

Lifelong Learning and Changing Character of Society in Japan

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Japanese *society* is falling apart.
This means we are facing the two
crises – the crisis of people's social
existence and the crisis of social
integrity caused by structural
change of society.

Key words: diversification, individualization,
multi-valued
base-layer residents autonomy,
re-creation of new community

Japan is no longer a country which is a
homogeneous and monotonous nation-state,
now is a country which is a very diversified and
individualized and also multi-valued society.

We have the need to create the new word
which consist of two opposite words.

1. The Structural Transformation of Japanese Society

3 factors in background

(1) a rapid decline birthrate
and a demographic aging

(2) a conversion of industrial structure
and a conversion from an industrial society
to a consumer society

(3) a rapid reduction in tax revenue
and a change of local governments structure

Old national-initiative type administration



New local government-based administration

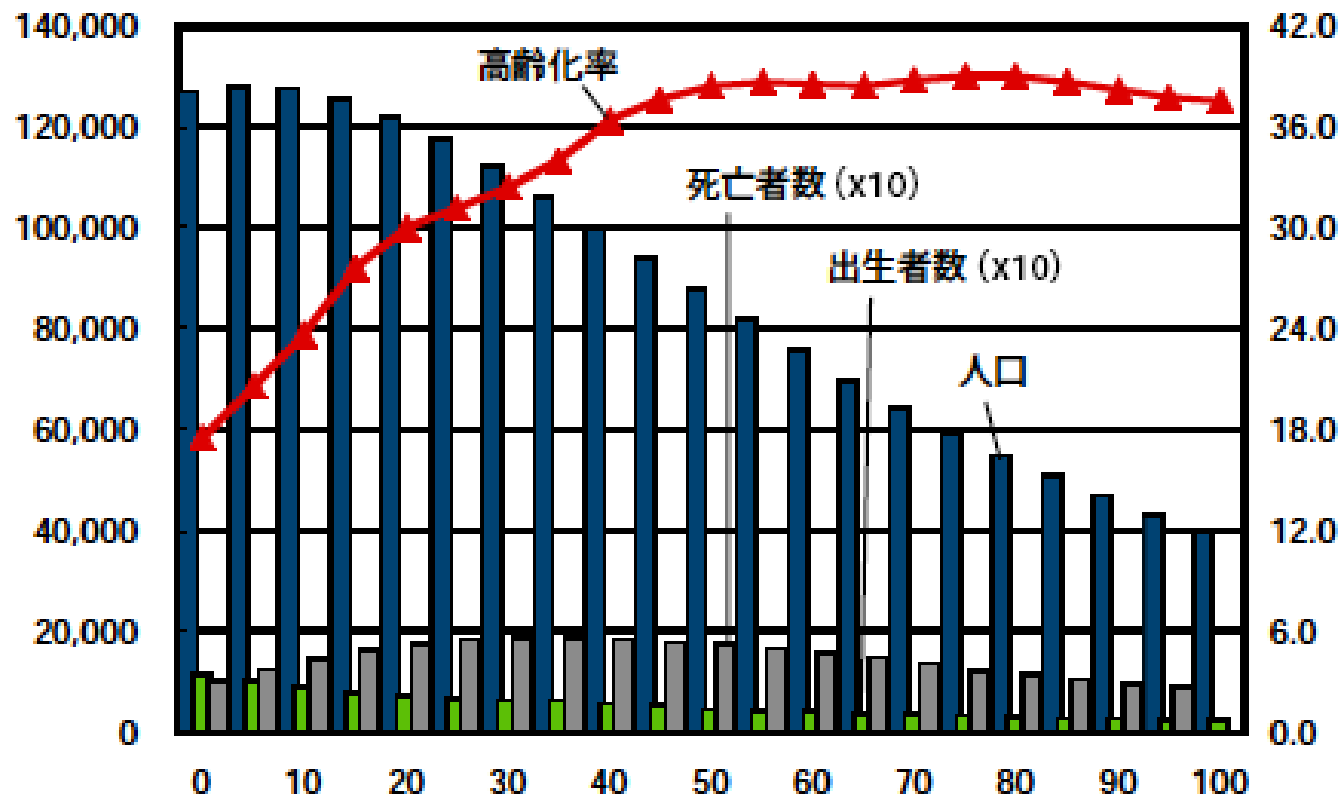
(1) A rapid decline birthrate and a demographic aging

The elderly ratio of Japan : 24%.

1970	7%	aging society
1994	14%	aged society
2005	21%	super-aged society
2040	40%	

人口 (100 万人),
出生者数, 死亡者数 (10 万人)

高齢化率 (%)



日本総人口, 出生者数, 死亡者数の2000年より2100年までの推移 (出生者数, 死亡者数は年間, 見やすくするために数値は10倍して表示してある. GRIPS SS-Proj CoreShell, CSJ.06 による)

Rapid aging of Japanese society
accompanied by a decrease in the birthrate



Caused a rapid reduction in the population

Now 127 million people

2006 Population began decreasing

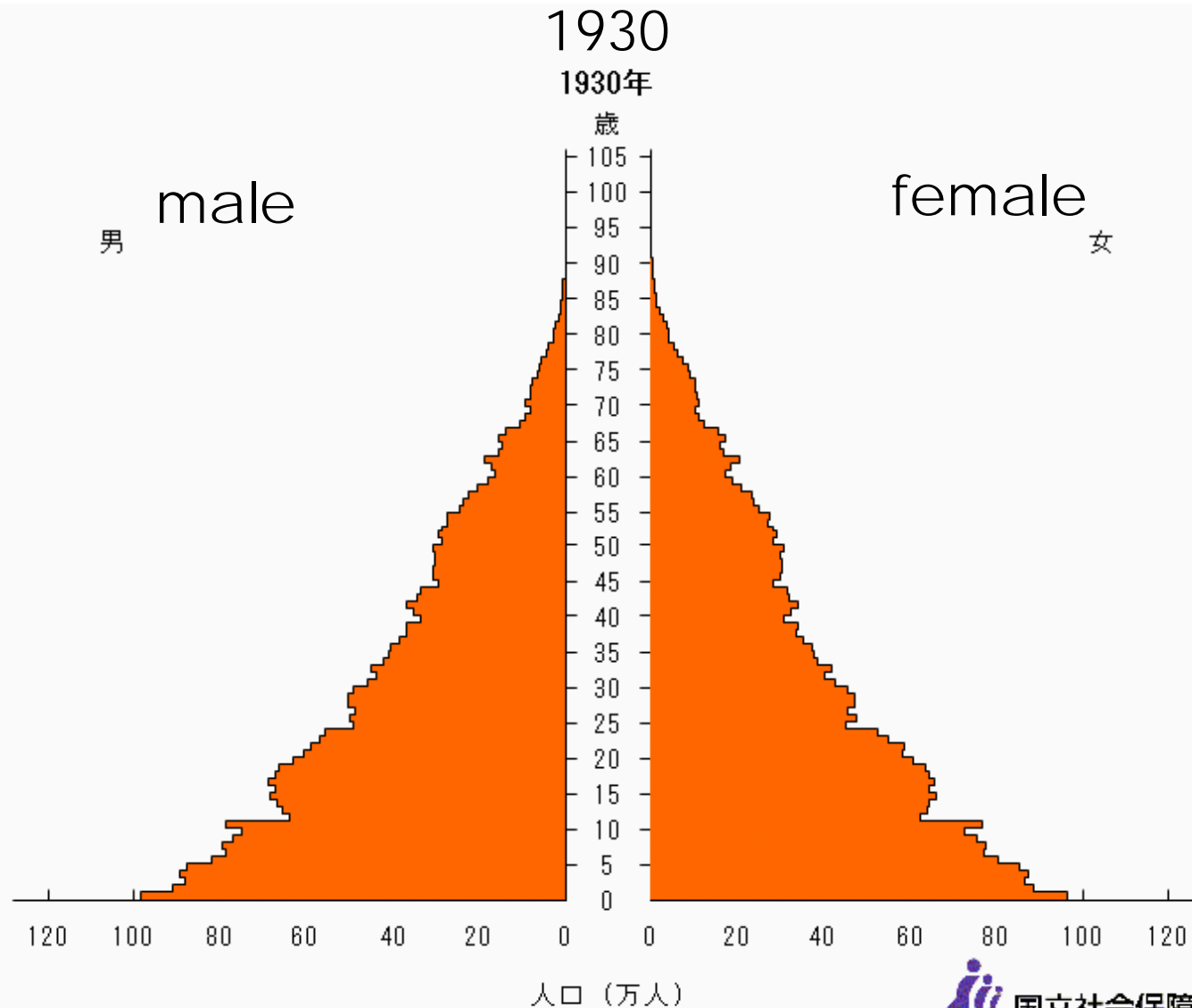
2050 100 million or 80 million(sever prediction)

2100 60 million or 40 million(sever prediction)

...

3500 1 person

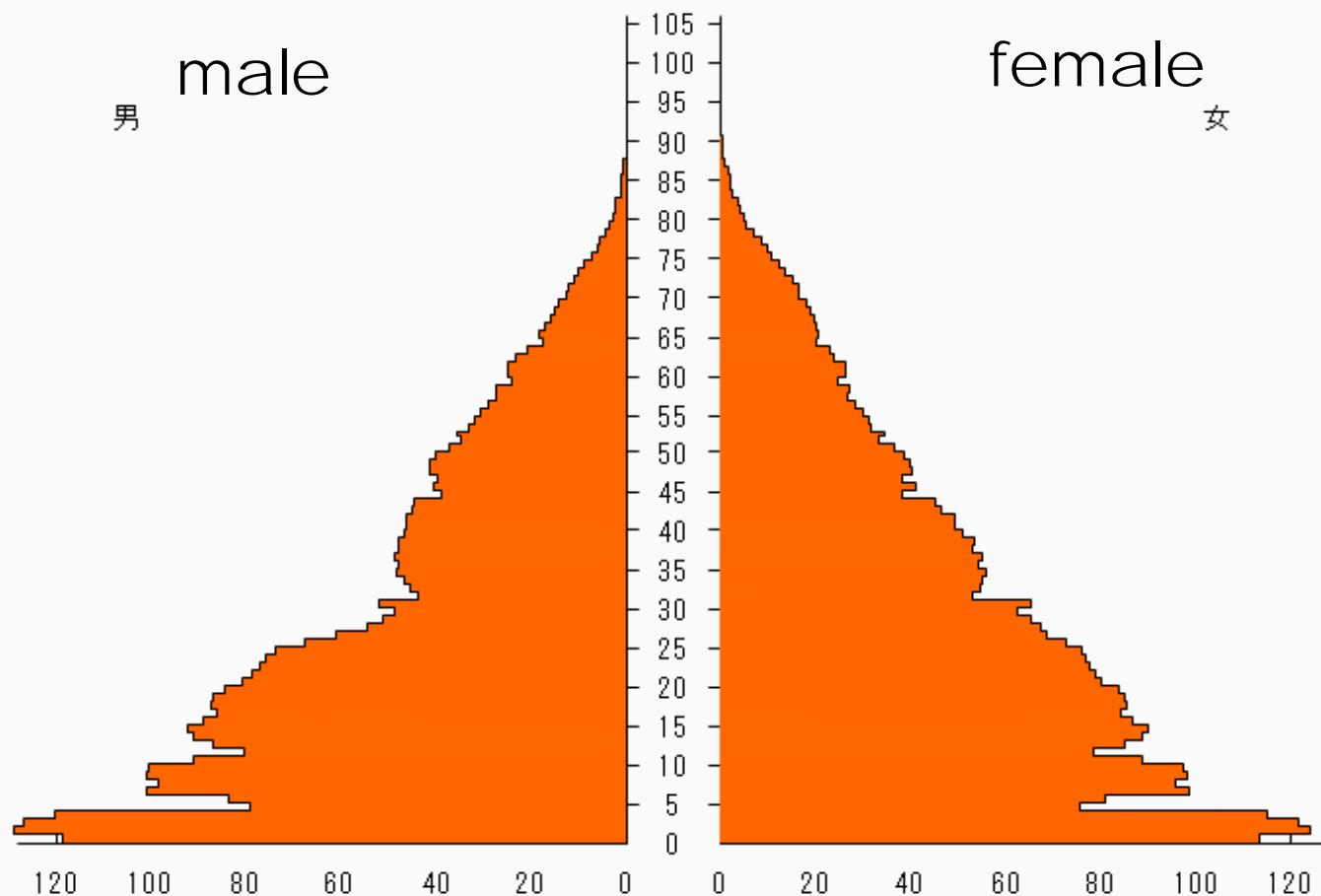
Structural change of the population pyramids in Japan from 1930 to 2055



1950

1950年

歳



male
男

female
女

人口 (万人)

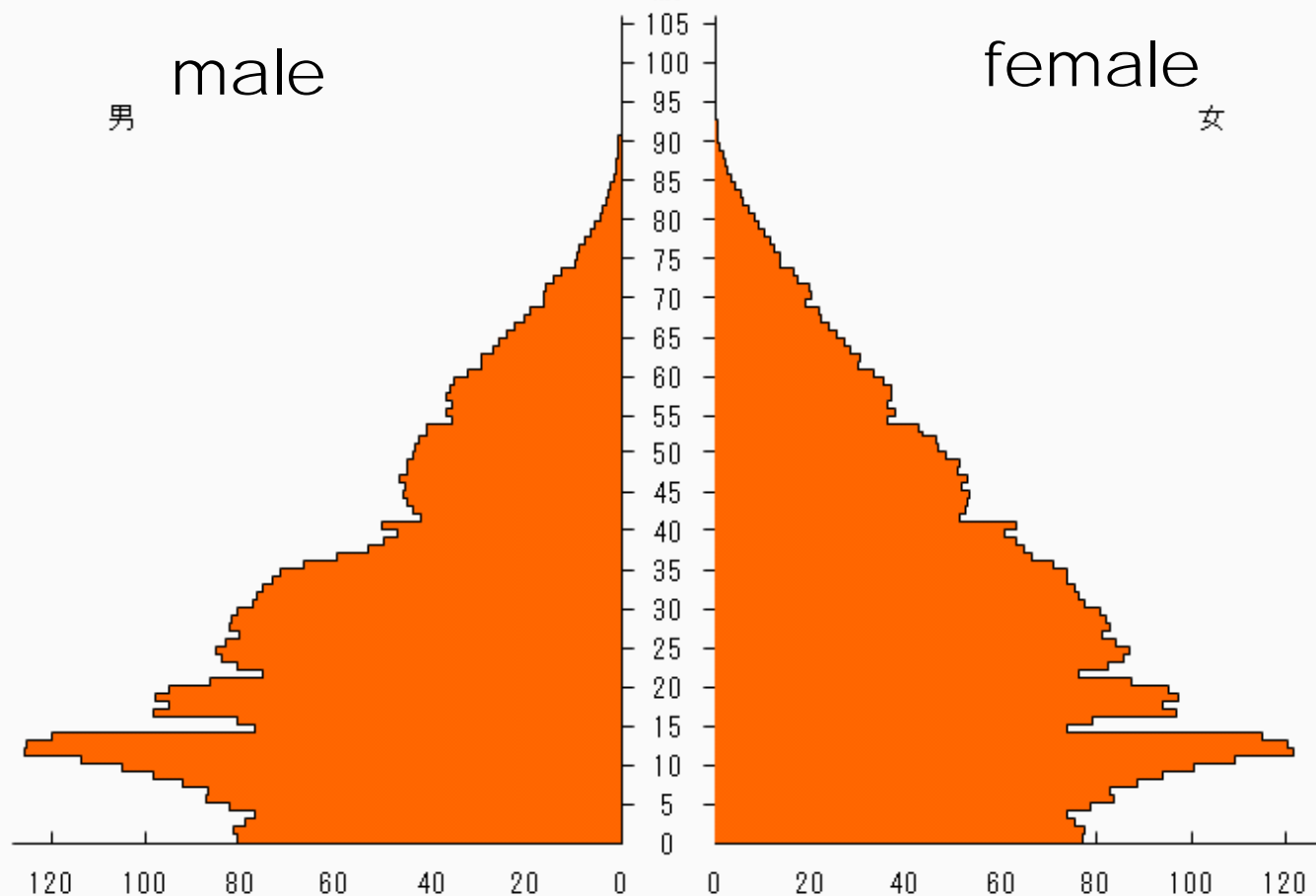
1960

1960年

歳

男 male

female 女



人口 (万人)

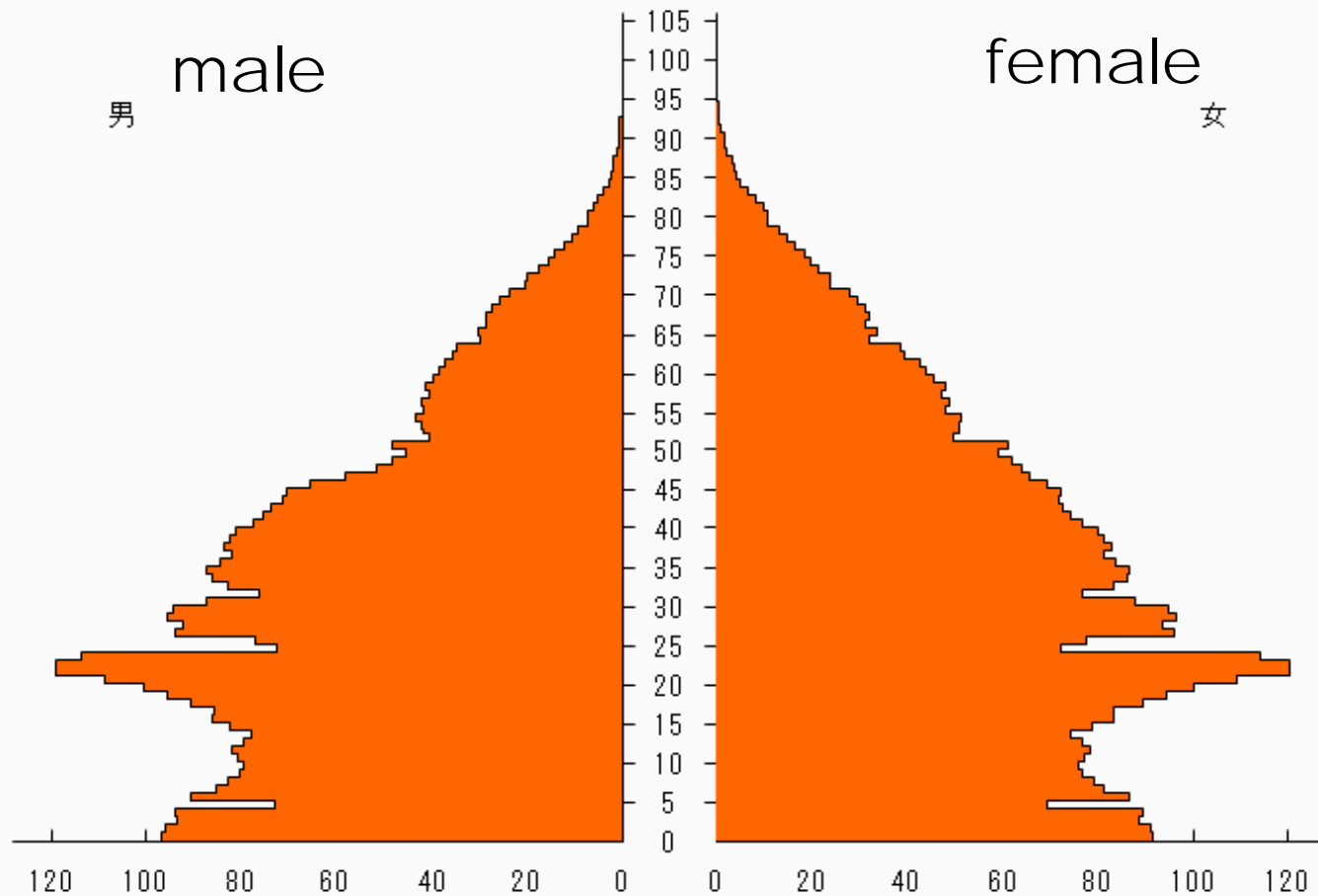
1970

1970年

歳

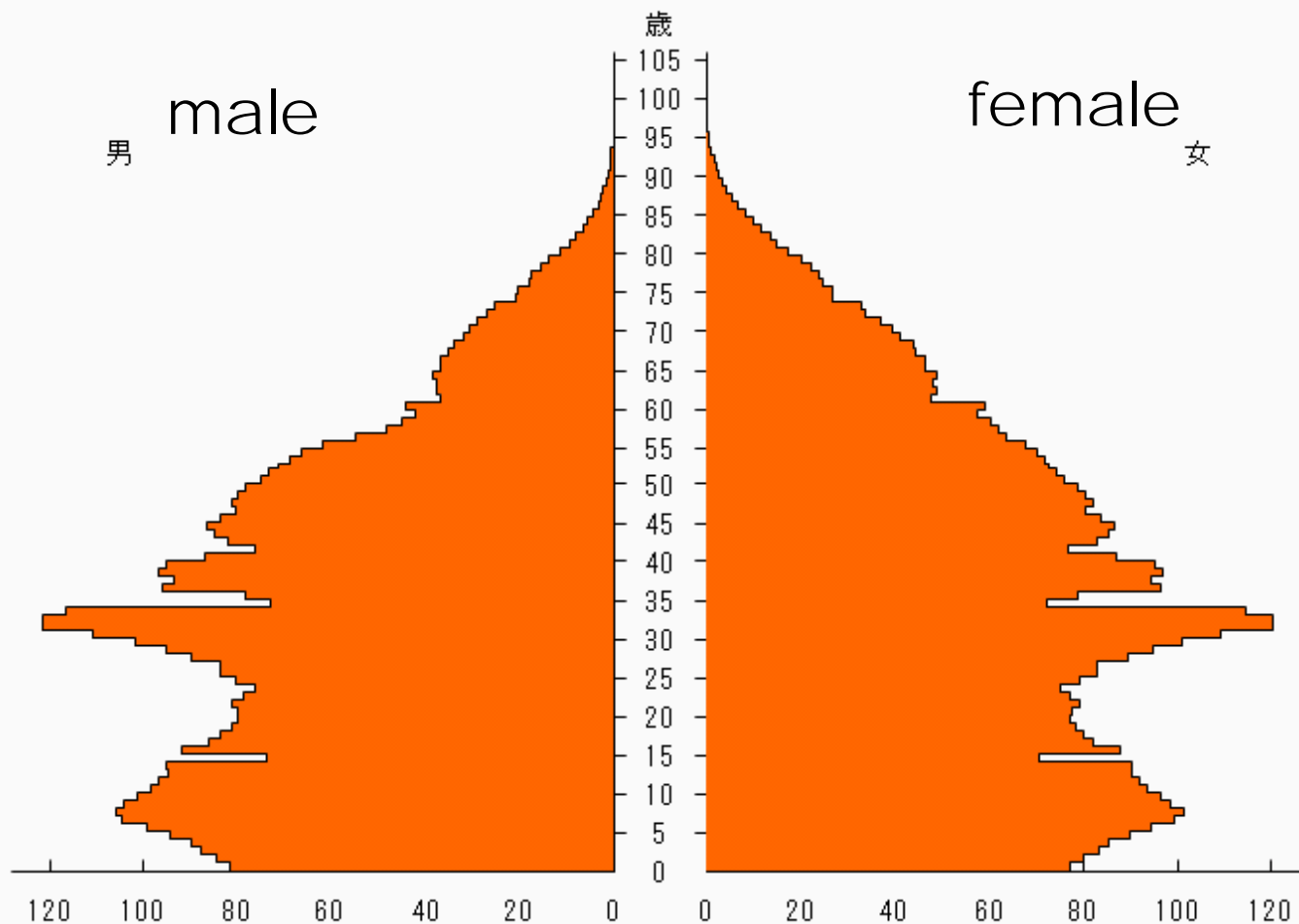
male
男

female
女



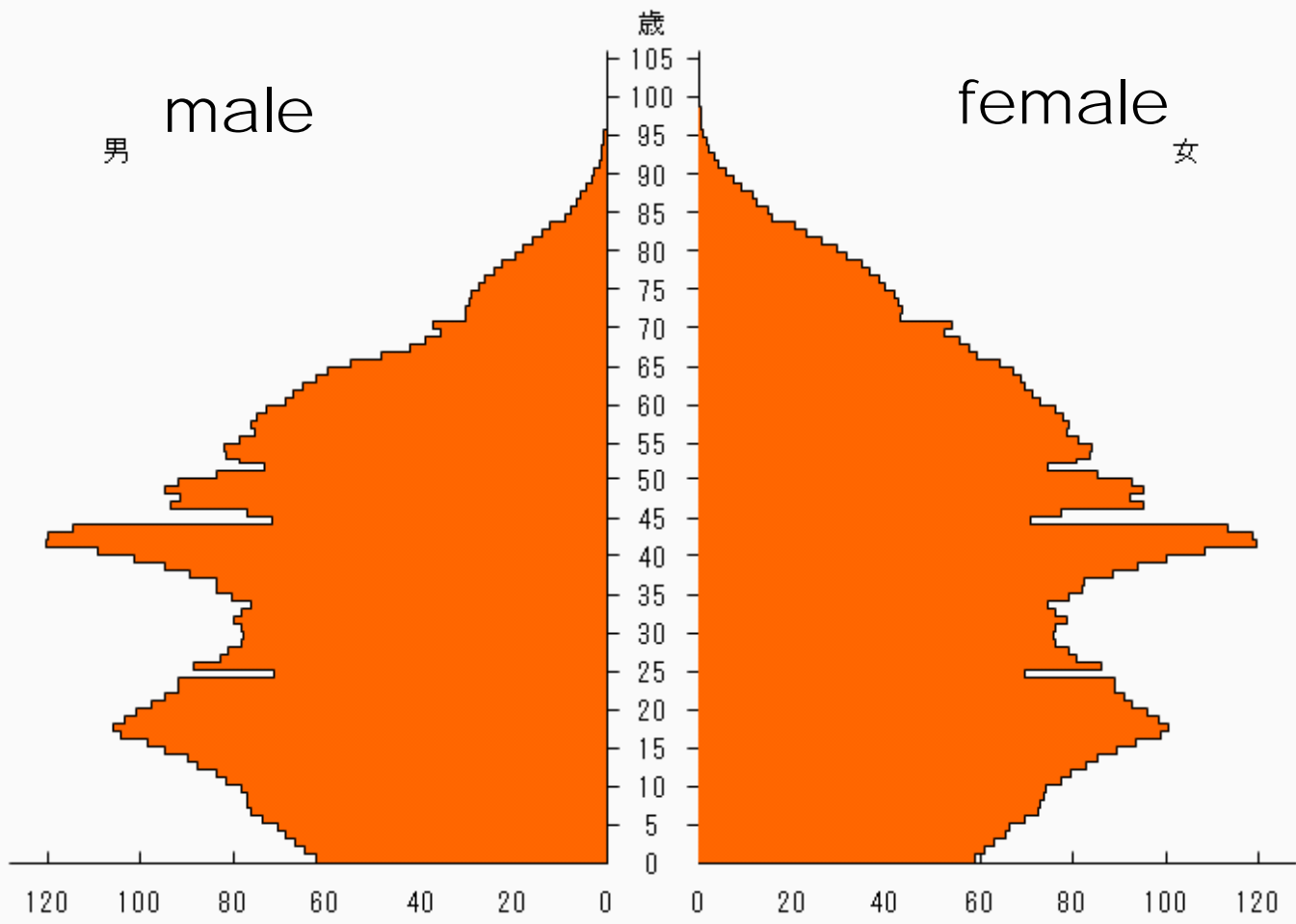
人口 (万人)

1980
1980年



人口 (万人)

1990
1990年



人口 (万人)

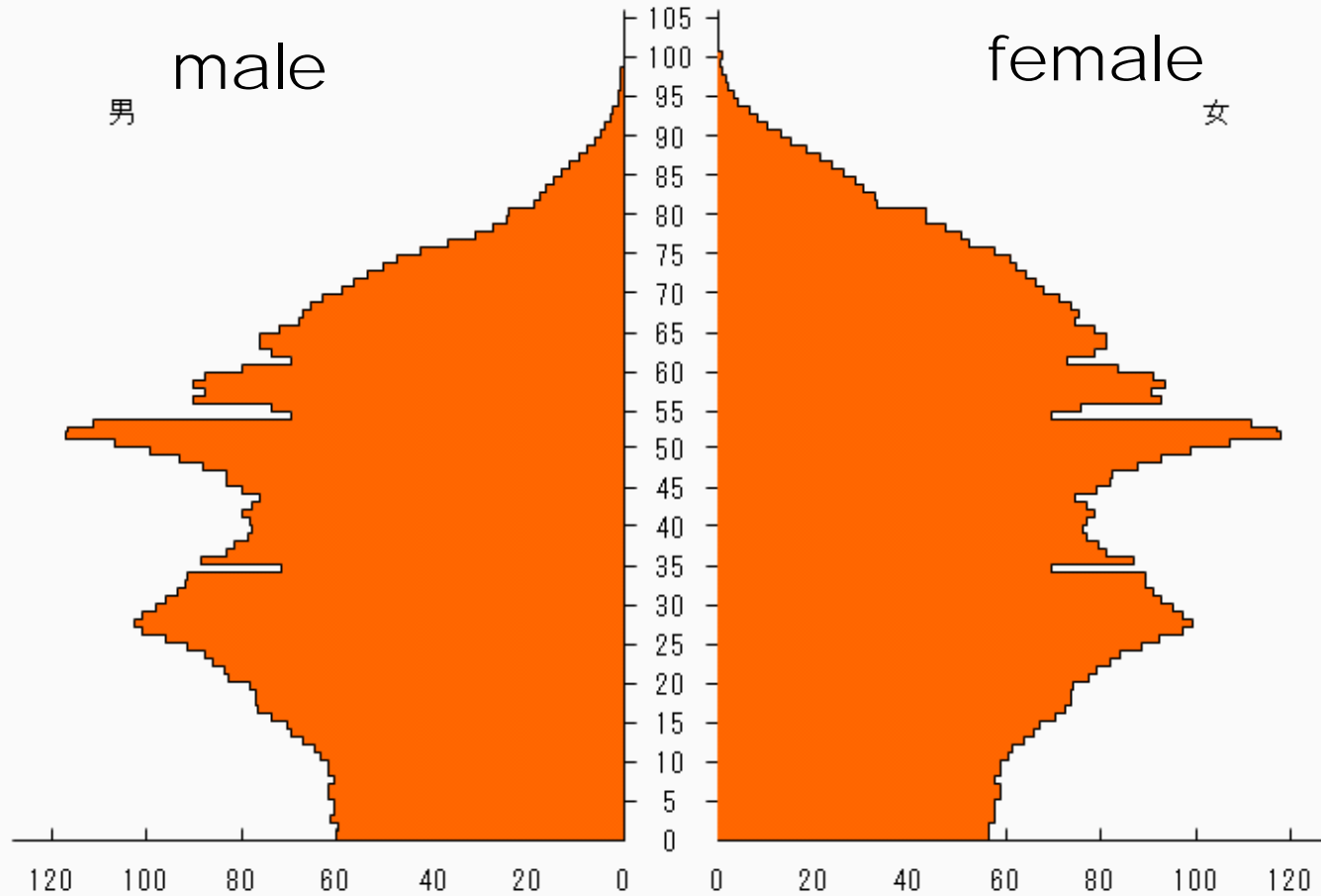
2000

2000年

歳

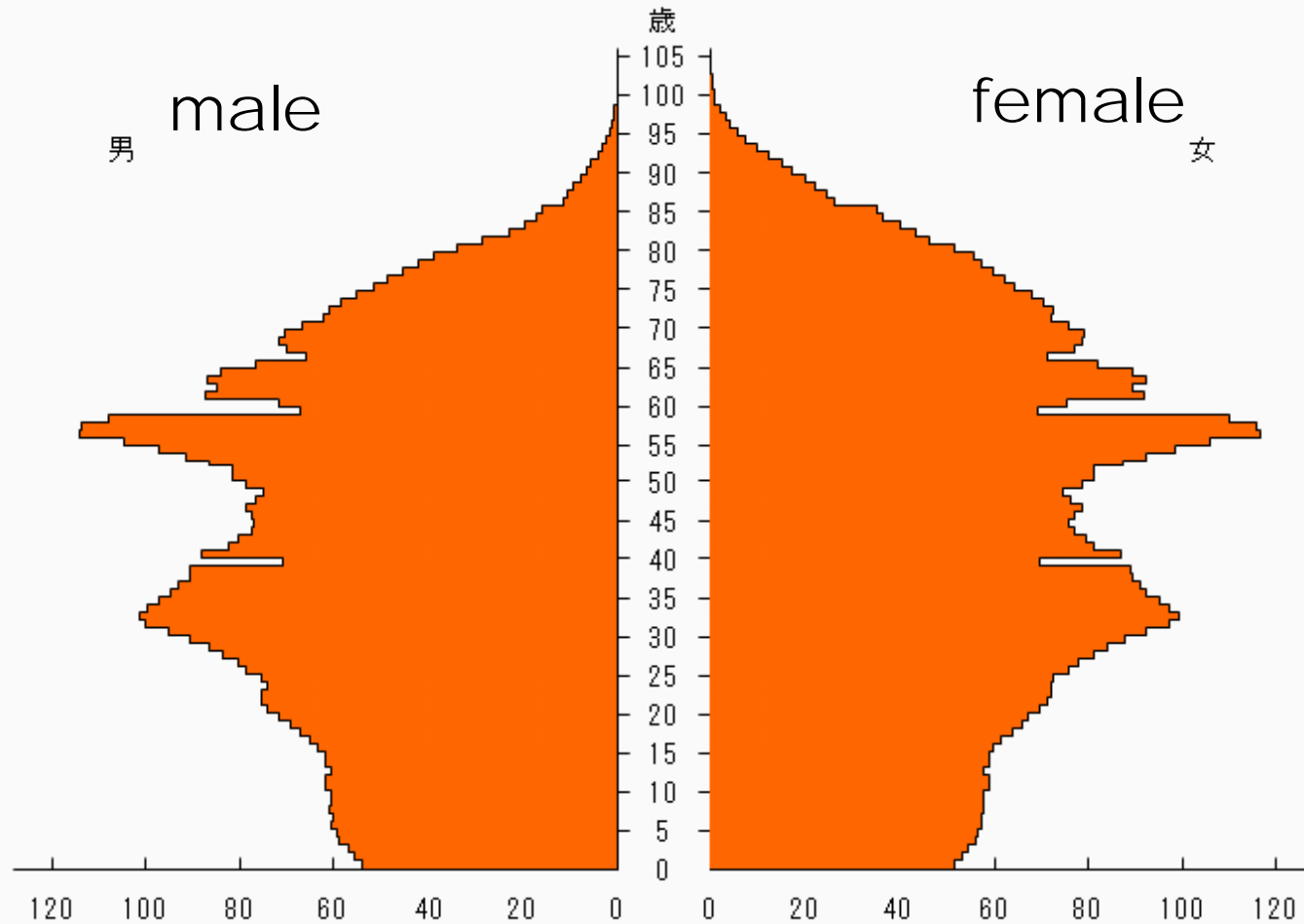
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female
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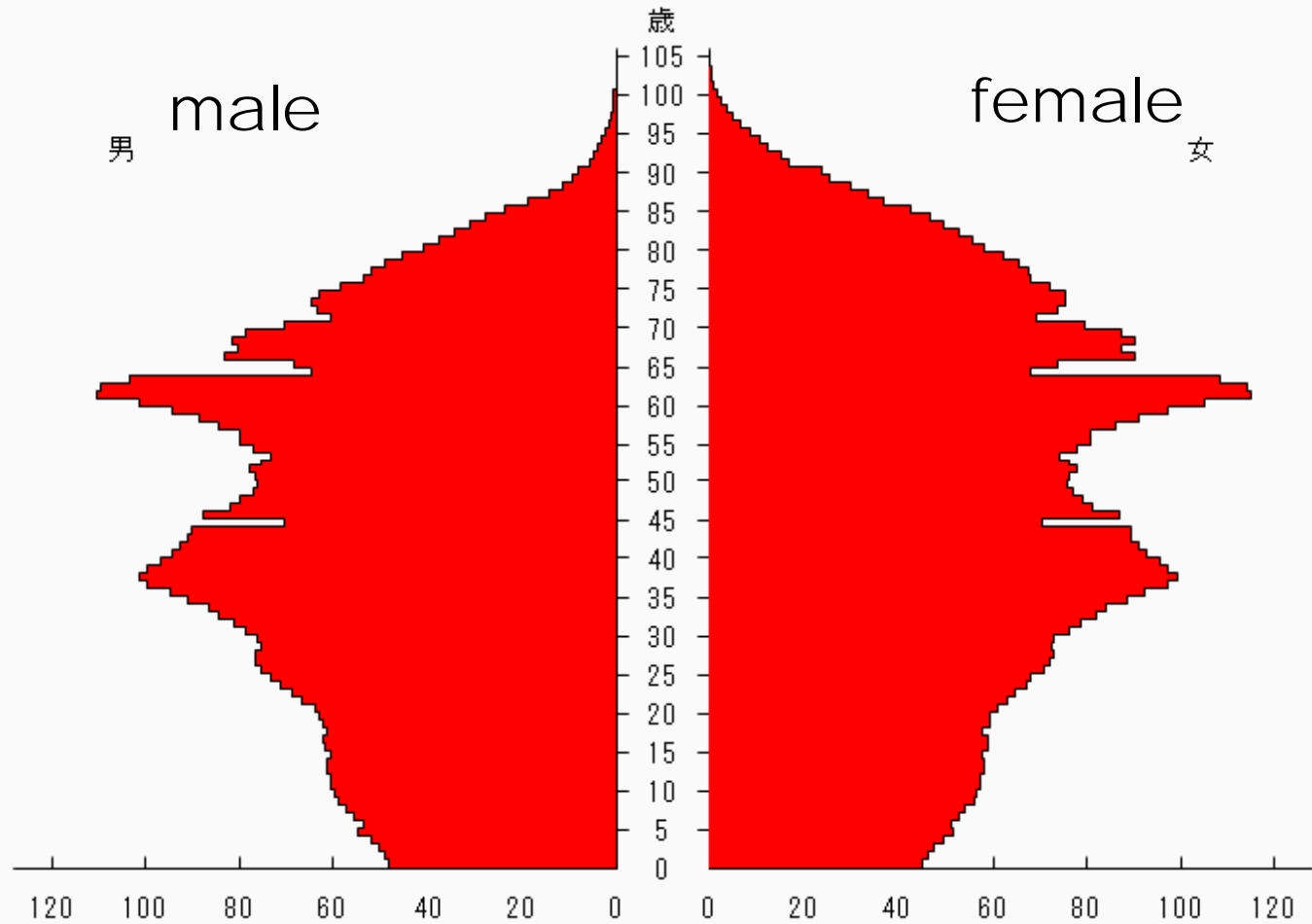
人口 (万人)

2005
2005年



人口 (万人)

2010
2010年



人口 (万人)

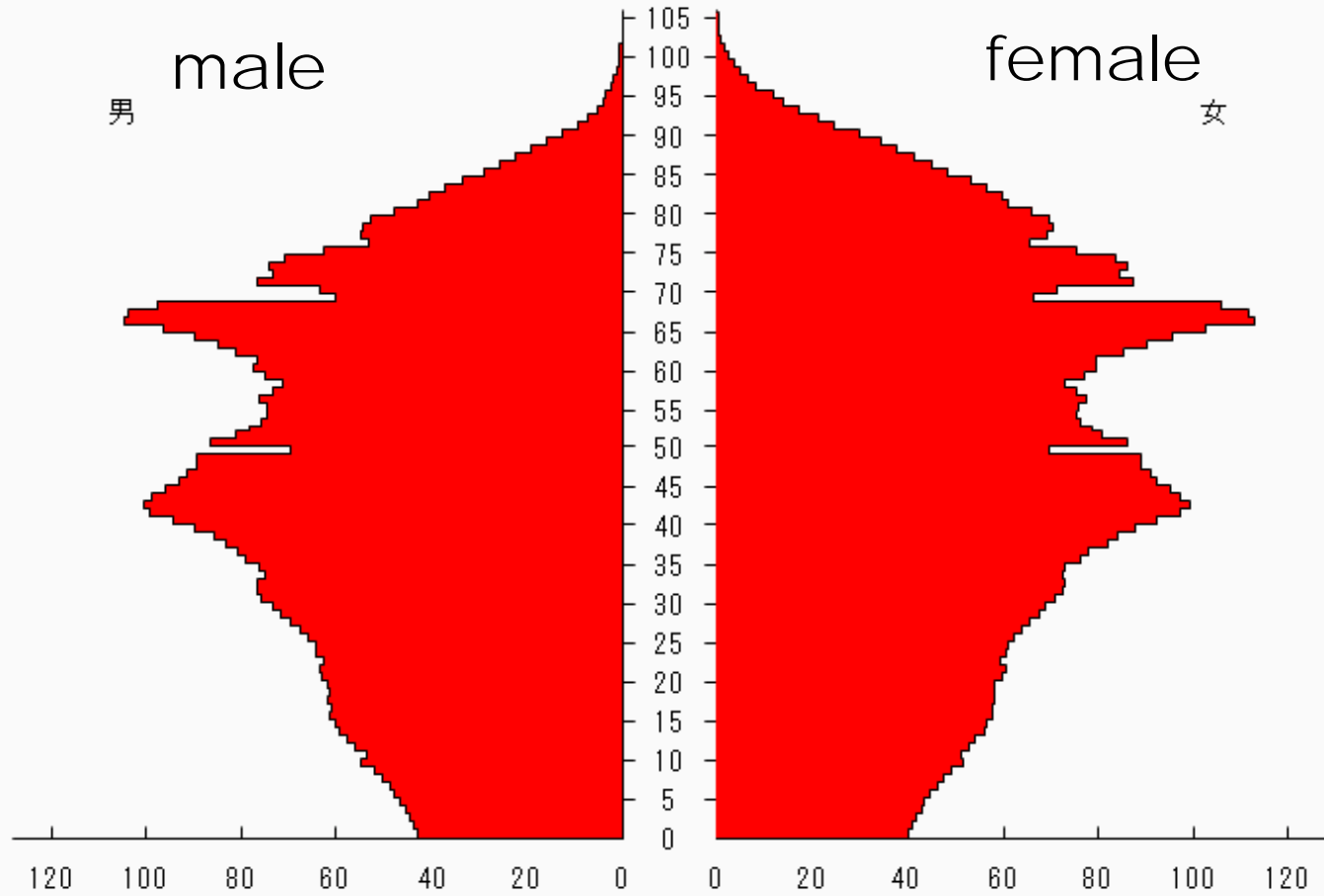
2015

2015年

歳

male
男

female
女



人口 (万人)

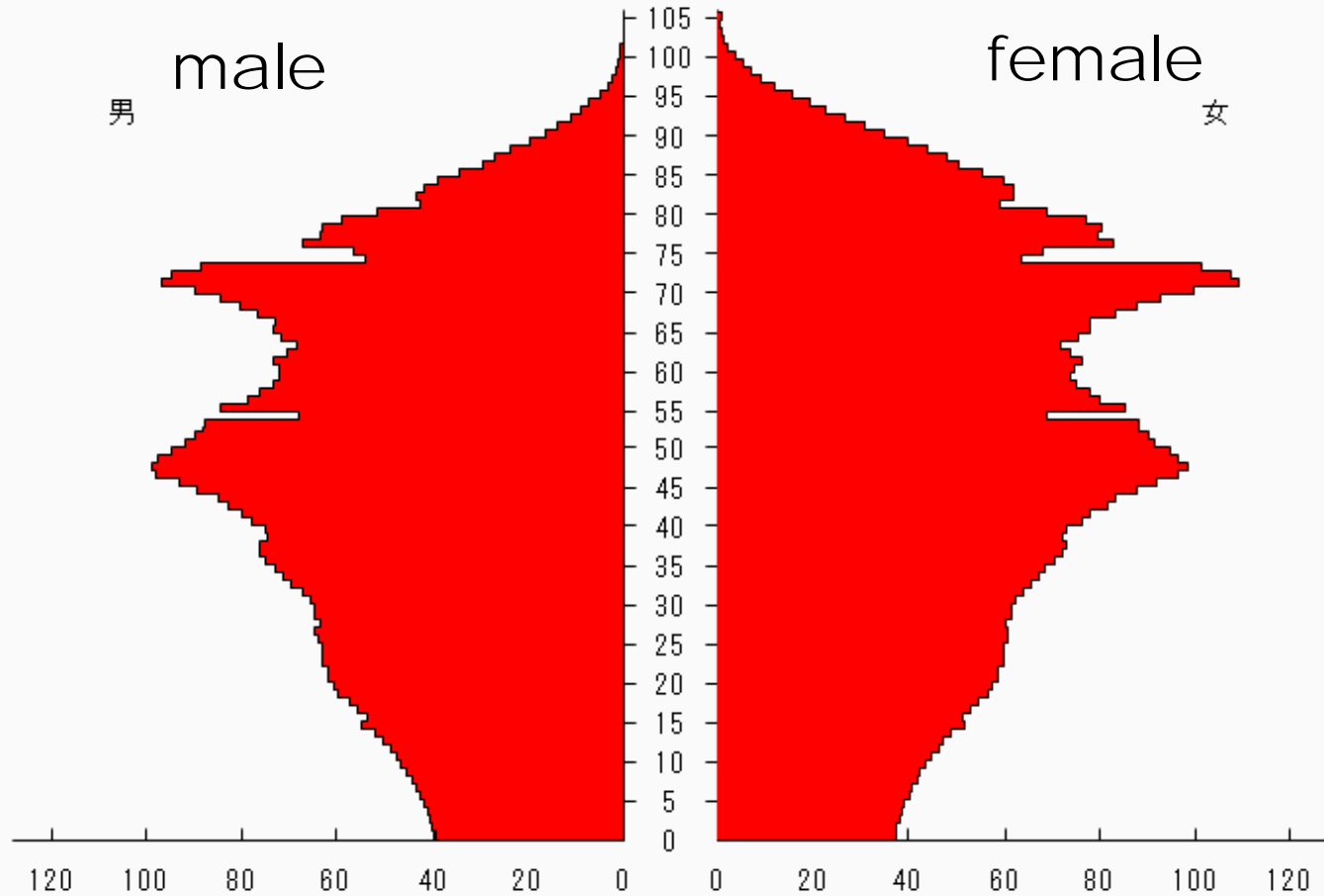
2020

2020年

歳

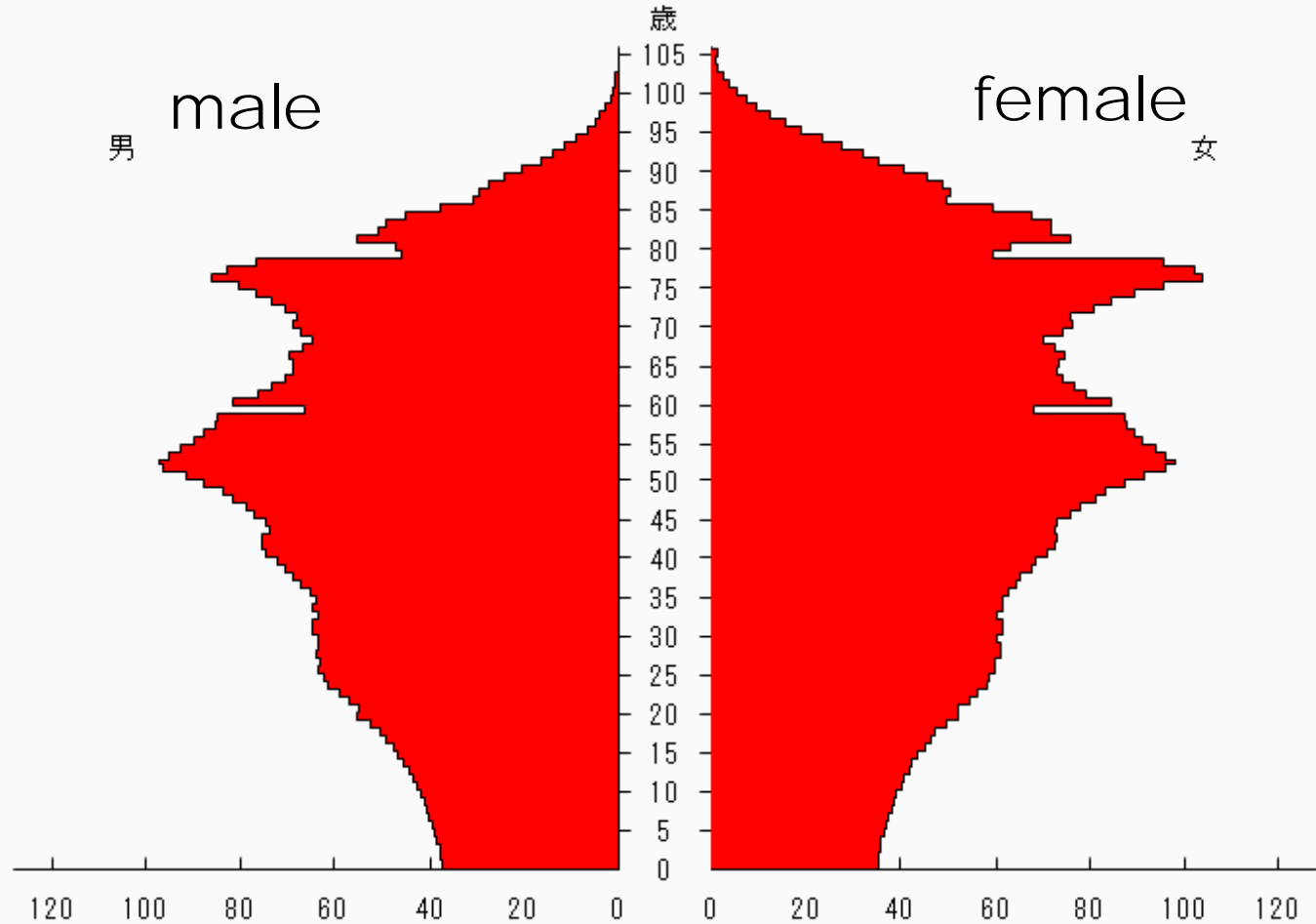
male
男

female
女



人口 (万人)

2025
2025年



人口 (万人)

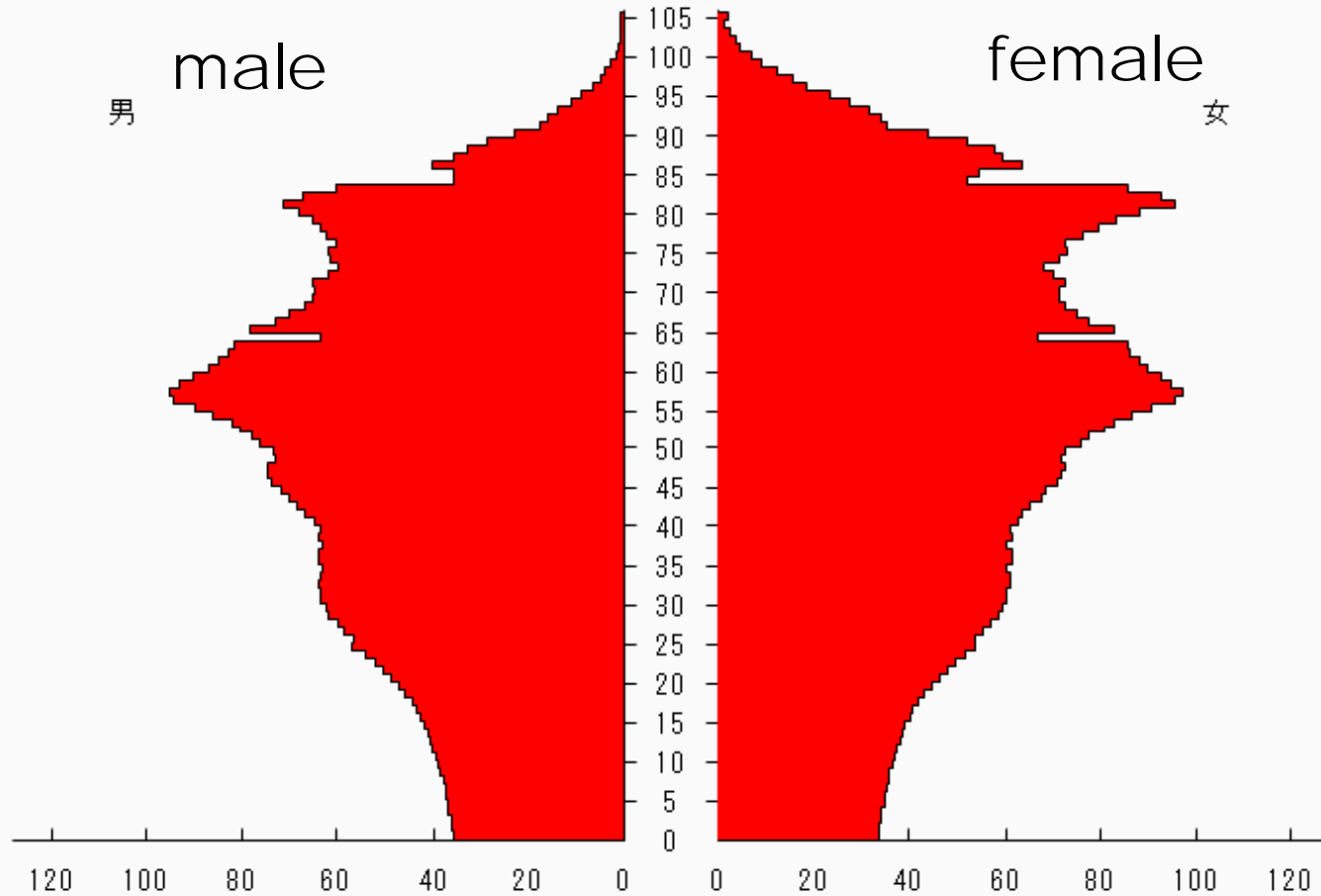
2030

2030年

歳

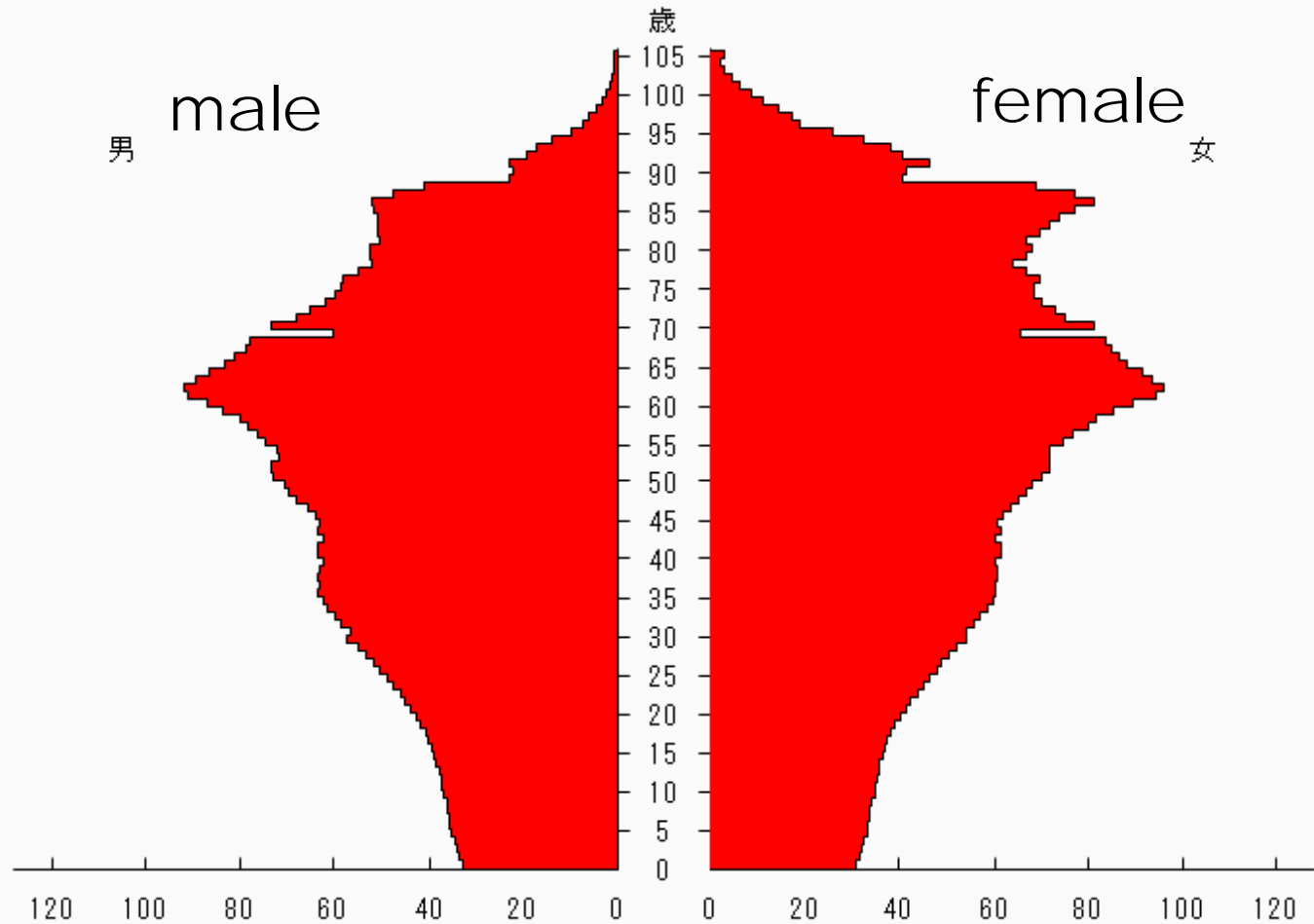
male
男

female
女



人口 (万人)

2035
2035年



人口 (万人)

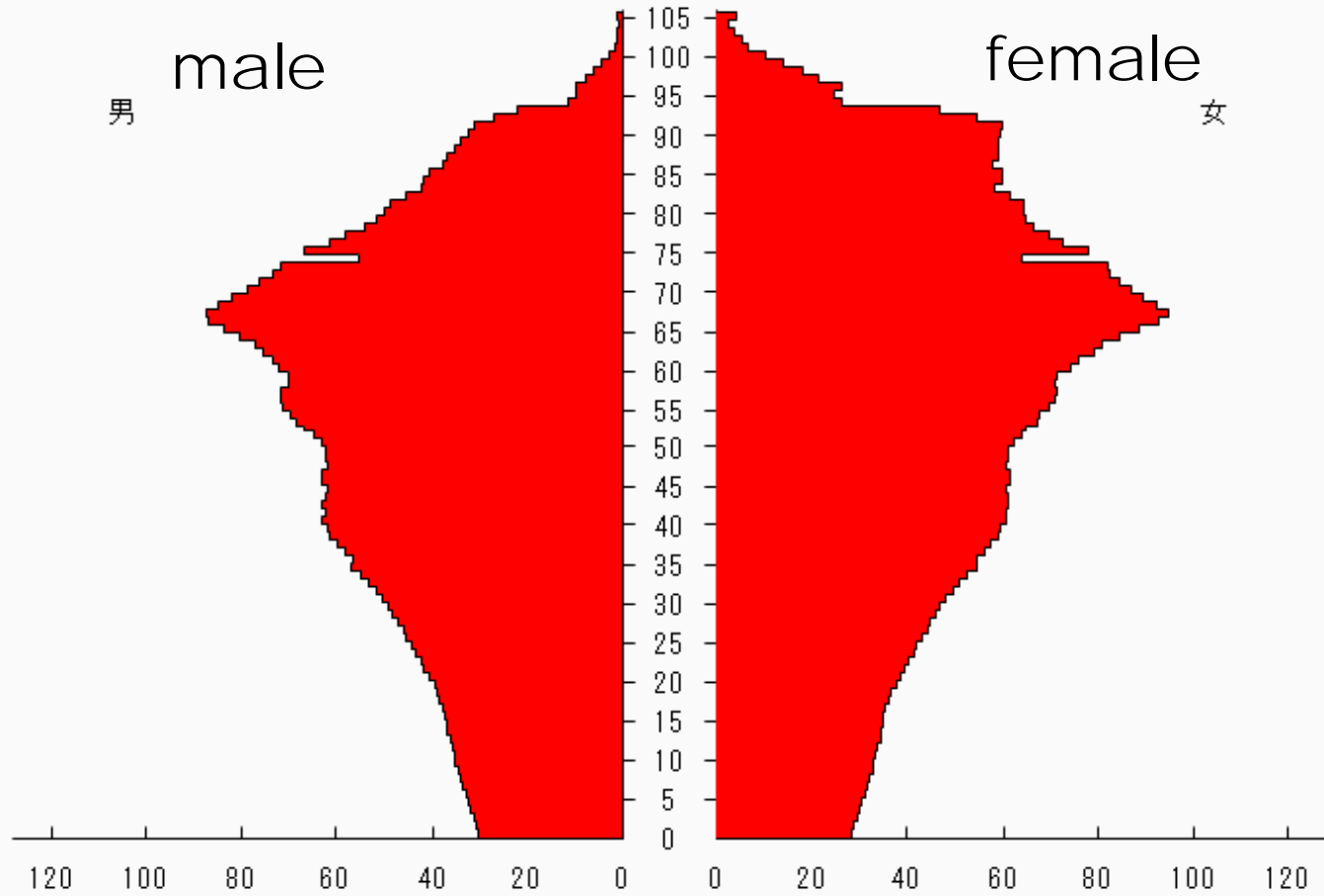
2040

2040年

歳

male
男

female
女



人口 (万人)

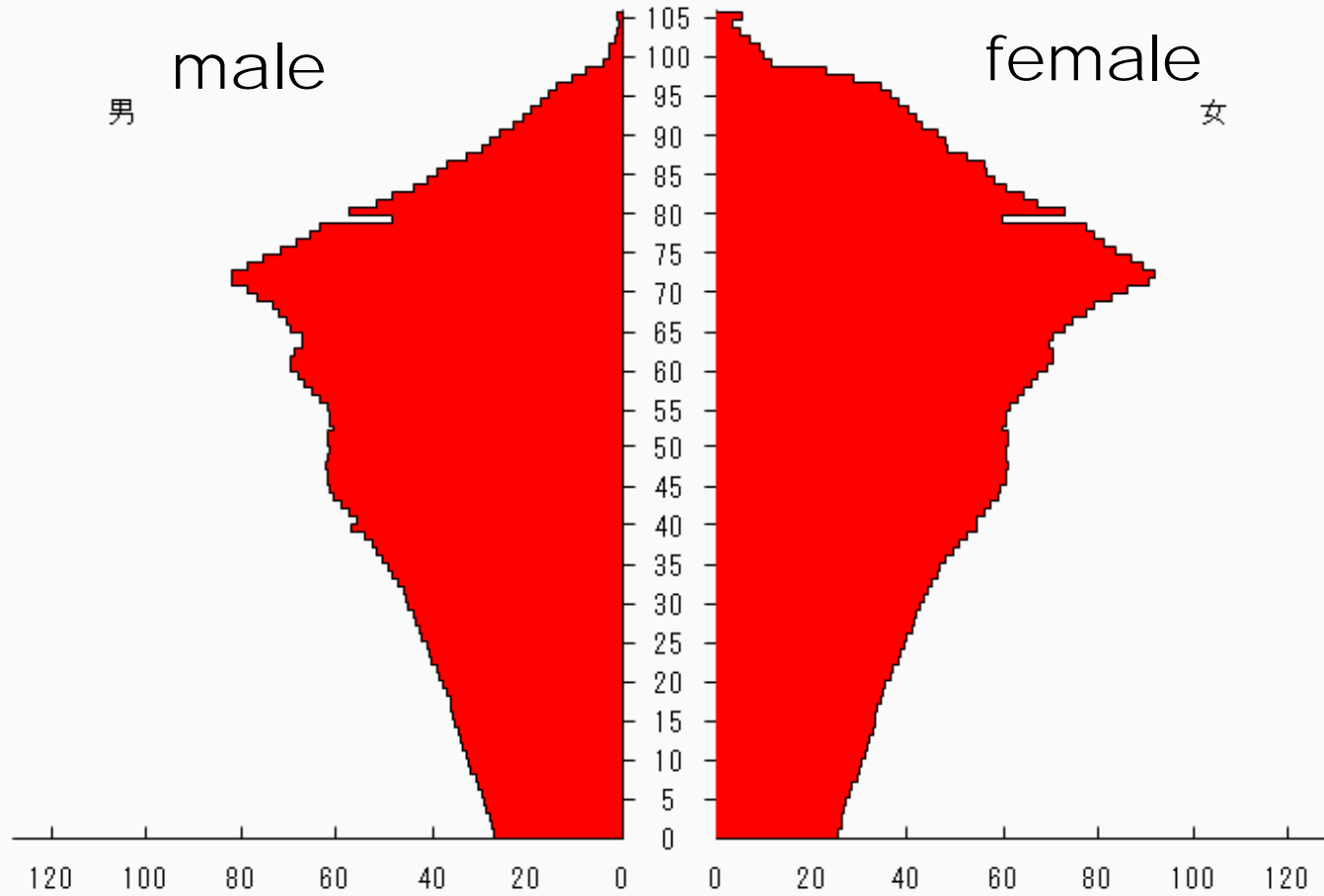
2045

2045年

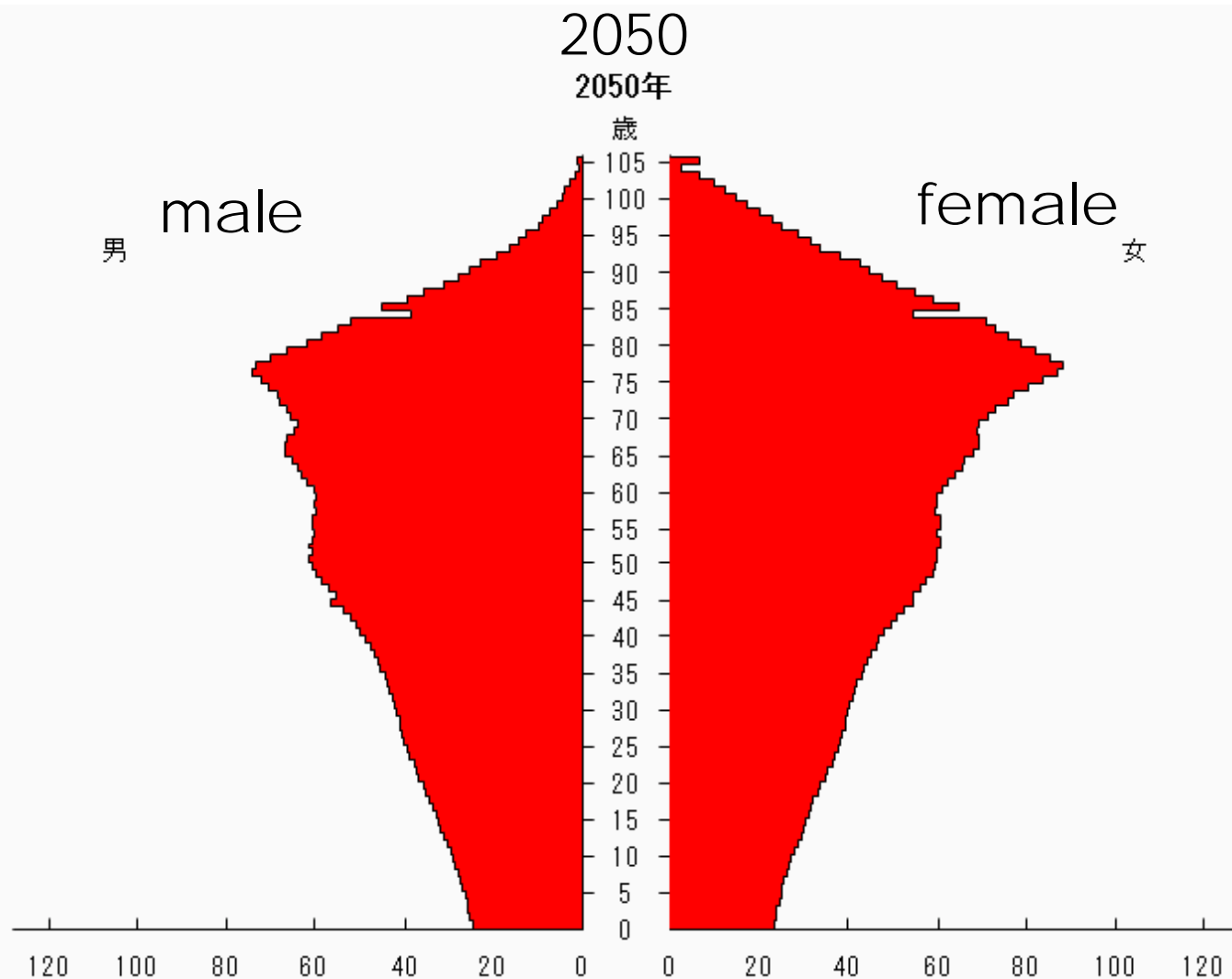
歳

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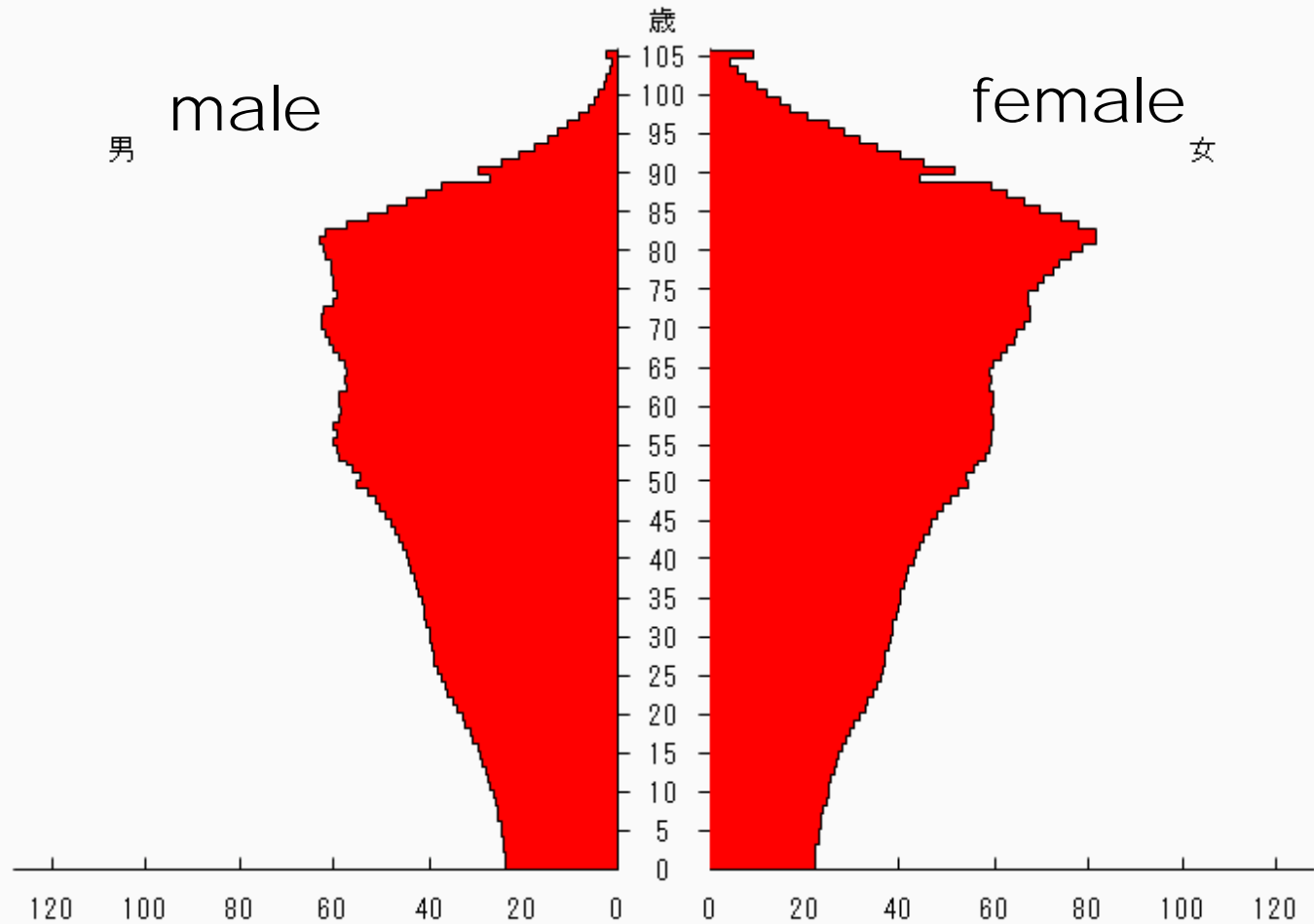


人口 (万人)



人口 (万人)

2055
2055年



人口 (万人)

Japanese society is already the society whose scale has been reducing.

This is the big challenge for industry.

Individualization and diversification are underway.

The social conversion progressed from the society based on production into the consumption centered society.

From the end of the 1980s to the beginning of the 90s

The bubble economy :

Japanese society turned into a consumer society and monetary economy society.

The bubble economy dissolved at 1991:

Japanese society fell into long-term depression, which has continued up to now.

The number of non-regular employee exceeded 2/5 of all the employers.

The unemployment rate is also over 5% today.

The political structure :

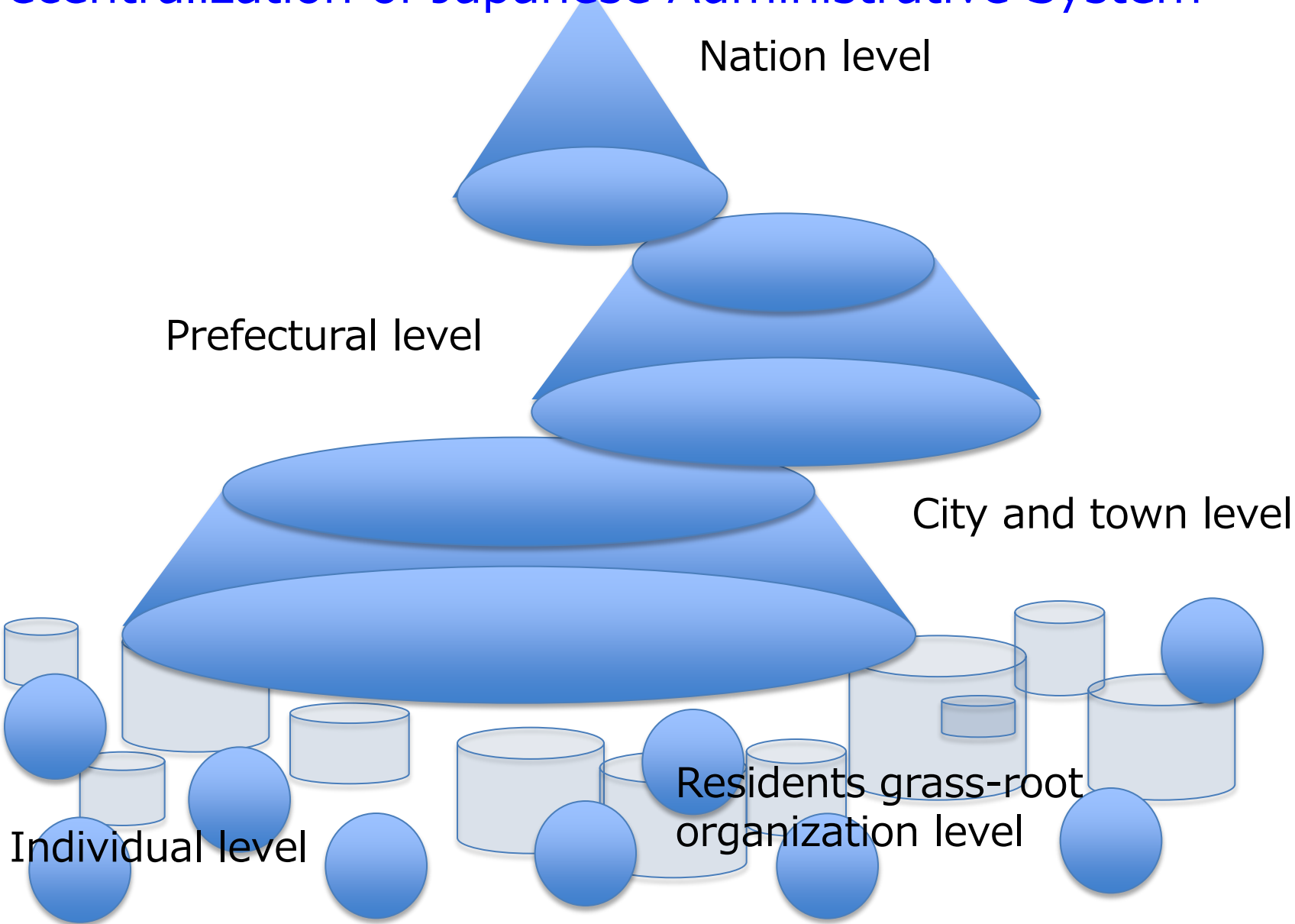
The structure where central government takes the lead and supports local government has begun to collapse.

The local government has been pressed for independence along with decentralization.

The society has begun to collapse on the very basis of administrative system.

Over the past 20 years, people have become isolated and social "bonds" have also been breaking down.

Decentralization of Japanese Administrative System



2. The trend and Present Condition of the Lifelong Learning Policy

Lifelong learning is politically thought as important in society.

Government tries to mobilize the people and regain the social integration through lifelong learning policy.

1970s : The concept of lifelong education was introduced from Europe into Japan.

1980s : The concept of lifelong learning spread throughout the society and it has continued till today.

At the end of 19th century :
Before lifelong learning, the concept
of social education, practice, and
an administration already had
spread through Japanese society.

It was called popular education.

After the World War II, social education restarted as a measure for realizing people's better life and for spreading democracy and peace.

The Social Education Law was launched in 1949 and social education was promoted throughout the whole country.

The important institution is a *Kominkan* (community learning center, CLC). There are 16,000 Kominkans all over the country as residents' learning bases today, and there are also about 230 million users each year.

On such the foundation of social education, the concept of lifelong learning was introduced into Japanese society in the 1970s.

1980s : Lifelong learning was thought as the policy and practice to provide the learning opportunities through market.

1990 : The Lifelong Learning Promotion Law was launched.

The key idea of this law :

- (1)Marketizing lifelong learning
- (2)Sending the learning opportunities as product to every citizen through market widely
- (3)Rearranging a whole society to a learning society

After the bubble economy collapsed :
Japanese society fell into serious and long
depression.

Not avoidable : Rapid decline in birthrate, high
speed of aging and decreasing in population

The society : Individualized and diversified



The necessity of re-unifying society came to be
called for.

The new role of lifelong learning :

(1)To mobilize residents to bear a social burden

(2)To re-unify the society

The direction of lifelong learning policy has begun to change :

From “community building for lifelong learning”
to “community building through lifelong learning”

Promoting lifelong learning to mobilize residents and re-unify the community.

The central government gave up the state level unified policy of lifelong learning.

Each local government launch the lifelong learning policy individually.

The national budget of social education and lifelong learning began to be reduced.

JP¥ 2trillions 8060billions (1996)



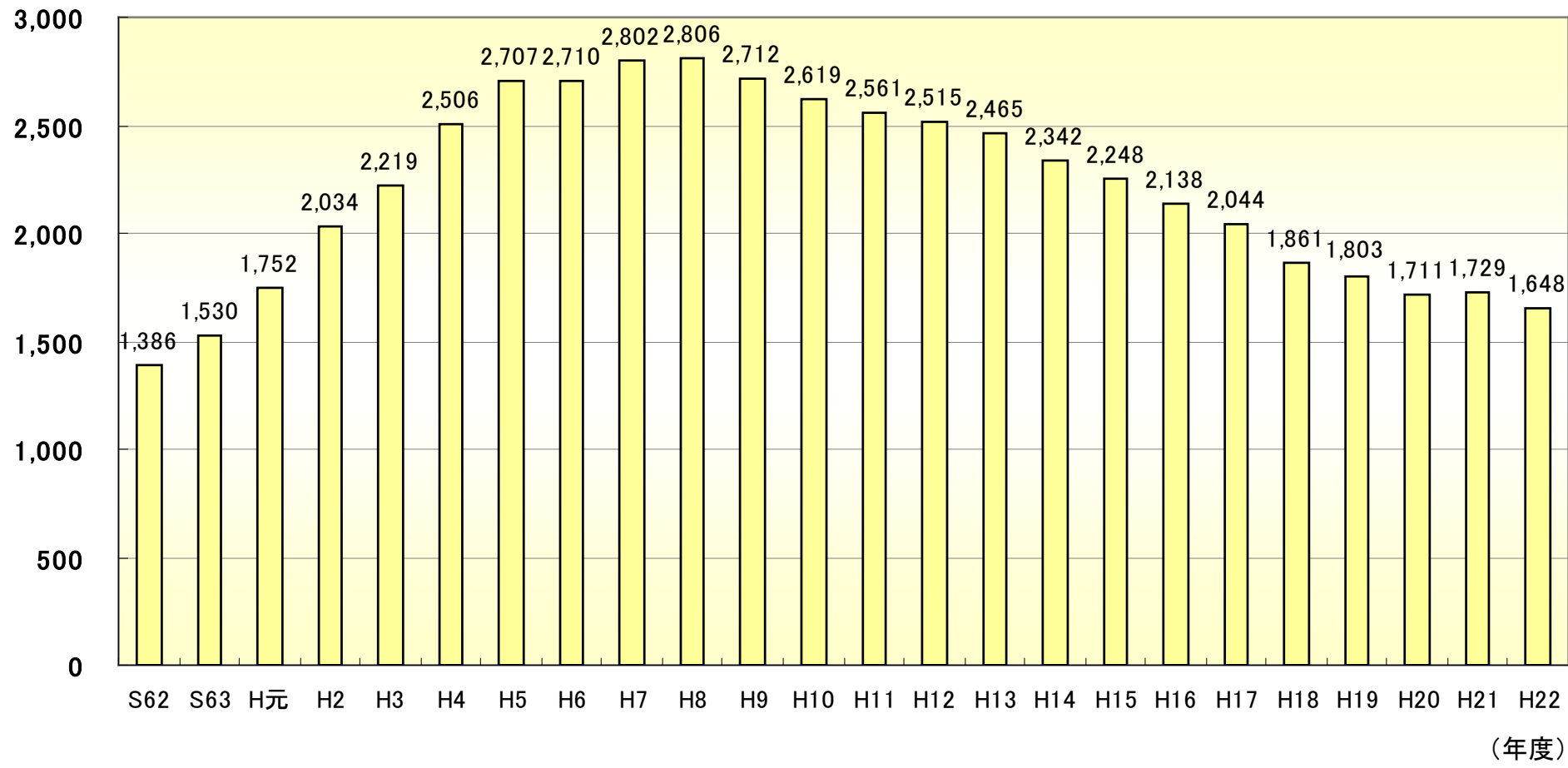
JP¥ 1trillion 6480billions (2010)

10% of education expenditure

社会教育費の推移

Change of national budget for social education and lifelong learning (10billions)

(十億円)



資料: 地方教育費調査
平成22年度について、岩手県、宮城県、福島県については、21年度の値を計上

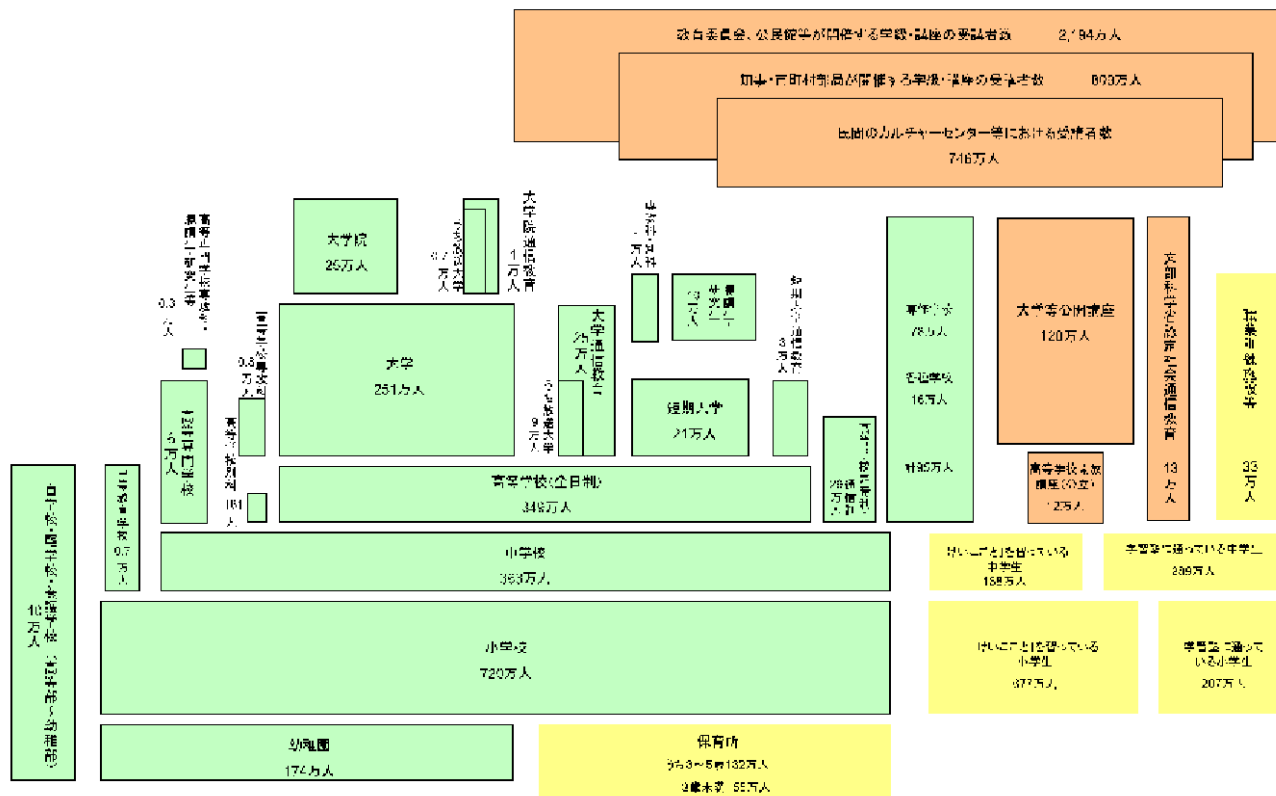
Promoting lifelong learning :

To re-unify the society on the basis of residential grass-root autonomy organizations

People not a citizen but residents became main actors activating the society.

The situation of learning population in Japan

学習人口の現状



- 社会教育施設利用者(年間延べ数)
- ◆公民館(類似施設を含む)・・・2億3,311万人
 - ◆青少年教育施設・・・2,061万人
 - ◆社会体育施設・・・4億6,662万人
 - ◆博物館(類似施設を含む)・・・2億6,633万人
 - ◆女性教育施設・・・277万人
 - ◆民間体育施設・・・1億5,330万人
 - ◆図書館・・・1億6,133万人

資料: 文部科学省「学校基本調査」(平成17年度), 「社会教育調査」(平成17年度), 「平成5年度学習塾等に関する実態調査」ほか

127 million overall population

An aging ratio : about 24%

Persons aged 75 and over :

11% (45% of overall aged persons)

Kominkan (main lifelong learning facilities) : 16,000

Study classes (established every year) : 450,000

Learning participants : 233 million

Library : 3,200

Users : 170 million

Loan of books : 632 million volumes

Museum and similar institutions : 1,300 + 4,500

Users : 266 million

Gymnastics institution users : 153 million

Scale of lifelong learning population :

6.5 times of the overall population

3. Example of the Activities of Resident as the Main Actors

Grassroots residents community has become the key to resolve the problem caused by the structural change of society and to re-unify the people and make the society stable.

3 examples of the lifelong learning practice in which the community residents play the role of main actors.

The first is the project that construct the multi-generation exchange type community corresponding to an aged society.

The second is the activation project for a depopulated area.

The third is a trial of so-called MONO-LAB-JAPAN project.

The first project :

This project consists of two main activities.

The first activity :

Universities and enterprise companies undertake to hold an elderly-people-oriented seminar and offer its opportunities for elderly people, especially retired company employee, to participate in, and support them make new friends and build new human network, and urge them to lead the second life.

Elderly people oriented seminar 1



Health seminar 1

Health seminar 2



Elderly people oriented seminar 2



Computer seminar 1

Computer seminar 2



Group and club activity



City clean up volunteer activity

Walking club activity





Aging Forum in Expo 2005

Members of this project planned, organized and held this forum by themselves.



The second activity :

Organize elderly people and build the activity base, like community café, where many generations of community residents can use and talk and interchange, and make children and youth and elderly people in community interchange freely and build a relationship watched mutually.



Opening event
of community café
6th May, 2012





Inside of the café



Outside of the café





Participants of international youth leader program visited the community café. Feb. 7, 2013

The final target of such community-building is that the elderly people become a treasure of a local community, one in which even if someone has become bedridden, children will go to talk and play.

The second project :

The activation project for a depopulated area

There is the word "marginal village" in Japanese society.

City young men move to the depopulated district of farming and mountain villages, and begin a new "agriculture-oriented life", and activate the village.

The basic idea :

Young men interchange with the elderly people of a depopulated district.

Young men absorb the agricultural technology and traditional-handicrafts which the elderly people have.

Then try to unite the traditions and the new thinking of city young people and renew the traditional culture.

They try to promote the exchange between city and village by using this new culture, and vitalize the depopulated village.



Life in the project 1



Life in the project 2

The third project :
so-called MONO-LAB-JAPAN project

This is a trial project that elderly people and citizens with various technology share an idea and an image mutually, while being freely connected to children, and try to create a new thing while showing the children the pleasure of craftsmanship.

The MONO-LAB has centered on the small studio of a street corner rather than one based on some big factory.

MONO-LAB-JAPAN in action







The network these 3 projects combine into mutually is already underway.

Various activities at people's life level cooperate mutually and cover a Japanese society.

Japanese society is the society where various people exist and help each other mutually.

It is the society which produces new value.

In this society, independence is a pronoun of the mutual reliance instead of isolation.

This society is consisted of the "weak" people who are connected and creating a "strong" community.

Society is reborn again because people just make a new "solidarity."

Now, such activities are advanced at the very base of Japanese society.

4. Quiet dynamism of local communities and *Kominkan*

we are challenged to create new *communities* that ensure people's lives and guarantee their survival.

Those three examples have strong relationship with dynamism of local communities.

What is at issue here is the possibility of building local communities as a process that keeps producing new values based on residents mutual relationship with others, where residents fully assume their roles in the community.

Such recreation of local communities will build new markets based on mutual trust and credit among residents.

Multi-layered and closely woven human networks of mutual concern and attention, and the sense of trust and security will transform local communities into a more dynamic, more productive economic process.

This means that local communities themselves are transmuted into dynamic, ever-changing networks of people.

That is a mechanism that keeps its equilibrium as a dynamic process.

There, we find an image of a new society.

Kominkan is the key to reconstruct a new community like this.

According to the changes in social and economic structures, the fatigue and dissolution of residents' autonomous organizations are in progress.

To address this problem, residents are trying to find a new form of autonomy.

They think that the social education by *Kominkan* would play the key role in developing new actors who will ensure future autonomy.

Kominkan is called as Community Learning Center (CLC), and it is a facility for residents to commit local municipality level learning activities.

But, it is not only a learning facility for the residents,
but is also something more for the residents.

It is there that residents hold regular meetings [*jokai*] to discuss the base-layer communities' issues, train children for performances of the lion dance [*shishimai*] for the shrine's festival, organize a puppet show (*ningyo jyoruri*) preservation group, entertain the elderly, develop specialties using local produce, hold meetings of firefighting teams or men's groups, and elect leaders of self-government organizations.

For residents, *Kominkan* is the center of their daily lives, the hub of exchanges among residents, the community's projects themselves, and the residents' exchanges themselves.

When residents talk of *Kominkan*, it is with such projects and activities in mind.

For the residents of the base-layer community, the *Kominkan* is something quite dynamic.

The *Kominkan* is a place of residents' self-government activities, but at the same time it is the very process of such activities.

The activities of the *Kominkan* have a built-in system to develop and recruit actors at the base-layer community level.

This shows that the *Kominkan* is inextricably linked with the management of the community.

Successfully handling the *Kominkan* directly leads to managing the community autonomously, and helping residents lead stable lifestyles in their mutual relationships.

It represents a dynamic nexus of residents' interactions.

The words "doing *Kominkan*" often heard from residents present what *Kominkan* means for the residents.

At a glance, local communities may look monotonous, conservative, and basically intent on sticking to tradition, but actually, they have this built-in mechanism running that develops the relationship of mutual recognition among residents, stimulates people to move around dynamically, and keep their quiet daily lives running in mutual assistance.

Kominkan is the key for such residents autonomy of the base-layer community.

5. From a static system to a dynamic system

Challenges facing lifelong learning in Japan:

How we can link learning activities to the formation of a new community.

Restructuring:

The static government system based on the distribution of knowledge, technology, and money = a system for managing people.



A dynamic community where people living in the local community fully play their roles, mutually recognizing their existence in their relationships with others, fully live their lives, and, by all of the above, keep the community in constant change, a process of relationships.

A community that creates a constant equilibrium by being dynamic, ensures the lifestyle of community residents by changing itself, recognizes their human dignity, and keeps recognizing their existence, including the look and feel of the community.

This *community* is not the unstable market society where free and lone individuals, freed from the regulation of the community, repeat production and consumption in faceless markets.

In the new community, people feel that they are fully positioned in the community, freely and fully live in their relationships with others, and pursue their activities for a better life, and it is all of these activities that are called production and consumption.

There grows a cycle that links economy, welfare, and culture together and supports people's lives in their existence.

This community also creates a dynamism that keeps helping residents to improve their lives and makes this dynamism its own asset.

To seek for and create such a *community*, it is essential for us to explore the role of lifelong learning ensuring learning to residents and developing an infrastructure for this learning.

What local communities are now being challenged with is to help them be the existences as “learning.”

“Learning” has become to the government critical task to transform the traditional static social structure based on distribution into a dynamic structure based on regeneration and cycling of knowledge.

6. "Learning" as very essence of individual's existence and society

"Learning" is the key to construct a new community.

"Learning" :

an activity to distribute knowledge and to propel the development of each person

a process to generate and circulate knowledge among the relationship of people as grassroots community residents

a process of constituting individual's existence and new society

The concept of the new society has a strong relationship with a grassroots residential autonomy organization and base-layer municipality.

This concept of society also means the new market that people's network consist as the expression of "love" through people's "desires"

This new market is a market of a value-generating process.

The key of this new market is “learning” of individualistic “I” as collective “we”.

In this situation, the individual person has become as the collective residents through “learning”.

“Learning”:

a process of knowledge generating and circulating among the residents

a process of the residential level community building. This community is also a market.

The individual people's existence grassroots
Residential autonomy organization
Base-layer municipality

"learning"



comprise
the new markets.

These markets:
not normative power

the freedom to mutually approve the
perpetual creation of values
keep being generated.

The existing power has been suspended in mid-air and denied of its universality.

Knowledge is no longer things distributed by power.

Knowledge changes its nature to constituting thing which is created and communally generated by residential people and which keep changing to what follows.

It becomes the thing as an excessiveness against the normative powers.

Knowledge is also expressed as excessiveness of verbalization.

Knowledge is constantly generated as an excessive, perpetually recombined constitution of mutual recognition among the residents.

We can say that knowledge is generated and guaranteed by those people who are communal existences.

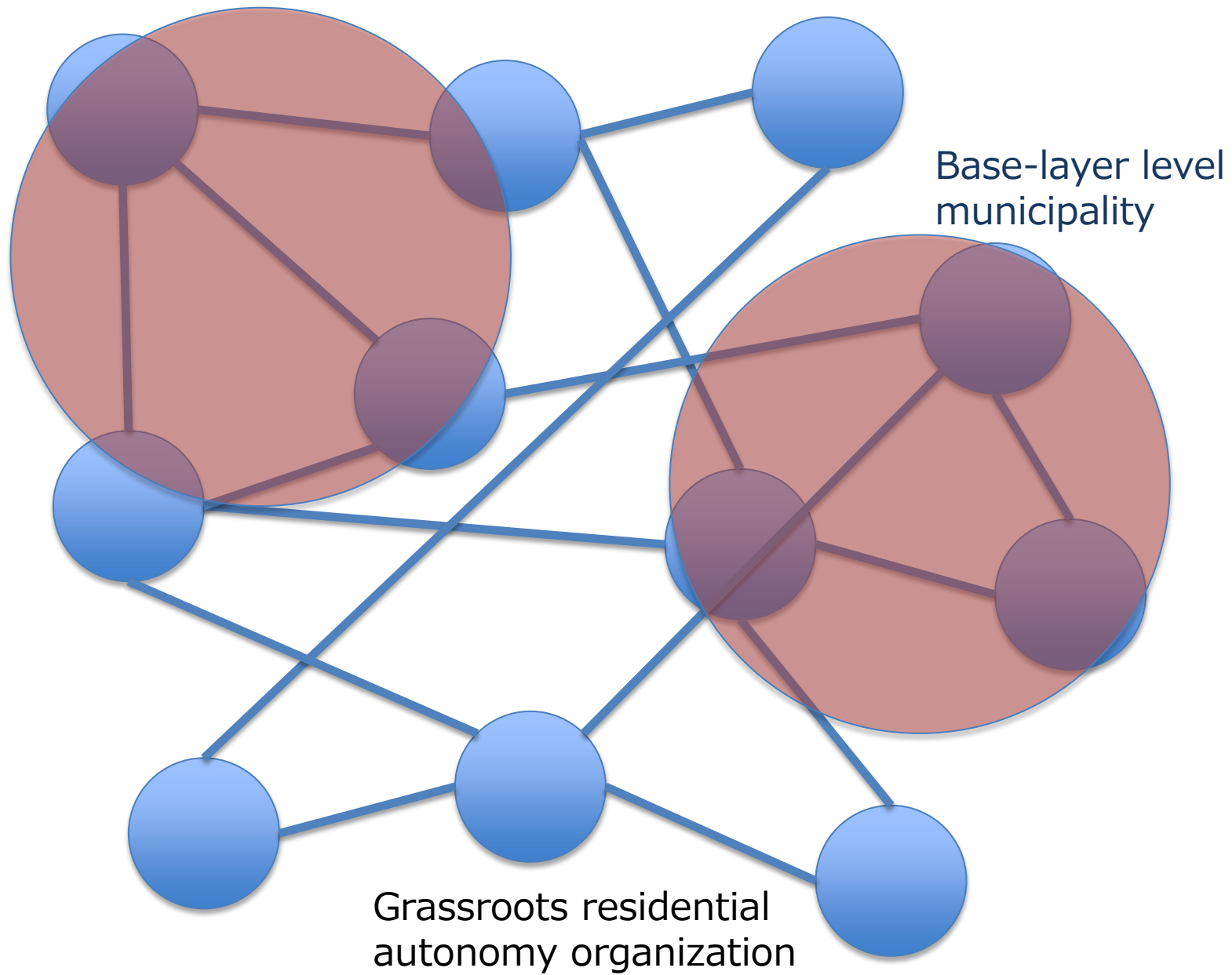
Market:

the place where knowledge is generated as an excessive constitution that people, mediated by imagination, communally create and guarantee to each other.

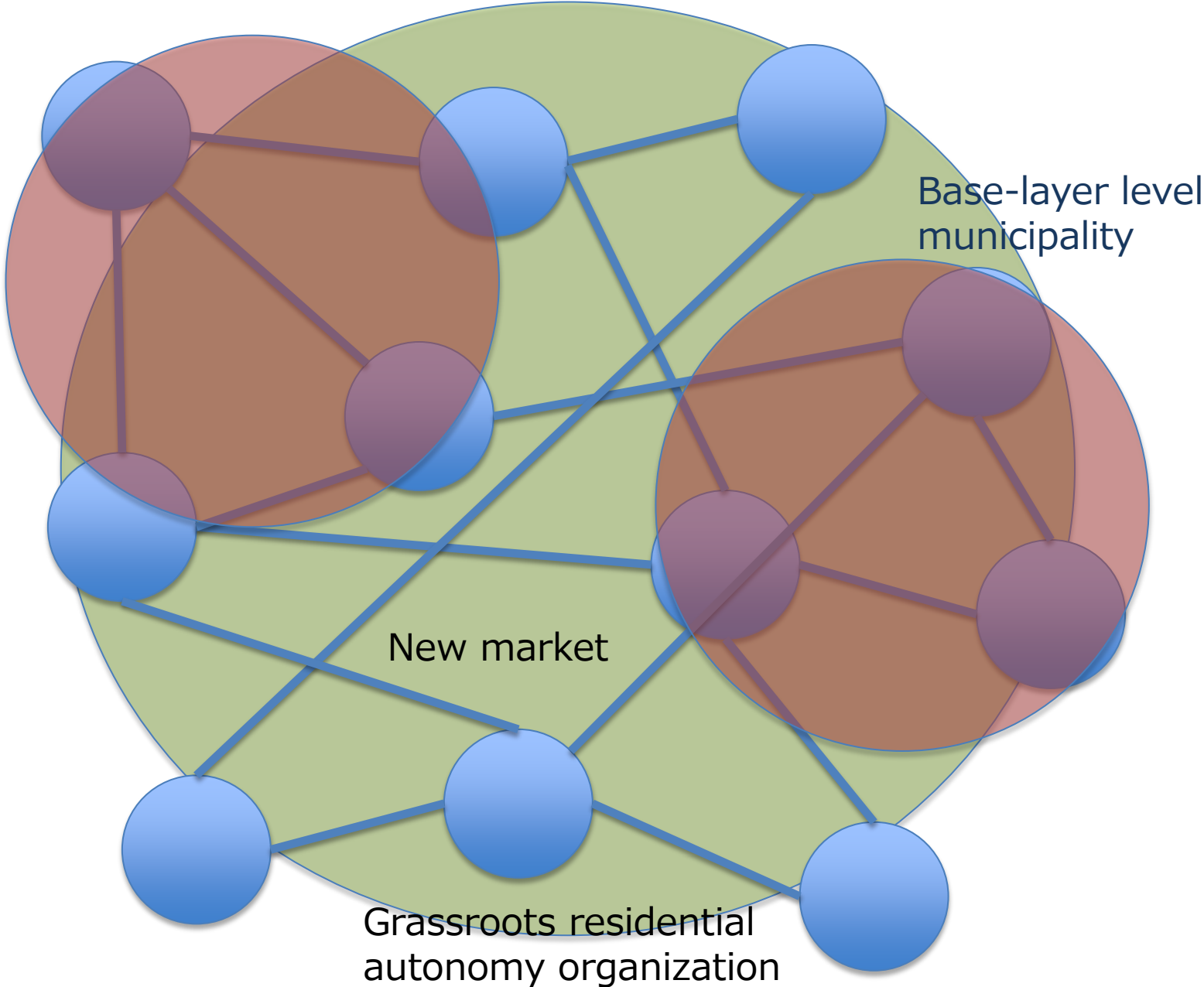
the place where consumers constitute and excessively deploy by involving themselves in the production process and substantiating their own values.

a producer and a consumer have been combined each other and reborn as so-called "pro-sumer".

Grassroots base-layer municipality transforms itself:
no longer a “bio-power” or a government
controlling and protecting the people
a circulating and constitutive power that
constitutes the networks of communities, and that
also constitute new markets

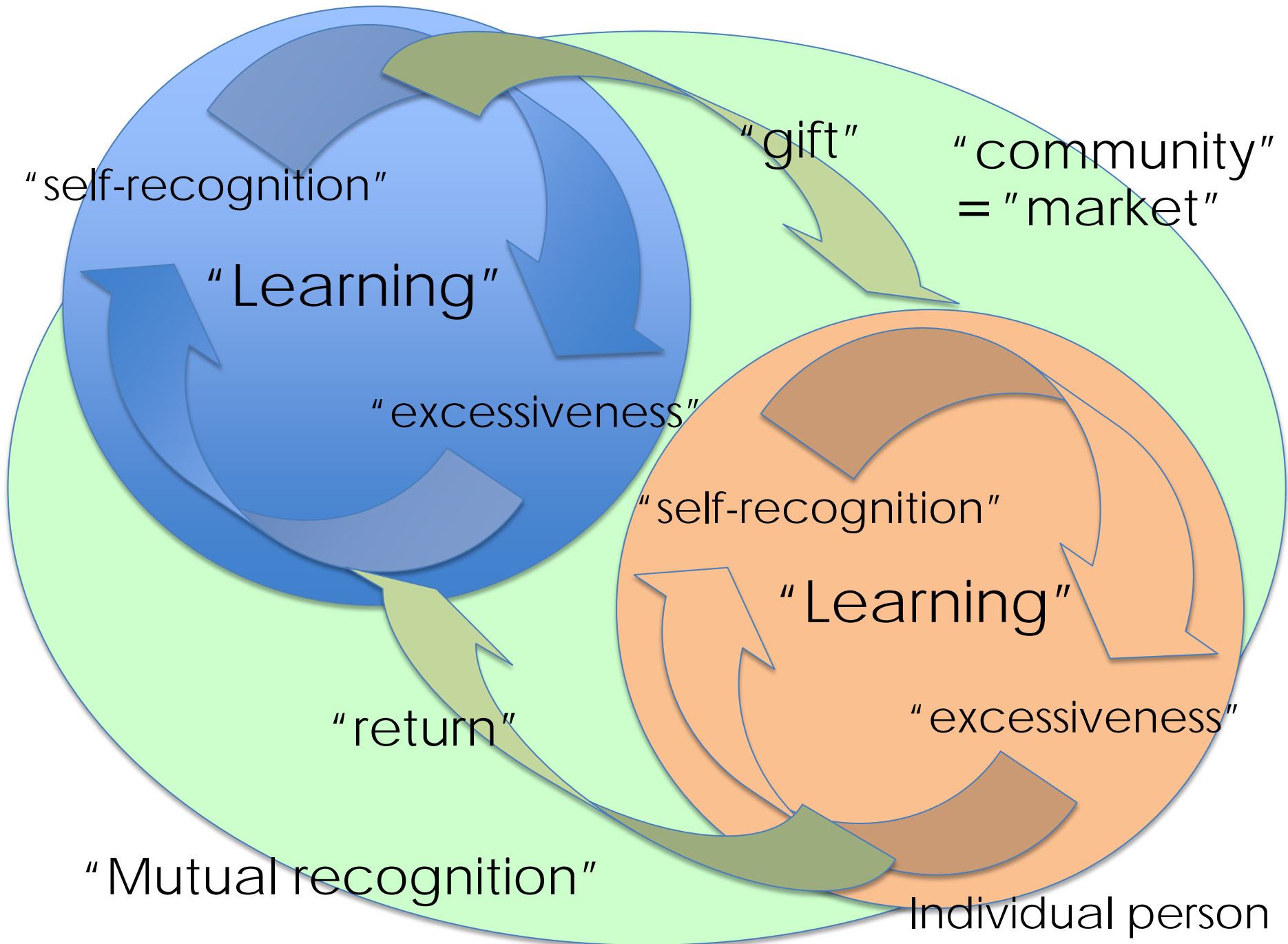


These markets are specific to their respective areas, and by forming networks with one another, they give birth to a diverse and rich local economy and create employment in that economy.



Now we are facing the challenge that existing markets are globalizing beyond state borders, we may see new markets or society constitute the state as a dynamic network of communities, and also recombine existing markets.

What serves as the basis of such a perspective is “learning”.



“Learning” becomes the very existence of an individual and the very basis of the community and the state.

Thank you