



In the early 1980s, it was a dream of almost every man in Japan, young or old, to have his own car. Wages were still low, and owning a car was beyond the reach of every average man on the street. Most of the cars in the road were either taxis or government-owned vehicles. The few people who did own cars were thought to be very rich. Cars were a status symbol, and the bigger the car, the better.

Those first-time car owners cared for their cars like babies. Besides keeping them **immaculately** clean, they decorated the interior like their living rooms. Expensive seat covers were **mandatory**. Car interior shops **sprang up** on every corner. For Japanese men, it was a dream come true.

VOCABULARY WORDS/PHRASE

immaculately sprang up
mandatory

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Before, car ownership was a symbol of wealth. Is this still true today? Why or why not?
2. Do you agree that Japan has a car culture? If so, what are the factors that caused it to happen?
3. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of having a car?
4. What kind of car would you rather own— a big or small car? Explain.
5. Which of the statements about small and big cars do you agree on?
 - @. Big cars are better because they are safer in case of accidents.
 - @. Big cars waste too much gas and take up too much parking space.
 - @. Small cars are better because they are more fuel-efficient and they cost less to own and operate.