

# TOKYO TALES

By Carole Hallett Mobbs



of Japanese life and fashion is no different. The cut and finish of the clothes is impeccable.

The Japanese get dressed up for all sorts of reasons: when they are going on a group outing, dining out and even if they are attending an art class. My enamelling teacher commented on how much she likes teaching "foreigners" as they don't bother to dress up like the Japanese ladies, which means she can take the class casually dressed too. I'm sure she intended this to be a compliment!

For a sight of the more outrageous fashion styles, a trip to Harajuku presents a colourful spectacle. Harajuku is an area near Yoyogi Park and the important Meiji Jingu shrine. On Sundays, the fashionable youth of Tokyo congregate there to listen to buskers and pose for photographs taken by the rather surprised tourists on their way to view the shrine. Magazine photographers mingle in the crowd, so there is a willing market for viewing the extraordinary styles seen here.

One of the more dramatic fashions is known as the 'Harajuku Lolita' and various similar terms. Girls attempt to emulate the appearance of Victorian porcelain dolls and

## Fashion Statement

**H**air is beautifully styled and bouffant, outfits are immaculately stylish, co-ordinated with stunning jewellery and designer handbags; and that's just the guys! Fashion in Tokyo is certainly distinctive and often spectacular. Street fashion here is unique, and the latest vogue can change weekly. One brief trend I've seen was girls wearing what appeared to be adult-sized romper suits and recently I've seen a number of people with one trouser leg rolled up. This particular fad doesn't seem to have taken off into the mainstream, but others have.

A typical fashion staple for young women, whatever the season, is shorts worn with over-the-knee socks and sky-high stiletto shoes. On the whole, people here are very elegantly turned out. Designer labels are especially important and, because so many people still live with their parents, they have a large disposable income. They quickly dispose of it on the latest Louis Vuitton bag or Chanel sunglasses. Attention to detail is very important in all aspects

their clothes are carefully chosen to this effect. They usually consist of pink frilly skirts, held out with a small crinoline or petticoats, knee-high socks and flat Mary-Jane shoes. Hair accessories are worn in abundance with hairbands, ribbons and bows being particularly favoured. The naturally dark Japanese hair is often lightened as much as possible and twisted into curls and ringlets. The best way to imagine it is to think of Alice in Wonderland.

Of course, when one thinks of Japanese clothing one immediately thinks of kimono which I will tell you about next time.

