

Kawaii

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What is “Kawaii” ?

Kawaii = Cute ???

Origin : pitiful, かわゆし  かわいい

Now...

* Childlike

innocent, natural, unconsciousness

* Weakness



* Genuine warm feelings and love

→ be hidden, invisible



Other Meanings and Roles of Kawaii

- * Make something more Obscure
- * Useful way to express and keep good relation



New Types of **Kawaii**

Kimokawa(ii)= Creepy + Kawaii

Busakawa(ii)= Ugly + Kawaii

EroKawa(ii)= Sexy + Kawaii



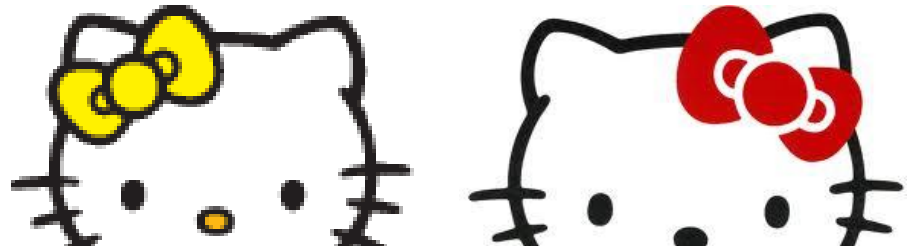
Therefore...

❖ Kawaii is unique

→ the definition has changed

→ globally popular and influence

as a symbol of Japanese Pop Culture





Mascots

- Sanrio Hello Kitty
- San-X Rilakkuma
- Yuru-chara (Gotochi-character)
- Various companies



Mascots

Japanese Communist Party
“Proliferation Bureau”

- Campaigning for the election
- Supporters dressed up as the characters
- Make politics easier to understand and engage potential voters via digital media



Mascots

Udon-nou (Udon-brain)

- Kagawa prefecture
- Growing up now - many people especially in Kagawa prefecture encourage him
369 place/1699 entries
- Kawaii, kimo kawa? (creepy kawaii)
- Merchandise - T-shirts, DVD, Doughnuts, LINE stamps, application, etc
- A local to a national to a global level



Mascots

Kawaii mascots are Japanese pop culture

- ❖ Products
- ❖ Mass produced
- ❖ Media

- ★ Different purposes
- ★ Economic spirals
- ★ Becoming global





Figurines



Characters can be depicted as
Kawaii

The more popular the characters, the
bigger the fanbase therefore
leading more people to be
interested in Kawaii culture which
leads them interested in Japanese
Pop Culture

Chibi

“Auto-kawaii”

Takes even scary characters and treats them as cute

These characters help spread Japanese Pop Culture since this cuteness attracts many people from different cultures



Figurines

To many, not very kawaii, but figurines can incorporate kawaii attributes that help spread Japanese Pop Culture. Favorite characters that look kawaii attract people who would probably not buy into this subculture.





Bento

- Bento = Lunch box
- Kyaraben, or character bentos
- Animals bento
- Using faces and happy expressions



Bento

- Decoration
- Not aesthetics, but nutrition



Bento

- Not necessarily an expensive hobby
- Imagination, creativity, and a sense of humor





Corporate and International Effect

Due to the “boom” of this *Kawaii Culture*, corporations such as Sanrio and San-X for example, have completely capitalized on the fact that these types of ideas, in which ever tangible way they may come, be it food, figurines, etc.



- Whichever way one chooses to spin it, profit is profit-- something which was evident to media pirates as well as corporations.
- This notion helped to popularize works that are known to many of us today, albeit, if first reach via illegal means.
- Media piracy became prominent in terms of kawaii culture visual arts.

Corporational Effect: Sanrio: “From four to forever”

Due to its evident mounds of profit, corporations used every weapon in their arsenal to commercialize kawaii, with not just only 1 medium, but several, ranging from all sorts of things such as: jewelry, clothing, home decor, and even automobile accessories.

Hello Kitty born in 1974 & has soared to exponential profits for a few decades and reached record setting profits due to the fact that they targeted EVERY age demographic.

Due to economic hardships, recessions, and war Japan's economy has suffered a decline and corporations have steadily stock drop in 2 decades.

Company sells up to 50,000 types of products relating to *kawaii* and Hello Kitty a year alone.





Due to the rise of kawaii culture in Japan, the international societies have taken arms in the popular race that Japan has been #1 at least since the 1990's.

Pop-icons, especially Westerners, have been prominent figures in helping push the kawaii culture into the global perspective, whether they know it or not-- helping with the internationalization of kawaii.

With the help of international partners (pop idols, internet highways, or corporations) Sanrio was able to reach a staggering 21.1 billion yen in 2010 alone with roughly 80% coming solely from Hello Kitty.

Due to its redundancy at home, Hello Kitty, along with other various other works of kawaii and Japanese pop culture, has still been able to thrive in the global respect, much of the market coming from China.

Professor Koichi Iwabuchi states "Japanese cultural industries and Japanese media products cannot successfully become global players without Western partners...in terms of promotion, distribution, and even localization of the content- to hide its "Japaneseness"-- as a global marketing strategy".

Conclusion: Kawaii - the essence of Pop Culture

globally accepted as a Japanese "idea"
widely used in modern Japanese culture
mascots, bento boxes (food in general too) and figurines
depict pop cultural icons from movies, tv, anime, etc as
kawaii therefore spreading pop culture to those who are
in this subculture
influences other (outside Japan) cultures
cute culture is now accepted across the globe with the use
of the internet
corporate effect does not/will not go unnoticed with respect
to kawaii

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Class PowerPoint

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Q & A