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Beautiful “Looks” Created by Women:
New Aesthetics on Makeup for Overturning Traditional Japanese Beauty

A Thesis Presented

by

YURINA YOSHIKAWA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment

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East Asian Languages and Cultures

**BEAUTIFUL “LOOKS” CREATED BY WOMEN:
NEW AESTHETICS ON MAKEUP FOR OVERTURNING TRADITIONAL JAPANESE
BEAUTY**

A Thesis Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

BEAUTIFUL “LOOKS” CREATED BY WOMEN:

NEW AESTHETICS ON MAKEUP FOR OVERTURNING TRADITIONAL JAPANESE

BEAUTY

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In this thesis I focus on comparing the styles of beauty or “looks” that women have created for themselves, as well as concepts of traditional beauty. By doing so, this thesis will clarify how women try to change traditional beauty concepts and express themselves.

As anyone who has watched TV in Japan has noticed, Japan has stereotyped aesthetic values of women that mass media such as magazines or TV dramas have created and disseminated. Pictures of beautiful women (*bijinga* 美人画) and beauty pageants are just two examples. In Japan, women having black hair, white skin, almond-shaped eyes, and well-defined noses are considered beautiful, and this aesthetic has not changed much since the Heian period (794-1185). After the work of Takehisa Yumeji (1884-1934), whose pictures created the foundation of *kawaii* culture in the Taishō period (1912-1926), women have adopted this new aesthetic category in order to get around the fixed aesthetics of the *bijin* look. In other words, the start of *kawaii* culture is one of the turning points for women to evade a monolithic image of what is considered beautiful. However, as *kawaii* culture spread across the world due to the

popularity of manga and anime, the notion of *kawaii* also began to be fixed by the mass media, becoming as rigid as the notion of *bijin*. For example, Japanese idols from the Shōwa period (1926-1989) through the Heisei and Reiwa all look alike by design. Many idols have bangs, natural black or dark brown hair, and flat-shaped eyebrows which are attractive to men. To overturn this tendency, some women have created new kinds of makeup styles to express their own version *kawaii* aesthetics. Bubble makeup, *ganguro*, *yamamba*, or “gal” makeup were all created by women and popular among young women. In general society—particularly men—did not accept these makeup styles as aesthetically beautiful; the public regarded these looks as not *kawaii* but rather ugly (*busaiku* ブサイク). However, even though society found looks ugly, this kind of makeup nevertheless became extremely popular among girls and women in their 10s and 20s who regarded such looks as *kawaii* and trendy. This aesthetic can be seen as what happens when women get around fixed notions of beauty by adopting and transforming the idea and look of *kawaii*.

In this thesis I discuss the development of the *kawaii* aesthetic and how it becomes a way for women to break out of the tyranny of *bijin*. I look at a trend of new *bijinga* and talk about how women are trying to break away from the traditional notion of *bijin*. Using a collection of contemporary *bijinga*, I examine how actresses are fighting to do their own makeup for their films, TV programs, or dramas; in particular, actresses Ishihara Satomi and Nanao try to express their own beauty by creating the characters’ looks themselves. In this respect, the characters are original styles of beauty created by these women.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Across its long history, Japan has generated various aesthetic values and systems. The opinion-leaders of beauty in the past have included such figures as noblewomen serving at the royal palace in the Heian period; geisha or high-ranked prostitutes between the Edo (1603-1868) and Taishō period (1912-1926); and screen actresses, models, or idols in the Shōwa (1926-1989), Heisei (1989-2019), and Reiwa periods (2019–). Particularly in contemporary Japan, however, people can be opinion-leaders regardless of profession or social status. In this respect, the aesthetics of beauty have diversified—and yet, due to the mass media, most of the variety of Japanese aesthetics is hidden, and only a certain limited range left available. Mass media sometimes misleads the public into have false impressions, formulating or propagating stereotypes. For example, in the Taishō period, modern girls (*modaan gaaru* モダンガール) were largely represented as if they were the new Westernized opinion-leaders in terms of fashion or makeup; that is, although most Japanese women still wore transitional Japanese kimono rather than Western clothes, the mass media focused on the Westernized modern girls. In fact, the number of modern girls was quite small. Folklorist Kon Wajirō said that ninety-nine percent of



Fig.1: Modern Girls in Ginza, Tokyo (*Fujin gahō*, 1933)

women in Ginza, Tokyo wore Japanese clothes as of 1925.¹ In 1927 Shiseidō released a survey about clothes worn in Ginza, posted in a monthly article. According to the survey, 797 males out of 1151 wore Western clothes while 349 out of 1151 were in traditional Japanese clothes; in the case of women, only 22 out of 522 wore Western clothes, and the rest were in kimono.² Thus modern girls were a minor phenomenon, numerically speaking, at that time. Even though the modern girls surely had an effect on Japanese society, most women still stuck with the traditional

¹ Kon Wajiro and Yoshida Kenkichi, *Moderunorojio* (Tokyo: Gakuyo Shobo, 1986).

² Ichikawa Yoshika and Satō Asami, *Shiseidō monogatari* (Tokyo: Shiseidō museum, 1995), 31.

fashion styles—even the modern girls wore kimono when they were at home.³ The figure above, which depicts modern girls and boys in Ginza, appeared in one of the most famous women’s magazines, *Fujin Gahō* (婦人画報), in 1933. This image might mislead readers, giving a false impression of people in Tokyo; in particular, readers of *Fujin Gahō* might have thought there were many modern girls in the city. In fact, in an article about modern girls in the women’s magazine *Josei* (女性), the author wrote, “Last year, one of my friends who lived in the suburbs came to Tokyo, and asked me to show him modern girls. I brought him to Ginza and even took him to a couple of cafeterias that were popular among the modern girls. However, we could not find them after all. My friend went back home in great disappointment. Stand at the corner in Ginza and count how many women having the characteristics of modern girls pass through. You might encounter one modern girl in a thousand people.”⁴ This article reveals how mass media influences people, gives people fixed ideas toward the various notions of *bijin*. This thesis will spotlight the hidden aesthetic values in makeup so that we can better understand how Japanese women have faced and overcome the traditional ideals of beauty. In this endeavor, I will focus more on modern aesthetics created by women for themselves.

³ Ichikawa and Satō, *Shiseidō monogatari*, 31.

⁴ Suzuki Bunshiro, “Modern girl to fusen,” *Josei* (March 1928), 34-37. My translation.

1.2 Plan of the Work

One of my main resources is a series of books entitled “‘Women’s images’ in the Taishō and Shōwa periods that women’s magazines created,” edited by Iwami Teruyo.⁵ This series collects articles from women’s magazines *Fujin kōron* (婦人公論), *Fujin club* (婦人倶楽部), *Fujin gahō* (婦人画報), *Shufu no tomo* (主婦之友), and *Fujin no tomo* (婦人之友). These magazines reflect makeup aesthetics trends, popular kimono styles, and notions of elegance that people in the Taishō and Shōwa periods valued. Exploring this series will reveal what kinds of makeup, kimono, or behavior were regarded as *bijin*. There is another reason why exploring women’s magazines has an essential role in the field of aesthetic values: particularly in the case of women’s magazines published in the Taishō and Shōwa period, in which many beauty columns remained, it is interesting that most of the authors of the columns were male. Several male beauty researchers, actors, or orthopedists discuss makeup trends or the beauty of women with female actresses and experts. Each column identifies the participants on the first page, and more than the half on the participants were men. Since today professional beauty experts are more popularly women, it seems that the number of male beauty consultants, researchers, or experts has decreased from the prewar period. Nevertheless, women’s magazines in modern Japan continue to emphasize and value male opinions about beauty. By looking at women’s magazines of the Taishō and Shōwa eras, this thesis will clarify how media at that time reported the notion of *bijin*.

⁵ Iwami Teruyo, ed., “*Fujin zasshi*” *ga tsukuru Taishō to Shōwa no joseizou*, 30 vols. (Tokyo: Yumanishobo, 2014-2016).

Chapter two explores traditional beauty looks through *bijinga* from the Asuka period to the Meiji. By doing so, this thesis addresses the notion of unchanging “beautiful women.” To achieve this goal, this chapter has three research topics: (1) elegance, (2) beauty pageants, and (3) Japanese obsession with white skin. I again emphasize here the magazine collections supervised by Iwami Teruyo. Although this thesis focuses primarily on makeup, a broader notion of elegance is one of the most important conditions in the evaluation of makeup looks as *bijin*, and therefore this thesis also addresses how elegance and *bijin* have related to each other. As for beauty pageants, I explore some contests from the Taishō period to contemporary Japan, showing further elements of the traditional conceptualization of beautiful women. Lastly, the Japanese obsession with white skin is essential in this chapter, because white skin has been regarded as *bijin* since well before even the Heian period.

Chapter three explores the standard *kawaii* looks created by mass media and by men. Japanese women have faced and suffered under traditional notions of *bijin*, and in this respect, *kawaii* culture is an important turning-points, changing the stereotyped *bijin* and allowing women to create their own aesthetics for themselves. However, this aesthetic created by women is often regarded as “minor,” and received much criticism because it did not meet traditional conditions. Chapter 3 therefore discusses what kind of women people regarded as *kawaii* in order to clarify the standard of *kawaii* looks through mass-media and men.

Chapter 4 examines “new *kawaii* categories.” Since the late Shōwa period, women have created some unique aesthetics: bubble makeup (trendy during the Japanese asset price bubble of 1986-1991), *ganguro*, *yamamba*, gal culture, and the Harajuku girls. Especially *ganguro*, *yamamba*, and gals are inevitable in this discussion, since in them girls overturned the “white skin absolutism” that had been undisputed in notions of beauty. Harajuku girls are also an

essential example, since they have their own sense of makeup and fashion which overturned the traditional dominance of elegant and natural looks. Aside from such makeup trends among the public, chapter 4 also discusses contemporary Japanese actresses Ishihara Satomi and Nanao. Whereas most actresses hire or are assigned makeup artists for their films, dramas, magazine shoots, or TV shows, these two actresses insist on self-makeup. Ishihara Satomi in particular has a long career as an actress, and has played many characters with her own aesthetics. In this thesis, I explore their interviews to clarify their reasons for choosing self-makeup. By doing so, this thesis aims to draw conclusions about women's challenges against traditional, fixed aesthetics of female beauty.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF TRADITIONAL BEAUTY LOOKS

2.1 Unchanging Beautiful Women Through *Bijinga*

This section will introduce beautiful women's portraits, called *bijinga*, from the Asuka period to the Edo period. *Bijinga* have played an extremely important role in the field of Japanese beauty aesthetics. This thesis treats *bijinga* and portraits differently, since each has its own merits. With portraits, unlike *bijinga*, the most important facial parts, such as shape of eyes, noses, lips, or facelines, would not be emphasized by photographers. In this respect, portraits are more reliable materials to clarify modern makeup characteristics. However, in terms of color of skin tone, we can easily find figures that are clearly whitewashed when we focus on models or idols. Therefore, portraits can show us how Japanese or other Asians have been strongly attracted to having white skins throughout a long history. On the other hand, *bijinga* reflect "a perfect ideal women" image in artistic renderings. In other words, *bijinga* represent the best materials to see exaggeratedly beautiful women. Unlike portraits, *bijinga* do not always truly depict the actual models. The fact that every woman depicted in *bijinga* looks so similar, in any generation and by any artist, goes to demonstrate how long Japanese have been tied up with the traditional aesthetics as authentic beauty. Treating *bijinga* in this thesis plays an important role in narrowing down the features of traditional women's beauty. In this sense, portraits and *bijinga* have different advantages in their use. In this thesis, I will use portraits as the best materials to analyze modern trendy makeup and the importance of white skin, and *bijinga* as useful materials for clarifying the traditional authentic beautiful women. A professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures and Art History, Miya Elise Mizuta Lippit, interprets *bijinga* as the artistic culmination

of the focus on the beautiful women. *Bijinga* in broad terms started before the twentieth century, particularly in the Edo period. *Ukiyoe* is one of the most famous and well-known art genres, and *bijinga* is the part of *ukiyo*e. According to Lippit's book *Aesthetic Life*, *bijinga* are portraits of ideal women for artists, and the ideal women in *bijinga* mostly have artificial rather than real beauty, since the *bijinga* generally reflect the artists' ideals. As for the notion of *bijin* itself, both outer beauty and inner beauty are focal. Yet the two have in common a traditional Japanese aesthetics.

According to Lippit, it was 1907 that the genre called *bijinga* was created by the government-sponsored forum for exhibiting artworks.⁶ As to *bijin*, Lippit identifies four modes: (1) real *bijin*, (2) natural beauty, (3) true *bijin* and (4) artificial beauty.⁷ Toyama Masakazu indicates that real *bijin* and true *bijin* are not the same, in that the painters or artists remove the imperfections of a real *bijin* to depict true *bijin*.⁸ In other words, true *bijin* is based on the artistic viewpoint. On the other hand, the notion of real *bijin* is also changeable according to the artists. Each artist has a different sense of beauty, and expresses the women's inner beauty as well as physical beauty. Among these four elements, Lippit especially focuses on the artificial *bijin*, saying that "artifice can take an ideal part that is not able to be encountered in the real world."⁹ In this respect, *bijin* presents women as having attractive beauty aspects that Japanese prefer, which is to say, as within traditional Japanese beauty aesthetics. Lippit also explains this issue

⁶ Miya Elise Mizuta Lippit, *Aesthetic Life* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2019), 10.

⁷ Lippit, *Aesthetic Life*, 95.

⁸ Lippit, *Aesthetic Life*, 95.

⁹ Lippit, *Aesthetic Life*, 96.

within *bijinga*, saying that “the discussion of what constituted women’s beauty in *bijinga* or the aesthetics in general should be represented in traditional Japanese forms.”¹⁰ In this way, *bijinga* reflect Japanese ideal women. What constitutes such traditional ideal women will be the focus of the present discussion.

As already mentioned, *bijinga* play an essential role in the beauty fields. One reason is that westernization caused the Japanese to reassess traditional beauty. The ideals of beauty imported from Western countries expanded Japanese beauty aesthetics in the Meiji period; nevertheless, many *bijinga* depicting traditional Japanese women continued to be generated. That is to say, *bijinga* has a conservative role, maintaining and preserving national beauty standards. This is one reason why *bijinga* endure even now. Therefore, exploring *bijinga* is quite important in this thesis to clarify the ideals of traditional beauty, as well as to consider whether Japanese aesthetics have truly changed since the Heian period. Since *bijinga* capture the essence of beauty in Japan, and they also come to define what elegance is for women, chapter 2 especially focuses on *bijinga*.

A further point is a discussion of the most important three makeup colors, which is crucial before we step forward to the women’s beauty looks in chapter 4, because these three colors had a crucial role in makeup history before the encounter with Western cultures in the Meiji period. According to Japanese makeup historian Yamamura Hiromi, the three colors were the center of makeup for more than a thousand years.¹¹ Traditional Japanese “beautiful women”

¹⁰ Lippit, *Aesthetic Life*, 2-5.

¹¹ Yamamura Hiromi, *Keshō no nihonshi: Biishiki no utsurikawari* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2019), Kindle location 214.

utilized the three colors to make their appearances beautiful. Exploring these three colors will demonstrate that women regarded as *bijin* continue to rely on the traditional three basic colors even in contemporary Japan. I would like particularly to highlight that this reliance is generated by mass media. To clarify this argument, I will introduce the historical background of each color.

Red makeup appears primarily in the use of lipsticks, blush, and nails. Japanese envoys to China in the Sui and Tang brought many things back to Japan, introducing new makeup ways, red lipsticks, and fragrances to Japan. This is said to be the beginning of red makeup's history.



Fig.2 (left): Woman's portrait, Nara period: *Torigeritsujonobyōbu* (鳥毛立女屏風) © Kageyama Kōichi/Artscape, 2015

Fig.3 (right): Noblewoman in the Heian period © Takumaro/Japaaan magazine, 2019

Figures 2-3 show two women with different modes of makeup. The left image is from the Nara period, and the right from the Heian.

The left figure is from Dedicating Record of Todaiji Temple (*Todaijikenmotsuchō* 東大寺献物帳) in 765 CE, and according to Yamamura, demonstrates the makeup trends regarded as

beautiful in the Tang.¹² Since Japan at that time interacted with China, the methods of Japanese makeup were influenced by Chinese trends. The woman has applied blush, at that time made by mixing white foundation with red ingredients. Japanese women followed Tang styles and applied lipsticks to full lips, as seen here. In the Heian period, however, with the cessation of interaction with China, women developed unique aesthetic values for makeup as part of what is now called Japan's original national culture (*kokufū bunka* 国風文化). As shown in Figure 3, women in the Heian had small lips: these women applied small amounts of lipstick due to its expensiveness. Safflowers have a small amount of the red pigment essential for red lipstick, and therefore safflowers were said to be *beni ichimonme*, *kin ichimonme* (紅一匁、金一匁): the red safflower pigment (*beni*) was equal to gold.¹³ As in this image, women in the Heian period, particularly the noblewomen who served at the royal palace, applied *beni* lightly, unlike in the Asuka period. Little is known about the relationship between the value of *beni* and the aesthetic of small mouths. However, it is certain that people did regard women who had small lips as *bijin*.

With the beginning of the Edo period, not only nobles but also ordinary people started to wear makeup.¹⁴ They sometimes put on red blush before they applied foundation to lighten up

¹² Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, 313.

¹³ “Okeshō History: Hanayakasa wo enshutsusurujiro” [Makeup history: Colors expressing elegance], *Pola Research Institute of Beauty and Culture*, Jun 13, 2019, accessed February 20, 2021, <https://www.cosmetic-culture.poholdings.co.jp/culture/history/8.html>.

¹⁴ Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, 706.

their faces.¹⁵ I will explain the white makeup in the next section; however, having white skin was the most important condition to be *bijin*, and this aesthetic value has been taken over into contemporary Japan. In the Edo period, a unique aesthetic became popular among noblewomen, known as “dark bluish red” (*sasairo beni* 笹色紅). In order to make this color, one applied *beni* lipstick several times. Applying *beni* once produces a light red, but with repeated application,

¹⁵ “Edo jidai no benigeshō” [Red makeup in the Edo period], Isehan official website, n.d., accessed February 20, 2021, <https://www.isehanhonten.co.jp/beni/makeup/>.

again and again, it eventually produces an iridescent color. Figure 4 shows a woman who has



Fig.4: An *ukiyo-e* of a woman with dark bluish-red lip color, depicted in the Edo
©Yamamura Hiromi, blog, 2018

applied this *sasairo beni*. The color looked green, purple, or gold depending on the angle. Because *beni* was still expensive in the Edo, *sasairo beni* became a symbol of wealth. Nevertheless, as seen in this image, Edo people also regarded women having small lips as *bijin*. In this way, the history of red makeup shows us how having small lips became an essential condition for *bijin*. According to Yamamura, Japanese people generally preferred small lips, regarding large or thick lips as inelegant. Yamamura also notes that Sayama Hanshichimaru's

makeup journal, entitled *Miyako fūzoku kewaiden* 都風俗化粧伝,¹⁶ recommended that women put face powder on their lips to blur the vermilion border, then put *beni* inside that border to make the lips look small.¹⁷

Turning now to white makeup, this aesthetic value has been passed down to modern times without great changes. When envoys brought white face powder (*oshiroi* 白粉) back from China in the Asuka period, Japanese recognized that the Chinese regarded having white skin as the symbol of beauty, and introduced this aesthetic into their makeup culture.¹⁸ Thus it was in the Asuka period that Japanese started wearing makeup as a central part of beauty aesthetics—and ever since then, Japanese people have been obsessed with having white skin.

According to Yamamura, the trendy opinion-leaders changed, from being Chinese to being noblewomen serving at the royal palace.¹⁹ Even though Japan ceased sending envoys to

¹⁶ This journal, published in 1813, was extremely popular among women, and contained methods of skin- and haircare, and discussions of what kinds of behavior look beautiful.

¹⁷ Yamamura Hiromi, “Edo no ochoboguchi, Heisei no fukkura lips, Reiwa wa...!?: Jidai kawareba bijin mo kawaru” [Small lips in the Edo, thick lips in the Heisei, and what about in the Reiwa...!?: When the period changed, the notion of *bijin* also changed], *Cosme*, October 12, 2019, accessed March 6, 2021, <https://andcosme.net/makeup/post-5352/>.

¹⁸ Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, Kindle location 331.

¹⁹ Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, Kindle location 407.

China, Japanese nobles had already learned that white skin is beautiful from Chinese literature.²⁰ Yamamura notes that noble men too wore makeup in the latter Heian period as a symbol of wealth or of homosexual love affairs (*dansyoku* 男色). In the Edo period too, women started utilizing face powder not only to make their faces white, but also to make their eyes look smaller.

Makeup journals published in the Edo were like women's makeup magazines, from which women could learn ways of skincare, haircare, and behaviors that would make them more beautiful.²¹ Figure 5 shows part of an article explaining how to make eyes look smaller, to fit the *bijin* aesthetics of that time, by utilizing face powders. According to the article, applying face powders thickly on the eyelids and between eyelashes makes eyes look smaller. Also, the article recommends women to look with downcast eyes so that those with large eyes might hide their double eyelids. The article also indicates that putting a bit of *beni* on the eyelids will make eyes look smaller. Today, red-colored eye shadows are more commonly avoided in women's makeup

²⁰ Suzumori, Masayuki. "Hito wa naze keshō wo surunoka" [Why do people wear make-up?], *Japanese Cosmetic Science Society* 42, no. 1 (2018): 27-35, <https://doi.org/10.11469/koshohin.42.27>.

²¹ "Edojidai no oshiroi, kesyōdōgu ya kesyōsui nadono matome: Oshiroi wa namariirideyūdoku, ohaguro wa kusai. Edojidai no kesyō wa nanikato taihendatta" [The collection of face powders, makeup tools, and toners in the Edo: Face powders containing lead were toxic, *ohaguro* was smelly: Makeup in the Edo had many troubles], *Edo Guide*, February 15, 2016, last modified May 5, 2017, accessed February 20, 2021, <https://edo-g.com/blog/2016/02/makeup.html>.

because the red color makes one's eyes look swollen and small. In this respect, people in the Edo period had opposed aesthetics for eye makeup to today. In the Edo, white faces, almond eyes, and well-defined noses were the most important qualities of *bijin*.

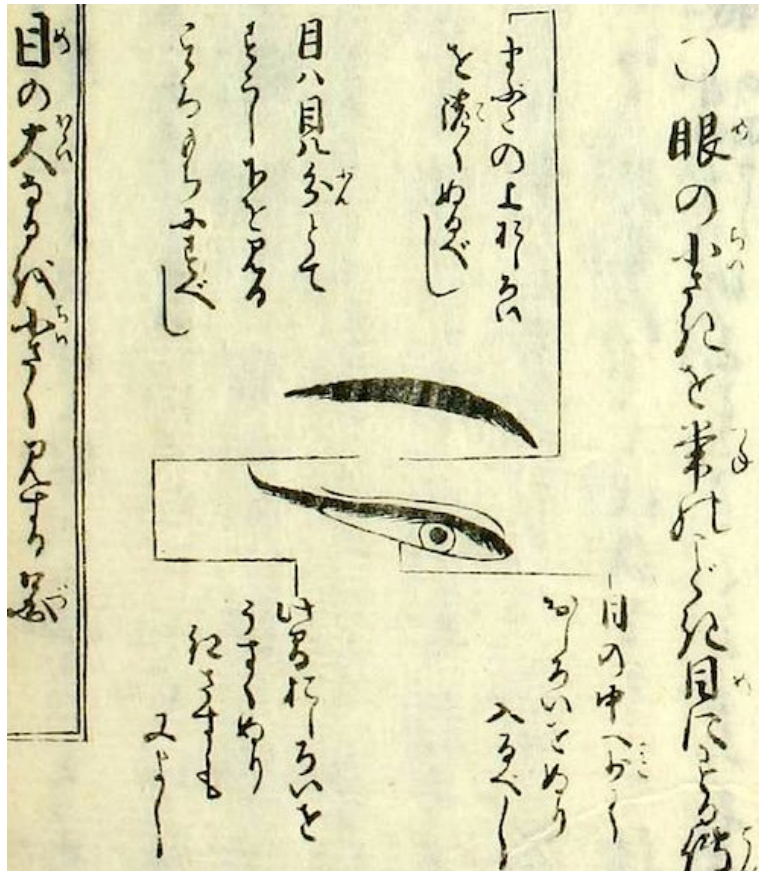


Fig.5: Technique for making eyes look smaller by applying face powder, in *Miyako fūzoku kewaiden* © Edo guide, 2017

As for black makeup, the third color, eyebrows in the Heian period and *ohaguro* (black-dyed teeth) in the Heian and Edo had unique aesthetic values. Both noble men and women shaved their eyebrows (*hikimayu* 引眉); in this unique Japanese practice, people would completely shave their eyebrows and replace them on the forehead.



Fig.6: Heian noblewoman in twelve-layered ceremonial kimono © Pola Research Institute of Beauty & Culture, 2020

The *bijinga* in Figure 6 shows a noblewoman in the Heian period. As we see here, the woman has shaved or plucked all of her eyebrows and repainted them, using black ink called *mayuzumi* (眉墨). It is not clear why people drew eyebrows higher on the foreheads, but one hypothesis is that it helped to hide one's facial expressions. Many idioms about eyebrows—*mayu wo hisomeru* (frown 眉をひそめる), *mayu wo yommareru* (have one's mind read 眉を読まれる), *mayu hitotsu ugokasanai* (not even blink an eye 眉ひとつ動かさない)—suggest the eyebrows' important role in facial expressions and communications. In the Heian period, nobles were often obsessed with wealth and social status, and as we have seen used face powders and *beni* as symbols of wealth quite aside from their function in beauty. In a similar way, people shaving their eyebrows so as not to show their facial expressions might have been another proof

of nobility.²² As for the eyes and nose, the aesthetic values changed little from the Heian to the Edo: people regarded as *bijin* had small, almond shaped eyes and hooked noses (*kagibana* or *washibana*).

Another form of black makeup in this period is *ohaguro*. Many researchers have studied *ohaguro*, and while there are many hypotheses as to its origin, the *ohaguro* culture remains mysterious. According to Tatebayashi Azusa, one of the oldest Chinese history books recording encounters with the Japanese, the *Gishiwajinden* (魏志倭人伝), described Japan as the black-dyed-teeth country.²³ This record was composed between 280 and 297 by Chen Shou.²⁴ Tatebayashi notes that the *Gishiwajinden* is the oldest record pointing to *ohaguro*; assuming this record to be credible, the black-dyed-teeth culture lasted more than 1500 years in Japan. According to Tatebayashi, this long tradition slowly declined from 1873, when in the Meiji period the Empress Shōken took the initiative to quit *ohaguro*.²⁵ Even though the culture

²² “Heian kizoku wa naze hitai ni mayu wo kaitaka?” [Why did Heian aristocrats paint their eyebrows on their foreheads?], Kikukawa Dental Hospital official website, March 8, 2001, accessed March 7, 2021, <http://www.kikukawa-dent.jp/article/14307529.html>.

²³ Tatebayashi Azusa, “Keshō bunka ron: Kuro, shiro, aka no kontorasuto” [Makeup culture theory: The contrast of black, white, and red], M.A. thesis (University of Ferris, 2010), accessed April 3, 2021, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/228870967.pdf>.

²⁴ Mitsunari Miho, “Shiryō: Gishiwajinden” [Historical data of *Gishiwajinden*], Gender History (website), September 29, 2015, accessed April 3, 2021, https://ch-gender.jp/wp/?page_id=11985.

²⁵ Tatebayashi, “Keshō bunka ron,” 15.

declined due to Westernization, the practice had crucial roles for Edo women. People regarded black as a color which did not mix into other colors, so that married women had to apply *ohaguro* to their teeth as a symbol for their husbands of their virtue.²⁶ Also, as previously mentioned, women having children had to shave their eyebrows. These characteristics of black makeup were banned and no longer remain in Japanese makeup culture, yet the black makeup of the Edo period is regarded as the only uniquely Japanese styles.

This section has explored Japanese traditional makeup history to clarify the traditional beauty looks, as they appear in *bijinga*, based on the three colors red, white, and black. Even though some unique makeup ways such as *ohaguro* and *hikimayu* were eliminated as time passed, most of the qualities, such as almond-shaped eyes, well-defined nose, and white skin still remain in modern Japan. With these traditional beauty looks established, this thesis will examine how Japanese beauty and aesthetics values for makeup have changed in modern Japan. The following section explores modern Japanese beautiful women through beauty pageants. Compared to *bijinga*, beauty pageants give more reliable evidence of the standards for *bijin*, since the beauty queens reflect public opinion.

²⁶ Yamamura Hiromi, “Edo jidai no keshō no iro, ohaguro 1: Gendai towa mattaku kotonaru, ha wo kuroku someru biishiki” [The color of makeup in the Edo period, *ohaguro* 1: The beauty aesthetic of black-dyed teeth, which is completely different from contemporary Japan], *Keshō no nihonshi burogu*, last modified April 9, 2017, accessed February 20, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/gamp.ameblo.jp/yamamura-kesho/entry-12259571075.html>.

2.2 Beauty Pageants

This section addresses how *yamato-nadeshiko* (大和撫子) is closely related to the stereotyped traditional Japanese *bijin*, by examining some beauty contests. *Yamato* is another way to say Japan, and *nadeshiko* is a kind of flower which, in the language of flowers, is “pure.” According to the Collaborative Reference Database, some *waka* poetry describing women as *yamato-nadeshiko* remains.²⁷ In *manyōshū*, the oldest Japanese poetry collection, authors used the term *yamato-nadeshiko* as a symbol of beauty. Moreover, according to linguist Yamaguchi Yoshinori, the term *yamato-nadeshiko* was utilized in *kokin wakashū*²⁸ as a metaphor for women, and *yamato-nadeshiko* became the Japanese authentic aesthetic.

Yamato-nadeshiko indicates women who appear fragile, but at the same time have a strong mind, elegance, and beautiful looks.²⁹ As already noted, most women in *bijinga* from the Asuka to the Edo periods had small almond-shaped eyes and small lips. In terms of eyes, Edo women used face powder to make their eyes look smaller. Considering these characteristics, women whose face parts are small might be described as *yamato-nadeshiko*. To examine this

²⁷ “Nihonjosei wo ‘yamato-nadeshiko’ to iuyouninattanowa itsugorokaraka”

[When the Japanese started to describe women as ‘yamato-nadeshiko’], Collaborative Reference Database, control number 20110722/646, August 4, 2011, https://crd.ndl.go.jp/reference/modules/d3ndlcrdentry/index.php?page=ref_view&id=1000089614.

²⁸ “Nihonjosei wo ‘yamato-nadeshiko’ to iuyouninattanowa itsugorokaraka.”

²⁹ Yamaguchi Yoshinori, *Kurashi no kotoba, shin gogen jiten* [New etymological dictionary for daily used terms] (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2008).

hypothesis, I explore the history of geisha and maiko-han to define elegance and how it worked in the beauty pageants, and also explore how some images of winners in the beauty pageants are crucial for discussing traditional Japanese beauty.

2.2.1 Geisha and Maiko-han as Role Models for Elegance

In terms of defining *bijin*, a 1913 article from *Fujin gahō* depicts the trope of “beautiful woman”.³⁰ According to *Fujin gahō*, it was geisha who attracted attention as perfect models of



Fig. 7: Trendy geisha hairstyle in the Taishō period © Sakurai Masaaki, *Fujin gahō*, 2019

³⁰ Sakurai Masaaki, “Fujin gahō 115 syūnen kinen tokusyū: Biyō no 115 nen”

[*Fujin gahō* special number for the 115th anniversary: The transition of beauty over 115

beauty in Japan, since people at that time regarded geisha as women with both a beautiful face and intellect.³¹

Geisha offer entertained skills such as dance, song, or performances on the *shamisen*. Asahara Sumi, a freelance writer, explored more than forty *hanamachi*, where many geisha work. Asahara has interviewed geisha and written about them and Hanamachi for twenty years. According to Asahara, geisha already existed in the middle of the An'ei period (1772-1781), and *hanamachi* flourished in the Kasei Bunka era (1804-1830).³² Originally, geisha was a male profession.³³ The Fukagawa Geisha was one of the most flourishing geisha house in Tokyo. Since people who could play instruments were quite rare at that time, geisha were valuable. However, because Yoshiwara geisha were the only officially certified ones, and the Tokugawa shogunate strictly separated geisha and prostitutes, some uncertified geisha who sold themselves

years], *Fujin gahō* official website, December 8, 2019,

<https://www.fujingaho.jp/culture/a50723/fujingaho115-beauty-191209/>.

³¹ Sakurai Masaaki, “Fujin gahō 115 syūnen kinen tokusyū.”

³² Asahara Sumi “Edo no mannaka ni, ichiryūgeisha ari: Nihonbashihanayanagikai ga hanayaidakoro” [There is a first-class geisha in the middle of Edo: When the Nihonbashi Hanayanagi world was brilliant], Tokyo Guide, September 2, 2016, <https://guidetokyo.info/history/chronicle/chronicle06.html>.

³³ “Hanayanagikai no rekishi: Edo jidai kara 300 nen ijō no rekishi wo mochi, saiseiki wa Shōwa shoki” [The history of *Hanayanagi*: Its more than 300-year history, and the peak period in Shōwa], Tokyo-geisha.com, About the Hanayanagi World, accessed March 9, 2021, <https://www.tokyo-geisha.com/html/article/history01.php>.

were arrested and transferred to Yoshiwara, which was declining. Yoshiwara started to educate and polish their entertaining skills more in order to discourage them selling themselves. In this connection, the shogunate and *hanayanagi* field intended to draw a clear line between geisha and prostitutes. One means of doing this was to forbid geisha to rob *danna* customers from prostitutes. Their ways of wearing kimono and arranging their hair were also different.³⁴ This distinction made Yoshiwara prostitutes first-class. However, even though their profession and status were actually different, the fact that some geisha sold themselves for living costs, and some other women called themselves geisha to approach American military personnel in the postwar period, gave a false impression of geisha to many foreigners.³⁵ Regardless, it remains the case that geisha had both intellect and beauty.

As previously mentioned, some beauty pageants were held for geisha, and many male customers participated as voters. Before mass media developed, geisha were some of the most outstanding, famous women, and many people regarded them as fashion leaders. Moreover, since geisha had to acquire beautiful behavior before they took customers, geisha became a symbol of beauty and elegance.

Little is known about who took over from the geisha as style trendsetters, but in *Shufu no tomo*, January 1, 1934, Itō Shinsui commented about the transition of beauty from beautiful looks to beautiful behavior: “When geisha, Manryū or Yachiyo’s postcards were still popular just like the bromides of current film actresses, women having well-defined eyes and noses like

³⁴ “Hanayanagikai no rekishi.”

³⁵ “Hanayanagikai no rekishi.”

dolls' were the most important condition.”³⁶ Considering Ito's comments, it seems that the trendsetters had shifted from geisha to screen actresses as of 1934; further evidence is provided by an article on beauty-trend transitions released by Shiseidō, which states that screen actresses were the fashion plates in the 1930s.³⁷ However, even though these new trendsetters had appeared, geisha were still one of the perfect models. Women's magazines introduced geisha's aesthetic values, such as their recommended face powders, foam cleansers, or *kanzashi* hair accessories. The geisha's hairstyle was the model for general women, and hair catalogues like the figure on the left in Figure 8 below, became popular. One of the main reasons that geisha were famous was that everyday women (and some modern girls who wore kimono at home) could easily imitate geisha hairstyles and cosmetics. In other words, geisha beauty was more practical and feasible for everyday women, especially in the Meiji and Taishō periods.

It is said that the first beauty pageant was held in 1891. Although geisha and prostitutes were fashion leaders in the Edo and Meiji, Taishō people were even more enthusiastic about them. Geisha and prostitutes differ in terms of social status. Geisha are women selling traditional skills such as dance, instruments, or singing, and had to serve as a foil to prostitutes. Particularly

³⁶ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 203. “Bromides” are a form of photographic portrait especially used for celebrity photographs. In contemporary Japan, bromides are used in the anime and idol industries. Bromides differ from regular photographs in terms of price and processes.

³⁷ Suzuki Setsuko, “Nihon Josei no keshō no hensen 100 nen” [The transition of Japanese women's makeup trends across 100 years], HMA Shiseidō, January 10, 2017, https://hma.shiseido.com/jp/info/p20170110_1824/.

geisha who worked in Yoshiwara, the officially certified entertainment district established in 1617, were strictly forbidden to sell themselves since it entailed stealing prostitutes' customers. Yet while geisha were in a lower position than prostitutes, they had high popularity since they had both beauty looks and intellectuality.



Fig.8: Winner and runners-up in the first beauty competition held in *Ryōunkaku*, 1891. Left to right: Tamagiku, Momotaro, Kotoyo, Azuma and Kotsuru © Jessica, Sora News 24, 2014

Figure 8 shows the winner, Tamagiku, and the other runners-up in the first beauty pageant held in 1891. All contestants were geisha, and 102 geishas had photographs taken under the same conditions in terms of kimono, *uchiwa* fan, hairstyle, and makeup. The image clearly shows that every geisha has a well-defined nose. Especially the geisha in the middle in the figure, Kotoyo, seems to have *kagibana*, long regarded as *bijin* in beauty history. Even though each girl has a different attractive atmosphere and looks, all of them have common features regarded as *bijin*. One is almond-shaped eyes. Kotoyo's left eye shows a double eyelid, but the



Fig.9 (left): Manryū, a geisha, winner of the beauty pageant held by *Bungei club* ©
<http://northhall.blog.jp/archives/16388385.html>, 2020

Fig.10 (right): Suehiro Hiroko, winner of the beauty pageant held by *Jijishinpo* ©
https://bakumatsu.org/blog/2014/04/meiji_bijin_ranking.html/hiroko_suehiro_m

rest of the girls have single or hidden double eyelids, and every geisha has slanted eyes, an important condition for *bijin*. Moreover, their lips also look similarly small. The woman second from the left, Momotaro has slightly plump lips, but the other girls have small lips.

A few years later, *Bungei club* (文芸倶楽部) held a beauty contest for geisha in 1907.³⁸ In the pageant, Manryū won the first prize with ninety thousand votes from readers. Then, in 1908, the *Chicago Tribune* held an international beauty contest, where they negotiated with a Japanese newspaper company, *Jijishinpō*,³⁹ to provide a contest to discover the “most beautiful woman for the world.” Manryū had no qualifications to apply for the contest, since the Chicago Tribune company demanded a general type of woman who did not have any professional experience selling her appearance. The 1907 contest is considered the first time that “amateur,” or non-professional, women participated and competed as *bijin*.⁴⁰ The girl who won the first prize was Suehiro Hiroko, a sixteen-year-old girl. Both Manryū and Suehiro have hidden double eyelids, but still their eyes are almond-shaped or slanted. Their noses were also well-defined, and the wings of the nose were small. Their lips are also small and thin.

According to Hayazaka Wakako, an article saying that “small lips were a symbol of women being forbidden to have a voice”⁴¹ appeared in a women’s magazine published after the Pacific War. Across history, Japan has had a male-centered society, and women have had to follow in this society. Considering the historical background of women’s social status, it is little

³⁸ This women’s magazine ran from 1895 to 1933, published by Hakubunkan.

³⁹ One of the leading newspaper companies established by Yukichi Fukuzawa, in business from 1882 to 1936.

⁴⁰ Lippit, *Aesthetic Life*, 108.

⁴¹ Hayazaka Wakako, “Kuchibeni to josei no rekishi” [The history of lipsticks and women], unpublished student paper, Keiyo University Law School, accessed March 9, 2021, <https://www.students.keio.ac.jp/hy/law/class/registration/files/hayasaka.pdf>.

wonder that small lips were closely related to the image of ideal women for the society, especially before Western cultures were imported.

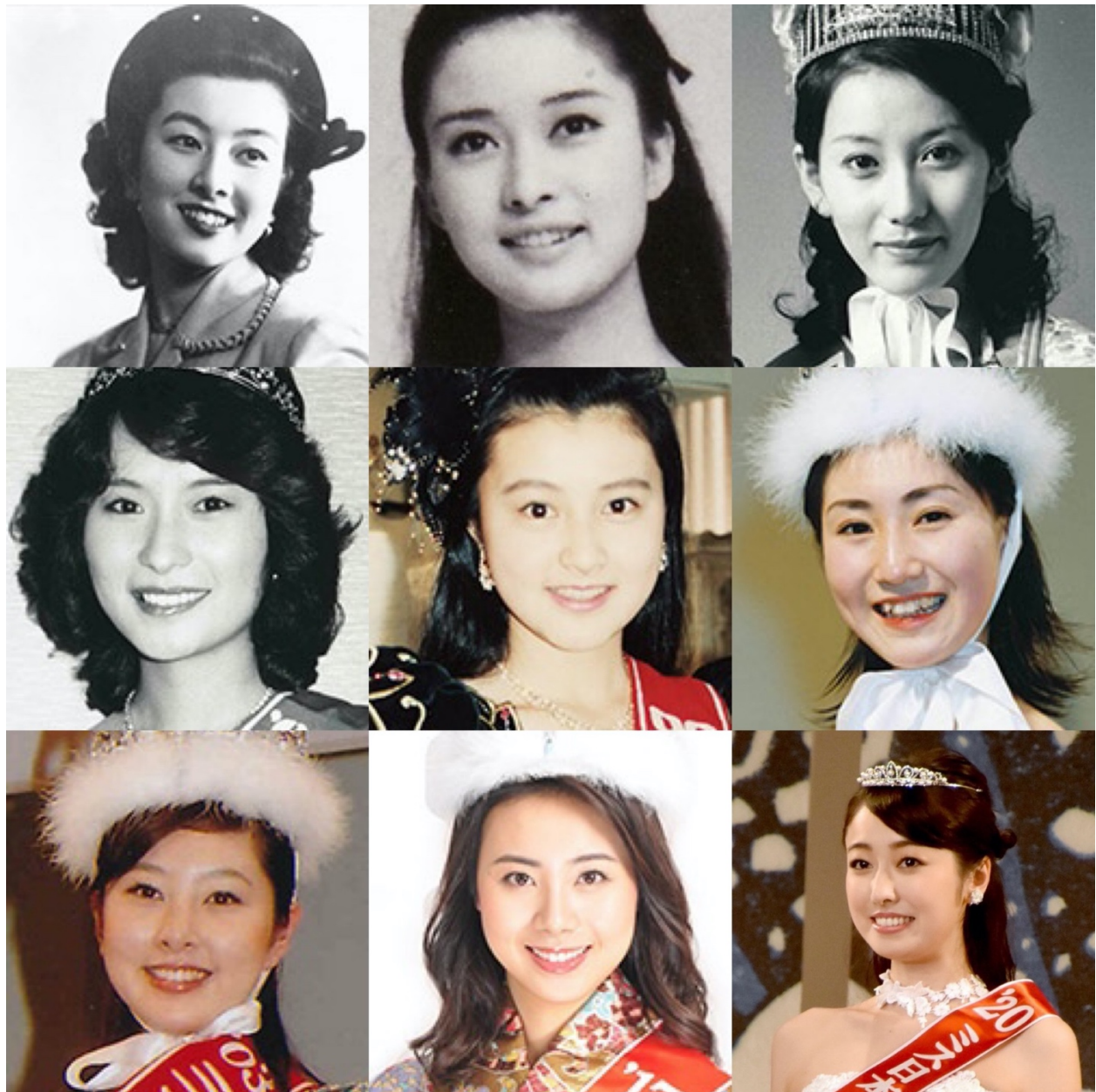


Fig.11: Winners in the Miss Nippon Contest, 1950 to 2020 © Miss Nippon official website. Top row, left to right: Yamamoto Fujiko (1950), Takeuchi Sachiko (1970), Tezuka Keiko (1977); middle row: Minegishi Fusako (1982), Fujiwara Norika (1992), Komatsuda Yuri (1999); bottom row: Aizawa Reiko (2003), Takada Shiho (2017), Oda Yasushi (2020)

Figure 11 shows winners of The Miss Nippon Contest; I have chosen to focus more on the Miss Nippon Contest rather than Miss Universe Japan because the former officially

announces that the contest focuses on inner beauty, outer beauty, and behavioral beauty, i.e., on Japanese traditional beauty.⁴² The background of the beauty pageant dates back to 1950. When the war ended, the United States provided food assistance through an organization called the Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia, which support greatly contributed to Japanese reconstruction. In order to express gratitude, Japan decided to choose a beautiful woman as a goodwill ambassador to build friendship with the United States. The first winner of the contest was Yamamoto Fujiko, in the top left. According to the Miss Nippon Contest, Yamamoto became the standard of *bijin* for future contests. The contest focused on not only her beautiful look, but also her independent and strong aspects that lay hidden in her soft and elegant facial expressions.⁴³

What the Miss Nippon Contest shows corresponds with the notion of traditional Japanese *bijin*, *yamato-nadeshiko*. Assuming that women with small face parts have been regarded as *yamato-nadeshiko*, most of the beauty queens in the Miss Nippon Contest meet the standard of *bijin*. Most have soft- or hard-angled eyebrows and slanted eyes, an important element that makes them look independent and strong-willed and shows up their beauty more. Even though some women such as Komatsuda Yuri (1999) and Oda Yasushi (2020) have “kawaii” elements rather than *bijin* in terms of eyes, eyebrows shape, or face line, most of women have those common characteristics of beautiful women that we have explored. In addition, the entertainment

⁴² “About the Miss Japan Contest,” Miss Japan Contest official website, n.d., accessed March 7, 2021, <https://www.missnippon.jp/about/>.

⁴³ “About the Miss Japan Contest.”

media company Imadane conducted a survey about contemporary beautiful actresses who seem to have the characteristics of *yamato-nadeshiko* in 2018.



Fig.12: Top three contemporary Japanese actresses regarded as *yamato-nadeshiko*: Matsushima Nanako, Nakama Yuki, and Yoshinaga Sayuri

Figure 12 shows the top three actresses whom the public chose as having the features of *yamato-nadeshiko*. Matsushima took first place as the symbol of the traditional Japanese *bijin*. She surely meets most of the conditions of *yamato-nadeshiko*, particularly her eyes, noses and black long hair; I would note, however, that this choice of Matsushima in first place might have been affected by the character she played in a TV drama entitled “*Yamato-nadeshiko*,” which aired October-December 2000 and was a great hit. Sakurako, the heroine of the drama, is a flight attendant who is a strong and independent woman, and speaks elegantly. Like Matsushima,

Nakama Yukie also has played many characters in kimono. It seems that, apart from the women's looks, the media too greatly affected the rankings.

Lastly, we may briefly address contemporary *bijinga*. Since Japanese have shifted to Westernized lifestyles and rarely wear kimono, *bijinga* has slowly lost popularity. However recently, starting with Ikenaga Yasunari, *bijinga* is regaining popularity. Some artists remain interested in creating *bijinga*.



Fig.13: Contemporary *bijinga* collection. Top row: Beniko Choji ©Beniko Choji Twitter/2018; Ikenaga Yasunari ©shukado contemporary. Bottom row: Matsuura Shiori ©Matsuura Shiori Twitter/2017; Miyazaki Yu ©pinterest

Figure 13 shows four *bijinga* by different artists. Although some artists depict women with short hair, in most cases, women in *bijinga* are depicted using three colors—red, white, and

black—just as in traditional *bijinga*. An interesting point is that we can see the aesthetics change with regard to bangs: based on these *bijinga*, bangs may be no longer only kawaii aesthetics but also *bijin*. Perhaps here the aesthetic may have changed. As for the lips, the shapes differ depending on the artists; for example, the woman depicted by Ikenaga has plumper lips than the other three do. However, each woman has almond-shaped eyes no matter whether the eyelids are single or double. Most importantly for this thesis, these images show the white skin and black hair aesthetic. All three *bijinga* other than that by Ikenaga show women as pure white like snow. The sharp contrast of the colors with the colorless women reminds us of the traditional *bijinga* and the image of *yamato-nadeshiko*. Given that the four images have much in common in terms of red, white, and black colors, the *bijinga* show that the notion of beauty has not changed much, and that many Japanese still have a fixed conception of *bijin*.

As we have seen, traditional Japanese *bijin* is closely related to *yamato-nadeshiko*. Most beautiful women have the characteristic of *urizane-gao*, long regarded as the symbol of *bijin*. Although contemporary Japanese society does tend to respect each woman in terms of beauty, and some media have reported that “*yamato-nadeshiko* has disappeared,” I argue that the traditional notion of *bijin* remains; moreover, the notion of *bijin* is firmly fixed and has changed little since the Heian period.

2.3 Japanese Obsession with White Skin

Some Asian countries, including China and Korea, focus on having white skin. Japan too is one place where people have made efforts to obtain white skin. I would say that the notion of “white skin” has changed due to the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law. Until the middle of the Shōwa period, the notion of white skin seemed to imply changing one’s skin color to make one’s face

white. Many cosmetic companies targeted this ideal of whiteness, and the term “white skin” was essential in advertisements. However, cosmetics companies can no longer exaggerate their expressions due to this law: instead of saying “white skin,” companies began to say “make your skin brighter,” “obtain clear skin,” “protect your skin from sunburn, marks, and freckles,” or “this product approaches your skin to improve the dullness.” In this way, methods of appealing to customers greatly changed during the Shōwa period. According to Miyamoto Noriko, it was in 1873 that the Japanese government first introduced a policy regarding medical matters and pharmaceutical affairs in earnest.⁴⁴ Comparing older cosmetic advertisements with more recent ones shows how the methods of approaching customers have changed.

⁴⁴ Miyamoto Noriko, “Yakuziēsei no rekishitekihensen to yakuzikyōiku 6nensēkaikaku no kaishi” [The historical transition of pharmaceutical sanitation and the 6-year system of pharmacopeia], *Journal of the Japanese Society for the History of Medicine* 54 no.3 (December 2007): 305-306, <http://jsmh.umin.jp/journal/54-3/305.pdf>.



Fig.14 (left): Face Wash Cream Advertisement, Rosette Co., Ltd, 1941 ©Shōwa modern suki, 2014
 Fig.15 (right): Face Wash Cream Advertisement, Rosette Co., Ltd, 2016 ©Youtube, Rosette, 2017

Figures 14-15 show advertisements for face washes produced by Rosette, a popular cosmetics company whose face wash creams are their most famous products. Rosette started selling “Leon face wash cream” in 1929. In the left image, the advertisement for Leon face wash cream, Rosette clearly specifies its effectiveness in making faces white. The right advertisement, however, notes that the product name changed from “Leon face wash cream” to “Rosette face wash paste” in 1951. This advertisement, published in 2016 as part of a TV commercial, refers to “dullness improvement” instead of saying “white skin.” Due to the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law, cosmetics companies cannot present their whitening products freely, but must follow the policy in choosing expressions to explain their products. Today, “make your skin white” is regarded as inappropriate, since it will give customers the false impression that they can change their original

skin color and obtain literally white skin. In this way, the notion of white skin seems to have changed. However, companies edit the image models' face tone whiter, or they employ models who have white skin in their advertisements. In this respect, the actual notion of white skin has not changed in society, and having white skin as much as possible remains the actual aim. This section will examine this Japanese obsession with white skin through cosmetics advertisements and essays written by Uno Chiyo.

2.3.1 Introduction of Women's Magazines

Before discussing how Japanese have obsessed over having white skin since the Asuka period, this thesis turns back to women's magazines, particularly focusing on *Fujin gahō* (婦人画報), *Shufu no tomo* (主婦之友), *Fujin kōron* (婦人公論), and *Fujin club* (婦人倶楽部), the four great women's magazines in the postwar period. To clarify how media reported women's beauty standards, this section explores each magazine's history.

Fujin gahō was founded by Kunikida Doppo, who started his publishing career in 1905. An author of novels, he devoted himself to *Fujin gahō* as editor-in-chief. *Fujin gahō* is the oldest of the four listed women's magazine. According to Tomizawa Sachiko, the main target readership was girls' students from the upper class.⁴⁵ *Fujin gahō* mainly published both kimono

⁴⁵ Tomizawa Sachiko. "Fujin gahō no fashion: from 1905 to 1940s Paris de yosouu miyake no joseitachi wa akogare no aidoru" [Fashions of *Fujin Gahō* from 1905 to the 1940s: Noble women dressing up were the idols for the public], *Fujin Gahō Lifestyle*, July 14, 2020, accessed March 19, 2021,

and Western fashions, modern girls and modern boys, trendy makeup, and discussion of short hairstyles. Compared with other magazines, *Fujin gahō* often published Westernized fashions and trends.

As for *Shufu no tomo*, Ishikawa Takeyoshi started his publishing business in 1916, and began *Shufu no tomo* in 1917. According to the official website of Usa city tourist navigation, Ishikawa created a women's magazine for women who got married and had children. His concept was to create the best magazine for them to obtain information they would like to know about childcare and household management.⁴⁶ He provided a wide variety of topics, such as educational Q&A sections and columns on how to educate children at home, how to educate daughters for marriage, how to prepare for children's school lives, or how to save money. Many women chose *Shufu no tomo* as the best magazine in 1920.⁴⁷

Fujin kōron started publishing from Chūō Kōronsha in 1916, with Shimanaka Yūsaku its first president. *Fujin kōron* has as its magazine concept to support women being independent. Some famous women's writers like Yosano Akiko and Hiratsuka Raichō posted columns in *Fujin kōron*. The main topics were women's independence, sociology, and feminism. *Fujin kōron* focuses on what kind of issues surround women, and how they can deal with them.

<https://www.fujingaho.jp/lifestyle/fashion-jewelry-watch/a33304313/jpelegance-fukai-akiko-200714/>.

⁴⁶ Usa City Tourist Navigation official website, last modified October 23, 2020, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://www.city.usa.oita.jp/tourist/featured/1/9043.html>.

⁴⁷ Usa City Tourist Navigation official website.

According to the Yumani Books website, intellectual women or ones who had high interest in women's issues were the main readership.

Finally, *Fujin club* was published from Kōdansha (previously named Dai Nippon Yūbenkai Kōdansha) in 1920 and ended in 1988. The concept of the magazine was, "Pleasure as women, happiness as mothers."⁴⁸ *Fujin club* also focused on childcare and households. The magazine produced material on such topics as lunchbox recipes, needlework, flower arrangement, school uniforms for children, and household expenses.

2.3.2 Advertisements for Foundation in Magazines

This section deals with the history of Japanese foundation makeup in the twentieth century. According to Yamamura, an advertisement for colored foundation appeared in *Fūzoku gahō* (風俗画報) in 1896. Yamamura mentions that although it was in the 1890s that the advertisements were published, it was only from 1907 that women's magazines introduced the colored foundations as a way of making women's beauty look natural.⁴⁹ Once Japanese women started utilizing colored foundations, beige has been important, and people no longer utilized white colored foundations except *maiko-han* and *kabuki* actors. Yet this does not mean that

⁴⁸ Weblio, accessed March 21,

<https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/www.weblio.jp/content/amp/%25E5%25A9%25A6%25E4%25BA%25BA%25E5%2580%25B6%25E6%25A5%25BD%25E9%2583%25A8>

⁴⁹ Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, Kindle location 1990

Japanese people no longer value having fair, white skin. Even today, women in particular often try to make their skins fair and bright.

“Fair skin can hide even the seven faults” (*iro no shiroi wa shichinan kakusu* 色の白いは七難隠す) is a very old and famous adage. Yamamura cites an article entitled “Miyako fuzoku kewaiden” (都風俗化粧伝), from the late Edo period, which says that “there are an extremely low number of beautiful women who are perfect. The way to make up, or the skill of wearing makeup, [is what will] make your face look beautiful. The first priority is fair skin. Fair skin hides even the seven faults, as a proverb says.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, Yamamura says that upper-class women, particularly those who served at the Imperial Court, valued white-colored foundations, and that utilizing foundation was regarded as an important matter in the Heian period.⁵¹

In the Shōwa period, *Fujin gahō* had a regular column page called “Q & A about makeup” to which many women sent concerns about their dark skin; famous beauty expert Fujinami Fuyō answered these questions, suggesting several items and giving advice on how to make fair skin.⁵² Having fair skin was always a hot topic in the *fujin zasshi*. In the discussions, beauty experts gave examples of geisha and shared their skincare methods as well. For example,

⁵⁰ Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, Kindle location 50-51. My translation.

⁵¹ To have white, fair skin implied being among those “who do not need to work outside.” As few people could meet this condition, having fair skin became a symbol of nobility by way of scarcity. See Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, 22.

⁵² Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 66.

Figure 16 is an advertisement for facial wash cream that appeals consumers wishing to obtain fair skin. It reads:

Completely safe. The way to decolorize for snow white skins [and hide] acne and freckles. There are so many advertisements and products about whitening and appealing to consumers. However, consumers won't be satisfied with the actual effectiveness. People who feel disappointed with these products should utilize our "Leon face wash cream," which contains rare chemical products. Use its whitening effect to decolorize and bleach the melanin pigment in your face, arms, and legs.⁵⁴

Today, beauty advisors working at cosmetics industries cannot say "Completely safe," "decolorize," "bleach," or "this product makes your skin white." However, advertisements at that time contained many words no longer allowed. They reveal that whitening products were extremely popular among women, and that having white skin was an indispensable element. Even though beige-colored foundations appeared in cosmetics stores and natural makeup became a new trend, women's desire to have fair skin has not changed much even today.

2.3.3 Criticism of White Skin by Beauty Experts

In every period, Japan has focused on having white skin. We can see how many were worried about dark skin in the women's magazine collections. For example, a girl of 20 posted her skin troubles to *Fujin gahō* in 1931, saying, "I'm a 20 year-old girl with dark skin,

⁵⁴ My translation.

particularly around cheeks. My neck is also very dark, and foundations do not work well.”⁵⁵

Another woman asked, “I heard that hydrogen peroxide solution makes skin lighter. Is that true?”⁵⁶ Another said, “Do you know any ways to make my skin white without using face powder or makeup?”⁵⁷

Clearly many women persisted in seeking white skin to be *bijin*. However, some women, having limited and uncertain knowledge, wrongly chose dangerous products or supplements. For example, a female reader consulted a female doctor, Fujita Seiko, saying, “Because my skin is terribly dark, I am trying arsenious acid. Can you teach me how to take it? I already bought it.” Perhaps surprised, Fujita answered, “I don’t know why you bought it, but arsenious acid is poison, and you cannot obtain the white skin as you are expecting with it. Moreover, the acid is utilized as rat poison. It is quite dangerous.”⁵⁸ Again, one of the participants in the column discussions, Kagawa Tetsuo, wrote, “what I would like to emphasize for amateur women is that they need to carefully choose products they use. The other day, a woman whose husband is a diplomat came to see me and she said that she has had dark skin since she was born, and because she wanted white skin, she used XX fluid. Her skin got white spots under her eyes.”⁵⁹ In reference to these white spots, a leading cosmetic company, Kanebo, announced the recall of

⁵⁵ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 66.

⁵⁶ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 3.

⁵⁷ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 11.

⁵⁸ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 15.

⁵⁹ My translation. The “XX” here implies a certain product’s name, which the magazine chose to hide. Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 5.

their whitening care lines in 2013 after they discovered that some consumers had health problems caused by the products.⁶⁰ According to department of health, some whitening beauty products contain dangerous levels of mercury, which can cause serious health damage.⁶¹ Even though people have heard of the dangers of whitening products, women continue purchasing lightening skincare products for obtaining beautiful fair skin like Western people.

Beauty experts sometimes criticize the use of white face powders. One Japanese Western writer, Ōta Saburō, claimed natural looks are the best: “The definition of *bijin* today is said to be women who have high noses and big eyes. However, ones who have flat noses try to make their noses look high, and ones who have small eyes try to make their eyes look big, which is not a good idea. Women should make use of their original faces with natural makeup. Don’t think everyone has to have high noses, or white skin.”⁶² Marie Louise also expressed doubt about Japanese white skin boom, saying, “The other day, I was invited to participate in a party held by British Embassy. There, I felt funny since Japanese women there put on thick makeup while foreign women use makeup lightly. Women should put on light makeup not only when they wear

⁶⁰ “Announcement about our whitening products recall conducted in September 2013,” Kanebo Cosmetics official website, July 4, 2013, accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.kanebo-cosmetics.jp/information/>.

⁶¹ “Skin lightening products can cause health problems: Fact sheet for the general public,” Minnesota Department of Health website, last updated December 23, 2020, accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/skin/gpfs.html>.

⁶² Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 256.

Western clothes, but also kimono.”⁶³ Chiba Masuko, who also worked at the beauty clinic that Marie Louise founded, agreed with her. According to Chiba, beige-colored foundations are now better than white.⁶⁴

Today, women rarely choose white-colored foundations or face powders except those who have certain professions such as *maiko-han*, *geisha*, *kabuki* actors, or musical actresses. Instead, they spent their money on skincare products to produce white skin. Women in early modern Japan also shifted their must-have items for acquiring white skin from foundations to skincare products. Leading camera company Fujifilm, which also produced famous beauty products, notes that a much greater variety of cosmetics and skincare products appeared as society rapidly Westernized after the Pacific War. Women changed their base makeup items from Japanese traditional-style foundations to foundations that contain oil, such as liquids, creams, and powders.⁶⁵ To deal with this change, companies tried to produce new skincare products.

The reason why women posted so many queries about dark skin in women’s magazines was that they poured their passion into being like Western women. As for the level of whiteness desired, they sought to obtain skin as white as that of Western women. Japanese women’s role models were Western women, and their highest hopes for makeup and skincare products were

⁶³ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 293.

⁶⁴ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 293.

⁶⁵ “Special edition of beauty and health care: Let’s learn about the history of skincare,” Fujifilm Beauty & Healthcare Online, volume 14, n.d., accessed February 1, 2021, <https://h-jp.fujifilm.com/contents/yomimono/beauty-healthcare/bh14-201810.html>.

that they might approach Western women. Because they had high expectations for beauty items, they might feel that no products or methods were ever enough. Evidence of this is found in an advertisement which Yamamura posted on her beauty blog (Figure 18).⁶⁶

Figure 18: Advertisement for face wash cream to produce white skin ©Yamamura Hitomi, Makeup history blog, 2017

This advertisement appeared in *Yomiuri Shimbun* in 1954. There is a white woman's face on the advertisement, by which this cosmetics company suggests that their product can provide their customers with faces as white as those of Western women. Whiteness is a key point among

⁶⁶ Yamamura Hiromi, "Shōwa nijūnendai no keshōhinkōkoku ichi: 'Bihaku' no moderu wa hakujin josei" [Advertisements in the 20s of Shōwa period part 1: The role model for 'whiteness' is white people], *Keshō no nihonshi burogu*, July 10, 2017, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/gamp.ameblo.jp/yamamura-kesho/entry-12289612015.html>.

modern Japanese women; what this advertisement shows is that women in modern Japan, the obsession with white skin has to do with being like Western women.

2.3.4 Criticism of White Skin Through Advertisements

As we have explored, Japanese has valued to have white skin in the long history by being influenced by China, Western countries, and South Korea. Yet, Japan has another aesthetic value, healthy beauty or natural beauty. Women's magazines, particularly *Fujin gahō* and *Shufu no tomo* highlighted the term "healthy" and "natural." Moreover, tanned skin booms regularly make a comeback since the 20 centuries. Particularly, 1980s and 1990s are the most interesting decades since the beauty trends were divided tanned skin booms and white skin booms.

Figures 19-21 show some advertisements published by the leading cosmetics companies, Shiseido and Kosei. In 1966, Shiseido released a new product called "beauty cake," with the tagline, "Be loved by Sun," and chose Maeda Bibari as the image model for their TV commercial (image on left). This commercial gave a great deal of public attention to Maeda, and both the beauty concept and the model had a great impact on the public. According to Shiseido, the 1960s was the first decade of a tanned skin boom in Japan.⁶⁷ One possible reason for this boom is because the model, Maeda, is half Japanese and half American. Based on the Shiseido's makeup transition research, the 1960s was also the decades when Japanese most eagerly followed

⁶⁷ Suzuki Setsuko, "Nihon Josei no keshō no hensen 100 nen" [The transition of Japanese women's makeup trends across 100 years], HMA Shiseidō, January 10, 2017, https://hma.shiseido.com/jp/info/p20170110_1824/.



Fig.19 (left): Shiseidō advertisement for Beauty Cake Foundation, 1966 ©news post seven, 2018

Fig.20 (top right): Kosei advertisement for Two-Way Cake Foundation, 1979 ©kose.co.jp, 2015

Fig.21 (lower right): Shiseidō advertisement for hair shampoo, 1982 ©shisedo monogatari, 1998

Western beauty trends.⁶⁸ Since Japanese had regarded Westerners as beauty role models since the end of the war, Maeda with tanned skin temporarily changed the stereotyped aesthetics.

⁶⁸ Suzuki, “Nihon Josei no keshō no henshen 100 nen.”



Fig.22: Advertisement for Kiss Me foundation, 1954, *Yomiuri Shimbun* ©Yamamura Hiromi, Yamamura's blog, 2017

Figure 22 is an advertisement for foundation produced by Kiss Me, one of the cosmetics brands managed by Isehan. It was published in 1954; the tagline reads, “Greatly popular in America—the beauty ways of foundation,” as well as, “Once you put on the foundation with the tip of your finger, you can make beautifully and clear white skin—just add a bit of Kiss Me face powder so that you can be true *bijin*.”⁶⁹ Within the notion of *bijin*, then, one role model for the “true *bijin*” was the Western people at least between 1945 and the 1960s. The advertisement with Maeda must have surprised many Japanese, since the reason they followed Western beauty was

⁶⁹ Yamamura Hiromi, “Shōwa nijūnendai no keshōhinkōkoku ichi.”

that Westerners were their role models in terms of white skin. In this respect, Shiseido changed Japanese aesthetics and as a result, Maeda obtained great popularity by this TV commercial.

As previously mentioned, the 1980s and 1990s are complicated decades for fashion, since public opinion toward beauty aesthetics split between tanned skin and white skin. I address the “gal” cultures in detail in chapter 4; for the moment, I note only that the 1980s and 1990s were the decades in which the media highlighted the gals’ tanned skin as a new makeup trend. However, the more tanned-skin girls were highlighted, the more the public focused on having white skin.

The image in the bottom right on page 53 (Figure 21) is an advertisement for shampoos and conditioners released by Shiseido in 1982. The model does not look gal but has tanned skin to give a “healthy beauty” impression. However, although some cosmetics companies published advertisements like this, with models having tanned skins, other brands focused on white skin.

Kosei is an interesting multinational cosmetics company that released products for both tanned and white skin. The figure in the top right (Figure 20) advertises a “2-way cake foundation” released by COSME DECORTE, which is managed by Kosei, in 1979. One of the characteristics of COSME DECORTE is that they tend to employ Western models as their advertising or image models, and this tendency has not changed since 1970. On the other hand, Kosei established a new brand, “Sekkisei (雪肌精),” in 1985. Unlike COSME DECORTE, Sekkisei focuses on traditional Japanese beauty aesthetics. According to the official website, Sekkisei was born based on Japanese *miyabi* (雅 elegance) aesthetics. Sekkisei is intended to provide women with elegant, clear, and bright skin. The kanji 雪 means snow, and 肌 means skin. Sekkisei set their brand concept thus: “White and soft skin like snow. Strength will be transmitted through elegant behavior. ‘Clear skin like *nadeshiko*,’ shining from inside people’s

mind and skin. We desire to make Sekkisei promise our customers to provide traditional Japanese elegance. We transmit Japanese aesthetics.”⁷⁰



Fig.23: Advertisement for enriched toner for winter, produced by Sekkisei ©pintarest

With this brand concept, Sekkisei has produced many whitening skincare products and foundations since 1985. Figure 23 above advertises enriched skin toner for winter. As we can see, the model wears foundation thickly to make her face look whiter, and also her skin tone is edited to fit the model into its brand concept of white skin like snow. In this way, Kosei

⁷⁰ Sekkisei official website, accessed March 31, 2021,

<http://www.kose.co.jp/sekkisei/miyabi/>. My translation.

approaches customers from two different aesthetic values: white-skin beauty and tanned-skin beauty. This helps to prove that the more tanned skin became popular, the more people focused on white-skin trends as representing true beauty.

Significantly, photo editing is today disputed worldwide. As with this image published by Sekkisei, many companies edit their models or celebrities in advertisements, TV commercials, magazines, dramas, and in all media. Especially in the beauty industry, edited media can mislead people, giving false impressions and stereotyped beauty aesthetics. Even if beauty consultants did not highlight to have white skin and recommended healthy, natural looks, the impact of the media—particularly advertisements and TV commercials—would be much greater than we realize. This is because cosmetics companies spend a great deal on advertisements. According to cosmetics marketer Sarukoji, cosmetics companies rely on TV commercials, where the total amount of advertisement was 98.7% as of 2019. According to Sarukoji, branding or brand recognition is quite important for cosmetics companies, so they tend to rely on TV commercials.⁷¹

Based on this data, it seems that cosmetics companies mostly advertise their products through visual effects. In this respect, many young girls prefer Korean cosmetics in contemporary Japan due to the K-pop boom. In most cases, K-pop idols are greatly edited by their fans, themselves, or their companies, and their faces look extremely white. The edited white

⁷¹ Sarukoji, “Shiseido ga TVCM wo yamerurashii: TVCM to net kōkoku nit suite aratametekanngaetemita” [Shiseido announces that they will stop creating TV commercials: Reconsideration of the relation between TVCM and Internet advertisements]. Note (website). August 31, 2020, accessed April 1, 2021, <https://note.com/sarukoji/n/n62e2dd6ec270>.

skin makes their fans long to have white skin just like the K-pop idols do. In fact, based on research conducted by TesTee Lab, 64.7% of teens and 55.5% of 20s have purchased cosmetics products made in South Korea.⁷² Clearly the media, especially advertisements and TV commercials, can decide impressions of aesthetics, which can also cause stereotyped beauty aesthetics.

White skin is the most important example of this effect, and for this reason, white skin has often become a target for criticism. Since the war, tanned skin booms have come in with the Westernization, so that Japan seemed to shift aesthetics from white-skin beauty to a healthy beauty. Yet even though the healthy or natural beauty spread in society, people have tended to stick to white-skin aesthetics due to the visual effects in advertisements or celebrities, including K-pop idols.

We also can see how people stick to having white skin by looking at some cases, such as edited photographs of K-pop idols, as well as the case of Nissin noodle company, which white-washed a famous mixed-race tennis player, Ōsaka Naomi, for their 2019 TV commercials. In the first place, white-washing is a way to depict or edit people who are not white or minority as if they are white. White-washing can be regarded as discriminatory toward minorities. For example, the anime *Ghost In the Shell* is a famous example of white-washing. In the original anime, the heroine is Japanese; however, when the anime was recreated as a live-action film in

⁷² “Kankoku kosume ni kansuru chōsa” [Survey of Korean cosmetics], TesTee Lab, August 19, 2020, accessed April 1, 2021, https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/lab.testee.co/k-cosme_2020%3famp.

the United States, Scarlett Johansson played the role of the heroine, and the film of *Ghost In the Shell* became controversial worldwide.

As mentioned above, the noodle company Nissin also caused a white-washing issue in 2019 when they released an animated TV commercial with the concept, *Prince of Tennis*. In the commercial, Nissin depicted Ōsaka as a woman with white skin and light brown hair, which caused widespread controversy. On BBC News, Ōsaka remarked that she did not think Nissin did the white-washing on purpose; however, she also said she would like Nissin to talk to her about white-washing if they were to try to portray her again.⁷³ Importantly, Nissin meant no offense, and they did not white-wash on purpose. Yet I would say that white-washed advertisements in the beauty industry are a trigger increasing the number of people who believe that white skin is aesthetically better. These days, white-washed celebrities are everywhere in Japan, as well as in China and South Korea. As a result, Japanese people tend to be used to white-washed photographs, and many do not realize that the white-washing is regarded as a big issue in other countries. These examples of white-washing show how Japanese have positive opinions about white skin and how aesthetics have been rooted in the society for a long time.

⁷³ “Naomi Osaka: Tennis star responds to ‘whitewashed’ ad,” BBC News, January 24, 2019, accessed April 3, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/www.bbc.com/news/amp/world-asia-46986366>.

2.3.5 Uno Chiyo's Writings About White Skin

Lastly, this chapter will explore the essays “My life with makeup” (*Watakushi no okeshō jinseishi*) and “I’m always busy” (*Watakushi wa itsudemo isogashii*), written by Uno Chiyo (1897-1996), a writer whose long career spanned three imperial reigns. Uno wrote many works related to makeup, and also worked on an olive oil skincare project. In “My life with makeup,” published in 1984, she described her love affairs, skincare routines, favorite face powder, and anxiety about her dark skin. She became pessimistic about her dark skin in her teens, since her father said that no one would choose to marry a dark-skinned girl like her.⁷⁴ In the essay, she remarks that having dark skin have might decided her future.⁷⁵

Granted Uno's pessimism about her chances for marriage due to her dark skin, it seems that for women, being white and fair-skinned was one of the most crucial aesthetic values of *bijin*, and this value has not changed even today. According to Uno, she used sunscreen cream and face powder produced by Club Cosmetics (*Kurabu*), which was tremendously popular among women.⁷⁶ She also mentioned that she wore makeup to hide her complexion; however, more significant is the fact that the motivation for using makeup was her pessimism about her future, especially marriage. Therefore, when she broke up with her lover, she stopped wearing makeup even though she spent most time of her on makeup.⁷⁷ In the essay, she says, “I would

⁷⁴ Uno Chiyo, *Watakushi no okeshō jinseishi* [My life with makeup] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1984), 118.

⁷⁵ Uno, *Watakushi no okeshō jinseishi*, 119.

⁷⁶ Uno, *Watakushi no okeshō jinseishi*, 123.

⁷⁷ Uno, *Watakushi no okeshō jinseishi*, 154.

never wear makeup. How could I put on makeup every day without Professor Miura? For whom should I make up my face without him?”⁷⁸ She wore makeup not for herself, but for her lover, or for someone other than herself.

In her essay “I’m always busy,” Uno says, “I always think about others when I wear makeup, choose clothes, and arrange my hair. The feeling is that if I wear makeup in this way, they might not feel strange or uncomfortable, or something like that. I put on makeup because I want to make people I meet comfortable.”⁷⁹ “Makeup is manner” and “manner is for someone” are both common Japanese aesthetic ideas, with which Uno’s words match completely. In fact, she somehow felt relief that the beautiful girl turned back into the original, dark-skinned girl when she stopped using makeup. According to Uno, she felt a kind of guilt about deceiving people with makeup, and she could not be satisfied with her beauty after she put on makeup because she was the one worried about her dark skin. She might have been relieved since she had lost the reason for using makeup and did not need to hide her complexion anymore.

Uno’s writing suggests a notion, which is that Japanese people are relatively strict about appearances. She relates an experience, when a president told her, “How old are you? What? You are eighteen? You actually do not look as if you are eighteen. You really look old.”⁸⁰ His words hurt her so much that she started wearing makeup again. This experience is closely related to why Uno regards wearing makeup as manners for other people. In another episode, an elevator

⁷⁸ Uno, *Watakushi no okeshō jinseishi*, 154. My translation.

⁷⁹ Uno Chiyo, *Watakushi wa itsudemo isogashii* [I’m always busy] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2004), 245, Kindle edition.

⁸⁰ Uno, *Watakushi no okeshō jinseishi*, 157.

boy laughed at her appearances when she passed him. She had purchased a set of Western clothes for the first time in order to attend a party, and she was not familiar with Western clothes at that time. The elevator boy laughed at her nonsensical fashion.⁸¹ Furthermore, Uno also indicates in “I’m always busy” that a male teacher who worked at the same school as Uno told other teachers that her appearance reminded him of *hatsuniума*.⁸² These episodes are related to one another, explaining what kind of environment Uno was surrounded by, in terms of beauty aesthetics. This is part of the reason why Uno tried to hide her complexion with makeup. Having white skin is central to *bijin*, which holds a certain status for her.

2.4 Elegance and Femininity

We have explored the traditional beauty looks through *bijinga*, beauty pageants, and Uno’s writings. This section discusses the notion of elegance, which is closely connected to the standard of *yamato-nadeshiko* or *bijin*. With respect to elegance, women (especially) in the Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa were judged on three main points: (1) makeup/hairstyle, (2) clothes, and (3) behavior (e.g., how to walk, how to cross one’s legs, how to talk, how to move one’s fingers). I turn now to explore elegance and femininity, which arises from women behaving elegantly, by looking at some women’s magazines, particularly *Shufu no tomo*, *Fujin gahō*, *Fujin*

⁸¹ Uno, *Watakushi no okeshō jinseishi*, 65.

⁸² *Hatsuniума* are carriages with lots of gorgeous decorations that merchants used to sell their products in new year. Uno, *Watakushi wa itsudemo isogashii*, 230.

club, and *Fujin kōron*, to examine how beauty experts presented elegance in women primarily during the Shōwa period.

“Elegance” has a range of meanings in Japan; women’s magazines used several different expressions for this notion: (1) *shitoyaka* (淑やか), (2) *jouhin* (上品), (3) *seiso* (清楚), (4) *tsutsumashiyaka* (慎ましやか), (5) *onnarashii* (女らしい), and (6) *yuubi* (優美).⁸³ All of these except (5) should be translated as “elegance,” “grace,” or “graciousness” in English, and basically are words used for describing women. In many cases, when these terms are used, they are used together with *onnarashii*, femininity. Thus elegance and femininity have similar meanings and are extremely connected to each other.

2.4.1 Elegant Behavior

As mentioned in the section on beauty pageants, elegance is one of the most important elements in the field of beauty aesthetics, and geisha were the role models of elegance. Elegance shows up not only in makeup but also in reference to behavior, fashion, and or hairstyles. This section addresses elegant behavior, based on the article “From makeup beauty to behavior beauty-化粧美より動作美へ-,” written by a professor in a girl’s school, Ishiya Takeko, and published in *Fujin gahō* on October 1, 1926, the last year of the Taishō period (1912-1926).⁸⁴ In the article, Ishiya says:

⁸³ These terms expressing elegance come from the main resources of women’s magazine collections supervised by Iwami.

⁸⁴ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 146.

As the saying goes, “dressed neatly, and behaved beautifully.” Japan has respected both dressing up and behavior as ideals of beautiful appearances. In terms of “appearance,” or beauty as modified by clothes and makeup, people have paid much attention and analyzed carefully how to become more beautiful. However, as for “the beauty of behavior,” which consist of both physical beauty and spiritual beauty, it tends to be forgotten; nevertheless, the beauty of behavior beauty is essential to obtain authentic beauty.⁸⁵

Beautiful behaviors have been regarded as an essential point in terms of elegance in Japan until today. However, according to Ishiya, many people in the Taishō period focused more on beautiful looks or stylish clothes and tended to put less emphasis on behavior. As the main cause of this, Ishiya points out that cultural developments had affected traditional Japanese cultures and people in various ways. For example, Ishiya claims,

Originally, traditional Japanese cultural expressions such as tea ceremony or dance were good practice for women to acquire beautiful behavior. However, these practices were effective ways to make women look more beautiful when they were in kimono, and when their lifestyles were also Japanese-style, but more recently women in Western clothes have increased. Some people say that Japanese do not fit in Western clothes. Nevertheless, the problem is not race but behavior. Kimono hid their body shape, but Western clothes revealed how they

⁸⁵ My translation.

have not cared about their behavior. Thus, women should adapt themselves to the current lifestyle and fashion styles.⁸⁶

In the magazine discussion of “From makeup beauty to behavior beauty,” some authors wrote about Japanese dance (*Nihon buyō* 日本舞踊) as a means to improve women’s elegance. Ishiya remarked, “even though learning *buyō* is hard, you can include the basic movements in your daily life. The basic movements of *buyō* require you to move your entire body to express the beauty of behavior, therefore, women who start practicing *buyō* can obtain beautiful movement.”⁸⁷ Hayashi Kimuko also encouraged women to learn *buyō*, saying that “girls’ parents make their daughters learn dance in order to let them acquire the way to walk and to behave, the way to move when they are in kimono in order to make them look more *shitoyaka* or elegant and beautiful.”⁸⁸ Hayashi also said, “Even though some of your parents might have controlled you like dolls and let you learn practice *buyō*, now you are adults and you have to make your own choices. Therefore, I recommend young women to learn *nihon buyō* for women’s beauty.”⁸⁹ Furthermore, Kōno (Kawano) Motohiko suggested that ballroom dance is effective for correcting housewives’ postures and body shape. Especially these days when Western clothes have become popular, she says, and some women have already changed their fashion styles, ballroom dance

⁸⁶ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 147.

⁸⁷ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 147.

⁸⁸ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 150.

⁸⁹ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 150.

can correct your leg shape as well.⁹⁰ This is because straightening one's back to maintain good posture is part of elegant behavior.

Many traditional Japanese cultural expressions, such as calligraphy, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, kendo, and dance, focus on posture. Satoka Mitsuna, who worked as an airline stewardess for twenty-five years, is currently a lecturer on elegant behaviors. When she interviewed a *maiko-han*, Satoka noticed that she hid her hands into her kimono when she did not use them. Even though the *maiko-han* said this was because she did not put powder on her hands, Satoka realized that not moving one's hands could make people look beautiful, because hands express feelings and even lifestyles.⁹¹ Satoka points out that keeping one's fingers straight and together looks elegant in women. Also, according to Satoka, squeezing one's hips, straightening the back and back of the knees, and making the direction of toes and knees the same all help to make one's posture beautiful.

⁹⁰ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 152.

⁹¹ Satoka Mitsuna, “‘Utsukushikumiseru’ tameni, CA ga yatteinukoto 8tsu” [8 things that CA keep in their mind to “make them look more beautiful”], Tabi Labo, August 24, 2015, accessed March 10, 2021, <https://tabi-labo.com/139300/want-to-see-again5>.

2.4.2 Elegance and Tranquility

Women's magazines descriptions of behavior were also important points for women learning to be elegant. What does elegance mean in behavior? One point, as I have noted, is posture. In addition, "not making noise" or quietness is another essential element.

Tranquility has played an important role in Japan. Traditional gardens and tea ceremony are examples of such quietness. In tea ceremony, the host tries not to make noise when putting the container of tea powder and whisk on the tray. Both the host and the guest served by the host required quietness in order to listening to the sounds of nature, and for mindfulness, according to Murata Jukō (1423-1502), the founder of the tea ceremony.⁹² This mindfulness or spiritual beauty is connected to elegance. On the subject of quietness and behavior, popular actor Hanayanagi Shōtarō and beauty expert Hayami Kimiko discussed tips on how to become beautiful women in *Fujin club*, October 1, 1937. The main topic was, "How to make yourself appear elegant and beautiful." Hanayanagi gave a clear tip about behavior:

If you want to make yourself look elegant, it is needless to say, but sitting and standing or other daily movements should be done quietly, and women in particular should pay attention to the lower body. When walking, you'd better keep your knees together and walk as if you were walking on a line. Put your

⁹² "Sadō 'Murata Jukō, Takeno Jōō, Sen no Rikyū' no rekishi" [The history of Japanese tea ceremony based on Murata Jukō, Takeno Jōō, and Sen no Rikyū style], Fujiwara chaho, July 27, 2008, accessed January 1, 2021, <http://www.fujiwara-chaho.co.jp/hpgen/HPB/entries/20.html>.

shoulders backwards, and don't move your upper body much; in other words, do not shake your shoulders, and tuck your chin in.⁹³

According to Hanayanagi, this posture is the basic manner, and important when actresses played the role of elegant daughters or women in the Taishō, soon after women were first allowed on stage. In addition, Hayami indicates the relationship between tea ceremony and elegance by giving an example:

To speak about my friend, her daughter showed a lack of elegance and femininity even when she graduated from girl's school. Therefore, she decided to let her daughter learn about tea ceremony. Her daughter had already learned tea ceremony in her school, but she was then in a school uniform, which does not match to the atmosphere of tea ceremony (laughter). Then, her behavior completely changed after she learned tea ceremony in earnest. Mothers should make their daughters learn tea ceremony at least for a couple of years.⁹⁴

In this context, tea ceremony requires quietness, not making extra noise, and slow movements are crucial. This slow movement generates elegance.

A popular geisha in the Shōwa period, Baikiku, gave tips to make women look elegant in *Fujin club*, December 1, 1933:

How to behave is to make the best of your beautiful makeup and perfect kimono. What geisha keep in mind is opening their mouths as quietly as possible to make themselves look elegant. Also, putting your sleeves on the kimono when sitting

⁹³ My translation.

⁹⁴ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 267.

make your posture beautiful. This is a little bit old-fashioned, but the posture is feminine. Also, walking with the feet turned out is important, but not too much.⁹⁵

In this passage, Baikiku encourages women to pay attention to the way they talk and the way they move their lips so that their beautiful makeup and kimono look more beautiful. Moving the lips and talking quietly is also an important element of authentic *bijin*.

2.4.3 Elegance, Makeup, and Hairstyle

In terms of makeup, firstly, women who wear light makeup or have natural looks were regarded as *bijin*, since light makeup makes women seem humble, quiet, or natural, and this modest impression that makeup gives to women can be elegant. In a column entitled “Symposium about how to make beautiful women discussed by beautiful painters and beauty experts,” published in *Shufu no tomo*, January 1, 1934, beauty experts discussed what kind of women look beautiful. A male artist, Iwata Sentarō, explained, “I like the women who are classical, and elegant, and I cannot like someone who has a tight perm and wears thick makeup.”⁹⁶ Another artist, Hayashi Tadaichi, said, “Well, women who are neat, clean, and elegant are the best. Someone who is putting on eye shadow or lipstick thickly is not my type.”

Japan tends now to encourage women to look healthy. One of the reasons that cosmetics brands produce several kinds of foundation colors might be that Japanese society started focusing on healthy appearances as a new aesthetic value. According to makeup-culture

⁹⁵ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 197.

⁹⁶ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 201.

researcher Yamamura Hiromi, Japanese makeup had been based on the “three colors,” i.e., red (for lips and cheeks), black (for eyebrows and teeth), and white (for the face), since ancient times, and makeup utilizing these three colors were the traditional method, as we have seen.⁹⁷ Yamamura points to an advertisement posted in *Fuzoku gahō* (風俗画報) in 1896.⁹⁸ The advertisement is about foundations, and the brand released two kinds, white and beige. According to Yamamura, beige foundations were produced by 1896, yet it was only from 1907 that women’s magazines and beauty books started focusing on the use of beige-colored foundations to make skin natural.⁹⁹

Another example is a discussion, involving beauty experts, dancers, popular actors, and geisha, focused on foundations and facial creams, published in *Shufu no tomo*, October 1, 1932.¹⁰⁰ An interviewer starts conversation by noting that “recently Japanese, foundations have changed, since darker skin is said to be better.” A dancer, Hanayanagi Sumi, says, “Foundations are no longer utilized for making skin whiter. The change of architectural styles, and the trend of Western clothes, have enabled women to change their foundation colors from white to beige in order to express healthy beauty.”¹⁰¹ Famous beauty expert Marie Louise said in the same discussion, “It was almost twenty years ago that I recommended colored foundations to Japan, but only since last year have Japanese women finally started buying colored foundations

⁹⁷ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 10-25.

⁹⁸ Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, 108.

⁹⁹ Yamamura, *Keshō no nihonshi*, 108.

¹⁰⁰ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 166.

¹⁰¹ Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 10, 166-167.

according to each one's skin tones.”¹⁰² Thus people in the Shōwa period started focusing on healthy appearance, and this became another point of elegance. The healthy aesthetic corresponded to a naturalistic orientation in makeup.

As the Miss Nippon Contest demonstrates, beauty means not only looks but also behavior. Elegance has been important to traditional Japanese culture and history; therefore, Japanese people tend to focus on elegance in their behavior. Japanese cultural expressions particularly emphasize good posture and tranquility, and these elements were adopted into conceptions of women's beauty.

More recently, in the Shōwa, people started to pay attention to natural beauty, which is now also regarded as elegant. Considering that the notion of elegance is important to Japanese cultural expressions, it is no wonder that women who meet its conditions are regarded as *yamato-nadeshiko*, or orthodox *bijin*, and that many Japanese would agree readily.

This chapter has explored what makes beauty “standard” in Japan. We clarified the standard of beautiful looks by exploring beauty pageants, and elegance by examining women's magazines. Both standards of looks and behavior arise from Japanese history. As for looks, many elements, such as almond eyes that make women look strong and independent, well-defined nose, black hair, and white skin have continued since the Heian period (in terms of white skin, since the Asuka). Furthermore, one thing that I would highlight here is that these fixed notions of elegant and beauty can sometimes make it difficult for people to accept something new in aesthetics. I will explain this in more detail in chapter 4.

¹⁰² Iwami, *Fujin zasshi*, vol. 11, 166-167.

CHAPTER 3

Standards of Kawaii as Created by Men

As noted in the introduction, kawaii is not only a subculture, but also a women's field in terms of makeup aesthetics. With the notion of *bijin* firmly fixed, women started adapting themselves to a new kawaii culture when Takehisa Yumeji developed the kawaii field in the Taishō period. In contemporary Japan, the poverty of Japanese vocabulary is worrying, and one of its effects is that “kawaii” can be utilized widely, in any situations and about any things. In other words, kawaii has greatly diversified and developed since the Taishō period. Women in modern Japan tried to adapt themselves to kawaii in order to evade the fixed and stifling notion of *bijin*, yet while kawaii culture is much more flexible than *bijin* aesthetics, kawaii is also fixed by mass media—and through it, by men. This chapter examines the culture of kawaii as formulated through Japanese idol cultures.

3.1 Origins of Kawaii Culture: The *Bijinga* of Takehisa Yumeji

Takehisa Yumeji (1884-1934), a writer and painter, was also a famous designer. According to Takaya Kikuko, Takehisa pursued a new concept of beauty as a pioneering graphic designer, creating picture envelopes, postcards, stationery, book covers, covers for musical

scores, and a wide range of illustrations.¹⁰³ He also collaborated with companies to design advertisements: packages for Meiji milk caramel and other chocolates as well as cosmetics; poster representations of beautiful women; *ukiyo*e.¹⁰⁴ His advertisement designs appeared in such

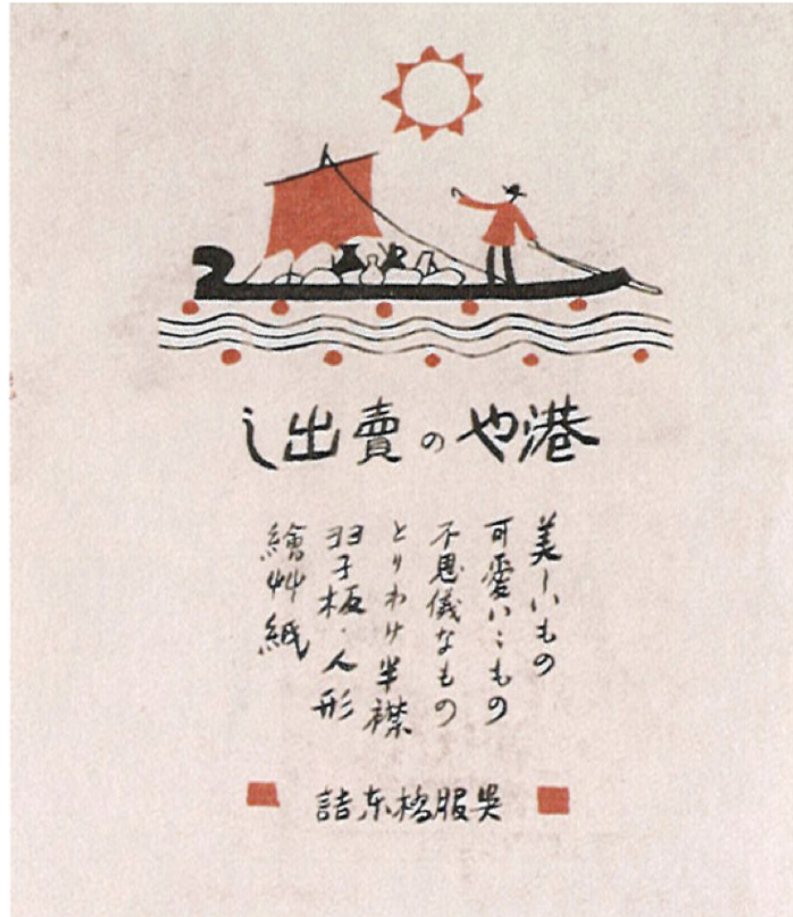


Fig.24: Advertisement for Minatoya shop, owned by Takehisa Yumeji, 1914 ©Takaya Kikuko/2019.

department stores as *Mitsukoshi*. In 1914, Takehisa started his own business and managed a shop

¹⁰³ Takaya Kikuko, “A study on Yumeji Takehisa’s unique way of designing,”

Hachinohe Kōgyō University Journal 38 (March 2019), 3,

<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/268252496.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ Takaya, “A study on Yumeji Takehisa’s unique way of designing,” 3.

named *Minatoya ezōshi-ten* (港屋絵草紙店), hoping to improve his life as an artist and to polish his aesthetic works; this shop was the origin of *kawaii* culture.¹⁰⁵ Figure 24, the advertisement of his shop, reads, “Beautiful items, *kawaii* items, mysterious items, especially collars for kimono, *hagoita*, dolls, and picture books.”¹⁰⁶ Already Takehisa utilized the word *kawaii* to explain his own aesthetic values in his works, and it would be the origin: Takehisa was the pioneer of *kawaii* culture through graphic design which did previously exist. Takehisa also drew *bijinga* as well as



Fig.25: Beautiful women *bijinga* wearing kimono, illustrated by Takehisa Yumeji © Masuda Yoshitaka, *Jappaaan magazine*, 2018.

designing kimono, the latter having now taken over as “Taishō Roman” patterns. Takehisa thus holds a high reputation in modern Japan as one of the greatest painters, designers, writers, and poets, although he has not generally been recognized in other countries. Importantly, his retro-

¹⁰⁵ Takaya, “A study on Yumeji Takehisa’s unique way of designing,” 7.

¹⁰⁶ My translation.

design items have gained great popularity among women, and the “Taishō Roman boom” remains much-loved. The trend covers more than kimono, as well: Taishō Roman-inspired cafeterias or interiors are widely popular regardless of age and gender. In this respect, I would say that Takehisa Yumeji, in causing the boom and developing the *kawaii* concept that has spread all over the world, created the “coolest” of Japanese traditional pop cultures. Yet while Takehisa described his designs as *kawaii*, his concept of *kawaii* was not yet adapted to women’s appearance in general; it is specifically in his presentation of eyes that he created the new aesthetic.

Figure 25 shows his *bijinga*, “Takehisa Yumeji Onna Jūdai (竹久夢二 女十題), completed in 1921, known as the origin of Yumeji-style *bijinga* (夢二式美人画).”¹⁰⁷ Apart from the rightmost, the women are in modern pattern kimono. In terms of color scheme and shades, Takehisa’s colors are dusty and smoky, giving a chic impression. Each kimono has just a few patterns and looks simple compared to the *bijinga* explored in Chapter 2. As a designer who started his business to sell his own work, he might adapt the *kawaii* aesthetic to his designs. When it comes to the women’s general appearance, all have many common points with the traditional standard of *yamato-nadeshiko*: white skin, oval face, well-defined nose. In this respect, Takehisa took over the standard *bijin*. Yet a crucial difference from other *bijinga* is the

¹⁰⁷ Masuda Yoshitaka, “Jōcho afureru kimonosugata mo chūmoku! Taishō roman, Takehisa Yumeji no daihyōsaku ‘Onna Jūdai’ wo zensaku gosyōkai” [Amazing quaint atmosphere kimono! Introduction of entire ‘10 women’ depicted by Taishō roman, Takehisa Yumeji], Japaaan (website), Magazine, November 27, 2017, accessed March 10, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/mag.japaaan.com/archives/65174/amp>.

depiction of eyes: most of the women in his *bijinga* have eyes that slant down, something now regarded as *kawaii*, and in strong contrast to the almond eyes of women in traditional *bijinga*. Another element is the occasional use of “*sanpaku* eyes” (三白眼). Because some anime characters have the particular type of *sanpaku* eyes called *jitome* (ジト目), many people now think *sanpaku* eyes are a Japanese idea, but they actually came from ancient Chinese physiognomy. In terms of physiognomy, *sanpaku* were not included as one of the essential elements of *bijin*, even though celebrities either in the contemporary Japan or other countries who have *sanpaku* eyes are popular, since the eyes make people look mysterious and cool. These two features, dropping eyes and *sanpaku* eyes, which are not found in traditional *bijinga*, make Takehisa’s works look different. Insofar as his works challenge standard *bijin*, Takehisa gave many Taishō women hopes of chasing their ideals of beauty by adapting themselves to *kawaii* aesthetics.

Takehisa laid the foundation of *kawaii* aesthetics in the Taishō period. His *bijinga* have a different atmosphere than the traditional *bijinga* of the Heian or Edo periods. In most cases, Takehisa focuses on his kimono designs, yet the crucial changes come with his expression of women’s looks in terms of their eyes. Although other features followed the traditional, standard *bijin*, these eyes have unique features, disturbing orthodox *bijin* aesthetics. In this respect, Takehisa provided a new aesthetic for many women.

3.2 Idols in Modern Japan

This section examines the standard of *kawaii* aesthetics that was created by men and by mass media. Takehisa’s new aesthetic, *kawaii*, offered many women hope of pursuing their own *kawaii* aesthetics, and in this respect the *kawaii* culture he created was a turning point for

Japanese women to break out of the tyranny of *bijin*. However, as Ishiya Takeko pointed out in her article mentioned above, titled “From makeup beauty to behavior beauty, cultural and technological development affected people to the point of determining what kawaii is or which women are kawaii. Especially after black-and-white television sets became common in 1952, producing a range of programs and celebrities, Japanese idols have had much in common when it comes to makeup and hairstyles. This section examines what kinds of girls are regarded as kawaii by exploring the idols’ makeup and hairstyles.

To clarify the standard, I have chosen Matsuda Seiko, Kawai Naoko, and Nakamori Akina as the representative Shōwa idols, and the members of the band Nogizaka46 as the representative Heisei and Reiwa idols. These idols are extremely popular among men, and thus good examples to determine the standard of kawaii. On the other hand, I also consider the most famous (in Japan) K-pop idol groups, TWICE and BLACKPINK. Unlike the Japanese idol groups, K-pop girls’ idol groups have a large number of female fans. Exploring K-pop idols alongside their J-pop competitors will help to clarify differences in makeup between the preferences of male and female consumers of kawaii culture.

3.3 Shōwa Idols

It was in 1971 that Japan began to utilize the term “idol” to describe the growing industry of young pop stars appearing on a TV show entitled “A Star Is Born.” Since 1971, many such



Fig.26 (left): Famous Shōwa idol Matsuda Seiko’s natural makeup ©girls channel, 2018; geinoumedia, 2020
Fig.27 (right): Famous Shōwa idol Kawai Naoko’s natural makeup ©gēnōtabloid, 2017; entopi, 2016

stars have been produced, and built careers as popular idols. Among Matsuda Seiko (Figure 26), Kawai Naoko (Figure 27), and Nakamori Akina, the most famous Japanese idols in 1980s, it was particularly Matsuda and Kawai who obtained large popularity from men.

In terms of hairstyle, both Matsuda and Kawai wore bangs and rarely showed their foreheads. Matsuda’s curly hairstyle, called the Seiko-chan cut, was imitated by many women in their twenties. Both Matsuda and Kawai also had clear double eyelids and large eyes; their noses were small, round, and well-defined. They had black hair, and used makeup lightly. In most cases, they applied light-colored lipstick, such as light orange or pink glosses, rather than thick red lipstick. Compared with the lips and blush, eye makeup was thicker, consisting of black mascara and black eyeliner on not only the upper but also the lower eyelids; nevertheless, because they drew the eyeliner thinly, it still looked natural. As for the face line, both have

relatively round rather than oval faces. Perhaps surprisingly, but within Japanese aesthetics quite typically, both Matsuda and Kawai had “double teeth” (*yaeba* 八重歯) at that time, a fanglike or snaggle-toothed appearance that people commonly regard as kawaii.



Fig.28: Shōwa idol Nakamori Akina’s makeup collection

Even though Nakamori, as seen in in figure 28, sometimes wore similar makeup to that of Matsuda and Kawai, she changed makeup significantly to alter her image and atmosphere. In general, the images on the right half of the figure are regarded as *bijin*. For example, the Twitterer who posted the figures above comments, “Akina with bangs is like a pretty girl, but the Akina without bangs is like an extreme *bijin*.”¹⁰⁸ Akina with bangs wears light makeup, and the natural makeup makes her eyes look slanted down, rendering the atmosphere soft and adorable. She has small lips, nose, and round face. This is in keeping with the trend since the Shōwa era

¹⁰⁸ Twitter feed @H_H00723, April 11, 2019, 1:55, accessed March 11, 2021, https://twitter.com/h_h00723/status/1160429427114643456?lang=de.

for idols to curl their hair, making their faces look round. On the other hand, Akina without bangs applies thick, dark-red lipstick. The texture looks matte, rather than gloss. Eye makeup is also thicker; particularly because she put thick eyeliner around the outer corner of her eyes, Akina's double eyelids are hidden and look slanted, making the atmosphere *bijin*. In this respect, we see clearly the important of double or round eyes to creating a cute atmosphere and *kawaii* aesthetics.

Kudō Shizuka (Figures 29-30), who debuted in 1986, had a different atmosphere from Matsuda, Kawai, and Nakamori. Kudō joined the large idol group *Onyanko Club*, produced by

80年代メイク

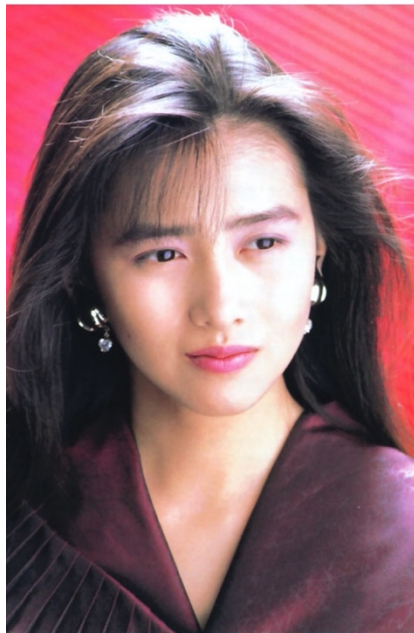


Fig.29-30: Kudō Shizuka's makeup in the 1980s ©takumijun's blog, 2013 (left); Youtube by starrysky, 2018 (right)

Akimoto Yasushi, who also produced AKB48 and 46 groups.¹⁰⁹ From the beginning, Kudō wore relatively thick makeup to make her appear mature.

The figures show Kudō in 1980s. Unlike the other idols who had pure concepts such as Matsuda and Kawai, Kudō's long hair, thick eyebrows, light pink-purple eyeshadow, bluish pink lipstick or dark red brown lipstick, large earrings and vivid colored fashion styles clearly make her remarkable. Compared with the other three idols, Kudō's image concept at that time was “bad girl” (*Yankī kyara* ヤンキーキャラ).¹¹⁰ Kudō's makeup shows us how she was categorized in terms of character, and aesthetics, in a different group from the other idols discussed.

In short, popular Shōwa idols who were categorized in the orthodox, “pure” group have many qualities in common in terms of black hair color, bangs, double eyelids, round eyes, and light makeup applied over light-colored foundation to tone their faces up. Among the Shōwa idols, particularly the orthodox, “pure” idols, natural looks were regarded as *kawaii*.

¹⁰⁹ Kasai Katsuji was the main producer of Onyanko, while Akimoto was the main producer of the AKB groups and 46 groups.

¹¹⁰ Koimousagi, “Kudō Shizuka no mukashi wa? Onyanko ushirogamihikaretaijidai wa? hittokyoku wa?” [What was Kudō Shizuka like? How was her “ushirogamihikaretai” era? What are her most popular songs?], Koimousagi no burogu, n.d., accessed March 11, 2021, <https://koimousagi.com/20636.html>.

3.4 Heisei and Reiwa idols

This section examines some of the elements that have come to define kawaii in the Heisei and Reiwa idols. Because 46 groups are large idol groups, I choose some of the girls in those groups as examples for examining makeup.



Figure 31: Nogizaka46 Special Edition CD cover ©amazon.com, 2018

Figure 31 shows Japan's most popular idol group today, Nogizaka46. Nogizaka46 is called the "younger sisters" of AKB 48, and both bands are managed by official producer Akimoto Yasushi. Most of Nogizaka46's members have bangs: only three of the twenty-one girls do not have bangs. However, unlike the Shōwa idols, some Nogizaka46 members dye their hair light brown, albeit most have natural black or dark brown hair color. Most of the members have long hair. Then there is white makeup: white skin had a new boom in Japanese society from the 2000s, challenged intermittently by a black skin boom, with the white skin look coming to dominate in the 2010s, after which having white skin became a crucial element both in *bijin* and *kawaii*.¹¹¹ And indeed, all of the Nogizaka46 girls have white skins and use light-colored foundation.

Continuing to focus on makeup, consider particularly Nishino Nanase and Shiraishi Mai, the top two members in Nogizaka46. Because Nishino is generally categorized as *kawaii* and Shiraishi as *bijin*, we can fairly directly compare their makeup to clarify the differences.

¹¹¹ "Gal bunka no rekishi: nendairyūkō" [History of gal culture: Trendy boom by decades], Nendai-Ryūkō, 2014, accessed March 11, 2021, <https://nendai-ryuukou.com/history/012.html>.



Fig.32-33 (top row): Nishino Nanase's makeup, before 2010 debut ©Love&Peace; ©Pinterest
Fig.34-35 (bottom row): after debut ©idol report, 2018; ©beauvo topics, 2020

Figures 32-35 show Nishino, who passed the audition to enter Nogizaka46 in 2011. The two figures on the top were taken immediately before and after her debut. When an interviewer asked Nishino what she was like when she was in high school, she said, “I looked a bit *gal* at that time. Because of the trend, I had thin eyebrows. I also worn colored contact lenses, my hair was lighter, and long. My skin was also darker. But after my debut, my skin got whiter because I

became introverted and rarely go outside.”¹¹² As Nishino said, her eyebrows are thin and light brown. On the whole her makeup shows less color. She applies the dark orange blush, and the way to use blush also is different from the current Nishino, swept across the cheekbone, starting low and moving upwards. According to women’s magazine *And Girl*, applying blush on the side of the cheek like pre-debut Nishino makes the face looks mature.¹¹³ As for black makeup, the pre-debut Nishino looks like she wears black-colored contact lenses. Indeed, despite her interview, many fans assume that she is one of the members who wears or wore colored contact lenses. One of the characteristics of such lenses is that light is dulled and thus eyes seem not to reflect what the person is looking at. Looking at the images, there is a high possibility that Nishino wore black-colored lenses. Colored lenses have been extremely popular among women since the 1990s, when such lenses spread in Japan; not only Nishino but also many ordinary

¹¹² “Nishino Nanase ‘gal’ datta joshikōseijidai: Iroguro, hosomayu, karakon wo kokuhaku” [Nishino Nanase’s “gal” era in high school: Dark skin, thin eyebrows, and colored contact lenses], Crank-in, July 27, 2019, accessed March 11, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/m.crank-in.net/news/67142/1/amp>.

¹¹³ “Onaji iro demo ōkiku inshō ga kawaru ‘otona ga dekiru inshōbetsu no cheek no irekata’ dōgakaisetus” [Your atmosphere can be greatly changed even with the same blush color: Video lecture on “the way to apply blush according to the impression you want to obtain”], *And Girl*, August 18, 2017, <https://www.andgirl.jp/beauty/10436?page=2>.

women use the lenses in their daily lives.¹¹⁴ In a sense, colored lenses are a new addition to the aesthetics of black makeup.

Nishino's looks changed dramatically over the next ten years. Currently, Nishino has flat-shaped eyebrows which make her atmosphere soft. She dyes her hair lighter, and the curly bangs make her look pretty rather than *bijin*. In addition, the way of sweeping blush changed: she applies blush on the middle of her cheekbone, in a round shape. Lipstick color too has changed, from very light pink gloss to a pink-beige color. Her eye makeup is light, but it looks like she has double eyelids. Furthermore, as Nishino said, her skin has become white.

¹¹⁴ Hitomi Jun, "Color contact lens no rekishi" [History of colored contact lenses], Refrear official website, January 2019, accessed March 11, 2021, <https://refrear.jp/seminar/カラーコンタクトレンズの歴史/>.



Fig.36: Shiraishi Mai's natural makeup with bangs ©insiderdevtour.com
 Fig.37: Shiraishi Mai's girl makeup ©atama-bijin.jp
 Fig.38: Shiraishi Mai's girl makeup in beauty magazine Ray ©premj.jp
 Fig.39: Front cover of beauty magazine Maquia ©charmey/2017

Turning now to the other popular member, Shiraishi Mai (Figures 36-39), we see that as with Nishino, her atmosphere also greatly changes by means of makeup. In terms of facial elements, Shiraishi has features of both *kawaii* and *bijin*. Most significantly, there are her large eyes and double eyelids, which make her atmosphere change depending on the colors and methods of using makeup. Shiraishi as we see her on the bottom line has no bangs. Her hair color is light brown, and she applies the same color to her eyebrows as to her hair. Even though more

than 70% of Japanese men prefer black hair,¹¹⁵ brown hair color is well-established among women; in this respect, the black makeup aesthetic has changed in modern Japan. Moreover, Shiraishi applied deep pink colored lipsticks, and her eye makeup is also thick. By contrast, however, the Shiraishi on the top line looks *kawaii* rather than *bijin*. First, she has bangs, which make her eyes large. According to SEPHORA, the more bangs are closer to eyes, the more the eyes look large, and larger eyes in turn make people look young or *kawaii*. Beyond the size of her eyes, Shiraishi (top left) makes her eyes look slanted down by using eyeliner, which in addition she does not apply at all to her lower eyelids, and this changes her atmosphere from a cool or strong woman to a soft woman. As for eyebrows, the color is lighter and thinner, and the shape changes from slanted to flat-shaped. Lipstick colors too are lighter than with Shiraishi as she appears in the bottom line.

To summarize, for Japanese idols, the *kawaii* standard consists of the following elements: (1) bangs, (2) black or dark brown hair color, (3) white skin, (4) natural and light makeup, and (5) round-shaped eyes with double eyelids. In terms of colored makeup, black makeup has been changed from black to brown in the modern Japan.

¹¹⁵ “Kurokami wa yappari nihonjon no miryoku? Moteru joshi no kamiiro wo chōsa shitemita” [Is black hair the most attractive? Survey on which hair color is most attractive to men], Irabu Column, Lifestyle, March 3, 2015, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://www.ielove.co.jp/column/hatena/00384/>.

3.5 K-pop Idols

This section explores the K-pop idol groups to compare how their kawaii aesthetics differ from those of Japanese idols. K-pop groups, especially TWICE and BLACKPINK, have significantly more female than male fans, and are quite popular among Japanese women as well. The K-pop idols boom has had such an effect on Japanese *otaku* culture and contemporary Japan in general that many women call themselves idol *otaku*. Exploring K-pop idols will lead us to the differences between the standards of kawaii among men and women.



Fig.40: BLACKPINK: Top row, JISOO and LISA; bottom row, JENNY and ROSE © ENFANTS TERRIBLES, 2020

BLACKPINK, one of the most famous K-pop idol groups, began their history in 2016 (Figure 40). LISA is Thai, and the rest of the members Korean. Even though many K-pop idols

have extremely flashy colored hair and thick makeup, BLACKPINK is nevertheless conspicuous in this respect. According to one Twitterer, the gender ratio at BLACKPINK fan sign events was 12% men and 88% women.¹¹⁶



Fig.41: LISA with orange hair ©JOAH/2017

Fig.42: LISA with black hair ©twitter, BLINK ONCE/2017

Fig.43: LISA with blond hair ©rank1

Fig.44: LISA from advertisements of M.A.C ©PR TIMES/2020

¹¹⁶ The survey was conducted in 2015.

In Japan, LISA is the most popular member (Figures 41-44).¹¹⁷ As indicated by these images of her wearing different types of makeup, LISA has large eyes, and her double eyelids are wide. Her nose is small and well-defined. An interesting characteristic is her way of drawing eyelines. Although the left half of her eyelines are thinner, her eyeliner shape is “cat’s-eye”: that is, she draws a line starting from the inner corner of her eyes, moving to the outward. This type of eyeliner is not popular among Japanese men, while women have positive opinions.¹¹⁸ In addition, LISA adds a bit more color on her face aside from the eye makeup. Her lipstick color is thicker than among the Japanese idols, and LISA applies matte-texture lipstick rather than glosses. As for eyeshadow, LISA put glitter and vividly-colored eyeshadow on her eyelids—once again very different from the Japanese girls’ choice of beige, brown, or light baby pink eyeshadow depending on the “TPO.”¹¹⁹ LISA wears colored lenses, varying among blue, green,

¹¹⁷ “BLACKPINK member ninki jun saishinban! Kankoku de ninki nanowa dare?” [The most recent BLACKPINK popularity ranking! Who is the most popular member in Korea?], Toretame, February 7, 2020, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://toretame.jp/blackpink-member-popularity-ranking.html/2>.

¹¹⁸ “Dansei ni kikimashita! Torendo demo yameta hō ga ii! Hi motemeiku 4 sen” [Men’s opinions! Better not do these even though they’re trendy! 4 makeup ways that are not popular for men], Biglobe Beauty, February 20, 2019, accessed April 2, 2021, https://beauty.biglobe.ne.jp/news/beauty/mic_190220_8422395437/.

¹¹⁹ TPO, a term from Japanese social aesthetics, means that people should groom themselves according to Time, Place, and Occasion. For example, beige-based makeup is for work, pink-based for dating, and reddish for hanging out with other women.

or purple. Whereas many women’s magazines and other media recommend black or brown colored lenses because of their natural beauty look, K-pop idols like LISA wear vividly-colored lenses, and the looks that colored lenses give are once again more popular among women. Since both Japanese *bijin* aesthetics and kawaii aesthetics are based on a natural-look makeup, the colored lenses, eyeliners, and hair colors all fall outside the norms of the Japanese “standard.” This may be one reason why so many Japanese women are attracted by K-pop idols.



Fig.45: TWICE ©twice777.secsaa.net/2016. MINA, MOMO, and SANA: Japanese. TZUYU: Taiwanese. NAYEON, DAHYUN, JIHYO, CHAEYONG, and JEONGYEON: Korean.

Another popular K-pop idol group is TWICE. Since 2015, TWICE has attracted an enormous fanbase regardless of age, nationality, or gender. The band has nine members; three are Japanese, one Taiwanese, and the remaining five Korean.

As indicated in Figure 45, the TWICE members and their looks also change dramatically depending on events or music concepts. However, a couple of members have outstanding hair color at all times.



Fig.46: TZUYU with bangs ©totoyo37 blog, 2020

Fig.47: TZUYU with trendy floating eyeliner ©kpopmonster.jp

Fig.48: TZUYU with red hair ©gēnōsummary, 2020

Fig.49: TZUYU with blond hair ©gēnō entame channel, 2020

Figures 46-49 show Taiwanese member TZUYU, who is the most popular member not only in Japan but also in other countries. She has large, almond-shaped eyes, a small and well-defined nose, and small lips. In most cases, her makeup is lighter than other members'. She uses eyeliner differently from LISA, but she also has cat's-eye lines and applies relatively natural-colored eyeshadow. Her light makeup makes her look more aligned with natural beauty looks, and in terms of facial elements, her face is similar to that of Shiraishi, whose photobook sold more than 500,000 copies as of March 9, 2020, which is the top sales number among the Nogizaka46 members; Shiraishi has many female fans as well, and she was sixth out of seventy-eight in the "most popular face" ranking among women.¹²⁰ In this respect, it is no wonder that Japanese women chose TZUYU as the most favorite members. Yet TZUYU also challenged with an unusual makeup style called "floating eyeliner." People usually draw eyeliner to fill in the gap between eyelashes. However, after the digital media outlet Irish Tatler reported on Lucy Boynton wearing floating eyeliner at the SAG awards in 2019, the makeup style slowly became trendy.¹²¹ Since the eyeliner trend is popular among celebrities, it is difficult to follow this trend for

¹²⁰ "Josei ga naritai kao no yūmeijin ranking! Risō no kao No.1 no josei geinoujin wa?" [Ranking of the most popular face chosen by women! Who is the no. 1 female celebrity with the ideal face?], *Minna no ranking*, last accessed March 13, 2021, <https://ranking.net/rankings/best-woman-naritaikao>.

¹²¹ According to the media, floating eyeliner was a trend from the 1960s revived by Lucy Boynton. Emma Blanchfield, "If You Thought Winged Eyeliner Was Hard, Prepare Yourself for This New Liner Trend," *Irish Tatler* (website), July 29, 2020, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/irishtatler.com/beauty/floating-eyeliner-trend.amp>.

ordinary people; many Japanese TZUYU fans admire her for taking the trend on, and using it to show herself more beautifully.

3.6 Kawaii looks and age difference

Makeup, age and a certain kawaii look are deeply related, for several reasons. “Kawaii” has a wide variety of meanings, and can be used to describe people who are not considered young, because kawaii also operates to reference affection or respect for a person. In this case, people may describe anyone as kawaii regardless of age, gender, or appearance. Because kawaii does not always indicate looks, but also personality or behavior, kawaii is a complicated term to define. However, when people use the word kawaii in reference to people’s looks or makeup, there are quite strict age boundaries. In particular, colored lenses, false eyelashes, and blond or vivid hair colors can be controversial.

The skincare brand Astalift, owned by the famous camera company Fujifilm, employed Matsuda Seiko as their image model for their products. A photo taken in 2010, when Matsuda was 48 years old, shows Matsuda’s natural makeup.¹²² Even though she wore natural makeup during her idol era, and we cannot see a big change in her makeup, her eyebrows are slightly

¹²² “Matsuda Seiko: Nakajima Miyoki no hoppe ni “aan” Fujifilm keshōhin shinCM” [Matsuda Seiko: Put jelly serum on Nakajima Miyuki’s cheek, new CM directed by Fujifilm], Mantan-Web, September 13, 2010, accessed April 20, <https://mantan-web.jp/article/20100912dog00m200021000c.html>.

upturned and no longer the flat-shaped eyebrows marked as attractive to men. Also, her bang-less hairstyle makes her face look calm and mature.

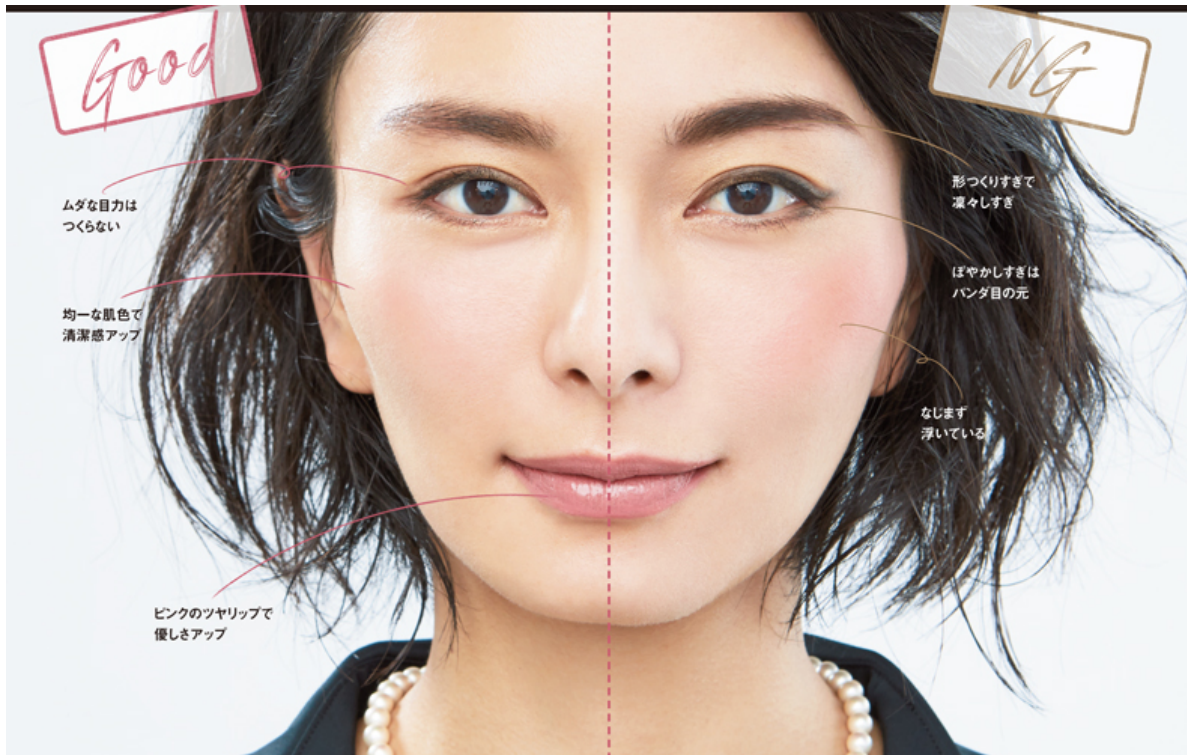


Fig.50 Best makeup for women in their 30s and 40s as suggested by web beauty magazine, *Domani*

©Domani. 2019

Figure 50 shows an approach to the best makeup for women in their 30s and 40s, as suggested by the magazine *Domani*.¹²³ A beauty, lifestyle, and fashion web magazine, *Domani* presents a great deal of information on beauty methods for women in their 30s and 40s. The

¹²³ “Otona meiku no shikata! Nachuraru ni kawaiku shiageru tekunikku de 40dai karano datsu furumeiku” [How to wear makeup for mature women? Get around old-fashioned makeup by using techniques of natural makeup that make you kawaii], *Domani*, August 21, 2019, accessed May 2, 2021, <https://domani.shogakukan.co.jp/213691>

figure indicates good makeup to imitate, and some points that women in 30s should be careful about with their makeup.¹²⁴ Compared with the left half, the right half of the model wears thick makeup. For the eyebrows, she outlines the shape of eyebrows clearly and puts on eyebrow powder thickly. She also puts vivid blue eyeshadow on her eyelids, draws eyeliner on her lower eyelashes that give her a strong look. The cheek blush is also thicker. The left side of her face, however, has similar points to Matsuda Seiko: the eyebrows are slightly upturned and not outlined; eyeshadow is in a soft pink or brown color without thick eyeliner; and cheek blush is not used thickly. In this way, most makeup magazines recommend that women in their 30s change from thick makeup to natural makeup. On the one hand, since Japanese girl's idols usually wear natural makeup, unlike K-pop idols, their looks can mostly continue to be applied when they are in their 30s or older. However, current Japanese idols such as Nogizaka46 or AKB48 wear colored lenses and eyelash extensions, and it is likely that some will quit wearing these at some point in the future. This is because, as mentioned above, colored lenses, eyelash extensions, and vivid hair colors are limited by an invisible line according to age.

¹²⁴ “Otona meiku no shikata!”

カラコンを初めて着けた年代を教えてください

278 件の回答

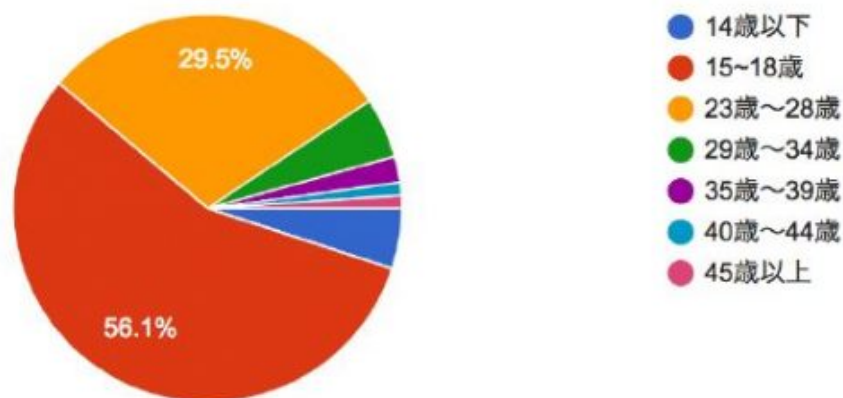


Fig.51 Survey about colored lenses by age ©Karapara007, 2019

Figure 51 shows the result of a questionnaire regarding the use of colored lenses with respect to age.¹²⁵ Based on this survey, 56.1% of women already tried wearing colored lenses while in their teens. 29.5% of women wore colored lenses in their 20s, and the percentage continued to decrease with age. The same web journal, Karapara007, also conducted a survey about when people should stop using colored lenses, finding that 24.1% of women said to stop between 35 and 39, 19.8% between 40 and 44, and 16.9% between 29 and 34, while 14%

¹²⁵ “Karakon wa nasai kara nasai made tsukeruka wo karakonyuuzaa ni ankeeto chōsa”

[Survey of users of colored lenses about from what age to what age they wear them],

Karapara007, last modified November 8, 2019, accessed April 20, 2021,

https://007s.jp/blog/until_what_age/.

answered that colored lenses are only acceptable for girls under 18.¹²⁶ However, based on another survey conducted by mynavi news, 46.3% said that people should quit using colored lenses as well as wearing miniskirts by the age of 20 to 29, and 17.0% chose under 19 as the best time to stop.¹²⁷ Clearly colored lenses are controversial beauty products, however many regard them as kawaii makeup items for young women. As for false eyelashes, 34.7% chose the age between 20 to 29 as the best age to quit wearing them.¹²⁸ Some people insist that they can use false eyelashes no matter their age, because makeup is for oneself and not for other people, but some argue that people should wear makeup according to their age.

Even though colored lenses and false eyelashes can be controversial, the age range seems relatively wide. When it comes to hair color, however, people have much stricter limitations to when they can accept vivid colors.

¹²⁶ “Karakon wa nasai kara nasai made tsukeruka wo karakonyuuzaa ni ankeeto chōsa.”

¹²⁷ Forusa, ““Kurome ga ōkiku mieru’ karakon wa nansai made yurusareru? Yakuhansū ga kaitō shita nenrei wa” [Until which age is wearing colored lenses that ‘make pupils look larger’ acceptable? The age that half the respondents chose is...], *mynavi news*, November 11, 2015, accessed April 20, 2021, <https://news.mynavi.jp/article/20151111-a404/>.

¹²⁸ Forusa, ““Kurome ga ōkiku mieru’ karakon wa nansai made yurusareru?”

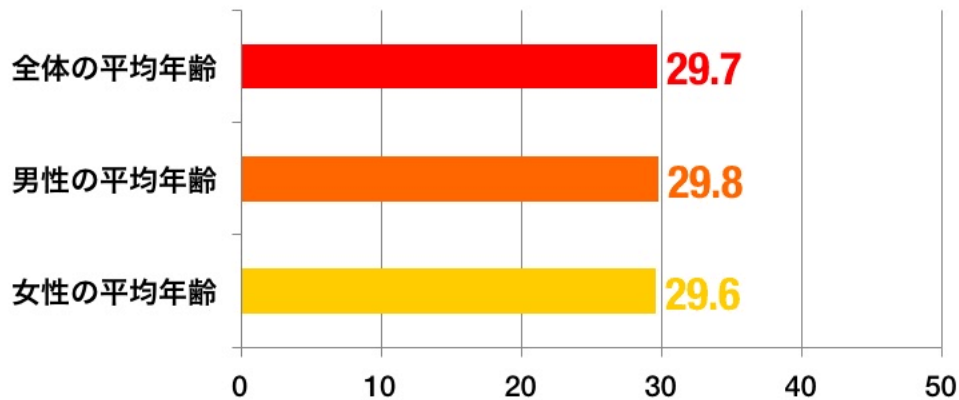


Fig.52 Survey about what age people quit dyeing their hair blond ©athome, 2016

Figure 52 shows the average age at which people think one should stop dyeing one’s hair blond.¹²⁹ The orange line represents men’s opinions, the yellow women’s, and the red an overall average. According to this survey, conducted by Athome, both men and women chose the late 20s as the borderline. Since Japanese people tend to prefer dark or natural hair colors, those with blond hair or vividly-colored hairstyles can be seen as “bad girls” or “bad boys,” making such hair coloring controversial.

In just this way, gal makeup is closely related to age. The gal magazine *Popteen* is one of the most famous gal magazines among teens, particularly high school gals. Masuwaka Tsubasa, Fujita Nicole, and Ikeda Miyu (Michopa) were employed as principal models. Fujita “graduated” (moved on from) the magazine in 2017, and Michopa in 2018; both were 19 years old at that time. It is true that Fujita and Michopa quit gal modeling to match the magazine’s teen-readership concept. However, Michopa also decided to graduate from *Popteen* because of the

¹²⁹ “Kinpatsu ya tanpan wa nansai made okkē?” [At what age will you quit blond hair or mini denim shorts?], athome, October 13, 2016, accessed May 7, 2021, <https://www.athome.co.jp/vox/life/88205/pages2/#nextpage>.

age limitations for gals, as reported by entertainment web magazine *Model Press*, quoting Michopa's remarks on the TV program, "Dare To Surprise":

Until when can I be a gal? I do not want to quit. I like gal because this is my style.

But there are no gal makeup magazines for mature women. I would like to

continue modeling. If so, I know I'd better quit being a gal....¹³⁰

Michopa was interviewed in 2018, when she was only 19 years old, but despite her youth she had already started thinking about the age limitations for a gal model. Moreover, some gal magazines have been affected these days by the natural makeup boom. Today, a lot of media push models, idols, and actresses who are naturally beautiful, such as Shiraishi Mai, Nishino Nanase, Ishihara Satomi, Mori Nana, and Nagano Mei. In this respect, the reason why so many Japanese people are into Nogizaka46 is closely related to the boom. Therefore, gal magazines like *Popteen* are inevitably changing their concept to match popular trends.

¹³⁰ "Michopa: "itsumade gyaru wo tsuzuketeii?" riaru na kattō wo akasu" [Michopa: what age should I quit gyaru style?], *modelpress*, February 14, 2018, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://mdpr.jp/gal/detail/1746608>.



Fig.53 (left) Front cover of *Popteen* in 2011
 Fig.54 (right) Roster of *Popteen* models posted in 2017

Figures 53-54 show gal model Funayama Kumiko, who was extremely popular among young gals. According to the press, Funayama was a cover girl continuously for 17 months.¹³¹

¹³¹ “‘Popteen’ sotsugyō no kumikkii, 17-gō renzokuhyōshi kara ‘gyaru no kamisama’ e: Hashiritssuzuketa 6-nenkan wo furikaeru” [Kumikkii graduating from ‘Popteen,’ from a 17-month continuous cover girl to ‘God of gyaru’: Look back across her 6 years], Modelpress, Jun 30, 2014, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/mdpr.jp/gal/amp/1382649>.

The Funayama in the front cover image looks like an authentic gal model, with her blond hair, greenish colored lenses, large eyes with false eyelashes, and cat eyeliner. Compared with Funayama in 2011, however, the gal models of 2017 look quite different. Most gal models have black hair with bangs. Even though their makeup is thicker than idols', they still look natural. A twitterer, Aoi, who posted the figure, tweeted, "Girls with black hair should not be regarded as gals. Did *Popteen* change its concept to Lolita?"¹³² While *Popteen* was one of the famous "gal" magazines which attracted many gals since 1980, there are now only a few models with vivid-colored hair or tanned skins like Michopa, and most of them seemingly do not look like gals. In short, whereas natural makeup is always acceptable at any time and for any generation, gal makeup is an extraordinary category affected by age, media, social preferences, and makeup fads. For this reason, women who protest against the traditional aesthetics and protect gal culture, such as Michopa, Fujita, Masuwaka, or BLACK DIAMOND, have an important role in this thesis as well as in Japanese gal culture and history.

3.7 Conclusions

Chapter 3 explored the start of kawaii culture with Takehisa Yumeji, and examined Japanese idols from the Shōwa period to the Heisei and Reiwa period, comparing them also with K-pop idols. In Takehisa's *bijinga*, he did not depict women perfectly in terms of the Japanese

¹³² Aoi (@prutney), "Kurokami-ritsu kurokami toka gyaru janai ima no *popteen* tte rori-keina no," Twitter, October 10, 2017, 12:34, <https://twitter.com/prutney/status/917790556171800576>.

standard of *bijin*. However, when Takehisa called his works “kawaii,” he designated thus the kimono he designed, the hair accessories, backgrounds, and even atmosphere of the images. In this respect, his “kawaii” gave Japanese women inspiration to create many kawaii aesthetic elements for themselves, seeking to get around the fixed standard of *bijin*.

Japanese idols from the Shōwa period onward show many common elements in terms of their makeup. Unlike K-pop idols, Japanese idol groups also have more male than female fans. The Japanese idols wear thin and light makeup, to make their looks align with conceptions of natural beauty. Most idols have bangs and round-shaped eyes with double eyelids, and apply glosses rather than matte lipsticks. Flat-shaped eyebrows make their atmospheres soft, child-like, and adorable. Their hair color is black or brown: Japanese idols rarely dye their hair blond or use other vivid colors. By contrast, K-pop idols use makeup that is not natural but rather glamorous. Compared with Japanese idols, K-pop idols wear thick eye makeup. Their ways to draw eyeliner, and the colors they choose, all step sharply outside out of the Japanese fixed standards of kawaii looks as created by media. This very different standard of kawaii attracts many Japanese women to become K-pop idol fans. The fact that K-pop idols have many female fans while Japanese idols have many male ones suggests how Japanese women think about kawaii. Women’s standards for kawaii are significantly different from those established by men and the media.

In the next chapter, I discuss some unusual makeup looks that some Japanese women have created in their enthusiasm to level a women’s challenge against the standard aesthetics.

CHAPTER 4

New Aesthetics Created by Women

4.1 Introduction to Diversified Kawaii Categories

As I have repeatedly indicated, kawaii aesthetics diversify year by year even though the standard of kawaii is static. Nevertheless, it is a fact that kawaii aesthetics do have various subcategories such as *busa-kawa* (ブサカワ ugly but cute), *yuru-kawa* (ゆるかわ soft and cute), *yakko-kawaii* (カッコかわいい mixed cool and cute), and *kimo-kawa* (キモカワ creepy but cute). Particularly *busa-kawa* and *kimo-kawa* have quite different features to the other kawaii categories. Figure 55 shows an example of both *busa-kawa* and *kimo-kawa*. It is the cover of a picture book for children entitled *Kobito momogatari* (こびと桃がたり, Peach dwarf story,



Figure 55: Front cover, *Kobito momogatari* (2018)
©amazon.com

2018), by Nabata Toshitaka. Even though the dwarf has been regarded as *kimochiwarui* and *busaiku*, which are the full, correct readings of *kimo-* and *busa-*, the book became popular not

only among children but also among women. In total, more than two million copies of the dwarf series were sold as of 2013. The dwarf seemingly looks creepy, but the more one reads the story, the more the dwarf looks adorable. This kawaii category is therefore quite different to the kawaii standard. Originally, kawaii includes every external factor—stories, designs, fashions, shapes, colors, atmosphere—which is why kawaii culture spread so widely, whereas Japanese beauty aesthetics focus narrowly on the subject’s appearance, i.e., how the subject looks perfect.

It is not only the peach dwarf story that approaches the kawaii from a different perspective. Focusing on makeup, some women also tried to challenge the orthodox, fixed, or standard kawaii and overturn it by creating unique makeup that has not been regarded as kawaii by the public. The next section therefore explores some unique *bijinga* from the Edo period through to modern Japan. After this, the focus shifts to new makeup trends created by women: (1) bubble makeup, (2) gal, (3) *ganguro* and *yamamba*, and (4) Harajuku girls. These kawaii aesthetics are extremely contested; in particular, *ganguro*, *yamamba*, and *gal* are often regarded as ugly, shameful, or dark makeup trends. However, it is also the case that such makeup was popular among some women even though the number of them adopting the trends was small. By exploring these *bijinga* and makeup trends, this thesis clarifies how historical painters tried to overturn the standards of *bijin*, how modern women express themselves, and why women in the modern Japan have created such aesthetics.

4.2 Bizarre *Bijinga* Against Traditional Beauty as Justice

We have explored some traditional Japanese *bijinga* through this thesis. My argument is that the notion of *bijin* has not changed that much even now; in effect, people are bound by unchanging, fixed notions, as if only traditional beauty and the dominant strains of *kawaii* were the truth in terms of aesthetics. However, some *bijinga* painters from the Edo period onward in Japan have depicted *bijinga* in different ways. Usually, women in *bijinga* should be *bijin*, but not here. This section examines these bizarre *bijinga* to clarify how and why painters have depicted women mysteriously. In particular, I suggest that by doing so, the *bijinga* painters expressed their suspicions of orthodox notions of *bijin*.



Fig.56 (left): “Genkaku” (幻覚 hallucination), Kainoshō Tadaoto, 1920 ©gesshokukadan, 2019

Fig.57 (right): “Honō” (焰 flame), Uemura Shōen, 1918 ©Tokyo National Museum

Figures 56-57 show two bizarre *bijinga*. The figure in the left, “Genkaku” (幻覚 hallucination), was painted by Kainoshō Tadaoto in 1920; that on the right is Lady Rokujō from the *Tale of Genji*, painted in 1918 by Uemura Shōen. Both women have a beautiful look. They have slanted-up or almond-shaped eyes, *kagibana*, and oval faces, and thus these women meet most of the conditions of *bijin*—and yet these women look different from normal *bijinga*. The Genkaku is dancing as if she possessed by something. Her kimono looks as though it is burning with flame, and her shadow suggests a *mononoke* or goblin, making for a bizarre look. Her eye is reddish, as if caught on fire, and because this flame hides her black eyes, her atmosphere seems ominous. The painter, Kainoshō Tadaoto, also depicted some normal *bijinga* in the latter half of his life. Tsuchida Bakusen, a contemporary painter, criticized Kainoshō’s *bijinga* as “dirty,” and he refused to display his works in the gallery, saying that “Dirty figures make a gallery dirty.”¹³³ Kainoshō’s works are generally called *derori* (デロリ grotesque), whereas in general *bijinga* reflect ideal, dreamy, or unrealistically beautiful women. In this respect, the fact that Tsuchida refused Kainoshō’s works shows their eccentricity bordering on heresy.

Uemura Shōen, on the other hand, mainly depicted orthodox *bijinga*. She described her concept of her works as “Pure drawing like a pearl without any faults” and “Authentic *bijinga*

¹³³ “Kainoshō Tadaoto towa dareda?” [Who is Kainoshō Tadaoto?], Sakaba de rekishi wo katarukai, June 25, 2006, accessed March 14, 2021, <https://060636.blog.fc2.com/blog-entry-258.html>.

expressing truth, virtue, and beauty.”¹³⁴ The figure above is the only one of her works that depicts a phantom as *bijinga*. The Lady Rokujō, who cursed Genji’s first principal wife, Aoi no Ue, to death due to extraordinary jealousy, wear kimono with a pattern of wisteria flowers and spiderweb. In one of the flower languages, wisteria means “I’ll always be by your side.” Uemura represents the woman as not only beautiful but also jealous, emphasizing the dependency, the most human parts of the Lady Rokujō. These bizarre *bijinga* are just two examples among many; a number of painters left behind strange or unusual *bijinga*, even though most such *bijinga* were not regarded as authentic, and it was obvious that many people would find them weird. At the same time, granted that *bijinga* has relatively fixed aesthetic standards, we can see these bizarre *bijinga* as those which tried to overturn the rules.

4.3 Makeup Trends Created by Women

4.3.1 Gal Culture

Gal culture is closely related to *ganguro* and *yamamba* makeup trends. The gal boom greatly affected women’s aesthetic values. The start of gal culture is 1996, even though the individual elements had already appeared at least by 1991. The stock types are “teamer” and “*kogal*”, where a teamer is a group of bad boys and bad girls, and according to web media

¹³⁴ Zouchan6, “Uemura Shōen ‘Honō’” [‘Flame’ painted by Uemura Shōen].

Bijutsu to baiku to ryokō to tozan to etosetora (blog), December 29, 2015, accessed March 14, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/zouchan6.exblog.jp/amp/25221063/>.

company noel, consisted of younger students in junior high school or high school.¹³⁵ Within such a teamer group, we find the *kogal*, which stands for *kōkōsei no gal* (high school gal).



Fig.58: Gal Makeup in the 2000s demonstrated by Luna from Black Diamond © KAWAII PATEEN, 2018. From top left: No makeup with colored lenses; Eye makeup to make wide eyelids; Applying dark colored foundation; Eyelashes; White makeup; Face paint with stickers

¹³⁵ “Teamer no imi towa? Tokchō & fashion to moto teamer no miwakekata”

[What teamer means? Features, fashion, and the way to distinguish people who were

Before moving forward to explore gal culture, consider the basic gal makeup, as demonstrated by current gal Luna on YouTube. Figure 58 shows the process of gal makeup as it was popular in the 2000s. According to a web media site *fashionsnap*, gal girls created a community called Black Diamond in 2012 to revive gal culture, and it is now the largest gal community in Japan.¹³⁶ In their official web blog, Black Diamond explained why they created the community: “There are more than 150 gals from Hokkaido to Okinawa, and we widely appear in the media to spread the idea of how gal culture is kawaii. We would like to revive gal culture again. We also participated in some events in Paris, Milano, or San Francisco to share gal culture as an original and unique culture.”¹³⁷ In the video excerpted here, Luna shares how to wear the gal makeup of the 2000s.¹³⁸ Although Luna has large eyes with double eyelids, she uses a small piece of latex bandage to make wide eyelids and obtain larger eyes. She also wears blue

teamers in the past], Noel, March 18, 2019, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://noel-media.jp/news/4053>.

¹³⁶ “Fashion ni rule wa nai: Black Diamond ga uketsugu ‘gal mind’ towa” [There are no rules in fashion: The “gal mind” that Black Diamond has taken over], *Fashionsnap.com*, July 25, 2018, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.fashionsnap.com/article/2018-07-25/blackdiamond-gal/>.

¹³⁷ Black Diamond, “Hajimemashite! Black Diamond desu (´•ω•´) ♪” [Nice to meet you! We are Black Diamond (´•ω•´) ♪], *Heisei no Kabukimono* (official blog), last modified February 19, 2017, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/gamp.ameblo.jp/bdiajp/entry-12249283928.html>.

¹³⁸ Luna, “Girl makeup in the 2000s by Black Diamond Luna,” *Kawaii Pateen* (channel), June 24, 2018, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=3PtRCBZ-EDE>.

colored lenses, an important item for gal looks. As for foundation, she applies a dark color; according to Erimokkori, another member of Black Diamond, many gals do not tan their faces but rather make them dark with foundation.¹³⁹ Lashes are also crucial for eye makeup, and gals apply them to both their upper and lower eyelids. Using white cream highlighter on the eye pouches and on their lips intensifies the gal look. According to Luna, most blushes are pink-based, and recently it has become difficult to find the kind of dark orange eyeshadows seen in this video; however, the more the color is used on the face, the more the face looks kawaii.¹⁴⁰ Luna shows lip makeup using concealer; to keep the lips moisturized, she applies gloss onto the whitened lips. Finally, gals often use the stickers sold in a hundred-yen shop or the discount chain store Don Quixote. Based on the makeup shown here, gal makeup was developed in response to *ganguro* and *yamamba* in 1998.

¹³⁹ Homura Yoshikazu, “Naze ‘kurogal’ ni nattanoka? Ganguro café report” [Why did girls become ‘ganguro?’ Report of a ganguro café], Kai-You (website), May 31, 2015, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://kai-you.net/article/25463>.

¹⁴⁰ Luna, “Girl makeup in the 2000s.”

In 1996, the famous Heisei singer Amuro Namie became the opinion-leader of gal fashion, leading to the gal boom called Amurer. Figures 59-62 show Amuro and her fans, called



Fig.59-60 (top row): Amuro Namie © pintarest, /2020
Fig.61-62: Amurer © fasshongazoku.blogspot.com, 2020

Amurer (アマラー). In 1996, Amuro got her big break, and many women followed her fashions and makeup styles. Wearing long brown hair, thin eyebrows, dark-colored lipstick, blue eyeshadow, and platform boots became extremely popular. According to a Japanese hair-coloring company, Hoyu, the Amuro Namie boom prompted many women to start dyeing their hair brown. According to Hoyu's Kobayashi Naoki, the image that people with brown hair were

bad boys or girls was strong in the early Heisei period; therefore, the company designed the color packages conservatively in order not to encourage bad behavior among youth.¹⁴¹ Even though the number of people who have brown hair has increased, people continue to have negative views of people with extremely light brown, blond, or other vivid colors even in contemporary Japan. After all, black was the most orthodox hair color for women in *bijinga*, as we have seen. The Amuro boom changed one aesthetic rule, that people should not dye their hair and keep it black, but in addition tanned skin was mandatory for gal girls. These features, particularly the light brown hair colors, tanned skin, and thick makeup, were all unusual and eccentric at that time. A Japanese leading newspaper, *Asahi Shimbun*, reported the dramatically different new style saying, “What is new is the strong will also expressed in [Amuro’s] songs. Not reddish lipsticks, makeup that emphasizes thin eyebrows, or going barefoot express this newest tendency that women focus on themselves rather than follow men’s preferences.”¹⁴² Furthermore, in an interview, Amuro said, “When I watched Janet Jackson on TV, I thought I wanted to be a cool

¹⁴¹ Hidaka Nao, “Tenki wa ‘Amurer’ deshita: Hoyu ga kataru chapatsu no Heiseishi” [The turning point was ‘Amurer’: The brown hair culture of the Heisei analyzed by Hoyu], *Asahi Shimbun Digital*, April 4, 2019, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.asahi.com/sp/articles/ASM2L6VYCM2LOIPE02X.html>.

¹⁴² Marie South, “‘Amurer’ zensei no 96 nen, josei ga mechakuchakagayaiteita” [In 1996, the peak of ‘Amurer,’ women were extremely blight], *Huffpost.jp, Arts and Culture*, September 21, 2017, accessed March 15, 2021, https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/m.huffingtonpost.jp/amp/2017/09/20/amuronamie-what-we-were-in-1996_a_23217199/.

woman just like Janet. Then, I realized for the first time that the term ‘cool’ can also be utilized for women. I came to think that I also wanted to be a cool woman, rather than a kawaii woman.”¹⁴³ This interview would have made many people rethink how people had been tied up by existing values. Amuro also said that she never thought she changed her fashion styles to increase male fans, but rather considered principally her female fans.¹⁴⁴ The effect was significant not only for ordinary people: many who became celebrities entered the entertainment fields because of Amuro. Although she retired from entertainment in 2018, she has for a quarter century encouraged Japanese women with her energetic dances and powerful songs that explain how women can be cool. Even beyond all this, Amuro also broke the tattoo rule: she has some tattoos on her arms and wrists. As many people know, tattoos are strongly tabooed in Japan, and Japanese who have them are not allowed to use public baths, pools, relaxation salons, or hair removal salons. Yet even though she frequently appeared in the media, which meant that she was at great risk for criticism due to her tattoos, Amuro did not erase her tattoos. She even overturned the absolute aesthetic of white skin and black hair. In short, Amuro broke many longstanding social-aesthetic rules that had carried over into modern Japan. Based on her own interviews and the fact of the Amuro boom, Amuro is the one who created this new aesthetic, developing it for herself and for other women who wished to be strong, independent, and themselves. When she

¹⁴³ “Amuro Namie ga idol jidai kara attōtekini josei ni shiji saretekitariyū” [The reason why Amuro Namie has been popular among women since her idol era], Wezzy, July 29, 2018, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/wezzy.com/archives/56805/amp>.

¹⁴⁴ “Amuro Namie ga idol jidai.”

participated in her last *Kōhaku utagassen*, the Japanese traditional New Year's TV show, in 2018, the highest audience rating was 48.4%: almost half the nation watched her farewell performance.¹⁴⁵ When news website Sirabee released a survey on “the top female singer of the Heisei period” conducted in 2019, Amuro took first place with every generation of women voters from their 20s to their 60s: 38.1% of females in their 20s, 48.4% of 30s, 56.3% of 40s, 55.0% of 50s, and 54.8% of 60s.¹⁴⁶ This survey shows dramatically how Amuro attracted women and how much she was loved by female fans. Amuro's makeup, fashion, and way of life surely changed many women's lives as well, perhaps expressing how much women have struggled with the existing social and aesthetic rules imposed by the media. In this respect, Amuro Namie is the pioneer of the new aesthetic for women; in the next section I explore *ganguro* and *yamamba*, two styles derived from the gal culture Amuro developed.

¹⁴⁵ “Amuro Namie, shunkan saikōsichōritsu 48.4%! Kokumin no hanbun ga utahimerasutokōhaku mita” [Amuro Namie, the highest audience rating of 48.4%! Half the nation watched her last Kōhaku], Sankei News, January 5, 2018, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/www.sankei.com/entertainments/amp/180105/ent1801050007-a.html>.

¹⁴⁶ “Heisei no utahime toittara dare? Mottomo kokumin no kioku ni nokotta joseikashu towa.” [Who is the Heisei princess singer? The one who left the strongest impression among nationals...], Sirabee news site, March 31, 2019, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/sirabee.com/2019/03/31/20162057772/amp/>.

4.3.2 Ganguro and Yamamba

This section consists of two parts: (1) Exploring makeup, and (2) sociology in gals. Specifically, this section approaches why girls, particularly high school girls, became *ganguro* or *yamamba*. According to Kokugakuin University, it was high school girls from 15 to 18 who initially consumed and developed gal culture.¹⁴⁷ As we have explored in this thesis, having white skin had traditionally been absolute, an unchangeable element of beauty, leading many Japanese women to try to obtain the white skin. In women's magazines in the Shōwa period, for example, many women posted concerns about dark skin, and some were willing to use toxic medicines or low-quality skin-care products. Given this context we are led to the conclusion that gals from the 1990s to the 2000s tried to start a revolution and send messages to their society in protest.

Due to the Amuro boom, young girls came to dye their hair brown, tan or color their skin, and wear colorful, thick makeup. According to *Shibuya Keizai Shimbun*, it was in 1998 that girls with extremely dark faces and makeup based on a white color first appeared in Shibuya, Tokyo.¹⁴⁸ Even though *ganguro* is the term most widely recognized in world media, most of the figures found under that term online are actually *gonguro* (ゴングロ), who have much darker

¹⁴⁷ “Kenshō! ‘yamamba’ no tōjō to suitai: kokugakuin daigaku kōza ‘shibuyagaku’ rendōkikaku” [Examination! The start of ‘yamamba’ culture and its decline: the project of ‘shibuya study’ in Kokugakuin University], *Shibuya Keizai Shimbun*, November 15, 2002, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.shibukei.com/special/118/>.

¹⁴⁸ “Kenshō! ‘yamamba’ no tōjō to suitai.”

faces than *ganguro*. *Shibuya Keizai Shimbun* claims that *ganguro* is short for “*hada wo gangan ni kuroku yaku*” (to tan the skin more and more).



Fig.63: *Gonguro* gal models from women's magazine *Egg* ©Mizuno Yuka Official Blog/2014

Figure 63 shows *gonguro* models in the most famous gal magazine, *Egg*, which started in 1995. According to website *fashionsnap*, *Egg* employed amateur models who were caught by

editors on the street in Shibuya and posted as their “real high school gals.”¹⁴⁹ Unlike other women’s magazines, it was generally high school girls who created the subjects for the magazine. This unique system might make gals tan their skin darker so that they might have opportunities to appear in the magazine as models. In this cover image, most people have black hair and fairly ordinary fashion; the four *gonguro* girls look isolated from their society. There was thus a clear border between people in general and *gonguro* and *yamamba*. Even though there were many Amurer in 1996, *gonguro* and *yamamba* were an extremely minor contingent among them. This rarity gave *gonguro* girls a kind of status: they had something different from general people who lived under fixed standards created by others. This psychological aspect might in fact lead girls to become *ganguro*, *gonguro*, or *yamamba*.

We can describe the details of these looks: the basic makeup methods seem the same as what Luna showed for gals. The girls in on the cover here have put white eyeshadow or highlighter around their eyes and lips, and applied mascara and eyeliner; it seems likely that they have also applied eyelashes. Their eyebrows are thin and brown. Two girls wear white face paint, but overall their faces still look natural, showing little to no change between Luna and the *gonguro* girls apart from skin tone.

Yamamba, however, look different from *gonguro* because of colors, particularly face paints and hair colors. According to *Shibuya Keizai Shimbun*, in 1999 some *ganguro* girls

¹⁴⁹ “Sōkan kara 19 nen Shibuya gal zasshi ‘egg’ kyūkan he” [It has been 19 years since Shibuya gal magazine *Egg* came to an end], Fashionsnap.com, Fashion Network, May 6, 2014, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://www.fashionsnap.com/article/2014-05-06/egg/>.

developed their makeup to create the *yamamba* look. As previously noted, one reason may be that *Egg* focused on real gal girls rather than professional models, and thus any gal girl might become popular among her peers. The more they looked “strange” to society, the more people paid attention.



Fig.64: Yamamba makeup © Ecchannel/2018

Figure 64 shows a process of applying *yamamba* makeup posted by Japanese YouTuber Etsuko in 2018. Compared with *ganguro* and *gonguro* makeup, this process reveals some strong differences in *yamamba* makeup, especially when it comes to eye makeup. In short, *yamamba*

makeup uses various colors. The process of applying dark foundation and drawing eyebrows is the same as with *gonguro*, except that that *yamamba* makeup also puts highlighter on the nose. As to the eye makeup, eyeliner is not drawn between the lashes but rather over the line so that the eyes look larger. Using white or pale-colored eyeshadow makes a contrast to the darkest foundation color. The bottom eyelashes are not put on the real eyelids but on the eyeline. The methods with lip makeup are the same as with *gonguro*. In general, *yamamba* girls use hair accessories to add a bit more color, and their hair color is also much lighter than that of *gonguro*.

4.3.3 More Recent Gals

This section explores some current gal makeup to clarify how *gonguro* and *yamamba* makeup were transformed in the 2000s. According to *Shibuya Keizai Shimbun*, the gals with dark skin, such as Amurer, *ganguro*, *gonguro*, or *yamamba*, disappeared in Spring 2001, and gal culture came to focus on white skin again.¹⁵⁰ The black-face gal boom culture only lasted for three years.

Here are four different gals in contemporary Japan (Figures 65-68):

¹⁵⁰ “Sōkan kara 19 nen Shibuya gal zasshi ‘egg’ kyūkan he.”



Fig.65 (top left): Masuwaka Tsubasa © oricon news, 2013

Fig.66 (top right): Fujita Nicol © modelpress, 2016

Fig.67 (lower left): Peko © MAKEY, 2017

Fig.68 (lower right): Michopa © oricon news, 2020

Masuwaka Tsubasa, on the top left, made a turning point in gal culture. In 2002, the 17 year-old Masuwaka appeared on one of the most popular gal magazines, *pop teen*, for the first time. As mentioned, the black-face gal boom ended in 2001, and beauty aesthetics gradually transited from dark skin to white skin and a natural look. Masuwaka is one of the important gal

models who changed the gal culture and contributed to its spread over the world. Masuwaka proposed gal makeup as being like kawaii dolls. Her gal concept is “girly.” In most cases, Masuwaka has bangs and curly hairstyles. Large eyes are necessary, therefore eye makeup is the thickest part, involving volumed eyelashes, color lenses, and black eyeliners. Nicol, Peko, and Michopa are of the same generation. Nicol usually wears lighter-colored foundation, and the eyelashes are relatively natural. By contrast to her natural eye makeup, she dyes her hair blond or in light colors, and applies thick lipsticks in red, magenta pink, or hot pink. Peko also has white skin or applies light-colored foundation to make her face look white. Also, she frequently wears light-colored lenses in olive green or blue grey. Peko has hidden double eyelids, but makes her eyelids wide by using band-aids. Although dewy skin is the orthodox trend today, Peko lightly applies powder foundation to keep her skin matte. As for eyeliner, she has cat eyes. Michopa has a different characteristic in terms of her dark skin, despite the fact that white skin came back and many women make their best effort to obtain it through both skin care products and foundation. According to web media company Nikkan Taishū, Michopa commented on TV two years ago that “I like the dark skin since it makes me a cool woman.”¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, a beauty expert has criticized her, saying that dark skin is old-fashioned. Moreover, graduate student Suzuki Nanami decided to participate in a beauty pageant in order to argue that people should not be judged by

¹⁵¹ “Michopa, hada no rekka wo meguri keiseigekai to batoru ‘mukatsuku!’” [Michopa has a quarrel with a plastic surgeon about the aging of her skin: “Disgusting!”, Nikkan Taishū, Performing Arts, December 25, 2018, accessed March 17, 2021, <https://taishu.jp/articles/-/62580?page=1>].

colors or looks.¹⁵² Suzuki strongly opposes traditional beauty aesthetics, especially the notion that only people with white skin are beautiful. Because she had dark skin since she was born, her classmates often asked why her skin is so dark; Suzuki remarked, “I felt like people criticized my tanned skin compared to other kids, and therefore I could not be confident in myself.”¹⁵³

Furthermore, some Japanese school kids with extremely tanned skin have experienced bullying by their classmates. Whereas Japanese beauty aesthetics gradually returned to the traditional aesthetics in terms of white skin, some women, such as Michopa and the gals in the 1990s and 2000s, wear makeup as they wish even though it is not trendy or looks strange to society.

We have explored each gal makeup style from the 1990s until today. This section has discussed what makes girls be gals even though most people have more positive impressions toward elegant and orthodox kawaii people. A leading recruitment support company, Mynavi, conducted a survey in 2016 to clarify how many female undergraduate students were previously gals. Their results showed that only 36 girls out of 401 were gals, and the rest of them said that they had not been.¹⁵⁴ Of those who were gals, some thought gals were kawaii and they wanted to

¹⁵² Suzuki Nanami, “Konpurekkusu to watashi no kyori” [The distance between me and my complex], Huffpost.jp, July 10, 2019, accessed March 17, 2021, https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/m.huffingtonpost.jp/amp/entry/story_jp_5d230375e4b04c481416b3e8/.

¹⁵³ Suzuki, “Konpurekkusu to watashi no kyori.”

¹⁵⁴ Hamami editorial department, “Mukashi gal dattakotogaaru joshidaisei wa yaku 0-wari! ‘kinpatsuhademeiku’ ‘gal sâ ni shozou’” [Those female undergraduates who were previously gals were 0%! “flashy makeup with blond hair” or “belonged to gal

be gals. Some of them liked the flashy and vivid makeup. Moreover, many girls said that if they had become gals, they thought they could be outstanding. Since most of women are not gals, it seems that gals have a special position in the Japanese society. Another survey, conducted by the matching-site company Pairs, sought to clarify what kind of fashion styles men do not want their girlfriends to wear, finding that approximately 60% of males chose gal fashions as undesirable—the highest rate.¹⁵⁵ These surveys suggest that society at large does not regard gals as a desirable aesthetic. For one thing, gal girls and boys are regarded as bad girls and boys, those who do not study hard and seem to care only about amusements. In addition, people are strongly bound up by existing or traditional aesthetic qualities such as white skin, black hair, elegance, or *yamato-nadeshiko*.

Some researchers have argued that Japanese aesthetics have changed from the traditional to the Westernized beauty images, particularly in terms of large eyes with double eyelids. It is true that many women in contemporary Japan desire to have large eyes or wide double eyelids and therefore color lenses, eyelash extensions, and band-aids became popular among young women. However, these aesthetics still operate inside of fixed standards created long ago. Although Westernized aesthetics have often become trendy since the Meiji period, it is also true that women's magazines, such as those from the Taishō and Shōwa periods that we have

club”], Mynavi, March 25, 2016, accessed March 17, 2021,
<https://gakumado.mynavi.jp/gmd/articles/35008>.

¹⁵⁵ “Otokouke no ii deeto fuku, warui deetofuku towa?” [Which fashions do men prefer and not prefer for dating?], Pairs, January 11, 2016, accessed March 17, 2021,
<https://www.pairs.lv/3139>.

explored in this thesis, focus on how to be elegant, how natural looks are beautiful, or how short hair does not match Japanese aesthetics. In other words, the society accepts these new aesthetics as long as people remain inside of the longstanding Japanese aesthetic principles. Therefore, I would say that Japanese beauty aesthetics actually have not changed so much. Some people find it difficult to adapt themselves to the existing aesthetics, and gals are some of those who have tried to get around the standard through kawaii culture. One of the Black Diamond members, Miyu-pyon, stated her reasons for becoming a gal on YouTube: “my skin was originally dark, and I did not like my skin. However, when I was in junior high school, I found the magazine, *Egg*, and I realized that there are kawaii fashions even if one’s skin is dark.”¹⁵⁶ As Miyu-pyon indicates, it is hard for some Japanese with darker skin than others to adapt themselves to the white skin-dominant aesthetics. It is surely not only Miyu-pyon but also some other girls who became gals to protest the unchanging standard, suggesting that certain kinds of people find the beauty criteria problematic. Another member of the band, Konomin, said that “other people around me had negative impressions toward gals and it was only me who liked the gal. But that was what I wanted to be.”¹⁵⁷ Black Diamond girls realize that gals are no longer popular, yet they keep being gals since they like gals and they think gals are kawaii. In the YouTube video, it turns out that Black Diamond girls have a strong will to do what they want even if people do not understand them. Black Diamond leads us to the conclusion that gals are a minority because gals are not part of the traditional aesthetics, which in turn makes girls choose to be gals in order to protest the existing aesthetic standards.

¹⁵⁶ Homura, “Naze ‘kurogal’ ni nattanoka?”

¹⁵⁷ Homura, “Naze ‘kurogal’ ni nattanoka?”

4.3.4 Gal cultures and Black cultures

Japanese gal cultures have developed in unique ways since 1990s. Unlike *ganguro* or *yamamba* gals, most current gals have white skin. Some women who were previously *ganguro* gals quit tanning and got their skin tones back to white or original. Yet, some current gals such as Michopa, Yukipoyo, or gals from BLACK DIAMOND prefer having tanned skin and intentionally keep their skin dark. *Ganguro* and *yamamba* had a great impact on traditional Japanese aesthetic values. However, some people might think Japanese gal cultures are related to black fashion cultures. It is also true that the *ganguro* and *yamamba* makeup styles have been controversial around the world. Since this thesis focuses on women trying to overturn traditional Japanese beauty standards and on gal makeup, a discussion of these social issues is inevitable. To summarize, I will argue that Japanese gal cultures have little relation to black cultures for two reasons: (1) *ganguro* and *yamamba* have a strong characteristic of “rebellious” against traditional Japanese aesthetics and social rules; and (2) BLACK DIAMOND has officially denied the relation between tanned gals and black cultures.

In terms of skin color, it cannot be said *ganguro* and *yamamba* are related to black people, since there are few reputable sources on such relations. If the tanned makeup boom were closely connected to black cultures, Japanese media, especially fashion and makeup magazines, would likely indicate this, and some black people would be mentioned in gals’ interview articles. In fact, however, tanned gals have said little about black fashion cultures, whereas they have identified as having a rebellious spirit, reacting against society, stereotyped standards, or even putative normality. As previously noted, some tanned gals have complexes about their own natural skin tone because of the white skin boom. Some regard mainstream fashions, and those who wear them, as boring. Some simply consider the tanned gal look to be kawaii.

This thesis has pointed out that Japanese beauty aesthetics have not changed that much since the Heian period, leading many people to associate traditional beauty with authenticity. Japanese schools have extremely strict fashion rules. Some schools forbid students from wearing hair accessories. The color of school uniforms, as well as accessories such as socks or hair elastics, are required to be black, brown, or navy. Some schools require students with light brown hair to fill out forms avouching that they were born with this hair color and did not dye it. In most cases, wearing makeup is not allowed. Japanese young people must follow the rules even if they do not understand how these fashion styles are related to their academic abilities. The reason why young people have created new makeup or fashion trends might be that teenagers are surrounded by many such seemingly incomprehensible social rules. *PR Times* released a survey about school rules in 2019, asking 670 high school students what sorts of school rules they object to. Most expressed dissatisfaction toward the regulation of hair colors and styles. Second place was no-makeup rules, third no smart phone use, fourth school uniforms arrangements, and fifth forbidding piercings.¹⁵⁸ It seems clear, then, that some young people have complaints tied up with social rules. Some tanned gals are also rebellious and want to follow their own style, which

¹⁵⁸ “2019 nenban! Kōkōsē no sēfuku jijō & kōsoku ni taisuru fuman wo daichōsa! Hotondo no kōkōsē ga minari ni kansuru kōsaku ni fuman wo motteirukoto ga hanmei” [2019 version! Survey about high school boys and girls’ complaints toward school uniforms and school fashion rules! It turns out that most of them are dissatisfied with the rules], *PR Times*, April 4, 2019, accessed May 7, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/amp/p/000000028.000020107.html>.

they signal with their skin's opposition to the dominant white-skin preference. Therefore, tanned skin is more a symbol of rebelliousness than something borrowed from black cultures.

In 2018, BLACK DIAMOND posted an official Twitter message on this issue: *Ganguro* is an Japanese original girls' culture, and it is not connected to black people. Ganguro culture has a totally different context from black cultures. Do you really think *Maiko-han* in Kyoto wear white powder because they want to be white people? To be honest, [when it comes to racism and cultural appropriation arguments] we would rather gals be left out of it.¹⁵⁹

Although there has been quite a bit of research on gals and Japanese social issues, few studies have reported connections between tanned gal cultures and black cultures. Tanned gals are best understood as the other side of the Japanese white-skin boom, as trying to change or argue for alternative aesthetics that break the stereotyped, "boring," standards.

4.3.5 Harajuku Girls

Even though these Japanese kawaii styles created by women are rarely accepted by Japanese society at large, people in some other countries regard these unique makeup and fashion styles as kawaii. Black Diamond, for example, pointed out in the interview video that "Japanese customers also come to our *ganguro* café, but the number of customers from other

¹⁵⁹ Black Diamond (@bdiajp), "Gangurogyaru wa nihondokuji no gāruzukaruchā de, kokujin-san o ishiki shita monode wa nai," Twitter, January 6, 2018, 14:22, <https://twitter.com/bdiajp/status/949722928706301952>.

countries is large, and we want to develop our café in order to appeal to other countries in the future.”¹⁶⁰

People in other countries than Japan have paid attention to not only gal cultures but also to Harajuku-style makeup and fashion. One of the biggest differences between gals and Harajuku girls is the main location generating each aesthetic. Gals are called Shibuya-styled, and Harajuku girls Harajuku-styled. Harajuku girls are often said to be unique, distinctive girls. Today, Harajuku styles have diversified, producing subcategories of Harajuku girls such as pastel girls, gothic, Lolita, cyber, or decora. This section explores these categories of distinctive kawaii aesthetics and how the Harajuku girls’ kawaii aesthetic affects people from other countries.

¹⁶⁰ Homura, “Naze ‘kurogal’ ni nattanoka?”

Discussing Japanese singer and fashion model Kyary Pamyu Pamyu is inevitable here, since she is the one who spread the decora culture, one of the Harajuku-styled aesthetics. Figures



Fig.69 (left): Aomoji fashion: Kyary Pamyu Pamyu © warnar Music Japan
Fig.70 (right): Akamoji fashion: CanCam ©HMV&BOOKS

69-70 show two images. On the left is Kyary, with a unique fashion. Kyary started her career as singer in 2011, and she has spread her outstanding kawaii concept all over the world. Aside from gal magazines, there are two other women's fashion magazines in this category, *Akamoji Style* and *Aomoji Style*. According to Japanese women's recruiting company Mynavi Women, the term *akamoji* came from the reddish colors of titles in orthodox women's magazines such as *JJ*, *Cancam*, *Ray*, and *ViVi*, which are all widely accepted among the public. The most notable characteristic is that *akamoji* style is popular both among men and women. The women on the right in Figure 64 offer an example of *akamoji* style. The models on the cover wear natural makeup; in particular, their eye makeup is quite natural in that they only apply mascara on their

eyelashes, and it seems they do not draw with eyeliners nor use eyelash extensions like the gal girls and Kyary. Instead, they apply light red lipsticks and blush to make their faces look dewy. This style is the more popular and orthodox in contemporary Japan. *Aomoji*, on the other hand, has an opposite concept, focused on how makeup and fashions are kawaii for girls. In this respect, Kyary is one of the pioneers of *aomoji* girls. Her makeup and fashions for her stage or music videos are extremely colorful. In particular, she prefers pastel colors. In terms of colorful looks, *yamamba* makeup and fashion has some of the same characteristics, as we have seen, yet Kyary uses unicorn colors such as pastel pink, lilac, purple, or aqua. This unicorn color palette is one of the important characteristics of *aomoji* style, even though *aomoji* has many categories beyond this Kyary-inspired style.



Fig.71 Harajuku girls' makeup collection © Street Girls Snap

Figure 71 shows a variety of Harajuku girls. As we see, Harajuku girls are colorful. Common to all is that these Harajuku girls have bangs, the symbol of *kawaii* aesthetics. Aside from the white skin, bangs also make them different from *ganguro* girls or *yamamba* girls. Even though they are all categorized as Harajuku girls, however, each girl has different makeup, fashions, and hairstyles. This is the most important feature: although there are many categories among the Harajuku girls, their individual ways of makeup, dress, or expression are themselves different. In short, there is no exact definition of *kawaii* in the Harajuku aesthetics. In this

respect, each girl has their own concept or message, and their styles are not necessarily for society and men, but for themselves—for girls and for men who also have a high interest in these fashions.

We recall that the *yamamba* in 1990s had a certain formula in terms of makeup: white-colored lips, panda-eye makeup, pastel-colored eyeshadows. However, Harajuku girls such as these do not have any specific tendency or set of makeup rules. For example, the girl in the top left uses vivid rainbow colors. Her eye makeup colors match the hair accessories. Not only eye colors but also lipstick color is deep red, and the texture is matte. Her deep black hair and white skin make the colorful makeup more distinctive. The girl in the top right wear Chinese clothes and hair accessories. Unique to her makeup is the eye circles created with eyeshadow. If in general people try to hide eye circles by using concealers and foundation to make face tone even, this woman intentionally makes eye circles. Speaking of eye makeup, the girl in the bottom right has a somewhat similar feature to *yamamba* makeup in that she has overlined her eyes with eyeliners that make her eyes slant down. She uses fewer colors compared with other three girls; however, her hair colors and color lenses are vivid.

Some Japanese prefer not to regard this aesthetic as Japanese authentic kawaii; however, these unique kawaii cultures have spread over countries and become popular. One example is the “soft girl,” newly trendy among youth in Western countries. According to CNN Underscored, the soft girl look has become popular since 2019, and involves girls wearing sweet pink outfits and

girly makeup.¹⁶¹ The new genre was born from TikTok, one of the most popular social media



Fig.72 (left): Japanese *Harajukukei yume-kawa* girl (原宿系ゆめかわ) ©au pay market

Fig.73 (right): Makeup of soft girl in foreign countries © kawaii haven alternative fashion

apps among women in their teens and twenties. Characteristically, they utilize many pinks in their makeup, outfits, accessories, and even hair colors. As for outfits, they prefer over-sized sweatshirts.¹⁶² Another article describes the soft girl as feminine, hyper-anime-inspired by such programs as *Sailor Moon*, which has been popular among women since 1992.¹⁶³ By contrast, the

¹⁶¹ Courtney Thompson, “What is a soft girl? Shop the latest teen trend,” *CNN*

Underscored, March 9, 2020, accessed January 30, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/09/cnn-underscored/what-is-a-soft-girl/index.html>.

¹⁶² Thompson, “What is a soft girl?”

¹⁶³ *Sailor Moon* has kept its popularity until today, and many cosmetic companies collaborate with the show. *Sailor Moon* has a soft aesthetic, and many soft aesthetic-edited pictures are posted online. See Janna Mandell, “VSCO girls and E-girls: How to tell the

girls who wear soft, pastel-colored outfits, hair accessories, or socks are called *Harajuku-kei yume-kawa* girls (原宿系ゆめかわ女子). *Yume-kawa* girls are inspired by the dreamy worlds of *Hello Kitty*, *My Melody*, or *Kiki Lala*.¹⁶⁴ According to Fujitani Chiaki, the first pioneer Harajuku girl's model was AMO. Fujitani pointed out that AMO used the term “*yumekawaii*” to introduce some kawaii cosmetics and skincare products in 2013 for the first time.¹⁶⁵ *Yume-kawa* girls prefer pastel pink, purple, green or blue. Both types of girls wear soft-colored makeup, and particularly favor thick red lipsticks. They put pinkish cheek powders on widely. Their outfits are soft pastel-colored. There are several common points in their makeup as well.

The soft girl or “soft girl kawaii aesthetic” trend has only recently been transmitted to Japan, around October 2020, at which time several media writers picked up the topic and wrote

difference between tiktok subcultures,” January 9, 2020, accessed January 30, 2021, https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/www.huffpost.com/entry/vsco-girls-egirls-difference_1_5dfa5f45e4b018347919e8ef/amp_

¹⁶⁴ Shinmura Kiyoko, with Itakura Yuka, “Yumekawa towa donna imi? Amakute meruhenna sekai ga miryokuno yumekawa burando yonsen” [What does yume-kawa mean? Top 4 of the best outfits for sweet and fairy tale-inspired yume-kawa world], Shingakunet, Study sapuri, February 1, 2018, accessed January 30, 2021, <https://shingakunet.com/journal/trend/20170327193868/>

¹⁶⁵ Fujitani Chiaki, “‘Yumekawaii’ wa naze bunka to nattanoka? Media wo ōdan shite eta shiminken” [Why did “yumekawaii” become a culture? The citizenship obtained by crossing over media], Kai-You, July 26, 2016, accessed April 1, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/kai-you.net/amp/article/31184>.

articles. However, the concept of soft girls arose in other countries, even as they are inspired by girly *anime*, such as *Sailor Moon*. Soft girls might be inspired by Korean idols as well, yet these foreign soft girls also inspire Japanese *kawaii* culture, particularly Japanese Harajuku girls.

4.3.6 E-Girl vs Harajuku Girl

E-Girl stands for electronic girls, those who spend their time on games, cosplays, or TikTok.¹⁶⁶ E-Girls also actively utilize SNS, particularly TikTok, and their appearances are similar to soft girl. Since soft girls are said “hyper-anime version of E-Girls,” there are few great



Fig.74 (left): Cyber-style Harajuku girl ©harajukuii
Fig.75 (right): E-Girl © Pintarest

¹⁶⁶ Sarah Spellings, “What is an E-Girl?” *The Cut* (*New York* magazine), February 28, 2020, accessed January 30, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/www.thecut.com/amp/2020/02/what-is-an-e-girl.html>.

differences between them. However, E-girls relatively tend to prefer black-based, chic styles or vividly colored styles, rather than girly ones. Soft girls have feminine tendency in their makeup or outfits; E-Girls look stylish and cool. According to Cody McIntosh, soft girls and E-Girls borrow the aesthetics of cuteness from some film characters, live-action or animated.¹⁶⁷ For example, E-Girls are influenced by American film *Harley Quinn*, *Sailor Moon*, Disney Princesses, the character Sakura from the Japanese anime, *NARUTO*, and Princess Peach from *Super Mario Brothers*.¹⁶⁸ Sailor Moon in particular has extreme popularity for cosplayers, and these internet-based trendy girls have close relationships with game or anime characters.¹⁶⁹ E-Girls are created through the integration of cultural ideas, including but not limited to Japanese kawaii culture.

4.3.7 K-pop idols vs Japanese gals' makeup

Chapter 3 explored the features of K-pop idols' makeup as well as hair color, and this section has discussed the characteristics of Japanese gals and Harajuku girls. Although K-pop idols and Japanese gals or Harajuku girls have many commonalties in their looks, the present section addresses some important difference, focusing on hair color and lip makeup.

¹⁶⁷ Cody McIntosh, "E-Girls: 10 Pop Culture Characters Who Definitely Inspired the Trend," Screen Rant, December 14, 2019, accessed January 30, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/screenrant.com/pop-culture-figures-ingspired-e-girls-trend/amp/>.

¹⁶⁸ McIntosh, "E-Girls."

¹⁶⁹ McIntosh, "E-Girls."

Before comparing these looks, it is necessary to clarify how much Japanese girls are affected by K-pop idols. A total-beauty web site for teenagers, “Chojudai Media,” released a survey of more than a thousand girls in their teens who are into K-pop idols, asking how those idols affect the Japanese girls’ makeup and skincare approaches.¹⁷⁰

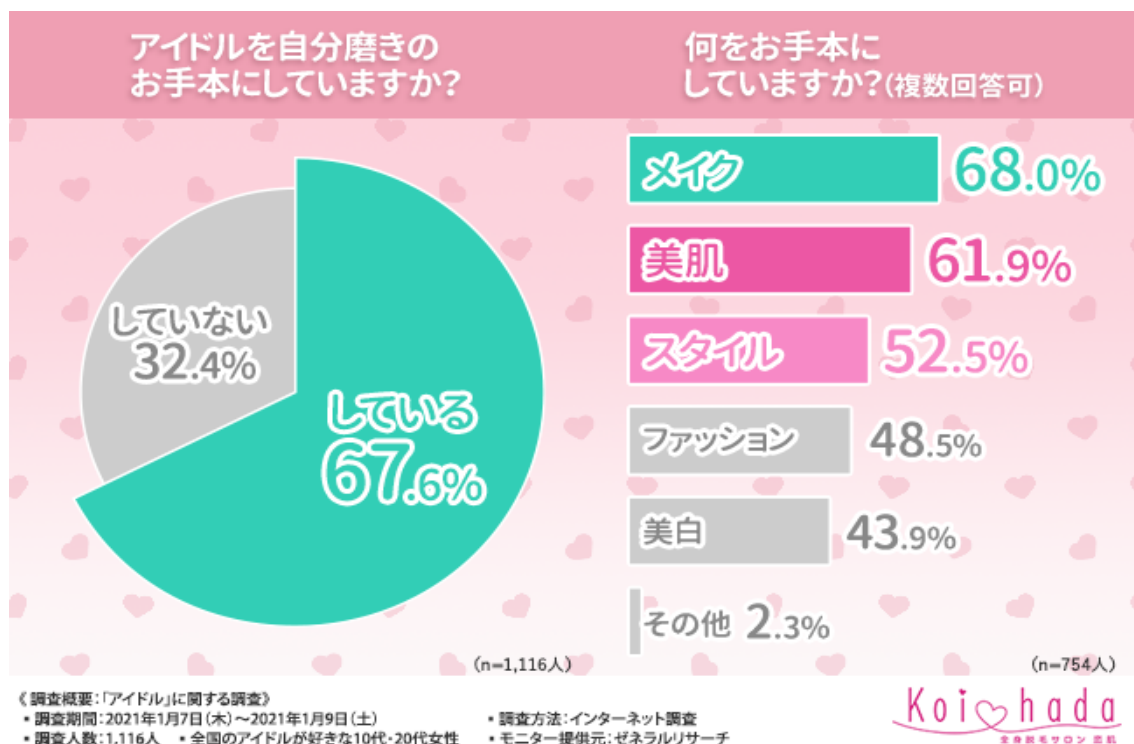


Fig.76 Survey about relationships between Japanese girls and idols © chojudai media, 2021

Figure 76 shows how many girls regard idols as role models, and if so, what aspects of those idols they want to imitate. 67.6% of girls imitate idols to polish themselves, with 68%

¹⁷⁰ “Ankeeto kekka’ yaku hansū no onnanoko ga aidoru ni naritai! 7-wari chikaku ga otehon ni ♡ [‘Survey result’: approximately a half of girls want to be idols! 70% of girls regard idols as their role models ♡], Chojudai, last modified January 22, 2021, accessed May 3, 2021, <https://chojudai.com/2021/01/22/11400/>.

focusing specifically on idols' makeup, with a lesser focus on skincare, body styles, fashions, and white skin. 48% of girls have experienced a desire to be idols. Chojudai also released survey results about girls' image of idols, and what elements they thought necessary to be idols. 71.3% of girls said that idols have slim and skinny styles, 64% clear and neat skin, 47.6% white skin; in addition, 47.3% said that idols are professional dancer, and 40% that they have long, beautiful legs.¹⁷¹ More than half the girls thought that having perfectly beautiful looks is necessary to be an idol, as well as having a strong will. Even though Chojudai did not clarify which idols these girls were into, their specification of skinny body-type, high dance skills, beautiful looks, and long legs suggest that most of the girls are talking about K-pop idols: not only are these elements usually required for K-pop idols, but in addition it is no longer rare for Japanese girls to audition to debut as K-pop idols, making K-pop now quite familiar among Japanese girls. In this respect, it is no wonder that K-pop idols have greatly affected Japanese women, particularly teenagers, when it comes to makeup and fashions. Indeed, *Modelpress* mentioned that Fujita Nicole has long been a big fan of BLACKPINK;¹⁷² moreover, some famous Youtubers have released videos explaining how to do makeup like K-pop idols'. All this said, there are important differences between Japanese gal girls and K-pop idols in terms of makeup and hair color.

¹⁷¹ ““Ankeeto kekka’ yaku hansū no onnanoko ga aidoru ni naritai!”

¹⁷² “Fujita Nicole ‘yumemitai’ BLACKPINK to nengan htsusigoto de ‘sōshisōai’” [Fujita Nicole says, “it’s a dream come true!” First collaboration with BLACKPINK], *Modepress*, September 18, 2018, accessed May 3, 2021, <https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/mdpr.jp/news/amp/1793385>.

As previously mentioned, gal makeup and K-pop idols' makeup have common elements, particularly with eye makeup: both wear colored lenses, draw cat eyeliner, have long lashes, and make their eyes look large. Their eyebrows are slightly upturned, unlike Japanese idols or girls wearing traditional kawaii makeup. However, there are two big differences between them, which come down to lip makeup and skin tones.



Fig.77 (left) Wheein's lip makeup ©Rikolog, 2021
 Fig.78 (right) Rose's lip makeup © Rikolog, 2021

Figures 77-78 show two famous K-pop idols' lipstick colors. The left figure is Wheein from MAMAMOO, who debuted in 2014; the right is Rose from BLACKPINK. Both apply various colors on their lips, from light pink to thick brownish lip colors. However, regardless of the color shades, they use matte lipsticks without gloss. One possible reason is that matte lipstick retains its color much longer than glosses or dewy lipstick. Since K-pop idols have extremely tight schedules every day, and they sweat a lot, it would be necessary for idols to use matte lipsticks to keep their beautiful looks. Another possible reason is that Korean women tend to focus on beautiful and mature looks, rather than adorable or kawaii looks. Like Nakamori

wearing thick red lipstick in figure 28, women wearing matte-texture lipsticks look mature. K-pop idols are the reason why matte-texture lipsticks become popular among young Japanese



Fig.79 Michopa with brown lip gloss © popteen, 2017
Fig.80 Yukipoyo with magenta pink gloss © excite, 2020
Fig.81 Imai Hana with baby pink gloss © make book, 2015
Fig.82 Fujita Nicole with red gloss © the television, 2021

girls. However, many Japanese men seem inclined against thick, matte-texture red or brown lipstick, because it does not look natural nor elegant. For Japanese men who prefer women with pure and kawaii looks, such matte lipstick would be too much.

Figures 79-82 show Japanese gal models with different colors of lip gloss. They also apply matte-texture lipsticks, but mostly they use glosses or sheer-texture lipsticks. Compared with K-pop idols, then Japanese gal models have dewy lips.



Fig.83 Masuwaka Tsubasa with beige lipstick ©Rakuten blog, 2009

In addition, before such current gal models as Michopa, Yukipoyo, and Nicole appeared on TV, there were fewer colors of lipstick, reflecting something of a skin-color lipstick boom (see Figure 83 for an example). Until approximately 2015, many gals applied beige or light baby pink on their lips. Here is a striking difference between Japanese gals and K-pop idols: Korean women tend to prefer red lipsticks or vivid colors, and rarely apply skin-colored lipstick like Masuwaka's in the figure. Most of the K-pop idols mentioned in this thesis apply thick rather than colorless lipstick. This preference might arise from the Korean preference for white skin; indeed, as mentioned before, K-pop idols' whitewashed images, edited to make their skin extremely white, are now at the center of world controversy. Vivid colors, especially red, look good on white skin. Therefore, to make their looks more glamorous, K-pop idols would prefer

thick lipsticks more than Japanese girls would. In this respect, Japanese gal makeup has recently come to have a relatively wide variety of colors in terms of lipsticks.

Another important difference between them is hair colors. What is interesting is that Japanese usually dye their hair among three colors—black, brown, or blond—and have certain stereotypes regarding other colors, such as red, blue, orange, pink, or silver, that K-pop idols often use. In Japan, few people dye their hair other colors beyond the three; some groups who might be expected to do so are musicians in “visual style” bands, cosplayers, or *menhera* (i.e., people suffering from mental illness). Even though blond hair can be controversial, people still accept it, perhaps because of Western cultures. Despite their rebelliousness, even gals generally do not dye their hair red, blue, or other vivid colors. In this respect, visual style bands, cosplayers, and some Harajuku girls are extraordinary.

This section examined differences between K-pop idols and Japanese gals, focusing on makeup and hair color. Current gal models look not unlike K-pop idols, and many Japanese teen women respect idols and have tried to follow their trends in makeup or fashion. Yet despite K-pop idols as well as Korean women in general using matte-texture, thick, red lipstick to make their appearances mature, independent, or strong, Japanese gals have retained sheer-texture, skin-colored lipstick. Red lipstick makes the most of white skin, which I suspect is one reason why Korean women (including K-pop idols) often apply dark, thick colors on their lips. As for hair color, K-pop idols frequently change their hair, and they are willing to dye it in vivid colors such as red, yellow, green, purple, blue, or orange, according to their new albums’ concepts. On the other hand, not only gals but also actors, actresses, fashion models, and musicians in Japan usually do not pick these colors: people only select among black, brown, or blond. This is striking, because gals have broken many aesthetic rules in their history, but their hair colors

remain limited. K-pop idol culture has had a great affect on Japanese beauty cultures, but when it comes to hair color, the Japanese still retain a disregard for people who dye their hair vividly.

4.4 Contemporary *Bijinga*

This section introduces some *bijinga* depicted in contemporary Japan in order to approach the new aesthetics created by women from a different perspective.



Fig.84: Contemporary *bijinga* by Sioux ©twitter, Sioux/2021

Figure 84 shows some of the unique *bijinga* created by a female *bijinga* artist, Sioux. As I have suggested throughout this paper, the notion of *bijin* has not changed much since the Heian period in terms of its long, black hair, white skin, almond eyes, and well-defined nose. Besides, even contemporary *bijinga* seem to stick to the three colors, red, white, and black, which are characteristic of traditional *bijinga*. In this respect, the *bijinga* in this figure represent a revolution seeking to overturn the existing *bijinga* depictions in contemporary Japan.

The crucial differences lie in (1) hair color, (2) hair length, (3) eye color, and (4) eye shape (particularly the use of round eyes with long eyelashes). Hair color is the most striking point: the girls in these *bijinga* are not tied up with traditional aesthetics, where white, blond, or green hair are quite rare. Long hair too has long been regarded as noble and beautiful in Japan, yet the girl in the bottom-left image has a particularly short haircut—not a popular hairstyle in Japan. The Japanese matching company Pairs conducted a survey in 2016 on the subject of male preferences in women’s hair length, finding that almost 80% of men chose long and medium-long hair, and only 22% preferred it shorter.¹⁷³ This survey matches the ideal women depicted in traditional *bijinga*. In this respect, the girls in the figure above are a new type of *bijin* that has not been discussed before. The eye colors too are not black but blue, purple, or olive green. As already discussed, black or natural brown-colored lenses are common, and such light and unusual colors are not so popular, especially with men. However, gals and Harajuku girls wear vivid-colored lenses rather than natural colors; indeed, the eyes in these *bijinga* have similar

¹⁷³ “Josei no kamigata, sukinanowadore? Danjotomoni ninkinonagasa wa...!”

[Which is your favorite hairstyle for women? The most popular hair style is...!], Pairs, April 4, 2016, accessed March 19, 2021, https://www.pairs.lv/mote_tech/2169/.

characteristics to those of Harajuku girls, with both upper and lower eyelash extensions. Some of the girls have face paint or stickers as well. Considering these features, the *bijinga* have much in common with the Harajuku girls.

This type of *bijinga* is quite extraordinary. They break many traditional, longstanding aesthetic rules. In this respect, these *bijinga* can be seen as one example of a revolution to overturn existing fixed aesthetics and propose another way of depicting women in the field of *bijinga*.

4.5 Actresses with Self-Makeup

Finally, this thesis examines two contemporary popular actresses, Ishihara Satomi and Nanao, who do self-makeup (i.e., do their own makeup) for their dramas, films, or magazine jobs. Through some images and interview articles, this section examines why, in contrast to most celebrities, these actresses do not hire professional makeup artists.

4.5.1 Ishihara Satomi

Ishihara Satomi is one of the most famous actresses working today, extremely popular with audiences regardless of age and gender. Beginning her career in 2002, she has played a range of roles for nineteen years. In a long interview in her photo album, she reminisced:

One day I shaved my eyebrows to make them thin, put on makeup, changed my socks to loose ones, and folded my school skirt to make it short. On the way home, I removed the makeup by rubbing with my hand. But my mother realized I

had been shaving my eyebrows and I was scolded by her. Every time I did something wrong, she found it immediately, so I did not shave my eyebrows nor worn makeup after that.¹⁷⁴

Later her manager too strictly managed her behavior, even overseeing her comments for each event to ensure matching her image concept with what the public demanded her. As a result, she said, she gradually lost any energy to practice makeup, watch other films, or do other things that she tried to do, and she became lost in herself.¹⁷⁵ When she was 23 years old, a magazine asked her to appear on its front cover for a special issue introducing exercise, posture correction, and breathing methods to reduce the waist size. This magazine job changed her way of thinking. Since she had only ten days until the model job, she went to gym every day, switched her meals to vegetable soup, and went to the beauty salon; for the first time, she made an effort to change her body style. This opportunity gave her confidence and she started studying and practicing makeup and fashions as a way to find herself. Over time, she gradually came to do self-makeup instead of hiring makeup artists.

Another reason why she started doing self-makeup came from her first long vacation in New York. According to Ishihara, in December 2010 she had a month vacation for the first time since she started her career. When she tried to text her manager all of her schedules during the vacation, her manager declined and said, “You can decide everything on your own.” In New York, she went to a language school, and she wore whatever makeup, nail polish, and clothes she wanted without any apparent judgment from the public. Ishihara looked back on those days

¹⁷⁴ Ito Akinori with Ishihara Satomi, *Encourage* (Tokyo: Takarajimasha, 2017), 154.

¹⁷⁵ Ito and Ishihara, *Encourage*, 155.

saying, “Because I thought I had to be Ishihara Satomi, who has an image-character created by my professional fields, I always thought I had to do this, I had to be like this, and I could not love myself. I would say that I was struggling with being tied up by other people than myself. My experiences in New York taught me that I can do what I want.”¹⁷⁶ In this long interview, she indicates that she was struggling with the fixed image created by the entertainment office to which she belongs, the media, and society. Doing self-makeup is not just a professional approach to her jobs, but also her “resistance” to the fixed, ideal character created by someone other than herself.

¹⁷⁶ Ito and Ishihara, *Encourage*, 157.



Ishihara Satomi, makeup creations for dramas.

Top row: Fig.85: Makeup for *Unnatural* ©ryukkunet, 2017; Fig.86: Makeup for *Heaven~gokuraku restaurant* ©instagrammer news, 2019; Fig.87: Makeup for *Shitsuren Chocolatier* ©entopi, 2018

Lower row: Fig.88: Makeup for *Takane no hana* ©pinterest; Fig.89: Makeup for *Jimi ni sugoi! Kōetsu girl* ©makey, 2018; Fig.90: Makeup for *Dear Sister* ©livedoor, 2014

Figures 85-90 show characters that she has played with self-makeup. According to *livedoore news*, Ishihara studies makeup by thinking about how long a given character usually

takes on her makeup, or what kind of makeup this character would prefer.¹⁷⁷ Even though Ishihara carefully reads the script, she does not focus rigidly on the original character descriptions, but rather makes each character so that she expresses herself or the characters. In the figures above, Ishihara changes the shape and color of eyebrows, lipstick colors, and eye makeup. For example, the character from *Unnatural* (2018) does not apply foundation but rather concealer to hide eye circles, applies mascara on the tip of the eyelashes, and puts on beige-colored lipsticks; this makes the character look calm, because she is a forensic pathologist who performs autopsies. According to *Nikkei Style*, Ishihara drew the eyebrows arch-shaped and chose a greyish brown color to express the character's soft atmosphere and strong will.¹⁷⁸ Ishihara tried to express the character without using foundation, eye makeup or even lip makeup as much as possible. In the drama *Kōetsu girl*, she even asked fashion stylists to allow her to choose clothes: she wanted to arrange not only makeup but also fashion styles by herself. Because her character wanted to be the editor of a fashion magazine, Ishihara frequently changed

¹⁷⁷ “Ishihara Satomi, yakugara no meiku wo mizukara kōan: yakudukuri no ikkannde” [Ishihara Satomi devises makeup for each role], Livedoor News, March 28, 2020, accessed March 19, 2021, https://www.google.co.jp/amp/s/news.livedoor.com/lite/article_detail_amp/18033810/.

¹⁷⁸ Suzuki Tomomi, “Ishihara Satomi san, josei ga mitometa jiko branding ryoku” [Ishihara Satomi: The self-production method that makes her attractive for female fans], *Style Nikkei*, *Woman Smart*, March 23, 2018, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://style.nikkei.com/article/DGXMZO28101470U8A310C1000000/>.

the character's makeup, hairstyles, and clothes. In this way, Ishihara has done a kind of self-production in each TV drama and film, usually by doing self-makeup.

Ishihara has many female fans, and according to *Nikkei Style*, was chosen, in a survey conducted by women's magazine *Biteki* (美的), as having the most attractive look for women three years running.¹⁷⁹ Many female fans follow Ishihara's makeup and fashions, and the cosmetics and fashion brands she uses for her dramas sell strongly. Moreover, in interviews she tells how she changed through their use, and encourages women to express themselves by themselves, not for other people. She relates her own experiences that changed her way of thinking, gave her confidence, helped her find ways to overcome herself, and uses this to tell women how they too can be themselves without being bound by other people's opinions or aesthetic values. This is why Ishihara is so popular among women, and why so many women respect her lifestyle. Her experience of struggling with a fixed image expected by the media and society changed her, and gave a clue to start doing self-makeup to be what she wants.

4.5.2 Nanao

Another actress who does self-makeup is Nanao. Her main profession is as a fashion model, a career she started when she was 20. She obtained the "Race Queen of the year" in 2009 and 2010.¹⁸⁰ Compared to Ishihara, Nanao has opposite reasons for doing self-makeup. Whereas

¹⁷⁹ Suzuki, "Ishihara Satomi san."

¹⁸⁰ Ara Vahanian, "Nanao Arai: Japanese Fashion Model and Movie Actress," HubPages, July 26, 2020, accessed March 19, 2021,

Ishihara does self-makeup in order to be outside the fixed frame drawn by someone other than herself, Nanao does self-makeup to reflect the public image of “evil woman.” She has had many opportunities to play the role of mean woman or evil woman in dramas. Some actresses and actors do not like to play these roles, because playing bad people may give the public a negative impression and fixed image of the actors, but Nanao seeks out such roles. According to *cinema cafenet*, Nanao focuses on being a mean woman because the public have a certain bias toward mean people. She claims that there many kinds of mean women, and makeup is quite important to express each type. Therefore, she does self-makeup, changing cosmetics accordingly to make the perfect character of the mean woman.¹⁸¹

<https://discover.hubpages.com/entertainment/Nanao-Arai-Japanese-Fashion-Model-Movie-Actress>.

¹⁸¹ “Interview: Nanao, ‘Akujo wa jibun no mochiba’ meiku momizukara miritani de syukō wo korasu” [Interview: Nanao “Mean women’s roles are my field” creates her own makeup according to her characters], Woman Excite, December 22, 2016, accessed March 19, 2021, https://woman.excite.co.jp/article/lifestyle/rid_Cinemacafe_45885/.

Figures 91-93 show Nanao in a variety of makeup. She is proud of these roles, even though most avoid them. In another interview, Nanao claimed that the field of devilish women is



Nanao. Fig.91 (left): thick makeup for Interview job ©modelpress, 2017; Fig.92 (center): natural makeup for drama, *Marigold for 4 Minutes* ©the television, 2019; Fig.93: thick makeup for drama, *Miss Devil* ©cinema cafenet, 2018

where she can shine the most. In the image on the right, which appeared with this interview, she intentionally uses two opposite colors on her makeup. She applies deep blue eyeshadow on her eyelids, puts on blueish pink lipstick to add accents, and draws her eyebrows sharply. In the left figure, from her drama *Miss Devil*, she seems to apply false eyelashes or eyelash extensions, uses eyeliners to make cat's-eyes, and also applies eyeliner on her bottom eyelashes so that her eyes

look sharp. She changed the color of the lipstick from blueish pink to a matte-textured red. Since she has played this sort of role, her fans got a surprise when they saw Nanao wearing natural makeup in another drama, *Marigold for 4 Minutes*. Here, as seen in the middle image, Nanao had her hair cut to make bangs, her eyeliner slanted down to make her eyes look soft, and the color of lipstick changed from vivid pink or red to coral pink. Compared this makeup, the other two figures of Nanao express a strong atmosphere.

In most cases, Nanao does not hire makeup artists when she plays a devil woman because she has a specific image of the character she plays, and she desires to create ideal characters by herself. Even though the motivation of doing self-makeup is different from Ishihara's, both actresses strongly desire to make their characters themselves rather than rely on the image of their characters created by other artists. Nanao focuses on how she can reflect the personalities and images of evil women imagined by society, and does self-makeup to express the perfect characters. In this respect, Nanao has in common with Ishihara that she does not want to play the roles created by makeup artists but those created by herself.

Most celebrities hire makeup artists and fashion stylists for their jobs to match their looks with those of the original characters. Actresses and actors are expected to be other people, to live other people's lives. Some celebrities struggle with the stereotyped image of themselves created by media and society, and for some, self-makeup is a way to express themselves. Examining Ishihara and Nanao shows us how they decide and create the image of characters they play. Since the entertainment field is a part of mass media, celebrities have to deal with the images created by someone. However, Ishihara and Nanao try to avoid fitting themselves into the fixed aesthetic values by doing self-makeup.

CONCLUSION

As regards Japanese conceptions of female beauty, some believe that aesthetic values have changed greatly over the long years since the Heian period. However, I have argued that such notions show a certain stereotyped standard that has remained almost unchanged. In contemporary Japan, the *kawaii* aesthetic lies at the center of the field of beauty; this new category surely makes people imagine a dramatic transformation from *bijin*-centered to *kawaii*-centered aesthetics. Yet I would say that the notion of beauty is always largely fixed: regardless of generations and periods, people regard women with long black hair, white skin, and almond eyes as beautiful rather than *kawaii* or pretty. Even though beauty standards seem to be changed, the stereotyped principles have remained. To clarify the reasons for this gap between the general perception and mine, I divided my thesis into four chapters: (1) an introduction to the mass media's construction of a stereotyped conception of beauty; (2) traditional Japanese beauty looks; (3) the fixed standard of *kawaii* looks as created by mass media and men; and (4) some new aesthetics created by women that challenge the existing traditions.

Media such as magazines or TV dramas have a tendency to show people a certain aspect of things that can create a false impression or a fixed image. The image of the 1920s era Modern Girls is an example. In the 1920s, *Fujin gahō* posted an illustration of Ginza with many modern girls and modern boys walking through; in fact, only 1% of women wore Western clothes, and most women were still in traditional Japanese kimono. In this respect, *bijinga* have had a

significant role in the ancient, medieval, and early modern periods as an important form of media. Exploring *bijinga* depicted in each period gives us idea of the beauty standard in Japan.

Noblewomen in the Heian period had a unique aesthetic on eyebrows: since hiding facial expressions was a symbol of wealth, they shaved their eyebrows. However, even though at times Japan's contact with China was not as strong and Japanese created their own original cultures, still their aesthetics continued to be influenced by Chinese literature. White skin and black hair were also symbols of wealth in China, and these two elements have not changed much even now.

In the Edo period, geisha, prostitutes, and other women became opinion-leaders. Edo people had a unique aesthetic, *ohaguro*, and it was quite important for them to clarify their social status. However, apart from *ohaguro*, such beauty standards as long black hair, white skin, almond eyes with single eyelids, and small lips did not change.

In the Taishō period, beauty pageants became popular. Comparing winners from the Taishō to modern Japan, we find that most women still have black hair, whiter skin, almond eyes, or slanted up eyebrows, and those with these qualities were chosen as the most beautiful. The Miss Nippon Beauty Pageants clarify the evaluation standard of “women who have traditional Japanese beauty.” In this respect, Japan has a certain standard of beauty and these criteria have dominated even until today.

In fact, most contemporary *bijinga* have the same tendencies as traditional *bijinga*. Some elements changed, such as large eyes with double eyelids or plump lips, although almond-shaped eyes are still an important element in *bijin*. However, most essential points are white skin and long, black hair; these qualities are firmly attached to the beauty standard, and most Japanese regard these elements as inevitable and necessary criteria in *bijin*.

Various other media also assist and spread these stereotyped aesthetics. For example, an article regarding short hair style appeared in *Fujin Club* in 1927, and in it almost all critics had negative opinions about short hair because it did not fit into the traditional aesthetic values. Some people had positive ideas about short hair, since modern girls were much highlighted by the media; however, *Fujin Club* only presented negative opinions in the article. This is one of many pieces of evidence demonstrating that beauty standards were created and maintained by the media.

To overturn this fixed and stereotyped standard, women started adapting themselves to the kawaii aesthetics that Takehisa Yumeji developed in the Taishō period. Women in his *bijinga* have a different atmosphere from traditional *bijinga*, particularly in terms of eyes. Unlike the traditional beautiful women, the women in Takehisa's *bijinga* have slanted-down eyes and *sanpaku* eyes, something which did not appear in the orthodox standards before. Taking the traditional *bijinga* as the “authentic beauty” for the public, the *bijinga* of Takehisa would seem strange or unique. However, for some women, his *bijinga* became a turning point, a moment to break the traditional unchanging aesthetics and create new beauty styles for women themselves, rather than for the public. Modern girls or women having short hair are the obvious examples. The public strictly criticized women with short hair, arranged kimono, or Western clothes. These girls changed their looks by having their hair cut, arranging kimono, and wearing Western fashions, thereby pursuing their own kawaii styles. However, the society did not accept the new trends as being outside of traditional beauty.

The wide spread of television provided a standard of kawaii looks through the emergence of idols. As shown by such representative idols as Matsuda, Kawai, Nakamori, Nishino, and Shiraishi, the features of idols' looks have much in common since the Shōwa period. Japanese

idols wear natural makeup to make their faces look adorable. Compared with K-pop idols, Japanese idols rarely wear thick eye makeup, since drawing eyeliner makes faces look strong. Since having large, round-shaped eyes is important to create the kawaii atmosphere, some idols wear eyelash extensions and natural black or brown colored lenses, and they rarely add deep colored eyeshadows. K-pop idols, on the other hand, focus more on eye makeup in terms of eyeliners, eyeshadows, colored lenses, and false eyelashes or extensions. Given that the eyes are the most important parts to express human will or emotion directly, K-pop idols (including boys' groups) seem especially to focus on eye makeup to make their appearance and atmosphere look strong. In this respect, Japanese idols seem expected to appear relatively innocent and pretty.

Since such media as women's magazines, news, TVs, or SNS transmit the idols' makeup and fashion, remark on how their look is kawaii, or even present men's positive opinions toward the idols, gradually the notion of kawaii too became fixed. *Yamamba* is the best example of how kawaii standards are fixed by the media and the public, since many regard the *yamamba* makeup trends as a shameful or "dark" culture. *Yamamba* makeup has completely different features from the traditional kawaii looks. Gals broke all of the rules, the long history of "white skin is beautiful, black hair is the authentic beauty, and natural makeup is the best." However, the *ganguro* and *yamamba* were very much a minority. Shibuya was the only place where gals gathered and exchanged their information. Even though they were minority, however, they showed a kind of opposition to the beauty standards created by others, and even to people who cared how others might look at them.

Not only gals but also some actresses express themselves as they like. Ishihara and Nanao do self-makeup instead of hiring professional makeup artists. Their common position is that they strongly focus on their own voices and how they themselves want to show their characters.

Considering that actresses have to be someone else in their jobs, and usually have to follow the directors, producers, screenwriters, fashion stylists or makeup artists to reflect the original characters' images as well as public opinion, Ishihara and Nanao show us their intentions to express themselves by themselves.

Moreover, as we can see in the contemporary *bijinga* depicted by Sioux, women having very short hairstyles, blond hair, or thick eye makeup have rarely been depicted in the past. Most contemporary *bijinga* still presents traditional-styled women. In this respect, Japan has focused on a certain beauty standard since the Heian period, particularly white skin and long, black hair, which are the most essential and unchangeable elements. Even though Japan has developed *kawaii* and aesthetic standards have seemingly changed, nevertheless the aesthetic values remain inside of the traditional beauty criteria: people still expect girls to have natural looks, black or natural brown hair, and white skin. *Ganguro*, *yamamba*, or gals are the ones who tried to overturn the existing beauty standards and create their own beauty. Sioux also expresses a wide variety of beauty by depicting boyish women with short hair or dramatic hair colors such as silver or blond.

At the same time, it should be noted that *bijinga* painters never depicted women as having tanned skin. Most women in *bijinga* have white, bright skin. It is possible that what makes Japanese obsessed with white skin and black hair is deeply connected to Chinese and Korean beauty aesthetics. A future study of these two essential aesthetics that have played most important roles in Japan would need to consider when and why China started regarding white skin as essential to beauty, and how Chinese beauty aesthetics have influenced Japanese. Korea too is a country obsessed with white skin. K-pop idols' faces are mostly edited to tone up their faces, for example, and Japanese cosmetics stores sell many Korean beauty products, including

whitening skincare products or face creams that are extremely popular among young Japanese girls. Exploring the history of Korean cosmetics as well as K-pop idols' beauty standards would also be of value to understanding Japan's two dominant beauty standards.

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