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Alluring Faces

Beauty Standards in Japanese Society through the Ages

Bachelor degree

Laufey Magnúsdóttir

SSN: 140591-2709

Supervisor: Gunnella Þorgeirsdóttir

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Abstract

This thesis discusses images of beauty in Japanese society; what the Japanese see as beautiful women and how those ideals have developed and what has been attempted to achieve, from the early Heian period up until to our days. The thesis is split into three parts; first how ideals of beauty were presented during the Heian (794-1185) era, highlighting the aristocracy; and the Edo (1600-1868) era, with courtesans and *geishas* in the spotlight. The second part looks at the Meiji era (1868-1912), Taishō era (1912-1929) and the Shōwa era (1926-1989); how beauty ideals changed with new times, so-called *moga* (modern girl) being one representation and symbol of the future.

Lastly the final part explores modern beauty images as well as the beauty industry, from the portrayals in the media to the way those ideals are achieved; with salons, cosmetics and plastic surgery.

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Introduction

Walking through a typical drugstore in Japan certainly isn't a calming experience. Loud promises of longer eyelashes, bigger eyes, better skin and other beauty regimes echo through the store. The shelves are tightly stacked, with endless variety of things I had never even dreamt of needing; I feel overwhelmed, yet curious.

In the winter of 2013 to 2014 I studied as an exchange student in Osaka, Japan where I enjoyed learning about many aspects of Japanese culture. One of the most striking and interesting things I noticed was the variety of cosmetics and beauty products available. When walking into a Japanese drugstore the most prominent factor is how large and noisy they are. It is not that there are so many people inside the stores, but rather the videos. In sharp contrast to what I am used to, small screens playing commercials for make-up and beauty products are spread out around the store. These small screens are selling anything from toilet paper to face massagers, even oftentimes snacks, giving you a feeling that the store is more of a department store than a pharmacy. With a great variety of beauty products, including machines that one could not help but wonder what functions had, it seemed more like a beauty store mixed with an electric device shop. I felt quite overwhelmed; the videos playing, the stacks upon stacks of beauty products, packed with texts and advertisements. The pharmacies at home in Iceland seemed rather dull and small with scant variety in comparison. The Icelandic pharmacies lack the rows upon rows of hair colouring, including the *anime* (Japanese animated cartoons) hair colour in bright unnatural colours.

Another thing I noticed was that, generally speaking, women in Japan always looked well-kept and elegant. They would wear make-up and wear nice clothes. Young girls would usually wear really cute and girlish clothes that they seemed to have spent

quite some time putting together. The Japanese clothing and accessory stores were always fun and interesting to browse through. You could see clearly that Japanese fashion was very different from fashion in Europe and America. There was much more emphasis on being girly and cute, at least the stores that targeted a young demographic. I absolutely loved it, even though I knew that a lot of it probably would not fit me. It was not just that they were so cute and girly, fashions of younger people were just plainly different from what I was used to. Sometimes you would see girls with unnaturally big eyes, or pupils to be more precise. The girls were actually wearing contacts lenses to make the eyes look bigger. There were also girls wearing fake glasses, in Japan – and perhaps widely in Asia - is it perceived as attractive to wear glasses, to stand out from the crowd whether it is purely Japanese trend or if it's become further widespread remains to be seen.

Another peculiar fashion that I sometimes saw Japanese women wearing, were black sleeves (not attached to their clothes) in the summer heat. One sunny day in Japan, walking along a pathway to my train station, I saw a Japanese woman wearing such sleeves along with sunglasses and a sunhat, all in black. In confusion, and longing for a shadow, I hurried to the station and I couldn't help but wonder: "How could you wear that in this heat?" Traditionally, white or pale skin has been perceived as attractive and women in Japan have avoided exposure to the sun. Certainly, beauty is perceived differently by people and cultures. Physical beauty also changes with time, each time period and culture has had their own perception of beauty. When it comes to clothing, what is fashionable nowadays will likely not be in twenty years. Part of Japan's allure are its beautiful Geishas in the past, with their white facial make-up with red lips and unusual eye brow lines that look very exotic to an outsider. Given that they were the

beauty ideal of the past, or of the Edo period (1600-1868); what has changed? How has Japan's past history formed the basis for today's images and standards of beauty?

The purpose of this essay is to look at Japanese beauty standards through the ages and observe how they have developed and examine what factors have led to which beauty standards are prominent in Japan nowadays. What is and has been seen as beautiful amongst women in Japan, furthermore, are those ideals linked to the West or are they exclusively Japanese?

Methodology

The research was for this thesis and was primarily based on academic sources, books and articles; as well as a survey. The survey was aimed at younger people, and open to Japanese as well as Icelandic and international people for comparison. Some males participated, but due to the theme it seems males were not as keen to participate as female participants.

The survey was conducted using the free survey website [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). The questions were composed using multiple choice, dropdown, matrix, ranking and a comment box. For clarification two photographs were included. One photograph was of Japanese circle lenses, contact lenses that make your eyes look bigger. The second photograph was of the "Hana Tsun Nose straightener – Nasal support beauty clip." On April the 2nd 2015 the survey was shared as an event on the social networking website Facebook. It was then advertised among young adults and adults on a group named "Banzai 214-2015" (a group for students studying Japanese at the University of Iceland and Japanese exchange students at the University of Iceland) and shared by teachers and students in the program. The survey was open to the public from that date until April

18th 2015. The final number of participant was 85 individuals, of which 78,82 % respondents were female, and of those 84,91 % ranged from 21 to 30 years old. The main purpose of the survey was to inquire about people's knowledge and views of Japanese cosmetics, not just people of Japanese origin, but also people of different nationalities for comparison. The survey is presented in the appendix at the end of the thesis, where the font has been minimised and the photographs have been shrunk to about half their original size but otherwise identical to the survey used online.

Chapter 1 – Japan’s Images of Beauty in the Past: Geishas and Courtesans

In Japan, the belief that inner and outer beauty is heavily connected dates back many centuries (Sherrow, 2001, p. 162-163). According to Slade (2009) there are three reasons for the origin of cosmetics. Those are: a functional one, to care for the skin and body; a social one, the etiquette of social communication and an aesthetic one, to comply with an ideal of beauty (p. 119). In this chapter the focus will be on the Japanese ideal of beauty in the past, mainly in the Heian (794-1185) and Edo (1600-1868) periods from whence links will later be drawn to modern perceptions of fashion.

The Japanese traditionally gave great attention to bathing, both for physical hygiene as well as for spiritual reasons Sources tell us that Japanese people generally took great care of themselves, their hair, teeth, skin and eyebrows (Sherrow, 2001, p. 162-163); the body with massage, which was also an important beauty ritual, as well as with perfumes, that have been made in Japan as early as 500 C.E. (Sherrow, 2001, p. 162-163).

The Heian period (794-1185) is agreed upon by most scholars to have been the epitome of Japanese aesthetics and Dalby (2001) argues that the hair was the most important feature of a Heian lady’s physical beauty (p 221). It was usually seen as a significant beauty asset in ancient Japan, as can be seen by old tales speaking of women’s shining dark hair; to keep it glossy women spread oil with a cloth on their hair. Heian (794-1185) women would part their hair in the middle and let it fall long and straight, some even to the ground or longer, and on their head they would wear ornaments (Sherrow, 2001, p. 162-163). When Heian ladies aged they were equally

afraid of their hair thinning as women nowadays are of gaining weight (Dalby, 2001, p. 221).

If the hair was long and glossy, a thin face was merely a small flaw, as the ideal face was perceived as being a full face, with a high forehead, and white skin. Still, Heian women pursued those ideals by using white powder on their face and shaving their eyebrows and painting new ones high on their forehead (Dalby, 2001, p. 221).

However, of more importance than the physical was a beautiful lady's accomplishing attributes: "the poems she wrote, but also the papers she used and her calligraphic style, the blend of incense with which she chose to perfume her rooms and clothing, and the colour combinations in her layered robes." If a lady was a "beautiful boor," such as the unfortunate Omi Lady¹ in the *Tale of Genji*², she was ridiculed by her contemporaries (Dalby, 2001, p. 221).

In the world of the Heian court society, a sensitivity to beauty and subtle refinement in behaviour flourished. Aesthetics were of the utmost importance, and ample consideration was made to please the eye. Noble women wore multiple robes, the standard being twelve, and not being able to move easily was not an issue, as the noble women were merely supposed to sit in them. They exposed these robes in overlapping layers at their wrist, and the blending of colours was of the highest significance to show a lady's taste. Even though there was much attention brought to appearance, when a man was wooing a lady, he would not know what she looked like. Often a lady's sleeves was all a man would be able to see of her, hanging outside her carriage or flooding from beyond a screen, hiding the lady. Unsurprisingly, sleeve edges and hems

¹ Omi Lady: Described as "pretty but voluble and lacking any sense of subtlety." (Dalby, 2001, p. 345)

² *Tale of Genji*: A prose novel by lady-in-waiting at court Murasaki Shibuku (978-1016), written shortly after 1000, depicting the life of the *Heian* (794-1185) court (Varley, 2000, p. 64-65).

in layered colours became the aesthetic focal point concerning Heian women's dress (Shirokauer, Lurie & Gray, 2006, p. 67).

According to Dalby (2001), this fashion trend of ladies displaying their sleeve outside of their carriage, caused gowns to be made with irregularly wide sleeves on the side to let hang outside. Poet Sei Shōnagon³ was not particularly fond of this trend: "I cannot stand a woman who wears sleeves of unequal width. If she has on several layers of robes, the added weight on one side makes her entire costume lopsided and most inelegant...yet nowadays everybody seems to have their clothes cut like this... Fashionable, good-looking people really dress in a most inconvenient way" (as cited in Dalby, 2001, p. 222). As easy as it seemed to be criticised by the privileged and bored court for not satisfying their requirements in manners, taste etc., one custom popular in the Heian court would presumably be frowned at by modern people, *o-haguro*⁴. This custom of the Heian period (794-1185) upper class that later spread to the lower classes, consisted of teeth blackening, or *o-haguro*. Noble women painted their teeth black when and when they got married, and when they came of age – celebrated on the "Coming-of-Age-Day," when they became adults, that age was 13 for girls 15 for boys at the time, but now the age is 20 - (Sherrow, V., 2001, p. 253-254; Kids Web Japan, n.d.).

This custom gained popularity during the Edo period (1600-1868) and spread to courtesans. The blackening substance was a combination of powdered iron filings and water or vinegar. This protected bad teeth, but the main purpose of the custom was to obscure a lady's facial expression (Shirokauer, Lurie & Gray, 2006, p. 67). When foreigners came to Japan, the black teeth looked peculiar, even repulsive to them, which definitely influenced the Grand Council of State to prohibit it in 1870. A few years later

³ Writer of *The Pillow Book* (*Makura no Sōshi*), and a court lady - lived from 966 to 1025 (*Encyclopædia Britannica online*, n.d.)

⁴ *o-haguro*: meaning teeth blackening

Empress Shōken in a bid to appear more European, quit the habit of using teeth-blackening and then, other women quickly followed (Slade, 2009, p. 116). Indicating that rather than adhering to rules, Japanese society seemed to be more influenced by role models and fashion icons.

In the Edo period (1600-1868) there was a hierarchy of prostitutes, the highest being *tayū* courtesans, admired as fashionable people and celebrities. When a *tayū* would receive the attention of a wealthy client, custom dictated that he would give her the latest fashions four times a year. Those were kimonos made from luxurious textiles such as satin, brocade, velvet, and open-weave ramie and adorned with grand patterns made with dye and embroidery. The *tayū* had a daily procession through *Yoshiwara*⁵ to advertise themselves. In wooden clogs with white faces and their hair done up in the latest style, they would walk slowly and in exaggerated figure-eight steps (Hix, 2015).

By the mid-1700s, the *tayū* had faded away and a new kind of high-class courtesan took her place, *oiran*. By that time, courtesans were so influencing on fashion that wives of upper-class men came to Yoshiwara for the express purpose of seeing the *oiran* do their procession. The most admired courtesans were seen as the picture of youthful perfection, with no moles or blemishes and often the ideal body shape – slender. Men would describe an ideal courtesan in great detail; small mouth, round, soft faces, even the shape of a woman's ears. The most eroticized things concerning women in artwork of the time were a bare foot or a glimpse of a red undergarment coming out from a courtesan's robe. A trend began as a sign of position which later developed into fashion, was the habit of tying the *obi*⁶ at the front of a woman's kimono, while generally tied in the back. Originally this meant the *obi* tied on the front meant that the

⁵ *Yoshiwara*: The pleasure district in the city of Edo

⁶ *Obi*: Like a belt or corset, worn with kimono

woman wearing it was selling herself, yet the courtesans were such fashion icons that wives of high-rank military men soon started to wear their obi in front, a fashion statement of the time (Hix, 2015).

A popular Japanese book from 1791, depicts the detailed glamorous fashion of these style icons:

The upper garment consisted of white *nanko* dyed with purple clouds among which peeped out some tasteful pattern. Here and there were flowers embroidered in silk and finished by handpainting representing in vivid colours the four seasons, while the crest consisted of a wisteria flower sewn upon the dress with purple silk thread. The underwear consisted of a figured satin garment bordered with plain brown *Hachijo* silk and embroidered with the same pattern in colored silk, and of a lower girdle of claret-colored figured satin lined with bright satin scarlet silk crepe. As an instance of the beauty and costliness of the night-gown of a certain young miss, the *Keiseikai Shi-juhat-te* (“Forty-eight methods of buying courtesans”) mentions that “the garment was of scarlet crepe trimmed with purple figured satin and edged with gold and silver threads so as to give the effect of waves breaking upon the seashore, while her night-sash was of *kabe-choro* (wrinkled silk).” (as cited in Longstreet and Longstreet, 2009, Chapter 8, para. 7).

The courtesans seemingly took great effort to uphold their whole signature look; in order to present the highest ideals they wore a toxic lead makeup on their faces, necks, hands and feet (Hix, 2015). In the *Edo* (1600-1868) (continuing in *Meiji* (1852-1912) era) the fundamental cosmetics base in white-powder make-up were white lead particles, later proven harmful (Slade, 2009, p. 117).

Longstreet and Longstreet (2009) discuss the process of putting on make-up by courtesans and *geishas*⁷; it was a long ritualistic process. The girl would scrub her face, look in her mirrors and examine her features. Then she put on camellia oil and a half-

⁷ *Geisha*: *Gei* meaning art and *Sha* meaning person. A female singing and dancing entertainer. Not a prostitute, as they could not compete with the courtesans of the Yoshiwara, but were sexually available (Longstreet, 2009, Chapter 5, para. 1 & 4).

masque of either pink or white undercoating; Tokyo *geishas* put white over pink, Kyoto *geishas* put white, then added pink. This masque quickly hardened, so the girl had to be quick to take another flat brush and blend the masque well so that not a trace of the skin could be seen (Chapter 8, para. 4). Then rouge was brushed around the eyes and on the cheeks. She cleansed her eyebrows and lashes with a damp towel in order to be able to put on colour. Then a cotton puff was used to put on an ample amount of white powder and cover the whole face. Then with a black pencil, she would draw on sideburns; and then the eyebrows, first with red, then with, black liquid. The mouth was painted with bright red and made to look small. The eyes were rimmed in red and then black. A quantity of white masque was brushed over the throat, bosom and, the part that that the Japanese consider “beautiful and maddening.” Lastly, an elaborate black wig was put on, lacquered, and jewels and pins put on it. (Chapter 8, para. 5).

All this glamour and effort were depicted in *Ukiyo-e*⁸, the woodblock prints so famous during the era and made famous in the Yoshiwara district. These prints very often depicted courtesans and actors from Yoshiwara, a pleasure district in Edo (1600-1868), sometimes referred to as “the floating world” (Schirokauer, Lurie, & Gray, 2006, p. 153-154).

According to Hix (2015), because a woman was regarded as less of a person than a man, the women in the prints of “the floating world” are often depicted with obscured faces, while the actors in theatre, especially the ones recognized for female impersonation, are painted with unique, individualized expressions. “If you look at the paintings of Katsukawa Shunsho, all of his female beauties look more or less exactly the same,” Laura W. Allen, the curator of Japanese art at the Asian Art Museum says (as cited

⁸ *Ukiyo-e*: a style of painting in the seventeenth century using wood blocks, inking them and then putting them on paper.

in Hix, 2015). Seemingly, the way women were depicted in the artwork indicates how women were perceived in society; and as in other parts of the world, history is documented through men's eyes.

The *Ukiyo-e* prints, present the idealized depictions of beauties of “the floating world”, and artwork from former eras show similar ideals. A drawing from the 8th Century named “Ladies under a tree, decorated with bird feathers in screen panels” depicts the basic image of Japanese beauty: “a round-to-oval face, with gentle facial lines, and a straight nose and straight eyes (Fig. 1). The flat, broad eyelids and small, receding chin, which were signs of beauty in this period, expressed the peacefulness and charity of the human spirit. A small mouth with well-shaped lips enhanced the graceful appearance.” A drawing called “Kichijo Ten (Mahasri)” (Fig. 2) is another example of this idealized notion of Japanese facial beauty-somewhat a “Venus of the Orient” exaltation. The Printed Scroll of the *Tale of Genji*, from the 12th Century, shows this notion in a more conventional way (Fig. 3). *Ukiyo-e*⁹ art from the Edo¹⁰ (1600-1868) period also depicts straight eyes and nose, flat single eyelids and receding chin (Fig.4), typical ideals of beauty in Japan's past (Shirakabe, 1990, p. 215-216).

⁹ *Ukiyo-e*: Pictures of the “floating world,” pleasure district in *Edo* in the seventeenth century (explained further later) (Schirokauer, Lurie & Gay, 2006, p. 153)

¹⁰ Edo: Both referred to as a time period and as the city that later became Tokyo (Schirokauer, Lurie & Gay, 2006, p. xix)

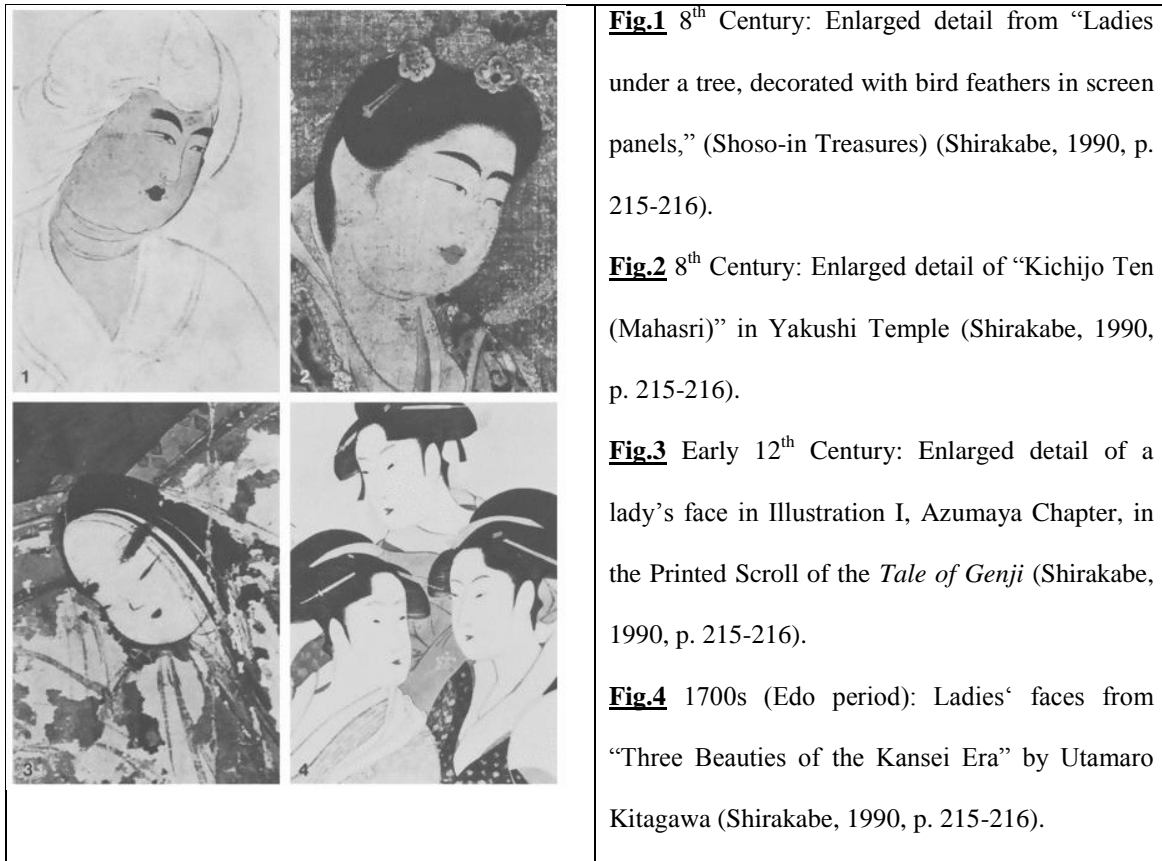


FIGURE A: INCLUDES FIGURE 1, 2,3 AND 4

As Japan is a group oriented society, strong or unique facial features were not valued, as those might have depicted individuality or self-assertion. For that reason, women in Japanese art during the Edo period (1600-1868) were rarely shown as having any individual facial features. Beauties of the time were described in writings and art as having similar features: White skin, long oval face, straight nose. The eyes, nose and mouth in a round-to-oval face were customarily shown in a specific way that reflected Buddhist notions of harmony and universality (Shirakabe, 1990, p. 215-216).

Art in Ancient Japan depicted idealized images of beautiful women, each era showing a few changes. Long flowing hair changed to ornamented up-does. The white powder and other cosmetics, had been used for hundreds of years. Yet, as time passed, Japanese society changed drastically, and with it, attitudes towards cosmetics and perceptions of beauty ideals would too.

Chapter 2 – Towards Modernity

In 1868 the Meiji Restoration brought about political changes and Western influences to Japan; the Tokugawa government was overthrown, the shogunate abolished and the emperor restored. Emperor Meiji sought to adapt to Western ideals and in his portrait painted in 1880 by Takahashi Yuichi he wore Western clothes and had a Western style haircut; and Western influences in arts, literature, thought and attire became prominent (Schirokauer, C., Lurie, D. & Gray, S., 2006. 183). The *Meiji* (1868-1912) government urged men to get rid of the white face powder and their top knot, the previously common hairstyle for men, and switch to men's Western hairstyle (Ashikari, 2003, p. 9). For men, hairstyles became one of the earliest ways to get acquainted with foreign fashion and with modern aesthetics. While foreign clothes were expensive and difficult to attain, foreign hairstyle was not. Japanese men could therefore obtain it almost right away. In fiction from the Edo period, much like the bathhouse, the barbershop was a social place of urban spectacle to see and observe. As it was already connected to the fashion scene, it became one of the first places for visual adornment in modern Japan (Slade, 2009, p. 121-122).

However, despite of lenient attitudes towards male hairstyles, the Meiji (1868-1912) government made it a punishable offense for women to cut their hair without permission, which implies how important the hair was to the culturally constructed ideas of feminine beauty (Slade, 2009, p. 121-122). According to Ashikari, Japanese language teacher with PhD in Social Anthropology, (2003) Meiji nationalist government decided middle-class women should be in the home to protect traditional Japanese culture from Western influences, while middle-class men should learn about Western culture and technology outside the home to catch up with the West. The Meiji

nationalists invented and imposed on Japanese women a traditional ideal figure of women, based on samurai-class women. Furthermore, they promoted a distinct image of all Japanese women, using middle-class women as models of “good wives and wise mothers” for lower-class women to encourage Japaneseness and Japanese identity (p. 9).

Japanese women, being viewed as the embodiment of national cultural purity, their fashion changed much slower than men’s. Attitudes towards women’s cosmetic changes of the Meiji (1868-1912) era are demonstrated in a story about playwright Hasegawa Shigure and her mother. Shigure writes about how she suddenly had a new mother. The mothers’ eyebrows had been shaved and her teeth that had been black, changed. “The mother I now saw before me had the stubbly beginnings of eyebrows, and her teeth were a startling, gleaming white” (... as cited in Slade, 2009, p. 122). This demonstrates how rooted ideas of use of cosmetics were in Japanese society, and how even though men had been adjusting to modernity through their clothing and hairstyle, society was not as quite as equipped for women’s adjusting.

Nevertheless, the next era, the Taisho (1912-26) period was a time when Japanese women gained some freedom. They became more visible in a public setting and were employed as nurses, schoolteachers, bus attendants and telephone operators. Therefore, make-up became more practical for daily use and even became a social necessity as personal grooming and etiquette norms were created for women that were out working (Slade, 2009, p. 117). In the Edo (1600-1868) period and the Meiji (1868-1912) period, people had painted their lips with lip rouge in a pursed-up mouth kind of shape. However, during the *Taisho* (1912-26) period, painting it all over the lips became popular. In the Meiji (1868-1912) era cosmetic creams had been introduced to the Japanese market, but following the creams came Western-style make-up in the Taisho (1912-1926) and Shōwa (1926-1989) eras. Hygienic facial culture, referred to as

“aesthetics” in present-day Japan, was introduced in Japan in 1905. Endō Hatsuko, allegedly the first to offer this service, charged 50 sen (0,5 yen) for about 40 minutes. It grew popular, mainly with the upper-middle class; showing the impact reporters had, as they tried the service and made it popular with readers (Slade, 2009, p. 117). With more mediums materializing, the presentation of cosmetics and beauty images was changing, and so was the way cosmetics were used.

Traditional face powder had always been white, but the early *Taisho* (1912-26) era brought coloured varieties to the Japanese market. The traditional face powder hid women’s real skin tone. Many women began to use the coloured powder and non-lead white powder, which gave a “transparent, pure white complexion”. Hence the traditional white face and the everyday foundation were separated. (Ashikari, 2003, p. 10). With the variety of colour, the idea of matching make-up with age emerged. Cosmetic companies arranged people into students, middle-aged, elderly and so forth and personal grooming got a more naturalistic feel to it (Slade, 2009, p. 117-118;).

Western clothes and hairstyles, along with Western-style make-up with cream and face powder was adopted by Japanese women in the early Shōwa (1926-1989) era (Slade, 2009, p. 118). However, white powder and the preference for white skin as an image of beauty remains to our days. The only exception was that the *moga*¹¹ made tanning fashionable in the Taisho period (Slade, 2009, 116).

Chapter 2.1 – The modern girl

Popular words and expressions from the Taishō (1912-1929) and early Shōwa (1926-1989) periods show a view of the aesthetic changes. Those changes defined that time of sometimes neurotic refinement and intellectualism that was the fruit of the great *Meiji*

¹¹ *Moga*: Modern girl – Japan’s equivalent of the American/European Flapper girl (Hoffman, 2012)

(1868-1912) venture to comprehend and catch up with the West: “It”, *shan*¹², “mannequin girl”, “modern girl”, “stick girl”, and *mobo*¹³ and *moga*¹⁴ are but a few of terms used to describe young women during the era. “It” refers to the famous Clara Bow film, as Bow was the archetypal flapper of American films (*Imdb*, n.d.). The *moga* was Japan’s counterpart to the international flapper phenomenon. These two expressions came to be under the same conditions; economic surplus, growing thirst for more liberation and growing effects of visual modernism (Slade, 2009, p. 120-121). The *moga*, or in other words *modan gaaru* (modern girl), wore pumps, short dress, bobbed hair, and could be seen in cafés and urban streets (Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 18-19). Furthermore, Miller (2006) says the *moga* had a small mouth, permed hair, sloping shoulders, pale skin and made big Betty Boop eyes with crescent eyebrows with her make-up (Chapter 1: Beauty Transformations, para. 5). *Mannequin girl* were the fashion models; those who had been used before in advertisements but in 1929 the modelling business kicked off. This form of beauty was very modern and the beginning of a universal standard for feminine beauty (Slade, 2009, p. 120-121).

The *moga* was based on the Western or International Flapper¹⁵ image and Western standards



FIGURE B: 1936, A BIT TIPSY/TIPSY BY KOBAYAKAWA KIYOSHI (HONOLULU MUSEUM OF ART, 2010)

¹² *Shan*: comes from the German word Schön. It is a masculine term that refers to feminine beauty.

¹³ *Mobo*: Modern boy – usually with long hair, wore bell-bottom trousers, floppy tie, coloured shirt and round-rimmed spectacles. The *moga*’s brother (or lover) (Hoffman, 2012)

¹⁴ *Moga*: Modern girl – Japan’s equivalent of the American/European Flapper girl (Hoffman, 2012)

¹⁵ The personification of the free spirit of the 1920s, with short hair and wearing short skirts, she was strikingly different from the fashion and attitudes of the 1910s (Spivack, 2013)

of beauty, but rather than just Westernization, she meant modernization for Japan. Artist Kobayakawa Kiyoshi created a typical image of the *moga* in his woodblock print *A bit Tippy* (or just *Tippy* in other sources) from 1936 (Fig. B). Portrayed as a high-class café waitress, the print shows her fleshy body, pale skin, round face, and big eyes (Miller 2006, Chapter 1: Beauty Transformations, para 5).

The *moga* made an impression on some foreign visitors to Japan, who implied their part in changing the aesthetic and social norms. Greek novelist Nikos Kazantzakis, who visited Japan in 1934, wrote about a *moga* named Joshiro in the 1937 novel *Le Jardin de Rochers*¹⁶ (Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 20):

Joshiro was unendurable. She had lost the delicate but disturbing charm of the Japanese woman, her naive smile, her insinuating grace—the omnipotence of weakness. She had become, with her sports clothes and her woman’s freedom, a hybrid, equivocal being, half ridiculous, half tragic, like all the incoherent organisms of transition. (as cited in Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 20).

Kanzantzakis wrote that the Americanized *moga* and *mobo* are somewhat ridiculous, in imitating Western models. Yet, in trying to “make a new synthesis,” they represent Japan’s future better than the “exotic charm” of the old Japan, with the “beautiful kimono” and “lacquered hair” (Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 21). However, as Miller (2006) discusses, Western influences did not necessarily mean complete imitation of Euroamerican style, as how-to books from the era on modern cosmetics and hairstyles portray. One example would be a picture from a manual that depicts the difference of the

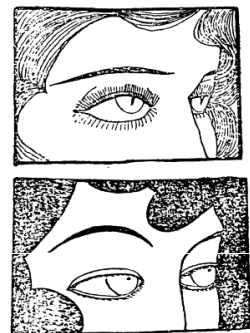


FIGURE C FIGURE D: 1924, BEAUTY MANUAL THAT SHOWS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JAPANESE- (ON BOTTOM) AND WESTERN-STYLED (ON TOP) MAKEUP (MILLER, 2006, CHAPTER 1)

¹⁶ *Le Jardin de Rochers*: translated as The Rock Garden

new Japanese woman's eye make-up from a Western woman's (Fig. C). The style was borrowed but obviously not exactly the same (Chapter 1: Beauty Transformations, para 6).



FIGURE F: C. 1930s, BIWA CONCERT BY SHITBATA SUIHA (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

By the 1930s even women that still wore kimonos would have used modern cosmetics and hairstyles, such as the permanent wave, a short, curled hairstyle. This is sometimes depicted in pictures from the time, a mixture of Japanese tradition and modernity (Fig. D). This contrast is shown with the ancient instrument *biwa*, used in Japan since the seventh century, and the microphone stand

on the right, as well as the formal traditional wear and the modern perm hairstyle ((Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 82).

The permanent wave first appeared in Japan in the *Fujin gurafu* magazine in 1921. The first permanent wave machine arrived in Japan in 1923, but after 1934, the style grew in popularity due to less cost when the first Japanese permanent wave machine materialized. In 1939, permanent waves were available in 850 beauty parlours in Tokyo. (Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 20). The government discouraged women from getting a permanent with anti-luxurious campaigns during the China Incident in 1937-1941, claiming it wasted electricity and sent the incorrect cultural message in this “emergency period” of National Spiritual Mobilization.¹⁷ However, some salons just

¹⁷ Prime Minister Konoe Fumimaro declared the National spiritual mobilization campaign in 1938 (as cited in Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 25)

changed the name of the hairstyle from *pāmamento* to *shukuhatsu* (refined hair) or *denpatsu* (electric hair) and women continued perming their hair (Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 20).

In this time of old meets new, authorities and social critics persistently shaped and controlled the *moga*, the same could be said about the traditional woman, the *moga*'s counterpart (Brown & Minichiello, 2001, p. 21). Periodicals frequently published articles condemning the *moga* and complimenting traditional beautiful women. Those articles were not only written by critics and academics, but also some by male artists. For example, *Yōga*¹⁸ painter Fujita Tsuguji (1886-1968) wrote about women in the journal *Bungei shunjū*. First he positively writes that American influence had altered Japanese women into clever and active individuals that could cope against men. However, after that he praises the qualities of traditional fashion: “The beauty of the Japanese woman’s hair was in its blackness and straight flow, and it is unnatural to have it curled in permanent waves.” Furthermore, he connects the kimono to Japanese femininity: “When dressed in Japanese costume, [women] must behave according to Japanese customs of modesty and quiet, and it is wrong for them to imitate American movie actresses.” (as cited in Brown, K. H., Minichiello, S., 2001, p. 21).

The government approved of some characteristics of the *moga*. In January of 1941, The National life guidance department of the Imperial rule assistance association announced that instead of the old beauties, *bijin*¹⁹ from *Ukiyo-e*²⁰ woodblock prints, Miss Nippon as a representative of the ideal Japanese young woman should be a “modern, athletic” woman, with a “suntanned face, upright carriage, rather broad stature, sprightly walk, inclination for work [and] keen appetite...” The committee also

¹⁸ *Yōga* – Western painting, using oil and watercolours (the other type of painting style being *nihonga*, Japanese painting)

¹⁹ *Bijin* – beautiful women, usually traditional

²⁰ *Ukiyo-e* – the floating world, often paintings of *bijin* (beautiful women)

concluded that the ideal woman should possess “gentle speech, and sound sleeping habits,” as well as a “natural, unpainted complexion, [and] bright, unsophisticated mind.” However, as the government was preparing for total war, it would not encourage correspondingly active minds or social habits (Brown, K. H., Minichiello, S., 2001, p. 21).

The *moga* were quite controversial, portrayal of the 1920s fashion in Japan, rather a symbol of modernization than Westernization. They were the pre-war trendsetters, beauty ideal of the time and representation of the future (Miller, 2006, Chapter 1: Beauty Transformations, para. 5). The post-war era saw adoration of the Euroamerican standard of beauty, with a gap between portrayal of healthy, cute, wholesome Japanese women on one hand, and sexy and sensual white women on the other. Until the 1960s, Japanese women were primarily depicted as the professional housewife ideal or modest young women. Female sexuality was depicted with foreign models and actresses and Japanese women had to “camouflage themselves as white” to be linked to sexuality. Separation from the Euroamerican standards of beauty could only be seen as late as the 1970s and 1980s, the time of high cuteness, what Japanese fashion is perhaps most famous for nowadays (Miller, 2006, Chapter 1: Beauty Transformations, para. 9).

Chapter 3 – Beauty Images in the Media: 1970s to Our Days

Perceptions of beauty differ between countries, but a perceived idiosyncratic one has for the last decades been the Japanese almost obsession with cuteness. According to Kinsella (2013) cute culture, including cute fashion, began as youth culture in the 1970s, particularly among young women. The Japanese word for cute, “*Kawaii*,” chiefly means “childlike; it celebrates sweet, adorable, innocent, pure, simple, genuine, gentle, vulnerable, weak, and inexperienced social behaviour and physical appearances” (p. 220). From the 1970s to 1990s cute people and cute accessories were overly popular, and the cute fashion became a basic style or aesthetic, which was split into more specific fashions. The multi-media, consumer goods and services were filled with cute style (Kinsella, 2013, p. 220), and from the mid-1970s, advertisements and articles published in some of the leading women’s fashion magazines implied an inclination to look more than merely youthful, but child-like and cutie-pieish (Kinsella, 2013, p. 228). This chapter will examine images of women in the media for the last couple of decades in Japan, the depictions of female “idols” as well as focus on schoolgirls.

An influential celebrity named Seiko Matsuda was lauded for her cute, innocent behaviour and looks in 1980’s, appearing in magazines and television and being a prototype of the now famous “idol singers” she gained super-stardom. (Kinsella, 2013, Cute Idols: para. 1-2) The “idol” concept is a particularly Japanese one, it refers to celebrities who are most often singers yet are also expected to have other talents. Often plucked from obscurity to perform in single gender bands and are perceived as being the ultimate in what is perceived as attractive at each time. Seiko was referred to as “*burikko*,” a term used to describe a woman who, in order to appeal to men, behaves

young and girlish (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 44). Matsuda was flat-chested, bow-legged and she dressed in children's clothes, took faltering steps, blushed, cried and giggled on television. She debuted early and many "idols" have since done the same; since 1974 the debuting age has only been getting younger, f. ex. (male bands *Tanokin Trio* – aged 14-19, *SMAP* – aged 14-15, *Hikaru Genji* – aged 14-16), and female idols *Kyon Kyon* – aged 14, *Nakayama Miho* – aged 15 and *WINK* –aged 14 (Kinsella, 2013, Cute Idols, para. 1-2). Cute is still very prominent everywhere in the media in Japan, and idols usually have to have cute looks and cute behaviour to gain popularity – though perhaps not to the same extent as Matsuda Seiko.

One thing that idols have been using to add to their cute image is school uniforms. Through the 1970s and 1980s female idols appeared on magazines and in record covers wearing school uniforms, f. ex. Nana Okada in her 1975 "*Jogakusei*" (Schoolgirl) and Tsukasa Ito on her debut album *Shojo Ningyo* (Girl Doll) in 1981. In 1985 a schoolgirl band was formed from high school girls named *Onyanko Club* (Kitty Cat Club). The group was marketed with some sexual insinuations, as their logo was a cat bent over; "*nyan*" meaning "meow" in Japanese, and "to do *nyan nyan*" was 1970s slang for sex. Additionally, their first song was called "Don't Make Me Take Off My Sailor Suit," a smash hit (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 40-41).

Yet at the same time as they're expected to be sexually attractive and insinuating they're also supposed to be "pure," girls that can be admired, emulated and dreamt about; and in order for the public to see them that way. The ones lucky enough to get into an Idol band have to follow strict rules such as: no boys, no going to dance clubs, no smoking nor skipping school (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 42). This recipe for a good girl schoolgirl image was also followed in making of the biggest female idol group of

the 1990s, *Morning Musume* (Morning Daughter), and today's most popular girl idol group, *AKB48* (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 45, 50).

Keeping up the “pure” image is demanding, but the perception is that it's all for the fans, whereas it is mainly a ploy, a play on image brought about for capitalistic reasons. As Ashcraft and Ueda (2014) say: “If idols have boyfriends, what does that mean for their adoring fans? Ironically, the more real they are, the less “real” they are perceived. Perfection is an utter fabrication. The girl is human, “regular.” The fantasy is dead” (p. 50). What AKB48 member Moeno says about their uniforms has a similar feel to it: “The uniform I wear to school isn't very flashy and somewhat dull, but the uniforms we get to wear on stage are very colorful. I feel much happier when I'm wearing one of them” (p. 50). It is all fabricated, made for a fantasy, yet what do school uniforms have to do with this fantasy, the perfect female image?

Chapter 3.1 – Schoolgirls and their trends

According to Ashcraft & Ueda (2014), school uniforms have been made into a trend. Some stores sell cute, unofficial school uniforms, to wear outside of school, so-called *nanchatte seifuku* (just kidding uniforms). Those may look like a school uniform but are, in fact, fake. Some schools do not require their students to wear school uniforms, some girls think their actual school's uniform is unattractive, so they want to wear a cute one. For teenage highschool girls, a school uniform represents a short period in their life when they are free from worries of career, marriage and children yet moderately mature. For men, it reminds them of their first crush in junior high school or high school. The schoolgirls are not kids and not yet adults, still they have more freedom than both (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 7, 23-24, 111).

Kinsella (2013) wrote that not only teenage girls, but also young unmarried women represent freedom in Japanese society. They are left out of most of the labour market and consequently do not have active social roles. Japanese society links young women, as they are apart from mainstream society, with an exotic desirable world filled with consumption, individual fulfilment, degradation and play (*asobi*)²¹. Young women are the main initiators and participants when it comes to cute fashion. Young men do not symbolize the same freedom, but for many of them cute fashion is a way to liberate themselves from social rules and expectations (p. 244). This presumably clarifies to some extent the reason schoolgirls are so prominent in Japanese pop-culture and media. Still, not long ago some girls grew tired of being the objects of fantasies and fetishes.

In the 1990s, a different trend appeared wherein young Japanese girls rebelled against the cute, innocent look as well as the traditional Japanese beauty image, that so long had been dominated by pale skin and thick, black hair. A new fad was born, *kogal*. The name came from *Koukou* (high school) shortened to *ko*, and *gyaru* to *gal*. These girls would typically bleach their hair and have tanned skin. Lightened coloured hair and tanned skin was not about trying to look Western. Similarly as Western teens may colour their hair in striking colours, the *kogals* were making a statement. It was not widely acknowledged in Japan to colour your hair in lighter colours at the time, it was seen as rebellious and many highschools and work places would forbid it (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 114-115).

An editor at the most influential girls' magazine of the 1990's, *egg* magazine, Yonehara; claims: "These girls changed society, it was a revolution." Magazines stereotyped schoolgirls into a "pure young girl that could be dirtied up" for salarymen. He explains: "Japan was a male-dominated society. Men controlled everything, and

²¹ *Asobi* – in this context in means going out, having fun

their desires-until the *kogals* hit” (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 114-115). *Kogals*, a reaction to the innocent schoolgirl look fetishized by men, were breath of fresh new air and changed images of girls in the media, especially in fashion magazines.

Kogals brought with them a new definition of fashion that drastically changed how magazines viewed fashion. In a sense the fashion magazine had to change how they approached fashion. “Before *kogals*, Japanese fashion was mostly top down,” says Yonehara. “People were told what was popular each season, this design or this colour, but with *kogals*, it was about what kids were wearing on the streets. That’s how we knew what was popular” (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p.118).

Miller (2005) claims that the word *kogal* was a generalized, often derogatory term that the media used for many beauty trends in the 1990s; such as emulating pop star Amuro Namie²², and wearing platform shoes – which made girls feel empowered because of the height they gained wearing them (Chapter 1: New Beauty Ideals and the Media’s “Cool Girls,” para. 5-6). Perhaps the media did not like this womanly empowerment, or that these girls were not cute and innocent in a standard sense. Seemingly, it was a mixture of both.

Kawamura (2006) explains how after the Japanese economic bubble burst in the 1990’s²³, with Japanese values changing rapidly, fashion became progressively more creative and innovative, as teens challenged and redefined what was fashionable and aesthetic (p.787). Salesgirls in the popular shopping district in Shibuya in Tokyo could spot the latest trends from teenage girls that shop there. The teens influence fashion by telling the salesgirls what they themselves like, However in order for fashion to spread

²² Born in Okinawa, this star had long, light brown hair, make-up, thin body and wore “saucy” clothes (Miller, 2005, . Chapter 1: New Beauty Ideals and the Media’s “Cool Girls,” para. 4)

²³ The Japanese economic bubble burst – In the 1990’s there was a bank crisis and stocks fell, after a period of economic growth.

to the countryside and to other countries, fashion magazines are essential. Japanese fashion magazines not only influenced Japanese girls' fashion, but also girls in the rest of Asia (p. 790-791, 798).

Japanese schoolgirls, or young women, have popularised many things, kindling trends like colouring their hair, loose socks, navy socks and colour contacts. Loose socks became popular in the 1990s because they made girls legs look thin, even though sock-glue was needed to keep them up. Chemical company Hakugen made “Snoopy Sock Touch” in 1993 and it became a success. But by 2000, navy coloured knee high socks were the biggest trend. By 2013, some girls were wearing both. The loose socks can still often be seen on the streets of Shibuya, Tokyo. (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 28-29, 111).

In the mid-1990s, schoolgirls started to wear colour contacts and started a *karakon*²⁴ boom. In 2005 contact lenses that made the iris look bigger had become popular among schoolgirls because they made eyes appear larger, a feature that suggest childishness and therefore considered cute - circle lenses (Ashcraft & Ueda, 2014, p. 111). In response to the survey question Q8. “Are circle lenses popular where you come from?” 14,12 % answered that with “yes,” the same percentage answered with “rather” and 55,29 % answered “no, not at all” and 16,47 % answered “I don’t know what they are”. Perhaps this suggest that many people around the world know about circle lenses

but they are only popular in Japan, or Asia.



FIGURE G: CIRCLE LENSES (PINKY PARADISE)

Ever since the *Kogal* trend was at its peak, there have been many variations and subcultures as a response or rebellion of society's expectation, but the free Japanese schoolgirl image so prominent in the Japanese media, certainly differs from a new trend in Tokyo, discussed by freelance writer Freeman (2015). This new trend, called *me no shita chiiku*, meaning "undereye blush." Pink blush is applied excessively high on the cheekbones, right under the eyes. Sometimes it is referred to as "Momoko Blush," as it has become a signature make-up style for It Girl *Momoko Okihara*, creative director of edgy and feminine line *Murua*. The trend has since entered the mainstream and Japan's fashion subcultures have made their own interpretations of it. The craze (only in Tokyo apparently though), is appealing for some fans because it makes the wearer look sick. In the last year, *Byojaku*²⁵, the sickly look, could be seen in Japanese fashion magazines and beauty blogs.

Kirakova (2014) claims this fad was led by teen magazine *Ranzuki* with the tag line: "I can be the cutest and most stylish girl in class," meaning pale skin, worried brows and mildly blushed cheeks and lips. Kanako Kirita says: "This look gives off the unapproachable, damsel in distress vibe that makes people want to protect them" (as cited in Kirakova, 2014). This is only one of the many trends in Tokyo, but this at first glance seems rather different from the cute Japanese schoolgirl image. As we have seen, even if variations appear, the emphasis in Japanese fashion tends to be on cuteness. Harajuku²⁶ model RinRin Doll says about the undereye blush: "Rather than a sick look, the blush brings a more youthful and innocent look to the face," she says. It "makes you very much healthy and alive," she says, the reason being that it resembles the full-of-life colour attained after exercising (as cited in Freeman, 2015). Therefore, we can conclude that when it all comes down to it, it's about cuteness.

²⁵ *Byojaku*: meaning „sickly“

²⁶ Harajuku is a district in Tokyo famous for fashion and variations of subcultures

Chapter 3.2 – Cosmetics

There are ways to achieve the cute look; with cosmetics and plastic surgery, and the media promotes those ideals, encouraging consumption of products and services.

Miller (2006) discusses the way beauty images are presented to us nowadays and compares it to the Edo (1600-1868) period:

A major difference from the past is that the ideals for culturally sanctioned beauty attributes are on display in new and unavoidable forms of media everywhere, with precise details of what the consumer should strive for. To be sure, because of a thriving print media culture, women during the Edo era (1600-1868) were also exposed to popular prints of demimonde beauties who were not found in nearly every space that greets the eye, as they are today. (Introduction: Conceptualizing Contemporary Beauty, para. 10).

Nowadays, the cosmetics market in Japan is the second largest in the world, with the United States placed in number one. Men's cosmetics are about 10 percent of the Japanese cosmetics market in Japan. Sales of perfume, hair-care products, skin-care products, and makeup in Japan is presumed to attributed to about 15 billion US dollars in 2002 (Miller, 2006, Introduction, para. 4). Given that the population, according to Country Economy (2014), of Japan in 2002 was circa 127.4 million people, the average spending per person would be around 170 US dollars a year. Of course, people spend different amounts of money on cosmetics, but this seems rather high, considering that cosmetics are often not so expensive in Japan.

In the survey conducted (see appendix) Q12. “When you think of Japanese beauty products, what is the first thing that pops into your mind?” respondents gave a wide variety of answers, but “circle lenses,” “fake eyelashes” and “face masks” were the most common answers or parts of answers. Conceivably, those are the most famous Japanese beauty products.

According to social anthropologist Ashikari, (2003) conducted a survey in the years 1996 and 1997, and even if this may be rather outdated, it can still be applied nowadays. From his research he found that most Japanese women wear make-up foundation every time they are out in public, in the daytime and in the evening. He says middle-class women put on make-up before going outside the home because it is “etiquette” or “common sense” for mature women to wear it in public. In his survey, Ashikari found that 95 percent of his participants wore make up when in public (middle-class women). It would be a statement if a mature woman would be seen outside the house without make-up on. Apparently, she would be presumed to be a grassroots activist (Yoko Ono), feminist activist or not Japanese. Seemingly, not something that an ordinary middle-class woman would like to be confused with. (p. 3, 5).

Ashikari (2003) asserts that in the 1990’s Japanese middle-class women’s everyday usage of white foundation was even more widely spread than before. Meanwhile, the traditional white face was used only on occasions such as wedding ceremonies and coming-of-age ceremonies and was a symbol of “Japaneseness and traditional feminine virtue” (p. 11-12). According to Lakoff and Scherr’s research, (1984), there are two types of cosmetics in the West: cosmetics that enhance what is already there and those that change the appearance of a woman. Japanese foundation for women seemingly does not fit in either group. It is more about obtaining the

standardized white face that is considered the “normal and right” skin tone of Japanese women. (as cited in Ashikari, 2003, p. 11-12). The groundwork of Japanese makeup art is about attaining the “right” skin tone. Participants in Ashikari’s (2003) study focused on “improving their complexion” and when it came to other women wearing make-up, they focused on their complexion. Furthermore, he suggests Japanese women have an “obsession” when it came to wearing foundation, as 93.7 percent of the participants said they wore foundation every time they put on make-up. In the West it is common for women to wear only eye make-up or lipstick, but in Japan it is the opposite, wearing only foundation is more common. For Japanese middle-class women, with the standardized white face they attain the same skin tone as other middle-class women. To look “normal” in public is one of the principal purposes of everyday make-up (p. 12-13).

Miller (2006) argues that current Japanese consumption of products to lighten the skin is connected to ideas from their own history (see chapter 1). Therefore claiming that the wish for pale skin is because of Euroamerican influences is a misguided notion based on the belief that the West is always in a superior position (Introduction: Conceptualizing Contemporary Beauty, para. 3).

Ashikari (2003) argues that this preference of white complexion in Japan is neither merely a form of admiration for the West, nor an interpretation of traditional values of women’s beauty in Japan. Instead, Japanese people’s skin colour is perceived as “white” and “black”, which is connected to a contrast of “us” and “them” (p. 73). These are some examples of everyday attempts towards the ideals of beauty in Japan, but just as some people in Western countries do, some people go further in their pursuit of perfect beauty.

Chapter 3.3 Plastic surgery

As we have seen cosmetics in Japan are used to achieve the ideal look or to look like everyone else, which begs the question what kind of plastic surgery are Japanese people seeking to improve their looks?

Frequently ads in magazines will give insight into these, a blog written by Japanese Yumi Nakata (2014), a language teacher, discusses double eye-lid surgery, or Blepharoplasty. She claims it to be one of the most popular cosmetic surgeries in Japan. An Asian “monolid” is changed into a Western-style “double lid”²⁷ and then the eyes will appear to be bigger. It may be referred to as Western-style, but she argues that it is to imitate Japanese pop idols. Many celebrities in Japan have had this surgery but are embarrassed to admit it and deny it. Many Japanese fashion magazines use models of mixed race or *Ha-fu*²⁸ models to make this Japanese Western look popular. Instead of having the surgery though, ordinary people in Asia can buy a tape or glue to mimic the look.

Toland, Cheng and Shaw (2004) assert that while European and American women tend have body-oriented surgeries, for instance liposuction and breast augmentation. Asian American women usually want a surgery related to the face, “double-eyelid surgery” (p. 59).

Lee and Thomas (2012) discuss how in 1896, a Japanese physician named Mikamo made the first operation to change the Japanese eyelid to look more attractive. He said he was changing eyelids to look what he thought to be “normal” Japanese eyelids and not to make them look like Caucasian eyes. Mikamo’s surgery used three stitches and mainly operating on a fold usually found in a Japanese eyelid. After World

²⁷This means a crease appears on the eyelid

²⁸ Japanese of mixed race; half-japanese, half some other race (Shoji, 2013)

War II, Japan was very influenced by American culture and many surgeons wished to make Western eyes in Japanese faces. However, the standardization of Western eye features in Japanese faces have been diminished because the effect of aging in deep-set eyes, gives a sunken look, so even though many patients want double eyelids, they also want to maintain their Oriental look (p. 508-509).

Furthermore, Lee and Thomas (2012) argue that Westernization did impact changing Japanese standards of what is seen as beautiful eyes. Still, that does not mean that Western features were completely imitated in Japanese aesthetic eyelid surgery (p. 508). Rather than mimicking the Western look, this is about mimicking the Japanese idols.

Conclusion

From what has been explored above, it would suggest that modern Japanese fashion and what is seen as beautiful, largely has its roots in Japanese culture. Japanese society presents considerable demands to look a certain way, or look like everyone else. The image of what is considered beautiful in Japan seems not to be overly influenced by Western countries, but rather, Japanese society has its own ideas and trends. People rather look to idols (Japanese celebrities) concerning beauty and fashion trends.

Even during the Heian period (794-1185) Japanese women were faced with high impossible standards of beauty: be cultured, be able to write poems, layering their robes nicely and have thick, black, glossy, floor-length hair (though mostly only the aristocracy were bound by those ideals). Seemingly, no matter where what period in time one reviews, society is very demanding on women.

To an outsider, Japanese trends may often look as if they're about emulating Westerners, but usually that is not the truth. Sometimes it is about Japaneseness, and other times it is rebellion against social expectations, but Japanese beauty standards are most likely a continuation of their own history.

Geishas and courtesans may be a symbol of traditional beauty in Japan but current style and beauty icons would likely be idols or a Japanese schoolgirl (Ashikari & Ueda, 2014, p. 24). There does seem to be a change afoot, a slight widening of horizons and opening to different standards of beauty as the popular trend and interest website BuzzFeed (2015) recently posted an article by Ngo (2015, April 28) on the first plus-size fashion magazine being published in Japan. When the article was published, the magazine had already celebrated their one-year anniversary. A lingerie line called *Pocha Kawabura* has started to sell bras in larger sizes in Japan and plus-size girls' idol

group *Potty* debuted last January. Concerning how women are displayed in the media in Japan, as the women displayed in Japanese fashion magazines are usually very thin, this would seem to be a large step in the right direction for Japanese society as well as indication of changes in societal pressures and expectations. Japan continues to be a leading fashion icon, Japanese cosmetics are found all over the world and various fashions in the West are obviously Japanese in origin.

The survey composed for the thesis questioned both Japanese and people of other nationalities, leaving an opening for further research; also, due to more emphasis on the academic text, only a few were used, would the answers be different if only the Japanese were asked or perhaps only older Japanese people? Do older generations view the beauty industry differently?

Japanese beauty standards are to some extent based on the Japanese history and traditional culture and to some extent influenced by exterior forces; but in the end, the Japanese people, have translated those external influences and made them their own.

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- Figure b: Honolulu Museum of Art. (n.d.). Girl Talk: 20th Century Japanese Prints Depicting Women. Retrieved from http://honolulumuseum.org/art/exhibitions/5036-girls_talk_20th_century_japanese_prints_depicting_women/ 16
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- Figure e: Pinky Paradise. Circle lenses. Retrieved from: <https://www.pinkyparadise.com/Articles.asp?ID=251>..... 26
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Appendix

Dear participant

My name is Laufey Magnúsdóttir and I am currently studying Japanese Language and Culture at the University of Iceland. For my BA thesis I am researching Japanese beauty standards and cosmetics.

I would appreciate if you could take the time to answer this questionnaire. It takes about 5 minutes. The answers will be completely anonymous and the data collected will exclusively be used for this thesis. You are not obliged to answer all the questions and every participant is much appreciated.

At the end of the survey there are two open questions where you can express your opinion. I welcome all feedback.

This research has been approved by my thesis supervisor, Dr. Gunnella Þorgeirsdóttir. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at lam5@hi.is or my supervisor at gunnella@hi.is.

Thank you for your help,
Laufey Magnúsdóttir

1. What is your gender?

What is your gender? Male Female

2. Age

Age Under 20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 60+

3. Where were you born?

If other please specify:

4. Where do you live now?

If other please specify:

5. Do you use the following?

	Every day	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Not at all
Mascara	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eyeliner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eyeshadow	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foundation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facial cleansing mask	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moisturizer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. Do you read fashion magazines?

7. Please rank from 1-5/6, from most important to least important, where you get fashion and beauty tips from (you can add something else or skip if this doesn't apply to you)

- Fashion magazines
 Advertisement
 Celebrities
 Blogs
 Friends
 Other:

8. Are circle lenses* popular where you come from (see photo)?



Yes
 Rather
 No, not at all
 I don't know what they are

9. Do you know anyone that uses the following?

	Yes, many	Yes, a few	No
Tanning lotion or cream with tanning effect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tanning both or solarium	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whitening lotion or cream with whitening effect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Do you use any of the following?

	Yes very often	Yes, often	Sometimes	Rarely	No, not at all
Tanning lotion or cream with tanning effect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tanning both or solarium	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Whitening lotion or cream with whitening effect	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Do you know what this is?*



FIGURE H: HANA TSUN NOSE STRAIGHTENER – NASAL SUPPORT BEAUTY CLIP (JAPAN TREND SHOP).

Yes I have seen it before but don't know what it does No

12. When you think of Japanese beauty products, what is the first thing that pops into your mind?

13. Is there anything interesting you have noticed in regards to Japan that is different from Europe and/or America regarding beauty products and cosmetics?

Thank you for taking this survey. Any feedback is welcome as well as questions at my e-mail, lam5@hi.is.