THE RISE OF J-BEAUTY

BeautyMatter
INTRODUCTION

Japan is a hotbed of beauty, steeped in ancient wisdom, traditions and time-tested ingredients. The Nipponese thrive on the concept of beauty and have relied on centuries-old design principles to beautify every element of daily life – from the food they eat to the rooms they inhabit. When it comes to personal care, Japanese women find confidence in themselves by taking care of their skin. They are the number one spenders on cosmetics in the world (per capita) and, as such, have one of the most innovative and technologically advanced industries.

This report dives into the history and traditions of Japanese culture and explores how this has translated to modern day beauty practices, leading the country to stake its claim in the Asian beauty boom.
Japan has strong beauty traditions, dating back centuries, that emphasize rituals and simple regimens with multi-purpose products.

Many Japanese women still adhere to the traditional beauty methods of the country’s original beauty icons, the Geishas.

Flawless skin was of the utmost importance to the Geisha’s, who developed specific beauty rituals that continue today. This includes a well crafted skin care regimen to eating food that enhance skin health.

Beauty ideals remain centered around achieving a light skin tone, historically a status symbol among the aristocracy. Evidence of this ideal dates back to the Nara Period (710–94), when women painted their face with a white powder called oshiroi, and in the Heian Period (794–1185), a white facial tone continued to stand as a symbol of beauty.

References to the Ukkiri, a term for moist, naturally colored skin, were described in a handbook on beauty titled Miyako fuzoku kewaiden (A Manual of Cosmetics in the Capital), which was published in 1813 and remained a bible for beauty through the next century. The book encouraged a range of techniques for making the skin “beautifully white,” including facial cleansing, facial packs made of lead oxide, and herbal treatments for acne.

Throughout this period, cosmetics also played an important role, relying on a palette of three basic colors: red (lip rouge, fingernail polish), white (face powder), and black (tooth-blackener, eyebrow pencil).

Wearing makeup was and continues to be considered good etiquette and form. Women were expected to be made up from early morning until late at night, even when home alone. Putting on makeup was viewed as a private act, not to be seen by others, which is likely why many women today shy away from putting on makeup in public.

The Japanese believe that well-cared-for skin is the foundation of beauty, a notion that lives at the heart of the culture, no matter what trends come and go.
Japan has a set of defined aesthetic principles that guide cultural ideals of what is considered beautiful, influencing everything from design to daily life.

**WABI-SABI**

Alone, these two words have individual meaning. *Wabi* refers to a humility or humbleness, and simplicity while *sabi* denotes an appreciation for the aging process, and the well-worn patina of time.

While there isn’t a direct translation in English, together these words combine to hold meaning for an intuitive approach to life that focuses on finding beauty in imperfection, and accepting the natural cycle of growth and decay.

**THE FIVE PILLARS OF IKIGAI**

*Ikigai* is a Japanese concept that means “a reason for being,” similar to the French phrase, *raison d’être*. Everyone in society has an *ikigai*, attained through a long process of soul searching. This personal discovery is an important part of the culture, and finding ones *ikigai* brings satisfaction and meaning to life.
Incorporating various forms of beauty is an important framework for the way Japanese people live each day. These 7 Zen Aesthetic Principles guide the Japanese approach to design.

Kanso – simplicity, and an elimination of clutter
Shizen – naturalness
Datsuzoku – break from routine
Fukinsei - asymmetry or irregularity
Shibui – understated beauty
Seijaku – energized calm
Shibui – austerity

Beauty and health are embedded in Japanese culture. You could say that wellness is a national religion. For starters, the diet is full of skin-supporting foods like oily fish, seaweed, green tea, and fermented foods.

Beyond diet, Nipponese people still partake in traditional onsen, a hot springs bath, for health and vitality. The callisthenic practice of radio taiso has been an important start to the day for almost a century and is broadcast to music on public NHK radio early in the morning.
MAKEUP REMOVAL
This is the first step in a double cleansing process. The skin care ritual begins by removing makeup with an oil or balm, pre-cleanser. This step can be traced back to Shu Uemera who introduced the technique in 1967. It is now a permanent fixture in daily routines.

CLEANSING
As the second step in the double cleansing ritual, the cleanser is a mild (but thorough) facial wash. These are often foaming formulas that can be applied to the skin without too much friction.

LOTION
Known as Kesho-Sui, this step is key for achieving plumpness, while hydrating the skin with ingredients like hyaluronic acid and aloe. There’s no American market equivalent but the closest likeness is somewhere between a toner and a light moisturizer.

SERUMS
Biyoueki, which roughly translates to “beauty liquid,” targets specific conditions like dark spots, wrinkles, or dullness. These products tackle many of the same issues as lotions, in a more concentrated formula.

MOISTURIZERS
This central step can range from oil-based products to creams and milks which act as a seal for previous products. Traditional moisturizers include sonbahyu, which is a rich horse oil and squalane, which comes from olives or (traditionally) from sharks.
EXFOLIATORS
Japanese women slough off skin without harsh abrasives or chemicals. Preferred delivery methods include peeling gels, creams, and powders that gently scrub to reveal fresh and glowing skin.

FACIAL DEVICES
Facial devices are commonly in the Japanese beauty arsenal. Their functions vary based on the tool, but are often used for rolling and massage to encourage tone and lymphatic drainage.

SUNSCREEN
This may be the single most important step in the daily ritual. As such, Japan has developed some of the most light weight formulas with maximum protection. Textures range from transparent gels to milky, mattifying formulas.

WHITENING PRODUCTS
There is an ancient Japanese saying that states, “a fair complexion hides seven flaws.” This notion is one that still rings true today. Women are constantly in pursuit of this pale ideal of beauty. There are a multitude of products in the Japanese market to help achieve a light skin tone. Whitening skin care promotes a brightness to the skin. While there are some products that bleach or reduce pigment, traditional “whiteners” bring skin to life, often using natural ingredients such as sake and rice to achieve powerful results.
The beauty standard for striking skin is a term referred to as mocha-hada, or rice-cake skin. The reference is to a ubiquitous Japanese dessert that is deliciously plump and soft. The philosophy here is that softness reigns supreme as a beauty ideal and the more gentle and nurturing you can be with your skin, the better.
BEAUTY PRINCIPLES

Beyond the hustle of Tokyo, where fashion forward neighborhoods like Harajuku take beauty to the extreme, makeup is minimal. Japan can be credited with perfecting the “no makeup makeup” look, favoring a flawless complexion and a natural, understated touch.

FACE
Flawless, pore-free skin is what the Japanese are known for. Beyond their well crafted skin care regimens, soft, dewy makeup helps to enhance complexions. Base makeup comes in many formulas; liquid, powder and cream foundations as well BB creams and cushion compacts. Concealers are applied under eyes and “problem areas” but never appears cakey or creased. It is often used in a shade lighter than skin tone. It looks natural, with a translucent matte finish.

CHEEKS
An innocent “flush” subtly defines apples of cheeks with soft swipes of pink and red-tinted blush. The term koshoku means blood-coloured or naturally flushed and is the basis for the healthy, fresh, and blushing from the inside look that Japanese women desire.

EYES
The facial focal point tends to be the eyes, where bigger is always better. Because of this, lash products are important. Curlers, mascaras and extentions are constantly being updated with new technologies. Smudge-proof shadows and liners that add dimension to the eye are also essential.

LIPS
Like cheeks, lips are less defined (so that focus remains on the eyes). They are enhanced with washes of translucent tints in shades of rosy pinks and reds as well as lighter nudes, corals and peaches. Full, plump and shiny lips are considered beautiful and there is an abundance of glosses, balms and lipsticks to create this look.
BRANDS WITH HISTORY

SHISEIDO

**Year Founded:** 1872

**Hero Product:** Eudermine (1987)

The history of Shiseido is not merely a story about products and services; it is a story of a company taking a broader perspective to also consider aspects of culture and lifestyle, and seeking to always create new value. The company debuted Japan’s first Western-style pharmacy and has continued to bring innovation to the beauty market for 146 years. Products include skin care that emphasizes brightening and anti-aging benefits, cosmetics, hair care and fragrance.

SHU UEMURA

**Year Founded:** 1960 - Launched first single product (cleansing oil)
1967 - started Japan Makeup
1983 - changed name to Shu Uemura

**Hero Product:** Cleansing Oil (1960) / Eyelash Curlers (1991)

As a beloved Hollywood makeup artist and cosmetic school founder, Shu Uemura believed that quality skin care was essential to creating artistic expression in makeup. He founded his beauty brand to bring his techniques to a wider audience, taking advantage of Japan’s booming economy at the time.

SK-II

**Year Founded:** 1980

**Hero Ingredient:** Pitera - a unique and proprietary yeast strain derived from fermentation and is used in all of the ingredients. It is rich in vitamins and amino acids, minerals and organic acids.

**Hero Product:** Miracle Water Facial Treatment Essence (1983)

Developed by Japanese Scientists during the 1970s who were experimenting with using new, naturally derived ingredients and came across the anti-aging benefits of sake. The skin care brand positions itself as the “fountain of youth” and is a favorite among celebrities worldwide.
TRADITIONAL INGREDIENTS

ADZUKI BEAN
You can eat Azuki beans with rice or in mochi, or you can crush up the beans and wash your face to exfoliate your skin. The brownish-red bean is a rich source of antioxidants.

ARBUTIN
Extracted from the bearberry plant, it functions as a melanin inhibiting substance to help stop dark spots.

BAMBOO
The hearty and distinctly stalky plant is used in many forms in Japanese beauty products. Most commonly as bamboo charcoal or as a fragrance note in skin care.

JABARA EXTRACT
Harvested from the Japanese citrus fruit, it is rich in Vitamin C and polyphenols, to help inhibit the appearance of pigmented spots, and help neutralize skin-aging free radicals.

KOMBU
This seaweed is used in everything from cooking to skin care. It is rich in vitamin B2 and imparts heavy duty moisture, forming a veil over skin.

PEARL
Beyond its beautiful exterior, pearls can be ground into an amino-rich powder. Pearls are also potent antioxidants, and boost the body’s own enzymes.

SAKE
The fermented liquid promotes brighter, smoother skin due to its high content of kojic and amino acids.

TSUBAKI OIL
The tsubaki, or camellia flower, is packed with oleic acids that make for a skin-loving, powerful moisturizer.
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RED

The Japanese concept of color is a dynamic one, and red is particularly important. It represents strong emotions rather than ideas, and has held a prominent position in the country over time. The crimson hue has played a big role in the beauty history, beginning in the Kofun period (300-710), where it was common practice to paint the face with red pigments. From here, it evolved into rouge accents for key facial features.

There are many words in the Japanese language that refer to the color. One definition of the very word for color, iro, translates to a palette containing red. Another term, beni, comes from benimochi, the name for a traditional paste made of fermented safflower petals used to color the lips, cheeks and outer corners of the eyes. It is still a popular ingredient in Japanese lipstick.

Shades of red are commonly used to decorate young women as a symbol of the innocence of youth. After marriage, red is worn only in undergarments; passion kept in hiding. Since the Heian period (794-1185) fabrics dyed with safflower red have been worn close to the skin to evoke physical healing power.
South Korea’s cosmetic industry has seen increasing success over the past couple of years, reaching mainstream appeal in the west. It’s swift rise to mainstream popularity is unparalleled. In the past five years alone, South Korean beauty exports have grown from $1 billion in 2012 to $2.64 billion in 2017, according to the Korea Customs Service.

K-Beauty entered the US market in 2011 when Sephora began carrying South Korean skincare brand Dr. Jart+. Since then, Korean beauty products have become coveted in western markets, prized for their scientific innovation, unusual ingredients and instagrammable packaging. E-commerce platforms such as Peach & Lily and Soko Glam were trailblazers, introducing a wide range of products to the American market. This led to large-scale adoption by brick-and-mortar retailers like Sephora, Saks Fifth Avenue and Target, who now have a selection of K-Beauty on offer.

While the K-Beauty wave has appeared to be everlasting, there are signs that J-Beauty is poised to make a return as the go-to authority in the cosmetics industry. Jing Daily reported that Korean beauty conglomerate AmorePacific, the 14th largest cosmetics company in the world - with 33 brands under its umbrella - reported a 76% reduction in net profit in the final quarter of 2017, due in part to a drop in the Chinese market.

A 2018 report by L2 on beauty in China found that the digital visibility and sales of J-Beauty brands were increasing at a faster rate than K-Beauty brands in 2017. In addition, China and South Korea’s crumbling relationship has caused a decrease in the number of Chinese visitors to South Korea, dipping to 4 million last year, down from 8 million the year before. In the same year, Japan saw a 15% increase in Chinese visitor numbers, reaching 7.35 million in 2017.
Skincare is deeply rooted in all Asian cultures, but each country has a unique approach. The distinct rituals and ingredients of each culture stretch back centuries.

As neighbors with shared history, Korea and Japan have a number of similarities in their approach to skin care that starts with a focus on local ingredients and practices that are ingrained in daily life, following ancient wisdom and rituals. In both cultures, a pale complexion is the ultimate symbol of beauty. Women actively avoid sun exposure and always apply SPF, contributing to their smooth and fair complexions. Hydration is also essential. Both beauty philosophies focus on moisture as the foundation of beautiful skin, developing advanced technologies and innovations for hydration.

Despite these similarities, it is interesting to look at where J-Beauty and K-Beauty diverge to better understand the recent shifts in the marketplace.

**J-BEAUTY**
- A “slow” beauty approach to innovation
- Time-tested products
- Simple rituals

**K-BEAUTY**
- Focused on rapid innovation; adapting to the latest trends and incorporating new ingredients
- Boundary-pushing products
- Complex, multi-step routines
Historically, Japan has been a self-sustaining culture. Traditionally, many Japanese people have preferred to buy and use Japanese made products. This began to change in 2008 when the country entered a recession. Businesses started to explore global expansion as a way to recover. As part of this expansion, the beauty sector focused its efforts on marketing to international consumers.

Now that the country is regaining its economic footing, the beauty capital is poised to claim its place as a global leader in the industry.

Japanese brands have watched K-Beauty ride the wave to international success and are eager to be part of the Asian beauty boom.

The American market has become very familiar with K-Beauty, trailblazing the path for a curiosity toward J-Beauty. Consumers are savvier than ever and have an appetite for well made products with a track record. J-Beauty has roots as the beauty authority throughout Asia - and the world, offering well-established, quality formulas.

Japanese bands are masters in niche categories, having perfected their craft over time. Sang Ying, General Secretary of the China Beauty Expo told Jing Daily that, “Japanese cosmetics are particularly advantageous in the development of small category and featured products. Many companies spend decades for one product. This has created the ingenuity ‘quality’ sign for Japanese products.” It also presents a great opportunity to answer a growing consumer demand for premium, specialized products in the west.

J-Beauty’s simple aesthetic, natural ingredients and a streamlined approach play into current North American trends, such as the clean beauty movement and a less is more approach to beauty.
JUST THE NUMBERS

JAPANESE BEAUTY EXPORTS

2017: US $3.1 Billion (+22.5% from previous year)
2016: US $2.4 Billion


2017 Exports: 90% of Japan’s total cosmetics exports went to Asian countries.

Top 3 markets: Hong Kong (28%), Mainland China (27%) and South Korea (11%).

(The Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)

KOREAN BEAUTY EXPORTS:

2017: US $3.96 Billion (- 5.3% from previous year)
2016: US $4.18 Billion

(Korean International Trade Association)
MARKET OPPORTUNITY

THE JAPANESE MARKET TODAY

According to Euromonitor International, Japan has the highest per capita spending on skin care and cosmetics than any other Asian nation thanks to its growing middle class.

A survey by Japan Department Stores Association reported that cosmetics sales have been on a steady increase since 2012; due in large part to the influence of inbound sales by tourists. This long pattern of domestic growth buffered by tourism dollars has positioned Japan’s beauty industry for a resurgence on the global stage.

EXPORTS ON THE RISE

Shiseido, Japan’s largest cosmetics maker, has announced it will open its first new domestic factory in 36 years, and double capacity at another plant, to meet surging demand for its products around Asia and from tourists visiting the country.

The Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry reports that J-Beauty exports grew 22.5% year-on-year to US$3.1 billion in 2017, up from 2.4 billion in 2016. 90% of Japan’s total cosmetics exports in 2017 went to Asian countries. The top 3 markets being Hong Kong (28%), Mainland China (27%) and South Korea (11%).
CHINA’S PROMINENT ROLE

According to a report from L2, Japan saw a 15% jump in Chinese visitor numbers in 2017, which reached 7.35 million for the year. In contrast, Chinese visitors to South Korea plunged to around 4 million, down from 8 million the year before.

This increase in tourism directly ties to stronger sales. The L2 study also noted how Chinese consumers have shown growing interest in Japanese brands on RED, a popular Chinese app for travel shopping tips and cross-border e-commerce. Japanese brands SK-II, Dr. Ci: Labo, Fancl, DHC, Kate, and Pola received above-average growth in mentions on the app, a trend not reflected for their K-Beauty counterparts (see figure top left).


POISED FOR INTERNATIONAL GROWTH

Based on the growing visibility of Japan’s beauty products in the market, we will likely see a continued trajectory as J-Beauty continues to expand into established western markets, like the US, Germany and France.
ANTI-POLLUTION SKIN CARE
Responding to increased concerns surrounding air pollution and sun exposure, skin care brands are launching products to address these issues.

Kenzoki - Belle De Jour Dream Night Mask
Shu Uemura - Anti/oxi+ Pollutant & Dullness Cleansing Oil
Sofina Grace - UV Emulsion

TARGETED/AGE-SPECIFIC BRANDS
Skin care has started to see the benefit of population ageing in Japan (the country has the oldest population in the world), with a number of brands releasing product collections to address the growing demand.

Lúcido - Hair, skin and body care for men in their 40’s
Prior - Makeup, skin and hair care for women in their 50’s
Sofina Grace - Skin care and sunscreen for ages 50+

JELLY TEXTURES
Jellies are not only loved for their bouncy texture, they also good vehicles for active ingredients and keeping them stable.

Cure - Natural Aqua Peeling Gel
Shiseido - WASO Fresh Jelly Lotion
Suhadaka - Jelly Water Wash
HYBRID SKIN CARE/MAKEUP PRODUCTS
As masters of skin care, many Japanese brands enhance cosmetics with the benefit of protection, moisture and ingredients that look after skin. Formulas are more skin care-like, including high-coverage foundations with ultra-light textures, SPF face powders and moisturizing lipsticks.

“IKALI” FACE
Inspired by famed Japanese makeup artist Ikali, the look sees blush applied directly under the eyes, for a double benefit of camouflaging dark circles while giving a sweet innocence to the face.

DOLL-LIKE LASHES
Lash enhancements are an essential part of the Japanese makeup regimen, but the look is subtle. While extensions are commonplace, many mascara brands such as Fairy Drops and Kiss Me offer innovative formulations that lengthen and plump, without the trace of a smudge.

LUXURY FUDE BRUSHES
Japan has set a high bar for makeup brushes, using traditional fude (writing brush) techniques for superior quality. The craftsmanship and natural materials found in Japan — from the wood to the exotic animal hair — produces the most opulent products from companies such as Hakuhodo, Shiseido and Shu Uemura.
JENDARESU-KEI
A “genderless” style that is redefining gender stereotypes, while raising questions about what it means for men to be cute. The androgynous look combines male and female beauty ideals, incorporating more traditionally feminine fashion and full face makeup, including colored, stylishly coifed hair and shaped eyebrows.

YAMI KAWAII
Translating to “sick” cute, this is a subculture with a dark undertone. It explores themes of depression and suicide with styles that incorporate medical motifs and accessories like fake bandages, skulls, pink blood, and gasmasks in a high contrast palette of black and pastel colors.

MONOCHROME
This low-key look can be seen as reaction to the exaggerated fashion styles born out of Harajuku and Shibuya and the influx of international tourism and corporate culture taking over Tokyo. It is a streamlined (and slightly androgynous) style that incorporates a subtle palette of black and white with oversized silhouettes such as maxi coats and wide leg pants.
A new plant-derived skin care brand whose name translates to “boy”. The tagline, “Look Beyond” encourages diversity and appeals to unisex clientele that doesn't conform to gender - and skin care - stereotypes. This is a new concept for the Japanese market, targeting two underserved segments; genderless and men’s. The boldly colored and patterned packaging makes a statement and provides easy recognition. Literally a stand-out in the beauty landscape.
ADDICTION

Founded by Japanese celebrity makeup artist Ayako for “women who seek their own original style”. It features unique colors and textures inspired by the experiences of Ayako through her work on the world stage. Products are sleek and come in a variety of well curated colors. The formulas speak to the quality and innovation of Japanese beauty with a simple and luxurious aesthetic.
J-BEAUTY: HAIR CARE BRANDS TO KNOW

Arimino
Aquair
Botanist
Caretrico
Fiole
Funori
Gatsby
Komenuka Bijin
Kao
Kracie
Kunoma
Laggie
Lapidem
Lebel
Louvredo
Lux
Ma Chérie
Milbon
Molto Bene
NS-K
Oshima
Pola
Reveur
Shiseido
Shu Uemura
Spice Sisters
UKA

BIOPROGRAMMING
Lumielina’s Bioprogramming range of care and styling products harnesses the transformative power of quantum physics to literally bring hair to life. Disrupting the industry with its focus on hair health, the range activates molecules and gene expressions using cutting edge innovation.

Image courtesy of Lumielina
**INTERVIEW: YUKIKO UMEZAKI, STORE MANAGER, SHIRO BEAUTY**

With a tag line that reads “Simply simple,” shiro is a long-standing Japanese skin-care brand whose mission is to enhance a client’s natural beauty using simple, natural methods. shiro’s beauty products treat the skin with expertly chosen natural ingredients, gathered from Japan.

**What is the history of shiro?**
The president has a long history in the beauty industry, working with natural ingredients for skin care for over 30 years. The company first came into the market under a different name, Laurel, in 2009 with a collection of skin care products. In 2015, we changed the name to shiro, which is a combination of the president’s first name and her son’s initial.

**What makes shiro/its products distinctly Japanese?**
We use mostly Japanese ingredients but also source from other places, with suppliers that have a similar mindset. It is important to us to have a personal relationship with these producers. Most of the process is done by hand, with love. There is no effort spared in bringing out the best of these ingredients, which we present in the most simplest way.

Japanese women like step by step skin care. Our products incorporate these, from pre-cleansing and toning to moisturizing and then makeup. Our ingredients are made with the intention to bring out the brightest complexion - a very Japanese practice - using ingredients such as sake katsu and kombu. Our makeup is developed to create the “perfect face,” that appears flawless, light in tone and with a lot of highlighter.

**Why do you think J-Beauty appeals to an international market?**
Everyone loves “Made in Japan” because Japanese products are high quality and we care so much about ingredients, production, package, and people’s skin to make everyone happy. The Japanese have a reputation for looking young, and people outside of Japan are curious to know how we achieve this. Everyone wants beautiful skin quality that is clear, bright, moisturized and smooth-texture and to look young forever, like Japanese women.

**Why did shiro decide to expand into the American market?**
In general, the economy has not been as prosperous as in the past. Asian beauty has been gaining popularity in the west so it seems like a good time to expand. We opened the store in New York this past January (2018) and hope to open more US stores in the future.

**Does shiro position itself differently in the USA, vs in Japan?**
In Japan, we have 23 stores. Globally we have 4 stores - 3 in London and the newly opened store in New York. In Japan, our stores are more full service, with a salon/spa, and cafe. We sell home goods and a full range of skin care and cosmetics. Outside of Japan, our stores have skin care and limited cosmetics. The biggest challenge in our international expansion is not being able to sell products that have not been approved (by the FDA). Some ingredients are not found in these markets so it will take time for us to be able to sell our full collection of products.
INTERVIEW: MAI CHLOE WU, FOUNDER + CEO, COSME HUNT

Cosme Hunt is a curated destination site that makes all the best beauty products and the latest skincare from Japan accessible to beauty-forward people around the world. Born and raised in Tokyo and now based in San Francisco, Chloe is poised to become the primary expert and go-to resource for Japanese beauty in North America.

What prompted you to start Cosme Hunt?
I have been living in North American (Vancouver and San Francisco) for a number of years and haven’t been able to find cosmetics for my fair skin. Also I missed the skin care from Japan - especially the skin-lightening products. I started to think about how I could solve this [personal] problem - and at the same time noticed the popularity of K-Beauty in the US and thought, why not J-Beauty too?

What are the main differences between Japanese and Korean beauty?
K-Beauty has nice designs but it tends to be very busy. J-Beauty is more simple. Also, the Japanese market has been a lot more detached than the Korean market. Koreans are used to working and selling in other countries while Japanese companies haven’t really cared about appealing to an international clientele. With the current state of the economy, Japanese brands are starting to consider expanding globally and are starting to think about that with the product design.

What makes J-Beauty distinct?
Japan has a long beauty history. A skin care ritual is taught to daughters by their mothers. From a young age, my mother taught me to look after my skin. Starting at age 10 I was toning and wearing sunscreen on my face everyday.

What are some current J-Beauty trends?
Anything with placenta or hylarounic acid is popular. If a product says it contains placenta, it will be a big seller. Japanese women want “mochi-hada” (sticky rice) skin, that is plump and soft - and they use products that contain rice to achieve this effect. Another trend is “pucci-pura” (petite price) products. These are cheaper small travel sizes that women can put in their purse. Women are on the go a lot and having small, multi-tasking products saves space and time. Even sheet masks are becoming multi-purpose, with a toner, serum and milk in one.

Are there any new brands you are excited about?
Another trend is that men are starting to pay a little bit more attention to skin care. The brand Botchan is helping to lead this movement with its collection of genderless skincare, for everyone! This is a new idea in Japan and is being used by “beauty insiders” for now but as teh concept becomes more popular so is the brand.
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