

The figure of kappa in japanese culture

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Whether ads are for perfume, sports or other products, some of them are associated with Kappa who is cute, persuading the customer to buy the products. Moreover, Kappa even becomes the ambassador for environmental protection and lucky god in Japan. Lots of animations and comics even use Kappa to represent kind and helpful creature. However, people have a very different opinion about Kappa in ancient Japan. There is a strong transformation from past and now about Kappa. The Kappa was a monster of Japanese folklore. " Its characteristics includes the dish-like cavity on its head, its penchant for eating cucumbers, and its aversion to grounds and to irons, and its habit of trying to pull horses, cattle and humans into water."

Most of the Japanese folklore all came from real life. Japan is an island, surrounding with sea and Inland River, therefore, there were so many folklores about water monsters created by people in the past and Kappa was one of them. Because ancient people can't use scientific knowledge to explain everything, they all attributed everything for natural power made by god. Therefore, they tried to build figures of god. At first, Kappa was not a monster but represented as water god in Japan. However, with so many preys, there are still lots of water disaster happening, people tried to question and doubt this god. Gradually, Kappa became the monster that people were fear of. After several years, Kappa's figure changed again. Although he was still a monster, but he had two opposite sides at that time.

In Japanese folklore, he would destroy the crops, touch women's butt in the bathroom, grab children and livestock into water. However, sometimes he would help farmers to cultivate land, help children to find their home, even one folklore stating that Kappa got his lost arm by a doctor, and he gave

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doctor secret medicine as a gift. Therefore, in this time period, Kappa was not acting as a monster that easily. He was more like a mischievous kid. During the late Meiji Road, Kappa was always depicted in novel, comics and animations that always portray Kappa as a nice creature, giving audience a strong expression. For example, in one story, Kappa was no longer a monster, but a humorous, clear minded missioner, leading people to a fantastic world of Kappa, changing the constant image people have about Kappa. With Kappa getting popular, government began to use it as a public figure. For example, Kappa became the ambassador of tourism, blessing all tourists travel safely; Some people sees Kappa as a god because they think that he can give people more fortune, less disease and better luck. As you can see in japan, there are lots of amulets about Kappa in the store.

In sum, the figure of Kappa is changing due to the society change in Japan. By another way to say, Kappa changes due to the human need. From the water monster to lucky god, Kappa changes a lot and becomes more popular now.