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## International



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# Mickey Mouse, Hello Kitty, and now Pleasant Goat?

## Chinese Soft Power and the Global Advance of Chinese Animation

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Mickey Mouse and Hello Kitty are well-known brands in Japan and have a great number of fans among adults as well as children. Right now in China, however, the Chinese brand *Pleasant Goat* (*Xǐ Yáng Yáng*) is more popular than even Mickey Mouse or Hello Kitty.

*Pleasant Goat* is a character from the popular Chinese television animation program, *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* (*Xǐ Yáng Yáng yǔ Huī Tài Láng*). The story is about a group of 5 goats living in a goat village and their humorous interactions with a wolf that is determined to eat them.

Since the program began airing in 2005, not only have episodes containing over 600 stories about the *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* already been broadcast, but a wide variety of goods are also being sold as part of the brand strategy. Pleasant Goat can be seen everywhere when walking around Chinese towns. There are children's backpacks and stationery, as well as calendars, and many other items. As part of the general retail strategy for such goods, in December 2009, an affiliate company of Japan's Bandai Namco opened an amusement facility called the *Namco Land Kid's Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf Amusement World* in a major department store located in the center of Shanghai, the *Shanghai New World Department Store*. According to the company, you can see people dressed in *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* costumes performing a dance show, etc. A movie has also been produced, and the film shown in movie theaters last year was a top box-office earner, with ticket sales reaching nearly 100 million yuan (or 1.3 billion yen).

Although *Pleasant Goat* is a Chinese character, there are several secrets behind its great success. One of these is its name. In Chinese, the Chinese characters for *Pleasant Goat* (*Xǐ Yáng Yáng*) have a celebratory nuance of overflowing joy and happiness and, as a name, this has a very good ring to it and sounds very bright and cheerful, which is perfect for the main character in a children's animation program. In addition, there is also a lazy character, *Lazy Goat* (*Lan Yáng Yáng*), and a warm-hearted character, *Gentle Goat* (*Nuan Yáng Yáng*), etc., so that the names of all the goats in the goat village are popular, manageable, and familiar Chinese names.

The main baddie character *Grey Wolf* (also known as *Big Big Wolf*, *Huī Tài Láng*) is dead set on eating lamb *shabu-shabu* (a delicacy of thinly sliced raw meat lightly dipped in boiling stock) with his beautiful wife *Red Wolf* (*Hong Tài Láng*) and he tries over and over to catch the goats from the goat village, to no avail. He always pulls some stunt that ends in failure and returns home to be slapped and hit by his wife with a frying pan. But *Grey Wolf* always thinks only of his wife and no matter how many times he fails he never learns and never gives up. This lovable character is another secret behind the popularity of the program.

But the most important thing that has supported the success of this program is the Chinese national strategy for China to exercise soft power, and to develop and enable the success of its cultural industries. China's entry into the WTO was decided in December 2001. In order to stimulate cultural industries that were finally exposed to international competition with its entry into the WTO, more than 20 years after the launch of the Policy of Reform and Open Doors, in 2003 China finally set about making some belated and tentative reforms to its cultural sector. As part of these reforms, from 2006 China has been embarking on a series of policies to promote the Chinese animation industry. One of these policies to develop domestic industry comprises limitations on broadcasting foreign-made animation programs during prime time. This strong state backing of protection and encouragement of development has created a massive *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* fever about the Chinese-made program.

If the story ended here, it would simply be a matter of China's animation industry having gained a reasonable level of competitiveness and a new brand having emerged, and it would be little more than a domestic Chinese news story. Japan's animation industry is not just limited to Akihabara, and it has had the power to create the so-called *costume-play* phenomena which reaches to places across the globe, so that even if China had produced an animation that had become very popular, it still would not necessarily be on the same scale. But in fact, *Pleasant Goat* is now starting to spread overseas.

*Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* is currently being broadcast in 13 countries, and this year in South Africa, a *Made in China* amusement facility has been opened. When one mentions TV animation or amusement facilities,

the first thing that comes to mind in global terms is Disneyland, and in Asia, this is followed by Kitty Land. At the moment, except for dyed-in-the-wool animation nerds, nobody outside China knows the names of any Chinese animation characters. Chinese animation is inexpensive and the quality is improving, however, and there are plans to take over the world market, particularly aiming at low-end and middle-class consumers in developing countries and emerging nations.

China is currently aiming for a higher level of economic and industrial structure. As a result of having achieved double-digit growth figures every year since the beginning of this century, it has overtaken Japan in terms of nominal GDP and become the world's second largest economic power. Even though its piece of the economic pie has become larger, however, in terms of quality, China is still behind, and its leaders want to do something to improve this situation. Thus, the success of *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* represents much more than just the survival of China's cultural industries and the issue of their competitiveness, it is also about the important question of China's national image and soft power.

Only 5 years have passed since the introduction of the animation development policy, but from the perspective of seeking to stimulate China's own culture, the efforts of China's cultural industry have penetrated and captured the hearts of Chinese consumers, and it has developed into a pillar among China's industries. Moreover, the central government is also providing robust support to develop *Chinese brands* and proactively export them overseas as part of its national strategy. It is said that the animation industry's product chain has already formed bases at 50 locations within China, and Guangdong Province—which has always been at the forefront of China's efforts to open up to the world, and which has achieved success in terms of foreign-oriented style development—has become one of the key centers for these efforts. The face of Guangdong Province, which has long had processing and export as its primary industries, may also be transformed some time in the near future.

I showed a picture of *Pleasant Goat* to some of my students and their uniform response was "What's this? It's not cute at all!" But later, one student came up to me and said, "Professor, I watched one of the *Pleasant Goat* films. It wasn't too bad, actually!" There are certainly some aspects of the relationship between *Pleasant Goat* and *Grey Wolf* which resemble the relationship between the popular Japanese animation characters, *Anpanman* and *Baikinman*, or *Tom and Jerry*: one character chases about after the other and argues, but they also somehow get on well in the end. The day when we can watch *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf* in English, French, and even Japanese may not be too far ahead in the future after all.

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Profile  
Professor, Faculty of Education and Integrated Arts and Sciences, Waseda University. Professor Aoyama's specialties are International Relations and Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy. She obtained her PhD. from Keio University, and her recent works include 'China's Regional Diplomacy and an East Asian Community,' in *Construction of an East Asian Community Part 3: International Migration and Social Change*, (Iwanami Shoten, 2007); *Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy*, (Keio University Press, 2007); *China's Public Diplomacy*, (The Japan Foundation, 2009), etc., among many others.

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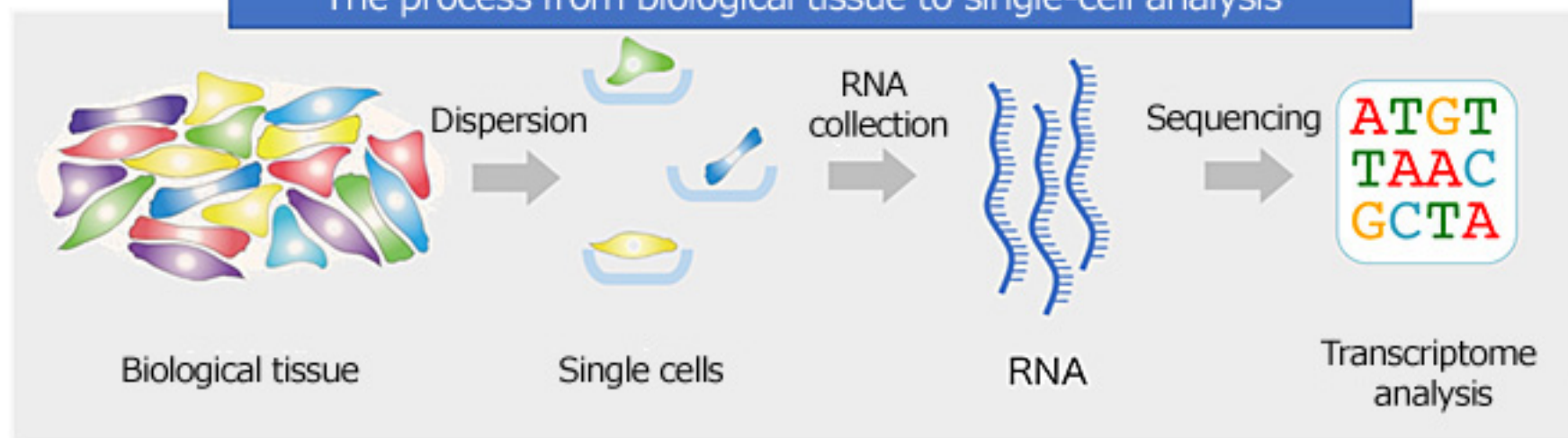
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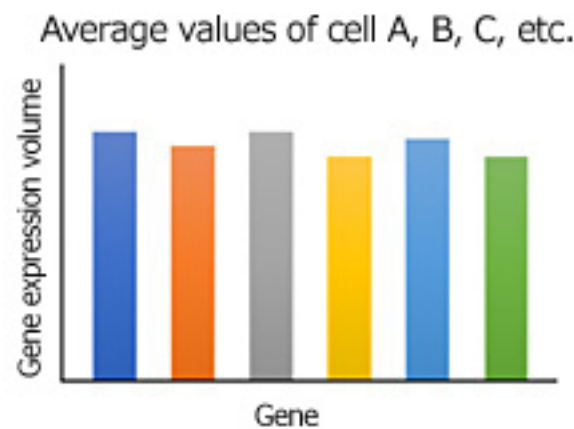
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What's New!

## The process from biological tissue to single-cell analysis

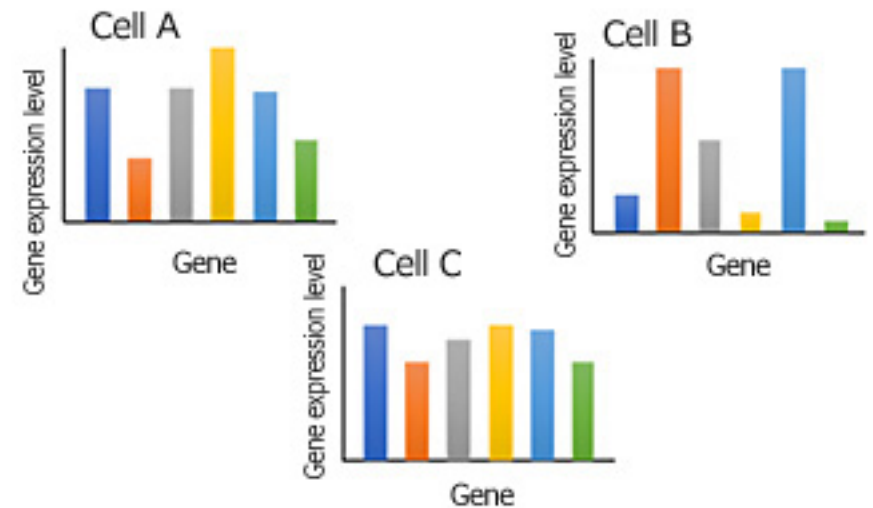


### Past method: Analyze the tissue as a whole



Even if there is more than one unique cell, it is difficult to find specific data out of **averaged data**.

### Single-cell analysis

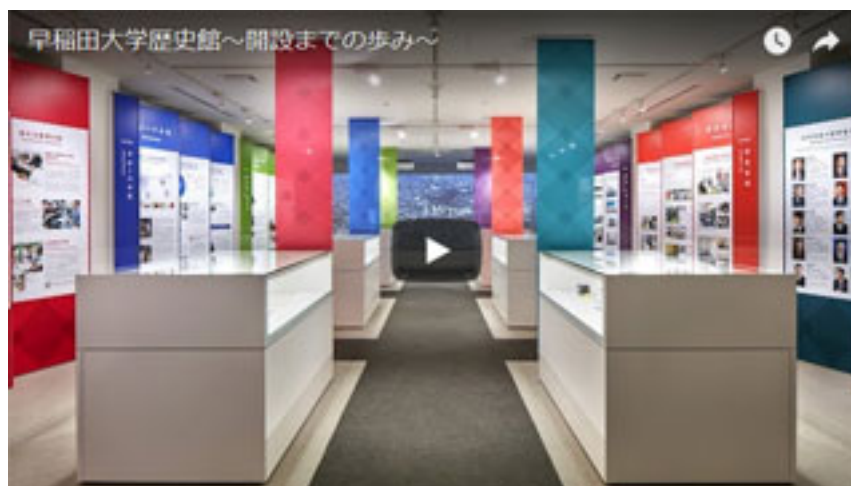


The individual qualities of cells are clarified, after which characteristic cells are found and analyzed.

[From Molecules and Cells to Individual Organisms—Reconsidering the Life Phenomenon through a Multi-Layer Approach Research](#)

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