

Japan's Cultural Diplomacy Through Anime and Manga in Promoting the 2020 Tokyo Olympics

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are to japan's cultural diplomacy through anime and manga in promoting the 2020 tokyo olympics. With the pandemic arising on the horizon, Tokyo 2020's Olympics had to suffer schedule setbacks for almost a year, amongst mznany other causalities from its wake. The practice of cultural diplomacy is a legitimized act of soft power move by one's countries upon others. In the modern age comes with details of many mediums and types that enhance the mainlined diplomacy acts. Japan's usage of anime and manga culture had taken over the world by storm along with its fans that are interconnecting the further attempt at mutual understanding, and universally shared values. By using nine characters from beloved manga and promoting the Olympics through cooperation with famed anime studios, the result is a magnanimous and harmonious symbiotic relationship that blooms within international sportsmanship. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced this development to direct humanity to places that perhaps 15 years ago were said to be almost impossible, including reduced space for face-to-face meetings, restrictive regulations, and also sanctions that must be implemented regarding matters around related topics.

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Introduction

Diplomacy is an action or form of communication between countries in reaching an agreement or solution as a form of mediation, and also negotiation (Constantinou et al., 2016). Negotiations born from this diplomatic form also have an impact on cooperation between countries in various domains and main sectors that run in a country, ranging from geographical, economic, defense, geopolitical, and also broadly cultural. Culture itself has a fairly broad scope and range, things that are born from the side of humanity ethnically, inherently, and also new are included in culture, which includes, knowledge, religion, art, etc. (Constantinou et al., 2016).

Since the shift in the role of the state in its focus on accumulating economic influence and also ideological expectations driven by the development of the image and image of one state towards another; The Cold War made many of these countries also

subject to unseen factors that encouraged the birth of new perspectives in viewing a geopolitical relationship clearly, not to mention the phenomenon of global bipolarism at that time, as well as the encouragement of many innovations, ideas or modern attitudes in looking at the dynamics of the world as a whole; The way we as humans view the world has also begun to change since military or defense forces began to be used as a form of nerve warfare, to the formation of the image of a country at large.

The form of diplomacy itself was widely focused on the previous focus only on narrowing three main things that focused on supporting aspects in boosting / increasing the defense and economic influence of a country. The Cold War forced the values of the defense and military aspects to begin to loosen, over the fear of World War 3 occurring in the near future; Therefore, the focus of gathering hard power is only highlighted from the economic aspect. The appearance of other faces of the same coin began to be improved, soft power began to be used in its utility to help state activities; both in the extreme and subtly.

Japan is one of the countries that has great potential for the development of the modern world, although it had experienced moral decline, due to their defeat in World War 2, the enactment of disarmament, weakening, and also ideological, socio-economic reforms, as well as some aspects of culture that needed to be abandoned; not to mention the post-World War 2 occupation of the United States. Making this country have to undergo massive and extreme changes, like other Axis countries. With the occupation of the United States itself, acculturation is born and most clearly seen from the combination of existing cultures, highlighted from the aspect of massively using manga and anime products in increasing the spirit of the country in order to subtly also create aspects of culture that are novel in the sense of novelty that has not been widely and effectively called for and also promoted, also used.

Products born from Japan in the medium of entertainment and also counterculture that is popular as the antithesis of western values, were dissolved massively and quickly through the occupation of Japanese culture through anime and manga at the end of the 20th century, which made Japan also come out as a developed country in technology, and also the economy; brings a breath of fresh air brought by the influence of anime and manga as well as a form of victory against the global invasion of Japan in multi-sectors, despite being hit by economic crises for decades to come (1990-2010).

From a world perspective in the way of looking at the Cold War itself, one of the events that became a major concern globally in its use as part of sportsmanship culture and also aspects of fair play, became a diplomatic tool by a country in stealing attention in building a world image (nation branding) The Olympics came out as one of the mediums that since the Cold War has been used as an extension of a country, in building an image and also building an image (Dubinsky, 2023).

Since the world era entered the phase of simultaneous and international telebroadcasting, the Olympics and also other sports fever events that were born thanks to world globalization, the development of ICT, in 2020, the latest era in the Olympics as a place to build the image of a country must also experience a slight deviation and also the full implementation of new policies caused by the emergence of COVID-19, which gave birth to the pandemic until now.

Cultural diplomacy is part of a form of diplomacy that uses culture as a medium of exchange for the acquisition of information, acquisition of knowledge, as well as counseling/introduction of a certain aspect of culture, which is used by a country to be a certain attraction in attracting the attention of another country; and in this case the cultural

aspect used by Japan is to use anime and manga as supporting factors, and the transfer of attention as a form of promo and also an encouraging message, not not not to increase tourism, but used to shift the main focus of the global community to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. The objectives of this study are to Japan's cultural diplomacy through anime and manga in promoting the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Research Methods

This study uses a focus on qualitative research design approach, which uses a constructivist point of view, where the location of the data is studied flexibly to build a coherent research result is to sort, reduce, place the author in a position which is vulnerable to require data flexibility and open-mindedness of where the data source is further studied (Creswell, 2014) (Stebbins, 2022). The follow-up process of this research approach is to look at qualitative types that have exploratory qualities, where an in-depth understanding of the data is naturally processed throughout the study, in order to answer related research questions. "In what form have anime and manga emerged as aspects of Japan's cultural diplomacy in promoting the 2020 Tokyo Olympics?" by looking at the history of the anime itself, its utility, its connection to the 2020 Olympics, and also the products produced in Japan's own efforts to promote the Olympic Games from various mediums that are closely related to anime and manga culture.

This research focuses on collecting secondary data, and taking data through online networks, both from data in the form of journals, news, articles, books, and also other literature reviews that have similarities and are mutually sustainable with this research, reflecting on the foreign policy landscape involved, the bodies that are the unit of analysis, the themes in general, also many other factors that will help the author in the preparation of related research.

Results and Discussions

Anime & Manga

The origins of anime and manga are already in Japan, for manga itself before the start of Japan's industrial revolution, precisely in the Edo period (1603-1867), with the appearance of Chōjū-giga collectively published by several classic Japanese illustrators, and even the effect of rotating footwork on an illustration inspired many modern manga authors to this day; Toba ehon which became the basis for the initial concept of the manga itself; however, the creation of the word originally appeared in the description of Santō Kyōden's *Shiji no Yukikai* (Four Seasons). Modern manga itself emerged and was popular due to the occupation of the United States in Japan after World War 2. Thanks to this, illustrators and storytellers or more familiarly called manga-ka, many are inspired by Disney comics, Betty Boop cartoon series, etc.; for the market of manga itself has its own market share which is divided into age groups, story types, and tropes or tropes or tropes that are often encountered in stories, and patterns of characters presented (Dethal & Widewalls, 2016).

The anime itself first appeared in 1917 with *Namakura Gatana* which is a 4-minute silent film depicting a samurai who fails to test the sharpness of the blunt sword he just bought (De Guzman et al., 2021) and for some who deny the silent film, another product that is said to be the world's first anime product was created in 1906, namely *Katusdō Sashin* (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2020) In addition, anime itself has a fairly complicated history of further development, and its original purpose was the use of the anime itself, the animated film that was theatrically released for the first time by Japan in 1945 is a

propaganda film titled "Momotaro: Sacred Sailors" which is contextually very thick with high occidentalism values, and also the portrayal that Caucasians are its main enemy (Solomon, 2017). From its development which is still experimental and also has not been able to compete with Disney in the era of World War 1, Post World War 2 which actually helped Japan in achieving the latest inspiration for the creation of style, and substance of animation and manga.

Tokyo Olympics 2020

The Olympics itself is a sporting event that has for decades been a place to show off abilities in talent, ability, and athletic talent, and is held with a sports focus on various branches. The Olympics themselves began to officially enter into a modern annual routine in the geopolitical realm, in 1896 in Greece, their home country, to revive celebrations for the return of Greek sporting events, which had been practically their country since 776 BC. After many years of success in becoming an event that is used as an effort for a country that becomes both a guest and its master as a form of attraction of state influence internationally, a country's promotional business for its contribution to existing sportsmanship, efforts will boost the vision and image of a country regarding the norms and values that the country has. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics is not the first time this event in the modern era has now been postponed and completely canceled, even in the era of World War 1 and 2 even the world crisis that experienced extreme changes had to push back the holding of the Olympics. The era brought from the Olympic Games itself in the 20th century always brought winds of change and important markings that became reminders of the history of humanity itself (Black Power Salute in 1968 in Mexico; Munich Massacre at the 1972 Olympics, Moscow Boycott in 1980, etc. from the event mark, a reminder that humans are still arriving at the point of development in the collective consciousness (Dubinsky, 2023).

The Tokyo Olympics experienced something similar, but with a very different feeling, the presence of Covid-19, the global pandemic, made many things that became a focal point not allowing mass attendance (face-to-face) shift from international events that solely required the attention of the visitor, spectators, by underlining the power of influence brought from tourism as well, forcing an analogous transition to virtual integration minus the athletes who were its main focus. With this pandemic, policies, strategies, and moves from old values (relics from old Olympic traditions) to new understandings, new urgency in looking at the mapping of world geopolitical forces.

As of August 2021, Japan itself has only managed to achieve 30% of mandatory vaccinations for its citizens, possibly also due to delays in counseling and also the spread of vaccinations that have only started since February 2021, compared to many other developed countries that have gained access to vaccines faster (BBC News, 2021). Not to mention the strictness and decrees launched by the Japanese side and also the IOC as the organizer who strongly enforce the behavior and also the pattern of treatment applied by Japan to athletes attending the Tokyo Olympics (Pymer et al., 2021). The prediction from the IOC itself of the withdrawal from the 2020 Olympic Games can also result in a loss of swelling funds of 1.64 trillion dollars due to additional expenditures on labor aspects and rental costs from existing facilities, although the problem of swelling funds and also the commercialization side of the Olympics is always associated with many related events; because this makes the Olympics an international event whose hope is to attract tourism, an increase in income from the economic sector, the cultural sector with all expenses skyrocketing (Tsuchimatsu et al., 2020).

Behind all the negative reactions, and condemnations that came from various parts of the world, for the 2020 Olympics not to be held, including criticism of the lack of focus on transparency, misinformation, or misuse of existing data. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), which is less responsive and inefficient in urgent health care, should be able to quickly and nimbly prevent, and overcome both the latest virus, and exposure to the latest variant at that time (lambda) (Boykoff & Gaffney, 2020); (Rosenberg et al., 2021) The Japan Times, 2021. In addition to the gamble of loss of funds that must be reimbursed and also covered, the organization of the Tokyo Olympics also depends on so much attention that must be carefully addressed, and missteps cause losses that depend not only on capital, but also on the image of the country and its organizing committee as a whole.

The Use of Anime and Manga as a Form of Japanese Cultural Diplomacy at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics

Nine Japanese Ambassadors Through Anime & Manga Characters for Tokyo 2020 Olympics

In 2017, Japan announced nine figures as their representatives who were selected as main ambassadors in attracting aspects of Japanese tourism even further Jakarta Post, 2017. This chain of action from Japan is already part of a brand campaign owned by Japan for their self-awareness of thousands of intellectual property they have from their various pop-culture products; including the arrival of Shinzo Abe at the closing ceremony of the 2016 Rio Olympics wearing a distinctive dress belonging to the game character series made by Nintendo, namely Mario from the Mario Bros. series (Melnick, 2023). The form of a callback and also a marker to recall that Japan, which will host the 2020 Olympics, is a popular culture producing country that is massively consumed, shared, and also proud, even outside of its own country.



Illustration 1 Shinzo Abe dressed and arrives through a giant pipe like Mario at the 2016 Rio Games. (Quoted from the boredpanda.com page accessed on 2023-04-06)

Illustration 2 (ki-ka) Astro Boy, Sailor Moon, Shin-chan, Monkey D Luffy, Naruto, Jibanyan, Son Goku, Cure Miracle & Cure Magical, the nine figures who became ambassadors for Tokyo Olympic 2020. (quoted from page wheninmanila.com article written by Sam Beltran, accessed on 2023-04-06).

The nine characters are: Astro from the Astro Boy series or better known as Atom in Japan; Sailor Moon from the series of the same name; Nohara Shinnosuke or more familiarly called Shin-Chan from the Crayon Shin-chan series; Naruto from the series of the same name; Monkey D. Luffy from One Piece; Jibanyan from the Yo-Kai Watch series; Son Goku from the Dragon Ball series; and the last one is Cure Miracle and Cure

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Magical from the same series, Mahou Tsukai Pretty Cure. These nine figures have influence, as well as exposure internationally and domestically within Japan itself. Since 2017 Japan through its website (which is now no longer active) has started selling a variety of merchandise products related directly through tokyoshop2020.jp; which includes merchandise such as t-shirts, totebags, and various other memorabilia.



Illustration of 3 Types of merchandise traded by the Japan Olympic Committee such as drinking bottles, mugs, totebags, t-shirts, lanyards, etc. (reported from the Player.one page, accessed on 2023-04-06)

With the attention born from figures of various eras and eras that have become part of life in at least people who had and may to this day still experience periods of watching and enjoying all kinds of consumption of Japanese popular culture products, or just collectors of memorabilia that are anime or manga, and have aspects of familiarity obtained from related things, It is certain that it will be influenced to collect or at least buy instead of fulfilling personal desires, or an event not to miss the existing trends.

Olympic Promotion through Short Film Animation from Studio Ponoc

The emergence of Covid-19 and followed by the pandemic afterwards, made the holding of the Olympics itself had to be postponed and the possibility of the beginning of the normal running of this Olympics was lost, the existence of regulations, regulations and also other binding matters, making the first time the Olympics and also the sequence of activities, scheduling, and also the course of related events had to undergo many changes.

With the regulation of spectator restrictions and also for the athletes themselves the *excitement* and euphoric feelings that must be built from public interest, should easily reach the expected level, but behind the many criticisms, as well as the issues, and controversies faced, the main issue of the main focus of the Olympic organizers was born from the loss of funds, as well as delays in the event; Not to mention considering the ticket sales that must considered *null* or *void* (Wade, 2021).

Various other issues are coming from the Japanese people who fully condemn the holding of the 2020 Olympics, with restrictions on visitors, restrictions on mass

attendance for spectators, athletes who attend and are flown to Tokyo, also have to undergo so many strict regulations, seeing Japan's seriousness in continuing the related Olympics, the confusion that is present is the organization of the event itself, from and for whom it continues (Alt, 2021).

Behind the confusion and chaos presented to ignite the spirit needed for public interest in living the course of this Olympics, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) collaborated with Studio Ponoc, chaired by a former animator from one of Japan's leading studios, Studio Ghibli, which is one of the studios that managed to get the title as Disney for Japanese animation from what films they have produced and Produce, inseparable from humanitarian issues, nature, and also harmony in life. Yoshiyuki Momose as the *lead director* who led this project, previously had a considerable role in the production portion of several Studio Ghibli animated films such as *Grave of Fireflies*, and *The Tales of Princess Kaguya* among them is the result of his collaboration with Isao Takahata, as writer and director for the two animated films, and the key animator is Yoshiyuki Momose (Pineda, 2021).



Illustration 4 Promotional banner for "Tomorrow's Leaves", a short animated film produced by Studio Ponoc in collaboration with OFCH as a form of promotion and also a humanitarian message to rise, during the 2021 pandemic. (Quoted from the animenewsnetwork.com page accessed on 2023-04-06).

Studio Ponoc released a short animated film entitled *Tomorrow's Leaves* with one of the subsidiaries of the IOC, the Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage (OFCH) on the official website of The Olympic Museum on its Youtube channel; with a total duration of 8 minutes, depicting the journey of 5 young men and women reviving nature personified as an entity that has life like frequent themes found in animated films made by Studio Ghibli and Ponoc (Pineda, 2021). The International Olympic Committee also has its own message for the short animation.

The annual arrival of the message leaf causes concern – something is undeniably wrong.

It's usually vibrant and lasting colours quickly fade, and it suddenly withers and crumbles.

Five envoys, from five diverse lands, are dispatched to find out what has happened.

The envoys travel to a distant land, quietly guided by tiny spirits. Each envoy has its own strengths and vulnerabilities. They compete and support each other as they draw closer to their destination, facing

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treacherous terrain and difficult conditions. Through athletic challenges and the uniting power of sport, they discover the positive fundamental values that come with playful competition.

Together, the envoys approach near the source of the message leaf.

Can they restore life to a future in peril?

(dikutip dari animenewsnetwork.com)

Seeing that there is a message that clearly wants to be conveyed from this short animated film is the continuous awakening of the world and synergy with the world community to join hands, in the spirit of this Olympics there is also symbolism that is easily digested by the audience. In addition, there are also several animations that illustrate.



Illustration 5 Excerpts from *Tomorrow's Leaves* depict five young men and women trying to save the island that is the main focus of the animation (the personification of the universe) and depicts the sport of short-distance running. (screenshot taken from The Olympic Museum's Youtube channel page, accessed on 2023-04-06)

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sooT56IKJoA&embeds_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.animenewsnetwork.com%2F&feature=emb_imp_woyt).

Even the scenes of the five main characters that are the focus of the animation are involved in Olympic sports, including 100-meter running, hurdles, swimming, pole

vaulting, volleyball, basketball, and even a sport that was recently included in the Tokyo Olympics, namely rock climbing.



Illustration 6 Footage from *Tomorrow's Leaves* when one of the main characters pays homage to volleyball as an Olympic sport (screenshot taken from The Olympic Museum's Youtube channel page, accessed on 2023-04-06

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sooT56IKJoA&embeds_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.animenewsnetwork.com%2F&feature=emb_imp_woyt).

From the message described, express or implied, is the desire to regenerate self-confidence and rise to recover together, especially the message that is very intensively carried out globally during the pandemic era; and this Olympics is also used as a turning point that solely does not stop at promotional events and pays tribute to athletes present in Japan, at the expense of safety and security they have to participate in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games; but also to collectively make this Olympics part of a new spirit in the face of the pandemic.

Cultural promotional aspects carried out through anime and manga that are continuously related to each other; creating messages that transcendently exceed state values that are explicitly limited to the acquisition of economic, cultural, and political values; Which now also concerns the latest problems that are indirectly related to the health, security, and also the country's development sector globally, which is undeniably affected by the impact of the pandemic.

Mutual Love Among Athletes and Japanese Pop Culture Domestic Athletes (Japan)

The love, respect and self-drive to win medals for their national country are felt very strongly by the Japanese themselves, many of their athletes steal the show by making many references to their own popular culture products, both in terms of games / tactics, which narratively meta has a fairly small possibility that can be done but similarities and also opportunities that arise during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics also allow this to happen, as well as homage through various forms, including songs.

First, it came during the Japanese men's volleyball team match against Canada, Ren Takahashi who sprinted towards the net, *faking* at the *spike* before passing the ball to team captain Yuki Ishikawa who *smashed* to the opponent's side of the court; *This play* is similar to what happened to one of the sports anime that is very well known among anime lovers, namely *Haikyuu!* namely Atsumu and Osamu Miya (Sportsada, 2021). The reflection of reality that also occurs in fictional series is a difficult opportunity to achieve,

not to mention in international events such as the Olympics, this makes many viewers admire the social media network Twitter.

Second and finally, there is a celebration that is routinely carried out by the Olympic organizers themselves, seen in the footage at the momentum *break* during the archery session by playing LiSA's "Gurenge" as the opening theme of the *Demon Slayer* anime which was also played at the closing ceremony of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics; and "Guren no Yumiya" performed by Linked Horizon, as the opening theme of the *Attack on Titan* anime, both of which were used as background songs for related sessions, this shows that a form of respect for Japan's own universal *pop-culture*, which comes from manga and anime culture.

International Athletes

In addition to the form of promotion and also the massive dissemination of related information, Japan, which has succeeded in bringing its country through anime and manga, with a clear and well-established narrative, has also succeeded in giving birth to a form of mutualism which is also a massive message of respect and also a form of cultural contribution that comes from various parts of the world. One form of this love is to connect directly with athletes who attended the 2020 Tokyo Olympics; with the mutual love that comes from the Land of Sakura, and is sent back through small actions that come with a very meaningful impact.

First, this love came from one of the Mexican gymnastics, Alex Moreno, who made references to the anime that was then very popular and worldwide, titled *Kimetsu no Yaiba* or better known as *Demon Slayer* who carried out his gymnastic routine during the competition by tuning one of the *soundtracks* owned by the anime ("Demon Slayer Corps" one of the songs in the *Demon Slayer* anime series); Showing his love for related anime series also indirectly elevates the form of the sport when connected with the use of the song.

Second, came from 3 athletes from different branches, namely long jump, bullet throw, and fast walking athletes who came from three different countries spectively celebrating and also posing as a form of referential for their love for *One Piece* manga / anime which is very global. Greek long jump athlete Miltos Tentoglou, who posed "Gear 2nd" belonging to the main character of the *One Piece* series, Monkey D. Luffy, and continued by him by successfully bringing home 2 gold medals for his country; next is a shot putter from the United States, namely Peyton Otterdahl who poses belonging to one of the main protagonists besides Luffy, Franky at the introduction of the athlete, and placed 10th in the shot put event; The last came from an Italian athlete, Massimo Stano, this fast walking athlete made a reference to Luffy's "Gear 3rd" pose.



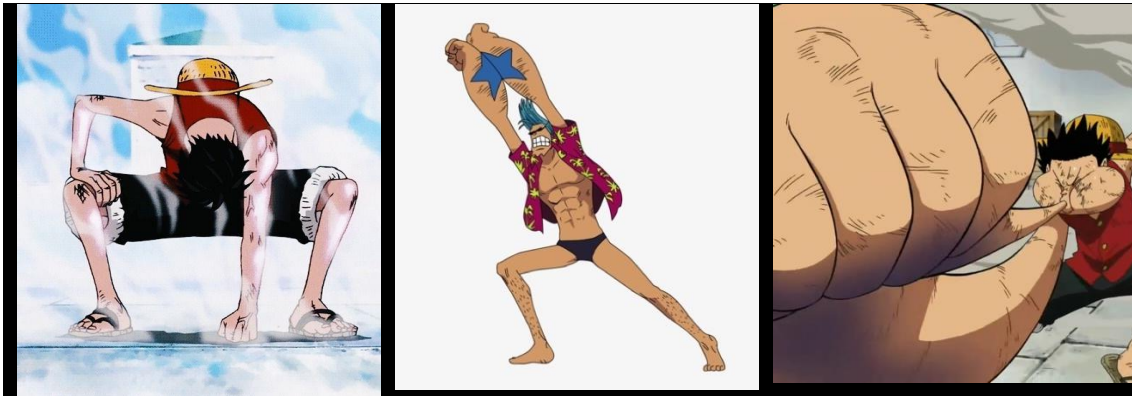


Illustration 7 (ki-ka) Miltos Tentoglou, Payton Otterdahl, Massimo Stano, as athletes who pay tribute to characters from the One Piece manga/anime series. (taken from various sources including Twitter, and One Piece Wikia, accessed on 06-05-23).

Third and final came track and field American Noah Lyles, who won the first gold medal for the U.S. in the 200m race since the Beijing Olympics in 2008, and the celebration was a "kamehameha" pose belonging to a character from the *Dragon Ball* series; And from this pose has led us to the conclusion that the mutual understanding of what has been born between anime and manga fans is universally present from any part of the world, and the influence of anime and manga can also be felt by fans towards the country that is the birthplace of *pop-culture* .



Illustration 8 Noah Lyles doing Kamehameha pose, a signature movement usually done by characters from the Dragon Ball anime series. (reporting from the TeamUSA Twitter page).

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From what has been described, various efforts made to further raise the status of anime and manga culture itself in the era of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, showing that love is not only shown by the Japanese state itself, but the interest that comes from athletes who are generally part of the international community, there is implicit mutual interaction, and explicitly demonstrated by these athletes clearly.

Conclusion

Seeing the dynamics in the era of modern globalism and also the development of ICT that advances technological development towards virtual, encourages innovations that are in line with the development of the world globally, which cannot be separated from massive and rapid integration of technology. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced this development to direct humanity to places that perhaps 15 years ago were said to be almost impossible, including reduced space for face-to-face meetings, restrictive regulations, and also sanctions that must be implemented regarding matters around related topics. The 2020 Tokyo Olympics forced Japan to think empathically through a comprehensive humanitarian point of view, using the foundation and point of view of diplomacy which here is cultural diplomacy which is useful as a place for knowledge transfer activities, or the exchange of shared cultural values; And in this topic, we focus on aspects of pop-culture that are very globally known, namely anime & manga. With the use of pop-culture aspects through anime & manga products, mutual understanding, and continuous understanding occur between the target and the source of related content producers. With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, as well as the pandemic; this momentum is used continuously with the cultural product that Japan is very proud of, anime; which with the release of the collaboration between OFHC and Studio Ponoc indicates that the conjunction born thanks to these two things gave birth to "Tomorrow's Leaves" which succeeded in becoming a synthesis between the two worlds, with messages and also interesting content mediums, presenting messages that also cross the boundaries of the spirit of sportsmanship, and also inviting people to fight the pandemic better; Although the Olympic event itself reaped many controversies, the spirit that existed and was born thanks to this short animated film made by Studio Ponoc, gave birth to inspiration to continue to advance the world globally to rise from the slump born due to pandemic conditions.

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