

KONSHUU

vol. 53 #7

Summer Vacation



Sailor Scouts

Sailor Moon

Art By Heaven Jones

THIS MONTH'S

OVA RECOMMENDATION

KIDOU SENSHI GUNDAM 0080- POCKET NO NAKA NO SENSOU

War in the Pocket is a clever short OVA series utilizing the One Year War Conflict of *Mobile Suit Gundam*'s Universal Century timeline to tell a gripping coming of age story. Despite taking place during a period typically considered part of the winter months, *0080*'s peaceful suburban setting is starkly calm, evoking a youthful sense of adventure and freedom not dissimilar to the feel of summer vacation - which is strongly contrasted with the stark manner in which *0080*'s very, very, young protagonist Alfred Izuruha realizes the harsh reality of war.



1989, Sunrise
By Fumihiko Takayama
6 OVAs

ANIME RECOMMENDATION

SPECIAL A



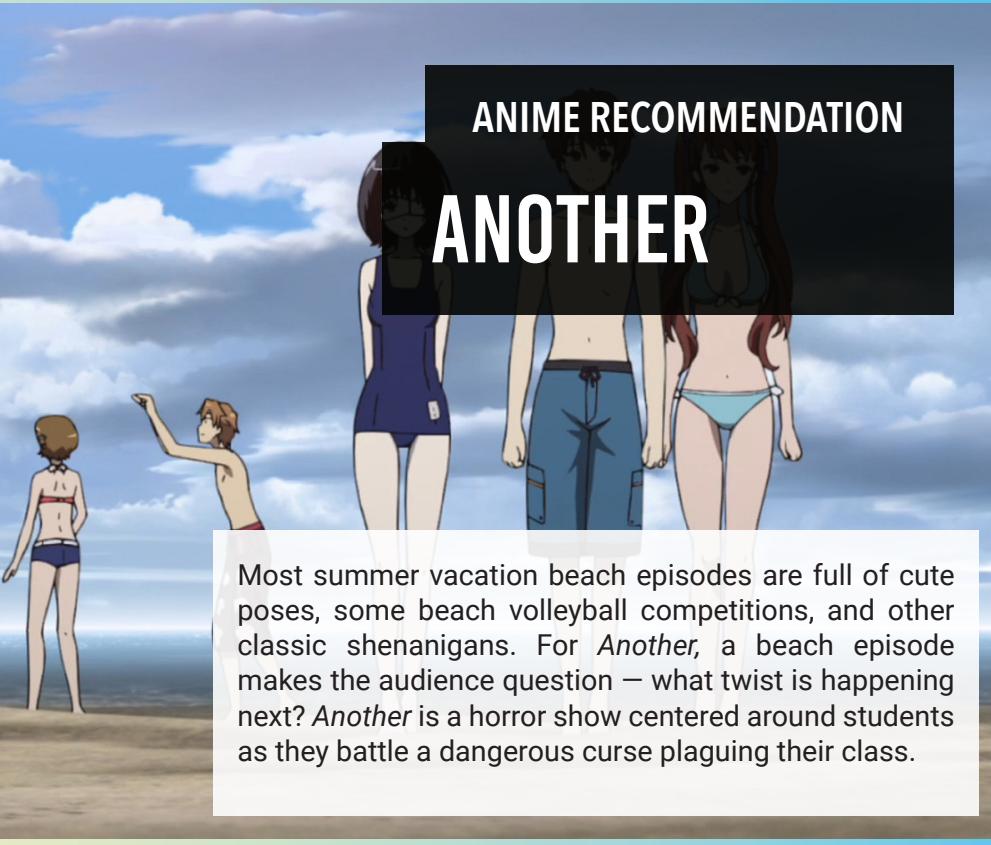
2008, Gonzo
Directed by Yoshikazu Miyao
24 episodes

Special A is a classic school, comedy, and romance series focusing on the adventures of students as various challenges (including a beach episode!) come their way. Fans of shows such as *Kaichou wa Maid-Sama* and *Ouran High School Host Club* would likely enjoy *Special A* as the character dynamic is similar — a female lead from a humble background contrasted with a somewhat mysterious and wealthy male. So basic, yet still so fun!

FEATURED SERIES!



2012, P.A. Works
Directed by Kenji Horikawa
12 episodes



ANIME RECOMMENDATION

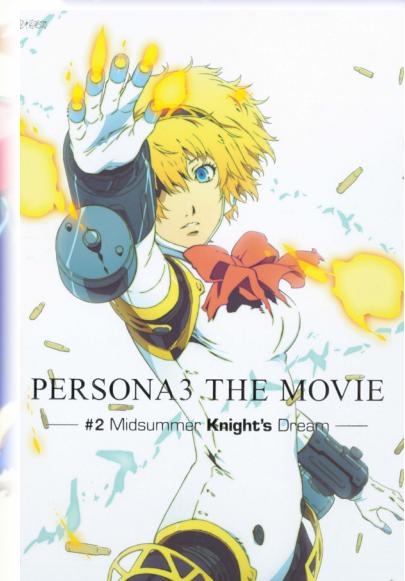
ANOTHER

Most summer vacation beach episodes are full of cute poses, some beach volleyball competitions, and other classic shenanigans. For *Another*, a beach episode makes the audience question — what twist is happening next? *Another* is a horror show centered around students as they battle a dangerous curse plaguing their class.

MOVIE RECOMMENDATION

PERSONA 3 THE MOVIE 2: MIDSUMMER KNIGHT'S DREAM

Persona 3 is the dark horse of Atlus' Persona series that is often overshadowed by its successors, which is a big shame really. The game has a grim but exciting atmosphere that I believe was best expressed through the films. The second film sticks out in particular for its setting of a summer vacation trip that is full of peaceful and tragic moments, and of course, the introduction of everyone's favorite Anti-Shadow Suppression Weapon: Aigis.



Spring 2014, A-1 Pictures
Directed by Tomohisa Taguchi
1 Movie



Gon, Killua, Kurapika, and Leorio

Hunter x Hunter

Art By Heaven Jones

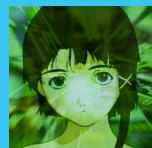


Basil and Friends

OMORI

Art By Kate Bushmareva

THE PROGRESSIVE DECLINE OF MACROSS



TONY T.

1st Year, Intended Economics and Data Science

Yes, "idol sings so good that war stops" is, in fact, the peak of this series.

Writer

Last summer, I started watching the *Macross* franchise, ultimately finishing the series toward the end of that year. Though I greatly enjoyed the original entry and certain other entries past *Super Dimension Fortress Macross*, I felt that the series strongly declined the further it went. The series' combination between large amounts of military mecha action and a love triangle dynamic involving a prominent idol character was fairly charming, and made an interesting, if not generic, point about human society. *Super Dimension Fortress Macross* was never a particularly deep show, but was poignant in its delivery of an ultimately simple message of human culture creating bonds that triumph over any bloodshed or conflict. However, I also viewed later entries as suffering from various different issues, the most prominent of which being that most of them blatantly extracted elements from the original, like love triangles and military action, whilst not adding enough individual flair to set themselves apart as much more than just a repeated series with new bells and whistles. As a result, later entries felt like they were simply tacking those elements on, as if they were items on a checklist, rather than seamlessly integrating them into the series' script and presentation, as the original did. Not only did later entries feel unoriginal, but they felt weaker by nature of doing the same ideas again, but with less impact. Specifically, I am referring to *Macross 7*, *Macross Frontier*, and *Macross Δ* as the three full television anime follow ups to the first series. Various other spinoff *Macross* series exist as OVA series, though, with my opinions on them aside, they do feel incomparable to the television series for being radically different media with different intentions.

But beyond the frankly over-discussed unoriginality complaint, I had a bigger complaint regarding the series. The original series introduced a strong core idea that permeated throughout the entire narrative and was generally relevant to all the main cast. Like the aforementioned elements of romance and mecha, the main message of *Macross* was included in later entries in a halfhearted way. Unlike those elements, though, this central point was not only repeated endlessly through all the series' successors, but made increasingly less relevant and even less poignant the more it was used. The final entry I watched, *Macross Δ*, went so far as to devalue the message and impact of all the entries prior to it. So, before I get ahead of myself, what



exactly did the original 1982 *Super Dimension Fortress Macross* intend with its display of music?

The point of the original *Super Dimension Fortress Macross* is not incredibly complex or layered. In fact, the show is quite explicit in explaining its point to the viewer. While, yes, the series is generally known for crossing the somewhat distinct elements of giant mecha action and idol anime together, the entire point of that mix relies on the concept that whilst individuals can differ in viewpoints, what stops those differences from erupting into warfare is the existence of culture. Within the original series, that culture just so happened to take the form of Lynn Minmay, an idol whose music brought different races of humanity to end their quarreling and make peace. The music did not somehow carry special peace magic, but rather, the simple act of expressing sentiment through music was so awe-inspiring to the war-focused Zentraedi race of giant humans that they reconsidered their societal structure. Basically, neither Lynn Minmay nor her music were somehow literally inherently magical. The show's message was that music as a concept in of itself represents some form of human culture, and that figuratively brings otherwise uncooperative people together to build a truly advanced culture. This could perhaps best be seen in the famous "Do You Remember Love?" scene of the aptly-named *Super Dimension Fortress Macross: Do You Remember Love?*, wherein in the heat of battle, Lynn Minmay sings her heart out in the form of a song found from an ancient extinct civilization. This action somehow is so emotionally poignant that it gets a full battlefield to cease fighting. Yet, after the song, when questioning the song itself, it is noted that it was not inherently powerful, but was a simple pop song. The point is obvious: *Macross* was an insanely cheesy anime, but at no point was the "music is magic" angle literal.



Unfortunately, this brutally straightforward understanding of the series' message seems to have been forgotten through the various spinoffs and sequels the original series received. 1994's *Macross 7* is perhaps the least offensive. It featured excellent scenes showing characters with terrible singing voices still having their music express sentiments, demonstrating a vague point about how it is the human spirit that drives progress forward. Despite this, even the best sequel to *Macross* fumbles in delivery. Aside from being poorly paced with far too long of an episode count, *Macross 7* treats music like physical magic, with music performances generating beams of light emitting from the singer. This could be treated as a metaphorical representation of music, but it is hard to take that angle seriously when the series shows the protagonist's singing literally advancing time forward from a point of standstill. Furthermore, certain parts of the series have the military trying to weaponize and scientifically study the protagonists' music as something quantifiable. This can also be somewhat hand waved by the show's conclusion showing their music as beyond human understanding, but it feels somewhat lukewarm when so much of the series has characters discussing music in technobabble terminology.

Skipping over the largely forgettable 2008 *Macross Frontier* series, which largely retreaded similar ground as the original whilst also adding in even more obvious literal "music is magic" moments, comes the most egregious series of all the *Macross* sequels: *Macross Δ*. Instead of artistically showing music generating some mystical concept of energy, *Macross Δ* makes the baffling decision to explain its own events, along with retconning all previous climaxes of older series, with an explanation that literally attributes magical biowaves to the power of those scenes. In doing so, it not only derails its own ideas, but it retroactively ruins great, if not fairly decent, older media.

It should be said that, while the concept of *Macross Δ* is outlandish, it is not extraordinarily bizarre in the context of the wider *Macross* franchise. In its premise, the only thing that separates *Macross Δ* from its predecessors is the addition of more than two main singers. What makes *Macross Δ* completely perplexing is the fact that the great evil the main idol group faces is a disease that makes people go insane. By showing the



main singers' music literally creating magic and visibly curing the syndrome, the series bypasses all levels of logic. But more importantly, *Δ* completely betrays the themes of the franchise as a whole. Even in *7* and *Frontier*, which visibly show music having a force beyond symbolic in the world, the music within those series only worked in abstract, mystical ways. Those series, along with the original, showed musicians performing generally as either an extreme demonstration of willpower or independence, never as a force that actually had effects in the world by itself. *Macross Δ*'s explanation of its music and that of older entries as having power that can be measured and studied heavily breaks suspension of disbelief in its own material; yet, this also retrospectively makes powerful emotional explosions in older material less persuasive and commanding as it attributes the power of those events not to the strong wills and beliefs of the performers, but to some confounding space magic. It completely contradicts the point of the original series (and arguably *7*), where music, and by extension, all human creations and culture, are not shown to have physical value, but rather, hold large figurative and social value.

Obviously, none of this is to say that liking (or disliking) any of these series is invalid. Numerous ways to enjoy media exist, and one could prefer the modern digital animation and more dynamic action of the newer entries. Despite it often receiving a large amount of criticism from western audiences, I greatly enjoyed *Macross 7* for its focus on an almost 1960s hippie counterculturist mentality in its main protagonist and his performances. But my main concern with the series comes from its complete indecisiveness on its main message, evident through the repeated instances of new discoveries on the concept of music which completely contradict earlier series' views of that idea. The series lacks a sense of consistency, despite all the television series (and the majority of the OVA series) sharing continuity. As a result, I can't help but feel disappointed in *Macross* as a whole. I wouldn't say I wasted my time, as I still greatly enjoyed *Super Dimension Fortress Macross* and *Macross 7*, but I am a bit let down by how I felt the series declined greatly in between installments with increasingly nonsensical retcons of previously established lore. *Macross* isn't exactly the most immaculate series in terms of logic, but having idol groups being able to somehow magically cure alien rabies via specific particles generated with passionate singing really does overstep things just a bit.

ANIME CONTINUES TO GRIP SUMMER OLYMPIC SPOTLIGHT WITH STAR-STUDDED CAST

鉄腕アトム/美少女戦士セーラームーン/クレヨンしんちゃん/ONE PIECE/NARUTO—ナルト— 疾風伝/妖怪ウォッチ/ドラゴンボール超/魔法つかいプリキュア!
 Characters ©Tezuka ©T-P-T ©U/F-S-A-A ©O/S-F-T ©K S-S-T-P ©LYW ©B/S-F-T ©A-T ©Japanese Olympic Committee ©Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee ©Japanese Paralympic Committee



NIKO OLIVA

1st Year, Undeclared

aka gokuluvr666

Writer

On January 20, 2017, Japan unveiled a unique batch of nine ambassadors for the 2020 Summer Olympics. The roster consisted of anime characters from a wide range of genres: shonen powerhouses Son Goku (*Dragon Ball*), Naruto Uzumaki (*Naruto*), and Luffy (*One Piece*); magical girl icons Sailor Moon (*Sailor Moon*), Cure Miracle, and Cure Magical (*Pretty Cure*); classic children's favorites Jibanyan (*Yo-kai Watch*) and Crayon Shin-Chan (*Crayon Shin-Chan*); and the blueprint for the globalization of the medium himself, Astro Boy (*Astro Boy*). No strangers to worldwide tests of courage, whether it be the World Martial Arts Tournament, the search for the *One Piece*, or the Chunin Exams—and not to mention embodying what it means to transcend one's existing limits to reach the supernatural, if not universal—it is no surprise that this team was a heavy favorite, garnering 2 million views in two weeks after the initial announcement. This move arrives in the wake of the launch of JATA, or the Japan Anime Tourism Association, an initiative by leading publisher Kadokawa in September 2016 to bolster the national strategy to promote tourism through visual media. As expected, merchandise was pushed out three years in advance, carried online at the Tokyo 2020 Official Shop as well as at airport pop-ups and souvenir shops in the host country. An interesting thing to note is that on the merchandise, while the nine ambassadors are pictured together (give credit where it's due, crossovers are no easy feat when it comes to copyright), there is no standout connection to the spirit of the Games aside from the telltale rings. The poses are not too dynamic either, rather reminiscent of standard official art. Simply put, there wasn't really anything fresh that their newly appointed position brought to the table, at least materially speaking. However, this could have indicated that whatever was coming next would be completely unprecedented, or, unfortunately, their role as "ambassadors" would be as two-dimensional as their physical forms. While no details were initially announced,

I laid my expectations on the positive end of the spectrum, hoping for cosplayer appearances, state-of-the-art decor like the life-sized figure outside of Bandai Namco's Tokyo headquarters, or refreshment stands in the Olympic Village for athletes and at the stadiums for fans, replicating the country's signature theme cafe format.



Fast forward to the Opening Ceremony of the 2020 Summer Olympics in July 2021, due to a postponement in light of the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to wreak havoc on the Japanese population. Goku was trending on Twitter as many foreign spectators awaited his appearance at the Games, only to be disappointed and perplexed that he was nowhere to be seen. On the bright side, many famous openings and original soundtracks were played during the opening as well as some events, such as the main theme from *Final Fantasy*, "Guren no Yumiya" from the first season of *Attack on Titan*, and "Imagination" by SPYAIR from *Haikyuu!!* Upon deeper investigation, Japanese outlet Hachima Kikou reported that Japanese fans are heavily against the Olympics being held, much less the use of their beloved mascots for promotional purposes, especially as the nation approaches an expanded state of emergency once again amidst another surge of infections.

Translations from kotaku.com report scathing remarks from netizens, ranging from criticisms over the Japanese Olympic Committee's decision to push forward with the Games, to what the authors and characters themselves would think if their likenesses were being used in accordance with an event that violates the safety of the general public:

"This will make Astro Boy's image bad."

"The creator of Astro Boy was a doctor. The Olympics should not be supported over human life, because this is an emergency due to the novel coronavirus."

"This is blasphemy to the God of Manga (Tezuka)."

"It's sad to see *Sailor Moon* used like this commercially. This is confirmation that the current Olympics are the worst."

Not all comments were negative, as some still expressed support for the tradition that originally united the international community.

"I'm looking forward to the Olympics! I'll be cheering from my house."



The idea of paying homage to famous figures has always been a controversial one, even here in the Western world, namely in the Super Bowl with Travis Scott's incorporation of *Spongebob* in his performance and Justin Timberlake utilizing a hologram of Prince in his Halftime Show despite the late singer reportedly not being a fan of Timberlake to begin with. Albeit a fraction of a glimpse into the sentiment of the Japanese people, the online responses granted me a new perspective on how immortalized these characters have become in the nation's identity. The lives of fans must have been touched deeply enough for them to fiercely defend the group's honor through a "what would X do" logic, as if they were not simply drawings, but sentient entities who could actually make decisions in these kinds of situations. Additionally, as opposed to sweeping the issue under the cliche rug of using the characters to "bring hope during dark times," many fans spoke in a manner that almost showed some sort of respect for the unspoken autonomy of these characters.

Do you believe Goku and friends should have been permitted to attend, and what did you think their appearances would entail? Who would your dream lineup be, and what events would you want to see anime incorporated into the promotional material? Outside of the athletic domain, where else would you foresee anime making a positive impact on the audience? Personally, I was surprised that Ichigo Kurosaki wasn't there to round out the Big Three and that Hatsune Miku didn't make the cut. Let us know in the comments below, or start up a conversation in our Discord server; we'd love to hear your thoughts!



A MANCHU A PROMISE OF SUNSHINE AND SEA



FELIX LEVY

1st Year, Environmental Engineering

Without further ado, let's dive right into it

Writer

Amanchu, a 2016 Iyashikei animated by JC Staff, invites us to follow the experience of these two high school girls, opposed in every way in their personalities. Futaba, who just started living near the coast, and an overly cheerful and soon-to-be classmate of hers, Hikari, seizes this opportunity to take this shy girl in her maelstrom of craze for scuba-diving. We accompany Futaba on her quest for personal growth with her new friend and their newly formed group. Directed by the notorious Junichi Satou, who already worked on the adaptation of *Aria*, another work by *Amanchu*'s creator Kozue Amano, which received a great amount of praise in the Iyashikei genre.

Amanchu does a great job at establishing the dynamics between the characters early on, as well as showing the potential for development of the characters. Futaba and Hikari's high school life offers a lot of freedom to its students (to a point that makes us reflect, not without regret, on our own stricter high school experiences), but this school still seems quite hostile to Futaba, for this freedom requires initiative, a thing that she has come to fear as shown in her monologues and flashbacks. However, their teacher, who happens to be the diving club's advisor, joins in with Hikari in helping Futaba learn this sport and confront the challenges that she has to face. Some high school drama follows which, despite not being the most original part of the show, reinforces Futaba's character and is quite entertaining thanks to the rest of the cast and their interactions.

This show is also filled with educational parts about diving, and we get to tag along in learning the basics and notably safety rules that will be at the center of Futaba's diving exam at the end of S1. While this makes for a nice buildup for eventual cool underwater moments and is essential to Futaba's character arc, it is pretty slow and does make us want more from *Amanchu* and its premise.

Something essential to note though is its use of different simpler art styles for comic effects or to reinforce character reactions or personalities in dialogues, and is similar to *Aria* in that regard. This makes the dialogues and frequent slice of life parts much more entertaining and also makes the extreme personalities of characters such as Hikari work well.

In Season 2, our long-awaited entry into the world of real scuba-diving begins. Now, Futaba needs to put her practice into effect, and her newly-gained confidence clashes with the stress and possible dangers of this activity. Her demons still follow her there, making for some nice development (although it doesn't differ much from the first season). The underwater visuals are pleasant and follow Futaba's perspective, as they go from a dark, hostile world to colorful wildlife and sunrays. A new character also gets introduced, Kokoro, much younger than the rest of the cast, who gets approached by Hikari just like Futaba before. But most importantly, this season invites us into the world of dreams, which occupies a big chunk of its runtime.

During the dream world section, the characters often connect in their lucid dreams, which allows them to have new experiences. Futaba, for example, who is an "expert dreamer", acts much more confident and uses these instants to fly around and have fun. However, it eventually becomes the center of a drama plot when side character Ai meets a mysterious boy called Peter, and a disaster taking place in her dreams surrounding that boy has to be resolved. This section brings us some of the most well-directed and visually appealing scenes in the entire show (for instance, Ai and Peter running through the school at night during a school festival with beautiful phantasmagorical elements). But despite how climactic this is, it doesn't really fit into *Amanchu* as a whole when it comes to its tone and inclusion of fantastical elements and makes season 2 quite inconsistent.



Amanchu indeed has a certain tendency of forgetting what it is about, and sometimes fails in its runtime to offer concrete development for its characters that are stuck in the same development devices throughout the entire show. However, it offers fun character interactions with several very appealing scenes both visually and emotionally. We can probably expect a season 3 soon, and we shall wait and see where *Amanchu* is headed.

THE ENDLESS EIGHT RELATABILITY IN A COVID ERA



MITCHELL MADAYAG

1st Year, Undeclared

If not doing homework is the price to pay for an endless summer of fun, so be it.

Editor-In-Chief



SPOILERS FOR THE MELANCHOLY OF HARUHI SUZUMIYA!

As the self-proclaimed biggest (or perhaps the only) *Haruhi* fanatic in my social group, I can not reiterate enough how much I love the infamous Endless Eight Arc. To recap, the SOS Brigade are stuck in an infinite time loop, “doomed” to repeat a series of fun summer activities across the same two weeks. As the name suggests, Kyoto Animation decided it would be clever to adapt the Endless Eight in the form of eight almost identical episodes. I say “almost” because every episode was individually crafted with the utmost care. From rerecorded voice lines to different camera angles and even the many outfits each brigade member changes into, the overall vibe varies greatly from one episode to another. Despite the distinct difference in visuals and sound, the generally simple plot is preserved, making it tedious to watch the same dumb fun continuously. The viewing grind can be grueling but is ultimately worth experiencing one of the most unique experiments in animation history. Like Yuki, the viewers are relegated to the role of a mere spectator, rendered powerless to *Haruhi*'s godly powers. Our relatability to Yuki is enhanced since we are both forced to repeatedly watch the gang fail to end each loop. Thank goodness us viewers are privileged in only having to watch eight of the 15,532 loops at most.



Being in quarantine for over a year and a half has further enriched my perspective of the Endless Eight. Staying indoors all the time makes everyday feel about the same. Similar to Kyon and Koizumi's sense of *deja vu*, it was difficult to discern one week from the next since my daily activities were limited to doing online schoolwork or using electronics in general. Having been put in a comparable situation where I am anxiously wishing I can return to a normal life, I now sympathize with Yuki to an even greater degree. It is hard to believe my first year in college has already flown by and it makes me wonder how many loops it took for the ever-patient alien to become exhausted for once.

I would be lying though if I said my time was wasted as my highlight of the year would be discovering CAA, a community I can be a part of. I'm grateful for trying something new like writing these articles and I don't regret anything I've done or haven't done one bit. Even this summer has been a substantial improvement to the fever dream of 2020's as I'm getting back into tennis and catching up with many high school friends. I never had to be like Yuki and accept things the way they are and can instead be like Kyon and find the missing answer to spice things up in life, no matter how small. Ironically, I still have to take summer classes, but I now have a greater freedom to escape the monotony of it all. Despite it being called endless, the Endless Eight eventually reached a conclusion, a payoff that felt extremely satisfying to the SOS Brigade and us viewers. Perhaps I'm overhyping myself, but I can't wait to feel a similar sense of fulfillment as I step onto campus as an official college student. Life may never be the same again, but I'm looking forward to taking small steps to ultimately break out of this bind. I just pray my little sister doesn't tell me to answer the phone.



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Aqours
Love Live! Sunshine!!
Art By Miranda Zhang