

Gacha Gacha Becomes Big Business

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **capsule** (noun) /'kæp.sjʊl/ – A small container, often for toys or medicine.
Example: The toy came inside a tiny plastic capsule.
2. **exploded** (verb) /ɪk'spləʊd/ – To grow or increase very quickly.
Example: The gacha gacha industry has exploded in recent years.
3. **import** (verb) /ɪm'pɔ:t/ – To bring goods or ideas into a country from abroad.
Example: Japan imported the capsule toy concept from the United States.
4. **quaint** (adjective) /kweɪnt/ – Unusually attractive or interesting because it is old-fashioned or unusual.
Example: Some capsule toys have quaint designs that appeal to collectors.
5. **pandemic** (noun) /pæn'dem.ɪk/ – A disease that spreads across a large region or worldwide.
Example: The pandemic increased interest in easy-to-run capsule toy machines.
6. **diverse** (adjective) /daɪ'vɜ:s/ – Showing a lot of variety or different types.
Example: Companies created a diverse range of gacha gacha toys.
7. **nostalgia** (noun) /nɒs'tæl.dʒə/ – A feeling of pleasure when remembering the past.
Example: Many adults buy gacha gacha toys for nostalgia from their childhood.



Gacha gacha machines are popular across Japan.

Originally, capsule toys were simple playthings for children. They make a rattling sound, which is

why they are called “gacha gacha.” Today, adults enjoy them as much as kids, making them a big part of everyday life. The machines are everywhere — in stations, malls, and even museums.

The industry has grown extremely fast in recent years.

By 2024, the capsule toy market reached about 120 billion yen, three times larger than in 2020. This shows how popular the toys have become with both young and adult collectors. Social media helped to increase awareness and interest. The growth has turned a simple children’s toy into a significant business.

Capsule toys actually began in the United States.

In the 1930s, gumball machines sometimes included small toys in capsules. Many of these toys were made in Japan at the time. Japan officially imported the idea in 1965, offering tiny erasers and robot figures. In the 1980s, popular anime like Kinnikuman made capsule toys highly desirable.

The industry has adapted to modern challenges.

During the coronavirus pandemic, empty shop spaces were filled with capsule toy machines. They are cheap to operate, require little electricity, and need few staff. Companies also started producing a diverse range of quirky toys targeting adults. These changes allowed the industry to grow even faster. Capsule toys became both fun and practical for businesses.

Adults buy capsule toys for many reasons.

Some enjoy them because of nostalgia and childhood memories. Others like the excitement of the surprise when opening a capsule. The machines continue to appear in every corner of Japan. The variety and creativity of toys keep fans interested. Gacha gacha remains a small but powerful part of Japanese culture today.

DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever bought a gacha gacha toy in Japan? What did you get?
2. Which locations in Japan do you see most capsule toy machines?
3. What kind of toy would you hope to find in a gacha gacha capsule?
4. Do you enjoy surprises like in gacha gacha? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think adults in Japan buy toys from their childhood?
6. How does social media in Japan make gacha gacha toys popular?
7. If you could create your own gacha gacha toy, what would it be?