

AN ANALYSIS ON JAPANESE PACKAGE DESIGNS FROM THE POINT OF A CHINESE DESIGNER

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Keywords: package design, consumer, color, design, food package

Abstract

The package design is an important part of measures representing the countries, nations and cultures([1], [2], [3]). The aim of this paper is to analyze Japanese package designs from the point of a Chinese designer. The Japanese package designs faces directly consumer's needs in colors, in materials, in designs and in letters. They are concerned with environment. Many of them are made from recyclable stuffs, ex. paper, wood, or hemp. Almost all milk package is made from paper. They show Japanese traditions by combinations of Japanese letters, ex. Kanji(originally produced in China), Hiragana, Katakana and so on. They also pay much attention to their affordance which they would have to let consumer pick up, open and eat easily. Their "pretty" colors are also characteristics of Japanese package designs that we, Chinese designers have to learn. Generally Japanese package designs are quite kind to consumers.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapid development of economy modern days, a plenty of products have appeared and both the artistically and practically higher request increased for the package of various products. The package design came into people's daily lives being a form of the artistic expression.

Americans regard package design as a tool to earn money, North European people feel package design as a necessity in their daily lives. Japanese people, on the other hand, assume that package design is the mean for the existence of their nation.

Two factors gave influence on Japanese package design: One was the need for the simplicity and small scale. They seem interested in design of down-sizing, standardization and of multi-functions. The second is that they think much of their traditional culture. They integrate various aspects of the race in to design.

In the present paper. the characteristics of Japanese package design, especially food package designs, were analyzed in comparison with Chinese one.

ANALYSIS

1 . *Japanese package designs showing their ethnicities*

The package design nowadays are the expression of culture. Japanese package designs possesses prominent traditional culture. They have used a variety of means to emphasize Japanese traditional culture and evoke consumer's sympathy. For instance, they use new fonts

in combinations of "Kanji" which are originally Chinese characters and Japanese characters, "Hiragana" or "Katakana" which are deformations of Kanji.

Japanese package designs inquire the traditional culture in terms of form, color, and material (Fig.1).

They try to fusion such tradition with innovation of technology. Japanese people traditionally feels good for what is expressed through natural things. They will feel the beauty of nature to see sacks made of hemp.

Based upon their tradition, Japanese people created original culture absorbing those of other countries. The diversity of Japanese culture revealed in diverse package designs in daily lives. In Japanese packages, do exist in harmony two of the forms of fashionable and convenient style and composition by Euro-American influence and that of Japanese style.

2. Japanese food package designs

Food is one of the most important part in our daily lives. The package designs are the total reflections of bland concept, function of products and consumer's mind etc. They have the direct influence upon consumer's purchasing desire. It can be said that the package is a strong tool to construct affiliation between the products and the consumers.

This is prominent especially in food packages. Japanese merchandise society is approaching to its maturity. Japanese consumers want higher things for merchandises. As a consequence, many companies make much of package designs. Such package designs attract consumer's attention as the one which are simple, easy to open, convenient and soft to environment.



Fig.1 The package design using traditional characters and figures.



Fig.2 The package of bamboo

1) Japanese food designs are the environment- protective expressions

In these modern lives, people are seeking the oasis for their lives. People want to be back to nature even when the civilization and the technology have highly developed.

Recent days many people are much interested in the protection of environment. Japanese people have formed strong mind of environmental protection due to their island nation and scarcity of resources.

Japanese designers in package automatically take the environmental protection into their works. They select the materials which would not pollute the environment and are easy to recycle. Almost



Fig. 3 The package of paper.



Fig. 4 An example of humanized design.



Fig. 5 Hot food (right) and salty food (left)



Fig. 6 Designs by shapes and styles.

all the materials of food package are now plastic through the world. Plastic materials have very bad influence on environment because they resist to be decomposed. "The white pollution" have been an issue through the world.

Japan has succeeded in this point. Many food companies have gradually destroyed the plastic packages and prefer to utilize materials which can be decomposed easily, for instance, paper, wood, and hemp cloth (Figs. 2, 3).

In Japan, many paper package have "tag" to use for opening. One of the package that is most accepted by Japanese consumers is "the paper bottle for liquid". The mouth of a paper bottle is equipped in special design for easy opening. The paper bottle is thus replacing the pet bottles.

2) Japanese food package designs are humanized designs

Through designs the impression and the feeling of the food are expressed. "Humanized design" is spreading all over the world. Japan particularly emphasizes humanized design. What humanized design shows is convenience. One instance is yogurt (Fig.4). You can drink it by straw. You can also drink it by opening its mouth. But in the latter case, you do not need to open the mouth fully; as a tag is attached at the back of the mouth, you can stop the mouth at the half position. The deadline for consumption is printed on the package. The package of vivid color attract many consumer's attention. But as such print by vivid color may be harmful for health, Japanese packages refrain from being so colorful. They do not use harmful inks.

Also Japanese packages create psychological communications with consumers. They sometimes personify the package both in color and design. So the consumers are evoked some psychological reactions. Say, they use red color in package for hot foods. They also utilize the figure of “fire” as design. So the consumers can learn how hot is the food by its color and design. Japanese package utilizes not only color and design but the shape, material, and quality of the container to let the consumer know the taste of food (Fig. 5).

Japanese consumers are fond of something pretty, “kawaii” in Japanese, utilizing cartoons or designs something like cartoons. These figures make the consumers accept the product informations so easily. Thus Japanese package designs employ different colors, shapes, and styles to stimulate consumers’ visual, tactile, and taste senses all together (Fig. 6).

CONCLUSION

Japanese package designers have spent much time for research in sincere attitude and developed humanized designs holding traditional styles. These are what we Chinese designers must learn. That they demand quality in details means that they have responsibility for their works. They also respect consumers. For good designs is important the influence of the regional culture. Without culture, there is no spirit. It seems to the author as a young Chinese designer that many Chinese package designs mimic Euro-American designs and lack original appeal with no creative work. Japanese package designs, on the other hand, posses their original styles in harmony with their tradition and modern fashions. This is the point of success in Japanese package designs and the point that Chinese design have to learn.

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