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abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the Inter-Connection between shamanism, such as folklore, and Korean medication advertisement design in the newspaper during the Japanese Colonial Period.

Advertisement can be seen as a mirror reflecting an era and an aesthetic phenomenon that is a medium to convey information. From such a context, medication advertisement reflects preferred medication of the public through those days' forms and contents and also tells the story of wide-spread diseases at that time.

These days, medication advertisement and packaging follow universal designs. However, Korea's first medication advertisement design that was introduced to the world held "traditionality" as a prime value.

keywords

advertisement, typography, shamanism, amulet, folk, Korea, Japanese Colonialism.

The Inter-Connection between Shamanism and Korean Medication Advertisement Design during the Japanese Colonial Period

The shamanistic graphics value of the Korea's first medication advertisement design as part of Korean visual culture identity.



The purpose of this study is to examine the Inter-connection between shaman-ism, such as folklore, and Korean medication advertisement design in the newspaper during the Japanese Colonial Period. Advertisement can be seen as a mirror reflecting an era and an aesthetic phenomenon that is a medium to convey information. From such a context, medication advertisement reflects preferred medication of the public through those days' forms and contents and also tells the story of wide-spread diseases at that time. Now a days, medication advertisement and packaging follow uni- versal designs.¹⁾ This fact is related to the lack of an identity in the Korean design due to irruption and cultural dispossession produced by Japanese colonialism in the modern period. However, Korea's first medication advertisement design was introduced to the world held "traditionality" as a prime value.

The word "advertisement" started to be used in the late nineteenth century and was widely used during the Japanese Colonial Period until today.²⁾ Furthermore, Western civilization being imported after late nineteenth century stimulated and changed the visual culture of the Japanese Colonial Period by means of Western design techniques. The main role of advertisement at that time was to promote the source of raw materials for Japanese industry and their daily sales. However, medication advertisements published in newspapers in the Japanese Colonial Period showed the characteristics of interactions of three factors such as the introduction of Western and Japanese medication, overflow of medication advertisements and shamanism appearing in Joseon's medication advertisement. At the same time, in these advertisements, we can also find a correlation between medical pharmacy in the Japanese Colonial Period and the history of the amulet. After pillaging Joseon's ³⁾ national rights, while Japan recognized Western science and medicine, Japan denied traditional Oriental medicine and started cracking down on its operation. In spite of various attempts to get rid of tradition and folk beliefs, talismans were widespread and in common use.

As such, in spite of distribution of Western and Japanese medications and the introduction of their advertisement, Korea was one of the countries where people's 'self-medication' was widespread. As to this fact, the researcher thought that 'self treatment' as so-called 'folk remedy' is closely related to the above mentioned facts, and tried to examine its origin.⁴⁾ The researcher focused on the settlement course of Korea's medication advertisement such as (folk remedy, amulet, advertisement as a strategy of marketing sales, the introduction of Western medical pharmacy, etc). The resulting analysis showed that Japanese and Western medication advertisement had scientific or stimulating forms. Joseon's medication advertisements and some parts of Japanese's on the other hand dealt with many similar aspects to talismans in the aspect of message, forms, image and typography of advertisement. The products naming and images used for Joseon's medication advertisements connotes a strong attachment to the shamanistic tradition such as the use of imaginary animals sacred animals belonging to the Buddhist culture, or are symbolize "long life and prosperity". The use of angels, Buddhist monks and magical beings were very commonly used in both the illustrations and the names of the products. A clear example is the drug Sin Young Hwan (宁神丸) literally meaning "pill sent by God". Also, the calligraphic typeface denotes a strong resemblance to the structure used in the Korean ancient amulets. The general form which takes the form of writing (vertical or circular), the energetic serif that were used in amulets to drive away bad energy and plasticity of the characters almost appear as encoded characters. In other words, we can say that Joseon's medication advertisements are involved in shamanism.

After liberation the shamanistic ad format seemed to have almost disappeared. However, we can see that such shamanistic designs appear in various ways in the brand marks of pharmaceutical or health food companies and local governments. Shamanism appearing in advertisement takes very small parts. But as shamanistic aspects also appeared in

Japanese medication advertisement designs, they are one of the expressional methods of Oriental design, which can be seen as an aesthetic result born from Korea's traditional culture and history and not as an imitation of Western designs. In summary, shamanism appearing in Korean medication advertisement can be seen as some part of Oriental or Korean identity and the result of the times that naturally formed from national historicity.

Most other theses that have treated the subjects of advertisement, medication and shamanism tried to solve only relevant problems in each one's professional fields. But as an 'inter-disciplinary' research, in this study, the researcher intends to apply a cross-disciplinary perspective by connecting the topics of design (AD), medicine (medication) and religion (shamanism/folk beliefs) to interpret their relationship. As R. Barthes explained in his early days, human beings tend to take many things generated in a society as granted and naturalize them at a moment.⁵⁾ From such context, in this study, as for medication advertisement designs in the Japanese colonial period and their meaning that have been taken for granted without attention until now, the researcher tried an interdisciplinary research of Korean advertising history.

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Footnotes

- 1) Kim Kyeong Ha(2010), *Study on Drug Package Universal Design* [의약품패키지 유니버설디자인에 관한 연구]. Seoul: Sungkyunk- wan University. Master Thesis.
- 2) Korea Association of Advertising(1996), *100 Years of Korean Advertising* [한국광고 100 년]. Seoul: Korea Association of Advertising.
- 3) Korea's current shape was formed by the states of the last Joseon dynasty and even though the Joseon Dynasty begins in 1392 and ends in 1910, during the period of Japanese colonialism the current Korean peninsula was known as Joseon (also known as Chosŏn).
- 4) <http://www.segye.com/> 2009.11.24. *What do you think* [어떻게 보십니까]. Generic Medicines Super Sale.
- 5) Roland Barthes(1984), *Mythologies* (translated by Annette Lavers, Hill and Wang) (New York : Hill and Wang).