

Japanese fans



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Japanese Fans

Introduction

Fan is commonly known as something that generates air. It aids people to reduce the heat in the atmosphere and at the same time serves as decoration or part of their fashion trend.

Japan is known as the country where the folding fan creation is famous. It is also said that in Japan, there are two types of fans namely round fans and screen fans. Over the years there are notions made about the use of Japanese fans. Others says that only emperors are allowed t use fans but through the years it was changed and soon the use of fans was promulgated to all levels of people. Fans are also used during ceremonies but the shape and decoration differs with that of the common fan. The land of the rising sun experiences humid and hot days during the summer season and this is the main reason why Japanese are encouraged to use fans.

This paper aims to explore the meaning, various positions and designs of the Japanese hand fans. A further discussion of the relevance of Japanese fans to the country's history will also be discussed.

Vocabulary Words related to Japanese Fans Study

Fan- is a thing that is used to identify a rank or profession in a Japanese society. It is also serves as something that generates air.

Folding Fans- it is primarily used during imperial ceremonies in Japan.

Akomeogi- the term used to name the Japanese folding fan.

Ogi- is a painting that decorates a Japanese fan.

Komori Ogi- also called as bat fan because of its shape and its material is paper.

Uchiwa- distinct Japanese fan because it is a round fan that cannot be folded.

Hiogi- is a fan with wooden blades, crescent folding and shaped like a wedge.

Meaning of Fan

Japanese Fans are primarily used as a thing that produces wind to minimize the heat in the atmosphere. It also symbolizes a profession in the society. Earlier in Japan, fans were used to distinguish what rank does a person belongs (Roberts). It was divided into two types the first one is the usual folding fans while the second is the round fan. Fans were invented in Japan to be use during imperial ceremonies. Japanese also uses fans to make the atmosphere more fragrant. This is a way for them to attract good vibes and to lighten up their feelings. A fabric softener is used to make the fan more odorize and it is commonly used in places like Japanese businesses and homes.

The Role of Japanese Fans in Japan's Culture

Fans provided a long playing role in the culture of Japan since it is patronized by both men and women. Carrying fans has been part of Japanese culture and there are instances when they match their fans with the color of their outfit (Roberts). Aside from the practical purpose of fans to reduce heat, it is also used to drive insects away (Japanese Hand Fans). The rank of a person can also be distinguished based on its design, material as well as shape and sizes.

For the Japanese people, fans were included in their social status (Roberts). It gives specification to a status and gender depending on the type of individual that carries it. Japan invented the folding fan during the 8th century and it was exported to China (De Mente 231). Akomeogi was developed as early as the 6th century and utilized by the aristocratic people. Fans during that time can only be used during formal gatherings since it is used by Japanese who has high positions in the society.

During the Heian period, Japanese fans are made up of Japanese cypress called hinoki and it was bonded together by a thread. In order to determine the Japanese's rank in the society, one may count the thin stripes of wood in the fan. Nowadays, this fan is still used during formal occasions by priests of the Shintoism religion as part of their formal costume. Such fans were also used during court hearings by emperors and empresses.

Japanese fans were also part of Japanese marriage and coronation events to compensate the costume and the hot atmosphere during the aforementioned occasions. Fans that were used during prestigious events are designed with bright colors and long tassels.

Fans that can be folded have montures or the stick and guards. The leaves of the fans are designed by craftsman. Every design employs something that displays a social significance on the Japanese culture. Through the years it was also known as part of feminine art in Japan. After which, Japanese fans became part of wars by Japanese soldiers to defend themselves against enemies. The iron fan called Harisen is used to block possible attacks of opponents (" Japanese War Fans"). Great importance is given to Japanese fans since it became weapons to defend one's body self.

Japanese fans can be used in various ways. Aside from cooling oneself from it, Japanese fans can blow a fire and make it bigger. Females who are wearing shorter skirts can hide their behind by means of Japanese fans. When you are in the mood to catch other people's attention, the fan is one great thing to help you with this. Just waived the colourful fan more faster or more higher to grab the attention of the people that you want. When carrying plenty of things and you find difficulties holding it with hands only, fans can be used to place something on it. Fan dance is also one distinct activity that emphasizes the use of Japanese fans.

Japanese Fans Designs and Distinctions

Japanese fans that are printed are done by painting it on a paper floor (Kurt 28). The material used is made up of paper and this hand made craft has unique watermarks (Kurt 35). In the 19th century paper fans were affected by innovation and are produced by machines which made it smoother than the original texture.

Folding fans in Japan is part of the precious culture since it is patronized by tourist during their visits to Japan. During Geisha presentation, fans were also used as part of the dance.

The round and flat Japanese fan called Uchiwa is historically said to be an import from the Chinese people and was the earliest form of fan to be introduced to the Japanese people.

Hiogi or the folding fan was made during the 7th century. It aims to guard Japanese because the material is made up of wooden blades. The only people who can use such fan are those who serve as emperors during

Japanese court trials. It serves as protection to the Japanese emperor and for them to be easily identified on a large crowd.

Fans during the early Japanese times were made with no decorations at all. As years goes by, the creation of fans were developed and materials like paper and silk were incorporated for aesthetic purposes. This made the Japanese fans less costly and spreads through all people in the society.

Japanese fans are part of culture, beauty and function combined. It is one of the greatest prides of Japanese aesthetics because it defies more than one function of having a Japanese fan. Japanese painters did their best to provide more unique designs and shape to express their artistry in fan making (Kurt 112-117). This is done by using different colors of ink and different materials to produce a fan.

Everyday, Japanese fans were present in the lives of people in Japan. This gives them the comfort against the hot weather and it is discarded once it is worn out. Japanese may be criticized by fellowmen when seen using a broken Japanese fan. Famous Japanese fans were produced by highly acclaimed fan artist and their works were sold as collectors items.

Since fans play an important part of the Japanese art, culture and literature, it was represented to some literary tales. Two of Japanese tales that gave notable importance to Japanese fans are the Tales of Ise and the Tales of Genji. The use of fans is frequently depicted on folding screens and hanging scrolls.

War Fans in Japanese Culture

During feudal warfare, fans were utilized by warriors in different ways. War fans come in different sizes and materials. It is used as a signalling device to tell warriors that enemies are fast approaching (" Japanese War Fans"). It varies from wood, tasselled pom-pom and solid iron. Sumo referees also use fans to mark that the battle has begun.

Tessenjutsu is the term that is used to describe the art of war fan fighting. The commander of the Japanese troop often raises the fan and points it to the location designated to the enemies.

Kinds of Japanese War Fans

The Uchiwa as mentioned above were made of iron and has a wooden core. Officers with high rank positions are the main carriers of these fans (" Japanese War Fans"). They use uchiwas to ward off attacking arrows and to signal their troops and to hide from the rays of the sun (" Japanese War Fans").

Average Japanese warriors are using Gunsen. This fan can be folded and the main function is to cool the soldier's body (" Japanese War Fans"). It has brass, bronze or similar metal materials so that it stays strong yet can be carried lightly. It is carried in different body parts. Some warriors use it as belts while others use it as breast plates to guard themselves from sharp bows and swords of opponents.

Saihai are simply known as fans for signalling. It directs soldiers about the next movement of the troop.

Japanese fans were also made through disguises to deceive enemies during war. Tessen is a fan that has outer spokes and looks like a harmless normal

fan (Cunningham). A samurai can easily bring tessen during trainings without guards noticing it (Cunningham). Swords and sharp fans are not allowed during the said events but tessen fans can be deceiving.

Colors, Symbolism and Importance of Japanese Fans

Shades of Red- Japanese Red symbolizes many things; from blood, to love, to infatuation. It also denotes strong emotions and ideas based on one's intellect (Dreyfus). **Shades of Blue-** is often associated with Japanese girls who are pure. It also represents the water that surrounds Japan (Dreyfus). Japanese who carries blue hand fans are natural lovers of their culture since it is part of Japanese art and culture.

Shades of Black- this color is referred to in Japanese as something mysterious, mournful or evil (Dreyfus). It can also be noted as the color of elegance and class when paired in velvet evening gowns.

Shades of White- this is a sacred color and signifies purity in Japanese. There are many Japanese weddings who use this color. It also reflects the healthcare profession and Japanese nurses are often called as "Angels in White" (Dreyfus).

Shades of Pink- in Japanese fans indicates either innocence or love. It is usually carried by the younger generation and develops a childish carrier. It is normally associated to female Japanese and their freshness as a woman. It also symbolizes love and purity (Dreyfus).

Japanese hand fans were essential in numerous phases of Japanese society. It aids Japanese people from everyday usage of cooling their bodies, guarding them during warfare, distinguishing them during court events and decorating

them during presentations of actors and dancers (Japanese Hand Fans). The Japanese fan shape symbolizes something for the Japanese believes that the topmost part of the fan is the beginning of their life (Japanese Hand Fans). The ribs of the fans pertain to the path of life and the different directions that they will go (Japanese Hand Fans). The bottom part of the fan which is held by the carrier symbolizes the authority of the fan owner to decide which way to go (Japanese Hand Fans).

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