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WRAPPING CULTURE IN RELATION WITH WASTE PROBLEM IN JAPAN

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ABSTRACT: Japan is an industrialized country, in which people still embed traditional cultural values in their daily life. These values include Japanese wrapping culture, which is based upon societal values of *tatemaie*. The creation of excess waste is directly related by this value. It is seen as exclusive and perceived as a type of respect to present a guest or customer with an individually wrapped item. Wrapping their products in many layers and offering an esthetically pleasing product is one of manufacturer ways to show respect for their consumer. Packaging is no longer to preserve and convey goods but it becomes more cultural. In case study done, over 2/3 of the packaging items in this survey is primarily for esthetic purposes. This packaging of product using plastics, demonstrated in this survey, accounts for 75% of materials used. As plastics are material that is hard to recycled, only 30% of plastic wastes is recycled. The 70% become pure waste, neither recycled nor reused. Waste produced in Japan per person per day is quite low compared to other nations worldwide. However, Japan population's density is much more higher. Japan does not have land available to create more landfill sites and thus is currently in a desperate situation. Moreover, in Japan, recycling is not considered as profitable business. Even though government and private enterprises have taken initiative to start dealing with recycling, the heavy burden of recycling bring by local government. By 2003, only half of the municipalities in Japan embraced 'Containers and Plastics Recycling Law' which born in 1995 and fully enforced in 2000. Creating a sustainable future is expensive and takes time. As long as Japan places priority on economics above environmental sustainability, the problem will worsen. The government must take a leading role and demonstrate to the public how to be environmentally friendly by changing their attitudes before the general population accept the idea.

KEYWORDS: Culture, Packaging, Waste, Recycling, and Plastic