

Omamori Transformation: The Influence Of Kawaii Culture in Omamori Commodification

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Abstract. Omamori is one of the spiritual culture's phenomena existing within the Japanese society. Omamori for the people of Japan has the main function as protection against misfortune or danger. Along with the progressing time, the shape and function of omamori undergoes changes with the commodification carried out by the producers of omamori. The function of omamori which originally was a sacred object shifts into accessory or souvenir that is often bought by the Japanese and tourists. It can be seen that omamori is utilized as commodity by the temples to attract visitors to come and buy omamori.

Keywords: *Omamori, Commodification, Popular Culture*

1. INTRODUCTION

Japan is one of the popular countries for tourism destination. Japan's popularity as one of the popular tourist destination countries is caused by among others the cultural diversity of the Japanese people. Apart from the cultural diversity, Japan's popularity as one of the tourism destination countries is also caused by its many sceneries and culinary diversity as well as Japanese technologies which become the some of the many attractions of Japan. Many tourists go on vacation in Japan to enjoy the cultural diversity of Japan.

The most popular tourist attractions visited by tourists are the Buddhist and Shinto traditional temples. Religious temples or tourist attractions, particularly big temples such as Asakusa, Kin-kakuji, Kiyomizu-dera, and other temples generally each of these temples sell trinkets and souvenirs which are the representation of the temple's unique characteristics. The trinkets can be key chains, postcards, or decorations that represent the characteristics of that particular temple. Nevertheless, in each temple, one of the souvenirs that are mostly enjoyed by both the Japanese people and foreign tourists visiting the temple is omamori or amulet.

Omamori has the meaning of "to protect." Omamori has variety of shapes and functions. Omamori itself can be found both in Buddhist and Shinto temples and generally is sold in varying prices. Omamori itself became popular during the era of Tokugawa when Omamori given by the temples and the practice of omamori's usage became popular among the Japanese, particularly among the urban people. Initially, omamori was made of wood and paper, however in the progress of time, the materials used to create omamori becomes even more varying and the shapes of omamori are also designed in such a way so that they have particular attraction for the Japanese people and foreign tourists.

Omamori has a variety of types and functions. Some popular types of omamori are: koutsu anzen (交通安全) that functions for road safety, omamori for passing examinations or passing the entrance examination for desired school (gakugyou joju 学業成就), luck (kaiun開運), successful in business (shoubai hanjou 商売繁盛)(Swanger, 1981). Generally all these types of omamori can be found in any temples all over Japan. Nevertheless, although they have similar functions, the types and shapes of omamori in each temple are varying. For examples, Tenmangu Temple in Dazaifu has nineteen types of omamori with seven different functions, whereas Sensoji Temple in Asakusa district, Tokyo has fifteen types of omamori for six different functions. One of the most popular places for omamori is Kompira Temple that has seventy types of omamori for forty five kinds of needs, including for specific functions such as success in the election, for abundant harvests, and for ships' machines protection or even preventing pollution (Swanger, 1981) .

Similarly, the designs and shapes of omamori are also varying. Initially omamori was made of paper and wood, but in its progress the shapes and materials for its creation become varying. Current Omamori is made of various materials such as plastic, cloth, and occasionally in the shapes of credit card, car bumper's sticker. In the modern age, there is omamori that seems to have commercial value and is made by presenting popular characters in Japan such as Hello Kitty, Mickey Mouse, Doraemon, etc. in the omamori, apart from the inscription of the name of the temple selling or producing the omamori.(Swanger, 1981). The emergence of omamori with such popular characters presentation is one of the influences of kawaii culture that influences the shape of omamori.

In the usage of omamori, Japanese people generally place omamori nearby. For example, students in Japan generally place omamori as handphone's strap, or hang on their bags. For omamori that functions to make them able to pass examinations well, they commonly place omamori in their pencil cases. While for omamori koutsu anzen or for safety in travel, generally the Japanese people hang the omamori on the car's windshield or on the front part of the car. Yet there are some who mount sticker-formed omamori on the car's front bumper.

The varying development of omamori's shape indirectly can be viewed as an attempt to carry out cultural commodification done by factories that produce omamori. Such attempt is done to make the shapes and designs change of omamori becomes a separate attraction of the temple hence many more Japanese people and tourists will come to visit and buy omamori.

In the modern age, omamori not only can be purchased through the temples, but is also available in several souvenir shops. Omamori is also sold freely in varying shapes, although many monks in the temple disagree about the freely sale of omamori and neither omamori sold in the souvenir shops get the blessing rituals from the monks in the temple (Swanger, 1981). In such case, due to the varying numbers of types and shapes of omamori, omamori also becomes a separate attraction for tourists who mostly buy omamori as souvenirs for their relatives regardless from the functions and their belief of omamori. For tourists visiting Japan, omamori is a unique object owned by Japan.

2. RESEARCH ISSUE

Along the times, omamori has also undergone changes in terms of design and shape. Omamori which initially was just a slab of wood or paper containing prayer, gradually began to change shape that was adjusted to the progress of time and likewise with the production of

omamori began to be diverted to secular industry due to the incapability of the temple to meet the needs of omamori.

The author is going to analyze the development and commodification of omamori which in this case will be focused on the shape change of omamori from wooden slab shape to cartoon characters shape; from its belief function to commercial function to earn as much incomes.

3. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The research method applied in this research is by applying literature review qualitative method by interdisciplines approach.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Masahiro Kusunoki explained that in society's religious life aspect there is a revealed symptom of belief such as prayers, curses, canonisations etc. Such symptom of belief is not a rational cultural value but most are jujutsuteki-shukyoteki or magical-religious, namely a belief symptom that shows an attempt to achieve an objective to satisfy the demands or wishes which are considered of being impossible to be realized rationally by something that is considered to be more powerful than human beings. The movement of jujutsuteki-shukyoteki or magical-religious when it is perfect or reaches its maturity will get to self rejection, and this is the so called religious or religion mystery world. Meanwhile, the belief symptom mentioned above moves with these two axis. To be more precise it is the dynamics integration of the two axis that is called as shomin shinko. The characteristic lies on the essence of the combination between religion as part of life experience and religion as ideal or doctrinal demands. (Quoted from Anwar, 1990). Based on Kusunokie's explanation, it can be comprehended that Shomin Shinko is the form of the belief of Japanese people on prayers, curses, sanctifications and others that have magical-religious nature.

Religious, by Kusunoki's interpretation, is prayers of self-rejection, acquiescence, devotion, sincere surrender etc.; whereas magical is irrational prayers that end or fulfil man's wishes or demands (Anwar, 1990). The mechanisms of magical-religious beliefs, called inori (prayer) by Kusunoki, are manifested in various belief movements (shinko sayo). (as cited in Anwar, 1990).

According to Kusunoki there are eight forms of shinko sayo namely: (1) kito, request for good fortune prayers; (2) kigan, prayers for good luck to pass an examination, success in career; (3) noroi, incantations to ask for natural power to harm particular person, (4) tomurai, prayers containing condolences; (5) harai, spells to cast out evil spirits; (6) zange, statement of regret and confession of past sins; (7) kei, the attempt to purify oneself; (8) satori, prayers to get physical and moral safety and happiness (as cited in Anwar, 1990)

Omamori is a spiritual culture owned by the people of Japan. The Japanese people has a strong belief on their gods and they consider everything happened in their life cannot be separated from the intervention of the gods that they believed in. Additionally, in the belief owned by the Japanese people, they believe that in various objects live the gods. Hence quite often the Japanese people think that objects around them are sacred objects and have godliness power from the gods they believe. (Swanger, 1981).

There are not many researches specifically on omamori, nevertheless there are two journals discussing omamori specifically. These journals were written by Eugene Swanger (1981) and Eric Mendes (2015). In this case, both journals discussed the development of omamori.

In the journal written by Swanger, Swanger described the development of omamori. During Tokugawa era, types and shapes of omamori developed in line with the people's needs and the progress of time. During Tokugawa era, the omamori commonly found was koutsu anzenomamori to protect the Japanese people during their journey (Swanger,1981). As time progresses, the types and functions of omamori have also developed and apart from koutsu anzen omamori, there are seven types of omamori which are generally produced and bought by the Japanese people, namely koutsu anzen (交通安全) which has the function of safety in the traffic, omamori for passing the examination or passing the entrance test for the desired school (gakugyou joju 学業成就), luck (kaiun開運), success in business (shoubai hanjou 商売繁盛)(Swanger, 1981). In addition to the development of omamori's functions and types, the forms of omamori also change. Initially, omamori was only a slab of wood or paper with prayer inscribed on it, but in accordance with the progress in time, the shape of omamori has been modified by cloth wrap with string attached to it. Additionally, in the past omamori was kept in a hidden place, while in the modern era, omamori is no longer hidden instead it is placed in open places such as hung in bags or made as handphone's accessories.

Eric Mendes in his journal entitled "Ancient Magic and Modern Accessories: A Re-Examination of the Omamori Phenomenon" reviewed Swanger's research. In this case Mendes reviewed Swanger's article by comparing the result of Swanger's observation with omamori that is developed in the modern era. In his review, Mendes described the development of omamori in the modern era after the initial observation carried out by Swanger. In his article, Mendes explained that the transformation of omamori shape was also influenced by kawaii culture possessed by the Japanese people. Mendes quoted Kinsella's opinion, The dramatic spread of cute culture since the 1980s left few objects unchanged, there were even houses one could purchase especially marketed for their embodiment of cuteness. This new aesthetic craze was not to leave behind omamori. Through their aesthetics, omamori become a collective embodiment of kawaii (cute) culture (as cited in Mendes, 2015).

In terms of production, in both journals, both Swanger and Mendes viewed that due to the strong demands of the Japanese people for omamori, most temples were unable to meet the demands of the people and later transfer the production of omamori to factories devoted on producing spiritual objects. Industrialization and technological advancement have altered omamori's form as well. Originally produced by lay women, omamori are now almost entirely produced by large secular manufacturing companies that specialize in the production of religious objects.(Mendes, 2015). It can be viewed that in this case, omamori sold by the temples is produced by secular factories.

In both journals, both Swanger and Mendes's discussions focused more on the transformation and development of omamori's function, yet both journals did not directly discuss the presence of the commodification efforts from the temples and factories in transforming omamori through the development and transformation of omamori's shapes. In this case, the factories producing omamori tried to commodify omamori into something that is more attractive both for the Japanese people and the tourists into purchasing omamori so that the temples and the producers of omamori got the most profit.

In discussing commodification, commodification is closely related to capitalism and Marx's argument on commodity can be used to understand the cult of commodity forms in capitalism (Quail, Razzano, and Skalli, 2005). Marx explained that: The Relations connecting the labour of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individual at work, but as what they really are, material relations between person and social relations between things. It is only by being exchanged that the products of labour acquire, as

values, one uniform social status, distinct from their varied forms of existence as objects of utility.(as cited in Quail, Razzano, and Skalli, 2005)

Commodity fetishism allows social relations to be concealed, as the fetish “attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities (as cited in Quail, Razzano, and Skalli, 2005). Therefore, the commodification process defines the process of changing the utility value of a product (practical function of something in a person’s life) into exchange value (money value) of a product. Commodification releases product from social context which means becoming something useful for business (Quail, Razzano, and Skalli, 2005).

The research carried out by Ateljevic and Doorne (2003) explained that, the contemporary global economy has become characterized by an intensity and sophistication of the processes of commodification of consumption where production is increasingly aestheticized, attaching meanings and symbolic associations to material objects. The traditional interpretations of cultural commodification suggest disempowerment of traditional cultures and cultural practices through the integration with global tourism (Ateljevic and Dorne, 2003).

Ateljevic and Doorne focused their analysis on the argument put forward by Appadurai. Appadurai (1996), brings exploration of material culture one stage closer by focusing on processes of commoditization in terms of cultural exchange and the expression of political and economic power. In particular, he emphasizes the social methodology of exchange and argues that ‘we have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories (as cited in Ateljevic and Doorne, 2003). There were four arguments by Appadurai that were made as the basis by Ateljevic and Doorne in their research. Firstly, the role of commodity in gift-giving has strategic, political and economy significance; secondly, commodity circulates in regiment of value; thirdly, commodity is a symbolic element of identity formation; and lastly, these process are planted in structural context through wvwhich power-knowledge is exercised (Ateljevic and Doorne, 2003).

4.1. The Development and Commodification of Omamori in the Modern Age

One of the concrete forms of the Japanese people’s belief on objects considered sacred is the phenomenon of omamori or as the concrete form of Shomin Shinko. As explained earlier, in shomin shinko, there are specific characteristics which are: religious-magical, textual-nontextual, functional and non functional. Omamori has religious-magical nature because the Japanese people believe that there is magical power in omamori that can protect or help them. Next, omamori has textual-non-textual nature since there is no particular scripture explained about omamori. The Japanese people purchase omamori merely based on stories or gods who live in the temples. Omamori also has the third specific characteristic of shomin shinko which is functional and non functional. In this sense, for the Japanese people, omamori has the function which they believe can protect them from bad things. For the Japanese people, when viewed from the definition of inori proposed by Kusunoki, omamori falls into the category of kito type. Kito itself can be categorized as tariki, which is a request proposed through the power of gods or deified ones (as cited in Anwar, 1990). In this sense, omamori can be considered as the concrete form of kito. However for foreign tourists, omamori might not necessarily have the protection function for them, instead it is merely as a souvenir or it is used as an accessory.

As religious phenomenon of the Japanese people and as omamori can be found in Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, thus it is a common thing that the forms and functions of omamori become very diverse. Swanger’s research showed that there are seven functions of omamori

(koutsu anzen, gakugyou joju, kaiun, shoubai hanjou, en musubi, and anzan) which are commonly used by the Japanese people, nevertheless quite often Japanese people come to the temple requesting omamori with specific function. Meanwhile, Mendes' research showed that in era of technology advancement, there is omamori to protect electronics goods although based on the research done by Mendes, such omamori is still very uncommon. (Mendes, 2015).

When viewed from the result of Swanger and Mendes' research, in line with the time progress, the Japanese people's needs of omamori became even more varying, and this means the needs of omamori would be even more increasing and with the increasing demand of omamori the temples would not be able to meet the demands of the needs of omamori so that they had to transfer the production of omamori to factories devoted to produce religious products. The transference of omamori production to the factories indirectly caused the transformation of omamori's forms and designs. The multitude of demands from the Japanese people in this respect was understood by the temples and the omamori industry that in line with the progress of time, omamori had become a daily commodity and also had a great potential to attract consumers both from the Japanese people and foreign tourists. Therefore, by taking omamori's aesthetical value into consideration, the industry and the temples began to make some changes to the forms of omamori (Mendes, 2015).

Swanger in his article claimed that the great change in the shape of omamori was the paper with prayer inscribed on it was wrapped in a cloth pouch. Since the olden days, Japanese people have believed that gods or spiritual powers resided in objects and dark places, such as in trees, mountains and inside stones (Mendes, 2015).

The transformation of omamori form which initially was merely made of wood and paper to be wrapped in cloth showed an innovation implemented both by the temples and omamori industry to change the aesthetics of omamori in line with the progress time. In this case, it can be seen that the form transformation implemented by the temples and omamori industry as an effort in implementing commodification. The transformation of omamori's form which was implemented by the temples and omamori industry as an effort carried out both the temples and omamori industry gave a separate unique aesthetic value and functionally the use of omamori became more practical.

However, with the presence of the transformation of omamori's form that was more practical and more varying, hence the Japanese purchasing omamori was able to place omamori in unconcealed places such as being hanged on the bag, being handphone's straps, or being placed in the front part of car's window. In addition to its conventional form, omamori was produced in such way with diverse forms such as animal shapes representing the zodiacs, or was produced in forms resembling characters in Japan's history which later were made as omamori (Mendes, 2015). The transformation of omamori's forms and designs carried out by commercial industry and temples can be viewed as an attempt to attract consumers in purchasing the products.

The shape and design transformation carried out by the temples and industry made people generally buy omamori as souvenirs. As cited from Mendes (2015), Today, it is not uncommon for people to purchase omamori primarily as souvenirs, accessories and collectables, their potential religious benefits acting as a nice bonus or even a non-issue. Though support of this motivation by religious institutions is rarely verbalized, acceptance and accommodation of this type of omamori purchasing can be seen in the omamori offered by temples and shrines today (Mendes, 2015). Based on the opinion proposed by Mendes, it can be viewed in this modern age the function of omamori undergoes a shift due to the innovation in the transformation of omamori's shapes and designs.

From the article's excerpt above, the multitude demands on omamori in this respect was viewed by omamori production industry as an opportunity to do commodification on omamori. They tried to commodify by exercising omamori's aesthetics and designs transformation. Additionally, by viewing the consumption pattern of the Japanese people who currently prioritize more on the use of omamori as accessories and also to attract foreign tourists visiting the temple in purchasing omamori that becomes the specific characteristics of the temples. In addition to changing the design and exercising modification to the shapes, they also develop the functions of omamori as a form of commodification so that they can attract the interests of the consumers, both Japanese and foreign tourists so that they can get great revenue.

When viewed from Appadurai's argument which had been described in the journal article written by Ateljevic and Doorne, omamori in the Japanese as well as foreign tourist is often bought and used as souvenir and collection or as a gift for friends or relatives (Swanger, 1981). In such respect, omamori can be viewed as a commodity in gift giving that has strategic, political and economy significance.

4.2. The Influence of Kawaii culture on the transformation of omamori's forms and designs.

Among the popular cultures developing in Japan, kawaii culture is the culture that dominated Japan's popular culture in the 1980s. Based on the article written by Kinsella (1995), Kawaii style dominated Japanese popular culture in the 1980s. Cute Style saturated the multi-media and consumer goods and services whilst they were expanding rapidly between 1970 and 1990 and reached peak of saccharine intensity in the early 1980s (Kinsella, 1995). From the quote above, it can be viewed that kawaii culture in Japanese society rapidly bloomed into consumers and multimedia products between 1970 and 1990 and reached its peaks in the 1980s.

Mendes, in journal article quoted the opinion of Ito, Okabe, and Matsuda which stated that handphone is one of the objects that was often personalized in Japanese society. In Japan, a handphone, particularly for the young people, is "more than just a tool, it is something they are highly motivated to animate and customize as a dream catcher, good luck charm, an alter ego, or as a pet" (Ito, Okabe, Matsuda, as cited in Mendes, 2015). So it can be said that in the life of Japanese society, the function of technology such as handphone is not only as a communication device but it is also made as personalization object which indirectly shows the identity of the technology user. Not only handphone, most of the young people in Japan has the habit of personalizing their things with accessories. Most of the accessories used by the Japanese young people are kawaii products.

Mizuko Ito (2005) pointed out that there were technical, social and cultural characteristics in the use of handphone in Japan. One of the characteristics described by Ito was personalization. In Ito's research, one of the dimensions of personalization was handset customization. In Japan, handphone's straps representing favourite character or design were almost universal form of customization. Hjorth expressed, Different plates, screened and painted designs, special antennas, and screen guards are other more advanced form of customization (as cited in Ito, 2005). Yoshii et al (2002) also thought that both customization and personalization were the main driving force of cellular web, for ringtone and wallpaper downloads are the popular sites in cellular web (as cited in Ito, 2005). Japan's dense urban life condition and the widespread sense of social supervision in school, work place, and at home,

undoubtedly contributed to such attachment to the personal and personalized communication devices (Ito,2005).

When viewed from Ito's explanation, the Japanese people had the tendency of personalising their handphones, therefore it was very natural if the Japanese, and particularly in this case, the young people really enjoyed personalizing their handphones with accessories such as handphone straps, wallpaper or ringtone. Thus, in the modern age, quite often accessories with kawaii element become commonly used as the device to personalize the handphone.

Relating to the personalization of handphone with kawaii trinkets, Kinsella (1995) thought that the young people got into kawaii culture through the consumption of trinkets with kawaii appearance and emotional quality (Kinsella, 1995). Personalization pattern of handphones with kawaii accessories was read by the temples and omamori producers as a potential to attract consumers' interests to purchase omamori. Kawaii itself according to Kojien has three definitions: (1) itawashii (pitiable); (2) aisubeki (likeable); (3) chiisakute utsukushii (small and beautiful).

In Japanese culture, kawaii culture began to emerge in 1970s and was closely related to Fancy Goods industry. Kawaii culture started from the culture of young people among the teenagers, particularly young women. In 1971, consumers booming began and it did not take long for companies and research institutions to find and capitalize kawaii culture (Kinsella, 1995). In 1971, Sanrio which was the equivalent of Hallmark cards, experimented with printing cute designs on paper which was previously was blank writing paper and stationeries. The prototype's success of fanshi guzzu (fancy goods) was inspired by kawaii style in Japanese manga and the young people's handwriting. This motivated Sanrio to develop their production, and the type of Sanrio's fancy goods increased (Kinsella, 1995).

In reading the development of kawaii culture among the Japanese young people, the temples and omamori industries tried to include the elements of kawaii culture. In this case, the temples and the industries tried to commodify omamori so that the design and form of omamori became more attractive. Therefore, to make omamori that was used by the Japanese able to be made as accessories that could be used as handphone straps, bag's accessories, etc more attractive design and form was needed to make omamori more attractive to the Japanese. One of the ways was to integrate the element of kawaii culture into the form of omamori.

The effort to integrate elements of kawaii culture into the design of omamori itself by the temples and producers of omamori was the results of the reading of kawaii consumption pattern carried out by Japanese youths. This is due to the fact that Japanese young people entered kawaii culture through consumption of kawaii trinkets that had kawaii appearance and emotional qualities. In this case, by integrating elements of kawaii into the designs of omamori, it can be seen that the temples tried to attract the interests of the temples' visitors in purchasing the omamori they produced and sold as well as promoting the gods of their temples through the sales of omamori. Moreover, by integrating the elements of kawaii into omamori, then indirectly omamori could be included in the definition of kawaii according to kojien namely aisubeki and chiisakute utsukushii. Omamori has small size and beautiful design (chiisakute utsukushii), hence with such beautiful design omamori can be liked by many people, regardless if its function as an amulet that is able to protect its owner from harms or bad things (aisubeki).

Along with the development of popular culture and the spread of kawaii culture among the Japanese people, the aesthetic side of omamori is also influenced by kawaii culture. By adjusting to the development of kawaii culture, omamori produced and sold in temples begins to present popular culture's characters as well as those that are made with kawaii forms. For

examples, in the wrapping cloth that is used to wrap the prayer contained paper, in addition to the inscription of the temple's name or function of the omamori, illustrations of kawaii characters such as Hello Kitty or other characters with kawaii impression are added. Besides the addition of kawaii Japanese popular culture's characters, the forms of omamori frequently are shaped with kawaii characters or animals designs (Mendes, 2015). The change of omamori forms by adding kawaii or cute characters design is one of the ways of the temples to promote and sell omamori to the Japanese people and can certainly attract the attention of foreign tourists.

The efforts of omamori's producers and temples in adding the kawaii culture influenced designs fall into commodification that was proposed by Marx. In this case, there were efforts of the temples in exercising commodification on omamori. Therefore, it is natural when one visits a temple and goes to the place where omamori is sold, it will be almost impossible for not finding omamori with designs that presenting kawaii characters; such as omamori presenting the character of Hello Kitty, which is one of the icon of kawaii culture existing in Japan. Many omamoris sold in the temples presenting Hello Kitty in their design. By adding design of kawaii characters, thus the temples and omamori producers can attract the interests of both the Japanese people as well of the foreign tourists to stop by and buy omamori as souvenirs or collection. Hence, the function of omamori which originally had spiritual function, began to shift to be simply as accessories or collector's items by the Japanese people. The spiritual function of omamori shifted to merely supplementary function.

4.3. Promotion and Commercialization of Omamori

Omamori in *Shomin Shinko* is textual and non-textual; it can be linked to the story behind the omamori which is the characteristic of the temple producing and selling the omamori. Fujii Masao stated that to determine the characteristic of the omamori of a temple, the temple should have a gohonzon (the image of Buddha) or goshintai (Shinto God), and engi or story. Sometimes, an omamori itself has an engi. For example, enmusubi omamori from Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine in Kamakura has a phrase from a song "shizu no odamaki" which is inscribed at the back of the omamori as a reference to an incident happened in the shrine. According to the engi, it was in that shrine where Shizuka—the wife of Minamoto Yoshitsune—rejected Yoritomo's proposal (quoted from Swanger, 1981).

Based on the explanation given by Fujii Masao in Swanger's article, engi is one of the crucial factors for a temple to be able to promote the omamori produced by the temple. Even if they commodify omamori by exercising aesthetic transformation by way of transforming the shape of omamori, if they cannot promote or commercialize omamori, then they will not be able to get big income. Hence it is crucial for a temple to have engi or a story of the God residing in the temple or shrine.

In popularizing and commercializing omamori, the temples, shrines and omamori industries take advantage of the Japanese people's belief. Thus they attract the interests and encourage the Japanese people and foreign tourists to purchase omamori using the engi or story of the god residing in the temple. If the temple does the promotions well, many visitors will come to the temple only to purchase the omamori sold in the temple. The combination of promotion by using the engi and the form of omamori shaped in such ways enable the temples to attract visitors from various locations.

When viewed from the tourism sector, engi can be the means for the temple to attract tourists to visit the temple. Generally foreign tourists visiting the temples will be interested to hear the story about the gods residing in the temples. Quite often both foreign tourists and the

Japanese people themselves are willing to travel to various areas in Japan to visit the temples with interesting engi. If the temples get many visitors, it will be possible the multitude of visitors will purchase omamori sold in the temples and they will get great revenues.

5. CONCLUSION

Omamori which is the concrete form of the Japanese people's spiritual belief, in the modern age has experienced various kinds of transformation. The major transformation is the production of omamori is no longer carried out by the temples which are the religious institutions; instead it is transferred to secular industries specializing in producing religious related products. With the transfer of production, the omamori producing industries exercise the transformation of omamori's forms by taking market shares into consideration. Additionally, popular culture, particularly kawaii culture also becomes one of the factors influencing the industry of omamori producers in changing the shapes of omamori which is adjusted to the progress of time.

The occurrence of the efforts of transforming the shapes of omamori indicated that there are efforts exercised by the temples to attract as many visitors as possible so that they can get the most revenue. Moreover, to support their promotion in selling omamori, the temples use the engi or story of the gods residing in the temples to attract visitors. It can be seen that omamori is utilized as commodity by the temples to attract visitors to come and buy omamori. The development of omamori's shapes goes along with the Japanese people's needs and globally is an innovative strategy in maintaining the essence of Japanese culture.

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