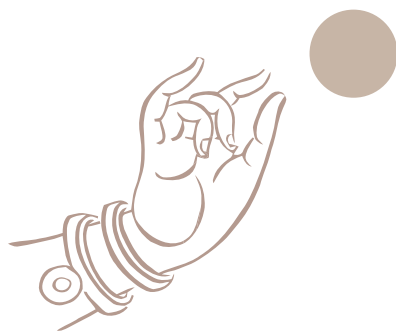


Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

MOONCAKE PACKAGING DESIGN

AN EXPLORATION OF MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL SYMBOLISM
AND MINIMALIST DESIGN

*A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for a **Master in Design** at Massey
University, Wellington, New Zealand.*



Abstract

In this Master of Design thesis project, I explore the excessive packaging of Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival mooncakes and the positive impact of minimalist design on the current packaging trends. In particular, I explore how minimalist design can be subtly applied to mooncake gift-box packaging so as to reflect the traditional values associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival while also offering today's young Chinese a new approach to this symbolic packaging. I explain, through my design exploration of the legends and customs associated with this ancient and notable festival as well as the visual symbolism, colors, materials, and forms used in mooncake packaging, how this new approach draws inspiration from Japanese minimalist design and traditional Chinese motifs. Through this packaging design exploration, I hope to offer an alternative that maintains the integrity of this festival and its ancient customs.

Key words: Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival, minimalist design, mooncake packaging.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to: my supervisors, Doctor Caroline Campbell and Lee Jensen, for their responsible attitude to work, thoughtful guidance, and sincere advice in regard to my design work and thesis; the library staff for their help with my academic writing; and my peers for their encouragement.

I would like to thank my friends, Miyuu Wang, Meng Yuan, Danjing Lin, Tamia Zhang and Syamim Shari, who always kindly gave me some suggestions on packaging design. In addition, I am particularly grateful to my family members, especially my parents, Guangxu Cui and Bin Zhong, for their support and love.

Finally, I give thanks for every challenge and opportunity in my life.

Table of contents

<i>04</i>	Introduction Research questions
<i>06</i>	Literature review The status and impact of excessive mooncake packaging History and background of the Mid-Autumn Festival
<i>22</i>	Methods Design process first stage Symbolic meaning of Chinese motifs Design process second stage An inspiration from Japanese minimalist design
<i>36</i>	Case study analysis of Kenya Hara's designs Design process third stage Final design stage
<i>51</i>	Conclusion
<i>53</i>	List of figures
<i>57</i>	References

Introduction

Mooncakes are traditionally associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival, which is celebrated on August 15 of the Chinese Lunar Calendar. The mooncake, symbolic of the cultural values of reunion, happiness, and peace, is the most representative food of the Mid-Autumn Festival.

In the thousand-year history and development of China, the cultural significance of the mooncake has become more and more profound so that even in modern society, mooncakes still occupy an important position, especially in the gift giving associated with this festival. According to a survey conducted during the 2015 Mid-Autumn Festival, 63% of consumers chose mooncakes as festival gifts for their friends and family as well as their company colleagues. However, although the cultural importance of the mooncake has not diminished, the increase in materiality has meant that its symbolic significance is lessening (Xiaomeng, 2014). Consequently, for China's modern society, the spiritual meaning of the mooncake tradition is becoming weaker. In contrast, the material value of the mooncake is getting stronger and is mainly reflected in the excessive packaging of this festival food.

The excessive packaging of the mooncake has consequently led to an imbalance with regard to the value of this festival food (Yong, 2005). In my opinion, this form of packaging overemphasizes the material benefits of excessive packaging while ignoring the traditional essence of the mooncake. In addition, excessive packaging is problematic in that it has a very short life. Produced in large quantities, mooncake packaging is also a wasteful use of resources and quickly becomes garbage, which leads to environmental pollution. Moreover, the excessive packaging of the mooncake deviates from the trend of green packaging, thus increasing the burden for consumers as well as the environment.

This led me to seek to create an alternative approach to the problem of excessive mooncake packaging. In this thesis project, I look to maintain the cultural essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival while also exploring a minimalist design approach in the representation of traditional legendary symbols, materials, and

packaging construction. The aim is for this packaging to better reflect the values of the Mid-Autumn Festival for a contemporary audience.

The following exegesis is divided into four parts. In the first part, I discuss the current situation of excessive mooncake packaging in the Chinese market and its adverse effects on society and the environment. This is then followed by a brief explanation of the historical and cultural significance of the Mid-Autumn Festival and includes reference to the legends and customary practices that are specific to the Mid-Autumn Festival. In the third part, I discuss the influences informing my minimalist design approach to mooncake packaging design. In particular, I concentrate on the designs produced by renowned Japanese designer Kenya Hara as well as his design thinking. In this section, I explain how my design thinking and processes draw on his naturalistic and minimalist approach to packaging design and visual symbolism. On concluding the exegesis, I briefly reflect on how this thesis project adds another dimension to the mooncake packaging currently produced for the Mid-Autumn Festival market.

To start with, I posed two key research questions to help frame the thesis investigation:

1. How can mooncake packaging, as a medium, better convey the cultural and symbolic essence of the Mid-Autumn culture?
2. Can an unconventional minimalist approach be applied to mooncake packaging without losing the traditional Chinese characteristics?

Literature review

THE STATUS AND IMPACT OF EXCESSIVE PACKAGING



Figure 1. *Examples of excessive packaging*

Figure 2. *Unnecessary excessive packaging of goods in Hong Kong supermarkets*

In modern-day China, the increasing emergence of a middle-class society has seen more and more manufacturers begin to pay attention to how their goods are packaged. This has led, on the one hand, to emphasis on product packaging and the development of packaging design. On the other hand, merchants' blind attention to product packaging has also led to excessive packaging and increased waste of natural resources.

The basic function of packaging is to store and protect goods from damage during transportation and to promote the sales of goods. However, excessive packaging is commodity packaging with excess function and value. This is mainly reflected in that the packaging structure is too complex, the surface decoration elements are too many, and the material is not suitable for use or recycling; there are also high packaging costs and overdesign. In terms of packaging design, the product itself should be the main focus and the packaging secondary. However, excessive packaging blindly pursues the economic value of goods and ignores the essence of packaging. Moderate packaging, by contrast, can promote the sale of goods, avoid damage in the transportation process, and save environmental resources.

It is stipulated in China's first 'Restricting excessive packaging for commodity-General rule' (2014), that the interspace ratio of beverages, wines, and pastries shall not exceed 55%, the interspace ratio of cosmetics and health foods shall not exceed 50%, and the interspace ratio of tea shall not exceed 25%. The interspace ratio of cereal must not exceed 10%. For products with a net content of 30ml or 30g or less, the interspace ratio and the number of packaging layers may be exempted. For products larger than 30ml and less than or equal to 50ml, or greater than 30g and less than or equal to 50g, the maximum interspace ratio shall not be more than 60%. The packaging layers of beverages, wine, cakes, cosmetics, health foods, and tea shall not exceed three layers, and the number of layers of food shall not exceed two layers. The total cost of all packaging products, including beverages, cakes, cosmetics, health foods, tea, and food, should not exceed 15% of the factory price of the products, except for the initial packaging. Any packaging that exceeds the above data is excessive packaging (p. 2-3).

From the above regulations, we can clearly understand the definition of excessive packaging in China. The regulations also point out that under the basic principle of not damaging the function of product packaging, the package should be made light and simple. Under the premise of satisfying these main functions, the auxiliary functions of the packaging should be simple and practical, and should include the functions of sealing, opening, carrying, and decoration. At the same time, the packaging should be produced from non-toxic and harmless packaging materials, and the packaging waste beneficial for recycling, degradation, and treatment. The regulations thus encourage the designer to use packaging materials that can be recycled and are environmentally friendly.



Figures 3 and 4. *Types of mooncake packaging*

Excessive packaging, also termed unreasonable packaging (Siyuan, 2008), is mainly reflected in the processing technology, material selection, packaging structure, and decoration design.

Different products require different packaging materials and, hence, different processing techniques. Before designing a package for a product, it is necessary to first know such basic information as the shape, size, and form of the product. Only if the key qualities of the product are fully understood can the processing technology and process mode of packaging be determined. If the designer does not have an accurate understanding of the product, it can easily lead to unreasonable packaging design. For example, if the product is a high-grade porcelain and the package is designed using ordinary cartons, this unreasonable packaging will most likely not protect the product from damage during storage or transportation. Likewise, a product that does not have a high requirement for packaging protection but is packaged with high protection materials is both unreasonable and wasteful. Complex packaging techniques used on products that have low requirements for packaging technology is one manifestation of excessive packaging. Moreover, complex processing technology involving human, material, and financial resources increases the cost of packaging, which is transferred to the consumer.

According to research findings, the energy consumption of commonly-found excessive mooncake packaging in the market is about six times that of regular mooncake packaging and 365 times that of bulk mooncake packaging (Linsen,

2008). Statistics show that the Chinese baking industry spends as much as 2.5 billion yuan a year on mooncakes, and that for every 100,000 boxes of mooncakes produced by the manufacturer, four to six trees with diameters of more than 10 centimeters need to be cut down for packaging material (Linsen, 2008). Moreover, according to incomplete statistics, more than 100 million wooden boxes of mooncakes are produced every year in China. Consequently, during August, the month of the Mid-Autumn Festival, it could be said that people consume more than 6,000 trees. Hence, the harm to the environment caused by the excessive packaging of this festival food gift cannot be ignored.

In China, mooncake packaging is one example of excessive packaging (see Figs. 3 and 4). On the market, the ordinary carton cake packaging costs about a few yuan. In contrast, the luxury-packaged mooncake can cost dozens or even hundreds of yuan. These luxury boxes are often finely crafted (see Fig. 5). The processing of the box not only involves printing but also carving, ornamental engraving, artificial inlaid jewelry, and other procedures (Xiali, 2015). These layered processes directly affect the cost of the product for the customer. I argue that as the mooncake is a common product with few technical requirements, this complex packaging is unnecessary. Because the packaging of mooncakes is mainly used to protect this product from external pollution, from being damaged in transport, and to ensure its easy sale, the packaging need not be of high collection value. Hence, the excessive processing technology used in mooncake packaging is completely unsuitable and, in regard to resources and waste disposal, unsustainable.



Figures 5 and 6. *Luxurious mooncake and green tea packaging*

For the designer, the cost of packaging is an issue that must be taken into consideration when selecting the right materials. The economic value of materials is affected by many factors, such as the scarcity of raw material resources

and the difficulty of processing. Compared with glass, metal, chemical fiber, and other materials, paper is less subject to process and resource constraints, so, in terms of price, is relatively affordable. However, it can often be seen that excessive packaging uses materials such as expensive wood, brocade, porcelain, lacquer, and metal (see Figs. 5 and 6).

The primary purpose in using expensive materials is to create visual beauty so as to attract more consumer attention. In addition to luxury materials, excessive packaging is often impractical in that it includes such features as metal rings, artificial jewelry, ribbons, and satin fabric. Consequently, the cost of materials used in excessive packaging is much higher than that of ordinary packaging with the result that costs have multiplied and are even higher than the price of the product itself. Moreover, the use of luxurious materials in the overpackaging of mooncakes is resulting in resource wastefulness that cannot be ignored.



Figure 7. *Packaging waste contamination*

The other serious issue of excessive packaging is that the packaging materials are not easy to recycle nor do they easily degrade. Some materials emit a lot of poisonous gas during the waste treatment process, which results in serious environmental pollution as well as seriously impacting human health. The designer should therefore be careful when selecting materials for the packaging

design process. The materials should be selected according to the function of the package as well as the size, shape, form, and materiality of the product itself. Where possible, they should be selected on the basis of ensuring that when disposed of, they do not contribute further to environmental pollution and waste.



Figures 8 and 9. *Unreasonable use of package space*

Siyuan Meng (2008) states that there are primarily two reasons for excessive packaging caused by unreasonable use of packaging space. Firstly, the designers do not measure correctly the basic form, dimensions, and volume of the product in order to design a suitable packaging structure for the product. This is evident in the packaging of the mobile phone charger, which appears not to have been packaged according to normal product requirements (see Fig. 8). Not only is the internal space too large for this product, there appears to be too many packaging layers. This one example is evidence of the excessive type of packaging designed to protect fragile products, such as porcelain, glass, electronic products, and other fragile items. The emphasis on too much buffer has resulted in the phenomenon of excessive packaging design for lesser products. Secondly, merchants deliberately exaggerate the size of the packages with fillers so as to create the illusion of plentiful products in order to obtain more profits. Furthermore, there is an essential difference between the two cases of overpackaging, with the second type constituting a fraud to consumers. I argue that the structural design of packaging should be determined by the purpose and function of that packaging. Reasonable packaging requires accurate calculation of the size and volume of the product. Only by fully understanding

the product specifications can packaging be designed reasonably so as to avoid excessive packaging and resource waste.

This thesis project is concerned with the packaging of the mooncake, the symbolic food of one of China's key festivals, the Mid-Autumn Festival. In marketing this food to consumers, more and more merchants are now resorting to using a lot of luxurious decoration materials to overpack the mooncake so as to meet the demands of some consumers. The merchants, consequently, profit highly from this form of excessive packaging. In my opinion, the excessive packaging of the mooncake ignores the essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival, misrepresents traditional culture, and results in an imbalance between the value of the product and the value of the packaging. Moreover, excessive packaging has no practical value other than its own packaging value.

Feng Jicai, a chairman of the Chinese Folk Artists Association, mentioned in a press interview by Suyi (2007), puts it thus:

Now the mooncake is packed beautifully and luxuriously, but it gradually becomes a gift only with other meanings of benefit and exchange. These worldly things blend into the mooncakes, making people ignore the essence of the traditional culture of the Mid-Autumn Festival. (p. 1)

In order to appreciate the cultural importance of the mooncake and the Mid-Autumn Festival for Chinese people, I will briefly outline its history as well as the legends associated with it.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL



Figure 10. *Mid-Autumn Festival lantern activities*



Figure 11. *Worshipping the moon goddess on the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival*

The Mid-Autumn Festival, which is celebrated on the August 15 in the Chinese lunar calendar, was formed from combining the legends and folk customs of several dynasties (Xinxing, Huan, & Wei, 2005). The festival first began in the early days of the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907) of ancient China and became widely established in the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279; Lanlan, 2012). During the Qing Dynasty (AD 1644-1912), the Mid-Autumn Festival became, like the Spring Festival, one of the most important traditional festivals in China (Lanlan, 2012). Furthermore, it was the Song Dynasty Emperor who officially initiated the 15th day of the lunar calendar to be the celebratory date of the Mid-Autumn Festival. Lanlan (2012) explained, during the Tang and Song Dynasties, with the dynasty replacement and the peasant uprising, ancient China often experienced decades of war. Many people consequently lost contact with their families, and there was no fixed and stable place to live. The outcome of this long-term upheaval was people's desire for reunion with their family and friends. Hence, the Chinese often associate the moon's dimness or brightness, waxing, and waning with their joys and sorrows. For Chinese, the round moon of the Mid-Autumn Festival thus came to symbolize joy and reunion.

The essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival is symbolized by the customary practices of gratitude, prayer, and reunion (Xinxing, Huan, & Wei, 2005). According to Chinese custom, gratitude refers to people's thanks for nature's gifts, such as thanks for the harvest and thanks for the absence of natural disasters. Another customary practice of this festival is the prayer for a long and healthy life and happiness. There are many traditional customs associated with this festival, such as watching the moon, admiring the osmanthus tree, watching the lion dance, playing with the flower lantern (Ji, 2011) and, especially in regard to this project, eating mooncakes (see Figs. 10, 11, 12, and 13).



Figures 12 and 13. *Mooncakes and osmanthus wine*

At the Mid-Autumn Festival, the day of the year when the moon is most full, people from China's 56 ethnic groups will eat mooncakes, whether they live in the south or the north of the country. This festival food symbolizes reunion and harmony. In the beginning, the mooncake, which is shaped like a full moon, was the sacrificial food of the moon god. Wenjing (2014) states that the custom of eating mooncakes during the Mid-Autumn Festival began in the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907), became a popular custom of the Northern Song Dynasty Imperial Palace and, from there, gradually spread to places outside the court. After that time, in the Southern Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279), people combined watching the moon with eating mooncakes. Over time, the mooncake has become a very popular gift that people now give to each other to wish one another health, happiness, and a happy reunion with their families.



Figure 14. *Family reunion in the Mid-Autumn Festival*

In the following section, I discuss how the design language richly used in mooncake packaging draws on Chinese traditional symbolism and the legends associated with the moon.

Among the many legends associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival, and which originated from the primitive worship of the moon, the most widely circulated are four that revolve around the moon palace. These are Chang'e flying to the moon, Jade Rabbit making heavenly medicine, Wu Gang chopping the tree, and the emperor Tai Zong visiting the moon palace (Ji, 2011). These legends, summarized below, provide a background to the formation and development of the Mid-Autumn Festival as well as the festival's customary practices.

Chang'e flying to the moon



Figure 15. *Chang'e flying to the moon*

According to the ancient legend of Chang'e flying to the moon, there were ten suns in the sky, which caused the crops to fail so that people could not live normally. In order to save the people, the hero of this legend, Hou Yi, shot down nine of the suns. As his reward, the Heavenly Queen Mother gave Hou Yi the elixir of immortality so that by taking this medicine, he could fly to the moon and become immortal instantly. However, Hou Yi did not want to

leave his wife, Chang'e, and so he temporarily gave the elixir of immortality to Chang'e to look after. One day, Chang'e found a thief named Peng Meng, who broke into the backyard of their home with a sword and forced Chang'e to hand over the elixir. Chang'e knew that she could not defeat Peng Meng. So, when she found herself in danger, she decided to open the treasure box, took out the elixir of immortality, and swallowed it. After Chang'e swallowed the medicine, she flew away from the ground and out of the window to the moon where she lived alone in the moon palace. The next moon legend is that of Jade Rabbit.

Jade Rabbit making heavenly medicine



Figures 16 and 17. *Jade Rabbit making heavenly medicine*

A long time ago, there was a rabbit sitting outside the moon palace. Because the rabbit looked like white jade, people called it the 'Jade Rabbit.' The legend has it that the Jade Rabbit sat on the ground outside the moon palace with a stick made of jade to make the elixir of immortality. People believe that the elixir of immortality made by Jade Rabbit is a longevity medicine. When people take this medicine, they will become immortal with youth, longevity, and health. After many years, the Jade Rabbit became synonymous with the moon and was a key symbol of the poems produced by ancient literati.

Wu Gang chopping the tree



Figures 18 and 19. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi. (1882). *Wu Gang chopping the tree* [Painting]

The third legend concerns the osmanthus tree. This legend tells that in front of the moon palace there was a mortal named Wu Gang. Wu Gang violated the laws of the moon palace wonderland by illegally cutting down and harvesting the osmanthus tree and so was punished by a fairy. Only after cutting down the osmanthus tree every day could Wu Gang hope to return to the human world. However, being a magical tree, the osmanthus tree could never be cut down. Wu Gang found, to his dismay, that when he cut down the tree, it, in a flash, grew back again, thus preventing his return home. Wu Gang became homesick and really missed his family, so he cut some osmanthus branches and threw them from the moon to express his nostalgia for his hometown. This legend led to the Mid-Autumn Festival customary practice of admiring the osmanthus tree and drinking osmanthus wine.

Taizong Tang visiting the moon palace



Figure 20. Zhiding, Yu. (1647-?). *The moon palace* [Painting]



Figure 21. Tingjian, Huang (1045-1105). *Chang'e and the Jade Rabbit under the osmanthus tree* [Painting]



Figure 22. Chen, Zhou. (1460-1535). *The emperor Tai Zong visiting the moon palace* [Painting]

The last legend is from the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907). According to historical records, in the Mid-Autumn Festival night of the Tang Dynasty, after Emperor Tai Zong had been admiring the moon, he went back to his room to sleep. The emperor suddenly dreamed that he had accidentally entered the moon palace from which he could see many gorgeous pavilions and palaces stretching into the depths of the clouds. He also saw patterns of dragons and phoenixes carved into the palace wall, which was made of white jade. Moreover, the emperor saw that the palace steps were made of white jade, and that the sides of the steps were full of rare and attractive flowers and plants. Intermittent songs accompanied the cold inside the palace, where the emperor saw fairies dancing in clothes made of white silk. When Emperor Tai Zong finally walked out of the palace, he discovered a man cutting down the osmanthus trees and a jade rabbit still making the elixir of immortality. Then, as the sky got brighter, he reluctantly left the moon palace.

The Mid-Autumn Festival began in the Tang Dynasty. In the Tang Dynasty, the popularity of Taoism played a role in the promotion of the Mid-Autumn Festival in the Song Dynasty (Jian, 2007). The prevalence of Taoism is closely related to the four mythical stories of Chang'e flying to the moon, Jade Rabbit making heavenly medicine, Wu Gang cutting down the osmanthus tree, and the emperor Tai Zong visiting the moon palace. The legend of an immortal living in the moon palace was widely circulated amongst the people of China and subsequently developed into a desire for longevity and the pursuit of life (Jian, 2007). This led to the celebratory activities of worshipping the moon, drinking osmanthus wine, admiring the osmanthus tree, and eating mooncakes, which, together, reflect Chinese people's customary respect and recognition for this festival as well as family reunions.

With the development of time, these four legends are well-known, and they are endowed with the beautiful meaning of the Mid-Autumn Festival. Based on the research question, 'How can mooncake packaging, as a medium, better convey the essence of the Mid-Autumn culture?', I think the use of visual elements in packaging design should be reasonable, which means that all the elements used are related to the Mid-Autumn Festival theme. At the same time, I believe that through the analysis of the above four legends and the meaning behind the legends, we can clearly extract some symbolic patterns and elements, such as

Chang'e, the moon, the moon palace, the osmanthus tree, auspicious clouds, and Jade Rabbit. Appropriate use of these elements in mooncake packaging design can help the project better reflect the traditional Mid-Autumn Festival culture.

A key consideration of this thesis project is to highlight the symbolic significance of the Mid-Autumn Festival while also allowing Chinese consumers to better feel the charm of the Mid-Autumn Festival culture. In this section, I discuss how my repackaging of the mooncake combines key elements from the above four legends with Chinese traditional patterns. In addition, and in response to the critique of over-decoration, I discuss how my packaging design draws inspiration from Japanese minimalist design.

Methods

DESIGN PROCESS FIRST STAGE

The design process is divided into four stages. In the first stage, I discuss how after analysis of the four legends, I selected the motifs most representative of the Mid-Autumn Festival for further development and refinement.



Figures 23, 24 and 25. *Mid-Autumn Festival motifs in excessive mooncake packaging design*

In the packaging design, excessive use of decorative elements can cause visual interference, making the main information of the package difficult to stand out. This not only affects the visual effect of the product but also misleads the consumer's thinking about the nature of the product. For example, there is the use of elements in excessive mooncake packaging (see Figs. 23, 24, and 25). This packaging mixes too many, strong contrasting colors, different styles of fonts, and various floral patterns on the packaging. Especially in Fig 25, the dense dots and patterns on the rabbits mean that these decorative patterns do not have the symbolic meaning of the Mid-Autumn Festival but make the picture visually crowded. I thus decided to explore simplifying the redundant decorative elements so as to make the mooncake packaging more visually effective for the consumer.



Figures 26, 27. *Hand painted Chang'e elements*

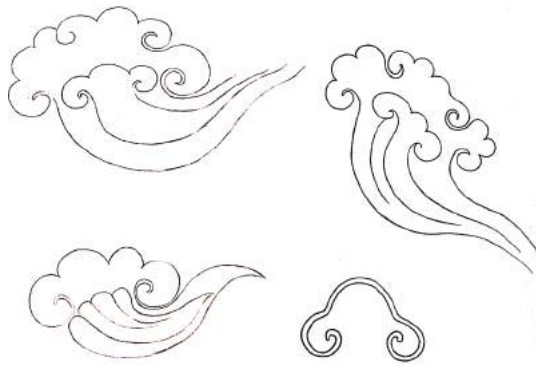


Figure 28. *Hand painted auspicious clouds*



Figure 29. *Hand painted osmanthus branches*

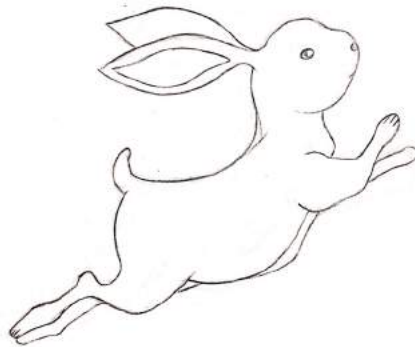


Figure 30. *Hand painted Jade Rabbit*

In order to do this, I began to read repeatedly the four legends while analyzing their content in combination with the existing mooncake packaging cases on the Chinese market. I then selected the motifs frequently used and most characteristic of the Mid-Autumn Festival. These include Chang'e, Jade Rabbit, the moon palace, osmanthus tree, auspicious clouds, Chinese dragon and phoenix, lotus, moon, and mooncake. After this, I set about painting and redesigning some of the features of these motifs.

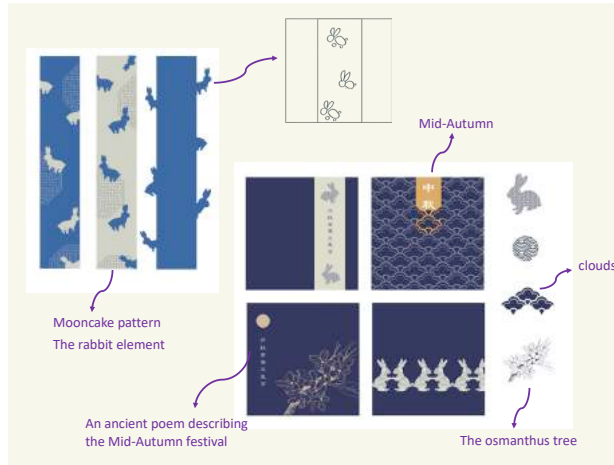


Figure 31. *First mooncake packaging design*

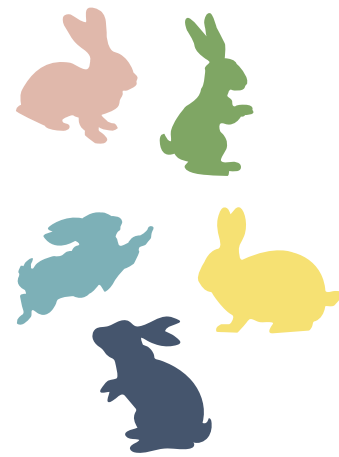
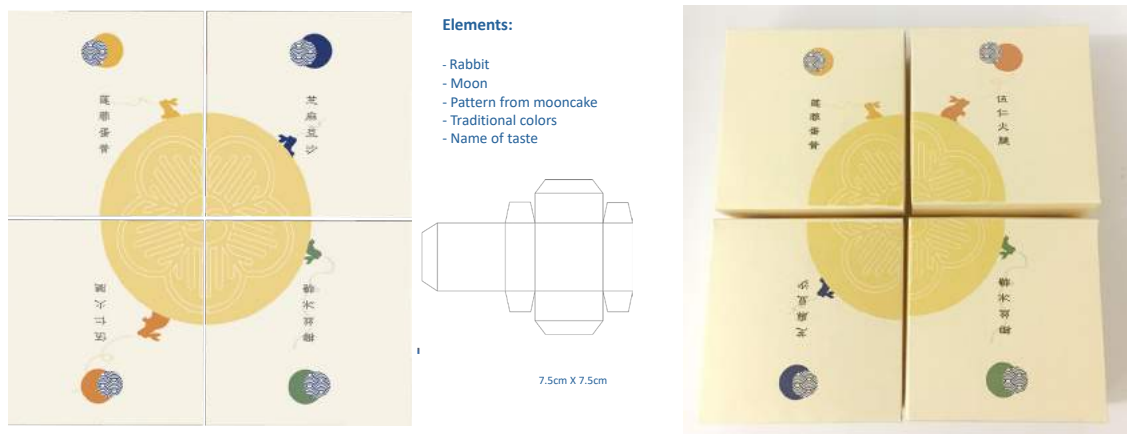


Figure 32. *Jade Rabbit patterns*



Figure 33. *First mooncake packaging model*

The first stage of the design process involved combining the Jade Rabbit motif with the symbol for longevity. It also involved integrating the osmanthus branch that Wu Gang used to convey homesickness as well as some ancient Chinese patterns so as to form a group of mooncake packaging designs with a Mid-Autumn style (see Fig. 33). However, although I used these key motifs, I found there to be a lack of connection between the four small mooncake boxes, which lead to their incompatibility.



Figures 34 and 35. *The second mooncake packaging design and model*

The idea for the second mooncake packaging model comes from the main meaning of the Mid-Autumn Festival, which is 'reunion.' I continued to use the Jade Rabbit motif from the first design and combined it with the legend of Jade Rabbit making the heavenly medicine. I hoped that this packaging set would be more conceptually uniform and complete than before. The idea behind this second design is that when the four small boxes are put together, they form a complete moon and mooncake pattern, which symbolizes the joy and reunion of the Mid-Autumn Festival. When the four mooncake boxes are separated, it is like sharing the mooncakes with the family on the Mid-Autumn Festival night. My intention in creating this second design was for the set to look fun and to convey the Mid-Autumn Festival custom of reunion (see Figs. 34 and 35).



Figure 36. Application of Chang'e to mooncake packaging design



Figure 37. Application of Chinese dragon and phoenix to mooncake packaging design

After hand-painting and redesigning some Mid-Autumn legend motifs, I began to gradually bring these motifs into the mooncake packaging design. In so doing, I hoped to discover the visual effect produced through combining these motifs so as to find a clear direction for the final mooncake packaging design style. For example, in the Chang'e design, I used the legendary character from the legend Chang'e flying to the moon as a symbol of eternal life and embodiment of the moon goddess that Chinese people believe in (see Fig. 36). The figure of Chang'e is often used in mooncake packaging. However, I tried to create a more concise style that simply combined the face of the moon goddess and the moon pattern to distinguish it from the ornate examples discussed in the introduction to this section (see Figs. 23 and 24). Inspired by this result, I tried incorporating the dragon and the phoenix with the style of Chinese ancient landscape painting but found that it did not reflect the festive atmosphere very well (see Fig. 37).

In the first part of the experimental design, I realized that visual language has an important role in packaging design. I thus conducted a specific analysis of the motifs, patterns, and colors that are closely related to the Mid-Autumn Festival as well as an analysis of Chinese style. This analysis enabled me to quickly select the motifs, patterns, and colors that best suited my intention. In the following section, I elaborate on the symbolic meaning of the visual language associated with the Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese style.

SYMBOLIC MEANING OF CHINESE MOTIFS



Figure 38. *Traditional patterns of blessing, wealth, longevity, and happiness, which first appeared in the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–907).*



Figure 39. *The traditional pattern of bats*



Figure 40. *Traditional Chinese plant patterns*



Figure 41. *Traditional Chinese patterns of the prosperity brought by the dragon and phoenix*

The visual language employed in the decoration of mooncake packaging mostly adopts the symbolism related to the Mid-Autumn Festival, which contains many ancient philosophies and auspicious meanings. Chinese traditional patterns are, in the main, divided into ancient figures; plants; flowers, such as the peony and lotus; auspicious animals; Chinese characters; geometry; and pottery ware (see Figs 38,39,40 and 41). In addition, different patterns carry different cultural connotations and so convey different emotions and blessings. According to Zhang (2011), in mooncake packaging design, traditional patterns that symbolize happiness and propitiousness, such as “prosperity brought by the dragon and the phoenix”(see Fig. 41), “bats pattern”(see Fig. 39), and “the blessing, wealth, longevity and happiness” are advocated (p. 33).

In addition to the moon goddess Chang'e, the moon palace, and Jade Rabbit, key motifs include auspicious clouds, the Chinese dragon and phoenix, as well as Chinese characters. For Chinese, the symbolic meaning of auspicious clouds is luck and propitiousness (Yang, 2011) while the peony, the national flower of China, symbolizes wealth, luck, nobility, and prosperity. Because of the Taoist concept of longevity, the moon palace and Jade Rabbit have become symbols of peace and longevity, and the phoenix, believed by the people of ancient China to be the king of the birds, a symbol of harmony and auspiciousness like the dragon. Hence, I argue that in conceiving and creating mooncake packaging design for a contemporary audience, the knowledgeable use of traditional motifs, patterns, and colors can evoke the richness of the Mid-Autumn Festival cultural legacy while also offering young Chinese an alternative approach.

Color is the most active factor in visual symbolism and, in terms of packaging design, the first carrier to deliver information to the consumer (Wenjing, 2014). When shopping in supermarkets, the consumer's eyes stay on each product for a short period of time, so color often plays a leading role (Dan, 2006). People have a specific and culturally informed understanding of the symbolic meaning of each color. In traditional mooncake packaging, red is symbolic of an auspicious, warm, and joyous atmosphere, while yellow and golden yellow are the representative colors of the ancient Chinese royal family. Yellow is thus the symbol of power, wealth, and luck (Yanjin, 2014).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	甲骨文	金文	小篆	隶书	楷书	草书	行书
Sun							
Moon							
Car							
Horse							

Figure 42. *The different forms of Chinese characters sun, moon, car and horse*

1. 甲骨文：Inscriptions on bones or tortoise shells of the Shang Dynasty (BC 1600-1046)
2. 金文：Inscriptions on ancient bronze objects — Shang Dynasty (BC 1300)
3. 小篆：“Xiao Zhuan” It's a style of calligraphy, adopted in the Qin Dynasty (BC 221-207) for the purpose of standardizing the script
4. 隶书：“Li Shu”, An ancient style of calligraphy current in the Han Dynasty (BC 202-220)
5. 楷书：“Regular script” created in Eastern Han Dynasty (AD 25-220)
6. 草书：“Running script” created in early Eastern Han Dynasty (AD 25-220), between the "Regular script" and "Cursive script"
7. 行书：“Cursive script” created in Eastern Han dynasty (AD 25-220) after the "Regular script"

Chinese characters play an essential part in Chinese traditional culture (Yanjin, 2014). Not only are they an important container for conveying ideas, emotions, and values, but the characters are rich in cultural connotations (Qisong, n.d.). Over the thousand-year history of Chinese culture, Chinese characters have evolved into an abundant art form which, when combined with visual symbolism, can better demonstrate their cultural significance in a more vivid way. In order to test this idea and to make my mooncake packaging design artistic and appealing, I experimented with the fonts used in the packaging. It is well known that different fonts have different effects. I argue that in mooncake packaging design fonts, as well as colors and patterns, can convey the cultural meaning behind this festival food.

DESIGN PROCESS SECOND STAGE



Figure 43. *Traditional colors from ancient paintings and porcelain*

Figure 44. *Auspicious clouds seal effect*



Figures 45 and 46. Tests exploring the visual effect of color and the auspicious cloud seal stamp

After exploring the symbolic motifs to be employed in the packaging design, I set about exploring the visual effect of the seal stamp and traditional colors (see Figs. 44, 45 and 46), particularly the blue color sourced from Chinese blue and white porcelain, the vermilion and green colors sourced from the ancient paintings of the Tang Dynasty (see Fig. 43), and the gold yellow symbolizing the moon, moon cakes and ancient Chinese royalty.



Figures 47 and 48. Rabbit and auspicious cloud with seal effect

The seal stamp was inspired by the block printing invented during the Tang Dynasty. Different from modern precision printing technology, the uneven color distribution caused by manual printing imparts the imagery of a natural and friendly feel (see Figs. 47 and 48). It reminds me of the mooncake packaging I saw more than ten years ago, probably when I was in primary school. At that time, mooncakes were simply wrapped in russet paper and tied with twine. I remember only the simple red auspicious pattern and the flavor of the mooncake that was printed on the package.

In this second iteration, I chose to work with the auspicious cloud and Jade Rabbit motifs. The auspicious cloud motif originated, in China, from an ancient primitive totem and has a thousand-year history (Shuai, 2011). Symbolically, the motif means auspicious and safe and, in China, is a well-known motif appearing on various souvenirs as, for example, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. In this test design, I used three pieces of auspicious cloud to form a round pattern to symbolize the Mid-Autumn Festival reunion as well as happiness. In addition to this pattern, this design includes the flavor name of the mooncakes. Further, in this test design, I decided to imitate the structure used in packaging individual mooncakes and fixed one of the packages with rope. I also changed the structure of one of the test packages from the common square mooncake box into a small cuboid paper bag. I then sealed the bag with a band on which was printed the word ‘团圆’, meaning reunion and which implies that it was not opened and was new.

Through this exploration, I attempted to create designs that retained the symbolic essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival without being overly simple and visually unappealing. However, I found aspects of the design and the arrangement of motifs to be unbalanced. After consideration, I decided to turn to minimalist design theory to help guide the next stage in the design process. In the next section, I discuss the importance of minimalism and, in particular, the work of Japanese graphic designer, Kenya Hara, as a key influence in inspiring my design thinking.

THE INSPIRATION FROM JAPANESE MINIMALISM

Minimalism was one of the Western modern art schools that emerged in the United States after the Second World War in the mid-1960s (Xiali, 2015). Minimalism is deeply influenced by abstract expressionism. Based on pursuing artistic abstraction, freedom, and purposeless artistic style, minimalism emphasizes more rigorous practical functions (Shaozhen, 2012). In the 1960s, minimalist design first appeared in the field of painting. It advocates that the expression of painting should be reduced to the relationship between color and form, that the picture be depicted with few colors and simple shapes, and all unnecessary elements discarded (Jia, n.d.).

The idea central to minimalism is 'less is more.' Less, however, does not mean blank and boring. It means deliberate simplification. More does not mean crowding and abuse of elements, it means a perfect balance at saturation. Minimalism is deeply influenced by modernism (Jia, n.d.). In terms of aesthetics, its key characteristic is extreme simplicity when combining function and form.

In the East, Japanese minimalist design is mainly informed by Japan's special geographical location as well as the integration of Zen philosophy (Shaozhen, 2012). Japan's limited living space and frequent natural disasters have brought huge challenges to the survival of the Japanese people. At the same time, the Japanese have created a simple attitude towards life and a strong absorption of foreign cultures. In the combination of tradition and modernity, Japanese minimalist design has its own unique style. While absorbing Western advanced design concepts and ideas, Japanese minimalism does not forgo the incorporation of the essence of Japanese traditional culture. According to Japanese Zen beliefs, "simple is better than complex, quiet is better than noisy, light is better than heavy, unique is better than complex" (Xiali, 2015). For these reasons, Japanese minimalism is more in line with the harmony between man and nature, is more practical, more sustainable, and, with regard to visual aesthetics, clearer. Its expression is exemplified by the reduction of elements as well as functionality. For the famous Japanese graphic designer Kenya Hara, minimalism does not mean "this is good," but "this is enough" (Hara, 2010).

I argue that Japanese minimalism can bring another dimension to Chinese mooncake packaging; one that better follows the principle of sustainability. In order to better understand this, I conducted a case study analysis of three packaging, graphic, and brand designs produced by Kenya Hara.

Case study analysis of Kenya Hara's designs

Case 1





Figures 49 and 50. *Kenya Hara rice packaging design*

This first case study focuses on the packaging Kenya Hara, an eminent graphic designer and curator, designed for Iwafune rice. The seemingly simple and natural packaging design conveys the idea that Iwafune rice is a very healthy grain (see Figs. 49 and 50). In order to reflect the concept of sustainability and the link between consumers and the environment, Hara believes that the materials used in the product packaging should be green and biodegradable. In this design, the rice labels, bags, as well as the outer packaging box are all created from untreated, slightly rough paper material, which imparts a natural, healthy visual effect. Moreover, Hara attaches great importance to the structure of the product packaging. For this rice packaging, Hara created an uncomplicated packaging structure, utilizing paper bags and cartons within a minimal space. The packaging structure is conducive to the storage of rice and is also convenient for consumers to store in a kitchen space of limited dimensions. Furthermore, the calligraphic font provides important information about the rice while also giving consumers an intuitive understanding of the product.

Case 2



Figure 51. *The cover of program booklet*



Figure 52. *Embossed text and patterns on soft paper*



Figure 53. *Sunken translucent letters and footprints on the snow*

In this second case study, I focus on the material used by Hara for the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics opening and closing ceremony programs. Kenya Hara (2010), in his book *Designing Design*, mentioned,

The opening ceremony of the Olympic Games is a strong experience for everyone, whether it is athletes, spectators or staff. So I wish this program list which I was designing should be like a container, to store people's exciting memories. (p. 160)

I argue that this idea is conveyed by the material used in the program cover. Hara demanded that the paper used in the design should conform to the winter atmosphere and be able to awaken people's ideas of ice and snow. So, he chose a special kind of white and fluffy paper. In the printing process, a heated mold is pressed onto the soft paper, causing the slightly sunken font to melt partially and the resulting sunken font to appear as transparent as ice, just like people walking on soft snow in winter (see Figs. 52 and 53).

In addition, the cover of the white booklet applied two diverse finishing technique to add on the feature of the cover, the red Olympic flame used Spot UV printing technique meanwhile the Olympic rings and font used letterpress technique. (see Fig. 51). The red Olympic flame is visually bright and smooth to the touch, while the embossed font and Olympic rings retain the paper color and slightly rough texture. The use of these two printing processes and the contrasting colors of red and white gives people a clear sense of touch and visual experience, which also deepens people's understanding of the Winter Olympics.



Figure 54. *MUJI store in New York City*



Figure 55. *MUJI paper carry bags with logo*

Case 3

MUJI is a Japanese grocery brand that focuses on daily necessities. The brand concept is simple and in keeping with the natural, environmentally friendly, and people-oriented store (Xiali, 2015). The biggest feature of MUJI is the minimalist design. The products do not have any trademarks, unnecessary design, processing, or color but are displayed in their raw and natural state and function. Except for the red MUJI logo on the storefront signboard and paper carry bag, there are hardly any product marks or bright colors (see Fig. 55). Instead, most products are colored white, beige, blue, or black. Hence, MUJI is nothing yet everything.



無印良品



無印良品



無印良品



無印良品

Figure 56. *Poster design for Japanese brand MUJI*

This idea is conveyed in the series of posters that Hara produced for MUJI in 2003. In these posters, the horizon is like a huge container dividing the picture into two parts and containing everything between heaven and earth. The juxtaposition of the brand name with the horizon also hints at the relationship between humankind and the earth. The Japanese word ‘无印良品’ or ‘MUJI’ is the only artificial decoration on each poster, the four characters typographically represented using a simple font and the color white fuse the meaning of MUJI and the vast horizon. Thus, the poster not only conveys the brand concept of MUJI but also the philosophy of life behind the brand—namely, nothing, yet everything. Compared to the dazzlingly decorative designs created to attract consumers' attention, Hara's minimalist design of the MUJI posters appears simple. The posters, though, convey the idea of naturalism. They hint at a values-based approach to the use of resources in brand design.

The case study analysis of Kenya Hara's minimalist designs for rice packaging, an international winter event, and company brand made me realize that minimalist design is visually saturated and balanced. By this I mean that the design and arrangement of every element, motif, and word is meaningful. This key finding prompted me to revisit the mooncake packaging produced during the first two stages of the design process. I asked myself whether I had carefully scrutinized the patterns, colors, fonts, and motifs employed in these designs. Do they have to exist or are they missing? Furthermore, the case studies convinced me that the simple and rational use of visual language can more effectively convey product information to the consumer. Also, I learnt from looking at the effect of packing materials and print technology that the choice of materials can have a distinct impact on how a product is perceived and intuited.

DESIGN PROCESS THIRD STAGE

Inspired by Kenya Hara's minimalist designs, I set out to experiment with the arrangement of line, color, pattern, and symbolic motif as well as printing techniques, such as embossing (see Fig. 57).



Figure 57. *Iterations exploring Jade Rabbit and embossing*



Figure 58. *Blessing lantern*



Figure 59. *Single mooncake box structure*



Figure 60. *Iterations exploring wave, auspicious cloud and peony motifs*



Figure 61. *Mooncake packaging with wave pattern*

The placing of lanterns and praying for blessings during the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival is a customary practice and symbolizes people's yearning for a better life. My packaging design, especially the single mooncake box, was influenced by this custom. I began to study the structure of the single mooncake box. I wanted to design a box that saves on materials, is easy to open and, importantly, reflects the shape and form of the Mid-Autumn Festival blessing lanterns. The single mooncake box is fixed by a small seal which, when opened, allows the box to expand out into a structure similar to the lotus form of the lantern (see Fig. 59).

While designing the single small mooncake boxes (see Fig. 60), I thought to include the hand-painted patterns of auspicious clouds, the peony flower symbol, and traditional Chinese wave pattern to evoke the Mid-Autumn Festival atmosphere. In designing the outer box (see Fig. 61), I thought to incorporate the Jade Rabbit motif with both the longevity and wave pattern. With regard to the wave pattern, this pattern first appeared embroidered on the hem of the Royal Minister's official costume and means blessing and auspiciousness. In addition to these motifs and patterns, I added to the outer box packaging a verse from an ancient poem describing the Mid-Autumn Festival. The verse translates as, 'As the bright moon shines over the sea, from far away you share this moment with me.' For me, this verse encapsulates the ideas and images conveyed by the inner and outer packaging designs as well as symbolizing Chinese people's longing and desire to be reunited with their family.



Figure 62. *Second iteration of mooncake packaging with wave pattern*

In the last set of mooncake boxes (see Fig. 61), the wave pattern was used in many places. In keeping with the spirit of minimalism and the spirit of the Mid-Autumn Festival, I lastly began to create different wave patterns to make the packaging more visually clear and vivid.



Figure 63. *The single and box mooncake packages produced during the second stage of the design progress*

FINAL DESIGN STAGE

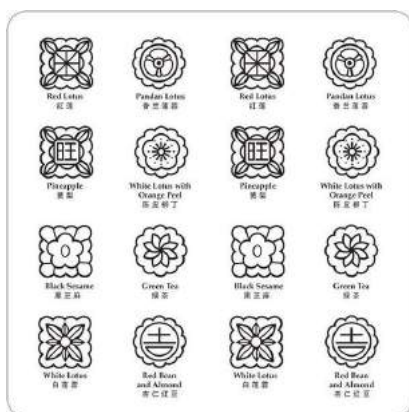


Figure 64. Design inspiration: mooncake pattern



Figure 65. Design inspiration: a view out the window on the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival



Figure 66. Symbolic elements appeared in the final design

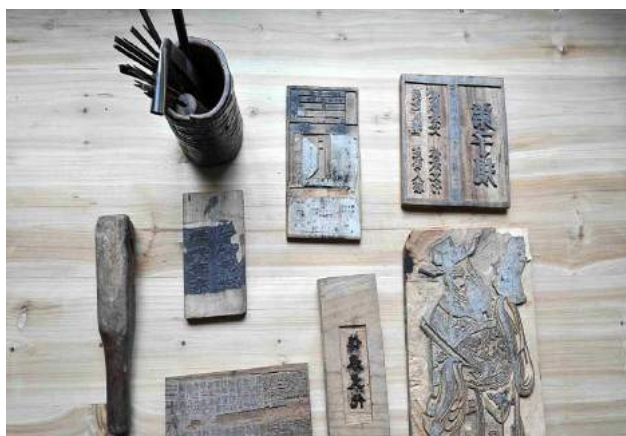


Figure 67. Design inspiration: the block-printing technique of the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907)



Figure 68. Final design inspired by the origin and legends of the Mid-Autumn Festival

The critical design thinking and learning that I gradually accumulated during all stages of the design process led me to have a clear idea for the final packaging design. In this mooncake packaging design (see Fig. 68), I used the most representative elements of the Mid-Autumn Festival and the four legends associated with that festival. Specific to the final design is the use of the colors blue and white, which closely adhere to the blue and white used in Chinese porcelain. The reason for choosing these two colors is that they have strong visual contrast, which conforms to Chinese traditional aesthetics, and, at the same time, highlights the symbolic motifs used in the design. In designing the top cover of the box, I combined the full moon with motifs symbolizing reunion (see Fig. 66), patterns of the mooncake itself (see Fig. 64) and the traditional Chinese wooden window structure (see Fig. 66). My aim in deliberately rethinking the representation of the moon palace, the moon, and auspicious clouds was to provide a picture of people watching the moon through the window on the Mid-Autumn Festival night (see Fig. 65).

On opening the top cover of the box, the first thing that appears before the mooncakes is a translucent paper on which is written a Chinese poem. The poem was written in the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279). It describes people's nostalgia for their family, their longing to be reunited with their family during the Mid-Autumn Festival, and their yearning for a long life. I want the mooncake packaging as a media to convey the beauty of the Mid-Autumn Festival.

In addition, I designed the mooncake packaging to convey, via minimalism, the beauty of this festival. The four small boxes inside the larger box, feature a leaping Jade Rabbit pattern created using the seal effect, and which was inspired by the block-printing technique invented in the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907) (see Fig. 65). In order to give the small box packaging deeper cultural significance, I incorporated, as a font, the small seal script first developed during the Qin Dynasty (BC 221) and which was the first font in China's history to be promoted nationwide. Before that time, China did not have a unified font. The small seal script is shown positioned at the bottom of the mooncake box, the carry bag, and the flavor of the mooncake on small mooncake boxes. The seal effect and small seal script thus show China's a unique and quaint beauty as well as reflecting the long history of mooncake.

Furthermore, this set of final designs combine the legend Chang'e flying to the moon with Jade Rabbit making heavenly medicine so as to symbolically convey the longevity and happiness associated with the purchase, gifting and eating of this festival food. Moreover, on taking out the four small mooncake boxes from the larger box, people will see displayed on the bottom of the latter four Chinese characters '福祿壽喜' within a circle. These characters serve to reinforce the idea of the mooncake as a gift and mean blessing, prosperity, longevity and happiness.

I hope that when consumers see this minimalist-design-informed package, it will help awaken in them the beauty of the Mid-Autumn Festival and also that it will prompt them to preserve the symbolic meaning of the festival as well as its traditional culture and customs.

Conclusion

While undertaking this project, I gradually realized that good packaging design should not only bring visual beauty to promote sales and increase commodity profits, but also correlate with traditional aesthetics and consumer needs. The project confirmed for me the need to identify the issues associated with excessive packaging in order to generate alternative solutions. As a designer, I cannot design a product according to my own preferences but must consider the culture in which the design is to operate.

In the beginning, I established two research questions concerning the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival and the mooncake packaging. I questioned if mooncake packaging, as a medium, could better convey the culture and symbolic essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival. And, I questioned if an unconventional minimalist approach could be applied to mooncake packaging without losing the traditional Chinese characteristics.

In answering these questions, I first investigated the current situation of excessive packaging of the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival mooncake. I argued that excessive packaging wasted a lot of manpower, material, and financial resources and, at the same time, is a burden to the environment. I found, in addition, that the excessive packaging of mooncakes leads to an imbalance between the value of this festival food and the value of packaging. Excessive packaging overemphasizes the material benefits at the expense of Mid-Autumn Festival customs, thus distorting the essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival culture. This led me to research the historical and cultural background of the Mid-Autumn Festival as well as the legends core to this lunar festival. I explained how these legends arose in response to Chinese people's worship of the full moon at a particular time of year and that this was demonstrated in the customary desire for a long life, health, and family reunion. The historical material provided a context for thinking how to create mooncake packaging designs that retained the essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival while employing a minimalist approach.

It was at this stage that I turned to Japanese minimalist design particularly the work of Kenya Hara. Hara's careful selection and combination of colors, images, typography, natural materials, and simple packaging structures provided the inspiration for my single mooncake packages, box packages, and carry bags. Key to the design development was the principle of sustainability and minimal decoration as well as retaining the symbolic essence and characteristic of this Chinese festival and celebratory food.

The Mid-Autumn Festival mooncake packaging combined the advantages of Japanese minimalist design fundamental while maintaining Chinese traditional composition specifically Mid-Autumn Festival aesthetics. Hence, it not only reflects the essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival, it does so in a way that maintains the visual beauty of that festival. The project packaging moreover offers a new perspective and greater possibilities for the future of traditional Chinese packaging. Compared with existing excessive mooncake packaging, this project focused on saving natural and social resources in line with the concept of environmental protection and sustainable development, such as packaging structure, cost, and materials.

Thinking forward, the Chinese market could adopt this project's packaging principles and composition and so create systematic, cost-effective and sustainable packaging for other Chinese festival, such as the Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, and Dragon Boat Festival. I speculate that by continuously updating and improving the packaging of traditional foods and pastries current excessive packaging design could convert into Chinese minimalist style.

List of figures

Figure 1. Green. (2017). Examples of excessive packaging. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from http://www.glhbgs.com/wap_news_detail_cn/id/6055.html

Figure 2. Tencent. (2018). Unnecessary excessive packaging of goods in Hong Kong supermarkets. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <https://new.qq.com/omn/20181226/20181226A0XID6.html>

Figure 3. ChinaLuxus.com. (2012). Types of mooncake packaging. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.chinaluxus.com/20120818/212485.html>

Figure 4. People.cn. (2015). Types of mooncake packaging. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://art.people.com.cn/n/2015/0914/c206244-27581044-5.html>

Figure 5. China.cn. (2013). Luxurious mooncake packaging. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from http://v.china.com.cn/finance/2013-02/02/content_27866975.htm

Figure 6. Teaoto. (2017). Luxurious Green tea packaging. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.teaoto.com/html/news/cygc/34063.html>

Figure 7. Kuaibao. (2018). Packaging waste contamination. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <https://kuaibao.qq.com/s/20180822A161Z300?refer=spider>

Figure 8. China.cn. (2013). Unreasonable use of package space. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from http://www.china.com.cn/news/txt/2013-06/21/content_29186224_2.htm

Figure 9. Hao, L. (2011). Unreasonable use of package space. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://lihao.blog.kepu.cn/2011012114591.html>

Figure 10. Huijiang. (n.d.). Mid-Autumn festival lantern activities. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <https://www.hjenglish.com/zhongqiu/zqjdxs/>

Figure 11. Wuhunews. (2018). Worshipping the moon goddess on the night of the Mid-Autumn festival. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.wuhunews.cn/wuhu/shiping/2018-09-19/1455582.html>

Figure 12. Zgwxbbbs. Mooncakes. (2016). [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://m.zgwxbbbs.com/baixingguanzhu/minshengshishi/5854.html>

Figure 13. Suhu. (n.d.). Osmanthus wine. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <https://m.sohu.com/n/467791084/>

Figure 14. Chongqing new east cuisine college. (2015). Family reunion in the Mid-Autumn festival. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.cqxdfpr.com/a/012455F2015.html>

Figure 15. Baidu.cn (2018) Chang'e flying to the moon. [Painting]. Retrieved from <https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/190478884.html>

Figure 16. Gs5000. (2017). Jade Rabbit making heavenly medicine. [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.gs5000.cn/gs/shenhua/4297.html>

Figure 17. Hynews. (2018). Jade Rabbit making heavenly medicine. [Painting]. Retrieved from http://www.hynews.org/2018/ms_0920/56202.html

Figure 18. Tsukioka Yoshitoshi. (1882). Wu Gang chopping the tree. [Painting]. Retrieved from [https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/吴刚_\(神话\)](https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/吴刚_(神话))

Figure 19. Aihazi8. (n.d.). Wu Gang chopping the tree. [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.aihazi8.com/guoxue/319.html>

Figure 20. Zhiding, Yu. (1647-?). The moon palace. [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.ifuun.com/a201710206175102/>

Figure 21. Tingjian, Huang. (1045-1105). Chang'e and Jade Rabbit under the osmanthus tree. [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.ifuun.com/a201710206175102/>

Figure 22. Chen, Zhen. (1460-1535). The emperor Tai Zong visiting the moon palace. [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.yueyaa.com/museum/20141208/36270.html>

Figure 23. 16pic. (2015). Mid-Autumn Festival motifs in excessive mooncake packaging design. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from https://www.16pic.com/psd/pic_1547191.html

Figure 24. Nipic. (2009). Mid-Autumn Festival motifs in excessive mooncake packaging design. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.nipic.com/show/4/106/e39a086be307ae63.html>

Figure 25. Nipic. (2015). Mid-Autumn Festival motifs in excessive mooncake packaging design. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <https://www.58pic.com/newpic/11740348.html>

Figures 26 and 27. Cui. (2018). Hand painted Chang'e elements.

Figure 28. Cui. (2018). Hand painted auspicious clouds.

Figure 29. Cui. (2018). Hand painted osmanthus branches.

Figure 30. Cui. (2018). Hand painted Jade Rabbit.

Figure 31. Cui. (2018). First mooncake packaging design.

Figure 32. Cui. (2018). Jade Rabbit patterns.

Figure 33. Cui. (2018). First mooncake packaging model.

Figures 34 and 35. Cui. (2018). The second mooncake packaging design and model.

Figure 36. Cui. (2018). Application of Chang'e to mooncake packaging design.

Figure 37. Cui. (2018). Application of Chinese dragon and phoenix to mooncake packaging design.

Figure 38. Anxinpiao. (n.d.). Traditional patterns of blessing, wealth, longevity, and happiness, which first appeared in the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–907). [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.anxinpiao.com/tupian/6zionieiw>

Figure 39. Nipic. (2014). The traditional pattern of bats. [Painting]. Retrieved from <http://www.nipic.com/show/10883998.html>

Figure 40. Toutiaohao. (2018). Traditional Chinese plant patterns. [Painting]. Retrieved from <https://kknews.cc/zh-cn/culture/n3a83x8.html>

Figure 41. Fjgym. (2018). Traditional Chinese patterns of the prosperity brought by the dragon and phoenix. [Painting]. Retrieved from http://www.fjgym.com/news/News.aspx?class_id=23&id=6923

Figure 42. Liangbaolou. (2018). The different forms of Chinese characters sun, moon, car and horse. [Calligraphy]. Retrieved from http://www.sohu.com/a/241537434_790376

Figure 43. Cui. (2018). Traditional colors from ancient paintings and porcelain.

Figure 44. Cui. (2018). Auspicious clouds seal effect.

Figures 45 and 46. Tests exploring the visual effect of color and the auspicious cloud seal stamp.

Figures 47 and 48. Cui. (2018). Rabbit and auspicious cloud with seal effect.

Figures 49 and 50. Kenya Hara. (1999). Kenya Hara rice packaging design. Retrieved from <https://www.ndc.co.jp/hara/en/works/2014/08/iwafunerice.html>

Figures 51, 52 and 53. Kenya Hara. (1998). Programs for the Opening and Closing Ceremony of the Nagano Winter Olympic Games. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <https://www.ndc.co.jp/hara/en/works/2014/08/naganoolympic.html>

Figure 54. Epoch Times. (n.d.). MUJI store in New York City. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/8/12/26/n2375779.htm>

Figure 55. Tommy Tong. (2013). MUJI paper carry bags with logo. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.tommytongmy.com/2013/09/top-20-best-franchises-part1.html>

Figure 56. Kenya Hara. (n.d.). Poster design for Japanese brand MUJI. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.tommytongmy.com/2013/09/top-20-best-franchises-part1.html>

Figure 57. Cui. (2018). Iterations exploring Jade rabbit and embossing.

Figure 58. Loutian. (n.d.). Blessing lantern. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://goods.ruten.com.tw/item/show?21831435750706>

Figure 59. Cui. (2018). Single mooncake box structure.

Figure 60. Cui. (2018). Iterations exploring wave, auspicious cloud and peony motifs.

Figure 61. Cui. (2018). Mooncake packaging with wave pattern.

Figure 62. Cui. (2018). Second iteration of mooncake packaging with wave pattern.

Figure 63. Cui. (2018). The single and box mooncake packages produced during the second stage of the design progress.

Figure 64. Shejibao. (n.d.). Design inspiration: mooncake pattern. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.shejibao.com/suca/1424.html>

Figure 65. CNR. (2018). Design inspiration: a view out the window on the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival. [Digital photography]. Retrieved from <http://www.taihainet.com/news/fujian/cbhx/2016-08-02/1740151.html>

Figure 66. Cui. (2018). Symbolic elements appeared in the final design.

Figure 67. Taiwannet. (2016). Design inspiration: the block-printing technique of the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907). Retrieved from [Digital photography]. <http://www.taihainet.com/news/fujian/cbhx/2016-08-02/1740151.html>

Figure 68. Cui. (2018). Final design inspired by the origin and legends of the Mid-Autumn Festival.

References

- Dan, Z. (2010). Emotional interaction in mooncake packaging. Shangqiu Normal University, 95.
- Hara, K. (2015). Designing design. Guangxi Normal University Press.
- Ji, J. (2011). Chinese traditional festival research and cultural element analysis. Shannaxi Normal University, 1–77.
- Jia, L. (n.d.). On the connotation of ‘less is more’ minimalist aesthetics. China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House, 169.
- Jianchun, D. (2007). Mid-Autumn cultural exploration. Minzu University of China, 1–46.
- Lanlan, W. (2012). The origin and formation of the Mid-Autumn festival. Social Sciences in Ningxia, 4(173).
- Linsen, L. (2008). Thinking about the problem of excessive packaging of mooncakes. China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House, 22(5), 74–75.
- Qisong, L. (n.d.). The elements of the mooncake packaging designing. China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House, 66–67.
- Restricting excessive packaging for commodity-General rule. (2014). Qinhuangdao printing house of China standard press, (80), 1–10.
- Shaozhen, W. (2012). Minimalist style packaging design research. Xi’an Academy of Fine Art, 1–42.
- Shuai, C. (2011). Auspicious cloud pattern in modern graphic designing of exploratory applications. Xi’an Academy of Fine Arts, 1–37.
- Siyuan, M. (2008). The study of excessive packing in the angle of design. Hunan University of Technology, 1–72.
- Suyi, G. (2007). Folklore experts talk freely about the Mid-Autumn festival. Guangming Daily, (005), 3.
- Wenjing, S. (2014). The inheritance of traditional culture in mooncake packaging design. China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House, 214.

- Xiaoli, L. (2015). Packaging design influenced by minimalism. *Quzhou college of technology*, 91–93.
- Xiaomeng, T. (2014). Research on the culture of Chinese traditional festival and the gift design. *Jiangnan university*, (04), 1–106.
- Xinxing, J., Huan, L., & Wei, Z. (2005). The similarities and differences of the traditional customs of the Mid-Autumn festival between China and Japan. *Beijing International Studies University*, (128), 94–99.
- Yang, Y. (2011). The application and innovation research of Auspicious cloud pattern in modern symbol design. *Anhui University*, 1–54.
- Yanjin, S. (2014). Analysis of Chinese style packaging design. *China Academic Journal Electronic Publishing House*, 41–42.
- Yong, L. (2005). Excessive mooncake packaging status survey. *China consumer news*, (02), 2.
- Zhang, X. (2011). The comparison between China and Japan on food package designing. *Beijing Forestry University*, 61.



