

REPORT AL RIENTRO DELL'ESPERIENZA DI SCAMBIO

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Testo

During the last few months, I had a chance to take a part in the exchange program to Tokyo university of Arts.

After completing my bachelor degree in my country China, I wanted to learn more about product design. I decided to continue a master degree in Politecnico di Milano, an university with an open and international view. Another hand, Italy is well-known as its fashion and product industries, in where I have more opportunities to get knowledge and information.

Luckily, I got the opportunity to go to Tokyo university of Arts as an exchange student.

In past decades years, Japanese design become more and more popular over the world. Especially in China, many designers treat it as the Bible. In addition, Tokyo university of Arts is the most famous school because of its high quality of education and many artists who graduated from it. Therefore, studying in Tokyo university of Arts is an excellent experience for not only my design understanding, but also my job career in the future.

After 4 months studying there, it proved that I have made a right decision that time. I've learned different point of views and methods of design, and it was quite interesting to compare with other countries.

Tokyo university of Arts composed of two departments, art department and music department. Design belonged to art department. It was the most historical and famous public art school in Japan, especially in traditional art and music areas. There was not a

big amount of student, but it still a much international school since I met many foreign students there.

In Tokyo university of Arts, I studied in Function research studio, which was in charge by Professor Yamazaki. He used to be a designer in a big Japanese design company, which produced many classical and famous product. But he quitted his job there and become a professor in TUA. In the studio, there were 4 Japanese students, who were in the first of their master period, and another exchange student.

I took two design courses during that time. One is a theoretical course and one practical course, in which we work with another studio.

In seminar class, we discussed about UNIVERSAL DESIGN. In 2020, the olympic game will be hosted in Tokyo. There will be thousands of tourists from all over the world arrive in Japan to join the festival. So the whole country will face a big problem that how to provide a better service for them. These people, especially from western counties, who don't know Japanese language and culture at all must have a big issue travel there. For example, the public transportation in Tokyo, such as metro, Japan railway, bus, is one of the most complex transportation system in the world. Even for Japanese people, they still need some tools to figure out the best choice moving thought the city. I once used an application which produced by metro company. Unfortunately, it is all in Japanese characters, so it is very inconvenient for foreigners to use this application. In addition, design is not only for normal people, but also needs to consider about people such as the disable, the old and the kids etc. Obviously they have totally different requirement and standards for product and service.

We started with discussing about the topic of USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN. This topic was very popular few years ago. At the very beginning, the goal of design is making people survival. As the time went by, it developed into how to provide a better experience for people. Therefore designers started to learn Ergonomics, human behavior etc.

In one week, each of the students made a research hanging out the city, to find what was the universal design for us.

I found some example such as the tourist board with Braille, two handrails on the stairs, the lower one for children, etc.

Nowadays, an universal design may not only mean a real existent product, but also includes the graphic design or service.

After the research, I realized that Japanese are facing a big problem that how they can provide a perfect service for people from different races or different cultures. At the same time, I was thinking about what if my country would hold another Olympic game in the future or more and more foreigners come over to traveling or working? How we can make them satisfied?

What is the UNIVERSAL DESIGN for me? It is something based on understanding of human behavior. To solve a problem for everyone, we need to figure out their abilities, cultures and languages which is not only the spoken language, but also visual one. Then we can get the minimum standard and symbols. It definitely can be used by normal people if

something are suit for the disable. For me, the most important thing of the universal design is how we can make people understand and use it in a easy way.

At the end of this theoretical course, each Japanese student had to choose a topic from the following to do a project in the next semester according to their own understanding of the UNIVERSAL DESIGN,

- 1.the eating equipment
- 2.re-design a hospital
- 3.a green life

Talking about the practical course, we did a project for the famous Japanese company MITSUBISHI. It was founded over 100 years ago, producing the heavy industry.

The main topic of this project is how to play the engine as a game.The company makes different kinds of engine for tools such as weeding machine, street cleaning machine, etc.But these are common application of engines. The company wanted to find a new way to use it and give the engine a brand-new definition and life.

All 11 students were divided into 2 groups. One group was asked to design a real product, another one was for the installation design. I belonged to product design group.

All of us went to the MITSUBISHI engine factory in Nagoya with two professors. We had a visit to their producing line and a closer-seeing of how to make an engine to help us know better how an engine works and its function. And we tried a lot of engine-applied machines. Almost every steps was totally automagical such as casting, assembly, even the transporting robots worked automatically.

What's the main goal of our project? We need to find out our main target user. We decided to do a product for kids around 10 years old. It would be like a DIY product which could do with their parents together. During this time, kids get well-known about the engine and how it works, and also enhance their relationship with parents.

We designed several shapes, with which kids can make their own playing equipments, such as a moving kart car, or a skate board. But the engine is the heart of the product to provide the powder to it. And the final product is designed to assembly or take parts away in a easy way.

In addition, we designed a web(UI) as a platform for ordering their own lovely "toy".Also there would be a engine part for making and playing. Once a kid finishes his/her order in web, he/she can gets what's needed for the toy and makes it in the making area and then play it outside, the playing area, which is divided in different parts, including a forest, a desert, a waterfall and a mountain with a cave. It stimulate a natural environment so that all the kids can join the beautiful landscape personally.To realized this requirements, we went to a real theme park where people drive the kart.And finally, we made a prototype of the product.The result was good.

But we still had some problem to think about.The most difficult one is that why we choose engine as the powder resources instead of motors. This is also the question asked by MITSUBISHI company crews. The motor is used in many product now. Because the electricity is a kind of clean, high-efficient and recyclable energy.So what's the

advantages of engines comparing with motors? What's the joy engine can bring to us? Probably is the sounds when engine works, or the strong masculine feeling.

The another group did several experiences to figure out the feeling related to the sounds, the smell, the shaking when engine works.

It was quite interesting to do the team work in Japanese way. They like to do the work together instead of finishing assignment alone. For me it was a little inefficient cause everyone had own options to speak out, it would be difficult to make a decision which made every happy, we spent more time in this kind of things. For me, it just wasted time. I preferred once the decision made up, all the team members finish his/her work as soon as possible, so we can get more time to check and fix the project.

Anyway, it was a wonderful experiment to have a team work with others. I learnt a lot from my classmates and professors during our communication. It is important and necessary for designer to talk to people who have different background and knowledge.

What's more, the university organized many activities for international students so we could get well know of Japanese culture. For example, we took part in a studying-journey. During this one-day trip, we went to a small city near Tokyo. There were still many traditional handmade pottery. All of us made an own subject with the help of local handcraft man. We got our well-made masterpiece before leaving Japan. From this trip, I saw that Japanese try to keep all the traditional things and absorb new modern elements.

And I had a chance to travel in Hokkaido, the north part of Japan. Like the other place in the world, you can see vary sightseeings and cultural experiences from south of Japan.

The most difficult problem I had in Japan was I had to speak Japanese. Unfortunately, I haven't learned much Japanese before arrive there. And merely Japanese people can speak English well.

From this exchange program, I figure out that a good designer is not only well-educated in his/her major, but also familiar and sensitive with information he/she access to. And it will be an excellent job if he/she applies what he/she has, no matter knowledge or information.

Autorizzo al trattamento dei miei dati personali ai sensi del Decreto Legislativo n. 196/03 da parte del Politecnico di Milano.

Firma CHEN QINXIA