

JAPANESE PACIFIST
AND ECOLOGICAL POSTERS.
U.G. Satō and others

CHANGE FROM WAR TO ECOLOGY

Although Japanese designers are identified by their visually interesting and perfectly printed and invariably eye-catching advertising posters, it is worth remembering that they pay no less attention to those glorifying a “to be” instead of a “to have” attitude. In the modern consumeristic world of advanced technologies, anti-war and ecological posters remain ideologically at the other extreme of the world of advertising, although one could state defiantly that they “advertise” peace and an untainted environment. After all, Lex Drewinski, an eminent Polish designer who was also interested in this subject, once stated: “I’m advertising a dove of peace.”¹⁾ The Japanese manifest a pacifist and pro-ecological attitude in the poster in a mode that remains attractive and, even more importantly, understandable for all nations in the world. This feature ought to be emphasized, as Japanese posters are not always understandable for people of Western culture. Agata Szydłowska pointed out that: “Raised in the western cultural circle, we are used to dealing with posters whose meaning is an outcome of text and image (...) Therefore, it becomes even more challenging for us to accept and understand that the representation on the Japanese poster often says nothing, remaining an empty sign, and certainly cannot be interpreted employing the tools developed in contact with the European poster.”²⁾ The

¹⁾ Kossakowski, Niziołek 1996 (251: 5).

²⁾ Szydłowska (2007); page not numbered.

poster creators of Japanese origin often draw the recipient into the process of arranging emptiness; they offer an “empty vessel” that can be filled with meaning: “The Japanese wanting to express specific content at the same time leave the door open, so that this content can be exchanged according to the demand.”³⁾

However, in the case of a message regarding universal threats, the picture or mark proposed by Japanese designers is understandable. The Japanese have won numerous honours at the International Poster Biennale in Wilanów for ideological posters. In their suggestive ecological and pacifist posters, often acting on the level of emotions, as well as in other media and artistic activities, there is a deep awareness of the interdependence of all forms of life’s ecosystem. In Japanese art and literature, as well as in the common areas of everyday life, there is a reflection on the close relationship between people and the natural environment. For centuries, the Japanese have been aware of the healing power of nature (including the influence that trees and forests have on people), which today has been already confirmed by scientific research.⁴⁾

The traditions of Shintoism – a belief that all natural phenomena have a spiritual nature and animals, plants and inanimate matter constitute part of the universe just like people – are present in the works of contemporary Japanese artists. Takuya Tsukahara, a photographer, clearly articulates this conviction: “My mother taught me to respect and love nature. It is a feeling characteristic of every Japanese, through religion, culture, upbringing... Nature is a both peaceful and a furious element; it’s water, clay, rock, wind. Knowing Nature allows you to know a person, their love for peace and the war they fight... Earth as a source of life and as a grave. Rock as the quintessence of death and eternity. Sea – as a source of food, and at the same time unexplored mystery and the most dangerous element. These are all very traditional Japanese truths that perhaps sound banal for European, but these trivialities are often a visible sediment of deep truth. For me, as a man and an artist, Nature is everything...”⁵⁾

In the contemporary world, pro-ecological, anti-war attitudes and actions are complementary; the members of green movements often emphasize their

³⁾ Hara (2006: 9).

⁴⁾ Garcia, Miralles (2018).

⁵⁾ Cieślińska (1980: 35). A fragment of the quoted voice-over from the movie by T. Pobóg-Malinowski 1–2–3–4. *Japońskie charaktery*.

pacifist views. The strength of this dual commitment is also reflected in contemporary utility graphics. Many Japanese designers create posters for both the preservation of peace and the protection of the natural environment. Both of these ideas go hand in hand in the work of Yukiya Takakita, who in *Change from War to Ecology* (1995)⁶⁾ (fig.1) transformed a missile into the root of a plant. This poster has a clear, simplified and at the same time sophisticated form, so characteristic of the Japanese poster. It is distinguished by a subtle passage of luminous colours (silkscreen printing), a delicate outline and a way of depicting small, winged insects that mark the boundary between the zones of death and life. However, the legibility of the message of this work is supported by a slogan in English. This particular form without any accompanying text would not be so easy to decipher as a hybrid of two elements [a missile and a root]. Some Japanese designers strive for intelligibility of the message in posters with a universal message, using the repertoire of means and motifs known from European or American designs as well, which is not surprising given the achievable assimilation of elements (especially visual ones) of other cultures. The purpose of this article will be to answer to what extent Japanese designers retain the formal and ideological traditions of the Japanese poster when creating pro-environmental and anti-war posters, and to what extent they incorporate other means of expression to ensure the readability of visual messages for a wide audience. Considering that in the modern world the function of the poster as well as the place where the public may see it is undergoing change,⁷⁾ a subsequent question arises, namely: is expression specific to different cultural circles in any way relevant for viewers?

⁶⁾ The JAGDA Peace and Environment Poster Exhibition, „I’m here” 1995: Hiroshima-Nagasaki 50. The designer created a series of thought-provoking posters in the service of ecology, entitling them: *Decology (Design + Ecology)*, 1999.

⁷⁾ Part of the urban space (in Japan, subway tunnels and shopping malls) as the natural point of contact with the poster has been gradually taken over by the Internet, and the functionality of the poster often gives way to its artistry and the promotion of the designer’s vision; hence the presence of posters in museums, art galleries, private collections and art auctions is not a surprise. It is also worth noting that the obvious function of the poster as a message in the European tradition is not at all evident in Japan: “The first priority is to convey the moment of poetic repose and allow them to draw a view of relief in the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives. The poster not only performs a commercial function; it is part of a cultural mode of expression.” Bürer (1994: 7).

PEACE, LIFE, MOTHER EARTH

Due to the location of their country, the climate, and the existent destructive elements, but also owing to their spirituality, tradition and experience of tragedy, the Japanese are a nation that has learned the real value of such abstract and, for some, trivial concepts such as ecology and peace. Both of these areas merge in the graphic design motif of a dove, in posters created after World War II in European countries so recurrently that it has become obsolete. At times, this trite motif of a peace dove can shake things up, yet not through symbolism, but context, as in the works by an Israeli poster artist, Yossi Lemel, e.g. a work from 2003: *Israel – Palestine Peace* (a dead dove in a jar with formalin) or *All we need is dove* from 2012 (hybrid of a bomb and a dove). Most Japanese designers use far less drastic measures, although Tetsuro Minorikawa in his poster *Sarajevo1914–2014* (fig. 2) depicted a silhouette of a bird repeatedly riddled with bullets, the holes filled with blackness – emptiness. Masuteru Aoba in a photographic image of a dove with a tied beak expresses the wish: *Peace, be Heard* (2016). Yuji Satō, a designer with great achievements, referred to this subject as early as the 1970s. In the poster *Peace?* (1976) a pop-art dove in pastel colours is the vessel of a perverse message – its wing is also a hand holding a gun. He employed even more surprising tactics in the *Liberation [Auschwitz Anniversary]* (1978) poster, in which the silhouette of an ascending dove was created from torn pieces of barbed wire. In another original project (*Peace*, 1978) revealing his unconventional thinking, Satō stressed the illusory nature of freedom and peace – the figure of a dove formed from a webbing of a metal mesh fence (fig. 3). Among the Satō projects with a dove motif, there is also quite banal, not disturbing *Love Peace* (2000), in which the wings and tail of the pigeon become both outstretched hands.

Yuji Satō, (U.G.⁸⁾ Satō), born in 1935 in Tokyo, represents the second generation of Japanese poster designers.⁹⁾ He uses lines, bright spots, repetitions,

⁸⁾ As “Satō” is the most popular surname in Japan, to distinguish people with the same names and surnames, one can write the same-sounding names with different kanji ideograms, thanks to which their spelling varies. The designer renders his name as the English/American abbreviation U.G., which is pronounced the same as his first name, Yuji.

⁹⁾ He graduated from the Kuwasawa School of Design (1960), founded Design Farm design studio (1975); then he taught illustration at his alma mater (1995–2005). He is a member of Alliance Graphique Internationale (AGI) and Japan Graphic Designers

avoiding technically the perfect photography so popular in Japanese posters; nor does he create typographic posters.¹⁰ He is a pacifist and an ecology activist; one of the designers who react to current events not only through the message contained in a poster, but by taking action, and organizing demonstrations. For almost 60 years, he has created posters with universal meanings that refer to the realities of his own country and other parts of the world, including Poland. During this time, some irreversible changes took place in the world. However, an elementary question, *What's next for Gaia?*, which Satō posed in a poster from 1995, remains relevant and has gained in relevance. The reflections on the future of Earth are accompanied by a colourful, seemingly optimistic image of the planet, depicted as a flower dressed with multihued layers floating into space, like petals. This work gains a new dimension at the end of the second decade of the 21st century, because the fate of the land, stripped of natural resources, exploited to her deepest layers, does not appear in the bright colours that Satō employed.

The impulse for designing eco-friendly and pacifist posters is often inspired by the Japan Graphic Designers Association, of which Satō, as already mentioned, is a member. Established in 1978, it has prepared numerous exhibitions of posters devoted to specific topics: *Peace, Japan*, as well as the Hiroshima appeals campaign, organised annually since 1983. Satō has been a participant in several such endeavours; *Hiroshima-Nagasaki 50* poster (1995) based on a contrast between a black human silhouette composed of elements of ruined buildings and a bouquet of multi-coloured flowers in the shape of continents. In *No to Nuclear Testing (Non aux essais nucléaires)*¹¹ (fig. 4), another poster by this designer from 1996, which raises a similar striking problem the juxtaposition of youth and vitality with death is genuinely stunning. Inspired by the Tahitian woman from Paul Gauguin's *Te Nave Nave Fenua* (Delightful Land), Satō transformed the character into a simplified black silhouette against

Association (JAGDA) and has presented his works at numerous individual exhibitions (*My Theory of Evolution*, Okabe Gallery, Tokyo, 1972; *Visual Structure of humor* International Design Center, Nagoya, 2003; International Poster Biennial 1996) as well as the collective ones; he has been awarded with numerous prestigious distinctions (Golden Bee, International Biennale of Graphic Design, Moscow, 1998; Bronze Prize; International Poster Triennial, Toyama, 1997, 2000.)

¹⁰ One of the exceptions is *Water for life*.

¹¹ Between 1966 and 1996, France conducted 164 tests of nuclear weapons at Mururoa Atoll, a part of French Polynesia. At the 15th International Poster Biennale in Warsaw, Sato received a gold medal for this poster in the ideological poster category.

a white background. The full shapes of a young woman contrast with the skull that substitutes the face. Satō signs this project modestly, adding himself as the co-author (Gauguin & U.G. Satō).¹² In the year preceding the creation of the poster, he initiated a poster campaign, to which he invited other designers. Their works were presented at a Paris demonstration organised by Gérard Paris-Clavel. Another poster, *Stop nuclear testing by India* (1998), makes its point unequivocally.¹³ In this project, the artist also relied on the interplay between black and white, but the brilliant idea distinctive for the concept was to reverse the figure of Buddha, giving him the shape of an atomic mushroom cloud. In this form, it functions on an emotional as well as intellectual level.

In matters of particular importance, impossible to conceal, Satō doesn't hesitate to formulate blunt, even alarming messages, using black and white only. Sometimes he adds elements to the poster that at first sight may seem comical; while deciphering, they reveal their true meaning and give the viewer a huge lump in the throat. In the work *Warning against Warming*¹⁴ (1998) (fig. 5) he depicts a penguin taking off its black "tailcoat", which takes the form of a dead animal. The tiger's fur in the poster *Preserve the natural heritage* (1998) (fig. 6) is not naturally naturally mottled, but covered with numerous handprints – apparently the animal has been marked, patted by people.¹⁵ Global warming is a problem that Satō often exposes. In the poster under this title¹⁶ from 1997, a giraffe speckled with continental shapes emerges from water in which it has been submerged to the neck; the continents, flooded by the oceans, have become mere traces; a map around the neck of

¹² In the 1860s, and later in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, French artists were fascinated by Japanese art (especially the *ukiyo-e* woodcut) and drew from it in full, incurring a great "aesthetic" debt to Japanese artists.

¹³ Anti Nuclear Testing Committee, silkscreen.

¹⁴ The Pan-Pacific Committee for Environmental Poster Design Exhibition, 1998.

¹⁵ Lex Drewinski is close to the Japanese designer in this way of thinking; many years later made the poster *Tańczący z wilkami* [Dances with the Wolves], in which the shoe-prints traced next to the dead wolf mark the route of the hunter. In 2002, both outstanding designers, the Polish and the Japanese, had a joint exhibition in the USA (California State University, Northridge Art Galleries. *Posters of U.G. Satō and Lex Drewinsky*). Both designers are renowned for their intelligence and agile mental shortcuts they employ in their designs.

¹⁶ Poster made for The United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change, Kyoto 1997, silkscreen.

the animal. This excellent concept for the *Water for Life* (2005, silkscreen) (fig. 7) poster – multi-layered, referring the recipient to the symbolism of water, regardless of the weight of the message – visually and symbolically combines East and West in its message, while accentuating the universality of the problem. The repeated motto is written in English, while the letters remain in portrait format, in columns, from top to bottom. The effect of falling letters was achieved by imitating a brush dipped in watercolours with blue shades, thus indicating the importance of water as a medium, a pigment carrier. Employing a concept permeated with simplicity, but visually sophisticated, the author expresses the idea: water for life, water for art. A similar notion of associating letters, numbers, and characters with water was employed by Shinmura Norito in a typographic and photographic poster *Global warming* (2006). In the visual stratum, however, the design is based on a completely different idea; black text is washed away by water, and the sunken signs, letters and numbers merge, losing their shape and legibility.

One of the aspects of U.G. Satō's designs is the balance between the Eastern and Western traditions of imaging. An important place in his projects is taken by Mount Fuji,¹⁷⁾ whose silhouette is transferred to the form of a freshly washed, snow-white cloth drying on a line; another time, he inscribes the mountain with the silhouette of a white bird with spread wings that looks like a snow stain against the blue background. Another project from the same year is also executed in white and shades of blue. An open can with white ring-shape pull covering its upper part refers overwhelmingly to the snow-capped top of Mount Fuji. This image can be read as an element of nature contaminated by human interference (in opposition to the purity, freshness, and freedom symbolized by the dove and white fabric on the aforementioned projects), but on the other hand, an aluminum can is an easily reusable package; thanks to aluminum recycling, one can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decrease air and water pollution, and landfill expansion. Nevertheless, since the poster is a part of an original exhibition, the plethora of pull rings may refer to multiple opening of the same can, the one containing the inspiration and talent of the designer himself.

¹⁷⁾ Posters created for own exhibition in 2008.

THERE IS A GREAT EMPHASIS IN JAPANESE DESIGN
FOR THE FOUR SEASONS AND THE SEA, SKY, SUN AND TREES
ARE KEY ELEMENTS OF DESIGN¹⁸⁾

In numerous projects, Satō draws attention to the relationship between the individual and the elements of nature; he provides the viewers with seemingly evident truths which are not obvious to everyone. Satō depicted the intricate dependencies between the world of plants and animals, with particular emphasis on the tree motif (along with its symbolism) in an intriguing series of works entitled *Where can Nature go?* (1993). In one of them, he builds the silhouette of a tree from the motifs of birds and their many-coloured wings (*The Tree is full of life*) (fig. 8). Another poster, which shares its title with the entire cycle, depicts the dynamic silhouette of an inclined tree merged with leopards leaping from its branches, and partly incorporated into these branches; in the next, the tree is formed out of birds with their wings extended, which uproot it when flying away (fig. 9). A literal, visual link between different species of animals and trees is also found in the *Green Crisis* (1993), in which the shape of a tree is formed from the silhouettes of bears. Simultaneously, Satō creates various hybrids, running zebras (fig. 10) with trees rooted in their backs (the tree trunks smoothly morph into the animals' stripes) that move the trees from place to place, as do leaping leopards, whose paws grow into a tree. In the poster *Trees are all eyes* (1993), eyes with multi-coloured irises flash mysteriously, among the spruce branches, reminding of the presence of *kami*, mysterious creatures or ghosts. Speaking about the methods and the goals of his creation during the exhibition of his posters at the Ginza Graphic Gallery in May 1993, Satō also referred to trees: "This time I brought up ecology, my theme for the past twenty years, with familiar and symbolic trees. With humour and using illusions. I tried to be as symbolic as possible in showing the anger, sorrow, pleasure and joy of trees or their *moodiness*. I tried to create a kind of visual shock by creating an optical illusion in a very ordinary, easy-to-ignore picture. That is my message. I hope that these many attempts that retain a sense of playfulness naturally relate to ecology."¹⁹⁾

¹⁸⁾ Watano (1992: 21).

¹⁹⁾ <http://www.dnp.co.jp/CGI/gallery/schedule/detail.cgi?l=2&t=1&seq=221>(21. 02. 2019).

One of the principles that Satō uses in design is *notan*, the harmony of black and white which, one not being able to exist without the other, creates unity.²⁰⁾ This is the cover of a picture book *Animals and Human Beings*²¹⁾ (published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, 1987); the black silhouette of the elephant engulfs the black or white silhouettes of several other animals. These figures are dominated by a person standing on the back of the elephant with a red apple in his hand. The person seems to grow beyond this pyramid of dependencies, although it is impossible to survive outside the ecosystem. Many of Satō's projects bring this deep awareness regarding the interdependence of species, people, animals, plants, and other living organisms to the fore. This relationship is presented graphically, just like a jigsaw puzzle, one element being contained in another, meshing with the adjacent ones, unable to exist without each other, because the shape of one form determines that of the other.²²⁾ The use of optical illusion is a procedure frequently used by Japanese designers, and Satō is aware of the goals of such action: "I have always tried to make my drawings vivid, as if they had been created by a magician, and as thrilling as if they were suspended in mid air, in a circus performance. Even if my aim is to bring to people's attention some miserable, gloomy state present in the world, from which they would normally avert their eyes, by using unexpected humour, though it may at first glance appear nonsensical, it might attract people's attention and awaken their awareness."²³⁾

A designer who, apart from Satō, directs the attention of his audience to endangered species of animals is Kazumasa Nagai (born in 1929). He does so in a mode different than Satō, though no less evocatively. In the series of post-

²⁰⁾ Black and white, according to the principle of negative and positive (in Western understanding of the concept), define each other and the limits of their forms; in Japan, there is no such distinction.

²¹⁾ This picture book became an inspiration for a Czech writer, Miroslav Kutílek, who wrote texts for pictures by U.G. Satō (*Alternativní bajkýdky*, Praha 2003).

²²⁾ The same method is used in design in the sculptures, objects in the open air or utility items (wooden boxes with corners cut into the outlines of animals and human figures, the monument „SKY WAY” 2005, cut out negative forms). Similarly, a considerable amount of Lex Drewinski's output constitutes black and white posters, "negatives". The background in these pictures creates a form that emerges from a different one. In other words, the black and white surfaces interact to create unity in the image. This principle guiding the structure of the background and figure results from the application of one of many tricks in the field of the psychology of vision.

²³⁾ U.G. Satō quoted by Matul (2014 : 13).

ers *I'm here* (1992) Nagai created elegant portraits of animals, sophisticated in form yet fragmentary (figs. 11, 12). The characteristic “crest” accompanying the outlines of their silhouettes gives an interesting optical experience. In the stream of light accompanying the rhinoceroses, giraffes or elephants some other small figures representing the same species are visible. The significance of the presented creatures is emphasized by the title being the voice of animals; it not only proclaims their physical presence but also requests that this presence take root in people’s consciousness. Kazumasa Nagai’s posters have been exhibited all over Europe, including Poland, and the suggestion contained in them is more necessary for Westerners than for the Japanese themselves, since as the author puts it: “From the early days of Japan there existed a philosophy that any living things - humans, animals, and plants – are equal, the spirits dwell in mountains, rivers, woods, and animals, and that people must pay respect to them and learn how to live harmoniously with them. (...) I think such a philosophy is deeply rooted in Oriental countries including Japan. I would like to continue to learn its wisdom.”²⁴ In a series of posters *Life* (from 2001) issued in screen printing (figs. 13,14). Nagai subtly and decoratively combines animal and ornamental-organic motifs. These posters are original statements, monochromatic studies of insects, fungi, bird eggs and animal heads seen frontally. Nagai masterfully recreates the texture and arrangement of feathers and fur, the outline of shells. Through this action, he emphasizes the value of careful observation and manual work while also presenting the ability to synthesize the most important characteristics of an animal species, whose image is reduced to the form of a sign or fragment (e.g. fox, tiger, elephant, monkey filling the entire poster space). Animal portraits, their heads in close-up (and the word *Life* adorned into one of the animal’s eyes) catch the viewers’ attention and hold them in suspense as if they were standing in front of the living representatives of each species. These works are a testimony to artificiality, the conventionality of the division into graphic art and graphic design, acting as a poster conveying a message and at the same time are sophisticated works of art also affecting human sensitivity with their beauty.

²⁴ Nagai (1992: 4).

NO MORE FUKUSHIMA

The earthquake that took place in Japan in March 2011 was the strongest in the country in 140 years. The tsunami wave triggered by it caused a breakdown at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. The forces of nature, devastating on an unprecedented scale, encountered an invention of human hands and mind – a power plant. The effect turned out to be disastrous for people. The Fukushima catastrophe sparked a ripple of malaise among many designers; some referred to the origins of the disaster, the earthquake, followed by its aftermath – the tsunami. Tetsuro Minorikawa created several posters, including *No more Fukushima*, with the motive of a cracking egg. In the *Tsunami Japan* (fig. 15) project, with a minimalist, thoughtful form and unusually strong impact, he showed mere fragments of fingers visible from under water flooding the world. The “drifting” letters of the title deepen the impression of the inevitable catastrophe and destruction.²⁵⁾ A similar message was included in the poster *No more Fukushima. Earthquake Japan*, depicting a hand that crumbles while grabbing another, like a stone sculpture. U.G. Satō created a poster *No more Fukushima* (fig. 16) as well; it is extremely unlike Minorikawa’s work. In his design, Satō proposed a decorative form, yet in the warning hues of yellow and black. The line forming the ornament with the skull in the middle turns out to be a wire ending with a plug bearing the symbol of nuclear energy. The title letters, alternately rising and falling, seem to vibrate optically as if due to an earthquake. A work worth mentioning at this point is a Polish project, *No more Fukushima* by Jan Bajtlik. He created a poster for the Kuwasawa Design School in Tokyo depicting the character from Edvard Munch’s *The Scream*. Drawing inspiration from the famous painting, just like U.G. Satō from Gauguin’s Tahitian woman, the Polish designer, however, made several drastic changes related to the subject of the tragedy; he depicted a black figure against a white background, replacing the head with a skull, and the eyes, nose, and mouth with symbols of nuclear energy.

²⁵⁾ This poster won at the Poster Biennale in Warsaw in 2012 in the category of the ideological poster.

CONCLUSION

Strongly impressed by the aesthetics of Japanese design, Catherine Bürer wrote with passion: “Every encounter with a Japanese poster opens up a new universe. Its driving force is sensitivity; aestheticism and provocation are its ideals. A profound desire for the essence of things, the ability to take risks, perfection as a demanding standard, a disciplined quest for expression and great precision of thought all preclude superficiality.”²⁶⁾ Alan Weill,²⁷⁾ in turn, pointed to the discipline of thinking and the ability to synthesize as the basic values of the Japanese poster created after 1945. The features mentioned above apply equally well to pacifist and ecological posters created by the Japanese. The specificity of this type of posters lies in the universality of the message, which is why some designers practice so-called “hybrid design”²⁸⁾ combining native tradition with Western influences. The message is understandable, which is desirable in a poster with a call to action, yet, for a European recipient, it frequently loses its mystery and its *kirei*. In becoming decipherable by the general public in a globalized world, it sometimes loses its Japanese flavour and the features that Catherine Bürer enumerated while deliberating on the definition of Japanese poster: “(...) a spectacle, a pleasure, a shudder, a shock? Like every miracle, it does not serve up instant comprehension, nor does it respond to conventional interpretation. It impresses through its elegance, its abstract components, its indirect message. Its profound impact or subtle gentleness must be felt before it can be understood.”²⁹⁾

As a rule, we need three seconds to perceive a poster, but whether we find it intriguing or want to read it habitually depends on the initial “impact,” mentioned by Bürer, or the subtlety of its impression in the realm of the subconscious. While viewing Japanese pacifist and organic posters, usually commissioned by international organizations or as contenders in various competitions, one can think that the use of popular motifs (dove,³⁰⁾ missile)

²⁶⁾ Bürer (1994: 9).

²⁷⁾ Weill (1990: 3).

²⁸⁾ A term coined by Tsune Sesoko, a Japanese publisher, in: Thornton (1991: 4).

²⁹⁾ Bürer (1994: 6).

³⁰⁾ In the Japanese tradition, a dove had a different meaning than the symbolism of a peace dove consolidated in post-World-War-II Europe; nowadays, the peaceful symbolism of a dove has already been adopted in Japan, though. See: Frühstück (2007: 173).

and the unification of means of expression is more common in anti-war posters.

In contrast, in posters appealing for the protection of the natural environment, Japanese designers have remained faithful to their visual tradition, perhaps because references to Mother Nature, visualizing inanimate matter, plants and animals or fleeting atmospheric phenomena has been practiced by Japanese artists for centuries. A representative example of the use of “Western” visual language in anti-war posters and “Japanese” pictorial language in ecological posters can be witnessed in the above-discussed projects by U.G. Satō, who has remained artistically active until the present day. In this context, it is worth referring to projects from the 1950s (perhaps the first examples of this type) to indicate this duality/rift in the way of visualizing pacifist and ecological ideas. I refer to the posters of Ryuichi Yamashiro (1920-1997). His *Protest against the use of nuclear weapons* (1957) is one with a white dove motif repeatedly used after the Second World War. In Yamashiro’s work, it falls head first, a red tear falling from its eye, with the globe inscribed in its silhouette. *The Forest (Deforestation)*, in turn, a poster from 1954, constitutes the quintessence of Japanese tradition, culture and aesthetics. It is a typographic poster created for a tree planting campaign with a composition consisting of repeated black ideographs of various sizes. The *kanji* characters themselves resemble the silhouette of a tree and are a record of the words: tree, forest; 木 is the ideogram for wood, while 森 and 林 mean forest. Outlined against a white background in a certain density, they bring to mind the distribution of trees in a forest. The brilliance of this idea is purely Japanese.

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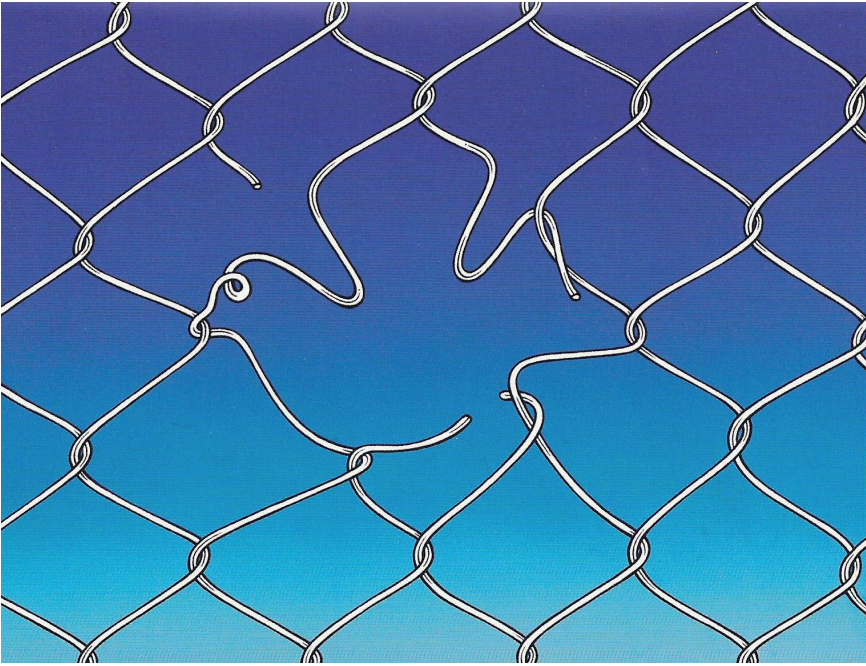
[68]



1. Yukiya Takakita, *Change from War to Ecology*, 1995



2. Tetsuro Minorikawa, *Sarajevo 1914-2014*, 2014



3. ▲ U.G. Satō, *Peace*, 1978

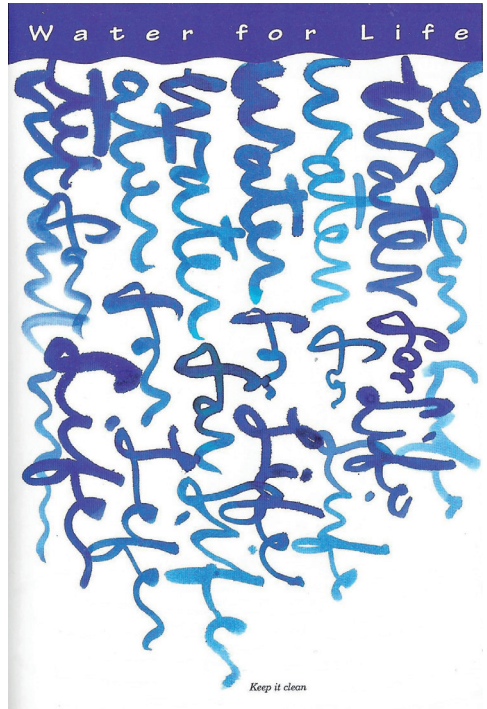
4. ◀ U.G. Satō, *No to nuclear testing*
(*Non aux essais nucléaires*), 1995



5. U. G. Satō, *Warning against Warming*, 1998



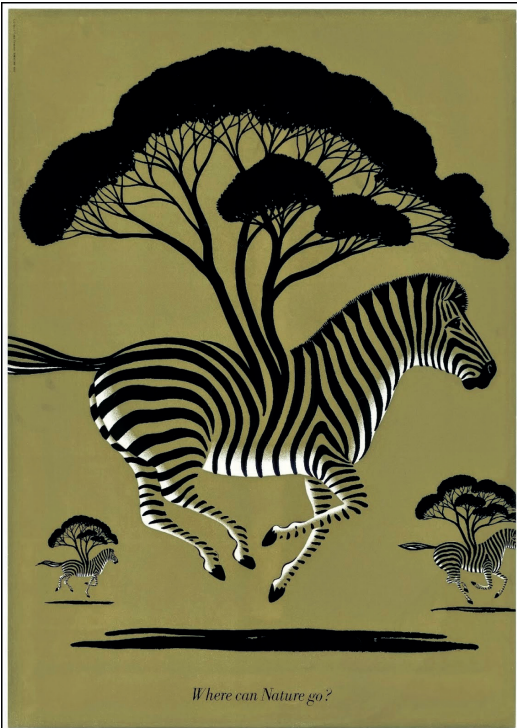
6. U. G. Satō, *Preserve the natural heritage*, 1998



7. U. G. Satō, *Water for Life*, 2005



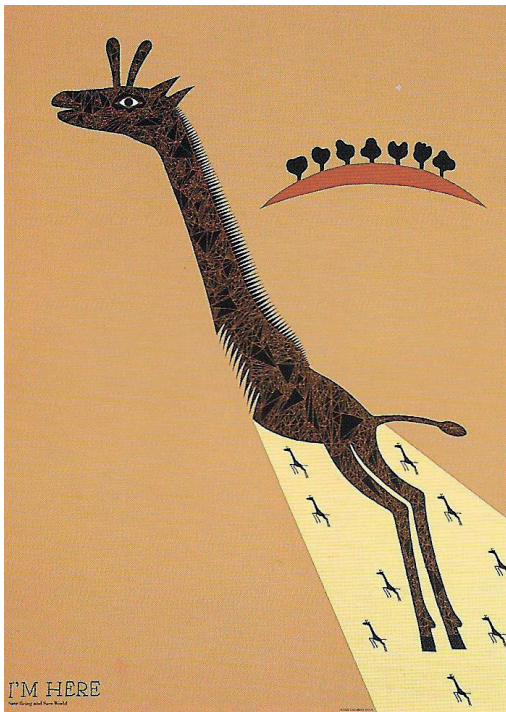
8. U. G. Satō, *The Tree is full of life*, 1993



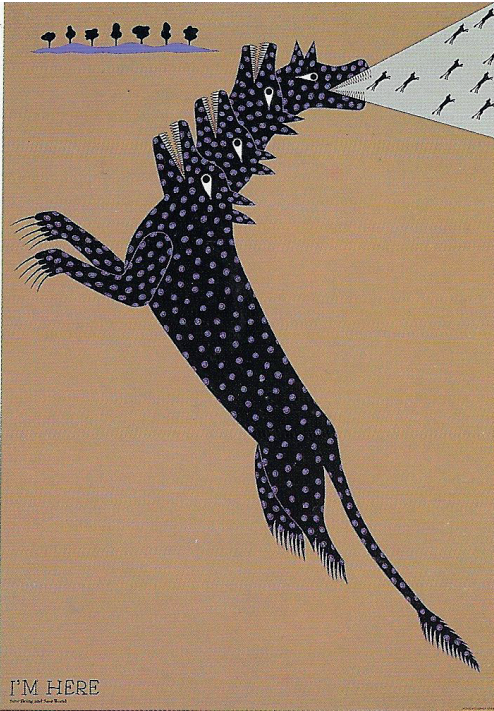
9. U. G. Satō, *Where can Nature go?*, 1993



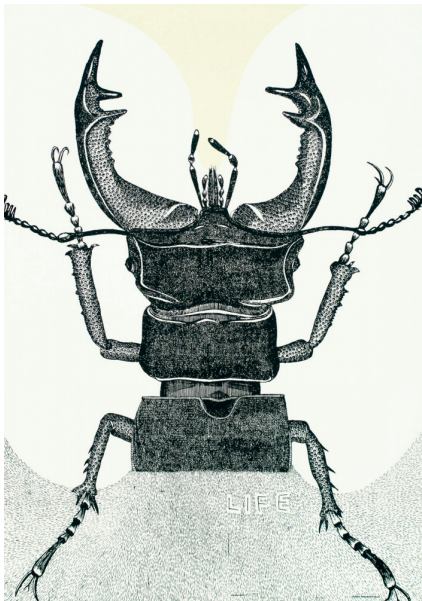
10. U. G. Satō, *Where can Nature go?*, 1993



11. Kazumasa Nagai, *I'm here*, 1992



12. Kazumasa Nagai, *I'm here*, 1992



13. Kazumasa Nagai, *Life*, 2003



14. Kazumasa Nagai, *Life*, 2003



15. Tetsuro Minorikawa, *Tsunami Japan*, 2011



16. U. G. Satō, *No more Fukushima*, 2011