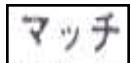


How To Identify Japanese Covers

by
Jerry Bell, Editor, AMCCS

As the next stage in our series on helping members to identify covers which do not show a country of origin, I have chosen Japan, which is one of the easier countries to identify of those which use similar characters.

If the cover does not state "Made in Japan" or "Made in Nippon", I use five methods of identifying whether it is from Japan or not. With luck, this captures about 70% of them. The rest are very difficult.

1. The most obvious place to start is the character which looks like a **J** with a dash, which I believe is part of a string of characters for the country of Japan, and is not found with any other country which uses similar characters. 
2. The Japanese word for match is "matchi", and the characters look like this: These characters are more commonly found on post-World War 2 covers. 
3. Look for the words "**SEI**" or "**SEIZO**" after a name, usually that of a factory, e.g. M. NAOKI SEIZO. It means "manufactures" in Japanese.
4. A small symbol sometimes appears on older covers. It looks like this: Likewise, here's another that commonly appears on post-World War 2 covers: I do not know what either symbol means. If any member knows the meaning of these symbols, I would greatly appreciate their advice, and I can publish this in a future edition. 

5. Some older characters made for the Chinese market show the Chinese characters for matches: Look for the normal Japanese identifier, which generally appears somewhere else on the cover. 

Here are some Japanese labels where you can see the various identifiers I've referred to:

*Ed note: Jerry was kind enough to let me reprint his article here from the June 2006 issue of the *Observer*, the Australian Match Cover Collectors' Society bulletin. I'm on Jerry's mailing list, and I get a lot of good information from the *Observer*. If you're a collector who's interested in the hobby Down Under, or just labels in general, you might wish to consider joining AMCCS.*

The bulletin is published quarterly, in magazine fashion. You can write to the membership officer: N. Youl, 13 Midvale Ave., North Balwyn, Victoria 3104 Australia.

AMCCS also has a web site that you can check for details:
<http://users.on.net/figg/amccs>

