

Use of Ladybugs as a Urinal Target in a Water Closet of a Variety Shop in Osaka, Japan

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Insects are found in almost every environment worldwide; thus, they influence human lives, minds, and souls. Insects are ubiquitous not only in the environment including human habitations, but also in human culture, where they are represented in literature, art, film, music, history, religion, cartoons, video games, etc (BERENBAUM, 1995; KONISHI, 2007; MEYER-ROCHOW *et al.*, 2008; KLEIN, 2012; TAKADA, 2010; 2013 a; HOSHINA & TAKADA, 2012). However, the representation of insect images on cultural objects has perhaps not been sufficiently explored. Therefore even simple questions in cultural entomology still remain as to how insects are represented in human culture, because the field in which studies insects' influence on human culture and societies, has been established for only approximately 30 years. Perhaps, insects are found in unimaginable extent of human culture.

In this report, as a curious example of insect representation in human culture, I recorded coccinellid insects being used as a urinal target to reduce splashing as an aim to maintain hygiene in gentlemen's toilets (Figs. 1 & 2). I found this target on March 1, 2014 in the water closet of a variety shop in Osaka, Japan. We can observe at a glance that the image is a realistic depiction of the seven-spot ladybug (*Coccinella septempunctata* LINNÉ, 1758).

Surprisingly, some have already reported insects being used as urinal targets to reduce splashing; for example, BEREMBAUM (2009) reported that fly images are used as urinal targets in the water closets of Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Moreover, TAKADA (2013b) reported bee-like images are used as urinal targets in gentlemen's toilets in Tengachaya Station, Nankai Electric Railway, Osaka, Japan. In contrast, SAKURATANI and SHIYAKE (2009) have reported that ladybugs are represented in various kinds of cultural media or objects and in many kinds of goods such as confectionery (TAKADA, 2013c). Perhaps, however, this is the first report of using coccinellids as urinal targets. This representation may be unexpected for many entomologists because ladybugs are



Fig. 1. Gentlemen's water closet of a variety shop in Osaka.



Fig. 2. Ladybug-shaped urinal target to reduce splashing as an aim to maintain hygiene in gentlemen's toilet.

not unsanitary pests, but harmless and unthreatening insects, and are not usually associated with water closets or unsanitary places. Furthermore, ladybugs are cute insects with calm behavior that might not, to entomologists at least, imply as a target. Some western gentlemen might even hesitate to aim at such a realistic depiction, because western countries traditionally associate ladybugs with good luck (ADAMS, 1992; TAKADA, 2013 c).

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