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AESTHETIC JOURNEYS AND MEDIA PILGRIMAGES IN THE CONTEXTS OF POP CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FROM AND TO EAST ASIA

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AURORE YAMAGATA-MONTOYA, MAXIME DANESIN & MARCO PELLITTERI

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AESTHETIC JOURNEYS AND MEDIA PILGRIMAGES IN THE CONTEXTS OF POP CULTURE AND THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES FROM AND TO EAST ASIA

EDITED BY

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Fashionable pilgrims:
Rental and second-hand kimono shops styling paths of new embodied communities

Lucile DRUET | Kansai Gaidai University, Japan

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ABSTRACT

Ever since the Meiji period, the kimono has been commodified — nationally and internationally — as the Japanese national dress, symbolising Japan as a land full of exquisite, exotic traditions. While kimono production is now in decline, its image is still thriving, actively promoted and marketed to attract tourists — domestic and international ones alike — in quest of an "authentic", sometimes premium, Japan experience.

As a result, the kimono consumed by visitors in Japan, especially in the emblematic "traditional" Kyoto, becomes an object that can be placed at the nexus of content and fashion tourism as well as pilgrimage, with the rental kimono practices or second-hand kimono purchases employing similar liminal dynamics.

This article analyses the interactions the kimono entertains between design and marketing, experience and global consumerism, tourism and pilgrimage; mapping the different territories shared by kimono pilgrims and their communitas *by first looking at kimono as contents and secondly, kimono as rental / second-hand object.*

KEYWORDS

Kimono; Tradition; Content tourism; Fashion tourism; Pilgrimage; *Communitas*.

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Introduction

As recent studies show, pilgrimage covers — concretely and metaphorically — many territories and connects with many different narratives, whether they achieve personal or more social goals. Many aspects of pilgrimage can be seen as engaging polarised elements that are useful when analysing the dynamics in tourism studies, more specifically bringing new perspectives to the categories of contents tourism (Seaton and Yamamura, 2005,

2017, 2020), cultural tourism (Mc Kercher and Du Cros, 2002), fan tourism (Sugawa-Shimada, 2015; Greene, 2016) and fashion tourism.[1]

In other words, pilgrimage is not limited to sanctity and religious activities. It can be an effective framework for fostering new ideas for the above-mentioned fields and the kimono industry as well. As phrased by Ian Reader (1993: 5):

> When talking of pilgrimage in the religious traditions […] one is only touching upon some of the many manifestations of pilgrimage. […] Indeed, a general examination of the word and concept of pilgrimage indicates that its scope runs far beyond the boundaries of visitors to shrines and holy sites connected with official religious traditions into areas far more concurrent with the secular world.

By its hybrid and versatile nature, pilgrimage applies to a wide spectrum of times, objects, itineraries and spaces, combining the sacred with the mundane, the serious with the recreational. The way *omiyage* changed from being souvenirs strictly tied to a shrine or a temple (お宮笥) to being just regarded "material memory" of a place (お土産) presents an interesting parallel, as with modernity, pilgrimage routes developed the practice of mixing "prayer with pleasure" (Cwiertka and Yasuhara, 2020: 77). Pilgrimage, beyond this reification trajectory, also contains a liminal aspect:

> Within the diversity of the pilgrimage experience, certain key elements recur so often that they shape how we understand the term: the destination and what makes it special; the route traveled, with its rigors, joys, and power to transform; the personal motivation for undertaking the journey; the end result, be it transformation, disappointment, or catharsis; the relationship between pilgrimage and sense of identity, both personal and communal […] [thus pilgrims can be perceived] as stepping out of their base culture to join — albeit temporarily — a new society based on classless shared experience […] In this view pilgrimage is a liminal experience, involving a leave-taking and a temporary otherness, followed by a re-entry into the base culture. (Davidson and Gitlitz, 2002: XVII-XVIII).

[1] Fashion tourism is a relatively new topic in that regard, especially fashion tourism in Japan. General definitions and contextualisation can be found in the following articles: Lewis, Clifford — Kerr, Gregory M. — Burgess, Lois (2013), A Critical Assessment of the Role of Fashion in Influencing the Travel Decision and Destination choice. *International Journal of Tourism Policy,* 5 (1/2), pp.4-18; Craik, Jennifer (2013), Fashion, Tourism and Global Culture. In: Black, Sandy, *et al.*, *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 353-370.

With these considerations about pilgrimage, content and fashion tourism in mind, renting a kimono and / or buying a second-hand kimono, specifically in Kyoto, appears as a practice at the nexus of such categories. It can also, potentially, bring new perspectives on pilgrimage scholarship, which often avoids talking about the implication of clothing, as well as new lines for fashion studies to think about the globalisation and localisation of clothes, especially when consumed by tourists.

Put differently, Japanese nationals, residents and international tourists dressing in kimono during their visit to or tour of Kyoto can be seen as pilgrims, with the kimono being either the goal or the means to complete a mediated Japanese experience, inviting considerations about embodiment, movement, wrapping[2] and class as it has become a typical activity for both the elite and the middle-class tourist.

The question this article will examine is: to what degree does the kimono rental / second-hand experience relate to pilgrimage? What level of awareness does a tourist have of pilgrimage when dressed in kimono and touring around Kyoto in it or when buying a second-hand kimono as a souvenir?

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on national and international travel, only visual material (from pamphlets and websites) and data gathering had been conducted. This article thus mainly employs methodology based on visual anthropology and critical discourse analysis (CDA)[3] principles as well as analysis of empirical observations as a Kyoto resident living in the city for the past ten years. First, seeing what kimono implies in terms of symbolical contents and fashion implications. Secondly, analysing how the rental and second-hand shops are curating the kimono experience for such "pilgrims".

1. Kimono then and now: historical and contemporary territories

1.1. Kimono branding Japan, Japan branding kimono

Since the Meiji era (1868-1912), the kimono has been employed as a commodity that disseminates the image of Japan as a sophisticated nation, not yet up to Western standards

[2] It has been noted that Japan has developed its arts and culture on a wrapping mindset: paper or cloth wrapping resonating with positive values such as diligence, purity, and service. See Hendry, Joy (1993), *Wrapping Culture: Politeness, Presentation and Power in Japan and Other Societies.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[3] A key concept in social sciences theory (now also applied in marketing) following what has been established and theorised by Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas. See: Foucault, Michel (1972), *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books; Habermas, Jürgen (1981,1985), *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Boston: Beacon Press.

of technology, but very well developed aesthetically.[4] The kimono, analogous to an ambassador, is thus a visual advocate for a delicate, beautiful, and articulate culture, albeit simplified. From a foreign perspective, kimono was — and is still often — placed into the category of ethnic costume with no other meaning than signalling a faraway land, thus allowing all kinds of sartorial liberties.[5]

The kimono was, for instance, worn without an *obi* in a relaxed, carefree manner, because it was seen as a loose type of loungewear. Although described clearly by Lafcadio Hearn in his book *Glimpse of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894: 483), the kimono would often be worn in the West with the right panel crossed over the left one, the way Western female attire (especially buttoned shirts) is designed although to Japanese eyes this dressing disruption would be seen as shocking, a gesture bringing bad luck. This mishap shows how the kimono, once it "migrated West", was rearranged by the sartorial customs of the country of adoption.

The kimono, by fitting into the category of the oriental and the exotic, also fell into the malleable '*objet*' category that can be re-dimensioned to fit the desired effect of the collector, "interpreted from the collector's rather than the creator's frame of reference" (Guth, 2004: 167). As phrased by Terry Satsuki Milhaupt (2014: 158-159):

> The kimono, whether as a souvenir or collectible object, was a referent to Japan as imagined by its owner, not as lived within a Japanese context. […] The kimono's owner could project onto this garment his or her longing for a Japan that was "traditional", exotic, unchanging or whatever image suited his or her fancy, regardless of the kimono's function and symbolism within Japan.

More concretely speaking, the kimono as an object in the West became widely collected by artists such as Georges Hendrik Breitner, William Merritt Chase, Gustav Klimt, Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, James Tissot, James McNeil Whistler (Wichmann, 1981: 16-21), and

[4] The idea that Japan positioned itself as an aesthetic country, exporting its "traditional" arts, can be seen in many publications, such as: Irvine, Gregory (ed.) (2013), *Japonisme and the Rise of the Modern Art Movement: The Arts of the Meiji Period*. New York: Thames & Hudson; Morais, Liliana (2019), Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts Historical and Political Trajectories from the Meiji Period until Today. *Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies,* 11, pp. 139-146.

[5] Like the kaftan imported from the Middle East did a few decades earlier during the Orientalism movement. See more in the following exhibition catalogues: Fukai, Akiko (1996), *Japonism in Fashion*. Kyoto: Kyoto Costume Institute; Martin, Richard — Koda, Harold (1994), *Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress.* New-York: Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Mary King Longfellow (Guth, 2004: 185). Wealthy collectors as well as upper-class ladies and actresses like Lotta Crabtree, Ruth St Denis, Elsie Whelen Goelet Clews, and Alice Roosevelt Longworth (Lynch and Strauss, 2015: 180) were kimono enthusiasts too, most likely inspired by the success of Sada Yacco's performances and Giacomo Puccini's *Japoniste* opera, *Madama Butterfly*. In this way, the kimono in the West became the trope for a passive, diligent woman while being a fun, relaxed garment, the representation of a certain ideal and the representation of the privileged class, with Americans using the kimono to emphasise women's domesticity in a more positive light while Europeans framed the kimono within the "*fin de siècle*" aesthetic (Stevens and Wada, 1996: 52).

Japanese paintings, *Ukiyo-e* prints, and photographs imported during these Japonisme times (from the 1870s until the 1930s) by displaying ladies *in situ* dressed in silk kimono, consolidated this now systematic association of kimono as symbol of prim and proper Japan, a country that is civilised, treating women equally (Sievers, 1983: 16-18). The *bijin* (attractive woman) terminology used to form the whole *bijinga* iconography, including events such as the photo contest organised by the newspaper *Jiji Shunpō*[6]*,* illustrate this trend. The use of geisha related imagery, in postcards, souvenir photographs, and ephemera made for national and international use (Wakita, 2013: 65-92), was amplified by "real" geisha bodies, for instance O-Kane, O-Sumi and O-Sato, who served at the tea house built by Kiyomizu Ryūzaburō for the Paris World Exhibition in 1867 (Lockyer, 2001: 67; Aso, 2013: 26). These multiple promulgations of the geisha figure perfected the idea that Japan is a beautiful, quaint, kimono clad country.

The *Britannia Pacificatrix* mural (Figure 1) celebrating the British Empire's position at the end of WWI[7] further exemplifies this vision, giving more visual evidence that Japan was understood as the land of kimono. While the countries regarded as powerful (America, France, Italy, Russia and the four great British "dominions" at the time: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa) are allegorically represented, dressed with symbols of grandeur; the ones considered inferior are depicted as children in need of protection, in a

[6] For more detailed definition of the term *bijin* (美人) and its commodification, see: Mizuta Lippit — Miya Elise (2013), 美人/ Bijin / Beauty. *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, pp. 1-14; Fraser, Karen (2012), Beauty Battle. Politics and Portraiture in Late Meiji Japan. In: Yuen Wong, Aida (ed.), *Visualizing Beauty. Gender and Ideology in Modern East Asia,* pp. 11-22.

[7] Completed in 1921, it is now displayed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office, London. See: https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/11.1/forum_mirkovic.html (Accessed 15 April 2021).

diminishing, reductive view. As a result, the representation of Japan stands out: as it is symbolised by a rather realistically depicted Japanese young lady, in complete kimono garb. Her outfit also includes the *tabi* socks and *zori* sandals, while the other "nations" are either barefooted or in antique roman sandals.

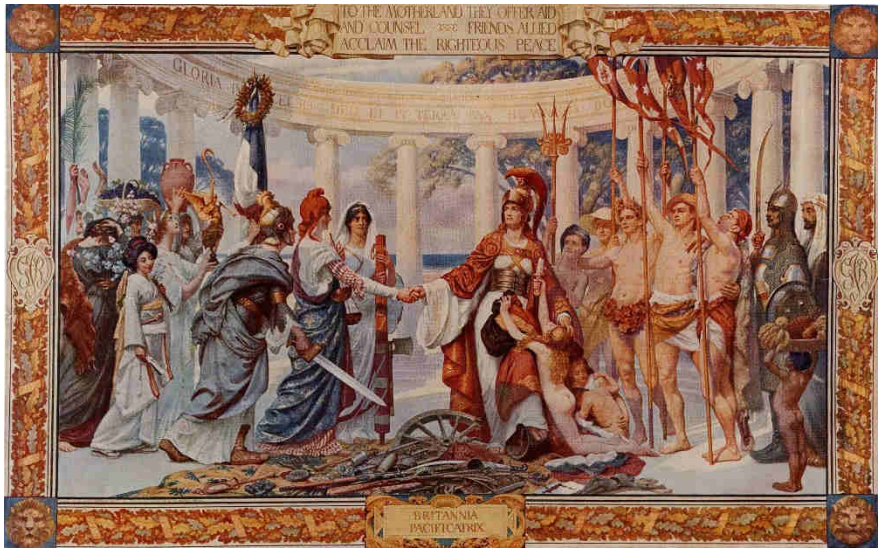

Fig. 1. Sigismund Goetze, *Britannia Pacificatrix* (mural painting - 1921).

A Inside national borders too, the kimono came to be representative of Japan as a powerful, modern nation, serving nationalist agendas promoted by the government and the army. For example, the 1895 victory of Japan over China (First Sino-Japanese war), and the 1905 victory of Japan over Russia (Russo-Japanese war) resulted in a halt in the adoption of Western fashion and a new push for kimono as national dress. In the late 1930s, the kimono became an even more effective tool to promote the military expansion campaigns and propaganda, its design and motifs tapping into an eclectic imagery: soldiers, generals, horses, dogs, tanks, zero fighter planes, and flags were in use in Mussolini's Italy and Nazi Germany as well as the Hinomaru and the Manchukuo (Atkins, 2005; Inui, 2007).

But ever since the end of WWII, the kimono has been seen as an industry in decline: for instance, the kimono represented a market worth $16 billion dollars (17,240 億円) in 1982 but only $2.5 billion dollars (3,010 億円) in 2015.[8] Other sources show that the

[8] See table on page 6 in the joint report by 和装振興研究会 [Wasō shinkō kenkyūkai][National Dress Preservation Association] and the 経済産業省 製造産業局 [Keizaisangyōshō Seizōsangyōkyoku] [Ministry

domestic kimono production was 16,500,000 pieces in 1966 but only 40,000 pieces in 2016, a decrease of 97.5%.[9] Domestic expenditures surveys (家計調査) confirm the decline, with $53.2 million dollars (6022 百万円) spent on kimono (also called *wafuku*) in 2006 and about $9.6 million dollars (1083 百万円) in 2020, a sharp 82% decrease in less than twenty years.[10]

Noting that the majority of frequent kimono wearers are well-established adults, generally between 50 and 70 years old[11] further confirms that the kimono in postwar Japan shifted from hegemony to rarity, from all kinds of people, both children and adults, to mostly married, wealthy women. These numbers highlight how kimono usage / frequency moved rapidly from every day to occasional to rare, now only connected to ceremonies, family rituals, the practice of traditional arts, or other formal occasions. Following a strict code of manners — the etiquette and set of rules emphasised by social traditions as well as the authoritative *kitsuke* schools[12] — the

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of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)] 「和装振興研究会：報告書」[Wasō shinkō kenkyūkai: hōkokusho][National Dress Preservation Association: Report] (June 2015). Available from https://www.meti.go.jp/committee/kenkyukai/seizou/wasou_shinkou/pdf/report01_01_00.pdf (Accessed 29 November 2021). See also the table discussed in the online magazine Status, 着物需要の変化：「仲人」の衰退と「エコ」という理念 [Kimono juyō no henka: nakōdo no suitai to eko to iu rinen][Changes in the kimono industry: brokers' decline and the new "eco" philosophy] (October 2021). Available from https://status-marketing.com/20211026-4230.html (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[9] See the「友禅生産統計」[Yūzen seisan tōkei] [Statistics on Yūzen production] report (April 2017). Available from http://www.taizou.jp/blog/2017/04/27.php (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[10] See page 8 of the report 令和 3 年度第 1 回伝統産業生活化推進審議会 [Reiwa san nendo dai ikkai dentō sangyō seikatsu suishin bangikai][First Report of the Committee on Activities for Traditional Industries](August 2021),「後半期 5 年間に向けて」[kōhanki go nenkan ni mukete] [Laying Out the Next Five Years Segment]. Available from (Accessed 28 November 2021): https://www.city.kyoto.lg.jp/sankan/cmsfiles/contents/0000073/73676/02R03shiryo.pdf.

[11] See page 8 of the report by 経済産業省繊維課 [Keizaisangyōshō Sen'ika] [Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Textile and Clothing Division] (January 2015),「和装振興研究会 ～きものて 日本の魅力を向上する～ 論点資料」[Wasō shinkō kenkyukai ~ kimono de nihon no miryoku wo kōjō suru~ ronten shiryō] [Documents from the Japanese Clothing Research Group: showing the appeal of Japan with kimono]. Available from (Accessed 28 November 2021): https://www.meti.go.jp/committee/kenkyukai/seizou/wasou_shinkou/pdf/001_03_00.pdf.

[12] Kitsuke schools are this way considered the guardians of kimono's elegant and formal "tradition", focusing on training and passing on the way (道) of wearing kimono to students who fell out of such knowledge by lack of mother / daughter generational transmission. The schools are also sought after because women interested in kimono think that studying through a school is the only proper way to learn it correctly as it legitimises their approach. But the main restraint might be the cost of such training, thus nowadays most of the schools strategise by first proposing free classes which can later be turned into more expensive certification courses, emphasising the degree of seriousness and dedication proper kimono wearing implies. See these examples: Nihon Wasō (日本和装) https://www.Wasōu.com/course/ (Accessed 29 November 2021); Hakubi Kyōto Kimono Gakuin (ハクビ京都きもの学院) http://www.hakubi.net (Accessed 29 November 2021); Sekka Kimono Gakuin (雪花き

kimono is used in a limited time and space, conforming to an irreproachable image, one matching the idea of being — allegedly — the "most beautiful ethnic dress in the world […] [holding] quasi-spiritual qualities" (Maynard, 2004: 83). The '*kimono no hi*' celebrated every year on November 15th[13] confirms the ambivalent paradox of the kimono and its culture nowadays: it is represented everywhere, esteemed and respected, yet technically, economically, emotionally more and more inaccessible.

In reaction to these traditions, designers are putting on the market kimonos that are seen as more fashionable, more casual, and less expensive. In terms of tailoring and design itself, designers either break the cylindrical silhouette by making the skirt shorter, opening the collar overlap or bring a refreshing taste with innovative fabrics, trendy motifs that are often dyed using faster processes or being inkjet printed (Cliffe, 2017; Valk, 2018a, 2018b; Hall, 2020). This is the case with haute couture designers such as Shito Hisayo, Jotaro Saito, Hiroko Takahashi, and the brand Yoshikimono. More middle class, but equally inventive, are the brands Modern Antenna, Rumi Rock, Kimono Hearts, and Gofukuyasan, reinterpreting colour combinations and cultural identification with outfits inspired by hard rock music, street fashion, and iconic art history references (Botticelli, Van Gogh, etc.). In an effort to make it relevant again to people accustomed to Western clothes — with their fast, cyclical pace and easy dressing procedures — new ways to accessorise and wear a kimono are advertised, as seen in the numerous Instagram accounts and magazines such as *Kimono Hime* (now renamed *Kimono Anne*) and *Nanaoh*.

Nowadays, dressing in kimono takes one into a doubled otherness, embracing the fact that this mode of dress is, on the one hand, a national emblem, a heritage (Dalby, 1993: 3;

もの学院) https://sekkakimonogakuin.com (Accessed 29 November 2021); Kimono Kikata Kyōshitsu Ichiru (きもの着方教室・いち瑠) https://ichiru.net (Accessed 29 November 2021); Kyōto Kimono Gakuin (京都きもの学院) http://www.kyoto-kimono-g.jp (Accessed 29 November 2021); Naganuma Kimono Gakuin (長沼静きもの学院) https://www.naganuma-kimono.co.jp (Accessed 29 November 2021). See more in the following references: Goldstein-Gidoni, Ofra (1999), Kimono and the Construction of Gendered and Cultural Identities. *Ethnology, An International Journal of Cultural and Social Anthropology*, 38 (4), pp. 351-370; Assmann, Stephanie (2008), Between Tradition and Innovation: The Reinvention of the Kimono in Japanese Consumer Culture. *Fashion Theory. The Journal of Dress Body and Culture*, 12 (3), pp. 359-376; Yamanaka, Norio (2012), *The Book of Kimono*. New York: Kodansha International. First Edition 1982; Valk, Julie (2021), *Selling the Kimono. An Ethnography of Crisis, Creativity and Hope*. Abingdon, Oxon New York, NY: Routledge, p.32; pp. 59-61.

[13] キモノの日 has been established in 1966. See: https://www.kimononohi.org (Accessed 29 November 2021).

Satsuki Milhaupt, 2014: 7), so monumental and immutable that some organisations advocate for the kimono to be registered on the UNESCO list;[14] and, on the other hand, the kimono is resourceful, creative, and resonates with contemporary demands.

In other words, kimono invite people into a rich and fluid dialogue between timeless, eternal shapes (the wrapped silhouette, Y shaped collar and rectangular sleeves, the left panel "draped" over the right one), and more versatile use of symbols, patterns, colours, combinations, and accessories.

This duality has been noticed by numerous kimono scholars and Amanda Stinchecum (1984: 9) summarises it as follows:

> Japan has maintained a single tradition in clothing over many centuries. The kimono, modern descendant of the *kosode*, persists as the national dress. Kimono are still worn at New Year's, for tea ceremonies, and occasionally to shrines and temples. They lend their wearers an air of timeless, gracious formality. […] The effect of timelessness in Japanese dress is a startling acknowledgement of the persistence of ancient taste in the culture. […] Style and fashion, individual preference and the love of novelty, have found expression far less in the cut of Japanese garments than in the patterning and decoration of their fabrics.

The recent exhibitions — dedicated to both kimono as historical clothing and kimono as fashion — held in Paris, San Francisco, London and Tokyo[15] demonstrated this polarised, doubled nature of the kimono at length: the Guimet museum and V&A museum kimono exhibitions share many similarities, encompassing kimono designs and outfits from the late 17th to the early 21st century, tying Edo period pattern fashion with haute couture / catwalk silhouette fashion. The San Francisco exhibition was more focused on showing the kimono's influence on Western fashion, using examples which display the deconstructed, fragmented way kimono has changed how Western designers think and

[14] Activities and campaign by Kimono Nippon きもの日本: https://www.wasou.or.jp/wasou/about/w_heritage.html (Accessed 28 November 2021); Wasōka 和装家, https://omotenashi.or.jp (Accessed 28 November 2021); and the video recently published by Nihonwasō 日本和装, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlR3bc7HOEY (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[15] *Kimono. Au Bonheur des Dames.* Guimet Museum, Paris (February 22 to May 22, 2017); *Kimono Refashioned.* Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (February 8 to May 5, 2019); *Kimono: from Kyōto to Catwalk.* Victoria & Albert Museum, London (initially scheduled from February 29 to June 21, 2020. Closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it got rescheduled and open from August 27 to October 25, 2020); *Kimono: Fashioning Identities* Tokyo National Museum, Tokyo (initially scheduled from April 14 to June 7, 2020. Reported because of COVID-19 pandemic to June 30 - August 23, 2020).

build the shape, textures and contours of clothes while the one in Tokyo traced the DNA of kimono all the way back to the Heian period, in a linear, yet deep, manner.

In short, these exhibitions are valuable resources to understand how kimono fit and yet challenge the traditional register of "rapid change in shape" with which we define and date fashion in the West. Josephine Rout (2020b: 7) further anchors that idea when she formulates the following:

> [Kimono] epitomizes Japanese sartorial identity […] although the basic shape has not changed, the combination of materials, decorative techniques, patterns and way of wearing the garment varies drastically. […] As the most important aspect of Japanese dress is the surface decoration, it is the scale and placement of pattern that changes, as do the ways in which they are applied. The beauty of many kimono is the combination of multiple decorative techniques, including weaving, dyeing, painting and embroidery. In many cases, it is the technique that allows us to date a kimono.

On another level, when wearing kimono, one is getting into more than just a dress / dressing[16] affair: the materiality of the kimono leads one into a specific embodiment of Japanese culture linked to some degree to the respect of Japaneseness (Cliffe, 2017: 195), deeply connected to the history of Japan and one's own perception of his/her/their silhouette. Put differently, wearing a kimono is wrapping oneself into an exotic beauty, clearly different from other countries (Yamanaka, 1982: 9; Goldstein Gidoni, 1999: 353-354) and, ultimately, the kimono can be seen as something that has been crystallised over time as a valuable cultural and social asset. As Itoh Motoshige phrased: "If the kimono were to disappear, society would lose its gracious gloss" (2016: 3).[17]

The kimono, thus advertised and sold to tourists, domestic and international, is deeply connected to the traditional, immutable image of the kimono, as imagined in the Meiji era. This type of kimono may be an "invented tradition",[18] a modern, fabricated way to stay

[16] Here referring to the terminology and classification developed and analysed by Roland Barthes in his fashion essays, as seen in the edited volume titled *The Language of Fashion*, pp. 8-10.

[17] Translation by the author.

[18] As Eric Hobsbawm stated: "'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. […] [Inventing traditions] is essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition." (Hobsbawm, Eric — Ranger, Terence (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-4.). Further it was noted that:

in touch with an idealised past; it may have many shortcomings, but it has the power to create something appealing and dynamic, as a tradition that repeats itself or as a repeated tradition that is thus closely woven, intertwined, to the repetition of pilgrimage and more directly to the repetition of consumption. This "invited kimono" may also be seen pertaining to a certain "self-orientalism" dynamic which simplifies it too radically, but it is what prevails in the mind of the many consumers of kimono.

As mentioned above, the kimono represents traditional, exotic, quaint, exquisite Japan and tourist agencies and the general public are drawn to its Japaneseness and its clear-cut definition and identification procedures because Japaneseness and kimonos silhouettes sell well. A parallel here could be made with China and the use of *Qipao*, which is another "traditional" dress that brings to a polished, polite package orchestrated by the national tourist agency, controlling all the meaning and effects the clothing might have on the audience, repeating the same trope over and over again.[19] The Australian fashion designers using indigenous patterns to create alternatives to current Western outfits is another source that can be put in parallel as they are, like the kimono nowadays, good examples that demonstrate, as analysed by Margaret Maynard (2000: 149), how

> style is clearly an unstable, even fluid process [and] ethnicity, national imagery and perhaps indigenous imagery, too, can never be 'essential' but must be regarded as moving through cultures and throughout art forms and be seen as expandable and subjective notions, looking back to shared cultural and historical markers but always in process and never static.

What can be identified, underlying all this, it that the general tourist / pilgrim public also sees kimono as fashion, maybe not as deeply and articulately as fashion scholars do, especially the ones working to stop the Euro-centric vision of the definition and history of fashion,[20] but as something approachable, cheap, fun, and playful, as cosplay.

"Sometimes new traditions could be readily grafted on old ones, sometimes they could be devised by barring from the well-supplied warehouses of official ritual, symbolism and moral exhortation." (p. 6).

[19] See: Yan, Grace — Carla Santos (2009), 'CHINA, FOREVER': Tourism Discourse and Self-Orientalism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36 (2), pp. 293-315; Ng, Sandy (2018), Clothes Make the Woman: *Cheongsam* and Chinese Identity in Hong Kong. In: Pyun, Kyunghee — Wong, Aida Yuen. (eds), *Fashion, Identity and Power in Modern Asia*, pp. 357-378.

[20] There is a legion of books addressing that issue in recent years. See for example: Rath, Patricia — Petrizzi, Richard — Gill, Penny (2012), *Marketing Fashion: A Global Perspective*. New York: Fairchild Books; Jansen, Angela M. — Craik, Jennifer (2016), *Modern Fashion Traditions: Negotiating Tradition*

So, if there is a boom in kimono for tourists (rental and / or second-hand) it is because, on some level, the kimono is seen as an item one can easily shop for and integrate, sometimes for just one day, into one's dressing experience, changing temporarily into a mode of dress that is completely foreign, for the joy of feeling oneself deconstructed, elastic. As Cusack and Digance (2008: 228) described:

> People think of themselves less as members of a particular family or holders of particular values, and more as weaves of certain logos and frequenters of certain restaurants, resorts, and other temples of consumption. This creates a more plastic sense of self, with identities being "more flexible, amenable to infinite reshaping according to mood, whim, desire and imagination.

In terms of images, the kimono is to be seen yet again as a "double agent" that can be used to articulate, on many levels, the "tradition vs modernity" discourse about Japan. On the global 21st century stage, the country is in fact presented consistently as between past and present, nature and future: the traditional side usually represented by a young lady in kimono and the modern side symbolised by skyscrapers like Tokyo Sky Tree tower,[21] as seen in the poster released by the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) (Figure 2).[22] This type of duality is a long established imagery, tapping into the Meiji / Japonisme aesthetics, with airlines and Japan Travel Bureau (JTB) posters advertising national travel inside Japan and international travel to Japan with kimono, further exemplifying the idea that Japan equals peace, quiet, harmony, beauty; equals kimono.

and Modernity Through Fashion. London: Bloomsbury; Welters, Linda — Lillethun, Abby (2018), *Fashion History: A Global View.* London: Bloomsbury; Cheang, Sarah — De Greef, Erica — Yoko, Takagi (2021), *Rethinking Fashion Globalization*. London: Bloomsbury.

[21] With a traditional kimono-clad figure counterbalancing modernity, one can also see how the traditional side of Japan is treated like a demure, quiet girl while the modern side is epitomised with innovative, sharp, masculine energy.

[22] https://bascule.co.jp/work/jnto/ (Accessed 15 April, 2021).

Fig. 2. JNTO, *Japan: where tradition meets the future* (poster and website banner - 2016).

The 2006 *Cool Japan* campaign (Figure 3) proposes a fusion of tradition and modernity, making it quite fashionable with the kimono donned in a unique, atypical manner by the AmiYumi pop stars of PUFFY. The kimono presented here has a shorter hem, emphasising the legs and glittery boots worn by the duo.[23] The belt accessories create a clashing appearance, between traditional class and punk rebellion. The kimono thus stands out as new, but overall, it stays connected to the traditional Japanese imagery, as seen in the use of Mount Fuji (through the blown-up reproductions of two of Hokusai's most famous *Ukiyo-e* prints), the display of an eggplant and a hawk (one held by Ami the other by Yumi) symbolising in a surreal yet traditional way the *hatsuyume* (初夢) custom (Milhaupt, 2014: 242). Another version, released in 2010, includes the anime figure Rei Ayanami (Figure 4), further blending fantasy and reality with a character from the famous science-fiction, robot *mecha* anime and manga series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* with a realistic, seasonally sensitive, and easy to wear *yukata*, further consolidating the trope of seeing ladies in kimono as a signal of an open, beckoning, welcoming Japan while confirming the kimono as "enchanting anachronism" (Milhaupt, 2014: 240).

[23] The duo had already posed in such fashion kimono in the Summer 2005 issue of *Kateigaho International* magazine. See specifically the article: "Summer kimono and Yukata, PUFFY-style" pp. 60-69.

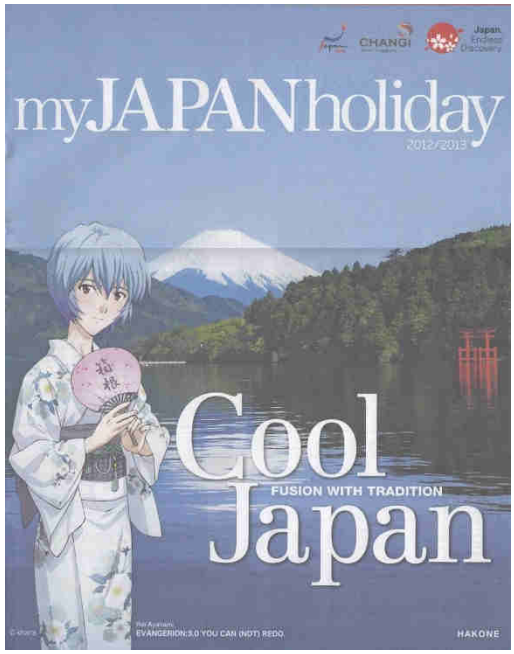

Fig. 3 & 4. (Left) JNTO, *Cool Japan: PUFFY Ami Yumi* (poster - 2006); **(Right)** JNTO, Cool Japan: Hakone (poster - 2010).

1.2. Kyoto as the Idealised venue for kimono

While the reality of kimono production in Japan is varied and found in many locales around the country,[24] with textile specificities pertaining to local techniques and climate, it is Kyoto that, in the postwar years, became the city most associated with the image and practice of kimono. Historically and aesthetically speaking, Kyoto can be considered as the epicentre of the kimono culture, as shown by the number of kimono craft and business associations located in Kyoto (about 28%, 17 groups out of 60 nationwide).[25]

The weaving and dyeing industry of the ancient capital has been praised for centuries and benefits from a positive, premium image, albeit in decline. In 1895, Kyoto counted

[24] See for example the map on page 6 in the「第 2 回和装振興協議会 事務局報告資料」[*Dainikai Wasō Shinkō Kyōgikai Jimukyoku Hokoku Shiryō*] [*Report Document from the 2nd Council on Japanese Clothing*] (May 2016). Available from https://www.meti.go.jp/committee/kenkyukai/seizou/Wasōu_kyogi/pdf/002_03_00.pdf (Accessed 15 April 2021).

[25] See the list published by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)「和装業界の商慣行に関する指針に賛同を表明した団体・事業者」[*Wasō gyōkai no sho kankō ni kansuru shishin ni sandō wo hyōmeishita dantai ・jigyōsha*] [*List of registered Kimono selling businesses and groups*] (May 2018). Available from https://www.meti.go.jp/policy/mono_info_service/mono/fiber/Wasōu/sando_list20180529.pdf (Accessed 7 April 2021).

more than 35,000 weavers (dispatched among 3,800 establishments) and 2,000 dyers (for 1,400 establishments) (Ichihara, 1895: 197); in 1974, only 6,000 weavers were still in activity (in 653 establishments) and 5,164 dyers (in 846 establishments) were still in business (Hall, 2020: 39). One of the newest reports further proves the decline, which averages between 50% to 67% decrease: in 2006, there were 1,529 weavers in activity (in 152 establishments). This figure dropped to 691 weavers in 2018 (for 75 establishments). In 2006, there were 2,295 dyers (in 272 establishments) in Kyoto and 818 in 2018 (in 88 establishments).[26]

Kimono businesses are inseparable from the geography of Kyoto, with areas such as Nishijin (西陣), Muromachi (室町), Kyō-Tango (京丹後) that were known to resonate with the sound of the weaving looms.[27] Moreover, the specific dyeing and weaving techniques developed in Kyoto City convey this attachment to the ancient capital in their own denominations, thus giving terms such as *Nishijin-ori* (西陣織), *Kyō-Kanoko shibori* (京鹿の子絞), *Kyō-Yūzen* (京友禅) and *Kyō-Komon* (京小紋).

In particular, the brocade weaving *Nishijin-ori*, established in Kyoto for more than 550 years, is one of the most gorgeous examples, with motifs reflecting Kyoto scenery. Traditionally fashioning festival and *Nō* theatre costumes, Nishijin is now focusing on high-end *obi* design. Nishijin is locally famous and engages with international tourists via the activities (weaving workshops, small-scale exhibitions, kimono fashion show) held primarily at the Nishijin Textile Center.[28]

The Shibori Museum[29] established its activities on the same idea as the Nishijin Textile Center, with an exhibition space and several workshop options. The visitor can choose between a scarf or a *furoshiki* kerchief, using different tie and dye techniques: *Itajime, Sekka* or *Kyō-Arashi Shibori*.

Kyō-Yūzen is another iconic kimono technique that is deeply rooted in the city, easily recognisable with its hand-painted, delicate motifs. Following the Nishijin example, recently

[26] See page 5 of the report 令和 3 年度第 1 回伝統産業生活化推進番議会 [*Reiwa san nendo dai ikkai dentō sangyō seikatsu suishin bangikai*][*First Report of the Committee on Activities for Traditional Industries*] (August 2021),「後半期 5 年間に向けて」[*kōhanki go nenkan ni mukete*] [*Laying Out the Next Five Years Segment*]. Available from https://www.city.kyoto.lg.jp/sankan/cmsfiles/contents/0000073/73676/02R03shiryo.pdf (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[27] With the decrease of looms in operation, this is less and less true.

[28] https://nishijin.or.jp/eng/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[29] https://en.shibori.jp (Accessed 28 November 2021).

the studios tend to be more open about their process and advertise their craft more publicly, allowing for instance workshop visits and proposing hands-on experiences, in Japanese and basic English. Minami Shinichiro's studio (南進一郎),[30] Okayama Kōgei (岡山工芸),[31] and Tomihiro Yūzen (富弘友禅)[32] are the studios with the most experience in that regard, proposing workshops where one can try dyeing a small piece of silk cloth that could be fashioned as a bag. Among these Yūzen references, Chisō (千總) is probably the most famous, very actively promoting the technique and the pieces they have for sale via their gallery and shop, in addition to sale catalogues and an official website in Japanese and English. Most recently, Chisō had been in the spotlight with an exhibition at the Worcester Art Museum[33] and corresponding catalogue (Li *et al.*, 2020). Chisō even went digital with selected models available in the Nintendo video game, *Animal Crossing: New Horizons.*[34]

These examples illustrate how specialists in Kyoto textile techniques multiply real and digital outlets where people can get a short demonstration of the fabrication of kimono. A metonymic approach where the part gives a taste of what the whole kimono represents.

But, as mentioned above, this kind of deluxe, high-end kimono is exactly the type that is reported as being in steep decline. As a result, the classy, deluxe Nishijin and Yūzen Kyoto made, "bespoke" kimono is going more and more into the path of innovation and transformation in terms of shape and form, in a tendency that could be called "deconstructed" kimono or, as Julie Valk analysed, as "the path to resilience",[35] combining technical ingenuity and bricolage: the weaving / dyeing techniques continue to be used, with the same level of detail and quality but on a smaller scale, for different purposes than making a full-scale kimono. Seeing how Tomoko Fujii from Tomihiro Hand-dyeing Yuzen

[30] https://yumebina.official.ec (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[31] https://www.okayama-kougei.com/about-us/yuzen-trial/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[32] Tomihiro participated in the Kyoto Design Week (2020) with an open studio event and on a regular basis proposes workshops (upon reservation). See more on their official website: http://tomihiro-yuzen.jp/koubou_taiken/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[33] https://kimonocouture.worcesterart.org (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[34] See the following articles: Kelly, Katy (2020), Authentic kimono fashions await you in Animal Crossing from Kyoto furisode tailor Chiso. Available from https://soranews24.com/2020/07/03/stylish-kimono-fashions-await-you-in-animal-crossing-thanks-to-kyoto-furisode-tailor-chiso 【 pics 】 / (Accessed 28 November 2021); Nguyen, Lisa (2021), Kimono Designer Chiso Releases New Designs And Dream Island For Animal Crossing: New Horizons. Available from https://happygamer.com/kimono-designer-chiso-releases-new-designs-and-dream-island-for-animal-crossing-new-horizons-101582/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[35] Valk, Julie (2021), *Selling the Kimono. An Ethnography fo Crisis, Creativity and Hope*. Abingdon, Oxon New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 76-78.

Co., Ltd got into designing tumblers and coffee mugs featuring their unique Yūzen touch and expertise (in collaboration with Shigemi Inari from Toho Rubber corp.) or how Nishijin textile artisan Masao Hosoo got to design fabric for sofas (in collaboration with Thomas Lykke) and bags (in collaboration with Lucio Antonucci)[36] confirms that trend.

Thus kimono that has the most publicity and established image (and again reported as being on decline, on the verge of disappearing) stays relatively — if not completely — separated from the casual, tourist kimono that booms around Kyoto City. In fact, there is a clear divorce between the former, which "keeps dying" and keeps being "cornered" into new challenges and the latter, which keeps striving and bringing new sets of innovations. The tourist kimono is, in fact, going into innovation by inviting new ways of being worn: not for ceremonies but for fun, not silk kimono but polyester, for just the one-time experience of it, following — albeit involuntarily — the path of pilgrimage.

The *kagai* (花街) entertainment districts[37] — and the *maiko* and *geiko* communities they shelter — form another fascinating "only in Kyoto" feature that further anchors the idea that Kyoto, more than other cities in Japan, is the city of kimono. In these areas, we can see a kimono that is alive and used on an everyday basis, be it the subdued *komon* (小紋)[38] kimono the artists don when they go to their dance or music lessons in the morning or the outstanding *hikizuri* (引き摺り),[39] when they go to entertain at banquets, attend ceremonies, or perform at formal dance recitals. How their image is used further anchors the idea of Kyoto-based *maiko/geiko* are *de facto* kimono ambassadors, advertising the traditional aspect of Kyoto with a visual presence on maps, menus, *omiyage* sweets (Figure 5), green tea bottles, posters, novelty goods, and souvenirs. They can also be found on good manners and city preservation posters, emphasising for instance how Kyoto doesn't need violence nor organised crime (Figure 6).

[36] See more details about these projects in: Murayama, Yūzō — Juliet W. Carpenter (2019), *Heritage Culture and Business, Kyoto Style: Craftsmanship in the Creative Economy*. Tokyo, Japan: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, pp. 97-98, 105-108.

[37] *Kagai*, or "flower districts", is an umbrella term that designates, in Kyoto, the five areas where Maiko and Geiko performers live and work. More precisely, *Kagai* in Kyoto means the district of Gion Kōbu (祇園甲部), Gion Higashi (祇園東), Miyagawachō (宮川町), Pontochō (先斗町) and Kamishichiken (上七軒).

[38] *Komon* designates a kimono with small patterns duplicated all over the surface of the garment.

[39] *Hikizuri* is a term that designates the specific dance kimono which is longer than the usual kimono, meant to be trailing on the floor when performing.

Fig. 5 & 6. (Left) Maiko iconography used on *omiyage* souvenirs (for instance here Matcha Green tea flavoured sweets) (product package - June 2020); **(Right)** Maiko iconic silhouette used in a *bōryokudan* organised crime prevention poster (poster - December 2019).

As proclaimed by Jan Bardsley, their presence is magical, "turning the esoteric capital into a welcoming touristic playground" (2021: 25). Beyond the glossy image, some *maiko* and *geiko* enjoy being advocates for local kimono businesses. For instance, with Satsuki (紗月) one gets to follow one of the most popular *geiko* in 2021,[40] as she actively promotes kimono culture, whether she is talking about her career and the kimono especially designed for her by Muneo Ueda (NHK, 2020),[41] or talking about kimono dyeing studios she is visiting, such as Umezome (梅染) (Kimonoto, 2021).[42] With these examples, it can be noted that the traditional side of kimono is being

[40] Now freshly retired, she was coming from Tsurui *okiya* house, part of the most traditional and wealthiest of the *kagai* districts, Gion Kōbu.

[41] See the NHK documentary (2020), Geiko SATSUKI, A Beauty Through the Seasons. Available from https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/special/episode/202012270810/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[42] See the video and interview done for the website *kimonoto* (2021) 梅染友禅・梅染師　山本晃さん ～インタビュー編～ 「紗月がゆく！祇園・人気芸妓が訪ねる京の技」vol.1. [*Umezome Yūzen Umezomeshi Yamamoto Akirasan Intabyu Ichihen / Satsuki ga yuku! Gion ninki geiko ga tazuneru kyō no gi*] [*Geiko Satsuki from Gion goes on a visit to Umezome dyeing studio. Interview (Part 1)*] Available from https://www.kimonoichiba.com/media/column/384/ (Accessed 15 April 2021).

enhanced, with an emphasis put on beauty, mystery, and rarity, fulfilling a certain scopophilic desire to see kimono and see ladies in kimono.

Attending one of the three main festivals — may it be *Jidai*, *Aoi,* or *Gion matsuri* — vividly complements the idea of Kyoto as kimono galore, the latter being the occasion for many people to dress in *yukata*, not just the float musicians but the parade audience as well. When coming to Kyoto, the kimono image and the kimono industry can be seen and felt in every direction, at a shallower or at a deeper level, depending on one's curiosity and taste. International guidebooks have picked up on that reality and keep advertising the city as a quiet and beautiful space, full of pilgrimage sites, with kimono on the front page (Figure 7).

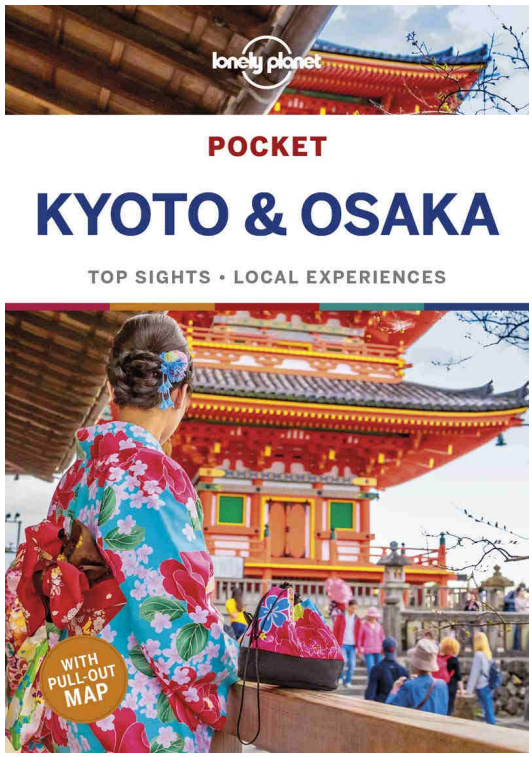

Fig. 7. Lonely Planet, *Pocket Kyoto & Osaka* (guidebook cover - 2019).

At the local level too, numerous companies capitalise on the image of Kyoto as a kimono wonderland. For example, since 2001, holding a *Kimono passport* booklet[43] gives any

[43] See these websites for a full description of the concept: https://kimono-passport.jp (Accessed 28 November 2021); https://www.en-kyoto.yumeyakata.com/kimono-passport/ (Accessed 28 November 2021); https://yumekyoto-kimono.com/en/gallery/ (Accessed 28 November 2021); http://goinjapanesque.com/13307/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

kimono wearer the opportunity to get discount coupons or receive special souvenirs when they go to participating shrines, temples, café, or museums. The passport is free; the only condition for receiving these trinkets is to be dressed in a kimono and present the booklet at the venue. This practice shares some similarities with pilgrimage, on the idea of going to specific locales to get an emblem or reward. The kimono in such case can be seen as part of an "open sesame" formula, giving regular or occasional kimono wearers the feeling of being exclusive and treated in a special way, similar to the *osettai* (お接待) hospitality services the Shikoku *o-henro-san* (お遍路さん) benefits pilgrims receive when touring the route of 88 temples.

A similar example is provided by the Keihan railway, as the company consistently "weaves" the station halls, walls and racks with posters and free newspapers starring Miss Sanjō Keiko (三条けい子)[44] a fictional young lady dressed in elegant kimono, suggesting visitors have a nice stroll, wishing them to find their own Kyoto in the process (Figure 8) or more recently, commenting on the cherry blossoms with a romantic note saying "happy feelings just blossomed" (うれしい気持ち、咲きました。) (Figure 9). JTB guidebooks published in Japanese present the same dynamic, as seen in the example titled Kyoto 着物散歩 (JTB Mook, 2017). Here, kimono dressing is emphasised as an essential part of a successful Kyoto visit, mentioning on the cover that with rental kimono shops it is an easy thing to do, as if wrapping the experience of being in Kyoto with an extra layered garment were adding extra meaning.

[44] Incarnated by Nakagawa Kana (中川可菜) since 2018. To see more posters, refer to the official website: https://www.okeihan.net/okeihan/poster/ (Accessed 15 April 2021).

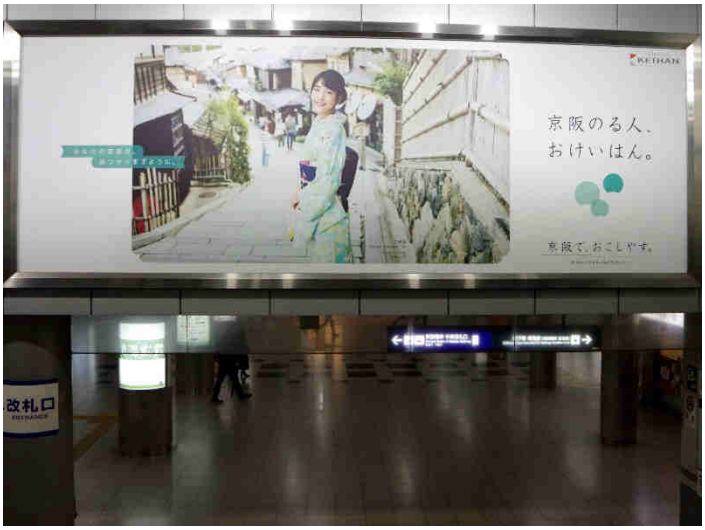

Fig. 8 & 9. (Left) Keihan Sanjō Station, "Find your own Kyoto" (*in situ* photograph - February 2020); **(Right)** Keihan, "Happy Spring has come" poster (2021). **Source:** https://www.okeihan.net/okeihan/poster/ (Accessed 29 November 2021).

It can be said that Kyoto is developing a specific strategy of infusing tourism with kimono, turning the use of the garment into an exclusive form of mass welcoming. As seen in these examples, the multiple incentives to wear kimono, feel kimono, see kimono in Kyoto are representative of the 'fashionable city' point, as analysed by Lewis, Kerr and Burgess (2013: 12-15):

> Given the increasing competition between destinations, understanding [the application] of fashion, could enable destination marketing organisations to gain an advantage by positioning their destination as a fashionable place. […] Urry (1990) suggested that destinations are often not consumed because they are intrinsically superior but, because of the taste or status they communicate. Graburn (1983) also argued that changes in tourist styles are not random but represent aspects of class competition, prestige hierarchies and the succession of changing lifestyles.[…]. If a destination is perceived as being fashionable with one's peer group, visiting that destination may communicate membership of a group or indicate an aspiration in being a member of a group. This has a similar effect to the trickle-down theory of fashion if the individual is interested in being a member of a higher socio-economic group (Simmel, [1904] 1957) or the sub-cultural leadership theory of fashion if the individual wants to identify with a particular group (Field, 1970).

In summary, Kyoto has over the years become the locale where the overall image and practice of kimono in Japan, as ceremonial dress and fun fashion, comes alive with the idea of appealing to the broadest audience possible: locals and tourists, experts and amateurs. A logic of "desacralisation" of the kimono, making it more accessible and livelier, because Kyoto is accessible and fun. Making the kimono (or sometimes just some aspects of it)

available as part of the visit of Kyoto can be seen as parallel to pilgrimage sites where local businesses strive by catering to the pilgrims, such as the Ise Shrine *okage mairi* (お蔭参り) pilgrimage that turned in the Edo period into a secular carnivalesque procession, mixing all kinds of people and garments (Bocking, 2001: 84).

2. The "real" kimono experience

In line with the different activities and incentives programming, promoting, and exemplifying the kimono as national dress and postwar fashion, as well as responding to the tourists' demand for tradition and unique experiences, a whole market of rental and second-hand kimono developed over the past ten years.

Kyoto, as described above, being the epicentre of kimono culture and the city that one visits for the historical feel of its paved streets, *machiya* houses, shrines and temples, gets a double benefit from this dynamic, with the kimono market growing as the idea of visiting traditional pilgrimage sites in the most "authentic" way explodes.

As of January 2021, the city counts about forty different rental shops and twenty second-hand kimono shops. The practice of going first to a kimono outlet and then visiting a shrine or a temple is now well established with numerous websites making the rental kimono option easily accessible and understandable by breaking the process of dressing in kimono into bite-size units. The second-hand shops and markets are also well advertised on Kyoto tourist websites and monthly free journals such as *Kyoto Visitor's Guide* or *Enjoy Kyoto.*[45]

Similar to the starting point of the Shikoku pilgrimage where the white vest (白衣), the sedge hat (菅笠), the walking staff (金剛杖), etc. can all be bought on the spot, tourists arriving in Kyoto can find shops with all in one place deals and get dressed from head to toe at once. Rental shops put the accent on that aspect with slogans and catchphrases such as 「手ぶらで OK♪」"Come as you are". Second-hand shops also tend to be very didactic, they have signs and free handouts that detail the basics of a proper kimono look, going through the basics (kimono and *obi*) to the *komono* (小物)

[45] Both titles are available at tourist information centres and hotels.

accessories (under-kimono, slip, under belt, *tabi* socks, *zori* sandals, fastening cords, padding, etc.).

2.1. **Rental kimono**

Rental shops developed very specific strategies where the novice can easily find their way, geographically and visually, with maps and flow charts explaining the rental service the shop provides. One of the early "global" kimono rental shops in this mindset was the now defunct "Kimono Rental Station". First opened to match the *kōyō* (紅葉) autumn foliage season in 2007 and 2008 (October 2 to December 25, 2007 and October 20 to December 8, 2008), it later ran on a more regular basis, providing simple fittings for both male and female visitors (Firsching-Tovar, 2017:134-135). Operating inside the JR Kyoto station building was convenient, as the station is a central area for visitor foot traffic.

Other rental shops located around the strategic Kyoto station, such as Wargo,[46] are still popular, but the ones established in the historical Gion, Yasaka Jinja, Kiyomizudera, Fushimi Inari, and Arashiyama areas are now more prominent. Their success may be due to these convenient locations, which reduce the distance between the dressing room and the "pilgrimage" site, limiting the challenging pain of walking in kimono for the first time as well as avoiding taking too many buses or trains to reach the "goal" venue. Stepping, standing, and squeezing oneself into crowded public transportation can be a hindrance when being all dressed up in a kimono.

Rental kimono shops built up their kimono *taiken* (体験) experience through a combination of economic, practical, and aesthetic elements. In order to attract both Japanese and international tourists on a budget, the ads emphasise inexpensive rental fees, usually between 2,000 and 6,000 yen for regular sets. The whole dressing-up stage is designed to be easy and fast, with experienced employees who can dress anyone in a kimono within 15 minutes. The most time-consuming part involves the choice of which kimono to wear (the number of pieces available can be overwhelming) and how to set up one's hair.

[46] https://kyotokimono-rental.com (Accessed 28 November 2021).

Fig. 10. Kyo-Temari "authentic kimono" advertisement (shop website banner). **Source:** https://www.kyotemari.com/en/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

Also, as demonstrated by Kyo-Temari (Figure 10), some shops lead their marketing strategy with the "authenticity" argument, playing on the idea that shops are reliable, professional and knowledgeable. In these semi-exclusive shops, one can find kimono that look like the typical mainstream, cheap, made in China / made in Vietnam, polyester, printed, tacky kimono, which (unfortunately for the purist) represents the majority of the kimono available for rental.

Besides these basic offerings, many shops emphasise unique options, turning the experience into something even more special. Making sets available for couples is, for example, something that has been advertised heavily, with the implied note that these are sets for heterosexual couples. Still, "same sex" couples can be seen in kimono, especially if they are girls, under the popular term *futago* (双子) or twin kimono coordinates, emphasising here the homosocial side of Japanese society as well as the cosplay practice in place at Disneyland and Universal Studios Japan amusement parks. In the same line, carnival animal masks can also be rented, another option that shows how reactive the shops are, eager to cater to every need, be they motivated by photogenic rules or more religious ones. Over the past few years, the *hijab* veil, made available in "Japanese" textiles, has been implemented as an option for kimono rental, demonstrating how shops are attempting to be culturally sensitive and more inclusive, catering to tourists of the Islam faith (especially the many visitors from Southeast Asia).

For people with a taste for *taishō roman* (大正浪漫) or a more retro-style touch, antique or vintage kimono are also available, although rarely older than 50 years. The other "limit" on such kimono is their size, as they generally do not fit people who are more than 165 cm tall or with a hip size of more than 100 cm. The "Decoco plan" proposed by Okamoto Kimono, the outfits presented by Irodori / Maison de Coco[47] or Kyolan (Figure 11),[48] employs a novel approach with new kimono, designed to look vintage but from a *Mori* girl / Western perspective, meaning kimono in pastel colors, adorned with lace or simply made with lace and necessarily combined with a white under-kimono to cut / play with the transparency.

Most significantly, rental shops curate and condition where people go once dressed in kimono, with a prominent emphasis on how short the distance is between the shop and specific temples or shrines that people are eager to visit. For example: shops located in the Higashiyama and Gion area recommend Yasaka Jinja Shrine, Kiyomizu-dera temple. For JR Kyoto station, or the shops along the Keihan train line, it would be Fushimi Inari shrine. In north-west Kyoto, Kinkakuji temple, and in the western Kyoto, Arashiyama and its iconic Tenryūji temple, the bamboo forest and the "kimono forest" next to the Randen train tracks at Arashiyama station (Figure 12)[49].

[47] See the following websites: https://www.irodorikyoto.com (Accessed 28 November 2021); https://maisondecocokyoto.com/plan/#plan5 (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[48] The shop started advertising a new plan in May 2021 on their Twitter account, which earned about 3,000 "likes": https://twitter.com/kimonokyolan/status/1394836339263041538 (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[49] The Kimono Forest (キモノフォレスト) is composed of 600 acrylic poles with Yūzen fabrics and LED lights lodged inside, which are illuminated at night. The poles can be enjoyed on the east side of the Keifuku-Randen Arashiyama station, in an area coined the "Hokkori" (relaxing) zone, contrasting with the "Hannari" (graceful) area which is covered with 3,000 bamboo green trunks on the walls and ceiling of the west concourse. The fabrics were created by the Kyoto based Kametomi / Pagong (京都亀田富染工場) studio, using a traditional Kata-Yūzen printing technique. The project, supervised by Morita Yasumichi (森田恭通), was completed in 2013.

Fig. 11 & 12. (Top) Kyolan rental shop's "lace kimono" plan (digital photograph - 2021). Source: https://twitter.com/kimonokyolan/status/1394836339263041538/photo/1 (Accessed 28 November 2021). **(Bottom)** The kimono forest in Arashiyama (located inside the open air Randen Arashiyama station) (2015). **Source:** https://notesofnomads.com/things-to-do-in-arashiyama/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

Rental shops frequently employ temple and shrine trademark images; the shop Hanakomachi sets an example by giving a clear map of the most photogenic spots, and how far they are from the shop.[50] In this mix of sacred and secular places, the determining factor seems to be the visual or fashionable aspect of the place, specifically how great one would look when posing there.

[50] https://kyoto-kimonorental.net/kanko/ (Accessed 28 November 2021).

Back to the Higashiyama Gion area, with one of the tiniest, but also most "Instagram worthy"[51] spot, Yasaka Kōshindō (八坂庚申堂), saw a boom in visitors because of the colourful and cute *kukurizaru* (くくり猿), stuffed cloth figurines symbolising a monkey touching its feet, curled in a ball-like position, hanging around the central prayer hall.

Fig. 13. Yasaka Kōshindō before Covid-19, filled with visitors in rental kimono (*in situ* photograph - November 2017).

In this *in situ* picture of Yasaka Kōshindō (Figure 13), one can see how crowded and busy the area can get. With people coming and going quickly, some respectful and others completely oblivious of the religious character of the place, the overall atmosphere was at the same time serious and jovial, focused but also carefree, creating an atypical juxtaposition of gestures and attitudes.[52]

[51] The hashtag #yasakakoshindo, as of April 9, 2021, totalizes 4,292 posts. It is far behind #kiyomizudera (258,306 posts) and #kinkakuji (222,858) posts, but compared with places of the same scale, such as Ichihime Shrine, we see a stark difference, with the hashtag #ichihimeshrine topping at 329 posts. For a general overview of the term definition and usage, see: Arnold, Andrew (2018), Instagram Worthy: How Social Media Has Reshaped Our Ideas On Attractive Design. *Forbes*. Available from https://www.forbes.com/sites/andrewarnold/2018/03/29/instagram-worthy-how-social-media-has-reshaped-our-ideas-on-attractive-design/?sh=483c57534792 (Accessed 28 November 2021). For an at length study of Instagram, refer to: Leaver, Tama — Highfield, Tim — Abidin, Crystal (2020), *Instagram: Visual Social Media Cultures*. Cambridge, UK Medford, MA, USA: Polity.

[52] A visit conducted in August 2020 showed that the travel restrictions related to COVID-19 pandemic considerably changed the atmosphere in this particular temple with virtually nobody around anymore. The one thing remaining, reminiscent of the busy "Instagram tourist in kimono" times, was a poster explaining how the visitor should first go to the main hall, pay a tribute or execute a small prayer and then, afterwards, take pictures.

As Jennifer Craik (1993: 17) states, we assist here in an 'orchestration' that brings place, *habitus* decorative behaviour, and fashion together:

> dress and body are 'tailor-made' for their environment […] Through different body styles, one wearer is distinguished from another, one group from other wearers. Fashion techniques are also the perfect device for playing on the rules of social intercourse by visually displaying calculated transgressions.

Reviewing the different plans the rental shops are proposing, one can see that the photographic aspect of the experience is carefully advertised and encouraged, with a wide range of prices, from the simple shoot in the shop's garden or photo studio to the deluxe three hours tour with 200 photographs guaranteed. Such plans usually include the most photogenic spots in the vicinity, with a professional, English-speaking photographer.[53] These plans show that their main purpose is to satisfy a double scopophilia, merging sightseeing and seeing oneself presented in kimono. Renting kimono and taking pictures is a way to mark the experience with memorabilia, reminiscent of the "Greetings from…" postcards as well as partaking of the aesthetic of anniversary or wedding pictures.[54] A parallel can also be seen with the Heian period traveller's costumes that can be rented at the entry points villages and stations of the Kumano Kodō (熊野古道) pilgrimage route.[55] In this particular case, the visitors enjoy the outfit in an ephemeral, formatted manner: during a short stroll around the easy section of the trail, just enough to get pretty "I have been there" pictures. The time travel (タイムスリップ) feeling is not as strong with regular kimono rentals

[53] See for instance the plans advertised on the rental shops websites, such as: Kimono rental Rose, https://www.rentalkimonorose.com/en/ (Accessed 28 November 2021); Yume Yakata, https://www.en-kyoto.yumeyakata.com/location/ (Accessed 28 November 2021); Yume Kyoto (Gion), https://yumekyoto-kimono.com/plan/special/ (Accessed 28 November 2021); Kimono rental Wargo, https://kyotokimono-rental.com/en/photo-session (Accessed 28 November 2021); Shoken silk Kimono rental Kyo Temari, https://www.kyotemari.com/en/plan/photo.php (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[54] Tourists turn into models of the day, getting into different poses, sometimes even holding "love" or "wedding" message garlands during their photoshoot.

[55] See for example the plans advertised on the following websites: https://www.kumano-travel.com/en/tours-activities/traditional-costume-experience-with-kumashiroya/586 (Accessed 28 November 2021); https://www.tb-kumano.jp/en/activities/heian-kimono/ (Accessed 28 November 2021); https://japan-camper.com/2016/09/21/kumano-kodo-pilgrimage-hike-with-traditional-costume/ (Accessed 28 November 2021); https://www.veltra.com/jp/japan/wakayama/a/123951 (Accessed 28 November 2021).

in Kyoto but the power of the pictures taken is equal, effectively prolonging / permuting the *senjafuda* (千社札) tradition with a "tourist gaze 3.0":

> Gazes organize the encounters of visitors with the 'other', providing some sense of competence, pleasure and structure to those experiences. The gaze demarcates an array of pleasurable qualities to be generated within particular times and spaces. It is the gaze that orders and regulates the relationships between the various sensuous experiences while away, identifying what is visually out-of-ordinary, what are relevant differences and what is 'other' […] Many tourist buildings, objects, technologies and practices […] are structured around visualism. […] While the visual sense is not the only sense, it is the organizing sense, it organizes the places, role and effect of the other senses. […] The distinctiveness of the visual is crucial for giving all sorts of practices and performances a special or unique character […] The most mundane of activities, such as shopping, strolling, having a drink, or swimming or river rafting appear extraordinary and become 'touristic' when conducted against a striking or unusual visual backcloth. (Urry and Larsen, 2011: 14 and 195)

2.2. **Second-hand and vintage kimono**

Shopping for a second-hand kimono can be understood as another natural prolongation of kimono rental and "pilgrimage" experience, with first the idea of second-hand prices making the kimono more easily accessible and secondly (as it will be shown below) with the idea of engaging the body of the tourist-pilgrim more fully and in a more active and performative manner.

According to the Yano Research Institute 2019-2020 survey report, "recycled" / second-hand kimono account for about 12.9% in the retail market,[56] an increase of about 3.5% compared to 2012, when the segment represented about 9.5% of the whole market.[57] The sales of used garments is proportionally speaking not strong compared to the other segments and yet it is the trend that consolidates the kimono market and audience in the long run with "slow fashion" kimono.[58]

[56] https://www.yanoresearch.com/en/press-release/show/press_id/2441 (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[57] Yano Research Institute (2013), Kimono Market in Japan: Key Research Findings 2012. Available from https://www.yanoresearch.com/press/pdf/1061.pdf (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[58] This forms a stark contrast with the kimono sold as new that are made in Vietnam or China, cheap, disposable cotton or polyester garments, pertaining to the "fast fashion" logic. See more on the idea of fast fashion and kimono in the following article: Hall, Jenny (2018) Digital Kimono: Fast Fashion, Slow Fashion?. *Fashion Theory. The Journal of Dress Body and Culture* 22 (3), pp. 283-307.

Among the second-hand shops in Kyoto, the most popular venues in the past ten years are flea markets. The most important and most established ones are *Kōbō-san* market held every 21st of the month and *Tenjin-san* held every 25th of the month. Both are held in religious places — Tōji Temple and Kitano Tenmangu Shrine — and these markets welcome the visitors in search for a kimono with about 15-20 stalls (among a total of about 200) dedicated to second-hand and / or vintage kimono pieces. These famous pilgrimage sites set an involuntary pilgrimage flavour with the overlap of sacred sites (a Buddhist temple, a Shinto shrine) and a mundane space (a flea market).

At Kitano Tenmangu Shrine, the second-hand kimono displayed on tables or hangers (Figures 14 and 15) cost as little as 500 yen. Short *haori* (羽織) jackets are often highlighted and are popular because of their practicality: it bears the most recognisable part of a kimono (sleeves, colourful motifs) but is easier to wear. A *haori* doesn't require an *obi* or any kind of wrapping, folding components to be worn properly. In many regards similar to a cardigan, it is also easy to pair with Western clothes which makes it even more appealing, especially for the market visitors willing to dress in it after returning to their own country and going back to "normal" everyday life.

Fig. 13 & 14. (Left) Cheap, second-hand kimonos on tables, display at the Kitano flea market (*in situ* photograph - October 2018). **(Right)** Second-hand kimonos on hangers, display at the Kitano flea market (*in situ* photograph - October 2018).

The most popular stall at this market is the one that proposes *tsumehōdai* or "all you can fit in one bag" (詰め放題) deals. Regardless of the type of kimono or *obi* one might select, a large-sized bag is priced at 5,000 yen and a small one at 2,000 yen while a single kimono or *obi* is 1,000 yen a piece. Therefore it is a real bargain, as the L-size bag

can hold about 10 pieces. Visiting consumers end up buying in bulk, sometimes filling two or three L-size bags at once. Such kimono might be worn for real or for fun, although some have imperfections such as stained or discolourations.

On the other side of the spectrum, there are stalls focused on quality and antique / vintage pieces, recognisable by the higher price range, the colours, and the plastic or paper *tatōshi* (多当紙) wrapping (Figure 16) that marks the kimono and *obi* as higher-end (pure silk) and well-maintained (no stains).

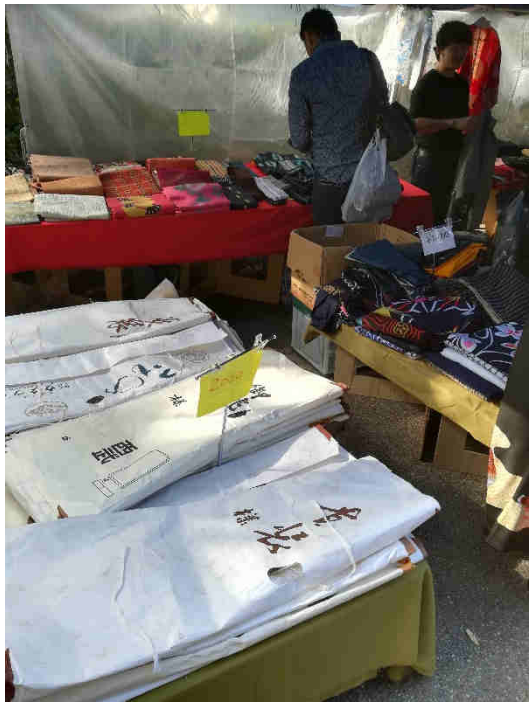

Fig. 16. More high-end second-hand kimonos wrapped in *tatōshi* envelopes, display at the Kitano flea market (*in situ* photograph - October 2018).

In the downtown area of Kyoto one can find many regular second-hand kimono shops cleverly placed in the main *shōtengai* shopping arcades, sprawling between Shijō and Sanjō on the North-South axis and Teramachi and Shinkyōgoku on the East-West axis or grouped around the historical kimono business street of Muromachi (close to the Shijō Karasuma intersection).[59] Among those that are still operating despite COVID-19

[59] Due to Covid-19, the author counted that about 30% of second-hand stores have closed permanently, including the long established and popular chain Tansu-ya (たんす屋). Although it has been reported that now, it is thriving again, reviving the business online and in new temporary, pop-up stores or event locations. See: https://business.nikkei.com/atcl/seminar/19nv/120500136/073000206/ (Accessed 28 November 2021); https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000009.000075602.html

restrictions (as of January 2021) there is Harajuku Chicago. The kimono selection is located on the second floor of the store (the first floor is for Western vintage clothes), where one can choose among a large number of reasonably priced *haori* jackets, *yukata*, gowns made from 'reformed' kimono, *hakama*, obi, *zori*, bags, and kimono, arranged by gender, colour and degree of formality. They also have small leaflets in English with abbreviated (and sometimes confusing) explanations about *kitsuke*. Signs and posters in the store guide the visitor, informing them about *obi* and kimono combinations, for instance *nagoya-obi* (名古屋帯) can go with regular *komon* (小紋) kimono, while *fukuro-obi* (袋帯) goes with formal kimono and *furisode* (振袖). As Julie Valk also noted in her own fieldwork,[60] the browsability factor in such stores is another aspect that makes them so attractive and less scary than more traditional kimono stores.

Iwai (井和井) is a smaller store that caters to tourists and locals by proposing high-end souvenirs (paper, incense, incense burners, clutch bags, wallets, hair accessories, *furoshiki*, and ceramics) but at the back of the store, unique antique kimono, *haori*, *obi*, and accessories are displayed for sale. The atmosphere and the pricing represents a more exclusive and maybe more authentic kind of store that attracts a slightly different category of people, either willing to have a kimono not necessarily to wear but as a nice piece of wall decoration, or wealthy kimono enthusiasts or collectors. Compared to Chicago, the labels with English are kept to a minimum, amputating some of the valuable meaning that the Japanese labels convey such as the type of silk used and the size.

The second-hand kimono market follows the same dynamic as the rental shops in terms of cost and overall didactical approach to dressing in kimono. But a difference that can be noted is in the "purchase" act: rental kimono accents the service, the image, the gaze, sometimes over-simplifying what a kimono means and turning it into a mass produced, impersonal costume, while the second-hand kimono is based on the idea of finding a kimono (or *haori* jacket) that fits one's body, personality, and taste, a kimono one can later alter and combine with more possibilities than the rental one could ever

(Accessed 28 November 2021); https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000019.000075602.html (Accessed 28 November 2021).

[60] See in particular her chapter "Second-hand retail and new business models" in Valk, Julie (2021), *Selling the Kimono. An Ethnography of Crisis, Creativity and Hope*. Abingdon, Oxon New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 135-157.

offer. The second-hand kimono thus prompts a longer attachment to the object while the rental kimono stays relatively on the surface.

Stating this puts the practice of second-hand kimono at the crux of pilgrimage and fashion tourism practices, which tend, nowadays, to have more inclusive, engaging, sensory, and embodied ways of doing things. As explained by Bærenholdt, Haldrup and Larsen (2008: 178-180):

> [Since 1990's] The 'performance turn' departs from classical mainstream tourism theories by displacing studies of symbolic meanings and discourses with embodied, collaborative and technologized doings and enactments. It highlights the body and the corporeality and expressiveness of performance by stressing the significance of embodied encounters with other bodies, technologies and material places. […] Performances are socially negotiated not only between actors but also with a present or imagined audience in mind. Performances require audiences: real or imagined, now or later. […] Not only are experiences of the world always mediated through the body and its active engagement with and sensing of material environment throughout the auditory, visual, olfactory and tactile perception systems, but material affordances (as well as the social and cultural) enforce particular embodied choreographies and scripts on us to be enacted.

In another publication in the same vein, the tourists are also described as active agents, curators of their own experience:

> when tourists do 'sight-see' they are not completely passive; most are busy making, for instance, photographs. The performance in turn acknowledges that in the act of consuming tourists turn themselves into producers; they create, tell, exhibit and circulate tales and photographs that produce, reproduce and violate place myths that tourism organizations have designed and promoted. (Haldrup and Larsen, 2009: 5)

Elizabeth Kramer observed the same phenomenon,[61] which further consolidates the practice of buying / collecting kimono as something transformative in itself and part of a bigger life altering experience as well.

The practice of browsing, selecting, and trying on a kimono before buying it and making it one's own also puts a focus on the garment itself as it becomes more concrete, part of a collection of souvenirs the tourist-pilgrim will bring home and cherish as capsules and

[61] Kramer, Elizabeth (2020), Kimono Rental, Tourism and Sartorial Expression. In: Jackson, Anna (ed.), *Kimono: From Kyoto to Catwalk*, pp. 227-229.

markers of their experience, similar to the paraphernalia the Shikoku *henro* pilgrims also get to bring back home. The white jacket (白衣) with calligraphy and temples seals (signalling the end / completion of the journey) is a particularly good example that can be put in parallel with such "souvenir" kimono.

The kimono henceforth takes on a new layer of meaning, more fully transformative than the rented ones, more prone to influence the identity of the tourist-pilgrim who consumes it, for a longer period of time. As phrased by Hugh Wilkins (2013: 40-41):

> The gathering of souvenirs is, therefore, a means of making tangible an experience, either for consumption by others, or as means of prolonging the experience for one's own consumption. [...] [and] consumers tend to buy products that reflect actual or aspirational self-perception, partly at least because the products communicate to others details about lifestyles. [...] They are especially high in symbolic content, with them providing an opportunity for self-expression and social positioning.

With second-hand kimono shopping also comes the idea of the kimono as garment, as object, which will take on a pilgrimage of its own, leaving Japan and reaching "Western" shores where it will be contextualised and used in a variety of Japan-related or just fashionable settings. A double tendency that has been noted by Josephine Rout, who mentions some of the most daring stylists and how they "work" with kimono.[62] It has also been analysed by Takagi and Thoelen (2021: 24-27) in their research on "Kimono de Jack" wearers in Europe and in the US, who note that kimono are often experienced as a fashionable, malleable surface to play with, especially outside of Japan:

> wearers show their personal creative adaptations in the wearing of their kimono, even though most of them are well aware of the establishment rules to which kimono wearing is supposed to abide. […] The rule breaking nature of the groups, inherent to the concept of highjacking urban space with kimono appearances, allows room for freer interpretations of how kimono should and could be worn. […] [they] realize that they are able to break the rules more freely exactly because they are not in Japan.

With second-hand kimono shopping there seems to be a third way being opened, which is the one that ties authenticity and rectitude of the form (shape and style) with

[62] Rout, Josephine (2020a) "From Edo to Instagram: Kimono Fashion." in Jackson, Anna. *Kimono: From Kyoto to Catwalk*, pp. 307-311.

authenticity of the place (Kyoto, temples, shrines, traditional activities), which will then be exported and, in that peregrination, transport the memory of the pilgrimage outside of Japan for new disseminations.

To fully complete these interpretations, further qualitative and quantitative research, for instance questionnaires with first-hand informants, is still needed. For example, asking why they became interested in kimono, why they chose to rent or buy second-hand, whether they feel like they were able to touch upon the "real" kimono or not, whether they feel closer to Japanese culture thanks to the kimono or not, and ultimately whether they feel like they achieved some kind of pilgrimage when going around in kimono or searching for a kimono could be potential questions to help clarify the kimono consumers' intentions.

Conclusion

What can be concluded with the material at hand is that these two types of kimono practitioners are following most of the criteria of a pilgrimage but without being conscious of it. They change into specific clothing, the clothing changes something about them, they take predetermined paths, they go to specific venues, shrines and temples, some of them inscribed in official pilgrimage routes [63] and acts with codified gestures. Their motivations come from and are formed around gazing and embodying but also come from an existential *communitas* (Turner and Turner, 1978; Wheeler, 1999; Di Giovine, 2011). Yet, looking at the Instagram / Facebook posts (or observing directly the scenes they create on the scene), they do not seem to be paying attention to the other kimono-clad fellows. In other words, they embrace pilgrimage by embracing kimono as national dress, as Kyoto souvenir, as elegant Japaneseness, as heritage, and by going around in a transformative sight-seeing experience, although involuntarily or unconsciously.

The walking component, common in all forms of pilgrimage, is another important point which anchors the pilgrim in a clear *gestus*. Renting and walking in kimono or buying a kimono in Kyoto as a souvenir can in fact be seen as an action that anchors the "pilgrimage" in a multi-sensory event (Hall, 2020), deeply connected to one's body in terms of size, silhouette, modesty, smell, and touch. In terms of pain too, as a kimono,

[63] For example, Kiyomizudera is part of the Saigoku Kannon pilgrimage.

especially worn for the first time can be challenging: the feeling of being too tight, movement being restrained, the *zori* or *geta* sandals hurting the feet with blisters, and other discomforts. Having to master all the kimono codes and *obi* ties are in this way overwhelming, but these difficulties give the experience more specificity and value (Greene, 2016: 337).

In the same category, but on another level, donning a kimono can be understood as a fast material pilgrim-tourist experience: rented kimonos are given back at the end of the day; there is no storage, no altering, no burning, and no parting ritual from the clothing (Davidson and Gitlitz, 2002:114-116), and second-hand kimonos tend to be bought on the idea that they are easy to wear (opting for a *haori* or seeing the kimono as a gown).

A second point is that such kimono, rented or sold as second-hand clothing, are controlled by the shops. While the shops cater to the needs of the tourist-pilgrims, they are also curating their experience in terms of destination (visits to a shrine or temple) and in terms of transmission (minimum level of information about kimono history and culture, no real sense of seasonality or formality, no explanation about the symbolic meaning of flowers, motifs, etc.). So the focus remains on fun and casual modes of consumption and yet we have a certain degree of liminality: people dressing in rental or second-hand kimono sense the difference between their regular clothes and the kimono.[64]

Despite these shortcomings and its juxtaposed, collaged nature, these kinds of kimono pilgrimages help revitalise the kimono culture overall, albeit in a fluid, reified and fragmentary way, or, as coined by Bauman, in a "liquid modernity" fashion (2000).

The pending questions are: Is the interest for kimono coming from the idea of embodied experience or just from the commodified image? Just for Instagram or Facebook "likes"? Is it in the idea of matching the ever so photogenic Kyoto that people feel like a kimono would give them the right photogenic appearance? One can also come to the conclusion that the kimono advertised and marketed by tourist agencies and media is growing more and more detached, different from the ones encountered by the tourists during their rental or shopping experience. Also, while the industry moves towards a consolidation of kimono as tradition and fashion, with designers and

[64] This liminality is emphasised even more by the limit exposed by the *wafuku*（和服）/ *yōfuku*（洋服）terminology, which distinguishes clearly the Japanese mode of dress from the Western ones.

boutiques, what can be seen in the tourist-pilgrim adventure with kimono is again something partial, biased, somewhat incomplete, dialed down to make it easy but so much so that the knowledge gets "lost in translation".

Overall, this specific kimono "pilgrim" practice is giving new, nuanced meanings to the idea of pilgrimage with a detachment from the spirituality of the place and the journey, yet a spiritual aspect is present. There is also a distance between what a kimono really is, how the kimono is advertised by tourist agencies, the JNTO, etc., and yet there is a proximity to the kimono, as the shape / silhouette is respected. Similar to the Shikoku pilgrimage again where people nowadays take the trip for different reasons than people in the Edo period but nevertheless, they follow the *kata* (形) predicated form (Reader, 1993: 107-136).

In this intricate and ambiguous manner (Greene, 2016: 335), this new type of practice is inviting us to look further at the question of quality, authenticity, movement (Collins-Kreiner, 2010), pace, and poise in embodied experiences of space, in both pilgrimage and fashion studies.

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