



Close-up of traditional uchikake material in the kimono atelier , Salon de Emile ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas

Meeting Local Crafts in Yamaguchi

Sustainable Traditions and Innovations in Textile and Clothing Culture

Marjatta Heikkilä-Rastas, Finland

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Motivation Studying fashion design in Paris at the end of the 1960s I was particularly interested in Japanese culture and fashion; my favourite idol then was young Japanese designer Takada Kenzo. Many years later, after working as a clothing designer for three decades, I met professor Mizutani Yumiko in spring 2007 in the University of Lapland (UOL) where I worked as full professor of Fashion and clothing. Professor Mizutani came with her students from Yamaguchi Prefectural University (YPU) to our new faculty of art and design in order to participate in our annual fashion show. She also displayed a presentation of upper-class Japanese life style and history of kimonos. That was the starting point of our successful cooperation which has lasted until today.

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In this article I want to observe the significance of the rich handicraft traditions of textile, clothing and design of Yamaguchi Prefecture; such as special traditional weaving, dyeing and paper-making by local experts. At the same time, I am experiencing memorable traditions and finding unique places where all this has been continuing often for centuries. I use knowledge that I have gained during my working trips in Japan for many years. The information, publications and results of the numerous cooperative workshops (JFW) where Japanese and Finnish students have designed, realized and presented collections using traditions and materials from both countries have been a great source for my understanding and appreciation of the skills and traditions, as well as the commitment to maintaining them.

Objective I have acquired specific knowledge for this article by observing and interviewing experts of the weaving traditions of Yanai-Jima and Kuga-Chijimi, the dyeing technique Ai-Zome Japan-blue and the tradition of handmade Washi-paper; and exploring the connection of these handicrafts to sustainable kimono culture. Although history has an important role in my writing, I am approaching this essay from the designer's point of view, not the historian's.

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Relevance Studying the skills of traditional handicrafts and the sustainable way of thinking that is naturally part of them may inform and inspire even contemporary clothing culture locally and globally. This essay may even arouse interest in travelling to and visiting the places where these crafts were developed over many years, and where people are seeking to create and produce something new, something significant for our present age. Examining traditional crafts and their role in building cohesive communities can inspire innovations in sustainable social practice. This voyage through workshops, visits to places of traditional crafts and their experts, and the knowledge I have gained from international meetings and presentations about Japanese crafts and culture have indeed impacted my own designer identity and my design works.

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Weaving traditions Yanai-Jima and Kuga-Chijimi

Yanai and Kuga are two cities in eastern Yamaguchi Prefecture, both having a long tradition of weaving, going back to the Edo period (1603-1867). The weaving of plain white cloth changed with the introduction of Ai-Zome Japan-blue dyeing of the hand-spun yarn in the late 19th century, producing vertically striped cloth that became known as Yanai-Jima. The spread of floor looms in the early 20th century helped to make Yanai-Jima very popular especially for rustic workwear. For various reasons however the Yanai weaving craft and tradition almost disappeared after the Taisho period (1912-1926).

In the 1990s people of Yanai city revived their use of traditionally dyed and woven Yanai-Jima striped cotton for kimono. This 38cm broad material was woven in hand looms and according to the sustainable idea of kimono culture it was specially designed for cutting and making kimonos without waste. At the same time, the material was suitable for rustic workwear in agriculture.

In December 2009 we jointly planned and held with professor Mizutani a cooperative fashion and textile workshop (JFW) in the University of Lapland with students of YPU and UOL. Professor Mizutani, whose brilliant idea the whole joint workshop was, brought special handwoven textiles, striped cotton and local modern denim material. She also presented the theme for the workshop: *Aesthetics of kimono and its structure* where sustainability was highlighted.

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Yanai-Jima decorations in coat combined to felt and reindeer leather of JFW workshop 2011 ©Markus Vertanen

Yanai-Jima decorations in felted coats of JFW workshop 2014, exhibited in Arktikum 2015 ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas

Students in mixed groups designed and manufactured accessories, clothing and interior objects out of these materials. The joint workshop was a fruitful way of co-creation and using traditional material in contemporary innovations. Working meant merging two cultures to achieve new multi-cultural products with new significance.

In the following workshops this inspirational material (Yanai-Jima) was used as part of the new products, combined with new ideas and materials. Products had traces of Japanese tradition, close to kimono culture. The results of the numerous workshops were creative and encouraging. We were able to develop many ideas into items of modern clothing.

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Students fitting the felted coat with Yanai-Jima decorations on mannequin in JFW workshop, 2011, Rovaniemi
 ©Markus Vertanen



Staff of Yanai Nishigura presenting new colours and products to professors Mizutani and Heikkilä-Rastas, April 2019 ©Takahashi Junichiro

During my first trip to Japan in January 2010, I had the possibility to visit Yanai city and Yanai Nishigura building, located in Shirakabe no Machi-nami, an area of traditional buildings designated an Important Preservation Districts. The beautiful building, originally a soya-sauce factory, was renovated to handicraft use over twenty-five years ago. During Super Global Workshop 2016 linked to Agri Art Festival, I saw for the first time the collection by Mizutani Yumiko. She had subcontracted production of some types of Yanai-Jima cotton to obtain a less expensive material. She named the collection *Mompekkō*. We saw these *new* Yanai-Jima trousers in fashion shows and exhibitions. They were contemporary interpretations of traditional agricultural working trousers.

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Professor Heikkilä-Rastas is weaving herself a piece of striped Yanai-Jima cotton with old narrow handlooms, April 2019, Yanai Nishigura ©Takahashi Junichiro



Atelier of Kuga-Chijimi ©Takahashi Junichiro

My recent visit to the the Yanai-Nishigura atelier in April 2019 confirmed the dilemma that rural areas are struggling with today – on the one side there is a lack of young people interested in picking up such a slow craft as weaving with hand looms. Also, material produced in the traditional, very slow way becomes just too expensive to be used for kimonos, which was the original purpose. However, the appreciation and conservation of such local expertise is also a stimulating example of sustainable design. Yanai municipality supports these local initiatives and is committed to conserving this tradition. The Karari shop just opposite Yanai Nishigura offers souvenirs produced with variations of Yanai-Jima fabric. However, some high standard design and marketing skills would be helpful in this process. Still it was quite an experience to sit by the old looms and weave for myself an experimental piece of cloth!

Another variation of handwoven striped textile, Kuga-Chijimi from nearby Kuga has incurred similar ups and downs. Its origin dates back to 1749, when a local monk introduced the method of weaving striped textile for light summer kimonos, using twisted yarn. Soaked in water, threads of the finished fabric open up, causing a *shrinking* effect giving the crepe-like quality that has become the distinct feature of Kuga-Chijimi.

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Staff member weaving monochrome Kuga-Chijimi with twisted yarn 2019©Takahashi Junichiro



A rose Kuga-Chijimi cotton bag with bamboo handles and a matching rose silk shawl ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas



Typical Kuga-Chijimi product; a shawl in shrunk twisted yarn 2019 ©Takahashi Junichiro

Almost forgotten, in 1996 local director-teacher, Matsumoto Junji developed a method of weaving special products and restored and renovated some abandoned old looms in Kuga. He also provided members of Kuga-Chijimi Association hundreds of thousands of meters of this new kind of cotton thread with twist in the yarn, from Kyoto.

In 2012, the only surviving weaver and member of Kuga-Chijimi Association, Toyokawa Ikako managed to gather another five enthusiasts to re-start the Kuga-Chijimi tradition under the new brand; *Heisei Kuga-Chijimi*. While kimono making out of this material became too expensive the six ladies developed a collection of small pouches, bags, shawls and neckties, coasters, towels and other accessories, that are sold in small handicraft-boutiques of the area and even in Tokyo. The group also regularly organizes workshops offering people of all ages, but specifically the young, hands-on learning on the hundred-year old looms that are still in good condition.

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In Japan-blue workshop dyed material was used for fashion show in Nagato, 2017 ©Kaizaki Ken



Outcomes of Japan-Blue dyeing experiments at Shimizu Family House, 2017 ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas

Ai-Zome Japan-blue dyeing tradition

West of Yanai, facing the intensely blue Japanese Inland Sea, Seto Naikai, is the small town of Tonomi. It is here where some remarkable initiatives promoting the Japan-blue dyeing technique, Ai-Zome, are located. Indigo-dyeing method was known in India as early as 3000BCE. Later, the method was carried via Silk Road to China and all over the World. The plant based dyeing method came to Japan via Korea and is first mentioned in the Nara period (710 – 784).

Japanese use their own plant called Tade-Ai in the dyeing process. No chemicals are used in the dyeing process. Ash-dissolved lye is added to sukumo – fermented leaves of the Tade-Ai plant, to produce the unique deep blue dye.

As part of the Super Global Fashion Workshop in Yamaguchi Prefectural University in 2017 participants from three international universities heard lectures about this ancient dyeing tradition, and had the chance to experience it themselves at the Shimizu Family House in Tonomi. The house is recognised as a National Tangible Cultural Property, the results of the experiments were highly inspiring and, the atmosphere of working in an old building and courtyard produced a charming feeling of the past. The mixed groups from the three universities used Japan-blue dyed clothes for their works, and their outfits were presented in Fashion Show, Nagato.

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Professor Heikkilä-Rastas, artist Amemura Hideko and architect Matsumura Kenji in front of AI-MA, Tonomi, April 2019 ©Mizutani Yumiko



Japan-blue dyed brooch in silk fibers and satin ribbons by Amemura Hideko, Aima, April 2019 ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas

In April 2019 I had the opportunity to meet and interview the textile artist Amemura Hideko, an expert of Ai-Zome, Japan-blue dyeing, in AI-MA, a hundred-year old traditional residence renovated in 2019 by architect Matsumura Kenji to house a gallery, cafe, workshop and small accommodation. In spite of her advanced age of 91, Amemura shared intriguing stories of her connection to and working with Ai-Zome, Japan-blue tradition. Her philosophy is to do everything naturally, use natural colour for dyeing and use no chemicals in the process. She wants to design to make people happy. *I want to contribute to society by using this method of Japan-blue dyeing.*

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Japan-blue artist Daido Ryuji, presenting dyeing process at his atelier so-i
©Takahashi Junichiro



Daido pre-watering the textile before dyeing ©Takahashi Junichiro

Another momentous experience was the visit to so-i, an atelier of a young native from Tokyo, Daido Ryuji, who made Tonomi his base and renovated an old dyeing factory. He planned the whole production system and also cultivates his own Tade-ai. He uses natural methods in boiling the plant and dyeing cloth through several phases, where lye is used to maintain the colour. In this atelier we found really innovative and modern Japan-blue dyed products in different materials, cotton, linen, wool; jackets and dresses were beautifully designed and finished.

Visiting the various places and ateliers in Tonomi area, it is worthwhile to stop at the charming Seaside Cafe Tonomi for light lunch. The view is enchanting. Visitor could later pay a visit to ceramic atelier, le -sorcier in the mountain area. The artists of the area know each other well and have many kinds of cooperation with each other.

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Tokuji Washi handmade paper dress with asymmetric hemline, Super Global Fashion Show, 2017 ©Kaizaki Ken

Tokuji Washi handmade paper tradition

One of the interesting materials and handicraft traditions that I saw during my visits to Japan and in the cooperative research-oriented workshops is Tokuji handmade paper Tokuji Washi, used in clothing since the 10th century. Its origins can be traced to buddhist temples, where monks made their vestments of washi-paper, known as Kamiko.

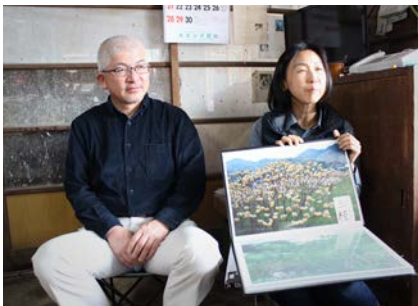
During several Japan-Finland workshops in UOL Professor Mizutani supplied students with Tokuji handmade paper, which was used innovatively for long dresses, festive evening corset or yellow and blue dyed paper-dress. All outfits represented successfully high-quality modern clothing design but following the sustainable ideas of kimono culture and traditional materials.

During the Super Global Fashion Workshop 2016 in Yamaguchi the group of multicultural students and teachers from five universities were brought to atelier workshop Chogen no Sato in Tokuji area. It was in the beginning of 1970s when several families in Tokuji area started to produce handmade paper again restoring the old handicraft tradition. In beautiful country side surroundings the workshop group had the possibility to make experimentally pieces of handmade paper. Students preparing outfits for fashion show in Nagato used among other traditional materials also handmade paper in their works, as well as in 2017.

In 2019 Professor Mizutani introduced me to Chijimatsu Washi Workshop in the same area, providing me with comprehensive and substantial knowledge of Tokuji Handmade papers history, production process and temporary use. Chijimatsu Tomoyuki represents the 4th generation of his family's paper making experts. In the Middle ages, 16th century, the paper was made often as side field of farming and government collected taxes in Tokuji area as paper. The four important *white products* for taxes were rice, paper, candle wax and salt; diverse areas were in charge of diverse products for taxes. In ancient times the handmade paper was used for making kimonos and many modern designers have used this material in contemporary clothing; one of the most important is Issey Miyake, whose relationship with Japanese handmade paper is remarkable.

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Chijimatsu Tomoyuki and Funase Haruka presenting the work and products of Chijimatsu Washi Workshop in Tokuji, April 2019 ©Mizutani Yumiko



Partially peeled branches of Mitsumata ©Mizutani Yumiko



Dried skin of Kozo ©Mizutani Yumiko



Mitsumata grown at Chijimatsu farm, ready to be harvested for handmade paper making process, 2019 ©Mizutani Yumiko

In Chijimatsu Washi Workshop we learnt the whole process. We visited the meadows of *Mitsumata*, the plant which is used for the boiling, drying, washing and peeling process, another plant being *Kozo*.

We saw the complicated, though very natural phases of the laborious process and also crowds of sheets of ready handmade paper. The system, planting and producing paper was very fluent and professional although all was done with old traditional way. One could see that the old tradition is flourishing in skillful hands and many modern renovations are helping the process. We could also see wonderful examples of contemporary paper products like tiny paper slippers and small paper-dress for baby going first time to shrine – a substitution for western christening dress. Naturally also normal paper products are done like visit cards, envelopes, book leaves etc.

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Chijimatsu explaining washing process of plant fibers ©Mizutani Yumiko



Close-up of plant fiber ©Mizutani Yumiko



Tiny baby slippers of handmade washi paper ©Mizutani Yumiko



Adorable small paper-dress for baby who is taken first time to shrine ©Mizutani Yumiko

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Close-up of hemline in precious Uchikake ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas

Finding folding culture in Japanese design

The kimono theme which had started in our cooperative workshop in UOL 2009; continued in 2010 when Professor Mizutani presented for Japanese and Finnish students the idea of folding culture of kimono. Workshop students were fascinated about folding two-dimensional things to three-dimensional. The idea of origami folding could be seen strongly in workshop products that were exhibited in Yamaguchi Civic Hall in December 2010. The workshop students also learnt the crucial sustainable principle of making kimono; the fabric had exactly certain breadth which was cut in a way that no waste was left.

In December 2010 I had the chance to visit not only Yamaguchi but also Tokyo high-end fashion brands area Omotesando. Nothing however was as impressive and fantastic as the Exhibition of Issey Miyake; 132 5 where I understood the core idea of folding culture, origamis which Miyake had ingeniously brought to his modern, sustainable collection completely made from recycled material developed during several years in the Reality Lab. I still cannot marvel enough the genial patterning of clothes being folded to two-dimensional, but opened up to three-dimensional fashionable pieces of clothing again. The colours, structures and models were bearing highly innovative features but at the same time strongly traditional breezes of samurais, traditions and old kimono culture.

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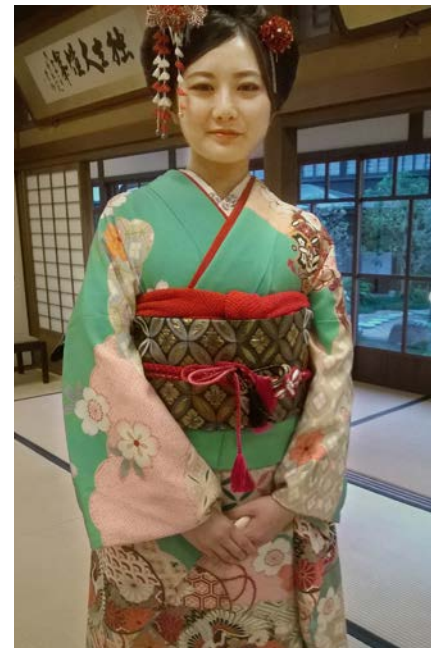
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Students from University of Lapland, Finland, wearing kimonos in Saikotei, Super Global Fashion Workshop 2016 ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas



Students from Quindao University, China, wearing kimonos in Saikotei, Super Global Fashion Workshop 2016 ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas



Nishiwaki Suemi put a wonderful ceremonial kimono on student from Yamaguchi Prefectural University, Super Global Fashion Workshop 2016 ©M. Heikkilä-Rastas

Closure

During Super Global Fashion Workshop in Yamaguchi 2016 participants of five international universities had chance to get acquainted to kimono culture putting on a traditional kimono in *Saikotei*, Yamaguchi City's Museum and Reception Hall. The beautiful building made of Zelkova tree and pine wood was originally a luxurious traditional Japanese restaurant named *Gion Saikotei*, which operated from around 1878 to 1996. The precious building was reopened as museum in 2004 and it tells the history of Early Modern Period of Japan. Nishiwaki Suemi dressed one of the students of YPU in traditional kimono with all its details and also made her coiffure in typical Japanese style as well as make-up. Finally all dressed in their kimonos, the group moved to the first floor to enjoy a wonderful Japanese banquet with best delicacies. The experience was overflowing.



The group of SGFW students and teachers dressed in kimonos in Saikotei, 2016 ©Mizutani Yumiko

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The author wearing the magnificent Uchikake over kimono, Salon de Emile, Kudamatsu, 2019
 ©Takahashi Junichiro



The black, floral kimono from the back
 ©Takahashi Junichiro

In spring 2019 I had a unique possibility to visit the kimono gallery of Nishiwaki Suemi, Salon de Emile in Kudamatsu city. I could experience the tradition of putting on a kimono with all its specific finesses, details and rules. I understood somehow much deeper the importance and the influences of kimono culture in Japanese way of life. For me these skills reflect the Japanese ways of thinking in valuing the old traditions as paragon for modern life.

The presented crafts and clothing cultures I could research over the past years not only left a deep impression but also inspired many students – and above all myself, for innovative solutions in textile and clothing design. The travel through years and experiences has been highly inspiring and memorable. During my visits to Japan, especially in April 2019, I came to understand that the kimono is not only about dressing up, but it is the amalgamation of many cultural concepts that involve a whole cosmos of crafts and experiences. Kimono culture contains the crucial way of sustainable thinking in Japanese society and the idea of folding origamis even in modern clothing give some sort of structured, traditional security and defense against unknown threats in insecure world.

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Doctor of Arts of Aalto University, University Professor (emerita), and fashion and clothing designer. Over the years, she has been studying and developing user-based clothing design, functional clothing, sustainability and responsibilities of designers.

Between 2009-2017 Heikkilä-Rastas led joint workshops at the University of Lapland in cooperation with Yamaguchi Prefectural University and professor Yumiko Mizutani. She also exhibited at Arctic Design Week and participated in Super Global Workshops and fashion shows in Nagato, Yamaguchi Prefecture in 2016-2017. Most recently, she led a research trip to Yamaguchi in April 2019.

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Special thanks to Mizutani Yumiko, Daido Ryuji, Amemura Hideko, Chijimatsu Tomoyuki, Nishiwaki Suemi, the staff of Yanai-Nishigura and Kuga Chijimi, and many others for helping me with their knowledge and insights.

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Places **Chijimatsu Washi Workshop**

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One of a few workshops in Tokuji which pursues traditional washi making, it is run by Chijimatsu Tomoyuki, a successor and the 4th-generation of his family's washi making business.

Chijimatsu Washi Workshop is unique in that it covers the whole process of washi making – from planting and cultivating the raw materials mitsumata and kouzo – to selling finished products and goods.

Both short and intensive sessions to try washi making are available on request.

747-0522, Yamaguchi, Yamaguchi shi, Tokuji Shimaji 613-1

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

Chogen no Sato

The park is named after Chogen, a Buddhist monk who devoted his life to reconstructing Todaiji Temple in Nara after its destruction in war in the late 12 century. It is said that Chogen brought the technique of Tokuji's proud handcraft, washi making, while visiting as the region's official. There are many historic artifacts and sites dedicated to him.

The park is designed to show an overview of the life of Chogen and his reconstruction project, as well as to offer visitors a chance to see and experience local craftwork, including washi-making, weaving, dyeing, and wood-working.

747-0235, Yamaguchi, Yamaguchi shi, Tokuji Fukadani 1137

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

Karari

A souvenir shop run by the local initiative *Yanai-Jima no kai*. Situated in Shirakabe no Machinami, visitors can buy Yanai-Jima textiles and products.

Open 13:00-16:00

742-0022, Yamaguchi, Yanai shi, Yanaitsu 465

[web-site](#)

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Places **Salon de Emile**

A beauty shop run by Nishiwaki Suemi. It has an adjoining rental dressing facility and a photo studio where visitors can have photos taken in kimono and matching coiffure.

744-0007, Yamaguchi, Kudamatsu shi, Eki-minami 2-11

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

Shimizu Family House

Former residence of the Shimizu merchant family, who were engaged in brewery and finance. Constructed in 1878, the building is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property which exemplifies the architecture of the time when Tonomi prospered as *shukuba machi*, a key stop-over along the Sanyo Road, Japan's major thoroughfare.

747-1111, Yamaguchi, Hofu shi, Oaza Tonomi 2657

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

Shirakabe no Machinami

Literally, white walled townscape, Shirakabe no Machinami is a historic area which still preserves remnants of the prosperous merchant town in the Edo period (1603-1867). The traditional buildings are designated an Important National Historical Asset.

742-0022, Yamaguchi, Yanai shi, Yanaitsu-furuichi

So-I

Located about 15 minutes' walk from Tonomi station, so-i is an Ai-Zome studio run by Daido Ryuji. Daido employs a traditional natural dyeing method.

Open 10:00-17:00 on Thursdays and Fridays, and 9:00-17:00 on Saturdays. Prior inquiry is recommended.

747-1111, Yamaguchi, Hofu shi, Oaza Tonomi 2666

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

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Places **The Costume Museum**

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Located within a few minutes' walk from Nishi- Honganji Temple in Kyoto, the museum is an informative place to learn the history and intricate details of kimono. It holds a number of garments worn by the nobles in courts during the Heian period (794 to 1185).

The exhibits include 1/25th scale models, recreating court scenes depicted in Japanese classical novels, *Genji-Monogatari* and *Taketori-Monogatari*. Closed on Sundays, National holidays, Summer holidays (August 13-17), and following preparation periods for new exhibits; June 1-July 31, December 1-February 3.

600-8468, Kyoto, Shimogyo ku, Horikawa dori, Izutsu Samegai Bldg. 5F

[web-site](#)

Umibe no Cafe Tonomi

A cozy cafe along the Tonomi beach. Seats at the terrace provides a panoramic view to the sea.

Opens 11:00 until sunset from Friday to Monday.

747-1111, Yamaguchi, Hufu shi, Tonomi 3048

Yamaguchi City Saikotei

Established in 1878 Gion Saikotei was a high-class Japanese cuisine restaurant until its closure in 1996. The refurbished Saikotei is a museum and a hub for exploring local culture. It can be booked for conferences and meetings.

753-0091, Yamaguchi, Yamaguchi shi, Tenge 1-2-7

[web-site](#)

Yanai Nishigura

Located in Shirakabe no Machinami, the historic district in Yanai city is an old soy sauce warehouse renovated to a gallery and workshop where visitors can see and experience local crafts including weaving a small piece of Yanai-Jima.

Opening times are 9:00-17:00, but it is closed on Tuesdays. Workshops are held from 13:00-16:00. Prior reservation is required for a group of more than 5 people.

742-0021, Yamaguchi, Yanai shi, Furuichi 3700-8

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

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People **Amemura, Hideko**

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Textile artist specializing in Ai-Zome dyeing.

Born in 1928 in Hiroshima, Amemura started dyeing in her teenage years. She was intrigued by Ai-Zome when she visited an exhibition with her husband. Since then she has dedicated her life to Ai-Zome, adopting natural ash fermentation technique to become the leading artist in the field. Currently based in Tonomi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, Amemura contributes through her works and workshops to passing down the Ai-Zome tradition to the next generation.

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

Chijimatsu, Tomoyuki

Craftsman and owner of Chijimatsu Washi Workshop.

Born in Tokuji, Chijimatsu spent his childhood helping his father, a Tokuji washi making craftsman whose skill recognised as a Non-tangible Cultural Property of Yamaguchi Prefecture. Having worked as an engineer in Osaka, Chijimatsu Tomoyuki returned to his hometown to take over the washi making business.

Chijimatsu's washi making starts from growing raw materials – kozo and mitsumata – to processing them into strong, beautiful paper, and developing them into various products.

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

Daido, Ryuji

Born in Tokyo, Daido studied fashion at University. He started his career started as a dyer using chemicals but his interest shifted to natural dyeing which led him to participate in a 3-year government program for regional revitalization. He relocated to Tonomi, Yamaguchi Prefecture with the program, and studied Ai-Zome dyeing under Amemura Hideko.

Daido practices and develops the technique and creates products in his own studio *so-i* which was established in 2018 in the Tonomi area.

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

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People **Mizutani, Yumiko**

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Costume producer and designer as well as the Dean of Faculty of Intercultural Studies at Yamaguchi Prefectural University.

Mizutani's focus is on regional revitalization and regional product development through clothing design. With her students, she established Naru Naxeva Ltd., whose products include a series of modern clothing inspired by agricultural wear called (*R*) *mompekkō*.

Mizutani has been leading international collaborative workshops with a team gathered by Marjatta Heikkilä-Rastas since 2009 and has provided the central information on the history and traditions of the textile-producing and fashion areas in Japan.

Toyokawa, Ikuko

The representative of a local craft revitalization initiative, Kuga-Chijimi no Kai, Kuga-Chijimi Association. Toyokawa managed to gather five other members to re-start the Kuga-Chijimi tradition. Her passion lead the association to produce smaller accessories under the brand *Heisei Kugachijimi*.

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

Publications **Collaboration and Co-Creation in Clothing Design Utilizing Regional Resources**

Mizutani, Y.; 2017; Vaasa, Finland: University of Lapland, Series C
A book to document Professor Mizutani's practical research in fashion design utilizing regional resources at Yamaguchi Prefectural University, which centers on international collaborative workshops with Finland's University of Lapland and other notable universities across the world.

[web-site](#)

Dangerous Liaisons; Art, Fashion and Individualism in Fashion Theory Volume 2

Radford, R.; 1998 - Issue 2; London: Taylor & Francis Online

[web-site](#)

Japan-Finland Workshop

Heikkilä-Rastas, M. , Taipale, T. (edits); 2014; Vaasa, Finland: University of Lapland

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- Publications** **Muodin vai muodon vuoksi?** 23|30
- Heikkilä-Rastas, M.; 2003; Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Industrial Arts Helsinki julkaisu A 42
English title: For Fashion or Form?
- Professorimatalla – On Professor Voyage**
Heikkilä-Rastas, M.; 2016; Vaasa, Finland: University of Lapland, Faculty of Art and Design
Northern Statements and perspectives about fashion and clothing design

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Glossary **Ai-Zome**

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Literally *blue dyeing*, colouring process using blue dye extracted from the Japanese indigo plant. The plant extract, known as *sukumo*, is mixed with lye and fermented again. The process lends itself particularly well to rougher fabrics such as cotton and hemp, and Ai-Zome was widely used in artisanal and agricultural clothing. The deep blue that emerges is a characteristic Japanese theme in textile and interior design. Today Ai-Zome is a mainstay of global fashion, valued for its aesthetic, practical and environmental qualities.

[web-site](#)

- ▶Kuga-Chijimi
- ▶Tonomi
- ▶Yanai-Jima

Edo Period (1603-1867)

Also known as the Tokugawa Shogunate, a period in Japan's history when the country was ruled by the non-imperial Tokugawa family. It was established by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1603, taking the title of Shogun, a military title. The seat of government was Edo – renamed Tokyo during the Meiji Period – while the Emperor was reduced to a religious and symbolic presence within the imperial court at Kyoto. The government's authority was assured in the provinces and regions through local feudal lords (*Daimyo*) who pledged allegiance to the Shogun. To prevent the daimyo from gaining a regional power base, the Shogun required them to spend every second year in Edo. The Edo period ended centuries of regional and clan conflict, defining the outlines of Japan as a nation state. Historically the Edo period is characterised by internal stability and prosperity, and externally as a time when the country became intensely introspective, purposely limiting, excluding and demonising foreign influence and contact.

Issei Miyake (1938-)

Renowned Japanese fashion designer.

His signature collection *Pleats Please* is a living classic launched in 1993. Issei Miyake has worked with Japanese handmade paper in clothing and interior design. In 2010 his Research/Development team, Reality Lab. launched the *132 5 ISSEI MIYAKE* brand, which introduces origami principles of folding in their products.

[web-site](#)

- ▶Kamiko
- ▶Omotesando
- ▶Washi

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Glossary

Kamiko

Clothing made with washi paper. Among other uses, Kamiko was used for the vestments worn by Buddhist monks for rituals such as the water-drawing ceremony at Todaiji Temple. More recently, the designer Issey Miyake presented a Kamiko collection in 1982.

- ▶ Issey Miyake (1938-)
- ▶ Nara Period (710-784)
- ▶ Washi

Kouzo

Japanese name for the paper mulberry plant, identified by the botanical name *Broussonetia Papyrifera*, which ranges naturally throughout Asia. It is a source for washi paper.

- ▶ Kamiko
- ▶ Mitsumata
- ▶ Tokuji Washi
- ▶ Washi

Kuga

Township in Yamaguchi Prefecture where the variant of striped textiles known as Kuga-Chijimi originated. Kuga was amalgamated into Yanai City in 1954.

- ▶ Kuga-Chijimi
- ▶ Nagato
- ▶ Tokuji
- ▶ Tonomi
- ▶ Yanai

Kuga-Chijimi

Variation of woven striped textile developed in the town of Kuga in Yamaguchi Prefecture. In this process, very light cotton was soaked in water. This causes a slight shrinkage (*chijimi*) and gives fabric its crepe-texture.

- ▶ Ai-Zome
- ▶ Tokuji Washi
- ▶ Yanai-Jima

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Mitsumata

Japanese name for the shrub commonly known as oriental paper bush, identified by the botanical name *Edgeworthia chrysantha*. It is source of the bark used in washi.

- ▶ Kamiko
- ▶ Kouzo
- ▶ Tokuji Washi
- ▶ Washi

Mompekkō

Trademarked name for a line of clothing using textiles woven and produced in Yamaguchi. Mompekkō is a contemporary rendition of the traditional *mompei* baggy pants worn by agricultural workers.

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

- ▶ Ai-Zome
- ▶ Kuga-Chijimi
- ▶ Yanai-Jima

Muromachi Period (1336-1573)

A period of rule by military government (Shogun) based in Muromachi, a district in Kyoto. It is also known as the Ashikaga Shogunate or the Ashikaga Period after the predominant clan of the time.

Nagato

City in Yamaguchi Prefecture on the coast of the Sea of Japan, with a population 34,000

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Kuga
- ▶ Tokuji
- ▶ Tonomi
- ▶ Yanai

Nara Period (710-784)

With the establishment of the imperial court at Heijō-kyō (present-day Nara) during the reign of Empress Genmei (707-715) Nara became the first permanent capital. In 784 the capital moved to Nagaoka.

[web-site](#)

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Glossary **Omotesando**

Long, wide, tree-lined boulevard leading from Aoyama Dori to Meiji Jingu. It was laid out in the Taisho Era (1912-1926) as the approach to Meiji Jingu. Its name literally means the *front path*. It is frequently compared with and likened to the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris, with many flagship stores. The surrounding Aoyama area is a focal point of the fashion and design industry.

► Issei Miyake (1938-)

Origami

Literally *folding paper*. A traditional practise of folding paper into three-dimensional objects. In contemporary usage, origami is a term applied to any folding or sculpting process. Although origami is practised from a very young age, it can describe complex geometric principles and be applied to various other materials and objects.

Seto Naikai

Known in English as the Inland Sea of the Seto. It stretches 280 miles east to west between Japan's three main islands Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu.

Tade-Ai

Japanese name of the indigo plant, identified by the botanical name *Persicaria tinctoria*.

[web-site](#)

► Ai-Zome

► Tonomi

Takada, Kenzo (1939-)

One of the first Japanese fashion designers to win international acclaim. He was also among the first male students to be admitted to Bunka Fashion College in Tokyo, after which he moved to Paris in 1964. He presented his first collection in 1970, establishing his distinctive Kenzo brand and style. The business was acquired by LVMH in 1993 but retains a distinct identity. He was made a Knight of the Legion of Honour in 2016, one of the highest accolades bestowed by the French Republic.

► Issei Miyake (1938-)

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Tokuji

A town in the Saba district of Yamaguchi Prefecture. In 2005 it was amalgamated into Yamaguchi City.

- ▶Kuga
- ▶Nagato
- ▶Tonomi
- ▶Yanai

Tokuji Washi

Paper produced in the town Tokuji. Paper-making was a major activity in Tokuji for centuries, with over 4,000 producers in the town at the start of the Meiji Period (1868-1912). However, the craft declined gradually with the introduction of western paper towards the end of the Meiji Period, and only 2 producers remain. Paper-making is thought to have originated in Tokuji when the revered Buddhist monk Chogen visited the town on his travels in search of timber for the reconstruction of Todai-ji, to which he devoted much of his life.

- ▶Ai-Zome
- ▶Kuga-Chijimi
- ▶Yanai-Jima

Tonomi

A small town in the centre of Hofu County in Yamaguchi Prefecture. The town thrived as an intersection in road and sea transport. Today, Tonomi retains a strong sense of history and traditional craftsmanship.

- ▶Ai-Zome
- ▶Kuga
- ▶Nagato
- ▶Tokuji
- ▶Yanai

Uchikake

A type of Japanese garment to wear over kimono

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Washi

The generic word for Japanese paper, which is made from the inner bark of the ganpi tree, the mitsumata shrub or the paper mulberry bush. It is generally tougher than paper made from wood pulp, lending itself therefore to widespread applications including household goods and interiors, clothing and toys. It is also used in vestements worn in religious services. The process of making washi is registered by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage.

web-site

- ▶ Kamiko
- ▶ Kouzo
- ▶ Mitsumata
- ▶ Tokuji
- ▶ Tokuji Washi

Yanai

Town in the south of Yamaguchi Prefecture. Yanai City, the current municipality, amalgamated several neighbouring communities between 1954 and 2005. Half of the city's surface area of around 140 sq km is mountainous and coastal terrain. It has a population of 31,000.

web-site

- ▶ Kuga
- ▶ Nagato
- ▶ Tokuji
- ▶ Tonomi
- ▶ Yanai-Jima

Yanai-Jima

Name given to the striped textile patterns and processes produced in the town of Yanai in Yamaguchi Prefecture. The style originated in 1860 when hand-spun cotton was dyed with lye-fermented indigo, giving the distinctive stripe (*shima* or *jima*) in its name.

web-site (Japanese)

- ▶ Ai-Zome
- ▶ Kuga-Chijimi
- ▶ Tokuji Washi

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