

Tradition in Modern Japan: the Invention of Tradition

Sachiko Hatanaka

Ever since E. J. Hobsbawm employed the phrase “the invention of tradition” many cultural anthropologists have started to reconsider the idea of “tradition”. “Tradition” does not necessarily mean only a cultural inheritance handed down from the past. It is also expected to have a certain significance and utility in contemporary life. Since “tradition” forms an attachment and affection for, as well as the sense of being confined to, it serves to make members recognise the importance of unity in community life. For the revitalisation of regional communities, traditional craft industries have obtained a higher opinion throughout Japan along with the increasing popularity of the provinces, which is well represented by the catch-phrase, “the time of the provinces”.

In this article I will consider traditional crafts manufacture, their modernisation, their extant tradition and the making of the tradition in order to depict a real image of “tradition” in modern Japan. This article will show how traditional craftsmanship was newly invented while using traditional raw materials.

Professor Emeritus Sachiko Hatanaka, Chubu University, Kasugai Aichi 487-8501, Japan

Introduction

Ever since E. J. Hobsbawm employed the phrase “the invention of tradition” in 1983 (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), many cultural anthropologists have started to reconsider the idea of “tradition”. “Tradition” is generally regarded as something inherited from the past, yet, in reality, many traditions were artificially invented in the modern era.

The modernisation of the Meiji Era (1867–1912) brought about considerable changes in food, clothing and shelter in Japanese society, although the existing sense of values remained unchanged until the end of the Second World War. Also, regionalism had become even more noticeable during this period. The rapid economic growth (1960s’) and other radical changes in Japan, after the Second World War, not only altered the nature of the nation, but also precipitated a collapse of values. Consequently, the economic changes destabilised regional communities, thus forcing some to reorganise themselves

or even forcing some long-lasting communities into dissolution. What kind of roles, then, did “tradition” play in communities under such circumstances?

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I became interested in traditional craft industries that have survived in Ishikawa Prefecture on the coast of the Sea of Japan, and conducted investigations into their actual conditions. The traditional craft industries have played major roles in Ishikawa Prefecture, where tourism has been encouraged to revitalise the region. Every year about five million tourists visit Kanazawa, an old castle town, now the capital city of Ishikawa Prefecture, and about three times as many come to Ishikawa Prefecture as a whole. Indeed many visitors to the prefecture are attracted by the *Kaga Hyakuman-goku* Festival¹ which was inaugurated by Kanazawa City, yet it could not draw so many tourists without the Traditional Crafts Festival being held at the same time. Here I mean typical local industries that are traditional craft industries. The three crucial requirements for the development of a local industry are: 1. cheap and plentiful labour, 2. availability of raw materials, 3. traditional craftsmanship historically accumulated in the region.

One can describe the actual state of today’s traditional culture variously according to what one investigates. In this article, I do not intend to discuss the historical changes of craftsmanship or its artistic values. I will consider traditional crafts manufacture, their modernisation, their extant tradition and the making of the tradition in order to depict a real image of “tradition” in modern Japan. This article will show how traditional craftsmanship was newly invented while using traditional raw materials. For concrete examples of such invented “traditional” craftsmanship, I took up three well-known traditional crafts: *Wajima Shikki* (Wajima Lacquer Ware) which represents the traditional crafts in Ishikawa Prefecture, *Kanazawa Haku* (Kanazawa Gold Foil) which dominates the market in Japan and *Kaga-yuzen* (Kaga textile dyeing) which exemplifies the invention of tradition best.

¹ Kaga is the name of *han* or a domain in the Tokugawa Era. Kaga-han extended over most of present Ishikawa and Toyama Prefectures.

The domain boasted its annual product of rice as much as Hyakuman or a million *koku* (*goku*). One *koku* is 180 litres.

I am indebted to Mr. Sekio Sugioka's research on *Wajima Shikki* (Sugioka 1979), and to Prof. Koji Yasue's research on *Kanazawa Haku* (Yasue 1980, 1981). The section on *Kaga-yuzen* is based on collaboration carried out by the staff of the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Kanazawa University and myself².

Traditional Craft and Modernisation

1974 saw the establishment of "The Law on the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industry"³, yet "traditional craft" here means the survivals of the industrial revolution in the Meiji Era and the rapid economic growth after the Second World War. The traditional crafts in Ishikawa Prefecture that this law has designated are *Kutani Yaki* (Kutani Pottery), *Wajima Shikki* (Wajima Lacquer Ware), *Kaga Yuzen* (Kaga Textile Dyeing), *Kanazawa Haku* (Kanazawa Gold Foil) and *Kanazawa Butsudan* (Kanazawa Family Buddhist Altars).

It is said that scores of cities in Japan are economically dependent on traditional industries. As traditional craft originally developed under the protection of feudal lords in the Edo Period (1601–1866), some craftsmen endeavoured to reach higher standards to satisfy their lords. Ishikawa Prefecture, which is situated on the coast of the Sea of Japan, was the central part of Kaga Han, a domain well-known as *Kaga Hyakuman-goku* for its wealth in the Edo Period. Even in the Meiji Era, this region was distinctive for its wealth and tradition. The fact that the family of the feudal lord, the Maeda clan, had a keen interest in the protection and promotion of culture resulted in a sufficient background for the birth of crafts. Hence even in the Edo Period, lacquer ware in the Wajima and Yamanaka areas and Kutani Pottery, as well as Gold Foil and Family Buddhist Altars in this region were already famous throughout Japan.

The traditional skills in the Wajima Lacquer Ware industry, which developed under the feudal lords' protection, survived modernisation and underwent further improvements even after the Meiji Revolution thanks to the

² It was carried out in 1983 for the first time, and I had continuously worked for getting further informations.

I owe a lot to Mr. Kōmei Yasue, a well-known Haku artisan at the Yasue Haku Museum.

³ "The Law on the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industry" aims to promote:

- (1) craft that produces goods primarily for everyday use.
- (2) craft whose main manufacturing processes are manual.
- (3) craft that employs traditional skills or techniques.
- (4) craft that chiefly processes traditionally used raw materials.
- (5) craft in which many workers in certain region are engaged.

support from devotees of Wajima Lacquer Ware in place of feudal lords. The craftsmen of Wajima Lacquer Ware continued to make house-to-house calls to devotees to obtain orders, and made efforts to gratify their tastes for lacquer ware. They not only visited old prestigious houses, Japanese inns and restaurants, but also got in touch with consumers in various parts of Japan, thus increasing the number of lacquer ware admirers. This enabled the small town of Wajima to remain as a successful centre of traditional crafts.

Wajima Lacquer Ware was unattainably expensive for common people to acquire in general, yet the high economic growth which elevated the national standard of living in the 1960s and 70s afforded a variety of people the opportunities to purchase Wajima Lacquer Ware. To expand the market for its lacquer ware, Wajima town frequently organised Wajima Lacquer Ware Exhibitions in principal cities all over Japan.

Whilst the craftsmen in Wajima continued to produce wooden lacquer ware, those in Yamanaka immediately responded to economic growth and carried out a so-called modernisation by changing raw materials. They adopted plastic instead of wood and also changed the paint from lacquer to chemical paint called Cashew. In other words, they applied to the traditional craft industry the principles of economic growth, according to which, modernisation meant rationalisation and mechanisation. The adoption of plastics as raw material brought prosperity to Yamanaka and other lacquer industry towns such as Aizu and Kainan. It is no wonder that expensive lacquer ware was replaced by cheap plastic imitations when people started to use gas or paraffin heaters instead of *hibachis* or Japanese charcoal braziers, and electric refrigerators instead of ice boxes in daily life. Consequently, wooden lacquer ware was once almost driven out of the market.

One of the reasons the wooden lacquer ware industry experienced a decline lies in its long production process. The whole process of lacquer ware production basically consists of three stages: the preparation of the material, the layering of lacquer and decoration. It takes three years to season Zelkova trees and prepare proper materials for Wajima lacquered bowls. And it takes another six months to complete the elaborate layering process that consists of forty to sixty stages. It is true that the artisans in Wajima stuck to their traditional craft because they had a strong will to preserve the tradition as a representative centre of the traditional lacquer ware industry. However, it is also true that the geographical condition of Wajima, a town situated in a remote region of Ishikawa Prefecture, made it almost impossible for them to modernise the industry, whether they wanted to or not because of poor transportation.

The wooden lacquer ware industry in Wajima nearly collapsed at one time, but the situation got better. As the living standard of the Japanese improved with high economic growth, the Japanese developed a taste for things,

which had once been regarded as luxurious, and consequently began to reappraise wooden lacquer ware. Though they preferred lacquered soup bowls, which had been popularly used in the past, lacquer ware had become too expensive for ordinary Japanese after the Second World War. Plastic bowls, on the other hand, are cheap and light with bright lustre, but they lack the feel of real lacquered bowls, the enduring colour tone and the graceful curve from wooden basis. When wooden lacquer ware was put on the market at an affordable price, people naturally chose the real thing. Neither economics nor business theory could explain such changes in the people's delicate sense and taste. In other words, the inheritance of culture transcends economic principles.

The boom in traditional crafts brought many young people to Wajima from all over the country at the time of high economic growth, adding life to the craftsmen's workshops. Ironically, the modernisation of the lacquer ware industry in Yamanaka put the region into an economically difficult situation. Factories there went bankrupt and many workers had to move to big cities seeking jobs.

When the Wajima Lacquer Ware industry was designated as a traditional craft, its increasing popularity changed the craftsmen into "artists". The lacquered "works" produced by such "artists" were displayed at exhibitions in big cities, and became too expensive for ordinary people to purchase. Once a craftsman became an "artist", his work began to be treated as "a work of art". But, these days, some craftsmen have chosen to be "artisans" rather than "artists". And some artisans in Wajima recently started to establish an organisation which aims to promote friendship with other lacquer ware craftsmen all over the country. In an interview with a newspaper, an "artisan" said, "My lacquered work is not a work of art but a craft item. I don't want it to be displayed on the wall or in a show case. I want people to touch and use it in everyday life. You cannot appreciate lacquered ware until you use it".

Surviving Traditions – A Case of Gold Foil

The traditional craft industry and its craftsmen did not attract people's attention in Japanese society, which was on its way to industrialisation. The craft of gold foil was first brought to Japan from China in the seventh century after the introduction of Buddhism. The tradition of gold foil in Kanazawa, which had originated in Kyoto, started in the latter half of the 16th century. The gold foil industry itself dates back to 1819, and the Tokugawa Shogunate restricted its production. However, with the advent of the Meiji Revolution, many of the old guilds came to be dissolved by law, and the gold foil industry was completely liberated in 1872 (the 5th year of Meiji). From around 1977 on,

the gold foil industry in Kanazawa came to dominate the market nation-wide and it has now established itself as one of the strongest local industries.

Gold foil has provided material for traditional craft items such as Buddhist altars, their accessories, and many other arts and crafts (e. g. *byoubu* or folding screens, *fusuma* or sliding paper doors, *hyougu* or mounting for hanging scrolls, *gakubuchi* or picture frames, *kinshi* or gold thread for textiles, *shikki* or lacquer ware, *sensu* or folding fans, and so on). Its production process mainly depends on manual work even today, and therefore, the gold foil industry fits in the categories of both 'traditional industry' and 'cultural industry'. It still maintains an old-fashioned system of manufacturing, a kind of pre-modern industry such as a credit system with the wholesale dealer, and is called 'gold-foil manufacturing' by Professor Yasue.

Gold foil is made by beating out gold, and its process looks simple at first sight, but, in fact, it demands a great deal of skill for a complicated process. The process is divided into several different stages, and its technique is unique to Japan: first, gold is beaten out into a thin film using a machine, and then four-centimetre square foil pieces called *Uwazumi* are inserted into 2,000 sheets of paper called '*uchigami*', which are finally wrapped up in leather bags made of cats' hide and beaten out by a machine. Gold foil sheets, which are now 3/10 to 8/10 microns thick, are put into a wide 100-page bundle of Japanese paper called '*hiro-mono-cho*', each gold sheet being inserted between the pages. Finally, the gold foil, which is cut out into standard size 11 centimetre-square sheets, is inserted between square sheets of paper called *kiri-gami* and then is tied up in 100-sheet bundles. This job of removing thin pieces of foil is usually done by experienced female workers, for gold foil easily sticks to one's hands or to metals, so the tools for this work are all made of pleioblastus, or Japanese bamboo called '*me-dake*', which adds some folkloric attributes to the craft. Gold foil, which is one millimetre thick, consists of 8,000 to 10,000 thin films of foil.

Although the process of making foil has partly been mechanised, machines used for beating gold are simple ones whose hammer can make only vertical movements, so if a craftsman wants to beat gold evenly, he has to move the material around busily under the hammer. Therefore, even though they use machines today, they have to be as skilful as when they manually beat the gold. In around 1921, machines took the place of handwork, and the output increased by 60 per cent. Having said that, the industry still remains 'small and weak' and this is the very reason why it is called 'foil manufacture'.

Any use of gold was banned during the Second World War, and the production of gold foil was also interrupted, but in 1953 the ban was totally

lifted. In the 1960s the industry expanded its overseas market in the US, India, and Thailand. Nonetheless, most of the craftsmen remained constrained by pre-modern social codes and were bonded together in a master-apprentice human relationship. This was mainly because the industry depended upon domestic labour controlled by wholesalers.

After the 1960s, however, the feudalistic relationship between the foil craftsmen and their wholesalers came to be severed rapidly. Prior to this, foil craftsmen used to purchase necessary materials from the wholesalers called 'Ton'ya' on a credit loan and get their cost of processing with all the necessary expenses reduced in exchange for the finished products of foil. Thanks to the liberalisation of the gold trade, foil craftsmen could sell their products directly to the manufacturers of Buddhist altars, folding screens, lacquer ware or ceramics, and they could also buy gold when the market price of gold was cheap. However, no matter how skilled the craftsmen were, their names were never known to the public, because gold foil was nothing but 'material'.

Since the gold-foil industry because of its noise and vibrations was also affected by anti-pollution regulations, the industry constructed a gold-foil zone on the outskirts of Kanazawa City from 1967 to 1972. In the Zone about fifty small factories were built. There used to be more than 500 artisans in the Meiji and Taisho Era, but today only 233 artisans are enrolled in the Gold-foil Commerce and Industrial Co-operative in Ishikawa Prefecture, although 1,150 non-enrolled workers were in the gold-foil industry in 1993. The advantage of the gold-foil industry, one that supports traditional crafts, is that there is no substitute for gold foil. The prosperity of the gold-foil industry as a centre of production certainly owes much to the fact that the Shinshu sect of Buddhism is dominant in Kanazawa. The demand for gold foil will never diminish in Japan where Buddhism is the chief religion, because gold foil is indispensable for Buddhist altar objects and images of Buddha as well as for temples.

Japan has more than 600 kinds of handicraft industries in total. As people started to have a higher opinion of handmade goods neglected at the time of the rapid economic growth, gold foil has also come to be appreciated recently. "Handmade" once meant "out of date", "poor" or "humble", but now it is generally regarded as "genuine" and "high-grade". People have become more and more interested in "artisans" with handicrafts, and, consequently, wholesalers have started to treat such artisans as "artists" in order to increase demand for handmade items. However, no artisan of gold foil will become such an "artist", because the gold-foil industry depends not on wholesalers but the artisan spirit for keeping tradition. The gold-foil industry will never bring a large profit nor enjoy the limelight of the world, yet it will surely survive as a traditional craft industry.

Tradition in Making

Kaga-yuzen, which is a textile dyeing method, handed down in the Kaga District in Ishikawa Prefecture and designated as one of the traditional arts and crafts, has a unique history of development. In the Edo Period, the Shogunate had a consistent policy of promoting traditional arts and crafts, and Kaga-dyeing, also called '*ume-zome*' or plum-dyeing, was one of those industries which flourished in the Kaga District. It is believed that Miyazaki Yuzensai⁴, who had settled down in that district, originated *Kaga-yuzen* in around 1720 with the aid of a local dyer, combining the technique of Kaga-dyeing and that of the Yuzen dyeing method in Kyoto.

Kaga-zome, or Kaga-dyeing, was originally designed for gifts, but due to the financial difficulties of the *Kaga-han*, or the feudal government in Kaga, *Konya*, or dyers' main concern gradually shifted from luxurious *Kaga-zome* to plain cotton working garments. Thus, *Kaga-zome* declined.

In around 1882, however, *Kaga-zome* regained its initial popularity, but its market did not extend over the neighbouring prefectures of Ishikawa, Toyama, and Niigata. Needless to say, it was no match for its counterparts in Kyoto and Edo. The Yuzen in Kyoto had a very long history, and was supported not only by the nobles but also by the merchants. Besides, the dyers had very sound commercial foundations, which enabled the industry to prosper in the Meiji Era. Thus, ever since the Edo Period the *Kyo-yuzen* had enjoyed commercial popularity. On the other hand, the Kaga-dyers were conducting their business on a very small scale in the mid of Meiji Era, and even at present, are dominantly under private management. In fact 88 per cent of the whole *Kaga-zome* industry is privately managed.

In the economic boom following the First World War, they began to promote the sales of *Kaga-zome* on the advice of the Mitsukoshi Department Store in Tokyo, whose founder was a prosperous merchant in Edo, or Tokyo. However, amidst the austere social conditions during the Second World War, its production, was interrupted, because it was earmarked as a luxury item. In this way most of the traditional industries saw their worst days during the wartime and for another ten years after the war. There was also a severe shortage of skilled artisans. Kanazawa, however, was fortunate enough to be saved from the ravages of war, and the wholesalers, or the *Ton'ya*, also became prosperous in the post-war economic recovery. At the same time, the

⁴ Miyazaki Yuzensai (1653–1736) is believed to have established his fame as a fan painter in Kyoto, but no further details are available. In 1920 his grave stone was found in Kanazawa. In 1973, when Yuzen-dyeing won public popularity, a monument was erected to the memory of the painter in the precinct of a certain temple, and people in Kanazawa have been celebrating the 'Yuzen Festival' ever since.

brand name of 'Kaga-yuzen' came to be known among the public at the time. Before the war, particularly in the Taisho⁵ and early Showa Era⁶, *Kaga-yuzen* was not familiar to many people.

The *Kaga-yuzen* was not originally the name by the local people in Kaga, but Kyoto peoples generally referred to the dyeing-pattern in Kaga as '*Kaga-fū*', or Kaga style, because it was a dyeing method peculiar to the Kaga District. Basically, however, the dyeing tradition in Kyoto had a dominant influence over that of Kaga. As the dyeing technique had already existed since the 15th century, *Kaga-zome* simply meant that it was produced in Kaga.

Traditionally, a painter-designer called a '*moyō-shi*', and an artisan called a '*norioki-shi*', whose job was to put glutinous rice paste along the outlines of the design in the process of dyeing, got their training from the dyer, but from the latter half of the 1920s, a division of labour started to occur between the dyer called a '*some-ya*', and the painter-designer (*moyō-shi*). The dyer peddled from door to door for orders in the neighbouring areas, Noto and Toyama, and the orders, which the dyer took were advanced to a painter-designer. In the pre-war days, there were only a few wholesalers in Kanazawa, and consequently the business transactions between wholesalers and dyers were not so frequent either. The wholesalers dealt in dyed goods in general, and the dyers with a long-established tradition were called *kon'ya* [literally, dark-blue dyer] until before the war.

The *Kaga-yuzen* is an industry, which grew rapidly in the two decades after the war, but its popularity is only local, as compared with Kutani Porcelain Ware or Wajima Lacquer Ware, which has enjoyed nation-wide fame. The reason is that people in Kanazawa have more opportunities to wear Kimonos, such as at tea ceremonies or other formal occasions of weddings and funerals.

Now I will focus on how *Kaga-yuzen* has succeeded in establishing its present status as a traditional industry by observing its development process in the triangular relation of wholesalers (*ton'ya*), dyers (*some-ya*), and painter designers (*moyō-shi*). There are two different types of design dyeing the hand-drawing process and the pattern-dyeing process. The *Kaga-yuzen* dealt here refers to the former. Water is vital for *Kaga-yuzen*, and in this respect, Kanazawa is blessed with water of good quality from the Saikawa and Asano-gawa. The water from these rivers contributed to the rise of *Kaga-yuzen*.

As the hand-drawn *yuzen* gained popularity, painter-designers have also come to win people's attention. As a result, the role which painter-designers play in the whole process has become so important that it now depends solely

⁵ Taisho era: 1912–1926.

⁶ Showa era: 1926–1989.

upon their skills as a painter-designer whether *Kaga-yuzen* sells well or not. It also depends upon their skills whether *Kaga-yuzen* can manifest its own originality independent of *Kyo-yuzen*, which laid the foundations of *Kaga-yuzen*.

Painter-designers felt an obligation towards dyers for introducing customers, which, incidentally, strengthened their relations. In recent years, however, wholesalers came to have direct transactions with painter-designers. With dyers excluded from the business, prices have got lower and wholesalers have found it easier to sell their products. In 1948, big department stores like Mitsukoshi and Daimaru suggested to wholesalers in Kanazawa to restore the *Kaga-yuzen* industry. This caused the wholesalers to get more actively involved in the promotion of the *Kaga-yuzen* industry. To cite an example, they sponsored the Yuzen Festival in 1953 commemorating the 300th anniversary of Miyazaki Yuzensai's birth with a view to promoting the sales of *Kaga-yuzen*.

In the pre-war days dyers used to play the major part in the business, and the relationship between dyers and painter-designers was hierarchical like the master-apprenticeship relation. Yet, after the war, the central axis moved from dyers to wholesalers. Dyers' part was divided into each process of work, on the other hand, wholesalers widely expanded their business activities. Dyers represented producers, whereas wholesalers aimed at selling their goods, so both parties had different viewpoints from each other: the dyers' concern was focused right on the uses of the products in people's daily life, while the wholesalers were more oriented towards promoting sales. Since the Society for the Promotion of *Kaga-yuzen* was not an organisation of dyers, dyers could no longer take the lead in promoting and selling *Kaga Yuzen*. It was wholesalers that came to play the key role in the Society. The wholesalers established a new system of taking orders with new distribution channels by abolishing the traditional distribution system in which goods had to go through dyers, wholesalers at the production centre (*sanchi ton'ya*) and wholesalers at distribution centres (*shusanchi ton'ya*) before they got to retail shops. The wholesalers, instead, started to hold exhibitions, twice in Kyoto, and accepted orders from customers. Exhibitions for sales promotion became important for all the parties involved, painter-designers, dyers, and wholesalers.

In the early years of the Showa Era (1926–1989), when today's active painter-designers in the 60s and 70s first began to serve their apprenticeships, there were only a few masters in Kanazawa, and many young painter-designers had to go to Kyoto for their training. *The Kyo-yuzen* industry boasted the highest technical standards in Japan both in quality and quantity. One salient feature of the painter-designers in Kanazawa was the fact that most of them had been trained in Kyoto, not in Kanazawa. Another feature was that some of those apprentices were allowed to commute to their masters, although commuting was prohibited in the apprenticeship tradition, and apprentices were expected to live with their master's family. Some disciples commuted to

their master's house for the first one year or one and a half years, during which they learned sketches or Japanese painting while engaging in chores, and it was not until they started living with their master that they were allowed to engage themselves in the work of yuzen-dyeing. Therefore, there existed three different apprentice systems for Kaga-yuzen trainees.

During the wartime, since the government discouraged people from buying luxury goods and controlled the provision of materials, it was virtually impossible to maintain the apprentice system and some painter-designers were forced to change their job. Even after the war they could not get back to their work immediately.

The years between 1955 and 1968 were the formative period for *Kaga-yuzen* dyeing. In those days commuting was common among the trainees, and residential training was only rarely practised, and getting trained in Kyoto also became less popular. Another drastic change was that those young trainees came to receive a monthly salary. Before the war they were not paid except for some meagre personal expenses: they were only providing labour without being paid. This was mainly due to the revision of labour laws after the war, but it was also due to the changes in the attitudes towards working among painter-designers as well as the decrease of traditional residential trainees.

A third feature of the *Kaga-yuzen* industry was that there was no membership organisation for the *moyō-shi*, or the dyers. Generally speaking, a membership organisation tends to refuse new members. It is for monopolising the gains. Since there was no such union for the painter-designers in Kanazawa, those who came back from Kyoto were able to start business without any restrictions. Because of the lack of a membership organisation, the trainees' training became less strict. On the other hand, the master-apprentice relationship also became less tense than it used to be.

It was only after the war that they established themselves as a guild, or a union, and in the ten years from 1965 to 1975 the industry succeeded in increasing its production. In the former days they used to produce goods after they had taken orders from their customers, but around that time they started producing goods based on prior estimates.

In 1973 the wholesalers took the initiative for establishing the Society for the Promotion of *Kaga-yuzen*. Previously, painter-designers used to have a direct contact with their customers, but nowadays it has become very difficult for them to grasp their customers' tastes, because customers' tastes are no longer regular but varied and unspecified. As a result, painter-designers are expected to produce goods, which would suit everybody's taste, so most of the dyers are keenly aware of the gap between the artistic value of *Kaga-yuzen* and its cost efficiency: whether they should draw what they really want to or what sells well – that is a difficult decision for them to make.

Thanks to active advertisement, *yuzen* has become familiar to the public, but at the same time people came to have a fixed image of it – a false image of *yuzen* which is clad in the costume named ‘tradition’.

The Association for the Promotion of *Kaga-yuzen* embarked upon quality control and started to issue a certificate to allow the selling of products with the trademark of ‘*Kaga-yuzen*’. In 1975, one year after the enactment of the law promoting traditional arts and crafts, *Kaga-zome* was designated as a traditional art and craft, prior to *Kyo-yuzen*. That was because *Kaga-yuzen* used traditional rice paste called *itomenori*, whereas *Kyo-yuzen* used gum, or a sticky substance made from the rubber tree, and also because the division of labour was not so advanced as in the case of its counterpart. Although some parts of the process are mechanised, the most important stages lie putting paste or colours on the material or drawing outlines of the design, depending upon the craftsmen’s manual dexterity. The very fact that the process does not allow mass-production has contributed to giving *Kaga-yuzen* a ‘scarcity value’ as well as an image of a luxury item. Although the process itself was manual and traditional, wholesalers have succeeded in combining the dyers’ expertise and tradition, and have recreated “*Kaga-yuzen*” as a trademark. The dyers’ tradition is one originated by dyers called *kon’ya* (dark-blue dyers) in the Edo Era. We feel the tradition of the dyers when we see them washing the cloth in the river (*Yuzen-nagashi*), or when we see a big ‘*noren*’, or a shop sign curtain, at the entrance with the shop’s sign printed on it. Yet we rarely have a chance to see the *yuzen-nagashi* in rivers in the traditional way these days because the cloth is now washed in an artificial current at factories in the industrial park of *Kaga-yuzen*, where the cloth can be washed immediately after being steamed. The present success of *Kaga-yuzen* owes much to the combination of the new techniques of *Kaga-zome* and the dyeing and the old skills traditionally handed down by *some-ya*.

In order to become a member of the Association for the Promotion of *Kaga-Yuzen*, one has to get a recommendation from the dyers and the wholesalers. As the Association issues a certificate for qualified *Kaga-yuzen* with the sign and seal, the painter designers cannot sell *Kaga-yuzen* unless they get a membership of the Association. Since *norio-shis*, who specialise in putting paste on the design, are not entitled to bear their seal and signature on the final products, their membership in the Association means nothing more than fostering mutual friendship.

Nowadays many people get involved in the whole process of completing *Kaga-zome*, but only the painter-designers are allowed to sign and put their seal on the work. Therefore, young pattern-designers, who have gone through the training stages, such as designing, sketching or colouring are expected to register their own signature and seal with the Association at the completion of their required training. This started in 1965, when there was a boom in the

sales of *Kaga-yuzen*. Previously, the painter-designers bore their seals on their works, only when they wanted to display them at some art exhibition. In other words, they made it a practice to put a seal only on such works as are to be regarded as fine arts. When *Kaga-yuzen* was designated as a traditional craft in 1975, the painter-designers completed almost all the processes of *Kaga*-dyeing from designing to colouring by themselves. It was a tradition of *Kaga-zome*. Yet as the division of labour advanced, many people have got involved in the process, and some people today think it unfair that only the painter-designers are entitled to bear their seals and be recognised as a *Yuzen*-painter, though there are many other hands involved in the whole process.

In 1955, Kimura Uzan, a *Kaga-yuzen* painter-designer, was first designated as an important intangible cultural asset (a living national treasure). The work by craftsmen came to be evaluated as highly as that of artists ever since. The appearance of Kimura Uzan helped to bestow new value on *Kaga-zome* dyeing: in other words, it has become customary for *moyō-shi* to bear their seals on their works, and they, thereby, have come to be called 'yuzen-artists'. They have undergone a transformation from 'craftsmen' to 'artists'. Initially, artists bore their seals in order to claim that they were ready to assume any responsibility for their work, although painter-designers today put their seals even on goods just to be sold. The seal called 'rakkan' is the mark of artists' responsibility for their artistic works. By so doing, they intend to impress their customers that their works are not just goods, but objects of art, thereby increasing sales figures. In this way, the seals of painter-designers have come to be recognised as the trademark of *Kaga-yuzen* dyeing, and, at the same time, guarantee the product's top quality. Thus, the seal custom was established by wholesalers for selling.

What artists aim at is 'beauty', whereas what craftsmen aspire for is 'unity'. This also applies to Wajima Lacquer Ware. In this respect, today's *Kaga-yuzen* is neither 'art' nor 'craft'. The term 'fashion industry' describes best what it actually is. The yuzen-artists follow the fashion, aiming only at matching the consumers' demands. Exhibitions are only meant for displaying their new works, as is the case with the fashion industry.

The materials used for dyeing nowadays are chemicals, not traditional colours called 'ganryo', and the traditional rice paste called 'itome-nori' has been replaced by rubber gum. Productivity and profits have taken precedence over 'genuiness'. Some old craftsmen deplore that recent *Kaga-yuzen* is not the "real thing". Some people blame yuzen-artists' of moral degradation, while others say that the industry itself has grown too big. *Kaga-yuzen* can no longer be considered as a genuine traditional craft which has inherited the skills from the Edo Era, but it is really a "traditional craft" invented by wholesalers who organised the Society for the Promotion of *Kaga-yuzen*. The present-day *Kaga-yuzen* is supported by the Society for the Promotion of *Kaga-yuzen*, under

which there are about 14 wholesalers and 260 artisans (or artists) registered with those 14 wholesalers. The wholesalers deliver a list of artists' names together with their seals. A close association of *Kaga-yuzen* with the artists' seals seems to have taken firm root both in sellers and buyers. The painter-designers have become artists who now do nothing but design for yuzen. Today *Kaga-yuzen* has established a firm position as a traditional craft. It can safely be said, therefore, that the seal-registration system is critical in supporting painter-designers.

Concluding remarks

I have discussed in this paper several factors behind the transformation that *Kaga-yuzen* has gone through since the end of the Second World War. Also, I have considered the changes the *Kaga-yuzen* boom has brought to its new apprenticeship system. First, the whole process of yuzen-dyeing has been divided into sub-stages and each step has been simplified. This division of labour has contributed to efficiency in production and, at the same time, the craftsmen's work that has been made routine by the repetition of the same work. However, this will make it impossible to pass the whole of painter-designers' traditional craftsmanship on to the younger successors. Worse still, it will discourage younger trainees from gaining independence from their masters in a desirable way. Once, a business firm even tried to make an apprentice independent without his master's permission.

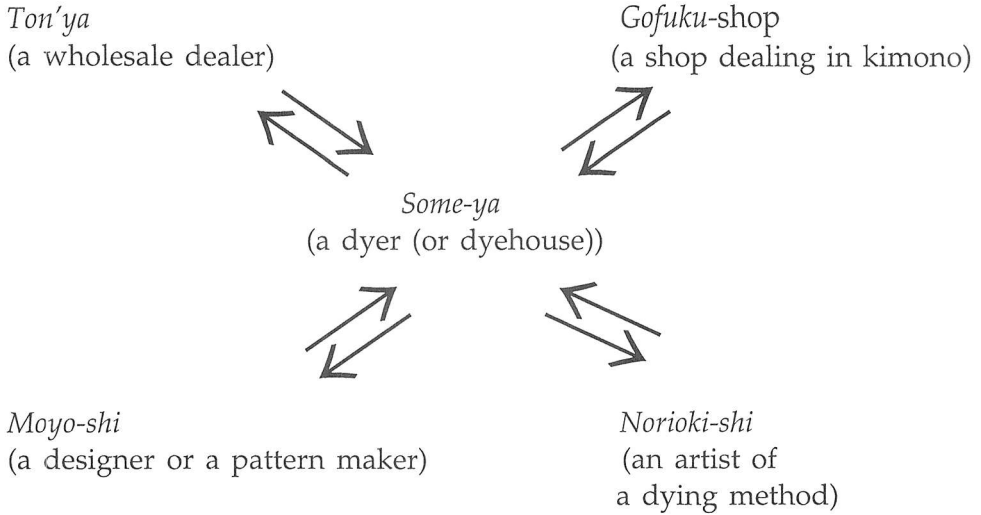
Another factor behind the transformation is the loosening relationship among the painter-designers. That has led to the weakening of the master-apprentice relationship, and the masters came to find themselves unable to assume as strict attitudes towards their apprentices as they used to. As a result, even those trainees who fail to meet the required standards can be independent artists. In this situation, the definition of the roles of the master and the apprentice has become less definite. We have thereby come to see the end of the pseudo father-child relationship as seen in apprenticeships in the former days.

Those industries labelled as 'traditional craft industries' have preserved their old infrastructure more persistently than other industries, and many of them are on the decline in modern society. The changes that all organisations in Japan suffered at the time of the Meiji Revolution seem to be repeated in today's *Kaga-yuzen* industry. In this connection we can safely assert that the transformation *Kaga-yuzen* has undergone in the post-war days has been a necessary measure to survive in the rapidly changing society.

Appendix

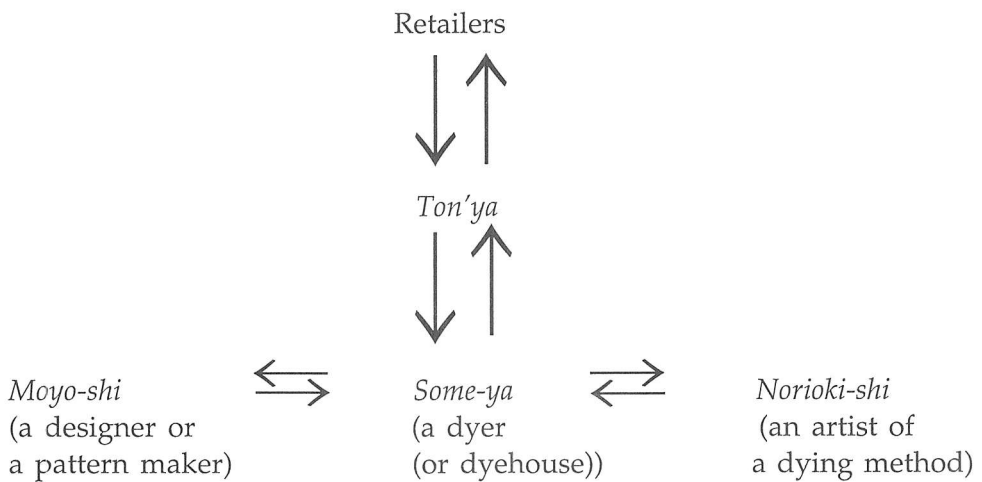
Relationship among a wholesale dealer *Ton'ya*, a dyer (or dyehouse) *Some-ya*, and a designer or a pattern maker *Moyo-shi*:

Before World War I:



(The relationship between the *Some-ya* and the others is that of apprenticeship.)

After World War II:



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Tradicija šiuolaikinėje Japonijoje: tradicijos išradimas

Sachiko Hatanaka

Santrauka

Nuo tada, kai E. J. Hobsbawmas pavartojo sąvoką „išrasta tradicija“, daugelis kultūros antropologų ėmėsi iš naujo peržiūrėti „tradicijos“ sampratą. Visuotinai laikoma, kad „tradicija“ yra kažkas paveldėta iš praeities, nors iš tikrųjų daugelis tradicijų yra sukurtos dabartiniais laikais.

Tradicija nebūtinai reiškia vien tik kultūrinį paveldėjimą, perduodamą iš praeities. Manoma, kad ji turi tam tikrą prasmę ir praktinę naudą dabartiniame gyvenime. Kadangi tradicija formuoja prierašumo, lygiai kaip ir priklausomybės (arba apribojimo), jausmą, tai ji padeda visuomenės nariams suvokti vienybės reikšmę bendruomenės gyvenime. Pažymėtina, kad didėjant provincijų populiarumui, kuri tiksliai išreiškia posakis „provincijų laikas“, tradicinių amatų pramonės šakos įgijo ypatingą vertę visoje Japonijoje atgaivinant regionines bendruomenes.

Taigi kokį vaidmenį tradicija vaidina šiandienėje Japonijoje? Reikia turėti galvoje, kad ji buvo paveikta XIX a. modernizacijos Meiji laikotarpiu – vyko esminių pokyčių maisto, aprangos, būsto kultūroje ir kartu sustiprino šalies regionalizmą. Kita vertus tradicijai įtaką darė, intensyvus ekonominis augimas po Antrojo pasaulinio karo, vertybinių orientacijų pokyčiai ir regioninių bendruomenių destabilizacija.

Kaip konkretūs išrastos tradicinės amatininkystės pavyzdžiai straipsnyje nagrinėjami trys gerai žinomi Japonijos tradiciniai amatai: *Wajima* lako dirbinių gamyba (*Wajima Shikki*), atstovaujanti Ishikawa prefektūros amatams, *Kanazawa* auksavimas folija (*Kanazawa Haku*), vyraujantis Japonijos rinkoje, ir *Kaga* tekstilės dažymas (*Kaga-yuzen*) – geriausias išrastos tradicijos pavyzdys.

Pažymėtina tai, kad Japonijos jūros pakrantėje esančios Ishikawa prefektūros senųjų amatų plėtrai įtakos turėjo turizmas, paskatintas siekiant atgaivinti regioną. Kasmet apie 5 mln. turistų aplanko Kanazawą, senąjį pilies miestą, bei dabartinę Ishikawos prefektūros sostinę, ir tris kartus daugiau – visą prefektūrą. Daugelį jų traukia *Kaga Hyakuman-goku* šventė ir tuo pat metu vykstantis Tradicinių amatų festivalis. Antra vertus, „tradicinių amatų“ plėtrai turėjo įtakos 1974 m. išleistas „Tradicionių amatų pramonės rėmimo įstatymas“. Jis apsaugojo amatus, išlikusius po Meiji laikotarpio pramoninio perversmo ir po XX a. antrosios pusės ekonominio šuolio. Ishikawos prefektūroje tai buvo nuo istorinių laikų vietinių feodalų globojami amatai – *Kutani* keramika, *Wajima* lako dirbiniai, *Kaga* tekstilės dažymas, *Kanazawa* auksavimas folija, *Kanazawa* šeimos budistiniai altorėliai.

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjama ne istorinė amatininkystės raida ar dirbinių meninė vertė, bet tradicinių amatų gamyba, jos modernizavimas, išlikusi tradicija ir tradicijos „darymas“, siekiant išreikšti tikrąjį šiuolaikinės Japonijos „tradicijos“ vaizdinį. Jame siekiama atskleisti, kaip buvo iš naujo išrasta tradicinė amatininkystė, nors ir naudojusi įprastas žaliavas. Aptariami veiksniai, turėję įtakos tradicinių amatų nuosmukiui ir jų naujajam atradimui. Matyti, kaip Antrojo pasaulinio karo ekonominių pasekmių politinis administravimas, ekonominės plėtros iššūkiai, technologijos racionalizavimas ir mechanizavimas, tradicinių medžiagų keitimas naujomis, plastmasės, cheminių dažų naudojimas, tradicinių santykių tarp amatininkų ir prekybos agentų keitimasis, pragyvenimo lygio kilimas, prabangos daiktų, kuriais tapo dirbiniai, pagaminti iš natūralių medžiagų, siekis ir skonis, amatininko tapimas menininku, eksponuojančiu dirbinius – meno kūrinis parodose, amatų rėmimo draugijos, amato statuso įteisinimas buvo aktyvūs veiksniai, darę įtaką tradicijai.

Straipsnyje pabrėžiama, kad tradicijos „darymas“ ir gamybos modernizavimas keitė amato sampratą. Tai matyti iš to, kaip perduodamas amatas, taip pat iš santykių tarp amatininko ir jo mokinio. Pavyzdžiui, keičiantis *Kaga* tekstilės dažymo technologijai, susidarė nauja mokymosi sistema, kai visas procesas buvo padalytas į etapus ir suprastintas. Šitoks darbo padalijimas padidino gamybos efektyvumą, nors amatininko darbas tapo rutininis. Tačiau svarbiausia tai, jog tapo neįmanoma perduoti visą tradicinį tekstilės dažymo procesą kaip amatą jaunesniajam įpėdiniui, kad jis galėtų tapti visaverčiu

nepriklausomu amatininku. Susilpnėjo ryšiai tarp meistro ir mokinio bei pasikeitė tradicinė jų vaidmenų samprata. Taigi dabartinėje mokymo sistemoje galima matyti akivaizdžią tėvo ir sūnaus pseudosantykių pabaigą. Straipsnyje parodoma, kad „tradicinių amatų pramonės“ pokyčiai tarsi atkartoję Meiji laikotarpio transformacijas kitose srityse, bet tai yra būdas tradicijai išlikti ir prisitaikyti prie kintančios visuomenės.

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