

Fig. 1. Haori from:
the Ryerson Fashion
Research Collection,
FRC2017.01.002



HAORI: AN ASPECT OF CULTURE

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I still remember the first time I heard the word *haori*. My aunt, who lives in Japan, was visiting, and I proudly showed her my beautiful vintage “kimono” that I had recently purchased. She told me that what I thought was a kimono, is actually called a haori. The main difference is that while the kimono is a floor-length robe, the haori is a jacket worn on top. Traditionally, the haori was a male garment, and women did not wear it until around 1985 (Dees 103). Although the haori is not the same as a kimono, it is part of traditional Japanese dress, which became their national costume during the first decade of the twentieth century (Dees 11). Therefore, it is an essential part of kimono culture. This paper seeks to analyze and explore the similarities and differences between two Japanese haori jackets; privately owned pink silk haori (see fig.2) and a black and wine red reversible silk haori from the Ryerson Fashion Research Collection, FRC2017.01.002 (see fig.1).



Fig. 2. Privately owned Pink Silk Haori from: author's photo album.



Fig. 3. Private pink silk haori & black and wine red reversible silk haori from: the Ryerson Fashion Research Collection, FRC2017.01.002.

In the book *The Social Psychology of Clothing*, Susan Kaiser looks at how culture emerges and how it is maintained. Clothes can play an important role in this process; she explains that “Shared usage and understanding of clothes can cultivate a sense of interconnectedness among members of a group” (351). Culture has both a *material* side (e.g., products, signifiers, and artifacts) and a *non-material* side (e.g., abstract concepts, ideology, and values). Together they make up the expressive dimension of culture (Kaiser 351-352). The haori and kimono tradition is an *expressive dimension* of the Japanese culture and when analyzing the two haori jackets the focus will be on the material side.

The two haori jackets were examined using the methodology developed by Mida and Kim in *The Dress Detective* (2015). Unfortunately, there is not much information about the previous owners of these garments. The burgundy silk haori is from the 1990s and was donated by Deanna Horton, who had purchased and worn it in Japan. The pink haori was imported from Japan to the U.S. and sold at the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.; it dates to the 1950s.

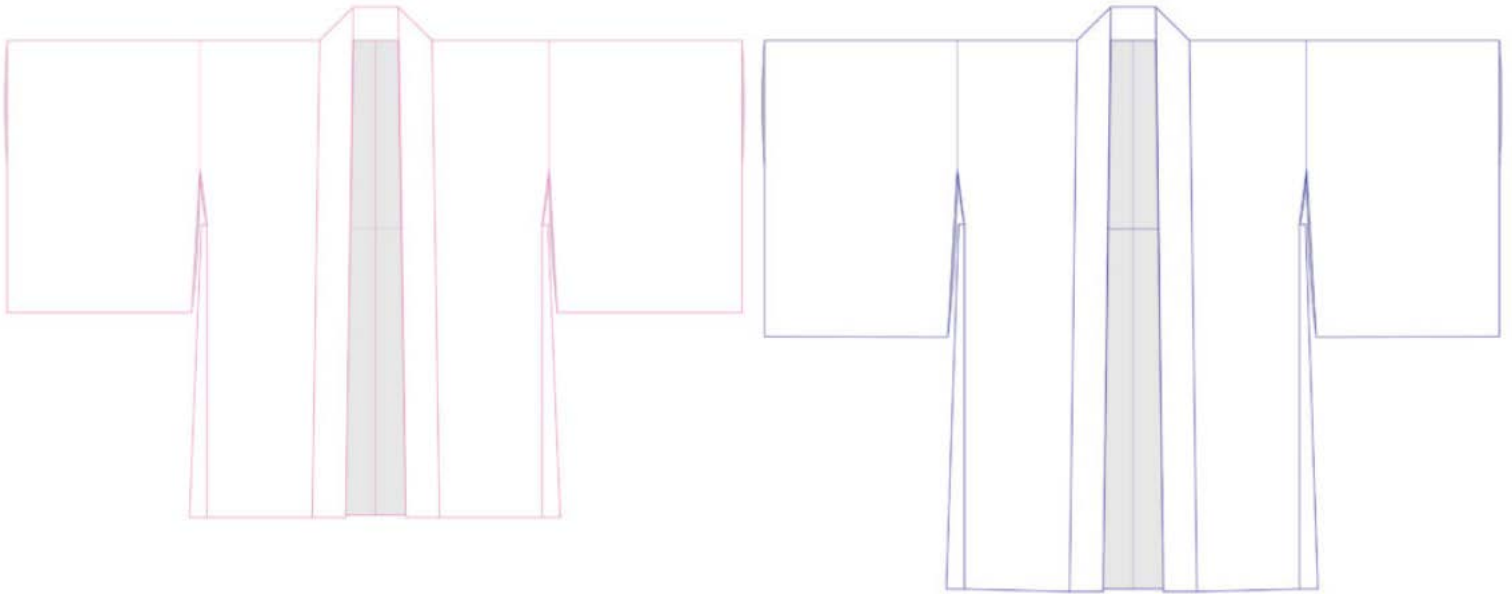


Fig. 4. Technical drawing of the two haori jackets, illustration by author.

COLOURS AND FABRIC WEAVE

At first sight, the most striking difference between these two garments is the colour and fabric weave (see fig.3). The material used in both of these haori jackets is silk. What sets them apart is the weaving and printing technique. The burgundy haori is made of a plain weave silk crepe fabric (*chirimen*) created by over-twisting the weft threads to create a crimped appearance ("Making Kimono"). The base print is made up of two overlapping leaf motifs and is probably printed using silkscreen, while the larger black floral motif looks like a stencil print. This haori jacket is reversible; the lining fabric is made of ordinary plain weave (*hiraori*) and has a colourful pattern that is divided into squares of different colours and motifs. The squares and the different coloured motifs do not line up perfectly; therefore, it is likely that block print was the technique used. The pink haori is not printed, the elaborate floral motif was most likely created using a technique known as *kasuri*, where the pattern is made by weaving with pre-dyed threads of different colours ("Making Kimono"). A geometrical monochrome pattern that looks very similar to *rinzu* weave fabrics covers the lining; *rinzu* is a float weave technique from China that is similar to damask and was introduced to Japan in the 16th century ("Making Kimono").

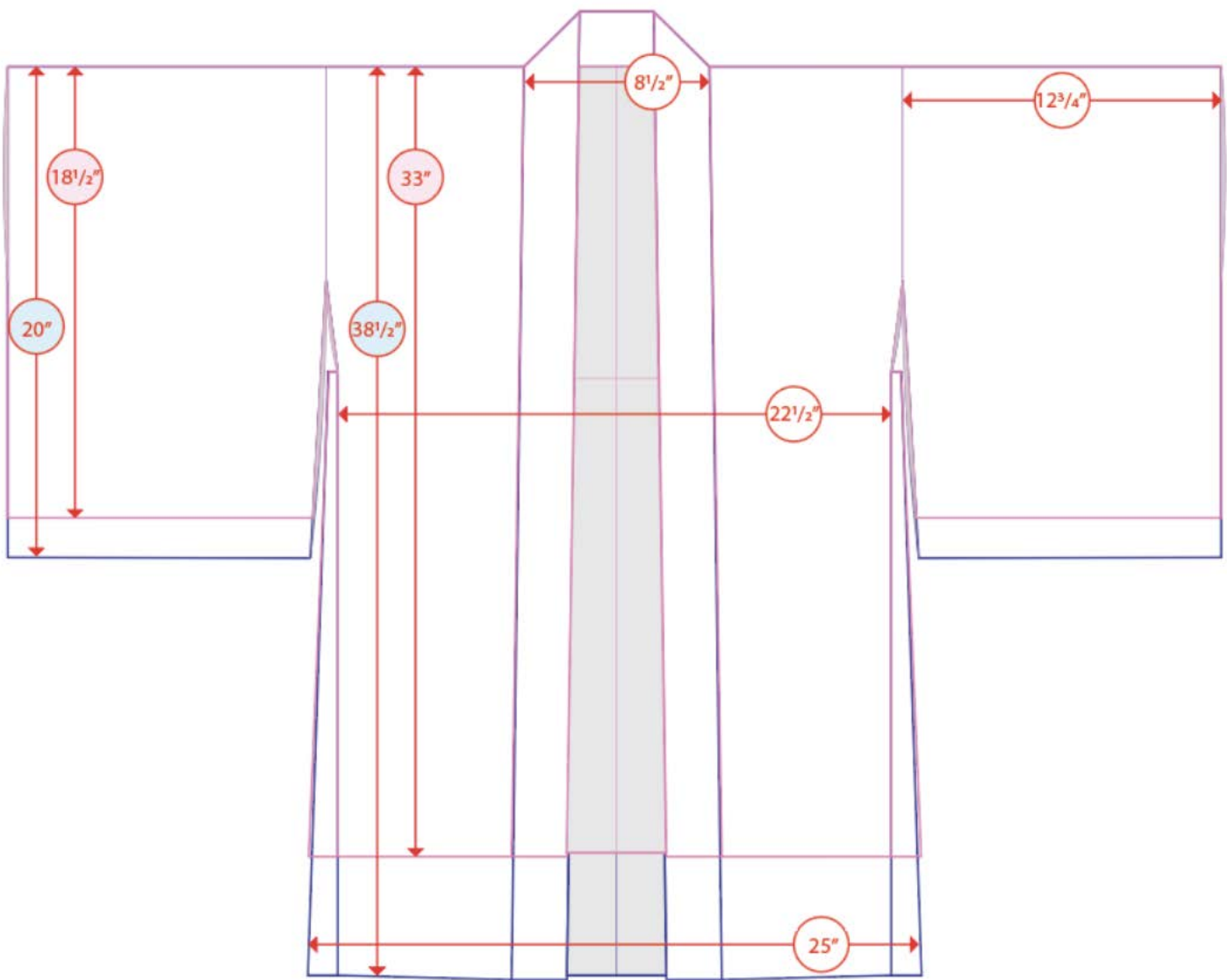


Fig. 5. Technical drawing of the men's and the woman's kimono with measurements, illustration by author.

The construction and size of the two haori jackets are very similar (see fig.4), but the colours are quite the opposite. One has mainly light pink tones of fuchsia and pale orchid, with dusty olive green, silver and gold details. The other is a sand beige base colour covered by small wine red and dark blue leaves and large flower motifs in black, while the lining has brighter shades of blue, green, red, and white (Kimono and the Colors of Japan 77, 80, 126, 130, 221-222). Traditionally, the haori was an item of men's clothing made of plain black silk, or dark shades of blue, green, or gray. Because of sumptuary laws, hiding luxurious fabrics became a trend, and only the linings were decorated with colourful, elaborate designs (Dees 123). Geisha first adopted this plain haori style, and around 1895 it became accepted as a women's garment. During the 1920s, colourful designs became trendy for females. Still, men's haori continued the tradition of darker toned-down designs and bright linings (Dees 103). The colours of these two haori jackets tells us that the pink haori belonged to a woman and the burgundy was made for a man.

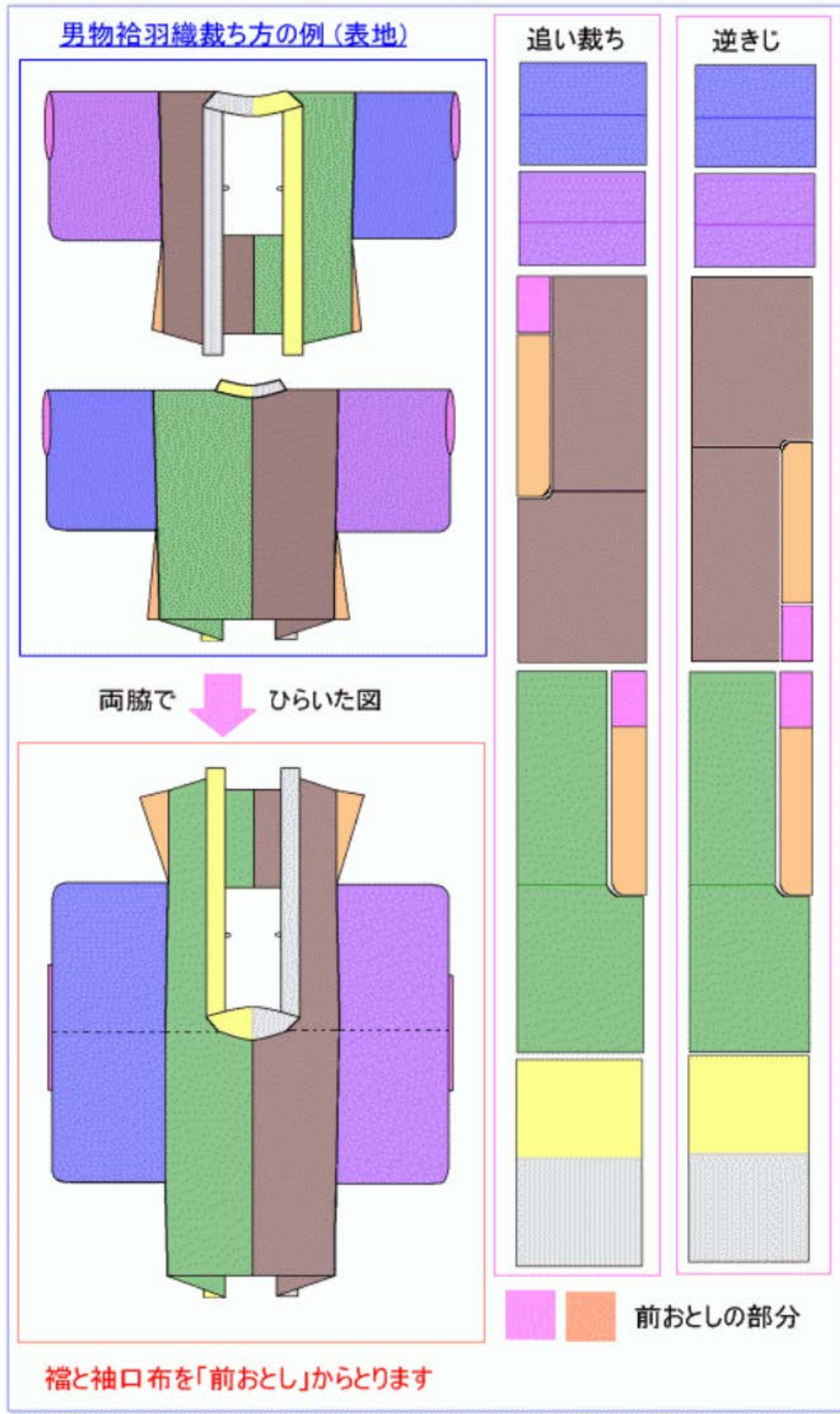


Fig. 6. Haori jacket pieces from: "How to cut a man's haori." Kimono is not open, Akimono Kimono, kimono-akinai.com/category/wasai/wasai-sotogi/. Accessed 17 October.



"How to wear Kimono for men." *YouTube*, uploaded by Wakamono-Kimono, 27 Nov. 2015, www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6EJ-wh1gD8. Accessed 17 October 2019.

CUT AND CONSTRUCTION

Approximately 34 feet of fabric is needed to cut a kimono, and not one piece of fabric goes to waste (Van Assche 45). Although the haori needs less material than a kimono and the pattern pieces look a little different, the same principle of zero waste applies (see fig.6). Two differences are worth pointing out: the side pieces (shown in orange) are not used when making a kimono, and on a haori, the neckband (shown in yellow and gray) continues to the hem while on a kimono, it ends at the waist (see fig.6). When measuring the men's and women's haori, I found that they are the same size (see fig.5). The only difference was that bodice and sleeves on the men's haori were slightly longer. From this observation, it becomes clear that the haori jacket does not emphasize the variation in body shape between women and men, or any particular body part. The haori has a looser fit than the kimono because it does not overlap when worn. Instead, the neckband is folded outwards, and two hidden loops become visible (i.e., one on each side of the neckband). A cord is attached to the loops and tied in the front, creating a small gap (Yamanaka 110). Watch the video below to learn how a men's kimono and haori is worn.



Fig. 7. Haori jackets from Trove's 2016 collection from: Finch, Cammie. "Traditional Samurai Jackets Are Making a Chic, Sophisticated Comeback." *My Modern Met*, 11 Oct. 2016, <https://mymodernmet.com/trove-modern-samurai-haori-jackets/>. Accessed 17 November 2019.

THE NON-MATERIAL SIDE

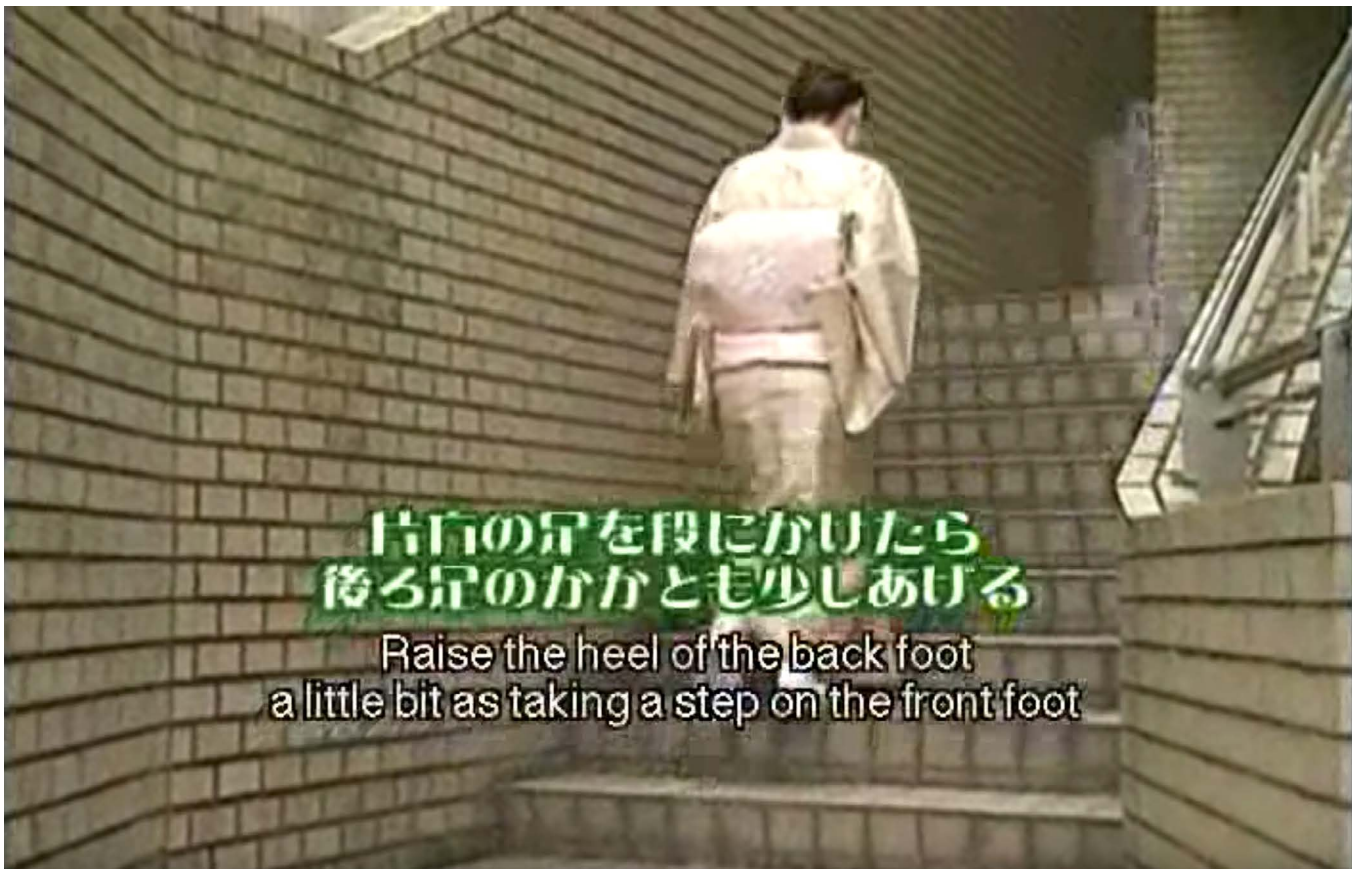
By analysing the colours, weaving techniques, construction, and fit, of two haori jackets and how the garment is worn, I have only scratched the surface of this massive tradition. The overwhelming non-material side of the kimono culture becomes clear. There is so much symbolism in the colours used, abundance of weaving techniques, details in the construction and wear, and centuries of history, traditions and customs. Even for the Japanese, it is a lot to keep track of, and as a response to the westernization that took place after Japan reopened its borders in 1853, kimono academies have been established during the last five decades (Ishimura xii). Here, the Japanese can learn not only the practical and theoretical sides of wearing the national costume, but also the cultural aspects such as "the manners and movements appropriate to the one who wears it" (Ishimura xii).

The kimono is still fashionable in Japan, but for special occasions and not part of the everyday wardrobe ("Wearing the Japanese Kimono in Modern Times"). Many, both women and men, wear the iconic kimono at the *Coming of Age Day*, which is one of the most important holidays in Japan. This celebration is held on the second Monday of January every year. It is a celebration of everyone who turned 20 the past year and marks the transmission from youth to adulthood ("Seijin No Hi"). However, there are contemporary clothing lines that incorporate the traditional Haori style to create modern looks (see fig.7). The Tokyo-based clothing store, Trove, is an excellent example of how to mix traditional and modern garments to create a chic and contemporary look (Finch, 2016).

The non-material side of the kimono culture is tied to more abstract concepts like ideology and values that have developed parallel with the garments, as the wearer of a kimono is "tied to more than nine centuries of Japanese culture, history, and protocol" (Ishimura ix). See links below for a visual presentation of the kimono history and for more information about manners and movement when wearing a kimono.



Konishi, Hokuto. "History of KIMONO." *YouTube*, 15 Feb. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZr6M61ZBpo. Accessed 17 October 2019.

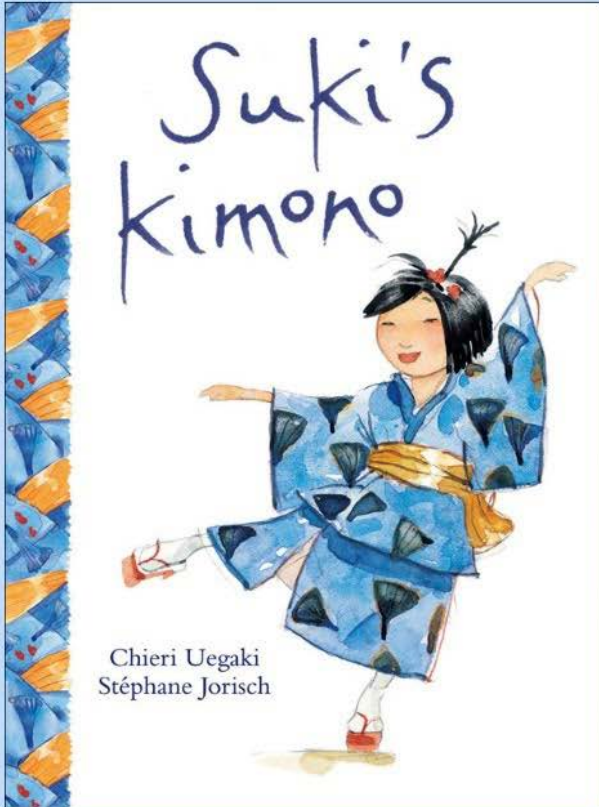


"Kimono The manners when you go out in Kimono How to Japan TV." *YouTube*, uploaded by HowToJapan, 26 June 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qw2zN1P6Hlw. Accessed 17 October 2019.

SweetBerry Read Aloud

SUKI'S KIMONO

by Chieri Uegaki



"[Read Aloud] Suki's
Kimono." *YouTube*,
uploaded by The
SweetBerry Library, 3 Feb.
2016,
[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=xrXsFs5KpLQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrXsFs5KpLQ).
Accessed 17 October
2019.

TRANSGENERATIONAL VALUE

As a child, I was exposed to the material side of Japanese culture through the beautiful gifts my aunt brought home from Japan. I still have very clear memories of these gifts and remember how even the wrapping paper and small gift bags looked like art to me. During my research, I came across "Suki's Kimono," a children's book written by Chieri Uegaki. It tells the story of a Japanese Canadian girl who was introduced to the kimono culture in Japan through her grandmother (2003). If I had more time, I would love to explore the transgenerational value of the kimono culture and how it has been transmitted, learned, shared, and transformed (Kaiser 351-352) throughout history. Instead, I will end this paper with a link to "Suki's Kimono". I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did!

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