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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

This thesis preserves the conventional Japanese name order of family name followed by given name. In the cases of Japanese authors publishing their work in English, the Western name order is used, except for authors whose work was published following Japanese name order. Romanization of Japanese names and terms follows the Hepburn system, which uses macrons to represent long vowels. Macrons are omitted, however, for the place names Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto.
INTRODUCTION

On Monday, October 15, 1900, the Mitsukoshi Department Store, then called the Mitsui Dry Goods Store reopened their flagship store in Tokyo, Japan. Following a successful test on the second floor of the store in 1895, the first floor had now also been transformed into a showroom with glass display cases in the manner of European and American department stores. The renovation of Mitsukoshi’s flagship store signaled a departure from the traditional Japanese custom of showing seated customers four or five samples of products at a time, and the adoption of the contemporary Western strategy of displaying all products for customers to peruse at their leisure. As the Jiji shimbun newspaper reported two days later,

The day before yesterday, before dawn, an enormous number of people were pressed together in front of the store, waiting for it to open as a store with only showrooms. At the same time the doors opened at 7 a.m., a wave of people rushed forward. At 10 a.m. there were about 8,500 people and the 760 jō showrooms upstairs and downstairs were packed to capacity. The store closed the front doors temporarily and refused customers entrance. In the afternoon, because of people leaving and arriving, it was even more crowded in front of the store on Muromachi Street. Due to the crowds, the horsecars could not travel easily, and a few police officers diligently took up positions to clear the tracks. The high number of customers caused the store to allow entry until only 3 p.m.

In spite of the fact that Mitsukoshi could not accommodate all the customers who wished to enter and experience this new way of shopping, more than 106,000 customers visited the store. The day’s sales surpassed all previous single-day sales records for the company and reached 502,000

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1 Mitsukoshi Department Store (Mitsukoshi gofukuten in Japanese) was originally founded in 1673 in Kyoto and Edo (present-day Tokyo) as a drapery named Echigoya by Mitsui Takatoshi. It went through a number of name changes in the intervening years; for the reader’s ease of understanding, I will refer to it in this thesis as Mitsukoshi. Brian Moeran, “The Birth of the Japanese Department Store,” in Asian Department Stores, ed. Kerrie L. MacPherson (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1998): 145.


3 760 jō is approximately 13,500 square feet.

yen. The *Jiji shimbun* called the event the company’s greatest success since the Tokyo store had first opened. What is not evident from this newspaper’s account is that the visitors were mostly women, and these women were wearing kimono and purchasing textiles for Japanese-style dress.

The fact that the store reopened on a Monday indicates that the customers would have been people who were not employed. Mitsukoshi’s clientele in 1900 was primarily the descendants of court nobility, and at this time upper-class women did not work. Elite men of leisure certainly must account for some of the grand reopening’s many customers; department stores specifically catered to women, however. Furthermore, illustrations of Mitsukoshi at the turn of the twentieth century overwhelmingly show women shopping. When men are included in these images, they are not prominently depicted but rather hidden in marginal areas of the illustration.

These same illustrations, from posters, advertisements, and newspaper articles, portray women only in Japanese-style dress. Japan fervently began adopting Western technology and ideas in the 1850s in the face of possible invasion by America and European imperial powers. Upper-class Japanese women had begun to wear Western-style dresses in public at a hall called the *Rokumeikan* (“deer-cry pavilion” in English), and a fashion for Western dress had spread among these elite women in the mid-1880s. Yet, by the 1890s Japan’s indiscriminate imitation of the West had begun to decline. Moreover, people began calling for a rejection of Western ways. The retaliation focused on replacing Western clothing, hair accessories, household goods, and

5 *Kabushikigaisha Mitsukoshi*, 34-35; Moeran, 146. One yen in the Meiji period would be valued at approximately 20,000 yen today. Thus, 502,000 yen in today’s money would be about 10,040,000 yen. “Meiji jidai no ‘ichi en’ no kachitte doregurai?” Nikkei Inc., accessed May 10, 2018. https://manabow.com/zatsugaku/column06.


7 *Kabushikigaisha Mitsukoshi*, 36-37; Moeran, 147.
furniture with the original Japanese versions. In 1889, a thriving discourse arguing for the
abolishment of Western dress began appearing in newspapers. The interest in this point of view
continued, and intensified after Japan’s military victories in the first Sino-Japanese War
(1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). By 1900, Japanese women had returned
to wearing kimono again.

Japanese people’s retaliation against aspects of Western culture was one result of the
spread of gendered nationalist ideology at the turn of the twentieth century. This gendered
nationalism principally affected women and women’s civil rights while it supported and evoked
two other forms of nationalism: “national essence nationalism” and renovationism. National
essence ideology reconstructed Japanese history around the emperor in order to reinforce the
position of the current emperor and emphasize the long-established traditions of Japan, including
its dress. Renovationist nationalism responded to fears that Japan was abandoning these
traditions and thus losing an authentic Japanese essence. The call for a return to Japanese dress,
the kimono, combined both national essence and renovationist nationalisms. However,
nationalists called only upon women to reject Western dress, as nationalist ideologies considered
it necessary for men to continue wearing Western dress in order appear civilized to the Western
gaze. The production of this dichotomy is the work of gendered nationalism.

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Thus, the customers at the grand reopening of Mitsukoshi’s Tokyo flagship store on a Monday in October 1900 were mainly women, and they were wearing Japanese, not Western, dress. Mitsukoshi had its roots as a dry goods store, or drapery, and even after the store expanded its line of products in 1905 it mainly continued to carry textiles for sewing into Japanese-style dress. However, at the turn of the century the store’s upper-class women customers were not purchasing the same styles of textiles they might have even a few years prior. Mitsukoshi’s managing director Takahashi Yoshio, had decided in 1895 that women’s textiles for special occasions should reflect the style of the times. Toward that goal, Mitsukoshi established an in-house design department that produced new textile designs with motifs and colors as directed by the company. The designs of these textiles and the motifs they incorporated, as published on the pages of Mitsukoshi’s catalog and magazine the Mitsukoshi Times, evoked national essence and renovationist nationalisms through their associated meanings. The fact that textiles produced specifically for women to wear as kimono conjured these nationalist ideologies in turn produced gendered nationalism. Mitsukoshi’s production of gendered nationalist ideologies at the turn of the twentieth century illuminates a site of convergence between gendered nationalism, Japanese women’s fashion trends, the agency of consumption, and the politics of display.

**Historiography**

This study enters into several distinct academic discourses. The implications of women’s kimono and obi textile designs at the turn of the twentieth century rests within the larger fields of

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11 *Kabushikigaisha Mitsukoshi*, 44-45.

12 *Kabushikigaisha Mitsukoshi*, 32-33; Moeran, 146-147.
the history of dress and the history of the kimono. The production and consumption of these textiles at a department store is part of the history of consumption in the modern era. Finally, the connection between these textiles and the periodical in which they appeared engages the field of Japanese women’s print media. While the historiography that follows addresses these areas of scholarship, the initial focus of this project was the revival of kimono for women, and the historiography reflects this framing. It was as the project developed that kimono became part of a larger whole. Furthermore, while Japanese language literature exists in all of these areas and I consulted some of this scholarship, I limit my discussion here to English language sources.

The early study of the history of dress focused on what clothes and other personal adornments could tell scholars about the meanings of dress itself. One of the most important early scholars on the history of dress is art historian Anne Hollander. Her monograph *Seeing Through Clothes*, published in 1975, remains a seminal piece for understanding the work of clothes and how to interpret them. In *Seeing Through Clothes* she examines the connections between the dress depicted in Western art and its real-life corollaries over the past two and a half thousand years. With the concept that the clothed figure appears “more persuasive and comprehensible” in its portrayal in art, Hollander argues that the way we view people in reality is mediated through contemporary artistic stylistic modes.¹³ Thus, there is an inherent connection between changes in styles of dress and changes in the principle artistic medium used to portray the figure. The concept that our real-life understanding of dress is mediated through its depictions in art is significant for this study of women’s kimono textiles, as the context of artistic representations might contribute to the ideology evoked by kimono when viewed on the street.

Since the 1970s, scholars of the history of dress and fashion studies have moved beyond the straightforward study of dress and have demonstrated repeatedly that dress can be used to examine larger social issues. Sociologist Yuniya Kawamura demonstrates in *Fashion-ology: An Introduction to Fashion Studies* (2005) that “cultural objects,” such as dress, play a part in the symbolic differentiation of social groups. Examining these objects therefore allows us to the understand hierarchies of power which underpin distinctions between individuals, groups, and classes of people. Kawamura argues that fashion is one “conceptual tool” that can be used to analyze symbolic structures of difference in society.14 One example of dress being used as a tool to investigate relationships and divisions can be seen in the theory put forward by Kristen Hoganson in her chapter “The Fashionable World: Imagined Communities of Dress” (2007). Hoganson shows that in the early twentieth century imagined communities of dress based on consumption created transnational connections between middle- and upper-class Euro-American women at the same time they differentiated these women from Euro-American working-class women and colonial women. Hoganson centers her argument with American women looking to aristocratic, European women, especially French women, as the epicenter of fashion and the apogee of civilization during the early twentieth century. Her theory can also apply to the case of the imagined community of dress created by the Mitsukoshi Department Store through their publication of the *Mitsukoshi Times*.15

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It is through my analysis of the *Mitsukoshi Times* that I will examine a particular social issue: the connection between women’s kimono and their relationship with gendered nationalism, and how this relationship gave women the role of “bearers of tradition.” Beyond Japan, the study of dress and its connections with nationalism and imperialism has deep roots in a number of other geographic contexts. In “Official Photography, Costume, and the Indonesian Revolution” (1997), Jean Gelman Taylor uses the dress of men and women in Indonesian state photographs taken at the proclamation of independence from the Netherlands in 1945 to analyze what role was given to women in the “official historiography” of the Indonesian Revolution. She demonstrates that men, wearing Western dress, identified themselves as modern actors with power, while women, staged in “national dress,” are associated with the past.16

Historian Mina Roces examines the meaning of dress in the Philippines in her article “Gender, Nation and the Politics of Dress in Twentieth-Century Philippines” (2005). Unlike Taylor, Roces argues that women have not always been the bearers of tradition. Spanning colonial and postcolonial periods, she shows that the shifting identities associated with Filipino dress privileged men over women and thus it was incumbent upon women to be strategic in their dress in order to make their voices heard in political spaces.17 Historian Laura Prieto builds on Roces’ work with a focus on the American colonial period in “New Women, American Imperialism, and Anti-Colonial Nationalism: The Politics of Dress in Philippine Mission Stations, 1898-1940” (2016). She argues that Filipina women as well as American missionary women used Filipina and Western dress to communicate their highly layered identities. Both


groups consequently were able to reconfigure the meaning of “modern womanhood” for an international audience. With the context of the meanings of dress in Indonesia, the Philippines, and other countries in mind, I examine Japanese women’s kimono textiles produced by Mitsukoshi and published in the *Mitsukoshi Times* in order to analyze what it meant for a woman to wear a kimono in the late Meiji period.

The English language literature on Japanese women’s dress has until recently largely focused on the history of the kimono up to the Meiji period, with only a nod to modern kimono. This of course creates the misunderstanding that since 1868 kimono have existed largely as static, traditional pieces of clothing, if they are worn at all. In a general history with thousands of years to cover, this is somewhat understandable, however a significant gap in the coverage of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century dress has persisted in the scholarship for some time.

Today, among the most respected of early historical scholarship on kimono is art historian Helen Minnich’s *Japanese Costume and the Makers of Its Elegant Tradition* (1963). Her lengthy monograph begins circa 660 BC and ends in the modern era, but is focused more on earlier changes in the kimono, giving only ten pages to the history of Japanese dress from the Meiji period to the 1960s. Minnich argues that the history of Japanese dress is part of the “panoramic human background against which that history is traced” and therefore, views her work as a

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19 For research on dress in other countries see, for example, Emma Tarlo’s work on dress in India: *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India* (1996).
“history of taste rather than of tailoring.”

Her study mainly records information provided by textile connoisseur Shojiro Nomura, listed as a collaborator on her work.

Since the 1960s, but especially since the 1980s and 1990s, scholars have increasingly paid attention to changes beginning in the nineteenth century and modern kimono. The most frequently cited study of Japanese dress is anthropologist Liza Dalby’s *Kimono: Fashioning Culture* (1993), in which she demonstrates that the significance of the kimono lies in the lack of change in its key elements, including the “square sleeves, lapover collar, geometric construction, [and] use of obi.” In other words, Dalby’s monograph is not a history of the kimono, but a study of the continuity of its parts in context. Terry Satsuki Milhaupt’s monograph *Kimono: A Modern History* (2014) owes a great deal to Dalby’s pioneering work, but specifically addresses and expands upon the discussion of modern kimono. It is the most extensive consideration of modern kimono to date. Milhaupt builds on the concepts established by Dalby and many others to show how the kimono has been worn and what meaning has been imbued within it has reflected outside societal changes in economics, politics, international relations, and society at large. She argues that beginning in the late nineteenth century and through the twentieth century that Japan “manipulated the kimono” in order to help secure a place and national identity for itself in the modern world.

As I will demonstrate here, the relationship between the kimono as an icon of authentic Japanese tradition and the women wearing kimono was a crucial part of creating a national identity under nationalist ideologies.

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21 Minnich, 20-22.

Kimono are objects of material culture, and images often have to stand in for viewing extant garments in person. Catalogs from museums or private collections contribute to this important aspect of research. Among such catalogs on kimono, few focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century kimono, however, and fewer include contextual articles. Recent consumer interest in modern kimono within Japan and abroad may be behind the publication of two catalogs that are valuable not only for the kimono they present but the context they provide.

Kimono: The Art and Evolution of Japanese Fashion: The Khalili Collections (2005), edited by Anna Jackson, Keeper of the Asian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum is the catalog of the kimono collection of The Khalili Family Trust, one of the most comprehensive collections of kimono of its kind. The collection and catalog spans the years 1700 to 2000, and includes examples of men’s, women’s, and children’s formal, semi-formal, and informal kimono. The catalog includes an overall introduction to the history of the kimono itself by the preeminent apparel scholar Nagasaki Iwao, titled “Clad in the Aesthetics of Tradition: From Kosode to Kimono,” as well as chapters on the history of the Edo, Meiji, Taisho, and early Showa periods by prominent historians. These chapters on historical context are supported by a chapter on each period’s history of dress written by Anna Jackson. In “The Meiji Era: The Ambiguities of Modernization,” historian of design Christine M. Guth argues that the Meiji period cannot be contained by clean periodization or modernization efforts, as people’s viewpoints did not disappear overnight. Indeed, she suggests that these opinions persevered for much longer through the “newly legitimating guide of tradition.”23 Jackson’s chapter “Dress in the Meiji Period: Change and Continuity” demonstrates that national identity was issue underlying the various

23 Guth, 106.
sartorial choices people made during this period. The dichotomy of *wa* (“Japanese”) and *yō* (“Western”) was at the heart of the debate over identity; for example, where dress had once been many different garments each with a specific purpose and name, for the most part Japanese dress became subsumed under the term *kimono* (“the thing worn”) in contrast to Western dress. The debate over national identity discussed by Jackson inherently includes how to incorporate tradition, understood as things Japanese created prior to modernity, into that identity.

This question of identity and tradition continues in the years of 1912 to 1945. In “Delirious Japan: Politics, Culture and Art in the Taishō and Early Shōwa Periods,” historian Kenneth H. Brown argues that these years were a time of contrasts, where exciting cosmopolitan urban areas were also the sites of feverish nationalist militarism, politics were at once concerned with civil liberties and authoritarianism, and high culture was intertwined with mass culture. In Jackson’s companion chapter “Dress in the Taishō and Early Shōwa Periods: Traditions Transformed,” she likewise demonstrates that as currents of “national, social, and cultural identity” shifted course, kimono styles did too. Dress itself was drawn into these debates as a focal point for ideas of “tradition and modernity, of the native and the foreign.”

*Fashioning Kimono: Art Deco and Modernism in Japan: The Montgomery Collection* (2015), edited by historian of Japanese art Annie Van Assche, is a catalog of a museum exhibition by the same name, organized by the Victoria and Albert Museum and guest curated by Van Assche. The exhibit, and by extension its accompanying catalog, claim that despite the


kimono’s long history of development, it is the developments undergone by the kimono during
the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that are among its most “dynamic.” With the
influence of Art Deco, the majority of the kimono in this exhibition show a “dramatic break”
from traditional motifs and colors. Chapters which contextualize the catalog include Van
Assche’s “Interweavings: Kimono Past and Present,” which provides detailed information about
the kimono and its construction, along with specific changes during the turn of the twentieth
century.27 Anna Jackson, in “Dynamic Lines and Syncopated Rhythms: Art Nouveau and Art
Deco Designs in Early Twentieth-Century Kimono,” argues that Japanese textile designers did
not simply adapt the influential Western designs, but engaged with them using “stylistic
synthesis,” allowing women to be at once fashionable and still Japanese.28 In “Atarashii Onna:
The New Japanese Woman,” Elise K. Tipton shows how the “new woman” and the “modern
girl” were emblematic of the social and political culture for middle-class women at that time: the
fashions of the new woman and modern girl became symbols for the independence and equality
women were increasingly demanding.29 Akiko Fukai argues in “The Kimono and Parisian Mode”
that the West’s fascination with all things Japanese, Japonisme, had an instrumental influence in
Parisian fashion as well as the aesthetics of the West at the turn of the twentieth century.30

A crucial aspect of the study of women’s dress in modern Japan, including the study of
modern kimono, is Western dress. While English language scholarship on the dress and style of

27 Annie Van Assche, “Interweavings: Kimono Past and Present,” in Fashioning Kimono: Art Deco and Modernism
28 Anna Jackson, “Dynamic Lines and Syncopated Rhythms: Art Nouveau and Art Deco Designs in Early Twentieth-
the modern girl overflows, less attention has been paid to earlier endeavors. A study of one of the
most significant decisions by a woman to wear Western dress is by Sally Hastings. In “The
Empress’ New Clothes and Japanese Women, 1868-1912” (1993), she traces the adaptation of
Western dress by the Meiji Empress and her court in 1886. Hastings writes that at this time
women were increasingly taking public roles as nurses, teachers, and military support staff, and
these positions required a uniform of Western dress. She thus argues that the empress’s decision
to wear Western dress was clearly tied to a message of support for women’s roles and importance
in the development of the modern nation.31 Similarly, Kenichi Hirano connects the choice of
dress with Japan’s modernization efforts. In “The Westernisation of Clothes and the State in
Meiji Japan,” (2010) Hirano uses the changes in dress in the Meiji period, and the distinction
between Western dress and “traditional Japanese clothes (kimono)” as a method to consider
larger cultural changes during this time. He argues that the distinction between Japanese and
Western clothes, and the choice between them, was weighted with the meanings of “cultural
choice,” identity, and national independence.32 While Julia Meech-Pekarick’s volume The World
of the Meiji Print: Impressions of a New Civilization (1986) is focused on the study of Meiji-
period woodblock prints, among the topics she discusses is the dress depicted in the prints.
Meech-Pekarick’s work is based on her research of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Lincoln E.
Kirstein late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century collection of about 200 ukiyo-e woodblock
prints. As her subtitle suggests, Meech-Pekarik demonstrates that the prints are “evidence of a
nation in transition and poignant reminders of both the unprecedented speed and the inevitable

limitations of Japan’s modernization…”33 In this way, her work fits well into the study of Japanese dress during this time period. Japanese women in both kimono and Western dress are common subjects in the Kirstein collection, and Meech-Pekarik uses the literal and figurative impressions from the prints to discuss women’s dress.

Recently, other scholars have approached the study of kimono from the perspective of fashion. Traditional fashion theory as set by Thorstein Veblen and Georg Simmel claim that a system of fashion can only develop particular economic and social conditions.34 Other scholars, such as Roland Barthes and Gilles Lipovetsky, argue that countries outside of the West, including Japan, as well as India and China, did not have the conditions necessary for a fashion system, and thus were not part of one before adopting Western dress.35 Toby Slade, in his 2009 monograph Japanese Fashion: A Cultural History, uses the aesthetic discourses of modernity as his framework. Like Barthes and Lipovetsky, Slade has a Western-centric bias and argues that Japan’s system of fashion grew only after the kimono was designated as “traditional.”36 Kimono scholar Sheila Cliffe and economic historian Penelope Francks refute this supposition. In “Three Social Powers of Japanese Traditional Fashion” (2014), Cliffe shows that the kimono has always been part of a system of fashion because the kimono historically gave its wearers the ability to

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subvert the authorities and present social commentary, and remains relevant today.\textsuperscript{37} In her 2015 article “Was Fashion a European Invention?: The Kimono and Economic Development in Japan,” Francks uses the scope of the period of industrialization from the eighteenth century to World War II to argue that the process of change that affected the majority of women’s kimono during this time can only be understood as fashion.\textsuperscript{38}

One aspect that is often left unaddressed in the studies of dress in general and kimono more specifically is consumer culture, a concept that is at the heart of the relationship between dress and the modern department store. The scholarship on Japanese consumption in the modern era is strong, and Mitsukoshi is particularly well represented in studies of the development of department stores in Japan. Two of the most important recent volumes on consumer culture in Japan are \textit{The Japanese Consumer: An Alternative Economic History of Modern Japan} and \textit{The Historical Consumer: Consumption and Everyday Life in Japan, 1850-2000}. In \textit{The Japanese Consumer} (2009), Penelope Francks demonstrates that through consumption, the “everyday activities of ordinary people” were a crucial part of Japan’s industrialization process.\textsuperscript{39} \textit{The Historical Consumer} (2012), edited by Francks and economic historian Janet Hunter, is a collection of essays that addresses gender and the household, tradition and modernity, and the spaces and methods of consumption. The volume both expands the discourse on Japanese economic history as well as enters into dialog with a comparative framework developed for


industrialized countries in the West. Brian Moeran’s essay “The Birth of the Japanese Department Store” (1998) uses the history of Mitsukoshi as a case study for the overall development of Japanese department stores. He argues that department stores have been a critical part of creating a society that has adapted Western culture to its liking, or “domesticating” it and in turn creating a “new hybrid cultural creole form.”

One aspect of consumer culture is print media. Mitsukoshi began publishing its public relations periodical the *Mitsukoshi Times* just before the Japanese women’s print media boom in the 1910s and 1920s. Very little information exists in English on the *Mitsukoshi Times* or similar publications produced by department stores, however scholars, including the industrious Barbara Sato, are expanding the scholarship on Japanese women’s print media.

Barbara Sato is one of the most important scholars in the field on Japanese women’s print culture; her scholarship focuses mainly on the Taishō period (1912-1926), and as such deals with concepts such as modernism, new roles for women, and mass culture. In her essay “An Alternate Informant: Middle-Class Women and Mass Magazines in 1920s Japan” (2000), she deals with the dichotomies of high, traditional Japanese culture and low, mass Western culture. She shows that by the 1920s, mass women’s magazines were increasingly expanding their circulation to urban middle-class women by selling low-brow sensational stories, rather than filling their pages with articles on cultural refinement. The expansion in readership, Sato claims, in turn changed women’s images of what was possible for themselves.

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41 Moeran, 173-174.

In her book *The New Japanese Woman: Modernity, Media, and Women in Interwar Japan* (2003), Sato examines three new identities, or possible roles, for women in the 1920s, the modern girl, the housewife, and the professional working woman, and their reciprocal relationships with mass women’s magazines. She argues that while the media was instrumental in putting forth these identities, they were not shaped without input from the women themselves and their actions as consumers and “consumers of ideas.” Sato’s chapter in *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (2008) builds on the discussions of consumerism in *The New Japanese Woman*, arguing that it was not only the middle class who were the putative consumers. Rather, she writes, mass women’s magazines allowed working-class women the chance to be a part of the booming culture of consumerism in the 1920s.

Sarah Frederick’s monograph *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women’s Magazines in Interwar Japan* (2006) builds on the pioneering work done by Sato. Frederick examines major women’s magazines in the late Meiji and Taisho periods and argues first, that women’s magazines played a significant role in the overall development of modern Japanese literature. Second, she claims that because Japanese women’s magazines were often at the core of an ongoing debate over the values of popular versus literary fiction, they also played a role in intellectual debates on modernity and its facets of urbanization, Westernization, consumerism, and changes in gender roles.

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45 Sarah Frederick, *Turning Pages: Reading and Writing Women’s Magazines in Interwar Japan* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2006).
In contrast to much other scholarship in the field, Mara Patessio’s work focuses on the nineteenth century. Similar to Sato, however, she examines how new opportunities for women were handled in the press. In “Readers and Writers: Japanese Women and Magazines in the Late Nineteenth Century” (2010), she focuses on how perceived threats from women publicly expressing their opinions were dealt with in the Meiji period. She argues that outside of controlling women’s education and actions in public, another method of control used was placing in periodicals attacks on reading material that could potentially lead young women astray.46

This thesis addresses the relationship between nationalist discourses, modes of consumption, and women’s dress in modern Japan. Using the periodical the Mitsukoshi Times as a primary source, I bring together the fields of Japanese women’s dress, consumption, and media to examine how the Mitsukoshi Department Store evoked and produced gendered nationalism through its textile designs in the early twentieth century. Central to my argument are sociologist Brian McVeigh’s discussions of national essence nationalism and renovationism. Similarly, I use Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined communities to interrogate the relationship between Mitsukoshi and their readers of the Mitsukoshi Times.47 I also rely upon the expertise of scholars


Yumioka Katsumi and his co-authors, Nagasaki Iwao and Fujii Kenzō to interpret the motifs incorporated in Mitsukoshi’s textiles.48

Sources and Methods

The Mitsukoshi Times (Mitsukoshi taimusu in Japanese), published monthly from 1908 to 1914, was a combination mail-order catalog and magazine that scholars describe as a public relations magazine (PR-shi). It provided content on new products, upcoming events, and behind-the-scenes activities at the department store, in addition to information on fashion trends. The Mitsukoshi Times was the successor to Jikō (“Vogue”), a monthly periodical of similar scope published from 1903 to 1908, as well as several irregularly published periodicals published as early as 1895. Like the clientele of the department store itself, the readers of the Mitsukoshi Times were middle- and upper-class women.49

For my investigation I sampled eleven issues of the Mitsukoshi Times from 1909 to 1912. I chose to sample issues from the months of January, April, and June for their seasonality, as well

48 Yumioka Katsumi, *Kimono to Nihon no iro natsu-hen (Summer Kimonos and the Colors of Japan: Kimono Collection of Katsumi Yumioka)* (Tokyo: PIE Books, 2006); Yumioka Katsumi and Fujii Kenzō, *Oriobi ni miru Nihon no monyō zukan* (Tokyo: Seikai Bunkasha, 2008); Yumioka Katsumi and Nagasaki Iwao, *Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa ni miru kimono monyō zukan* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2005). Yumioka Katsumi began his career as a hair and makeup artist, initially collecting kimono as a hobby. He later opened an antique kimono shop, Ichinokura, and was one of the founders of the antique kimono movement. Yumioka has curated several exhibits of his collection, and has written many books on kimono, especially kimono motifs and colors. Nagasaki Iwao is a historian of Japanese dress. Fujii Kenzō worked for more than thirty years at the Kyoto Municipal Dyeing and Weaving Laboratory (“Kyōtoshi senshoku shikenjō,” now the Kyoto Municipal Institute of Industrial Technology and Culture).

as the consistency of their availability in the collection I surveyed. The April issues present and comment upon spring fashions, while June issues do so for summer fashions. While certainly the fall and winter fashion seasons would provide important context, I chose to focus instead on the January issues for three reasons: first, the importance of the New Year’s holiday in Japanese culture gives important weight to fashions for the new year specifically, an additional fashion season. Second, the January issues allow for the possibility of product placement and articles regarding the end of year/New Year’s gift giving season. Lastly, in each January issue the *Mitsukoshi Times* included a one-page New Year’s message, which provides the opportunity for direct comparative analysis.

From this sample I found the *Mitsukoshi Times* generally comprised three sections: a section of frontispieces at the beginning that often accompanied later articles in the magazine, an illustrated catalog, and the magazine itself. A fourth supplemental section, “Osaka Mitsukoshi” ("Osaka no mitsukoshi") appeared at the back of the periodical through the January 1911 issue and presented the three main sections in brief with a focus on products, styles, and events specific to the Osaka area and the branch store located there. Given that the *Mitsukoshi Times* was at its core a vehicle to promote the department store itself, there were not many advertisements, but full-page ads for Mitsukoshi products or events often appeared in the front and back of the periodical. As a whole, the periodical averaged about 90 pages. The front section averaged 8 to 10 pages with between 4 and 6 frontispieces; the catalog, magazine, and “Osaka Mitsukoshi” sections averaged approximately 30 pages, 40 pages, and 10 pages, respectively.

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50 While I was able to sample the January and June issue for each year from 1909 to 1912, the April 1910 issue was unavailable, and therefore I have a sample of only three April issues.
While the magazine section was printed in black and white, the frontispiece and catalog sections were printed with one-color plates, usually red, blue, or sepia. It was due to advances in reproductive technology that color pages could included in a mass-produced periodical, but the same issues that came with black and white printing remained, as only slight differences in tone could be distinguished. Furthermore, the catalog pages presented products in only one image. This practice prioritized including more products in fewer pages rather than illustrating product details through images. Descriptive captions were therefore extremely important for potential consumers. In order for mail-order customers to be satisfied with their purchase, the product descriptions would need to be of a high quality. Thus, most descriptions for textiles indicated the type of fabric, colors, motifs, and for what gender, age, and use the textile was appropriate.

For my analysis, I selected several articles from each issue to read in their entirety, prioritizing articles which were less related to clothing or fashion trends but instead mentioned politics, the emperor, or foreign countries; or involved cultural calendar events or events happening at Mitsukoshi department stores. I selected these particular pieces in an effort to balance my close analysis of the catalog sections and to investigate how the *Mitsukoshi Times* discussed nationalist ideologies.

To analyze the textile designs presented in the catalog section of the *Mitsukoshi Times*, I focused my sampling on five categories of products as suggested by headings in the catalog: 1) textiles for *maru-obi*, the most formal type of obi; 2) textiles for the *katagawa-obi*, a less-formal, half-width obi; 3) *omeshi* textiles, an abbreviation of *omeshi chirimen* and a type of high-quality

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silk crepe; 4) *yūzen chirimen* textiles, silk crepe dyed with the *yūzen* stenciling process; and 5) miscellaneous textiles, such as textiles which are striped, made with *meisen* silk (a “flat, hard-finished silk”\(^{52}\)), or dyed with the *kasuri* process (a yarn-dyed process similar to *ikat*). As these categories are not exclusive, there is some overlap. For each issue of the *Mitsukoshi Times*, I sampled the first catalog page of each type of product that included captions about the textiles and for which the textiles were listed as appropriate for women thirteen years of age and older. About 15 to 25 products met my criteria in a given issue, however I limited my analysis to no more than 20 products.

After sampling, I cross-referenced the textile designs and their incorporated motifs with a list of motifs that were considered to be in the *Genroku* style, a trend started by Mitsukoshi based on the textile designs of the ostensibly idyllic Genroku era (1688-1704). I then examined the associated meanings of each motif from my sample for possible connections to nationalist ideologies.

One of the significant drawbacks to using a periodical like the *Mitsukoshi Times* is that the voices of the very people we as researchers wish to study are absent. Mass-produced and widely circulated, even century-old magazines and catalogs are not especially difficult to find in a library or special collection, however, by using them as primary sources, researchers re-inscribe the supremacy of their predominantly male publishers’, editors’, and writers’ privileged voices in our research.\(^{53}\) Researchers like myself who want to disrupt the hierarchies of power in and of our fields are often faced with the difficulties of finding sources, let alone accessible

\(^{52}\) Dalby, 333.

\(^{53}\) Most articles in the *Mitsukoshi Times* do not have authors attributed, however the majority of authors in periodicals were men in the early twentieth century; women were a rare exception. James L. Huffman, *Creating a Public: People and Press in Meiji Japan* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1997): 236-239.
sources in which the voices of historically marginalized people speak for themselves. I wish to acknowledge that I am using a source that is not produced or likely written by Japanese women in part to examine what the experiences of Japanese women might have been. Yet, by reading the Mitsukoshi Times against the grain we can illuminate the influence of nationalist ideologies upon the Mitsukoshi department store, and follow its effect onto kimono textiles and, in turn, women’s bodies.

In the early twentieth century, the Mitsukoshi Department Store’s public relations periodical, the Mitsukoshi Times, created an imagined community of readers and customers. The members of this community in turn placed their trust in the store when Mitsukoshi developed new styles and textile designs. However, the Mitsukoshi Department Store produced designs for women’s kimono and obi textiles that had clear connections to national essence, renovationist, and gendered nationalisms. The textiles’ relationships to nationalist ideologies can be seen through the seemingly idyllic historical time period their designs evoke as well as the meanings associated with particular motifs. Furthermore, the textiles’ placement in the catalog pages of the Mitsukoshi Times signaled a connection to nationalist ideologies through their adjacency to other ideologically nationalist products and articles in the periodical.

Accordingly, we can understand that women themselves, wearing kimono with designs that evoked nationalist ideologies as part of an ostensible kimono revival, acted as the physical, living embodiments of traditional Japan that renovationist and national essence nationalisms promoted. As the bearers of tradition, the bodies of women in these kimono became commodities of nationalism as much as the textiles themselves were was in the pages of the Mitsukoshi Times.
In the first chapter, I introduce the concepts of gendered, national essence, and renovationist nationalisms that grew out of this time and discuss how the *Mitsukoshi Times* created an imagined community for Mitsukoshi. I argue that articles in the *Mitsukoshi Times* show the influence of national essence and renovationist nationalism, and that the production of an imagined community itself alludes to the national essence ideology of the Japanese nation as a family.

In the second chapter, I examine and analyze Mitsukoshi’s textile designs published in the *Mitsukoshi Times*. I argue that Mitsukoshi’s designs’ style and ideological motifs evoke national essence nationalism and renovationism. The fact that Mitsukoshi produced these textiles only for women’s kimono connects to the gendered nationalist renunciation of Western dress for women. This in turn suggests the influence of gendered nationalism in Mitsukoshi’s textiles.
CHAPTER ONE

The Growth of Nationalist Ideologies

Mitsukoshi’s growth as a department store in the early twentieth century coincided with the development of several forms of nationalist ideologies in Japan. Nationalism is the modern ideology that the people and systems of a particular group have a fundamental, perhaps undefinable, quality in common that gets maintained through institutions and the legislature. Nationalist ideologies operate at every level of a society, from the individual to the institutional, in ways that are active and visible as well as passive and invisible. Therefore, it is not surprising that Mitsukoshi may have been influenced by nationalist ideologies as well as re-produced them in the *Mitsukoshi Times* and through their products.\(^{54}\)

In any society multiple nationalist ideologies exist at once, and these forms of nationalism are multifaceted. They inform and inflame each other by creating and exploiting the ambiguities that live in the spaces where forms do and do not overlap with each other. In Japan at the turn of the twentieth century the nationalist ideologies that developed included both official and popular forms, encompassing economic, educational, popular cultural, and ethnos nationalisms. The nationalist ideologies that influenced Mitsukoshi the most, and which Mitsukoshi most clearly re-produced, were gendered nationalism, national essence nationalism, and renovationist nationalism.\(^{55}\)

In Japan during the Meiji period (1868-1912), the ideology of gendered nationalism defined women’s place in the nation, women’s citizenship, and women’s civil rights. Women

\(^{54}\) McVeigh 7, 31-33, 196.

\(^{55}\) McVeigh, 5-7.
were not allowed to vote, join political parties, or participate in any political activities during the Meiji period. It is true that men did not gain universal suffrage until 1925. However, the Meiji government regarded women as politically distinct and inferior to men even while many men were likewise unenfranchised. The most frequently cited example of gendered nationalism that arose during the Meiji period is the ideology of “Good Wife, Wise Mother” (ryōsai kenbo). The Meiji oligarchs came to believe that women would be an important resource as the country looked to fulfill its image as a strong nation; women were vital not only for their reproductive capabilities but also for what was believed to be a natural instinct for solid morals and religious purpose that they could pass on to their sons. The government put Good Wife, Wise Mother ideology into policy in the 1898 Civil Code. The code made official the long-held Confucian philosophy that wives were subordinate to their husbands.

The phrase ryōsai kenbo was coined in 1875 by Namakura Masanao, a scholar of Confucian and Western learning who counted among his cohort some of the most influential intellectuals of the Meiji period. These men included Fukazawa Yukiichi, one of the most important proponents of Western learning, and Mori Arinori, the first Minister of Education mentioned above. Nakamura’s philosophy of Good Wife, Wise Mother came from a combination of established Confucian and fresh Western ideas; one of the new Western theories was the concept that a person’s character was not an inherited trait but something that could be

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57 McVeigh, 223-225.

developed. Like the Western thinkers he read, Nakamura believed the best place character could mature was in the home. That it would be mothers who would raise children to be of strong character was undeniable, for Nakamura also “advocated an almost mystical view of sexual differences” and likewise “believed that women have a strong moral and religious sense and are naturally endowed with a maternal instinct.” The government’s interest in the characters of the country’s youth came from a desire to have a population of men ready for military service; any discussion of gender and women’s rights in Japan was from the first premised upon the state’s, rather than the people’s, needs.

It was because of the state’s interest in modernization that the government officially adopted the ideology of Good Wife, Wise Mother. This ideology lay beneath the Civil Code of 1898 and an ordinance from the same year that required a girls’ higher school in each prefecture. It was through this ordinance that Good Wife, Wise Mother truly put theory into practice, however it encompassed only middle- and upper-class women until later reforms in 1911. While earlier educational policies included aspects of the philosophy, such as mandating sewing for girls in primary school and making the girls’ secondary education track less rigorous than boys’, the establishment of higher schools for girls created institutions where the ideals of Good Wife, Wise Mother were carried out. The core curriculum for girls’ higher schools was distinct

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59 McVeigh, 222-223.


61 Nolte and Hastings, 158. Good Wife, Wise Mother philosophy was extended into elementary schools in 1911. Even by 1915, only 2 percent of primary school graduates attended higher women’s schools. McVeigh, 225.

from boys’ higher schools as it focused on moral education and domestic skills; subjects such as foreign languages, mathematics, and natural or social sciences were not emphasized. These different courses set a separate track for women that emphasized domestic over wage labor, and minimized opportunities for intellectual growth and roles in the public sphere.63 Through Good Wife, Wise Mother, middle- and upper-class women were taught to act only in carefully prescribed ways that would benefit the nation and empire. While not only allowing but mandating that girls attend school, and making women the guardians and educators of their children were new concepts in Japanese society that opened up more options for women, by the end of the nineteenth century, and with the wholehearted adoption of Good Wife, Wise Mother by the government, intellectual elites had restricted the possibilities of the ideology so that women’s power would not leave the front gates of their homes.64

Good Wife, Wise Mother was also rooted in national essence nationalism and renovationism. National essence nationalism and renovationism are two complimentary forms of nationalist ideologies; they and gendered nationalism inform and are affected by the principles and practices generated by each other.

The concept of national essence (kokutai) nationalism attempts to convey the significance of the emperor and his lineage, and the importance of the Japanese people as the emperor’s children. The Japanese term, kokutai, literally means “national polity,” but connotes a spiritual connection between the Emperor and his people. Based in Shinto and Confucian philosophy, this idea of a national essence went beyond the relationship between the living emperor and citizens.

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63 Uno, 501, 503.

64 Sievers, 23-25.
of Japan into the past. National essence nationalism was based upon this “continuous national historical essence,” which mythologizes an unbroken imperial line going back to the legendary first emperor of Japan.

The desire to protect and sustain ostensibly authentic Japanese customs and culture informs national essence nationalism, but it is the very heart of renovationist nationalism. Renovationism is a cyclical nationalist response in the face of rapid social and political changes. Japanese renovationist nationalism asserts that the concept of “Japanese,” or tradition, is distinct from the concept of “Western,” or modern. Moreover, a pure, untouched condition of “Japanese-ness,” or an authentic Japan, existed before Japan’s undesired engagement with the West beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. In the case of Meiji Japan, the cycle began with intense, accelerated efforts at importing new technology and industrializing. This allowed the country to reach standards exhibited by the contemporary Western powers in their military defeat of China, and later, Russia. The first victory in China allowed the Japanese a period of reflection on the many social, political, and cultural changes that had occurred in a few short decades. An initial apprehension that Japan had lost touch with its ostensibly authentic traditions and values launched a period of reaction in which nationalists promoted Japanese culture and values that were presumed to be endangered. This response led to the renunciation of some parts of Western culture the Japanese had adopted, including Western dress.65

National essence and renovationist nationalisms demonstrate the impact of gendered nationalism through the concept of the Japanese nation as a family and the outcomes of the fear for losing Japanese traditions to new Western culture. Through national essence nationalism, the

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65 McVeigh, 57.
country of Japan is recast as a family united with the emperor as the father. The head of the Japanese family is gendered male through the emperor and his lineage, reinforcing Confucian tenets. Through renovationism, fears that Japan would lose its authentic self resulted in a rejection of Western dress. However, because men needed to appear modern for their work in the public and international sphere, it became women’s responsibility to repudiate modern, Western dress, in favor for traditional, Japanese dress.

The Mitsukoshi Times and Mitsukoshi’s Imagined Community

The contradictory nature of gendered nationalism influenced Mitsukoshi. At the same time that the department store was adopting Western sales and marketing strategies it was also following the nationalist rejection of Western dress for women by only selling textiles for Japanese style dress. However, the strategies Mitsukoshi used to transform the company from a dry goods store into a department store would not have been successful without the support of its customers. One way Mitsukoshi built trust with its clientele was by creating an imagined community through the Mitsukoshi Times. This in turn gave the department store the following and support for their new textile designs.

Like the introduction of two floors of showrooms at the Tokyo flagship store in 1900, Mitsukoshi made large-scale changes to its shops in order to transform into a modern department store. The company added shop windows to their Tokyo storefront in 1904, and began construction on a fanciful, new Tokyo flagship building in 1910; when the new building opened

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66 While Mitsukoshi had opened a Western clothes department for men and women in 1988, the store eliminated the department in 1895. In 1906 the department reopened as a men’s tailoring department. *Kabushikigaisha Mitsukoshi*, 31-32, 47.
in 1914, it included an elevator and the first escalator in Japan.\textsuperscript{67} However, the \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} and its predecessors supported Mitsukoshi’s development through the creation of an imagined community that placed customers at the heart of the company’s enterprise.

The \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} was the result of a redesign of Mitsukoshi’s original monthly combination magazine and catalog, \textit{Jikō}. Mitsukoshi published \textit{Jikō} from August 1903 to May 1908 on a monthly basis for 12 sen an issue.\textsuperscript{68} Each issue was approximately 60 pages.\textsuperscript{69} When the \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} debuted in June 1908 it was as a newspaper-sized, sixteen-page periodical published every ten days. One issue cost 5 sen, including postage, though subscribers could purchase the periodical for a reduced rate on a monthly or semi-annual basis. This redesign created a shorter periodical that was published more often, providing readers not only with frequent and up-to-date news on trends and events, but reminding them to shop at Mitsukoshi often.\textsuperscript{70}

However, due to reader feedback the \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} was redesigned again and from the October 1908 issue became a monthly, A5-sized (5.8 x 8.3 in) periodical with an average of 90 pages an issue. The price increased to 18 sen with this change, yet Mitsukoshi found clear success with this format at least until May 1914, when it merged with Mitsukoshi’s magazine on the company’s business philosophy, \textit{Mitsukoshi}. The relatively quick return to a format similar to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{67} Moeran, 146. Not all of Mitsukoshi’s innovations were centered in Tokyo; the Osaka store introduced a first-floor showroom in 1896, directly after the Tokyo flagship’s experiment on their second floor in 1895. \textit{Kabushikigaisha Mitsukoshi}, 32-33.
  \item \textsuperscript{68} One sen in the Meiji period would be valued at approximately 200 yen today. In 1905, 1 sen would have been enough to purchase one sweet red bean bun. “Meiji jidai no ‘ichi en’ no kachitte doregurai?” Nikkei, Inc.
  \item \textsuperscript{69} Okada, 42. From 1899 to 1903, Mitsukoshi published booklets on fashion trends and products on an irregular basis and under various names. These booklets were distributed for free to regular, upper class patrons of the store. Ono, “‘Mitsukoshi taimusu,’” 72.
  \item \textsuperscript{70} Ono, “‘Mitsukoshi taimusu,’” 72. The price also increased slightly, though it is unclear if \textit{Jikō}’s price included postage or not.
\end{itemize}
Jikō’s after a likely long redesign process signals that reader input and interest was high, and readers were not deterred by the significantly higher price. Indeed, enough demand existed for the “Osaka Mitsukoshi” section within the Mitsukoshi Times that it became its own independent periodical two years later, in March 1910. Circulation numbers are not available for the Mitsukoshi Times beyond the knowledge that Mitsukoshi, which began publication in March 1911, was distributed for free on a monthly basis in runs of 50,000 issues before it merged with the Mitsukoshi Times.⁷¹

These large business initiatives suggest that the Mitsukoshi Times was successful in that it had large, if not also profitable, subscription rates to continue publication for several years, and then for several decades as Mitsukoshi. Moreover, the periodical had a significant level of reader interest: enough to cause the editors to call for a second redesign within six months, and enough for readers to continue to subscribe even at a higher price point. Therefore, it is likely that a significant number of upper-middle-class and upper-class women, not only in cities but across Japan read the Mitsukoshi Times or borrowed one from someone who did. The high degree of reader involvement and associated subscription rate indicates enthusiasm for the contents of the periodical. This is unsurprising, as the Mitsukoshi Times marketed itself in some ways less as a magazine and catalog and more as a community newsletter.

From the very first turn of the page, a reader of the Mitsukoshi Times was transported into the heart of the Mitsukoshi community. The periodical invited the reader to become a member of the Mitsukoshi family through keeping them up to date on events sponsored by Mitsukoshi, introducing them to other members in the community, inviting them to participate in the

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⁷¹ Ono, “‘Mitsukoshi taimusu,’” 72-73.
community as contest entrants and consumers, and providing them with select behind-the-scenes knowledge of Mitsukoshi. The front and magazine sections worked in tandem to build this imagined community, as the frontispiece photographs often linked to articles later in the magazine. The frontispiece section had only limited captions, and thus was not broken up by columns of text; the separation of these two sections had the effect of creating a continuously updated Mitsukoshi family album that readers would see first upon opening the periodical.

As a typical example, the frontispiece section from the June 1910 issue includes 1) a photograph of a young woman, “the daughter of Mr. Morita from Shimonoseki,” wearing a newly-designed kimono from Mitsukoshi, and a photograph of two young girls, “the daughters of Mr. Takeshi from Tokyo,” wearing matching Western-style dresses; 2) five photographs of young women, full names provided, in costumes made by Mitsukoshi titled “Western Dances by Students of the Imperial Theater School of Art”; 3) a photograph titled “Special Guests of the Children’s Exposition,” featuring a group of men who had traveled from Manchuria; 4) a photograph of the judges choosing the winners of Mitsukoshi’s photography contest of beauties; and 5) eight pages of photographs showing the winning photos. The frontispieces usually included images of recent events, such as Mitsukoshi’s annual Children’s Exposition. In addition to images of important guests, Mitsukoshi also covered events with photographs in media res, such as the April 1909 issue, which devoted a full page spread to images of the crowds attending the “opening celebration” of the sale of new textile designs. These types of images in particular had the effect of placing readers into the time and space the photographs were taken, whether or

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72 Anderson, 6-7.

73 Mitsukoshi Times 8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p.

74 Mitsukoshi Times 7, no. 4 (Meiji 42 [1909], April), n.p.
not they attended the event itself. The photographs were supported by articles inside the magazine which reported on what happened at these exhibitions, seminars, sales, and opening ceremonies, as well as previewed upcoming events. In other words, every event Mitsukoshi organized was an event in which many members of the community could participate.

Less commonly, the *Mitsukoshi Times* included images of its individual customers like the images of Ms. Morita and the Takeshi sisters. However the periodical frequently sponsored contests, such as the photography contest, which gave readers the opportunity, if they were lucky, to see their name in the magazine. The store regularly held design contests on a specific theme or in a specific style, the results of which were published in the *Mitsukoshi Times*; in addition, the *Mitsukoshi Times* held poetry contests on a recurring basis. Contest participation provided readers a way to enter the Mitsukoshi community beyond reading and consumption; it allowed readers to see themselves in Mitsukoshi, to make a space for themselves, and perhaps become famous in their own right. Even when readers did not win, the names and images of the winners served as a way to introduce them to other members of the Mitsukoshi family, even if they would never meet in person, allowing readers to picture their imagined community.

The captions for the photographs of Ms. Morita and the students from the Imperial Theater School of Art, which state that their dress was designed or made by Mitsukoshi, suggest another way the *Mitsukoshi Times* urged their readers to participate was through consumption. Periodically, the *Mitsukoshi Times* even included in this front section a photograph of a display.

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75 The frontispiece pages show the winning photographs of the photography contest, however an article inside the magazine reveals the winners of the beauty contest based on these photographs. *Mitsukoshi Times* 8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p., 15-18.


77 Anderson, 6-7.
case or specific products readers could purchase. For example, the January 1909 issue includes photographs of display cases holding products commemorating the anniversary of a naval battle in the Russo-Japanese War. The frontispiece section of the periodical acted like a family album because it depicted the people, places, and events that were significant to Mitsukoshi, and therefore the Mitsukoshi community. Including images of products, including a ruler, a pen with an ink jar, an underwater-mine-shaped tobacco tray, an ashtray, a toy, a variety of vases, and a statue of Emperor Jimmu, in this album, rather than in the catalog, conveyed the importance of these products to the community. Indeed, the title of the products commemorating the war anniversary is “View of the Commemorative 1904-1905 War Products Display,” suggesting that the very act of seeing the products is an event in and of itself.

At its core, however, the consumption of any Mitsukoshi product was another way to join the Mitsukoshi community.

Even readers who had never stepped foot in a Mitsukoshi store could participate from afar through the Mitsukoshi Times mail-order catalog. This created an “imagined community of dress” based on the consumption of Mitsukoshi textiles.

The photograph of the photography contest judges exemplifies another way Mitsukoshi strove to create a sense of community through the pages of the Mitsukoshi Times: providing peeks behind-the-scenes. Through photographs and articles, readers of the Mitsukoshi Times gained insider knowledge of Mitsukoshi’s newest improvements and recent activities. In the

78 Mitsukoshi Times 7, no. 1 (Meiji 42 [1909], January), n.p.
79 “Meiji sanjūshichi-kei sen’eki kinenhin chinrestsu no kōkei,” Mitsukoshi Times 7, no. 1 (Meiji 42 [1909], January), 27.
80 Hoganson, “The Fashionable World: Imagined Communities of Dress.”
image of the judges, the reader received a sense of that this contest is not only important to her, but to Mitsukoshi as well. The photograph shows thirteen men in a large room with elegant furniture crowded around a table covered with photographs; some are taking notes, others considering prospects. Through the image, the reader learns more about the process behind the contest judging.\textsuperscript{81}

Other glimpses behind-the-scenes include an article about models of historical Japanese military battles Mitsukoshi produced for an exposition in London in 1910 at the request of the Department of the Army, and annual New Years’ messages with detailed information about the events and business outcomes of the past year.\textsuperscript{82} Mitsukoshi gave readers knowledge about the inner workings of Mitsukoshi, such as such as construction and renovations, how employees are trained, what the company envisions going forward, and modernizing features the department store has made. This insider knowledge provided readers with the additional information to make them authorities on Mitsukoshi. In families, only those members with enough power and influence know the family secrets; by giving the readers of the \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} ostensibly private information, Mitsukoshi created the feeling that the readers were privileged, community insiders.

Mitsukoshi created an imagined community through the \textit{Mitsukoshi Times}. This in turn allowed its members to go to every Mitsukoshi event, be introduced to other members, participate through contests and consumption, and become Mitsukoshi insiders. For Mitsukoshi, this created a large group of consumers who could feel as though were a part of Mitsukoshi

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} 8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} 7, no. 1 (Meiji 42 [1909], January), n.p.; \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} 8, no. 1 (Meiji 43 [1910], January), n.p., 36; \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} 9, no. 1 (Meiji 44 [1911], January), n.p.; \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} 10, no. 1 (Meiji 45 [1910], January), n.p.
itself. These consumers subsequently might have more trust in Mitsukoshi than the average consumer when the company pioneered a new fashion trend or design, or evoked nationalist ideologies. Indeed, the comparison of the front section of the *Mitsukoshi Times* to a family photo album, or the Mitsukoshi imagined community to a family echoes the metaphor used by national essence nationalists and the Japanese government to describe the Japanese nation. The idea to frame the Mitsukoshi consumers as an imagined community or family may have been a marketing technique, but the connection between the Japanese nation as a family and Mitsukoshi’s imagined community is appropriate given the examples of nationalist ideologies revealed by this survey.

The winning photographs of beauties display the outcome of the push for upper class women to reject Western dress, a renovationist concept understood through a gendered nationalist lens. The women in the photographs and their selection as beauties reveal a self- and societal selection of what is considered beautiful: thirty-three out of thirty-five of those who won sent in photos in which they are wearing kimono. The very narrow constraints of when, where, and how Western dress might be appropriate instead of kimono is apparent in the photographs of the two beauties wearing Western dress, the Takeshi sisters and the theater students demonstrating Western dances. These cases demonstrate that Western dress is acceptable for Japanese women only when living outside Japan, for example in Sacramento, California, or Honolulu, Hawaii; when one is a young girl; or if one is wearing Western dress as a costume.83

In other words, the *Mitsukoshi Times* communicated the gendered nationalist idea that adult,

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83 Endō, 113; *Mitsukoshi Times* 8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p.
Japanese women who were living in Japan should only wear Western dress when they were trying on a persona which was not their own.

On the other hand, the products commemorating an anniversary of the Russo-Japanese War evoke renovationism and national essence nationalism. The manufacture of these products supports imperial Japan’s offensive militarism and subsequently evokes the renovationist desire to become equal with Western imperial powers. The products manufactured further evoke renovationist nationalism because they were made from scrap wood and metal used to refurbish the flagship of an armada in the Japanese Imperial Navy. Through the purchase of this merchandise, customers thus indirectly supported the past and future actions of the Imperial Navy monetarily, and directly supported them ideologically.

The commemorative products themselves show evidence of both renovationist and national essence nationalism. As everyday household items, their use promoted an active remembrance of the war and support of current military actions through daily performative acts. As a product for children, the toy evoked renovationist ideology in a slightly different way. Mitsukoshi’s inclusion of a toy indicates the remembrance of the war and the importance of its commemoration is already in 1909 being actively passed onto another generation. While it is unclear what type of commemorative toy Mitsukoshi sold, its inclusion in the display shows the intention of sowing seeds to raise new generations who approved of militarism and renovationist nationalism.

The statue of Emperor Jimmu also invoked national essence nationalism. Emperor Jimmu is a legendary figure in Japanese history, the grandson of the sun goddess, and considered to be

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84 *Mitsukoshi Times* 7, no. 1 (Meiji 42 [1909], January), n.p.
the founder of Japan’s unbroken imperial dynasty. The date given for his ascension to the throne was chosen to be the date the Meiji Constitution was promulgated, February 11, 1889, and later became the holiday National Foundation Day.\footnote{Jansen, 395.} By manufacturing a statue of Emperor Jimmu, Mitsukoshi elicited the very dawn of Japanese history, triggered a mnemonic link to Emperor Meiji, and evoked national essence nationalism.

Similar to Mitsukoshi’s products commemorating the anniversary of the Russo-Japanese War, the models of historical Japanese military battles Mitsukoshi produced for the Department of the Army invoke renovationist ideology. The Army contracted Mitsukoshi to create models of four historical battles for the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition in London, yet of the four battles depicted, three took place within the previous forty-five years. Mitsukoshi created models of battles from the Siege of Osaka (1614-1615), the Boshin War (1868-1869), the Satsuma Rebellion (1877), and the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). While the first model illustrated a war between different factions of samurai and would have engaged Westerners’ interest in a Japan before the overwhelming influence of Western technology, culture, and ideas, the other three models portrayed modern Japanese history.

The models of the Boshin War, Satsuma Rebellion, and first Sino-Japanese War together narrated a ideologically renovationist story. In the Boshin War the Imperial Army overthrew the Tokugawa shogunate, and in the Satsuma Rebellion Saigō Takamori and other samurai rebels failed to overthrow the Imperial Army; the models represent a Japan that was pulled into international events without its consent, descended into civil war, and was then occupied stomping out the last areas of resistance. In contrast, in the first Sino-Japanese War Japan
defeated China and won considerable privileges in accordance with other Western imperialists doing business there. This final model not only indicated the success of Japan’s rapid industrialization, but suggested to the audience Japan’s future victory against Russia. The four models set the country’s “traditional” history to the side, and instead focused on presenting an underdog story that showed anything was possible, that even an island country in Asia could become an imperial power. They begged the question “what is next?”

An article in the magazine about the models in fact addressed what Mitsukoshi hoped the British viewers of the models would learn from the exhibit. The author explained that the firearms and uniforms of figures in the models are very detailed and correspond to the styles of the contemporary period, so visitors to the exhibit will be able to “see how the wars truly were.” However, the foreign viewers “will also see one part of Japanese customs.” Customs, ふぞく, refers to social traditions, practices, and manners. The use of this word in connection with an exhibition of military history models indicates that militarism itself, or how Japan has used militarism to achieve its aims of renovationist nationalism, is a custom worth communicating to the foreign community. This example shows Mitsukoshi and the Japanese Army itself using an exposition of Japanese craftsmanship, a form of soft power, as a way to parlay throughout the wider international community of civilized nations their modernization and military ascendance.

The photographs of Mitsukoshi beauty contest winners, Mitsukoshi products commemorating an anniversary of the Russo-Japanese War, and models made by Mitsukoshi of

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86 Jansen, 430-433.

87 Mitsukoshi Times 8, no. 1 (Meiji 43 [1910], January), n.p.; “Rikugun shō no senshi mokei,” Mitsukoshi Times 8, no. 1 (Meiji 43 [1910], January), 36.
historical Japanese battles indicate how gendered, national essence, and renovationist nationalisms were woven into the fabric of Mitsukoshi’s imagined community. These nationalist ideologies were also bound into the designs and motifs of the textiles that Mitsukoshi created. The managing director of Mitsukoshi instructed the company to begin updating the designs women’s textiles in 1895 by “breath[ing] fresh air into motifs, and creat[ing] styles that are appropriate to our time.”

The practices the *Mitsukoshi Times* used to bring the community together, such as encouraging participation through contests and providing insider knowledge, created trust between Mitsukoshi and their discriminating customer-members to try each new style and design.

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88 *Mitsukoshi enkakushi*, quoted in *Kabushikigaisha Mitsukoshi*, 32.
CHAPTER TWO

Mitsukoshi’s production of gendered nationalism is evident in its textile designs for women’s kimono and obi. Mitsukoshi promoted gendered, national essence, and renovationist nationalist ideologies through the style of textile designs they created and the motifs incorporated within textile designs. One of Mitsukoshi’s most popular early fashion trends the revived the fashion of the Genroku era, an idealized period in Japanese history. The nostalgia associated with this time evoked the renovationist support of Japanese traditional culture. In Genroku-style textiles and in other textile designs, Mitsukoshi incorporated motifs that connoted both national essence nationalist and renovationist ideology. The evocations of these two nationalisms on Mitsukoshi textiles, in connection with the context of the practices of gendered nationalist ideology, created an environment in which Japanese women became the bearers of “tradition.”

Genroku Style

While the Genroku style was not Mitsukoshi’s first attempt at creating a fashion trend, it was the department store’s first clear success; it also built upon the strong nationalist sentiments in the wake of Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Mitsukoshi’s Genroku style debuted in the celebratory fervor of Japan’s historic military victory in 1905. It was the first time in the modern era an Asian nation had defeated a Western power, and the Japanese were jubilant. This euphoric mood initially attracted Takahashi, the managing director of Mitsukoshi, to the Genroku style, for he thought the strength of people’s feelings were reminiscent of the exuberance of the Genroku era (1688-1704).  

89 Moeran, 148.
overarching Edo period, which is known for its stability, peace, and cultural developments. However the Genroku era is particularly known for its ostentatious clothing. Genroku era dress, anthropologist Liza Dalby writes, “stands out as the peacock’s pride of all kimono.” Even the Japanese political historian George Sansom states that “[c]onsidered in retrospect the most attractive feature of this era is the gaiety of colour and pattern in clothing and decoration which reflected the mood of the times.”

The hallmarks of Genroku style are large-scale designs of motifs such as hollyhock leaves, butterflies, and flowers and birds, especially those done in the style of Ogata Kōrin, a painter of the Rinpa school who lived during the Genroku era. The designs were explicitly coordinated across multiple platforms by Mitsukoshi’s design department. Mitsukoshi blazoned the designs across kimono and obi textiles, men’s neckties, kanzashi hair pins, footwear, lacquerware, and pottery. Branding extended to cuisine, as well as a “Genroku dance” composed by Takahashi himself, which was performed by geisha and kabuki actors. Most of all, Mitsukoshi’s Genroku style revolutionized women’s kimono designs.

As identified in the sample of Mitsukoshi Times issues from 1909 to 1912, Mitsukoshi produced textile designs with Genroku motifs including butterflies (chō); hollyhock leaves (aoi); pine, bamboo and plum motif in mist (kasumi ni shōchikubai); the interlocking circles motif (shippō or wachigai); and the waves motif (nami), as well as a tie-dye (shibori) dye-resist method called hitta shibori. In addition, other motifs are marked as being “Kōrin style” (kōrin-fū). The Mitsukoshi Times clearly marked only some of these designs as being Kōrin-style, but

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90 Dalby, 40.
92 Moeran, 146-147.
the Mitsukoshi community would have recognized this quite distinctive style even without labels.

In my analysis, I identified thirty-three individual textiles with Genroku motifs, including those in the Kōrin style in the *Mitsukoshi Times*’ January, April, and June issues for 1909 to 1911. Significantly, every issue had at least one textile design in the Genroku style. The issue with the most Genroku-style designs is January 1909, which was published during a Mitsukoshi contest for Kōrin-style designs. A second wave occurs in the second half of 1910 and early 1911. In the June 1910 and January 1911 issues the *Mitsukoshi Times* published four Genroku-style textile designs; the April 1911 issue included two. While the trend clearly began to slow in the following issues, the periodical continued to publish at least one design that evoked the Genroku style for the next year.

The vibrant designs certainly reflected the victorious atmosphere of the post-Russo-Japanese War period, however why did Takahashi choose the Genroku era in particular? Takahashi chose to create a fashion trend based on the Genroku style at least in part because he believed that flamboyant designs would be preferred in a time of prosperity. The Edo period itself is known for its long-lasting peace and widespread prosperity. However the Genroku era is not only known for its economic growth, but also for being a watershed moment in Japanese culture. The time period has such an outsized influence on the directions of Japanese culture that the term “Genroku” is used as a metonym for Edo period culture. These years in particular saw the development of what was considered in the Meiji period, and is still thought of today, to be

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94 Jansen, 175.
some of the hallmarks of Japanese traditional culture. Such essential elements include haiku poetry, *ukiyo* (“the floating world”) and *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints, geisha, and the masterpieces of kabuki theater. In addition, the shogun during the Genroku era, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, promoted Confucian scholarship, which saw a renaissance during the Meiji period. Confucian philosophy was not only important to academics in the late nineteenth century but also to the government, as it also influenced ideologies supported by the government, such as Good Wife, Wise Mother. In the Meiji period, the Genroku era thus symbolized not only a period of prosperity and peace, but also the very genesis of a large part of Japanese tradition, including the basis for the modern kimono.

In this way, Takahashi’s decision to name the style Genroku evokes not only an idyllic period in the past, but also the origin of what people in the Meiji period considered Japanese-ness itself. By referencing such quintessential Japanese culture Mitsukoshi in turn evoked renovationist nationalism’s desire to place authenticity in the pre-modern era, or the mythical days before Western intervention.

The fashion for Genroku style lasted for a full four years, from 1905 to 1908. However Mitsukoshi continued to produce kimono textiles with characteristic Genroku motifs or in the Kōrin style for at least four more years. Despite Mitsukoshi’s continued production of Genroku designs and motifs, the results of the sample of *Mitsukoshi Times* issues did not yield any reference to the Genroku style by its name. However, after enjoying such a long popularity, members of the Mitsukoshi community would have recognized at the very least the most well-

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95 Ibid., 175-186.

96 Moeran, 148.
known Genroku motifs, such as the hollyhock leaf, butterfly, or interlocking circles motifs.

Mitsukoshi not only chose to revive Genroku-era style as a fashion trend; the design department selected the particular motifs they would use to represent the Genroku style in the early twentieth century. Mitsukoshi engineered the Genroku style; the motifs chosen reflect not only their historical significance, but their contemporary resonance.

Of the five types of Genroku motifs included in these issues, three motifs – the hollyhock; pine, bamboo, and plum in mist; and butterfly motifs – are not only Genroku motifs, but also ideological motifs. The remaining two, the waves and interlocking circles motifs do not have meanings manifestly imbued with nationalist ideologies. The Kōrin style and the hitta shibori tie-dye method are not motifs, but are characteristic of the Genroku style. The Kōrin style does not have a meaning associated with it per se, however it had a strong connection with the Genroku style. Kōrin lived during the Genroku era and Mitsukoshi sponsored Kōrin-style competitions during the time the Genroku style was popular. Thus the description “in Kōrin style” acted as another way to identify textiles done in Genroku style. A characteristic of the Kōrin style is its stylization and simplification of elements. As in this

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97 Milhaupt, 117.
katagawa-obi example from the January 1910 issue of the Mitsukoshi Times, the plum blossoms lose distinction to the point they nearly become organic circles (figure 1). The thatched-roof motifs too are conveyed with little more than symbolic cross-hatching. Similarly, because hitta shibori is a dyeing technique it has no particular meaning. In the January 1909 issue, a yūzen chirimen textile intended to be worn as a nagajuban undergarment, the hitta shibori is used as a background device (figure 2). Used across the main area of the cloth, the method is also picked up in some of the cherry blossom flowers, simply creating an overall more pleasing aesthetic effect, and elevating the design of the textile itself. Therefore, for both the Kōrin style and hitta shibori, their connection to nationalist ideology comes from their popularity during the Genroku period and its subsequent association with the Genroku style.

Like the Kōrin style and hitta shibori technique, the wave motif does not have any conspicuous connections to nationalist ideologies. Waves express the Buddhist concept of the connection between the shores of the enlightened utopia of Nirvana and the shores of this world, as well as similarly representing rebirth and immortality. Many types of wave motifs exist, such as the crests of waves, waves expressing rough seas or calm, or the concentric half-circle wave motif (seikaiha), indeed a maru-obi textile design published in the June 1910 issue combines two types of wave motifs: more realistic crests of waves overlay a background of the geometric half-

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98 Mitsukoshi Times 7, no. 1 (Meiji 42 [1910], January), n.p.

99 Hitta shibori is detailed tie-dying method similar to fawn spot shibori (kanoko shibori). Dyers bind the bottom part of small bead-sized sections of pre-woven cloth with thread. This is done across wide areas of cloth to create large-scale patterns. The bound sections of the cloth are not penetrated by dye, and when unbound reveal a raised pattern of dappled, nearly square spots. While it was possible to imitate the pattern with stencils, the time-intensive nature of the hitta shibori technique was part of its allure during the ostentatious Genroku era, when consumers wanted to flaunt their wealth. Yumioka and Nagasaki, 199, 258; Van Assche, “Interweavings: Kimono Past and Present,” in Fashioning Kimono, 13; Anna Jackson, ed., Kimono: The Art and Evolution of Japanese Fashion (2015): 62-64; Anna Jackson, “Dress in the Edo Period: The Evolution of Fashion,” Kimono: The Art and Evolution of Japanese Fashion (2015): 27.

100 Mitsukoshi Times 7, no. 1 (Meiji 42 [1909], January), 9.
Figure 2. Second from top, yūzen chirimen textile with a pine, bamboo, and plum motif in mist; third from top, yūzen chirimen textile with cherry blossom motifs and a hitta shibori background; bottom, yūzen chirimen textile with camellia motifs. Mitsukoshi Times 7, no. 1 (Meiji 42 [1909], January), n.p.
circle waves (figure 3). However, a preference for a particular motif did not exist during the Genroku period. Thus, any wave motif invoked the Genroku style.

The interlocking circles motif appears in nine textile designs, the most designs developed from any single Genroku motif. An extremely old motif, it first appeared in Palestine during the first century BCE and came to Japan through China during the Nara period (710-794). The interlocking circles represent the four directions and the concept of ten directions (the eight directions on a compass plus above and below), and thus symbolize unity. The nobility favored the motif in the Heian period (794-1185) and adapted it into a more Japanese style. The

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Figure 3. *Maru-obi* textile with crests of waves and concentric half-circle wave motifs. *Mitsukoshi Times* 8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p.

Figure 4. *Katagawa-obi* textiles with the interlocking circles and diamond-shaped flower motifs. *Mitsukoshi Times* 9, no. 4 [April 1911], 6

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101 *Mitsukoshi Times* 8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p.

102 Yumioka and Fujii, 65.
interlocking circles motif continued to have relevance across hundreds of years as a symbol of good fortune to elites and commoners alike.\textsuperscript{103} Two *katagawa-obi* examples of the interlocking circles motif appeared in the April 1911 issue of the *Mitsukoshi Times* (figure 4).\textsuperscript{104} The textile on the right depicts a more typical representation of the motif, while the flattened version incorporated in the textile on the left is more unusual. The interlocking circle motif’s association with unity does align with national essence nationalism’s concept of the nation as one family, and the motif’s long history in Japan suggests the renovationist advocacy of Japanese traditional culture. However, the interlocking circles motif is not obviously associated with nationalism in either case, unlike with the following motifs, which evoke renovationist nationalism in various ways.

The butterfly motif is represented second most in the sample, incorporated into eight designs, but also has the most consistency as it is the only motif that appears in textiles each year. Two textiles that incorporate the butterfly motif are quintessential examples of the Genroku style itself. One textile, from the June 1909 issue, shows the type of large-scale patterns typical of the Genroku style (figure 5).\textsuperscript{105} The butterfly motifs in this *yūzen chirimen* textile are so large they are nearly unrecognizable as butterflies. In a *yūzen*-dyed *maru-obi* from the June 1910 issue, both butterfly and birds fly above the background, detailed in gold thread (figure 6).\textsuperscript{106}

The butterfly represents immortality due to its stages of metamorphosis; therefore it was a symbol favored by the samurai class and became a crest for many samurai families. In the


\textsuperscript{104} *Mitsukoshi Times* 9, no. 4 [April 1911], 6.

\textsuperscript{105} *Mitsukoshi Times* 7, no. 6 (Meiji 42 [1909], June), n.p.

\textsuperscript{106} *Mitsukoshi Times* 8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p.
Kamakura period (1185-1333), the swallowtail butterfly (*agehachō*) was a decorative motif, but it had a spiritual purpose when samurai incorporated it into the design of their armor and helmets. Thus displayed on items soldiers wore into battle, butterflies were entrusted with carrying fallen samurai from the battlefield to heaven. The butterfly also has favorable associations because the Japanese word, *chō* (蝶), is a homophone for the readings of characters with the auspicious meanings of even numbers (ٕ, *chō*) and to excel (長, *chō*).\(^\text{107}\)

The butterfly motif’s strong connection to the samurai class and militarism during the years of military rule indicates a relationship with renovationist nationalism in the modern era. Japan’s rapid development of the military in the mid- and late-nineteenth century was a reaction

\(^{107}\) Yumioka and Fujii, 98; Yumioka and Nagasaki, 96.
to demands by the Western powers; the response was first born out of fear, then evolved into a desire to be seen as equals with the West. After Japan defeated China in the first Sino-Japanese War, the fervor for militarism and its resulting successes continued, albeit with a focus on locating those successes within the context of authentic Japanese traditions, rather than in recently imported Western culture. The butterfly motif thus connects the wearer not only to the samurai’s long-lost, much heralded way of life but to contemporary passions for military success and the victories against the West they represented. In other words, the butterfly at once symbolizes a singularly Japanese tradition, the samurai, and promotes the contemporary culture of militarism.

In the same way, the hollyhock leaf motif connects to renovationist ideologies through militarism. The three-leafed hollyhock is famously known as the official family crest of the Tokugawa clan. The hollyhock leaf’s use as a crest was restricted during the Edo period when the Tokugawa shogunate reigned, but it was popular as a motif during the Genroku era. The Tokugawa family came to power in the early seventeenth century through the actions of one of Japan’s most famous military commanders, Tokugawa Ieyasu. Thus the representation of their crest not only references the

108 Yumioka and Nagasaki, 42-43; Dalby, 182, 291.
Edo period’s time of peace and cultural development to which the Genroku style itself alludes, but also celebrates militarism itself. In fact one of Mitsukoshi’s models of historical battles, the Siege of Osaka, depicted the battle which solidified Tokugawa Ieyasu’s control over all of Japan. The hollyhock leaf motif embraces the renovationist interest in both military power and authentic Japanese culture. A katagawa-obi textile from the June 1911 issue of the Mitsukoshi Times combines a stylized hollyhock leaf motif with a Genjikō motif, which represents an incense-burning game associated with the famous novel of imperial court life, the Tale of Genji (figure 7). This combination of motifs is quite common, but created an especially fresh effect in the Mitsukoshi design.

While the combination of the pine, bamboo, and plum motif in mist specifically represents a Genroku design (see figure 2), the pine, bamboo, and plum composite is a common and quintessential Japanese motif dating back to the Muromachi period (1336-1573). It is representative of a good omen native to Japan. In this manner, the pine, bamboo, and plum motif is representative of a Japanese essence. In addition, it is a marker of Japanese traditions, as it has appeared in Japanese art and on an array of household items, as well as textiles, for hundreds of years. The plum, bamboo, and plum motif represents a longevity of tradition and authentic, indigenous characteristics of Japan, thus demonstrating renovationist ideology.

Mitsukoshi’s revival of the fashions of the Genroku era evokes renovationist nationalism because of what the Genroku era represents in Japanese history: a period of peace and economic

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10 Yumioka and Nagasaki, 150.
prosperity as well as a critical time of cultural development. Key characteristics of what came to be considered traditional Japanese culture, including in the worlds of poetry, art, and theater, came into being during this era. Genroku style subsequently symbolizes to renovationists not only those features, but all such ostensibly authentic and pre-Western, pre-modern culture. In addition, many of the Genroku motifs identified in this analysis have secondary connotations of renovationism through their individual associated meanings. This re-inscription was not accidental; just as the Genroku style was chosen as Mitsukoshi’s fashion trend in 1905, so too were the Genroku motifs the textile designs incorporated. Mitsukoshi’s choice of Genroku motifs with such ideological meanings becomes even more consequential when connected to their comparable use of motifs with ideological meanings in general.

**Ideological Motifs**

Unlike the Genroku motifs, each of which first evoke renovationist nationalism through their connection with the cultural meaning of the Genroku era and only secondarily through their associated meanings, it is the meaning associated with the following motifs themselves that produces nationalist ideologies. In my analysis of the sample of *Mitsukoshi Times* issues from 1909 to 1912, I identified thirty-one individual textiles that incorporated ideological motifs, not including Genroku motifs with ideological meanings. The motifs identified in the sample comprised the camellia (*tsubaki*), carriage wheels decorated with flowers (*hanaguruma*), chrysanthemum (*kiku*), fan papers (*jigami*), hemp leaf (*asanoha*), hydrangea (*ajisai*), paulownia (*kiri*), ships and sails (*fune, irifune, yakatafune*, and *bo*), and traditional instruments motifs (*gakki*), as well as arrow feather *kasuri* (*yagasuri*). In contrast to the Genroku-style motifs, which
demonstrated clear trend lines, these ideological motifs show a relatively stable continuity of use: each issue contains a textile with at least one ideological motif. Furthermore, Mitsukoshi featured at least three textiles that incorporated ideological motifs in one issue each year from 1909 through 1911. This signifies that Mitsukoshi sustained production of these motifs over the course of four years, which shows continuity across seasonal fashion trend cycles. By inference, such motifs were not only temporarily popular, but continued to influence the marketplace. While their popularity may or may not have been due to their connection to nationalist ideologies, the meanings associated with these motifs clearly evoked both renovationist and national essence nationalisms. The majority of these ideological motifs connote renovationism through their connections to Japanese traditional culture. These traditions are often directly symbolized by motifs, such as traditional instruments representing the culture of the imperial court. In other cases, a particular motif originated with the samurai class and thus connotes a support of militarism that connects the motif to renovationist nationalism. Several motifs, such as the camellia and paulownia, are connected to national essence nationalism, through their direct connections to the imperial family or Shintoism.

Like the pine, bamboo, and plum motif discussed above, the hemp leaf motif evokes renovationist nationalism as a representation of prototypical Japanese culture. The motif’s design originated in Japan and was widely used in the Meiji period as a quintessentially Japanese design. In other words, it was used as an indicator of something, such as a textile or piece of ceramics, that was manifestly Japanese and considered a Japanese tradition.\footnote{Yumioka and Nagasaki, 196.}
issue of the *Mitsukoshi Times*, the traditional representation of the hemp leaf motif as a stylized geometric shape is spread across the entire *katagawa-obi* textile design (figure 8).  

Motifs associated with the pinnacle of Japanese imperial court in the Heian period similarly represent Japanese culture. The carriage wheels decorated with flowers, traditional instruments, and fan papers motifs all connote different aspects of lavish Heian court culture and for the purpose of identifying with that tradition.  

For example, textiles which incorporated

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113 *Mitsukoshi Times* 7, no. 6 (Meiji 42 [1909], June), n.p.

114 Yumioka and Nagasaki, 23; Yumioka and Fujii, 55. For an example of the carriage wheels decorated with flowers motif, see figure 11.
instrument motifs became popular during the Meiji period, but the instruments represented were limited to those used in the imperial court, such as the *taiko* drum and flute (*fue*) incorporated on a textile in the January 1911 issue of the *Mitsukoshi Times* (figure 9).\(^{115}\) The fan papers motif, which depicts the papers of folding fans removed from their bamboo braces, acted as a representation of imperial court culture, as well as a blank page for the inscription of other motifs. In one case, a textile incorporated flowers from all four seasons, including chrysanthemums, another ideological motif, onto different fan papers (Figure 10).\(^{116}\)

The camellia is another motif that evoked renovationism through its representation of Japanese culture. The particular variety of camellia represented by this motif (*Camellia japonica*) are originally from Japan, and thus would have prestige among motifs under renovationist ideology as

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\(^{115}\) Yumioka and Nagasaki, 164-165; *Mitsukoshi Times* 9, no. 1 (Meiji 44 [1911], January), n.p.

\(^{116}\) *Mitsukoshi Times* 8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p.
something authentically
Japanese. In a *yūzen chirimen*
textile intended for undergarments
from the January 1909 issue, the
motif is depicted quite
realistically, which emphasizes the
symbolism of the flower itself (see
figure 2). In addition the
camellia was considered to have
power against evil spirits and was
a necessary part of Shinto
rituals. The camellia’s actual
use in Shinto ceremonies connects
it further to nationalist ideology through national essence nationalism. Shintoism formed one of
the theoretical bases of this ideology, which is explicitly linked to the unbroken imperial lineage,
the Emperor, and the legendary spirit of Japan itself.

The chrysanthemum motif (figure 11) is also associated with national essence
nationalism. The chrysanthemum itself is the imperial flower; as a motif, the sixteen-petaled
chrysanthemum is the crest of the imperial family. Thus, at the turn of the twentieth century the

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118 *Mitsukoshi Times* 7, no. 1 (Meiji 42 [1909], January), 9.

119 Yumioka and Fujii, 24; Yumioka and Nagasaki, 72. Camellias were a popular motif during the Edo period, and so
also may have been part of the Genroku style trend. Ibid.
chrysanthemum imperial crest signified imperial Japan. Though a variety of chrysanthemum motifs were common, as the chrysanthemum itself was the imperial flower, all chrysanthemum motifs can be understood to evoke the imperial family, and thus national essence nationalism. The motif therefore represents the continuity of the imperial line. As a prominent symbol of Japan, the chrysanthemum motif exemplifies the authentic essence of Japan.

Similar to the chrysanthemum motif, the paulownia also has connections to the imperial family. The paulownia was long a symbol of a monarch’s reign and good governance by a monarch; beginning in the early modern period the imperial family began using it as a part of a family crest. Around the turn of the fifteenth century, after a period of persistent fighting the paulownia crest was presented to vassals who had distinguished themselves. Soon after, it began appearing on the armor and clothes of shogun and generals, including the Ashikaga shoguns and among the most important military figures in Japanese history: the generals Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the first Tokugawa shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. The paulownia was a symbol for not only the imperial family, but the military as well. Furthermore, the motif’s military associations were not with the common samurai foot soldier, but the most well-known commanders in Japanese history. The paulownia drew upon national essence nationalism, through its connection with the imperial family, and renovationist nationalism, through its connection with the highest military commanders, and combined them into one icon. An example of the paulownia motif appears in a yūzen chirimen textile intended for use as a nagajuban undergarment in the April 1909 issue of the Mitsukoshi Times (figure 12). The motif seems

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120 Dalby, 89.
121 Yumioka and Fujii, 29.
overshadowed by the much larger pattern of leaves from the image, however the quiet elegance of the paulownia’s leaves and stem winding through the background suggest the similar way nationalist ideologies are woven into the fabric of people’s everyday lives.

While the hydrangea motif evokes renovationism through its support of militarism like the paulownia, the hydrangea is associated with the samurai class at large, similar to the Genroku style’s butterfly motif. The motif attracted samurai, particularly from the Momoyama period (1568-1603) to the early Edo period, because it expressed a sense of glory and the idea that one could overcome difficulties to achieve success.\(^{122}\) The hydrangea motif is only represented in one

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\(^{122}\) Yumioka, 102. In contrast, while the camellia motif was associated with the power to destroy evil, it did not appeal to samurai because the flower tends to face downward, in other words, bow its head. Yumioka and Fujii, 24.
textile in this analysis of the *Mitsukoshi Times*, however the design represents the samurai desire for honor and triumph. Each individual hydrangea motif is large and the flower petals are geometrically stylized, which suggest boldness and straightforwardness, a quality of the samurai themselves (figure 13).

While the samurai class adopted motifs such as the butterfly and paulownia from their original associations with the imperial court and its culture, the use of the arrow feather motif (*yabane*) originated with military culture during the Momoyama period. Not only directly symbolic of a military weapon and military affairs in general, the arrow feather represents the ability to destroy evil. At the turn of the twentieth century, the motif was very common in *kasuri* textiles. Arrow feather *kasuri* kimono became especially popular as part of a school uniform for girls in the 1910s when the president of the elite Gakushuin Girls’ School, General Nogi, declared that students could not wear *yūzen*-dyed kimono, which often had more ostentatious

Figure 14. *Left and right,* two varieties of arrow feather *kasuri* textiles. *Mitsukoshi Times* 7, no. 6 (Meiji 42 [1909], June), 7.

Figure 15. Arrow feather *kasuri* textile. *Mitsukoshi Times* 7, no. 6 (Meiji 42 [1909], June), 6.
colors and designs.\textsuperscript{123} Three versions of the arrow feather motif were included in a one-page spread of the \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} June 1909 issue, indicating the popularity of this motif even prior to the implementation of dress codes a few years later (figures 14 and 15). The arrow feather motif directly connotes militarism, its weapons, and its culture. Furthermore, the motif’s origins with the samurai culture imply a celebration of Japanese traditions of militarism. The glorification of samurai and the spirit of the samurai is one aspect of Mitsukoshi’s own model of

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure16.png}
\caption{Maru-obi textiles with sail motifs. \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} 9, no. 6 [June 1911], 3.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure17.png}
\caption{Maru-obi textile with roofed pleasure boat motif. \textit{Mitsukoshi Times} 10, no. 4 (Meiji 45 [1912], April), 1.}
\end{figure}

the Siege of Osaka; the samurai are another aspect of Japanese traditional culture which
renovationist nationalism seeks to highlight.

Gathered under the broader category of ships and sails are several types of motifs that
evoke militaristic renovationism: small, traditional Japanese boats; Japanese-style roofed boats
for recreation; and billowing sails from larger ships. In general, a motif of a boat with a lowered
sail indicates assembling forces and preparing for action. In contrast, a motif of a boat with a
raised sail billowing in a strong tailwind represents the strength to charge forth and eliminate
obstacles. Any ship motif with a sail, or sail motifs individually evokes militaristic imagery, and

Figure 18. Katagawa-obi textile with
traditional row boat motif. Mitsukoshi Times
8, no. 6 [June 1910], n.p.

Figure 19. Yūzen kabero textile with
traditional row boat motif. Mitsukoshi Times
10, no. 7 (Meiji 45 [1912], June), 9.
thus renovationist nationalism, including two textiles from this analysis (figure 16). Though not reflected in this sample of Mitsukoshi Times issues, motifs of modern ships, such as yachts, were common in the early twentieth century, and similarly invoked the dominance of the Japanese Imperial Navy during this time.

It is true that traditional Japanese boats such as the roofed pleasure boats and small row boats depicted on these textiles certainly do not reflect modernity, and are a far stretch from the clear militarism that motifs of sails and more contemporary boats evoke (see figures 17, 18, and 19). Boats, ships, and sails were a summer motifs; four textiles were published in June issues and one was published in an April issue. However, in the context of the high militarism of the time and the ideology of restorationist nationalism, it is possible to read the traditional Japanese boat motifs against their ostensible association with the summer months, or easy relaxation floating on the water.124 These are traditional boats, as well as a traditional, often-used motif; indeed, scholars of kimono and kimono motifs Yumioka Katsumi and Nagasaki Iwao state that boat motifs are important to Japan as a land surrounded by water on all sides. Boats were critical for fishing, shipping, transportation, and other industries and as such were a symbol of significant parts of the country’s economy for hundreds of years.125 This motif is not original to Japan, but the context allows for a traditional-style boat to be read as a foundational aspect of Japan, and thus part of Japan’s traditional culture. Thus, such motifs would be still associated with renovationist nationalism, but more aligned with the facet that promoted authentic traditions than the aspect which was concerned with being recognized as a world power.

124 Yumioka and Fujii, 75.
125 Ibid., 75; Yumioka and Nagasaki, 182-183.
Mitsukoshi’s frequent incorporation of motifs such as the camellia, chrysanthemum, arrow feather, and ships and sails in their textile designs evoked renovationist ideology connected with militarism and authentic Japanese culture as well as national essence nationalism. As in their recreation of the Genroku style, Mitsukoshi’s choice of each motif was deliberate. The popularity of a particular flower or motif in general, despite its meaning, may account for some use of ideological motifs. However, the quantity and continuity of the incorporation of these motifs into textile designs indicates, if not intent on the part of Mitsukoshi, at the very least influence from nationalist ideologies.

As national essence nationalism and renovationism inform and are affected by gendered nationalism, the fact that national essence and renovationist nationalisms influenced Mitsukoshi and their textiles reflected these ideologies in turn indicates the impact of gendered nationalism. One way the impact of gendered nationalism can be seen is through the difference in style of textile designs.

**Aesthetics, Identity, and Gendered Nationalism**

Similar to the dichotomy between traditional and modern boats, differences in aesthetic choice can suggest a more traditional or more modern design. In the Meiji period, such aesthetic choices in turn indicated the modernity or traditional-ness of the woman wearing the textile.

In figures 2 and 11, the contrast between textiles with a traditional aesthetic and a modern one is quite apparent. In figure 2, the realistic quality of the bottom textile with the camellia motifs is boldly at odds with the stylistic nature of the textiles with flower and pine motifs above it. Likewise in figure 11, the textile design that incorporates the realistic carriage wheels with
flowers motif sticks out in contrast to the textile below it with the chrysanthemum motifs in a traditional style. In the early twentieth century, a photo-realistic aesthetic was associated with Western painting, and thus the modern world.\textsuperscript{126}

At the same time, the development of art nouveau had a dramatic impact on Japanese art and design as well. The art movement began in the 1890s in the West, however its originators based their work on the flat lines and stylized forms of Japanese artists, including Ogata Kōrin. This meant that some of the conventions of Japanese art were deemed modern as well, especially when infused with a dynamic energy through the use of line and color.\textsuperscript{127} The contrast between the two textiles with interlocking circles motifs demonstrates the difference between a more traditional design and the influence of art nouveau (see figure 4). While both textiles include the diamond-shaped flower motif (\textit{hanabishi}) inside the circles, the textile on the left represents the motif in the conventional way, while the textile on the right depicts the motif with tilted vertical petals, along a vertical axis, and in contrasting colors. Similarly, in the hollyhock leaf and \textit{Genjikō} textile (see figure 7), the designers took two motifs traditionally portrayed in a stylistic manner, and pushed them further. Designers abstracted the sail motifs in a similar way in their two textiles (see figure 16). Moreover, in the textile on the left, the design uses the traditional half-circles wave motif to great effect, as geometric designs were part of the art nouveau aesthetic.

Mitsukoshi’s inclusion of textile designs that looked radically new did not mean that their more conventional designs did not meet a standard of modern aesthetics. Some textiles were


\textsuperscript{127} Jackson, “Dynamic Lines and Syncopated Rhythms,” in \textit{Fashioning Kimono}, 31-32.
dyed in colors that were themselves modern, as it was only a few decades prior that synthetic dyes became available in Japan. Some colors which had been previously available only to the wealth, like purples, became much more affordable, and others, like reds, and blues became available in dramatically brighter hues. The combination of wearing the Japanese style dress while appearing modern through aesthetics, such as a realistic or art nouveau style as aesthetic style, or through color with new dyes, allowed women to embody both tradition and modernity.

When renovationists renounced Western dress, gendered nationalism gave women the role of wearing Japanese-style dress because men were required to appear modern in their work in the public and international spheres. Renovationism coded Japanese-style dress, particularly the kimono, as an authentic and traditional aspect of Japanese culture both separate from and prior to Western influence and the modern world. Mitsukoshi, however, gave its community of upper- and middle-class women a way to be traditional and modern at the same time by wearing kimono made of textiles that were modern by virtue of their style or color. In other words, this allowed women to appear fashionably modern while still being coded appropriately traditional at a time when new identities for women like the modern girl (moga) or new woman (atarashii onna) were seen as iconoclasts and outsiders.

Gendered nationalist ideology gave women the role of wearing dress that signified an authentic Japanese culture in the face of Western cultural incursion. Mitsukoshi’s textiles with Genroku style designs and ideological motifs also produced gendered nationalism and re-


produced national essence and renovationist nationalism when women wore them. The renunciation of Western dress for women was in effect the creation of women’s role as the bearers of “tradition,” and was not produced in isolation.

The theory of women as bearers of tradition argues that when fears about the loss of native culture in the face of modernity found enough support, women are called upon to uphold certain customs. Anthropologist Hannah Papanek observes this allocation of “tradition” to women is typical in countries in the process of industrialization. In such societies, apprehension about precipitous change may lead to attempts to restrict women’s political and social roles, which has the additional putative benefit of relieving the stress on men confronting modernization. In Japan, men gained civil rights that women did not; indeed, legislation prevented women from participating in the public sphere. For example, a law in 1872 prohibited women from cutting their hair short, while for men the decision to cut one’s hair was viewed as a positive change that marked a man as a progressive member of society. Historian Sharon Sievers argues that women cutting their hair can be understood as part of the reformation and modernization of the country, and that this prohibition indicates a repudiation of women’s right to play an active part in the changes. “In fact,” Sievers concludes, “it can be seen as a symbolic message to Japan’s women to become repositories of the past, rather than pioneers, with men, of some unknown future.” The hair-cutting ban for women was not only a visible designation of who could create and who would receive the institutions of modern Japan, but also a gendered sign that men would be actors for the future, and women bearers of the past.

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131 Sievers, 15.
The renunciation of Western dress and the revival of the kimono for upper-class women began more than twenty years later and developed in accordance with the same principles. The support of tradition is of course a tenet found in both national essence and renovationist nationalisms. However, the idea that women would hold a supporting role in the creation of modern Japan, and that role would include becoming repositories of the past, was produced and sustained through gendered nationalism and its burgeoning philosophy of Good Wife, Wise Mother. The curtailment of women’s roles to guardians and educators of their children shows that Good Wife, Wise Mother ideology is another way that middle- and upper-class women were allocated the support roles of bearers of tradition.

The ideology of Good Wife, Wise Mother less obviously relegated women into the role of bearers of tradition, however it connects with the highly visible allocation of Japanese authenticity to women through kimono. In light of the political and social context for women in Meiji Japan, the fact that upper-class women returned to wearing kimono because of national essence, renovationist, and gendered nationalist ideologies, and in turn wore kimono made from textiles with ideological styles and motifs, has additional resonance. Women, wearing Mitsukoshi kimono textiles which evoked national essence and renovationist nationalist ideologies, re-produced these nationalisms and became commodities of nationalism themselves.

The concept of “modular individuals” illuminates how these women became commodities of nationalism. Sociologist Brian McVeigh demonstrates in his discussion on economic nationalism that nationalist ideologies seek to create modular individuals that can be inserted where necessary to stimulate economic growth. Modular individuals are created by muddling the most divisive class boundaries through educational systems that impress upon
students a “high culture” they all share.\textsuperscript{132} The Meiji government’s implementation of Good Wife, Wise Mother ideology similarly attempted to create modular women. If properly taught, the government hoped that these women could be counted on to raise children of strong character, particularly boys who would later serve their country as soldiers, or in other words, modular men. Similarly, in the early twentieth century, a good wife and wise mother was not a Modern Girl or New Woman; her identity and dress were firmly traditional. Through Mitsukoshi’s imagined community, middle- and upper-class women learned a unifying “high culture” of fashionable, and appropriate, dress.

Mitsukoshi’s fashion trends in no means created a standard uniform for women; however in the context of their textile designs that evoked nationalist ideologies, the Good Wife, Wise Mother ideology and the theory of women as bearers of tradition, Mitsukoshi’s imagined community indicates a certain modularity. In this way, kimono-clad women, through their renovationist embodiment of traditional Japanese culture, became nationalist commodities of the government.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{132} McVeigh, 32.}
CONCLUSION

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Mitsukoshi Department Store sought to increase its dominance in the market through tangible and intangible means. The company visibly transformed its stores into modern showrooms filled with display cases, added shop windows to their storefronts, and built new stores entirely. Mitsukoshi also debuted dramatic new kimono textile designs for women. These new designs were perceivably different, but they also evoked the ideologies of national essence nationalism and renovationism.

Mitsukoshi facilitated the general acceptance of new fashion styles and textile designs by a discerning customer base through its public relations periodical the *Mitsukoshi Times*. The *Mitsukoshi Times* encouraged their readers to become a member of the Mitsukoshi family through detailing Mitsukoshi-sponsored events, offering contests, introducing them to other members, and providing insider information on the Mitsukoshi company. Thus the periodical created an imagined community, whose trust in Mitsukoshi, and its products, subsequently grew.

Mitsukoshi based one of its first successful fashion trends on the ostentatious styles popular during the Genroku era. Its Genroku style reflected the elation following Japan’s military victory over Russia in 1905, and conveyed the Genroku era’s associations with peace, economic prosperity, and development of quintessential aspects of Japanese culture. Among the motifs Mitsukoshi used in its Genroku style textiles, many had their own associations with revisionist nationalism. Some, such as the hollyhock leaf and butterfly motifs, supported the Japanese military’s contemporary actions through their connection with historically important military commanders and the samurai class. Others, such as the pine, bamboo, and plum motif, signified
traditions that renovationist ideology promoted as authentic Japanese culture, and wished to protect.

In addition, Mitsukoshi produced textile designs separate from their Genroku-style textiles that incorporated motifs whose meanings were associated with renovationist and national essence nationalism. Motifs such as the arrow feather and hemp leaf evoked renovationist ideology through their representation of military and traditional culture, respectively. The chrysanthemum motif symbolized national essence nationalism through its exemplification and support of the imperial family. The fact that women wore textiles with Genroku style and ideological motifs as kimono, another renovationist symbol of Japanese traditional culture, compounded the nationalist ideologies the style and motifs evoked and added gendered nationalism into the discourse. Furthermore, aesthetic design or color of a textile allowed women to have a firmly traditional identity by wearing kimono while at the same time appearing fashionably modern. Realistic-looking or art nouveau-inspired motifs and colors created with chemical dyes symbolized modernity.

Appearing modern was important for women because they had been consigned the role of bearers of tradition legislatively and socially. In the renovationist renunciation of Western dress, it was upper-class women who returned to wearing Japanese-style dress. The way for women to appear modern at the same time as literally wearing their role of bearers of tradition was for kimono textiles to invoke modernity.

Whether or not women wore kimono with, for example, art nouveau designs, the fact that the kimono textiles Mitsukoshi sold were imbued with nationalist ideologies suggests that when women wore these textiles, they re-produced these national essence and renovationist ideologies.
In the same way that women purchased textiles from display cases in the new Mitsukoshi show rooms, women wearing kimono made from Mitsukoshi textiles became commodities themselves.

If Japanese women’s bodies became as commodities of nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century, then, why? What purpose did this serve? Did it suit the needs of Mitsukoshi as a department store, was it an effect of consumer capitalism and modernity? Was it in service of nationalism itself? These questions require further research, and are beyond the scope of this study.

This study was unfortunately restricted by time constraints, which limited my ability to consult Japanese-language scholarship. Though I used Japanese-language literature when possible and did my best to understand how my topic fit into the scope of scholarship done in Japanese, I recognize the limitations of my heavy reliance on English-language sources. Also due to time restrictions, I was unable to consider articles on fashion in the magazine portion of the Mitsukoshi Times, which would certainly yield interesting results. Other research avenues to explore include Mitsukoshi’s earlier and later iterations of public relations periodicals, as well as those produced by other department stores that followed Mitsukoshi’s lead. This study would also benefit from a comparative analysis with literature in other women’s magazines of the same period and in what ways national essence, renovationist, and gendered nationalisms were invoked in those periodicals. Further research comparing renovationist messages given to men and women during the backlash of Western culture at this time might also provide new methods for analyzing the implications of gendered nationalism.
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