

Kimono – Yukata

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The item that I have chosen is called the Kimono, it holds meanings to a different level for my friends and me, and I would like to share this with you. The way I have encounter this item was very random, walking down the streets of the lower east side. So, my friends and I would get together for monthly meals and discuss our goals, accomplishment and things we would like to manifest into our future. Well, I seen this cute small shop called Kimono House and I loved the flower pattern dresses because at the time I had no idea that this dress had a name nor a traditional background. My curiosity got the best of me, I had to walk into this shop once I seen the different material, I thought that I have just walked into a fabric store where they made dresses. The lady at the shop had greeted us and we had no idea what we were looking for or what we were doing in the shop. My first question was what are these beautiful dresses? She smiles and starts to explain to us that the items we are calling dresses are kimono from Japan.

My next question was why are they in different section of the shop? There are different fabric and meaning to each Kimono. At the Kimono shop the lady was actually the owner and she had three different kimono, casual, semi-formal, and formal. I fell in love with the casual cotton summer kimono that worn for summer festivals and close by bathhouses, it's called the yukata. I told my friends that this was a sign and we all had to get one, but the prices were pretty expensive because all kimono came directly from Japan. Being tall with curves I needed extra fabric and just my luck there was only one left that was my size, I had to get it, it was defiantly a sign. Later on, while having our meal we're talking and I stated that I want to change my eating habits, I usually eat outside. I had developed some allergies and I was aiming for a healthier eating habits, so I suggested that we should hold our monthly gathering at each other home bring a dish. One of my friends said since we all got a Kimono and it meant to be worn of time when there is celebration, we all must wear them on the date of our gathering, we all laughed but I love the idea. I love it so much that I was able to convince them that we should definitely have tea parties with snacks from Japan like macaroons, matcha

Matsu and seafood, sushi and tea. At first, they thought it was too much because we had to make them, but I told this is a great way to learn something new and try different food. It was a success our tea parties went on for four year and the kimono has become so meaningful to me because of all the secret, goals, accomplishment that I had manifest into my life happened while wearing this item. This might be just an item to someone but to me it has inspired me to become the person I want to be. Last week December 11,2020 I had to go back to the Kimono House located on 131 Thompson Street because I forgot how to put on my obi. The obi the final outer layer that you tie into a bow after the kimono.

The first layer is the underclothing called nagajuban, that can also be worn with a hadajuban to prevent the nagajuban from becoming soiled. The second layer is the kimono, the left panel goes over the right. The upper center line on the back of the kimono should be in line with your spine. The full length of the kimono should be within 2 inches of your full height. It creates a fold in the fabric called an ohashori, it's important for women to buy a kimono that's long enough to fold down. Next is a colorful belt called an obi goes over the outer kimono layer. There are many different lengths, fabric, and styles of obi (Kimono House).

Throughout time the Kimono has developed from hunters to being wore to weddings, funeral, celebration and so much more. The Kimono has a long history from where to came from and what reasons the people wear it all over the world. The fashion in Japan is rich in culture. Their clothing from the past and present Japanese fashion tells story of a society with traditions and it continues to evolve into the new world. These fashions are closely watched by people in Hong Kong by young people, but it not only young people in Japan, were talking about South Korea, Thailand, Europe and North America. Tokyo also lives up to the fashion trend. The Jomon period (300 BC), the Japanese were still a loose collection of hunter gatherer tribes that was slowly transitioning to sedentary agriculture (Horner,1). At the ending of this period their clothing has become more carefully arranged. Agriculture has given them civilization where they could focus on culture and this is how they transitioned into the Kofun period.

In the Kofun period the most famous item of Japanese clothing was born. The Nara period (710 AD) the emperor moved the capital to Nara, and the country expanded culturally and socially creating an extensively trade with China that will bring high culture and fashion. Throughout this period clothing began to reflect class and social status. The more of your body was covered the higher your status was to society. It was more applied to women who draped themselves in long, flowing kimono robes that covered them from shoulder to toe and had sleeves that would reach past the fingertips. The kimono would provide them with privacy and safety from the lookers of other lower classes or rivals within their own class.

The kimono began taking on a religious significance because of the idea of hiding the body. Plus, the social status and granting privacy in the public, the clothing protecting from the evil spirit common in the Shinto religion. Shinto religion is a unique religion based on nature, rituals, and purity. The West has gotten their first glimpses of Kimono through international trade and then developed the stereotypes of what they thought was consider a Japanese dress. The Edo period and Sokaku (1603 AD) was the cut off of foreign trade its purpose was to prevent intruder from Western to influence and stabilize the country.

Fashion in Japan goes back to World War II where the western clothing continued to be a symbol of sophistication and expressed modernity. Western clothing and fashion during the Meiji era (1868-1912) represent one of the most remarkable transformations in Japanese history (Butler, 1). The Japanese had borrowed and adapted styles and practices from the western countries. Japan had isolated itself economically, politically, and culturally from the west as well as other countries for two hundred years. After World War II which was during the Taisho period (1912-1926), Japanese was still wearing Western clothing that would symbol of sophistication and an expression of modernity. The influence from the United States caused Japanese ways of dressing to undergo a major transition, more people began to follow the trends from the West.

The kimono is now commonly worn only to formal events in the modern days in Japan. The events are mostly celebration, weddings, funerals and tea parties. At the age of 20, young people celebrate their passage into adulthood by visiting a shrine on

Coming of Age Day, on the second Monday in January. The girls on this day wear a furisode which is a kimono with long flowing sleeves and the boys wear haori a half coat. They also wear a hakama decorated with their family crests. The Kimono has been globalized through the world, just put kimono on your search engine and watch how most of the fast fashion all around the world have kimono for sale. For example, Forever 21, Zara, Shein and more online store that carry kimono. "They're being worn by everyone, from Kim Kardashian and Olivia Palermo to fashion-loving teens and Starbucks-toting moms" (Edward,1). The Kimono is everywhere within the world, just see how it advertised online within social media just it not worn traditional. When you go online, you'll see models wearing it open kimono as a cardigan sweater and it's all in style.

Citations

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