

Continuity of Japanese Traditional Folk Textile Dyeing: *Katazome*

Wrapping Modernity with Nostalgia

日本の伝統的染物の例—型染めの存続： 近代性をノスタルジーで包む

A Dissertation Presented to
the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
International Christian University
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

国際基督教大学 大学院
アーツ・サイエンス研究科提出博士論文

March 14, 2024

María José del Carmen Salome SANTAMARIA HERGUETA
サンタマリア-エルゲタ マリアホセデルカルメンサロメ

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Declaration

This declaration confirms that I have composed this dissertation. It has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree. All quoted material is clearly distinguished, and the sources of information specifically acknowledged. This dissertation, and the research it records, is entirely the work of the author.

María José del Carmen Salome SANTAMARIA HERGUETA

Abstract - English

This research explores the history of *katazome*, one group of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan, from the perspective of the actors and agents related to its production, promotion, and consumption. Their opinions help us to understand what Mingei represents today; what authenticity, transmission, or tradition mean to the construction of *katazome* as cultural heritage; and why its successful preservation requires the consideration of the interests of all the stakeholders involved in it.

This research considers *katazome* to be a modern phenomenon in Japan, although it notes that its roots can be traced back to older cultures of traditional folk textile dyeing. In the context of this research, *katazome* is particularly associated with the Mingei Movement of 1920s. *Katazome* is also associated with Serizawa Keisuke, a Mingei representative and the one who developed and transformed this craft tradition. By exploring the various aspects of Mingei, and the works, legacy, and personality of Serizawa, we can better understand the evolution of *katazome* and the challenges confronting the continuity of this craft; as well as the crucial role of the *kōbō* in the life of *katazome*.

The *kōbō* is central to this research not only because it is the physical space where the production of *katazome* takes place; but also, because it constitutes the social space where its members interact and establish relations among themselves; and because the *kōbō* represents the symbolic realm where lineage is built and legacy constructed. As such, the *kōbō* is pivotal to the preservation of the *katazome* tradition.

The consumption of *katazome* is mediated and shaped by other actors than the craftspeople. For instance, business-like structures profit from social trends and influence fashions to brand the *katazome*, pushing for their material consumption in department stores, galleries, and retailers' networks; government structures promote the symbolic consumption of *katazome* through their official appreciation as Japanese cultural heritage as well as through their initiatives to preserve it; museums promote the visual consumption of *katazome* through their expositions; and research/ academic institutions focus on the cultural consumption of *katazome* through their publications and projects.

As a practitioner of *katazome* in a *kōbō* belonging to the lineage of Serizawa for nearly four decades, I have witnessed the evolution of the consumption of *katazome* and how it has affected the *kōbō*. Thus, various questions confront me and prompt this research: Why is it that certain *kōbō* thrive, while others barely survive, and some disappear? Does the fate of a *kōbō* matter and if so, to whom and why?

The ability of the *kōbō* to join the various initiatives seems to be an important factor contributing to their (economic) viability and continuity. A *kōbō*'s participation in such initiatives reflects its awareness of the need for evolution and change in order to adapt the production by craftspeople to the consumers' demands. In this context, it becomes critical to

explore not only what authenticity, transmission, tradition, or modernity mean from the perspective of cultural heritage, but also, what are the trade-offs necessary to assure the continuity of the *kōbō*, and how the various consumptions (cultural, material, symbolic, visual) might support it.

要約 (Abstract, Japanese)

本研究は型染め — 日本の伝統的染物の一種 — の歴史をその製作者、仲介者、そして消費者の観点から検討する。彼らの見解は今日における民芸とは何か、文化遺産としての型染めにとって「正統性」、「継承」、そして「伝統」が意味するものは何か、そしてまた型染めの保存のためには何故彼ら全ての利害を考慮に入れなくてはならないか、を理解するのに有益である。

型染めの起源は古の伝統的染物にあるが、本研究では型染めは日本における近代的現象であると定義づける。本研究においては、型染めは1920年代の民芸運動に伴う日本の近代化の産物であると看做す。型染めはまた民芸の代表者であり、それを発展させ変容させた芹沢銈介と密接な関係がある。民芸の様々な面、並びに芹沢の作品、遺産、人柄を考察することによって私たちは型染めの発展、その存続に対する障害、さらにまた型染めの存続のための工房の決定的な役割を理解することが出来る。

工房は本研究の核心である。工房は型染めの製作がなされる物理的なスペースであるだけでなく、工房の構成員が相互に交流し合う社会的スペースでもある。そのみならず、工房は流派が生まれ、その継承が保証される象徴的な領域である。かくして、工房は型染めの伝統の保存においてこの上なく重要な存在である。

型染めの消費は職人以外の人や組織が仲介し影響を与える。例えば商業的に組織された企業は消費者の傾向に敏感に反応でき、またファッションに影響を与えられるので、型染めの販路を開拓しやすい。またそのような企業はデパート、画廊、小売店の販売網を利用するのにも適している。一方、行政は型染めを日本の文化遺産として公的に評価したり、その保存運動を主導したりして、型染めの象徴的な消費を促進したり出来る。美術館は展覧会を通じて型染めの視覚的消費を促進する。研究/学術機関はその刊行物やプロジェクトにより型染めの文化的消費を促進する。

ほぼ40年間にわたり芹沢の系統の工房で型染めを実践してきたので、筆者は型染めの消費の変遷とその工房への影響を目撃してきた。そして種々の疑問を持ち続け、それが本研究を行う動機となった。なぜ或る工房は繁栄し、或る工房はかろうじて存続し、或る工房は消滅するのか？工房の命運は重要であるのか？もしそうなら、誰にとって？

種々のイニシアチブに参加する能力は工房が経済的に生存し存続することを可能にする重要な要素に思える。工房が色々なイニシアチブに参加することは、その工房が職人の製作作業を消費者のニーズに合わせるために変革しなくてはならな

いということを自覚しているということを意味する。その点で、正統性、継承、伝統、あるいは近代性、が文化遺産という観点から何を意味するかということだけではなく、工房の存続を保証するためにはどのような取引が必要か、そしてどのように様々な消費タイプ（文化的、物理的、象徴的、視覚的）がそれをサポートできるかを考察することが非常に重要になる。

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisory panel at the International Christian University, Professor Robert Eskildsen, Professor Christopher Bondy, and Professor Itoh Aki for patiently guiding and supporting me during my research process.

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My thanks with sincere admiration and respect go to the craftspeople who allowed me to observe the reality of their practice at their workshops. I further appreciate the naiveté and patience with which all my interviewees interacted with me, generously sharing their views and experience with traditional folk textile.

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Notes on Japanese Names and Language

- i. The dissertation uses the modified Hepburn system of Romanization of the Japanese language.
- ii. Japanese terms are written in Romanized italics with the Japanese term in brackets. Those Japanese terms internationally accepted, such as kimono, are written in Romanized regular. Names of Japanese people are written with family name and then name, while names of other people are written first name and then family name.
- iii. Well-known place names and other terms commonly used in English are written without diacritical markings (for instance, Tokyo instead of Tōkyō).
- iv. This document uses the terms “craftspeople” and “crafts” in the context of the fieldwork to denominate those practicing crafts, although most of them are professional dyers who produce traditional folk textile dyeing, *katazome*.

List of Abbreviations

ACA	Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan	<i>Bunkachō</i> [文化庁]
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage	<i>Mukei Bunkazai</i> [無形文化財]
IICP	Important Intangible Cultural Property/Properties	<i>Jūyō Mukei Bunka-Zai</i> [重要無形文化財]
LNT(s)	Living National Treasure(s)	<i>Ningen Kokuhō</i> [人間国宝]
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan	<i>Keizai Sangyō Shō</i> [経済産業省]
MEXT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan	<i>Monbu Kagaku Shō</i> [文部科学省]
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization	

List of Japanese Terms Frequently Used

<i>Aizome</i>	藍染	Indigo dyeing
<i>Bingata</i>	紅型	Stencil dyeing from Okinawa (Ryūkyū)
<i>Katagami</i>	型紙	Stencil
<i>Katazome</i>	型染	Stencil dyeing
<i>Kataezome</i>	型絵染	Dyeing painting with stencil (Serizawa's style)
<i>Kenkyūjo</i>	研究所	Research workshop
<i>Kōbō</i>	工房	Workshop, atelier
<i>Shokunin</i>	職人	Craftsperson
<i>Somemono</i>	染物	Textile dyeing
<i>Washi</i>	和紙	Japanese handmade paper

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Chapter One: Introduction

This research explores *katazome*, one group of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan, from the perspective of the actors and agents related to their production, promotion, and consumption. The research considers that this craft tradition must be analyzed in relation to those who practice it (craftspeople), those who demand for it (consumers), and those who mediate it (such as institutions branding these crafts, retailers, museums, professional associations, mass media, and influencers/lobbyists). As such, the understanding and meaning of *katazome* products depends on the period when it happens. For instance, their consumption in the 1950s, when the Mingei Movement was thriving and the middle class booming in Japan, assume a different form than that of *katazome* in the 2020s, when traditional wear is just ceremonial and mass production of textiles has shaded craftsmanship.

The opinions of all stakeholders, in particular those of the dyers, form a wealth of unrecorded knowledge that opens up the *katazome* tradition to perspectives from multiple generations. These candid opinions shed special light on what authenticity, transmission, and tradition mean to *katazome* as cultural heritage; on the relevance of the Mingei Movement to this craft along the years; and on the importance of effectively considering the interests of all stakeholders as a condition for the continuity of the *katazome* tradition. Due to the extremely limited body of published literature on the subject, this research often counted on the information from interviewees. Accordingly, this research is built as a case study, the first analysis on *katazome* from an insider perspective in several regions across Japan.

While acknowledging that the history of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan goes back many centuries, I have anchored my study in the early twentieth century and the Mingei Movement. By listening to the voices of professional and amateur dyers and other professions involved in the craft during these last five years, my study tells a story of one century of change in the *katazome* tradition, while exploring several scenarios for the years ahead.

In this chapter, I introduce myself in so far as that is relevant to my research on traditional folk textile dyeing (Section 1.1). In Section 1.2, I describe the boundaries of the research, and provide the working definitions of the terms I am using, although I will use them with a certain flexibility. I also describe the background context of this craft, with an analysis

of the Mingei Movement and intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Japan, and their relevance to traditional folk textile dyeing. The various areas of cultural heritage will be further treated in Chapter Six, when I integrate the results of the research. In Section 1.3, I present the research profile, with its approach and guiding questions. I then attempt to evaluate the significance of my research in Section 1.4. Finally, Section 1.5 provides an overview of the research.

1.1. Pathways to the research: My trajectory with katazome, curiosity, and motivation

My initial encounter with Serizawa's Iroha panel (Figure 1.1) at a Yokohama exposition in September 1978 immediately inspired me with admiration for his work. I was informed that Serizawa was to Japan what Picasso was to Spain, that he was considered to be a "Living National Treasure", and that his stencil dyeing was connected to Mingei, Japan's Arts and Crafts Movement. I was also told that Mingei represented a crafts movement genuine to Japan, spearheaded by Yanagi Soetsu, and whose guiding principle was "Love to know" rather than "Know to love." The allure of these revelations captivated me, fueling a fascination

Figure 1.1. Serizawa Keisuke,
Iroha panel



Source: Japanese syllables, stencil-dyed crepe silk,
Serizawa: Master of Japanese Textile Design,
National Museums of Scotland, 2001, p. 60

that compelled me to aspire to become Serizawa's pupil. Thus, my enthralling journey into the realm of *katazome* began.

As my familiarity with Japanese culture grew, questions regarding the contemporary relevance of Mingei and the world of *katazome* began to surface. Was Mingei a mere relic of the past? Did it retain significance in the present era? Was *katazome* synonymous with the Okinawan stencil-dyeing tradition, *bingata*? Furthermore, how could Serizawa, an accomplished artist, be considered representative of Mingei? How far away were the myth and the person within Serizawa? Gradually, I came to understand that in order to genuinely "Love to know", one could not escape going through a certain extent

of “Know to love”, especially when coming from a different culture, as was my case. This realization marked the inception of an arduous and winding path of this research journey.

I became an amateur dyer¹ in 1985 and have belonged since then to the Dote Katazome Kōbō, in Ibaraki prefecture. My *kōbō* belongs to the Serizawa lineage. The two *sensei* or master craftspeople of this *kōbō*, Ms. Dote Chizuko (1941-2018) and Mr. Dote Takehiko (b. 1936) started their professional careers at Serizawa’s *kōbō* (which later became the Serizawa Kenkyūjo) after finishing their secondary school. Mr. Dote worked full time for roughly 30 years as long-term assistant to Serizawa in the *kenkyūjo* until the death of Serizawa in 1984. After Serizawa’s death, Mr. Dote continued working in his own *kōbō*. Ms. Dote worked at the *kenkyūjo* for about 10 years until she married, and continued working as a professional dyer for Serizawa from home, in the *kōbō* built in the family home. In 1980 the wife started teaching *katazome* in the *kōbō* and created an amateur group for *katazome*, the Moe group (萌グループ). The *kōbō* specializes exclusively in stencil dyeing or *katazome* on natural fabrics and on Japanese paper (*washi*). It strictly follows the technique of traditional folk textile dyeing of Okinawa (*bingata*); uses exclusively natural dyestuffs (*ganryō*); and produces textile dyeing fitting into the Japanese functional tradition, such as Japanese doorway curtains (*noren*), kimono, kimono sashes (*obi*), and tapestries.

I have witnessed a decreasing demand for traditional folk textile dyeing, also in my *kōbō*, and the gradual disappearance of similar *kōbō* across Japan through the last four decades. This trend coexists with an increased interest in these “uniquely Japanese products” that are branded and marketed as a sign of Japanese identity (METI, 2012). I wanted to understand the causes of these contradictory trends. I also wanted to ascertain whether and how the craft tradition might possibly continue. Because my interest in these problems had been aroused by my working with craftspeople, I decided to “love to know to love” (by adapting Yanagi’s guiding principle) and give a voice to the craftspeople, and document their lives with their own voices. Other reasons motivating this research include my keen interest in documenting the process and environment of *katazome* production at the place where it occurs. I thought this approach was suitable for a proper analysis of the factors lying behind the consumption trends

¹ Being an amateur practitioner, my commitment to *katazome* is serious, and my living does not depend on my works. I participate in expositions and sales exhibitions under the umbrella of the *kōbō* together with the other pupils and teachers. In addition to expositions, my involvement with this craft includes sporadic educational and promotional activities, and my current research work on the continuity of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan.

of *katazome*. Lastly, I felt a compelling need to do this research because, when searching for publications concerning the lives of the craftspeople involved in traditional folk textile dyeing, I found a glaring lack of comprehensive accounts, and felt a duty to write about the craftspeople as holders of a certain vanishing tradition.

1.2. Boundaries, terms, and concepts

The background research for this dissertation extends from the 1920s to the 2020s. The early twentieth century is an important period for the research as period that the Mingei Movement in Japan, was launched, and began exerting great influence on the homogenization and promotion of the traditional folk textile dyeing across the country. The Mingei Movement connects to Serizawa Keisuke, one of its representatives for textile crafts, and the major influencer on the popularization and modernization of stencil dyeing in Japan.

This research concentrates on the practice of traditional folk textile dyeing, focusing on handmade stencil dyeing or *katazome*, in particular on the *bingata* technique. I mostly refer to *kōbō* working with natural dyestuff (*ganryō*) and producing works for traditional use in Japan. Due to the nature of the *kōbō* participating in the research, I also refer to pour dyeing (*tsugi honzome* or *chūsen zome*) as one of the traditional stencil techniques, while noting that they apply chemical dyes (*senryō*) using manually operated machines for their stenciled works. I further refer to Yūzen dyeing (Yūzen *zome*) because this technique also uses stencil dyeing partially. Finally, at times, I refer to tie dye as a patterned traditional folk textile dyeing, noting that most of the dyers use indigo, although they do not use stencils to produce dyeing patterns.

The research is particularly focused on the craftspeople involved in the production of the craft, namely, professional and amateur traditional dyers. The fieldwork also included two weavers because of the common issues they shared with the continuity of their craft, and because of the tight working relations they had with the dyers. Other than the craftspeople, the research has included various mediators, such as staff working at regional tourism offices, prefectural and regional centers for crafts promotion, museums, and retailers and art galleries (Table 1.1).

I am using the terms “textile” and “fabrics” indistinctively, despite noting that, technically, textile is a broader term, which includes all fabrics, fibers, and yarn; while “fabric” strictly speaking refers to woven, felted, or knitted fibers.

1.2.1. Japanese traditional folk textiles, dyeing, stencils, and bingata

The history of textiles dates at least five thousand years. Some fabrics meet practical needs, others express preferences and tastes, and are imbued with cultural and symbolic meanings. Textiles provide information about the bearer's gender, age, social rank, occupation, religious association, or special duties. They also communicate identities and values (Schneider, 1987, pp. 409-412).

In Japan, elites traditionally wore textiles with colors and patterns, excluding other social classes from using them through sumptuary laws. Commoners, however, experimented through the years with the fibers, colors, and patterns that they were allowed to use, and developed forms that were freer from the rules that dictated the textiles for upper classes (Appadurai, 1986, pp. 31-32; Schneider, 1987, p. 412-413; Mellott, 1993, p. 52; Kobayashi, 2004, p. 389; Ricketts III, 2006, pp. 8-9). With time, some of the patterns of the commoners were incorporated in the textiles that the upper class used; and *vice versa* respecting the limits of colors or materials, since the commoners could not use for instance red color or silk and cotton before the early 20th century. With the development of travel within Japan, the exchange between regions favored the exchange of textiles, until then specific to each region. With these exchanges, the limits between what was exclusively an elite textile, or specific to a locality, became blurred.

The early twentieth century saw a great surge of appreciation of traditional folk textiles, as well as other traditional crafts. This happened in several phases, extending even into the second half of the twentieth century. A first “inter-war” phase started in the 1920s and coincided with the Mingei Movement as a reaction against industrialization and importation of foreign goods challenging local artisans' production. A second “post-war” phase in the 1940s resulted from the need to protect traditional culture and national identity. A third phase, or Mingei boom, originated in the 1960s-1970s as a reaction to cultural importation in Japan, and a sense of nostalgia for local traditions (Robertson, 1988, pp. 502-506 and 511-514). This period coincided with the promotion of local travel industry and the souvenir (*omiyage*, お土産) culture. The traditional textile industry peaked around 1980 with around 460,000 makers to slowly decline, parallel with the overall economic decline which started in the 1980s, with only 50,000 makers in 2007 (Pontsioen 2012, pp. 92-93; Kakiuchi & Takeuchi, 2014, p. 14).

Defining traditional folk textile dyeing is complicated because the categorizing parameters have evolved over time. For instance, there is no single fabric specific to traditional folk textile dyeing, and fabrics which were used by commoners, such as hemp and to a certain extent silk pongee, later became products only for those with a certain purchasing power. Cotton, once reserved for elites, became affordable to the masses. The same is true for dyestuffs. While bright colors were prerogative for only upper classes, indigo was worn by commoners, but also by samurai and upper classes (Nagasaki 1993, p17). Regarding the stenciled textiles, all were initially considered aristocratic, be it Ryūkyū's *bingata*, and Edo and Kyoto's *komon*. Lastly, the concept of "folk" as consumers remains fluid as well. Some merchants, who were nominally at the bottom of the premodern class structure, could afford sophisticated textiles characteristic of upper classes; while poor samurai could only afford what lower-class artisans could produce. The industrialization and urbanization in the Japanese society from the Taishō period onwards conceptualized society into an urban and a rural population, making it even more complicated to define traditional folk *katazome* from the perspective of the consumer.

Somemono is the generic term for dyeing products, including hand and machine produced works, with any type of dyestuff. Stencil dyeing or *katazome* represents a dyeing technique, of which *bingata* is characterized by the Ryūkyū native patterns. Other stencil dyeing styles include the small patterned *komon* of Edo-Tokyo and Kyoto. All these styles can be produced industrially, hence the importance of the efforts of the government to define those crafts which are traditional in order to protect the livelihood of craftspeople and national culture.

In Japan, from the Edo period onwards, individual expression through textiles expanded in parallel with urbanization and socio-economic development. People moving to cities and towns personalized traditional textiles to announce their business with doorway curtains, or to animate festivals with banners. While lifestyle patterns changed and western clothing increased in urban areas, traditional textiles' use persisted when performing traditional roles and customs. For instance, people going to hot springs or participating in festivals continued to use *yukata*, the informal kimono (Rathbun 2013, p11).

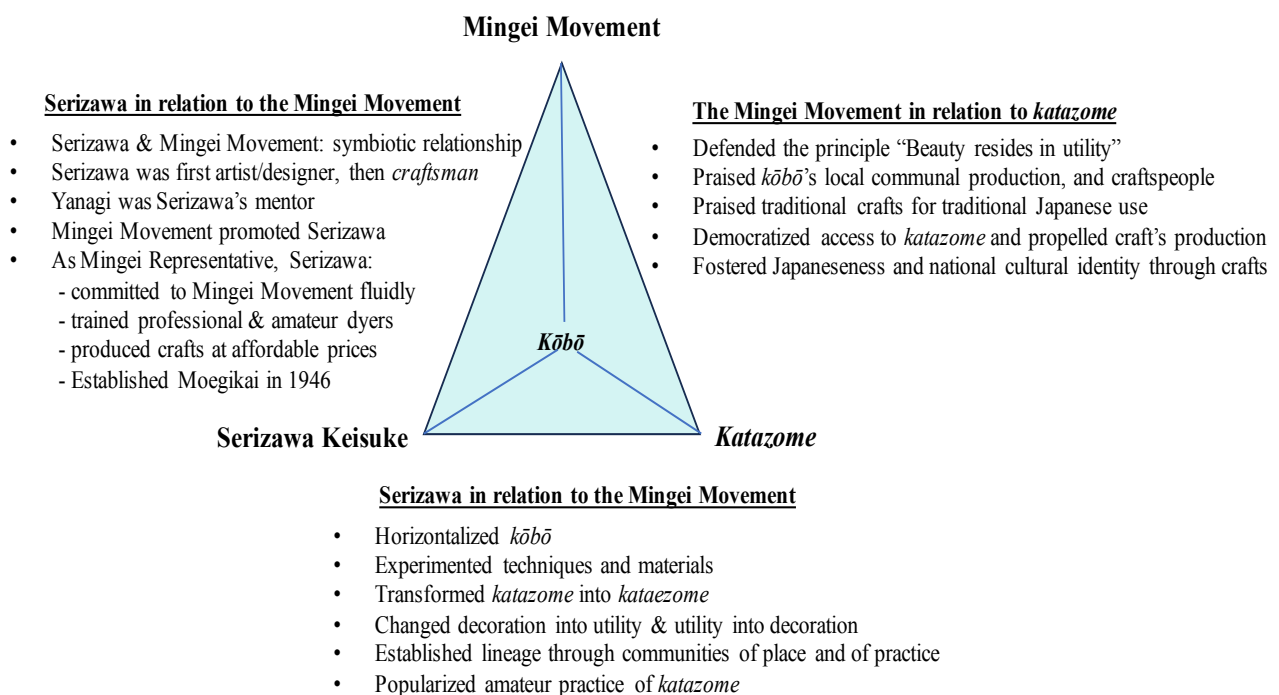
Japanese traditional folk textile dyeing is assimilated, together with other crafts,² to the Mingei Movement. The history of Mingei reflects the societal transformation of pre-industrial

² Such as weaving, pottery, lacquerware, metalwork, toys, painting and sculpture, basketry, paper, and farmhouses carpentry.

rural objects into a modern style reflecting national identity that transcends Japan's boundaries (Kikuchi, 2004, Brandt, 2007). Although challenged by domestic and global developments, Mingei resisted introducing significant changes³ to its original approach. The 1950s saw an incipient diversification and dispersal of the (Japanese) Mingei towards production of objects outside Japan; or with the “spirit of Mingei” adapted to other objects or environments, such as home interior design in urban areas (Wilson, 2007, pp. 122-123). These changes coexisted with the Mingei-style practice persisting in areas of Japan until nowadays. However, a considerable proportion of these Mingei objects is gradually becoming rarer since craftspeople do not find suitable artisan successors easily. This comes in addition to the difficulty in finding traditional raw materials and finding suitable markets for the finished products. Another type of these Mingei objects is signed, to become iconic objects, available only to the well-off.

Japanese traditional folk textile dyeing cannot be understood without reference to the Mingei Movement, as just modern *katazome* cannot be understood without reference to Serizawa Keisuke, one of its representatives. Figure 1.2 illustrates the relation between the Mingei Movement, Serizawa, and modern *katazome*. This relation will be further referred to in Chapter Two, Section 2.1, when discussing Serizawa.

Figure 1.2. Relationship between the Mingei Movement, Serizawa Keisuke, and *katazome*.



³ In the late 1970s, Yanagi Sori, third director of the Japan Folk Crafts Museum questioned why industrial design would not apply to a modernized Mingei.

The Mingei Movement brought to light traditional folk textile dyeing of several parts of Japan, including the *bingata* of Ryūkyū, now Okinawa. These textiles were used for kimonos, kimono sashes (*obi*), Japanese doorway curtains (*noren*), wrapping cloths (*furoshiki*), bed covers (*kakebuton*), and other items for daily life. Serizawa used the traditional *katazome* technique of *bingata* and transformed it to the level of *kataezome* (or image-paintings with pattern dyeing) by infusing modern design into *bingata*. He produced some of his works at affordable prices, introducing the craft's hand mass-production, for instance, for the Serizawa calendars or greeting postcards. Serizawa also transformed the way in which *katazome* was produced in the sense of integration of tasks under one (his) leadership. In previous times the different phases of *katazome* were the responsibility of different guilds. For instance, making the design, carving the pattern, applying resist paste (*nori*), washing the dyed fabric, drying, and tensing it, and so on. However, Serizawa horizontalized the *kōbō*, integrating all these tasks in his atelier, and set the pattern for other *kōbō*.

1.2.2. Mingei

The Mingei Movement is part of the culture in Japan constructed in the 1900s and evolved with other cultural and socio-economic processes. This section provides the historical background and overall context to the modern traditional folk textiles, where this research is anchored. After a historical note, the section explores Mingei from three distinct but related levels of analysis, which allow for a dynamic view of the meanings of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Japan. These levels include Yanagi Soetsu and the Mingei Movement philosophy; its products; and the processes and institutions which shaped the Mingei Movement (Santamaria Hergueta, 2023).

Historical context

Japan entered a new level of industrialization after the Russo-Japanese war (1905). By the mid-1910s, not only Tokyo and Osaka, but also cities of all sizes, experienced considerable economic development, and middle-class affluence. The democratic tendencies during the Taishō period were accompanied by urban development with people moving to the cities in search of work and enjoyment of modern public facilities. As a by-product, a new consuming elite became patrons of the arts in the private sector. This resulted, on the one hand, in their increasing interest in pastimes like the tea ceremony and the utensils of the Momoyama period as consumers of art and enjoyment. On the other hand, there was a revival of research into and

production of these items, with new opportunities for crafts makers. Changes in the way of life in the cities and transformation of factory production altered both the relationship of workers to production, and the socioeconomic character of neighborhoods that shifted from households to factories. Corporations, labor unions, political parties, and the mass media were other institutional figures of the Taishō period associated with urban development and progress, contributing to Japan's modernization. But as was the case in nineteenth century England, Japan's modernization also caused widespread alienation and consequently, nostalgia (Gordon, 2003; Wilson, 2007; Young, 2013).

Yanagi Soetsu and the Mingei Movement

The philosopher Yanagi Soetsu (1889-1961) created Mingei theory in the 1920s in the context of socio-political change in Japan. The word *Mingei*⁴ is composed of “*min*” (people, 民) and “*gei*” (art, 芸), which can be translated into English as the “art of the people” or as “folk craft” in the words of Yanagi (Yanagita et al., 2009). “Mingei” is now broadly used in overseas as well as in Japan.

Yanagi travelled extensively from the 1910s until the late 1930s, defending the respective cultural identities of local craft communities (Mimura, 2019), including those of Japan's ethnic minorities (Ainu and Okinawan) as well as the colonies which the Japanese imperialist policy in the 1920s-1930s tried to assimilate. He argued that these crafts belonged to a common *self*-culture as opposed to a culture *external* to Japan/Western, constructing a sense of Japaneseness across all these communities and territories.⁵ The results were twofold. On the one hand, Yanagi defended a well-defined originality in these crafts. On the other hand, he branded Mingei as *traditional authenticity*, which fueled the idea of Japaneseness in the context of Japanese cultural nationalism (Kikuchi, 2004; Brandt, 2007; Nakanishi, 2008; Marquet, 2012; Steele, 2012).

Yanagi claimed that the supreme beauty was found in “hand-made folk crafts for ordinary use, made by unknown craftsmen”, and that such recognition could change society itself (Kikuchi, 2004, pp. xv-xvii; Rios, 2021, pp. 193-194). His thought of an absolute and universal beauty of simplicity and utility of objects is consonant with the aesthetics of

⁴ From 民族の工芸 *minzokuteki kōgei*, translated as native folk crafts or crafts of the people.

⁵ Peter Pels (1997) argued that enhancing local profiles and communities fosters the notion of national identities through an appropriation and differentiation of *what is us versus the other*.

decontextualization, where the primary emotion is the appreciation of objects,⁶ and where the authors become irrelevant.⁷ Yanagi's philosophy⁸ stipulated that "the work must be made by anonymous craftsmen, produced by hand in quantity, inexpensive enough to be affordable, utilitarian enough to be desirable by commoners, and representative of the production's location" (Yanagi et al. 1989).

Yanagi launched the Mingei Movement in Japan in 1926 together with two potters, Kawai Kanjirō (1890-1966) and Hamada Shoji (1894-1978), and published his theory on Mingei, *Kōgei no michi (The Way of Crafts)* in 1928. Although the Mingei theory was about unknown craftspeople producing works, its representatives were all consummated artists (Wilson, 1995; Rios, 2021, pp. 193-194). Such discrepancy between discourse and practical reality makes it necessary to dissect what "craftspeople" represent within the Mingei theory in relation to the construction of the social altar composed of the Mingei representatives and artists, and to the social stratification.⁹ One such example is Serizawa Keisuke, who, while considered as the Mingei Movement textile-dyeing representative, maintained a fluid relationship with the Movement (See Chapter Two).

Mingei Movement and crafts evolution

The divergent views within and from other cultural movements shaped the Movement over the years. For instance, Tomitomo Kenkichi (1886-1963) and Bernard Leach (1887-1979) defended the artist-craftspeople as the only way to rejuvenate the crafts, rather than copying crafts without innovation (Jones, 2014, pp. 139-142). The arguments about crafts, artisans, and utility kept evolving along with those on art, artists, and decoration, leaving Yanagi aside from the arts' trends of the moment (Ajioka, 1995).

The New Mingei, a new trend with Mingei Movement, started in 1931 as an alternative to address socioeconomic needs of rural communities. Established in Tottori by Yoshida Shōya, it included not only craft production, but also its commercialization through the establishment

⁶ Theory of aesthetics detached from context of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who argued for aestheticism as an absolute attribute of objects separated from social, political, and economic constraints (Crawford, 1974).

⁷ *The death of the author* by Roland Barthes (1967), who interprets beauty as a function of utility through personal experience, where the author becomes irrelevant.

⁸ Influenced by Medievalist theories in Britain of John Ruskin (1819-1900) and William Morris (1834-1896), Scandinavian and German philosophies by Artur Hazelius (1833-1901) and Heinrich Vogeler (1872-1942), and Buddhist rhetoric ideas from Japanese old-time masters (Moeran, 1981; Kikuchi, 2004, pp. 6-7).

⁹ Illustrated by singularity for the craftspeople, always doing the same thing; versus plurality of the artists, with opportunities to cross cultural boundaries using their connections across different segments of society.

of the (urban) retailer network Takumi. Department stores across Japan began to promote the crafts of anonymous craftsmen and those works of the representatives of the Mingei Movement through sale expositions. Increasingly, the network of supporting institutions and an energetic mass media exposed these crafts to urban customers and encouraged new markets (Wilson 2007). By the 1940s magazines promoted the utilization of Mingei products because of their beauty and fashion, and because by using them, the Japanese economy would become stronger and the future of local communities brighter. This social perspective was well received by the various establishment structures and social elites, who supported the New Mingei eagerly.

From the 1950s onwards, the conception and production of crafts changed profoundly. Craftspeople created new works blurring the borderlines between crafts, art, and design. Modern crafts penetrated the design, encompassing super-crafts and craft-design, and became objects of the everyday life retaining a Japanese flavor, such as the Akari lamp series¹⁰ from 1951 by Noguchi Isamu (1904-1988), as Figure 1.3 illustrates. Super-craft art objects include basketry made with various materials as in Shōno Tokuzō (b. 1964) works,¹¹ or those of Sudo Reiko (b. 1953) combining stainless steel with other fibers¹² to produce her textiles. In the case of *katazome*, such drastic transformation of the craft did not take place, although Serizawa's innovative approach to *katazome* constituted a breakthrough in traditional folk textile dyeing.



Figure 1.3. Modern crafts: between super-crafts and crafts-design: Akari Lamp series by Noguchi Isamu.¹⁰

¹⁰ Isamu Noguchi with Akari, 1951. The Noguchi Museum Archives, 07019. Photographer unknown. ©The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, New York / ARS.

¹¹ “Shining”, timber bamboo and rattan vessel, 33x48.3 cm. by Shōno Tokuzō
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/707002>

¹² “Burner Dye”, stainless steel and cotton textile, 610.9x116.8 cm by Sudo Reiko
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/492155>

While crafts makers experimented with aesthetic and functional boundaries, the tradition of copying works of special significance to cultural heritage in Japan continued, as Kida Takuya and Cynthia Takayama (2010) have noted. This tradition, which was supported by the government beginning in the Meiji period, continues to the present day (pp. 26-28). The tradition of copying in the case of folk textile dyeing is not as relevant as it is in other crafts, such as pottery or lacquerware, except for the specific task of stencil carving to replicate old *katazome* patterns.

Coexisting with these innovative crafts, the traditional Mingei-style crafts continued to be produced in traditional studios/ateliers (*kōbō*). Currently, these crafts are marketed through those specialized retailers (Figure 1.4) that developed out of the New Mingei of the 1930s, such as the Bingoya shop in Tokyo, and the Takumi stores and Mingei museums networks across Japan. Specialized shops, department store sales, exhibitions at museums, and specialized publications maintain the interest in these *traditional* Mingei products' *clientele*. A considerable number of small studio/ateliers producing traditional crafts is gradually disappearing, as they have failed to recruit young people to replace the retiring senior staff. As a result, there is a twofold tendency in the current trends in the world of Mingei. One trend is to observe their disappearance with a sense of nostalgia and by-gone era of *romanticization* of society, and the other trend is to situate them as a cultural construction linked to Japaneseness and national identity (Kikuchi, 2015, pp. 92-96; Creighton, 2001). Akimoto (2012) argues that linking these crafts to individuals who can modernize them, rather than anchoring them in their past, would ensure their continuity.



Figure 1.4. Mingei products retailer, Tokyo. Pottery, basketry, woodworks are displayed in traditional wooden furniture, with signed works in closed vitrines (far center). December 2021. © Maria Santamaria

From the crafts' perspective, Mingei reflects the interaction of three heterogeneous groups. One group includes the craftspeople, such as dyers and related guilds, who range from unknown craftspeople to creative artists (See Chapter Two). A second group, composed of mediators, includes numerous parties such as government institutions, museums, power networks, department stores, influencers/lobbyists, and the mass and social media. The last group includes the consumers, with a growing importance in recent times. The consumption pattern depends on the consumer's appreciation of the craft, and is based on the knowledge of the object itself, how it is made, for what purpose, and how it fits into the continuum of a historical tradition.¹³ The consumers' appreciation,¹⁴ is also influenced by a series of intermediaries sensitive to social changes (Wuthnow & Witten, 1988) (See Chapter Five).

Mingei as an evolutionary cultural process

Mingei embodies the dynamic interaction of multiple networks, and groups with vested interests (Wuthnow & Witten, 1988). Its multiple networks included specialized associations of art, design, modern craft, and folk craft. Among the groups with vested interests, those commercializing objects and branding the image of Japan, as well as the government fostering its policies were especially relevant. The mainstream policies enhanced the concept of regional and national identity, war efforts and building of the empire, and the promotion of Japaneseness. The interaction of these groups illustrated the crossing of borders between art and politics through the socioeconomic policy related to Mingei and crafts consumption, including traditional folk textile dyeing by unknown artisans and by consummated artists such as Serizawa. The Movement benefited from an institutional support from the government through the 1930s and 1940s, with the mass media calling for readers to decorate their homes with local products to support their production and culture. For instance, in the 1941 issue of the magazine *Fujingahō*, Hata Ichiro wrote that "by using Mingei objects and by infusing them with a new urban sense, towns' women would not only revive an urban culture but would also help to create a vital driving power through the exchange with regional culture" (Brandt 2007, p. 153).

The phases of the evolution of Mingei, from the conception to its production, selection, institutionalization and finally stabilization required the mobilization of political, economic, and intellectual resources, aligned with the dominant ideology of Japan throughout the years

¹³ In consonance with the Crafts theory by John Perreault in *The eloquent object* (1987) and the analysis of the art-crafts connection (p. 201).

¹⁴ According to the concept developed by Arjun Appadurai (1986) in *Commodities and the politics of value*.

(Goodman, 2005, pp. 67-70). The appropriation of Mingei by various actors and institutions, selected a set of products *compatible* with notions of cultural heritage and national identity,¹⁵ and the concept of Yanagi-Mingei shifted towards Japaneseness-*Kōgei* or traditional arts and crafts. The branding of traditional crafts influenced their appreciation, resulting in a cultural capital based on taste and the construction of class and national identity.¹⁶ Nowadays Mingei has become the *extraordinary ordinary* that has found a new niche of consumers among urban elites interested in minimalist craft-design objects. Such renewed appreciation of Mingei is reflected at governmental level and in the culture industry that has merged Mingei with *Kōgei*, packing it as Japan's Important Cultural Heritage (Morais, 2019, pp. 144-145). Mingei through *Kōgei*, has gained its place in what Japan considers worth preserving for future generations.

1.2.3. *Intangible cultural heritage in Japan and traditional folk textile dyeing.*

Cultural heritage protection in Japan has nearly 150 years of history. The Enhancement of the Protection for Cultural Properties Act was launched in 1950 to preserve and promote Japan's traditional craft. This institutional support included the establishment of local crafts industries, and the nomination and support to individuals as Holders/Preservers of Important Intangible Cultural Property, known as Living National Treasures (LNTs). Over the years, the concept of cultural heritage has expanded from protecting buildings over to protecting places of scenic beauty, important objects of art, and folk traditions. The cultural heritage has diversified and adapted the protective measures to the importance and type of cultural property. The number of protected cultural properties has increased, from 1,508 in 1950 to 3,113 in 2014. Among these, the designated Craft Techniques within Important Intangible Cultural Properties (IICP), increased from 35 in 1950, to 53 in 2014 (Kakiuchi, 2016, pp.19-22).

There are 43 Selected Conservation techniques within the IICP, of which one directly related to traditional Japanese textile dyeing (Dyeing with true indigo, Yoshio Mori (b1941), selected in 1996). In addition, there are three products/dyestuffs among the 31 included in the IICP, which relate directly to traditional Japanese textile dyeing (Ryūkyū indigo dyestuffs, jointly owned by Seisho Inowa (b1927), and the Organization for Conserving Ryūkyū Indigo production techniques, selected in 1977; Awa Indigo, owned by the Organization for Conserving Awa Indigo production technique, selected in 1978; and Natural Dyestuffs, owned

¹⁵ Leading to the branding of a national identity through the crafts' consumption, in line with the culturalist-intersubjectivist theory of Clifford Geertz in *Toward an interpretive theory of culture* (1973).

¹⁶ In consonance with the theory of social context aesthetics of Pierre Bourdieu (1990).

by the Japanese Association for Conserving Ethnic Craft Techniques, selected in 1979). Finally, there are three dyeing traditions designated as IICP, including Yūzen dyeing (1955), Edo Komon (1978), and Bingata (1996) (Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, n.d.).

Japan recognizes the contribution of individuals to the excellence in traditional crafts through the system of LNTs. There are several hundred individuals who have been granted this status in the several categories considered. Among them, there are 18 individuals in the textile category, of whom two are related to traditional dyeing (Komiya Yasutaka, b1925, designated in Edo Komon in 1978; and Tamanaha Yūkō, b1936, designated in *bingata* in 1996). In addition, there are 30 LNTs in the textiles category who have passed away, of whom, four directly related to traditional dyeing. These include Komiya Kōsuke (1882-1961) designated LNT in 1955 in Edo Komon; and those LNTs designated in *kataezome*: Serizawa Keisuke (1895-1984) in 1956; Inagaki Toshijirō (1902-1963) in 1962; and Kamakura Yoshitarō (1893-1983) in 1973 (Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, 1993).

In 1955, the government established the Traditional Craft Association (*Dentō Kōgeikai*) and, since then, has hosted the Japan Traditional Craft Exhibition (*Nihon Dentō Kōgeiten*) in the Tokyo National Museum. The exhibition selects the best works of new and senior craftspeople from across Japan with specific requirements that their work should be traditional craft. Strict requirements of the exhibition force the craftspeople to use traditional materials and techniques in their works. Meanwhile, the designation of traditional crafts as regional industries pushes the regions to appeal to the wider market (Triharini 2015).

Traditional folk textile, which includes weaving and dyeing, is one of the crafts considered by the Law for the Promotion of Traditional Crafts Industries (Densan Act) of 1974, under the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan (METI). The METI has designated as *kōgei* (工芸) those traditional arts and crafts of Japan which meet five conditions: the crafts must be made mainly for everyday life of everyday people; the main parts of the production process must be by hand; the crafts must be locally produced in Japan; traditional techniques must have been used continuously for more than 100 years; and materials must have been extracted and used in a traditional way for more than 100 years (METI 2022a; Kakiuchi, 2014, p. 14). At the end of November 2022 there were 240 traditional crafts products registered, including a total of 48 textiles, 13 of which are textile dyeing.¹⁷ The four traditional crafts of

¹⁷ The other crafts included 35 traditional weaving and two embroidery textile crafts.

interest to the present research are the Edo Komon, Kyo Komon, Kyoto Yūzen, and, in particular, the Ryūkyū Bingata (METI, 2022b).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) administers the World Intangible Cultural Heritage list. So far, no Japanese traditional dyeing craft has been designated as such (UNESCO, 2023).

The above reflects the complexity of the systems to protect and foster traditional crafts and the difficulty in analyzing the convergence of such systems. There is a further difficulty in examining how domestic and global developments affect the evolution of folk crafts. Some authors have noted the change in consumer patterns and tastes, the difficulty in finding suitable replacements to the craft people, the decreasing availability of the raw materials needed to produce these crafts, or the changes in the economic basis of craft producing (Wilson, 2007). These could well apply to the traditional folk textile dyeing as well (Pontsioen, 2012; Sarashima, 2013a). While analyzing in general terms how textile dyeing is affected by domestic and global developments, it is important to delve into the impact of these changes in specific situations and compare them. This is because there is no clear demarcation among different denominations under the term traditional folk textile dyeing. For instance, *aizome*, *katazome*, *tsutsugaki*, Edo and Kyo Komon, *bingata*, or Yūzen, while being subtly distinct, all share some common elements in their production, blurring their categorization as different entities. This is also because the textile dyeing takes place in localized ateliers throughout Japan, where the dyers have adapted their techniques through years, hybridizing some characteristics of the craft, while maintaining those which they considered essential.

1.3. Research profile, approach, and questions

This section outlines the methodology and the underpinning of the enquiry, after introducing the profile, approach, and questions guiding the research.

Research profile

The research used a realistic approach to account for perspectives in approaching traditional folk textile dyeing as cultural heritage of Japan, and to seek the stakeholders' views on the evolution of the craft. The research justified a qualitative enquiry because:

- a) The epistemological paradigm behind the research favors the inclusion of all stakeholders to understand how folk textile dyeing in Japan is constructed as a cultural entity.
- b) The research generated data through methods which were flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data were produced; and the methods of analysis involved understandings of complexity, detail, and context through a general inductive approach (Mason, 1996; Thomas, 2003).
- c) The research focused on processes in a “naturally occurring data”, where the environment could not be controlled. Therefore, the research aimed at understanding how these processes occurred (Thomas, 2003; Bryman, 2001).

The research contained an exploratory component when it asked, for instance, what had changed in the production of crafts? which were the available initiatives to ensure economic viability of the *kōbō*? or which were the consumption patterns of *katazome*? The research also included questions which called for historical approach, when enquiring about non-contemporary events. For instance, how the relation between Yanagi and the Mingei philosophy evolved? and what was the impact of Serizawa Keisuke on *katazome* as a Mingei craft? Finally, the research included questions on contemporary events that called for a case study approach. These contemporary events served to investigate why certain *kōbō* thrived while others disappeared, in which contexts certain crafts’ preservation initiatives proved to be more effective, and how the amateur groups’ practice supported the continuity of the craft.

Research approach

This research uses a qualitative and ethnographic approach to study the continuity of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan. The research is grounded on the following:

- a) Historical approach: *Katazome* is a traditional folk textile dyeing technique, part of the cultural foundation in Japan. To approach *katazome* it is necessary to adopt a historical perspective to *bingata*, the Mingei Movement, and Serizawa Keisuke.
- b) Craft theory (Yanagi et al., 1989; Perreault, 1987 and 2004): *Katazome* are handmade crafts, using traditional materials, processes, and formats (utilitarian textiles). There is meaning

and context to the work of the dyer, and a shared knowledge on how these crafts are produced, their purpose, and the historical tradition continuum.

- c) Institutional approach to Mingei from a cultural perspective (Wuthnow & Witten, 1988; Robertson, 1995): Culture is a social construction that exists through its products. Culture happens in a social context where objects are produced, disseminated, interpreted, and consumed, and where the role of institutions and structures is critical to its construction. Social structures, networks, and communication strategies act as “the agency”, shaping the meaning of the craft, influencing the consumer’s appreciation and consumption of the craft.
- d) Anthropology of things (Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986): The value of *katazome* depends on their intrinsic value and the consumers’ appreciation. The appreciation and meaning of cultural products depend upon the context and time where culture emerges, and the institutions, structures, and networks that affect it. Crafts, have a dynamic social life depending on the context in which they exist at two levels. At one level, a craft has its own cultural biography. At the other level, the craft is part of the social history of its tradition.

Research questions

By adopting an insider perspective of the dyers, the research anchors the analysis of the evolution of the *katazome* tradition as a reality that exists through the meaning of culture, expressed by its products. The research addresses six broad sets of interconnected questions:

- a) What has been the historical trajectory of the traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan, and what have been the major factors influencing the evolution of this craft? How has the Mingei Movement impacted the evolution of the *katazome* tradition and what is its relevance nowadays?
- b) What has been the role of Serizawa Keisuke in the history of modern *katazome*? How does a deeper knowledge of Serizawa help in understanding his works and the impact he had on the evolution of *katazome* and the building of lineage?
- c) How has the tradition of the craft been constructed, maintained, and transmitted? How does traditional folk textile dyeing/*katazome* contribute to Japan’s cultural identity? What role does the *kōbō* have and what are the meanings attached to it? What is the role of lineage in the practice of *katazome* and what importance does it have for the craftspeople?

What are the main career paths of craftspeople involved in *katazome* production, and how have these paths evolved over time?

- d) Should traditional folk textile dyeing be left to the market forces? What are the factors that affect the consumption of *katazome*? How is the continuity of this craft tradition being supported? What are the structures, institutions, and mechanisms involved, and how do they operate? Under which conditions are these mechanisms effective and for whom? What are the main stakeholders and how have their roles evolved?
- e) What are the main materials and techniques of *katazome* production and products, and how have they evolved? What have been the major changes in the availability of materials and tools, and how have craftspeople adapted to these changes? What have been the main favorable factors/challenges facing the *kōbō* and how have they adapted?
- f) How have the changes in demand and consumption of *katazome* influenced the production of the craft? What are the main types of craft consumption and how do they support the continuity of the *katazome* tradition?

1.3.1. Material and methods

The central theme of this research is the life and thinking of the craftspeople. From them, the research explores how crafts and practice have evolved, how these changes have affected the craftspeople's lives and their work, and when these crafts and tradition are viable. Therefore, contextualizing the events and obtaining information on the “why” and the “how” are critical to understand what options could be proposed to address the issues encountered.

The ontology of this research suggests that individuals' views and understandings are meaningful properties of the social reality under consideration. The epistemological position suggests that interviews are appropriate options to generate data based on i) the need to listen to individuals' accounts; ii) the belief that knowledge and evidence are contextual; and iii) the acknowledgement that interviews are complex social interactions (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

The research profile contained anthropological and qualitative aspects and used a mixed approach of ethnographic methods to collect and generate data, including:

- a) Qualitative interviews. I used semi-structured interviews among professional dyers, amateur dyers, staff at institutions promoting traditional folk textile dyeing, and other mediators; and oral history interviews among professional and amateur dyers. The period of enquiry was from December 2017 to October 2022.
- b) Participatory observation. To supplement my observations from working in the Dote *katazome* atelier, I had two immersive experiences as artist-in-residence in Tokushima, Kamiita City (6 to 28 October 2018), and at the Nibashi Senkō in Hamamatsu (25-26 May 2022).
- c) Survey of 37 amateur dyers belonging to the Moe group of Ibaraki prefecture (March 2020).
- d) Documentary collection and analysis. I analyzed a wealth of available paper-based, graphic, and visual documentation as well as crafts' material. In addition, I videoed various professional dyers while working, and several craftspeople making *sukumo* (indigo paste).

The fieldwork included 50 qualitative interviews involving 50 people. At the closure of the data collection process, I had interviewed a total of 31 practitioners. These included 29 dyers, of whom 18 professional (14 professional and four senior apprentices) and 11 amateur, and two professional weavers who also dyed their works. In addition, I interacted with four staff working in museums, and ten other staff working on the consumption of crafts as cultural and symbolic products. Finally, I also had multiple interactions with five people working at the front line of the distribution of these crafts through their retail outlets and galleries (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Data collection and generation strategies: Qualitative interviews, December 2017 to October 2022.

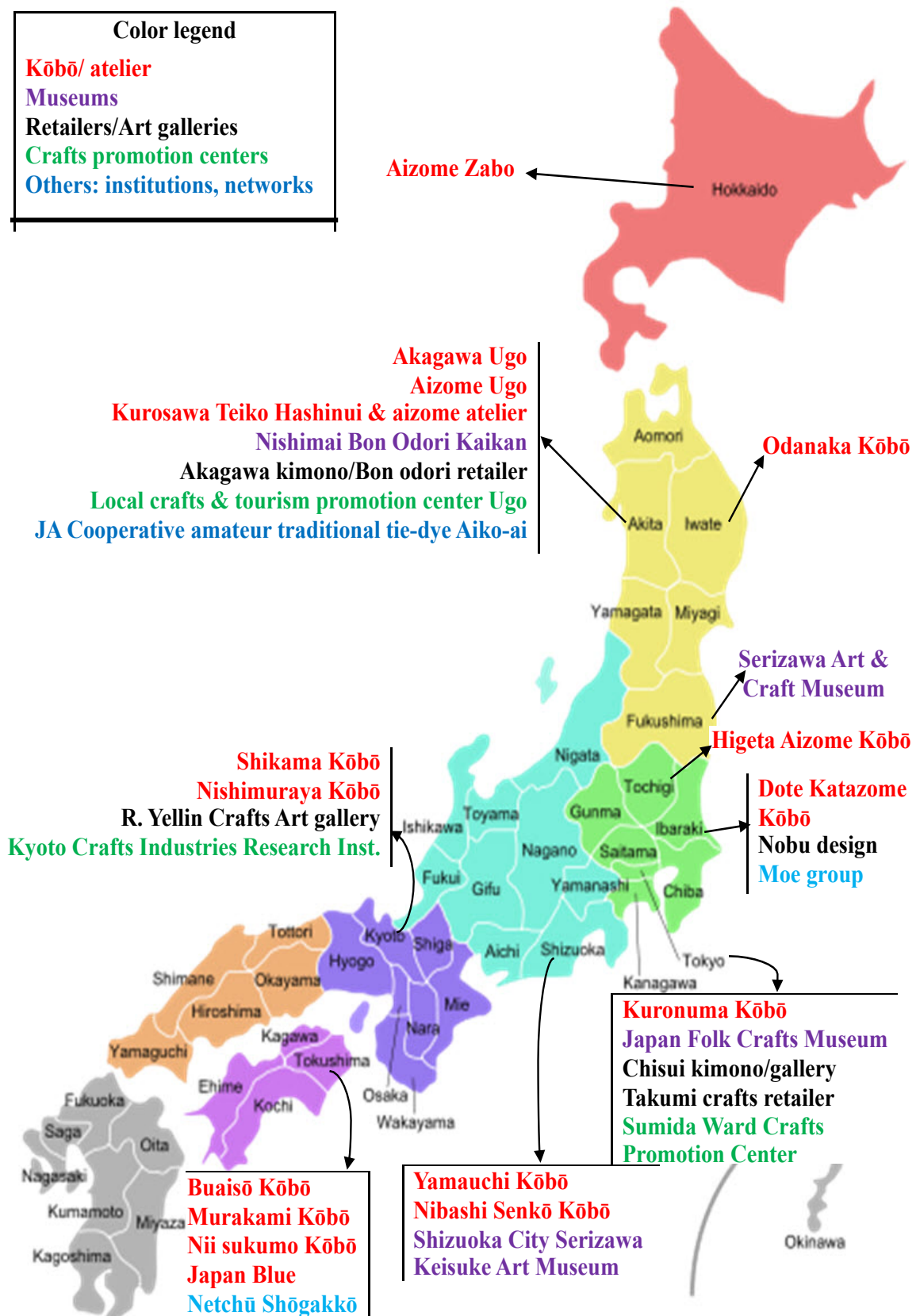
Type of interview	Interviewee profile							TOTAL INTERVIEWS
	Professional dyers	Amateur dyers	Other craftspeople	Dealers/ galleries	Museums	Government institutions	Other	
Semi-structured interview	16	9	2	5	4	6	4	46
Oral history interview	2	2						4
TOTAL PEOPLE INVOLVED	18	11	2	5	4	6	4	50

The sample of the interviews followed a snowballing process, whereby “contact is made with participants appropriate for the research through whatever available access route, and through these first participants the researcher is introduced to others of similar/ relevant characteristics for the research” (Edwards & Holland, 2013).

Due to my being an amateur dyer for about four decades, the veritable fieldwork of this research is much longer, if we adopt the understanding of fieldwork of Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick (2008) as “the collecting of empirical sociological or cultural data, generally through participation in a social activity or culture (hence participant observation) or merely through close observation of that culture (‘field observation’), as in the field work associated with cultural anthropology” (p. 126).

Figure 1.5. illustrates the fieldwork sites relevant to this research. I visited and interviewed dyers of sixteen *kōbō* in nine prefectures, and within these, two amateur networks in two of these prefectures. I interacted with staff from five retail businesses related to traditional folk crafts, of whom two art galleries and three businesses selling traditional folk textile dyeing products in four prefectures. I also visited and interviewed staff from four museums, including two exclusively dedicated to the life and works of Serizawa Keisuke (Sendai and Shizuoka), one dedicated to Mingei (Japan Folk Crafts Museum, Tokyo); and the other dedicated to Bon Odori performance, critical to the indigo tradition continuity (Akita prefecture).

Figure 1.5. Fieldwork sites by the type of facility visited and by administrative location. December 2017 to October 2022.



1.3.2. Data analysis

I used a general inductive approach (Thomas 2003) to analyze data generated through the fieldwork to a) condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format; b) establish links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and c) develop a framework where data would best fit.

The first phase included transcription and edition of the jotted notes from the interviews and observation. In a second phase, I coded the transcribed text to disassemble and reassemble data according to the several indexing categories that I had identified through the research process. Then, I rearranged these fragments to explore the similarities and differences across the different interviews. While reading the transcriptions of the interviews, I completed the list of indexing categories, including those which had emerged prominently to the initial ones, and grouped them by level of hierarchy. The first level of hierarchy contained the three core themes:

- a) Crafts evolution, exploring how time had affected crafts, materials' availability, consumers' appreciation, and the perspectives about the future of crafts and craftspeople.
- b) Crafts practice, dealing with the different types of engagement with the practice of crafts, and the aspects related to becoming a craftspeople.
- c) Craftspeople, focusing on the personal aspects of the craftspeople's lives. This node also dealt with Serizawa as an artist, craftspeople, and as an individual.

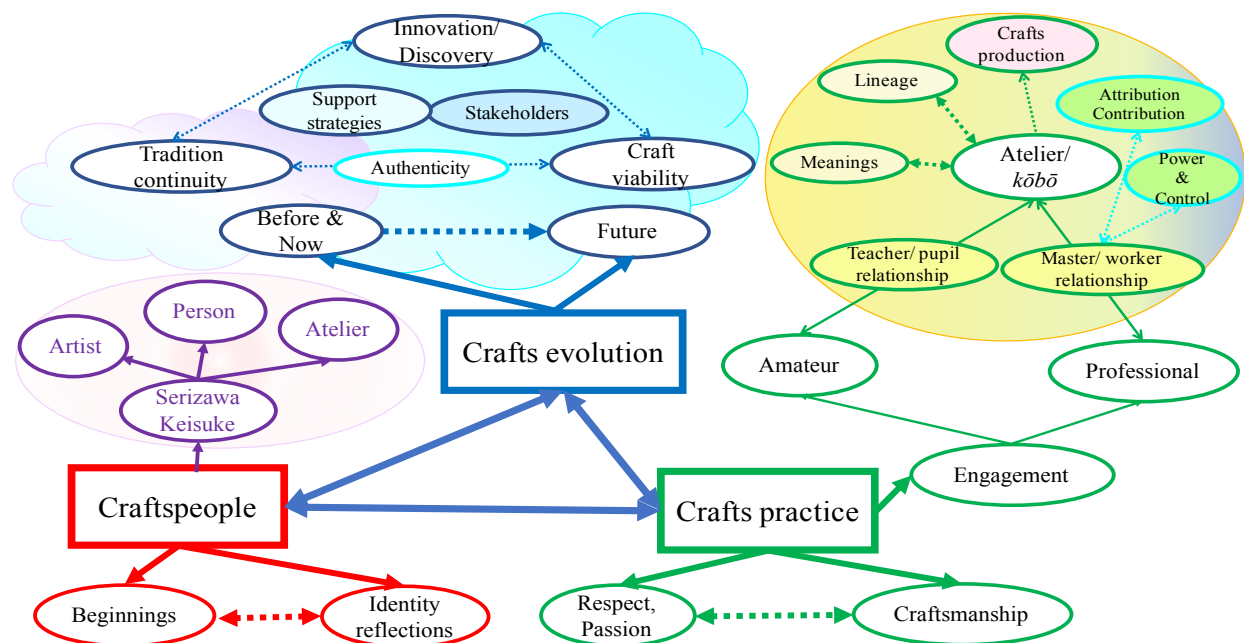
The nodes at the second level of hierarchy disaggregated the content of each core theme, allowing further detailed analysis of the content of the fieldwork data. Most of these nodes were the end point of analysis, such as "before and now" and "future" under the core theme "crafts evolution". However, some other nodes such as "engagement" within the core theme "crafts practice" were further disaggregated into "amateur" and "professional" nodes, to be further related to the atelier/*kōbō* node.

There are some nodes that have multiple connections and which I treated as a cloud to facilitate the analysis. For instance, I grouped "tradition and authenticity", "continuity and sustainability", and "innovation and discovery" under what I denominated as the cloud "aspects and concepts related to crafts' evolution". I further grouped "stakeholders" and "initiatives" to

better analyze the craft's support strategies. Finally, I denominated as “lineage” the cloud on the transmission of the craftsmanship, composed of the nodes addressing the relations among “teacher/pupil” and “master/worker”, as well as issues around “power and control” and “contribution to the craft and attribution of the crafts’ authorship”.

In the next phase I progressively constructed a framework with the chart of codes that (a) best fit the data; and (b) constituted a best-fit option to analyze the data and build an argument. Figure 1.6 displays the three core themes to which auxiliary themes and nodes related. Within each theme, I identified the categories that would explain most data.

Figure 1.6. Relationship among the main three core themes, auxiliary nodes, and cloud-themes. Fieldwork, December 2017 to October 2022.



The division of these themes or nodes is not absolute and needs to be understood as one of the options selected to organize the content of the fieldwork and facilitate its analysis. For instance, the division between the nodes on craftsmanship and on professional engagement is relative in the sense that these two nodes share similar meaning at times. In such cases, some of the information in these two nodes is shared to ensure that the different perspectives are taken care of in the analysis. Other times it is difficult to connect one node to a single core theme and they are connected to the node which they relate most. For instance, the node “respect and passion” is attached to “crafts practice” and links to “craftsmanship”, although these attributes relate to other nodes as well.

1.3.3. Self-experience as researcher and reflexivity

Using ethnographic methods for my research was useful because they allowed me to contextualize what traditional folk textile dyeing means from a situated perspective, and to better understand the Japanese culture. The following are examples that illustrate how I experienced the various approaches to collecting data:

- a) Participant observation. While working at the textile *kōbō* where I belong, I registered information shared among members of the team related to the continuity of *katazome*. For instance, while chatting among them, several members commented that the current brushes used for background color dyeing are no longer made of animal fur, but of nylon, obliging them to work with new industrial products that have no Mingei *kokoro* (soul), although they are much cheaper. On another occasion, the members commented on the continuity of *katazome* and on the factors affecting the craft. These included the availability of traditional materials and good quality fabrics at affordable prices; how the high cost of the finalized textiles could not compete with other similar textiles from abroad, or those which were produced industrially within Japan; and the progressively decreasing number of places where we could go and dye indigo. Through the practice of textiles in their context, I was able to gather much valuable information on my research interests. This process, which James Davies termed as “immersion” (2010, pp. 79-80) and Brian Moeran as “observant participation” (Moeran, 2007, pp. 13-14, 16-17) was progressive and happened through the years, during which my knowledge and emotions about what I was experimenting changed as well. The “immersion” translated into spending much longer time than what I would need if I used semi-structured interview strategies. However, I think that giving a chance to things to be said in their natural context is important in Japan, where people are often reluctant to comment on issues that are somehow problematic or difficult to address.
- b) Oral history interviewing. I used oral history interviewing with a view to “gathering data not available in written records about events, people, decisions, and processes” while acknowledging that these interviews, are grounded in memory, which is a “subjective instrument for recording the past, always shaped by the present moment and the individual psyche” (Truesdell, 2009, p. 1). I used these life interviews having several sessions with my interviewees to create a collection of autobiographical materials (Sommer & Quinlan, 2018, p. 2) on their craft practice experience. I asked for permission to record the

conversation with the two leading craftspeople at my *kōbō* around their life experience as professional dyers. I had several of such sessions in which they spoke freely on how they became involved in their work; how things had changed along the decades of working in such traditional milieu; and on their opinion on the economic viability of traditional *katazome*. I did not face any difficulty using this type of methodology partly because for a long time I had been discussing on the perspective of my research with them. I also carried out oral history interviewing with two amateur dyers. I assured all interviewees that I would clear any sensitively intimate or personal issue with them prior to publishing my research, to which they replied that they trusted my judgment.

- c) Semi-structured interviewing. There was not a rigid pattern for the interviews, and they unfolded differently. For instance, I interviewed staff of a textile dyeing atelier that has “modernized” itself, ensuring its sustainability for the time being. I also interviewed a team responsible for protecting and promoting traditional craftsmanship in a ward in Tokyo. On both occasions, I had a set of questions which I had prepared in advance. When the terms became too technical and I found that taking notes became an impediment for the interview, I asked for permission and recorded it. This was most useful for me because I could focus more on the flow of the conversation. I also felt that it was useful for my interlocutor since he did not need to worry about my understanding of each term used. In the case of the interview with the ward team, they requested that I bring along an interpreter. They had prepared for the interview and brought four people along.

Using ethnographic methods for my research was useful because of its epistemological basis, which considers that the context shapes the results of the enquiry. Therefore, using a methodology that gives special attention to the environment within which the traditional folk textile dyeing evolves is critical. Using other methodological approach would not have allowed me to contextualize the findings as profoundly as I have been able to do through the participant observation and the type of interview I have used. Another by-side benefit I experienced doing interviews is that I could piggyback on contacts for further interviews. For instance, if the interviewee would refer to such and such fact that happened at X time, I was able to follow-up and ask for the specific details of the person referred to during the interview.

I felt that getting interviews was difficult unless some insider introduced me to the potential interviewee. I thought that in Japan the credentials are critical when requesting the

attention/time from others, thus the importance of extending the personal network continuously and maintaining it. Once the contact was solidly established, the confidence relation established with Japanese counterparts proved durable and valuable. I also felt that organizing interviews took a long time and required a long preparation. In some cases, the counterparts requested a list of questions prior to accepting the interview. I often found that they had prepared documentation and put together a team to answer my questions.

Grasping the reality through my jotted notes and recording of interviews, as well as converting this material into useful data took a considerable amount of time. I also felt the importance of transcribing the jotted notes, recordings, and impressions as soon as possible after the observation or interview. Once I converted this information into data, I felt relieved considering that the data had been “stabilized”.

I consider that in the passive observation the layers of interpretation resulted heavy due to my cultural background different from those involved in the subject of my research. However, the layers became thinner when I used participant observation approaches, since I entered in a common reality and shared common moments in a primary fashion through the craft’s practice. The extent to which the primary fashion happened depended on the degree of “insidership” I reached. I felt that the interviews allowed me to grasp the reality that the interviewee wanted to convey for my research, recognizing the possible intentionality in the content of the shared reality.

I reflected on my role as a researcher and the reflexivity required in the different settings. For instance, when doing the semi-structured interviews, I could see myself assuming different identities. These included being a researcher, a person interested in crafts, a general citizen, or a foreigner in Japan. All these identities were present at the same time and would manifest differently (Lavis, 2010; Bondy, 2013, p. 582; Roger et al., 2018). For instance, while trying to jot notes down or multitasking (field worker); when trying to adapt my research question (researcher); when looking at the products that the dyers showed me (potential customer); trying to manage my daily agenda and cope with deadlines (citizen); or facing challenges when dealing with Japanese and culture codes (foreigner in Japan). When doing the participant observation, my reflexivity evolved. Being an insider myself, I was interpreting not only the reality I was experiencing when the observation happened; but also, filtering it through what I knew, felt, expected, and lived through my life as a practitioner.

1.3.4. Limitations

I acknowledge that the following factors could potentially limit the validity of the research:

- a) I used qualitative methodologies which present some limitations inherent to this type of enquiry. They include the non-replicability of results; the fact that the interviews I had did not follow a standardized protocol; or the gaps of understanding between the interviewees and the researcher (Edwards & Holland, 2013).
- b) I used purposive sampling method, which uses a nonrandom selection of participants. Due to this participants' selection approach, the method cannot exclude the possibility of inherent researcher bias (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2-4).
- c) The interviews took place between 17 December 2017 and 24 October 2022. However, the recall period of the interviews in some cases is several decades. For instance, in the case of oral histories' interviews, some interviewees traced their memories back to when they started their career as dyers about 60 or 70 years ago. Thus, I cannot exclude the possibility of gaps popping up between the retrospective reporting and the contemporary memory.
- d) I cannot exclude the possibility that the answers from some interviewees reflected some level of "social desirability", trying to answer in a manner which they thought would please me. The potential reasons for social desirability include i) being a foreigner interested in traditional Japanese crafts; ii) interviewees knowing my relationships with other dyers; iii) interviewees knowing that I am a dyer myself, either because those facilitating my research had informed them, or else because I disclosed it while introducing myself/ answering questions from my interviewees about the reasons of my research interest.

The coronavirus pandemic affected the organization of the fieldwork, since several planned interviews had to be cancelled and could not be re-programmed for various reasons. Thus, the window of opportunity faded away.

1.3.5. Ethical considerations and research clearance

The fieldwork used a mix of qualitative and ethnographic approaches in which I played various roles, such as participant and passive observer, interviewer, and document analyst. I

asked people about their experiences with craft practice, which in some cases addressed personal information about their lives and experiences. The most important issues to which I paid attention included what Mahnaz Sanjari and colleagues have labelled as ethical research standards, namely, respect for privacy, the establishment of honest and open interactions, and avoidance of misrepresentations (Sanjari et al., 2014, pp. 4-6).

- a) Consent: I informed all interviewees of the purpose of the interview in the context of the present research. All of them consented verbally to the interview. In some cases, they also consented that I record the interview. In the cases where the interviewee did not consent, or where I did not raise the issue, I took notes of the meeting.
- b) Confidentiality: All interviews took place in the workplace of the interviewees, except for the amateur dyers, whom I interviewed at their homes/ public places. I assigned a reference number to each interviewee and assigned them to the group that they belonged to (professional dyer, amateur dyer, other craftspeople, museum staff, retailers, and so on). I quoted sensitive matters in an anonymous manner to protect the source of information.
- c) Standpoint of the researcher: I have been practicing *somemono* since 1985. From 1985 to 1990 I attended the atelier on a regular basis. From 1990 to 2016 I was living abroad. However, during this period I continued being connected to the atelier and producing *somemono* with a relative frequency. Since 2016 I joined the atelier once again on a regular manner. I am a PhD student at the International Christian University researching on the continuity of Japanese traditional folk textile dyeing. Therefore, during interviews I was aware of the risks of preunderstanding and made efforts to reframe my understanding of the situations I was familiar with. I consider that my affiliation to *katazome* facilitated the contacts and inspired a sense of trust among the interviewees.

I obtained the certificate of ethical clearance for the research at ICU (1February 2019).¹⁸

¹⁸ E-Learning Course on Research Ethics Certificate, by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

1.4. Significance of the research

This study is probably the first comprehensive study on traditional folk textile dyeing covering various regions across Japan, and among the very few taking an insider perspective. The research could not identify any study going into such detail and feedback from the dyers in several prefectures, on the structures where *katazome* are produced, how the crafts are produced, and how these structures and crafts have evolved over time. Similarly, the research could not identify any other analysis on the consumption of *katazome*, the various types of mediators and how they operate, and how the relation between mediators and consumption types has evolved over time. Finally, this study has considered the perspectives of all stakeholders, prioritizing the dyers to the extent that no other study seems to have done so far.

Through the interviewees' feedback, the study documented and analyzed the experiences of professional and amateur dyers, some of whom worked directly with Serizawa. By so doing, the study results are twofold. On the one hand, it dissects aspects important to the tradition of the craft, such as the meanings attached to the *kōbō*, the authenticity of the crafts and of the craft's tradition (Hobsbawm, 2012, pp. 2-7), to then analyze how these aspects support the sense of cultural identity and cultural heritage. On the other hand, the study brings new perspectives to the personality and persona of Serizawa, and how those belonging to his circle illustrate how the *katazome* lineage is built and tradition constructed.

The study blends a documentary review and analysis, a qualitative enquiry, and an ethnographic study on traditional stencil dyeing in Japan, which adds to the evidence provided by other ethnographic studies about traditions in Japan. Such studies include, for instance, the one by Brian Moeran on Onta ware (1997), Christine Yano on Enka songs (2003), Han Seung-Mi on Wajima lacquerware (1995), Katarzyna Cwierka on culinary culture (2006), and Sarashima Sumiko on *bingata* and on weaving, and cultural heritage (2013a and 2013b). This research has also been inspired by ethnographic studies in other areas, such as the work by Christopher Bondy on the *buraku* identity (Bondy 2020).

While there has been a considerable number of studies on pottery/ceramics, lacquerware, and weaving as Mingei crafts, those on traditional folk textile dyeing are rare. Among the bibliography to which I had access to, only few analyzed traditional folk textile dyeing from an insider perspective. These included one study by Sarashima Sumiko on

Okinawa's *bingata* from the perspective of ICH (2013a), that of Robert Pontsioen on the lives of Tokyo's craftspeople, among whom there was an Edo Komon practitioner (2012), and the one by Charlotte Linton on Ōshima *tsumugi* (2020).

The current research is significant because it contextualized the production of *katazome*. Through a situated perspective, it analyzed the life and experience of the dyers within a local situation, and how the evolution of consumption patterns of these crafts forced changes in their work and their lives. In this way, the research provided information that helped re-constructing the meaning of culture as a dynamic process. Such information has allowed me to propose concepts such as hybridization or heterogenization of *katazome* (production, promotion, and consumption), and fluid authenticity, which in my view are highly useful concepts to account for such a dynamic process. Despite traditional folk textile dyeing being intimately related to Mingei, my thesis argues that discussions of whether the craft is or is not Mingei is no longer relevant; and that what is relevant is understanding that *katazome* nowadays is a hybridization of many techniques, strategies, and craftspeople and other stakeholders, where Mingei performs some roles—or is made to perform some roles.

The documentary review and analysis, and the qualitative enquiry supported the ethnographic study and helped providing a historical perspective to the *katazome* lineage. The enquiry helped to understand what Mingei means nowadays. The enquiry together with the documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources on the work of Serizawa and Mingei, contributed to knowing him and his legacy from a new perspective.

The research addressed various issues that are rarely addressed and which I consider to be important in the traditional crafts practice. For instance, the attributed authorship of these crafts where several people contribute to the production process; or the role that amateur practice plays in the preservation of *katazome* as cultural heritage.

Finally, this research makes a breakthrough on the future of the various profiles of *kōbō* in relation to the different types of consumption of *katazome*. In addition to the economic viability of *katazome* which relates to its material consumption, the research explores the potential value of various options related to the symbolic, visual, and cultural consumption of this craft for the continuity of the tradition.

1.5. Overview of the research

In the present Chapter One I explain how this research is the culmination of a story of personal curiosity and admiration of Serizawa Keisuke, the mythic artist of works of unparalleled beauty, which in my mind, expressed the soul of Japanese aesthetics. Having arrived in Japan some weeks earlier, visiting the exposition of Serizawa in Yokohama in September 1978 constituted a complete revelation to me. I also explain how I had become amateur dyer in 1985 at the Dote Katazome Kōbō, in Ibaraki prefecture, and how we belong to the Serizawa Keisuke lineage. During all these years, I witnessed how ateliers were disappearing, and how the declining consumption of traditional *katazome* is affecting the lives of craftspeople around me. I felt the need to conduct this study, realizing that very little had been written about this traditional craft, and even less from an insider perspective. Chapter One proceeds to address the first set of questions of the research. It outlines the research boundaries and provides a historical perspective of Japanese folk textile dyeing. It then situates the history of craft in the context of Mingei, proposing a framework to better analyze the impact that this Movement had in the modern history of traditional crafts. I finally introduce the ICH relevant to the traditional folk textile dyeing. Once the historical background and context set up, the Chapter moves onto the methodology and the research design, with a section describing the profile and approach, indicating the theoretical underpinnings of the study, and the set of questions guiding the research. The section further explains the material and methods used to collect and generate data, and how these were analyzed using the inductive framework built from the fieldwork findings. This is followed by some notes of my experience as a researcher and reflexivity, as well as on the limitations of my research, and the ethical considerations which guided me during the fieldwork, as well as the research clearance process at the ICU. This Chapter ends with a section on the significance of the research, which re-joins some aspects of my motivation for this undertaking.

I devote Chapter Two to the dyers, addressing mainly the second and third set of questions of this research. The chapter opens with an analysis of Serizawa Keisuke. I look at him from various perspectives to try to deepen the knowledge not only about him as an artist, but also about what he as a person meant for those working for and with him. I was lucky enough to meet various dyers who had worked directly with him, and who provided me with their naïve and ingenuous insights on their relation, which I consider crucial to understanding the meaning of lineage in the *katazome* tradition. I then move to the analysis of the various

profiles of dyers, starting with the initiation into the craft and the various systems of apprenticeship, which I back up with the feedback from my interviewees. The chapter then explores the difference between artists and artisans/craftspeople in Japan, which has some different connotations from these terms in Western culture. This documentary analysis is supplemented again with the views and opinions of the craftspeople participating in my research. I use the feedback of the dyers to explore their motivation and trajectories into the professional practice of the craft, what craftsmanship meant to them, and how had their profession and work changed through time. Their feedback was also useful to understand the advantages and challenges of the craftspeople who have their own *kōbō* and those who remain employees of others. In the last section of the chapter, I focus on the amateur practice of *katazome*. I start by defining the meaning of amateur practice of crafts in Japan, comparing it with the definition of amateur practice of crafts in the West, in order to analyze the extent of amateur crafts practice in Japan. I then present three amateur groups, one led by Serizawa several decades ago, and two contemporary ones, and treat them as case studies to explore two sets of interrelated issues. The first set relates to the dyers, and includes their motivation to become dyers, their perceived self-expressiveness, and femininity. The second set of issues focuses on the crafts they produced, and includes the culturality and social nature of these crafts, as well as the impact of amateur practice of *katazome* on the continuity of this tradition. I also introduce what the *kōbō* meant to amateur dyers, which I treat in depth in Chapter Three.

Chapter Three delves into the *kōbō* or the dyer's atelier. This chapter constitutes the anchor around which the other chapters are constructed, because the main argument of this study is that without *kōbō* no traditional folk textile dyeing can exist. As such, it serves to address several sets of the research's questions. In particular, this chapter addresses those questions related to the construction, transmission and continuity of the *katazome* tradition; and those sets of questions focusing on the production and consumption of *katazome* and their evolution. I first established three categories of *kōbō* depending on their size and function, and assigned the *kōbō* relevant to my research to one category, arranging them by their main production technique, based on the ethnographic data collected during the fieldwork. Next, I investigated the various meanings of the *kōbō*. These include the physical space where the crafts production happens, the social environment where dyers interact and groups emerge, and the symbolic realm where tradition and lineage are constructed. Because exploring the symbolism of the *kōbō* proved complicated, I referred to works by other researchers to help my argument, but I also provided numerous examples based on the fieldwork to sustain it. I treated

here the notion of cultural nationalism, which became relevant in the discussion of *katazome* as a Mingei craft, and of the nature of support provided by the various initiatives promoting this craft. Most of my attention, nevertheless, went towards investigating the factors which affect the continuity of the *kōbō* and the coping strategies that craftspeople adopted to confront the challenging situations. These coping strategies depended on factors associated with the profile of the *kōbō* and were outside the production of the tangible craft. I conclude the chapter with an analysis of the trend of traditional folk textile dyeing.

Chapter Four concentrates on the production of *katazome*, addressing mainly the fifth set of research questions. Questions about the materials and techniques of *katazome* production are addressed in a descriptive manner in the first part of the chapter. Questions about the changes occurred in their production and its evolution are treated analytically in the second part of the chapter. To provide a historical perspective of the craft. I ground the research roughly from 1920s to 2023, because of the impact that the democratization of society and urbanization, together with the Mingei Movement and Serizawa Keisuke had on the appreciation and consumption, and thus, in the production of *katazome*. The above background leads to a detailed description of the traditional *katazome* production processes. Firstly, I included the materials, and within them, the fabrics, the tools, the ingredients and how to prepare them, and the stencil creation and preparation processes. Where available, I accompanied the analysis of the various components with historical and documentary notes. However, due to the extremely limited body of literature on the subject, the analysis often counted on the information from the interviewees, and in particular, from Ms. and Mr. Dote, the master dyers from the Dote Katazome Kōbō. Secondly, I analyzed the techniques of traditional textile dyeing in detail, examining all phases of the dyeing process. To better illustrate the process, I provide ample examples of how various master dyers who participated in my research perform these tasks. The personal stories and conveyed craftsmanship of the master dyers, together with their references to changes in the course of their multi-decade dyeing careers, allow me to transit to the second part of the chapter, and to build the case of the evolution of the production of *katazome* on a realistic basis. The chapter gathers the dyers' perspective of tradition, by asking them "what makes *katazome* to be traditional?" Their views on authenticity, traceability/lineage, Japaneseness, and placeness provide further illustrations to the definition of the METI on what the Japanese people consider "traditional crafts" to be. The chapter furthermore discusses issues of attribution and contribution in the authorship of traditional crafts. I consider these aspects important for those artisans working on crafts which

become signature works of consummated artists. However, I found no previously published material on this subject, and therefore, I explored it from a philosophical definition of attribution (Fisk, 2006), several brief mentions in literature (Han, 1996, p. 146; Jones, 2014, p. 142-143; Cieśliczka, 2021), and -most importantly- the feedback from interviewees during the fieldwork. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of the evolution of *katazome* drawing upon Robertson's perspective on societal evolution through iterative processes of homogenization and heterogenization with a consequent glocalization (1995), providing examples to illustrate these processes.

Chapter Five addresses mainly the sixth set of research questions on the consumption of *katazome*, and complements Chapter Three in addressing the fourth set of research questions on the roles that the main stakeholders play and how these roles have evolved. This chapter explores *katazome* as commodities as defined by Arjun Appadurai (1986) mentioning the special case of barter and gifts as commodities without monetary exchange. Both, barter and gifts are important to this research because their practice is not uncommon among amateur dyers. I then explore the craft's consumption as a theory of the late nineteenth century, related to urban existence, and to fashion (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, pp. 62-65). Crafts do not exist in isolation, and have both, a "cultural biography" or individual specific trajectory, and a "social history" of things, or the history of the ensemble of individual items belonging to the same category (Kopytoff, 1986). The "social history" of things helps us to frame objects in the perspective of tradition, as opposite to the cultural biography of a specific item, which normally refers to the short term. When investigating consumption patterns historically, I use several examples of study of traditions in Japan in order to illustrate how both perspectives are complementary. I also use Kopytoff and Appadurai's views on the interconnection between production, demand, and consumption, and apply it to *katazome*, to illustrate how this relation adapts to the changes of the craft's social environment. I then argue that, as the distance between the production of crafts and their consumption increases, the role of mediators becomes more evident and necessary. I refer to the theories of Robert Wuthnow and Marsha Witten (1988), and of Roland Robertson (1995) in order to analyze the roles of the mediators. After setting the background, I analyze how these roles apply to the various types of *katazome* consumption, drawing on both documentary analysis and feedback from interviewees during the fieldwork. I conclude this chapter with an analysis of the evolution in the consumption of *katazome* from the perspective of their social history (Kopytoff, 1986) using the approach

of homogenization, heterogenization, and hybridization/glocalization of crafts developed by Appadurai (1986) and Robertson (1995).

Chapter Six focuses on the fourth set of questions of the research, while contributing also to the third set of questions of tradition and authenticity. The chapter looks into the continuity of the traditional folk textile dyeing based on the results of the fieldwork. It also contrasts the reality of the lives of the craftspeople interviewed with a wider socioeconomic context. The chapter analyzes various options available for enhancing the continuity of the craft. I discuss the meaning and construction of tradition and authenticity with a view to explaining the tension pervading this research, which originates from the need to use a terminology which does not correspond to the reality in the everyday life of the craft. I highlight the importance of the role that amateur practice plays for the continuity of the craft. Then I move to the final section, where I review various initiatives taken at different levels for promoting the craft. The review is not exhaustive and is to be considered as succinct case studies to illustrate the emergence of these initiatives, their operating procedures, and their usefulness and effectiveness. Finally, I identify few areas for further research to strengthen the validity of the present results, as well as to delve into other areas which were not possible to go into in the present research, and which necessarily rely on a bigger project initiative than the present one.

Chapter Seven presents the conclusions of the research. It starts with the achievements and contribution. Then, it presents the main points for consideration pertaining the dyers, the *kōbō*, and the crafts and their production. The chapter then reviews the main aspects on the craft's consumption and its evolution, linking them with the *katazome*'s cultural biographies and the social history of the tradition. Conclusions on the economic viability of the craft and the continuity of the tradition, and several recommendations close the chapter.

Ethnographic studies depend on the moment and the context where they are carried out. In this research, unexpected situations, such as the coronavirus pandemic, affected the planned fieldwork and forced me to adapt to what was possible to do. Nevertheless, this research allowed me to engage with craftspeople and explore their work and contributions to the craft.

Chapter Two: The dyers

This chapter examines the people who produce the traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan. It takes an internal perspective, foregrounding the voices of the craftspeople working in the various *kōbō*, ranging from individual to large-scale ateliers. The content of this chapter takes stock of a subset of the data generated during the fieldwork from December 2017 to October 2022. The subset included 27 semi-structured interviews four oral history interviews. The interviewees included eighteen professional dyers, eleven amateur dyers, and two weavers who also dyed their products. Moreover, this chapter takes stock of the results of a survey of a group of 37 amateur dyers; comments, and feedback from four apprentices; and the self-experience during one artist-in-residence in Tokushima in 2018, and another in Hamamatsu in 2022. Section 1.3.1 provides further details about the data collection and generation strategies used during the fieldwork.

The chapter focuses on stencil (*katazome*) dyers, although it also includes the views of several tie-dye (*shibori*), Yūzen, and pour (*chūsen*) dyers. Unless specified otherwise, I refer to those dyers whose main production technique is stencil. I refer to them as craftspeople rather than craftsmen, in order not to overlook the numerous phases of the dyeing techniques which are traditionally done by women, such as the washing of the dyed fabric or its final presentation (*shiage*). There are several aspects related to the artisans which are dealt with in other chapters of this dissertation. For instance, the relations among artisans working in the same atelier are dealt with in Chapter Three, section 3.2.2 when discussing the *kōbō* as a social environment; the challenge of the interface between the production by the dyers and its commercialization is addressed in Chapter Three, section 3.3 on the evolution of the *kōbō*; and the attribution of the authorship of the work of the artisans to their master in Chapter Four, section 4.5 when exploring the authorship of crafts. The present analysis of amateur dyeing practice sheds light on the role of informal settings and networks, and contributes to the analysis on the continuity of traditional folk textile dyeing in Chapter Six.

Every traditional folk textile dyeing has a human story behind it, filled, to different extents, with moments of satisfaction and frustration, repetition, and accomplishment. When gazing at a doorway curtain or a kimono, one is often curious about the person who dyed it, the technique, the aging of the colors on the fabric, and the geographical location of the *kōbō*

from which the dyeing originated. While the works of most dyers remain anonymous, those by Serizawa Keisuke are easily recognizable to a vast number of people interested in this craft. However, the knowledge in the public domain about Serizawa is confined to his reputation as an artist and member of the Mingei Movement. Little else is known about him and even less is about the work and lives of other dyers from their own perspectives. This chapter's objective is to provide an insider's perspective of those dyers: from the master of modern *katazome*, Serizawa, to professional and amateur dyers, and apprentices learning the craft.

This research found a wealth of bibliography documenting the work of well-known dyers, especially those designated as Holders/Preservers of Important Intangible Properties, in monographic publications, art collections, and exhibition catalogues. However, the research found scarce bibliography on ethnographic studies which could elucidate the insider's perspective of the people behind the folk textile dyeing. Although neither extensive nor representative of the community of traditional folk textile dyers, my fieldwork explored the personal perspectives of a few professional and amateur dyers. The interviewees spoke about why they began their practice as dyers, how it had changed for them through time, how they related to their peers, and how they saw themselves contributing to the dyeing tradition in Japan. Through their contributions, broader themes became evident, including gender, power relations, the meaning of craftsmanship, and Japaneseness. This research is interested in Serizawa lineage, and therefore, interviewing four dyers having worked at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo was important because their feedback also helped to know more about Serizawa as an individual.

The chapter commences with a comprehensive analysis of Serizawa Keisuke from several perspectives. Discussing Serizawa Keisuke in depth is relevant not only because of his artistic oeuvre and his association with the Mingei Movement, but also because of the importance of the lineage affiliated with his *kenkyūjo*. As such, he marks a pivotal place in the transition from premodern and modern practice of the craft. An additional reason for examining Serizawa in depth is that the *kōbō* I belong to is anchored in his lineage. Subsequently, Section 2.2 elucidates the significance of apprenticeship, craftsmanship and artistry in the context of traditional Japanese crafts and serves as backdrop to Section 2.3, which is devoted to professional dyeing. Section 2.4 pertains to the amateur practice of traditional folk textile dyeing. Following this, Section 2.5 condenses the key points of the chapter.

2.1. Serizawa Keisuke: The artist, the genius, the craftsman, and the person

It is difficult to understand the modern craft of stencil dyeing without referring to Serizawa Keisuke. Serizawa used the technique of the traditional stencil dyeing of *bingata*, and transformed it into *katazome*, or image-paintings with pattern dyeing, by infusing modern design into *bingata*. Serizawa also transformed the way in which *katazome* was produced. In previous times the different phases of *katazome* were the responsibility of different guilds. These would include making the design, cutting the pattern, applying resist paste (*nori*), washing the dyed textile, drying and tensing it, and so on. However, Serizawa integrated all *katazome* production tasks in his atelier, setting the pattern for other modern dyeing *kōbō*.

His (Serizawa) *nuno moji* – stencil depicting Japanese lettering in the form of bolts of fabric billowing in the wind – are highly distinctive in color and shape and invoke feelings of joy in the viewer. (Figure 2.1) (Moriyama, 2020, p.356)



Figure 2.1. Serizawa Keisuke (1895–1984). Chinese Character *Shin* (Truth), 1960. Stencil-dyed hemp, 37¼ x 19¼ in. (left). Chinese characters *Haru* (Spring), *Natsu* (Summer), *Aki* (Autumn), *Fuyu* (Winter), 1965. Stencil-dyed paper, 80¼ x 27¾ in (right). Tohoku Fukushi University Serizawa Keisuke Art and Craft Museum. In Earle J., et al. (2009). *Serizawa: Master of Japanese Textile Design*. Japan Society Series, Yale University Press, p. 42 (left) and p. 33 (right).

Serizawa Keisuke (1895-1984) is considered among the most authoritative figures in modern textile design in Japan (Boettcher, 1987, p.6), and the importance of his work is comparable with that of England's William Morris (Moriyama, 2020, p. 356). The biggest attraction of Serizawa's work lies in the combination of traditional *katazome* techniques with his creativity in design and painting, permeated with oriental exoticism (Shiratori, 2016).

After his academic training at Tokyo Industrial High School (1914), Serizawa established a design atelier in Shizuoka with a small group of friends (1917). He was interested in quality art and became a member of expert networks that facilitated his career, such as the Shirakaba group (1915s), or the Mingei group in the 1920s (Munsterberg, 1958, pp. 107-121; Longenecker, 1978; Macé, 2009). Following advice from Yanagi Soetsu, he researched *bingata* in Okinawa for several months in 1937. This experience with craftspeople in Okinawa was pivotal for Serizawa. He took his strength as artist from the craftspeople's intrinsic traditional "weakness" of tight routine production of objects. These techniques served as channels for his artistic production. His attachment to the Mingei Movement was important, but not crucial for the development of his career. It was important, because Yanagi's *The Way of Craft* gave strong moral support to his work, and allowed him to become acquainted with a group of enthusiastic people with whom he shared ideas about aesthetics. The encounter also provided him with access to a larger range of folk crafts for which he had already acquired a taste and enthusiasm, and from which he received inspiration. (Ajioka, 1995). In the latter part of his career, Serizawa was recognized and acclaimed both nationally and internationally, a wide range of his works having been shown in museums and exhibitions worldwide.

Serizawa's most distinctive quality was his ability to interact with different types of disciplines and professional undertakings. He combined design with lacquerware works (The 10 Disciples of the Buddha, in Kadowaki, 2015, p.63), dyeing, or woodwork (Shizuoka Industrial Testing Center, 1922); and with daily-life items (Yamamoto Kanae's Farmers' Art Center in Central Japan, 1923). Other examples of his versatility in creation include the combination of design and traditional textiles (*bingata* – Okinawa, 1928); design and book design using stencil dyeing (Kōgei magazine, 1931 and onwards); and architectural design (Ohara Museum in Kurashiki, 1963). He was the first person to use Japanese paper (*washi*) for stencil dyeing¹⁹ (Harada, 2021, pp. 6-7), painted in glass and other media, and applied

¹⁹ Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum, Shizuoka city, Japan. <https://www.seribi.jp/English%20panhu.pdf>

overglaze enamel to ceramics. He blended industrial design with the philosophical basis of Mingei, combining his art production of original masterpieces (Kimono, wall hangers, folding screens), with mass-produced authored pieces (*Don Quixote e-hon*²⁰ (Fraleigh, 2006), Sange (Fukuchi, 2010), calendars (Kiriaki, 2020, pp. 6-8) and industrially-produced unsigned items (fans, match boxes) (Ajioka, 1995; Earle, 2009; Marshall et al., 2000; Shimizu, n.d.).

Serizawa lived through a period of profound change in the approach to art and crafts, from production to consumption. Until the early 1900s fine arts and crafts were differentiated. On the one hand, decoration was the main function of art, and was accessible to the elites. On the other hand, utility was what characterized crafts, which were the essence of the Mingei Movement, and accessible to the masses. The modernization of the country, which involved a rapid urbanization, resulted in a new middle-class that regarded art as a commodity, treating crafts as something nostalgic of the past. At the same time, the official discourse on building Japan as a modern state went along with that of national identity through the Mingei Movement. For further details see Chapter One, Section 1.2.2. on Mingei.

The Mingei Movement considered Serizawa as its textile representative, praising his image and works. Serizawa, although far from being an unknown craftsman, concurred with various principles of the Movement: he was committed to training others in the craft, and, to a certain extent, he produced crafts for the masses at affordable prices. At the same time, Serizawa merged the decorative and utility functions in his works, which became crafts used as ornaments in people's homes. The knowledge about Serizawa comes from four sources, of which the documentary material about him, and the analysis of his works are well developed. The other two sources, which include understanding him from the perspective of his personal art collection, and through opinions of his entourage, have been less explored/documentated so far. Therefore, this study considered important to use primary sources of information to complete the knowledge about Serizawa and the craft tradition.

2.1.1. Serizawa from a documentary perspective

The analysis of the documentary material (written and audio visual) on Serizawa conveys the image as a consummate artist of global stature, representing the Mingei Movement

²⁰ Experimenting an adaptation of the stencil dyeing technique, *kappazuri* (合羽摺) to produce this book.

and the Japanese spirit. One of the most complete sources of knowledge on Serizawa is the encyclopedic book collection about his lifework: *Serizawa Keisuke zenshū* (1983). There are numerous magazines and journals informing about his works or commenting on his exhibitions; and the announcements of exhibitions in museums devoted to him (in Shizuoka, Sendai, and Kashiwa – until 2010), or to Mingei (Japan Folk Crafts Museum in Komaba, Tokyo). The commented catalogues in English of Serizawa exhibitions in Paris (1976) (Leymarie, 1976), San Diego (1978) (Longenecker, 1978), Vancouver (1978), Edinburgh (2001) (Serizawa, 2001), St Petersburg (2006) (Kosourova, 2006), and New York (2009) (Di Marzo, 2009; Earle et al., 2009), disseminate knowledge on him to a global audience. Recently, Marty Gross has recovered important visual material on Serizawa in his Mingei archive project (2023), contributing to the global knowledge about Serizawa.

2.1.2. Serizawa from the perspective of his works

The analysis of the works of Serizawa provides a more diverse image of Serizawa as a unique artist and designer; and as a consumed craftsperson compatible with the Mingei perspective. His ‘authored’ masterpieces (kimono, kimono sashes, folding screens) convey the knowledge of Serizawa as an elit artist, producing for the few wealthy consumers of art. Visitors to museums or exhibitions also gain knowledge on Serizawa as the LNT when they appreciate his masterpieces. This perspective on Serizawa contrasts with the consideration of his signature works which are mass produced by hand (Serizawa calendars); or industrially (reproduction of picture books or *e-hon*; and printed seating cushions, wrapping cloths and doorway curtains); and those products presented to the consumer in an ‘anonymous’ manner (fans, match boxes). The analysis of his production projects the image as an elite artist only available to the very few, blended with that of a representative Mingei craftsman whose works are accessible to the masses. These masses include those consumers with a certain purchasing power and interest in his works (authored mass-produced items), as well as those for whom the consumption of the item is unrelated to Serizawa (as in the case of match boxes).

2.1.3. Serizawa from the perspective of his personal art collection

Serizawa’s personal art collection provides a different kind of knowledge about him. Exhibitions at museums (Shizuoka and Sendai) of his personal art collection show that Serizawa was an avid traveler, who was always interested in folk art, and in accessing a world

sometimes distant. During the fieldwork, interviewees who had worked at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo confirmed this image of Serizawa. Furthermore, these interviews revealed the interest that Serizawa had for these objects as a source of creativity and as materials to show to his visitors. Interviewees referred to trucks periodically visiting Serizawa's home with artefacts from many parts of Japan and abroad, trying to sell them to him. He would purchase a few selected artefacts and use some for his designs. Once used, he would give most of them away to his near entourage, while keeping only some for his personal art collection. He would later use some of these objects for display, as a means of creating an environment appropriately tailored for receiving his visitor/s.

From this perspective, Serizawa used these objects as commodities with attributes of luxury (artefacts kept for his personal art collection), and as commodities with attributes of utility/necessity (artefacts employed for his design and discarded once used). Feedback from interviewees projected an image of Serizawa, not only as an avid curious traveler interested in (folk) art globally but also as an extremely self-controlled individual, conscious of the importance of the moment that meeting him would constitute to the visitor. In this sense, two interviewees commented on how he would prepare the setting for the meeting with each visitor, decorating the space with objects that he thought the visitor would appreciate, and how glad the appreciating comments of the visitors would make him. Interviewees referred to the Kamakura atelier as his reclusive creation space, an empty environment displaying few artefacts for his designs, as opposed to his atelier in Kamata, populated with artefacts, where he would receive visitors. The extent of the artefacts that Serizawa owned is largely unknown, since he would give away a considerable proportion of these artefacts once used as his models.

2.1.4. Serizawa from the perspective of those who worked with him

During the fieldwork, the four interviewees who had worked with Serizawa for several years as apprentices or assistants, portrayed an image of him as a highly-disciplined individual, caring for details, and with an imposing personality. As one interviewee noted:

He inspired fear in me. He was aware of his identity. He would not like to entrust things to others. Maybe he worried always about his works. He would say things contrary to what he had said the previous day. However, what he told today was right, and so was what he had said yesterday. (Professional dyer, 05 October 2019)

The interviewees were unanimous in their opinion about Serizawa having a unique personality, easily intimidating others around him; and at the same time, being conscious about details and critics from others. They described how he spared several hours per day evaluating and assessing the work of other dyers who asked him for advice on their works, and how he would become exasperated and short tempered when he considered that the works presented to him lacked technique or details. The interviewees further commented that everybody was nervous when meeting Serizawa, who seemed to hate being distracted in his work *for nothing*.

The image of Serizawa that comes out of the interviews is that of a man with a uniquely creative mind. All interviewees praised the endless energy and passion with which he worked, and the natural genius in his art. Serizawa noted that, when he was at work, he thought about nothing but what he sought to create, and that his design changed during the carving process, “the knife following its own way” (Marshall et al., 2000). Interviewees referred to Serizawa as “the master” (*sensei*) with extreme respect and reverence for his craftsmanship, mastery, and creativity. As one professional dyer noted, “He was fast. Fast designing, fast carving the stencil. When I looked at (Serizawa) *sensei* at work, I understood how great he was” (12 May 2018).

Interviewees praised Serizawa for his efforts to transmit his knowledge on art through groupings around him for those interested in traditional folk textile dyeing. During his life, he established three groups: Konohanakai (このはな会) and Katsurakai (桂会), which were exclusively devoted to amateur practice; and the Moegikai (萌木会), composed of his peers and those dyers who had worked in his *kenkyūjo*.²¹

2.2. Craftspeople and artists: apprentices, artisans, artists

A typical craftsperson (*shokunin*) is authentic and perfect doing always the same type of work, as opposed to artists, who are able to cross boundaries and evolve.
(Expert opinion informant, 12 October 2019)

The difference between craftspeople and artists in Japan is a modern construction of words. Traditionally, the makers of any object or craft were called *shokunin*. The word

²¹ Moegikai, established in 1946 (Kiriaki, 2020) by Serizawa was composed of senior staff dyers. Contrary to Konohanakai and Katsurakai where all members were women, in Moegikai “all members were men, except for one or two *notable* women, such as Ms. Hirose from Ichikawa city.” (Expert opinion informant, 5 October 2019).

shokunin consists of two parts, *shoku* (職), which translates as employment, occupation, trade, and skill; and *nin* (人) or person. In addition to *shokunin*, other words for craftspeople include *saikushi* (細工師), *takumi* (also meaning craftsmanship, skill, dexterity, 匠), *kōgeika* (工芸家), *meikō* (meaning skilled artisan, 名工), *gikō* (技工), *kōjin* (meaning artisan or laborer, 工人), and *shukōgyōsha* (specific for handicrafts person, 手工業者). Terms such as *deki* (出来) and *degiwa* (出際) relate to the ability and quality in execution of the craftspeople's work; while *shokunin konjō* (職人根性), or *shokunin katagi* (職人氣質) express the spirit of true artisan, or the work's pride of the craftspeople.

2.2.1. Apprentices

Becoming a craftspeople, artisan, or *shokunin* implies rites of passage through apprenticeship in a *kōbō*. Several terms express the various connotations of the apprentice system in Japan, based on the concept of becoming a self-reliant fully qualified person or *ichininmae* (一人前) through hardship and effort or *kurō* (苦労). During the Edo period the relation between master and apprentice was a common and quasi-exclusive education system in virtually all domains. Apprenticeship served to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next, and the training of the young for life. During the Meiji period, the traditional apprentice system lost its exclusivity as the result of the emergence of schools and training institutions, although it was maintained for most traditional crafts (Goto et al., 1983, pp. 160-161). This system is known as *totei seido* (徒弟制度), while the in-service training in the merchants households is known as *decchi bōkō* (丁稚奉公). Both systems followed general patterns, with the young person leaving the family home to get a skill and mature as a person (Kondo, 1992, p. 46). In many of the words meaning “apprentice”, one of the components is the word “younger brother” (*otōto*, 弟). Some of the terms indicating apprenticeship include *deshi* (young brother child, meaning the follower or assistant, 弟子), *uchideshi* (boarding young brother or apprentice 内弟子), *totei* (walking young brother or apprentice, 徒弟), *onideshi* (senior apprenticeship, 鬼弟子), *detchi* (go-for attendant, 丁稚), *minaraikō* (the one who learns the job by observing, 見習い工), *shiji* (pupil, 師事), *insei* (internal student, 院生), *hōkō* (live-in apprenticeship, 奉公), and *shūshū* (disciplined learning, 修習).

The purpose of the apprenticeship is to acquire a skill and “develop a total capability ranging from a working talent to fitness to be a member of a work community.” The skill acquired includes two important aspects: proficiency, or physical ability to operate the tools and materials naturally; and internal knowledge which enables the apprentice to interact with the tools and materials, bringing them to a finished craft. Crafts apprenticeship is a lengthy process, that implies spending time and learning by doing through the imitation of their peers (Sennett, 2008, p. 120). It is through repetitive practice that the movements are first observed and sensed, practiced, and integrated fully into internal knowledge (Wolek, 1999, pp. 396, 398). By belonging to the *kōbō* apprentices identify with the roles and the ideology of its master (Singleton, 1998, p. 6). The apprentices observe the senior apprentices and the master working and, by learning/stealing their “secrets” (*nusumi keiko*, 盗稽古), they become part of the craftspeople family (Goto et al., 1983, p.182; Pontsioen, 2012, pp. 288, 312; Singleton, 1998, p.14; Taylor & Pontsioen, 2015, p. 67, as cited in Irie, 1988). In such way, the apprenticeship constitutes the entrance to the craft’s community of practice. In classic systems, such as the one prevalent in traditional crafts, apprentices learn by observing and repetitive practice, with little empirical information from the senior apprentices or from the *shokunin*. There is a distinction between those who come to the crafts from schools and universities, and those young adults who join the crafts through apprenticeship after finishing the secondary school. The latter includes those born into a crafts family, and those whose experience in crafts is new.

Through years of practice, apprentices acquire the skills to do the job by integrating the technique into themselves. Progressively they acquire the artisanal spirit or *shokunin katagi* (職人氣質), which explains why they produce crafts not because there is a market for them, but because making crafts becomes their purpose in life or *ikigai* (生き甲斐). They progress to journeyman and to master, through a hierarchical system like the crafts journeys in the medieval Europe (Sennett, 2008, p. 49). The research of Dorinne Kondo of 1992 in a traditional confectionary shop, and that of Robert Pontsioen of 2012 in traditional crafts’ ateliers in the Tokyo area identify common characteristics in traditional apprentice systems. Kondo (pp. 47-49) and Pontsioen (pp. 267-269) noted how power imbalances could result in exploitation of apprentices. It was hard to criticize these situations, as discipline *was part of the system*. They noted that this apprentice system was widely regarded as appropriate and appreciated for the transmission of knowledge in traditional crafts, and how parents would send their children to other ateliers to diversify their craft skills prior to succeeding their family business (*ato tsugi*).

In my study, I found similar situations to those described by the above authors. Those professional dyers with a certain age commented on how being an apprentice meant long working hours and doing repetitive work for prolonged periods of time until they would master the various phases of the dyeing techniques:

At the beginning, I worked with *nisewashi* (not true mulberry paper) already colored. Using a pattern, I dyed *nisewashi* in two colors. We called this dyeing of papers *somigami*. I did this for a long time. Then, I started doing the *somigami*, but this time on real *washi* and did it for a long time as well. After this, I started applying *nori* (resist paste) to *washi* postcards. And from time to time, I was asked to color them. After several years, I started repairing the stencils damaged after repeated use. We copied these patterns and carved new stencils for the atelier. (Professional dyer, 14 September 2019)

During their apprenticeship, the dyers commented how they were being asked to do works unrelated to the craft production (for instance, repairing the roof of the atelier, or daily cleaning of the atelier), and how through observation they assimilated the secrets and tricks of the profession from senior *shokunin* and the master. They explained how at times they had to make efforts to get along with others during the long working hours, how much they appreciated the bonding with other apprentices, and how important they considered the personification of the craft in their lives. They also explained that they were sent by their parents, who were *shokunin* related to stencil dyeing themselves, to learn the job or to complete their training in other ateliers before going back to take on the family business as *ato tsugi* (successor).

The apprentice whom I met during my artist-in residence in Hamamatsu, was employed by the *kōbō* under the *totei* system, while the three others whom I met in Tokushima were being trained in centers promoting the traditional dyeing at prefectural level. The prefecture subsidized their on-the-job training for three years, during which they received theoretical and practical training not only on the dyeing techniques, but also on how to establish and manage their own ateliers once completed the training. This new system of apprenticeship has replaced completely the *uchi deshi* system. The factors that have consolidated such change include not having space to lodge apprentices in the master home, the inability of the master to hire an apprentice when the consumption of the crafts is decreasing, the diffusion of machines which

perform the easy tasks that the apprentices used to perform, and most importantly, the increasing scarcity of candidates for the *uchi deshi* system (Pontsioen, 2012, pp. 278-280). Only one out of the sixteen *kōbō* visited had one *totei* system apprentice. Of the other fifteen ateliers, only one received a regular support from a young person wanting to learn the dyeing techniques. Some of the other *kōbō* visited commented that in the past they had apprentices who became assistants and eventually left the ateliers after a while. Among the reasons, they invoked for not having any more apprentices were that they did not have enough work to justify an apprentice, and that in any case they did not have the space or the means to hire one.

2.2.2. Artisans and artists

Painters (*gaka*, 画家) and calligraphers (*shoka*, 書家) working for samurai had a higher status than *shokunin*, which included crafts' production. Later, artist-craftspeople were denominated *sakka*, a term used normally for literary authors, but also used for “those who can sign their (craft and art) works.” The word includes two characters meaning to produce (作) and family (家). The boundaries of *shokunin* and *sakka* remained fluid and ambiguous, in the language and the concept. The term *meishō* (名匠) refers to distinguished masters.

As the industrial modernization of the Meiji Restoration progressed, the horizon and concept of crafts started to change. For instance, the patronage for and consumption of certain crafts, such as swords, declined, while the production of exportable object was promoted by the government to earn currency and fund the Meiji reforms. After Japan's first participation as a country in the Vienna World Fair of 1873, museums were created, the Company for Founding Industry and Commerce (Kiryū Kōshō Kaisha) was established in 1874; and branch offices opened in New York (1877) and Paris (1878) to develop markets for export goods. To support the export industries, the government organized Domestic Exhibitions for the Promotion of Industries, and decentralized its organization promoting these initiatives regionally. Schools of art, craft, and industry were opened as an alternative to the old apprenticeship system. The government also established self-regulating trade organizations in 1884 (Ajioka, 2012, pp. 408-410).

The profile of the *shokunin* progressively changed from producing works in anonymity, to gaining public recognition for their work through the awards received at World Fairs'

expositions; and their nomination as Teishitsu Gigei-in (帝室技芸員 or Imperial Craftsmen) from the 1890s. some craftspeople started making more decorative works and signed them. With these changes, the differences between *shokunin* and artist (*sakka*) became less obvious.

The representatives of the Mingei Movement, who preached for beauty in the objects made by the unknown artisan, were all consummated artists in the different disciplines, including Tomimoto Kenkichi (1886-1963) and Hamada Shōji (1894-1978) in pottery, or Serizawa Keisuke (1895-1984) in textiles (Cieśliczka, 2021, p. 9; Wilson, 2007, p. 92). With the horizontalization of *kōbō* in the early twentieth century, many different craftspeople who until then had their small *kōbō* became absorbed in bigger ateliers headed by an artist-craftsperson. One such example is the Serizawa Kenkyūjo, whereby, rather than outsourcing the different tasks of the dyeing process to smaller ateliers, Serizawa employed these craftspeople, integrating all phases of the dyeing production in his atelier.

In Yanagi's views, the fluidity between crafts and art paralleled the evolution of the independent creator or artist-craftsperson from producers of necessary goods to those of valuable goods. The independent creator could be an art student involved in crafts, such as Serizawa, or a craftsperson who would develop his/her perspectives to create art, such as Munakata Shikō (1903-1975). For Yanagi, artisans/craftsmen could be "unlettered, uneducated and lacking any particular force of personality" ... "that could unconsciously create beautiful things with the help of nature, tradition and Divine power" (Kikuchi, 1997, pp. 43-44). What mattered to Yanagi was that either path, the artist-craftsperson transmitted his/her technique to others, popularized the crafts and encouraged people making them. As such, the artist-craftsperson was not only master of the technique, but also the transmitter of knowledge to others (Wilson, 2007, pp. 68 and 94-95), conveying lineage as an essence of the crafts.

Among all traditional crafts, textiles and bamboo crafts are probably those that are the least signed even if they are the works of consummated artist-craftspeople, as opposed to other crafts, such as pottery, and lacquerware, where the signature of the author in the craft is a more common feature. In textiles, and especially in dyeing, it is the technique and the design which act as signature of the craft, while in weaving it is the nature of the fiber and the technique which serve as identifiers. There is an additional characteristic of textile dyeing. While other crafts use the material and convert it into the final product, in the case of textile dyeing, the

technique acts only as an intermediary step in the craft's production. In this sense, folk textile dyeing is the result of numerous processes and specialized crafts by different parties/workshops.

Sennett (2008) noted that signing utilitarian objects was not traditional in other cultures either; or that marks in works appeared in ancient Greece when the object had a decorative function, which could increase its economic value. The marks would indicate the place where artisan came from, especially if they were slaves and immigrants (p. 91). However, it is in the mid-twentieth century that the idea of conceptual art departs from the dependency on the skill of the artist as a craftsperson. Creativity dwells in the mental sphere, while craftsmanship stays in the hands of the object's maker. In Japan, the distinction was more nuanced. Late in the nineteenth century and in a country conscious about its rich craft traditions, the challenge was to retain these traditions while appealing for modernity. The schools of arts and crafts (*Kōgei Gakkō*) and industrial design (*Kōgyō Gakkō*) of the 1870s and schools of fine arts in the early twentieth century insisted on the traditional crafts in the art development, which ensured the strong base of the graduates in traditional crafts (Cieśliczka, 2021, pp. 12-14).

Craftsmanship involves overcoming the challenges of the day-to-day work: repairing tools, devising techniques to make the work naturally, learning how to control movements and controlling the tools to perfection, and being obsessed for quality and well finished products (Sennett, 2008, pp. 131, 159). There is a sense of shared notion of work, which translates into navigating the rite of passage of correct attitude and bodily motions without interrogating their purposes or logic. At the conceptual level, it is the belief that labor is never alienating.²² Mascia-Lees (2011, p.17-18) cites Risatti's comments on how making a craft object involves a transformation of perception into objects, ideas, and practices. It demands specialized knowledge of materials and their properties and a high degree of motor/muscle skills. Risatti observed how, at the height of their talents, skilled craftspeople performed in a way that was often described as "effortless." While their mind is engaged with intellectual, abstract, and conceptual problems concerning form and expression, their skilled "thinking hands" execute the objects' physical construction (Risatti, 2007, p. 191).

When discussing the differences between artists and craftspeople in his research about Tokyo craftsmen, Pontsioen (2012) notes the implicit assumption that creativity is a mental exercise (in art) while manual work requires less mindfulness (in crafts), referring to Bernard

²² Discussion with Richard Wilson on the meaning of craftsmanship in a Japanese pottery *kōbō*, June 2022.

Leach expression of “the conscious artist and the comparatively unconscious craftsman.” He also points out that while in the West the distinction between products and processes developed during the European Renaissance (fourteenth to seventeenth centuries) and favored the intellectual background to the practical skills (pp. 244-245), this was not the case in Japan, where the distinction was much subtler. In Japan, the distinction started developing in the late 1850s and further developed in the early twentieth century. However, other than in the fine arts disciplines, those practitioners in the traditional arts and crafts in Japan identify themselves as *shokunin*, despite their works fitting into what the West considers pieces of art.

During the fieldwork, those dyers whom I interviewed referred to themselves as *shokunin*, never as artists. When referring to themselves they expressed the importance of the tradition in their textile dyeing techniques, and of their belonging to a lineage to which they adhered. Pontsioen (2012) noted similar feedback from the practitioners in his research, highlighting the importance that craftspeople attached to replicating objects with consistent quality through skilled practice as in the past, despite shifting external conditions. This embodied creativity specific to craftspeople manifests in following a tradition in the making, whereby novelty is secondary to reproducing high quality products, contrary to artists, who focus on the new (pp. 247-250). Replicating objects as in the past in Japan does not have negative connotations as it would have in the West. As Kida and Takayama (2010) have noted, the tradition of copying works of special significance to the cultural heritage in Japan has remained critical through times. This tradition, which was supported by the government from the beginning of the Meiji period, continues to the present day. The purpose of this government-led program is two-fold. On the one hand, it ensures the preservation of both the object in case of accident or disappearance; and the technique of production, which is often selected as IICP. On the other hand, the protection of the old techniques has enabled the creation of contemporary art-crafts (pp. 26-28). Reproducing old patterns is especially relevant in traditional folk textile dyeing, where the old stencils are repaired and the traditional *bingata* designs are used continuously. Repairing the damaged-by-use stencils is a craft in itself, and all apprentices in stencil dyeing go through this learning process.

2.3. Professional practice: Working for oneself, working for others.

This section brings the voices of eighteen professional dyers and four apprentices pursuing a professional dyeing career. Through their feedback, the section presents the various

categories of professional engagement including the apprentices, *deshi* (assistants), *shokunin*, and masters. Rather than being four compartmental categories, they represent a dynamic passage from being apprentice to having a senior position and, in most cases, heading their own *kōbō*. The section presents the reflections of these dyers not only while at work, but also when looking at their past and imagining their place in the future of craft.

Out of the four apprentices whom I met, one was employed in the traditional *totei* system. He joined a *kōbō* of pour dyeing a year ago, when he was looking for a profession at 17 years old. His daily routine consisted in washing the fabrics and hanging them to dry. His work was intensive since he was servicing four senior *shokunin* dyeing the traditional hand towels (*tenugui*), and summer kimono (*yukata*). He used a semi-industrial machine for washing the fabrics, but hanging them to dry was demanding and risky, because he had to climb several times a nearly six-meter ladder and stand on bamboo bars to hang the daily production of dyed fabrics (Figure 2.2.). He commented that it took him a while to perform these tasks naturally, and that sometimes he still felt he needed more practice and time for his body to learn the job fully. He also commented that at times he felt stressed, since the rhythm of his work was decided by the pace at which the *shokunin* worked, not his own. He performed these tasks independently. He commented that did not know when he would be entrusted other tasks.

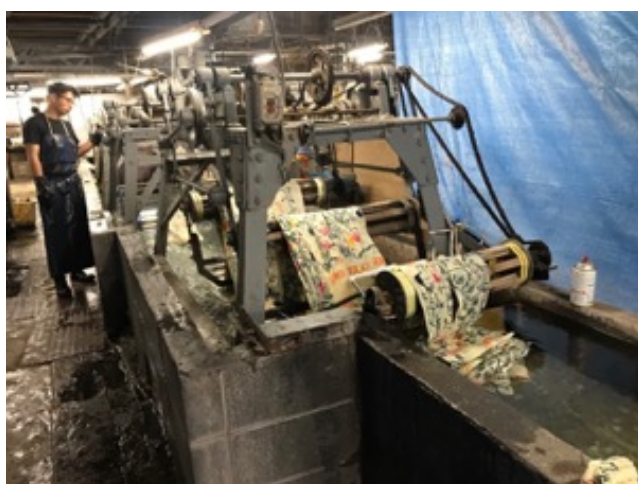


Figure 2.2. Tasks of an apprentice to the Nibashi Senkō Kōbō, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka prefecture. The picture of the left illustrates the washing of the fabric with the help of a machine. The fabrics need to be carefully placed to ensure their flow while washing. The picture of the right shows the fabrics hung to dry. The apprentice needs to climb a ladder and to place the fabrics while standing on the bamboo poles on the top. May 2022. © Maria Santamaria.

The other three apprentices covered here worked through the Japan Blue Initiative, at the center for indigo promotion in Kamiita town, Tokushima prefecture. In the three-year on-the-job training, the apprentices received theoretical courses and started practicing the various areas of indigo production and dyeing from day one. One apprentice, who was expected to graduate from the program in one year, was making arrangements to start his own *kōbō*, while the plans of the other two apprentices graduating in two years' time were still fluid. During their time as apprentices, they experimented freely, for instance dyeing leather or bamboo with indigo, and they stressed the importance they attached to developing their creativity.

Among the eighteen professional dyers interviewed, nine had taken on the dye's craft from their fathers, who were *shokunin*, or who had a family business related to dyeing, with one dyer having started dyeing while helping the partner's family business (Table 2.1). Most of these dyers had joined other *kōbō* as apprentices for a certain period at their start of their careers, prior to returning to take on their family business or to establish their own ateliers. In the words of one dyer, "My father accompanied me to the atelier to see if I could become an apprentice because he started worrying about my future in the family business. From that day, I started working" (05 May 2019).

The status of the apprentices in a *kōbō* varied depending upon their education level. Those people becoming apprentices after graduation from university would stay at the *kōbō* for some two to five years, alternating the period at the *kōbō* and their family business, and gradually taking over the family business as its successor. Referring to the Serizawa Kenkyūjo, one interviewee stated that, at his time, there were three apprentices who had joined the atelier after finishing the secondary school, while most of them had completed their high school or had a degree from an art-related technical school or university. In the view of this interviewee, there were differences in treatment, not only because of their education level, but also because those having a higher education degree tended to be the children of families who owned a *kōbō* and did not join the *kenkyūjo* for an employment purpose, but for a training purpose prior to going back to their family business. Those apprentices who joined the *kōbō* after the secondary school remained there for longer periods, becoming *shokunin* at the *kōbō* which employed them. Some interviewees stated that they lived in dormitories and all their expenses were borne by the *kōbō* who employed them, including some money for their own. One interviewee explained

that “After an interview I joined the atelier. For a while I did not receive any salary as such, but I was taken care of, and helping one or another I got used to the work” (25 May 2022).

Table 2.1. Profile of professional dyers interviewed by family tradition and type of apprenticeship followed, fieldwork December 2017 to October 2022.

	Family tradition	No family tradition	Total
Apprenticeship <i>kōbō</i>	9	5	14
Apprenticeship training center	0	4	4
Total	9	9	18

Among the nine professional dyers interviewed who did not belong to a family of dyers, four had started their own atelier after being trained at the prefectural centers for indigo promotion in Tokushima and Akita. The other five professional dyers had started as apprentices in a *kōbō* and remained as *shokunin* working for different *kōbō* during their careers. Some of the latter did their own creations while working at the *kōbō* after working hours, and another craftsperson started a *kōbō*, although she continued working occasionally for the *kōbō* where she did the apprenticeship.

Fourteen dyers followed the stencil dyeing tradition. Among them, nine specialized in *katazome*, two in *Yūzen zome*, and three belonged to *kōbō* which had shifted to pour dyeing when their *katazome* business shrank. The remaining four dyers specialized in tie-dye, although all of them had experienced stencil dyeing during their careers. All dyers used indigo color regularly for their works, and those dyers specialized in tie-dye used this dyestuff exclusively.

All eighteen interviewees referred to themselves as *shokunin*, despite some of them having had their works accepted in top-ranked national exhibitions such as the Kokuten, which is the national annual exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Association in Japan, and in various international museums. They conceived their work as the intermediary step to doorway curtains, table runners, kimono and kimono sashes, and tapestries, all objects meant to be used. Seeing themselves as intermediary steps in craft creation made them distinct from other crafts. For instance, they explained how potters take earth and create a finished object, or how lacquer craftspeople produce finished objects. Contrary to these, the dyers needed craftspeople external to the dyeing craft, not only for them to start dyeing, such as the weaver or papermaker to do the fabric or *washi*; but also, to finish their crafts, such as the sewer, kimono maker, or partition

maker to convert their dyeing into door curtains or tapestries, kimono and kimono sashes, and partitions. This dependency on the work of other traditional craftspeople added a layer of difficulty to their profession. Indeed, most of the *shokunin* interviewed noted that becoming a professional dyer was difficult because making a living only with *somemono* was complicated. They also commented on how, in addition to the difficulty in receiving sufficient compensation for their products, they had to pay memberships to several professional associations to present their works at national, prefectural, and local levels.

Of the eighteen *shokunin* interviewed, seven worked as employees in a *kōbō* or in a training center for the promotion of indigo dyeing (Table 2.2). They expressed satisfaction for being able to concentrate on their jobs, and produce their own creations outside working hours. Two of the dyers sold the crafts produced at the *kōbō* in their free time at fairs or through the social media with considerable success. Some dyers complemented their income as employees with part-time jobs. For instance, one interviewee combined working as a dyer employee during weekdays, and occasionally as a supermarket's cashier during the weekends.

For the eleven self-employed dyers, the situation proved challenging, especially for those four who did not own a retail outlet to directly sell their products. In the words of one interviewee, “In the old times we could make a living on *sakuhin* (works of art). I have been doing tie-dye dyeing for the last 25 years. Now I rarely make *sakuhin*, but products to be sold.” (11 October 2018). Some dyers commented that they engaged in part-time jobs to be able to produce the crafts they wanted, rather than focusing only on the production of the sellable crafts. Those seven self-employed dyers who had access to a retail outlet were being helped by their family members in the running of the retail outlet while they could concentrate on the dyeing.

Table 2.2. Access to retail outlet and use of social media for the promotion and sales of works. Professional craftspeople employed in a traditional textile dyeing *kōbō*, and self-employed/owning the *kōbō*. Fieldwork, December 2017 to October 2022.

	Access to retail outlet		No access to retail outlet		Total
	Employee	Self-employed	Employee	Self-employed	
Use social media	1	2	2	1	6
Do not use social media	1	5	3	3	12
Total	2	7	5	4	18

The use of social media for the promotion of the crafts and their sale was a tool which only six craftspeople used out of a total of the eighteen interviewees. A widespread view of those using the social media is reflected in the following comment:

The situation is easier now because we can sell things through internet, and we get more diffusion of our products. Now I can do publicity of my products myself... In the old days, we needed to wait for requests to come. I only started using computers recently and only from time to time, but I hate it. (Self-employed professional dyer, 11 October 2018)

Those craftspeople who did not use social media had a different perspective. The reasons for not using it varied, but the overall sentiment was illustrated by an interviewee as follows:

Some craftspeople had gone to announcing themselves individually on internet. This resulted in many orders, but they had to lower the price of sale. At the end of the day, the only result was many more hours of work for nothing ... Also, there were many requests for visits that resulted in less time available for creation and work on the artisan's end. (Self-employed professional dyer, 09 June 2018)

Through the fieldwork, it became evident that the interface between the *shokunin* and the consumers was a complicated one. Some dyers affirmed that their lives were dedicated to producing the crafts and they had no problem with it. The sense of craftsmanship and their experience was geared to sorting out the day-to-day challenges until the dyed fabric was rolled and packed to be finally processed for consumption. Nevertheless, the public relations aspect of their work was a challenge since they had not mastered modern communication technologies and had always worked on their own responding to requests by the traditional sector's mediators. One dyer illustrated the situation when she explained how difficult it was to say to customers: "please buy this wonderful product", being too shy to promote and sell her dyeing crafts (11 October 2018). With less demand for dyeing products, the go-between professionals who handled the marketing and branding aspects of the work of the dyers had disappeared, leaving them at a loss because they could hardly handle the public relations needed to advocate for and promote their products. Chapter Three, Section 3.3, further analyzes the various situations that craftspeople face, when addressing the evolution of the *kōbō*; and Chapter Five, Section 5.3, examines how the role of the various go-between professionals has evolved.

Several craftspeople interviewed during the fieldwork offered insights into how unwritten rules and societal expectations affected their professional development and status as dyers. Gender and academic background were perceived to be more influential than the quality of their work in determining their success in the field. In the words of a professional dyer, “To be accepted at the Kokuten (National Exhibition of the Art and Crafts Association of Japan) it takes making good dyeing work and having a diploma. It took nearly 25 years for me to become a member. Men become members much earlier because it is assumed that men should progress at a certain pace. However, being a woman, it is more difficult... In paper there is no difference, but what is said is not the reality.” (10 February 2018). Always referring to the academic background influence in the craftspeople’s career, another professional dyer noted that, “Even as a *shokunin* you need a diploma, otherwise you are nothing. I thought that this was important, and had an inferiority complex (劣等感持った). After working for 10 years, I studied four years at the night art (printing) school. After that I became more relaxed.” (21 April 2018).

The selection process for the Kokuten was mentioned as an example on how the system had become biased in favor of artists with formal academic training, suggesting that academic background could be used to determine the worth of a craftsman’s work, potentially undermining the value of their skills and experience. The reflection of a professional dyer on how the Kokuten had evolved serves to illustrate this point, “Nowadays when a work is presented to the Kokuten, the jury on the selection board are informed who the artist is, from which university he/she graduated; and only after that is the work evaluated. So nowadays there would be no place for people like us.” (01 March 2018).

The above three comments from craftspeople provide insight into the complex social dynamics and hierarchies within the traditional crafts world. They highlight challenges faced by women and those without formal academic training, shedding light on barriers for some individuals to achieve recognition, and their efforts to accept and overcome their situations.

Craftsmanship

The concept of craftsmanship filtered through the interviews and personal observation during the fieldwork. The folk textile dyeing tradition is marked by a highly-compartmentalized craftsmanship, where for instance, in the indigo sector, those who produce *sukumo* do not dye, and vice versa; and those dyers mastering a technique, rarely visit other

ateliers to “keep their style pure” (professional dyer, 11 October 2018). One interviewee commented on how traditionally, the process of *katazome* depended on several specialized professions, since:

Some people applied *nori* either to the *washi* or the fabric; other people colored as per the sample pattern; others washed the fabrics once dyed; and others finalized the work process (*agari*). Within the latter, there were people responsible for removing the *mimi* (marks of the fabric by the tensors); and for rolling the dyed fabric perfectly smooth before it was sent to the customers. Folding a kimono fabric in an imperfect manner would ruin the work. (Professional dyer, 05 May 2019)

The interviewees’ comments about their work offered insight into the ways in which the craftspeople acquire skills, and the strategies, tricks, and techniques they employ to overcome challenging situations in their daily practice. The methods are honed through years of trial and error, as well as accumulated experience and expertise, providing concrete examples of what it means to achieve mastery (Figure 2.3).



Figure 2.3. Mr. Yamauchi Takeshi in his atelier, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka prefecture. Mr. Yamauchi has adapted his tools to work alone efficiently. In the picture of the left-hand side, he is applying the resist paste through the stencil to the fabric, which he framed to be able to operate large patterns by himself. In the picture of the right-hand side, he is tensing the fabric with a modified *harite*, whereby he bended the fixing nails of one side of the tenters, allowing him to stretch any length of fabric at ease by himself. May 2022. © Maria Santamaria

The feedback from interviewees illustrated the importance of craftspeople's experience and skills, that go beyond technical proficiency over to understanding the essence of the materials and tools used; and paying attention to detail, since even small imperfections could ruin the dyeing work. One dyer explained that it was the fabric that determined the dyeing design, because "the same design can be much better in *bashōfu* (banana fiber fabric) than in the best of the *tsumugi* (pongee silk)." He also explained that, when a dyer buys a fabric, "the question of matching the fabric and the design would haunt his mind until he has found the design right for it" (17 December 2017).

The following comment about embodying the master's identity when contributing to his products illustrates the level of understanding and mastery needed from the craftsman to genuinely assist the master's work:

When you do a work for somebody else, you need to embody the other person's identity, and to imagine how the other person would do what she/he is asking you to do. When (Serizawa) *sensei* asked me to apply color in his stencil dyeing in red or purple, I always asked him if the color I had prepared was the right one he wanted. He always agreed, but I wonder if he was sincere with me, and if my color was the color he had in his mind. I continue thinking this once and once again. Whenever I carved his *katagami*, I went outside myself to carve in his style, not in my style. I think that it is only by embodying the other person that one can tell that it was not that person who carved the *katagami*. However, to do this, you need to have 'absorbed' the personality and style of the person you work for. (Professional dyer, 08 January 2021)

The fact that a *shokunin* contributes to his master's work by internalizing the techniques and ethos of the master is indicative of the importance attached in Japan to copying old masters' traditional crafts with a view to preserving their production techniques and acquiring the creativity needed to transform the craft (Kida & Takayama, 2010, pp. 26-28).

Respect and passion

The feedback from the interviewees transmitted respect and pride for their profession and passion for their work and illustrated the degree to which the practice of dyeing has become an integral part of their lives. The interviewees' comments reflected a profound internalization of the craft, revealing their temperament as craftspeople, and their desire to safeguard this

tradition for future generations. One professional dyer, after recognizing the challenges of living only on the craft, stated, "My life is that of a craftsperson, and this is what I like to focus on. I have the temperament of a craftsperson and, as such, I want to continue like this. I enjoy working. I would like to protect this tradition for future generations because this life is authentic" (11 October 2018). Such sentiments clearly highlight the deep-rooted commitment to the practice of crafts among the interviewees.

Another interviewee explained how the practice of crafts had become an integral part of her life, as a professional dyer and as a woman in a structured society, to the extent that it even affected her wedding preparations. She said, "My wedding was stressful because I started to doubt if I would be able to continue with the dyeing practice or not as a married woman" (10 February 2018). Such comments reveal how the practice of crafts permeates every aspect of the interviewees' lives.

Interviewees expressed admiration and respect for other craftspeople, whom they considered as masters of their craft, and appreciated the unique techniques and skills of these masters. Their comments reflected a deep understanding of the craft. Two professional dyers praised the work of Yunoki Samiro (1922-2024), whose use of color was deemed to be unique and impressive, and his continued devotion to the craft at more than 97 years of age (05 May 2019).

For those dyers who had worked directly with Serizawa, the opinions about his craftsmanship were unanimous. In the words of a dyer, "Serizawa was a genius because he condensed in himself all the process of *katazome*. He was also a genius in the way that he made stencils. He would carve them endlessly, and very fast. His way to carve stencils was very fluid" (12 May 2019). Another dyer who had trained in Serizawa's *kenkyūjo* for several years commented "Nobody can go beyond Serizawa, he did it all. Sometimes, my colleagues speak about doing *kataezome*. I correct them because *kataezome* is only for Serizawa. It is wrong to speak about *kataezome* without speaking about Serizawa. He used the technique of *katazome* and did *kataezome*" (05 October 2019).

The feedback from interviewees provided insights into their mental attitude towards the practice of crafts, showcasing their deep-rooted commitment to the craft and their admiration for the masters of their trade.

2.4. Amateur practice: an additional identity

In my work (as researcher), co-workers were all men, and women professionals were an exception. I could not relate to women in my work. When I joined the *katazome* group, I discovered a group of mature women doing something which seemed to be interesting in a nice environment. (Amateur dyer, 3 May 2020)

The section refers to those craftspeople whose life does not depend on the craftwork, namely, the disciples (*seito*, 生徒) of a teacher (*sensei*, 先生), who attend a *kōbō* regularly. The section presents the definition of amateur practice of crafts and the accuracy of the terms and cultural differences between Japan and the West when referring to amateur practice. After some notes on amateur practice of crafts and its history in Japan, this section analyzes the results of the fieldwork. To do so, I grouped issues under the amateur practitioner (motivation, self-expressiveness, and femininity), the atelier (physical space, social environment, symbolic realm), and the products (culturality, and social nature of the crafts). This section takes stock of the data generated through 21 semi-structured interviews, a survey of 37 amateur dyers, participatory observation, and documentary analysis; and refers to four amateur dyeing groups, Konohanakai, Katsurakai, Moe group, and Aizome Aikokai (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3. Data generation strategy, Amateur practice of traditional folk textile dyeing. Fieldwork December 2017 to October 2022.

Data generation strategy		Konohanakai & Katsurakai	Moe group	Aizome Aikokai
Qualitative interviews	Amateur dyers		12	2
	Professional dyers	4	2	1 ^(#)
Survey	Amateur dyers		37	
Documentary review		Kusuda (1957) Konohanakai (1982) Shiga (2016) Kiriaki (2020) Shimizu (n.d.)		

^(#) = Spokesperson at Ugo town, Akita prefecture, for the indigo promotion activities in Ugo.

Konohanakai and Katsurakai, Kamata, Tokyo

Serizawa established the Konohanakai (このはな会) and Katsurakai (桂会) groups devoted to amateur dyeing. The precedent of the Konohanakai was the informal grouping of people interested in traditional folk textile dyeing that Serizawa established in 1922 in

Shizuoka, and which he later continued in 1952 in his atelier in Kamata, Tokyo (Kusuda, 1957; Shimizu, n.d.; Shiga, 2016, pp. 206-208). Anybody could become a member of the Konohanakai and attend the practice monthly. The Konohanakai celebrated the first sales exhibition of the works of its members in Tokyo in 1953, and the last in 1981 (Konohanakai, 1982, pp.120-121; Kiriaki, 2020, pp.6-8). During its existence, the Konohanakai had registered several hundred women, and dozens of them in a given time (Figure 2.4).

The Katsurakai assembled a dozen pupils with about twenty years' experience at the Konohanakai. The Katsurakai members had privileged relations with Serizawa Keisuke, based on their engagement over time as well as their mastery in *katazome*. Serizawa himself joined these two groups monthly in addition to organizing annual sales exhibitions in department stores and galleries. According to one interviewee, most of their members were women married to wealthy men. The interviewee further noted that “So many people joined the Konohanakai. Many people just came for a short while and left. Somehow there was a continuous transit of people, and only one or two became professional dyers” (21 September 2021).



Figure 2.4. Members of the Konohanakai, the amateur group on traditional folk textile dyeing that Serizawa Keisuke established in 1952. Inauguration of the 26th annual exhibition of the works of the Konohanakai members at the Takashimaya Department Store in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, 1977. Group picture with Serizawa, Mr. Yotsumoto T., and Mr. Dote T. of the Serizawa Kenkyūjo at the back (picture on the left-hand side). The picture on the right-hand side shows some members of the Konohanakai and Serizawa observing the works displayed. Photograph courtesy of Mr. Dote Takehiko.

Moe group, Ushiku town, Ibaraki prefecture

The *kōbō* where most of the empirical data mentioned in this section comes from belonged to the lineage of Serizawa and used the traditional technique of folk textile dyeing of

Okinawa, *bingata*, with natural colors. Its members produced exclusively stencil dyeing fitting the Japanese tradition on fabric and on Japanese paper (*washi*), such as doorway curtains (*noren*), kimono, kimono sashes (*obi*), wrapping cloths (*furoshiki*), or fans (*uchiwa*). The two professional dyers, husband and wife, leading the *kōbō* started their professional careers at the *kōbō* of Serizawa after finishing their secondary school in the 1960s. In 1980, the wife, Ms. Dote Chizuko, set up the Moe group for amateur dyeing (Figure 2.5).



Figure 2.5. Members of the Moe group, Ushiku town, Ibaraki prefecture. Opening of the exhibition *Some ten benkyō kai* at the Tokyu Department Store, Nihonbashi, Tokyo (1988). Some of the members pose at the opening day, with Ms. Dote third from left on the first row (left-hand side picture). The picture at the right-hand side shows the members of the group responsible for the entrance counter. Photographs courtesy of Ms. Satō Teruko.

The group included a total of 37 members over a period of about 30 years. Each member stayed within the amateur group for a variable number of years, with some joining for less than one year, and others staying for several decades. All members of the group were females. None of the members of the group became professional dyers. The amateur practitioners contributing to this phase of the study were all adult women from 62 to 92 years of age at the time of the fieldwork who had practiced *katazome* between five and twelve years on average. The Moe group was never formally disbanded, although it does not exist anymore. With the passing away of its leader, Ms. Dote in 2018, most disciples left the *kōbō*. At the time of the fieldwork, members of the Moe group were still meeting periodically on social grounds.

Aizome Aikokai, Ugo town, Akita prefecture

This section incorporates the views of several members of the amateur dyeing group Aizome Aikokai, in Ugo city, Akita prefecture. This group of women keeps the tradition of folk textile dyeing of Akita alive. The festival of Akita, known as Bon Odori, is one among the three top famous festivals in Japan where women dance in traditional kimono, and is intimately

related to the indigo culture. The members of the group not only produced dyeing works individually, but also focus as a group on collaborative works to preserve the traditional textile dyeing culture in the town. Examples of their creations include tapestries and collections of dolls dressed traditionally for the festival for the Nishimonai Bon Odori Exhibition Hall (Figure 2.6), to which all members contributed.

This amateur group was established in 1995 by Nawano Sanjyo, a practitioner, and fashion researcher at Nishimonai. The group included 27 members who met twice a month to practice their craft. At the time of the fieldwork, the group counted thirteen members, with ages between 74 and 97 years of age. At the death of Ms. Nawano in 2018, the group tried to pursue its activities, and continued meeting once a month. However, the corona crisis of 2020 hit them hard. Their inability to meet for more than two years loosened their enthusiasm, which, coupled with the age of some members and the lack of strong leadership, resulted in the group being informally disbanded. In 2023, they continued dyeing individually in their homes, and gathered socially on a periodical basis at the prefectural premises dedicated to women's groups associations of the Japan Agricultural Association Building.



Figure 2.6. Amateur group Aizome Aikokai, Ugo town, Akita prefecture. Three members of the group gather around one of their works for the Nishimonai Bon Odori Exhibition Hall (left-hand side picture). On the right-hand side, one of the works of the group, displaying dolls dressed in traditional kimonos, which they dyed and sew to preserve the memory of the Bon Odori, landmark of the town's cultural heritage. October 2022. © Maria Santamaria.

Contrasting with the other three groups, the Aizome Aikokai, not only dyed fabrics, but also produced doorway curtains, bags, summer kimono, and formal kimono as end products by themselves. The members of the group sold their works during the town's festival, or through the network and retail outlets of the Association for the Preservation of Indigo Culture in Ugo town. This association helped in the branding and marketing of the Aizome Aikokai products as part of the national initiative to support prefectural projects on local crafts. The members of the group lobbied for the culture of indigo in their locality through visits to the Exhibition Hall, or demonstrations of the dyeing technique to the public.

Definition of amateur practice of crafts

Finding a precise equivalence between Japanese and English terms related to amateur practice proved troublesome. For instance, in Japanese, the terms *decchi* (丁稚), *deshi* (弟子), or *seito* (生徒) mean “the one who learns”, but have different connotations that are difficult to convey in English. In other cases, the translation from Japanese into English is misleading because the words related to leisure, hobby, and amateurism do not have the same meaning in the two languages (Linhart & Fröhstück, 1998, pp. 1-2, 11). For instance, the Japanese term *okeiko* (programmatic study with a professional teacher, who receives remuneration) is translated as amateur practice in English. However, this study suggests that *okeiko* represents a more serious engagement in the practice than what the Policy Studies Institute (1991) and Stephen Knott (2011, pp. 131, 269) refer to as amateur practice, which is often associated with a do-it-yourself approach. Probably the term *okeiko* is closer to the English term “serious leisure” because of the commitment it implies; or “community of practice”, representing a group of people who share a craft or profession, although they do not pursue any economic gain through their practice (Table 2.4). These differences in terminology reflect not only language differences, but also cultural differences when approaching the practice of crafts in general. The idea of blurred borders between work (professional practice) and leisure (amateur practice) relates to the various definitions of work, productivity, aesthetics, play and labor (Knott, 2012; Kouhia, 2016, pp. 12-13).

Table 2.4. Attributes associated with amateur, *okeiko*, and professional craft practice.

Amateur	<i>Okeiko</i> *	ATTRIBUTE	Professional
No income from crafts	No income from crafts	INCOME	All income from crafts
Self-taught	Trained with <i>sensei</i> in <i>kōbō</i>	TRAINING	Fully professionally trained
Unimportant	Certain artistic aspirations	ARTISTIC ASPIRATIONS	High
Spare time/hobby	Regular allocated time	TIME ALLOCATED	Full-time
Not taken seriously	Serious engagement	ART FORM	Considered professional occupation
Limited	Relative experience	EXPERIENCE	Considerable
Imitative & derivative	Reproductions and original	CONTENT/STYLE	Original
Recreational	Recreational	APPROACH	Creative/business like

Source: Policy Studies Institute (1991), and (*) Santamaria Hergueta (2022a).

The amateur practice of crafts fits well into what Bourdieu considers to be the social capital, by which the members of the *seito* (in the current case) would find “benefits as individuals and as a group by sharing expertise, learning from others, and participating in the life of the group” (Portes, 1998). This sense of wellbeing is notable regardless of the craft produced (Ruismäki & Juvonen, 2006; Knott, 2011, pp. 186-190; Knott, 2012; Heo et al., 2013; Kouhia, 2016, pp. 21-22, 26-28; Santamaria Hergueta, 2022a); and relates more to the social and cultural connections and to learning skills in a joyful manner (Iwasaki, 2007, pp. 253-257; Wang & Wong, 2014; Hackney et al., 2016), contributing to the meaning in life of the amateur groups’ members (Kono et al., 2020; Kouhia, 2016, pp. 23-25; Santamaria Hergueta, 2022a), and to the blurring of their group’s class differences. (Knott, 2011, pp. 16-17). In her publication *Bonds of Civility*, Ikegami Eiko (2005) explained how the networks of aesthetic knowledge in Japan, which gained importance during the Edo period, allowed people of different economic status and background to socialize across territorial and status borders (p. 4); and how the participation in these networks allowed its members decouple their identities from those linked to their status in society, to those linked to their love for arts, transforming the quality of individual social relations (pp. 12).

Amateur practice of crafts in Japan

The documentation on the amateur practice in Japan is limited to data from the surveys run by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2017) every five years and some analytical reports on the evolution of leisure activities in Japan (Japan Productivity Center, 2017; Nishina, 2020). However, the granularity of these

data is insufficient and does not allow any analysis of the amateur practice of the different traditional crafts. There are several reports on leisure music (Sugiyama et al., 2018) or on pottery (J-Net21, 2018). The current research has identified only two documents on the amateur practice of *katazome* (Kusuda, 1957; Konohanakai, 1982) and one brief account of the experience of an amateur practitioner visiting the atelier of Serizawa Keisuke in the 1970s (Chambers 1971).

The 2016 survey on leisure activities in Japan reported that the amateur practice of crafts in Japan is less than three per cent among the general population (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2017). This low number may come as a surprise to some, and maybe it is due to the structure of the survey, which counts all types of activities that people do in their free time on a non-professional basis. There seem to be no more specific data available on the scale of amateur practice of crafts *-seito-* in Japan, despite the importance attached to tradition and cultural heritage in Japan.

2.4.1. Amateur practitioners

The Asahi Graph had a special number on Serizawa. The beauty of the red color in the dye of “A day in the Naha market” shocked me and thought that I absolutely needed to follow him. (Amateur dyer, 10 April 2020)

Motivation

The interviewees stated that they had begun their practice because they admired and were impressed by the works by Serizawa Keisuke in exhibitions or publications (Moe group), or by the beauty of the kimono during the Bon Odori festival (Aizome Aikokai). The interviewees from both groups also noted other reasons that had contributed to their becoming amateur practitioners. One of such reasons included self-realization, in the sense of wanting to do beautiful things; wanting to do things with their own hands; and wanting to make a kimono for their children or for themselves. In other cases, the reasons to become amateur dyer included recommendations from teachers or friends who already practiced crafts either professionally or as amateurs. In the case of some interviewees, their decision to become amateur dyers had been triggered by their desire to give meaning to a sudden opening of free time, for instance, after retirement or once the children had grown up. Others had become amateur dyers when they had realized that there was a *kōbō* nearby.

Two interviewees mentioned the lack of favorable conditions as the reason why they had stopped their practice, as they had had to prioritize other occupations in their lives. Some interviewees explained that their relocation due to the husband's transfer to other regions had prevented them from continuing their practice. In other cases, incidents in family life had taken away their motivation.

This primary emotion felt when admiring crafts' beauty such as Serizawa works or kimono during the Bon Odori constituted the most overwhelming reason stated to join the amateur practice of folk textile dyeing. This reason is consonant with the Mingei approach to culture appreciation, with an intuitive aesthetic response guiding the appropriation of the craft product (Kunik, 2009). Reasons mentioned by other authors, such as the family history in crafts production (Mason, 2005), or the possibility of raising the home economy through crafts (Mason, 2005; Kokko & Dillon, 2011), did not come out as relevant in the present study.

Self-expressiveness

The sense of wellbeing referred to by the interviewees concurred with a positive relationship between the level of involvement in serious leisure activities, and life satisfaction and health noted by other authors. Being amateur practitioners resulted in a sense of wellbeing in three ways. Firstly, amateur practice was enjoyable at home while preparing for the dyeing session at the *kōbō*, which allowed them to produce crafts as personal achievements. Secondly, the time spent in the *kōbō* with other members of the group was fun and relaxing. This time was permeated with the sense of belonging to the *kōbō* as a social structure, and to a social group/community of practice. This belonging was constructed through the time spent together, and the sharing of experiences beyond the time at the atelier, for instance, visiting other *kōbō* and discovering indigo; visiting exhibitions and museums and appreciating the work of other dyers (Figure 2.7); and organizing and managing exhibitions of their works (Figure 2.5). Several members of the amateur group continued socializing even after they had stopped practicing the craft, often recalling their time as amateur practitioners as a rewarding and memorable experience in their lives.

Finally, the amateur practice of stencil and tie dyeing allowed the practitioners *to be themselves* and relate to local social structures and to what they defined as *their own roots*. Several interviewees noted that acquiring the skill for producing *katazome* had allowed them to better appreciate this tradition and to become more conscious about the importance of

safeguarding it for future generations. Although the interviewees did not affirm openly that their amateur practice related to social status, they noted that, without having economic means, time, and a certain taste for tradition and art, it would have been impossible to do *okeiko*.



Figure 2.7. Indigo dyeing atelier of the Kitajima family, Toride city, Ibaraki prefecture. Mr. Kitajima teaches the technique of fabric dyeing to a member of the Moe group. Each member practiced all phases of indigo dyeing with her own work (picture on the left-hand side). After experimenting with indigo dyeing, the Moe group members took a break for lunch by the bridge over Tone River at the Kitajima atelier, while waiting for the dyed fabrics to dry in the sun (picture on the right-hand side). March 1993. Photographs courtesy of Ms. Satō Teruko.

Femininity

The amateur practice of crafts, including textiles, has been conventionally identified as feminine (Knott, 2011, p. 197; Kouhia, 2016, pp. 17-18), partly due to the fact that women used to have this responsibility in their homes. Femininity also came through as an important factor in the amateur practice of folk textile dyeing in the current research. In terms of numbers, all members of the amateur group established at the *kōbō* considered in the present fieldwork were women with the common denominator of a well-off socioeconomic status. In terms of profile, there was a gender division as well. For instance, the women of the Moe group were involved in all phases of dyeing and learned from the woman *sensei*. Two men occasionally visited this *kōbō*, although they did not belong to the amateur group of dyers. They learned from the male *sensei* stencil carving and indigo dyeing exclusively. Both these tasks tend to be more associated with masculinity in the *katazome* universe.

Femininity was expressed in various ways. The interviewees' comments illustrated the roles, duties, and position of women within the family or the working sphere. Some of the interviewees detailed how they negotiated what they referred to as "family permission" and

how the husband wondered how the engagement in amateur dyeing would impact his wife's family roles. This obligatory negotiation of amateur practice and domestic duties suggested that, as in other studies, amateur practice of crafts as leisure was not liberated from duties assigned to women at home (Kouhia, 2016, p. 18). Becoming an amateur practitioner provided the chance of finding a place in a feminine world for those who had a profession which could be associated with those corresponding to a "male" profile, such as engineers, researchers, or medical doctors. Other times, femininity expressed "sisterhood" complicity among women and the possibility of speaking informally about their things in a safe environment despite age differences and diversity of backgrounds "as they would have wished to refer to their mothers" (Santamaria Hergueta, 2022a).

2.4.2. *Atelier – kōbō*

The replies to questions "What did the *kōbō* mean to you?" or "What can you tell me about the *kōbō* where you practiced dyeing?" defined the atelier as the physical space where the dyeing happened, and as the social environment where the members and the teacher interacted. In addition, the replies from interviewees alluded to the *kōbō* as the symbolic realm where tradition and heritage took shape. Chapter Three provides further details when analyzing in depth the meanings of the *kōbō* in Section 3.2.

Physical space

Interviewees referred to the *kōbō* as the location conveniently located or not too far from their homes that provided a unique space for experimenting while learning the dyeing technique. The convenience of the *kōbō*'s location came out more prominently than in the case of professional dyers, who did not mention it (See Section 3.2). The amateur dyers explained that, without the atelier, none of them would have practiced dyeing because they did not have space at home, and because they could not afford to buy themselves all the materials and tools available in the *kōbō*.

Social environment

Interviewees referred to the *kōbō* as a social environment where things happened at various levels. Firstly, the *kōbō* enabled the establishment of the amateur dyeing group. Interviewees referred to themselves as members of the amateur group, rather than as pupils in the *kōbō*. Secondly, the *kōbō* was the social environment where teacher and disciples related

with each other. The teacher developed herself through interaction with disciples, and in their turn, these grew with the advice from the *sensei*, and through the contact with other members of the group. Belonging to the group was intense and called for a strong commitment from its members. Thirdly, the *kōbō* was the environment where women interacted freely while practicing stencil or tie dyeing. The diversity of the members provided ground for their growth and opening to ideas, and the interviewees explained how the *kōbō* fostered cultural integration of the members in the group.

Symbolic realm

Interviewees noted how important to them it was to belong to the *kōbō*, which allowed them to feel the (Japanese) traditional culture and be part of their cultural heritage through the works they produced. For the amateur dyers, the symbolism attached to the *kōbō* reflected more their belonging to what they considered to be their culture and tradition, differently from the professional dyers, where the sense of lineage dominated, as Section 3.2 elaborates.

2.4.3. Products

This core theme includes comments of the members of the amateur group about their works in relation to the cultural symbolism of *katazome* and tie dye, and about their significance as objects for consumption or trade.

Culturality

The interviewees stressed two aspects related to the culturality attached to what they produced. The first aspect put tradition in perspective and addressed cultural heritage. The interviewees positioned themselves in a central point, looking back to their heritage, and forward to the future and the continuity of the *katazome* and tie dye traditions. In relation to the cultural heritage, they explained that, because these crafts were traditionally bound to Japanese culture, their practice was important to them. Other interviewees conveyed the notion of practicing something they knew because they had lived with these traditional crafts since their childhood. The interviewees also expressed their belief that the amateur practice of *katazome* and tie dye contributed to the continuity of these traditions. They stressed the importance of practice to appreciate tradition, and the usefulness of public events as a means of attracting interested people to the *kōbō*. Finally, they also commented on how the exhibitions

offered an opportunity, not only to present and explain these dyeing techniques to visitors, but also to provide information about the *kōbō* and foster amateur practice.

The second aspect that came out through the interviews was the notion of a national identity and the amateur practice of *katazome* and tie dye. One interviewee stated that practicing *katazome* was important because, as a Japanese, she thought it was a must to be aware of her own traditions. Another interviewee emphasized her admiration about the interest of foreigners in these traditions, “while some Japanese were more interested in modern things, which might not be necessarily authentic.”

Social nature of crafts

Through the feedback from interviewees of the Moe group, it became clear that the *katazome* they produced was something personal and not perceived as a means of earning money. They pointed out that they made *katazome* for themselves and as a way of interacting with others. One interviewee noted that she had stopped doing *katazome* since she had already produced enough works for her family and friends and did not want to continue producing works “just to put them in the cupboard.” This preference for gift-giving permeated the relation among the Moe group members, who periodically offered their works among themselves. This practice could reflect reciprocity as a principle of interaction, one of the significant cultural features of traditional Japan associated with gift-giving on the one hand. On the other hand, it could reflect the new trend of individualization in modern Japan, particularly in urban areas, providing the opportunity of individuals to interact as individuals and to express personal affect (Befu, 1968, pp. 454-455).

The amateur dyers had mixed views about the sales exhibitions organized by the group. They explained how, on the one hand, these events represented an exciting activity which involved visiting interesting places and presenting their own *katazome* to new people. They also mentioned how, on the other hand, these events represented a challenge because of the tight schedules for preparing their crafts, and because they felt that, while preparing for these exhibitions, they left behind their home duties. The interviewees commented on how what bothered them most was the need to attach a price to the pieces presented with the possibility of purchase by interested people. One interviewee spoke about her frustration when the gallery organizing the exhibition had accepted orders from three interested customers, obliging her to replicate her *katazome* work after the exhibition had closed.

The members of the Aizome Aikokai had a slightly different approach to their works. On the one hand, they produced collaborative works for the town, in order to preserve the indigo dyeing tradition. On the other, they individually produced some small items for sale, such as bags, purses, doorway curtains, which were clearly differentiated from those works which they did for themselves (kimono). This different approach to the works is probably because the members of the Moe group came from different and distant locations, while all those of Aizome Aikokai resided in Ugo town.

Broadly speaking, amateur products circulate in selected networks, but do not receive proper attention from formal networks (Knott, 2011, p. 20), making apparent the value that the different networks infuse in the appreciation of objects and crafts (Knott, 2012). The results of this fieldwork support the thesis of Wuthnow & Witten, who consider culture as the social products expressed by symbols and commodities (Wuthnow & Witten, 1988), highlighting the difference between amateurism, where culture is represented by products appreciated through social consumption (barter, gifts); and professionalism, where these products are traded as commodities of economic value.

Amateur practice and the continuity of *katazome* tradition

In a historical analysis of more than 2000 publications since the Meiji period on *keiko goto*, Tanimura Reiko has found evidence that women are those who keep the traditional culture of Japan, through *keiko*, and that *keiko* has helped the construction of national identity through the practice of traditional crafts (Tanimura, 2015). The results of the present study are consonant with those of Tanimura and support the perspective that amateur practice supports the continuity of *katazome* tradition through practical actions at individual level. By assuming an active role and explaining/educating others about the craft, the amateur dyers transmit the value of this tradition to the inner circle of people visiting their homes to whom they explain what they do, or display the *katazome* they have made; as well as to a wider circle of people they reach when greeting the New Year with stenciled postcards; and to a further wide circle of people coming to exhibitions transmitting the taste and educating them about *katazome*.

2.5. *Wrap-up*

The objective of this chapter was to provide an insider's perspective of those individuals producing traditional folk textile dyeing, including Serizawa Keisuke, professional

dyers, apprentices, and amateur dyers. It was important to explore the various aspects of the personality of Serizawa and the dyers, as people behind the crafts. The chapter examined the process of becoming a professional dyer, through the apprenticeship period and the attainment of a mastered craftsmanship. The amateur practice of traditional folk textile dyeing was given a special attention because of its importance on social networking, its gendered characteristics, the social nature of its products, and the role that this practice plays in the continuation of the craft tradition.

In relation to Serizawa, I found that the knowledge provided through secondary sources of information focused on the mainstream discourse as a consummated artist and transformer of the modern stencils. The Mingei Movement considered Serizawa as its representative for traditional textile dyeing, and the marketing of such image promoted Serizawa and his works throughout his life. Serizawa considered Yanagi as his mentor and conversed with the principles of Mingei. Through his life he committed to training others, and produced unsigned works for mass consumption in his *kenkyūjo*. As a well-known designer and artist, he produced signature works for elites, and exerted power positions in the *katazome* sector along his career.

Consulting primary sources of information allowed me to better understand Serizawa as an individual. For me, it was important to exploit primary sources of information to obtain a more rounded perspective as a person. Accessing those people who had worked with Serizawa was complicated, not only because artisans do not grant interviews easily, but also because most of them are in their late eighties, and because part of planned fieldwork was interrupted/cancelled due to the coronavirus crisis. Nevertheless, I could interview at length four people who had spent years working at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo, in their own *kōbō*. Interviewing the dyers in their own environment proved pivotal to understanding their work and the influence that Serizawa had on them. It also allowed me to better understand their contribution to the works of Serizawa, as well as their opinions about Serizawa as a person. Moreover, the interviews shed light on the intensity of the continued presence of Serizawa in their *kōbō*. Further to the feedback from these four dyers, I was able to access information from other dyers who had worked with Serizawa, but with whom I had no direct access.²³

²³ Including Yunoki Samiro (1922-2024), Okamoto Takashi (b. 1943), and Shimodaira Kiyohito (b. 1936).

Serizawa came across as an imposing individual for those around him. He was revered for his genius and ability to approach stencils' art, and his discipline to work. But he was also feared because of his short temper with those whom he considered did not honor the effort he made to spend time with them. Serizawa came across as a person extremely conscious of himself, caring for details to the maximum when working or when meeting people and requesting same accurate behavior from those around him. He would not have a fixed idea about his work from its inception and would draw with brushes what he would later modify with the cutters when carving stencils. Similarly, he would modify his orders to staff after a night reflection, prior to deciding on the way of doing the dyeing work.

The interviews with those having worked with him projected an image of Serizawa as an avid collector of crafts. He was interested not only in Japanese crafts, but also in those from abroad. Dealers who knew his interests would come periodically with trucks full of antiques and other items, from which he would choose without much discussing the price. As such, he spent considerable resources in his personal art collection. However, its size is unknown, since one of the purposes of buying items was to use them as models, after which he would give them away to people around him, keeping only those items of special interest to him for his art collection. He kept numerous crafts and used them to set up the meeting space when receiving people in accordance with the tastes of the invitees. However, he kept his Kamakura atelier empty, displaying only the items which he would use as models for his work.

A more intimate image of Serizawa projects him as a generous person ready to spend time and engage in leisure activities such as tennis playing, skiing, and hiking with those closer to him, especially at the start of his career. At the same time, he was always conscious of social differences, treating people with authority following formal codes. He was fond of people confronting his views on reasonable grounds.

The path to becoming professional dyer in Japan is through the apprenticeship system. The traditional system consisted in young people joining a *kōbō* for several years until they would assimilate the dyeing techniques and the “soul” of the craft by observing and practicing what more senior dyers did. They lived in the premises of the *kōbō* or in dormitories adjacent to it. Being considered as part of a wide family, these apprentices were asked to perform, not only tasks related to the dyeing, but also any other task needed, such as maintenance works. Those people with secondary school degree tended to stay longer and became employees in the

kōbō more often than those with high school and university degrees. Those young people with high school and university degrees frequently came from better-off family backgrounds, which in many cases had a traditional folk textile dyeing atelier. Therefore, the families sent their children to widen their experience to other ateliers for a few years in a different *kōbō* prior to becoming the successors to the family business. In the case of Serizawa, even if he already mastered stencil dyeing techniques, he went to Okinawa in a kind of apprenticeship for several months in 1937, heeding Yanagi's recommendation. All senior dyers interviewed during the fieldwork whose parents had a family business related to dyeing had been apprentices in the traditional system. Among those professional dyers with no family tradition in the craft, half of them had been formed through the traditional system, and half had attended a training center.

The traditional apprenticeship system has become rarer, because of the difficulty in recruiting new people to learn the craft as it was done before, and because of the disappearance of *kōbō* which provide such training. To ameliorate the situation, the government supports prefectures' programs aiming at preserving the folk textile dyeing tradition in Japan, especially related to indigo. These programs offer a three-year paid apprenticeship in a training center, which includes theoretical and practical training, to those who want to become professional dyers. In my study, this system proved effective, since all four apprentices of the Japan Blue initiative in Kamiita town, Tokushima prefecture had firm plans to start their own atelier and two had taken steps towards establishing their own atelier. In addition, all the professional dyers interviewed in two *kōbō* in Kamiita town, one in Ugo town in Akita prefecture, and one in Kyoto, had followed similar training programs supported through prefectural initiatives. Only one of the apprentices interviewed was following the traditional system or *totei*, working at the *kōbō* without any structured theoretical training, although he lived offsite.

Once their period of apprenticeship completed, dyers become professionals of two broad types depending on their background, skills, and craftsmanship. Gender, education profile, and social status also seem to influence the dyers' paths. The first type included those artists who, like Serizawa, used and transformed traditional dyeing techniques. The other type of dyers included those who expressed themselves exclusively through traditional folk textile dyeing techniques. All dyers interviewed referred to themselves as *shokunin* or craftspeople, not as artists, irrespectively of whether their work/craft creations had artistic profile. The differentiation between artists and craftspeople is considered a recent phenomenon in Japan, linked to its participation in World Fairs from that in Vienna in 1873 onwards. The difference

between artists and craftspeople in Japan is more nuanced than in other countries. This is because those schools of art and crafts and of industrial design established in the late 1870s in Japan insisted on traditional crafts as the basis of art development in all graduates.

Professional dyers faced challenges because the craft is labor intensive, and the prices of their crafts did not match the costs of production. Contrary to other crafts, such as pottery or basketry, where the same artisan produced the final object, dyers depended on other professions external to their craft to make a product ready for consumption. They depended on weavers to produce the fabrics which they would dye, or those artisans who processed the dyed fabrics into kimono, kimono sashes, and doorway curtains. Some dyers had their own *kōbō*, while others worked as employees. Working as employee offered some advantages, such as being able to focus on the work, and using the *kōbō* infrastructure to produce one's own creations outside working hours. For those dyers who owned a *kōbō* the situation was more complicated because, although many had a retail outlet to sell their products, not many dyers used social media to promote them. The interface between the dyer and the consumer remained complicated because, unless the dyer's work is well sought after, he must invest much energy to sell the craft. In the past, this interface was assumed by the wholesalers (*ton'ya*). However, this profession has practically disappeared from the production-consumption chain, obliging the craftspeople to assume the *ton'ya* function for which most of them felt unprepared.

Despite the challenges facing professional dyers, it was the pride of a work well done, a well-built craftsmanship, and the respect for their profession that counted most to keep them going with their practice. Selling their crafts was vital to them. However, the drive for their production seemed to be the craftspeople's desire to live by the principles of their craft tradition and produce works consonant with it. The dyers were reluctant to negotiate their traditional production towards one leaving more economic margins but compromising it.

The amateur practice of traditional folk textile dyeing represented only a minimal proportion of the three percent of people involved in amateur practice of all traditional crafts in Japan. The definition of what constituted a traditional craft, and what was included in amateur practice lacked consistency in the statistics of 2017, with figures representing a rough estimation of the reality. What represents amateur practice as used in Japan needs to consider cultural differences between Japan and other countries, and the term which would fit best with *okeiko* was "serious leisure" or "community of practice".

In the present study, all members of the amateur groups analyzed were women, and therefore, femininity came through as an important factor in the practice of folk textile dyeing. Femininity was expressed by comments on the pleasure of finding a place in a feminine world, particularly coming from those who had a profession with “male” profiles. Many amateur-group members appreciated being able to have intimate discussion on anything despite age difference and diversity in backgrounds. Other common characteristics of the amateur practice of folk textile dyeing was a well-off socioeconomic status of its members; and the possibility of devoting time “away from family duties” for individual practice at home and as a group in the *kōbō*, and for other group activities. The motivation behind joining the amateur practice included the admiration of the works of Serizawa or the kimonos used during the Bon Odori festival and wanting to produce beautiful things with their own hands. Finding a *kōbō* conveniently located, advice from others, and finding an opportunity of getting out of their family duties acted as triggers for their decision to join the amateur practice.

The amateur dyers experimented a sense of wellbeing in terms of life satisfaction and health. The *kōbō* was pivotal to the sense of wellbeing at three levels. Firstly, the *kōbō* was the physical location that enabled the production of crafts while enjoying their time in a pleasant and relaxed environment. Secondly, the *kōbō* constituted an environment which developed the sense of belonging to a social group. This belonging was constructed through the time spent together, and the sharing of experiences beyond the time at the atelier. Several members of the group continued socializing after they stopped the practice, often recalling their time as amateur practitioners as a rewarding and memorable experience in their lives. Finally, the *kōbō* represented the symbolic realm permeated by crafts tradition and national identity. Contrary to the professional dyers, where the symbolism attached to the *kōbō* came out most prominently, in the case of amateur dyers, the representation of the *kōbō* as a social environment dominated.

The interviewees conveyed a sense of culturality by putting tradition in perspective and recognizing cultural heritage in what they produced in the *kōbō*. To them, traditional folk textile dyeing was not only part of their culture, but also part of their national identity as Japanese, and therefore, it was important to practice it and to contribute to the continuity of the tradition. They stressed the importance of their amateur practice to better appreciate this tradition and transmit it to others by assuming an active role in public events and among their close circles.

Chapter Three: The *kōbō*: diversity, meaning, continuity

This chapter discusses issues related to the atelier or workshop where craftspeople work and where amateurs learn and practice traditional crafts. The word *kōbō* in Japanese comprises two ideograms, 工 and 房. As Martin (1992) explains, the first ideogram 工 conveys the idea of construction or craft and is a radical in itself meaning “work” (p. 4). The second ideogram 房 conveys the idea of a room or space with several compartments (p. 46). It is itself composed of two radicals, 戸, which means Japanese-style door, shutter, or entrance to a home (p. 8); and 方 which means direction, alternative, or manner (p. 8). From the ideograms, we can sense the meaning of *kōbō* as the traditional place where construction or works happens under some guidance or direction and alternatives, and work under some type of authority or leadership.

In the context of this research *kōbō* refers to the place where craftspeople produced traditional folk textile dyeing, and in particular, resist paste stencil dyeing or *katazome* unless specified otherwise. It is necessary to analyze three layers of meaning in the *kōbō*, critical to understanding its pivotal importance in the traditional folk dyeing culture in Japan: The *kōbō* is the physical space where the various production processes of *katazome* happen. In addition, the *kōbō* constitutes the social environment where its members interact and establish relations among themselves. Lastly, the *kōbō* embodies the symbolic construction through which the craftspeople become part of a cultural tradition and lineage. As such, the *kōbō* helps to construct the *katazome* legacy and plays a critical role in preserving its heritage.

There are hundreds if not thousands of *kōbō* across Japan, although the overall number has decreased sharply in the last decades (Association of Friends of the Modern Art Museum of Ibaraki, 2017, p. 37; Kyoto Yūzen Cooperative Association, 2019, pp. 1-5; Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, 2019). A *kōbō* is not a static entity and evolves through time and social changes. It will thrive, survive, or disappear depending on its capacity to adapt to changes confronting its functioning. Some of the challenges it faces have a direct effect on the atelier, and relate to the production of *katazome*, such as the availability of materials, the evolution of dyeing technologies, or finding of a suitable successor to its lead craftsman (Shibuya et al., 2010). Other factors, such as changes in lifestyle or fashion affect the evolution of the *kōbō* through changes in the demand of *katazome*. As several interviewees

mentioned, the societal changes of Japan in the last decades brought changes in housing, with people living in modern apartments that do not use doorway curtains or *noren* anymore. Interviewees also mentioned how fashion changes impacted the demand for *katazome*, with people nowadays wearing western-style cloths instead of kimono or *hakama*. Interviewees from the associations for the promotion of craft industries in Tokyo (Sumida ward), and Kyoto mentioned how with globalization, imports of cheaply mass-produced *katazome* were gaining ground at the expense of the traditionally-made *katazome* in Japan. At the same time, various institutions were promoting the consumption of traditional *katazome* and indigo dyeing as a cool fashion and creating joint ventures contributing to the modern Japan-blue boom (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, 2019). These and other public and private intermediary agents, such as the mass media, influence the choices of consumers and the goods they purchase and shape the demand for the crafts and the evolution of the *kōbō*.

This chapter presents the various types of *kōbō* and, in so doing, provides examples to better understand the variety of these structures in Section 3.1. Then, it explores the physical, social, and symbolic meanings attached to the *kōbō*, and the cultural nationalism in the *katazome* tradition in Section 3.2 to help analyze their evolution (Section 3.3). A wrap-up section takes stock of the chapter in Section 3.4. The content of the chapter builds on the evidence gathered from the fieldwork carried out between December 2017 and October 2022, which included qualitative interviews, participatory observation, survey to a group of amateur dyers, and documentary analysis.

3.1. Profiles of the *kōbō*

This section uses various characteristics of the *kōbō*, such as size, functions, or dyeing techniques to profile them. The limits of each characteristic remain relatively flexible. However, they allow a useful grouping for the analysis of these structures.

3.1.1. Size and function

Purposely, this research considered three groups of *kōbō* based on their size. Size from this perspective was an important attribute because it shaped the functions and scope of the *kōbō*. In this context, size referred not exclusively to the physical space but rather to the number of functions performed in the *kōbō* at one point in time. For instance, this research treated a

kōbō which was large in the past as a small-size *kōbō*, if it had become a single-craftspeople *kōbō* nowadays, even if its physical space remained considerable. Size did not imply that all functions were present through time. Instead, the size of the *kōbō* determined the maximum number of functions possible *in situ* at a time (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Profile of *kōbō*, by size and function.

Function/Size	Full-fledged functions, large	Limited functions, medium	Exclusive functions, small
Craftsmanship/people in <i>kōbō</i>	Considerable number of people	Limited number of people	One person, occasional assistance
Mastery	Always	Always	Always
Apprenticeship	Always	Sometimes	Never/rarely
Amateurship	Always	Sometimes	Never/rarely
Management	Of people and of production lines	Of people and of activities	Of personal production
Others: marketing, branding	Often	Sometimes	Rarely/never

Source: Feedback from interviewees during the fieldwork, December 2017 to October 2022

Large-size, full-fledged functions

These *kōbō* had a strong leadership either by the mentorship and direction of a recognized master; or because they enjoyed the support of a public initiative at prefectural or local levels. This type of *kōbō* attracted various profiles of craftspeople. Firstly, young people coming out of secondary school wanting to learn the job by doing (apprentices) worked and lived in the *kōbō* facilities or dormitory (*uchi deshi* system) with a view to developing a professional career. A second profile included those people engaging with *somemono* as a hobby (amateurs). A final profile included the employees assisting with the production of works of the *kōbō* or its leader (professional). These were the *kōbō* where apprenticeship started, craftsmanship developed, mastery blossomed, and amateurship happened. The physical space of these *kōbō* was considerable, with dedicated areas for the various functions they harbored.

Figure 3.1 illustrates an example of a large-size full-fledged *kōbō*, the former Serizawa Kenkyūjo in Kamata, Tokyo, which was operational until the mid-1980s. According to the interviewees, the initial workshop of Serizawa Keisuke consisted of a small apartment in the mid-1950s, where he and his assistant worked. When requests for his works increased, he moved to a bigger space, later denominated as the Serizawa Kenkyūjo in the mid-1960s. The interviewees who had worked in this facility confirmed that, in the busiest periods, it hosted

20-25 people with three different types of engagement. A first category of workers included the permanently-employed staff with one or two people involved in administrative work, in addition to two or three craftspeople assistants (*shokunin, deshi*), and one craftsman only devoted to washing the dyed textiles. A second category included the apprentices, who spent a minimum of about 6 months to learn the job before moving elsewhere. In the 1960s and 1970s, the number of live-in apprentices reached more than 20. However, with the decline of the *kenkyūjo* over the years, the acceptance of apprentices waned, and work was outsourced to assistants known to the *kenkyūjo* working from their homes. Only two initial apprentices became long-term employees in the *kenkyūjo*, while the rest moved to other workshops or established themselves as independent dyers. The interviewees commented on how in the early 1980s, the number of people related to the *kenkyūjo* had decreased considerably. It consisted of Serizawa, three to four craftspeople assisting him (*deshi*), and the administrative staff.

The last category included the amateur groups. Serizawa established two groups (Konohanakai, and Katsurakai) for people interested in *somemono* (*seito*). Serizawa animated these groups monthly, in addition to organizing annual sales exhibitions in department stores and galleries. There were several hundred members in the amateur groups throughout the years.



Figure 3.1. Serizawa Kenkyūjo in Kamata, Tokyo. Mr. Dote Takehiko, long-term assistant to Serizawa works with a group of staff in the area of dyeing fabrics which are tensed to dry (left-hand side picture) and in the area of carving the stencils (right-hand side picture). Kamata, 1970. Courtesy of Dote Takehiko.

From the perspective of the organization of the work, there was a broad division. On the one hand, the permanently employed administrative staff, the person exclusively dedicated to washing *somemono*, and the *deshi* had clear-cut roles and assigned tasks. On the other hand, the rest of the staff rotated undertaking various tasks as per the weekly planning of Serizawa

and the administrative team. Typical tasks included applying resist paste to *washi* or fabrics, applying colors to these media, carving stencils, cutting *washi*, making prototypes, and so on.

Another example of a large *kōbō* is Skills Pavilion in Kamiita town, Tokushima prefecture (Skills Pavilion- Kamiita Town, 2022). The prefecture established this facility in the early 2000s to preserve the indigo dyeing culture, known as Awa Ai, specific to Tokushima and to promote it throughout Japan. Interviewees from this facility commented on how their program offered three-salaried apprenticeship positions for three years in a structure that carried out all phases of indigo production. These spanned from the culture of the plant *Indigofera tinctoria*, the harvest and elaboration of the indigo paste or pit (*sukumo*), to the dyeing of thread or fabrics. Apprentices received practical training as full-fledged dyers and theoretical training to establish their own companies, and as educators to transmit their know-how to others. This structure also offered comprehensive education training sessions for schools in the prefecture and individuals and groups for a fee. A team of three to five experienced professional dyers ensured these educational activities and the technical direction for the apprentices. In addition, an administrative unit of four people managed this structure.

This facility also hosted the Netchū Shōgakkō (Enthusiastic Elementary School Network, 2021), a Japan-wide community-building initiative that started in 2015 with a view to dynamize local culture and traditions. In 2022, there were 16 prefectural teams, including fifteen in Japan and one in the United States. At the time of the fieldwork, the Netchū Shōgakkō team of Kamiita city served a group of 30-50 members and promoted various locally-rooted activities and typical prefectural products, such as visits to museums, experiencing local food products, or production of indigo paste (*sukumo*) and dyeing. This team had its own *kōbō* in a dedicated facility and offered a personalized artist-in-residence program for those interested in traditional indigo dyeing. Both the *kōbō* of the Skills Pavilion, and the one of the Netchū Shōgakkō operated under the Japan Blue prefectural project. Chapter Six provides further details on this and other collaborative initiatives promoting traditional folk textile dyeing.

Medium size, limited number of functions

These *kōbō* had a close direction from a well-established craftsperson or were known in the area from several generations. These *kōbō* had two essential functions: the development of craftsmanship and the mastery production of dyeing. In addition, the *kōbō* developed a different profile depending on other existing functions. For instance, some provided amateur

training such as the Dote Katazome Kōbō in Ushiku, Ibaraki prefecture; the Higeta Aizome Kōbō in Mashiko, Tochigi prefecture; and the Aizome Zabo in Sapporo. Others concentrate on developing and innovating–craftsmanship and on the reprofiling of their products, such as Buaisō in Tokushima prefecture, or the Kuronuma Kōbō at the Sumida Ward, Tokyo.

The Dote Katazome Kōbō in Ushiku, Ibaraki prefecture, illustrates a medium-sized *kōbō* with several functions. The two leaders of this structure, both professional dyers, commented on how they established this *kōbō* in the 1970s on the upper floor of the building where they lived. Both, husband and wife had worked at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo for several years. While the husband continued being a long-term assistant to Serizawa at the *kenkyūjo*, the wife worked for the *kenkyūjo* from home. They both used the *kōbō* for their own production. In 1980, Ms. Dote started training amateurs in dyeing, and established the Moe group. At its peak, there were around 15 amateur dyers attached to this *kōbō*. Currently, it consists of one craftsperson, receiving ad-hoc support from one or two dyers depending on the orders received. This *kōbō* illustrates a traditional structure following the lineage of Serizawa, where the craftsmanship and amateur training were transmitted as was done at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo. With no access to marketing or branding strategies through the internet or other social media, this *kōbō* depended on its networks of amateur dyers and professional associations.

Buaisō in Tokushima prefecture constituted an example of a middle-size *kōbō*, with a different profile. During the interview, staff commented that the craftsmanship consisted of five people who formed a cooperative after their apprenticeship at above-mentioned Skills Pavilion's *kōbō* in the Tokushima prefecture. The team also included two administrative-management members, who managed the activities of the team and those related to the branding and external promotion of the group. This *kōbō* produced all the materials needed for the dyeing, such as the cultivation of *Indigofera*, and the production of the indigo pit (*sukumo*). They also focused on the control and innovation of the overall production process, including the branding and commercialization of their products. This *kōbō* constituted an example of a structure of traditional folk dyeing not focused on the transmission of a given lineage, but rather on the development of its own lineage and innovation based on the (Awa-ai) dyeing tradition of Tokushima. Buaisō did not develop the apprenticeship or the amateurship functions for the time being. This *kōbō* used modern promotion strategies actively, due to which Buaisō profile was growing as a locally-rooted global brand.

Exclusive function, small size *kōbō*

These *kōbō* were the working spaces of single craftspeople devoted to their mastery development and production of their branded products. These craftspeople developed their products and sold them to *regular* customers or through their professional associations' sales exhibitions. These *kōbō* did not use external promotion strategies, remaining relatively local in the absence of an effective marketing/branding support through internet or other social media.

One such example is the Odanaka *Kōbō* in Iwate prefecture. During the interview, Mr. Odanaka Koichi commented on how he trained at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo for about six years after graduating from a design school in Morioka. After this period, he went back to the family *kōbō* in Iwate. This three-generation family-run *kōbō* traditionally dyed yarn and fabric (hemp) with indigo. When demand for these products decreased in the 1970s, they started stencil-dyeing and pour dyeing and made flags for festivals and for temples, doorway curtains (*noren*), or hand-towels (*tenugui*). At its peak, the *kōbō* included a team of several craftspeople. However, over time this *kōbō* shrank to a one-person atelier. Mr. Odanaka never considered training other people and focused on the individual production of his original products. These included calendars and postcards that he sold in the retail outlet at the entrance of his *kōbō*. He mentioned that he also responded to requests of his customers, such as the *noren* at the entrance of their businesses. In addition, he sold his products through the association of craftspeople at the prefecture-level and participated every year in the crafts section at the National Exhibition of Arts and Crafts at the National Art Center in Tokyo, the Kokugakai - Kokuten kōgeibu.

Another example of a small size *kōbō* was the Murakami *Kōbō* in Tokushima prefecture. During the interview, Ms. Murakami Chiaki commented on how she established a *kōbō* in a dependency of her home after training at the above-mentioned Tokushima prefecture-led *kōbō* for three years. She employed an assistant temporarily to help with secretarial tasks and preparation of the dyeing works. Occasionally people interested in learning tie-dye visited her atelier. Ms. Murakami had developed her own dyeing style and sold her products through the annual sale expositions that the prefecture organized, and to her regular customers.

*3.1.2. Specificity of the *kōbō**

Each *kōbō* is specific for the technique of dyeing they produce, irrespective of its size or the number of functions it has. This does not imply that the *kōbō* can do only one type of

dyeing, but rather that its primary production or the method by which they are best known is only one. Most *kōbō* use indigo in their works, and some use other colors, either natural/mineral, or chemical. Appendix One illustrates the main types and examples of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan, which Chapter Four analyzes in detail. There are two groups of dyes: thread dyeing, which is later woven; and fabric dyeing. The fabric can be uniformly dyed or with a pattern. When the pattern is the result of gripping or tying the fabric prior to dipping it into a dye, it is called tie-dye or *shiborizome* (絞り染). The tie-dye does not use resist paste. Stencil dyeing or *katazome* is another type of fabric dyeing and includes two main methods. One method is the direct dyeing or *surikomizome* (刷り込み染め) by which the design is applied directly without the use of resist paste or *nori*. The other method is indirect and is called *bōzenhō* (防染法) because it uses resist paste for dyeing. In addition to *katazome*, the free-hand dyeing or *tsutsugakizome/tegakizome* (筒描き染め/手描き染め) also uses resist paste. All these techniques are fully handmade. There is one technique, the pour dyeing or *tsugihonzome/chūsen zome* (次本染め/注染染め) where the color is applied with the help of a compressed-air machine manually operated. This dyeing method is highly specialized and is beyond the reach of amateurs, since its technology self-limiting. Pour dyeing is used to produce large quantities of dyed products, such as in the case of traditional hand towels or *tenugui*. The dye, in such cases, is chemical and is used to stabilize the color. (Japan Kōgei Association, 2013). Chapter Four Section 4.2.5 provides further details on the various dyeing techniques.

Table 3.2 describes the primary techniques of the *kōbō* mentioned in this research. The Kuronuma and the Nibashi Senkō used pour-dye technique exclusively for patterns, in addition to fabric and yarn dyeing; the Odanaka Kōbō used pour-dye for orders of hand towels or handkerchiefs, although its main business base was stencil and free-hand dyeing. Other *kōbō* used one technique exclusively, such as the Dote and the Yamauchi *kōbō* for stencil dyeing; and the Murakami, the Aizome Ugo, and Akagawa *kōbō* for tie-dye. The case of Buaisō is special in the sense that it combined traditional and modern technologies. For instance, the dyers dyed the yarn which was sent for traditional weaving elsewhere in Japan. This fabric was then dyed with stencils using bleach products for traditional finishing; or with laser-cut stencils for modern finishing, when dyeing fabrics with high-definition motifs such as photographs of people.

Table 3.2. Profile of the *kōbō* relevant to the research, by main production techniques.

Name/production	Yarn & Thread	Plain fabric	Stencil	Tie-dye	Free hand	Pour-dyeing	Others/ Comments
Serizawa Kenkyūjo, Tokyo			X		X		
Kuronuma Kōbō, Tokyo	X	X				X	
Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki			X				
Higeta Aizome Kōbō, Tochigi	X	X					
Odanaka Kōbō, Iwate			X		X	X	
Aizome Sabo, Hokkaido			X				
Buaisō, Tokushima		X	X				Other media
Murakami Kōbō, Tokushima				X			
Japan Blue Tokushima		X		X			
Nii Kōbō, Tokushima							<i>Sukumo</i> producer
Nishimuraya Kōbō, Kyoto			X		X		
Shikama Kōbō, Kyoto					X		Yūzen zome
Yamauchi Kōbō, Hamamatsu			X				
Nibashi Senkō, Hamamatsu						X	
Aizome Ugo, Ugo, Akita				X			
Kurosawa Teiko Kōbō, Akita			X	X			Dyer & Designer
Akagawa, Ugo, Akita				X			Dyer & dealer

Source: Feedback from interviewees during the fieldwork, December 2017 to October 2022

3.2. Meanings of the *kōbō*

This section builds on fieldwork findings, during which, interviewees replied to questions: “What did the *kōbō* mean to you?” and “What can you tell me about the *kōbō* where you practiced *katazome*?” This research considers three layers of meaning attached to the *kōbō*. The first layer of meaning is physical, where the *kōbō* is a tangible space that enables the production of dyeing products. The second level of meaning is social, and the *kōbō* becomes the environment where people interact and forge relations as companions/working colleagues; as teacher-pupil; or as master-assistant. The third level of meaning is symbolic, with the *kōbō* becoming critical to culture and tradition, building heritage and identity.

3.2.1. *Kōbō as a physical space*

There is not a single or uniform *kōbō* across Japan. Rather, there are as many types of *kōbō* as there are *kōbō*, since each of them is unique. While there were many differences between the various types of *kōbō*, those producing traditional folk textile dyeing for kimono and the

kimono sashes must have a covered space of about six meters long, to host the four-and-a-half-meter table (*ita*) where the stencils will be applied to the fabric. The Odanaka and the Dote Katazome *kōbō* are such examples and Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3; and Figure 3.4 illustrate these ateliers. Other needed spaces include a section to wash fabrics and Japanese paper (*washi*); poles to extend the fabrics or tense the cords to hang papers to dry; and several tables to perform various tasks, such as stencil carving and coloring *washi*. In addition, these *kōbō* have a terrace or garden where the fabrics can be extended to dry. Some of the *kōbō* have a retail outlet or gallery in addition to the working space, which constitutes an advantage for exposing or commercializing their products.



Figure 3.2. Set up of the covered area, Odanaka Kōbō, Iwate prefecture. Mr. Odanaka examines a stencil in the indoor section of his atelier. The picture illustrates various functional zones, such as those used for storage of tools and materials (against the wall, on the right); preparation of dyes and stencils and application of these to fabric or *washi* (board table, on the left); and coloring/drying fabrics (poles at the far end). November 2019. © Maria Santamaria



Figure 3.3. Mr. Odanaka and his family stand in front of the entrance to their *kōbō* in Iwate prefecture. The physical space consisted of a retail outlet/gallery; the working space consisting of a covered area (Figure 3.2) and a garden to dry fabrics dyeing; and the dwelling space for the family. Picture published in Colocal Local Network Magazine, Iwate prefecture, Vol 29, 8 August 2017.

What follows is a detailed description of a *kōbō* as a physical space, based on interviews and participant observation at the Dote Katazome Kōbō, a medium size atelier in Ibaraki prefecture. The workshop consisted of an indoor surface that occupied the second floor of a

building where the craftspeople lived. This workshop allowed for a maximum of eight people to work at the same time. It was an open space of about 50 square meters that contained a four and a half meters long board table used to apply *nori* through the stencils (*katagami*) to the fabrics and the *washi*. The space below the board table served as storage for materials, as well as for a roll-table used for the lunch and tea breaks of the members of the amateur group and visitors to the atelier. In addition, there was a washing area, with two basins dedicated to washing the fabrics, the *washi*, and the *katagami*; and another basin to clean the utensils used in the dyeing process (Figure 3.4. left-hand side picture). The workshop had four pairs of poles to tense the fabrics, or to hang the dyed *washi* used for fans (*uchiwa*) as well (Figure 3.4. right-hand side picture).

The walls were used as places for tidying up the daily tools and materials such as brushes, dyestuffs, recipients, and other artifacts (Figure 3.4. left-hand side picture). Some walls had built-in closets for the fabrics used, such as cotton, silk, linen, hemp, or banana fiber (*bashōfu*/芭蕉布), and the *washi*; and for their protection against mites and insects (Figure 3.4. right-hand side picture). Ms. Dote commented on how important it was protecting the fabrics where *nori* -which insects feed on- had been applied. She further mentioned that protecting the fabrics and *washi* from humidity was important as well, because of the mildew, which, if unhindered, could stain these materials permanently. All fabrics and *washi* were ventilated once prior to the rainy season and afterwards, in order to ensure their condition, while those that had been mildewed or damaged by pests were discarded. The upper part of the ceiling served as storage for materials rarely used, such as those used for dyeing large tapestries (Figure 3.4. left-hand side picture). In addition to the materials for *katazome*, there was a library with a considerable number of publications on *katazome*, textile dyeing, and textile design for consultation. The library also included most of the publications referring to Serizawa Keisuke over the years (Figure 3.4. right-hand side picture). The workshop space connected to a fifteen square-meter terrace. The terrace served as a place to apply color mordants, background dyestuffs, and fixatives to the fabrics; as well as to dry them after washing. The workshop had a garden area, used to dry the dyed materials, and to manage indigo dyeing.



Figure 3.4. Set up of a traditional folk textile dyeing *kōbō*. Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki prefecture. On the left-hand side picture, the indoor surface of the atelier with functional zones for the preparation of colors, storage of resist paste and other materials against the wall; for their application to the fabric or *washi* (board table in the middle); or for washing (on the far left against the wall). A storage area (below the board table, and the upper part of the ceiling); and a place for coloring and drying (poles) complete the space. On the right-hand side picture, poles to tense the fabrics, and a poster with Serizawa on the wall. April 2021. © Maria Santamaria

During the fieldwork, the amateur practitioners interviewed referred to the *kōbō* as a place conveniently located and not too far from their homes, which enabled their practice of *katazome*. They mentioned that the *kōbō* was critical to their practice for several reasons. These included not having enough space at their home or being able to use the materials and tools of the *kōbō* against a monthly fee. This fee would include the use of the space, tools, dyestuffs and all the material needed for dyeing, and *washi* to make samples. The fabrics were available for purchase at the *kōbō*, although the *seito* could also bring their own.

The amateur practice took place on the second and fourth Saturday every month. During this time, the *kōbō* would be set up as a space for the group of amateur dyers, while the tools and materials that the professional dyers used would be put aside. In such a way, the professional and amateur practices were kept independent and separated. This physical space had a multipurpose use and served as the meeting place for visitors and outside people when preparing events as well. While Mr. Dote remained a salaried employee (*shokunin, deshi*) at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo, the Dote Katazome Kōbō was used for the personal *katazome* work of Ms. and Mr. Dote, and for the amateur training. However, during interviews, Ms. and Mr. Dote commented on how lacking a space on the ground floor apt for a retail outlet or gallery (*madoguchi*) proved a considerable problem for commercializing their works, which remained

dependent on the initiative of external agents such as department stores, boutiques, museum shops, or galleries.

Large-sized *kōbō* differentiate the functional areas to a greater extent. For instance, the space of the former Serizawa Kenkyūjo was divided into two main areas, one with a wooden floor (*itanoma*) where *washi* cards, calendars, and other items were produced; and the other with earthen floor (*doma*) where fabric works were performed, such as doorway curtains, table centers, kimono sashes, and kimono. Another more recent example of a large-sized *kōbō* was the one at Kamiita city, in Tokushima prefecture, specialized in indigo dyeing. This physical space was adapted for the professional training of apprentices and for educational activities addressed to interested groups or individuals. The space consisted of a large area for several vats of indigo for dyeing thread and fabrics, which were managed by the apprentices and professional dyers, as shown in Figure 3.5. Figure 3.6 illustrates areas with pools of indigo where educational activities took place with visitors having a first-hand experience dyeing T-shirts, handkerchiefs, or tablecloths. There were no poles to tense fabrics, since the bulk of the work of this *kōbō* was tie-dyeing, which does not require tensing fabrics in the production stage.

Adjacent to this large *kōbō*, there was a second one, with a much more reduced size. This annex served for demonstration activities aimed at students at the professional schools of Tokushima prefecture potentially interested in specializing in textile dyeing. It was this space that the artists-in-residence used as well. The annex held several indigo barrels, a table, and several chairs (Figure 3.7). It had a washing area consisting of two sinks and a washing machine (not shown in the picture). There was no drying area inside the annex and the surroundings were used for this purpose.



Figure 3.5. Aizome Kōbō. Kamiita city, Tokushima prefecture. The *kōbō* has differentiated functional areas for dyeing yarn and thread (forefront left); dyeing fabrics (far left and forefront center); and washing of dyed products (far center). October 2018. © Ms. Ishikawa, Japan Blue Project Kamiita city.



Figure 3.6. Aizome Kōbō. Kamiita city, Tokushima prefecture. A group of apprentices (left) and instructor (right) participate in indigo dyeing educational activities. Dyeing pools for fabrics. December 2021. © Ms. Ishikawa, Japan Blue Project Kamiita city.



Figure 3.7. Japan Blue Aizome Kōbō. Kamiita city, Tokushima prefecture. This annex's space serves for demonstration and training activities and for the practice of the artists-in-residence. A group of secondary school students receive training in indigo dyeing. Indigo barrels in the forefront; and working space consisting of table and seating for a maximum of six people at the back. October 2018. © Maria Santamaria

3.2.2. Kōbō as a social environment

In addition to being the physical space that enables amateur and professional craftspeople to produce *somemono*, the *kōbō* constitutes a social environment where dyers interact, and groups emerge. This interaction varies according to the type of practice:

Professional practice

The *kōbō* becomes the environment where craftspeople relate to fellow workers horizontally (*shokunin*, *nakama*), and vertically with their boss (*deshi* and master; and apprentice with *uchideshi* and *shokunin* relationships). In the current research the relation among craftspeople came out as one of companionship and camaraderie, often enduring longer than the period at the *kōbō*. The craftspeople interviewed spent most of their time in the working place. Those who started as apprentices lived in common dormitories until when they would marry. The craftspeople belonging to the same *kōbō* highlighted to the researcher how, even in cases where they had left the *kōbō* several decades ago, they had

maintained their relationship informally or through their professional groups. Their participation in exhibitions, such as the annual national exhibition of crafts Kokuten, offered them the chance to talk about their lives, the dyeing environment, or the evolution of their dyeing works, among former companions. At times, there were other special events. One of them was the 10th anniversary of the death of Serizawa, held in 1995. This event congregated those craftspeople who had worked at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo, and which the interviewees stressed as having been important for maintaining their bondage as a group.

The (vertical) relation among the apprentices and craftspeople with their superiors was manifested in different ways. At times, this relation reflected an imbalance of power between the parties, whereby the various aspects of the life of the employee depended on the employer. The span of control included not only the time spent in the atelier, but also personal spheres of the employed craftspeople or apprentice. For instance, one interviewee mentioned how the master suggested a suitable marriage candidate and facilitated the ceremony for its celebration. The employees were expected to prioritize the needs of the atelier rather than comply with the terms of their contract. For instance, another interviewee commented on how the master had been upset and had bitterly asked an employee if she could imagine how her insistence on making *katazome* could affect him, because it would delay in the administrative work of the atelier. The employee had reiterated that she had been engaged for *katazome* work but was doing administrative work as extra for years.

Interviewees commented on how the relationship between master and *shokunin* at times reflected the pattern of human relationship of a bygone area, where “boys were *decchi* (丁稚, “feudal” apprentices) and girls were *jochūchan* (女中, maids, servants)”. The interviewees also mentioned how, when Serizawa was about to depart for his first trip to Europe, the Kenkyūjo staff, and the members of the amateur group Konohanakai had gone to Haneda airport to see him off, to pay respects and to wish him a good trip.

Amateur practice

The *kōbō* becomes the social ground for relations among the members of the group (*nakama*); and among the group and the teacher (*seito-sensei* relationship). During the fieldwork, the interviewees referred to the *kōbō* as a social space where “things happened” around three themes:

The first theme related to the establishment of groups: the *kōbō* was the social space where an amateur dyeing group was established (Moe group - 萌えグループ). In the words of one interviewee: “Ms. H. saw my work at the national exhibition of traditional crafts and contacted me to see if she could come and learn. This was the beginning of the Moe group. Others joined the group after visiting exhibitions of *somemono*. The word of mouth was important.” (Professional dyer, 17 December 2017)

This amateur group included a total of 37 members over its 30 years of existence, with a maximum of 12 members at one time. All members were women. Interviewees referred to themselves as members of the amateur group, rather than as the *sensei*’s pupils in the *kōbō*. Two males visiting the *kōbō* regularly for two years, although they were not part of Moe group. Their main interest was carving stencils (*katahori*), and eventually they produced indigo works.

The interviewees referred to the atelier as a place to socialize with others while learning by doing. They had a varied degree of dyeing experience and helped each other. The interaction established camaraderie relations that continued years after the members left the group.

The second theme related to the teacher-pupil interaction: the *kōbō* provided the environment for interaction between the teacher (*sensei*) and the amateur group (*seito*). Teacher and pupils engaged in a long-term relationship through the atelier’s group, which had reciprocal effects on both parties. The feedback from interviewees indicated that belonging to an amateur group was quite intense and therefore called for a strong commitment. On the one hand, the teacher developed herself through the interaction with pupils from their selection and through the teaching process, as illustrated by the following comments:

I told everybody that it takes a long time to learn, and therefore, I turn away requests of people who wanted to learn or do things in one day, as they do in the culture center. This is a long-term project and therefore, I selected carefully who would become my pupil. (Professional dyer, 17 December 2017).

I thought that Ms. M. was great because she never wanted to take holidays. She made me work harder whenever she came to the atelier. (Professional dyer, 21 April 2018).

On the other hand, the pupils grew with the advice from the teacher, and through the contact with other members of the group. The feedback from interviewees illustrated how the teacher became the person supporting the pupil's learning, challenging her ability to improve.

Looking at the stencil which I had produced for a kimono sash, the teacher asked me with surprise if I had done it all alone. Of course, I had done it. I wanted to show her what I can do when I work enthusiastically. (Amateur dyer, 3 May 2020).

Third of all themes was the interaction among pupils: the *kōbō* constituted the social space where women interacted freely while practicing dyeing. The diversity of the members provided ground for their growth and opening of ideas.

I felt I practiced *somemono* with women with more experience in life than me. I could speak to them freely, no need for *keigo* (formal Japanese language). I never had a bad feeling and enjoyed my time at the *kōbō*. (Amateur dyer, 31 May 2020).

Because all members of this group were women, femininity pervaded the camaraderie established among them. Femininity came as a distinct aspect in amateur practice, as opposed to professional practice of *katazome*. Some interviewees commented on how among the groups that Serizawa had established, the Konohanakai and the Katsurakai were two groups “with mostly wealthy women who learned *katazome* as a hobby”, as opposed to the Moegikai where most of the members were professional masculine dyers.

One interviewee commented on how, based on his own experience, joining a group like this had a considerable social load. In his words, “it was not only learning the craft but inheriting a social system with interlocking obligations. Students who simply wanted to learn the craft were marginalized.”

3.2.3. *Kōbō as a symbolic realm*

While describing the *kōbō* as a physical space was simple, illustrating it as a social environment becomes more complicated. However, the fieldwork produced sufficient elements to build an image of such an environment through the various examples that the interviewees provided about their social interactions while working or learning at the atelier. In contrast,

exploring the symbolic meaning of the *kōbō* proved complex because the interviewees did not talk about it explicitly. Instead, their allusions constituted a representation of “belonging to a community.” By belonging to the *kōbō* the craftspeople became *de facto* the keepers of a Japanese cultural tradition.

In addition to having a place where to dye while relating to others, the *kōbō* acted as the vessel through which the craftspeople rooted themselves in their tradition. Traditional folk textile dyeing was considered a craft where the so-called live-in apprenticeship (*uchi deshi*) was historically important. During the interviews, those who had started their professional practice as apprentices commented on how spending most of their time in the atelier allowed them to not only learn *katazome*, but also to bond with other apprentices and the master and understand better the history of the dyeing tradition. For instance, they would often refer to the Mingei Movement and to the importance of maintaining the philosophy of its main founder, Yanagi Soetsu, in their works. In this sense, the *kōbō* authenticated the lineage and enforced a *cultural community* among those who belonged to it.

The symbolism of the *kōbō* reflects a cultural construction that depends on various factors. A dyer belonged to the *kōbō* through a sense of continuity of work from previous generations to the next ones. From this perspective, the craftsman and the apprentice who attended a *kōbō* to become a professional dyer, contributed to the construction of the lineage of such *kōbō* through their works and continuity through time. When the apprentice or craftsman would go back to the family business or started his own *kōbō*, he transmitted the identity of the master. The representation of the master would become present in his *kōbō* as well, thus helping the construction of its lineage. For instance, in their *katazome kōbō*, Mr. Odanaka and Mr. and Ms. Dote exhibited images of Serizawa or his works, as Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4 illustrate, explaining that they had these images permanently because “this was where they had become professional dyers and where they belonged to.”

The periodic participation of the members of a *kōbō* in exhibitions in galleries or department stores fueled the sense of belonging to the *kōbō* and its lineage. For instance, the Konohanakai group that Serizawa established in 1952 participated in the annual exhibition that the Takashimaya Department Store in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, organized from 1953 until 1981. On 14 occasions between 1959 and 1981 these exhibitions circulated to other cities, including Nagoya, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Yamagata, or Matsue. The group also produced several

publications documenting these experiences, as well as a recapitulative of its history in 1982 (Konohanakai 1982, pp. 120-122). Similarly, the Moe group that Ms. Dote established in 1984 participated in various expositions, which Mitsukoshi Department Store in Tokyo or private galleries in various cities (Toyama, Tsukuba, Mito) organized during the years, when the group was active. These exhibitions included references to the Serizawa relationship reinforcing the sense of belonging to his dyeing tradition. Belonging to the *kōbō* was further charged with symbolic meaning when participating at the exhibition organized in 1995, marking the tenth anniversary of the death of Serizawa, with works of all members that had belonged to his *kenkyūjo*. In this case the organizers, the Tohoku Fukushi University in Sendai, which hosted a Serizawa Museum, acted as the gatekeepers of the *kōbō* lineage through their list of participants to the exhibition.

Keeping a dyeing style that *Serizawa would agree with* constituted another sign of belonging to the *kōbō*. When asking the interviewees for a more precise meaning of what they meant, their replies were not straightforward. Rather, they commented on how their works should be consonant with the dyeing tradition of the *kōbō* where one belonged. The following two examples illustrate their understanding. The first situation reflected consistency as a sign of lineage and identity. One interviewee mentioned the pride he felt when an old colleague from the Serizawa Kenkyūjo commented on how the style of Serizawa permeated through the works of a pupil to the interviewee. The interviewee commented on how transmitting the essence of Serizawa's style was the main objective in the *kōbō*. The second situation exemplified what would be inconsonant with the dyeing tradition of the *kōbō*. One interviewee commented on how awkward the intervention of a colleague of the Serizawa Kenkyūjo had sounded to participants at a meeting to promote *katazome*, when the colleague had proposed a Mickey Mouse *katazome* motive to attract young people to the world of *somemono*. This proposal had caused uproar among the other dyers at the meeting because *Serizawa* "would be devastated to hear this proposal from someone from the *kenkyūjo*."

Understanding the role that the *kōbō* plays in building tradition and cultural lineage is only possible if one shares that specific "culture." This implies having a sense of belonging to a greater environment that transcends the moment and the physical place where the dyers work. The interviewees lamented that, when a *kōbō* disappeared, it dragged away a part of the traditional heritage of Japan. They also commented on how, when the orders of a *kōbō* dropped, this affected several subsidiary traditional craftspeople as well. They mentioned the examples

of Japanese fans (*uchiwa*) or the Serizawa calendars. In their opinion, these two traditional items represented the Japanese cultural heritage and identity, and as such, continuing their production was important to some crafts' professionals. Just to mention a few, they included producers of mulberry paper (*washi*), fermented persimmon paper (*shibugami*), silk mesh (*sha*), stencils (*katagami*), resist paste (*nori*), brushes; the dyers; and those who mount the fans with bamboo.

The mass media also endorses the symbolic construction of the *kōbō* when promoting traditional crafts as a sign of Japanese identity. Printed and digital media often display craftspeople in their *kōbō* in a simple way, with artisans as middle-aged adults wearing indigo-dyed traditional clothes while working (Figures 3.8 and 3.9). In the case of indigo dyeing, the image of the hands of the dyer tinted by the continued use of indigo makes a strong statement of continuity, tradition, know-how and authenticity (Figure 3.10).



Figure 3.8. Mr. Hosokawa Hideaki in his atelier. Mr. Hosokawa wears indigo dyed traditional craftspeople dress. The background of the picture shows the raw material with which he works, bamboo (right), and some bamboo products (center and left). In the forefront, we can see the tools he uses. The forefront right, shows a traditional fuel heating stove and an electrical fan. Fujingahō, 4 October 2020.

<https://www.fujingaho.jp/culture/craft-tableware/g32048598/kyoto-craftsman-hosokawa-200410/?slide=15>.



Figure 3.9. Mr. Kondo Tadashi in his atelier. He wears traditional indigo-dyed craftspeople dress. The tools he uses for work are displayed in the background, together with old-fashioned furniture, heating stove (fuel), and iron-cast kettle to boil water. Kōgei magazine, 5 June 2017.



Figure 3.10. Buaisō, Tokushima. The team working in their atelier. The drying area at the left back, and pools for dyeing threads at the right. Pool of indigo at the forefront. The dyers' arms and hands tinted with indigo serve as proof of their professional activity. GAP 1969 magazine, INTERVIEW series Vol 6(3), 09 September 2016.

The *kōbō* provides the framework for contextualising the link between the individual craftsperson and a construct of Japanese identity. In the research, this link came out as a constructed identity *over* the craftspeople themselves. During the interviews, they commented on how their *purpose* was their work, while heritage or Japaneseness *were terms used by the media*. However, when prompted with the question of disappearance of their ateliers, they regretted that when that happened *something essentially Japanese was lost*. This figurative identity played as a reminiscence to a nostalgic past, where people and nature existed in a harmonious tandem in rural areas producing items of inherent beauty for daily life. This image, consonant with the concept of one's own homeland (*furusato*) is always associated with authentic culture and sincere lifestyle, evoking a confrontation with the cosmopolitanism inherent to modern urban life (Robertson, 1988, pp. 494-518). The *kōbō* perpetuated the Mingei philosophy in modern times. One interviewee commented on how the Mingei philosophy was more relevant now than it was one hundred years ago, "because the industrialization that gave rise to the Mingei Movement was far gentler to traditional craftsmanship than the current globalization."

The *kōbō* symbolized femininity in the context of *somemono* amateur practice. This aspect became evident through the interviews with the members of the Moe and Aizome Aikokai groups and references to the amateur groups that Serizawa established (Chapter Two). The *kōbō* also acted as the vessel connecting the amateur practitioners of *somemono* to their (Japanese) tradition, illustrating the role that women play in the preservation of the crafts' cultural heritage.

In the current research, all different trades participating in the process of *katazome* constituted an example of community of interest, because their “membership” did not imply a location; while a community of place was the ensemble of members attached to the *kōbō*. We could further identify as a community of both, interest and place to include the dyers of the *kōbō*. The symbolic power of these communities of interest and place is enhanced by the official recognition of their values. For instance, with the nomination of traditional *katazome* as cultural heritage by a national authority; or the inclusion in media campaigns, associating the work of traditional *kōbō* with the cultural identity of Japan, such as in the Cool Japan Initiative by the METI (2014, 2020).

Several researchers have delved into the meanings of physical spaces and how these contribute to the cultural identity of a community. Among them, Edward Relph is one of the most cited authors defining what a place is from the perspective of its distinctiveness as opposed to its samelessness (placelessness) (Relph, 2014). For him, “the static physical setting, the activities, and the meanings, constitute the three basic elements of the identity of places” (1976, p. 47) that “are sensed in a chiaroscuro of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, other people, personal experience, care and concern for home and the context of other places” (1976, p. 29). To Relph’s three elements, Turner and Turner (2006) added the social interactions associated with the place as a fourth element (2006, p. 207). Scannell and Gifford (2010) analyzed the meaning of a physical space from the perspective to individual and group attachment to it. They argued that, while at individual level, the attachment to a place resulted from personal connections and meaningful experiences; at group level, this attachment related to the symbolism shared among the group members. By belonging to a place where they practiced and thus, preserved their culture, “this culture links members to place through shared historical experiences, values and symbols” (2010, p. 2). As such, the attachment of this community related to the representation of what occurred in the past in that place, and how the collective memory recollected the events and experiences by the people (Osborne, 2001, p. 8; Stedman, 2003; Jenks, 2008, p. 242; Niznik, 2017). The members of the group familiar with the place developed a social identity by seeking a balance of similarity to the members and distinctiveness to those outside (Bourdieu et al., 1991, pp. 631-643; Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 3; Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p. 45). The social space with its distinctiveness acquired a symbolic power when official institutions acting as a neutral authority legitimized its worth (Bourdieu, 1989, pp. 21-22).

To further illustrate the various meanings of physical spaces, I have selected three examples, which allow interpretation about the symbolism of physical places' contribution to the culture identity of a community, be it of practice or place. These three examples are not directly related to the *kōbō* setting, although they shared a few commonalities.

Yagi Yasuyuki's research of 1988 explored the delimitation of Japanese villages through the differences between the physical space from a territoriality perspective, and the boundaries established by objects and rituals with symbolic meaning to the villagers.²⁴ Similarly to the villagers of Yagi's research (pp. 140-144), the dyers belonging to the *kōbō* in the present study formed a community that established its boundaries by producing dyed items in a traditional way, following a master, or participating in expositions of the members of their (*katazome*) community. The members of the *kōbō* internalized the history and roots of the craft (*bingata*, Mingei), as well as the knowhow of previous generations of craftspeople and maintain the (*bingata*) tradition when achieving their mastery in (a Japanese craft) stencil dyeing. They were conscious of their contribution to the (Serizawa Keisuke) lineage by their belonging to the *kōbō* as assistants, apprentices, or pupils to the master. And because Mingei, *bingata*, or the technique of stencil dyeing that Serizawa developed were all branded as uniquely, typically Japanese, they reflected the Japanese identity and Japaneseness. There was a quasi-automatic abstraction of the *kōbō* being assimilated to the notion of identity and something unique as Japanese cultural heritage. Through his analysis, Yagi helped understanding that limiting the definition of the *kōbō* to terms of territoriality or location would be incomplete and reductionist, and that we need to consider not only what it is, but also what it represents, how this representation takes place, and to whom it is relevant.

A second study by Józef Niznik (2017) on the symbolisms of physical places,²⁵ revealed that the public discourse which shaped these symbolisms was effective if it had cohesion with the realities experienced at individual level, and the collective memory of the local community. Otherwise, the result was social disorder until the assimilation process led to a new equilibrium. In the meantime, the locality would try to assert its identity, calling for a

²⁴ The boundaries significant to the villagers' self-identity did not coincide with the territoriality limits, and included objects or ritual that connected the villagers with their beliefs and traditions. Participating in social events that reinforced the village boundaries, the villagers not only re-defined the village, but also, they did so symbolically, based on their socially constructed reality (Yagi, 1988, pp. 140-144).

²⁵ Niznik analyzed the symbolism of a physical place in the context of political integration of countries. A locality was the social construction of a physical place through a series of symbolisms relevant to those belonging to the locality (2017, pp. 129-131).

bygone past when confronted to change (globalization), asserting its traditional values in a conservative manner (2017, pp. 129-131). Nižnik's example allows us to understand why the symbolism of the *kōbō* calls for tradition, Mingei, national identity or Japaneseness when confronted with changing modernity and globalization. While Yagi seems to hold the view that the main constructors of the symbolism around the physical space were those belonging to it, Nižnik pointed at the strategic role that intermediary parties or public discourse would play in such construction. Since the event was recent, there were some dissonant views about what it meant to belong to the European Union for the newly joined states.

The third study by John Donohue (1990) analyzed the symbolic aspects of the physical spaces for the training of martial arts (dojo). He noted that in addition to the physical space, the social structure of the dojo reflected patterns of human relations associated with Japanese culture. These patterns included ritual and symbolic practices around a) rank and hierarchy in human relations indicating the individual position vis-à-vis the rest; b) corporate nature of social endeavour that established the rules for the group and developed the sense of belonging to it; and c) link between physical endurance and spiritual development used to select those members who were worth being inside.²⁶ Donohue research illustrated how the members of the dojo practicing martial arts, not only practiced physical exercises, but also accepted and conformed with the rituals naturally imbued in the dojo (p. 62). The public discourse that mediated the symbolism was consonant with the Japanese tradition and widely accepted.

In my study, the symbolic construction of the *kōbō* from the craftspeople's perspective related to lineage and tradition in the making, and to some nostalgia of the times when *katazome* were a more popular consumption. However, the symbolic construction of the *kōbō* that the feedback from interviewees highlighted did not relate to a sense of national identity as was the case in Yagi and Donohue works, although the public discourse and roles of the mediators they cited differed. In the case of Nižnik the public discourse and mediators were more visible. This may be the case of the symbolism of the *kōbō* in the current research, where the construction of the Japanese identity did not come clearly from within. Therefore, it would be important to acknowledge the role of the public discourse and the one from various mediators. Chapter Six

²⁶ These themes arose from the observance of rituals that were evident to those who belonged to the dojo (1990, p. 56). By belonging to this physical space, the members impersonated the martial arts and through it, the Japanese spirit of a tradition. The dojo created a sense of social identity because of the manipulation of symbols not only at an intellectual level, such as relations among pupils and with the teacher, or salutation rituals; but also, at a physical level, such as the uniforms and their colors, or the exercises and movements (1990, p. 62).

discusses such roles through examples of media campaigns and initiatives at national, prefectural, or local levels.

3.2.4. Cultural nationalism and katazome tradition

National movements to protect and promote the traditional heritage emerge in times of perceived crisis. The crafts convictions against the industrialization in the 1920s, which stood behind the Arts and Crafts movements in various countries and the Mingei Movement in Japan, re-emerged in Europe in the 1960s-1970s as a reaction to the ethics and sustainability of modern industrialization, and in 2008 after the global financial crisis against globalization (Bell et al., 2021, pp.3-4). In addition to these movements, the post-war period affecting Japan prompted its government to establish laws and initiatives on the grounds of cultural nationalism. These included the law for the Protection of Cultural Assets, including Intangible Assets, and the system of designation of LNTs, of 1950 under concerns to lose its cultural heritage in Occupied Japan (Bambling, 2021, pp.148-149).

Public and private initiatives, intermediary agents and the mass media promoting the consumption of traditional crafts focus on their value in terms of authenticity, craftsmanship, and local production. This focus could be interpreted as a form of cultural nationalism (Yoshino, 2005). The METI's Cool Japan (METI, 2020), a predominantly industrial policy to boost the national economy through products and industries related to Japanese culture, constitutes such an example.²⁷ Established as the Creative Industries Promotion Office in 2010, the Cool Japan Advisory Council reshaped its message after the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake of March 2011. It now stressed the need for the revitalization of Japan, taking steps to restore shine to the 'Japan brand' and called for the essential spirit that the Japanese people traditionally possessed to overcome the situation (Mandujano, 2014; Garvizu, 2019). The public discourse that followed assimilated the production of traditional crafts to the uniqueness and exquisiteness of the Japanese knowhow and identified the cultural heritage as a sign of national identity and Japaneseness. It is worth noting that the symbolism attached to the *kōbō* that the feedback from interviewees in the present study highlighted did not relate to a sense of national identity, but rather highlighted their desire to follow a craftsmanship tradition. This cultural nationalism, therefore, points to the strategic role that intermediary parties and public discourse play in such construction, rather than the cultural identity experienced by insiders.

²⁷ Chapter Six elaborates on government-supported policies to protect its cultural heritage in the 1970s onwards.

This example of identification of traditional crafts as a symbol of Japaneseness through ingeniously crafted campaigns using public discourses of national identity is not unique. Like *kōbō* and *katazome*, idol groups and popular culture (Mandujano, 2014) and Japanese tea practice (Surak, 2011) serve the needs of the same genre of cultural nationalism. The mass media endorse the symbolism of *kōbō* when promoting traditional crafts as a sign of Japanese identity. In the case of indigo dyeing, images of dyer's hands tinted by continued use of indigo make a strong statement of continuity, tradition, know-how and authenticity (Figure 3.10).

3.3. Evolution of the *kōbō*

This section explores how *kōbō* has developed through time, with emphasis on those where the core business is traditional folk textile dyeing. The starting point is therefore a physical space enabling the full production of traditional folk textile dyeing, with at least a professional craftspeople fully dedicated to such endeavor, and one assistant for the work and overall running of the *kōbō*. Other structures are the core business is amateur practice or those professionally set-up spaces to experiment *katazome*, such as the educational centers at the municipalities were considered important from a cultural heritage perspective and are discussed in Chapter Six. This research considers that the continuity of the *kōbō* depends on the ability of the craftspeople to produce dyed works and sell them at a price covering the costs of production, and leaving a margin for the running of the *kōbō* and the costs of living of the staff. The examples gathered during the fieldwork provided some elements that helped understanding why some *kōbō* thrived, while others merely survived, and many declined and disappeared. Some of the reasons that influenced their evolution were not specific to *katazome*, and therefore examples of other ateliers served to illustrate the issues raised.

3.3.1. Challenges confronting the *kōbō*

Most of the *kōbō* participating in this research faced three types of challenges related to the balance between cost and price of their production, obsolescence of production, or redundancy of their craftsmanship by new technologies. Unprecedented crisis was another challenging situation confronting the *kōbō*. Table 3.3 and the following paragraphs illustrate these challenges and crisis:

Table 3.3. Continuity of traditional folk textile dyeing *kōbō*. Main challenges and crisis, and coping strategies. Feedback from the dyers interviewed.

Challenging situation	Coping strategy
Consumers are interested in products but are unwilling to buy them at a price covering the costs of materials, salaries, and running costs of the <i>kōbō</i> .	Dyers engage in part-time jobs to make their ends meet.
	Dyers stop outsourcing tasks to other craftspeople and carry them on themselves to reduce costs of their products.
	Dyers make items that are sellable rather than creative.
Dyers produce traditional dyed items that consumers are not interested in, such as kimono, kimono sashes, or traditional wrapping cloths and doorway curtains.	Dyers adapt their production lines to items that are sellable, such as bags, table centers, or decorative cloths for the home.
	Dyers reconvert their <i>kōbō</i> into spaces to experiment with traditional textile dyeing and other education facilities.
	Dyers close their atelier.
New technologies compete with traditional craftsmanship professions making them redundant.	Dyers adapt to some extent to these new technologies, such as silk screens instead of traditionally carved stencils.
	Dyers carry on with their traditional craft without adaptation to new situations until their retirement, when they close their atelier.
Unprecedented crisis, such as globalization with massive import of cheaper products; or coronavirus pandemic.	Dyers try to adapt their production lines to sellable products.
	Dyers make changes in their ateliers to ensure protection measures against coronavirus and safety to the visitors.
	Dyers join initiatives such as Cool Japan or quality labels to find new markets for their products

Source: Feedback from interviewees during the fieldwork, December 2017 to October 2022.

Consumers unwilling to purchase crafts at their production costs

To confront this challenge, the dyers have adopted various coping strategies. These included becoming part-timers or having side-jobs to make their ends meet. More than half of the dyers belonging to small and medium-sized *kōbō* interviewed admitted having had part-time jobs in supermarkets, distributing newspapers or milk, or working as cashiers at counters on highways. Interviewees from other crafts such as pottery confirmed a similar situation, which was an indication of the penury not only for dyers, but also for other traditional craftspeople. In other cases, interviewees commented on a second strategy to cope with the situation. In order to reduce the cost of the final product and maintain their margins, they stopped outsourcing several tasks in the production of their goods, while carrying them on themselves. For instance, instead of sending doorway curtains to other craftspeople for specialized traditional hand-finishing they would sew the borders themselves by machine. They

also commented on how they used to apply background indigo to *katazome* instead of sending it to indigo ateliers as they had used to do in better times. A third strategy that some dyers pursued was to adapt the production of their *kōbō* to the market. Two dyers commented on how, in order to sustain their jobs, they had stopped “making things” in the sense of creations (*sakuhin*) and only produced items for selling (*urimono*), which hinted at the importance of the (material) consumption as a factor of some relevance in shaping the evolution of the *kōbō*. While these strategies alleviated the situation in the short term, they did not provide a durable solution to the *kōbō*. Rather they compromised the craftspeople’s work focus, lessened the traditional value of the end product, or reduced the creativity potential of the craftspeople.

Mismatch between dyers’ production and consumers’ interests

Some of these products included textile dyeing for kimonos, kimono sashes, doorway curtains, or wrapping cloths (*furoshiki*). Without any exception, all interviewees from the various associations for the promotion of traditional textiles and unions (*kumiai*), kimono retailer, galleries, and museums confirmed how difficult the situation for the *kōbō* had become. They commented on how this was the result of two situations. Firstly, ways in which traditional Japanese wear was used had changed in modern life. For instance, women did not wear kimono as in previous times, modern mansions did not display *noren*, or plastic bags had substituted the traditional wrapping cloths. They also mentioned that the interruption of gatherings since early 2020 due to the coronavirus crisis had resulted in consumers not buying kimono and kimono sashes used in tea ceremony, flower arrangement, or traditional theaters’ attendance anymore. A kimono retailer commented on how currently her clients visited the shop to keep the contact, while it was clear that their intention was not to purchase anything. She noted how she feared that her clients might stop organizing social gatherings, which involved purchasing kimono and kimono sashes, for a longer period, since most of them were senior citizens.

Resulting from changes in lifestyle and fashion, or a crisis, the *kōbō* confronts a dilemma of obsolescence of its main production line, which calls for an adaptation of the type of items they make. Interviewees commented on how they maintained their traditional know-how and applied it to other items. Several of the *kōbō* interviewed had developed new lines of products, such as bags and other smaller objects which, as they mentioned, sold relatively well.

One former professional dyer mentioned how he could not adapt to such changes. He transformed most of the surface of his third-generation *kōbō* into a space to experience

katazome for visitors, such as tourists or schools. Figures 3.11 and 3.12 illustrate the space reconverted to experience traditional textile dyeing for visitors; and the changes made at this space to adapt to the coronavirus crisis. He further mentioned that he rented some space out for other craftspeople; and that he retained a minimal part of the space for his previously employed professional dyers when the nowadays seldom orders of kimono were received; and another space for processing dyeing products *for tourists*. Figure 3.13 illustrates the space devoted to processing dyeing goods for tourist consumption; and the printed material they receive for processing at an affordable price. This interviewee commented on how the coronavirus crisis of 2019 had catastrophic effects on his business. Not only had he been forced to invest in infrastructure to make it safe for visitors, but also with the tourism sector collapse, his business was at the brink of bankruptcy.



Figure 3.11. Entrance to the Marumasu Nishimuraya Kōbō, Kyoto. The ancient *katazome kōbō* had been transformed in a facility to experience traditional Kyoto textile dyeing for tourists. This space serves as an exposition hall and retail outlet for the products of the atelier. In addition, a space had been rented out to a professional potter and to a leather artisan (not in picture). December 2021. © Maria Santamaria



Figure 3.12. Marumasu Nishimuraya Kōbō, Kyoto, space for educational activities. The space to experience traditional textile dyeing had been adapted to implement the protection measures against coronavirus in 2019. Adaptations included covering walls and the floor with plastic (at right side and at the center right), and building protections for individual occupancy of the space (at the center left). December 2021. © Maria Santamaria



Figure 3.13. Marumasu Nishimuraya Kōbō, Kyoto, dyeing processing space. One part of the ancient *katazome kōbō* had been converted into a space processing traditional textile dyeing goods *for tourists*. Once the industrially dyed indigo fabrics with printed patterns were received in the atelier (left-hand side picture), they were processed by a team of three members working on a part-time basis by hand (right-hand side picture). These goods were sold through tourist shops, not at the retail outlet of the Nishimuraya Kōbō. December 2021. © Maria Santamaria

New technology and redundancies of traditional craftsmanship

The interviewees, including craftspeople and intermediary institutions, noted how modern technologies competed with traditional know-how. They mentioned how carving stencils (*katagami*) by hand had become obsolete and how an increasing number of *kōbō* used silkscreens instead. They also mentioned how modern printing technologies, such as ink-jet printing produced kimono quasi-identical to those traditionally dyed, and at one tenth of their price. These changes in technology resulted in a growingly number of customers unwilling to pay the price of traditionally produced dyeing; instead, they tended to try to purchase others *as same* but more cheaply produced items. As a result, the traditional *kōbō* confronted a difficult situation that demanded a transformation of the technology of production to ensure its continuity. Among the *kōbō* visited, three of them had accepted using silkscreens instead of hand-carved *katagami* and they found them easier to produce, maintain, and use. Contrary to this accepted change, most of the dyers interviewed considered that adopting ink-jet printing for kimono did not fit with their idea of traditional crafts. They saw this change gaining terrain

but commented on how it “was something for the young generations, not for the traditional *kōbō*.” Interviewees from the association for the promotion of traditional crafts commented on how the concept of tradition was an evolving one, and how the sector needed to accompany such changes, providing the necessary information on the items purchased to the customers. The interviewees also commented on how globalization resulted in the delocalization of the production of these dyeing products to other countries affected their *kōbō* profoundly. They further noted that at their individual level nothing could be done about it.

3.3.2. *Factors favoring the continuity of the kōbō*

During the field visits to the various structures as well as through the interaction with the craftspeople and intermediaries, several factors became relevant for the continuity of the *kōbō*. None of them were individually sufficient and necessary to determine the fate of the *kōbō* in the short run, although a critical factor included ensuring a successor to the *kōbō*. Those *kōbō* which had several of these factors seemed to be better off than the rest. Table 3.4 below outlines these factors.

Table 3.4. Factors favoring the continuity of the *kōbō*.

Maintaining diversity in the production lines or in the functions of the <i>kōbō</i> .
Having a clear strategy of marketing, branding, and promotion of the products of the <i>kōbō</i> .
Managing social media to publicize and promote the profile of the <i>kōbō</i> and its products.
Owning a retail outlet to avoid intermediaries when selling the products of the <i>kōbō</i> .
Participating in public-private initiatives for the promotion of the dyeing products.
Participating in professional networks to strengthen the belonging to an <i>expert</i> community.
Receiving a recognized form of patronage, or designation as Important Intangible Cultural Property.
Having a successor to the <i>kōbō</i> upon retirement of the master craftsperson.

Source: Feedback from interviewees during the fieldwork, December 2017 to October 2022.

One such factor was having a diversification of functions in the *kōbō*. The diversification or generalization of functions in the *kōbō* led to a greater security, while the specialization in a single product or technique led to a greater efficiency. Those ateliers which could maintain several types of production lines, such as traditional and modern dyeing goods; or those ateliers which entertained production lines with amateur training, were better off than those *kōbō* which kept doing a single production line and a single function.

Efforts to influence the consumers' appreciation through marketing, branding, and promotion of these products at the *kōbō* level stood out as a worthwhile investment in the structures visited. Those *kōbō* with a professionally designed strategy of marketing and branding, with an aggressive promotion of products, such as Buaisō or Kuronuma, were much better off than those who did not share such an approach. The importance of being able to manage social media even in the absence of such a professional approach to marketing came out clearly from the interviews. Those *kōbō* which did not use any social media remained local and faced difficulties in commercializing their products.

Owning a retail outlet came out as an important factor in the evolution of the *kōbō*. Those interviewees from *kōbō* without their own selling facilities stressed how important their efforts were to gain direct access to clients when participating in exhibitions. They emphasized how their experience in this area was time-consuming but still worth the effort in case of success. Without direct access to clients the craftspeople depended on an interface dealing with their dyeing products. They mentioned that the commission that galleries, wholesalers, or department stores retained varied between 35%-50% of the final price. Therefore, *kōbō* with a direct access to consumers such as the one of Mr. Odanaka, Aizome Sabo (Figure 3.14), Buaisō, or Nishimuraya had a great advantage when comparing to those which did not have it.



Figure 3.14. Aizome Sabo, Sapporo. The retail outlet of this *kōbō* served as the entrance to the dyeing area. It consisted of a reception area where visitors could sit (at the forefront), an exposition area with shelves at the walls and at the counter where the *kōbō* staff processed payments of purchases and other secretarial tasks. The emplacement of the retail outlet allowed visitors to observe what types of dyeing the *kōbō* did and see the finalized products. This was useful for those who

wanted to purchase dyeing goods, and at the same time it illustrated the type of goods that those potentially-interested amateur dyers could learn. September 2019. © Maria Santamaria

Another aspect that became obvious during the fieldwork was the importance of the intermediary institutions or “agents” guiding the *kōbō* and mediating the establishment of public-private initiatives, such as the Sumida ward of Tokyo, or the Crafts and Arts Research

Institute of Kyoto. Other institutions focused on the promotion and branding of regional products, such as the indigo as Tokushima regional heritage (Awa Ai). Those *kōbō* which were part of such initiatives such as Kuronuma, were much better off than those which had not access to any of these structures. Chapter Six discusses these initiatives further.

Maintaining the membership in the professional associations and guilds came out as important to the *kōbō* and the craftspeople. This membership enhances the sense of “belonging to the community” and offers them with various opportunities to discuss matters relevant to them and exhibit their works. Most of these professional associations and guilds were self-sufficient and the members were their sole supporters. The fees that each member must pay vary depending on the association. Interviewees mentioned how, for instance, the annual fees and other costs associated to the membership and participation at the Kokugakai could result in around 100,000 yen, and those of a regional crafts association around 60,000 yen.

Prestigious sponsorships, for instance being designated as IICP, as was the case of the Higeta Aizome Kōbō in Tochigi, was important for the evolution of the *kōbō*. During the interview, staff members of this *kōbō* pointed out how the number of visitors and volunteers had soared since the Higeta facility had been designated as an IICP, and how the selling of their products had increased. They also mentioned that they had received a lump sum of money to restore the site, and that without this support, the place would have become derelict. They mentioned that in the past, the renovation of the facilities had never been completed because the owners of the Higeta Aizome Kōbō could only do partial works on the roofs, or the piping system according to their economic situation. However, with the funds received after the designation as IICP, they had been able to rehabilitate the facility in an integral manner.

Having a successor to the *kōbō* came out as one of the most critical factors for its continuity. During the fieldwork, those craftspeople in their late 70s and 80s interviewed commented with regret on how arriving at what they qualified as *the end of their careers* they had nobody to take over the *kōbō*. Those interviewees who had children confirmed that these were not interested in crafts as a full-time professional occupation. Other interviewees who had no children mentioned that they could not find any apprentice to transmit their knowhow to, or someone to take over their *kōbō*. As a result, it became apparent that, after the retirement of most of the senior professional dyers and other craftspeople interviewed, these sometimes three-generation *kōbō* would disappear unless some drastic change happened in the next 3-5

years. The situation was different in those *kōbō* of recent creation, such as Buaisō; those that joined support initiatives, such as Kuronuma; or those that depend on an official institution, such as the prefecture-led Kamiita city structure; or on an official designation, such as in the case of Higeta Aizome Kōbō.

3.3.3. *Impact of kōbō disappearance*

Interviewees commented on the critical effect that the disappearance of a *kōbō* had on the work of other ateliers. In the traditional crafts universe the work is compartmentalized, and each task is the responsibility of a specific craftsperson or guild. For instance, the different artisans that intervene in the various phases of the production of *katazome* would include: the producer of traditional Japanese paper (*washi*) used to make the stencil; the manufacturer of persimmon-fermented paper (*shibugami*); the manufacturer of the cutting tools for the *katagami* carving (quite specialized depending on the pattern sought); the *katagami* carver (*katahori*); the producer of silk mesh (*sha*) to fix the patterns in the stencil; the manufacturer of resist paste from glutinous rice (*mochi nori*); the manufacturers of the tensors of fabrics in their width (*shinshi*) as well as in their length (*harite*); the manufacturers of brushes for applying mordant (*gojiru*) and background colors (*jizome* and *hikizome*), as well as small-surfaces' colors (*fude*); the dyer; the washer of dyed products; the person applying specific bamboo tensors to the dyed fabric to dry (*agari*); the traditional seamstress finalizing the products; the manufacturer of cardboard or wood boxes depending on the importance of the dyeing, and kimono packing bags; and finally the person charged of packaging the dyeing work and shipping it. Traditionally, these professions were differentiated and specialized. However, over time, these small traditional *kōbō* have been disappearing and have been giving way to more industrialized options. For instance, the five professions that intervened in the production of a traditional stencil (*katagami*) have become redundant when using machine-produced silk screens for *katazome*. In this respect, Serizawa constituted the exception to the traditional dyeing customs of outsourcing most tasks to the various guilds. He transformed the way of producing *somemono*, by assuming all phases of the production of *katazome* in the same atelier.

3.3.4. *Estimating the trend of traditional textile dyeing kōbō*

It was difficult to estimate the evolution of the number of *kōbō* in an accurate manner. The main reason was that there were no comprehensive statistics that could faithfully illustrate

how they had trended. Although an official designation of what constituted a traditional craft in Japan was adopted by the METI in 2014, there was no discriminating definition in practice of what should be included in the statistics under the “traditional crafts *kōbō*.” The main sources of information included the official statistics of the METI and the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, and those from the unions/guilds or *kumiai* (組合). The numbers they provided were specific in the sense that all those registered were part of the official numbers. However, not all *kōbō* were part of the guild or the professional associations in a continuous manner. In fact, it required considerable resources to continuously belong to these networks, and some *kōbō* decided to opt out when this effort had become unmanageable to them. For instance, in the case of the Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ms. Dote commented on how she opted out of the National Crafts Association due to, among other factors, its considerable fees after a 25-year membership, while Mr. Dote changed his status to (non-paying fee) honorary member in 2008 after nearly 40 years of membership. She also indicated that both remained members of the Ibaraki Craft Association and the Association of Friends of the Museum of Modern Art of Ibaraki, because they considered this association *to be more useful to them*. Therefore, consulting and crossing information between the various groupings would provide a more accurate image of the trends. Most of sources of information consulted provided an idea of the craftspeople without necessarily differentiating the disciplines of the various crafts they belonged to.

Some of the sources consulted did not provide the number of existing *kōbō* per year, but only an estimation of the number of bolts of fabric dyed as an estimation of the activity. For instance, the Kyoto Yūzen Cooperative Association Survey of 2019 noted that the number of bolts of fabric dyed with stencil and freehand in 1980 was over three million and one, and a half million respectively; while in 2019 these two figures became sixty thousand, and fifty thousand rolls respectively. Figures from the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries (2019) indirectly informed the trend in the number of *kōbō* in the traditional textile sector by estimating the trend of sales of about three hundred billion yen in 2010 at a roughly 17% of what they were in 1990 (Kakiuchi & Takeuchi, 2014, p. 14). They further indicated that this declining trend in sales was comparable to that of the overall traditional craft industries that was 20% in the same period. Out of about two hundred ninety thousand people working in the traditional craft sectors in 1979, only one third remained in 2016. Chapter Four provides further details on the production of traditional folk textile dyeing.

Interviewees from the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Crafts at the Sumida ward commented on how in the last 30 years the number of *kōbō* decreased from 70 to 6. The head of the union of free-hand dyers in Kyoto (Tegaki Yūzen kumiai 手描き友禅組合) explained that the number of craftspeople belonging to the union of free-hand dyers decreased dramatically over the last 30 years, and it consisted of 120 members including all corps de métier in December 2021. The research by Miyamoto Yasuo (2006) on the tradition of folk textile dyeing in Akita prefecture noted the progressive disappearance of *kōbō* to the last one, the one owned by the Kamata family, which closed in 1990, after seven generations' lineage (p. 109). Miyamoto also noted that the Kamata family continued running some workshops and demonstrations' events even if the professional dyeing production had stopped. Other interviewees including dyers, weavers, and responsible staff of galleries and specialized kimono retailers confirmed what they considered to be an alarming trend at which traditional crafts *kōbō* were disappearing.

Triangulating information from written sources (Association of Friends of the Modern Art Museum of Ibaraki, 2017, p. 37; Kyoto Yūzen Cooperative Association, 2020, pp. 1-5; Miyamoto, 2006, p.109; Santamaria Hergueta, 2022b; and the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, 2019) with feedback from interviews with staff from the associations promoting traditional crafts in Sumida Ward of Tokyo and in Kyoto, and with most craftspeople and retailers; as well as with mass media sources (NHK BS101, 2022) and the personal observation of the researcher in the last four decades, it is a fact that the number of *kōbō* in Japan is decreasing considerably.

This trend was not specific to traditional folk textile dyeing; it was also notable with respect to *kōbō* that were related to other traditional crafts (Pontsioen, 2012, Urushihara, 2013, p. 142) as well as in the overall sector of the traditional craft industries (Kakiuchi & Takeuchi 2014, pp. 14; Shibuya et al., 2010, pp. 2-4). There were multiple factors behind this situation, such as the ageing of the craftspeople, the difficulty in obtaining raw materials, or the changing tastes of customers, that made the sale of the crafts difficult. However, the most cited reason that affected the *kōbō* of all traditional crafts was that, when these craftspeople retired, they found nobody to take over the workshop. There seemed to be two main reasons for this situation. One reason was the economic difficulties of the craftspeople in the absence of proper initiatives to protect their jobs. The other reason put forward related to the change in the apprenticeship

system. In the past, young adults joined the live-in apprenticeship system (*uchi deshi*) for a few years, and in the process learned all the tasks towards craftsmanship by carrying them out while at the same time contributing to the work of the atelier. However, this system as such had become rare these days. Instead, those interested attended training courses or studied at art and crafts schools or universities. In a few cases, there were new ateliers established after apprentices graduated from regional training *kōbō* such as the one in Tokushima.

While many traditional folk textile dyeing *kōbō* disappeared, few continued in this labor-intensive but capitalization-thin sector (Heilman Brooke, 2002); while others opened their doors incorporating new techniques that were officially considered traditional as well. An example was the use of silkscreens instead of traditionally made *katagami*. Nowadays this new technique was well accepted as a natural evolution that facilitates the work of the craftspeople when stencil dyeing. Other techniques, such as the use of ink-jet for *katazome*, were more contested from the perspective of what is a traditional craft. Chapter Six further discusses similar examples in the context of what is the concept of tradition and authenticity in crafts, and on the roles that institutions play in the continuity of this craft.

3.4. *Wrap-up*

This chapter started by introducing the word *kōbō* on the basis of its characters 工 and 房, a term which conveyed the idea of a space where traditional work happened under a direction. After broadly defining the *kōbō*, I grouped them by size from a perspective of the number of functions they performed, and by the specific technique they used to produce dyed items. I found these two steps useful to profile the eleven *kōbō* that had contributed to this research. Indeed, each *kōbō* was unique and it was necessary to find common attributes among the diversity of the *kōbō* to help the analysis of their evolution through time. When I completed the setting of the various attributes defining these ateliers, it became easier to define the focus and boundaries of the chapter, and how it related to the rest of the chapters of the dissertation.

The focus was on the traditional folk textile dyeing *kōbō*, and in particular, those doing stencil or *katazome*. I anchored the chapter on the Dote Katazome Kōbō of Ibaraki prefecture and complemented it with examples from the other *kōbō*. I chose this atelier for three main reasons. Firstly, this *kōbō* belonged to the Serizawa Keisuke lineage and its leaders had worked

directly with him for several decades. Since the research considered the point of departure of “modern” *katazome* to be the Mingei Movement and Serizawa, I considered anchoring the chapter on this *kōbō* advantageous. Secondly, the Dote Katazome Kōbō had both, professional and amateur practitioners, and therefore allowed me to explore the various meanings of the *kōbō* in depth. Finally, this *kōbō* offered me a privileged access to information and familiarity, since I have been part of it for several decades. The chapter included other *kōbō* using different traditional dyeing techniques to illustrate and reinforce the analysis of the meanings the *kōbō* and of their evolution through time.

This chapter pursued two different objectives. On the one hand, it sought to clarify the pivotal role of the *kōbō* to the *katazome* tradition in Japan. It did so by exploring three layers of meaning attached to the *kōbō*. Firstly, I treated the *kōbō* as the space where the dyers worked, and using the perspectives of size, and function, I described the settings of these ateliers. Secondly, I presented the social meaning of the *kōbō* as the environment in which the dyers interacted, the pattern of interaction depending on whether their practice was professional or amateur. In both cases, there were vertical relations of the craftspeople or amateur practitioners with the master or the teacher respectively; and horizontal relations among themselves, as *nakama* (in professional dyers) or as *seito* (in amateur dyers). In the case of amateur practice, the *kōbō* provided a suitable environment for women’s relations. The current chapter presented these relations, although the core of the discussion is set out in Chapter Two, when addressing the profiles of the dyers and the relation among them. Lastly, I outlined the symbolism of the *kōbō* as a cultural construction supported by the sense of belonging to a community. I then used various examples illustrating the sense of belonging, such as image displays at the *kōbō*, participation in group activities, keeping concordance with the master’s style of dyeing, and so on. To further interpret the three layers of meaning of the *kōbō*, I contrasted the fieldwork findings with the work of other authors on the symbolism attached to physical places. The chapter noted the role of media and other institutions in relation to the symbolism of the *kōbō* and the crafts’ lineage, tradition, or national identity and Japaneseness. However, the main discussion on this layer of meaning happens in Chapter Six, when examining how the different intermediary structures and networks (“agency”) influence the appreciation of the dyed products in society, and how they represent these ateliers.

On the other hand, this chapter aimed at understanding the factors affecting the evolution of the *kōbō*. I focused the content on the *kōbō* whose continuity depends on their

professional output of dyeing products. I identified three different situations that affect the viability of the *kōbō*, and which are directly related to the fieldwork. In the first situation, the dyers sold their products below the production costs. As a result, they needed to find part-time jobs, to assume tasks of other corps-de-metier, or to concentrate on sellable -rather than creative- products to balance their economies. In the second situation, the *kōbō* produced items that had become obsolete in the current market horizon, such as kimono, kimono sashes, *noren*, or *furoshiki*. To cope with the situation, the dyers oriented their work towards the production of items that sold better, such as tapestries, tablecloths, or bags. Some dyers unable to adapt to the changing situation transformed their *kōbō* into other structures. In the last situation addressed, the *kōbō* confronted changes in technology or outsourced work that resulted in cheaply produced items. Although the dyers tried to accommodate some changes in technology, most of them could not compete with major changes, such as ink-jet printing, or importation of mass-dyed products, and some envisaged the discontinuation of their *kōbō* after they retire. An additional situation external to the craft's sector, illustrated by unprecedented crisis, such as globalization with massive import of cheaper products; or coronavirus pandemic, which also affected the viability of the *kōbō*.

This chapter also identified various factors favoring the viability of the *kōbō* and its continuity. For instance, having a suitable strategy of public relations and branding/marketing; owning a retail outlet; participating in support initiatives at national, regional, prefectural, or local levels; being members of professional associations or guilds/*kumiai*; benefiting from a patronage or official designation of prestige; and most importantly, having a successor to the retiring craftspeople of the *kōbō*. Some of these factors mentioned in the current chapter were more relevant in other parts of the dissertation. For instance, the discussion on the apprenticeship systems (Chapter Two), in the context of the trajectory of the dyers; the evolution of the *kōbō* (Chapter Four), when analyzing the production of *somemono* resulting from changes of materials and tools, and of consumption patterns; the transformation of the *kōbō* and adaptation to new consumption patterns (Chapter Five); or the various initiatives of promotion of the traditional crafts industry (Chapter Six).

Chapter Four: The *Katazome* production: The long way of rice and soybeans

This chapter focuses on the production of Japanese traditional folk textile stencil dyeing. It describes the materials and techniques used, and analyzes the evolution of the production from both insider and theoretical perspectives. This chapter also explores the meaning of tradition and authorship in the context of stencil dyeing. In Japanese, stencil dyeing products translate as *katazome* or *kataezome*. The first word, *katazome* comprises two ideograms, 型 and 染. As Martin (1992) explains, the first ideogram 型 reads *kata* and means model or template to be respected (p. 57), and the second ideogram 染 conveys the idea of dyeing, color or taint with dyestuff from trees (p. 61). Therefore, *katazome* means dyeing with patterns or stencils. The second word, *kataezome* comprises three ideograms, 型, 絵, and 染. The second ideogram, 絵, means painting or drawing, and thus, *kataezome* means dyeing paintings with stencil. The term *kataezome* was coined in 1956, when the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology designated Serizawa Keisuke as a LNT (Moriyama, 2020, p. 356; Imai, 2016). The reason for creating this new word was the consideration that Serizawa produced stencil dyeing not only by repeating patterns, but also by creating paintings with stencils. He was the first person to produce stencil dyeing on media other than fabrics and used Japanese paper or *washi* for his works as well. This research uses the term *katazome* when referring to stencil dyeing, reserving the term *kataezome* when addressing works of Serizawa. Unless specified otherwise, this chapter refers to fabric stencil dyeing.

The Japan Crafts Association (Nihon Kōgeikai, 1990, pp. 20-23) acknowledges how overseas influences have shaped Japanese dyeing (and weaving) history. The first records correspond to the influences of the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-906) dynasties of China in Japan during the Asuka (552-646), Hakuho (646-710) and Nara (710-794) periods. A second broader wave of influence came from China (Ming dynasty, 1368- 1644) and Southeast Asia during the Muromachi (1336-1573) and Momoyama (1573- 1615) periods. The third wave of influence came from the West in the Meiji period (1868-1912) with the massive importation of dyestuffs from plant species exotic to Japan. These included various woods yielding red dyestuffs, such as sappanwood (*Caesalpia sappan*) from Asia, or narrawood from Africa (Melo, 2009, pp. 24-25). During the Meiji period, Japan modernized the textile industry, incorporating

synthetic dyestuffs and technologies that improved the productivity of the textile sector. However, this transformation challenged the traditional hand dyeing and weaving sectors, which did not respond to new markets. Nevertheless, these sectors continued because of the producers' attachment to their long tradition, which they felt that Japan could not allow itself to lose (Nihon Kōgeikai, 1990, pp. 20-22).

While acknowledging the long history of stencil-dyeing in Japan, in the context of this research *katazome* refers to the traditional folk textiles rooted in late Edo period, and more specifically their iterations from the late Taishō period, coinciding with the Mingei Movement. Analyzing the evolution of stencil dyeing in the late 1920s is relevant because the democratization of the society, urbanization, and affluence of people in those cities changed the nature of demands for traditional dyeing products. For instance, hinged doors replaced sliding doors in modern homes, and plastic bags became utility objects, making stenciled doorway curtains and wrapping cloths redundant. As this was happening, the Mingei Movement promoted the local craft production and consumption of traditional products, including *katazome*, across all segments of Japanese society (See Chapter One for further details). Consequently, two related processes emerged: homogenization, with an increase in the number of *kōbō* across Japan producing *katazome*; and heterogenization, emphasizing the distinctiveness of these products, rooting them to a place and original identity. These processes resulted in a broader production of diversified, traditional, and new, hybrid *katazome* products.

Despite a wealth of literature on other crafts such as lacquerware (Han, 1995; Rausch, 2006; Triharini, 2015) and pottery (Moeran, 1990; Wilson, 1995; Wilson, 2023), material analyzing the evolution of the production of traditional folk textile is relatively scarce and concentrates on the fabrics themselves (Wallerger, 2012), or weaving (Sarashima, 2013b; Parry-Williams, 2015), with few studies related to dyeing (Mellott, 1993; Miyamoto, 2006; Ricketts III, 2006; Rice et al., 2012; Nagasaki, 1993; Sarashima, 2013a; Moriyama, 2020; Santamaria Hergueta, 2022a & 2022b). I have chosen Robertson's approach to cultural evolution (1995) to inform the evolution of the production of *katazome*, because his approach is aligned with the institutional approach to culture of Wuthnow & Witten (1988) that I am using as the overall framework of analysis of my research.

This chapter provides an overview of traditional folk textile dyeing products, and in particular of *katazome*. Section 4.1 presents a historical background of the craft, providing

contexts for its cultural importance. Section 4.2 describes in detail the materials and techniques utilized in *katazome*. Section 4.3 features the perspectives of professional dyers, who offer insight on how their work has changed along the years in the *kōbō* and how these changes have affected their craft output. Section 4.4 initiates a discussion on the meaning of tradition in the production of folk textile dyeing, setting the stage for Chapter Five and Six, which explore the concept of tradition from the perspectives of consumption and preservation of the craft respectively. Section 4.5 briefly touches upon the issue of attribution and contribution in the authorship of signed folk textile dyeing, an aspect of the craft little spoken about, but considered relevant to today's recognition of authorship in other disciplines. Section 4.6 uses the approach of Robertson (1995) to societal evolution to analyze the *katazome*, drawing attention to the processes of homogenization, hybridization, and heterogenization that have contributed to the development of the craft. Finally, Section 4.7 recalls the key points covered in this chapter.

The content of this chapter builds on the evidence gathered from the fieldwork carried out between December 2017 and October 2022, while section 4.2 draws heavily on the researcher's participant observation of dyeing activities spanning several decades at the Dote Katazome Kōbō in Ibaraki prefecture.

4.1 Background

Stencilling is one of the earliest known techniques used for image production, as evidenced by caves where hands became stencil patterns such as those in Maltravieso (Spain) or in Magdalenas (Argentina) (Bechtold et al., 2003, p. 499). *Proper* stencils were used in China as early as the ninth century BC. In Japan, the use of stencils has its origins in China. Craftspeople from both countries developed the stencil technique which they applied to fabrics, pottery, hides, or walls of buildings (Romero Magallanes, 2021, p. 2). *Katazome* emerged as an alternative to expensive textile brocades that were only accessible to elites (Rathbun, 1993, p. 11). In Japan, patterned textile dyeing known as *kyōkechi* dates back to the eighth century and could be considered as one of the precursors of *katazome* (Mellott, 1993, p. 51). *Kyōkechi* is a type of tie-dye where the dyestuff is poured between two carved woods into the fabric (Yoshioka, 2010, p. 7). One of the earliest examples of textile dyeing using stencils is a kimono from the sixteenth century that featured a *komon* design. *Komon* design refers to a composition

of minute patterns as this word indicates, from small (*ko*, 小) and crest (*mon*, 紋) style. These *komon* style garments were initially favored by samurai and wealthy nobles (Mellott, 1993, p. 52; Kobayashi, 2004, p. 389). In his essay on the tradition of folk textiles in Japan, Nagasaki Iwao (1993, p. 17) noted that the lack of extant examples challenges the full understanding of the origins and the evolution of these textile dyeing techniques prior to the mid-Edo period (1603-1868). It is from this period that the industry of *katazome* developed in Japan, when fabrics from Southeast Asia and India became available and the local artisans mastered resist-dye techniques. This period also witnessed the appearance of intricate designs of stencils or *katagami*, as craftspeople succeed in joining all parts of the carved paper design with silk threads, later transitioning to silk mesh. Stencil dyeing diversified depending on the area of production, with some of them retaining their identity and placeness, and resulting in iconic styles such as Edo Komon in the Tokyo area, or *bingata* in Okinawa. However, wearing stencil-dyed clothing remained an expensive product, which only rich people could afford. The Meiji and early Taishō periods saw urbanization and the progressive democratization of the society leading to changes in fashion, with an increasing number of commoners using *katazome*. Stencil dyeing remained associated with traditional garments, bed clothing, banners, and doorway curtains (Mellott, 1993, pp. 52-53).

During the mid Taishō period, the Mingei Movement played a significant role in transforming the production, consumption, and promotion of *katazome* products. This transformation was largely facilitated by Serizawa Keisuke, who popularized the use of *katazome* as decorative items by stylizing traditional patterns. Despite the changes to the utilitarian use of *katazome* products, the dyeing process and stencils used remained largely unchanged from the Edo period (Mellott, 1993, p. 53; Ishikawa, 2021, p. 65). In urban settings, department stores played an important role in the dissemination of *katazome* products. Serizawa himself trained several generations of professional and amateur dyers in his atelier, thus promoting the availability of *katazome* as Mingei products for the masses. Urban areas saw the emergence of new *katazome* products by using new media such as *washi* for postcards, calendars, or fans; new patterns and colors for traditional doorway curtains or kimono garment; or new products, such as wall hangers and tapestries to cater for a diverse range of customer tastes. In rural areas, however, *katazome* continued to be produced locally for traditional uses such as bed clothing, doorway curtains, wrapping cloths (*furoshiki*), and kimono garment. The dominant color scheme in rural areas was indigo against a white background.

Both the Edo Komon and *bingata* styles of *katazome* share a long history and have undergone similar evolutions. Originally reserved for the wealthy and high-class individuals, these products eventually became more accessible to commoners, and are now considered as traditional folk textiles. This grouping nevertheless remains fluid because the definition of commoners as a consumers' group is ambiguous. For instance, low-ranking samurai, while belonging to the highest social class, were obliged to use textiles commonly associated with lower classes, including artisans. Conversely, rich merchants, belonging to the lowest social class, had access to richly elaborated textiles (Nagasaki, 1993, p. 17). Furthermore, *bingata*, which became one of the emblems of the Mingei Movement in the 1920s, was originally reserved for the high classes of the Ryūkyū kingdom (Sarashima, 2013a, pp. 118-119).

Apart from the various social changes, the availability of the different fabrics through history also played a critical role in the evolution of *katazome*. Although cotton was considered a fabric for the elites until the early seventeenth century, when its production bloomed in Japan, it became widely available to the commoners who used it for stencil-dyeing. Consequently, cotton replaced the locally produced fabrics made of hemp and other plant fibers. At the same time, as industrially produced cotton expanded, locally-produced handmade fibers became expensive and their use became more exclusive. Until after the Edo period, the decoration function in folk textiles in Japan remained secondary to other characteristics, such as durability, utility, or economy (Nagasaki, 1993, p. 21).

The mastery exhibited in Japan's intricate stencil patterns and dyeing traditions is considered a predecessor of modern serigraphy. While serigraphy acquired world importance as a commodity, it distanced itself from the creative process, which considered that art should be based solely on the artist's hand. The emergence of Pop Art, however, changed this notion, placing art at the reach of the general public. Recent developments in *katazome*, with laser carving of stencils (Okita & Takesue, 2012, pp. 1393-1394), and 3D or ink injectors dyeing of fabrics (Mori, 2012, p.123) are indicative of how modern serigraphy is influencing the traditional stencil dyeing through indigenization of new technologies in traditional products (Romero Magallanes, 2021, p. 4).

How can we define what tradition means for folk textile dyeing, in order then to analyze its evolution through time? How does tradition relate to authenticity, and originality? Would a hemp dyed with indigo for commoners suffice to characterize traditional folk textile dyeing?

How should we address the fact that although hemp was the fiber used by commoners, if finely woven (*jōfu* 上府), only upper classes used it, as was the cotton prior to its cultivation in Japan? The same applies to indigo, because, although reserved for commoners, it was also worn by samurai and upper classes. Equally problematic is the clear-cut distinction of who is a commoner from a consumer's perspective, as we saw earlier when referring to Edo Komon and *bingata*.

I propose a dynamic perspective that avoids a single model evolving in a linear manner. Instead, evolution would be guided by a messy process of multiple iterations involving wider circulation of products (homogenization), diversification and characterization of products by place and identity (heterogenization), and transformation of techniques and processes (hybridization and indigenization) (Robertson, 1995, pp. 27-29).

4.2. Materials and techniques

This section consists of two parts: the first part describes the materials used in *katazome*: fabrics, stencils, tools, and ingredients. The second part concentrates on the techniques and phases of production. Appendix One provides details and examples on the types and techniques of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan.

4.2.1. Fabrics

In its handbook, the Nihon Kōgeikai (1990) explains how the development of Japan's highly distinctive textile traditions reflect the local climatic and topographical conditions, and the evolution of the regions' historical circumstances. For instance, the northwest part of the Kanto region was important for sericulture since the Nara period, while the Chikugo area of northern Kyushu, became the center of cotton cultivation from the seventeenth century onwards, and Okinawa and the Amami Ōshima islands became famous for their *bashōfu* production (pp. 32-32).

The various traditions of textiles and their regional specialties are pivotal for the production of *katazome*, where fabrics play a critical role. According to the dyers interviewed in the context of the present research, the fabric determines the pattern that will work best and its optimal use. They explained how they purchase fabrics *for which they have a feeling* and

keep several bolts of various fabrics in the *kōbō* while developing the design that will be the best match. As they explained, a thickly handwoven silk fabric is suitable for kimono sashes, but never for a kimono, doorway curtains or wrapping cloths. They mentioned that *tsumugi* silk (紬) or pongee are ideal fabrics for kimono because they are smooth and have limitless pattern possibilities. Hemp is also a preferred fabric because of its texture or the vividness of the colors when dyed. Suitable fabrics for doorway curtains include hemp and cotton, which they will dye most times with indigo because of its durability. The dyers stated that handwoven fabrics are what they value most, reserving them for high-end works, such as kimono sashes.

Fibers used for *katazome* include both plant-based and animal-based fibers. The former group includes fibers obtained from hemp (*asa*, 麻), cotton (*men* or *wata*, 綿), as well as bark and bast fibers from mulberry, wisteria, ramie (*chōfu*, 苧), or Japanese fiber banana (*bashōfu*, 芭蕉布). Among animal-based fibers, silk (*kinu*, 絹) is the most commonly used.

Cannabis sativa or hemp (*asa*) is the oldest textile plant of relevance for the production of textiles, its use dating back several thousand years. Owing to its local production and practicality, hemp is the most commonly used material in premodern textiles. Before the introduction of silk and wool, hemp was the most popular fabric not only for commoners who used it in their daily lives, but also for the higher-class groups, among whom the finely woven hemp (*nuno*, 布 or *jōfu*, 上府) was much appreciated (Rein, 1889, pp. 165-166). However, cotton, introduced from China in the fourteenth century, was indigenized and gradually replaced hemp, when it became widely available after the mid-Edo period. While urban dwellers could afford the ready-made fabrics available throughout Japan, people living in rural areas with lower purchasing power produced their own fabrics, giving rise to local variations that were highly regarded in urban areas. Fabrics that were initially produced locally for economic reasons later became cultural heritage assets with distinctive identities, such as the *bashōfu* made of bark of banana trees in Okinawa, the *kamiko* made from the bark of kozo branches in Gifu prefecture, or the *kamiko* and *shifu* made from paper mulberry trees in Miyagi prefecture (Mohajer va Pesaran, 2018, pp. 241-242).

The fibers of *Musa basjoo* serve to produce *bashōfu*, which is a fabric exclusive to Amami Ōshima and Okinawa islands. Rein noted that *bashōfu* was popular and frequently used fabric more than one century ago (1889, pp. 168-169). Although it was initially a basic product

for commoners, *bashōfu* gradually became a highly appreciated fabric, partly due to the designation of the Preservation Group of Kijoka no Bashōfu as a group holder/preserver of an IICP by the Agency for Cultural Affairs of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 1974 in recognition of their *bashōfu* technique (Sarashima, 2013b, p. 149), and of Taira Toshiko (1921-2022), the president of the Preservation Group as the LNT of Bashōfu technique and practice in 2000.

Currently dyers reserve this fabric for high-end works because it is expensive and difficult to find. Master *katazome* dyer Dote Takehiko commented that there was no fiber like *bashōfu*, and that he felt a great responsibility to come up with a design worthy of such a fabric.

Gossypium herbaceum, commonly known as *wata-no-ki* (綿の木) in Japan, is the main cotton plant cultivated for the production of cotton or *wata* in the country. Introduced from India in the latter part of the eighth century, the sector failed to thrive until its reintroduction in 1570. Farmers from various regions cultivated cotton in the off-season periods to complement their economies. Notably, in the Yokote area of the Akita prefecture, farmers produced cotton and sold it throughout Japan. Nevertheless, the local production of cotton, which remained comparatively expensive in contrast to imported products from the United Kingdom or India, ceased in the late 1980s (Rein, 1889, pp. 166-167; Miyamoto, 2006, pp. 95-96).

Silk was introduced to Japan by Korean and Chinese immigrants by the third century AD. Sericulture relied on white mulberry tree plantations and silk-spinner caterpillars (*Bombix mori*). The silk industry flourished, particularly in the Honshu Island, where farmers dedicated the off-season periods of winter and rice cultivation for sericulture (Rein, 1889, p. 203). The upper classes of Japan supported this sector and used locally produced silk for clothing, wrapping presents, and offerings (Rein, 1889, p. 188). The (re)opening of Japan's borders in 1854 led to the resurgence of sericulture, aided by the decimation of silkworms in Europe due to diseases. The silk industry became important to Japan's economy and one of the main export items, buoyed by its participation in World Fairs (Rein, 1889, pp. 503-527). The official catalogue of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904 documented 180 Japanese manufacturers of raw silk and 125 of silk fabrics among the nearly 400 Japanese participating textile manufacturers (pp.120-125). This catalogue featured the Dyeing and Weaving School of Kyoto, where pupils' silk and cotton work and utensils were exhibited (p. 113); and two stencil dyeing manufacturers of silk and of cotton in Shizuoka prefecture (pp. 120 and 124).

Fabrics that were initially reserved for elites such as silk, cotton, and finely woven bast fibers gradually became available to commoners after the Edo period. At the same time, fabrics initially used by commoners, such as *bashōfu*, ramie, and *asa*, gained appreciation from the elites when production became scarce due to its decreased economic efficiency, and as people migrated to cities for work in the early twentieth century (Cort, 1993, p. 37).

In traditional *katazome*, fabrics typically have standardized sizes and are sold in bolts called *tan*. One *tan* is about 35-40 cm wide by twelve to thirteen meters long, and it suffices to make a kimono, or two kimono sashes (*obi*). Tans are used for doorway curtains, with multiple widths added depending on the size of the door or entrance. However, as the use of the traditional *katazome* diversified, so did the size of the fabrics. Nowadays, most of the fabrics used are imported and machine-woven, while handwoven fabrics are considered exclusive and expensive. Cotton, silk, and hemp are the most widely used fabrics, with *bashōfu* and other exclusive fibers used less frequently. Woven *washi* is used occasionally as a dyeing fabric.

Japanese paper, or *washi*, is important in the stencil-dyeing process. Before applying dye to the fabric in color *katazome*, the dyers make various samples on *washi*. These samples allow defining colors and tones, and determining if shadowing (*bokashi*) is needed and to what extent it is necessary. The *washi* samples are useful for future dyeing and serve as an inventory or catalogue of the works at the *kōbō*. *Washi* played an essential role in stencil-dyeing process since the stencils were traditionally made of *washi*.

4.2.2. Stencils

Katagami, also known as paper stencil, are the patterns through which the resist paste is applied onto the fabric in the dyeing process. The word *katagami* translates to ‘carved paper’ and is composed of two ideograms, 型 for pattern and 紙 for paper (Martin, 1992, p. 81). The origins of *katagami* can be traced back to the eighth century, but it was during the Edo period (1603-1868) that the *katagami* culture flourished, with the proliferation of patterns and colors in traditional garments (Dickens, 2012a, p. 26). *Katagami* are produced from layered sheets of handmade paper made from the inner bark of the mulberry tree. This paper tanned with persimmon juice to make it waterproof and durable is known as *shibugami* (Humphrey 2014, p. 3). The quality of *shibugami* depends on its water resistance, durability, and limited elasticity. In recent years, the production of conventional *shibugami* has decreased due to the closure of

the ateliers that specialize in this craftwork and the emergence of a cheaper ‘*katagami* paper’ or cross pattern vinyl, which is Japanese paper impregnated with a synthetic resin of the polyester family (Okita & Takesue, 2012, p. 1384). During the fieldwork of this study, interviewees reported on their experiences with the new ‘*katagami* paper’, noting that it was harder to carve, but more resistant and durable than traditional *shibugami*.

The width of *katagami* used in kimono and kimono sashes production is approximately 36 centimeters’ width, with lengths varying from 11 centimeters for the shortest (*sansun*), to 15 (*koban*) or 22 centimeters (*chūban*). The size of *katagami* used for other products such as doorway curtains, wrapping cloths, or tapestries varies depending on the size of the fabric (Humphrey 2004, p. 3). The *shibugami* is carved using specialized knives, known as *katabori* (型彫) or *kogatana* (小刀), to create the chosen pattern. Figure 4.1 illustrates the various types of these knives and punches. Carving *katagami* is a skilled craft that requires a considerable expertise. There are four main carving techniques: cutting stripes, circles, patterns, and thrusts (Okita & Takesue, 2012, p. 1388; Dickens, 2012a, p. 27; Humphrey, 2014, p. 12).



Figure 4.1. Knives and punches serving to carve stencils or *katagami*. Those in the left-hand side serve to cut in line, while those in the right-hand side serve to punch the *shibugami* making circles of various sizes. April 2022. © Maria Santamaria

After carving the design, the pattern is stabilized with the frame of the *katagami*. In modern times, the pattern is fixed with lacquer or *urushi* to a silk mesh called *sha* (紗). Figure 4.2 shows the silk mesh used to stabilize the pattern of the stencil before and after fixing it with lacquer to the stencil. Historically, fixing the patterns of the *shibugami* required a specialized process called *itoire* (糸入れ), which involved placing human hair or silk threads between all parts of the design to hold them together, before gluing them between two identical sheets of *shibugami* (Dawson, 1982, p. 122; Dickens, 2012a, p. 27). Nowadays the design pattern is fixed by lacquering the silk mesh to the carved *shibugami*. When the pattern is stabilized, the

attachments (*tsuri*, つり) that hold the pattern together are cut. This process is called *tsurikiri*, and it completes the process of the *katagami* elaboration process. Figure 4.3 illustrates the process of elaboration of a stencil, whereby the design is cut off leaving strips to fix it to the frame until all elements of the design are fixed with the support of the lacquered silk mesh.



Figure 4.2. Silk mesh or *sha* (on the left-hand side) used to stabilize the patterns in the *katagami* with lacquer. The middle picture illustrates a *katagami* once the silk mesh has been fixed and the strips holding the pattern together cut. The right-hand side picture is a detail of the mesh once the pattern has been fixed. April 2022. © Maria Santamaria



Figure 4.3. Mr. Dote Takehiko works on a *katagami*, Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki prefecture. The design is glued onto the *washi* infused with persimmon juice or *shibugami*, and the areas where the resist paste will be applied onto the fabric are cut out (left-hand side picture). The cut-out design rests attached to the frame with strips or *tsuri*, that will subsequently be removed once the silk mesh fixes all parts of the design onto the *katagami* (picture in the center). Finally, a silk mesh is placed over the *katagami*, and both *katagami* and silk mesh are coated with lacquer, allowing all parts of the design to adhere together once the strips are cut off (picture on the right-hand side). March 2020. © Maria Santamaria

Katagami carving is a highly-regarded craft in Japan with a long history dating back centuries (Kuo et al., 1998). Stencil carving was traditionally centered in Suzuka city, of Mie prefecture, where the various processes of *katagami* production, such as production of paper (*katajigami*, 型地紙), carving (*katahori*, 型彫り), threading (*itoire*, 糸入), and silk meshing (*shabari*, 紗貼) were honed to perfection (Okita & Takesue, 2012, p. 1382). Stencils are referred to as *Ise katagami*, due to the concentration of artisans devoted to this craft around Ise in Mie prefecture. The production of stencils developed rapidly from 1619 onwards, under the growing demand for high-quality stencils for Edo Komon, which were popular among local feudal lords (Nihon Kōgeikai, 1990, pp. 25-26; Sandino, 2020, p. 118). In 1955, the Japanese MEXT recognized six masters of Ise *katagami* production as LNTs. In 1993 the Agency for Cultural Affairs of this Ministry designated Ise *katagami* as one of Japan's IICP (*Jūyō Mukei Bunkazai* 重要無形文化財) and entrusted the Ise Paper Stencil Preservation Society as its institutional holder (Agency Cultural Affairs, 2023).

Each *katagami* artisan tends to specialize in one type of *katagami* and knowledge of the craft is passed down through generations of apprentices. Figure 4.4 illustrates one such example of families of stencil carvers, the Dote family. Mr. Dote Takehiko, a member of the Dote family, spoke about his upbringing in a stencil carving tradition during interviews conducted in the context of this research. He mentioned that he was born in a stencil carving tradition in Chiba prefecture and that he had been helping his father with stencil carving and delivering stencils to customers since childhood. He also recalled that during his childhood the atelier was busy all the time and that his father, the assistant, and the apprentice in the atelier could barely satisfy the orders from customers. However, over time, the number of customers' orders decreased, and the atelier shrank. Rather than waiting for orders from customers, the head of the family, Mr. Dote Sakae, actively sought customers, one of whom was Serizawa Keisuke. When Dote Takehiko was 16 years old his father arranged for him to become an apprentice at Serizawa Keisuke's atelier. Initially lodged and fed against 10 hours' daily work as apprentice, Mr. Dote continued working for Serizawa Keisuke until the latter's death in 1984. During his nearly 35-year career with Serizawa, Mr. Dote became his assistant, working not only as a stencil carver, but also taking on various other tasks in the *kenkyūjo*, including all processes of dyeing as well as training others.



Figure 4.4. Dote family along with their neighbors in front of the family quarters, Chiba prefecture. Mr. Dote Sakae, a volunteer firefighter and professional *katagami* carver who was born in a family of *Yūzen katagami* carvers stands third from left of the image. To his left is Mr. Dote Takehiko, who later became a professional *katagami* carver and worked as an assistant to Serizawa Keisuke. To the right of Mr. Dote Sakae

stands his elder son, who assisted in the family atelier. The family atelier had an apprentice and assistant, both standing in the front row center. Chiba, 1940. Courtesy of Mr. Dote Takehiko.

4.2.3. Tools

Tools for stencil dyeing include spatulas and paper cones, brushes, containers, and tenters. **Spatulas** and paper cones are used to handle the resist paste during the dyeing process. Figure 4.5 illustrates the three main types of spatulas used in this process. A first type includes spatulas with round corners used also for rice cooking, known as *shamoji* (杓文字). This spatula serves to mix the resist paste or *nori* with water until the paste reaches the appropriate texture. A second type of spatulas includes those with straight border, called *hera* (へら). Those flat border spatulas that serve to apply the resist paste through the stencil onto the fabric have a handle and are known as *dehabera* (出刃ベラ). The last type includes spatulas with straight border and square shape that are used to apply and take away the resist paste layer on the wooden plank or *itaba* (板ば), and are known as *komabera* (駒ベラ). *Hera* comes in various sizes to accommodate the precision of different designs and the various types of fabric or *washi*. Figure 4.5 illustrates the various types of spatulas used in stencil dyeing.

The **paper cones** or *tsutsu* (筒) serve to apply the resist paste to the fabrics or *washi* for free hand dyeing (*tsutsugakizome*, 筒描染), and for applying resist paste to areas already colored to apply a second dye (*fusenori*). Paper cones come in various sizes depending on the precision of the design/work to be accomplished as illustrated in Figure 4.6.



Figure 4.5. Spatulas used for stencil dyeing, Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki prefecture. The picture on the left shows round border spatula or *shamoji*, used to prepare the resist paste. The picture in the center shows spatula with straight border or *debabera*, used to apply the resist paste to the fabric and *washi*. The picture on the right side shows the squared spatula or *komabera*, used to apply and take away the thin layer of resist paste of the wooden plank or *itaba*. January 2022. © Maria Santamaria



Figure 4.6. Paper cones used for stencil dyeing, Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki prefecture. Paper cones or *tsutsu* are used to apply resist paste to the fabric or *washi* when dyeing free hand (*tsutsugakizome*), and when covering colored areas for a second dye (*fusenori*). The paper cones are cut according to the necessary amount of resist paste and the precision of the design. January 2022. © Maria Santamaria

The **brushes** used in *katazome* can be grouped into three categories based on their function. The first category consists of the flat brushes or *hake* (刷毛), which include brushes made of animal fur called *hikizomebake* (引染刷毛), used to apply the mordant onto the fabrics, and to dye the background color (*jizome*, 地染め) to fabrics or *washi*. The *sujikaibake* (筋交刷毛) are also flat brushes, in diagonal form, which are used to dye *washi*. A third type of flat brush is the so-called *shirogenoribake* (白毛糊刷毛), made of animal's white hair. This type of brush serves to apply colorless products, such as the white glue that is applied on *washi* to cover carton ply boxes. These brushes were made of animal fur, although nowadays, they are being replaced by those made of nylon.



Figure 4.7. Brushes for stencil dyeing, Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki prefecture. The upper left picture corresponds to brushes called *hake*, used for applying mordant (*gojiru*), and to color backgrounds (*jizome*). The upper right picture shows diagonal brushes (*sujikai*) used to apply background color to *washi* and *shirogenoribake*, used to apply transparent products to *washi*. The lower left picture corresponds to brushes called *fude*, used to apply color to fabrics or *washi*. The lower right picture depicts brushes made from dried grass or (*mizubake*) used to gently detach the resist paste when washing the dyed fabric. January 2022. © Maria Santamaria

The second category of brushes, known as *fude* (筆), serve to apply colors to the *washi* or fabrics (*hikizome*, 引き染め), and to shadow and blur the colors (*bokashi*, 暈し). They are also made from animal fur and come in various sizes to adapt to the detailed type of pattern to be died. The final category of brushes includes those made from dried grass or *mizubake* (水刷毛) which are used to gently detach the resist paste when washing the dyed fabric. Figure 4.7 depicts the various types of brushes used in the *katazome* process.

There are two basic types of **containers** or *yōki* (容器) used in stencil dyeing. The first type encompasses metallic bowls or dye pots of various sizes that are used to blend the resist paste with water utilizing the rounded border spatula (*shamoji*) until the paste attains its appropriate softness to be applied to the fabric. These containers are also used when applying the mordant and background color onto fabrics, and when dyeing the *washi* using the *sujikai*. The second type of containers are ceramic and include small plates or *kozara* (小皿), and mortars or *nyūbachi* (乳鉢) with pestles. They are used to prepare the colors by mixing the dyestuffs with the mordant. Figure 4.8 illustrates the various types of containers.



Figure 4.8. Containers used for stencil dyeing, Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki prefecture. The picture on the left shows a metallic dye pot, used when applying mordants or colors to fabrics. The picture on the right shows ceramic containers, which include small plates (*kozara*), and mortars (*nyūbachi*) with pestles, used to prepare colors. January 2022. © Maria Santamaria

The **tenters** are the last category of utensils used in stencil dyeing. Tenters refer to the frameworks used to hold fabric taut during the dyeing, ensuring an even dye and a proper pattern formation. The *harite* or *hariki* (張手、張木) shown in Figure 4.9 (picture on the left) are used to stretch the fabric horizontally along its length to standing poles. When the space is limited, the fabric can be stretched in a quadrangular fashion, as illustrated in Figure 4.10. The *shinshi* (伸子), on the other hand, are slivers of bamboo spiked at the ends that serve to taut the fabric width wise while dyeing, as shown in Figure 4.9 (picture on the right). The slivers measure some five to ten centimeters more than the fabric's width and act as springs when piercing both sides of the fabric (L.W. 1910, p. 40; De Ketelaere 2008, p. 18). *Shinshi* are placed at a distance of about ten centimeters apart when applying the pre-dyeing and post-dyeing mordant, and about four centimeters apart when applying color to the fabric, as Figure 4.11 illustrates. These *shinshi* are also used to taut the fabric in length and separate it prior to dipping it into the vats of indigo dye as Figure 4.12 illustrates. The so-called *shiageru* or

someage shinshi (染め上げ伸子), are special *shinshi* used to taut the dyed fabrics during the drying process. They are thinner and measure some few centimeters more than fabric's width. These *shinshi* are applied at about one centimeter apart, or in the expression of Mr. Dote “a tight finger apart” to tent the fabric gently while avoiding leaving marks referred to as *mimi* (耳) on the dyed fabric.



Figure 4.9. Tenters used in stencil dyeing. Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki prefecture. The picture on the left shows a pair of tenters (*harite*, *hariki*), used to stretch the fabric longitudinally. The picture on the right shows bamboo slivers (*shinshi*), used to stretch the fabric width-wise while dyeing. January 2022. © Maria Santamaria



Figure 4.10. Quadrangular structure used to taut fabrics in spaces of reduced size. Artist atelier, Geneva, Switzerland. An amateur dyer applies colors to the fabric that is being stretched using a specialized structure. The four cylinders or rollers of the structure taut the fabric in its length, while the *shinshi* at the back of the fabric stretch it in its width. March 1992. © Maria Santamaria



Figure 4.11. Tensing of fabrics with bamboo slivers to apply colors. A member of the Dote Katazome Kōbō, Ibaraki prefecture holds the fabric and shows its back to illustrate how these slivers are applied every ten centimeters apart. The lower panel of the fabric illustrates the front of the fabric with the resist paste applied ready to apply the colors. March 1987. Courtesy of Ms. Satō Teruko.



Figure 4.12. Taut fabrics with bamboo slivers prior to dipping them into the indigo vat. Kitajima Aizome Kōbō, Toride, Ibaraki prefecture. The slivers are positioned to the length of the fabric at about eight centimeters apart to prevent that the parts touch each other, allowing the dye to reach all parts of the fabric. A pole collecting the slivers is suspended from the ceiling with a rope to allow the immersion of the fabric into the indigo vat. March 1993. Courtesy of Ms. Satō Teruko.

4.2.4. *Ingredients*

In stencil dyeing, there are three main categories of ingredients in addition to water, which serves to prepare the dyes and mordants, and to prepare and wash the fabrics and *washi*. The first category includes the **resist paste** or *nori* (糊), which is a mixture of sticky rice flour and rice bran (Dickens, 2012a, p. 27) that safeguards the capillary attraction of fibers and prevents the running of colors in the fabric. According to interviewees during the fieldwork of this research, this paste was traditionally produced in each atelier, or purchased in 20-30 kilograms' containers from small-scale manufacturers who tailored their production for their customers. However, many of the craftspeople producing the resist paste have since retired and have not been replaced. Nowadays it is possible to purchase ready-made resist paste from semi-industrial manufacturers. When applied through the stencil, the resist paste creates a negative image of the design on the fabric, safeguarding the protected areas from colors, while permitting colors to penetrate in the non-reserved areas of the fabric.

The second category of ingredients includes the **mordants**. The affinity of textile fibers for natural dyes is generally low, requiring the use of mordants. These chemicals possess

affinity for both, the fabric and the dyestuff, thereby facilitating a bond between them, enhancing color's light fastness and washing fastness. Mordants form an insoluble complex of the dye within the fibers, improving the quality of color as well. Animal fibers hold mordants more effectively than vegetable fibers, so silk or wool colors are typically more vibrant than those of cotton or hemp (Schneider, 1987, p. 429). Natural dyestuffs that require mordants to color fibers are referred to as mordant dyes, in contrast to other infrequent dyes such as turmeric or pomegranate rind, which have tremendous affinity for cellulose fibers and are known as direct natural dyes (Samanta & Konar, 2011, pp. 33-34; Saxena & Raja, 2014, p. 59). Mordanting can be performed by pre-mordanting (before dyeing), simultaneously mordanting and dyeing, or post mordanting (after dyeing) methods. Some dyestuffs produce color by themselves without the need of mordants, such as indigo, which is trapped in the fibers through reduction by fermentation and subsequent oxidation. These dyes are known as vat dyes (Ahmed, 2009, p. 34; Melo, 2009, p. 4, Samanta & Konar, 2011, pp. 33-34).

Mordants play a crucial role in different phases of the dyeing process. One of the mordants is a solution of dried soybeans' flakes called *gojiru* (豆汁), which literally means 'juice of (soy) beans'. This tanning agent is water-soluble. *Gojiru* is prepared by putting soybean flakes in a mesh and soaking it into water for about 30 minutes, then squeezing the mesh to extract the solution. This solution can be used for about five days if kept refrigerated. *Gojiru* is then diluted depending on the type of fabric and on *the eye of the dyer*. The solution is applied to the taut fabric on both sides prior to dyeing to prevent colors from bleeding and to add luster to the fabric (Hays & Hays, 1992, p. 189). There is no need to apply *gojiru* to *washi* dyeing. *Gojiru* is also used to prepare most of dyestuffs. In addition to *gojiru*, there is a separate mordant, that consists of an aqueous formaldehyde solution, and which is cautiously sprinkled over the colored fabric to fix the colors prior to washing. This formaldehyde solution is unnecessary for *washi* dyeing.

The final category of ingredients used in textile dyeing comprises the **dyestuffs**. Japan has a rich history and appreciation of colors that can be traced back over a millennium. The author Murasaki Shikibu (974-circa 1014) described in detail more than 80 different colors in her work, *Tales of Genji*. Historically, bright colors were associated with and reserved for the upper classes of the Japanese society (*kinjiki*, 禁色) as opposed to *duller* colors allowed for the commoners (*yurushi*, 許し色) up until the Edo period. However, the modernization of Japan

and the importation of dyestuffs from abroad changed the situation, with a wider range of synthetic colors available, coexisting alongside natural colors. Consequently, there was a progressive loss of skills of dyeing with natural dye materials (Ricketts III, 2006, pp. 8-9; Yoshioka, 2010, pp. 3-4), despite the Mingei efforts to revitalize this tradition.

Traditional folk stencil dyeing uses two types of natural dyes, which are referred to as *ganryō* (顔料) dyestuffs: natural organic dyestuffs and inorganic pigments. Natural organic dyestuffs consist of plant and animal-based dyestuffs that are soluble in the media used as solvent. In contrast, inorganic pigments have limited solubility and poorer fabric penetration than natural organic dyestuffs. One such example of inorganic pigment used in traditional folk textile dyeing is the white green or *byakuroku* (白緑色), made from malachite powder. Some dyers use synthetic organic dyestuffs, which are referred to as *senryō* (染料) for their stenciled dyeing works.

The efficacy of a dye, or color fastness, depends on the capacity of its chromophore or chemical component to either bind to the surface of the fibers of the fabric, or be trapped within them (Melo, 2009, p. 4). Color fastness relates to the color's resistance to light (light fastness), to washing (wash fastness), or to rubbing (rub fastness). Yellow dyes show the poorest light fastness, while cochineal red dyestuff has good washing and light fastness. Indigo has the highest light fastness of all (Melo, 2009, p. 15; Saxena & Raja, 2014, p. 45). The light fastness of the colors depends on the mordant used in the overall dyeing process. Wash fastness refers to the stability of the color on the fabric when washed with detergents containing varied amounts of alkali. Indigo dyes have the best wash fastness among the natural dyes. Rub fastness relates to the resistance to color fading and staining of the fabric when rubbed with standard white fabric. Natural dyes have a poorer rub fastness than synthetic ones. Natural fibers of animal origin such as silk or wool have better fastness than fibers of plant origin, although the color fastness can be modified with mordants and time of dyeing. Synthetic fibers such as rayon or nylon have a poorer color fastness than natural fibers when applying the same dyeing method (Noda, 2008, p. 98; Samanta & Konar, 2011, pp. 50-52, Zarkogianni et al., 2011).

The three most representative natural organic dyestuffs used in traditional textile dyeing in Japan include the blue indigo, *kon*, or *ai* (藍); yellow or *shibuki* (渋黄色); and red, vermillion, *beni-no-hana* or *benibana* (red flower), or *shu* (朱色). The **Japanese red** or *benibana* (紅花)

was initially obtained from the safflower plant (*Carthamus tinctorius*) or common saw-wort. The flowers were collected in spring and dried into cakes for later use. The dyestuff produced the red color only after producing a yellow dye, which was discarded. The use of safflower as a dyestuff can be traced back for more than three and a half millennia to Egypt. In Japan, safflower arrived through India and was used for centuries until it was gradually replaced by the animal-based (insect) cochineal carmine starting in 1869. By 1880, safflower had practically disappeared from Japan (Rein, 1889, pp. 176-177). The use of safflower diminished for two main reasons. Firstly, cheap imports of safflower from China displaced the local production of safflower in the Mogami River valley (Yamagata prefecture), the most important production site in Japan. Secondly, changes in policy of the feudal authorities of Yamagata assuming the control of the production in the 1650s, followed by Tokugawa government's measures to destroy this monopoly later; together with pressure to increase the production of exportable products such as tea and silk, led to the replacement of safflower fields with mulberry and tea plantations (Cesaratto et al., 2018, p. 5; Konta, 1979, pp. 558-562 and 593-596). The *sukaretto* (scarlet), a synthetic red dye made of naphthol, appeared in Japan in 1890 and found its way in traditional crafts, including woodprints and textiles. Due to its brightness, the utilization of scarlet dye received some criticism, as it broke the harmony of Japanese *traditional* colors (Cesaratto et al., 2018, p. 10). Nevertheless, the replacement of the *traditional* dyestuffs with synthetic ones was not abrupt or total, but rather gradual and dye specific to the craftsperson and the type of work produced. Examples of the fluidity of approach to the type of dye used include artists and traditional folk textile dyers such as Yunoki Samiro (1922-2024), who belongs to the Serizawa lineage and who uses synthetic dyes for most of his stencil work (Yunoki, 2021, pp. 68-69; Rios, 2021, p. 196-197), or dyer Yamagishi Koichi (b1946), a professional dyer in Yonezawa, Yamagata prefecture, who is reviving the *benibana* color natural dyeing (Moriyama, 2020, p. 368).

Red color was undoubtedly the most difficult color to achieve before the appearance of synthetic dyestuff. Cochineal (carmine) refers to both the color and the dried pregnant females of *Dactylopius* species of insects (Schneider, 1987, p. 427; De Rosso & Mercadante, 2009, pp. 60-61; Saxena & Raja, 2014, p. 46). The cochineal carmine or crimson is a highly-priced color. Some of the dyers interviewed during the fieldwork reported that depending on the importance of the craftwork, they mix several dyestuffs such as madder (*Rubia cordofila*) for *shuiro* or *akane* (朱色), and sappanwood (*Caesalpia sappan*) for *suō* (蘇芳) to produce red color.

Indigo, also known as **Japanese blue**, is one of the oldest and widely used natural dyes, with a continuous history of use spanning five millennia. Indigo has been used in India since antiquity (Melo, 2009, pp. 10-11). The word “indigo” derives from the Greek word *indikon*, meaning ‘something Indian’ (Balfour-Paul, 2006, pp. 1-2). Indigo is one of the natural dyes with a highest light and wash fastness, which helps to explain its continuous use and its widespread popularity, being considered as the “king of natural dyes” (Yoshioka 2010, p. 5; Saxena & Raja, 2014, pp. 39-40).

The sources of blue dye are the indigo-giving plants, which belong to several botanical families and are found in diverse environments (Balfour-Paul, 2006, p. 3; Cardon, 2009, p. 23). In temperate climates, the best-known source for indigo is woad or *Isatis tinctoria*, and in Asia, the *Persicaria tinctorium* or dyer’s knotweed (John and Angelini, 2009, p. 92). Unlike other natural dyes where the plants can be directly used to color media, the source plants for indigo contain its precursor. This precursor is then transformed into indigo color during the extraction process. The extraction process differs depending on the region where indigo is produced. In tropical and warm areas, the precursor to blue is transformed by soaking the leaves until they decompose and release their dye. Subsequently, the dye is sold as a concentrated liquid or as a hard cake (Ricketts III, 2006, p. 7).

In cooler areas, the dyestuff is extracted by composting the dried leaves, and the process lasts for several months. This method was developed in Japan using *Persicaria (Polygonum) tinctorium*, and in Europe using *Isatis tinctoria* or woad (Ricketts III, 2006, p. 8; Saxena & Raja, 2014, p. 40). Woad, which is native to Europe and the Middle East, has been used for its blue color since the Bronze and Iron Ages, as evidenced by historical records (Balfour-Paul, 2006, p. 1; Cardon et al., 2023, p. 682). After harvesting, the plants are crushed into fist-sized balls and stored in sheds, ready for local use or shipping elsewhere. These balls are known as couched woad in English, or pastel *agranat* in French (Cardon et al., 2023, p. 682).

In Japan, the primary method for extracting indigo is the fermentation of the leaves of *Persicaria (Polygonum) tinctorium*, a plant native from Vietnam and Southern China (Clarke, 2017, p. 3). In Okinawa, indigo is extracted from the fermentation of fresh leaves, while, elsewhere in Japan, it is extracted from the fermentation of dry leaves. These two methods are collectively referred to as *tatezome* (建染) because they involve fermentation, as opposed to

dyeing with the maceration of fresh leaves or *namabazome* (生葉染). The Akita and Tokushima prefectures are the two best known areas for indigo dyeing, and both use the composting of the dyer's knotweed as the extracting method of indigo, also called *sukumo* (染). The *sukumo* production method is the most efficient source of indigo, followed by the couched woad (Cardon et al., 2023, p. 702). Tokushima is renowned for producing the best quality *sukumo*, and has a long-standing reputation for dyeing as the ancestral tradition (Rein, 1889, p. 175; Ricketts III, 2006, pp. 7-8). The indigo tradition of Tokushima is often referred as Awa Ai, taking the name of the region where Tokushima is located. In Akita the dyeing tradition has run parallel with its weaving tradition (Miyamoto, 2006, p. 95).

The process of indigo dyeing requires four key components: *sukumo*, an alkaline solution made of hot water and ash made from either natural wood or fish flakes to help dissolve the dye in water, a reduction agent such as wheat bran or sake to facilitate the natural fermentation of the bacteria in the *sukumo*, and water. (Clarke, 2017, p. 3; Ricketts III, 2006, pp. 17-19). Each atelier or *kōbō* has its own unique combination of these components. During the fieldwork conducted in Tokushima, the Buaisō staff noted that they exclusively use leaves to make *sukumo*, resulting in neater tones of blue, especially for brighter colors. Conversely, other *sukumo* producers interviewed noted that they use leaves and stems in their *sukumo* production. Indigo can produce various shades of blue, ranging from light to almost black-blue. The presence of impurities in the raw materials being composted into *sukumo* can result in the production of purple hues.

There are two methods to produce **Japanese yellow** dye, also known as *shibuki iro* (渋黄色). In the first method referred to as *yamamomo zome* (楊梅染), the dyestuff is obtained from the decoction of the bark and branches of the Red-bayberry bush, also called wax myrtle, Yangbai tree, or *Myrica rubra*. The resulting dye is presented in hard cakes for storage (Noda, 2008, p. 93). The dyestuff contains an astringent pigment, which was traditionally used to color and strengthen the durability of fabrics and fishing nets (Rein, 1889, p. 177). The second method to obtain yellow dyestuff is called *shibugaki*. It is obtained from unripe kaki fruits, which are stamped in iron mortars every summer until obtaining a pasty mass. This mass is placed in wooden tubs that are soaked in water, and then transferred to bags made of straws. These bags are repeatedly squeezed to obtain the juice, known as *shibu* or *kaki-no-shibu* (柿の渋). The product obtained through the two methods have similar uses.

The *kōbō* purchase the *shibuki* dyestuff in hard cakes or bricks. Ms. Dote Chizuko commented how it was always wise to keep one or two litters of the dyestuff ready for use, because it takes a long time to prepare it: the bricks need to be put in a net to soak in water until they melt. The resulting liquid is poured into containers, where natural white alum or *myōban* (明晩) is added. The white alum acts as a mordant. It precipitates the liquid and stabilizes the color. This is a delicate step called *myōban nitsumeru* and requires the dyer's experience to decide on the amount of white alum which should be added to the liquid. Ms. Dote also commented that in the old days, *shibuki* was popular, although it was never easy to apply. The dye can be stored for months. When used, the supernatant is poured into a container and diluted with water until the adequate color is obtained. The resulting yellow dye can range in color from pale yellow to brown depending on the dilution. Like indigo, *shibuki* is considered to protect fabrics or *washi*, and as some dyers commented “these two colors age beautifully.”

4.2.5. Techniques and processes

The term *senshoku* is used in Japan to refer to craft textiles and is composed of two ideograms denoting dye and fabric respectively (染織). *Senshoku* includes dyeing and weaving. There are two categories of dyeing techniques. One category of dyeing is referred to as pre-dyeing (*sakizome*, 先染) because the dyeing occurs before the weaving of the fabric. Yarn dyeing (*itozome*, 糸染), of which the ikat patterned dyeing (*kasuri*, 紵) is an example, is considered a form of pre-dyeing. The other category is known as post-dyeing (*atozome*, 後染) because the dyeing is applied to a woven fabric, either to the totality of the fabric, or with a pattern. Broadly speaking, the patterned dye is referred to as *bōsen* (防染) or resist dye. Patterned dyeing is of principal importance to this research.

The patterned dyeing can be obtained with a pattern or stencil, in which case is called *katazome*. There are various types of *katazome* depending on the pattern and the use of resist paste to protect the fabric from color. In addition, there are patterned techniques which do not use stencils, or use them partially. Table 4.1 presents a classification of patterned folk textile post-dyeing techniques, with a distinction made between those that use stencils and resist paste, and those that do not.

Table 4.1. Patterned folk textile post-dyeing in Japan. Types by stencil and resist paste use.

↓ To make patterns →		Uses <i>kata</i> /stencils	
		YES	NO
Uses <i>nori</i> / resist paste (<i>noribōsen</i>)	YES	<i>Bingata</i> /Okinawa stencils Edo & Kyo komon/small patterns <i>Honzome</i> /pour dye <i>Nassen</i> /colored resist paste	<i>Tsutsugakizome</i> /free hand Yūzen zome combines stencil and free hand dyeing
	NO	<i>Surikomizome</i> /direct dye <i>Bassen</i> , <i>Nukizome</i> /discharge dye	<i>Shiborizome</i> /Tie-dye

Katazome refers to a technique of repeated pattern dyeing that involves the use of stencils. Resist paste made of rice known as *nori* (のり, 糊) is applied through the stencils to delimitate the areas to be protected from the dye. In such case, the technique is referred to as *nori bōsen* (糊防染), or resist dye which uses *nori* as the resist paste. There are several types of *katazome* that use *nori* in such way, such as the traditional dyeing from Okinawa known as *bingata* (紅型), the small pattern dyeing characteristic of the Tokyo and Kyoto areas known as Edo Komon (江戸小紋) and Kyo Komon (京小紋), the *nassen* (捺染) in which the pattern is applied through colored resist paste as a print, and the pour dyeing, also known as *honzome* (本染め), which uses hand machinery and is particularly renowned in Hamamatsu. Some *katazome* types do not use resist paste, such as the direct application of dye through stencils, known as *surikomizome* (摺り込み染め). On occasions, direct dyeing is combined with stencil dyeing, with the stencil dyeing used to create the lines and the direct dyeing being used to color the areas outside the lines. This technique adds dynamism to the dyeing work.²⁸ Another type of *katazome* which does not use resist paste is the discharge dye, known as *nukizome* or *bassen* (抜染) because instead of applying color through the stencil, it uses bleach to take the dye away from the dyed fabric.

Other patterned traditional folk textile dyeing do not use stencils for their patterns. For instance, the free hand dyeing or *tsutsugakizome* (筒画染), in which the craftspeople apply the resist paste by hand using a paper cone or *tsutsu* (筒) to create the design. Another example of patterned dyeing using resist paste is the Yūzen dyeing (友禅染), where craftspeople combine *tsutsugakizome* with direct dyeing with stencils (*nassen*, 捺染). However, as the primary technique in Yūzen dyeing is not a repeated pattern dyeing with stencils, it is broadly

²⁸ As was the case of one of the versions of Serizawa's Don Quixote *e-hon*, which he created with this technique.

considered a category apart from *katazome*. Another patterned technique which does not use resist paste or stencils to create patterns is the tie-dye or *shiborizome* (絞染) (Nihon Kōgeikai, 1990, pp. 22-25; Krauss, 2006, pp. 13-26).

The dyeing process starts with the election of the fabric. Prior to dyeing, fabrics need to be soaked in water for several hours or boiled to eliminate any finishing products in them at the time of purchase. The fabric is then stretched taut with tenters and slivers until it dries completely. Mr. Dote explained that stretching uniformly the width of the fabric, or *habadashi* (幅出), was a professional craft, and that they always sent their fabrics for steam ironing or *yunoshi* (湯のし) to these craftspeople before dyeing. In some instances, dyers sew narrow strips of cloth between fabrics used for wrapping, such as *furoshiki* and *fukusa*, to ensure that these fabrics are dyed in their entire length (Hays & Hays, 1992, p. 191).

Next, the fabric is removed from the tenters and slivers, and is placed on a wooden plank (*itaba*). This plank is an important element of the dyeing apparels because it serves to fix the fabric flat and taut while the resist paste is applied. To accomplish this, the dyers apply a thin layer of diluted resist paste, which adheres to the back of the fabric and allows for precise placement of the stencil (*okurikata*) without the risk of the fabric moving. At the commencement of every year, the previous year's layer of resist paste is systematically eliminated from the plank using flat spatulas or *komabera* until the plank is thoroughly clean. A fresh layer of resist paste is then applied, symbolizing the start of a new dyeing season. In the Dote Katazome Kōbō, upon the conclusion of this work, the dyers indulged in a period of relaxation, savoring green tea while reminiscing on how the fragrance of the new resist paste on the wooden plank evoked memories of similar rites of passage from one year to the next at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo.

To prepare for the resist paste application, the dyer sprays a gentle mist of water on the plank to soften the resist paste layer. After a short interval, the fabric is extended and flattened against the plank, making it ready for the application of the resist paste. Some of the *kōbō* visited during the fieldwork employ flat-head pins to fix the fabric to the wooden plank. According to the dyers of these *kōbō* using flat-head pins is a less cumbersome method than using planks with resist paste layers.

The subsequent step in the stencil dyeing process is the application of the resist paste through the stencils, which should be soaked in water to prevent cracking, with the help of the flat spatula (*hera*). Some *kōbō* use dyed resist paste when they want to create a contrast between the original color of the fabric and the resisted stenciled area (Pontsioen, 2012, p. 115). The stencil needs to be set with precision to avoid any interruptions in the pattern, which would ruin the result of the dyeing work. To facilitate the replication of the stencil pattern, stencil carvers place a mark inside the pattern or *okuri* (送). Upon the complete application of the resist paste to the fabric, the tenters or *harite* are attached to both ends of the fabric. The fabric is then removed from the plank and once it is attached to vertical poles, slivers of bamboo (*shinshi*) are applied to stretch the fabric and let it dry. The slivers of bamboo are placed approximately ten centimeters apart. The dyers must ensure that the fabric is completely dry, but not overly so, to avoid cracking of the resist paste on the fabric that would result in colors on unwanted surfaces. The pre-dye mordant or *gojiru* is applied to the fabric on both sides. The dyer carefully controls the concentration of the mordant considering the specific fabric type. She then applies it evenly on both sides of the fabric to ensure uniform coloration of the dyestuff on the fabric. The completion of the pre-dye mordant application ends when the fabric has dried. This marks the end of the preparation phase, and the start of the coloring phase.

The coloring phase starts with the preparation of the colors. The dyestuff powder is mixed with *gojiru*, which is diluted with water according to the fabric to be dyed. Prior to the application on the fabric, each color is tested on *washi* or -even better- on an extreme of the fabric to ensure that the concentration of *gojiru* and tone of colors are appropriate. The application of the colors in stencil dyeing as well as in free hand dyeing is known as *irozashi* (色差し). *Irozashi* is always done on the taut fabric with brushes (*fude*) of different sizes, depending on the size of the design. All colors need to be applied twice, with sufficient drying time between applications. The first application is more diluted than the second. A post-dyeing mordant is then applied to the fabric to protect the dyed areas that are ready for washing. Often, various colored areas are covered with resist paste before applying another color, such as a background. This technique, called *fusenori* (伏糊), involves covering selected areas of the fabric already stenciled, to apply other colors to non-resisted areas. *Fusenori* is always performed by hand using paper cones or *tsutsu* (糊筒). When dyers want to color the background or *jiiro* (地色), the fabric must be washed, and the colored areas be protected by hand with resist paste using the *tsutsu*, repeating the dyeing process.

Sometimes, dyers create shadowed areas or *bokashi* (暈し) to create color gradations on various colored areas of the fabric. *Bokashi*, which comes from the word *bokasu* (暈す), which means to blur, and is equivalent to the term used for *bingata* dyeing in Okinawa, *kumadori* (隈取) or color gradation (Sarashima, 2013a, pp. 197-199). Blurring is done with only a minimal amount of color loaded onto the brush. Any color can be used for *bokashi*, although indigo (in bars), burgundy, or black (Japanese ink or *sumi* 炭) are the most frequently used. Blurring the fabrics in this way adds depth and dynamism to the dye. However, it is a tedious process that requires careful attention from the dyer. As Ms. Dote commented “you need to check for any missing *bokashi* which comes promptly to your eyes. Then, you better count how many *bokashi* you need to have per segment of the stencil. And just do this operation again, because it is nearly sure that you forgot at least one *bokashi*.”

The coloring process in the case of indigo is different. Once the resist paste is applied to the fabric, it is held taut with the help of slivers of bamboo to create an open zigzag on the fabric to keep the parts from touching each other. The fabric is then hanged on a longer wood guide before being immersed into the indigo vat as Figure 4.12 illustrates. The dyer will repeat the immersion process until the desired color is achieved. Since the blue color will only appear after washing the fabric, the dyer’s experience is critical in determining how many times the fabric needs to be immersed in the indigo vat. The fabric needs to dry completely between immersions to prevent the resist paste running. In the case of indigo dyeing, the blurring is always done using black color.

Except for indigo dye, which does not require a post-dyeing mordant, all dyed fabrics with natural colors require the application of a post-dye mordant prior to washing to improve the color fastness. The most commonly used post-dyeing mordant is a dilution of formaldehyde, which is gently sparkled onto the taut fabric in a uniform manner once the coloring phase is completed. Sparkling formaldehyde, called *horumarin kirifuku* (ホルマリン霧吹), should be conducted in an open-air environment due to its potential respiratory toxicity.

The washing process, known as *mizumoto* (水元) is meticulous and time-consuming. In the past, washing dyed fabrics was considered a separate craft. The fabric is immersed in water with care, as improper handling can make marks on the colored areas. The fabric is left to soak in water for several hours to allow the resist paste to soften and dissolve as much as

possible. To help the resist paste detach from the fabric, the dyer stretches the fabric while it is completely immersed in the water, by shaking it gently several times with about a five-centimeter diagonal movement along the length of the fabric. The remaining resist paste is removed by gently caressing the fabric while it is immersed in water with a loose grass brush or *mizubake*. Once the fabric is free of resist paste, it is stretched out to dry using tenters and thinner slivers that are specifically designed for drying washed fabrics, or *someage shinshi*. These slivers are placed one centimeter apart to minimize the appearance of marks or “ears” or *mimi* (耳) on the fabric. Despite efforts to avoid them, some *mimi* are inevitable. However, the closer the slivers are placed together, the less noticeable the *mimi* will be. After the fabric has dried completely, the slivers are removed. The dyer then inspects the fabric for any remaining *mimi* on the fabric, which can be removed out by gently rubbing the edges with a damp towel. Once the fabric is dry, it is rolled -never folded- and the dyeing process is complete.

The dyeing process involves a laborious task of tenting the fabric repeatedly, which can be a challenge for a single dyer (Pontsioen, 2012, pp. 116-117). According to Mr. Dote Takehiko, working with another person yields results equivalent to three people, but working alone is calm yet slow. To adapt to the situation of working individually, some dyers have modified their tools. For instance, Mr. Yamauchi Takeshi, a professional dyer of Hamamatsu, who works always alone, has adjusted the tenters’ ends so that cords can be attached and released with a single hand. As he put it, “Needs make your brain be creative. Not only tenters, but I have figured out how to work alone. I use pins to fix the fabric to the plank to be able to detach it without the help of anybody.”

4.3. Before and now

The description of materials and techniques of folk textile dyeing in the previous section provides the basis on which the present section analyzes the changes in *katazome* production, as the craftspeople perceive them. The perceptions of practitioners of other traditional folk textile dyeing, such as tie-dye, Yūzen dyeing, or pour dye complement this inside perspective.

The materials and methods described above are time-tested but by no means static.

The production of folk traditional dyeing has undergone significant transformations in terms of fabric and color deviating from its aristocratic origins. These changes relate primarily to a shift from a social class-based consumption pattern to one driven by economic purchasing power and individual taste. Nowadays, a wider range of dyeing products is available to a larger number of people. The shift has been fueled by using synthetic dyestuffs, imports of cheap products, and advancement in *katazome* production technologies. Despite these changes, the fundamental techniques and processes in stencil dyeing production, including *sukumo* and *kakishibu* production, have remained largely unchanged (Rein, 1889, pp. 173 and 181-182; Balfour-Paul, 2006, pp. 3-4). According to the insights gained from interviews with dyers conducted during the fieldwork, the stability of the dyeing technique is rooted in the essence of what they considered craftsmanship. For them, being an artisan entailed overcoming the challenges encountered in their daily work. The dyers acknowledged that the availability of materials was one of the main challenges, and attributed their ability to solve such situations to their craft expertise. As one dyer expressed:

For instance, we need to think what to do when the (new) *washi* does not dye well. If marks appear, we need to find ways to make them invisible. We acquire this technique experimenting and with experience. This is the knowledge that comes with years of practice. (Professional dyer, 17 December 2017)

The interviewees considered that some of the changes in the availability of materials for dyeing production have been beneficial. One such example relates to the availability of the resist paste which is used to transfer the design pattern to the fabric. In discussing how the changes in production of resist paste had affected his work, Mr. Dote explained that in the past, he, and other artisans used to mix the rice powder and *nuka* (rice bran) themselves to make their own resist paste. However, as orders of dyeing products from customers increased and with the rising price of *mochigome* (sticky rice), it became more cost-effective to buy ready-to-use resist paste from local artisans. Over the years, Mr. Dote commented, that the situation evolved and soon they were obliged to source the resist paste from bigger scale manufacturers:

We had to adapt because little by little the local old artisans from whom we purchased *nori* stopped making it, since the demand decreased... Most of them could not make a living with so few people asking for these products. When (the local artisans) made *nori* in town, people protested because they said that it smelled

bad. This was another reason for stopping the production. We found a manufacturer in Kyoto who sold *nori* only through distributing shops, such as Sansai or Tanakanao. The distributing shop selects the manufacturers, judging what is nearest to what we used to use... We take *nori* from Sansai. The *nori* from Tanakanao is too dark and we can hardly see the design.... (Professional dyer, 05 October 2019)

Mr. Dote also mentioned that the price of the resist paste purchased from the specialized shop had not changed significantly over time, and it was now easier to order the amount needed, such as one kilogram, compared to buying in bulk of around 25 kilograms as was done in the past. The present supply reduced waste, he said, as previously, buying *nori* in bulk resulted in mold formation and they were obliged to discard a significant amount of the resist paste. Mr. Dote concluded by stating, “Now it is better.” Overall, Mr. Dote’s account provides insights on how changes in society and economic factors have affected the availability and production of resist paste, and how artisans have adjusted their craft practices to overcome these challenges.

In the perspective of the interviewees, the availability and quality of certain materials, such as brushes and fabrics, have changed towards a less satisfactory situation. The interviewees noted that some materials, such as traditional packing boxes for the sale of traditional *somemono*, were no longer available at reasonable prices. The interviewees shared their reflections on past and present times, and the challenges they faced in continuing their craftwork. Two dyers detailed the fabrics and traditional packing boxes’ situation as follows:

Now, there are no good-quality fabrics, even if we go to the specialized shop, even if we ask for good-quality pongee silk, nothing is good-quality nowadays ... now it is difficult. In the old days, the people selling fabrics travelled around, even in India. They loved fabrics and looked here and there. Even handwoven silk or cotton from India... These people knew what we needed, and they came to sell the fabrics to us. We could also ask for different fabrics that we would need... However, this profession does not exist anymore. Of course, we still have many fabrics because our work depended on always having a fabric when we would need it. So, whenever we thought that a fabric was good, we would buy it immediately... but the new ones are not so good and expensive, and it is very difficult to get good ones. (Professional dyer, 21 April 2019)

Traditional paper boxes (to present the dyeing product for sale) are no more available. The artisans who used to make them are either retiring, dying, or going out of business because so few people buy these boxes anymore. Now there are cheaper boxes from China and people buy them ready made... For us, one way would be to present the *somemono* in these Chinese white boxes, and put *washi* around without sticking it to the boxes like we used to do traditionally. Of course, this is not as good as if the *washi* would be glued traditionally to the box, but there is no other way... I have the impression that I belong to the Showa era, and that this era is far gone. Now everything seems to be mass produced, and small artisans are disappearing. Of course, since the artisanal supply chain is disappearing, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the level of detail in our work. I wonder if the fact that all these jobs are disappearing will make one day my job to disappear as well. (Professional dyer, 1 March 2018)

The evolving availability of materials and the increasing difficulty in finding traditional ones was a recurrent issue during the fieldwork. Similar situation has been reported by others analyzing the experiences of dyers and other craftspeople in the Tokyo area (Pontsioen, 2012, p. 123) and in Kyoto (Hays and Hays, 1992, p. 192). However, despite these challenges, these authors note that the fundamental techniques and processes associated with dyeing production have remained unchanged over time, as previously noted.

4.4. What makes a *katazome* to be ‘traditional’?

This section explores the concept of tradition as an attribute to the *katazome* products and dyeing processes from the perspective of those involved in the craft. Specifically, their insights on the “how” or “what” aspects of the craft are relevant to the present chapter. The preliminary perspectives of the dyers and the craft dealers discussed in this section serve as an introduction to a more substantive discussion on the essence of these crafts and their preservation, which is addressed in Chapter Six, when the feedback from other stakeholders will be integrated.

During the fieldwork dyers and craft dealers emphasized the added value of these textiles because *they were traditional crafts*. However, what exactly did they mean by

tradition? Did tradition depend on the materials used, the location of production, the dyer, the production technique, the patterns and designs, or the intended use of the textiles? Can a kimono, its band (*obi*), a doorway curtain (*noren*), or a wrapping cloth (*furoshiki*) be always considered traditional crafts? And more importantly, what was the essence of these crafts that needed to be preserved and what could be modified or relinquished from their perspective?

The responses from the interviewees were nuanced. Often, they stated that it was not their place to judge their own work, but rather left to those who purchased their products. However, scooping into their comments, it was possible to identify several attributes characterizing a traditional folk textile dyeing. The most frequently mentioned attributes included authenticity, locale/sense of place, and the traceability of the craft's origin (as opposed to its uniqueness as a craft or artwork), as well as temporality. They attached a relative importance to the identity of the dyer, with greater emphasis on the characteristics of the final product.

Authenticity as a concept relates to three broad categories. The first category relates to philosophy: being authentic is being faithful to oneself, being sincere, true, and honest with oneself. The second category is a concern of the law of evidence: being authentic is being a reliable and accurate representation of something. The third category concerns most the art domain and relates to an object being true to its origins and to its authorship. Authenticity entails considering the intent of the artist, the purpose of the object and the circumstances of its history. Societies value authenticity positively and have constructed a culture based on a ubiquitous ideal of authenticity which some consider a “malaise of modernity” (Varga & Guignon, 2020). This consideration of authenticity reflects a conservative position where the craft tradition is imagined as being anchored in an unchanging past with fixed practice. However, the craft tradition can be imagined as an eminently evolving process, open to creativity, which is forward-looking, from a “tradition-as-resource” perspective (Bell et al., 2021, pp. 8-9); and which incorporates new materials and methods in response to shifting social, economic, and sustainable developments (Niedderer & Townsend, 2019, pp. 177). The idea of authenticity is not static, and being authentic at one moment in time represents a system of organizing and providing stability of a discipline at that time. Authenticity therefore is a *negotiated* term that provides a universal validity built on what is exemplary at one point in time in a concrete setting, and cannot be generalized on a static/permanent period (McNeil & Mak, 2007, pp. 2-3, pp. 27-28, p. 44).

The concept of authenticity, as expressed by the interviewees, implied using materials in a certain manner. However, it became complicated to articulate the specific concepts behind what the dyers meant with “certain manner.” They referred to “using fabrics for the intended purpose”, “using colors that were concordant with the Japanese traditional colors”, and using patterns which they deemed “traditional.” For instance, they explained that cotton or hemp was meant to be used for doorway curtains, while hemp was not intended for wrapping cloths. The interviewees commented that doorway curtains made of synthetic fibers displaying the name of a shop in loud colors printed on them, were merely cloths used for a traditional purpose but were not traditional or authentic products. Colors and design were crucial to defining authenticity in their view. To further understand the relationship between tradition and authenticity, I presented a stenciled fabric dyed through the direct application (*surikomizome*) of synthetic colors and asked my interviewee:

Q: Would you say that this dyeing is traditional?

A: Yes, the design is traditional.

Q: What about the color?

A: The color is not traditional, but you know? We must think about means to make it easy for people to adhere to *somemono* (textile dyeing) these days.

Q: In such case, would you consider this *somemono* as authentic?

A: Well, the technique and design are authentic ... I think so, the colors maybe not... this is difficult, probably not.... It is not authentic in such a sense, but overall, maybe yes ... (Professional dyer, 17 December 2017)

Based on the comments of the dyer, it became clear to me that they considered colors to be a negotiable attribute when assessing the authenticity of traditional stencil dyeing. This could partially be due to their consideration of some traditional dyeing techniques, such as pour dyeing, using non-traditional synthetic colors, including strident yellows, reds, and blues. The dyers placed greater importance on the color of the dyestuff than on its composition, recognizing that they sometimes used synthetic dyestuffs to improve the light fastness of the finished product. The dyers also explained how they adapted to new tools, or improvised when their production was discontinued, as otherwise they would not be able to continue their dyeing work. Additionally, during my fieldwork, it became apparent that the dyers considered authenticity to be closely linked to the traceability of the lineage of the craft and mastering its techniques. For the dyers, producing *katazome* using the dyeing techniques passed down to

them for generations was crucial and had little room for deviation. One professional dyer recounted a conversation with a staff of the Serizawa Keisuke Art and Craft Museum in Sendai visiting her *kōbō*. The visitor had remarked on Serizawa's traces and traces of the dyer's own atelier in a kimono sash that had been dyed by one of the apprentices of the *kōbō*. The dyer, commenting on the pride felt when hearing that the visitor from the museum had recognized the influence of both sides, remarked that she had only transmitted what as a dyer, she had learned from Serizawa (2 June 2018).

Several dyers who used pour dyeing techniques explained that they considered their products as traditional, despite using hand-assisted machines and synthetic dyestuffs. They justified their position by stating that their designs were *purely Japanese*, and their products were traditional hand towels (*tenugui*, 手拭) and summer kimono (*yukata*, 浴衣) used in most traditional facilities, such as Japanese inns and hot springs. However, the most important factor that justified pour dyeing as traditional craft for them was the *authentically Japanese technique of stencil dyeing* they used, and that it was rooted in the manual stencil dyeing tradition.

The dyers regarded stencil dyeing as traditional because it was authentically produced in a *kōbō*. For them, the *kōbō* was an essential condition of authenticity that conferred a sense of **placeness** to the dyeing products. Placeness came through from the dyers' attachment to where the craft practice happened, and not to the region or area where the *kōbō* was located. For instance, they considered that using the *bingata* dyeing technique of Okinawa with Ise stencils, and *sukumo* from Tokushima to produce a kimono, was authentic not because the government had designated these techniques and materials as IICP attached to a region; but because the *kōbō* was the nexus to the lineage and the dyeing tradition to which they belonged. Three professional dyers interviewed, whose *kōbō* participated in an ongoing initiative to preserve traditional crafts, shared their views on how the institutional support reinforced the sense of authenticity to their works. They also noted how the sense of placeness for them related not only to the *kōbō* itself, but also to the region where it was located.

Two professional dyers who also operated a shop selling kimonos and related garments, one in Akita and the other in Kyoto, remarked that their profit margins were quite limited. They expressed that they were finding it increasingly difficult to sustain their business by relying solely on traditional dyeing products made 100% in Japan. In the past, they used to complete the entire dyeing process locally in their ateliers. However, these days they were doing locally

only the intricate patterns, sending the simpler patterns to ateliers in other countries in Asia, such as Viet Nam or Myanmar, to reduce costs. This phenomenon is not new and has been previously observed in other Kyoto workshops, which had outsourced part of their work to countries like China or Korea (Hays & Hays, 1992, p. 192).

4.5. *Whose katazome is this? Attribution, contribution*

This section explores the authorship and ownership of the production of crafts (*katazome*), specifically in those *kōbō* where there is a relationship of authority among professional dyers. While Chapter Two approaches the power dynamics within *kōbō* from a human relations perspective, this section focuses on the attribution of authorship of the craft and the recognition of the contributions of those who have a significant participation in the production process from the perspective of the craft itself.

Attribution serves to put credit where it is due, and is a function of several criteria: transparency, participation, equality, due process, efficiency, and substantive fairness (Fisk, 2006, pp. 73-76, and pp. 95-96). Of all these criteria, substantive fairness is the one that relates most to the attribution, as the recognition of the contribution of a person to a craft production. Substantive fairness is also the criteria most problematic to apply, and in some cases, Fisk argues, “it seems acceptable for the boss to take credit for the work of subordinates”. She uses the example of politicians who do not credit their speechwriters for their work publicly; the speechwriter may even be accused of breaching an implicit contract of discretion if he/she publicizes his/her work. For Fisk, speechwriters are an interesting example where society accepts the non-attribution, or the transferability of attribution, whereby the politician gets the credit for the speech and the speechwriter earn his/her living. Fisk’s example is comparable to the situation in large *kōbō*, whereby after their horizontalization early in the twentieth century, members started producing crafts with their masters’ signatures.

Traditionally, the production of crafts relied on a multitude of guilds working in small size *kōbō* specializing in specific tasks. Folk textile dyeing was no exception and its production relied on more than 30 different guilds as outlined in Chapter Three, section 3.3. The resulting dyeing textile produced in a local *kōbō*, bore the needs of commoners in their daily lives, and thus, these items were never signed. However, with the promotion of local products for export

by the government and Japan's participation in World Fairs since 1850s,²⁹ the situation changed. The organizers of these fairs required that art works, which were much better appreciated than those objects registered as crafts, indicate the name of the author. In Japan, these art craft objects resulted from the collaboration of multiple guilders and companies specialized in the various phases of production of the craft. Often, these works were attributed to the director of the workshop, whose contribution to the production was nominal in most cases (Han, 1995, p. 147; Cieřliczka, 2021, p. 10). Meghan Jones, in her research on Tomimoto Kenkichi, quotes him as having said "people called craftsmen who do not do their own work are exactly like a head of a company, and those people should not exist as artists", although in fact, he hired assistants for his own signed works, and never acknowledged them formally as having contributed to the production of his ceramic works. Jones further noted how Tomimoto "came to rely on his university students as assistants", and how he received criticism for the employment of craftsmen without proper public recognition of their contribution, for instance, in a review of Tomimoto's spring show at Mikasa in 1914 (Jones, 2014, pp. 142-143).

The Mingei Movement influenced the authorship of the crafts -relating it to the production site/*kōbō* rather than the individual craftspeople-, and their localization, in order to promote their internal consumption of the crafts. The Mingei Movement saw the horizontalization of craft production, and the emergence of large size *kōbō* employing several guilds. Within these *kōbō*, the most senior staff assumed the role of assistant to the master or *deshi* (弟子), contributing to his signed work; while the remaining staff assisted in producing the *kōbō*'s generic unsigned items. These unsigned items were still recognizable to the *kōbō*.

Several professional dyers and museum staff interviewed mentioned the Serizawa Kenkyūjo as such an example. This workshop produced signature works by Serizawa, such as kimono, kimono sashes, doorway curtains, or wall hangers; as well as unsigned *Serizawa style* items traceable to the workshop, such as calendars, postcards, and fans. While all interviewees acclaimed Serizawa's genius and mastery, I felt a tension in their comments regarding the lack of attribution to the artisans who contributed significantly to his signed works. This tension was not specific to the Serizawa Kenkyūjo, but rather the result of the horizontalization of the *kōbō* after Mingei, which resulted in the shadowing of the work of some artisans.

²⁹ While the first World Fair took place in London in 1851, it was only two years later that Japanese objects were seen in Dublin. In 1867, parties from Japan sent delegates to the Paris World Fair, which received over nine million visitors and marked the beginning of the fad for Japanese things (Morais, 2019, p.140)

The acknowledgement of the contribution of each artisan involved in the production of a master's signed work is a delicate matter that can potentially complicate the branding of the master authorship of these works. Some interviewees commented on how some masters or *sakka* (作家) of the Mingei Movement addressed this tension, by participating in public events together with their assistants, to acknowledge their contribution to the master's work.

4.6. The evolution of *katazome*: homogenization, heterogenization, hybridization

Crafts production is a multifaceted process that responds most significantly to their consumption. Therefore, the analysis of the evolution of *katazome* as products needs to consider three aspects: production, consumption, and measures to preserve those crafts. This section focuses on the production aspect of *katazome*, while Chapter Five deals with the evolution of the consumption of these crafts, and Chapter Six explores the evolution of the measures for the promotion and preservation of *katazome* as a tradition. In this context, I draw upon Robertson's (1995) perspective on societal evolution through glocalization to explain how traditional folk dyeing textiles have evolved over time through iterative processes of homogenization and heterogenization over time.

Robertson (1995) considers that the evolution in society results from the dynamic interactions within and between societies. These interactions expose and transmit the local culture through a **homogenization** process. Deterritorialization occurs when a local culture crosses its boundaries in its way to universalization. Simultaneously, other cultures interact with the local culture and influence it through a process of **heterogenization**. These processes are inherent to each other. The acquisition of new elements into a local culture transforms it into a hybrid culture, which in turn is reterritorialized. (Robertson, 1995, p. 27; Hernandez i Marti, 2006, pp. 92-94). Homogeneity and heterogeneity coexist similarly as universalism and particularism, resulting in various forms of **hybridization**. Robertson terms this relation as **glocalization**, a fusion of global and local. The concept behind glocalization is what Japanese denominate *dochakuka* (土着化) or indigenization (Befu, 2003, p.20); and refers to the agriculture principle of adapting one's farming techniques to local conditions. Reterritorialization implies the differentiation of local cultures, and the "invention of customers' traditions" to adapt successfully to globalization (Robertson, 1995, pp. 28-29). **Transformation** illustrates an innovative interaction between homogenization and heterogenization, as was the case of Serizawa's *kataezome* in relation to the *bingata* technique.

In the 1830s, the Euro-American notion of the world as a unified entity started developing, with -among others- the start of World Fairs by the 1850s. According to Robertson (1995), these processes, as well as the later attempts to link localities on international or ecumenical basis did not respond to globalization, but rather to glocalization. Such interactions fostered the interpretation of distinct civilizations and led to a sense of what Robertson calls globality (p. 27). Globality iterated with distant cultures and influenced them. Japan's participation in World Fairs served not only to promote Japanese products, but also to diversify and indigenize their production to cater to the tastes of international customers. Conversely, products from other cultures influenced the local cultures of Japan, which assimilated these exotic products to varying degrees of indigenization. During the Meiji period, the nation-state acted as the primary agency for diversifying and hybridizing local cultures in Japan, whether by copying ideas or engaging in collaborative projects. The discourse on Japanese uniqueness, Japaneseness, or *nihonjinron* (日本人論) during the Meiji period was critical to interacting with distant cultures, and also acted as a barrier to indigenizing ideas. The discourse of Japaneseness permeated the Mingei Movement as well. During his voyages to local places, Yanagi Soetsu described and catalogued crafts, providing them with new kinds of identity, where materials, production techniques, and placeness were important (See Chapter Two).

In a 2004 study, Kobayashi Keiko examined the trend of small-patterned textiles during the nineteenth century. She described the iterative process leading to the transformation of the Edo Komon, and how traditional local methods blended with new Western technology and techniques from abroad through a process of indigenization. Kobayashi emphasized the impact of World Fairs, which not only exposed Japanese craftspeople to the mechanical world, but also showcased “the irregular, asymmetrical, and non-scientific qualities of Japanese objects” that fascinated the Western world (Kobayashi, 2004, p. 392).

In Figure 4.13 I have graphically represented the evolution of folk textile dyeing products over time in terms of their degree of homogenization and heterogenization, and in Figure 4.14 I have included examples of the crafts to illustrate their evolution's processes.

The category labelled as ‘Mingei and before’ acts as the inception point, and includes products that exhibit limited homogenization and heterogenization. This group comprises products whose materials, designs or techniques were deeply rooted in their local contexts and had not spread to other territories. Consequently, local and regional differences were preserved,

resulting in unique and distinctive products. Examples of products in this group include the indigo dyeing products of Tokushima and Akita, which were initially confined to these two areas. Other examples include Okinawa's *bingata* and Nagoya's Narumi tie-dye.

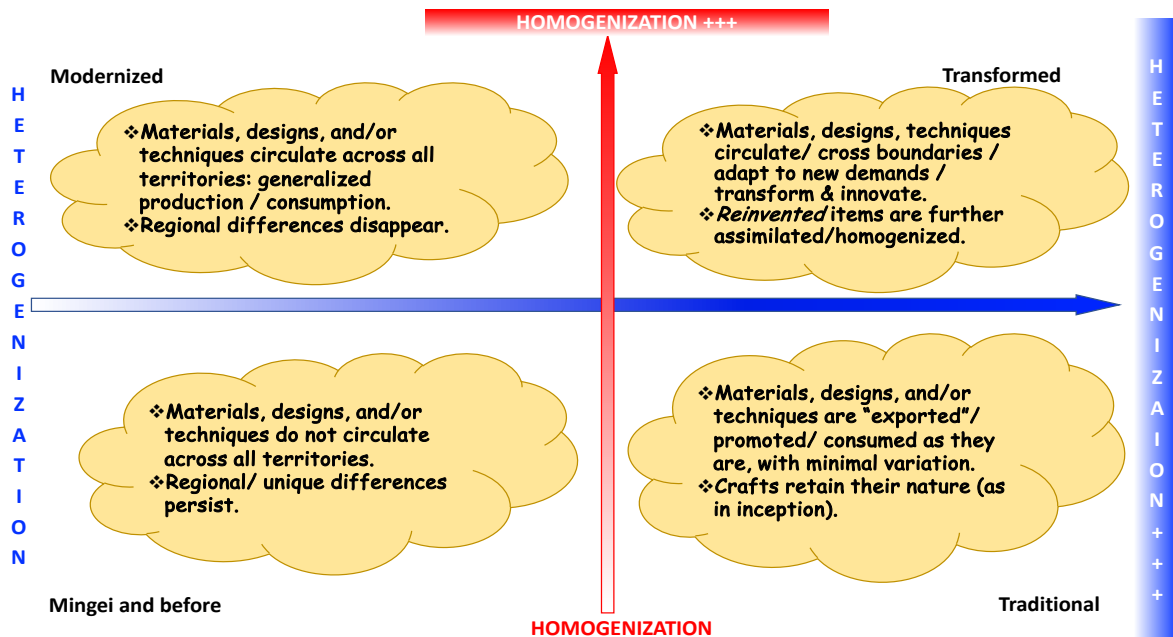


Figure 4.13. Mapping framework of folk textile dyeing products in terms of their degree of homogenization, heterogenization, and transformation.

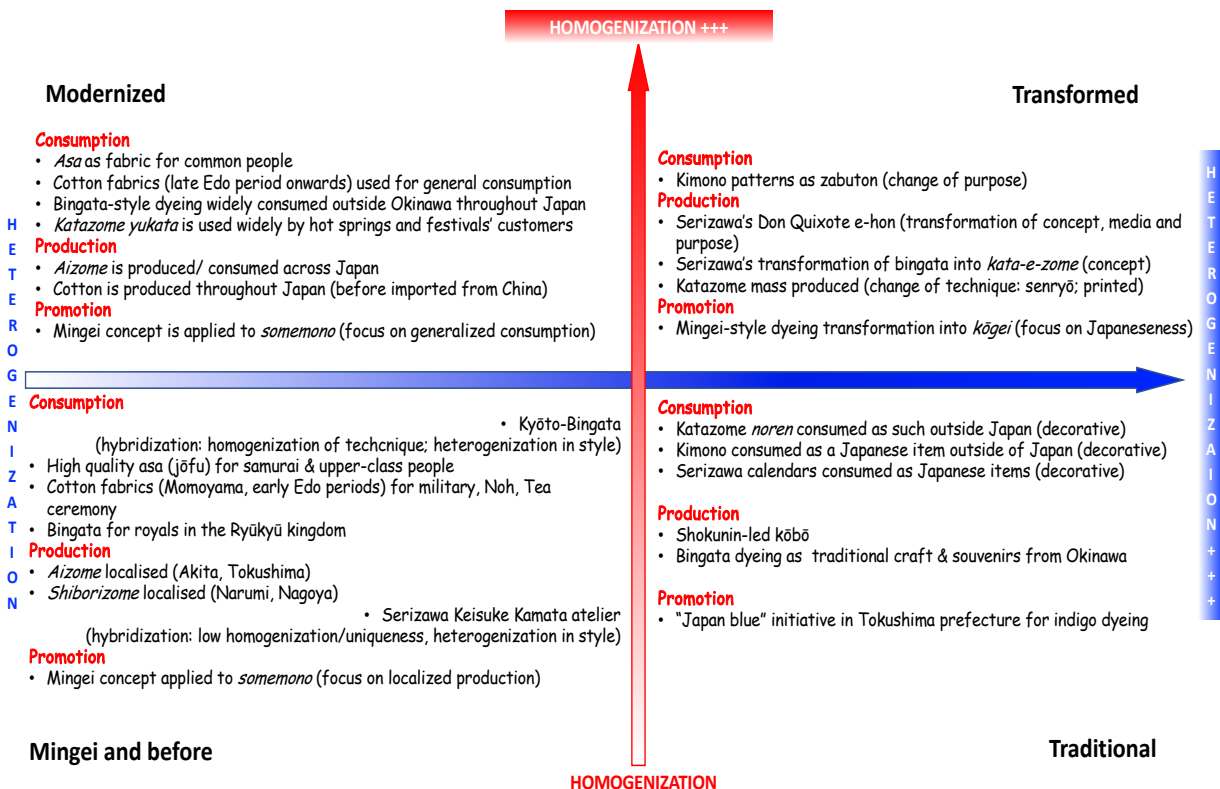


Figure 4.14. Examples of the evolution of folk textile dyeing products in terms of their degree of homogenization, heterogenization, and transformation.

The ‘Modernized’ group comprises those dyeing products that demonstrate a higher degree of homogenization and limited heterogenization. Over time, the process of deterritorialization facilitated the circulation of materials, designs, and technique, leading to the universalization of the products (within Japan). As a result, the regional differences disappeared. The production of indigo dyeing, and stencils across Japan are examples of the ‘Modernized’ group.

On the other hand, the ‘Traditional’ group comprises products with limited homogenization and higher degree of heterogenization. Such products maintained their materials, design, and techniques over time, without significant external influence. The products in this group embody the preserved tradition of folk textile dyeing, replicating identical products through generations, with a strong sense of placeness and authenticity. Anchoring the crafts in the strict tradition limits the interest of young generations in the production of the crafts, partly due to the limited economic margins that traditional crafts produce (Ricketts III, 2006, pp. 20-21). Some of the dyeing textiles designated as IICP traditional crafts belong to this group, such as the Edo Komon dyeing of the Tokyo area, and the *sukumo*-based indigo dye Awa Ai of Tokushima.

The ‘Transformed’ group includes products that exhibit high levels of homogenization and heterogenization. Such products have crossed boundaries in terms of geography and production characteristics, including materials, design, or techniques through transformation and hybridization processes. In some cases, these dyeing products have undergone a deterritorialization process, followed by a subsequent reterritorialization, resulting in the formation of glocalized products. The works of Serizawa exemplify well the product transformation through the use of a different concept, media, or purpose in his illustrated books or *e-hon* (絵本), as well as using *bingata* technique on *washi* paper. He further transformed the original stencil technique from *bingata* into his *kataezome* pioneering work. Another example of transformation is the use of pour dye for mass production of stenciled works and use of synthetic dyestuffs. Ongoing transformative processes include using lasers for stencil carving (Okita & Takesue, 2012, pp. 1393-1394), or dyeing kimono through ink-jet printing. Initially considered experimental and exotic, these processes became indigenized and progressively found their niche as they were glocalized and absorbed in the mainstream crafts domain.

The evolution of folk textile dyeing is not linear or uniform. The evolution of Okinawa's *bingata* serves to illustrate this point. Originally exclusive to the royal and the upper class during the Ryūkyū kingdom, *bingata* became a traditional textile dyeing of Okinawa. Later, *bingata* expanded beyond the Okinawa territory to Kyoto, becoming Kyoto-Bingata (Rathbun, 2013, p. 11; Sarashima, 2013a, pp. 118-119). This process of homogenization with deterritorialization only occurred in the dyeing technique and not in the designs; the latter retained their distinct placeness in Okinawa. Sarashima describes how *bingata* became the symbol of Okinawa and how the aristocratic past of *bingata* disappeared and became a traditional folk textile dyeing with efforts by the Government of Japan to preserve *bingata* as its cultural heritage through a process of heterogenization and reterritorialization. (Sarashima, 2013a, pp. 109-110). While Sarashima concedes the importance of hybridization in the evolution of culture and tradition and mentions the importance that foreign academics and collectors had in the resurgence of *bingata* (p. 109-110), she does not emphasize the impact that the Mingei Movement had on the evolution of the *bingata* into a traditional craft of Okinawa.

I argue that the Mingei Movement played a major role in the construction of *bingata* as a folk traditional product. By separating its production (by craftspeople) from its consumption (by elites), *bingata* was branded as, and later became assimilated to, Mingei, a process fostered by governmental cultural agencies. Sarashima also does not mention either Serizawa Keisuke in her research. In my opinion, Serizawa's visit to Okinawa was pivotal in the wider circulation of *katazome* throughout Japan (homogenization), as well as the conceptual transformation of *katazome* into *kataezome*; the transformation of the production methods, e.g., the use of *washi* for stencil dyeing. It is also thanks to Serizawa that the *katazome* products hybridized and diversified, acquiring a decorative function with the calendars or wall hangings, deviating from their initial utilitarian function. It is through the work of the Serizawa Kenkyūjo that modern printing technologies enabled the indigenization of *katazome*, which became mass produced and made available at affordable prices. His iconic designs became the motifs of seating cushions (*zabuton*), tablecloths, and handkerchiefs (Figure 5.5). Serizawa transformed and hybridized the motifs of *katazome* and horizontalized the *kōbō*, and he also contributed to the heterogenization of the technique, which has remained stable through centuries.

4.7. *Wrap-up*

This chapter started by introducing the term *katazome* (型染), which conveys the idea of dyeing with a pattern, as opposed to *kataezome* (型絵染), which conveys the idea of dyeing paintings with stencils. *Kataezome* was first coined in 1956, when the MEXT designated Serizawa Keisuke as a Holder/Preserver of an Important Intangible Cultural Property of Japan. The term *kataezome* is generally confined to the works of Serizawa. Stencil dyeing, together with weaving, belong to the textile category of folk crafts known as *senshoku* (染織), whose ideograms mean dye and fabric.

I have mentioned the evidence of the dyeing tradition in Japan since the sixth century, and that this tradition is the result of three waves of interactions: with those in China (sixth to ninth centuries), with Southeast Asia (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), and with the West (from the Meiji period onwards). I then explained why, in the context of the present research, *katazome* refers to traditional folk textiles from the late Edo period, and more specifically from the late Taishō period. The democratization of society, coupled with a rapid urbanization and affluence of its populace into cities resulted in a more diversified demand for “new crafts”, while the Mingei Movement called for people to support and consume traditional crafts. Starting the discussion of stencil dyeing textiles in the early twentieth century is relevant because it allows to have a starting point from where I could analyze the evolution of these crafts through processes of homogenization, heterogenization, and transformation.

I further noted the difficulty in defining the term “traditional folk dyeing textiles” because of the complexity in defining the terms “traditional” and “folk” in an accurate manner. It has been difficult to find studies and research focused on stencil dyeing as a traditional craft, although I found several studies on other crafts, namely, pottery, lacquer, or textile weaving, from which I found various issues relevant to traditional folk textile dyeing.

This chapter has pursued three different objectives. The first objective was to describe and provide a brief historical survey of the materials and techniques used in the stencil dyeing process. I divided the materials in four groups, including the fabrics with attention to those that are most used in stencil dyeing: hemp, cotton, silk, and *bashōfu*. The second group of materials included the stencils, for which I provided a detailed description of its production process

bringing in the story of a family of stencil carvers, through my conversations with Mr. Dote Takehiko, of the Dote Katazome Kōbō in Ibaraki prefecture. The third group of materials include the tools used in stencil dyeing, with the spatulas and cones to apply the resist paste to the wood plank and to the fabrics, the different brushes to apply mordants or colors; the containers to prepare mordants or colors; and finally, the tenters, either to stretch the fabric longitudinally or in its width. The final group of materials included the ingredients, such as the resist paste of Japanese *katazome* made of sticky rice flour and rice bran, or the mordants made of flakes of soybeans, and the dyestuffs. I focused on three dyestuffs, which I consider the most representative Japanese colors for traditional *katazome*: red (*benibana*), blue (*ai*), and yellow (*shibuki*). I attached special importance to the blue or indigo, for its significance in *katazome* and as a Japanese cultural heritage in Tokushima and Akita prefectures. In the description of the dyeing process and the different techniques, I concentrated on the Dote Katazome Kōbō, which belongs to the Serizawa lineage and has maintained the traditional dyeing techniques. All the descriptions are tinted with comments from professional dyers interviewed during this study, although most of these comments and the Figures come from the Dote Katazome Kōbō.

The second objective of the chapter was to explore the changes in the production of *katazome* through time, and to deepen my understanding on what tradition meant from the perspective of the dyers themselves, and what their views were on the attribution of their participation in signed works at the *kōbō*. The dyers commented how they were obliged to adapt to incremental changes in the availability of materials and tools. Some of these changes had a positive end. For instance, the manufacturers of resist-dye paste (*nori*) from whom the dyers had been customarily buying *nori* disappeared, so the dyers worked with the wholesalers of this product to identify the new sources of *nori*, a change which was positive to them. In other cases, the results are more nuanced, as is the case of those brushes made of animal fur which have been replaced by those made of nylon; or the traditional *katagami* paper, which was replaced by one with a nylon mesh, harder to carve but more resistant and durable. Other products, such as quality fabrics at affordable prices, or the traditional boxes to present dyeing materials for sale are no more available. Regarding the changing availability of materials, the dyers commented that, despite its importance, it was their duty to find solutions to the challenges of their daily work. They confirmed that despite changes in the availability of products, the fundamental dyeing techniques and processes had remained unchanged over time.

The meaning of tradition is difficult to define, although all dyers and dealers of *katazome* interviewed commented that *katazome* had added value because “they were traditional crafts.” Most of them associated the term “tradition” with authenticity, sense of place, traceability, and temporality. From their feedback, I understood that *katazome* was traditional because it was authentic in the sense of being traceable to the origin of the craft and the lineage itself, and because the dyeing techniques underwent minimal deviation from the original ones. I also understood that the dyers were ready to negotiate the nature and color of the dyestuffs, but not the technique of dyeing. At the same time, they agreed that pour dyeing was traditional despite using synthetic colors and hand-assisted machines, because they considered that this technique had its origins in (Japanese) traditional *katazome*. They associated tradition with time, in the sense that dyeing has been passed through various generations, and it is not something just new. They also noted that traditional or authentic is not about wide diffusion (homogenization or generalization), but about respecting its essential characteristics through time (heterogenization or exemplary). Most importantly, they associated tradition with the production site, or *kōbō*, more than the region where it was located. Some dyers who also dealt with *katazome*, recognized that they found it increasingly difficult to sustain their businesses relying only on local production, and that they subcontracted out simpler patterns to various countries in Asia, while they did the more intricate patterns locally.

Recognizing publicly the contribution of the people who contributed significantly to the signed works in traditional *kōbō* is a topic little talked about. In the old days, this issue was not relevant, since the folk crafts were all unsigned. However, it became a relevant topic in modern large-size ateliers, which employed many craftspeople who contributed to the signed works by the master artist of the *kōbō*. Attribution is a function of various criteria, with substantive fairness being the most related criteria to the recognition of all significant contributions to the crafts production. At the same time, giving credit to those who are due is difficult, and there is a delicate balance to be stricken between recognizing the work of the significant contributors and maintaining the branding of the master authorship of these works.

The final objective of this chapter was to analyze the evolution of folk textile dyeing. Analysis covers the evolution of this tradition in all its aspects, not only the production, which is treated in this chapter, but also the consumption of the products, which is treated in Chapter Five, and the measures in place to preserve the folk textile tradition, which is contemplated in Chapter Six. I have used Robertson’s perspective on societal evolution (1995), because it is

consistent with the overall theoretical perspective on the institutionalization of culture (Wuthnow & Witten, 1998) that I use in my research. Robertson considers that the culture evolves through iterative processes of homogenization and heterogenization. Through these processes, local cultures present their products to others, and in so doing, they also receive influences from these other cultures, going through a process of hybridization that allows local cultures to transform and to assimilate elements from others (indigenization). Japan went through such a process when it participated in the World Fairs, whereby the production of their crafts was tailored to cater to the tastes of international customers, and by so doing, they also influenced the local markets and their production (glocalization). Kobayashi (2004) and Sarashima (2013a) analyze the evolution of Edo Komon and *bingata* respectively. I have characterized four groups of folk textile dyeing depending on their degree of homogenization and heterogenization: “Mingei or before” is the starting point where homogenization and heterogenization are minimal and the products remain without circulation. When these products or techniques start circulating to other regions, they are homogenized, and regional differences disappear. The dyeing becomes “freer” and loses some of its original characteristics in the course of their universalization. This is what I call “Modernized” dyeing products. Another direction in which the dyeing products can evolve is heterogenization, whereby the techniques are maintained as original, free from external influences, and their placeness is maintained. I denominate the products in this group as “Traditional” (in the sense of being traditionalized), which would include products designated as Intangible Cultural Properties in Japan. The last group includes those products which have gone through hybridization processes as a result of their interaction with other techniques, processes, or as radical processes of innovation and creation. This is what I denominate “Transformed” folk textile dyeing, which I exemplify through the analysis of the evolution of *bingata* in the hands of Serizawa Keisuke.

Chapter Five: *Katazome* consumption

This chapter seeks to answer questions such as: What do people consume when they purchase a traditional hemp doorway curtain dyed in a Japanese *kōbō*? Are they buying a fabric locally dyed in Japan? Are they buying a piece of Japanese craft's tradition? Are they buying a Mingei symbol? And what do they consume when they purchase the machine washable nylon doorway curtain with the same dimensions and motifs? What are the factors that influence their decision? Prompted by what drives demand, this chapter delves into the consumption of *katazome*, exploring its types, mediators, and changes over time. In so doing, the chapter addresses the last set of questions of this research, and links strongly with Chapter Three and Chapter Six, when addressing the continuity of the *kōbō* and the *katazome* tradition respectively. I use the term *katazome* as a synonym of traditional folk textile dyeing, including stencils, pour, and Yūzen dyeing. When referring to any single technique, I use its specific name. I also refer to tie-dye or *shibori* as a specific technique outside the *katazome* group, although it is one of the traditional folk textile techniques which I also refer to in my overall research.

In this chapter, I analyze *katazome* consumption using several theories and approaches from other scholarship to craft demand and consumption. In so doing, I reflect on them in relation to *katazome* using the results from the fieldwork and documentary analysis, and using examples from the work of Serizawa to illustrate my arguments in relation to the consumption of these crafts. I use the theory on the anthropology of things (Appadurai, 1986), which considers crafts as commodities in a capitalist context. This theory helps explain that the value of *katazome* depends not only on their intrinsic value, but also on the consumers' appreciation. I also use the institutional approach to culture (Wuthnow & Witten, 1988) which I presented in Chapter One when analyzing the Mingei Movement. This approach forms the backbone of the discussion on the consumption of the craft. The approach of Wuthnow and Witten helps understand how the structures and networks (agency) related to branding and communication strategies, all stakeholders that are outside the production and actual use of the craft, shape the meaning of *katazome* and their consumption. At the same time, the approach of Robertson assists with the understanding of the role of agency in the various types of consumption of the crafts.

Section 5.1 sets up the scene with the definition of *katazome* as commodities, presenting their diversity and versatility as aspects of singularity in these crafts. Subsequently Section 5.2 presents the demand as a function that mediates the production and consumption of crafts, serving as a preamble to Section 5.3, which seeks to clarify the role of the mediators in the consumption of these crafts, as well as the patterns of their operations. Section 5.4 analyzes the various types of consumption of these crafts, while Section 5.5 delves into the evolution in the consumption of *katazome*. Finally, the wrap-up in Section 5.6 highlights the main points discussed in this chapter.

5.1. *Katazome as commodities: diversity and versatility*

I consider *katazome* as one type of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan and adopt the working definition as (i) handmade objects, using traditional materials, processes, and formats of clothing and utilitarian textiles, (ii) produced in a context where the craftspeople attach meaning to their craft, and (iii) where the shared knowledge on the techniques they use, and the continuation of the tradition are considered essential. These crafts also entail a bodily/haptic experience in the production and their use because the dyers experience the full essence of the fabrics and the dyeing process when working, and the users need to live the objects to understand their value. This definition, which was put forward by Perreault when referring to what a craft is (2004, p. 77), converges with what the METI denominates as traditional crafts or *kōgei*. The METI considers traditional crafts as those handmade products designed to be used in the everyday lives of everyday people, using raw materials and production methods/techniques in a specific locality for at least 100 years continuously to the present day. There are other requisites for qualifying crafts as *kōgei*, which relate to the objective of the Traditional Industries Law of 1974, that is namely, to contribute to the development of Japan's regional economies. These requisites include, for instance, to have a minimum number of workers producing the craft, and in an enterprise established as a local industry (METI, n.d.). This aspect of the law is discussed further in Chapter Six, when analyzing the continuity of the craft. Both definitions of crafts by Perreault and by METI retain the essential attributes of the Mingei philosophy of the crafts. At the same time, they admit some adaptations to modern times by accepting, for instance, that crafts must use the “main” mode of production, or the “main” traditional materials, rather than categorical statements.

Arjun Appadurai (1986) considers that commodities are “things with a particular type of social potential, that are distinguishable from products, objects, goods, artefacts and other sorts of things -but only in certain respects and from a certain point of view.” He further considers that services are important objects of commoditization as well (p. 6). Focusing on the idea that “a commodity is any thing intended for exchange” pulls our attention to the question of “what sort of an exchange is a commodity exchange” and to the dynamics of exchange, rather than being only preoccupied with the definitions (p. 9). For Appadurai, homogeneity and singularity are important concepts which shape commodities. Homogeneity is represented by what perfectly fits into a class/object category as opposed to the singularity or the uniqueness of an object (or service) within a class/category. For instance, the technique of stencil dyeing represents homogeneity within the *katazome* tradition as a class/category, while the *kataezome* technique of Serizawa represents singularity in the craft in that class/category. Similarly, while textile dyeing represents homogeneity, *katazome* on *washi* dyeing represents singularity in the craft as a class/category.

Appadurai argues that commodity exchange is a fluid concept that depends on the life of the object and can be of four broad types. Firstly, an item can be a commodity by destination, as is the case of the kimono sashes produced in an atelier responding to a wholesaler request of a customer. Secondly, the exchange of commodities can represent a metamorphosis, whereby items intended for other uses are traded. For instance, the sample of colors of a dye made as a prototype/model in the atelier is traded as a collectible item. Thirdly, the commodity can be traded by diversion, such as the trading of items once protected from economic exchange. The market of sacred objects of a society sold as tourist art items would be examples of commodities by diversion. Lastly, “ex-commodities” represent those items which were traded in the past but have become removed from monetary exchange. Examples of ex-commodities would be kimonos by Serizawa, initially a commodity by destination, which after his death become museum items protected from further trading. Objects which in the past were traded for money and are now considered national treasures, or which acquire a symbolic social meaning are further examples of ex-commodities. Other perspectives of commodity exchange include their division into necessities and luxuries (Appadurai, 1986, p.16). This perspective is relevant to *katazome* and to its evolution. For instance, hemp indigo-dyed wear, considered in the past as commoners/rural wear, has made its way into luxury wear nowadays. Similarly, *bingata* wear, historically reserved for royal class in the Ryūkyū kingdom, became available to the general public in the twentieth century.

There are two kinds of special commodities exchanges, which do not include a monetary exchange, the barter or direct exchange of objects, and gifts. Both, barter and gifts, are important to the current research because of the meaning of dyeing products for amateur practitioners, in which the social value is paramount. While gift exchange is driven by reciprocity, sociability, and spontaneity, commodity exchange is comparatively free of moral or cultural constraints and is driven by money (Appadurai, 1986, p. 11).

5.2. Demand and consumption

Consumption as a theory began to develop from the late nineteenth century onwards. In their publication on cultural theory of 2008, Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick referred to Thorstein Veblen's work of 1953, articulating the significance of consumption to urban existence; and how the patterns of consumption, which defined lifestyle and status, constructed social classes. Edgar and Sedgwick further referred to the analysis of Georg Simmel of 1950 and 1957 on the meaning of fashion in the metropolis, noting that fashion-conscious consumers needed new things to assert their identity, and, to discard their past choices as fashion in the past, to continue consuming the exotic new items (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, p. 62-65).

Crafts as such are not objects in isolation or static, but rather have a biography. Each item has a history of production, which includes a craftsperson working in an atelier with raw materials as it has been done for generations, while adapting to changes and challenges. After production, the item will transit to the consumer, experiencing daily use as a utilitarian, decorative, or symbolic object, or else will be sold again, which will start further trajectories. This is what Igor Kopytoff termed the "cultural biography of things", as opposed to the trajectory of an ensemble of items belonging to the same category, which he termed as the "social history of things" (Kopytoff, 1986, pp. 66-68). The demand is therefore a needed chain link in the cultural biography of the crafts because it connects two different worlds. On the one hand, there is a world that represents a vital experience in the creation of the object and puts it in historical perspective. This world has the technical, social, and aesthetic knowledge of the craft making. On the other hand, there is a world that knows about appreciation and tastes, which attaches an economic value to the object based on its utility, converting it into a commodity (Appadurai, 1986, pp. 41-43). The knowledge of these two worlds will diverge as the social, spatial, and temporal distances between producers and consumers increase. In settings where the production and consumption are merely a function of utility, the demand is

straightforward and direct because the two worlds are not too far apart. For instance, in an isolated rural setting, indigo dyeing of locally produced hemp fabrics has its own internal demand and serves the needs of the laborers and villagers. Everybody knows what it takes to produce the dyed fabric and the exchange price is determined by the effort that it takes to gather and process the materials, and the needs of use. However, even in this example, the villagers will keep some dyeing for special occasions, such as local festivals and ceremonies, following the tastes and customs of their culture.

Demand is also a needed chain link in the “social history of things” because it helps understand how the meaning of the craft shifts in a longer historical perspective. Instead of looking at the biography of indigo products of a specific village, the social history of things focuses on the evolution of the demand for indigo through centuries, lumping a multitude of cultural biographies of specific craft objects.

Analyzing the complex interactions between small and large trajectories and short- and long-term patterns is complicated. The emergence of the consumption of souvenirs from distant places, collectibles from far away times, or keepsakes from the past illustrates the intent to integrate an item and its class. There are several studies which have attempted to explore these transitions between the cultural item and its social history, such as the study of Erika Nakagawa (2015) on the consumption of green tea and the export of Japanese national identity; and that of Kristin Surak (2013) on the tea ceremony and the development of cultural nationalism and nationness in Japan. Other studies include that of Millie Creighton (1997) linking visits to rural places and the Japanese tourism industry to the sense of nostalgia and national identity; Brian Moeran’s study (2009) on incense production and the consumption of social taste in Japan; and Sugimoto Seiko’s study (2020) on the role that magazines played in the consumption of pongee and its relation to the Mingei Movement.

Until the Edo period, there were rules determining the type of fabrics, dyeing, and cloths which the different social classes could use; or the type of settings where these different cloths could/should be used, depending on the social structure of communities. In these cases, the demand was governed by sumptuary laws, which can be political, symbolic, or both. For instance, until the late Edo period in Japan, colors in dyeing were reserved to upper classes and rulers in the Japanese society, while the commoners were only allowed to use indigo and other dully-dyed fabrics. Similarly, while upper classes used silk and cotton, commoners could only

use hemp and other locally produced fabrics. (Appadurai, 1986, pp. 31-32; Schneider, 1987, p. 412-413; Mellott, 1993, p. 52; Kobayashi, 2004, p. 389; Ricketts III, 2006, pp. 8-9). Behind the sumptuary laws governing the demand of the crafts there were people and, over the course of the Edo period, an information (didactic) literature advising on what was appropriate and what was not for the different classes or events in the community. These mediators of the demand of crafts gained importance as the worlds of production and consumption became divergent, once the sumptuary laws lost power. The mediators set the value of the exchange of the item based on social and cultural norms which were applied more or less rigidly throughout history, although breaking these rules itself became a kind of fashion generation.

Demand therefore conceals the relationship between production and consumption in two reciprocal ways: the social, political, and economic forces influence demand; and the demand can manipulate these social and economic forces making consumption change (Appadurai 1986, p. 31). For instance, the silk *bingata* of Okinawa, reserved by sumptuary laws for the royal class influenced and asserted the tastes of this elite, receiving influences from elsewhere based on this elite's taste for exoticism. The incorporation of new patterns and fibers into what the royal class used influenced their own tastes and subsequently the craft production. When the sumptuary laws became obsolete, giving way to symbolic and economic power in the twentieth century, *bingata* became available to the wide public. Changes in demand relate to changes in the utilitarian function of the objects. For instance, stenciled kimono by Serizawa lost their original utility function, becoming craft art pieces for collectors/museums. Other works by Serizawa, such as his industrially-produced Iroha-design handkerchiefs and seating cushions have regained a utilitarian function from the initially decorative function that this design had in the partitions and wall hangers, falling into the category of craft design. The evolution of these products will determine their consumption type, as analyzed in section 5.5.

Arjun Appadurai further argues that the sumptuary laws that characterized complex premodern societies, which externally regulated clothing, body decorations and other visible acts of consumption, defined demand socially and controlled it (1986, pp. 31-32). For him, the sumptuary laws have been replaced by fashion: "what modern money is to primitive media of exchange, fashion is to primitive sumptuary regulations." For him, fashion suggests an illusion of total access and higher convertibility of items, assuming a democratized access and consumption of objects (crafts). He signals, citing Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Baudrillard, that modern consumers are the victims of velocity and taste of fashion in the same way that

primitive consumers were of the stability of sumptuary laws. As such, demand is a socially regulated and generated impulse, rather than a response to an individually constructed need.

The consumer demand can be manipulated by direct political appeals as commodities responding best to political motivation are those whose consumption is tied-up with social messages (Murata, 2015, p. 12). Gandhi's manipulation of the meaning of indigenously produced cloth is one such example (Schneider, 1987, p. 439). Political appeals for consumption variously entail patriotic or protectionist messages. For instance, the call of Japan's government to consume Mingei products in the decades following the WW2, the Traditional Industries Law of 1974,³⁰ and the Cool Japan Initiative of 2012, all openly encouraged consumers to buy these crafts, among other things, as Chapter Six will analyze, to develop regional and Japan's economies. The political appeals accelerate when they perceive a danger for the sector, such as was the case in the three examples mentioned above, by an industrialization which destroyed employment in the traditional crafts sector, societal changes with new consumption patterns, and imports of foreign products which competed against locally produced items. Murata Daisuke has criticized the banalization of the word "*kōgei*", which is being used by some stakeholders as a sign of modernization and internationalization of Japan with aggressive mass communication campaigns, focusing on the economic value of the crafts, leaving sometimes aside their intrinsic quality (Murata, 2015, pp. 11-12, 18-21).

The alignment of political and economic mediators is not automatic as in the above three examples. For instance, in Chapter Four, Section 4.2.4, refers to how fights between the rulers and the merchants for the control of the *benibana* dye and its consumption provoked tensions in the commerce of these products (Konta, 1979, pp. 593-596).

The production knowledge includes the market, consumers, and the destination of the crafts as commodities. As mentioned earlier, in small-scale pre-industrial traditional societies, this knowledge addressed the internal consumption of the group and was quite complete, limiting itself to the production of crafts by objective methods. However, where the external demand drives the production of the crafts, the traders and their agents become relevant because they connect the producers of crafts, who have the knowledge and need the means, with the

³⁰ Article 1 states that the Law "aims to promote such traditional craft industries as a way to provide extra diversity and charm to the social fabric, to contribute to the development of local economies, and to contribute to the healthy development of the economy of Japan." https://www.tohoku.meti.go.jp/s_kokusai/topics/190110_en.html

consumers, who have the means but, in most cases, lack the knowledge of the crafts (Appadurai, 1986, p.56). The mediators are relevant because they become the holders of authenticity and expertise of the crafts, both concepts which became important in the nineteenth century in shaping the consumers' tastes and attaching value to the objects. Consumption mediators, influence the production to accommodate customers' taste and the conditions of production. For instance, Jane Schneider in her publication *The Anthropology of Cloth* of 1987, mentions how under the influence of merchants organizing handicrafts, "rural artisans can make shoddy cloth for export, but apply high standards to cloth for indigenous social and ritual ends and for the occasional discerning tourist" (p. 437). At times, the intermediaries and traders influence the consumption of the crafts, stripping these from their original purpose, understanding, and taste, converting them into exotic tradeable commodities. The use of traditionally dyed kimono sashes traded as table runners for modern homes is one example illustrating these diversities between the philosophy of production and the practicality of consumption of traditional crafts.

Crafts have been commodified as objects for consumption based on a value, which is negotiated by intermediaries. There is a necessary distinction between the concept of use-value, which refers to the usefulness of a thing and is based on the natural property of the thing; and that of exchange-value, which indicates a distinctive quality about the thing in terms of the particular purpose it serves. As such, the use-value of commodities often differs from their exchange-value (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, p. 371). At the same time, there are other cultural objects which are not exchangeable because they are uncommon, incomparable, unique, and singular, whereby no economic tag can be attached to them to transact in a society. In this case, it is the ensemble of institutional intermediaries acting as an agency preserving certain objects from public material consumption, and, at the same time, will allow other forms of consumption such as cultural, visual, and more importantly symbolic consumption in the case of traditional crafts as this chapter will explore. In any society, there is a mixture of both commoditization and singularization of objects that is governed by structures and institutions, whose function is to balance an excessive heterogeneity which would be unmanageable and chaotic, and an excessive lumping of commodities which would lead to a meaningless homogeneity (Kopytoff, 1986, pp. 68-70 and 73-76). For instance, it would be utopic to have a society where all cultural objects are considered singular and unique because the absence of material consumption would impede further production of these crafts. Similarly, a completely commoditized society where value might be homogenized would banalize/destroy its culture and the notion of societal public goods. As Kopytoff notes, "culture ensures that some things

remain unambiguously singular, it resists the commoditization of others, and sometimes singularizes what has been commoditized” (p. 73). Michele Hardy, referring to textile crafts, argued that they had been trivialized by Western societies, by restricting the commodification of these items to their physical value. For her, the value of the craft involved “technical expertise, sensitivity, creativity, and a comprehensive awareness that acknowledges responsibility for process, materials, and product” (Hardy, 2005, p. 182).

The approach of Wuthnow and Witten (1988) helps understand how the structures and networks (“agency”) related to branding and communication strategies shape the meaning of *katazome* and thus their consumption. I am combining the Wuthnow and Witten theory with that of Robertson on cultural evolution to better understand the role of “outside” agency in the various types of consumption of the crafts. Since the consumers’ values evolve through time, the value attached to the crafts is also dynamic acquiring their own social life. The theory of the institutional approach to culture and that on the anthropology of things are intimately related. However, while the former places emphasis on the mediators between the producers and the consumers, the latter places the craft and its trajectory at the center of the attention. In this way, there is a distinction made between the homogenization, heterogenization, and hybridization of the dyeing tradition as a category (or its social history); and the social life of a dyeing product important to the analysis of the craft (or its cultural biography).

5.3. Mediators of *katazome* consumption

This section focuses on the individual group of intermediaries/mediators (Table 5.1) and analyzes the roles they play in the four types of craft consumption. The roles of the mediators are not static and vary through time. For instance, the symbolic role that the department stores played in the early twentieth century promoting *katazome* and *Mingei* products has evolved towards a purely material consumption of these crafts. There are new mediators that are now competing with other more traditional ones, such as the social media, which has replaced many of the roles that the mass media used to play. The importance of the mediators in crafts consumption is not limited to the internal market in Japan, and extends to the environment where the commodities are traded. For instance, Massimiliano Papini analyzed the cultural flows between Japan and England, and found that the intermediaries were important from the mid-1870s. The role of the World Fairs was pivotal and contributed to developing the cultural phenomenon of Japan mania. The mass media, together with Japan-

themed spectacles and bazaars reinforced the idea of otherness in the Northeast of England, appealing to the British consumers to buy *veritable* Japanese, as a veritable fairyland, products (Papini, 2020, pp. 288-289).

From the moment when the *katazome* leaves the *kōbō*, it wanders through a winding path, either as a barter, a gift, or a commodity, until it reaches its destination. To be successful and reach its destination, the meaning residing in the producers' world of tradition, lineage, and crafting of the object must be transferred to the craft item in the first phase; and to be repacked for the consumer in a second phase. This meaning transfer from the producers' world to the consumer item is the role of the mediators or cultural intermediaries, who were described by Bourdieu (1984) as "the new professions that helped reduce class distinctions by enhancing the consumption of *legitimate* culture by the masses" (De Propriis & Mwaura, 2013, p.3). For Bourdieu, these (new) cultural intermediaries included not only producers of cultural programs on television or radio, critics of quality newspapers and magazines, writer-journalists, and journalist-writers, but also, practitioners in design, packaging, sales promotion, public relations, marketing and advertising (Nixon & Du Gay, 2002, p. 496). The mediators form a complex institutional structure, which sets up standards and determine the worth of a work/object, its production, and how to appreciate/consume it properly. This institutional structure construct what Bourdieu termed as the "symbolic power", naturalizing its statements into a taken for granted reality (Surak, 2011, p.176). Any item contains its "hard item", which relates to the bare nature of the item, and its "cultural content", which attaches what the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) denominates "the symbolic meaning, artistic dimension, and cultural values that originate from or express cultural identities" (De Propriis & Mwaura, 2013, p.6-7). For instance, the cultural intermediaries of traditional folk textile dyeing are expected not only to promote the consumption of these items, but also to advise on their "proper" use by style, occasion, year's season, age and gender, and so on. The profiles mediating the consumption of cultural items -the agency- include a plethora of professional profiles, such as expert critics, commentators of artistic products, lifestyle advocates, and consultants. There is also a diverse array of structures and institutions, such as wholesalers, promotional and development centers, and department stores. These mediators relate to the cultural content of items by being near to the consumers.

Other mediators add value to the item's chain of production and manufacturing working with the producers/craftspeople designing and manufacturing the items/crafts. For Lisa De

Propriis and Samuel Mwaura, there are two types of mediators, including those related to the production work from a cultural content perspective, and those related to consumption work on a cultural catchment perspective. De Propriis and Mwaura argue that the value-chains linking the producers with the consumers are incomplete unless they include on the one hand the conception of the item prior to its production, and on the other hand the object's cultural utility, with its proper consumption by the user (2013, p. 11-13). The model that De Propriis and Mwaura propose includes three phases, facilitated by three related but distinct-profile mediators. The first phase starts with an idea of an object and the production of the object. The mediators who intervene in this first phase are the creative intermediaries. The second phase considers the object itself and ends in its conversion as a cultural commodity, through the intervention of the commodifying mediators. The last phase relates to the conversion of the cultural commodity into a cultural utility through the intervention of consumption mediators. While the creative intermediaries add artistic cultural content to the object, and the consumption intermediaries add cultural utility, the commodification intermediaries merely focus on making available the object to a wide number of consumers (pp. 14-16). The consumption mediators are those who wield the most legitimizing powers because they influence the perceptions, beliefs, and tastes of the end users of the object (p.18).

Once the phase during which the meaning of the culturally constituted world is transferred to the object has been completed, there is a second phase, during which the consumer appropriates the meaningful objects through various rituals. As such, the social life of the item can take several paths. For instance, the consumer can appropriate the object through an exchange ritual (transferring meaning from giver to receiver), as is the case where an amateur dyer presents her/his works to other members of the group as a sign of reciprocity and building a sense of belonging among the members of the group. The consumer can appropriate the craft through a possession ritual (impregnating it with a meaning given by new owner). One such example is Serizawa's *The Ten Great Disciples of Buddha*, a commissioned work by the Atago Isshin Church in Mie prefecture, for a donation to build a shrine in Kushinagara, India (Kadowaki, 2015, p. 63). Another ritual through which the consumer can appropriate the object is that of grooming, through which the consumer enhances the meaning of the object by using it. This ritual is the most genuine and important of *katazome* as crafts, from the Mingei perspective, which considers utility as the essence of the craft. Finally, the consumer can appropriate a craft through divestment rituals, trying to imbue his/her own personality onto the craft. This type of ritual seems irrelevant to the appropriation of traditional

crafts, where the origin and lineage of the craft are what matter most (McCracken, 1986, pp. 78-80).

As the community of consumers adopts the value of the object and closes the distance between the producer and themselves as end users, the importance of the mediators decreases. For instance, in the case of barter and gifts, the transaction is quite direct, and the role of intermediaries/mediators is reduced to a minimum. The barter happens in a consonant environment, where both parties are aware of the meaning of the object. In the gift exchange the person offering the object is the one who transfers the meaning when presenting it through several rituals, which include introducing the history of the craft and of the object in particular, and packaging it in an appropriate manner within the tradition. The rituals of presentation are illustrated, for instance, by offering a hand dyed indigo doorway curtain packed in a wooden box where both, the curtain and the box are wrapped in *washi* paper knotted with a *washi* string, while explaining the region and the *kōbō* where it was produced, and even the dyer who produced it and the lineage to which he/she belongs. The piece of dyed fabric is imbued with a cultural, even symbolic, meaning through the person who offers the gift, who acts as the mediator, to the one who receives it, who becomes the consumer.

While the role of mediators in the case of barter and gift exchange is limited, it becomes more complicated in the case of the item going through a commodity exchange. I refer to “agency” as the class which includes the various profiles of those who act as mediators/intermediaries, such as wholesalers, retailers, guilds, officers at local/prefectural levels, museums’ staff and other relevant profiles having a role between the dyers and the consumers. The importance of the role of the agency/different mediators varies with the type of consumption of the craft, as Table 5.1 illustrates. The importance of the various mediators’ groups is not static and has evolved through time. Table 5.1 identifies the role/s of each mediator in relation to each type of consumption of the craft/tradition. The table assigns either a main, important, or relative important role for the category of intermediaries depending on what their contributions are with respect to the material, visual, cultural, or symbolic consumption of the craft/tradition. The table allows to identify the critical mediators for each type of consumption.

Table 5.1. Traditional folk textile dyeing: Types of consumption by main role of mediators.

Types of mediators	Roles that mediators play by type of consumption				Comments
	Material	Visual	Cultural	Symbolic	
Wholesalers/ton'ya/retailers	Main role			Important category traditionally	Contribute to symbolism of traditional commodity exchange. Less relevant now.
Guilds/kumiai	Important			Relatively important.	Preserve sector tradition. Foster material consumption.
Professional associations		Relatively important	Important	Main role in preserving tradition.	Support communities of practice of crafts.
Prefectural & regional promotion centers	Relatively important			Main role in preserving tradition.	Act as gatekeepers of initiatives and cultural hubs (information, training).
Prefectural & regional research centers			Main role is documentation and knowledge advancement.		Offer factual information and analysis, guiding knowledge/action.
Local/regional tourism offices	Relatively important			Main role in craft/tradition placeness.	Present crafts and help rooting traditions locally.
Museums		Main role	Important as knowledge hubs.	Main role in some museums.	Specialized museums support symbolism of tradition and crafts.
Art galleries	Main role	Important			Support cultural symbolism if specialized in a craft.
Department stores	Main role	Relatively important		Support craft tradition	Played an important symbolic role historically.
Mass media (television, films)		Main role	Important in cultivating "properness" of use/culture	Important in preserving tradition	Convey value of tradition & fashion. Use of public people to get message across/for propaganda.
Mass media (specialized publications)			Main role is knowledge advancement.	Main role is to preserve tradition.	Support community of practice and preserve tradition.
Mass media (periodicals, magazines)	Main role in consumption of crafts as commodities	Main role	Important in cultivating "properness" of use/culture	Important in educating public on tradition	Raise awareness on crafts, tradition, and craftspeople. Promote fashion in women and home magazines
Social media (various platforms)	Main role	Main role	Important in connecting groups/people	Can support networks & symbolism	Develop communities of practice including consumers.
Private lobbyists & influencers	Main role	Main role		Support tradition symbolism.	Support public awareness on crafts, tradition, and craftspeople.
Government agencies	Main role to sustain craft production.		Important role documentation & education	Main role to preserve tradition	Support Japaneseness and the traditional crafts sector through initiatives.
Consumers	Main role to sustain craft production.			Important in preserving tradition	Support continuity of tradition and craftspeople production.

There are mediators of more recent appearance, such as the social media and internet, most of the influencers and lobbyists, and the consumers themselves. During the fieldwork six out of eighteen dyers commented on how the use of internet and social media has boosted the sales of their products (Table 2.2 of Chapter Two). Although this practice is not generalized yet, it is gaining terrain; and it is proving an efficient method to support the material consumption of the crafts. Influencers and lobbyists are becoming increasingly numerous and important for the material consumption of crafts. Consumers acting as mediators of the crafts' consumption within communities of practice are becoming increasingly important for the material consumption of crafts. To transfer the meaning of the culturally constituted world to the consumers, mediators operate through two mechanisms, namely advertising and product design/fashion.

Advertising is used to bridge the culturally constituted marketplace and the item for consumption or commodity. The objective of advertising is to establish a symbolic equivalence between the attributes that the viewer/reader sees in the commodity and what this person knows as existing in the culturally constituted world. For advertising to be successful, the world and the object need to be consonant, and the initially neutral object needs to become a good with cultural meaning ready for consumption (McCracken, 1986, pp.74-75). Advertising uses print and visual media. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 illustrate the advertising used in mass media by Kimono Salon, a branch magazine of Kateigahō focusing on kimono fashion, and by the original Kateigahō, a high-end magazine focusing on lifestyle and home. Both magazines, as well as Fujingahō (Figure 5.3) address a feminine population and cultivate a traditional and modern chic version of Japanese style (Sarashima, 2013b, pp. 144-145, Moeran, 2013, pp. 111-115).



Figure 5.1. Front page of Kimono Salon, a branch magazine within Kateigahō (left-hand side picture) to mark kimono fashion. Presentation of *katagome* kimono sash (right-hand side picture). Kimono Salon, Spring Summer Issue, 2023.

<https://www.kateigaho.com/kimono/honshi/162526/>

Fashion is another instrument influencing the tastes of consumers and the consumption of the crafts. Fashion operates through three mechanisms. The first one is similar to advertising, and takes new styles of clothing or items, connecting them with categories and principles of cultural world. The second mechanism operates through opinion leaders and famous people, such as movie stars, with whom the future consumer relates/can relate, who are used to influence consumers' preferences. The third mechanism operates approaching the existing culture radically from other perspectives (McCracken, 1986, p. 76). While in the past fashion was considered a phenomenon of the West since the last decades of the twentieth century, scholars have increasingly started considering fashion as a global phenomenon. Fashion developed in Japan towards the middle of the Edo period, along with the rise of market economy and political changes which loosened the sumptuary rules of garment and wear. During the Meiji period the kimono gradually became the representation of Japanese dress, though traditionally it had been used by the ruling and daimyo classes, which represented only 3-7% of the population in Japan (Cliffe, 2008, p. 41). While men would adopt Western dress codes as sign of modernity, women combined western fashion with kimono wear, which was promoted by newspapers and magazines, and which had become widely available in department stores. Wearing kimono, which was considered popular as the every-day dress in urban settings, progressively lost its importance towards the late nineteenth century, when Western clothing became dominant. However, it established itself as the social norm for formal

occasions in the twentieth century, to then become a fashionable item in the twenty first century (Valk, 2017, pp. 311, 328-333). Currently, it is being accepted that the fashion system in Japan was comparable to that in the West at the end of the Edo period, with similar complicated apparatus of designers, producers, wholesalers, and sellers (Francks, 2015, p. 354; Bincsik, 2022, p.13-15).

Traditionally, the dyers as other craftspeople worked through the **wholesalers** or *ton'ya*, and to a certain extent through the retailers well known to each *kōbō*. In his research on craftspeople in the Tokyo area, Robert Pontsioen (2012) noted the important role of the *ton'ya* in liaising the craftspeople with the consumers of their products (pp. 121, 138, 214). These intermediaries bought the dyeing products, selling them in their businesses or through the businesses of their networks. They knew the market and advised the craftspeople on the tastes of the customers and their demands. The *ton'ya* focused on the saleable items, passing commands on the most popular. The commercial margin of the *ton'ya* oscillated between a 30% and 50%.

The interviewees during the fieldwork stated that the *ton'ya* had practically disappeared from the production-consumption chain, as those with whom they used to work for decades retired without passing the torch to the next one. The interviewees also commented on how as the market for traditional folk dyeing products shrank and many ateliers closed, the *ton'ya* profession was no more profitable. The interviewees explained how some **retailers** with whom the dyers worked for many years had developed a trust relation. They also explained that there was no exclusivity on the dyer or the retailer, with the retailer selling works from many ateliers/dyers, and the dyers selling their works through any retailer which would accept their works for sale. Over the years, the long-term relation established between the dyers and certain retailers allowed the latter passing commands by fax to the atelier, indicating the set list of the items, their reference number, type of fabric, measures, type of dyeing product, name assigned to the item, the number of pieces ordered, and any other needed specifications. Periodically the wholesaler transferred the money of the items sold to the atelier.

During fieldwork, one high-end kimono retailer commented on how for them, provided a similar level of craftsmanship was ensured, selling traditional folk textile dyeing fabrics for kimono was more difficult than selling woven textiles. They explained that for the dyed fabrics, the retailer was expected to provide assurance -among others- of the stability of the colors to

the client. Since the color fastness of the dyed fabrics could change with age even if well kept, when exposing them to light, and even with washing/cleaning, the retailer had to assume the aftercare responsibility to a certain extent, and this was an additional burden for him, which did not occur with woven products. This high-end kimono retailer accepted nevertheless, selling dyeing works from dyers for *less important* works, such as dyed fabrics, which the retailer would offer to clients to make bags, purses, or other items. Even for such fabrics, the retailer mentioned that as important as the quality of the dyed fabric was the lineage of the dyer, since “as customers do not always understand the quality of the craft, they buy more the name of the dyer/atelier than the craft itself.” Another retailer, this time specializing in folk crafts, concurred in his opinion that consumers bought more easily when they knew who the dyer/atelier was even for reasonably priced table runners. In his own words, having this extra information was a bonus for the client. However, sometimes providing the name of the dyer/atelier downplayed the reputation of master craftspeople, selling their works for as cheap as 3,500 yen a 70x39 cm tablecloth, for which they would receive the 50%. Always in the framework of the present research, one fashion designer accepted displaying and selling *katazome* works with zero commission on the sales. She explained that offering customers modern fashion wear with traditional *katazome* doorway curtains, tablecloths, postcards, or framed motifs was a good way to sell both, her fashion designed wear, and the craftspeople works, since her *clientele* was interested in quality hand crafts and had a certain purchase power. She stressed the importance of accompanying each *katazome* item with information on the dyer, since customers often bought *by name rather than by object*.

The **craft guilds or *kumiai*** can take the role that the wholesalers had in the past. However, their direct main role is to protect the sector as a socioeconomic activity (Pontsioen, 2012, pp. 53, 102, 164). For instance, during the fieldwork, interviewees from the traditional textile guild of the Sumida ward of Tokyo, and that of the textile industry of Kyoto, explained how their efforts go towards the protection of the sector, by lobbying for support from institutions such as the Sumida Crafts Promotion, or the recognition of their crafts as *kōgei* Japan in their localities.

During the fieldwork, only those interviewees of large *kōbō* mentioned the importance of the *kumiai* structure not only to promote their crafts, but also to get organized and access support from institutions at prefectural or national levels. For instance, those interviewees from *kōbō* with a retail outlet in Kyoto, Tokyo, and Ugo town, mentioned the importance of the

kumiai in protecting their economic interests and the tradition, both reasons that justified their active participation in these structures. However, most dyers working in smaller scale or individual ateliers did not belong to *kumiai* but to professional crafts associations in the prefecture where their atelier was located, in addition to some of them belonging to the National Arts and Crafts Association (Kokugakai). While the guilds were more focused on the sustainability and the material consumption of the crafts, the professional associations were more directed towards exhibitions and other events.

In the modern history of *katazome*, the case of the Moegikai Senshoku Kyōdō Kumiai (萌木会染色協同組合) or the Moegikai dyeing cooperative, illustrates the pivotal role of these intermediaries for the continuation of the *katazome*. Serizawa established the Moegikai as a network of *katazome* dyers in 1946. He then soon converted this cooperative into an instrument for getting government support for accessing fabrics and other dyeing materials, which had become difficult to access in the post-war period. The main activities of the cooperative included group buying of materials at subsidized prices, and the organization of sales exhibitions of the dyeing works of its members. According to information from the Takumi store archives, Serizawa himself was not an active member in the cooperative, although as a founder authority, he retained a leading figure accompanying the cooperative for decades. As the cooperative crystalized and became organized/institutionalized, it employed some administrative staff to support the work of the president, committee members, and the work of the cooperative. Takumi lent 150,000 yen for the employees' contracts, and Serizawa hosted the cooperative in his atelier in Kamata, which later moved to Yotsuya 4-chome and then Nishi-Shinbashi, in central Tokyo, where they opened a showroom (Shiga, 2016, pp. 269-271). During an interview for the current study, Yamauchi Takeshi, a professional dyer from Hamamatsu, explained how he had joined the cooperative in order to be able to get the materials needed for his dyeing in his late twenties and stayed as a member for nearly 30 years. He vividly remembered how busy they had become trying to cope with *katazome* orders across Japan, and how important was the cohesion among its around a dozen members had been, "especially when things went wrong, all of us worked as a group in the same direction." However, as Japan's economy improved, the situation changed. In Mr. Yamauchi's own words "we became more independent, and slowly, the cooperative's spirit vanished in the late 1980s, until it finally dissolved formally in the early 2000s. The spirit of the cooperative faded away with Showa." Although the government supported the accessibility of cooperative to dyeing

materials, its economic viability depended on the 500,000-yen entrance fees that each member had to pay when joining the cooperative, and a fee for participating in the sales exhibitions/events of around 100,000 yen. However, as Mr. Yamauchi explained, they used to round up to 120,000 yen in support of the secretariat's salary. He further noted that when the cooperative dissolved, the remaining resources were distributed among its members, and that he had received 1,000,000 yen at that time. The Moegikai dyeing cooperative, offers an interesting experience at two levels. Firstly, the cooperative supported the craftspeople production and the material consumption of *katazome*. Secondly, through its connections with the Mingei Movement and the government support, the cooperative mediated the cultural and symbolic consumption of these crafts. Being purchased through the cooperative, these items were legitimized automatically as traditional Japanese crafts. Their consumption was promoted not only because of the dyeing item, but also because as a locally produced Japanese crafts, their consumption implied supporting Japan economy and the nation.

The **professional associations** maintain the community of professional practice and preserve the craft tradition. Their main role is symbolic because they help construct craft lineage by keeping the craftspeople connected. The bond of the apprentices in a *kōbō* is maintained through the professional associations once they move onwards to their own family business/become independent. These associations are important for the cultural consumption of crafts because of the studies and reports they publish, and for the visual consumption of crafts because of the expositions that they organize, and their catalogues and publications for both the public and the specialists. One example of a professional association is the National Association of Arts and Crafts (Kokugakai), responsible -among others- for the Annual National Exhibition of Arts and Crafts (Kokuten). Becoming a member of these associations require an economic effort from the craftspeople because they are fully self-sufficient and only rely on members' fees for the various activities that they organize. The crafts industries have their own associations, such as the Japan Traditional Crafts Aoyama Square,³¹ Association for the Promotion of Traditional Crafts Industries, which play an important role advising the craftspeople on the products, as well as mediating their manufacture, and educating the consumers about the *proper use* of the crafts.

³¹The website the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Crafts Industries contains a searchable database with information of the crafts industries by prefecture, with full details about the craft itself, including their production technique. <https://kougeihin.jp/en/>

The **prefectural and regional crafts promotion centers** act as cultural hubs, organizing crafts promotional activities for the public, educational activities for schools and other interested population groups, and providing information about the crafts in their locations. Their main role consists in safeguarding the continuity of the craft tradition, providing the framework and economic support for professional training of apprentices. The traditional apprenticeship in the *kōbō* has practically disappeared, and it has been replaced by the training initiatives in these institutions. Often these centers are the repository of all activities relating to crafts in the locality and are the gatekeepers of support initiatives. Indirectly these centers support the material consumption of the crafts through their promotional activities and the events/fairs they organize periodically. The promotional craft centers mediate two different types of institutional support. On the one hand, they operate as pull mechanisms for interested parties/ateliers making grouped request for support from the institutions. One such example is the Sumida ward in Tokyo, which acts as production and manufacturing mediators; it has supported three dyeing *kōbō* to develop the Some-zome brand and to present it to the so-called Sumida Modern project. The Some-zome project was later included in the Japan-wide initiative of 2017 supported by the METI, Local Creators' Market: Five Fabulous Finds across Japan. The Sumida Ward Crafts Promotion Center acted as a mediator between the traditional *kōbō* (physical entities) and the concept of national identity and Japaneseness (symbolic realm), legitimizing their *kōbō*, by cataloguing/certifying their products and implementing a holistic public relations strategy to boost their “quintessentially made in Japan crafts.”

On the other hand, these crafts promotion centers operate as push mechanism for supporting susceptible parties/ateliers in the implementation of selected initiatives. One such example is the prefectural center for the promotion of indigo culture and tradition, located in Kamiita-chō, Tokushima. Historically, Tokushima region is a center of the indigo tradition in Japan and the prefecture launched a long-term initiative to preserve this tradition. The center, through the Japan Blue initiative, focuses on the symbolism of indigo as a national identity and Japaneseness, and supports long-term preservation of the tradition. In its facilities, it provides professional training as well as educational activities and practice at amateur level. The prefecture networks with other initiatives, such as the Japan-wide initiative, the Netchū Shōgakkō to facilitate community involvement and empowerment, which trains and provides knowhow in *sukumo* production and indigo dyeing to its members.

The **prefectural and regional research centers** play an important role because their studies and information analysis guide the craft in specific regions. Since they monitor the situation gathering data from local networks and institutions, the information that they provide is precious for other research activities and projects. One such example is the Kyoto City Industrial Research Institute (Kyoto-shi Sangyō Kenkyūjo, 京都市産業研究所), which is continuously involved in operational research and training activities, and disseminates information and report analysis to their stakeholders. These centers are important to guide craft policies and initiatives because of their role as knowledge hubs. As a result, they also support the symbolism attached to traditional crafts, although this is not their main role.

The **local/regional tourism offices** constitute a hub of knowledge of the area they cover, disseminating a wealth of printed material to the public. The staff at the tourism offices provide information about the local crafts produced and the place where the *kōbō* are located. Often, their staff personally know the craftspeople and are much aware of the history of the craft. Therefore, their main role is not just to distribute or forward the printed information and pamphlets, but also their privileged position as gatekeepers of the knowledge in the area. For instance, in the current research, the staff at the prefectural office in Akita contacted the local tourism office in Ugo town. Subsequently, the counterpart responsible for cultural affairs in Ugo town coordinated a three-day agenda to enquire about traditional folk textile dyeing tradition in the area. Teaming up with a local person whom the craftspeople trusted was invaluable not only during the visits while in Ugo town, but also and most importantly, for the preparation and coordination of the agenda. The tourism offices promote the crafts tradition and their symbolism as genuinely Japanese products, by attaching meaning to the work that the local craftspeople produce, and safeguarding the survival of the craft locally. While this craft placeness is the main role, the tourism offices play an important role for the material consumption of the crafts. Often, they have a showroom or vitrines where they show samples of all local products inviting the public to purchase them.

Museums as intermediary cultural agencies are a recent phenomenon in Japan. The first museums were established in Tokyo (1872) and in Kyoto and Nara (1883) following the participation of Japan in World Fairs to present and showcase Japanese cultural heritage objects (Wilson, 2007, p. 78). These museums, or *hakubutsukan* (博物館) focused on thematic collections with often a historical perspective, and differed from those museums focusing on

fine arts, or *bijutsukan* (美術館). The Japan Folk Crafts Museum or Mingeikan, established in 1936; the Ohara Museum of Art, established in 1930; and the dozen or so folk crafts museums across Japan are examples of *hakubutsukan*. Richard Wilson, recalling John Maher (1994), notes how due to the objects displayed, the crafts museums convey the meaning of otherness, placing the viewer in a superior position with respect to the primitiveness conveyed in the objects shown, and confer an “artistic prestige” and singularity to the object. (Wilson, 2007, p. 83). Of special importance to the present research are the museums dedicated to Serizawa Keisuke, in particular that of Sendai recently relocated from the Tohoku Fukushi University grounds to a more central but much smaller space near the Sendai railway station, Miyagi prefecture (*Serizawa Keisuke Art and Craft Museum*); that in Shizuoka city, in Shizuoka prefecture; and that of Art and Crafts Museum, in Kashiwa city, which had an important space dedicated to Serizawa, but was reprofiled in 2006 and does not exist anymore as such.

Museums are the primary contemporary institutions upholding the classical standards of artistic value. They have the capacity to naturalize power relations and serve propagandistic purposes (Hart et al., 2022, p. 237; Murata, 2015, p. 20), and their displays clearly affect the perception of the objects (Freeland, 2001, p. 104). One of the main roles of museums relates to the visual consumption of culture. Through their expositions, the public can apprehend the objects displayed in a certain style, learning about their meaning. Their catalogues and publications reinforce the visual consumption of crafts as well. The other main role of museums is the symbolic consumption of culture. This is specifically important in the folk crafts museums, supporting and preserving the Mingei tradition as it was conceived one century ago. The museums devoted to Serizawa are significant in preserving the (transformed) tradition of *kataezome*, unique to him. Since Serizawa’s works are constructed as a native Japanese product, these museums support the cultural identity attached to his image, namely a representative of the Mingei Movement, a LNT, and the one who popularized the folk dyeing tradition in the twentieth century with a marked Japanese style.

Museums preserve and collect artworks; educate the public through the exhibitions and hands-on experiences; and convey standards about art’s value and quality. However, changing patterns of funding combined with the competing claims of ‘tribal’ groups challenge museums’ aims and values. At the same time, museums are only a part of the story of the art market, because wealthy collectors worldwide have greater buying power (Freeland, 2001, p. 106-108).

Art galleries and art dealers are related most to the commodification of culture, since their main *raison d'être* is the margin resulting from the selling of items in their exhibitions. Art galleries stand on their expertise, assuring the consumers that what they will purchase is worth at the moment of the transaction, or as an investment for the future. In addition to supporting the material consumption of culture, they also support the visual consumption because of the catalogues and publications they make. In some cases, when art galleries specialize in a certain craft, they also support its symbolic consumption. For instance, the Toko Co. Ltd, Mashiko, Tochigi prefecture, specializes in the various categories of folk crafts, including folk textile dyeing, and all its exhibitions are devoted to these objects. In the case of the Toko gallery, being situated in Mashiko is also important because of the links of this town with the Mingei Movement.³² The location and the profile of the business of this gallery are two factors favoring the symbolic consumption of the crafts.

Department stores became relevant as cultural mediators in Japan in the early twentieth century, which coincided with processes of rapid urbanization, influx of populations to the cities, and the development of the medium class with its purchasing power. By the 1920s, department stores, as well as certain high-end retailers, became centers for shopping and entertainment, with their own cafes, and barber and beauty services. Department store companies invested in market and product research to support contemporary fashion and advertising. Mitsukoshi, which was founded in 1673 as a kimono shop called Echigoya by Mitsui Takatoshi, engaged artists, journalists, and scholars to guide fashion -especially for kimono- and launched the Ryūkōkai (Society for Fashion), in addition to publishing lavish magazines in the early 1900s. Other kimono shops also became department stores, such as Takashimaya, founded in 1831 by Iida Shinshichi in Kyoto, became a department store, and established branches in other cities in Japan. Takashimaya was pivotal for the development of silk textiles, including in the Kyoto area (McDermott, 2010, pp. 39-42). Takashimaya founded a similar society for fashion, called Hyakusen-kai around 1900 (Sugimoto, 2020, p. 158; Bincsik, 2022, pp. 27-28). Both Takashimaya and Mitsukoshi department stores periodically organized sales exhibitions for textile folk dyeing, cultivating their tradition of support to this craft. The Takashimaya department store in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, organized the annual exposition of the Konohanakai group from 1953 to 1981 (Konohanakai, 1982, p. 121).

³² The Toko Co. Ltd. uses social media to promote its business through the symbolism attached to traditional crafts <https://mashiko.com/>.

The **mass media**, as defined by the Cambridge dictionary, refers to the ensemble of (traditional) methods of giving information to a large general audience, for instance, through newspapers, television, and radio, and is composed of those institutions that produce and distribute information, visual, and audio images on a large scale. The mass media historically dates from invention of the printing press in the sixteenth century, when newspapers started appearing. The transmission of information, which was mainly oral until then, became visual with the printed material, and its consumption became more private/intimate. Later, with the introduction and expansion of electronic media in the early twentieth century, the consumption of the media was no longer confined temporally or spatially.³³ Cinema, television, and radio have become familiar elements of the daily life of the public (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008, p. 199).

Since its inception, mass media has played a leading role in mediating consumption, whether written, broadcast, or spoken. The assumption of the broadcast or spoken media is that the individual members of the audience will have their needs addressed or, more significantly, shaped by viewing or listening to the media program. The viewer/listener will “identify” with the character in the film, television series, or radio program. Despite realizing that the set up in the film or program is different from her/his own reality, the viewer will resonate with the human emotions of the actors. By recognizing or comparing her/his values with those displayed in the media, the viewer becomes permeable to the fashion, lifestyle, and consumption patterns of the characters shown in the programs (Edgar & Sedgwick, 1999, pp. 150-151; and 283-284). Television programs and films convey powerfully what is consonant with Japanese traditions and the importance in preserving them. For instance, the period films (*jidaiseki*) show how the sumptuary laws affected the way in which the various social classes dressed; and how traditional folk textile dyeing decorated their homes and businesses/ateliers. The Japanese public television NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai), established in 1924, transmits television programs and has an archive of videos in its NHK World Japan - Journeys in Japan and other searchable databases³⁴ which include the history of various traditional crafts with a clear role in educating viewers and preserving the cultural heritage.³⁵

³³ For instance, the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) series Japan 2020, coinciding with the Olympic Games and which was dedicated to culture and travel in Japan, included articles on traditional crafts, including dyeing: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20191008-the-fabrics-that-reveal-the-other-japan>

³⁴ NHK archives introducing, among others, traditional crafts with their localized production and craftspeople. <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/tv/journeys/> and <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/ondemand/latest/>

³⁵ For instance, the programs focused on Chirimen silk dyeing and Yūzen katazome in the Kyoto area, <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/ondemand/latest/?p=result&mode=all&key=all&keyword=chirimen&type=tvEpisode&> and <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/ondemand/video/6024011/>

The written media includes newspapers, specialized publications, and periodicals and magazines. The specialized publications, for instance, *The Mingei*, or *Kōgei* are critical in documenting the various aspects of the craft and related events, keeping the subscribers up to date with regard to exhibitions, upcoming publications, and news about craftspeople and their works, and about the professional crafts associations; and advancing the knowledge of the various crafts' communities of practice. These specialized periodicals play a critical role in preserving the tradition as well.

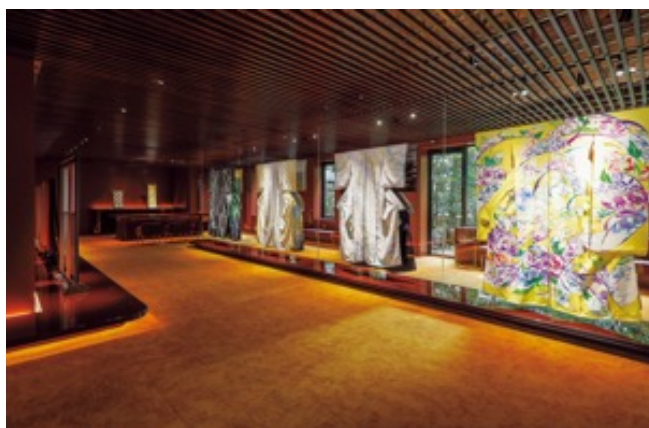


Figure 5.2. Presentation of a traditional space for Kyō Yūzen, Chisō main shop and its gallery in Kyoto. *Kateigahō* issue of December 2022.

<https://www.kateigaho.com/kimono/diary/91781/>

Periodicals and magazines, particularly those for women and about homes, support all four types of cultural consumption. They support the material consumption of crafts through their articles announcing dyed items, mainly kimono and kimono sashes, as commodities, providing details on how, and where the consumers can purchase them. These publications play a main role in the visual consumption of the craft because they also *educate* the reader about what is consonant with good taste in the Japanese tradition and what is the proper use of the various items. For instance, the magazines *Kateigahō*³⁶ (Illustrated Home Magazine), *Kimono Salon*,³⁷ *Utsukushii Kimono* (Beautiful kimono), and *Fujingahō*³⁸ (Illustrated Magazine for Ladies) include glossy and lavish pictures about women wearing kimono apparel,

³⁶ First published in 1958 by Sekai Bunka-sha, aimed at 40-year-old women “well educated and well established” living in their own home, and where the husband’s salary is in the higher income bracket (Moeran, 1995, p. 111).

³⁷ First published in 1981 by Bunka-sha.

³⁸ Addressed to married women with teenager children.

and about traditionally decorated homes where indigo dyeing is often displayed (Figures 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3). These publications, focusing on and contextualizing “Japan’s good traditions”, show their readers how best to enjoy these traditions through the “spiritually uplifting” item they promote (Moeran, 1995, pp. 112-113). Consequently, these magazines reinforce the sense of national identity among the readers through their images and texts, that bring an idealized Japan into their homes. Another periodical magazine, *Taiyō - Nihon no kokoro* (Sun - the soul of Japan), launched in 1963, and its special issues ‘series’, launched in 1973, cover most Japanese crafts. The 293rd issue of *Taiyō - Nihon no kokoro*, *Serizawa Keisuke no Nihon* (The Japan of Serizawa Keisuke) of 24 October 2021, is a special issue devoted to his work, with contributions from dyers who had worked at his *kenkyūjo* and other art critics. Another example of the special issues’ series is the *Yunoki Samiro - tsukuru koto, ikiru koto* (The oeuvre and life of Yunoki Samiro), published on 15 December 2021 as a retrospective of his artistic life.



Figure 5.3. Mr. Okamoto Takashi in his atelier in Shizuoka. Mr. Okamoto spent some two years at the Serizawa Kenkyūjo in Kamata, Tokyo. The picture in the right-hand side shows Mr. Okamoto applying resist paste through a stencil to a fabric. The picture on the right-hand side illustrates his respect for his mentor Serizawa Keisuke, with his picture and a traditional *awamori* bottle from Okinawa, the favorite drink of Serizawa. The title of the article is “Okamoto Takashi san no onshi - Serizawa Keisuke”/岡本隆志さんの恩師・芹沢銈介 [Serizawa Keisuke, mentor of Okamoto Takashi]. *Fujingahō*, 7 August 2021.

<https://www.fujingaho.jp/uts-kimono/essay/g37240648/kimono-sakka-okamototakashi-210807/?slide=3>

The role of magazines as consumption mediators is not new, and Sugimoto Seiko (2020) has described how the origin of fashion magazines can be traced to kimono pattern books from the Edo period, when the pattern books for kimono designs, which appeared as catalogues around 1680, served as manuals for kimono makers’ shopping catalogues for

consumers, and fashion plates for the kimono shops. In addition, woodblock prints displayed the fashion leaders of that time, such as kabuki actors, beautiful city-girls, and courtesans wearing kimono, facilitating the visual communication of the kimono trends and the consumers. However, the influence of visual communication was much broader than fashion consumption, and also served as an efficient mediator for communication among stakeholders. This network included consumption mediators, such as kimono shops, and department stores; production mediators, such as craftspeople and artists, and associations related to kimono production and promotion; and other related groups, such as kimono schools and kimono wearing professionals, as well as people involved in art movement, such as the Mingei Movement (Sugimoto, 2020, p. 158). Sugimoto further argued that the Utsukushii magazine supported the aesthetics of the Mingei Movement by displaying in their first issue of 1953 kimono made of pongee silk (*tsumugi*) of Kihachijo, branded as a genuine Mingei product; and Takumi store news, presenting the Mingei Movement and kimono by Serizawa. Progressively, *tsumugi* kimono became popular, and the footing for the images in the magazine slightly changed, including words as handwoven or Mingei-style, announcing kimono not only from big department stores, but also from craftspeople cooperatives. In the 1990s the magazine continued publishing *tsumugi* kimono, although the footage changed to announce these items as classy, luxurious, and bliss. Volumes 240 and 242 of 2012 included, respectively, an article portraying a kimono from Okinawa titled “Beautiful dyeing and weaving of Okinawa found by Yanagi Muneyoshi” and another titled “*Tsumugi* in various regions, conveying the warmth of Japanese culture passed down through generations” (p. 169).

In his 2013 study on Kateigahō, Brian Moeran noted how, by its title, the magazine establishes itself culturally as a magazine for Japanese women, or rather for women who are concerned with being ‘Japanese’, as opposed to being ‘western’ (p. 115). Furthermore, Moeran noted that Kateigahō promotes a ‘fantasy’ of Japaneseness, which it tries to connect with the ‘reality’ of Japan (sub)urban lifestyles, tinting it with nostalgia of the past and the homeland (*furusato*). Moeran also argued, that although it addresses modern urban lifestyles, the magazine never displays pictures of crowded places, but rather, natural environments, projecting a modern and yet enclaved traditional lifestyle for its readers (p. 139). Women magazine in practice, also establish a correlation with social stratification because by having a clear profile or targeted readers, they reinforce age segmentation and influence the identification of consumer groups among their readers (Assmann, 2003).

Social media refers to digital platforms and online technologies, which allow a fluid communication between the users. By participating in platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, people stay connected and share information, build networks, and establish virtual communities. Like traditional mass media, social media serves to support the material consumption of crafts, at the same time that it fosters the cultural and symbolic consumption of the craft as well. In the current research, several dyers commented on how using social media was useful to announce their work and increase the sale of their products without any other intermediary. In such case, the social media played the role of the agency mediating their production and the consumers. They also commented on the effort that using social media constitutes, because “they were not ready for these new technologies, and because their work was to dye, not to sell crafts.” Some dyers explained that using social media had allowed them to establish contact with the consumers, and to better know their opinions about the craft, both important to expand the base of consumers, and tailor their production and ensure future sales (Figure 5.4). Compared to the mass media, which operates on a one-to-many basis, social media operates on the basis of many-to-many basis allowing for greater instantaneous interaction among the users. Social media allows for interaction among users of the platforms, and includes the consumers in the virtual community of practice that the social media creates. Having consumers in the network shortens the distance between them and the dyers, making mediators redundant and some transaction costs drop (Valk, 2017, pp. 325-326).



Figure 5.4. Works by Mr. Katō Yukihiro, employee at Nibashi Senkō Kōbō, Hamamatsu. Mr. Katō actively uses the social media and internet under his artistic name, Kouyanokatou, to sell his hand towels (*tenugui*) and to update his followers on his activities. “Dogs” (left-hand side picture) and “Crimson glory vine” (picture in center) are two of his original works being sold through internet. In addition, he participates regularly at fairs across Japan (right-hand side picture of his stand at an open-air fair in Kyoto, 3-4 May 2023).

<https://kouyanokatou.wixsite.com/mysite-2> and

<https://twitter.com/kouyanokatou/status/1653556721573593088/photo/1>

A further group of mediators includes the **influencers or lobbyists**, involved mainly in the consumption of craft as commodities. In addition, they also promote the cultural consumption of the crafts because of their claimed expert knowledge. Depending on their profile, they can support the symbolic consumption of the craft as well. There are multiple examples of individuals and groups belonging to this category. One example of craft and craft-art is Becos, a society established in Tokyo in 2017 by Tashimura Kentaro, offering Japanese crafts through their social media channels. Their main role is to sell Japanese crafts on behalf of the craftspeople. Becos as a company, apart from mediating the sale of craftspeople's productions, aims at informing the consumers in the various crafts traditions.³⁹ Becos' website periodically publishes articles about the different crafts, putting forward the craftspeople, the *kōbō* where the item was produced, the technique used, and what is more important, explaining the reasons why as a Japanese craft the object is unique. For instance, when announcing the free-hand dyeing (*tsutsugaki*) items, Becos introduced Matsuda Nariki, the dyer, showing his products and a quality video produced by Takumi, a collaborating company, about his *kōbō* and his dyeing technique.⁴⁰ Mr. Matsuda explains that he belongs to the 12th generation of dyers in the Tottori prefecture, where all other *kōbō* have disappeared. He further explains that he feels himself the holder of this craft, and that "We cannot end the tradition that has continued for over 300 years." He then continues "Fortunately, my eldest son wants to follow in my footsteps, and he is in the midst of training to pass on all my know-how, as I received it from my father." After situating the craft within a continued lineage and the Japanese tradition, Mr. Matsuda qualifies his craft as authentic and worth consuming by saying that each of his items is handmade and original, and that he would be happy if the person purchasing his works could feel the warmth of his hands, a feeling which machines cannot transmit. Becos promotes the Japanese crafts as having such a good quality because they say that -among other things- the Japanese drive for perfection, constant devotion to the ideas of hospitality (*omotenashi*) and attentiveness (*kikubari*), which assure the high quality of the crafts.

Another example of a private influencer related to traditional crafts in Japan is Nakata Hidetoshi, a former football player of Japan. Upon retirement, Nakata established the ReValue

³⁹ The company introduces the history and production of traditional crafts, while presenting the products which they sell through its website <https://becos-en.myshopify.com>. For instance, on 20 September 2023, the website included information about indigo dyeing <https://en.thebecos.com/blogs/column/aizome-japanese-indigo-dyeing-every-fabric-tells-a-story>

⁴⁰ Introducing details of the localized production of the craft and the dyer <https://en.thebecos.com/collections/matsuda-dyeing-works> accompanied by a video produced by Takumi <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2Zn9Gid428&t=10s>

Nippon Project in January 2009⁴¹ to develop awareness of the issues that the traditional Japanese crafts were facing, and to create opportunities for more people to experience Japanese arts, culture, and craftsmanship to preserve and expand them. As part of this initiative, Nakata visited all 47 prefectures across Japan, identifying crafts and products of each prefecture, categorizing them in home, food, craft, sake, stay, visits/spots items. His branded NihonMono⁴² represents, in Nakata's own words, "the expression of the splendor of Japanese culture", and is the compression of the two words Nihon and Hon Mono ("Japan" and "genuine/native things") into what reads as Things Japanese. The NihonMono is built as a searchable database which contains information on each prefecture by all categorized items, or on any specific category across all prefectures. Most entries display Nakata visiting the place, interacting with the craftspeople, presenting the craft and its production, and other information of interest for those who would like to visit the place. There is ample information about items for purchase.

Government institutions mediate the institutionalization of traditions, legitimizing their symbolic meaning of nationness and Japanese national identity. Their main role relates to the symbolism of the crafts, through the various initiatives which they promote. One such example is the system for designation and recognition of IICP of 1955 to preserve those traditional crafts which could disappear without the government support. Government institutions network with other intermediaries such as department stores to support the symbolic consumption of these traditions through exhibitions. One such example is the Nihon Dentō Kōgei ten, or annual Exhibition of Japanese Traditional Art Crafts, which since 1954 exhibits works of master craftspeople itinerating across Japan for six months (Kikuchi, 2015, pp. 92-94). The post-war period saw the resurgence of a popular neo-nationalism in Japan, as a reaction against Western cultural colonization, supporting a Japanese cultural identity through "the native haptic and holistic concept of decoration and the role that traditional crafts have played since antiquity" (Kikuchi, 2015, p.103). More recent government policies include the branding of soft culture, such as the Cool Japan Initiative of 2012. The Cool Japan initiative legitimizes traditions and what it considers natively Japanese products, imbuing them with a popular and fashionable symbolism, in order to boost national income through consumption and tourism.

⁴¹ Nakata also established the Take Action Foundation to foster "individual actions and link them to solve global problems." <http://nakata.net/tag/revalue-nippon>

⁴² NihonMono website presents cultures of Japan emphasizing their placeness: <https://nihonmono.jp>

The **consumers** play a role which is being progressively recognized as important for the consumption of the crafts. This role is the result of social media interactions/ internet use, making information sharing an instant phenomenon that liaise people independently from their locations. For instance, through the social media and internet the dyers announce and sell their works. Depending on sales trends, the dyers will adapt their production, occasionally making some variations within the popular style of dyed items. Through this quick feedback, the customers actively influence the production of the crafts. The channelling of the production is beneficial for the craftspeople because it boosts the sale of their products, but induces changes in the original production of the artisans to the detriment of the tradition of the craft (Schneider, 1987, p. 437; Pontsioen, 2012, pp. 260-261; Wilson, 2007, pp. 116-119). Internet and social media allow customers to by-pass retailers, and act as a 24/7 shopping mall, offering purchase opportunities such as sales or auctions. Social media acts as a facility which constructs communities of interested people, and progressively, separating online activities from activities of physical groups has lost its significance (Cliffe, 2013, p. 92).

Another situation where the consumers become active participants in the consumption of the craft happens when the dyers make demonstrations and workshops to introduce dyeing techniques to the public. Through direct contact there is a reciprocal exchange of perspectives, with the consumers better appreciating the dyeing crafts, and the dyers better understanding the needs and preferences of the consumers.

5.4. Types of consumption: who consumes katazome and how?

This section presents the various types of consumption of *katazome*: material, visual, cultural, and symbolic, and illustrates them with examples. These four consumption types are related and often mixed. For instance, the purchasing of crafts (material consumption) often results from an interest in announcements and advertising in printed material (visual consumption), seen in museums and events (cultural consumption) of traditional crafts made in Japan. Similarly, each type of consumption does not have a unique mediator, but rather a group of mediators which play major, important, or supportive role as Table 5.1 illustrates.

The demand for traditional folk textile dyeing is the driving force for the work of craftspeople, as discussed in Chapter Three which analyzed how the craftspeople and the *kōbō* adapted to changes in demand. We saw that, when the demand for *katazome* had declined to a

critical level, the *kōbō* followed different paths. Some *kōbō* could not adapt to the situation and closed. Other *kōbō* adapted their work towards a more sellable production, able to re-catch the customers' tastes or to compete with a delocalized production. Lastly, some other *kōbō* reprofiled themselves, re-conceptualizing their production, or innovating and modernizing it. The three paths led to an economic efficiency in the production of the craft, increasing the availability of products for a greater number of people. As a result, the commodification of *katazome* diversified partly due to the democratization in the craft's consumption. For instance, while the elites aimed at Serizawa's signed *kataezome*, the urban middle class demanded Serizawa's traditionally mass-dyed *kataezome* design products, and tourists contented themselves with industrially produced souvenirs with Serizawa's *kataezome* printed motifs.

The various paths to increase the production efficiency of *katazome*, especially when innovating and modernizing the production, or reconceptualizing it, led to the production of crafts as commodities tinted with a certain distinctiveness. These *katazome* "became" locally produced crafts, following traditional techniques, local materials, and had a traditional utility. Their branding as locally produced traditional crafts happened even though some phases in the production were outsourced at times. The public could see and read about traditional folk textile dyeing in magazines, and even experiment them during demonstrations at public events and workshops in museums. Later, the role that the magazines, television, and film industry had, was taken up by the social media, which was able to foster the visual consumption of these crafts quicker and to a larger number of people than the mass media. By focusing on tradition and heritage and linking *katazome* to the Mingei tradition, as an assertion of something specifically Japanese, *katazome* mediators fostered the sense of national identity. Traditional folk textile dyeing was not only traditional crafts, but also authentic and native crafts from Japan, because indigo, stencils, resist paste, or banana fiber were all assimilated to things essentially Japanese. Accordingly, cultural consumption assimilated to symbolic consumption and *katazome* acquired a longer perspective in the tradition of the craft.

The representation of Japaneseness and symbolism in the consumption of *katazome* can take three forms. The first form considers *katazome* as a commodity with no utility value, but rather for occasional display as a collectible. Such an example would be owning an original work by Serizawa, evoking the nostalgic past where the transformation of *katazome* into *kataezome* happened, and embodying a unique Japaneseness, which Serizawa represented. By owning a signed kimono of Serizawa, the owner becomes unique and distinct, possessing a

portion of a past national history which cannot be replicated. The second form would be illustrated by the urban middle class consuming mass-produced *katazome*, such as the Serizawa calendars. In this case, there is a combination of utility function in home decoration, while valuing the history and tradition of the production of the calendars. These calendars represent a purely Japanese object to which the consumers relate in their daily lives as something inherent to their culture and identity. The third form of Japaneseness representation would be illustrated by tourists consuming industrially produced Serizawa's designed dyeing. Typically, they would purchase a good-buy value souvenir, such as a 700-yen handkerchief with the Serizawa's Iroha design. In this case, consumption of the craft does not relate to consumption of national identity. Rather, the purchase relates to the appropriation of an exotic Japan, which the tourists will bring back home as a sample of "otherness" culture.

5.4.1. *Material consumption*

In the material consumption, the main agents are wholesalers and retailers, art galleries, department stores, mass media, internet/social media, private lobbyists and influencers, and the consumers. In the *katazome*, the wholesalers included the professionals to whom Mr. Dote alluded when explaining how he would receive orders for the various items which would be later sold at Takumi or Bingoya stores or through their networks. Based on years of practice and with the disappearance of the wholesalers, these retailers would contact directly Mr. Dote for the orders. Art galleries, as department stores do, consider art as commodities and their main role is to trade them for money. The department stores had a special relevance in the early twentieth century in the promotion of the Mingei crafts, which has continued to the present days. Examples of the role of art galleries and department stores in the material consumption of *katazome* include the sale expositions at the Takashimaya Department Store in Nihonbashi, Tokyo, and in other regions of Japan, mentioned in Chapter Two in relation to the amateur practice of *katazome*. The sales exhibition that the Japan Folk Crafts Museum organizes each autumn is another example of museums acting as temporary art galleries selling -among other crafts- *katazome* directly from the dyers. A third example is that of the periodical exhibitions dedicated to a dyer or a craft, such as the annual sales exhibition organized by Toko Co. Ltd. in Mashiko, Tochigi prefecture, dedicated to senior dyer Shimodaira Kiyohito.⁴³ The common

⁴³ Shimodaira Kiyohito (1936-). Joined the Serizawa Kenkyūjo in 1956, where he worked for 23 years. The Toko Co. Ltd, Mashiko, Tochigi prefecture organized a solo exhibition from 10 to 21 September 2022; and from 30 September to 12 October in 2023. <https://mashiko.com/exhibition/20230930-shimodaira/>

characteristics of these events held in physical locations is that they encourage the material consumption of crafts as commodities, while disguising or softening the commercial aspect. However, these structures organize sales events for a number of years, and become institutions by themselves, contributing also to the symbolic consumption of the crafts.

There are other mediators who play an indirectly-supporting role for the material consumption of the crafts as commodities, such as prefectural and regional promotion centers, and local and regional tourism offices. The network of prefectural and regional promotion centers focuses on educational or training activities to introduce the crafts to the public, and support craft production initiatives in their localities, while local and regional tourism offices promote the craft industries by informing the visitors about the various *kōbō* and their products.

In addition to the categories of mediators using a physical location, other categories of mediators support material consumption of crafts using new technologies/electronic means to reach a wider number of potential consumers in diverse locations. These categories of mediators include the traditional mass media, represented by a wealth of printed material in magazines for the public, among which, *Kateigahō* and *Fujingahō* are among the best known in Japan.

5.4.2. Visual consumption

Jonathan Schroeder (2002) defines visual consumption as “not only the visual-oriented consumer behavior, such as watching videos, tourism, and window-shopping, but also a theoretical approach to the interstices of consumption, vision, and culture.” For Schroeder, the cultural system of meanings is influenced by advertising, consumption, marketing, and mass media, and involves “looking, watching, spectatorship, seeing sites, gazing, window shopping, browsing, perusing, traveling, viewing, surfing the Web, navigating the Internet, and many other visual processes.” Image is the key characteristic of twentieth-century economy, and the product traded attempts to match it, and not the vice versa (2002, p.4). Visual consumption relates to desired lifestyles and identities more than necessities per se for our day-to-day lives. The fact that images surround us does not mean that we know what we are seeing, but rather, that we apprehend what we see through the assimilated conventions of intermediaries, which depend on our educational, physical, and cultural conditions/backgrounds.

In visual culture, advertising creates a dream world of images where anything seems possible, and market segmentation by consumer identity is a powerful strategy. Advertising has become the dominant form of visual communication, and has grown increasingly sophisticated. The development of new communication technologies, such as the World Wide Web, has changed how consumers consume culture. Looking at pictures posted in the net may convey a message that a product is a commodity *with style*, rather than a simple commodity. What we purchase is not a hard item, but the cultural product that the mediators have transformed through visual marketing techniques (Schroeder, 2002, pp. 22-23).

The main agents of visual consumption are the museums through their exhibitions and catalogues, the private lobbyists and influencers, and, most importantly, the mass media in written and visual forms, and the social media. Undoubtedly, the written media and crafts periodicals and magazines transmit images of objects in the “right” context for consumers. To be effective, images need to connect in some way to the consumer, for her/him wishing to know more and to engage with the craft. It is not what is written in the magazine, but what is conveyed in its images that *hooks* the consumer. Films and television traditionally, and now with the development of social media, the influencers and related professions have embedded images in all peoples’ daily lives. Other mediators, such as professional crafts associations and crafts promotional centers use images efficiently to convey their messages in their publications or event announcements. However, the scope of and scale of their work’s traditional/analogue communication become marginal when compared to how effective mass and social media are. In the current research, visual consumption played the most important role in the practitioners’ decision to join the amateur practice of *katazome*. Interviewees stated that their visits to an exhibition of Serizawa or their encounter with his works in magazines made them want to join *katazome* practice.

5.4.3. Cultural consumption

Cultural consumption of crafts relates to the appreciation of an object, considering that, further to it being a hard item, it has value derived from where and how it was produced, and how it was meant to be consumed. In front of a craft from another culture, it is essential to understand the value that that culture attaches to the object, to better appreciate the object through our own culture (Freeland, 2001, pp. 64-66). Similarly to the “circuits of affordances” which facilitate the tasks of production of crafts/objects efficiently, techno-material, spatial,

temporal, representational, social and economic affordances intervene in the legitimization of the cultural value of the craft/object and consequently educate the consumers. The object as such belongs to several domains related to cultural production (Moeran, 2014, pp. 36-37). For instance, the case of traditional folk textile dyeing, shares “positions” or “spaces” with industry, handicrafts, amateur/hobby, fashion, home decoration, tradition, and luxury/collectibles. This culturalization and education role that allows us to consume an object in context is the main role of research centers at prefectural and regional levels, and specialized publications, when they communicate results of experiences and research in a way that consumers gain knowledge to better understand the crafts/object and its use. Government agencies, professional crafts associations, mass media and social media support the cultural consumption of crafts by diffusing messages to the public through their operating channels (television, films, radio, electronic means, printed materials). Many museums nowadays organize events and workshops so that visitors can experience the craft being exposed and understand it better. For instance, the Serizawa Keisuke Art and Craft Museum in Sendai organized three-day hands-on workshops on *katazome* for about 20 participants for several years in the late 2010s.

The cultural and the symbolic consumptions of traditional crafts are intimately related to each other because of the weight of the tradition attached to these objects, and they cannot be dissociated. While the symbolic consumption of crafts precludes its culture consumption, not all cultural consumption is imbued with symbolism.

5.4.4. *Symbolic consumption*

The symbolic consumption of crafts can be understood as a deliberate choice to attach value to what is meaningful to the community as a group, and not merely to the individual as a commodity. Symbolic consumption of crafts precludes its cultural consumption and situates the object in an in-material realm. In the same way in which the *kōbō* represented the physical location of craft production, a social environment for craftspeople, and the symbolic realm of a distinctive community of practice of crafts, we could assimilate the material consumption with the hard item and where it is produced; the cultural consumption with the social environment and how the item is produced, and the symbolic consumption with the concept of national identity that it represents. The symbolic consumption of *katazome* evokes collective identity and cultural heritage and illustrates the confrontation between the advancing industrialization/cosmopolitanism of the early twentieth century, on the one hand, and the

attachment to localities invoking local cultural identity and Japaneseness eager to defend a threatened sector of production, on the other.

Mediating symbolism in crafts is a long-term endeavor and depends on a political will to legitimize the tradition. While the lineage depends on the craftspeople themselves, the tradition is constructed and legitimized by others than the craftspeople directly involved in the *katazome* production. The achievement of a collectively shared idea of Japaneseness requires inputs from numerous intermediaries. Among them, official institutions play the main role. Governmental institutions for instance, established museums and schools of art, craft and industry in the 1870s, supported national crafts associations and the organization of annual expositions in the 1940s, published the Enhancement Protection Cultural Properties Act, established the ICH system in 1950, and launched major initiatives, such as the Cool Japan in 2012, supporting, among others, public-private initiatives in the traditional crafts sector. Government policies shaped their discourse on the symbolism of traditional crafts, reflecting societal changes. For instance, the discourse supporting the Mingei Movement and the consumption of Mingei products which was so popular in the 1960s-1970s, gave way to a discourse on Kōgei, more inclusive than Yanagi's Mingei crafts, and less anchored on the early twentieth-century historical circumstances. Public institutions, such as prefectural and regional craft promotion centers and tourism offices promote crafts and support the tradition by rooting them locally (placeness) within the craft history (tradition). Other mediators support the symbolic consumption of *katazome* as well. For instance, the mass media conveys the sense of tradition through pictures of Japanese craftspeople in their *kōbō* (Chapter Three, Figures 3.8, 3.9, and 3.10), or illustrating how the craftspeople themselves respect their lineage belonging (Figure 5.3). Museums may strengthen the identification of the artist with its location (Freeland, 2001, pp. 91-93), supporting the collections' symbolism. For instance, the Serizawa Art and Crafts Museum of Shizuoka, his natal place; or the Japan Folk Crafts Museum complex, where Yanagi lived with his family while in Komaba illustrate this point.

5.5. Evolution in the consumption of katazome

This research considers that *katazome* as a culture in Japan must be analyzed in relation to those who practice it (dyers), those who buy it (consumers), and those who mediate it (institutions branding these products, retailers, museums, professional associations). Therefore, the meaning of traditional folk textile dyeing, and the way people understand it are not static

and evolve with social changes. How Japanese consumed *katazome* when the Mingei Movement was thriving or after WW2, is different from its consumption nowadays, associated with occasional/ceremonial use of traditional wear, and with symbolic use in traditional spaces.

Over the years, the socioeconomic changes in Japan and the urbanization of its society, witnessed a profound change in the lifestyle of Japanese. The rural population working in agriculture moved to work in the industrial and the service sectors in cities and adopted new fashions. Newly developed industrial textile fibers such as nylon or polyester proved to be practical in use and competitive in price, so they progressively replaced traditional cotton, silk, or hemp for daily use. The appearance of synthetic colorants translated in brilliant colors, more color variations, better fastness properties, easier handling, and wider application. As a result of these changes in fashion and the availability of new textile fibers and dyestuffs, the traditional dyed wear and home items available to the middle class who used them widely in the day-to-day life in the 1930s became progressively obsolete in the 2000s (Bincsik, 2022, pp. 24-27). Women would use kimono and *obi* only on special occasions. Plastic bags replaced *furoshiki*, and washable synthetic bed covers replaced traditional *kakebuton*. These changes in consumption patterns of these traditional products resulted in a decrease in demand for folk textile dyeing. Many ateliers had to reduce their size and many professional dyers had to work in other areas to make their ends meet. Many professional dyers do not find successors to their ateliers, and once they retire due to age, these disappear.

While there has been a decline in demand for these products for traditional use *per se*, they are still popular among elites, who consumes them on an occasional basis. At the same time, in recent years there has been a revival in the appreciation of these traditional folk textile dyeing for modern use, by re-using *katazome* fabrics to make fashionable clothing; or using these fabrics innovatively, including home decoration. One such example is the use of pongee silk as a fabric for traditional wear in Japan. Considered as a second-class silk for a long time, it had become popular as a craft promoted by the Mingei Movement, to be later designated as a traditional craft and as a cultural heritage item. With time, its consumption had increased, at the same time that its production decreased, resulting in pongee dyed fabrics in a sought product only available to those with a certain purchasing power. Parallel with this trend and because of an effective branding strategy, pongee kimono has become an item of choice among a young generation of Japanese users, resulting in a revitalized second-hand market of these kimono available at affordable prices (Sugimoto, 2020, pp. 169-171).

In his study about craftspeople in the Tokyo area, Robert Pontsioen (2012) addressed the consumption changes in traditional crafts. He noted that the resurgence in consumption of these crafts during the 1960s and the 1970s expressed the reaction to the intense cultural importation after the WW2, like the resurgence in consumption fueled by the Mingei Movement in the 1920s and 1930s as a reaction to the industrialization of crafts production. During these decades, crafts' consumption related to people reaffirming their national identity as individuals, and to contributing to a sense of Japanese nationalism in society (pp. 90-94). There were other population factors, such as urbanization and population increase and changes in consumer tastes which also contributed to the increased consumption of traditional crafts.

Using a similar approach to the one used when analyzing the evolution of *katazome* production in relation to the homogenization, heterogenization and hybridization/transformation of crafts (Appadurai, 1986; Robertson, 1995, pp. 28-29) in Chapter Four, it is possible to analyze the evolution of the consumption of *katazome* (Figure 4.13). This analysis adopts a long-period analysis, referred to as the “social history of things” by Kopytoff (1986), and considers an initial point where homogenization and heterogenization are both low, which I denominated “original” consumption. One such example is the *bingata*, which was consumed by royals of the Ryūkyū kingdom prior to its unofficial annexation by Japan in the early seventeenth century. Other examples are the cotton fabrics which were consumed exclusively by the military, or for Noh and tea ceremonies during the Momoyama and early Edo periods, and the high quality hemp (*jōfu* 上布) consumed only by samurai and upper-class people. With social changes, there was a homogenization of the consumption of these products with the disappearance of the sumptuary laws. As a result, *bingata* became available to the public across Japan (homogenization of social classes and of location). Cotton fabrics also became available to the general public from the late Edo period onwards. The consumption experienced transformation and reinvention as well. For instance, through a change of purpose, a traditional, indigo-dyed doorway curtain by Serizawa found its place in modern homes once its size was adapted to modern homes doors, just like a handkerchief which was once re-designed and industrially produced. The original doorway curtain by Serizawa is consumed as a non-signed item, while the mass-produced doorway curtain for modern home and the industrially produced handkerchief are both consumed as signed items (Figure 5.5).

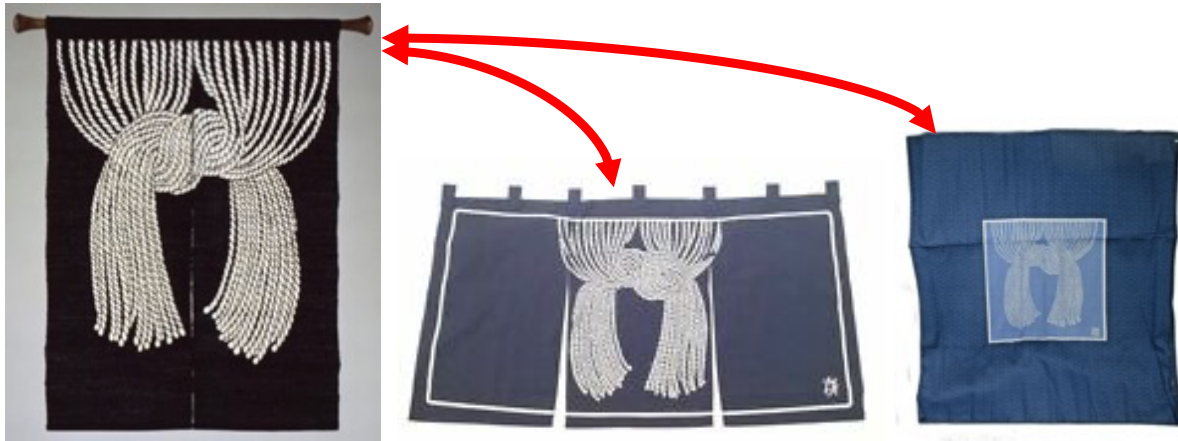


Figure 5.5. Transformation of consumption. Straw Rope (*Nawa*) doorway curtain, 1955 by Serizawa, indigo stencil-dyed cotton, 120.5x88.5 cm (left-hand side picture) (Earle, 2009, p. 26). Same design by Serizawa consumed as a modern-home doorway curtain, cotton and synthetic dye, with signature (center picture); and as a handkerchief, industrially dyed cotton, with signature (right-hand side picture) (personal collection M. Santamaria).

Finally, the evolution of *katazome* consumption includes those dyeing products with low homogenization and high heterogenization, resulting in a distinctive consumption through time as authentically traditional items. For instance, the Serizawa calendars are still being produced using the same technique as when the first one was produced in 1946, and despite Serizawa having passed away in 1984, are consumed as conceived initially. Another such example where the consumption of the craft has remained are the fans designed by Serizawa in the 1950s, which are produced year after year traditionally as identical copies of the originals. Both these crafts are consumed in Japan and abroad as genuinely traditional Japanese crafts.

During my fieldwork, I gathered sufficient evidence to affirm that the consumption of the traditional folk textile dyeing had been affected by the urbanization and social customs in Japan, which rendered obsolete many of the *katazome* items produced traditionally with natural dyestuffs for specific uses and consumed in rigid settings. Furthermore, it became evident that the appearance of synthetic dyestuffs played against the natural dyes because of their practicality in handling as well as their durability. These changes in consumption went along with the traditional consumption of traditional folk textile dyeing in culture-related occasions as a trend for people interested in natural products and handcrafts works and, more importantly, as a statement of support to the traditional crafts sector and to the national cultural identity.

Currently, the consumption of textiles that can be considered traditional crafts, based either on traditional pattern or traditional technique, offers a mosaic of items featuring traditional patterns synthetically dyed (Serizawa's Iroha handkerchiefs, *bingata* budget souvenirs); traditional patterns traditionally dyed with natural dyestuffs (Tokushima indigo dyeing, traditional *kōbō*'s dyeing); and new patterns traditionally dyed with natural dyestuffs. While the pattern and the production method came through as important for the choice of the traditional *katazome* in the present study, the use of natural dyestuffs came out as a more nuanced preference, based on the practicality of handling the dyed items perceived by my interviewees. There are several studies which have analyzed the consumer preferences of natural dyestuffs. Susanne Geissler (2009) noted the difficulty that these studies faced in assessing consumers' preferences because their opinions were subjective and changed regularly. At the same time, these studies suggested that the value that consumers attached to a product were not limited to its functional properties or dyeing technique; and that the emotional component, such as fashion or consideration of the item as luxury, clearly dominated the consumers' choices. While consumers interviewed attributed importance to the sustainable development of natural dyestuffs, the purchase decision of these items related more to the price, and to their perceived and emotional values attached to the crafts (Geissler, 2009, pp. 371-372).

5.6. *Wrap-up*

This chapter explored the various meanings of craft consumption, focusing on the traditional folk textile dyeing, especially on *katazome*, from several perspectives. One such perspective was consumption as a function of demand, which placed consumers at the center of the debate. The chapter used the theory on cultural evolution of Robertson (1995) and that of Wuthnow and Witten on the institutionalization of culture (1988), to explore what customers purchased when they bought "traditional folk textile dyeing" in Japan. The chapter used the theory on the anthropology of things of Appadurai (1986) to explore craft consumption in context. Furthermore, the chapter analyzed the various mediators of the consumption of crafts and the roles they have in material, visual, cultural, and symbolic consumption, to then explore the evolution of consumption of *katazome*, and the expression of national identity and Japaneseness in this tradition.

The chapter started introducing commodities as items which are monetarily exchanged at one phase of their lives, stressing the importance of the nature of the exchange in defining

the type of commodity they become, and the fluidity of the concept, which depend on the social life of these items (Appadurai 1986). Commodity by destination and by metamorphosis are the two types of commodities which are most relevant to *katazome* as crafts to craftspeople because they support their living. The trading of *katazome* by diversion, or as ex-commodities is less relevant to the present research because it does not represent the mainstream of livelihood of most craftspeople or *kōbō*. However, these two forms of commodity exchange are important for some singular *katazome*, for instance works of Serizawa and other consummated craftspeople's works, which have made their way as items of cultural importance in Japan. As a craft loses its homogeneity and becomes singular, its trading as a commodity by destination often evolves into a metamorphosed exchange, until it reaches the level of singularity which makes its trading impossible, and converts it into an ex-commodity. Barter and gift are two special forms of commodities whose exchange does not involve money. Both are relevant to this research because of the importance that these two forms of commodity exchange have in the amateur practice *katazome* and in the continuity of the craft (Chapter Six).

Furthermore, the chapter addressed consumption as a function of demand. Crafts are not static or exist in isolation, and their demand relates on the one hand, to their cultural biography which illustrates the technical, social, and aesthetic knowledge of craft making, as well as the craft nature as a hard item. On the other hand, the demand of crafts relates to the construed value as cultural items around appreciation and taste, and to their social history as traditional items. Demand as such, acts as the link between the short-term demand of an item, and the long-term historical perspective around it. To understand how consumption and demand are constructed, it is necessary to consider both, the multitude of experiences with crafts as items (cultural biographies), and how these are blended into a tradition (social history) (Kopytoff, 1986). Integrating cultural biographies of single and multiple patterns of craft consumption as items, and their historical social history is complicated, and several authors have attempted to analyze how the demand, consumption, and production of various crafts/traditions have evolved through time in Japan (Nakagawa, 2015; Creighton, 1997; Moeran, 2009; Sugimoto, 2020).

In Japan, until the Edo period, strict rules governed the types of fabrics, dyeing, and clothing which the various population groups could wear. This situation was not exclusive to Japan. In Europe, the Italian Renaissance fashion was masculine and elitist, similarly to France and England. With the English revolution of the seventeenth century and the French Revolution

of 1789, these sumptuary laws were toppled (Schneider, 1987, p. 432). The process of change was softer in Japan, and as the influence of the sumptuary laws loosened, the role of unstated but persuasive conventions on what wear was appropriate for the various occasions gained relevance and influenced the demand of fabrics and patterns. The role played by the sumptuary laws in the past, is that of fashion in modern times. The consumer is influenced by socially-driven impulses, which have evolved through time and guided the demand, rather than the demand being driven by individually constructed needs (Appadurai, 1986; Schneider, 1987). While social changes, political, and economic forces influence the demand, which also retro-influences the consumption patterns and the production of the crafts (Schneider, 1987, p. 437). In the case of traditional folk textiles, as with other Mingei crafts, the political and economic forces go hand-in-hand with the various initiatives calling for the demand of consumption of these crafts, tying it up with social messages in times of difficulty for the craftsmanship sector.

The concepts of use-value and exchange-value are important in the consumption of the crafts. The use-value relates to the usefulness of the item and is based on its natural property. The exchange-value of a craft relates to its distinctive quality for the purpose it serves, and depends on the homogeneity/commoditization and on the singularity of the object. The exchange-value of objects is not static and relies on a complex mesh of structures and networks, which acting as an agency, mediate the cultural value of objects (Edgar & Sedgwick, 2008; Kopytoff, 1986). As such, the agency does not have a fixed composition of stakeholders or a fixed role but rather acts as a web of influence varying through time on the different population groups and cultural traditions. As a result, the agency legitimizes the cultural content of an object around its “hard item”, determining the worth of a work/object, its technique of production, and the way in which the object should properly be consumed (De Propriis & Mwaura, 2013; Surak, 2011). The importance of the mediators is evident in three phases of the life of the craft. Firstly, in the creative phase, advising craftspeople on options to adequate their production to the market’s demand; secondly, in the commodification phase, converting the object itself into a cultural commodity; and last, in the consumption phase, with the consumption mediators supporting the conversion of the cultural commodity into a cultural utility. The intermediaries in each phase are different, although some can act in more than one phase.

When the craftspeople and the consumers of their work share the knowledge of the craft, the mediators are redundant. In the case of gifts and barter, the role of these intermediaries is limited because the giver and the receiver directly communicate the meaning of the craft and

its cultural utility. However, mediators become increasingly crucial as the distance between the world of the craftspeople and that of the consumers grow apart. The mediators use two instruments -advertising and fashion- to bridge the worlds of the craftspeople and the consumers. Both instruments, comparable to those existing in the West, gained importance in Japan during the Edo period (Bincsik, 2022). Depending on their profile, some mediators are more relevant in one type of consumption than other. For instance, those mediators whose main role relates to the material consumption of *katazome* include the wholesalers and retailers, art galleries, department stores, mass-media, internet/social media, government agencies, influencers and lobbyists, and more recently consumers. Other mediators backing up the material consumption of *katazome* include tourism offices, craft promotion centers, and craft research centers at prefectural and regional levels. The mediators which have a major role in the visual consumption of *katazome* include museums, mass media with television and films as well as with the periodicals and magazines promoting fashion and home decoration, and more recently social media with its various platforms, and the ensemble of influencers. Art galleries and department stores support the visual consumption of *katazome*, although their main role is the material consumption.

Cultural consumption of *katazome* goes beyond viewing them as mere physical items, and involves recognizing their value derived from the production and intended purpose. To fully appreciate a craft, it is crucial to understand the cultural significance attached to where it was produced (Freeland, 2001). Research centers at prefectural and regional levels, along with specialized publications, play a vital role in educating consumers and providing insights into the cultural context of *katazome*. Government agencies, professional crafts associations, mass media and social media platforms back up the cultural consumption of *katazome* by disseminating information through television, films, electronic means, and printed materials. Museums play a role through workshops and hands-on activities to present these crafts to the public.

Symbolic consumption of *katazome* is intimately related to cultural consumption, although not all cultural consumption is imbued with symbolism. Symbolic consumption of *katazome* expresses notions of national identity, and evokes a sense of collective identity and cultural heritage, illustrating the tension between advancing industrialization and cosmopolitanism, and the preservation of local cultural identity and Japaneseness. Mediating symbolism in crafts relies on sustained efforts and political support. Official institutions shape

discourse on *katazome* as traditional crafts, while the promotion centers, tourism offices, mass media and museums reinforce their symbolic consumption. These institutions strengthen the association between craftspeople and localities relevant to their birthplaces and working locations, supporting the symbolism of their work, and contributing to preserving the crafts and fostering a deeper appreciation for their cultural value.

The evolution in the consumption of *katazome* has been affected by the socioeconomic changes and urbanization in Japan, which has transformed the lifestyle of its population, with the rural workforce shifting from agriculture to the industrial and service sectors in urban settings. Urbanization has led to the adoption of new fashions, replacing traditional textiles like cotton, silk, and hemp with industrially produced fibers such as nylon and polyester. The introduction of synthetic colorants with vibrant colors, has increased durability and ease of use, resulted in the decline in demand for traditional dyed wear and household items. Despite this decline, there has been a resurgence in the appreciation of *katazome*, with repurposing of fabrics for fashion and innovative home decoration. For instance, pongee silk, once considered as a low-quality fiber, became popular in the 1970s and a luxury product in the 2000s. At present, it has become a fashionable product for young people, who consume second-hand kimono at affordable prices.

Similarly to the analysis of the evolution of *katazome* production of Chapter Four, this study applies a long-period analysis to the evolution of *katazome* consumption. The initial stage of consumption, referred to as “Mingei and before”, was characterized by low levels of homogenization and heterogenization. Examples include *bingata*, exclusive to the royals of the Ryūkyū, cotton fabrics used only by the military, for Noh and tea ceremonies during the Momoyama and early Edo periods, which became available to the general public after the disappearance of sumptuary laws. The evolution of both, *bingata* and cotton fabrics, illustrates a homogenization across social classes and regions in Japan. The consumption of *katazome* also underwent transformation and reinvention. For instance, original indigo-dyed doorway curtains by Serizawa found a place in modern homes after adaptation of their size and following mass production to make them affordable. The design of Serizawa doorway curtains was also transformed in industrially produced handkerchiefs. Both, modern-home doorway curtains and handkerchiefs appear as signed objects, while the originally dyed doorway curtain by Serizawa was not signed. Additionally, some *katazome* products maintained low homogenization and high heterogenization, resulting in a distinctive consumption of these crafts as authentically

traditional items. Serizawa calendars, produced identically as since 1946, and fans designed by Serizawa in the 1950s, continue being produced nowadays, and are consumed in Japan and abroad as genuine traditional Japanese crafts, maintaining their originality.

The current consumption of *katazome* offers a mosaic of synthetically dyed items with traditional patterns, traditionally dyed patterns using natural dyes, and new patterns traditionally dyed with natural dyes. The feedback of interviewees suggests that in selecting *katazome*, the choice is influenced by the pattern and the production method, while the use of natural dyes is influenced by perceived practicality. Other authors note that consumer value goes beyond functional properties and techniques. Emotional factors, such as fashion and perceiving the item as a luxury, and its price strongly affect the consumer choices (Geissler, 2009).

Chapter Six: Continuity and sustainability of traditional folk textile stencil dyeing

The main line of argument throughout my research has been that *katazome* as a traditional craft is not only the dyed fabric which is appreciated because of its beauty, but also the representation of a human endeavor, rooted in an evolving and yet stable community of practice, which symbolizes the cultural identity of Japan. Anchoring my analysis of the *katazome* in the 1920s and attaching it to the Mingei Movement enabled me to acknowledge a far longer history of the origins of the tradition and, at the same time, analyze its contemporary evolution and prospects for the future. Similarly, anchoring *katazome* on Serizawa Keisuke was most relevant, because he embodies the essence of tradition with his exquisite craftsmanship in the dyeing technique and his contributions to further develop such tradition. Analyzing his trajectory, his approach to the craft, and his personality as a genius, artist, craftsman, and most importantly as a person, allowed me to give a human face to this personage, which until now had not been documented. My enquiry on the personality and lives of the craftspeople and their work helped me to connect their community of practice to the *kōbō*, another central pillar of my research, which has concluded that without the *kōbō* there is no *katazome*. As my research progressed, I came to realize that the stakeholders mediating the consumption of these crafts, with their vested political and economic interests, were as important as the craft as an object, if not more. I could then speculate that the fate of the *kōbō* and the dyers depended on their capacity to either adapt or reinvent themselves, or to join the various initiatives launched by the stakeholders. I also realized that most of the dyers were more concerned with continuing with their craft than with the imposed criteria and classification of their work. They wanted to continue being themselves and to keep carrying out their work for as long as they could.

This chapter takes all the above into consideration and addresses the continuity of traditional folk textile dyeing. It will review the ways in which the tradition of the craft has been constructed, maintained, and transmitted. In so doing, this chapter attempts to answer some of the questions included in the third set of questions of this research. The chapter also seeks to answer the following questions from its fourth set: Should traditional folk textile dyeing be left to the market forces? What are the factors that affect the consumption of *katazome*? How is the continuity of this craft tradition being supported? What are the

structures, institutions, and mechanisms involved, and how do they operate? Under which conditions are these mechanisms effective and for whom? What are the main stakeholders and how have their roles evolved?

In her analysis on the craft debate in Japan, Kikuchi Yuko noted that (modern) “crafts are primarily regarded as a form of highly specialised professional art, minutely institutionalised and factionalised, a situation which is unique to Japan, where the demarcation of ‘craft’ from ‘fine art’ and ‘design’ is unclear and irrelevant” (2015, p. 92). This aspect came out strongly from the fieldwork in the present research, together with the sense that the success of *katazome* as a craft mostly related to factors outside of the *tangible* craft. For instance, its credentials seemed to be the major criterion behind its appreciation, more than the dyeing itself. I am using the term credentials as an ensemble of the impalpable elements which wrap the dyeing as an object, such as the ascendance of the *kōbō* and the dyer’s lineage, the belongingness to the craft community of practice, and the participation in official designations and initiatives. These honors and affiliations are critical in the promotion of the craft, and they motivate those involved in the craft production. As Richard Wilson, former professor at the ICU on cultural heritage⁴⁴ put it during an interview in the context of this research (April 2018) “... the biggest difference between pre-modern craft and what took place afterward, is that although premodern craftspeople were also into value-adding, seeking titles and patronage, most value adding took place inside the work itself. From this perspective, it becomes evident that externalized value adding is the key to success in the continuation of the *katazome* craft tradition. In a way, this is what Yanagi Soetsu through the Mingei Movement and Serizawa Keisuke for folk textiles did in their time.”

In this chapter, I take stock of the results of the fieldwork and review those factors and experiences which influence the continuity of the traditional folk textile stencil dyeing. In Section 6.1, I start by setting up the scene at the present time, while looking back to the Mingei period, in which I anchored my research, and looking forward to the years to come. Next, I address the concepts of crafts’ tradition and authenticity as I consider them pivotal to the continuity of the craft in Section 6.2. I then move to Section 6.3, where I discuss continuity of the craft including its economic viability, and explore how the preservation of traditional folk

⁴⁴ Former Professor at the International Christian University, Department of Arts and Science, and former advisor to this research.

textile dyeing operates through several examples of initiatives, which I treat as brief case studies. I also bring to light the role that amateur practice has on the continuity of the craft. Finally, I close the chapter by outlining some options for support and suggestions for research on the continuity of this Japanese craft tradition.

6.1. Current crossroads: Looking back and looking forward

There are two basic perspectives which framework the analysis of the evolution of traditional crafts. The first perspective is tinted by narratives of loss and decline, pointing towards a nostalgic past, which is thought to be both, glorious and lost forever. The second perspective “appreciates the importance of the cultural narratives in constructing the past as a process of imaginative signification that can be extended into the present and the future” (Bell et al. 2021, pp.8-9). While one perspective looks backwards to the history and tradition of the craft, for the other perspective tradition is a resource that coexists with modernity and offers possibilities to look forward.

The analysis of the evolution of traditional folk textile dyeing in modern times needs to contemplate two aspects of change. The first aspect is quantitative and includes the trends in the number of *kōbō* or production sites, and in the volume of crafts produced. The second aspect is more discriminatory and considers the pattern of changes taking place not only in the type of crafts produced, but also in the factors influencing such changes, namely, the consumption preferences and the mediators of such preferences.

As discussed in Chapter Three, analyzing trends of traditional folk textile dyeing accurately is complicated because the statistics available do not discriminate between traditional textile dyeing and traditional textile weaving, amalgamating these two different traditional crafts into the category of “traditional textile”. Although dyeing can be considered as a subgroup of weaving, when discussing folk crafts, they are assigned to different categories of finished crafts. A further complicating factor for the analysis of the trends in this craft is that there are no official statistics on folk textiles as such, and, therefore, all estimations are only approximative. Nevertheless, it can be affirmed that there has been a steady declining trend in terms of production sites and volume of production of traditional textiles in Japan since the late 1980s, which mark the start of the “lost years” of economic stagnation which affected all

segments of society. The decline in the craft sector started after the three waves of resurgence of traditional folk crafts, which coincided with the Mingei in the 1920-1930s, after the WW2 in the 1940-1950s, and a reaction to intense cultural importation in the 1960-1970s, (Pontsioen, 2012, pp. 93-95). Kakiuchi Emiko and Takeuchi Kiyoshi analyzed the evolution of traditional crafts in Japan, using data from METI of 2009, and noted that the sales of such crafts decreased from 508 billion yen in 1990 to 118 billion yen in 2010, and the number of employees decreased from 205 thousand to 73 thousand in the same period. This was despite the government efforts to support the sector (Kakiuchi & Takeuchi, 2014, p.14).

These statistics are corroborated by specific situations. For instance, Charlotte Linton (2020) has observed that, while in the 1970s the *tsumugi* silk industry in Ōshima island supported more than 20 thousand people, in 2020 there were only 150 employees in this sector (Linton, 2020, p. 256). Pontsioen, while conducting research on Tokyo craftspeople by also using the METI data of 2009, has remarked that the number of traditional textile makers in Japan peaked in 1980 with 460 thousand workers, but then declined to less than 50 thousand in 2007 (Pontsioen, 2012, p. 92). The situation concerning indigo is similar. Introduced in Japan around the eighth century AD, the production flourished from the Edo period until the early twentieth century, when the Mingei Movement led to the revival and appreciation of the indigo tradition. However, despite its designation as IICP in 1978, in 2006, there were only about 80 farmers, mostly elderly, working under contract for the four *sukumo* producers in Tokushima (Ricketts III, 2006, pp. 8-9 and p. 20). In Akita prefecture, where the indigo dyeing sector counted 60 dyeing houses in 1882 around the Yokote, and 12 in the Asamai areas, only one several-generation dyehouse remains today (Miyamoto, 2006, pp. 95-96).

The Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries has compared the situation 2016 to past performance, and noted that there had been a reduction from 288 thousand workers in the traditional crafts' sector in 1979 to 62 thousand and from a volume of transactions of 540 billion yen in 1983 to 96 billion. This source attributes the causes of the decline in the traditional crafts' sector to the technological innovation and industrial revolution with a generalized mass supply and consumption of standardized low-priced daily necessities; the rural decline, which was the main source of primary materials for traditional crafts; the conversion of land into residential areas, which displaced production sites or forced their closure; changes in employment conditions; and changes in lifestyle and consumer preferences. It should also be noted that the decline in the crafts sector is showing signs of recovery with an

increased interest from consumers in high end traditional crafts, and *uniquely* Japanese crafts, together with a growing appreciation of these crafts abroad, which is actively promoted by the government and public institutions (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, 2019).

To understand the patterns of changes taking place in traditional folk textile dyeing, it is necessary to analyze the changes in the production processes at the *kōbō* level, as well as the changes in the various types of consumption of these crafts. Although the essence of the technique of *katazome* production has remained stable, the availability and type of materials have changed, and this has obliged the craftspeople to adapt to the new environment. For instance, during the fieldwork, the dyers explained to me how old fur brushes and good-quality pongee silk (*tsumugi*) fabrics had been replaced with modern products to the detriment of the traditional craft. They also recognized that in other cases, the replacement of products had been beneficial, as in the case of the ready-to-use resist paste (*nori*) which enabled them to purchase only what was needed, or the nylon-coated paper for the stencil, which was more resistant than the old one. For small-scale and single craftspeople ateliers, the future is grim because they have difficulties in finding a successor. However, for those ateliers that have adapted their strategies to the new customers' demands or joined initiatives and accessed institutional support, the future is less threatening. The dyers who had incorporated internet use in their work stated that internet had been beneficial as a means of enhancing their profile, boosting their sales, and staying connected with others. Some of the craftspeople interviewed had adapted their approach to their crafts to ensure the continuity of their *kōbō*. For instance, they maintained traditional motifs but applied *new* dyeing techniques, such as pour dyeing or ink-jet textile printing; used the traditional stencil dyeing technique to modern designs; or found attractive or new uses to traditional folk textile dyeing.

Chapter Five addressed the relation between demand and consumption, and the role of the mediators in fashioning the appreciation of consumers for traditional folk textile dyeing, all of which influenced the craftspeople's production. Chapter Five also analyzed the various types of consumption of the craft. It hinted at divergent paths evolution depending on whether one referred to the material, visual, cultural, or symbolic consumption of *katazome* as a traditional Japanese craft. Here again, it is complicated to delve into the trends in the various types of consumption of the craft. While the statistics quoted earlier in this section indicate that the traditional textile sector in Japan has steadily declined, one cannot conclude that the

material consumption of traditional *katazome* has followed the same trend. This is for various reasons. These include the fluid definition of what traditional *katazome* is, and how strictly one applies this definition to the pattern, the technique, and the products, or only to some of these attributes. At one extreme one would find, for instance, a natural fabric dyed with a traditional *bingata* pattern, which was dyed using a hand-carved stencil and natural dyestuffs following traditional technique, for use as a traditional Japanese product. At the other extreme, one could find any variation of modern Japanese stencil patterns, technology-assisted stencil carving, synthetic fabrics and dyestuff, and dyeing products for modern use. During the fieldwork, interviewees attached importance to the pattern, which they mentioned could not be traded in their concept of traditional *katazome*. Those interviewees belonging to the Serizawa lineage went further by emphasizing that they would only consider as traditional *katazome* those that would not stray away from what Serizawa would consider as such.

Much as a number of traditional *kōbō* have been disappearing for the reasons analyzed in Chapter Three, others have been newly opened with the purpose of making *katazome* which are economically viable. Many of these new *kōbō* have introduced the production of their stencils with laser-assisted technologies, and others have used hand-operated machines so as to assist their stencil dyeing, while others have introduced ink-jet printing for their traditional stencil patterns. Some other ones have used new synthetic fabrics and synthetic dyestuffs with traditional stencil patterns, and many have been outsourcing part of the production of traditional *katazome* to more economically efficient countries in neighboring Asia. Under these circumstances, one cannot conclude that the material consumption of traditional *katazome* in general is at risk because the institutions behind the protection of traditional crafts regard tradition as an evolving concept. For instance, during the fieldwork, the Association for the promotion of traditional crafts industries of Kyoto pointed out to me that, when pour dyeing had appeared in Japan in the early 1900s, it had provoked an outcry, but that the technique had become a stencil dyeing technique that had been uniquely developed in Japan, and through time it had turned into being considered as a Japanese *katazome* tradition. Always referring to pour dyeing, the two *kōbō* participating in this research explained how they had become pour dyeing ateliers as a means of becoming more economically efficient; and how the disappearance of some *katazome kōbō* had translated into them receiving an increasing volume of orders and expanding their capacity to cope with their demand for unique crafts which were “Made in Japan”. As Sarashima Emiko noted, all forms of material consumption, including

non-genuine cheap souvenirs from Okinawa are important, because they transmit some image of Okinawa which helps to perpetuate its textile tradition (Sarashima, 2013a, pp. 283-284).

The interviewees during the fieldwork projected an image for an uncertain future with few options ahead for themselves, while recognizing that traditional folk textile dyeing was still popular among consumers. Most interviewees remembered that their craftwork in both the bygone and the current times had faced existential challenges. In the past, they had been confident in addressing them through their craftsmanship because many of those challenges had been related to the dyeing techniques. But nowadays they said they were confronted with situations they felt incapable of coping with. They, for instance, mentioned the difficulties they were encountering in advertising and selling their own dyeing in the absence of a retail outlet or use of social media. Most interviewees conveyed the idea of commitment to their craft and acceptance of the future's uncertainty. Pontsioen has also noted (2012) the insufficient number of apprentices (24%), the high percentage of aging guild members (24%), the decrease in market demand (14%), economic recession (14%) and the lack of raw materials (9%) among the greatest concerns of Designated Tokyo Crafts guild leaders (Pontsioen, 2012, p. 336). While concurring with Pontsioen, the present research identified multiple initiatives and supporting mechanisms from which *traditional* craftspeople can benefit, and which are outlined in the following sections with specific examples as they refer to traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan.

The visual, cultural, and symbolic consumption of *katazome* follows a general upwards trend with an effective support to the continuity of the traditional folk textile dyeing tradition of Japan. This situation is the result of several factors, such as the development and expansion of modern communication technologies and their democratization through the internet for open global use; the multiplication of expositions and events enhancing the cultural consumption of these crafts by the public; or the launching of government policies and strategies aimed at developing the regional and national economies of Japan, while banking on its cultural identity through the symbolism attached to these crafts.

6.2. Tradition and authenticity

This section explores the concept of tradition from the perspective of the preservation of the craft. It complements Chapter Four Section 4.4, which initiated the discussion on the

meaning of tradition in the production of *katazome*, and Chapter Five Sections 5.1 and 5.2, which explored the concept of tradition from the perspective of craft consumption.

In his work of 1983 on the meaning of tradition, Eric Hobsbawm argued that traditions are invented, and that the difference between customs and traditions resided in the symbolism and rituals attached to the latter, which were institutionally supported. While customs evolved to address changing technical and practical needs of those involved in a certain practice, tradition was imagined as stable and solid, representing set social values of a community. As such, it implied an external sanction system conciliating the practice itself with the symbolic representation for the society (Hobsbawm, 2012, pp. 1-8). The concept of custom and tradition of Hobsbawm has some analogy of scale with the distinctions that Kopytoff made between the cultural biography of things and the social history of things (1986, pp. 66-68). The concept of the construction of tradition is also convergent with the theory of cultural evolution of Wuthnow and Witten (1988), which is the overall guiding line of this research. For Hobsbawm, Kopytoff, and Wuthnow and Witten, the practice of the craft, even when happening for a long time, does not become a tradition unless it is legitimized as a social good by those having an authority beyond the community. Following these arguments, in the present case legitimization would translate into an assimilation of the craft practice with a custom belonging to the community; and, in turn, the custom would transit into tradition by acquiring a shared sense of authenticity. To make this transition, the community authority would need to use rituals and symbolisms in consonance with the shared values (Schnell, 2005, p. 202). Tradition, then, is a function of both, contemporary reality and modernity, because while it is imbued with a sense of history and nostalgia, it also measures social progress (Rausch, 2012, p. 190). There is not a single way to understand tradition. Some of the traditional folk textile dyeing traditions respond to the placeness of the practice, others relate to a lineage, while others are constructed as a national public good. For instance, in the case of *katazome*, *bingata* is a dyeing tradition responding to placeness of the practice in Okinawa; to the lineage of Serizawa; and to the designation of Bingata as a IICP or Serizawa as LNT as national public goods. Similarly, we could differentiate between dyeing a fabric, representing the cultural biography of a given *katazome* craft; and embodying the tradition of such craft as done by craftspeople in the Japanese way, representing its social history.

The concept of authenticity in tradition and cultural heritage, nevertheless, poses some challenges when applied to living human expressions, such as traditional folk textile dyeing.

In her research on folk dance as ICH, Valeria Lo Iacono (2022) has pointed out that the mere quest for authenticity could freeze the very concept of heritage that UNESCO defends when promoting human creativity. She noted that the UNESCO restricted the concept of authenticity, to design, materials, workmanship, and settings in *Issues arising in connection with the implementation of World Heritage Convention* (1977), and that applying them to the intangible heritage was problematic. The UNESCO's *Nara Document on Authenticity* of 1994 and *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* of 2005 further recognized the different ways in which different cultures understood authenticity and proposed several authenticity indicators.⁴⁵ Lo Iacono has acknowledged that the UNESCO's Yamato Declaration of 2004 discouraged using the term authenticity when identifying and safeguarding ICH, while arguing favorably to the application of the term in other cases (Lo Iacono, 2022, p.300). Lo Iacono has agreed with the views of Hobsbawm on the construction of traditions to support social processes and power relations, and with Bendix (2009, p. 9) who has noted that tradition could serve the interests of the various stakeholders, leading to its commodification. However, Lo Iacono (2022) has concurred with those who defend that ICH is something transmitted through generations, and that as such, it cannot be static, but alive and dynamic (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004, pp. 58-60; Deacon & Smeets, 2013, pp. 133-134); and has concluded that having a framework for ICH is relevant provided that it takes into consideration "its multi-layered and complex nature, the embodied and socio-cultural dimensions, the dynamic and transcultural nature, the importance of human agency, the discourse in which its practitioners engage, and the existence of genre-specific values and traditions" (pp. 319-320).

In her research on *bingata* as cultural heritage, Sarashima Sumiko has also explored the meaning of authenticity and tradition. She concurs with Walter Benjamin (2018) that in traditional societies, authenticity relates to the quality of traditional continuity, rather than the historical uniqueness of a single object (pp. 106-108). She has proposed the analysis of the evolution of *bingata* as a symbolic order of 'tradition' that underwent a process of metamorphosis along with people's experience of social change and the influx of value from outside of Okinawa in the flow of modernization. (Sarashima, 2013a, pp. 109-111).

⁴⁵ These include form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques, and management systems; location and setting; spirit and feeling; language, and other forms of intangible heritage; and other internal and external factors.

Both Lo Iacono and Sarashima seem to agree on the concept of fluid authenticity, which I consider relevant for the concept of authenticity in the *katazome* tradition. I also believe that having a framework which can be adapted to the various cases is useful and allows for a more structured analysis and comparison of the traditions considered. In Table 6.1 I have illustrated the ways in which the UNESCO elements related to authenticity could apply to traditional folk textile dyeing. I argue that such a framework is useful, and should be used fluidly based on the perspective of the craftspeople themselves, rather than on a rigid imposition from those external to the craft practice.

Table 6.1. UNESCO Authenticity indicators as they could apply to traditional folk textile dyeing, proposed examples.

UNESCO Authenticity Indicators, Intangible Cultural Heritage [#]	Proposed application to traditional folk textile dyeing, Japan
Form and design	Dyeing patterns and motifs
Materials and substance	Fabrics, dyestuffs, resist paste, stencil papers, tenters, brushes and other tools
Use and function	Traditional wear (kimono, summer kimono, festivals and other ceremonies' wear) and home uses (doorway curtains, cushions, wrapping cloths)
Traditions, techniques, and management systems	<i>Katazome</i> techniques, indigo-related cultivation and preparation, traditional dyestuffs preparation
Location and setting	<i>Kōbō</i> , communities of practice
Spirit and feeling	Craftsmanship, lineage, sense of "Made in Japan"
Language, and other forms of intangible heritage	The crafts
Other internal and external factors	Guilds, initiation rituals, apprenticeship, amateurship

(#) UNESCO (2005). *Operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. WHC.05/22, p. 20.

Charles Lindholm has argued that there are two meanings of authenticity. One meaning relates to the identity and to correspondence of content, which is a social construction implying sincere, essential, natural, original, and real values. As such, authenticity is the opposite to fake, replica, copy, or artificial. The other meaning of authenticity relates to genealogy or history, implying that something is authentic when its origins can be evidenced. He further argued that authenticity becomes relevant in modern societies with the mobility of people. In earlier traditional societies, in which people rarely left their communities, the knowledge about them or about the artifacts within the community was known to all, and therefore, there was no need to legitimize their content or origins (Lindholm, 2013, pp. 360-365). In his opinion, authenticity

is neither a static nor a fix concept, and he adopted different meanings depending on the milieu and period considered, because of its social nature (Lindholm, 2008, pp. 1-5). For McNeil and Mak (2007), authenticity is a social construct that the different disciplines use to help structure their particular environments (p. 44). The authentication of artifacts or traditions contributes to their commodification, which is detrimental to the genuine nature of the cultural heritage and results in its hybridization (Moeran, 1997; Wilson 2007, p. 116-119; Linton, 2020, pp. 256-259; Zbucheá, 2022, p. 15).

Defining authenticity adapted to different cultures is relevant to Japan, where the tradition of copying works of special significance to cultural heritage is important and has been continuously supported by the government from the beginning of the Meiji period. Japan considers that copying traditional crafts preserves their production techniques and that the transmission of this craftsmanship is the motor of the evolution of the craft tradition. It is only when the craftspeople master traditional techniques that their creativity can advance and transform the craft tradition (Kida & Takayama, 2010, pp. 26-28). This notion of authenticity in craft and art copying does not have a derogatory sense in Japan as copying crafts and art could have in the West. Copying heritage techniques can improve and transform craft production. Copying tradition includes foreign crafts and techniques as well. After some initial contact with an external craft, there is a process of assimilation and domestication of the craft into Japanese culture, which can transform the external form/technique by giving it a *Japanese accent*. The craft can then be reterritorialized with a relocated or glocalized authenticity.

Philomena Keet (2011) has analyzed these processes through the example of the new vintage blue jeans production in Kojima town in Okayama prefecture. She has contrasted two ateliers, emphasizing how they thrived due to their efforts to imitate the jeans' pattern and production to the limit, deconstructing a pair of second hand old American blue jeans that they wanted to produce, using old machines from the United States to sew the fabrics. At the same time, they improved the fabric, the dyeing process, and the ageing of the jeans. Their production has gained global customers' appreciation, and according to Keet, "the passionate investigation and pursuit of quality has resulted in an *exceptional authenticity* being rendered for Made in Japan's premium jeans. This authenticity, established fully in the 1990s in Japan, is now recognized globally, with an increasing number of high-end fashion brands using the Made in Japan quality as an authenticating strategy of their own" (Keet, 2011, pp. 50-59). Shuling Huang has referred to this model of export growth by incorporating international styles as

Japan's strategic hybridism. Huang argues that this strategic hybridism is used to expand the Japanese culture across neighboring countries, partly due to the cultural proximity, based on her analysis of how it has penetrated Taiwanese cultural and consumers' circles (Huang, 2011, pp. 4-6). From Befu Harumi's perspective (2003, p.20), the regionalization of "Japanized" Western cultural "Made in Japan" products into Asian countries, illustrates what she denominated a "Japanization of the West", or simply "indigenization of Japan." Through her perspective, she argues that globalization is never linear or unidirectional, but rather complex and multidirectional, and involving numerous iterative processes of cultural hybridation.

This section explores tradition and the way in which it is construed from several perspectives applying it as much as possible to the traditional folk textile dyeing. Firstly, the section brings in the results of the fieldwork, which serve as the basis for analyzing the ways in which authenticity is legitimized. Secondly, it presents some of the insiders' views on the meaning of tradition of the craft. Lastly, this section reviews the official system and discourse on the protection of traditional crafts in Japan.

6.2.1. Communities of place and communities of practice

During the fieldwork, most interviewees qualified traditional folk textile dyeing and all the various production techniques as genuinely traditional crafts of Japan. All the dyers interviewed conveyed a similar message, considering themselves as belonging to a community of practice of *something* culturally bound to the trajectory of the craft. Due to the profile of the dyers interviewed, many of them felt bound to the Serizawa lineage and the Mingei tradition, in a kind of "Serizawa community of practice", which included both professional and amateur practitioners across Japan. I am referring here to the *kōbō* of Ms. and Mr. Dote in Ibaraki prefecture, Mr. Yamauchi in Shizuoka prefecture, and Mr. Odanaka in Iwate prefecture; as well as the networks of Konohanakai, Moegikai, and Moe. In this community of practice, I am also including those interviewees from the Shizuoka City Serizawa Keisuke Art Museum, the Serizawa Art and Craft Museum of Sendai in Miyagi prefecture, and the Japan Folk Crafts Museum in Tokyo. Many of them were initiated into a community of practice linked to the Serizawa Kenkyūjo in Kamata, Tokyo, but the placeness attached to it had evolved into what I denominate a community of practice linked to a lineage, or the "Serizawa way of *kataezome*." I sensed that for the craftspeople and related individuals in this group, belonging to this community of practice was felt as strongly as, if not stronger than, belonging to any other wider

community of craft practice. In a sense, it did not matter to them how their crafts were to be denominated, and the adherence to wider initiatives or designations came through as secondary or even irrelevant to some of them. What mattered most to them seemed to be their being part of the Serizawa “universe”. Since Serizawa had no clear successor, upon his death, this “Serizawa way of *kataezome*” community of practice acts as a strong bond among its members. Their cultural grounding to the Japanese crafts tradition *transited* through Serizawa who, in turn, legitimated the necessary authenticity of their crafts practice. It was also interesting to note that none of the interviewees in this community of practice considered themselves belonging to the *kataezome* tradition, exclusively reserved for their revered master Serizawa.

Other interviewees came up as belonging to a place-bound community of practice. For instance, the interviewees in the Buaisō, the Japan Blue, and the Netchū Shōgakkō, as well as those from the Ms. Murakami and Mr. Nii *kōbō* all seemed to be grounded to the community of practice of indigo in Tokushima prefecture. Similarly, those interviewees belonging to the Akagawa, Aizome Ugo, and Kurosawa Teiko *kōbō* in Ugo town Akita prefecture belonged to the folk indigo dyeing tradition, which came across as being primarily grounded to the community of practice of indigo in Akita prefecture. This strong sense of placeness seemed to dominate any other special lineage. In these two prefectures, they confirmed that the indigo tradition was intimately related to the traditional festival dance (Bon Odori), and that this cultural manifestation was the motor for the continuity of practice of their craft. Compared to the previously described “Serizawa way to *kataezome*” community of practice grounded around Serizawa, these communities of practice in Akita and Tokushima felt that they were more strongly grounded in their prefectural locations than in the wider indigo tradition and cultural practice in Japan. The Higeta Aizome *Kōbō* in Tochigi prefecture was similarly more grounded in its location than in the indigo culture as a traditional craft in Japan. However, in this *kōbō*, which had a history of nearly two centuries of existence, placeness and indigo culture came intimately related. The fact that in these *kōbō* placeness clearly dominated can be attributed to the fact that both Akita and Tokushima prefectures had aggressive strategies to protect and preserve the indigo production and related culture, legitimizing it as Japanese traditional heritage.

There was a third community of practice of wider scope, namely, the traditional crafts practitioners. This community of practice became more evident in those *kōbō* which were not attached to any prefectural or national initiative, but which produced *kataezome* or indigo dyeing

for a number of years without being part of any official designation. One such example was the Aizome Zabo of Hokkaido, which purchased *sukumo* from Tokushima and produced dyed items, considering them as Japanese crafts. They were aware of the absence of a strong network of traditional folk textile dyeing or indigo in Hokkaido, but believed that their techniques and production were related to the national culture of Japan.

Finally, during the fieldwork I interviewed several *kōbō* which belonged to a community of practice related to their dyeing technique. For instance, the Kuronuma and Nibashi Senkō, in Tokyo and Hamamatsu respectively, affirmed that they belonged to a group of *kōbō* which modernized the traditional folk textile dyeing several decades ago and started the pour dyeing technique in Japan, which is nowadays widely considered as a traditional craft. Those craftspeople involved in laser stencil carving and inkjet kimono *dyeing*, often referred to by interviewees in the course of this research, would constitute similar communities of practice related to their innovative techniques within the traditional crafts. In all these cases, although placeness and tradition remain important belonging factors, their most important grounding seems to be the way in which their techniques modernize the tradition. This type of community of practice illustrated a process of what Robertson (1995) referred to as transformation or hybridization followed by a glocalization in her theory of cultural evolution. This process has been analyzed in several other Japanese traditional crafts, including Edo Komon textile dyeing (Kobayashi, 2004, pp. 388-390) and Wajima lacquerware (Han, 1995, pp. 244-247; Urushihara, 2004, pp. 48-49; Rausch, 2012, pp. 177-191).

To summarize, the notion of tradition that permeated each of the communities of practice described above is based on either (i) belonging to a master lineage (for instance Serizawa), (ii) being located where the craft tradition was officially grounded and supported, (iii) using a specific technique with extra-ordinary aspects within the craft tradition, or (iv) producing what the dyers considered as Japanese crafts. Each of these groups has implied a different authentication process of their craft practice as “traditional”. For some craftspeople, the authenticity of their work was legitimized by the fact that they belonged to Serizawa’s *nakama* (inner circle), while, for others, it was their belonging to prefectural initiatives and guilds. In some other cases, the craftspeople themselves provided the credentials of their work as being traditional. Although the notion of authenticity came out as being pivotal to the concept of tradition, the latter was difficult to define in accurate terms. Rather, what became more relevant was maybe a concept of fluid authenticity. Fluid authenticity would allow for a

more accurate picture of what tradition represents in folk textile dyeing, be it the craftsmanship formation, the production techniques, or the items produced.

6.2.2. *Insiders' views*

During fieldwork, only a few interviewees agreed to discuss in depth what tradition meant to them in relation to authenticity and to the future of their crafts. Most of the interviewees commented that it was not easy to elaborate, and they felt they were not well enough informed to continue discussing these topics. One interviewee illustrated the concept of fluid authenticity when he commented on how:

There is a need to dismantle the thinking behind Mingei (dyeing products), depending on what we think its essence is. This would go against the exclusivity of the creation or product. If we think that the essence is the pattern, this pattern could be used in modern items that customers demand nowadays. If we think that the essence lies in the form, we could replicate it with modern technologies and reduce the price. If we think that the essence is the design, we could use it for modern settings. However, this does not mean that what was exclusively thought of as a pattern for a kimono becomes a *zabuton* (seating cushion). This would be humiliating for the kimono bearer. The first purpose of the design should be respected. However, these designs could be used for other products such as postcards, or book markers referring to the original creation. Also, maybe a kimono can be converted into fashionable items. Maybe the main obstacle for Mingei in Japan is that they live in their past. (Professional dyer, 9 May 2018).

Some craftspeople referred to the importance of innovation and creativity for maintaining tradition in their practice in diverse manners. In some instances, the views of others acted as a motivator for their own practice. This point was illustrated by a dyer, who on her way back after one-week workshop abroad to teach *katazome* to twenty foreigners commented:

What surprised me most is how all students tried to learn the Japanese techniques and how passionate they were about it. In Japan, nowadays the appreciation for *katazome* is old, *démodé*... So, I felt that I needed to tell Japanese people that *katazome* is important. My creation developed differently from that time on (Professional dyer, 17 December 2017).

In other instances, it was through visits to other ateliers or through exposure to other dyeing techniques that craftspeople felt how helpful these were to maintain the craft tradition while refining their dyeing technique. This opinion was not general, and some other craftspeople commented that they preferred to abstain from contacts with other craftspeople and exposure to other techniques rather than maintaining and further developing their own dyeing style.

Overall, the craftspeople interviewed did not express concern about the various definitions of themselves or their crafts in relation to their belonging to tradition, heritage, and authenticity. They seemed to be more concerned with producing their dyed items best they could as they had learned during their apprenticeship. Pontsioen made similar remarks in his research on Tokyo craftspeople (2012, pp. 99, 106).

6.2.3. Official policy and discourse

Japan has a long, if not the longest, history of support to what is considered cultural heritage and tradition, being one which remounts to over a thousand years (Kakiuchi, 2016; p. 7). At the beginning of the modern era, the government had established the Law on Preservation of antique artefacts (1871); the Law on Preservation Method of Ancient Shrines and Temples (1897), which established the system of designation as especially protected buildings or National Treasures; the Law on Preservation of National Treasures (1929) with the approval system approved; one on the Preservation of Natural Monuments of Historical Sites and Sights (1919); and the Law for the Preservation of Important Art-related Works/Objects (1933), which regulated the conditions under which cultural objects could be traded and exported. In the post-war period, and after investigations to describe the wartime damage which started in 1945, the government established the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (1950), integrating former laws and unifying the preservation measures until then considered. The year 1950 is relevant to this research, because this law also considered intangible properties and folk cultural properties.⁴⁶ In 1954, the government issued the first amendment with the establishment of the designation of Important Intangible Cultural Properties and their holders/preservers (LNTs).

⁴⁶ Article 2 of the Law for Protection of Cultural Properties defines Intangible Cultural Properties as theater, music, craftsmanship and other intangible cultural products of high historic or artistic value to the state, while Folk Cultural Properties consist of customs, folk performing arts and folk techniques concerning food, clothing and housing, occupation, religion, annual events, clothes, utensils, hoses and other properties, which are indispensable for understanding the transition of the lives of people (Akagawa, 2015, pp. 78-79; Zemska, 2021, p. 159).

This amendment contemplated that a skill (*waza*, 技) and person holding that skill are a pair, both important to the cultural lineage which needs to be protected. The amendment also added the folk cultural properties as a new category to be considered as cultural heritage, to promote independent cultural and artistic activity by people and groups. The Basic Law for the Promotion of Culture and the Arts (2001) and the Convention for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage⁴⁷ (2003) were both developments of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties (1950) and its first Amendment (1954) (Akagawa, 2015, pp. 75-77; Kakiuchi, 2016, pp. 7-12; Wilson, 2017). As of April 2018, there were thirty-eight Designated IICP in the Craft techniques, out of which, thirteen in the category of individual recognition and seven in the collective or group recognition of the category of textile weaving and dyeing,

Japan used the system of protection of IICP not only to protect its own culture, but also as a tool to improve the international status of Japan during the post-war period. In 2006, the government launched the Law for the Promotion of International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage as a spin-off of the Law of 2001 and as one of the tools of diplomatic policy (Wilson, 2017). With a view to promoting and raising awareness for the protection of cultural properties, the Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA) was established in 1968 as a result of the merger of the Cultural Bureau of the Ministry of Education and the Cultural Properties (MEXT) Protection Commission. This Agency is in charge of the application of the Law and the Basic Direction of Cultural and Artistic Policies and its quinquennial implementation plans. These plans stipulate the granting of economic packages to support the various expressions of culture, as well as the administering of the award system for those individuals with outstanding achievements related to the development of culture (Order of Culture since 1937), or those who rendered a particularly distinguished service related to the advancement of culture in its various manifestations (Person of Cultural Merit, receiving a lifetime pension since 1951). The Agency celebrates the Cultural Properties Protection Week from 1 to 7 November every year. It also promotes public-private partnership at local level and acts as a pull mechanism for these administrations. Examples of such partnerships include the Power of Culture initiatives, where the agency supports cultural events, manages the branding of such initiatives for the organized civil society (Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2018). Japan certifies its heritage as well and, up to

⁴⁷ The ICH Convention includes Cultural Properties, Folk Cultural Properties, and Preservation Techniques for Cultural Properties. The States Parties had to adapt/align their policies as signatories of the Convention. For instance, Japan's cultural heritage management system is a matter of the national government, which tends to favor heritage that fits the national narrative. However, the Convention focused on the role of communities. (Akagawa, 2015, pp. 78-79).

2018, it had certified thirty-seven stories/traditions based on one locality or collective stories unfolding in several municipalities, which included three related to the textile tradition, the Kakaa Denka, or the silk story of Gunma (2015) and Tango Chirimen Textile Road: A 300-year history of weaving silk crepe textiles (2017), and the Safflower Culture supported by Yamadera (2018) (Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2019).

Japan was the third country to join the Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH of UNESCO in 2004. Until the end of August 2023, the UNESCO had inscribed a total of 676 elements on its Representative List from 140 countries, of which 22 from Japan. Within this list, the following was included: two crafts related to traditional folk textiles, the Ojiya-chijimi and the Echigo-jofu: the techniques of making ramie fabric in Uonuma region, from Niigata Prefecture inscribed in 2009; and the Yūki-Tsumugi (silk weaving technique) from the Yūki and Oyama cities in northern Tokyo, which were inscribed in 2010. Until now no folk textile dyeing tradition has been inscribed in the UNESCO Representative List.

The METI maintains a list of Designated Traditional Crafts Products throughout Japan in an effort to support the sector, as well as to revitalize and boost regional and local economies (See Chapter One Section 1.2.3, and Chapter Five 5.1). By the end of 2022 METI had recognized 240 traditional crafts, out of which 48 belonged to the textile category. Among these, there was a total of thirteen textile dyeing entries designated as traditional crafts, including nine related to pattern dyeing products⁴⁸ (METI, 2022a; METI, 2022b).

Since 2001 Japan has enacted the Fundamental Law for the Promotion of Culture and Arts, incorporating the Law to Promote Specific Non-profit Activities of 1996, in view of the importance of the Non-Profit Organizations in national development. In 2006, the Tourism National Promotion Basic Law was revised, and the newly established Japan Tourism Agency within the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism launched and administered the Visit Japan Campaign, ensuring the collaboration between the protection of cultural heritage and tourism promotion.

⁴⁸ The METI designated traditional crafts comprised the Ryūkyū Bingata from Okinawa prefecture; Tokyo-zome Komon and Tokyo Tegaki Yūzen from Tokyo; Arimatsu-Narumi-Shibori from Aichi prefecture; Kyo Kanoko Shibori, Kyo-Yūzen, and Kyo-komon from Kyoto; Naniwa Honzome from Osaka; and Kaga Yūzen from Ishikawa prefecture.

6.3. Continuity of traditional folk textile dyeing and economic viability

During the fieldwork, interviewees representing various groups of stakeholders stressed the need for changes whenever they talked about the preservation of the *katazome* tradition and specifically, its economic viability. Through the course of the research, I identified various mechanisms supporting the continuity of traditional folk textile dyeing. Not all mechanisms supported the economic viability of the craft, and some of them supported the continuity of the craft in a “hybrid traditional” form.

Throughout my research, I have argued that “without a *kōbō* there is no *katazome*” to stress the importance of placeness, locality, and craftsmanship in the production of stencil dyeing, and in the construction of this craft’s tradition. The results of the fieldwork have evidenced that one of the most critical challenges to the continuity of the *kōbō* was its economic viability. Young people did not seem to be attracted by the career of professional dyers because the craft is labor-intensive and poorly compensated. The craftspeople found their work highly satisfying. They also recognized that living solely on the craft practice was difficult unless they became publicly recognized artists or were able to access reasonable mechanisms to sell their works. Left to the market forces, most craftspeople interviewed stated that they often had to sell their works at prices below the production costs. As one interviewee put it,

Craftspeople have difficulty in finding their successors or in staying in business in Japan. Competition with products from Asia is fierce and many Japanese craftspeople cannot survive. Some craftsmen know that they will be the last artisan in the atelier. Others are luckier, for instance, in the atelier for *byōbu* (partitions) of Mr. K., his son has committed to succeeding the atelier and attended the business school. He is part of the B2C initiative, working with artists to produce objects adapted to new markets’ demand. Another such example is Mr. E.’s son, who is succeeding to his father in the atelier. He was producing traditional *hinamatsuri* (Girls’ Day festival) dolls in the past, and now opening the line production for new patterns, such as *sumō* (traditional wrestling of Japan) dolls, that are selling seemingly well. (Local promotion crafts center office, 17 May 2018).

In the area of traditional folk textile dyeing, one of the ateliers visited had been set up in an ancient industrial building and had spaces for design, dye, *sukumo* (indigo paste)

preparation, and so on. This *kōbō*, run as a cooperative by five professional dyers trained in a prefecture-led supporting initiative, also owned a plantation of *indigofera tinctoria* for its exclusive use. Several years ago, some members of the atelier organized a workshop in New York to train people on indigo dyeing with a view to expanding the demand for their products. Later on, they established an office in New York, from where they managed a well-built aggressive public relations strategy. They diversified their products and kept experimenting traditional dyeing on different media in addition to fabrics. Gradually they developed a niche of clients, which included designers and galleries interested in their high-end works. The philosophy of this atelier was to sell their products at a price that would make their business sustainable in the long run for the continuity of their tradition. Linton (2020) describes how the Kanai Kōgei of Ōshima had a similar approach and travelled across Japan conducting public workshops with a view to not only expanding the demand of the *kōbō*'s *tsumugi* silk production, but also exploring how his technique of *dorozome* and indigo could be applied creatively to materials other than *tsumugi* silk (Linton, 2020, p. 258).

Another atelier which I visited, and, which I was told was economically sustainable at the time of the fieldwork, illustrated the evolution of a company producing traditional *katazome* and other dyeing crafts about thirteen years ago. The current company had several sections: machine operated design, computer design, sewing section, and indigo dyeing. The indigo section produced thread dye and tie dye, but accepted *katazome* orders as well. They were running indigo dyeing workshops for interested people and maintaining a network of amateur dyers. They believed that regular workshops and the amateur dyers contributed considerably to the economic viability of the *kōbō* and the continuity of the tradition.

The above two examples illustrate the uniqueness of each *kōbō*, and how, faced with a similar situation of precarity of the traditional craft sector, numerous options emerged that allowed for the continuation of the craft. These and other examples of *kōbō* which have been described in Chapter Three indicated that generalization in approach and functions in the *kōbō* was associated with security and continuity, while specialization and having a single profile was associated with greater efficiency and uniqueness. What follows is an analysis of the various mechanisms identified during the research. These are grouped in two broad categories, depending on their direct or indirect support to the economic viability of the traditional craft.

6.3.1. Mechanisms supporting the economic viability of traditional folk textile dyeing

The mechanisms directly supporting the economic viability of the craft production are those whose primary objective is to support its material consumption, with effects measurable in the short term. They include the various government-led initiatives at different levels, private initiatives and lobby groups, the amateur dyeing networks, and the consumer networks. In addition to the mechanisms described below, there are other stakeholders and intermediaries related to the material consumption of traditional crafts analyzed in Chapter Five, which are relevant here as well.

Government-led initiatives

Japan has integrated cultural heritage into local economies as a valuable resource for regional development through cultural tourism and the creation of quality added products (Kakiuchi, 2016, p.7). The country's long history of regulation and protection of its cultural heritage has translated into a multitude of mechanisms operating through the various levels of its administrative structures, at national, regional, and local levels. Once the policy is established at national level, its implementation is transferred to the regional administrations and prefectures, where most of the operating mechanisms translate into programs and projects. Often these policies are supported by centralized branding media campaigns which target domestic, regional Asian, and global consumers for locally produced Japanese products and tourism. The Discovery Japan campaign, launched just after the Expo '70, enhanced a nostalgic image of agrarian community and native land (*furusato*), which was succeeded by the Exotic Japan campaign in the 1980s. Both campaigns were built around an image of an authentic Japan, in the same way as the Visit Japan campaign (Yōkoso! Japan) of 2003 and the Cool Japan initiative of 2012 did (METI, 2020). All these initiatives were launched by the METI, in collaboration with the Japan National Tourist Organization, to develop the economic sector or production and tourism focused on local economies, banking on cultural nationalism (Robertson, 1988, pp. 505-510; Huang, 2011, p. 5-7). These initiatives target large market sectors and, although not specifically focused on the promotion of the material consumption of traditional crafts, have a positive effect on their consumption, because the media campaigns project images of a rural and nostalgic Japan as authentic in order to convey the image of "Made in Japan" as a symbol of quality in services or goods. To accompany the branding of the national Japanese culture, the initiatives provide economic packages and tax incentives at local level with a view to specifically promoting local tourism and the consumption of products

and crafts, which are now generally referred to as *kōgei* (Kikuchi, 2015, p. 109). In some cases, as in the 2005 Aichi Exposition and accompanying campaign, Japan granted a visa waiver to some Asian countries to boost tourism and material consumption of Japanese goods; and which, in the case of Taiwan, became a permanent measure (Huang, 2011, p.14).

The Japan National Travel Organization collaborates with the above-mentioned policies and campaigns. Under their slogan “Japan Endless Discovery” they have a multilingual website which is user-friendly and provides information by destinations, things to do, tips to plan a trip to Japan, and related articles.⁴⁹ The website contains nearly 150 articles, among which, fifteen relate to traditional textiles. Some of the articles present the craft in depth, such as that on pour dyeing of 30 July 2020, which is not attached to any locality. However, most of the articles on crafts relate to the place where they are produced, including those articles on Kaga Yūzen in Kanagawa prefecture, weaving techniques of *tsumugi* of Kumejima in Okinawa prefecture, and the Chirimen weaving in Tango city, in Kyoto area. Especially related to this research is the announcement of 30 September 2020 on traditional indigo dyeing,⁵⁰ inviting visitors to explore the history of *aizome*. The article explains the origins of indigo dyeing in Tokushima, as well as the production of indigo, and the different dyeing techniques. Moreover, this article presents the Aizumicho (Ai no Yakata) Historical Museum, the places selling indigo dyeing products, and those *kōbō* opening their doors for visitors.

Among the fifteen articles on the craftsmanship category, nine belong to the group “move your hands” and announce hands-on experiences with indigo dyeing in five localities.⁵¹ Other hands-on experiences’ announcements include *bingata* from Okinawa, Kaga Yūzen in Ishikawa prefecture, Tairyō-bata (banners) dyeing in Kanagawa prefecture, and traditional dyeing with natural purple gromwell (*murasaki*) and Rubie *akane* (red) dyestuffs in Kazuno, Akita prefecture.

The Japan National Tourism Organization also administers the Japan Heritage Official Site, with information on tangible and intangible heritage properties. This site contains a

⁴⁹ Japan Endless Discovery acts as the official guide to Japan: <https://www.japan.travel/en/>

⁵⁰ The September issue of 2020 dedicated to the origins of traditional indigo dyeing <https://www.japan.travel/en/japan-magazine/exploring-the-origins-of-aizome-traditional-indigo-dyeing/>

⁵¹ In Gujō city, Gifu prefecture (where they refer to indigo as “Japan Blue”); Yamagata prefecture, Fukuoka prefecture, Nara, and Ōme, Tokyo. The Ōme experience is denominated “Rhapsody in Blue”, and its announcement notes that “one reason why indigo is called *Samurai Blue* is because it was popular among them.”

comprehensive article, which explains the history of the indigo culture in the Tokushima region and the historical importance of the indigo with the Awa Dance Festival and the Awa Ningyō Joruri puppet theater, and a video called Awa-The Birthplace of “Japan Blue” on indigo dyeing. The site contains other articles with videos on traditional textiles, such as Kaka Tenka or silk of Gunma prefecture; the Chirimen silk weaving of Yosano and Tango in Kyoto prefecture; and the history of the introduction of cotton in Japan in the Okayama prefecture.

Another related government-led regulation is the Law for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries (*Dentōteki kōgei hin Sangyō no Shinkō*, 伝統的工芸品産業の振興, known as the Den-San Law) of 1974, which was launched to revitalize the local traditional industries, in view of the decline of a 60% in the number of companies and a drop of 75% in the number of both employees and sales in the last 30 years (Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries, 2019). This law regulates what is considered a traditional craft in Japan (See Chapter Five for details of this law in relation to the definition and the promotion of consumption of traditional crafts). “Kōgei Japan” is another example of Government-led promotional campaign for traditional crafts. It has a comprehensive website with a database on all traditional crafts of Japan, which is searchable by category and region, and which provides information about the history, techniques, and where to buy each craft.^{52,53} Most prefectures’ crafts promotion association have websites with databases on the traditional crafts by administrative areas, related local industries, and hands-on experiences in these crafts.⁵⁴

The responsibility and resources for the implementation of national policies lie at regional/prefectural level, whence the importance of this administrative level. I interviewed staff of Akita, Kyoto, and Tokushima prefectures, as well as staff of the Tokyo metropolitan government administration on their experiences supporting the traditional folk textile dyeing sector. In the case of Tokushima, I was able to gain a first-person experience since the prefectural office designed and managed my artist-in-residence, so that I could immerse myself in the Awa indigo culture, which is considered a traditional craft and a national cultural heritage in Japan. My artist-in-residence took place in a facility in Kamiita-chō, which is an

⁵² Kōgei Japan’s searchable database on traditional crafts: https://kogeijapan.com/locale/en_US/

⁵³ In the Japanese website, the searchable database includes additional detailed information on the traditional craft category and technique, as well as information on its location, and on the master craftsman’s profile and personal message. http://www.kougeishi.jp/list_of_kougeihin.php?sub_gyoushu_id=2

⁵⁴ For instance, the website of the Shizuoka Prefecture Local Craft Promotion Association is one such example <http://www.shizuoka-kougei.jp>

establishment implementing several initiatives to preserve the indigo tradition. One such initiative is the provision of a three-year fully subsidized professional training with an intake of two people interested in becoming professional dyers every year. In addition, they maintain permanent and periodical programs of educational activities for elementary and professional schools, and organize hands-on experiences for the public at amateur level. The prefectural government provides salaries to a team of professional dyers, who are working as permanent staff in the facility, and guiding and assisting with these activities. The prefecture also takes part in the Netchū Shōgakkō (熱中小学校) or Enthusiastic Elementary School initiative, which aims at empowering communities for the strengthening of social cohesion.⁵⁵ The members participating in this initiative learn indigo paste production and indigo dyeing techniques, among other things, and participate as a team in the annual Awa Odori festival, which is intimately linked to the indigo tradition in Tokushima. The prefecture also hosts the Japan Blue team, another initiative which conducts promotional activities and events to spread the indigo tradition of Tokushima across Japan. None of these initiatives is meant to be fully funded by the prefecture. Rather, the prefecture provides funding for the secretariat, seed resources to launch the initiatives and start the program, and a solid communication and public relations strategy, along with continued partial subsidies, while waiting for other stakeholders to come in and develop public-private partnerships to ensure the continuity of their activities.

The interviewees of Tokushima prefecture acknowledged the value of the prefectural support, while noting that a much stronger institutional support was still needed. They complained that, as professional dyers, they were losing ground to dyers from Akita prefecture, because of the latter's aggressive strategy of public relations. They also noted that although the indigo production in Akita prefecture is better known, only the Tokushima prefecture indigo dyeing is the one authentic to Japan. They noted that in Akita the indigo production had been modernized, while Tokushima strictly adhered to the traditional methods used as in the past, and, therefore, the sector should be further protected, because otherwise this tradition would not be sustainable in the long run. They also complained that there was no census of the ateliers capable of receiving interested people for apprenticeships. They noted that having such support to get organized would be highly beneficial for the continuity of the craft tradition.

⁵⁵ This initiative started in an abandoned elementary school in Yamagata prefecture in 2015 and now has branches across Japan and in Seattle (USA). This is a prefecture-subsidized initiative, where adults from all ages and regions interact, learn, and develop new value-creating activities from their region: <https://www.townkamiita.jp> and <https://necchu-shogakkou.com/intern/>

Being designated as a traditional craft entails reconnaissance and honors which motivates the craftspeople at the same time as it raises appreciation for the crafts among consumers (Sarashima, 2013b, p. 148). At the same time, it carries some serious limitations, such as those raised by the dyers of Tokushima during the fieldwork, which had also been noted by Roland Ricketts III (2006, pp. 2, 20), or in the *tsumugi* silk crafts of Ōshima island (Linton, 2020, p. 257). The negative consequences in the craft practice resulting from the designation of a craft as heritage have been also mentioned in relation to traditional crafts in Tokyo (Pontsioen, 2019) and in traditional lacquerware (Rausch, 2012, pp. 177-191; Urushihara, 2013, pp. 161-162). Being designated as a traditional craft by the government at the same time limits the craftspeople's room for innovation. Another factor that is hurting craftspeople is the fact that the government is pushing in general for the consumption of traditional Japanese products, not only those officially designated as such but also other loosely denominated "traditional" products. So, these two developments are possible detriments to the craftspeople's profession.

Often government-led support initiatives are replicated on a local level in the case of dynamic administrations. During the fieldwork, I visited several institutions that support traditional crafts through consolidated initiatives. The institutions operate as a) a pull mechanism when interested parties/ateliers unite and request specific support from the institutions; or as a b) push mechanism whereby susceptible parties/ateliers receive adapted initiatives. Either way, it is necessary to get organized, and to have a margin of manoeuvre/modern operation capacity to access institutional support. Another requisite is persistence since the institutional support may take several years until it is available at the users' point.

An example of the pull mechanism was the Sumida ward in Tokyo. It was running an initiative to foster economic activity and protect artisanal production, including traditional dyeing. In 1990, the guild of Sumida had seventy registered dyeing enterprises. However, in 2018 there were only eight enterprises, due to the delocalization of production to China and other countries to reduce costs. One enterprise started dialoguing with other enterprises on how they could save the knowhow and keep the sector alive. As a result, three companies decided to collaborate with a new initiative that they called Some-zome and develop a brand. The purpose of this collaboration was not to increase sales, but to protect the sector from disappearing and to present to the world the Japanese knowhow. Although one company could do all steps of production, the other two could not, and therefore, if the other two companies

were to survive, they needed to work together. Two additional dyers were favorable to this new initiative, but could not run in the forefront, and could only assure punctual collaborations with Some-zome. This collaboration initiative Some-zome was presented as a project to the Sumida ward, and accepted in the so-called Sumida Modern project. Later, it was included in a broader initiative, the Local Creators' Market: Five Fabulous Finds across Japan. The institutional support from the Sumida ward included wide public relations campaigns, cataloguing and standardization and certification of products, annual fairs, annual promotional reunions, established craft retail outlets, and so on. Various interviewees noted that one factor enhancing the sensitivity of Sumida ward towards craftspeople's needs was that this ward has been an area where craftspeople have lived for nearly 200 years. The Sumida ward subsidizes training for people who are already working in a *kōbō* and who will succeed its direction when the current master retires. This initiative is run as a public-private collaboration, whereby the government administration provides support for what is external to the craft production itself, which is ensured by the private company or group of companies.

The Katagami Cooperative Association in Shizuoka prefecture⁵⁶ is another example of a public-private collaboration between craftspeople and government institution at prefectural level. The Association was established in 1982 with a view to revitalizing the endangered traditional textile handicraft industry. It resulted from the unification of three *kumiai* or cooperatives, the Ise Katagami Jigami Production Union, the Japan Chūsen Katagami Cooperative Association, and the Ise Katagami Sales Association. In 2023, it was composed of twelve members. As a network of networks, the Association is involved in numerous projects such as craft promotion events, hands-on experiences and exchange programs, educational activities at primary and professional schools, and sales fairs. These activities, as well as the overall branding and promotion of the Association and its work are supported by the Association for the Promotion of Traditional Crafts Industries of Shizuoka, which is directly funded by the Shizuoka prefecture. The collaborative arrangements of the Katagami Cooperative Association are similar to those of the Sumida ward, with the government administration supporting those areas for which the craft production sector lack expertise, and consequently supporting its operations.

⁵⁶ Ise Katagami Kyōdō Kumiai (伊勢型紙協同組合) <https://isekatagami.or.jp>

Private initiatives and lobby groups

This section presents several initiatives from individuals and groups for promoting the material consumption of -broadly defined- traditional crafts in Japan, banking on their “Made in Japan” image. Most of them operate through well-thought public relations and strong communications strategies. None of the initiatives presented here were focused on the traditional textile dyeing. The support for it forms part of the overall support to traditional craft sector in Japan. One common feature of these initiatives is their strategic piggybacking to national initiatives in their communication strategies. At the same time, they inform on the craftspeople and production sites, or simply offer local crafts for purchase. These approaches enable them to connect cultural biographies of the crafts to their social history or tradition. Therefore, while these initiatives support the material consumption of these crafts, they also call upon the symbolism of the craft and help to construct its tradition, while conveying the notion of Japan’s cultural identity. One such initiative is led by Nakata Hidetoshi, a former Japanese footballer, who established the NihonMono (Japan Things) project⁵⁷ in 2009, and travelled across Japan to identify traditional crafts, travel experiences, with a view to promoting cultural nationalism and heritage through domestic tourism (Kikuchi, 2015, pp. 90-91).

Another example is BECOS a Tokyo, Japan-based e-commerce platform established in 2017. It specialises in traditional Made-In-Japan products for modern use. BECOS praises itself for having visited every artisan from whom they sell works, thus addressing the challenge that craftspeople face with selling their own production. In its own words, BECOS sells handmade Japanese crafts which cannot be found on big-brand retailers’ sites. They publish articles on various traditional crafts⁵⁸ including textiles, such as the one on wrapping cloths (*furoshiki*) of 17 May 2023,⁵⁹ where they explained the history, production techniques, sites of production, differences with other traditional cloths, and wrapping cloths for sale at BECOS. For the items that they propose for sale, they provide information about the craftsperson who produced it, the technique used, and the place where it was produced.

Tsunagu Japan is a third example of a private platform using Japan cultural identity in its commercial strategies. Tsunagu Japan manages multiple media platforms “connecting Japan

⁵⁷ NihonMono project by Nakata Hidetoshi: <http://nakata.net/project>

⁵⁸ BECOS’s complete guide to traditional Japanese crafts, published 4, March 2021: <https://en.thebecos.com/blogs/column/traditional-japanese-crafts-complete-guide/>

⁵⁹ BECOS’s guide to Japanese traditional wrapping cloth: https://en.thebecos.com/blogs/column/all-about-furoshiki-japanese-traditional-wrapping-cloth?_pos=4&_sid=c6ab6a6ee&_ss=r

to the world by sharing all that makes Japan special.”⁶⁰ This company is one among a myriad of new public-private companies,⁶¹ which targets foreigners interested in Japan, especially those from neighboring countries, either for a visit or to establish collaborations with Japanese enterprises. In their website, they present the various regions of Japan with the interesting spots to visit, local products to purchase, and other cultural opportunities to experience, including traditional textile wear.⁶² None of these companies or platforms have experience in production of traditional crafts, and act as cultural mediators.

Amateur dyeing networks

Although the world of traditional crafts is conceived as masculine, amateurism is overall feminine (Kikuchi, 2015, pp. 101-102; Kouhia, 2016, pp. 17-18) and has played an important role in the continuation of traditions. In an historical analysis of more than 2000 publications since Meiji on *keiko goto*, Tanimura Reiko found evidence that women are those who keep the traditional culture of Japan, through *keiko*, the amateur practice of traditional crafts; and that this practice had helped the construction of national identity in Japan (Tanimura, 2015). The results of the present study are consonant with Tanimura and support the perspective that amateur practice supports the continuity of *katazome* tradition through practical actions at individual level.

The amateur practitioners in the present research provided support to *katazome* on two levels. On one level, the monthly fees that they paid to the *kōbō* contributed to the continuation of its activities and enhanced the living of their teachers. On the other level, by assuming an active role and explaining and educating others about the technique, the amateur dyers added value to this tradition. They mentioned various settings for so doing, which ranged from an inner circle composed of their family members and those who visited their homes, to a wider circle of people they could reach during events. The amateur dyers acted as cultural mediators, explaining how they did the stencil works and how to enjoy these crafts. They further promoted the *katazome* culture when greeting the New Year with *katazome* postcards, and transmitting to those visiting their expositions the taste of *katazome* and educating them about the *katazome* culture and tradition.

⁶⁰ Tsunagu Japan's presentation : <https://www.d2cx.co.jp/about/?lang=en>

⁶¹ For instance, the New Dendan Project, the Japan Brand Festival, the Japan 100 (一般財団法人伝統の工芸品産業振興協会) and so on. <https://jbfes.com/project/>

⁶² Tsunagu Japan's promotion of local and traditional culture experiences: <https://www.tsunagujapan.com/yukata-vs-kimono-the-secret-culture-behind-the-japanese-national-dress/>

Other initiatives to make the traditional crafts sector viable

Interviewees pointed out the recurrent issue of the devastating impact of the massive import of cheaply produced dyeing in the Japanese market against which they could not stand their businesses. This is a widely-recognized issue for the traditional crafts sector, which has contributed, among other things, to the launching of the above-mentioned initiatives by the government. However, some of those *kōbō* affected went ahead on their own with a view to preventing the imminent bankruptcy of their several generation-old businesses. Two such examples included the Nishimuraya Kōbō of Kyoto and the Akagawa Kōbō in Ugo, Akita prefecture. They explained that, in order to be able to retain the Made-in-Japan label, they controlled the overall process of the dyeing, although they outsourced some of the phases to neighboring countries. Both *kōbō* had set up collaborative agreements with local communities abroad, entrusting them to do some of the intermediary tedious artisanal work, while the design and the completion of the dyeing was assumed by the master dyers of their *kōbō*. In both cases the experience had been positive in the sense that they have been able to keep a quality work within reasonable prices. However, they recognized that setting up these collaborative relationships had not been easy, and that over the years they had been obliged to change the countries with whom they collaborated.

Overseas cooperation projects and initiatives to bolster traditional crafts production businesses is a relatively frequent phenomenon in Japan. For instance, Urushihara Takuya (2004) reported on the results of two such projects in lacquerware crafts. The first project took place between the Kiso lacquerware district in Nagano prefecture and the Union of Myanmar from 1994, in the framework of both countries' cooperation through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations. It was set up as a technical cooperation project to develop lacquerware skills of Myanmar artisans, with delegations of master Japanese artisans sent to Myanmar, and several cohorts of artisans from that country to train in Japan. The second project, which started in 1998, involved the lacquerware district of Kawatsura in Akita prefecture and several Japanese designers working in Italy. Those crafts products which suited European modern design preferences were exhibited at the Macef International Home Show in Milano in 2000, and were largely appreciated by buyers from various European countries. Urushihara noted that craftspeople could negotiate their products with consumers, avoiding the more complicated path for selling their crafts in Japan. Both these projects have been discontinued. In the case of Myanmar, the project stopped because the insufficient funding and because, as a result of the

project, a large number of Myanmar-made products flooded the Japanese market. In the case of Italy, the project was interrupted in the absence of stable distribution channels. However, the experience in the Italian project was judged positive for expanding the line of products in the domestic market through a glocalized consumption (Urushihara, 2004, pp. 48-49).

Creating collaborative networks between craftspeople, artists, and designers is another type of initiative which has proved to be a positive experience for those involved. Such collaborations entrusted specialists with the economic and marketing aspects of the craft production, rather than leaving them to the craftspeople, who often lacked the relevant knowledge or skills in these areas (Zbucnea, 2022, p. 22). For instance, the Nuno craft studio established working partnerships with local indigo dyeing *kōbō*, and promoted such collaborations with fashion brands, such as MUJI that lasted and provided positive results for the parties involved (Sudo et al., 2021, p. 15). The collaboration between Kawabe Yunosuke⁶³ and Mizuno (Speedo) for the design of the official swimwear of the Japanese synchronized swimming team for the 2004 Olympic games offers another example of understanding tradition as a resource allowing transformation and creativity. Using stenciled patterns based on kabuki, the swimwear produced was launched under the slogan “This is the country of the kimono”. The swimwear fused modern textile technology with traditional patterns, and a strong message reinforcing Japan’s cultural identity, constituting an example of a novel innovation going global (Dickens, 2012b, pp. 109-112). Other examples include collaborations between Louis Vuitton from France and lacquerware crafts of Wajima, and the one between Fendi from Italy and Kaga embroidery from Ishikawa prefecture (Murata, 2015, p. 13).

Interviewees from the Tokushima facility for indigo promotion, Kyoto’s Nishimuraya Kōbō, the Aizome Zabo in Sapporo, and the Serizawa Art and Crafts Museum in Sendai commented that the hands-on experiences sessions in their facilities addressed to the public represented a non-negligible income, promoted the crafts, and expanded the artisan’s network. Similar experiences have been noted in Ōshima with *tsumugi* dyeing (Linton, 2020, p. 260).

6.3.2. Other mechanisms supporting the continuity of the tradition of folk textile dyeing

The primary objective of these mechanisms is to support the continuation of the craft tradition by promoting its visual, cultural, and symbolic consumption. These mechanisms also

⁶³ An artist, designer, and craftspeople belonging to a several-generation family of dyers in Kyoto.

indirectly support the material consumption of the craft in the long term. They include the documentation on the craftspeople and the craft practice before their disappearance as well as the establishment of related archives. Programs and activities aimed at familiarizing young people with the tradition of the craft are also to be encouraged, because they contribute to better understanding and appreciation of the crafts and their products, because they develop intercultural openness (Zbucheá, 2022, p. 15). Other relevant initiatives include the celebration of awareness events aimed at sensitizing the general public on the meanings and values of the traditional folk textile dyeing. Finally, research on the crafts could lead to policies supporting the continuation of the craft tradition.

Designation of Holders/Preservers of Important Intangible Cultural Properties

The Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, which is administered through the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, designates individuals excelling in a craft/art technique as Holders/Preservers of Important Intangible Cultural Properties (LNTs), and receive an annual grant of about two million Japanese yen, in addition to other subsidies for training successors, or public exhibitions and performances. Until now, 47 LNT have been designated in the textiles category, most of whom relate to weaving crafts. Twelve of them work in areas related to traditional stencil dyeing, including Serizawa's *kataezome* technique, recognized in 1956, and Tamanaha Yūkō (b. 1936) on *bingata* in 1996. In addition, five in the Ise stencil paper techniques were designated in 1955 (all of whom are deceased now); and two others were also indicated in Edo Komon dyeing, of whom only Komiya Yasutaka (b.1925) is still alive. At times, it is not only individuals, but associations that are designated as Holders/Preservers of Important Intangible Cultural Properties. For instance, in addition to five individuals designated as LNTs in the 1950s, the Ise Paper Stencil Preservation Society was added to the list of the Crafts' Designated Groups in 1993 (Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, 1993).

The official designations also happen at prefectural level. For instance, the Okinawa Bingata Dentō Hozon-Kai (Association for the Preservation of the Bingata Tradition) was designated as a group as Holder/Preserver of Important Intangible Cultural Property by the Okinawa Prefectural Government in 1973 (Sarashima, 2013a, p. 114). Sarashima argues that in all official designations related to cultural heritage, in addition to being highly motivating for the practitioners, carry honors which need to be appropriated by the community and transmitted collectively to the public in order to be sustainable (Sarashima, 2013b, p. 148).

Other designation mechanisms

Kikuchi Yuko and Imanishi Hirotake analyzed the situation of Kanazawa, in Ishikawa prefecture, which had been designated as the UNESCO city of Crafts and Folk Art in 2009. The city identified twenty-two crafts and branded them as Kanazawa or Kaga crafts to give them a cultural identity as part of the promotion initiative. In 2020, the city published the Kanazawa KOGEI Action Plan, where the city opted for a strategic change from preservation of traditional crafts towards promotion of creativity and new activities aimed at facilitating tourism, as the main strategy to cope with the “shrinking traditional craft industries with unsustainable future.” This strategic direction favors projects involving technological innovation for reviewing stages of craft production and identifying alternatives in the materials used. It encourages the adoption of new digital technologies and social networking of information across craft communities; and the adoption of a schema of cultural diversity, challenging and shaking off rigid structures (Kikuchi & Imanishi, 2022, pp. 270-273). This initiative constitutes a clear example of a public authority understanding the tradition as a resource which is oriented to the future, rather than stagnating in its nostalgic past.

Private initiatives supporting Japanese crafts excellence and cultural identity

One such initiative is the Japan Craft 21, whose purpose is “to revitalize traditional Japanese master crafts (*dentō kōgei*) by identifying the issues artisans face and implementing solutions for the 21st Century.”⁶⁴ This organization started as a reaction to the massive import of cheap products from neighboring countries against which Japanese craftspeople could not compete, and the lack of apprentices to succeed the current masters, most of whom were in their eighties or more. Those who launched the initiative also wondered if creative effective communication strategies could not change the consumers’ perception of traditional crafts, and, for instance, make them use wooden lunchboxes instead plastic ones. This organization became active in 2020 and acts in partnership with the Asia Society. Their activities include the support to “vulnerable but viable traditional crafts” such as traditional carpentry, for which they established and funded educational facilities and training for six apprentices. They also support traditional craftsmanship through their annual Japan Traditional Craft Revitalization Contest, which not only stimulates an ample media coverage, but also provides the Ronnie Award to the winner, with a five million yen in addition to support for business management, information technologies, and marketing of the winner’s craft production. Their activities are privately

⁶⁴ Japan Craft 21 was established in 2018 to support quality crafts traditions: <https://www.japancraft21.com>

funded by individuals and corporations, with the support of volunteers. Craft Japan 21 is in alliance with other like-minded organizations, such as The Creation of Japan,⁶⁵ which focuses on crafts promotion events, and the Iwamiginzan Gungendo,⁶⁶ which supports the documentation and purchase of traditional crafts, and offers hands-on experiences. They organize traditional crafts voyages through rural Japan, proposing accommodations in private homes in the countryside, in what they announce as “like in the good old times”, replicating Japan’s modern dialectics of tradition and loss (Creighton, 1997, pp. 242-244).

Other initiatives

Several interviewees commented that the viability of some *kōbō* was seriously compromised, making it inevitable that they would disappear in the next 10-15 years. These “residual” *kōbō* faced a complicated situation resulting from a strictly traditional single-line of dyeing production, lack of communication strategy and public relations, difficulties in selling their work, and lacking a successor to take over the *kōbō*. However, not being economically viable did not mean that these *kōbō* could not contribute to the continuity of the craft tradition. On the contrary, their testimony would be critical to understanding the history and symbolism of the craft since most of these craftspeople had more than sixty- or seventy-years’ experience in traditional folk textile dyeing.

It is not clear who should take the initiative for the gathering and consolidation of such testimony. During the fieldwork, I enquired on such an option when meeting with various staff at the museums participating in the research. While they pointed to the Japan Crafts Museum in Tokyo, the interviewees at this Museum indicated that the responsibility for such initiative should be taken by a government structure rather than by a museum.

In other countries, such initiatives are located at universities, for instance, the Asian American Art Oral History Project, at De Paul University, which records experiences of craftspeople, some of whom Japanese traditional dyers (Tate, 2016). Another option to contemplate would be placing such testimonial initiative at the prefectural level. This is the administrative level where other initiatives supporting traditional crafts are attached, and this

⁶⁵ The Creation of Japan acts a cultural intermediary branding and lobbying for traditional crafts through events: <https://thecreationofjapan.or.jp/about>

⁶⁶ Iwamiginzan Gungendo was established in the 1990s. It operates through a network of shops and ateliers across Japan and focuses mainly on Japan-made traditional fabrics and clothing: <https://www.gungendo.co.jp>.

level would seem appropriate since these structures know their constituencies well. However, at present, there is no such attempt to integrate the knowledge of these production sites, since they are private, and do not necessarily communicate to the prefecture when they close their businesses. A first step would be to design and establish an inventory of the *kōbō* with a view to profiling them. A second step would entail a full documentation of the *kōbō* with oral histories of the craftspeople and their craft history and works documented. The next step would be the constitution of an archive available for those interested in the history of the craft and its people. Such an initiative would constitute a way of public recognition of the craftspeople themselves, and the role their *kōbō* played in building the *katazome* tradition.

In addition to the analysis that my research has contributed to uncovering various aspects of the personality of Serizawa, I consider it important to further reconstruct the role that Serizawa has played in the traditional folk textile dyeing. This new research could include a deeper analysis of how he was *experimented* by a greater number of his assistants, colleagues, contemporary artists, and amateur dyers. Since most of these people are in their eighties, and in some cases have become centenarians, there is no further time to lose to initiate this project, which should give light to how the modern lineage of *katazome* was constructed and how it is being handed to the future generations.

In the context of this research, I met with film director Marty Gross.⁶⁷ One of his projects, the Mingei Film Archive Project⁶⁸ focuses on recovering old films on Mingei crafts, and in some cases, asking contemporary craftspeople to comment on the recovered films. Until recently the focus of the Mingei Film Archive Project had been ceramics. However, he informed me of his plan to include traditional folk textiles, in particular Serizawa's work on *kataezome*, soon in his project (Gross, 2023).

The sensitization of the general public to the meanings and values of traditional folk textile dyeing came out several times during the fieldwork as options to be taken whenever possible. The team participating in the Japan Blue initiative of Tokushima, for instance, had two-hour indigo dyeing demonstration events in various cities in Japan, including those

⁶⁷ Of the Marty Gross Film Production Inc., which focuses on Japanese art and culture: <https://www.martygrossfilms.com/index.html>

⁶⁸ The Mingei Film Archive Project started in the 1980s. It is an entirely private initiative, supported by a network of academic, for-profit, and public institutions and private donations: <http://mingeifilmarchive.com>

targeting visitors from abroad at the Haneda Airport premises. The activities carried out by volunteer groups and associations when they participate in demonstration events are examples of sensitization activities that contribute to people understanding and appreciating the craft as well. Experiencing folk textile dyeing needs several-hour sessions to be a meaningful experience, and therefore, not all events offer the appropriate conditions for such activities.

Personal efforts of individuals not to let die a tradition merit attention as well. In the area of textiles, Sarashima (2013) noted how it was thanks to the personal efforts of Ms. Taira Mieko, that the tradition of *bashōfu* was revived in Kijoka, Okinawa. She succeeded in her endeavor first by continuing the craft's practice and teaching it to a small group of interested people, and then by establishing the Preservation Group for Kijoka-no Bashōfu (Sarashima, 2013b, pp. 142-143). Another example relates to the use of folk textile made of Japanese paper (*washi*) for garments and the efforts made by Mr. Abe Kenji, in Shiroishi city, to ensure the viability of the *washi* production. He started such a personal project in 2012, and established a group of around fifteen volunteers and elderly staff, dedicated to the production of garments with *washi* (Mohajer va Pesaran, 2018, pp. 242-243). Mohajer va Pesaran showed that the volume of the craft produced in this project was limited and yet the project was sustainable thanks to the internet, which connected the local “makers” with a fleet of small niche brands interested in this traditional craft (pp. 252). A third example relates to the conservation of the indigo culture in Asamai city, in Akita prefecture, and the personal efforts by the only family involved in indigo culture in Asamai, the Kamata family. The Kamata Kōbō, which was established in 1840 could not allow this tradition to be lost. Mr. Kamata Inosuke set up a project in 1982, focused on maintaining the craft tradition alive, which was continued by Ms. Kamata Shigeko after he passed away. It included training of students and children as well as demonstrations of indigo dyeing with a view to protecting this local culture tradition (Miyamoto, 2006, p. 108). These civic associations sometimes structure themselves as traditional crafts' preservation societies or *hizon-kai* (保存), while others just remain as groups of interested people and volunteers interested in the craft.

Of special importance are the programs and activities targeting the familiarization of young people with the dyeing tradition. These activities, which in some cases constitute entertainment and in others are part of the school curriculum, were mentioned by several interviewees during the fieldwork as detonating factors for their involvement in *katazome*

practice. According to staff of the Japan Blue project in Tokushima prefecture, out of the sessions with young people in the professional schooling curricula, an average of one person per year applies for the apprenticeship program at Kamiita chō.

Opening lines of research on traditional folk textile dyeing in the form of case studies would be another option to contemplate. Other traditional crafts have been researched at length, including ceramics, lacquerware, or weaving. Having case studies on *katazome* would add to our knowledge on the craft and would help identify measures which could ensure the continuity of the craft tradition. Having further research conducted on the importance of amateur practice in the continuation of the craft would be highly relevant in two areas. The first area would be on the role of practitioners in divulging and promoting *katazome*. The second area would be on the extent to which the monthly fees and other payments which the members of the amateur groups provide to the atelier support the professional craftspeople of the atelier, many of whom are struggling to survive solely by means of the crafts' production. Another area which could be worth investigating would be the analysis of experiences providing incentives to ateliers with a view to establishing amateur groups.

Finally, and in view of the growing, albeit incipient, importance of the effects of modern technologies on the production methods of traditional crafts and on the preservation of intangible human heritage, research in this area would be worth being envisaged. Digital technologies make it possible to document, store and protect not only artworks, literary texts, and business records (McNeil & Mak, 2007, p. 47), but also traditional crafting. In relation to the latter, Skublewska-Paszkowska et al., (2022, p.5) have noted several craftsmanship studies on the application of digital technologies to, for instance, visualize craftsmen at work, or to show traditional Chinese gold lacquer wood carving. A multi-country team supported by the European Union research and innovation program is applying digital technologies to traditional crafts, such as silk weaving, in the Mingei Online Platform project. This project includes acquired representations of knowledge for craft re-enactment, through a meticulous representation of crafts processes and techniques, in addition to using contextualization narratives for technological history and social and historical events relevant to the craftspeople and their practice (Zabulis et al., 2022, 160-167). These experimental technologies, which are being used in museums already, could be further expanded to the craftspeople environment.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

The dissertation analyzed those elements critical to understanding the craft and the tradition of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan. It first described people, places, and things, based on their cultural biographies, and then reconstructed their social histories which contributed to the craft's lineage, tradition, and national culture.

Some elements of the practice have evolved over time. For instance, the *kōbō*, stable pillar of the craft, has witnessed its limits of adaptation to changes in the last five decades. The span of adaptation of the dyers to changes in the availability of materials, tools, and -in some cases- techniques for the craft's production has accelerated during the last seven decades. The evolution of the demand for *katazome*, which had been decided by sumptuary laws in the Edo period, came to be influenced by the Mingei Movement, and then by popular fashion. This evolution has taken more than two centuries to materialize. In so far as the craft consumption is concerned, the visual and the material types of consumption have taken shorter time to develop than the cultural and symbolic consumption. In the case of Serizawa's transformation of traditional folk textile dyeing as well as the lineage that he established, the time scale, rather than in number of years, is better approached in terms of a two-generation's community of practice that is rapidly vanishing. The concept of authenticity has also evolved from the crafts' utility value to the mediators' regulated exchange value. The consumption of *katazome* has evolved from the one based on utility, to the decorative and symbolic one. With the craft's commodification, the way in which traditional folk textile dyeing are consumed does not relate to time, but to purpose; and the consumption is influenced by the degrees of homogeneity and singularity attached to the craft.

7.1. *Achievements and contribution*

This study constitutes a first comprehensive assessment of the continuity of traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan, carried out through an insider's perspective of its main stakeholders. No other study has been found that reflects the views of the dyers in several prefectures across Japan with such detail, or analyze the structures where *katazome* are produced, the ways in which the crafts are produced, and the evolution of these structures and crafts over time. No other study has analyzed the consumption of *katazome*, from both, the

cultural biography of the crafts themselves, and the social history of the folk textile dyeing tradition. Basing itself on the views of the dyers, the study has delved into the perspectives of the stakeholders to disentangle the craft's situation and put the tradition in perspective.

This study is significant because it dissects those aspects of the craft which support the sense of cultural identity and cultural heritage of the folk textile dyeing, such as the meanings attached to the *kōbō*, and to the authenticity of the crafts and the craft's tradition. While so doing, the study also makes a number of original contributions to the knowledge of the *katazome* in Japan in various areas. A first area relates to the *kōbō*, where the profiling by size and function (including by craftsmanship, mastery, apprenticeship, amateurship, and management) with such detail provides a solid base to analyze their evolution. The study then analyzes the meanings attached to these structures, and the lineage and tradition of the craft. This analysis also adds to previous ethnographic studies on the meanings of physical spaces and the constitution of communities of place and practice, which all help to understand the essence of cultural identities.

The study also brings an innovative view to the meaning of culture as a dynamic process. Adopting a situated perspective, the feedback from the dyers on how they coped with the evolution of the consumption patterns of their production was critical to apply theories of cultural evolution to *katazome*. While recognising that this craft is intimately related to Mingei, the analysis of the production, promotion, and consumption of *katazome* through processes of homogenization, heterogenization, and hybridization, has shown that discussions of whether the craft is or is not Mingei has ceased to have much importance. What has become relevant instead, is the understanding that *katazome* represents a mosaic of techniques, products, and approaches of stakeholders to the dyer's productions, where Mingei performs some. For instance, Mingei performs genuine roles in the case of low homogeneity and high heterogeneity of crafts production, while some intermediaries use indiscriminately Mingei as a concept for crafts to brand/market them.

Finally, the study will make original contributions to the analysis of the construction of Japanese traditions. The construction of cultural traditions is generally considered to be dependent on an authentication authority (Hobsbawm, 1983). However, the fieldwork has evidenced a more fluid construction of the tradition of modern folk textile dyeing from at least two perspectives. The first perspective considers the relationship between the Mingei

Movement, Serizawa Keisuke, and the practice of the craft. Serizawa considered Yanagi Sōetsu as his mentor, and collaborated in multiple projects and initiatives. Serizawa, a well-educated designer and innovative artist, represented the Mingei Movement, which praised those unknown craftspeople producing repetitive works for daily use in a communal setting. Although not exclusively committed to the Mingei Movement, Serizawa supported it considerably in his capacity as designer, for instance, designing the front cover of its magazine (Mingei), or the logos for those retailers promoting Mingei crafts (Bingoya shop in Tokyo). He used his fame and authority to establish the cooperative Moegikai to support traditional dyers in obtaining materials after WW2. Serizawa popularized *katazome*, making some of his works at affordable prices through hand mass-production, and also providing art with a utility function in home decoration (Serizawa calendars). Serizawa also established a *katazome* lineage of professional and amateur dyers through his training and coaching.

The second perspective considers the construction of tradition through the community of practice by those craftspeople belonging to the Serizawa lineage (professional and amateur dyers) and supported by related structures, such as the Serizawa-dedicated museums. This community of practice, which was linked first to Serizawa's atelier in Kamata, Tokyo, is now dispersed geographically, as those dyers who had worked with him rejoined/established their own *katazome* ateliers across Japan. In other cases, the construction of tradition has been more complex and has been authenticated through other mechanisms. For instance, in the case of indigo tradition, placeness played an important role in Tokushima or Akita prefectures, while in other areas this sense of placeness was replaced by a wider sense of cultural identity and Japaneseness. Finally, in other cases, the tradition has been constructed around those *kōbō* belonging to a community of practice of a specific technique, such as pour dyeing, which is considered to be an indigenous tradition in Japan. In all the above cases, the tradition has been legitimized internally through a shared sense of authenticity in their communities of practice, place, or technique, before, and independently from the external institutional authentication, such as the designation as IICP, or LNTs.

The study blended a documentary review and analysis with a qualitative enquiry into traditional folk dyeing in Japan, which adds to the evidence provided by other ethnographic studies about traditions in Japan including those on Wajima lacquerware, Onta ware, Enka songs, culinary culture, Okinawa's *bingata* and weaving, and Japanese tea culture. At the same time, this study added to the evidence to the few works on traditional folk textile dyeing which

adopted an insider perspective, including those Okinawa's *bingata*, Edo *komon*, and on Ōshima *tsumugi*.

7.2. *The dyers*

The study approached the dyers not only as producers of crafts, but also as people with singular and unique trajectories. Such an approach enabled a better appreciation of their works and their contribution to the tradition of folk textile dyeing. Interviewing those who had worked with Serizawa Keisuke enabled a more comprehensive image about him, uncovering until now un-reported perspectives about his personality, and also about the role that he played in the construction of the *katazome* lineage and tradition. Similarly important was the feedback from the apprentices and relevant stakeholders on the way to become a professional dyer. The approach had evolved from the *uchi deshi* system to school-based training, reflecting the modernization and bureaucratization of the path to craftsmanship in Japan. The feedback from those people whose craftsmanship was at their highest illustrated how they had coped with their craft practice in the midst of a rapidly evolving tradition.

The views from the amateur dyers highlighted the social nature of their craft production, as opposed to the professional dyers' production, which is traded as a commodity. Their feedback reflected the importance of the practice in their lives and in safe-guarding the craft's tradition. Their views also shed light on the femininity associated with the amateur practice of the craft and on various roles that women play/are made to play in the Japanese society. The major motivating factor to join amateur practice was the admiration for Serizawa's works.

7.3. *The kōbō*

Without *kōbō* there is no craft. The *kōbō* is the physical space where crafts are produced, social environment where relations are built, and the symbolic realm where lineage and tradition are constructed. It ensues that their continuity and adaptation to modernity is critical to maintain the traditions that remain relevant even when society changes.

Serizawa pioneered the assimilation of the guilds responsible for various phases of the *katazome* production into his *kenkyūjo* in Kamata. This horizontalization of *kōbō* for *katazome* production set a trend, which was followed by many others and has become the norm nowadays.

The trend in the number of *kōbō* has been downwards, although it is difficult to estimate the situation accurately. This is partly due to differences in the application of definitions and register of *kōbō* by the various institutions. While many *kōbō* have disappeared, various initiatives to promote the traditional craft sector (including national campaigns, decentralized support initiatives, modern apprenticeship systems, and patronages) have started providing results. These outcomes highlight a need to re-consider what tradition means in a context of social change and globalization, and the role that the *kōbō* play in maintaining such tradition.

The success of the *kōbō* relates to things *outside the tangible craft*, such as lineages, networks, official designations, branding and marketing, and access to retail outlets. These elements promote and provide meaning to the crafts, and motivate the craftspeople and stakeholders. Seeking titles and patronages has been a sought-after approach of craftspeople eager to add value to their works. However, in the pre-modern craft period, most added value was generated in the workpiece itself. Such a change in patterns of value creation illustrates the importance of externalizing value adding for the continuity of the *kōbō* and the craft.

7.4. The production and the products

Despite changes in the availability of materials and utensils used for stencil dyeing, the fundamental techniques and processes have remained unchanged through time.

Folk textile dyeing in Japan has evolved over time following distinct processes. While some techniques and patterns circulated among regions and allowed a diffusion of the crafts, others remained free from external influences, keeping authenticity as a landmark for their traditional character. At the same time, other products have gone through a radical transformation process, giving way to hybridized products. For instance, the original *bingata* went through a process of conceptual hybridization/transformation through the hands of Serizawa at the same time as the stencil technique was homogenized across Japan; and the tradition was heterogenized and branded as an IICP of Okinawa.

Considering the evolution of dyeing products through the homogenization, heterogenization, and hybridization processes is useful to analyze the crafts' production, and to explore the extent to which belonging to a certain group allows access to various initiatives for the preservation of the folk dyeing tradition.

7.5. Consumption and its evolution

The role that the various groups of mediators play in the visual, material, cultural, and symbolic consumption of *katazome* is as relevant, if not more relevant, than the object itself. The mediators constitute a complex structure of numerous and diverse profiles, which not only transform the *katazome* into a culture-bound consumer product, but also act in their commodification, their utility, and symbolic value.

In other traditions in Japan, such as tea, pongee silk, and even the concept of homeland (*furusato*) the transition from commodities to the constructive element of national identity and Japaneseness is quite evident. But in the case of *katazome*, the transition from consuming indigo, stencils, *bingata*, and *kataezome* to consuming Japaneseness is more complicated. This is because *katazome* as a craft includes different profiles belonging to multiple lineages of artisans/craftspeople, multiple techniques, and hybridized products, which renders its generalization difficult.

The *ensemble* of stakeholders mediating the consumption of traditional folk textile dyeing has constructed some of the dyestuffs, techniques, and products; and master Serizawa as icons of Japanese national identity at various levels. For instance, indigo is being branded as Japan Blue, and it is the object of several regional initiatives preserving the tradition of indigo, as in Tokushima and Akita prefectures, as quintessentially Japanese. Similarly, the government of Japan has designated Ise stencils and *bingata* as IICPs, and Serizawa Keisuke as a LNT for the transformation of *katazome* into *kataezome*.

7.6. *Katazome's cultural biographies and tradition's social history*

To understand the craft evolution, it is necessary to analyze the evolution of the various components of this tradition at category level in the long term, and at item level in the short

term. For instance, in the case of *bingata*, the long-term historical perspective of the tradition illustrates its evolution from its aristocratic origins to its democratization through the Mingei Movement, its commodification, to finally being considered a symbol of national cultural identity. At the short-term level, the cultural biography of a kimono, for instance, spans from the moment when the dyer conceives it with input from production mediators, to when it leaves the *kōbō* and is dressed in the symbolism of the lineage and tradition ready for its purchase, to finally be invested with the *properness* of utilization. Depending on who the final user will be, the kimono will be worn by the purchaser, become a gift to her daughter, be sold if considered out of date, or finish its days in a museum, where visitors will consume this kimono visually and culturally.

When the dyers stated that their focus in life was to dye to perfection or explained how they coped with their daily work, it was easy to understand the person in context, and the craftsmanship. However, understanding how they embodied the Japanese cultural identity requires consciousness about the symbolism attached to belonging to the culture. It also requires awareness that the craft is not only the object, but also the incarnation of the lineage that places the craft in its history and its perspective for the future, whatever it may be. It implies having a sense of a greater environment that transcends the moment and the place where dyers work.

When a *kōbō* disappears, or the production of a traditional *katazome* product is discontinued, part of Japan's cultural heritage disappears. While the cultural biography of the *kōbō* would simply end, and, for instance, the Serizawa calendars would become unavailable, the social history of the *katazome* tradition would become thinner and less diversified. This is because *katazome* is a labor-intensive vibrant tradition that depends on many guilds and family-based craftsmanship. Scaling down the types of traditional *katazome* products and of the *kōbō* producing them, is the main reason why, in the short term, guilds which survive on these crafts disappear; and why, in the long term, the craft tradition becomes monotone and soulless.

7.7. Economic viability of the craft and continuity of the tradition

The challenges confronting the traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan in a globalized economy, which is focused on economic efficiency, are tremendous. While it requires

strenuous efforts to ensure the economic viability of traditional folk textile dyeing as an indigenous/genuine Japanese craft, the continuity of the tradition is not at risk. This situation is the result of several factors. On the one hand, traditional *kōbō* have streamlined their creation towards sellable crafts in order to survive, leaving master-signed pieces for an elite niche of consumers. Other *kōbō* have internalized new production techniques that have modernized the tradition. At the same time, the market is flooded with products sold as traditional dyeing, with consumers priming lower prices than the craftsmanship, the place, and production techniques.

The continuity of the *katazome* tradition is also ensured by the network of mediators which is supporting the visual, cultural, and symbolic consumptions of the craft through successful strategies. Profit and non-for-profit intermediaries compete and collaborate at prefectural and local levels, piggybacking on national initiatives. These national initiatives enhance the national culture and identity of Japan, with some of them also supporting the economic recovery of the craft sector at local level.

Through this study, it has become clear to me that the folk textile dyeing tradition is modernizing as a response to liberal policies pursuing economic efficiency. This modernization has provoked changes in the *katazome* production, impacting the craftspeople and their *kōbō*. These changes illustrate how the tradition is evolving. In such a dynamic situation, I have found several avenues for future research. Some of them would constitute new projects, while other would support ongoing initiatives. I believe that all would contribute to the survival of a diversified and vibrant traditional folk textile dyeing in Japan.

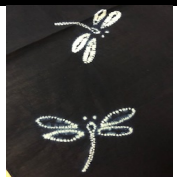
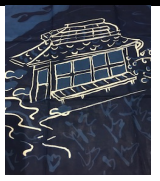




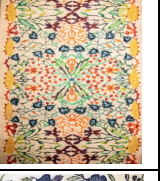


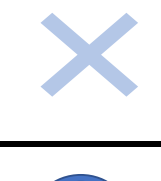
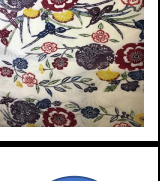
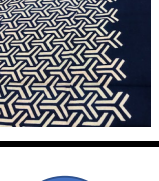
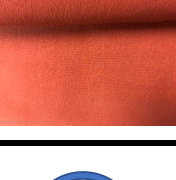




















- 1) Increase the validity of the current research by adding more case studies on the craft.
- 2) Document with traditional and new digital technologies the lives, work, and achievements of craftspeople retiring or obliged to close their *kōbō*, and of those who worked with Serizawa, so that their experiences become integral elements of the social history of the craft tradition.
- 3) Encourage craftspeople by continuing and expanding initiatives which recognize excellence in craftsmanship and tradition.
- 4) Increase awareness and interest in the craft for people of all ages by pursuing initiatives which support its visual, cultural, and symbolic consumption.
- 5) Promote the practice of the craft by standardizing databases on *kōbō* at prefectural level, making this information available to interested people.

- 6) Foster amateur dyeing by subsidizing the *kōbō* to undertake such training.
- 7) Diversify and open ways to the craft by exploring collaborations with the industry.
- 8) Explore economic efficiency of *katazome* by outsourcing parts of its manufacture while retaining the essence of the craft production at *kōbō* level.
- 9) Enable participation of traditional *kōbō* in ongoing campaigns and initiatives for material and symbolic consumption of traditional crafts in Japan.
- 10) Encourage the evolution of a diversified tradition, where new technologies encourage the craftspeople to cope with the challenges confronting them, instead of destroying tradition in the search for economic efficiency.

Moving in these directions will help to assure a bright and diverse future for traditional folk textile dyeing. The weight of “vanishing tradition” can be lifted from the craft.

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Appendix One. Japanese traditional folk textile dyeing: Patterns, types of dye, color fill, and support

		Pattern				
		Tie-dye	Free-hand dyeing	Stencil dyeing	Pour-dye	No pattern Plain dyeing
Type of dye	Plant-base Indigo					
	Mineral-base <i>ganryō</i>					
	Chemical-base <i>senryō</i>					
Color	Fill					
	Empty – <i>bassen</i>					
Support	None					
	Air compressor					

X Not frequently found; O Frequently used, frequently found.
Photos by M. Santamaria

Yarn or thread dyeing (*itozome* 糸染), which will be later woven. When applying unified colors to the threads, the weaving will result in fabrics with various textures, tonalities, and patterns depending on the threads used, and on their uptake of the dye. When woven, applying different colors to the whole thread length will produce stripes or jacquard fabrics. Dyeing selected parts of the threads will result in patterned ikat fabrics called *kasuri*.

Fabrics (*mujizome* 無地染, *kijizome* 生地, *nunozome* 布, *danzome* 段染). These refer to dipping the fabric in indigo dye (*aizome*) to obtain an even colored fabric (*kijizome*, *nunozome*) or graded-color fabric (*danzome*). Dyeing with indigo is central to Japanese traditional folk textile dyeing. The dyed fabrics serve to make conventional clothes for craftspeople and for those working in the primary sector (agriculture, poultry). Modern Japanese use indigo-dyed materials widely and consider it fashionable.

Tie-dye (*shiborizome* 絞り染). Tie-dye is one of the traditional national crafts in Japan. There are two main techniques including when the patterns result from gripping, tying the fabric (*shiborizome* 絞り染); or by folding the fabric (*itashimezome* 板締め染め); and dipping it in one or various colors, leaving undyed patches that form the pattern.

Free-hand dyeing (*tsutsugakizome* 筒描き染め, or *tegakizome* 手描き染め). The design is done by hand, without the use of a stencil.

Stencil (*katazome* 型染め). A pattern made of Japanese paper (*washi*) impregnated in fermented persimmon juice (*katagami*) is used to apply the resist paste (*nori*) to the fabric and produce the design. There are two main techniques when applying *nori*, one that empties the volume of the design (and the lines get dyed) and the other that empties the lines (and the volumes get dyed). One type of stencil dye is the *bassen-zome*, where the stencils are applied to a pre-dyed fabric, using a bleach product instead of *nori* to decolor the pattern. Another type of stencil is the *surikomizome* (摺り込み染め) where the colors are applied directly through the *katagami*, without the use of resist paste.

Pour dyeing (*tsugi honzome* 次本染め, or *chūsen zome* 注染染め). A pattern is pressed in the fabric, where hot dye is poured using compressed air blown through it from below using a foot pedal. This is the main technique for the traditional Japanese hand towels (*tenugui*). The process of dyeing consists of applying resist paste onto the cloth based on the pattern, then folding and repeating the process, and finally pouring in the dye.

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