

31. Clothing and livelihood

31.1 Spinning and weaving

Spinning thread, weaving cloth and sewing garments were long considered to women's occupations.

Hemp, a cloth material of Japan since ancient times, was planted in today's Fussa City area until the early Meiji Period. There are the middle Edo Period records of Fussa and Kumagawa area women weaving hemp, called *omejima* (developed in Ome and dispersed nationwide) during their agricultural off-season. From the middle Meiji Period, when cotton thread was first available for purchase, farmers would get *Hakonejima* (cotton weaved at today's Hakonegasaki, Mizuho Town) to work sewing *Yaguji* (bedclothes), and to procure waste thread to weave into their own cotton clothes and quilting. In the later Meiji Period, as cheaper and more abundant cotton thread was imported, cotton found wider uses and the people of the present Fussa City area purchased cotton thread and cloth to earn cash income aside from the sericulture trade.

During the sericulture trend of the Meiji to early Showa Period, farmers wove silk cloth from inferior cocoons, unfit for sale. (The home-woven cloth was known as *uchiori*). At that time, an important merit in a farmer's bride was weaving and sewing skill. Farm girls learned weaving from mother or grandmother after elementary school lessons or went afield to learn sewing. Clothes were treated respectfully as they represented a woman's time and effort. A garment was not an expendable item. It was patched, altered, washed and recycled over and over.

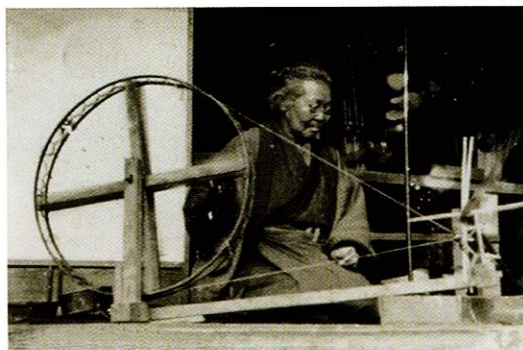


Fig.196 Female elder spinning thread on engawa (veranda) and a weaver in a back room(Kumagawa, 1923 (Taisho 12)).

31.2 Working clothes

A male farm worker wore a thick cotton (*tenjiku*), cotton (*momen*) shirt, or a splash-patterned (*shimagara*) cotton garment, a vertical patterned undershirt and long deep-blue underpants (*momohiki*). When it was cold, he wore a *nora-banten* (short cotton-quilted coat). He always carried a towel to hang around his waist, to wipe sweat or to shade his head. A female farm worker, in the busy season or doing sericulture, wore everyday clothes (cotton *nagagi* (long wear)). This included a half width sash (*obi*), tucked up her sleeves with a cord, and a head towel. A carpenter or plaster wore deep-blue underpants, a coarse *tenjiku* shirt, a stomach band and a livery coat. At year's end, a major customer would present a new livery coat to his master tradesman with customer's name or crest displayed on its back. As the New Year arrived, the master would visit his customer for New Year's greetings, wearing the presented livery coat.

31.3 Children's growth and children's clothes

When a child was born the maternal home would present newborn baby clothes. A newborn baby's clothes were sewn from cloth dyed with hemp-leaf patterning or with turmeric as a prayer for healthy growth. On the baby's seventh night (*oshichiya*), he/she, wearing the presented clothes, would pay a visit to the ritual lavatory and well for thankful use throughout life.

The *obiake* event was performed after the thirty-first day of life (for a male baby) or the thirty-third day (for a female baby). The *obiake* event ritually cleansed mother and baby, and the baby was taken for a visit to the shrine (*omiya-mairi*). The attire for this event, also presented by the maternal home, outerwear bore family crest in plain colors, and innerwear a patterned design. The baby of a weaving farmer wore special tailoring and dying whose color was black for a boy and red for a girl.



Fig.197 Male worker's attire (Kumagawa). Farm worker's attire at the field work.



Fig.198 Female worker's attire (Fussa, early Showa Period). Work drying silkworm eggs (*sanshu*) laid onto paper.

The attainment of a child's seventh calendar year, irrespective of gender, was celebrated by the *obitoki* event. This event saw the removal of the *tsukehimo*, an attachment to an infant's clothes. The presentation of this gala dress was another maternal family obligation. Early in the Showa Period, girls wore a splash-patterned silk-cotton blend kimono (*kasuri-no-gasu-meisen*), boys wore deep-blue kimono fabric and both wore a short coat (*haori*), a waistband (*sanjaku-obi*) and a pair of low-heeled wooden clogs (*komageta*). In the same way as the clothes of *obiake*, the inner-used garments (*uchiori*) were sometimes dyed.

In the Taisho Period, children usually wore thin striped or grid patterned cotton kimonos with cylindrical sleeves. Usually there were many siblings so girls sometimes had to wear clothes handed down from brothers. From the late Taisho to early Showa periods, girls wore splash-pattern printed kimono (*nikoniko-gasuri* or *gasu-meisen*). In addition a yellow or pink waistband (*sanjaku-obi*) and apron were worn. After graduating elementary school, they wore the full-scale kimono.

At the time the Pacific War broke out, boys were wearing western-style clothes at their elementary school entrance ceremonies.

31.4 Clothes for important occasions

Best clothes were worn on New Year's day, during the Bon festival, or when paying formal visits to relatives. Men wore a long stripe patterned silk kimono and a short coat to match. Young men wore striped cotton kimono. Most ladies also wore stripe patterned or fine patterned silk kimono and a short coat to match. When the Showa Period arrived, *Hachiojimeisen*-patterned kimono could be worn as best clothes.



Fig.199 Baby clad in ceremonial kimono (Fussa, 1935 (Showa 10)).



Fig.200 Girl clad in ceremonial kimono (Fussa, about 1929 (Showa 4)).

In wedding ceremonies through the Taisho to early Showa Period, almost all brides wore a black or dusky purple (*nasukon*) triple-layered silk kimono (with two white inner layers), whose outer hem was turned to cover the inner (*hikkaeshi*). Many brides had woven their own wedding kimono. Brides of lower economic status families would wear black kimono with skirt and shoulder patterning. Onlookers envied those who could wear beautifully patterned wedding kimono. The *obi* (sash) was made of black satin weave cloth. In entering the Showa Period, *maruobi* (wide sashes) have been worn. Younger ladies wore their hair *shimada* style, and beyond 25 years of age they changed hair style to *marumage* (oval, flat hair style) and wore *tsunokakushi* (white cloth decoration around hair). If a first-born son, the bridegroom wore black family-crest-embroidered kimono, *haori* (short coat for formal kimono) and hakama (formal *Sendai-hira* silken skirt). His siblings' wedding ceremonies were simpler, i.e. the elder brother's family crest embroidered haori or her usual best clothes were worn at their wedding ceremonies.

In recognition of a deceased family member, men wore black family crest embroidered haori and black *tabi* (Japanese socks), women wore white kimono. This white kimono was one of the white kimono layers she wore at her wedding ceremony. She also wore white underwear and white obi. Kinsmen wore the kimono with a triangular, bamboo-pegged, bleached cotton at the neck. Kinswomen wore a bleached cotton head cloth, tightened at rear. Funeral attendees wore a *haori* over their everyday kimono but changed the haori tie strings to white to acknowledge a funeral. After the Pacific War, female mourning dress changed from white to black.



Fig.201 Bride and bridegroom (1915 (Taisho 4)).



Fig.202 Funeral procession (Kumagawa, 1934 (Showa 9)).