Ginza Shopping:
Evaluating Evidence for Middle-class Women's Adoption of a Modern Yōfuku Fashion-based Nijū Seikatsu Identity in Mid-1930s Japan

銀座でショッピング
―1930年代中期日本、モダンな洋装を和式生活に採り入れ、「二重生活」を送る中流所得層の女性を捉えた様々な記録を分析し、彼女たちのアイデンティティを探る―

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Abstract

This article makes use of the most recent western and Japanese scholarship on pre-war Japan's consumer culture and the so-called *moga* (modern girls) phenomena in order to more deeply explore the consumption patterns, shopping-based lifestyles and values of Tokyo's middle and upper middle class women during the first decade of the Showa era. To these new secondary sources, the author adds a close reading of key archival photographic and film-based sources as well as new Japanese language work in the area of consumer and business history. It's goal is to examine the extent to which middle class Tokyo women had adopted western style fashions as part of a dual lifestyle or *nijū seikatsu* in the immediately pre-war years. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, but one that is firmly based around an analysis of documentary and photographic-based evidence, it seeks to explore the nature and meaning of the pre-war Ginza shopping experience for middle- and upper-class women. Focusing on the impact of department stores and the consumption of western-influenced clothing, makeup and accessories, it also uses five key movies featuring women living a *nijū seikatsu* to argue that the years 1935-37 marked a high point of modernity in Japanese urban culture.

Keywords : *Yōfuku*, *Nijū seikatsu*, *Moga*, Early Showa, Pre-war department stores, Shopping in the movies

概　要

本稿では、戦前の日本の消費者文化と、モガと呼ばれる当時時代を先取りしていた女性たちの存在に着目しつつ、昭和初期の10年間に見られる東京の中流・上流所得層の女性たちの買物様式やライフスタイル、そして彼女たちが日本の都会文化に及ぼした影響について考察する。これら女性たちを記録した日本語文献や、彼女たちの諸相を捉えた映画やドキュメンタリー、写真等を分析することを通して、第2次世界大戦開戦を間近に控えた数年間に、日本文化や和装を生活に留めつつ、洋装を採り入れたこれら女性たちの所謂「二重生活」に、洋装はどの程度浸透していたのかを考察する。同時に、当時銀座で買物をするということが彼女たちの

アイデンティティに及ぼした影響を掘り下げたい。さらに、「二重生活」を送る女性に取材した5作の映画を取り上げ、百貨店が女性のライフスタイルに及ぼした影響、ひいては、女性たちが採り入れている洋服や欧米風の化粧、装飾品に焦点を当て、日本の都会文化は1935年から1937年の2年間に、劇的に現代化が進んだことを明らかにしたい。

キーワード：洋服、二重生活、モガ、昭和初期、戦前の百貨店、買い物、映画の中で買い物

In the early 1990's the work of the late historian of twentieth Japanese women, Miriam Silverberg (1991), helped trigger a growing interest (mostly by feminist and literature scholars) in the rapid changes that took place in the values and identity of the new class of educated urbanized women of the interwar years. These scholars, most notably Sato (1993, 2003) and Mackie (2000) began a serious effort to uncover and interpret the "modern" lifestyles, attitudes to family life and overall aspirations of these women, especially those who challenged the stereotype of the *ryōsai kenbo* ("good wife, good mother") of earlier generations. Feminist scholars in particular have paid attention to the so-called "modern girls" (*moga*) and *jokyû* (café waitresses) who most seemed to embody the transformations brought about by the interaction of consumer ideology, western ideas and the mass media. In more recent years, the work of these researchers, which tended to be heavily based on magazines, advertising images and literary accounts, has been reinforced by a closer examination of other types of visual and mass-media evidence. The latter, several of which inform this study, have greatly enhanced our understanding of the deep social changes in urban Japan, especially Tokyo and the Ginza, that occurred in the first ten years of the Showa era (1926-35).

In 2003, Barbara Sato's *The New Japanese Woman* delivered the field's the first full-length integration of gender and social history and provided a much more nuanced understanding of the media construct that was the *moga.* Her work also shed light on the manner in which ordinary Japanese women sought to develop and find outlets for expressing their hopes and desires. While coming from a gender-based perspective, Sato's exhaustive and multidisciplinary research has proved both inspiring and useful to the work of scholars of consumer and material culture. These scholars too, have in the past decade given increased attention to women in their roles as workers, housewives and consumers. Among the leading works are those by Harootunian (2000); Tipton (2000; 2002a, 2008; 2013); Weisenfeld (2009); Francks (2011); Nickerson (2011); Gordon (2012a); Young (2013) and Usui (2014). To this considerable assortment of new multidisciplinary research, one can add the analysis of women's changing image and role in 1930's *josei eiga* (women's films) made by High (2003), Wada-Marciano (2008) and Russell (2008). While most of these latter academics have focused on the nature of Japanese "modernity" in general, the cumulative effect of their work has been to provide a much enhanced understanding of the extent to which urbanized women in the major cities truly embraced what will be termed here a "*yōfuku*-fashion based *nijū seikatsu.*" The expression adapted by the author in this reading is derived from the broader notion of a dual Japanese and Western lifestyle (literally *nijū seikatsu*); one built around a combination of a traditional Japanese home and a western-influenced working or leisure life. As used in this study, a "*yōfuku*-fashion based *nijū seikatsu*" denotes an active desire to adopt a lifestyle in which western-style clothing, accessories, makeup and hairstyles are worn on frequent occasions and where shopping and dining activities in western-style environments are a regular activity, but without any explicit rejection of kimono and other everyday customs and traditions. As such it can be seen as a more practical, body-centered and female-oriented version of the so-called *bunka seikatsu,* an upper-class intellectual movement beginning in the 1920s which held that western goods and materials, especially for the home had the ability to improve family life and

create a more educated and culturally rich lifestyle (Kashiwagi 2000: 68; Ishii 2005: 4).

Despite the great strides represented by the publications listed above, the nature and parameters of Japanese women's growing aspiration for alternative expressions of identity through the active and visible consumption of western clothing and goods, i.e., "shopping," is one that sometimes eludes academic disciplines. Indeed operating in different academic fields and using quite divergent sources for their work, some of the scholars listed earlier have not always been familiar with each other's work. This is clearly less true of the most recent publications, especially those by Tipton (2013), Gordon (2012a) and Nickerson, all of which make use of an impressive range of primary and secondary sources. Nevertheless, a case can be made for further efforts at even greater integration of academic disciplines in order to more systematically and accurately assess when, how and to what degree, urbanized middle-class Japanese women, especially those in Tokyo, adopted a modern consumer-oriented lifestyle built around shopping as a leisure activity. Evidence for the existence of this kind of lifestyle, is explored below through an interdisciplinary approach. This approach, while still taking cues from the work and viewpoint of feminist scholars, relies more heavily on evidence and data about women's consumption and behavior gleaned from the research of the material culture, business and economic historians, both western and Japanese, mentioned earlier. To these new secondary works, the author adds some new Japanese language scholarship in the area of business history; a systematic examination of photographic images from printed archival sources (especially magazines and advertisements) and images and scenes from every existent 1930's movie featuring characters wearing *yōfuku* or engaged in urban shopping or dining. These are evaluated with a view to assessing exactly when and why urban Japan, and especially Tokyo, saw the birth of a truly modern and female-driven consumer culture built around both shopping for cosmetics and western-influenced clothing and promenading and dining in public spaces, especially department stores.

Meisen kimono and the early origins of women's non-traditional dress and hairstyles in urban Japan, 1920-29

In a recent article, economic historian Francks concludes that through the period of Japanese economic growth and industrialization from the eighteenth century to World War II, the kimono outfits that most women continued to wear were subject to a process of change that can only be understood as "fashion." She further argues that this was possible without mass-produced ready to wear western clothing, although the latter is widely regarded by fashion scholars as being a prerequisite for the existence of a fashion-based consumer culture (Francks 2011: 4, 19). Considerable evidence to support her view is provided by business historian Yamauchi (2014) whose research strongly suggests that *meisen* kimono, made from inexpensive pre-dyed silk, had by the late 1920s, become Japan's first clearly identifiable fashion clothing item. Adopted as a school uniform by Gakushuin high school before World War I and spreading to other Tokyo schools in the early 1920s, *meisen* kimono underwent a transformation from an unglamorous home-clothing option that was somewhat preferable to cotton or linen, to a fashionable "walking dress," in just a decade. The initial reason for this was a conscious effort by depression-hit department stores in urban areas to carry cheaper goods, leading to retail competition that lowered prices drastically. This allowed domestic *meisen* to begin competing with imported muslim wool and within a few years, (in part as a result of the government's post-earthquake decision to place additional tariffs on imported wool) it's price had dropped below its rival (Yamauchi 2014: 302-09).

Meisen received an additional boost from the mid-1920s when department stores such as Daimaru in Osaka and Mitsukoshi in Tokyo started to make their own kimono and hired designers to make increasingly

colorful and artistic patterns (Van Ashe 2000: 197). Draped on mannequins and available through mail order, these patterns would soon include Art Nouveau motifs among others. This gave the garment an element of western modernity, despite most designs in fact being re-workings of classic Japanese images. By 1929, *Shufu no tomo* was carrying advertisements for *meisen* kimono featuring movie actresses, and a survey a year later found that around half of the women walking in the Ginza wore the garment. The study also found that it was especially popular with waitresses and telephone operators thus making it the first fashion garment in Japan to be affordable by non-elites. *Meisen*'s overall popularity with the urban middle-class would reach a peak in the years 1930-35 but declined rapidly as the more affluent segments of this demographic increasingly chose to buy or make their own *yōfuku* (Wada: 10).

In addition to *meisen* kimono, the post earthquake decade saw many Kantō-based women also turning to the simple loose-fitting *appappa* dress, an easily sewn plain one-piece that had originated in the late 1920s among the working class of Osaka (Nickerson 2011: 25-6). This garment, while never regarded as anything but functional, would be widely adopted as substitute for *yukata* on especially hot days. While hardly a "modern" garment, the record-setting heat of 1929 led this dress to become the default summer style for urban women under thirty, thus adding another non-traditional *yōfuku*-type item to the wardrobe of the average urban woman and further necessitating the use of western drawers which could be bought or made at home (Gordon 2012a: 90, 123; Nanoka's Crafts Weblog: 2010; Shashin Life 2011; Stevens 1996: 168). It is also highly likely that the lack of running water and bathroom facilities after the earthquake led some women to take the still drastic move of cutting their hair to a more manageable shoulder length, an action encouraged in a *Shufu no tomo* article just months before the earthquake (Sato 2000: 147; Slade: 124).

Coincidently the earthquake occurred just a year after the launch of a campaign by Shiseido, under the co-direction of American hair stylist Helen Grossman, to promote a variety of new approaches to hairstyling, most notably the covered ears or *mimi-kakushi* style. Within just a few years, significant numbers of women had began to replace the traditional bundled *sōku-hatsu* style with a westernized asymmetrical *yō-hatsu* style based on this style, a decision that was doubtless influenced by the almost universal adoption of the style by silent movie actresses. The fact that experts deemed this style to be suitable for both *wafuku* and *yōfuku* was another likely factor in this transformation and over the next decade, it would be adopted by a significant percentage of urbanized women. Despite its wide availability, however few women in this decade were daring enough to take on the Hollywood-style bob (*danpatsu*). This boyish style and the even more radical permanent would, during these early Showa years, be largely the preserve of those in the entertainment industry and a small number of *moga* (Usui: 55; Sato 2003: 55). As will be seen, however, it's adoption, first by Mitsukoshi department store's human mannequin girls and later by their elegant *yōfuku*-wearing Shiseido counterparts would make it a symbol of mid-1930s *nijū seikatsu* modernity and attract a new class of shoppers to the *depaato* (department stores).

The role of uniforms and magazine advice in the early adoption of *yōfuku-style* clothing and accessories, 1930-34

Outside of the *appappa*, the spread of *yōfuku* in this period was still largely confined to uniforms, especially western-influenced sailor attire, which was adopted in some elite secondary schools after 1919. During this same period, numerous companies, stores, hospitals and schools began to embrace the use of uniforms for the growing number of *shokugyo fujin* (working women) who were hired as office clerks, department sales women, switchboard operators, stenographers, nurses and primary school teachers. While most of these wore relatively plain dark uniforms, the beige dresses and white collars of the so-

called *basugaru* (who collected tickets on the Tokyo Motorbus) and the chiffon dresses of department store "mannequin girls" exhibited an element of upper-class style, that would have been highly attractive to lower-middle and middle-class women and may well have spurred interest in the wearing of *yōfuku* outside work (Tipton 2013: 23). The growing ubiquity of such uniforms, especially school uniform, was of course a spur to increased enrolment in sewing schools such as Bunka saiho jogakuin and Sugino as well as to ownership of, or access to, a sewing machine (*misshin*). Since almost all uniforms would have to be sewn at home, sewing skills were essential to women of almost all social classes.

As Gordon has shown, Japanese women in these early Showa years were the world's most enthusiastic adopters of a home-based sewing culture with almost every urban housewife aspiring to own a Singer or domestically-made sewing machine (*misshin*). Indeed while hand sewing was the default, around 3-4% of households were owners of a domestic or Singer model despite the high purchase cost, and these would often be shared among relatives and friends (Gordon 2012b: 10). Many of these women too, would become piece-rate workers or make some extra money by sewing for others. In most cases, women turned to magazines for sewing patterns as well as for advice about skirt lengths, making and matching shawls and converting unused kimono into *yōfuku*. Practical advice (*jitsuyō kiji*) and the promotion of products related to the household, increasingly became the central content of mass-circulation women's magazines such as *Shufu no tomo* and *Fujin kurabu* (Frederick 2006: 114; Silverberg 2006: 65). These magazines, which were often as long as 500 pages, had a collective circulation of over a million by the late 1920s (Usui 2014: 51). Unlike earlier magazines such as *Josei*, which were aimed squarely at the upper middle-class "new women," (including full time housewives), the bulk of the readership were members of the new lower-middle class, especially office clerks and sales staff. Increasingly from 1930, they would also include *jokyū* (café waitresses), the second most common job for women among non-factory workers (over 100,000 by mid-decade) and even some of the more experienced and higher paid textile workers who benefited from the economic recovery that began at this time (Kusakabe: 32; Tipton 2000: 122). While few of these were in a position to buy any middle-class goods, they could at least sew a *meisen* kimono or uniform (Inoue 2006: 117; Hunter 2003: 276-77; Gordon 2012b: 7). More importantly, together with their middle class counterparts (the so-called *shinchūkansō)* they would adopt and internalize the magazines' promotion of sewing skills as a societal norm, much as American and European women of the same age had already done. Increasingly, too, as will be seen below, they could aspire to purchase accessories and cosmetics, which when worn with these hand-made non-traditional garments, would take on some of aspects of an identity-shaping "fashion," thus giving them a modest but significant place in the middle-class, female-driven consumer culture that emerged in the mid-1930s (Gordon 2012a: 123-4, 135; Sato 2003: 87, 104).

Cosmetics and the Ginza department store as twin agents in the "making of the modern Japanese shopper," 1928-35

In her *Shopping for Pleasure*, Rappaport (2001) argues that shopping emerged as a liberating social experience for middle class female Londoners in the late Victorian period. Spending several hours together in public spaces in central London, these new bourgeois consumers were able to add a new dimension to their feminine identity. Peiss (1998), examining women shoppers in New York's "Ladies Mile," in the same era emphasizes the promenading aspects of window shopping and browsing, pointing to the role of show windows, strategically placed mirrors and the rapid refinement of restaurants and restrooms. Such shopping trips were often followed or preceded by matinee movies and visits to beauty salons and cafés. These new urban shoppers were also regular consumers of women's magazines, most notably *Ladies Home*

Journal that catered to the same demographic as *Shufu no tomo*. It should be noted, however, that even in the U.S., ready to wear clothing was still out of the reach of all but the wealthy until the mid-1930s and that very few of these consumers would have returned from their shopping trips with an entire clothing outfit. While this was of course true for the vast majority of even middle-class consumers in urban Japan, it is equally clear that middle-class Ginza shoppers of the mid-1930s were not in fact far behind their New York counterparts when it came to the sophistication of the overall clothes-shopping experience available to them.

After the earthquake, department stores in Tokyo that had largely catered to an upper class clientele, began to target middle-class shoppers in order to compete with the lower prices charged by railway terminal retail outlets (Moeran 1998: 163-64). By the mid-1920s, most of these larger stores had begun to designate certain lower floors for less affluent shoppers and to market lower-priced clothing, especially *meisen* kimono. In part because of the opening of suburban train lines, special store-bound bus services and the increased size and quality of their cafeterias and bathroom facilities, these efforts would have a significant impact in the early 1930s. By this time too, almost all *depaato* had adopted glass window displays outside the store and opened restaurants with western-style tables and menus in which customers could eat without taking off their shoes or coats. The latter innovation was of course partly an imitation of the modern style of dining that mostly male customers were able to enjoy in the area's leading cafes, such as Café Lion (Tipton 2013: 121-23). While a majority of the customers in *depaato* restaurants were from the upper-middle classes, by the early to mid-1930s, the better paid segments of the new *shokugyo fujin* demographic would have been in a position to enjoy this form of leisure, as indeed would some of the fashionable *jokyū* café waitresses themselves. Wajiro Kon made careful note of this new class of shoppers in a 1930 study, contrasting their behavior with the upper-class women shopping on the higher floors. The former, he wrote, would grab several new kimono and rush to a mirror, soliciting comments from friends, relatives or even husbands (Silverberg 2006: 43; Ooka 2009: 7). While kimono purchases would have been by mail-order, other items, notably western drawers (which were rapidly replacing traditional *koshimaki* underwear), and other accessories could have been paid for and taken home directly, even by these less wealthy women (Inoue 2002: 30-40). Perhaps the most important product for those striving for an upper-middle class status, however, were cosmetics and other beauty products, both imported and domestically made. Face creams and hair tonics in particular, were advertized relentlessly in women's magazines, some of which also carried advice on how cosmetics could please their otherwise wondering husbands (Tanaka 2011: 131). It would be the scrutiny, inspection and visual enjoyment of these items, sometimes in the form of beauty instruction events, that would in fact come to define the mid-1930s shopping experience for women aspiring to a *nijū seikatsu*.

Recent work by Weisenfeld, Nickerson and Usui have greatly enhanced our understanding not only of the origins of Japanese women's devotion to the transformational qualities and power of cosmetics, but of the origins of modern shopping in interwar Japan. Nickerson in particular argues that the consumption of brand cosmetics played a significant role in the "making of the modern Japanese woman." She also shows how Takashimaya's adoption of an idea by pioneer beautician Yamano Chieko to use three human mannequins (wearing kimono) in what can be described as an early fashion show in 1928, would become a primary vehicle for bringing women into the department stores that sold these products (Nickerson 2011: 121-23). Stories of visitors (including a member of the royal family) being surprised to see human mannequins, some of whom were well known actresses, naturally led to an increase in interest in *depaato* shopping (Mukashi no yosōi 2013). Once inside, regardless of their limited ability to afford imported goods,

these new customers could be exposed to a range of premium cosmetic products, both domestic and imported, the qualities of which were explained by immaculately uniformed shop girls (Tipton 2013: 31). While most of these were expensive and initially targeted at upper class women in traditional kimono, their attractive displays, especially those by Shiseido, could and did attract younger and less affluent consumers. Some of these doubtless then went to local outlets to buy less expensive products, but would thereafter become potential consumers for the more overtly western-style brands.

While the use of "models" was obviously an effective way of promoting browsing in *depaato*, it would be innovations by pioneering beauty products maker Shiseido and its innovative second president Fukuhara Shinzo that would come to define the upper middle-class woman's shopping and consumption-based lifestyle in the early 1930s. Both Nickerson and Weisenfeld have given much overdue attention to the life and impact of Fukuhara, the son of the founder of Shiseido (Nickerson: 101-04; Weisenfeld 2009). After graduating in pharmacy from Columbia University in 1912, Fukuhara spent time immersed in the art world in Paris, returning to Japan with the intention of turning his father's pharmaceutical company into a luxury cosmetics brand that would use modern advertising to promote western cosmetics for both traditionally and modern dressed Japanese women. He would also use his knowledge of photography and design to locate and employ some of the most talented young artists in Japan and help develop the Art Nouveau-influenced advertising and graphic design motifs that would distinguish it from all of its competitors.

The key product for Shiseido, and one that would be of prime importance to the so-called *moga* of the mid-1920s was face powder. Prior to the company's emergence as a cosmetic powerhouse, the white powder business was dominated by two brands, *Kurabu* and *Reito* (Ishii 2005: 2). Magazine advertisements for these products invariably featured upper-class women in kimono and traditional hairstyles (Usui 2014: 56) and lacked appeal for younger elite women consumers. The product that would launch Shiseido's image with these women and later with younger *moga*, was its Rainbow Face Powder. Released in 1917, a year when consumption of low-priced domestic cosmetics were rapidly increasing among middle-class women, the product attracted widespread attention to its beautiful eight-sided box featuring the camellia blossom, the company's logo (Nickerson 2011: 102; Schenking 2013: 149). Sold at the redesigned Ginza store, this premium powder allowed the company to rebrand itself as a cosmetics company for the younger westernized elite. It was 1932's "Modern Color" face powder, however, that would solidify its image as the prime purveyor of *nijū seikatsu* consumer products. The release of this range of tinted color powders designed by Amano Ayao and packaged in an egg-shaped box featuring a *moga* illustration on the lid, was followed by the company's decision to sell a range of soap products ("Shiseido Ginza Soaps") at a considerably lower price than its other cosmetics and to begin holding beauty demonstrations (Nickerson 2011: 103; Weisenfeld 2009). This line, one that could appeal to the new demographic of working women who were already consuming cheaper products, was promoted by another innovation, the use of a group of "models" called "Parasol Girls". Wearing light colored chiffon dresses and walking up and down the Ginza, this early PR stunt would lead directly to the company's formation of the legendary "Shiseido Girls" in 1934, fronted by 26-year old mannequin girl Komai Reiko. Komai, like the eight others selected from a large pool of mostly upper-class applicants was chosen for her embodiment of health, beauty and the ability to wear western clothing confidently and with an upper-class bearing while still retaining a sense of unthreatening Japanese femininity (Nickerson 2011: 122-23).

Making their debut in April 1934 in Takashimaya's Osaka store after intensive training by Komai, the Shiseido Girls put on three 80-minute beauty demonstrations and dance performances every day. Sporting a range of outfits designed by their leader (the most common of which was a light-colored dress, around

10cm above the ankle with a ruffled collar), the troupe members would then give individual consultations to women on how to use the company's new cold creams and powders. So successful were these events that in 1935 Shiseido set up mobile beauty salons *(biyō idō salon)* that visited smaller cities and towns often giving demonstrations to graduating high schools seniors (Usui 2014: 59). Through their very personas these "smart, confident, professional" women, with their *yōfuku*, permed hair accessories and makeup, exposed hundreds of thousands of small and medium size town women to the full range of personal consumer items that until 1935, had been the preserve of a small number of upper-middle class Tokyo residents (Nickerson 2011: 123-27). Featured in the company's elegant *Shiseido Graph* magazine, these early beauty consultants would become inextricably linked with the consumer and lifestyle fantasies of the growing numbers of women who, beginning in 1935, would make the Ginza into a world leader in almost every aspect of female driven consumer and leisure-based modernity. The district's unique role would be further reinforced with the opening of the Takarazuka Revue Company's first theater in Tokyo on January 1, 1934. Built next to the upscale Imperial Hotel in Ginza-adjacent Hibiya, the theater would become synonymous with modernity and fashion, as symbolized by a staged photo sequence in the company's magazine in November 1936. The stylish image featured three troupe members "in the school uniform of olive green hakama...looking in the shop windows [and] mingling with...ladies in conventional kimono" while a group of sailor-uniform-clad schoolgirls look on with interest. With several of their plays being set in Paris ("Parisette," 1930 and "Rose Paris," 1931) or Manhattan ("New York" 1933, "Manhattan Rhythm," 1937), the troupe, would by the mid-1930s, became synonymous with *moga*-type *yōfuku* and the fantasy of a shopping-based fashionable Parisian lifestyle (Yamanashi, 2014: 6-7).

Shopping and Fashion in mid-1930s Japanese Movies: Documentary" evidence or fiction?

The recent gender-focused social history and material culture scholarship cited earlier—with its use of primary sources and contemporary photographic images—provides us with at least a partial window into the world of the interwar Ginza shopping experience for middle class women. Yet despite the existence of a highly developed mass media and rich magazine culture, the social historian of the interwar years is hindered by the lack of photographic and video sources from the interwar years. Especially absent are non-stylized, unposed photos of lower middle-class working women in *meisen* kimono, uniforms, or everyday homemade *yōfuku* engaged in domestic tasks. Even more lacking is documentary film evidence that would allow us to actually see *meisen* or *yōfuku*-clad women shopping or dining in restaurants. Indeed just a handful of documentary clips exist and these are mostly street scenes that offer little that the photographic record does not also show. It is for this reason, that making judicious and careful use of movies from the period can add a dimension to our understanding of what a *yōfuku*-fashion based *nijū seikatsu* may have actually looked like. This, however, raises the issue of the accuracy or validity of such sources, given that the scenes are an artificial creation. As will be suggested, below, a strong argument can be made for giving certain movies considerable credence as sources that, when used to show material culture's impact on behavior, have many of the elements of primary ones. This will be done by examining the only five existing movies made between 1935-37 that feature actresses playing middle and upper-middle class women wearing (or shopping for) *yōfuku* as a routine activity.

Operating on very low budgets and producing a movie (many of them still silent) in as little as two weeks, it is reasonable to begin with the assumption that clothing worn by actresses in early and mid-1930s movies would not usually have been selected by any professional staff at Shochiku, Nikkatsu or

Toho, the three main companies producing the popular movies examined below. Indeed, there are no credits given to a "costume designer" of any kind in the movies discussed below until Naruse Mikio's 1937 drama, *Shukujo wa nani o wasureta ka* (What did the Lady Forget). In addition, when the motives of the directors who made several vehicles featuring actresses in *yōfuku*, namely Naruse Mikio, Ozu Yasujirō and Shimazu Yasujirō, are considered, there is no compelling reason to believe that these cinematic auteurs of the key *shoshimin geki* ("slice of life" dramas) and *josei eiga* (women's films) of the 1930s would purposely choose clothing styles that were unnatural or overly elaborate. Indeed it is entirely possible that they left costuming decisions to the actresses themselves or to their assistants, thus making their 1930s movies a potentially useful source for the material culture, fashion and consumer historian and arguably even for those focusing on interwar women's roles and identity construction.

Movie production by the major Japanese studios had reached into the hundreds by the mid-1930s giving Tokyoites in particular, a choice of several new releases every week. Cinema attendance in Tokyo, while well below the American equivalent in the 1930s, averaged around one movie a month overall, which would suggest a figure closer to two or three for young women. With entrance prices being around the cost of a coffee in a café and prices for local films being lower than that of western ones, an overwhelming majority of urban women would have been familiar with the leading actresses of the day (Salomon 2004: 154; Freiberg 1987: 78). While only a small number of the latter specialized in roles in which *yōfuku* was common, many of the most well-known performers, most notably Tanaka Kuniyo, Irie Takako, Date Satoko and Chiba Sachiko were routinely seen in both *yōfuku* and *wafuku*. As such the contents of and contexts for their movie outfits are a useful resource, especially given the extent to which everyday lifestyle trends born in modernized post-earthquake Tokyo had already shaped women's consumption patterns and preferences by the mid-1930s.

In her discussion of interwar *gendai geki* (contemporary dramas) especially those of Ozu Yasujirô, Wada-Marciano argues that not only was the capital city's post-quake middle-class modernity imbedded in these vehicles, but "the films themselves shaped the image of Tokyo in the popular imaginary and provided space for imagining urban life and community" (2008: 42). An evocative description of this same middle-class gendered consumption was given by the social critic Gonda Yasunosuke who wrote of Ginza women "in short bobbed hair [and] darkened lipstick...dressed up in flashily designed kimono like the apparel of café waitresses." These women he added, "adore American actresses with whom they have become intimate at the movies" (Harootunian 2007: 171-2). While actresses such as Claudette Colbert (whose "*It Happened One Night*" was a favorite of Ozu) may well have been idolized, it seems likely that it was the westernized Japanese actresses with whom this new social class could best identify. Among the reasons for this was the female audience's ambivalence as to the suitability of the Japanese physique for *yōfuku*. To this was added an understandable fear of the underlying negative societal attitudes towards fashions perceived as embodying sexuality or indeed that simply revealed the shape of the body. These reservations and fears would of course grow in the years immediately before the war as the central government began to clamp down on western manifestations in general. In the early to middle 1930s, however, a veritable explosion of new actresses and entertainers brought western fashions, many worn outside the context of uniform, directly into the lives of hundreds of thousands of women.

Depaato shopping and dining in the 1937 *josei eiga* works of Shimazu Yasujirō, Naruse Miko, Osamu Shimizu and Ozu Yasujirō

Before any examination of *yōfuku* fashions and shopping outings found in late 1930's *josei eiga* (women's

movies), it should be noted that even in the works of the pioneering directors under discussion, the vast majority of the female characters are in kimono and there are few, if any, shopping scenes. Additionally, while there were a number of movies (most notably *Tonari no Yae-chan* (Our Neighbor, Miss Yae), 1934 and *Jinsei no onimotsu* (Burden of Life) 1935, that featured a woman in *yōfuku* in movies made prior to 1937, none of these popular works featured a lead actress who engages in any kind of modern shopping trip or whose western clothing is portrayed as being routine or unremarkable. In this year Japanese studios produced over 500 movies, several of which featured leading characters shopping in western outfits. The most influential and representative of these, are discussed below with a view to assessing the extent to which the shopping experiences of the women in *yōfuku* or modern kimono styles that appear in these vehicles can give insights into the consumer-based identity and modern values embodied by their wearers.

Obviously influenced by Hollywood comedies of the day especially those by Ernst Lubitsch, *Konyaku sanba gurasu* (The Trio's Engagement), Shimazu Yasujirō's lighthearted 1937 comedy of the Tokyo bourgeoisie's manners, revolves around the efforts of three employees of a textile company to win the affections of the boss' immaculately dressed daughter (Takamine Mieko). Although she wears a modern kimono in some scenes, the lead character dons expensive looking tight-waisted dresses, heels and delicate hats in most of her scenes in Ginza. One of the lengthiest of these, set in the boss' department store display area, was in fact shot in the Kanebo Service Station, a mid-Ginza exhibition area set up by the beauty goods company in December 1935 to showcase the work of the innovative designer Tanaka Chiyo. This sumptuously configured space, featuring highly stylized mannequins in western gowns, dresses and accessories immediately attracted the most fashionable Tokyo elite including movie stars such as Irie Takako and Takamine herself. The latter chose to wear some of these elegant designs in the movie, making this Shichoku vehicle perhaps the first ever in Japan to feature a (non-kimono) costume designer (Nickerson: 159; Nishimura: 115-17). While no purchases are actually made by the lead actress, the movie does include kimono and *yōfuku*-wearing women looking at merchandise. Indeed the *nijū seikatsu* shopping routine of the boss' daughter is taken for granted by those around her and there is no hint of any tension between her kimono and *yōfuku*-wearing identities or persona.

Opening in the same month as *Konyaku sanba gurasu*, the two-part Naruse movie, *Kafuku* (Learn from Experience I and II) is based on a Kan Kikuchi novel. This combined three-hour drama centering on a love triangle among twenty-something Tokyo elites, featured 26 year-old actress Irie Takako, already well known for appearing as a *moga* in some earlier silent movies. As Catherine Russell points out, the movie uses clothing as a key motif with the first encounter between Toyomi (Irie) in kimono and her upper class *yōfuku*-wearing rival Yurie (Taehisa Chieko) taking place in a Ginza clothing store. Part II of the movie features a continuous display of the latest fashions including "an excessive array of collars, belts, ribbons, hats, printed dresses and wide-striped suit jackets" (Russell: 125). While the image of a *yōfuku-wafuku* pair strolling, shopping or chatting together is one that can be seen in some earlier movies, here it is integral to many of the key scenes, including a walk through Ueno Park in which we get a clear look at the two women and their clothing, side by side. Women's images in Naruse's two-part portrayal of life among the Ginza bourgeoisie are obviously highly stylized in a manner not unlike American movies (aimed at women in the same era. At the same time, however, there are no credits given to any costume designer and it seems likely that the entirely *yōfuku* clothing styles worn by every character except Toyomi, were ones bought by staff in the leading department stores or chosen by the actresses themselves. While the extreme ostentatiousness of the characters and their almost totally western lifestyles may not have been an accurate portrayal even of the Ginza elite, the manner in which the interchangeability of western and traditional

dress is presented, does not seem forced. An extraordinarily prolific director, Naruse directed at least four movies every year in the mid-1930s. In *Nadare* (Avalanche), the perceptive auteur put the *moga* living a *nijū seikatsu* squarely at the center of the story. The story of an upper middle-class man, Goro, who loses interest in his kimono-wearing demure wife and goes back to his first love Yayoi, the movie includes scenes in a plush *depaato* restaurant, a night club with a live band and a clothing and accessory shop where the protagonist buys an expensive looking handbag as a present. Yayoi is never seen in anything but the most fashionable *yōfuku*, high heels, hats and veils and lives in an apartment with western furniture (Russell



Figure 1 Department store in *Konyaku sanba gurasu* (Dir. Shimazu Yasujirō, 1937)

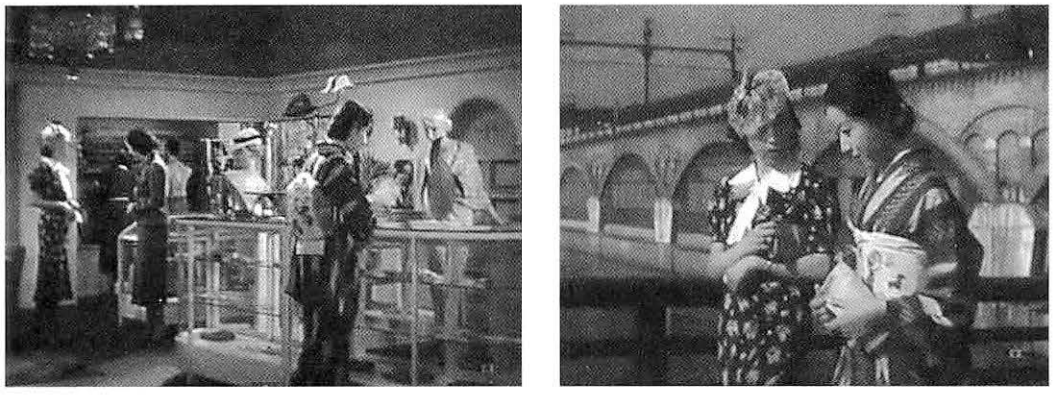


Figure 2 Department store and promenading in *Kafuku* (Dir. Naruse, Mikio, 1937)



Figure 3 Fashionable dining in *Nadare* (Dir. Naruse, Mikio, 1937)

2008: 123-34) again suggesting that such lifestyles were in fact real ones for an increasing number of the upper middle class.

Where Naruse and Shimazu focused on the wealthiest members of Tokyo society, Shimizu's largely unknown *Shirobara wa sakedo* (White Roses Bloom but...) gives aristocratic Irie Takako the role of a lonely love-shy Ginza seamstress Atsuko, whose job is to sew western clothes for precisely the types of characters seen in *Kafuku*. Although only a seamstress, she and her *depaato* mannequin rival for the affections of her love interest, both wear a number of western outfits (designed by Tanaka Chiyo) and scenes include the main character walking in the most fashionable areas of Ginza. While shopping scenes are restricted to the clothing shop where Irie works, the desire for, and consumption of, *yōfuku* is a default mode for the types of female customers with whom Irie interacts. In addition to scenes in the shop, Irie is seen watching couples in an amusement park and going to a dance hall with her love interest. The movie culminates in a fashion show in the *depaato* for whom Irie supplies dresses and her rivals' selection of her lovingly-sewn wedding dress. While the movie has a sad ending and was not a hit, it is an almost perfect encapsulation of the promise embodied in the modern fashion-based *nijū seikatsu* Ginza lifestyle and can be deemed as akin to a primary source in visual terms.

Released at the end of 1937, Ozu's *Shukujo wa nani o wasureta ka* (What did the Lady Forget) has no shopping scenes and almost all of its female characters, except the lead, are in kimono. Despite this, Ozu's movie belongs with the other movies discussed here because of its focus on *yōfuku*-wearing Setsuko (Kuwano Michiko) the spoiled 16-year old niece of an affluent doctor visiting her uncle in Tokyo. A light Lubitsch-like social satire, Setsuko, smokes, reads movie magazines and wears only western outfits and high heels while attempting to cajole her henpecked uncle into becoming more assertive with his wife. With only kimono-wearing women in her scenes, her modernity seems somewhat novel compared with the other movies examined. Yet as Ozu scholar Joo points out in his discussion of director's films of everyday life, even the mostly *meisen* kimono wearing characters make shopping, fashion and food their main topics when chatting (and smoking) together (Joo 2011: 232-33). The movie is also the first one featuring an actress in western clothing to have a costume designer credit and boasts a thoroughly modern comedic banter between the women.

Discussion

Taken together 1937's *Konyaku sanba gurasu, Kafuku, Shirobara wa sakedo* as well as *Shukujo wa nani o wasureta ka*, reflect a world in which shopping and the consumption of yōfuku are the default leisure activities for Tokyo women of their social class. Made in a matter of weeks and clearly based on the reality that the directors or writers saw around them rather than any fantasy world that night require specially -made costumes, the movies can be seen as a reasonably accurate indicator of the degree to which the *nijū seikatsu* had penetrated modern Japan's middle and upper middle classes. While political scientists think of 1937 as a year in which domestic and military events were beginning to move Japan in a militaristic and imperialist direction, such issues could hardly have seemed more irrelevant to the types of women who appear in these stories and who could be seen on the streets of urban Japan in that year. No matter how it is measured, the period 1935-7 saw almost every quantifiable indicator of western-style modernity and the consumption of leisure-related services and goods rise at a rate that startled many commentators (Sansom 1937: 104-07).

Extrapolating from statistics provided by women's labor historian Nagy (1991: 201-04), it would be

reasonable to assume that Tokyo, with around a third of its population of two million residents being in in the middle class, was home to close to a hundred thousand women working in white collar jobs that paid enough to allow for some discretionary shopping on clothing and other fashion-related goods discussed earlier. Indeed by the time the *josei eiga* discussed here were released, perhaps half of working women in Tokyo were wearing western clothing of some kind (usually uniforms) on a regular basis, while many others could be seen in *appappa* on hot days. Thus if female students are included, one could extrapolate that on any given summer day in 1937, over half the girls or women who could be seen on the streets of the more affluent areas of Tokyo, and most certainly near the Ginza shops, would have been in non-Japanese clothing of some kind (Gordon 2012a: 122; Sato 2003: 49, 182; Mukashi no yosoi 2013). In most cases these would be self-sewn dresses (under which would be western-style underwear), with makeup and accessories being the norm rather than the exception. It should of course be remembered, that the percentage for non-urban residents would have been a fraction of this ratio and that *wafuku* remained the default dress of housewives and older women even in the large cities. Nevertheless, the extent to which western-style clothing and accessories had permeated Tokyo's urbanized middle-class was remarkable given the situation just five years earlier.

While the late 1930's period is outside the scope of this study, there is considerable reason to believe that most middle-class women largely ignored the efforts made by government-sponsored nationalist organizations, most notably 1937's National Spiritual Mobilization Campaign (*kokumin seishin sodōin undō*) to pressure women into more restrained modes of leisure and consumption. Indeed as Silverberg (2007: 76) and Atkins (2001: 140-41) suggest, there is almost no evidence for any significant change in the overall leisure-based behavior of urban women, while Tipton notes that a 1939 frugality campaign in the Ginza in which women and children were mobilized to reprimand women in "dresses and kimonos...cosmetics and permanent waves" for their wastefulness, proved to be almost entirely ineffectual (2002a: 135). An examination of movies released after the Film Law of 1939 banned frivolous or sexually-oriented content does indeed show a noticeable drop in the ubiquity of *yōfuku*-wearing characters, especially upper-middle class bourgeois consumers. Yet, even after its passage, light-hearted productions such as Hiroshi Shimizu's *Nobuko* (1940) and *Kanzashi* (Ornamental Hairpin) and Chiba Yasuki's *Hideko no Oendansho* (Hideko the Cheerleader) continued to feature women in some kind of *yōfuku*, though mostly modest and unglamorous compared to those examined earlier.

It is of course understandable that the various efforts to encourage nationalism and promote Japanese over western cultural expressions would have intimidated some women and possibly curtailed their willingness to shop for and wear *yōfuku* fashions in the late 1930s. Yet the actual record suggests that this may not in fact have been of much significance at first, indeed Gordon cites figures showing a steady increase in hair salons (2012b: 23) a good indicator of a continued adherence to fashion-related shopping and lifestyles. Finally too, Nickerson quotes the results of interviews with readers in the magazine *Fujin gahō* which, while finding that almost all women preferred kimono for everyday wear (*fundangi*), noted that upper class women were still wearing *yōfuku* on a regular basis (Nickerson: 41-2). Given this limited but important evidence for the continuation of the modes of behavior outlined in this study, there is good reason to believe that by the mid to late 1930's, the fashion-related shopping and consumption patterns lifestyle embodied by Tokyo middle-class woman, had permeated the collective female consciousness to a very high degree. When one further considers that these were the women whose lifestyles their contemporaries in smaller cities aspired to, the mid-1930s consolidation of the kind of modern identity that was inherent in a *yōfuku*-fashion based *nijū seikatsu* is highly significant for any understanding of women's

behavior both during and after the war, especially in the area of clothing and fashion-based identity.

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