

PACKAGED WEDDINGS, PACKAGED BRIDES:

THE JAPANESE CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is concerned with the Japanese Ceremonial Occasions industry, and in particular with contemporary Japanese weddings which are viewed as commercialized productions for a highly consumerist society. The study is mainly based on anthropological fieldwork conducted in an urban wedding parlour. The perspective offered diverges from those of previous studies in that its focus is on weddings, rather than marriage, and on the activities of the wedding producers, rather than those of its principal actors.

The thesis shows how both 'traditional' and 'Western' traits found in commercial weddings are manipulated by the Ceremonial Occasions industry which is heavily involved in the 'invention of traditions'. Although such invention has hitherto and elsewhere been analysed in terms of political or national aims, the argument here is that traditions may also be created for economic, or business, purposes. Such a viewpoint enables me to reconsider ways in which Japanese social organization has previously been interpreted both by social anthropologists and by those contributing to what is known as studies of *nihonjinron*.

Another major theme concerns Japanese women. The part women take in maintaining 'traditional' and 'feminine' pursuits such as kimono dressing, is examined against the background of the view of women as 'repositories of the past'. Gender distinctions are also considered in the context of the commercial wedding in which it is mainly women, or brides, who are 'objectified' and 'packaged' by the wedding industry. Another perspective on Japanese women pertains to various kinds of representations of women in the Ceremonial Occasions industry and in Japanese society.

The thesis is also concerned with representation in general - at both practical and metaphorical levels. Photographs and other forms of visual representation are an essential part of the Ceremonial Occasions industry, and may be related to the emphasis on formality and form in general in

Japanese ceremonies and social organization. Wedding representations of all kind are also regarded as part of a 'mirror' to a peculiar thing called 'Japaneseness' which is deliberately devised by the wedding producers and served, carefully packaged, to their customers.

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

All Japanese terms are romanized in the Hepburn system. Macrons indicate long vowels.

Japanese words always appear in *italics*, except in cases of words which have already become part of the English language, such as kimono and obi. Names of cities always appear in their English version.

I follow the Japanese convention for personal names throughout, giving the surname first and given name last. In some cases I have adopted the convention of referring to people by their surnames. The use of given names is limited to such a use by the informants themselves.

I have created pseudonyms for Shōchikuden, Cobella, Princess Palace, and the names of all other companies and persons in the wedding parlour to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the people concerned.

British Pounds equivalents in the text have been calculated at £1 = ¥250, the approximate rate of exchange during my fieldwork.

How Many Stories
in a Wedding dress?
Not Only the bride's.

- Carol Ann Duffy, poet

INTRODUCTION

I first visited Japan in 1984. Among all the memories and impressions I have been carrying with me since that visit, one has always stood out: two kimono clad Japanese women buying coca-cola from a vending machine in front of the national *Bunraku* theatre in Osaka.¹ Then, this image symbolized Japan for me. A country where tradition lives peacefully with modernity; where the 'Western' does not hinder the 'Oriental'. I came back to Japan in 1988 on a Japanese government scholarship, and conducted a research which was initially concerned with these relations and eventually challenged them. How disappointing.

This study is involved in a critical examination of questions concerning terms such as 'traditional', 'Oriental', 'Western' and 'Westernization'. The 'dual' structure of the modern commercial wedding which is one of the main concerns of the study supplies one of the bases for this analysis.

More than 80 per cent of urban Japanese chose to have their weddings in commercial institutions in the late 1980s, early 1990s. About 30 per cent of them had their weddings in wedding parlours, another 40 per cent preferred to have a very similar procedure, though one considered more prestigious, in hotels. The others had comparable style weddings in different commercial facilities. Although this study is mainly about wedding parlour weddings, it does touch on other wedding facilities and discusses the similarities and differences between them, as well as the changes in popularity over the years.

Princess Palace is a modern wedding parlour located in the centre of Kobe, a large busy city in Central Japan. The parlour caters for about a thousand couples a year, although, like other parlours, it has seen a decline in numbers since the mid 1980s. Most of the couples who get married in Kobe Princess Palace are residents of the city, although some may live in nearby towns or in Osaka, a neighbouring larger city. It is hard to delineate a portrait of the people who choose to

marry in Princess Palace. Generally, it is possible to argue that they are part of Japan's large middle class. It is perhaps easier to draw on those who do not marry there. Wedding parlours enjoyed immense popularity from the mid-seventies into the mid-eighties. From that time onwards, they have been losing customers, mainly to hotels. As we will see, the reason for this change is not to be found in a different wedding pattern offered by hotels, since the latter have more or less adopted the pattern previously devised by wedding parlours. Young Japanese and their parents nowadays prefer hotel weddings because they are considered more prestigious. Commercial weddings have always served as a good opportunity for conspicuous display. With the growing affluence of the Japanese, more expensive hotel weddings provide a more impressive décor for such a display. The incentives for choosing the more expensive alternative are however not only financial. The 'quality' of one's guests plays an important role as well. Indeed, a common argument for preferring a hotel wedding is that "certain respectable guests could not possibly be invited to a parlour wedding". This respectability applies to highly positioned businessmen as well as to university professors.

This study is about the modern wedding practice so popular in Japan. It is also about those who initiated that pattern in the first place, and who are presently involved in the production of such weddings. The 'Ceremonial Occasions industry' of the title is the collective name of these producers. The term *kankon sōsai* in Japanese, refers to life cycle events: initiation rites (*kan*), weddings (*kon*), funerals (*sō*), as well as to other festivals (*sai*). However it is mainly used for weddings and funerals. The English term 'Ceremonial Occasions' is in fact the translation used by the industry itself. These so-called organizations were established in post-war Japan and are also known as *gojokai* or 'mutual benefit' associations. They control a large portion of the wedding-funeral business in Japan. The company which owns

the wedding parlour in which I conducted my fieldwork is one of the largest organizations of its kind.

Fieldwork for this study was carried out between April 1989 and July 1991, during which time I worked as a part-time employee in Kobe Princess Palace's beauty shop. The beauty shop is an indispensable part of the new style Comprehensive Wedding Parlour which supplies all services that are in any way related to the wedding. The shop is in charge of making-up and dressing the bride and groom as well as other female wedding participants for the wedding. My work as an assistant dresser gave me a special viewpoint from which to observe weddings and the wedding parlour work. This study is concerned mainly with the 'backstage' of the wedding production, and being a dresser provided me with a perfect spot for this kind of outlook. Moreover, unlike most wedding studies, the study takes the point of view of the 'producers' and not that of those usually considered as 'principals'. Being part of the wedding producers allowed me a better comprehension of their motivations and way of work.

There was another significant consideration for choosing to work at the beauty shop. The beauty shop is involved in creating appearances. Its female workers produce both 'Japanese' and 'Western' brides. Observing the dressers and sharing their work seemed to me a perfect vantage point for investigating the relations between the so-called 'traditional-Japanese' and 'Western'. This position, however, resulted in a slightly unexpected view of both components of the new Japanese wedding, as will be shortly explained.

Not a great deal has been written in English on Japanese weddings. The most recent works are those of Hendry (1981) and Edwards (1989). These studies are, however, very different from each other. Hendry's work while giving valuable and indeed the most complete information about Japanese wedding practices in past and present, is basically a community study, though with marriage as its main concern. Edwards's study, on the other hand, is the closest in its topic and style to my own research as I will shortly explain. Other sources for an

anthropological perspective on Japanese weddings can be found in earlier village or community studies that mention weddings as part of their ethnography. The earliest of this kind of work is the well known research conducted by the Embrees in the late 1930s (Embree 1939). Most other village studies which provide some information about wedding practices are from later periods. Among them are those of Beardsley, Hall and Ward (1959), Norbeck's study of a fishing community (Norbeck 1954), Cornell and Smith's (1956) study of two Japanese villages and a later study of Smith (1978) about the price of progress in Kurusu village. Writings of Western visitors and travellers from earlier periods, although mainly based on rather casual observations, constitute another source for information about wedding practices in pre-war Japan (see among others: Bacon (1975), Bishop (1900), Chamberlain (1902) and Erskine (1925)).

There are, of course, various sources in Japanese concerning wedding practices. Some of them, like that of Tamura (1904) about the Japanese bride, were either translated or initially written for a Western audience. The most comprehensive historical survey in Japanese of wedding practices has been written by Ema (1971). Other sources for related information about various ceremonies, folklore, and changes throughout the years are scholarly works about marriage and weddings (see Kawashima (1954), Minami (1953), Takamura (1963), Omachi (1962), Emori (1986)). Some of these studies are mentioned throughout this thesis. However, I should emphasize that I am not particularly concerned here with surveys of 'traditional' Japanese practices. The best comprehensive source for such a historical survey is Hendry's excellent summary in English of existing materials (1981, see mainly chapter 1). Another source of information about wedding practices and manners related to weddings are Japanese ceremonial occasions manuals (see Fujisaki (1957) and Shiotsuki (1991)).

The most recent, and indeed closest in topic to my research, is Walter Edwards's book on commercial weddings.

Modern Japan Through its Weddings as Edwards decided to term his account of modern Japanese weddings, came out while I was already in Japan conducting my fieldwork in a wedding parlour. Naturally, although happy to see that another anthropologist has found the theme interesting, my first reaction was one of dismay: Couldn't he have waited for a few years?; the second, of bewilderment: What should I do now? Edwards conducted his fieldwork in a wedding parlour, which, although located in a different environment from the one in which I was studying (a provincial centre as opposed to a large city), was very similar in its organization and its 'products' (weddings). But, after carefully reading Edwards's account, I decided to pursue my research.

Apart from the few disagreements which I have with Edwards's analysis of the wedding (for which, I have to admit, I zealously searched), the main reason for my initial decision was the difference in our fieldwork experiences which seemed to advance a different analytical perspective. Edwards carried out his fieldwork mainly as a reception worker (Edwards 1989:10), and by observing receptions. By contrast, although I did watch several receptions from behind a curtain, the focus of my fieldwork was on the beauty shop which prepares wedding participants' appearances. I believe that the different viewpoints we gained thereby have influenced the analytical perspectives that we have finally pursued. Edwards's observation of wedding receptions has given rise to his emphasis on 'performance' ('front stage'), while my laborious work in preparing brides and other female participants has ended up in highlighting 'production' ('backstage'). From his focus on the couple as 'principals' emerged his view of the wedding as a 'ritual', or rather 'rite of passage'. From my focus on them as 'customers', I developed my view of them as 'objects'. Following his 'rite of passage' idea, Edwards also went on to elaborate on gender and person in Japanese society. Following my 'production' view I have gone on to develop ideas about the 'bride as a product' or a 'commodity' which I then develop into ideas about consumerism

in Japanese society. Considering all these points, as well as the 'female' perspective which I have gained through my work at the beauty shop, I think that my adopting of the producers' rather than the customers' point of view is in many ways complementary to Edwards's analysis.

I hope, of course, that this thesis is more than merely complementary - for that is the main theme that Edwards has emphasized in his discussion of marriage which he sees as the inevitable match between incomplete man and woman, whose deficiencies are complementary. However, I am concerned not with marriage, but with weddings. On that point, our discussions diverge. Edwards who is concerned with marriage, looks into the contents of the wedding in order to fulfil his "ultimate aim... to explore values that define what it means to be a person in Japanese society" (1989:10). I, on the other hand, look at weddings and their production, and accordingly, see the wedding as a container of forms (and not of meaningful contents). Moreover, I see these *forms*, or representations, as I will later call them, as deliberately produced and promoted by a financially interested wedding industry.

I have outlined above some of the discrepancies and disagreement between my own research and the work of Edwards. While doing so, I have also mentioned several points which characterize my particular perspective. Some of these deserve more attention and I will come back to discuss them before this Introduction is complete. There is, however, one more significant point in which my approach diverges not only from that of Edwards but indeed from many other wedding studies, among them most of those mentioned above. Most wedding studies are interested in 'continuity', and thus tend to explain present wedding practices as products of the emulation of the old commoner classes of customs of the warrior class (Cf. Edwards 1989:40, Kamishima 1969:82, Yanagida 1957:167). In contrast, although I accept that the adoption of warrior class customs has had its influence on present wedding practices, I am not interested in 'continuity', but with 'invention'.

In his study of a Tokyo neighbourhood, Bestor has argued that:

Analyses that place the locus of Japanese social structure firmly in the social patterns of the past or argue that similarities between the rural past and the urban present result from static continuity explain little.

(Bestor 1989:260, (my emphasis))

Instead of taking 'continuity' and 'tradition' at face value, Bestor suggests that we look at them as metaphors which may be manipulated. His study, like mine, is not of tradition as an aspect of historical continuity but of 'traditionalism':

the manipulation, invention, and recombination of cultural patterns, symbols and motifs so as to legitimate contemporary social realities by imbuing them with a patina of venerable historicity.

(Bestor 1989:2)

This view of tradition "as a cultural construct whose meaning must be discovered in present words no less than past events" (Yanagisako 1985:18) is closely related to the idea of the 'invention of traditions' (Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983)). In this study I analyse the process of the formation of the present wedding custom as a process of 'invention' rather than that of 'spontaneous generation' (Hobsbawm 1983a:307). I show how the Ceremonial Occasions industry has been massively involved in this process of invention.

Yet, there is an important point to be made here. When I define the process of the development of the modern pattern as an 'invention of traditions', I do not, by any means, try to argue that wedding entrepreneurs have created things from nothing. Most of the 'traditional' materials found in the modern wedding ceremony - such as wedding costumes - are indeed taken from Japanese history. As has been suggested by

Hobsbawm: "A large store of such [ancient] materials is accumulated in the past of any society" (1983b:6). But Hobsbawm also argues that "More interesting, from our point of view, is the use of ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a *novel type* for quite *novel purposes*" (1983b:6, (my emphases)).

It is actually in the definition of such 'novel purposes' that my approach to the 'invention of traditions' diverges from its original use. While using Hobsbawm and Ranger's term, I suggest a larger understanding thereof. Whereas the term is normally used to reflect inventions for 'social' and 'political' motivations, usually connected with the modern 'state', I show that 'traditions' may also be produced for economic or business purposes as has been the case in this study.

Later on, when examining the background for the development of the modern wedding pattern (chapter 2), we will see how the fact that the wedding is no longer performed at home has stimulated the process of invention. Before the introduction of public spaces for weddings, the wedding used to be in many ways a family and community affair (Embree 1939:132,204-5, Beardsley et al. 1959:323-9). The introduction of the wedding parlour in the late 1960s caused a "major change in wedding practices" (Smith 1978:212). When the wedding took place at home, the aid of the community was not only necessary but also an important part of the event itself. The use of a public space meant that the help of family and neighbours was no longer necessary since all the services were supplied by 'outsiders', mainly the *gojokai* organizations.

This change seems to be strongly connected to a much larger process which occurred in Japanese society during corresponding years: that of community breakdown or the decline of community solidarity (see Smith (1978), Beardsley et al. (1959), Moeran (1984a)). It will be possible to argue, then, that the Comprehensive Wedding Parlour which perfected the commercial wedding into a Total Production, had something

to gain from this process of decline of community (and family) solidarity and that it supplied an alternative to it.

The first chapter of this thesis describes the total wedding now offered not only by Kobe Princess Palace but also by most other commercial wedding facilities throughout Japan. The modern wedding parlour supplies its customers with 'wedding packages' which consist of both 'traditional-Japanese' and 'Western' elements, including various wedding costumes and diverse 'dramatic' scenes. These seemingly conflicting elements appear to live so peacefully together precisely because both of them are 'inventions' and products of manipulation. In other words, just as I do not see the 'traditional-Japanese' as a product of historical continuity, I also do not see the 'Western' elements as the direct products of the so-called 'Westernization' process which Japan has undergone. This will be elaborated on during the course of the thesis (mainly in chapter 7). However, I mention it here because it explains why throughout the thesis I insist on keeping both terms always in inverted commas. Eventually, I will go even further to suggest new terms which express more accurately how I see the situation - 'traditionese' for 'traditional-Japanese' and 'Westanese' for 'Western-Japanese'.

Earlier on, I argued that the different fieldwork experiences that Walter Edwards and I had have led to our advancing different theoretical perspectives. There have been other ways in which the 'field' or the phenomena observed influenced the analysis. In chapter One I describe a wedding day at the parlour as a 'production'. Following this perspective I suggest looking at the customers, mainly the bride, as 'objects' - or 'products'. Such a view of human beings is indeed problematic, but, I would like to note here that it is important to distinguish between methodological and theoretical points of view. In treating people as 'objects' I actually reverse Appadurai's (1986) approach to things. Whereas Appadurai humanizes objects, I objectify humans. Like him, I am aware that in pursuing such a line of analysis I may

be 'doomed' to fall into some kind of 'methodological fetishism' (*Ibid.*:5).

In chapter One I delineate the wedding parlour as a windowless 'closed' system. It is perhaps this enclosure of space and time, in addition to taking the point of view of the producers, that also 'confined' my perspective. As I have already argued, unlike most analysts of weddings, I am not studying marriage. Instead, I stay loyal to the confinement of the space of my field. This is the reason why most stories in this study are of people who belong to this space, either as workers, or as customers. In this study, unlike in most wedding studies, in Japan and elsewhere (Cf. Charsley 1991), the people who get married are not the 'principals'; instead, they are 'pushed' into the background. I indeed leave the parlour in some parts of the work. However, such departures - like the one to the kimono school - are related to the parlour's work and are not connected to a larger context of the lives of its customers.

Studies of weddings usually end up with analyses of marriage and kinship and are in many cases connected to questions about gender. Edwards's interest in 'gender, person and society' is thus not an exception. Moore has suggested that "women have always been present in ethnographic accounts, primarily because of the traditional anthropological concern with kinship and marriage" (1988:1, see also Ortner and Whitehead 1981:10). This, in turn, has brought feminist anthropology to regard kinship and marriage organization "as the obvious place to start looking for important insights into the ways in which culture construe gender" (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:11). Faithful to my position, I suggest other points of entry for studying gender in Japanese society.

I have mentioned the more 'feminine' approach which the focus on the parlour's beauty shop endowed on me. All the beauty shop workers reappearing throughout the pages of this study are women, as are those who own and manage it. Most employees are middle-aged women who treat their work more as a feminine hobby than as a substantial job. In the thesis I

look at their work and motivations. A significant place is given to their interest in kimono and kimono dressing. This subject of the Japanese woman and the kimono is analysed in more general terms. Kimono tends to be manipulated as a concept and as a metaphor, and is presented by the Ceremonial Occasions industry as 'traditional' as well as 'feminine'. As such, kimono can be used not only for defining differences between women - such as those between old and young, married and unmarried - but also for gender differentiation, and other related distinctions, such as that between the public and the private domains. I also try to show how this kind of genderization is maintained and perpetuated not only by men, but also by women themselves in their interrelations and their relations with men. Relations between kimono dressers and their apprentices, kimono school teachers and their brides-to-be students, and between mothers and daughters are analysed in this respect.

Women are also treated in the thesis from another perspective. I will shortly touch on the general importance of representation in Japanese ceremonies and indeed in Japanese social organization. The Ceremonial Occasions industry is as much concerned with representations of women as it is interested in those of 'Japaneseness'. I examine the use of prevailing images of women - such as 'good wife, wise mother' (*ryōsai kenbo*) - by the Ceremonial Occasions industry and other related institutions, like the kimono school. Another interesting image which is examined, mainly in relation to the bride, is that of a confined doll. A 'daughter in a box' (*hako-iri-musume*) is a phrase used to refer to a sheltered maiden protected by her family from the outside world. An interesting parallel can be drawn between the image of the 'boxed' Japanese girl and that of the 'packaged' Japanese bride.

The title of this study talks about 'packaged weddings and packaged brides'. The emphasis on the *packaging* of the bride, among all other wedding participants, is perhaps also connected to my own fieldwork experience as an assistant

kimono dresser. As we will see, the core of the beauty shop work is the making of bridal appearances. However, my own fieldwork 'bias' is, of course, not a sufficient reason for such an analytical statement concerning the special inclination of the bride to objectification. As I show, the bride has a central role in the production of weddings. Indeed, when observing various wedding promotion schemes, one may get the impression that 'weddings are (mainly) for brides'. Most wedding advertisements are designed to attract brides and usually there are no grooms around. The brides are approached by wedding parlours and hotels as well as by bridal aesthetic salons which offer special beauty treatments for weddings. In these advertisements brides are advised to prepare themselves and their bodies for the wedding and for their men. Does such a central position imply that at least on her wedding day the Japanese woman is considered important? Perhaps. But, on the other hand, being central in such a way means also being more subjected to objectification and indeed to commoditization and packaging.

The argument that brides are more easily objectified and packaged than grooms should not be surprising. Rubin, who suggests that we look for the locus of women's oppression in the traffic of women, argues that if men have been sexual subjects and women semi-objects for much of human history, then many customs, clichés and personality traits - among them the curious custom by which a father gives away the bride - seem to make a great deal of sense (1975:175-6). Rubin does not, of course, deny the fact that men may also be trafficked. But, the great difference is that men are never trafficked as *men* (*Ibid*:175). A usual implication of the 'trafficking' of women is that which relates to the process which the bride undergoes in marriage when she enters a new household. However, this interesting aspect is not my concern here. Instead, I am interested in the objectification of the bride in which the wedding parlour takes an active part.

I have argued earlier that in contrast to Edwards who is concerned only with the contents of the Japanese wedding,

"regardless of form" (1989:8), I am interested in the forms in which these alleged contents of values of 'gender, person and society' are embedded. This point is expanded upon mainly in chapter One, but, I would like here to link the importance of form in events such as the wedding to the way in which 'tradition' (and the invention thereof) is used in this study. Hobsbawm's distinction between 'custom' and 'tradition' is illuminating in this respect:

'Custom' is what judges do; 'tradition' (in this instance invented tradition) is the wig, robe and other formal paraphernalia and ritualized practices surrounding their substantial action.

(Hobsbawm1983b:2-3)

So, (invented) tradition for Hobsbawm is *form* - the wig and the robe. In this study, it is the *packaging* in which weddings and brides are enveloped.

As we find out in the course of the chapters to follow, the layers of formal and commercial packaging are manifold. The formality of the wedding and of wedding costumes constitute part of this packaging. Another aspect is the importance given to various types of representation in the wedding as well as in other ceremonial occasions. I have mentioned above the concern with representations of women in this thesis. The study is also involved in the examination of other sorts of representations in the Ceremonial Occasions industry and, in general, in Japanese social organization. The 'invention of traditions' itself can be seen in these terms as the production of representation of 'Japaneseness'.

One of the most manifest forms of representation is the significance of photography and other kinds of such recording (like video) in the wedding - as well as in other ceremonial occasions. Photography is, of course, important not only in Japanese commercial weddings. For example, they also have a fixed place in Scottish commercial weddings (Charsley

1991:142). In Japanese weddings, as well as in other commercial weddings, photographs play a crucial role in the 'framing' of the event; there are those moments during the event which are, as a rule, used for photography (see Charsley 1991:142-5), and some photographs are indeed considered a 'must'. However, there is some difference between Japanese wedding photography and, say, English wedding photography. In English -and I could add, Israeli commercial weddings - the professional photographer has long ago left his or her studio and is responsible for a series of wedding photographs throughout the event. In Japan, on the other hand, a similar set of indispensable photographs - such as 'the cutting of the cake' - is managed by the reception director and taken by amateur photographers: in fact, by a considerable number of wedding guests. This could be related to the fact that photography is so widespread in Japan that amateur photography is itself so developed. But, there is more to it than that. Professional photography is in charge of creating highly formal photographs which are handed to the customers in elaborate hardback covers. In other words, formality is considered more important than the recording of the event as it goes on; no room should be left for spontaneity in Japanese wedding representations. The wedding producers must supply their customers with formal fixed representations of the event which, as we will see, are representations of their own 'Japaneseness'.

So far I have introduced some of the main ideas which will be discussed in the chapters to come; others will arise throughout the work itself. Each chapter of the following seven is built on an ethnographic core, and concludes with an analytical discussion. I open with a description of a day at the wedding parlour and the production of the wedding. Chapter 2 is mainly descriptive, and delineates the history of the Commercial Occasions industry, as well as the specific example of the company studied here. Chapters 3 and 4 are concerned with the wedding producers. Chapter 3 describes the wedding parlour's organization and work, while its conclusion raises

some interesting issues concerning company studies in the Japanese context. Chapter 4 presents the beauty shop, its structure and work, and starts a discussion concerning Japanese women and kimono which is continued in the following two chapters. Chapter 5 entitled 'The kimono and the Japanese woman', provides a larger perspective on the subject. In it I present another ceremonial occasion in which kimono plays a very important role for women -the Coming of Age Day. The chapter also discusses another kind of institution involved in the 'production of traditions' - the kimono school. In chapter 6 we go back to the parlour and discuss the packaging of the bride. In chapter 7 I consider the idea of the 'invention of tradition' as it is practised by the Ceremonial Occasions industry and emphasize the financial incentives of the people concerned. The Conclusion links between the inventions of the Ceremonial Occasions industry and other manifestations of 'Japaneseness' - among them the *nihonjinron* (discussions of the Japanese). A special attention is given to the involvement of the business establishment in the fostering of myths of Japanese 'uniqueness' - such as the 'homogeneity myth'. I also touch on other theoretical issues raised in the Introduction and throughout the thesis.

Notes

1. The *bunraku* is a traditional puppet show.

Chapter One:

TOTAL PRODUCTION: A DAY AT THE WEDDING PARLOUR

It is only a twenty minute walk from the bustling centre of Kobe Motomachi station, and less than two minutes walk from "Kobe Business Centre", to the 'gorgeous' building of Kobe 'Princess Palace'. Like many other wedding parlours in Japan, the building sticks out from those surrounding it. Special facades, such as those of European castles or 'Walt Disney's Palaces' are not uncommon - especially in the case of Shōchikuden, the company which owns the parlour, known to be the most showy (*hade*) of all wedding parlour companies.¹ To the outside viewer, Kobe Princess Palace's facade does not reveal the fact that it has three floors. It is supported by long white poles and encircled by big arched windows which reach to the top of the building. The green painted glass windows give viewers a mixed impression of something between a stereotyped church and a mosque. The large staircase which leads to the hall is of a Hollywood-style 'Scarlet O'Hara' type. It is occasionally used for 'romantic' photographs of the bride in her Western wedding dress. It was this American feature which inspired one of the workers to suggest that the building looked like the American White House. The building is surrounded by a spacious yard with a parking lot and lawn. Entering the grounds of the parlour either on foot or by car, the visitor can see a big board with details of all events that take place during any one day. On very busy Sundays the board will be filled with the family names of as many as seventeen couples to be married that day.

What is this institution called the 'Comprehensive Wedding Parlour' (*sōgō kekkon shikijō*) as the Kobe Princess Palace is called? How does it function? And how does it actually produce weddings? In this chapter I will start to answer these questions, as well as describe a wedding as it takes place at Kobe Princess Palace. Here it is important to note that weddings in Kobe Princess Palace are not very

different from weddings conducted in other wedding parlours in Japan, as described by Edwards (1989:14-35). However, while Edwards' description of the wedding looked mainly at what can be termed 'front stage' activities, my aim is to give a fuller view of the production of a wedding, by taking into consideration the points of view of its producers, and by looking at its 'back stage' activities in addition to the 'front stage' performance which attracts both scholars and ordinary people alike.

A 'Comprehensive Wedding Parlour': Kobe Princess Palace

Kobe Princess Palace is a 'Comprehensive Wedding Parlour'. In other words it gives all those services which are in any way related to or necessary for weddings. Under a single roof, a couple not only get married but the bride and groom choose their engagement and wedding rings there, as well as arrange their honeymoon abroad. Through the same parlour, they can also purchase furniture for their new home and arrange for its delivery.²

A tour of Kobe Princess Palace gives an indication of the various services that the wedding parlour provides (see chart 1). Most of the visitors enter the parlour from its ground floor, using the large staircase in the building's facade. When customers enter through the main door they find themselves face to face with a small information desk, where one of the parlour's employees or sales ladies refers them to the lower ground floor on which most of the services are located. Also on the ground floor are a Shinto shrine, and a small Buddhist temple. Although most couples choose to get married in a Shinto ceremony, the parlour also offers the choice of a Buddhist ceremony. In both cases a priest is called in to perform the ceremony.³

The photo studio which is used throughout the wedding for taking photographs of brides, grooms and their families is also located on the ground floor. A small room inside the confines of the photo studio is used by the beauty shop

chart 1

PRINCESS PALACE - Structure of The Wedding Parlour

LOWER GROUND FLOOR - Back Stage

Front Desk (<i>furontō</i>)	Clothing Department (<i>ishōbu</i>)	Beauty - Shop (<i>biyōshitsu</i>)
Wedding consultants	Japanese Costumes on display	Western style hairstylist room
Honeymoon Corner		
Betrothal gifts (<i>Yuinō</i>) Corner	Wedding and Party Dresses Boutique	Japanese style ¹ 'Brides' Room' (<i>hanayome no heya</i>)
Gifts (<i>Hikidemono</i>) Corner	Lockers for the use of Wedding guests	2 Japanese style dressing rooms for guests
Jewellery Department (engagement and Wedding rings)		Japanese style dressing room for groom and men guests

GROUND FLOOR - Front Stage (Public Ceremony Part One)

Entrance hall	Shinto Shrine	Photo Studio
Information Desk	A small Buddhist temple	Changing room (<i>ironaoshi</i>) for bride ²
Large screens (for transmitting the the Shinto Ceremony)		
Coffee shop		
2 Waiting rooms for the bride's and groom's families (<i>hikaeshitsu</i>)		

FIRST FLOOR - Front Stage (Public Ceremony Part Two)

6 Ballrooms	(Kitchen)
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¹ A room covered with Japanese tatami mats where no shoes are allowed.

² This small room belongs to the beauty shop although found for convenience in the photo studio.

workers for changing the bride's costumes during the wedding (see below). The floor also has a large lobby which is crowded with wedding guests on busy days, and two video screens for the transmission of the Shinto ceremony while it is in process. Next to the stairs there are two waiting rooms for the principals' families. The ground floor also has a small coffee shop for the use of customers and wedding parlour workers. The shop is located at the front of the parlour and in fact it is the only room inside the wedding parlour which has windows facing on to the outside.

From the ground floor a large staircase leads to the first floor which houses six ballrooms of different sizes and décor.⁴ The kitchen which caters to all the ballrooms is also located on this floor.

While the two upper floors are mainly busy on wedding days, most of the preparatory, or 'backstage', activities take place on the lower ground floor. This floor houses the department which deals with reservations and requests for wedding-related services, and is occupied by uniformed employees. Next to the reservation counter there is a smaller 'Honeymoon' counter at which the young couple get information about possible 'Honeymoon Packages'. Wedding parlour employees and sales ladies may also confer with customers at one of the sets of tables and chairs which occupy a considerable part of the floor's centre. Besides these consulting counters, there is a long show-case in which betrothal gifts (*yuinō*) are displayed.⁵ Another attached show-case displays wax samples of the different selections of food which may be served at the wedding. In one corner of the floor, there are several show-cases with samples of items available as presents for the wedding guests (*hikidemono*). Common gifts are household articles such as kitchenware and tableware. In addition to this, there are samples of edible food, such as fish and fruits, which are also given as *hikidemono*. Near the *hikidemono* display there is a small jewellery corner mainly for engagement and wedding rings.

The bride and groom in Kobe Princess Palace - like those in most other wedding facilities throughout Japan - wear rented costumes for their wedding. A considerable number of the wedding guests, especially women, also rent their costumes from the wedding parlour. The lower ground floor houses the costume department (*ishōbu*) which is in charge of costume rental. This department with its costume displays occupies two sides of the floor.

On one side there is a boutique for wedding and party dresses, on the other, a long counter with show cases containing Japanese costumes.

Putting on the bridal costume and the special make-up considered essential for the Japanese bride is a complicated task which is done by professionals. In charge of this task is the beauty shop (*biyōshitsu*) which is also located on the lower ground floor. The beauty shop workers also dress the groom and other wedding guests in 'Japanese' costumes. For these tasks they use several rooms on the lower ground floor (see chart 1).⁶

The Wedding Parlour Cycle of Work

The wedding parlour cycle of work is generally divided into two distinct parts. There is the preparatory type of work during the quieter days of the week, and then there are the busy weekends (and holidays) when most weddings are held. While during the week the parlour is usually very quiet, at weekends, especially on Sundays, the parlour is packed with customers and workers. On busy days the parlour sometimes caters for as many as seventeen weddings. The first ceremony is usually scheduled at 10 a.m in order to allow enough time for the necessary preparations, especially of the bride; the last ceremony is usually set at around 5 or 6 p.m. This schedule means that several weddings take place consecutively and that they will thus be at different stages at any given time.

The Production of a Wedding

One of the things which may strike an observer of the weddings that take place in Kobe Princess Palace is their similarity. I do not intend to say that all weddings I observed, as well as those which were described by Edwards (1989), were identical. Of course there are some distinct traits in each very personal ceremony. However, my point is that in contemporary Japan (at least from the mid-seventies to the early nineties) all weddings - which are now performed almost exclusively by commercial institutions - have a fixed pattern. In the next chapter I will discuss the development of this pattern and show to what extent its formation has been a result of commercial considerations of efficiency. Here, however, I would like to describe the pattern of weddings as I observed them in Kobe Princess Palace. It is important to note that although my description is of a single wedding of one couple, we must bear in mind the fact that at the same time that this wedding is going on, there are other weddings in different stages running parallel to it. This point is significant in order to understand the importance of maintaining a rigid timetable and efficiency during the course of each wedding's production.

My use of the word 'production' is not unintentional. On the one hand, the term refers to the wedding's 'process of being produced' or 'being manufactured, especially in large quantities'. However, there is another meaning to the word which has a more 'performative' aspect, in the same way that an artistic work such as film or play is also a 'production'. In his account of Japanese weddings, Edwards (1989) chose the term 'performance' to describe a wedding day at a wedding parlour. Although the wedding, especially the reception, is in many ways a performance, I would argue that this term is not entirely satisfactory. One reason for this is that it is actually hard to determine who are the actors and who is the audience in Edwards's concept of performance, since wedding guests themselves take part in the 'play' of being 'made-up'

in appropriate costumes which are often rented and put on in the wedding parlour itself. And yet it is very clear, however, who the 'producers' of the entire event are: these are the different departments of the wedding parlour, each responsible for a certain part of the production and all together accountable for the smooth production of a product known as 'Japanese Wedding'.

Although the production of a wedding does not start on the wedding day itself but several months (usually up to almost a year) earlier, I will start my description of the production as it takes place during the wedding day itself. Since I am interested in both the 'product' itself, and in the process of production, my description will pay attention to what I term the 'backstage' components of the wedding, as much as to the 'stage' itself.

A Wedding(s) Day at the Parlour

The 'formal' (or 'front stage') time of a wedding in the parlour is four hours. This period of time includes the gathering of all wedding guests, the Shinto ceremony, photographic sessions and a reception (*hirôen*). Included in it also are periods of 'waiting time', short intervals when the wedding party has to wait before it can proceed to the next stage, after the party ahead has vacated its destined location. The actual duration of the wedding day, however, including the preparatory parts, varies among the participants in the event. The bride has the longest and - as we will shortly see - the busiest day of all. She has to arrive at the parlour two and half hours before the ceremony in order to be made-up and dressed by the beauty shop professionals. The groom for his part is advised to arrive one hour before the ceremony. This is also the time when the wedding guests are supposed to arrive.⁷

Dressing Up and Gathering

Dressing is the most crucial of backstage activities, and the preparations of the bride for her first appearance in an elaborate kimono, heavy make-up and head cover (see Edwards 1989:14-5, see also chapter 6) are the most complicated. Although the groom and many of the female guests also get dressed in the parlour, their dressing process is not as complicated and usually does not require as much time as that of the bride. Some of the female participants, however, especially those who play leading parts in the ceremony, often also have their hair set in such a way that it will fit their general formal ('Japanese') appearance.⁸

After being dressed, the bride is led to the first floor. From this time onwards, she (and to lesser extent also the groom) will be constantly led by one or another of the wedding producers, who literally take her by the hand when she is wearing 'Japanese' costume that is confining and uncomfortable to walk in. The bride now enters one of the waiting rooms to meet her relatives, while the groom joins his family in an adjacent room. Most of the people who gather in both rooms - numbering around forty - are close relatives. These are the people who will take part in the family picture and the religious ceremony to follow. Included among them is a married couple who play the role of the *nakōdo*. Though translated as a go-between or a matchmaker, the couple usually does not have anything to do with matchmaking as such (Edwards 1989:15). While the matchmaking itself may be performed by either a man or a woman, for the wedding ceremony itself, a married couple is required. (Hendry 1981:140, Lebra 1984a:102). The couple is supposed to give an example of a stable married life (Edwards 1989:15). While in the past the *nakōdo* - the term normally refers to the husband only - was a respected family member (Omachi 1962:255) or a neighbour, nowadays in urban weddings he may well be the groom's company superior (see Rohlen 1974:241-2; Kondo 1990:180).⁹ The symbolic importance of the *nakōdo* - as opposed to the actual introduction of the couple -

can be seen in the honourable seats, next to the bride and groom, that they occupy during the wedding and in the wedding portrait.

The short time spent by the relatives in the waiting rooms is used for a briefing by a parlour's employee. The parlour employs on a part-time basis two or three middle-aged women who act as 'attendants' (kaizoe). While on duty these women are dressed in plain kimono. Their role is to explain to the wedding participants what they are supposed to do, especially during the religious ceremony ahead of them.¹⁰ The attendant explanations are considered necessary by the wedding producers who generally think that "people nowadays do not know much about ceremony".¹¹

Photographs

On receiving a signal from the photo studio that it is ready for the next wedding party, the attendant guides the bride and groom there. A while later all the party will be invited to join them for a 'group photograph'.

The photo studio occupies a relatively large space on the first floor. This space is divided into three spots for different photographs. There is a spot for the bride and groom in their 'Japanese' costumes. Beside it is a space especially designed for the group pictures. The third spot, for the bride and groom in 'Western' dress - to be taken later on - is located on the other side of the studio. This location allows the studio workers¹² to use both sides of the studio at the same time. This is very important in later stages of busy wedding days when brides and grooms leave the reception in order to change their costumes (see below) and they could not possibly be allowed to wait for the more time consuming photographs of other wedding parties to be finished.

Taking professional photographs of the bride in her different costumes, of the bride and groom together, and of their families, is considered as essential a part of the wedding parlour wedding as the Shinto ceremony or the

reception which follows it. In fact, some couples who for some reason choose not to go through the whole ceremony, make sure that they have their photographs taken in formal wedding costumes.¹³

The importance of the photographs can be clearly seen in the way in which the photographers treat the appearance of the 'objects' they are photographing. Greatest attention is paid to the picture of the bride, who is the only participant in the wedding to be photographed on her own. This solo portrait is of the bride in her first costume, which is considered to be the most 'traditional-Japanese' costume of those that she is about to wear during the day.

Arranging the bride for the photograph may take more than twenty minutes. Every fold in her kimono is taken care of by the photo studio workers. Her pose, just like that of the groom when he joins her for the second photograph, is fixed. The photographers know exactly which poses they wish to immortalize for their customers. In both the bride's solo picture and in that of the couple's, the position has to be suitable for the 'Japanese' costume they wear. The bride's body is always photographed in profile (although her head faces the camera) so that the camera can capture the beauty of her elaborate kimono and its decorated long sleeves. The groom, for his part, is 'added' to the bride's photograph in a front-facing position (to her right). His feet are placed in a fixed open stance, which is wider than his ordinary one; in his right hand he holds a fan, while his left hand is drawn into a lightly-clenched fist. This pose is deemed suitable for the 'traditional-Japanese' costume he wears - probably for the first and last time in his life - as it resembles more than anything else a Samurai posture.¹⁴

By the time the bride and groom have completed their pictures, the bride has been standing in a somewhat 'frozen' pose for a long time. This, together with the confining kimono and heavy wig, may cause some brides - especially if they are pregnant - to feel unwell.¹⁵ In some cases the bride will complain verbally, but only after she has tried to put up with

the discomfort. I witnessed many cases in which brides have suddenly become completely pale, but, I should add that this was not always noticed by others around them, including their families. In some cases, finding that she can not take it any more, the bride does convey her afflicting feeling (*kurushii*), and the dresser may try to ease slightly the kimono binding. But the general attitude is that the bride *should* endure (*gaman*), and she is often told this by her mother during the course of the wedding day.¹⁶ The slightest disturbance in the photo studio is considered by the photographers as an undesired flaw in the production process, and they wait impatiently before continuing their task of producing a perfect presentation of The Bride.

After the bride and groom have been photographed, their relatives are invited to join them in the studio. As in other stages of the wedding, they are summoned by a female announcer through the parlour's loudspeaker.¹⁷ The relatives who are usually familiar with posing in group photographs from other weddings in which they have participated or from photographs that they have seen, take up their positions.¹⁸ The front row consists of the bride and groom in the middle; to their sides the *nakōdo* and his wife - the latter next to the bride, on her left, and the *nakōdo* next to the groom on his right. The groom's father is seated next to the *nakōdo* and beside him his wife, the bride's parents are seated in the same order on the other side. Beside the mothers, at each end, is seated another close member of the family - usually a brother, sister or grandparent.¹⁹ The remaining relatives arrange themselves in rows behind, as far as possible on the side of their own kin.

As in the case of the pictures of the bride and groom, the group photograph's pose is strictly taken care of by the studio, particularly that of the close relatives sitting in front. Their positions, especially those of the women wearing kimono, are corrected by the female assistant who folds their legs, takes care of the appearance of the kimono and does everything needed to create a 'perfect' picture. The assistant may also make one final check of the bride, but this task is

mostly done by a dresser.²⁰ Two or three experienced dressers are at hand all the time, to powder the bride's nose or to adjust her head cover, while the studio workers may take care of the way her overgarment (*uchikake*) is spread over the floor.²¹ After all distractions are taken care of,²² the photograph is finally taken, and at this point all smiles, if there were any, are erased. Formality in Japan requires seriousness.

Photographs: Some Quick Shots

The professional glossy hard-backed photographs which may be displayed over the years to come are considered an essential part of the wedding. But these are certainly not the only recordings of the wedding. Most wedding guests carry their own cameras, and pictures are taken by them throughout the day. The waiting periods between the different stages of the day are usually utilized for taking photographs. Some of these snapshots, like the professional pictures, have already become part of the family wedding album. Such pictures include one of the bride and groom posing in front of the board bearing their family names and is always taken when the couple depart from the waiting rooms on their way to the photo studio. Others are taken during the reception, especially of the most memorable moments such as the wedding cake cutting (see below). This kind of 'memorial moment' snapshot is explicitly encouraged by the wedding producers, who actually pose those concerned for the picture, and create 'frozen' moments (or 'frames') in the flow of events.

'Packing' the Bride

The relatives depart from the studio for the lobby, leaving behind the bride and groom.²³ In order to be able to proceed to the next stage in the wedding agenda - the Shinto ceremony - it is necessary for the bride's long overgarment

which was untied for the photographs, to be tied again. This act of binding, or packing (*karage*) is usually done by two dressers. In this stage the 'packing' is necessary in order to enable the bride to walk. However, packing also probably has some 'deeper' implications to do with the packaging of the bride as we will discover later on. In the meantime, the dresser instructs the groom - who stands still, as if waiting for further instructions - to stand to the bride's right side. Then she puts the bride's palm lightly on the groom's, and holding the bride's other hand she leads the couple to the lobby.

In the lobby the bride and groom are positioned in the front of two rows of guests who have already been arranged by the 'attendant', facing, and ready to enter the shrine.²⁴ However, on busy days the shrine is in continual use, with one party entering hard on the heels of another. It is not uncommon for the preceding party to fall behind schedule for some reason, in which case the bride will be seated on a couch especially designated for this purpose - a different couch is used later on while she has to wait for the reception. Her relatives and girl-friends who do not participate in the Shinto ceremony will gather around her to admire her appearance and have their picture taken with her.

When the shrine is finally ready for the party to enter, the attendant knocks on the wooden doors which are opened by two (part-time) shrine maidens (*miko*).²⁵ The whole retinue steps slowly in, the 'attendant' bows to them before she leaves the shrine, closing the doors behind as she prepares to guide her next group.

The Shinto Ceremony

Although considered by the wedding parlour's customers as part of the 'traditional' Japanese wedding, the Shinto ceremony is actually a rather new practice in weddings.²⁶ The shrine is contained in one room which is designed in the same way in all the parlours run by the company. The room has a red

carpet and all its structure and furniture (including the altar) are made of wood. The altar and some other Shinto symbols create an atmosphere of a genuine shrine. The 'ancient' (tape-recorded) music played in the background adds another 'traditional' flavour.

Once inside, the bridal couple are guided by the shrine maidens to sit in the centre of the room, and the *nakōdo* couple are seated behind them. The others take seats in order of entrance, the groom's relatives on the right side and the bride's on the left. Each relative has a small tray in front of him or her with a cup of sake and tiny pieces of *surume* (dried cuttlefish) and *konbu* (a kind of seaweed) packed in paper.

The ceremony is conducted by a Shinto priest who is dressed in so-called 'traditional' costume.²⁷ After the priest greets the participants, he proceeds with the purification rite done by waving a long stick with strips of white paper attached to its top (*harai-gushi*).²⁸ Other parts of the ceremony are a prayer (*norito*) and offering which are practices shared with other Shinto rituals. The *san-san-ku-dō* ceremony in which the groom and bride exchange nuptial sake cups is considered another essential component of the ceremony, as is the exchange of rings.²⁹

While the ceremony conducted in the shrine is strictly for close family members, other relatives and friends are invited for the reception which follows it. These guests have already started gathering in the lobby where they can watch the Shinto ceremony on video. At the announcer's instruction, the guests gather at the bottom of the stairs and are directed to the first floor where the reception is to take place.

The Reception: Dramatic Entrances

Among the 'dramatic' scenes which constitute the reception (*hirōen*), the entrances of the bride and groom deserve special attention. During the reception the bride leaves the room two or three times in order to change her

costume (and have professional photographs taken). Each of the entrances which follow is highlighted by special effects.

The bride, the groom, *nakōdo* couple, and parents all formally greet the guests, while standing in a row at the entrance of the ballroom and bowing to each one of them in turn.³⁰ The couple and the *nakōdo* and his wife then stay outside while the guests are being seated in the ballroom according to a seating chart prepared in advance. Until a few years ago the bride entered the ballroom in the white costume she had worn for the wedding ceremony. However, recently a new fashion has developed and many brides choose to change into a colourful overgarment (*uchikake*), preferably red (see chapter 6). This costume change, unlike the others which follow, is a relatively quick one and is done by two dressers on the spot. Another even more recent fashion is to add a 'traditional-like' artificial plait to the already heavy wig. All these fashions are designed to highlight the bridal entrance into the room (and at the same time to increase the wedding parlour's profit).

While in other wedding facilities the bride and groom enter directly into the room (see Edwards 1989:19-20), in *Shōchikuden* parlours there is always a stage on which the bridal couple and *nakōdo* and wife are staged; when ready, the curtain is opened and the four appear enveloped in a cloud of white smoke which is created by water released onto dry ice. As the lights are dimmed in the main hall, the stage lighting, on cue, turns rose pink in colour and the hush from the audience intensifies. After a pose for pictures the four descend from the stage in order to walk slowly to their table placed on another elevated platform. The two fixed stages on either side of the room are known to be a special trait of *Shōchikuden* and are apparently part of the distinctly 'showy' image developed by the company.

The march through the long aisle may take various forms. The most popular one is that which has been described by Edwards (1989:20) in which the four slowly follow the director, usually to the sounds of Mendelssohn's "Wedding

March". But there are other options which may add to the dramatic impression. It is possible for the bride and groom to walk together under a 'traditional' parasol; another option is that in which the bride follows the groom dutifully three steps behind.³¹ These styles, however, may be used in later entries. While 'traditional-Japanese' style entries are used to accompany 'traditional-Japanese' costumes, 'Western' style entrances are employed for 'Western' attire into which the couple change later. The entrance considered the flashiest of all is that in which the couple is lowered into the hall in a sliding device called 'gondola'.³² This entry is usually intensified by other special audio-visual effects and is considered most appropriate before the 'candle service'.

The Reception: The Ceremony Order

After the bride and groom, and the *nakōdo* and his wife have taken their seats, the master of ceremonies - usually a wedding hall employee³³ - congratulates the bride and groom and their families, before introducing the *nakōdo*, who gives the first of the opening speeches. The *nakōdo*'s speech is followed by two speeches by the principal guests (*shuhin*).³⁴ These speeches like that of the *nakōdo* are very formal and follow a standard form.

It is not only the opening speeches which follow a standard pattern; all the proceedings to come follow a strict 'ceremony order' (*shiki shidai*) as the wedding programme is termed by the producers.³⁵ As will be explained in the next chapter, the idea of 'ceremony order' has been developed with the growth of the wedding industry in an attempt to maximize the use of time and space. As a result there is a great similarity between all weddings which are held in commercial facilities, be it wedding parlours, hotels or other public facilities (see chapter 2).

In order to keep the proceedings going smoothly, the master of ceremonies is assisted by a person who directs the participants through all stages (see Edwards 1989:19-35ff.).

Other waiters and waitresses are in charge of various tasks such as dimming the lights at the right time, or giving cues to the participants. One or two waitresses will always be behind the bride and groom when seated, and physically seat them (especially the bride). In order to avoid any mishaps, this 'anonymous hand' is around at all times.

The Reception: 'Mini-Dramas'

In addition to speeches, the reception programme consists also of several acts which are performed by the bride and groom. These short performances (or mini-dramas) are devised to create climaxes of memorable moments, which are emphasized by freezing such moments for valuable photographs. The first of these acts is the 'Cake-Cutting Ceremony' in which the bride and groom under the close guidance of the room director, insert a knife into an extremely elaborate inedible wax cake. The romantic music, the spotlight which shines on the couple, and yet another white cloud to envelop them, only intensify the well-staged event.

Following this scene is the toast (*kanpai*) which, as on many such occasions gives guests the cue to relax and start eating and drinking. This is also usually the time for the bride to leave for her first costume change (*ironaoshi*) which will be followed later on by two or three other such departures.

The toast is followed by a series of congratulatory speeches. These short speeches are given by company superiors, former teachers, relatives and friends. As in the opening speeches, the speakers elaborate on the same ideas, of the couple's new role and new responsibilities in society. The flow of the speeches is not hampered by the absence of the bride, who continually has to leave the room for her costume changes (each takes about twenty five to thirty minutes (see chapter 6). While Edwards (1989) regards the themes of the speeches as direct reflections of the 'real' ideals and values of Japanese society,³⁶ I am slightly more sceptical. Rather, I

see the speeches as having a very similar role to that of the inedible wedding cake, that of decoration. In both cases the form is much more important than the content.

The couple's entrances to the room are, however, highlighted. One of these entries, when the bride and groom are both in 'Western' attire, is followed by yet another well-staged dramatic climax: The '*Candle Service*'. The bride and groom each carrying a long unlit candle, light their candles, each from his or her own parents' table. Then, led by the director, they go around the room and together light other candles which are placed on the guests' tables. As the couple light the candles, they are greeted by cheers and applause which is encouraged by the master of ceremonies. When the couple reach the tables of the groom's friends they are likely to have some difficulty in lighting the candle. The couple's unsuccessful attempts will be accompanied by cheerful urging of the friends who have deliberately wetted the candle's wick as a way of teasing the groom. This so-called 'genuinely spontaneous' event (Edwards 1989:31) actually occurs in every wedding, and is apparently encouraged by the wedding producers.

After these 'comic interludes', the bride and groom proceed to their table where they light the central candle: The '*Memorial Candle*'. Having the shape of a heart or a straight long shape with a list of numbers (apparently for the years the couple will be together from now on, and the years they previously spent with their parents), the huge candle is said to represent the 'flame of love' (see Edwards 1989:31). This scene, like other memorable moments, is documented by the guests as the couple pose in front of their cameras.

Now there is not much time left before the two hours to which the reception is restricted are over. The fifteen or so remaining minutes are filled in with some lighter speeches or some kind of entertainment - of song and dance - usually offered by friends.

The '*Flower Presentation Ceremony*' brings the reception to a close. In this short ceremony the couple present bouquets

to their parents (each to the other's). The ceremony is introduced by the master of ceremonies as an expression of the couple's gratitude to their parents for having raised them until their wedding day. While the ceremony is accompanied by music and some kind of narration in other places (see Edwards 1989:33), Shōchikuden adds yet another sentimental element by an accompanying 'Happiness' slide show. The slides (photographs are provided in advance by the couple themselves) follow the bride and groom from childhood through to their dating period. This ceremony is not only a sign that the reception is about to finish but also an excellent opportunity to bring the participants to shed a tear or two in an emotional outbreak which is considered an appropriate ending. The bride, feeling relieved at the fulfilment of her tasks and less worried about her make-up, will sometimes continue sobbing later on when parting from the guests. After the presentation, the couple and the parents are lined up in front of their guests while the master of ceremonies announces that the reception is about to end and introduces the two final speakers. The groom's father speaks first, he thanks the guests on behalf of the parents. His standard and short speech is followed by an even shorter speech given by the groom on behalf of himself and his bride.

The reception is over, two hours have passed and a new wedding party probably waits to use the room. The master of ceremonies announces that the reception is over. Then, for the last time, he leads the bride and groom through the aisles where they receive applause and congratulations. Finally they are guided to the entrance where they are joined by their parents and *nakōdo* and wife. The guests pack up some untouched food and their gifts (*hikidemono*) in big paper bags with the company's emblem on them. When leaving the room they are to go through the final mini-ceremony, when mutual bowing is exchanged between them and the line of their hosts. Although the ceremony is very similar to the one at the beginning of the reception, this time as the atmosphere in the party has become less formal - mainly due to the alcohol - there are

some handshakes and maybe even some words of thanks are exchanged. After some more informal farewells and snapshots with the bride back in the lobby, the bride and groom and many of the female guests go downstairs to take off their formal costumes before leaving the wedding parlour.³⁷

Wedding Production: Total Planning for Weddings

We have seen how a wedding is put on by the wedding parlour. However this is only part of the production, albeit the climax of the whole production process. The preparation of the wedding entails several visits of the couple to the wedding parlour, usually more visits being required of the bride since her appearance in the wedding has to be more carefully prepared. The preparation process also includes decisions that have to be made concerning costumes, the number of guests, and their seating arrangements, as well as the location of the honeymoon. Some of these preparatory stages will be discussed later on, but here I would like to discuss the production process from a more general point of view. In so doing I intend to take the perspective of the weddings' producers rather than that of the customers.

The parlour's production of a wedding does not start when the participants enter its doors (or those of its beauty shop) on the morning of their wedding. Moreover, it does not finish when they leave the parlour at the end of the day (again through the beauty shop). The wedding parlour offers a much larger plan for weddings. The 'total planning' usually starts sometime from six months to a year before the wedding, occasionally much earlier.³⁸ It then goes on to the honeymoon and the furniture which will decorate the young couple's home. The wedding package (see chapter 2) even includes the necessary formal outfit for a ceremony in which a future baby is presented to the local deity.³⁹ In this way as in others the parlour attempts to replace the role of the family.

Some of the preparatory stages for the wedding, such as the betrothal ceremony (*yuinō shiki*) (see note 5), are usually

performed in private, after consulting the appropriate books on etiquette. However, it seems that the wedding parlour constantly tries to expand its control (and business) and some wedding parlours even supply special private rooms in which families may perform the betrothal ceremony if they so wish."

As was mentioned above, Kobe Princess Palace - like all other wedding parlours in Japan - is a 'Comprehensive Wedding Parlour'. As such it not only offers all those services which are related to weddings in any way, but it also markets its expertise on wider wedding-related matters. The wedding parlour belongs to a network of wedding and funeral parlours (see chapter 2). These so-called 'Ceremonial Occasions' (*kankon sōsai*) organizations constantly strive to keep their image as 'ceremonial occasions' experts and not just as suppliers of services related to ceremonies. This attempt may be clearly seen, for example, in a short leaflet which for some time was given to each new customer (or member). The leaflet had the shape and colour of a Japanese passport and carried the name "A Life Care Passport Presented to a 'Mrs'. -

Shōchikuden". The 'passport' for the Japanese 'Mrs'. included various details of manners related to the prospective 'Mrs'.' own wedding, weddings of friends, and also about funerals and various other 'Japanese' manners. The choices of a Japanese passport and of addressing women are both interesting and will be discussed later on. Here, however, it is interesting to see how the wedding industry constantly recreates its own image as a group of experts as a means of distinguishing itself from other producers of similar services. Maintaining such an image has become more difficult since other facilities have actually built themselves on the same basis and even shrines have become 'comprehensive wedding parlours' which supply furniture and honeymoon packages. Keeping the image of ceremonial experts, I have to say, is even more significant in the case of funerals, where the services supplied by the 'ceremonial occasions' organizations are not offered at lower prices as compared to other suppliers. Thus in the case of funerals the

ceremonial expertise and the totality of service (24 hour service) is even more emphasized.

The Ceremonial Occasions business is based on an assumed lack of knowledge by people of ceremonial manners, as well as on its customers' alleged difficulties in deciding things for themselves. "The Japanese cannot decide for themselves, they always need somebody to decide for them", said a young parlour employee as she spoke of the well organized wedding plan offered by the parlour. Although her remark was made in reference to the 'Japanese' in general, and was obviously addressed at the 'foreign' (or rather 'Western') researcher, it does reveal part of the industry's attitude towards its customers. This is, of course, not to suggest that the 'Japanese' or the customers of wedding services are really so dependent in their nature, but it is more accurate to say that it is in the industry's interest to recreate such an image of the 'Japanese' they so faithfully serve.

This kind of attitude towards the 'helpless', 'ignorant' customer can be seen in the 'Bridal Schedule' which is given to each couple while applying for a wedding. This is a carefully planned six month programme, starting with the application and finishing with the honeymoon, by way of the betrothal ceremony onto the honeymoon. In each month the bride and groom are told what they are supposed to do: when to order the furniture, when to sign for the honeymoon and so on. This plan is also always included in the parlours' wedding catalogues which usually start with an impression of a couple in love and finish with an exotic photograph of the Hawaiian islands where the couple will spend their honeymoon.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter focused on a description of the wedding parlour in which I conducted my research, and the second part on a depiction of a wedding day and the production of weddings in general, as they take place in the same institution. In both cases my intentions here have been



of an introductory kind. Of a similar nature is this concluding section. In the same manner in which I tried to invoke the reader's imagination by my partial descriptions above, so here in this 'quasi-conclusion' I will try to raise questions and thoughts which will hopefully be answered later on in the thesis.

A great part of this chapter has contained a description of the wedding day. During the course of my description, I alluded several times to another account of a 'commercial' wedding, that of Edwards (1989). I would like here to expand on the relation of that account of a similar institution and a similar wedding pattern to the contents of my own work.

Edwards starts off an essay by writing that "Weddings are rites of Passage.." (Edwards 1987:51). Although for Edwards the link between weddings and 'rites of passage' is taken as a matter of course (see also Edwards 1989:8), I suggest that it is important to question this 'axiom'.

Handelman (1989) suggests a typology of public events. He distinguishes between events that model, present, and represent the lived-in world. The wedding, depicted by Edwards as 'rite of passage', seems to fall into the first category of "events that are called upon to do transformative work within themselves" (Handelman 1989:31). But, does the wedding do any transformative work at all? Or, is it, rather, an event which merely marks transformation or "simply validates changes that have occurred elsewhere, or by other means"? (*Ibid*).

Unlike events that model, which are purposive and 'embedded in a means-to-end context' (*Ibid*:28), 'events-that-present' have a 'modular' organization, scenes can be added and subtracted without necessarily altering the story lines of the event (*Ibid*:47). Thus, the possibility to incorporate the 'new elements': the wedding cake ceremony, the candle service and the flower presentation (Edwards 1987:61) seems to characterize the wedding more as an event-that-presents than as an event-that-models.

I would then argue that if the event described could at all be defined as a ritual, it will be in terms of what

Handelman (1989) calls an 'event that presents the lived in world'. This kind of event has the logic of a "mirror, the reflecting surface that displays how things are, but that in itself, and through itself, acts directly on nothing.." (Handelman 1989:41). Thus, while Edwards suggests that we see the commercial wedding as a "window on social values" of Japanese society (Edwards 1987, 1989:12), I prefer to suggest that the image of a *mirror* is more appropriate. While a window is only transparent for the 'outsider' (Western researcher and reader) to see through, a mirror reflects also for the 'insiders'.

In this respect it is worthwhile to consider the fact that -like department stores - the wedding parlour is a windowless space. Like them, it is also a 'closed system' in which, although people put on appearances (trying on unobtainable clothes in department stores, and changing into formal 'traditional-Japanese' and 'Western' costumes only for the wedding), they leave the space in their former looks. Being a commercial institute, the wedding parlour does not sell new ideas, it merely sells (perhaps also reproduces) 'images' of the 'outside' world.

In selling images, the wedding parlour does not promote changes, nor does it aim to do so. This is one point at which my argument and that of Edwards diverge. While Edwards (1987:52) argues that the themes which are projected through the wedding are those of "values relevant to the social relations being created by the wedding", as I have already suggested, I do not think that such new social relations are at all created. Moreover, as mentioned, while Edwards regards the 'content' of the various parts of the wedding, I suggest that it is merely 'form' which is actually being sold.

I have already related my emphasis on form (as opposed to content) and the perspective I have chosen to depict the wedding. I have chosen to describe the wedding day as a *Production*. As I have mentioned in this chapter, I saw it as a way to include also the 'performative' or theatrical aspects which indeed - as I hope I have shown - exist in the

production. On the other hand I could not ignore that initial feeling I had when I first observed the activities on busy working days at the parlour, a feeling which kept popping up while conducting my fieldwork. What I witnessed was a well organized, terribly efficient 'lubricated' machinery for the production of weddings. Observing brides running hastily from one 'station' to another, always urged on by the 'producers' who had to keep to a strict timetable, brought home to me an image of an assembly line. It reminded me of an insider's account of a factory floor work in one of Japan's biggest industries:

The term "conveyor belt" suggests automation, but actually the work is done by human hands. Only the parts are transferred by automatic power. The first worker, standing at the beginning of the assembly line, feeds the conveyor with parts. The next person assembles the parts, and the man next to him adds still more parts. All this is done in accordance with the line speed. The people working on the line are nothing more than power consumed in the process of assembly. What is achieved at the end of the line is the result of our combined energy.

Kamata (1982:25-6)

The wedding parlour's work at times seemed not very different from that described by Kamata of the production of cars. Like in the factory, each 'station' at the parlour had its own responsibility and all together were responsible for the final result which, in this case, was a smoothly flowing wedding. The fact that all this 'process' was centralized in one windowless space only underscored that image.

Taking a 'production' viewpoint of the wedding is dangerous. In pursuing it I risk being attacked on at least two levels. The first risk lies in the position in which such a stance puts the wedding participants, mainly the bride and groom, who are usually considered as the main actors or the

principals. "Clearly", some will argue, "they have emotions, and they also play a part in taking decisions". The second risk is related to the general appearance of the wedding in general, and especially of the bride which is seen as 'traditional', 'aesthetic' and even 'artistic'.

The first point is easier to answer. I will argue that by taking the 'production' perspective I am bound to fall into some exaggeration in order to make my point. I would also add that there is no necessary contradiction between having feelings and being 'processed', as we will see later on when treating the subject of 'packaged' brides (see chapter 6).

It is the other argument which I find more difficult to answer. And I will answer it by taking things to somewhat of an extreme. It is true that in the process of producing the product called 'Japanese' wedding there are 'islands' of delicate work, even of art and beauty if I might use such extreme terms which are in fact used by some of the producers themselves. This kind of attitude is mainly found in the work of the dressers and 'bride-makers' which will be broadly discussed later on in the thesis (see mainly chapters 4 and 6). But, are there not such moments of creativity while producing a car, or a television set? The dressers and bride-makers who will appear time and again throughout the pages of this thesis indeed love their work which some of them regard as highly as art. However, they also see the busy everyday life with its strict timetable and efficiency rules as the main 'enemy' of their work which consciously or not becomes more and more standardized and mechanical.

While Edwards (1989:8) writes that "regardless of form" weddings as 'rites of passage' "contain ideal images about the status to be entered", I suggest that in the wedding production process 'form' gains victory over 'content'. This can be observed on several levels of the wedding reception. For example, we have seen that wedding speeches go on constantly regardless of whether the couple themselves are in the room or not which suggests that the speeches are not done directly for their benefit. The standard form of the speeches

and the fact that no one actually listens to them since all ideas projected are well known (Edwards 1989: 20-4), only emphasizes my argument that the form of the speeches is no less important than their content. In other words, my view is that not only that "the *medium* is part of the *message*" (Moore and Myerhoff 1977:6), but, 'the medium *is* the message'. Edwards, however, chooses to completely ignore the form and develops many of his ideas of "gender and person" in Japanese society based on the "symbolic message" (Edwards 1989:21) which is (allegedly) conveyed in those speeches.

Another more obvious example of relations between 'form' and 'content' is portrayed in one of the main features of the wedding reception: The Wedding cake. The huge elaborate form of inedible wedding cake, would seem to be the ultimate 'victory' of 'form' over 'content' (since the cake is hollow). Edwards, however, seems to think differently, as he regards the 'cake-cutting ceremony'- and other such 'mini-dramas' which he described at length (Edwards 1989:24-35) - as designed to convey the central image of the marital ideal. Although Edwards (*Ibid*:109) considers explanations such as "emulation of the rich", and "the attraction toward things Western" as factors, he is certainly not satisfied with these kinds of explanations as he struggles to find out why the cake-cutting ceremony has become so popular in Japan. In his search for 'content', he goes on by saying that "neither of these [emulation of the rich and the attraction towards things Western] has any bearing on the cake's symbolic content". Furthermore, in a rather paradoxical way, he argues that the fact that the cake is inedible, "moreover, demands that we look for some symbolic significance". If we do not find this significance we, alas, will "be forced otherwise to conclude that the custom is patently absurd" or that an entire nation is "silly".

And, indeed, Edwards finds what he was looking for - "values appropriate to the context" such as those "concerning the nature of the marital bond" (*Ibid*:37). Moreover, he finds them in "conceptual associations already present in Japanese

culture" (*Ibid*:109, see also Edwards 1982). Owing to these existing notions, the wedding cake can assume a symbolic value parallel to the one it holds in the West - an image of fertility". Thus, the 'solution' has been found. Regardless of the fact that the Japanese version of the wedding cake does not have even one 'grain' in it, Edwards finds the explanation in "grain products" which are naturally "connected with images of seeds and insemination".

It is true that the wedding cake has been adopted from the West, but while Edwards finds it obvious that in the "West", wedding cakes represent insemination (which is, then, also related to the phallic image of the knife), Charsley (1992) is not so sure. In his study of the history of the wedding cake in the West and in other parts of the world, he quotes informants (like a hotel manager with a strong wedding trade), who describe the cake as symbolic, but without ever thinking what it symbolizes (Charsley 1992:18). As Charsley so rightly points out, all kinds of symbolic meanings can be found in wedding cakes, some of them are attached to them by their makers, some by various brides and grooms, and some by "the anthropologist's own symbolic imagination". For the latter, Charsley (*ibid.*:122) gives as his sole example an early essay written by Edwards about "wedding cakes as symbols in modern Japan" (Edwards 1982). Thus, for Charsley, symbolic meanings may have been attached to the cake by the various people involved and including anthropologists "looking for pattern and meaning" (Charsley:122). However, what really influenced the process of the acceptance of the cake in Scotland as well as the changes which occurred in it throughout the years, was of a different nature; it was rather "what people would buy" (*Ibid*:130).

Other non-Western societies have adopted the wedding cake, which in fact seems very popular throughout the world. For these societies, Charsley writes, the cake was "a widely meaningful element of 'western culture'" (*Ibid*:121). In my opinion it was actually this fact that made the wedding cake popular in Japan. The fact that it was 'Western' made it "what

people would buy". Changes in wedding practices throughout the years can support my 'market' explanation (following Charsley) as opposed to that of Edwards. In 1982, Edwards found the fact that the custom of throwing rice at the bride had not been adopted in Japan, as a clear example of his explanation that "there will be a tendency for those elements that "make sense" in terms of the symbolic code to be chosen over those that do not" (Edwards 1982:707). I, however, saw many a cases between 1989 and 1990 in which rice was thrown at the bride and groom in hotel 'Christian' weddings. It would then be appropriate to ask: has the custom become popular since it suddenly 'made sense in terms of a symbolic code'? or, rather, was it the logic of the market in which the growing popularity of 'Western' 'Chapel weddings' (see chapter 2) has given rise to the adoption of new 'Western' attributes?

The emphasis given to form by the wedding producers leads to theatre. Edwards (1989:137) finds the industry's concern for creating memorable occasions during the wedding as grounded in conventional Japanese theatre. While I may suggest that the stylized gestures and exaggerated poses of the bride and groom may be more similar to *Bunraku* puppets than to that of Kabuki actors I still agree with Edwards's depiction of the wedding as a "series of poses". In this chapter I have suggested that the separate parts of the wedding day may be regarded as 'frames' -not unlike those of a film (see Moeran 1989a). Although Edwards uses the same term, I find it difficult to accept the way in which he chooses to explain this "basic Japanese approach to experience". Loyal to his argument about the fundamental difference between the concept of self in Japan and the West - which some critics find poorly based (see Roden 1991) - Edwards grasps the 'frame' in accordance with other writers of what is known as *nihonjinron*. He uses Nakane's 'organizational frame' to sustain his argument that the concept of self in Japan emanates largely from the social context (Roden 1991:237). In other words, the 'framed' structure of the Japanese wedding is portrayed as yet

another supportive argument for the 'group model' enhanced by writers like Nakane.

Unlike Edwards, I do not see the use of 'frames' in the wedding production as 'natural' (being 'uniquely' Japanese), rather, I will argue that 'framing' (like 'form') is used by the wedding industry in a way which enhances the 'group model'. In other words, what we see here is an example in which both the researcher and the people he studies are 'trapped' in the 'myth of Japanese uniqueness' (Dale 1986). While the researcher fosters this idea by elaborating on 'theories of Japaneseness' (*nihonjinron*), the subjects of his study - in this case the wedding industry - advance it through what may be paraphrased as 'practices of Japaneseness'. But, this theme will be developed later on in the thesis, in the meantime it might be worthwhile to go back to my image of the wedding as a 'mirror'.

Handelman writes about 'event that presents':

It may be likened to a mirror held up to reflect versions of the organization of society that are *intended* by the *makers* of the occasion.

(Handelman 1990:8; my emphases)

It is indeed the 'makers of the occasion' who create the wedding as a 'mirror', they produce a 'mirror' to a peculiar thing called 'Japaneseness'. It is this kind of 'Japaneseness' which the wedding experts try to foster when providing a 'Life Care Passport for the ['Japanese'] Mrs.'.

Notes

1. 'Walt Disney' style facades are typical also of other kinds of institutions in modern Japan, as its "Love Hotels".
2. According to custom the furniture is purchased by the bride. In order to mark the event the furniture which is delivered by trucks is decorated by special ribbons. (on ceremonies of the bride's trousseau delivery see Hendry 1981:166-9).
3. Buddhist ceremonies are mainly held for members of the Sōka Gakkai sect. Although the Kobe parlour does not offer a Christian wedding, other wedding parlours do have a church or a chapel. In all parlours there is also an option of having a non-religious ceremony, 'in front of people' (*hitomae*), in which case the shrine altar is covered. Unlike the religious ceremonies which are conducted by priests, this kind of ceremony is conducted by a wedding parlour front desk employee.
4. All ballrooms, either in the parlours owned by the company which owns Kobe Princess Palace, or of other wedding facilities, have some basic common features. Among them are the huge wax wedding cake and a sizeable 'memorial' candle for the 'candle service' (see below). The reception rooms of Shōchikuden (the owner of Kobe Princess Palace, see chapter 2) always have two stages on each side of the room.
5. These gifts are given by the groom-to-be to his prospective bride in the *yuinō* (or betrothal) ceremony. The ceremony is generally held a few months before the wedding, usually at the bride's house. For a detailed account of the *yuinō* ceremony, see Edwards (1989:78-83). The *yuinō* set consists of symbolic items which are used as a decoration for the main gift of cash (now accompanied by an engagement ring). The cash payment is now typically set as roughly three times the prospective groom's monthly salary (see Edwards 1989:82, Hendry 1981:158, Shiotsuki 1991:62). The symbolic set which is offered by the parlour includes a decorative set of pine bamboo and plum (*shōchikubai*) which symbolizes happiness and celebration, and a few other symbolic decorations (see Hendry 1981:159-60).
6. The beauty shop also uses a small room inside the confines of the photo studio (as mentioned above). A detailed account of the beauty shop will be given in chapter 4.
7. Wedding guests are called *okyakusan*. In this instance the word *kyaku* refers both to the couple's families' guest and to the parlour's customer. 'o' and 'san' are added to the word as honorific
8. Wearing kimono usually requires modifications to fit in with a 'total' appearance. This will be explained in chapter 5 which deals with kimono.

9. It seems that in rural areas of Japan it is still common to have a relative - especially of the groom's side - as a go-between (Hendry 1981:141, see also Bernstein 1983:45). Another typical go-between in rural areas is a neighbour of one or other of the parties (Hendry: *Ibid*). While the respectability of the real mediator is not important, the 'ceremonial *nakōdo*' has to be someone with good reputation (Lebra 1984:101). It seems that the role of the real go-between and the one who takes the 'ceremonial' part in the wedding are becoming more and more separated. When I asked one of the brides how they chose their *nakōdo*, she answered that they looked in the groom's company for the manager that was the highest in rank between those who would still agree to act as a *nakōdo*.
(On the process of marriage proposals and arranged marriage see Lebra 1984a:79-102).

10. While in wedding parlours the 'attendant' serves several weddings at the same time, this is usually not the case in hotel weddings. There, where a more prestigious ceremony is offered (see chapter 2), a single attendant is nominated for each couple whom she serves and guides throughout the day. Both in hotels, and wedding parlours the attendants - being the ceremonial guides - are dressed in kimono, unlike other workers, who wear 'Western' style uniforms.

11. This is true not only for weddings but also for other 'Ceremonial Occasions' and for manners in general. It is not only the wedding and funeral industry (see Introduction) which takes advantage of this 'ignorance' (which it of course encourages). There is a whole range of interested businesses, including publishers of a variety of instructive books and manuals, the most popular of which is called "An Introduction to Ceremonial Occasions" (*Kankon sōsai Nyūmon*, by Shiotsuki). Between the early seventies, when the book first came out, and 1991 (when I completed fieldwork) the series is said to have sold 7,000,000 copies. Many informants said that they have used this kind of manual, especially for those stages leading up to the wedding, such as the engagement ceremony, which are less controlled by the wedding parlour.

12. The photo studio is rented from the wedding parlour company by a privately owned company. Apart from the owner himself, there are three workers - two men and a young woman in her thirties. While the men are professional photographers, the woman acts as an assistant. (For more on organizational aspects of the studio, see chapter 3).

13. These relatively rare cases are of couples who choose to marry abroad in one of the 'chapel weddings' offered by the wedding industry in Hawaii or Australia. This kind of wedding is considered more 'Western' and as such more modern. Others decline to have a full ceremony for various family reasons.

14. The difference between the bride's softer position of hands, which are held in front, lightly holding the fan, and that of the groom, may be regarded as symbolic of gender relations in Japan. It should be noted, however, that while the groom's hand is fisted in his 'Japanese' costume, both his hands are open and give a 'softer' image later on when he is in 'Western' costume.

15. Pregnant brides are indeed not uncommon in the parlour. A rough estimation of about 20 to 30 per cent of the brides is not an overstatement.

16. It should be noted that there was never a case in which the wedding plan was disturbed by such an occurrence.

17. For the role of women as public announcers see Moeran (1989a:22). In the wedding parlour's case it is also women who are the ceremonial 'attendants' (kaizoe) and in the photo studio it is the woman who is the assistant who is in charge of arranging the 'objects' for the photograph. Moeran also depicts Japanese society as a film in which it "is usually women who act as mediators between (the film) frames" (Ibid:20). Later on we will see how even the periods between the 'frames' of the wedding day are used for taking photographs (or for being 'framed').

18. In general, group pictures are very popular in Japan. In any famous tourist spot one can find a set of benches of different heights ready for group pictures. There are usually also official photographers ready to take the pictures of groups of school children in their dark uniforms, or of groups of employees on a company trip (see Graburn 1983:49).

19. It seems that sometimes the two chairs at the edges which create a line of ten chairs are missing, and the mothers sit at the sides (see: Hendry 1981:177). Apart from this the group picture seemed to be identical all over Japan. I also witnessed a case in which a framed picture of the deceased grandfather was held by his widow in order to let him participate in the photograph. The picture which was the type of those used on the altar for funerals (see Smith 1978:157-8), is linked to the wedding photograph by the importance of presentation and 'framing' (see Introduction, chapters 5 and 6).

20. As mentioned above, the 'dressers' are employees of the beauty shop, and are experts in kimono dressing.

21. This 'division of labour' characterizes the relations between the studio workers and the dressers. While the former take care of the picture as a whole the dressers are mainly in charge of the bride, although they may also correct the kimono of female relatives.

22. The most difficult 'objects' who may delay this stage of the photographic session are young children, who do not always reply as expected to the photographers' clapping, or even to the sounds of the plastic duck used on these occasions.

23. It seems that there are several variations in different wedding facilities. In some wedding parlours the *nakōdo* and his wife stay with the couple at the studio at this stage, and this period of time may be used for a photograph of the *nakōdo* couple. In some cases the shots of the bride and groom are taken after the group photograph, and sometimes the group photograph is taken after the Shinto ceremony (see Edwards:1989:19). At Kobe Princess Palace for pragmatic reasons the ceremony is conducted after the group photograph.

24. The rows of the two families are arranged in the following order: The *nakōdo* and his wife create two rows (facing the shrine). On the right side the groom's father takes the place behind the *nakōdo* followed by his wife, on the left the bride's parents stand behind the *nakōdo*'s wife. Behind them the family members arrange themselves as instructed by the 'attendant', according to their kinship with the bride and groom.

25. The shrine maidens are actually young students who do this job on a part-time basis (*arubaito*). They do not have any religious training. Nevertheless they are dressed in formal religious costumes, in white and orange.

26. The first Shinto ceremonies were held in the Meiji period (from 1900) (see Ema 1971:169, see also Erskine 1925:8), however, the ceremony has become a standard part of the wedding only after the Second World War (Yanagawa 1972:126; see chapter 2).

27. The priest is not an employee of the wedding parlour, but the priest of a nearby shrine. He is invited to conduct the ceremonies and is paid by ceremony. In some hotels I witnessed two priests conducting the ceremony together (see also Edwards 1989:16). In prestigious hotels I have seen yet more elaborate costumes for the priests adding another 'traditional' flavour to the total 'show'.

28. This item is considered one of the main symbols of the Shinto ceremony for the laymen participating in the ceremony. In one of the introductory guiding tours at the wedding parlour made by a sales lady to her potential customers after a bridal show, (see chapter 3) a mother of a future groom verified if this was the room in which the priest is "waving that white paper's stick..". For her this was what "it is all about". The mother's attitude is not uncommon, in many cases the Shinto ceremony is chosen "because it is the most beautiful". For the relatively small role

which religion itself plays in choosing which kind of ceremony to hold at the wedding, see Lebra (1984a:108).

29. Although most people think of the *san-san-ku-do* (literally three-three-nine-times) only in connection with marriage, its meaning and use are broader than that. The sharing of ritual sake creates a deep and solemn bond between two people who are ordinarily considered unrelated. This symbolic tie can also bind the older and younger sister in the geisha world (see Dalby 1983:41-3). The symbolic sake exchange in weddings is also not necessarily connected to a Shinto ceremony, and according to some accounts it was conducted in the past in private in front of the *nakōdo* (see Embree 1936:207-8, Bacon 1902:63). For a detailed description of the Shinto ceremony see Hendry (1981:178-80), Edwards (1989:15-9).

30. Although I have seen this practice which is called *ritsurei* at all the weddings I observed at the parlour and in other wedding facilities such as hotels, it is not reported by Edwards (1989). The reception ends with a similar ceremony called *hiraki* or opening (see below).

31. The wedding parlour tries to supply other kinds of 'entrances' as well. One scenario on offer is for three men, usually friends of the groom to be dressed in a 'traditional' short coat (*happi*) (with the name of Shōchikuden on it) and enter after the bride and groom carrying a wooden case and a lantern symbolizing the carrying of the bridal trousseau. Like other 'inventions of tradition' this 'dramatic scene' has some historical basis. However, it seems that in the process of invention (see mainly chapter 7) two separate processions - that of the groom's side, carrying a barrel of sake, a gift of fabric and a lantern, and that of the bride's side, carrying an oblong chest (*nagamoci*) containing the bridal clothing (see Lebra 1984:106-7) - have been combined for a better dramatic effect. This 'entry', however, is not very popular as the young couple, according to the parlour's manager, prefer the more standard entrance.

32. The so called 'gondola' may have the shape of an Italian gondola, but other shapes such as that of a carriage are also in use. The device is not used in Kobe Princess Palace, but is in use in other Shōchikuden parlours.

33. Using an employee as a master of ceremonies is yet another typical trait of Shōchikuden. In other cases the master of ceremonies can be a friend of the groom (see Edwards 1989:20). Yet again this shows the efficiency of production in Shōchikuden.

34. The principle guests are usually from both sides, very often they are the couple's current or past company superiors, otherwise, they may be former teachers. For a more detailed description of the speeches and other parts of the reception see Edwards (1989:19-35).

35. For each ceremony the producers fill in a very detailed form with the names of all speakers and all other particulars, such as the number of costume changes or the names of guests who will offer songs or dances. They also limit the time for each activity (for example three minutes for each congratulatory speech).

36. The importance given by Edwards to the content of the reception speeches can be observed by the distinct part they take in his description of the wedding reception (Edwards 1989: 20-24, 28-30). Moreover, a major part of his analysis of "gender, person and society" is based on notions mentioned in these speeches (see Edwards 1989:114-27).

37. Although it seems that it was popular to leave directly to the honeymoon (see Edwards 1989:35) now newlyweds tend to have another party for friends. This party called 'Ni-ji-kai' or Second Party is usually conducted at a restaurant or a bar and is much more informal. The wedding industry is now trying to appropriate also the 'second party' by offering its rooms for use. Some related businesses such as the wedding parlour's beauty shop already can profit from the 'second party' since brides may need new hair settings before leaving the parlour for their party. In such cases the beauty shop is allowed to charge extra payment (on financial arrangements see chapter 3).

38. I am referring here to the 'membership system' which is the basis for the wedding parlour's work. Some brides and grooms become members of the company which owns the wedding parlour a considerable number of years previously. In most cases it is their parents (or more accurately mothers) who sign a contract with the company on their behalf. The membership system will be elaborately explained in the next chapter.

39. The ceremony is called *miyamairi* - *miya* is shrine, *mairi* is visit for the purpose of worship or prayer. The ceremony which is celebrated at the end of a period of pollution after giving birth (30 days after the birth of a boy and 33 days after that of the girl), requires a special expensive outfit for the newborn. It is interesting to note that according to custom these garments are given by the mother's family (see Hendry 1981:201-2).

40. The rooms now offered for the 'second party' (see above) fall into the same category.

Wedding Scenes Photos 1-3:





Chapter Two:

BACKGROUND: THE WEDDING INDUSTRY AND THE NEW STYLE WEDDING

The extremely well organized production and fixed 'ceremony order' described in the previous chapter are certainly not typical only of Kobe Princess Palace. The wedding pattern, with its elaborate entries, 'theatrical' scenes and frequent costume changes, has come to encompass not only urban Japan but most of rural Japan as well (Edwards 1989:42).

But the Japanese wedding ceremony was not always as uniform and as fixed as it has become in recent years. The development of the wedding pattern delineated earlier is closely linked with that of the wedding industry. This chapter will outline this history.

My argument here is that the expansion of the wedding pattern and the growth of the wedding industry had their origin in the move from home weddings to public space events. This change was clearly promoted by specific agents. The *gojokai* or 'mutual benefit associations' had then and still have a major role in the wedding industry.¹ Indeed the majority of 'comprehensive wedding parlours' in Japan are still owned by these associations.

The *gojokai* associations are based on a form of membership system, in which money is accumulated over a period of time, and then is used for weddings or other ceremonies. Although wedding parlours nowadays still work according to a similar scheme, the system has gone through changes with the growth of the wedding industry. This chapter will follow the history of these associations and the shift in their ideology, from that of 'service for the common good' to a much more explicit 'market ideology'.

While the first part of the chapter will explain the history of the wedding industry generally, the second part will give a more elaborate portrait of one of the *gojokai* companies. Cobella, the company which owns Kobe Princess Palace is part of one of the largest wedding parlour groups in

Japan. Through the way the membership system operates in Cobella it will be possible to study about the way other wedding parlours work. Through the changes in the company advertising policies and the adjustments in its membership system, we will be able to see how the wedding market has reacted to changes in wedding practices and more generally, in Japanese society. Finally, wedding costs and the way they are calculated will also be given.

Changes in Wedding Patterns: The Prewar Period

If what characterizes weddings in Japan nowadays is their uniformity, wedding practices of the prewar period could be noted for their diversity. In my definition of the prewar period I follow Edwards (1989:38) who sees this period as covering the first half of the current century. Edwards also believes that, when looking for the origins of modern wedding practices, it is necessary to begin with those that developed much earlier among the samurai, whose long period of dominance greatly influenced subsequent trends in weddings. I however, disagree with this assessment. Following the line suggested in the introductory section of the thesis that the process of the development of modern wedding practices was one of 'invention' rather than one of continuity, I want to argue that wedding practices of the early ruling classes are interesting only to the extent in which they were later on used and manipulated by wedding entrepreneurs.

There is, however, one other historical period which is relevant to our discussion here. This is the Meiji period (1868-1911), mainly the late part thereof. This period was one of rapid social changes and as such it was also a period prone to innovations in many spheres, including those of ritual and manners.² Many of these changes were a result of Western influence, or rather of an actual encounter with the West. As for wedding practices, one of the new 'fashions' was to have a Shinto ceremony (*shinzen*).³

The 'fashion' of having a Shinto ceremony is related to the influence of the first such ceremony for the Crown Prince (later the Taishō emperor) in Tokyo in 1900. In other words, although the Shinto ceremony is now seen as an 'ancient' 'traditional' practice it is actually a rather modern innovation. Moreover the incorporation of a specifically religious ceremony into the wedding is said to be a result of Western influence (Ema 1971:169-70). My argument is that the 'traditional' image of the Shinto ceremony, like that of other elements of the wedding such as the 'Japanese' costumes, have been deliberately promoted by interested agencies. The wedding industry - with the *gojokai* organizations as its core - has always been the main promoter of such ideas. Taking this perspective, we can see that although there were signs of the introduction of Shinto ceremonies in the late Meiji period as a result of the imperial wedding, the popularity of such weddings flourished only after the war (see Hendry 1981:195-6, n.64), when they were clearly promoted by the emerging wedding industry.

It is also only since the war that other uniform wedding practices have started to evolve. Before that, wedding practices were characterized not only by diversity but also by lack of formality, especially in the case of commoners (see Edwards 1989:38-42).

From Home weddings to Public Space Events

The widespread wedding pattern, as depicted earlier and very well described by Edwards (1989), could not have evolved if the wedding ceremony had remained in the privacy of the home - the common practice until as late as the 1940s. Though we can find some signs of a trend towards public ceremonies in the city in the Meiji period - namely, of weddings taking place in restaurants, hotels or clubs - these were held only by those few people who could afford them.'

In the prewar period weddings were commonly performed at home. This was true for the rural areas as well for the

cities.⁵ Even when the ceremony was performed in a shrine, during the Meiji period, the common practice was to have the reception at home after the ceremony. According to various accounts home weddings were characterised by the involvement of the larger community.⁶ This involvement included not only the actual help of neighbours, especially that of women of the direct community (Embree 1939:132,204-5), but also financial aid supplied by various co-operatives in the community.

It was only after the war that the practice of having the reception in yet another public space became a widespread convention, not only for the affluent classes, but for many others too. One of the reasons for this shift was the smaller size of houses, especially in the cities. The most popular places for wedding parties were Japanese-style restaurants (*ryōtei*). This practice prevailed until the late sixties.

Conducting the ceremony in a space divorced from the house and the direct community naturally meant the involvement of more 'outsiders', and with it the rise of related services and enterprises. The proceedings were usually as follows. The bride was prepared at home by a beautician who also dressed her in a kimono rented from a specialised clothing rental shop (*kashi ishōya*). It seems that upon entering the public sphere, appearance (or 'form') has become more important and the kimono has become fancier and too expensive to purchase. After the preparations at home, a third organization took over: the shrine, which charged money for the ceremony. Onto the scene (in the shrine) came also the professional photographer so significant for documenting the occasion.⁷ The day was usually completed in a restaurant where the reception took place.

With the wedding proceedings getting more complicated and involving various enterprises, it became difficult for the family to arrange the wedding, and the help of relatives and neighbours also became irrelevant as the reception was no longer performed at home. But the family was not left alone for long, 'mutual benefit associations' (*gojokai*) were soon started as agents to offer help in arranging all the procedures. It is important to note in this respect that the

wedding industry had its vested interest in the decline of community solidarity, as it started offering its services in place of the community. It was then that they planted the seed for the 'total wedding programme' - the practice prevailing today.

The Gojokai Entrepreneurs as Agents of Change

The first *gojokai* was founded in 1948 in Yokosuka near Tokyo by someone who was previously involved in funeral services. The organization offered its 'members' (*kaiin*)⁶ low cost wedding and funeral services. The members paid low monthly instalments over a period of several years, and the accumulated amount was used for either a wedding or a funeral. Apart from offering a centralized organization for the wedding, the *gojokai* also offered a saving system which was helpful in those economically harsh days of the postwar period. The alleged ideology of the *gojokai* was the provision of services for the "common good" of its members.⁷

The initiative in Yokosuka was soon followed and other 'member' associations offering services related to 'ceremonial occasions' appeared throughout the country. The first to follow the venture were entrepreneurs involved in the undertaking business. These establishments not only had the necessary funerary equipment to start with; they had also already operated on a 'membership' basis for funerals so that the same system could relatively easily be used also for weddings. These organizations were in many ways similar to the co-operative associations in the rural areas, although the rural associations also had other functions such as admitting a new member household, hamlet festivals and the like. The co-operative system seems to have been most developed in the country. Embree (1939:112-53) describes a complicated scheme of co-operative associations called *kō* in his village community (*buraku*). Among those associations were those which gave aid in the cases of funerals and weddings. Co-operative associations called *dōgyō* assisted in weddings and funerals in

Kurusu village studied by Smith (1978:205-6). Beardsley et al. (1959:371-374) also mention such associations. Both the rural associations and their urban counterparts usually owned the necessary equipment which could then be used by any member household. In all of these cases, both in the village and in the city, the importance of these associations grew during the years of acute wartime and postwar shortages (see Beardsley et al 1959:372).

The second group which found an interest in the new Ceremonial Occasions business was that of kimono rental shops (*kashi ishōya*). These shops already owned the main inventory necessary to start the business with, since the main service the *gojokai* offered directly for weddings was that of bridal robes rental.¹⁰ As mentioned above, the *gojokai* organizations did not offer only wedding services. They were concerned with other

'ceremonial occasions' as well. Nevertheless, the rapid growth in the number of these organizations through the fifties and the early sixties all over Japan was strongly connected to weddings. However, until the late sixties they operated mainly as agents connecting the various enterprises taking part in the wedding. It was only towards the end of the sixties that they started building their own wedding facilities. From that time on the wedding industry saw immense growth. Though many of the *gojokai* remained small or medium sized companies located in one area,¹¹ a few of them expanded vastly, to create wedding parlour networks. One of these huge companies is Shōchikuden (literally, "Pine and Bamboo Palace").

From a Small Gojokai to a Wedding Parlour Chain

The history of Shōchikuden, the largest wedding parlour network in Japan, illustrates well a process which started with the 'mutual benefit associations' and continued with the construction of 'comprehensive wedding parlours'. The founder of the company, Utsunomiya Chikajidō, was a vinegar maker in Kyoto, until at some stage he went into the undertaking

business. Like many of the originators of the first *gojokai* organizations, he saw the financial potential of the funerary enterprise. His small shop in Kyoto offered the rental of a special altar and decorations used in funerary rites. The service was given at low prices to the city residents who became members.¹² In the years after the war the owner saw the financial possibilities underlying 'ceremonial occasions'. These years were also marked by the prosperity of kimono rental businesses which benefited from the loss of kimono during the war when people were obliged to sell their clothes in order to obtain basic supplies of food and when many lost their possessions on bombardments and fire. These were the main considerations which led Utsunomiya to extend his small shop and include bridal services by adding a bridal kimono rental section on the other side of the same shop. By offering this kind of wedding service, Utsunomiya could increase the number of members who joined the *gojokai* which he established in the Kyoto area.¹³ In the following years the company saw large growth, and extended its services to neighbouring areas.

The Company Expands and Diversifies

Like other *gojokai* organizations, the growth of Utsunomiya's company was closely linked with the decision to establish its own wedding parlours. This was a trend which started in the late sixties and led to the heyday of *gojokai* organizations. The nature of this trend will be shortly discussed, but first let us examine the process of the expansion of the organization founded by Utsunomiya. This was a process that started with the establishment of the first Shōchikuden wedding parlour in a shrine in Kyoto in 1968, followed a few years later by a large wedding parlour in the same city.

The expansion of Shōchikuden involved the diversification of what was originally a family company into three separate companies. The first to leave the company and to establish a company of his own was Utsunomiya Hideichi, the youngest son

of the founder. In 1969, only a year after his father's company opened its first wedding parlour in Kyoto, he founded Cobella, the company which owns Kobe Princess Palace.

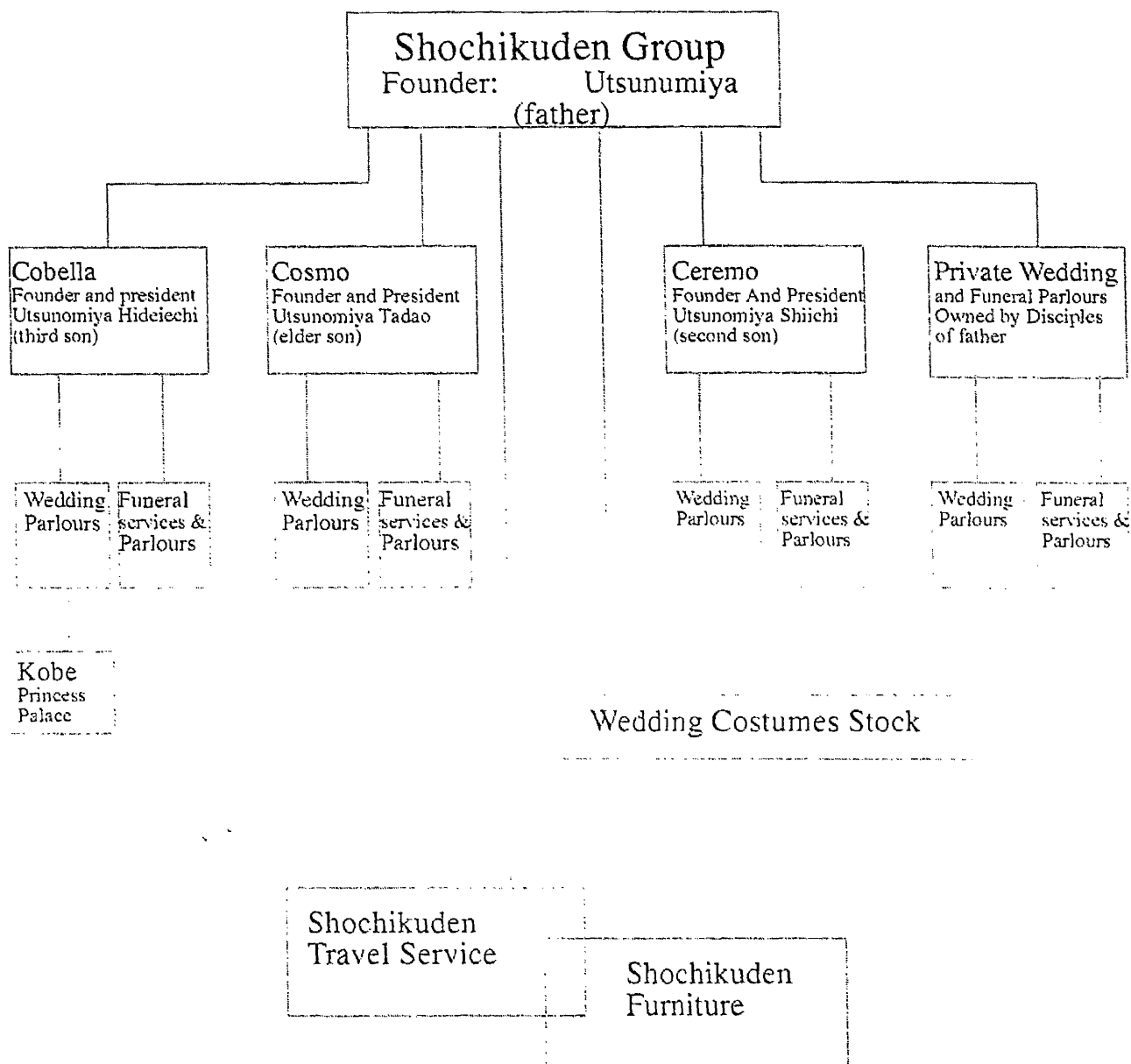
The youngest son was the first to establish a separate business, and after him the second brother established another company called the Ceremo Gojokai. The eldest brother remained as the successor of the father (who died in 1976) in Kyoto, his branch of the company is called 'Cosmo'. 'Cosmo' operates not only as an independent company with its own wedding parlours and funeral centres, but also as the main - though not the sole - supplier of costumes to all the wedding halls which belong to the 'Shōchikuden Group' (see below). The person in charge of costumes is the eldest daughter of Utsunomiya Chikaijidō who stayed with her elder brother in Kyoto. (see chart 2).

Although the three companies now operate separately as stock companies (*kabushiki gaisha*) controlled by Utsunomiya Chikaijidō's three sons, they stayed under the 'umbrella' of the 'Shōchikuden Group'. The companies are connected to each other not only by joint activities such as the supply of costumes, but also by their customers. Each member of any of the companies is allowed to use his member's rights in any of the 'Shōchikuden Group' parlours throughout the country.¹⁴ By the early 90s the Shōchikuden Group owned about ninety wedding parlours all over the country. These parlours are divided into two types: those which are directly owned by biological descendants of the founder, and those which are owned by other entrepreneurs who have received the right (*kenri*) to operate from the family. Nevertheless, the right to use the name 'Shōchikuden' has not been given to anyone who happened to have the necessary funds; all non-family owners have undergone their training with the father of the family. In this way the family has ensured that its reputation would not be harmed.¹⁵

Like the other expanding *gojokai*,¹⁶ Shōchikuden did not neglect the undertaking business, and all sub-companies continued to offer services for other ceremonial occasions - mostly funerals - as well as weddings. Later on we will

Shochikuden Group

(Structure)



Notes:

1. Wedding Costumes Stock belongs to Cosmo and is supplied to all other parlours.
2. Shochikuden Travel Service & Shochikuden Furniture are sub-companies of the Shochikuden Group and Supply Services to all parlours.

carefully examine one of these companies and its work, but let us first see how 'specialized wedding parlours' ('*senmon kekkon shikijō*') were constructed,¹⁷ and how their structure was linked with the creation of the fixed ceremony order in which the commercialized wedding is distinguished.

The Comprehensive Wedding Parlour and The Birth of The 'Ceremony Order'

With the growth of the *gojokai*, entrepreneurs saw the financial potential involved in the wedding business and decided to use the capital accumulated from their members' fees to build their own facilities. Efficiency played an important role in the decision to create a single physical space, since the latter enabled better control of all wedding proceedings and thus greater profits. The new style wedding parlour concentrated all the enterprises previously involved in one place by operating its own hairdressing and dressing salon, clothing rental service, Shinto shrine, photo studio, kitchen and ballrooms. A concrete example of this structure and its works will be given in the next chapter, but here I would like to illustrate the development of the wedding pattern which was created hand in hand with the establishment of the 'comprehensive wedding parlour'.

It seems that with the construction of wedding parlours, *gojokai* owners openly neglected the ideology of 'service for the common good', shifting to a more clearly stated 'market ideology' which stressed efficiency and better prices. It was only by the late sixties that Japan had recovered from the disaster of the war, only by that time that, with the beginning of the economic boom, wedding entrepreneurs could safely change their principles.¹⁸

Profit making was also the main motive for the creation of the fixed wedding pattern. For the owners of the new style wedding parlours it was not enough to have all the stages of the ceremony - starting with the preparation of the bride and ending with the reception - in one space. They had to think

also of the capacity of this space; in other words they wanted to make an optimum usage of space and time.

Considering the problem of the business day's 'output' or 'production', the entrepreneurs had to take into account various factors. There is a limited number of days in a year which Japanese consider to be 'good' for weddings. Apart from having weddings mainly on weekends and holidays in order not to interfere with working life, there are two other important considerations when they decide on a date for a wedding. One of them is seasonal: there is a strong preference for spring and autumn weddings, and the hot summer months (especially July and August) are usually avoided.¹⁹ Another consideration which still plays an important role is the astrological calender, borrowed from China and used to distinguish between auspicious and inauspicious days. Nowadays this calender is mainly used in the context of ceremonial occasions, namely in selecting between auspicious and inauspicious days for weddings and funerals,²⁰ and for certain ceremonies concerned with building.

Being the 'ceremonial occasions' specialists, the new wedding parlours' owners were bound to be aware of all these factors when seeking for a practical way to construct their wedding parlour system. As one of them²¹ told me in a very straightforward manner about the wedding reception described in the previous chapter:

..If you want to put on a lot of weddings on a 'good' day, it is useful to have a programme for the ceremonies. So we developed the ceremony to an order (*shiki shidai*) to ensure that it would finish in two hours...It was, and still is, better for business.

The New Style Weddings vis-à-vis Home Weddings

The extremely fixed pattern of wedding receptions, both in its time limit (two hours) and in its contents, contrasts sharply with the wedding reception pattern as it used to be

when held at home. Then, particularly in the country but also in the cities, receptions were a time for festivities. According to the well-known folklorist, Yanagida, during the Meiji period a rural party could last several days, while in the cities, even if the reception was held in a restaurant, there was a feeling of "feasting together" (Yanagida 1957:180-1). Later accounts of village weddings all describe receptions which might start with a rigid format but later lose their formal structure. "The wedding is an extreme example whereby a social gathering begins with stiff formality and ends with orgiastic abandon" writes Embree (1939:209) of a home wedding in the late thirties. Of a wedding twenty years later we hear the same: the reception might start "stiffly solemn" but later on "conversation warms" and by the end of the evening (at an unfixed time) "the men wend their jolly, unsteady way home" (Beardsley et al. 1959:326-7). Although the final result of the wedding parlour reception might be slightly similar to that of the home wedding, in that one may see men "wend" "their unsteady way" home under the influence of the alcohol consumed during the reception, it seems that at least part of the 'jolliness' has been sacrificed to a strict schedule. As one of Smith's informants puts it: "No one much likes this way of doing things [in the wedding parlour]. It's really flat and a lot less fun than it used to be" (Smith 1978:214).

Home weddings had a structure similar to that of other Japanese ceremonies and parties, especially when drinking is involved. These parties always started with a rigid format which broke up later on as people warmed to the occasion (Moeran 1986).

But, with the smaller size of urban houses (Edwards 1989:41) and, no less important, with the massive promotion of the more advantageous new style wedding, the Japanese, who also had more money to spend on a fashionable wedding, were gradually convinced to have their weddings at public spaces. As for the new wedding parlours owners, with profit and efficiency becoming the major motivations, they have developed a more fixed 'ceremony order'. Unlike restaurant owners who accepted

wedding parties in the 50s and 60s and who were satisfied with just one party in an evening, the new wedding parlour owners thought only of the next party of guests waiting to enter the banquet hall.

The Commercial Expansion of the New Wedding Pattern

The wedding description given earlier makes it obvious that wedding parlours have maintained the pattern which was invented during the 70s. Although there have been some changes throughout the years, these have all been made within the time constraints put into force as part of the idea of maximum utilization of time and place. While it may not be surprising that a successful idea is maintained by its own initiators, what is more striking is the expansion of an identical pattern to all other facilities offering wedding services. Seeing the growing success of the wedding parlours, hotels and public halls which offered wedding services, started imitating the wedding parlour's pattern. Shinto shrines have also found it appropriate to accommodate themselves to the pattern of services developed in the commercial sector (See Edwards 1989:49-51).

But how did this 'imitation' - as it was defined by a leading wedding entrepreneur - take place. The rather simplistic explanation given by him that "Japan is small so people quickly copy from each other" is not enough. Nevertheless, it is true that the pattern became widespread through a network of people and businesses involved. Firstly, there were the wedding parlour owners themselves, who were related to each other through the *gojokai* organizations.²² Thus, when one parlour incorporated a new feature it was soon imitated by other parlours. But there have also been other ways in which the pattern could spread, for other concerned businesses have been involved. These are various. Maybe the most direct 'carriers' of new practices are connected with the media. Magazines, especially women's magazines, have always been interested in weddings. Among women's magazines are those

which are clearly targeted at brides-to-be, and others which touch on the subject frequently through articles as well as through advertisements.²³ Apart from this kind of magazine which is basically for the general public, there is a large industry of more 'professional' literature for the wedding business circle.²⁴ These magazines have been very active in promoting various wedding-related businesses. Moreover, in a number of cases, the professional magazine itself is actually connected to a certain wedding-related business and is much more involved in the industry than merely reviewing its practices.²⁵

But the media have not been the sole promoter of wedding practices. Nor have they been the only ones to promote new features to fit the fixed pattern. We have seen that the commercial wedding is fabricated from an array of different ingredients and special effects. The 'production' (*enshutsu*) - as the special effects of the reception are called by wedding producers - involves other industries. For example, in order to create a white smoke effect ('angle cut') when cutting the wax wedding cake, a dry-ice machine is required. The same is true of other elaborations of the production. Clearly, it has been in these concerned businesses' interest that new ideas will become popular. Thus, the likelihood that any of the new effects or fashions entering the market also has to do with the successful promotion of the effects by the businesses concerned.

The End of the Wedding Parlours' Heyday

The seventies and early eighties were the 'glamorous days' of the specialized wedding parlours. Although wedding parlours were never the sole institutions to offer wedding services, the pattern initiated by them was embraced by all the other wedding facilities. Nevertheless, there have been significant changes in the popularity of wedding parlours as we can see in tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1
Places of Wedding Ceremonies and Receptions 1982/1990
(per cent; 1982:410 marriages, 1990:600 marriages)

Place	Ceremony		Reception	
	1982	1990	1982	1990
Wedding parlour	40.5%	26.7%	41.8%	28.2%
Hotel	28.0	40.8	30.5	45.3 ^a
Public Hall	14.9	12.2	15.5	13.3
Restaurant	n.d	0.7	n.d	5.3
Shrine/temple	8.3	6.5	5.3	1.3
Church (domestic)	3.2	7.3	0.7	0.5
Church (overseas)	0.7	2.5	-	-
Home	0.2	-	0.5	-
Other	3.9	1.5	-	2.3
Not held	0.2	1.2	0.5	3.0

SOURCES: Edwards (1989:51), Sanwa ginkō (Sanwa Bank) kyōshiki zengo no suitōbo (Tokyo 1982, 1990)
Note: n.d - no data.

^a The difference between ceremony and reception can be explained by more church ceremonies which are followed by hotel receptions.

TABLE 2
Changes in Wedding Locations 1976-90

Year	Wedding Parlour	Hotel	Public Hall	Shrine/temple	Other ^a
1976	34.5%	20.6%	17.5%	11.8%	14.8%
1977	35.5	20.5	19.7	11.5	12.5
1978	39.3	21.7	21.5	7.2	9.6
1979	43.6	20.5	20.0	7.9	8.0
1980	43.5	26.1	16.9	6.1	6.9
1981	39.9	29.2	19.4	4.2	6.8
1982	40.5	28.0	14.9	8.3	8.0
1983	42.7	23.9	15.0	8.2	9.5
1984	37.1	29.3	19.2	4.9	8.7
1985	39.8	30.6	15.1	6.2	6.8
1986	35.2	34.5	16.5	4.9	8.3
1987	32.3	38.4	15.0	5.2	8.9
1988	33.7	35.4	14.9	3.8	10.9
1989	29.9	42.7	11.4	4.5	10.7
1990	26.7	40.8	12.2	6.5	12.0

SOURCES: Sanwa ginkō (Sanwa Bank) kyōshiki zengo no suitōbo (Tokyo 1976, 1986, 1990)

^a 'Other' in this case includes: restaurants, churches, and the category 'other' in each year's table (see table 1).

Table 1 describes the places chosen for weddings in 1982 and 1990. The table is based on samples of couples living in the urban areas of Tokyo and Osaka.²⁶ Looking at the figures we can see that the two main types of commercial competitors are hotels and wedding parlours (about 70% together). This figure is true both for the data quoted by Edwards (1989:51) for 1982, and for 1990. Nevertheless, although wedding parlours and hotels have remained the most popular wedding facilities, the proportion between them is very interesting. When comparing the data for 1982 and 1990 we can see that between those years the popularity of wedding parlours as opposed to hotels has virtually 'reversed' itself. While in 1982 41.8% of couples chose to have their reception in a wedding parlour and 30.5% had their receptions in hotels, in 1990 only 28.2% got married in wedding parlours while 45.3% chose hotels.

But the change between 1982 and 1990 is only part of the whole picture. Table 2 describes the changes in wedding facilities' popularity from 1976 through 1990, and allows us to identify the wedding parlours 'peak' time as between mid 70s and the early 80s. In 1976, 34.5% of the sampled couples had their wedding parties in wedding parlours. By comparison, only 20.6% chose to have their parties in hotels. In 1979, there were already 43.6% wedding hall weddings while hotel weddings remained at the same level as three years previously (20.5%). Nevertheless, from the beginning of the 80s, there are signs of a new trend.

While the popularity of wedding parlours' weddings has not changed much from 1979 to 1980 (43.5% vs 43.6%), hotel weddings were starting to be more popular. In one year they rose by almost 6%. The next years brought a gradual decline in the prominence of wedding halls with a parallel rise in the appeal of hotels. This trend has continued until the time this research was conducted in 1990.

It is clear from tables 1 and 2 that from the mid 70s onwards the majority of young couples (around 70%) chose one of the most popular wedding facilities - wedding parlours or hotels. But what have the tables to tell us about the other

30%? Public facilities have stayed in third place. In spite of a few fluctuations through the years there is no sign that they are going to change this position. This will be explained later on as related to the search for a more 'expensive' and 'elegant' place for weddings.²⁷ Shrines and temples have also lost some of their customers, compared to 1976, a fact that could be explained by the growing centrality of all wedding facilities. The slight rise in 1990, however, may reveal a meagre trend for more 'personal style' weddings from the nineties. What about home weddings, the main site for weddings until the 1940s?. What we can see in table 1 (0.5% in 1982 and 0% in 1990), verifies what has been argued above that the new style commercial weddings have *totally* replaced home weddings.

Customers' Change of Taste and Wedding Parlours' Response

"Young people do not like wedding parlour weddings any more. They prefer hotel weddings just because they are more expensive", complained an experienced wedding parlour's sales lady as she discussed the difficulties of her promotion work, and coincidentally pinpointed the main grounds for the decline in wedding parlours' popularity as well as the coinciding rise in the appeal of hotel weddings. It is not prices *per se*, however, which make the difference between hotel and parlour weddings; rather, it is the different *image* they convey, especially in the eyes of young Japanese.²⁸

Targeting the young in the wedding parlours' promotion schemes is not a new practice (see Edwards 1989:90-1), but is related to the process by which the *gojokai* organizations have clearly changed their ideology to 'market ideology', and by which weddings have come to be promoted more as 'consumer products' than as family affairs. However, as with any product on the 'market', customers' taste tends to change. Thus, whereas before it seemed enough to attract the young with 'special offers' such as reduced honeymoon fares, later on, with the continuing decline in their popularity, wedding parlours realized that more significant steps were required.

These related to their image. While wedding parlours initially promoted themselves as delivering "better ceremonies for less" (see Edwards 1989:98), hotels have always kept an elegant, expensive image. This image is conveyed through advertising, in magazines and in public areas such as trains and train stations. A typical hotel advertisement has a Western model dressed in a gorgeous, usually white, wedding dress, and carries a title such as "Simplicity and Elegance", usually in English.²⁹ Hotel advertisements - especially those for the luxury hotels³⁰ -do not usually promote especially cheap packages. Instead they promote 'elegance', 'extravagance' and 'modernity'. What has become clear to some smart wedding parlour entrepreneurs is that it is this 'expensive' image that young Japanese are now looking for.

These entrepreneurs have always been very attentive to changes in public taste and in their own popularity. Thus, they are fully aware of the decline in their reputation vis-à-vis that of hotel weddings. Later on we will examine somewhat more pragmatic ways in which wedding parlour companies like Cobella deal with their decreasing fame. Here I would like to discuss the more subtle ways in which companies like Cobella have reacted.

Cobella, one of the largest and most successful *gojokai* organization in Japan, has been clearly aware of the new tastes, especially those of the young and the company's change of name from Hanshin *gojokai* to Cobella (*Kobera*) in 1987³¹ can be attributed to an understanding of the changing market. The choice of the new name was explained to the company's members and prospective members in various promotion materials. "We changed our name from *Gojokai* to Cobella (*Kobera*) along with the era" (*gojokai kara kobera e no jidai to tomo-ni*). They also give one source of the new 'modern' name. 'CO' derives from two English words, 'C' meaning 'Ceremonial', and 'O' 'Occasions'. 'Bella', they write (using English letters), stands for 'beautifully' (*utsukushiku*) in the Italian language (or 'belle' in French).³² All together, the company's full name is: Ceremonial Occasions Bella, or, Cobella (*kobera*) for

short. The fact that most of the company's customers probably are not that fluent in either Italian, French or English did not prevent the company from choosing the name, which can be seen as another example of the importance given to *form*. Most of the customers will probably remember only the Japanese *katakana*³³ version of the name *Kobera*. Indeed, one effective use of *katakana* is in changing a word which has a specific meaning - such as '*gojokai*'- into an abstraction (Fields 1988:37). The foreign ring of the name has a yet more significant role in that it creates a *modern*, stylistic image -an image that the wedding parlour previously lacked.³⁴

The change of name is of course only one example of a broader attempt at image change that Cobella has undertaken. The new style Bridal Fairs are another manifestation of the this. Special bridal exhibits have always taken place at Kobe Princess Palace , as in all other wedding parlours. These events, which the parlour puts on a few times a year, are used to display a selection of wedding items and services and also to simplify the process of their selection by couples and their families. Changes which occurred in these events can be seen on several levels. One of them is the size of the events. Bridal fairs which in the past were smaller and were mainly aimed at the company's members have now become grand events open to the general public. Moreover their style has become, as in the name of the company, more modern and 'Western'. This can be seen also in the central place now given to 'Western' wedding dresses, as opposed to 'traditional' Japanese costumes, on the costume display (see chapter 6).

Thus it could be said that in some ways Cobella is trying to 'blur' its 'traditional' *gojokai* image in favour of a 'modern' wedding facility image. Things are not that simple, however, especially since the company is still supported by a membership system. Therefore, parallel to the 'modern' bridal fairs which are yet again aimed at the young, the company still holds smaller scale bridal shows for its existing members. Unlike the grand Bridal Fairs, this kind of event is aimed at the parents rather than the young.³⁵ Here, yet again,

we can see how the company can use 'traditional' (the *gojokai* image) together with 'modern' (the 'modern' Bridal Fairs) as long as they both contribute to its financial aims.

Cobella: A Portrait of a 'Ceremonial Occasions' Company

As mentioned earlier, Cobella was established as Hanshin (Osaka-Kobe) Gojokai in 1969 by Utsunomiya Hideichi, the younger son of the founder of the Shōchikuden Group. Like his father and eldest brother in Kyoto, Hideichi started by giving wedding services through his new *gojokai* in a shrine in Nishinomiya (a town located between Osaka and Kobe). Only in 1975 did he open his first wedding parlour in the same city, and this is still the centre of his company.³⁶

Cobella is now not only the biggest company in the Shōchikuden Group, but also one of the largest *gojokai* businesses in Japan. It owns about seventeen wedding parlours and thirty funeral parlours and service centres all over the country.³⁷ The company which had around fifty thousand members in 1969, now has over one and a half million members.³⁸

Cobella, like all other *gojokai* organizations, is involved not only in weddings but also in funerals and other ceremonial occasions. Formally the company is divided into Shōchikuden for weddings (*konrei*) and Gyokusenin for funerals (*sōshiki*). The company tries to keep up a division between the two 'occasions' whose nature is somewhat contradictory, by having not only different names but also completely separate locations for each.³⁹ Nonetheless, as we will see below when dealing with the membership system, the capital for both businesses is jointly accumulated.

Cobella, like all other wedding parlour chains in Japan is basically a membership organization, offering a plan for guaranteeing low-cost weddings and funerals, as well as a saving system. The system of the *gojokai* seems not to have changed much since the time they were first established after the Second World War. The members still pay a monthly instalment over a period of several years and the money

accumulated is used for either a wedding or a funeral. However, whether or not the *gojokai* were purely altruistic in the first place,⁴⁰ this kind of attitude was abandoned from the seventies, with the growing success of the organizations themselves, and with economic development in Japan in general.

The way the membership system operates today in Cobella can be seen as yet another illustration of the way business adjusts to the changes in wedding practices in particular, and in Japanese society in general. It is also another manifestation of the sharp business intuition of its management. Acquaintance with the membership system and the changes it went through is important not only for an understanding of the *gojokai* business in general, but also for an understanding of the 'packaged' wedding pattern which is offered by the wedding parlour.

A 'Ceremonial Occasions' Package: The Membership System

Any person (both bride and groom) who wishes to get married in Kobe Princess Palace must be a member in Cobella.⁴¹ On subscribing, every new customer signs a contract with the company stipulating the services to which members are entitled if they keep their side of the agreement by paying a monthly instalment over a fixed period of time. There are three types of membership (marked by the letters K, P, and L). The prospective member can choose a monthly instalment of ¥3,000 for a period of 60 months, in which case the accumulated sum will be of ¥180,000 (K Type). The member could also pay the same amount for a longer period of 90 months in which case the money accumulated would reach ¥270,000 (P type). The highest rank - and recently the most popular type of membership (see below) - is ¥5000 monthly instalments for an eighty month period which can accumulate to ¥400,000 (L type) (see table 3).

The services offered vary according to the grade of membership. These are mainly quantitative (more services for

TABLE 3
Membership Types

Type of Membership	K	P	L
Accumulated amount	180,000	270,000	400,000
Monthly payment	3,000	3,000	5,000
Period of payments	60 months	90 months	80 months
Time of payment	by the end of each month ^a		
	The rest of the amount at once before using the rights		

^a. Several ways of payment are offered: automatic transfer, money collection (by sales ladies), bringing the money to Cobella's branch, by remittance.

higher rank) but can also be qualitative (higher services for a higher rank), such as a higher quality of wedding dresses. For example, it is stipulated in the contract that a bride of the highest rank (L type) is entitled to a 'French dress', and that a groom of L type is entitled for a special cake cutting service (compared with a regular one) called 'Angel cut'. A member can choose to move to a higher grade at any stage if he so wishes, but he can never move to a lower grade.

A member of whatever type does not have to complete the course of payments in order to receive the services. He is entitled to services after a period of 180 days, provided that he completes his payments at once (*mangaku*). On the other hand, if the member has completed his payments (*manki*), his right to use the services is preserved until he claims it.⁴²

The services stipulated in the contract between the member and the company are divided into two main categories: weddings (*kankon no bu*) and funerals (*sōsai no bu*). Within the wedding category there is another division into services which are provided for the groom and those for the bride. Any member⁴³ can use his rights only once per one membership card, for one of the three categories. After membership is used it is possible to subscribe again and the rights can be used in any of the branches of Cobella and the Shōchikuden Group.⁴⁴

In each of the categories (weddings and funerals) there is very precise specification of the props and services to which the member is entitled (in all three ranks). Thus, the way membership is organized suits the idea of a fixed pattern of weddings (and funerals). Members can not use the accumulated money as they wish, but they must comply with the services which are offered by the company. It is also very important to note that, neither in the case of weddings nor in that of funerals, does the accumulated amount cover all the expenses of the ceremony.

The Wedding 'Package'

A wedding at Kobe Princess Palace (and other Cobella parlours) requires that both the bride and the groom be members of Cobella. Thus the 'packages' (*pakku*) of services for brides and grooms are built in such a way that they will complement each other.⁴⁵ When looking carefully at the services stipulated for the couple, it is evident that, while the groom's 'package' includes various services connected to the wedding production - of the ceremony as well as other preparatory stages (wedding ring, betrothal (*yuinō*) set) - the bride's 'package' is totally different, consisting mainly of wedding costumes and anything related to dressing (and 'bride making').⁴⁶

This division between the couple's packages is not surprising considering the large difference in prices of costumes between the bride and the groom (see table 4). Bridal costumes have always been more expensive than those of the groom. But the clear distinction between the packages also has more practical aims, which are at least partially related to new wedding practices.

We have seen that there is a tendency for young Japanese nowadays to prefer hotel weddings, since they are considered more prestigious, especially by grooms who are established company employees, or who feel that their guests are too respectable to be invited to a wedding parlour. As a bride who

married a young scholar and a university employee explained : "It is maybe a strange way of putting it, but it seems that a hotel is higher, and when you invite famous professors you just can not invite them to a wedding parlour". This kind of attitude poses a problem in many cases in which the bride (or her family) is already a member of Cobella and a considerable amount of money has already been accumulated. Another 'cultural' consideration which further complicates the matter is the notion that "in Japan, the place of wedding is decided by the groom's family".⁴⁷ However, the way the bride's package is constructed and the way it can be used have come to solve these kinds of problems.

The idea behind the bride's 'package' is that there are more brides (or brides' families) who are long term members of the *gojokai*, since mothers of girls are usually more concerned with the costs of wedding costumes and thus tend to subscribe more than mothers of boys. When such a girl is about to marry, her prospective groom may join as well. On the other hand, if the groom does not wish to get married in the wedding parlour, the bride's package is built in such a way that the bride's family can avoid losing money while at the same time complying with the will of the groom's family as is allegedly expected. In this manner, the wedding industry does not only avoid obstructing existing gender distinctions but also serves a role in maintaining them.

The 'solution' offered to such 'conflicts' lies in the content of the bride's package. Since her package mainly consists of her own rented costumes, the whole 'package' can be used in a different wedding facility, most probably, hotel. In other words, the wedding will be carried out in a hotel which will supply all services apart from the bride's costumes. Moreover, Cobella goes even further by offering to compensate the other facility for its loss of profit from the bride's costumes, which are usually a considerable part of the wedding services.⁴⁸ This kind of arrangement is obviously not ideal from the wedding parlour's point of view since they lose the prospective profits from the whole wedding. Thus, wedding

parlours' managers first try to convince both the bride and groom to have the wedding in the parlour. Only if that fails do they resort to the above 'solution'.⁴⁸

Adjusting the Membership System to New Trends

The manipulation of the bride's 'package' is only one example out of many of the ways in which the membership system of Cobella - as well as of other *gojokai* - is being constantly adjusted in order to respond to changes in society in general and wedding practices in particular. 'Mutual benefit associations' like Cobella, have obviously understood that the membership system which was suitable for the harsh times of the early postwar period can not be still relevant, with the growing affluence of Japanese society.

It is possible to identify a few general stages in the changes which the membership system has gone through. At first, at the peak of the wedding parlours' success, from the early to mid-70s, *gojokai* entrepreneurs understood that their more affluent customers wanted more than a saving system to help them cover the wedding costs. They had more and more customers who wanted to use their child's wedding as a 'conspicuous display' of their growing social status, and wealth.⁵⁰ To satisfy the needs of this kind of customer they established the ranking system for fees mentioned above. For those who could afford it, the highest rank (L type) allowed the 'display' of more elegant (and so, expensive) costumes, and could provide a generally more luxurious and showy wedding.

But the offer of a more extravagant wedding did not seem to be enough, so that later on, especially with the growing success of hotel weddings and the corresponding decline of wedding parlour weddings, those running the latter revealed that the system itself had ceased to be relevant. As the manager of Kobe Princess Palace puts it: "People are rich now, they do not need to save money for weddings". This realization, together with the identification of the young as

the main customers, has led to the opening - although not formally - of Cobella's parlours to non-members. This means that people can now become members in Cobella after they have decided to have their wedding at one of its parlours.

While other *gojokai* organizations have formally opened their gates to non-members - offering them services for slightly higher prices, Cobella still insists that anyone who uses its wedding-related services first become a member. Although Cobella is aware that the young couple's opinion about their wedding venue and style has become very significant, it chooses to take a 'safe' attitude, and not to ignore completely the parents' role. We have already seen an example of this 'policy' in the two types of bridal fairs, with the more 'old-fashioned' type of events being said to appeal to the parents of prospective brides and grooms. The wedding contents themselves are another example for the maintenance of ideas of 'traditional' side by side with 'Western-modern' (see mainly chapter 7).

In this 'play' between 'traditional' and 'Western-modern', and between attracting the young or their parents, Cobella has recently started to manipulate the 'membership' system itself. This is done by trying to give a 'modern' aspect to the membership by issuing a 'Cobella-card' after the fashion of various club-cards. The holder of the card is entitled to discounts in various shops, which are not necessarily concerned in any way with weddings, but have made an agreement with Cobella. Cobella also started to offer various activities for card holders, such as trips to hot springs, or beach resorts (especially 'for young' as the advertisement states). The company has even opened a course for Jet-skiing given in one of its parlours. This course is open also to non-members, although members have special rates.

Wedding Costs

Kobe Princess Palace marries only members of the *gojokai*, some of whom have already saved a considerable amount of money over the years, while others have become members after deciding to get married in the wedding parlour. But is the amount accumulated really sufficient for a wedding? Table 4 lists the prices of wedding related services, based on a rough estimate of wedding costs which the parlour prepares for its customers. If we look at the total sum of costs which amounts to around ¥1,800,000 (for a reception of 50 guests), we can see that the accumulated membership money does not nearly cover expenses.⁵¹

Let us look at what wedding costs consist of. It is clear that expenses for the reception, including the various parts of the 'production' ('*enshutsu*'): such as the memorial candle, dry ice and the like, constitute a considerable part of the costs. Other costs include a relatively low fee for the religious ceremony (¥15,000) and various expenses connected with the engagement ceremony, presents to guests (which can actually be regarded as part of the reception costs). We can also see that the wedding parlour charges for each of the elements of the total production. Thus, it is clear that any elaboration in the production is directly translated into more profit. This explains the process of invention and elaboration in the confines of the fixed pattern, which will be discussed further later on (see chapter 7).

It is also evident when looking carefully at table 4 that wedding costume rental constitutes another significant part of the general wedding costs. Altogether wedding costumes for the couple and relatives reach ¥774,000 (about 40% of all wedding costs). Of this amount bridal costumes constitute the largest amount (¥581,000) (77%). The prices of costume rental, together with the relatively high prices of photographs and video (together ¥177,000)⁵² illustrate the importance of presentation in the modern commercialized wedding. The

TABLE 4
Wedding Costs Kobe Princess Palace 1990-91
(calculated for 50 guests)^a

Service	Cost	
Engagement (yuinō):		
betrothal set	35,000	
betrothal receipt set	3,000	
sub-total:		38,000
Ceremony and miscellaneous:		
ceremony fee	15,000	
wedding invitations	9,000	
seating charts	5,500	
video	80,000	
sub-total		109,500
Reception:		
food	500,000+	
sake	5,600+	
beer	13,400+	
flower arrangements	38,800	
master of ceremonies	40,000	
memorial heart (candle)	12,000	
dry ice	16,000	
karaoke	24,000	
microphone	3,000	
use of facility	25,000	
sub-total		679,800
Gifts for guests and related miscellaneous:		
souvenirs	90,000	
confectionery (gifts)	30,000	
paper bags	10,500	
tea in waiting rooms	4,000	
flower presentation	6,000	
sub-total		140,500
Photographs:		
group photograph	15,000	
photograph bridal couple	15,000	
western bridal couple photo	15,000	
other four poses	52,000	
sub-total:		97,000

Service	Cost
Costume Rental:	
Bride's attire:	
uchikake	250,000+
furisode	180,000+
wedding dress	100,000+
underwear set	3,000
beauty shop's dressing	48,000
sub-total	581,000
Groom's attire:	
Japanese formal wear	30,000
tuxedo	30,000
underwear set	3,000
sub-total	63,000
Family formal costumes:	
6 tomesode	120,000
2 morning suits	10,000
sub-total	130,000
sub-total costume rental:	774,000
Total Wedding Costs:	1,838,000

Note: The rate of exchange in this period was about f1=¥250.

* Costs and the way they are sectioned are taken from a written rough estimate (gaisan-sho) which is given to customers. To the rough estimation one should add a few more items which are not included but are always used. Among them: the bridal bouquet (¥20,000+), wig decorations and others.

significance of presentation and appearance is specially accentuated in the case of the bride (see chapter 5 and 6).

Given that wedding practices developed in the comprehensive wedding parlours established by the *gojokai* organizations have come to be practised in all other wedding facilities as well, it may be assumed that wedding costs in Kobe Princess Palace can be taken as a rough guideline to wedding costs in similar facilities as well. Total costs (as are shown in table 4) come to over ¥1,800,000. In practice, with other unlisted costs, the sum usually does not fall below ¥2,000,000 (around £8000). This assumption includes public facilities and shrines which now offer commercial weddings. Although the price charged by public facilities like those

maintained by municipal governments are known to be slightly lower than those of wedding parlours (see Edwards 1989:50), according to my investigations they offer exactly the same services for almost the same costs. The same can be said for Shinto shrines. Hotels, however, are considered more prestigious and so, although they offer the same style of wedding, their costs are said to be twice or even three times higher than those of other facilities.⁵³ The average wedding cost calculated by an annual survey on wedding expenditure made by the Sanwa Bank mainly in the areas of Tokyo and Osaka was over ¥2,500,000 (over £10,000) for 1990. This higher cost can be explained by the fact that the survey pertains to all facilities including hotels. The Sanwa Bank survey also gives the average amount of total expenditure related to marriage, including honeymoon and preparation for marital life (furniture). This amounts to a total of ¥7,562,000 (£30,000). Although it can not be accurately measured, it is important to remember that Cobella, and other *gojokai* for that matter, offers a larger 'wedding plan', and thus it can get profits also from other wedding related services and goods such as the honeymoon and bridal furniture, as will be more elaborately explained in the next chapter.⁵⁴

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have followed the history of the wedding industry and the development of the prevailing wedding pattern. In very general terms, we can identify a process which has started mainly after the Second World War. This process which began with informal home weddings has, in its most popular form, now turned into extravagant, extremely formal, prestige presentation weddings which take place in hotels and wedding parlours. I have identified such 'real' agents of change as the *gojokai* organizations and other related businesses in this process, and have also distinguished certain important historical periods, such as the early postwar, and the seventies.⁵⁵ The latter which seem

to constitute the 'glamorous days' of the wedding parlours, were also the time of a beginning of an 'economic boom' and rising affluence of Japanese society. These general trends starting in the seventies have influenced the wedding industry's customers' tastes leading to the present appeal of extravagant weddings.

It is possible to see the process as one in which weddings which were initially family (and community) affairs gradually became consumer products. I have noted that one of the important steps in the development of the new style wedding was its leaving the private sphere. It was only in such public locations that organized production could start to emerge. This point is interesting because of the link made by Hobsbawm (1983a:304) between 'invention of tradition' and the construction of 'formal ritual spaces'. Hobsbawm - like others in the same volume (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) - finds the importance of 'formal ritual spaces' in the national or rather political domain. I, however, would like to expand this theory by suggesting that the use of such public spaces can be profitably and efficiently used by economic institutions as well.

The case of another 'ceremonial occasion' may highlight this point concerning the importance of 'public spaces' in the process of production and invention of new 'ceremonial' practices. While the seventies and early eighties were the heyday for *gojokai* weddings, the nineties - according to Ceremonial Occasions entrepreneurs - are going to be marked by much higher profits from funerals (see also chapter 3, note 19).

Naturally, the role played by Cobella - and other *gojokai* - in the case of a funeral is very different from that played in a wedding. All large *gojokai* organizations hold a service line twenty-four hours a day. Cobella has connections and people posted at all big hospitals so that aid can be given soon after death. It also owns a fleet of cars, including those to carry the body from the hospital to the home, as well as special decorated cars to carry the deceased body from the

place of the last farewell (funeral) ceremony (*kokubetsu-shiki*) to the crematorium. While weddings are promoted as 'good value for money', the *gojokai* services for funerals are promoted mainly on grounds of professionalism, and quick and total service. The family of the deceased is believed to be in a state of shock and despair, and so unable to perform all the necessary arrangements for the funeral. Cobella offers to do all required arrangements from the time of death until the funeral ceremony and cremation. The *gojokai*'s role as a 'ceremonial occasions' expert is very obvious in the case of funerals. Each detail is taken care of and the family is also given clear directions on how to behave in each part of the mourning services. These directions are given orally, on the spot, as well as through reading materials, and recently also on videos marketed by Ceremonial Occasions businesses.⁵⁶

While until the late eighties most of the *gojokai* funeral services were carried out by them at the deceased home, from the early eighties *gojokai* organizations have started constructing luxury funeral parlours which offer space and services for the central funeral ceremony (*kokubetsu-shiki*) held in the funeral day before the cremation, as well as for the long wake night (*tsuya*) held the night before. These recent establishments are clearly a part of the shift in the Ceremonial Occasions industry's strategy in the direction of further promotion of funerals. In this case - as in that of weddings in the seventies - the establishment of a public space is closely linked with financial interests. Interestingly enough, the Ceremonial Occasions industry uses the same kind of argument - such as the smaller sizes of urban houses - as used to be given by entrepreneurs and scholars (see Edwards 1989:41) for the 'need' of a public space in the case of weddings.

The structure of these establishments also suggests another manifestation of the total service offered by the Ceremonial Occasions industry. Apart from special halls for the services, they usually also sell household Buddhist altars (*butsudan*), and - just like wedding halls hold gifts for the

guests (*hikidemono*) - they handle the proper items given in return for condolence gifts (*kōden-gaeshi*), another indispensable department is that for mourning costumes. In other words, the 'total service' is also clearly translated into profits

The creation of public spaces for funerals - as for weddings before that - has led to the production of 'invented traditions', such as elaborate (and extremely expensive) altars (*saidan*), and even elaborate mourning costumes. Although there is much less room for invention in the case of mourning costumes - compared to wedding costumes (see chapters 6 and 7) - which are basically black, the industry has started promoting tuxedos (like the one used in weddings, but with a black tie) for the main mourners. The introduction of a tuxedo, which is clearly seen as 'Western' (see chapter 7), seems to be a part of the same tendency which led Cobella to publish a fancy brochure about funerals which carried the English name: *Final Ceremony*, in both cases adding a 'modern-Western' 'flavour' is part of the elaboration and invention. This process of 'invention' which this thesis goes on to discuss in detail (chapter 7), has been only alluded to in this chapter which has filled in the background to an understanding of that process.

7. See description of the parlour's wedding for the photographer's role. The photographs play an important role also in other ceremonial occasions such as funerals (see for example Smith (1978:157-8)). It is also an important part of the Coming of Age Ceremony (*seijin shiki*) as will be described later on, (see chapter 5), and part and parcel of the 'arranged marriage' (*miai kekkon*).

8. As is explained below, the term *kaiin* is not directly translated to the English word 'member'. Nevertheless, for the sake of convenience I will from now on use the term member to refer to *kaiin*.

9. The fact that the initiators of these kinds of associations, such as the person who established the organization which owns Kobe Princess Palace (see below), were mainly entrepreneurs, poses a question about their stated ideology. In any case, nowadays these organizations have more or less abandoned this 'altruistic' ideology, though to some extent they still promote their services as being cheaper and economically wiser.

10. The costumes remain until today the only direct service Shōchikuden offers, apart from the physical space for the wedding. All the other services are still offered by other related companies, as will be illustrated in the next chapter.

11. Edwards's (1989) account is of this kind of a *gojokai* located in a provincial centre of several hundred thousand which he refers to as "Hirayama".

12. At that time funerary services were performed at home, for this purpose a special altar and decorations were needed. The local shop gathered money and with it purchased one altar and decorations to be then rented to the same people in relatively low prices. Nowadays the same rites are offered to members in a special hall owned by the *gojokai*.

13. The various *gojokai* have always had areas of control, in other words, decided areas in which they are allowed to recruit members.

14. I have to admit that it was difficult to get more details concerning the precise kind of relations between the three companies. What came up over and over again in interviews with people at the top of each of the companies, including members of the Utsunomiya family, was the duality in the relationship. "We are separate companies" on the one hand, while, on the other hand, 'Shōchikuden' was presented as one entity. Business confidentiality, I suppose, is only one reason for the difficulty in getting such information; family relations and possibly family intrigues, are another reason.

15. This system is somewhat similar to arrangements of other large commercial household confederations in Japanese history. This kind of confederation which in Kyoto in the Tokugawa period was called *noren uchi* (within the shop curtain), had a main household (*honke*) to which two kinds of branches were related. One kind of branches was those headed by blood-related kin (*bunke*), the others were headed by non-kin (*bekke*). Apparently, merchant households were especially receptive to non-kin members, for merchants were not dependent on land as their chief resource (Kondo 1990: 162-3). (For more about the subject and the changes which occurred through the Meiji period and later on see Kondo (1990:162-175); on modern family confederations (*dōzoku*) see Nakane (1967), Nakane (1984), Hamabata (1990)).

I must note here that this version suggesting that parlour owners were always former apprentices was given to me by the daughter of the late head of the family, according to her account no one has ever paid for the right to use their name. However, I have heard a slightly different version from the manager of Kobe Princess Palace who argued that the right is sometimes bought. It is hard to say if the discrepancy in the accounts is a result of lack of knowledge of a company employee (the manager) or rather a distinction between ideology and reality. In such case it is interesting how an attempt to attach a 'traditional' attribute to the company is being made (by the founder's daughter). We will be able to see similar examples later on.

16. It is interesting to note here that not all *gojokai* developed in the same way as *Shōchikuden*. For example, the second largest wedding parlour network, Heian Kaku did not expand as a family business. Instead, independent entrepreneurs use the same name on a basis of agreements on separate business areas.

17. 'Specialised wedding parlours' (*senmon kekkon shikijō*) was another term used by the 'comprehensive wedding parlours' in order to distinguish themselves from the unspecialized services offered by regular restaurants.

18. See Smith (1978:7) for a 'micro' level discussion of the late economic recovery in a village after the war.

19. There are various 'theories' concerning 'good' days. For example April was not considered a good month since the cherry blossoms are falling. April had another connotation of death, in its name *shigatsu* (literally the fourth month), *shi* (in a different character) also denotes death. May, on the other hand, was regarded as a very good month. Although seasonal considerations have not been completely abandoned, the wedding industry has succeeded in promoting weddings in 'new' months. June is a very good example, there has been a big campaign for 'June Weddings' which have had its effect. The summer months are promoted for cheaper weddings. The explanation usually given to such changes is that since all the parlours are air-conditioned there is no reason weddings should not take place in summer.

20. The best day for weddings is still considered to be 'daian' (or 'taian') which is considered a lucky day for everything. For more about the lunar months system see Hendry (1981: Append:240-2). On the issue of scheduling the wedding from the customers' point of view, see Edwards (1989:83-86).

21. A 56 year old lady, owner of several wedding and funeral parlours and employer of 570 people. Her parlours carry the name of Shōchikuden's main competitor. In our long conversations she was very frank about the practical and financial goals of her business as well as that of other Ceremonial Occasions businesses.

22. These links between the various *gojokai* organizations have also more formal expressions, in collaborative associations. One of these associations is "Zen Nihon Kankon Sōsai Gojo Kyōkai" ("All Japan Ceremonial Occasions Mutual Benefit Association"). Another organization is "Zen Nihon Kankon Sōsai Gojo Kyōdō Kumiai" ("All Japan Ceremonial Occasions Mutual Benefit Cooperative Association"). Each of these organizations has its own publications which are circulated around the wedding parlours. "Zen Nihon Kankon Sōsai Gojo Kyōkai" occasionally also publishes material for the general public, including comic strip books (*manga*) which explain to prospective members all they want to know about the *gojokai* organizations.

Apparently, although these associations are supposed to represent all *gojokai* organizations, there are affiliations among particular *gojokai* groups and particular associations, however all *gojokai* can benefit from the various publications, for gaining information.

23. An example of a magazine which is explicitly for brides-to-be is *Bright Bridal*. The magazine gives its female-readers current information about wedding costumes, honeymoons and the like. It also usually includes an expanded review of a wedding facility. In one of its editions (March 1987) it introduced Shōchikuden in a 40 page promotion type article (paid by Shōchikuden). Other general women magazines such as *25 Ans*, or *Classy*, also have recurrent references to weddings.

24. One of these magazines is *Hanayome* (Bride) which is defined as aiming at professional dressers. The magazine deals mainly with wedding costumes and is often used in the wedding parlour as a source for imitating new fashions.

25. *Hanayome* (Bride), for example is published by the biggest bridal make-up company, *Hyakunichisō*, which also organizes dressing competitions and training sessions for professional dressers.

26. The data for Tables 1,2 are taken from surveys conducted by the Sanwa Bank annually from 1976. This is also the source of the data used by Edwards (1989: 49-50, tables 2,3).

27. The same explanation can account for the rise in popularity of church weddings (3.2% domestic churches in 1982, 7.3% in 1990). For young Japanese churches are symbols of 'Western' modernity, and having the wedding ceremony in a church does not have anything to do with religion.

28. It seems that the notion that hotel weddings are much more expensive than wedding parlours weddings is more an image than reality. Looking at the Sanwa Bank data on the matter, the difference in price is not that big. Although there are a few very luxurious hotels which indeed charge as much as twice or three times more than wedding parlours, there are also other lower grade hotels which charge just about the same as parlours. However, the less luxurious hotels may benefit from the image. It is interesting that even wedding parlour entrepreneurs themselves are 'trapped' in this image, for the manager of Kobe Princess Palace said that hotel weddings were as much as twice or three times more as wedding parlour weddings.

29. The slogan "Simplicity & Elegance" is for the Hotel Okura in Tokyo. Another example, out of many, is the slogan used by Akasaka Tokyu hotel: "Elegance Marieé", giving a somewhat French flavour.

On the use of foreign models in Japan see Fields (1988:23-31). On 'Western' brides see chapter 6 of the thesis.

30. Luxury hotels may have gained popularity also as a result of the tendency in Japanese society to consider 'brand names' and labels. Thus getting married in a luxurious hotel such as the hotel Okura, for example, may resemble shopping at a high class store such as Mitsukoshi (see Vogel 1967:82). Moreover, the high status symbol is given by the hosts as a 'present' to their guests - as the appropriate 'packaging' for the gifts they receive - by supplying them with a paper bag which carries the name of the hotel. According to Louella Matsunaga (private communication), this attitude of ranking can be seen also in the very clear distinction between the relatively lower rank supermarkets (*sūpa*) as opposed to the more prestigious department stores (*depato*).

31. 1986, the year before, was actually the last year in which wedding parlours were (only slightly) higher than hotels. From that year on, there has been only a decline in wedding parlours' popularity (see table 2).

32. On another occasion in a television advertisement the company gave another interpretation of the word. This time it was a Bell, which was presented in the advertisement. Of course this bell was supposed to 'ring a bell' to ('Western') wedding bells.

33. Katakana is one of two Japanese phonetic alphabets. It is usually used for loan-words.

34. The same concept lies in the use of Princess Palace as attached to Shōchikuden. Cobella is not the only company which had the idea of changing its name to a katakana word, larger companies have been doing the same. In 1991 ten companies listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange changed their corporate name, "hoping to create a modern and international image.." (The Daily Yomiuri April 1991). A spate of corporate name changes hit Japan as a result of the so-called CI (or corporate identity) boom in the early eighties (Fields 1988).

35. This kind of event is usually much shorter than the grand Bridal Fairs which extend over two or three days. The old style bridal show is a one day event which includes a free lunch for members and prospective members. All the participants are invited by sales ladies (see chapter 3). Some of the participants - mainly women (or mothers) - are long term members who might have a scheduled wedding or a very general plan for a wedding for their son or (more probably) daughter, who has reached the right age for marriage. Others are prospective members invited by a sales lady in the hope that the show - which displays besides costumes, a selection of available scenes and special effects - will convince them to join the association.

36. The first wedding parlour was eventually pulled down in 1990. The reason given for the decision was that business did not go very well there. The parlour looked old fashioned compared to other newer halls, its facade was in a Japanese style in an imitation of a shrine. The interior looked much less luxurious than other newer parlours, while the various rooms, including ballrooms, were smaller. It seems that the company decided that the Nishinomiya parlour was out of date. This decision can be seen as part of the general attempt of Cobella to keep with the times and appeal to young people's taste.

37. The data given here is true for 1989 when Cobella celebrated its 20th anniversary. Thus, the number of establishments now is probably slightly higher, since every year there are new investments. Most of the wedding parlours established by Cobella were newly established although there have been also a few mergers, when Cobella took over less successful parlours. The mergers have been from competing *gojokai* companies, but also within the Shōchikuden Group itself. ('*Kankon Sōsai Times*' 1989).

38. At about the same time the total number of *gojokai* members all over Japan was said to be seventeen million (Sanda and Tsuda:1988). At the end of March 1991 payments made by members to *gojokai* businesses totalled 1.018 trillion yen (up 7% from the previous year). (This is the amount reported by *gojokai* organizations to the Ministry of International Trade and Industry) (The Japan Times July 18).

39. The problem of joint location and business did not seem to exist when the father of the family started the business and divided the same shop into weddings and funerals. Thus, one may

wonder if the separation which is now emphasised by the company, as that between happy (*medetai*) occasions such as weddings, and sad occasions such as funerals, is not a more recent modern influence.

40. Although the new *gojokai* established from 1948 onwards emphasized their service "for the common good" of their members (Edwards 1989:43), I have questioned the taking for granted of their stated ideology. This was based on the fact that most *gojokai* initiators were involved in business before establishing these associations.

41. As will be shortly explained, recently, apart from long-term members, there is a rather large number of people who become members after they have already decided to get married in the wedding parlour. In either of the cases the membership system is the same from the moment they subscribed.

42. It is emphasized in the pamphlets which are distributed to the members that "No matter how much prices rise, the content of the service stipulated in the contract when you subscribed is not going to change". Nevertheless according to the contract, Cobella promises a 7% rise in the value of your money over a period of five years. There is no mention of a case in which the services will be used after five years.

43. Or any one of his family, as the contract stipulates.

44. There is also the possibility of transferring one's rights to a different *gojokai* if the member moves to a different area, but this is subject to certain conditions including the consent of the other *gojokai*. In any case, if such a transference occurs, the member is bound to be subjected to a certain loss.

45. A rather cynical expression of Edwards's (1989:120-3) main argument about the incompleteness of each sex finding its solution in 'harmonious' marriage.

46. About 'bride making' see chapters 4,6. The 'package' includes also formal costumes for the bride's family. The only exception in the bride's package is a set of engagement receipt (*yuinō ukesho setto*).

47. The groom's side usually also determines the wedding style. Such was the case of the bride who married in a hotel because of her groom's honourable guests. There the couple had the choice of a Christian ceremony (which is considered more 'modern'). However, they chose a 'traditional' Shinto ceremony because, in the bride's words, the groom was from the countryside and "a modern wedding was out of the question".

48. There is a fee called *mochikomi-riyō* (bringing-in fee) which a customer has to pay if she brings her own costumes into the wedding facility. This fee is covered by Cobella. In the rare cases that brides bring their own costumes to the wedding parlour, they also have to pay a certain fee.

49. The manager of Kobe Princess Palace boasted in his success to 'keep' most of the couples in the wedding parlour. But even in his case more than 20% of the brides use their 'packages' in other facilities. In other Cobella parlours the number has already reached 50% of the customers.

50. Vogel (1967:81-2) writes about the beginning of this kind of 'conspicuous display of wealth' through the child's wedding in the late sixties, as he observed it in the 'new middle class' of Japanese salary men and their families. "It is not unusual for the parents of the bride and groom to spend the equivalent of two or three times the young husband's salary on the wedding..."

51. This is true even considering the fact that the member receives more for his money; see for example the bridal package which is ¥400,000 compared to the real cost of costumes (¥581,000).

52. This amount does not include the large number of snap shots taken throughout the wedding. Nor does it include other optional studio photographs such as that of the go-between (*nakōdo*) couple or a family photograph with parents, which are occasionally included.

53. This information is based on informants' reports. However in the case of hotel weddings it is important to note that there are many levels of hotels and accordingly varied prices. Thus this information mainly refers to the most prestigious hotels. In this respect, hotels are different from wedding parlours which all have the same prestige.

54. The total expenditures include also other expenses such as the cash payment for the engagement, a cash gift to the go-between (*nakōdo*) of which the wedding industry does not benefit directly.

As for the costs, we can see a slight rise from the costs quoted from the same source in 1982 by Edwards (1989). The wedding cost was then ¥2,014,000, and the total expenditure ¥6,853,000.

55. Another crucial historical period is the Meiji period. Its ideological as well as historical importance will be dealt with in chapter 7.

56. It is rumour that the idea of teaching how to behave during the funeral was taken by the Ceremonial Occasions industry from a film called *Sōshiki* (Funeral) (or, *Death Japanese Style*, in the English version) by Itami Jūzū, in which the hero gets such a video. This anecdote is interesting especially when considering the mockery of the importance of form in Japanese ceremonies made by Itami Jūzū in the film.

Chapter Three:

THE 'COMPREHENSIVE WEDDING PARLOUR': ORGANIZATION AND WORK

I began this thesis with a depiction of a contemporary Japanese wedding whose production was so efficient that I went on to compare it with an assembly line. Having explained how this efficient wedding practice was developed - I will now show how the productive 'machinery' actually works. In this chapter, therefore, I will describe the organizational structure of Kobe Princess Palace, as well as draw some portraits of a few of the characters who are directly responsible for the production of weddings, and for the promotion of wedding 'packages'. A closer acquaintance with the parlour, its operation, its employment practices, and its people is essential to further understanding of its products.

I have claimed that my account was going to offer a distinct viewpoint, that I was going to present a 'backstage' view of the wedding. It is in this chapter that some of the 'real' backstage stories can be found. These are the stories of how the customer is actually seen in the parlour. Here, again, emerges the question of who the real actors are in this show called 'wedding'. We will also see how the production of the event for the customers is so total that it continues well after it was finished, by controlling the ways it is remembered.

Looking carefully behind the 'screen' of the efficient and 'harmonious' production machinery it will be also possible to find some 'cracks' in the harmony. The origin of these 'cracks' is in the internal relations and conflicts of interest among the various actors in the production. This perspective will be translated into questions of a more general kind in the concluding part of the chapter.

Organization of The Wedding Parlour

All wedding parlours in Japan call themselves 'comprehensive'. As previously explained, this means that each parlour provides all those services which are in any way related or necessary for weddings. These services are usually also concentrated under one roof. While some wedding parlours actually own and directly control all the various departments in their parlours, some of them operate differently. Most of the parlours managed by Cobella and many of those owned by the Shōchikuden Group do not supply all wedding services directly. After signing a contract with the customer, Cobella sub-contract other specialized companies to supply the necessary services.

The reasons behind this way of operating are the same as those which explain why the large majority of the parlours' workers are employed on a part-time basis. The main consideration as defined by the manager of Kobe Princess Palace is that of *efficiency*. As we have seen, the wedding business is very much effected by seasonal as well as other calendrical considerations. In other words, there are many days during the year in which no weddings are performed. While other wedding parlour companies meet this reality by employing part-time staff as well as by gradually 'stretching' the calender, adding June and Summer weddings, Cobella minimizes losses also by its sub-contracting system. As we will see, individual part-timers and sub-contracted companies not only have in common the reason for their employment in the first place, but also the way they are seen and treated by *The Company* (*kaisha*) as Cobella is called by its related companies.

The Structure of Kobe Princess Palace

One of the few full time Cobella employees in the wedding parlour is its manager who is not only in charge of the small staff who are employed directly by Cobella, but also acts as

a kind of mediator between the sub-companies and Cobella. Although the idea behind having sub-contracted companies is that of efficiency, many daily problems occur and the manager has to try and solve them at the parlour level before turning to the head office for advice if necessary. The present manager of Kobe Princess Palace is a man in his late thirties, a university graduate.¹ Like other parlour managers in Cobella he started his career as a front desk employee, in charge of wedding reservations. Later on he worked in the funeral department. He has been the manager of the parlour since it was established in 1981. As a full time employee he has to comply with any decision which is made by Cobella's management. However, Cobella encourages its parlour managers to develop their own ideas, especially about promotion schemes or concerning new 'scenes' to be added to the wedding reception.² The managers also have regular meetings in which they discuss new ideas and promotion schemes.

Directly under the manager are a few employees who work as Front Desk staff. Their jobs are remarkably varied and include wedding reservations, honeymoon bookings and ordering of furniture.³ Male staff sometimes also act as 'models' in bridal fairs, and help in directing the wedding reception. The scope of the tasks differs according to an employee's experience and sex.⁴ Both men and women wear uniforms. While men (including the manager) wear black suits with a butterfly tie, women wear pink two piece suits. The number of these employees, who work on a part-time basis, changes according to the wedding schedule. Most of them are young, with women being usually not older than 25, and men not normally more than 30. Among the Front Desk staff there are two male employees, who are older, and work on a full-time basis. Although the latter are considered superior to their part-time counterparts, they also participate in most essential tasks.

Apart from the Front Desk personnel, Cobella employs directly, also on a part-time basis, a few women who work as waitresses at the reception. (Although if necessary Front Desk men also help). The two or three ladies who act as attendants

-and who are the ceremonial guides - are also part-time employees of Cobella, as are the young student-shrine maidens who work at the Shinto ceremony.⁵ There are, of course, many other people who are involved in the wedding production, but they are employed by other companies.

The Parlour's Subcontractors

Perhaps somewhat differently from other cases of heavier industries, most of the wedding parlour's sub-contracted work is performed within its confines.⁶ This centralization is necessary for the fluent production of weddings. The parlour's subcontractors can be roughly divided into suppliers of goods and suppliers of services. While most suppliers of goods are not personally represented in the parlour, suppliers of services employ their own staff, although - like the parlour itself - usually on a part-time basis.⁷ Another important difference between suppliers of goods and of services is that while the former are not exclusively confined to one wedding parlour, some of the service suppliers are restricted from offering services to others outside the parlour itself.

The most loosely connected to the parlour are the various traders of the goods given as gifts for the wedding guests (*hikidemono*). Their shops get paid when orders are made for their goods, after the wedding parlour has taken its cut.⁸ The same kind of arrangement goes for other companies such as the jewellery company. The only suppliers which have a different arrangement are those who supply Japanese bridal accessories which are promoted through the beauty shop. In these cases the beauty shop also gets its cut (see below).

The company most strictly subordinated to the parlour is the catering service. The parlour has a kitchen built in its confines since preparing the food on the spot is necessary for a smooth flowing reception. On the other hand, Cobella finds it unprofitable to train expert cooks and to have its own kitchen inactive on a considerable number of days in a year. It is much more efficient - as the parlour manager explained -

to have a smaller specialized catering company which on a contract basis provides its services exclusively to the parlour.

The same rationale which holds for sub-contracting the catering lies at the basis of the relationship the parlour has with other companies. In the cases of the photo studio and the beauty shop, it is regarded as more efficient for the parlour to hire their specialized services rather than to train and employ its own staff to do the required tasks. In the case of the coffee shop, specialization is not so much the cause as profitability -or lack thereof; it is considered more profitable (or rather, less ineffective) to let another company 'suffer' from the irregular spread of weddings over the week and the year. Unlike with the catering, the three other companies are allowed, according to their contracts, to offer services also to other interested customers, as well as to the parlours' direct customers. However, in all cases the parlour supplies the majority of business to its subcontractors, a fact which - as we shall see later - is clearly reflected in the relationship between the parlour and the smaller companies.

The policy that Cobella has of using the services of either people or companies on a partial basis goes well beyond the supply of services and goods. Later on I will describe how even the main promoting job of the parlour - the sale of weddings and the recruiting of new *gojokai* members - is done by female workers who are employed by private agencies, rather than directly by Cobella. Acquaintance with these women and their work is crucial for a wider understanding of the wedding business. However, before this, I would like to elaborate a little more on the relations between the parlour and its subcontractors. This will be done by illustrating the cases of the beauty shop and the clothing department.

The Beauty Shop's Position in the Wedding parlour

Before the age of commercialized weddings, the beautician's role at the wedding was performed at the bride's home. Nowadays, however, having a beauty shop in the confines of the wedding facility is considered a real necessity. This is true of all kinds of facilities, including hotels and public facilities. Being in charge of the creation of the bride's appearance in all stages of the wedding, the beauty shop has a central role both in wedding preparations and in the production of the wedding day itself. The beauty shop's distinct position is even more accentuated owing to its 'traditional' image. This unique position will be discussed at length in the next chapter. Here, however, I would like to consider briefly the financial aspects of the relationship between the beauty shop and the wedding parlour.

The beauty shop is a private business. It is owned by Sakamoto Sachiko, a 75 year old accomplished beautician and 'bride-maker', who owns three other beauty shops which are also located in Cobella's wedding parlours. The shop is managed by Sakamoto Keiko, Sachiko's daughter-in-law.

The beauty shop's owners pay Cobella a monthly rent of ¥250,000. Like other businesses which are located inside the confines of the wedding parlour, it is, on the one hand, a private business, but, on the other, almost totally dependent on the wedding parlour for its survival. Although the beauty shop does offer such beauty services as hair setting and permanent wave for ordinary people, in practice, its clientele are mostly related to weddings. Its customers are brides and other wedding guests - mainly female, but also male - who require dressing or hair setting.

The beauty shop income consists of money it receives from the wedding parlour for preparing brides; from commission it receives for promoting special accessories, and from fees it charges wedding guests (see table 5). Although the shop receives from the wedding parlour a fixed amount for each bride it prepares (¥10,000), its actual profit from each bride

TABLE 5
Costs of Services Offered By the Beauty Shop
(in yen)

Service	Cost
Tomesode ^a dressing	2,000
Furisode ^b dressing	2,500
Men's dressing (<i>montsuki</i>)	1,500
Hair setting	3,500+
Permanent wave	5,000-10,000
facial treatment ^c	5,000
depilation	3,000+
manicure	1,500

Note: The rate of exchange in this period was about £1=¥250.

^a Tomesode is the formal kimono worn by married women.

^b Furisode is a long-sleeved formal kimono worn by unmarried women.

^c This treatment is mainly given to brides as preparation for their wedding (see chapter 6). It is sometimes given by the beauty shop free as a service for the bride.

varies according to 'extra' accessories it succeeds in adding to the general bridal appearance. As we have seen, the bride changes her total appearance two or three times during the wedding, shifting from what is considered to be 'traditional-Japanese' (or rather 'traditionese') bridal appearance to a 'Western' (or 'Westanese') appearance (see also chapters 6 and 7). Each of these outfits include also special accessories which are an excellent source of extra profit.

The 'traditional-Japanese' appearance, being more complicated and also more expensive (see chapter 2, table 4), is especially prone to various elaborations and additions.⁹ One example is that of the wig ornaments. The 'traditional-Japanese' outfit includes a special wig and wig decorations (*kanzashi*). Although the bridal 'package' includes ordinary wig and decorations which do not require further payment, there is a choice of higher quality accessories which do require extra payment. The beauty shop is in charge of adjusting the brides' wigs (*katsura awase*), and can recommend special 'traditional' decorations (*kanzashi*), for which if rented, they get a percentage. Special wig decorations made by Mikimoto - the famous pearl company - are offered for lease for ¥20,000 to ¥30,000. From this amount which is paid by the

customer to the wedding parlour, Mikimoto gets only 30%, the beauty shop also gets 30%, and the wedding parlour 40%.

The fact that the wedding parlour and its customers are the main suppliers of the beauty shop's (and for that matter, any other sub-contracted company's) income, very clearly affects their relationship with the parlour. The beauty shop's dependency is certainly emphasized by the wedding parlour's management. "Anytime we ask for better terms" said the beauty shop manager, "the (parlour) manager has a ready answer: you should not complain, he says, since you get customers without moving".

This attitude on the part of the parlour can be observed also in financial practices where the parlour reserves its right to change any financial arrangements with its subcontractors at any time. In the beauty shop's case, many of these changes are conveyed to its owner by the parlour manager in 'social' meetings they have at the parlour's coffee shop. There were many cases where the owner came back to the shop from these meetings very frustrated by the parlour's attitude. Her frustration was usually shared by her daughter-in-law who is the shop manager, and the shop's chief. In one of these meetings, the parlour manager informed the beauty shop that the price of a special light wig which was offered to the customers (as an option) was going to be raised by more than 30%. In the beauty shop's experts' opinion, this sudden high rise was about to harm their profits. They thought that customers already regarded the price as too high, and they could always choose to have the ordinary heavy wig without any extra charge. In this case, the main complaint the beauty shop management expressed, was that yet again the parlour considers only its own profit and makes its own decisions without consulting with any of the other businesses concerned.¹⁰

As seen from the beauty shop's viewpoint, the wedding parlour clearly takes advantage of the former's dependent position. The feeling that the beauty shop's heads expressed in the above incident was that "No matter what happens, the Company always profits" (*mōketeiru*). This belief which came up

frequently in conversations between the shop's owners and its small full-time loyal staff, can be regarded as an example of a general feeling small subcontractors have towards the Company.

The reason that in spite of the frustration, the beauty shop and other subcontractors usually do not complain in front of the parlour, but rather among themselves; and above all, the reason for them staying in the parlour, is well expressed by the parlour manager's 'ready-made' answer mentioned above. The beauty shop owner knows well what the manager is saying about getting business without making too much of an effort. She is aware of the fact that she avoids the tough competition outside the wedding parlour.¹¹ On the other hand, she also knows that her profits are considerably lower than those of parallel businesses which are located in more prestigious wedding facilities such as hotels. Undoubtedly, the beauty shop's image and prices are affected by the relatively low prestige of the wedding parlour.¹²

The Beauty Shop and the Clothing Department

The rental of wedding costumes has been one of the main activities of the *gojokai* organizations' business from the time they were established and has remained so until the present day. As we have seen, costumes also constitute a central part of the wedding 'package' offered to the *gojokai* members. It is perhaps those two factors - the 'historical' combined with the more purely financial - together, that explain why in all the parlours owned by Cobella (and, for that matter, Shōchikuden in general) the costumes for rent are owned by the wedding parlour itself and not by subcontractors.

Although all wedding parlours have their own stock of costumes, they do differ in the way they handle their clothing department (*ishōbu*). In the case of the Kobe parlour, the clothing department is managed by the family who owns the beauty shop. In other words, Sakamoto Keiko, the beauty shop manager, is also the manager of the department. This

arrangement, however, is rather unusual. In other parlours the clothing department is either managed by the parlour itself or by a separate private company. Such is the case with the two other parlours in which the Sakamotos have their beauty shops. While in one of them the clothing department is managed by another private company, in the other, it is managed by the wedding parlour itself, or by Cobella employees.

As a manager of the clothing department, Sakamoto Keiko hires and pays the salaries of the mostly part-time women who work there.¹³ She is also in charge of choosing new costumes and of the way they are presented to the customers. As reward she receives a commission of 5 percent from all proceeds from costumes (including accessories) that the company earns.

Although this arrangement of having the same manager for both clothing department and beauty shop is still uncommon, it is the policy of Cobella to have this arrangement in other parlours if possible. The idea has been promoted by Utsunomiya Hideichi, the head of Cobella, himself. In his view, the work of the beauty shop is closely connected to that of the clothing department and thus it makes sense for them to have the same management. He also thinks that when customers (mainly brides) are given advice concerning attire by a beautician, they are more likely to accept it.¹⁴ Although the women employed in the clothing department are neither beauticians nor kimono dressers (see Chapter 4), the fact that they are directed by a beautician creates, in the eyes of the head of Cobella, the necessary image.

Another argument in favour of having a sub-contracted manager in charge of the clothing department, rather than a Cobella employee, is that with a sub-contracted company the parlour can establish a payment based on commission. This kind of arrangement can not be established with an ordinary employee since it may be a cause for 'unnecessary' internal competition and conflict. On the other hand, a commission is regarded as the best incentive for the clothing department manager to promote expensive costumes.¹⁵

contact with Kobe Princess Palace and like many other persons involved in the wedding production they are not employees of the parlour, nor of the company which owns it. Most of them are engaged through local sales agencies (*dairi-ten*), which are another group of subcontractors of Cobella. These agencies - which are under the supervision of a local branch of Cobella - are usually managed by a man (*ten-chō*), and their main role is to find new subscribers to Cobella. The managers of the agencies usually work independently on a commission basis from Cobella.¹⁷ In using these agencies, Cobella, the large *gojokai*, yet again shares the risk with other smaller companies.

Most of the sales ladies do not earn a regular salary, but work on a commission basis. The commission they obtain for subscribing a new member is not the same in all the agencies, and any local agency management can decide about the level of pay. The exact amount of commission is known to be a well kept secret among the sales ladies themselves. Some of the sales ladies argued that although they themselves did not earn much, other more experienced and talented sales ladies earned very good salaries.

Although sales ladies did not disclose the level of their commission, it is evident that in all agencies the commission varies according to members' ranks. These ranks are determined not only according to the members' formal ranks - which are based on their types of payment (see chapter 2, table 3) - but also on another inner ranking. This grading which is not disclosed to customers is based on the customer's personal condition (age, age of son or daughter and so forth). The reason for the 'confidentiality' of this ranking is that some of the personal conditions which are taken into account, may be rather embarrassing. An extreme example is that of the high grading of aged people (with high funeral prospects).

Selling Techniques

The 'sales ladies' are the main promoters of weddings (and funerals) which are operated by Cobella. Their main job is to bring in new subscribing members to the *gojokai*, in other words, to find customers for the ceremonial occasion-related services offered by Cobella. One of the most common ways in which sales ladies have always tried to find new members is by 'door-to door' promotion.

'Door-to-door' promotion (*tobi-komi*, "jumping in" in Japanese) is thus part of the sales ladies working routine. It is also a very well organized promotion technique. The sales ladies are usually driven in groups by their agency to a certain area, where they work for the whole day (10.00 to 3.30). There they are free to solicit members as long as they keep to the area in which their agency is in charge. The time of the day chosen for soliciting makes it clear that the sales ladies' primary targets are women, since it is mainly housewives and mothers who are likely to be found at home during the day time. This should not be surprising given the widespread assumption that it is women who "hold the household purse strings (Lebra 1984a:134-5) and, it is women who decide whether to subscribe to the *gojokai*. And, of course, it is usually mothers who are worried about the wedding costs of their daughters (more than of sons).¹⁸

There are also some less 'aggressive' promoting techniques such as telephone marketing and direct mail when postcards are put through people's letter boxes. I myself, living in an area which was covered by one of Cobella's branches, have occasionally found in my letter box a pre-stamped postcard from Cobella. This postcard had two aims; one was the promotion of part-time work for women (*okusama pato boshū*) as sales ladies, and the other the promotion of Cobella's ceremonial occasion-related services. It also included a short questionnaire concerning the potential subscriber's general knowledge about ceremonial occasions costs, particularly for weddings and funerals, and was

designed to figure out if anyone in the person's family was about to have any scheduled ceremonial event (such as wedding, 'coming of age' or 7-5-3). The postcard concluded by offering its addressee the chance to hear more about the *gojokai* ("you just have to write your name and address and send the already stamped postcard"), and by reminding the potential subscriber that a small gift would be sent to those who filled in the questionnaire.

Selling Techniques: Recent Changes

Although the main promotion technique is still 'door to door' soliciting, in recent years it has lost some of its efficiency - at least in the case of weddings - as more couples become members after they have already decided to get married (see chapter 2). This trend of 'subscribing on the spot' which seemed to harm the profits of the sales agencies and the sales ladies was at first partially 'solved' by having sales ladies doing promoting jobs in the parlour itself. For the sake of impartiality, sales ladies used to work in shifts during weekends, when each one in turn, stood at the wedding parlour's entrance, and received prospective customers. This 'solution' was accepted by most sales ladies, especially by those who found it hard to solicit members outside the parlour. Some of them clearly said that in recent years they solicit most of their customers at the parlour itself.

However, from the beginning of 1991, sales ladies have been told that they are no longer allowed to stand at the doors on weekends. Instead, the parlour was to use its own employees for promotion within its confines. As in other cases (like that of the beauty shop and wigs mentioned earlier), this order was sudden and naturally brought about the objection of the sales ladies. As one of them complained: "We lost our best spot for getting customers. From now on we will have to find our customers all by ourselves". Nonetheless, yet again, the parlour is the one to decide, and although in this case it was not a matter of gaining more profits, it was

clearly a matter of cutting expenses. It was another case in which Cobella - in its strive to keep its image as the dominant part of the relations - showed the subcontractors (in this case the sales agencies) 'who is the boss'. The agencies could not change the decision, they could only count on the fact that there was still much work to do outside the parlour. If there was less work for weddings, there still existed the growing funeral market.¹⁹

Sales Ladies at the Parlour

Although the main task of a sales lady is to find new subscribers (or to sell 'ceremonial-occasion-packages'), her role usually does not end at this, and she is considered responsible for her customers until they have used their rights as members. Thus, she also attends them through their preparatory visits to the parlour and throughout the wedding. A good sales lady also keeps in touch with her subscribers in order not to miss business opportunities, such as a 'coming of age ceremony' of the twentieth birthday of a daughter (see chapter 5). She also tries to convince them to subscribe again after they have consumed their rights.

Sales ladies are very easily noticed in the wedding parlour setting, for unlike most other employees they are not in uniform.²⁰ They can usually also be distinguished by their age - most of them are middle aged women.²¹ They are also noticeable in their relative freedom of movement inside the wedding parlour. Seeing themselves in charge of 'their customers' - as they themselves refer to the bride and groom whom they try to serve faithfully - they feel free to enter the different departments in the parlour. Although their behaviour is often regarded by other sections of the parlour as importunate (*urusai*), it seems that a certain amount of importunity is almost essential for the fulfilment of the sales lady's role. A brief portrait of one of the veteran sales ladies who is also maybe the most noticeable one in the wedding parlour may illuminate this point.

'The Sales Lady': a Portrait

Mrs. Suzuki has worked through an agency as a sales lady for Cobella for fifteen years and has already 'married' over eight hundred couples. She is over sixty and is known to everyone as a widow.²² It is hard to imagine a busy working day at the parlour without Mrs. Suzuki around with her loud voice, guiding her customers. She is always there on time to take pictures of the bride while she is being prepared in the beauty shop for the ceremony. Later on she will take care of other snap shots of the wedding guests before the ceremony starts. She will accompany the bride and groom and their families throughout the day, to take care of any request or question that might arise, and she will not leave the parlour until she has seen 'her bride' back to the beauty shop to get ready to leave the parlour.

Mrs. Suzuki not only knows how to make new customers and how to serve them,²³ she also knows how to maintain a good relationship with all the sections of the parlour. While other sales ladies are usually not very welcome in the beauty shop, for example,²⁴ she is one of the few sales ladies who can enter the beauty shop almost at will. The way Mrs. Suzuki handles both customers and her counterparts in the parlour with persistence, but at the same time with the necessary amount of politeness, is helpful in her role as a 'sales lady'.

The Wedding Parlour: Internal Relations and Tensions

I have described the wedding production as a fluent and efficient process, however, we have seen by now that unlike it might have been expected, it is not one uniform group which deals with the production, rather, it is a collection of several separate groups, each of them in charge of a certain part of the whole production. It has also become evident, however, that the general production is orchestrated by a particular 'player', that is the parlour, and its main agent, its manager.

Throughout this chapter I have illustrated a few aspects of the relations between the centre and its sub-players. Here, I would like to consider also the relations among the sub-players themselves. Once more it should be emphasized that these relations are also eventually controlled by the same centre - the parlour, or the Company.

Customers' Claims as an Organizational Mechanism

The production of a wedding is divided among its various producers in such a way that each individual company is responsible for a particular part of the production. Nevertheless, it is in the nature of such a production that there are many meeting-points among the different producers. It is mainly these points at which the question of liability arises. In order to handle this question the wedding parlour has devised a few organizational mechanisms. One of these devices is a rule of strict registration of each action and the exact time of its start and its completion. The wedding parlour has a ready-made form (in copies to all sections) to be filled in for each wedding production day. On this form each one of the producers fills in the necessary details about each wedding. For example, the beauty shop writes in such details as what costumes or hair styles the bride puts on, the photo studio will add the number and types of photographs taken for each customer and so forth. During the wedding day itself this form is used as a 'time-watcher', in other words, each section must fill in the exact time of each action.²⁵ This recording has an explicit purpose. It can be used as evidence in a case of a customer's claim (an English word used in Japanese) against the company, or in a case of a possible claim suspected by the parlour. In such cases the parlour goes back to check the recordings in order to find the 'guilty' party. As one of the beauty shop's employees explained: "In some cases we finish the bride's costume change (*ironaoshi*) on time, but the photograph takes longer than usual, so then we have this (recording) to show that we were O.K".

What the beauty shop worker was referring to was the possibility of a fault in the wedding production (in this case, late return to the reception room after costume change) which might have resulted in the customer's claim. In such a case the customer would make his or her claim to the wedding parlour which is regarded as the producer. The wedding parlour, in return, would probably pass the responsibility to one of its subcontractors. The question would be most acute when a demand for reimbursement is posed by the customer. Some cases which occurred during my fieldwork may illustrate this problem of reliability and customers' claims. They will also illuminate some of the problems of the internal relations in the wedding parlour.

Case 1: The Fallen Tiara, or The Importance of Video Recording

The incident

Towards the end of the reception, after the bride and groom had got up to leave their seats and made a few steps towards the door, the bride, already in Western dress, lost her head decoration. Luckily, her groom succeeded in catching it, and they proceeded to the door where they had to stand with the *nakōdo* couple and both parents for the final bowing ceremony (*hiraki*). One of the reception workers (a Cobella employee) saw the incident and used the time before the guests left the room, to quickly fix the tiara to the bride's forehead. But unfortunately, because the crown had been hastily fixed and, of course, by someone who was not professional, the tiara fell off again during one of the bride's bows. As a result, the bride had to finish the ceremony without her Western crown.

The problem and the conflict

In fact, there was no real problem concerning the incident since no claim was made by the customers.

Nevertheless the parlour decided that they should tackle the problem before such a claim could be laid. In the producers' point of view no claim would be made before the customers had seen the reception video. There was general agreement that 'fixing' the video could prevent problems. However, there were disagreements about the appropriate corrections which should be made.

These disagreements can be taken as an example of possible conflicts of interest between different 'players' in the production - in this case between the beauty shop represented by Keiko, its manager, and a young cameraman employed as a freelance by Cobella. As the persons responsible for the mishap, Keiko and the shop's chief were invited to watch the video.²⁶ It was clear to both the beauty shop representatives and the cameraman that something had to be done before presenting the video to the family. The problem was how much, and which parts to cut. Here, there were clearly two contradicting interests. Keiko, from her side, wanted all the parts that could be used against her beauty shop, or which would show the mishap, to be cut. She even offered to finish the film at the point where the bride and groom were leaving their seats, just before the tiara first fell down. However, the cameraman had a different view. Representing both the wedding parlour and some kind of general artistic values, such as those of continuity, he wanted the video movie to stand as much as possible in regular standards of length and content. In his opinion it should not be cut too short, and had to include the final ceremony. His position was made very clear when at some point later, Keiko vigorously entreated him to do the necessary cuttings and he pointed out that this would allow the customers to make a claim against the video.

The 'solution'

Finally, a compromise was reached. It was agreed that the video would be cut twice. One cut would be made just before the tiara fell off. Then, the whole section of film up to the

point when the bride had the tiara on again would be completely omitted. This included pictures of the reception worker attaching the tiara to the bride's forehead (a scene which in any case would have been cut, since, as a rule, 'backstage' activities are not shown in the video). Then the final scene would be 'glued' in. Keiko accepted this after she had been convinced that the scene was not taken closeup and thus the missing tiara would not be so noticeable.

The words of gratitude spoken to the cameraman by Keiko and the 'guilty' beautician when leaving the room were apparently not enough to complete the affair, since it was still necessary to clarify things with the parlour manager. As is usually done in such cases, it was Keiko's mother-in-law who went to speak with him. Coming back to the shop after her meeting with the manager she informed Keiko that the affair was now over. Very experienced in such matters the elderly lady started by apologizing to the manager saying that the beauty shop was always "bad" and always caused problems. This tactic brought the manager to tell her that it was not so, and that these kinds of things might happen to anyone.²⁷ Nevertheless, it was not only the beauty shop owner wise ways which made the parlour manager to be as kind as he was. There was another factor which helped the beauty shop in that case - the fact that it was a wedding parlour employee, directly under the parlour manager's authority who had caused the second incident. By not informing the beauty shop about the falling tiara and by trying to fix it herself, she had prevented the parlour from justifiably making a complaint against the beauty shop. There were other cases, however, in which the manager was much more severe, in some cases going so far as to instruct the shop to dismiss the dressers involved. This kind of interference with the beauty shop's internal affairs was not so much taken as an order to obey, since in the delicate interdependency which marked the relations between the large and the small company, the autonomy of the latter concerning personnel was usually observed. However, it

was another opportunity for the parlour to strengthen its image as powerful.

Case 2: The Forgotten Arm

The incident

In this case a claim was made by a family, who said that, a few days after their daughter's wedding, the family gathered to look at the precious photographs from the wedding, when suddenly one of the family members discovered something disastrous. While one of the bride's arms was painted in white - the right colour for 'traditional-Japanese' costume - the other arm was brown, the way it would be in the warm Japanese summer when the wedding took place. Not only that the family could not stand the tanned colour of a 'Japanese' bride,²⁸ it was obviously distressful that the perfect representation of the bride was damaged by having two different coloured arms. The family's demand was that the wedding parlour reimburse the money they paid for the studio photographs.

The conflict

As usual in such cases, soon after the wedding parlour received the claim it passed it on to the responsible party. This time it obviously was the beauty shop. The parlour manager summoned the beauty shop manager and told her of the incident. As proof he handed her still photographs which were taken by wedding guests at the reception. Keiko could not, of course, evade her shop's responsibility. And indeed she reproved the dressers involved,²⁹ she also decided to leave evidence of the 'convicting' pictures in the beauty shop so that all other employees would take notice and would be more careful in their work.

Nevertheless, reproaching her own employees did not resolve the problem, nor did it answer the parlour's demand - that the beauty shop pay for the studio photograph. Although

at the internal level (of the beauty shop) Keiko accepted full responsibility, she could not possibly do so at the general parlour level. The financial aspect was one dimension, another point was her shop's prestige and its position in the parlour. Thus, after consultation, the beauty shop position was that they were willing to pay only if the photo studio would also share the cost. After all, they said, the studio workers were also negligent when they did not notice the fault during their long preparations for the bride's photographs.

The 'solution'

As usual in these cases Keiko pleaded her point to the parlour manager, who then posed it to the photo studio. As usual the negotiations went mainly through the manager, and not directly between the subcontractors. The studio, as might have been expected, did not accept the beauty shop's argument at first. Its manager's argument was that the beauty shop should have 'supplied' the photo studio with a 'fully-made' bride. He also argued that it was the beauty shop which was responsible for the bride's appearance, while the photo studio was responsible only for the representation of that appearance. However, although the studio did not want to fully admit its responsibility, after negotiations and pressure from the parlour manager, it consented to share the cost, but only if the beauty shop would pay a larger part of it. This is how matters were resolved.

Discussion

Looking carefully at the two cases above, we may note several points although one or two, like that of representation, will receive further discussion later on in this thesis. It seems that representing the ceremonial event and its main 'actors' is at times more important than the event itself (see chapter 5). It was also possible to observe again the nature of the total production of the wedding. In

case 1 we could see how the industry actually continues to create the event even after it was already over. In this case the border line between the event and its representation was clearly abolished. The 'passivity' (or shall I say *objectification*) of the customers (allegedly the principals) in this case was also evident when they were not even asked if they would like 'their' video to be cut, or 'their' wedding to be revised.

What is most interesting for our discussion here, however, is the reflection of the relations between the different producers of the wedding. We could see how each element in the production has its own interests to protect. This includes also the large Company itself. We saw how the latter, although itself dependent on the small companies, tries continually to ensure its image as the dominant 'player' in its relations with its subcontractors. It is also rather evident now that what looks as an efficient production on the surface does not necessarily indicate a 'harmonious' production process in the interior, a point which will shortly be discussed in more general terms. Before that, however, a few more points should be made on the subject of customers and their claims.

The Customer

What was common to the cases above, and I should add, to most other cases where claims were either actually made or were anticipated by the parlour, was the concern over a 'troublesome' customer. As a matter of fact one of the strongest arguments the beauty shop manager had in her controversy with the cameraman (case 1) was that the customer was 'troublesome' (*yayakoshii*). Apparently if the customer had not been considered a 'difficult' customer, the wedding parlour might not have taken the trouble to correct the video so vigorously before presenting it, they might have considered it enough to make some minor changes instead of 'major surgery'.

However, it is not only regarding claims that the parlour is so concerned about 'troublesome' customers. In the wedding production itself much more attention is given to those considered 'troublesome'. In the beauty shop level there were cases in which the employees were explicitly told by their manager to treat specific customers with special care. In other cases the beauty shop manager herself found it necessary to offer a special service. Such was the case in which she decided to do herself an 'outside (dressing) job' in a hotel, although it involved long hours of travelling. She only did it because she knew the customers were 'difficult', she explained, and she preferred to be there in person.

Although such is not the case with all 'troublesome' customers, there is a special category of customers who are considered to require special attention. These are people who belong to the Japanese mob (yakuza). During my fieldwork there were several weddings in which there was either clear information or a suspicion that yakuza members were involved. In all of these cases it was easy to observe that special treatment was given to the customers.³⁰ A specific case of a yakuza wedding deserves a brief mention here.

This is not the place here to describe the wedding itself and the interesting points in which it differed from other 'ordinary' weddings.³¹ I would like, instead, to mention only some of the points which may indicate the special treatment which the customers received. Unusual care was taken through all the departments and all stages of the wedding production. It included the dressing of the groom by the beauty shop manager herself and the dressing of the bride (at her home) by the head bride dresser. On the 'front-stage' level the couple were accompanied by the head of the largest sales agency - a man - instead of the usual female sales lady - a fact which may also be associated with aspects of masculinity related to the yakuza (see note 31). The extreme act of 'favouritism' was in the permission given to the wedding reception to extend over as long as five hours, more than double the usual strict time limit. The producers' attitude towards their 'special'

customers - which I would define as an ambiguous combination of fear (thus the special care) and latent adoration³² - although interesting for itself, can also reveal more of the general attitude towards 'ordinary' customers who do not deserve the same attitude.

In case 1 above a brief remark of the beauty shop manager about the customer being 'troublesome' was enough for her counterpart in the production to get her point. It was as if the word 'troublesome' (*yayakoshii*) was a kind of a code word among the different producers. Apparently the wedding parlour production system has developed a more institutionalized mechanism to do the same distinction. There is an agreed word which is put on the ('troublesome') customer's form in order for all elements in the production process to take notice of. However, since the customer may see the sign, a confidential code word is used. It is the Chinese character for congratulations and long life (*kotobuki*), which is frequently used in the wedding industry - for example to mark wedding reception rooms - and as such the least obvious. While it is evident that this code word plays a unique role in unifying the usually antagonistic elements of the production 'against' the customer, the question remains whether or not the rather ironic choice of code may be regarded as an indication of the meagre existence of humour in the production of weddings.

Conclusion

A considerable part of this chapter has focused on what can be generally labelled as the wedding parlour's 'employment system'. In this I include both the employment of people and of subcontractors. It was interesting to observe a great similarity between both elements. In both cases we could discern aspects of exploitation, but we were also able see interdependence between the main actor and the 'smaller' ones (companies and employees). I will suggest that not only is this kind of relation part of the attempt made by Cobella to build an efficient organization for the production of

weddings, it is also at least one of the reasons for its economic success. Clark writes about the Japanese company:

One way in which large companies can retain some degree of *flexibility*, is by employing numbers of temporary workers...A second way in which a large firm can adjust is by curtailing orders to the small firms which act as subcontractors to it. (my emphasis)

(Clark1987:47)

It is exactly this *flexibility* which is so important to Cobella. Although Clark³³ refers mainly to adjustment during difficult times, in the case of Cobella, the adjustment is twofold. Not only that Cobella, like other large companies, can more easily adjust itself to fluctuations on the market, it is exactly the same structure which is essential in its day-to-day work as a result of the seasonal nature of its product.

The reliance that Cobella has on small companies which are specialized in a particular task is certainly not uncommon to large Japanese companies. This kind of relationship has been discussed by many. The literature tends to emphasize the dependence and distinctions in power and quality between the large company and the smaller ones. This correlation between the company's size and measures of its quality such as productivity, level of wages and stability of its labour force has been generally referred to as 'dual economy' (See Broadbridge (1966), Yasuba (1976)), or as 'industrial gradation' (Clark 1987).³⁴

The relations between the large or 'parent' company, and its subcontractors used to be seen mainly in terms of exploitation. However, it is now agreed that the relations may in many cases be regarded more in terms of cooperation and mutual trust (Yoshino 1968:156-9). In the case of Cobella and its subcontractors we could discern a relationship which can be best described on a continuum between exploitation on the one hand, and cooperation and mutual trust on the other. For

example, the relations Cobella has with its catering company - which is tied to its parent company exclusively, even though the work is seasonal - can be regarded as closer to the exploitative end of the continuum. On the other hand, its relations with the beauty shop can be seen more in terms of cooperation and mutual trust.

The wide literature concerning the 'Japanese company' has not been interested only in the relations between companies, a major concern has been the structure of the company itself. The prevalent view has been that large Japanese companies share the same characteristics (Koike 1988:4-5). In many of these kinds of accounts cultural continuity is used as an explanatory device (Abegglen (1958), Nakane (1984)). The proponents of the so-called 'culturalist view' (Koike 1988) attribute characteristics, such as 'life time employment' (Abegglen 1958:11) and seniority wages, to the Japanese company and, in general, maintain that the reason for the existence of 'unique' labour management practices in Japan lies in the fact that Japanese society has a group-oriented morality (Koike 1988:5). Although this particular thesis is not a 'company research' per se it does call for yet more attention to the suitability of the 'Japanese company' definition to both large and small companies. We have seen that at least one major component of the 'Japanese company' does not seem to be valid for the description of the large company. It is hardly possible to describe the employment system of Cobella as 'life time' or permanent employment.

Although scholars are aware of the diversity in Japanese companies, the tendency is still to use a scale in which the large companies are considered as the norm and small companies are considered marginal. It is also still the case that both scholarly and popular attention is centred on the Japanese mainstream. The image of Japan Inc. which stresses familiar themes such as life time employment, harmony, homogeneity, diligence, and a 'Confucian ethic' still prevails. This attitude includes a spate of relatively recent works which are seeking to unlock the secrets of 'the Japanese way' - such

works as Pascale and Athos (1981), Ouchi (1982), and Vogel (1979).

It is important to note, however, that there are writers who attempt to give an alternative to the prevailing view - like Kondo (1990) - or to modify it (Vogel 1975). Nevertheless, unfortunately, it seems that such writers have stayed 'trapped' in the idea that the difference lies in size. The main idea promoted in such views is that characteristics such as permanent employment and seniority system apply only to a minority of workers in Japan and it does not include certain workers such as farmers, those employed in small companies and temporary workers (including women) (Vogel 1975:xviii). Attempts like that of Kondo (1990) to study smaller companies and women in that respect indeed should be followed. However, scholars should try to avoid perpetuating the prevalent view by presenting their own research as that of the 'other side' - small companies (Kondo 1990:50) and the 'different' - part-time women as opposed to full-time male employees. Here again, when looking carefully at the example of Cobella, it is possible to see that the definition of low-status part-timers is much larger and can apply not only to women.³⁵

Another aspect in my description of the parlour's work in this chapter seems to be raising some other thoughts concerning well established ideas about the Japanese company and Japanese society (which seem to overlap). In my discussion of the (working) life of the parlour I have used terms such as 'conflict' and I have mentioned ways of conflict resolution. Looking carefully at the everyday life of the parlour, it is possible to describe it as a life full with series of conflicts and with organizational mechanisms which exist to solve them. But, let us not be wrong here, these mechanisms are not to be seen as 'functionalistic'. They are, instead, purposely and intentionally used by the stronger players (mainly the strongest player) in process which can be defined more in terms of 'division' than of 'solidarity'.

The picture of the Japanese company portrayed in this chapter seems to contradict the largely held view of the Japanese company and society as 'harmonious', 'group-oriented' and 'conflict-free'. However, there is a growing literature on aspects of conflict management in Japanese society (Krauss et al. 1984, Eisenstadt and Ben-Ari 1990). This kind of literature that examines Japanese society through the study of conflict and which may - as it was put by Krauss, Rohlen and Steinhoff - "strike some as an unusual, and even perverse, approach to adopt given most previous English-language studies of Japan" (1984a:3), seems to be more appropriate to describe the 'real' life of the company depicted in this chapter.

However, in a rather similar way to that of company studies mentioned above which try to offer an alternative but fall into the 'trap' of 'dual economy', some of the 'conflict' literature falls into the 'trap' of the 'culturalist' interpretation, or remain in the "Japanese cultural context" (Befu 1990:235)³⁶ instead of offering a general theoretical framework. A relatively 'mild' version of this kind of attitude is expressed by the editors of a volume on 'Conflict in Japan':

Generally, the cultural ideal of harmony is more notable in Japan than in the West. Conflict is not considered natural there, rather it is regarded as an embarrassment to be avoided whenever possible.

(Krauss et al. 1984a:11)

A more explicit expression of this perspective is offered by one of the writers in the same volume:

If the Japanese place more value, as I believe they do, upon social interdependence, cooperation, solidarity, or harmony than, say, the Americans, they are more likely to interfere with one another's actions. The norm of harmony may be precisely what makes people more aware of

conflicts with others, conflicts between self-interest and obligation and so forth.

(Lebra 1984b:56)

It seems that Krauss, Rohlen and Steinhoff (1984) and others in the same volume are disinclined to discard completely ideas of Japanese uniqueness, let alone, the Japanese model of harmony, although they admit its faults (Krauss et al. 1984b). Here, again, Lebra (1984b) explicitly expresses this idea:

When we focus on conflict we seem to accept the conflict model and reject the harmony model as if they are mutually exclusive. This is an oversimplified dichotomy that fails to capture reality. In fact, the logic of bipolarization may well be reversed. The more harmony-oriented, the more conflict sensitive.

(Lebra 1984b:56)

In this concluding part of a chapter concerning the organization and work at the 'backstage' of the production of weddings, I have touched on the important and well addressed subject of the 'Japanese company'. My discussion, however, was not, by any means, intended to offer a comprehensive analysis of the 'Japanese company'. Instead, my intentions were more 'modest'. In other words, by looking in a very general manner at literature which is interested in the Japanese company as well as in that which deals with conflict in Japanese company and society, I have tried to raise questions rather than supply answers. One of the main conclusions which can be reached here is that there is still room for scholars of the Japanese company in particular, and more generally of Japanese society to adopt a more general theoretical approach to the study of company and society. The tendency of scholars of Japan to stay embedded in a culturalist interpretation will be further discussed in the thesis in relation to the 'all-powerful' notions of Japanese 'uniqueness' which are part and

parcel of the *nihonjinron* (discussion of the Japanese). However, here, what I would like to leave as an open question for scholars of Japanese company and society to try and ask themselves - in a paraphrase on Rohlen's (1974) well known title: Is it really 'harmony' from which the Japanese company - and yet again, society - takes its 'strength'?

Notes

1. His case was rather exceptional among wedding parlour's managers in Shōchikuden, since university graduates usually do not work for such low pay. This point is obviously related to the general low ranking of wedding parlours as compared to other wedding facilities, such as hotels.

2. New scenes are usually first offered on an experimental basis. Such was the new offer of a young geisha costume (*maiko*) for the bride (an idea that will be discussed later in greater detail (chapter 7.)) Another original idea of the manager was of a unique kimono show to be performed in an International Conference of Nurses and Midwives in the city. The introduction to the nurses association was made through another employee of Cobella, who worked in the funeral department and thus had close relations with hospital staff.

3. In the two latter cases, Cobella employees promote 'products' (furniture and honeymoon plans) of sub-companies of the Shōchikuden Group. The furniture is offered by a company called *Shōchikukagu* (Shōchiku-Furniture) which produces and sells bridal furniture (*konrei kagu*). The company which deals with honeymoon plans is called Shōchikuden - Travel Service.

4. For example, only men employees are required to act as 'models' in bridal fairs. Female parts in the fairs are acted by outside volunteers - young girls who are happy to act as models, just in order to have the chance to put on wedding outfits. Also, the job of guiding the wedding party to the ballroom for example, is always done by a man, while the 'anonymous' announcements are always done by female voices (see chapter 2).

5. Although most workers are employed on a part-time basis, some of them - like the young students shrine maidens - have a lower status, being employed as *arubaito* (as opposed to *pato*). The word *arubaito* which originally meant student jobs, is now used in reference to all those jobs which are insecure or casualized. (Saso 1990:155).

6. Using sub-contractors is certainly not an uncommon practice in the Japanese economy. This practice is very common in the car industry. In a car firm like Nissan, for example, 70% of the cost of goods and services used in the production of a small car is represented by orders to sub-contractors. The percentage is even higher in other industries (see Clark 1987:68). In these cases, however, the majority of the sub-contracted work is done outside and then brought into the plant.

7. Only one goods supplier is represented personally on a regular basis. The jewellery company, in charge of engagement and wedding rings, has its own young female representative on most busy Sundays, but not throughout the week. Other companies have to rely on others, either Cobella employees, or other companies' workers (as we will shortly see) to promote their goods.

8. Unfortunately I could not get exact figures of the wedding parlour's share in this case. However, from other figures that I received for other companies which supply their goods through the beauty shop (see below), I would estimate that the wedding parlour takes at least 30% and possibly more.

9. See chapter 7 for the various inventions - including the wig - which are related to the 'traditional-Japanese' appearance.

10. The lighter wigs were a rather recent introduction to the wedding production. At the start, probably for promotion reasons the wedding parlour did not take its cut, and for a period of a few months the wig company shared the amount of ¥38,000 (70%) with the beauty shop (30%). Later on, the wedding parlour decided to raise the price for the customer to ¥50,000, so that it could take the increase. The parlour did not consult with the two companies for their opinion concerning the level of the increase.

11. As we shall see later on (chapter 4), the beauty shop's owner actually started her relationship with Cobella in large part because of the tough competition in the beauty business.

12. The beauty shop owners, Sakamoto, and her daughter-in-law, frequently complained about their low income compared to those of beauty shops in hotels. According to them, while they received ¥10,000 per 'bride making', a beauty shop in a respectable hotel could earn as much as 20 times more. They also had to adjust the prices they charged wedding guests to a certain level. While they charged between ¥2000 to ¥2500 for formal kimono dressing, the same service cost ¥5000 or more in hotels' beauty shops.

13. There are about five women who are employed at the clothing department. Two of them have been employed for a relatively long time (more than two years). These women work with customers as advisors. Only one of them works on a full-time basis. The other, although she comes every day, works as a part-timer (earning ¥600 per hour). The reason for that - as was explained by Sakamoto Keiko, her manager - is that sometimes she wants to have shorter hours so that a full-time basis is impossible. Another more recent part-timer also works as an advisor to customers, but is summoned to work only on busy days. Apart from them, there are two or three part-timers who work at the back (*ura*), and are in charge of costume maintenance. Their salaries are lower.

14. This view is related to the general view of the customers as ignorant "who do not know anything about ceremonial occasions".

15. It seems that once again the sharp business intuition of Utsunomiya Hideichi proved itself right. In 1991 Sakamoto Keiko was invited to a formal lunch at Cobella's head office to celebrate the high proceeds she made in the clothing department.

16. Their name derives from the combination of business (or trade) (*eigyō*) with the common honorific which is attached to any name in Japanese (*san*).

17. I must note here that one of the best kept secrets concerns the relations between Cobella and its sales agencies. I could not get an exact description of these relations, although I understood that usually the heads of the agencies (*tenchō*) work at least partially on a commission arrangement with Cobella.

18. More about relations between mothers and daughters see chapter 4.

19. It is clear that there are more subscribers for funerals these days. While the *gojokai* organizations lose customers for weddings, they seem to strengthen their position in the 'funeral market'. Elderly customers who worry about their own funeral, I was told, "do not care about the name (of the company), like young people" "all they care about is having a fast and reliable service". While old people in Japan tend to have more money to spend then most, they indeed do not care so much as young people do about the prestige of the 'product' they purchase. Thus for the *gojokai* organization which certainly has a problem of prestige among the young, old people constitute a perfect market.

20. Most of the people involved in the parlour's work wear uniforms. I have already mentioned the front desk employees, with black suits for men, pink for women. The ceremonial attendants were said to wear plain dark pink kimono as their uniform. The shrine maidens and the priest are clearly distinguished by their 'traditional' costumes. The beauty shop employees have also pink or green robes, with the emblem of their shop, as their uniforms.

21. Using middle-aged women as relatively 'cheap labour' can be seen as another way the parlour uses people (and companies) for its own best interest. The sales ladies usually start working after their children have grown up. As one of the sales ladies put it: "There is no use at being at home after the children have grown up, isn't it?" (*kodomo ga okiku natta kara uchi ni iru no wa mottainai, deshō*). This search for interest of women in this certain period of their lives will be discussed in the next chapter when dealing with the motivations of the dressers to start working. Although there is similarity between the cases it seems that in the case of the sales ladies financial motives play a bigger part than the search for new interest in life.

22. Although Mrs. Suzuki presents herself as a widow, she is actually divorced. She has kept this 'flaw' in her life history a secret since she thought that it might interfere with her job. As she herself put it: 'People who are involved in auspicious work are not supposed to have such an experience'. Her big secret was confidentially disclosed by her to the beauty shop manager and to me in a hotel coffee shop while we were waiting for a chapel ceremony to finish in an 'outside job' - a dressing job done in a different facility (see chapter 4). After telling her story she asked us not to tell anyone about her real life history.

23. Knowing how to make customers sometimes also means to 'snatch' them from others. I have observed such a case when Mrs. Suzuki actually 'took' customers off the hands of a Front Desk employee. The uniformed young man was guiding a bride-to-be and her mother through the wedding dresses display in one of the bridal fairs, when Suzuki approached him saying something like "please, give them (the customers) to me" (*watashi-ni kudasai*). The poor fellow could not do much when a second later she had already guided the customers in her self-assured way through the dress display. While it was clear that in this case the more experienced 'won', it is also important to remember that while the sales lady had to 'fight' in order to get her salary, the Front Desk employee probably had less incentive to 'fight' over customers since his (relatively low) pay was not going to be any different anyway.

24. As mentioned, there is a tendency in the parlour to see the sales ladies' behaviour as importunate. The beauty shop dressers were sometimes clearly irritated with the frequent visits of sales ladies to their shop in order to take guard of 'their brides'. They were especially annoyed when sales ladies tried to interfere with their professional work.

25. See also chapter 4 for more about formal mechanisms for efficiency maintenance.

26. Keiko also invited the person who was directly responsible. A new beauty shop employee, who worked only in 'Western' dressing, and was the one initially to fix the tiara to the bride's forehead. The employee was terrified at the idea of watching the results of her misconduct and continually apologized to Keiko and the chief. Although Keiko calmed her by telling her that these kinds of things could happen to anyone, she also let her feel that it was she who was responsible.

27. Presenting yourself or your group (*uchi*) as useless is not uncommon in Japanese society. It is common of one to nullify a compliment he or she is given as not true. It is also common of parents to present their children as worthless. (See Lebra 1976:127-8 on the subject of boasting (*jiman*) and humility, see *Ibid*:112-3 on *uchi* and its opposite *soto*).

28. On the aesthetic importance of white for Japanese women and brides see chapter 6.

29. The responsibility for a bride's appearance is generally that of her 'bride-maker' who is the dresser who prepares her for her first 'Japanese' appearance. However, it is usually the job of the bride's room assistant to paint the bride's hands and arms (see chapter 6).

30. There are some clear marks which can suggest that a person belongs to the *yakuza*. Men can be distinguished by tattoos which usually cover their bodies (see Lebra 1976:185-6, see also Raz 1992:219). Although the tattooing may be discovered only by the man-dresser, other symbols such as a missing finger (Lebra 1976

186), permanent waved hair, golden bracelet or sun-glasses suggest the same. Although it is usually more difficult to detect a woman who is related to a yakuza family, there are somewhat more subtle signs such as her relatively rude behaviour, or the way she wears her kimono (and the style of her Western clothing) (see chapter 5).

31. An interesting point was the special role given to the groom who was the only groom I had seen in two and half years of fieldwork, to have more costume changes than his bride. This fact and the special elaborated 'traditional-Japanese' costume worn by the groom may be related to aspects of masculinity and 'Japaneseness' which are attributed to the yakuza. Raz (1992:220) argues that the kimono worn by yakuza on special occasions serves to denote the "Japaneseness" of its wearer. On the other hand, however, the kimono's very rarity (for men) also signifies the opposite: it denotes exclusiveness. This duality is typical of the way in which the yakuza present themselves to fellow yakuza and to common Japanese - a variety of sign-sets which are both inclusive and exclusive (Ibid:213).

Another distinct feature of the wedding was the dressing of the bride at her home. Although there were a few other such cases (see chapter 6), they were very rare. In this case it may suggest the importance, or rather power, of the bride's family. It was also interesting to note how the definition of 'relatives', the people who participate in the Shinto ceremony, was elaborated to include the wife of the head of the yakuza group in the area (oyabun). This is not surprising considering the organization of the yakuza group along lines of fictive kinship (see Lebra 1976:172-6).

32. Lebra (1976:170) writes that in spite of the fear or disapproval most Japanese feel towards the yakuza, some aspects of their behaviour are considered beautiful and morally valid. This is one of the reasons for the glorification of yakuza in popular literature and films (see Moeran (1989a:161-176)). Raz (1992:211) also mentions this dual image "of both romance and terror" that conventional society holds of the yakuza.

It is interesting to note in this respect that the attitude of the various parlour workers which was characterized by an extreme curiosity when employees came to 'watch' the couple and their guests, was similar to an admiration of popular idols (tarento). The participation in the wedding - as wedding guests - of some 'real' film stars of course only added to the admiration.

33. See also Yoshino (1968:155-6).

34. Clark (1987:64-73) prefers the term 'industrial gradation' to the more prevailing term 'dual economy' for two main reasons. The first is that instead of 'dualism', he sees a continuous variation (Ibid:64). The second reason is that the term 'gradation' is, in his view, a more accurate representation of how the Japanese themselves view companies (Ibid:67). Clark summarizes his view of this 'gradation' as "The bigger a company, the better its quality, the smaller the worse." (Ibid:64). Kondo (1990:53) stresses what she calls a "culturally

meaningful" distinction between large and small companies, recognized as such by the government and the Japanese people themselves.

35. The subject of women as part-timers is, however, very interesting and will be discussed further in chapter 4.

36. Befu (1992:235) refers mainly to two essays in Krauss et al. (1984): Lebra (1984b) and Niyekawa (1984).

Chapter Four:

CINDERELLA BEAUTY SHOP: DRESSERS AS 'CARRIERS' OF 'TRADITION'

In the previous chapters we became familiar with the history of the wedding industry, and with the structure and work of the wedding parlour. This chapter will present in more detail the beauty shop which was described as being a crucial part of the wedding parlour and the production of weddings as a whole. A closer look at the beauty shop, its structure, work, and female employees will shed more light on the production of weddings in the wedding parlour. It will also give the background necessary for the understanding of the role of kimono in Japanese society in general (chapter 5), on the one hand, and of the role of costumes in the wedding (chapter 6), on the other.

The beauty shop's responsibility is that of preparing the bride and wedding guests. In other words they are in charge of the production of 'appearance', especially that of the 'bridal appearance' (*hanayome sugata*) (see chapter 6). As has been already implied and yet remains to be explicated when dealing with the special appearance of the bride and its importance, expertise in 'appearance' production is not to be underemphasised in the context of special occasions like the wedding. I will also argue in this chapter that the beauty shop's work in kimono dressing connects it with 'traditionality'. This 'traditional' image of the dressers is reproduced constantly by the shop and the wedding parlour since it contributes to the general process of an 'invention of traditions' which underlies the wedding parlour's work (see chapter 7).

The Beautician's Role: From a Hairdresser to Dresser

In chapter 2, I discussed the history of the wedding industry and the ceremonial pattern of weddings. The history was presented as a process of elaboration, invention and

centralization (of services) which had two crucial historical stages. One was in the late forties and early fifties when the wedding ceremony began to leave the home, and the other in the seventies when comprehensive wedding parlours were constructed. Changes in the role of the beautician-dresser in weddings are closely related to this process.

A professional hairdresser (*kamiyui-san*) is already mentioned as part of the relatively simple home wedding in prewar Japan. Nevertheless, in those days, her role was limited to that of arranging special hairdresses for the bride and other women relatives (Embree 1939:205). It was only after the war, and later in the seventies, with the separation of kimono from everyday life and the elaboration of costumes for 'ceremonial occasions' that the hairdresser began to acquire the role of 'dresser' that she has today.

Accounts of rural home weddings after the war tell us of a professional hairdresser, as she was then called, who was not only in charge of the bride's coiffure (by then a wig was used), but also of make-up and dressing of the bride (Norbeck 1954: 179, Beardsley et al. 1959:325). Moreover, in some cases, the hairdresser served as the bride's attendant throughout the ceremony (Norbeck 1954:179).¹

With the establishment of the comprehensive wedding parlour and its centralization of services, hairdressers started working in the confines of the wedding parlour.² Although nowadays they no longer attend upon the bride during the ceremony, since this role has been taken by other wedding parlour employees, they do attend upon the bride costume changes all through the ceremony.³ Over the years they also took on their role as 'dressers' (*kitsuke no hito*)⁴ as more wedding guests needed a professional hand in kimono dressing. In the process of elaboration and invention which the wedding has gone through, the dressers' role has also been elaborated to include various styles of dressing and make-up ('Japanese' and 'Western'). The personal story of such a hairdresser - Sakamoto Sachiko, the owner of the beauty shop (see chapter 3) - and her business, will serve to illustrate this process.

Biographical Background: The Founder of The Beauty Shop

Sakamoto Sachiko, herself a daughter of a rich trader from the area of Osaka, married into another 'good' family of doctors. The Sakamotos were physicians for generations as was Sachiko's husband who unfortunately was killed in the Pacific War when she was 33 years old and pregnant by her third child. Left with three young children to support, the young woman had to start working, something she had not been used to before. After she closed her late husband's clinic, she decided to become a beautician and went to study the profession. Her family, she recalls, was very much against the idea that she would start working at all, and particularly in such a low status profession.⁵ She herself disliked the fact that she had to be with what she saw as 'low-class' women, but she enjoyed this kind of work and, being ambitious, she studied hard, aiming at the highest rank among the beauticians - that of 'bride making'.⁶

After graduating in 1950, she opened her own shop. At the time the beauty business was prospering as there was a "Permanent wave Boom" in Japan and women would queue up at her shop. She recalls times like the New Year when she was so busy that she did not sleep.

Sakamoto's contact with the wedding parlour chain started during the heyday of the wedding industry, in the mid-seventies. With her excellent business intuition, Sakamoto, who already had two small ordinary beauty shops, understood that she could do much better if she tied her business into that of weddings.⁷ Until then she sometimes worked in preparing brides for weddings in the bride's house. However, as home weddings were gradually disappearing, she knew she was about to lose this side of her business. In 1979, when Cobella opened a shop in Sakai, in the south of Osaka where Sakamoto had lived and worked, it looked for a beautician to open a shop within the confines of the new comprehensive wedding parlour. For Cobella, Sakamoto's expertise in kimono dressing

and 'bride making' was essential. Moreover, it has always admired her high proficiency in the art of 'bride making'.⁸

From the time Sakamoto decided to close her shops and to move into the Sakai wedding parlour, she connected herself exclusively to Cobella, and in 1980 when the company expanded its business to Tokyo she opened a shop there. This she gave to her eldest child and only daughter - who moved with her husband to Tokyo - to manage it. The shop was opened not in a regular wedding parlour but in a small hotel, in which Cobella bought the rights for the beauty shop and the costume department. It, however, at some stage, was temporarily closed due to a big fire, before being reopened in a different location. The Kobe shop was the third to be opened in 1981. Three years later, the last and seemingly Sakamoto Sachiko's favourite shop, was opened in Himeji (see chart 3).

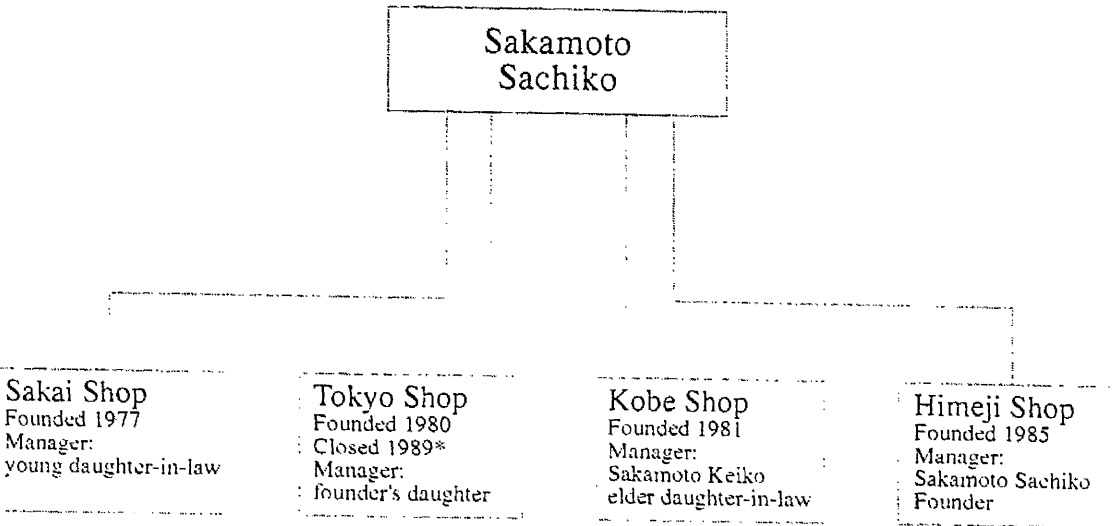
A Family Business

The business which Sakamoto Sachiko expanded through the years is a family enterprise (known in Japanese as *dōzoku gaisha*, see Dore 1958:105-6, Hamabata 1990:87-89). Though it might be of a special kind as it involves only female members of the family.⁹ The Tokyo shop was managed by Sakamoto's elder daughter until it was handed on to a different company due to the daughter's physical condition.¹⁰ Sakamoto Sachiko's younger daughter-in-law is in charge of the Sakai shop. Cinderella Beauty shop in Kobe,¹¹ which was the focus of my fieldwork, is administered by her elder daughter-in-law, Sakamoto Keiko. The story of Sakamoto Keiko might give a clue to the way in which the family business has expanded.

Succeeding to "Mother"'s Business

Sakamoto Keiko is the wife of Sakamoto Sachiko's eldest son. Keiko did not attend beauty school until she was 36, but graduated from a music university and, after marrying Sakamoto's son, moved to Hiroshima where she was a housewife

Sakamoto's Beauty Business



* The Tokyo shop was closed due to Sakamoto's daughter's health condition.

and took care of her two children. When her younger daughter was in elementary school, the family returned to Osaka and moved to the family house while Sakamoto Sachiko moved to a smaller apartment nearby. When her mother-in-law (whom she refers to as 'mother' as is common in Japan) decided to open the shop in Kobe for her to manage she still did not know anything about beauty shops. So, Sakamoto Sachiko left the Sakai shop in the hands of her younger daughter-in-law,¹² and managed the new shop for a year while Keiko went to a beauty school. She remembers those days as hard times. She had to attend classes every day from 9 to 3, as well as manage the house and take care of her husband and children. She also recalls that most of her class mates were so young that they could be her daughters, but, as she said, she felt that she had no other choice, so she had better study hard.

For Keiko it appeared to be taken for granted that since she had been asked, she had to succeed to her mother-in-law's business.¹³ "She was my husband's mother so we had to work together" she said. Getting a beautician's licence was necessary not only in order to follow her mother-in-law, but also to become the formal manager and employer of the Kobe shop and sign a contract with Cobella - which is always referred to by the Sakamotos as 'The Company' (*kaisha*). She repeats the phrase "succeed to the house" (*"ie o tsugu"*); while telling about her becoming a beautician at the age of 36, she also recalls that in her class there were several other women like her who had no choice but to succeed to their family business.

Apart from family commitment, Keiko also saw joining the beauty shop business as a good financial opportunity to increase her family income. She said that she knew she could allow herself things, such as sending her children to a private school, that she could not otherwise afford. After a year of internship in the shop itself, she became its formal manager. She is now the one who signs a contract with Cobella every year (as do her younger sister-in-law in Sakai and mother-in-law in Himeji).

For the past two years Keiko has also been in charge of the clothing department in the Kobe parlour. As was explained in the previous chapter, the Sakamotos hire, and pay the salaries of the department's employees and in return they get a percentage of the costume proceeds earned by the wedding parlour.

Cinderella Beauty Shop

Cinderella Beauty Shop is located on the lower ground floor of the wedding parlour, although its work extends to other areas of the wedding parlour as well. The centre of the shop is the beauty salon, which includes a reception desk and has two entrances, one opening into the parlour, and the other on to the parlour's parking lot, being used by the beauty shop employees and by familiar customers (such as brides on their wedding day). The salon is a Western style room and is arranged like an ordinary hairdresser's salon.¹⁴ The biggest room used by the beauty shop is the brides' room (*hanayome no heya*) which is attached to the beauty salon and can be entered only through the shop.¹⁵

The brides' room is a Japanese style room and is used for the make-up and dressing of the bride for her first and most elaborate appearance (a 'Japanese' appearance of *uchikake* and wig). The room which is lined with eight tatami mats has mirrors on two sides - half sized on one side for make-up, and full sized for dressing on the other. Another wall is occupied by a show-case of Japanese wigs. The opposite wall has shelves which are used for the brides' *uchikake* for the day (divided into the times of ceremonies). At one of the corners, standing on a cabinet, is a glass show-case with two white horses. The case is treated as a shrine, the horses are referred to as deities (*kami-sama*), and Keiko does not neglect to offer them water and food and praying in front of them by clapping her hands and shutting her eyes for a short moment each time she comes to the shop.¹⁶ The special ceremonial envelopes¹⁷ which contain money given as a tip (*oshūgi*) are also put in the box

until they are collected by the beauty shop owner at the end of the day. Next to the horses is a door leading to a lavatory for the exclusive use of brides¹⁸ and the beauty shop owners.

While the brides are dressed in the brides' room, the grooms are dressed in a smaller room just opposite the brides' room - another room used by the beauty shop in its work, although other male guests may use the room for changing into formal suits. The female wedding guests are dressed by the beauty shop part-time dressers (see below) in another two attached rooms located at the back of the lower ground floor. Since the rooms are mainly used for kimono dressing, they are called 'tomesode rooms'.¹⁹ Both rooms are lined with tatami mats and have full-sized mirrors covering their walls.

Completely separated from the beauty shop is the 'ironaoshi room'. Literally meaning colour (*iro*) change (*naosu*), *ironaoshi* refers to the bride's change of costumes during the reception. The small room (three mats) is located on the ground floor inside the photo studio. Since the room is used for all the costume changes that the bride goes through during the reception, its location inside the photo studio is the most appropriate. Photographs of the bride are, as mentioned earlier, taken in all the costumes and the location of the room makes the bride's absence from the reception room at least somewhat shorter (see chapter 1). Its location also means that dressers are always around and can be called by the photographers for correction of brides' (and other guests') costumes.²⁰

The room has two mirrors fronted by two stools for make-up, and another mirror for Western dressing. The room's floor is elevated and in its entrance (*genkan*) are lined brides' white shoes. On a wall the workers hang bride's artificial flower bouquets for the day, with the respective brides' names attached.

The Beauty Shop Work: Structure and Organization

The beauty shop work force consists mainly of part-time female workers, all of whom are kimono school graduates (see chapter 5) who are summoned to work as necessary. It employs only three full-time employees, all middle-aged women, who work every day from nine to six, and longer hours on busy weekends, and between 1989 and 1991 - about thirty part-time workers. Although the formal manager of the shop is Sakamoto Keiko, the ultimate authority is Sakamoto Sachiko. As Keiko herself put it:

..speaking of management, mother is to the last the one who does the management, she is the owner and she is the one who gives (invests) the money..²¹

Although Keiko is the direct manager of the shop, she comes to the shop mainly on weekends or when weddings take place. Then she works at the beauty salon and in the *ironaoshi* room doing Western dressing and make-up. She also manages the general financial aspects. However, she leaves the everyday management to the three full-time employees: Yamada - the shop chief, Tomiyama - the head 'dresser', and Tanaka.

The shop chief (or *chiifu* - as she is called by everybody) joined the shop one year after it was opened in 1981, and from that time on she has worked there everyday from 9 to 6, and on weekends sometimes until as late as 10 in the evening. She, like the other two full-time employees, has four free days a month.

One cannot mistake the chief for a regular worker. She is a tough, though kind, woman who controls everything which goes on, from the shop itself to the bride's room, through the *tomesode* and to the *ironaoshi* rooms. The latter is where she often works most of the day since her expertise is Western make-up and hair setting. She is also in charge of the daily accounting and of dealing with the part-time employees.

While the chief is in charge of the technical administrative side of the shop's work, Tomiyama - who is considered the shop's expert in kimono dressing - might be said to be responsible for the more 'aesthetic' side of the work. Another 'division of labour' between the two is that between Western (yō) and 'Japanese' (wa). Tomiyama's authority in kimono dressing is inferior only to that of Sakamoto Sachiko herself.

In everyday work Tomiyama is the one in charge of the brides' room. Under this duty she sees herself accountable for any bride who leaves the brides' room. Although she is more tender in character than the chief, she is not a forgiver when it comes to mistakes done when preparing a bride. She would not hesitate to order a dresser to take off all the make-up or attire from a bride, and do it by herself all over again. Tomiyama, unlike the two other full-time employees, is not a licensed beautician.²²

Unlike the chief and Tomiyama, Tanaka does not have expertise in either 'Japanese' or 'Western' brides' making. She can do Western hair setting and can handle a kimono, but not a 'full' bride. As a person she is very quiet and very different in character from both her counterparts. However, what makes her a good worker is her sense of responsibility and order. She is in charge of opening the shop in the mornings (sometimes as early as 7) and closing it at the end of the working day. In her quiet and compliant character (especially towards the shop's owner), Tanaka complements her two working mates, and together they make a reliable working team, which operates the beauty shop quite independently. Helping them in operating the shop and its changing part-timers is a core of veterans, among them the chief of the *tomesode* room.

The Beauty Shop Work: A day at Work

The beauty shop - like the wedding parlour in general - does not seem to be the same place on weekdays as during

weekends. During the week the shop is usually very quiet, with its full-time employees mainly busy preparing for the weekends. They prepare kimono and dresses, they prepare brides (see chapter 6), and they take care to summon the necessary number of part-timers for the weekend (usually two dressers per wedding). On busy Sundays, however, the shop is as active as a beehive. Brides, wedding guests, sales ladies and uniformed part-timers all bustle around.

The brides' room is in many ways the 'heart' of the beauty shop work. It is not only located inside the beauty salon where the reception is also to be found, but it is also central in many other ways. This room is where the bride begins and finishes her 'journey' between costumes on her wedding day. It is also a meeting place for the workers, where they take their afternoon tea.²³ On slow days it is used for training sessions in kimono dressing (see below). And it is also central in a more symbolic way, having the shop's 'mini-shrine' located in it.

While the more experienced workers of the shop work in the brides' room, the bulk of part-time 'dressers' work in the *tomesode* room where they dress wedding guests in kimono. Whereas the preparation of the bride is a long process of more than two hours, kimono dressing of a wedding guest is much shorter (around ten to fifteen minutes). This factor, together with the number of customers (which can easily reach one hundred on a busy day with about fifteen weddings), makes the nature of the *tomesode* room work very different than that of the brides' room. The pressure of work is more periodic, peaking in the thirty minutes or so before each ceremony. The customers usually come in family groups. Such a group will typically include three generations: grandmother, mother and daughter (bride's sister) and usually also some aunts (possibly with their daughters). Apart from them, there are usually some other more remote female relatives and there is, of course, the female go-between (*nakōdo*) who wears a formal kimono as a must. In many cases the whole party of wedding participants can not be dressed simultaneously even when full-

time employees and other 'bride makers' are called to give a hand, and customers often have to wait as long as thirty minutes, dressed only in their special kimono underwear, until they are fully dressed.

It seems that each of the beauty shop's rooms has its own atmosphere. What characterizes the nature of work in the *ironaoshi* room is an air of efficiency. Brides are being changed there in the midst of their wedding party. Hence, the work should be done as quickly as possible. In order to fit into the strict time schedule, a single bride could be subjected to six or even eight hands simultaneously. While an expert is setting her hair, another one is busy with her make-up. At the same time another part-timer is fixing her earrings, and yet another one fixing her gloves. When made-up, the bride is quickly 'inserted' into her wedding dress, which is prepared in advance.²⁴

Efficiency in the room's work is also kept by more formal mechanisms. The room has an intercom connection, not only with the other rooms used by the beauty shop (this is used in order to divide working hands in the most productive manner in each moment), but also with the reception halls. Whenever a bride leaves the room to go back to one of the reception rooms, the latter is notified so that its director can adjust the programme. Another institutional way of maintaining efficiency is the strict instruction that the employees have to fill in the exact time of each bride's entrance and departure.

The Beauty Shop Work: 'Divisions of Labour' and Hierarchies

The beauty shop employs more than thirty women including its part-timers, and its work consists of different tasks such as bride's preparations, the dressing of guests, Western and Japanese make-up, and so on. These tasks, however, are clearly differentiated. Moreover, working tasks - just like the people who carry them out - are not only differentiated; they are also evaluated differently. As we will see, 'Japanese' dressing is considered higher than 'Western' dressing.

However, hierarchies exist also among 'Japanese' dressers, the most apparent one being that between ordinary dressers and 'bride makers'. There is also a distinct difference between veterans and beginners. And there is a ranking which manifests itself in the process of kimono dressing itself. Before going on to describe these various layers of distinctions and hierarchies and their meanings, we need to examine the position of the person who stands at the top of the whole structure: the founder and owner, Sakamoto Sachiko.

*The ō-sensei*²⁵

"Good morning, the ō-sensei is here today" was the *aisatsu* or the day's greeting²⁶ which welcomed me on some of the busy Sundays at the wedding parlour and beauty shop. These were the special occasions in which Sakamoto Sachiko came to the Kobe shop for the day. Although Sakamoto Sachiko usually spent the weekends working in the Himeji shop which had been under her direct management, she did not neglect visiting her other shops, not only for special training sessions (see below), but also on working days. In this way she not only affirmed the affiliation between the shops, but also maintained her claim to dominance.

The title: ō-sensei is more telling than merely distinguishing Sakamoto Sachiko as the ultimate owner. The term *sensei* refers to a teacher and a master (mistress) of a certain art. Although the term is now used to refer to 'masters' in many spheres of life, from university professors to prestigious hairdressers, it nonetheless has a special flavour in the wedding parlour context. Whereas other managers and owners in the wedding parlour carry 'modern' titles such as *shachō* (head or president of company; for the photo studio owner) and (general) manager *shihainin* - (of the wedding parlour) the beauty shop owner is considered a great *sensei* of the 'traditional' art of kimono dressing.²⁷

A visit by the ō-sensei usually had great influence on the atmosphere of the beauty shop - especially if she was in

one of her furious moods where not a single employee (or anthropologist, for that matter) avoided being scolded by her. Her presence was felt most of all in the brides' room where she herself prepared a bride or two while at the same time supervising other brides' makers.²⁸ If the brides' room was said to have a relatively severe atmosphere in general, it had usually become an almost frightening place, especially (but not only) for new 'bride makers' who tried their best not to come in too close contact with the *ō-sensei*.²⁹

But it was not only the bride's room where the *ō-sensei* imposed her authority. She always paid quick visits to other rooms of the beauty shop where she either gave a hand if necessary, or just made her presence known by giving some general orders.³⁰ In her visits to the shop she also did not fail to show her face in all the other areas of the wedding parlour, reemphasizing her ultimate status not only in front of her direct employees but also to other wedding parlour's employees and management.³¹

Distinctions: 'Japanese' and 'Western'

The main split in the beauty shop's work is that between 'Japanese' and 'Western'. Although some of the workers can handle both tasks, they are nevertheless differentiated, as we could see in the case of the chief and her counterpart, Tomiyama. The same division exists between Sakamoto Sachiko and her daughter-in-law. The differentiation between 'Japanese' and 'Western' can best be seen by comparing the atmosphere in the brides' room to that of the *ironaoshi* room and the beauty salon. The brides' room, which is where the bride is prepared for her most 'traditional-Japanese' appearance (see chapter 6), is characterized by a particularly serious atmosphere. The work should be done silently, and, in general, an air of seriousness envelopes the room. Bride makers are strictly forbidden to have a private or unimportant conversation with the brides. Moreover, even among themselves, dressers are much more reserved when in the brides' room. On

the other hand, in the *ironaoshi* room, although the dressers should work more quickly and efficiently, the atmosphere is usually much more relaxed. This difference, I will argue, is well linked to the distinction between 'traditional' (which equals 'Japanese') and 'Western'; while time and efficiency are important for the latter, perfection and strictness are essential attributes of the former. Interestingly enough, the same kind of distinction can be found in other trades in Japan.³²

The 'seriousness' or, rather, 'uniqueness' of kimono dressing goes beyond the brides' room also into the *tomesode* room. Although in this room there is much more pressure of time, and thus efficiency considerations must be more taken into account, it seems that there are some rules which the kimono experts are usually unwilling to break. One of them is the *holistic* nature of the dressing. Kimono dressing is not seen as just helping a woman to put on her own (or rented) kimono, it is rather a specialist task which should be done fully by the dressers. So in cases when women come to the wedding parlour half-dressed in a kimono and ask (for the full price) to have the work completed, the dressers always insist that the kimono be totally taken off and that the work be done afresh (*yarinaosu*). In this way, the kimono dressers keep up their image as not being merely the providers of service but holders of a unique knowledge, and so they justify their status of 'experts' (*sensei*) in the wedding parlour.

Whereas 'Western' beauty work is usually discussed in professional terms of efficiency, 'Japanese' 'bride making' deserves different vocabulary. Tomiyama, the 'brides making' expert explicitly sees her work as creative, "like art". She regards every bride she has 'made' as a piece of (art) work (*sakuhin*). She also sees every beautiful bride she has made as her own achievement. The beauty shop owner was more careful when asked for her definition of the work of kimono dressing and 'bride making':

To say it is art is a bit too much, but on the other hand it cannot be defined as a hobby as it is not so light. It is the unique (*dokutoku*) work of a beautician. However, when people do it really beautifully it can reach art, but there are many conditions (like the bride's body). Yes, if someone does it perfectly it can maybe be seen as art. But, after all, it is the Japanese beautician's unique job. And (she added smilingly) Pleasant work which goes through hardships.

Although the shop owner was hesitant to define kimono dressing and bride making as art, her observations are revealing with regards to her view of the nature of these pursuits. It is first of all obvious from her remarks that 'Japanese' is not only distinguished from 'Western', but also that it has special qualities and uniqueness. These qualities are again clearly 'Japanese' as she alluded to in her concluding remark when speaking of "hardships" which are strongly associated with 'traditional' Japanese notions concerned with craftsmanship and apprenticeship, as will be discussed shortly. Finally, regarding all the distinctions between 'Japanese' and 'Western' that have been mentioned so far, it is possible to say that 'Japanese' and 'Western' are not just distinguished, but differently evaluated. Nonetheless, it is important to note here that the relative statuses of 'Japanese' and 'Western' may well be different in other circumstances or contexts. Brides, for example, may regard the 'Western' appearance as more important. What I suggest is that in the context of bridal dressing as an art or craft, the 'Japanese' art of making a bride has a higher prestige mainly as a result of its 'traditional' image.

Kimono Dressing: The Importance of One's Proper Place

A recurrent phrase used by the *ō-sensei* is "top is top, bottom is bottom" (*ue wa ue, shita wa shita*). The *ō-sensei* uses this phrase in her visits to the shop on working days and

on the training sessions she conducts. The implication of the phrase is naturally that any worker should know her proper place which goes for all the divisions: between veterans and beginners; 'bride makers' and ordinary kimono dressers; and even among ordinary kimono dressers themselves.³³ It also means that in matters of kimono dressing no worker is allowed to criticize the *ô-sensei* herself when she is present, or Tomiyama, the head dresser, when the owner is not around. This attitude is closely connected with the way in which 'know-how' is transferred in the shop from top to bottom.

Knowing one's proper place has also very clear implications for the process of dressing itself. Here top is analogous to *front* (*mae*), and bottom to *back* (*ushiro*). As a rule, the more experienced dresser stands in front of the person being dressed and the less experienced stands at the back. The front work is considered the more complicated and it is actually the main work of adjusting the kimono. The back work is that of an assistant (*joshu*), and, as a matter of fact, a very experienced dresser can do without one. The assistant, always a beginner, is also supposed to do all the preparations before the actual dressing; that is preparing all the small items (*komono*) necessary and helping the customer to wear the special kimono underwear (see appendix).³⁴

The Beauty Shop Work Force: Veterans and Beginners

The beauty shop part-time work force is divided into two distinct groups: the veterans - the so-called women (by the English term) - who have worked at the shop (as part-timers) from its opening or from its first years, and all the others, some of them do not stay long time in service. Most of the veterans are now bride makers, a level they have reached after years of training.

Motivations for Working at the Beauty Shop

All the part-timers, regardless of their length of service, are paid by the hour, and the payment is very low. Starting from ¥550 per hour with the highest pay of ¥700 for some of the experienced.³⁵ Considering the low payment and the fact that even at these wages they could work not more (and usually less) than eight days a month since weddings are conducted mainly on weekends; one may ask: So, what on earth makes these women come to work in the first place?

The beauty shop manager is, naturally, aware of the low wages, but she also knows that whenever they recruit part-time employees there are plenty of women who want to work, and most of them will not leave although the payment is so low. She admits that there are a few women who work for a short time and leave, but she also knows that when they recruit again many new women will come.

The owners' good understanding of the motives which bring women to work in their beauty shop serves them in determining the level of the salaries they offer.³⁶ As Keiko herself put it:

Women who come to work as dressers are women who do not have to work for the money. Most of them are ladies (*okusan*) from middle (class) houses. Those women took dressing classes as a hobby, not for money, but for dressing their daughters and themselves, then they come to a place like ours and get taught, at least the basics. In this way they make the most of their hobby and keep it alive. They get paid transportation fees and an hour payment, and finally they can make money for their own pleasures (*asobi*). There are plenty women of this kind.

"I love kimono, I love the work"

The beauty shop owners indeed understand well the motivations of the women who come to work at the shop. Most of

the women are middle-aged women who after their children have grown up leaving them some time for themselves, look for a new interest in life. Many of the part-timers start kimono dressing as a hobby, taking classes in kimono schools - institutes which were mainly established in the seventies during the growing economic affluence of Japan. After graduating from the schools some of the women find out, however, that the short (and expensive)³⁷ time they spent in the school did not make them skilful enough. And since they also do not have enough 'private' 'ceremonial occasions' in which to practise, they see themselves lucky to have a place to practise what they just acquired, or to use their 'fresh' dressing license. Some of them are also eager to develop their skills under the teaching of the great teacher and the senior (*senpai*) workers.

Moreover, taking kimono dressing as a part-time job is considered by most of the employees as preferable to other kinds of jobs such as secretarial work. It not only means that they have to work only a few hours a week,³⁸ and as such the work does not seem to interfere with their housework. They also feel that their devotedness to their husbands and children is not impaired as a result of the type of pursuit they take. In the next chapter I will discuss more widely the 'traditional' and 'feminine' aspects of kimono dressing as a pursuit. However, I would like to mention here that the beauty shop part-timers view their work as an additional 'channel' of their role as women and wives. One of the more obvious links between the two worlds (of household and of work) is seen in the relatively high number of mothers who had daughters among the workers. "If I only had boys", one of the new dressers told me, "I don't think I would have gone to study kimono, but I have two girls and they are almost twenty years old..". What the novice dresser was referring to was the 'coming of age ceremony' in which wearing a kimono for girls has become very popular.

As the owner of the shop explained, some women saw the job as a mere hobby, but soon found the work itself too

difficult and left. Rarely did these women complain of the pressure of work. What was usually more disturbing for them were others' attitudes towards them. They were not willing to be treated as novices at the age of 45-55, did not find it proper to be always reproached by their seniors (in expertise), and did not like the fact that they had to conduct service tasks (such as cleaning) in addition to the actual dressing.

The Veterans: The dressers' Core

Not all women are discouraged by being treated as novices. Indeed, some women regard their superiors' scolding and the manual tasks they are obliged to do as essential if they are to acquire dressing skills. For these women, kimono dressing is more than a hobby; it is seen more as an art or craft which should be acquired through the 'traditional' way of apprenticeship. This view is held mainly by the so-called 'veterans', most of whom are 'bride makers'³⁹ - who started working in the shop from the time it opened in 1981 or soon after it was open.⁴⁰

The veterans' salaries are not much different from those of beginners (see above). Even the 'extra' money at times attached to their hourly based pay does not make their income large enough to live on.⁴¹ Some of the veterans have husbands to support them; others who have to support themselves (mainly widows) have different work during weekdays; others live on a pension and from giving kimono lessons. As one of them put it "My work here is not for subsistence (*seikatsu*) but more for pleasure (*dōraku*)". They get their gratification not only from making a beautiful bride, but also from being acknowledged by their *sensei*.

The Beauty Shop: Aspects of Artisan Apprenticeship

Although nowadays both the work of a beautician and that of a kimono dresser require some kind of formal education,

this was not the case in the past when hairdressers (who are the predecessors to today's dressers) did not study at schools, but were trained under a particular Japanese system of apprenticeship called *totei seido*. (see Clark 1979:15-7, Dore 1973:376-8, 386). Some aspects of these particular relations between the 'master' (*sensei*) and his/her disciples (*deshi*) were more easily found in earlier days of the *ō-sensei*'s work when she trained women from the countryside who lived in her house. When ready they went back to their hometowns and opened their own shops. The *ō-sensei* keeps in contact with her disciples to these days.⁴² Both elements of acquiring skills far from the natal home (Kondo 1990:235-6) and the long lasting relationship with your master (Lebra 1984a:240) are considered attributes of the traditional relations between the *sensei* and his/her disciples. Although modern dressers are not trained in the same strict patterns of the traditional *totei seido* there are however aspects of the system which can be seen in the beauty shop's work.⁴³ Artisan apprenticeship aspects can be found in the way knowledge is transferred to the novices and in the concepts of the beauty shop owner, as well as in those of the dressers themselves, especially, the older ones. I will argue that these features which are emphasized by the beauty shop owner are part of an attempt to establish a 'traditional' image. But, let us first look at how some of these so-called 'traditional' aspects manifest themselves in the beauty shop work.

Acquiring Certain Dressing Skills

Although all the women who come to work at the beauty shop are already licensed dressers, they nevertheless must acquire the shop's 'own way of doing things' (*uchi no yarikata*). This phrase is repeated over and over again by the *ō-sensei* as well as by senior workers. New workers are actually told to forget what they have just acquired in the kimono school and to study the shop's way of work. Obviously, as the shop hires only kimono school graduates, the

instruction should not be taken literally. What it does mean is that new workers should adjust their knowledge to the ways of the shop or rather of the *ō-sensei*. It also implies that the workers should feel solidarity with the shop.⁴⁴

Acquiring dressing skills also means a continuous endless process of learning. This view was explicitly expressed by the *ō-sensei* when she said that it actually takes ten years to study how to make a bride perfectly. "After a year one can study the outline", she said, "but when comparing with the work of a ten year experienced bride maker it looks like the work of an elementary school student". Thus, this again is a hierarchical 'chain of knowledge' in which every person gets her knowledge from her superiors. The *ō-sensei* herself never stops studying as she said. She participates in training sessions and competitions with other dressers of her level.⁴⁵ She brings the new knowledge she receives in those sessions to her disciples at her shops. From her it is mainly delivered to the senior employees (or disciples) and they pass it on to their inferiors.

Training at the Shop

Younger employees of the shop frequently complain that they are not properly taught by their superiors,⁴⁶ the answer they always receive is that they should look and study. These young workers, Keiko once said, are ignorant of their own culture, "In Japan", she said, "there is the system of master-disciple (*sensei-deshi*), which is not teaching, but looking at the master and studying through work". Learning through observation (*minarai*, literally seeing and learning) was the primary mode of instruction which a master gave his disciples or apprentices. In more vivid terms, apprentices had to learn through stealing (*nusunde oboeru*), for they could not necessarily count on formalized education (Kondo 1990: 237-8). The art of kimono dressing and especially that of bride making is not supposed to be taught orally. The *ō-sensei* would become angry particularly at bride makers if they ask how to

do a specific chore. "One should first do and then if necessary her superior would tell her to do it all over again (*yarinaosu*)", she used to say thus emphasizing learning through training.

Although aspects of apprenticeship are highlighted in the beauty shop, its owners cannot rely solely on learning through observation. Since most of the employees work only a few times a month, they need some kind of formal teaching in order to acquire the proper dressing skills. The main formal teaching is usually conducted by the *ō-sensei* herself during the summer's short training (*kōshū*). Other training sessions are conducted either by her or by one of the seniors during the year.⁴⁷

The Summer Course

The summer course is a three days training session (each day from 10 to 4) which takes place in the brides' room. All the employees are supposed to participate in the training session. Part-timers do not receive any payment for these days. Indeed, they are supposed to regard this as a rare opportunity to study directly from the *ō-sensei* for which they should be grateful.⁴⁸ The course consists of a demonstration of 'bride making' followed by demonstrations of ordinary kimono dressing. The second part of the course - usually half of the second day and the whole third day - is dedicated to individual training by the employees, as they replace each other as models. The training is supervised by the shop seniors and by the great teacher herself.

The focus of the training is 'bride making', which usually takes the best part of the opening day and is done by the *ō-sensei* herself.⁴⁹ The *ō-sensei*'s 'performance' sometimes attracts other female employees of the wedding parlour. The make-up and dressing (of a model, usually a young girl) are done very carefully, and with explanations. The idea is that although only a few of the employees actually make brides, all of the employees should know something about it, not only

because bride making is the ultimate kimono dressing, but also that they could assist when necessary. The instruction in bride making, like other dressing, includes also practical information. In other words, it is not a Bride (in general) who is prepared, but a bride in the specific wedding parlour, the length and tightness of her gowns decided by practical considerations such as the fact that there is no lift. Thus, like in other areas of Japanese craftsmanship, practical and aesthetic factors are combined.⁵⁰

Since the short course is a rare opportunity in which employees, particularly those who do not make brides, have a chance to learn directly from the *ō-sensei*, the owner uses it in order to teach them also some more practical things. The dressers are not only taught various 'tricks' which can help them in dressing; they are also educated to be better promoters of their own work and of the shop's work and goods (mainly kimono accessories [see chapter 3 and 5]). It is not enough to do good work with one's hands, they are told by the owner, one should also be good in "mouth work" (*kuchi no shigoto*). A typical example of 'mouth work' is inventing names for kimono ties. *Furisode* - a long sleeved kimono for unmarried girls - requires a more complicated tie (see chapter 5). In order to create a professional image, the dresser should invent a name for the particular tie she does. Names such as 'flower' or 'butterfly' will usually be appreciated by the girls and their mothers. 'Mouth work' also generally refers to being polite and kind to the customers.⁵¹

Another aim of the summer training course seems to be the creation of solidarity with the owner and a spirit of 'group' identity among the workers.⁵² In the course of everyday work the employees do not have many chances to meet each other. They also do not have formal meetings in which they can get to know each other, people not only join at different times, but also work on different weekends. Thus the opportunity to be together for a few days and to get to know each other is important. Most important is the opportunity to meet directly the *ō-sensei* of whom all the workers of course have heard, but

some have not had the chance to meet. The structure and content of the summer course is devised to create the desired 'group' identity. It begins with a formal opening: all the employees sitting in a circle, the *ō-sensei* in the centre interviewing each employee and introducing the veterans to the others.⁵³ On the other hand, the training finishes with an informal tea with the owners, which is nevertheless led by the *ō-sensei*. The familiarity of the conclusion seems to create the illusion that the session established familiarity not only among the workers themselves, but also with the shop's owner.

Becoming a Bride Maker as Self Realization

The summer short course is also a decisive point in the process of becoming a full 'bride maker'. Not all part-timers become bride makers and as a matter of fact not all of them even aspire to the title.⁵⁴ Becoming a bride maker entails much arduous work and devotion. After a year or so of working in the *tomesode* room a talented and hard working part-timer may be promoted to work as an assistant (*joshu*) in the brides' room. There she will work long days - as she must not leave before the last bride returns to the brides' room and leaves the wedding parlour - doing any kind of service work, including cleaning and laundry. During the months as an assistant she might have some chances to watch one of the expert bride makers at work, or even get some general explanations from the dressing chief. But her main teaching will not start until the summer short course where she will have her first chance to practise bridal make-up and dressing.

After the summer course the novice bride maker will continue to work as an assistant. From time to time she will be asked to join one of the experts on an 'outside job' (*shutchō*).⁵⁵ This 'outside job' could be of two kinds. A short *shutchō* is when the dressers are sent to the bride's house to prepare her for a wedding which takes place at the wedding parlour itself. This kind of 'outside job' is rather rare nowadays since the majority of brides are prepared in the

wedding facility itself. The second kind of outside job, and the most common now, is when the dressers go to a different wedding facility, and there they are in charge not only of the initial preparations, but also of the costume changes during the wedding and of dressing close family members. This usually takes a full working day.⁵⁶

Then, one day the 'fresh' bride maker is told that that day she should do a bride by herself. It may well be that this will occur on a day when the *ō-sensei* is in the beauty shop.

Becoming a Bride Maker: A Veteran's Story

Although the *ō-sensei* is now less involved in the shop's work and in the promotion of dressers, it was she herself who promoted the veterans when the shop was first opened in 1981. At that time the atmosphere at the shop, according to veterans, was much stricter than today. For the veterans, becoming a bride maker was regarded as becoming a mature practitioner of the art of dressing (*ichinin-mae*). The story of one of the veterans may be revealing.

It was in the summer, the time of the summer short course, in my third year, the *sensei*⁵⁷ approached me and said that I should state that I want to do brides..but I did not do so. Not by any means did I think I would make brides, I was over 50, I did not think I could do brides, It seemed to me too high, too great to stretch myself to that level, I was satisfied with dressing *tomesode* and *furisode*..But, when the *ō-sensei* saw this, she said: "Kawamura-san does not have the heart (the will) to follow me.

As the *ō-sensei* reacted in such a manner, the middle-aged lady decided to study brides. She studied not only on the three days course, but throughout the year. She studied while being an assistant in the bride's room and looking at the *ō-sensei*'s work. She spent her own money on studying as she, and

a few other beginners, some of them still working today, paid a kimono expert to come and teach them in their houses. When they found that this training was not good enough, three of them came everyday to the shop and practised, one of them acting as a model. In this way they had either the *ō-sensei* or the dressing chief check and correct their work. The veteran continued her story:

So, like that, steadily I improved my skill (*te ga agaru*) and in the fourth year (in the shop) I became able to make brides ..if those stern (*kibishii*) words had not been said by the *ō-sensei*, I would not do (brides) even now..After all, severe words are better..and it was *The sensei*, she said those words. Now, it makes me very happy and grateful..after all, if you work in such a place and can not reach '*hanayome*' (bride) you are not a full person (*ichi-nin-mae*), at last I became as everyone..

Thus for the veteran becoming a bride maker was more than promotion, it was more a process of maturing, of becoming a full dresser. This process - which was an arduous one, and meant going through hardship (*kurō*) - is, as we shall see, typical of 'traditional' artisan apprenticeship. But before moving on to the concluding part of the chapter I would like to say some words about the changes the beauty shop has gone through since 1981.

Cinderella Beauty Shop: Past Present and Future

The beauty shop's old hands frequently recall nostalgically the "old days" (actually only ten years ago) when the shop had just opened and the *ō-sensei* herself trained them almost every day. A veteran who started working when the shop first opened told me:

When I started working in the shop, I worked in the *ironaoshi*, but I also did *tomesode* as everyone had to do

this, we studied every day, at that time the *sensei* taught us by herself. Now there are seniors (*senpai*) like Tomiyama-san who teach, but then at the beginning, it was The *sensei* herself. It was frightening (she says laughingly), You know what I mean..I studied with all my might, I was scolded by The *sensei*, there were many days I went home crying. It was different from now.

What the veterans miss most of all is the severe (*kibishii*) teaching of the *ō-sensei*. "Now", they say "even The *sensei* is not so severe any more, she has become gentle". (*yasashiku narimashita*). The women who come these days to work as dressers, they complain, do not even need a licence, and they are not trained as severely as they were in "those days" (*mukashi*).⁵⁸

The veterans' complaints about the ineligibility of new workers are not fully acceptable since newcomers to the shop still need a licence to start with, and they are also trained rather strictly by their seniors.⁵⁹ The veterans' view is obviously at least partially a result of a mere nostalgic image of the past. Nevertheless there is a certain truth in their complaints, the present atmosphere in the shop is less severe than it was in the past. One of the factors for change is no doubt the fact that the *ō-sensei* is not present at the shop regularly and that she has been replaced by her daughter-in-law Keiko who is different from her less in her character, than in her view of a beautician's work.⁶⁰ When the shop was just established, the *ō-sensei* herself managed it, and her direct control clearly influenced the shop.⁶¹ But the trend toward simplification in hiring processes and the less severe training is also a result of larger 'structural' processes connected to the relationship with the wedding parlour.

When the shop was first opened, the wedding parlour was much more involved in the beauty shop's work. New employees were interviewed by the parlour manager together with the *ō-sensei* and the shop's chief. Moreover, before reaching the interview any woman who wanted to work at the beauty shop had

to prove her ability in sales work for three months, after taking a course in sales. Only after she succeeded in getting fifteen members to subscribe (see chapter 3), could the licensed dresser apply for an interview at the beauty shop. In other words, at that time, when the wedding parlour and the shop were newly established, the employees' first loyalty was to the wedding parlour itself, and belonging to the shop was considered secondary. Nowadays, however, the wedding parlour usually does not interfere in the beauty shop work especially not in the recruitment of employees. This trend is a result of several processes, both in the wedding parlour and in the beauty shop.

As was described in the previous chapter, after the initial establishment of the wedding parlour, its management made it the policy to have separate sub-companies with whose internal work it does not interfere. On the other hand, Sakamoto's business has also established itself as an independent business with a core of loyal veterans⁶² and close contacts among the three shops.⁶³ Another factor that should not be underestimated is the confidence the parlour has come to have in the shop and its owner. As has been mentioned, Sakamoto Sachiko has been respected from the start for her great knowledge in kimono dressing. With the years, however, she has also proved her proficiency in managing a business which contributed to the trust the parlour has in her and in her daughter-in-law - who seems to complement her in her competence and understanding of 'Western' brides.

The beauty shop has established its position in the wedding parlour just as the dresser and the bride maker have become essential in the production of the wedding ceremony (and of the bride). The question that bothers its founder and owner most of all is its future. For Sakamoto Sachiko the future of her business is undoubtedly connected with the future of 'Japanese' bride making. Although the beauty shop is involved also in 'Western' bride making, the heart and soul of its work, in Sakamoto's view, is 'Japanese' dressing and above all 'Japanese' bride making.

At the age of 75, the *ō-sensei* has started talking about her retirement, "I will leave in about five years" she told me, "I want to have some fun before I die".⁶⁴ She actually started to prepare her retirement by intensifying the training in her shops. She started conducting more short courses during week days. She also decided to teach her daughter-in-law, Keiko, the art of 'Japanese' bride making.⁶⁵

The *ō-sensei*'s belief in the continuity of the business reflects her belief in the continuity of the prevailing style. Weddings are not going to become only 'Western', and the bride at least in the near future is still going to wear a 'Japanese' costume, because it is in the Japanese nature. "The Japanese have this love for delicate work", she said, "it is in their nature (*nihonjin jishin*)". We will later on see that this view about the 'Japanese nature' is not limited only to the *ō-sensei*, it is actually promoted by the whole wedding industry as it is -for them as much as it is for the *ō-sensei* - a vested interest on which much of their industry relies.

What is left for her, as the *ō-sensei* sees it, is to continue passing her knowledge firmly (*hishi de*) to her disciples so that they can guard (*mamoru*) her business after she leaves. She genuinely believes that her disciples will continue observing the craft she has taught them. The *ō-sensei* still keeps in touch with all of her disciples, among them many have opened their own shops. Her relationship with them is seen by her as one of her great rewards.⁶⁶ In a very similar way to many other (Japanese) women who had careers, when the *ō-sensei* looks back she does not regret having had a career. Like them she ends up with the conviction she has chosen the best possible life course (Lebra 1984a:240). "When I look back I feel content" she says, "I am not like a salary-man (*sarariman*), I have created something".

And as for the family business, the *ō-sensei* knows her two daughters-in-law will keep the business, although she is worried that they do not have the necessary knowledge in 'Japanese' bride making. As for her granddaughters, the daughter of her own daughter is now going to a beauty school,

maybe to make up for her mother. The others are not yet interested,⁶⁷ but who knows, their mothers started late as well. In any case, there is no doubt that the shop will not be the same when lacking the air of 'traditional' authority of the great *sensei*.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented Cinderella Beauty Shop and its work. The beauty shop has now come to have a crucial role in the production of brides and of the wedding. By following the history of the shop and its founder, we have been able to follow the process of a creation of a new vocation. We have seen not only how hairdressers have become dressers, but also how ex-housewives have become dressers and bride makers. However modern it may be in its inception the profession of the dresser is nevertheless defined as 'traditional'. There is no doubt that the 'aura' of 'traditionality' is granted to the profession because of its occupation with materials which are considered uniquely 'Japanese' such as the kimono (as will be shown in chapter 5), and the 'Japanese' bride (see chapter 6). But there is more to it than that: the beauty shop and its owner are continuously recreating a 'traditional' image. The wedding parlour, for its part, has also a vested interest in keeping the 'traditional' image of its 'dressers' since this image is crucial in the whole process of 'invention of tradition' which is actually what the wedding industry is much about (see chapter 7).

The story of an artisan related by Kondo (1990:231-3) in her intriguing account of factory life is all too similar to the stories told by the *ō-sensei* and the shop's veterans. "All of life" says the maker of Japanese confections "is a form of *benkyō*, learning, and each shop had its own *yarikata*, its own way of doing things". The *ō-sensei* used almost the same vocabulary, when she told me of her life, although she added another dimension, of growth. "There is always progress" she said, "always climbing..like myself, through the years I

climbed the ladder (*kaidan o nobotte*), there is no end to studying". In her process of learning, the *ō-sensei* has developed her own *yarikata*, way of doing, which she insisted was different from other beauty shops.

The emphasis the *ō-sensei* put on her own way of doing was also observed in the process of acquiring dressing skills. Newcomers to the shop were told to forget what they have studied before and to study the shop's own way of doing things (*uchi no yarikata*). This emphasis can be seen as one form of creating a dichotomy of 'we' and 'they' or 'in' vs. 'out' (*uchi/soto*). This dichotomy which is closely connected with an attempt to create a 'group' distinction could be identified in many other spheres of the shop's life. I have mentioned the attempt done in the summer course to create an imagined 'solidarity' with the beauty shop and its owner. This attempt was 'graphically' drawn by having all the beauty shop employees including new part-timers sitting in a circle out of which the clothing department staff was seated.

There are also many other means by which 'group' identity is created. Like many other Japanese companies, the beauty shop has its end-of-the-year, and New year parties with the shop's owners (Cf. Rohlen 1974:106-11). Other practices which are supposed to enhance solidarity are company trips (*Ibid*:108). A popular outing in Japan is to hot spring resorts. Sakamoto had also offered such an excursion to all her three shops in one of the summers. Kondo (1990:203) sees these kinds of activities as part of the company's attempt to impart a family flavour (*kazoku no aji o tsukeru*) through a variety of institutional and informal practices. This 'family flavour' was clearly observed when different members of Sakamoto's family participated in these kinds of events. In one of the New Year parties Sakamoto's elder daughter came especially from Tokyo in spite of her deteriorating physical condition, only in order to "show her face" for a few minutes in the party. In the summer hot spring trip the attempt to create a fictive family rapport was even more exaggerated by

having as guests of honour members of the Sakamoto's family who live in America.

Plenty has been written about the Japanese company as a family (Cf. Abbeglen 1958, Clark 1979, Nakane 1984, Rohlen 1974, Vogel 1979:157). According to this explanation the group which is based on the workplace constitute an intimate environment which "has indeed a very similar function and role as that of a *mura*, a traditional rural village community (Nakane 1984:126).⁶⁸ But as I suggested (in chapter 3) that we should question the 'harmony' of the Japanese company in the case of the large company - Cobella - I would suggest to pose the question of *company as family?* in the context of the beauty shop.

This question has been raised by others. For example, instead of accepting the idea of family as company as such, Kondo (1990:161) suggests a more complex outlook. Following Foucault (1979, 1980) her approach "highlights the strategic appropriations, political deployments, ironic twists, and subtle nuances in the peregrinations" of this idiom she refers to as *uchi no kaisha* (our company). One aspect of the complexity of the notion of company as family lies in the difference in definition of the '*uchi*' by various agents in the company. In Cinderella beauty shop this kind of discrepancy could be observed between the views of the owner and her employees. While for Sakamoto Sachiko, the owner, '*uchi*' included all her three shops, for Cinderella beauty shop employees - if there was a feeling of '*uchi*' at all - it was only of their own shop.⁶⁹ The owner tried to promote her concept of *uchi* by having joint New Year parties and company trips, the employees, for their part, prepared entertainments for these events on a beauty shop level, emphasizing their own 'group' as opposed to the 'others'. The collective *uchi* notion had not only 'high' aims such as solidarity, it had also very practical implications when workers were sent to work in other shops, a task which they always did reluctantly.

Indeed, the whole complex subject of company as family does deserve much more attention on its own. However, in this

context I would only suggest that creating an image of company as family could contribute another dimension to the 'Japaneseness' and traditionality' of the beauty shop's pursuit.

This 'traditional' image could be observed also in the 'discourse' of the employees themselves, when they - especially the veterans - speak of their experience in the shop. The veterans keep on alluding to 'traditional' artisanship. I have mentioned how they spoke nostalgically of the strict (*kibishii*) training. Referring to an ideal past (*mukashi*) is often related to the concept of tradition (*dentō*) (Moeran 1984a:165). Another recurrent term in the *ō-sensei*'s and the veterans' descriptions of their training and work is *kurō*, hardship, in the process of becoming a full practitioner of the art (*ichinin mae*) (see Frager and Rohlen 1976:263, 265).

I have mentioned earlier the distinction between the 'Japanese' and the 'Western' bridal making. The distinction has been observed in the special atmosphere which surrounds the Japanese bridal making, especially in the brides room. It is not surprising, I would argue, that a similar atmosphere of strictness (*kibishisa*) and silence is described for the Japanese division of sweets in the factory studied by Kondo (1990:231-2). Just as in the case of the Japanese confectionary so it is in the case of the brides' room, this kind of atmosphere is seen as 'traditional' (*dentōteki*) by outsiders (Kondo 1990:232). Thus in the same manner that Kondo's Ohara-san, the head of the Japanese division, created himself as a kind of "living stereotype of the traditional artisan" (Kondo 1990:232) so do the *ō-sensei* and her loyal employees create a 'traditional' image of their craft and work. And, just as preparing special sweets for different seasons gave another support to the 'traditional' and artistic definition of the cakes maker (Kondo 1990: 233), so does the occupation with 'ceremonial occasions' enhance the 'traditional' definition of the dressers and bride makers. Indeed, another factor which facilitated the creation of a

'traditional' image in both cases was the fact that they were family businesses which as such are considered 'traditional' (see Dore 1958, Bestor 1989).

Nevertheless, there are certain differences between artisans who make Japanese cakes and those who make 'Japanese brides'. The difference, however, does not necessarily lie only in the fact that the latter are making a 'human' product, as we will see later on 'human' commodities do not differ much from material ones. Part-time workers, almost all of whom are women -like in the case of the beauty shop - are excluded from artisanal identity (Kondo 1990:231). And indeed for many of the part-timers in the beauty shop the work is not much more than a hobby which gives them a new purpose in life (*ikigai*) after their children have grown up (Pharr 1976:324). The choice these women have in electing a 'traditional'⁷⁰ feminine pursuit such as the *kimono* as a hobby and a part-time occupation may be seen as an appropriate compromise between their traditional devotion to their husbands and children (Pharr 1976:324), on the one hand, and going out of the house to have their own interests, on the other.

The choice of feminine pursuit - interestingly enough - is not limited to women who take part-time work late in life. Lebra (1984a:226) found that women who had to take a job early in their life being single, widowed, separated or divorced chose "female" businesses. Most of these women also preferred to set up their own businesses. Thus, the case of Sakamoto Sachiko, who as a young widow decided to become a beautician even though the profession did not seem to suit her social status, and despite her family disapproval, is not uncommon. Another example was mentioned briefly (see note 7) of a woman who has now become a successful businesswoman in the Ceremonial Occasion business. In her case, she became a beautician at the age of fifteen because of a financial need. However, when she divorced her husband in the age of twenty-three she decided to open her own business of kimono rental and dressing.

There is yet another point to be made here about the choice those women made, be it of a profession or a hobby. Apart from being a female pursuit, kimono dressing and bride making are also closely connected with 'tradition'. In the next chapter we will examine this link between 'tradition' and women. I will show how Japanese women have become 'repositories of the past'. However, what we could start observing here is a kind of pattern in which women perpetuate their position in society. This was observed in the relations between mothers and daughters. We have seen the importance mothers of girls see in dressing their daughters in kimono. Lebra (1984a:42-6) mentions the significance of femininity training, which was part of the socialization of girls of prewar or wartime Japan. This kind of training included training in elegance, modesty and tidiness, which were all connected with wearing kimono (properly). It is interesting how mothers of today perpetuate similar values in the socialization of their own daughters although these are strongly combined with women's compliance and inferiority. In chapter 5 we will see how important the mother's role is in choosing kimono for the 'coming of age ceremony'.

Other aspects of the pattern in which women perpetuate their condition in society were observed in this chapter. We have seen how women as professionals employ other women in what can be termed as exploitative manner since they know that "there are plenty of them". We have also seen how women as bride makers create the 'ideal Japanese bride'. This pattern may well be explained in terms of what Kandiyoti has called 'bargaining with patriarchy' which is "[women's] active collusion in the reproduction of their own subordination" (1988:280).

I will continue pursuing these themes in the next two chapters. I will also examine in the coming chapters the 'twin' concepts (or myths) of 'traditionality' and 'Japaneseness'. These concepts will finally be analysed against the background of general terms such as national identity and consumerism. We will then see that it is not only

that 'traditional' artisanship is celebrated in Japan as a symbol of national identity, 'to the point of canonizing certain artisans as Living National Treasures" (Kondo 1990:235), but there is also the celebration of 'traditionality' as such.

Notes

1. In some cases the hairdresser had a role during the ceremony to do with feasting, when she had to move two tiny pieces of dried fish or plum from one side of the tray in front of her to the other. This was done when the ceremony was celebrated in its abbreviated form. The beautician's act was supposed to symbolize the elaborate feasting which is the custom when a full traditional ceremony is carried out (Norbeck 1954:183).

2. Because of their role in bridal preparations, hairdressers had connections with kimono rental shops which were involved in the establishment of the *gojokai* (mutual benefit) organizations and the comprehensive wedding parlours which came later on.

3. Interestingly enough, towards the end of my fieldwork there was a plan to have a beauty shop employee act as the bride's attendant throughout the ceremony. Although I do not know if this plan was put into effect, the idea itself is interesting as another example of an 'invention of tradition'. In this case - like in some others mentioned in the thesis (see chapter 7) - the invention takes the form of 'playing with tradition'. In this case, it is clear how former 'traditions' are manipulated by the wedding industry for the sake of efficient production of weddings.

4. The term 'dresser' (*kitsuke no hito*) which is used in the wedding parlour context is actually a recent term that developed with the kimono schools which teach 'dressing' (*kitsuke*) (see chapter 5) and with the wedding parlours. Both institutions have their origins in the seventies during Japan's economic boom.

5. Lebra (1984a:60) argues that it was actually the stigmatization of women as "low-class" which had blocked women from occupational careers until recently.

6. The phrase used is '*hanayome o tsukuru*', literally 'making a bride' (see chapter 6 note 25). The term refers particularly to the 'Japanese' appearance of a bride in *uchikake* and wig.

7. The story of Sakamoto Sachiko is not the only story of a beautician, or rather of a brides' expert, who knew how to take advantage of the changes in the wedding industry. An even more remarkable story is that of Tamura Keiko, now owner of three wedding parlours and nine funeral parlours in a rival company. Tamura started to work as a beautician at the age of fifteen. Like Sakamoto, she was left without financial support after she had divorced her husband at the age of twenty-three. Tamura actually 'sensed' the developments in the wedding business much earlier than Sakamoto, when she decided soon after the war, to open a kimono rental shop. Then, she joined the *gojokai* with the establishment in 1948. Although she long ago left the beautician's profession, her know-how, together with her contacts in the kimono rental business and, of course, her prominent business skills, have made her what she is today.

8. One clear example of the respectful attitude towards Sakamoto Sachiko is that she is referred to as 'sensei' ('master' of a certain art) even by the owners of Cobella and the Shōchikuden Group.

9. Sakamoto Sachiko's two sons do not take any part in the business, since they are both salary-men. When asked why her husband is not involved in the business, Sakamoto Keiko, the wife of the elder son, first said that it was because it was women's work and that men could not do dressing (*kitsuke*). Then she added that, on second thoughts, there were men who "did beauty (*biyō*)", like hair styling. Another reason she gave was that her husband saw the profession as a low level one and that there were no university graduates in the business. Ironically, her husband now suggests that their son - who has tried unsuccessfully for the last three years to enter university (*rōnin*) - should join the beauty business since his grandmother has a lot of property. Apparently, however, the young man himself is too proud to agree: "only people who cannot enter an ordinary university are becoming beauticians".

10. Sakamoto's daughter was described by her sister-in-law as a 'weak' (*yowai*) person, her 'illness' was never clearly defined. "She has always had a weak body and she has always caused worries" said her sister-in-law. "Also in her character", she added, "she always worries". The hard work in the shop did not do her good, she said, and she started losing weight. This kind of explanation for a physical condition which is connected to personality on the one hand, and social and work pressures from the other, is not uncommon in Japan.

11. Using a loan word for the beauty shop's name is not unique. While the first shop opened by Sakamoto had a 'Japanese' name: Shōchiku (literally pine and bamboo), the newer shops have loan-words names - 'Baron' and 'Cinderella'. (See chapter 2 for a similar trend with wedding parlour names).

12. The younger daughter-in-law, Sakamoto Asako, had entered the Sakai shop a few years earlier. Since there were not enough workers at the shop, she had to take her beauty courses through a correspondence course while working at the shop during the days.

13. This kind of family obligation is not uncommon in Japanese family businesses. (See Kondo 1990, Hamabata 1990).

14. Only the area of the beauty salon and the 'brides' room' which is attached to it, is rented by the beauty shop. Other areas used by the beauty shop in its work belong to the wedding parlour and are given over for use to the beauty shop.

15. This fact is important since it makes the room a 'restricted' area of the beauty shop into which 'outsiders' such as the sales ladies can not enter so freely. When outsiders do enter the room

they feel obliged to excuse themselves for their rudeness (by using the appropriate Japanese phrase: *shitsurei shimasu*).

16. It seems that horses are sometimes viewed as bringers of good fortune. Horses were given as offerings to shrines in early Shinto because, being expensive objects, they represented a sincere feeling on the part of the donor. It was also believed by many that horses are a kind of a go-between between humans and god (*kami*). One can still see sacred horses at some Shinto shrines. At the most famous Shinto shrine - Ise - there are white horses. It is possible even that the white horses for the shop were bought there. (Personal communication from Ian Reader, whom I would like to thank).

Nevertheless, although the horses were treated like gods, neither Keiko nor her mother-in-law could answer the question of why these white horses were sacred. I was only told that they were given as a present to Sakamoto when she opened the shop. It seems, however, that the beauty shop employees take the horses less seriously than the owners. In one case when an expensive melon was put in the glass box as an offering, one of the veterans, a humorous person, said: "I wish I were god" (*kami-sama ni naritai*). It is, however, worth noting that the melon was given later on to the owner, Sakamoto Sachiko, which may imply of the importance she had in the eyes of her employees.

17. The envelopes are like those given on happy celebrations, being tied with red and white paper strings (*mizuhiki*) (black string is used for funerals). (See Hendry 1990:21, 1993 for the ceremonial role of this kind of 'wrapping').

18. The brides are sent to the lavatory at a specific stage of their preparation. From that time on they will not be able to use the lavatory (see chapter 6).

19. *Tomesode* is the formal kimono worn by married wedding guests (see chapter 5). Of the two *tomesode* rooms, the bigger one is the one in which most of the dressing work is conducted, the smaller one being used only on very busy working days.

20. Recently brides have taken to wearing two kinds of *uchikake*, a white one and a coloured one; they, naturally, are photographed in both. Since the change from one *uchikake* to another is relatively simple (because it is just the overgarment) it is performed in the photo studio itself. Another task of the dressers which is performed at the photo studio is re-binding, (or packing (*karage*)) the bride's *uchikake* which was opened for the photograph.

21. It seems that Sakamoto Sachiko divided her property in this way not only because she wanted to help her children or because her brides wanted to help her, as she put it. But also for tax reasons. See chapter 2 for a similar process in Shōchikuden itself.

22. As the one in charge of 'bride making' she is supposed to be, if not a licensed beautician, at least a graduate of advanced courses in kimono dressing, as she is actually considered by other employees and customers. I myself was surprised when she told me that in fact she did not take any high classes of kimono dressing. Tomiyama learned most of what she knows from her employer, Sakamoto Sachiko and, as we will see later on, this fact could have helped her in the necessary adjustment to the beauty shop's particular way of work.

23. Lunch (usually a lunch box brought from home) is eaten by the workers in a tiny room in the rear of the brides' room. It is taken by two or three dressers at a time, as schedule allows.

24. The wedding dresses, which all have large stiff crinolines, are put on the floor in such a way that the brides can climb into them. Then the upper part is put on by more than two workers. As another way of saving time the bride's own brassiere (which is not used when wearing 'Japanese' attire) is placed on the dress in advance, so that she can put it on immediately after the make-up process is over.

25. The term *ô-sensei* can be best translated as 'great (*ô*) mistress' (master in its female form). *Sensei* usually refers to a 'master' of a certain art. However, I have chosen to leave the term in Japanese mainly because of the 'peculiar' connotation of the word 'mistress' in English.

26. In Japan people tend to greet each other more by commenting about the condition than in inquiring about the other's well-being. As such, greetings describing the weather: "it is hot (cold) today" are very common. (Cf. Kondo: 1990:18). In the wedding parlour context a common greeting is "It is busy today, isn't it?".

27. All the dressers are referred to, both by other wedding parlour workers and by customers, as '*sensei*', which implies having knowledge in the 'traditional' art of dressing as well as in 'ceremonial occasions' etiquette. On the other hand, novices at the shop are corrected when they call their seniors '*sensei*'.

It is interesting, however, that Sakamoto's daughter-in-law, Keiko is called *sensei*, although the title is added to her first name (Keiko-*sensei*) which is an unusual combination with a clear touch of familiarity. In Keiko's case, then, the title is more a (capitalist) sign of ownership than of (respected) mastery of art. The clear distinction in the attitude of the shop employees to the two Sakamotos is another sign of their difference in status. While Sakamoto Sachiko was indeed treated as a 'mistress', especially by the shop veterans who acted as her servants, dressing her, combing her hair, carrying her bag. This kind of treatment was not given at all to Keiko, who was on more friendly terms with the employees, especially the full-timers.

28. The brides who had been prepared by the *ō-sensei*'s own hands were considered very fortunate. In many cases they were told how lucky they were to have been 'made' up by the mistress of our company (*uchi no sensei desu*). (About the use of *uchi* (literally the inside, the interior) to signify the speaker's company (or household, or school) see Nakane 1984:3-4, Hamabata:1990:46-7).

29. In this respect there was a difference between new younger dressers and veterans. Although the latter were also fearful of the *ō-sensei*, they nonetheless believed in the value of 'severe' (*kibishii*) teaching and supervising, while younger workers were less familiar with these 'traditional' aspects of apprenticeship (see below).

30. The *ō-sensei*'s orders were usually given in a very direct superior way: "You, do the back..., You, why don't you do anything...". The terms '*anata*' or '*anta*' (meaning 'you'), sound almost derogatory in a society like Japan where direct approach is usually avoided. In any case they are a clear sign of superiority.

31. On many occasions Sakamoto arranged to meet the wedding parlour general manager in the afternoons. These meetings were usually held at the wedding parlour's coffee shop where she could be seen with the manager, who - like others - referred to her as '*sensei*'.

32. Kondo (1990:232) mentions a very similar distinction in attitude between the departments of a Japanese and Western confectionery. The atmosphere in the Japanese department is characterised by severeness (*kibishisa*) and working in silence, which is very similar to that of the brides' room.

On the other hand, Hendry (1991:26) gives hairdresser's setting as an example of a situation in which the 'wrapping' of high speech is not necessary as opposed to more formal situations (among which when wearing kimono). The 'loose' atmosphere may well account for the beauty salon and the *ironaoshi* room, but it seems that the 'traditional-Japanese' 'wrapping' of the brides room requires a different behaviour.

33. In ordinary kimono dressing there is a distinction between *tomesode* (short sleeved kimono for married women) and *furisode* (a long sleeved kimono worn by unmarried girls) (see chapter 5). Dressing someone in *furisode* is considered a more complicated task and is done by more experienced workers.

34. The distinction between different levels of dressers can be usually observed also in their uniforms. Usually beginners, and as a rule, ordinary kimono dressers, wear green robes while bride makers wear pink ones.

35. New part-timers actually earn only ¥500 since from the ¥550 pay the shop deducts ¥50 for their training (like a kind of internship). By comparison, a high school or college student

working in a fast food restaurant may earn between ¥700 and ¥800 per hour.

36. Although the owners argued that they could not afford higher salaries, it is evident that if they could not find women at these prices, they might have had to hire fewer of them even on busy days and offer higher salaries.

37. Acquiring a dressing license in one of the Kimono schools usually amounts to a considerable sum of money. The schools charge not only for the lessons (about ¥3000 per meeting), but also for accessories and text books. (O'Neill 1984:642, see chapter 5). I was told by one of the part-timers that she spent ¥1,000,000 in total on her license.

38. Part-time work in Japan does not always mean short hours or a shorter working week. Indeed, part-time women workers in Japan are on average working over thirty hours with a five-day working week, and in retailing, catering and smaller companies they are often working a six-day week (Saso 1990:145).

39. Although the majority of the veterans are now bride makers, there are a few who take on different roles. One of these women is Sadamoto, the chief of the *tomesode* room who dominates the *tomesode* room, trying to keep alive some of the disciplined atmosphere inherited from the *ō-sensei* whom she admires. Another devoted worker is the one in charge of men's dressing (*montsuki*). She works together with another part-timer in the men's dressing room.

40. There were only two women who proceeded to bride making during my two and a half year fieldwork. One of them was herself a kimono teacher and a manager of a kimono school's branch, although she kept it secretly.

41. This addition to the salary comes from tips (*oshūgi*) which the customers, mostly brides' mothers, present to the dressers. All the tips are collected by the owner, and it is actually the *ō-sensei* who decides how to divide the money which is added to the dressers' salaries in a separate envelope. The veterans see in this addition to their pay more an acknowledgement of their work by the beauty shop founder and owner whom they warmly thank, than their own earned money. (It is also a way in which both sides avoid taxes). The loyal veterans may at times win other 'extras' in trips or invitations to restaurants with the shop's owner. These 'treats' can be seen as an example of an attempt to create a 'company as family' (see Rohlen 1974, Kondo 1990, and below).

42. Kondo (1990:235-6) argues that the most exemplary form of *kurō* (hardship) takes place outside the natal home, for separation from one's own circle of attachment is itself a form of suffering. It seems that the importance of being trained

outside the natal home is still prevailing as the *ō-sensei* told me of a young daughter of one of her previous apprentices who herself went back to the countryside and opened her own shop. Now when she wants her daughter to study the profession she has sent her to study from the *ō-sensei* herself. The girl was working at the Himeji shop as an apprentice.

43. This point will be developed in the concluding part of the chapter, but I have to emphasize here that whether the system existed as such or whether it exists more in the minds of modern Japanese in their 'nostalgic' view of the past, I am referring here only to the latter.

44. I am referring to (expected) feeling of solidarity with the company which was described by writers such as Rohlen (1974:45, Nakane 1984:3) of seeing the company as "one great family".

45. The *ō-sensei* has reached the highest level in mastering the art of dressing, at national level (*zenkoku kankyo-hesei dōgyo kumiai no shihan-kōshi*). This level is reached after winning regional competitions. Nevertheless she continues studying. Conferences and study meetings are arranged by different organizations. An important body is a company which also produces bridal make-up and accessories and publishes an important magazine for professional dressers called *Hanayome* ('Bride').

46. This complaint was frequently made by Sakurai, a relatively young worker (a single woman in her thirties), who unlike all the other part-timers went to a beauty school. She took the course while working at the shop (she also worked in an office during the week), and when she passed her exams she interned at the shop. In some ways, her position, although she also worked only on a part-time basis, was closer to that of the 'traditional' apprentice.

47. Another short training course was usually conducted in January, before the 'coming of age ceremony' (see chapter 5). There were also less formal training sessions for dressers in the *tomesode* room which were conducted by the chief of the room. Usually the summer time which is less busy was used for training sessions during the week.

48. They usually thanked the *ō-sensei* with a present bought by money which was collected from all the participants. The gift was generally presented to the great teacher by the shop chief.

49. There was one occasion when the *ō-sensei* brought her closest disciple at the time, the chief of the Himeji shop with whom she worked directly. The chief did the actual dressing while the *ō-sensei* watched and gave her remarks. This was a unique case when the *ō-sensei* just returning from a long trip abroad was reported to be too tired to conduct the dressing by herself. However, this

case is an example of the way 'know-how' is transferred, the disciple, (though a senior) is only transmitting to others what she was taught by her great teacher. The same is true for 'bride making' in the shop in general, Tomiyama, the head dresser always mentioned how the *sensei* herself did the work, while she was training other dressers.

50. Moeran (1984a:201-4) finds such co-existence of aesthetic and practical considerations in the field of pottery has a major bearing on aesthetic appreciation. He also argues that the link between practicality and beauty is related to subconscious Shinto beliefs with which Japanese aesthetics in general are imbued (*Ibid*:24).

51. It is possible to define these kinds of tasks as social expertise which according to Lebra (1984a:239-40) is a prerequisite supplement to technical expertise. Lebra brings the story of a beautician who used to give a morning class everyday to her employees to improve their attitude toward customers.

52. See Rohlen (1974:193) on similar objectives in a much larger institution - a bank, and Rohlen (1970) for a large engineering company. However, while Rohlen emphasizes the importance of introductory training courses for new members, this kind of course was not at all given in the shop. Another significant difference between large institutions' training courses and that of the beauty shop is the separation between the place of work and the training location. Such physical separation is analysed by Rohlen (1970:188) as part of a separation stage in what he considers a 'rite of passage'. This kind of analysis is obviously not very suitable in the beauty shop's smaller scale training courses.

53. The clothing department (*ishōbu*) employees who are in the room, but outside of the circle only emphasize the 'group'.

54. The aspiration to be a 'bride maker' is usually connected to the employee's age and initial motivation for joining the shop. Usually older women, who see kimono dressing more as a hobby, will be satisfied with ordinary kimono dressing.

55. Although the common translation of '*shutchō*' is 'business trip', I am not convinced that this should do in this context; 'outside (out) job' is perhaps more suitable.

56. Most of the second kind of 'outside jobs', in which the dressers are doing their work in different facilities - mainly hotels - are cases in which the costumes are supplied by Cobella as part of the membership system (see chapter 2). In some very rare cases the work is not connected to Cobella but is only Cinderella beauty shop's work. These uncommon cases might occur in special circumstances such as a wedding of friends of the Sakamotos and are conducted with Cobella's permission.

57. In the beauty shop's vocabulary the term 'sensei' when it comes without a name attached to it, refers solely to The sensei, the great sensei herself.

58. Reminiscence about the past (*mukashi*) is perhaps typically connected with building an ideal image of the past. Moeran (1984a:165-6) has argued that it is the decline of community solidarity itself which has led to the construction of an ideal image of the past 'community' among the potters he studied. It seems that the idea of *mukashi* is prevalent in Japan - mainly (but not only) in rural society. Dore (1978:65-6) has commented on the frequency with which Shinohata people reminisced about the past, mainly of the hard times before the war as compared to the relative luxury of the present. It seems that in all cases, nostalgic tones are used more when speaking to an outsider. The relations between *mukashi* and *dentō* (tradition) mentioned by Moeran (*Ibid*:165) are also interesting and will be dealt with later on.

59. Sadamoto, the chief of the *tomesode* room is particularly severe with her subordinates, especially beginners. In fact, in one of the joint new year parties (for all Sakamoto's shops) when Keiko had to introduce and thank her workers. She asked Sadamoto, of course in good humour, to try to be more gentle (*yasashii*) with her subordinates, she also mentioned that even the *ō-sensei* had become less severe (*kibishii*) with the years.

60. While Sakamoto Sachiko regards kimono dressing as a specialized artisan's work, which could even reach the level of art if it is done perfectly, Keiko sees the beautician status as relatively low. In her view an artisan (*shokunin*) is regarded as lower in status than a person of education (such as teacher or doctor). The fact that she specializes in 'Western' dressing which can not have the 'aura' of traditionalism is also important to notice.

61. The shop in Himeji which the *ō-sensei* manages now can serve as evidence to the influence of the *ō-sensei*. The shop is much better organized, it employs much younger women, the employees are careful of their appearance (high heels, no short socks) and, in general, they are much more severely trained and treated.

62. It seems that since the shop has the core of devoted expert dressers who could dress brides, it became more profitable, from Sakamoto's point of view, to hire women who see the work as a hobby, and accept a lower pay, even if they leave after a short while.

63. Employees are often sent to work in a different shop when necessary.

64. Sakamoto Sachiko's greatest pleasures apart from her work - which she also sees as pleasure - is playing mah-jong with her friends. Although she enjoyed very much playing the game in her



free time, she told me, she was actually worried that it would start boring her if she was to do only this.

65. The initial plan was to teach Keiko in the next summer course. Finally, the *ō-sensei* even did not wait for the summer training but conducted an initial 'training' to Keiko while using a 'real' bride in a not very busy wedding day.

66. Lebra (1984a:240) argues that one of the most gratifying rewards for professional women is a social one. Social relations between the *sensei* and her previous disciples is an example of this kind of reward.

67. Keiko's daughter has just started studying music at university as did her mother.

68. According to this familiar explanation, management practices such as lifetime commitment, payment of wage by seniority and quality circles all contribute to the achievement of group goals.

69. A similar difference was observed by Kondo (1990:203) between the *sachō* (the company's president) and his employees. While the president saw the '*uchi*' as the whole company, for the latter it was their work group, which was where complaints against the company could be aired with impunity. Another way the workers may see the *uchi* is as being the owner's family. In this case the distinction between *uchi/soto* is concerned more with money and power (Kondo 1990:204,209).

70. Frager and Rohlen (1976) argue that as a consequence of more leisure time and a higher income more people are taking up some form of traditional art "on what we would term a hobby basis" (1976:273). Attending a kimono school falls into this category, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter five:

KIMONO: THE KIMONO AND THE JAPANESE WOMAN

..the most wonderful aesthetic products of Japan
are not its ivories, nor its bronzes, nor its porcelains,
nor any of its marvels in metal
or lacquer - but its women.

Lafcadio Hearn (1904)

In previous chapters the structure of the wedding parlour and the beauty shop, which is an essential part of the wedding parlour, have been described. Before taking a deeper look at the relationship of the wedding industry with its main customer - the bride - I would like to look more carefully at one of the main linking objects between the wedding industry and the buyers of their services - the kimono. By now we have seen how important a part costumes - of bride and groom and other guests - play in the wedding. This chapter will look at the kimono from a more general perspective. The kimono is not only central to the beauty shop work; it has also become a crucial element of 'ceremonial occasions' in Japanese society in general. By giving a background to the kimono and what it has come to be in modern Japan, this chapter expands a discussion on the kimono and Japanese women. This discussion of Japanese women and brides - as they are moulded by the tight wrapping of their modern kimono - was alluded to in the previous chapter and will extend into the next chapter.

'Ceremonial Occasions': The Role of Kimono

As was mentioned earlier, kimono is worn (mainly by women) on other formal occasions outside the wedding ceremony.¹ I would like to open the discussion about kimono in modern Japan by elaborating on one of these occasions: the coming of age day. This day is not only a landmark in the life of the Japanese woman, but it is also an important day for businesses related to 'ceremonial occasions'. For Cinderella Beauty Shop it is the busiest and most profitable day of the year.

The Coming of Age Ceremony: The Attainment of Female Adulthood

Since the War, the 15th of January has been a national holiday to celebrate 'coming of age'. In this day all young people who have reached the age of twenty are given the right to vote, smoke, drink, and bear responsibility for their own actions. The event is celebrated in every city and town in a formal ceremony called '*seijin shiki*' (the coming of age ceremony) in which speeches are made by civic leaders, and poems and essays are read by the representatives of the celebrants, all concerning the topic of becoming an adult.² Nevertheless, it seems that the costume rather than the ceremony itself plays the main role:

for many people questioned, the most striking feature of this occasion (the coming of age ceremony) was concerned with dress, for attendance at the ceremony is made in a most formal attire. Girls wear kimono which might cost in the region of several hundred thousands yen (several hundred pounds), beside which the cost of the boy's new western suit pales into insignificance.

(Hendry 1981:206)

As Hendry has observed, the costumes and especially the kimono for girls are the main feature of the day. Wearing kimono for the 'Coming of Age Ceremony' is considered by many girls and their mothers as one of those rare 'once in a life time' chances to put on a kimono and with it a beautiful Japanese appearance (another chance is of course at the wedding ceremony). The idea is also promoted as such by related businesses. Here photo studios play an important role, together with kimono shops, department stores, Ceremonial Occasions organizations (or wedding parlours), and beauty shops. As in the promotion of weddings, women's magazines are important promoters, it is possible to see a growing number of advertisements for kimono and its related accessories towards late December. For the special occasion the girls (or rather

their mothers) are willing to spend a considerable amount of money and time.

When questioned about their motivation for wearing kimono³ for the coming of age ceremony, all of the girls found it difficult to answer. For most of them it was just taken for granted. Many answered: "because all my friends do the same" or even more generally "because everyone does". Another frequent answer was "because my mother wanted me to"; "it was my mother's dream". As we will see in the next chapter, this attitude is in fact very similar to that of brides concerning their 'Japanese' bridal appearance. In both cases the act of wearing kimono symbolizes for the girl (and for her mother) being both Japanese and a woman.⁴ This feeling fits well the promotion of both days as special ceremonial occasions in the girls' life which as such should be cherished and memorized.

Preparations for the Day (Customers' Side)

The mother's role seems to be crucial not only in the decision to wear kimono as mentioned, but also later on, with all the preparations.⁵ After the decision has been made and accepted by the girl, the mother has to plan the next stages. The preparations usually start well before the date. To begin with the mother has to decide if the kimono will be bought or rented. In the first case the expenses will naturally be much higher, a *furisode* (a long sleeved kimono and the most formal attire for unmarried women, see below) for the ceremony cost from ¥500.000 to ¥1.000.000 in 1990-1 (about £2000 to £4000). The kimono may be purchased in a specialist kimono shop or at one of the exclusive department stores.

If the second possibility were to be chosen - that is, renting a kimono for the occasion - the mother could either turn to a shop which specializes in clothing rentals (*kashi ishōya*), or to a wedding parlour. If she happens to be a member of one of the *gojokai* organizations, she would probably end up renting the kimono using her membership reduction.⁶ As a member in Cobella she would be probably approached by her

'sales lady' just about the time one starts to consider the matter, about a year before the actual day.

The next stage will be going to the wedding parlour to choose the *furisode*. The visit to the wedding hall is usually done in a threesome - the mother, daughter, and the loyal sales lady. They first go to the costume department to pick a kimono. After choosing the kimono they are guided by the sales lady to the beauty shop, where they book an appointment for the hair setting, make-up and dressing on the morning of January 15. If they are lucky and early enough, they should be able to get an appointment for 8.00 or 9.00, but very soon these hours will be booked and the poor girl (and her mother), who has to be at the civil ceremony at 2.00 p.m, will have to arrive at the beauty shop at 5.00 or 6.00 a.m.

Before leaving the wedding parlour, however, they must arrange for a photograph at the studio. The professional photograph, to be taken on the day itself or sometime before,⁷ is an essential part of the event.

At the Wedding Parlour's Beauty Shop

For Cinderella Beauty Shop the 15th of January is the busiest and most profitable day of the year. It is also a day during which the beauty shop engages the biggest number of part-time workers. The energy which is devoted to this day by the owners and workers might at least partly be explained by the fact that the income of the beauty shop on this one day is incomparably more than that received from any other wedding day - no matter how busy - with an expected turnover of around ¥1,500,000. The actual amount which was gathered during the day when I was conducting fieldwork was about ¥1,800,000 from 120 girls. From this amount the beauty shop had to pay the salaries of the thirty part-time workers who were invited and worked for about nine hours (they were paid ¥500 to ¥700 per hour). Apart from this the beauty shop had other expenses for the day, but even considering those, the total net income was high (about ¥1,600,00).⁸

Preparations for the Day (Producers' side)

The main preparations for the 15th of January are done during the last weeks before the actual day. Although some tasks, such as fixing the girls' appointments and preparing some of them for a special photograph taken before the event extend over the whole year.

As always the majority of the work is done by the three permanent workers and a few of the veterans. From the beginning of January they prepare the kimono and the obi. In order to save time, all the kimono sashes are tied in advance. On the last Sunday before the 15th the part-time workers (of the day) assist in arranging all the kimono boxes (according to the appointment time) in the *tomesode* room, both sides of which will be filled with more than 100 boxes. At the beauty salon efforts are made to prepare sets of hair decorations.⁹

The bulk of part-time workers who are called up by the beauty shop are asked also to participate in a short training course (see chapter 4) which is to be conducted a week before the 15th on a week day. In this course the women practise kimono dressing. They also learn how to speak to the girls and how to sell them extra items such as a ready-made *hosei* (a set of gauze and cotton used for padding the body, which literally means *correction*) for ¥1000 or a *kazarihimo*, a coloured decorating string for ¥1500.¹⁰ The few workers who will be in charge of hair-setting may practise this chore and learn how to suggest the special kimono hair decorations the beauty shop has on offer at specially high prices (see note 9). Yet another group of four workers practise make-up of which they will be in charge.

The 15th of January

The 15th of January is a busy day at the wedding parlour. Although this time it is not brides and grooms who are 'produced', but rather 20 year old girls for their coming of age ceremony. A very few, if any, weddings take place on the day,¹¹ they will be scheduled for the afternoon after most of the girls have already left for their civil ceremony.

The day starts early for the beauty shop workers and manager, as it does for the clothing department workers. They have to arrive at work at 4.30 in the morning to get ready for the first girls arriving at 5.00. The photo studio workers arrive at 6.00 a.m, and other parlour workers arrive between 6.00 and 7.00 a.m.

Since each of the beauty shop workers knows her responsibility for the day, she goes to her assigned room. The two *tomesode* rooms used usually for female wedding guests dressing are arranged differently, The main room is used for the dressing, the smaller one for getting undressed and for putting on the underwear necessary for the kimono (*hadajuban*). In the main *tomesode* room where usually one side of the room is used, both mirrored sides will be occupied by eight to ten pairs of dressers.

As setting the hair is the most time-consuming chore, the beauty shop tries to assign as many women as possible to this professional job. The beauticians occupy not only the beauty shop itself, but use any possible space including the back room and the brides' room. Nevertheless, all through the day a long queue of girls stretches deep into the corridor.

Another group of four women struggles against time in the men's dressing room in order to make up the girls who may be queuing there already dressed in their kimono and with their hair still unset, or with their hair already done, but still wearing jeans. There is not necessarily one line of action to follow. The girl may start in either one of the rooms, the procedure is decided more on the basis of convenience and the length of the queue rather than on any aesthetic or other consideration.

Each one of the girls holds a piece of paper, detailing the different sections of preparation and accessories needed, with which she moves between the different rooms. In each of the rooms the necessary fee will be added by an employee. The dresser also has to note on the paper both her name and that of the assistant (*joshu*) (see chapter 4), as being responsible for the girl's final appearance. When fully ready in her kimono with her hair set and her face made-up, the girl goes back to the beauty shop where she pays the accumulated fees for her preparation (see table 6).

Creating a Memorable Image

Although fully ready to leave for her ceremony, the girl still has one more 'station' before her: the photo studio, located on the ground floor. As will be explained later on, the professional photographs taken before leaving the parlour are sometimes considered as the peak of the day.

The photo studio with a supplementary working force (of two extra part-time workers and the owner's wife), is organized to take the pictures of two girls simultaneously. In conjunction with the parlour the studio offers two possible options of hard cover photographs: a 'one pose' (*one pōzu*) photo - standing pose, or a set of 'two poses' (*tsū pōzu*) - standing and sitting. The prices are ¥10,000 and ¥18,000 respectively (see table 6). The girl's posture is carefully taken care of in a similar way to that of the bride's (see chapter 1). The final result is a replica of pictures which appear in photo studio advertisements preceding the day.

The photograph of a daughter's coming of age ceremony has come to be an indispensable part of the family album, along with photographs taken at other memorable events such as weddings and graduation ceremonies. Sontag (1978:8) argues that the family seeks to assemble a portable kit of images that can be brought periodically to bear witness to the family's continuity and connectedness. (See also Ben-Ari (1991:88) on a coming of age ceremony for boys in a commuter

village). The importance of photographs in Japanese society was mentioned already in chapter 1 in relation to wedding photographs. Graburn (1983) writes about the importance of photography in Japanese tourism, although he elaborates his explanation to other domains of life as well. In his view, photography is a central part of the Japanese concept of *kinen*. *Kinen* could be loosely translated as "souvenir", however it has more fundamental importance in Japanese, "for it is the legitimizing, commemorating, material symbol not only for tourism but for other life events". Thus, as the photograph of the tourist spot, the photograph of the life cycle event can be seen as legitimizing and confirming the event. However, as we have seen in the case of weddings and as we will see later on, photographs are more than mere 'souvenirs', their role as 'representatives' of events such as the wedding and the 'coming of age day' make them a crucial part of the event itself.

The photographs, especially the professional studio picture, seem at times so important for the girls (and their mothers) that they overshadow the ceremony itself. In fact, there are girls who do not even bother to go to their ceremony at the city hall but who get dressed only in order to have the commemorative picture. Others do go to the city hall but find it unnecessary to step inside and listen to all the "boring" speeches. They consider it much more enjoyable to stand outside, see their friends in kimono and no less so to be seen. A considerable part of the time is spent taking snapshots and recently also video recordings of the girls' own appearances. The importance given to *representation* in the coming of age ceremony together with what was mentioned earlier about becoming a full member of society only at later stages - at employment and marriage (see note 2) reemphasizes the significance of *form* in Japanese 'ceremonial occasions'.

The girl's coming of age photograph has a special importance not only as part of the family album, but it also has more specific social roles. The professional photograph may well be used in a future match-making (*miai*) procedure

where a photograph is a necessary item for the introduction of the prospective sides (see Edwards:1989:59). Photographs are also necessary in order to thank all the relatives who have sent congratulatory gifts (*o-iwai*) for the occasion of the daughter's coming of age.¹² The custom in these cases is to send a photograph of the girl in a kimono to all the relatives who have sent congratulatory gifts. A mother of a twenty year old girl told me of the efforts it took her to convince her daughter to put on a kimono that she had bought for her. Finally the daughter agreed to be taken by car from her home directly to a beauty shop, from which she would be taken again by car to the photo studio. Going to the civic ceremony or even walking in the streets was totally out of the question. For her mother this solution was satisfactory enough since it saved her from the embarrassment she would have faced if photographs of the kimono-clad daughter had not been sent to the congratulating relatives.

Related businesses are fully aware of the importance parents ascribe to such occasions as the coming of age ceremony, and they do their best to profit from them. In doing so they in fact reemphasize and reproduce the importance of these events.¹³ Starting from the beginning of December, photo studios advertise in both free local and regular newspapers. The advertisements always carry a photograph of a twenty year old girl in a *furisode*-style kimono and remind both the girls themselves and their families of the importance of capturing the memory of the important event of becoming a full member of society. The advertisements do not refer to the civic event as much as to the "ceremonial (bright) appearance" (*hare sugata*)¹⁴ that the girl must leave for the future ("Aren't you going to leave a memory of your ceremonial appearance?").¹⁵ Apart from praising the beauty of a twenty year old girl in a kimono, they also insist on the importance of the "memorial photograph" (*taisetsuna kinen shashin*) and again urge the girl and her family to seize the opportunity which will not reoccur ("By all means, you should save this beautiful ceremonial appearance" (*utsukushii hare sugata*)).

The separation between the event and the photographs can be best seen in photo studios' special offers. They offer free dressing and make-up for girls who will have their pictures taken before or after the day itself. We could observe a similar importance which is attributed to the representation of the event earlier in the thesis, when discussing customers claims (chapter 3). There, I showed how the memories of the event - either in photographs or video - are considered more important than the event itself, and how by 'fixing' them any mishap in the event itself is 'fixed' as well. Thus, it seems that in modern (consumerist) Japan not only are the event and its representation completely separated, but also the representation seems to overshadow the event.

Total Costs

It is clear by now that the 20 year old girl and her mother invest plenty of time and energy in creating the ideal image of a 'coming of age' Japanese girl. Let us now check how much money is spent by an average Japanese family for the day. This differs mainly in accordance with the value of the kimono, and whether it is rented or bought. Table 6 lists prices of costs related to the coming of age day. We can see that even if the kimono is rented in the wedding parlour - which can be done only if the girl's family is a *gojokai* member - the total costs vary from a minimum cost of ¥103,000 to a maximum estimated cost of ¥246,500. However, if this is not the case and the family requires the services of both a kimono rental shop and a private beauty shop, the costs will usually be much higher. Naturally, the expenses for the day will be vastly increased if the mother decides to buy a kimono for her daughter instead of renting it (up to about £4200). The total cost, which thus varies according to the prestige of the commodity (kimono) and the service could be defined as the cost of attaining female adulthood in Japan.

TABLE 6
'Coming of Age Day' Costs
(in yen)

Service/commodity	minimum cost	Maximum cost
Beauty shop costs:		
Furisode dressing	3000	3000
Hair setting (apu)	3500	3500
Hair decorations	2000	8000
Decorating string (kazari himo)	1500	1500
Make-up	2000	2000
Other extra items	-	500
sub-total (beauty shop costs)	12000	18500
Other costs:		
Kimono Rental	75000	200000
Photographs	10000	18000
Other expenses ^a	6000	10000
Grand Total:	103,000	246500^b

^a Other expenses may include other small items needed for kimono dressing (see appendix), taxi fares, films and so forth.

^b This maximum cost is only in case kimono is rented at the parlour. It does not take into consideration more expensive kimono rental rates in other places, as well as the possibility of kimono purchase which costs about ¥1,000,000, in which case maximum total expenses may reach ¥1,046,500 (about £4200).

Before we continue to look at the kimono from a more general perspective, some points from this initial acquaintance with the kimono should be highlighted. We have noticed how important a part kimono and appearance have come to play in the coming of age ceremony, and the importance of capturing this appearance in a memorial photograph. However, it is very important to note a clear distinction between the sexes in this respect. Earlier I mentioned Hendry's (1981:206) remark on the cost of boy's Western suits which "pales into insignificance" in comparison with the expenses made by girls. The difference between boys' and girls' attire is also articulated in etiquette manuals, which are used on this kind of occasion (see chapter 1). In 'Introduction to Ceremonial Occasions', the best-seller of Yaeko Shiotsuki, the author, while recommending an expensive kimono for girls, to be used later on other 'ceremonial occasions', recommends suits for boys. There is no doubt, Shiotsuki (1991:36) writes, that the dark blue suit will be useful as an everyday attire later on.

Thus it might be said that on the occasion of the formal attainment of adulthood each sex obtains its place. While young men are related to the 'modern' world, women are related to formality and appearance, and to 'tradition'.

This distinction between the sexes which links women with Japanese wear and men with Western 'everyday' wear is crucial in understanding the role the kimono has come to play in modern Japan, and will be discussed further later on. Now, the second part of the chapter will examine the process through which the kimono has come to be connected with formal ceremonial occasions on the one hand, and almost exclusively with women, on the other. It will also explore the role of kimono in modern Japan and its relation to Japanese society and to Japanese national identity.

Kimono in Modern Japan

The word kimono (*ki-* from *kiru* 'to wear' and *mono* - 'a thing') originally referred to 'a garment' and was a general term for women's as well as men's attire. Nevertheless it has lost this general meaning and now kimono is limited to 'Japanese apparel' (*wafuku*) as opposed to 'Western apparel' (*yōfuku*). 'Yōfuku' is what Japanese women wear most of the time. Some women do not even own a kimono, or they might have a few which they brought with them as part of their trousseau when they got married, but which were then tucked away and forgotten. Although 'kimono' is a term used also for male kimono Japanese modern men wear kimono very rarely, most of them probably wear formal kimono once in their life time, that is, at their wedding.

The kimono as it is known today consists of a T-shaped, usually silk, garment which is wrapped over the body and fastened with a wide stiffly woven sash (*obi*). The modern kimono style is usually determined by various rules such as age, formality and seasonality. These rules, which do not leave much room for personal innovations or creativity in wearing kimono, are in some ways 'echoes' of the court dress

of Japanese ladies of the Heian period (794-1185) (Dalby 1988:19).

In modern Japan the kimono for ordinary women has come to be associated mainly with 'ceremonial occasions'.¹⁶ There are only a few opportunities in the life of an unmarried Japanese women to wear a kimono apart from the one which I described above. Other rare opportunities are on New Year's day on visits to shrines or at a friend's wedding reception party. After marriage, the occasions for wearing kimono are also quite rare for most women. Some women own the kimono proper for participation (as guests) at ceremonial occasions such as weddings (see below). Many others either do not own one, or own one which is too old to be used, and so prefer to rent the proper attire at the wedding parlour. Whether she decides to wear her own kimono which has probably been tucked away for years and smells of mothballs, or chooses to rent one at the wedding parlour, the Japanese woman would probably need the professional hand of a dresser in order to don the kimono, as she herself does not have a clue about how to put the kimono on.

Obi

The kimono has always been fastened by a sash - or obi - of some kind. The obi had different shapes and variety of widths in the past. During the Edo period (1600-1867) it was the obi, rather than the kimono, which reflected the social position of its wearer as well as fashion trends (see Dalby 1983:289-90). Until about 1800 a fairly pliant weave was used, only then heavier, stiff tapestry-weave cloth became popular (see Yanagida 1957:27). The modern obi, which is a fairly wide stiffly woven belt encasing practically the entire midriff, probably has its origins in that period. From that time on the obi became more highly elaborated and consequently came to demand as much attention as the kimono itself, so much so that nowadays one cannot always tell which is the backdrop to which - the garment or the obi - both in price and in attention.

Although the shape of the obi is the same - the wide tapestry woven is the only obi allowed by propriety rules nowadays - the way it is tied to the body reflects the woman's age and sometimes her social status as well. As Dalby puts it in her book about *Geisha*: "There is a symbolic correlation between the primness of the wearer and the level at which she ties her obi" (1983:290). A proper wife should tie hers just below her breasts while young girls, supposedly virginal and innocent, are to wear their obi in a way which will give no clue that they even have breasts under it. There are, however, some women who wear their obi slightly lower. The geisha "who have no stake in looking prim" (Dalby 1983:290) also allow a wider band of white collar to show in front and expose more of the nape of their necks, thus creating a more "graceful loose kimono line" than ordinary women.¹⁷ Another class of women who for a more trained eye can be seen to wear their kimono slightly lower are wives and daughters of Japanese gangsters (*yakuza*).¹⁸

Kimono - Age and Formality

Since modern Japanese women are not considered great connoisseurs of kimono etiquette, large kimono shops and kimono schools supply them with detailed information, called TPO (Time, Place, Occasion). These tables instruct them about which type of kimono is proper for which occasion.

The kimono worn by a Japanese girl for her 'Coming of Age Ceremony', and on some other special occasions such as a friend's or older sister's wedding is considered the most formal wear for young girls. So is the kimono worn by a married woman when she is invited to participate in a wedding ceremony.

The most formal kimono for a non-adult female is called *furisode* or 'swinging sleeve' to describe its very long sleeves. When the arms are held at one's side the sleeves reach to the ankle.¹⁹ Once a woman becomes an adult, most commonly signified by her marriage, she can no longer wear

'swinging sleeves'. She must change to a type of kimono called *tomesode*, the sleeves of which reach just below the hip. The name refers to the sleeves (*sode*) of the one who has to stay here (*tomeru*), that is, who marries into (this) house (Dalby 1983:295). Unlike the girl's *furisode* which usually has bright colours, the married woman's *tomesode* is black with a coloured pattern only at the hem (the placement of the design also changes according to age. As the "number one formal wear for a Mrs" (*misesu no dai-ichi reisō*) the *tomesode* is decorated with family crests.²⁰

Though highest in the hierarchy of formal kimono, the *tomesode* and *furisode* are not the only types of formal kimono. The main distinction in traditional Japanese clothing is between everyday wear (*fudangi*) and formal wear (*haregi*). There are a few criteria which differentiate the two. One of them is the material of which the kimono is made. Formal kimono are always made of silk, while *fudangi* may be made of wool, cotton, or even certain weaves of silk such as pongee. As was mentioned above, nowadays kimono have become mainly a formal type of wear and so one rarely sees women in kimono made of something other than silk, although elderly women, especially in rural areas frequently wear *fudangi*. In the country it is also possible to encounter men in cotton or wool kimono. Another occasion for wearing a cotton kimono, is at summer festivals.²¹ Apart from these cases most of the kimono worn and sold in shops nowadays are silk kimono of different grades of formality.

Hierarchy of Kimono

As has been mentioned, a silk kimono is considered more formal than a non-silk one, but among silk kimono there are other levels of formality. 'Woven' (*ori*) kimono in which the thread is dyed before weaving is usually considered less formal than a *some* or 'dyed' kimono where the silk is coloured after being woven into cloth.

Inferior to the *tomesode* and *furisode* are a few types of kimono which are considered formal enough to be worn even at the reception party of weddings, although they may not be worn at the wedding ceremony itself; that is, they may not be worn by close family members or female go-between (*nakōdo*). The first in hierarchy is the *hōmongi* or 'dress suitable for visiting' which is a coloured kimono with either one or three family crests. Although its sleeves are short, *hōmongi* can be worn by unmarried girls as well, and is even considered appropriate for the interview a girl has with her prospective groom (the *miai*), and for the engagement ceremony (*yuinō*). Another 'semiformal' (*semifōmaru*) kimono is the *tsukesage*.²² Although it is considered slightly less formal than the *hōmongi*, the *tsukesage* can be used on the same occasions as the *hōmongi*. Just below the *tsukesage* is the *komon* with an all-over-pattern, the *komon* is not considered appropriate either for guests at a wedding reception or for a girl's own ceremonies before the wedding, like the *miai* or the *yuinō* ceremony. It is proper for more informal occasions such as visiting, dating and shopping, and thus is less often worn. Another popular kimono which can be worn for semiformal purposes such as school entrance and graduation ceremonies is the *iromuji* which is a solid coloured kimono.

Mourning Kimono

Another highly formal kimono used for other purposes or another 'ceremonial occasion' is the mourning dress (*mofuku*). Like the *tomesode* it has five family crests, though it does not have any coloured pattern, and it is worn with a black obi. Nowadays, it is mainly close family members who wear kimono at funerals.²³ Like the kimono appropriate for weddings, mourning kimono can be hired at kimono rental shops as well as at wedding parlours and funeral parlours.

Kimono - Seasonality

Another important index of appropriateness for kimono, in addition to levels of formality, is the season. Although, as we will shortly see, this dimension is almost irrelevant in the context of ceremonial occasions such as the wedding. Seasonality is expressed by the type of garment as well as by design and colour.

From September to April women should wear kimono of the lined type called *awase*. There are two lighter garments to be used in May and June (unlined *hito* kimono) and for June through August (light silk kimono woven with openwork stripes called *ro*) (see Dalby 1983:296). For most women, however, the short season garments are usually considered a luxury, and they would wear *awase* kimono through May.²⁴

Japanese tend to stress the affinity between natural changes of seasons and their aesthetics. However it is interesting to note that it is usually much more the cultural definition of the season which determines which kimono a woman should put on, rather than the actual weather.²⁵

Frequent kimono designs are auspicious objects such as fans, which are usually not restricted by the season. However, natural objects may have a seasonal significance. Some are expressly associated with a particular month - pine for January, plum for February, iris for May. Others are more generally related to seasons, such are cherry blossoms in spring or maple leaves in winter (Dalby 1983:298-9). However, it should be noted that some natural objects - like cranes, plums and pine trees - are also auspicious signs and thus are considered appropriate anytime through the year as formal attire for ceremonial occasions (see chapter 6).

Seasonality may be also displayed in colour. Colour combinations which are usually named after flowering plants are specific to each month. For example, a 'pine combination' which is considered most appropriate for January is pale green over deep purple. The proper colour for October is 'bush clover combination' of rose backed with slate blue. Here, again, the combination names though reflecting a connection to the nature world, are cultural categories and the colours

themselves have little to do with the name (see Dalby 1983:299). These rather subtle differences of colour, though known to the artists who dye or hand-paint the finest silk kimono and appreciated by few kimono connoisseurs, are generally unrecognized by modern Japanese women. They also do not affect the formal kimono worn on formal occasions such as weddings.

Kimono in the Wedding Parlour Context

While rules of age and formality are strictly observed in the wedding parlour context, other aesthetic considerations usually do not enter the confines of its 'closed system'. The natural flow of seasons is certainly not felt in the heated (in the winter) and air-conditioned (in the summer) 'world' of the wedding parlour. Indeed, rules of formality dictate that a black *tomesode* be worn all through the year. Nevertheless, there are fine distinctions between seasons that are not kept by the wedding hall.²⁶ In my opinion, the grounds for that are mainly financial, since the wedding parlour finds it as inefficient and unprofitable to hold a larger stock of kimono for rent when it can manage with a smaller choice. The fact that most of the wedding parlour's customers are not great connoisseurs of kimono is another reason for it being unsophisticated in its kimono collection.

Colours: 'Hade' and 'Jimi'

Delicate colour distinctions are not part of the wedding parlour 'kimonology'. Nevertheless there are general colour differentiations which are manifested at the parlour. The main one is that between '*hade*' gaudy, showy colours, and '*jimi*' plain, sober colours. This applies naturally only to the pattern on the kimono since the kimono itself is black. This general colour distinction concerns two different spheres of social differentiation. One of them is age - among married women²⁷ younger females are supposed to wear kimono with a more

showy pattern than elder women. The gaudiness of the *tomesode* is judged not only according to the colours of the design, but also according to its placement on the hem of the kimono (see above). The higher the pattern extends, the more appropriate to youth. But even younger women are not allowed to wear what might be considered 'showy' or '*hade*' kimono, as Japanese women are not supposed to show off in general. Also, it is considered more appropriate to wear *jimi* (sober) colours for formal occasions such as a wedding ceremony. Nevertheless there are three women who have social permission to wear a gaudy (*hade*) kimono. These are the mothers of bride and groom and the female *nakōdo*. Their special roles in the wedding ceremony, and even more so in the reception dictate a more eye-catching kimono. This goes well with the general flashy wedding production (see chapter 1). As for mothers, being the main customers of the wedding parlour, it is also important to give them a good service in order to avoid any claims (see chapter 3). Those women are not only dressed in a more '*hade*' kimono, but also dressed much more carefully by the dressers, who always find out before they start dressing a party of wedding guests who are the two '*okasama*' (honourable mothers) and '*nakōdosama*' (honourable go-between). They will be dressed by the more experienced dressers and no compromises will be made in their dressing.²⁸

Since most of the women who require the dressing service regard themselves as "kimono ignorant" (see below), they let decisions about '*hade*' '*jimi*' distinctions - as well as about general appearance - be made by the kimono experts at the wedding hall. Thus, in most cases, it is the category in which the kimono is defined (mainly by the dressers and the clothing department advisors) rather than the actual pattern which counts. Actually, in many cases a single family member, usually the mother (of bride or groom), chooses the kimono for all other family members. The kimono she chooses usually can be graded according to levels of *hade*(ness) and *jimi*(ness). While her kimono should be the most showy, the grandmother's kimono should be the most sober.²⁹

Kimono in the Past

The Japanese kimono as is worn by most Japanese women today with its rigidity and formality is in some ways a development of traditional native wear. However, many seemingly 'traditional' attributes of the kimono are actually rather recent developments.

Although silk garments were introduced to Japan from China as early as in the Nara period (710-784), it was not until very late in Japanese history that commoners started to wear silk kimono. Commoners of pre-modern Japan were subject to many limitations as to colour and quality of clothing (Shibusawa 1958:20).³⁰ Details such as colour, length and breadth of sleeves indicated information about the age, social and marital status of the wearer (Hendry 1993:ch.4)

Thus, it was the upper classes who developed the 'art of kimono dressing'. The court ladies of the Heian Period (794-1185) developed an elaborate mode of dress, which was based on combinations of colours in layering silk robes. Although this fashion, which is often referred to as '*jūni hitoe*', or 'twelve layers',³¹ passed away when courtly society did, the influence on kimono style echoes down to the present day (Dalby 1988:2)

Kimono as Ladies' Fashion with 'Japanese' Flavour

While most clothing restrictions were abolished in the Meiji period, the Japanese, especially in the countryside, were not so quick to change their clothing habits (Shibusawa 1958:20, Yanagida 1957:14). It seems that more than anything else it was interested businesses which carried the emancipation of colour and style. In 1905 Mitsukoshi Clothing Store introduced "ladies' silk kimono" (Yanagida 1957:14-5). It was the first time that the kimono was presented as "Ladies' Fashion". The silk kimono had '*genroku*' designs, resembling the bold, flashy patterns popular in the Genroku

epoch (1688-1703). It seems that the dazzling silver and gold painting of the Momoyama period (1568-1600), which became popular by the next year were not merely chosen for their expected aesthetic appeal to the fashionable ladies. Victory in the Russo-Japanese war had brought with it an air of patriotism and traditionalism as well as criticism of extreme Westernization. The choice of the Momoyama period designs seems itself not to have been accidental since the Momoyama period was seen, as Yanagida Kunio puts it, as "possibly the most thoroughly Japanese of all epochs in the nation's history" (Yanagida 1957:16). Whatever might be meant by 'most thoroughly Japanese', the combination of 'Ladies Fashion' on the one hand and 'Japaneseness' on the other, proved to be one of the main attributes of the kimono throughout the years. This combination of 'Japaneseness' - which, as was already mentioned, always alludes also to 'traditionalism' - with 'fashion' which is 'modern', might seem contradictory, however, as I will show later, it has worked well as a marketing technique. Another point to be made here is that using patterns which were previously used only by the upper classes, may be seen as a first step in the emergence of kimono as a status symbol in the new society.

The Second World War and New Clothing Restrictions

Though a trend of fashionable kimono began in the urban areas, especially in Tokyo from the beginning of the century, the Second World War and the hard economic times brought it to an end. During the war, the Japanese government issued official notices concerning dress, telling people to dress simply and to change into more convenient clothes.³² Western clothes, especially trousers, were considered more convenient for work than Japanese kimono. Nevertheless, there are many stories of families who were evacuated from the cities, especially Tokyo, to the countryside where they found that they had to sell or barter their expensive fashionable kimono for a few pounds of rice or vegetables (see Robins-Mowry

1983:83). Women informants who were girls during the war remember the time of the war as hard times when kimono could only be dreamt of, since their mothers could not afford to buy them kimono even later on, during the hard times which followed the war. Indeed, mothers to daughters sometimes explain their desire to dress their daughters in expensive kimono as related to the fact that they did not have the chance to do so when young.

After The War: Kimono as 'Ceremonial Occasions' Attire

Although it is impossible to pinpoint a single cause for the creation of the concept of special dress for special occasions, or more precisely of 'kimono for ceremonial occasions',³³ the role played by the *gojokai* organizations and the kimono rental shops (*kashi ishōya*) can not be ignored. Earlier in the thesis it was argued that the history of the wedding industry, which began with the establishment of the *gojokai* organizations just after the war, was strongly connected to kimono. Kimono were not just the main 'real' asset the *gojokai* associations possessed, but it was kimono rental shop owners - who knew how to benefit from the general loss of kimono during the war - together with those involved in funerary services who also were to become involved in the new *gojokai* organizations. There is no doubt that general processes in Japanese society - such as the so-called 'Westernization' or rather the development of the idea of the West in Japanese eyes, as well as economic development - had an impact on the evolution of the idea of 'ceremonial occasions' and special expensive attire. Nevertheless, the *gojokai* organizations, kimono rental shops and later on wedding parlours had a vested interest in promoting expensive kimono and the idea of kimono as a unique dress for unique occasions (for a unique people).³⁴

The Seventies and the start of the 'Economic Boom'

As I discussed in chapter 2, the process by which Japanese weddings came to be elaborate and extravagant had its roots in the years after the war when the wedding gradually left the private sphere of the home. However, it did not become large-scale until the establishment of 'specialized wedding parlours'. This stage was marked in costume by the introduction of the most elaborate kimono - the *uchikake* - as the essential wear for a 'Japanese bride' (see chapter 6 and 7). A similar process can be observed for kimono in general. The type of kimono which was defined as special attire in the years after the war, became more extravagant and expensive starting at the sixties and early seventies.

A word should be said about this crucial period in the Japanese economy. Rohlen (1974:11) summarises the Japanese economy in 1968-69 in the following words: "By all means except urban congestion and pollution, the standard of living of the Japanese was improving the fastest in the world". The remarkable growth the Japanese economy experienced during the period of 1968-9 (14 percent real growth rate of gross national product) came at the end of two decades of almost continuous rapid expansion. This trend was then expected to continue. There was more to these developments than mere economical growth. It has been argued that the considerable improvement in their standard of living made the Japanese again proud in their nation and culture. This tendency, writes Rohlen, "was a significant departure from the postwar tendency to worship anything that was not Japanese (Rohlen 1974:12, see also Mouer and Sugimoto 1986:49)."³⁵

One effect of the economic growth was the emergence of a 'new middle class' in Japan (Vogel 1963). This was the class of the Japanese salary men and their families. According to Vogel, the Japanese salary man and especially his wife wanted to imitate the richer classes in their conspicuous consumption of wealth.³⁶ Interestingly enough, Vogel argues that the main channels for 'conspicuous display' of the wives of the new salary man has been in their child's wedding and in their own extravagant kimono (Vogel 1963:81-2).

The seventies saw the growth of fashionable and exclusive kimono shops, as well as the establishment of kimono schools to teach modern Japanese women how to wear 'Japanese attire'. But this was only a beginning of a process, only later on did the kimono reach the exclusivity and high prices which characterize it nowadays. As I was told by a kimono school owner:

When the kimono schools started in the seventies almost any woman could afford to study kimono dressing, since it was also possible to buy cheap kimono. But now there are no cheap kimono any more. There is nothing like everyday kimono (*fudangi*). Only expensive kimono for special occasions.

Kimono prices vary according to their quality and design as do the prices of obi, but as a general rule the lowest price for kimono is about ¥100.000, although most women would feel more than embarrassed to buy such a cheap product. To the kimono one must add an appropriate obi, which may cost as much as the kimono itself, and other accessories - such as the necessary Japanese style sandals (*zōri*). By the 1990s prices had reached a six figure range.

Kimono Schools: Learning to be a Japanese Woman

The seventies with their relative economic affluence not only brought flashy wedding parlours and exclusive kimono shops, but also kimono schools aimed at teaching Japanese women the forgotten art of how to wear kimono. Dalby defines kimono schools as institutions which "capitalize on the fact that many women with the means and desire to cultivate a kimono image do not have the required knowledge or confidence" (1983:291). As the kimono became more and more separated from everyday life and confined to formal occasions, women were to study not only how to wear kimono themselves, but also how to dress others, starting with their own daughters at home and

continuing later on to dressing other women as an occupation.

There are five big kimono schools in Japan, each with its head office in one of the major cities. Thus in Osaka we find the '*Nihon Wasō Gakuen*' ('Japan School for Japanese Dress'), and in Kyoto the '*Kyōto Kimono Gakuin*' ('Kyoto School for Kimono'). They offer courses for kimono dressing and manners³⁷ for girls and women all over the country through local branches. '*Nihon Wasō Gakuen*' had about thirty thousand students in 1991. These female students were instructed by hundred and fifty teachers, all of whom were graduates of the school itself. The income of these schools comes not only from ordinary fees from amateurs (around ¥3000 per lesson on 1991), but also from the issue of permits and from publications (O'Neill 1984:642).

Kimono School Attendants

When kimono schools started in the seventies they attracted mainly middle class ladies. These women, (as was explained to me by the owner and president of a kimono school), were girls (*musume jidai*) during the war, so that they either could not wear kimono at all or they had to stop wearing it. Women who felt deprived of kimono in their youth could finally afford to buy expensive kimono and to learn the art of kimono dressing which they had forgotten. Wearing an extravagant kimono also symbolized for these 'new middle class' (Vogel 1963) women that now they could wear an attire which in the past was worn exclusively by the upper classes (see above).

Kimono schools (in conjunction with kimono shops and wedding parlours) have always encouraged the so-called 'longing' Japanese women have for kimono.³⁸ One of the main themes in kimono school advertising is this 'longing' (*akogare*). Sentences such as "Every woman longs for a beautiful and charming kimono appearance" (*utsukushiku, adeyakana kimono sugata wa josei no akogare*) or "Any woman

would yearn for a graceful manner in dress" (*shittori toshita kikonashi wa, josei nara dare mo ga akogaremasu yo ne*) are all too frequent in many published materials - in newspapers as well as in the schools' own brochures. The idea being promoted is that a woman, by the mere fact of being a (Japanese) woman, naturally 'yearns' to wear kimono. This 'longing' is presented as so pervasive that it goes beyond historical changes or age.³⁹

From the seventies onwards, middle class women have pursued kimono dressing as a fashionable hobby (see Dalby 1983:285). Most women have used their new skill for dressing themselves and perhaps women in their closest circles, mainly their daughters.⁴⁰ Some women, however, (like the 'dressers' we met in the previous chapter), choose to proceed on to higher levels⁴¹ and to take up kimono dressing as an occupation. But, from the late eighties there has been another kind of student: young unmarried girls who study the art of kimono dressing as a part of their preparations for marriage.

Kimono Dressing as Part of Bridal Training

'Bridal training' (*hanayome shugyō*) for girls is certainly not a new practice. It was given through girls' high schools before the war, and later on was transferred to women's junior colleges (Lebra 1984a:58). Apart from regular girls' schools, 'bridal training' was also available through private schools. Schools specializing in bridal training existed in prewar Japan, but they flourished after the war, especially in the seventies with the 'economic boom'. This type of school is attended by twenty-year-old girls in preparation for their marriage. Attendance of such a school may have a double purpose: to obtain the training itself, and to display one's marital candidacy (Lebra 1984a:82).

'Bridal training' in prewar Japan included the study of a "set of expressive specialities intended in femininity training, such as flower arrangement, tea ceremony, *koto* and *shamisen* music, classical dance, and calligraphy" (Lebra

1984a:59). But while this kind of training (though considered very important) was then less prevalent and more class-bound than practical training such as sewing (*Ibid*), it has now become more common. Again, what was the privilege of the higher classes in prewar Japan could now be enjoyed by middle class Japanese girls.⁴²

The art of kimono dressing per se was naturally not considered part of bridal training in prewar Japan since wearing a kimono was an integral part of everyday life (mainly for urban women). However, in modern Japan, as the kimono has become more and more separated from everyday life and associated almost exclusively with special occasions it has gradually found its place beside the refined arts of tea ceremony and flower arrangement. The trend is relatively new, according to the owner of one of the largest kimono schools, for the last two or three years young girls have been the majority of students in the school. However, it took kimono schools a great deal of effort to include the kimono in the inventory of things necessary for a prospective bride (which means actually any unmarried girl in her twenties). While aiming at prospective brides, kimono schools in their promotion schemes not only emphasize the 'longing' the girl should have for kimono (of which she might initially be unaware), but also the importance of kimono for the performance of all the 'traditional' arts. Tea ceremony and playing one of the 'traditional' Japanese musical instruments require a 'traditional' appearance, that is, wearing a kimono. But kimono schools entrepreneurs do not regard the kimono as a mere decorating device for 'traditional arts'; as will be shown later on, they are also attempting to appropriate an 'artistic' definition for the kimono per se.

Another characteristic of kimono dressing which is underlined by the schools is the study of manners. The acquisition of good feminine Japanese manners has always played a major role in bridal training. When I asked girls why they studied kimono dressing they usually could not give a clear motivation. A frequent answer was that "kimono is one of

the Japanese things that a Japanese girl should know just like flower arrangement and tea ceremony".

It usually takes a year before a kimono student is able to dress herself, and this is the normal period of time invested by most of the prospective brides. In other words, most of the girls do not intend to learn kimono dressing in order to turn it into an occupation (which requires at least three years), nor do they intend to master the complicated art of dressing. This attitude is typical also of the other 'traditional' feminine arts, as Lebra put it: "The general goal was not so much to learn the specific techniques of an art as to internalize proper manners and comportment through the art" (1984a:59). This inclination of feminine arts will be discussed in the concluding part of the chapter but let us now see how kimono schools create their image of 'art' and 'traditionality'.

Kimono Schools: Creating a 'Traditional' (Artistic) Image

"Wabi and sabi, the way of art (*gei no michi*), history shines, studying devotedly the way of kimono with all one's heart - Nihon Wasō Gakuen", goes the first verse of one of the largest kimono schools' anthem.⁴³ The 'paired' term 'wabi and sabi', inasmuch as it can be translated relates to simplicity, imperfectness, austerity, elegance, unworldliness and tranquillity.⁴⁴ These notions are very closely connected with Japanese aesthetics, especially with that of the tea ceremony (or the 'way of tea') (Kondo 1985) and *haiku* poetry. I will argue that the use of 'wabi and sabi', as well as the use of the phrase 'way of art' (*gei no michi*)⁴⁵ is not unintentional. It is part of a deliberate attempt made by kimono schools to appropriate a definition as one of the traditional Japanese aesthetic pursuits. In other words, by using such terms, kimono schools not only define themselves as 'artistic' but also as uniquely 'Japanese'.⁴⁶

The attempt to be associated with other traditional arts can be seen, above all, in the kimono school system itself.

"Kimono schools", the owner of one of the five largest schools told me, "have the same system as other Japanese cultural pursuits (such as tea ceremony, calligraphy, or flower arrangement), that is the Japanese traditional vertical system of master (*sensei*) and disciple (*deshi*)". The system she was referring to was the headmaster system (*iemoto*) which can be found in the traditional arts such as Nō, classical dance, flower arrangement, or tea ceremony. The headmaster system is based on strong family (real or fictive) and teacher-pupil relationships and emphasises the transmission of special skills and techniques (O'Neill 1984:635, Havens 1982:22-5).⁴⁷ Although the structure of kimono schools does not resemble in all details that of the headmaster system prototype,⁴⁸ its system is (presented as) vertical. When a disciple finally acquires a certificate of full proficiency in the art of kimono dressing (*menkyo-kaiden*) she may open her own school, but it must be a branch of the main school.

Presenting the kimono school's system as 'traditional' in this respect is financially beneficial in a twofold way. Not only is this image supposed to attract new students, but also the system itself ensures the head of the school the greatest economic advantages by collecting fees for a proficiency from individuals who are linked to him indirectly (Nakane 1984:61).⁴⁹

Acquiring an 'artistic' image is also obtained through more direct ways by the definition of kimono dressing itself, as a kimono school owner explained to me:

Recently, kimono dressing has come to be an art. You will be able to see in our yearly grand event (see note 43), it goes over technique, it is an art. It is like watching a dance. Twenty years ago it was not like this. It is like showing off your work (of art).

Thus, what the kimono school owner was saying was that as the kimono lost its everyday function it has gradually become art.⁵⁰ However, this process was not at all 'natural' for it

required many efforts on the part of the kimono schools which could benefit from the 'artistic' - as well as the 'traditional' - image. The kimono school headmaster often compared kimono dressing with other 'traditional' arts.

When you do tea [in tea ceremony], the taste is the same, but what is important is the etiquette, the *form* (*sahō*), twenty years ago it was not like this in our school, but [finally] after twenty years we also teach *form*, the way you put a small cord, now every movement is fixed. So if someone does it perfectly, the people who watch her see it as art. This (she concluded) makes me content.

The importance of teaching *form* (*sahō*) and formality to Japanese women will be discussed further in the concluding part of the chapter, but before that, we will see how kimono dressing could become so detached from everyday life so that it could reach almost artistic definitions. The complexity of modern kimono dressing has of course much to do with that.⁵¹

Modern Kimono Dressing

As was mentioned above it normally takes a woman a whole year (of weekly lessons)⁵² to learn the 'secret' of dressing herself in kimono. It is hard to imagine that the art of kimono dressing took so long to learn in the past when kimono was in fact everyday attire. But, as we have seen by now the kimono which is worn today (on the very special occasions it is actually worn) is not at all the same as that worn by the common people in prewar Japan. If it is similar to anything worn in the past (if not in shape, in ideas of stiffness and etiquette) it is to the kimono of the samurai class where propriety was the sole aim of women's dress and demeanour (Dalby 1983:291); and where women had the time and means to spare for elaborate clothing. In any case, kimono schools have of course their vested interest in presenting the art of

kimono dressing as a complicated task for which only they have the 'knowledge' and tools.

The Complexity of Modern *Kimono Dressing*

"A certain amount of judicious padding will help most women achieve a better kimono line, to be sure, but the numerous figure-fillers advocated by kimono schools mould a woman's figure into an absolute cylinder". So writes Dalby (1983:291) who argues that all the 'gadgetry' advocated by kimono schools is a substitute for the ease that comes with familiarity in wearing kimono. Women who are really accustomed to kimono, such as geisha somehow manage to stay put together without all the aids advocated by kimono schools.

Kimono dressing for modern women requires many small items (*komono*) including various paddings, belts, cords, clips and the like, all are specially produced and sold at the kimono schools themselves, at kimono shops and also at wedding parlours. These numerous items are now considered essential to kimono dressing and as such essential for any Japanese women to have (see appendix). When wedding guests come to get dressed in the wedding parlour they are expected to bring with them the necessary items, which they usually bring in a special 'Japanese attire bag'. Regardless of the fact that not all women have taken kimono dressing courses, many of them possess the necessary items - which they probably bought for a previous rare occasion in which they had to wear kimono - although they do not even know their names.

The division between the kimono and the everyday life of ordinary Japanese women is very clearly observed in the wedding parlour dressing room context. There, whether they rent kimono or bring one of their own, women usually let themselves completely to the authority of the dresser. The (assistant) dresser will open the special kimono bag for the customer (in the case of brought-in kimono she will frequently have to hold herself from sneezing as a result of the strong mothballs odour). After the assistant prepares all the

necessary items for dressing, she will also help the customer put on the special underwear. The customer, for her part, usually just stands passively and obeys the dressers' orders. Although this 'ignorance' concerning kimono is typical both of young and older customers, there is some difference between them. Older customers (or married women) usually find it necessary to apologize for their lack of knowledge "One does not wear kimono any more" or "There are a very few opportunities for wearing kimono nowadays", they will usually say. On the other hand, young women, especially unmarried girls (apart from the cases in which they went to kimono schools), usually are not so embarrassed by their own ignorance.⁵³

Kimono Dressing as Packaging

Kimono dressing itself, whether done by oneself, or by two dressers in the beauty shop, can be best described as a series of wrapping and binding. The first step before dressing is arranging all the essential small items in a convenient place. The dressing itself starts with padding the body with gauze and towels. The act of padding the body, is literally called 'correction' (*hosei*). Any woman is supposed to 'correct' her body before she goes on to wear a kimono; if she is thin she will be padded by an extra towel; if fat her breasts will be flattened. If she has any fault such as a low shoulder she (or her dresser) will have to 'correct' the necessary parts. All these amendments are done in order that the woman's body will be made fit an ideal cylindrical body shape considered appropriate for kimono.

After carefully padding the body, the dressing process goes on in a series of wrapping and binding. First the undergarments are carefully wrapped around the body and tied with cloth cords, then, they are fixed with an elastic belt. Over them the kimono is wrapped, folded and bound in the same way. After the binding of each layer, a final binding completes the wrapping. This binding (of the obi) is, however,

different from the previous ones in two ways: it is both tighter and at the same time more decorative. When the dressers at the beauty shop reach the stage of putting on the obi they should inform their customers of the act ("Spread your legs, because I am fastening, hold out [or stand firm], please (*ganbatte kudasai*)" is the sentence they are taught to use). Then, they have to use all their power and all their body (leaning over the obi cushion) in order to bind the obi properly.⁵⁴ But, they also have to tie it beautifully, if they can, to use the obi patterns in the most perfect way possible.⁵⁵

Thus, kimono dressing is not a mere 'wrapping' of the body (see Hendry 1990, 1993). It includes at least two more significant stages. One of them is 'correction' of the female body in order to make it fit the kimono (and not the other way around, as it is often in Western wear). The other, can be defined as 'packaging'. Binding the kimono with the beautiful obi may be compared to the act of binding of fine merchandise (or commodity) with a beautiful ribbon. It seems that the obi constitutes another (final) layer in the process of 'packaging' which will be also described in the next chapter concerning the bride. This separation might be seen as part of the general aesthetic abstraction of commodities, whereby the packaging (or wrapping) becomes disembodied from the commodity itself and ends up as the focus of attention (Haug 1986:49-50, Moeran 1990b:136, n.8). The beauty and complexity of packaging varies according to what the package contains - that is, younger women are more beautifully 'packed'.⁵⁶ This 'packaging', I will argue in the next chapter, reaches its utmost in the ultimate kimono dressing - that of the bride.

Categories of Packaging

The general rules of dressing are the same for most kimono styles, nevertheless there are some distinctions to be made. One of the main distinctions is that of age. Age in a sense is also an indication of the woman's marital status, for

the main distinction is that between miss (*misu*) and Mrs. (*misesu*). Among married women another broad distinction is between young and elderly.⁵⁷ As a general rule a kimono of an unmarried woman is supposed to be more concealing (protecting) than that of an elder woman. The hollow of the neck must be fully covered in her case while the opposite is true for an elderly lady where a "big V shaped opening" should be formed (Matsushima 1990:99). The unmarried woman's obi is also to be tied higher than that of her elderly counterpart, again creating a more protective and virginal image (see above). In total, in the case of the unmarried woman the kimono should be more tightly packed (*tsumeru*) but, at the same time, it has also to be more aesthetically appealing.

Conclusion

This chapter has followed the history of the kimono and the process by which it came to be what it is today. I tried to show how the kimono has not only become a form of feminine clothing but also a feminine pursuit. This link between kimono and Japanese women can be seen as illustrative of the role of Japanese women in society. We have also seen how this process has been promoted by various agents, including kimono shops, Ceremonial Occasions organizations and kimono schools which in different periods have used and manipulated the concept of kimono for their own (financial) motivations.

I opened the chapter with an elaborate description of the coming of age day. We have seen that becoming an adult in Japan, in the case of women, has come to be strongly connected with clothing and more generally with appearance. While twenty-year-old girls invest a great deal of energy and money on their appearance, their male counterparts can do with an ordinary Western suit. What - if anything - has this distinction between women's and men's attire - which is also apparent when observing wedding guests, as well as funeral attendants - to say about Japanese society? Is it really so significant? I would argue that this distinction in dress can

be taken as an example and as a manifestation of a general differentiation between men and women in Japanese society (and in Japanese national identity).

The difference in the amount of energy and money invested in the coming of age day by boys and girls is certainly not the only one. Another very clear differentiating point between the genders in this matter is the fact that girls wear kimono or 'traditional-Japanese' attire while boys wear 'Western attire'. Thus, if we take the coming of age day as related to processes in the larger society we can observe at least two significant points concerning distinctions between men and women in Japanese society. Firstly, appearance or *form* and the representation thereof is considered more important for women than for men. And secondly, women are more related to tradition while men are considered more as carriers of Western (or modern) fashions (or ideas). This important point will be shortly discussed further, however, it is also related to another difference - that between the 'public' and 'private' spheres. This aspect can be best seen in the way scholars, especially Japanese, see this distinction. Befu (1984:63), following Umesao, argues that from the early days of modern Japan, dress in the 'public' sphere was defined as 'Western'. As a consequence, Japanese-style clothing came to be confined more to 'private areas of life'. This distinction seems surprising when considering Japanese wear for women on what can be clearly defined as 'public spheres'. The only explanation for this view is that the scholars themselves consider only men in their explanations. Shibusawa (1958:48-9), a Japanese folklorist, looks at this distinction from a slightly different perspective when he argues that the reason why Western clothing was not generally adopted by women in the Meiji period was that the woman's place was still at home. In any case, what is applied in these views is the notion that women are considered as related to the private domain (which seems to be regarded as more 'Japanese') while men are associated with the public (and 'Western') domain of life.

These representations of gendered differences indeed deserve more general discussion which will be mainly undertaken in the conclusion of this thesis. It is however important to note here that "gender constructs cannot be reduced to the affairs of men and women, and gender ideologies are not representations of reality, but a system of producing differences" (Cornwall and Lindisfarne:forthcoming). In other words, like Cornwall and Lindisfarne, I do not attempt to reduce representations of femininity (or masculinity in their case) to the mere relations between the sexes, but to look at them and at their representations in more general terms.

But, the kimono not only marks distinctions between men and women, we could also notice certain distinctions among women themselves. The kimono worn by a twenty year old girl for her coming of age ceremony is very elaborately patterned and showy (*hade*), and so is the kimono in general in the case of young unmarried girls when they participate in ceremonial occasions, such as weddings of relatives or friends. On the other hand, the kimono considered appropriate for an older woman is more sober and plain (*jimi*). Indeed, the older the woman gets the more sober her kimono should be. This showy-plain (*hade-jimi*) distinction may be seen as implying 'play' for girls (or unmarried women) and 'formality' for older (married) women. However, the way the kimono is worn poses a question about the validity or at least the extent of 'play' for girls who wear their kimono in explicitly more 'concealing' and tight way than older women who are allowed a larger opening in the hollow of their necks and a more loose binding. This rule of etiquette can be interpreted as implying the restraint of 'play' even for young women. It also suggests an analogy between tightness and beauty.

This correlation between constraint and what is seen as aesthetically pleasing is of interest in its implication to the Japanese social organization. Richie suggests that we look at the kimono as a metaphor and as a presentation of the view the Japanese have of themselves "We are a people whose social consciousness is at least as strong as our individual

consciousness..." (1987:88). Being a metaphor the kimono is open to different interpretations and uses. It seems that the Ceremonial Occasions industry cleverly utilizes this tendency. Thus, the kimono is presented as a symbol for Japanese society. The constraining (thus beautiful) kimono may be regarded as symbolizing ideas prevalent in Japanese society of 'harmony' and 'groupism'. Moeran (1984a:210) shows how the aesthetic practice of *mingei* (folk craft) parallels the social practice of the potters' ideal of 'community'. In both cases the 'ideal' is not match by practice. The ideas and ideals that the Japanese have of themselves play a very interesting part in the Ceremonial Occasions industry and will be discussed further in the thesis.

I have argued that the 'economic boom' of the seventies had an impact on the development of modern kimono fashion. However, it was also mentioned that kimono as 'ladies' fashion' had actually started earlier, at the beginning of the century. Thus, kimono was promoted for women, in the midst of the Meiji era, a period which is signified by its vast Western influence. In that period government leaders made efforts to change traditional fashions in costumes and hairstyles (Yanagida 1957:11-2). But it seems that it was mainly men's fashion which the government made efforts to change.⁵⁸ Sievers (1983:15) argues that it was during these crucial days of the early Meiji period that the government gave a "symbolic message" to Japan's women to become 'repositories of the past'.⁵⁹ This type of attitude has been described by Hanna Papanek for societies undergoing rapid development

In societies that are changing very rapidly, ambiguous signals are presented to women. Fears are often translated into attempts to prevent changes in their roles. They become the repositories of "traditional" values imputed to them by men in order to reduce the stresses men face...

(Papanek 1977:15)

But, in what way are Japanese women 'repositories of the past'? What are the 'traditions' that they preserve?

It was mentioned that the study of the art of kimono dressing has become part of bridal preparation. The kimono has come to be one with other 'traditional' Japanese arts such as the tea ceremony and flower arrangement, which are considered extremely feminine. Ironically, women were banned from practising the tea ceremony when it was first invented (in the sixteenth century) (Beard 1953:97, Cherry 1987:43). But, does this mean that women's status, or women's roles, have been radically changed? Or rather, does it reflect the decreasing aesthetic importance of that art which allows the participation of women. The answer lies in the way in which these arts are practised by women. As was argued for the art of kimono dressing so for other pursuits of the kind, women generally do not try to reach a mastery of any of these arts. Rather, they pick up courses which may give them a touch of refinement. Higuchi Keiko, a Japanese feminist writer, describing the way in which Japanese girls and wives⁶⁰ take various courses, writes of the Japanese girl in metaphorical terms:

She is just like a Japanese box lunch (which) contains many kinds of food prettily arranged and looks beautiful, but it does not have any distinctive feature or appearance. Whichever restaurant you may order in, they will serve almost the same box.

(Higuchi 1985:164)

When I asked a kimono school owner what she expected from the brides-to-be when they graduated from her school, she answered that she would hope that the education they acquired at her school would help them to be 'good wives and wise mothers' (*ryōsai kenbo*). Although the phrase was presented by her as a 'traditional' Japanese pattern for women, it was actually coined as late as 1875 and presented a classic model from the nineteenth-century West.⁶¹ In a society where all the official authority over children's upbringing was in the hands

of their fathers and older brothers, the idea put forward by Nakamura Masano was rather revolutionary since it implied that women are more qualified for child rearing than men. Nakamura also advocated equal education for girls and boys. Nevertheless, perhaps in a similar way to other ideas of Western origin, it seems that the phrase 'Good Wife, Wise Mother' has gained a more 'Japanese' interpretation over the years, as we can see in the way it was presented by the kimono school owner, who sees herself as an educator of women.

What is, then, 'a good (Japanese) wife, and wise mother'? The best answer, could probably be found when examining 'bridal training'. It has been argued that the bride (mother)-to-be does not take courses in order to master a certain art but in order to refine her manners. As a kimono teacher put it "A woman who does not practice such things (like tea ceremony) is considered no good". But what are those things? Is their content important, or is it rather the pattern, the form, the formality? In a somewhat reflective manner the kimono school owner told me: "They are odd, the Japanese, come to think of it, they like to see things which can be set in models" (*kata ni hamatta mono*). And, she continued, "actually those things that the woman has to study are unimportant (nothing) things" (*nani-mo-nai koto*). In spite of the fact that she was speaking to a foreigner (me), I find her thoughts rather revealing. Since it is only the perfect practice of 'form' and formality which is required from women.

Refinement of manners for women is of course not only a Japanese practice. Veblen (1957:49) defined good manners as the "voucher of a life of leisure". In other words, refined tastes and manners are evidence of good 'middle class' breeding. According to Veblen's theory women (as well as domestic servants of his days) who are even more involved in the refinement of manners than man, do not do it for themselves. The wife (and I would add also daughter) refines her manners (and consumes) in order to manifest the ability of her husband (father) to pay. Having this in mind, it is not

surprising that the best term for a good mannered Japanese woman should be 'Good Wife, Wise Mother' (*ryōsai kenbo*).

A famous Japanese film director Shiro Toyoda, was once asked why Japanese women are such good actresses (in comparison with men). In his view it was only natural:

The Japanese woman from childhood is forced to play a role - more so than in most countries. She is her father's daughter, then her husband's wife, then her son's mother. From the earliest age she learns to mask her feelings and to counterfeit those she does not feel. One of the results is that the Japanese woman becomes a consummate actress. You could take almost anyone, put her on the screen, and she would do very well.

(Richie 1987:139)

Thus, the Japanese woman is expected to play a role in society. Put another way, Japanese women were never left without clear role models (Bernstein 1991:14). In this role external attributes such as *form* and *appearance* are crucial. It has always been *appearance* which was important for women and was taught through bridal training. "A model mother was characterized as neat in physical appearance" wrote Lebra (1984a:44) of her female informants' view of femininity. Here, again Veblen's revelations of a different society and age are yet so appropriate. A woman's sphere, he writes, is within the household for which she should be the "chief ornament".⁶²

The importance of appearance for women may be seen also in the importance of representation. I have mentioned the importance of photographs on such occasions as coming of age day and the wedding. In both cases the most elaborate photographs are those of girls or women. Photographs, writes John Berger "offer appearance - with all the credibility and gravity we normally lend to appearance - prised away from their meaning" (Berger 1984:51). Thus, again, it is *form* which is left for women.

The importance of appearance for women can only partially explain the fact that kimono has remained mainly for women in Japan, there are certainly other significant reasons. A plausible interpretation is connected to the way it constrains the body.

..the kimono which was a casual wear for men became the only style for women (in the feudal age) and restricted a woman's motion. A person wearing a kimono is defenceless, and if the front opens one is really helpless, so women always have to behave well.

(Higuchi 1985:115)

A similar view was expressed by other writers. Mary Beard, an (early) Western feminist wrote about the Tokugawa period, which in her view saw the start of a 'middle class' and with it a rise of a 'cult of dressing' for women in a kimono:

Now the city was to affect women's dressing. The shogunate totalitarian government, centred in the growing city of Yedo (now Tokyo), could be delighted by women's adoption of a feminine uniform which both rigidly disciplined the movements of its wearers and kept women exceedingly busy developing the kimono into a feminine art.

(Beard 1953:98)

As such, and especially in feminist writing this may suggest the kimono as a device for subordination of women. Although I do not entirely discard this idea, I do agree with Wilson who has argued that "to understand all 'uncomfortable' dress as merely one aspect of oppression of women, is fatally to oversimplify" (Wilson 1985:244).

However, kimono could be a symbol of the dominated status of women in Japanese society from yet another perspective. As was explained, kimono - modern kimono, that is - is not only

confining, it is also a luxurious and (very) expensive dress. According to Veblen's theory of leisure class - which seems to dominate fashion theory to these days since it was never really challenged by more modern fashion writers (Wilson 1985:52) - there are many ways in which to prove one's economic and social condition, however, dress is the best way of all:

expenditure on dress has this advantage over most methods, that our apparel is always in evidence and affords an indication of our pecuniary standing to all observers at the first glance.

(Veblen 1957:167)

Thus, kimono can be seen as evidence for the status of women in Japanese society not only in being confining but also - using Veblen's own words - by "putting in evidence their masters' ability to pay". And, indeed, according to Vogel (1963:82) although the relatively low income of the "Japanese new middle class" allowed the 'salary man' and especially his wife, only a few flamboyant gestures, kimono for women and for a child's wedding were the most evident gestures of conspicuous display. Much more than a Western dress, kimono - like items with labels from high class stores - was (and still is) regarded as an excellent way for conspicuous display since the distinction in prices and exclusivity is more obvious to the (Japanese) observer.⁶³

I would like to argue, then, that although kimono has been (deliberately) presented by interested agents, and (mistakably) regarded by scholars - Japanese as well as Western - mainly as 'traditional', and as such as unrelated to trends of consumerism, a different approach could be appropriate. In this I will follow writers such as Appadurai (1986) and Bourdieu (1977) who speak for a wider definition of commodity. The 'traditional' definition of kimono has related it more to the sphere of *gemeinschaft* (in Toennies's sense) than to use value (Marx's sense). This kind of distinction is

not uncommon in anthropological writing (Appadurai 1986:11). The 'traditional' also, to some extent, gave the kimono a 'sacred' (as well as aesthetic) aura as was mentioned in the use of the term here for 'traditional-Japanese' appearance. These spheres of life are usually regarded as less prone to consumerism (Appadurai 1986:11, 23). However, I would argue, using what Bourdieu (1977:177) had to say about gift giving that "practice (or a 'thing' - in Appadurai's terms) never ceases to conform to economic calculation even when it gives every appearance of disinterestedness".

In my opinion, 'kimono' as a concept and a metaphor has been cleverly used by related businesses, from Ceremonial Occasions organizations, to kimono shops and kimono schools. These basically financially oriented organizations have been constantly manipulating the concept, and changing its image. When appropriate, it was presented as fashion (as in late Meiji), But, after the kimono had already established itself as 'ladies fashion' (along with a 'ceremonial occasion' attire) another definition came along, (or rather an existing definition was accentuated). This was the kimono as 'traditional'.

It is possible to distinguish a marked 'traditional' image for kimono from the seventies. This image came together with the establishment of kimono schools and wedding parlours that introduced 'traditional-Japanese' brides. But it was not only kimono and Japanese brides who were to be introduced as 'traditional-Japanese' at that period, it was rather 'traditional-Japanese' itself as a 'novelty' which was on fashion at the time. The seventies and early eighties saw also what was termed as a 'festival boom' (*matsuri būmu*), which was another manifestation of "a revived interest in *dentō* (tradition) for both social and commercial reasons" (Robertson 1987:124). The examples for this so-called 'nostalgia-boom' were manifold and could be observed by the regular coverage of television of local festivals and, in general, special reports on traditional pastimes. The 'revival' of tradition varied from renewed local ceremonies (Robertson 1987, Ben-Ari 1991)

to a fresh interest in regional cuisine. Other manifestations of this so-called 'retro boom' were the spread of local history societies (Robertson 1987:127; Ben-Ari 1991:95) and the growing domestic tourism which searched for a 'real Japan' (Martinez 1990, see also Graburn 1983).⁶⁴ Yet other aspects of it were the growing popularity, especially among women, of Japanese artistic pursuits such as tea ceremony, flower arranging (Kurita 1983) as well as kimono dressing.

But has it been really an 'authentic' search for 'real Japan' which inspires these novel pursuits? Kurita, a Japanese sociologist argues to the contrary:

..the very international-ness of the life style makes the traditional Japanese arts appear quite alien and exotic. We look at our tradition the way a foreigner does, and we are beginning to love it. It is the product of a search for something more "advanced" and more *modish* than we have found in our century long quest for new culture.

(Kurita 1983:131, my emphasis)

Although I am not quite convinced of the adequacy of the term (and explanation) 'international-ness' offered by Kurita, I tend to agree with the alienation to which he insinuates. "The dialectics of authenticity ensure the alienation of modern man even within his domestic contexts", writes MacCannell (1976:160) in his book about the modern leisure class tourist. This kind of alienated attitude was observed when a kimono school owner told me that she would have liked more people ("even men") to find the beauty in kimono. If they do not want to wear it, she said, they can find other ways to enjoy its beauty, for example, they can put it as decoration in their rooms. This kind of alienated view, I will argue, is a prerequisite in the process of the promotion of 'traditional-Japanese' as a 'novelty'.

It is the aesthetics of decontextualization (itself driven by the quest for novelty) that is at the heart of

display, in highbrow Western homes, of the tools and artifacts of the "other": the Turkmen saddlebag, Masai spear, Dinka basket.

(Appadurai 1986:28)

Although Appadurai writes of decontextualization of artifacts which belong to the 'other', the same decontextualization (and quest for novelty) can be observed in decorating a modern Japanese room with a 'traditional-Japanese' kimono.

Going back to our other concern here in this chapter, which is Japanese women, it is possible to identify a similar process of 'alienation' which resulted in objectification of Japanese women. In the same manner that the quest for so-called 'real Japan' was influenced by the relations Japanese society has had with its main 'significant other'- the West, so were other ideas the Japanese hold of themselves influenced by these relations.

From the early visitors to Japan such as Lafcadio Hearn and Townsend Harris a particular view of the Japanese woman has been propagated by Westerners. This view which is defined by some as a 'remote aesthetic viewpoint' (Robins-Mowry 1983:xvii), has led people like Lafcadio Hearn to write of Japanese women what was quoted in the opening of this chapter. Others, writing about the 'real Japan' defined the Japanese woman as "the crown of the charm of Japan" (Norman 1892:174). These kinds of general descriptions of Japanese women, although somewhat different in content, form the (erotic) image of the 'Oriental woman'⁶⁵ as depicted by other visitors to the 'Orient' (Said 1991:6) do resemble in attitude. If the woman was presented as 'typically Oriental' in one case, so she was presented as 'typically Japanese' in the other.

It is true that it was not only Western men who took part in enhancing the 'mysterious and romantic aura' of Japanese women, "Japanese men are equally guilty of limited visions about the distaff members of their society" ((Robins-Mowry 1983:xvii). But what is more interesting for us here is that this 'aesthetic' view developed by Westerners, has in its turn

been projected on Japan and has become the view of the Japanese themselves.

Moeran (1990a:9) has suggested that the Japanese practise "in reverse" most dogmas of Orientalism. In his view the Japanese practise on the West the same "large collective terms" and "abstract ideas" that the West practised on Japan in the first place. This is part of the process Moeran refers to as 'Japanism' in which the Japanese "for their part, attempt to set themselves apart from, restructure, and thus gain authority over, 'the West'" (Moeran 1990a:1-2).

This 'inverse Orientalism' or rather 'inverse Japanism' has, if you like, two channels. One of these will be discussed in the next chapter and is related to the abstract or 'monolithic' view (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986:132) the Japanese hold of the West. The other channel, however, is exactly the way in which the Japanese see themselves, or more accurately present themselves to the Other (which has always been The West) (see Dale 1986:40), and also to themselves. This 'presentation of self' (expanding Goffman's term from individual to nation or culture) is closely connected, I will argue later on in the thesis, with the Japanese (national, cultural) identity. And part of it is the presentation of its women as symbols. As such they are treated more as 'things' or 'objects' than as living creatures. As Robins-Mowry puts it:

The world gently placed this living, breathing woman into the glass box used throughout Japan to encase all treasured kimono-clad and artistically hand-wrought dolls. She was entrapped in the legends of her own perfection - a likeness that harmonized with those other perpetuated symbols of Japan: cherry blossoms and Mount Fuji.

(Robins-Mowry 1983:xviv)

However, it should be clear that the "world" (used by Robins-Mowry) is a too abstract term and no doubt some

attributes such as 'male' 'Western' 'wealthy' (Said 1991:6), (and even 'Japanologist')⁶⁶ could be more revealing. The same should be true for 'Japan'. In this chapter I have tried to show how particular groups in Japanese society have been involved in this process of 'symbolizing' - and at the same time 'objectivizing' -the Japanese woman. Kimono promoters such as Ceremonial Occasions organizations, kimono shops and kimono schools as well as photo studios take an active part in this process, in which financial motivations play a very important part. Moreover, I have aimed to show in more general theoretical terms how a 'consumerism' explanation may prove to be much more explicatory than it may seem. We have seen that although the 'traditional' may seem to be detached from consumerism because of a special aura (deliberately) endowed to it, its promotion may well be understood in consumerist terms.

In the next chapter we will see another manifestation of promotion of the 'traditional', this time in the case of the 'traditional-Japanese' bride. The Japanese bride is also another feminine symbol of Japan. We will examine how images of Japanese women, like the one mentioned above - the doll - are playing part in the process of 'making' the Bride. We will also touch another aspect of the 'Japanese identity' which shows itself in the 'Western Bride' versus 'Japanese Bride'.

Notes

1. Another ceremonial occasion in which kimono plays a very important role is a ceremony known as 7-5-3 (*shichi-go-san*). The single day celebrated on 15 November is actually a recent amalgamation of several traditional rites to celebrate the first time a child was allowed to wear grown-up clothes (Hendry 1981:204). On this day children are dressed in fine clothes and taken to visit a shrine. As on other 'ceremonial occasions' the costs of the day, especially of the kimono for girls, are high. Some families choose to cut costs by just getting photographs taken with the costumes and skipping the shrine visit.

2. The term depicting adult is *shakai-jin*, which literally means a member of society. Although formally both Japanese boys and girls become 'members of society' at twenty, there are suggestions that they actually 'go out into the world' (*shakai-jin ni naru*) when they enter the world of work (see Rohlen's description of a bank official ceremony for new employees where the bank president explains to the new employees that by entering the world of work they had become 'members of society' (Rohlen 1974:49-50)). Another serious step into the world is marriage (Hendry 1981:206-7, Edwards 1989:117-24). It might be better to distinguish between the term '*otona*' (an adult) which is what Japanese boys and girls legally become at twenty and '*shakaijin*' a member of society which is what they become when they become employed and later on when they get married.

An interesting point to note here is that while for the men, from their marriage onwards both conditions (employment and marriage) usually coexist, for women often only one - that of marriage life - remains. This might allude to the fact that it is more women who really become full members of society when married and mothers.

3. Girls were asked in the beauty parlour where they got ready for the ceremony. I also interviewed girls who got dressed in other places, such as clothing rental shops (*kashi ishōya*) which also often offer dressing services, and beauty salons. I have to note that all the girls I asked were prepared by a professional dresser.

4. Girls asked for their feeling while wearing the 'Coming of Age' kimono usually said that, although the kimono was very confining, they could feel both more feminine (*onnarashii*) and traditional (*dentō-teki*). Robins-Mowry writes about the motivations of a Japanese woman to wear kimono on special occasions that "she knows only that this is the Japanese way" (Robins-Mowry 1983:3).

5. The importance mothers relate to their daughters wearing kimono was mentioned earlier (see chapter 4). I argued there that this could be part of what Lebra (1984a: 42-6) calls femininity training (see Chapter 4). Taking care of your daughter

wearing a kimono in the coming of age day may be seen also in more general terms of sex difference in socialization. Lebra (1984a:184-5) argues that this difference lies partially in the sex identity of mother and daughter. As she puts it: "The idea of a child as a mirror image of its mother seems to apply more to a daughter". The affinity between mothers and daughters (and sons and fathers) especially in latter stages of childhood or adolescence is also found in children's own view of their families as it was seen in drawing tests given both to eight and nine years old, and thirteen and fourteen years old (Lebra 1984a:321 n.8). This aspect of mothers recycling their childhood experience and thus perpetuating the existing reality will be elaborated on later on.

6. As was explained in chapter 2 the membership system in *gojokai* organizations is mainly intended for saving money for weddings and funerals. However, some other benefits, such as a reduced prices for kimono renting for the coming of age ceremony are available.

7. In order to ease the work pressure on the day itself the photo studio suggests to its customers that they have the picture taken before the event (see also below, on photographs).

8. As was explained earlier the beauty shop which was the main site of my fieldwork is one of three owned by Sakamoto Sachiko (see chapter 4). The other beauty shops had about the same number of customers in the years I conducted my research. In any case, the number of customers did not fall below 100.

TABLE TO NOTE 8
Cinderella Beauty Shop's Income on the Coming of Age Day
(in yen)

Incoming		Outgoings	
120 girls	1,800,000 ^a	salaries (about)	160,000
		lunch boxes	15,000 ^b
		other special expenses	25,000
		Total	200,000

^a This includes all expenses - of services and accessories - as specified in table 6 below (the cost for each girl is between ¥12,000 and ¥18,500).

^b The two figures for salaries and lunch boxes are calculated for thirty workers.

9. A crucial part of the girl's appearance in the coming of age day are the colourful hair decorations. These ribbons and pins are used only when wearing a kimono. The beauty shop offers sets of them at high prices. I myself was busy one full Sunday in raising the prices - sometimes by more than 50% - of all the hair decorations adjusting them to the special day's rates. The idea behind this - as explained by the beauty shop owner - was that anyway any price would be paid on this distinctive day. The

decorations are organized in sets in order to save time during the busy day and to ease the choice on the girls. Moeran and Skov (forthcoming) also report of the tendency in Japan to raise prices to meet extra demand on special occasions such as Christmas eve.

10. The workers must have taken this lesson seriously since on the day, following this training, practically all the 120 girls have purchased this string which is attached to the obi only for decoration, paying for the short cord ¥1500.

11. As the 15th of January is a national holiday it could have been a very good day for weddings, like other days of the kind such as 'Respect for the aged day' on 15 September, on which the wedding parlour is usually very busy. The reason for not having weddings on 15 January is utterly practical, the hall is too busy with the young girls.

12. It is customary in Japan to send congratulating gifts to one's relatives, usually cash, on such occasions as birth, school entrance, graduation and coming of age. According to the Sanwa Bank survey of yearly family expenses on such occasions the yearly average total in 1991 was ¥233,700. The average amount spent for the coming of age of a relative was ¥14,650 (while the most frequent amount was ¥10,000) (Sanwa 1991).

13. See chapter 7 for an example of an 'invention' of new tradition according to which girls will wear 'traditional' wigs on the coming of age day. In this case as in others, related businesses produce new 'traditions' and new needs and as such reproduce the importance of these special events.

14. The word used is *hare* which can be translated as 'formal', or 'ceremonial' and also as 'fine', 'bright' and 'pure'. It must be noted that the same phrase 'ceremonial appearance' (*hare sugata*) is often used in wedding advertisements (see chapter 6).

In the context of Shinto, the term *hare* relates to the extraordinary and sacred which contradicts with *kegare* which denotes the polluted, the unclean (Namiyara 1984). It is interesting, in this respect that '*hare*' or sacred, always refers to 'traditional-Japanese' appearance (never to 'Western'), which may suggest that an air of sacredness envelopes the 'traditional-Japanese'. Robertson (1987:125) alludes to a similar tendency when she writes about a "sacred-like aura surrounding "traditional" events"

15. Many of the advertisements mention not only the coming of age ceremony which is celebrated on January 15, but also the New Year holidays (*shōgatsu*) which is another occasion for wearing a kimono. Many refer to the 'season' (*shizen*) of dressing up. I have to note, however, that there are reports of recent New Year holidays which suggest that fewer women wear kimono for their shrine visits on these occasions (see Moeran and Skov: forthcoming).

16. This is to distinguish between 'ordinary' women and women of special professions such as geisha, or other women of the field of entertainment who wear kimono on a much more regular basis. On kimono for geisha see Dalby (1983).

17. In the wedding parlour, on the other hand, dressers are not allowed to let a wide band of white collar to be exposed in the front, and the kimono, especially that of married women, must not be pulled back to expose a large part of the nape. These points are considered important in order that the proper woman will not "look like a geisha". If an untrained dresser fails at one of these points, the customer must be dressed all over again.

18. When I observed this phenomenon at one of the yakuza weddings at the wedding parlour, the beauty shop owner praised me for my sharp eye, as this is not a very marked difference. (On other differences between yakuza weddings and 'ordinary' ones, see chapter 3).

19. Today the *chū-furisode* or "mid-swinging sleeve", whose sleeves reach only to the knee has become popular. It is considered almost as formal as the longer version and can be more easily worn by unmarried girls who consider themselves too "old" for *furisode* (on the age factor for *furisode* see also chapter 6, see also Dalby (1983:295)).

20. Formal wear is also called '*montsuki*' as it has a '*mon*'- a pattern or a crest attached (*tsuku*) to it. Every family in Japan has its own crest which is a stylized depiction of a plant, animal, tool, utensil, written character, or other object or symbol used to identify a certain family. (on patterns and their history see Niwa 1990:77-126, see also Kawakatsu 1936:30-5)

21. This kimono is called *yukata*. Cotton and wool kimono may also be worn both by men and women at home or at Japanese style hotels and SPA.

22. The *tsukesage* pattern comes on the bolt, with a definite front and back side that are divided at the shoulder, and its motifs are concentrated on the upper torso and the hem.

23. Other female participants at funerals may wear Western black clothes, often a black suit, to which any accessory, apart from a white pearl necklace and earrings, must be black.

24. This does not include, of course, women who are considered great connoisseurs of kimono like the geisha. Another developing group of connoisseurs is that of kimono schools teachers who, as a rule, wear kimono for any lesson or any other event in their school. As a matter of fact, big schools, like Nihon Wasō Gakuen (see below) have a kind of uniformed kimono for their teachers staff. Although this kimono may not be of a very expensive kind it is always appropriate to the season in garment, design and colour.

25. The attention the Japanese pay to the seasons is usually mentioned by them as an aspect of their uniqueness. This tendency for 'cultural' definition of seasons goes also for Western clothing and other aspects of life in modern Japan (see Kondo 1990:241-3). This attitude toward seasons may be understood as part of a general approach the Japanese have toward nature. While they extol harmony with nature, on the one hand, they "unnaturally" confine it, like they do in miniature box gardens and bonsai, on the other (Lebra 1976:21).

26. For example, formality actually requires a lighter garment *tomesode* for the summer. These kimono can be found at kimono shops but the wedding parlour does not find it profitable enough to have them as they are used only for a short time of the year.

27. As was mentioned above unmarried women wear *furisode*, which is a coloured kimono.

28. Such 'compromises' are made mainly for older women, especially for grandmothers (*obasama*) (as a reference to age). A frequent example is letting the white under-robe collar be as it is, without the stiff padding (*erishin*) which has to be inserted into it, in order to create a rigid collar.

29. In many cases the mother, as the host, is also the one who pays for the kimono for family members and the female *nakōdo*.

30. In general silk was prohibited to the lower classes, as were the colours red and purple, along with loud ornamental designs. The commoners, both men and women wore hemp or later cotton kimono, in dark blue, grey or orange, either plain or striped (Yanagida 1957:14).

31. Although the word means twelve layers, in its most elaborate form it could describe a garment composed of up to twenty distinct kimono, each chosen carefully to create together an aesthetically pleasing combination of colour contrasts at the neck and sleeve (Dalby:1988). Nowadays *jūni hitoe* is worn in Imperial weddings. After the wedding of the Imperial son on June 1990 there was an attempt to promote this form in wedding parlours, but it was not successful (see chapter 7).

32. It is interesting how in different historical periods government restriction on clothing was introduced for different reasons, yet existed. In the Tokugawa (Edo) period (1600-1867) commoners were subjected to many limitations on clothing, as one of the ways adopted by the shogunate to maintain social distinctions (Shibusawa 1958:20). In Meiji period (1868-1911) although former restrictions were abolished as a sign of modernization, new regulations concerning formal attire were issued. Some of these regulations replaced Japanese formal attire with Western attire. Others regulated Japanese formal attire

(Yanagida 1957:11-2). And, during the war period there were regulations concerning simplicity and convenience.

33. Yanagida (1957:16) argues that the important distinction between festive and ordinary attire collapsed during the Meiji period with all the changes this era brought about. Thus, the distinction was actually recreated after the war.

34. The importance of 'ceremonial occasions' and their strict rules of formality was also promoted by various guiding books to 'ceremonial occasions' which are consulted by Japanese in such matters (see chapter 1 note 11).

35. One of the things that began to come in for praise in that period was the Japanese company system (see Rohlen 1974:12). This period, in general, was crucial in the development of a new kind of economic nationalism as will be discussed later on in the thesis (see mainly Conclusion).

36. The tendency of the wife to be involved in conspicuous consumption more than her husband was already observed by Veblen (1957; originally published 1925) who termed this kind of conspicuous consumption as vicarious consumption and related it to the dominated position of women. This subject will be elaborated later on.

37. The schools offer courses in 'Japanese attire manners' (*wasō mana*) and in Western attire (*yōsō mana*). In these courses women can learn how to behave in different situations (from everyday life to ceremonial occasions) when dressed in either kimono or Western wear.

38. In the next chapter we will see how wedding parlours use the same idea of 'longing' in their promotion schemes.

39. For example, in its leaflet, *Nihon Wasō Gakuen* takes an 'historical' perspective when it suggests that the Japanese body have changed after the war. Nevertheless, it goes on saying: "Even if the figure has changed, the longing of a Japanese woman is (still) to wear "kimono" properly" (*taikei ga kawattemo, nihonjin de aru josei no akogare wa "kimono" o kikonasukoto nano desu*).

40. Dressing one's own daughter for special occasions seems to be one of the reasons for women to study kimono dressing (see chapter 4).

41. The kimono school system is based on levels. Upon entering the school the student must take the elementary course, which usually continues for three to four months. Later on she may choose to pursue higher levels.

42. Other 'modern' accomplishments which are considered essential for prospected brides are English conversation, word processing,

driver's education (Cherry 1987:43) and at least one trip abroad (Moeran 1989b:47).

43. The school's anthem is sung on formal occasions such as graduation ceremonies. It is also sung by all the participants at the opening of the grand event of the year: "All-Japan Kimono Dressing Grand Championship" (*zen nihon kimono kitsuke senshukun taikai*). The event which takes place in a large hall (several hundred seats) features kimono dressing contest between about 400 successful (who won in the previous local contests) competitors. The contest is divided into the two 'ceremonial occasions' kimono: *furisode* for unmarried women and *tomesode* for married women.

44. These qualities of *wabi* and *sabi* aesthetics were defined by Hisamatsu Shin'ichi (see Sen 1989:239-41). The term *wabi* alone which is very much related to the way of tea (*chanoyu* or *chadō*) has three aspects according to Haga (1989). First, it relates to simple, unpretentious beauty. Another side of this beauty is its imperfectness and irregularity, while its third aspect is a tranquil, austere beauty. Yanagi (1972) relates a third term to *wabi* and *sabi*, this is *shibui*. To the beauty represented by all three terms he refers as "irregular" which involves a certain love of roughness (Yanagi 1972:123). *Wabi* and *shibui*, he argues actually stand for one and the same thing, but whereas the word *wabi* belongs to "the vocabulary of the select few", *shibui* is a more commonly used term (Yanagi 1972:184).

Others also attempt to explicate these complicated terms. Varley (1986:143) who admits the difficulty in defining the term 'wabi' writes that "it is probably no exaggeration to say that it came to embrace all of the tastes that informed the arts in medieval times (in Japan): naturalness, suggestion, asymmetry, the withered, cold, and lonely". He also connects *wabi* with tea ceremony and with Zen. Kondo (1985:292) suggests a slightly different definition when both terms are related to the art of tea ceremony (or the 'way of tea' (*chadō*)); *wabi* is the beauty of simplicity and poverty, while *sabi* is the beauty of the imperfect, the old, and the lonely.

45. The phrase '*gei no michi*' uses the same Chinese characters as the term *geidō* which usually refers to Japanese ways of art such as *chadō*, the way of tea.

46. This attempt may be seen mainly as business oriented as kimono schools entrepreneurs suppose that this image will attract new students, especially prospective brides. It is also interesting to note in this respect that kimono is being presented by various kimono entrepreneurs in different ways - as 'traditional', as Japanese art, as fashionable and so forth - in accordance with the immediate aim of business.

47. Although the headmaster method began among the aristocratic and warrior arts of the fifteenth century, the present system took shape during the 1780s when rich merchants aped the Tokugawa elite classes by taking up their artistic diversions in even

greater numbers than before. The abolition of the samurai class in (1868) Meiji restoration resulted in the decline of the schools. The struggling of the schools was first relieved in the 1920s when well-to-do urban families started sending their daughters for lessons in the polite accomplishments. After the war with the great middle class engagement with the arts the system turned into a nationwide institution with far more respectability than it has ever had in the pleasure quarters of nobles or merchants (Haven 1982:24).

48. O'Neill (1984) suggests five basic characteristics which the various *iemoto* organizations usually have. First, the principle of hereditary succession to the headship of the group; although the successor may be adopted. Second, strictly traditional teaching, coupled with the secret transmission (*hiden*) of certain important information, skills or techniques. The third characteristics of organizations which are based on a *iemoto* system is their use of a permit system. The fourth characteristic arises from the previous one, being the development of a hierarchical, pyramid-shaped organization with the *iemoto* or headmaster at the top, the other teachers in the next section, and then a broader base of pupils in training. A final characteristic is a strong sense of reciprocal duty and obligation within a school.

49. It is interesting to notice the similarity between Nakane's (1984) description of the '*iemoto* system' and that of the kimono school owner. In both cases the ideal type is presented as the reality, with no references to instances which breach the rules. While for the latter this may represent a vested interest, it seems to be also involved in an attempt to present the system as uniquely Japanese. In that respect both the head of the school and the anthropologist are trapped in the 'myth of Japanese Uniqueness' (Dale 1986). This point will be discussed further later on in the thesis.

50. Moeran (1984a:211) writes of a very similar process in the case of pottery, when he argues that precisely because Onta pottery is used no longer in everyday life but only on special occasions, people complain if pots are not perfect. In the case of Onta pottery, this process was a result of the fact that Onta potters now have to produce for an urban market that increasingly looks upon folk craft as decorative rather than as purely functional.

51. While the complexity of kimono dressing serves kimono schools in acquiring 'artistic' definition - as well as acquiring new students, it serves beauty shops (like the one discussed in the previous chapter) in maintaining their unique expertise. It is interesting, in this respect, to compare the definitions of kimono dressing by the beauty shop owner (see chapter 4) and the kimono school owner. While the latter was determined in her 'artistic' definition, the former was less so, as she had much more efficiency and work considerations to take into account.

52. Although in their advertisements kimono schools usually offer a three or four month course, the kimono student soon finds out that the basic course is not satisfying. She will also be advised by her teacher to go on for at least a year.

53. The concept that unmarried young girls are not supposed to know much about kimono (compared to married women) can also be observed in the dressers' attitude. While older women might be asked more carefully if the kimono is too tight, young girls are more likely to be told "it isn't tight, is it?" in such a manner that does not leave the girl much room for an answer. If, however, the young girl 'dares' to complain, she will just be told either that "it will be loosen up during the day" or that she should "hold out" (*ganbatte*), or that she must "endure" (*gamman*) since "this is kimono". In other words, what they are actually saying is that this is how it is to be a Japanese woman. (see chapter 6 on the subject of endurance).

54. This aspect of the dressing work is usually the most disturbing for most beginners. They usually find it hard to be in such close physical contact with the customer. In Japanese society when physical contact among adults is not very common this is regarded as embarrassing, and in a sense derogatory (like other 'physical' professions).

55. Usually the obi has a pattern which in perfect kimono dressing is supposed to appear exactly in the middle of the back. In the beauty shop context, however, perfection of beauty always competes with efficiency and time (see chapter 4). Thus perfect results are usually achieved when the shop is not too busy.

56. While the married woman's obi is tied in basically one kind of way, called *taiko* (or drum), the unmarried woman obi may be tied in many ways. The tying of a girl's obi in shapes of butterflies or flowers is actually considered one of the great pleasures by expert dressers because it gives some room for personal invention.

57. In the beauty shop context these are the main distinctions, apart, of course, from those mentioned above concerning the formal role at the wedding (mothers and female go-between). Kimono text books, however, provide detailed tables which usually have the following distinctions of social status and age: miss, Mrs., middle-aged, and elderly. They also refer to bodily differences when they give instructions for a slim woman or a heavy woman.

58. Although there were some suggestions for Western clothing for women, even by the Empress herself (in 1887) (Shibusawa 1958:22), it seems that these were more short-term gestures. These motions were more part of the overall trend of reform, and women's styles were the first to be re-reformed later on (Shibusawa 1958:48).

59. Sievers (1983: 14-5) refers to a different area of appearance: hair-styles. While men (particularly samurai) were strongly pushed to forgo long hair-styles in favour of the shorter, more 'practical' Western hair-cut, a law banning short hair for women was issued in 1872.

60. It is not only brides-to-be who take courses, for Japanese 'middle-class' urban housewives also enjoy taking courses in 'housewifely arts'. Married women's attitudes seem to be the same as those of girls. As it was described by Vogel: "Many wives who have studied such arts for years will say modestly but sincerely that they are mere beginners" (Vogel 1963:192).

61. The term was coined by Nakamura Masano, in one of the last issues of the Meiji Six Journal (*Meiroke zasshi*) - a magazine published by the Meiji Six society (*Meirokekusha*), one of the most influential intellectual groups of the period. Nakamura who had spent considerable time in Europe, presented a Western model of ideal womanhood. Women, he suggested, would provide the religious and moral foundation of the home, educating their children and acting as the 'better half' of their husbands (Sievers 1983:22-3).

62. In the next chapter we will see how 'modern' Japanese girls have become ornaments or 'flowers' of the office.

63. I have to note that nowadays Western clothing with exclusive brand name labels has come to join kimono as a conspicuous display.

64. A strong element related to these trends is the notion of 'native-place' building (*furusato zukuri*) (see Robertson 1987:134-5; Ben-Ari 1991:95-6).

65. Although an erotic image of Japanese women or particular groups in Japanese society does exist (Martinez 1990, Moeran 1990a:9), the 'aesthetic' image prevails more in early writings. The erotic image can be found, however, in a more modern and vulgar image presented for example in a guide book of 'Oriental Women' for the Western man (De Mente:1985) in which the Japanese women deserve the compliment: "Good Things Come in Small Packages". Vulgar it may sound, both in the 'aesthetic' image of Lafcadio Hearn and in the modern version women are reduced to 'things'.

66. Although Moeran seems to emphasise the role of Western Japanologists, mainly Anthropologists, I think that the influence goes beyond that, to more 'unacademic' ties with Western visitors, and other kinds of contacts with the West.

Chapter six:

THE JAPANESE BRIDE AS A 'PACKAGED PRODUCT'

In earlier stages of the thesis I suggested a view of the wedding parlour's wedding ceremony from a backstage perspective. I argued that taking the point of view of the 'producers' as opposed to the more prevalent approach which has the principals - bride and groom - as the main 'actors', can reveal a new perspective. I suggested that we look at the relationship between the bridal couple and the suppliers of wedding services as one of 'consumers' and 'entrepreneurs', and furthermore that we try to take the perspective of the industry. From that viewpoint evolved the metaphor of the bridal couple as 'objects' being 'processed' by the industry. In this chapter I suggest that the main 'object' being 'processed' not only by the wedding parlour itself but by a whole range of interested businesses is 'The Bride'.

In the last two chapters I discussed the work of the wedding parlour's beauty shop and the special place the kimono had come to have not only in the wedding parlour context but also in Japanese society in general. As it is today, the kimono and with it the pursuit of kimono dressing is part of a feminine world. It is done by women for women. In this world one special symbol stands out - 'The Bride'. Not only is 'making' a bride (the verb *tsukuru* - make is used) the highest level a dresser can reach at the beauty shop, but also wearing the 'Japanese' bridal costume (*hanayome ishō*) is considered to be the ultimate form of kimono wearing. Furthermore donning the 'bridal appearance' (*hanayome sugata*) is considered and promoted as the climax of the Japanese girl's life. In this chapter I examine how the bride, as well as the bridal image, are created. This will take us again out of the wedding parlour as we look at the promotion devices of other wedding facilities as well as at other companies involved in clothing, cosmetics and aesthetics. Creating the bridal image is not a solitary process. It is connected to much larger concepts and

images of Japanese girls and women. Those images will be analysed in this chapter, together with the recurring subject of the attitudes of the Japanese toward Western images.

Wedding Preparations: Choosing the Wedding Costumes

After the wedding day is fixed and arrangements for the engagement ceremony, the honeymoon, the bridal furniture are all set, the wedding parlour suggests that the next stage to be gone through is choosing the wedding costumes. This should be done not less than three months before the great day (on the wedding parlour plan see chapter 1). Although it is not only the bride who has to choose costumes, she definitely has a much bigger role than other participants in choosing and adapting her outfit and wig for the wedding day. She is also expected to prepare herself, her face, hair and body for the "greatest moment" in her life.

Some Important decisions

Before proceeding to the wedding parlour to choose the actual attire she is to don on her wedding day, the bride should make some initial decisions. Some of the smaller decisions regarding accessories and decorations will be made in the wedding parlour, but the main decisions are always made before the bride arrives at the wedding parlour to choose her outfit. All the brides in Shōchikuden change costumes during their wedding,¹ and there was not a single case during the time of research where the *uchikake* (a long elaborate overcoat) was not worn.² Thus, the choice of not changing costumes does not exist for the brides. Not only do they want to become beautiful brides - which means showing themselves in different lights (see Hendry 1981:160)- or different colours (as the term for costume changes (*ironaoshi*) implies), but also it seems just "natural" (*atarimae*) for them to do so since "all the brides today are doing this".

Just as in the decision to have costume changes, wearing *uchikake* is taken as a matter of course. Nevertheless for most of the brides, the *uchikake* has also a definite statement to make. Putting on the *uchikake*, especially the white one as will be shown later, means being a bride, as many brides actually said: "When I was dressed in the white *uchikake* I felt like a bride". Wearing the *uchikake* also means being 'Japanese' since it is conceived as the most 'traditional' form of 'Japanese' bridal attire. As I will show in the next chapter, this concept concerning the *uchikake* has gained its place due to a deliberate effort of the wedding industry. It was also the industry which created the grounds for the notion of *uchikake* as the most 'natural' costume a 'Japanese' bride should don at her wedding. This notion concerning the 'genuine' bond between Japanese girls and the *uchikake* was expressed by the beauty shop's *ô-sensei*: "Even an unattractive Japanese bride, mysteriously looks beautiful with *uchikake* and wig." Then she added, reflectively: "The *uchikake* and wig have been made to suit all the Japanese, have they not?".

Although wearing the *uchikake* seemed 'natural', an increasing number of brides have decided to do away with the second form of Japanese wear: the *furisode*. In general the choice to do away with the *furisode* was not made after the bride had seen the *furisode* offer at the wedding parlour; it was always a prior decision based on personal as well as more general, social considerations. When I asked the head of the brides' room why girls decided not to wear *furisode*, she could only express her regret, herself viewing the *furisode* not only as beautiful but also as 'traditionally Japanese'. Thus she gave what may at first glance was a technical reason, but which actually had more to it than that. Her explanation was related to the general *furisode* appearance which requires a smaller wig than that used for the *uchikake*.³ She explained that young girls usually wore their hair over the forehead so they were not used to pulling all their hair up and to tucking it into the wig. What she was actually saying here was that the young generation does not appreciate real Japanese beauty.⁴

A woman owner and president of several wedding parlours reacted in a similar, though a more pessimistic, tone: "Young girls have just stopped loving kimono, you see..".⁵ Both the entrepreneur and the bride-making expert regretted the loss of the *furisode*, but accepted it as part of the new generation (*shin jinrui*) which does not respect the same values as the older generation.⁶

Another very interesting argument for the decline of *furisode* popularity was given by the *ō-sensei*, the beauty shop owner. She agreed that there were also the girls' own considerations or wishes (*kibō*), but, in her opinion, the main reason was to be found in the wedding production (*enshutsu*) itself. As the wedding production became more showy (*hanayaka*), wedding dress suited it much more than a kimono. "In a *furisode* the bride can only walk straight and sit", she said, "in a dress she can do many things and it is possible to put on a production". What the *ō-sensei* was referring to, were obviously the 'Western' mini-scenes which were incorporated into the wedding, such as the candle service and the (optional) 'gondola' entrance. Her remark is interesting not only because it 'thickens' the 'production' argument pursued in the thesis, but also because it manifests a clear distinction between 'Japanese' and 'Western'. The bride's costume can be seen as reemphasizing 'Orientalist' (or, rather, 'Japanist') themes mentioned earlier. In a 'Western' dress, the bride seems to be much more active and can move around (at least enough to light a few candles), in a 'Japanese' costume, however, her *passive* role (as will be explained further below) is accentuated.

What does the younger generation itself think about the bridal *furisode*? One of the reasons brides noted for giving away the *furisode* was that it was too difficult and tiring (*shindoi*) to wear both the *uchikake* and the *furisode* which are very tight and heavy. This reasoning is rephrased by the older generation as "young girls are not used any more to kimono, and in general, they do not know how to endure" (*gaman dekinai*).

However, the rationalization frequently made by girls is undoubtedly of a different nature. As girls marry later than in the past⁷ some of them see it as inappropriate to wear *furisode* at their age. As one of the brides, a school teacher, put it: "I did not wear *furisode*, not only because it is wearying and heavy after the *uchikake*, but even more so because of age reasons (*nen rei teki-ni*). *Furisode* has the image of a 20 year old (*hatachi*), of the coming of age ceremony. I have already become twenty-six and I felt it was not proper for me any more". Age has always been important in Japanese tradition, there is an appropriate age for just about everything in a person's life history. A girl is usually presented to the deities of the local shrine when she is thirty days old. Then, the age of three is the time for her first kimono. She wears probably her first *furisode* at the 'coming of age ceremony' at twenty (see chapter 5). And finally, a few years later she reaches 'The right age', that is, marriageable age. Although the term '*tekireiki*' means literally 'the right age' it has a special meaning in Japanese - the age appropriate for marriage (Edwards 1989:63).⁸ Other 'old' brides shared the same feeling as the school teacher while some younger brides felt that it was pointless wearing *furisode* since they already had pictures of themselves in *furisode* from the coming of age ceremony (see chapter 5). Above all, it seems that whereas the *uchikake* is as if taken for granted as a bridal wear, when it comes to more aesthetic as well as practical decisions, two lavish Western dresses have recently come to be preferred. Reaffirming the categorized role of the two different attires, one of the brides who chose not to wear *furisode* said: "I don't like kimono but *uchikake* is more bridal wear while *furisode* is kimono".

The Bridal Fair as an Exhibition of Bride's Attire

After the bride has made the initial decisions about the kinds of outfit she is to put on her wedding day, she comes to

the wedding parlour to make some more specific choices. Although the prospective bride may come to the wedding parlour to choose her attire on any day of the week, and some girls do come during the week or on weekends when they are free from work, the main event in which many of the wedding costumes are chosen is the grand event called the Bridal Fair. This may be seen as the beginning of the production process of the bridal appearance. In the Fair she is the 'Star' as she is going to be for one day in her life - her wedding day.

Bridal Fairs take place in most wedding parlours as well as hotels. In Cobella, as was explained earlier in the thesis, they constitute an important promotion device as well as a convenient way to centralize bridal preparations. The Bridal Fair is usually divided into two parts: a display of bridal items and a show. The standing display of bridal items - from bridal furniture to wedding costumes - is located on the parlour's lower floors. The show which is partly an (amateur) fashion show for displaying wedding costumes and partly a display of reception scenes (like the 'candle service' or cake cutting ceremony) takes place in one of the ballrooms on the upper floor.

It is not only at the show - which in many parts resembles a fashion show, displaying young unprofessional girl models in wedding costumes - that the female part of the bridal couple gets most of the attention.⁹ Looking at the organization of the Bridal Fair costume display, it is obvious that the bride is the main consumer at whom the wedding parlour is aiming. Whilst groom's costumes are tucked away in a relatively narrow corner near the *tomesode* for wedding guests, brides' costumes (both 'Japanese' and 'Western') fill most of the lobby. The much larger space and attention which are given to brides' costumes should not be surprising if we have in mind some simple financial considerations: firstly, bridal costumes rental price is at least ten times higher than that of grooms' costumes; secondly, bridal costumes constitute a very considerable part of the general wedding costs (see chapter 2).

The special Bridal Fair in Kobe Princess Palace in September 90 which celebrated also the 10th anniversary of the hall's foundation may illuminate the way the bride is treated. This time it was decided to construct a special big stage on one side of the lobby, around it (all the way to the coffee shop) there were wedding dresses on display. From observing the display and comparing it to previous fairs it was quite apparent that a bigger role was given to the wedding dress, although *uchikake* and *furisode* displays did occupy a large space on the other side of the lobby, an area which visitors were obliged to pass on their way up from the Lower Ground Floor. According to the wedding hall plan, 'Japanese' wear was the one to be chosen first .

A girl never comes to the bridal fair alone, but is usually accompanied by her prospective groom and her mother, or parents, and sometimes on Sundays (when the fair become more of a social leisure activity), by the groom's mother or even both his parents. Whether the bride arrives at the Fair in a pair or in a larger group, one item is never missing: The camera. When the bride is trying on wedding dresses she is photographed. The pictures are usually developed on the same day, and are used as a means for choosing the right dress, that which will also (or mainly) look well through the camera lens.

'Japanese' Attire

Before deciding on the wedding dress, the bride is advised to choose her Japanese attire. Whereas the dress is tried on, 'Japanese' wear can not be fully worn since it takes too much time and effort to put it on. In order to create the outline of the *uchikake*, the prospective bride is invited to put on a kind of a cone shaped pillow which, tied to her back, resembles the curve created by the obi under the outer coat. The pillow gives a very general look as the *uchikake* is not tied, but just put over the body. Yet this general look is entirely sufficient since *uchikake*, like kimono in general,

does not have to fit the body, on the contrary, as was shown in the previous chapter for kimono dressing, the body is adapted and 'corrected' to fit the attire. The main considerations for choosing the *uchikake* are colour, pattern and grade.

Uchikake are offered at various prices (or grades; see chapter 2). After the bride has decided, with the help of her mother, on the money to be spent, she moves on to choose the colour of the *uchikake*.¹⁰ All the brides wear white *uchikake* for the ceremony, but recently they have started to put on a coloured *uchikake* for a studio photograph and often also for the dramatic entrance to the reception hall (*nyūjō*).¹¹ Although brides used to wear red *uchikake* which is still the most popular colour, they have a much larger choice now. Recently green, black and silver *uchikake* have been promoted. The introduction of new colours might be a result of a 'diffusion' of fashion notions into the realm of 'tradition'. (Or, is it another sign that 'tradition' itself can be explicated in terms of fashion?, see also chapter 7). Since the young bride is ultimately the one to make the choice, 'gaudy' (*hade*) and 'luxurious' (*gōka*) colours and designs are used in order to appeal to her. As for the bride's mother, she might find the 'luxurious' *uchikake* as yet another way of displaying her family affluence to the wedding guests.

Popular colours for the *furisode* are purple, blue or green. Although pink is popular for young girls' *furisode*, it is not popular for bridal *furisode*, nor for the *uchikake*. It may be related to the age factor, since pink is considered more childish it may be good for 20 year old (*hatachi*) girls on their coming of age day but not later than that. As was mentioned above for the choice of colours in the case of the second *uchikake* so for the *furisode*, it seems to be an indication of the influence of fashion notions, rather than tradition. The popularity of purple is especially interesting since according to more traditional concepts, purple and violet were said to be avoided by the bride and groom since they fade soonest and divorce may result (Bishop 1900:254).

The *uchikake* and *furisode* background colours are adorned with bright patterns in various colours. Whereas the *furisode* is usually decorated with flowers or other geometrical patterns the *uchikake* is adorned with more 'traditional style' patterns. Those are patterns considered good and lucky omens (*kisshō*, *zuissshō*). Frequent patterns are of pine trees, plums and cranes. These propitious signs are usually connected to longevity or other positive aspects of life. The crane has traditionally been considered a sign of long life, victory in battle and good tidings, so as a pattern is used for happy occasions such as weddings and births. Cranes are sometimes used with a pine-bamboo-plum (*shōchikubai*) combination (Niwa 1990:80) which is used for the engagement (*yuinō*) presents and represents happiness (Hendry 1981:159).¹² Thus, not only is the 'traditional-Japanese' trait of the *uchikake* manifested, but also its 'eternal' bond with Japanese Weddings.

The Main Stage: Commercial 'Fight' Over The Bride

After choosing the Japanese attire, the bride proceeds to the other side of the lobby to the main stage. Whilst the process of selecting Japanese costumes involves mostly the bride and her mother, picking the Western dress include other members of the family as well as the groom. After selecting one of the dozen dresses on display the bride is invited to put it in the provisional changing room. Then she enters the stage where only brides and their attendants are allowed. Her family is to watch her and take her picture from below. The sales ladies (see chapter 3), who accompany the brides are also restricted from entering the stage. The stage is symbolically separated by a red carpet which leads the brides to it, and by the fact that all shoes, except the bridal shoes supplied by the wedding parlour, must be taken off before getting on the stage.

However, the stage is not only that of the bride's, it is also a live display of a competition that takes place literally over the customer's body. As was explained earlier

in the thesis, the wedding parlour does not provide all the bridal services directly. Many other companies are involved in the general production. Although some of the services like that of food catering are supplied by one company, other areas are open to competition. Bridal accessories is one of the areas where competition is tougher than others.¹³

The wedding dress, elaborate as it may be, cannot be worn without some necessary accessories. The white dress must be adorned with a crown, a necklace (and suitable earrings) and a veil. The coloured party dress should have a head cover as well as necklace and earrings. The 'Western' bridal appearance is definitely incomplete if a garland of artificial flowers¹⁴ is missing. Most of the accessories are not included in the 'bridal package' (see chapter 2) and require extra payment. Among all the costumes and accessories only the flower bouquet (*buke*) is bought (not rented) and taken home after the wedding. The bouquet is usually the last item chosen to complete the bridal appearance, in most cases one bouquet is selected which will suit both dresses.

The competition between the different companies which are taking part in the Bridal Fair is at times quite severe. Several dress companies participate in the fair and have to compete with each other. Though only one accessory company - the well-known pearl company, Mikimoto - participates in the fair, it has to compete with the cheaper accessories offered by the clothing department and beauty shop. The competition is practised on the customer without her knowledge. A recurring scene at the Fair struck me as a vivid demonstration of this 'invisible' competition; the scene of choosing the bouquet. Two different bouquet companies participate in the fair, each of them represented by one female employee. After the bride decides on her dresses and accessories, one of the two ladies who happens to be more alert or free at the moment would approach the girl and offer her a suitable bouquet. While the bride and her dresser observe the bouquet or rather its suitability for her general appearance, the other sales lady (from the competing company) waits for the first opportunity

'to attack' the bride. And the opportunity would soon come - a slight hesitation of the bride, and the faithful bouquet company worker¹⁵ would step over and offer her 'merchandise'. This process would repeat itself until the bride with the help of her attendant made the final decision. I must note that although the competition between the two companies (represented by the two ladies), was very visible to me as an informed observer, I noticed that the main 'object' for the competition - the bride - was not aware of the existence of two competing companies. As far as they knew, all wedding fees were paid to the wedding parlour and they usually did not realize that the various companies were actually competing for each sale. Moreover, some of the bride attendants, beauty shop workers who were called to give a hand at the event, were unaware of the competition or ignored it when they suggested bouquets to the bride.¹⁶

'Western' Attire

As mentioned, in contrast with 'Japanese' attire, wedding dresses are fully tried on, and preferably the bride's hair is also taken care of to create a full 'Western' appearance. The dresses on display are very fancy, being made of materials like velvet and taffeta and often decorated with lace or other adornments. Colours are also usually elegant: dark greens, purple, dark red and glamorous golds are popular. The elaborate style is further exaggerated by the large crinolines which are, as a rule, tucked into the dresses. However, the "luxurious" (or "gorgeous" - a popular term used in the wedding parlour) attribute of the dresses is not found only in colours or materials. There is something else that makes the special quality of the dresses. This is the crucial distinction between them and everyday wear.

Moreover, dresses which were considered very popular in a previous year may lose all their charm the following year. This was the case with a particular party dress - black velvet with yellow sun-flowers - which seemed to be very elaborate

last year, but was defined in the September 90 Fair by one of the brides' mothers as inappropriate for her daughter not because it did not suit her (actually the dress fitted her much better than all the other dresses), but because it looked too casual "like everyday wear". Thus, it is not only the 'Japanese' wear which should be well distinguished from everyday wear, the wedding dress though 'invented' from different 'materials' came to have the same formal role. What are, then, the 'materials' from which the dresses are 'invented'? It is clear that they are taken from other worlds and periods. As I will explain in the next chapter this 'other world' is always the 'West'. It is, however, important to note in this context, that the dresses are made of materials which 'make dreams come true'. The same 'old dream' the Japanese girl is told to have of being not only a 'Japanese' bride but also a 'Western' princess is materialized in them. The Japanese girl and woman to be, should be satisfied with this 'dream come true' as this will probably be the first and last chance she has to wear such a 'daring' appearance.

Preparing the Bride's Body For the Great Day

The Bridal Fair where the bride chooses her costumes and becomes familiar with the parts she has to fulfil on her wedding day is only a starting point in the bride's preparation process. Beginning in the month before her wedding, she is urged by the wedding parlour to consult the beauty shop concerning the wedding costumes and wig fittings as well as other preparations. Not only does the beauty shop play a major role in the Bridal Fair, but also, from that time on, it is the central agent in charge of the production of the 'bridal appearance'.

As part of the preliminary 'bridal appearance' production process, the beauty shop offers a "Bridal Beauty Plan". This plan extends over a month in which the bride's face, hair and body are prepared for the wedding day. Some of the cosmetic and hair treatments are to be paid directly by the bride to

the beauty shop, but as a result the bride is entitled to a free facial treatment (paraffin mask) to be held two days after her face and neck are shaved and two days before the great day. According to the small pamphlet the beauty shop issues, this special treatment will make the young lady (*ojōsama*) more beautiful for the "once in a life time ceremonial (formal) day (*hare no hi*) for which she has always waited".

Preparing the bride's body, especially her face, for the wedding, is not a new practice. Reports of village home weddings describe the shaving of the bride's face and neck to prepare her for the heavy make up (Beardsley 1959:325, Norbeck 1954:179).¹⁷ Nevertheless those preparations usually occurred during the wedding day itself or in some cases on the night before (Norbeck:*Ibid*). Thus, the prolonged cosmetic and aesthetic treatment offered to prospective brides nowadays seems to be more a result of modern attitudes towards women's beauty, than a continuity with past practices concerning bridal preparation. The general 'Western' inclination of these kinds of 'bridal aesthetic' plans gives another support to this point.

'Bridal Aesthetic' plans are not offered only by wedding parlours' beauty shops. Beauty salons offer similar programs. A large beauty salon chain called TBC (Tokyo Beauty Salon) offers "Bridal Aesthetic" treatments in its 139 shops over the country. One of the main ideas promoted by beauty salons advertisements for "Bridal Aesthetic"¹⁸ is the same idea which was mentioned in relation to bridal costumes; emphasizing the 'longing' for the unique day. This idea is portrayed in slogans such as: "Get ready for your once in a lifetime day". Nevertheless, since these beauty salons are aiming at a modern Western image they emphasize the Western aspects of the wedding ceremony. Their treatments are offered using Western terms such as "*hando kea kōsu*" (hand care course) and "*hea resu*" (hair less). Moreover, they are strongly connected to the Western parts of the wedding ceremony itself. The advertisements promise to take care of each finger of the

bride's hands, these hands which "hold the bouquet, light the candle in the candle service, and exchange rings in the wedding climax (*kuraimakusu*)". They will make these bridal hands which "attracts the attention of all the participants" "smooth" (*nameraka*) and "fresh-looking" (*mizumizushii*).

The comprehensive bodily treatment which will prepare the bride's hands, hair and body for the roles she has to fulfil in her wedding characterizes also the wedding parlour's attitude. Whether the part the brides has to perform is 'Western' or 'Japanese', the concept is that of *Production*. The beauty shop not only prepares the bride for her wedding, it also - and even more so- produces a 'perfect bride', one who will be bodily prepared for her wedding day acting role.¹⁹

Wedding day preparation - The final 'Touch'

The wedding day starts early for the bride. She must reach the wedding parlour two and half hours before the ceremony is scheduled. Entering directly into the beauty shop, which she already knows well from her previous visits for advice and treatment, she is guided to a room she has usually never seen before, a room kept for 'real' brides on their wedding day. This room will be her first and last 'station' in the long day ahead of her. She then hands herself over to the expert dressers who will take care of her throughout her long, strenuous day. The initial preparations for the *uchikake* appearance are the most time-consuming and exacting of all the make-up and costume changes she will go through in her 'journey' between 'traditional- Japanese' to 'Western' bride.

In the Japanese style room the bride meets the expert dresser who will be in charge of preparing her for her elaborate *uchikake* appearance. After short greetings (*aisatsu*) between the dresser and the 'young lady' (*ojōsan*) (as the bride will be referred to throughout the day),²⁰ the long process of make-up begins. Although other brides in different stages of preparation might be sharing the same room, there are no greetings nor any conversation amongst the brides.

Donning A white mask

The bride, separated from her familiar Western clothes - already in white kimono underwear (*hadajuban*) and white Japanese socks (*tabi*) - sits demurely in front of one of the mirrors to watch herself being transformed into a 'Japanese Bride'. The process of make-up lasts more than an hour and includes the painting of the face, neck, arms and hands.²¹ Although in the past a bride's make-up (at least that of the upper class brides) was known to be white (Tamura 1904:47), the old style white powder known as *oshiroi* is now replaced by modern style make-up. There are several companies specializing in bridal make-up which supply (according to their advertising materials) the "colour of Japanese ceremony" (*nihon no gishiki no iro*) to be used by the dresser in the make-up process.

The make-up is done in several stages of painting, brushing and powdering the face with a special powder to keep the paint from fading in case of possible natural reactions such as sweat or tears. The colour of the face, though much whiter and considerably heavier than that of Western make-up, is not as white as it used to be in the past, according to veteran dressers. One of the reasons given for that was that it is a response to the new generation's preferences. This is again an implicit criticism of the new generation (*shin jinrui*) which does not appreciate the 'real' Japanese beauty which is equated with fair skin. This ideal of beauty was expressed also in the beauty shop work as dressers used to complain among themselves of brides with darker skins and the difficulty it created in the make-up process.²²

The dresser's expertise is tested by her ability to form the desirable Bridal image by a skilful play with make-up. She uses mainly white and red (and some black). Red colour is used near the bride's eyes to give the impression of bashfulness (*hazukashii kanji*). The red colour near the ears serves the same purpose as it should create the illusion of blushing. The whiter liquid paint used to paint the bride's front neck and nape is used not only in order to make the face more distinct

but even more so to give a feeling of naivety (*uiuishiisa*) and freshness (*shinsen*).

After painting a very thin black line over the bride's eyes and attaching artificial eyelashes the most delicate task of painting the mouth completes the make-up process. Considerable attention is given to the mouth which is considered to be the "(focal) point" (*pointo*) of the bride's face. It is coloured by a deep red colour which covers only part of the lips - previously painted in white - creating a smaller mouth in a shape of a 'mountain' (*yama*).²³

The general effect of the make-up is the creation of a different face, completely unrecognizable (see also Jeremy and Robinson 1989:116). One of the points to be taken seriously during the make-up process is that the 'real' face (or skin) is not revealed at all. Just as Liza Dalby's geisha 'mother' (*okasan*) found it disturbing to have those "untouched spots" on either side of Liza Dalby's 'foreign' nose when she made her up (Dalby 1983 131-3), so is the dresser fighting against any 'stubborn' spot on the bride's face. One of the flaws to be found in the make-up work is if the bride would find even the tiniest spot of 'her own face' (*jibun no kao*) emerging underneath the white mask.

It seems that the heavy make-up has a crucial role in the detachment between the person in the bride and the 'Bride' as a symbol (a subject which will be discussed in the concluding part of this chapter). The most common reactions of brides as the make-up process reaches its final steps are expressions of a feeling as if they look different from usual. Many of the brides simply say "(I look) like a completely different person". Some brides just laugh or giggle with surprise and yet others may reveal their association with their different look. "Like a Kabuki actor" said one of the brides, referring to her own image in the mirror.

Before proceeding to the next complicated stage of dressing there is yet another item to complete the facial 'mask'; that is the 'traditional' Japanese wig²⁴ to be decorated with special 'traditional' head decorations

(*kanzashi*). These objects, though also completely detached from everyday life, when added, help in creating the desirable image. Although the bride will be also unrecognizable in her full outfit, in it (compared with having only the 'mask' on) she has a clear role - that of a 'Japanese Bride'.

'Packaging' the Bride into the Bridal Role

The last stage in the production of the 'bridal appearance' consists of putting on the costume which will settle the 'traditionality' of the appearance - the *uchikake* (see chapter 7). The process of dressing (*kitsuke*) like any kimono dressing requires two pairs of hands. The expert dresser who made up the bride takes the front (*mae*) position, which in any kimono dressing is kept for the person considered to be higher in knowledge. The assistant helps from the back (*ura*) and does all the preparations for the actual dressing. The dressing itself follows the basic rules of kimono dressing which were described in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, since a bride's dressing, or rather bride's 'making' (*hanayome o tsukuru*)²⁵ is considered the highest level of kimono dressing, more attention is given to details and an air of seriousness adds another 'masking' of 'traditionality' and formality.²⁶

The first stage in any modern kimono dressing is of 'correction'; the woman's body is padded in order to mould her body into the kimono figure.²⁷ The same idea of padding the body while 'correcting' natural flaws such as big breasts or uneven shoulders, is performed in the bride's case. Nevertheless in bride's dressing, the 'correcting' material (the pads and bandages called *hosei* or 'correction', see chapter 5) like all other accessories connected with her, has been commercialized and a rather expensive full set of 'correction' is ready for use.²⁸ Over the 'correction', and under the white kimono an under-robe (*nagajuban*) in the recurrent colours - red over white - is tightly wrapped. The fully white kimono worn over the under-robe and tied with a

white obi in a special knot for brides, is not to be seen as it is covered by an outer coat - the *uchikake*.

There are a few more details necessary for the creation of a full 'traditional' 'bridal appearance'. A set of accessories, all in white, are tucked into the bride's obi. They include a fan which is to be used later on for the studio photograph, but, obviously not for any practical use, and an empty purse. Their role seems to be symbolic in reference to the objects which in the past were carried by the bride on her journey to the place of the ceremony.²⁹ Like them the last item to be attached; the head cover, which is one of two types - *tsunokakushi* (horn cover) or *watabōshi* (see chapter 7), has a symbolic as well as aesthetic role.

Final 'Packing'

Now the bride is ready for her ultimate 'bridal appearance' (in which she will be photographed), but the long *uchikake* worn over the white kimono creates a practical obstacle. A trailing garment might have been suitable for the living space of the traditional (mainly rich) Japanese home, where much of the everyday activity was conducted close to the floor; where people knelt, not sat (on chairs), to accomplish tasks; and where the tatami mat floors were clean enough to permit trailing garments (Dalby 1983:286). However, today trailing garments may be found only in Japanese wood block prints of women in a graceful flowing line of kimono,³⁰ and to some degree in the geisha's world. But it is certainly inappropriate for the modern style wedding parlour. The bride is about to climb a few staircases on her way from the dressing room to the upper floors and it would be hard to keep the carpets clean enough to protect the rented attire. Moreover the bride, being an inexperienced kimono wearer as she is, finds it difficult enough to walk in a folded kimono let alone, in a full flowing one. And, of course there is efficiency and time to be thought of, considering the fact that there are a dozen more brides mincing their way around

the parlour. Thus the bride is 'packed up', as the term defining the act (*karage*) literally means, in a set of elastic bands (again white and red). The ties will be opened for the studio pictures and tied yet again for the reception.

Although fully ready to be exposed to the wedding guests the bride has yet to go through an 'on-the-spot' lesson in kimono manners as well as in the more specific bridal role. Kimono wearing requires a special way of walking, the toes should always turn inwards and the *zōri* (Japanese sandals) clad feet should be dragged and not lifted.³¹ The bride is also told to walk very slowly. The slow pace is required not solely because of the weight of wig and costume, but also in order to allow the bride to be better seen (and photographed) while doing her walking.³² The dresser also instructs the bride on how she should hold her hands and fan. Some final guidelines are as a reminder to the bride to keep her chin down in order to keep the heavy wig from falling and in general to move only when told.

The Bridal Role: (object-like) Passivity

The bride is instructed by her dresser to be very careful in her movements. The dresser also tells her to move only when instructed to, and only as much as is required from any specific act. These (passive) requirements of the bridal role are embodied in the bridal costume itself. One of the brides once complained that she could not raise her hands in the *uchikake* as it was so tight. "You are not supposed to do your exercises" replied her expert dresser with a smile, "you have to raise your hands only high enough to do the *san-san-ku-do* (the sake exchange in the Shinto ceremony)".

Moreover, it seems that the passive (object-like) role is generally accepted by the brides themselves. It seems that from the moment the make-up process starts, the bride becomes like an automaton. A bride who sat ready in her *uchikake*, waiting to be taken upstairs, had something bothering her eye. After a few dressers had tried to help in vain, they told her

to try do it herself. "Is it O.K.?" she asked, (meaning is it all right that I treat my own eye). I know many small anecdotes of this kind to show the detachment the brides feel from themselves. Brides are afraid to 'spoil' the 'creation' just produced by the dresser. Brides are also ready to get very specific orders. Another bride, who had to wait for about thirty minutes before going upstairs, was seated in the middle of the brides' room. While sitting, she suddenly looked at her (painted) hands (she was not yet given the fan she should hold) and asked what was she supposed to do with her hands. The way she looked at her own hands and the way she asked the question revealed not only detachment from the 'creature' she has been made to, but also a clear readiness (or should we say, submissiveness) to her bridal role.

The Bride in Her Wedding

"Mild jollity flows around the stiff, doll-like figure of the bride without touching her, for she must sit expressionless and motionless." So wrote Beardsley, Hall and Ward (1959:326) of a bride in a village wedding. We find very similar descriptions in other village home weddings' reports. "The bride remains ever serious and carefully maintains the proper sitting posture" (Norbeck 1954: 183); "The bride joins the company to sit demurely through the banquet" (Embree 1939:208). The bride's demeanour seems to have stayed the same in wedding parlour weddings;³ with the groom and the go-between (*nakōdo*) couple, she sits separated from the wedding guests. But while the others, mainly the two males, might have a bite of the food, (the female *nakōdo* also eats very little and does not speak), the bride strictly refrains from eating nor does she say a word; as instructed by her dresser she sits quietly and unsmilingly with her eyes downcast.

In her conduct the bride must show the "self discipline" and endurance (*gaman*) expected from a Japanese woman in general.

Self discipline keeps the emotional pitch low even in the most critical moments of life. Throughout her wedding day, though it be her greatest occasion, the bride is expected to look neither joyous nor sad but, instead, aloof and unmoved.

(Beardsley et al. 1959:67)

In chapter One I mentioned the physical 'endurance' expected from the bride, for example, in the long photographic sessions. A certain amount of this kind of perseverance is required from any woman - especially an inexperienced young girl - who wears kimono (see chapter 5). There is, however, another kind of endurance which is required from the bride. The wedding parlour bride, like the 'home bride' mentioned above, is expected to display self discipline and not to show her emotions. Brides usually do not cry until very late stages of the reception, when crying is not only encouraged by the wedding producers, but also when it can not do too much harm to their appearances. There are, however, some rare cases in which brides can not put up with the tension or with their emotions. Such was the case with a pregnant bride, who seemed very stressed which perhaps explains why both her mother and sister spent time with her in the brides' room. They were apparently trying to cheer her up when they frequently noted how "charming" (*kawaii*) she looked. The bride - not unlike other brides - did not say much during the time she was being 'made up'. But, when led to her family waiting room, she suddenly burst into tears, and could not stop sobbing for a few minutes. Her mother's reaction manifested the self-discipline she expected her daughter to have. "Kiko, Kiko" she repeated her daughter's name in a severe voice "pull yourself together". Then, the mother left the waiting room to await other wedding guests in the lobby. The dresser, for her part, was very worried about the bride's make-up and artificial eyelashes, and rushed downstairs to bring the bride another small tissue to dry her tears.

The bride does not sit on her raised seat for very long, Indeed, she spends a considerable part of her own wedding either in the costume changing (*ironaoshi*) room or the photo studio, and usually spends more time out of the reception room than inside it. This aspect of the wedding production frequently results in a feeling of busyness as expressed by one of the brides: "Instead of hearing the (wedding guests') speeches I had to leave, so my feeling was more of hustling or being busy (*awatadashisa*) than of palpitation (*doki-doki*)".

The 'Western' Bride

Although there seems to be a continuity in the bride's role from earlier home weddings to the contemporary wedding parlour weddings, the modern practice is different in at least one major aspect -the bride is playing two roles. She is not only 'The Japanese Bride', but also a 'Western Bride' or in other words, she is also 'packed' in 'Western' packaging.

The bride arrives at the wedding parlour in Western clothes (*yōfuku*) from which she is soon to be detached when made up to be a 'Japanese' Bride. Nevertheless when she has completed the 'Japanese' part fixed for her by the wedding producers, she is to return to a Western outfit. Although very different from her everyday Western wear, the bride feels more comfortable in this dress than in the confining kimono. The wedding dress, be it as elaborate as it may, is much lighter and more comfortable to wear than the heavy *uchikake* and wig, but the difference is not only physical. There is also a distinct difference in mental feeling; whereas in the *uchikake* the bride is also wearing a wig and what was defined as a 'white mask', in the dress it is as if, at least partially, she is returning to herself. Although the 'Western' appearance also requires a heavy (Western) make-up, this 'mask' is not entirely unfamiliar to most Japanese girls³⁴ as was the 'traditional-Japanese' make-up.

One of the attributes of the Japanese bride (which repeats itself also in the literature) is her being different,

or, even unrecognizable. This is an important aspect to be discussed later on, nevertheless, a point should be made here in reference to the 'Western' Bride. Many brides report of a feeling of being like "a completely different person" while in 'traditional-Japanese' costume, they also tell about wedding guests, mainly children, who could not recognize them in their '(Japanese) bridal appearance'. In the Western attire, especially in the coloured dress when the hair style is also looser (the white dress requires pulling the hair back) they are much more recognizable. Their feeling also changes: "The first time that my face could shine with pride was after I changed to the blue party dress" one of the brides told me. "My feeling also became much lighter and cheerful".

The distinction between the 'traditional-Japanese' and the 'Western' Brides is not unintentional, I will later argue that it is created by the wedding industry. One of the attributes that distinguishes between the 'Western' and the 'Japanese' appearances, in addition to the one mentioned before of seriousness as opposed to cheerfulness, is found in the Japanese term for individualism (*kosei-teki*) (see Moeran 1984b). The Western wedding dress (or more accurately, the coloured party dress) is very frequently defined as "*kosei-teki*", as is the bride's appearance in this dress. Though the term *kosei* can not be directly translated to 'individuality', the wedding producers use, and at the same time recreate, the image that 'Western' attire is more individualistic. While the 'traditional-Japanese' appearance is very fixed, there is a feeling of more choice when it comes to 'Western' wear. Although the bride's dressers (or rather 'producers') actually create the bride's looks, they try to give her the feeling of slight participation in decisions. When time allows, the bride is given the opportunity to choose her lipstick and sometimes she is even allowed to put it on by herself. But the *kosei-teki* (individualistic) definition is not only about selecting the eye shadow or putting lipstick on by yourself, nor it is 'individualistic' in the sense known to us in the West. It is related to the use in Japanese society in general, and the

Japanese world of commercial fashion in particular, as I will argue in the concluding part of the chapter.

The Packaged Bride: Further Layers of Packaging

We have seen by now how the bride is almost literally 'packaged' by the elaborate layers of her costume during her wedding. However, the 'packaging' of the bride consists of other layers as well. These are more general and symbolic modes of 'packaging' and 'repackaging' which can be found for example in advertising materials, and which are delineated in general images of Japanese brides and women, in concepts of fashion and aesthetics, in colours and in language. In the following sections of the chapter I will discuss aspects of this 'packaging'.

'A touch of scarlet' on a 'pure' white

One of the obvious symbolic forms of 'packaging' of the bride is in colours. Amongst the various colours which create the total bridal appearance, two colours seem to be of a particular significance - white and red. The first costume to be worn by the bride is usually a white *uchikake*. This is the sort of outfit considered appropriate for the (Shinto) wedding ceremony. There are various interpretations of the white colour which the bride wears. It is sometimes seen as representing purity as does the Western dress (Hendry 1981:169). Other explanations refer to the white as similar to the white in which babies and the dead are dressed, symbolic of *tabula rasa* which starts a new period (Hendry 1981:170). White, having a similar meaning at weddings and funerals parallels other rites used for the departure of the dead which were performed also at weddings, such as breaking-up the bride's tea cup and the lighting of a bonfire. The meaning attached to this death symbolism is that the bride is dead to her own household; from then on she lives only for her husband (Tamura 1904:49-50, Norbeck 1954:181, Hendry 1981:170).

Although interpretations or references to the white colour made by brides who got married at the wedding parlour were not directly connected to death, the notion of white as *tabula rasa* or as non-colour was expressed. One of the brides said that the wearing of the white *uchikake* (called *shiromuku*), represented for her the move to her husband's house; dressed in white she could be "dyed" (*somaru*) into his house (see Hendry 1981:170). For many of the brides, being dressed in a white *uchikake* expressed the feeling of getting married, of entering another house, and again of being and yet becoming a different person. As one of them put it: "I had a feeling of being a different self from what I was until now".

Similar to the red colour of the bride's lips on the white mask is a woman in a crowd of men, adding a touch of beauty. 'A touch of scarlet' (*kō itten*) is the phrase denoting a woman in a group of men (Cherry 1987:26-7). Red is 'pretty', an attribute females are supposed to seek. Red is also a sign of a happy occasion and thus it has become popular for the second *uchikake*. The undergarments worn beneath the kimono by Japanese women traditionally have been red, a colour thought to ward off the menstrual pain and keep the female reproductive system running smoothly. Men considered a glimpse of this red underwear to be very erotic (Cherry 1987:26). Nowadays a white undergarment is usually used; nevertheless, a touch of that red is left in the bride's under-robe which has red patterns over a white background. The touch of red over the 'pure' white background is a symbol of beauty as says one of the advertisements which uses this colour effect:³⁵ "A splendid day, looking beautiful..." (*yokihi, utsukushiku..*).

'Packaging' in Images: The Bride as a Doll

The 'Japanese' bride is not only wrapped in the appropriate colours, but she is also made up to fit existing images of brides and women in Japanese society. It is needless to say perhaps that by using popular images the wedding industry also perpetuates those images.

"How Beautiful, like a (Ms.) doll" (*kirei ne, ningyō-san mitai*) is the greatest compliment given to a 'Japanese' bride in the wedding parlour. In many ways this compliment, though attributed to the bride, is a praise to the dresser who created her.³⁶ The bride as a doll is a very common image in the literature describing Japanese brides from different periods. I have already mentioned Beardsley, Hall and Ward's (1959:326) use of the term 'doll-like'. Norbeck (1954:181) who writes of a village bride of about the same period, likens the bride in her "short measured steps" to an "animated doll". An early woman visitor to Japan describes in her letters the process of make-up and dressing of a bride which she saw by chance. She writes of her impression of the final result:

she looked as if a very unmeaning looking wooden doll had been dressed up with the exquisite of good taste, harmony, and quietness which characterize the dress of Japanese women.

(Bird 1984: 206-7)

But it is not only 'outsiders' such as foreign visitors or anthropologists who view the Japanese bride as a doll, it is also the Japanese themselves. Moreover, the image of a (confined) doll can be found in other spheres of life relating to girls and women. A 'daughter in a box' (*hako-iri musume*) is a term which refers to a sheltered maiden protected by her family from the outside world. Japanese use wooden boxes to protect precious dolls, pottery and tea bowls, they see a parallel between caring for their treasured possessions and for a daughter (Cherry 1987: 41-2). Some view the notion in a negative way as over-protection of the painfully shy girl who does not know how to do anything besides sitting prettily within the confines of a boxlike Japanese home (Sievers 1983:34). However, many of the Japanese consider the phrase as a compliment for loving protection.³⁷ Whether this Japanese attitude towards their girls, is a result of the 'inverse Japanism' (see Moeran 1990a) I have mentioned in the previous

chapter or an 'authentic' Japanese attitude has become hard to tell.

Another connecting line between daughters and dolls is to be found in Girls' Day on March 3. Although formally it was decided (from 1948) to consolidate Boys' Day and Girls' Day into a national holiday - 'Children Day' - on May 5 (previously only Boys' Day) Japanese families still celebrate the two holidays separately. Girls' Day is commonly known as *hinna matsuri* or "Doll Festival". About a week before the festival a display of miniature dolls is set in the house to be admired by everybody. The set includes the imperial couple on top, on the descending steps range court ladies, musicians and warriors together with miniature furniture and bridal trousseau (Norbeck 1954:148, Cherry 1987:45). The miniature dolls are dressed in brocade ancient kimonos - if money allows (expensive dolls' set range between ¥800,000 to ¥1,000,000). Very fine dolls are usually stored in glass cases just like the '*daughter in a box*' whom they honour. The parallel between the girls and the miniature dolls goes further in the common belief that the longer the dolls remain out after March 3, the longer it will take for the daughter of the house to find a husband (see Tanizaki 1958:126).

Japanese girls and young women like dolls. They decorate their rooms and their small cars (*Minica*) with cute (*kawaii*) dolls.³⁸ Like their dolls Japanese girls strive for a 'cutie' (*kawaiko-chan*) image. 'Cutie' is only one of the terms describing girls who pretend to be dumb and act childishly (*burikko* or 'pretending kid' is another term; Cherry 1987:39). In contrast with the feminine erotic image promoted by Western stars such as Madonna, Japanese female pop idols are childish and always 'cute'.³⁹ Even Barbie dolls did not sell well in Japan until toy makers adjusted them to the childish cute naive image. While American girls pretend to be women (like their Barbies) in order to attract boyfriends, Japanese women pretend to be childish and cute, like their dolls.

The childish, naive image is clearly used by the wedding industry in its promoting materials as well as in the way they

create their brides. For example, a wedding parlour from the Shōchikuden group uses a girlish childish first person voice throughout its catalogue. The dressers in the beauty shop use make-up, in shades of white and red in order to create a "fresh" (*shinsen*) "naive" (*uiuishii*) 'doll-like' bride.

Targeting The Bride: Images and Language in Wedding Advertising

The decorative brochure entitled 'Wedding Sketch' (in English words) which every prospective couple receives at Kobe Princess Palace, has the bride as its main character. An illustration showing a big figure of a (Western appearing) bride with a very small groom figure at the corner of the page, is accompanied by the following text: "The bridal appearance of which I always dreamt. I wish to get married (or "be a bride") in the most wonderful me" (*ichiban sutekina watashi de totsugitai*). On the next page the text goes on to state the fact that being a girl, the longing (*akogare*) for bridal apparel is inevitable,⁴⁰ then the wedding parlour goes on to promise the bride that it will put together costumes, from Japanese to Western, which will "paint" (*irodoru*) her beautifully.

Placing the bride in the centre is not unique to the Kobe parlour nor to wedding parlours, it is rather one of the main advertising techniques for weddings. An elegant brochure from a shrine which was transformed into a comprehensive wedding parlour opens with a double-paged picture of a 'traditional' Japanese bride in *uchikake* and *tsunokakushi* while the short text reads: "I, (I am) becoming a bride" (*watashi, yukimasu*). It is of interest to note that the character for bride (*yome*) is accompanied here by a special phonetic reading which was invented for the specific text ("*yukimasu*"). This 'play' with language (called *ateji*) is an example of the way in which symbolism is used in the language of wedding advertising.

The idea that 'wedding are (mainly) for brides' can also be found in wedding advertisements in the mass media.

Advertisements at train stations and on trains - which are very popular locations for wedding advertisements in the crowded cities of Japan - often have pictures of brides, either in Japanese or Western wear (in the latter case often a foreign model is used to present the wedding dress). Viewing girls as the main 'consumers' of weddings reveals itself also in women's magazines which have many wedding advertisements. In these magazines, brides are always presented in their wedding costume, but without their grooms. Just as in the wedding parlour's brochure mentioned before, the short text which accompanies the pictures frequently repeats the "longing" (*akogare*) which a Japanese girl should 'naturally' have for putting on her bridal costumes.

Flowery Language: The Bride as a Flower

A 'Flower Bride' (*hana-flower, yome-bride*) is the term used for the bride in the wedding parlour and in the wedding industry in general.⁴¹ Flowery language is used to describe Japanese women beginning when they are still 'buds' (*tsubomi*), a synonym for virgins (Cherry 1987:35). Many girls' names contain floral characters, such as *Hanako* (Flower child) while boys names are often based on birth order (Tamura 1904:82). Just as a woman is seen to add a 'touch of scarlet' (*kō itten*), like a red flower, in a crowd of men, so a man seated between two women is said to have 'flowers in both hands' (*ryōte ni hana*). The same general concept of a woman as a 'decoration' was brought to the male dominated work place where young fresh office ladies (OL) are called '*shokuba no hana*' or 'office flowers'. Unlike the artificial flowers in the bridal bouquet which can blossom forever, the office flowers are replaced at the first signs of aging (or at marriage).

Whilst the doll image occurs mainly when describing the 'Japanese' bride, the bride as a flower is an image used both for the 'traditional-Japanese' and the 'Western' bride. The wedding industry often uses the floral image. "Y-o-u like a

Flower" (*hana no yōna a-na-ta*) says an advertisement for a famous Tokyo hotel, while the image is of a Western style bride (represented as usual by a foreign model) in her white dress sitting by a huge array of fresh roses. But an advertisement of an exclusive bridal beauty and costume rental shop summarizes the idea. Two brides fill the page: Whilst one is a Japanese fair-skinned bride, in a kimono,⁴² the other is a Western bride (a foreign model) in a white dress and veil (see photo 11). The only sentence says it all: "A Flower of Japan. A Flower of the West. A Ginza-made⁴³ Bride" (*nihon no hana. seiō no hana. ginza de tsukuru hanayome*).

Conclusion

The slogan chosen by the exclusive Ginza bridal shop to promote its business is much more telling than it may seem. Not only are they using one of the widespread images of the bride -the Flower - they insist on demonstrating that they "make" two kinds of brides: "Japanese" and "Western". Throughout this chapter I showed how these two brides are 'made' or 'produced' by the wedding industry. The process of 'production', it was argued, does not start on the wedding day; nor is it confined to the wedding parlour site. It is a much larger operation which is connected to the promotion of Japanese traditionality for women on the one hand, and to commercialized fashion on the other.

The chapter followed the bride's 'production' process. I have shown that the bride is considered by the large wedding industry as its main 'consumer'. A vast set of related services and products has evolved around the 'Bride'. Bridal accessories companies, for wigs, wigs' decorations, flower bouquets and bridal aesthetic services are only a few among many others. With the wedding and the preparation of the bride becoming extremely commercialized, promotion techniques of weddings and bridal preparations have become similar to general promotion techniques of commercial commodities.

Targeting the bride as the main consumer is not surprising. In the Japanese highly active domestic-market working girls between eighteen and the late twenties form not only a very large but also a very wealthy sector of Japan's consumer market. These girls are referred to in the catchy phrase 'Yenjoy girls' (Moeran 1989a:23). The 'Yenjoy' girls are constantly urged to use their money on entertainment, clothing and on their body (see also Moeran and Skov:forthcoming). The 'joyful' period is about to finish in marriage when the 'office lady' is to turn into a 'wife' (*okusan*) and mother. Thus, no wonder a whole range of 'aesthetic' and 'feminine' industry tries to get as much as they can from what they present as the 'peak' of the girl's life, but, which is also (for her) a kind of closing (spending) party of the 'yenjoy' period."

The Bridal Fair was described as one of the main promotional as well as selling devices used by the wedding parlour. Bridal Fairs usually take place on weekends when they offer family entertainment. In this respect the Bridal Fair selling techniques are similar to a general technique that emphasizes 'entertainment' in the selling of commodities. According to this 'philosophy of commerce': "One must not confront the buyers brusquely with a commodity but 'guide them into the 'entertainment'" (Haug 1986:68).

One of the devices used by the wedding parlour in the Bridal Fair was a stage designed for the brides to try on the Western dresses. The idea of a stage is not unfamiliar to the promotion of commodities:

Thus the sales room is designed as a stage, purpose-built to convey entertainment to its audience that will stimulate a heightened desire to spend. 'On this stage the sale is initiated. This stage is the most important element in sales promotion'.

(Haug 1986:69)

What is sold on the stage and in the Fair in general is not only the bare commodity itself but also a fulfilment of a lifetime dream. The idea of 'Once in a Lifetime Dream' is one of the main concepts in the promotion of weddings. Just as in the case of kimono (see chapter 5) so it is with weddings, the idea is 'sold' almost solely to girls (and their mothers) who seem to be its best 'consumers'. In the previous chapter I have suggested a link between the growing popularity of kimono and consumerism, which is a result of a process of economic growth that started at the seventies. The same connection is true for weddings and wedding costumes. The wedding entrepreneurs are fully aware of the economical and social changes; as described by the manager of the wedding parlour: "For a girl it (wearing wedding costumes) is once in a lifetime event, a moment to cherish, A supreme moment that she would like to have as a memory forever, and since now there is money to spare she can afford this. Twenty years ago people could not even afford honeymoons abroad".

Of course the fulfilment of the dream is an illusion, one day in which the girl is given a special status, that of a star (Edwards 1989:135), (or at least of a 'tarento' (talent) as television and media personalities are called in Japan). Nevertheless, it seems that the wedding industry is aiming (and quite successfully) at one of the 'Commodity Aesthetic' ideals:

'Commodity aesthetics' ideal would be to invent something which enters one's consciousness unlike anything else; something which is talked about, which catches the eye and which cannot be forgotten; something which everyone wants and has always wanted.

(Haug 1986:52)

Throughout this chapter we have seen how the bride is being 'packaged' by various layers of clothing, images, colours and language. In this process of 'packaging' a special place is kept to what was told in the previous chapter to be

closely related with Japanese women - *form*. I argued that the ideal Japanese woman has come to be defined more in terms of her mastery of 'formal' pursuits such as tea ceremony and kimono dressing, or in other words a mastery of 'form'. In a similar way 'form' or 'appearance' (*sugata*) became one of the highlights of the Japanese wedding. It may be of interest here to note that the word *sugata* has both the meaning of appearance and form. The relation between these two and women may be symbolically observed in the character *sugata* itself which is built on the radical 'woman' (*onna*).

In an intriguing essay about 'wrapping' in Japanese society, Hendry points out that the Japanese bride wears at least three layers of garments, the outer one being the most luxurious.

These layers of clothing indicate ritual and formality just as gifts for such occasion are carefully wrapped in a way entirely unnecessary for presents exchanged casually between close friends.

(Hendry 1990:24)

And indeed just as formal presents and other 'wrapped' objects in Japan (see also Hendry 1993), this process of wrapping may end in the *packaging*, which is disembodied from the commodity, becoming the focus of attention, gaining more significance than the content itself (Moeran 1990a:2, Moeran 1990b:136:n.8, Haug 1986:49-50).

Japanese court ladies of the past were known to be extremely busy with their appearance, and with the 'wrapping' of their bodies (see Hendry 1993:ch.4, Cort 1992, Dalby 1988). Ivan Morris wrote about the eleventh century Japanese court ladies:

..A woman skill in choosing clothes, and particularly matching colours was regarded as a far better guide to her character and charm than the physical features with which she happened to have been born.

Probably the most extreme Japanese example of the literal 'wrapping' of the body is a set of garments known as *jūnihitoe*, worn by court ladies of the Heian period (794-1185) (Hendry 1993:ch.4, see also chapter 5 and 7 of the thesis). Hendry emphasizes the restriction of movement in these garments. The 'wrapping' had also an element of hiding, as the woman would be sometimes further obscured by being obliged to stay behind a screen during conversation, only her (colourful) sleeves visible.

Modern Japanese women do not share the same ideas of beauty and clothing with the Japanese court ladies of the past. However, some aspects of those ideals of beauty, such as white skin and the use of layers of clothing can be also observed nowadays. They are mainly upheld by a distinct group of women - the Geisha (see Dalby 1983). These ideas are also promoted in relation to the 'Japanese' bridal image created by the industry.

One of the aspects of Japanese feminine beauty of the past was a fair skin, although white skin is still admired mainly by elder women in Japan, Japanese women do not paint their face in white powder as they used to. However white make-up has remained important for the Geisha, especially when she participates in a party (Dalby 1983:133-4) and for Kabuki actors. It has also remained necessary for the 'traditional Japanese' bride.

Earle Ernst writes about the Kabuki actor's white mask:

The detachment of the actor from his role is further marked in his make-up. The face of the actor on stage is a compromise between the human face and the mask.

(Ernst 1974:195)

In the chapter I have described the detachment felt by the Japanese girl as she is transformed into a 'Japanese Bride'. A feeling that may well be related to the notion

mentioned that the bride moves from her own household to her husband's. But there is more to that. "I felt as if a different hand is involved and gradually I am becoming a different person" said one of the brides. This 'different person' was also unrecognizable both to the bride herself and to some of the wedding guests. Nevertheless that person had a very clear role; she was a 'Japanese Bride', and as such her beauty was not so much judged by physical features as it was judged according to her fulfilment of the 'Japanese' role. And again like the Kabuki actor who:

is not in any way dependent upon physical beauty, or even attractiveness...His theatrical beauty is provided solely by the materials of the theatre..

(Ernst1974:195)

So is the bride's beauty dependent more on the ability of her dresser to 'make' her similar to a Japanese doll, than on her own attractiveness.⁴⁵

The term used by the bridal industry for preparing the bride is 'making a bride'. In English the verb 'make' has also come to be related to Western fashion, mainly to cosmetics in the term 'make-up' (Wilson 1987:95, see also Baudrillard 1981:91).⁴⁶ Wilson argues that "fashion is, among other things, a continuous dialogue between the natural and the artificial. This kind of relationship may result in fetishism:

A fetish is an alienated object that we ourselves make, but into which we then project magical properties..Because of its proximity and relationship to the body, clothing is especially apt to be fetishized. It is possible that in all cultures this occurs to greater or lesser extent. In eleventh century Japan, for example, the natural appearance was not admired at all. Not only did the court ladies shave their eyebrows and blacken their teeth.., but they muffled their bodies in elaborate robes.

(Wilson 1987:95-6)

It is not only clothing which is prone to fetishism, it is also the body and beauty. As it was put by Baudrillard (1981:93-4): "Today there is an area where this fetishist logic of commodity can be illustrated very clearly..the body and beauty". Baudrillard, like Wilson, sees the 'unnatural' in this fetishism of beauty. "What we are talking about is a kind of anti-nature incarnate, bound up in a general stereotype of models of beauty, in a perfectionist vertigo and controlled narcissism" (1981:94). Thus, not only that the "the body's wildness is veiled by make-up" The process of which "drives are assigned to a cycle of fashion" is also a process of narcissism (although controlled). I have mentioned the preoccupation with the bride's body, both in the parlour, and in wedding advertisement. A similar tendency can be found in Christmas advertising in modern Japan. Christmas eve has become a romantic night for young Japanese. Very similar to the case of weddings, while the event itself involves both sexes, commercial advertisements target mainly the same 'yenjoy' girls mentioned above. In both cases the female body itself is a central theme. Moeran and Skov see the link between this 'hedonistic' preoccupation with the body and 'consumerism' - "in a sense of a distilled form of consumption in which the act of consumption itself becomes an experience" (forthcoming). In the previous chapter we have seen how 'consumerist' ideas are related to the 'traditional-Japanese', of which the 'traditional-Japanese' bride is the ultimate climax. But, let us now see how these ideas are related to the other bride - the 'Western' bride.

It is not only a 'Japanese mask' that the bride wears in her wedding, she wears also a different mask, that of a 'Western' bride. Although the 'materials' of which the 'Western' mask is made are taken from a different world, mainly that of commercialized fashion which seems to be more familiar to the young bride, still by "gaining this new face, one (the bride, in this case) simultaneously loses one's own" (Haug 1986:76). Haug describes how fashion advertising treats its (female) human targets like commodities "to whom it offers

the solution to their problem of realization" (1986:72). While one branch of capitalism commercializes the *packaging* of humans in clothes, another one "caters for the actual physical appearance":

Visagists are no longer going for a natural look but, on the contrary, extreme artificiality. The cosmetics industry is keen to sell women as many products as possible. Habbart Ayer recommends 13 for a single make-up image and promises -the promise of use-value - to turn every Cinderella into a fairytale Princess.

(Haug 1986:75)

The 'Cinderella Dream' (Moeran and Skov:forthcoming) has reached Japan, and just as many other Western Dreams it has been used by the wedding industry in its promoting campaign.⁴⁷ "We can dare (to fulfil) the bride's Cinderella dream" (*hanayome no shinderera durimu o okashi dekimasu*) says the slogan of a costume rental shop (see photo 1D). In this advertisement like in many others, the model chosen to represent the fully 'made' 'fairytale Princess' is a Western girl dressed in a 'pure' white dress.

So if the first 'mask' worn by the bride is that of a 'traditional Japanese bride' what is the other 'mask'? During my research I was asked to participate in a bridal fair as a Western model. When I was fully made-up and dressed in a "gorgeous" Western dress the reaction of the people I worked with for the last year was "After all, (you are) a foreigner" (*yappari gaijin*). Of course they knew I was a foreigner all the time, but in heavy Western make-up and elaborate Western costume I was the 'foreigner' (with a capital F), the 'gaijin', they knew from television and the movies, from women's magazines and from advertisements.⁴⁸

The Western wedding dress is often distinguished from the Japanese attire in its 'individuality', dresses and girls in dresses are often defined as *kosei-teki* or 'individualistic'. But, what is the meaning of this recurrent term, does it mean

that there is more choice in Western attire? that Western attire is immanently different from Japanese attire? The word *kosei* is not typical only to the wedding parlour, it continually recurs in various cultural spheres.

Moeran (1984b) has studied words which he calls 'keywords' that seem to be recurrent in Japanese society. Among these words is the word *kosei*. His analysis is based on the notion of 'key verbal concepts' developed by Parkin (1978). According to Parkin, these words "shape people's perceptions of changes in the group's environment of opportunity, which may in turn redefine the lexicons and taxonomies" (*Ibid*:26).

Although the word *kosei* was ('loosely') translated by Moeran (1984b) as 'individuality', he is not certain that it actually means what it appears to mean. Before we go on to discuss the adoption of the word *kosei* into the Japanese 'spirit' (suggested by Moeran), let us examine it in the context of "contemporary Japanese advertisements which target young women" (Tanaka 1990:78), A context which is relevant to our topic here.

Tanaka has conducted a systematic search through the monthly magazines for young women. In her study she focuses on a few words which are frequently used in relation to women in advertisements. One of the frequent words is 'individualism' (*kosei*).⁴⁹ But does the word really mean being individualistic, or doing things in your own way? What Tanaka has gathered from many examples is rather peculiar kind of 'individuality'.

An 'individualistic' woman of 1987 is wearing a vivid-coloured polo-neck shirt, carries a green hand bag, has her hair up, and has a short fringe. Using a colour because it is in fashion, or because it is popular in Paris, is hardly an individualistic thing to do.

(Tanaka 1990:90)

Thus, being 'individualistic' means being fashionable. Being individualistic means also "buying European products which are expensive and have high status", in that sense

'individualism' is also equivalent to 'elitism'. 'Individualism' as it manifests itself in the advertisements studied by Tanaka and as it is used in the wedding parlour concerning 'Western' wedding dresses and 'Western' brides thus has a very different meaning than what is expected. Being 'individualistic' in that sense is doing what has already gained social approval.

Being 'individualistic' in fashion, then, is closely connected with images of Western women. Western women are also usually presenting those 'individualistic' products in advertisements, including those of wedding costumes.⁵⁰ Does it mean that Japanese girls are seeking to be individualistic as their Western counterpart, or rather that the word 'individualism' as it expresses itself in the Japanese word *kosei* is not equivalent to what we know as 'individualism' in the West (Moeran:1984b:262).

According to Moeran, the Japanese are in fact "extremely suspicious" of Western 'individualism',⁵¹ while, they find the good side of 'individualism' in the term *kosei* which has become completely Japanese. The Japanese have thus "neatly adopted and adapted" the word not only into their language but also to the 'Japanese spirit' (*seishin*) (*Ibid*:263). Although I agree with Moeran that the term *kosei*, as we have seen, has a 'unique' Japanese meaning, the question remains what is this 'spirit' into which the term was so willingly adopted and adapted. Is it really the 'good-old' spirit of *kokoro* (heart)? or, is it rather another spirit (or 'packaging') which envelops the wedding parlour and the wedding (and fashion) industry? - the spirit of *consumerism*.

Although *kosei* or 'individuality' has a special meaning in Japanese, the way it has been adopted into the Japanese language and 'spirit', is not that different from the way in which other 'Western' ideas are regarded. The 'abstract' manner in which the 'Cinderella Dream' or the 'Western' bride itself are treated, manifests the same attitude. In the next chapter, in which I discuss inventions and novelties in the Ceremonial Occasions industry, we will see how 'Western' ideas

(such as 'individualism') as well as 'traditional-Japanese' ideas are manipulated by the industry. Then we will also see that it is not only 'traditional-Japanese' and 'Western' brides which are so neatly packaged, it is also the 'traditional-Japanese' and the 'Western' ideas themselves.

Notes

1. Costume changes are also reported by Hendry (1981) and Edwards (1989). According to the Sanwa Bank survey, in 1990 only 2.5% percent of 600 surveyed brides did not have any costume changes (Sanwa 1990).

2. Brides may chose to wear only wedding dresses in hotel weddings especially when they have a chapel ceremony. In one of my excursions to 'outside work', I helped the beauty shop owner to dress a bride who was having the ceremony in a chapel and the party in a Western-style club. This bride changed from a white dress to a red one for the party.

3. Wedding *furisode* is always worn with a wig. This is unlike *furisode* worn on other occasions, such as the 'coming of age ceremony' or the New Year, which is worn without a wig.

4. Replacing technical for social reasoning can be found also in other spheres of Japanese society. The Onta potters in Moeran's study (1984a:174) give technical and artistic explanations to support the use of the old kick-wheel as opposed to the electric wheel. Moeran argues that in fact by using the kick-wheel the potter is affirming the existence of his community.

5. In her view the *uchikake* was also about to lose its importance in a few years. She was the only wedding entrepreneur who held this view, while others predicted a better future for the *uchikake*, although they usually said that it is hard to predict.

6. Conversations about the young generation of girls who know nothing about being Japanese women and are sometimes "just like boys" were frequently held among the beauty shop dressers in their free time.

7. According to the 1990 Sanwa bank survey the average bride's age was 25.8.

8. The appropriate marriageable age for girls has shifted with the years, nevertheless it has stayed in the twenties - preferably before or around twenty-five. Lebra (1984a:90) argues that the idea of '*tekireki*' limits the woman's bargaining power in marriage negotiations. One of her informants quoted a tea ceremony instructor's counsel that where marriage is concerned a woman must retract one demand for each year she added to her age. In such a marital strategy, twenty-five seems to be a turning point. A Japanese woman who does not marry when the time

is ripe risks being ridiculed as a "Christmas Cake" (*kurisumasu keeki*). Like the elaborate Christmas cake so desirable before the 25 of December yet totally useless after Christmas.

9. Whilst there is a tough competition among girls (mainly 20 year old (*hatachi*) girls) who wish to have a chance to put on bridal costumes, only for the sake of the studio picture to be received (they are not paid for their modelling), young men seem to be much less interested. In many cases, male employees have to participate since there are no outside volunteers. Also, male parts are always played by two 'actors' while at least ten girls take part.

10. The mother's role in dressing her daughter in kimono was already discussed in the previous chapter. Lebra (1984a:262) mentions also the important role mothers play in preparing their children's weddings.

11. The fashion to wear two kinds of *uchikake* (white and coloured) is quite a recent one, before, it was either of them. Recently it has also become fashionable to add a long plait (*naga*) to the bride's wig for her entrance to the party hall.

12. According to Tamura's (1904:48) description of Japanese weddings of the beginning of the century, blossoms of pine, bamboo and plum were sometimes used to decorate the alcove (*tokonoma*) at the groom's house where the wedding took place.

13. Another area in which a few companies compete inside the wedding parlour is in the return gifts (*hikedemono*) given to the wedding guests. Nevertheless whilst this competition is quite apparent to the consumer since different products are offered, the competition over the bride as we will shortly see, is less overt.

14. In some rare cases brides choose to have a garland of fresh flowers which can be supplied by a flower shop connected to the wedding parlour or by an independent shop.

15. The workers of the various companies are not called by their own names but rather by their company name followed by the suffix *san* (Ms., Mrs. or Mr.).

16. Although the bride may be unaware of the competition, she may well feel the pressure, and this might be one of the reasons for the decision made by the parlour manager towards the end of my fieldwork to exclude workers from outside companies from the fair and to give all responsibility to the beauty shop owner and her employees (see chapter 3).

17. There are earlier reports of shaving of the eyebrows (Tamura 1904:34). However this practice was more connected to preparing the bride for her new status as a married woman than to the wedding make-up. Other preparations and physical changes the bride had to go through were: blackening her teeth, and changing

her hair style and way of dress (see: Tamura 1904:34, 37-8, Ema 1971:90-1).

Tooth-blackening may also have been done at puberty or at betrothal, or left until the first pregnancy (Ema 1971:79, 192, Bishop 1900:97, Hendry 1981:169). Smith and Wiswell (1982:2) report of elderly women in the village still blackening their teeth, in keep up with the old custom of doing so in marriage. One of their male informants compared this practice with the *tsunokakushi* (horn cover) headdress worn by brides (see below and chapter 7), both being said to indicate the sinfulness of women.

18. These advertisements are mainly found in women's magazines. Prices for these treatments vary; from ¥12,000 for hand treatment to ¥9,000 for body treatment. A 'comprehensive plan' is offered "from ¥60,000".

19. Although the wedding parlour and its beauty shop are aiming at the Great Day itself other Beauty shops may have an additional notion which goes beyond the wedding day. The idea to come always together with the 'Once in a Life Time' idea is that of preparing your body for your man (*kare*) (or for 'him' as the word *kare* literally means). "Marriage, to say goodbye (*sayonara*) to the up-to-now you, and start the second life with him". For this "new start" the beauty salon offers a special bridal aesthetic plan. It is interesting to note here that similar advertisements that focus on the "female body" relate also to 'Christmas eve' in Japan (see Moeran and Skov:forthcoming).

20. The 'generation gap' between the new generation (*shin jinrui*) and the older generation can be observed here as the dressers' as well as the bride mothers' bows are generally much deeper than those of the brides'. Furthermore, the younger bride makers of whom there were a few employed at the beauty shop, usually bow less deeply than those who were brought up according to older etiquette codes.

21. The relatively easy task of painting the bride's arms and hands (in a more pinkish liquid paint) is sometimes performed by the brides' room assistant (*joshu*) in order to save time.

22. The notion of the beauty of fair skin goes much beyond the wedding and the bride. Japanese women even today make every effort to avoid the sun, using a parasol or avoiding the beach. Although, as I mentioned, this attitude applies less for younger women. The preference of white skin for women is probably related to the fact that upper class women were not exposed to sun rays. Therefore a white skin has always been prized in Japan as evidence of social superiority. White face colour is used by the Geisha and Kabuki actors (Ernst 1974:196).

23. See Dalby (1983:132-33) on Geisha's make-up.

24. The wig is fashioned in the *Takashimada* coiffure - A style of hair dressing, known to be worn by daughters of the Samurai class in the past. On the wig as well as the wig decorations as another 'playground' for market competition see chapter 3, and chapter 7.

25. The verb 'to make' (*tsukuru*) is used only for bride's make-up and dressing. For other kimono dressing the special term for kimono dressing '*kitsuke*' (literally dressing) is always used. The verb '*tsukuru*' itself has a very large meaning in Japanese. According to the Kenkyusha New Japanese Dictionary the verb *tsukuru* means also to create, and to manufacture.

26. See chapter 4 for the special 'serious' atmosphere in the brides' room. The special atmosphere includes also an instruction not to have small talk with the brides and among the bride makers themselves. See Hendry (1990:25-6) about the use of respectful language (*keigo*), especially amongst women as a way of 'wrapping' particular situations and occasions.

27. As was shown in the previous chapter the padding under the kimono is a modern practice. Tamura, who writes about Japanese brides and women in the early twentieth century, states rather proudly: "Our ladies (in comparison with American ladies) do not wear corsets, nor do they make any unnatural form by padding here and there under the outer dress" (1904:36). It seems that the padding together with the use of clips and elastic bands are constituting "a substitute for the ease that comes with familiarity in wearing kimono", like that of the Geisha (Dalby 1983:291).

28. While other 'correction' (*hosei*) sets are made in the beauty shop itself, the bride's set is bought by the beauty shop from a professional maker at a very high price. In 1990 the beauty shop had to pay as much as ¥3,000 for this kind of set, while (comparatively) the fee the shop got from the wedding parlour for bride's dressing was only ¥10,000.

29. According to Jeremy and Robinson (1989:116-17) the bride used to carry with her seven objects on her journey by foot, to the place of the ceremony. These, called *hakoseko* comprised of a needle and thread, a fan, purse, mirror, comb and a pair of scissors. Embree described a similar practice where "a traditional purse containing a mirror, pin, and crystal ball, and a fan tucked in a very wide and very tight belt" (1939:206).

30. Japanese feminine figures are known to the West through Japanese wood block prints of the 'floating world' (*ukiyo-e*: pictures - e, of the *ukiyo* - floating world) - the floating world of the Edo period was the world of theatre and the pleasure quarters (Dalby 1983:269).

31. Towensend Harris, one of the first Western visitors to Japan, described the Japanese woman's way of walking. The Japanese lady he wrote "minces her steps as tho' her legs were tied together at her knees" (Rudofsky 1985:46).

32. Ben-Ari (1991) mentions the teaching of a stylized way of walking to young archers in a village 'rite of passage' which initiates male youth aged twenty to the adult segment of the community. This stylized way of walking, he argues, resembles that used in Japanese theatre performances.

33. While we can find continuity in the passivity of the bride, it seems that the groom came to have a much more passive role than that he used to have in home weddings. This point may be considered in the light of the commercialization and formalization of the wedding ceremony in which both bride and groom are objects. However, as I explained in the Introduction, my main concern is with the objectification and packaging of the bride among all other wedding participants.

34. Japanese girls and women use make-up relatively more than in the West. From a certain age in their adolescence they wear foundation cream over their face and lipstick over their mouth as an indispensable requisite.

35. This specific advertisement was of a beauty shop and was published in a women's magazine. It had a bride in a white *uchikake* and *watabōshi* with a stripe of red collar, and a red belt. Although a touch of colour to the collar is a common practice, the (uncommon) red belt is clearly a 'play' used in the advertisement in order to emphasize the red over the white with its social-cultural connotations, especially that of beauty.

36. The phrase is often used during a bridal dressing training when the *ō-sensei* creates the perfect bride of a model. When I acted as a model in one of the Bridal Fairs and was 'made' by the head of the brides' room I (or was it the dresser?) also was paid the compliment.

37. Some examples of this kind of a protected 'girl in a box' can be found in literature. A perfect example is that of Yukiko, the youngest of the Makioka sisters in a novel which carries this name (Tanizaki 1958). Although already over thirty, Yukiko who was raised in such a protected environment, is too shy to speak on the telephone or to meet serious prospective husbands on her own.

38. These dolls are usually Western dolls. A set of the seven dwarfs from Walt Disney's 'Snow-white' was very popular as a car decoration in the early 1990's.

39. An example of the ultimate 'cutie' was Seiko Matsuda, Japan's most popular female singer of the early and mid 1980s, who portrayed the childish image in her childish voice and body.

40. The phrase used in the catalogue is: "Bridal costumes for which any one being a girl yearns" (*josei nara dare mo ga akogareru hanayome ishō*). Similar statements are found in many wedding advertisements as well as in those for kimono for the coming of age ceremony, and kimono dressing in general (see chapter 5). This advertising strategy can be summarized as saying to girls that they (as girls) should 'naturally' long to wear a kimono, and that their highest wish should be to put on the bridal costume.

41. Though there is a term for the groom which also uses the character for flower - *hana-muko* - the flower seems to signify the bride. The second character - *muko* - has the meaning of son-in-law, usually defining a son-in-law who is adopted to his wife's family (*muko-yōshi*). Moreover, though the bride as a flower is a frequent image there is no such image for the groom.

42. For some reason the bride in the picture is not in *uchikake* but in a black *furisode* which was worn by brides before the wedding industry promoted the *uchikake* (see chapter 7). It is possible that the beauty shop is trying to present a more 'traditional' image or rather it is trying to promote again the black *tomesode*. A similar attempt has been made by the wedding industry before. A special issue of 'The Bride' (*hanayome*), the magazine for professional dressers in October 1987 was devoted to the "Old Days Boom" (*orudo daizu bumo*), the central figure in this 'boom' was the 'classical' (*koten*) bride in a black kimono. In the next chapter I will elaborately discuss this continuous process of 'invention'.

43. Ginza, the most luxurious section of Tokyo is considered a synonym for 'elitism'.

44. This is not to say that after marriage the Japanese woman stops consuming. As I have mentioned in chapter 5, Japanese women in general are considered the main consumers. However, it will usually take some years of relative economizing after marriage until the woman starts spending money on herself, in such activities such as taking kimono lessons, or buying extravagant kimono or brand name clothing.

45. The 'white mask' is not the only similarity between the Japanese bride and the Kabuki actor. I have also mentioned the stylized way of walking.

46. See Baudrillard (1981:91) for a relation between "make-up" and fetishism.

47. Just as other Western ideas (as is shown below) the 'Cinderella Dream' has been taken by the Japanese wedding industry in an 'abstract' way. In other words, its 'form' is kept, while the complexity of its implications is being neglected.

48. On the large role played by foreigners in Japanese advertisements from the late 1960s, see Fields (1988:23-31). Johnson (1983:37-8) sees the vast use of Western actors and actresses in television advertising as an indicator to the high level of the internationalization of Japan.

49. The other words mentioned by Tanaka (1990) are also of interest. The use of the loan-word 'feminist (*feminisuto*) is an example how English words when introduced to the Japanese language may retain only part of their meaning and finally have a completely different meaning than the English word (Ibid:81-3)

50. It is interesting to note that mannequins at Japanese show-windows are always Westerners as well.

51. This can be seen by their attitude to the word for individualism (*kojinshugi*) which is viewed "entirely negatively" (Moeran 1984:70).

花嫁のシンデレラ・ドリームをおかします。



"We can Dare (fulfil) the Bride's
Cinderella Dream"

Photo 10:

"A Flower of Japan, A Flower of the West
Ginza-made Bride"

Photo 11:



日本の花。西欧の花。銀座でつくる花嫁。

Scenes from The Bridal Fair

Photos 12-15:



Chapter Seven:

PRODUCTION OF TRADITIONS: INVENTIONS AND NOVELTIES IN THE 'CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS' INDUSTRY

..novelty is no less novel
for being able to dress up
easily as antiquity.

(Hobsbawm 1983b:5)

Throughout the chapters of the thesis so far a portrayal of the modern wedding parlour wedding has been drawn. Putting it in a nutshell the modern wedding has been described as a commercial 'package' of 'traditional' and 'Western' ingredients. Although it is rather tempting to look at those seemingly contradictory elements as representing the continuity of a set of traditions which succeeded in staying side by side with the 'Westernization' of Japan, I suggest that we need first of all to study the so-called 'ancient' origins of the 'traditional' and then consider the character of the 'Western'.

Throughout the proceeding chapters I have at times alluded to a rather cynical approach which I hold concerning the 'traditional' attributes of the modern wedding - which can be quite easily extended to other ceremonial occasions, such as The Coming of Age Day. In this chapter I will explore this subject of the 'traditional' in the modern wedding ceremony. Our 'investigation' might lead us not only to questioning of the 'traditional' but also it can provoke us to view the relations between 'tradition' and 'Western' in a different light.

The 'Traditional-Japanese' Costumes

Any theatre requires costumes and a change of costume during the theatrical act helps creating a more absorbing performance. One of the high points of the new wedding pattern offered by the commercial wedding parlour from the seventies

has been the elaborate costumes and costume changes (*ironaoshi*). If I had chosen to stay with the 'performative' explanation for the wedding ceremony offered by Edwards (1989) I would probably explain the proliferation of wedding costumes as a mere theatrical device important for the 'performance'. However, I have suggested that we need to look at the modern wedding ceremony from an alternative (though not contradictory) viewpoint. And, instead of viewing only the 'performance' as the wedding participants and 'principals' themselves see it, we need also to look at the wedding from the 'producers' perspective. If we take this approach we will soon find out that although costumes have indeed been an important part of the wedding 'show', they have also had another crucial role to play in the process of the production of the modern wedding pattern. Their role was to add a 'traditional' flavour so as to sustain the impression of continuity between old and new styles of ceremony.

The bride and groom start the wedding day in Japanese wear. While the bridegroom wears formal but relatively simple *hakama* (pleated skirt), the bride wears a series of elaborate and heavy costumes which cannot be seen on any other occasion except that of the wedding ceremony. Their appearance is considered to be the most 'traditional-Japanese' and as such suitable for the Shinto ceremony which opens the formal part of the wedding. But, are their costumes indeed as ancient as they are presented and conceived? In the following paragraphs we will try to follow the 'traces' of the so-called 'traditional' costumes of bride and groom.

The Uchikake

The *uchikake* is a heavy elaborate upper coat worn over a white kimono. As was explained, the *uchikake* is considered today the most 'traditional' bridal attire. In fact, it is usually a bride in *uchikake*, wig, and head-cover (see below) which creates the so called 'Bridal Appearance' (*hanayome sugata*) (see chapter 6). Western attire for brides, on the

other hand, is usually referred to by Western loan-words (*buraidaru fasshon*, or *mōdo*).

As we have seen in the previous chapter, when questioned about their motivation for wearing *uchikake*, all brides used to stress both the "Japanese" (*nihon-teki*) and "traditional" (*dentō-teki*) aspects which made them decide not to select the other option of marrying in a Western dress only.¹ Choosing to have a 'traditional-Japanese' appearance as well gave them a feeling of continuity with their 'Japanese' past. The fact that their mothers and grandmothers did not actually wear *uchikake* or anything similar to that in their weddings did not seem to change that feeling of following a 'traditional' practice.²

It is very obvious that the wedding industry tries to enhance the 'traditional' image of the *uchikake*. "Wear your hair in the traditional Japanese wedding style (*Takashimada*), put on a pure white kimono (*shiro muku*), take the oath of marriage", says one of the wedding parlour's publications. But, upon closer examination, we find that the truth is that the *uchikake* was not commonly part of the bridal attire until as late as the 1960s. Before that time it was worn only by those who could afford it (see Ema 1971:215), and earlier it was known to be part of the court ceremonial wear. The *uchikake* became more popular with the establishment of the specialized wedding parlours and the fixed pattern that they promoted. In the modern wedding 'production', there was no room for other styles of wear, and the black kimono which was common before (see below) disappeared. Moreover, concerning the "pure white" image which is usually regarded as very traditional (see chapter 6), there are researchers who doubt its Japanese origin and see it more as a later influence of the white Western wedding dress.³

The Tsunokakushi ("horn concealer") and Watabōshi

The 'Bridal Appearance' is not complete if the bride does not wear the special *Takashimada* coiffure - A style of

dressings, known to be worn by daughters of the Samurai class in the past -which was formerly done with natural hair by a professional hairdresser, but which has now come to be replaced by a wig of the same style.⁴ Another item necessary to complete the 'traditional' and 'pure' bridal image is one of two head-covers: the *tsunokakushi*, which is a thin strip of white silk cloth that envelops the wig and covers some of the forehead; or the *watabōshi* which veils the wig entirely and also some part of the face. But, like the *uchikake*, the *tsunokakushi* ("horn hider") is a recent trend. According to Ema (1971:225) the origin of the *tsunokakushi* is as late as the Meiji period and is a result of the Western influence of that time. Some brides chose to wear what is claimed to be a former version of the *tsunokakushi*, the *watabōshi*, which adds an even more solemn and pure look to the bride since it also covers part of her face.⁵ For modern brides both alternatives are considered to be "traditional" and the decision between them is purely aesthetic, in other words one of *form*.

The saving system offered by the *gojokai* organizations made the relatively expensive *uchikake* affordable to ordinary people. It is possible to regard this as an 'altruistic' act coming to help the Japanese who from the Meiji period started to adopt ceremonial practices of the upper classes (Yanagida 1967:190, Edwards:1989:40), but considering the fact that the *gojokai* owners were involved in bridal wear rental as one of their main businesses, one could not ignore the fact that it was a 'vested interest' of these associations to promote the practice of 'uchikake for everyone'.

The Bridegroom's Formal Wear

The groom's appearance did not deserve much attention in home weddings, so that while the bride's appearance has been relatively well described, his has been almost ignored (Beardsley et al. 1959:325, Norbeck 1954:179-80, Embree 1939:205-6). He has gradually become a co-star to the bride, though, however, in a supporting role, and his costumes are

now also changed during the wedding. His first attire made to suit that of the bride's, is that of a Japanese wear. Continuing our 'search' for the origins of the 'ancient' costumes we need not go very far in the case of the *hakama* (pleated skirt) and the black cloak (*haori*) with the white house crests that the groom wears. These garments were originally designed by the Chancellery in 1877 as ceremonial dress for low-ranking nobles and ordinary officials and later on became the usual formal dress for men. (Yanagida 1965:12).

Nevertheless, it seems that grooms usually have not worn Japanese style clothing until very recently. Through the Taishō (1912-1925) and a large part of the Shōwa (1926-1989) periods, the groom was known to wear Western clothes, usually a formal black morning dress (*mōningu*) (Ema 1971:219). The wedding parlour decided to include formal Japanese wear for the groom in its programme in order to add another 'traditional' flavour and thus to complete the picture. After all, the perfect form of the wedding production could not possibly stand a 'Western' groom standing side by side with his 'pure traditional-Japanese' bride in the wedding portraits.⁶

Before the 'Age' of The Uchikake

In chapter 2 I explained how Shinto ceremonies started sporadically during the late Meiji period, but did not achieve their popularity until the fifties. The same goes for the wedding costumes. In one of the most detailed accounts of the history of weddings in Japan, Ema (1971) gives at least three different bridal appearances (*hanayome sugata*) of the late Meiji period. Only one of these guises is worn by the bride as described in the previous chapter, in an over-gown and head dress (*uchikake* and *tsunokakushi*). Two other bridal appearances are those which became common through Taishō and the early Shōwa years.

It is possible to gather from various sources⁷ that, in the early years after the war, the bride used to wear a black

short-sleeved formal kimono (*tomesode*). This *tomesode* was similar to the formal *tomesode* worn by female wedding guests nowadays (see chapter 5), though compared with wedding guests' kimono, it had a slighter heightened and more elaborate coloured pattern.⁸ In the late forties and fifties, with the growing popularity of Shinto ceremonies and restaurant receptions, the black *tomesode* gave place to a black long-sleeved kimono (*furisode*).⁹

The change from short-sleeved kimono to a long one is interesting given the point which was made earlier in the thesis (chapter 2) about the wedding gradually being divorced from the private domain. While long sleeved kimono have always been considered proper for ceremonies and improper for work, the short sleeved kimono allows its wearer a certain amount of work. And, indeed, in early postwar weddings, brides used to serve the guests during some parts of the wedding.¹⁰ However, with the ceremony taking place outside the house, the bride did not have to act as hostess to her guests, and her passive 'doll-like' role has become more pronounced.

Ironaoshi: Changing Colours

The idea of *ironaoshi* (*iro*-colour, *naosu*-to change, to correct) which refers to the change of costumes during the wedding is not a new one. There are suggestions that the practice of changing at the wedding day itself started during the Tokugawa period, between the formal ceremony and the banquet (Ema 1971:154,208). Some Japanese scholars argue that it is an abbreviation of an even older practice where the bride would wear white for the first and second day of her wedding and change into a coloured garment on the third. (Nakayama 1928:828; Ema 1971:90-91).

In village home weddings there are reports of the custom of changing costumes, although the time of change and the number of changes varied. In a village in southern Japan studied by Embree in the late 30s the bride used to change her kimono when the formal part of the ceremony had come to an end

(Embree 1939:208-9). In central Japan, Beardsley, Hall and Ward (1959:325) report a first change which occurred before the bride left her parental home. However, they suggest that the practice of changing clothing is an "optional symbolic custom". In home weddings the bride always changed to one of her trousseau kimono as an opportunity to show to the other members of the community part of the clothing she took with her to her new home, and as a sign of household wealth. Smith who also argues that this practice of "displaying the trousseau" was "by no means universally observed" suggests that the reason was economic: "few brides have enough kimono of sufficient quality to carry on the display" (Cornell and Smith 1956:79).

According to informants, it was not only in the villages that the practice of changing costumes was not very popular, and it hardly existed in the prewar period or even much later. As a veteran bride dresser put it: "When I started the beauty shop 31 years ago (in 1957)..there was almost no *ironaoshi*..if the bride did change kimono it was for her own kimono".¹¹ The practice as it is today in the wedding parlour actually started in the sixties with the introduction of the *uchikake*.

In the case of the *ironaoshi* like in adoption of the *uchikake*, the wedding parlour entrepreneurs made clever use of 'tradition'. They revived a practice, leaving only its *form* and filling it with different materials. The flexibility of this 'traditional' custom can be seen in the way new fashions have changed it through the years. One example is that of the second Western dress which has gradually taken the place of the Japanese *furisode*. The introduction of the groom's *ironaoshi* is even more striking, as this, of course, does not have any grounds in past practices. The wedding parlour entrepreneurs not only kept and revived the *frame* of the custom said to be 'traditional', they also combined it with modern advertisement themes like the idea of "Once in a Life Time Dream" which was discussed in the previous chapter.

'Western' Costumes

Western clothing has thus joined in with its Japanese counterparts as the practice of *ironaoshi* has become more and more elaborate. But, as we will see, in the same way that the 'Japanese' costumes were taken from past practices while being manipulated for the use in the wedding industry, so were the so-called 'Western' costumes.

Although there are some reported instances of brides wearing wedding dresses before they became particularly popular in the seventies and eighties, these cases were quite rare and usually limited to church weddings. The wedding dress, like its 'traditional-Japanese' counterpart, the *uchikake*, was introduced by the wedding industry in the seventies to fit the other 'Western' elements of the programme, such as the wedding cake ceremony and the candle service. The white wedding dress was not left alone in 'Japanese' surroundings for a long time. The early eighties, have brought in the coloured party dress as well.

Wedding parlour owners argue that the growing popularity of the Western dress has to do with the growing reputation of hotel weddings and church ceremonies. In their opinion, Western dress was much more suited to a church wedding than Japanese wear. But the facts suggest that, given the low percentage of Japanese who actually get married in church,¹² and the fact that the dress is now worn regardless of whether the wedding takes place in a church, this argument is not valid. Nevertheless the reasoning itself is very interesting in that it reveals a tendency for those concerned to envisage the 'Western' as a single 'package', conceived in quite an abstract way.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the bride's dresses are always very fancy, made of elegant materials and colours. I have argued that the dresses are made of materials which make dreams of stardom come true. Looking at the dresses, images of European bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century - as they are conveyed in films and television series

- are the first to emerge. As aforesaid, the dresses are always very elaborate. Moreover, as the process of invention and elaboration is endless, new items are added to emphasize the 'Western' picture. Such was a new fashion of tucking a bustle under the skirts to add to the puff of the crinoline.¹³ Another indispensable item to complete the 'Western' 'uniform' is a certain elaborate head-cover, either a very 'pronounced' veil, a hat, tiara or crown.

Looking at the 'Western' bridal appearance, one finds that it is a very pronounced - even 'grotesque' - version of actual 'Western' attire. My argument is that just as 'Japanese' attire is exaggeratedly 'Japanese', so are dresses extremely 'Western'. This 'abstract' attitude towards the 'West' can be observed not only in other wedding costumes but also, as we will shortly see, in other 'Western' elements of the wedding.

The groom's 'Western' wear shares much the same qualities as those of his bride. While grooms used to wear suits as Western attire when this practice started, now they usually wear an elegant tuxedo. The tuxedo is offered in various colours, with the 'pair' flower of the bride's bouquet attached to its coat's lapel. Some grooms even choose to change to a second tuxedo with the third *ironaoshi* of their bride. Thus the same process of elaboration and a stereotyped view of the West is observed.

Looking at the 'Western' clothing of other wedding participants (who do not change costumes through the ceremony), one can also find some illuminating abstracts of Western fashion. Although the principal female participants wear 'Japanese' kimono (see chapter 5), the main men wear morning suits which are usually rented at the parlour. Although the morning suit may seem quite old fashioned in the West, it still symbolizes the West for the Japanese.¹⁴ Most other male wedding guests wear black suits and white ties (as compared with the black tie worn in funerals). Their clothing is plain, and often an old, used suit is used. In this case formality is the point, Western wear is used in a 'Japanese'

way, exaggerating formality and form.¹⁵ As for women guests, although most of them wear kimono, some of the young girls do wear Western attire. Often they wear elaborate party dresses, sometimes rented in the place. Especially in cases when costumes are rented, they look more like old (rather grotesque) theatre costumes than party wear. Some elder women wear black suits which they decorate with a colourful flower broach or the like, in order not to confuse their clothing with solid black funeral wear.

Invention in Process: The Elaboration of the 'Production'

Wedding parlours were the creators of the commercial wedding in the first place; they have also been responsible for new ideas which later on have been incorporated into the fixed pattern they themselves created. Among wedding parlours Shōchikudeden is known to be the most inventive and 'showy' (*hade*). Mrs. Sakurai, the daughter of Utsunomiya Chikaijidō, the founder of the company, told me about the development of the reception 'production':

We thought it was boring to hear only speeches in the reception so we added a slide show of the bride and groom to be shown during the reception. This was back in 1968, when we still conducted weddings in a shrine. The cake-cutting started later in 1973 in our first wedding parlour in Kyoto. In 1977 one of the Shōchikuden parlours invented the 'gondola', but it was adopted by only a few of our parlours...Now, also there are always new things, such as laser effects. Every parlour can invent new things as long as they can be adjusted within the time limits..

The wedding industry has never stopped inventing new ideas to elaborate the fixed pattern. If we recall the way the wedding parlour charges separately for each new idea, the financial benefit of each new idea is very clear. I have

discussed above 'inventions' which characterized the first years of the wedding industry, but as we have seen in the case of 'Western' attire, the process of 'invention' is continuous.

'Western' Inventions

The commercial wedding pattern has a few distinguishable 'Western' elements in addition to wedding dresses. Among them are three "new elements" - as they were termed by Edwards (1987:61). These are the wedding cake ceremony, the candle service and the flower presentation, which were incorporated to the wedding in the mid-seventies (or a little earlier). According to Edwards these elements are those "that distinguish the reception from other formal banquets". Among these new elements Edwards (1987:62) finds the wedding cake, or more accurately the wedding cake cutting ceremony, as the main characteristic of the wedding. I have already argued that I completely disagree with Edwards's search (and recover) of "conceptual associations" which were already present in Japanese culture, to explain the "symbolic significance" and the acceptance of the cake (see chapter 1; Edwards 1989:109). I have, then, argued, that any 'symbolic significance' - if any - of the wedding cake is in it being 'Western' (see also Charsley 1992:121).

I would like to pursue this argument here and to say that the inedible wax wedding cake - four feet high and with a miniature bridal couple in (of course) Western wedding attire standing at its top - is, like 'Western' attire, a manifestation of the abstract way in which Western attributes are perceived. I will go further and argue that the cake, like other 'Western' elements (as well as the 'Japanese' elements, as we will see later on) was incorporated into the commercial wedding (and accepted) exactly because of this characteristic, and not as a result of any 'deep' symbolic significance which previously existed in the heart of Japanese culture. In short, I will show that both 'Japanese' and 'Western' elements were

accepted by the Japanese customers - which is how I see the wedding principals -because they were presented as *novelties*.

However, before we proceed to see also how 'traditional-Japanese' attributes are constantly incorporated into the wedding pattern, there is another word to be said here about the attitude towards the 'Western' attributes of the wedding. I have argued earlier that there is something of the grotesque in the elaborate (old-fashioned) 'Western' costumes. It is possible to identify a similar attitude also in other 'Western' elements, such as the huge wax cake and the candle service ceremony. The latter is, in fact, the only part of the wedding reception which is relatively comic. Does the 'lighter' attitude toward the 'Western' elements - as compared with the more 'serious' attitude towards the 'Japanese' attributes - have something more to say about the attitude towards the West? I would leave it as an open question.

New 'traditional-Japanese' Innovations

The process of invention (or rather the invention in process, as I have called it) is, thus, endless. Moreover, it involves not only the fabrication of so-called 'Western' or 'modern' effects but also the invention of 'Japanese traditions'. The invention of 'Japanese traditions' - just as that of 'Western' special effects (such as dry-ice smoke, see chapter 2)-not only involves the Ceremonial Occasions business and some other related enterprises, but is actually deeply embedded in the Japanese social organization and Japanese business practices as we will see later on.

The wedding industry is abundant with producers of various wedding-related artifacts. One of the most successful markets is that for 'traditional' bridal accessories. As we have seen, (chapter 6), the production of a perfect 'bridal appearance' is considered one of the important goals of the wedding. Coming to aid in the production of this perfect 'traditional-Japanese' bride, are not only the producers of bridal costumes, but an array of producers of special

accessories. The accessories vary from special bridal make-up, to special 'traditional' wigs and other 'traditional' decorations.

The case of a certain wig company may illustrate some of this endless process of invention. A company called Cosmo-fani a sub-company of the big oil company Cosmo - is a relatively new company that specializes in wig production and rental. The company presents itself as "aiming at the development of a rational (*gōriteki*) lease system of wigs". The company's way into the wedding parlour was not an easy task. It involved the participation of its representatives in the parlour's bridal fairs, frequent visits to the parlour, especially to the beauty shop, and even the training of the beauty shop's experts.¹⁶ The efforts which were invested from the company's side are an indication of the competitiveness of the market.

The main reason for the difficulties which stood in the company's way was the existence of another style of wigs. Although the old style wigs are much heavier and are not made to order like those Cosmo had to offer, they are, nevertheless, part of the bride's package and do not require extra payment. This fact could also explain why even a few years later, although Cosmo wigs had become more popular, they never replaced the old 'free' wigs completely. Moreover, after the company - with the beauty shop's help¹⁷ - had succeeded in establishing its place in the competitive world of the wedding parlour, it was the beauty shop itself which posed itself as a competitor when in 1991, using the services of a small wig company, it produced its own 'light' wig. The beauty shop owners decided that if they had to promote light wigs, they might as well be their own.

The cases above demonstrate that the market for 'traditional' artifacts operates like any other competitive market. But, a closer look at the way in which the wig company tried to promote its product can shed more light on the subject of 'production' of traditions. Although the company presents itself as offering a modern 'rational' (*gōri-teki*) service of wigs which are produced in a modern factory,¹⁸ the

'traditional' aspect is certainly not overlooked. The company's promotion catalogue carries the title "The time when tradition (*dentō*) shines beautifully". It is, indeed, this association between 'modern', 'rational' ways of production, on the one hand, with 'traditional' products, on the other, which is most striking. Cosmo-fani, like its counterparts in the market of 'traditional' artifacts, does not only imitate or improve traditions, it actually produces them.

What is even more striking is the fact that this process of invention seems to be done consciously or 'rationally' - if one wants to use the company's own vocabulary. A conversation about 'modern' girls between Cosmo-fani workers and some of the beauty shop's veterans in a training session given by the wig company representatives to the beauty shop employees (see note 16) was very interesting in this respect. During the conversation one of the wig promoters argued that their company was aware of the fact that nowadays there were fewer girls who wanted to don 'traditional' costumes. Although he was contradicted by the beauty shop's dressing chief, who argued that there were still enough girls who yearned (*akogare*) to wear kimono in their wedding, the wig promoter continued. "However", he said, "our company must think of the future, this is why we started thinking about new uses for our wigs". One thing his company was contemplating was the introduction of wigs for the 'Coming of Age Ceremony', celebrated on the age of twenty. They also thought about introducing wigs for the twentieth birthday itself.¹⁹ The beauty shop's expert dressers were almost as enthusiastic about the idea as the wig promoters themselves. Looking at their side of the business, they could see the possibility of dressing more girls on the coming of age day since donning a wig is a much shorter process than setting the customer's own hair.

Although the conversation above was only hypothetical - as yet there are no signs of wigs in the coming of age ceremony - its implication is intriguing. One can only wonder what will happen if Japanese girls start donning wigs for the

coming of age day or for their twentieth birthday. I would not be surprised if after a few years of such a practice, 'wigs for twenty year-old girls will be seen just as 'traditional' as 'wigs for brides' are considered today.

Invention in Process: 'Playing' with Tradition

The case of the new wig was mainly a case in which an interested part of the wedding industry offered a 'modern' development for an existing 'traditional' artifact. There is however, another kind of invention which I would term 'playing with tradition'. This kind of more 'daring' venture is usually made by the wedding parlours themselves and, relatively, does not involve a great deal of investment. In this kind of 'invention' a custom related to a very specific group or occasion is introduced into the wedding. In many of the cases the 'invention' consists of special attire. Unlike in the case of *uchikake*, where the aristocratic history of the attire has been disguised, in these cases the origin of the attire is very obvious and openly stated.

The introduction of a special wedding attire called *jūnihitoe* (literally twelve layers) is an example of such 'playing with tradition'. The attire which was offered as a set for bride and groom was an imitation of the full court dress (*sokutai*) worn by Prince Akishino and his bride, Princess Kiko, in the royal wedding in June 1990. Not long after the imperial wedding, advertisements for *jūnihitoe* could be seen everywhere, especially in train stations and on trains - popular locations for wedding advertisements. Cobella had devised a special expensive 'twelve layer set' which could be rented just for a photograph.²⁰ However, although the imperial wedding itself attracted a great deal of interest, the attire was not very successful. The manager of Kobe Princess Palace attributed this failure to the fact that the costumes were very expensive and very uncomfortable to wear.²¹ He also admitted that they might have been wrong, since apparently young Japanese, who have recently been the main target of new

ideas did not 'long for' (*akogare*) the imperial costumes. It is, indeed, difficult to determine why the court dress did fail to become popular. It is probably the result of various reasons as the parlour manager have explained it himself, but it could also be that the period of 'mass-producing traditions' is over.²² On the other hand, it may well be that the idea of *jūnihitoe* was one of those novelties 'thrown' into the market which did not succeed. The fact was that Cobella found it necessary to promote the *jūnihitoe* because other wedding facilities did so. In any case, the industry never gives up trying new ideas, either 'Western' or 'traditional-Japanese'.

"I am trying to make my customers happy", said the manager of the Kobe parlour when trying to explain the reasons for yet another invention he introduced to his parlour. His idea which was presented to the customers in a bridal fair (see chapter 6) was of an optional bridal costume of a young geisha (*maiko*).²³ The manager's idea was a very obvious 'play' with tradition. The bride who was to wear the young geisha's attire was certainly not to be identified with the geisha.²⁴ However, the 'traditional' 'exotic' image of the geisha was used more as a mere beautiful form to be seen. Here, again the producer - in this case the manager - was fully aware of the invention; he himself even defined it as kind of "play" (*asobi*). For his part, he was only acting in line with the recent tendency of the industry to appeal to young customers (see chapter 2). "From the traditional point of view it is a little strange", he said, "but young people are not interested in difficult things. They prefer light things, they prefer light things to look at".²⁵

Conclusion

In this chapter I have touched on two general points which have reference to the whole thesis. The first is that of 'invention of traditions'; the second, the attitude towards the 'Western' as it shows itself in Japanese modern wedding

practices. These two seemingly separate areas are in fact strongly linked to each other, as I have tried to show in the chapter and as I will explain further below.

The term 'invention of tradition' was coined by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) and has been frequently used since to show how 'tradition' or 'traditionalism' may be manipulated in various spheres of life. Hobsbawm and others in the same volume have tried to show how "'traditions' which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented" (Hobsbawm 1983b:1). Although they admit that 'invention of tradition' may be found in various spheres of life, they consider one area as the most "relevant". This is the "comparatively recent historical innovation, the 'nation', with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest." (*Ibid*:13) The search for invention which is related to the 'state' lies in the background of all the essays in the volume including the concluding one (Hobsbawm 1983a) which while concentrating on the period of 'mass production of traditions' in Europe, tries to draw general assumptions concerning the 'invention of traditions'. Hobsbawm concludes that the creation of traditions may be a product of either 'political' or 'social' powers, (*Ibid*: 263, 307) both of which are strongly connected with the modern 'state'.

Although I find the relation between 'invention of traditions' and the 'state' with its related phenomena such as nationalism, as very important, I would like to suggest that the idea of 'invention of tradition' may be more largely applied. Firstly, I have shown in this chapter - and throughout the thesis - that 'tradition' can be invented and used by organizations whose main motivations are not necessarily 'political' or 'social' but rather, financial. The idea that businesses may in some cases "use" 'invented traditions' was alluded to by Hobsbawm himself (1983a:307), nevertheless, nowhere do Hobsbawm and others suggest that businesses may themselves be involved in invention of new traditions. I, however, suggest that in the Japanese case, as

we can see from the example of modern Japanese wedding practices (and other ceremonial occasions), businesses have been strongly involved in the process of invention. Indeed, it might be argued that businesses can be found in the heart of this process.

Secondly, the example of the Japanese Ceremonial Occasions industry may show that 'invention of traditions' is not necessarily a practice which is limited to a specific period of time in social life, 'traditions' may be invented and fashioned constantly. In the case of the Japanese wedding we have seen how 'Japanese-traditions' are constantly produced side by side with the production of 'Western' effects (or shall we also say 'traditions?'). In both cases, 'traditions' can be invented, tried on (like in the case of the *jūnihitoe*) as well as discarded (like the *furisode* for the bride). This aspect of 'invented traditions' may well be connected to my first point, that is, to invention based on financial motivations. In such a case 'traditions' are no different from any other 'novelties' in a the market of a consumerist society.

Hobsbawm argues that "we should expect [invention of tradition] to occur more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which old traditions had been designed" (1983b:4). In considering the modern history of Japanese society, we can see at least two periods which are marked for their 'rapid transformation'. One is the Meiji period (1868-1912), the other is the early postwar period and the time of the American occupation (from 1945). Another period which is important to our discussion here is the 1970s, and the rapid economic growth which followed them. But, was it really the weakening of old social patterns which allowed the massive inventions of new traditions particularly in those periods? I tend to see other factors which encouraged the invention, at least in the Japanese case.

The Meiji period has been described as the time of the creation of Japan's modern myths (Gluck 1985). The national

ideology²⁶ which was developed in the late Meiji period was more clearly defined and established in the early postwar period (*Ibid*:6). But, it was not only the Japanese national ideology which had its roots in the Meiji period. There were also "elite efforts from the Meiji period forward to fashion an industrial ideology that would domesticate capitalism" (Kinzley 1991:xiv). I will argue that it was these new 'economic' myths - the 'culture of harmony' (*Ibid*) and the 'homogeneity myth' (see Conclusion) - which had their origins in the Meiji period but were highlighted later on in the 1970s with the 'economic boom', which supplied a supportive background to the 'invention of traditions' in those crucial periods of 'rapid transformation'.

If the postwar period was the time for the construction of the 'formal space' for weddings and with it the elaboration of the ceremony, (see chapter 2), the Meiji period can be noted, in a more general sense, for its 'mass-production' of traditions (Hobsbawm 1983a). Moreover the 'inventions' of the Meiji period, especially in the sphere of ritual, seem to have had a direct influence on the rituals of the postwar period, including the wedding ceremony. Gluck (1985) defines two major ceremonies in the late Meiji period as "unprecedented ceremonies" - one being the promulgation of the Constitution on the eleventh of February 1889 (*Ibid*:42-45), the other the Imperial funeral in 1912 (*Ibid*:213-21). Another ceremony with even greater concern for us here is that of the wedding of the Crown Prince (later the Taishō emperor) in 1900, which was the first one to be held at a Shinto shrine.

These two historical periods had also something else in common which was actually the cause for much of the 'rapid transformation'. This was the contact with the outside world, or more correctly with the 'West'. This encounter with the 'West' had a clear effect on the 'unprecedented ceremonies' described by Gluck (1985)(see above)). These ceremonies had a very interesting characteristic, which was, an amalgamation, though in separate parts, of the 'Japanese' and the 'Western'. In many ways these extraordinary ceremonies may be seen as a

kind of an 'ideal type' for other 'invented' ceremonies, such as the modern wedding. It was not only the 'invention' of the 'traditional' that started at this crucial historical period and manifested itself in these 'unprecedented ceremonies'; it was also the 'invention' of the 'Western'.

In this chapter and throughout the thesis I have mentioned the distinction between the 'Western' and 'Japanese' which characterizes the wedding itself, as well as its production (see chapter 4 on the beauty shop's work). Befu (1984:62) writes that

the "Japanese" vs. "Western" distinction is not based on objective classification. The two are rather "cultural concepts with a high degree of popular consensus". Befu goes on to say that being a cultural classification, the "Japanese"/"Western" dichotomy is, "while clear and evident to Japanese, not always comprehensible to non-Japanese". I would argue that the reason for this unclarity of the dichotomy lies in the fact that the 'Western' itself (which Befu keeps in quotation marks for "smoother reading" (1984:60)) is a Japanese concept or rather a Japanese 'invention' of 'Western' and as such another term like 'Westanese' (Western-Japanese) might be more adequate to describe it. In the case of the Japanese wedding we have seen how the so-called 'Western' was manipulated by the wedding producers to their own motivations.

In a very similar way that the 'Western' or the 'Westanese' is manipulated by the wedding industry so is the 'Japanese'. The Ceremonial Occasions industry has created 'traditional-Japanese' (or shall we call it 'traditionese'?) artifacts to complete the modern Japanese wedding picture. The image which is created by industries such as the wedding industry is that in modern Japan tradition lives side by side with modern-Western (which always come together).²⁷ This image (which is an important feature of the industry's 'ideology') is easily accepted by writers like Edwards (1987;1989) who view the commercial wedding as a "window" to Japanese society (see chapter 1).

Edwards - who sees the history of the commercial Japanese wedding as a 'spontaneous generation' rather than as 'invention', which is how I see it - finds different reasons for the adoption of the two separate aspects of the wedding. While the 'traditional-Japanese' aspects were adopted by the Japanese as a result of emulation of the upper classes of the past (see Edwards 1989:38-42), the 'Western' elements, although introduced by the wedding industry itself, were adopted because of "their ability to articulate values appropriate to the context (of marriage)" (Edwards 1989:37). The idea that modern wedding practices are largely a result of the emulation of the commoners of former warrior class customs is argued by many others (Cf. Smith: forthcoming, Yanagida 1967:190, Ema 1971) and should, of course, not be completely discarded. However, as Charsley argues concerning the wedding cake in Great Britain, "Emulation of practices identified as of high status has been important in shaping the progress.. but it is far from being a single key to unlock the whole complex course of events" (1992:137). Moreover, the emulation itself has been manipulated by the Ceremonial Occasions industry, as we have seen through the use of the so-called *akogare* (yearning) both in the cases of brides and kimono (chapters 5, and 6).

I suggest, on the other hand, that both aspects, which I termed: '*Westanese*' and '*traditionese*' have been accepted by the Japanese customers not because of deep values which already existed in their culture (in the case of the "new elements") and not as a result of the existence of a mysterious yearning of the Japanese to imitate the former warrior class, but, because they were 'novelties'. Indeed, the wedding industry has answered certain kinds of 'needs' of their clientele. But, what kind of need or desire has it responded to? Using somewhat blunt words a Ceremonial Occasions entrepreneur described the relation between the industry and its young customers as follows:

The young people, and the people who do business from their desires are soon coming together (*atsumaru*), the businessmen (referring to the wedding industry entrepreneurs) think only of the profit (*okane mōke bakari*).

Hobsbawm (1983a:307) argues that the most successful 'invented traditions' are those which meet "a felt - not necessarily a clearly understood - need among particular bodies of people". The wedding industry has obviously found this kind of need, and later on it has constantly reproduced it.

But, again, what is this 'need' in the case of Japanese weddings? I would argue that it is no different from any other 'demands' in a consumer market. In defining 'need' or 'demand', I follow Appadurai (1986) who takes his lead from writers such as Veblen (1957), Douglas and Isherwood (1978) and Baudrillard, when he suggests that "demand is a socially regulated and generated impulse, not an artifact of individual whims or needs" (Appadurai 1986:32). Appadurai also emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between producers and consumers. He suggests that we look at "consumption (and the demand that makes it possible) as a focus not only for *sending* social messages (as Douglas has proposed), but for *receiving* them as well" (1986:31). And, here, he points to a very important point for our discussion here of manipulation:

Demand thus conceals two different relationships between consumption and production: 1. On the one hand, demand is determined by social and economic forces; 2. on the other, it can manipulate, within limits, these social and economic forces. The important point is that from a historical point of view, these two aspects of demand can affect each other.

(Appadurai 1986:31)

Following this line, it will be more accurate to look at the relationship between the 'desires' of the consumers, and the manipulations of the producers as reciprocal, rather than as a direct response of the industry to existing needs. However - as always in social life - things are not that simple. Even if we agree that the relationship between consumers and producers can be explained in reciprocal terms, there is, no doubt, also an element of power in these relationship. Appadurai himself acknowledges this position of power when he accepts the views most strongly suggested by Baudrillard (1981) and Bourdieu (1984) concerning the power of the establishments that control fashion and good taste. These establishments are deeply involved in "placing consumers in a game whose over-shifting rules are determined by "taste makers" and their affiliated experts who dwell at the top of society" (Appadurai 1986:32).

The question remains, who are these 'taste makers' (see Bourdieu 1984:255) and their associates "who dwell at the top of society" in the case of Japanese social organization. I will argue that the process of 'invention' in which the Ceremonial Occasions industry has been so massively engaged, involves the elite of Japanese society. However, this should not necessarily be a direct involvement. As was argued by Appadurai, demand "emerges as a function of variety of social practices and classifications" (1986:29). The extensive promotion of 'invented traditions' by the Japanese Ceremonial Occasion industry can be analysed on the background of the massive fostering of 'Japaneseness', especially in the 1970s.

Another aspect of this trend which was defined by Dale (1986:14) as the "commercialised expression of modern Japanese nationalism" is the *nihonjinron* (discussions of the Japanese). This genre includes any work of scholarship, occasional essay or newspaper article which attempts to define the unique specificity of things Japanese (Dale 1986:14, see also Mouer and Sugimoto 1986:21-2, Yoshino:1992:2). This manifestation of Japanese nationalism was already well addressed by writers such as Dale (1986), Mouer and Sugimoto (1986), Befu (1980a,

1980b, 1992) and others. However, while the written (sometimes academic or pseudo academic) expressions of nationalism were studied, other aspects which may be referred to - in a paraphrase on 'discussions of the Japanese' - as '*practices of the Japanese (or of Japaneseness)*' were less observed.

These kinds of '*practices of Japaneseness*', which is how I see the '*inventions*' of the '*traditionese*' promoted by the Ceremonial Occasions industry, are very much part of the Japanese modern nationalism which can often be defined as economic nationalism. In the concluding part of the thesis I will analyse the ways in which '*practices of Japaneseness*' are related to the written *nihonjinron* and show how important a part play business elites, and business interests, in the process of '*invention of (Japanese) traditions*'.

Notes

1. Choosing the exclusively 'Western' alternative means getting married in a church, usually found in hotels. This alternative, though, is not very popular as in 1990 only 7.3 percents of the couples surveyed chose to have their ceremonies in a church (see table 1, chapter 2), and even in those cases many of the brides wore *uchikake* for photographs. There were no cases of wearing only a wedding dress in the wedding hall. (though there are few *Shōchikuden* parlours which include a small 'church' or a room defined as one.

2. The tendency or preference of Japanese young brides and their mothers to ignore the historical facts is similar in some ways to that of the visitors to the Mikimoto pearl island museum who seemed not to notice the written information that the white clothing of the *ama* (the diving women) was designed by Mikimoto himself, but preferred to believe that it was "traditional" (Martinez 1990:102).

3. The main resource is a book called *Kindai Nihon Fukusō-shi* (History of Dress in Modern Japan) which surveys the history of Japanese clothing from the Meiji period. In it there are some interesting descriptions of wedding fashions and how they have changed since the Meiji period.

4. The argument for this change is that after the war there were fewer hairdressers who had the skill (*gijutsu*) needed. Another reason is the short and permanent waved hair style adopted by modern women. The shortage was quite quickly filled up by specialized wig factories. The small sized factories of that time, although still existing today, have as competitors large modernized plants, as we will shortly see.

5. According to Hendry, the *tsunokakushi* - which is generally interpreted as covering the "horns of jealousy" or the bad traits of the woman's character which must be hidden to signify the future obedience of the wife - is said to be a recent simplified version of the *watabōshi*. The latter used to be worn by noblewomen to go out, by women of Ikko Buddhist sect to visit the temple, and later came to be used at ceremonial occasions, finally limited to a bride in her wedding (Hendry 1981:170, 195n.54).

6. The 'balance' (*barancu*) between the bride and groom is strictly kept in the wedding parlour. For example, grooms chose the colour of their tuxedos in accordance with the bride's dress.

The fact that recently the groom's cloak (*haori*) is offered in various colours, and not only in black, as it was decided in 1877, only emphasizes the point that the 'traditional' is open to innovations, adjustments and fashions.

7. Apart from anthropological accounts such as Beardsley et al (1959:102), Cornell and Smith (1956:80 photo), Norbeck (1954:179-80), much of the information included here was gathered from informants, and from Japanese literature, including professional 'dressing' magazines.

8. This goes well with existing etiquette rules, as they were described in chapter 5, according to which younger women usually wear a higher and more elaborate pattern on their kimono's hems.

9. Informants seemed to disagree about the time black *furisode* had started, some argue that it used to be worn already in the Taishō era (and was changed to *tomesode* in the costume change (*ironaoshi*)). It seems that until the *gojokai* system not only made the *furisode* financially possible, but also promoted it, it could be afforded only by rich families.

10. Usually the bride served the guests at the last part of the wedding party. Embree (1939:209) reports of the bride - "as hostess" - serving tea to the wedding guests before they leave. According to him, in this act and by seeing of her parents together with the groom and his family she "assumes her role of daughter in the new household".

11. Quoted in *Hanayome* ('The Bride') a professional magazine for 'dressing' (*kitsuke*). "*Kitsuke Zuisō*" ("Dressing" - Occasional Thoughts") in *Hanayome* 1988, Vol 4:108.

12. According to the Sanwa Bank survey, only 7.3% of those surveyed had their ceremonies in a church in 1990 (see table 1, chapter 2). This is not such a considerable rise from the 3.7% who did so in 1976.

13. An anecdote from my fieldwork concerning this new innovation may show a bit of the general attitude towards the 'Western' dresses. While working together with one of the clothing department employees, a middle-aged lady, she asked me if "over there" ("*mukō*" - which is quite a typical way to treat the "West") we still wear those bustles when we dress for parties. Although this may be an ignorance of a middle-aged lady, yet when thus asked I could characterize her image of the West as not very different from that of others with whom I have worked.

14. The morning suit was proclaimed by the Chancellery on November 1872 as a substitute for Japanese costume for ceremonial robe worn by noblemen at court (Yanagida:1965:11). This Meiji regulation is very interesting if compared to the one announced in September of the same year for Japanese formal wear for low-ranking nobles (see above). This duality will be dealt with in the concluding part of the chapter.

15. Richie (1987:90) mentions the tendency of the Japanese to always be over-dressed when in Western clothing. In his view, the reason is that the rigidity of the kimono is being sought for in the rigidity of foreign formal dress.

16. In one of the small scale training sessions (to be distinguished from the big summer training with the *ō-sensei*, see chapter 4), two representatives of the wig company came to present the wig to the beauty shop employees. The presentation lasted more than two hours and included a short video promotion film about the company as well as actual presentation of how to adjust and fit the wigs.

17. As was explained in chapter 3, the beauty shop is in charge of promoting bridal accessories. As a reward it gets a percentage of the profits. In the case of Cosmo wigs, the profit was 30% of the wig's rental price.

18. This 'modern' image is important vis-à-vis the more 'traditional' image of small workshops which produce the old style wigs.

19. As we have seen, the 'Coming of Age Day' has become strongly connected to kimono wearing and as such it offers a good market for 'traditional' accessories (see chapter 5). On the other hand, the celebration of the twentieth birthday in such a way is totally uncommon. Thus, if such a practice is introduced it will be a brand-new 'tradition'.

20. The set was offered only for a photograph to be taken on a separate day for a price of ¥250,000. (The same set was circulated among the parlours according to orders). Another possibility was to have the attire as part of a '¥1,000,000 package', which included also a designer wedding dress. In Kobe Princess Palace there was only one customer who chose this 'package', although there were a few more customers in other Cobella parlours.

21. As was mentioned, wearing the costumes required another visit to the wedding parlour. Including the long preparation, especially of the bride's, and the photographs it took a whole day.

22. I am referring to Hobsbawm (1983a). See conclusion of this chapter.

23. The costume was to come instead the *furisode* (long sleeved kimono) which had been gradually losing its place (see chapter 6). I must note that the new attire was presented in a Bridal Fair towards the end of my fieldwork, and therefore I do not have details of its success or failure.

24. It is important to note here, however, that the geisha's place in Japanese society and the relations between wives and geisha are more complex than they might seem. Although I am not going to discuss these relations here, it is interesting to note that geisha are regarded as symbols of Japanese femininity. (For more about the complex relations between geisha and wives see Dalby (1983:167-75)).

25. I have to note that this kind of lighter attitude toward 'traditional-Japanese' features of the wedding was rather new. The parlour manager himself was not sure about the reaction. However, if such an attitude is to continue it may raise questions about the dichotomy between (serious) 'Japanese' to (lighter) 'Western' which was suggested above, especially in the case of young Japanese.

26. Gluck refers to this national ideology as the 'tennosei ideology' - the ideology of the imperial system.

27. The bond between 'modern' and 'Western' lives so strongly in Japanese consciousness that even modern gadgets and machines - which (paradoxically) are so much linked with Japan in Western consciousness - are considered 'Western' (even in the eyes of anthropologists) (see Befu 1984:73).

CONCLUSION

I opened this thesis with a depiction of the production of weddings at the wedding parlour. Following that description I suggested that we should look at the wedding as an 'event that presents the lived in world'. As such, the wedding was delineated as a deliberately produced representation of 'Japaneseness'. Indeed, this thesis is very much about various sorts of representations. The 'invention of traditions' which has been elaborately discussed throughout the thesis can itself be regarded as a production of representations of 'Japaneseness'. As I have shown, this 'Japaneseness' fostered by the Ceremonial Occasions industry consists of both 'traditional-Japanese' - or, better, 'traditionese' - elements as well as 'Western' (or, 'Westanese') components. However, although we have seen that both 'Western' and 'Japanese' 'traditions' are invented, we could discern the importance given to representations of 'traditionality' as related to 'Japaneseness'. I have also tried to show the link between 'traditionality' and national identity. In particular, 'traditionality' has been related to kimono as an attire and kimono dressing as a pursuit. We have seen how kimono as a concept and a metaphor has been used by interested agents which present it as 'traditional' as well as 'feminine'.

As much as this thesis is concerned with representations of 'Japaneseness', it is also about representations of women of which that in dress is only one. Visual representations constitute another significant layer of *packaging* of women. I have tried to link between the importance given to photography and other forms of visual representation by the Ceremonial Occasions industry and the emphasis given to form in general in Japanese ceremonies and social organization. Here, I will try to touch on these various levels of representation and to explain their significance in more general theoretical terms.

explained in terms of the dialectics of authenticity (MacCannel 1976:160). Hobsbawm writes that "where the old ways are alive, traditions need neither be revived nor invented" (1983b:8). I have argued that in this thesis tradition is not studied as an aspect of historical continuity, but rather it is 'traditionalism' in the way it was defined by Bestor, as "the use of social idioms or metaphors that seek to clothe the present in a mantle of venerable antiquity" (1989:258). By adopting this kind of view of 'tradition' it is possible to see how it is exactly the alienated attitude towards Japanese traditions that could advance the promotion of 'traditional-Japanese' (or 'traditionese') as a novelty.

I argued in the previous chapter that it is possible to discern a link between the extensive promotion of 'invented traditions' and another manifestation of fostering of 'Japaneseness' - the *nihonjinron*. Publications on Japanese uniqueness reached their peak in the late 1970s (Yoshino 1992:2, see also Mouer and Sugimoto 1986:1).¹ Although it is beyond the scope of this study to explain the development of the *nihonjinron*, Yoshino (1992:ch.9) attempts to classify the various explanations for that occurrence. One type of explanation is that which identifies the *nihonjinron* as a rescuer of Japanese identity threatened by Westernization. Another explanation also sees the *nihonjinron* as an attempt to come to terms with significant changes that have effected post-war Japanese society. This attributes a cultural explanation to Japan's economic success. Another perspective for explaining the development of the *nihonjinron* is the dominant ideology thesis. In addition to these general explanations there are those which explain the *nihonjinron* in terms of Japanese culture itself. Be the explanation one of those mentioned or a combination of them, my concern here is more with the acceptance and prevalence of the *nihonjinron*, especially in the 1970s.

Dale, a conspicuous critic of the *nihonjinron* attempts at explaining the dimensions of the *nihonjinron* to the outsider:

imagine this as something which filtered down through newspapers and regional media to everyday life, and you have a picture of what has taken place in Japan, where almost any discussion from the formally academic to the colloquial market-place exchange can reflect this ideology of nationhood.

(Dale 1986:II)

Although Dale might be suspected of overstatement, it should be accepted that writings of the *nihonjinron* "comprise an industry whose producers are intellectuals and its consumers are the mass" (Befu 1983:253). It has been against this kind of background of mass consumption of 'Japaneseness' that the mass promotion of invented Japanese traditions could succeed.

Nevertheless, while the general 'spirit' of 'Japaneseness' may partially explain the popularity of other 'products' of the same kind, such as the kimono and 'traditional-Japanese' wedding costumes in the 1970s, I will argue that in order to fully understand the wide acceptance of such 'invented traditions', it is necessary to study more carefully the ideas promoted through this 'spirit'. I have argued that while critics of the *nihonjinron* paid much attention to the role of academics and to *nihonjinron* as an 'academic issue', showing their limited academic value (see Mouer and Sugimoto 1986), less attention was given to the role of politicians and business elites. However, some of the critics, and among them Mouer and Sugimoto themselves (1983:277) have alluded to the involvement of the political and business establishment.

The important role played by business elites in diffusing as well as systematizing ideas of Japanese distinctiveness was recently discussed by Yoshino (1992). Their interest in the *nihonjinron* is manifested in the existence of a fairly large market for successful company chairmen, top managers and internationally active businessmen who publish books on their experiences (Yoshino 1992:70). An epitome of such a literature is Akio Morita's (1986) book 'Made in Japan', the

autobiography of the founder of Sony Corporation. The involvement of business elites can be understood in the light of the shift of emphasis among the country's elite from "GNP as a symbol of restored national confidence" to the "rediscovery of national identity in cultural terms" (Yoshino 1992:163). Closely related to this shift of emphasis was the belief that Japan's economic success was caused largely by 'Japanese style' management and business, which elites accentuated as being a product of Japan's cultural tradition. The main themes promoted by spokesmen of this rediscovered national identity, among them academics like Nakane (1984), were those of 'harmony', 'consensus' and 'group orientedness'. In other words "familism has come to replace the GNPism" (Kawamura 1980:55). Indeed, the interest of businessmen in the *nihonjinron* is not surprising since the social structure portrayed in this literature has much to do with Japanese management and business practices. "In other words, the company is often regarded in the *nihonjinron* as a typical social context in which the Japanese cultural ethos or underlying culture is 'externalised'" (Yoshino 1992:138). This aspect of representation of 'Japaneseness' was mainly discussed in chapter 3 of this thesis, where we saw how often cultural continuity is used as an explanatory device in company studies.

This study did not attempt to examine businessmen's attitudes towards the ideas of the *nihonjinron*. However, we could observe some examples of the receptiveness of such ideas. One was the case of the kimono school owner who insisted on portraying her school in terms of 'vertical' organization, as if she was directly quoting from Nakane (1984). It is not my concern here whether the kimono entrepreneur had read Nakane or the like. What is important, however, is that such ideas were at the background of the way she managed her organization or at least of how she presented it to an outside 'Western' researcher. Presenting the 'ideal type' as reality itself seems to be not very different from the way in which writers of the *nihonjinron*, like Nakane

(1984) herself as well as others, tend to present an ideal picture of Japanese society. Such an ideal portrayal was given for example by Vogel (1979) in his book on 'Japan as Number One'. Another example of the idea of 'vertical' society was the way in which the owner of Cinderella beauty shop repeated over and over again to her employees that in Japan "up is up and down is down" (*ue wa ue shita wa shita*). Other ideas of 'Japanese uniqueness' which were observed to be promoted in the beauty shop were those of a Japanese way of apprenticeship, and the idea of family-like company.

Another significant component of representations of 'Japaneseness' is concerned with Japanese aesthetics. This aspect was discussed in connection with the attempts made by kimono schools to acquire an artistic definition related to the 'unique' Japanese aesthetic terms: *wabi* and *sabi*. We could also discern a special attitude towards 'Japanese' beauty in the beauty shop context. An excellent example is the beauty shop owner's view that any Japanese girl, no matter how attractive she actually is, will be beautiful in *uchikake* and wig. Indeed, we should not ignore the fact that such kind of conviction can serve business interests as we have seen in both cases of the beauty shop and the kimono school. However, on the other hand, it is difficult to regard the *ō-sensei's* view as a mere deceit. It seems that when expressing this belief she sincerely accepted it, or had come to accept it in her many years in the brides' business.

Such views of Ceremonial Occasions entrepreneurs of their own pursuits may suggest that rather than regarding the people involved as mere cynical promoters of 'invented traditions' in which they themselves do not believe, we might need to look at things in a more literal way. Indeed, we could observe cases in which businessmen were consciously inventing, as in the case of introducing wigs for the Coming of Age Day, as well as in other incidents of 'playing' with tradition. However, it seems that, in general, the people involved in 'invention' on a daily basis - such as kimono dressers, bride makers, wedding parlour employees and managers - are so immersed in the idea

of Japanese 'uniqueness' themselves, that the 'invention' can not be explained only in 'conspiracy' terms.

Looking at things from the perspective of business elites, it is rather obvious how they can benefit from promoting ideas such as 'harmony', 'consensus' and 'familism'. As it was put by another critic of the *nihonjinron*: "the ruling elements in Japan, and particularly managers of large corporations, are obviously aware of how the notion that consensus or group orientedness are Japanese norms can be utilized to discipline members of the organizations they lead" (Kawamura 1980:159). This kind of affiliation between the *nihonjinron* and business elites was well observed by others as well (see Kinzley 1991, Yoshino 1992:ch 8.). However, I would argue that while the 'invention of new culture of industrial harmony' (Kinzley 1991) was scrutinized, another kind of invention was neglected. The Japanese establishment and especially Japanese business elites have been as much interested in fostering an image of 'homogeneity' as they have been interested in promoting ideas of 'harmony'. An apparent manifestation of the 'homogeneity myth' is the "image of Japan as a classless society, with only a slight difference between rich and poor" (Van Wolferen 1989:351).

The 'homogeneity myth' has been promoted by proponents of the *nihonjinron* who present an image of a 'classless' society. This image was portrayed in a book about the 'Japan that can say NO' which caused an uproar in the United States. The book which was initially a product of a collaboration between a politician, Shintaro Ishihara, and a businessman, Akio Morita, the president of Sony Corporation - who, as was mentioned, had already published another '*nihonjinron*-style' book aimed towards an overseas audience (Morita 1986) - was finally published by the former (Ishihara 1991).² In it, among other elaborate examples of Japanese uniqueness and of possible 'lessons for America', Ishihara writes: "In any case, few countries have as egalitarian a class structure as Japan" (1991:81).

The idea of a 'homogeneous' Japanese is easily translated into the idea of 'homogeneous' consumer. This homogeneity of the consumer was very cleverly used by the wedding industry in promoting 'uchikake for everyone', especially in the seventies, when it coupled with the propounding of the idea that "all will benefit equally from Japan's new wealth" by bureaucrats and politicians (Goodman 1992:11). Interestingly enough, this kind of view about the 'classless' Japanese society was offered to me by a leading Ceremonial Occasion entrepreneur while sitting in her executive car driven by her private chauffeur. Explaining how the *uchikake*, worn only by the samurai class in the past, has become available to everyone, she said, "Now, everybody is the same, now all the Japanese have become ordinary people (*futsū no hito*), including samurai". She later expanded her explanation:

Japan has become much better for the people after the war. Since democracy started, everyone is equal. So the people that were discriminated against in the past and longed (*akogare*) for *uchikake* now want their daughters to wear it.

We have seen how this so-called 'yearning' (*akogare*) that the Japanese allegedly have for wearing 'traditional-Japanese' bridal costumes as well as kimono in general, has been massively manipulated by the Ceremonial Occasions industry and other related businesses, such as kimono schools. This 'yearning' is obviously strongly related to ideas of 'Japaneseness' which itself was mainly promoted for Japanese women.

Inverse Orientalism and The Japanese Woman

When discussing Japanese women and kimono I have suggested that the Japanese woman has come to play a role similar to other 'eternal' symbols of Japan, such as mount Fuji and cherry blossoms (Robins-Mowry 1983:xviv). I have

argued that this kind of attitude towards Japanese women may be understood in the light of what was referred to as 'inverse Orientalism' (Moeran 1990:1-2), and may well be called 'inverse Japanism'. This has two channels, the one is the abstract or 'monolithic' (Mouer and Sugimoto 1986:132) way in which the Japanese see the West, and the other is the Japanese own 'presentation of selves' which includes what I have described as ideas (and practices) of 'Japaneseness'. We have seen how ideas about the 'Japanese woman' - which were not that different from ideas of other men about other 'Oriental women' (Said 1991:6) - first held by foreign visitors to Japan, were, in turn, projected on Japan and expressed by the Japanese themselves. In this respect it may be interesting to 'inverse' Said's own view of Orientalism. Whereas Said argues that Orientalism "has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" [Western] world" (1991:12), I will maintain that 'inverse Orientalism' (or Japanism) has more to do with Japan than it has to do with the West. Taking this perspective, it is possible to see the Japanese own representations of self not as a mere 'mirror' image of the West but in a more complex manner.

An interesting aspect of this kind of representation of 'Japaneseness' is the 'feminine' aspect of the Oriental or the Japanese image. In the writings of the *nihonjinron*, the West is defined as 'masculine' whereas Japan is usually defined as 'feminine' (Dale 1986:45). This point is of particular interest since the *nihonjinron* are mainly concerned with the male world of Japan and women barely figure in them. "The male world described is however, revealingly feminized, and brute masculinity in its varied forms is palmed off as distinctively characteristic of the 'West'" (Dale 1986:120). If women are to be mentioned at all, it is only 'woman as mother'.

These kinds of distinctions between 'Japan' and the 'West' apply to other familiar images of 'male' and 'female' such as the identification of Japan with 'nature' (*shizen*) (Dale 1986:51) which is typical of the image of women (see

Ortner 1974). Another distinction is that which identifies the West with 'universality' (*fuhensei*), and Japan with 'particularity-uniqueness' (*tokushusei*). Universalistic interests are very typically attributed to men, who are said to control the 'public' domain, while women are confined to the 'domestic' domain (Rosaldo 1974). Although the 'domestic' versus 'public' model has been recently largely criticized, none the less it "remains a salient feature of many different types of analysis...[and marks out] a clear domain for women within the material presented" (Moore 1988:21). Moreover, the same distinction between men and women was offered by Japanese scholars who suggested the kimono as a 'domestic' attire, and as such suitable for women. In advancing such an explanation the Japanese male scholars have yet again perpetuated images of Japanese women.

Japanese Representations of Women

An interesting manifestation of the distinction between the 'public' and 'private' domains can be observed in the slogan 'Good Wife, Wise Mother' (*ryōsai kenbo*). This phrase was used by the kimono school owner to define her expectations from brides-to-be who take kimono lessons. Interestingly enough, although the term was used by her as well as by others as 'uniquely' Japanese, it has actually been adopted from the West in the Meiji era. It is possible to argue that the link suggested in the phrase between women and the domestic domain can be explained as a Western influence. Moore (1988:22) argues that the rigid division of social life into 'domestic' and 'public' spheres owes much to the pervasive Western influence of the nineteenth-century social theory (Moore 1988:22). However, what is interesting for us here is less the origins of the phrase or the debate about the applicability of the distinction 'domestic'/'public' in feminist theory, than the term's implications in present day Japan. It seems obvious that the popular phrase was used by the kimono school owner exactly in a manner which emphasizes this distinction. Women

are part of the 'domestic' world, and taking kimono lessons or other similar pursuits, such as flower arranging, will help refine their 'domesticity'.

Indeed, considering kimono and taking kimono lessons as 'domestic' pursuits is also shared by the women involved themselves. I have mentioned that there are more mothers to daughters working in the beauty shop than mothers to boys. Being a mother to a daughter was actually given as a significant motivation for studying and practising kimono dressing. These women saw it as one of their domestic obligations to be able to dress their own twenty-year-old daughters for their Coming of Age ceremonies.

The relations between mothers and daughters as significant in perpetuating gender distinctions have been emphasized by feminist writers (see Chodorow (1974), Rosaldo (1974)). Although the 'natural' and 'universal' relation between mother and child has been widely criticized in feminist anthropology (see Moore 1988: 25-30), it is hard to ignore the 'cultural' aspects of motherhood. As it was put by Moore herself: "the category of 'mother', like that of 'woman', is a cultural construction" (1988:28). Lebra, an anthropologist who studied Japanese women has argued that:

By and large, local mothers tend to recycle their childhood experience as daughters and sisters into rearing their own daughters and sons in such a way that the culturally standardized sex polarization perpetuates itself over generations..

(Lebra 1984a:185)

Thus, the attachment between mother and daughter may serve to perpetuate the subordinate position of women who "in most societies are defined relationally (as someone's wife, mother, daughter-in-law..)" (Chodorow 1974:57-8). However, the same position may also be used as a source of power as offered by Kandiyoti (1988). I have explained how the relations between mothers and daughters as well as those between senior

bride-makers and novices can be interpreted in terms of 'bargaining with patriarchy'. But, women can gain power from their domesticity not only over other women, but also over men. Rosaldo suggests that especially in "societies where domestic and public spheres are firmly differentiated", of which Japan is clearly a case, "women may win power and value by stressing their differences from men" (1974:37). She continues:

By accepting and elaborating upon the symbols and expectations associated with their cultural definition, they may goad men into compliance, or establish a society unto themselves.

(Rosaldo 1974:37)

If one chooses to adopt this relatively 'optimistic' perspective of women's position in society, one may view those women who chose a feminine work as kimono dressers and bride makers and those who participate in feminine lessons for kimono dressing, as not very different from that of the American woman of the seventies who could "forge a public world of her own" by her involvement in charity and baking contests. (Rosaldo 1974:37). Although this study was not directly involved in the examination of the power of Japanese women, it seems that at least one point of departure in such a study should be the 'domestic' domain.

A word of caution should be added here. I have mentioned above the debate in feminist anthropology concerning such distinctions as that between 'domestic' and 'public'. However, I do want to emphasize that in my use of such terms I am referring to cultural representations and not to any universal axioms about gender relations. The importance of such representations was recognized by Moore who argued that:

Cultural representations of the sexes clearly have a determining influence on the status and position of women in society..

(Moore 1988:35)

Considering the 'domestic'/ 'public' distinction as a cultural representation, it is interesting to look at the power women can get from such kinds of representations.

The Japanese Woman and 'Traditionality'

Kimono as an attire and kimono dressing as a pursuit were not, of course, defined in this study only as 'feminine'. Another distinct characteristic of kimono which was described as being constantly reproduced by interested agents was its 'traditionality'. Related to this, I have argued that Japanese women have been given the role of 'repositories of the past'. Indeed, the female figure has always been in the midst of the conflict between tradition and modernity in Japan. In an introduction to a recent volume concerning Japanese women from 1600 to 1945 Bernstein writes:

Indeed, Japan may be unique in having waged such a conscious discourse on women for such a long period of time, for since the early days of the Tokugawa rulers the "woman question" has engaged political leaders and the intellectual and moral elite alike.

(Bernstein 1991:13)

The intensive concern in the "woman question" has resulted in the aptitude of women to role playing which was mentioned in chapter 5. As it is put by Bernstein:

With their gender roles publicly prescribed, scrutinized, lauded, or condemned in government edicts, law codes, moral tracts, slogans, short stories, theatrical performances, folk tales, family histories, magazines and films, Japanese women have never been without clear role models. Put another way, they have never been left alone.

(Bernstein 1991:14)

An interesting historical manifestation for the centrality of women in the discourse of traditionality versus Westernization or Japaneseness versus non-Japaneseness was the debate over the Modern Girl (*moga*) in the late 1920s and early 1930s (Silverberg 1991). To quote again from Bernstein's introduction to the same volume:

It is interesting that a female symbol came to portray all the contradictory values that were pulling Japanese society apart in the interwar period. The modern girl, half Japanese but also vaguely Western, highlighted the message that had first gained currency in the Meiji era - namely, that as women go, so go the "traditional family", Japanese values, and national unity. The modern girl was an "emblem for the threats to tradition", Silverberg concludes, "just as the 'good wife and wise mother' has stood for its endurance.

(Bernstein 1991:11)

The late 1920s Modern Girl, was, thus, "both Japanese and Western - or possibly neither", and as such did not only pose a "threat to tradition" but also "called into question the essentialism that subordinated the Japanese woman to the Japanese man" (Silverberg 1991:263). The wedding parlour bride, on the other hand, does not seem to pose any such threats. Like the Modern Girl, her body is 'packaged' in both Japanese and Western clothing, but unlike her, she does not play "with the principle of cultural or national difference" (Silverberg 1991:263). Contrary to that, her packaging which was explained in terms of 'consumerism' is part of a tendency in fashion for "a compromise between the need to innovate and the other need to change nothing in the fundamental order" (Baudrillard 1981:51). This inclination of fashion which itself is regarded by Baudrillard as "pernicious form of consumerism" results in "a game of change [in which] old and new are not relative to contradictory needs, [but] they are cyclical paradigms of fashion" (*Ibid*).

Indeed, this 'game' between old and new can be attributed to the general process of the 'production of traditions' in the Ceremonial Occasions industry. Concerning the modern bride, it results in a representation of a woman which is clearly distinguished from that of the Modern Girl. While the Modern Girl's Western appearance was an "emblem for the threats to tradition", the modern bride's 'Western' appearance - which has already become 'Westanese' -, as well as her 'Japanese' (or 'traditionese') appearance, are emblems for the endurance of the 'good wife and wise mother'.

Visual Representation and its Significance

The image of the Japanese bride is well projected in the various ways in which she is represented. I have discussed the bride's confining costumes which suit well her passive role in the wedding. Although we have seen that all other participants at the wedding, including the groom, are more passive in the parlour wedding than they were in home weddings, it is still obvious that the bride plays the most passive role. This image of a demure bride who is taken by the hand to her costume changes and who does not say a word nor touch her food during the reception, is well represented in wedding photography and wedding videos. Pinney describes sequences in central Indian wedding videos in which "the bride becomes the focus of the camera [which] stand out as spaces of visual pleasure removed from the ordinary flow of events.." (1992:29). The inclination of the bride (or the female) to 'looked-at-ness' has been highlighted concerning women's role in films (see Mulvey 1989). This distinction between men and women was described by Linda Williams who argued that "men lend themselves easily to 'doing' whereas women seem more suited to being 'seen'" (quoted in Pinney:1992:29).

The division active/male and passive/female is represented in the roles of the groom and the male go-between (*nakōdo*), as opposing those of the bride and the female go-between. While the men give speeches, eat their food and even

have some chats with other guests during the reception, the females are very quiet throughout the day. A similar distinction was observed for the Coming of Age Day. Whereas boys wear Western suits and as such are identified with the (modern-Western) active world of work, girls who wear kimono are associated with the passive formal world of the kimono in which movement and work are considered almost impossible. It is girls who are dressed in order to be *looked at*. Indeed it is only girls who are encouraged by interested businesses - such as photo studios, *gojokai* organizations, kimono rental shops - as well as by their own families, to be photographed. The precious representation of their formal 'attainment of adulthood' is not only to be kept in the family album, but is also sent to relatives and may be used in a future match-making (*miai*) procedure.

I have discussed the extensive use of photography in the wedding as well as in other ceremonial occasions like the Coming of Age Day. Bourdieu who regards the role of the camera as wholly connected to the structure of the family in a modern world, emphasizes the role of the camera in the 'sacred moments' of the 'cult of domesticity' such as weddings, christening or anniversaries (Krauss 1990:19). The camera is not regarded merely as a passive tool which exists in order to document or record, it is more active than that. Bourdieu sees the photographic record as an agent in the collective fantasy of family cohesion, and in that sense the camera is a projective tool, part of the theatre that the family constructs to convince itself that it is together and whole. "Photography itself", Bourdieu writes, "is most frequently nothing but the reproduction of the image that a group produces of its own integration." (quoted in Krauss 1990:19).

Wedding photographs and those of other ceremonial occasions may be regarded as reproducing the image of the family's integration. A few specific wedding photographs certainly play this kind of role. The formal studio family photograph is, of course, one of those representations. Other photographs, although not professional, but which have already

become a crucial part of each wedding album are also used to the same purpose. One of these photographs is that of the bride and groom posed in front of the boards which carry their houses' names, on their way from the waiting rooms - where the two families gathered separately - to the Photo studio and Shinto shrine. This photograph is considered too important to be left entirely in the hands of the unexperienced customers and the sales lady always takes care to create the right pose, and usually takes the photograph by herself in her own camera. This representation of the bride and groom serves to reproduce the image that 'in Japan weddings are between families, not between individuals'.

While Bourdieu's view of photography is clearly sociological, there is a different, less sociological, perspective which claims to a more distinct separation between the photograph - the sign, and its referent - the reality. Such a view is offered by Tagg:

The indexical nature of the photograph - the causative link between the pre-photographic referent and the sign - is therefore highly complex, irreversible, and can guarantee nothing at the level of meaning.

(Tagg 1988:3)

Threadgold (1990) who writes about 'feminine, masculine and representation' embraces Tagg's view about photography. She sees the photograph, not as a "simple reflection of a prior reality", but, as a "new and specific reality, a two-dimensional, positive paper print from a granular, chemical discolouration on translucent negative" (1990:6). She also sees representation, in general, in the same light:

Representation is always a process of signification, of semiosis, of meaning-making, but, like the sign, representations (which are in fact signs) can be 'taken' as referring to something else, something 'real', outside signification, something which was not made but is. This

is how a process of construction, of making meaning, comes to be interpreted as reference, referring to something that already exists. It is how representations come to be taken as realities.

(Threadgold 1990:2)

This kind of view allows us to look at wedding representations (as well as representations of women) not only as representing reality, but also as creating reality on their own. This 'second' 'reality' may be separated from any 'social' agent and indeed of 'aesthetic' quality. However, the possible existence of the 'something else' gives space for a deliberate creation of such a 'reality'. We have seen how manipulative the wedding producers can be when it comes to creating the 'right' representation in wedding videos. Moreover, it is even possible to argue that they manipulate the aesthetic medium itself. It seems that the wedding videos 'imitate' wedding photography in their stillness, immobility and confinedness. Pinney argues that "under certain conditions, [film and photography] are capable of imitating each other - that is, a certain practice of photography can come to look very much like a film and a certain type of film to resemble still photography" (1992:26).

Japanese wedding videos indeed resemble still photography. In other words, the video stays loyal to the 'framing' of the wedding. As we have seen, no 'backstage' representations are allowed, only the formal scenes: the Shinto ceremony and the reception, are recorded. Moreover, the wedding event is distinctly cut from any larger context. In this, Japanese wedding videos seem very different from central Indian videos, for example, as the latter include parts such as the arrival of the groom's bridal party, the procession around town and so forth (Pinney 1992:29). The Japanese wedding parlour video which does not include even the gathering of the guests, represents well the 'closeness'- 'windowless' wedding parlour's system as well as the

importance given to formal representation. The wedding is portrayed as an event fixed in time and space.

Following the description of a wedding day at the parlour, I argued that while Edwards regards the commercial wedding as a "window on social values" (1987, 1989:12), I prefer the image of a 'mirror'. While a window is transparent for the 'outsider' who is usually a Westerner, the 'mirror' image implies a representation which is intended firstly for the 'insiders'. I also argued that this 'mirror' is deliberately devised by the wedding producers. Wedding representations of all kind can be seen as part of this mirror which, as I have argued, is a 'mirror' to a peculiar thing called 'Japaneseness'.

This peculiar 'Japaneseness' is indeed represented in the packaged bride with her 'Western' and 'Japanese' costumes. It also composes the packaging of the whole 'total wedding'. In this packaging, the 'Western' does not necessarily reflect the Westernization of Japan as much as the 'Japanese' does not reveal its 'traditionality'. Whereas the 'Western', or indeed the 'Westanese' is a product of the abstract or 'monolithic' view of the West, the 'Japanese' - or 'traditionese' - is the product of notions of Japanese 'uniqueness'. Both products are carefully packaged by the Ceremonial Occasions industry and served to the Japanese customer as representations of his or her 'Japaneseness'.

Notes

1. According to Nomura Research Institute survey of 1978, using 1960 as an index, by 1977 annual publications of books in this genre increased fivefold (Befu 1983:254).

2. The book was published in English after an unauthorized translation of lectures carried by Akio Morita for his friend Shintaro Ishihara to his political support groups which were published in Japan in a million copies, caused a tumult in Washington. Consequently, Ishihara had decided to publish his authorized version in English while Morita, as Vogel - another conspicuous *nihonjinron* advocate - puts it in his preface to the authorized book, decided to "avoid any possible misunderstanding and to prevent any adverse commercial impact on Sony" and refused to allow his portion of the original (Ishihara:8-9).

APPENDIX:

MODERN KIMONO DRESSING

A. Instructions for Kimono Dressing:

1-4: Putting on the
long under-robe (*nagajuban*)



写真③



写真①

長襦袢の着付け方



写真④



写真②

1-7: Binding the kimono



写真①



写真③



写真④



写真⑦



写真⑥



写真⑤



写真②

留袖の着付け方

1-7: Putting on the obi



写真⑤



写真①



写真⑥



写真②



写真⑦



写真③



写真④

袋帯の二重太鼓の結び方

8-15: Binding the obi



写真①



写真⑪



写真⑧



写真⑫



写真⑨



写真⑮



写真⑬



写真⑩

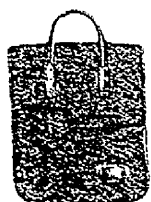
B. The small items necessary for kimono dressing
(komono)



すそよけ



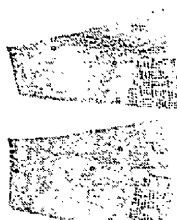
足袋



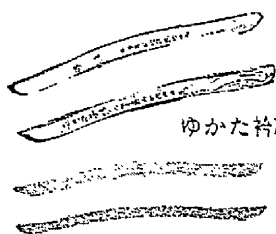
和装バック



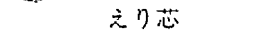
御たとう紙



伊達巻



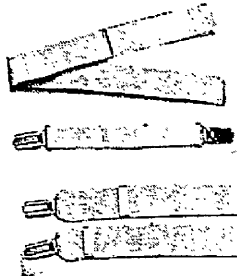
ゆかた袴



えり芯



ベルト通し かん



和装ベルト



ホームコート



肌じゅばん



前板



尚美姿(帯枕)



三点まくら



和装ブラジャー

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