

Letter From NEW YORKERS

Kimono in N.Y.C. by Susan Hamaker

The kimono is Japan's national garment, but it hasn't been the first choice for everyday wear since the Meiji Era (1868-1912), when the government encouraged the switch to Western-style clothing.



Luckily for kimono enthusiasts in the New York area, there are several places that make the garment accessible. Businesses such as Kimono House and KaedeNYC offer kimono rentals and sales, while the certified experts at Kimono Experience will dress you for special occasions.

For several years, Stephen Globus has opened Globus Washitsu to the public for exhibitions and special events featuring the latest in kimono fashion from Japan and worldwide. His most recent exhibition, Modern Samurai - Men's Kimono, was held last week, and showcased the innovative works of twelve international designers and stylists who presented men's kimono that were deeply rooted in tradition, yet boldly modern.

Currently, the Newark Museum is hosting a special exhibition, Kimono Refashioned: 1870s-Now!, which runs through January 6, 2019. Co-organized by the Kyoto Costume Institute and the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Kimono Refashioned offers a spectacular look at Japan's influence on global fashion, with pieces by Issey Miyake, Rei Kawakubo, Coco Chanel and Tom Ford for Gucci. (Susan Hamaker is the writer/editor of JapanCultureNYC, an English-language website for all things Japanese in New York.)

THE JAPAN VOICE

COOL JAPAN from New Yorkers' Viewpoints



Rachel Tretter, Associate Director of the Albertz Benda Gallery, looking at Yokoo's "Back of Heads" Series (1980). Photo by Ryoichi Miura

Tadanori Yokoo Death and Dreams Albertz Benda Gallery

Tadanori Yokoo's painting exhibition, held under the title of 'Death and Dreams' since September 6 at the Albertz Benda Gallery in Chelsea, ended on the 13th.

Twenty-one titled pieces of his work from the 1980s to present were showcased in portraits reminiscent of screen actresses from the good old days. In contrast with tableaux of context-dissociated scenes, his drawings of 'the mystery of love' and 'views of life and death' captured viewers with fear and awe. (Written by Ryoichi Miura/Translated by Kunio Shimura)

Tying the Japan-U.S. Culinary Industries Together Gohan Society's Ms. Kawano hosts dinner event Two chefs receive prestigious awards

Saori Kawano, the president of Korin, a company specializing in the selling of professional cooking knives and kitchen equipment, hosted a benefit dinner event for the non-profit organization Gohan Society at Brookfield Place on the night of October 10. There were over 130 chefs and volunteers combined, and in total, there were 510 attendees. Michael Anthony, a chef for the famous New York restaurant Gramercy Tavern, and Shinichiro Takagi, the owner of restaurant Zeniya in Kanazawa (Ishikawa Prefecture), received Ambassador Awards from U.N. Ambassador Yasuhisa Kawamura for their work in tying together the Japanese and American culinary industries.

At the event, the chefs of 28 New York first-class restaurants volunteered to cook the food. In addition, Japanese yellowtail, maguro tuna and Ozaki beef from Miyagi Prefecture were provided as a donation. The proceeds from this event reached \$35,000, and will be



used as expenses for future lectures and scholarship programs that send American chefs to Japan for training. Ms. Kawano commented, "It was because of everyone's good will that this wonderful event was made possible, and I am extremely grateful." (Photo and article by Ryoichi Miura)

From left: Michael Anthony, Michael Romano, U.N. Ambassador Yasuhisa Kawamura, Saori Kawano and Shinichiro Takagi

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TOKYO, KYOTO AND OSAKA RECOGNIZED WITH CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER'S 2018 READERS' CHOICE AWARD

On October 9, Condé Nast Traveler announced the results of its 31st Annual Readers' Choice Awards, including "The Best Cities in the World: Best Big Cities" list, featuring the Japanese cities of Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka ranked at #1, #2 and #12, respectively.

"This wonderful recognition of three of Japan's best cities demonstrates the continued interest in Japan as a top destination among U.S. travelers," stated Naohito Ise, Executive Director of the New York Office of Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO). "The JNTO will continue to work to inspire travelers to visit all of our cities, as well as lesser-known regions."

One of the most popular cities in the world, Japan's capital city of Tokyo is a thriving center of culture and innovation, which in June 2018 saw the opening of the world's first digital museum, the MORI Building DIGITAL ART MUSEUM. Kyoto, the former capital of Japan, offers rich history



throughout the city, alongside world-class restaurants and hotels, including the forthcoming openings of the Ace Hotel and the Park Hyatt Kyoto in 2019. The second largest metropolitan area in Japan, Osaka, is home to Osaka Castle, a rich local food scene and abundant nightlife offerings.

The 2018 Readers' Choice Awards are published exclusively on Condé Nast Traveler's website at www.cntraveler.com/rca, and are celebrated in the November 2018 issue on newsstands nationwide on October 16.

As the official tourism board of Japan, Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) is involved in a wide range of promotional activities to encourage international travelers to visit Japan. Through a variety of campaigns and initiatives, JNTO is inspiring more American travelers to visit Tokyo, Kyoto and beyond. (Written by Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO))

Advertisement

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The Government of Japan Should Insist on Complete Innocence

As presented in the preceding article, the Government of Japan has been confronted with a thick wall in the United Nations. The principal factor for this is the fact that the comfort women sex-slaves theory, initiated by left wing activists from Japan, is the common understanding among those within the U.N.. In addition, the Government had not devoted much effort on this issue, and its presentations have been inconsistent. As the sex-slaves theory has been the mainstream thinking, not only within the U.N., but also Euro-American nations, overcoming this existing notion requires enormous work. For this enormous task, the Government has been expressing merely simple statements such as "The comfort women were not forcibly recruited," "They were not sex-slaves," and "This mistaken notion had been spread by misinformation propagated by Asahi Newspaper." They have not been presenting any further details about them. In addition, they have kept apologizing on this issue. They must be feeling resistance within themselves to turning around its policy and insisting innocence.

However, for solving the comfort women problem from the ground up, there is no way other than working on the basis of true historical fact. The fact was that at that time in Japan prostitution was not illegal (as in many other countries), it was a publicly recognized commercial

activity, and the comfort women system was an extension of the domestic system applied for Japanese soldiers. It performed the role of protecting local women and girls from violence, protecting soldiers from sexual diseases and for protecting military secrets from leaking. Moreover, the prostitution system frequently had a role for unfortunate young women for turning their life into a wealthy or blessed life. This was applied not only in Japan proper, but also in Taiwan and Korea. It was not considered a social problem at all at that time.

The comfort women problem started with Japan when Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa went to South Korea and made apologies in 1992, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono made his "Statement", and Prime Minister Murayama set up "The Asian Women's Fund", establishing Japan's policy of "apologies and compensations." At that time, Seiji Yoshida's My War Crimes book was still believed by many as his actual experience, confirming, erroneously, the sex-slaves theory. However, by reviewing historical documents, no evidence was found to confirm the sex-slaves theory. Nonetheless, the policy of a nation could not be turned around overnight. The Government of Japan fell into a dilemma. Thus, the way the Government decided to pursue was, without denying their former policy of "apolo-

gies and compensations," but adding new statements such as "They were not forcibly recruited," "Comfort women were not sex slaves," or "The number was much less than 200,000." For those who hear these statements, they could not understand these statements because they were contradictory with the policy of "apologies and compensations." Especially, the committee members of the U. N., were totally left at a loss because of the inconsistency of Japan's statements. If the Government presented their case on the basis of historical facts, they have no way other than throwing away the policy of "apologies and compensations."

As politicians, it might be hard to throw away the policy of the predecessors. But, for the sake of the country, they must do. As the Abe Administration confirmed with a study in 2014, the "Kono Statement" was not based on historical facts, but was made on the basis of political intentions by the two countries. Moreover, the Japanese politicians have, erroneously, a sense of guilt toward Korea concerning Japan's past annexation of Korea. Prime Minister Miyazawa must have made apologies under this kind of sentiment, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono as well. In recognition of these points, the Government of Japan should proclaim loudly that the policy of "apologies and compensations" were

made by mistake and was not based on historical fact, and that, therefore, Japan is totally innocent concerning comfort women.

The Government may need some time for making these new statements. There is a need of private sector providing articles and books on comfort women in English for spreading to the U.N. and the world. In fact, we have been doing just these types of activities. When these efforts are done to some extent, the Government should change their policy and proclaim complete innocence. The effort of the Government has been achieved to some extent. In the "Final Observations" of the U.N. Committee for Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the phrase "sex slaves" was not used at all.

It should be recognized that when one debates on the comfort women issue outside of Japan, there is a big gap in its understanding. The common sense in Japan is not a common sense abroad. About comfort women, many books have been published and many articles have been written in Japan, but they have not been introduced outside. There is a big gap. We are striving to narrow the gap by working day and night.

Koichi Mera, Ph. D. President, GAHT-US Corporation