RESPIRATION
- BREATHING LIFE INTO OBJECTS AND TRADITIONS.
A study into person-product attachment in clothing and the tradition of mottainai in Japan.

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Master’s Thesis
30 op
Fashion & Collection Design
Department of Design
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2016
This thesis is a study into the mechanisms of attachment between a person and a garment. It examines the topic through multi-disciplinary theories, as well as through the vitality of traditions and crafts in Japan. One key aspect of the thesis is the study of ‘mottainai’, a Japanese concept concerning regret towards wasting materials, effort or skills.

The thesis is divided into six parts, of which the first five parts are comprised of theoretical and empirical research work. The sixth part is a complimentary part for the research work. It introduces conceptual and theoretical samples of long life design garments, as well as the theoretical and artistic background for them.

The person-product attachment has been studied before, but this thesis is looking at the same topic from the point of view of garments. It also introduces a cultural insight to the topic, through the traditions and current practices in Japan. The thesis aims to find common attributes for clothes that fall under the category ‘long life design’, and which are dear for their owners, i.e. ‘mottainai’. It also aims to provide ideas to clothing designers and retailers interested in sustainable design, on how to prolong the life cycle of their garments.

An extensive literature research, interviews and online data-collection was carried out in order to collect the theoretical background for this thesis. The design of the conceptual and theoretical garments is based on conclusions drawn from the research work, as well as on observations and physical trials. The designs were visually inspired by three different components; the ancient Shinto-religion, the female Ama divers in Japan, and the demolished old main wing of hotel Okura in Tokyo.

**Keywords:** person-product attachment, sustainable fashion, Japanese textiles, Japanese clothing, mottainai
Taiteen maisterin opinnäytteen tiivistelmä

Tekijä: Päivi Merviö

Työn nimi: ReSpiration. Breathing life into objects and traditions. A study into person-product attachment in clothing and the tradition of mottainai in Japan.

Laitos: Muotoilun laitos

Koulutusohjelma: Fashion & Collection Design

Vuosi: 2016

Kieli: englanti

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii kiintymyksen mekanismeja ihmisen ja vaatteen välillä. Se tutkii aiheutta monialaisen teorioiden, sekä Japanissa elinvoimaisina jatkuvien perinteiden ja käsityötaitojen kautta. Yksi työn keskeisistä näkökulmista on syventyminen japanilaiseen ‘mottainai’-käsitteeseen, mikä tarkoittaa katumuksen tunnetta materiaalien, vaivamöön tai taitojen hukkaan heittämistä kohtaan.

Opinnäytetyö on jaettu kuuteen osaan, mistä ensimmäiset viisi osaa koostuvat teoreettisesta ja empiirisestä tutkimustyöstä. Kuudes osa on täydentävä osuu tutkimustyölle. Se esittelee konseptuaalisia ja teoreettisia esimerkkejä pitkäikäisen muotoilun (long life design) vaatteista, kuin myös niiden teoreettiset ja taitteelliset taustat.


Avainsanat: käyttäjä-tuotesuhde, kestävä muoti, japanilaiset tekstiilit, japanilaiset vaatteet, mottainai
I would like to express my gratitude to the Scandinavia-Japan Sasakawa Foundation and the Japan-Finland Society in Tokyo for the Chuyo Watanabe grant I received to assist me in the construction of this thesis.
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“Truth is Both Old and New.”
- Sōetsu Yanagi
PART 1: INTRODUCTION

In my life three aspects have almost always intertwined together in a way or another: costumes and fashion, environmental issues and an Japanese culture.

My mother has always made beautiful things, such as handmade bobbin lace, whereas my father has always repaired and built various items and my grandmother has made meticulous oil paintings. They have all taught me the value of effort, materials and patience. At the same time I have admired historical costumes and worn elaborate and imaginative costumes on my childhood birthdays, and created stage outfits together with my mother for our elementary school drama club. Animals, I have always loved dearly, and as a thirteen-year-old I wrote an extensive report on nature conservation instead of boy band introductions for our literature class in junior high. Japanese phenomenons, objects and things have fascinated me from childhood—without realising they were Japanese. By now, I have done internships and exchange studies in Japan and travelled there many times for holidays. I also have a family now in Japan, as my husband is Japanese. All of these factors have molded me into what I am now: environmentally aware, crafts-appreciating clothing designer still at the start of my career, endlessly interested in Japanese aesthetics and phenomenons. All of these aspects become intertwined also in this Master’s thesis.

I have studied clothing and fashion related issues for over a decade. At the beginning of the 21st century fast fashion chains and clothing production moving mainly to China was the main topic in education and media. Already then I had mixed feelings about this change in fashion industry - on the other hand there was excitement for all kinds of new possibilities, such as the emergence of new channels for global marketing and material sourcing, but on the other hand there was also nervousness over future employment and growing piles of textile waste. Today, in year 2016, I feel a shift in attitudes within the society and the media. The ethics of consuming and fast fashion is being questioned, and due to the growing awareness of environmental issues people are demanding for actions towards a more ethical and ecological society. From this same year, 2016, textile waste can no longer be taken to landfills in Finland, but it must be recycled or repurposed.

Lengthening the life of an object, or cherishing the life of an object, is in the main role in my thesis. Personally I feel the humankind has walked on the path of growing production rates and mass-consuming for so long that it is time to take a look and reconsider the way we manufacture, consume, use and think of items. I believe that by combining new methods and materials to old knowledge and values, new kind of products and consumption models can be formed.

I am interested in what makes people connect with their objects, so as not to discard them. Which mechanisms and factors create bonds between people and objects, which are the attributes of such clothing, that will be cherished and mended, time after time? How do people make emotional connections to clothing? Which are the triggers to initiate these bonds? How can these features and triggers be intentionally implemented into clothing? Do cherished pieces of clothing have similar characteristics, despite of time and place?

In researching these questions I hope to find ways to diminish the amount of discarded clothing and textile waste. My aim is to research how the life-span of clothing could be lengthened, and what people appreciate in pieces of clothing. I am especially interested in what are the clothes that people wear and use, not only preserve.

The Japanese concept of ‘mottainai’ is at the core of my thesis. The Japanese ideal of ‘mottainai’ basically means the sense of regret concerning waste. The word or expression itself could be translated, in its simplest form, to English as “waste not, want not” as an example. It encompasses the aesthetics of using and reusing materials wisely, beautifully, and respectfully until they are completely spent (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 15). Mottainai, an old Buddhist word, includes a strong sense of respect and appreciation towards materials, and is thus also connected to the ancient and animistic belief of Japanese Shinto religion, that all objects have souls. This leads me to wonder whether clothes could also have “souls”?

The Japanese have always had a close relationship with their environment. As an island nation they receive their livelihood from nature, but are also under the mercy of natural conditions. People respect and cherish nature, and also benefit from it. In Japan natural disasters can happen any day and change the course of life. This sense of lingering threat makes one value life, work and effort, and it makes each day count. This can be seen also in the effort put into making materials and objects. Carefully manufactured items have a long life-span, and they spark a sense of respect in the users.

I have conducted my thesis partly in Japan, where I have visited museums, galleries, designer’s and craftsmen’s studios in addition to research based on literature. I have been on a quest to find out the meaning of ‘mottainai’, bonds between objects and people, as well as the work cherishing attitude of Japanese craftsmen. What creates the sense of mottainai, what makes Japanese craftsmen work so meticulously, and can all this be transferred into global contemporary fashion design? Can new ways of encouraging alterations and repairs to clothing, or new ways to think and create collection design be found? How should designers and manufacturers adapt to this change?

I had various options in mind when giving the name for my thesis. One of the working titles was Ishu-Monogatari, a word play between Japanese words issho-mono, meaning an “eternal object” or “an object for life” and monogatari, meaning ‘story’ or ‘tale’. Another possible title was Rioma, meaning “forever mine” in Finnish, including the Japanese term iti for ‘chic’. The final name, ReSpiration, was inspired by a sentence written by Thomas P. Kasulis in his book ‘Shinto-The Way Home’: “Ritual breathes life into the spiritual, ritual is re-spiration.” (Kasulis, 2004, 168). The name expresses continuity - it encompasses the meanings of spirit, spirituality, breathing, eternity, and life itself. It also connects the theoretical and visual backgrounds of this thesis together; the aspiration for long life design, the symbolical and theoretical influence from mottainai and Shinto, the struggle of the Ama divers, and the beautifully crafted, now lost hotel Okura. I hope it is also a relatively multicultural name, which sends a message without additional explanations. Symbolically it is breathing new life and spirit into traditional materials, techniques, endangered cultures and the garments themselves.
1.1. THE AIM OF THE WORK

In my thesis I aim to state that in order for items (in the case of my thesis, clothing, textiles and accessories) to be appreciated and cherished, there needs to be emotional connections between the consumers and the products. I also deal with the slow fashion concept and claim it is better not only for the environment, but also for the general happiness of consumers. I am concentrating on these topics mainly from the point of view of Japanese culture and aesthetics, as a central concept for my thesis, ‘mottainai’, is of Japanese origin, and a long tradition of appreciation towards materials and objects is eminent in Japanese culture. There are also many brands and artisans in Japan who utilize the slow fashion concept without actually marketing it as such, or consciously striving for it for commercial purposes.

My thesis will cover the topics of so called ‘long life design’, ‘new’ or ‘silent luxury’, ‘slow fashion’ as well as the Japanese concept ‘mottainai’ as a reaction against the environmentally unsustainable fast fashion. I was interested in the ways people get attached to their possessions, and to clothing in particular. How do people make emotional connections to clothing? Which are the triggers to initiate these bonds? Can these features and triggers be intentionally implemented into clothing? In researching these questions I hoped to find ways to diminish the amount of discarded clothing and textile waste. In practice this meant studying and implementing traditional and new skills in crafts, upcycling and finding quality materials, and finding ways how the producing and consuming of clothes could be done in a way that would evoke appreciation and feelings of fondness towards them. I believe that the basic reasons why connections and bonds are made with objects, are something permanent, thus understanding the mechanism and nature of these factors would be important in developing new, sustainable products.

I have been investigating these themes through Japanese aesthetics, drawing especially from Japanese traditions and the Shinto-belief. My visual inspiration is built from three different sources; the Japanese Ama-divers, the demolished Hotel Okura in Tokyo and features from the Shinto-religion.

I have been involved with Japanese culture, aesthetics and way of life for over ten years, and want to deepen my knowledge in this field. My BA-level thesis, ‘Shiosai’, concentrated on Japanese aesthetics and particularly on the ‘beauty of decay’ (‘wabi-sabi’), and the clothing worn by peasants. In Shiosai I concentrated mainly on the shapes of traditional clothing, implementing them to modern clothing, as well as re-using materials, in that time second hand kimono. This time I have studied the traditional Japanese methods and concepts to understand the relationships between clothing and people, and to use them as inspirational background. My aim is to study old and new methods, and merge them together to create something new, as well as hopefully invent new concepts, new visions for the future.

In this thesis I wanted to go deeper into the philosophy of clothing and particularly into the Japanese concept of ‘mottainai’. Simply put, the term means “the sense of regret concerning waste”. Mottainai is an old Buddhist word, also connected to the Japanese Shinto religion, that all objects have souls. As the current scale of textile waste is unbearable, I am interested in this mottainai concept as a solution to the question how to make people feel emotionally connected to their clothing. I hope and believe that the era of so called ‘fast fashion’ is tailing off, and people will start appreciating quality and durability once again. Through my thesis I hope to a) find common denominators for the emergence of emotional connections between clothing and people, b) to find reasons why people keep or discard clothing, c) to design clothing that encourages emotional connections and keeps people from discarding them. My own belief is, that versatile items made from quality materials, with interesting characteristics will stand the test of time. The Japanese traditional skills and crafts are of very high quality, and also ecological thinking has been naturally present in Japanese traditional design and thinking for thousands of years. Clothing has been re-inforced with decorative patchwork to make it last longer, items have been re-used for different purposes, the clothing is folded flat, thus saving space. As saving space will also save energy nowadays (in transport for example), I am interested in this aspect as well - flat clothing, that will become three dimensional when worn.

Consuming and behaviour related to consuming has been widely researched and studied. Often the aim has been to understand what sells, why it sells and who buys, in order to make better strategies and to grow profits. The point of view for an environmentally and ethically conscious designer is however different; the interest lies within finding out what is conserved, why is it conserved and who conserves what. How to make garments, which morph into beloved treasures, which will never end up in landfills?

Due to my background and interests, it was clear to me ever since I started studying in the MA-program, that my thesis will cover a topic somehow related to Japanese culture. I did however want to finish with a work, that speaks a global language and is not branded solely on one country or one era. My aim was to create something, that can also benefit and inspire others, but also reflect me and my values as a person and as a designer.

“How to make garments, which morph into beloved treasures, which will never end up in landfills?”

1.2. STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

The thesis consists of a written part and of a small theoretical collection of items; carefully considered treasure trunk of clothes which form a small collection of “wearable artifacts”.

The thesis is divided in six parts; in the first part I will explain the background and structure of the work, in the second part I will see how our consuming habits have changed, how person-product attachment and emotional connections to objects are born, and which phenomena are occurring at the moment to challenge consuming habits and the cycle of fast fashion. The third part deals with the mottainai concept, Shinto-religion and Japanese traditions, and their influence on textiles, clothing and person-product attachment. In the fourth part I will explain about my empirical research work, conducted both in Japan and in Finland. The written, i.e. the theoretical part of the thesis ends with the fifth part, where I analyse my findings, present my conclusions and where I also suggest some future scenarios and ideas.

The sixth part introduces the designs and the process behind them. In it I am introducing the Japanese Ama-divers and the demolished Okura hotel, which have been a visual inspiration for my work. I will also show how the findings based on my theoretical research have influenced the design of the products.

1.3. DATA, METHOD AND EXECUTION

I have worked with my thesis in various locations both in Japan and in Finland, and because of this I have had to carefully consider and coordinate which parts of the thesis I can and should pursue, when and where.

My work with the thesis started with data collection in Japan, where I have collected literature and visual materials, as well as physical materials for the designed products; where I have visited exhibitions,
I have continued collecting and reviewing literature in Finland, and part of the design work and material manipulations, such as dyeing and knitting, have been done in Finland, at the Aalto University studios. Back in Tokyo I have continued with designing, writing and testing with materials, as well as sewing some prototypes to test my ideas.

As I have had to relocate several times during the execution of this thesis, it has also proved to be an exercise in identifying what is truly essential for the project. From the beginning I have had to consider which books, magazines and other materials, which fabrics and other tools are necessary for the completion of this thesis. This has also correlated with the theme of the thesis, as I have also had to weigh which objects are important to me, which objects are mottainai.

1.3.1. RESEARCH BASED ON LITERATURE

I collected and studied a vast amount of literature -such as books, newspaper articles, websites, pamphlets and images- to understand the topics featured in my thesis. The literature I have reviewed for this thesis is multidisciplinary - it spans from the fields of design, textiles and fashion to history, economy and social psychology. I have kept a keen eye on various newspapers and websites and bookmarked an extensive list of articles on current phenomena in society, which in my opinion relate to the topics featured in my thesis. I have used both academic literature and other resources, such as newspaper articles, as reference material for the thesis. In some cases newspaper articles and websites offer the most acute information on certain topics, and therefore I have also used a relatively extensive amount of such references within this thesis.

In Tokyo I spent hours at the library of the National Institute of Informatics (Tōkyō daigaku jōhōgaku kenkyūjo, NII), the Japan Foundation library, and at the National Diet Library reading literature and writing notes. The Japan Foundation especially has a good selection of books written in English about topics concerning Japanese society and culture. I also made a whole book and magazine findings at Japanese book shops, which have their dedicated sections for Japanese design, arts, religion and handicrafts. Japanese magazines often feature articles and images related to crafts, design and making things by hand, therefore I was interested in scouring through also older editions of these magazines. Visiting shops selling vintage magazines became a regular habit for me while I have been in Tokyo.

I have watched and recorded regularly NHK world’s’ documentaristic tv-programmes such as ‘Arts & Design’, ‘Tokyo Eye’ and ‘Design Talks’ - which often feature topics such as Japanese traditions, arts, and design. These programmes have often pointed me to interesting locations - such as exhibitions, galleries or shops- to visit, or topics to research.

In Finland I have had the benefit of visiting the library of Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. This library has a good collection of academic literature and has proved to be beneficial especially for the chapters related to person-product-attachment, consuming and long life design.

From the beginning of the thesis I have also collected a vast amount of online articles and links to different websites in addition to other literature. This list of links and materials became even exhausting in the end, as I felt the amount of information provided by all of these materials was over-powering. I realised that all aspects and information provided by these articles could not fit into the scope of this thesis and I have therefore had to limit and choose the bibliography used for this thesis as well as consider the extent of the thesis again. I have used some online resources as direct references, whilst some of them have provided me insights and inspiration in the background of this thesis. Some non-academic resources have been used in order to research the insight of consumers and to observe the current phenomena in the society. As I feel the topic of this thesis is ever-continuing, I am sure the online links I have collected will provide me interesting and important information also in the future.

1.3.2. RESEARCH AND EXCURSIONS IN JAPAN

In Japan I collected all kinds of materials related to the topic of this thesis - such as literature, photographs, pamphlets, fabric swatches- and implemented my research in various locations; in museums, exhibitions, by visiting skilled craftsmen and designers and documented the traditional methods they use. I also conducted eight interviews in Japan.

I have collected materials and done research in various areas in Tokyo, Gifu, Kiryu, Kagoshima and Fukuoka. Kagoshima and Fukuoka are located on the southern island of Kyushu in Japan, whilst Gifu is at the middle of the main island of Honshu. Kiryu is one of the textile hubs in Japan, located in Gunma prefecture, a couple of hours train ride west of Tokyo. In Fukuoka I had the chance of visiting a small village of Yame (Yame-shi), where a cluster of skilled craftsmen pursue their professions. For this opportunity I am ever grateful for Shiranzi Takahiro, one of the owners of the shop ‘Unagi no Nedoko’ (“Eel’s Bed”), who was kind enough to introduce and take me to various studios within Yame-shi. Unagi no Nedoko acts as a showroom and for the products of local craftsmen in and nearby Yame city. I also visited a shop called ‘Fourcault’ in Fukuoka City, where I had an interview with the shop owner and designer Takaki Takao. Items featured in Fourcault are carefully chosen and curated. In Kagoshima I could introduce myself to the traditions of Dorozome (mud dyeing) and Oshima-tsumugi, a lustrous woven silk fabric, with intricate patterns.

I believe that new innovations come also from learning from the traditions. I interviewed the craftsmen and designers I met, especially about the Japanese concept of mottainai. Sometimes a language barrier exists in Japan, as not that many people in Japan speak fluent English. My skills in Japanese are then again merely moderate. Therefore the help of my Japanese husband was invaluable in conducting some of these interviews. I could pose my questions in Japanese to my interviewees, but I couldn’t always understand everything they said at the moment of the interview. My method was to record everything that was said, and later ask my husband to help with some of the translations.

Japan has provided me with much inspiration also as a society - by observing daily activities of people around me, news topics, displays at shops and department stores, events and exhibitions I have gained a lot of valuable, experience-based information.
1.3.3. Online Data Collection

For a long time my intention was to draft an online survey to collect data on what kind of clothing people feel attached to and what kind of garments they tend to wear and keep for long periods of time. I did, in fact, build a lengthy questionnaire, but after careful consideration and conversations with my thesis supervisor, Dr. Kirsi Niinimäki, I came to the conclusion to discard it. The questionnaire and the processing of it would have been too time-consuming and heavy for the scope of this thesis. An extensive, and relatively up-to-date data regards to the same issues already exists, with numerous books, articles and research papers also covering the same topics. I decided to draw detailed data from these previously written documents.

As to the emotional connections to clothing, I constructed an online survey and a temporary page on facebook, where people around the world could express their emotional connections to clothing. The facebook page was titled with the working title of this thesis “IsshoMono - An Item for Life: Photo Stories of Meaningful Clothes”. The group proved to be less popular as I had hoped for; it gained 27 members in total and 7 stories with photographs were posted to the page. I could, however, still make some observations based on the photos and stories sent to me through the page.

1.3.4. Product Design

The product design is based on a list of design principles, which I have conducted based on the findings drawn from my research work, interviews and observations. The design work has gone through an evolution within the course of this thesis, and the final decisions have been made in Tokyo, after the completion of the research work.

The aspect of ‘mottainai’ and long life design has been considered already when making initial material choices; I wanted each material to be either second hand, found or inherited, or of such good, classic quality, that it would stand the test of time. The aspect is also shown through material manipulations; through dyeing with traditional methods and dyes, and through hand stitching.

Initially my purpose was to design simple, classic garments for women, but as I realised that one of the key factors for long life design is multifunctionality, I decided to design garments which are gender-neutral, i.e. suitable for both men and women. This would enable their inheritance to new generations of users, despite their gender.

Even though simple, classic items are often regarded as long lasting, words such as ‘unique’, ‘handmade’, or ‘elaborate’ have also been mentioned as features of garments, that are considered as valuable - something to preserve and keep. Therefore my decision, and a challenge I set for myself, was to design garments that would have some classic features, yet also intricate and surprising details in them. I purposely emphasized the role of making things by hand, by traditional methods and with patience.

PART 2:
FROM REPLACEABLE TO IRREPLACEABLE
- CHANGES IN OUR RELATIONSHIPS TOWARDS CLOTHING
Globalisation and business and marketing driven thinking have lead to fast fashion becoming accepted among consumers, and more over, becoming the norm for ‘real clothes’ or ‘normal clothes’. The organisers of ‘Feel and Think: A New Era of Tokyo Fashion’ exhibition state however that “...creativity in fashion design cannot be based on practicality and affordability. Rather, the creativity lies within the possibility of initiating a dialogue between the designer and the wearer and an emotional experience that fashion can deliver.” [Hori et al., 2012, preface]. In this chapter I shall offer a review over the changes in consumer’s consumption habits and attitudes towards fashion during the 21st century. The topic is broad, and consists of multiple factors spanning over different fields of science, therefore I am introducing a few key factors, which are relevant for the scope of this thesis.

The world was, as also stated in the Fashion Futures report by Levi Strauss & Co. (2010), living in a very uncertain state of mind with the arrival of the millennium. The beginning of a new decade stood for an exciting, uncharted territory and on the other hand it would also evoke fears, for example in the shape of the so called Y2K problem, i.e. problems related to digital and non-digital data storage situations. Western and Japanese economies were struggling, and the dominance of the United States of America came under threat along with the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, and with the following war in Iraq. While the western economies suffered, the eastern economies of China, India and Russia started budding. Inexpensive ‘fast fashion’ produced in China and India started to spread globally, also due to digitalisation and improved logistics. Consumers struggling with money were thrilled to be able to purchase trendy yet more than affordable pieces of clothing from brands like H&M or Zara.

The fast fashion businesses would initially support domestic brands in western countries by enabling them to cut down on economical risks and to cut down the cost of production. Raw material production and manufacturing processes were transferred to countries that could offer cheap labor and fast deliveries, also as that was what consumers wanted; fashion quick fixes of trendy yet affordable items. Quality was a subsidiary attribute. This kind of shift resulted in many domestic apparel companies, such as growers of raw materials or fabric weavers, in multiple countries to go bankrupt [Kaufman, 2002].

For designers the changes in fashion industry and the way people shop is a challenge. Big fashion houses, such as Chanel, Gucci, Prada or Yohji Yamamoto or Issey Miyake in Japan for example, are a phenomenon prior to the change of decade. Young designers are facing the facts, that either they will probably work as ‘behind the scenes’ designers for fast fashion companies or these big fashion houses, or make their own business, that is most likely to stay relatively small and local. An emerging group of young designers are re-thinking the system of fashion and are representing their collections as valued assets or as fine art as an example. They have developed business strategies that address perhaps small but loyal clienteles. Hiroshi Narumi, author, editor and an associate professor at Kyoto University of Art and Design, mentions brands like Mi&i Perhom, Mintdesigns and Matouh as small companies, which focus on creating timeless designs and their own original fabrics and textiles [Narumi in Hori et al. 2012, 10]. By developing unique designs and by realising the value of local traditions and skills, these designers can make their brands stand out and get the attention of buyers, who are becoming more and more aware of the impact of fashion, and fast fashion in particular, has on the environment. New brands are realising the value of uniqueness and the quality of materials and skills.

2.1. Changes in Fashion Consumption and Attitudes Towards Fashion in 21st Century

Globalisation and business and marketing driven thinking have lead to fast fashion becoming accepted among consumers, and more over, becoming the norm for ‘real clothes’ or ‘normal clothes’. The organisers of ‘Feel and Think: A New Era of Tokyo Fashion’ exhibition state however that “...creativity in fashion design cannot be based on practicality and affordability. Rather, the creativity lies within the possibility of initiating a dialogue between the designer and the wearer and an emotional experience that fashion can deliver.” [Hori et al., 2012, preface]. In this chapter I shall offer a review over the changes in consumer’s consumption habits and attitudes towards fashion during the 21st century. The topic is broad, and consists of multiple factors spanning over different fields of science, therefore I am introducing a few key factors, which are relevant for the scope of this thesis.

The world was, as also stated in the Fashion Futures report by Levi Strauss & Co. (2010), living in a very uncertain state of mind with the arrival of the millennium. The beginning of a new decade stood for an exciting, uncharted territory and on the other hand it would also evoke fears, for example in the shape of the so called Y2K problem, i.e. problems related to digital and non-digital data storage situations. Western and Japanese economies were struggling, and the dominance of the United States of America came under threat along with the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, and with the following war in Iraq. While the western economies suffered, the eastern economies of China, India and Russia started budding. Inexpensive ‘fast fashion’ produced in China and India started to spread globally, also due to digitalisation and improved logistics. Consumers struggling with money were thrilled to be able to purchase trendy yet more than affordable pieces of clothing from brands like H&M or Zara.

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2.1.1. The Throwaway Culture

Once upon a time fashion trends would change twice a year, now they change constantly, and designers are have not for a long time been the only ones to initiate or introduce new trends. New trends are spreading globally within hours, or even minutes, and styles are copied in sweatshops in an instant. The increasing rhythm of disposable fashion comes with the price of ever lowering quality of clothes, and suppressed wages of garment workers. The source for the ever-growing piles of abandoned clothes and textiles lies within globalisation, plummeting production costs, the development of online platforms and changes in consuming and buying motives, which together have created a system, where clothes are created and wanted often and fast.

Current Consumption Rates

The consumption of textiles has been increasing, and the global per capita textile fiber consumption was increased by 35% between years 2000 and 2007. In Sweden, the quantity of textile products put on the market was increased by 40% between years 2000 and 2009 [Aalto et.al., 2012].

In year 2012 Finnish consumers and facilities disposed of 71 million kilograms of textiles. 58 million kilograms were taken to landfills and or incinerated. Only 1,15 million kilograms were recycled to be new materials [Aalto et.al. 2015, 15].

23% of the disposed of textiles were given for NPO’s which are collecting unwanted textiles. However, only less than 5% of clothes are disposed of after their primary use [Wrangel 1997, as cited by Aalto et.al. 2012, 36], and a significant amount of clothes and home textiles are in fact traded via independent flea markets and online trading groups, such as recycling groups on facebook [Aalto et.al. 2015, 14]. There are currently no statistics available regards to textiles recycled or swapped through such independent channels.

A new law, banning the disposal of textile waste to landfills, was introduced in Finland from the beginning of 2016. Even though this may curb the disposal frenzy, it may also strain charity shops, which are already struggling to cope with the amount of poor quality donations they receive. According to Aalto et.al. (2015), 23% of the garments disposed of by consumers is donated to charities, who in their turn can not utilize all of the donations, therefore discarding a further 23% of the donated goods.

Second Hand Textile Exports

From the textile products exported yearly from Finland, second hand clothes and rags made up to 44% in 2010 [Aalto et.al., 2012, 31]. Enterprises in the second hand-sector export globally more than half of the textile products they have collected [Aalto et.al., 2012, 11; Aalto et.al. 2015, 15]. UFF, an NPO operating in Finland, exports around 81% of the textiles it has collected, to the Baltic countries among others [Aalto et.al., 2015, 11]. Many charities and retailers are exporting their unsold goods to third world countries, such as Uganda, Malawi or Zambia. While this may at first create business opportunities for local traders, and offer buyers of weak purchasing power low-priced garments, the influx of textile offloaded from wealthy
Impulsive and Compulsive Buying Behavior

According to Helga Dittmar (2008) consumers use material goods as means to achieve life satisfaction, success and happiness. She also suggests, that such materialistic value orientation often leads to disappointment (“Is this as good as it gets?”) (Dittmar, 2008, 4). This would, therefore, be one catalyst for endless shopping cycles. Impulsive purchasing, often also present at online shopping, is typically done with little deliberation and prior planning. Consumers disregard financial constraints and consequences, as their desire for the goods is so strong (Dittmar, 2008, 54). Impulsive buying can lead to compulsive buying patterns. Compulsive buying behavior or shopping addiction, often stems from values linked to identity seeking and material values according to Dittmar (2008). Compulsive buying behavior can have harmful psychological and financial consequences, such as substantial debt.

Helga Dittmar (Dittmar 2008, 51) also suggests that the motives for shopping have changed into hoped-for emotional benefits, and identity reflection. Slogans such as “retail therapy”, “I shop therefore I am” and “keep calm and shop on” also reflect this. Online communication platforms, online services and applications ensure the easy and fast distribution of news and trends around the globe, and one prominent feature of the last 10 years is the spread of trends via blogs and independent user account pages via social media services such like facebook, instagram1, youtube2, pinterest3 or twitter4. Current technologies encourage consumers to interact with retailers (Mohr, 2013). Blogs offer consumers the opportunity for self-expression, and then again brands have come to view popular bloggers as important trend-setters and influencers (Mohr, 2013). While television entertainment is also largely comprised of reality tv-shows and competitions, where anyone has the chance to raise to stardom, the modern society is formed to be very competitive. Material possessions have therefore become even stronger tools in identity seeking and in expressing this ‘built identity’ to others, and consumers engaged in social media may even feel pressure in making new purchases, in order to stay ‘on trend’. Dittmar (2008) states, that while material possessions can have positive psychological functions in maintaining or enhancing people’s sense of who they are, it becomes harmful when people engage in compulsive buying.

The Abundance of Choice

The excessive choice offered especially by fast fashion and high street chains, is also one factor in bulk-buying. Fast fashion retailers offer an abundance of options and new styles come into the stores on a weekly basis. Sheena Iyengar (2010, 183) points out, that too much choice can actually lead to less satisfaction or happiness, as people tire from having to compare and process all of the different options. When faced with too many options, we get tired, we loose our sense of consideration, and end up buying things we don’t really need, and which we regret buying later. Fast fashion retailers are content with this, as it means their customers will return frequently. Impulsive and Compulsive Buying Behavior has the chance to raise to stardom, the modern society is formed to be very competitive. Material possessions have therefore become even stronger tools in identity seeking and in expressing this ‘built identity’ to others, and consumers engaged in social media may even feel pressure in making new purchases, in order to stay ‘on trend’. Dittmar (2008) states, that while material possessions can have positive psychological functions in maintaining or enhancing people’s sense of who they are, it becomes harmful when people engage in compulsive buying.

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needs’. This together with affordable prices create cycles of hoarding, when the consumers have an illusion of never-ending funds and never-ending (artificial) needs. Bulk-buying without consideration together with the difficulty to re-sell poor quality clothes, result in the piling up of unwanted and sometimes even unused clothing in cupboards and closets, donation boxes and in the worst case - the landfill. According to Iyengar (2010, 191), another reason why people buy clothes in bulks and with little consideration from fast fashion retailers is that consumers may feel it is not necessary to fully evaluate them, as they would do when choosing something more expensive or of higher quality. In other words, they don’t see them valuable enough for careful consideration.

**Shopping 24/7**

One factor in encouraging the disposal of “outdated” items, is not simply the sheer volume of affordable, trendy options, but also their easy accessibility (Iyengar 2010, 87). Items can be easily and comfortably bought online, and returned without facing any representatives of the companies. Online shops offer the consumers the possibility to shop whenever they like, and as expressed by Helga Dittmar (2008), buying from online stores is experienced as easy and remote, resulting in over spending and unnecessary purchases. Many online retailers are offering discount codes or coupons for their customers, which are valid only for a limited time period, further encouraging impulse purchases. Consumers do not have the sensation of paying for the items, as purchases can be made with just a couple of clicks. Returning customers do not also need to re-fill their credit card details, and some online shopping sites offer the consumers the possibility to make orders without the need for instant payments - they are therefore spending money that they don’t, in fact, have (Dittmar 2008, 11).

According to the study by Dittmar (2008), one aspect lacking in online shopping is having the any physical contact with the products. This is then again an advantage for conventional brick & mortar businesses. (Dittmar 2008, 60) Online shops are, however, often required by law1 to offer their customers the possibility to return any unwanted goods. I suspect that because of the combination of easy purchasing method, lack of physical contact with the product at the purchasing moment and the possibility to return goods back to the retailer, consumers are more inclined to order more items than they initially intended to. I also suspect, that due to the physical effort required from the consumers to return the goods, consumers fail to return all of their unwanted purchases, resulting in cluttered wardrobes and eventually, discarded products.

Some of the garments returned back to retailers will be disposed of - in never used, pristine condition-, because they become “out of date” when they are finally returned back to the warehouses, logged back in to the systems and checked for possible faults. The same fate awaits clothing that never sells; Unsellable clothes are in the worst case destroyed in industrial-sized shredders and dumped in landfills. (Chalupa, 2010). Some brands prefer to destroy their unsuccessful items to donating them to charities, as to protect their brand image (Chalupa, 2010; Valkama, 2016). According to an article in Hämeen Sanomat newspaper (Valkama, 2016), clothing brands operating in Finland claim they are left with no surplus stock of unsold garments. Professional in clothes recycling, Outi Pyy, is however doubtful that any brand would have a 100% sales record. Without an

[1] Bulk-buying means to buy something in large quantities

[2] According to the Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 on certain aspects of the sale of consumer goods and associated guarantees, the consumer has within EU the right to cancel and return any goods bought from a service online or outside of a shop within 14 days, for any reason and with no justification. (Europa.eu, 2016)

**Faster Pace, Lower Price, Lower Quality**

Fast fashion chains of course aim at quick turnovers and for their customers to shop at their establishments frequently. The garments are meant to be just a moment’s joy - that is why their quality is poor and prices low, to ensure the return of customers for another shopping frenzy. The markets have during the last 20 years designed items to be disposed of with ease, and trained consumers into thinking items can be easily and affordably replaced. Michael Braungart and William McDonough question in their renowned work, Cradle to Cradle, what happens when people realize that nothing can really be disposed of; “…you may be referred to as a consumer, but there is very little that you actually consume - some food, some liquids. Everything else is designed for you to throw away when you are finished with it. But where is ‘away’? Of course, ‘away’ does not really exist. ‘Away’ has gone away.” (Braungart & McDonough 2008, 27).

Social media is also feeding the cycle of “snacking” at fast fashion retailers. Youtube is filled with haul videos where young consumers are introducing their garment findings. Instead of a few garments, they are introducing bags and bags full of trendy items. Forever 21, a fast fashion retailer, has even sponsored contests, where shoppers who post haul videos can win gift cards to buy more clothes (Merrick, 2014). On one of these videos, a young shopper named Blair Fowler describes her new top: “I had to sew a button back on it, ‘cause the button fell off, and my mom taught me how to sew the button on. And that button looks better than the button I didn’t sew on, and it’s a lot sturdier, too, ‘cause I sewed it, like, a hundred times, whereas the other one only has, like, three loops on it.” (Merrick, 2014).

It is astonishment how consumers are satisfied with the poor quality - the cheap prices and value of novelty has more significance.

The Fashion Futures 2025 study conducted by Levi Strauss & Co (2010) predicts, however, that the fast fashion industry of the early 21st century -such as China and Brazil-, will be competing for global leadership by 2025. The study go on further by stating that by 2050 the Russian, Mexican, Indonesian and Indian economies will be significant players in the global field. This means rising wages in these formerly emerging economies. Climate change, population growth, and shortages of key resources will also affect the clothing industry, as materials become more scarce and therefore, more expensive (Levi Strauss&Co., 2010.)

Consumers are however currently used to getting their fashion fixes fast and cheap, while retailers are still expecting to get their profits. The rising labor and material costs are therefore resulting in ever lower quality of clothing. The words of Sōetsu Yanagi, the founder of the Japanese Mingei folk craft movement, are very relevant in this relation: “It is unlikely that the clothes we wear today will ever be displayed in art galleries. This is because they are poor in material and design. Things go on being made that can only be described as bad, and interest lies only in the new and changing. Such an environment fails to deepen the sense of creative imagination, and even the taste of the educated becomes poor.” (Yanagi, 1989, 205).

One reason people have not valued the fast fashion garments as objects is perhaps their rendition as objects which are done without significant investments or skills. As they are not seen as someone’s manifestation of skills or effort, they are insignificant. Paul Bloom enlightens this same idea with an example from the world
of art: “If you have low opinion of the capacities underlying a creation, then you will see it as bad art and yet no pleasure from it - except, perhaps, the joy of mockery. …You need to be dazzled by the idea to be dazzled by the art.” (Bloom 2010, 146).

As garments are manufactured in factories in faraway countries, consumers have lost the ability understand the true effort and value of making. If the production causes harm to the surrounding environments or the garment workers, people feel out of touch, as everything happens in unfamiliar places (Braungart & McDonough 2008, 125). Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (1981) talked about humans beings as homo faber, the makers of things, but as in modern world so many things are offered ready-made, at low prices and with fast deliveries, have people lost the understanding of effort and making things by hand?

2.1.2. PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE

In consumer markets, and especially in fashion markets, products have been and are intentionally aged (planned obsolescence), made ‘out of date’. According to Nuntinen (2004), this has happened not only by making products of poorer quality, but also by studying consumer markets and studying trends and by trying to encourage new trends. This planned obsolescence has gained criticism. I as well would suggest intentional reforming and editing of products, instead of intentional aging of them. By this I mean developing new methods and systems for editing and recycling ones products, be it manufacturer or consumer.

Planned obsolescence was born in USA in the 1930’s as a way to to revitalize economy, during and after the political turmoil caused by World War II. The purpose was to boost the economy, by innovating and producing new product ideas, and hindering economic stagnation by offering consumers the chance to earn money by manufacturing new products to buy new products (Cooper, 2010). Industrialisation had led to fast and efficient production of products, which also were of good quality. Unsold goods started to fill warehouses as early as the mid 1870’s, and this forced the industry to cut back or suspend production. This situation continued until the late 1920’s.

Brooks Stevens, an American industrial designer, credited as the creator of the term ‘planned obsolescence’, has explained it as “Instilling in the buyer the desire to own something a little newer, a little better, a little sooner than is necessary” (Adamson, 2003, as cited by Brian Burns in Cooper, 2010, 42). As maximizing sales is often the primary goal for manufacturers and retailers, strategies promoting over-consumption are still a major factor in current markets (Burns in Cooper, 2010, 43). Planned obsolescence makes products wither, break or become out-dated, so that consumers discard them and buy either services to repair them or new products to replace them.

Brian Burns (in Cooper, 2010) suggests four different modes for obsolescence; aesthetic, social, technological and economic. These different modes stem from different phenomena in the society, resulting in obsolescence of objects. Of these, especially the aesthetic and the social mode are relevant for clothing, although the economic, and to some extent also the technological mode have an impact (Burns in Cooper, 2010, 45). Clothing is also used as a means to communicate and to conform (Plax, Rosenfeld, 1977), thus changes in society are also reflected on the choices people make regards to clothing. The economic mode is related to repairing and maintenance. This is relatively easy to fast fashion and its’ cheap prices, as consumers are reluctant to repair clothing that originally cost close to nothing for them, particularly when repair services may sometimes cost more than the actual item. The technological mode is related to clothing in the form of new materials and fiber compositions, which are a factor especially in the sports clothing and professional clothing industries.

One factor that may lead to short product life-spans is the disconnection between an object and the user. If products are too complex for the user to understand, it may lead to misuse or mishandling, leading to unnecessary disposal of the products. Designers and engineers are educated to understand the products, whereas ordinary consumers rely on experience and common sense (Burns in Cooper, 2010, 53). Therefore the products should either be readily understandable, or have easy to understand instructions, which do not frustrate the user, with them. When applied to clothing, clothes with too unfamiliar, complicated shapes or methods of dressing may face the risk of easier disposal, as the consumers may feel confused, frustrated and also disconnected from them. For others these features may be the charm that make them cherish these experimental, artistic pieces. However, when considering the possible life-span of such clothing and the possibility of someone else later inheriting and using them, having no natural comprehension of how to wear them may predict a short life-span for them. Designers do feel pressure in creating something special, in order to stand out and cause a stir, and are afraid of sticking to classic models that are proven to be functioning and also liked by the consumers (Donald A. Norman, as sited by Brian Burns, in Cooper 2010, 53).

As previously stated, maximizing sales is often the primary goal for manufacturers and retailers. Therefore the so called ‘cradle-to-grave’ designs dominate the modern manufacturing, according to Braungart & McDonough (2008). This means products are designed to last only for a certain period of time. Also the services built around products are in fact, due to their high cost and/or inavailability, encouraging the consumers to eventually discard the products, and buy new ones instead, as purchasing a new item is often cheaper than the repair of them (Braungart & McDonough, 2008, 28).

One contradictory sign of planned or built-in obsolescence is the fact that the packaging of products is sometimes more durable than the products themselves, as they are designed for repetitive use (Braungart & McDonough 2008, 98). According to Braungart & McDonough (2008), the intention behind the current industrial system is to manufacture products, which are attractive, affordable, legal, which perform well enough, and which last long enough to meet market expectations (Braungart & McDonough 2008, 37). Consumers are however becoming more and more well-informed of unethical business practices and their expectations towards product sustainability is growing.

1) According to Burns, (in Cooper, 2010, 45 - 46), the aesthetic mode of obsolescence is composed of two components, of which the first relates to appearance, and the second to fashion and style. An object may become obsolete by either becoming aesthetically faded, worn out or dirty, or by becoming "out of fashion". A functioning object may be discarded on the grounds of it becoming aesthetically obsolete - a feature which is prominent in relation to fashion.

2) Social obsolescence is also made of two components according to Burns (in Cooper, 2010, 47). Products related to a certain activity - such as cigarettes or tamagohachi - will no longer have value, when the activity becomes socially unacceptable or undesirable. Other factors are new laws or voluntary standards, which change and shape social behaviour and thus create obsolescence.

3) Technological obsolescence occurs when a functioning product becomes obsolete when a newer product, with newer technology is introduced. When new technologies are invented and introduced all the time, making technological products lasts longer may actually create more unnecessary waste, rather than diminish it (Burns in Cooper 2010, 63).

4) Economic obsolescence occurs when repair, maintenance, use or upgrade is economically out of reach, unreasonable, for the consumer or the manufacturer of a product.
2.1.3. The Wake-Up Call

Brian Burns (in Cooper 2010, 41) points out that although for many years hand-crafted products were appreciated more than their industrially produced counterparts, the industrial revolution of the mid-nineteenth century slowly led towards high quality production and performance in both Europe and North America. Recent activities among consumers and the revelations made in media of unsustainable business practices may indicate a shift towards the other direction yet again; hand-crafts may become desirable again.

The increased speed and different paths of communication have -in addition to communicating about the latest trends- succeeded in passing on information; people have become aware of the ethical and ecological problems of disposable fashion. A few large scale disasters and phenomena have also affected the way people behave and consume; the collapse of the Rana Plaza garment factory in Bangladesh in 2013, economic instability, global warming and the massive earthquake and tsunami off the Pacific coast of Tōhoku in 2011 have all left their marks not just in history, but also into people’s minds. In Japan, the book sales of Marie Kondo’s guide book of decluttering and organising soared after the quake, as people started to think what really is important and valuable for them (Young, 2015).

A shift in modern society has also created an insistence for a change. The hectic pace of industrialized society and the requirements for constant availability have created phenomena such as downshifting1, mindfulness2, and general interest to slowing down, longing for nostalgia and communal, down-to-earth experiences. People have shown interest towards real life experiences, which include shopping in unique brick-and-mortar stores instead of generic webshops or retail chains. Products of slow luxury3 and traditions offer a sense of calm and safety, a break from the hectic digital world, and flood of information.

As mentioned earlier, Sheena Iyengar proposes that people get overwhelmed in the face of too much choice. Perhaps phenomena such as downshifting, mindfulness and KonMari - which aims at reducing one’s belongings-, are really signs of people getting tired, exhausted. People get paralyzed, when they feel they should be able to scour for the perfect one among infinite options. Sheena Iyengar (2010, 275) points out, that our senses have limits, and when they are overwhelmed, the choices people make become meaningless, or even impossible to carry out. This results in poorer choices and less satisfaction in the choices that have been made (Iyengar 2010, 275). If a promise of quality already exists, in the form of a limited, curated collection of options, it relieves the pressure from making the “correct choice”.

Futurist and author James Wallman (as sited by Mattila, 2016) suggests, that in the near future collaborative consumption and sharing economy practices will spread and become more popular. This means consumers will be sharing and renting commodities, rather than purchasing and owning everything by themselves. At the moment, the world’s greatest store (Alibaba4) doesn’t own a warehouse, the world’s greatest hotel company (Airbnb5) doesn’t own any hotel rooms, and the world’s greatest taxi provider (Uber6) doesn’t own any cars (Mattila, 2016). New business models will bring customers and services together, without necessarily owning any of the commodities. Wallman says it is all about a more reasonable way to consume, and also to save space.

The spread of collaborative consumption practices is shown also in the spread of clothing rental services and clubs, where members can, for a membership fee, borrow clothes for daily use for a couple of weeks at a time. The rental services require the clothing to meet certain standards; the materials and the composition must be durable enough, to endure repeated laundry runs and consumption. The styles need to be appealing for majority of the possible clientele, and timeless designs will of course ensure better profits for the business, as the styles can be rented over and over again (Niinimäki 2011.)

The spread of rental services will most likely pose further requirements also for the clothing that people do purchase; consumers will consider more carefully which clothes they need and want to own. Garments that are considered to be the most ‘personal’ ones are the ones that are sill most likely bought, as well as wardrobe staples, that are being constantly used.

Dittmar (2008) also argues that while opinions are divided, a substantial body of evidence suggests that materialism has a negative impact on people’s well-being, as it takes energy away from more meaningful pursuits in life (Dittmar 2008, 77). This would also suggest, that as people are more interested in improving their physical and mental well-being, they are also becoming more interested in owning and buying less. In regards to clothing and textiles, this is visible in the form of recent phenomena related to reducing and reusing clothes, such as minimalism, KonMari and different challenges, where people are encouraged to limit the contents of their wardrobes to certain units.

Various events linked to reusing and recycling (such as Cleaning Day, which is a global recycling event of Finnish origin), as well as the abundance of recycling groups formed on social media, for example on facebook, are telling the tale that consumers are willing to both sell and buy second hand items. However, people are not willing to buy threadbare clothes, and therefore it requires quality materials and quality manufacturing methods from the clothes; badly made clothes will tear apart before they can be re-sold at fleamarkets or charity shops. There are, for example, facebook fleaemarket groups dedicated for “quality materials” or “quality brands”. An article by Sarah Halzack (2016) on The Washington Post suggests, that women are happy to pay for items they think are worthy of it. Banana Republic and Anthropologie, both American clothing brands, have been suffering of declining sales rates, and the article suggests this may be due to unbalanced price-quality relation (Halzack, 2016).

As mentioned before, fast fashion items are often bought based on impulsive and compulsive behaviour. The slow fashion practices are then again all about consideration and patience, as both the manufacturers and the buyers are seeking for quality and permanence - trust. One could therefore make the conclusion, that whereas fast fashion items are often bought based on emotional motives, slow fashion items are bought based on both emotional and rational motives. Buy Me Once for instance, is an online store, which is selling only products, that are meant to last for a lifetime. The mission stated by the website says “We’re looking for the classic designs that will go the distance. They might not be ‘hang on trend’ but they won’t be embarrassing next week either.” (http://www.buymeonce.com/our-mission/)

One reason for the ‘wake-up call’ is that the realization that the environment, among which children are currently growing may be encouraging them for over-consumptive habits. As it is obvious, that natural resources are becoming more scarce, it is important to make sure children of today are aware of the changes ahead (Dittmar 2008, 11).

1) Downshifting refers to the process of slowing down or becoming less active in work environment, such as the act of leaving a well-paid but difficult job in order to do something that is emotionally more satisfying. http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/downshifting
2) Mindfulness is the practice of being aware of your body, mind, and feelings in the present moment, thought to create a feeling of calm. (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mindfulness
3) Slow luxury means items, which are focused on craftsmanship, quality and timeless designs
4) Alibaba, (Alibaba Group Holding Limited), is a Chinese e-commerce company that provides consumer-to-consumer, business-to-consumer and business-to-business sales services via web portals. It also provides electronic payment services, a shopping search engine and data-centric cloud computing services. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alibaba_Group)
5) Airbnb is an online marketplace that enables people to list, find, and rent private vacation homes for a processing fee. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airbnb)
6) Uber is an online marketplace that enables people to list, find, and rent private vacation homes for a processing fee. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airbnb)
7) Sheen Iyengar means items, which are focused on craftsmanship, quality and timeless designs
8) Cleaning Day is a global recycling event of Finnish origin, which is visible in the form of recent phenomena related to reducing and reusing clothes, such as minimalism, KonMari and different challenges, where people are encouraged to limit the contents of their wardrobes to certain units.

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2.2. About Person-Product Attachment

To understand the development of consuming, it is important to understand the relations between people and objects. People don't use objects and things merely for survival, but also to achieve goals, practise their skills and shape their own identities. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton also suggest that learning from product-person interaction should be an essential part of our general knowledge:

“Man is not only homo sapiens or homo ludens, he is also homo faber, the maker and user of objects, his self to a large extent a reflection of things with which he interacts. Thus objects also make and use their makers and users... What things are cherished and why, should become part of our knowledge of human beings.” (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981, 1).

Failed person-product relationships lead to the increase in the amount of discarded textiles (Chapman, as cited by Niinimäki 2011, 30). Therefore it is important to study the relationships between people and products, also known as person-product-attachment (PPA). Jonathan Champan (2010, 70) argues that emotional attachments towards objects have a direct influence on the longevity of such objects, and motivate the users to hold on to them even after the objects are not in regular use anymore. An existing PPA predicts therefore a longer life-span for the product, thus making them more sustainable.

Nicole van Nes (in Cooper 2010, 115) notes that person-product attachment, or bonding with products, also stems from trust experienced towards the object. Early satisfaction with the product creates the possibility of trust, which is further strengthened when the person gets familiar with the product and knows it can be relied on.

When creating and designing products, designers have the power and the responsibility to decide and consider a number of factors; the appearance and the material of the object, the way it is used and understood, the way it is manufactured and the way and the place the product is marketed. Donald A. Norman reminds us, however, that the emotions a product evoke may have a bigger role in the product's success than its physical features (Norman 2004, 5). A designer can obviously influence the physical features of a product. When it comes to emotional components, it is more complicated, but there are parts not just the designer, but also the marketer or distributor of products can have an input on.

Before an attachment can be born between a consumer and the product, the product has to be first chosen by someone. In order to consider what may be some of the attributes linked to products that people get attached to, we should try to understand what are the attributes of products people choose in the first place. How people choose, may also be a factor in what kind of things people feel are important. There are different factors in how choices are made - some of which are informed, other uninformed, subconscious. Professor Sheena Iyengar (2007) suggests that our choices are guided not just by our senses, but also by the information we have gathered of the products previously, and by our own personal history and background.

One interesting and strong factor in choosing is our concept of self. Helga Dittmar (2008, 25) argues that possessions function as symbols of personal and social identity, while also giving people the sense of control and mastery. Norman’s views are in line with this, as he states that everything people own is a public expression of theirselves (Norman 2004, 53). Iyengar points out that people choose based on their preferences, but also on how their choices define and communicate their identities; “Not only do people choose based on their own preferences, they also come to see themselves as defined by their individual interests, personality traits, and actions: for example, “I am a film buff” or “I am environmentally conscious.”” (Iyengar 2010, 31).

The concept of self is strongly linked to our surroundings; it is culturally specific. While the concept
of self is a fundamental human attribute, it is also highly dependent on cultural norms and the surroundings we live in (Norman 2004, 53). Through her studies, Sheena Iyengar has for example pointed out the difference between individualism and collectivism, and how this has an effect on how people choose: “Ask yourself: When making a choice, do you first and foremost consider what you want, what will make you happy, or do you consider what is best for you and the people around you? This seemingly simple question lies at the heart of major differences between cultures and individuals, both within and between nations.” (Iyengar 2010, 30). Japan, for example, is a collectivist society and this is seen in how people dress themselves during different seasons, or how many different options of bread there is at the supermarket, among other things. One may for example prefer a colorful, unique object, but feel hesitant to choose it because of the collectivist sense of what is aesthetic or ‘normal’. Norman (2004, 54) states that while Americans want to excel as individuals, the Japanese wish to be good members of their society, thus choosing accordingly. He also points out, however, that when an individualistic person is put into a social, collectivist situation, or a collectivist person put into an individualistic situation, their behaviours change and conform to the surroundings (Norman 2004, 54). I have also found myself conforming to the prevailing norms, and dressing -i.e. choosing- somewhat differently depending on whether I am in Japan or in Finland.

The general assumption in the society according to Sheena Iyengar (2010, 78) is, that having more choice is better, and any limits to choice are often rejected as anti-freedom. She argues that while people like having options and the power of choice, having too much choice will actually confuse and overwhelm us (Iyengar 2010, 179), as briefly discussed in chapter 2.1.1. If the amount of options is smaller, decision-making is easier, as we can trust ourselves more (Iyengar 2010, 204). I would also suggest, that this is also related to the sense of achievement, which enhances positive self-image - when we can feel we have chosen well, we can be happy both with the selection we have made, but also with ourselves.

Donald A. Norman (2004) has introduced three different levels how design appeals to consumers; visceral design concerns itself with appearances, behavioral design is about the joy and effectiveness of use and reflective design considers the rationalization and intellectualization of a product. Products which match with our needs, expectations and attitudes will attract us, while products that conflict with these will be disappointing, eliciting emotions as strong as disgust (Gyi et.al. 2004, 10).

Products, which offer excitement and stimulation through multi-functionality, exciting material, shape or possibilities for modification create emotions such as inspiration and fascination. Products containing some aspect of novelty will offer a sensation of surprise (Gyi et.al. 2004, 11.). While these can be factors why people are easily attracted to impulse purchases (e.g. fast fashion items), they can also be reasons why people become attached to items.

Norman (2004, 10) states that aesthetically pleasing objects makes us feel better and thus make us also perform better. Norman (2004, 138) also argues that the behavioral aspect is important in the formation of attachment towards products, as we attribute pleasure to objects that function well and fulfill our expectations. The effect is opposite, when a product does not function as expected, and we end up projecting feelings of frustration, anger and even rage to the product. Therefore it is important to consider the interaction between the user and the product. When designing and manufacturing products, paying attention to all aspects of attachment is important, in case the creation of attachment and prolonging the life of the object is the purpose. Jonathan Chapman also points out, that if consumers do not feel attraction towards products and lack the desire to keep them, there is no point in making them physically durable (Champan 2010, 61).

Pieter M A Desmet (as sited by Gyi et.al., 2004) from the Delft University of Technology introduces the role of anticipations, goals and motives and the performance of products in relation to them, when
selecting products. People will have certain expectations on how the product will perform and what kind of emotions the usage of them will facilitate; “When shopping for new shoes, one might, for example, anticipate that wearing a particular pair of elegant shoes will have the consequence of ‘being attractive’. If this person has the goal to be attractive, he or she will appraise this particular pair of shoes as motive compliant and, for instance, experience desire. If the same person has the goal of ‘comfortable walking’, he or she might appraise the anticipated discomfort as motive in compliant and experience dissatisfaction.” (Gyi et al., 2004, 9) Therefore, if the product can respond to such anticipations, the user might feel attachment towards it, whereas if the product fails to meet these expectations, the feelings will be of anger, frustration and disappointment.

Material possessions are also experienced as parts of identity, and they are expressing individual’s factual or ideal self (Norman, 2004, 54; Dittmar, 2008, 25). The possessions we have are communicating to others about our values and aspirations, both consciously and subconsciously. Possessions give their owners a sense of control, but they are also extensions and symbols of their personal and social identity (Dittmar, 2008, 25). Material objects as part of identity are representing relationships, group belongingness, values and beliefs, and they can also be symbols of historical continuity, which in turn can even be a factor in better mental health (Dittmar 2008, 31-32, 35).

As Helga Dittmar (2008, 29) points out, the notion that people regard possessions as a part of the self is not new. For example in Japan, the ancient, yet existing religion of shinto has strong animistic features. The beliefs of the ‘life spirit’ of owners transferring into their possessions have been found for example from shinto religion as well as among Amerindian tribes (Beaglehole, 1931, as cited by Dittmar, 2008, 29). People feel attachment towards objects, when they are viewed as part of the self, as one’s identity.

Personal sense of accomplishment is inducing positive sense of self (Norman, 2004, 55), and therefore actions and products that help in this, are more likely to become more important for their users. One classic example of this is the cake mix manufactured by Betty Crocker Company in the beginning of 1950’s; despite the well-received look, taste and feel of the product, it failed at first, as consumers did not experience the sense of accomplishment when using the product (Norman 2004, 55). Users feel more attached to products that boost the positive sense of self through personal input or accomplishment.

Objects are used to show and communicate not just accomplishment, but also skills and values. As Paul Bloom (2010, 154) suggests, humans are essentialists, receiving pleasure from the display of intelligence, creativity, strength and wit. Based on this, one could argue that people are likewise more likely to appreciate and feel attachment towards objects that convey values or messages of higher intelligence, creativity, strength or wit. Dittmar (2008, 2) also argues that consumer goods are bought and valued as they are offering a way to gain social status and to express an identity of “ideal self”. The emergence of social media platforms in the digital world is making it easier for us to communicate our values, aspirations, and sense of control, but they are also extensions and symbols of our personal and social identity.

Emotions evoked by products (garments in this relation), which make such products ‘live longer’, do not, however, need to be only pleasant ones. As cited by Gyi et al., Pieter M A Desmet notes that “...it may be interesting to design products that elicit ‘paradoxical emotions’, that is, positive and negative emotions simultaneously.” He also do, however, have the ability to create conditions that may lead to an intended experience (Forlizzi and Ford, as cited by Chapman, 2010, 65). Such conditions may include transparency in business models, material and design choices, possibilities for personasifications and custom-made features, and individualized customer service.

2.3. MECHANISMS BEHIND EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS TOWARDS CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

The nature and meaning of clothing is changing very slowly, if at all. New types of intelligent clothes are of course developed, but their use in normal, daily life is still mostly a part of science fiction stories. The basic tasks and meanings for clothing -to act as cover, warmth, means of self expression or status symbol- have not changed.

When considering the emotional connections and the person-product attachment, felt explicitly towards clothing or accessories, one key factor to understand is that ‘fashion’ and ‘clothing’ are accounted in different terms. Whereas ‘fashion’ is considered to be something temporary and replaceable, ‘clothing’ is seen as something more permanent. “Fashion means that the product is able to signify the present. According to Kaiser (1990) fashion is a symbolic product, and it differs from clothing. Clothing is material production that fulfills our physical needs for protection and functionality.” (Niinimäki, 2011, 38-39). In this light, garments seen as ‘clothing’ are garments responding to the needs of protection or functionality, and are thus keeping their value for longer.

Norman however argues, that the emotions evoked by a design are more relevant than its’ practical, tangible features (Norman, 2004, 5). This also raises an interesting question; people are most likely to acquire clothes, that they consider to be attractive - aesthetically pleasant. However in certain situations, aesthetic attributes of a product are irrelevant, and people have to settle for something they consider unattractive, as long as the utilitarian value of the product is what is required for. This may be the case for example for protective gear or clothing made for certain occasions and purposes. In these cases, can people become attached to the items because they respond to their needs of protection and functionality, despite considering the products aesthetically unattractive? Norman suggests, that the attachment to products is not in fact actually based only on aesthetics or only on utilitarian value, but on emotions - on how the items make us feel (Norman, 2004, p.46). Therefore the ugly but practical products may make us feel comfortable or protected, and we may feel even a companionship towards them (for instance due to shared history), and therefore become emotionally attached to them.

Marie Kondo (2014) writes in her bestseller book The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up, that “People have trouble discarding things that they could still use (functional value), that contain helpful information (informational value), and that have sentimental ties (emotional value). When these things are hard to obtain or replace (rarity), they become even harder to part with.” Donald A. Norman also points out, that aesthetically pleasing clothes makes one feel better, happier: “The surprise is that we now have evidence that aesthetically pleasing objects enable you to work better... products and systems that make you feel good are easier to deal with and produce more harmonious results... When you bathe and dress up in clean, fancy clothes, don’t you feel better?” (Norman 2004, 10).

Emotions evoked by products (garments in this relation), which make such products ‘live longer’, do not, however, need to be only pleasant ones. As cited by Gyi et al., Pieter M A Desmet notes that “...it may be interesting to design products that elicit ‘paradoxical emotions’, that is, positive and negative emotions simultaneously.” He also
suggestions that these paradoxical emotions may help in creating products that are “unique, innovative, rich, and more challenging or appealing than those that elicit only pleasant emotions.” (Gyi et al., 2004, 12) For example the mold and bacteria covered garments Martin Margiela introduced at Boijmans Van Beuningen museum in Rotterdam in 1997, are still remembered by many, and they are surely evoking emotions of disgust and fear, as well as curiosity and wonder.

As previously introduced, Norman argues that a design must excel at all levels of design in order to be successful; the visceral, the behavioral and the reflective (Norman 2004, 36). This is especially true when emotions and reactions towards the same objects vary over time, meaning, that what we love today, we may hate tomorrow (Norman 2004, 33). As a challenge for designers, same objects may raise completely different emotions in different people. This is why I also interested into considering, whether there has been and whether there are universal design attributes, that have evoked mostly pleasant emotions throughout times and nations. Products having such traits could be labelled as ‘classics’.

2.3.1. THE ROLE OF STORIES AND MEMORIES

Memories linked to garments are a major reason why people hold on to them (Ninimäki 2011; Spivack 2014). Garments can be cherished, dear objects despite them being impractical or unaesthetic, or having no monetary value. In the book ‘Worn Stories’, by Emily Spivack (2014), 67 cultural figures and storytellers introduced their cherished pieces of clothing and the story behind each garment. Memories of people and events were the main reason for keeping the garments in at least 39 of these stories. Most often the garments were functioning as a token of long lost relationships - boyfriends, girlfriends, relatives and friends. They act as a kind of a glue, linking together these people over time and space. Value linked to stories and memories also were functioning as a token of long lost relationships - boyfriends, girlfriends, relatives and friends. They act as a kind of a glue, linking together these people over time and space. Value linked to stories and memories also were functioning as a token of long lost relationships - boyfriends, girlfriends, relatives and friends. They act as a kind of a glue, linking together these people over time and space. Value linked to stories and memories also were functioning as a token of long lost relationships - boyfriends, girlfriends, relatives and friends. They act as a kind of a glue, linking together these people over time and space. Value linked to stories and memories also.

Memories of certain events or people can also bring comfort and a sense of safety for people. In Spivack’s (2014) Worn Stories, artist Marina Abramović told about a pair of hiking shoes she bought to walk the Great Wall of China. Not only does she still hold on to these shoes because of their strength, durability or material, but also because they have a strong relation to her work, and because they remind her of her efforts and memories; “The moment I put them on, I have this rush of the memories of everything I’ve been through, how hard it is to be an artist, and what it takes. And I have this incredible feeling of intimacy, like I’m with an old friend.” (Spivack, 2014, 95). Marina Abramović walked halfway through the Great Wall of China, to meet her companion Ulay in the middle. In that very spot they bid eachother farewell. Abramović also remarks that “Sometimes people are ashamed to talk about these things, but I know so many people who would never throw away their old shitty T-shirts or pullovers that are falling apart because of the comfort they get from those clothes. Everybody is vulnerable.” (Spivack 2014, 93).

The feelings of affection towards objects can be evoked by knowing the history of the product, by realising the value of the product, or by memories and stories related to them. These stories and memories can also function as a link between people, and therefore strengthen the will to cherish and keep the objects related to them. Petra Ahde-Deal (2013) researched in her doctoral dissertation how women relate to their jewelry and possessing them, and one of the key points she stated is that women keep memories alive by possessing and cherishing particular pieces of jewelry. The sense of appreciation and value is not related to the monetary value of the jewelry, but instead to personal links and memories people have gained while wearing or acquiring the jewelry. Ahde-Deal writes in her dissertation that “Pieces of jewelry carry qualities, both external and internal, requiring them to be kept. Often, the pieces of jewelry are worn to preserve emotional attachments and memories from one’s life. They keep our memories and connections to significant people around us fresh. They seem to be necessities which are hard to let go. The emotional attachments in jewelry work as preservatives, they make their biographies longer.” (Ahde-Deal, 2013, 9).

I believe these sensations can be related to other objects, like clothing, as well. Jewelry has been however regarded as adornment, and it is often made out of long-lasting quality materials, therefore making their life-span readily longer. With clothing there are more factors to challenge the emergence of emotional connections: durability of materials, fit of the clothes for different generations and body types, changing trends, lifestyles and surroundings, and difficulties in storing and preserving the ever-growing amount of possessions.

Memories related to particular objects predict a longer life for them. In Noora Mattila’s article ‘Tavaran aika on ohi’ (“The time of an object is over”) (Mattila, 2014), professional cleaners give an example, how some people keep on storing old vhs-cassettes in the hope of some day be able to watch them through again. I had an interview with my husband (part 4.4.3.), who stated he can’t let go of items of clothing, when he has attached a some kind of memory to them. People have natural interest towards the backgrounds and stories of other people and artefacts, which could imply that if and when the story of a product is known, it may predict the formation of PPA (Bloom 2010, 210).

Professor Rik Pieters (as sited in Pobken, 2013) has also pointed out in his study, that material objects can be socially productive and cherished for the social gatherings they allow. In this relation, the object stands as a symbol for something immaterial, for a memory or a feeling. In textile and garment setting, such an object could be for example a garment worn only on special, social occasions (e.g an inherited Santa Claus attire), or particular home textiles used in social gatherings. Norman (2014, 114) also introduces the ‘Juicy Salif’ juicer by Philippe Starck as such example: “The juicer tells a story. Anyone who owns it has to show it off, to explain it, perhaps to demonstrate it.” In clothing such social memories and the joy of reflection could be evoked by unusual or special origin, materials, manufacturing method or way of using the garment. All features, that could be embedded to the garments by the designer or the manufacturer.

Sometimes the way an object has been acquired - the existence of a story, and a memory of a special occasion - ends up being the reason, why it evokes a special feeling in their owners. Consumers are interested to know how especially objects of artistic value are created (Bloom 2010, 135). In commercial design setting, the formation of such memories and bonds could be helped by offering the customers the experience of personalized service and sufficient information of the products.

2.3.2. The Role of Materials, Colors and Shapes

As I previously pointed out, the role of memories has been proved to be one of the biggest factors in creating and deepening person-product attachment. For a designer, it is very difficult to artificially try to create these memories between the product and the consumer, as most often memories linked to PPA are born during the use of the product, not when it’s acquired. However, studies have found certain design attributes that enable longer life span for products, and these attributes can be found also from literature, such as Emily Spivack’s Worn Stories (2014).

Professor Kirsi Niinimäki found in her study, that design attributes such as high quality, certain colors or prints, classical design, functional style and multi-functionality, alongside with aesthetic ageing process of certain materials (such as wood or leather) enable and encourage longer lifetime for garments (Niinimäki 2011, 81). Some of the oldest and most popular colors featured in clothing history and fashion are especially black and white, but also blue, brown, green and different tones of ochre, ranging from red to pale yellow (Brunello, 1973; Cadigan, 2014; Gottesman, 2016). Geometric styles, stripes, checks, plaids and floral patterns have been the most widely used styles of patterns on textiles around the globe (Cadigan, 2014). Among the oldest known textiles, which are still widely used and appreciated, are linen, wood, cotton, hemp and silk (Cadigan, 2014).

Miles Park (in Cooper, 2010, 84) notes, that marks and scratches can also become a desirable feature on a product, but this depends on the type of the product and of the material. The patina of wear can be regarded as documentation of a product’s life-span, such well-worn leather or softened, scratched wood. Users are however less approving towards scuffs on electronic products for example.

The product’s visceral, immediate, effect is important in order for the product to get noticed. In commercial setting the visceral effect extends to also visual merchandising; if the product is displayed correctly and made to look good, it will more likely appeal to customers. Objects can cause pleasure and enjoyment by visual, aesthetics elements, and people may acquire objects based on this fact alone (Norman 2004, 214). In fashion world this is obvious through fashion shows, magazine articles and online-shopping, where items can be seen, coveted and acquired based only on their visual attributes.

The product has to however also function, feel and look good, in order to extend it’s life cycle. Therefore the attributes of shape, form, weight, feel and texture are also key features (Norman 2004, 69). Sōetsu Yanagi points out, that items that are meant to be used, should be pleasurable to handle; “The special quality of beauty in crafts is that it is a beauty of intimacy. Since the articles are to be lived with every day, this quality of intimacy is a natural requirement. Such beauty establishes a world of grace and feeling … People hang their pictures high up on walls, but they place their objects for everyday use close to them and take them in their hands.” (Yanagi, 1989, p.198). Norman (2004, 79) also argues that the touch and feel are critical to the behavioral assement of a product. If the wearer enjoys touching and using a garment, they are more likely to use it more, experience with it more, and eventually possibly form an attachment towards it.

The way people experience objects can increase the possibilities for the formation of emotional connections felt towards objects. If a product is well designed, regarded as functional and the user-experience is generally positive, the product will more likely be valued as something people don’t want to discard. Like previously mentioned, frustration and anger towards objects through negative user-experience (such as malfunctions or difficulties in usage) can make people neglect and discard the objects more likely (Norman 2004, 81-83). Likewise, a good apprehension of a product from early stages of use is propable to predict an extended lifespan for the product as well as the formation of a deepened person-product attachment (Battarbee 2004, 56, 164). Norman (2004, 80-81) is in fact blaming designers of too much self-centeredness, stating that many designers create products that are difficult to understand or use by the users. Some creations shown on catwalks may be visually striking, but their behavioral and reflective design is lacking - their meaning and application is not understood and they are difficult to use. On the other hand, some designs which function well and are readily understood, lack of aesthetic sensibilities and artistic features - they are visually uninteresting. Therefore, in order to create clothing that evokes feelings of attachment, these features should be combined and used together.

According to Professor Sheena Iyengar (2010), people are drawn to things that represent visually some level of uniqueness, but which aren’t too exclusive, as too unique things “turn us off” (Iyengar 2010, 90). People want to at the same time differentiate, but also to belong to a group. If an item is too unique and special, it creates a sensation of unstability especially in regards to social relations, as we fear the reaction something too unique would create in other people (Iyengar 2010, 92).

Iyengar (2010) created an experiment with her colleague Daniel Ames, where they showed different kinds of children’s names, ties, shoes and sunglasses to study participants. Some of the names and objects were quite common, some relatively/slightly unique, and the rest of them very extravagant. The participants were asked to evaluate how unique each item was, and how much they liked the item. In each group the slightly unique items gained the highest scores, whereas the extravagant items gained the most negative scores. All of this speaks for design attributes, which have familiar features with some originality and unique features, but which are not too flamboyant.

Norman (2004, 110) also argues that in order to maintain the excitement, interest and aesthetic pleasure felt towards an object, it should be able to offer a different angle of perception every time it is used. In other words, such objects should be protean, versatile, or be rich and deep in such a way, that something ‘new’ can be experienced of them throughout their lifetime. Norman cites works of music, literature and art of being objects with such qualities. Excitement or interest towards an object could be also created by “rationing” the amount or portion of interest, so as not to make overwhelm the users and make them weary or bored. Christophe Alexander expresses this thought with the following words: “If there is a beautiful view, don’t spoil it by building huge windows that gape incessantly at it. Instead, put the windows which look onto the view at places of transition - along paths, in hallways…” (Christophe Alexander, as cited by Norman 2004, 109) In clothing such rationing of beauty could be implemented for example by incorporating delicate and even hidden details, or a limited amount of handcrafted elements to the piece. Clothing could also be reversible, with one side of the garment being plain, one side decorative or bold. The element of excitement could therefore be a secret, that only the owner or wearer of the garment knows of.
2.3.3. THE ROLE OF TAILORING, CUSTOMIZATION & HAND-MADE ELEMENTS

Braungart & McDonough (2008, 102) argue that people generally enjoy buying things that are brand-new, and which are made of ‘virgin’ materials. They enjoy the thought that something is made just “for them”, expressing their individuality. The objects become like family members. Items that are tailored or customized to better reflect this individuality, could therefore create even stronger bonds with the person.

In the past custom-made, tailored clothing was the norm, resulting in well-fitting clothes. As the process was (and is) slow and labor intensive, it is therefore also expensive. This did, however, encourage the users to hang on to their tailored pieces for very long. In current society mass customization services are again being introduced through developments in technology. Things can be ordered online with particular traits and measurements, and manufactured only after the order and the payment has been made. Technological inventions such as 3D-printing, digital printing and robotics are making manufacturing processes more agile.

Users hold on to their tailored pieces for very long. In current society mass customization services are again to better reflect this individuality, could therefore create even stronger bonds with the person. The objects become like family members. Items that are tailored or customized and which are made of ‘virgin’ materials. They enjoy the thought that something is made “just for them”, expressing their individuality. The objects become like family members. Items that are tailored or customized to better reflect this individuality, could therefore create even stronger bonds with the person.

Braungart & McDonough (2008, 33) note, that universal design solutions also ignore localized preferences; “Brute force and universal design approaches to typical development tend to erocshelm (and ignore) natural and cultural diversity, resulting in less variety and greater homogeneity.” Braungart & McDonough (2008,123) argue that from sustainability point of view products should be customized and modified to meet local needs; material and energy flows, customs, needs and tastes. A complete mass-customization of clothing according to local preferences and features (when exporting to numerous locations) is however quite likely extremely expensive and difficult. These different features could be however used in smaller scale, to induce excitement and curiosity. For example by utilizing locally produced materials or incorporating traditional skills into products, the product will be connected to a story, which, like previously discussed, is one important factor in enticing person-product attachment. Otherwise classic styles could have customized features according to the city and the presence of psychic energy.

Norman (2004, 219) suggests that such products are seen as having been in contact with the artist, the celebrity or the maker - someone special, thus giving the product an appealing added value (Bloom, 2010, 140). People also appreciate the perceived amount of effort (Bloom 2010,141). This would support products made with handicrafts and special skills, as such products have a special origin, and are made by someone with acquired skills. In the art world, posters of famous artworks may be liked, but they are not appreciated in the same way as the genuine art works. The phenomenon seen in arts is also present in fashion; fast fashion retailers copy the catwalk looks of big fashion houses sometimes even blatantly. These copies sell, but they are never appreciated in the same way as their original versions. One general sentiment is that the manufacturing of fast fashion products does not require skills of effort, whilst its’ opponent, haute couture1, is considered to be an art form of perseverance and patience. The notion that fast fashion would require ‘less skills’ is one more reason why they are sometimes discarded easily; “If you have low opinion of the capacities underlying a creation, then you will see it as bad art and get no pleasure from it - except, perhaps, the joy of mockery. …You need to be dazzled by the idea to be dazzled by the art.” (Bloom, 2010, p.146). At the same time it can be seen as a defence statement for crafts and traditional skills.

Master dyer Sachio Yoshioka (in Japan's Arts & Culture 2011, 37) believes that mass-produced goods have shown a bad example and disconnected people from the manufacturing process, thus hiding the amount of work and waste that is related to each item, and changing people’s attitude towards quality. He states that “…people make do with ready-made clothes even if they don't exactly fit. If people had clothes tailor-made they would soon realize how much waste there is in mass production.” Awareness of materials, methods and transparency in manufacturing processes could lead to better appreciation of workmanship and quality materials.

1) Haute couture, often referred to being high-quality, hand-made fashion. The official term is defined by the Paris Chamber of Commerce (Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris) and refers to high-quality, made-to-measure fashion for private clients, from fashion houses which have an atelier, employing a full-time personal of at least fifteen people, in Paris. (http://www.chamberofcommerce.com/581/what-is-the-definition-of-haute-couture)
2.4. Desirable Goods - The Lifespan of Clothing in Relation to Consuming and Trends

What kind of products, clothes, are desirable then, or how are they made to be desirable? The lifespan of trends, innovations and thus fashionable products have a great impact on the appreciation people show towards objects in general, but especially towards clothing. In regards to the mottainai concept, it is important to study and learn how these mechanisms function in fashion markets. In fashion, new trends are introduced to the market several times each season. While new trends emerge, the old ones wither away. Fashion works in cycles, where popularity of the trend is related to the different phases each trend goes through. These phases are the introduction of a trend, the approval of a trend, and the regression of a trend (Nuutinen, 2004).

Miles Park (in Cooper, 2010, 95) suggests, that even though the fast changing cycles of fashion are a major factor in causing obsolescence in clothing, they can also have a role in extending life-spans by reviving past phenomenons in fashion. This may encourage people to hold on to their garments, “just in case it comes back to fashion”, but also search for genuine vintage pieces. In order for clothing stand the test of time, to become vintage, the materials have to be of good quality. The rotating cycles also give consumers the sense of refreshment, of something new, which is one motivator in making purchase decisions.

Sheena Iyengar (2010, 150) suggests, that trends are self-fulfilling prophecies, which are orchestrated by trend forecasters, designers and advertisers; “The higher the exposure a product receives and the greater its perceived social acceptability, the more people will buy it, which in turn further increases its exposure and acceptability.” The life-cycle of a trend may however influence how the object is evaluated and appreciated; an out-dated item, which was trendy just before, may look like something old, but not something old ‘enough’. Already well before the fast-fashion era, Sōetsu Yanagi (1989, 107) pointed out that people judge things based on their age, when they should judge things based on their sincere, genuine essence; “Beyond all question of old or new, the human hand is the ever-present tool of human feeling, whereas the machine, however new, is soon out of date. Young people nowadays judge according to whether a thing is new or old, but more important is whether it is true or false. If true, whether it is handmade or machine-made, it will always preserve its newness.”

Article “Shopping is a ‘loop of loneliness’” (Popken 2013) introduces a study conducted by marketing professor Rik Pieters from the Tilburg University in the Netherlands, where more than 2,500 consumers were interviewed over six years. The study found that consumers don’t all behave in the same way, which is on the contrary to previous research done on materialism. Previous studies on materialism have treated consumers as one lump. The study found, that some consumers use shopping as a medicine to feel differently and to cheer them up. Other group likes comfort, luxury and having a comfortable life. Pieters points out, that people in the latter group are happy with what they have, and luxury for them can mean different things - from Louboutin heels to ‘an old frumpy couch’.

Whereas consuming has sometimes been completely frowned upon when talking about ecological and ethical choices and values, I would like to think it matters more what we buy, how we buy and for what reasons. Carefully made decisions, and items that are cherished like treasures become long life design in the end. Pieters’s study also agrees with this thought: “We shouldn’t be afraid to like things. From collectible ashtrays to new bike parts, talk about it and that you like it and look for it and buy it...The problem isn’t materialism itself, it’s the why of materialism.” (Popken 2013).
Noora Mattila (2014) also points out, that while consuming keeps economy in growth, people could purchase less often, but better quality items which are ethically produced.

Brands function as symbols, indentifying marks, which draw the consumers towards the products or away from them (Norman 2004, 60). They convey certain messages, values and an overall image, to which the consumer wants or does not want to be associated with. Norman (2004, 60) suggests that all in all, brands are all about emotions, signifying the emotional responses of consumers. Dittmar (2008, 2) argues that goods and brands are used as tools to achieve the ‘good life’, or the ‘ideal self’. There is a notion that by using certain products consumers can change their personalities and lives. Brands and products thus have ‘power’ to change the way a person is being comprehended, and are therefore desirable. Formerly, identity was built and based on given features such as class, religion, nationality or profession, but nowadays the social position is no longer automated and inherited in a similar way. Helga Dittmar (2008, 12) suggests that identity is instead achieved and constructed by the individuals themselves, and the acquisition and consumption of particular material goods are an important component in this. People will be drawn to goods, that reflect their values and function as suitable building blocks for their identities. Sheena Iyengar (2010, 152) also notes, that by choosing, using and showing goods, consumers are making sure they are sending the right kind of message of themselves to others, as nobody wants to be seen as unsophisticated.

Goods positioned to be luxury, i.e. expensive and premium, may often be described by consumers to be of high-quality, durable and having longer life-spans (Cooper 2010, 26). They are also considered to offer good economic value over the long term, when considering their long service life against their high purchase price (Park in Cooper 2010, 91).

More expensive products are assumed to be of higher quality and this is sometimes turned to good account by companies who own brands categorized as both cheap and luxury, as -for higher profits- companies are sometimes selling the same product under two different price categories (Iyengar, 2010, 156). This would suggest, that the brand, and the price of a product is sometimes a bigger factor in enticing buyers than the actual quality of a product. Norman (2004, 87) notes, that also prestige and rarity, alongside with higher prices, make things more desirable. We feel more pride in owning something, when we know it is genuine and rare.

Desirable goods will not appeal to us for long however, if they do not both function well and if they do not appeal to our emotions. Soetsu Yanagi (1989, 197), when talking about crafts, has said that beauty is indentified with use, meaning that functionality is one factor in making something beautiful. Iyengar (2010, 120) points out that on the other hand, objects also need to excite our senses and appeal to our emotions in order for us to remember them and care for them. Yanagi (1989) continues by proposing that utility and beauty should be in good balance; “If crafts are only judged from a utilitarian point of view, then pattern, for example, is uncalled for. But good pattern adds to the function of that utensil. It becomes an indispensable part of use. On the other hand, however useful an artifact may be, if it causes in the mind a feeling of ugliness, it detracts from total service.” (Yanagi, 1989, p.197)

All in all, goods that their owners are fond of will be used and also shown to others with pride, while goods that have failed our expectations will be hidden or discarded (Norman 2004, 88). Therefore concentrating on the creation of a good product - which is pleasing both functionally and aesthetically - as well as an enticing brand is an important trait for any designer or manufacturer.

The Problem Isn’t Materialism Itself, It’s the Why of Materialism.”
- Professor Rik Pieters
2.4.1. Designer Collaboration Projects

As previously mentioned, appreciation for goods largely stems from their perceived rarity and exclusiveness, and this can be seen in the modern day markets as well. Unique, one-off items, or limited edition goods appeal to consumers. This is evident for example in the limited edition collaboration projects, that especially fast fashion retailers have made with well known designers. H&M for example has collaborated with Karl Lagerfeld, Stella McCartney, Roberto Cavalli, Matthew Williamson, Roberto Cavalli, Sonia Rykiel, Jimmy Choo, Versace, Lanvin, Comme des Garçons, Marni and Balmain. These collections have often sold out within a very short time - for example the whole Marni for H&M collection in 2012 was sold out within a few hours after its' launch (Jung 2014).

Designer collaboration projects are beneficial both for the fast fashion brands as well as the luxury brands, as the fast fashion brand can enhance its brand image and increase its brand equity, while luxury brands receive fast and very efficient media exposure, also boosting their image and sales. Co-brands often become highly sought-after products, which are also traded through online second hand markets (Jung 2014.).

Jung (2014) sees that the consumption of luxury goods has a strong social function; “The social dimension of luxury value perception refers to the perceived utility that consumers acquire by consuming products or services recognized within their own social groups. Such utility may confer conspicuousness and prestige value, which can affect consumers’ evaluation and propensity to purchase luxury brands.”. While fast fashion brands are functioning from the basis of offering their customers excitement through masses of new products and fast-changing cycles, luxury fashion brands operate on the basis of exclusivity and prestige, sometimes keeping their classic items in production for years. The collaboration projects between these two are therefore usually sold as limited collections, in limited amount and for a limited period of time. This way the collections can offer the excitement and newness of fast fashion brands, but at the same time convey the sense of prestige and scarcity of the luxury brands.

Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton (1981, 30) also suggest that an object can become a symbol of status, if given the features and an image of one. Rarity can be seen as such feature, as it implies that something is difficult to obtain and therefore requires effort to make or to find. Status symbol requires however that it is being recognized as one by the audience. Collaboration collections between fast fashion retailers and luxury fashion houses function as an example of this, as the brands of the luxury houses are usually very well known among the consumers and fans of fashion. The products in the collaboration collections have also usually a higher price-point than the normal range of fast fashion retailers, while nevertheless being a fraction of the prices of the luxury lines.

Owning products of something limited and scarce may also be a way to differentiate and an attempt to enhance one’s own value. People do not want to be lumped as a crowd, but want to feel themselves as distinct individuals, or as members of a ‘distinctive few’, as the general conception is that people who are one of a kind are “better people” (Iyengar 2010, 87). Limited edition pieces function as the building material for the ideal self.

One reason why limited edition collections may feel more appealing and desirable, is their size. Limited collections or special collections often have a curated, smaller number of items. As previously mentioned, people find decision making easier when the amount of choices is limited. An extensive number of options overwhelms and tire people, while a selection of too small feels restrictive. Professor Sheena Iyengar (2010, 190) has found through studies with her colleagues, that “when people are given a moderate number of options (4 to 6) rather than a large number (20 to 30), they are more likely to make a choice, are more confident in their decisions, and are happier with what they choose.”. A curated and limited selection make the process of choosing easier and more enjoyable. When the selection is smaller, decisions will be more considered and reasoned, resulting in better satisfaction in products and thus, their longer lifespan. We have a limit to our capacities, and most people can handle only five to nine items before they start having difficulties in perception (Iyengar 2010, 182).
2.4.2. New Luxury, Silent Luxury & Slow Fashion

As the economy is worsening and the awareness of ecological problems is increasing, the sense of appreciation towards good quality materials and sustainable consuming is arising again. There has been talks about ‘new luxury’, where the normal consumer has access to products of good quality, and of ‘slow luxury, slow factory, fabbrica lenta’ and ‘slow fashion’, which give value and respect to the products and the people making them, rejects mass-produced clothing and supports artisan, fair trade, second-hand and sustainably produced clothing. In slow fashion trends are not in the limelight (Cataldi, Dickson & Grover, 2011). Luxury in the traditional sense has been something rare, something expensive and often something more decorative than useful, as also suggested by Sōetsu Yanagi; “They are more decorative than useful. Even if they are made for use they are expensive and are therefore not employed in daily life, thus becoming luxury items. From the very beginning they are made for art collectors, and become disconnected with the life of the people. …Apart from use and the people there is no meaning in either craftsmanship or its beauty.” (Yanagi, 1989, p.203). New luxury, slow luxury or slow fashion gives value for quality and practicality, and it is not meant only for the wealthy and the famous - it is meant for everyone.

Slow Fashion as a concept was first introduced by Kate Fletcher from the Centre for Sustainable Fashion. It represents all things “eco”, “ethical” and “green” in one unified movement (Cataldi, Dickson, & Grover, 2011). The slow design movement has, however, been more visible in other design fields, rather than fashion design. The fashion industry has and is working based on fast moving cycles and change of seasons. Consumers in fashion have been trained to buy often and to discard items often. Fast fashion industry is based on globalised mass production, where garments are transformed from design sketches to ready-to-sell garments within a few weeks. Consumers are blinded by low prices and end up buying more items than they need (Cataldi, Dickson, & Grover 2011). The pressure on social ecological environment keeps increasing at the same pace as the fast fashion consumption practices increase. Therefore it is crucially important to encourage more responsible consumption behaviour, that is based on discretion and awareness. Slow design and slow fashion encourages taking time to ensure quality production, to give value to the product and contemplate the connection with the environment (Cataldi, Dickson, & Grover 2011).

Slow fashion is however not only about environmental sustainability and ecological values. Sojin Jung and Byoungho Jin have discovered five dimensions for slow fashion; equity, authenticity, functionality, localism and exclusivity (Jung & Jin, 2014). These dimensions extend the impact of slow fashion to equity and localism by caring for producers and local communities, to authenticity by sustaining traditional and historical skills, to exclusivity by offering diverse and unique products, and to functionality by maximizing product lifespan and efficiency. Slow fashion conciders sustainability both from the environmental and social standpoint, encouraging the designers and producers to design and produce beautiful, durable products, and on the other hand the consumers to purchase high-quality items less often. As slow fashion tries to avoid exploiting natural resources, the low-speed production enables raw materials to grow naturally (Kate Fletcher, as cited by Jung & Jin, 2014). It also improves the quality of life for the garment workers, by removing the time pressure. In slow fashion, the workmanship and quality of work is more important than the speed of production.

Slow design reveals charasteristics in objects that are often missed within the mass-produced ‘fast design’ practices. By acknowledging the origins and the story of a product, the consumer can make more informed and more ethical choices. I believe, that when a consumer has the possibility to learn the story of an object, and to understand the effort put into each item, they will create a connection to the objects and appreciate them more. Mass-produced items often remain impersonal, bland. Ramia Mazé points out in her doctoral thesis ‘Occupying Time: Design, Technology, and the Form of Interaction,’ that ‘Design is not only about the spatial or physical form of objects, but the form of interactions that take place – and occupy time – in people’s relations with and through [them]. A central, and particular, concern of interaction design must therefore be the “temporal form” of such objects and the “form of interaction” as they are used over time.’” (as cited by Fuad-Luke & Strauss 2008, 4). Jonathan Chapman (2010, 70) also suggests that slowing down production and consumption cycles will result in longer-lasting life cycles for objects. When an object ‘grows’ with the user, meanings are evolved, memories are born, and this predicts a deeper person-product attachment. Enterprises pursuing the slow fashion system may also utilize co-creation processes, where the consumers are invited to give their input to the design process (Jung & Jin, 2014). This increases their awareness of the manufacturing methods behind a garment, while also giving them the sense and satisfaction of participation, as well as the joy of receiving an item that has their fingerprint on it. As previously discussed, having the chance for personal input during manufacturing acts as an self-enhancement method and increases the person-product attachment.

The fast-fashion industry intentionally conceals the processes behind each product, thus putting a distance between the product and a consumer. If the consumers have access to information of the processes, and even an opportunity to influence contribute to the designs or processes behind objects, they become
connected to the objects and more motivated to take care of them. Slow-fashion designer Jessica Robertson (2012) states in her online article for eco-textiles website Ecouterre, that “By linking products and their producers with the end user, the consumer becomes part of the production chain and, by extension, a co-producer. This user-centered practice heightens the relationship and emotional longevity between wearer and garment.” Sharing the product background and history should however be done in such a way that it does not make the customer feel guilty or bad (Braungart & McDonough, 2008, 173). The gained information should offer the joy of discovery and support.

Slow design exposes the life and the origins of the products and introduces the people who manufacture them. Slow design processes are therefore open-source and rely on collaboration, sharing and transparency. When the consumers are engaged in the development processes of objects, they feel more involved and feel they have had an impact. This, I believe, strengthens the connections between items and consumers, and ensures the product will have a longer life cycle. Slow Design encourages users to become active participants in the design process, embracing ideas of conviviality and exchange to foster social accountability and enhance communities (Fuad-Luke & Strauss, 2008, 6).

As mass retailers are looking for manufacturers who can compete with the combination of low prices and high volumes, many smaller producers have been forced out of business (Jung & Jin, 2014). The slow fashion principle enables smaller producers and independent designers to work together, as independent designers then again are not able to purchase large quantities of products. Slow fashion encourages the utilization of local and traditional skills, and methods of making things by hand.

As pointed out by Jung & Jin (2014), slow fashion is not only about being the opposite of fast fashion and slowing down the process, but it is about adding value and authenticity to the products by paying attention to quality, craft-based production and utilizing unique, traditional techniques. Jung & Jin go on to suggest, that slow, patient construction of garments will show and therefore connote the history of the products to the users. Involving local producers and traditional, local methods will also keep local businesses, resources and traditions alive, whilst also creating the sense of excitement and rarity to consumers.

Handmade items are also often irregular, while mass-produced items are regular and all similar. The irregularities may however be seen as charming and lovely features, giving the product its own nature and a special character, enabling the person to become more attached with it. Sōetsu Yanagi has also emphasized that 'freedom is beauty', that there is something alluring about irregularities; “Why should one reject the perfect in favour of the imperfect? The precise and perfect carries no overtones, admits of no freedom; the perfect is static and regulated, cold and hard. We in our own human imperfections are repelled by the perfect, since everything is apparent from the start and there is no suggestion of the infinite. Beauty must have some room, must be associated with freedom. Freedom, indeed, is beauty. The love of the irregular is a sign of the basic quest for freedom.” (Yanagi, 1989, 120). For example the Japanese Raku teaware have purposely malformed shapes, in order to “reject perfection”, as perfection is seen as something uninteresting, un-alive. The object is let to breath and live freely, and material is not forced to be something it is not. As Sōetsu Yanagi, 73,4% of the respondents of the study agreed that they would prefer the products to be automatically optimized according to environmental impacts, thus erasing the need for any extra environmental labeling (Niinimäki, 2011, 77). The same study states, that most respondents wish the eco-clothes to look the same as ordinary clothes. When buying garments, the product’s ecological impact is rarely the most important criteria.

Through the slow fashion principles, environmental sustainability could also be practiced without additional labels or stamps - the products would be automatically, naturally sustainable. In a study pursued by professor Kirsi Niinimäki, 73,4% of the respondents of the study agreed that they would prefer the products to be automatically optimized according to environmental impacts, thus erasing the need for any extra environmental labeling (Niinimäki, 2011, 77). The same study states, that most respondents wish the eco-clothes to look the same as ordinary clothes. When buying garments, the product’s ecological impact is rarely the most important criteria. The visceral effect, i.e. the product visually and haptically pleasing, has more value. Therefore, the eco label is unnecessary, if the product is appealing especially through it’s visceral, but also reflective and behavioral features.

Slow fashion items are also ecological in the sense, that higher quality, versatile products are most likely worn longer, more often and in multiple ways. As previously discussed, the strongest factor in enhancing person-product attachments are memories and stories. When a garment is worn often and longer, it is more likely that it will also become a part of a story, of a memory.
2.4.3. LONG LIFE DESIGN

Long life design means that an object will predictably have a long life cycle, i.e. it has such qualities, that will not be affected by trends or changing circumstances. The design speaks of universal, timeless language. Long life design objects are of good quality, they are functional, versatile and their design is timeless. Norman (2004, 58) also suggests that in order for a product to have long-lasting value, it must have good balance for all three levels of design, which were previously introduced; the visceral, the behavioral and the reflective. In other words, design should be attractive, pleasurable, effective, understandable and appropriately priced.

D&Department is a chain of stores and a gallery in Japan run by graphic designer Kenmei Nagaoka, which aims at promoting only long life design products from the 47 prefectures of Japan. Nagaoka started the chain of stores, by showcasing objects he found from thrift stores and thought to be of exceptional quality in his Tokyo apartment. Now the D&Department stores and art galleries feature art and design objects (which include daily items, such as tea bags, noodle packets or children’s gym shoes) sourced from around Japan. All of the items sold or exhibited through D&Department stores or exhibitions must fall under the category of ‘long life design’. They select the objects which they showcase or sell according to a five step criteria:

1. KNOW (The maker of the product is known)  
2. USE (The product is meant to be used)  
3. BUY-BACK (The product can be bought back later on, to be re-sold as second hand)  
4. LONGEVITY (The product can be repaired or altered, thus used for long-term)  
5. CONTINUITY (The manufacturer will continue making the product)  
(FOP, 2015)

These criteria sum up well the main characteristics of long life design objects. The brand or the age of the product does not determine, is it categorized as long life design. Objects that are of certain brand and function as status symbols may lose their value when they cease to serve as such (Dittmar 2008, 36). This may happen for example when they become too popular and lose their reputation of being something exclusive and covetable. For this reason the brand of price of a product is not a valid criteria in deciding whether it is long life design or not. Long life design does not need to mean only clothes marked as luxury, quality or previously introduced slow fashion or slow luxury either. Even affordable garments, originally bought from fast fashion retailers, can become long life design if they meet the requirements for long life design, and if they are cherished and taken care of for long time. The age of an object enhances its status, and therefore also a trivial object may become rare and valuable through its age (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981, 30).

One significant factor in determining whether an object is long life design or not, is how it functions, i.e. how well it is designed on the behavioral level. Through this, the long life can be achieved both from the utilitarian point of view (i.e. is the product durable and does it do what it is meant to do) as well as through satisfaction of the user (i.e. positive emotions felt towards the object). If the performance of a product is inadequate, the product fails and produces negative emotions in the user (Norman 2004, 37). In clothing, features related to the behavioral level could be for example the fit and versatility of the product, the maintenance of it and also whether the product is easily understood. Extravagant and artistic garments may be visually pleasing, but if the design is too complicated and the way of dressing it is not clear or it is uncomfortable, the user experience is negative through frustration and confusion. A functional, long life design product also does not set limits for age, gender or body type. As Sōetsu Yanagi put it: “Things that cannot be used possess something negative, even if beautiful.” (Yanagi, 1989, 179). Beauty and long life design begins therefore from utility and behavior.

Sōetsu Yanagi (1989, 203) was in favor of folkcrafts also for their utilitarian features. As they are produced for a purpose of use, and they are produced in relatively large quantities, the repeated practice in their technique result in steady level of quality and functionality, while still maintaining the sense of handmade objects. Similar guarantee of quality is not necessarily present in artful, unique objects.

According to Norman, the underlying principles of visceral design are wired in to all of us and are consistent across people and cultures (Norman 2004, 67). Products designed according to these rules will be universally attractive, even though simple, whereas products designed for the reflective level will be perhaps more sophisticated and intricate, but become outdated soon as of changed in trends and cultural differences. This is a challenge also for clothing designers, as designing something charming but simple is in fact very difficult. Detailed, ornamental clothing may be interesting and enjoyable to design and craft, but they are more likely to follow the fluctuation of trends.

Sōetsu Yanagi also explicated the timeless, simple features of long life design objects through tea utensils used by tea masters in Japan; “They are sound both in mind and substance. If they had been too delicate, or too showy, they could not have served as utensils. Is not sincerity their primary virtue? Is it not wonder they radiate true beauty.” (Yanagi, 1989, 185). He also stated that also the common, daily articles become beautiful as they are loved and used. I also made a notion through Spivack’s (2014) Worn Stories, as well as through my empirical research work (chapter 4.5.), that most often the most cherished, loved pieces of garments are items that are well-worn, daily items. The aspects of behavioral, visceral and reflective design correlate together here; objects which are too complicated or impractical, will not be used frequently, even though they may be visually pleasing. However objects which are visually pleasant, and practical, will be used frequently, and will thus also be a component in creating memories, therefore creating a bond with the person using it. Fashion creations have sometimes been criticised of being too unique and outlandish, as consumers feel they do not know how and when to use them. As their visceral design is also often soon outdated, their life cycle tends to be very short-lived.

As Yanagi put it, “the virtue of folkcrafts is that one feels no obtruding personality in them. The thing shines, not the maker.” (Yanagi, 1989, 200). If the object is designed only for the purpose of showcasing the brand or designer, forgetting the different levels of design, and if it is bought only for the sake of its brand or designer, it means the object itself fails to entice the user with its features. This leads to the likelihood of it being discarded, after the brand or designer falls out of favor. However, if the product is good enough to “stand on its own feet”, it will gain a better reputation, create stronger bonds with the user, and at the same time increase the reputation and value of the brand or the designer.

Norman (2004, 107) suggests that one sign of great design is that it can be appreciated after continual use and presence, i.e. it does not become tiresome, drab or tacky. Therefore one could trust that design features which have appealed to people over generations all over the globe, are features of long life design. These kind of features were discussed and introduced briefly in chapter 2.3.2.

Continuity is one aspect of long life design and materials are in important role when considering this. Products should be designed from the beginning in such a way, that their materials are selected to serve their purpose. The usability, maintenance, durability, impact on the environment and their post-use life should be
carefully planned to be truly long life design (Braungart & McDonough, 2008, 72).

Objects which are used for a long time will naturally wither and damage. Therefore one should also consider how the materials behave and change in different conditions. Materials, which change their appearance in a visually pleasant way are more likely to stand the test of time. As also Norman suggests, each stain or scratch make things special and personal; “Each mark, each burn, each dent, and each repair all contain a story, and it is stories that make things special.” (Norman, 2004, p.221).

Continuity in long life design can be implemented by also carrying over products and models, which are proven to be good and functional, to the next seasons. If something works well and is liked, the manufacturing of it is continued. For clothing businesses this could mean keeping certain designs in production, and only altering its details or materials, if deemed necessary. As I also found out through my empirical research work (chapters 4.5.1. and 4.5.2.), people are sometimes missing particular designs, which they have found to be perfect for them, but which are no longer available in stores. These staples in their wardrobes become withered due to excessive use, and they are often mended and modified, in order to lengthen their lifespan.

Kenmei Nagaoka (NHK World, 2014) also stresses, that designers should base their design vision on their roots, learning from the past.

Long life design aims at evoking loyalty of users not only with good quality or versatility but also with the possibility for alterations and repairs. A research conducted by British charity WRAP (The Waste and Resources Action Programme) suggests that on average consumers are willing to pay over 30% more for longer-life products that are backed by a longer standard guarantee or warranty (Wrap, 2013).

Cars are checked for any faults and dents at an annual maintenance. Would it be worth considering, for retailers to arrange similar maintenance services for the garments they are selling, where they would be lovingly repaired? The owner could also see the ‘story’ of the product in a service book provided by the retailer. Some retailers are offering similar services; for example Nudie Jeans is offering repair and alteration services for their products, without a time limit (Kant Hvass et.al. 2015). By providing repair, alteration or rental services manufacturers would still be able to grow and develop, despite not selling as many units of products as perhaps before (Braungart & McDonough 2008, 112). Products could be upgraded and modified, or swapped to new ones.

Happiness and satisfaction for consumers in relation to objects does not lie in the quantity of objects one owns or purchases, but in the quality and the personal significance of the objects. Long life design is also about the relationship between an object and a consumer. Finding a balance in consumption creates permanence and satisfaction for consumers. Extreme ends, i.e. not consuming at all or consuming all the time are both too restrictive methods. A more stable, loving relationship between an object and a consumer is therefore also important.

When designing longer-lasting products, one should however take into consideration what happens, when these products are eventually discarded. Jonathan Chapman (2010, 68) points out, that durability of objects may sometimes have a destructive impact, as waste facilities are battling with layers and layers of physically durable waste. This is also why the ‘afterlife’ of objects needs to be taken into consideration; can the objects be disassembled, and can the parts or materials be recycled or repurposed for something else.

Braungart & McDonough (2008, 114) are also showing some criticism against long life designs, against products that are durable for too long. They see the durability of many modern day products as “intergenerational tyranny”, which does not take the needs and tastes of future generations into consideration. For this reason the design qualities of the products should be universal in such a way, that they will look fresh and pleasing to the eye even after decades. Many Japanese textiles for example, are bearing motifs and patterns - such as geometric or stylized floral patterns - that look very modern, even though they are hundreds of years old. As also previously stated, stories and memories, the history of objects, are important in creating person-product attachments. In this relation it would be very dismal, if there were no objects with such qualities.

_assured of their decisions and seldom have feelings of regret. These decisions are based both on emotional and rational factors. Content with the decisions then again predict a better person-product attachment, which in turn means a longer lifespan for the products. As discussed earlier, people find it easier to make a choice, are more confident in their decisions, and are happier with what they choose, when the number of options is not too extensive (Iyengar 2010, 190). In this relation long life design could also mean limiting the number of the items in a collection, in order to not to overwhelm the customer and enhance customer satisfaction.

Design retailer and graphic designer Kenmei Nagaoka, from D&Department Store in Japan has identified the importance of long-life-design. Nagaoka as well believes in the creation of long life design through awareness and emotional connections to objects. He has criticized the un-social way of shopping, where items can be bought online or from department stores without any kind of human interaction. The D&Department store started from Kenmei Nagaoka’s own frustration, both for unnecessary items filling the markets and for the lack of communication and storytelling in modern day shopping. He wishes to connect people and carefully selected products, and tell their story forward; “Japanese folk-art shops do a great job of telling a story about the local manufacturers behind the products and you’d have thought that was the norm. However, take the example of Japanese convenience stores - but actually now this applies all around the world- we shop without talking to anyone, without any communication whatsoever.” (Lexus International, 2013). The experience of acquiring an item, the interaction between a seller or maker and the customer, is therefore also important.

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“If you want a golden rule that will fit everybody, this is it: Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.”

William Morris
PART 3:
FULFILLING THE LIFE OF AN OBJECT
- APPRECIATION OF MATERIALS AND SKILLS IN JAPAN
3.1. THE MULTIFACETED CULTURE OF JAPAN

Various forms of traditional skills and methods in crafts have been persevered in Japan, despite the powers of globalisation and the rise of the throwaway society. One reason for the ‘survival’ of the variety of craft skills has been the unique history and location of Japan itself, as well as the climatic and geological features of the Japanese archipelago. These have created distinct lifestyles in different areas of Japan.

As an island nation, Japan could develop its own unique culture and society, without constant influence from other cultures. The favorable, albeit also challenging climate and the fertile soil along with the surrounding sea have created successful living conditions for the large groups of people inhabiting the islands, as well as enabled the country to create a multi-faceted, unique culture. Many local and cultural craft skills within Japan have been transmitted from the history to the present unchanged, partly due to the natural and rough landscape of Japan, which consists of mountains, valleys and forests (Fält in Fält et.al.1994, 9). The variety of craft skills were originally developed from a necessity to survive, but have evolved into a appreciation towards materials, historical values and the skills and makers themselves. Shogo Koyano states that the preservation of traditional crafts is related to family ties and to close bonds between lifestyle and nature (Koyano 1979, 2).

The appreciation towards national and local traditions and skills is still clearly visible throughout the country, and many traditional skills are utilized in conjunction with modern techniques, creating new, innovative products and ideas.

Despite having its long history and its own, distinct culture, Japan has not, however, been immune to foreign influence. The biggest foreign influence to Japanese culture has come from Korea and China, especially during the Yayoi-period (years 300BC - 300AD) and the Kofun-period (years 300AD -522AD). During these times Chinese and Korean populations moved to Japan, starting from the northern parts of Kyushu islands, and introduced significant skills such as weaving, wet rice cultivation, metal processing, a new way of making earthenware, the Chinese writing system, Confucianism and Buddhism to the Japanese (Fält in Fält et.al., 1994, 11-18). The Japanese national culture strengthened, developed and differentiated during the Heian era (794-1185), when the interest towards Chinese influence weakened at the same time with the Japanese court showing interest towards the development of Japanese’ own aesthetics and literature (Fält in Fält et.al., 1994, 42).

Japan has received Western influence from the end of 16th century until the isolation of the country in 1639, and again from the end of 18th century onwards. Japan has shown interest especially towards the Western calendar, medicine, linguistics, astronomy, geography, physics, chemistry and science of warfare (Fält in Fält et.al.1994, 73-79, 115-117.) Despite the various attempts of trying to incorporate foreign features as a part of Japanese society, the Japanese have rather borrowed and adapted them to fit in to their own cultural heritage (Fält in Fält et.al. 1994, 154).

Western values and aesthetics were pushed to Japan especially during the Meiji and Taishō eras (1868-1911 and 1912-1925 respectively) and to underline the end of the Tokugawa shogunate and to demonstrate to Western nations that Japan was a ‘civilized society’ according to their standards, the government of the Meiji era purposely aimed at the westernization of Japan. This was for example shown in the requirement of the military personnel and government workers to wear western-style uniforms (Yoko Takagi in Hori et.al. 2012, 12-13.) However, while part of the populace considered Western things to be highly advanced and fascinating, another part of the general populace especially in rural villages preferred to preserve their own habits and traditions (Takanori Shintani in Conrad et.al. 2008, 561). Therefore Japan was, already at that time
a land of two opposite and parallel cultures, the traditional one based on self-reliant, hand-made production and the innovative one based on industrialisation and mass distribution (Yanagi 1989, 104; Takanori Shintani in Conrad et.al. 2008, 561.) The existence of these two parallel worlds is present in modern day Japan as well, where many traditions and old ways of doing are co-existing with highly innovative methods and manners. The existence of opposing, parallel cultures is characteristic for Japan in various fields. The modern day, Japan is visually extremely rich, where contrasting elements - old and new, traditional and modern, silent and loud, minimal and abundant- are in constant competition with each other. Foreign elements are mixed in together with Japanese elements, forming a visual synthesis (Tuovinen in Fält et.al.1994,281)

Japanese apparel-manufacturers as well as the manufacturers of synthetic, highly innovative fibers were able to offer their products on a wide scale by the 1960’s (Yoko Takagi in Hori et.al. 2012, 13), while at the same time local manufacturing of traditional textiles and garments continued in family-owned businesses. In current Japan this situation continues, assembling the best parts from both worlds together, making the words of Soetsu Yanagi true; “Truth is both old and new” (Yanagi 1989, 104).

The Western influence and the admiration and curiosity towards imported goods is also at the background in the phenomenon or culture of ‘kawaii’ in Japan, which has also affected how people approach consuming and appreciate traditions, pushing it towards a more Westernized society. Kawaii can be translated as ‘cute’, but it refers to such physical features that can be considered adorable, lovable, quirky, funny or even ugly but endearing (Johnson & Okazaki 2013, 7). The phenomenon can be linked to the illustrations of beautiful people, bijin, of the Edo era (1600-1686), which transformed into people wearing Westernized dresses in the images drawn during the Meiji and Taisho eras, showing influence from the West (Johnson & Okazaki 2013,11). The more concrete beginning for the kawaii culture is however linked to illustrator Yumeji Takeshita’s “fancy goods” shop which opened in Tokyo’s Nihonbashai area in 1914. The shop was stocking cute, foreign influenced goods such as cards, dolls and illustrated books, aimed at Japanese schoolgirls. Takeshita’s aesthetic is considered to be a mixture of Japanese and Western elements, and many other artists were also fascinated by features of American culture they had seen during the war (curator Keiko Nakamura in Johnson & Okazaki 2013,11-12.) The characters in illustrations considered kawaii, are often wearing western-type attires, their faces and eyes are round, as opposed to small eyes and slender physique common in Japanese classical painting (Nakamura in Johnson & Okazaki 2013, 13; artist Eico Hanamura in Johnson & Okazaki 2013, 21, researcher Noriko Inomata in Johnson & Okazaki 2013, 26 ). By 1950’s and 60’s, as the Japanese economy improved, more ‘fancy goods’, i.e. cute items were produced and aimed at teenagers who were born during the baby boom after the wars (Nakamura in Johnson & Okazaki 2013,14). Women’s spending power increased with the rapid economic growth of Japan during the 70’s and 80’s and it increased the production of manga [Japanese comics] and cute items aimed at women [Johnson & Okazaki 2013, 37]. When the economic bubble burst at the beginning of the 1990’s, the 100-yen shops selling all kinds of goods for just one coin emerged, to answer the demand for cute but inexpensive goods. Kawaii products of all kinds were and are produced especially to be sold at these shops (Nakamura in Johnson & Okazaki 2013,16.) The popularity of kawaii culture, as well as the interest towards Western goods and phenomenons, can also be seen as a way for the Japanese to differentiate and to show their individualism.

The contrast in culture is also seen in sustainability issues in Japan. While there are clever inventions to encourage sustainability and for example a very efficient and strict system for recycling, one must admit that the image of modernized Japan is hardly that of a sustainable society on the surface. The high speed growth of the economy in the mid 20th century caused a dramatic change in the frugal lifestyle of the Japanese, and created the culture of mass consumption, mass production and thus also mass disposal of goods (NHK World!, 2015). Also master dyer Sachio Yoshioka [Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 37] argues that the profusion of massproduced goods available from the 1970’s onwards has been a bad influence, making people spend content with ill-fitting but inexpensive ready-made clothes. The Japanese society in the past however, and especially during the Edo era was very conscious about frugality and sustainability (Brown 2012, 12). We should also note, that compared to the very long history of Japan, the era of disposable items and throwaway culture is still very young. There has also, again, been a recent shift in attitudes towards a more sustainable society in Japan, and the demand for non material-satisfaction and for better quality of life has led to concerns over local identity and culture on a national level (Kakuchi 2014, 1). Kenmei Nagaoka [NHK World, 2014] also believes that the era of mass production and consumption is over in Japan, as the earthquake and tsunami in Tohoku region in year 2011 caused people to rethink their relationships with their possessions. He argues, that the concept of prosperity for the Japanese has changed from owning many things, to owning things that mean something, that people can believe in, and which produce inner satisfaction. The shift towards better sustainability is partly initiated also by municipal waste management policies. Any unrecyclable household waste has to be placed in certain type of bags, which individuals have to purchase from supermarkets. Some municipalities also charge for the rubbish collection services. Due to the implementation of these regulations, the amount of household waste has reduced even by 50% in some areas [NHK World!, 2015]. According to my own observations, recently there has also been plenty of interest and movement towards the “old values”, sustainability, frugality, all things eco and history within Japan. As referred to by Emi Moricihi (2016), a survey by Epsilon in 2012 discovered that Japanese consumers still have a higher preference for made-in-Japan products. As argued by Emiko Kakuchi (2014, 6), the recognition of cultural properties as invaluable components of local identity and as resources for development has gradually grown since the 1980s, i.e. since the time of rapid economic growth and prosperity in Japan. One reason for the interest towards traditional handicraft skills, especially by the younger generations, may be the lack of human interaction in modern society. It is being comprehended, that the Japanese society was, before the high economic growth a more warm, humane society, and because of this people are feeling nostalgic of this era (Takanori Shintani, in Conrad et.al. 2008, 564). I can see this phenomenon emerging in the Western society as well, when digitalization and robotization are making people more and more independent, diminishing the amount of correspondence between people. At the same time the abundance of materialism may feel suffocating. Mingei, i.e. Japanese folk art collector Jeffrey Montgomery [Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 59] also argues that during this era of materialism there is a universal need to return to something more basic, and that the folk art objects are functioning as a physical embodiment of humanity.

Also, Japan’s technology can be seen as divided into two sections, of which the other is highly mechanical, modern and born from the needs of contemporary mass culture and economic growth, and the other is the art of handmade masterpieces, transmitted through times by the system of inheritance, i.e. passing down the skills to the next one in line (Takanori Shintani, in Conrad et.al. 2008, 564). The practice of family owned businesses along with the apprenticeship-system are one reason of longevity for Japanese businesses and thus also for traditional skills. The average age for Japanese companies is 52 years, while for American companies it is 24 years. In addition, there are over 15,000 companies with more than 100 years of history, over 400 companies with more than 300 years of history and even 7 companies with more than 1000 years of history in Japan (Goydke 2016, 52.) The term Shinze refers to long-standing companies which have existed for over
300 years (Suekane as cited by Goydke 2016, 52).

The culture and society of Japan is multi-faceted and the extreme ends of all things can be seen as coexistent. While Japan has absorbed influences from foreign nations, it has molded and adapted them to be a part of their own culture. At the same time original Japanese traditions with extremely long histories have been preserved and cherished.

The persistence and resilience of the Japanese, thus also of the Japanese craftsmen, is linked to the natural conditions prevalent in Japan; the constant threat of natural disasters - earthquakes, typhoons, landslides and tsunamis-, have created an atmosphere of permanence, where people have always had to recover after disasters and start their lives again from the beginning (Fält in Fält et.al.1994, 9). It has also taught them the value of moderation, as well as respect and appreciation towards skills, effort and materials. This is a lesson that modern day designers and consumers should also learn. It is not reasonable to blindly obey and follow traditions or other influences, but to adopt and to adapt - to respect and make good use of what has already been discovered and honed, and to combine these with new innovations to create the best possible products and services. This is also why, in conjunction with the studies on person-product-attachment, I am interested in the Japanese history and culture of continuity, and in the sense of Japanese aesthetics, which respects and appreciates the true nature of things, skills and resilience.

“Ware tada taru wo shiru”
- “I only know what is just enough”
17th century stone washbasin, Ryoanji Temple, Kyoto.
3.1.1. The Connection Between Long-Life Design and Japanese Crafts

Understanding the past and the roots of Japan helps in understanding the nature and structure of the current society and culture in Japan, and also how they feel about traditions and material things. The features of group-mentality and loyalty, as well as the close-knit relations between people and nature are all reflected in the history, especially through the development of Shintoism, Zen-Buddhism and Confucianism (Fält in Fält et.al. 1994, 155). The Japanese society was appreciative of sustainability and frugality especially during the Edo-era (1600-1868), and many of the practices adopted then are still current today. According to Brown (2012, 13), Edo Japan could achieve sustainability in forestry, agriculture, architecture, city planning, transportation and in the use of energy and materials. The solutions made during that time are resonant with the current ambitions towards more sustainable designs; quality, durability, renewability, energy efficiency, use of low-impact materials, reuse and recycling, and the offering of collaborative services (Brown 2012, 13).

The Japanese art of tea, and especially the tea master Sen no Rikyū (1521-1591) have greatly influenced the aesthetic sense and values in Japan. Rikyū shunned polished perfection and preferred rough textures, imperfection and irregularity, and promoted ideals and values such as harmony, respect, purity and tranquility (Stanley - Baker 1984, 148). The art of tea introduced the essence of permanence and the value of rustic, simple beauty. The aesthetic introduced by the tea masters was defined as the beauty of shibui, which values the beauty and calm of simplicity, austerity and imperfect irregularity (Kikuchi 2006, 41). According to Boyé Lafayette De Mente (2006, 36), the beauty of shibui quality is in perfect harmony with nature, it suggests serenity and quiet luxury. The word shibui is comprehended and used on a daily basis in Japan, and Yanagi suggested that even those who are not interested in the aesthetics of folk crafts or the art of tea, understand the meaning and proficiency of 'shibui beauty' (Yanagi 1989, 184). This goes to say, that the appreciation of traditional Japanese aesthetics and the modest beauty of folk crafts would be generally appreciated, even though they may not be actively pursued or applied, and even among people, who would normally prefer objects of more Western or temporary qualities.

The tea masters valued the beauty of folkcraft, as they considered these simple and unpretentious objects to automatically reflect the virtues of poverty and modesty (Yanagi 1989, 150). Another admirer of items of folkcraft and also an influential person was Sōetsu Yanagi (1889 - 1961), the originator of the Mingei-theory, Japanese folkcraft-movement, and the founder of the Mingeikan folk craft museum in Tokyo, Japan. He stated that the tea masters could find a profound beauty in the modest, practical objects as they were born from a need, not from the mere superficial purpose of creating something beautiful (Yanagi 1989, 186). Yanagi also argued, that the art of tea is to be thanked for teaching people the value of utilitarian objects, and for creating an interest and respect towards them (Yanagi 1989, 148). In addition for appreciating simple and rustic teaware, broken ceramic bowls and utensils could be repaired with gold dust and lacquer. This art is called Kintsugi or Kintsukuroi, and it regards the fractures and broken lines as the history of the object, building to its beauty and lengthening its life (Japan's Arts & Culture 2011, 45.)

Based on the qualities of Japanese traditions and folk-craft objects Sōetsu Yanagi also drafted a criterion of beauty. This criterion correlates surprisingly well with the observations I have made earlier of person-product attachment and long-life design. The criterion set by Yanagi is as follows:

1. Beauty of handcrafts - values the skills of the hand over the skills of the machine.
2. Beauty of intimacy - requires qualities of commonness and familiarity.
3. Beauty of use/function - states that the beauty of the object is born from its use, and that only useful items can truly be beautiful.
4. Beauty of health - states that over-complicated or over-decorated items, as well as items underlining the makers identity are forms of 'disease', as they do not serve the purpose of use.
5. Beauty of naturalness - appreciates the naturalness and locality of materials and simplicity of designs, stating that too much control creates only contrived objects.
6. Beauty of simplicity - states that beauty is not in excessive color or over-decoration, but rather in simple forms and patterns.
7. Beauty of tradition - values the beauty created by individuals' accomplishments, and the skills and knowledge learned from tradition, surroundings and materials.
8. Beauty of irregularity - appreciates the rough, austere, plain and tranquil, stating it contains hidden beauty.
9. Beauty of inexpensiveness - expresses how inexpensive but handmade goods available for everyone contain beauty through their practicality and unpretentiousness.
10. Beauty of plurality - appreciates the unconscious beauty born from the repeated actions in making products in quantities, as such objects are “freed from ailments arising from artfulness”.
11. Beauty of sincerity and honest toil - values sincerity and care in crafting, when objects are not made for money or greed.
12. Beauty of selflessness and anonymity - states that objects made anonymously are more beautiful, as they let the object and the materials speak, rather than the maker.

(Kikuchi 2006, 53 - 59)

One factor in the appreciation and longevity of tradition and skills in Japan can be found in the previously-mentioned Shinise-businesses. The longevity of these businesses can be accounted for several factors. First of all their business models are quality and customer-oriented, based on the Edo-era principle of sampo-yoshi, according to which everyone - i.e. the buyer, seller and the society- should benefit from interactions and the revenues should be generated in an ethical and fair manner (Sakai as cited by Goydke 2016, 52, 53). This generates trust and loyalty among the customers towards the businesses, and also vice versa, creates a sense of responsibility among the businesses to fulfill their promise of quality for the customers as well as for the benefit of the society as a whole. A system of ethics for merchants and artisans was also established in the Edo period - a time when the Shinise-businesses could enjoy a relatively stable and secure environment, due to the voluntary isolation of Japan (Goto as cited by Goydke 2016, 52). This system of ethics was a mixture of values derived from Shintoism, Zen Buddhism and Confucianism and was encouraging these businesses to show devotion to work, frugality, honesty and obligations to society (Goydke 2016, 52) - again a factor improving the trust between the consumer and the company, as well as emphasizing the patience and quality-control in the manufacturing process of goods.

The large amount of long-lasting businesses in Japan can also be accounted for the system of inheritance or ivi ('house'), where the business is traditionally passed down to the eldest son of the family. The practice of adopting adults to a family has also been carried out, in order to continue traditions and keep the businesses within the family for generations (Picken, Howorth et.al. as cited by Goydke 2016, 53.) Collaboration and
horizontal networking with other businesses has also been a factor in the endurance of the Shinise-companies (Kamei as cited by Goydke 2016, 53). When collaborating and networking with like-minded businesses, for example by trading services or goods, or by collaborative efforts in marketing, everyone can gain, improve their products and reputation, and expand their clientele.

The Japanese Shinto religion (further discussed in chapters 3.2. and 3.2.1.) also represents a few factors embodying the appreciation towards long life design. The themes of naturalness and simplicity, which are previously stated as longevity-enhancing attributes, are prominent features for anything related to Shinto. Also Soetsu Yanagi made the remark, that beauty in objects is born from naturalness and simplicity, made from local materials provided by the nature (Kikuchi 2006, 56). The Shinto sites, shrines and landmarks, are usually of unpainted wood and they have only few, if any, adornments (Kasulis 2004, 43). One should notice however, that the concept of ‘naturalness’ is two-faceted in Shinto; it is of course related to the natural world and the creations of nature, but it also also regards some objects and actions made by humans ‘natural’, as they were made by humans, which are part of nature (Kasulis 2004, 43). This is shown for example in the Japanese tatami straw mats, which are manufacture by man, but still display features of naturalness. The naturalness does not, in this context, mean leaving and using natural materials as they are, but enhancing their natural essence by the help of human hand. This, according to Kasulis (2004, 43), is to highlight the shared natural essence by the help of human hand. This, according to Kasulis (2004, 43), is to highlight the shared ‘kokoro’ (heart, mind or psyche) between nature and humanity. The attribute of simplicity follows the attribute of naturalness, as in Shinto it is considered that the natural can best be seen and expressed, when the material attributes are kept simple (Kasulis 2004, 44). The designer or maker of an object is there to collaborate with the natural, to ‘aid’ natural materials to speak and show their utmost beauty.

3.2. Fulfilling the Life of an Object - The Concept of Mottainai

The Japanese ideal of mottainai basically, in its simplest form, means the sense of regret concerning waste. The word or expression itself could be translated to English as “waste not, want not” as an example. To me, as well as to many Japanese children, the concept has become familiar through a bowl of rice; through times their parents would remind them not to waste a single grain of rice, but to eat every grain with gratitude and respect.

The concept of mottainai encompasses the aesthetics of using and reusing materials wisely, beautifully, and respectfully until they are completely spent (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 15). ‘Mottai’, an old Buddhist word, refers to the essence of things, suggesting that every thing in this world is related to one another (Gallery Kei 2011, 2). The concept of mottainai includes a strong sense of respect and appreciation for materials, and is thus also connected to the belief of ancient and animistic Shinto religion in Japan, that all objects have spirits, kami (Kasulis 2004). One sign of this in Japan are hundreds, even thousands of years old sacred Shimboku trees, which are an object of worship. The trees are allowed to live their life and age naturally, instead of cutting them down. This reflects the thought in mottainai concept, where things and objects are ‘allowed’ to live out their full existence. After withering they are reused and recycled so that very little is wasted. In traditional Japanese clothing this is seen for example in patchwork bearing Boro clothing, in Sashiko stitching that makes clothing more durable whilst also beautiful, or Sakiori weaves, where strips of worn out textiles are woven into fabrics. The custom of keeping tiny scraps of fabric or washi paper has been common in Japan since at least the eighth century (Yoshioka in Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 35). These scraps would be reused to make new textiles or folding screens, as an example.

Word Shimatsu from the Kyoto dialect, is also related to the mottainai concept. The word means frugality and expresses the efforts to rework material for another purpose. The word is written with Japanese characters for ‘beginning’ and ‘end’, indicating an attitude of careful consideration from start to finish (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 33). This means the life of the object is thought of as a whole, instead of only at the moment when it’s taken into use. In designing this could mean consideration for the whole life-span of an object, so that items would be designed and acquired with the thought in mind, that eventually they could be re-used in various ways, avoiding any waste.

Artist Junko Yanagi (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 35) thinks that a combination of four factors have produced the culture of shimatsu and mottainai in Japan; 1. Japan is an island nation., 2. Japan’s culture has been relatively homogeneous., 3. There has been no single state religion., 4. Japan has four distinct seasons. She reckons these factors have nurtured the concern for using things without waste as well as the aesthetic that underlies this thinking. Japan being an island nation has meant that some materials have been difficult to obtain or they are naturally non-existent, thus making them precious and valuable. On the other hand it has also meant that Japan has been able to protect and savor it’s own indigenous culture and traditions, and feel pride over them. Some of these factors could be seen as congruent with Finland (among other countries) as well, where the sense of frugality and using materials sparingly has also been a part of culture. Both countries also have the distinct four seasons, which affect farming, nutrition and the way people dress.

Toko Shinoda (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 9) describes that the Japanese have a sensibility to see beauty in the decline of life’s cycle. Japanese have embraced and appreciated beauty in withered and imperfect objects since ancient times. Mottainai as well, isn’t only connected to one’s wealth, but is more about one’s spirit and values. Although the concept and word mottainai I mention here are clearly Japanese, similar sensibility
and practices can be found also from other cultures, making the possibilities and interest in the mottainai principle global. After her visit to Japan in 2005, the Nobel Prize Winner, Professor and environmentalist Wangari Maathai introduced the concept at the United Nations, and also initiated an international Mottainai campaign to raise awareness for environmental issues and frugality (Gallery Kei 2011, 2).

Recycling has been a kind of natural, unobtrusive part of life in Japan since early history. Making most of what has been available is woven into the nature of the Japanese (NHK World 2015). Especially before industrialization, natural resources were precious as the changing seasons and the risk of natural disasters caused challenges for survival and restoring of materials. Therefore nothing was wasted, and also byproducts would be repurposed and used to make other items. The reason for recycling and repurposing of materials doesn’t derive only from economic circumstances, but also from the belief of Shinto origin that everything on earth has value and needs to be respected and used completely. Shinto is about respecting the nature and the naturalness of things. Shinto is also about connectedness, where everything, including also spirituality and materiality, are connected to each other (Kasulis 2004, 13). Man-made objects can also be considered ‘natural’, derived from nature, and therefore respected and valued (Kasulis 2004, 43). The Cradle to Cradle approach, introduced by Michael Braungart and William McDonough (2008), could be seen as a kindred way of seeing objects and materials to mottainai. In it, resources, including waste, is seen as potential building material for something new, and the purpose is to support sustainable living, and to learn a way of collaborating with the planet (Braungart & McDonough 2008, 11). Using the objects until they are withered and threadbare, and then using the scraps for a building material for something new, is respecting the materials, the object, and the maker, and is therefore fulfilling the life of the object.

One recent aspect, to why reducing the amount of waste is becoming increasingly important, is the fact that within Tokyo there is no more space for new waste disposal sites. The last space reserved for this purpose will be filled within the next 50-60 years (NHK World 2015). This requires increased actions to reduce, reuse and recycle. Professor Junya Matsunami, a specialist in waste management and a teacher of environmental economics, states however that the issue of reducing and recycling waste is a global issue, as the climate cannot stand a similar growth pattern of mass disposal of waste in developing countries, as what happened in developed countries in the wake of economic growth (NHK World 2015).

While the Western civilization has tried to control and shape nature according to their own needs (Braungart & McDonough 2008, 84), the Japanese have lived together with nature, at its conditions (Kasulis 2004; Brown 2012). In modern Japanese cities this may not, at first glimpse, seem to be the case anymore, but the sensitivity to nature is still present. It is showcased for example in the methods to build houses that withstand earthquakes and typhoons, in the seasonal offerings in supermarkets, and also, in the many long-lived traditions that require the observance of nature.

![Image 17: Shimboku tree with Shimenawa rope. Shimboku trees are considered to be sacred, and allowed to live their full life-cycle.](image)
3.2.1. DIFFERENT FACETS OF MOTTAINAI

The values of mottainai, Shintoism and Buddhism have been eminent in the daily life of the Japanese especially in the history, before the Meiji restoration. In modern life there are many factors that influence these values, such as the western influence and the shifts in the economic situation. The values of Shintoism, as well as Buddhism, are however so deeply incarnated in the Japanese culture, that people are often unaware of behaving according to them. Thomas P. Kasulis (2004) states that spirituality is like a second nature for the Japanese, and that they are not conscious of doing anything special when in fact, they are carrying on actions that can be regarded as part of Shinto.

Mottainai is the feeling of sadness or regret felt towards wasting any living or nonliving entity (Gallery Kei 2011, 2). As it can also be connected to the main principal of Shinto religion, that all entities can have spirits, and that also nonliving entities can be fulfilled with the energy of living entities (Kasulis 2004), the mottainai concept can be seen in numerous different contexts. Mottainai is not concerning only material waste but also immaterial waste. It can be seen as having different facets;

1. The regret regards to material going to waste
2. The regret regards to monetary value going to waste
3. The regret regards to emotional value going to waste
4. The regret regards to skills, effort or traditions going to waste

The regret regards to material or monetary value going to waste, is shown in the aspirations to lengthen the life of objects by reinforcing and mending them, as well as the ambition to recycle and reuse them or their materials. Large, discarded objects, such as worn and stuffed furniture and electronics are still collected in Japan and taken to recycling centers where they will be mended and renewed, after which they are sold at very moderate prices (NHK World 2015). As Shinto regards that materials can never exist without a relationship to the spiritual, also the material goods are therefore valued in this sense (Kasulis 2004, 16).

The reluctance to throw away materials was shown especially during the Edo society as the tendency to build and manufacture easily dismountable houses and objects, and through the developed market for reused materials. This is evident also in the current Japanese society, where ordinances which require appliances to be easily dissassembled or recycled have taken place (Brown 2012, 104-105, 172.)

Before the economic boom, and especially in the Edo society, builders and manufacturers of goods would take responsibility of their products, maintaining and repairing them when necessary (Brown 2012, 171-172). For example, broken umbrellas were taken to specific umbrella repairers (NHK World 2013, Brown 2012, 139), and many itinerant repairmen, such as shoe, crockery or tobacco pipe repairmen would visit neighborhoods on a regular basis (Brown 2012, 137). Also roadside litter, like paper scraps and rags, would be collected for reuse purposes and even the drippings of wax candles, used cooking oil and ashes would be sold, recycled and reused (NHK World 2013, Brown 2012, 140). Nowadays some manufacturers of products are selling their products in reusable containers, while laundries and dry cleaners are encouraging their customers to return their hangers to be used again (Brown 2012, 172).

In addition for items being made to be repairable, they are also made to last for a long time. Permanent building structures are often built from sturdy, natural materials like stone, earth or wood, which would age in a beautiful, aesthetic way (Brown 2012, 137, 172; Tuovinen in Fält et al. 1994, 220). Indigo, kakishibu or shibusumi painted or dyed surfaces (including wood and textiles), would also fade in an aesthetically pleasing way.

The respect shown towards materials is linked not only to their scarcity and therefore monetary value, but also to the investment of time and effort put into manufacturing them. This includes not only the efforts of man, but also the efforts of the nature. The terms shizen (‘nature’ or ‘natural’) and shizushi (‘natural beauty’ or ‘nature’s beauty’) which are present in Japanese aesthetics, depict the philosophy of nature being the ultimate designer, and that there is both outward and inward beauty in natural things. Signs of natural “faults”, such as knots in wood, are regarded as more humble and remind that imperfectness is the essence of naturalness (De Mente 2006, 3-6, 12). Boyé Lafayette De Mente (2006, 3) argues that materials and goods which have natural qualities in them are appealing to human beings on both conscious and subconscious level, and are therefore more attractive to people.

Related to the appreciation of natural things, and the efforts of nature, is animism, which is a prominent feature of Shinto, and thus of the Japanese in general. In its simplest form it means belief in spirits that inhabit both living and nonliving entities (Kasulis 2004, 74). The term “yōkōyo no kami”, “8 million gods”, represents the thought of a myriad of spirits, inhabiting everything around us. This reflects both the will and need to respect everything, but also the sense that everything is linked to something else (Chikuihi 2014). The deities, called kami, can therefore be both material and spiritual (Kasulis 2004, 85). De Mente (2006, 6) argues, that the Shinto concept that all entities encompass spirits and deserve respect, is deep-seated in the Japanese mind-set, and that even those designers and engineers who are not consciously following these notions are still influenced by them.

Sometimes a specific site in Japan may be considered and marked sacred, because it has received this status by association, by the act of contact with someone who is considered as being sacred himself. Kasulis (2004, 20) represents, that this can be compared to the action of fresh water becoming salty when it is in contact with the sea; “Once the relation occurs, the fresh and salt water cannot be separated from each other”. Sheena Iyengar (2010, 167-168) mentions a similar notional transition of energy or qualities, in the form of ‘priming’. It is about the automatic, sometimes unconscious associations people feel towards people and objects. Buying products worn by celebrities is one example of this, as the users are hoping some of the celebrities ‘fame’ or qualities will be mirrored on them. Considering this, as well as the previously presented thought that also human inventiveness and actions can be considered as ‘natural’ (Kasulis 2004, 43), it can be concluded that also objects made by men can evoke emotional and spiritual respect. Therefore they can also cause the feeling of mottainai towards discarding something that has emotional or spiritual value. The aspect of mottainai, which is showing respect towards objects and efforts made by other people, is inherited from generation to generation in Japan. This may be one explanatory reason to why also arts, design and traditional skills are appreciated in Japan.

Traditions are respected and kept alive through many ceremonies and celebrations, of which the matsuri village festivals are an example. These shinto-derived festivals are organised in old villages and neighborhoods, and most of them date back at least to the Muromachi-period (1336 - 1373), making them at least nearly 700 year old traditions. Some of them are much older, such as the Aoi-matsuri of Kyoto, which has been celebrated since 500AD (Vesterinen in Fält et al. 1994, 517). The origin of these festivities lie in peasant rites, and the main features of modern day matsuri have been passed on for centuries. Despite of the faithfulness shown towards traditional ceremonies and acts, the nature of the matsuri is not solemn or rigid, but that of comradery and joy (Vesterinen in Fält et al. 1994, 516). The whole neighborhood participates to them, from
young babies to the elderly, everyone celebrating together. As the matsuri are organised by local people for local people, it can be seen as an evidence of the willingness to preserve them and their traditions, i.e. the feeling of mottainai in case they were lost.

The concept of ma is related to Shinto and mottainai, and it is an essential concept in Japanese art and design. ‘Ma’ basically means ‘space’, but the meaning of the word is more conceptual. In relation to the Shinto-religion, a space is considered to be empty, ma, in order to be able to receive kami spirits (Tuovinen in Fält et.al. 1994, 219). In addition to space, ma also refers to time and the space of time between events. In art and design, ma is presented in the aesthetic and creative sense of the designer, in their ability to make the products look timeless, independent of the passing of time (De Mente 2006, 43-44.)

One aspect of mottainai, and especially that of respecting and valuing all things natural, is nonetheless the comprehension of impermanence. Tangible and intangible things are partly respected, as they are realised to be temporary after all. This sensitivity for transience together with the spiritual sentiments of Shinto, come together in the concept of *mono no aware*, which Kasulis (2004, 118) describes as “the ah-ness of things”, and De Mente (2006, 126-127) as the transient aspect of life and nature, that arouse feelings of sympathy, tenderness, pity or sorrow. In Japanese aesthetics and philosophy, good design embodies such features of *mono no aware*, as well as those of *wabi* (‘desolate beauty’) and *sabi* (‘beauty of decay’), that evoke feelings of “tranquil acceptance, contentment and sensual satisfaction” (De Mente 2006, 127).

Connected to the sense of impermanence are the aspects of purification and freshness, which may seem confusing or contradictory in regards to previously mentioned aspects of mottainai, i.e. feelings of regret when something is being lost or wasted. Many observers of modern Japanese society may not recognize what is being said about mottainai or the shinto values, as they may have witnessed numerous events that seem like disregard - not respect - towards objects; the use of disposable eating utensils, the act of wrapping and packing items, the desire to purchase new season fruits or wine, or the dismantling of buildings. Even though many of these actions have also practical reasons behind them (such as building safety in the land of earthquakes), they can also be linked to the essentially Shinto value of purification, freshness and the awe of life. The most clear way to achieve purification is starting afresh and in Shinto freshness can mean also renewal (Kasulis 2005, 54). This is why some buildings and shrines in Japan are dismantled at particular intervals, with new ones built at the same site. Purity therefore comes through newness and renewal. In this regard, respecting and feeling mottainai towards entities and nature, does not necessarily mean sticking with the old, but it can also mean providing new life-force, continuance, through renewal.

Even though the mottainai concept introduced here is tied to the Japanese culture and the Shinto religion, it can still be seen as having universal values and connections. The sense of respect, admiration, awe and spirituality are essential for Shinto (and thus, for mottainai), and as presented by Paul Bloom (2010, 213), spirituality is a universal notion, implying there is a deeper reality beyond materialism, which has personal and moral significance. Author Christopher Hitchens also argues, that such numinous, transcendent experiences can be experienced without any religious connections (Bloom 2010, 215.) In the Shinto philosophy things are respected as they are, when they are, and not glorified after their existence. Therefore it contains values, that we can also learn from in the process of designing long-life design objects.
3.3. Mottainai in Clothing & Textiles

The Japanese traditional skills and crafts are of very high quality, and also ecological thinking has been naturally present in Japanese traditional designs and thinking for hundreds and hundreds of years. This is seen also in Japanese clothing and textiles. Clothing has been re-inforced with decorative patchwork to make it last longer (e.g. boro clothing, sashiko stitching), items have been re-used for different purposes and the clothing is folded flat, thus saving space.

Earlier I have stated, that in the Shinto religion all objects are treated with a sense of respect, and as regards to objects made by men, the sense of respect also spans to appreciation of effort and labor. If an object is carefully manufactured, the careless discarding of it would be like an insult towards the manufacturer. If a textile is of good quality, a desire to continue its life even after the initial product is worn out, exists. Artist Junko Yanagi (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 49) states that objects, which have universal value will inspire people to try to reuse them, and that this will is further encouraged in case there is knowledge that the same object, textile in this case, may never be produced again.

The mottainai towards clothing and textiles stems partly from their scarcity and monetary value, but also from the efforts invested in making them. In the Edo period (1600-1687) commoners were prohibited from wearing expensive clothing -such as cotton- and were enjoined not to eat costly foods (De Mente, 2006, 71). Farmers would therefore wear clothing made mainly from hemp, and precious cotton threads would be used only as a reinforcement in clothes. Also the Boro clothing and textiles, bearing patchworks of overlapping shapes and mixture of various unique patterns reflect high regard for fabric.

Textiles were in the past mended and regularly also remade into something else (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 27). In the olden days and also nowadays, in households upholding the mottainai values, fabrics were recycled first to aprons, diapers or bedding, then to pouches, then to wrapping material and cleaning cloths, and eventually to fuel and ash when they become too worn to be used for clothing purposes (Yamaguchi in Japan’s Arts and Culture 2011, 33; Brown 2012, 139). To avoid paper waste, the Japanese have for centuries used beautiful furoshiki cloths for wrapping purposes (NHK World 2015). These cloths can be used over and over again and the habit is still withstanding in the current Japanese society.

Used-clothes dealers were common already in the Edo-era. According to Brown (2012, 140), there were as many as 4000 used clothes dealers in Edo (modern Tokyo). During that time it was more common to wash, mend and renew clothing, than to buy new ones. Sometimes garments would be taken to used-clothes dealers to be changed for better ones for a small fee (Brown 2012, 140.) The society in the Edo-era was practising zero-waste principals by nature, and items were also designed in the first place with the conditions of reduce, reuse and recycle in mind (Brown 2012, 70).

One aspect of mottainai in regards to clothing and textiles, are designs which have stayed unchanged for centuries, but which are still widely used in the Japanese society. Traditional Japanese clothes, especially kimonos and its lighter version yukata, as well as many garments worn by tradesmen and workers have stayed similar for centuries. The basic form of man’s kimonos was developed by the 7th century, and since the 12th century it has stayed as it is. The kimonos for women have been developed accordingly, with the exception of shortening the sleeves and adding the wide obi belt to the attire in the beginning of 18th century (De Mente 2006, 110.) The kimono and yukata are still widely used in Japanese society. While western clothes are used in daily life and in office work, the kimonos is used in formal occasions - such as weddings and funerals, and the yukata is used during leisure time -such as in fireworks festivals and during stays in Japanese traditional inns, ryokans (Vesterinen in Fält et.al.1994, 444, 446, 450.) Kimono and yukata are ‘mottainai’ also in regards to space and materials; They can be laid flat, thus saving storage space, and they are made out of one bolt of fabric woven especially for kimono, using nearly all of the material, leaving behind minimum amount of waste (Takagi in Hori et.al.2012, 12).

The outfits worn by peasants, workers and gardeners were and are generally comprised of a jacket or coat and trousers. The trousers were traditionally either form-fitting momokobi trousers which were wrapped around the waist, or more loose-fitting monpe trousers, under which the jacket could be tucked in. Hanets and happis are types of typical work coats, and these are also widely used today (Vesterinen in Fält et.al.1994, 447; Gallery Kei 2011, 50.) Jikatabi shoes are a typical part of these uniforms. As an exception, the wide and baggy tobi shukunin pants worn by some Japanese construction workers are, despite their very traditional outlook, a remainder of American knicker-bocker pants. They became the uniform for high-altitude workers after the World War II ended, when the workers had to scavenge military surplus stocks for garments.
One distinctive feature of Japanese clothing is that it does not have any kinds of buttons, buckles or zippers, but they are attached with different kinds of strings and belts (Vesterinen in Fält et.al.1994, 444). This also means they will fit many different body shapes and sizes, and are thus readily standing against the pass of time. The lack of buttons and buckles also means there is no issue in replacing them in case they go missing, or mending them if they are broken.

Because of its simple, but genious design kimono can also be easily taken apart, washed, dyed and put together again (Brown 2012,140; Vesterinen in Fält et.al.1994, 452). This also means that completely worn out or stained parts, such as sleeves, can be replaced.

The patterns of Japanese textiles are often astonishingly contemporary, despite they are hundreds of years old. The printed textiles especially in kimono are often using both symmetrical and organic elements, with vines of vegetation breaking architectural, abstract areas. The inspiration for different patterns are most often taken from the nature and the changing seasons, or from classical poems and stories (Tuovinen in Fält et.al.1994,249; Takagi in Hori et.al. 2011, 12 .) Different pattern models of these textiles created such great interest, that the first picture books introducing them were printed already in the beginning of 17th century. Numerous paintings of the Edo-era are also picturing the patterned fabrics in great detail.

Sōetsu Yanagi (Yanagi 1989, 197) considered, that a well designed pattern may add to the function of a utensil, even from completely utilitarian point of view it is of course unnecessary. He goes on to state, that an unattractive, although useful artifact, does not fulfill its service completely.

3.3.1. MOTTAINAI MATERIALS

In regards to mottainai and longevity, there are a some fibers that have been cultivated and used for hundreds of years in Japan, and which are still widely used today. All of these materials have such qualities that are already favorable for long-life products, but the Japanese have also developed methods to treat the materials in particular ways to ensure their longevity.

Hemp

For a long time over 1000 years, hemp was the main material for clothing in Japan, cultivated throughout the whole country (Vesterinen in Fält et.al.1994, 446). Especially clothes meant to be used during physical work were made of hemp, although visteria and bark were also used until the end of Meiji-era (1911). Other fibers used in commoners clothes, before the introduction of cotton, were widely available wild trees and plants, such as linden, elm, kudzu, ramie and nettle (Kei Kawasaki in Gallery Kei 2011, 4; Roberts & Takeda 2010, 34). Many villages in Japan were taking on the labor-intensive task and making their own garments from these plant fibers already from around 7000BC, the last half of the Jomon period (Kei Kawasaki in Gallery Kei 2011, 4). Hemp and ramie (known together as ‘asa) were also considered sacred (Gallery Kei 2011, 24, 26). The widespread cultivation of hemp gradually finished only when cotton became generally available also for commoners by the beginning of Showa era in 1926 (Kei Kawasaki in Gallery Kei 2011, 4.).

Silk

The cultivation of silk also has a very long history in Japan. The labor-intensive practice of growing silk worms was adopted to Japan from China between years 200-300AD (Vesterinen in Fält et.al.1994,445; Brown 2012, 50), and by the middle of the 17th century Japan’s own silk production flourished (Baker 1984, 170). For centuries the use of silk was reserved only for the elite, while the commoners were to use clothes made of hemp or cotton, but gradually also commoners could start to dress in clothes made of it. The Japanese were improving their skills in weaving silk, and therefore the overall quality of silk, by standardizing the conditions under which the silk worm eggs were produced. This selective growing of silk worms gradually led to stronger, finer and more versatile filament (Bristol 1949.) Nowadays Japan produces approximately 30% of silk in the world (Vesterinen in Fält et.al.1994, 445, 452).

Cotton

Cotton seeds were first introduced to Japan in the 8th century, but it took until the mid-Edo period (i.e. late 17th century to mid 18th century) until cotton was produced an harvested on a large scale (Brown 2012, 50; Gallery Kei 2011, 4). Rural families begun weaving their own cotton cloths to be used in their own garments and other textiles (Brown 2012, 51), and gradually indigo-dyed blue and white cotton fabrics became emblematic for Japanese folk traditions. Cotton was noticed to be warm, soft and comfortable, and in addition it was easy to dye. Cotton was not easily available to eastern Japan at first, and the price for the newly introduced cotton was relatively high. Therefore cotton fabrics were at first considered very precious, and their life was lenghtened with various methods (Stephen Szczepanek in Gallery Kei 2011, 34, 35). Gradually Japan became a leading producer of cotton clothes, and cotton took over hemp as a material for commoners clothes (Vesterinen in Fält et.al.1994,446).
3.3.2. Mottainai Methods and Techniques

Different methods have been developed in Japan to lengthen the life of fabrics, to make them more durable, to make them age beautifully or to save even the tiniest fabric or paper scraps. These fabrics were used and mended often, and a garment made of them could have been modified over and over again, passed on in the family for decades (Stephen Szczepanek in Gallery Kei 2011, 35). Below I share a short introduction to a few of these methods.

**Sakiori**

The technique of sakiori refers to rag weaving, where rag yarn made from fabric scraps is woven into a thick cloth (Stephen Szczepanek in Gallery Kei 2011, 35). Most often the fabric strips were made of cotton, which was highly regarded and precious. These fabric strips were used for weft, while bast fiber yarns, such as hemp or nettle, was used for the warp (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 28; Gallery Kei 2011, 46). The resulted sakiori fabrics, due to their durability and thickness, were then used to make especially work garments, bedclothes, sashes and aprons (Szczepanek in Gallery Kei 2011, 35; Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 21).

**Zanshi-ori**

Zanshi-ori or kuzuito is a weaving technique, which utilizes leftover yarns, collected over time. The threads for zanshi-ori are often either leftover yarns from home production of yarns and other fabrics, or they were purposely bought from other professional weavers. Due to the use of different yarns, small knots and slubs can be seen on the surface of the fabric, giving it a rich texture (Sri 2016). Similar to sakiori, the leftover yarns were often used for weft, while the warp is regulated, creating uneven, horizontal stripes when woven (Gallery Kei 2011, 40; Sri 2016).

**Sashiko**

Literally the word sashiko means ‘little stabs’ and refers to hand-sewn running stitches. The word is comprised of the Japanese words *sasu* or *sashi* (to stitch or to pierce) and *ko* (small) (Roberts & Takeda 2010, 35). The technique was used as a method to attach several layers of woven fabrics together by stitching horizontal, vertical, diagonal or curvilinear lines on fabric, in order to enhance their strength and insulating capabilities (Gallery Kei 2011, 38; Roberts & Takeda 2010, 35; Takano 1995). During Edo, sashiko stitching was also used for firemen’s protective coats, in order to make them more thick and absorb water more easily, as they were dipped in water before fighting the blaze (Takano 1993; Roberts & Takeda 2010, 38).

Most often and traditionally the sashiko stitching is performed with white or indigo-dyed cotton threads on indigo-dyed hemp or cotton, although also wool threads were used (Takano 1995; Japan Folk Crafts Museum 2014). The sashiko stitching creates beautiful patterns, and therefore gives another value for the stitched garments, in addition to warmth and strength (Japan Folk Crafts Museum 2014). Particular sashiko patterns were also considered as spiritual or magical, acting as a safeguarding talismans against evil forces (Roberts & Takeda 2010, 35).

The merely decorative form of sashiko stitching developed during the 18th century, as cotton fabrics became more affordable. Different areas of Japan have developed their own distinctive sashiko styles and techniques (Takano 1995).
**Kakishibu**

Kakishibu is a non-poisonous, natural method of treating wood, paper products, textiles and clothes with the fermented juice of unripe, astringent persimmons, *kaki*. In addition to giving objects a beautiful, saffron orange tone, kakishibu has strengthening, antibacterial, cooling and waterproofing properties, and it also works as an insect repellent (Conrad 2006, Hyde 2009.)

In old Japan, kakishibu was used especially as wood preservative, insect repellent, on katazome stencil papers, fans, parasols, clothing, and to treat containers for sake and soy-sauce (Conrad 2006). Repeated applications of kakishibu can also create a lustrous effect of leather on cloth (Japans Arts & Culture 2011, 31). Dyeing with kakishibu needs patience and time, as the color is developed by UV radiation from the sun. Cloths immersed in or treated with kakishibu are laid under in direct sunlight for hours, regularly turned in order to achieve an even dyeing result. The orange tone will develop gradually, usually over 5-7 days, after repeated treatments with the dye and absorption of the UV rays (Hyde 2009.)

**Shifu**

Paper was and is highly regarded in Japan, and in the past any used paper scraps were not discarded. Instead, they would be for example shredded and spinned into *kami-ito* paper yarns, and finally used as weft material for paper fabrics, which is called *shifu*. The paper yarns were used to make shifu since the 17th century for kimonos, work jackets and mosquito nets. Originally shifu was born from the resourcefulness of people of limited means, but was eventually developed into a more refined textile by skilled weavers. The paper thread and shifu fabric made from it were inexpensive, yet offered warmth and comfort, compared to the sometimes coarse bast fibers (Karuno 2013.) Nowadays shifu is a form of fiber art.

**Boro**

Boro refers to textiles and garments, which are comprised of layers of fabric patches, stitched together. The custom derives from frugality and resourcefulness, which valued even the tiniest little pieces of cloth. Whenever a tear or damage would appear on fabrics and garments, they would be mended, by stitching patches of fabrics and rags on them. In old Japan, even the clothing of deceased family members would be mended and over again, and passed on in the family to be used by the next generations (Roberts & Takeda 2010, 37). The layers of old rags build a network of memories at the same time as being utilitarian, bringing warmth and comfort. Boro garments have been found in work coats, futon covers, wrapping cloths, sleeping mats, diapers and dust rags (Szczepanek in Gallery Kei 2011, 35), although as these textiles were often reused and recycled, only some boro garments and fabrics have been preserved to modern days (Roberts & Takeda 2010, 37).

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**Aizome**

The spread of nationwide cotton cultivation resulted in the popularity of indigo-dyed fabrics and garments from the late Edo period onwards. During the time when commoners were by law required to wear only subdued colors—such as blue, brown or grey—, aizome rose into popularity and people invented numerous techniques to dye their clothing decoratively (NHK World 2016; Sato in Japan’s Arts & Culture 2007, 38). Some of these techniques were *kasuri* (a form of ikat dyeing where yarns are tied and dyed before weaving), *katazome* (resist dyeing with the use of paper stencils) and *shiborizome* (a form of tie-dyeing) (Sato in Japan’s Arts & Culture 2007, 38).

Indigo was favored for its beautiful ageing process, medicinal benefits, insect resistant properties and distinctive fragrance (Sato in Japan’s Arts & Culture 2007, 36). The blue and white fabrics were also favored, as the blue indigo would feel cooling under the hot sun, while white would stand out in the dark night (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2007, 41). As the process of preparing and taking care of the indigo vat was also very labor-intensive, meticulous work, it is also being suggested that this has created a respect towards the method, and a deeper bond between the people and the products dyed with it (Sato in Japan’s Arts & Culture 2007, 36).

The process of Aizome-dyeing, after carefully preparing the indigo vat, involves repeated dips of the dyed object into the indigo vat and then oxidising it, with the tone of the indigo gradually getting deeper and stronger. Very deep and dark blue tones are achieved after at least 30 repetitions of this step. The long process of multiple dips, gradually increasing the thickness of the indigo vat, results in a stronger, more deep color, which fades away very slowly and gradually (Yamamura 2014). The gradual changes in color are impossible to achieve with chemical dyes. The multiple shades of indigo, which are shown either during the dye process or during different stages of its aging, all have different names in Japanese, indicating how nature and the longevity of natural indigo is appreciated. The shades and names vary between *kamennokaki* (“peering in to the indigo vat”), *asagi* (pale blue), *hanada* (light blue), *ai* (indigo), and *kon* (navy) (Sato in Japan’s Arts & Culture 2007, 36).
3.4. Mottainai and the Appreciation of Traditional Skills in Modern Japanese Society

A collective sense to conserve and appreciate traditional skills and methods still exists in Japan. These skills are not practised by many, but are still regarded as something admirable and worthy of cherishing also among people who do not practise crafts themselves.

One factor to boost the appreciation towards crafts and skills is the sense of pride felt towards regional differences within Japan. Due to geographical features and the challenges of transport before the development of modern transport systems, regional crafts, foods and also linguistic dialects were developed (Kasulis 2004, 55.) The Japanese are very proud of their own regional specialties, but also curious about those of the others. Therefore they are often featured on television programmes and talk shows, and department stores, supermarkets and sales stalls at train stations are also often showcasing and selling especially food items from different regions.

A recent development towards the appreciation of well-crafted items has come in the form of minimalism and decluttering movements. News articles about Japanese people reconsidering and editing their wardrobes have been presented in newspapers, magazines and online blogs in recent years. Azby Brown (2012, 95) refers to this as self-regulation. The KonMari method, developed by Japanese cleaning consultant and author Marie Kondo, may on it’s own part reflect the shift in Japanese society, the longing towards a more simple, enjoyable life. In her method items are discarded based on the emotional reactions they cause in the owner, and only such objects that have a more profound meaning to the owner are left. Connections between the mottainai concept, Shinto values and the KonMari method can be also be discovered. As Marie Kondo’s book about the method, ‘The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up - The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing’ has been a best seller in Japan, Germany and the UK, and Marie has been featured in numerous Japanese television programs and international magazines, the method can be seen as having significance (Kondo 2014).

3.4.1. Efforts by The Government

The Meiji restoration of 1868 temporarily resulted in the influx of western arts and culture to Japan, as the country was trying to avoid colonization by the western powers, by promoting westernization as synonymous to civilization and enlightenment (Kakuchi 2014, 2). After the restoration, several laws with the aim of preserving and protecting historic and cultural sites and properties have been implemented in Japan (Kakuchi 2014). Emiko Kakuchi (2014, 1) states, that in modern Japan heritage is integrated with community development, it is considered as an important component for high-quality life style and also the economic value of cultural heritage has been recognized.

Rapid economic growth and urbanization in the 1960’s and '70s led to severe social problems in Japan, such as incoherent development, excessive centralization and the deterioration and depopulation of rural and traditional areas. Concerns were raised over traditional customs, skills and performing folk arts, as some of them were lost due to such rapid changes in industrial structure and attitudes (Kakuchi 2014, 5.) Therefore, in 1975 Japan’s government made revisions to the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, and inter alia introduced the Folk Cultural Properties category. This category is composed of Tangible Folk.
Cultural Properties (i.e. clothing, instruments, and dwellings), and Intangible Folk Properties (i.e. manners and customs, folk performing arts, and folk techniques concerning to food, clothing, housing, occupation, religious faith, and events) (Kakuchi 2014, 7.)

The Government Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has pursued several actions and campaigns in order to promote and protect traditional craft industries in Japan. The Densan Act, i.e. the law about “promotion of officially designated traditional craft products industry” was introduced in May 25th 1974. It was based on the concerns over mass consumption, disposable machine civilization, pollution and congestion issues. On the following year, The DENSAN Association, i.e. The Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries was established, as a core organisation to plan promotion for officially designated traditional craft products (The Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries 2016.)

The DENSAN Association and METI have officially designated 222 product groups as Traditional Japanese Craft products by year 2016, and aim to promote them on a global scale (DENSAN 2016). These are promoted and sold at the DENSAN Association’s flagship store in Aoyama in Tokyo. The designated craft products must pass through the following criteria;

1. The articles must be used routinely in everyday life. The products produced by the craft must have functional beauty, and their usability and completeness should improve over time. The color, possible patterns and form should be based on Japanese cultural background and customs.
2. The articles must be primarily manufactured by hand.
3. The articles must be manufactured implementing traditional techniques at least 100 years old. This is criteria is established as proper technique is considered to be born and polished only through repeated trial and error. Another aspect is the historical accumulation of know-how, which aid in the achievement of precision and perfected technique.
4. Main materials used must have remained unchanged for at least 100 years. This is to ensure the quality of materials, as they have been examined and learned over time. Materials are also required to be environmentally friendly. Changes to similar but newer materials is only permitted when the original raw materials become depleted or too difficult to obtain.
5. Manufacturing should be regionally established to a certain scale. This means that within one region, there should be at least 10 businesses or 30 people pursuing the craft. (DENSAN 2016.)

The METI, as based on the DENSAN act, is also carrying out the designation of Intangible Cultural Properties, which are commonly known as National Living Treasures. The designation is given to especially significant properties, but it provides them with strong financial support (Kakiuchi 2014, 7.) The custom of awarding the designation is known as National Living Treasures. The designation is given to especially significant properties, but it provides them with strong financial support (Kakiuchi 2014, 7.)

The J-Quality is an initiative backed up by the Japanese Government and the Japanese Fashion Industry Council, which aims at highlighting the skilled Japanese manufacturers of textiles and clothing. The initiative was born from the notion that many foreign luxury brands are utilizing products and materials produced by Japanese companies, but this fact goes often unknown (NHK World News, 2015.) Products and manufacturers of textile products can apply for the J-Quality certificate, which acts as a proof of Japanese technology, craftsmanship and aesthetics, as well as its safety, since transparency and sustainability are also expected throughout the promotion phases (Japan Fashion Industry Council, 2016.) The products with J-Quality certificate must be made by using solely authentic Japanese techniques, and all phases of production must be carried out within Japan. By October 2015, 292 companies and 135 independent products had been granted the J-Quality certificate (NHK World News, 2015.)

3.4.2. Living Legacies

Some features of pre-modern Japan, which are strongly related to traditional skills and crafts, have transmitted to modern days almost unchanged or with obvious ties to the past ways. One significant feature in the continuation of traditions and skills is the master/apprentice approach, which is known as meisho/deshi. The system, where apprentices would train in the guidance of their masters for extensive periods of time, was originally transferred to Japan from China and Korea (De Mente 2006, 22.)

In the traditional arts, mastery is achieved only after perseverance and the meticulous following of the Dō or Kata (“way”, a particular method of doing something) and craftsmen therefore are seen as achieving their full competence only in their mid fifties (Smith 1961 and Rohlen 1978 as cited by Formanek in Conrad et.al. 2008, 325). Even though apprenticeships still exist, another similar and perhaps more common system are small factories called Machi-kōba, which are operated either by families or groups of craftspeople. They are the “unknown craftsmen” of modern times (McKean 2013.)

Japan emphasizes group mentality, and also many skills are passed on within families or through the mentioned master/apprentice approach. The admiration of traditional crafts and skills is quite likely also related to the general reverence and respect of the elderly in Japan, who are seen as the preservers of traditions which are in the danger of disappearing (Conrad et.al. 2008, 325). Japan is a very hierarchical society, where skills and knowledge accumulated by time is in high-regard. The continuation of traditional skills, and the importance of learning by doing and experimenting, is still prevalent in the current Japanese society, through the apprenticeship system (Tuovinen in Fält et.al.1994, 281), and also through cultural concerns of lost know-how. According to Shintani (in Conrad et.al. 2008, 566-567), there is a growing movement in Japan to encourage senior citizens to pass on skills especially related to crafts. As Japan is surrounded by the forces of nature, the knowledge of how to best live in harmony with nature and use its offerings are precious.

The Just-In-Time (JIT) management system adopted by Toyota and other Japanese companies in the 1960’s and 1970’s also has roots in the Edzo era. It refers to the manufacturing or assembling of a product
just before, or only after it has been ordered or purchased. In the Edo-era such personalised deliveries were possible as suppliers and customers would share information and the manufacturing processes were well coordinated (Brown 2012, 211). The JIT management minimizes the size of warehouses, reduces the amount of waste and excess stock and follows demand/need ratio closely (Tapanainen 2016).

As mentioned in chapter 3.2.1., local, shinto-derived festivals called matsuri are also a living custom, passing on hundreds of years old traditions. These festivals are passing on craft skills and appreciation of them, as the celebrations have several features involving traditional crafts. The main organisers of the festival are usually dressed in clothes which have traditional origin. For example in Aoi-matsuri in Kyoto, the participants are dressed in Heian-period (794 - 1185AD) clothing (Vesterinen in Fält et al. 1994, 517). In smaller, more local matsuri, the participants are often wearing happi coats, momohiki trousers, jikatabi shoes and hachimaki headbands. The main feature of these festivals is the carrying of the portable Shinto shrine, mikoshi, around a certain area. These portable, decorated shrines carved out of wood are a display of craftsmen’s skills. The festivals also often feature performances which feature traditional costumes.

Another living remnant of Edo-era, which acts as a creator of communal spirit are local shopping streets called shotengai. These streets are several blocks long, lined with small shops specialising in one particular type of food or crafts. One shop may be selling ceramics for example, another tea, clothing or rice crackers. The shotengai streets are often direct descendents of their Edo-period forebears, often located in the same areas (Brown 2012, 169). These streets are acting as the neighborhood gathering places, and the vendors and customers often create close contacts with each other. As people know the sellers and their products, it creates a common sense of trust, and also that of responsibility. Kenmei Nagaoka (NHK World, 2014) also argues, that when sellers know who they are selling to, and customers know who they are buying from, the standard of products stays good, as the established relationships will not allow the production of sub-standard products. The close contacts between vendors and buyers also eliminates needless packaging and the need for customer promotion goods (Nagaoka in NHK World, 2014). Some shops active in the shotengai have been in business for generations. Azby Brown (2012, 169) argues, that despite the abundant existence of large department stores, supermarkets and retail chains, the humble neighborhood shopping streets remain viable, just because people prefer to shop there. The personal connections between the vendors and customers, the reliability brought in the wake of it, and the knowledge of product backgrounds is quite likely one reason for the survival of them. Paul Bloom (2010) also suggests that such familiarity and connectedness breeds pleasure for people.
3.4.3. APPEARANCES IN COMMERCE AND MEDIA

Traditional arts, crafts and items of long-life design are also presented and promoted through the Japanese media, such as television and magazines, and commercial channels, such as department stores, shops and markets, as well as galleries and exhibitions.

Department stores regularly exhibit them in their own gallery spaces in conjunction with the department stores, or they have dedicated shopping floors for high-quality craft items. There are also “craft department stores”, which feature clusters of small shops or studios run by artisans and designers. One such place is Akioka Artisan, located between Akihabara and Okachimachi train stations in Tokyo. Regional antenna shops then again are shops stocking regional specialties, such as foods and crafts, from the 46 prefectures of Japan. Their aim is to promote their own area and revitalize local economy especially by encouraging tourism to these areas.

Second hand stores and antique markets are also common, each promoting the mottainai attitude. One concept store concentrating on second-hand goods is Pass the Baton, which curates and gathers its selection of items primarily from their previous owners. The shop aims at transmitting the personal value and history of the merchandise by attaching photographs of the previous owners and messages written by them in conjunction with the items being sold. In addition to second-hand items, the shop also stocks deadstock products and remade and modified goods, both in their brick&mortar stores and online (Smiles: Co.Ltd., 2012).

Television-programmes often feature artisans and designers with specific skills in traditional Japanese arts and crafts. Daily morning programmes and talk shows on television feature different locales of Japan, introducing their local foods, handicrafts and sights (Kasulis 2004, 55).

The rise of interest towards traditional skills and crafts can also be seen in the amount of numerous magazines or articles in magazines and newspapers devoted for them, as well as in the emergence of open workshops and craft clubs, where people can go and learn simple craft skills. Azby Brown (2012, 98) also notes that in Japanese homebuilding periodicals, more and more space has been given for articles covering traditional, ‘alternative’ methods and practices. He also believes this is a sign of an attitude shift towards a society appreciating its past and skills. Also craft related events and festivals, such as the Design Festa, have become popular. Design Festa has been organised since 1994 and it is the largest art festival in Asia, with over 12,000 participants showing their skills in arts and crafts (Design Festa 2016).

The Design Travel project led by the D&Deparment and designer Kenmei Nagaoka, is a series of travel books and an iPhone application concentrated on presenting regional long life design products from Japan's different prefectures. The application and books introduce shops, restaurants, cafes, hotels, inns and other destinations, which fall in to the category of long-life design and promote local or traditional production (FOP 2015).

The This is My Partner project, launched in the conjunction with the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week TOKYO, aims at introducing production companies behind designers and brands showcasing at the fashion week (Miyaura, 2015). Through it, designers shed light on the Japanese craftsmen and manufacturers they work with, creating continuance for them and the skills they represent. In conjunction with the project, the Textile Yellow Pages were also launched, in order to connect designers and other producers to Japanese fiber and textile production companies.

Another similar project, called Nutte, is a recently created website to connect more grass-roots designers, manufacturers and skilled craftsmen to eachother, listing their expertise, experience and samples of their work. A contract is formed between the parties only after they both agree on the conditions they have set for eachother (NHK World News', 2016.) The website makes it possible for small scale designers, manufacturers and craftsmen to network with eachother more easily, and gives them more job opportunities.

3.4.4. ARTISANS & DESIGNERS UTILIZING TRADITIONAL SKILLS AND MOTTAINAI PRINCIPLES IN JAPAN

In addition to the highly-regarded Japan's Living National Treasures, numerous contemporary designers and manufacturers are also utilizing traditional skills and mottainai principles in their design work. Below I am introducing a few of them.

BlueBlue Japan
BlueBlue Japan is producing modern and youthful items utilising Japanese traditional skills, and foremost that of Indigo dyeing, and drawing their inspiration from the designs of traditional Japanese workwear. The brand states that they hope for their garments, produced in Japan, to be loved for a long time in the user’s life. The brand is sold at Okura, a shop fashioned after an old type Japanese storehouse, ‘kura’, which was traditionally used for storing rice or grain (Seilin&Co. 2016.)

Cosmic Wonder
Cosmic Wonder is a conceptual project by artist Yukinori Maeda, started in 1997. The project is a combination of clothing, artwork, publishings and performance. The project is based on sustainability, and it aims at infusing handicrafts with traditional Japanese techniques. For example its most recent collection, titled ‘Light Years’, featured handmade washi paper and hand-woven fabrics in organic linen, karamuchi, kudzu and herbal dyed wool. The brand is based in a remote village of Miyama in Kyoto, although its products are showcased in The Center for Cosmic Wonder in Tokyo, which also functions as a gallery space for art and music events (Cosmic Wonder 2016).

Kasurira
Kasuira is a brand established by Hiroshi Mikasa, a former fashion buyer. He started the business as he wanted to help and revive the industry of Kasuri weaving in his home town. Mikasa has developed new, contemporary products such as clothes and accessories, featuring especially woven kasuri fabrics. The production ability of the company is still limited, but Mikasa is hoping to grow it steadily. Currently the brand is being sold at an online store and at some department stores in Japan (NHK World News’, 2016.)

Matohu
Established in 2005 by Makiko Sekiguchi and Hiroyuki Horihata, Matohu is a brand based on Japanese aesthetics, sensibilities and historical influence. The concept behind the brand has been to create a brand that would deal with traditional Japanese aesthetics on a long term basis, and which would use non-Western apparel making techniques. They aim to make contemporary and timeless garments, which however, have a connection to the past. When the brand was launched, the designers published the themes for the following ten seasons, and repeated the same in 2010. Each theme is based on intense research in Japanese culture, arts and history. By deciding and announcing their themes on beforehand, the brand has been able to carefully design and select their fabrics and materials, as well as send a message to their audience that the creation of
good quality items takes time. This way fabric manufacturers have also had time to produce fabrics of highest possible quality for Matohu (Takagi in Hori et al. 2012, 78-85.)

Minä Perhonen
Designer Akira Minagawa of clothing brand Minä Perhonen aims to create ‘soulful’ clothing that is timeless and durable, and he consciously tries to avoid design elements that are easily dated. He creates original textiles for his clothing and has set up an repair service for his customers, so the clothes can be enjoyed and preserved for years. Minagawa encourages his customers to also enjoy the beauty of wear and tear, ‘patina’ in the clothes (Takagi in Hori et al. 2012, 94-99.) This appreciation towards patina is also an essential part in Japanese aesthetics, known as wabi or sabi - desolate beauty or savoring the weathering and aging of objects (De Mente 2006, 31-35).

Nuno
Nuno Corporation, established in 1984, creates highly innovative textiles which are boldly combining old practices with new technologies. The brand works exclusively with Japanese weavers and dyers, and many Nuno designs are part art and design museum collections around the world. NunoWorks, which was established in 2002, is concentrating solely on hand-printed textiles (Nuno Corporation, 2016.)

SouSou
Textile designer Katsuji Wakisaka, architect Hisanobu Tsujimura and producer Takeshi Wakabayashi established SouSou in Kyoto in 2002. The philosophy of the company is to create a “new interpretation of Japanese culture based on Japanese tradition” (SouSou 2016). The company designs and manufactures contemporary clothing with influences from Japanese clothing and textile history, and their collections include products such as jikatabi shoes, kimono-inspired jackets and dresses, and clothing for men inspired from Kabuki theatre.

The “100nen Coat or “100 Year Coat” is a trench-coat manufactured by Sanyo Shokai, and it is the first product to receive the J-Quality certificate, given to products that are completely manufacture in Japan, using high-quality techniques and materials. The coat is manufactured using several rare techniques, including the Saki-Zome dyeing process, which guarantees an even color, that does not fade in sunlight or after repeated washing. A lot of handiwork is incorporated in the manufacturing process of the coat. For example, all of the buttons and the collar are sewn by hand. Because the collar is handmade, using particular curved stitches, it is easy to mold it to stay upright if needed. As the name of the coat indicates, Sanyo Shokai is taking care of the maintenance and the after care of the coat for 100 years after it has been purchased. Therefore it can be passed on in the family, and enjoyed by generations (NHK World 2015.)
3.5. AESTHETIC GUIDELINES DRAWN FROM MOTTAINAI

As a summary, there are some guidelines we can draw from the mottainai concept, Shinto and old Japan, to aid in the creation of long life design objects.

**Naturalness**
Natural features, and the imperfect perfectness of nature is in high regard in Shinto and in Mingei. Natural features feel familiar, they are easy to approach and also easy to get fond of. This does not mean however, that all materials should be or should be left in their natural state, but the designer’s role is to ‘help’ the materials to bring out their best qualities. The true nature of materials should also be respected, i.e. they are not forced into performing something they are not naturally inclined to do.

**Simplicity**
As a continuance to attribute of naturalness, there is the attribute of simplicity. As Yanagi (1989, 150) stated, all works of art are more beautiful when they suggest something beyond themselves. Things that are too ornate, too ‘produced’, are not lively anymore, and they can become tiresome - and thus, more easily discarded. Simplicity lets the object breath and gives the impression that it can still develop into something else. Simplicity does however not mean unimaginative, cold or boring. Simplicity, together with naturalness, appreciate the beauty of irregularity. The works created by human hand always have some quality or irregularity and imperfectedness, whereas works created by machines are precise, perfect, and static. In order to give designs a sense of naturalness and freedom, human hands and machines should co-operate, each carrying out tasks they are best at doing.

**Awe**
Awe, wonder, or the “ah-ness of things” (i.e. mono-no-aware) is partially created by the sense of space, the possibility of something that can not be seen, existing. It is also created by time, care and love. Items that are created by intuition, but with time and skill, can cause the sensation of mystery and wonder. Related to the attribute of simplicity, if things are too obvious and rationalized, without any sense of peculiarity, they become uninteresting, bland.

**Practicality**
For mottainai as well as for Shinto, beauty is born from practicality. Even common, mundane items become cherished, when they are used, and vice versa, beautiful elaborate items become a nuisance and an object for frustration, when they can not be used. Such objects are also a waste of materials and efforts. The practicality of objects respects the materials they are made from, and the efforts of the person who made them.

**Longevity**
Longevity naturally requires durability and high-quality materials. Materials, which age beautifully with use and age, have a longer life, they become loved. Patterns and motifs that are of timeless nature, that can not be directly branded to a certain time also create longevity. Objects that create connotations to a certain period of time, may of course be beautiful, but most often they are appreciated as artefacts - kept behind glass doors, and never used. Therefore they are not breathing. Items which are kept in production for long also become their own guarantee of quality. The know-how in materials, methods and techniques become assured, and create a bond of trust between the maker and the user. Objects should also be easily mended or repaired, and in some case also easily disassembled.

The designer can take this into consideration already when designing and making the product. Producer or manufacturer of goods can think of ways to offer after-care services to the products it makes.

**Intimacy**
Articles that are loved, are frequently used, and as a continuance, items that are frequently used, become loved. Usability is one of the most important attributes, and people tend to keep objects they use often close to them. Therefore, because of this intimacy, objects should be pleasant to touch and use. This is accentuated in the case of clothing, as they are used on the body, touching the skin.

**Freshness**
Impermanence is understood, respected and valued in Shinto. Objects and materials are allowed to live through their life cycle, but they are refreshed, instead of thrown away. Freshness is not the same as newness. Items can be purified, mended, modified and remade into something else, giving them the chance of carrying on their lives in another task.

**Anonymity**
When items are not flagrantly branded and labelled, the materials, shapes and the overall essence of the objects become highlighted. This also diminishes the risk of the objects being discarded due to connotations made with the brand or label. The design attributes should be the reason why objects are appreciated and loved. The objects should shine, not the maker.
PART 4:
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH WORK
4.1. Focus and Aim of Research Work

The aim of the empirical research work was to offer some additional and self-perceived insight and information to compliment the literature research. I wanted to gather data especially from Japan regards to the topics the appreciation of traditions and crafts in Japan and mottainai, as academic literature especially on the last mentioned topic is still relatively rare and difficult to obtain. I also wanted to collect some fresh comments from the global online community in relation to the person-product attachment in regards to clothing.

The research work carried out in Japan had the purpose of getting better acquainted with the world of Japanese traditional crafts which are still surviving, as well as the mindset of Japanese consumers of clothes. I wanted to learn more about the history of some textile traditions and crafts and how they are preserved. I also wanted to hear the Japanese’ own insight into the concept of mottainai and the continuity of traditions.

In addition I wanted to collect some self-obtained data as a complimentary part for the observations drawn from the literature research. The purpose was to gather fresh comments and insight to the attributes which people connect with their cherished pieces of clothing.

4.2. Methods Utilized in Research Work

Majority of the empirical research work was conducted as semi-structured and conversational interviews. I had arranged some meetings with people I wanted to interview, and during these meetings I also got into conversation with their colleagues and other acquaintances, who are professionals in their fields. I recorded the interviews with my smart phone, while also writing down memos by hand. As some of the interviews were carried out in Japanese, my husband was of great assistance in translating the interview data into English.

During my excursions I also took photographs and collected pamphlets of interesting topics, as well as visually inspirational subjects.

4.3. Excursions in Japan

During the research process, I travelled to three different locations in Japan to conduct interviews and make observations. As I have mostly lived in Tokyo, I have also made observations an literature research there. The aim of the excursions within Japan was to learn more of the mottainai mentality, and of the perseverance of traditions and crafts.

4.3.1. Tokyo

In Tokyo I have been able to deepen my understanding of the way Japanese appreciate and also develop their traditional crafts, through daily observations, as well as visiting museums, exhibitions, department stores, shops and boutiques related to the topics of this thesis. I could draw information and inspiration particularly from Mingeikan, The Japan Folk Crafts Museum, as well as the d'Art gallery and department project store. Visits to the National Diet library, National Institute of Informatics library and the Japan Foundation library were also extremely important and beneficial.

4.3.2. Fukuoka

My excursion to Fukuoka and especially to Yame city [i.e. Yame-shi] was fuelled by my encounter with Takahiro Shiramizu, in an exhibition in Tokyo, where he was showcasing and selling the traditional monpe-trousers usually worn by elderly farmers. The trousers were manufactured of beautiful Kurume Kasuri fabrics, which resembled the garments I had seen the Ama divers wear in old photographs. The monpe-trousers Shiramizu-san was marketing were branded in a new and fresh way, giving them a very up-to-date and modern feel. As I went to inquire about his project, he invited me to visit his shop Unaginonedoko (‘Eel’s bed’) and the crafts community in Yame city.

I visited Fukuoka in September 2014. In Yame city, in addition to visiting Unaginonedoko, I could visit local craftsmen manufacturing traditional Kurume Kasuri and indigo dyed fabrics. In Fukuoka city I visited the Foucalt shop, run by Takaki Takao, specialized in displaying and selling a carefully curated selection of long life design and craft objects.

Kasuri is a Japanese ikat fabric, where lengths of yarns are tied and dyed before weaving, in order to produce designed patterns, which have a slightly blurred look to them. The Japanese word ‘kasuri’ comes from the verb ‘kasureru”, which in English means ‘to blur” (Tomita & Tomita 1982, 1.) Kurume Kasuri (or Kurume Gasuri) was developed in the Kurume area by a girl named Den Inoue at the beginning of 19th century, and it was designated as an “Important Intangible Cultural Property” in 1957 (The Cultural Foundation For Promoting the National Costume of Japan, 2016). Kurume Kasuri refers to kasuri fabrics made of cotton yarns, which are most often dyed with indigo (Tomita and Tomita 1982, 12). In addition to fabrics of geometrical motifs, also fabrics with representational images can be made. This type of kasuri is called E-Gasuri, i.e. picture kasuri, and this technique was also developed in Kurume, bu Taizó Ōtsuka in 1839 (Tomita and Tomita 1981, 38).

4.3.3. Kagoshima

The city of Kagoshima is located in south west of the Kyushu island in Japan. My visit to Kagoshima was quite sudden, and therefore I did not have time to prepare for the visit for a long time on beforehand. I was however interested to learn about the Oshima Tsumugi, or Oshima silk pongee, as well as the method of doro-zome, where the threads are dyed with particular type of mud before weaving, during my visit. To learn about these I visited the Amami no Sato centre, where the history and the process of Oshima Tsumugi manufacturing is presented. I was interested in this particular fabric and the unique Doro-Zome technique, as they have been preserved for extremely long time, the quality of the fabric has been ranked high, the making of it requires high skills and the dying technique is natural.

The Oshima Tsumugi is incredibly light and lustruous, intricately patterned woven silk fabric, it is very soft, difficult to wrinkle and water repellent due to the sleek surface. The Oshima Tsumugi is mainly produced in the Amami-Islands in Kagoshima prefecture, and it has been produced in the area for over thousand years. The technique of Doro Zome mud-dyeing was born in 1878, but also techniques of Ai Oshima (indigo dye) and Iro Oshima (chemical dyes) are used to dye the threads. (The Cultural Foundation For Promoting the National Costume of Japan, 2016.) In the Doro Zome technique the yarns or fabrics are dyed with a mud dye that is made from the branches and leaves from a tree called Téchigi (Rhaphiolepsis umbellata), and the mud
contains iron for a mordant (Tomita and Tomita 1982,11). The manufacturing of Oshima Tsumugi takes several complicated and time-consuming processes, and requires delicate and skillful workmanship (Anon, 2016).

As the area where the fabrics were manufactured were off-limits to visitors and could be only observed from behind a glass wall, I could not discuss with anyone at the centre about the tradition of making the fabric. I was also the only visitor to the centre at the time. Therefore I could learn and draw data only from the exhibition information boards and pamphlets.

As the making of the Oshima Tsumugi fabric is so laborious, detailed and the journey of the yarn to fabric takes several months, the fabrics are also extremely expensive, although deservedly so. This however eliminated the possibility for me to use these fabrics as part of any products I might manufacture, due to limited funds.

Despite the realization that I would not be able to use the Oshima Tsumugi fabrics in my own creations of long-life garments, the excursion to Kagoshima was nevertheless inspirational and awe-inspiring. It is also clear that the Kagoshima area is very proud of its traditional crafts, of which the Oshima Tsumugi and Satsuma Pottery are appointed as traditional crafts by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2014). Other traditional crafts in the area are among others Satsuma Kiriko cut-glass, Yaku Cedar products, bamboo products and Satsuma pewter ware (Kagoshima Prefecture, 2015).

4.3.4. KIRYU

I travelled to Kiryu in Gunma prefecture to initially interview textile designer Yuki Kawakami. While I was there I could also find out a little of the traditional local industries. Kiryu is especially known for textile manufacturing, which is Kiryu's primary field of industry. The area produces both traditional textiles for Japanese apparel and traditional dolls, as well as new, highly technical textiles (KIEA, 2016). Many western design houses are also getting their textiles manufactured in Kiryu (Kawakami, 2015).

I could also meet a local washi paper artisan, Masutaro Hoshino, at his studio. His family has been making washi paper at the location for over 300 years and today he is the only remaining washi artisan in whole of Gunma prefecture. Washi is thin, yet durable paper made out from the inner white bark of tree, using long bast fibers. Washi paper usually maintains its strength and appearance for over thousand years (Hoshino, 2015). The washi papers used in this thesis publication are manufactured by Mr. Hoshino.

4.4. INTERVIEWS IN JAPAN

To support my research, I conducted some interviews in Japan. These interviews can be described as semi-structured and conversational. All of the interviews were based on few key questions I had thought on beforehand, but I let the discussion flow freely, and let the interviewees talk freely about the topics. I tried to avoid interfering with the interviewees in the middle of sentences. In preparation for the interviews, the book “Doing Research in Fashion and Dress” by Yuniya Kawamura (2011) was of great assistance.

To Takaki Takao, of Foucault boutique in Fukuoka, I e-mailed the questions on beforehand upon his request, so that he could prepare for them before our meeting. Some of the interviews were spontaneous, as I met some people, like the carpenter Kiyoshi Sekiuchi, during my visit to Fukuoka.

At the time of the interviews I recorded them with my phone video recorder whilst also making notes by writing. The interviewees spoke both English and Japanese, some of them only Japanese. My husband, Koichi Chikuhi, has been of tremendous help in translating some parts of these interviews and in clarifying some Japanese terms to English.

I sent a request for interviews also to Kenmei Nagaoka from D&Department, and to a representative from the Pass The Baton concept store, but unfortunately did not get a response from neither of them.

I have divided the interviews in three parts:

“The makers” introduces the point of view of traditional or ‘long life design’ product makers, from the interviews I conducted during my excursion to the Yame village in Fukuoka.

“The sellers” introduces the point of view of product sellers, who pay special attention to the origins and quality of the items they sell, from the interviews I conducted with shop owners Shiramizu Takahiro in Yame city and Takaki Takao at Fukuoka city.

“The users” introduces the point of view of end-product users, from interviews I conducted with three individuals, each with an interest on traditions, design or vintage.

4.4.1. “THE MAKERS”

The interviews of “the makers” were conducted with three professionals of traditional Japanese crafts, of which Shutaro Nomura and Takeshi Yamamura I interviewed at their factories, and Kiyoshi Sekiuchi I interviewed at the Unaginonedoko shop, where his products are being sold.

Shutaro Nomura and Takeshi Yamamura were especially introducing their crafts for me, as I had an interest towards the practicalities of Kurume Kasuri and the natural method of Aizome indigo dyeing. I was however also interested in their insight on the appreciation of skills, materials and traditions. I also wanted to find out how much effort each of their products take to make, as to see whether my impression of laborous but meticulous work was true.
Shutaro Nomura is the executive director of Nomura Orimono, which specializes in manufacturing Kurume Kasuri fabrics. The weaving of Kasuri fabrics has been continued over four generations in the Nomura family, and the weaving machines used at the factory are between 70 and 80 years old.

Takeshi Yamamura, textile artisan, uses the old and natural method of Aizome to dye fabrics and yarns with indigo, meaning the blue tones of indigo are born from natural chemical reaction. He is specialized in designing and dyeing yarns for Kurume Kasuri fabrics. The facility where the dyeing processes take place is over 100-years old, and already five generations of the family have continued the craft there. Yamamura-san is a group holder of the Intangible and Important Cultural Properties title.

Kiyoshi Sekiuchi is the carpenter of Sekiuchi Furniture Factory, manufacturing furniture and small objects from wood.

Interviewees insight on materials and their appreciation:
When talking about materials and the appreciation of them, carpenter Sekiuchi mentioned how nowadays plastic is used a lot, even though wood is very durable and stays beautiful over the years of use. He stated that if treated properly, wood will not get damaged, and even if it gets some marks, it will just get more character and show its history through them. He referred to Japanese pottery, where small cracks and distortions are also considered good and beautiful.

Dyer Takeshi Yamamura reminded that natural Aizome, indigo dyeing, as opposed to chemical indigo dyeing, has nothing to do with the length of soaking the fabrics or yarns in the indigo vat, but the formation of deep color takes several soaks and oxidizations in order to get a thicker, beautiful tone. As the size of the molecules in natural and chemical indigo is different, they also have a different appearance. Chemical indigo appears soon, but can also fade away soon. Natural indigo is dyed through several dips, with light layers of indigo building up to a beautiful, long lasting color, which fades away gradually over time. Even though the method of natural and traditional Aizome is of course more laborious and expensive than chemical indigo dyeing, the products dyed with the method will stay beautiful for a long time and age elegantly.

In Nomura Orimono, the produced fabrics are washed and cut before sent out to their customers. Any leftover pieces and scraps of fabrics are bagged and sold at craft markets or festivals, so they are not thrown away. For example patchwork aficionados like to use them for their works. Also the thick cotton yarns, shibotta-ito, used to tie the kasuri yarns before they are dyed, are collected and sold as yarn at these same events. The materials are respected and they are finding ways to use also the parts that can not be used for Kasuri fabrics or products.

...on patience and effort:
Kasuri fabrics tend to be quite expensive, as multiple phases involving precision and manual labor are required in the manufacturing of them. Therefore I was intrigued to know what gives Shutaro Nomura the passion to continue manufacturing these traditional fabrics. At first he thought it was just his destiny, as he inherited the business from his father and he did not have any special feelings towards the craft. However, when he began to see products that incorporated the fabrics his factory had produced, it motivated him to continue and do his best. Many different companies are nowadays using the Kurume Kasuri fabrics produced by Nomura Orimono in their products, from businesses producing traditional products such as kimonos, to more contemporary fashion businesses.
Dyer Takeshi Yamamura works with a natural process, so his profession is all about patience and observing the natural changes during the different phases of making the indigo dye vat. First of all, the fermentation process of Sukumo, the dried leaves of indigo, takes approximately 100 days, after which the leaves are dissolved into alkaline water. The alkaline indigo water is then entered to a fermentation process with the help of sugar, which takes an additional two weeks.

Yamamura-san stated that in his opinion almost anyone could do the indigo dyeing itself, as it is not too demanding or difficult. The difficulty in his profession lies in first creating an effective vat and then keeping the indigo vat in good condition, as it is dependant on climate changes. He is taking records of the change in climate very meticulously, but has to approach each change in weather as they happen and try to adjust the vat accordingly.

Shutaro Nomura also mentioned, that almost anybody can draw or design different patterns for textiles, but you need special skills to do the calculations and planning required to convert the patterns to form Kasuri fabrics. Kasuri patterns are designed also by Shutaro Nomura himself, but also commissioned from professional designers. Occasionally apparel companies ask the company to produce particular designs.

Carpenter Sekiuchi-san uses around one week to manufacture one wooden lunch box - the item he is producing for sale at Unaginonedoko. He uses a lot of care for sanding and lacquering, and he lacquers the insides of the boxes seven times. Therefore he invests a lot of his time and care for each item. The cedar wood he is using is sourced locally.

What I could learn from these interviews was of course the incredible amount of effort, patience and meticulousness each of these craftsmen invest into their products, but also the mentality of willingness to protect these traditional skills and taking pride of them. The items produced by these methods are relatively expensive, but they are also very long-lasting and valuable. Collaboration between different skilled craftsmen is also important, as where one can produce beautiful materials, another one can use those to make beautiful items. Together their skills form long-life design. If people had a better understanding of the time and effort invested in each item, they would surely appreciate them more.

4.4.2. "THE SELLERS"

The interviews of the ‘sellers’ were conducted with Takahiro Shiramizu and Shogo Haruguchi from Unagi-no-Nedoko (‘Eat’s bed’), a shop in Yame City retailing local craft products from the Fukuoka area, and with Takao Takaki, the owner of Foucault, a boutique in Fukuoka City selling a carefully curated selection of urban folk crafts.

As all of the interviewees are deeply knowledgeable about the local and traditional crafts in their areas, I wanted to talk to them about their views of the preservance of these skills, and their meaning in modern society. I wanted to hear the interviewees insight into why they are so interested in keeping these traditions alive, how are they pursuing this, and also, what is their view on the mottainai concept as well as on long-life design.

I conducted the interviews at location in the before-mentioned shops, Unagi-no-Nedoko in Yame City, and Foucault in Fukuoka City.

Takahiro Shiramizu is the co-founder and chief manager of Unagi-no-Nedoko, a shop retailing local craft products from the Fukuoka area, and especially that of Yame City. The business is also conducting research of local and traditional culture, techniques and history. Unagi-no-Nedoko was established in 2012. Before this, Shiramizu-san was involved in a project aimed to vitalize job creation in the southern Fukuoka area by branding and creating appealing product designs.

Shogo Haruguchi is the other co-founder of Unagi-no-Nedoko.

Takao Takaki runs the Foucault shop, established in 2004, in Fukuoka City, together with his wife. The shop is concentrated on retailing products of urban folk crafts and the selection in the shop is carefully curated by the Takakis. The spatial design in the shop is by architect Katsutoshi Maeda. Before establishing the Foucault shop in Fukuoka, Takao Takaki’s hometown, he was working in financial management for paper manufacturing industry in Tokyo. He describes starting the business ‘luckily’ and ‘accidentally’, out of his own interests.

Interviewees insight on the qualities of good quality items:

Takahiro Shiramizu selects himself all of the objects sold at Unagi-no-Nedoko. The most important attribute for the products is that they must be mendable. An item that has been bought from the shop can be sent or taken back to the craftsmen to be fixed, in case they are damaged or broken. This is also one reason why majority of the objects sold at Unagi-no-Nedoko are manufactured by local craftsmen, so that the repair services can be arranged easily. The quality aspect of the products Shiramizu-san estimates based on his own judgment and senses.

Takao Takaki from Foucault describes himself as ‘stingy’, and he chooses the objects sold at his shop based on the phrase “despite my cheapness”. With this he means, he pays extreme attention to the quality of the products and the quality/price balance of them - he wants to acquire good, hearty objects, without spending too much. Takaki argues, that ‘good’ items are motivating and inspiring the user, by making them want to use them.

Takao Takaki was wondering, that for many people, an object’s value seems to be related to famous brands, makers, manufacturing areas or the high price of them. He stated that the value of an object should be decided by how important the item is to a person. Therefore the object may be of high value to someone, even someone else may not see any value in it. Takaki also represents the idea, that a good product produces joy and pleasure also outside of its own physical presence. When the item is not too expensive and it is durable and practical, it saves time, money and effort which can in turn be invested into some other activities that bring us joy.

..on long-life design:

When talking about the qualities of long life design, Takahiro Shiramizu stated that products that can be used for a long time and are durable, but also products that can be mended and maintained are long life design. Also the business model or system built around the product is maintaining and continuing the life of the product. He also mentioned, that price has nothing to do with this, as also an item bought from a 100yen shop (popular shops in Japan, where everything costs 100yen, i.e. approximately 0,80euro), can be long life design.
Takao Takaki thinks that the concept of long life design is needed in the modern society, but that good and attractive product should be created and sold without labelling them. He argues, that people should buy only such items, that are instinctively recognized as "Isho mono"-items. Isho-mono is a Japanese expression, meaning 'an item for life'. It refers to such items, that a person can rely on throughout his life, and which can be passed down to next generations. Takao also mentions, however, that sometimes it is the history or tradition that is lasting for life, rather than actual physical objects.

Takao Takaki also relates long-life design to the products of mingei, Japanese folk art. When Japan began its industrialisation from the end of 19th century, many folk art products were treated as ordinary and nothing special. Takaki argues that in reality, these objects were in fact extraordinary. He also notes however, that one should not glorify the objects just for the sake that they are mingei, i.e. folk craft products, but each object should be evaluated individually.

..on mottainai:
When talking about the concept ‘mottainai’, Takaki Takao instantly said it is a very good, meaningful word. He argues that the meaning of mottainai lies in not utilising the real value of an item properly, and therefore mottainai's connotation is something more than merely ‘wasting’. He made a comparison, by saying sometimes in order to create a beautiful, good quality object, one needs to use large amounts of materials and resources to achieve the desired end result. In Takao Takaki’s interpretation, mottainai is about effectively maximising the potential and value of an object.

Takahiro Shiramizu pointed in a similar manner, that for him mottainai is about the shame of wasting resources, and that untapped resources should be utilized in a better way. He mentions incense sticks made out of cedar wood as an example: The natural force in natural water systems grinds the leaves of cedar tree into a fine powder. This powder is then used to make the incense sticks. As the other parts of the tree are used for other purposes, such as furniture, nothing of the tree goes to waste, neither does the power of the water.

Modern society is highly competitive, and this is reflected even on how people buy things. Takaki Takao expressed that one major motivation for people in the modern society seems to be the pursuit of getting “likes” on social media sites like facebook or Instagram. A big motivation to purchase items is to show off photos of acquired objects to other people through these social media channels. In order to keep these “likes” coming, i.e., in order to keep up with the competition, people buy and forget items in a worryingly fast pace. Takao Takaki considers this as well as ‘mottainai’. He wishes for people to have more restraint and consideration, and wishes for them to buy good quality items less often. With the money and time saved, other enjoyable things could be done, such as meeting friends, listening to good music or reading good books.

In a personal level, Takahiro Shiramizu stated that the concept of mottainai or the question of why he feels attachment towards products is somewhat absurd, as he respects objects naturally. Precious items for him are several monpe-trousers, kimonos and ceramic dishes, which he has owned and used for a long time. He feels attachment towards products is somewhat absurd, as he respects objects naturally. Precious items for him are several monpe-trousers, kimonos and ceramic dishes, which he has owned and used for a long time.

In relation to mottainai, Shogo Haruguchi stated, that the way retailers are rewarding their customers in order to help them understand the value of objects. The technique or method alone does not give the product its value. Unagi-no-Nedoko is trying therefore to introduce the makers, the materials and also other purposes, such as furniture, nothing of the tree goes to waste, neither does the power of the water.

..on the survival and appreciation of traditional crafts:
There are a number of traditional crafts still pursued in Fukuoka. Takao Takaki mentions however, that for example the art of making Hakata Ningyo dolls is sometimes being ridiculed, even though the special ‘dashi’ festival carriages manufactured by the same craftsmen are appraised. He also feels, that in modern society there is little need for the use of traditional Hakata Ori or Kurume Kasuri fabrics as they are originally used. These fabrics are in modern days often used only in small pieces to find a balance between sale price and cost of making. The traditional crafts are however still living in Fukuoka, and are slowly enticing also young people to learn how to make them. Takao Takaki reckons, that if there were more projects and shops such as Foucault, Unagi-no-Nedoko and D&Department introducing stylish traditional and handmade items, more people would incorporate these objects into their daily lives.

Shiramizu Takahiro also believes, that as much information as possible should be distributed for customers in order to help them understand the value of objects. The technique or method alone does not give the product its value. Unagi-no-Nedoko is trying therefore to introduce the makers, the materials and also manufacturing locations of their products to their customers.

Craftsmen who are making things by hand, slowly an patiently, can not make a livelihood based on their crafts alone in the modern society. The traditional techniques and skills may need updating and collaboration with newer technologies, in order to thrive. However, as Shiramizu-san pointed out, handmade products often come in limited quantities, and as previously studied, this kind of ‘limited edition’ products are appealing to customers. People can be also educated more about the methods and backgrounds of products, thus enhancing their attachment towards them.

Takao Takaki gave me the valuable insight, that mottainai is not only about wasting materials or resources, it’s also about wasting ideas, thoughts or opportunities, as well as the potential of them. Mottainai has other dimensions than only the materialistic value, it is also about the mental or intellectual value.
As “users” I interviewed three individuals, each with a different interest and a point of view. These different aspects they have are traditions, design and vintage.

One aim of these interviews was to find out first-hand what may be some emotional connections formed towards objects and why some objects become so important to their owners. In addition to discussing about consuming habits, clothing and style, I asked the interviewees to show me some of their favourite garments or objects, and to analyze why these pieces were dear to them. I wanted to see, if their responses would correlate with the literature research I had already done, and to see if a list of features for “long life design garments” could be formed.

Another aspect of the interviews was to receive comments from Japanese citizens regards to the concept of mottainai, and if and how Shintoism is present in their daily life. To balance it out, I also wanted to interview someone western, to see if there are any striking differences or similarities between the eastern (i.e. Japanese in this case) and western (i.e. British in this case) users.

Each interview was conducted separately. I had prepared a set of questions to guide and support the interviews, but in the actual interview situation I let the communication flow freely. I interviewed each individual in their own surroundings; Koichi and Alice in their Tokyo homes, Yuki in her Kiryu home and a nearby cafe. This enabled them to physically show me pieces of clothing and other items when they came into their mind.

Koichi Chikuhi is a Japanese national, who is keen on history and traditions. He is working as a director and translator in a small creative agency in Tokyo. He has lived both in rural and urban areas in Japan and various countries in Europe. He also holds two design related degrees from Japan and Europe, and can thus discuss about objects from a design point of view. Koichi’s grandparents were farmers, and his parents are also farming alongside their professions as teachers, therefore he is able to share his point of view regards to the production of food - one key aspect in mottainai or Shinto.

Yuki Kawakami is a Japanese textile designer, who has studied both in Japan and Finland. Now she lives and works in the city of Kiryu, in Gunma prefecture of Japan, which is known for its long traditions in textile production. I wanted to hear Yuki’s thoughts both as a designer and user of things, and also as a Japanese national.

Alice Corbett is a British EFL teacher and law graduate, currently living and working in Tokyo. I knew that Alice is keen on vintage garments and that she is quite definite of her style. Therefore I wanted to hear the stories she had to tell of her garments, and what kind of items she likes to wear year after year.

Interviewees insight on mottainai and respect towards objects:

As presented by Thomas P. Kasulis (2004; 1,39), the mentality and core idea of Shinto and mottainai are inbred in the Japanese. This is also why they don’t sometimes recognize or separate elements of Shinto in their daily life, i.e. these elements are an unconscious part of daily lives. I could notice this also in Koichi; the appreciation towards ‘the gifts of nature’, i.e. rice and other vegetables and fruits, is natural for him. People in Japan live according to the four seasons, and through Shintoism and Buddhism, Koichi reckons that the general idea of showing respect, especially for food, is common among the Japanese. Yuki also mentioned that she feels that most of Japanese have that kind of appreciation within them. She also points out, that as Japanese are very group-minded, they can also be easily “controlled” and do not tend to “think outside of the box” too much. This, she said, is seen in the mass popularity of constantly changing trends and admiration of idols in Japan.

Koichi explains that mottainai is “understanding with brain and then just doing the practice”. He stated, that as the idea of mottainai is so natural to him, he doesn’t really think about it or its essence, as for him it is just a daily practice that comes naturally. Yuki also stated, that for her mottainai is omnipresent; it is a way of thought. I could notice the inherent nature of mottainai for Koichi, when I asked from him how he would explain the idea of mottainai to someone who doesn’t know anything about it. It was difficult for him to grasp the idea that someone would not really understand the essence of mottainai or how to appreciate objects or items. He reckoned that in such cases people do not understand how difficult it is also for natural objects, such as vegetables, to survive - how much effort it takes. For Yuki mottainai is about treating items properly and trying to avoid throwing things away.

Koichi also linked common and daily Japanese expressions, ‘Itadakimasu’ (“I will receive”, said before eating) and ‘Arigatou’ (“thank you”) to the idea of mottainai, as the words are literally showing gratitude; “Mottainai is just like thank you. Itadakimasu means we say thank you to the person who -for example the farmer or fisherman- who created the produce .. We think how lucky we are to be able to eat that thing. ‘Arigatou’ too, it literally means thank you, but if we analyze the word, arigato means “a rare thing to happen” or “hard to exist”. If we say arigata, we understand the background and that it is so rare so or so difficult for that thing to exist so we show appreciation.” These expressions are used in Japan on a daily basis, several times within a day. Therefore this notion would also emphasize the sentiment that the concept of mottainai and respect is something ingrained in the Japanese.

Koichi brought up how Buddhism and Shintoism along with the idea of mottainai have been a natural part of life for him, and for the majority of Japanese, since childhood. Various ceremonies, festivities and customs related to Buddhism and Shintoism occur during the year in Japan, and the Japanese partake in them from early childhood. According to Koichi, from the Buddhist point of view, objects can be seen as a chains of events and relationships, instead of them being mere objects. Because of this, discardng objects would be disrespectful to every ingredient in this chain of events and relationships.

Alice is from Great Britain, where the fast fashion retailer Primark has been very popular especially among students. Alice admits that when she entered university in Manchester, she would often go to Primark and buy a pile of clothes for 50 pounds. She stated that back then it was about wanting to wear something different to student nights, rather than having a particular style. Now she has had a change in her shopping habits, and aims at buying better quality items, and waiting until she finds a perfect item before buying it.

.. on recycling:

Koichi and Yuki both pointed out that charity organisations, such as UFF or Fida in Finland or Oxfam in UK don’t really operate in rural areas in Japan. This makes donating and recycling of old clothes more difficult, but may be also linked to the idea of mottainai. There are, however, shops that buy and sell second hand clothing, but they are not extremely widespread. In bigger cities stylized second hand shops exist, but Yuki is hoping more interesting recycle shops would emerge in Japan. In her opinion, Japanese recycle shop displays are generally boring and do not make shopping at these shops enjoyable. Personally this comment surprised
me, as my initial thought was that Japanese second-hand and vintage shops are extremely well styled. It is true however, that the stylish recycle shops I have seen have been in busy urban areas with trendy reputation (like in Shimo-Kitazawa, Harajuku or Omote-Sando in Tokyo), and the second-hand shops in ‘less popular’, more rural areas are often simply lines of shelves and racks of clothing, without any special store layouts or visual merchandising.

Alice buys a lot of second-hand and vintage pieces. She looks up to her mother’s style who was young in the 1970’s and also mentions her mother’s cousin, who used to work as a designer in the 1960’s for Mary Quant. Alice reckons she has picked up on these 60’s and 70’s styles and is therefore fond of vintage garments.

..on desirable attributes in clothing:

When purchasing clothes, what appeals to Yuki first is the visual appearance of the garments and do they correspond well with the contents of her closet. At the same time she is also paying attention to the quality and durability of the items. She buys a lot of second-hand items, but would also like to support independent brands, many of which belong to her friends, more. When buying second-hand items, Yuki reckons that small stains, ink drops and other marks do in some cases add more character to the items. She mentioned a second-hand military backbag she bought, that had some foreign writing on it. Later on she found out through her friend, that the text was Dutch and could find out the meaning of it. This experience added more thrill and excitement to the item.

For Alice, material, shape, design, and her own personal style is important when shopping for new clothes. She avoids fabrics that may feel uncomfortable and therefore often prefers cotton. Alice likes to make unique finds especially on the online auction site eBay. She mentioned a lace blouse she bought from the site, which at the time of purchasing was very unique and special to her. Later on high street retailers such as H&M, New Look and Next started selling copies of the same blouse, and Alice says this in a way “ruined” the blouse for her. She still likes the blouse, but feels annoyed as her “lovely unique item is just like….not unique anymore.” Alice also feels aloof of the way social media and different online services are spreading trends quickly and sharing information where to buy particular styles. She feels this is copying and not showing your original style; “Now in TopShop when you walk in and there are labels on some rails saying ‘most pinned item’, I think it’s on New Look as well. It doesn’t matter what the item is, I don’t want it then! Everybody’s seen it, everybody likes it!”

..on emotional attachment to clothing:

When asked why Koichi is rather reluctant to donating or selling away his old clothing, he brought up emotional connections to them, and in addition to just memories, the sense of some kind of ‘spirit’ inhabiting them: “Well, from the Shintoism point of view, maybe there’s some kind of spirit. If you have stuffs with spirits then how can you throw them away? Then you don’t know what happens to the clothes.” At this point I asked whether he means the spiritual connection to the items. He agreed, and said that he has the feeling of protecting the items he can you throw them away? Then you don’t know what happens to the clothes.”

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When asked whether the memories are the only reason Koichi holds on to items, or do other factors, such as material or color matter to him, his response revealed that emotional connection, attachment, is the most significant factor in making him keeping the items. Material values, such as quality, design, material or brand do, however, also have their value for him: “I prefer buying good quality one and to wear it for long. I don’t buy a lot, I just carefully buy one.”

Alice also mentioned a Laura Ashley dress from the end of 1980’s, that used to belong to her mother. The dress has a small stain on it, but it does not bother Alice. She stated that she does not like items like these because they would be in perfect condition or they would be worth of a lot of money, but she likes them because she has memories tied up to pieces like them. Of this particular Laura Ashley dress, she said it reminds her of her mother running around after five children, while also being a good pillar of the community. The garment could therefore be seen also as a symbol of something she admires and respects.

Yuki mentioned two garments especially, as garments she appreciates and has emotional attachment to. A military coat by Junya Watanabe, Comme des Garcons, that Yuki likes not just for the nice style and good fabric quality, but also as she received it as a present from her boyfriend, who was the previous owner. She thinks the coat will age beautifully, as the fabric is frayed on purpose. The other garment is a jacket Yuki wore to her graduation ceremony. It is made by her friend, of a fabric Yuki weaved herself. The other sleeve of the jacket was accidentally cut to the wrong grainline, and for this reason the sleeve is slightly curved. Yuki thinks this unintentional effect is charming. Yuki stated that she will probably keep hold of this jacket until she dies, even though the style is too ‘gorgeous’ to wear often.

When asked, Koichi mentioned a batch of hemp t-shirts as his favourite, cherished pieces of clothing.
He stated that as they are comfortable to wear, he likes the subdued colors of them and their style is simple, he will not get bored with them. The seams of the shirts are reinforced, ensuring that they will not loosen or get twisted during the course of usage. The shirts are also made by a relatively small company in Japan, which aims at making durable items. Koichi stated that in his opinion, he can trust the quality of the garments more when they are made by smaller companies. He also reckons, that Japanese manufacturers really pay attention to their products, aiming at producing consistent quality.

There are a couple of garments Alice named as the most dearest for her; a 1970’s style navy dress she found at a vintage fair, and a coat she has had for over 12 years. The sheep skin coat she found unexpectedly from a shop near her grandmother’s house in the UK, reduced from £200 to £50. She describes the coat to be very warm and having nice details. It has one spot of white acrylic paint on the sleeve, of which Alice stated “I remember exactly when and where I got the spot on it, at an art class.” From this description we can find, that multiple features of attachment are linked to the coat Alice mentioned; it is an essential part of a special memory for her and through the memory it is also related to particular people. As Alice could get the coat with a notable discount, the coat may feel like a ‘trophy’ or ‘catch’ for her. And then there are the material values, the ones a designer can also influence; the good quality leather, well thought-of details, careful finishing work and ease of wear.

From these interviews I could get more insight especially in to the meaning of mottainai as a part of Japanese life, but could also confirm previously made assertions. Memories were again proved to be an important factor in emotional attachments to clothing, but also the design of the items and quality of materials were important attributes for the interviewees. Wear and tear on clothes do not matter, when and if the person has formed an emotional attachment to them. Price is also irrelevant, as inexpensive items as well can become cherished mementos.
4.5. COLLECTING CLOTHING STORIES ONLINE

Plenty has been written about person-product attachment and I have gained a lot of valuable information through previous studies, research work, and books, such as Worn Stories (Spivack 2014) or Women in Clothes (Heiti et al., 2014), consisting of people’s stories and experiences towards clothing. I felt however, that I wanted to gather some current, up-to-date opinions and perspectives, especially from my own surroundings. The books I have read have mainly dealt with consumers residing in USA, and my interviews were mainly with Japanese designers and consumers. Therefore I established a temporary group on social media service Facebook, in order to collect stories and memories related to garments and accessories, especially from Finnish users.

4.5.1. ISSHOMONO FACEBOOK GROUP

I established a group to Facebook, with the aim of collecting my own database of clothing stories to function as another, complimentary basis for observations. I wanted to have ‘my own’ material to add to the observations and findings made based on other research results, observations and literature.

The group was created on January 25th 2016 with the working title and the original purpose was to keep it as a temporary project, open for viewing, posting and commenting for two weeks, until February 7th, 2016. I ended up keeping the group in Facebook, but changed the status of the group to closed, meaning only members of the group can see the posts in it. The group gained 27 members, and 7 stories with 11 photographs were posted to the group wall. In addition I received one story with photograph by email. The description of the group was as follows;

"Issho Mono - An Item for Life:
Photo Stories of Meaningful Clothes

Do you own a garment, that is somehow meaningful and special to you, your treasure?
The one that you love and cherish, the one that evokes memories, the one that you will always keep.

If so, then please participate to this small project, and post a photo of your special garment on the timeline of this page. You can also tell the story of the garment; what is it, where is it from, why is it meaningful to you.
If you prefer, you can also email your photos and stories privately to isshomono(a)gmail.com.

This Facebook group is temporary and open for viewing and posting until February 7th, 2016. It is a part of my Master of Arts thesis in Fashion and Collection Design at Aalto University, Finland. Please note, that I may use photos posted on this page as a visual material in the written part of my thesis. I will contact the person in question in this case. Thank you for your participation!"

In all of the stories, the most often mentioned characteristics as the reasons for holding on to garments, were that they had a position as a memento (5 mentions), their appearance was visually pleasing (5 mentions) and that their quality was satisfying or of particular quality (4 mentions).

In four cases a garment that was either received or bought by the user in a relation to a special occasion (such as a birthday present), was later turned into a garment to be worn often, in daily life. From these cases we can draw a conclusion, that the attachment towards the garment was first born from their status as a memento, and later deepened due to the continuous use.

Three respondents mention using or at least keeping the garment, even though the material is already frayed, or the garment is broken. Due to emotional ties, one respondent is holding on to a pair of velvet trousers, which she describes being in unusable condition. She is holding on to a thought of perhaps re-using the material she is fond of, to something else “as important, as this garment has been to me”. She feels vexed, that in the case of finding a suitable, particular garment, it is nowadays almost impossible to find the same style from clothing stores again. In the other cases memories and long-lasted use seem to have the strongest effect, as in to why these garments are not disposed of, despite their worn out appearance.

Most of the respondents did not give detailed responses into what they consider to be visually appealing, but they used phrases like the garment “looks like me” or “feels like me”. In these cases we can see that the garment is an expression of identity, a continuance of self. One respondent described she likes a garment because of it’s “simple elegance”. The garment in question is a black corduroy jacket from the 1970’s. Other instances where the garment was complimented because of its visual appearance, were of a black dress with white polka dots, black leather jacket with buckles and straps at the side, and of a red t-shirt, to which the owner could choose the print himself and express his creativity. In the last case we can see an example of the influence of customization, i.e when a person can influence the appearance of a product, it feels it was made especially for the person.

All in all the observations I can make from these responses are in support of the literature research. The role of memories is surprisingly strong, and the owners of garments can sometimes even ignore attributes regards to quality or material, in case the garment is important to them in the reflective level or aesthetically pleasing.

“I received the dress as a 20-year birthday gift from my best friends. The dress couldn’t possibly look more like me and it instantly became my go-to dress. I experienced the small and great things of life in this dress: I suffered from heart-aches, gained new friends, partied until the dawn, cried and laughed together with my friends, went to the first lecture in university, had terrible hangovers, sweated at festivals, travelled abroad, went to the first date with the person who is now my spouse. This was my favourite dress, until I accidentally washed it in washing machine and I shunk it. Luckily I could still make a skirt out of the hem.”

Janette, female, Finland
“My parents ordered shirts from mail order service for us kids. My brother wanted a car to his shirt, my sister wanted a fluffy cat and I, as the youngest child, wanted a skull and an eagle. I still have the shirt and I will always preserve it. I had many fine shirts but this is the dearest one, as anybody who knows me, will not be really surprised that I had a rather ‘grim’ taste already as a child.”

Juha, male, Finland

“A black corduroy jacket, my dad’s old from the 1970’s. The jacket is called ‘Kuski’ [‘coachman’], and it is a part of the first suit designed for men by Marimekko. When we were teenagers, me and my brother would compete on who was allowed to wear it, and for a while we took turns wearing it. Nowadays I wear the jacket on a weekly basis, and it is never idle in the cupboard, as I use it pretty much throughout the year. As I am a designer myself, I appreciate quality, and it is quite obvious in this jacket. The fabric doesn’t have any holes whatsoever, and even after four decades it is serviceable. I appreciate the history of the jacket as well, and the fact that in his youth my dad has walked around with his hands in the same pockets, as I do now. I like the simple elegance of the jacket and I was especially impressed to hear the history of the jacket. All the memories that I have created while wearing the jacket are of course giving the garment an additional story.”

Veera, female, Finland

“I bought this Metallica band shirt from a flea market in February 2003 to be the under shirt of my penkkarit -outfit. I was dressed up as an 1980’s heavy metal guy. I hunted for this shirt from other cities as well, as I originally wanted to get an Iron Maiden shirt. When I bought the shirt it had sleeves and it was longer, but I modified it to fit with my ensemble. I am using the shirt constantly, and it is the first thing I pack to go with me for example to warm countries. The cotton is so heavenly soft and weathered nowadays. I am really hoping that the shirt will never become so frail that I will not be able to use it.”

Salla, female, Finland

1 Penkkarit, or ‘benchpressing fest’, is a yearly tradition among Finnish upper secondary school students. The event is celebrated in the spring of their final year as the final day of school, before the start of the matriculation exams. In some cities the students dress up in costumes for the event.

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“I got this jacket from an internet auction website. It is deadstock from the 1980’s. The course of time stopped for this jacket back when it was shelved, but started again once I acquired it. I especially love the iron buckles on the side belt of the jacket, which are hard to find on biker jackets nowadays.”

Kazuya, male, Japan
4.5.2. OBSERVING THE KONMARI SUOMI (KONMARI FINLAND) GROUP

The KonMari phenomenom (briefly introduced in chapter 3.4.) has had a global effect and it has gained significant popularity also in Finland. There is a group in facebook, which in September 2016 had nearly 17,500 members, called KonMari Suomi (KonMari Finland). In order to get a few comments from people who have engaged with the KonMari method, I sent information regards to the IshoMono facebook group which I had established, to the members, asking them to join and share their stories. Later on I posted an additional request to the KonMari Suomi facebook group. I asked the members of the group whether they could define the clothing that ‘spark joy’¹, what kind of clothes they have saved, and what kind of clothes have had to go.

At the moment of posting, the group had a little over 3,000 members. The popularity of the group has since grown due to rather extensive coverage in Finnish media. I posted my message to the group on February 11th, 2016;

“I posted a message to you KonMari members earlier about a group related to my MA thesis, through which (via private messages) I collected images and stories about momentous clothes. Thank you to all of you, who sent me these messages!

However, I would still like to inquire, how have you chosen the clothes that ‘spark joy’? In other words, what kind of clothes have stayed in your cupboards as your treasures, and which ones have had to go? Or can you give these [clothes] any common denominators, other than the joyous, even mystical, feeling they produce?”

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Lainoin vasta ammiin teille KonMariilaisille viestein mun MA-lopputyöhön liittyvästä ryhmästä, jonka kautta (&yksityisviestein) kerinän kuvia ja tarinoita merkityksellistä vaatteista. Kiitos kaikille teille, jotka viestisit laitoksi!

smile emoticon

Vaikka vielä haluan uudelle, miten olette valinneet ne iloa tuottavat vaatteet? Eli minkälaiset vaatteet ovat saaneet jäädä aarteiksi vaatteiksi, mitä ovat saaneet vaatinut? Vai voiko niille nimeä yhteisiä piirteitä, muita kain iloa tuottavan, jopa mystisemmin, olotilat?

I received seven comments in total, from five different members of the group. Even though the sampling was very small, I could still draw data from the comments.

I analysed each comment, searching for any mentions of characteristics for either cherished garments, or for garments which were unwanted and discarded. Based on the received comments, the most important denominator for clothes that ‘spark joy’, i.e. cause positive emotions within the members is practicality and versatility of the clothes. The garments they appreciate do not need to be aesthetically pleasing, if they have a utilitarian purpose and are of good quality. On the other hand garments that are considered to be aesthetically pleasing, are sometimes appreciated merely on the basis that they bring joy and pleasure on the visceral level. The fit of the clothes was also mentioned as an important factor. One member stated, that she discarded all such garments, that were unfitting or impractical in any way, while another one mentions a silk skirt suit as her cherished garment, for the reason it is in perfect condition, fits her well and is suitable for many different occasions. Surprisingly, only one member mentioned memories related to a garment as a reason for keeping it. The same user however mentions that the same garment is also practical, durable and aesthetically pleasing.

Three of the members mentioned certain materials as preferrable; wool was mentioned twice, silk once. The same user however mentions that the same garment is also practical, durable and aesthetically pleasing.

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Three of the members mentioned certain materials as preferrable; wool was mentioned twice, silk once. The same user however mentions that the same garment is also practical, durable and aesthetically pleasing.

Characteristics mentioned that show show appreciation or attachment to a garment: fit, durability, practicality, memories, pleasing appearance

Characteristics mentioned that show dislike, reason for discarding a garment: -

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Member #1, comment on February 11th, at 19:57
Original comment in Finnish:
“Mulla on vaatekaupassa esimerkiksi villapatja, jota on tarpeeksi valja, pitää ja kokemukseksi olakseen haittaa retkailemaan. Se on kuitenkin partio- ja mökikierroksissa luotoutuneena kuivestuessa 2000 ja on vielä avain, vaikka siihen sinä on muutamia tuhoja, joka sattuu pesussa vuorelle. Päätään liittyvät muistoja ja sen pakemisesta tulee tietystä, se on ollut osa monia mahtavia muistoja ja heiksi. Lisäksi kun tieän sen olevan vain tietystä käyttötarkoitukseseen, niin ei tarvitse sitä varoa nokea tai savun hajua. Se tuottaa käytännöllisyyttensä, muistojen ja kivan ulkonäön kautta iloa.”

English translation:
“For example, I have a woolen sweater in my cupboard, that is loose-fitting enough, long and with a long collar in order for it to be fantastic for camping. It has travelled with me as a trusted garment through [girl] scout and cottage trips since 2000 and it is still intact even though it has a few stains on it, which won’t fade away when washing. Memories are related to the sweater and putting it on brings me a certain feeling, it has been a part of many wonderful memories and moments. As I also know it is only for a certain purpose, I don’t have to be worried of soil or the smell of smoke [getting on it]. It brings me joy through its practicality, memories and nice appearance.”

Characteristics mentioned that show appreciation or attachment to a garment: fit, durability, practicality, memories, pleasing appearance

Characteristics mentioned that show dislike, reason for discarding a garment: -

Member #2, comment on February 11th, at 20:09
Original comment in Finnish:
“Mulla on karkeasti jotain tultausta kaksi kategoriaa säästettäville vaatteillela: ne joista pidän ja jotka tuottaa siksi aktiivisesti iloa, sitten ne jotka on vaan niin järkeviä ja käyttännöllisiä, vaikka en varmasti niistä pidä. Esim. äitini vanhat villahousut. Ihan saakelin rumat ja niitä tarvii harvoin, mutta kun niitä tarvii vaikka sellaisilla tän talven -28 C pakkasilla, niin kovuomattomat.”

English translation:
“Crudely divided, I have two categories for the clothes I keep; those I like and which therefore actively bring me joy, and then those that are just simply so reasonable and practical, even though I don’t like them as such. For example my mother’s old woolen bloomers. So damn ugly and rarely needed, but when I need them during winters such as this winter’s -28c, they are irreplaceable.”

Characteristics mentioned that show appreciation or attachment to a garment: pleasing appearance, rationality, practicality

Characteristics mentioned that show dislike, reason for discarding a garment: -
Member #2, comment on February 11th, at 20:10
Original comment in Finnish:

"Ja mun ekologinen omatunto ei todella kaata esihumiissaan lainoissaan tavaraa, vaikka se ois ruma ja kaunistuksiksi ei saatatellä. Siis vaikka no on mun esimerkki vilallousa :D Uudet saman asian hoitavat pääät hommaan vasta sitten, JOS moista jooks aika jättää."

English translation:

"And my ecological conscience will not let me dispose of goods that are functional in their purpose, even if it was ugly and more beautiful options were available. So for instance the wooden bloomers in my example :D I will acquire new pants taking care of the same task only and when, IF there are some day fallen apart."

Characteristics mentioned that show appreciation or attachment to a garment:
functionality, durability

Characteristics mentioned that show dislike, reason for discarding a garment:
- Member #3, comment on February 11th, at 20:17

Original comment in Finnish:

"me vaatettai sai päädä, joista olen tähänkin aisti päätäytet. Kevään tai kaksia käytetyt sai lähtei. Ovat vaatteita joissa vihdyt ja kyljähän nisässä jonkinlaisen yhteenin nimitäjä on rentouu ja monipuoluisuus. Liian 'pänitävät' eite jokka pidetäse vaikka jooks jappempi vaatteita terveisellä tuli ostettia. 3.3 kg jappempiänä on nyt helppompi uosi mieleisiä vaatteita."

English translation:

"The garments I have worn until now anyway, could stay. The ones that were worn only once or twice, had to go. They [the garments I keep] are clothes where I enjoy myself and they do have some kind of common denominator of relaxation and versatility. I don't really wear the too 'pompous' ones, even though I have sometimes bought better [i.e. more presentable, festive] clothes when needed. It is easier for me to buy clothes that I like now that I am 33kg smaller."

Characteristics mentioned that show appreciation or attachment to a garment:
comfort, ease, versatility, used often

Characteristics mentioned that show dislike, reason for discarding a garment:
- Member #4, comment on February 11th, at 20:43

Original comment in Finnish:

"Kertea ovat vaatetuissani aikaa kestävät laadukkaat ja tyyliliikäiset vaatteet. Paksuakaisin on liik 20 vuotta sitten ostettu paksua maaliskuukertaa oleva juhlamekko ja jalka. Se on yhtä täydellisesti kannossa, sopivan kokoisen ja erittäin tyyliliikä monenlaisiin tapahtumiin, ja tietin kaupunkimukavaa päällä, aina silloksi on ihoa vasten todella ihana eikä hisosta."

English translation:

"The garments I have worn until now anyway, could stay. The ones that were worn only once or twice, had to go. They [the garments I keep] are clothes where I enjoy myself and they do have some kind of common denominator of relaxation and versatility. I don't really wear the too 'pompous' ones, even though I have sometimes bought better [i.e. more presentable, festive] clothes when needed. It is easier for me to buy clothes that I like now that I am 33kg smaller."

Characteristics mentioned that show appreciation or attachment to a garment:
comfort, ease, versatility, used often

Characteristics mentioned that show dislike, reason for discarding a garment:
- Member #4, comment on February 12th, 04:32

Original comment in Finnish:


English translation:

"It is also worthy to pay for something good. I was just a young graduate and I bought this suit with my first salary. The silk suit cost 170 Finnish markka, which was a A LOT for a 22-year-old back in 1997. I went to try the suit on in the small, local boutique for three times. It was so good that I decided to make the "investment of my life"."

Characteristics mentioned that show appreciation or attachment to a garment:
timelessness design, high quality, durability, good fit, pleasing appearance, comfort

Characteristics mentioned that show dislike, reason for discarding a garment:
- Member #5, comment on February 11th, 20:51

Original comment in Finnish:

"Huutia saivat kaikki epäkäyttämilliset vaatteet, kuten ihana neule, missä oli lian levätä hihtat, ei mahdistunut sen kanssa toppatakkii päälle ja keskkäyttöön liian kuuma. Kaikki vähintään väärän malliset lähtevät myös, esimerkiksi tunik, mikä muutet vuollit päälle, ol kuus ja kiva käyttää, mutta etusessa nyöri minun vartellelmiä väärässä paikassa, ja koska se oli siitä ommeltu, nyöriin ottaminen pois ei autanut asiaa, koska se "kagia" olivat väärässä kohtaa."

English translation:

"I got rid of all impractical clothes, such as a lovely knit, which had too wide sleeves, so a quilted jacket would not fit on top of it and it was too hot to wear during summer. Anything that was of wrong shape had to go too, for example a tunic, which otherwise would fit, was beautiful and nice to wear, but had a cord at a wrong place for my body at the front, and as it [the cord] was sewn in, taking it away wouldn't help, as the "lane" [for the cord] was in the wrong place."

Characteristics mentioned that show appreciation or attachment to a garment:

Characteristics mentioned that show dislike, reason for discarding a garment:
impracticality, does not fit, wrong shape, can not modify

In conclusion, this small sampling supports the earlier notions, that person-product attachment in regards to clothing is enhanced by practicality, versatility, good quality materials and good design, i.e. good fit of the product. Appealing appearance is also relatively important, but it seems to be an additional feature, enhancing the attachment if the product is otherwise seen as practical, durable and necessary.
PART 5
CONCLUSION - A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
In the beginning of I posed a number of questions, to which I wanted to search answers with this thesis. To find the answer to what kind of clothes are cherished, preserved and conserved, I could look into previously conducted studies and projects. However, I was interested in what kind of clothes are cherished, preserved and used, as the preservation of clothing in cupboards and closets, untouched, is after all somewhat questionable in economical and ecological terms. To find answers to this question I dug further, considering the aspects of design, psychology, economy and spirituality. The literature research to both person-product attachment and Japanese traditions and aesthetics could offer attributes and guidelines for usable long life design. The dip into the world of Shinto and Minegi broadened my view on this, reminding me to consider also the more philosophical or symbolic aspects of design, and the close relationships between clothes and their users.

What surprised me perhaps the most was the significance memories have in the formation of person-product attachment. Even though I did have a pre-sentiment, that emotional attachments to objects are one of the main reasons why they are preserved, as a designer I had the preconception, that these emotional attachments are primarily born from the design attributes of the objects; their exquisite materials or design. What I could find from my research, was that while materials, design and usability are important, the lack of them is sometimes ignored, if the object and the owner share a memory together. Memories have an incredibly strong impact on person-product attachment, and memories affiliated with products predict a longer lifespan for them. While purposely creating memories is challenging, if not nearly impossible, the designer can influence the formation of person-product attachment by utilizing design attributes discovered also in this thesis. My conclusion is that the longevity of products can be enhanced by taking the levels of visceral, behavioral and reflective design introduced by Donald A. Norman (2004), the design aspects introduced by Soetsu Yanagi (1989), as well as the design aspects represented by Shinto and Japanese aesthetics into consideration. The birth stories of products, i.e. openness about manufacturing practices, may encourage emotional attachments to objects. The fashion industry has been surrounded by a veil of mystery to the outsiders, who normally can only see the finished products on the catwalk or on the pages of magazines. By opening the birth process of collections - the inspirations, the manufacturers and the materials - buyers could be engaged to the products at a deeper level, making them understand their value better.

Consumers are brand-loyal when it comes to products such as electronic devices or home decor. Despite clothes being close to the skin and used almost constantly, clothes haven’t really had the same kind of position as cherished collectibles. One possible option to consider, could be to establish clothing companies that are governed in a similar way to Apple, for instance. To create a sense of uniqueness, but also that of longevity, they could have certain styles constantly in selection, with the possibility to customizations and alterations. New, improved styles would be launched only every now and then - not according to dictated seasons (i.e. fashion weeks). I believe this would create a sense of excitement in the customers, and strengthen the brand-loyalty. Features of the products could be edited to form limited editions to reflect local differences in economical and ecological terms. To find answers to this question I dug further, considering the aspects of design, psychology, economy and spirituality. The literature research to both person-product attachment and Japanese traditions and aesthetics could offer attributes and guidelines for usable long life design. The dip into the world of Shinto and Minegi broadened my view on this, reminding me to consider also the more philosophical or symbolic aspects of design, and the close relationships between clothes and their users.

The rise and popularity of decluttering methods is also a sign of people having the desire to simplify their lives, and preferring to use their time on things that bring them joy. Decluttering leaves owners with objects, which will have an even more active and important role in the life of their users. Therefore their emotional value will increase, they will become highlighted.

In order to really make long life designs true and to keep traditional skills alive, co-operation between different stakeholders is needed. The juxtaposition of the business-minded and the environmentally conscious for example, is unnecessary, when they can all have the same goal. Small creators can team up together in order to better represent their work and craft, to enliven local economies and to make their operations more efficient. Support from local governments is also needed, in the form of financial support and visibility campaigns. For instance, as discovered through my research, the government in Japan is supporting numerous campaigns to promote the high-quality craftsmanship present in the country. To encourage recycling and reusing and thus the longevity of objects, governments could rethink the VAT’s they set on repair and mending services. Sweden’s Social Democrat & Green Party coalition has already set a good example, by submitting a proposal to the Swedish parliament in October 2016, to reduce the VAT rates on bicycles, shoes and clothes, from 25% to 12% (Orange, 2016).

The topic of this thesis offers multiple possible ways to approach it, and there is still plenty of room for other studies related to the same topic. The research in this thesis as well could have been constructed in numerous different ways. It would be interesting to approach the notion of ‘classic clothing’ for example. Are their classic features considered classic and attractive regardless of time and place? Are there garments that people, despite of their different cultures consider timeless and attractive? Are there garments that people have loved throughout the ages? A more practical and experimental approach would be to study some particular traditional and new methods, and to combine their best features into new innovative techniques or objects, which however have features of naturalness, of shokun.

Many designers, me now included, have stated that the garments they design are meant to be loved for a long time. But how many have been able to prove this happens in practice? Perhaps the notion of long life design is based only on the designer’s own perception, and in the end, the designs do not work in the intended way after all. This would be one step further from this thesis; to manufacture all the designs featured in the next chapter, give them for people to use, and perhaps a year later check back on them to see, whether they have become abandoned or discarded, or have they really become cherished, loved - and living which are entirely handmade, as their price-level will be too steep for regular consumers. I am therefore suggesting using handmade processes partially, when and where they may create additional value or be more reasonable than machine made work. New, modern methods should be developed and invented, and I see a possibility for combining the old and the new, and strongly believe both are needed. Products which are completely or partially made by hand, have a completely different sensitivity in them than products made completely by machines. In the era when digitalization and robotization are incorporating more and more technology into our lives, seeing and using objects that have handmade features, feel more familiar and secure - they are more natural and warm.

The notions on choice, presented by Sheena Iyengar (2010) were also interesting. Her discoveries support the design and offering of smaller, curated collections in order to prolong the life cycle of garments. In the face of too much choice, people become overwhelmed and make irrational decisions. From a designer’s point of view the notion of a curated wardrobe is actually a challenge not an alleviation; how to make the correct design decisions, when you can not present a multitude of options? And how to design clothes that are factually used and cherished?

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“It should be remembered that craft objects are widely used, rather than widely appreciated. I think any work of art should not be separate from practical use, but rather harmonize with it. Then its beauty will be truly displayed.”

Sōetsu Yanagi
6.1. The Concept

I call the garments I have designed to complement this thesis as a ‘treasure trove of artifacts’, to distress their symbolic value and independent nature. I don’t regard them as a ‘collection’ of clothes, even though they can, in fashion industry terms, also be regarded as a capsule collection. Calling them a collection would however implicate, that they are a seasonal product - here today, gone tomorrow. Despite I have paid attention to a certain level of cohesiveness and compatibility between the garments, I have designed each garment to be a kind of specimen or a memento, each one telling a story of its own. Together these specimen form the ‘treasure trove of artifacts’, the name of which may also be seen as a nod to the Ama-divers, the features of Shinto and the Hotel Okura, which act as a visual inspiration for the design process.

The design process has been guided by a combination of factors; the characteristics for long life design I have found from the literature review and my own research work, the principles of mottainai and Shinto, and the visual inspiration from Japanese Ama-divers, Shinto and the demolished Hotel Okura in Tokyo. I wanted to incorporate the rustic and down-to-earth features from old Japan and the world of Ama divers with the more regular, modern and smooth features of the ‘60s and Hotel Okura. The designs are also a play between natural and artificial, old and new, light and heavy, and the irregular and regular.

Mottainai is of course one of the main guidelines directing my design work. I hope mottainai translates through the decisions I have made regards to the style and shapes, but I regard it as at least prevalent in the materials I have chosen and the techniques I have used. Some of the materials are ‘rescued’ second hand or leftover materials, like the left-over yarns used for the Okura knit, or the abandoned turquoise jacquard designed to be used for the Kintsugi t-shirt. Old techniques are shown in the kasuri fabrics, shibori ties and in the indigo, kakishibu and ink dyed fabrics. In the Ama knit I utilised a surface design I designed for another project some time ago, but which was left unused, and then forgotten.

On the other hand the new, carefully chosen materials are hopefully encouraging longer-lasting person-product relationships. I consider these materials to be of high-quality, making them stand against the flow of time. I also tried to think of my visual inspirations and the cultural relations when choosing these fabrics.

As the role of memories and stories was established to be one of the main reasons why people are happier with what they choose. Keeping this in mind, a collection with a limited number of items would be in fact long life design, as it makes comprehension and selection easier. People will not be overwhelmed, and they will be more likely to remember each item, and love each item. In this thesis I am introducing 11 designs. Originally I intended to introduce only 8 of them, as a reference to the notion of the number as a symbol for eternity and good fortune, and as a nod for the Japanese term *Yaoyorozu no Kami*, ‘eight millions of gods’. For a creative person, limiting the choices is however hard and despite abandoning many of my ideas, in the end I decided to stick with these 11 options. I also wanted to utilise more of the fabrics I had collected.

To consider the animistic approach in Shinto, each piece is an entity, and its own ‘personality’. Usually when designing collections, different fabrics are utilised in various designs, often for financial reasons. This time I wanted to treat each design as an artefact, and build them independently. One reason for this is also the nature of my materials; as some of them are second hand and reused, there is only limited amount of each material. To highlight each product and to give the impression they have ‘souls’, each of these garments, not just the styles, could be given their own name, in case they were produced and sold. The label on each garment would feature their name, and a little card telling their birth story, along with the names of its makers, would be attached with them. This would, hopefully, encourage person-product attachment, and promise a long life for each garment.

As I have designed handmade elements to many of these garments, I have yet to implement them in practice. I want them to be manufactured with patience, with skill and with love, to ensure their quality and long life - and this will be very time-consuming. This will be the next step.

One such example is a jacket I designed as a part of a study project, which was led by designers Niels Klavers and Saskia van der Gelder. This jacket is reversible; one side of the bonded fabric is grey wool, and the other is digitally printed cotton-satin featuring an aerial picture of Tokyo skyscrapers. The pring can be seen in 3D when wearing 3D-glasses. The jacket lays completely flat and has a geometric shape resembling a Japanese stone garden when not worn, but it becomes 3D, shapeshifting jacket when worn. This prototype is perhaps exciting and fun, but as it is highly conceptual the use of the product is difficult to understand without instructions. Therefore it would hardly be the kind of product that is cherished or loved by consumers, it is not long life design. In order to achieve the goal of designing longer-lasting products, the garments I design should be understood.

In order to truly design garments that would have the best possible prerequisites for longevity, I also considered different generations and genders; possible shapes and styles that would appeal over generations, and which would be suitable for both female and male. I’d like to consider that these designs are not neither too feminine, or too masculine, even though they do not fit the commonly perceived, restrained description of unisex clothing.

As I also discovered, one factor in ensuring confidence in decisions, and thus satisfaction towards items, is a curated selection. When people are given a moderate number of options, they are more confident and happier with what they choose. Keeping this in mind, a collection with a limited number of items would be in fact long life design, as it makes comprehension and selection easier. People will not be overwhelmed, and they will be more likely to remember each item, and love each item. In this thesis I am introducing 11 designs. Originally I intended to introduce only 8 of them, as a reference to the notion of the number as a symbol for eternity and good fortune, and as a nod for the Japanese term *Yaoyorozu no Kami*, ‘eight millions of gods’. For a creative person, limiting the choices is however hard and despite abandoning many of my ideas, in the end I decided to stick with these 11 options. I also wanted to utilise more of the fabrics I had collected.

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6.2. RESEARCH BASED PRINCIPLES AND CONCLUSIONS THAT DIRECT THE DESIGN WORK

To guide my design work, I drafted a list of principles based on my research and the conclusions I drew from it. These principles became a kind of ‘rule book’ for me, which at least to some part, I will follow in the future as well.

The Mottainai Aspect

The mottainai aspect refers to the respect of materials, skills and effort. In the designs this meant trying to utilize materials that were somehow ‘ignored’; second hand, dead-stock or inherited. It also means the attempt to utilize old techniques, so that they would not be forgotten.

Symbolically and visually, mottainai in this context meant using visual elements from the Ama divers, who are fighting for their survival, and from the Okura hotel, which I hope was still here. They are both ‘mottainai’.

I also meant trying to use such methods, that would not be harmful for the environment. The kakishibu and indigo dyeing methods I have used are natural and the dye vats can be discarded in an environmentally friendly way.

Even though mottainai is a reference to the appreciation of materials and their makers, even after they have become tattered, withered and old, I didn’t want to emphasize this by intentionally eroding the materials. I have also combined the use of new, virgin materials with second hand materials, as the main objective of the thesis was not the use of second hand materials, but it was the ambition to create long-life designs, which would evoke the feelings of mottainai.

Simplicity and Naturalness

As implied by the Japanese aesthetics and Shinto, the sense of space and a level of simplicity may also offer sensations of awe and wonder. If everything is too rational and organised, filled with details, it becomes suffocating and heavy. As Thomas P. Kasulis stated, the surroundings of Shinto shrines may be groomed and spirituality; and the Hotel Okura took me to the world of regularity, patience and structure.

My visual inspirations were offering me the ingredients for this balancing act. The world of the Ama divers and ‘found treasures’. As another aspect to usability I wanted the clothes to be of such designs, that are suitable both for men and women, and also for different generations. This meant avoiding features that would be clearly feminine or masculine, and therefore the designs do not include for example overly feminine dresses, skirts or tops. By making this decision there are more potential users for the garments, they can be for example passed on from one generation to another. This gives a promise of prolonged, active life for them.

Usability

Like discovered in the research, longer-lasting, cherished products must be usable. People are more inclined to form emotional attachments with products they use on a regular basis. Therefore this criteria was an obvious addition to my ‘rule book’ - the products must be the kind, that could be understood and used without instructions. In practice this meant clothes, that are comfortable to wear and which do not have overly experimental shapes or designs, but have shapes which are recognized and understood. Usability in clothes can also mean versatility, and the fact that the pieces can be easily combined with other clothes - and not just clothes from the same collection.

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Longevity

The attribute of longevity is a combination of multiple factors, and it is in its way the sum of all the features that contribute to the longer lifespan of objects. It means, however, especially the consideration of materials; their quality, their aesthetic values, how they feel against the skin and how they age. The kakishibu and indigo-dyed fabrics will age beautifully. The suminagashi-dyed fabric will keep its color, and the irregular pattern will not show small, accidental stains which may occur with the passage of time. Materials like wool, cotton and silk have also been discovered as materials for cherished objects in previous studies.

Longevity is also shown in the attempt to incorporate such solutions in to the designs, that enable transformations. The clothes are not tight-fitting and I have used a lot wrapped or tied closures, to make changes in body shapes and sizes possible. Buttons, zippers or hooks are avoided, as to avoid them breaking or getting lost. Sashiko stitches and reinforcements are used in easily abrasive places.

Visual Balance

As previously mentioned and discovered in the research, designs which are overly adorned, complicated and loud, may achieve attention at first, but their allure is likely to fade away quickly. They may end up confusing and tiring the user. Very minimalist and simple designs then again, may feel cold and distant, lacking connectivity to humanity and nature. Therefore I tried to balance between these two extreme ends. I wanted the designs to look familiar in one sense, but also fresh and exciting in another. I wanted them to be usable and practical, but also interesting, original and the kind that would cause curiosity and the sense of ‘found treasures’.

My visual inspirations were offering me the features for this balancing act. The world of the Ama divers offered me the features of irregularity, tradition, rusticity; the essence of Shinto gave me naturalness, simplicity and spirituality; and the Hotel Okura took me to the world of regularity, patience and structure.
Uniqueness
With the use of handmade features, such as hand-dyed fabrics and hand-stitched areas, I hoped to offer both the sense of uniqueness and human warmth to the products, otherwise rather simple and sewn by machines. Handmade elements can never be exactly the same when repeated, making each object unique. To bond the owner to the garment, these handmade features could be customized and shaped according to the customers wishes. These features can also be hidden to the surface, making them the secret of the bearer, enhancing the impression of a treasure.

6.3. Visual & Symbolical Inspiration

The visual and symbolical inspiration for the designs is a combination of three different ‘ingredients’: features and symbols of the Shinto-religion, the Japanese Ama-divers and the demolished main wing of Hotel Okura, which was built in the 1960’s in Tokyo.

The purpose was to combine these different aspects together, to create a somewhat familiar, yet surprising and fresh visual language. Products that evoke affection and warmth, but also excitement and curiosity. I also considered which garments could be so called ‘classics’, of both Japanese and Western culture. Clothing worn by the Ama divers, clothing present in Japanese clothing history, and clothing designed in the 1960’s both have properties that look ageless - a certain kind of elegant, albeit still down-to-earth style, subtle and smooth lines, and shapes that are multifunctional and flattering for many.

Features of the Shinto religion and the landscape of Japan and that of the Amas, were inspiring me visually and also symbolically. The roaring waves of the sea, hitting against the rugged seashore, or the soft waves, gently sweeping the pebbles and the seashells at the shore. The swaying seaweeds and fishing nets under the water surface. The ageing tree trunks and moss on their surface. As a contrast to this natural scenery, there were the architectural, polished features of Okura, which were cleverly combining the old with the new.

My inspirational sources are all different, yet also have something in common between them. They are all linked to eachother. Together they form an interesting blend of opposites; man-made vs. natural, tamed vs. wild, traditional vs. modern, symmetrical vs. asymmetrical. What is common for all of these is a certain sense of consideration and modesty that still doesn’t mean anything bland, and the touch of tradition which nevertheless, looks modern.

6.3.1. SHINTO

Shinto inspired me foremost symbolically, but also visually. The fact that it is about connectedness, underlining the relations between all things, resonated well with the aim of finding attributes for long life design. As Shinto also has animistic features, it sent a message of respect and appreciation for both materials, as their makers.

The Shinto feature of the ability to be awestruck was transformed to my designs through the use of traditional dyeing methods (i.e. shibori and suminagashi) and through designs which I hope to be both simplistic, timeless as well as reminiscent of traditions - connecting us both to the past and the future. Too often I overcomplicate my designs, but this time I tried to avoid this, in order to achieve the sense of ‘awe’, and that of naturalness. The dyeing methods and irregularity in designs also leave space for coincidences. The loose shapes and ‘uncluttered’ designs also reflect the Japanese aesthetic concepts of ‘kukan’ and ‘ma’, which can both be connected to the appreciation of space and time in Shinto. Space is not ‘empty’ in Japanese aesthetics; in the Buddhist sense it is considered to be an entity with four dimensions, and in the Shinto sense, space is to be filled with the invisible energy of the kami deities (De Mente 2006, 41; Vesterinen in Fält et.al. 1994, 528). The concept of ‘kukan’ refers to the openness and space, and ‘ma’ refers to space, pause, or intervals, and the ability to structure the flow of time (De Mente 2006, 41 - 44).

Shinto is celebrating life and spirituality, but it prefers freshness over newness. This was an important reminder and also an assurance for me; It reminded me not to become too absorbed into traditional influences, but also not to completely abandon or forget them. It is an advice to renew, rather than to replace.

Visually the influence of Shinto in my designs can be seen in a level of simplicity and naturalness; simple shapes with irregular, earthy details. The original Shinto belief did not have any man-made buildings as worship sites, but it considered forests as shrines, and stones, trees and rivers as the residing places of the deities. Now Shinto shrines can be recognized from the simple torii entry gates, and the shrine buildings themselves and their surroundings are unadorned and simple, yet awe-inspiring (Vesterinen in Fält et.al. 1994, 528.)

Sacred places in Shinto are marked with shimenawa straw-ropes, from which white strips of washi paper, called shide, are hanging (Vesterinen in Fält et.al. 1994, 528). These are to chase away bad spirits and impurities. These were also an inspiration for me, both on a visceral and reflective level.
The Japanese Ama divers have the romanticised image of pearl-divers, they are featured as water-nymphs in the Japanese *Ukiyo-e* works, and they also have the image of being strong independent women, which has sometimes been regarded as an irritation to men. They are regarded exotic also within Japan (Ruth Linhart in Nish, 1988, 114; Martinez 2004, 29.) Fosco Maraini (1962, 17) described that Ama are “the true children of the sea, in a category of their own”. In real life the Ama divers are hard-working - now most of them ageing women, catching abalone, sea snails, seaweed, oysters and sea-urchins under water, without any kind of breathing apparatus (Ruth Linhart in Nish 1988, 115; Hamaguchi 2015, Kneipp 2015). The tradition of Ama divers free-diving is over 2000 years old. They dive to up to 80 feet (24.38 meters), and hold their breath for approximately two minutes (Kneipp 2015.) The characters used to write the word Ama signify “sea-woman” or “sea-man” (Maraini 1962, 17).

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The work that Ama divers do is very risky, physically very demanding and they are constantly at the mercy of the weather, despite they have changed their traditional white cloth outfit for modern rubber wet suits (Matsubara 1978, 19; Hamaguchi 2015). The work of Ama could have been made easier by adopting modern technology, but they have rejected this in order to prevent overfishing and to protect the abalone they dive for (Kneipp, 2015).

Girls traditionally start learning how to dive when they are children, becoming skilled divers in their womanhood. Youn women were, however, already at the end of 1970’s expressing their dislike for the severe Ama work and preferred to establish their careers in bigger cities (Matsubara 1978, 16), and in in modern days the breed of Ama women is considered as endangered (Hamaguchi 2015). According to a research conducted by the Tōkai Suisan Kagaku Kyoukai Foundation, in years 2010-2011 there were 2174 active ama divers in whole of Japan, while back in year 1956 there were over 17600 active divers (Anon, 2013).

Due to the drastic decline in the amount of active Ama divers, the Mie Prefectural Government has planned to ask the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to add the tradition of Ama to UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage list. Yoshikata Ishihara, director of the Toba Sea-Folk Museum and the initiator of the UNESCO plea, accentuates the importance of Ama as practitioners of sustainable fishing (Hamaguchi 2015.)

Traditionally, the Ama attire, *amagi*, consisted only of a white *koshimaki* loincloth and a thin *tenugui* towel which was wrapped around their hair. Later on they added a white blouse to the outfit, before adopting the use of modern rubber wet-suits, which protects the divers from sharp reef edges and encounters with sea creatures (Ruth Linhart in Nish, 1988, 115, 116.) Based on old photographs of the divers, the *monpe* style trousers and the *hanten* coats they wore to warm up after diving, were often made out of cotton kasuri fabrics. The *tenugui* towels the Ama divers wear are often embroidered or printed with either the *Seiman* star symbol or with the latticed and square-like *Doman* symbol, to serve as a good luck charm and to protect the Ama-san from any danger and strange phenomena (Toba Sea-Folk Museum, 2014). To ward off bad spirits by using amulets is related to the animistic nature of Shinto religion (Kasulis 2004, 74).

For the product design part of my work, I was very strongly inspired by the Ama women, both visually as well as conceptually. They too, are ‘mottainai’. Their tradition has lasted for hundreds and hundreds of years, and despite the aid of modern technology being available, they have preferred to stick to traditional methods...
in order to be sustainable, and to protect and respect the creatures of the sea they are catching. Now only a fraction of Ama are left and without revitalizing the tradition, their skills may be forgotten in the future.

Visually I noticed how the rural work clothing, noragi, worn by the Ama look very timeless and even modern, despite the styles of them being very traditional and old. The styles are simple, but charming, as well as practical. They are long-life design. Noticeable is of course the white shirt, which is often named as a wardrobe classic also in the modern western world.

In addition to the attire worn and the equipment used by the Ama, also their environment by and in the sea was and is an inspiration for me. The under water world is fascinating, and the scenery of the sea is timeless. The waves and twirls of the sea, the rocky cliffs and the almost ornate, yet irregular sea weeds were, along with the traditional Ama attire, supplies for my visual tool box.

“Our job is holding our breath. It’s trying, indeed.” - sighed the Ama-divers interviewed by Hiroshi Matsubara in 1978. This utterance stroke a chord with me as well, in regards to the theme and the name of this thesis, ReSpiration. I am hoping they can continue to cultivate their traditional profession, I am hoping they can continue to breathe.
The Hotel Okura is a luxury hotel in the Toranomon area of Tokyo, built in 1962, in time for the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo. The hotel had the aim of being an “authentic hotel that would not imitate the West, but make the most of Japanese characteristics” (Hotel Okura, 2015). The original main building was designed by modernist architect Yoshio Taniguchi and it incorporated the works of numerous skilled Japanese artisans, artists, designers and architects (McKean 2015). In order to prepare for the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics, the old main building of the hotel was demolished, despite numerous campaigns to save it, in the autumn of 2015. A new main building will be opened in 2019 (Hotel Okura 2015).

In the old, now demolished main building of Okura, Japan’s traditional features were blended together with the features of modern, industrializing and more wealthy Japan of the 1960’s. The founder of the hotel, Kishichiro Okura, wanted the hotel to embody the concept of "wa ('harmony') and the aesthetics of the Muromachi Period (1392-1573) in Japan. During the Muromachi Period Japanese culture was blooming, and this is when the tea ceremony and the sense of 'wabi-sabi ('beauty of decay' or 'rustic beauty') became known (McKean 2015.)

The old main building had beautiful, intricate features everywhere, such as the hexagonal Okura Lantern ceiling lights, blue namakokabe (sea cucumber) tiles, lacquered chairs in the shape of plum flowers, the elevator doors with diamond shaped hishi-mon pattern, gorgeous Nishijin-weave silk brocades as wall-hangings, paper lamps and shoji screens, and wooden lattice work (McKean 2015; Maier 2015). Behind each of these features were skilled artisans, working with techniques passed down over generations (McKean 2015).

I drew inspiration for my designs from various features of the hotel. The hexagonal ceiling lights and the blue facade tiles made perhaps the biggest impression on me, and I could also connect the appearances of these to my other visual inspirations of the Ama-divers and Shinto. Their design also speaks of timeless language, which is in line with the attributes I listed as required features for my design work. I also imagined how the guests of the Okura would have looked like, in the hey-day of the hotel. I searched old images of the hotel, featuring some of their guests, and also looked into the fashions of the 60’s and 70’s. From these, I was inspired by the simple, yet smooth and voluminous silhouettes, and the intricate beading present at late 60’s and early 70’s evening wear.

The old main building of the hotel represents an interesting combination of hand made, sympathetic details with industrial, sleek structures. For me, it also represents a contrast for the world represented by the Ama-divers and Shinto; While Ama and Shinto represent something ancient, natural, un-tamed and rustic for me, Okura is a symbol of man-made order, precision, structure and glamour. At the same time the visual features of Okura are in line with the theme of continuity and appreciation of Japanese artisans. Visually I am extremely enticed and inspired by the contrasts of the rustic features of traditional crafts and of the glamorous luster of the 60’s. These features were mixed in Okura to create an astonishing harmony. Okura was also mottainai.
6.4. DESIGN PROCESS AND SELECTIONS

Compared to my usual design methods, this time the design process was different, as I wanted to follow the research based findings and combine them to my artistic vision. I wanted to try my best to ensure, that the garments I design would have features that could be classified as ‘long life design’ and which would possibly encourage person-product attachment. Therefore I made many compromises during the process, and I had to “kill my babies” many times.

It has often been said, that designing minimalist, simple styles is the most challenging. I have also, naturally, out of passion, most often created complex and highly conceptual designs, even though the clothes I wear myself are often simple and minimalist, or vintage clothes with traditional features. I have consciously tried to develop innovative and even unconventional, ‘crazy’ ideas in my designs. However, I have in recent years felt the urge to dare to try to develop my design style into a more simple, calm style. Style, that still has some unique features, without being too over-the-top. As I have discovered in my research, relatively simple and comfortable styles last longer.

The designs of the products were developed intertwined with the research process. My initial aim was to work in clear order, conducting the research first, and the designs only after it, but I could not help getting inspired during the course of the research. Like I previously mentioned, I had to edit and delete numerous of my original ideas however, as I realised they would not fill the criteria of long life design, or reflect the features of my inspirations clearly enough.

I always collect visual material to inspire me in design process, and this is a part I truly enjoy. In addition to material collected from books and magazines, I used documentary films and the Pinterest application to collect myself an image bank. This image bank has been supportive both for the research work, and for the design work.

Throughout the research I would make quick, small sketches whenever an idea or realization would come to my mind. In the end I would collect these sketches, compare them to the research work and make initial design decisions. To try out some of my ideas, I made prototypes both in 1/4 size, 2/4 size and full size. The final designs were born from the basis of these prototypes, the list of design principles I drafted and from initial design decisions. To try out some of my ideas, I made prototypes both in 1/4 size, 2/4 size and full size.

The color selection was guided by my research work, as well as the visual inspiration from shinto, Ama-divers and the Hotel Okura. As some of the materials I have selected are second hand or dead-stock materials, I have not been able to control the particular shades of colors precisely. This is the case also with the fabrics I dyed using traditional methods of indigo and kakishibu, as well as the techniques of suminagashi and shibori.

Primarily I wanted to choose colors that would of course be visually pleasing, but which would be factually correct as the kind of colors, that can be regarded as ‘long-lasting’. Colors that people attach to and consider as being ‘classic’. Black, white, blue and tones of ochre are present in my designs, and these colors were discovered through my research to be some of the oldest and most popular colors in clothing history and fashion. I also wanted the colors to reflect the world of Shinto, Ama-divers and the 60’s world of Hotel Okura. The Japanese teamasters acclaimed, that to achieve works that would resonate shibui quality - i.e. that of tranquility, serenity, transcendence - one should use the color scheme of unpolished gold and silver, ashes, shades of chestnut or russet, and natural colors like kelp green and grain chaff [De Mente 2006, 37]. Some of these shades are also present in the materials I have named.

WHITE - White, eternal and classic ‘non-color’. White has a connection to the Shinto rituals, where white elements are used as purifying, demon repelling agents; the white shide paper strips at shrines and home altars, the white outfits of the Shinto priests and the white salt in small piles outside houses, which also has a connection to the sea and thus, to the Ama-divers.

BLACK - Black is another ‘non-color’, popular throughout ages, irrespective of time and place. In Shinto, black fire is sometimes also used to purify, and what is left after fire, is charcoal and soot. Ink, sumi, is widely used in Japanese art. It is made from soot, and thus, it is metaphorically and practically giving new life for what has been burned. It is also a reference to black lacquer and the dark waves of the sea.

GREY - Smoke, often grey in color, is also used as a purifying agent in Shinto. The ashes left after burning are also grey. It also refers to cliffs, sand, and weathered surfaces. It refers to the passage of time.

INDIGO BLUE - Indigo blue is essential, self-evident. Japan has been called the country of blue, and there was a time when the peasants were required to wear only modest natural colors, among them indigo blue. Blue can also be seen in the blue tile facade of Hotel Okura and in the kasuri clothes worn by the Ama.

ASAGI BLUE - Pale Asagi blue, aqua, is indigo at its first steps. It nods to natural elements as well; seafoam, seashells and natural glass.

OCHRE - Ochre, another color discovered to be one of the oldest and most popular. It is a nod to the tones achieved by the kakishibu dye, to the straws in the shimenawa ropes at Shinto shrines and the warmth-exuding features of the Okura hotel. It is also a reference to amber - pine tree resin, which has been used as a material for jewelry for thousands of years.
6.4.2. MATERIALS

The materials are a combination of second-hand, deadstock or leftover materials, and of new, virgin materials. The purpose in using secondhand or leftover materials has been to recognize their value, and to lengthen their life cycle, while in using new, virgin materials I have tried to choose such materials, which have been proven to have attachment-enhancing qualities, and which age gracefully. As discovered, some of the oldest known textiles, which are still used and appreciated, are wool, cotton, hemp and silk. I have included these materials in my selection.

The selections include secondhand and deadstock materials. Among them are vintage yukatas, made of beautiful kasuri fabrics. I sometimes feel guilty for using these vintage fabrics and yukatas to make new garments, as I fear I might be somehow, unintentionally, degrading them. However, my purpose is the opposite; to give a new lease of life for these forgotten fabrics. As reassured by the notions drawn from the values of Shinto and mottainai, an object achieves its full potential and full beauty, only when it is being used. I wish to think I am letting not just these fabrics, but also the sense of aesthetics and skills in making them be seen again and to live again, in the form of wearable, contemporary clothes. The clothes I have designed are meant to be used and loved, they are not meant to spend their lives in wardrobes, displays or exhibitions.

Some of the fabrics I have found from the nooks and crannies of flea markets and antique shops, some from the dusty pile of safe goods, as the seller reckoned they were unworthy because they had some stains on them. I wanted to prove them wrong.

Among the fabrics are two vintage fabrics, which are quite likely made of acrylic and viscose. These fibers have quite often been shunned, as they are considered not to have the attributes of longevity or quality. These particular fabrics are however from the 60’s and 70’s, and have therefore stayed in good shape already up to 55 years. Viscose is also considered to be an environmentally friendly fiber. They also resonate the aesthetics from the era, and namely, that of hotel Okura.

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1. Black wool yarn, Schoeller Zefir.
2. Leftover cotton yarn from the dye process of kasuri yarns. These yarns are used to block areas of the actual kasuri yarns, in order for the blocked areas to stay white, while the rest of the yarn absorbs color.
5. Suminagashi silk. White silk with black hand-dyed suminagashi pattern.
8. Black woven wool.
10. Wool/polyamid jacquard blend. The jacquard pattern of this fabric is a reference to the 60’s and the aesthetics in hotel Okura.
11. Amber jacquard. This fabric was inherited from my late grandmother’s storage, and it is an interior textile presumably from the end of 60’s. Therefore I do not know the exact composition of the fabric, but based on closer inspection and a flame test, I came to the conclusion that it is most likely acrylic, possibly a blend of acrylic and viscose. The color and pattern of it are a reflection from the hayday of the Hotel Okura.
12. Aqua blue jacquard from the early 70’s. This fabric was abandoned, on its way to the landfill, and therefore I do not know the exact composition of it. Based on the look and feel of the fabric, the knowledge that it had been shrunk during a wash, and the observations made during a flame test, I presume it is a blend of viscose and acrylic. The pattern of the fabric is yet again a notion of hotel Okura and the 60’s, but the wave patterns and flowers, which could also be seaweeds, are also a reminder of the Ama divers.
14. Cotton kasuri, obtained from a second-hand yukata. The second-hand kasuri fabrics are a heritage from old Japan, and a direct reference to the Ama divers.
15. Cotton kasuri fabric, obtained from a second-hand yukata.
17. Thick indigo-dyed cotton, obtained from a second-hand gi jacket used in the martial art of Kendo. The kendo-gi jackets are made from thick, double-layered cotton fabric, in order to protect the person in battle. Quite often these jackets are abandoned after they become worn out and faded. As the material is strong it is however the perfect material for bags and containers, as an example.
18. Thick cotton, obtained from a second-hand gi jacket used in the martial art of Kendo. Hand-dyed with kakishibu. The kakishibu, in addition for giving the fabric a dark brownish ochre tone, gives it water and insect repellent qualities.
19. Fish leather, burbot. A side-product, obtained from fish that has been used for nutrition, therefore nothing of the animal has been wasted. The leather has been manufactured by a Finnish craftsman. The leather is to be used at neck labels, and at bag details.
20. Natural glass beads. Natural glass beads are formed either during natural phenomena such as lightnings, meteorite collisions or volcanic activity; or they are formed in the sea, as broken objects such as glassware or even pieces of shipwrecks are rolled and tumbled in the sea until they change their shape into small fragments of glass. The formation of natural glass beads in the sea may take up to 50 years. The beads are a metaphor for the Shinto concept of freshness, renewal and naturalness, as glass is refreshed, renewed material. The object’s appearance is changed, but essentially, it is still the same.
21. Czech glass beads. These square-shaped glass beads are a nod towards the tiles featured in hotel Okura, and the popularity of bead embellished clothes in the 60’s and early 70’s. The irregular patterns on these beads reminded me of seashells, and therefore, of the Ama divers. The production of glass beads in the Czech Republic also dates back hundreds of years, therefore the workmanship and quality of these beads is appreciated among bead-hobbyists.
6.4.3. PATTERNS, MOTIFS AND SHAPES

I wanted to incorporate motifs, shapes and patterns to the designs, that speak both universal language, are timeless and are also in some way connected to the three groups of visual inspirations.

The patterns featured in my materials are of course connected to my visual inspirations, but I also tried to choose them based on what was discovered about cherished items and long life design. Abstract and rather simple geometric patterns like checks and stripes are timeless and have been popular throughout times. Floral patterns have been favored as well, perhaps as they connect us to the nature. Patterns, which do not too obviously connect to a particular time, event or place, can be regarded as timeless. I tried to keep this in mind both when I was dyeing fabrics myself, and also when choosing fabrics for my designs.

The shapes are kept rather simple and straight, in order to keep the looks more gender-neutral. They also resonate with the Japanese aesthetics and also the features found in Shinto. As many of my fabrics also feature patterns, or have an otherwise ornate surface, I wanted to keep the initial shapes and lines of the clothes simple, to highlight the fabrics.

**Lattice, squares and stripes**

The lattice, square like motifs can be seen as a metaphor to the Doman symbols, worn by Ama divers as a protective amulet. Lattices, squares and stripes are also a reference to fishing nets, the square like Torii- gates at Shinto shrines, and the numerous square like details at hotel Okura.

**Oblique Shapes**

Oblique shapes are a notion of the beautiful wooden lanterns and oblique tiles at hotel Okura, the purifying and demon-repelling Shimenawa ropes at Shinto shrines, and the Seimans star symbol, which was also worn by the Ama divers as a protective symbol.

**Wave patterns**

Wave-like patterns are a metaphor for not only waves, but also the rugged cliffs of Japanese seashore and the surfaces of sacred, hundreds of years old Shimboku-trees at Shinto shrines. Despite the Japanese inspiration behind these patterns, they are timeless and independent of place and time.

**Florals**

The floral patterns seen in the jacquard fabrics are a nod towards the Okura hotel, and the fashions of the 60’s.
6.4.4. Material Manipulations and Dyeing

I wanted to incorporate some handmade techniques on some of my materials and designs. The methods of kakishibu, indigo-dyeing (Aizome) and sashiko were already introduced in chapter 3.3.2.

**Kakishibu and Shibori dyeing**

Shibori is a Japanese technique, where textiles are resist-dyed or manipulated to form three-dimensional surfaces. This is achieved by using different methods of folding, stitching, plaiting and twisting, and using the help of binding, clamping and knotting. The word Shibori comes from the verb shiboru, which means to wring, squeeze or press (Iwamoto Wada 2002, 8.) Shibori method in a way freezes time and leaves a permanent mark of the moment, when the fabrics were made. As these ties are done by hand, one can imagine the touch of the dyer on the fabric. Shibori fabrics show a connection to the maker.

I incorporated the shibori technique on a piece of natural raw-silk. I decided to use the *tesuji shibori*-technique, where the result looks simplistic and architectural. I liked the thought of combining rigid but unpretentious lines with the soft, warm nature of shibori-dyeing. In the classic *tesuji shibori*-technique, patterns are formed by pleating and fastening cloth along the warp, reversing these folds to create patterns of valleys and peaks, and finally tightly binding the pleated cloth around a core (Iwamoto Wada 2002, 151).

I started by marking the intervals of the folds and the spots where they are to be reversed on to the fabric. I first pinned all of the folds, before attaching them with a few hand stitches. After the folds were ready and stitched, I tied the fabric around a leftover piece of a plastic tube. This is to protect the back of the fabric, so that only the folded peaks will absorb the dye.

The next step was the kakishibu dyeing. After the preparation of the kakishibu solution, I brushed it all over the folded and tied cloth, then set it to direct sunlight. The cloth needs to be turned and moved throughout the day, so that it stays in direct sunlight. On the next day I added more dye, and repeated the process. For the consecutive 5 days I sprayed the cloth with water, but otherwise kept it in sunlight. The resulting color was a dark ochre, almost brown color, which was almost exactly the same tone as the burbot leather I had obtained. I used the same process for a white cotton fabric, obtained from kendo-gi jacket.

Making of the folds and the reverse-folds, stitching and tying is time-consuming, but making them can also be very calming. Seeing the color of the fabric changing gradually, by the power of the sun, was also very rewarding.
**Indigo dyeing**

I wanted to dye the raw-silk fabric, which I had earlier shibori-dyed with kakishibu, also with indigo. I was hoping this fabric would be a reminder of the blue facade of hotel Okura’s former main wing.

As unfortunately I could not utilize a traditional and natural Aizome vat, I had to substitute it with powdered indigo, which I obtained from a Finnish supplier. The indigo powder was made either from the *Indigofera tinctoria* or *Indigofera suffrutescens* plants, and its origin is in El Salvador.

To enable the catching of indigo to the dyed material, the indigo in the vat must first be converted into water-soluble form in an alkaline, oxygen-free environment. This act is called reduction, and it converts the indigo into leuco-indigo, also known as ‘white indigo’. The white indigo clings on to the matter that is to be dyed, and changes back into indigo blue, when it is oxidized, i.e. when the dyed object is lifted from the dye solution (Riihivilla 2016.)

I conducted the dyeing process in the color kitchen facilities at Aalto University. I first prepared the elementary vat, as per to the manufacturers instructions, from which the reduced indigo is added to a bigger amount of water into the actual dyeing pot. I added some simple horizontal nui-shibori lines to the raw-silk before watering it and adding it to the dye pot, as I wanted the finished fabric have a kind of a latticed pattern. After approximately 15 minute soak in the indigo vat, I lifted it carefully from the pot (in order not to mix oxygen with the dye solution), and let it oxidize in air for similar amount of time. I repeated this process 3-4 times, after which I washed the fabric in a water, where a little bit of vinegar was added to neutralize alkalinity. Vinegar was also used to neutralize the indigo solution, before it was disposed of.

The preparation of the indigo vat is not too complicated, but it takes time and attentiveness, as also hazardous, corrosive ingredients are used to make the elementary vat. One must also pay attention to correct temperatures, as well as the timing of the soak and oxidation processes.

**Echizen Suminagashi marbling**

The Echizen Suminagashi technique dates back to year 610, when Chinese ink was imported by Doncho, a Korean monk to Japan. Suminagashi became first a playful hobby among court nobilities. The current Suminagashi tradition began in 1151, when a man called Jizaemon started to practice it in the area of Takeo (Takefu City, Fukui). The technique has been transmitted as a heritage to the descendents of Jizaemon ever since, and the current artisan is the 55th decendent. Suminagashi was originally applied on handmade paper, but it’s application on fabrics began during the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

In the technique, papers and fabrics are dyed by copying the designs of ink floating on water and glue surface. Each design is unique, and cannot be reproduced. The suminagashi inks are dropped by brush pens on the surface of previously prepared bath of water and suminagashi glue. To create borders between patterns, a clear solution is dropped on the surface between each ink droplet. After the pool is filled with ink rings, the pattern is created by gently blowing the inks. Traditional Japanese fans are also used for this purpose. (The Cultural Foundation For Promoting the National Costume of Japan, 2016.) The fabric is then gently let to touch the surface of the water, and the pattern is then transmitted on to the fabric.

I incorporated this technique with black ink on white silk. I conducted the process in my home in Tokyo, utilising a large, approximately 55cm x 70cm square container. As handling of very large pieces of fabric is difficult in this dyeing process, I cut my silk fabric in 4 pieces, each piece being still large enough to fit patterns for the trousers. To help control the fabric and ensure an even dye result, I also utilised *shinsi* fabric stretchers, flexible bamboo sticks with pins at either end, to stretch the fabric and make its surface even. Each piece of fabric was dyed in two parts, meaning I prepared 8 unique Suminagashi patterns.

After trial and error I realised, that the trick into achieving beautiful, dark ink rings, is not to let the ink brush touch the film surface for long, but instead, make multiple very short dips. Longer dips release more color from the brush, but result in diluted shades. This requires patience, as filling the glue surface with ink rings will take more time, but the end result will be better. I would create my actual Suminagashi patterns by gently blowing the ink. I also tried stirring the pattern with wooden sticks and a hand-held fan, but this resulted in a messy, blurred patterns. The current of the wind creates a more delicate, natural result.

After the pattern is ready, the dry fabric is gently lowered to the surface of the ink bath, but the purpose is not to let it sink underneath the surface. Therefore there must be control of the fabric all the time. After each dip, the fabric is immediately showered in a 45 degree angle with cold water, until the water runs clear. Then it is let to dry, before the next dip.

The glue surface must be cleared with a newspaper sheet after every dip, and naturally the patterns need to be created for each dip separately. This is very time-consuming, but the creation of the patterns is also very calming and relaxing. The suminagashi inks are permanent after drying, but to prevent any leaks or fading, they can be chemically treated.
The clear Suminagashi glue surface before any ink is dropped.

A close-up of an ink pattern on the Suminagashi glue surface, before fabric is inserted.

The ink rings before the actual pattern formation.

Fabric about to be touched on the ink pattern surface. The coin weight at the middle of the fabric makes it touch the surface more evenly.

IMAGE 70: Finished Suminagashi fabric.
**Sashiko embroidery**

I designed the sashiko embroidery to be used, both as an ornamental feature and as a functional, strengthening feature, in multiple garments. I am fond of the technique, as while it is handmade and ornamental, it can also have utilitarian value. It also conveys and underlines the nature of making by hand, and making with patience. The patterns and stitches can be also easily modified piece by piece, and in case of custom-ordered items, they can be altered according to the customer’s wishes, thus creating a personal bond between the garment and the owner.

**Beading**

The natural glass beads are to resemble small grains of sand, natural pearls or fragments of sea shells, familiar to the Ama, or convey the impression of the beautiful ceramic tiles at the Okura hotel. Beading would give items the sense of a treasure.

Originally I had planned to incorporate beading to the hem of trousers, in a similar way that was done in the glamorous evening wear of late 60’s or early 70’s. This would however make any alterations to the trousers (i.e. shortening or lengthening of the legs) impossible, and the risk of the beading coming undone at the legs, close to the ground, is more likely due to friction. I was tempted, for artistic and aesthetic reasons, to use beading in other designs as well, but thinking of the long life design principles, I could not justify their use. Therefore the beading is incorporated only at the front bodice of the Kintsugi-T, a product which is meant to be like a peculiar artefact.
The Ama polo knit

The Ama polo knit is big and chunky, enclosing the wearer into a warm, secluded space. The texture and the shape of the knit is to resemble the dark sea where the Ama women dive into, or the warmth of the hanten coats to which the Ama divers would wrap themselves by a bonfire, after a dive. Keeping the long life design principles in mind, the spaciousness of the knit is allowing changes in the users shape and size, while the surface patterns are of timeless nature. The links-links pattern on the bodice is resembling the waves of the sea, or the algae floating within the sea - the realm of the Ama divers. The pattern is also ‘mottainai’, rescued, as originally I created it for another, sea inspired work, which was left uncompleted. The surface design was left forgotten and unused. However, I had a strong ‘mottainai’ feeling towards it and finally felt it had found its home in the Ama knit. For the sleeves I designed a simple, 4 x 4 stitch square pattern, which derived from the architectural features of the Okura hotel. Due to the tension of the links-links knit, the surface looks vivid and three dimensional.

The Ama knit is the first product I designed, and it was also manufactured. It is made out of black, machine washable merino wool yarn (Schoeller’s Zefir). The pieces were knitted with the Stoll CMS-knitting machine at the Aalto Design Factory, operated by studio master Miia Oksanen. The pieces are otherwise fully fashioned, except for the shoulder lines, which had to be cut and finished by overlock machine. Ideally the seams would be hand-sewn or attached together by a looping machine.

The Suminagashi Pant

The Suminagashi pant is made from silk, hand dyed with the Japanese Suminagashi marbling technique. By using the technique, abstract patterns can be formed. In these patterns one can see wave-like features, surfaces of ancient and sacred Shinboku-trees, or the rocky cliffs of Japanese shorelines. On the other hand the luster of the silk and the monochromatic pattern can be connected to the glamour of the Okura in the 60’s. Minor stains will also go unnoticed among the irregular pattern. The technique used is very old, but the outcome is very contemporary.

The shape is loose, airy and asymmetric, and the trousers are attached on the side, letting the wearer adjust the tightness of the waist as needed.
THE OKURA SWEATER

The shape and proportions of the Okura sweater are classic and somewhat minimalistic, but the surface design and the selection of yarns give it an allure of naturalness, crafts and tradition. The sweater is not too short, nor too long, not too wide, nor too narrow. It brings with itself greetings both from the world of Ama, as well as from the Okura, and it utilizes ‘mottainai’ materials used in kasuri making, a traditional craft.

The front of the sweater is partly translucent, with the three-dimensional lattice-work creating a contrast to the delicate base knit. The latticed pattern is formed by incorporating a separately knitted tube to the plain knit, as it is being knitted. The back of the sweater is made of a checkered 4 x 4 stitch pattern, as also used in the Ama knit.

This is another product I have manufactured. The main material for the Okura Sweater is leftover cotton yarn used in the process of dyeing yarns for kasuri weaving. The back of the sweater is machine washable merino wool yarn (Schoeller’s Zefir). The yarns were from Marugame Kasuri, a small company producing kasuri fabrics and products in Kurume, Fukuoka. The leftover yarns were originally wrapped around yarns which were to be dyed for kasuri weaving purposes. The yarns came in unravelled skeins, which were more or less tangled to each other. When the yarns used for kasuri weaving are being dyed, the yarns which are used to block dye are covered in glue, and this glue was still present in the yarns I received. Therefore I did test swatches, both with washed yarns and with unwashed yarns. The yarns are of soft cotton, but are easily breakable during knitting. The yarns with traces of glue on them proved to be even more fragile, snapping easily when knitted, and both of them proved to be unsuitable for knitting with the Stoll CMS-knitting machine. Therefore any products made from these yarns have to be knitted either by hand or by the manually operated, table-top knitting machine. As the yarns are relatively thin, I could not achieve the kind of smooth, fine surface I was looking for by hand-knitting. The best option was to use the table-top knitting machines.

The leftover kasuri yarns form an irregular, wave-like pattern when knitted, and I wanted to combine a more organized, yet subdued texture knit with it to the same product. The organic patterns formed by the leftover kasuri yarns would symbolically be a memento from the world of the Ama, and the organised, graphic texture knit would nod towards the Okura hotel.

To achieve this effect, one of my ideas was to use a traditional cable knit design called ‘lyhde’ in Finnish (‘sheaf’), but this can’t be created with the knitting machines. Therefore I tried to develop other options to achieve a textured, three-dimensional look, such as sewing rib knit cables together by hand, or knitting the kasuri yarns with felting wool. I wasn’t happy with these experiments, and therefore I came up with one more solution; Using the kasuri yarns, I knitted around 25 meters of narrow tube, using the Stoll JBO knitting machine. After this I started to knit the basis for the Okura sweater; 1 x 1 rib knit hem with the JBO knitting machine, which I then carefully transferred to the regular table-top knitting machine. The previously knitted cable would be attached to the single jersey knit, by lifting stitches from previous rows over the cable. The points where the knitted tube was to be attached to the single jersey surface had to be carefully calculated and marked prior to knitting. The knitting of the actual Okura sweater required a large amount of preparatory work; washing and spinning the yarns on to cones, knitting the cable, marking the correct attachment points on the knitted tube as well as on the base jersey, and calculating also the correct measurements for the knit, as it is fully fashioned. While knitting, I had to pay attention and calculate both the rows, stitches and the tube attachment points at the same time.
The grey wrap-around trousers are made of silk/hemp blend, with a hint of elastane. The fibers are a direct nod to Japan’s textile history, while the fabric itself is rather modern, contemporary. Just as well as in the fabric, the old and new are merged together in the shape of the trousers; it is a reminder of the hakama-trousers of Japanese tradition as well as the bell-bottomed, flared trousers of the 70’s.

The lining of the pockets is made of Suminagashi-dyed cotton, and sashiko stitches is used to prevent untimely wear and tear.
THE SHIBORI TUNIC

The patterns and the nature of the indigo and kakishibu dyed fabric is highlighted in this simple and spacious tunic. I did not want to drown the created patterns by designing something too structured or fitted. The shoulder lines and bust feature shibori stitches with unfinished ends. These can be unravelled or removed as per to the wearer’s taste, changing the appearance of the tunic.

BAG

The bag is constructed of strong second-hand cotton, derived from jackets used in the martial art of Kendō. The bottom of the bag is dyed with kakishibu, which makes it more durable and gives it waterproof properties. The top is indigo-dyed, double-layered cotton, making it durable, despite it being soft to the touch. The straps at the front are of fish leather.
The Lantern Shirt

The classic white shirt was to be an essential part for the collection of artefacts, as it is often mentioned as a wardrobe staple and it is also present in so many of the Ama photographs. A white shirt is almost eternal - it has made an appearance in some form throughout costume history.

However, I did not want to create just another version of the classic white shirt, but I wanted it to visually echo the features from the Shinto tradition, the Ama divers, as well as the glamorous 60’s world of the hotel Okura, while also keeping the long life design principles in my mind. To avoid issues of “female or male buttoning”, and to respect the aesthetics derived from Japanese traditions, I decided to discard the use of buttons altogether. The shirt is airy, light and loose-fitted, and does not therefore need to be completely opened. Instead the shirt has cords at the front which can be tied up. The raglan sleeves have shibori stitches, which can be pulled to rouche the sleeves and make them shorter, or they can be cut off and removed entirely, making the shirt more minimalistic.

I had originally designed decorative, sashiko-embroidered flaps both at the front and at the back of the shirt, inspired by the hexagonal lanterns used at the Okura hotel. After making a prototype of the shirt in full 4/4 size, I decided to remove the embroidered flap from the back, in order to make the shirt look more simple. I decided to keep the embroidered flaps at the front, as they offer protection and cover. I also widened the sleeves slightly, as a hint towards the bell-sleeves, popular in the late 60’s and early 70’s.

The Kasuri Monpe

The shape of these trousers is derived from the traditional ‘monpe’ trousers worn especially by farmers and peasants in Japan, and evidently also by the Ama. The traditional pattern is slightly modified, to make the fit less baggy and using elastic band only at the back of the trousers. The simple shape, without any zippers or buttons, is however respected. The pocket linings are to be embroidered with sashiko stitching, re-inforcing them and making them a ‘hidden treasure’ of the wearer. The embroideries can be customized, making the item more personal and special.

The material for these trousers is gathered from second-hand kasuri kimono. The cotton fabric, despite being old, is still very strong, and the pattern, despite traditional, speaks of timeless and even contemporary language.
'Kintsukuroi' is a Japanese term, meaning to "repair with gold". It is an art of repairing broken, chipped pottery with the use of gold or silver lacquer as an adhesive. 'Yobetsugi' then again is an old artform, where fragments of old, broken pottery are placed together to form new pieces (Japan’s Arts & Culture 2011, 47.) Both techniques are highlighting, instead of hiding fractures, they are about understanding that the piece is more beautiful for having been broken. These techniques were in my mind, when I designed the Kintsukuroi-T.

The front of the shirt is made out of old, worn out mattress cover from the early 1970’s, while the sleeves are of beautifully weaved jacquard wool. The pattern and the colors of these fabrics match exactly with the aesthetic features of Hotel Okura, and the pattern on the blue vintage fabric also resembles ocean waves or algae flowers, linking it also to the Ama divers. The back of the shirt is light, black wool. By combining these different patterns and textures together the effect of ‘yobetsugi’ is achieved.

The front is partially beaded with glass beads, and stitched with ornamental sashiko stitches. This is a metaphor to the art of ‘kintsukuroi’. The beading is also a nod to the beaded clothing of 1960’s and 70’s. The pattern of the beadwork is irregular, half organic, half structured. A missing bead will go unnoticed.

I wanted the shirt to have an overlapping structure, which would allow more freedom of movement, despite the shirt having otherwise stiff appearance. This overlapping, wrapped structure is present both at the bodice as well as the sleeves, and the proportions are mainly inspired by the hexagonal lanterns at the Okura hotel.

This product one may justifiably call extravagant or peculiar, and it is the oddity in my treasure trove. It is aware of the fact, that even though more simple, usable garments often end up being cherished, long-life objects, sometimes it is the ornate, strange heirloom that becomes the dearest to its owner. As discovered in the research, unusual or special materials, origin or manufacturing methods may encourage the formation of social memories attached to an object, through discussions and stories.

Despite this design is embellished with beads, and its materials are far from subdued and tranquil, I tried nevertheless make it also usable and diverse. The blue jacquard used for the shirt was abandoned, shunned, and on its way to the landfill. That is why I also wanted highlight it and to ‘fix’ it, just like broken ceramics would be fixed with streaks of golden lacquer, or by joining pieces of lost fragments together.

**THE PATCHI WOOL PANT**

The design of the woolen trousers is inspired by features from the clothes worn by the peasants in old Edo, and guided by the design principles I set for myself. The black wool is soft and warm, and together with the loose, wrapped style the trousers are multi-functional. The texture of the wool is a reminder of charred wood, naturalness, while the tapering, rather narrow legs are a remnant of the 60’s cigarette pants. Details, like the wets at pockets are of black wool jacquard. The pocket bags are of suminagashi-dyed cotton. Their beauty is hidden to the viewer, but known to the owner.
Ugetsu, literally ‘rain and moon’, refers to eerie weather, where moon casts its glance on earth every now and then from behind dark, gloomy clouds (Kasulis 2004). This name describes this layered design perfectly, as the jewel-like amber jacquard is occasionally peeking from underneath the soft, textured wool. The design is made of two components; a sleeveless vest, which also acts as an additional insulating layer, and a black, loose-fitted coat with belt fastening. The vest is made of amber-colored vintage jacquard, and the coat is made of black boiled wool, with details of black wool jacquard. Both the vest and the coat can be worn on their own as well. The inner arms and the neckline of the coat and vest are reinforced with sashiko stitches.

Simple, linear lines refer to traditional Japanese clothes, and are also echoing timeless, classic quality.
During the process of this thesis I have had to consider many times which are the items that are important and dear to me. I am dividing my life and my belongings between two countries, Finland and Japan. Within Finland I have stored some of them at my mother’s house, whilst some of them have travelled with me from one address to another; during winter 2016 I have had to live in three different temporary addresses in addition to my mother’s house, before returning to Japan. All of this has forced me to consider which objects I bring with me, from one place to another, and to question the necessity of some other objects. I have also identified the staples in my own wardrobe. My own experiences have helped me to consider and understand different reasons and scenarios to why people make connections to certain objects, and especially to clothing.

The sheer extent of the topic of this thesis, and the amount of multi-disciplinary connections between a garment and a person did astound me. My affection for this topic and everything it represents did also occasionally overwhelm me - in the course of the work I got worried if I am truly able to present it in a format it deserves. Despite this work ended up being rather extensive, there is still so much to study, so much to explore, and so much to say. I am also certain that the topic is an ever evolving one, and will thus offer more possibilities for studies.

I realize it is beyond the means of this thesis to change people’s attitudes or to significantly help small scale producers of traditional fabrics, dyes, yarns or ready made products, therefore I am aiming at at least improving awareness about skills and craftsmanship invested in clothes and about encouraging consumers into consider their choices when buying or discarding clothing. I hope to also inspire designers into designing long life design as well as utilizing the skills and know-how offered by wonderful traditional crafts around them. I hope I have been able to offer some balanced and up-to-date insight in how and why clothes can become cherished objects, and why they should do so. Introducing Japanese patterns of thought has hopefully offered a new perspective for designers, producers and consumers.

What has been surprising and eye-opening to me as a designer is, that good quality of materials or brand identity do not always outweigh other reasons why clothes are regarded as valuable. The most important reason to why clothes are cherished are the memories and the people they are connected with.

For a designer or manufacturer, it is difficult to artificially try to create these memories, but I believe that by providing information of the garment, by utilizing an open mode of production and showing integrity, and by enabling and encouraging consumers to look after their garments, it is possible to create better and longer garment-user relationships.

Designers are known to constantly change their sources of inspiration and the themes for their collections. Many also have their significant style or ethos, which they are following. For me, the love towards the Japanese sensibility and aesthetics and the abundance of historical Japanese reference is ‘mottainai’, something that I want to keep with me. For nearly 16 years I have been drawn to the sensibility and wisdom of Japanese design, found even in mundane objects. I have been in awe with Japanese gardens and temples, and the history still alive in everyday life. It has become a part of me and yet, I feel like I have only scratched the surface. This master’s thesis is also continuance, a kind of a sequel, to my bachelor’s thesis, which dealt with the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi, or the beauty of decay.

The path of this thesis has occasionally been somewhat a rocky one. Dividing my life and the life of this thesis between two countries, moving several times and staying long times apart from my loved ones, whilst also struggling with lack of resources has been extremely exhausting at times. The thesis process was occasionally a very lonely and challenging one. I am however, standing behind each decision I have made - perhaps because I have had to carefully consider these decisions. The products I have designed have a strong theoretical and symbolical arguments as their basis, to ‘defend’ their existence. I am also happy I could find materials and methods to support the themes introduced in this thesis. As an additional note, also the patterned edo-chiyogami papers used in between this thesis book are ‘mottainai’; they have been handmade in the Isetatsu papershop - which has been in operation since 1864 - near my home in Yanaka, Tokyo. I am moving away from my beloved neighborhood at the end of 2016, therefore these papers will also function as a memento of the neighborhood where this thesis was conducted.

Braungart & McDonough ask in their book, Cradle to Cradle, when will manufacturers and designers start questioning the current system of manufacturing and consuming:

“At some point a manufacturer or a designer decides, “We can’t keep doing this. We can’t keep supporting and maintaining this system”. At some point they will decide that they would prefer to leave behind a positive design legacy. But when is that point?”

(Braungart & McDonough, 2008, 43).

I hope that point is, at the latest, now.

Let’s start the Respiration.


The Association for the Promotion of Traditional Craft Industries. About DENSAN. 2016. Available at: http://www.densan.or.jp/index_e.html Verified on October 2nd 2016.


ONLINE SOURCES


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Cataldi, Carlotta; Dickson, Maureen & Grover, Crystal. About DENSAN. 2016. Available at: http://www.densan.or.jp/index_e.html Verified on October 2nd 2016.


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mrs. Haruko Hayakawa, and the members of the Japan-Finland Society in Tokyo
- for your kindness and generosity

Kirsi Niinimäki - for patience, guidance and advices
Miia Oksanen - for advices, insight and knitting

Takahiro Shiramizu, Shogo Haruguchi and Yu Shibao at Unagino Nedoko
- for your time, kindness and generosity

Takao Takaki at Foucault - for your insight and wisdom

Shutaro Nomura and the staff at Nomura Orimono - for your time and insight

Kiyoshi Sekiuchi - for your time and insight
Takeshi Yamamura and family - for your time and insight
Marugame Kasuri - for your kindness and efforts to help a stranger
Yuki Kawakami - for your kindness, time and insight
Alice Corbett - for your time and assistance

All my interviewees - for your time and comments

Hideo Akemoto and the members of Dogenzaka Studio - for your assistance
Anna-Kaisa, Eero & Rauha Pailinna - for giving a roof on top of my head
My family and Yuko & Yoshifumi Chikuhi - for your care and support

Aamu Salo - for advices

Anna Savolainen - for technical support

And Koichi
- for your belief, patience, care and support.
This thesis could not have been finished without you.