

The Kyoto Textile Industry's Product Management Tool

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Introduction

In Nishijin's textile industry (西陣織), Ori-Ya (織屋) established a system in which inter-company credit flows smoothly through the information production¹⁾ process.

Similarly, in Kyoto Muromachi (Kyo-Yuzen's (京友禅) production site), Shikkai-Ya (悉皆屋) created its own inter-company credit system. Meanwhile, the Nishijin Textile Industry Association was formed in order to consolidate the entire information production process. Throughout the long history of the Kyoto textile industry, both Ori-Ya and Shikkai-Ya have utilized certain product management tools to create their respective inter-company credit systems. Thus, this study clarifies the existence of these product management tools for the purpose of improving commodity management and information production in the region²⁾.

Chapter 1: Changes in Kyoto Muromachi

At the end of the Tokugawa period, the predecessor of Kyoto Muromachi was an area in which textile wholesalers were scattered throughout Sanjo-dori. However, after the opening of Kyoto Station (a major railway station and transportation hub) in 1877, Karasuma-dori was expanded, as part of the city's three major urban planning projects, and a dry goods wholesale district was formed around the parallel Muromachi-dori (between Nijo and Gojo). After World War II, this area was called, "Kyoto Muromachi," and it became a well-known marketplace for all types of kimonos from Kyoto.

In March 1927, the variety-based rationing system, under the Control Company Order, was abolished. However, the textile rationing system remained in effect, and Kyoto Muromachi became a registered operator in terms of price and legal agreements. Eventually, as the area's production facilities were restored, the rationing system was removed and the control of silk, rayon and cotton textiles was lifted. By 1951, all clothing products were allowed to operate freely. During the 1950s and 1960s, two major production centers (i.e., Nishijin and Tango) were established, and the Kyoto dyeing and weaving industry became active. As consumption increased during the Jinbu economic period, Kyoto Muromachi became a major center of the kimono industry.

In particular, in 1960, Japan's economy grew at an astonishingly high rate, and the aggressive policy of the then Ikeda cabinet (i.e., the Income Doubling Plan) went into full effect. Due to such unprecedented consumption in the country, the phrase "consumption is a virtue" was born. Meanwhile, the kimono industry was becoming more upscale, and

there was a dramatic shift from homongi kimonos to furisode kimonos.

By the time the Sato administration took over in 1964, the industry was thriving and enjoying a free economy. However, overcapacity and overproduction began to emerge. For example, in 1980, there were more than 2,000 firms engaged in the kimono business. Their products included high-class dyed kimonos, such as dyed kimonos (pure silk), obis (Nishijin pure silk), woolen kimono, prints, Western secondary products, Japanese secondary products, kimono linings, etc., and kimonos from the Nishijin and Kanto areas. Despite the increased competition, Kyoto Muromachi was still the top market, followed by Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya.

What made Kyoto Muromachi unique was that it collected all the textiles produced through Japan, including those from Nishijin and Tango, to create finished Kyo-Yuzen kimonos. Meanwhile, the wholesalers in the market specialized in the various products that they handled. For instance, each subcommittee was comprised of a kimono wholesaler, a Nishijin textile wholesaler, a Kanto textile wholesaler, a clothing and woolen fabric wholesaler, a kimono products wholesaler, a silk cloth wholesaler, and a linen wholesaler. The reason for this arrangement was to avoid handling the wide range of products in a haphazard manner. The wholesalers were also divided according to the types of customers that they served. In addition, unlike Kyoto Muromachi's unique (pre-sale) concentrated area wholesalers, these wholesalers specialized in peer sales. In this regard, just as white cloth wholesalers sold white cloth to dyed kimono wholesalers, Nakama (仲間) wholesalers sold dyed kimonos to wholesalers in Tokyo and Nagoya, which enabled the distribution of Kyo-Yuzen kimonos across the country. Meanwhile, Shikkai-Ya improved product distribution and cash flow by facilitating information production between all of the businesses in the Kyo-Yuzen manufacturing process.

It is important to note that the reason for the coexistence of Nakama wholesalers and Shikkai-Ya is that the latter had significant sales power, strong information production, and control of the entire region. Moreover, Shikkai-Ya's management items Shibu-Fuda (an identification tool during the manufacturing process) and Gofuku-Fuda (an identification tool after the product is commercialized), were unique to Kyo-Yuzen kimono industry. Based on these considerations, it is important to examine the management of Kyoto Muromachi in more detail, ranging from manufacturing to sales.

Chapter 2: Shikkai-Ya and Kyoto Muromachi

In Kyoto's textile industry, there was a unique type of inter-business trust in which Shikkai-Ya played an intermediary role in information production (Omori 2016a, 12-3). Meanwhile, the accounts receivable period was sometimes longer than one year because the settlement funds were transferred in the order of the seller, the wholesaler, the manufacturer, and the supplier of materials (e.g., raw silk for obi cloth), instead of settling the funds after each commodity sale. Thus, it was necessary for the manufacturers and wholesalers to distribute their products by considering the risk burdens and profits of the businesses involved in the overall process. In this case, through the intervention of Shikkai-Ya, who was in charge of all aspects of kimono production, such as Kyo-Yuzen, a system

was established that enabled the dry goods wholesalers to secure their products.

Shikkai-Ya was established during the early Meiji era (1868-1912), as a business operator responsible for managing entire product lines. For example, it focused on every aspect of kimono production, ranging from manufacturing to sales. It was even referred to as "Shikkai" (しっかい) or "Nuisance" (やっかい). The origin of the name Shikkai-Ya comes from the phrase, "He who is able to respond to every single request." According to Katayama and Ogawa (1986),³⁾ "Shikkai-Ya was a contractor engaged in dyeing and weaving, from white cloth to dyeing patterns, small crests, plain colors and other items, re-dyeing, washing and stretching, and kimono making." As stated earlier, it also acted as an intermediary between the producers and the Kyoto Muromachi wholesalers, with the goal of establishing trust.⁴⁾ The main reason why artisans and drapers trusted Kyoto Muromachi so much was that it not only served as a coordinator in the Kyo-Yuzen textile industry, but it also oversaw the manufacturing of kimonos and provided important information to them. In many cases, Shikkai-Ya expanded its business scope to include managing a wide array of manufacturing and sales processes.

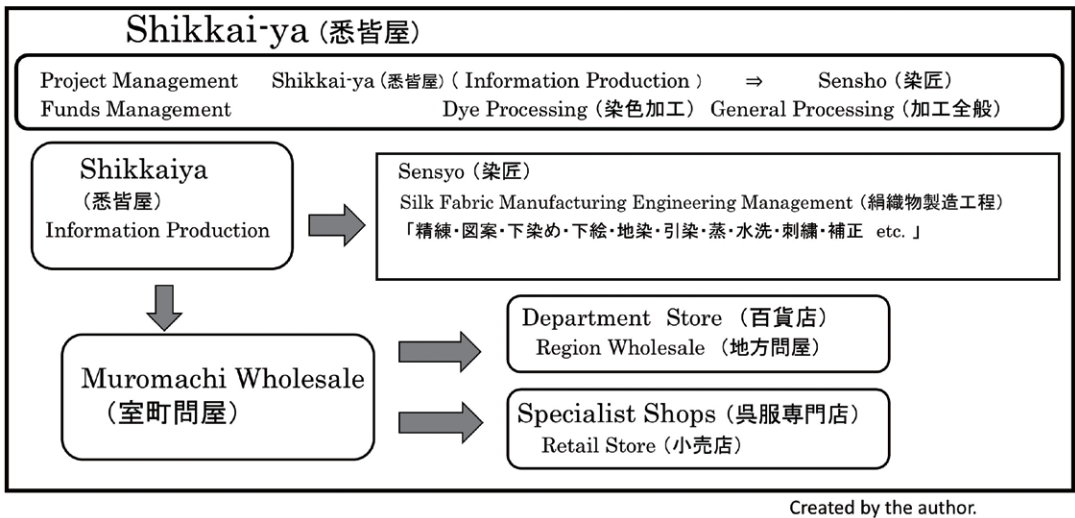
Interestingly, during the development of the textile industry in the 1930s, Thubushi-Ya, a similar business to that of Shikkai-Ya, was established. Although it had limited business with wholesalers (due to its relatively short history), it eventually gained the trust of wholesalers (especially those established after World War II) by providing them with high-class kimonos and managing the entire process, ranging from the purchase of white cloth to the design, dyeing, and sewing stages.⁵⁾

Meanwhile, Shikkai-Ya established a credit trading system that facilitated working capital by securing new kimono customers and stabilizing the manufacturing process. This also made it possible to shorten the production period, since each manufacturing process was specialized, and stabilize cash flow, due to the shortened capital collection period. Moreover, all of these aspects were managed in a unified manner, thereby minimizing the loss of intermediate distribution and cash flow. Overall, by stocking a wide variety of products, Shikkai-Ya's approach was similar to the purchasing methods of the new kimono merchants after they reformed their business model from wholesaler-dominated distribution to department-store focused distribution.

It is believed that Shikkai-Ya and Tsubushi-Ya were able to establish their own inter-business credit trading systems because they enhanced their information production and made the entire textile industry known to a wide range of manufacturers and wholesalers in the Kyoto Muromachi area. For example, the Kyoto Muromachi wholesalers (who dealt with the local wholesalers and department stores) purchased goods from fellow Muromachi wholesalers, who then delivered the goods to the local wholesalers and their customers (see Fig. 1). In this case, the reason why such business with other companies was acceptable was that their respective products were trusted by their customers, based on their long track records.

Finally, unlike Nishijin's textile industry, there were no financial institutions established with Kyoto Muromachi, since many wholesalers had ample financial resources and were medium-sized companies, with nationwide department stores and major regional

Figure 1



wholesalers as customers. Meanwhile, many carpet makers and crushers not only had stable financial capital, but they also secured sales channels for their own products in a wide range of businesses such as dyeing, processing, and design. Moreover, since the majority of the Kyoto Muromachi warehouses were from Shiga Prefecture, the Bank of Shiga established a Kyoto branch in August 1938. Thus, there was little need for Kyoto Muromachi to get involved with financial institutions.⁶⁾

Chapter 3: Margin Trading Tools

Kyoto’s textile industry began during the Heian-Kyo (794-1869) period, and as the industrial center of Japan, it eventually became the concentration point for textiles and textile-related products. At that time, the manufacturing process of such products was sub-divided, and systematic management was applied to both cash flow and information production. As for the credit transaction system, the following sub-section examines Shibu-Fuda and Gofuku-Fuda, two unique tools used by Kyoto Muromachi.

Section 1: Shibu-Fuda and Gofuku-Fuda

In Kyoto’s textile industry, there was a unique transaction system that differed from the usual sales contracts for high-class products in Nishijin’s textile industry. Normally, once the negotiations for the sale of a product have concluded, a contract is required to determine the date of delivery, the payment of the sales proceeds, and the settlement method. However, among the kimono-related businesses in Kyoto, there are cases in which the goods were entrusted to them at the time of delivery, without issuing a contract, delivery note or invoice. As a result, the products were distributed as “consigned goods” by the distributors and the wholesalers, and the vouchers operation in a series of steps after the seller made a payment.

In such transactions, they used paper twists, called “Gofuku-Fuda,” on which numbers and symbols were written, and attached to kimono or obi fabrics. Gofuku-Fuda was a unique

tool for identifying wholesalers, weaving manufacturers, wholesalers, and other related businesses. The symbol on the Gofuku-Fuda, which served as a cryptographic information tool limited to the textile industry, is still in use today. Meanwhile, Shikkai-Ya used paper twists, called “Shibu-Fuda,” along with Gofuku-Fuda to control the dyeing process. In general, Gofuku-Fuda is white because it is made of Japanese paper, but Shibu-Fuda is brown because it is made of Japanese paper and drawn with astringent persimmon. Thus, by drawing astringent persimmon into, for example, Washi, the tannin component in the astringent persimmon (which is resistant to water) strengthens the paper quality and the prevention effect (see Fig. 2).⁷⁾



Section 2: Shoshi

Apart from the aforementioned kimono tags for product management, in 1959, the Nishijin Textile Industry Association issued the “Nishijin Weaving Place of Origin Certificate” to indicate the quality and value of Nishijin textiles to the public. Such designation was affixed to, for example, the obi cloth, with the number of the member on a gold background. Although the association itself did not inspect the quality of the goods, the nature of the certificate was such that it was fully responsible for the overall quality. Moreover, when a weaver was given its designated number at the time of its independent establishment, it was fully recognized by its respective union.

Similarly, since 2005, Kyoto Muromachi has issued “Kyo-yuzen Shoshi,” under the auspices of the Kyo-Yuzen Promotion Council (Heisei 17). To date, this designation certifies that the products were made in Kyoto and dyed with the Kyo-Yuzen dyeing technique. Although the products are initially identified by Shibu-Fuda, they are replaced by Gofuku-Fuda when the products are completed and shipped from the manufacturer. Then, “Kyo-Yuzen Shoshi” is sewn on the products and shipped to local wholesalers and department stores.

Sewing this title onto the Kyoto kimono products serves as promise between the buyers and the sellers. It also provides additional credibility to the overall quality and value of the products, as Kyoto has a long history as a major industrial center known for producing high-quality products (see Fig. 3).

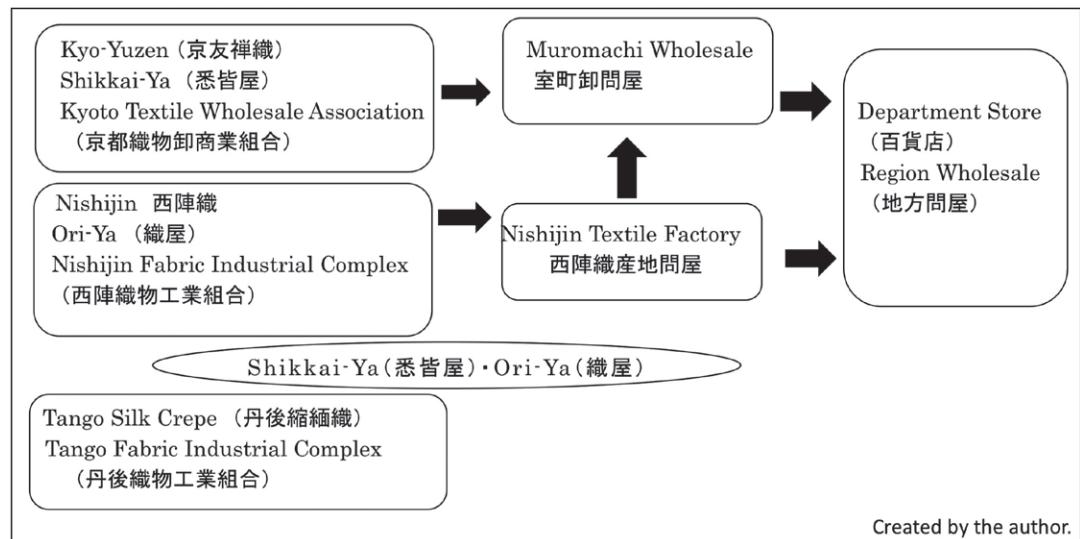
According to Fig. 4, which presents the overall flow of commodity transactions in the Kyoto textile industry, the Kyoto Muromachi wholesalers, Ori-Ya, and Shikkai-Ya established their respective credit trading systems through information production.

Figure 3



Shoshi (証紙) Quality markings textile manufacturer is responsible to the consumer.

Figure 4 Kyoto Textile Industry Trade



In sum, in Nishijin's textile industry, Ori-Ya established an inter-company credit system based on its information production system. Similarly, in Kyoto Muromachi, Shikkai-Ya created its own inter-company credit system. Moreover, Shikkai-Ya used (and still uses) Shibu-Fuda and Gofuku-Fuda as tools for identifying wholesalers, weaving manufacturers, and other related businesses.

Conclusion

In the manufacturing processes of both Ori-Ya and Shikkai-Ya (in addition to the management of due dates), mutual trust was vital to their long-term success. For instance, such trust between Ori-Ya and the weavers depended on the manufacturing technology, settlement of funds, payment status, and provision of reliable profits. There were also

agreements based on trustworthiness, such as whether payments should be made in cash, check, or draft on the agreed date of delivery. Through such actions, the relationships between Ori-Ya and Shikkai-Ya and their respective weavers were strengthened.

This paper focuses on the textile industry in Muromachi, Nishijin, and Kyoto and clarifies the unique system of credit transactions in the kimono industry. Under this system, the Nishijin textile weavers and the Shikkai-ya of Kyo-Yuzen acted as the hub of information generation and established intercompany credit. The existence of Gofuku-Fuda, Shibu-Fuda, and Shoshi, which guaranteed quality, was found to be important as a multifaceted tool with which this system of trust was managed.

In the future, we would like to investigate companies that use the family crest on the Gofuku-Fuda, which is used by long-established Shikkai-Ya. We would also like to expand our research to case studies of business succession from the perspective of the relationship between Gofuku-Fuda and family crests.

Acknowledgement

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The author would like to thank MARUZEN-YUSHODO Co., Ltd.

1) In this paper, we refer to information production as opposed to general manufacturing information.

2) Susumu Omori (2016b), "Kyoto Muromachi Textile Industry and Small Business Finance in Transition," Kyoto Bunkyo University Report from the Faculty of Social Relations, 17, 12-3.

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7) Currently, Gofuku-Fuda is written on Japanese paper with stamp ink. However, since the purpose of Shibu-Fuda is to control the manufacturing process, the symbols are written with an oil-based marker.

Supplementary explanation

This article is a translation of two articles, “The Credit System of the Nishijin Muromachi Textile Industry” and “The Credit System of the Kyoto Textile Industry”, with some additions and corrections.

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Abstract

京都繊維産業の商品管理ツール

大 森 晋

本稿では、京都の繊維産業を代表する西陣からのアプローチで呉服業における特有の信用取引システムの存在を明らかにする。

西陣織の高級繊維製品の生産地である西陣では「織屋」が情報生産の過程で信用取引システムを構築している。そして、京友禅の生産地である京都室町では「悉皆屋」が独自の信用取引システムを構築している。このことから、京都繊維産業の長い歴史の中で「織屋」と「悉皆屋」は、ある種の製品管理ツールを活用して、それぞれの信用取引システムを構築していることが考えられる。そこで、本研究では、京都西陣と室町の繊維産業における商品管理や情報生産の構築を目的として、これらの商品管理ツールの存在を明らかにする。

織屋や悉皆屋の製品製造工程における期日管理と並行して重要なのが資金決済である。そのためには、織屋や悉皆屋と織物職人に間では、製造技術、資金決済、支払状況、確実な利益の提供などが相互信頼のもとで構築されている。具体的には決められた納期に現金で支払うか、小切手で支払うか、手形で支払うか、約束手形サイトなどの条件は取引実績や資金力や人柄などを総合的な判断を背景にして信頼関係を構築している。このようなプロセスを経て、織屋と悉皆屋がそれぞれの織物職人との間で構築されたのが信用取引システムである。

今後は、老舗の悉皆屋が使用している「呉服札」に家紋を使用している可能性を調査研究していきたい。そして、呉服札と家紋の関係性からみた事業承継の事例研究にも繋げていきたい。

This paper investigates the textile business in Kyoto Muromachi, Nishijin, and identifies a unique system of credit transactions in the kimono industry.

In the Nishijin textile industry (西陣織), Ori-Ya (織屋) established a system for the smooth flow of inter-firm credit in the process of information production. Similarly, in Muromachi, Kyoto, the Kyo-Yuzen are employed; the Shikkai-Ya have established their own system of inter-business credit. On the other hand, the Nishijin Weaving Industry Association was formed to unify the entire process of information production. Throughout the long history of the textile industry in Kyoto, both weavers and the Shikkai-Ya have developed their own inter-firm credit systems by utilizing product-management tools of a kind. Therefore, this study presents these product - management tools, intending to improve product management and information production in the region.

In the weavers' and the Shikkai-Ya's manufacturing process (as well as delivery management), mutual trust is essential for long-term success. For instance, the trust between weavers and the Shikkai-Ya depends on manufacturing techniques, financial settlements, payment status, and the provision of reliable profits. There are also arrangements based on trust, such as whether to pay in cash, by check, or by draft on a set deadline. Through these processes, relations between the weavers and the Shikkai-Ya and their respective weavers are strengthened.

In the future, we would like to examine the use of family crests (家紋) on the Gofuku-Fuda used by the well-established Shikkai-Ya. In addition, we would like to expand the study to comprise case studies of business succession in terms of relations between the Gofuku-Fuda and family crests.

Keywords

Intercompany credit system

Product management tool Shibu-Fuda, Gofuku-Fuda and Shoshi

Nishijin's textile industry (西陣織), Ori-Ya (織屋)

Muromachi (Kyo-Yuzen's (京友禅) production site), Shikkai-Ya (悉皆屋)