HAPPEN TO BE FASHIONABLE? NEW PRACTICE CREATION THROUGH THE SEQUENCE OF MULTIPLE ACTORS

Yuki Yamauchi
(Center Fellow, Center for Japanese Business Studies, Hitotsubashi University)

Jun 2010

No.115

HAPPEN TO BE FASHIONABLE?

NEW PRACTICE CREATION THROUGH THE SEQUENCE OF MULTIPLE ACTORS

[Authors and Affiliation]

Yuki Yamauchi

Center Fellow, Center for Japanese Business Studies, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo, Japan

Yuki.yamauchi@gmail.com

Takahiro Endo

PhD Candidate, Cardiff University, Cardiff, UK

Endo.takahiro@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In contrast to previous research, this paper illustrates a process in which institutional entrepreneurs play less significant roles in creating a new practice. We drew on a historical case study that deals with the emergence of a new practice of emphasizing fashionable design of a type of clothing known as *meisen*. In the historical case study, multiple actors played distinctive and essential roles, which, as a whole, led to the creation of a new practice.

INTRODUCTION

Who creates a new practice? The creation of a new practice has been associated with institutional entrepreneurs that are organized actors with enough resources to pursue their interests (DiMaggio, 1988). Following DiMaggio's seminal work, researchers expanded the research on institutional entrepreneurs (Leca, Battilana, & Boxenbaum, 2006). Although a number of useful insights into the nature of institutional entrepreneurs have been provided during the past decade (e.g. Greenwood & Sudday, 2006), research on institutional entrepreneurs often regards them as heroic figures (Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007). That is, research has focused on a single or small number of heroic actors and thus has overlooked other actors in the process of creating a new practice.

With respect to the shortcomings identified above, some researchers explicitly pay attention to actors other than institutional entrepreneurs, namely opponents, opportunity

creators, and change consumers (Delbridge & Edwards, 2007). Drawing on previous studies that explicitly focus on multiple actors, we aim to elucidate the roles of various actors in creating a new practice. To do so, we explore the process of creating a new practice through historical case study. In this historical case study, the main focus is on the creation of fashion design in a category of clothes known as *meisen*.

Meisen is a type of silk *kimono* worn as traditional Japanese clothing. It was commonly regarded as a durable housedress in the 1910s. However, the attitude toward *meisen* changed in the 1920s and people began to regard it as a fashionable daytime dress. This change resulted from the growing emphasis on design of producers, distributors, and retailers of *meisen*. In other words, a new practice of stressing design in a particular type of clothing, *meisen*, was created through the following three factors. Firstly, an established figure, whose belief was based in the *bushido* ethos, adopted *meisen* for school uniforms at a prestigious school in Tokyo. His intention was to introduce an unpretentious style of living at school. *Meisen* was soon adopted by other schools. It could be argued that *meisen* school uniforms contributed to associating *meisen* with fashionable daytime, even though in the early stage, the *meisen* fabric for school uniforms did not have a complex design. Secondly, department stores were the dominant distribution channel at that time, and they tended to affect the behaviour of *kimono* producers. Following its growing acceptance of this clothing style, department stores sought to promote *meisen. Consequently,* the production output of

meisen increased. However, at this point a third factor emerged. *Wool muslin*, another kind of *kimono*, came the attention by department stores because of its durability and cheaper production cost. Department stores started to foster competition between *wool muslin* and *meisen* producers. In response, *meisen* producers began to distinguish their *meisen* by adding complex designs to it.

The findings of this paper make three distinctive contributions. Firstly and theoretically, the findings of this paper highlighted the importance of a sequence of actors' involvement in creating a new practice. Actors other than institutional entrepreneurs created the foundation for the new practice and institutional entrepreneurs launched the creation itself. Without this sequence, creation of a new practice would not have been enabled. Secondly, because a new practice has the characteristic of unintended consequence, in the sequence of actors, each actor had his or her own particular interest, but did not intend to create a new practice. However, the result was that the sequence resulted in the creation of a new practice. Finally, the findings have implications for practitioners. The expansion of the *meisen* market accompanied a contraction of the upmarket and an expansion of the downmarket. The example of the expansion of the *meisen* market is significant given the present worldwide economic downturn because innovative attempts in the current downmarket may result in the stimulation of a new demand.

In the next section, this paper clarifies the theoretical motivation related to creation of

a new practice. Then the following section presents the historical case study of *meisen*. Finally, we conclude the argument with a discussion of the findings by focusing on theoretical contributions and practical implications.

THEORETICAL MOTIVATION

New institutional theory originally was presented as a framework to explain the diffusion of a particular organizational structure (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). One of the characteristics of the explanatory frameworks of new institutional theories is that they widely utilize the concept of the organizational field, which takes into account organizations that frequently interact and tend to share norms, rules, and culture. Therefore, new institutional theorists explained the diffusion of particular organizational structure by focusing on frequent interactions in the organizational field and organizations that adopt similar organizational structures.

Over time, the theoretical focus came to include not only organizational structures but also various kinds of practices such as the customs adopted by organizations (Scott, 2001). While institutional theory has provided a unique explanatory framework, it is weak in explaining the emergence of new practices in the organizational field. In order to complement this shortcoming, DiMaggio (1988) focused on institutional entrepreneurs.

While the notion of institutional entrepreneurship has provided a remedy to a problem that baffled earlier institutional theorists, it raised another problem for more recent

institutional theorists. That is, as Lawrence & Suddaby (2009) indicate, institutional entrepreneurs tend to be conceptualized as separate from context. Most importantly, research focusing on institutional entrepreneurs tends to overlook other actors in the organizational field (Delbridge & Edwards, 2008).

There are, however, some exceptional researchers that do not necessarily solely emphasize the role of institutional entrepreneurs. There are two different streams of studies that provide the insights into non-institutional entrepreneurs. Firstly, some researchers argue that accumulation may lead to creation of a new practice (e.g., Dorado, 2005; Thornton, et al., 2005). For instance, according to Dorado (2005), the selective nature of reproducing institutionalized practice may cause accumulation and institutional change. That is, actors need to reactivate the past custom when they reproduce the institutionalized practice. In the reactivation numerous actors may slightly change its modus operandi. This effect may accumulate over time and create a new practice in the organizational field. Although this type of creation of a new practice may be worthwhile to elaborate, the target of this paper is to elucidate the role of other actors in addition to institutional entrepreneurs. A few researchers explicitly focus on other actors in addition to institutional entrepreneurs (e.g., Delbridge & Edwards, 2008; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, 2009). Lawrence & Suddaby (2006, 2009) highlight the importance of various kinds of actors in creating a new practice. Their focus is on types of strategies rather than types of actors themselves. Instead, Delbridge & Edwards

(2008), in addition to institutional entrepreneurs, raise opponents, opportunity creators, and change consumers, all of which play key roles in creating a new practice. Their focus is on the early stage of institutional change in the super yacht industry and provides insights into the multiple roles that actors in the organizational field may play. Opportunity creators are those ‘who may have no vested interest or material stake in fundamental change but who, through their actions, create the possibility for change to occur’ (Delbridge & Edwards, 2008, p.321). Furthermore, change consumers are related to actors that ‘provide the market’ for the ‘outcomes of change processes’ (Delbridge & Edwards, 2008, p.321). There are, however, exceptional research that focus on the role of other players in the organizational field.

HISTORICAL CASE STUDY

What was *meisen*?

In what follows, we will show the detailed story of *kimono* fashion in the 1920s,[1] focusing on the silk *kimono* known as *meisen*, which had been produced in a rural area north of Tokyo. Originally, *meisen* was just one of approximately ten different kinds of silk *kimono*s such as *fushi-ito-ori* or *futo-ori,*[2] which were used as working clothes until the middle of the nineteenth century. Because these names evoked an unfavorable image, drapers or distributers hesitated to adopt them, but *meisen* was an exception. For example, retailers disliked the name of *futo-ori* because *futo* means 'fat' in Japanese. They were also reluctant to use the name *fushi-ito* because it means 'wasted yarn' in Japanese. On the other hand, *meisen* gives a positive impression. It literally means 'noble enchanted land'. Therefore, retailers were fond of using the name *meisen*. Moreover, in the early twentieth century, weavers and other stakeholders also began to label other *kimono*s woven in the area north of Tokyo as *meisen*.

It is well known that *meisen* captured women's attention in 1920s (Fujii, 2003; Arai, 2004). One survey also suggested that more than half of the women walking down the street in the Ginza, located in the central part of Tokyo, were wearing *meisen* at around the same time (Kon & Yoshida, 1930). Furthermore, a growing number of women wore *meisen*

[1] *Kimono* is traditional Japanese clothing, and most Japanese women wore it before World War II.

[2] These names were shared among weavers to indicate how to weave.

downtown to go shopping. Similarly, waitresses and telephone operators, who were called career women at that time, wore it to commute in the 1920s (Koyama, 2003; Fujii, 2004). It is well known that the 1920s was decade of stagnation for Japan, and thus personal consumer expenditure remained static for a decade (Yamamura, 1972; Nakamura, 2003). Due to stagnation during this decade, the production of most textiles did not increase. However, the production of several kinds of silk textiles grew exceptionally. The unique growth of silk textiles resulted from the increasing popularity of *meisen*. Table 1 shows the output of silk textiles in the late 1920s and a significant increase in the output of *meisen*.

Table 1. Comparison of silk textiles unit: one million yen

Name / Year	Price(Yen)	The average between 1926 to 1928	1929	1930
Meisen	3～10	**8,448**	**12,386**	**14,190**
Union cloth (wool and silk)	5～20	1,150	1,321	898
Crape	10～20	5,229	5,236	7,980
White Silk	20～30	2,407	2,307	N/A
Habutae(※)	28～35	3,582	3,077	4,687
Others		2,557	2,743	789
Sum		23,373	27,070	28,544

Source: Osaka-Mainichi-Shimbun, Ekonomisuto, 25.
※: Smooth, glossy and tight silk textiles.

Regarding the anomalous expansion of *meisen*, it is necessary to point out that this kimono originally was used not for daytime dress but for housedress. The phrases “home wear or not bad looking street clothes” (Izumi, 1922: 87), “cheap but rugged clothes (Osaka

Mainichi Shimbun, 1922)[3] or “home wear with washing fastness” (Katei Zasshi, 1919: 178) showed the typical image of *meisen* among Japanese people until the 1910s. Here, a question arises regarding the change in attitude toward *meisen* in the 1920s. To answer this question, the following three factors are examined**.**

The samurai ethos and modern fashion

It all began in 1906, when *Maresuke Nogi*, an established charismatic figure, was appointed principal of Gakushūin, Japan’s Peers School for young women of the noble class. *Maresuke Nogi* was a well-known general in the Russo-Japanese War and had gained much respect throughout the country. Therefore, he was also looked upon as a mentor of the young Hirohito, who would ascend to the Chrysanthemum Throne. Most importantly, *Nogi* was known for his unique way of life, which demonstrated samurai ethics, avoiding a luxurious life style. A well-known episode illustrates his ethos—he served guests a very simple meal, which he called a ‘big feast’. However, the guests were not surprised and ate the meal because they had already known that he ate plain food everyday. People respected his simple samurai-inspired life style even after Japan moved towards westernization.

In addition to the samurai ethos, *Nogi* proposed some new ideas for the school as soon as assumed the position of principal. He had a firm belief that even daughters from noble class families should not exhibit their affluence in public. Therefore, he first launched a

[3] Osaka Mainichi Shimbun. 13 August 1922.

restriction to the wearing of expensive clothes by students. On the other hand, he thought that affluent female students did not need to wear cheap clothing such as that made of cotton or linen. He set his sights on *meisen* as appropriate clothing because although it was relatively cheaper, it was not crude. The *Gakushūin* prescript for school uniforms in those days show that it recommended *meisen* in its detailed rules and regulations (Joshi Gakūshuin, 1935: 278). Owing to *Nogi*'s nationwide fame, parents of *Gakushuin* students did not complain about his decision.

Furthermore, *Nogi*'s well-known ritual suicide, which was performed in accordance with the samurai practice of following his master to death, enhanced his good name and reputation. Shortly after the Meiji Emperor's funeral cortege left the palace in 1912, *Nogi* committed *seppuku*, the *bushido* way of suicide (Noss, 1980: 319). *Nogi*'s *seppuku* immediately created a sensation and caused intense debates about its pros and cons. However, the public generally honored his achievements with deep respect but at the same time felt that his suicide marked the end of the samurai ethos.

After his death, Gakushūin continued to use *meisen* as school uniform as Nogi's legacy. Other women's schools also embarked on introducing *meisen* as uniform. For example, Tokyo Jogakkan and Tokyo Joshi Shihan, Yamawaki, Miwata, Touyō Kasei, the Sixth school, located near Gakushūin, one after another adopted *meisen* as uniform (Tokyo Jogakkan, 1991: 384). We assume that they did this because they deeply respected Nogi. However, it

must be noted that the adoption of *meisen* was typically seen at first in urban regions. Some schools in the countryside delayed adopting *meisen*. Only a handful of fashion-conscious students in the countryside imitated urban style at that time (Morita, 1954: 25). According to the life story of an alumnus who attended the rural Kushiro high school, about half of female students wore *meisen* in 1926 (Sasaki, 1986: 61). Nevertheless, the number of female students who wore *meisen* as a street costume increased in the 1910s in urban areas. A fashion report in 1920 said that high school girls in downtown Tokyo wore *meisen* on the street (*Senshoku no Ryūkō,* 1920: 38-9). People who saw them gradually came to recognize *meisen* as acceptable daytime dress for walking in public.

The department stores' response

Adoption of *meisen* as a school uniform was followed by the appearance of the *kimono* in the retail business. Department stores decided to expand their customer base because they suffered from the serious recession after the Great War. In late 1919, they decided to plan for an assortment of many reasonable items on the store shelves. They especially promoted clothing that would attract a mass of female customers they had not yet targeted.[4] For example, the sales manager of the Takashimaya Department Store officially announced in magazines that they carried clothing such as *meisen* that were widely available at low prices (Ozawa, 1920: 20). They also inserted nearly identical information in advertisements of their

[4] It is well known that Japanese department stores, originally, had expanded businesses as drapers, so they had expertise in selling clothes.

new collection in 1920 (Shinkatei, 1920: 57). However, in reality, a report of the vice president of Takashimaya, one of the largest department stores at that time, showed that no other clothes appeared more popular than *meisen* (Katsuta, 1921: 14).

As department stores increased the transaction volume of *meisen*, they provided them at a much lower price point than drapers' shops. The shop price of *meisen* fluctuated often between 1921 and 1922. While a department store's sales manager said that shop prices were expensive in 1921 (Himeno, 1921:16), in the next year, another department store's chief buyer pointed out the price war among drapers (Fukuda, 1922: 21). As a result, *meisen* kimonos were often sold at a fifty-percent discount (*Senshoku no Ryūko*, 1922:24). In addition, according to another department store's merchandise manager, some drapers occasionally placed an unprofitable reserve price on *meisen* (Ogasawara, 1922: 19).

Department stores continued this way of promoting *meisen* through the 1920s. The chief buyers of department stores pointed out that the fashion highly valued the unique design of *meisen* (Matsuzawa, 1924: 17; Wakamori, 1924: 21). Other buyers said that the designs of *meisen* were surpassing other high-grade *kimono*s, and thus they could promote them for each generation (Tsuchiya, 1924: 138; Tuchiya, 1925: 231). Furthermore, advertisements in 1925 indicate similar recognition of the *meisen* (Ruriko, 1925: 284-285). In 1926, department stores began to create their own *meisen* designs and sell them as walking dress via a mail-order service (Ruriko, 1926: 267). In 1923, a well-known fashion specialist,

Hanamura Izumi, pointed out the drastic shift caused by *meisen*'s emphasis on fashion during the previous ten years (Izumi, 1923: 27).

Furthermore, other department stores contributed to the market expansion of fashionable *meisen*. Mitsukoshi in Osaka organized a *meisen* fair, which highlighted printed colorful patterns, for ten days starting on 21 January 1925 (Matsuzawa, 1925: 16). Although in the beginning, a few hundred *meisen* had been produced in the area north of Tokyo, since then the amount of sales was increasing drastically in Osaka. By the late 1920s, hundreds of thousands of *meisen* were woven in that area (Matsuzawa, 1927: 15). In addition, Mitsukoshi gave the *kimono* originally called *hogushi-ori*, which was traditional in the Osaka area, the name of *meisen* (Matsuzawa, 1926: 13). In the 1920s, other department stores also had succeeded in attracting large numbers of customers to buy *meisen*. They placed mannequins wearing *meisen* in store windows as a marketing tool (Koyama, 2003: 71-71). This way of displaying *meisen* was highly a novel practice at that time.

Wool Muslin

As we mentioned above, *meisen* dominated the Japan's clothing market in the early 1920s. However, in addition to *meisen*, department stores needed to sell other reasonable-priced clothing. It appears that once they began selling other kinds of clothing they began a price-cutting war involving *meisen* and other clothing. That is, in the early 1920s, department stores used *wool muslin* in order to create competition with *meisen* but this

tactic was not successful. There are many reasons for this failure.

In the early 1920s, *wool muslin* was thought to be similar to *meisen* in terms of price and design. Some department store chief buyers indicated that *wool muslin* was comparable to *meisen* (Tagai, 1922: 25; Nishizawa, 1924: 19-20). One of them also argued that the demand for *meisen* had been decreasing since winter of 1922 because of the adoption of *wool muslin* at department stores (Tagai, 1923: 18). For instance, Isesaki, which produced *meisen*, was bewildered by the attitude of department stores toward *wool muslin*. This producer had to face the requests of department stores, however, and accordingly changed its marketing concept around 1924.

However, *wool muslin* did not totally replace *meisen*. On the contrary, in the late 1920s, muslin lost its popularity among consumers. The reason why *wool muslin* failed to get market evaluations was the change in social environment and the recovery of the European wool market. Shortly after the Great Kanto Earthquake struck in 1923, the Japanese government under took a campaign to encourage the sale and purchase of Japanese products on a nationwide scale to help recovery (Kobe Yushin Nippou, 1924).[5] Through this project, the government planned to recover the international competitiveness of Japanese products (Kobe Yushin Nippou, 1924).[6] Furthermore, as a part of the project, the government imposed taxes on some imported goods to encourage Japan's economic recovery.

---

[5] *Kobe Yushin Nippou*, 21 July 1924

[6] *Kobe Yushin Nippou*, 19 June 1924.

Meisen was recommended because it was produced completely in Japan from raw materials to production to sales (Hirose, 1929: 11). For example, in 1924, a newspaper reported that the alumni reunion of *Atomi* female high school set up a league to encourage the wearing of *meisen* (Tagaya, 1924: 306). Furthermore, in the same year, *meisen* was given an award as a good domestic product in the cloth category at the Domestic Products Exhibition in Tokyo and Osaka hosted by Japan Women's University (*Nihon Joshi Daigaku*, 1924: 16).

In contrast, as inferred from the previous discussion, *wool muslin* was not featured favourably in this public campaign . Wool was an imported product, so the special tax for luxurious products was applied (Yamaguchi, 1924: 325). Moreover, the anti-Japanese movement in California in 1924 caused a great deal of animosity toward America in Japan. In turn, this animosity created an attitude that derided the products of foreign countries. Therefore, department stores, drapers, and other retailers hesitated to sell *wool muslin* since it was commonly regarded as a foreign product. Furthermore, the price of raw wool was drastically increasing as European countries began to import it once economic recovery was underway (*Osaka Jiji Shimpo*, 1923).[7]

The *wool muslin* firms could not adjust to the changing market situation and had no choice but to consolidate. In April 1924, some companies decided to reduce operations in (*Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, 1924).[8] In 1926, one of the biggest firms went into liquidation

[7] Osaka Jiji Shimpo, 8 November 1923.

[8] Osaka Mainichi Shimbun, 19 April 1924.

(Osaka Mainichi Shimbun, 1926).[9] Two market leaders agreed to form a merger in 1927, but were forced to close in 1929 (*Osaka Mainichi Shimbun*, 1930).[10] Even surviving firms were suffered from a prolonged and exhausting labour dispute (Shiraishi, 1994: 172-173). Due to these changes, *wool muslin* completely lost its market position. However, while the demand for *wool muslin* was severely decreasing, the demand for *meisen* was increasing (Tagaya, 1925: 6; Murata, 1925: 38). The vice president of a draper company said, "*wool muslin* sold well briefly, but it was just a dream, and we can see *meisen"* (Sakamizu, 1927: 11).

The hegemony of *meisen*

Due to the failure *wool muslin*, *meisen* gained economic supremacy in the Japanese home wear market. It was confirmed that *meisen* was more widely accepted in the mass market than cheap cotton (*Miyako Shimbun*, 1925).[11] *Meisen* increasingly established its status as fashionable public walking dress. For example, *meisen* became an acceptable substitute for ceremonial *kimono*, which was high-end and luxurious clothing in the middle of the 1920s (*Syufu no Tomo*, 1926: 292). Rather than home wear or somewhat fashionable walking dress, *meisen* was regarded as perfect for both walking dress and casual clothes (Tokyo *Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 1928).[12] In addition to establishing status as walking dress, *meisen* gradually expanded its usage in terms of the appropriate season (*Ruriko*, 1927: 259-260). Moreover,

---

[9] Osaka Mainichi Shimbun, 31 December 1926.

[10] Osaka Mainishi Shimbun, 6 February 1930.

[11] Miyako Shimbun, 29 November 1925.

[12] Tokyo *Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 4 June 1928.

even very fashionable people in the 1920s, known as ‘modern girls’, appreciated each seasonal design of *meisen* (Tokyo *Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 1928).[13] The producers of *meisen* also came to be conscious about new trends in design patterns (Itagaki, 1926: 23). In summary, both consumers and producers in the 1920s came to recognize that design played a crucial role with respect to *meisen*.

Other indirect evidence for the increasing orientation of *meisen* towards design stems from a decreasing number of historical documents that associate *meisen* with its durability. Furthermore, in 1929, *Aikoku Fujinkai* (Federation of Patriot Housewives, Osaka Branch) passed a resolution regarding *meisen* (Hirose, 1929: 13). According to the resolution, it was pointed out that some *meisen* were not durable and thus not necessarily suitable for housedresses. It appears that in the 1920s, more emphasis was put on the design of *meisen* than on its durability.

The change in the use of *meisen* can be confirmed by magazine articles. *Meisen* was featured in special issues on walking dress in a special issue of *Shinkatei* (1916: 98-102) (New Home) in 1916 and in *Fujokai* (1927: 249-253) (Female World) in 1927. However, in the former special issue, *meisen* was not regarded as walking dress. In a feature article, five pages (216 lines) were devoted to the newest walking dress in Osaka. *Meisen* was included with clothing in the housedress section. Since the special issue featured mainly walking dress,

[13] Tokyo *Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 7 September 1927.

home wear was assigned 22 lines, and only 16 were on *meisen* in the article, "*meisen* is the most popular casual clothing." As indicated above, *meisen* was obviously not regarded as trendy at that time. Although the magazine title is different, a special issue on walking dress in *Shinsekai* (New World) shows that *meisen* was regarded as walking dress. This time, the special issue assigned 46 lines out of 173 to *meisen*. Furthermore, there were 10 *meisen* pictures out of 17 in the magazine. The description of *meisen* in this special issue was associated with fashionable female designations such as 'miss', 'office girls' and 'young housewives', all of whom were considered to be on the cutting edge of fashion.

We can see the same trend in other women's magazines. *Meisen* pictures appeared in other magazines as main products for their mail order service. For example, *Syufu-no-tomo* (Associates for housewives) inserted an advertisement of eight pages about the round-table talk with respect to *meisen*, in which they had invited seven celebrities such as famous movie or *kabuki* stars. There were a list of 38 special selections of *meisen* in the advertisement and readers could order all selections (Endo, 1929: 258-265). Furthermore, *Fujin-Kouron* (the forum for public opinion by women) presented 21 different *meisen* with some ad copies referring to designs for the mail order service (*Fujin-Kouron*, 1929: 209-211).

Meisen was no longer just home wear but had become trendy walking dress. According to the results of the participant observation taken by *Wajiro Kon*, who was Japan's leading authority in anthropology at the time, women picked up a few *meisen* in the *meisen*

section, and then they walked to some place where they could compare them (Kon & Yoshida, 1930: 208). *Meisen* had become typical shopping goods, which people decided to buy after comparison.

CONCLUSION

In the conclusion, the findings from the historical case study are discussed in terms of new insights for both academics and practitioners. The case study highlighted the interdependence of actors. Although the actors that create a new practice were producers of *meisen*, they did not intentionally create a new practice. Rather, they had no other choice than creating a new practice.

The first insight highlighted the interdependent sequence of actors. In the historical case study, *Maresuke Nogi* initiated an opportunity for creating a new practice. His ethics, which were underscored by the *bushido* ethos, encouraged him to adopt inexpensive clothing, namely *meisen*, for the school uniform. This adoption was imitated by other female schools. These actors could be called opportunity creators (Delbridge & Edwards, 2008). However, this opportunity was not directly utilized by the department stores. After the adoption of *meisen* in schools located in urban regions, department stores started to promote wool *muslin* in the market. This is because wool *muslin* was cheaper than *meisen*. In turn, *meisen* producers started to emphasize complex designs for *meisen* clothing in order to differentiate

them from wool *muslin* clothing.

Therefore, as institutional entrepreneurs, *meisen* producers started a new practice putting complex designs on their clothing. Due to the change in social situation, the production of wool *muslin* became impossible in the middle of the 1920s. This, inevitably encouraged the department stores to concentrate on promotion of *meisen*. It could be considered that department stores encouraged the producers to create a new practice. Thus, department stores, by letting the *meisen* and wool *muslin* producers compete, can be called opportunity creators. However, this was not the only role of the department stores. While they created an opportunity for creating a new practice, at the same time they provided a market for the outcome of change, namely *meisen* with complex designs. The latter role of providing a market became salient especially after wool *muslin* producers faced difficulty in continuing their operation in the 1920s. Rather than heroic institutional entrepreneurs, the sequence of multiple actors as a whole brought about the creation of a new practice.

The second insight is closely related to the first insight. Taking a closer look at each type of actors' interest enabled us to realize the unintended consequence of a new practice creation. Although *meisen* producers' interests were, as a result of sequence of actors, achieved through the creation of a new practice, their interests were largely determined by the actions of department stores. That is, *meisen* producers' revenues came from department store sales. The department stores had the initiative in the transaction in the sense that they could

seek other producers such as those of wool *muslin* but not vice versa. Interestingly, the department stores' interests were not directly reflected in the creation of a new practice. Department stores did not have the clear intention to create a new practice of putting complex designs on *meisen* until the early 1920s. On the contrary, the department stores emphasized the cheap price of clothes and therefore utilized wool *muslin* together with *meisen* until the importation of wool, which was the material of wool *muslin*, was banned in the 1920s. The department stores' actions settled the direction of *meisen* producers to a great extent. In responding to department stores' growing reliance on wool *muslin*, *meisen* producers tried to differentiate their products from wool *muslin* producers and launched the novel practice of putting complex designs on clothing.

Furthermore, originally, *Nogi*'s and other female schools adopted *meisen* as their uniform because the inexpensive *meisen* was congruent with their values. In particular, *Nogi* was well known for his 'saving mind', putting emphasis on unpretentious style of living. It could be reasonably argued that fashionable design, which *meisen* later achieved, is far from unpretentious, Similarly, other schools adopted *meisen* school uniforms influenced by *Nogi*'s ethos.

Finally, we suggest that the findings have practical implications for contemporary practitioners. Considering the world-wide economic downturn, the findings indicate that innovative endeavours may result from cost reduction. As indicated above, the department

stores were the dominant players in the organizational field in the sense that they determined the competition scheme among other actors. The department stores were keen on promoting cheaper clothes. The department stores' orientation for cost reduction created competition between wool *muslin* producers and *meisen* producers. As a result of this competition, *meisen* producers gradually came to emphasize complex fabric designs. This novel practice resulted in expansion of the downmarket, enabling the masses to enjoy fashionable clothes.

REFERENCES

Arai, M. 2004. Ito kara hajimaru monogatari [The story from the yarn]. In Fujii, K., & Fujimori, T (Eds.), ***Meisen: taisho showa no oshare kimono [Meisen: trendy clothing in the Taisho and Showa eras]***: 124-133. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Dacin, M. T., Goodstein, J., & Scott, W. R. 2002. Institutional theory and institutional change: Introduction to the special research forum. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 45: 45-56.

Déjean, F., Gond, J.-P., & Leca, B. 2004. Measuring the unmeasured: An institutional entrepreneur strategy in an emerging industry. ***Human Relations***, 57: 741-761.

Delbridge, R. & Edwards, T. 2008. Challenging conventions: Roles and processes during non-isomorphic instituional change. ***Human Relations***, 61(3): 299-325.

DiMaggio, P. J. & Powell, W. W. 1983. The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism

and collective rationality in organizational fields. ***American Sociological Review***, 48(2): 147-160.

DiMaggio, P. J. 1988. Interest and agency in institutional theory. In L. G. Zucker (Ed.), ***Institutional patterns and organizations***: 3-21. Cambridge, M.A.: Ballinger.

Endo, H. 1929. *Meisen* nitsuite no zadankai [The special round table for *meisen*]. ***Syufu-no-tomo [Associates for housewives]***. 13(10): 258-265.

Fujii, K. 2003. *Meisen* no omeshi no tanjo to fukyu [The birth of *meisen* and its difusion]. ***Mukashi kimono no kikonashi [The dressing of classic kimonos]***, 64-71. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Fujii, K. 2004. Taisho showa no *meisen* kimono no ryūko [The boom in *meisen* between 1900 to 1930]. In Fujii, K., & Fujimori, T (Eds.), ***Meisen: taisho showa no oshare kimono [Meisen: trendy clothing in the Taisho and Showa eras]***: 114-122. Tokyo: Heibonsha.

Fujin-Kouron [The forum for public opinion by women]. 1929. Gendaitekina zuan to shikisai no fujin-kouron gonomi *meisen* [The special selection for modern women]. 14(12): 209-211.

Fukuda, T. 1922. Dai yonkai zenkoku akifuyumono kenkyukai syuppin kohyo [The comment for the 4th national textile fair for winter]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 4(10): 20-21.

Greenwood, R. & suddaby, R. 2006. Institutional entrepreneurship in mature fields: The Big Five accounting firms. ***Academy of Management Journal***, 49(1): 27-48.

Himeno, I. 1921. Joyogi muke to tokyo zome [Home wears and Tokyo kimono]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 3(12): 16.

Hirose, K. 1929. Shohi setsuyaku to kokusan aiyou no undou [the movement of the domestic goods and economy in consumption]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 11(8): 11.

Hirose, K. 1929. *Meisen* teido no ketssugi ga syutsugen [The announcement for recommendation to wear *meisen*]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 11(11): 13.

Itagaki, T. 1926. Natsumono no irogara ippen [The drastic color change for kimono in this summer]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 8(4): 23.

Izumi, H. 1923. Honshi no naiyou nit suite [The essay on this magazine]. *Senshoku no* ***Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 5(5): 27.

Izumi, T. Houmongi to Jōyōgi [Visiting dresses and home wears]. In Izumi. T (Eds.), ***Ryūkōshōhin Hensen no Kenkyū [The study for the fashion products]***: 87-90. Tokyo: Bungado.

Joshi gakushūin. 1935. ***Joshi gakushūin gojunenshi [Fifty years' history of joshi gakushūin]***. Tokyo: Joshi gakushūin.

Katei zassi [Family magazine]. 1919. Ryūkou to jitsuyo wo kaneta huyui [The winter fashionable clothes with practical use]. 5(11): 178-181. Tokyo: Hakubunkan.

Katsuta, T. 1921. *Meisen* to kumejima no sosiki [The designs of *meisen* and kumejima]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 3(2): 14-15.

Kon, W., & Yoshida. K. 1930. ***Moderu no rojio***. Tokyo: Shunyodo.

Koyama, S. 2003. Wafuku ni miru modan [The modern fashion of traditional Japanese clothes]. In Nitta, T., Tanaka, Y., & Koyama, S. (Eds.). ***Zusetsu Tokyo ryūko seikatsu [The essays on the Tokyo's fashion and life]***, 60-76. Tokyo: Kawade shobo.

Leca, B., Battilana, J., & Boxenbaum, E. 2006. ***Taking stock of institutional entrepreneurship: What do we know? Where do we go?*** Paper presented at the Academy of Management, Atlanta, G.A.

Lounsbury, M. & Crumley, E. T. 2007. New practice creation: An institutional perspective on innovation. ***Organization Studies***, 28(7): 993-1012.

Matsuzawa, S. 1924. Akifuyumono seisaku nikansite siken wo nobu [My opinion for the new clothes for winter]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 6(6): 17-19.

Matsuzawa, S. 1925. Ryūko moyo *meisen* no teisho [The advocation moyo *meisen*]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 7(2): 16.

Matsuzawa, S. 1926. Modan shiki no ouyou han-i nitsuite [The scope of application for

modern fashion style]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 8(12): 13.

Matsuzawa, S. 1927. Shin edo hogushi to haru no moyo *meisen* [New Tokyo style and moyo *meisen* for spring season]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 9(10): 15-16.

Morita. T. 1954. ***Kimono zuihitsu [Essays on kimono]***. Tokyo: Bungei shunju shinsha.

Murata, M. 1926. *Meisen* ten no zouka [The growth for the number of *meisen* shops]. ***Shôgyô-Kenkyû-Shiryô [the Journal for Commerce and Documents]***. 5(2): 38.

Nakamura, T., & Odaka, K. 2003. The Inter-War Period: 1914-37, an Overview. In Nakamura.T, & Odaka, K (Eds.) translated by Noah S. Brannen, ***The economic history of Japan: 1914-55***: 1-54. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.

Nihon joshi daigaku [Japan's women university].1926. Iryou rui no sentaku to isesaki *meisen* [The selection of clothes and Isesaki *meisen*]. In ***Honba isesaki meisen no ohanashi [The story of Isesaki meisen 85th edition]***. Isesaki, Japan: Isesaki Textile Association: 16.

Nishizawa, K. 1924. Ryuko to sengen to juyo nitsuite, [The essay on fashion, declaration and demand]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 6(1): 18-20.

Noss, J. B. 1980. ***Man's Religions 6th edition***, New York: Macmillan.

Ogasawara, M. 1922. Kongo no juyo okoran [The essay for the future demand]. ***Senshoku no***

Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]. 4(11): 18-19.

Ozawa, N. 1920. Fuyumono no ryūko to youbou [The request for winter season wears]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 2(6): 20-21.

Ruriko. 1925. Konshu no ryūkoshoku to *meisen* no shingara [The latest fashion colors and the latest designs for *meisen*]. ***Fujokai [Female's world]***. 16(10): 284-286.

Ruriko. 1926. Hatsu awase you shingara *meisen* [The new *meisen* for a lined kimono]. ***Fujokai [Female's world]***. 17(9): 266-267.

Ruriko, 1927. Shumi jo no fukushoku kenkyu: *Meisen* no shurui to sanchi [The essay on fashionable clothes: The discriminations among *meisen*s from the perspective of the differences from production districts]. ***Fujokai [Female's world]***. 18(9): 259-261.

Ruriko. 1927. Haruno ryūko shoku to modanizumu senshokuhin [The season colors in spring and modern clothes]. ***Fujokai [Female's world]***. 19(3): 249-253.

Sakamizu, Y. 1927. Fukeiki wo chouetsu seru *meisen* ban-nou to mosurin no hikaku [The comparison of *meisen* with muslin]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 9(12): 11-13.

Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving].1920. Zenkoku no ryūko fuzoku wo sisatsu shite [Essays on the mode of life across the nation] 2(2): 38-39.

Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]. 1922. Daimaru no oosetsushitsu nite, bukka mondai no kaiwa wo kiku [The discussion for the prices at daimaru

department stores]. 4(11): 24-25.

Sasaki, A. 1986. ***Kimono kurashi onna no koyomi [A woman's life and kimono]***, Kyoto, Japan: Tankosha.

Shinkatei [New family]. 1916. Osaka deha ima don-na mono ga hayaruka: Mottomo kouhei nishite mottomo seimitsu naru takashimaya gohukuten ten-in no chousa houkoku [What is the next fashion trend? The fair report by clerks of the Takashimaya department store]. 1(2): 98-102.

Shinkatei [New family]. 1920. Ryūkohin hyakusenkai no seihin bosyu [The advertisement for the fashion exhibition]. 5(9): 57.

Shiraishi, T. 1994. ***Nihonbashi, Horidome: Tokyo orimono donya shikou [Nihon-bashi and Horidome area: the history of Tokyo textile merchants]***. Tokyo: Bunshin-do.

Shufu no tomo [Associates for housewives]. 1926. *Meisen* teido no haru no ryūko kai [The *meisen* trend in this spring]. 10(4): 292-294.

Tagai, R. 1922. Isesaki oogasuri no juyo [The demand in respect to isesaki ikats]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 4(4): 25.

Tagai, R. 1923. Isesaki yushinkai shoshi ni tsugu [Announce for the private forum at Isesaki]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 5(7): 18-19.

Tagaya, I. 1924. Isesaki *meisen* senden no kouka [The effect on the advertisement for Isesaki *meisen*]. ***Shôgyô-Kenkyû-Shiryô [The Journal for Commerce and Documents]***. 3(6):

306.

Tagaya, I. 1925. Gofuku mono no seisansha to senden: Ryomo orimono kumiai no ketsugi [Weavers and advertisements of kimono: The resolution of the textile association of Ryomo district]. ***Shôgyô-Kenkyû-Shiryô [The Journal for Commerce and Documents]***. 4(6): 6-8.

Tokyo jogakkan hyakunenshi henshusitsu. 1991. ***Tokyo jogakkan hyakunenshi [One hundred years' history of Tokyo jogakkan]***. Tokyo: Tokyo Jogakkan.

Tsuchiya, Y. 1924. Fujin heijogi no kenkyu [The essay on womens home wears]. ***Fujin sekai [Women's world]***. 19(12): 138-141.

Tsuchiya, Y. 1925. Konshun no *meisen* to merinsu [*Meisen* and *wool muslin* for this spring]. ***Fujin sekai [Women's world]***. 20(4): 228-231.

Wakamoti, S. 1924. Fuyumono Ryūko to edo syumi no shingara [The latest fashion for this winter and the new designs of classic tokyo style]. ***Senshoku no Ryūko [Fashion for Dyeing and Weaving]***. 6(7): 21.

Yamaguchi, T. 1924. Beika haiseki to wagakuni ki-ito mondai [The boycott campaign for American products and the export problem of the domestic row silk]. ***Shôgyô-Kenkyû-Shiryô [The Journal for Commerce and Documents]***. 3(7): 325-329.

Yamamura, K. 1972. Then came the Great Depression: Japan's Inter-war Years. In Van der

wee. H. (Eds.), ***The great depression revisited: Essays on the economics of the thirties***, 182-211. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.