

KNOWING THE JAPANESE CULTURE: THE ART OF CLOTH WRAPPING "FUROSHIKI"

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Abstract : This scientific paper examines furoshiki. Furoshiki is a culture of folding fabrics to wrap things. The purpose of this study is to find out the meaning of the furoshiki philosophy for Japanese society and to find out the forms of furoshiki. The method used in this study is a descriptive research method, with literature study techniques for data collection. The data processing technique in this study is collected from existing sources, grouped, then analyzed, and used as the content of the study. Furoshiki can be used to wrap a wide variety of objects with different shapes such as flat objects and round-shaped objects, can be made into bags, and can also be used to decorate rooms. The meaning of the furoshiki philosophy for Japanese society is found in the colors and patterns of the furoshiki. Japanese society believes that the patterns present on the fabric can bring benefits to the recipient. Based on the results of this study, it is hoped that people will have awareness to start reducing the use of plastic for daily needs so as to reduce environmental pollution.

Keywords : *Forms of Furoshiki, Meaning of Furoshiki*

INTRODUCTION

Culture is something that cannot be separated from people's lives. Culture means mind or reason. So, culture is a whole system of ideas, actions and results of human work in the framework of community life that is made to belong to man by learning (Spicer, 2020; Van der Hoeven & Hitlers, 2019; Reed, 2018). Speaking of culture, of course, each country has its own distinctive culture. Japanese society is one of the countries that highly upholds the culture of their country. Although nowadays Japanese society has opened up to outside cultures, it does not mean that Japanese people forget the culture of their own country (Nakano & Zhu, 2020; Masao, 2019; Orsolini, Bellagamba, Volpe & Kato, 2022). One of the characteristics of the country of Japan and is still maintained today is wearing traditional clothes, namely *kimono*. In addition, there is also the art of folding paper or called *origami*.

We can create a wide variety of cute and interesting paper folds from this paper folding art.

If *origami* is a paper folding culture, then it is different from *furoshiki*.

Furoshiki (風呂敷) is a culture of folding cloth to wrap things (Dey, Fan, Gothelf, Li, Liu & Zhan, 2021). The items are wrapped in a folded and deduced cloth in such a way. *Furoshiki* have been used for centuries in Japan, made a kind of bag for carrying or storing an important object (He, 2018). In the past, *furoshiki* were used in public baths to wrap clothes and toiletries. Even in modern times, *furoshiki* is still used in Japanese people's lives. For example, *furoshiki* are used to wrap *bento* or food supplies and gifts at weddings. In addition, *furoshiki* is not only used to wrap items in the form of boxes or squares, but can also be used to wrap various round-shaped objects such as watermelons or bottles. Similar to *kimono*, the ornate patterns or fabric motifs used in *furoshiki*

also have a philosophical meaning for Japanese society. The existing motifs not only show their beauty and uniqueness but also the diversity of life symbols that blend with nature (Salman, 2018). For example, animal and plant motifs. Meanwhile, the fabrics used are generally made of cotton, silk, or polyester, with different sizes.



Figure 1. Wrapping round and square shaped objects

Along with the times, of course, culture in Japan has also experienced development. One of them is the culture of folding cloth or *furoshiki*. Culture comes from the word "culture" which means mind; reason; customs (KBBI 2013:214). According to anthropology, culture is a whole system of ideas, actions and results of human work in the framework of community life that is made to belong to man by learning (Koentjaraningrat 2002: 180). This means that almost all human actions are cultural. Human beings think and then act repeatedly, even then become a habit.

According to reference (Kammerer, 2021), culture has several properties, namely:

1. Variegated.
2. Can be continued sosial with lessons.
3. Spelled out in the components of biology, psychology and sociology.
4. Have a structure.
5. Have values.
6. Has static and dynamic properties.
7. Can be divided in various fields or aspects.

There are several factors that affect culture, namely (Rajeshwari & Shagirbasha, 2021):

1. Geographical cycle factors.
2. The parent factor of the nation.
3. Factors of mutual contact between nations.

Wrapping means wrapping it completely so that it is not visible (Mahmoudi & Parviziomran, 2020). In Japanese, the word "wrap" is called *tsutsumu* (包む). Wrapping and binding are two important things in *furoshiki*. The kanji "*tsutsumu*" (包む) comes from the figure of a woman who flatters the baby in her womb. Whereas, the kanji "*musubu*" (結ぶ) means to give shape to something or make something out of something that does not exist (Yamada 2014:110).

The wrapping culture in Japan is based on the custom of Japanese people who do not like to carry things in the open. In Japan, the word "*mottanai*" is known, which means not to be wasted (Nguyen, Parker, Brennan & Lockrey, 2020). *Mottanai* is what has become the lifestyle of the Japanese people. Leftover cloth or fabric that is no longer used, sewn, and then used for other purposes, such as wrapping things. The use of leftover fabric for other purposes is also not only for wrapping things, but can be used as a decoration or tablecloth.

Furoshiki (風呂敷) is a culture of folding fabrics to wrap things (Deni 2011:24). Literally, "*furo*" means bathing and "*shiki*" means to spread or spread. *Furoshiki* began to be used in Japan since the Nara period (710-794). In this era, *furoshiki* was known as *tsutsumi*, which is a cloth used to wrap valuables. *Furoshiki* were later used to wrap imperial treasures, known as *koromozutsumi* in the Heian period (794-1192) and *hirazutsumi* in the Kamakura period (1192-1338). In the Edo period (1615-1868), Japanese people had begun to use the word *furoshiki* to refer to the fabric used to wrap their clothes while in hot spring baths. At that time, Japanese people who came to public baths, wrapped their clothes and toiletries using towels or

silk cloths that usually had family symbols on them. This is intended so that their goods are not mixed or confused with other people's goods. Over time, the use of *furoshiki* has also grown. Japanese society then gave rise to ideas for wrapping a wide variety of other goods. In addition to wrapping, *furoshiki* can also function like an *obi* (belt on traditional Japanese clothing) that is no longer used, that is, as a decoration or tablecloth.

Since the 15th century, Nishijin has been the center of the textile industry in Japan (Sasanti & Milanguni, 2019). *Furoshiki* is available in a wide variety of materials, namely silk, rayon, cotton, polyester, nylon, and recycled fabrics. The inner sizes of *furoshiki* are: *chu-haba* and *shakuyon-haba* to wrap small objects, *futa-haba* and *nishaku-haba* to wrap gifts, clothes, and lunch boxes, *nishi-haba* to be used as additional bags, *mi-haba* to be used as tablecloths, *yo-haba* to wrap pillows, *itsu-haba*, *roku-haba*, and *sichi-haba* to wrap mattress.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a descriptive method. Descriptive research is research intended to investigate circumstances, conditions, situations, events, activities, and others, the results of which are presented in the form of research reports (You & Papps, 2022). The data collection technique used is a literature study technique. Literature study is any effort made by researchers to collect information that is relevant to the topic or problem that will or is being studied (Kellehear, 2020). Data is collected from existing sources, grouped, then analyzed, and used as research content.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Japanese people are used to a good thing that is to use the right amount at the right time effectively. Therefore, one Japanese tooling tends to have many functions. For example, in terms of the use of the room. One room in Japan can have

several functions, when holding a *futon* or sleeping mattress, the room will become a bedroom, when the *futon* is raised and arranged a table, then the room can function as a dining room, and when a mat is held, the same room will become a living room. *Furoshiki* also teaches to use things as effectively as possible. One cloth can be used as a wrapper for goods, a tablecloth, or as a bag. In the use of *furoshiki*, there are several things that need to be considered, namely the choice of colors and patterns. *Furoshiki* is not only used to wrap items in the form of boxes or squares, but can also be used to wrap various round objects such as watermelons or bottles, and can be made into bags.







The forms of *furoshiki* are *hira tsutsumi* (平包み), *otsukai tsutsumi* (お使い包み), *kakushi tsutsumi* (隠し包み), *yotsu musubi* (四つ結び), *futatsu musubi* (二つ結び), *sao tsutsumi* (竿包み), *m aki tsutsumi* (巻き包み), *suika tsutsumi* (すいか包み), *bin tsutsumi* (瓶包み), *b in nihon tsutsumi* (瓶二本包み), *tas ribbon*, *tas simple*, *tas shopping*, *tas shoulder*, *tas balloon*, *keranjang picnic*, *kisekae bag* (着せ替えバッグ), *hon tsutsumi* (本包み), *kasa tsutsumi* (傘包み), *hanataba tsutsumi* (花束包み), *ransel*, *hana tsutsumi* (花包み), *pem wrap roses*, *pem wrap ribbons*, *pembungkus stylish*, *pem wrap combination*, *pemegang twin*, *hachi tsutsumi* (鉢包み), *srung pillow*, *mem wrap tissue box*, *nejiri tsutsumi* (ねじり包み), *penghias sofa*, *taplak table*, and *mem wrap envelope*.




Forms of *Furoshiki*

Table 1. Forms of *furoshiki*

No.	Picture	Information
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1.		<i>Hira tsutsumi</i> (wrapping a flat object) - Wrapping a flat object without knots
2.		<i>Otsukai tsutsumi</i> (wrapping order) - Usually used to wrap food supplies or <i>bento</i>
3.		<i>Kakushi tsutsumi</i> (hidden wrap) - Wrapping practically and hiding knots
4.		<i>Yotsu musubi</i> (two vertical vertices) - Wrapping a heavy object
5.		<i>Futatsu musubi</i> (two horizontal vertices) - Wrapping a long object
6.		<i>Sao tsutsumi</i> (wrapping a long object)
7.		<i>Maki tsutsumi</i> (wrapping rolls) - Wrapping a cylindrical object or a

		long tube)
8.		<i>Suika tsutsumi</i> (watermelon wrapping)
9.		<i>Bin tsutsumi</i> (bottle wrapping) - Wrapping the bottle with a handle
10.		<i>Bin nihon tsutsumi</i> (wrapping two bottles) - Wrapping two bottles without having to use a visor
11.		Ribbon bag - Wrap books, files, and tablets
12.		Simple bag - Versatile small bags
13.		Shopping bags - A small bag that can be used to put things in while shopping

14.	<p>a.</p>  <p>b.</p> 	<p>Shoulder bag</p> <p>a. Shoulder bag with a long handle</p> <p>b. Sporty bag that can be carried on the back</p>
15.		<p>Balloon bag</p> <p>- Bags with single knots at all four angles</p>

The choice of *furoshiki* colors that will be used on various occasions conveys their respective meanings or meanings. For example, bright colors such as red or yellow are used during celebrations, and for mourning events use dark colors such as brown, purple, dark blue, and others. Meanwhile, the pola-pattern on *the furoshiki* denotes a symbol with a certain meaning contained in it. The *furoshiki* patterns are: *kai awase*, *takara zukushi*, *ariso*, *tombo*, *goshodoki*, *sho chiku bai*, *kame*, *fukiyose*, *same komon*, *asa no ha*, *enshu donsū*, *rikyū ume*, *shima*, *arare shima*, *shosoin monyo*, and *kamon*. These patterns are believed by Japanese society to bring benefits to the recipient. There are two basic nodes to know when creating *furoshiki*. The two basic knots are knots connecting two corners or ends of the fabric called *ma-musubi* knots and knots for one end or corner of *furoshiki* called *hitotsu-musubi*.

Furoshiki can also be used to decorate a house or room, that is, it can be used to decorate sofas and be used as tablecloths. Existing *furoshiki* are decorated in such a way and placed on a sofa or on a table. When attending events, the Japanese

usually hand over money that has been wrapped in envelopes and cloths called *fukusa*. The way to wrap the envelope is divided into two, namely wrapping the envelope for the celebration and wrapping the envelope for the funeral. The way to wrap an envelope for a celebration is to pull the left, top, and bottom corners in order above the envelope and end by pulling the right corner above and below the envelope. While the way to wrap an envelope for a funeral is to pull the right, bottom, and top corners sequentially above the amlop and end by pulling the left corner above and below the envelope.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that for Japanese society, *furoshiki* has a special meaning found in colors and patterns. They believe that the pattern present on the fabric can bring benefits to the recipient. Therefore, Japanese people use *furoshiki* on a wide variety of occasions. *Furoshiki* fabric can be used to wrap flat objects such as books, cake boxes, or files, to wrap bottles, flower pots, interior decorations, wrap envelopes and can be made bags.

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