

Minh Hanh

●Vietnam / Fashion Design

Public Lecture

Creativity in Asia discovered through fashion : Attractive features of Vietnamese fashion and culture formed and expressed by Minh Hanh

■Date: Sunday, September, 20, 2015 (14:00-16:30)

■Venue: Event Hall B2F, ACROS Fukuoka ■Participants: 400

<Part 1 Keynote Speech and Design Introduction>

New Fashion Dimensions From Fabrics of Ethnic Minorities and Japanese Tradition



The population of Vietnam is about 80 million people, and about 14% of that total consists of 53 ethnic minorities.

The people of these ethnic minorities are simple and straightforward. Their feelings change with what they see and feel in their daily lives, and as a result the colors, materials, and patterns of their fabrics change, too. What they make during the day will be different from what they make at night. As a designer, this is a wonderful characteristic and one to be treasured, but it is very difficult for us to

change our designs to match our moods as they do. When I work with the Hmong, eat with them, sleep in their homes, I can empathize with them. As a designer, I gain powerful inspiration from that empathy.

My apprentices often ask me what we can do to preserve and protect their traditional work. I reply that this is a never-ending battle. It is difficult for young designers to appreciate the value of tradition, because it is very difficult to successfully incorporate traditional elements into modern fashion. If they can come to appreciate traditional values, however, they treasure them forever. We are determined to continue fighting this battle.

I was born in the old city of Pleiku. The region is home to many ethnic minorities, and I often spent time with them. I loved them. After I graduated an arts university I began to pursue a career in fashion, and nobody would accept the use of traditional ethnic elements in fashion designs. They asked me why I would use materials nobody wanted to wear, and make designs that weren't civilized. I never gave up, though, and when I worked with traditional elements always felt the inspiration flow. It brought back what I had felt as a child. Later, that style of weaving was recognized as authentic Vietnamese culture, and began to be used in tourist souvenirs, giving the minorities a source of income, and pride in their heritage.

My goal is to create culture that intersects and mingles multiple eras and regions. The modern era needs authentic value born from tradition, and I work to pass that conviction on to the next generation.



A TaOi woman demonstrates the hand loom



Design incorporating ethnic TaOi elements



Design incorporating Japanese washi paper



Design incorporating kasuri pondee



Design incorporating kimono fabric

<Part 2 Panel Discussion>



●Panelist
NITTA Eiji
Professor Emeritus,
Kagoshima University



●Panelist
KAWACHI Hiroko
Professor Emeritus,
Koran Women's
Junior College



●Coordinator
FUJIHARA Keiyo
Professor, Graduate
School of Design,
Kyushu University

How to Preserve Tradition for Future Generations?

Professor KAWACHI, who has worked tirelessly to preserve and develop traditional Japanese fabrics such as Kurume kasuri pongee and Hakata-ori weaving, was delighted by the stunning combination of pongee and tulle fabrics in Minh Hanh's dress. Professor NITTA commented that the hand looms used by ethnic minorities have been excavated from 2500-year old graves. All felt the impact of Minh Hanh's work, combining tradition and modernity in complex ways.

A member of the audience asked what they can do to help preserve tradition for the future, and Ms. Minh Hanh replied "Youth can also feel the attraction of tradition, but it is important to show them the direction to grow in. Losing one's past is to lose your future."

School Visit

■Date: Friday, Sep. 18 (13:20-14:50)

■Venue: Koran College of Fashion Design

Ms. Minh Hanh came onstage with models wearing designs by herself, and her apprentices. She asked the models to walk through the student seating, and invited the students to notice the fabrics, embroidery, and weaving. As she introduced ethnic minorities, she advised students to "Treasure your roots and your identity. Japan has Hakata-ori and Kurume kasuri, and you

should utilize this cultural heritage in your own creations."

When asked what you need to be a designer, she replied it was "Thinking about designs every minute of the day. It can be lonely thinking by yourself, but if you really like design you'll willingly make the sacrifice. You have to love design from the bottom of your heart."

