

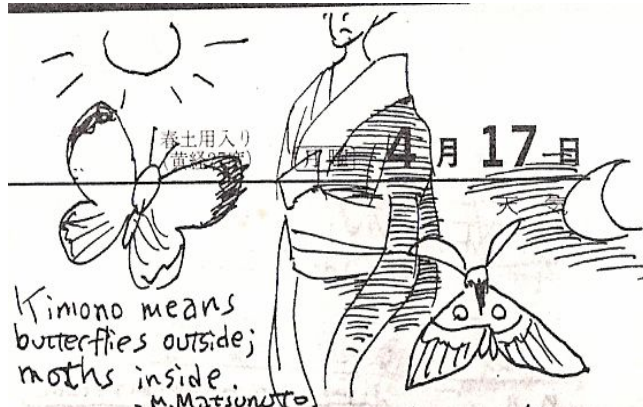
April 17, 2006 (Monday)

KIMONO Hide Shame (Honne).

Masks Hide Guilt.

着物は恥を隠し、

仮面は罪を隠す。



Another quixotic attempt to get attention among a women's group. As it turned out, this samurai fearlessness worked. There must've been approx. 15 women attending Annie M. Van Assche's presentation on KIMONO. I was the only male among the crowd. Wrong. There was another man, accompanying his physically disabled wife, who turned out to be Aaron M. Cohen, a former member of Delphi Club, the club both Nagata-san and I established in Tokyo in our thirties. Mr. Cohen, talmudic debater with an encyclopedic knowledge, and I met in our thirties. So we met here in thirty years. This is a miracle.

Was I bored to tears, watching slides on Kimono? On the contrary. I was "awakened" to several realities. Kimono is holistic. And if a Kimono-clad woman wears shoes or geta (wooden clogs) instead of sandals, it would be incongruous. She can't flaunt her beauty or catwalk, much less show crevices in her breasts. Women in Western dresses show encouraging 'conspicuous consumption,' flaunting their silent physical features, vital statistics, feeling guilty, sort of.

KIMONOed women are 'centered,' with their "hara" as a vital center of psycho-somatic activity. They walk 'grounded,' unlike most non-Japanese women wearing Kimono, including Chinese actresses in the movie, 'Memories of a Geisha.' Even a beautiful Chinese woman, Lisa was centered but not 'grounded' - off the ground. Chinese jump-dance; Japanese dance with their feet firmly on the ground. Most martial artists spin around their 'hara' center as an axis. My kind of judo or aikido is a cosmic dance of Siva. My hula dance can easily turn into an art of self-defense. The hexagonal logic of soccer debate is just an application of cosmic dance. Debaters must be centered enough to radiate their actions in all (at least 6) directions. 小股の切れ上がった女 is a fox whose behavior, or bodily action rather, is centered despite their deceptively slender and demure outlook. My book on haragei, visceral communication, must be updated.

Masters of psychology in Japan know how to hide behind Kimono so as to keep observers guessing what's under Kimono – honne. Kimono is tatemae – meant to be seen and heard. Both tatemae and honne are truths – outside truth and inside truth.

It's not aesthetic, ethical or moral to tell the truth, 'dekimono' ourselves. This is Japan's Kimono mind. Truth is somewhere between showing it and not showing it. Americans are a people, with their balance thrown off. They reveal too much. "Brokeback Mountain" or other 'gay' comedian movie I saw last night. Gross. I don't even want to remember the title of the movie. They reveal too much. Common courtesy demands they Kimono themselves to civil minimum. Gail Saltz, psychiatrist, says secrets can be good for us, in her book 'Anatomy of a Secret Life.' She says in part, "If we can control our own secrets, making sure they occupy the place we want them to, then our lives can seem manageable."

Look who's talking, shrink? That's a double standard. She says, 'Don't tell,' while encouraging their clients to tell. Come on. Give me a break. Westerners hide behind their masks, not showing their guilt. Professional identity is nothing but mask-outward personality. Cohen says BBC's Hard Talk is better than Larry King Live, because they take off their masks (persona in his word) and sound authentic, playing for real. Sen. Hillary Clinton, who gave a speech at Brown Univ. this morning, is a perfect orator displaying 'grace under pressure,' while 700 anti-war demonstrators kept shouting at her. She seems to have what it takes to run for presidency: plastic mask. The perfect couple, euphemism for plastic couple, with her oversexed husband, would certainly turn US politics and diplomacy around. Masks hide guilt. Kimono hides shame. Kimono, if brilliantly worn, outshines everyone around, causing them to lose face – or shame-consciousness in egalitarian communities. Did Lisa have to pay the price for her grandstand play? Or did I, as her promoter? All is shrouded in Kimono mysteries.

Some secrets must be clothed in Kimono. But here in America, in Hollywood or in New York, everyone "takes it off."

A young woman asks a handsome elderly man: "Did you sleep with my mother?" "Did you wear condoms?" in the not very controversial movie "Rumor Has It." I said to myself, "What? That's too direct." There should be more 'ma,' that's vital for any well-mannered Kimono-clad ladies. Kimono means critical social distance. Tourism is helping me morph into a butterfly acceptable even to female crowds in New York. I'll keep myself Kimonoed to maintain 'ma' (time-space warps) between moths and butterflies.