

# Endangered Japanese Textile Heritage

**Kazuko Satō, shifu expert, to visit UK: an amazing opportunity to hear the stories behind the unique paper textiles of North East Japan.**

Shifu is an exquisite woven paper cloth, which together with the associated technique of kamiko (clothes fashioned from treated sheets of paper) were once widely produced in Japan. They are now an endangered craft.

Kazuko Satō (91) has 65 years of experience of shifu weaving and is one of only a handful of craftspeople in Japan keeping this prized textile tradition alive. Her father-in-law revived shifu production in the 1930s and 40s and Kazuko has been updating his instructions for use by the next generation of weavers. Heartened by renewed interest internationally in the art of shifu weaving, in this her first visit to the UK, she will share her knowledge and skills through a series of fascinating lectures and demonstrations.

Her visit happily coincides with the exhibition, Art Without Heroes, Mingei, at The William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow which runs from 23 March - 22 September. Kazuko remembers as a student sitting at the feet of Bernard Leach and Sōetsu Yanagi, founder of the Mingei Japanese Folk Craft Movement.

More recently she has been interviewed as part of the British Museum's Endangered Material Knowledge Programme 'Paper People', a project nearing completion.

Over the last 5 years this amazing life story and the paper heritage has been recorded. Eleanor Burkett, who studied under Kazuko Satō in Japan has been working with Kazuko and Migiwa Matsutani, her translator, to collate this. The desire is to share this more widely, in-person and in English.... so come and be amazed!

## Events

- **Saturday 01 June, 2 - 4pm:** Welcome event at Bow Arts Studio, Old Manor Park Library, London E12 5JY. [Book your space here.](#)
- **Monday 03 June, 2 - 4pm:** Lecture hosted by the Endangered Material Knowledge Project (EMKP) at the Stevenson Lecture Theatre, British Museum, London WC1B 3DG. Booking opening soon.
- **Saturday 08 June, 1.30 - 5:30pm:** Talk and demonstration including afternoon tea, hosted by Textile Society, The Clore Learning Space, Garden Museum SE1 7LB. [Book your space here.](#)



## **Fundraising for Kazuko Satō's Visit**

Kazuko Satō introduced Eleanor to shifu, washi and kamiko 40 years ago when she was a student in Fukushima. Now it is her turn to make Kazuko's dream of visiting the UK to share her knowledge a reality. This can only be done with the generosity of others.

Time has been insufficient for formal grant applications, so Eleanor is looking to raise 6K to cover the cost of welcoming Kazuko Satō and her translator, Migiwa, to the UK. Migiwa's translation will unlock Kazuko's expertise and experience to new audiences.

[Find more information and ways to donate, follow this link.](#)

## **About Eleanor Burkett**

Trained in Fine Art Textiles at Goldsmiths College. Her passion for paper took her to Fukushima, North East Japan, where Kazuko Satō was her weaving teacher. Eleanor's artwork, using textile and paper processes interchangeably, is a contemporary response to paper techniques honed during 3 years living in Japan.

More recently Eleanor has written 'Washi Memories', a beautiful volume which celebrates the papermakers of Kamikawasaki. It was published in 2023 as a limited edition by The Old School Press.

For further information please contact Eleanor on [ellie@burkett.me.uk](mailto:ellie@burkett.me.uk).

