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Analysis of Okinawan Garment in UHM Costume Collection

Poster Session

Okinawa's trade with different nations resulted in a wealth of textile materials and the knowledge to create innovative textiles. What resulted were ingenious techniques for weaving, as well as unique designs. Much like Japan's traditional *kimono*, the Okinawan kimono is comprised of a basic straight body, rectangular sleeves, and a long narrow collar. The Okinawan version has a much wider body, with its length stopping at the ankle. The importance of textiles in Okinawa stems from its belief system. The kimono is not just a means of protection from the elements, nor is it merely a status signifier. In Okinawa, the kimono has religious importance. It is a means of protecting the animal spirit believed to reside in our bodies. Wrapping ourselves in woven cloth embraces and protects the spirits within us. This spirit, the *mabui*, protects individuals from harmful encounters with sickness or death. Even an unraveled seam could result in the demise of the wearer.