



Future Fashion Leaders on Show

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BUNKA Fashion College, the first professional dressmaking school in Japan, was established in 1923. Over 300,000 students have graduated from the institution, and some have become world-renowned fashion designers, including Yamamoto Yohji, who established the Yohji Yamamoto brand, and Takahashi Jun, who established UNDERCOVER. Approximately 3,500 students who aim for success in the fashion industry currently study at the college, which organizes its departments based on four specialties: Fashion Creation, Fashion Technology, Fashion Marketing and Distribution, and Fashion Accessories and Textiles.

Pieces designed by students are displayed and sold at the school festival held every November, which attracts many visitors who can also look around the facility or purchase goods from select shops organized by students. The highlight of the

All Photos: Itabashi Yuichi

The highlight of the annual festival at Bunka Fashion College in Tokyo is the fashion show, where students showcase their creations and thousands of people gather to watch.

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Some 20,000 people gather at the college to watch the fashion show each year. With the support of members of the fashion industry and teachers, students deal with all aspects of the fashion show, including planning, designing and creation of show pieces, styling, stage direction, modeling, hair and makeup, and setting up the venue. Each year, they leave visitors speechless not only with their fantastic stage direction but also with their elaborate creations.

Yoshimura Kaori and Hada Sayuri, teachers who also fulfill the role as chairs of the fashion show committee, explained the meaning behind the show managed chiefly by students.

“Students form teams in early May to start preparation. Three planners collaborate with other students, who are responsible for other parts of the show, to create a scene. Today’s students find it difficult to have passionate discussions with others.



Scenes from the Bunka Fashion College fashion show

While they may struggle to establish communication initially, they soon learn not to compromise and not to shy away from discord and conflict in order to create pieces of a high standard. In six months, they gain a lot of knowledge from the experience and grow as people.”

Domestic and overseas companies, textile organizations, production areas and trading companies provide a variety of materials to support the fashion show. After students have decided on a theme, which materials to use, and which scene to present their pieces, they give a presentation. Students who have successfully completed this process act as the head of the scene, and come up with designs by working with three planners and three design staff.

This year’s show was comprised of eight scenes. Each lasted about three minutes, during which nine to eleven models appeared successively on stage. A team that used materials provided by Eddie Bauer, an American outdoor brand, created a scene called *TEPPEN* (summit), to portray the ambitious mountaineers’ attitude toward life with pieces featuring the colors blue, red and white. The daring creations showed how outdoor wear might evolve in the future. The other team used materials provided by LANIFICIO CERRUTI, a long-established Italian textile manufacturer, and created a scene called *Ideal* based on the history of suits. Classic yet

modern pieces offered endless possibilities for fashion creation.

The most distinctive scene was called *Buvivian*, which used the national costume of Ukraine as its motif. Adorably colorful creations adorned with flower motifs that were made chiefly with folk-inspired textiles provided by the Embassy of Ukraine and Fujikake Co., Ltd. drew loud applause from the audience. The show lasted about 30 minutes, and was repeated sixteen times over three days. The venue, which accommodates up to 900 people, was full to capacity each time.

Sasaki Chiokuni, a second year student in Garment Creation in the Fashion Creation Department, who acted as the chair of the fashion show committee this year, decided to enter Bunka Fashion College after watching one of the fashion shows before enrolling. “I was mesmerized not only by their creations but also by the music, lighting and stage direction. I found it difficult to believe that the pieces were created by students. At the same time, I dreamed of creating a show like this myself.”

One thousand students were involved in this year’s fashion show. The valuable experience of organizing a quality show as students helps to develop talented people who can lead the fashion industry for the next generation. 