

"Hinagata Bon": The Art Institute of Chicago Collection of Kimono Pattern Books

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Hinagata Bon: The Art Institute of Chicago Collection of Kimono Pattern Books

BETTY Y. SIFFERT

The Art Institute of Chicago

The Asian Art Department and Ryerson Library collections of Japanese picture books (*e-hon*) at The Art Institute of Chicago began at the end of the last century with a gift from Martin A. Ryerson, founder of the museum's library and one of the Art Institute's earliest and greatest benefactors. Ryerson's gift was drawn from his own collection of books.

Under the guidance of Frederick W. Gookin, who was named curator of the Buckingham Collection of woodblock prints in 1914, significant additions were made through purchases from fine collections that came on the market in the early decades of this century. In 1923, the collection was augmented with a large part of the picture-book collection acquired by Ernest Fenollosa, an early curator of the Oriental Department of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, during his years of residency in Japan.

In 1931, a descriptive catalogue of both the Japanese and Chinese books in the Art Institute's collections was published.¹ This catalogue remains an important source of information because of its detailed descriptions of the books in the collections. In his introduction to the catalogue, Kenji Toda, the compiler and editor, explained the focus of the core collection of Japanese picture books: a history of Japanese painting in the Edo period (1603–1868) that would supplement the Buckingham Collection of *ukiyo-e* prints, providing insights into the development of the woodblock print and the background of the major *ukiyo-e* artists. *Ukiyo-e* means literally “pictures of the floating (or transient) world,” and it refers to a school of artists whose paintings and woodblock prints depicted the world of Edo period Japan.

The collection grew with the acquisition of books of the Meiji era (1868–1912), in part through gifts of works

collected by artists who had lived and worked in Japan around the turn of the century. Among these acquisitions was the collection of Louise Norton Brown, which Martin Ryerson purchased and presented to the museum in 1919. This collection is of particular interest here because it provided most of the kimono pattern books of the Meiji era in the museum's collection.²

After the death of Frederick Gookin in 1936, a memorial gift from his library of Japanese art books was presented to the museum. This large collection included significant works from both the Edo and Meiji periods.

Generally, *hinagata bon* means “design book” or “pattern book.” But in discussing the Japanese *e-hon*, or picture book, the expression is used more specifically to refer to the block-printed books of *kosode* or kimono patterns, the first of which was published in 1666 and was entitled *Shinsen O-Hinagata (A New Selection of Respected Patterns)*.³

Because most of the museum's early *e-hon* were chosen to support the Buckingham Collection of woodblock prints, many *hinagata bon* of the Edo period in the collection are works by major *ukiyo-e* artists. The number of such books by each was small, especially in comparison to their work in *ukiyo-e*, but it was very significant, for kimono designers were held in the highest regard as artists. Some not only designed books of patterns but actually painted garments. Several, such as Hishikawa Moronobu (d. 1694), were members of designer families.⁴ Some books in the Art Institute's collection have no identified artist, possibly because of the loss of title pages, but they are important in the study of the culture of the Edo period within which the *ukiyo-e* artists worked. Their presence is evidence that the Art Institute's collection of *hinagata bon* from this period is quite representative.

Hinagata bon were working documents intended for use by the draper in helping his patron select a new garment. Many were produced by drapers or cloth merchants themselves, or at a draper's direction. Most of those that survive show great wear; covers, title pages, and other parts have, in some instances, been lost. This condition is common to many of the older *e-bon*, but is compounded in the case of these heavily used fashion books.

Early *hinagata bon* had a rather standard form: on each page, an outline of the back of a garment was filled in with a proposed pattern or design. The designer might add some instructions concerning color and the process of copying the design; sometimes poetic names were provided, or admonitions were added about how the garment should be worn. This basic format was retained by many designers into the Meiji period. The Art Institute's collection includes other types of books related to textiles and garment design that were also used in kimono making.

The *hinagata bon* from the Meiji period are generally, with a few important exceptions, the work of designers who were unknown in the West then and now. This is understandable because, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the focus of many of the publishers turned to annual volumes reflecting the newest fashions, which would render obsolete the previous year's designs. Louise Norton Brown explained that the older books

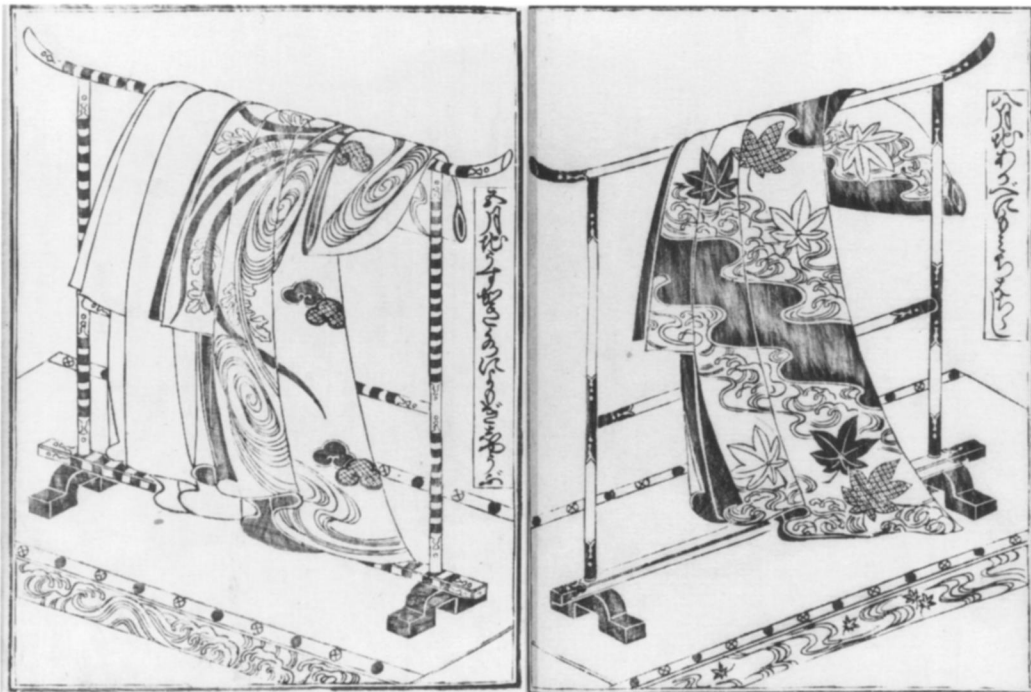
were "found in all the secondhand book shops of Japan . . . [and were] comparatively inexpensive."⁵ She suggested that useful and lovely collections could have been formed of such works, had they only been recognized. The Art Institute has almost one hundred Meiji *hinagata bon*, most of which are from Brown's collection.

In the figure captions that follow, the comments on books dating from the Edo period are based on the descriptive catalogue by Kenji Toda.

FIGURE 1. *Onna Shorei Shū* (Collection of Rules of Etiquette for Women), Volume 1: *Dress and Table Manners*. Published by Yamada Ichirobei (1660 [Manji 3]). 7 volumes, complete. 27 x 17 cm. (Ryerson Library 761.952 M860n)

This was one of many "useful books for women" published in the Edo period and was directed to the bride and young matron. Drawings of *kosode* (forerunners of the present-day kimono), which are portrayed as draped across lacquer racks on several pages in this volume, were guides to current fashion and popular design motifs. While this book predates the first *hinagata bon*, published in 1666, designs such as this could serve the same function; the draper could easily follow the drawing in making a garment selected by his patron.

The illustrations in this book have been attributed to the first *ukiyo-e* artist, Hishikawa Moronobu.



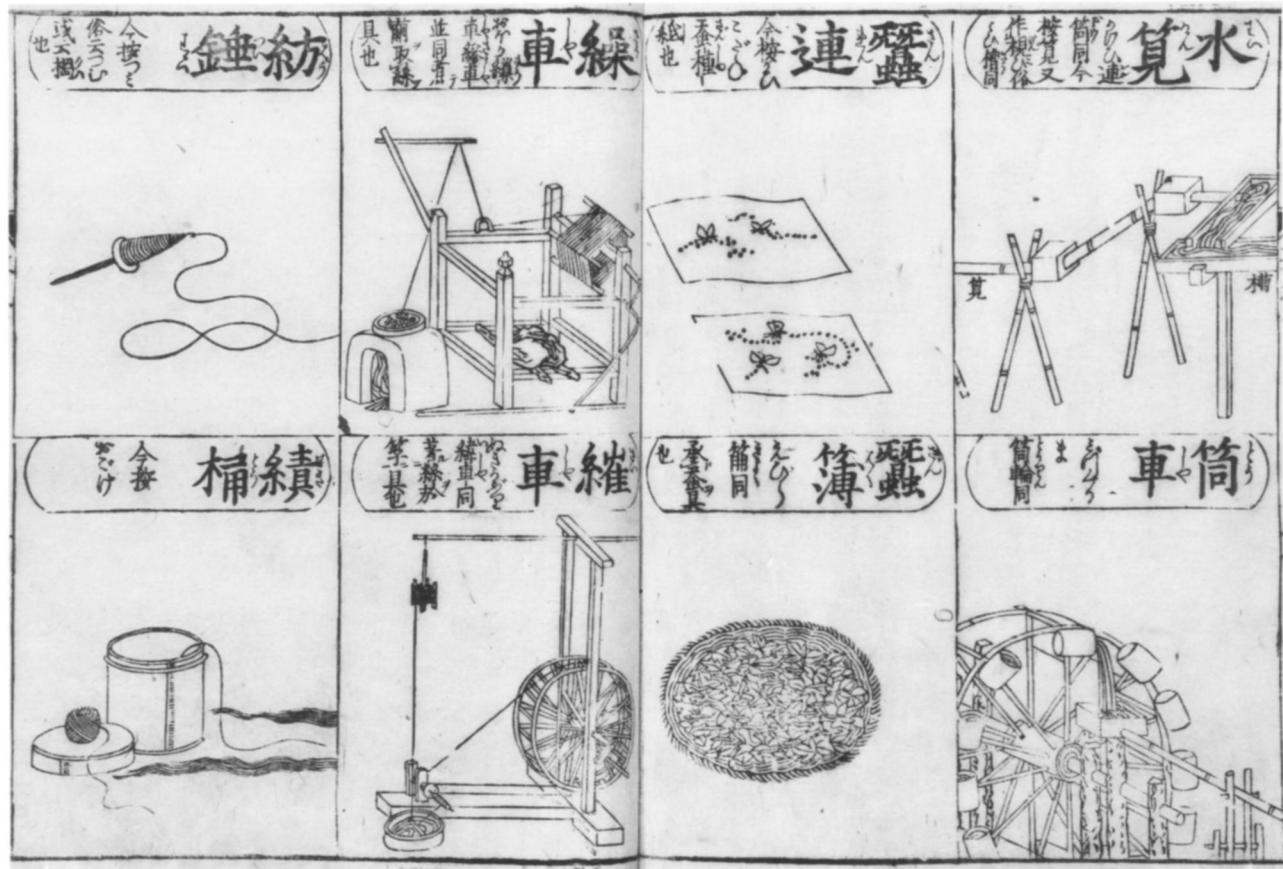


FIGURE 2. *Kunmō Zu-i* (A Collection of Pictures for Primary Instruction), Volume 10: *Utensils* (Kyoto, 1669–1695). Nakamura Tekisai, compiler. Eighteen of twenty volumes published by Yamagataya. 27 x 17 cm. (Ryerson Library 761.952 K961k)

The first edition of this work, published in 1660, was the earliest Japanese illustrated encyclopedia.⁶ This illustration is largely devoted to aspects of building tools and agriculture. Pictured here are several objects related to sericulture, which was almost exclusively the work of farm women. On the right page, upper left, young silkworms are spread on paper for sorting, with a picture below of cocoons formed by the worms on a tray. On the left page, upper right, is the winding of silk filament from a cocoon in boiling water. (See, in this issue, James T. Ulak, “Utamaro’s Views of Sericulture,” figs. 4c, 5a, and 6a) Above each picture are the Chinese character and Japanese name for the object, with references, on the left, to other related items.

The Art Institute has eight volumes from the first edition of this work, and ten from the second, which appears to have undergone several permutations between 1669 and 1695.

FIGURE 3. *Kosode No Sugatami* (*The Full-length Mirror of Kosode*) (1682). Hishikawa Moronobu, artist. 23 sheets. 18.5 x 13.5 cm. Formerly Arthur W. Dow Collection.

Moronobu (d. 1694) was both the first major *ukiyo-e* woodblock print artist and one of the period's most prolific illustrators of books.⁷ In this small volume there are twenty-three pages of one or two women in decorative *kosode*, each facing a page with a garment design in the *binagata* format. The book was designed for the draper, who could easily reproduce a garment from the clear delineation of pattern the artist had provided. On some pages, the user is instructed to use *chirimen*, a silk crepe, and is given needlework instructions for both the outside of the garment and its lining.

This work probably had popular appeal as well, since it is characteristic of Moronobu's rendition of the graceful female form in some of the loveliest of early *ukiyo-e*, done at the height of his career.⁸



FIGURE 4. "Kimono Designs" (Edo [Tokyo]: Yezōshiya Hachiyemon, and Kyoto: Yezōshiya Kisayemon, 1688 [Jōkyō 8]). Title and artist not given. This is the second of a probable two-volume set. 25 sheets. 27 x 19 cm. (Ryerson Library 761.952 K49)

In this work, each *binagata*-style design is directly related to one of the poems in *Hyakunin-Isshu* ("Verses by One Hundred Poets"), an anthology of classical Japanese poetry dating from the thirteenth century and still very popular in Japan. To the right of each design is the name of the poet, with a five-line poem inscribed on each side of the garment. Each design reflects the artist's reaction to the sentiment of the poem, sometimes with a line or phrase from the poem incorporated into the pattern.

This volume contains the second group of fifty poems in the anthology, suggesting that the first fifty were in volume 1. The work reflects the union of literature, visual art with traditional themes or motifs, and textile decoration, which is characteristic of the history of Japanese art.



FIGURE 5. *Tōryū Hinagata Kyō Mizu* (Modern Patterns: *The Water of Kyoto*) (Kyoto: Nagata Chōbei, 1705 [Hōei 2]). Artist: not given. 3 volumes, complete. 26 x 18.5 cm. (Ryerson Library 761.952 T712)

These volumes are quite typical of the *hinagata bon* format; the set's worn condition suggests heavy use for its primary purpose—to provide pattern ideas for the patron and the kimono maker.

Pictured is a pattern with a small “checkerboard” design, which could have been executed in a variety of ways depending on the wishes of the patron, the expertise of the kimono artisan, or the intent of the designer. In one of *nuibaku* in the Art Institute’s collection (pl. 4; cat. no. 2), the squares of “checkerboard” design were executed in silver leaf impressed on the fabric with a needlework overlay.

FIGURE 6. *Hinagata Yado No Ume* (Patterns: *The Plum Tree of Our Home*) (1730 [Kyōhō 15]). Tagagi Kōsuke, Banryuken, Manjiken Nakajima Tanjirō, Himekiya Magobei, artists. 1 volume, incomplete. 25.7 x 18.5 cm. (Ryerson Library 761.952 K866)

Because the volume is incomplete and only four of the 54 sheets present have artists’ signatures, the different artists’ work cannot be clearly identified, and there may be work in the volume by other artists.

This pattern book is devoted to a single theme long used in many of the visual arts as well as in *kosode* and kimono design: the flowering plum tree and the plum blossom, representative of early spring because it often starts blooming in February. The Art Institute’s red silk embroidered *furisode* with plum tree design (pl. 26; cat. no. 23) is a masterful interpretation of this popular theme that appears in the pattern on the right.

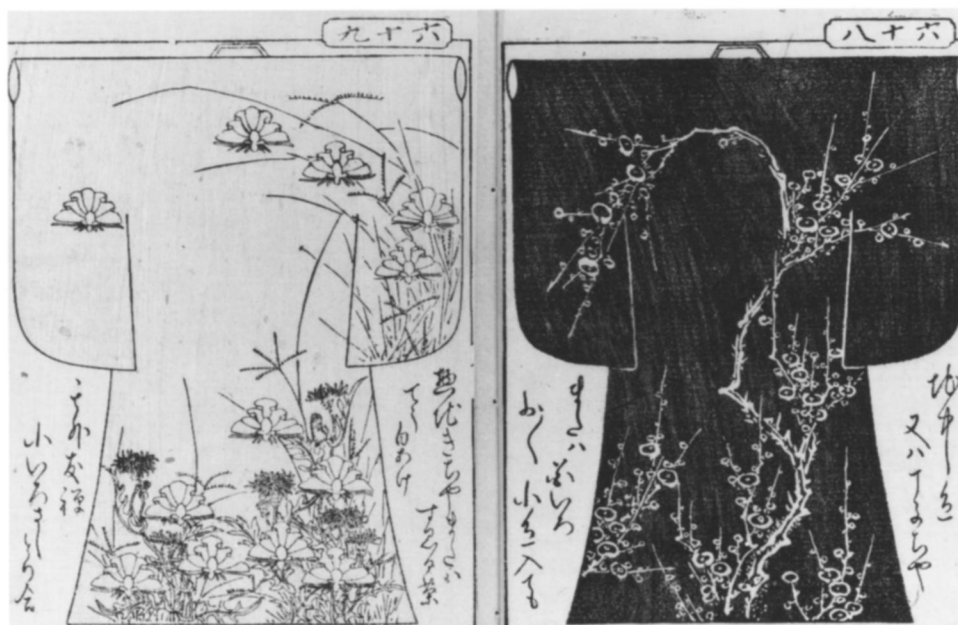




FIGURE 7. *Hinagata Some-Iro No Yama* (Patterns: The Mountain of Dye Colors) (Subtitle: *Tōryū Kōrin Shin-Moyō* [New Patterns in the Modern Style of Kōrin]) (Kyoto: Kikuya Kihei, 1732 [Kyōhō 17]). Kyoto, Nonomura, artist (probably Nonomura Chūbei). 3 volumes, complete. 26.5 x 18.5 cm. (Ryerson Library 761.952 C559h)

There are 112 patterns in these volumes for women's kimono that are primarily derived from the works of Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716), one of Japan's greatest painters and designers. Each pattern was given a name, generally a flower or plant; the designer also added notes about appropriate colors to be used in the yuzen-dyeing process.

As shown in this book, most designs of the first half of the eighteenth century used the full back of the garment for a design, which generally swept from the right shoulder toward the left hem. The garment was either worn loosely as a cloak over a kimono or was tied with a very narrow sash, the *obi*, so as not to interfere with the pattern.

The kimono pattern on the left uses the flowing plum tree combined with the pictorial fan. A similar theme appears in the Art Institute's *furisode* with mandarin oranges and fans in its design (pls. 24; cat. no. 21).

FIGURE 8. *Yebon Sakaegusa* (Picture Book of a Prosperous Household) (Edo [Tokyo]: Izumiya Ichibei, 1790 [Kwansei 2]). Katsukawa Shunshō, author of preface. Katsukawa Shunchō, artist; signed: Gōto Gakō Cūrinsha Katsukawa Shunchō. 2 volumes, bound in one, complete. Color. 20.5 x 15 cm. (Ryerson Library 761.952 S562s)

Katsukawa Shunshō (1726–1792) was a leading *ukiyo-e* artist in the late eighteenth century whose greatest works were prints representing actors. These prints are heavily represented in the collection of the Art Institute. Shunshō gave this book its title. Katsukawa Shunchō (fl. 1780–1795) was his pupil, and worked on both prints and book illustrations.

The pages reproduced here are from the first volume, illustrating a young woman's homelife. Represented are preparations for a wedding: selecting fabrics from the finished *tan*, or bolts of silk, and the hand-sewing of the kimono trousseau.



FIGURE 9. *Shingata Komon Chō* (*Album of New Komon Designs*) (Edo [Tokyo]: Harimaya Katsugorō, 1824 [Bunsei 7] [date of the preface]). Katsushika Hokusai, artist; signed: Zen Hokusai iichi fude. 1 volume, complete. 18 x 12 cm. Frederick W. Gookin Memorial Collection. (Ryerson Library 761.952 H7shin)

Katsushika Hokusai (1760–1849) was a preeminent print artist and painter, perhaps Japan's best known.

Komon are small, repeat patterns, at the time especially popular among the samurai class for semiformal and informal kimono. Later in the Edo period, they became generally popular with all classes as the sumptuary laws restricting elaborate dress were increasingly enforced.

In this small book, Hokusai presented many intricate geometric patterns and instructions for the efficient copying of each by the textile artisan. According to the preface, the patterns are Hokusai's original designs. Generally, the resulting drawings would have been transferred to fabric using stencils; the length of fabric would then have been vat-dyed to achieve the desired pattern. This book was to be followed by another related to needlework designs for garments, but this volume was apparently never completed.⁹

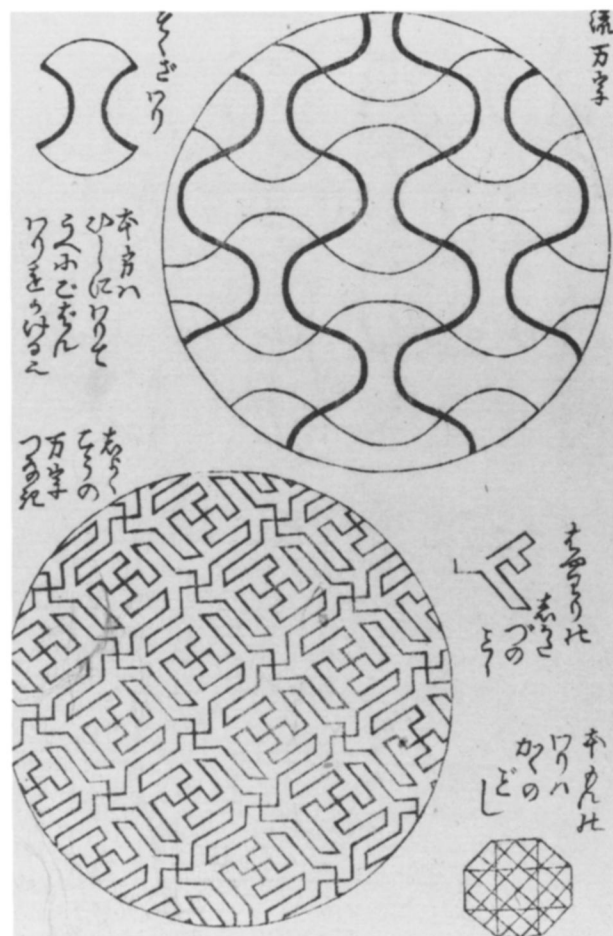


FIGURE 10. *Sanjūni-Sō Sugata Kurabe, Jochū Kyōkun Shina-Sadame* (*Thirty-two Women's Graces: Instructive Comments for Women*) (Osaka: Murakami Genyemon and Kyōya Kōsuke, engravers and publishers [?], 1717 [Kyōhō 2]). Nishikawa Sukenobu, artist; signed: Nishikawa-uji fude. 1 volume, complete. 20.5 x 15 cm. (Sheets in this volume are numbered *i, ro, ba.*) (Ryerson Library 761.592 S94sa)

Sukenobu (1671–1751) was a leading illustrator of books during the middle Edo period, producing several *binagata bon*, as well as an *ukiyo-e* artist. In this volume, instead of using the *binagata* outline format, he sought greater popular appeal by showing graceful young women modeling his designs. Above each figure, he provided a fanciful *mon*, or crest, along with instructions on how a woman might achieve each of the thirty-two Buddhist ideal graces: nobility, longevity, dignity, etc. On some pages, he also discussed women's ethics and behavior.¹⁰

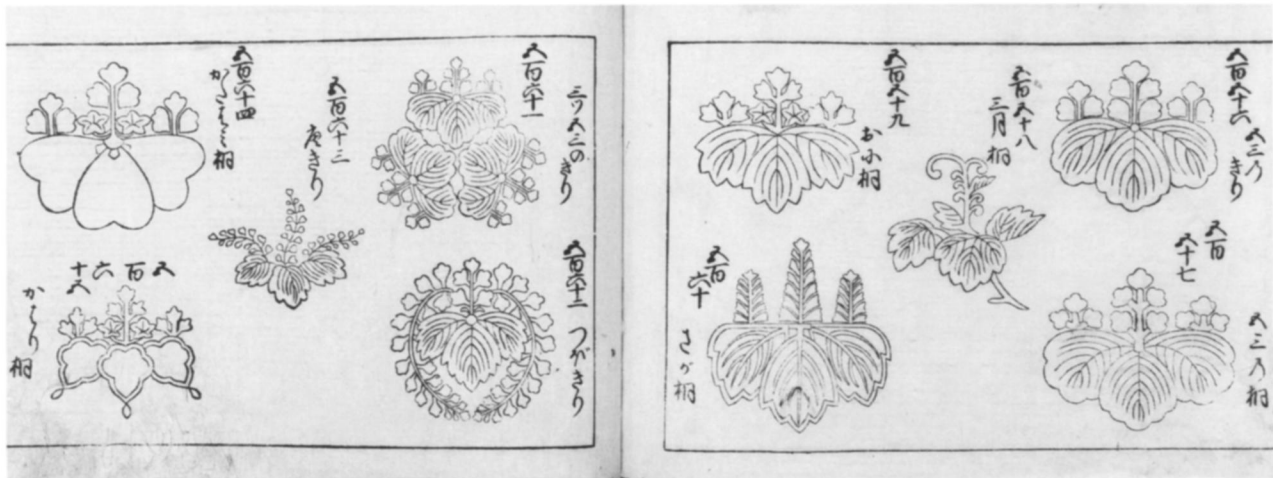


FIGURE 11. *Monchō Zushiki Kōmoku* (Book of Classified Forms of Crests) (Osaka: Aburaya Jinshichi, 1762 [Horeki 12]). Taga Kinsuke, artist. Murakami Kōsuke, engraver. 1 volume, complete. Gift of Frederick W. Gookin Memorial Collection. (Ryerson Library 745.44952 T121m)

Most of this book consists of sets of illustrations showing how a basic, traditional motif for a *mon* such as the pine tree, the fan, the paulownia leaf, etc., can be modified to provide a great variety of designs. At the end of the book are several pages of instructions for copying based on the basic geometry of the designs. These instructions could have been used in a variety of visual arts or could have been adapted for practical purposes such as creating merchant signs.

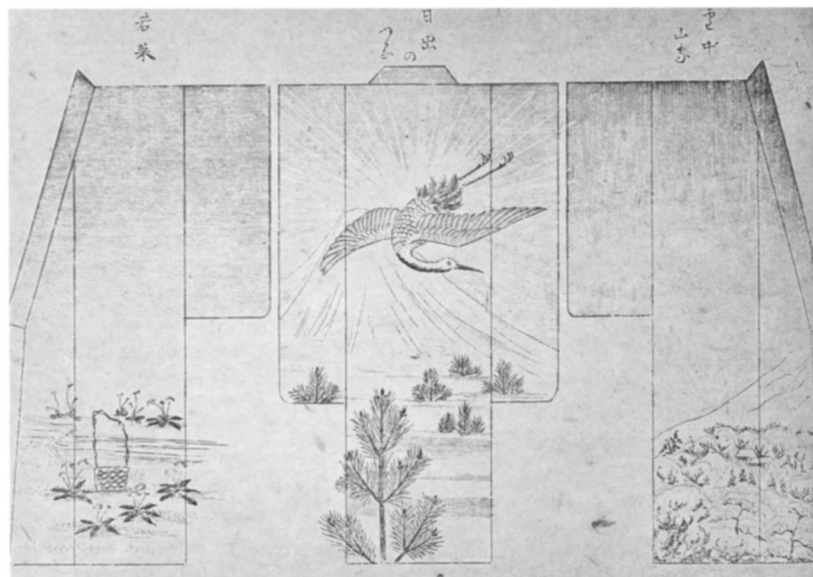


FIGURE 12. *Koyeki Non Chō Taizen: Kodai Moyō* (Ornaments of Old: A Collection of Designs) (Kyoto: Nakamura Asako, 1891 [Meiji 24]). Kyūsaburō Kaiyama, designer. 3 volumes, complete. 11 x 16 cm. Gift of Frederick W. Gookin Memorial Collection. (Ryerson Library 745.44952 K13k)

These small volumes provide a wide variety of designs for crests, borders, textiles, and *kanji* characters, in many cases with diagrams for their reproduction in various art forms. Pictured here is a variation on the *binagata* outline for the kimono. In addition to the back, both left and right fronts are shown in outline with the placement of the design. By the time this book was published, the *obi*, or sash, had reached its present width of 30 centimeters (about 14 inches), with a large decorative tie in the back that had to be considered in the surface design of the garment. Generally, the important elements of the pattern were moved to the bottom of the kimono, to the lower sleeve, and sometimes to the upper back and shoulders.

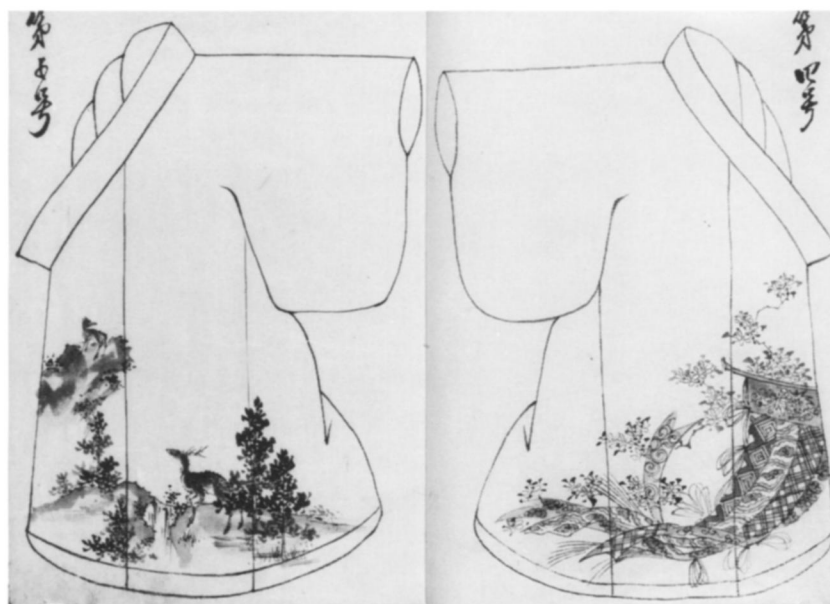


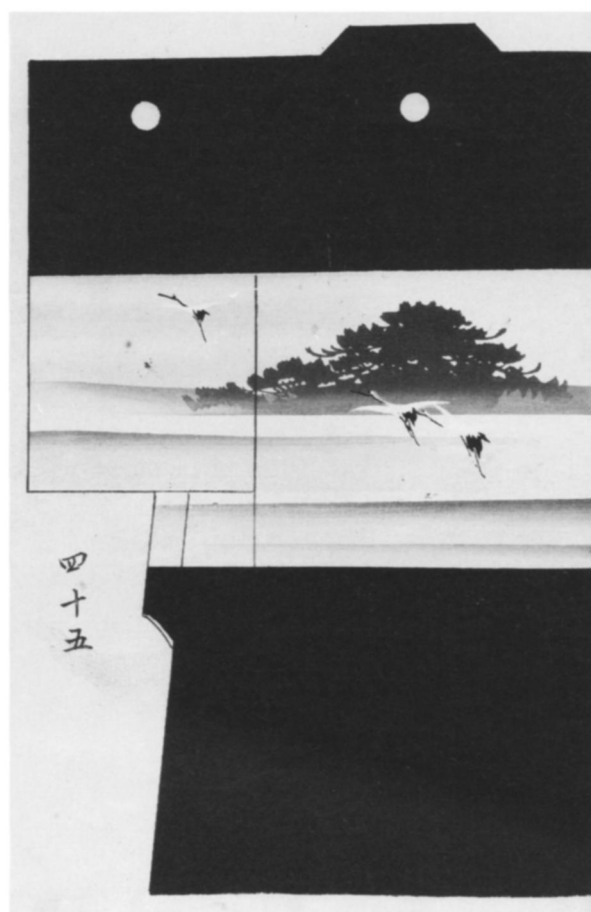
FIGURE 13. *Hinagata Bon*-style work, possibly a sketchbook. Title page information missing; probably produced between 1874 and 1901. 1 volume, complete. 26.5 x 19.5 cm. Gift of Martin A. Ryerson, purchased from Louise Norton Brown Collection. (Ryerson Library 745.44952 H653)

Each design shows half of the garment back and one side of the front. All designs were hand drawn and some were enhanced with subtle color. This unknown artist had the lyrical touch of some of the earlier *ukiyo-e* masters. The depiction of a brocade curtain of classical Japanese design could have been strikingly realized in embroidery, much as a similar pattern is in the Art Institute's *uchikake* (pl. 23; cat. no. 20).

FIGURE 14. *Hinagaromo (Designs for Kimono: Moon)* (Kyoto: Honda Ichijiro, 1906 [Meiji 39]). Kiyoe Tabata, artist. One volume of probably a larger set. Color. 32.5 x 23 cm. Gift of Martin A. Ryerson, purchased from the Louise Norton Brown Collection. (Ryerson Library 745.44952 T11hi)

Early in the twentieth century, this artist (Kiyoe Tabata) and publisher (Honda Ichijiro) issued several annual sets of kimono designs reflecting the latest in fashions, much as the design houses do today. In this work and others, there was an emphasis on a dark background fabric, using strong colors of brown, purple, green, and, of course, black. These colors remain popular in Japan with married and mature women who still wear kimono for ceremonial occasions.

Patterns with major design elements in the middle, such as that pictured, were probably for *haori* or *uchikake*, which were worn loosely over the *obi*-tied kimono. In the finished garment, the draper would add the wearer's family *mon* where the white circles appear on the shoulders.



17. See Muneshige (note 12), supp. vol., figs. 149–60, n. pag. The page layout of images suggests that Utamaro's sericulture series can also be interpreted as three groups of four each, rather than the more common grouping of four triptychs.

SIFFERT, "Hinigata Bon: The Art Institute of Chicago Collection of Kimono Pattern Books," pp. 86–94.

1. Kenji Toda, *Descriptive Catalogue of Japanese and Chinese Illustrated Books in the Ryerson Library of The Art Institute of Chicago* (Chicago, 1931).
2. The *hinigata bon* (pattern books) of the Meiji era in the Art Institute's collection have been catalogued in Cheryl Boettcher, "The Kimono Imagined," *Occasional Papers* (University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science), no. 180 (Nov. 1987).
3. Jack Hillier, *The Art of the Japanese Book* (London, 1987), pp. 112–13.
4. Hillier (note 3), chap. 8 ("Kimono Pattern Books of the Seventeenth Century").
5. Louise Norton Brown, *Block Printing and Book Illustration in Japan* (New York, 1924), p. 203.
6. Christie's, New York, *The Donald and Mary Hyde Collection of Japanese Books and Manuscripts* (Oct. 7, 1988: lot 102).
7. Richard Lane, *Images from the Floating World: The Japanese Print* (New York, 1978), pp. 44–46.
8. See also Hillier (note 3), pp. 112–13. See p. 114, pl. 63, for an illustration from another copy of Moronobu's book.
9. For additional information on this work, see Matthi Forrer, *Hokusai*, with text by Edmond de Goncourt (New York, 1988), p. 250, pls. 284–85.
10. See Hillier (note 3), p. 160, and p. 162, pl. 111. The book reproduced in Hillier is in the collection of the Art Institute. There is no standard translation for titles of older Japanese books; Hillier translates this title as *A Comparison of Thirty-Two Different Types*.

Isoda Koryūsai (Japanese, active 1766–1788). *Ukifune no Kane-ya* (*Ukifune of House of Kane*), c. 1778. From the series *Hinigata Wakana no Hatsu Moyō* (*New Designs as Fresh as Young Leaves*). Woodblock print; 37.6 x 24.9 cm. The Art Institute of Chicago, Clarence Buckingham Collection of Japanese Prints (1939.2174).

