

HIGHLIGHTING  
*Japan*

VOL.  
**175**  
DECEMBER  
2022



THE PATTERNS OF JAPAN

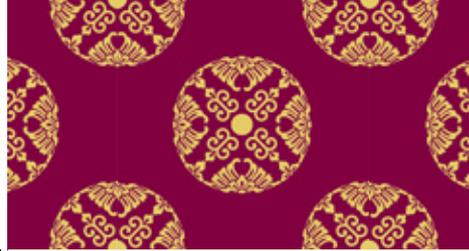
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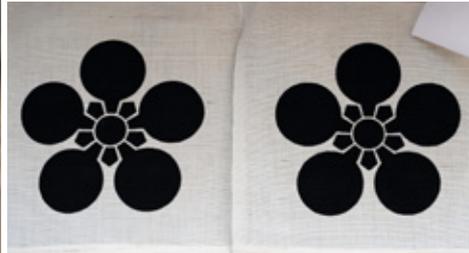
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## **THE PATTERNS OF JAPAN**

The first patterns to appear on the Japanese archipelago were created more than 10,000 years ago in a time called the Jomon period, named after the cord patterns (*jomon*) characteristic of the pottery of the period. Later, patterns from overseas began to reach Japan, and over time these patterns were remade in Japanese style. The patterns became increasingly diverse and were applied in various ways to everything from clothing such as kimonos to folding fans, lacquerware, ceramics and buildings. In this month's issue of *Highlighting Japan*, we take a look at some of the wide variety of patterns familiar in Japan today.

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**PRODUCTION** The Japan Journal

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**EDITORIAL SUPPORT** Kiura Eriko

**CONTRIBUTORS** Kato Kyoko, Sakurai Shin, Sasaki Takashi, Sato Kumiko, Sugiyama Mamoru, Yanagisawa Miho

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**DESIGN** Okadome Hirofumi

#### **ON THE COVER**

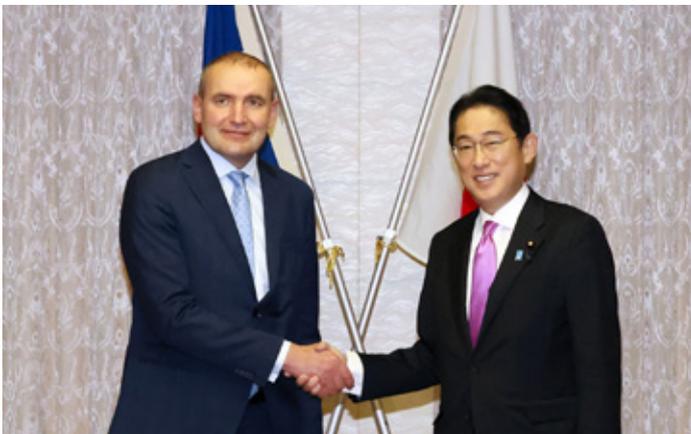
On the cover: An *obi* belt for a modern kimono, decorated with *yusoku monyo* patterns including “*onagadori no maru*” (long-tail bird roundels)  
Photo: Aizawa Tadashi

#### **EDITORS' NOTE**

Japanese names in this publication are written in Japanese order: family name first, personal name last.

## MEETINGS BETWEEN PRIME MINISTER KISHIDA AND H.E. MR. GUDNI THORLACIUS JOHANNESSEN, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ICELAND, AND HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS ASTRID OF THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

On December 3, 2022, Mr. Kishida Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan, met with H.E. Mr. Gudni Thorlacius Johannesson, President of the Republic of Iceland, who visited Japan to give a keynote speech at the World Assembly for Women (WAW! 2022). In addition, on December 5, Prime Minister Kishida held a meeting with Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of the Kingdom of Belgium, who visited Japan. Overviews of the meetings are as follows:



Prime Minister Kishida with H.E. Mr. Gudni Thorlacius Johannesson, President of the Republic of Iceland

### Meeting between Prime Minister Kishida and H.E. Mr. Gudni Thorlacius Johannesson, President of the Republic of Iceland

Prime Minister Kishida welcomed President Johannesson's visit to Japan and stated that Japan would like to further strengthen the bilateral relations with Iceland. In response, President Johannesson stated that it was an honor to give a keynote speech at the WAW! 2022, and that he would like to take the opportunity of his visit to Japan to further develop the bilateral relations.

Prime Minister Kishida stated that Japan would like to continue close cooperation on the Arctic issues, the sustainable use of marine living resources and others. In response, President Johannesson stated that he welcomed the development of dialogues with Japan in various fields, and that he would like to further enhance the bilateral cooperation on various global issues. Prime Minister Kishida and President Johannesson also exchanged the views on Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the situation in East Asia, and they confirmed that the two countries would work together to maintain the international order based on the rule of law.



Prime Minister Kishida with Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of the Kingdom of Belgium

### Meeting between Prime Minister Kishida and Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of the Kingdom of Belgium

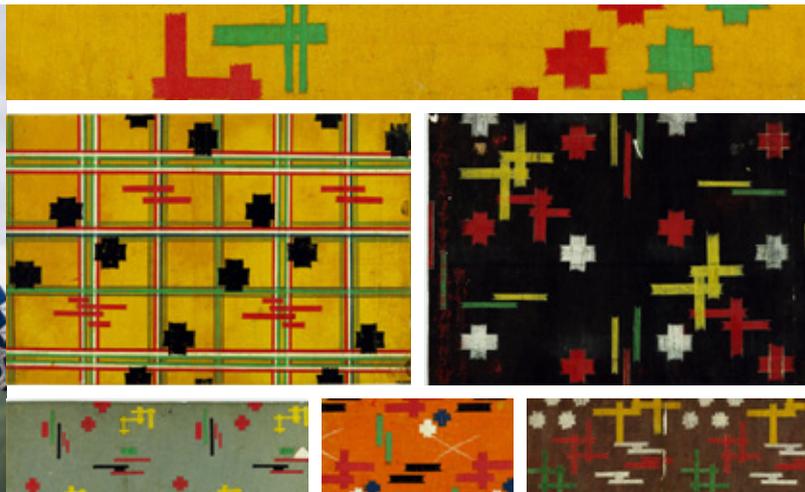
At the outset, Prime Minister Kishida welcomed the visit to Japan of the Belgian Economic Mission led by Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid and expressed his hope that this visit would contribute to further strengthening economic ties between Japan and Belgium, noting that cooperation on offshore wind power, hydrogen, next-generation semiconductors and DX would be promoted during the Mission's stay in Japan. In response, Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid expressed her wish to make this visit to Japan an opportunity to further develop relations between the two countries in the economic field.

Prime Minister Kishida and Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid shared the view that both states would continue to strengthen the relationship, including in the economic security field, between Japan and Belgium as strategic partners that share the fundamental values.

Dancers at Upopoy wearing clothing and headbands featuring Ainu patterns  
Photo: Courtesy of the Foundation for Ainu Culture



Sections of various *miezu* patterns (Album of Miezu Pattern Samples (National Treasure: Ryukyu King Sho Family Related Documents))  
Photo: Courtesy of NAHA CITY MUSEUM OF HISTORY



A *mushi-kui* pattern, including diseased leaves as an accent (the yellow leaf center right)  
Photo: Courtesy of Kaga Zome Promotion Cooperative Association



A roof tile with the imprint of a family crest (5-7 paulownia)  
Photo: take\_p/PIXTA

# The Patterns of Japan



A *sensu* folding fan with a wave pattern  
Photo: Courtesy of Miyawaki Baisen Co., Ltd.



Ise-Katagami stencil for a crane pattern  
Photo: Courtesy of Kioi Art Gallery

**T**

he first patterns to appear on the Japanese archipelago were created more than 10,000 years ago in a time called the Jomon period, named after the cord patterns (*jomon*) characteristic of the pottery of the period. Later, patterns from overseas began to reach Japan, and over time these patterns were remade in Japanese style.

The patterns became increasingly diverse and were applied in various ways to everything from clothing such as kimonos to folding fans, lacquerware, ceramics and buildings. In this month's issue of *Highlighting Japan*, we take a look at some of the wide variety of patterns familiar in Japan today.



# History and Characteristics of Japanese Patterns



Fuji Eriko  
Photo: Courtesy of Osumi Takayuki

**W**E interviewed Fuji Eriko, a researcher of Japanese patterns, about the history and characteristics of Japanese patterns.

## Please tell us about the history of Japanese patterns.

It is thought that the history of Japanese patterns began when they were drawn on earthenware in the Jomon period.<sup>i</sup> At that time, earthenware such as jars and plates were decorated with various patterns made using fingernails, shells, ropes, and other items. Examples include curved patterns such as spirals and waves, geometric patterns with continuous triangles, and rope impression patterns.

During the Kofun period (late 3rd to 7th century), various patterns originating from ancient Egypt, Greece, China, and other countries reached Japan. For example, when Buddhism was introduced in the middle of the 6th century, patterns related to Buddhism spread. One of them is a pattern with stylized flowers, leaves, and fruits of the lotus, a plant emblematic of Buddhism. The lotus pattern was applied to the architectural decorations of temples, pedestals of Buddha statues, Buddhist ritual implements, and so on.

In the Heian period (late 8th to late 12th century), patterns that had originated overseas began to be remade in Japanese style. For example, patterns depicting birds such

as phoenixes<sup>ii</sup> and parrots holding flowers, grass, ribbons, and other objects with their beaks were transmitted to Japan during the Kofun period, but in the Heian period, they changed to cranes holding pine sprigs with their beaks, and began to be depicted on mirrors and *maki-e*<sup>iii</sup> boxes. It is thought to be because in Japan, both pine and cranes symbolize longevity.

After the foundation for Japan's traditional patterns was laid in the Heian period, these patterns became more diverse and came to be applied to everything from kimonos to lacquerware, ceramics, and buildings.

## What are the main types of traditional Japanese patterns?

The patterns with the most types in Japan are those with stylized "plants." Standard patterns for kimono are cherry and plum blossoms in spring and chrysanthemums and maple leaves in fall<sup>iv</sup>. The *karakusamon* design transmitted to Japan during the Kofun period is a stylized pattern of grass with tangled leaves and stems, and is very familiar to Japanese people as a pattern on *furoshiki*,<sup>v</sup> which is a type of cloth used to wrap things. There are also patterns that combine *karakusamon* with chrysanthemums, peonies,



A Jomon-period pottery vessel with patterns thought to represent flowing water (Collection of Kyushu National Museum)  
(Diameter 32.5 cm, height 43 cm)  
Photo: ColBase (<https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>)



Two-tiered cabinet with a design featuring cranes and pine sprigs made with *maki-e* lacquer and mother-of-pearl inlay (19th century) (Collection of Tokyo National Museum)  
Photo: ColBase (<https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>)



An *obi* kimono belt decorated with a butterfly pattern  
Photo: Courtesy of Fuji Eriko



The *karakusamon* design printed on a *furoshiki* wrapping cloth

grapes, and so forth.

Patterns depicting the leaves and flowers of the paulownia tree are among the best-known types of plant patterns. Paulownia patterns were first used in the Heian period when they were adopted as the emblem of the imperial family and warlords. Nowadays, a paulownia emblem is sometimes used by the Japanese government in official settings.

The number of plant patterns increased in the Edo period, which lasted for about 260 years from the beginning of the 17th century. During this period, there were almost no major military conflicts and society was stable, so culture, industry, and technology developed in all kinds of ways. Horticulture also developed, and as the number of flowering plants cultivated for ornamental purposes increased, so did the patterns. For example, the cultivation of morning glory, which blooms in summer, became very popular in the 19th century, especially as a pattern for summer kimono.

I feel that many of the plants that are made into patterns are not simply beautiful, but they also have medicinal properties. Chrysanthemum, paulownia, and morning glory were also used in folk medicine. People may have tried to convey life wisdom through the plant patterns.

In addition to plants, there are also many patterns depicting “living things” such as birds, fish, shellfish, and insects. Among the patterns with living creatures, there are few depicting fierce beasts such as bears and wolves, as it seems most show creatures that people can see close by. Since ancient times in Japan, people have believed in the Buddhist idea of “reincarnation,” in which people and creatures repeat life and death over and over again. According to this belief, a person is not necessarily reborn as a person. I feel that the reason why there are many common creatures in the patterns is the desire that if you can’t be reborn

as a person, at least you would want to be reborn as a creature familiar to humans.

### What other patterns are there?

There are patterns that depict “nature” such as the moon, stars, thunder, mountains, rivers and waves. One familiar pattern is the *seigaihamon*. This is a pattern with regular repetitions of fan-shaped waves. It is said to have originated in ancient Persia and was introduced to Japan via the Silk Road. The unending waves are imbued with a wish for eternal happiness in the future.

A unique pattern is the *Yakushamon*, created in the Edo period. “*Yakusha*” here refers to a kabuki actor. The name comes from the fact that kabuki actors used it as their mark. One *Yakushamon* is the *ichimatsumon*. This pattern, which has alternating squares in two colors, is also found in similar forms overseas, but in Japan, it was used for costumes worn by the 18th-century kabuki actor Sanogawa Ichimatsu, hence the name. In one of the most well-known works of the ukiyo-e artist Kitagawa Utamaro (1753-1806), *Young Woman Blowing a Popen* (glass noisemaker), the woman is shown wearing a kimono featuring the *ichimatsumon* pattern.

Moreover, patterns based on puns and word play are extremely common. For example, there is pattern with a plant called “*nanten*” that is said to have been introduced from China for medicinal and ornamental purposes during the Heian period. *Nanten* was considered an auspicious plant because of the pun “*nan o ten-jiru*” (Japanese for “escape from calamity”). It is not only used as a New Year’s decoration and planted in gardens as a protective charm but also put on various things in the form of a pattern.

In addition, there is a wide variety of patterns including boats and other vehicles, dragons and other legendary

animals, and musical instruments.

### Do you have any advice to visitors to Japan from overseas on where to find these patterns?

Even today, patterns are used for various objects and places in Japan. You can find traditional patterns on dyed fabrics and ceramics as well as on the roofs and walls of castles, shrines, temples, and other buildings.

What you surprisingly might not notice are the various patterns depicted on Japanese coins and banknotes. For example, the 50-yen coin has a chrysanthemum flower, the 100-yen coin has a cherry blossom, and the 500-yen coin has a paulownia blossom<sup>vi</sup>. The back of the 1,000 yen bill also has cherry blossoms depicted<sup>vii</sup>. When you get your hands on these in Japan, I hope you will take a look.

Traditional patterns are used in various forms in modern society. Recently, more and more accommodations have been using wallpaper and floor tiles with traditional patterns for their interior decoration. Moreover, there are easy-to-miss patterns on fences and manhole covers in the cities. It might be fun to look for patterns while taking a city walk.

The emblem of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games had an ichimatsumon motif. There is also a type of wedding dress called “Wa dress” with a traditional Japanese pattern on a Western dress with a long hem. The Japanese patterns have been passed down to our society while constantly changing. The Japanese have created a wide variety of patterns based on all kinds of things. These patterns are imbued with various wishes that people make. I hope to keep conveying the rich culture of Japanese patterns to people both inside and outside Japan. <sup>7</sup>

Interview by SAWAJI OSAMU

- i The Jomon period stretches from roughly 16,000 years ago to 2,900 years ago. The word “Jomon” comes from patterns of rope impressions called “*jomon*” on earthenware excavated from the remains of this period.
- ii The phoenix is an imaginary bird that originated in ancient China. It is considered an auspicious bird.
- iii *Highlighting Japan* September 2022, “The History and Culture of Lacquer in Japan” [https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202205/202205\\_01\\_en.html](https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202205/202205_01_en.html)
- iv *Highlighting Japan* September 2022, “Kimono Bringing Elegance to Autumn in Kyoto” [https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202209/202209\\_07\\_en.html](https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202209/202209_07_en.html)
- v *Highlighting Japan* September 2020, “The Furoshiki Prince and the Revival of the Wrapping Cloth” [https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202009/202009\\_07\\_en.html](https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202009/202009_07_en.html)
- vi See the website of Japan Mint [https://www.mint.go.jp/eng/kids-eng/eng\\_kids\\_circulating\\_c.html](https://www.mint.go.jp/eng/kids-eng/eng_kids_circulating_c.html)
- vii See website of the National Printing Bureau <https://www.npb.go.jp/en/intro/kihon/genzai.html>



The print *Young Woman Blowing a Popen* (glass noisemaker) by Kitagawa Utamaro depicts a woman wearing a kimono printed with the *ichimatsumon* pattern (Collection of Tokyo National Museum)  
Photo: ColBase (<https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>)



The familiar wave-like *seigaihamon* design used to decorate a wall  
Photo: Courtesy of Fuji Eriko



A bowl decorated with a *nanten* plant pattern  
Photo: Courtesy of Fuji Eriko



A wedding dress, “Wa dress,” by designer Ueda Eiko featuring patterns such as peony flowers that symbolize welfare and prosperity  
Photo: Courtesy of ALIANSA



# Yusoku Monyo

## The Origin of Japanese Patterns



Onagadori no maru  
© Hachijou Tadamoto 2009

We look at *yusoku monyo*, traditional patterns used first by the aristocracy in the Heian period (late 8th to end 12th century) when dynastic culture flourished in Japan.

SUGIYAMA MAMORU

**A**MONG the many patterns in Japan, *yusoku monyo* are particularly graceful and elegant, having been used mostly by court nobles<sup>i</sup> for their clothing, household items and furniture, and architectural designs. These patterns form the basis for the various patterns that developed in Japan. The term “yusoku” refers to knowledge and rules related to ceremonies and events held by the imperial court and the aristocracy, and the patterns were used in a variety of ways according to these rules: in formal clothing for court nobles such as *sokutai*<sup>ii</sup> for men and *junihitoe*<sup>iii</sup> for women; in furniture and personal items, such as desks, cabinets and inkstone boxes; in vehicles such as palanquins and oxcarts; and in architectural decorations.

Many of the motifs for these patterns were natural scenery,

animals and plants, and running patterns or fixed patterns contained within a circular or square shape are characteristic of *yusoku monyo*. Some typical examples include *tatewaku*, a pattern of continuous curves like boiling steam with clouds, cherry blossoms, or plum blossoms; *koaoi*, which features a motif considered to be *fuyu-aoi* (lit. winter hollyhock), and *fusecho no maru*, which depicts flowers and butterflies within a circle. As running patterns repeat over and over, they were seen as auspicious, and running patterns of the water chestnut (*Trapa japonica*), an aquatic plant that grows and multiplies particularly well, were often used on undergarments as a prayer for prosperity of descendants.

*Yusoku monyo* can trace their roots directly to Sasanian Imperial Persia, from where patterns are said to have been brought to Japan via the Asia continent. The *tatewaku* pattern mentioned above is said to have been derived from the even more ancient Egyptian or Greek palmette pattern<sup>iv</sup>. Hachijo Tadamoto is president of the Kiyou Court Dress Research Institute, who is involved in research and outreach related to traditional dress, and is knowledgeable about *yusoku monyo*.



A container for sweets used in the court decorated with a *yusoku monyo* pattern called “*kooai*” (top)  
 Photo: Aizawa Tadashi



*Kooai*

© Hachijou Tadamoto 2009

“*Yusoku monyo* are considered distinctive Japanese designs, but if you look closely, you will see that they have an exotic form, which is interesting. The traditional patterns used all around the world today often have their roots in the ancient Orient. The world is interrelated through patterns.”

According to Hachijo, *yusoku monyo* were changed in a uniquely Japanese way as patterns from the continent were incorporated and repeatedly altered to become distinctively Japanese. During this process, motifs that did not match Japanese sensibilities gradually disappeared.

“Patterns of four-legged animals favored on the continent have mostly disappeared. However, Japanese people of the past must have longed to fly, as they liked birds and butterflies, and their frequent use in pairs is one characteristic of Japanese patterns.”

Just as in this example, Japan’s distinctive *yusoku monyo* were gradually established. There are other unique Japanese design methods, such as using running patterns as a base and layering fixed patterns on top, called “*futae-ori*” or partially cutting out and using running patterns called “*yare*,” and combining two fixed patterns to create a casual impression called

**Examples of *yusoku monyo***

© Hachijou Tadamoto 2009



Plum tree *tatewaku*



*Saiwai-bishi* diamond-shaped pattern



Cloud *tatewaku*



*Fusecho no maru*

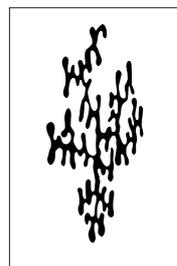


*Kooai*

“*hiyokumon*.” Moreover, *kuchikigata*, a pattern made from the wood grain that rises to the surface of dead, rotted trees, is known as a *yusoku monyo* pattern that developed within Japan. This pattern, having found beauty in a dead tree, symbolically expresses the sensibilities of the Japanese people who treasure nature.

Having been passed down for more than 1,000 years, *yusoku monyo* have also given rise to other Japanese patterns. These other patterns include family crests (see pp. 12-13) and *komon*, a design from the Edo period (early 17th to mid-late 19th century) in which a fine pattern appears across the entire fabric. *Yusoku monyo* are still typically used for formal clothing today, including for *obi* belts for kimono. Patterns with roots in the ancient Orient and in ancient Egypt and ancient Greece came to Japan, became uniquely Japanese designs, and are still around today. This in and of itself may speak of the great value of *yusoku monyo*. 

- i Aristocratic government officials who served the imperial court
- ii The *sokutai* is one of the highest levels of formal attire for men at the court. See *Highlighting Japan* March 2022 [https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202203/202203\\_02\\_en.html](https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202203/202203_02_en.html)
- iii Formal attire for ladies in court, worn in layers of various colors. *Junihitoe* is the popular name for this attire, while it is officially called *itsutsuginu-karaginu-mo*. See *Highlighting Japan* October 2020 [https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202010/202010\\_06\\_en.html](https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202010/202010_06_en.html)
- iv Decorative pattern, with long, thin leaves spreading out like a fan, originally from the ancient Orient



*Kuchikigata*

© Hachijou Tadamoto 2009



*Junihitoe*, formal court dress for women. The diamond-shaped pattern on the back is *kuchikigata*. All of the fabrics including the furnishings are decorated with *yusoku* patterns

Photo: Aizawa Tadashi



A roof tile with the imprint of a family crest (5-7 paulownia)  
Photo: take\_p/PIXTA



Paulownia blossoms  
Photo: shimanto/PIXTA

# Kamon Japanese Family Crests, Their History and Features

**Most Japanese families have a family crest that has been passed down from generation to generation. Japanese family crests, or *kamon*, have distinctive features, an abundance of motifs, and are skillfully designed.**

KATO KYOKO

JAPANESE people have long used their family crest on kimonos for ceremonial occasions and on their tombstones. Known as *kamon*, these family crests feature motifs such as plants, animals and the stars that have been familiar to Japanese people since ancient times. If the designs are carefully categorized, it is said that there are more than 30,000 such crests.

The family crest originated in the latter part of the Heian period (late 8th to end 12th century) when dynastic culture flourished in Japan. At that time, aristocrats attached their original patterns to their ox-drawn carriages so that anyone could tell who the cart belonged to at a glance.

Takasawa Hitoshi, president of the Japan Family Crest Research Society, explains, "I believe that the most important reason why aristocrats at that time put their unique patterns

on their ox-drawn carriages was because of etiquette on the road. For example, if you are riding in an ox-drawn carriage and pass by the ox-drawn carriage of someone of higher status, then you must get off and give way, or even prostrate yourself before them, depending on their status. This etiquette displayed on the road was later called *rotorei* and was becoming increasingly emphasized in the aristocratic society of the day when family crests appeared."

The aristocrats of the Heian period, who led lavish lifestyles, competed with each to have the most elegant and auspicious patterns on their ox-drawn carriages. However, the original purpose was to express status, ancestry and class through the use of patterns. Eventually, these patterns developed into family crests that simply represented one's family or clan.

In the Kamakura period (late 12th century to 1333), with the dawn of the samurai era, samurai families began to use family crests to distinguish between friend and foe on the battlefield and to show off their clan's military achievements. Each crest is associated with a desire for a boost in the warrior's fortune in battle or prosperity for one's descendants. These family crests were often displayed prominently on armor, as well as on the camp enclosures and flags hoisted on the battlefield, so



Family crest with 5-3 paulownia motif



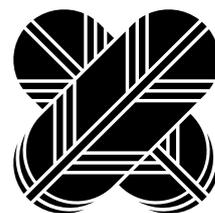
Family crest with 5-7 paulownia motif



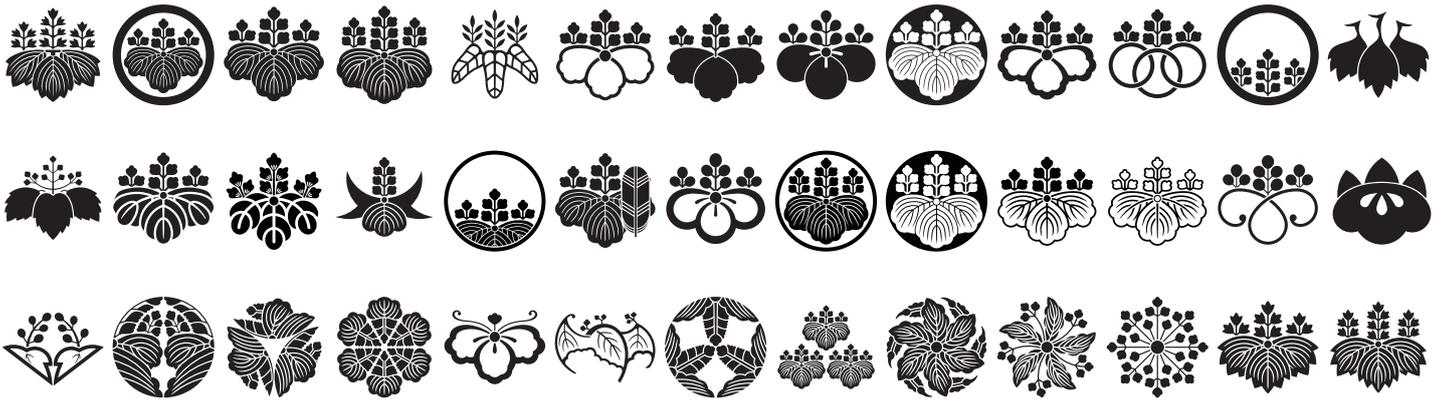
Family crest with crane motif



Family crest with moon and star motif



Family crest with hawk feather motif



Examples of the many different paulownia family crests

that the warriors' allegiance could easily be identified.

Takasawa explains, "Originally, unlike the crests of aristocratic families, the crests of samurai families, which were used to distinguish between friend and foe on the battlefield, were generally designed with simple single motifs. The motif had to be simple yet impressive and skillfully designed, easily recognizable from a distance.

When the war-torn era ended and the Edo period began (early 17th to mid-late 19th century), townspeople also started using family crests. At that time, many commoners were prohibited from using surnames, but since having a family crest was not prohibited, the crest was often used to identify a family at a glance in place of a surname. In 1868, the Tokugawa shogunate returned political power to the Emperor, the Edo period ended, and Japan's modernization began. In 1875, a decree promulgated by the new government required all citizens to have surnames, which in principle had been limited to noble and samurai families. When people started picking their new family names and designed patterns

to their own liking, it seems many took the opportunity to use family crests that were consistent with their origins, and those who did not previously have a surname set their family crests on the advice of local masters. Moreover, when establishing a new branch family, there were many people who used slightly different crests, such as surrounding the main family's crest with a circle, so the number of family crest types increased.

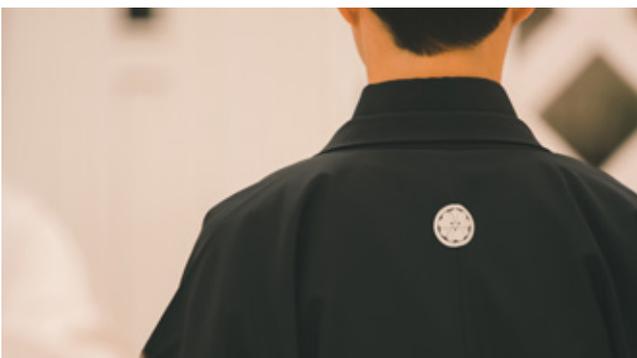
For example, the "paulownia crests" with their paulownia tree motif are familiar as a typical example of Japanese family crests, and they vary widely in the way the leaves are drawn and the number of petals. For example, designs where the number of flowers is arranged in the order of five, three, and five are called "5-3 paulownia," while those arranged in the order of five, seven, and five are called "5-7 paulownias."

It can be said that the most notable features of Japanese family crests are the abundance of their motifs and their skillful design. ㊦

Reproduction of a banner featuring the Tokugawa shogunate's familiar "triple hollyhock" crest  
Photo: mandegan/PIXTA



Ox cart illustration  
Image: hiro/PIXTA



A family crest printed on a kimono  
Photo: mits/PIXTA

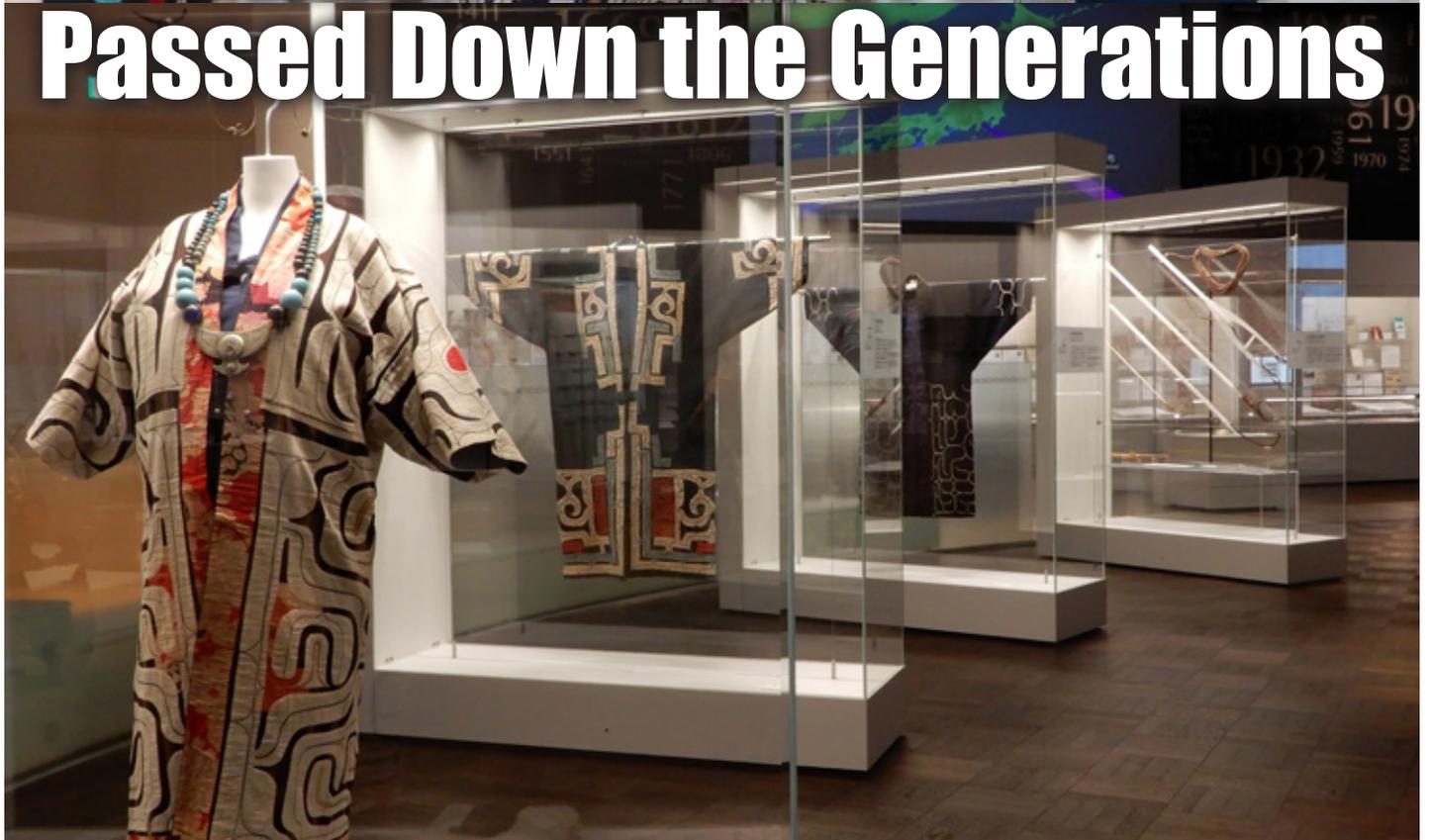


A family crest (plum blossom) printed on the noren entrance curtain to a building  
Photo: monjiro/PIXTA

Dancers at Upopoy wearing clothing and headbands featuring Ainu patterns



# Traditional Ainu Patterns Passed Down the Generations



Traditional Ainu clothing on display at the National Ainu Museum

All Photos: Courtesy of the Foundation for Ainu Culture

**The Ainu, who are indigenous people mainly from Hokkaido, have for many generations employed a variety of patterns on their clothing and tools.**

### SAWAJI OSAMU

**T**HE National Ainu Museum and Park, nicknamed “Upopoy”<sup>i</sup> and located in Shiraoi Town, Hokkaido, is engaged in exhibitions, investigative study, the communication of information, and more related to the history and culture of the indigenous Ainu people from the northern region of the Japanese archipelago, particularly Hokkaido. One of the main facilities at Upopoy is the National Ainu Museum, and displayed in the museum’s exhibition room are many valuable items, including tools used by the Ainu people for ceremonies and hunting.

Among the exhibits, the cotton garments will catch the eye of visitors. These traditional Ainu garments resemble kimono but are typically not lined, and many of them have *mojiri* sleeves of a trapezoid shape with narrow cuffs. The back and hems of the garments feature a variety of Ainu pattern designs. Some garments feature thorn-shaped patterns that are embroidered onto the fabric, a design that some fabric designers refer to as *kiraw* and others as *ay’us*, both of which mean “horn” in the Ainu language. There are also whirlpool-like patterns called *morew*. According to a dictionary compiled by Kayano Shigeru<sup>ii</sup>, *morew* is a “pattern used for sculptures,” but others consider it to be a pattern for clothing. The names of Ainu patterns differ based on the region where they are used and the people who made them. There are some patterns whose names have not been handed down.

Kitajima Isayka, curator of the National Ainu Museum, says, “There are many Ainu patterns because the Ainu have long made patterned garments for people to wear. But we have few clues to help us understand the meanings and origins of Ainu patterns, and there are many things that we have yet to learn.”

According to Kitajima, there are roughly three methods for creating these patterns on clothing. First, through embroidery. Second, by sewing multiple thin strips of fabric onto the garment to form patterns and then embroidering the fabric strips. And third, by cutting out broad pieces of fabric to form a pattern, then sewing the pattern onto the garment and embroidering it. The patterns are created using one or a combination of these methods.

In addition to clothing, a variety of patterns are depicted on various objects made of textiles or wood and so on—items such as headbands, aprons, and tools used for ceremonies and hunting. For example, patterns can be found on the wooden sheaths and handles of the short knives used for wood carving, hunting, cooking, and a variety of other uses.

While some believe the Ainu patterns were meant to ward off evil, according to Kitajima this cannot be confirmed

because there are few written records remaining about Ainu patterns. “However, if the people who make the patterns say they are intended to ward off evil, then they are meant to ward off evil,” says Kitajima.

Ainu patterns have been passed down from parent to child. In addition to passing on these patterns, courses have been offered in recent years to teach pattern embroidery, and it has become possible for anyone to learn. Kitajima, who is herself Ainu, has been embroidering for around 15 years since she began taking courses in around her mid 30s.

She says, “Ainu patterns are truly beautiful and powerful, and an energy seems to pour out when looking at them. It is also fun to sew the patterns. My teacher and other kind people are delighted when I show them the patterns I have completed. I’m able to feel connected to various people through creating patterns.”

At Upopoy, where the museum<sup>iii</sup> Kitajima works at is located, there is an experience-based field museum, the National Ainu Park. A variety of programs are held here, including performances of traditional performing arts and cooking. At the workshop (named *ikar usi*) within the park, guests can see wood carving and embroidery being made, and can also experience Ainu patterns being embroidered into items such as coasters and masks.

Why not encounter the charm of Ainu patterns at Upopoy? **V**

i See *Highlighting Japan* December 2020 “Upopoy: A Symbolic Space for Ethnic Harmony” [https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202012/202012\\_02\\_en.html](https://www.gov-online.go.jp/eng/publicity/book/hlj/html/202012/202012_02_en.html)

ii Kayano Shigeru (1926–2006) is a leading Ainu figure who devoted himself to preserving Ainu culture such as by recording the Ainu language and folktales and collecting tools.

iii The National Ainu Museum is holding the exhibition “*uaynukor kotan a=kar*: Ainu language and history of the National Ainu Museum and Park” between December 13, 2022 and February 12, 2023.



A visitor learns how to make Ainu embroidery at the *ikar usi* workshop in the National Ainu Park



A formal *yuzen* dyed kimono called “A school of fish” (by Kimura Uzan)  
(Collection of the Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art)  
Photo: Courtesy of Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art



A *yuzen* dyed *furisode* long-sleeved robe decorated with auspicious motifs (by Kimura Uzan) Collection of the Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art  
Photo: Courtesy of Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art

# Kaga-yuzen

## Kimono Fabrics Expressing Traditions and Artistic Skill



Section of a kimono with a flower pattern made with the *tegaki yuzen* technique  
Photo: Courtesy of Kaga Zome Promotion Cooperative Association

**Kaga-yuzen is a traditional kimono dyeing method that developed in Kanazawa City and surrounding areas in Ishikawa Prefecture and which is characterized by realistic patterns featuring mainly natural motifs such as flowers and grass.**

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### SAKURAI SHIN

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**K**AGA-YUZEN is a colorful method for dyeing kimono that originated in Kaga Province, modern-day Ishikawa Prefecture. Grass, flowers, birds, and other natural scenes are colored on beautiful, lustrous silk fabric using a *hake* and other brushes.

Nakagawa Seishi of the Kaga Zome Promotion Cooperative Association says that “by the latter half of the 16th century, a dyeing method known as *ume-zome* was established in Kanazawa. With this method, fabric was dyed using a coloring solution made from the bark or roots of plum trees. Having moved to Kanazawa in 1712, Miyazaki Yuzensai (1654-1736), a fan-painting artist who contributed to the development Kyo-yuzen in Kyoto, added new features to this technique, and Kaga-yuzen flourished and became established in the samurai culture of the Kaga clan.”

Kaga-yuzen emphasizes the *Kaga-gosai*, or the five Kaga colors of indigo, dark crimson, yellow ocher, grass green, and ancient purple, and it depicts flowers realistically. One characteristic of the dyeing method is coloring by heavy use of a *bokashi* shading technique to create a three-dimensional effect. Another characteristic is the use of *mushi-kui*, which depicts diseased leaves<sup>1</sup> as an accent.

Nakagawa says that “compared to dazzling Kyo-yuzen, Kaga-yuzen is said to have a relaxed grace. You might say that the climate of the region is reflected in the patterns and use of color.”

There are two types of Kaga-yuzen: *tegaki yuzen* and *itaba yuzen*. Tegaki yuzen produces realistic, hand-drawn grass, flowers, and other scenes of nature on silk kimono fabric. Itaba yuzen, on the other hand, affixes fabric over a long plate and dyes the fabric using stencils which have been cut into patterns (see pp.22-23). As it uses stencils, a characteristic of this method is that it allows the same pattern, such as fans and flowers, to be depicted repeatedly without a break.

Hand-drawn tegaki yuzen fabrics in particular strongly express the individuality of the artist. One such artist was Kimura Uzan (1891-1977), whose techniques and patterns greatly influenced the artists that followed. Having studied traditional color schemes and calligraphy from a Japanese painter who was also the master of his brother, Kimura sketched out flowers as well as birds, fish in the market, and other familiar things in the sketchbook he carried while walking around Kanazawa, and he used these as patterns in his yuzen. He



A *mushi-kui* pattern, including diseased leaves as an accent (the yellow leaf center right)

Photo: Courtesy of Kaga Zome Promotion Cooperative Association



A *soto-bokashi* pattern, in which flower petals are drawn with different shades of color

Photo: Courtesy of Kaga Zome Promotion Cooperative Association



A fan pattern made using the *itaba yuzen* technique

Photo: Courtesy of Kaga Zome Promotion Cooperative Association

created works with motifs of the natural beauty he saw in his everyday life by applying the techniques of Japanese painting, and elevated yuzen to art. In 1955, Kimura was recognized as an Important Intangible Cultural Property (yuzen), also known as a Living National Treasure, in recognition of this.

Nakagawa says, “Influenced by Kimura Uzan, many current Kaga-yuzen artists study Japanese painting and draw patterns just like a painting using kimono fabric as a canvas. This is significant because the Kaga-yuzen processes, involving the designing and coloring of kimono, are handled by a single artist.”

Continuing from their influential originator Miyazaki Yuzensai, Kaga-yuzen kimono fabrics to this day express the beauty of silk-dyeing through the artists who create them, drawing on more than 300 years of tradition. 

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i Leaves that are discolored due to insect damage or disease



Ryusou (Okinawan kimono) made with *bingata* textile dyed with a motif of flowing water and different colored maple leaves (National Treasure: Ryukyu King Sho Family Related Documents)

# The Textile Patterns of Okinawa

Okinawa, formerly the Ryukyu Kingdom, once prospered through its central role in the maritime trade networks of East and Southeast Asia. Okinawa has thus been culturally influenced by various countries as may be seen in its distinctive patterns.

YANAGISAWA MIHO

**T**HIS year (2022), Okinawa Prefecture is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its return to Japan after World War II. Located in Japan's far South West, Okinawa is made up of more than 150 large and small islands and has a subtropical marine climate. Actually, Okinawa once prospered through trade with the countries of East and Southeast Asia, being situated at the center of the region's network of maritime trade routes.

In the age when Okinawa was known as the Ryukyu Kingdom (1429-1879), the kingdom's government was located in Shuri Castle<sup>1</sup> in the capital, Shuri (now Naha City). The town along the coast called Naha at that time developed as a trading and commercial center connecting the capital to foreign countries. The cultural development of the Ryukyu Kingdom was influenced by many

Ryusou (Okinawan kimono) made with *bingata* textile dyed with phoenix and mist patterns (National Treasure: Ryukyu King Sho Family Related Documents)



countries through this trade.

During its heyday, the cornerstone of the kingdom's economy was the craft products that were exported to other countries, and a variety of designs, including patterns, were managed with great detail at a department specializing in the production of lacquer crafts set up by the royal government.

Yamada Yoko, curator at the Naha City Museum of History, says that “the



A costume with a Ryukyuan *kasuri* motif and woven checkered pattern (National Treasure: Ryukyuan King Sho Family Related Documents)

patterns used in craft products were designed to please those receiving them, with artists in the royal government's design department sometimes researching the preferences of importing countries.”

Since the times of the Ryukyuan Kingdom, there have been special Okinawan dyed fabrics known as *bingata*, created using a resist dyeing technique<sup>ii</sup> of the same name. The patterns used

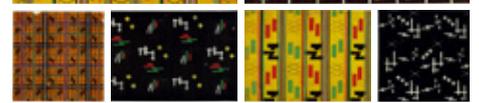
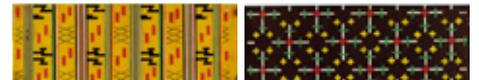
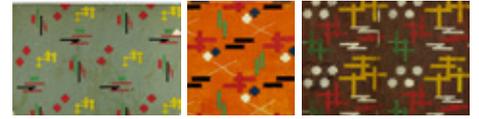
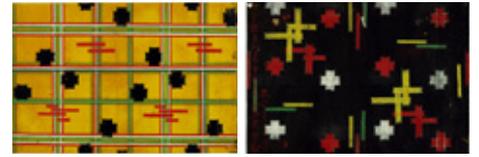
for these textiles can be divided into two broad categories: patterns brought from China and those that developed from traditional Japanese patterns. Certain patterns brought from China such as dragons and phoenixes were used as symbols of royal authority in the Ryukyuan Kingdom. At the same time, the plants often used as motifs in *bingata*, including cherry and plum blossoms, Japanese irises and maple leaves, do not grow naturally in Okinawa, and are clearly influenced by the traditional patterns of Japan.

The reason why the finished products have an Okinawan feel despite their use of motifs from outside Okinawa is their use of color.

Yamada says, “A characteristic of *bingata* is the extreme brightness of the colors. They are incredibly vivid and bright. Ryukyuan aesthetics are clearly expressed here.”

On the other hand, uniquely Okinawan pattern designs can be seen in woven *kasuri* textiles. *Kasuri* textiles use differently colored dyed threads in sections to produce a pattern. This technique is thought to have originated in India, been brought to the Ryukyuan Kingdom via Southeast Asian countries, and from there spread across Japan.

Many *miezu* (design patterns) for *kasuri* are recorded in *miezu-cho* albums that were created in the days of the Ryukyuan Kingdom. It is thought that high-ranking people including members of the royal family referred to the *miezu-cho* when ordering their *kasuri* fabrics and decided on designs. There are said to have been more than 600 *miezu* patterns created in total, with the Naha



Sections of various *miezu* patterns (Album of *Miezu* Pattern Samples (National Treasure: Ryukyuan King Sho Family Related Documents))

City Museum of History in possession of albums containing 366 of them.

It is thought that the weavers of the time gave *kasuri* names associated with the pattern's shape, and these patterns and names have remained familiar to the public to this day. For example, *tuiguwaa*, depicting flying birds; *ichichimaru gumu*, depicting five round clouds; and *in-nu-fisaa*, representing dog footprints, are patterns that are instantly recognizable as “Ryukyuan *kasuri*.”

The various patterns such as those on *bingata* developed from repeated interactions through international trade, while *kasuri* patterns have a distinctly Okinawan provenance. These Okinawan patterns reflect the diversity of Okinawan sensibilities, which developed through the island people's exposure to many different cultures. **■**

i Built in the middle of the 14th century. It is said that Sho Hashi (the first king of the Ryukyuan Kingdom) made the castle his base of operations in 1429. Thereafter, it was used as a royal castle for around 450 years. It was destroyed by fire in World War II in 1945, and the current fortress was rebuilt in 1992. The main hall was destroyed by fire in 2019, and restoration work is currently ongoing.

ii A dyeing technique that uses stencils. The pattern is placed on a white fabric, anti-staining glue is applied on top, and after drying the entire fabric is dyed with pigment, then steamed and washed. Only the areas applied with anti-staining glue are left white.



Ryukyuan *kasuri* motifs, from left, *tuiguwaa* depicting two flying birds, *ichichimaru gumu* depicting five round clouds, and *in-nu-fisaa* representing dog footprints

A *sensu* folding fan with a wave pattern



# FOLDING FAN PATTERNS

**There is a nearly 1,200-year history of making *sensu*, or folding fans, in Japan. Traditionally, scenes from classical literature and various auspicious patterns are painted on the fans.**

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YANAGISAWA MIHO

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**S**ENSU, or folding, portable fans, were thought to have been first created in the Heian period (late 8th to late 12th century) when dynastic culture blossomed in Japan. When a folding fan was opened, the face of the fan, which was decorated with various patterns, became visible. The motifs used are derived from auspicious patterns, or scenes of the imperial court from literary works that are now considered classical literature.

Originally called *hiogi*, these fans were made by weaving together thin, slender pieces of wood called *mokkan* and were primarily used by men. Later, the shape was refined, the fans were painted with designs, and their use spread to ladies in the court. *Hiogi* are thought to have been used less for cooling off than as objects of etiquette. Later, functional paper folding

fans of the kind seen today appeared, with wooden ribs and paper pasted to one side, which users wave to cool off.

Painters added a variety of patterns to *hiogi* and the face of paper fans. What kinds of patterns were these? Takano Kyo-suke works at Miyawaki Baisen-an, a company which continues to produce these fans in Kyoto more than 200 years since its founding, and explains the following.

“Often, famous stories set at court were painted as themes for patterns on fans. Not surprisingly, *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*)<sup>1</sup> was popular. This story has 54 chapters, but it is thought that court aristocrats would have understood exactly what scene was painted just from looking at the paintings. I think that people were able to show off their refinement and good taste with the paintings on their fans.”

Later, these fans came to be used as props in performing arts such as *noh* and in the tea ceremony. And in the Edo period (early 17th to mid-late 19th century), those such as affluent merchants became prominent and began to favor the wearing of kimono with designs and patterns. At the same time, fans reached the hands of ordinary people and increased in variety.

All photos: Courtesy of Miyawaki Baisen-an Co., Ltd.

Takano says that “it is speculated that at this time, the same designs used for kimono were also used for fans. Designs known as *komon*<sup>ii</sup> began to be used, probably in large part because printing technology developed during this time, making it easy to design running patterns.”

Auspicious patterns in particular were favored as themes for *komon*. These motifs express happy omens for prosperity, longevity, and more. For example, hemp expresses health and growth, as the plant grows extremely quickly and is robust. A check pattern expresses prosperity for one’s descendants and business expansion as the same pattern continues without end. Wave patterns express unending happiness by depicting waves that blissfully spread out into the sea. There is a variety of types and meanings.

There are also patterns of scattered pine needles joined in pairs. Takano explains that “pine trees are symbols of long life, as they are evergreens and keep their green year round. Pine needles express good marital relations as even when falling from a pine tree, the two needles stay firmly connected and do not separate. Pine needles, with their multiple positive interpretations, have been a favored theme since ancient times. In addition to practical fans that are actually used, there are also some decorative fans that are used to decorate rooms. Pine and other auspicious patterns are also favored themes for decorative fans.”

The shape of the Japanese fan itself is auspicious and known as *suehirogari*. The shape expresses the development of the future from the *kaname* pivot, which secures the fan body’s framework at the base, to the opening out of the fan. Fans with auspicious patterns and double meanings became popular as items calling for good luck. The tradition of Japanese fans has been passed down for more than 1,000 years. No matter how much time passes, the auspicious patterns on the fans are filled with people’s unchanging prayers. **7**

i *Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji)* is a long story made up of 54 chapters written by Murasaki Shikibu in the early 11th century. It describes aristocratic society of the time. It is said to be one of the oldest long novels in the world.

ii Refers to designing fans by repeating various patterns through a method of dyeing using stencils



A hiogi folding fan with a pine, bamboo and plum blossom design



A sensu folding fan with cherry blossom, maple leaf and flowing water motifs



A sensu folding fan with a wave pattern



Ise-Katagami stencil for a crane pattern

# The Ise-Katagami Patterns that Fascinated Europeans

**“Katagami” refers to the traditional Japanese craft of stencils featuring fine patterns cut into *washi* paper. Vivid patterns emerge on kimono fabrics by dyeing the fabric using these stencils. Ise-Katagami, a well-known type of Japanese paper stencil, were brought to Europe in the first half of the 19th century and fascinated people there.**

SASAKI TAKASHI

**K**ATAGAMI, or paper stencils, are used to print patterns on kimono fabric. These stencils have patterns drawn on and then cut out from washi paper processed with persimmon tannin<sup>1</sup>. Using the stencils, the pattern can be dyed onto fabric. Ise-Katagami from Mie Prefecture is a typical type of Japanese stencil, boasting a history of over 1,000 years.

Director Kajiura Genki of the Kioi Art Gallery (Edo Ise-Katagami Kimono Museum) in Chiyoda City, Tokyo, says that “those who saw Ise-Katagami surely were surprised at the artwork-like beauty and refinement of the stencils. Nevertheless, the names of the creators of the old paper stencils have not been handed down and remain unknown.”

Kajiura says that the reason for this is that “stencils are simple tools used to dye fabrics, and at the time, they were not

recognized as works of art in themselves.”

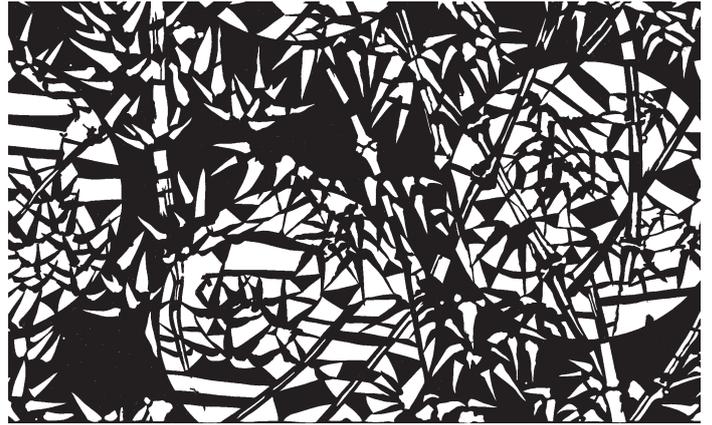
Washi paper made from *kozo*<sup>ii</sup> bark is used for Ise-Katagami. Three sheets are laid on top of one another and pasted together with persimmon tannins, with fibers running vertically, horizontally, then vertically. This technique creates a durable stencil that can be used multiple times for dyeing. Using special tools, artisans known as *horishi* delicately cut a variety of patterns based on traditional themes of natural beauty into the pasted-together washi paper.

For example, *kiribori* (drill carving) is used for *komon*, or small patterns, in which detailed patterns are spread out over the entire kimono fabric. In some cases, 100 small holes are cut into each 1 cm square. To complete these pointillist painting-like patterns, there is a need for not just a high level of skill, but also a tireless will not to become distracted. Kajiura says that “in recent years, mainstream print dyeing with machines can accurately and quickly print any design or pattern. However, one doesn’t feel the warmth or unique texture that comes from dyeing by hand. As a result, there is still a demand for dyeing using Ise-Katagami today, regardless of how much money or time it requires.”

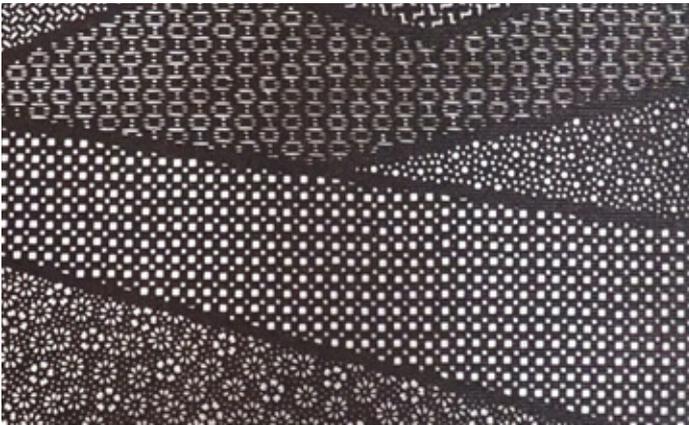
The standard Ise-Katagami stencil is 38 cm wide and 25 to 38 cm long, with the width matching that of the fabric. When repeatedly arranged precisely in parallel, a beautiful



Ise-Katagami stencil for a flowers and leaves pattern



Ise-Katagami stencil for a bamboo and the moon pattern



Ise-Katagami stencil with numerous small, detailed patterns



Ise-Katagami stencil for a carp pattern

continuous pattern can be printed on a roll of cloth (12 to 14 meters in length) needed for a single kimono. To dye the fabric, the stencil is first placed on the fabric and resist dyeing paste is applied. After applying dye to the fabric, the resist dyeing paste is washed away. The part covered by the paste is not dyed, and the pattern cut into the stencil appears on the fabric.

In the first half of the 19th century, German doctor and naturalist Philipp Franz von Siebold visited Japan, and upon return to his home, he took with him a large amount of Ise Katagami, along with *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints and specimens of the animals and plants he collected. This is how Ise-Katagami came to be known in Europe.

Kajiura says that “Siebold, who came across the Ise-Katagami, surely understood their value at first glance. Later, *ukiyo-e* spurred an enthusiastic vogue for *Japonisme* among Monet, Van Gogh, and other French impressionist painters. In the same way, Ise-Katagami also fascinated the European population and had a great influence on designs in various fields, including crafts, accessories, bags, wallpaper, and more. It seems that Ise-Katagami was used as the inspiration for glass, ceramics, furniture, and other crafts in France and as examples of stencils in craft museums and craft schools in Germany.”

The Kioi Art Gallery, an art museum specializing in Ise-Katagami, houses around 5,000 Ise-Katagami stencils mostly

from the Edo period (early 17th to mid-late 19th century), and of those, around 200 are seasonally rotated and permanently exhibited alongside kimono that have been dyed with Ise-Katagami stencils. It is a place of great value where one can thoroughly admire the surprising refinement of the Japanese traditional crafts left behind by artisans. <sup>17</sup>



A kimono printed with an Ise-Katagami peacock feather pattern

i A liquid squeezed from unripe, sour persimmons

ii A deciduous shrub in the Moraceae (mulberry) family and a primary material for *washi* paper

# Measures to Ensure Security in Cyberspace

To prevent cyberattacks, it is essential to strengthen measures at both the individual and state level (image photo)

Photo: metamorworks / PIXTA

Japan is implementing a range of measures to ensure security in cyberspace.

## SAWAJI OSAMU

IN recent years, cyberattacks aimed at disrupting business operations, stealing confidential information, acquiring money and other nefarious goals have increased both in Japan and overseas. In Japan alone, this year (2022) the damages caused by cyberattacks have included forcing the affiliate of a major automaker to shut down plant operations, and rendering the electronic medical records of a hospital unusable. The methods employed by attackers have become increasingly sophisticated, including attacks that exploit vulnerabilities in computer systems, and attacks that exploit the psychology of the people using a system. Today the activities of malicious actors in cyberspace have come to represent a serious threat to economic development and the security of people's daily lives. On top of that, it is believed that some states are strengthening their cyber warfare capabilities involving activities such as stealing informa-



Functions of the Public Security Intelligence Agency (PSIA)

Figure: Courtesy of the Public Security Intelligence Agency

Cover of “Overview of Threats in Cyberspace 2022,” a brochure published by the Public Security Intelligence Agency

Photo: Courtesy of the Public Security Intelligence Agency

tion or damaging infrastructure for political, economic or military ends, making the threat of cyberattacks of growing concern in terms of national security as well.

To prevent cyberattacks, each individual needs to keep the applications they use on devices such as PCs and smartphones up to date and take precautions such as not clicking on attachments or URLs in suspicious emails, SMS (short message service) and social media. It is also essential to strengthen measures at the state level.

Given these circumstances, in September 2021 the Japanese government established a Cybersecurity Strategy (hereinafter, “the Strategy”) by Cabinet decision. The Strategy is formulated based on the Basic Act on Cybersecurity which was enacted in 2014 to comprehensively and efficiently promote measures on cybersecurity, and this latest

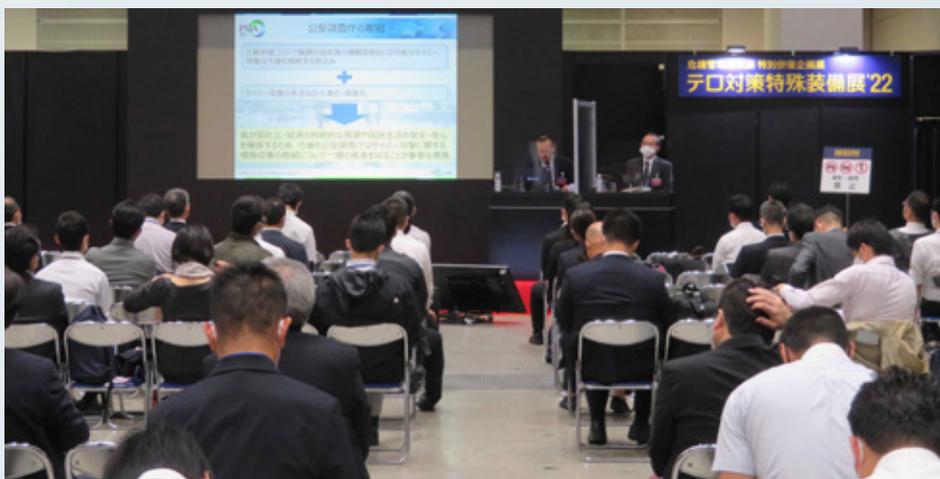
puter Security Incident Response Team/Computer Emergency Response Team) by the government is cited as one of the measures to be taken. National CSIRTs/CERTs are positioned as “a function responsible for general coordination in the event of a serious cyberattack to enable a series of actions ranging from information collection and analysis to investigation, evaluation, issuing alerts, responding to the attack, and subsequent planning of policy measures to prevent recurrence, etc., to be pursued in an integrated manner.” The Strategy also incorporates measures to enhance the posture of cyber-related units and fundamentally strengthen cyber defense capabilities in the Ministry of Defense and Japan Self-Defense Forces, advance cooperation with like-minded countries including the United States, Australia, India and ASEAN members, and lead international cyber exercises.



In terms of the role played by the PSIA in cybersecurity, Cybersecurity 2022, the latest annual plan based on the Strategy, states that the PSIA, “in order to promote investigation related to cyberspace, promotes efforts to contribute to cyber-intelligence countermeasures such as strengthening systems of collecting and analyzing HUMINT (human intelligence) information and providing it to relevant agencies and organizations in a timely and appropriate manner.” More specifically, the PSIA clarifies the actual states of actors who have launched cyberattacks and provides the intelligence to government agencies, or identifies the signs of an impending cyberattack on government agencies or corporations at an early stage and provides the intelligence to the relevant bodies. To strengthen these initiatives, in April 2022 the PSIA launched the Cybersecurity Intelligence Office. The agency also exchanges views on cybersecurity with economic groups, companies, universities and research bodies, conducts lectures for the general public, and prepares cybersecurity brochures as part of efforts to raise awareness.

Cyberattacks are now events that affect all of us. The growing threat of cyberattacks has made it increasingly important for members of the public, companies and the government to work together. **J**

**Note:** This article has been created with the consent of the PSIA and on the basis of materials published by the agency.



An official of the Public Security Intelligence Agency (PSIA) delivering a lecture at SEECAT (Special Equipment Exhibition & Conference for Anti-Terrorism) 2022 held in Tokyo in October

Photo: Courtesy of the Public Security Intelligence Agency

version of the Strategy is the third one.

As for cybersecurity, the Strategy states, “to meet the expectations of the people, cybersecurity policies should safeguard their free economic and social activities, secure their rights and convenience, and protect them by deterring the activities of malicious actors through law enforcement and legal systems in a timely and appropriate manner.” Under the Strategy, strengthening the framework for national CSIRTs/CERTs (Com-

The Public Security Intelligence Agency (PSIA) is one of the Japanese government agencies tasked with ensuring security in cyberspace. To ensure public security, the PSIA collects and analyzes information from Japan and abroad including the situation related to economic security, the trend of international terrorism, situation of neighboring countries and the activities of various domestic organizations, and provides the intelligence to relevant government agencies.

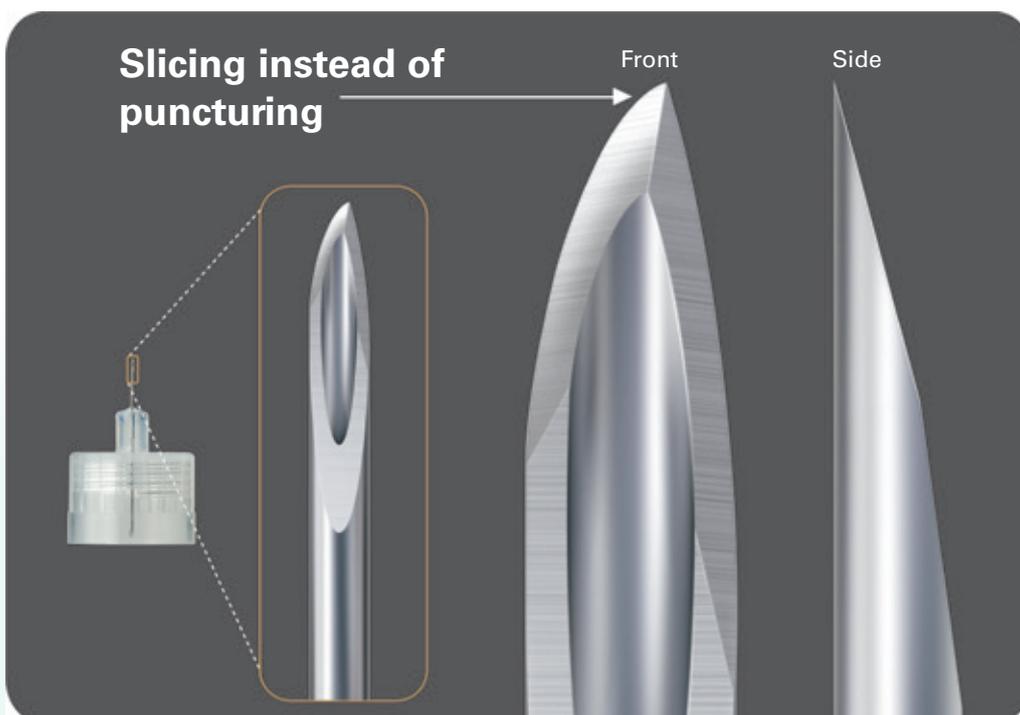


# Needles That Reduce the Pain of Injections

Nanopass Jr. (left), developed for children and other people with thin skin. The needle has a length of 3 mm and outer diameter of 0.18 mm.

A Japanese medical device manufacturer has developed a series of needles that considerably reduce the pain of injections. The needles can make a major contribution in particular to reducing the treatment burden of people with diabetes, who require insulin shots on a daily basis.

SASAKI TAKASHI



By making the tip of the needle asymmetrical, the injection pain is reduced

**I**NJECTORS are an essential medical supply for the treatment and prevention of diseases. However, probably most people do not like that tingling pain and would rather avoid injections if they could. Responding to their feelings, Terumo Corporation, a Japanese medical device manufacturer with a history of more than 100 years, has developed the Nanopass series, an injection needle to inject insulin, growth hormone, and so forth.

Nishikawa Hisao, head of the Research & Development Department at Terumo's Life Care Solutions Division, explains, "I came up with the idea to make a needle that causes less pain when I saw an

elementary school student at a hospital injecting insulin by themselves. Type 1 diabetes<sup>i</sup> is a common disease in children as well, requiring 4 to 5 insulin injections a day. I was hoping to lessen the fear of needles that they feel, even by a little.”

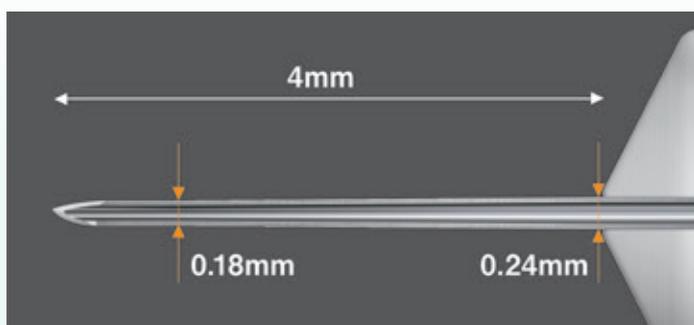
Development of the new needle began in 2000. Nishikawa and his colleagues aimed for an injection needle with an outer diameter of 0.20 mm, which is 20% thinner than existing products.

Nishikawa says that “there are 100 to 200 pain receptors per square centimeter distributed on the surface of a person’s skin, so the thinner the needle, the less likely it is to touch pain receptors and create the sensation of pain.” On the other hand, the inner and outer diameters of the injection needle must be structured so that the resistance to injecting the drug does not increase even if the needle becomes thinner. Moreover, in order to reduce the pain at the moment of needle piercing, the tip of the injection needle has an asymmetrical blade structure (asymmetrical edge) with a needle that can “thinly slice” instead of “puncturing” the surface of the skin.

Nishikawa recalls the difficulties at the time, saying, “We consulted with the injection needle manufacturing team within the company and interviewed as many as 100 related companies, but everyone just shook their heads and said that they can’t make such injection needles.” Under these circumstances, the stepping stone to development success was an encounter with Okano Masayuki, a craftsman nicknamed the “Mold Magician.” Okano’s factory in downtown Tokyo, which had only six employees (at the time), possessed the world’s highest level of stamping technology, even taking orders from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and other organizations. After hearing about the hardships of children with diabetes from Nishikawa, Okano decided to lend his hand to this venture into unknown territory.

Working toward being able to produce the world’s thinnest injection needle, it was about one and a half years after the start of development that they came up with a unique method to remove the ultra-thin metal plate from the mold and bend it step by step into a pipe shape. The trial and error process to facilitate mass production with stable quality continued for more than a year.

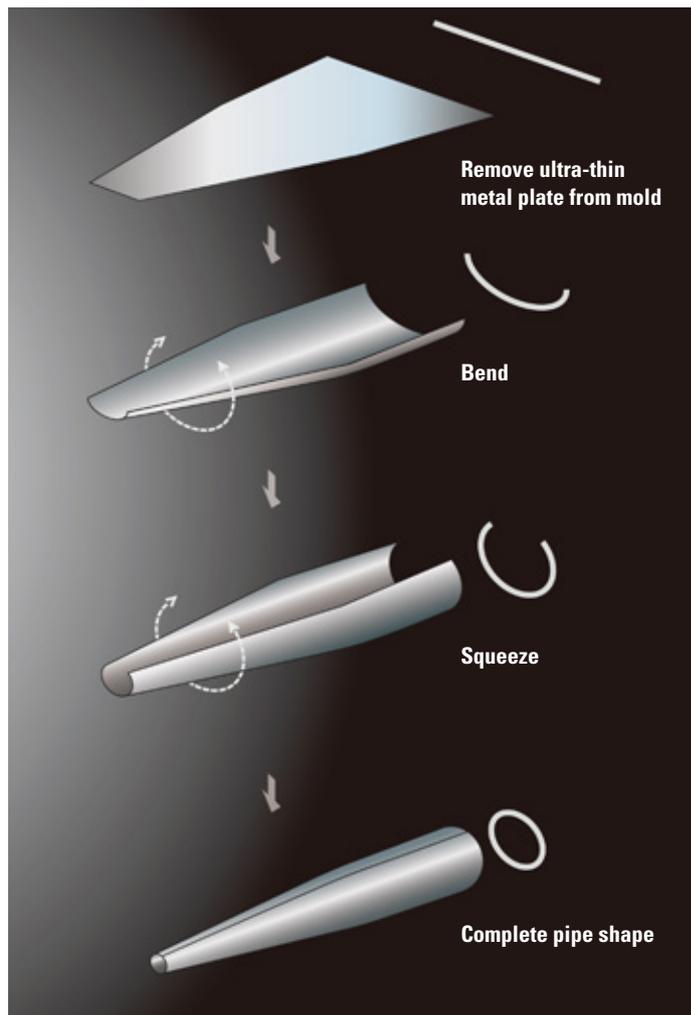
In 2005, the first product, called the Nanopass 33, reached



The Nanopass injection needle has a tapered structure that gets thinner toward the end

i A disease in which the cells that produce insulin in the pancreas ( $\beta$ -cells) are destroyed.

ii The inner and outer diameters get thinner toward the end



The Nanopass needle manufacturing process

the market. Since then, research and development have continued, with the Nanopass 34, which has an outer diameter of 0.18 mm, being released in 2012 and the Nanopass Jr., which has the same outer diameter (34G, meaning 34 gauge) but a needle length of 3 mm, debuting in 2019. Nanopass Jr. was developed for children and other people with thin skin. According to Terumo’s research (May 2017), the 34G needle is the “world’s thinnest double tapered pen needle.”<sup>ii</sup> The pursuit of this technology to reduce pain was highly esteemed and received the “Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award” and the “Invention Implementation Achievement Award” at the 2021 National Inventors Award.

Nishikawa relates, “When a little girl practicing doing injections with Nanopass at a summer camp for children with diabetes told me that ‘this doesn’t hurt at all,’ I was so happy that I couldn’t hide my delight.”

It is estimated that there are about 1 million people with diabetes who need multiple injections of insulin per day in Japan alone. Needles that cause less pain, created by unprecedented ideas and technologies, will undoubtedly greatly contribute to reducing the treatment burden of people with diabetes not only in Japan but also around the world. 

# Conveying the Charm of Rakugo to the French-Speaking World

**Cyril Coppini from France is sharing the charm of rakugo with audiences and readers in Japan and the French-speaking world, both through his story-telling performances and his translations of rakugo-related works.**

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**SATO KUMIKO**

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Cyril Coppini performs a rakugo story using his fan as “chopsticks”

Photo: Courtesy of Pacific Voice



Coppini strikes a pose

Photo: Courtesy of Cyril Coppini

**R**AKUGO is a traditional storytelling art established in Japan in the mid-17th century. It is widely performed even today, ranging from classic rakugo that has been handed down for generations to creative rakugo by modern rakugo performers, but all the tales told are humorous stories about the common people and human feelings. Another feature of rakugo is that the performer, wearing a kimono, remains seated on a cushion as they play several roles by themselves, differentiating between the characters only through the tone of their voice and gestures, without relying on costumes or stage art.

Cyril Coppini from France is a rakugo performer, working mainly in Japan and France. He explains, “Rakugo is said to ‘express a big world with small movements,’ and the only props are a fan and a hand towel, which are used in place of various objects to appeal to the imagination of the audience. That it relies on this promise between the performer and the audience is what is most attractive about rakugo, you know.”

In the high school that Coppini attended in Nice, southern France, Japa-



Coppini performing in French-speaking Montreal, Canada

Photo: Courtesy of Otakuthon Festival

nese was offered as an elective. Coppini was drawn in by how much fun it was when he tried it, and he went on to major in Japanese at university before acquiring a master’s degree in linguistics and Japanese modern literature from the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations (INALCO). “Rakugo” often appeared in the essays of the novelists that he researched at this time. “But the Internet wasn’t widespread back then, so I was always curious about what actual rakugo is like,” Coppini says.

In 1997, Coppini got a job at the Institut Français, a cultural center attached to the French Embassy in Tokyo. In Tokyo, he went to *yose*, theaters showcasing popular performing arts that he had longed to visit, and saw rakugo for the first time, which he says impressed him deeply. Later, while engaged in cultural exchange work between France and Japan, he met Hayashiya Someta, a practitioner of Kamigata rakugo (rakugo developed in Kyoto and Osaka, as opposed to the “Edo rakugo” of Tokyo), and started learning the basics of rakugo in 2010. In 2011, he won a prize at the International Convention of Amateur Rakugo in Chiba, performing under the rakugo stage name “尻流複写二” (Cyril Coppini). Every year from 2016, Coppini toured in France to perform rakugo that he himself has translated into French, taking care so as not to spoil its charm.

Coppini’s specialties include *Chiritotechin*, which is a humorous story

about a man who boasts about having eaten a fictional food, and *Tanusai*, which is a cute dialogue between a man and a child racoon who tries to return a favor to the man for saving the young racoon in the forest. Coppini explains, “When performing in France, I often do *Shinigami* (The Grim Reaper) as well. It’s a story about the Grim Reaper helping a man who is stuck in debt. *Shinigami* is a story usually performed by a rakugo master at the grand finale of a show. However, this story is actually based on a Grimms’ fairy tale and is familiar to Westerners too. Coupled with a dimming of the lights to match the story, I can draw in the French audience.”

Coppini also translates Japanese comics into French. One of his favorite stories, among the ones he has translated himself, is *Descending Stories: Showa Genroku Rakugo Shinju* by Kumota Haruko. The story is set in the world of Japanese rakugo from the 1930s to the 1970s, and develops from a scene in which the protagonist is moved by hearing the *Shinigami* rakugo.

Coppini says, “There are several other interesting manga based on rakugo, so it might be a good idea to get to know it through that first. Rakugo is a culture of gentle laughter that doesn’t hurt people. I think it has the power to save the world.”

Someday, Coppini hopes to hold an intensive course in France to teach rakugo and convey its depth. ㊦



A class at an Egyptian-Japan School (EJS)

# Popularizing *Tokkatsu* in the Egyptian Classroom

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is supporting educational reforms in Egypt through the spread of Japanese-style education focused on special activities, commonly referred to as *tokkatsu*.

SAWAJI OSAMU

IN Japanese schools, educational activities known as special activities (*tokubetsu katsudo*, or *tokkatsu* for short) are conducted aiming to enrich and improve class and school life and to develop students' attributes and their ability to solve life problems as members of an organization and society through class activities and school events. For example, there are classroom discussions where students and teachers converse and solve class problems on their own, daily class coordinators where a different student is in charge of cleaning the blackboard after class each day, and school lunch duty, where students serve food and clean up afterwards. *Tokkatsu* extend to a variety of scenes of student life, including classroom and schoolyard cleaning, school events such as sports events where students compete in a variety of competitions, and more. In Japanese school education, these are some of the important educational activities meant to develop students' initiative and ability to cooperate.



Children cleaning at an Egyptian-Japan School (EJS)



A classroom discussion at an Egyptian-Japan School (EJS)

“In a survey of teachers and guardians, we found that EJS elementary school students had demonstrated more positive changes in patience, communication skills, problem solving skills, and other non-cognitive skills<sup>ii</sup> than students at ordinary schools,” says Nakajima Motoe, who has been dispatched to Egypt as a JICA expert from 2019. “For example, we’ve heard that there have been improvements in teamwork among students and a sense of unity as a school across grades through group competitions held at EJS sports events. I think it can be said that these are also a result of tokkatsu.”

In 2018, the curriculum for first year elementary school students was revised for all of Egypt, and it was decided to introduce classroom discussion, daily class coordinators, classroom instruction, and other tokkatsu at Egypt’s approximately 18,000 elementary schools. At the same time, the JICA project began putting effort into Tokkatsu Officer training to establish tokkatsu across all of Egypt. A Tokkatsu Officer is an instructor who teaches elementary school teachers, principals, and other educators about the basic principles and instruction methods for tokkatsu. JICA holds training seminars in Japan and Egypt, inviting Japanese tokkatsu experts as lecturers, and they have supported the training of about 100 Tokkatsu Officers so far.

These Tokkatsu Officers were to the fore in the large-scale tokkatsu training seminars held by MOETE from June to September of this year (2022). Participants included about 30,000 educators, including teachers and principals from all over Egypt. The Tokkatsu Officers acted as instructors and held two-day training sessions repeatedly at venues across the country.

“I got the sense that tokkatsu will spread even further through Egyptian efforts when I saw the Tokkatsu Officers confidently speak about the special activities in front of many participants. There were also many comments from participants about how very useful the training was as it was practical,” says Nakajima. “I hope to offer support to Egyptians as they create and establish their own style of tokkatsu in the future.” 

Egypt has had its eye on these tokkatsu in Japan. Egyptian schools are facing the challenge of not adequately performing the role of developing social skills, such as cooperation and discipline, due to a variety of factors, including overcrowded classes from an increase in number of students and an overemphasis on memorization and testing in class. As a way of responding to these challenges, the Egyptian government decided to introduce Japanese tokkatsu into their school education.

“Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi, who observed an elementary school in Tokyo in 2016, was apparently very impressed with seeing students cooperate and serve lunch to one another,” says Matsuzaki Mizuki, a director of the Basic Education Team of the Human Development Department at JICA Headquarters. “Japanese school education is geared not just to helping children gain knowledge, but also to developing their humanity and social skills. I think this is what the Egyptian government rated so highly.”

Accepting a request from the Egyptian government, JICA began cooperating with the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MOETE) in 2017 and launched a project to introduce Japanese-style education in Egypt centered around tokkatsu. One major pillar of the project is the opening and operational support of the Egyptian-Japan Schools (EJS). At these schools, there is a maximum of 36 students per class, which is small compared to the average of 55 students in Egyptian public elementary schools. EJS also feature more classroom floor space than ordinary elementary schools in Egypt. They also have one desk and chair for each student, as opposed to long desks and chairs shared by multiple students as seen at other elementary schools. Additionally, EJS have been conducting school events, such as sports events, classroom discussions, classroom instruction<sup>i</sup>, daily class coordinators, and other class activities, as an Egyptian version of the tokkatsu model, and together with the project, they aim to spread this model to many schools in Egypt.

In 2018, 35 EJS were opened, attended by first- and second-year kindergarten students and first-year elementary school students. As of October 2022, this has grown to 51 schools up to elementary grade 5, and around 10,000 children are attending these schools. EJS are very popular, and the average admission ratio to enter the schools last year was about one in five.



Tokkatsu training for teachers

i The goal of classroom instruction is for students to learn about important things for life, such as developing fundamental life skills including washing hands and brushing teeth and forming better relationships which includes compassion towards friends, and to acquire the ability to take action.

ii Non-cognitive skills are abilities that are difficult to quantify using tests, and include cooperation, patience, and creativity.

A *Fuji no mine* sasanqua flower with its abundant, pure white petals  
Jun/PIXTA

## SEASONAL FLOWERS

### Sazanka *Sasanqua*



A single-form white sasanqua flower  
Rise/PIXTA



*Kamakura shibori* sasanqua flowers with dappled red and white petals  
Rhetorica/PIXTA

*S*asanqua is an ever-green shrub native to Japan. It has long been used as a garden tree and hedge, loved for its glossy green leaves and fragrant flowers. The flowering season in Japan is from October to December, with peak blooming in December. Because it blooms in winter, when flowers are scarce, sasanqua attracts many people as a flower that adds color to the season. Wild sasanqua bears single-form white flowers with five to seven petals, but as a result of breeding, there are many varieties of sasanqua with different shapes and colors. There are, for example, varieties with abundant petals, such as *Fuji no mine* (literally, the peak of Mt. Fuji), and those with pink, and red and white dappled petals, such as *Kamakura shibori* (literally, Kamakura tie-dye). Though sasanqua is a species of camellia, it differs from other species in the way its flowers fall. Whereas the flowers of most camellia drop to the ground as a single flower head, those of the sasanqua fall petal by petal. In the Japanese language of flowers, sasanqua means “overcoming difficulties” and “dedication,” because it blooms just as the winter cold intensifies.

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