**Japanese Furisode**
*(Ship and Leaf Crest Motif)*

**ARTIST:** Unknown

**DATE:** Late 20th century

**MEDIUM:** Silk and embroidery

Additional work in the collection by this artist:
Yes _____ No _____ Unknown _X_

**Acquisition #:** 2008.25

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**Culture of the Kimono**

The kimono enjoys high status as a symbol of Japanese culture. The kimono, as we know it today, developed from the Edo Period (1603-1868) -- a time of economic prosperity and a growing middle class in Japan. It was the middle class or merchant class that popularized these garments. However, due to strict class laws many middle class citizens were unable to spend their newfound wealth climbing the social ladder, so instead they spent it on luxuries like beautiful clothing. To further enforce the class hierarchy, the ruling class put several restrictions on the kinds of designs and fabrics the middle class could purchase. Due to these restrictions, not only did the kimono become a symbol of class and taste, but the patterns and fabrics reflected social order as well. Large geometric designs were reserved for high classes and smaller designs were reserved for lower classes. During the isolation of the Edo Period, motifs became more Japanese in theme and reflected specific symbols within Japanese culture, such as the wave patterns or hemp leaves which reflected the everyday scenery and foliage of Japan.

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**References**

https://muse.jhu.edu/article/627782

Textile Art of Japan

The History of the Sailing Ship


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**Vocabulary**

KIMONO -- in Japanese “thing to wear” or “clothing,” but has come to mean a specific type of traditional Japanese clothing.

FURISODE -- the most formal type of Japanese kimono; today mainly worn by young women for coming-of-age ceremonies.

JUNK BOAT -- A trade ship developed in 10th century China.

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**Media Description**

This kimono includes two major motifs -- embroidered bonsai leaves and ships featured on a black silk fabric. Bonsai trees were appropriated from Chinese culture, but the Japanese discovered a unique way of growing the trees which soon became synonymous with Japanese art and culture. Bonsai trees also took on a meaning of balance and peace. The pictured ships are “junk boats” which were also originally Chinese and used mainly as trade ships. Ships have various meanings in Japanese culture, but when paired with the bonsai plants they can be translated as auspicious signs for wealth and trade. This kimono design translates as a symbol of luck and wealth as well as references a history of cultural and economic trade with China.

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Albert and Victoria Museum of textiles

Snow, Wave, Pine: Traditional Patterns in Japanese Design

Completed by Lisa Co, Spring 2017
What's your sign?: Motifs in Culture
Art Activity Lesson Plan: K-8

Session Activity: Students will create their own kimono patterns from a selection of motifs in order to tell stories about their own lives or that reflect themselves. They will use blank sheets of paper to draw patterns or motifs of things they see everyday or that represent themselves in some way and then carve them into a lino tile. They will then stamp their motifs onto the provided t-shirts.

Activity Procedure: Students will be shown a series of common Japanese motifs and asked to discuss what they symbolize and the way they relate to Japanese culture. Examples of motifs might be: chrysanthemums, hemp leaves, cranes, cherry blossoms, etc. Students will then come up with their own symbols that describe aspects of their own culture or everyday life. They will then carve these into linoleum blocks and print them on t-shirts as repeatable patterns.

Objective: Students will understand the symbolism of motifs in Japanese textiles and create their own language of symbolism.

Vocabulary: motif - a decorative design or pattern; a distinctive feature or dominant symbol in an artistic composition.

Materials: Markers, linoleum blocks and linoleum cutting tools, ink, t-shirts, motifs (can be found in Japanese Textile packet on MOFA website: http://mofa.fsu.edu/learning-resources/)

Class Wars: Art and Social Order
Art History Lesson Plan: 9-12

Session Activity: The motifs seen on a kimono of the Edo Period reflected the class and wealth of the citizen wearing it. Students will develop an understanding of the way art and consumerism are influenced by class differences.

Discussion: The discussion should first start with an examination of motifs that were available to the lower classes and ones that were available to the upper classes and the reasons these particular patterns would be available? How does making certain patterns available to only the ruling class promote a hierarchy of power?

Objectives: Students will learn the way art is influenced by social conditions and the way symbolism can grow from these conditions.

Sources: History of the Kimono, Albert and Victoria Museum of Textiles

Completed by Lisa Co  Spring 2017