

Completed by Abby Mann Spring 2017

**Title:** *Japanese Furisode (Wheeled Conveyance)*

**Artist:** Unknown

**Date:** mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Medium:** silk and embroidery

**Acquisition #:** 2008.28

**Additional Work by Artist in Collection:** Yes  Unknown

### What Is A Furisode?

Furisodes are the most formal style of kimono worn by young unmarried women in Japan. By wearing a furisode, a young woman signifies that she is both single and a legal adult, and thus available for marriage. The furisode is generally worn for formal social functions such as the tea ceremony or wedding ceremonies of relatives. Since furisodes can be quite expensive, many women rent them as needed rather than purchasing them. Since the Second World War the wearing of traditional garments has dramatically declined, and nowadays most production is automated, but some makers continue to utilize traditional skills in the creation of contemporary kimono.

### How Are They Made?

Kimono are made from single bolts of cloth, about 14 inches wide and 36 feet long, which are cut into seven straight pieces. Traditionally, kimonos are sewn by hand; even machine-made kimonos require substantial hand-stitching. Embroidery was often used in conjunction with dyeing, the combination of techniques giving designs a variety of texture and visual depth. Techniques such as *yūzen* dye resist are often used for applying decoration and patterns to the base cloth. Repeating patterns that cover a large area of a kimono are traditionally done with the *yūzen* resist technique and a stencil. Over time there have been many variations in color, fabric and style.

### Object Description

This kimono is made using beige silk as the background for the motifs of the garment. The pattern may have been created using the *yūzen* resist technique and outlined in gold thread. It is decorated with a red-orange and gold maple tree motif, as well as a scene of a cart rolling beside a river, visible between the tree branches. The red-orange and gold color scheme may be a sign this garment was worn in autumn. The cart could be a sign of wealth, as traditionally only the wealthy could afford wheeled transportation.

### Wheeled Conveyance Motif

In the days before paved roads, only members of the imperial court could use wheeled conveyances. It is a favorite design motif and is used extensively in textile decoration. The design is meant to evoke a feeling of opulence and status.



### Vocabulary

**Kimono** – a loose robe with wide sleeves that is traditionally worn with a broad sash as an outer garment.

**Furisode** – literally “swinging sleeves,” a style of kimono distinguishable by its long sleeves, which range in length from 39 to 42 inches in length

**Yūzen** – a Japanese dyeing technique for fabrics



Close up of imperial cart (wheeled conveyance motif) on a historical Japanese furisode

### References:

Nagasaki, Iwao (1994). *Furisode*. Kyoto: Fujioka Mamoru. p. 93  
Sawada, Kazuto. "Furisode and Teenage Boys." *Bimonthly Magazine "REKIHAKU."* National Museum of Japanese History. Archived from the original on 22 May 2013. Retrieved 9 May 2014.

Many women celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> birthdays (becoming adults) by wearing *furisodes*. A *furisode* is a style of formal kimono to be worn with a *fukuro obi* (formal decorative sash). Men sometimes also wear traditional dress at special occasions but many men wear formal western clothes such as suits and ties today rather than traditional black *montsuki* kimonos, *hakamas* (pants), and *kaku obis*. Three-and-seven-year-old girls and three-and-five-year-old boys celebrate their birthdays at the *Shichi-Go-San* festival. Traditionally, each age group has its own special attire. Three-year-old girls wear kimonos with *hifu* (a type of padded vest) instead of an *obi* (sash), while seven-year-old girls dress in standard kimonos and *obis*. Boys each wear *hakama* and a long *haori* (jacket) that is decoratively printed. Traditional garb is not required, however, and children often attend shrines in suits or dresses.

**Design An Obi (K-5) Session Activity and Objective:**

1. Students will be introduced to traditional Japanese clothing and accessories, such as the obi.
2. Students will learn the differences between types according to gender and age, and design their own obis.

**Activity Procedure:** Explain that in Japanese culture, patterns have very specific meanings. Show students some images of men, women and children in traditional dress and discuss their outfits. Specifically discuss the patterns and the people wearing them. For example, women and girls commonly wear floral patterns, stripes and solids are reserved for men. Boys have a little more variety, wearing gradient color, geometric patterns, and even landscape scenes. Explain the way that more complex and colorful patterns were more traditional for young women, and subdued colors and simple patterns were more appropriate for older women. Give students a sheet of paper and have them design their own obis. Then have the students explain the meaning of their designs.

**Materials:** images of kimono and obi, sheets of blank paper, crayons and markers.

For more information on patterns and their meanings visit <http://mofa.fsu.edu/learning-resources/exhibition-resources> and look at the packet titled *Japanese Prints and Textiles*.

Useful Website for images of kimonos: <http://artquill.blogspot.com/2014/05/the-kimono-and-japanese-textile-designs.html>,

Useful Website for images of obis: <http://www.japonic.com/obi/index.htm>

For more images of children in traditional clothing:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=shichi%20go%20san%20festival%20japan&qs=AS&form=QBIR&sp=3&pq=shichi%20go%20san%20festival%20&sc=3-23&sk=SC1AS1&cvid=287D6D906B0044C49E905E54D9E748BB>

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (K-5):**

Big Idea: Skills, Techniques, and Processes. Enduring Understanding 1: The arts are inherently experiential and actively engage learners in the processes of creating, interpreting, and responding to art. VA.3.S.1.3 Incorporate ideas from art exemplars for specified time periods and cultures.

**Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (6-12):**

Big Idea: Skills, Techniques, and Processes. Enduring Understanding 2: Development of skills, techniques, and processes in the arts strengthens our ability to remember, focus on, process, and sequence information. VA.912.S.2.3 Demonstrate visual-thinking skills to process the challenges and execution of a creative endeavor.



Front and back view of a girl wearing a Furisode kimono and fukuro obi.

**Yuzen Technique (6-12) Session Activity and Objectives:**

1. Students will be introduced to yuzen, a technique used in Japan for dyeing fabric, such as that for a kimono and obi.
2. Students will watch a short video which demonstrates the technique: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xryv18hhYW4> (less than 4 minutes long)
3. Students will use this technique to create their own design on pieces of cloth.

**Activity Procedure:** Introduce some images of kimono or obi which have been dyed using the yuzen technique. Explain that traditional Japanese clothes are made using a combination of embroidery and dye, and that even clothes made by machine require extensive manual work. Explain that yuzen is a dye-resist technique, meaning that only the space not covered by paste is dyed. Show a short video demonstrating the technique. Give students a template to trace with the paste such as this one: <http://media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/736x/f6/31/5c/f6315cb23606cca2f2aa0e3aa701c832.jpg> After using a prefab template, have students design their own templates. Then, following the step by step instructions in the video, students will each produce a piece of fabric dyed using the yuzen technique.

**Materials:** Templates and materials to create templates, 12x12 pieces of fabric, yuzen paste, piping bags, and multiple dye colors