

Kimono

Japan, Taish -early Sh wa period (1912–1950)
Silk, plain weave, stencil-printed double *kasuri* (ikat)
Purchase, 1996
(8248.1)

The native iris, *kakitsubata*, is credited with strength-giving properties with its sword-like blades. Dew falling upon the plant suggests the soul of the warrior. Bundles of leaves that had collected the evening dew were thrown into the bath water of sons on Boys' Day, traditionally celebrated on May 5th.

Dramatically set on a diagonal, the field of flowers with leaves of saturated violet-red provides a dynamic fashion statement by this bold use of color.

Kimono

Japan, Taish -early Sh wa period (1912–1950)

Silk, *ro* (plain and leno) weave, stencil-printed

Purchase, 1996

(8257.1)

The lily, known as *yuri*, is regarded as an auspicious pattern, and symbolizes prayers for the prosperity of one's descendants. Japan is home to a large variety of lilies, some of which were exported in the pre-WWII period, improved abroad, and re-introduced to Japan. The noble pattern of undulating lines, *tatewaku*, signifies steam rising up from the plants at the first spring heat as an omen of good luck and good fortune.

Kimono

Japan, Taish -early Sh wa period (1912–1955)

Silk, *kobai* (plain weave with grid work of thicker and thinner thread yarns in warp and weft), stencil-printed

Gift of The Christensen Fund, 2001

(10957.1)

Yabane, or arrow feather, is an extremely popular kimono motif and many variations of the pattern have evolved. The arrow has a military connotation, and it symbolizes the power to destroy evil. The overlay of large bell flowers (*kiky*) and accents of delicate peonies (considered the “king” of flowers) soften the bold rhythm of the arrows, flying up and down on this Taish -style kimono.

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Japan, Taish -early Sh wa period (1912–1950)

Silk, *ro* (plain and leno) weave, stencil-printed

Purchase, 1996

(8256.1)

This particular leno weave, *nana-koshi-ro* with pairs of warps twisted every seven wefts creates a lightweight, translucent fabric, perfect for summer wear. One of the seven autumn flowers, the *nadeshiko* (fringed pink) is also called *tokonatsu*, which means “everlasting summer.” This flower continues to bloom from May through the first autumn winds, and reminds us of the height of summer. Medallions of Chinese bell flowers (*kiky*) bloom for a short time and signal the departing summer. Pampas grass (*susuki*) blades masterfully delineate the floral fields in gentle arches throughout the coolness of the teal background.

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Japan, Taish -early Sh wa period (1912–1950)

Silk, *ro* (plain and leno) weave, stencil-printed

Purchase, 1996

(8258.1)

The Confederate rose (*Hibiscus mutabilis*) is sometimes referred to as *aki-botan* (autumn peony) in Japan. Known for its elegance and beauty, and appreciated for the gracefulness of its ephemeral flower, the Confederate rose bears large blossoms in late summer. Each bloom lasts only one day and a particular type yields white flowers that turn to pink and wilt, reddening within a day.

Kimono

Japan, Taish -early Sh wa period (1912–1955)
Silk, *ro* (plain and leno) weave, stencil-printed
Gift of The Christensen Fund, 2001
(10953.1)

The Taish period (1912–1926) was one of confidence and optimism that had a direct effect on the design patterns on kimono. These striking motifs were dramatically enlarged providing an exuberant visual statement for the modern, independent urban woman of the Taish and early Sh wa periods (1926–1989). Power-operated spinning machines and Jacquard looms introduced from Europe sped up production and lowered costs, while chemical dyes allowed for the creation of dazzling colors.

The day lily is sometimes called *wasure-gusa* (“forgetting grass”) since people believed that if they ate day lily in early spring, their dark winter moods would disappear. The use of intense magenta instead of the usual white or pale yellow flowers also helped to brighten spirits.

Kimono

Japan, Taish -early Sh wa period (1912–1955)

Silk, stencil-printed warp *kasuri* (ikat)

Gift of The Christensen Fund, 2001

(10938.1)

Thistles bloom in late spring, signaling the coming of summer. Although many people enjoy the sight of thistles, they are rarely used as a design motif. The sharp serrated edges of the leaves that are punctuated with bursts of brilliant bright pink tufts recall the Arts and Crafts movement of William Morris and his designs of decorative acanthus leaves.