Reading Fashion: Depicting Classical Japanese Literature in 17th Century Kimono

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Literacy, Art and Fashion in the Edo Period

This article will explore the meaning of written characters and words in kimono patterns of the 17th century and women's cultural literacy that these patterns demonstrate. The *Genji hinagata* 源氏ひながた, a kimono pattern book printed in Jōkyō 4 (1687) depicts 139 patterns, 27 of which are inspired by historical or fictional women[1]. The first 11 women are characters from the *Tale of Genji* 源氏物語 (1008), which gives the pattern book its name. The other 16 women are from other fictional tales including the *Tales of Ise* 伊勢物語, and the *Tale of the Heike* 平家物語, as well as historical women like Murasaki Shikibu, the author of the *Tale of Genji*. Many of the patterns in this book contain words written inside the pictorial patterns of flowers, boats, bridges, and more. Using their knowledge of classical literature and Noh theater, the reader must guess how each of these 27 patterns is related to the woman it represents. The words included in these patterns are often the key to the puzzle.

Discussions of popular culture in the Edo period of Japan (1603-1868) often focus on Kabuki and Bunraku puppet performing arts. Though these two performing arts gained popularity during the mid to late-Edo period, the beginning of the Edo period was dominated by Noh classical drama. Moreover, while Kabuki was viewed as licentious and regulated by the shogunal government, Noh was patronized by the elite. Noh plays often drew inspiration from classical Japanese literature and presented classic themes for contemporary audiences. Many fashionable women of the early Edo period thus commissioned textiles depicting Noh dramas and classical literary themes[2].

[1] Katō Yoshisada 加藤吉定 and others, *Genji hinagata* 源氏ひながた, Kyoto, Tsurugayasan'emon, National Diet Library Digital Collection, 3 volumes, 1687.
[2] Michelle Kuhn, "The Influence of Noh Plays on *Kosode* Patterns in the *Genji Hinagata*", *Art Research*, vol. 18, 2018, p. 87-100.

Pictorial depictions of classical poetry in Japanese textiles have existed for well over one thousand years. During the festivities celebrating the birth of Fujiwara no Shōshi's and Emperor Ichijō's first child, Murasaki Shikibu describes a fellow lady-in-waiting's garments: "Lady Ōshikibu wore a beautiful train and jacket, both embroidered with the Komatsubara scene at Mt. Oshio"[3]. The depiction of Mt. Oshio alludes to a poem composed by Ki no Tsurayuki[4] at the coming-of-age ceremonies for the son and daughter of the Minister of the Left, Fujiwara no Saneyori (900-970). Murasaki highlights Ōshikibu's ensemble, not only because the imagery depicted in her garment is beautiful, but also because it is a skillful allusion to a famous poem composed to pray for the future health and success of two children born to the Fujiwara family. Lady Ōshikibu correctly matched the color scheme and imagery appropriate for the occasion and imbued her garment with literary and cultural significance. Moreover, the acknowledgement between the wearer of the garment and the viewer is an indispensable part of the design's success. If Murasaki and her colleagues did not grasp the literary allusion, Ōshikibu's design would not have been successful, and would not have been immortalized in a diary that has been passed down for the last thousand years.

Though Murasaki Shikibu does not mention any hidden words in Ōshikibu's garments, from at least the Kamakura period (1192-1333) we see words hidden within pictorial images of decorated lacquer objects. For example, in a 13th century accessory box with plum in lacquer (*maki-e* 蒔絵, see image 1) the words hidden in the design come from the collected poems of Po Chu-I (*Baishi Wenji* 白氏文集, 845). The silver Chinese characters form the branches and the trunk of the plum tree, the bank by the stream and a rock surrounded by ducks. The characters are artfully distorted to meld into the objects. Words could be both meaningful and aesthetic[5].

[3] Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部, *Murasaki Shikibu nikki* 紫式部日記 (The Diary of Lady Murasaki), in *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集, Tokyo, Shōgakukan, vol. 26, 2008, p. 144; translated from Japanese: "大式部のおもとの裳、唐衣、小塩山の小松原をぬひたるさま、いとをかし". English translation by Richard John Bowring, *The Diary of Lady Murasaki*, London, New York, Penguin Classics, Penguin, 1996, p. 18.

[4] *Gosen wakashū* 後撰和歌集, 1371; translated from Japanese: "大原やしほの小松原はや木高かれ千代の影みむ", "Oh, on the Ohara plain of Mt. Oshio, the grove of small pines, you must grow fast and thick to show the colors of a thousand years!". English translation by the author.

[5] This kind of characters hidden within a pictorial design were called *ashide* 葦手. Julia Meech-Pekarik, "Disguised Scripts and Hidden Poems in an Illustrated Heian Sutra: *Ashide* and *Uta-E* in the Heike Nōgyō", *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 31, 1977, p. 52-78. Accessed 10 October 2024 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20111084>.

Image 1: Accessory box (tebako) *with plum in lacquer* (makie-e)*, in* Magnificent Makie-e: Tales of Urushi and Gold Over a Thousand Years*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Art, Mitsui Memorial Museum, the Tokugawa Museum, The Asahi Shinbun, Tokyo, 2022, p. 62 © Mishima Taisha Collection.*

Men and women of the Edo period used a garment called a *kosode* 小袖 (small sleeve garment). The *kosode* was a shape that we associate with the modern kimono, a wrapped front garment with square hanging sleeves and a rectangular body. *Kosode* were made using silk and often lined for winter wear. Summer garments called *katabira* 帷子 were the same shape as *kosode*, but produced using plant fibers, including linen, hemp, and ramie. *Furisode* 振袖 had the same body shape as *kosode*, but the length of the sleeves was much longer. However, it should be noted that the "small" of "small-sleeve garment" was not a reference to the length of the hanging sleeves, but to the size of the sleeve opening, just larger than the woman's wrist, differentiating this garment from the large sleeve openings of Heian and Kamakura court garments. Women would wear at least one inner *kosode* of undyed or white cloth and an outer *kosode* dyed or embroidered in various colors. All strata of society wore the *kosode*, but aristocratic women and women of the samurai class would display their status through the quality and number of *kosode* used.

Though pictorial designs in textiles and other decorative arts were appreciated during the Heian period (785-1085), the popularity of brocade in the Kamakura (1192-1333) and Muromachi (1336-1573) periods encouraged the repetition of such designs. However, at the end of the 16th century, culture and technology conspired to bring pictorial designs into fashion again. Textiles in the early Edo period also often included words and letters in the pictorial designs. A pattern

with only visual imagery can be easily interpreted, but adding words and letters can imbue the design with further meaning. Not all words in textiles allude to literature, for instance *kosode* worn for weddings often simply have felicitous words like "blessings" (福) on them. Adding words to pictorial designs enables incredibly complex literary allusions.

The Japanese written language features three types of characters, Chinese characters imported during the early 5th century utilized as ideograms, called kanji 漢字, and two syllabaries utilized in conjunction with kanji to express grammatic conjugations and particles not needed in Chinese. The hiragana 平仮名 and katakana 片仮名 syllabaries were developed during the early Heian period as a cursive script and can be used independently from kanji as well. Though today there are only 48 hiragana syllables used to write Japanese, between the development of hiragana in the Heian period and the government script reform of Meiji year 33 (1900), each syllable could be represented by several symbols[6]. A single syllable, "a" for example, could take five or more forms. The choice of which variant to use for any given syllable was sometimes influenced by grammar, but often selected for aesthetic reasons to harmonize with the surrounding text or the calligrapher's personal style.

Although it is commonly said that literacy in Edo Japan was much higher than in contemporary Europe, recent studies have problematized this assumption[7]. Though it is impossible to state with any statistical accuracy the literacy rate of women during the Edo period, many women in big cities like Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka were likely able to read[8]. *Kosode* patterns popular during the 1650's-80's are often decorated with hiragana and kanji, supporting the theory that women who wore these designs were surely able to read them. Moreover, Ayaka Baba

[6] Takashiro Kōichi 高城弘一, *Meiji shonen no kyōkasho ni miru kana no hyōki* 明治初年の教科書に見る仮名の表記 (Notation of the Japanese Syllabary seen in the Textbook of the First Year of the Meiji Era), *Jissen joshi tanki daigaku kiyō*, vol. 34, 2013, p. 109-119.
[7] In 2012, Saitō Yasuo 斉藤泰雄 claimed that 50-60 % of men and approximately 30 % of women could read during the Edo period. However, Shimizu Kazuhiko 清水一彦 pointed out that Saitō's study does not take into account differences in regions, gender, social class, occupation or era and therefore his statistics are less than useful. Saitō Y., "Shikiji nōryoku/shikiji ritsu no rekishiteki sui'i – Nihon no keiken" 識字能力・識字率の歴史的推移—日本の経験 (Historical Progression of Literacy and Literacy Rates: Japan's Experience), *Kokusai kyōiku kyōryoku ronshū*, vol. 15, 2012, p. 51-62; Shimizu K., "Shuppan ni okeru gensetsu kōsei katei no ichiji rei bunseki: Edo jidai no shikijiritu wa takakatta to iu jōshiki o rei toshite" 出版における言説構成過程の一事例分析—「江戸時代の識字率は高かった」という"常識"を例として (Analysis of an Example of the Process of Discourse Construction in Publishing: The Common Understanding that "Literacy in the Edo Period was High"), *Shuppan kenkyū*, vol. 48, 2017, p. 1-21.
[8] Susanne Formaneck & Sepp Linhart, *Written Texts-Visual Texts: Woodblock-Printed media in Early Modern Japan*, Amsterdam, Hotei Academic European Studies on Japan, Hotei Publishing, vol. 3, 2005, p. 13.

has suggested that the artists who designed the *kosode* and artisans who executed the designs also had enough literacy to create these literary patterns[9].

One impetus for the rising literacy of the Edo period was the proliferation of printing. The first texts available in print were classic tales from the Heian period. The *Tale of Genji*, the *Tales of Ise* and Noh libretti were initially printed in moveable type in the Keichō period (1596-1615). These texts were printed as a series called the Saga-bon 嵯峨本 and produced on beautifully colored paper with mica underpaintings. The Saga-bon were sold or given to an exclusive group of patrons. However, movable type prints were swiftly replaced in just 40 years by woodblock prints. The first woodblock print editions of the *Tale of Genji* illustrated by Yamamoto Shunshō were printed in 1650 (Keian 3) and 1654 (Jōō 3). One significant feature of woodblock print editions is its illustrations which in turn inspired *kosode* patterns. The Saga-bon and Shunshō's illustrations led to a boom of *Genji* publications between the 1650's-70's[10]. The publication of the *Genji hinagata*, a *kosode* pattern book depicting women of those classic tales, demonstrates the level to which classical literature had permeated different strata of society and the interrelation of literacy and fashion.

Prior to the commercial availability of classical Japanese literature, those wishing to read the *Tale of Genji* must have borrowed a copy from a friend or teacher and created their own copy if they wished to keep the text. Classical literature was passed from teacher to student amongst the aristocracy in this way for nearly six hundred years. When Kyoto aristocrats lost their political power to the shogunates of the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, they sold copies of classical literature and tutored the samurai class for money[11].

One way for aristocratic families to maintain their intellectual property was to create "secret teachings" for literary texts. There were secret teachings for many classical texts including the *Tale of Genji* and the *Tales of Ise*. However, though the content of these secret teachings was restricted to students of the families who guarded each line of interpretation, the existence of these secret teachings was well known. Several Noh plays reference secret teachings, underscoring the close relationship between the actors and playwrights, their shogun patrons and the Kyoto aristocracy. Klein notes that in the Noh Play *Unrin'in* 雲林院, the *waki* (supporting actor) Kinmitsu, states that "long ago in my youth I fondly read the

[9] Baba Ayaka 馬場彩果, "Kosode Hinagatabon 'Shinsen ohiinakata' ni okeru moji monyō" 小袖雛形本『新撰御ひいなかた』における文字文様 (Moji Monyō in the Design Book of *Kosode Shinsen On-hiinakata*), *Uekusa gakuen daigaku kenkyū kiyō*, vol. 4, 2012, p. 59-69.
[10] Peter F. Kornicki, "Unsuitable Books for Women? *Genji Monogatari* and *Ise Monogatari* in Late Seventeenth-Century Japan", *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 60, n° 2, 2005, p. 147-93.
[11] Jamie L. Newhard, *Knowing the Amorous Man: A History of Scholarship on Tales of Ise*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard East Asian Monographs, vol. 355, 2013.

Tales of Ise and received secret instruction on this work from a certain personage"[12]. Secret teachings show the student a "hidden" or allegorical meaning to the text and create doubled or layered imagery not in the original text. Zeami, the great Noh actor and writer, stresses the importance of words with double meanings, or puns, in Noh plays. Puns on place names open the audience's ears and minds at just the right moment to have maximum emotive effect. However, overuse of puns can have the opposite effect, rather than catching the audience's attention, it can diffuse it[13]. The *Genji hinagata* utilizes puns and layered imagery to effectively merge the sartorial content with classical literary content.

Woodblock printing functioned as a catalyst for the spread of classical Japanese literature through the populace. Woodblock prints were available in bookstores and at lending libraries for reasonable prices and literacy around the nation rose quickly[14]. The commercial availability of woodblock prints meant that anyone with sufficient funds could freely purchase and read classical literature. Literature was no longer controlled by the aristocracy and the newly rich merchant class was keen to display their interest in classical literature on their clothes.

Though women had always enjoyed the *Tale of Genji* and the *Tales of Ise*, reading and copying it for generations, in the early Edo period a new group of male scholars attempted to limit women's access to these tales. For instance, Ise Sadatake 伊勢貞丈 described the *Tale of Genji* as "lewd"[15]. Proponents of *Genji* argued that the tale was a smooth way to bring readers to Buddhist enlightenment. Yamamoto Shunshō, illustrator of the first illustrated *Genji* woodblock print, declared that the reason he had illustrated the book was to make it easier for women and girls to read. Many young girls learned about the *Tale of Genji* from texts like the *Onna Genji kyōkun kagami* 女源氏教訓鑑 (Women's Mirror of Genji Lessons, Shōtoku 3, 1713) which includes a synopsis for each of the 54 chapters. Children were likely expected to memorize the titles and dates of anthologies rather than grasp the content or ideas of the literature,

[12] Ōwada Tateki 大和田建樹, *Yōkyoku Hyōshaku* 謡曲評釈第４輯 (Annotated Noh Plays) 4, Tokyo, Hakubunkan, 1907, p. 178; translated from Japanese: "公光と申す者にて候。我幼なかりし頃よりも。伊勢物語を手馴れ候ふ處に。". Accessed 7 October 2024 <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/876567/1/94>; Susan Blakeley Klein, *Dancing the Dharma: Religious and Political Allegory in Japanese Noh Theater*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard East Asian Monographs, vol. 435, 2021, p. 133.

[13] S. Blakeley Klein, *Dancing the Dharma*, p. 128.

[14] P. F. Kornicki, "Marketing the *Tale of Genji* in Seventeenth-Century Japan", in *Literary Cultures and the Material Book*, Simon Eliot, Andrew Nash, and Ian Wilson (eds), London, British Library, 2007, p. 65-75.

[15] P. F. Kornicki, "Unsuitable Books for Women?", p. 161.

but this is true for elementary education in general. Analysis and experimentation come after memorization of basic information. If the *Onna Genji kyōkun kagami* was an elementary textbook, then the *Genji hinagata* was meant for advanced students. After mastering the basic names and dates of classical literature and history, the *hinagata* was a space to play with themes and ideas.

Perhaps because so many digests and summaries of *Genji* in elementary textbooks were printed during the Edo period, some scholars doubt that women of the Edo period read beyond these elementary digests and primers of the *Tale of Genji*. It has been suggested that "the appearance of learning was perhaps as important as actually to be learned"[16]. Others claim that though women might have known the broad outline of the plot, they might not know much about the original dialogue or narration of the tale[17]. This expectation of women's illiteracy has been applied to the *Genji hinagata*, leading to interpretations of patterns that fail to consider the passages printed opposite the *kosode* patterns. Yet a careful reading of the text of the *hinagata* itself shows that cultural literacy of a high level is required to understand such patterns.

Genji Hinagata: Reading Fashion

The *Genji hinagata* does not put forward any argument either for women's reading or against. Its existence shows that the author and publisher believed that women were capable of both reading and understanding classical literary texts. Many of the 139 patterns in the *Genji hinagata* are based on or related to patterns published in other contemporary pattern books like the *On-hinagata* 御ひいなかた (Respected Patterns, 1666) and *Shokoku On-hinagata* 諸国御ひいなかた (Respected Patterns of Various Countries, 1686); it is not the patterns that make this book unique. Prior to the *Genji hinagata*, pattern books contained only sparse text, oftentimes just the base color and title of the pattern. The *Genji hinagata* contains long passages not directly related to the color or construction of the designs, putting this book in a hybrid category of literary and visual media. Moreover, each of these patterns has an accompanying text that describes the woman. The patterns are presented as a two-page spread. The *kosode* design is printed on the right-hand page with the title of the pattern on the bottom right and a label stating which woman it represents on the bottom left of the pattern. Suggestions for construction and colors of the *kosode* pattern are printed in the

[16] Marcia Yonemoto, *The Problem of Women in Early Modern Japan*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2016, p. 66.
[17] Linda H. Chance, "Genji Guides or Minding Murasaki", in *Manners and Mischief: Gender, Power, and Etiquette in Japan*, Jan Bardsley and Laura Miller (eds), Berkeley, University of California Press, 2011, p. 37.

upper register above the pattern. The left-facing page features a portrait of the woman wearing her own *kosode* pattern and a passage describing the woman and her pattern.

This paper will discuss two patterns with writing included in the pictorial design: Fujitsubo and the Nijō Consort. Fujitsubo is a central character of the *Tale of Genji*, the titular character's stepmother, and the paragon to which he compares all other women. The Nijō Consort is a historical woman and is supposedly one of Ariwara no Narihira's lovers depicted in the *Tales of Ise*. My research interprets the patterns not simply based on their visual elements, but by relying on the textual passage to the left of each pattern as well as the table of contents introducing each pattern.

The Fujitsubo pattern

Fujitsubo becomes consort to Genji's father in the first chapter of the *Tale of Genji*. Adolescent Genji is smitten with her, but their love is taboo. Fujitsubo 藤壺, the Wisteria Pavilion, is the name of the Fujitsubo's wing in the palace so her pattern in the *hinagata* rightly contains wisteria blossoms. However, the words used in her pattern (see image 2) are a difficult puzzle to decipher. At the beginning of each volume a table of contents introduces the nine patterns based on women. The table of contents entries mention a distinct dyeing method for each woman. However, these dyeing methods are not related to the visual appearance of the pattern suggested later in the book. The table of contents entries utilize allusions, puns, word play, and word association and require a substantial knowledge of the Heian and Kamakura literary canons as well as dyeing methods to decipher. Allusions to one tale or poem in the first line of the table of contents are followed by an allusion to a different tale in the next line, all linked through word play. It is exactly this blend of classical and contemporary, fiction and fabric that makes the *hinagata* so charming.

In the table of contents, the Fujitsubo pattern is labeled: "This sophisticated [kimono] you will want to wear is dazzlingly dyed, leaning coquettishly, a precious garment, the Fujitsubo pattern"[18].

The first phrase describing Fujitsubo's pattern, sophisticated, *ki no tōtta* (気のとおつた), is the archaic version of the modern Japanese phrase *ki ga tōtta* 気が通った (to be tasteful, easily marketable), and *iki* 粋 (stylish and refined)[19].

[18] Translated from Japanese: "気のとおつたに着せたいは伊達染 しなだれかゝるは大事ない物藤つぼもやう。".

[19] The concept of *iki* was conceptualized in the 1930's by Kūki Shūzō to include browns, blues, stripes and other understated design elements. In the *Genji Hinagata*, "refined" is bright and eye-catching.

Being "fashionable" is also a reference to Fujitsubo's popularity both with her fellow characters within the tale and her enduring popularity amongst readers. The term "brilliantly dyed" (*date-zome* 伊達染) refers to garments dyed in bright colors or patterns. The *Bankin sugiwaibukuro* 萬金産業袋 (Guide to Various Crafts and Trades, 1732) gives the following explanation of *hira-date-zome* 平伊達染:

> On a white or light blue background, faint designs are done in a style somewhere between *chayazome*[20] and *yūzen*[21]. From antiquity, this was used by aristocrats and samurai and is created using very fine lines in orange and indigo. Patterns of reed blinds and yellow water lilies, *shinobu* ferns and woven reed hats, as well as plums and calligraphy [are popular][22].

Though the Fujitsubo pattern suggested later is brightly colored, it does not fit the *date-zome* color scheme of orange and indigo, or feature the common designs mentioned. The next phrase, "leaning coquettishly", appears in the Fujitsubo passage. The final element of the table of contents, that this is a "precious garment", alludes to the care with which Fujitsubo is treated by the Kiritsubo Emperor as well as Genji's obsessive fascination with her.

The Fujitsubo pattern (see image 2), is composed of several elements. First, from the right sleeve down the right side of the body and ending on the right hem, there is a large snow roundel that encompasses a wisteria plant hanging on a trellis. Above the roundel on the right shoulder and mid-back are the characters for *uguisu* 鶯, Japanese bush warbler, and *yado* 宿, cottage. Around the kanji and at the middle of the hem, there are scattered cherry blossoms (*sakura*). To the right of the design, this *kosode* is titled the "Trellis and Wisteria Pattern" (mase ni fuji no moyau ませに藤のもやう). Next to the title of the pattern, the *hinagata* instructs that half the base color should be crimson (*han chi beni* 半地紅). The crimson base color would apply to the fabric outside the snow roundel. On the left, the pattern is labeled the "Fujitsubo Pattern" (Fujitsubo no moyau 藤つぼの模様).

[20] *Chayazome* (teahouse dyeing) is a pre-modern paste-resist dyeing technique that produces designs with long, flowing indigo lines.
[21] *Yūzen* is a multicolor paste-resist dyeing method similar to *chayazome*, but with a brighter color palette, including reds, purples, and black.
[22] *Bankin sugiwaibukuro* 萬金産業袋 (Guide to Various Crafts and Trades), vol. 4, 1732, p. 11; translated from Japanese: "地白。地浅黄。薄柄にして。友禅と茶屋染との間のもやう也。これ古代より。公家武家に用ひらるゝ所。かき。あいらうの細がき入り。翠簾にかうほね。しのぶにあみ笠。梅にもじ入…". Accessed 7 October 2024 <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/2605590>.

Image 2: Katō Yoshisada and others, Fujitsubo Consort pattern, Genji hinagata*, 3 volumes, 1687, Tsurugayasan'emon, Kyoto © National Diet Library Digital Collection.*

The use of flowers in the *Genji hinagata* patterns contains hidden meanings. The wisteria stands in for Fujitsubo, but the cherry blossoms may represent her niece Murasaki, who was best beloved out of Genji's numerous lovers. Murasaki is called "The Lady of Spring" later in the novel, so the appearance of cherry blossoms may hint at the blood relation between the two women. Cherry blossoms do not appear in the design for Murasaki herself, but they appear in another woman's kimono, the Akashi Lady[23].

According to the notes in the register above Fujitsubo's pattern:

> The characters should be done in *kanoko shibori*. The *sakura* blossoms should be in *kanoko* with some areas in "*shiraboshi*". The wisteria inside of the snow roundel should be a combination of mauve[24], white, sky blue[25],

[23] In the Akashi Lady pattern, *shinobu* (hidden) ferns stand in for Akashi, Genji's fickle emotions are represented by water bursting forth from rocks, and cherry blossoms float above the ferns, just as Murasaki is always floating in the forefront of Genji's mind, even when he is alone with Akashi. M. Kuhn, "Aspirational Elegance: Character Interpretation in the 'Genji Hinagata'", *Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies*, 2017, p. 69-94.

[24] Wisteria color (藤色) is a mauve with a slight hint of blue. We would also call this color lilac or violet.

[25] Literally the "middle color" (*naka iro* 中色). Research on the term *naka iro* suggests that the color is "sky blue", the middle range of cloth dyed with indigo. Hamada Nobuyoshi 濱田信義, Ruth S. McCreery, *The Traditional Colors of Japan*, Tokyo, PIE International, 2018. p. 133.

> and purple. The snow roundel itself should be turquoise. The trellis should be a variety of the previously mentioned colors[26].

Shibori 絞り is tie-dye and *kanoko* 鹿子 refers to a specific style of *shibori* that resembles the dappled spots of a baby deer's coat. A full day of work tying these tiny circles can only cover a few centimeters of cloth, making production of *kanoko shibori* extremely expensive. Production of *kosode* employing *kanoko* tie-dye over the entire garment was outlawed just four years prior to the publication of the *Genji hinagata* in 1683[27]. Therefore, the designs in this pattern book walk a fine line between the sumptuary restrictions and the populace's love for the technique by utilizing *kanoko* tie-dye only in small portions of the design. In the Fujitsubo pattern, *kanoko shibori* would be employed only in the words and cherry blossoms. The technique called *shiraboshi* 白星, a ground of white spots surrounded by color may be a subtype of *kanoko*. The colors suggested here do relate to the real-life color of wisteria, as both purple and white varietals were common in the Edo period and purple wisteria would be depicted in shades of mauve, purple, and blue. Overall, the mix of dyeing techniques depicted in turquoise, purple, mauve, sky blue, and white would be a striking combination against a crimson background.

Several extant *kosode* share design elements with the Fujitsubo pattern. The blue *chirimen* silk[28] *furisode* (see image 3) has wisteria hanging from a trellis above running water and iris (*kakitsubata*). The color of this *furisode* is similar to the sky blue suggested for the wisteria on the Fujitsubo pattern. An early Edo period *kosode* dyed entirely in *kanoko shibori* with only small embellishments in embroidery has wisteria hanging from a trellis over the right shoulder and right sleeve (see image 4), similar to the placement of the Fujitsubo pattern.

[26] Translated from Japanese: "文字かのこ、さくらかのこ、所々白ほし入、雪の内ふじ、白、中いろ、むらさきなど、こいろ入、雪の内あさぎ、ませ右のこいろ入。".

[27] The following dyeing methods were outlawed in the third year of Tenna (1863): thin silk crepe, embroidery, dapple tie-dye. Furthermore, "unusual weaving and dyeing methods" were banned. In Japanese, the term for the tie-dye is *sōkanoko* (total *kanoko*), which has come to be interpreted as the design being entirely done in *kanoko*, rather than small portions or sections of the design. Donald H. Shively, "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 25, 1964-1965, p. 126.

[28] *Chirimen* is a silk crepe that has a crimped or rippling three-dimensional texture.

Image 3: Blue chirimen *silk* furisode *with a design of wisteria, flowing water, and iris (*kakitsubata*) done in yūzen dyeing mid Edo period, National Museum of Japanese History © The Nomura Collection: Costumes and Accessories in Japan.*

Image 4: Red crepe silk kosode *with a design of wisteria trellises and wave done in* kanoko shibori *dyeing, early Edo period, in* Kosode: Haute Couture Kimonos of the Edo Period*, exhibition catalogue, Nagoya City Museum, Suntory Museum, Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, Matsuzakaya Kyoto Textile Sankōkan Museum, Nihon Keizai Shinbun, 2008, p. 49 © J. Front Retailing Archives Foundation Inc. Matsuzakaya Collection.*

On the lefthand facing page, Fujitsubo is depicted standing next to Genji wearing the pattern illustrated on the right-hand page. Though Fujitsubo is one of the most famous and integral characters from the *Tale of Genji*, she is rarely shown in woodblock prints, making the *Genji hinagata* portrait unique. Genji is depicted seated next to Fujitsubo with his hair styled in a childhood fashion called *mizura* 角髪, or twin loops of hair framing both sides of the face. In the *hinagata* image, Fujitsubo and Genji are depicted together as they have never been presented in other illustrations. They are depicted simply as a woman and a young boy, without context or background.

Though the design does feature wisteria, Fujitsubo's namesake, the words in the design do not appear to be related to Fujitsubo at all. The keywords "bush warbler" and "cottage" do not appear in the *Tale of Genji*. The *Genji hinagata* passage gives clues to the meaning of the Chinese characters for bush warbler and cottage:

> Querying "where is the bush warbler's cottage?" The plum scented sleeves reflected in the crimson dyed sleeves. Becoming lost on love's path, uncertainty in the way that the Fujitsubo leans coquettishly in this painted color. After the rains have soaked these sleeves, the shining Sun Princess she is called, how lovely she must have been[29].

The goal of each passage in the *Genji hinagata* is to first explain why the pattern is linked to the woman, give some background information on who the woman is, and give a sales point for why the reader should order this kimono. The clue for how the pattern is linked to Fujitsubo is in the first line. The phrase "where is the bush warbler's cottage" quotes a poem composed by Ki no Tsurayuki's daughter. The story behind this poem is told in both the *Ōkagami* 大鏡 (The Great Mirror, approx. 1119) and the *Jikkinshō* 十訓抄 (Stories Selected to Illustrate the Ten Maxims, 1252). The *Ōkagami* version provides more background detail:

> I remember one interesting and affecting incident from [Emperor Murakami's] reign. A plum tree in front of the Seiryōden had died, and His Majesty was looking for a replacement. He entrusted the matter to a certain gentleman who was serving as a Chamberlain at the time. "Young people can't recognize a good tree", the Chamberlain said to me. "You find one for us". After walking all over the capital without success, I located a beautiful specimen, covered with deep red blossoms, at a house in the western sector. As I was digging it up, the owner sent someone out with a message. "Attach this to it before you carry it away", I supposed there was

[29] Translated from Japanese: "うぐひすのやどいとゝはゞ、梅かゝの袖にうつろふへにかのこ色には、まよふ恋のみち、おぼつかなくも、藤つぼのしなだれかゝるぬれ色は、袖のなみだの雨にこそはれてのゝちは、かゝやく日のみやとも申けるは、いかばかりうつくしかりなんゆかし。".

> some reason behind it, so I took the paper along. The Emperor saw it and said, "What's that? " It was a poem in a woman's hand:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *Choku nareba* | I tremble and obey |
> | *Ito mo kashikoshi* | The Imperial command— |
> | *Uguisu no* | Yet how shall I answer |
> | *Yado was towaba* | If the warbler, asks, |
> | *Ikaga kotaen* | "Where is my home?" |
>
> Somewhat taken aback, the Emperor had inquiries made about the owner, and she turned out to be Tsurayuki's daughter[30].

The *Ōkagami* story answers how the keywords bush warbler and cottage are related to Fujitsubo. According to the *Ōkagami*, this event took place during Emperor Murakami's reign in the Tenryaku period (947-957). At this time, the Fujitsubo (Wisteria Pavilion) section of the palace was occupied by Fujiwara no Anshi (927-964), the daughter of Fujiwara no Morosuke. Anshi, the Lady of the Wisteria Pavilion, presided over the court for more than 20 years. She is also most well-known for giving birth to Emperor Reizei, the 63rd emperor of Japan. It is commonly believed that the fictional Kiritsubo Emperor was inspired by Emperor Murakami, and the name given to Genji and Fujitsubo's secret son in the *Tale of Genji* is Reizei.

The keywords "bush warbler" and "cottage" written in the pattern are intended to cause the reader to remember an event that took place during the historical period that *Genji* is supposedly based on. Thinking of Tsurayuki's daughter's poem brings to mind the historical Murakami, Anshi, and Reizei, inspiration for the fictional Kiritsubo, Fujitsubo, and Reizei. The encyclopedic knowledge that is required to understand the meaning of this single pattern proves without a doubt the erudition of both the author, and the education and cultural understanding required for readers to appreciate the meaning of the patterns in the *Genji hinagata*.

[30] Translated from Japanese: "いとをかしうあはれにはべりしことは、この天暦の御時に、清涼殿の御前の梅の木の枯れたりしかば、求めさせたまひしに、なにがしぬしの蔵人にていますがりし時、うけたまはりて、「若き者どもはえ見知らじ。きむち求めよ」とのたまひしかば、一京まかり歩きしかども、はべらざりしに、西京のそこそこなる家に、色濃く咲きたる木の、様体うつくしきがはべりしを、堀り取りしかば、家あるじの、「木にこれ結ひつけて持てまゐれ」と言はせたまひしかば、あるやうこそはとて、持てまゐりてさぶらひしを、「なにぞ」とて御覧じければ、女の手にて書きてはべりける。
勅なればいともかしこしうぐひすの宿はと問はばいかが答へむ
とありけるに、あやしく思し召して、「何者の家ぞ」とたづねさせたまひければ、貫之のぬしの御女の住む所なりけり。". English translation by Helen Craig McCullough, *Ōkagami, The Great Mirror – Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1027) and His Times – A Study and Translation,* Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan Press, 1991, p. 222-223.

The middle of the *Genji hinagata* passage describes Fujjitsubo "leaning", an echo of the table of contents and an allusion to the wisteria hanging in the pattern. The "dripping sleeves" of the passage are an allusion to a poem that Fujitsubo sends to Genji after she gives birth to Reizei, the offspring of their affair. "Oh, I know full well he only calls forth further dews that moisten my sleeves, yet I have no heart to scorn so lovely a little pink"[31].

Fujitsubo rarely reads the letters that Genji persists in sending her. So, Genji is touched to receive a letter from her declaring that she will not abandon her child, regardless of the shame and possible scandal. The *hinagata* passage ends with a reference to Fujitsubo's nickname in the Kiritsubo chapter, *Kagayaki-hime*, the Shining Princess. The *Genji hinagata* passage first presents the most difficult to parse allusion and ends with direct quotes of the *Tale of Genji*. The text is structured deliberately to guide the reader from a reference to the *Ōkagami* towards the finale, which states her nickname in the *Tale of Genji*.

The Nijō Consort pattern

The Nijō Consort, Fujiwara Takaiko (842-910), was consort to Emperor Seiwa and bore the future Emperor Yōzei. Near the end of her life, during Emperor Uda's reign, Takaiko was accused of having an affair with a priest and was stripped of her rank. However, she regained it after her death[32]. It has been suggested that her demotion and other rumors about Emperor Yōzei's mental illness were due to political competition between the descendants of Fujiwara Nagara, Taikaiko's father, and Fujiwara Yoshifusa, the father of the Somedono consort and grandfather of Emperor Seiwa[33].

The *Tales of Ise* are a collection of poems with minimal background stories. However, whether these episodes are historically accurate or not is a matter for discussion. The hero of most episodes is accepted to be Ariwara no Narihira (825-880). According to notes appended to the end of several episodes including Episode Six, "Pearls of Dew", the heroine is the Nijō Consort. Imanishi Yūichirō notes that as early as the writing of the *Ōkagami*, Narihira and Takaiko's

[31] Translated from Japanese: 袖ぬるる露のゆかりと思ふにもなほうとまれぬやまとなでしこ. Original text in *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集 (Collection of Japanese Classical Literature), *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語, Tokyo, Shōgakukan, vol. 20, 1994, p. 330. English translation by Royall Tyler, *The Tale of Genji*, New York, Penguin Publishing Group, 2001, p. 143.
[32] Michelle Osterfeld Li connects Somedono to her niece Takaiko, who likewise ascended to the rank of empress but was stripped of her rank late in life following an affair with the priest Zenyu. M. Osterfeld Li, *Ambiguous Bodies: Reading the Grotesque in Japanese Setsuwa Tales*, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 2009, p. 94.
[33] Yūichirō Imanishi, "The Formation of the *Ise Monogatari* and Its Background", in *An "Ise Monogatari" Reader*, Joshua S. Mostow (ed), Leiden, Netherlands, Boston, Massachusetts, Brill, 2021, p. 15-27.

relationship was taken as fact[34]. The *Tales of Ise* were first printed in the same Saga-bon movable type edition as the *Tale of Genji* and were soon followed with many illustrated woodblock print versions published for children. As with the *Tale of Genji*, the *Tales of Ise* were also reimagined in Noh plays. Takaiko is referred to as the Nijō Consort in the *Genji hinagata* and her description is based on Episode Six, "Pearls of Dew". Nijō is introduced as follows in the table of contents:

> Betel nut dyed like black ink or Sanemori ['s hair].
>
> The Nijō Consort's pattern is as pretty as that white jewel, "what could it be?"[35]

Betel nut dye (*binrōji* 檳榔子染), produces a dark black color. Betel nut is native to Malaysia and southeast Asia, and was imported into Japan from China in the early 8th century as a medicine and dye. According to the *Tale of the Heike*, Saitō no Bettō Sanemori was so heroic and determined to participate in the war between the Taira and the Minamoto clans, that he dyed his hair black to disguise his advanced age and spearheaded the rush toward the enemy. His hair dye was only discovered when his severed head was washed before being presented to Kiso Yoshinaka. Sanemori's hair is an oblique allusion to the black color created using *binrōji* betel nut dye.

As in the Fujitsubo table of contents entry, the colors and designs mentioned here are not directly related to Nijō's *kosode* design suggested later. The black color of ink and Sanemori's dyed hair are an allusion to "Pearls of Dew", episode six of the *Tales of Ise*. The darkest black *binrōji* dye is also metaphor for the dark night depicted in Episode Six when Narihira stole away the Nijō Consort. The query at the end of the table of contents line, "what is that white jewel?" (shiratama ka nani 白玉かなに) is also a quote from the same episode.

The Nijō Consort pattern is depicted on the right facing page (see image 5). To the right of the pattern, it is titled "Chrysanthemum Dew Pattern", and the base color is suggested to be turmeric colored. On the bottom left, the pattern is labeled "Nijō Consort Pattern". Chrysanthemum blossoms with leaves framing the petals are arranged in a semi-circle from the left shoulder across the upper back, down the right side of the body, and terminate at the left hem. On the right shoulder among the flowers, an enormous Chinese character sprawls down the body. This is the character for "dew" 露. Instructions for constructing the *kosode* and suggestions for colors are listed in the upper register:

[34] Yūichirō Imanishi, "The Formation of the *Ise Monogatari* and Its Background".
[35] Translated from Japanese: "実盛かすみいろに黒ひびんろうじ染白玉かなにきれいな二条の后もやう。".

> The characters should be crimson, done in *kanoko*. Chrysanthemum petals should be done here and there in turquoise *kanoko*. The leaves of the flowers should be pattern-less turquoise. Leave white and turquoise areas free for hand drawn ink paintings[36].

Image 5: Katō Yoshisada and others, Nijō Consort pattern, Genji hinagata*, 3 volumes, 1687, Tsurugayasan'emon, Kyoto © National Diet Library Digital Collection.*

Turquoise and crimson were the two of the most popular colors for *kosode* in this period. Large semi-circular patterns that concentrate the design on the right side of the back of the *kosode* were in vogue during the mid-1600's. In image 6, a similar design of chrysanthemums in *kanoko shibori* dyeing and embroidery was created on white plain-weave silk. The dark brown colored ramie *katabira* with a chrysanthemum blossom and palm leaf pattern, gives another idea of how Nijō's design could have been constructed in real life[37].

[36] Translated from Japanese: "文字べにかのこ、菊のはなに所々あさぎかのこ入、花葉に所々無知あさぎ入て、白浅ぎの上を、うはゑにて書べし。".

[37] Dark brown colored ramie katabira, Kyoto National Museum. Accessed 7 October 2024 <https://bunka.nii.ac.jp/heritages/detail/574956>.

Image 6: White plain-weave silk kosode *with design of chrysanthemums done in* kanoko shibori *dyeing and embroidery, early Edo period, in* Kosode: Haute Couture Kimonos of the Edo Period*, exhibition catalogue, Nagoya City Museum, Suntory Museum, Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, Matsuzakaya Kyoto Textile Sankōkan Museum, Nihon Keizai Shinbun, 2008, p. 62 © J. Front Retailing Archives Foundation Inc., Matsuzakaya Collection.*

The passage on the left-facing page describes the pattern opposite and introduces the reader to who the Nijō Consort was via clever allusions to the *Tales of Ise*. Underneath this passage, the hero Ariwara no Narihira carries the Nijō Consort on his back as they travel along the Akutagawa River. They gaze behind them at a spindly tree and short grasses. Implied, but not visible in the image, are the drops of dew that spark Nijō's curiosity. Unlike Fujitsubo and Genji, whose portrait is not drawing on an archetype, Narihira and Nijō's portrait is nearly identical to the Saga-bon version of the *Tales of Ise* Episode Six illustration. In fact, the Saga-bon edition codified the way that she, and this episode, have been portrayed[38].

Nijō's passage reads:

> "What is that white jewel?" Dripping in dew on the bank of the Akutagawa River that never dawns[39]. Gobbled up in one bite by a demon. Sleeves of parting, raining tears, rumbling of thunder, the thief of love, will they be

[38] J. S. Mostow, "The *Ise-e* Tradition and *Ise* Manga", *Japanese Language and Literature* 55, n° 1, 2021, p. 215/42. Accessed 7 October 2024 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27172845>.
[39] This is also a homonym for "not getting tired of someone".

> cursed?[40] Is this the moon from the spring of yesteryear[41] [queried] the old man of the past. This colorful pattern, in a new and chic style, this will become the pattern for love.
>
> 'Are those pearls', you asked,
>
> 'or what might they be?'
>
> I wish I had replied, 'Drops of dew',
>
> and vanished
>
> as quickly as they do[42].

Episode Six, "Pearls of Dew", of the *Tales of Ise* recounts the tale of two lovers. One night the man sneaks the woman out of her house, carrying her along the banks of the Akutagawa River. She is so sheltered that she has never seen dew on plants and questions him, "what are those jewels?" As the night deepens and a thunderstorm begins, they take refuge in an empty storehouse where a demon swallows the lady in one gulp. At dawn, the man who had been guarding the outside of the storehouse discovers the woman has disappeared and he recites the poem quoted at the end of the *Genji hinagata* passage. In Episode Four, "The Spring of Old", a man discovers his lover has disappeared from her Fifth Avenue estate and recites a poem questioning how the moon and spring can remain the same while his lover has disappeared. The *Genji hinagata* quotes a line of his poem, "is this the moon from the spring of yesteryear". Both episodes in the *Tales of Ise* claim that the unnamed woman in question is the Nijō Consort.

The puzzle presented by the Fujitsubo pattern was understanding the relationship between the words "bush warbler" and "cottage" written in the *kosode* pattern and the *Tale of Genji* character Fujitsubo. The word "dew" in Nijō's pattern is clearly related to Episode Six of the *Tales of Ise*. However, chrysanthemums are not mentioned in any of the episodes attributed to Nijō. Rather, the motif of chrysanthemums and the character for dew would cause many readers to think of a poem from the *Kokin wakashū*, by Sosei 素性[43]. Yet,

[40] The idiom "*sawaranu kami ni tatari nashi*" (spirits that aren't bothered, won't curse 触らぬ神に祟りなし) is often translated as "let sleeping dogs lie".

[41] Peter MacMillan translates this poem from Episode 4 "Could that be the same moon? Could this be the spring of old? Only I am as I have always been, but without you here". English translation by P. MacMillan, *The Tales of Ise*, Penguin Random House, 2016, p. 9.

[42] Translated from Japanese: "しらたまか、なにぞと、露に、ぬれかくる、あくたかはらの、あかぬ中、おに一口の、わかれの袖、なみだの雨に、神なりさはぐも、こひのぬす人の、たゝりにや、月やあらぬ、はるや、むかしの、むかし男、色のもやうは、今やうの、恋のひながたとも、なりぬべし
白たまかなにそと人のとゐしとき露とこたへてきへなましものを。".

[43] Several of Sosei's poems appear in the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (905), also known as the *Kokinshū*. Sosei was a Buddhist priest and poet, he is included in the *One Hundred Poets One Poem Each Collection* (*Hyuakunin isshu* 百人一首). ぬれてほす山ぢの菊のつゆのまにいつかちとせを我はへにけむ。 On the mountain road / dew from the chrysanthemums / drenched my

Sosei's poem is not inherently romantic in nature. I suggest a different poem may have been on the author's mind when they penned the *Genji hinagata*. "In the instant that an immortal's sleeve brushes white dew from the fragrant chrysanthemum, a thousand years pass"[44].

This poem was composed by Fujiwara no Shunzei on the occasion of Fujiwara no Ninshi's entrance into court in 1190. Facing opposition from retired Emperor Goshirakawa, Kujō Kanezane attempted to secure power through his daughter Ninshi's marriage to Emperor Gotoba. Kanezane commissioned Shunzei and the other leading poets of the day to compose poems to decorate lavish folding screens which adorned Ninshi's apartments in the palace. Shunzei's poem, accompanying chrysanthemum and dew motif reappear in the early Edo period in trousseaus for brides the Tokugawa family.

The second Shogun Tokugawa Ietada's daughter Masako, also known as Tōfukumon'in, was sent from Edo to Kyoto to marry Emperor Gomizuno in 1620. Her trousseau is the oldest example of furnishings made for shogunal brides, but the only piece to have survived is a small lacquer incense box (*maki-e*) bearing a dew drop and chrysanthemum pattern (see image 7). Masako's elaborate trousseau and the train of officials that escorted her from Edo to Tokyo were immortalized in a folding screen and became living legend. The dew and chrysanthemum motifs were repeated in Kamehime's trousseau, daughter of the Third Tokugawa Shogun Iemitsu, who married Maeda Mitsutaka in 1633[45]. The words of Shunzei's poem are hidden inside the pictures that decorate each item of Kamehime's trousseau. It is possible that Masako's chrysanthemum and dew motif was based on Sosei's poem as there are no words hidden in the design. However, the words hidden in Kamehime's trousseau make it clear that her motif depicts Shunzei's poem. For instance, on the lid of the accessory box (*tebako* 手箱, see image 8) the characters for immortal (仙人) are hidden in the mountains on the upper left. The hiragana character "no" (の) is in the middle of the image, the character for "to brush" (折) is hidden in a rock at bottom right and a garment, standing in for the word "sleeve", appears in the bottom left.

hem in the / instant it took to dry can / a thousand years have flashed by (*Kokin wakashū* 273). English translation by Laurel Rasplica Rodd, Mary Catherine Henkenius, John Timothy Wixted, and Leonard Grzanka, *Kokinshū: A Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern*, Boston, MA, Cheng & Tsui Company, 2004, p. 126.

[44] James C. Y. Watt and Barbara Brenna Ford, *East Asian Lacquer: The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991, p. 252; translated from Japanese: "仙人の折る袖にほふ菊の露 打はらふにも千代はへぬべし。"

[45] *Magnificent Makie-e: Tales of Urushi and Gold Over a Thousand Years*, exhibition catalogue, MOA Museum of Art, Mitsui Memorial Museum, the Tokugawa Museum, The Asahi Shinbun, Tokyo, 2022, p. 301.

Image 7: Incense Container with a Chrysanthemum Branch in lacquer (maki-e)*, in* Magnificent Makie-e: Tales of Urushi and Gold Over a Thousand Years*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Art, Mitsui Memorial Museum, the Tokugawa Museum, The Asahi Shinbun, Tokyo, 2022, p. 163, The Tokugawa Art Museum collection © Tokugawa Art Museum/DNPart.com.*

Image 8: Accessory box (tebako) *with decoration based on a poem from the* Shinkokin wakashū*, in James C. Y. Watt and Barbara Brennan Ford,* East Asian Lacquer: The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection*, 1991, p. 250, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York © Metropolitan Museum of Art.*

The motif of chrysanthemums and dew stretches back to at least Sosei's poem in the *Kokinshū*, but the use of this motif in wedding trousseaus originates with Shunzei's poem commemorating Ninshi's wedding in 1190. This motif gained new traction in the 17th century through *kosode* patterns like the *Genji hinagata*. Moreover, the way the character for "dew" sprawls among the chrysanthemum blossoms in the kimono pattern is reminiscent of the way that characters are hidden in Kamehime's lacquer accessory box.

Understanding the meaning of the words "bush warbler" and "cottage" in Fujitsubo's pattern and how it relates to Fujitsubo's appearance in the *Tale of Genji* requires knowledge of related classical literary texts. On the other hand, the word "dew" in Nijō's pattern is a keyword in Episode Six and Nijō's portrayal in the *Tales of Ise*, but the link between chrysanthemums and dew requires the reader to know a 12th century poem and perhaps even details of the Tokugawa Shogunal brides'trousseaus.

The *Genji hinagata* offers a new way to look at gender, women's education, literary reception and art in the Edo period. We can see from the *Genji hinagata* that women's education was much broader and more in-depth than previously thought. Though the *hinagata* has been ignored by literary scholars due to its proximity to women's fashion and supposed lack of relation to the original literary texts, it is a valuable artifact showing how Edo period women *used* their education. *The Tale of Genji* and the *Tales of Ise* were not simply dry-educational tools or manuals for creating poetry, these tales were also engaging. Women were drawn to the tales and wanted to show their affection for favorite characters by literally wearing their interests on their sleeves. These *kosode* patterns also show the high level of interpersonal connection inspired by the tale: viewers and owners of these *kosode* would interact based on whether the viewer could accurately interpret the pattern's allusion. Like minded souls could bond over these *kosode*.