

# **JAPAN ART CART**

**REVISED JUNE 2009**

**Department of Museum Guide Programs  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts  
2400 Third Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404**

## **Art Cart Inventory**

### **Art Cart Interpreters:**

The lead guide for each Art Cart shift should inventory the contents of the cart before **and** after the shift. If this is not done and objects are missing or damaged, the lead guide may be held responsible. (The lead guide is the first guide listed on the tour confirmation form.)

If an object is missing or damaged, make a notation on the inventory and report it to the Tour Office.

If an object is suddenly missing during your shift, notify security immediately by alerting the guard in the gallery or by calling x3225.

## INVENTORY SHEET: JAPAN ART CART

Date:

Guides/Docents:

OBJECTS	Comments			
	In	Beginning of Shift	In	End of Shift
Natsume, chaire, and shifuku (tea caddies (2) and pouch (1))				
Silk fukusa (2) and linen chakin (2)				
Sample teas (5)				
Whisks (2)				
Tea scoop				
Water ladle				
Raku bowl				
Seto bowl				
Tea sweets				
Fans				
Kimono (2)				
Women's obi (3)				
Child's kimono, obi & haori				
Pre-tied obi				
Obi-jime (cord) and Obi-age (tie-dyed sash)				
Netsuke and inro				
Bamboo and silkworm cocoon samples				
Mizusashi (fresh) and kensui (waste) water jars				
Tatami samples and wattle and daub wall section (teahouse)				
Children's happis and sashes (2)				

Check to see if you are low on any supplies (paper, pencils, etc.). Let the Tour office know if you need anything replenished.

Please share! Record visitor questions that “stumped” you and comments or observations you would like to share with fellow guides and staff. If you know the answer to someone's question, please record the answer! Staff will also periodically review questions and try to assist with finding answers.

# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

The MIA's Art Carts are hands-on gallery stations outfitted with art objects, props and visual aids related to the museum's permanent collection.

Staffed by Museum Guide Programs volunteers, Art Carts provide visitors with a unique art museum experience where **"Do touch!"** is the rule. Guides use the objects on the Art Carts as tools for facilitating learning experiences that encourage careful looking, thoughtful conversation, critical thinking skills, and further exploration of the Institute's permanent collections. And, they are lots of fun for all ages!

## ART CART GOALS

The goal of each Art Cart experience is to provide a multi-sensory interaction with art objects during which guides help visitors deepen their interest in and experience with the museum's permanent collection. Each object on the Art Carts is thoughtfully selected for its connections to the collection and its ability to engage the senses and inspire questions and observations. Although there are limitless possibilities for each Art Cart, we are constrained by several factors including cost, availability, durability/fragility, and safety and security of art and visitors in the galleries (i.e. most paint/ink are not allowed, nor are sharp objects).

Each cart also has a general theme or focus to tie the selected objects together (e.g. Africa – pattern and decoration of everyday objects; China – artist as master craftsperson; Americas – adornment/dress, environment; Japan – tea ceremony; South and Southeast Asia – symbolism; Pacific Islands – relationship to the natural world).

## BEST PRACTICES

A successful Art Cart-visitor interaction:

- Sparks curiosity and inspires exploration in visitors of all ages
- Involves the visitor in conversation about the objects on the Art Cart
- Allows the visitor to direct the discussion/discovery and explore those things of interest to the individual
- Provides opportunities for visitors to handle art objects with care and to learn about the museum's role in preserving and protecting the world's rich artistic heritage
- Stimulates as many of the five senses as possible/practical
- Encourages visitor exploration in the surrounding galleries to seek out related objects (ideas provided in the "Collection Connections" section of each Art Cart object entry)

**BEST PRACTICES,  
CONT.**

Each docent or guide is expected to:

- Study the written Art Cart materials before *each* shift and be prepared to discuss *all* objects on the Art Cart
- Arrive on time (20 minutes before the shift begins) and insure the cart is ready for visitors at the appointed time
- Exhibit an outgoing, friendly and welcoming attitude while staffing the Art Cart
- Be proactive and invite visitors to explore the Art Cart
- Engage visitors in open-ended discussions about Art Cart objects rather than lecturing to them
- Stress the fragility and authenticity of objects, where appropriate
- Assist visitors in establishing connections between the objects on the Art Cart and the permanent collection

**POLICIES AND  
PROCEDURES**

Refer to the *Handbook for Collection in Focus Guides* for detailed information concerning Art Cart assignments, arrival times, and responsibilities. *Docents received this information as a handout during Art Cart training.*

**OBJECT STORAGE,  
HANDLING AND  
SECURITY**

Each Art Cart includes items that can be divided into two main categories:

1. Art objects
2. Props, visual aids and general supplies

The art objects themselves are the main focus of each Art Cart. They are generally the most fragile, costly and difficult to replace items. To protect these objects, each is assigned a designated storage container or space, usually on the top shelf of the cart. It is essential each object is returned to its appropriate storage place at the end of each Art Cart shift.

The props, visual aids and other supplies are intended to support the art objects on each Art Cart, helping volunteers and visitors to understand or explore certain aspects of the art objects. These ancillary items are usually more easily replaced or repaired than the art objects themselves.

All items (art objects and supporting materials) must stay on or near the Art Cart at all times. Visitors and volunteers are not allowed to walk away from the Art Cart with objects and props. (Art Cart items are not to be used as tour props.) It is imperative that one docent or guide on duty is present at the Art Cart at all times to assist visitors in carefully handling the objects to insure object and visitor safety.

**OBJECT STORAGE,  
HANDLING AND  
SECURITY  
(CONTINUED)**

Should a visitor intentionally or unintentionally leave the Art Cart with art objects, props, or visual aids and the volunteers on duty are unable to recover these items from the visitor themselves, security should be notified immediately. (Locate the nearest guard or call Security Control via a gallery phone at x3225.)

**BRINGING PERSONAL  
OBJECTS**

Guides must refrain from bringing personal items from home to use on the Art Carts. All objects used on the carts a) must be vetted by Museum Guide Programs staff to insure they are appropriate for the Art Cart and b) need to remain on the cart/in the museum, so that Security is not put in the position of having to judge whether or not items are guides' personal property or the museum's property. Additionally, the museum cannot assume responsibility for the loss or damage of guides' personal property.

Museum Guide Programs is happy to consider your suggestions for possible additions to any of the Art Carts.

**ART CART  
INVENTORY**

Each Art Cart is stocked with a binder containing inventory worksheets listing each of the *art objects* on the cart. (Not all supporting props, visual aids and general supplies are listed on the inventory.) A thorough inventory of the Art Cart should be conducted at the beginning and end of each shift.

At the end of each shift, any damaged or missing objects and/or depleted supplies should be recorded on the inventory *and* reported to a staff member in the Tour Office.

There is also space on the back of each day's inventory sheet to record any questions, comments or suggestions docents, guides or museum visitors may have about the Art Cart. Please take a moment to share your experience with fellow volunteers and staff!

## TEA CADDIES

### NATSUME, CHAIRE AND SHIFUKU

#### WHAT IS A TEA CADDY?

Tea caddies are small jars used to store *matcha* (powdered green tea). These containers are important for maintaining the color and flavor of the tea, which can change if introduced to fluctuations in temperature and humidity. The containers are also meant to be admired during the tea ceremony and must fit into the overall aesthetic of the ceremony. In considering the fine points of a particular tea caddy, a guest would take into account the overall shape as well as observe five specific areas, from top to bottom: the mouth, shoulder, body, hips, and foot.

#### WHAT ARE CHAIRE?

*Chaire* are glazed ceramic tea caddies used to hold the *matcha* for *koicha* (thick tea). The custom of using ceramic containers probably originated in the thirteenth century, and like many other tea accessories, was imported from China. One of the most classic and elegant Chinese shapes was the *katatsuki* (square shoulder). Early Chinese *katatsuki* are characterized by thinly-potted bodies, a purple-brown glaze that runs in streaks on the shoulder and an unglazed foot. (*Chaire* are usually fitted with an ivory lid backed with foil. The lid for the *chaire* on the Art Cart is imitation ivory (plastic).) The caddy on the Art Cart, a replica of a *katatsuki chaire*, resembles those imported from China and favored by early tea masters. During a very formal tea ceremony, a prized *chaire* might be displayed on a lacquer tray (also found on the Art Cart). At less formal occasions, the ceramic caddy is placed directly on the tatami mat.

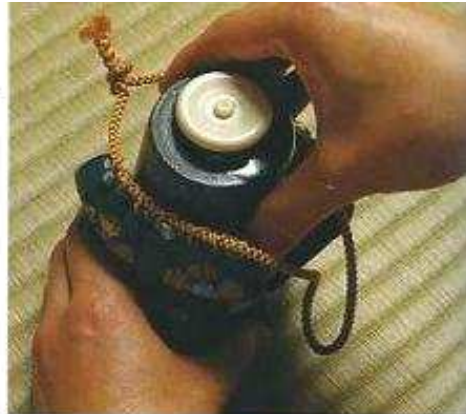
#### WHAT IS A SHIFUKU?

The *shifuku* is a cloth pouch that is used to protect the *chaire*. Opening the *shifuku* and removing the *chaire* is an integral part of *koicha* (thick tea) and the tea master carefully selects the textiles to complement the tea ceremony. They are made from a variety of *kireji* (fabrics) and act as wordless expressions of beauty. The choice of fabrics can express certain intentions or feelings on the part of the *chajin* (tea master), and can highlight feelings of splendor, humility, or artistic sentiment. Guests are supposed to appreciate both the thought that went into the selection and the quality and beauty of the material. The *shifuku* on the Art Cart is made from *kinsha*, fabric in which the background is *sha* (silk gauze) and the patterns are woven in with gold thread.



How to tie the *shifuku*:

休め緒の  
仕方



1

緒の結び目(打締・うらごめ)を上にして袋入を入れます。裏(表)が古くなっているものもありますので、仕舞の口を改るときはそっとおこないます。



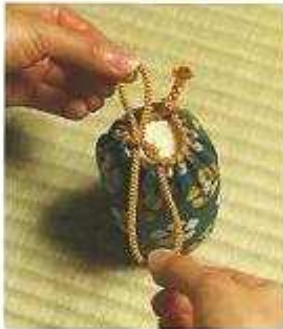
2

右の紐を上、左を下にして交差させます。



3

上の紐を下、下の紐を上にするようにして結びます。上下の紐の長さを均等にします。



4

上の紐を、下の紐の結にくぐらせます。

5

くぐらせたその紐を結び目にかけます。かたらを整えてできあがりです。



休め緒は、紐を使わない結び方です。袋入を使用しないときは、この結び方しておきます。

完成!



**WHAT ARE  
NATSUME?**

*Natsume* are wooden lacquered tea caddies that hold *matcha* for *usucha* (thin tea). *Natsume* (literally jujube), named for its resemblance to the fruit of that tree, are further classified according to shape and the particular tea masters who used them. The *natsume* on the Art Cart is the size and shape favored by Sen Rikyu.

**WHAT IS LACQUER?**

Lacquer is the highly toxic sap from a variety of sumac tree, *Rhus vernicifera*. (This plant is in the same family as poison ivy and poison oak. At any stage of the harvesting, refining or lacquer-making process, contact with the sap can cause an extreme allergic reaction.) The tree is harvested annually, during the warmer months of the year, by cutting through the bark and collecting a few ounces of sap. After the latex-like sap has been gathered, it is heated for several hours to purify it. The collection and handling of lacquer is both hazardous and time-consuming, and the raw material has always been relatively costly to produce.

Lacquer must be applied to an object in thin layers, allowing each to harden before applying the rest. A finely lacquered object in the Japanese style may require thirty or more applications (the Chinese produced a different type of lacquer that required carving or cutting away some of the layers to create designs in relief). Once properly hardened, lacquer produces a lustrous and extremely durable coating not unlike plastic. (It also becomes inert and will no longer cause adverse reactions on contact.) Lacquer effectively seals porous materials such as wood, bamboo, paper or fabric and, when hardened, is completely resistant to moisture, salts, hot liquids, or food. Lacquered containers are therefore very suitable for serving, storing and transporting foods and beverages.

**Lacquer's shiny surface picks up fingerprints quite easily and the oils from fingerprints can slowly eat away at the lacquer. Please use the cotton cloth provided to wipe off fingerprints. Remember to do this one last time before it is put away for the day!**

**WHAT IS THE DESIGN  
ON THE NATSUME?**

The stylized *matsu* (pine tree) design is a tradition adopted from the Chinese culture. In Japan, this evergreen is prized for its practical uses and attractive appearance and can be used to represent either longevity, good fortune or steadfastness.

The design was applied to the *natsume* by a technique called *maki-e*. *Maki-e* is a decorative technique that sifts sprinkled powders, usually silver or gold, through fine bamboo tubes onto damp lacquer. Once the lacquer has dried, the design can be polished to varying levels of shininess.

### WHAT IS A *FUKUSA*?

A *fukusa* is a fine silk cloth used to purify the *chaire*, *natsume* and *chashaku* (scoop). The cleaning of the caddies and scoop is an important act because it signifies a spiritual cleansing of the mind and heart. This is the point where all things involving the temporal world are dismissed. During the tea ceremony, the *fukusa* is folded to wipe the tea caddy and then re-folded to wipe the scoop. Folding the silk is another very important aspect of the ceremony and it is up to the host to learn the correct procedures from their tea masters. A man's *fukusa* is purple and a woman's is red or orange.

### QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Pick up the *natsume* and *chaire*. How do they feel? What makes you say that? Compare the two containers. How are they the same and how are they different (shape, weight, texture, decoration)?
2. The tea caddies are used to store *matcha*, a very valuable type of tea. What would you store in these containers and why? Do you have a container at home that you store precious things in? What is it? What do you store in it?
3. Examine the *shifuku* fabric. How does it feel? What makes you say that? What might be some reasons why *chaire* are kept in *shifuku*? What other types of things would you store in a *shifuku*?
4. Describe the decoration on the *natsume*. Why might pine trees be admired? What qualities do they represent? (Explain the symbolism of pine trees.) What do you notice about lacquer (texture, color, etc.)? If you had a *natsume*, how would you decorate it? What symbols would you use and why?
5. Japanese artists often use symbols and images from nature in their work. Find other references to nature in the Japanese galleries.
6. Find other *natsume* and *chaire* in the gallery. How are they similar or different to the examples on the Art Cart (material, decoration, size, etc.)?
7. Find other examples of lacquer in the gallery. What other types of objects have been decorated with lacquer? How are they the same or different from the *natsume* (purpose, size, shape)? Chinese artists had a different type of lacquer. Find examples of Chinese lacquer. What differences can you see? (Look at texture, color, decoration.)

**COLLECTION  
CONNECTIONS**

**TEA CADDIES AND SHIFUKU**

1. Gallery 225: Tea house set for a ceremony
2. Gallery 224: *Natsume*, *chaire*, and *shifuku* on display

**LACQUER**

1. Japan, *Suzuribako (Writing Box)*, 18th c., lacquer with gold and silver, 75.901a-f
2. Japan, *Tea Bowl Stand*, Muromachi Period, Negoroware (lacquer), 2002.219.2
3. Yo-Yu-Sai Hara, *Suzuribako (Writing Box)*, early 19th c., lacquer with gold, lead, and mother-of-pearl, 2001.70.1a-i
4. Gallery 215: Ancient Chinese lacquer
5. Gallery 210: Chinese carved lacquer objects

**REFERENCES TO NATURE**

1. Landscape paintings and painted screens throughout the Japanese, Chinese, and Korean galleries
2. Gallery 224: Netsuke



Shifuku



Shifuku and chaire



Natsume, top view



Natsume, side view

## JAPANESE TEAS

### WHAT IS GREEN TEA?

All types of tea (green, black, *oolong*, and white) come from evergreen plants of the *Camellia* family. *Camellia sinensis* thrives in Japan's cool climate. Straw and reed screens cover tea plants for anywhere from ten days to three weeks prior to harvest to reduce bitterness. Harvesting takes place in early May when the leaves are still young and green. After tea leaves are picked by hand they are inspected and sorted. Withering takes place as water evaporates and the natural process of fermentation or oxidation occurs.

In the process of fermentation, the tea leaf turns brown (just like a tree leaf in the fall changes colors from green to brown). The three types of tea: green, *oolong*, and black, are categorized according to their oxidation levels created by the fermentation process. Green tea is steamed, baked or pan heated to prevent oxidation and thus, the leaves remain green. (In contrast, *oolong* tea is partially fermented and oxidation is cut short, and black tea is fully fermented.) The process of fermentation can be accelerated by increased heat and high humidity. As a result of these conditions, it takes only a few hours to turn green tea into black tea.

There are samples of several types of Japanese green teas on the Art Cart.

### THE LEGEND OF TEA

According to Japanese legend, tea was first discovered by the Prince Bodhidharma, a young Buddhist monk. In homage to the Buddha, he vowed to stay awake for seven years of meditation. After three years of sleeplessness, he allowed himself to fall asleep. When he awoke, he was so angered by his weakness, that he tore off his eyelids, and threw them to the ground. The eyelids took root, and grew into a bush. Those who chewed the leaves of this plant easily stayed awake during long meditation sessions.

### WHAT IS SENCHA?

*Sencha* ("common tea") is green leaf tea drunk on a daily basis in Japan. There are many grades of *sencha*. *Matcha* is made from the finest *sencha* grade called *tencha*.

### WHAT IS MATCHA?

*Matcha* is the powdered green tea used for *chanoyu*. There are two different types of *chanoyu* tea, *koicha* (thick tea) and *usucha* (thin tea). Both types are made with *matcha* powder whisked with hot water.

**WHY IS *MATCHA*  
SO EXPENSIVE?**

*Matcha* (powdered green tea) is the highest quality tea available in Japan. To create *matcha*, the stems and veins of each leaf are removed so that the tea will be very fine when ground (compare with everyday *sencha* on the Art Cart). Because only the “meat” of the leaf is used and the finished product is about 1/10 the volume of the original harvest, *matcha* is very expensive. (For example, 100 grams of *matcha* costs about \$100 [U.S.] and 100 grams of *sencha* costs about \$30 [U.S].)

**HOW IS *MATCHA*  
USED?**

The tea is stored in leaf form in the large jars until it is ground into a fine powder for the ceremony. (There is an example of a large tea leaf storage jar (79.4, G224) in the collection.) The amount of hot water and the method of whisking determine the type of tea. In the case of thick tea (*koicha*), three scoops of *matcha* are needed. The whisk is moved slowly and rhythmically, just enough to blend the tea into a smooth, thick liquid. As the name "thick tea" indicates, the proportion of tea powder used is very high in relation to the quantity of hot water used. The resultant tea is not quite a paste, but neither is it very liquid.

For thin tea (*usucha*), however, half as much *matcha* is used and the mixture is whisked briskly until it is frothy. The flavor is slightly bitter and at the same time sweet; the higher the grade of *matcha*, the more full and round the taste, and the sweetness becomes more intense.

**WHAT IS  
*GENMAICHA*?**

*Genmaicha* is a specialty green tea that blends *sencha* with fire-toasted rice. During the firing, it is not uncommon for the rice to pop, hence the nickname “popcorn tea.” This tea is popular with Japanese cuisine, as it is well known for cleansing the palate and enhancing the taste of fine food.

Legend has it that during the 1400’s a samurai was having tea and discussing battle strategies with his patrol leaders. A servant named Genamai leaned over to pour tea for the warlord. Rice he had taken for a snack fell out of his pocket into the steaming hot tea and popped when hitting the hot tea. The warlord was furious, but, despite the fact that the tea had been tarnished, drank it. He enjoyed the unique flavor. In honor of Genamai, he pronounced that his rice and tea be served every morning and be called *genmaicha*.

### WHAT IS HOJICHA?

*Hojicha* is a grade of *sencha* that uses the lower leaves and stems of the tea plant and is therefore coarser in texture. Popularized in the 17th century among the literati painters, this tea is often drunk at night because it has fewer stimulants.

*Hojicha* is hand stirred while being roasted on an iron plate over a charcoal fire. This is what gives the tea its smoky smell. There are two kinds of *hojicha* on the Art Cart – one with typical “crumpled” leaves and one unique variety called *sumi-bancha* that uses coarser, flat leaves that are dried in the sun and then charcoal roasted. *Sumi-bancha* was once a popular everyday drink in Kyoto. Today it is less common.

### QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Pick up the jars and examine the various teas. Describe their characteristics (smell, texture, color, etc.). How are they similar or different? Which one would you most like to drink? What do you think each one would taste like?
  2. How does this tea compare to the tea you buy at the grocery store or tea you have in your home?
  3. *Matcha* is generally used only in tea ceremonies. What does this say about the importance of *matcha* and the tea ceremony?
  4. Share the legend of tea with the visitor. What legends and stories do you know that tell us how something was created? Where did you hear it?
- 
1. Gallery 225: Teahouse
  2. Gallery 224: Tea accessories including tea bowls, whisks, scoops, caddies, leaf tea storage jar

Tea samples – DO NOT REMOVE OR SHAKE FROM PROVIDED CONTAINERS  
(OK TO OPEN AND SMELL THROUGH PERFORATED LID)





## BAMBOO TEA ACCESSORIES

### WHAT AESTHETIC OR CULTURAL VALUES DOES BAMBOO REFLECT?

Many tea accessories including *chasen*, *chashaku* and *hishaku* (see below) are made of bamboo, a unique species of grass that has treelike qualities. Bamboo has a hollow interior, is amazingly strong, and has been used for everything from building materials to food. In the temperate climate of Japan, bamboo flourishes almost everywhere. (In fact, six hundred out of twelve hundred varieties of bamboo in the world have been identified there.)

This plant has profound cultural significance in Japan as well. Its straightness and upward growth frequently symbolizes the character and meditative practices of Buddhists. Also the pliant but resilient trunk of bamboo is often used to symbolize strength, flexibility and compromise admired in Confucian philosophy. (See the sample of dried, natural bamboo on the Art Cart.)

## CHASEN

### WHAT IS IT?

The *chasen* is a whisk used for mixing together matcha and hot water for the tea ceremony. While *chasen* are considered necessary accessories, they are also considered disposable and new pieces are traditionally purchased around the time of New Year celebrations.

### HOW WAS IT MADE?

*Chasen* are made out of a single piece of freshly cut bamboo. One end of a section of bamboo is cut and carefully split so that about one hundred sixty tines are formed. A colored thread is then wrapped around the base of the tines. Proportion, size, thread color, and the color of the bamboo vary with the tea master.



Chasen (in bowl)



Chashaku (scoop)

## CHASHAKU

### WHAT IS IT?

The *chashaku* or tea scoop is a tool used to transfer powdered green tea from the tea caddy to the tea bowl. The style of scoop on the Art Cart (*nakabushi*) was originally created by Sen Rikyu and is the one most widely used.

### HOW IS IT MADE?

Tea scoops most commonly used in the *wabi* aesthetic are made from bamboo and carved by hand using an ordinary knife. The bamboo is heated, bent and then carved, often by the tea master. In making a tea scoop, the tea master observes a number of important points, including the bend of the scoop, the treatment of the areas above and below the node (joint), the node itself, the stem, the curve between the node and the scoop, and the tip. It is in these points that the particular taste and skill of the maker emerges and allows each scoop to be unique. (Special tea scoops are kept in individual bamboo tubes which are usually signed by their makers or owners.)

### WHAT AESTHETIC OR CULTURAL VALUES DOES THIS OBJECT REFLECT?

Despite its small shape and minor role in the ceremony, the scoop is an important accessory that contributes to the overall effect of *chanoyu*. The scoop, made by a tea practitioner rather than a professional, is a direct expression of the personalities of the master who made it. Most *chashaku* used before the popularization of the *wabi-sabi* (rustic) tea aesthetic were originally made of ivory. Sen Rikyu, however, preferred the rustic beauty of the bamboo, especially as it deepened in color with decades or centuries of use.

Although all bamboo items employed as utensils are considered disposable, they are still treasured items and commonly named by their owners. Tea articles with poetic names, called *mei*, have a special place in the ceremony. Guests spend time during the ceremony admiring these utensils and discussing the creativity of the name. The idea is to produce a name fitting the occasion, the season, and the situation of the tea ceremony. A great deal of literary, philosophical, and artistic knowledge is mixed with creativity to bestow a name that will impress guests. Examples of *chashaku* names include *mus ikui* (worm-eaten), *voroboshi* (shuffling monk), and *kusemai* (recitative dance).

## HISHAKU

### WHAT IS IT?

The *hishaku* (water ladle) is used to scoop water for ritual purification in gardens, shrines and temples. It is frequently used in gardens for guests to clean their hands and mouths en route to a tea ceremony. The *hishaku* is also used during the tea ceremony to carry water from the *mizusashi* (water jar) to the *kama* (metal kettle) or from the *kama* to the *chawan* (tea bowl).

### HOW IS IT MADE?

The *hishaku* is made from two separate pieces of bamboo joined together. The *go* (cup) is made from a piece that has been cut at the node (joint). The handle, also from a single stalk, uses a piece of bamboo with the joint in the middle. The joint helps you hold the ladle properly. Lift the ladle by sliding your hand under the handle until you reach the joint. Once there, place your thumb on the joint and slowly begin scooping water.

### QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Bamboo is a popular material to use and depict in Japan. Find other objects in the galleries that are made of or depict bamboo. How has bamboo been used as a building material, for decorative accessories or tea utensils? What are some of the visual characteristics that indicate what you are seeing is bamboo?
2. Pick up the *chasen*. How does it feel (weight, texture, etc.)? Find other *chasen* in the galleries. How are they similar or different than the one on the Art Cart (color, shape, size)?
3. *Chashaku* are often treasured items and are always named before they are used. What would you name your tea scoop and why? (You might share examples of *chashaku* names provided above.)
4. Pick up the *hishaku*. Practice holding it like you would during a tea ceremony. How does it feel? What makes you say that?
5. Imagine yourself at a tea ceremony where all three of these implements are being used. What would you hear, see, smell, feel and taste? (This question is good for any object on the Art Cart.)



Hishaku (ladle)



Raw bamboo  
(shown here behind tatami)

**COLLECTION  
CONNECTIONS**

**CHASEN, CHASHAKU, HISHAKU**

1. Gallery 224: Tea accessories
2. Gallery 225: Teahouse set up for ceremony.

**BAMBOO**

1. Gallery 225: Teahouse (building materials)
2. Gallery 222: Audience Hall (building materials)
3. Gallery 217: Paintings of bamboo throughout Asian galleries
4. Gallery 218: Chinese brushpots carved from bamboo

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

Anderson, Jennifer. *Introduction to Japanese Tea Rituals*. 1991.  
Fujioka Ryaoichi. *Tea Ceremony Utensils*. 1973.

## TEA BOWLS

- WHAT ARE THEY?** The large bowl is black Raku ware. It is a replica of a tea bowl created by the Korean émigré potter Chojiro (1516-92), the ceramicist credited with developing Raku ware. The small yellow bowl is Seto ware. This bowl is smaller than an average tea bowl and is good for travel tea sets. Both bowls could be used for thin or thick tea.
- HOW ARE TEA BOWLS USED?** The tea bowl is always warmed before it is used. The bowl is filled with hot water, emptied, and then dried with a *chakin* (linen cloth). During the ceremony, powdered green tea (*matcha*) is scooped into the bowl, hot water is added, and a whisk is used to mix the two. During *koicha* (thick tea), the host passes the tea bowl to the main guest who bows to accept it. The bowl is raised and rotated in the hand and admired. The guest then drinks some (3½ sips) of the tea, wipes the rim of the bowl with a piece of white linen called a *chakin*, and passes the bowl to the next guest, who does the same. Before returning any empty bowl to the host, the guest is expected to spend a few moments examining and remarking on the bowl's finer points (size, shape, texture). For thin tea (*usucha*), the tea master prepares a new bowl of tea for each guest in turn.
- WHAT IS RAKU?** Raku is the name given to a type of pottery characterized by the use of monochrome black or red glazes, a wax-like sheen, and irregular forms. The Raku kiln was established in Kyoto at the direction of Sen Rikyu in the sixteenth century. It was led by the potter Chojiro and was legendarily named by Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the reigning warlord, when he awarded his son Tokei a gold seal with the character “Raku” on it. (Raku translated means “pleasure,” but it is also the middle character in the name of Hideyoshi’s Kyoto palace). Raku ceramists used this stamp on the objects they create. The surname Raku has been adopted by each successive master of the Kyoto kilns for 14 generations.
- HOW IS RAKU MADE?** Under the artistic guidance of the tea master Sen Rikyu, ceramists developed a new low-fired ware that embodied the rustic aesthetic of the tea ceremony. The glaze is generally black with a high wax-like sheen and is removed from the kiln while it is still hot. Removing the hot piece from the kiln introduces an element of chance into the process. The potter does not know exactly what effect the cooler air outside the kiln will have on a bowl, and can further enhance the unpredictability by placing the vessel in a reduction kiln, submerging it in cold water, or placing it in organic matter like straw, which is ignited by the pot’s heat. The aesthetic of sudden chance seemed to fit in with the idea of Zen enlightenment and the roughly modeled quality of the Raku tea bowl agreed with Sen Rikyu’s preference for simple, unelaborated ceramics.
- WHAT IS SETO WARE?** Seto ware refers to ceramics made from kilns in the town of Seto, near Nagoya. These kilns are some of the oldest in Japan, and began in the 13th

century by copying newly introduced Chinese and Korean forms. The kilns wanted to replicate Korean celadon glaze. The ceramicists of the Seto kilns have carried on the longest tradition of high temperature glazed pottery in Japan. Although seven types of glazes have been developed at these kilns, *Kiseto* (yellow Seto) is perhaps the most famous. *Kiseto* is characterized by a delicate pale greenish-yellow finish that accentuates the typically thin-walled bowls.

Seto ware was influenced by Korean pottery, particularly the rustic, expressive *punch'ong* pottery of the Choson Dynasty. In the late 16th century Japan invaded the Korean peninsula, destroyed many kilns, and kidnapped Korean potters. The Japanese invasion caused a major setback in Korean pottery but, at the same time, caused a boost to the ceramic industry in Japan. The Korean potters greatly influenced Japanese ceramics and Seto ware and Raku most obviously show these influences.

**WHAT IS A CHAKIN?**

The *chakin* is a white linen cloth used to wipe the *chawan* (tea bowl) during the ceremony. It is also folded and used as a mat for the *chasen* (whisk) when it is carried into the room in the *chawan*. After it is used, it is refolded into a bow-tie shape and set aside. *Chakin* are replaced after each tea ceremony. It would be considered improper to use a soiled *chakin*.

**WHAT IS  
WABI-SABI?**

In early tea gatherings the influences of the *shoin* style of tea was still strong. *Shoin* style architecture is opulent and characterized by intricate wood carvings and wall paintings adorned with gold. (The MIA's audience hall is a great visual representation of the type of sumptuous interiors aristocratic families created.)

The style of the tea ceremony changed, however, as more tea masters embraced the aesthetic ideals of *wabi-sabi*. *Wabi* (austere) and *sabi* (lonely) emphasize simplicity and understatement. *Wabi-sabi* is a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent and incomplete. Sen Rikyu incorporated these ideas into his tea ceremony and selected utensils that represented the *wabi-sabi* ideal.

**TEA SWEETS**

Elegant and beautiful sweet cakes (*kashi*) are served before the tea.

There are two categories of tea sweets:

1. *Namagashi*—moist sweets, usually served before thick tea (*koicha*)
2. *Higashi*—dried sweets, usually served before thin tea (*usucha*)

Higashi (dried sweets) are provided on the Art Cart. They are made in molds from glutinous rice flour, sugar, and starch. Higashi are served on a lacquer tray and are eaten using one's fingers. The colors and shapes of the sweets are seasonal and also often make subtle literary or poetic references to be acknowledged and admired by tea ceremony guests.

**QUESTIONS AND**

1. Carefully hold the bowls in your hands. (Use the illustrations

## ACTIVITIES

provided on the Art Cart to imitate the way it would be done in a tea ceremony.) How does it feel? Would you like to drink tea this way? Why or why not?

2. Compare the Art Cart tea bowls to cups and bowls you have in your home. How are they similar or different from these (size, shape, color, decoration)? How might the experience of drinking tea from a tea bowl differ from drinking from a Western-style tea cup?
3. Compare Japanese tea bowls to tea accessories found in other galleries in the museum. (Look at British, French and American tea services.) How are they similar or different from the bowl on the Art Cart? How do ways of drinking tea differ in each culture?
4. These tea bowls are intentionally made to look the way they do and reflect styles representing two main artistic centers associated with specific kilns in Japan. Describe Raku and Seto characteristics. Find other examples of Raku and Seto wares in the galleries. How are Raku and Seto similar or different?

After explaining *wabi-sabi*, ask:

5. How is the aesthetic of *wabi-sabi* (rustic simplicity) present in the bowl? What do you see that makes you say that? What other objects on the cart and in the galleries exhibit *wabi-sabi* characteristics?
6. Find examples of Korean pottery in the galleries. How are they similar to Japanese pottery? What ideas, techniques and styles have been shared between the two countries?

**COLLECTION  
CONNECTIONS**

**TEA SERVICES AND ACCESSORIES**

1. Gallery 224: Raku and Seto tea bowls and other tea ceremony objects and utensils
2. Gallery 225: Teahouse set for a ceremony
3. Gallery 206: Korean ceramics (especially punch'ong wares)
4. Gallery 204: Chinese tea ceramics
5. Gallery 333: Paul Revere II, *Federal-style tea service*, 1792
6. Gallery 310 and 324: Porcelain tea services
7. Gallery 350 and 354: Pieces from silver tea services

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

Piepenburg, Robert. *Raku Pottery*. 1998.  
Iwamiya, Takeji and Kaxuya Takaoka. *Katachi: The Essence of Japanese Design*. 1999.

Raku ware tea bowl





Seto ware tea bowl



## **WATER CONTAINERS MIZUSASHI AND KENSUI**

### **WHAT IS *MIZUSASHI*?**

The *mizusashi* is a ceramic container that holds clean water for replenishing the kettle and rinsing the tea bowl. The *mizusashi*, because of its function and size, is placed in a prominent position and is required to blend with the other utensils. The *mizusashi* on the Art Cart is Seto ware made by a Japanese artist named Koushu.

### **HOW IS THE *MIZUSASHI* STORED?**

It is a custom in Japan to provide boxes for the safe keeping of precious objects. These objects are themselves objects of beauty and are meant to be appreciated. Well-proportioned and particularly beautiful boxes are highly valued and considered "alive" by tea masters. The boxes generally have writing on the outside. Generally speaking, the inscription on a box will be by the head of one of the tea-ceremony schools and will give the kind of ware, the particular name of the object and the signature and seal of the inscriber.

### **WHAT IS *KENSUI*?**

*Kensui* (waste water jars) are used as receptacles for the water with which the tea bowl has been rinsed. Because the *kensui* served as a disposal container, it is placed in an unobtrusive yet convenient position in the teahouse. The *kensui* on the Art Cart is bronze, an alloy of copper and tin. Although the color of the bronze is affected by the amount of copper, tin and impurities in it, it is most often reddish-brown. Over time, oxidation causes bronze to develop a greenish outer crust, called a patina.

### **WHAT IS THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WATER AND WATER JARS?**

Water serves an important function during the tea ceremony. First, it is used for purification, for the washing of hands and rinsing of the mouth in the garden and the ritual cleansing of the tea bowls with hot water before tea preparation. During the tea ceremony, water is also needed to replenish the kettle and to make *matcha*. To ensure the best possible taste, tea masters go to great lengths to find fresh, pure water. The water jar, as the receptacle for this precious liquid, is an important element among the many

objects used in serving tea. In fact, during the ceremony, the *mizusashi* can only be touched by the host.

#### QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Describe the characteristics of the two jars (size, shape, texture, material, etc.). How are they the same? How are they different? How are these jars similar or different from ones found in the teahouse and related galleries?
2. The *mizusashi* is more prominent during the ceremony and is placed in front of guests. What characteristics suggest it is more important?
3. If you could take these objects home with you, where would you display them? What would you use them for (would you store something special in them)? Why?
4. Tea utensils often have special wooden storage boxes. What does this signify about the importance of these utensils? Do you have a container at home where you store special things? What does it look like? What special items do you put in there?
5. Find other bronze objects in the galleries. What are these objects used for? How do these objects compare to the *kensui*?

#### COLLECTION CONNECTIONS

1. Gallery 225: Water containers used in tea house display
2. Gallery 226: Contemporary ceramics
3. Bronze vessels and other objects in Japan and China galleries



Mizusashi



Kensui (bronze)

## TEA TIMELINE

### **552-645: Asuka period**

- Buddhism first arrives from China through Korea. Buddhist monks bring tea to help in meditation. (The caffeine keeps them awake during long sessions.)

### **794-1185: Heian period**

- Chinese culture dominates the Japanese court and the tea ceremony becomes a popular diversion.

### **1185 - 1333: Kamakura period**

- 1191: Practice of drinking whisked green tea (*matcha*) is brought from China with Zen Buddhism.
- 1211: Zen teacher Eisai authors the first academic work on tea in Japan, titled “Maintaining Health by Drinking Tea.”

### **1392 - 1573: Muromachi period**

- 1479: Shogun Ashikagaa Yoshimasa builds the Silver Pavilion and its famous tearoom. Yoshimasa is the first to practice the tea ceremony.
- 1560-1582: Nobunaga, a member of a wealthy Japanese family, begins to consolidate power. Nobunaga's tea master, Sen Rikyu, gains access to the imperial court.

### **1573 - 1615: Momoyama period**

- 1583: Sen Rikyu becomes the official tea master to shogun Hideyoshi (1536-1598) and becomes the national tea authority.
- 1592: Sen Rikyu is ordered to commit ritual suicide by Hideyoshi, who regrets the order for the rest of his life and atones by keeping the spirit of Sen Rikyu's tea ceremony alive.

### **1615 - 1868: Edo period**

- Japanese rulers, fearing military conquests, initiate the complete isolation of Japan by excluding foreigners and prohibiting foreign travel.
- 1843: Commodore Perry arrives with American ships to open Japan for trade.

### **1868 - 1912: Meiji period**

- The West is re-introduced to Japanese traditions, and an international demand for Japanese tea begins.

### **1926 - present: Showa period**

- Early 1900's: The Urasenke school attempts to widen the popularity of the tea ceremony and reorganizes its education system. The Urasenke school is the largest in Japan and traces its beginnings back to Sen Rikyu. Its founder was one of Rikyu's grandsons.
- There are many tea ceremony schools throughout Japan, and the study of the tea ceremony can be a lifelong pursuit.

# TATAMI MATS

## WHAT IS IT?

The *tatami* mat is a woven floor covering used in almost all traditional Japanese architecture. Both the Audience Hall and Teahouse have tatami floors. The Art Cart features a variety of tatami mat samples, including a booklet of different quality mats, a square sample with brocaded borders, and a book of different border samples.

## HOW IS IT MADE?

There are three different parts to an authentic *tatami* mat – the reed or rush cover, the straw core, and the decorative cloth edging. The quality of the reed cover depends on the quality of the rush that is used and how tightly the reeds are woven together. Higher quality mats are made from rush that is more mature and thicker (the thicker reeds will take the constant abuse of being walked on for a much longer period of time). Lower quality mats are made from the younger, thinner plants. New tatami mats are green and emit the distinctive fragrance of fresh tatami. As the mats age, they turn brown and their fragrance diminishes. When the outer cover wears out, it can easily be replaced.

The inner core of the mat is made of straw, a material favored for its great elasticity. It is pressed tightly and bound with cords. The tightness of the stitching is also very important. If the stitching is loose the mat will be too flexible. Today, some tatami mat cores are made of modern materials like styrofoam.

The cloth borders between mats come in a wide variety of colors, patterns, and level of quality. It is considered rude to step or sit on the mat borders.

## HOW IS IT USED?

In the 12th century, *tatami* mats were luxury goods used by emperors, nobles, religious leaders and high-ranking officials. *Tatami* came in a variety of thicknesses and sizes, and the color of the border fabric indicated the rank of the individual household that owned it. This custom carried on until the 17th century, when *tatami* found their way into the homes of ordinary people. The look and feel of these mats fit into the environment of the tea house, whose decorations are humble and modest. Today, a typical mat measures about 3' x 6' and the size of a Japanese room is expressed by its number of mats.

## HOW MUCH DOES A TATAMI MAT COST?

Mat prices vary, depending on the quality of reed and the style of border. The price of one 3' x 6' mat costs approximately \$100-\$200 (U.S.).

**QUESTIONS AND  
ACTIVITIES**

1. Describe the *tatami* mat's characteristics. How does it look, feel, smell? What makes you say that? What do you think it would feel like to sit on a *tatami* mat?
2. Look closely at the fabric samples used for borders. Which is your favorite? Why? Would you use different fabric for different rooms? Why?
3. Find other *tatami* mats in the galleries. What are the mats used for? How do they compare to the samples on the Art Cart? *Tatami* mats are very common in Japanese architecture and design. Would you like to have a *tatami* mat room in your house? Why or why not?
4. Compare the floors in the Chinese period rooms to the Japanese period rooms. How are they similar or different? How do the different floors impact the furniture and design of the rest of the room?
5. Sen Rikyu wanted to stimulate five sense (sight, touch, taste, hearing, smell) in the tea ceremony. Which ones do you think the *tatami* mat stimulates? How does it feel? What does it look like? Smell like?

**COLLECTION  
CONNECTIONS**

1. Gallery 225: Tea House
2. Gallery 222: Audience Hall

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

Plutschow, Herbert. *Rediscovering Rikyu and the Beginning of the Japanese Tea Ceremony*, 2001.

Tatami covering with brocade borders



## SENSU

### WHAT ARE *SENSU*?

*Sensu* are Japanese folding fans. The production of these folding fans rapidly grew in Kyoto after the 14th century when artists made folding fans to match styles of the earthy performing arts of *Nō* (masked drama). Nobility and court members favored these items as beautiful accessories for their kimono. *Sensu* were an integral element of court etiquette as well as a means of staying cool in the hot weather. Early fans were reserved for royalty and the nobility and were regarded as expensive accessories and status symbols. As time went on, *sensu* began to take on new uses and meanings. The shape of the unfolded fan began to symbolize rising prosperity and used as a memento or a prop for celebrations. Today, the *sensu* is an essential element in traditional Japanese etiquette, traditional performing arts, the tea ceremony and in games, as well as maintaining the original purpose of keeping oneself cool. When wearing traditional attire, no person is considered properly dressed unless they carry a *sensu*.

### WHAT ARE *CHASEKI-SEN*?

*Chaseki-sen* is the type of *sensu* used at a tea ceremony. They are decorated with a variety of designs, including passages from the 100 poems about the rules of preparing and serving tea by Sen Rikyu, symbolic emblems, flowers and sweets suitable for the tea ceremony. The decoration on the fan is important and must be appropriate for the season and occasion. The fan's role in the tea ceremony is decorative and ceremonial, rather than for cooling oneself. A closed fan laid on the tatami mat is used as a border or boundary between the guest and the tea master, tokonoma, and/or tea utensils, as a sign of respect.

### HOW IS IT MADE?

The frame of a *sensu* is formed by cutting bamboo into strips, punching a hole through one end of each strip, and inserting a thin skewer into the holes to hold the center together. Layers of thin Japanese *washi* papers are glued together and exposed to air and sunlight to dry naturally. When the paper is dry it can be decorated with gold leaf, hand painted, or left its natural color. Once decorated, the paper is then folded into fixed widths. The thinly cut bamboo ribs are inserted between the sheets of fan-shaped paper.

**QUESTIONS AND  
ACTIVITIES**

1. Pick up the fan and unfold it. How does it feel holding the fan? How and when would you use a fan like this?
2. Describe the decorations on the fan. What do you see? If you could design your own, how would you decorate it? What patterns and images would you use? If you were to make one fan for each season of the year, what kinds of symbols would you use?
3. Find woodblock prints and screens that have depicted fans in them. How are the fans used? Who is using them? How are the fans decorated? How are they similar to or different from the fans on the Art Cart?
4. Fans like these were once status symbols among the elite in Japan. What are some ways people today display their status (dress, cars, gadgets, etc.)?

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION**

Sen Soshitsu, *Tea Etiquette for Guests: A Practical Guide for Chanoyu Study*, 1993.




## JAPANESE TEXTILES

### WHAT ARE THE EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF THE *KIMONO* AND *OBİ*?

Textiles are an important aspect of Japanese culture and can serve as valuable teaching tools on the Art Cart. The educational objectives for the *kimono* and *obi* are to demonstrate the complexity of traditional Japanese attire, examine the variety of techniques and materials, and compare traditional Japanese dress with Western attire. The *kimono* and *obi* on the Art Cart were not intended to be complete sets. (For example, the *tomesode* would be worn in the fall, while the orange *obi* would be worn in the winter). Also, a traditional Japanese *kimono* consists of many accessories and can take a great deal of time to put on. (In some cases, it may take up to an hour to put on all the pieces.) Instead of focusing on how a *kimono* is worn, use these samples to help visitors understand and explore different aspects of Japanese textiles.

However, there is a pre-tied *obi* on the Art Cart that visitors can try on to get a sense of how it feels to wear this piece of traditional Japanese clothing. It is pink with a cherry blossom design. Step-by-step photo instructions for trying on the pre-tied *obi* are provided on the Art Cart.

### WHAT IS A *KIMONO*?

The traditional form of clothing worn in Japan is generally referred to as *kimono*. The term, which literally means “thing worn,” is used today to differentiate this style of attire from the Western-style garments many contemporary Japanese men and women wear. There are many different styles of *kimono* and the type worn varies depending on different factors (climate, life and customs of the imperial court, laws, the development of skills in weaving and dying, availability of materials, etc.).

### HOW DO YOU WEAR A *KIMONO*?

The process of putting on *kimono* can be detailed and time consuming. In its simplest form, the individual puts on the *kimono* and brings the left part over the right to close it, not unlike a bathrobe. (The reverse (right over left) is used for a burial kimono.) Adjust the *kimono*'s length and shape by folding over the extra cloth at the waist and tying a cord under the fold to hold it in place. Finish by putting on the *obi* (sash). Western accessories, such as earrings, necklaces and bracelets are not appropriate to wear with *kimono*. (See attached appendix from Liddell 1989.)



**HOW DO YOU WEAR  
A *KIMONO*  
(CONTINUED)?**

Below are simplified steps for assisting women with putting on *kimono*:

1. Without putting the arms into the sleeves, have an assistant drape the *kimono* over the wearer's shoulders.
2. The assistant should center the seam down the back and stand up the collar.
3. The wearer may now put her arms into the sleeves.
4. The assistant adjusts the length to just above the floor.
5. Place the right lapel under the left—ask the wearer to hold the right lapel in place while the assistant wraps the left lapel over it (bathrobe-style).
6. Use one of the tie dyed sashes to tie around the *kimono* at the waist. Re-adjust to just above floor-length.
7. Tie a second sash just below the chest/breasts.
8. Put on the pre-tied (pink) obi over the two sashes. The bow of the obi should be in the back.
9. Tie the *obi-jime* (obi cord) over the center of the fastened obi (decorative accent).

**WHAT WOULD YOU  
WEAR TO A TEA  
CEREMONY TODAY?**

Years ago, formal *kimono* were the only clothing worn to tea gatherings. Today, most Japanese wear Western clothing, and it is no longer obligatory to wear *kimono*. Men's formal tea ceremony *kimono* are usually black or earth-tones and include a family crest on the center back and shoulders. Women's tea ceremony *kimono* are decorated with exquisite patterns and designs that are appropriate to the season. Women do not wear perfume, which would interfere with the smell of incense and spoil the ambience of the tea room. Jewelry is also not worn to a tea ceremony.

## YUKATA

### Kasuri (ikat) weave

**WHAT IS A YUKATA?** The blue and white *kimono* on the Art Cart is a *yukata*, a Japanese summer *kimono* worn by both men and women. While most *kimono* are lined and must be worn with one or more undergarments, the *yukata* is a single-layered garment made from cotton. The name *yukata* comes from the words “*yu*” (bath) and “*katabira*” (under clothing). Thousands of years ago, court nobles wore linen *yukatabira*, which were draped loosely after taking a bath. *Yukatabira* were later worn by Japanese warriors and then by the general public. Today, the *yukata* is widely used for everything from festivals and summer daily wear to simple evening attire.

**WHAT IS KASURI?** *Kasuri* is the Japanese word for *ikat*. *Ikat*, meaning “tie-and-resist” in Indonesian, is a weaving process in which the threads of the warp (the vertical threads first laid on the loom to form the base) and weft (yarn woven horizontally into the warp) are tied and dyed repeatedly into intricate design motifs. The cloth is patterned by the way the threads are arranged on the loom. (See illustrations on the Art Cart.)

**WHO MADE THIS?** Traditionally, Japanese *kasuri* was woven by farmers’ wives who made everyday wear and *futon* (bedding) covers during the slow winter months. Today, *kasuri* is generally machine made. The fabric for this *kimono* was machine made and hand-stitched together. (If you look closely, you can see the irregularity of the hand stitching.) Assembling the *kimono* involved cutting pieces of fabric in strips and sewing them together. Straight-line-cut *kimonos* offered many advantages: they were easy to fold, suitable for all weather, and *kimono* makers did not have to concern themselves with the shape of the wearer’s body.

## **TOMESODE** **Yuzen-dyed silk**

### **WHAT IS A TOMESODE?**

Although there are many types of *kimono*, more formal ones can be divided into different categories, based on a person's age and marital status. This is a *tomesode*, worn by older, married women. (It differs from the *furisode*, which has longer sleeves, brighter colors and is worn by unmarried women.) *Tomesodes* are characterized by short sleeves and deep colors. This *tomesode* would most likely be worn in late autumn or winter because it has an inner lining for extra warmth.

### **WHAT DOES THE DECORATION DEPICT?**

Decorations and patterns also indicate in which season the *tomesode* would be worn. This kimono has *tsubaki* (camellias). Camellia is an evergreen that is celebrated for its brilliant flowers and sturdy leaves. The Japanese also employed the stems, leaves and seeds to produce dyes, implements and oils. A member of the tea family, it is also closely associated with the tea ceremony. The camellia blooms in Japan's temperate zones, and it represents November or December in traditional floral calendars.

### **WHAT IS YUZEN?**

*Yuzen* is a traditional dying method that is thought to have originated in the eighth century. First, resist paste (made primarily from glutinous rice) is squeezed out of a funnel-shaped tube to define different colored pattern areas. The rice paste repels the dye applied in the next step and leaves white areas of fabric once the paste is washed off in a later step. Dyes are applied within the resist paste outlines, and the fabric is washed, removing the resist paste applied in the first step. Next, the already dyed designs are covered with the resist paste and the background is dyed by painting on dye with a brush. The material is steamed, washed in water, and ready to be finished.

### **HOW IS SILK MADE?**

Silk, valued for its strength, luster and texture, is a popular fabric for *kimono*. The domesticated silkworm was brought to Japan by Korean refugees during the middle of the third century BCE. Silkworms are carefully cultivated from egg to caterpillar to cocoon. Once silkworms reach the chrysalis stage, the cocoon is steamed to kill the worm inside. This is important to do before the worm breaks the cocoon apart, damaging the long silk fibers. Traditionally, silk cultivation was done by women, and peasant families commonly grew and spun the silk for the clothing of the upper class. Sumptuary laws forbade peasants from wearing the silk that they produced, even if they could afford to do so. Today, silk is woven by hand and by large industrial looms. (See silkworm cocoons on the Art Cart.)

## OBI

**WHAT ARE THEY?** *Kimono* are worn with sashes called *obi*, which hold the *kimono* in place and keep the front closed. *Obi* not only serve this practical function, but are beautiful as well. There are different ways of tying and wearing these sashes, which in many cases reflects the wearer's age and status. (See illustration on the Art Cart.) The pink pre-tied *obi* on the Art Cart can be used to illustrate the complexity of *obi*-tying. The untied *obi* example can illustrate the various designs and techniques used to create *obi*.

### NAGOYA-OBI (2)

– **Yuzen dyed silk with embroidery**

– **Yuzen dyed cotton**

**WHAT IS A NAGOYA OBI?** *Nagoya obi* are the most convenient of today's *obi*. Japanese women first produced these *obi* in the city of Nagoya at the end of the Taisho Era (1912-1926). Lighter and simpler than earlier *obi*, they are characterized by a portion of the *obi* being pre-folded and stitched in half. The narrow part is wrapped around the waist and the wider piece is worn in back.

**HOW ARE THESE OBI DECORATED?** The gray *Nagoya obi* was made using the paste-resist method (see above) and has a very informal pattern and design. The orange *Nagoya obi*, also made with resist, is further embellished with embroidery.

## BLUE FUKURO-OBI

### Kaga-nui on silk

**WHAT IS A FUKURO OBI?** *Fukuro* is another type of *obi* that has a design on only one side. The design is typically embroidery and this type of *obi* is generally reserved for more formal occasions, such as tea ceremonies.

**WHAT IS KAGA-NUI?** *Kaga-nui* is the Japanese word for embroidery. In the early 14th century, embroidery was introduced in Kyoto as a decoration for rugs in front of Buddhist household altars and clerical robes. Later, *Kaga-nui* was executed for samurai warriors' attire, personal items, and women's *kimono*. *Kaga-nui*, distinguished by its exquisite beauty and elegance, is most often reserved for formal attire.

**WHAT ABOUT THE FLORAL DESIGNS?** *Kiku* (chrysanthemum) are represented on this *obi*. The chrysanthemum was revered for its beauty and elegance and is also used to represent the virtues of endurance and integrity.

## YOUNG GIRL'S KIMONO, OBI AND HAORI

### WHAT IS IT?

This matching 2-piece set would be worn by a young girl in Japan. (In reality, it was worn by CIF guide Eri Shiraishi when she was young.) A child's kimono is a small version of an adult's kimono.

### WHO WOULD WEAR THIS AND WHEN?

The plaid pattern on this *kimono* and *haori* (pron. ha-o-ree) set is called *Ki-hachi-jo* (pron. kee-ha-chee-jo) and can be worn by both young girls and adult women. The geometric design on the red and gold obi represents hemp leaves (*asanoha*). Hemp has been used since early times in Japan as a multi-purpose fiber and for Shinto offerings. Stylized hemp leaves are also used in family crests.

This kimono and haori set is considered informal because it is made of wool, an easily maintained material that can be laundered at home. The red and gold child's obi would not be worn with this particular set, but can be used to show an example of a child's obi.

The kimono makes its first appearance soon after the birth of a child, when the baby – wrapped in a special infant-sized *kimono* – is taken by its parents to the family shrine to be blessed. The next time a child would generally wear *kimono* is at a modern festival called *Shichi-Go-San*, meaning “Seven-Five-Three.” (See illustration on the Art Cart.) Each November 15, girls, aged seven and three, and boys, aged five, are taken to their local shrine for a further blessing and to offer prayers for a safe and healthy future.

### HOW WOULD THESE ITEMS BE WORN?

Putting on a child's kimono is a bit less complicated than an adult's, although both look similar when finished. Like an adult kimono, the child's kimono is put on and the left side is brought over the right side like Westerners might put on a bathrobe. Children's kimono are commonly made to a custom length for their height, eliminating several complicated “adjustment of length” (*o-hashori*) steps adults must go through to achieve the correct length when putting on kimono. (To assist children of various heights in putting on this example, simply fold over the excess material to raise the kimono to the correct length and secure it in place with the obi as described below.) The ties on the inside of the yellow and red kimono are also to make it easier for children to put on and secure.

Next, the obi is put on. (You may want to use the pre-tied obi on the Art Cart, if you do not know how to properly put on an obi.) After the initial layer of the obi is wrapped around the wearer's waist, an *obi-age* (pron. obee-ah-gay) is tied around the waist to secure the obi in place before finishing wrapping and tying the obi in place. The obi-age on the Art Cart is of a red tie-dyed material. After the obi has been tied, the obi-age can be

**HOW WOULD THESE ITEMS BE WORN (CONTINUED)?**

arranged to peek out from under the obi at the top to add visual interest. Over the top of the finished obi, a cord called an obi-jime (pron. obee-jee-may) is tied to provide another decorative element and to further secure the ensemble in place. (Please note that the obi-age and obi-jime are just some of the many accessories needed to properly tie an obi.) Finally, the haori is put on over the top of the kimono and obi like a jacket.

**QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

1. What does/would it feel like to wear a *kimono*? (Visitors are welcome to try the *kimono* on carefully.) How does it make you feel? Would you like to wear a *kimono* like this? Why or why not?
2. Practice putting the *obi* on (using the pre-tied *obi*). What does/would it feel like to wear an *obi*? How does it affect your posture? Would you like to wear an *obi*? Why or why not?
3. Compare the *obis*. How are they the same? How are they different? (size, color, texture, decoration) Which do you like best? Why? What type of decoration would you use to design your own *obi*?
4. Find other types of Japanese textiles in the gallery (actual textiles or images of people wearing textiles). How do they compare to the *kimono* and *obi* (material, pattern, purpose, etc.)? What do you see that makes you say that? How does the type of material used differ depending on the purpose and occasion?
5. Today, many *kimono* are worn on special occasions. What clothing do you wear for special events? When do you wear it? What does it look like? How do you feel when you wear these special clothes?

**COLLECTION CONNECTIONS**

**JAPANESE TEXTILES**

1. Gallery 219: *Chōken jackets*, Edo Period
2. Gallery 239: *Uchikake* (outer *kimono* worn by women), 18th c.
3. Gallery 239: *Furisode* (long sleeve robe), late 18th c.
4. Gallery 252: *Boy's kimono*, Meiji Period

**IMAGES OF DRESS AND ADORNMENT IN JAPANESE CULTURE**

1. Gallery 224: Porcelain woman, Arita ware, late 17th c.
2. Gallery 239: Wood block prints
3. Gallery 253: *Ikeda Shōen*, Cherry Blossom Viewing, c. 1910
4. Gallery 252: *Battles of Yashima and Ichinotahi* (screens), c. 1650

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Hayao, Ishimura. *Robes of Elegance: Japanese Kimonos*. 1988.  
Yamanaka, Norio. *The Book of Kimono*. 1987.  
Lidell, Jill. *The Story of the Kimono*. 1989.



Yukata



Tomesode

**NAGOY**

**FUKU**



**YOUNG GIRL'S**



## HAPPI COAT

- WHAT IS A HAPPI COAT?** A *happi* (hap-ee) coat is a lightweight traditional coat worn by men, women, and children on special occasions, as well as by taiko drummers. *happi* are typically made of a single layer of highly decorated cloth, have straight sleeves, and are much shorter and simpler than a kimono. The *happi* on the Art Cart, are sold specifically for festivals (*matsuri*).
- WHO WEARS A HAPPI AND WHEN?** People wear *happi* coats on special occasions such as festivals, holidays, and occasionally in their daily life. Because they are simpler and lighter-weight than *kimono* or *yukata*, *happi* lend themselves well to strenuous activity in a way these other traditional clothing styles do not. For this reason, men or women carrying heavy shrines in a parade may wear a *happi*. In addition, manual workers such as carpenters, gardeners, merchants, or firefighters wear *happi*, as well as *taiko* drummers when they perform. The Art Cart *happi* are specifically made for children, who might carry a small shrine in a parade. Though they have historically only been for boys, as festivals grow to incorporate and celebrate women and girls, they too have begun to wear *happi*.
- HOW DO YOU WEAR THE HAPPI COAT?** The *happi* coat is worn much like a bathrobe, with the left side brought over the right side and either tied shut by wrapping the belt around the waist or left loose. It is typically worn over a t-shirt with a pair of shorts or pants. Because *happi* are often worn during strenuous activity, a typical accessory is a towel-like headband called a *tenugui*, which keeps hair out of the eyes and catches perspiration. Like the *happi* themselves, these headbands often display patriotic symbols or assert group affiliations.
- WHAT IS THE SYMBOL ON THE BACK?** Happi coats originated as Japanese overcoats worn by shopkeepers, showing the family crest, shop name, or emblem on the back. Today, many *happi* are printed with kanji symbols on the back representing family, corporation, or team names, or images of scenery. The symbol on the back of the *happi* on the Japan Art Cart is *matsuri*, meaning festival.

祭

The symbol is written in *kanji*, a system of Chinese characters used in modern Japan. Kanji characters are ideograms, meaning that each character has its own signification and corresponds to a word. By combining characters, more words can be created. For example, the combination of "electricity" and "car" creates "train."

Kanji are used for writing nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs. Unlike the Chinese language, however, Japanese cannot be written entirely in kanji. For grammatical endings and words without corresponding kanji, two additional, syllable based scripts are used, *hiragana* and *katakana*, each consisting of 46 syllables.



**WHAT DO THE OTHER SYMBOLS MEAN?**

**Mitsu-Tomoe:** The popular "tomoe" design theme is inspired by whirlpools and associated with thunder. In the Edo period, the pattern was often used as a family crest and therefore appeared on clothing, household goods, and equipment. Today it is a common symbol on *taiko* drummer's *happi* due to the traditional belief that thunder is created by gods carrying *taiko* drums. However, the exact meaning of the symbol remains something of a mystery.



**Yoshiwara-Tsunagi:** The interlocking diamond pattern, called Yoshiwara-Tsunagi, refers to the Yoshiwara neighborhood of Tokyo as well as the word "Tsunagi," chaining. Yoshiwara was a well-known pleasure district during the Edo period where many fashions became popular. The Tsunagi pattern was originally used on screens hung at the entrance of houses to indicate that the women inside were available, and subsequently became popular with local Kabuki actors who wore the pattern during their dramatic plays. It ultimately reached fashion popularity elsewhere, and is now a common *matsuri happi* pattern due to its association with "communal chaining," or "eternal chaining."



**Blue Happi (on lapels):**

Small:



Youth:



**Black Happi (on lapels):**

Medium:



Youth:



**WHAT ARE SOME  
MATSURI CELEBRATIONS  
ON WHICH ONE MIGHT  
WEAR A HAPPI?**

*Matsuri* is a general term for festival, and encompasses everything from religious Shinto ceremonies to national celebrations. A Japanese idiom suggests that there is always a festival somewhere, as there are always neighborhood shrine festivals in addition to larger national celebrations. Some examples of festivals and holidays on which one might wear a *happi* include:

**Shrine Festivals:** Japan is full of Shinto shrines, places of worship that house sacred objects and in which Shinto gods dwell. People visit shrines throughout the year to pay respect, pray for good fortune, as well as for special occasions such as New Years, the birth of a baby, and special festivals for each shrine.

**Culture Day** (*Bunka no hi*): November 3. A day to celebrate Japanese traditions. Festivities include art exhibitions, parades, school and governmental award ceremonies for distinguished artists and scholars.

**Children's Day** (*Kodomo no hi*): May 5. On this day, families celebrate the healthy growth and happiness of children. It became a national holiday in 1948, but has been a day of celebration in Japan since ancient times. Many traditions still originate in the celebration of boys. Families with boys fly tubular streamers in the shape of carp fish (a symbol of success, as legend says carps swim upstream to become dragons), display warrior dolls in their homes, and eat a variety of symbolic rice cakes wrapped in grass, oak or bamboo leaves or filled with bean paste.

**Asakusa Sanja Matsuri:** The third weekend of May. One of the largest festivals of portable shrines in the country, this procession takes place in the Asakusa quarter of Tokyo. Men (and occasionally women or children) wearing *happi* carry dozens of portable shrines through the streets to bring luck and prosperity to the area's inhabitants, occasionally jolting the shrines in order to intensify the power of the deities they contain. In addition, the parade of shrines is interspersed with floats, musicians, *taiko* drummers, and dancers whose movements inspire an abundant harvest. Other site-specific shrine festivals are common throughout other regions of Japan.

**Star Festival** (*Tanabata*): "the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month", either July 7 or August 7 depending on region. Celebrating the day when, according to Chinese legend, the two stars Altair and Vega, usually separated by the Milky Way, are able to meet. People write their wishes on *tanzaku* papers (colorful, small strips of papers) and hang them on bamboo branches.

**Obon:** July/August 13-15, depending on regional use of lunar/solar calendar. Obon is a Shinto/Buddhist festival to commemorate deceased ancestors. Believers say that during Obon the ancestors' spirits return to this world to visit their relatives. Families hang lanterns to guide ancestors' spirits home, perform Obon dances (*bon odori*), visit graves and make food offerings at house altars and temples. At the end of Obon, they float lanterns in the rivers, lakes and seas to guide the spirits back into their world.

**Kyoto Gion Festival:** July 1-31. One of the largest festivals in Japan, the Gion Festival of Kyoto (the former capital of Japan) began during a terrible plague in 869 C.E. Young men carried shrines and floats through the streets to implore divine intervention. When the plague ended, the event continued, developing into a celebratory festival including parades, special floats (many still in use are several hundred years old), special foods, arts performances, and many unique traditions.

## QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Try on the *happi*. Look at yourself in one of the hand mirrors on the Art Cart. How does it look and feel compared with your own usual clothing?

Look around the Asian galleries at images and examples of clothing. How are they similar? How are they different? What do you say that makes you think that?

What festivals and holidays do you celebrate? What special clothes do you wear on these days?

## COLLECTION CONNECTIONS

### Japanese Clothing:

- Japan, *Boy's Kimono*, Meiji period, 98.118.2
- Japan, *Boy's Kimono*, 1868-1912, 98.118.1a,b
- Japan, *Chōken with Pattern of Drifting Mist*, Edo period, 2002.159.2
- Japan, *Chōken with Bamboo Pattern*, Edo period, 2002.216.1
- Japan, *Furisode (long sleeve robe)*, late 18<sup>th</sup> century, 2006.23

### Representations of Japanese Clothing:

- Japan, Hisaharu, Tanikado, *The Game of Go*, c.1924, 2006.4
- Japan, Suzuki Harunobu, *Courtesan with Attendants on Parade*, c. 1766, 74.1.67
- Japan, Ito Shinsui, *Collar Cloth*, before 1972, 2002.161.19.
- Japan, Katsushika Hokusai, *Woman Arranging Bonkei*, 1820-1834, P.78.63.33

### Children's Clothing:

- North America, Tsistsistas (Cheyenne), *Girl's Dress*, c.1860-1870, 2000.24
- China, Miao, *Child's Jacket*, 20<sup>th</sup> century, 91.111.5
- China, *Child's Coat*, 19<sup>th</sup> century, 42.8.93
- Moravia, *Child's Blouse*, 20<sup>th</sup> century, 2001.289.39
- India, *Child's Shirt*, 19<sup>th</sup> century, 30.23.32
- Pakistan, Swati, *Vest*, 2007.128.15
- Mali, Bamana, Nakun Diarra, *Child's Skirt*, 20<sup>th</sup> century, 86.100.17

### Visual Representations of Festivals and Celebrations:

- Greece, Attributed to the Methyse Painter *Athenian Red-figure Volute Krater*, 460-450 B.C.E., 83.80
- Israel, David Sharir, *Tu B'shvat, from The Seven Festivals*, 20th century, 2004.251.1

- Austria, Johann Georg Platzer, *The Pleasures of the Seasons: Spring*, c. 1730, 61.37
- North America, John Singer Sargent, *The Birthday Party*, 1887. 62.84
- China, *Bride from Wedding Procession*, 1368 – 1644, 89.60.1

**Special Celebration Attire:**

- Canada (Kwakiutl), Richard Hunt, *Transformation Mask*, 1993, 93.42
- North America, Anishinabe (Ojibwe), *Cape*, 19th-early 20th century, 91.85.7
- Papua Ngavimeli, *Dance Mask with Bird Totem*, 20th century, 73.3
- Republic of Congo, Kuba, *Yet Belt*, 20th century, 89.1
- Nigeria, Yoruba, *Crown*, c.1920, 76.29
- Asmat, *Doroe Spirit Mask*, 20th century, 92.114

