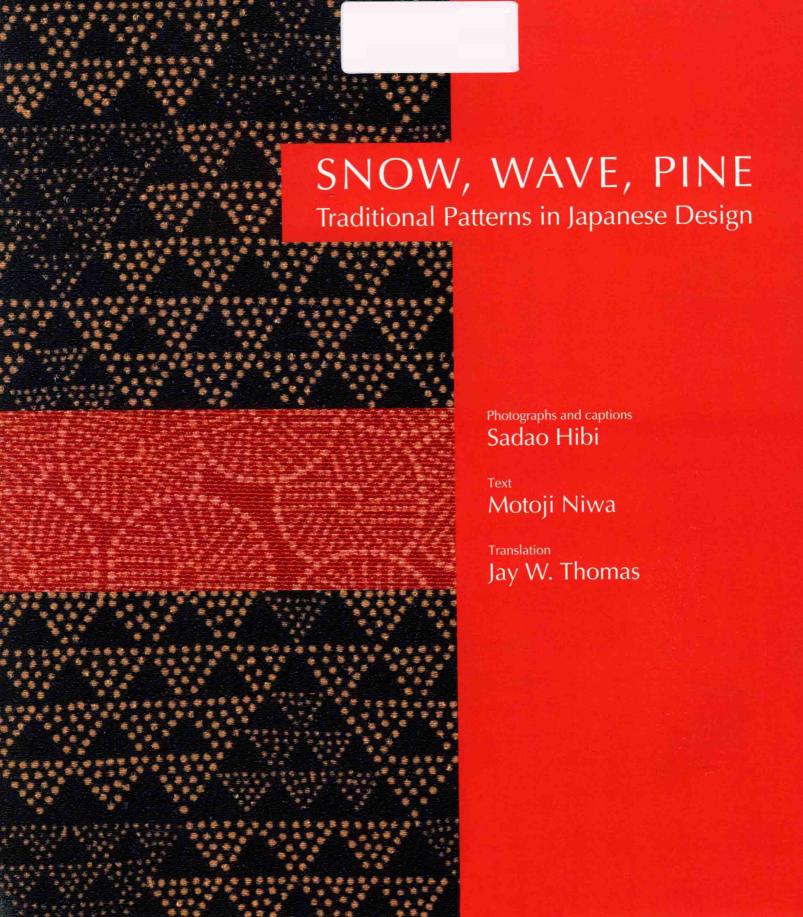


Traditional Patterns in Japanese Design

sadao hibi • motoji niwa





日本の伝統文様

Snow, Wave, Pine

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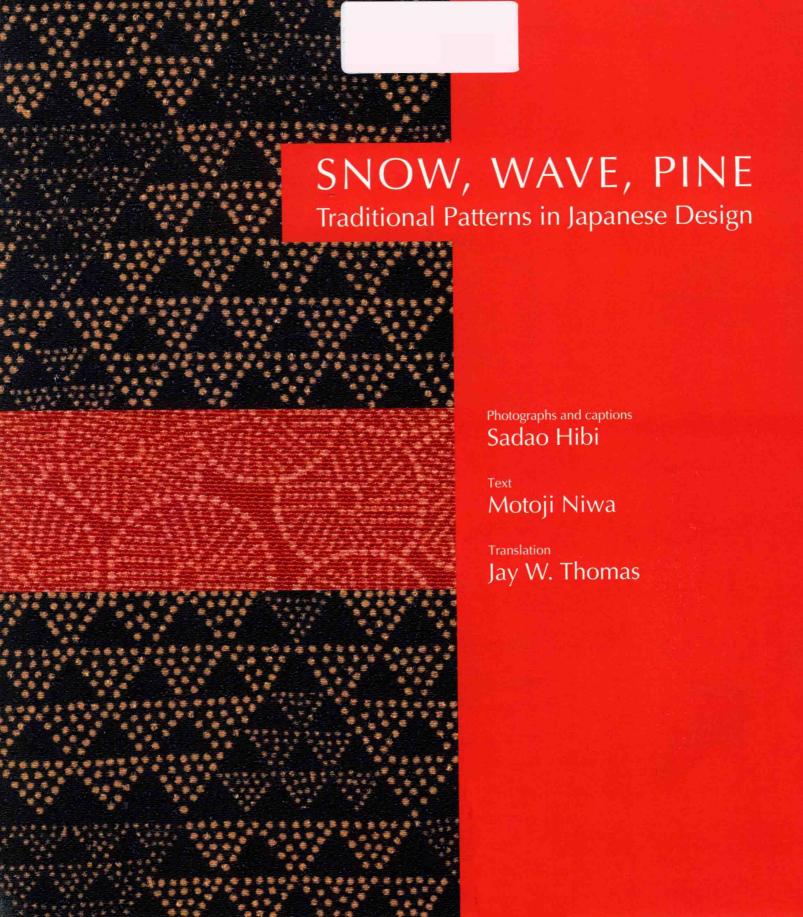
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SNOW, WAVE, PINE





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PREFACE

Traditional Japanese patterns are an important part of the fabric of life in Japan.

Patterns continue to thrive amid modernization and westernization. Nowadays they are used to decorate not only such traditional items as kimono, but also all manner of Western-style clothing or tableware. Essentially there are very few everyday, familiar objects that are not sometimes patterned with these traditional designs. Even today, they remain an indispensable part of life.

Throughout history, each period has produced new patterns. During the Jomon period (10,000–200 B.C.), for example, dynamic streak marks and spirals began to decorate pots and jars. The aristocracy of the Heian period (A.D. 794–1185), on the other hand, enjoyed elegant, refined patterns, often depicting natural scenery. The increasing democratization of patterns in the Edo period (A.D. 1603–1868) can be seen from the fact that kabuki—a new form of dramatic entertainment that had great mass appeal—brought new patterns developed and popularized on the stage.

Though we know little at this point about individual makers of patterns, one thing is certain: that all existing patterns are the product of long experience and development. Thus they serve as a record of the cultural and aesthetic history of Japan.

This book is designed to show something of the rich variety of traditional Japanese patterns that can be seen on a wide array of objects. I hope that this book will bring to the attention of readers around the world the remarkable stylization and artistry of these patterns.

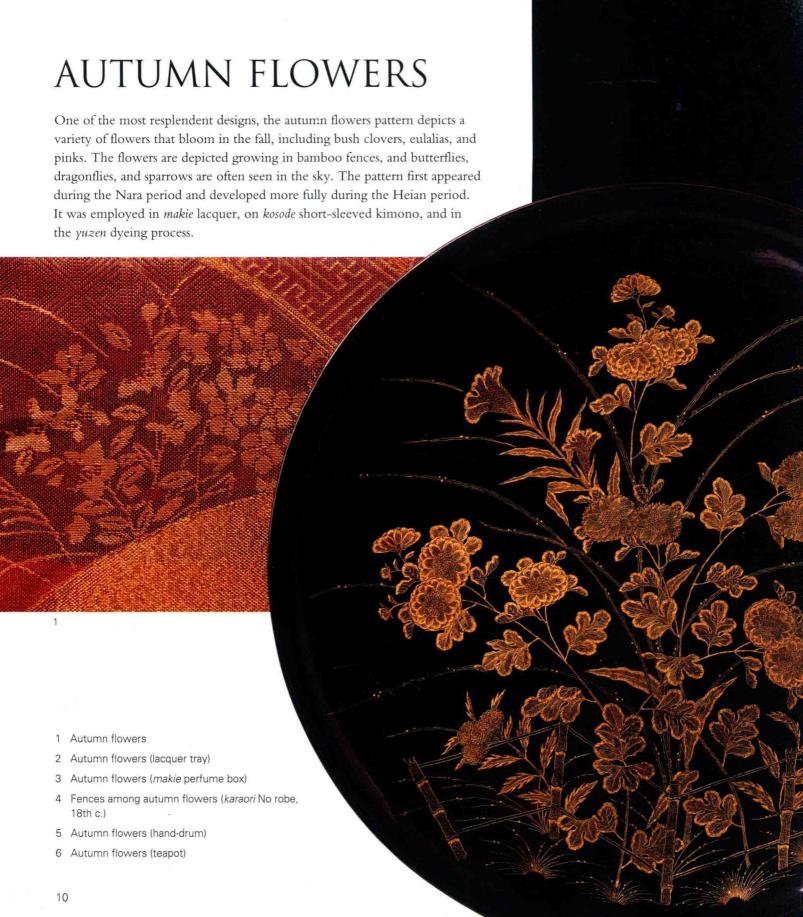
-Sadao Hibi

PLANT PATTERNS

lant patterns appeared much later than patterns employing points, lines, and rope figures, making it difficult to find examples of what can definitely be called plant patterns from the Yayoi period or earlier. It was not until the Asuka period that cultural influence from the Asian mainland that included the use of plant motifs began to be felt, as Chinese and Indian patterns, as well as those from Greece, Rome, and Persia, flowed into Japan by way of tools, Buddhist articles, pieces of cloth, and architectural items.

Early imports included lotus blossom, hosoge, and karabana patterns. The Tenpyo period saw the proliferation of Japanese-style patterns, such as peony, chrysanthemum, pine, plum blossom, autumn flower, paulownia, cherry blossom, and lily patterns. As weaving, dyeing, and painting techniques were developed during the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, the patterns themselves were refined and by the Edo period had achieved a high degree of brilliance.

Today, patterns based on plants found in the West, such as tulips, clematises, and cattleyas and other orchids, are used on Japanese and Western-style clothing, accessories, and the like.





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