



## Evolving depictions of *Kosode* (Small-Sleeved Kimono)

“Genre paintings” generally refers to pictures depicting the actual lives and livelihoods of people as well as the prevailing manners and customs of the period. Along with the customs of the day, genre paintings also depict the visual appearances and clothes of the people of that era. Garments depicted here indicate a person’s social status, age, occupation, and demonstrate the current fashions. Clothing is, therefore, an important key to interpret and comprehend genre paintings.

The *kosode*, which wraps around the whole body, usually contains various designs and colors, and their depiction added flowery flamboyance to genre paintings.

The shapes and designs of the *kosode*, which today is known as the kimono, changed considerably during Edo period due to the advancement of dyeing technologies.

We will trace the changes of *kosode* shapes from the early to mid Edo period and later.

# Changes in the silhouette

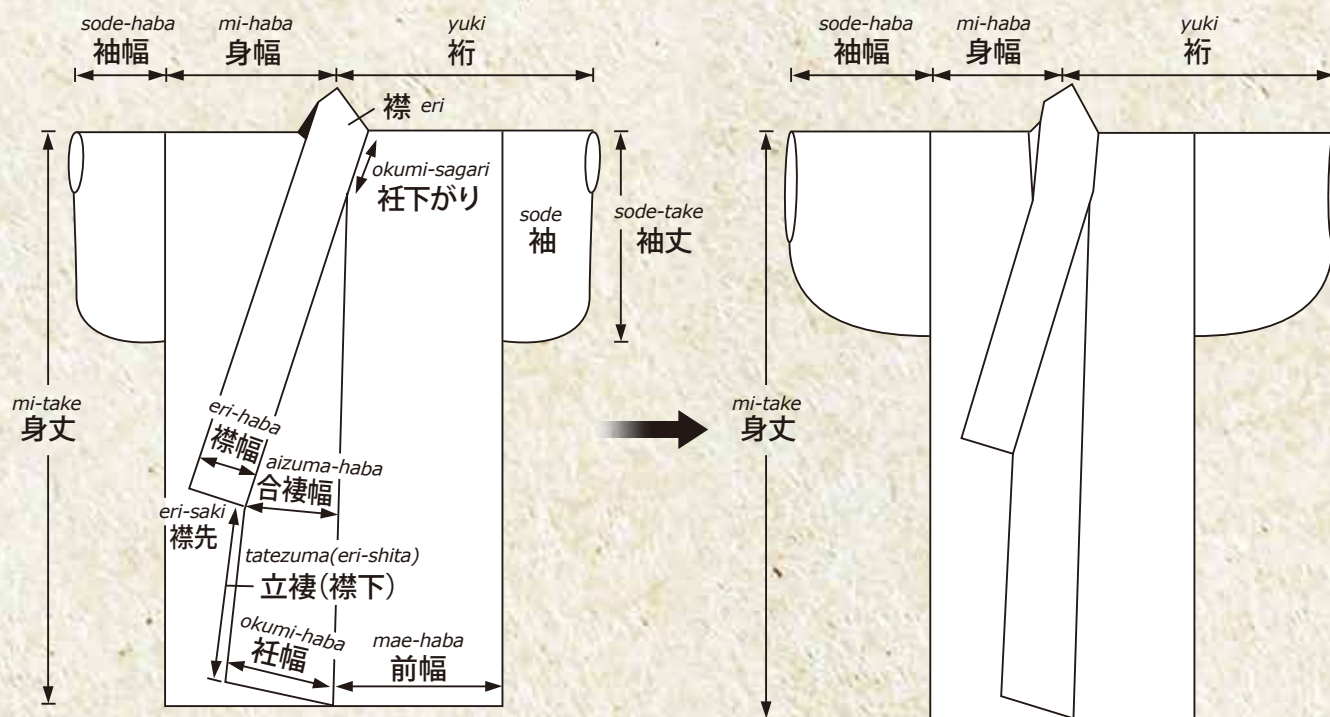
## From “Loose and relaxed” to “Slim and svelte”

First, while the *mi-haba* (body width) was originally very wide, as the *sode-haba* (sleeve length) became longer, the *yuki* (length from center back seam to cuff) also lengthened. Gradually the *mi-haba* became narrower until the *sode-haba* and *mi-haba* were almost the same width in the mid-Edo period.

Though in the early Edo period, the *kosode* showed the wearer's arms up to the elbow, gradually sleeves became longer and covered the arm up to the wrist.

Earlier *kosode*

*Kosode* after mid-Edo period



# Changes in the length of the collar

You can observe the position of the tip of the collar in each of these pictures. In the early Edo period it was below the knee, and then it became shorter, from the knee to the thigh and finally to the hip.

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Scenes of a Kabuki Performance



No. 26

Honda Heihachirō Figure Screen



No. 18

Sōō-ji Screens



No. 62

By Nishikawa Sutenobu Cooling Off

