Genealogy of Early Modern *Kosode* Garments

--- Two Lines Leading to the Kambun Style ---

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The evolution of Early Modern (early 17th century) *kosode* garments leading to the Kambun (1661–1673) style has always been thought to be unilineal. But that hypothesis leaves many unanswered questions. This paper looks at the possibility of two lines emerging from different social classes.

The first lineage spans the Momoyama (1573–1615) and early Edo (1603–1688) periods, and it evolves autonomously and without interruption toward the Kambun style. This occurs mostly as a result of upper class preferences and can be confirmed in extant garments from that period. The unilineal hypothesis is essentially the same thing as this first lineage.

The second lineage, proposed here, cannot be confirmed in extant garments, but it is clear from illustrations. There are also clues in the designs on certain types of other garments used in the Momoyama period. Originally, these designs were simply “curious” but they were soon adopted by *kabukimono* (outlaws in the early Edo period) and ladies of pleasure. Subsequently, through the influence of these townspeople, what was once a plebeian fashion became common and evolved toward the Kambun style.

Both lineages reflect the preferences of the consumers using them. In the first style, self-expression of the parts is restrained and an abstract design giving importance to the overall composition is fundamental. In the second style, a clear design of frank, bold expression is observed. There is also a definite difference in the preferred motifs. The dominant motifs in the first style are flowers and other kinds of plants, but fresh, lascivious motifs are outstanding in the second style.

These two contrasting design lineages merged into one in the Kambun style garments. The *Karigane-ya*, design books drawn in the Manji (1658–1661) and Kambun periods, clearly illustrates this for the first lineage. Likewise, the *Onhii-nagata*, another design book published in 1666, illustrates this for the second lineage. Definitely, the Kambun style is not simply the extension of the
unilineal evolution of Momoyama and Keicho (1596–1615) styles, but rather it is a design that developed out of the convergence of two earlier lineages.