

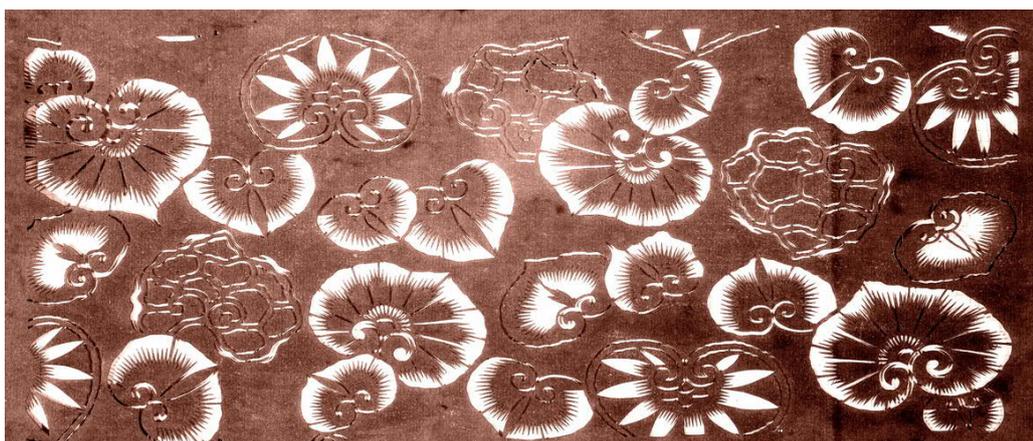
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First Initial Report of Findings from Katagami Research in Japan
October 4th 2017

I found 25 stamps of selling merchant names which were investigated with calligraphy information, pattern design and sculpture technique on 97 Katagami of the Silver Studio collection. They were made in the Bunka Bunsei (translated as "the cultural and administrative years"), late Edo period 1804 to 1867.

Note - These stamps are not the Katagami makers' names. They were merchants' trade names. The merchants were buying Katagami from the makers who were nameless farmers. These farmers produced Katagami to make money during the less busy farming seasons.

The Katagami merchants from Shiroko, Ise prefecture, were selling Katagami to dyers all over Japan. The successful Katagami merchants, although trading from Shiroko, Ise prefecture, opened branch offices in Edo to develop business. The merchants prospered well due to the favourable high quality techniques employed in the Katagami form Shiroko.

I believe that almost 200 Katagami of the Silver Studio collection have strong similarities with the same kimono patterns in Ukiyoe paintings of that time. Ukiyoe artists, such as Hokusai and Kunisada were sometime involved with Kimono pattern design during those times.



Ise Katagami Catalogue 2015
source of information for the following:

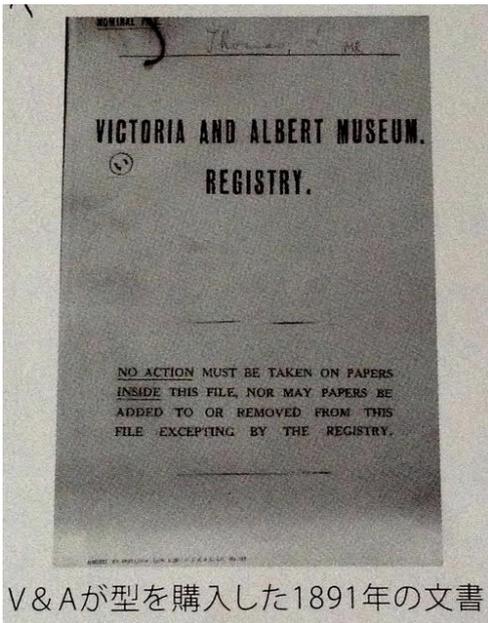
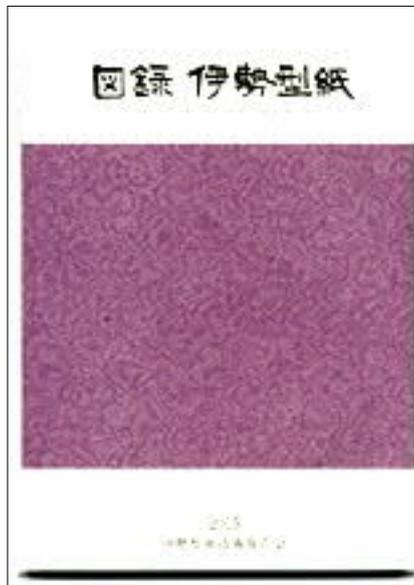


Fig1
V&A Registry

The previously stated Edo period Katagami in the SS collection and a proportion of the V&A collection have common origins.

The V&A purchased about 600 sheets of Edo period Katagami on August 24, 1891.

Source: Ise Katagami Centre, visited August 2017.

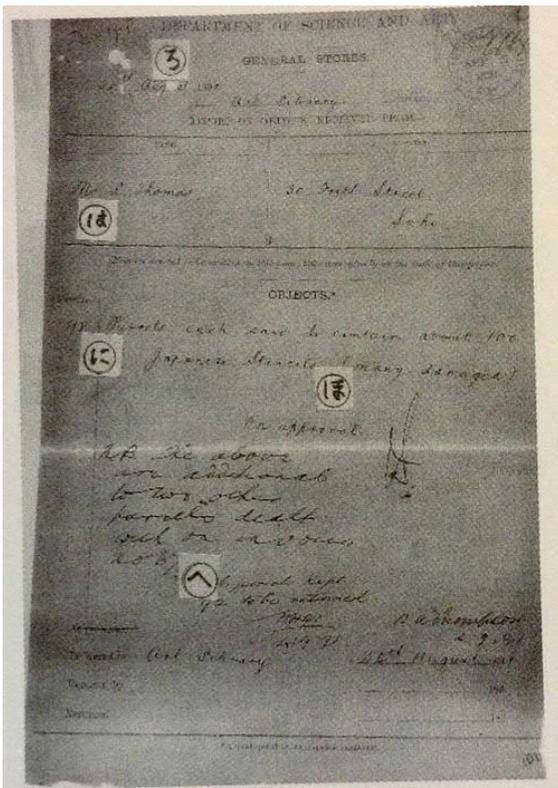


Fig2

L Thomas (probably an arts / antiques dealer), of 30 Fleet Street, Soho, London, stated that he sold Katagami to the V&A.

He packed 100 sheets of Katagami in one bag. The V&A settled the purchase of 6 bags on September 4, 1891.

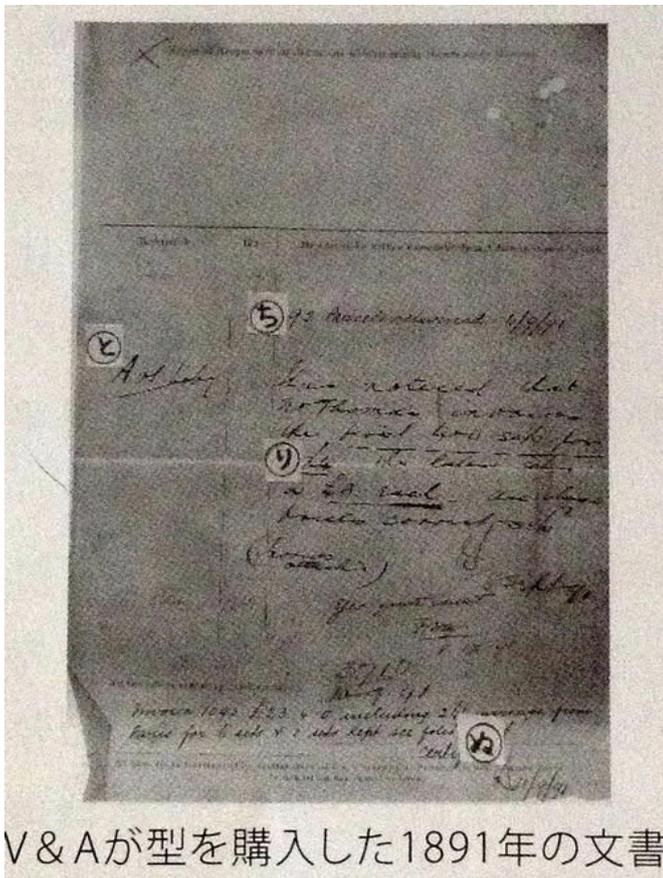


Fig 3

The price of one bag, about 100 Katagami sheets, was £3.

V&Aが型を購入した1891年の文書

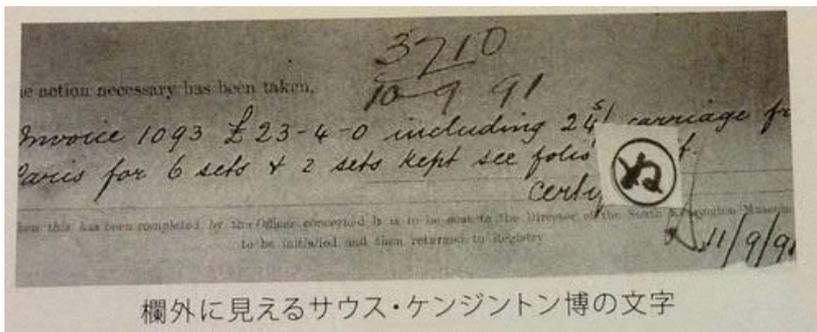


Fig4

The V&A spent £23 and 4 shillings on September 11, 1891 including transportation fee from Paris.

欄外に見えるサウス・ケンジントン博の文字



A Katagami in the V&A collection using recycled paper; dated 1885.

Source:
Ise Katagami Catalogue 2015

fig.7 ヴィクトリア&アルバート博物館所蔵の型紙(1885年收藏の型紙)

203 Katagami of the Silver Studio collection, used recycled papers and also have no merchant name stamps. However I discovered they originated during the Meiji period (after 1868) from calligraphy information in the recycled papers.

These 203 are from the Meiji era (1868-1911). The apprentices of Ise's carving craftsmen made Tenugui-hand towels, embroidery, men's obi belt and Export Katagami. Ise Katagami merchants sent young artisans to Tokyo to produce them. The sculpture techniques in these is nowhere near as good as those produced by the artisans.

According to the Ise Katagami Catalogue 2015, those Meiji period Katagami of the Silver Studio Collection and the V&A collection have in commonality. The V&A purchased Meiji period Katagami in 1879.

The embroidery and/or Souvenir Katagami in the Silver Studio collection consists of about 166 sheets. They are engraved with a simple floral design on square Katagami paper. They were made for kimono collars, decorations and souvenirs.



The men's obi Katagami in the Silver Studio collection consists of about 10 sheets. The design and techniques of these Katagami are similar to that used for ceramics & porcelain. The Obi belt Katagami were dyed repeatedly on the fabrics, the same as dyeing the Katagami for kimono.



There are about 27 sheets of Export Katagami in the Silver Studio collection. Katagami known as Export Katagami were produced only in the Meiji Period and were never intended to be used as Katagami for the purpose of dyeing fabrics in Japan. Their sole purpose was to be sold on the export market as decorative items. They are distinctly different in design and style, many having a border and consequently not capable of repeat pattern dyeing, but eminently suitable for framing as decorative items. Many exhibits a poor level of craftsmanship in cutting quality and technique.

According to Prof. Inaba of Tokoha Gakuen Junior College and other specialists, it was pointed out that these designs mixed together patterns of Japan and China, so are obviously not traditional Japanese design.

Some of these designs can be recognized as being copied from "STUDIES IN DESIGN", a book published in 1876 by Christopher Dresser.

Dresser published this book a few months after he had been to Japan. It is conceivable that he sold this book to the Japanese government. His Japanese craft research tour of three months was strongly supported by the Meiji government. Furthermore, he gave design guidance at craftwork places he visited at the request of the Meiji government. Following this, Katagami merchants produced "Export Katagami" around 1879, under the influence of Dresser's designs: Figs 8, 9, 10 & 11.

Fig 8

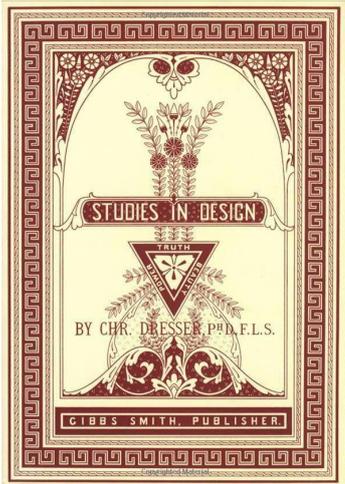


Fig9



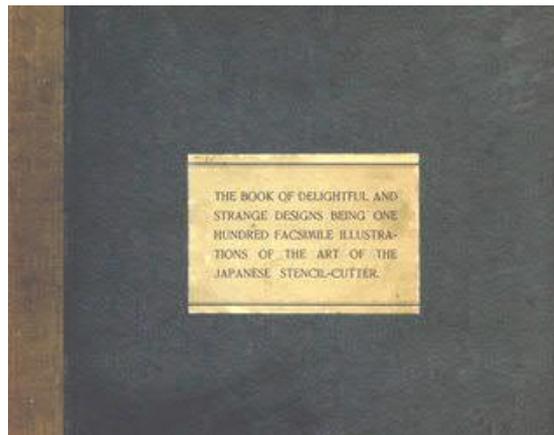
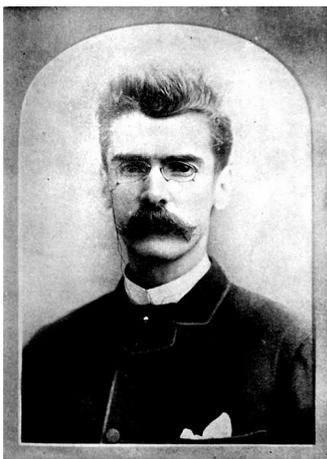
Fig10



Fig11



However the Katagami sculpture techniques were clumsy; as pointed out by Andrew White Tuer (Publisher, printer, author, typographer & inventor) in *The book of delightful and strange designs; being one hundred facsimile illustrations of the art of the stencil-cutter* - (1893 London, The Leadenhall press, ltd . New York, C. Scribner's sons).



The publication contained real Katagami in this, a 1st edition.



It was observed that some of the stencils have curious little devices (see No. 37) nicked in the margins, which must mean something or they would not be there, and it was soon discovered that each had its fellow bearing the same device. These turned out to be pairs for printing in two colours, part of the design being cut out on one plate and part on the other. A great many of the best and most beautiful designs, however, we found to bear no such marks, and these single plates are obviously intended for one printing only. It is principally these single plates, complete in themselves, that figure herein. And we thought that a book of Japanese stencil plates themselves would be more acceptable than direct impressions from them. Later, it was noticed that some few of the designs are divided amongst three or more plates and require that number of separate printings to complete them. Owing to this splitting up or dividing, stencil plates prepared for multiple colour-printing naturally have a weak and uninteresting appearance.

We came to the conclusion that our collection, part of which had already been secured for the South Kensington Museum, probably formed a portion of the stock-in-trade of a professional Japanese

Although apparently authored by Tuer, the publication appears to be a joint venture by several collectors.

Without the benefit of prior knowledge, they initially assumed Katagami to be used for direct ink printing and assumed Katagami pairs were used to print different colours.

It seems this group also had their own collection of Katagami, but the following statement is a little ambiguous in the relationship between their collection and that of the South Kensington Museum:

"We came to the conclusion that our collection, part of which had already been secured for the South Kensington Museum, probably formed a portion of the stock-in-trade of a professional Japanese stenciller."

stenciller. Many of the plates have seen much wear. On some of those where the design is distributed over several, the pigments have been left by the Japanese artist, shewing exactly what colours were last used.

Stencil plates can hardly be a publicly marketable commodity in Japan any more than holed loom-cards or engraved wooden blocks are publicly marketable at home: they simply form part of the working tools, or material, of the printer or decorator of cotton goods. It is surmised that the collection was sent to this country by some European who was struck by the marvellous beauty of the designs and the wonderful skill displayed in the cutting out. The person who sent over our plates was not the first European to discover the beauty of the Japanese stencil, for every now and then new and unused plates, but of feeble and conventional design, find their way over here for sale. These, however, like a certain notorious person's razors, seem to be made to sell, and they form a percentage, hardly appreciable, of the ship-loads of Japanese fans and pans moulded in millions to one pattern for the European market.

There is also acknowledgement of the poor technique which is found in export Katagami similar to the mass produced Japanese fans produced for export.

It can be appreciated that after Christopher Dresser's visit to Japan (1876) there was a decline in Katagami carving technology associated with the production of katagami for export, whilst also changing the traditional paper pattern designs that continued from the Edo period.

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