Lords of the Samurai
Legacy of a Daimyo Family

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FOR MORE THAN six hundred years, spanning the Kamakura, Nanbokucho, Muromachi, and Edo periods, and even continuing for a time into the Meiji, Japan was ruled by a warrior government headed by a shogun who wielded immense political power while expressing deference to the emperor. The shogun’s power ultimately derived from the prowess and loyalty of the warrior class known as bushi or samurai. Samurai means “he who serves”, and these men were in the service of powerful feudal lords, known as daimyo, who reported to the shogun.

The daimyo were a largely hereditary gentleman class who took guidance from the code known as bushido or the Way of the Warrior. For these feudal lords, the martial arts were just one part of personal cultivation, and they took a keen interest in arts of many kinds. Thomas Cleary writes in the exhibition catalogue:

The foundations of Japanese civilization may be said to rest on two bases, called culture and arms, or bun (文) and bu (武) in Japanese. In general terms, bun and bu suggest the constructive and the destructive as reflections of elemental forces of nature. They can also represent qualities of gentleness and intensity, in domains as diverse as medicine, psychology, and social policy.

For the samurai as warrior, this basic conceptual construction defines the primary purpose of warfare: to protect the civil society. For the samurai as ruler and administrator, the combination of bun and bu implies the mitigating influence of culture on the aggressive element of instinct, preserving social order by means of education as well as legal sanction.

The ideal individual embodied in his personality the qualities of bun and bu in appropriate place and proportion. The ability to be warm and humane in social life, cold and fierce in combat, was particularly prized in the person of the bushi (武士)—the Japanese warrior-knight. Each aspect of the personality was thought to have its proper place, the cultural capacity balancing the martial and the martial protecting the cultural.

The daimyo system provided great continuity to Japanese society, and daimyo rule often spanned many generations of the same family. Hosokawa Morihiro, former prime minister of Japan—and an accomplished ceramicist who has contributed several works to the exhibition—is the eighteenth-generation head of the Hosokawa daimyo family, which ruled the Higo domain in western Kyushu (present-day Kumamoto prefecture) for most of the Edo period (1615–1868).

For the exhibition “Lords of the Samurai”, which will be on display in San Francisco from June 12th through September 20th this year, the Asian Art Museum has collaborated with the Eisei-Bunko Museum in Tokyo, which preserves the Hosokawa family’s six-hundred-year material legacy, to present a selection of prized objects and artworks that demonstrate the range and depth of this daimyo family’s interests. One hundred and sixty-six objects are included in the exhibition, many of which are associated with specific members of the Hosokawa family over the centuries. These works bespeak not only the history of the family, but the individual tastes and innovations of the figures who headed it.

The history of the Hosokawa family begins with Hosokawa Yoriari (1332–1391). The younger brother of Hosokawa Yoriyuki, the kanrei (deputy) of the Muromachi shogunate, and a fierce warrior, Yoriari fought and survived many campaigns—as did his son Yorinaga, the shugo daimyo (military lord) of Izumi province. Yoriari is seen as an early Hosokawa lord who relayed the bloodstream to the present-day family, and is therefore revered as a distant ancestor.

In a formal portrait (1), executed more than a century after its subject’s death, Yoriari sits on a tatami dressed in a black samurai hat (eboshi) and black robe fastened by cords. A short sword (koshigatana) is tucked in his sash; he holds a closed fan in his right hand. The inscription at top right reads Shōmyōin dono shini—“portrait of the Lord Shōmyōin” (perhaps Yoriari’s Buddhist name).

One type of armour worn by Yoriari in battle was ōyoroi (2). It was used primarily from the late Heian period (794–1185) to the Kamakura period (1185–1333), when one-on-one mounted combat was the primary mode of warfare. It comprises a helmet, cuirass, tassets (laced overlapping lames) to protect the hips, and wide shoulder guards, among other pieces. Because a warrior’s armour became his funeral attire if he was defeated, a great deal of attention was paid to decorative details such as the colour of the lacing and the ornamentation of the metal fixtures. For that reason ōyoroi armour is not only heavy and showy, but often has high aesthetic value.

This suit of armour is a reproduction of the famous ōyoroi worn by the founder of the Hosokawa clan, Hosokawa Yoriari, in the battle of Kyoto in 1358. This authentic reproduction was made at the order of the eleventh-generation daimyo, Hosokawa Naritatsu (1789–1826), during a time when the revivalist Kokugaku (literally, “national studies”) movement was in vogue and it had become fashionable to reproduce famous suits of armour. Begun in 1824, the reproduction of Yoriari’s ōyoroi took five years to complete.

Armour’s lacing (ōdoshi) may incorporate leathers or braided silk cords of various colours, which are the primary distinguishing elements. The name of a suit of armour will usually contain a reference to material and colour, such as “red cord lacing” or “purple leather lacing”; this suit, with its keynote of white braided silk, is known as an ōyoroi with white cord lacing. The diagonal accents of multicoloured lacing in the corners of the shoulder guards and tassets are called tsuradori. The combination of white lacing with such tsuradori accents was very popular in Yoriari’s time for its refined, austere beauty. This armour’s hoe-shaped helmet crest (kawagata) and right breast plate (sentan ita), the originals of which were missing, are fashioned after those on an ōyoroi armour in Itsukushima shrine in present-day Hiroshima prefecture. The gauntlets (kote) are modelled on the so-called Yoshitsune gauntlets in the Nara shrine of Kasuga Taisha. This reproduction is thus a synthesis, containing parts that are historically informed and faithfully reproduced as well as parts that have been reinvented.

The reverence for Yoriari in the Hosokawa clan is also evident in their cavalry standards (umajirushi), which would be set up before or beside a commander’s horse to indicate his location on the battlefield. This dark blue
1 Portrait of Hosokawa Yoriari (1332–1391)
Japan, Muromachi period (1392–1573), 16th century
Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk
79.2 x 39.4 cm (image), 166.3 x 60.7 cm (overall)
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 3355

2 Ōyoroi-type armour
White cord lacing with diagonal corner accents (tsumadori)
Replica of a suit worn by Hosokawa Yoriari (1332–1391)
Japan, Edo period, 1829 (after 14th century original)
Iron, metal, leather, lacquer, silk, gilt bronze
Cuirass front height 54 cm, tasset length 29.4 cm,
shoulder protector width 36.8 cm, total weight 21 kg
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 4082

3 Large cavalry standard with the character ari
Used by Hosokawa Harutoshi (1759–1787)
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 18th century
Dyed silk
168 cm x 200 cm
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 4226

banner, with the character ari inside a resist-dyed white circle (3), belonged to Hosokawa Harutoshi (1759–1787). The central character, ari is one of the characters of Yoriari, in honour of Hosokawa Yoriari (1332–1391), first patriarch of the Hosokawa clan. In this type of standard, the
character could be executed in various ways: in white resist against a dyed background or in colour against a white background. Before this kind of banner came into use, Hosokawa lords used black cavalry standards with the nine-planet family crest in white. Documentary records confirm that Hosokawa Tadaoki (1563–1643) used just such a black cavalry standard with a white crest in the Battle of Sekigahara (1600). Cavalry banners with the *ari character did not come into use until after 1600, when the Hosokawa moved to Buzen province (modern eastern Fukuoka and northern Oita prefectures)—a domain granted to Tadaoki as a reward for military service at Sekigahara. Another distant ancestor (4) of the clan lineage was Hosokawa Sumimoto (1489–1520), who lived a century-and-a-half after Yoriari. Sumimoto experienced continual intrigue and conflict, and was frequently engaged in war, throughout his short life.

The Warring States (Sengoku) period (1490–1600) was the most turbulent, bloody, and brutal time in which a Japanese warrior could live or die. Consumed by ambition, suspicion, or jealousy, many members of the distinguished warrior families fought even with their own family members.

Adoption featured among many warrior families; Sumi-
moto was adopted into the line of Hosokawa shogunal deputies. Sumimoto’s adoptive father, Hosokawa Masamoto (1466–1507), had already adopted another son, Sumiyuki, from the powerful Kujō family. The adopted sons quarrelled over succession to the Hosokawa line; in 1507 one of Sumiyuki’s supporters murdered Masamoto. An attempt was made on Sumimoto’s life as well, but he fled Kyoto for Ōmi province. There he remained until a family associate raised troops and ended Sumiyuki’s bid for primacy in the Hosokawa house. Sumimoto returned to govern his branch of the Hosokawa—but only briefly: he was unseated in 1508. Sumimoto attempted more than once to regain his power; but in the end he died, disappointed, in Awa on the island of Shikoku.

In this equestrian portrait by Kanō Motonobu (1476–1559), Sumimoto, aged nineteen, wears haramaki armour and a helmet with a hornlike crest (kuwagata). His sword (tachi) mounting is slung at his left side; he holds a halberd (naginata), blade up, and a whip in his right hand, the reins in his left hand. A short sword is tucked into his belt.

For a warrior of Sumimoto’s time, a horse was an essential possession. The countryside was often mountainous and thickly forested; to travel on foot in heavy armour was impractical. Warriors put serious effort and expense into buying and maintaining vigorous, well-built horses.

Keiō Shūrin (1444–1518), abbot of Nanzenji temple in Kyoto, added the inscription above the figure, which dates the portrait to 1507. It reads, in part:

Long ago the Genji clan subjugated the east of the capital. Military leaders rose in the eastern provinces. From Hosokawa Yoriharu to his son Yoriyuki, they were first called Kanrei [deputy shogun]. . .

Hosokawa Sumimoto, a great archer and horseman, is far above other humans. He is also versed in waka [Japanese poetry] and appreciates the moon and the wind. . .

Outside the citadel he takes bows and arrows; in meditation and reading of sacred books he protects Buddhism. Inside and outside, pledging to the mountains and rivers for the sake of the rulers and vassals, always with propriety and benevolence, he attains saintly wisdom.

[On] an auspicious day in the tenth month of the fourth year of Eisei [1507], Keiō Shūrin was ordered to and respectfully added, this inscription.

—Keiō [tripod-shaped relief seal] Shūrin [square intaglio seal] 1

The exhibition also includes a set of the same type of haramaki armour seen in Sumimoto’s portrait. This armour (5), in a revival style was worn by Hosokawa Narimori (1806–1861), the twelfth-generation lord of the domain, who also saw to the above-mentioned reproduction of the white-laced ôyoroi armour worn by the clan’s first patriarch, Hosokawa Yoriari. Though similar in many ways to dômaru-type armour, haramaki is constructed with an opening at the back instead of the side, to make it easier to put on and take off.

Except for some incongruities, such as its replacement of the standard ridged helmet with a riveted helmet, this haramaki armour is comparatively true to the style of the late Muromachi period. The helmet’s hoe-shaped crest (kuwagata), with a lion in gilt bronze, was copied from ancient armour in the temple Kuramadera, in Kyoto. The colour scheme—black leather, with horizontal accents of red lacing on the first two lames on the sleeve protectors—seems to imitate a suit of ôyoroi armour presented by the Ôuchi clan to Itsukushima shrine, in what is now Hiroshima prefecture.

The first-generation head of the Hosokawa family in the early modern period was Hosokawa Fujitaka, later called Yûsai (1534–1610), from whom the family line descends to Hosokawa Morihiro, the present, eighteenth-generation head of family. A key figure in the alliances that would reunite war-torn Japan for centuries, Fujitaka was a courageous warrior, a well-known poet in the classical waka form, and a scholar of ancient poetry. In the seventh month of 1600, Fujitaka’s Tanabe Castle, then seat of the Hosokawa domain, was besieged by 15,000 enemies. Fujitaka and followers numbering fewer than five hundred—soldiers, women, and children—defended Tanabe for sixty days. His wife wore armour and attended to people in the castle. Believing that his death was inevitable, Fujitaka feared that his life’s work, a study of the Kökin wakashû,2 would perish as well. Through his arrangements, a delegation from the imperial court was permitted to pass through the siege to obtain Fujitaka’s works.

Fujitaka composed the following poem for the emperor.

Inishie no In the world that remains,
Ima no kawaranu Past and present,
Yo no naka ni Unchanged,
Kokoro no tane wo I leave these words:
Nokosu koto no ha Seeds of my spirit.

Upon receiving the poem, Emperor Goyozei (1571–1617) ordered an end to the siege on Tanabe Castle, and the lives of those within were saved. It was the only episode in Japanese history when literature trumped considerations of politics or war.3

In this portrait (6), Fujitaka/Yûsai, dressed informally and holding a fan, sits on a tatami; three of his poems appear above.4 According to the record Hanfu benran, in 1612 Fujitaka’s wife ordered the painter Tashiro Tôho to paint her husband’s portrait. Portraits of Hosokawa family heads were often made to commemorate their lives.

On a fan-shaped paper decorated with autumn flowers flourishing around a stream (7), Fujitaka wrote a famous poem by Sosei Hôshi. Extracted from the early 10th cen-

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2 Kökin wakashû (Collection of Poems Ancient and Modern), also called Kokinshû, is a poetry anthology compiled in the early 10th century. It is notoriously difficult for its numerous references to Chinese poetry and multiple levels of meaning. Fujitaka was among the few scholars of his time to decode and teach these poems.
in which literary scholarship proved more materially powerful than military force.

There are numerous works in the exhibition associated with Hosokawa Tadaoki (later known as Sansai, 1563–1646). The eldest son of Hosokawa Fujitaka, Tadaoki lived in a turbulent age, but managed not only to survive but also to play an important role in establishing the Hosokawa line.

In this portrait (8), Tadaoki, dressed in an aristocratic formal black robe, is seated on a tatami mat. His right hand holds a sceptre (hakki); his left, a long ceremonial sword (tachi). The black banner behind him, hung from crossed bamboo poles, displays two diagonal white lines; it is the Hosokawa’s early war banner. The design later changed to white with the nine-planet crest in black.

An astute and loyal vassal, Tadaoki served, in succession, three military leaders in their quest to unify Japan: Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616). A minor lapse of judgment in choosing whom he would support, and when, could have ended his life and his family lineage. In fact, Tadaoki lost his wife of many years, Gracia (née Tama, 1563–1600), to the struggle for power. A Christian, Gracia nevertheless took her own life to nullify her value as a hostage.

Gracia was a daughter of Nobunaga’s assassin, Akechi Mitsuhide. Before the battle of Sekigahara (1600), in which her husband supported Tokugawa Ieyasu, Gracia was captured by the leader of the opposing force. To preserve her husband’s honor and loyalty, she refused to submit to Ieyasu’s demand for her. When Ieyasu offered to spare her life on condition that she freed her husband, she refused, choosing to behead her husband to show his loyalty to his new master. Gracia’s actions were recognized with the fudai rank of samurai status.

In the portrait, Tadaoki is depicted in a traditional formal attire, seated on a tatami mat. His right hand holds a scepter (hakki), while his left hand holds a long ceremonial sword (tachí). The black banner behind him, adorned with crossed bamboo poles, displays two diagonal white lines, symbolizing the Hosokawa’s early war banner. The design later changed to white with the nine-planet crest.

The Hosokawa collection also contains a number of treasures, including a cabinet painted with the famous ‘Nine-Planet’ crest, made in memory of Hosokawa Gracia (1563–1600), who was the eldest son of Hosokawa Fujitaka. The cabinet was created in memory of Gracia, who was a daughter of the famous samurai Akechi Mitsuhide. When Mitsuhide was defeated by the Tokugawa in the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, Gracia chose to commit seppuku (ritual suicide) rather than submit to Tokugawa Ieyasu’s demands.

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11 Chopsticks, two pairs
Used by Hosokawa Tadaoki (aka Sansai, 1563–1646)
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 17th century
Wood
Length 35.7 cm (longer), 35.1 cm (shorter)
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 6544

10 Sake bottle and food box set (sagejō) in the shape of an eggplant
By Hosokawa Sansai (aka Sansai, 1563–1646)
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 17th century
Lacquered wood
Height 25.5 cm x width 17.5 cm x diameter 13.8 cm
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 6535

12 Covered bowls with nine planet family crest
Used by Hosokawa Tadaoki (aka Sansai, 1563–1646)
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 18th century
Lacquered wood with painted lacquer decoration
Height 12 cm x diameter 14 cm, height 6.8 cm x diameter 13.5 cm
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 6536

have a protective container created from a tube of bamboo, and may also have a wooden box to encase the scoop within its bamboo tube. Sometimes these containers have inscriptions written in ink or lacquer that might include the artist’s signature, the tea scoop’s poetic name, or a full verse associated with the piece. The bamboo tube for this scoop (14) tells us that it was made by Sansai himself.

Bamboo scoops began to be made in the late 15th century and were based on Chinese ivory models. The shift in material, from expensive ivory carved in China to bamboo, a material that grows plentifully in Japan, relates to

the shift in tea aesthetics to favour rusticity and locally made utensils. Tea scoops are regularly made by amateurs, and yet they are among the utensils presented to guests after drinking tea, for close examination. Earlier tea gatherings featured the ostentatious display of finest-quality imported Chinese ceramics, metalware, and painting; that an unassuming object such as this, carved by an amateur artist from a material growing everywhere in Japan, would warrant such attention is truly remarkable. It speaks to the philosophy behind rustic tea (sachibcha).

The tea master Takeno Jōō (1502–1555) was the first
Dishes with floral roundels, set of five
Used by Hosokawa Tadaoki (aka Sansai, 1563–1646)
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 17th century
Lacquered wood with painted lacquer decoration
Height 3.8 cm x diameter 19.4 cm
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 6539

Tea scoop (chashaku)
By Hosokawa Sansai (aka Tadaoki, 1563–1646)
Japan, Momoyama period (1573–1615) or Edo period (1615–1868), 16th–17th century
Bamboo
Length 18.1 cm x width 0.95 cm (scoop tip)
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 3211

Tea master to use the term wabi to describe this new attitude towards sharing a bowl of tea. Jōō’s letter to Rikyū defines wabi as follows:

The word... has come to mean straightforward, considerate, and not arrogant. Of the months of the year, the tenth most represents wabi. Lord Teika’s poem expressed it well:

The Month without God tells no lies.
What more sincere than the first drops of an autumn shower?
Whose are the honest tears that fall?\(^7\)

The tenth month in Japan corresponds roughly to November, and was poetically known as “the Month without God”—a time when the trees are bare and cold rains fall. Jōō also quoted the following poem by Fujiwara Teika as evocative of wabicha:

Miwataseba
Looking about
Hana no momiji mo
Neither flowers
Nakarikeri
Nor scarlet leaves.
Ura no tomaya
A bayside reed hovel
Aki no yūgure
In the autumn dusk.\(^8\)

Jōō’s student, Rikyū, quoted this poem by Fujiwara Ietaka to define wabi:

Hana o nomi
To those who wait
Maturan hito ni
Only for flowers
Yamazato no
Show them a spring
Yukima no kusa mo
Of grass amid the snow
Haru o misebaya
In a mountain village.\(^9\)

As much of a celebrity among tea practitioners as any movie star in the wider world, this piece is attributed to Japan’s most famous potter, Raku Chōjirō (?–1589), whose tea bowls most fully embody a revolution in Japanese taste. Tea drinking originally centred around the appreciation of refined Chinese masterworks. Beginning in the late 15th century, a succession of merchant-class tea masters developed the more rustic style of tea called wabicha. They admired the crude beauty of handcrafted, crude Japanese objects and incorporated such utensils—some of which were found objects, repurposed from other uses—into their teas. This bowl (15) takes its


\(^9\) Ibid., pp. 390–391.
poetic name from the jolly, rotund female deity Otadukus, also known as Otogoze. It is thought that the bowl’s voluptuous shape inspired the name.

In the Hosokawa family history, _Menkō shūroku_, there is a record of the art objects and tea utensils owned by Hosokawa Sansai entitled the “Oiemeibutsu no taigai,” which mentions it by name and states that it was loved by Sansai, who had Chōjirō fire this bowl for him.¹⁰

Not much is known about Raku Chōjirō, but it is believed that he began his career as a roof tile maker, and his legendary biography associates him with Japan’s famous tea master Sen Rikyū.¹¹ Raku bowls are hand built, then sculpted and trimmed with a knife or spatula, resulting in a distinctly individual form. In early Raku wares such as this, the raw clay was coated with a lead glaze and fired in a small-scale kiln. The current head of the family, Raku Kichizaemon XV, is innovating on his family’s storied tradition by creating abstract scenes in multiple colours on his tea bowls.

“Raku” carries multiple meanings. It is the name of one of Japan’s most prestigious artistic families, founded by the artist who made this tea bowl; and it describes tea bowls fired in small kilns by generations of the Raku family. Born in 1949, Raku Kichizaemon is the fifteenth-generation head of this artistic lineage. Potters around the world today use “raku” to describe a type of low-temperature firing that was inspired by Japanese Raku but which has morphed into something completely different, untethered to Japanese tradition.

Hosokawa Tadatoshi (1586–1641) was born to Tadaoki and Lady Gracia. In 1620, Tadatoshi became the heir to Tadaoki’s Kokura Castle and Buzen domain in northern Kyushu. His father passed down the family leadership to him in 1632; that same year, Ieyasu, the founding Tokugawa shogun, removed Katō Hidetada from the lordship of the Higo domain and appointed Tadatoshi to replace him. Higo was then among the three largest domains in Japan.

The Hosokawa were strangers in their new domain, and Higo was notoriously hard on strangers. But Tadatoshi—a highly cultured man who practiced the Way of Tea, performed Noh theatre, and played music—turned out also to be a careful and compassionate lord; he won the people’s trust, and his administrative ability earned him the shogun’s trust as well.

With Tadatoshi, the Hosokawa became top-level administrators of important holdings. The family’s glory would continue until 1868, when the feudal Bakuhan po-
17  Samurai man's formal vest and trousers for samurai men (kamishimo) with miniature pattern and nine-planet crests
Worn by Hosokawa Tadatoshi (1586–1641)
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 17th century
Ramie tabby with stenciled paste-resist dyeing (komon katazome)
Length 67.5 cm x width 62 (jacket), length 96.5 cm x width 36.4 cm (trouser)
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 6964

18  Military helmet with purple lacing and decoration in the form of a headband
Worn by Hosokawa Tadatoshi (1586–1641)
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 17th century
Iron, paper, lacquer, braided silk
Height 34 cm x width 17.5 cm x diameter 21 cm; weight 2.3 kg
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 4134

As in this example, kamishimo were commonly made from finely woven ramie, a crisp plant fibre resembling the flax used to make linen. The cloth was then stencil-resist dyed in indigo with an intricate komon (“miniature pattern”) diaper, leaving space for the Hosokawa family crests adorning the front of each shoulder and the centre

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11 The traditional history is recounted on the Raku family website: “Chojiro is thought to have been a son of Ameya of Chinese origin. He founded Raku ware under the guidance of Sen no Rikyu who established chanoyu, the tea ceremony, exclusively making red and black tea bowls for the tea ceremony.” (http://www.raku-yaki.or.jp/reki dai/ r1-e.html) However, some scholars, such as Morgan Pitelka, Handmade Culture: Raku Pottery, Patrons, and Tea Practitioners in Japan, Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005, pp. 17–30.
14 In an essay, the Confucianist Dazai Shundai (1680–1747) noted that “men’s kataginu in the past were made of ramie cloth 8 sun (30.5 cm, or 11.9 in.) in width, but since the Jōkyō (1684–1687) or Genroku (1688–1703) eras, they have extended to widths of 1 shaku (37.9 cm or 14.9 in.),” quoted in Maruyama (1994), p. 61. The width of each panel in this Hosokawa family kataginu is 31.7 cm, excluding the central hem allowance.
of the back. The type of komon used could also indicate rank or family.

For the military leaders of the Warring States era (late 15th through 16th centuries), the battlefield was a stage. One of their major concerns was how to stand out among tens of thousands of enemies and allies. Distinctive helmets were among the methods developed to awe the enemy and identify oneself to friendly troops. These helmets bore a variety of crests, including Buddhist and Shinto deities, animals and plants, fish and shellfish, as well as inanimate objects. Unconventional headgear (kawari kabuto) became very popular among military leaders around the Keichō era (1596–1615) at the end of the Momoyama period.

This example (18), with papier-mâché attachments (harikake kabuto), was worn by the third generation Hosokawa lord, Tadatoshi. Only the bowl is made of (thin) iron plate; the headband (hachimaki) decoration comprises layers of Japanese paper formed in the shape of a knotted cloth. The whole helmet was lacquered and coated with silver leaf, which has oxidised to a uniquely beautiful patina.

Tadatoshi was lord and patron to the famous swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (1584–1645), who served as sword instructor to the Hosokawa family. Miyamoto Musashi was also a renowned painter; this pair of screens (19)—said to have been commissioned by Tadatoshi—suggest that Musashi’s art was influenced by Kainō Yūshō’s late 16th century sliding-door panels at Reitōin and Zenkyoan, sub-temples of Keiminji in Kyoto. Kainō Yūshō (1533–1615) was an earlier warrior-turned-painter. The screen at right depicts a group of dark-feathered geese gathering to rest or to feed; in the left-hand screen white geese are already at rest on the ground. Executed decisively, the scenes are filled with energy and movement, evoking Musashi’s adroit swordsmanship.

The martial artist Miyamoto Musashi founded and perfected the Niten Ichi school of swordsmanship, in which a long and a short sword are used together. These wooden swords (20) are a Niten Ichi practice set attributed to Musashi himself. Carved from oak, both swords have oval-section handles and hexagonal “blades”. They are a little thicker than the practice swords used for training by the Niten Ichi school today.

These wooden swords have been handed down in the Matsui family, secretariat elders to the Hosokawa lords of
21  
(Far left) Portrait of Hosokawa Shigekata (1720–1785)  
By Takehara Harumichi, inscription by Shūzan Soki (1754–1807)  
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 1786  
Hanging scroll, ink and colours on silk  
93.5 x 49.3 cm (image); 179.3 x 72.8 cm (overall)  
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 3314

22  
(Left) Military banner with nine planet family crest  
Used by Hosokawa Shigekata (1720–1785)  
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), 18th century  
Dyed silk  
387 x 143 cm  
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 4224
Higo for many generations. Miyamoto Musashi was invited to Kumamoto in 1690 by the lord Hosokawa Tadatooshi; this invitation took place through the offices of Matsui Okinaga, house elder of the Higo domain. Okinaga’s adopted son Matsui Yoriyuki (1617–1666, sixth son of Hosokawa Tadaoki, adopted by Okinaga at the age of five) was a pupil of Musashi in the martial arts and supported Musashi in his sickly later years.

After Musashi’s death, Yoriyuki hired two of the old warrior’s disciples to work for the Matsui family. Subsequently many members of the family studied in the Nitenn Ichin school, whose practice flourished in the military training grounds of the Matsui clan’s castle at Yatsushiro, Higo province (now in Kumamoto prefecture). This is how wooden swords, saddles, and paintings made by Miyamoto Musashi came to be heirlooms of the Matsui family.

Objects associated with the eighth generation lord Hosokawa Shigejka (1720–1785) include this portrait (21) and a banner. To sit for his portrait may have made Shigejka impatient; noted for his energy and industry, he would probably have preferred to be out studying or painting the insects, marine animals, or botanical subjects that fascinated him. Indeed, he possessed encyclopedic knowledge on those subjects. As with many portraits of the Hosokawa lords, he is seated on a tatami and dressed in a formal, aristocratic robe. He holds a shaku, a wooden ceremonial sceptre, and wears a ceremonial tachi sword slung from his belt. His black hat is embellished with oikake, fan-like decorations, over the ears. This is regalia of a type worn by bodyguards in the imperial court’s army, suggesting that his tastes tended to the plain and simple. The portrait is inscribed by Shūzan Sōki, the 416th head abbot of Daitokuji temple in Kyoto.

Shigejka is remembered as a visionary social reformer. When he became lord of Kumamoto (Higo), in 1747, he inherited a financial mess that had been growing for years. His domain was deeply in debt; the Osaka bankers refused to lend any more money (unsurprisingly, as there was no concrete policy of repaying loans). Shigejka emphasised that while his samurai might be poor, honour obliged them to endure hardship and behave as role models for the people. To reform their attitude and develop good character, he built a school, called Jishukan. He also built a teaching hospital whose services were open to samurai and commoners alike (if they could afford treatment). This school is the ancestor of today’s Kumamoto Medical University.

Shigejka’s administration of justice was equally enlightened. The law as he found it punished major crimes with death and lesser offenses with exile; he created Japan’s first modern penal system, modelled in part on Chinese civil law. Long before the concept emerged in the West, his system was designed to be corrective; penalties were codified, and convicted criminals were imprisoned for specified periods. While serving their time they were taught to be productive, and money they earned as prisoners was invested and returned to them upon their release.

Hosokawa Shigejka’s banner (22) bears the nine-planet family crest in black on a white background. This design was adopted after Hosokawa Tadaoki (1563–1645) was rewarded with a new fiefdom for his military service in the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) and moved his domain from Tango (now northern Kyoto prefecture) to Buzen province (now eastern Fukuoka and northern Oita prefectures).

A banner (nobori), also called a signal flag (noboribata) or looped flag (chitsukebata), is a type of military standard. It is taller than it is wide and has loops along one side and the top for the vertical staff and horizontal side arm to pass through. The nobori derives from the so-called floating banner (nagarebata), which hung from a horizontal arm attached to the vertical staff by a cord, allowing the cloth to hang freely. Nobori were first used to distinguish allies from opponents in the mid-Muromachi period, when battles were fought between groups of foot soldiers. Insignia —perhaps a family crest, the name of a Buddhist or Shinto deity, or an inspiring slogan—typically appeared in black, crimson, gold, or silver on a background of white, red, or dark blue.

Combat was originally the job of the samurai; but the daimyo were battle commanders who were also responsible for ruling their domains in peace as in wartime. For that reason, even in the absence of war, daimyo equipped themselves with weaponry and military equipment, including banners.

After Shigejka’s son Harutoshi died in 1787, Hosokawa Narishige (1759–1836) took command of the clan as its tenth-generation lord. During his term he instigated a number of measures to improve the clan finances and to help with suffering caused by the famines plaguing the
country. Narishige was a cultured daimyo who was especially interested in the Noh theatre. Himself an accomplished painter, he was also an enthusiastic collector of Chinese paintings. Most of the Chinese paintings currently in the Eisei-Bunko Museum were collected by this individual.

This sleeveless jinbōri surcoat (23) was worn by Narishige and probably dates to the second half of the 18th century. It is made from imported wool with a red and white stripe accented with gold-patterned silk. The horizontal bands are not dyed or woven into the cloth; instead, they were made by placing wide strips of red and white felted wool side by side and stitching them together with meticulous, invisible stitches to create the effect of one continuous fabric. Such a striped wool textile would have seemed exotic to contemporary Japanese not only for its extravagance (wool was not produced in Japan) but also for the clean lines of its stripes—aesthetically different from the dyed, woven, or ikat-dyed horizontal bands of domestically produced luxury textiles (as in the Noh costume below).

The body of this surcoat has a standing collar and widely flaring, A-line body—reminiscent of a Portuguese mantle—providing mobility when worn over a suit of armour. The front edges can be fastened with buttons and loops, or opened to reveal a wide, flaring lapel faced with luxurious patterned silk, with cherry blossoms in three sizes over a background of stylised waves (seigaïha).

A suit of armour (24) worn by Narishige at first glance resembles medieval dōmaru-type armour. However, it has a clamshell cuirass divided into front and back by hinges on the left side; this places it in the category of tōsei gusoku. Tōsei gusoku-type armour was designed to adapt to changes in methods of warfare, such as mass combat and the use of firearms, which had taken place since the Warring States period (late 15th and 16th centuries). In addition to its helmet and shoulder guards, it provided protection for the rest of the body—including jaw guards, gauntlets, and greaves—to shield against spears and other projectiles. Hinges made the cuirass easier to put on and take off. This sort of jumbling of different forms is frequently seen in armour of the mid and late Edo period (18th and 19th centuries), when peace reigned and armour fashions frequently favoured appearance over function.

The mail, or kusari, of the gauntlets and cuisses (thigh armour) is a variety of what was called nanban (“southern barbarian”) mail, modelled after the chain mail of European armour. The type seen here, beautifully constructed of finely woven rings, is known as double-link mail (yaekusari).

Narishige was an ardent student of the Noh theatre, even publishing his own Noh libretto and a book of his own Noh chants. The Hosokawa collection contains many Edo period Noh and Kyōgen costumes and masks, testament to the continuing patronage of Noh performance over the centuries. The exhibition includes sixteen works in this genre, two of which are included here.

Noh costumes fall into a range of categories. The karaori, atsuitsu, nuihaku, and surihaku are four costume types that are shaped after the kimono-like kosode robe. Originally worn as an underlayer, the kosode had become a standard outer garment for elite Japanese society by the late Muromachi and Momoyama periods. Among the costumes, the karaori is the only one normally worn as the outermost garment (uwagi). The incorporation of such full-length robes into the Noh theatre probably stemmed from wealthy patrons’ practice of giving luxury kosode to favourite actors as rewards for outstanding performances.

Karaori robes—used primarily for women’s roles—can be further categorised as “coloured” (iōiri) or “colourless” (ironashi) depending on whether or not they display the safflower-dyed colour red (beni), which is associated with young, unmarried women. With its auspicious designs of pine trees, chrysanthemum, lattices covered with winding grape vines (traditionally identified as paulownia within the Hosokawa collection, due to an inscription on its original paper wrapper), and bush clover over an underpattern of mist-like horizontal gold lines, this robe (25) is a “colourless” karaori, suitable for the role of an older woman or, possibly, an aristocratic man.
Noh costume, *karaori* robe with alternating colour blocks and design of pine, chrysanthemum, paulownia, and bush clover
Japan, Edo period (1615–1868), approx. 1800–1839
Silk twill weave with silk and gilded paper supplementary weft patterning
149 x 150 cm
Eisei-Bunko Museum, 2417

The striking ochre and pale blue checkered background was created by tie-dyeing the warp to create alternating ochre and blue blocks; wefts of the same colour were then inserted into the respective sections. Ikat tie-dyeing in the vertical threads creates a delicate feathered effect at the upper and lower edges of each section. Careful alignment of contrasting colours when tailoring created the checkered effect. As is standard in *karaori*, all the motifs are woven: silk or gilded paper supplementary wefts were inserted by hand.

The daimyo collection of the Ii family, now housed in the Hikone Castle Museum, contains a *karaori* that is identical except for having been woven with different colours.19 Noh costume makers often used the same weaving pattern for more than one garment; by changing the colours, and sometimes the orientation, of each pattern block, they could create robes that were individually unique and visually distinctive.

The *kataginu* is worn most often in the Kyōgen theatre by the frequently appearing character of Tarō Kaja. The mishaps of this good-hearted but weak-willed manservant protagonist provide much of the comic-dramatic irony in Kyōgen plays. Though the types of costume worn to play particular roles in Kyōgen, including Tarō Kaja, are usually fixed, the actors themselves decide which specific garment to wear for a given performance. A costume may be chosen more for visual effect than for its symbolic or metaphorical relationship to the script; however, the costume’s bold, often freehand design can subtly enhance the comic or dramatic strength of the actor’s performance.

This *kataginu* (26) is dyed in freehand paste resist with small additional applications of ink and colours. A design of masts amid waves and interlocking hexagons (perhaps representing stylised gabions—large baskets holding rocks to prevent riverside erosion) appears on the garment’s upper back, and waterside reeds primarily in the lower part. These motifs would seem to conjure literary associations; however, their effectiveness on stage may have come more from the strong visual statement made by their organic simplicity.

This painting (27) by Gosedo Höryū (1827–1892), assisted by his student Hiraki Masatsugu (1859–1943), depicts the last Hosokawa daimyo of the Edo period, Hosokawa Yoshikuni (1835–1876). He is seated, dressed in a kimono and *hakoiri* jacket with the nine-planet family crest on his sleeve, his sword in his belt. This scroll reveals a major change in portraiture from the style in which his antecedents were depicted: the artist’s use of shading and perspective produced a much more realistic effect.

Yoshikuni’s strained expression also hints at a great change that had occurred, in his life and those of all
Japanese. The feudal system, in which the Hosokawa clan had played such an important role, had collapsed: the Meiji emperor assumed sole authority in 1868, and Japan became Imperial Japan.

The change took its toll on Yoshikuni. Never robust, he exhausted his strength in futile efforts to mediate between rival court and shogunal factions. The Hosokawa fiefdom became the province of Kumamoto, and Yoshikuni was appointed its first governor. In failing health, he resigned in 1870; retiring as head of the family at the same time, he passed both roles to his younger brother Morihisa. Yoshikuni died in 1876.

Many objects in the exhibition are associated with Yoshikuni, among them this suit of tōsei gusoku armour (28) in a style designed by an earlier luminary of the Hosokawa clan. Tōsei gusoku-type armour was developed in the late Muromachi period and early Momoyama period, when mass combat with guns and spears became the main mode of warfare. It protected the entire body while being light enough to enable quick and nimble movement.

Hosokawa Sansai (also known by his real name of Tadaoki) won more than fifty battles in his lifetime. At the Battle of Sekigahara, which established the Tokugawa regime of the Edo period, he wore a form of tōsei gusoku armour developed according to his own experience; in the Hosokawa clan this came to be known as the Sansai style (Sansai ryū). It is characterised by simplicity and practicality, yet has a refinement that reflects Sansai’s aesthetic sensibilities (he was an expert classicist and tea master). The typical Sansai ryū helmet is of the Etchū head-shaped (zanari) type—so named because Tadaoki’s former office as governor of Etchū—and normally has a crest of bundled tail feathers from wild birds. The body armour, as a rule, does not have shoulder guards (sode). The cuirass (dō) is either black or chestnut, with plain colours such as black or brown used in the lining as well.

The heads of the Hosokawa clan wore Sansai ryū armour for generation after generation; the Sansai style also spread widely among their vassals. Other daimyo families recognised its advantages and imitated it, so it became a major influence in the evolution of Japanese armour.

This suit of armour in the Sansai style was worn by the thirteenth-generation lord, Hosokawa Yoshikuni (1835–1876). The helmet’s enormous crest—over 120 cm high—is made of lacquered wood. Its powerful arc evokes an antelope’s horns but in fact represents plants and trees bending in the wind. The cuirass, tassets, gauntlets, and cuisses are covered with wrinkled leather. With its colourful left tasset, laced in red, this is a superb example of late Sansai-style armour.

Over his Sansai-style armour, Yoshikuni wore this eye-catching surcoat (29), with a white body accented by one red sleeve and a collar faced with opulent patterned silk in designs of Chinese-style dragons and clouds. With its boxy sleeves, four-panel body, and wide collar, it has a more Japanese-derived shape than the flared jinbaori worn by Narishige. The collar folds back on itself to create a decorative lapel resembling warrior coats (diyuku) made from luxury textiles and worn in the 16th and early 17th centuries by Japan’s military rulers and highest-ranking lords. Made to be worn over armour, this jinbaori has a wide construction with slightly flaring sides.

The single red sleeve on an undecorated white coat reflects the aesthetics of some “Sansai style” suits of tōsei gusoku armour, such as that shown above. There, a single red-laced tassel serves as a striking accent on a sober suit of brown leather-covered lames laced with dark blue silk cords. This garment reflects the continuity of particular clan-associated aesthetics preserved from generation to generation by the Hosokawa daimyo, even into the end of the Edo period.

This banner (30), the property of Hosokawa Yoshikuni, has two horizontal bands (hikiryō) over the nine-planet (kūyō) Hosokawa crest in black on a white background.

Inventories of the military equipment used by Hosokawa Tadaoki in the battle of Sekigahara (1600) tell us that between 1582 and Tadaoki’s domain transfer in 1600, the Hosokawa used a black banner with a design of diagonal white bands across the top corner. After moving to Buzen province (now eastern Fukuoka and northern Oita prefectures), the family began using a banner with the family crest in black on white, as in this example.

Later, during the Shimabara Rebellion of 1637–1638, Hosokawa banners featured various designs, including the nine-planet crest in dark blue on white; the crest over horizontal bands in white on dark blue; and the crest over horizontal dark blue bands on white.

According to the official Hosokawa family history Menkō shārokka, after the Shimabara Rebellion, Hosokawa Tadatoshi (1586–1641) standardised the clan’s banner to have horizontal bands over the nine-planet crest in black on a white background, as in this example. Even then the Hosokawa family banners varied subtly, depending on the presence or absence of the bands.

A hitatare in the Hosokawa collection (31) is believed to have been worn by Yoshikuni in his young adulthood. The original paper wrapping in which this outfit is still stored has an ink inscription telling us that it was worn on two occasions: first for an official visit to the shogun’s Edo cas-
tle on the second day of the first month of 1853 (Kaei 6), and for a visit to the shogun’s family temple of Kan’ei-ji in the Ueno district of Edo on the fourteenth day of the same month and year. Because we know that Hosokawa Narimori (1806–1860), the head of the family at the time, was then in Kumamoto for the New Year, this outfit is thought to have been worn by his nineteen-year-old son Yoshikuki, who was later renamed Yoshikuni when he became the thirteenth-generation Hosokawa daimyo. Yoshikuni had been appointed to fourth-rank lower chamberlain in 1851, and he had his coming-of-age-ceremony (genpuku) in the twelfth month of the following year, one month before he would have worn this hitatare.\(^{16}\)

A costume closely associated with the upper echelons of the warrior class, the hitatare comprises a jacket (ucagi) with double-panel sleeves and a V-neckline—in contrast to the round neck of Chinese-influenced aristocratic garments—and trousers (hakama). Its predecessor was worn by commoners and low-ranking samurai of the Heian period (794–1185); remnants of those practical roots can be found in the ties at the chest (originally to keep the front flaps from coming undone) and the draw cords through the ends of the sleeves (to facilitate movement), though in this garment they are essentially decorative. In the medieval age, the costume evolved into everyday wear for high-ranking members of the warrior class as well as for the aristocracy, who wore an unlined version. Under the Tokugawa shogunate, in the Edo period, the hitatare was elevated to official ceremonial dress for daimyo with status of fourth-rank chamberlain (shii shijū) and above.\(^{17}\) When worn by a daimyo lord, it would be paired with a black hat of folded and heavily lacquered paper (ori eboshi), another marker of class and rank.

This costume is made from a specific type of stiff silk tabby (seigo), which uses different colours for the degummed silk warps and for the thicker raw-silk wefts. Its shade, described as red plum (kōbai), was woven from red warps and white wefts; the red safflower dye has now faded to yellow. (An ensemble’s colour indicated the rank of its wearer: only the shogun wore purple, only the top two Tokugawa daimyo families wore scarlet, and other top daimyo wore a variety of alternate colours.)\(^{18}\)

The current head of the Hosokawa family, Morihiro (born 1938), counts his lineage back eighteen generations to Fujitaka. Formerly a leading Japanese politician who rose to the rank of prime minister, he has retired from political life reinventing himself as an accomplished ceramic artist (32) and calligrapher. The exhibition includes a number of examples of his work. His life path exemplifies the Hosokawa family’s age-old pursuit of both political leadership and the arts.

\(^{16}\) Entry on this work by Yamazaki Setsu, in Yatsushiro Shiritsu Haku butsukan Mirai no Mori Myōjī in and Kitakyo Shū Shiritsu Inochi no Tabi Hakubutsukan (ed.), Daimyō Hosokawa ke: Bun to bu no kiseki, Yatsushiro: Yatsushiro Shiritsu Hakubutsukan Mirai no Mori Myōjī in and Kitakyo Shū Shiritsu Inochi no Tabi Hakubutsukan, 2003, p. 44. See also Hinomishigaku, “Fukushoku”, Nihon no bijutsu 6, no. 26, Tokyo: Shibundo, 1968.
