Kimono

Place of origin: Japan (made)
Date: early 19th century (made)
Artist/Maker: Unknown
Materials and Techniques: Crepe silk with paste-resist decoration (chaya-zome), stencilled imitation tie-dye (kata kanoko) and embroidery in silk and metallic threads
Museum number: FE.12-1983
Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description
This kimono would have been worn by a woman of the samurai class, the ruling military elite of Japan during the Edo period (1615-1868). The design has been created using a paste-resist method called chaya-zome, which involves the extensive coverage of the fabric with rice paste, leaving only small areas of design to create the pattern when the cloth is dyed. This highly skilled and expensive technique, which results in an indigo blue design on a white ground, was reserved for the summer kimono of high ranking samurai women. Here the technique has been combined with a stencil-dyeing technique called kata kanoko and embroidery in silk and metallic threads.

Descriptive line
Kimono, White silk crêpe with embroidered and resist-dyed designs, Japan, Edo period, early 19th century

Physical description
Katabira with swinging sleeves for summer wear made from white silk crêpe (chirimen). The all-over design consists of rocks and water with clouds above, bamboo, pine, chrysanthemums and plum blossoms. There is a screen fan at the bottom front and a rustic pavilion at the centre front. The technique of decoration is based on the chaya-zome or chaya-tsui method whereby the entire background is resisted against the dye leaving the motifs blue against the white ground. The dyed designs have been enhanced with satin stitch embroidery in black, white, purple, orange and two shades of green, and also with gold laid and couched work. There is also stencilled imitation tie-dye in dark red. The garment is lined throughout with thin scarlet plain weave silk and there is a small wadded hem. Alterations have been made to the top part of the kimono. There is a seam at chest level which runs right round the garment proper as well as the lining. There is also a seam across the front of each of the sleeves at a slightly higher level than the chest seam. Two vertical inserts have been seamed into the back of the garment on either side of the usual back seam, and extended from the horizontal chest seam up to the collar band.

Dimensions
Length: 141 cm neck to hem (excluding collar), Width: 125 cm across the shoulders, Length: 153 cm down back seam (including collar)

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Object history note
Purchased. Registered File number 1983/587.

Historical context note
See Nishimura H., Mailey, J., & Hayes, J., Tagasode: Whose sleeves...: Kimono from the Kanebo Collection, New York: Japan Society, 1976
NAL Bibliographic Reference No.: 78.N. Plate 35 for a similar example made in the more usual ramie and plate 15 for an earlier example made from silk crêpe.

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O119976/kimono-unknown/