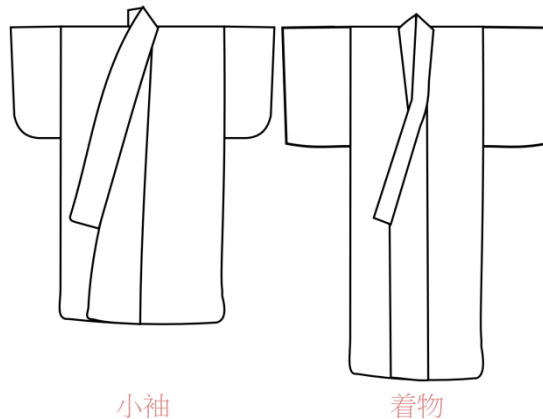


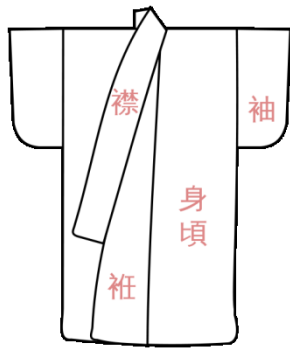
# KOSODE CONSTRUCTION | CLASS OUTLINE

☒ **Kosode (小袖)** – An untailed robe worn by both men and women in Japan.

- What was it made of?
  - Early periods
    - Silks from China
    - Asa fabrics
      - Plant fibers: hemp, linen, flax, jute
      - Tree bark (Ainu)
  - Nanban trade period (1543-1614)
    - Spanish – 1587
    - Dutch - 1609
    - Cotton & Wool
- How was it worn?
  - Lined vs. Unlined
  - Did weather change its usage?
  - Layering
  - Sleeve length
- When was it worn?
  - Heian period (794 to 1185)
    - Upper class undergarment
    - Commoner everyday garment
  - Kamakura period (1185–1333)
    - Emerged as a primary garment for upper class
  - Muromachi-Ashikaga period (1337-1573)
    - Preferred garment of choice for all classes
  - Azuchi-Momoyama period (1573-1603)
    - Evolution of kosode to kimono (Edo period | 1603-1868)



*Comparison of Kosode (left) and Kimono (right)*



Terms of Kosode:

- 襟 *eri* - collar
- 身頃 *migoro* - body panels
- 袖 *sode* - sleeves
- 衽 *okumi* - overlap panels

## Pattern Construction

*Basis for kosode pattern design and instructions*

### Tokyo National Museum Artifact I-4069

Kosode – “Pawlonia & Bamboo”

Muromachi period/16th century

- Kosode Length 129.8cm
- Yuki 60.0cm
- Sleeve W22.0cm
- Sleeve L50.3cm
- Neck W15.0cm



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Hanachiru. Kosode-parts.svg. Digital image. Wikipedia Commons. Wikipedia, 10 June 2010. Web. <<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/21/Kosode-parts.svg>>.

Hanachiru. Kosode-Kimono.svg. Digital image. Wikipedia Commons. Wikipedia, 12 June 2010. Web. <<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kosode-Kimono.svg>>.

Kosode of Paulownia and Bamboo. Digital image. Tokyo National Museum. Tokyo National Museum, n.d. Web. <[http://www.tnm.jp/modules/r\\_collection/index.php?controller=dtl\\_img&size=L&colid=14069&t=>](http://www.tnm.jp/modules/r_collection/index.php?controller=dtl_img&size=L&colid=14069&t=>)>.

# KOSODE CONSTRUCTION | PATTERN INSTRUCTIONS

This pattern is designed to create a simple, floor-length kosode with a short, closed sleeve. It's intended to fit the wearer aesthetically correct. Design is based conceptually on existing documentation and historical artifacts. With a few alterations, this pattern can be used to create various styles of Japanese garments.

## PATTERN DIMENSIONS

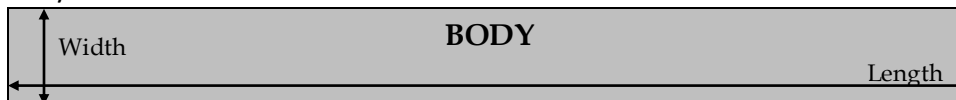
You'll need a few body measurements to create your pattern:

- Neck
- Torso (Largest measurement between your chest, waist or hip)
- Back Length (Base of neck to floor, without shoes)
- Bicep (Or largest part of arm)

Your pattern will develop through the following steps. If you have fractions in your measurements, to simplify this process, it's okay to round your numbers before completing the following equations.

*\*Seam allowance – Equations below will note whether to add seam allowance or not. Each person may have a different preference of seam allowance to use. I personally recommend a minimum of 5/8 inch seam allowance for this project, particularly for the sleeves. Less seam allowance will be difficult to work with, when making a narrow hem along the sleeve openings and cuff. An example of seam allowance to add, based off of the 5/8 inch allowance, will be illustrated at the end of the equation.*

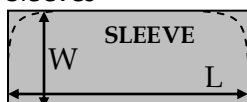
### Body Panels



Width:  $(\text{Torso} + 20'') \div 4$ ... add seam allowance (1.25" total or 0.625" on each side)

Length:  $(\text{Back Length} + 2'') \times 2$

### Sleeves



Width:  $2/3$  your Body Panel width  $[(\text{torso} + 20'') \div 4]$ ...add seam allowance (1.25" total)

Length:  $\text{Back Length} \div 2$ ...add seam allowance (1.25" total)

*\*To add curved corners: you can free-hand your shape onto the fabric with fabric chalk/pencil/marker, or you can use a stencil to trace the curve shape onto the fabric, like the edge of a round dinner plate.*

### Collar



Width: 12" ...add seam allowance (1.25" total)

Length: Same as Body Panel

*\*The collar pattern piece will be longer than needed for this pattern. You will eventually cut away excess or fold the excess into your collar hem. The extra length may come in handy when making different styles of Japanese garments, using this pattern as a base.*

## Overlay



Width:  $\frac{1}{2}$  of your Body Panel width  $[(\text{Torso} + 20'') \div 4]$ ...add seam allowance (1.25")

Length: Back Length + 2"

## DRAFT LAYOUT

Now that you have your dimensions, it's best to sketch your pattern layout on paper before marking your fabric. You may also want to create a set of paper pattern pieces, depending on how comfortable you are with working on fabric. Drawing your layout will also help determine how much material your custom pattern will use. Stripes and simple plaids are common in Japanese garments. If you intend to use a fabric with a print, keep in mind that you may need extra material in order to layout your pattern pieces so that the print lines-up correctly. Also consider, when working with a print, what direction you want the print to go on your finished garment. What you choose, will determine how to layout your pattern pieces on the fabric. Just remember to go with the fabric grain and not the bias.

### Recommending fabrics:

Linen, Hemp or other plant fibers (common for all social classes)

Silk (common for wealthy social classes)

Wool & Cotton (available to wealthy social classes during the Nanban Trade Period, beginning in 1543)

### Fabric Width

Most commercial fabric is substantially wider than period Japanese fabrics. Looms during this time produced fabrics averaging between 14 and 18 inches wide. The narrow fabric width gives some insight into the way that kosode are pieced together. Most modern fabrics vary between 45 and 60 inches wide. The dimensions of your pattern pieces will achieve the same look, as if using a narrow fabric, but in reality you will most likely use a material that falls in the 45 to 60 inch wide category. The goal of your draft layout is to use the width of your fabric with as little waste as possible.

## LAYOUT

Your layout should include:

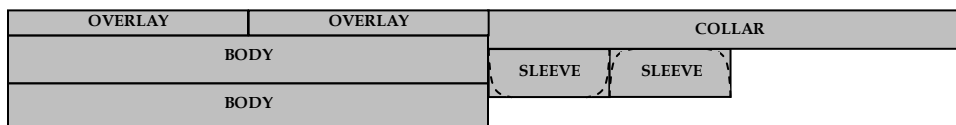
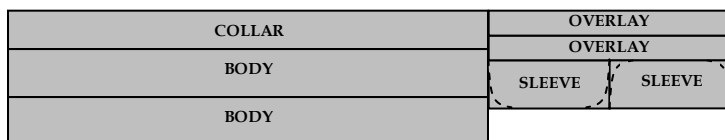
2 - Body Panels

2 - Sleeves

1 - Collar

2 - Overlay

As a starting point, I recommend beginning with the placement of your body panel pieces. With the two largest pieces in place, filling in around them with your other pattern pieces tends to be easier. Below are examples of what your draft layout may look like.





Once your draft layout is complete, mark your fabric accordingly and cut out your pieces. (If you have material that can be ripped on the grain, you may speed up this process by simply ripping the material instead of cutting. I do not suggest using this technique unless you are familiar with ripping material and are sure that the fabric you are working with is indeed capable of being ripped on the grain.)

*\*If you intend on making a kosode that is lined, you will need all pattern pieces EXCEPT the Collar piece cut out of your lining material.*

## LET'S SEW!

### Prep Fabric Pieces

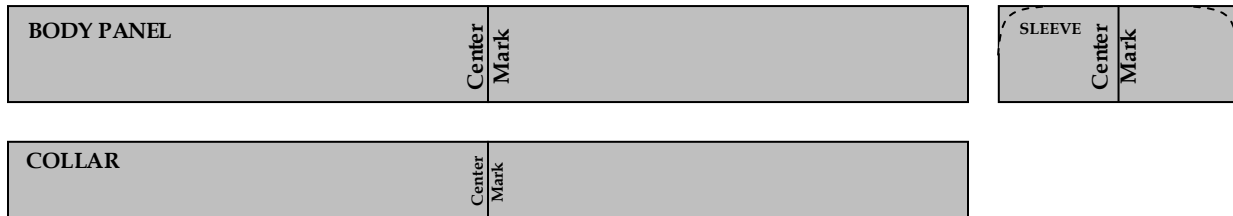
Before putting any pieces together, you need to do the following...

Finish any raw edges (optional) with a zigzag stitch or serger machine.

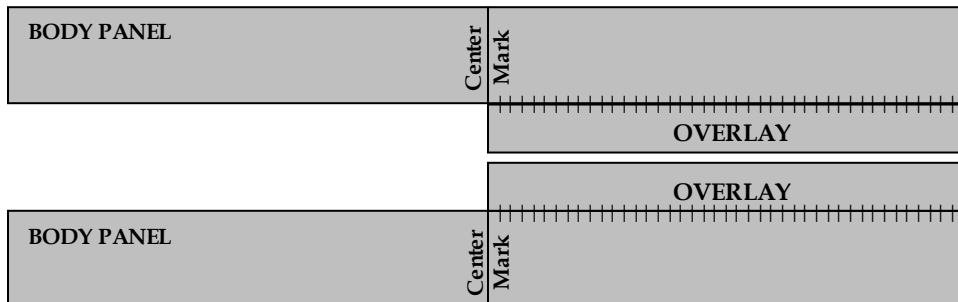
You'll need to know where the center points on the following pattern pieces are:

- Body
- Sleeves
- Collar

Use a fabric marker/chalk or straight pen to mark these points on your pieces, by folding these pieces in half and finding the middle. The example below illustrates where your marks should be placed. These markings will assist you later when aligning your body panels, sleeves and neck opening.

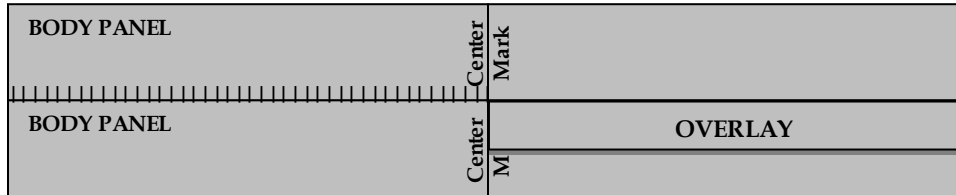


### Pin & Sew Overlays to Body Panels

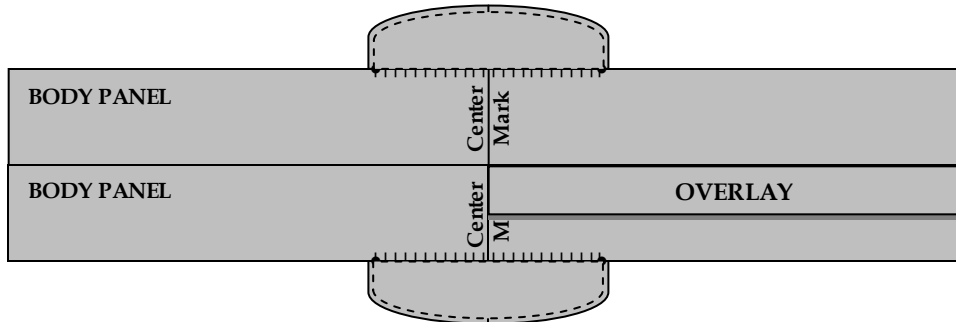


Reminder: You are creating a “left” and “right” body panel, so one overlay piece will need to attach to the opposite side when sewing the second overlay/body panel together. This is especially necessary when you are working with a print material or a fabric with a texture that has a visible direction.

Pin & Sew back-body-panel-left to back-body-panel-right, from end of the body panel to center mark.



Pin & Sew sleeves to body. Stop your stitch at the point where your seam allowance begins, along the outer edge of the sleeve.

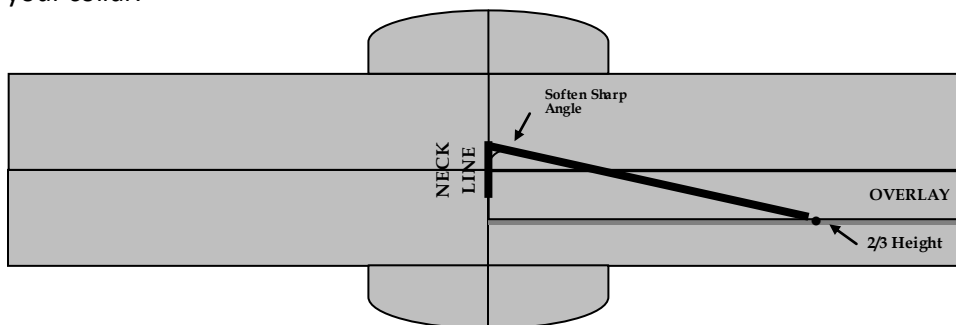


### Collar Prep

Along one edge, fold and press seam allowance towards wrong side of fabric.



Before attaching the collar, mark and cut the shape of your neckline/collar angle. The neck opening is determined by the diameter of your neck circumference. Neck measurement  $\div \pi$  (3.142) = neck diameter. With a straight edge, mark your neck diameter measurement across the center line of your body. Measure from the top of your overlay panel, and mark the edge about 2/3 of the way down. This is where your collar will end. Do this for both overlay panels. With a straight edge, draw a line that connects from the neckline to the mark on your overlay panel. This creates the outline of the collar. Soften the sharp angle by adding a subtle curve. Cut away the excess material and stay stitch along entire collar line. This will reinforce the material and keep it from stretching out of shape while attaching your collar.



### Hem Overlay Edge

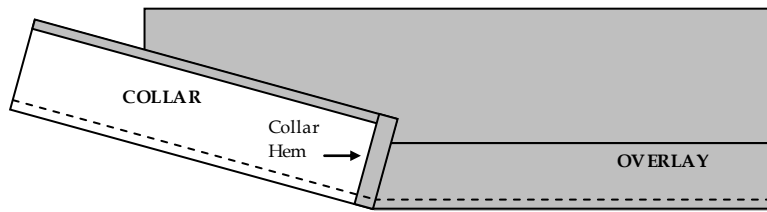
Before you attach the collar, finish the edge of the overlay panels with a narrow hem.



### Attaching Collar

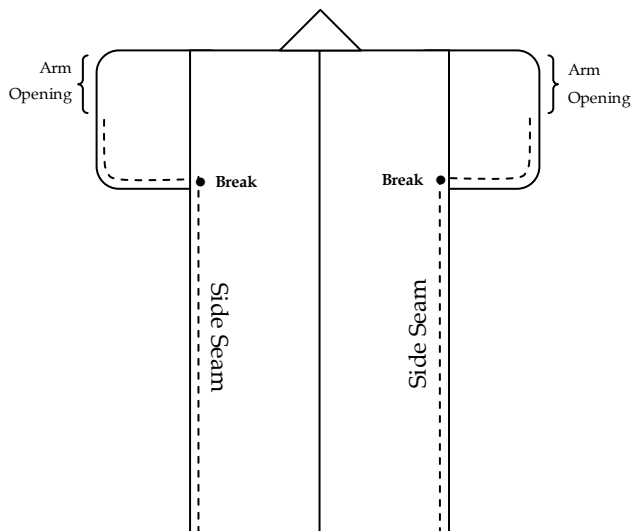
Sewing tip: use your scissors to clip the curve areas of your neckline. This will allow you to straighten out the curve temporarily, making it easier to pin & sew on your collar piece.

Pin collar to neckline. Start by matching the center of collar to the center seam line of body piece and continue until you reach the end of the overlay panels. Fold excess collar material in towards the wrong side of collar. If you have a lot of material left, you can cut away excess, leaving enough for the hem. Pin hem in place. Sew on collar.



Press your collar seam towards the wrong side of your collar. Then fold your collar in half, with wrong sides facing. Your collar seam should be tucked within your folded collar. To close the back side of your collar, use a blind/hidden stitch or you may consider using a sink stitch (stitch-in-the-ditch) with your sewing machine. You will also close the ends of your collar with a hidden stitch.

Fold your garment in half, with right sides together. Mark your arm opening, by using your Bicep measurement and divide by half. Use this number as the length of your arm opening. Pin & sew your side seams and sleeves closed. Break your stitch at the point that your side seam meets your sleeve seam. This will allow your seams to lay smoother, when your garment is right-side-out. Finish your arm openings with a narrow hem.



*\* This pattern is designed to make a basic, closed-sleeve kosode, most likely worn as an under kosode. If you wish to make longer sleeves, as an outer layer for example, anything longer than the sleeve measurement in these instructions would be left open at the armpit area. The unfinished seams would be finished with a narrow hem.*



### Kosode Hem

Take a moment to try on your garment and determine your preferred length of hem. A blind stitch (via machine or by hand) to finish your hem is preferred.

### Lining

If you intend to make a more formal outer garment, or need something warmer, then you may wish to line your kosode.

Cut the same pattern pieces out of your lining material, except for the collar piece. Sew lining pieces together the same as the outer fabric. Don't add collar to the outer material yet. Once lining is sewn and outer fabric is sewn, press the seams for the arm openings, overlay edge and bottom hem on lining and outer material. Sandwich together your lining and outer fabric, with wrong sides facing. Baste them together around the neckline/collar line. Attach your collar. Close all of your pressed seams with a hidden stitch.

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If you have any questions or comments regarding these instructions, you can contact me via email at [yamamura.kitsune@gmail.com](mailto:yamamura.kitsune@gmail.com)

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