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“Textile Treasures from Japan in the Collection of the MKB: Collectors of the Okinawa Textiles”

The Okinawa textile collection of the MKB comprises sewn objects as well as textile samples. A special feature of the museum’s textile collection is an emphasis on production methods, a direction that was established by Alfred Bühler (1900-1981), who served as the museum director from 1950 to 1964.

His frequent travels in the Pacific and to Southeast Asia (in 1931/32, 1935, 1949, 1955/56, and 1959) led to Bühler’s interest in local textile traditions and in their production methods. In addition to the wide-ranging textile collection of the Swiss textile expert Fritz Huber-Iklé (1877-1946), which arrived to the museum collection in 1947, Bühler focused on the systematic expansion of the collection. Resist dyeing techniques became one of his research topics, and, in a trip to Japan in 1964, he documented various *shibori* techniques.

Other collectors, in addition to Bühler und Iklé-Huber, were active in expanding the Japanese textile collection. Among these, by the far the most important was the Dutchman Jaap Langewis, who had lived several years in Japan, where he had documented various reserve dyeing techniques. During the 1950s and the 1960s, the MKB bought numerous textiles and textile equipment from Langewis. In addition, Ernst Hofmann and Carl Schuster should be mentioned.

The Okinawa collection of textiles at the includes apart from garments also *katagami*, *tenugui*, *furoshiki*, and numerous textile fragments relating of *bingata* and *kasuri* techniques. Apart from *bingata* textiles and stencils, textiles made of banana fiber (*Musa basjoo*) and agave fibers (*Agave americana L.*) should be mentioned.