

Tokyo  
JAPAN

# Discourses on Japanese lifestyle in early modern design: A turning point from Westernization to modern design

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*Takesei-isu*  
1948  
Junzo Sakakura



*Himo-isu*  
1950  
Riki Watanabe



*Teiza-isu*  
1960  
Cho Daisaku



*Spoke chair*  
1962  
Katsuhei Toyoguchi

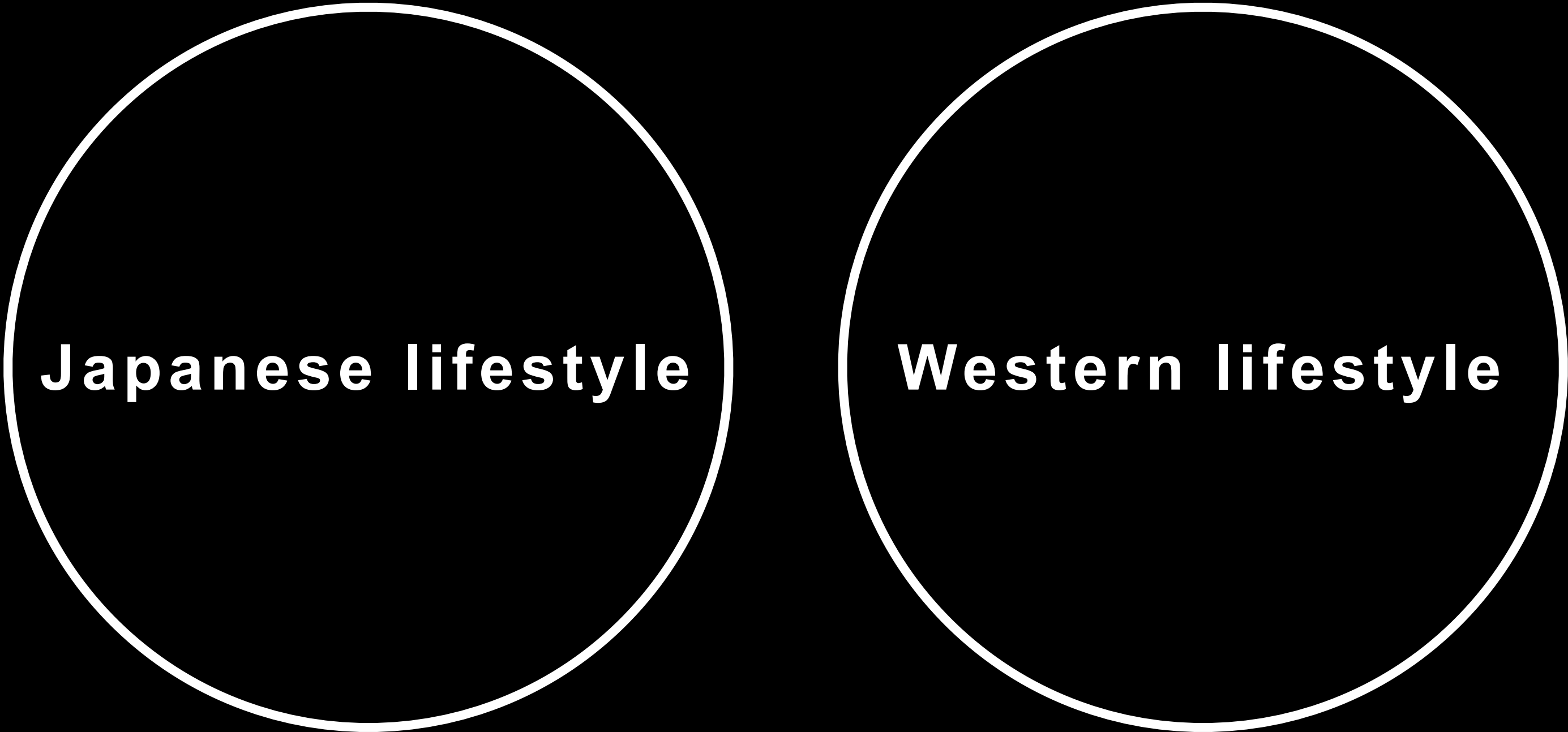


Japanese-style furniture had been designed to be placed in a room where we sit on *tatami* floor mats; therefore, it had a style clearly showing a tradition...If the designer who lives a modern life designs furniture with clear consciousness of **Japanese-style rooms**, it will be adequate for the **Japanese atmosphere** and useful. It will be **true modern Japanese-style furniture**

*Kagu to shitsunai* (Furniture and Interior, 1956)



**(1) How did the public establish definition of chairs outside the Westernization?**

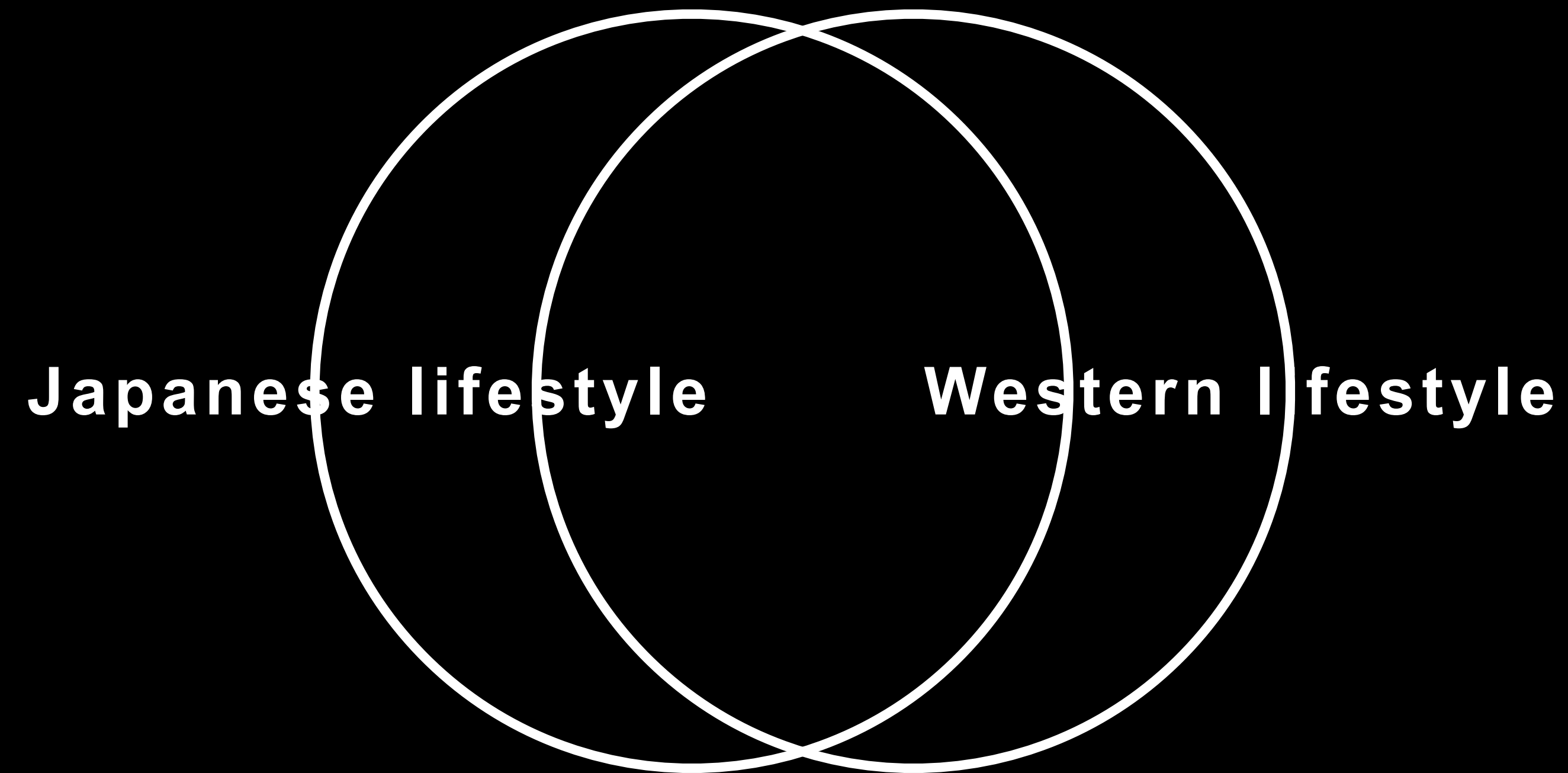


**Japanese lifestyle**

**Western lifestyle**



my idea regarding living room as  
a liberal place of recreation and  
relaxation **where we can sit both  
on the floor and in chairs freely**  
was basically successful.

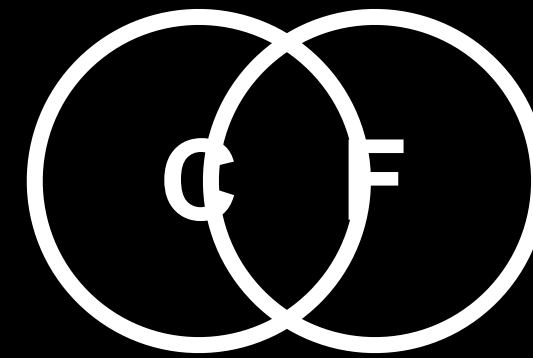
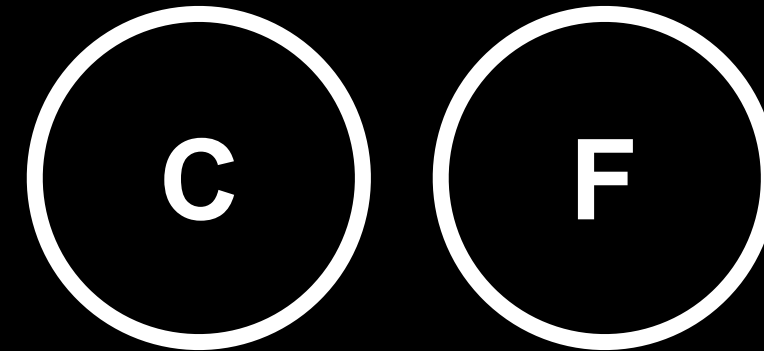
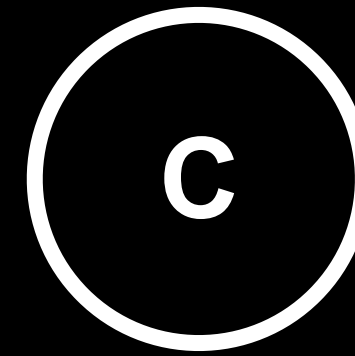


**(2) How did the relation between sitting on the floor and in chairs break out of the dichotomy, through ambivalence?**

Nishiyama classifies modern Japanese lifestyles into following three type.

- (1) Full Western style with sitting only in chairs.
- (2) Semi-Western style comprising a Japanese-style room with *tatami* and a Western style room with chairs.
- (3) A neutral lifestyle harmoniously including sitting on the floor and in chairs within a room.

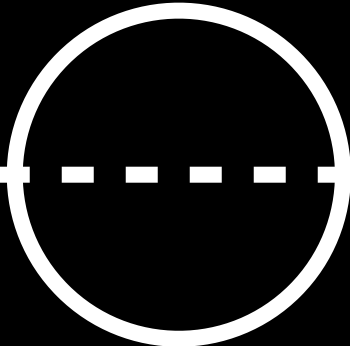
C:Chair-sitting  
F:Floor-sitting



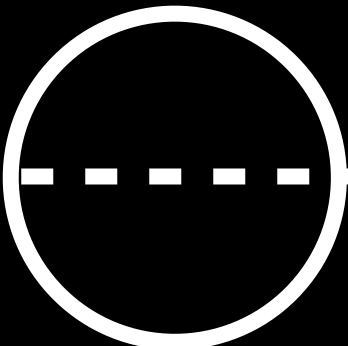
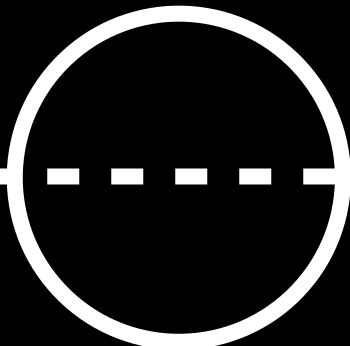
*Korekara no sumai* (Houses of the future, 1947)

Westernization

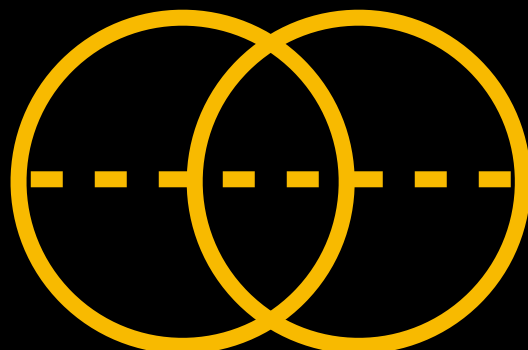
Western lifestyle



Semi-Western lifestyle



A neutral lifestyle



Normal seat



Low seat

椅子

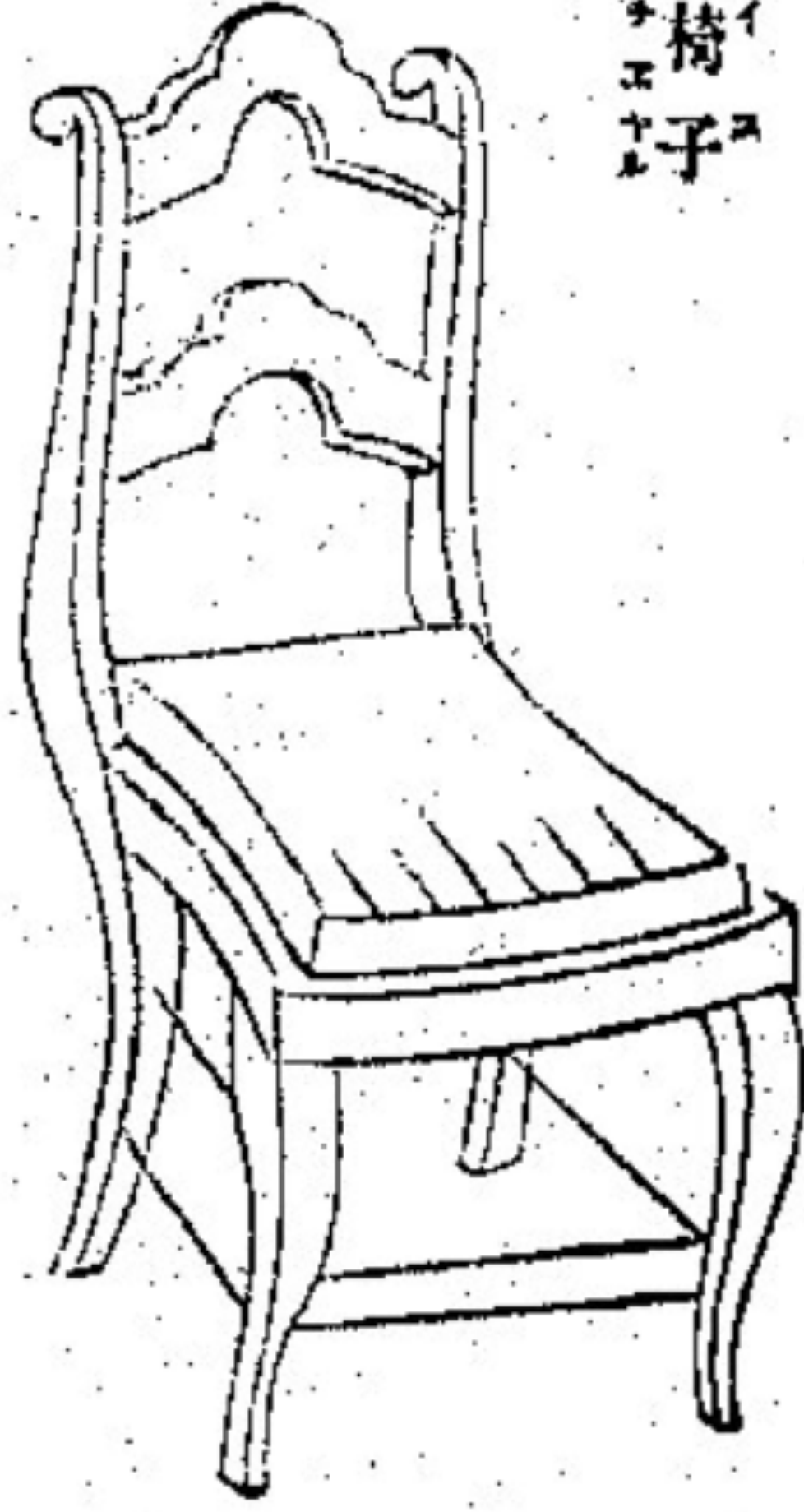
西洋の家には畳なく板張の上に  
粗末の所はござをしき上の間に  
はだんつう毛せん其外きれいな  
るをりものをして此上に椅子  
を並へてこれに腰を掛る風俗な  
り且又坐敷の内へ直にすはると  
なきゆへ往來を歩行せし沓の儘に  
入口にむしろの如きものなりてこれ  
物のよごるゝことなし日本へ渡來

The Western house has no *tatami*. He (a Westerner) puts rush mats on the wooden floor in the case of simple rooms, or puts beautiful carpets down in the case of fashionable homes. He puts chairs on carpets and sits in chairs.

*Seiyo Isyokuju* (Western Ways of Living: Food, Clothes, and Houses 1867)

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二十

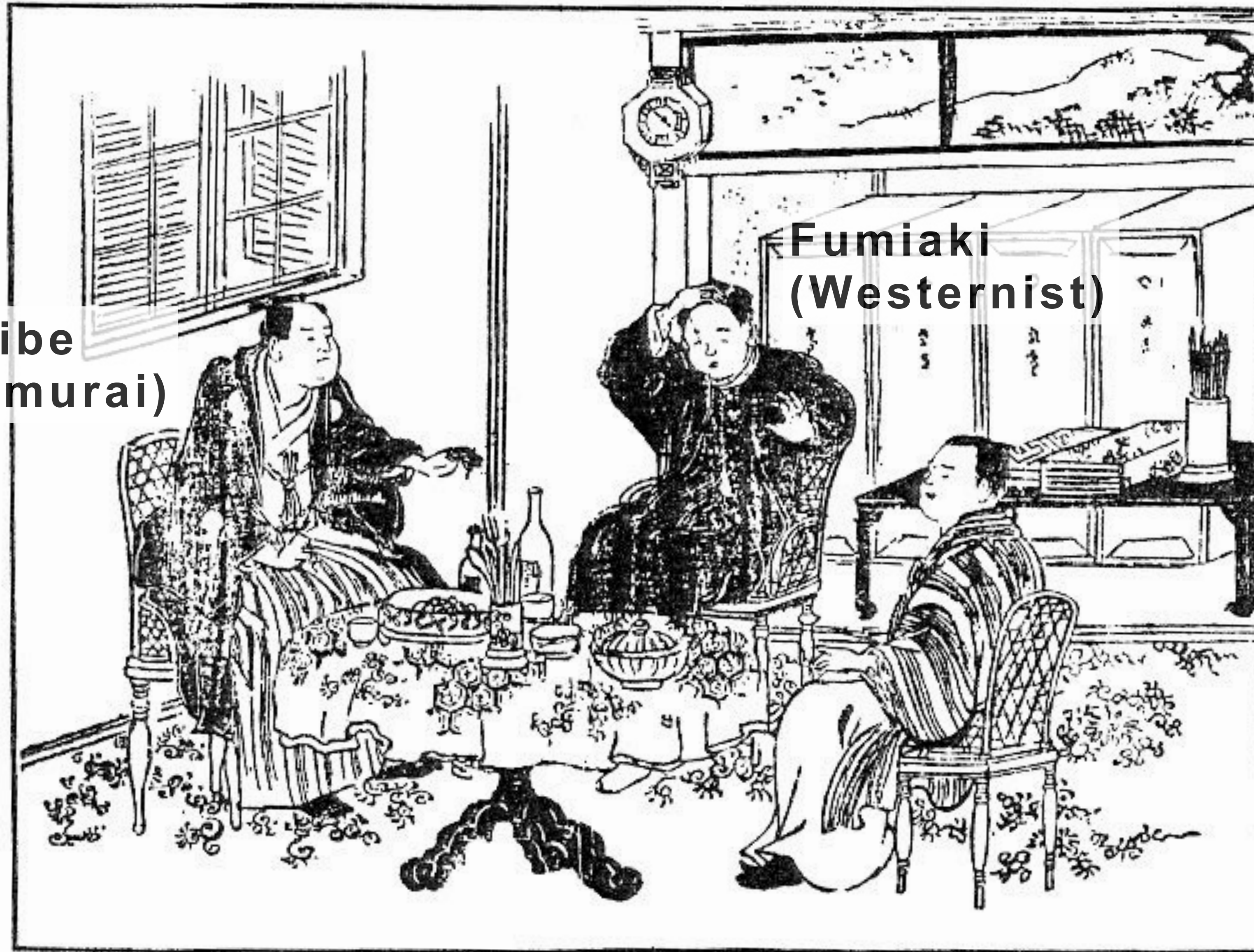
の儘にて内に遣入り素掃ひなし尤家の  
りてこれにて沓の泥をふきとるゆへ敷  
へ渡來せし西洋人等日本人の家に來る  
本人の目にて見れば土足にて失禮な  
風俗なるゆへ勘辨すべきことなり  
人寝なれば巾四尺餘もあり敷物は一

**We lay down where we walk, arrange dishes and  
change baby's nappy. That's nonsense.**

**S. Yokokawa's *Kaika no Iriguchi*  
(Entrance of Enlightenment, 1874)**

**Ishibe  
(Samurai)**

**Fumiaki  
(Westernist)**

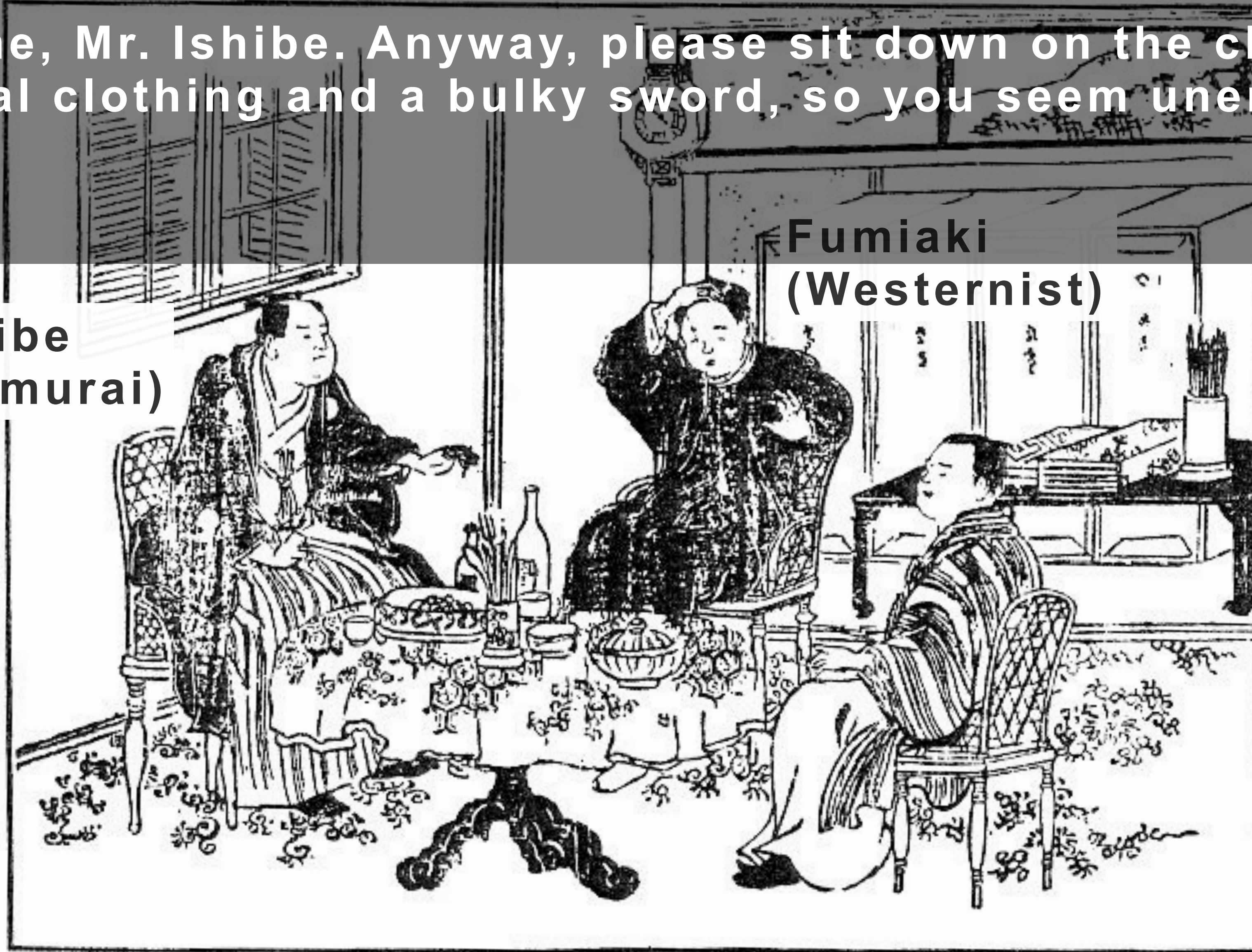


***Kaika no Hanashi* (Tales of Enlightenment, 1872)**

**‘Welcome, Mr. Ishibe. Anyway, please sit down on the chair. You have formal clothing and a bulky sword, so you seem unenlightened’**

**Ishibe  
(Samurai)**

**Fumiaki  
(Westernist)**

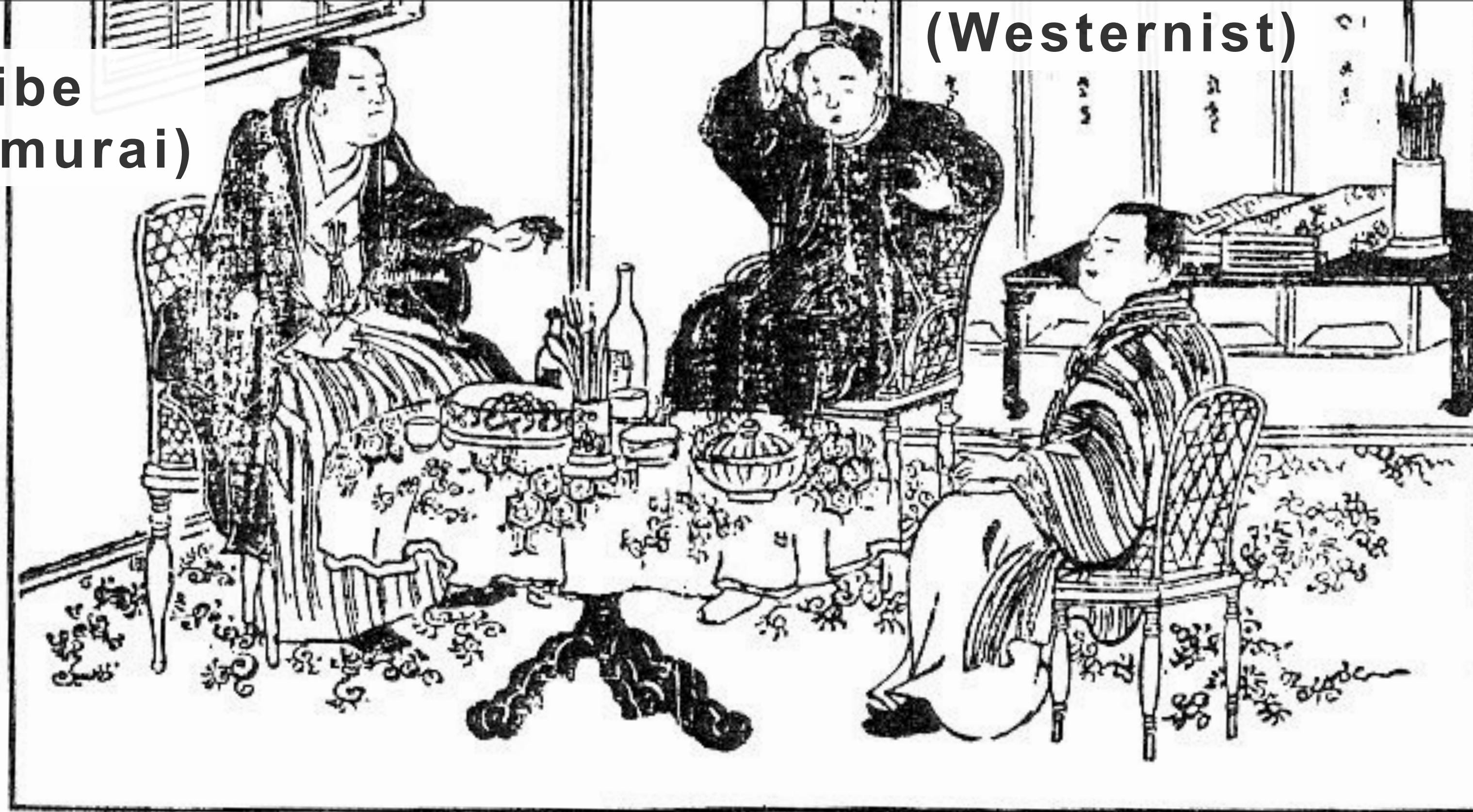


***Kaika no Hanashi* (Tales of Enlightenment, 1872)**

I have heard of your enlightenment for a long time. But first, enlightenment is not easy. Imitating the looks of a foreigner with Western clothing and a hat, having a beard and making your interior white are not regarded as enlightened.

**Ishibe  
(Samurai)**

**Fumiaki  
(Westernist)**

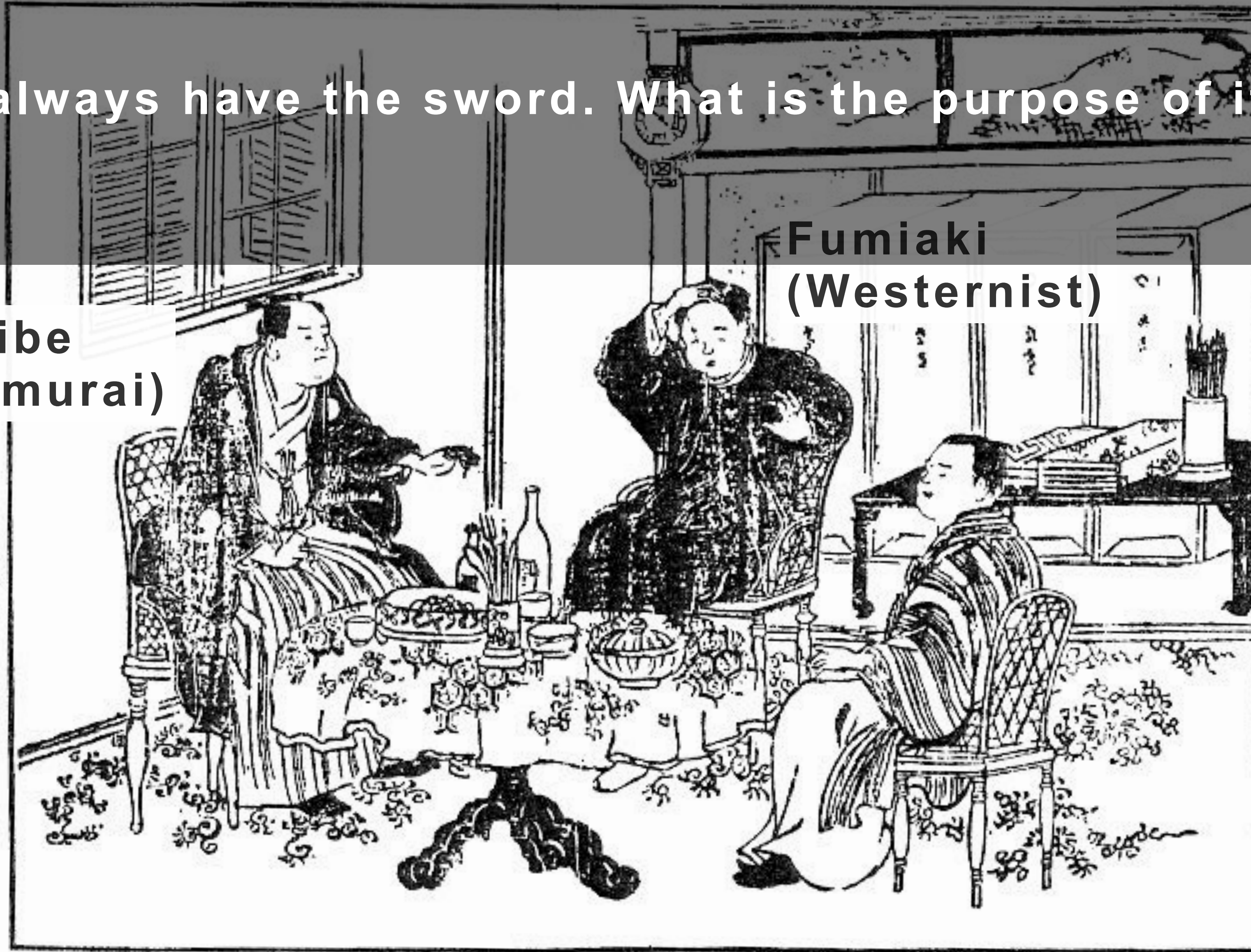


***Kaika no Hanashi* (Tales of Enlightenment, 1872)**

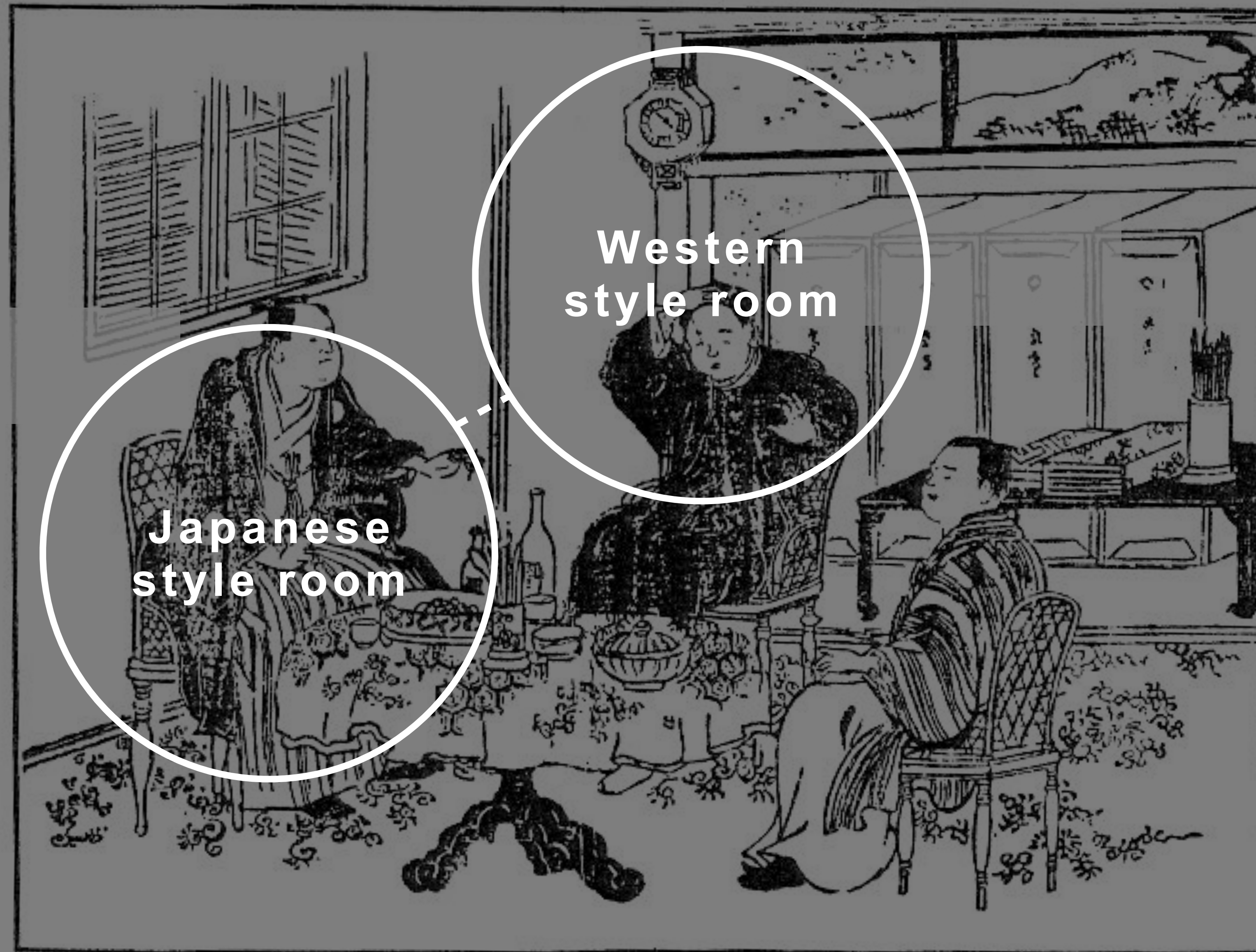
you always have the sword. What is the purpose of it?

Ishibe  
(Samurai)

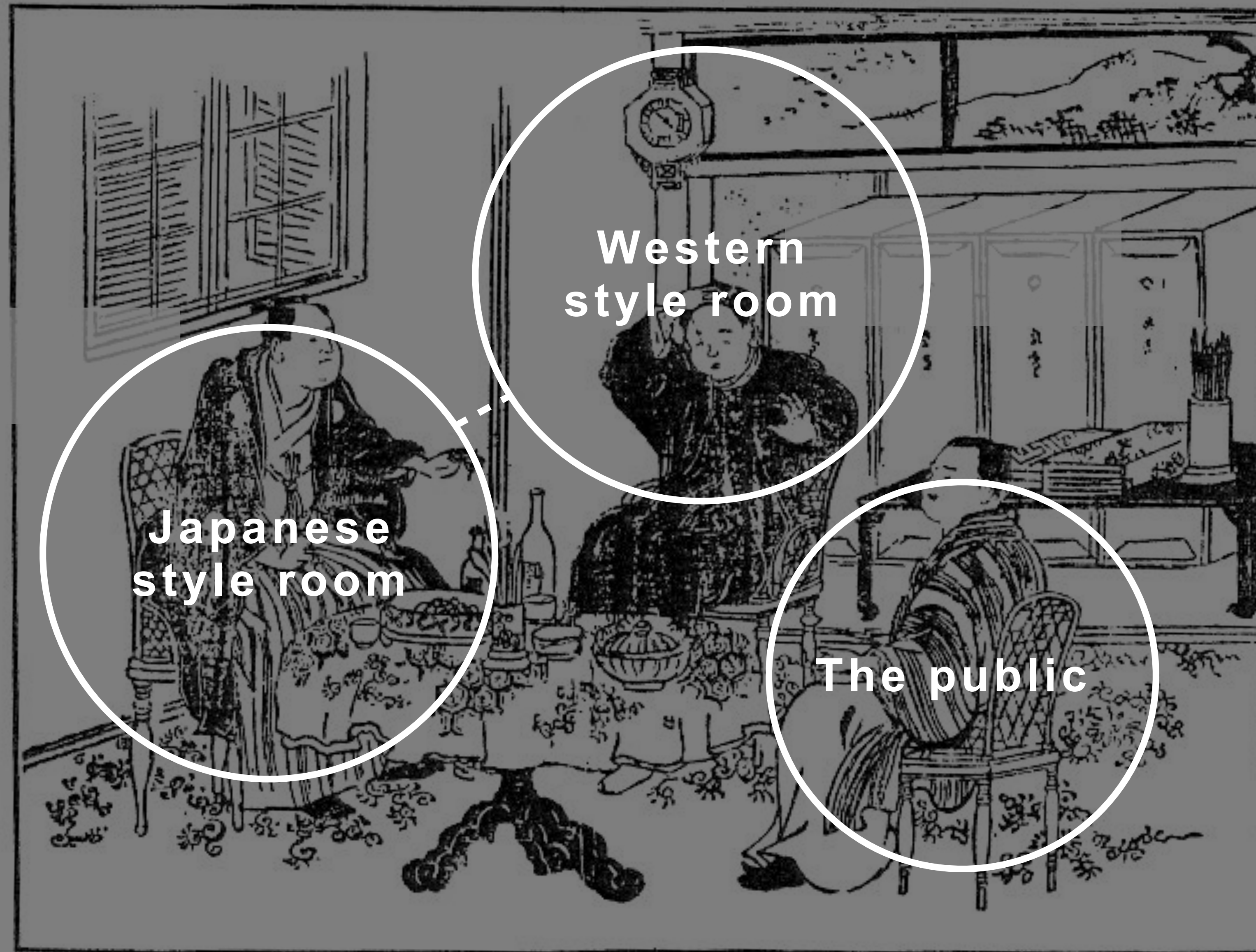
Fumiaki  
(Westernist)



*Kaika no Hanashi* (Tales of Enlightenment, 1872)



*Kaika no Hanashi* (Tales of Enlightenment, 1872)

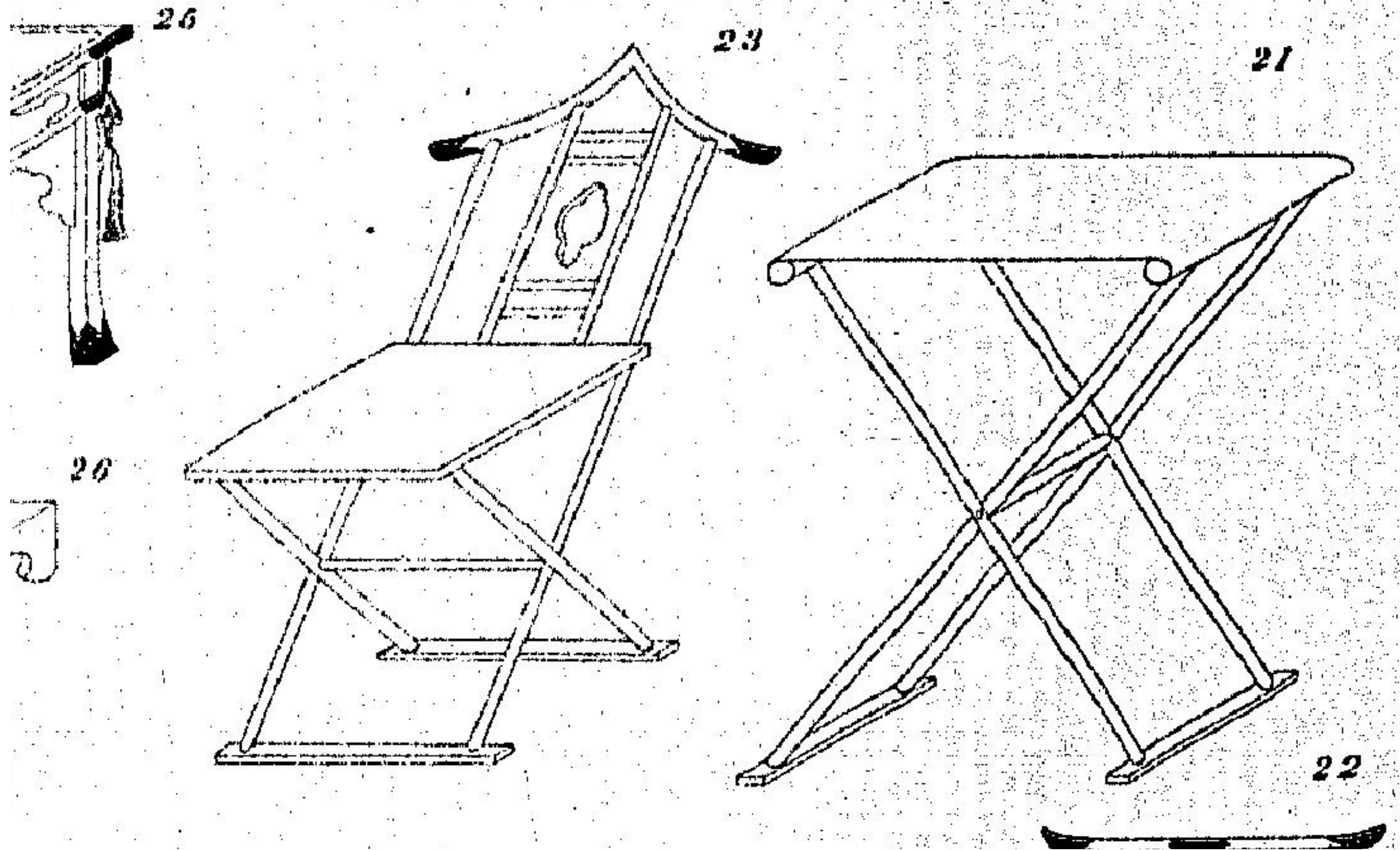


*Kaika no Hanashi* (Tales of Enlightenment, 1872)



**the chair has been modelled from a tourist's folding chair, only made rigid. The table is a foot higher than ordinary tables, and the chair is too low, so that my head comes to a convenient level with my plate**

***Japan, Day by Day (1917) E. S. Morse***

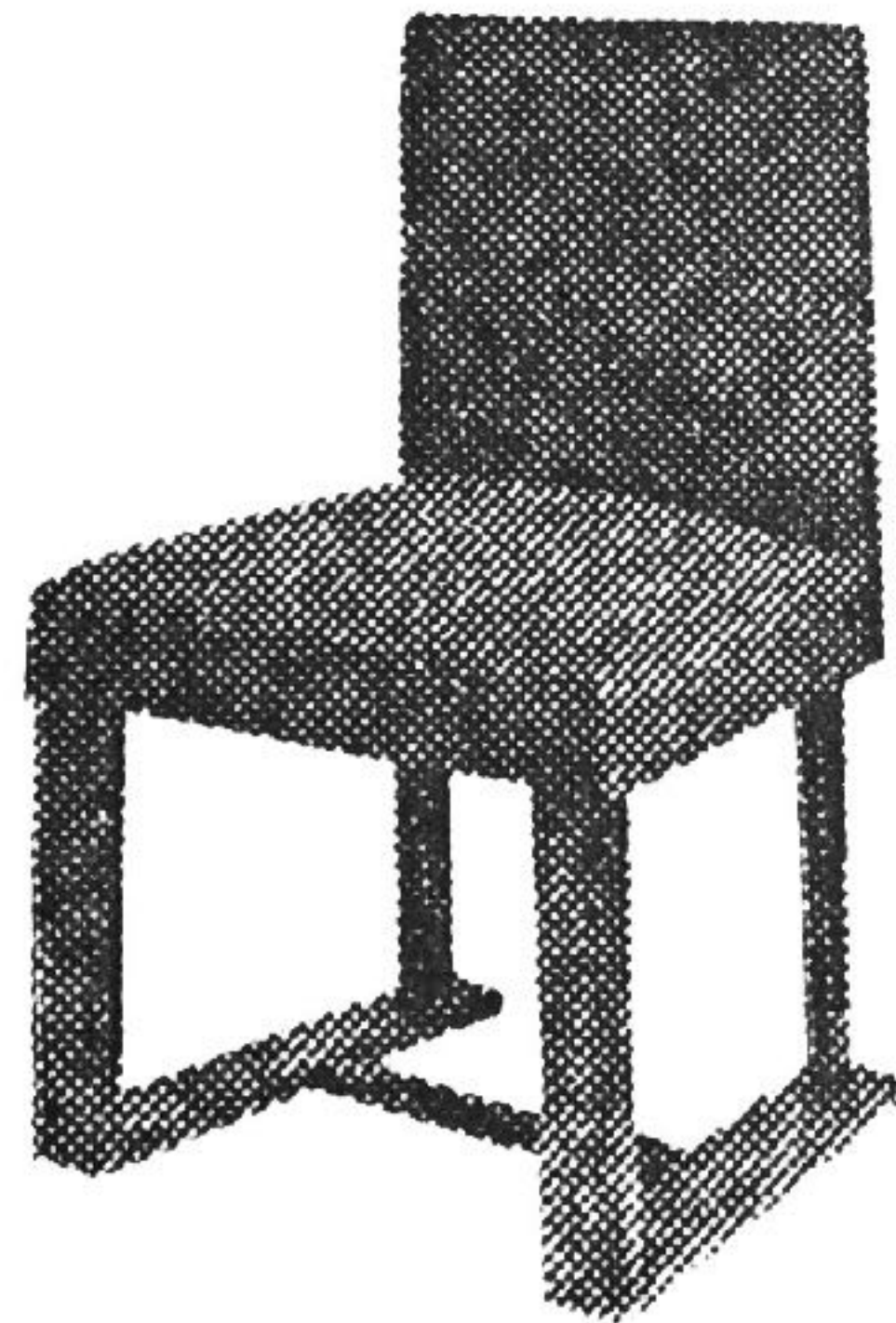


***Nihon-kagu-zuan to seisakuho***  
**(Drawings of Japanese Furniture and Its Manufacturing Method, 1911)**



**the chair has been modelled from a tourist's folding chair, only made rigid. The table is a foot higher than ordinary tables, and the chair is too low, so that my head comes to a convenient level with my plate**

***Japan, Day by Day (1917) E. S. Morse***

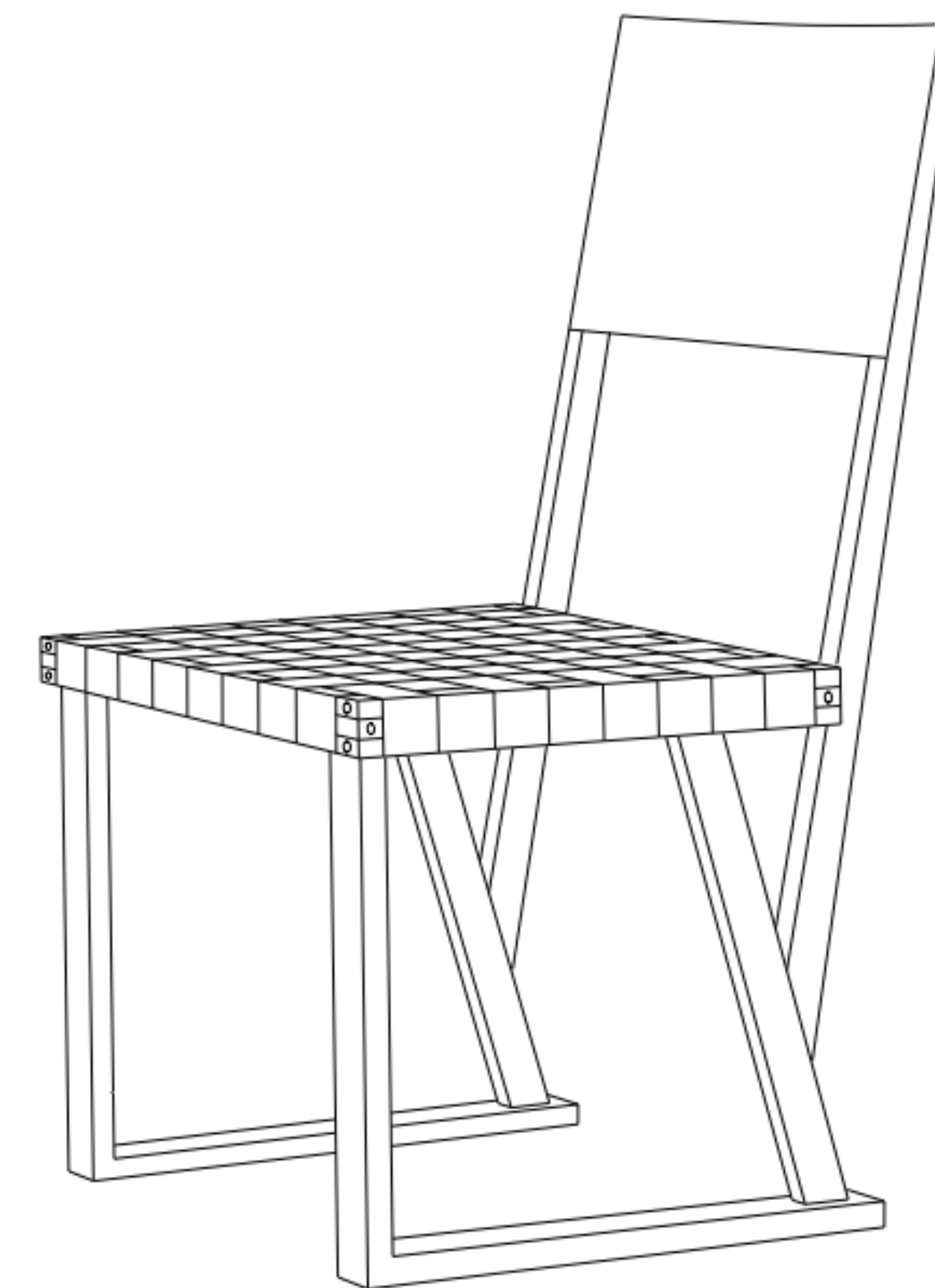


**1927**



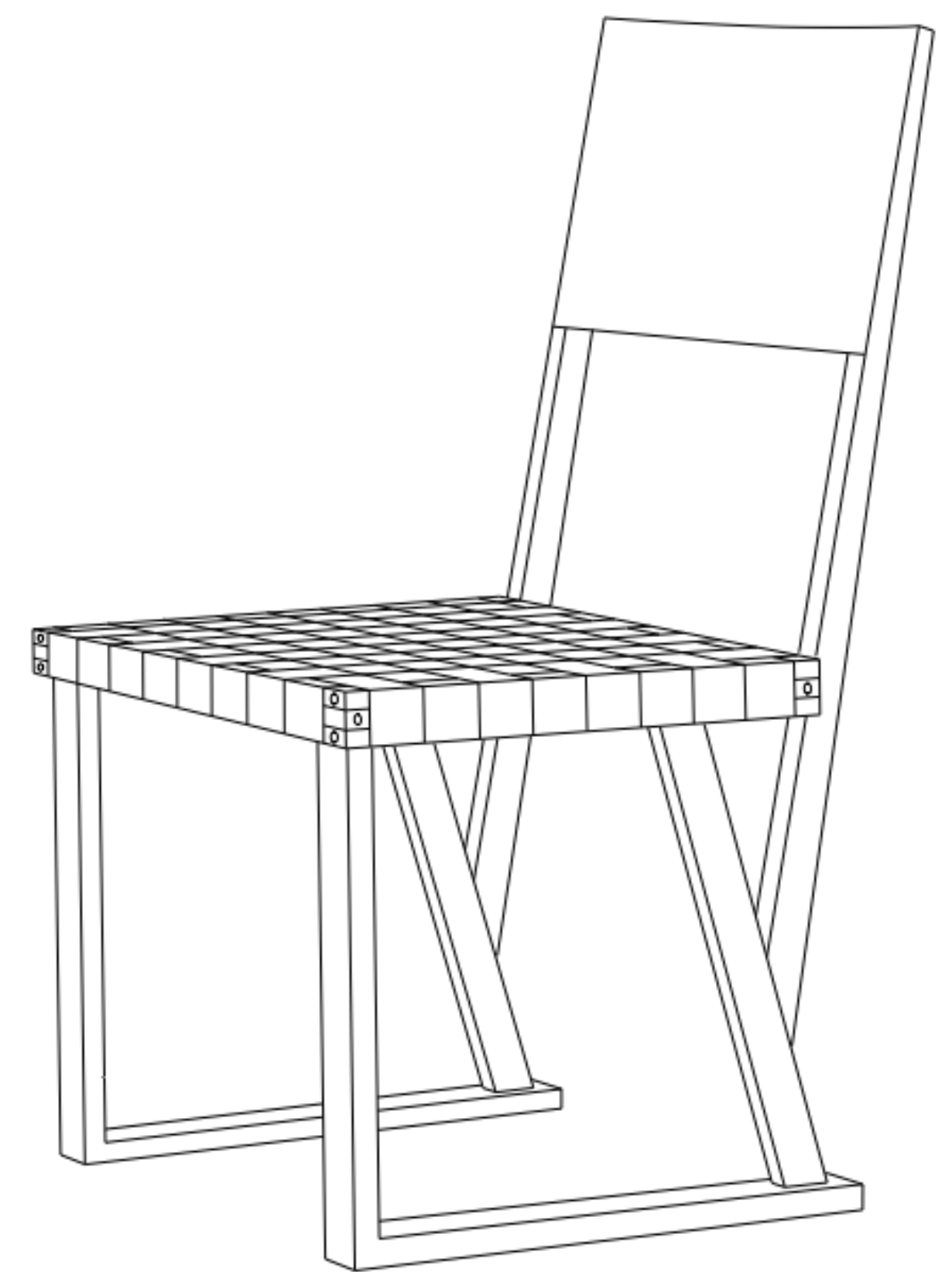
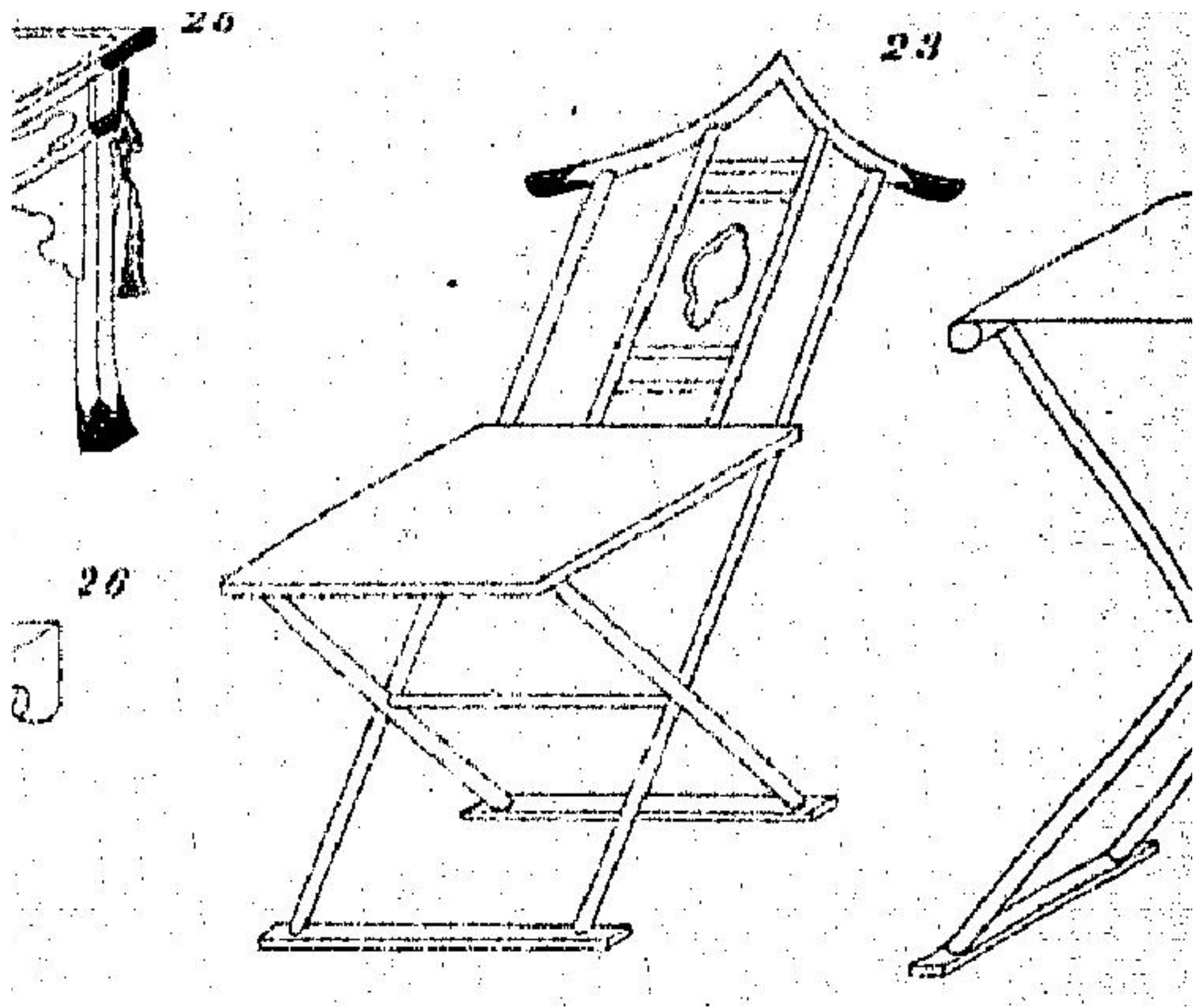
**1934**

**Chairs design by Chikatada Kurata (1895-1966)**



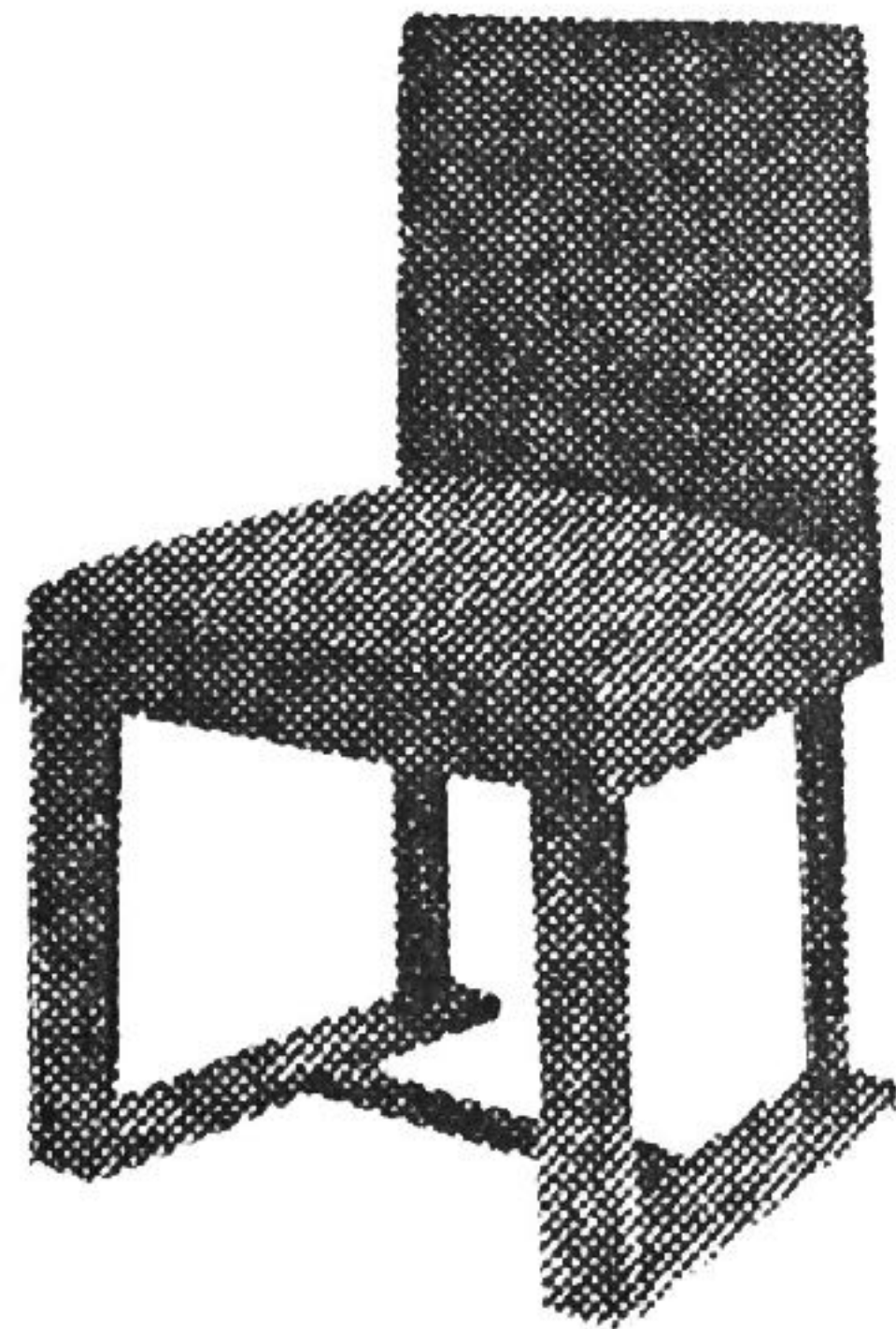
**1934**

**Chairs design by Chikatada Kurata (1895-1966)**

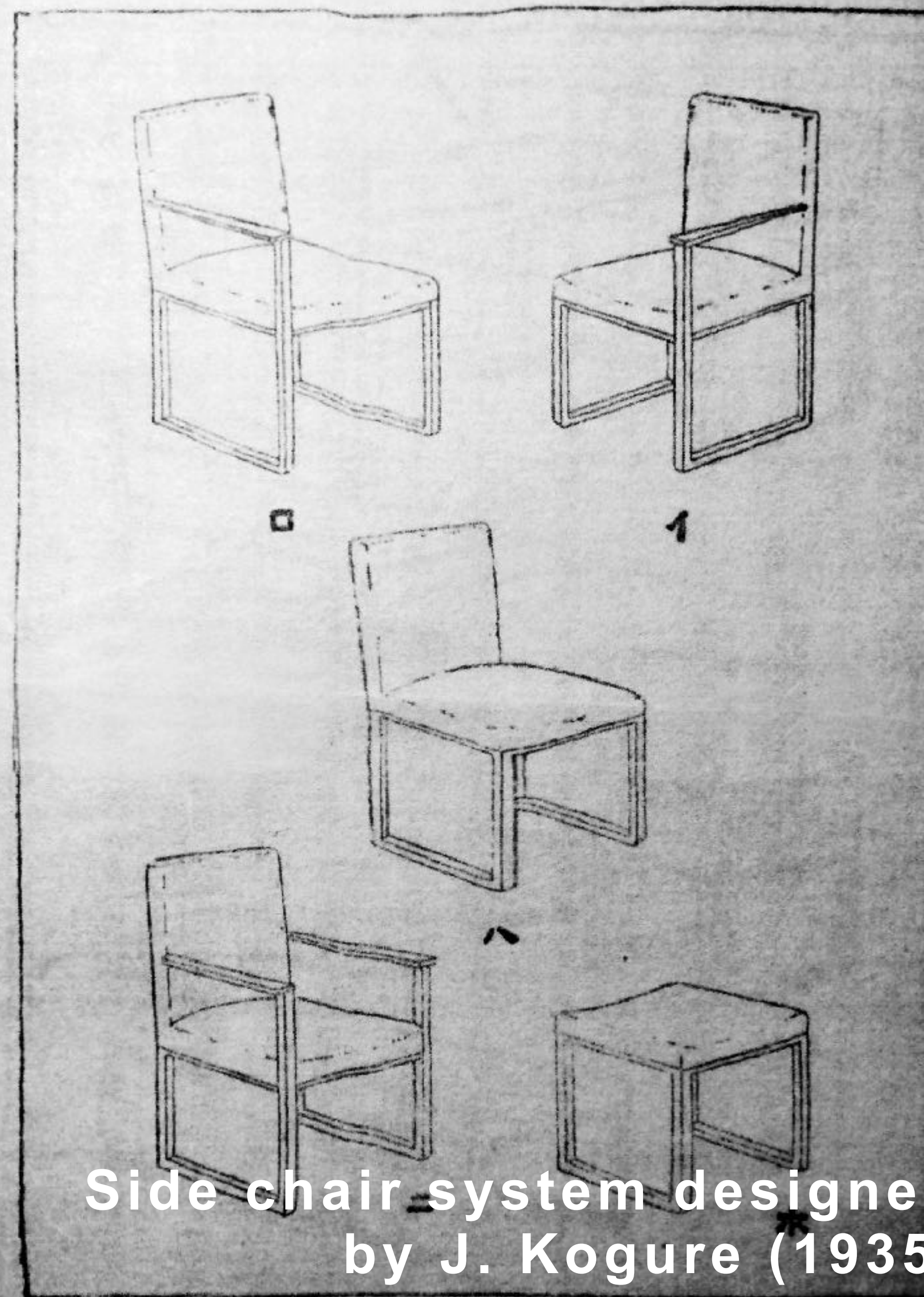


**Although I actually like *tatami*, we have to stop using *tatami* to make the room rational, or else we will have to unwillingly accept a dual-style of furniture**

**Kurata's comment in a magazine *Kenchiku-zasshi* (1946)**



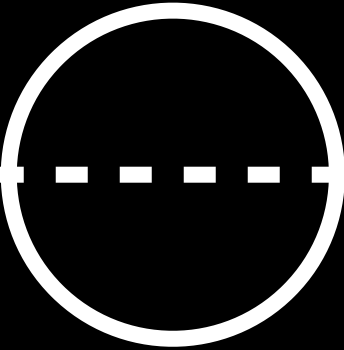
**Side chair designed  
by C. Kurata (1927)**



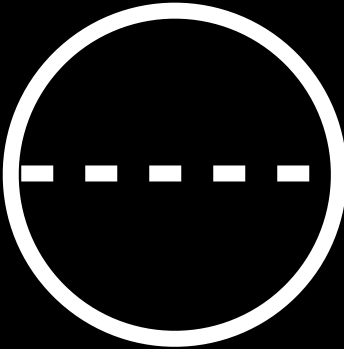
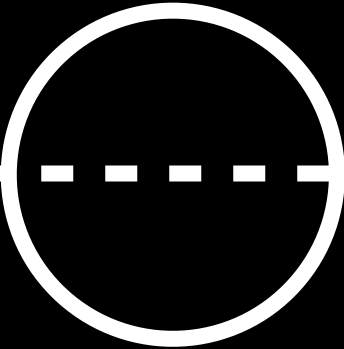
**Side chair system designed  
by J. Kogure (1935)**

Westernization

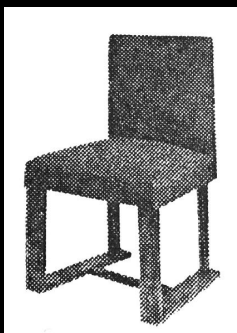
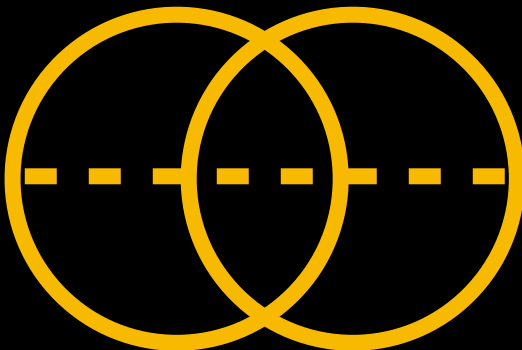
Western lifestyle



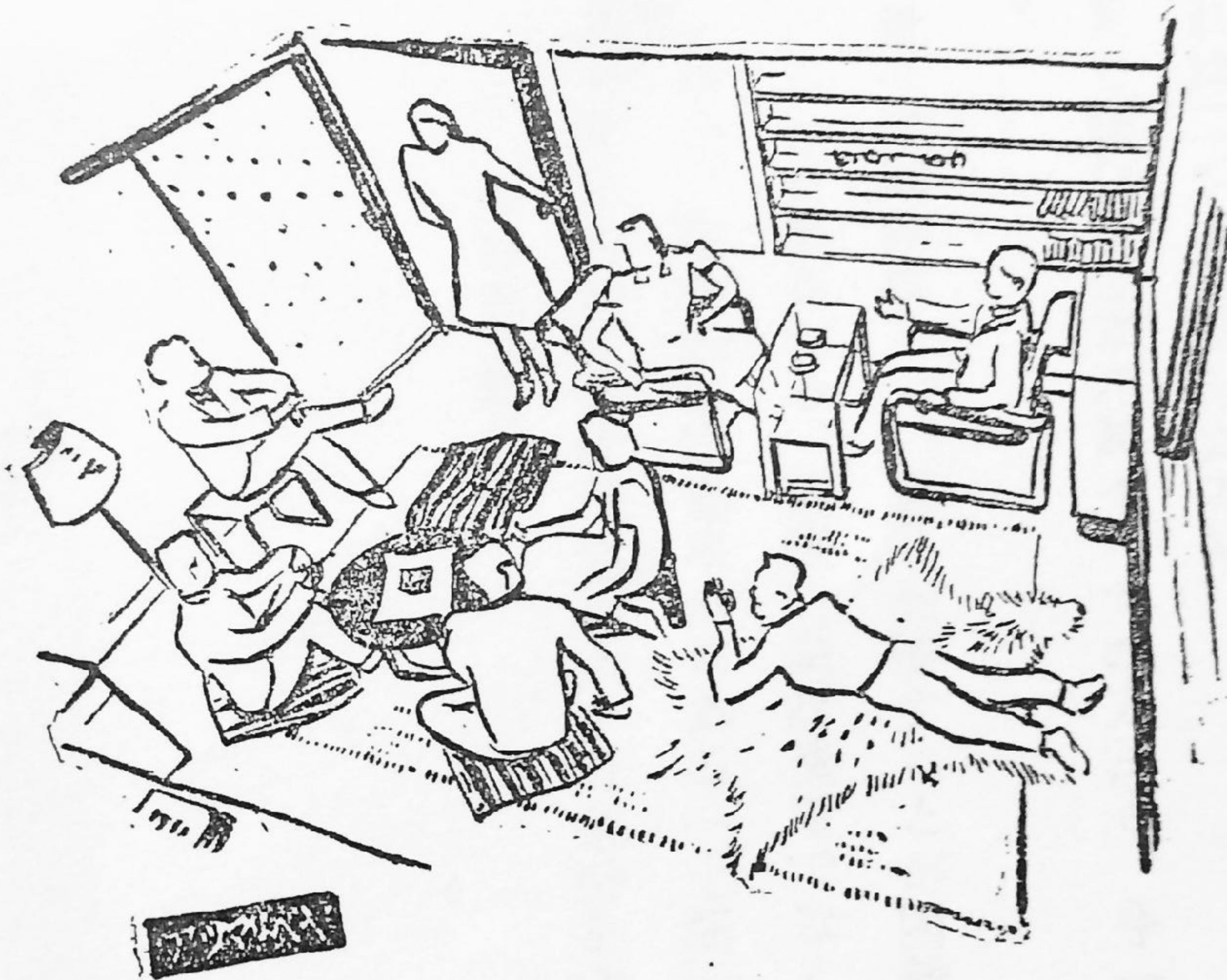
Semi-Western lifestyle



A neutral lifestyle



Low seat



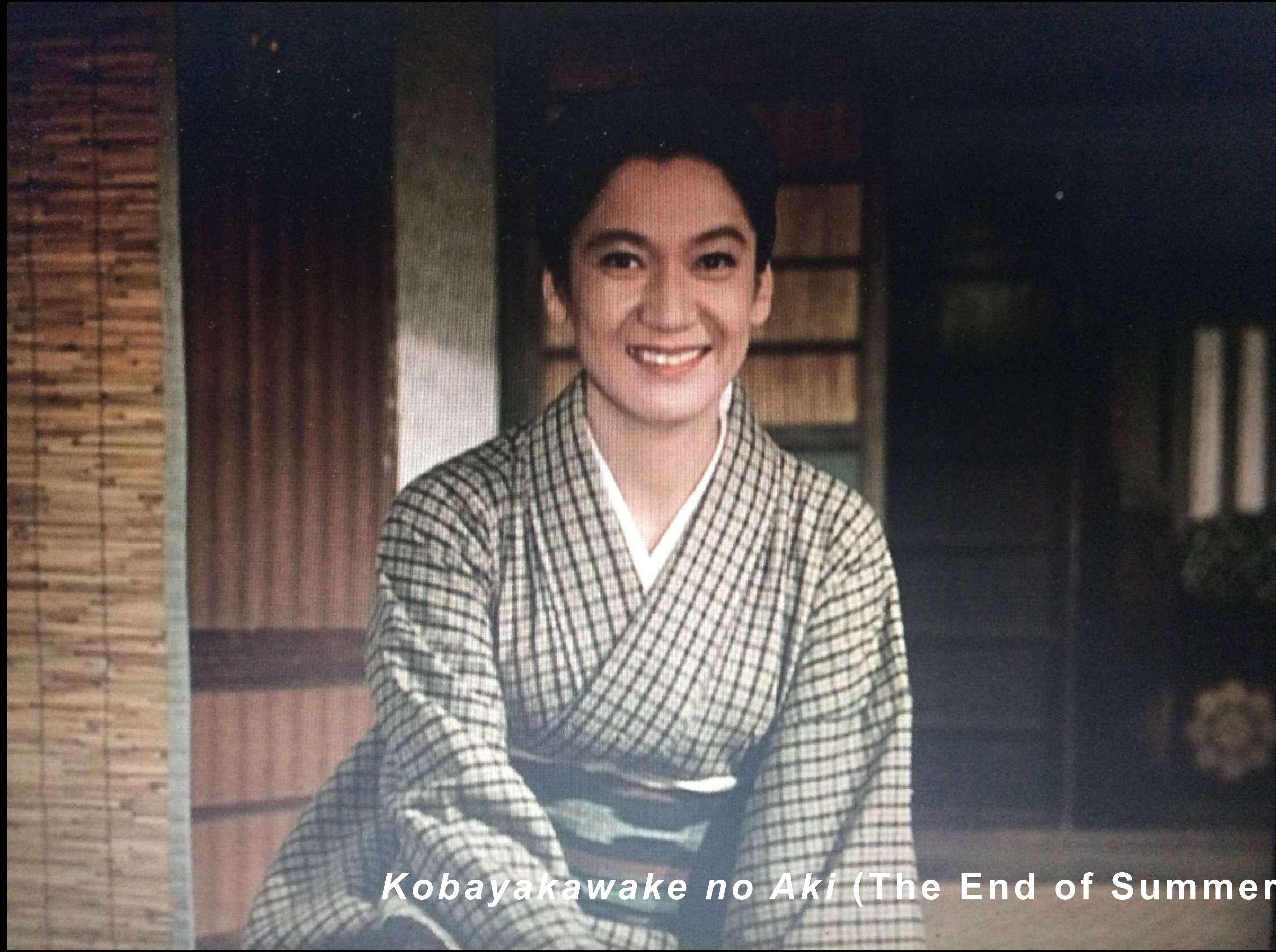
*Korekara no sumai*  
(House of the Future,  
1947)



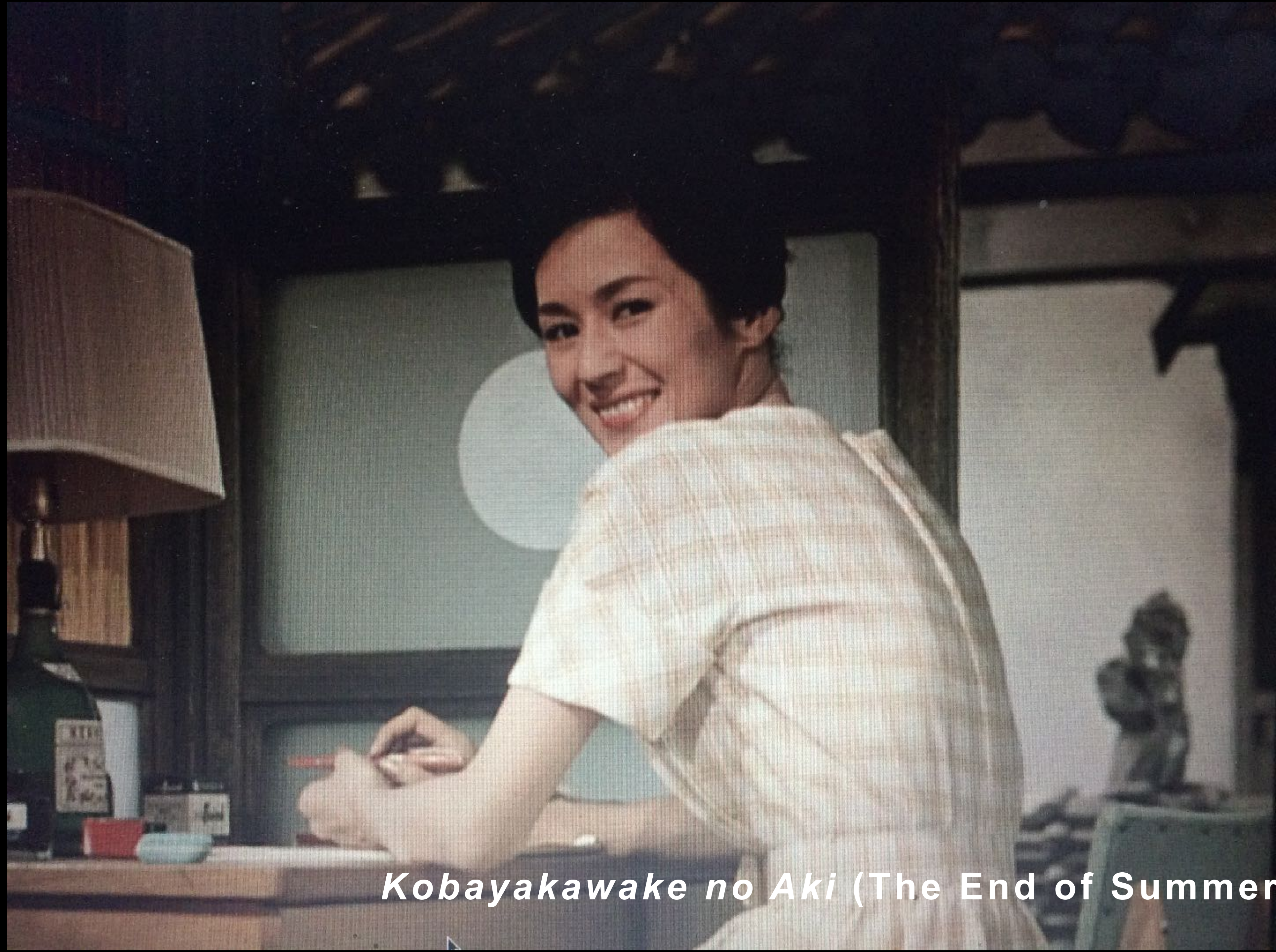
*Kobayakawake no Aki* (The End of Summer, 1961)



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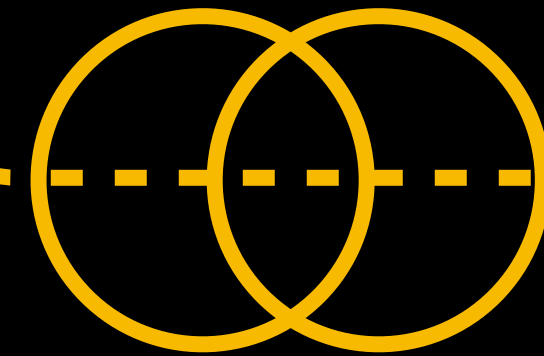
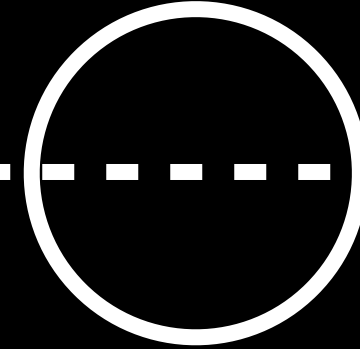
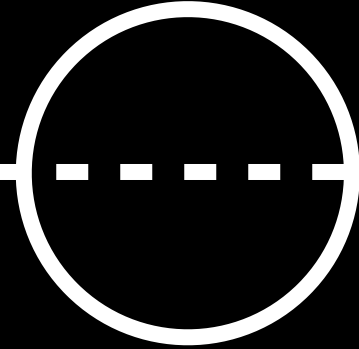
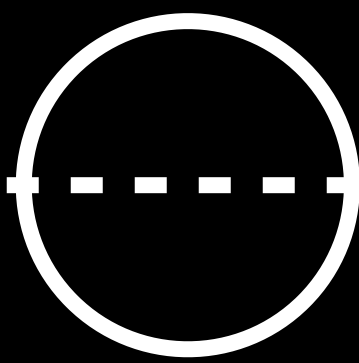
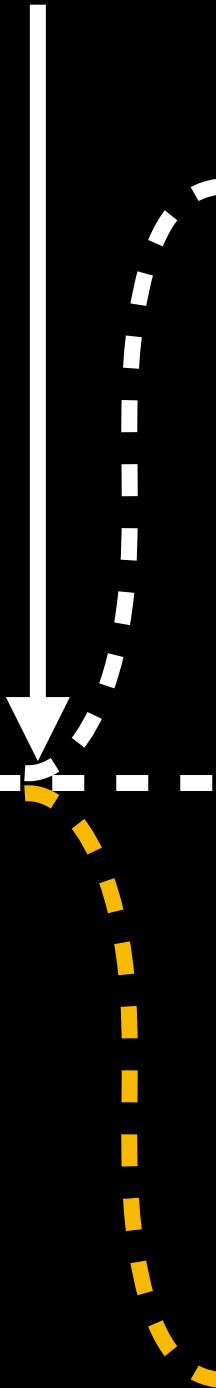
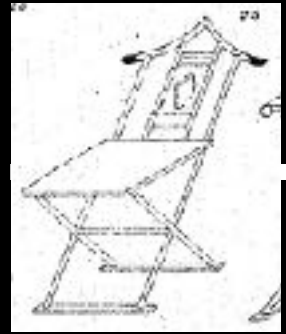


**Westernization**

**Western lifestyle**

**Semi-Western lifestyle**

**A neutral lifestyle**



**(1) How did the public establish definition of chairs outside the Westernization?**

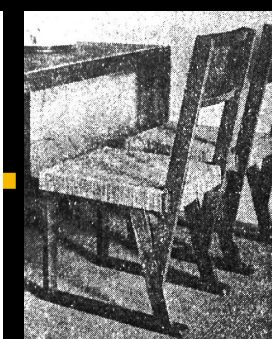
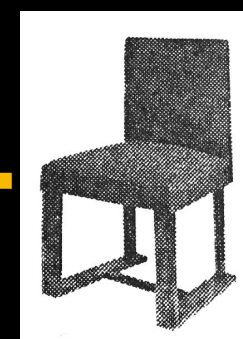
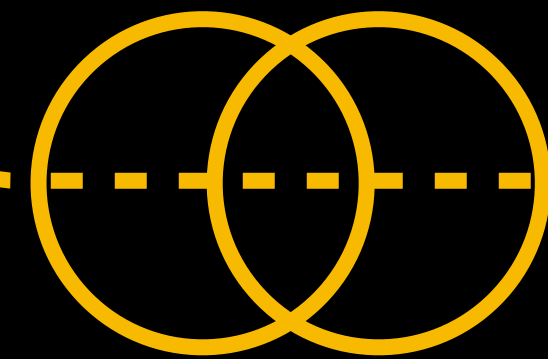
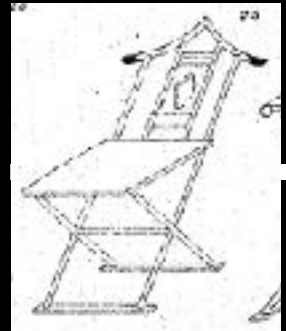
**The public independently established a definition of chairs through direct experiences of making and using chairs. For example, an early designer reviewed traditional folding chairs to create modern chair.**

Westernization

Western lifestyle

Semi-Western lifestyle

A neutral lifestyle



(2) How did the relation between sitting on the floor and in chairs break out of the dichotomy, through ambivalence?

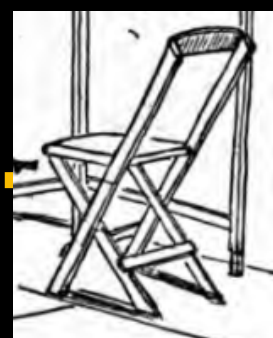
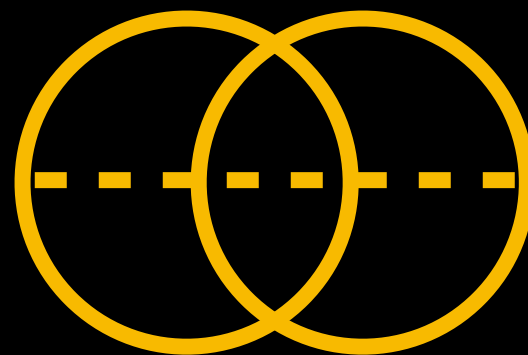
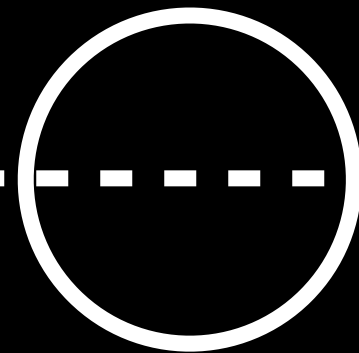
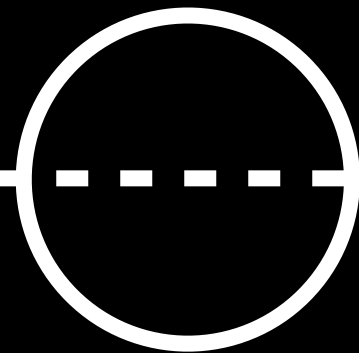
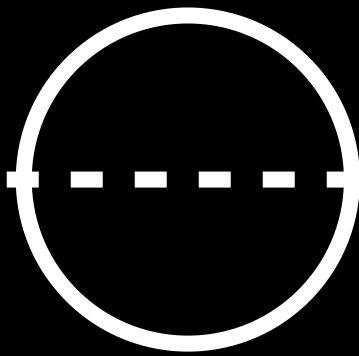
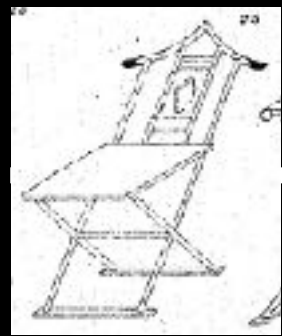
Discovery of a universe in the distance between the *tatami* mat and the seat height of chairs breaks out of the dichotomy of sitting postures and then leads to low-seated chairs.

**Westernization**

**Western lifestyle**

**Semi-Western lifestyle**

**A neutral lifestyle**



**Thank you**