

# History of Origami in the East and the West before Interfusion

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Origami is sometimes said to be an ancient Japanese art. The fact seems to be that, however, origami is neither ancient nor "Japanese." There is no trace of origami in ancient Japan or any other countries, and there is a tradition of origami in Europe as well as in Japan. European traditional origami is so different from its Japanese counterpart that the two traditions seem to have been independent from each other before the middle of the nineteenth century.

Recently, a comprehensive collection of Japanese traditional models folded by Kuzuhara Koto, a blind *koto* (Japanese stringed musical instrument) teacher born in 1812, came to be known to the origami community. On the other hand, European traditional origami is well documented in the books related to the Froebelian education system. I will use these two sets of origami models as main references to argue that there was little, if any, exchange of the origami culture between the East and the West before the Meiji Restoration, and that today's origami contains the heritage of the European tradition to the same extent as the Japanese one.