

## Museum

## Celluloid House Yokohama Collection Introduction Series 2

## Introduction to the Iwai Button Collection (3/3)

June, 2025



Masahiro Yokokawa (Celluloid House Yokohama)

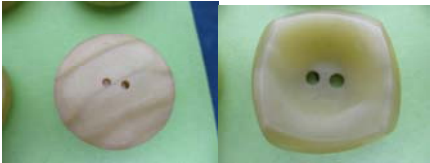

(Continued from the previous report dated May 2025)

**a-5. Components: "Celluloid only"**, the functional celluloid buttons (without decorative elements):

As mentioned in our report dated April 2025, the "Iwai Button Collection" has been made by non-clothing professionals for the purpose of collecting celluloid products, consequently it contains many celluloid buttons without decorative element.

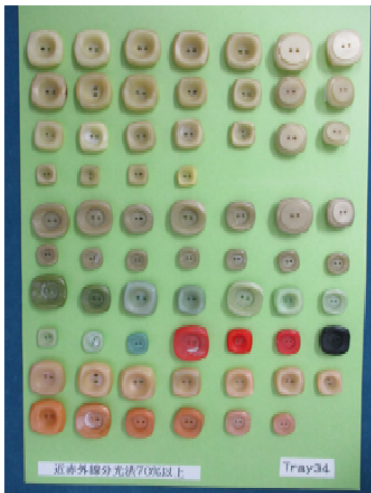



However, even if decorative elements are not included, the buttons keep unique form and color. It is judged that they were used in special environments such as uniforms and work clothes, rather than in ordinary clothing.

<b>Combination button</b> front hole: The outer and inner button are combined for a decorative purpose? (We think that such buttons are used on stage costumes or on stuffed animals?) 181 pieces- Tray29, Box40		
Button combined, front and back side		(before combination) outer and inner button, each front and back side
		

<b>Buttons with large indentations:</b> 247pieces - Tray34,35,36,37,38	
Indentation shape No.1 (gentle depression)	Indentation shape No.2 (with stepped notches)
	

a-6. Waveform changes by near-infrared spectroscopy of celluloid:

As a result of confirming the material by near-infrared spectroscopy, it is presumed that the near-infrared absorption characteristics of the "functional celluloid button" described in A-5 changed depending on the type and amount of colorant added (a phenomenon in which the waveform approximation value by near-infrared spectroscopy was less than 70% was observed

Change of Waveform of Celluloid by near-infrared spectroscopy.			
	Near-infrared spectroscopy Waveform approximation is <b>70% or more</b>	Near-infrared spectroscopy waveform approximation <b>less than 70%</b>	
Indentation shape No.1 (gentle depression)			
Indentation shape No.2 (with stepped notches)			



## B) Non-celluloid buttons:

The Iwai button collection includes many "non-celluloid buttons". At the time of collection, there was no simple method of specifying the material, and as a result of sorting the buttons mainly by appearance, it is judged that buttons other than celluloid having an appearance similar to celluloid functional buttons were also collected. The material for the buttons other than celluloid are acetyloid (acetate resin), acrylic resin, nylon, and glass.



### b-1. Acetyloid (Acetate) Buttons 193 pieces - Tray41,42,43,44(Panel)

It is very similar in texture to celluloid. The weight is slightly lighter, and it can produce colorful colors with a sense of transparency. Elasticity is inferior to celluloid.

In addition, its heat resistance is lower than celluloid, and nowadays it is rarely used for buttons due to safety perspective.

Transparent luster	Checkered patterns, tick patterns, and checkered buttons are said to be common in celluloid, but here they were acetyloids (acetic acid smell)
	

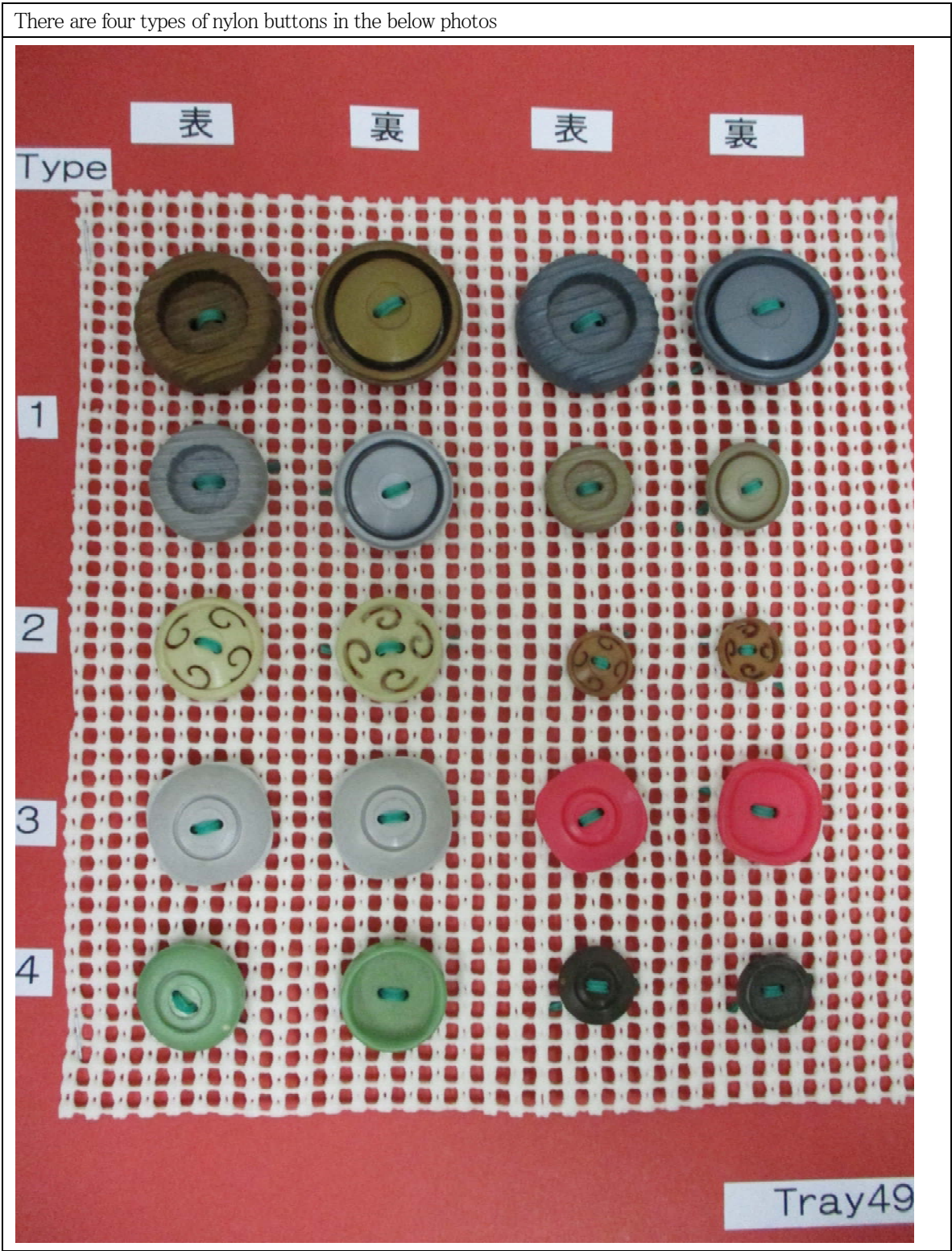
b-2. Acrylic resin (PMMA): They are transparent and have a beautiful luster that allows light to pass through. It is a material that is currently used in many buttons. They have a similar shape that the celluloid function button shown in a-5.

Shape with a small-sized depression	A shape with a circular indentation in the center
	

### b-3. Nylon buttons:



Nylon buttons are highly elastic, hard to break, easy to dye, and are currently used in many buttons. It has a similar shape to the celluloid function button shown in a-5.



#### b-4. Glass Button:

It is a button for a police officer old uniform, and it is made of glass material due to specific gravity of more than 2, and it can be seen from the cross section of the fragments.



#### 4. Classification table of Iwai Button Collection:

A classification table was prepared according to the criteria described in the April report (1/3 item2).

Button Components	Buttonhole	Features of the shape	Type	Related Tray No.
Celluloid only	Back hole foot	Arrangement pattern of flowers and fruits	1	4,5
		Twisted patterns, bouquet patterns, straight and curved patterns	2	6,7,8,9
		Morphological imitation of flowers, fruits, shells, butterflies, etc.	3	3
		Flat (no bulge) + surface pattern	4	10, 24(Partial)
		Small bulge + surface pattern	5	11,23(Partial)
		Pattern has a center	6	12, 23 (Partial)

	Other type	Square type, base square type, solo type, etc.	7	1,2
	Hole in front	Bottom flat + surface pattern	8	26,27,28,29, 23(Partial)
		Curved surface and like face button (raccoon hole)	9	30, 23(Partial)
		Curved pattern (including plates and bowls)	10	31,32,33
		With a large depression	11	34,35,36,37,38
		Combination Button	12	39, 40(Box)
Celluloid + backing Metal	Back hole foot	Bubble shape	13	17,18, 22(Partial) 、 23(Partial)
		Surface pattern (without Bubble)	14	13,14, 23(Partial)
		Pattern has a center (without Bubble)	15	15,16, 23(Partial)
		Oval, triangular	16	19、 23 (Partial)
Metal structure + celluloid decoration	Back hole foot	Celluloid is used as a decoration on the surface of the metal buttons.	17	20, 21, 24(Partial)
Celluloid + other materials	Front hole, And Back hole foot	Celluloid is used in the periphery as supporter and other materials (including natural materials) is placed in the center.	18	25, 24(Partial)

Material	Type	Tray
Acetyloid button	19	41,42,43,44(panel)
Acrylic Resin (PMMA) Buttons	20	45,46,47,48
Nylon Button	22	49.50(Pack)
Glass button, Metal button, Polypropylene button	22	51
Others : Degraded celluloid buttons, Natural material buttons, unknown material buttons and bubble button disassembly sample	23	52(one big back including 6 small packs)

## 6. References

- (1) Button Encyclopedia Bunensha Supervised by Iris Co., Ltd. Hiroshi Ohsumi
- (2) Button X Button 20th Century Plastic Button Art Digest TOMA Collection
- (3) Website TOMA Collection Button Gallery
- (4) Button Museum Taizo Kaneko December 9, 2003 "Celluloid Buttons and Fashion"
- (5) It's all about CELLULOID Buttons. By Monica Walker, Sullivan Gang Graphics and Printing, Inc., Wichita, Kansas, USA

- (6) The World of Antique Buttons、 Kashiwa Shoten Matsubara Co., Ltd. by Haruko Ogizuka
- (7) History and Scientific Analysis of the World's First Synthetic Resin Celluloid  
Takuji Yamada, Ryukoku University Review
- (8) Prog: Akiko Sakai, "Vintage Button Chatter"
- (9) Homepage of an apparel-related manufacturer (Shingen Button Co., Ltd. 2022.02.13)
- (10) Homepage of eyeglass-related manufacturers (especially Talex Co., Ltd.)
- Does the weight differ depending on the material? Related toFrame2016.06.20)
- (11) Antique button shop "CO-" (Higashikanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo)

Currently, the Celluloid House Yokohama does not have a permanent exhibition of its collection, but the Button Collection can be viewed as an exception.

In addition, we welcome the exchange of information and joint research with button professionals, clothing professionals, related collectors, and the others who are interested in this theme, and we invite you to contact us by e-mail at the following address: [celluloidhouse@aol.com](mailto:celluloidhouse@aol.com)