

KYOTO MUSE PORTRAIT

STEP-BY-STEP TUTORIAL • 6 STEPS

In this tutorial, you'll learn how to create a front-facing portrait inspired by Japanese aesthetics—using Tombow tools. The goal is to build the face step by step, then add color and fine details with red and black accents.

SUPPLIES

Irojiten CI-RV1 Cherry Red



ABT-885



ABT-N15



Fudenosuke



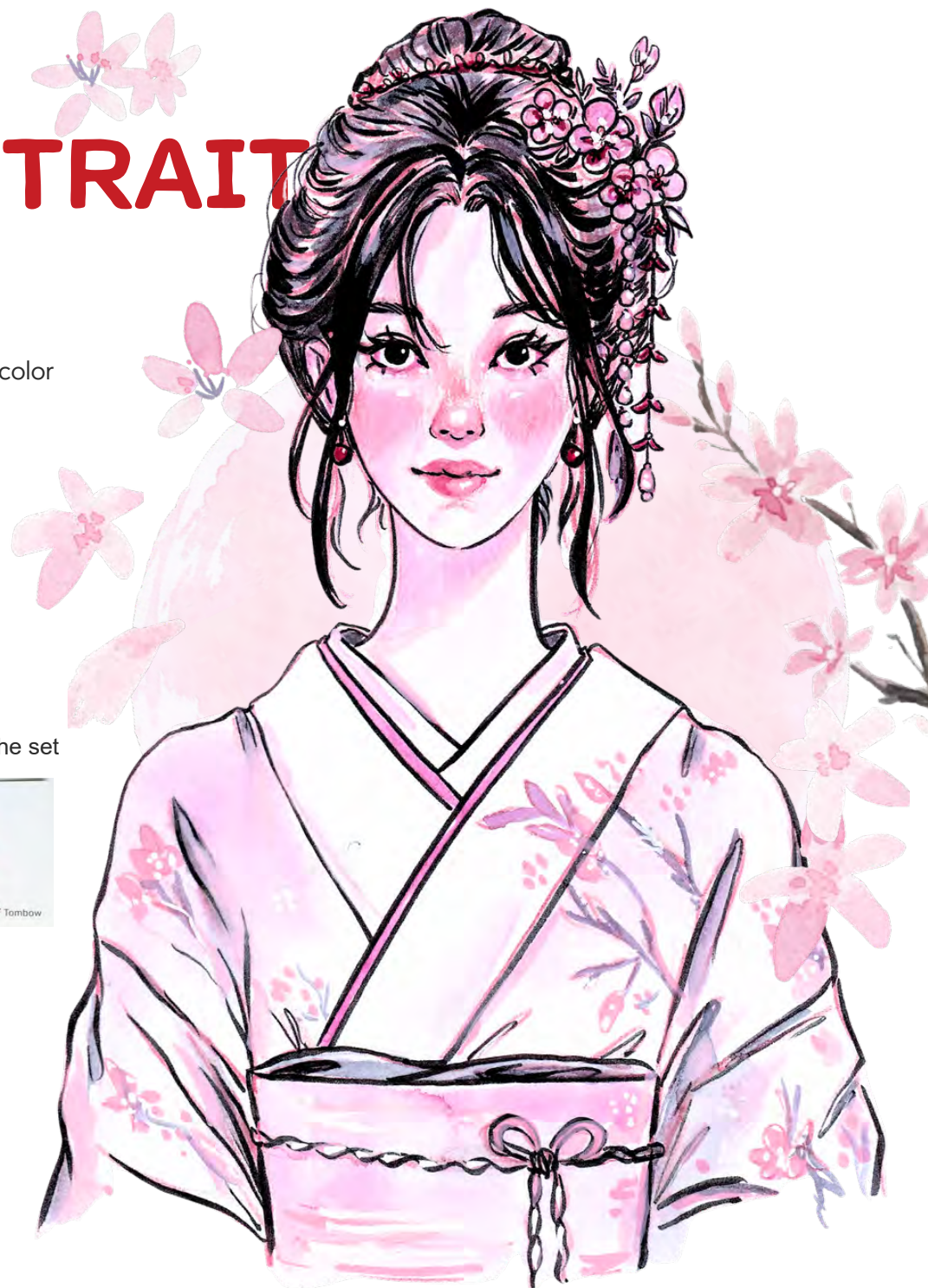
A6 Watercolor Paper



Mixing Palette
not included in the set

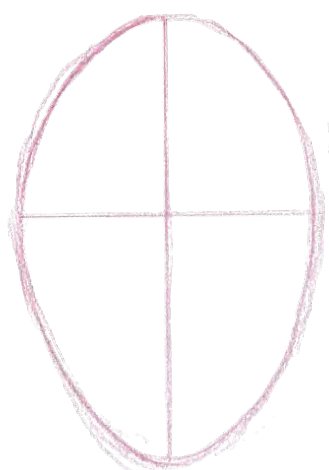


Scan this QR code to
access the sketch!



STEP 1

BUILD THE FACE SHAPE



Tool used: Irojiten CI-RV1 – Cherry Red



TIP: The vertical guideline helps keep the face symmetrical. The horizontal guideline helps you place the eyes and check proportions.

Start by drawing an oval to represent the head.

Next, draw a vertical centerline down the face to help keep everything symmetrical.

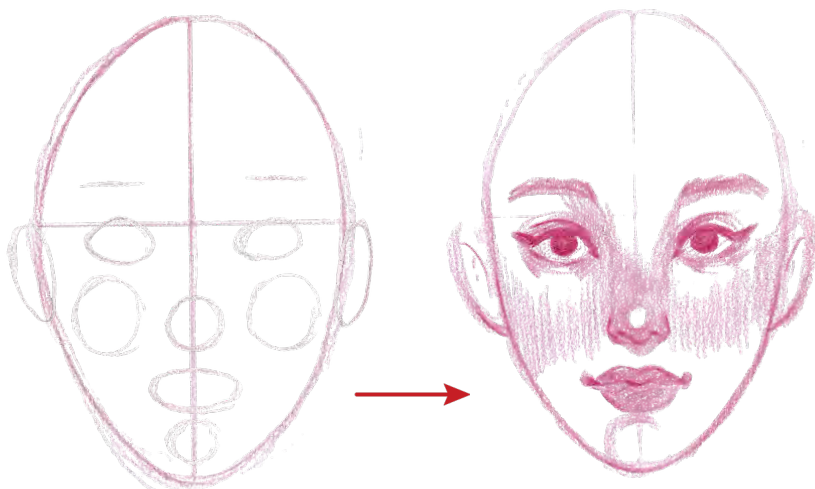
Add a horizontal guideline so you can place the eyes and better divide the face proportions. Keep your lines very light in this step.

The goal for now is simply to create a basic construction guide.



STEP 2

POSITIONING THE FACIAL FEATURES



Simple Shapes

Tool used: Irojiten CI-RV1 – Cherry Red



TIP: Use a very light touch. The goal is to block in the facial features with simple shapes first, then refine them afterward.

Use the guide lines for orientation and start placing the facial features. To help you, picture simple geometric shapes first before you draw the details—just like in the “Simple Shapes” example.

Start with the nose in the center of the face. Draw a small circle to suggest the volume of the tip of the nose, then add the nostrils on the left and right.

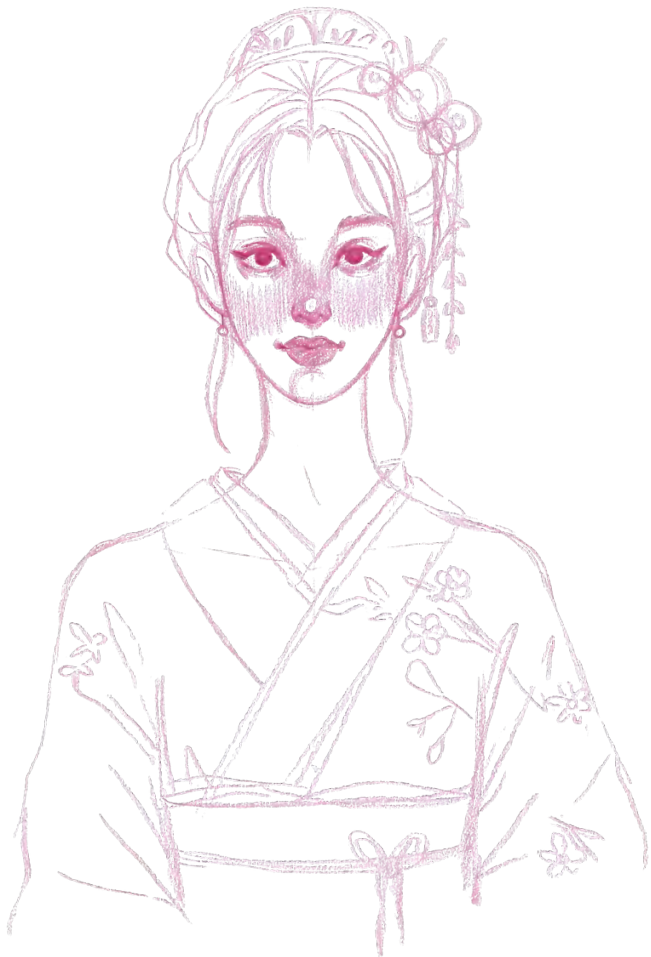
Next, place the mouth by imagining an oval shape. Draw a horizontal line through the middle of the oval to mark the opening of the lips, then refine the shape step by step.

For the eyes, start with two ovals along the horizontal guide and gradually shape them into almond eyes. Then add the pupils, lids, eyebrows, and ears.



STEP 3

BUILD THE FULL SILHOUETTE



Tool used: Irojiten CI-RV1 – Cherry Red



TIP: Think in broad areas first before moving on to details. That's how the drawing stays balanced and cohesive.

Once the face is in place, keep building the rest of the drawing using an extremely light touch.

First, sketch in the overall volume of the hairstyle. Then add the neck, shoulders, and the main lines of the kimono. For the collar, draw two diagonal lines that slightly overlap in the center.

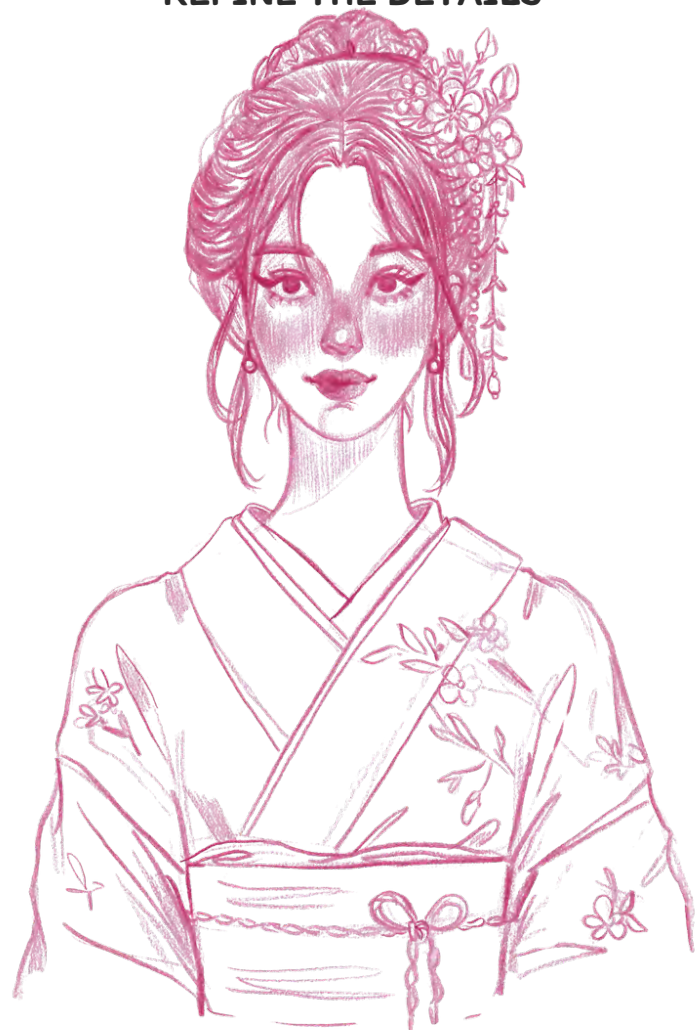
You can also block in the first decorations very simply: where the flowers go, plus the earrings or hair ornaments.

Nothing gets fully detailed in this step. The goal is to check the overall balance of the drawing: the size of the face, hair volume, how the kimono sits, and where the accessories are placed.



STEP 4

REFINE THE DETAILS



Tool used: Irojiten CI-RV1 – Cherry Red
TIP: Keep the details light and give them a little breathing room. A few well-placed embellishments look better than an overworked drawing.

Once the basic silhouette looks right, you can start refining the drawing further.

Develop the hair strands, keeping the hairstyle’s overall volume in mind. Add a few strands around the face to create more movement without covering the features too much.

Next, add the embellishments: cherry blossoms, earrings, dangling accessories, or details inspired by kanzashi. Also include a few patterns on the kimono to make it feel more decorative.

For a simple cherry blossom, start with a small center, then draw five rounded petals around it. It’s fine if the petals aren’t perfectly even—that looks more natural.



STEP 5

TRACE THE OUTLINES WITH THE FUDENOSUKE



Tool used: Fudenosuke in black
TIP: Don’t trace every line from your sketch. Pick only the key contours so the drawing stays light and elegant.

If your sketch looks solid, trace over the key outlines with the Fudenosuke fineliner.

Start with the main facial features: eyes, lashes, brows, and mouth. Then trace a few primary hair strands, the face outline, neck, the kimono collar, and the decorations.

Vary the pressure on the brush to get thinner or bolder lines.

Keep the facial details very delicate, while giving the hair, kimono, and accessories a bit more emphasis.



STEP 6

REFINE THE DETAILS



Tools used: ABT-885, ABT-N15, Blending Palette



TIP: Always start with heavily diluted color. It's much easier to add another layer than to fix a shade that's gone on too strong.

Before you start painting, decide where the light is coming from. Here, the light hits from the upper right, so the shadows fall more strongly on the turned-away and recessed areas of the face.

Place a little ABT-885 on the Blending Palette, then dilute it with the water brush. Use this thinned red to add soft touches to the cheeks, nose, eyelids, inner ears, neck, and a few selected shadow areas.

For the cheeks, begin in the center of the rosy area and blend outward until it fades naturally. You can also apply ABT-885 a bit more directly on the lips, flowers, accessories, and a few kimono details.

For deeper shadows, mix a tiny touch of ABT-N15 into ABT-885 to create a burgundy tone. Apply it sparingly in the shadow zones.

To finish, use ABT-N15 to deepen the hair, pupils, and the darkest areas. Leave a few white gaps in the hair to suggest light reflections.

OPTIONAL STEP

To give the portrait a bit more mood, you can add a few decorative elements.

Put a little ABT-885 on the Blending Palette, then dilute it with plenty of water.

Behind the head, you can paint a round or slightly irregular shape to frame the face. Then add a few branches or cherry blossoms in the background—using very fine, light strokes.

The goal isn't a highly detailed setting—just a softer feel and a nicer way to make the portrait stand out.

