

The Study of the late 19th Century Traditional Japanese Costume from the Western Perspective

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Abstract

This study illuminates how Westerners in the late 19th century thought about and evaluated traditional Japanese costume, by analyzing contemporary Western newspapers, and the records of first-hand observations and experiences of Westerners who stayed in Japan.

I examined Westerners' perception of the traditional costumes worn by Japanese envoys to the U.S. Americans focused on the traditional costume's form, and evaluated it by comparing it to Western clothing. We know that the English who value tradition paid special attention to the ritualistic qualities of the Japanese envoys' clothing and that they focused their appraisal through this lens. Thus, the appraisal of the Japanese envoys' clothing is different between the Americans and the English.

I studied how traditional Japanese costume was recognized by Westerners who stayed in Japan, and analyzed the articles about traditional Japanese costume in Western newspapers. While traditional Japanese costume perception moved to positive territory in Western newspapers, we also confirm that the traditional Japanese costume worn by the lower-class Japanese gave a mostly negative impression to the Westerners who stayed in Japan.

I . Introduction

In March 1854, the Empire of Japan ended its 215-year-old policy of national seclusion by the Tokugawa shogunate, and signed the Convention of Kanagawa (Japanese: *Nichibei Washin Joyaku*) with the United States of America. From 1860, the Japanese envoys to the U.S. began acquiring an extraordinary degree of information regarding its material resources. They brought back an immense quantity of American domestic products and prototypes, eagerly transmitting Western civilization to Japan¹. In particular, European clothing cultures quickly gained ground in Japan, and the Japanese official court dresses changed to European style court uniforms from 1872. Furthermore, the Japanese imperial family adopted European dress as the formal dress instead of Japanese traditional dress in most official ceremonies starting 1873. In this transitional period, some of the Japanese recognized European dress as a symbol of a new civilization, and considered traditional Japanese dress to be a product of the old era.

Then we may ask: What was the Western perspective during this period on the traditional costume of Japan? What kind of impression did the traditional Japanese dress make on the Westerners? The purpose of this study is to illuminate how Westerners (mainly the British and the Americans) in the late 19th century thought about and evaluated traditional Japanese costume. At this time, there is no precedent connected with this research.

The materials and sources used in this research are as follows. First, I investigated late 19th-century Western newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Times*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, *Harper's Weekly* and *The Illustrated London News*. Secondly, I used books by expatriates in Japan: "*The Mikado's Empire Book II 'Personal Experiences, Observations, and studies in Japan 1870-1875'(1876)*" by W.E. Griffis, an American; "*Unbeaten Tracks in Japan (1885)*" by Isabella L. Bird, an Englishwoman; and "*John L. Stoddard's Lectures Vol.III Japan China (1897)*" by John L. Stoddard, another American. These record the first-hand observations and experiences of Westerners staying in Japan in the late 19th century.

This paper's research method is as follows. I examined the Western newspapers' impression of the traditional costume worn by the Japanese envoys to the U.S. Next, I studied the pros and cons of the traditional Japanese costume and its gender distinctions as described in aforementioned books by Griffis, Bird, and Stoddard. Finally, I analyzed the articles about traditional Japanese dresses in Western newspapers. The research results of these three studies led to my conclusion.

II . Westerners' perception of the traditional costumes worn by Japanese envoys to the U.S.

Japanese envoys visited the United States in 1860, 1867, and 1871. At that time, many Americans were fascinated by traditional Japanese clothing worn by the diplomats, as shown in newspaper articles and illustrations of their costumes.

1. The traditional costume of the Japanese envoys to the United States in 1860.

First, I examine the description of the official dress (*Haori Hakama*) from the newspaper articles. This costume was worn by Japanese envoys as an official dress while they stayed in America (Fig.1).



Fig.1 "Japanese envoys dressed in *Haori Hakama*,"
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper 9 Jun. 1860

The article 'GREAT RUSH OF LADIES-THE JAPANESE AT HOME-HOW THEY EMPLOY THEIR TIME' from *The New York Times* on May 16, 1860, shows that some Americans compared the Japanese envoys' trousers (*Hakama*) to a Turk's pants, and their coat (*Haori*) to an American butcher's shirt. We can see that the Americans noticed the form of those clothes when they evaluated *Haori Hakama*. I quote from the article 'The Japanese in New York,' on *The New York Times* on June 20, 1860.

It is definitely settled that the Prince Embassy will not visit the Academy of Music to-day.... It is not at all unlikely that the under-officials may be palmed off at other places as the real Princes, and from their dress few could tell the difference.

From this description, we can see that the Americans could not identify the differences in the Japanese envoys' costumes according to rank.

Next, I examine the description of the formal dress (*Kariginu*) from the newspaper articles. This was the dress worn by the Envoy and the Vice Envoy of the Japanese delegation when they visited the White House on May 17, 1860 (Fig.2). Rest of the envoys wore *Suou* and *Hoi* for a formal dress, according to their ranks (Tanaka 22) (Fig.3).

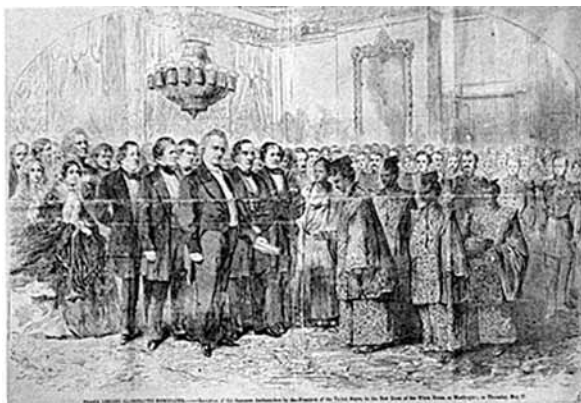


Fig 2. "RECEPTION OF THE JAPANESE EMBASSADORS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, IN THE EAST ROOM OF THE WHITE HOUSE, MAY 17," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* 2 Jun. 1860



Fig 3. "THE JAPANESE ENVOY IS FULL COSTUME," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* 9 Jun. 1860

The New York Times, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* and *Harper's Weekly* recorded in detail the costume that the Japanese delegation wore when they interviewed with the United States president². The fascination over the Japanese costumes is evident in the article, 'The Japanese at the White House,' on *The New York Times* on May 18, 1860.

The chief Prince was arrayed in a rich brocade purple silk sack, with ample overhanging sleeves, and flowing trowsers of the same color. The other two dignitaries

in green of similar texture and fashion. They were caps like inverted ladies' capes, fastened on the crown of the head by strings passing under the chin.... Gen. Cass privately said, referring to their ample trowsers, "That they would look better with hoops."

This describes in detail the material and the form of formal dress that chief Prince (The Envoy) and two senior officials wore. It compares Japanese envoys' caps to inverted ladies' capes, and points out that their trousers would be improved with hoops underneath. This description of *Kariginu*, *Suou*, and *Hoi* points up how Americans focused on the form when they considered the Japanese dress, and judged the clothing based on practicality especially by comparison against Western clothing.

On the other hand, the article "The Japanese Embassy at Washington" in *The Illustrated London News* on June 16, 1860 writes about the Japanese envoys' visit to the White House that "in point of size and extravagance of embroidery the dresses of the Ambassadors were worthy the occasion." The English, who value tradition, thus focused on the ritualistic aspect of Japanese envoys' clothing in their appraisal. From these articles, we can detect an underlying difference in perspective even within the greater Western culture, between the pragmatic Americans and the traditionalist English.

2. The traditional costume of the Japanese envoys to the United States in 1867 and in 1871

When the Japanese Commissioners arrived in New York in 1867, they attracted no attention from the Americans because they wore European clothing³. From this fact, we may infer that the Americans did not recognize as Japanese those who did not wear traditional clothing. When *Iwakura* envoys visited America in 1871, they wore Western dress, but for the meeting with the President of the United States they chose traditional Japanese official court dress (*Ikan*) and the formal dress (*Hitatare*). The March. 23, 1872 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* features an article on "THE NATION'S GUESTS-THE NEW WORLD ADVISING THE OLD. RECEPTION OF THE JAPANESE EMBASSY" and with an illustration (Fig4).



Fig.4 "WASHINGTON-PRESENTATION OF THE JAPANESE EMBASSY TO THE PRESTDENT AND CABINET," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* 23 Mar. 1872

This article describes Japanese envoys' clothing color, form of the dress, clothing materials, form of hats, and shoe design in detail⁴. It compares the envoy and vice envoy's shoes to the "American gaiter boots," and remarks that the secretaries' hats are "helmet-shaped." Similar to how they viewed the envoys in 1860, Americans again evaluate the Japanese envoy's formal costume by comparing it to Western costume.

Ⅲ. The traditional costume as seen by Westerners staying in Japan

1. The traditional Japanese costume's pros and cons

First, I examine the traditional Japanese costume's merits. Kimono is the garment that represents the traditional Japanese clothing, and it shows a straight, vertical silhouette when worn. Bird describes that traditional Japanese clothing has one striking advantage compared to Western clothing because it lengthens the typically short stature of the Japanese and conceals the defects of their figure (14), and emphasizes that the Japanese look better in traditional costume than in Western costume (31). Stoddard also indicates that Japanese ladies make a serious mistake when they exchange their national style of dress for European garments, because their charm and beauty are lost when they wear European clothing (158). Thus, Westerners recognize that the traditional Japanese costume with a straight silhouette is the ideal costume for the Japanese. Next, Bird mentions the advantages of traditional Japanese costume sewing as the following.

All Japanese girls learn to sew and to make their own clothes, but there are none of the mysteries and difficulties which make the sewing lesson a thing of dread with us. The *kimomo*, *haori*, and girdle, and even the long hanging sleeves, have only parallel seams, and these are only tacked or basted, as the garments, when washed, are taken to pieces, and each piece, after being very slightly stiffened, is stretched upon a board to dry. (69)

According to Bird, learning to sew is laborious for English women, but Japanese women are able to sew easily because there are no excessive challenges to their technique. As we know, Western costume is cut by draping (three dimensional design) and it is complicated to sew, but traditional Japanese costume is simple to sew since it cuts along straight lines by patternmaking (two dimensional design). Thus, Bird admits the ease of making and other benefits of traditional Japanese dress. Finally, Griffis describes the many roles of traditional Japanese sleeves as below.

What pretty children! Chubby, rosy, sparkling-eyed. The cold only made their feet pink, and their cheeks red. How curiously dressed, with coats like long wrappers, and long, wide, square sleeves, which I know serve for pockets, for I just saw a boy buy some rice cracknels, hot from the toasting coals, and put them in his sleeves.(354)

He also writes that "The Japanese, however, make a great fuss over a little cold. They go about

with their hands in their sleeves” (404). Griffis notes that a Japanese boy uses Kimono’s sleeves instead of pockets. He takes a close look at how the Japanese insert their hands inside their sleeves in cold weather as Westerners use pockets. Griffis recognizes that while Japanese costume doesn’t have pockets, the Kimono’s large sleeves have more functions than pockets in European costume.

Most of the drawbacks of Japanese costume are about the difficulty of putting it on Bird writes:

The boatmen, travelers, and cultivators, were nearly or altogether without clothes, but the richer farmers worked in the fields in curved bamboo hats as large as umbrellas, *kimonos* with large sleeves not girt up, and large fans attached to their girdles.... Probably the inconvenience of the national costume for working men partly accounts for the general practice of getting rid of it. It is such a hindrance, even in walking, that most pedestrians have “their loins girded up” by taking the middle of the hem at bottom of the *kimono* and tucking it under the girdle. (43-44)

She describes how Japanese sailors, travelers, and farmers either wore the Kimono without a belt or were even nearly undressed. Bird guesses that Japanese laborers are not comfortable wearing the Kimono while working or even while walking. Stoddard writes, “American ladies who have tried the Japanese dress say that the tying of the obi is extremely difficult” (158). Based on these statements we can see that Westerners thought of Japanese costume as burdensome for movement and constrictive to the body.

2. Traditional Japanese men’s and women’s costumes

The records of traditional Japanese men’s costume are limited to that of the lower class, since the Japanese emperor and most of the upper class men wore European clothing. Bird describes, “The Mikado and his ministers, naval and military officers and men, the whole of the civil officials and the police, wear European clothes, as well as a number of dissipated-looking young men who aspire to represent ‘young Japan’”(30). Griffis writes that peasants wear old unlined cotton in winter, and that their clothing “consists of a rag around their loins in all about thirty-six inches of decency in summer” (361). He describes the lower-class men’s clothing as “exceedingly scanty” (331). Bird mentions about peasant men’s clothing that “the men may be said to wear nothing” (83). She also writes that rickshaw workers wore “short blue cotton drawers”, “short blue cotton shirts with wide sleeves shirts” and “displaying chest and back elaborately tattooed with dragons and fishes” (34). She also writes that rickshaw workers wore “incomprehensible blue tights and short blue over shirts displaying chest” (17) and back elaborately tattooed with dragons and fish. According to Bird, “Tattooing has recently been prohibited; but it was not only a favorite adornment, but a substitute for perishable clothing” (34). Westerners point out that Japanese lower-class men’s clothing uses less materials, thus exposing their body in a barbarian way. However, they also acknowledge that Japanese lower-class men compensate for the drawbacks of their clothing by tattooing, which shows their attempt to understand Japanese peasant’s clothing with a positive perspective.

In contrast to the men, all classes of Japanese women mostly wore traditional clothing. One of the characteristics of women's Kimono is tying a large belt (*Obi*) on the back. Stoddard calls the *Obi* an "enormous cushion," and a "sofa-pillow" (157). Griffis focuses on the red petticoat (*Juban*) that Japanese unmarried girls wear inside the Kimono. Writing that the *Juban* "peeps out so prettily at times" (506), Griffis honors the special beauty of the traditional Japanese costume when worn. He also writes that Osaka women "dress in better taste, tie their girdles in a style nearer perfection, and build coiffures that are at once the envy and despair of Tokio damsels" (408). As for lower-class women, Bird describes.

My mago, with her toil-hardened, thoroughly good-natured face rendered hideous by black teeth, wore straw sandals, blue cotton trousers with a vest tucked into them, as poor and worn as they could be, and blue cotton towel knotted round her head (84).

She also writes:

Few of the women wear anything but a short petticoat wound tightly round them, or blue cotton trousers very tight in the legs and baggy at the top, with a blue cotton garment open to the waist tucked into the band,... The short petticoat is truly barbarous-looking, and when a woman has a nude baby on her back or in her arms, and stands staring vacantly at the foreigner, I can hardly believe myself in "civilized" Japan (83).

As Griffis and Bird record, Japanese women's clothing was very fashionable and sophisticated in big cities like Osaka, but peasant women wore blue cotton trousers, vests or blue cotton garments as everyday clothes, unable to afford a lifestyle driven by fashion. In addition, these peasant women's clothing culture was recognized as barbarous and uncivilized by Westerners.

IV. The traditional Japanese costume in Western newspapers

In this chapter, I examine the articles and illustrations about traditional Japanese clothing in newspapers in the U.S. and the U.K from 1860 to 1890. The article "women of Japan" in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, published on May 26, 1860, states that Japanese women's clothing is very close to men's clothing. Bird also had a similar opinion that "from the dress no notion of the sex of the wearer could be gained" (83). In fact, women's and men's Kimonos are designed nearly the same way. Therefore, Westerners saw no difference between the Kimonos worn by men and women. We can't find articles on Japanese costume in American newspapers from 1861 to 1865, since this was the time of the American Civil War. On the other hand, an English newspaper, *The Illustrated London News*, describes Japanese peasant's costume as "strange-looking dresses" in the article "SKETCHES IN JAPAN," on Aug. 17, 1861. From late 1860s onwards, Japan promoted its culture proactively to Western countries, sending performers such as a troupe of jugglers. The article "The Japanese jugglers" in *The Times* on Feb 14, 1867, tells that Japanese jugglers, "richly

habited in their native costume,” were incredibly popular at that time due to the amusements that they provided. This troupe then went on to America; the June 15, 1867 issue of *Harper's Weekly* introduces their performance and the Kimono-wearing jugglers on a full-page illustration (Fig.5). The illustration “ST. VALENTINES DAY-THE OLD STORY IN ALL LANDS,” published on Feb.22, 1868, also in *Harper's Weekly*, shows a Japanese man and woman in traditional Japanese costume celebrating the Western holiday (Fig.6). These illustrations boosted the image of Japanese traditional clothing in the West. *Harper's Weekly* again features an illustration of Kimono-wearing Japanese women in the article “JAPANESE LADIES” on Mar. 5, 1870 (Fig.7). This piece describes Japanese street costumes condescendingly, that these “certainly present a very absurd appearance.” It also wryly warns American ladies saying:

Before we laugh at the costumes of these semi-civilized people, perhaps it would be well to inquire whether our friends of the Celestial Empire are altogether unjust in styling us “outside barbarians” in matters of taste and fashion. Ladies who take delight in the hideousness of the “Grecian bend” are little right to laugh at their Japanese sister.

This admonishment reveals, if not an aesthetic understanding and appreciation for the Japanese costume, at least a welcome judiciousness and conscientiousness against cultural imperialism.

In the late 19th century, Japan sent students to America and Europe several times in order to accept Western culture with eagerness and ambition. In 1871, Japan sent more than a dozen students to America, including girls as young as seven, nine, and eleven years old. They studied for 10 years in America, then returned to Japan, to contribute profoundly to the modernization of Japanese education. During their time in the U.S., these young Japanese girls drew the attention of the American public. The article “The Japanese Ladies” in *The New York Times* on May 20, 1872, describes in detail Japanese clothing's materials, design, *Obi's* length and how to tie it, in order to know the traditional clothes of these women students studying in America. It can be estimated that the popularity and prestige of Japanese traditional clothing were increased by these changes in newspaper articles.



Fig.5 “The Japanese Jugglers.”
Harper's Weekly 15 Jun.
1867:376



Fig.6 “ST. VALENTINE'S DAY-THE
OLD STORY IN ALL LANDS.”
Harper's Weekly 22 Feb.1868:124



Fig.7 “JAPANESE LADIES.”
Harper's Weekly 5 Mar.
1870:157

In particular, we can see these kinds of changes in English newspapers between 1870 and 1880. *The Times* lavishes its highest compliment on Japan, calling it “Eastern Great Britain” on Aug. 20, 1872; and in the article “China and Japan” on Aug. 21, 1873, it praises that “foreign visitors saw much to admire and like in old Japan, and regret that so many features of interest are being needlessly effaced in a desire for reform, which seems to degenerate in trifles almost into a craving for change.” Those newspaper articles confirm that the British were interested in Japanese traditional culture. For example, *The Illustrated London News* on Apr. 11, 1874 features an illustrated article on Japanese dancing girls wearing the Kimono (fig.8). In the year 1885, the comic opera called *The Mikado* created a sensation in England. *The Illustrated London News* on April 4, 1885 includes the sketches from *The Mikado* at the Savoy Theatre and an introduction to the opera, and it describes stage costumes as “the handsome Japanese costumes”(Fig9). This opera played a crucial role in showing the beauty of Japanese traditional costumes.



Fig.8 “Japanese Dancing girl.” *The Illustrated London News* 11 Apr. 1874



Fig.9 “The Mikado at the Savoy Theatre.” *The Illustrated London News* 4 Apr. 1885

In the same newspaper on January 22, 1887, there is an article that people wore Kimonos for a new Christmas entertainment at a children’s Christmas party. There were two Japanese booths or kiosks erected instead of a Christmas tree, and there are “children of rather larger growth, dressed as Japanese” dancing a Japanese Quadrille, inspired by “the special beauty” of *The Mikado* production (Fig.10). Also, *The Illustrated London News* on December 29, 1888, has an illustration “Truth Doll-Show” which includes, alongside Western dolls, four Japanese dolls wearing traditional Japanese clothing (Fig.11).



Fig.10 "Children's Japanese Quadrille."
The Illustrated London News 22 Jan. 1887



Fig.11 "Truth Doll-Show"
The Illustrated London News
 29 Dec.1888

From these articles and illustrations, we confirm that in Britain, traditional Japanese costume was incorporated into the most profoundly Western cultural symbols such as Christmas, becoming a popular trend.

The article "The Japanese Headdress and Pillow" in *The Illustrated London News* on May 31, 1890, also point out that the Kimono is common to both sexes but that men's Kimono has a narrow belt (*Obi*) with no embroidery or bright colors to make it conspicuous, which makes it possible to distinguish men's and women's Kimono. This is different from the article "women of Japan" in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, published on May 26, 1860, and also Bird's earlier account. As the popularity of traditional Japanese costume increases, the Kimono changes from a unisex costume ("No difference between the Kimonos worn by men and women") to one that respects gender distinction ("difference between the Kimonos worn by men and women"). It also adds, "The national costume is certainly pleasing in its simplicity, but now European dress is rapidly being adopted. Which is a pity, as it tends a great deal to destroy the characteristic look of the people." This idea is very similar to Stoddard's as we discussed in III-1. We can observe that Westerners felt regret about the diminishing of the traditional Japanese costume due to the acceptance of Western clothing culture.

V. Conclusion

This study illuminates how Westerners in the late 19th century thought about and evaluated traditional Japanese costumes, by analyzing contemporary Western newspapers and the records of first-hand observations and experiences of Westerners who stayed in Japan. The results may be summarized as follows.

First, I examined Westerners' perception of the traditional costumes worn by Japanese

envoys to the U.S. Americans were fascinated by the Japanese envoys' costumes in 1860 because they wore traditional Japanese clothing. In particular, Americans focused on the traditional costume's form, and evaluated it by comparing it to Western clothing. In contrast, the English who value tradition noted the ritualistic qualities of Japanese envoys' clothing. This highlights the difference in perspectives of the Americans and the English.

Secondly, I studied how traditional Japanese costume was recognized by Westerners who stayed in Japan. The Westerners opined that the traditional Japanese costume has merits of concealing the defects of their figure, simplicity of sewing, and having large sleeves with the added role of pockets in European costume. They recognized that this is the best fitting costume for the Japanese. They also noted that the Japanese costume is difficult to put on, and that once worn, it hinders movement and constricts the body. The records by the Westerners in Japan regarding traditional Japanese men's costume are limited to that of the lower-class. The lower-class men's clothing is exceedingly scanty, using minimal materials and exposing the body. On the other hand, they also acknowledge that Japanese lower-class men compensate for the drawbacks of their clothing by tattooing, which shows their attempt to understand Japanese peasant's clothing with a positive perspective. In contrast to the men, nearly all Japanese women mostly wore traditional clothing, making it possible for us to study the Western perspective over the class spectrum. Japanese women's clothing was very fashionable and sophisticated in big cities like Osaka, but peasant women were unable to afford a lifestyle driven by fashion. In addition to this, these peasant women's clothing culture was recognized as barbarous and uncivilized by Westerners.

Third, I analyzed the articles about traditional Japanese costume in Western newspapers. Westerners saw no difference between the Kimonos worn by men and women in 1860s. Also, Western newspapers describe Japanese peasant's costume as "strange-looking dresses," betraying a negative undertone. From late 1860s onwards, we see a positive remaking of Japanese cultural image, due to Japan's proactive promotion of its culture to Western countries. For example, the illustration published in *Harper's Weekly* on Feb.22, 1868, shows a man and a woman in traditional Japanese costume celebrating Valentine's day. In particular, we can see these kinds of changes in English newspapers between 1870s and 1880s. *The Times* (August. 20, 1872) goes so far as to pay Japan its highest compliment, calling it "Eastern Great Britain"; it is clear that the British were very interested in Japanese traditional culture. In the year 1885, the comic opera called *The Micado* created a sensation in England. We confirm that in Britain, traditional Japanese costume was incorporated into the most profoundly Western cultural symbols such as Christmas, becoming a popular trend as shown by *The Illustrated London News* on January 22, 1887. Since the awareness of the traditional Japanese costume was raised in 1890s, Westerners began to see a difference between the Kimonos worn by men and women. We also know that Westerners felt regret about the diminishing of the traditional Japanese costume due to the acceptance of Western clothing culture, as Stoddard writes. While perception of the traditional Japanese costume moved in a positive direction in Western newspapers, we also confirm that the traditional Japanese costume worn by lower-class Japanese gave a mostly negative impression to the Westerners who stayed in Japan.

This study could not review American newspapers from 1874 to 1890 in detail. I will

continue this study using newspapers for these years to further this research.

Notes

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¹ See “The United States,” *The Times* 17 Jul. 1860

² “The Ambassadors were arrayed in state dresses of very with flowing sleeves and trousers, while his two colleagues had similarly fashioned garments of green. They wore caps like inverted ladies’ capes, fastened on the crown of the head by strange passing under the chin. They carried pikes, halberds and emblems of their rank. The inferior officers wore small hats, consisting of a round band, with triangular crowns, also tied to the head by strings under the chin.” “Their Interview with the President.” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* 2 Jun. 1860

“The chief Prince was arrayed in a rich brocade purple silk sack, with ample overhanging sleeves, and flowing trowsers of the same color. The other two dignitaries in green of similar texture and fashion. They wore caps like ladies, inverted capes, fastened on the crown of the head by strings passing under the chin. They carried pikes, halberds and emblems of their rank. The inferior officers wore small hats, consisting of a round band, with triangular crowns, also tied to the head by strings under the chin.” “The costume of the ambassador.” *Harper’s Weekly* 26 May 1860

³ “The Japanese Commissioners, who arrived in this City on Monday, spent most of yesterday in the privacy of their own apartments at the Metropolitan Hotel.... A few of them took a stroll about the City during the day, but being dressed in European costume they attracted no attention.” “The Japanese Commissioners,” *The New York Times* 24 Apr. 1867

⁴ “The Ambassadors and secretaries were in Japanese court costume, but Mr. Mori was in American party dress. The underdress of *Iwakura* and associates was in some cases of purple and in others of dark blue silk, with skull-caps, surmounted by high combs, to which were attached pieces of steel-colored wire gauze, over two feet in length, projecting several inches above the head, and then downward. They also wore jeweled swords, carried, it was noticed, on the left side instead of in front, and no more than one sword apiece. Both Ambassadors and secretaries wore plain black silk overdresses, girdled with purple silk and white turndown collars. The principals wore American gaiter boots and the secretaries Japanese silk shoes. The head-dresses of the latter were of silk glazed black silk, helmet-shaped,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* 23 Mar. 1872

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