

***Seiyô ishokujû* (Western clothing, food, and homes, 1867)
by Fukuzawa Yukichi**

I. CLOTHING Most undershirts and underpants are made of knit fabric, but some are made of flannel. People prefer to wear flannel underwear during winter. Top shirts are made of flax fabric and are worn every day. Flannel shirts are usually worn while traveling or during a voyage at sea. Since they are made of wool, they do not show the dirt.

Collars are made of ramie. Paper collars are also available. Although the paper kind is less expensive, it has to be disposed of after one day's use. One must always wear a collar with Western clothes. Wearing a Western suit without a collar is just like wearing the Japanese under-kimono without its collar. It is simply improper.

Regular shoes are worn by Westerners just like Japanese leather-soled sandals. Boots are worn either in rainy weather or when riding a horse. Slippers are worn only inside the house. A shoe horn is used by placing it at the heel of the foot to slip into the shoe.

A long coat is always worn by persons of high social standing. A short coat, usually worn by lower-class men such as craftsmen, is also worn by distinguished persons when relaxing at home. They sometimes wear a short coat even outside the house. On the other hand, the lower classes sometimes wear long coats, too. In short, people wear anything (without rules) depending on their taste. In general, the French wear long coats, whereas Americans and the British do not really care what they wear on top as long as they wear clean underthings, and therefore even distinguished people wear short coats.

For formal occasions, however, the long coat is worn by military officials as a "uniform" with gold and silver ornaments, depending on rank. There are numerous other kinds of coats but it is impossible to cite them all here.

The most popular material for coats is wool but cashmere, which is a mixture of wool and silk, as well as flannel and white ramie are also used.

A top hat is worn by an aristocrat, while a man of lower rank wears a round one. However, it does not necessarily mean that men of high social rank never wear round hats. Just as in the case of coats, those of high social rank have the freedom of wearing whatever pleases them.

In general, one should keep in mind that a top hat is worn with a long coat and a round hat with a short coat.

Although flat caps are commonly worn by ordinary men, they are intended mainly for military officers, who attach gold and silver ornaments to the front. The design of these ornaments varies

depending on the rank of the person wearing the cap. Some caps are trimmed with gold or silver. If you see someone wearing a cap with gold and silver decoration, it is advisable to assume that he is an officer.

Umbrellas are all made of silk. There are none made of paper in the Japanese manner. An umbrella, when folded, can also be used as a cane.

The preceding is a summary of Western clothing. As for the proper order of dressing, one puts on the undershirt first, then the underpants and the shirt. If one puts on each item following the illustrations in proper order, finishing with the overcoat, then the set of clothing will be complete.

Western clothes have pockets in various places inside where one can keep all small belongings. A handkerchief for example, should be kept in the pocket of the coat, money in the pocket of the trousers. A watch should be put inside the pocket of the waistcoat and its chain should be put through a buttonhole.

The following is the proper way to go to the toilet: to urinate, simply unbutton the front of your trousers. To defecate, however, you must unbutton your suspenders front and back; putting them back on again is quite clumsy and troublesome.

II. FOOD Westerners do not use chopsticks for eating. Meat is cut very carefully and then transferred to each individual's plate. Set in front of each person are a knife which is held in the right hand in order to cut a small piece of the meat, and a fork which is held in the left hand in order to stick the piece of meat and bring it to the mouth. It is awfully bad manners to use a knife to carry food to your mouth.

Soup is also served in a plate, and is eaten with a spoon. It has to be remembered that slurping is bad manners, even when you drink tea.

This illustration shows one place setting. At a banquet, twenty or even thirty guests sit at one big table.

For regular meals, red wine, sherry, or port wine are served. On special occasions champagne and various other kinds of liquor are served. One drinks brandy in a small cup after meals. The liquor made of barley called "beer" has a peculiar, bitter taste. Some people like beer because of that bitterness. Whiskey and brandy are too strong to drink during meals. They are unsophisticated drinks, preferred mainly by lower class men.

III. HOMES In the bedroom, Westerners keep a washstand where they not only attend to their toilette in the morning but also frequently wash their hands before and after each meal. The big bowl in this illustration *is* ceramic. It is used just like the copper basins we have in Japan. The dirty water is poured into the jar underneath.

This illustration shows a mirror placed on top of a chest of drawers. Since Western clothes have numerous buttons, it helps to use a mirror to look at yourself while buttoning and unbuttoning. You also need a mirror for combing your hair every morning and evening. That is why you find a mirror in every room in a Western house. For the finishing touch, you sprinkle perfume over the collar for purification. The small flask in front of the mirror is a perfume bottle and beside it is a brush for dusting off clothes.

Generally speaking, Westerners keep themselves cleaner than Japanese.

There are no tatami mats in Western houses. A thick carpet is placed over wooden floors and beautiful rugs are thrown on top of the carpet. There are usually several chairs on which to sit.

Since you do not sit directly on the floor, it is perfectly all right to go inside the house with shoes on. Besides, very often you find a mat in front of the entrance of homes. You wipe your shoes on it and clean off the dirt before entering the house. A Westerner who has just arrived in Japan tends to make the mistake of entering a Japanese house without taking off his shoes, but we should overlook this ignorance of our customs.

A bed is about three feet wide and six feet long. A double bed is about four feet wide. There are three layers of bedding; a straw mattress on the bottom, then a cotton one, and a wool one on the top. Finally, a white cloth is placed over them. The thickness of all layers should be almost one- and-a-half feet. However, the covers that are used are extremely thin. They use only two top sheets and one or two blankets. Although the top covers are thin, you can stay warm all night with your body sinking into the soft mattress. The bed linens are extremely clean. The sheets are white as snow, and you never find any fleas or lice.

The container that you see under the bed in the illustration is a chamber pot. You always find this thing underneath the bed when you stay in a Westerner's house. You should be careful not to mistake this container for something else when you visit a Western country as some Japanese actually did.

A watch is a somewhat irrelevant subject as regards Western living, but the author believes it is quite necessary to familiarize oneself with reading the time; all people carry a watch in the West to know the time without relying on temple bells as in our country.