

## KOREAN HEADDRESSES IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

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Among the many customs peculiar to quaint Korea, the style and manner of wearing the hat is probably the most noticeable. Fashions there seem never to change, for many styles of hats of to-day are of the same material and shape as those of the days of the Ming dynasty, or of the days of Confucius. The people have hats for all ranks and for all occasions—there are hats for the nobility, for the gentry, for petty officers, for chair bearers, and for almost every ceremony—and perhaps no nation has more ceremonies than the Koreans. There are also hats worn when a person reaches manhood, others for use during ancestral worship, for passing the civil service examination, during betrothal, at marriage, while mourning, and for making official visits to high dignitaries. The hat is in fact a badge of honor and its absence a sign of disgrace.

For many years butchers were not allowed to wear hats, the Buddhist religion making it a sin to take the life of any living creature. In 1895, however, a petition was presented to the Home Department of the Korean government asking that public notice be given throughout the eight provinces that butchers be allowed to wear hats the same as other citizens and that they be free from molestation. The preamble of the petition stated the grievances of the butchers: how for five hundred years, although guilty of no crime against their country, they had been grievously oppressed. The government promptly granted the petition. Upon being notified that their request had been allowed, a butcher named Pak, who had prepared the petition, wrote to the country butchers informing them of their approaching deliverance and warning them against

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<sup>1</sup>The author of this paper was a young man of great talent and promise. He was a skilful artist, and when a mere boy often visited the National Museum for the purpose of sketching and study. Through his deep interest in Oriental, and especially in Korean, subjects, he became acquainted with the attachés of the Korean legation, who, impressed by his usefulness, caused him to be made an official of the fifth grade, in which capacity he was employed at the time of his death, January 15, 1900.—W. H.

becoming puffed up by their sudden elevation in rank. A month later placards announcing that the petition was granted were posted throughout the country. The butchers in Seoul had for some months been allowed to wear hats; but if a country butcher wore one, he was greeted by some such remark as "You dog of a butcher, what are you doing wearing a hat like one of us?" Butchers are considered lower than beggars, as it is said "something might be made out of a beggar, but it is impossible for a butcher ever to rise."

When a boy attains the age of seven years he starts a topknot, which when grown is never changed in form as long as he lives. The topknot was the cause of an amusing episode in Seoul in



FIG. 3.—Headband and topknot. (No. 77,112, U. S. N. M.)

1895. Like many other nations when first adopting European customs, the Koreans went to extremes. An edict was issued that all topknots should be cut off, and, as the people naturally objected, soldiers were sent out in the city to forcibly cut off all topknots that had not been removed in compliance with the edict. This created such consternation that farmers would not bring their produce to the city markets, and such suffering resulted from want of food that the edict was abrogated and topknots were once more in full favor.

Every Korean, at all times, day and night, wears a band around the head (fig. 3). The hats are perched on top, never low on the head, and are secured by pins (fig. 4) to the topknot and by strings tied under the chin. Among the nobility, circular or ring-shaped

insignia of rank, about half an inch in diameter, are worn back of each ear and fastened to the head by a string (fig. 5). Five grades of nobility are thus represented: (a) *Tā-kum*, first rank, smooth white jade; (b) second rank, smooth gold; (c) *Young-kum*, third rank, carved gold; (d) fourth rank, carved white jade; (e) *Na-ri*, fifth rank, tortoise shell (anciently of silver). The button of the royal family is of smooth green jade.

The national hat of Korea (*kat*) is made of fine silk over a bamboo framework, stiffened with size (fig. 6). It has a small, cylindrical, truncated crown and a broad brim with long tying strings. The diameter of the brim is 18 inches and the height of crown  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches. In ancient times the brim was, by royal edict, very much wider to prevent conspirators from whispering to each other, the stiff brims keeping them some distance apart. This illustrates a national characteristic of Koreans, their suspicion of every one, and it will be many years

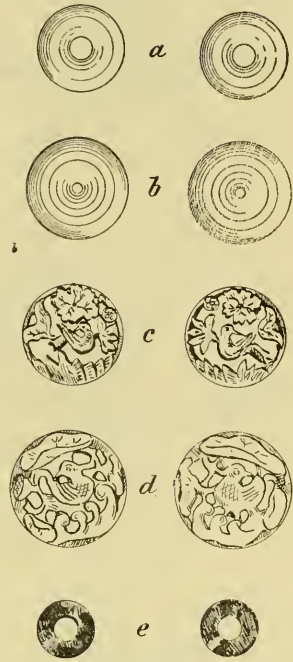


FIG. 5.—Buttons for headband denoting rank of nobility. (About  $\frac{2}{3}$  nat. size.)

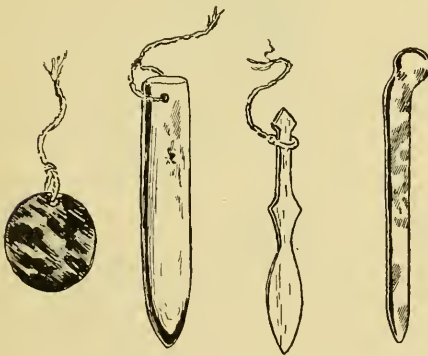


FIG. 4.—Hatpins for topknot. ( $\frac{2}{3}$  nat. size.)

before this universal peculiarity is eradicated in this otherwise kind, genial people. The *kon* is a wide, circular band of black horsehair,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, worn by those of the literary class who have not yet passed a civil service examination or held office (fig. 7). It may also be worn by one who passes the second grade of merit at the literary or military examinations before holding office, but the lower class of merchants and laborers, unless after such examination, cannot wear it.



FIG. 6.—National hat. (No. 77,060.)



FIG. 7.—House hat. (No. 77,056.)

In the Korean civil service examination, one of the requisites is the examination cap, or *yu kon*, composed of a piece of coarse black cotton stuff, shaped like a grocer's paper bag, 9 inches high and 7 inches in diameter. It is worn by students only at the literary examinations, held yearly for the preliminary grade (fig 8). This hat is reputed to be made in the shape of the mountain near which Confucius was born, and was introduced from China several centuries ago, probably during the Ming dynasty.



FIG. 8.—Civil service examination hat. (No. 77,057.)

The court or official hat, *samo*, is 7 inches high with a high terraced crown of stiff lacquered paper and woven bamboo, covered with black sateen (fig. 9). It fits tightly over the forehead, and at the back on either side there are curved, ear-shaped wings of gauze that project horizontally forward. This is practically the coronet of Korea and can be worn only by the nobility on official occasions, but officers of the government wear such hats during an audience with the King. The wings are said to have been made to resemble ears bent forward in the act of listening to catch every word of command the King may utter. The royal hat or crown

of the King of Korea is of the same shape as the *samo*, except that the wings are vertical instead of horizontal, indicating that the king receives his commands only from Heaven. The Koreans are great lovers of Chinese classics, and like all peoples of the far east, attach poetical names to everything. The gauze wings on the official hat are called the "wings of the locust." The Chinese poet says, "like the locust singing in the tree with love and peace toward all men," and as the locust is the emblem of peace, the royalty and men of noble rank, who are supposed to spend their time seeking peace and the welfare of their country, wear the locust-wing emblems on their headdress.



FIG. 9.—Official hat. (No. 202,889.)

Perhaps the most elaborate of Korean hats is the one worn by the king's assistants when he offers sacrifices. This is helmet-shaped and is skilfully woven of thin strips of bamboo encrusted with gilt papier-mâché dragons, scrolls, and other emblems. It is fastened to the head by a large hatpin, with cords and tassel, thrust through the sides and back of the hat (fig. 10).

A hat that seems to be prescribed for the bridegroom at the time of the wedding ceremony is shown in figure 11. It is made of lacquered paper, covered with silk cut and folded into a wedge



FIG. 10.—Ceremonial hat. (No. 77,058.)



FIG. 11.—Wedding hat. (No. 202,886.)

shape, and depending from the back are three double tassels of red silk.

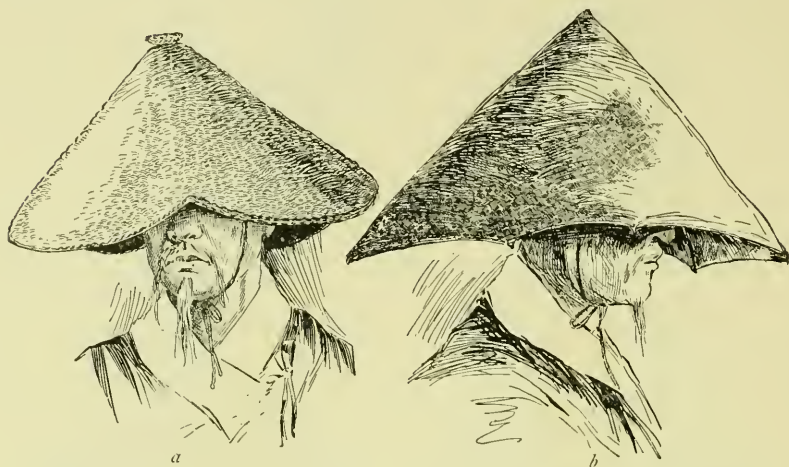


FIG. 12.—*a*, Mourner's hat (No. 77,066). *b*, Farmer's hat (No. 77,065).



FIG. 13.—Mourner's hat and headband. (No. 77,089.)

The largest hat worn in Korea is that of the farmer (fig. 12, *b*). It is conical, with hexagonal base, and is woven of split stalks of



millet. The exterior and interior of the straw are of different color and form a pleasing variety in the weave. It is stoutly braced inside with hoops of bamboo and gives effective protection against wind and storm.

Confucianism prevails among the higher classes in Korea and its influence permeates all classes of citizens. Confucius gave the order that mourning for three years should be worn for the loss of either parent, a custom strictly followed by Koreans. White is a mark of mourning, and all articles of mourning costume are covered with sack-cloth. The mourning hat, or *jang gat*, is largely



FIG. 14.—Royal chair-bearer's hat. (No. 202,886.)

in evidence in Korea (fig. 12, *a*); it is made of bamboo splints, the edges scalloped and finished with braiding, and is crowned with a rosette of bamboo. A frame to fit the head is fastened inside, and from it hang tying strings of twisted paper. It is 14 inches high and of 25 inches diameter, and is designed to hide the face, it being considered a grievous breach of etiquette to look into the face of a mourner. Taking advantage of this custom before Korea was opened to foreigners, Jesuit priests disguised themselves as mourners and lived among and taught the people for a long time

without detection. When the King dies, the nobility wear the *samo* in white (fig. 9). In the house and at a certain period the mourner wears a cap and head-band like that shown in figure 13.

The royal chair-bearers are trained from youth to carry a palanquin with a quiet, swinging motion free from jar. They wear one of the most peculiar of Korean hats (fig. 14), made of several thicknesses of brown paper, covered with purple satin, the front decorated with designs in silver paper, and from the top hangs a piece of gauze silk 5 inches long by 4 inches wide. The hat is  $\wedge$ -shaped, 10 inches high, 5 inches wide at the apex, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  by 6 inches square at the base.



FIG. 15.—“Fly’s head” hat. (No. 202,888.)

The official assistant’s hat, or *pare murce*, shown in figure 15, is of delicately interwoven horsehair and strips of bamboo covered with black silk. It is cylindrical in shape, 6 inches high, 7 inches in diameter, and is known among the Koreans as the “fly’s head.” The position of official assistant, or *shu re*, can hardly be explained to the European. He is a kind of secretary, superintendent, and general factotum for his employer, and is far from being a popular person where he is known. Koreans consider the fly the personification of greed and shamelessness, for no matter how many times



FIG. 16.—Royal musician's hat. (No. 202,887.)



FIG. 17.—Royal servant's hat. (No. 202,882.)

the insect may be driven away from food, it will return to finish its meal. As the *shu re* seems to be solicitous only about his



FIG. 18.—House caps. (Nos. 202,881, 202,878.)



FIG. 19.—Banded house caps.

pecuniary remuneration, and cares nothing for reprimand or abuse, he receives no more consideration than a fly, and must wear on his head his badge of servitude, which resembles a fly's head.



FIG. 20.—General's helmet. (No. 201,436.)



FIG. 21.—Soldier's helmet. (No. 128,344.)

The hat of the royal musician (fig. 16), is shaped somewhat like the official hat, but having a higher crown, and tassels of red silk hanging from the sides and back. The projecting wings are square at the extremities. This style of head-gear is worn only by the royal band detailed to furnish music in the palace.

The hat of the royal servant is of buckram, covered with brown silk. It is most ingeniously folded flat, and when open assumes the oblique outline shown in figure 17. This hat is worn with a suit of the same color and a blue sash.

The Korean is never hatless. When in the house his head is covered with a gauze skull-cap (fig. 18), which is considered *en d eshabille*, only intimate friends seeing it worn, and to appear with



FIG. 22.—*a*, Swordsman's hat (No. 202,879). *b*, Soldier's and constable's hat (No. 77,058).

it on the street would be the height of impropriety. The house hats are sometimes made in veritable nests, one over the other (fig. 19), varying in height, and in all of them the topknot can easily be seen through the meshes of the hat.

All of these hats are composed of bands of horse-hair, of different heights, some wider at the top than at the bottom, some cylindrical, others square in shape and nearly all open at the top.

There are a number of military hats, indicating different branches of the service, as shown in figures 20–23. The general's helmet (fig. 20), is a very elaborate affair, ornamented with brass dragons,

phoenix, Sanscrit prayers for victory, red plume, and trident-shaped brass at apex. The soldier's helmet (fig. 21), is padded with cotton and stiffened with perpendicular bands of iron riveted through the cloth. Other military hats (fig. 22-23), are pot-shaped, visored, made of felt stiffened with buckram and ornamented with bright-red tassels and plumes of birds.

Hats appropriate to the season of the year are worn by different individuals, the gentleman's winter hood being an example in



FIG. 23.—Musketeer's hat. (No. 202,880.)

point (fig. 24). This is of brocade, lined with red woolen cloth and bordered with otter fur, and is one of the few instances in which woolen cloth is used in Korea for any purpose.

The ornamental hood, an example of which is shown in figure 25, is placed upon the head of a very young child, and for its "protection" various characters are embroidered in the ribbon. The black ribbon at the back of the cap is removed when the child becomes able to speak.

The hat cover, or *kano*, is worn to protect the national hat from rain. It consists of a polygonal cone of oiled paper, folding like an umbrella (fig. 26), and is secured to the hat by a string of white paper, crossed under the chin and held by the hand. When not



FIG. 24.—Gentleman's winter hood. (No. 77,080.)



FIG. 25.—Baby's hat and detail of same. (No. 77,079.)



in use it is folded like a fan and carried in the sleeve. This is an interesting form of umbrella.

For the care of the hat, hat-boxes are used; these are woven of bamboo splints and covered with yellow oiled paper. An example is shown in figure 26.

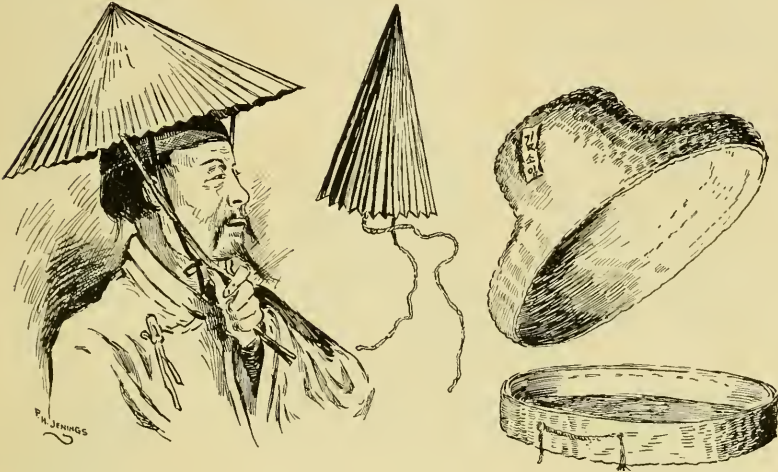


FIG. 26.—Umbrella or hat cover (No. 77,019), and hat-box (No. 151,628).

Usually the women cover the face with their outer robe or dress, so that earlier writers about Korea affirm that the women wear no hats. In figure 27, *a*, is shown a small satin-covered cap, having an ornamental button of jade on top, worn by women of the official class. Figure *b* represents a similar hat in white for mourning,

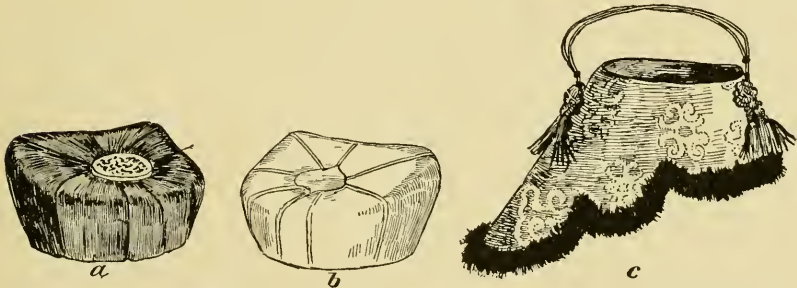


FIG. 27.—*a*, Lady's satin cap. *b*, Lady's mourning cap. *c*, Lady's winter hood.

and figure *c* is a winter hood of brocade, trimmed with fur and ornamented cords tied in fancy knots. In figure 28 are shown

methods of hair-dressing, and another style of hat with a streamer hanging down the back over the hair-knot, somewhat after the manner of the Tibetan woman.

As might be expected from the complexity of headdress, Koreans display the utmost skill in such manufactures. Nowhere in the world can better horsehair work be found, some of the hats showing as many as five different styles of hand-weaving so fine that only with a powerful lens can the stitches be seen.



FIG. 28.—Women's hats and mode of hair-dressing.

It is probable that the headband (fig. 3) is the oldest style of head-dress in Korea, and that the more complicated forms have been evolved during centuries of culture. Much of Korean custom is a survival of the influence of the Ming dynasty in China, whose culture was widespread in Korea.

There is one specimen in the National Museum which shows the Korean conception of a European hat. It has a high crown and is exquisitely made of horsehair and bamboo strips lacquered. It is an example of the revolutionary tendency of the reformers of 1895, and was one of the causes of the death and dispersion of those who would reform Korea in a year.

There are in all sixty-five different kinds of men's hats and about twelve different styles for children. Women are almost hatless, for they have only about half a dozen styles.

The people of Korea are rapidly adopting European ideas by introducing new laws, post offices, post roads, railroads, electrical plants, and many other improvements, and among the higher classes European dress has been adopted to some extent, yet changes of dress among the masses will come about but slowly, and it will be many years before the Korean hat will be relegated to the museum.