

FUJIWARA PERIOD.
(HEIAN)
897-1185.

Japan:

794-capital transferred from
Nara to Kyoto by Emperor
Kwammu.
844-suspension of intercourse
with China.

China:

907-959: Five Dynasties
960-1126: Sung

Europe:

1066-Norman Conquest
1096-First Crusades
1099-Capture of Jerusalem
Oriental luxury introduced
into Europe
Romanesque architecture
1163-Notre Dame.

The epoch of Japanese history that corresponds to the early mediaval era in the West was marked by a striking development of sentimentalism in the life of the nobility surrounding the Imperial Court. The political history of this period is a tale of the ebb and flow in the fortunes of the great clans, the Fujiwara, Taira and the Minamoto. Subsequent history is largely concerned with the doings of these houses.

In 794 the Emperor Kwammu transferred the capital from Nara to Kyoto possibly in an attempt to shake off the priestly influences which permeated the atmosphere of Nara. The Fujiwara period was an age of luxury and profusion insofar as the small aristocratic society developed a standard of living much in advance of that of the rest of their countrymen. With the suspension of intercourse with China in 844 there developed a nationalizing spirit. Continental culture imported during the past three centuries began

to be assimilated which led to a civilization Japanese in every respect, particularly in literature and art. Later in this epoch appeared the third wave of influence from abroad which was due to Buddhist monks of the Zen sect and pilgrims coming from abroad. The contemporary reigning dynasty in China was the Sung under which an attempt was made to fuse Buddhist ideas with those of the earlier Taoist and Confucianist system, a movement which resulted in a fresh impulse to art and the evolution of new forms. The effects of this ¹impulse in Japan continued through the succeeding Kamakura and Ashikaga periods.

With the removal of the capital to Kyoto, the Emperor assigned the Oribe No Tsukasa (dept. of weaving under Imperial patronage) a quarter in the northwestern part of the city. The area was restricted to two hundred by four hundred feet. Here, the weaving of textiles, especially brocades continued and flourished because ⁽¹⁾of the needs of the court nobles. The court nobility gave themselves over to writing poetic couplets, flower festivals, love ~~the~~ intrigues, gambling and the refinements of a beauty loving but sensual existence. What is known of the textile industry of these ages is obtained from paintings of court life, Buddhist statues and references ⁽²⁾made in the literature produced at this time. Something of the refinement and sophistication of society can be understood from "The Tale of Genji" written by a lady of the court itself, the Lady Murasaki. In it can be found many descriptions of the costumes, showing the extraordinary care and imagination both men and women

(1) Tapestry Weaving, Anon; Japan Magazine - 1910 - p. 559

(2) Isada, Naitake:

lavished on their persons-----"After much debating, the presents were distributed as follows: to Murasaki herself, a kirtle yellow without and flowered within, lightly diapered with the red plum blossom crest, a marvel of modern dyeing. To the Akashi child, a long close fitting dress, white without, yellow within, the whole seen through an outer facing of shimmering red gauze. To the Lady from the Village of Falling Flowers he gave a light blue robe with a pattern of sea shells woven into it. Lovely thought the dress was an example of complicated weaving, it would have been too light in tone had it not been covered with a somewhat heavy russet floss." (11)

Costume was extreme, not alone in being rich and costly but in the amount of material used. Men's sleeves were cut absurdly large and full, and women's dress was not merely baggy but voluminous. It is in this period that the use of ^scostly and gorgeous brocades and silks with beautiful patterns and splendid embroideries began to be used for garments. Heretofore such fabrics were produced for tribute only.

The most characteristic pattern found in the textiles was the diaper design. This was of two types: an all-over repeat of closely placed diaper and another in which the diaper acted as a background on which circular medallions usually consisting of flowers birds or butterflies were brocaded. (2) Sassanian designs as those (3) found in the previous periods continued to be produced.

New weaving techniques introduced:

Corded silk (Seigo) was first made in Kyoto about 1059. It was of two types: 1-silk cord used for

- pp. 463-464
- (1) - Tale of Genji - "A Wreath of Cloud" - by Lady Murasaki - translated by Arthur Waley
Boston & New York - Houghton Mifflin Co. The Riverside Press - Cambridge 1935-
- (2) - Honda, Noritake: Handbook of Japanese Art - p. 264
- (3) - Krummel, O: Kunstgewerbe in Japan p. 150

both warp and weft; 2- silk cord used only for
(1)
warp.

Satin (Shusha) made in Kyoto after the style of
(2)
the Chinese satin about 1131.

Crepe (Chirimen) was first mentioned as having been
introduced from China in 1158, decorated with stencilled
(3)
designs.

Ginran or silk brocaded with silver paper strips
was brought from China by travelers during the
(4)
tenth century.

Kinran or silk brocaded with gilt paper strips
(5)
brought from China during the tenth century.

(1)- Crewdson, p. 1414

Kummel, O. in Kunstgewerbe in Japan on page 150 says satin
was introduced during the Ashikaga period. (14th century)

(2)- Crewdson, p. 18

(3)-

(4)- Priest, A.: p. 16

Priest, Al: p. 37--gives the dates of importation between 1469-
1488.

157 Howell-Smith: p. 24--says the technique was first taught the
people of Sakai by Chinese weavers in the Tensho period
(1573-91).