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978-1-108-08061-3 - Japan: Its Architecture, Art, and Art Manufactures  
Christopher Dresser  
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Educated at the Government School of Design (predecessor of the Royal College of Art), Christopher Dresser (1834–1904) became arguably the first industrial designer, identified by his name on his work. He was an early proponent of oriental art: as a leading figure in the Aesthetic Movement, he promoted Japonism in art and decoration. In 1876–7 he toured Japan at the Japanese government's invitation, investigating local manufacturing and design. This beautifully illustrated 1882 work is the result. The first half is a travelogue of Dresser's time in Japan, written with a designer's eye for the architecture and decoration around him. The second half, covering the various ways in which design and decoration were used in the manufacturing industries, includes consideration of architectural motifs, the importance of symbols, lacquerware, ceramics, metalware, and fabric production. This remains an invaluable resource for the student of Japanese art and design.

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University Printing House, Cambridge, CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108080613](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108080613)

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2015

This edition first published 1882

This digitally printed version 2015

ISBN 978-1-108-08061-3 Paperback

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ART MANUFACTURES

BY

CHRISTOPHER DRESSER

PH.D., F.L.S., ETC.



LONDON  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1882

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*Printed by R. & R. CLARK, Edinburgh.*



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## P R E F A C E.

AN apology is needed for adding to the number of our books on Japan. We have heard of the ways of the Japanese, of the peculiarities of their manners, of their feasts and festivals, of the food they eat, and of the aspect of the country in which they live. My excuse for writing is a simple one—I am a specialist.

An architect and ornamentist by profession, and having knowledge of many manufacturing processes, I went to Japan to observe what an ordinary visitor would naturally pass unnoticed. As a specialist, and a specialist only, I submit this volume to public notice. When in Japan I engaged the best native photographer that I could find to take views for me ; thus I got not only architectural edifices, but also architectural details. I also engaged the best ornamentist in Kioto to make coloured drawings of temple decorations for me.

Many will be surprised when I say that as yet the English public know almost nothing, and even our architects very little, of Japanese architecture. Coloured illustrations are needed to give anything like a complete idea of the glories of Buddhistic art ; yet I hope that my book may throw some little light on Japanese building, and do something towards revealing the fact that Japan has had a great architectural history, although I have no chromatic illustrations. Ornament springs from architecture. I

have therefore endeavoured to trace its origin and development ; and for the first time, so far as I know, the growth of native conventional ornament is brought before the English reader.

Drawings of flowers, of birds, of fish, of insects, are all familiar to us ; but it is not generally known that just as the Greeks, Moors, and other peoples associated with their architecture certain conventional forms, so the Japanese have a national style of conventional ornament ; yet this is the case. To me the fact was almost unknown up to the time that I visited the country, although I had been an earnest student of Oriental art for nearly thirty years.

In my book I attempt to explain how the architecture resulted from climatic and religious influences, and how the ornaments with which domestic objects are figured, and the very finish of the objects themselves, are traceable to religious teachings.

As a guest of the nation, I was not only permitted to enter sacred edifices (some of which had never before been trodden by European feet), but I had also opportunities for studying all forms of art industry. For the privileges enjoyed I shall ever feel under a debt of gratitude to the members of the Japanese Government, I had also the honour of presentation to His Majesty the Mikado, who himself ordered that I should have every facility for seeing what I wished.

While in Japan I made a daily record of what I saw and did ; and this record was roughly illustrated. I either bought or had taken for me about a thousand photographs, some being fifteen inches by eighteen, the others about nine inches by twelve. I had a multitude of small coloured drawings made of temple ornaments. I visited sixty-eight potteries, and some scores of manufacturers engaged in other industries. I also brought specimens of work from most of the factories visited.

As to the temples and shrines, I saw about a hundred of the finest in the country, to say nothing of the crowd of temples

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nestled together on the top of Mount Koya-zan, many of which I studied minutely. In seeing these things I travelled about two thousand miles; but my stay was short, being limited to four months.

I mention these facts so that the reader may judge of my opportunities of study, and now I must leave my book in his hands.

I am much indebted to the painstaking care of Mr. Hundley, who has drawn the illustrations on wood for me, and to Mr. G. Pearson, the well-known wood engraver, who has cut the blocks. Both these gentlemen have exerted themselves in the kindest manner to render the illustrations such as I wished.

I have also to acknowledge the services of my daughters, who acted as my amanuenses, and thus rendered it possible for the book to be written during a long and painful illness from which I suffered while most of the letter-press was prepared. Their willing assistance was of great value to me.

TOWER CRESSY,  
NOTTING HILL, LONDON, W.,  
*October 1881.*

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