

## **ABSTRACT**

**DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT:** Clothing their Identities: Competing Ideas of Masculinity and Identity in Meiji Japanese Culture

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**DATE:** July, 2013

**PAGES:** 103

This is an in-depth analysis of competing cultural ideas at a pivotal time in Japanese history through study of masculinity and identity. Through diaries, newspaper articles, and illustrations found in popular periodicals of the Meiji period, it is evident that there were two major groups who espoused very different sets of ideals competing for the favor of the masses and the control of Japanese progress in the modern world. Manner of dress, comportment, hygiene, and various other parts of outward appearance signified the mentality and ideology of the person in question. One group espoused traditional Japanese ideas of masculinity and dress while another advocated embracing Western dress and culture. This, in turn, explained their opinions on the direction they believed Japan should take. Throughout the Meiji period (1868-1912), the two ideas grew and competed for supremacy until the late Meiji period when they merged to form a traditional-minded modernity.