

Charles Wirgman's Satirised Spectacles: Wirgman's View of Japanese from Illustrations in Meiji Era

Hiromasa HAMAJIMA

Charles Wirgman (1832-1891) came to Japan in 1861 as a special correspondent of *the Illustrated London News* and lived in Yokohama until his Death. He saw the transitional period of Japan from the Edo era to the Meiji era and produced cartoons, showing his view of the modernisation or westernisation of Japan. He also published *The Japan Punch* serially from 1862. The rapid westernisation of Japan gradually deprived him of his passion to illustrate Japan. He finally stopped publishing *The Japan Punch* in 1887.

This article focuses on Wirgman's illustrations of Japanese wearing spectacles in *The Illustrated London News* and *The Japan Punch*. Spectacles were introduced by Francisco de Xavier into Japan in 1551. They were useful for craftsmen when they worked on their products. By the late 1880s, however, the spectacles became an accessory for westernised Japanese to show them up as stylish men, *High-Collar-Mono*.

In caricatures Wirgman satirised Japanese with spectacles as a civilised symbol. His humorous cartoons of Japanese with spectacles display his view of the anti-westernisation of Japan. As a resident in Japan, however, he still had a hope for Japanese to regain traditional cultural values. Thus, he had an ambivalent view of Japanese, disappointment and expectation.