

# American Girls Have Better Legs Than Japanese Girls, Says Model

NEW YORK, (UPI) — The Japanese modeling business is booming, but one beauty from Tokyo says her colleagues are not match for American girls as clothes-horses.

"Our legs just can't compare with American legs," said Kimiko Katayama. "Yours are longer, slimmer. I think it is because we do so much kneeling on tatami (the matted floor covering in most Japanese homes).

"Parisian models, except for their facial features, look more like us somehow," continued Kimiko. "I have had a chance to watch them when the Paris fashion houses brought shows to Tok-

yo."

Miss Katayama is a slim, shoe-eyed beauty with olive skin, spectacularly white teeth, and black hair reaching well below her waist but usually worn sleeked back from her face and wound into a circlet at the crown.

For the record, she is an exception to her own observation on Japanese girls' legs. Perhaps her height helps, for she is several inches taller than the average Japanese girl.

Miss Katayama is five feet, seven inches barefoot. Most Japanese girls, she said, are five feet one or two inches.

"When I was growing up, I

was so much taller than my friends I got what you call complexes," smiled the Oriental beauty. "Now I find my height is an asset. I can model western clothes as well as kimono."

Miss Katayama, 28, is on a six-month visit to the United States to help promote cultured pearls, production of which Japanese and South Seas industry. Her sponsors are the imperial pearl syndicate, the world's largest sellers of the cultured gem.

Kimiko will make retail store appearances with a jewelry collection which includes a necklace or rather, the makings of a necklace—valued at \$100,000. It con-

sists of 41 large, perfectly matched Burmese pearls, still not drilled for stringing.

The model explained that Japanese women traditionally do not wear necklaces with kimono, but she put one on for the benefit of the UPI photographer.

"The kimono is coming back all over Japan," she said. "Immediately after World War II, all the younger women started wearing western clothes. I like sweaters and slacks at home too. But I wear kimono when I want to dress up."

"I think we look best in a kimono," she said. "And our women are realizing that it is one

tradition typically ours."

Miss Katayama owns 60 kimono's and has practiced the art of tying an obi so that she can complete one in 15 minutes. It used to take her close to two hours to wind the 15 feet of wide sash.

"Some obis come now with falsies," she said, "to pad out the back without so much folding."

Miss Katayama was born in a small town named for her family and located near Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. Told by friends that she should become a

model, she enrolled at a modeling school at Kobe, near Kyoto. She worked as a mannequin in a millinery shop in Kyoto at the same time.

Then a Tokyo fur shop owner hired her and it wasn't long before Miss Katayama had become one of Japan's leading models.

"We have a lot of models now," she said. "Even 14 and 15-year-old school girls hurry to Tokyo to learn. A model will be paid from \$25 to \$55 for a fashion show; good pay for us, but not nearly as much as your Suzy Parker is paid."