“Eboshi” Head Coverings

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https://eeOr.com/sca/wafuku/eboshi.pdf

Eboshi are Japanese head coverings that were worn both formally and informally throughout the SCA period. As in Europe, medieval Japanese men rarely left their homes with their heads uncovered. Eboshi can be worn alone, or beneath other headgear like straw “gasa” hats and “kabuto” armored helms. Certain modifications can make eboshi more formal, especially for late period personae. They are popular in the SCA because they are protective, can be absorbent, and they complete “the look” without a large expenditure of time or money.

Two types of eboshi are common in the SCA. The most common ‘soft’ or “na-e” eboshi is little more than a bag made of black cloth with an attached white or black cloth band for securing it to the head. The ‘upright’ or “tate” eboshi has the same shape, but the bag has been lined or treated so that the bag portion stands up proudly. They are sometimes made of opaque materials like lacquered paper, but often of semi-transparent lacquered fabric.

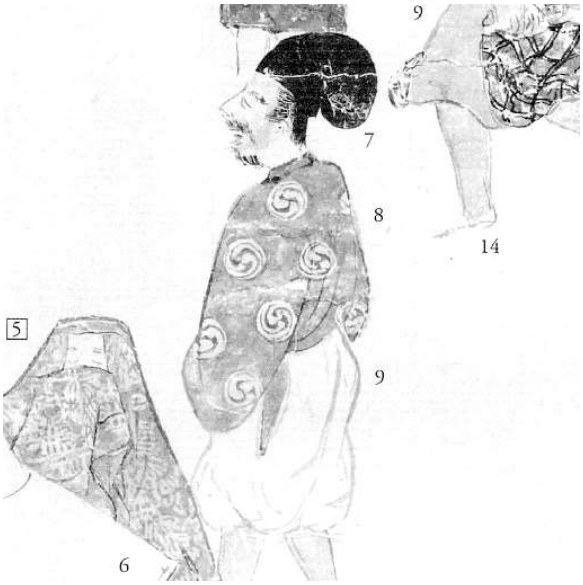
The tate eboshi is more appropriate for nobility who are in public, especially when wearing a classy outfit like “suikan” or “kariginu” robe. In paintings, tate eboshi often seem to stand off at the back of the head. These eboshi are so stiff and large that they do not fit to the form of the wearer’s head. A cord inside the eboshi at the back of the head (but several inches forward of the rear of the eboshi) tightens the stiff brim around the head,

There is a third type of eboshi that is not seen very often in the SCA, but is even more appropriate for ranking members of the military “buke” class. The “folded eboshi” “ori eboshi” is essentially a tate eboshi that has been folded to a sharp point and then lacquered. It is held in folded shape and secured to the head by cords that pass under the chin. This type of eboshi is so strongly linked with the buke that it is typically called a “samurai eboshi”.

For truly formal outfits like the “Sokutai sugata”, there is another kind of headgear called the “kanmuri”. That word is typically translated to the English word ‘crown’, and it can be considered to be the equivalent of a coronet in the SCA. The kanmuri consists of a round ‘pillbox’ component that has a hole through which the wearer’s ponytail can be passed, and a vertical ‘cover’ into which the folded ponytail is tucked. A long pin secures these two pieces together and fixes the kanmuri to the head. The kanmuri is also decorated with a stiffened lace ‘tail’ and often some decorative chin cords that further secure it. These can still be purchased today in Japan, as they are still worn with formal ceremonial outfits such as those worn by grooms during Shinto weddings, but they are very expensive.

This class presents a simple design for an eboshi that is practical and useful for SCA wear. Though having the headband fully attached is not historical, it makes the eboshi more convenient to pack and more comfortable to wear. Those with a full-time Japanese persona in the SCA should expect to make at least one new soft eboshi per year, as the black fades and the white band tends to get stained by sweat. With proper care, a tate eboshi lined with heavy interfacing can last for dozens of events.

Eboshi Examples

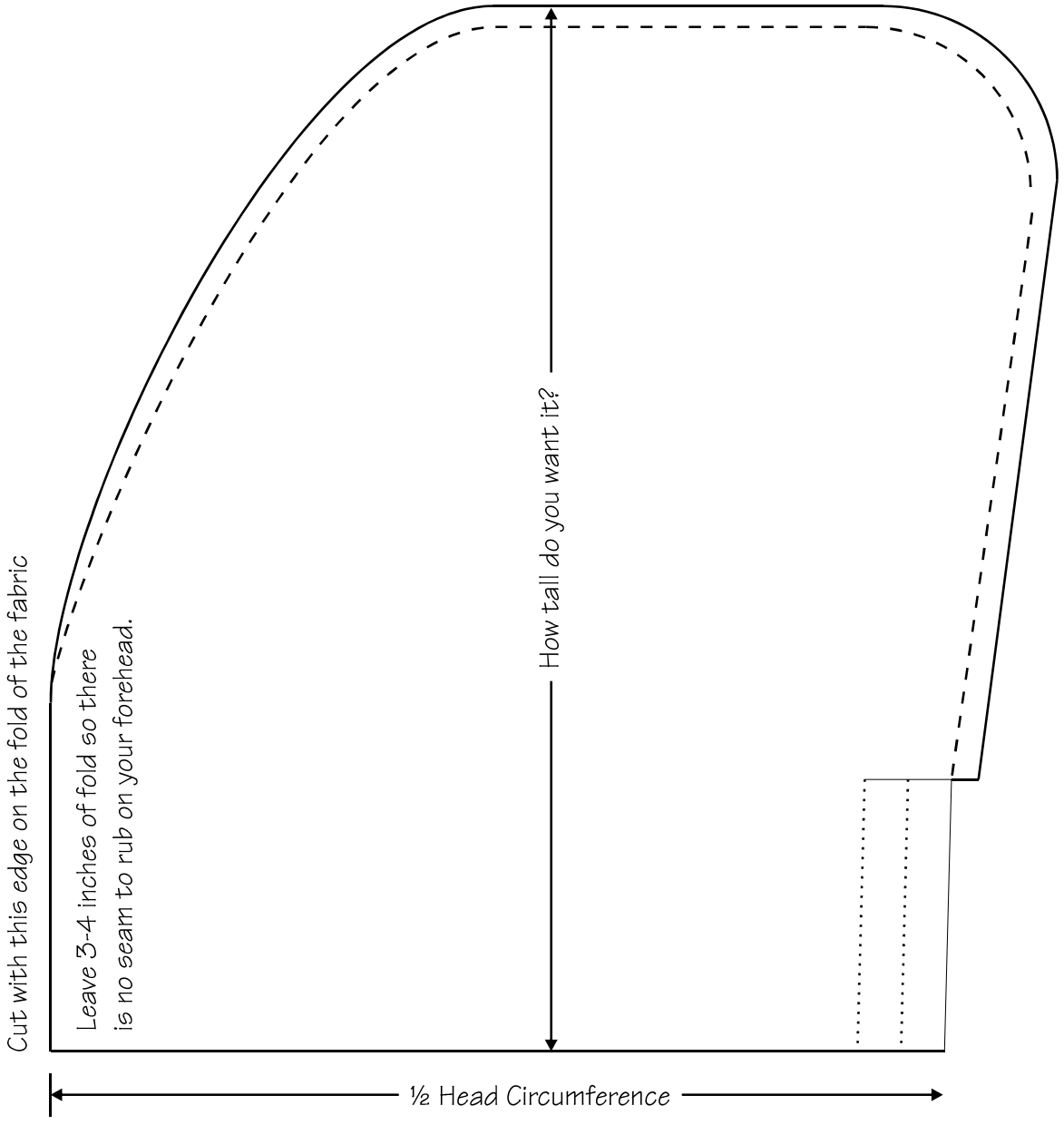


Sample Cutting Pattern

I normally make my eboshi from black linen with white linen for the band. Cotton is acceptable, but keep it lightweight and breathable. For stand-up "tate" eboshi, I line them with a heavy interfacing called "Peltex" from Pellon that comes in black. I have also found a nylon mesh fabric that is totally non-period of course, but stands up on its own.

Cutting pattern is approximate shape only. You will need to measure the circumference of your head one inch above your eyebrows, and determine the size of your pride for the height. The exact shape of the very top is up to you. I have seen some extreme versions and many simple ones.

You will also need a "half panel" of fabric (a rectangle about seven inches wide) at least 4 feet long to make the band.



Construction

1. Prepare the band.
   a. Fold band fabric in half down its long axis and press.
   b. Fold edges of fabric in to center of fold and press.
   c. Open folded fabric, fold in ends about 1/2" and press.
   d. Re-fold band, and re-press.
   e Fold band in half lengthwise and press to create center marks.
2. Prepare the body.
   a. Fold black fabric in half and press.
   b. Draw outline of body on fabric in chalk (see diagram) with forehead at fold.
      The exact shape of the curves is an expression of your personal style.
      I have seen much variation in style, and my style has varied over time.
   c. Make sure to leave 1" facing allowance for rear opening.
      You can make the opening taller or wider if you want the eboshi to be more adjustable.
      You can turn the cut top edges of the opening if you are worried about fraying.
   d. Cut at outline.
   e. If you are lining the eboshi, cut the same shape from interfacing except <u>do not</u> leave the facing allowance. Baste the lining to the inner side of the body piece.
   f. Fold rear facing in, press, tuck raw edge into fold, press, and sew in place.
3. Attach the band.
   a. Unfold body and place right side up on surface.
   b. Tuck the bottom edge of body into the fold of the band.
      Make sure the band is centered side-to-side on the body.
   c. Pin pieces together.
   d. Top-stitch band closed end to end, capturing bottom edge of body inside band.
4. Close the body.
   a. Fold body in half, right sides together and pin so edges match.
   b. Starting at front, stitch around curves, leaving 1/4" to 1/2" allowance.
   c. Stitch straight down back seam to top of opening.
   d. Bar tack at top of opening to prevent tearing.
   e. Turn right side out and press.