INTERVIEWING JAPAN

By

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PREFACE

Since this volume was first issued by the Hokuseido Press of Tokyo in October of 1939 and a second edition appeared in 1940, Japan has once more become a nation practically shut off from the rest of the world. For the second time in her history Japan has entered purdah. Now only her military bedfellows—Germany and Italy—have any measure of freedom on her unfriendly shores. And more than ever, the mind of the Japanese people has become an object of interest and speculation.

The first seclusion of Japan was brought about by the Tokugawa Shogun (military dictator) in 1638 because he feared that outside influences were destined to disrupt national unity. The intrigues of the European missionaries and traders made him highly suspicious. This period of national purdah is known as "The Great Peace" and lasted until the American, Admiral Perry, knocked at the doors of Japan in 1853. This 250 years of self-inflicted solitude wherein no seafaring ships were allowed to be built, shipwrecked

mariners were imprisoned or killed, and European traders, especially the Dutch, were kept jailed upon the island of Deshima off Nagasaki and had to do business through Japanese agents, stamped upon the Japanese character its present irremediable characteristics. It ended, quite naturally, in dissolution and decay as the ruling class (military) had no wars to fight for over 200 years and spent their hours in luxury and pleasure. By the time of Perry's arrival the merchant class, which was equivalent to the Indian sudra class, held a mortgage on the rulers. The peasantry was starving —drained by their feudal lords who were always in desperate need of money. Infanticide was usual, not an exception. Japan was rotten to the core and a revolution was inevitable. The "Bloodless Revolution" of 1868 led Japan from medievalism to modernity. Japan burst greedily upon the modern world and for the moment found an outlet for her cramped and pent-in energies in adapting Western ideas. After the turn of the century she ventured into the field of industrial expansion. The miraculous effect upon Japan of her new life may be seen by the fact that for one hundred years before the country was reopened to the world her population stood still; between 1868 and 1930, her population doubled.

It is only natural that a nation which suddenly awakes and finds itself steeped in the middle ages while the nations around her have relegated theirs to history books, should acquire an inferiority complex. Psychologically this is one of the causes which led up to the present conflict with the West. But up to the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), Japan met her fate meekly. The lords of the Empire used to meet in the old Tokyo gathering hall and attempt European dancing, their swords clinking. And the story was told to the author by a 50-years' resident in Japan of the first State ball for which every one was required to wear European dress in court for the first time. The clothes came from Paris but they had forgotten to ask for charts and instructions for wearing. It is said that many a lady appeared wearing her corset on the outside of her dress—a natural event in view of the fact that the "obi", or sash is so worn. But after the Russo-Japanese War things were very different. Not only had Japan beaten a so-called first class European power but she had acquired a strip of land on continental Asia—Korea. Before this she had only taken the Island of Formosa from the Chinese (first Sino-Japanese War 1894-5). And just five years before this war of 1894 Japan had pro-

mulgated her new constitution which forever took her out of the rank of Oriental despotism. The inferiority complex began to slip away and those who retained it—a certain element of the military and some petty officials—unconsciously began to transform theirs into an aggressive cockiness. However, this transformation was not publically evident until after 1931. But the allotment of naval building ratios after World War I, wherein Japan had anticipated being classed equally with America and England, did more than any one other thing, to rub Japanese complexes the wrong way. Even as in India, Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* still annoys, so in Japan the allotment of naval ratios still carries a sting. The American Asiatic Exclusion Act of later date did little towards changing this state of dissatisfaction.

The collapse of the World War I industrial boom of 1922-3 and the growing dissatisfaction of the army as it recognized the fact that while industrialism gave work to the masses, it only lined the pockets of a handful of rich families; and the realization that although agriculture, thanks to Western science and land reclamation, had been made to yield nearly 100 per cent more produce in the 20 years following the turn of the

century, could not be in any way further extended in order to make Japan self-sufficient in food, led to the militant policy of 1931. This was followed by the political assassination of capitalist Government members in 1932 and again in 1936 and finally to the China War of 1937. Japan entered purdah for the second time in December, 1941.

The present war with America and England is but a logical outgrowth of previous military policy and is made possible by the still feudal mentality of the people.

The Navy initially held a restraining hand on the Army as far as collaboration with Germany was concerned. But the Army, unable to bring the China campaign to a satisfactory close, refused to listen to the Navy's plan for southward expansion. The temporary eclipse of Army popularity after the Russo-German pact gave the Navy the chance it needed and the unquestionable success in French Indo-China gave the Army an escape from the China stalemate—a stalemate which can be blamed in part on Russia who forced the nervous Japanese to keep their first string equipment and men in Manchuria until 1940. Also, the Japanese Army underestimated China's tenacity nor did it take the initial stage of the war too seriously, having labelled the whole affair as an Incident and

anticipated that the fall of Nanking would be the end of the campaign.

The war in Indo-China brought the erstwhile bickerings of the Army and Navy to an end and German influence gradually became more acceptable to both. Probably the combination of German influence, the cockiness inspired by victory, the influence of a small group of super-aggressive militarists who have always hated England and feared America—a state of mind induced by fear of being treated as inferiors; and last, but not least, accurate information about English and American preparations in the East and Hawaii, precipitated the recent war.

A war is possible only if the people of the nation co-operate. The home front is the real front. What are the Japanese like at home? What is their psychology? The interviews given in this book are an attempt to penetrate behind the eternal smile of the Japanese. They have been kept in the original conversation form. While the interviews were taken in Japanese, translation, due to the circumtuitous idiom of the Japanese language, has not been word for word. Rather, the spirit of the interview has been kept as well as the humour, wherever possible. These conversations are therefore such as would have

occurred had the speakers' medium been English. The material originally appeared in the American owned, *Japan Advertiser*, an English language daily of Tokyo with which the author was connected. Since their initial publication, however, some material has been added.

It is hoped that the reader will gain some idea of the still feudal mentality of the Japanese people wherein the group mind is more powerful than that of the individual in every occurrence in life. In fact, individuality as we know it can hardly be said to have emerged in Japan except among a select few—mainly graduates of Tokyo Imperial University. Dissenters, however, these days, are either jailed or discreetly keep their opinions to themselves. One leading Japanese thinker and writer frankly told the author, "This is Japan's Dark Ages. We can only wait for the Army to hang itself. Meanwhile we must give it all the rope we can. We are helpless." But he would never dare say this to a fellow Japanese. Nearly every citizen, in his patriotic zeal, has become a one-man Gestapo. A chance remark has often led to jail.

Custom, to the Japanese, is a more potent force than innovation. In fact, the thinness of the veneer of Westernization can be seen in the course

of reading the articles in this book. The Japanese have taken Western science, machinery, certain forms of Government, education and organization, and made them their own, adapting, adjusting and blending to and with what they already had on hand. The new ideas have revolutionized Japan only externally. How really conservative the man-in-the-street is the reader can gauge by such interviews as *Venus de Milo is Indecent.*

The group mind of the Japanese is singularly well trained. Education is compulsory and literacy stands at over 99%. The product is a standardized one from one end of the Japanese Empire to the other. Reading matter in schools is carefully edited and presented these days according to military standards; the radio and the press are censored and controlled; short-wave radios are illegal. For nearly two decades, the fad of sending students abroad has waned and Japan, since 1931, has gloried in refinding her old culture and made a fetish of it. Even as in the era of "The Great Peace" the Japanese mind is cramped, constrained and limited. The outside world has become a far-away place. Even now, only a mere handful of people know of the "rape of Nanking." In fact, it is said that Government fears to have the war come to an end for then the

heroes must return. The Japanese soldier in China has broken his bounds of community and ideal. He will not be content to return to the fields and work like an ox for a pittance. The lord will not willingly return to slavery. Unless Japan wins and offers unlimited opportunities of expansion on the Continent, there will undoubtedly be a revolution in Japan conducted by these same erstwhile soldiers.

The Japanese are consummate actors. The whole role of social living is an act enforced by custom and close-pressed civilization. There are people everywhere. There is not a spot of ground in Japan where some one has not trodden. There is practically no lawlessness as there is no place for a criminal to hide. Part of this eternal role is stoicism. One never sees arguments or fights for it is traditional that it is not manly to show feeling. This is an interesting point for in modern motion picture theatres which have no tradition behind them, the very high-strung and inwardly excitable Japanese completely let go. Sometimes the whole theatre is a sea of sobbing men and women if the picture is touching. The Japanese are very sentimental.

Even as motion pictures ignite Japanese feelings, sometimes great anger gets beyond inhibi-

tion. Let the torch of anger once be lit and the primitive man emerges. A Japanese is never angry—he flies into blind rage. These extremes of emotion—excessive repression on the one hand and excessive lack of control on the other, go a long way towards explaining the Japanese proclivity towards suicide. By nature, the Japanese people are given to hysteria.

Arouse a Japanese to anger and the veneer of his civilization rolls off. His culture is only skin deep; for Japanese culture is not a product of evolution but of assimulation. The Chinese, in the sixth century A.D., found the Japanese without even a written language. Japan is the youngest nation in Asia and hence the most virile. The 250 years of seclusion allowed the Japanese time to assimulate and reform what they had received from abroad. The first great period in Japanese culture—the Heian |era, was almost strictly Chinese in its expression but the Tokugawa period was the flowering of all that was truly Japanese. What this present period of semi-seclusion will bring is hard to say.

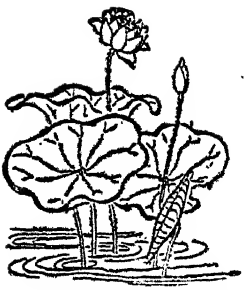
To-day, the future of Japan lies in the palm of fate. The ball has been thrown—rouge or noir —the roulette wheel is still spinning round—and Japan has gambled all. She will either emerge the

master of Asia or a broken nation. The petulant conqueror makes an interesting study.

September 21, 1942 ADRIENNE MOORE
LONAVALA

Japanese eras and year-periods referred to in this book:

	A. D.
Nara Era	645–794
Heian Era	794–1159
Hojo Period	1199–1333
Ashikaga Period	1333–1573
Momoyama Era	1573–1603
Genroku Period	1688–1703
Tokugawa Era	1603–1868
Meiji Restoration	1868
Meiji Era	1868–1912
Taisho Era	1912–1926
Showa Era	1926–



TOO EXPENSIVE TO DIE

THERE are fashions in death as well as in life. Even the undertaking business must keep abreast of the times. In fact, getting buried in Japan is more significant than getting married according to Undertaker Maki, and is apt to cost the family of the deceased all the way from 500 to 20,000 yen if not more.

Mr. Enzo Maki is a cheerful little man who lives around the corner from my house. For a long time his ornate display of white and silver flowers and his magnificent funeral wagon with its temple roof and wondrous sides carved like the temples of Kyoto had intrigued me. So one day I paid a call. His establishment in which he lives with his wife and three children, is anything but depressing. Fine white wood stands against his wall, the cupboards are filled with elegant wreaths, jars, cups, natural wood tablets, straw hats and a large assortment of other objects.

There were, on the day of my call, only two completed boxes piled on the floor but the satiny whiteness of their smooth surfaces kept them from being reminders of their purpose. After all, a Japanese undertaker doesn't deal with dead bodies.

Mr. Maki, whose family has been in the undertaking business for a hundred and fifty years, stated that his bills range from 500 to 3,000 yen as a rule.

"My charges are very reasonable and of course now and then I handle a much more expensive funeral. I have yet to conduct one like the late Baron Takuma Dan's though. That cost 150,000 yen," he said enviously. Mr. Maki then gave me a list of what his charges include:

Two stacks of sugar cakes ..	Y .60 to	Y 3.00
Two lanterns	7.50 „	15.00
Two lotus bud arrangements ..	5.00 „	20.00
Two tea stands	1.00 „	3.00
A tray for the meal offering ..	1.00 „	3.00
A tray for receiving gift money	1.00 „	2.00
An incense pot	1.00	
Senko (incense)	.20	
Another lantern	1.00	
Two candle stands	3.00 „	5.00
Shikimi bana	5.00 „	6.00

These essential funeral decorations average about fifty yen, said Mr. Maki who explained that

shikimi bana (arumenum) is a variety of poisonous leaf which is placed behind the corpse. Sometimes the leaves are even put into the coffin. They were introduced in the old days because it was believed that they would keep the corpse from being violated by animals, especially cats which might be demons in disguise.

Added to the above necessities is the cost of decorative flowers, real or of paper.

The paper flowers which are made up into wreath shapes, may either be rented or purchased. Rental is from two yen up for a day. Most of the wreaths are sent by friends of the bereaved and one never knows how magnanimous they really were until after the funeral when the number of rented wreaths may be counted by their absence. When the wreaths are purchased, they cost twenty yen or more, Mr. Maki said. After the funeral, the family either has the wreaths burned or sells them second-hand. Second-hand wreaths are resold to country undertakers for rental. Wreath rental sometimes has its crises. In small towns where the supply is limited, several funerals on the same day may boost the rental price three or four hundred per cent. In the old days these wreaths were gay affairs, not sombre white, black and silver as they are now. Yellows and

greens, in fact, any colour but red was used, but that was before Western influence introduced the sombre aspect and long face to a funeral. The flowers are imaginary in their form but show inclinations towards being dalhias and the like, depending upon the season of the year. Buds are favoured, but Mr. Maki denied that full blown flowers are avoided because of their depressing significance. "We simply think buds are prettier," he said.

Mr. Maki's fee also includes the arrangement of the coffin, the advertisement of the death notice in the newspaper, the arrangement of the funeral procession cars for guests, the furnishing of proper tents, tables and chairs at the funeral, and he will even rent silk toppers and tails to the mourners if they do not own them. In fact, an undertaker in Japan must be a sort of jack-of-all-trades, a combination interior decorator, florist and carpenter.

The two biggest single items of expense on an undertaker's bill are, of course, the shroud and the coffin. A good shroud of the finest white silk is priced at about 100 yen in Mr. Maki's shop, but cotton and linen substitutes are used and are much cheaper. "Some folks make their own and cheap cotton ones can be made for about a yen,"

said Mr. Maki with an expression of professional disapproval as he explained that the shroud *kimono* is closed on the opposite side from regular ones; to wit, on the left side of the chest. But only an undertaker can make a coffin. In fact, it was as box makers that undertakers first came into existence. In ancient times death was thought of as being unclean so the family tended to everything but the box which they ordered to be made by some local carpenter or chest maker. As Buddhism removed this death stigma, undertaking became a trade of its own.

Mr. Maki showed me his standard coffin for adults which is always 6 *shaku* long (about 6 ft.) by 2 *shaku* wide (about 2 ft.), with the wood 1.2 inches thick. He sells mostly cypress coffins at 150 yen each but an equally popular model is made of *momi* (fir) wood and sells for about eighty yen. The *momi* wood is softer so in such coffins the wood is 1.5 inches thick.

"The prices go down according to the thinness of the wood. The thinnest ones with wood only .5 inches thick are as cheap as fourteen yen. Coffins for the very poor cost as little as five yen but I don't make them," said Mr. Maki as he ran an admiring hand over the white satin lining of a coffin. The linings are a Western idea.

"Of course I am giving you an estimate on equipment for a simple funeral which culminates in cremation. Moreover, such equipment is simplified and more or less non-sectarian though mainly Buddhist. Country funerals and strictly Shinto funerals, of which there are now less than one per cent of the latter, are different. Most *Shinto* funerals are now held in the vicinity of the Ise Shrines.

Cremation is the general rule in all big cities of Japan, and less than one per cent of those who died last year in Tokyo were interred. Interment is allowed now only in cemeteries of a certain size. In Tokyo there are only a few city-owned cemeteries where a body can be buried. Contrary to trends abroad, in Japan the dead are never removed from the family home until the time for their disposal. According to Tokyo laws, the body must not be disposed of for at least twenty-four hours after death. No autopsy is required even in case of sudden death unless the question of character is involved at which time a police surgeon tends to the matter. However, in event that death is the result of a contagious disease, not even the undertaker is allowed access to the body.

"Then I just deliver the coffin and the physi-

cian and the nurse on the case place the body in it and it is immediately taken and cremated," said Mr. Maki. "Anybody can afford to get cremated in this country," he added as he revealed that Tokyo has ten large crematoriums all located either in the Nippori or Kirigaya sections. They are owned by groups of undertakers. Even charity cases sent in by the municipality must be paid for but this fee is usually returned. The body remains in the coffin for cremation which costs as little as five yen with the price rising as high as twenty yen, depending upon the elegance of the establishment.

Country villages and small towns usually do not have provisions for cremation though some have open air *yakiba* or pits with a roof over them. In Ibaraki Prefecture it is the custom to go to the corner of a field in which a hole is made for the purpose of cremation. A tree is kept in this hole so that to reopen it the tree is pulled up by the roots each time and when the cremation is completed it is replanted. Whereas the city crematoriums with their modern ovens take only thirty minutes, in these country *yakiba* cremation is an all night process. Before the pit an altar is made and on it an incense pot is placed. Rice and water are offered and all those participating in the rites offer

a pinch of incense while the priest chants *sutras*. Then a tall piece of bamboo is thrust into the ground before the pit in which the coffined body has been placed and each person present ties a piece of paper on the stick. Those desiring to be reborn as oldest sons in the next life tie their papers at the top of the pole. Then every one is given a handful of rice to be thrown around the coffin. This is done in order to keep the birds satisfied so they will not endeavor to disturb the dead. During the long night the neighbours tend the fire. Villagers who stay home see, on such nights, the weird blue light which sulphur makes glowing far out in the paddy field. Later, when the ashes are cold, relatives come with chopsticks and pick up the charred bones which may be left. The bones are passed from chopstick to chopstick, a custom which has given rise to a superstition which impels people never to pass food in this manner. These charred remains are put into a pot and buried. Once again the bamboo stick and its paper rite is performed and rice is sown. Prayers painted on wood are stuck into the soil over the grave.

Country crematoriums were seldom cursed with the ghoulish beggars who, until recently, used to haunt city crematoriums. As the mem-

bers of the family of the deceased passed them they cried for alms. If alms were not given they shouted out, "See you later." Then if alms were not given on the way out they called, "Come again." Many Japanese fear such a remark as a bad omen and so usually the beggars did a prosperous business.

Mr. Maki gets his biggest fees when a family decides to have a body interred. At this time he makes three separate coffins. The inner one, containing the body, is usually of paulownia wood which is soft and light. The next coffin is of cypress and the outermost one is of pine. Inasmuch as the body is not embalmed as in Western countries it is usually packed in tea leaves or wood shavings. In the country where only one coffin is used, the body is often packed in rice bran. Between the inner coffin and the cypress coffin Mr. Maki puts charcoal. The purpose is to keep the moisture away from the body for in Japan it is estimated that all graves are under water.

Mr. Maki laments that funeral arranging as a fine art is a thing of the past. Since 1915, when the funeral of Mr. Kanjo Tani set a new fashion by introducing the foreign style funeral wreath and the funeral car, the whole technique of burial has changed. In the old days there were long funeral

processions such as are still common in China and Korea. Often these processions were composed of a hundred and fifty men or more carrying ornaments and the coffin. The mourners followed behind the procession but were not professionals such as are found in other parts of the Orient. On such occasions the ladies were all attired in white but now economy has made it customary for those attending a funeral to wear black crested *kimono* over white ones. The men now usually wear morning coats though formal *kimono* are common in the more conservative families. In the country districts, the foot processions are still the rule but of course there is little elaborateness. So Mr. Maki's eighty funerals a year are quiet affairs.

In the early years of the Meiji era the average funeral procession still consisted of foot-weary attendants and mourners and it was not until the turn of the century that even horse-drawn carriages were introduced. The processional order varied, as all funeral customs do, according to the locality. The following is a sample of an elaborate Buddhist funeral procession in Tokyo in the Meiji era:

Carriers of white paper lanterns called *shirohari* (4)
Carriers of fresh flowers given by friends

Carriers of artificial paper lotus flowers given by friends
Carriers of dragon-ornamented lanterns called *ryuto-toro* (2)
Assistant priest
Head priest
Carriers of *ryuto-toro* (2)
A man carrying the death flag which states the deceased's name and social status
Two men carrying dragon-headed flags called *ryuto-bata*
A younger brother or some close relative carrying an incense burner
The elder brother carrying a covered spirit tablet on which the posthumous name is inscribed
Two men carrying *ryuto-bata*
Men carrying artificial lotus flowers presented by relatives
Carriers of *shirohari* (2)
Carriers of artificial white lotus flowers (2)
Coffin bearers followed by carriers of two coffin rests
Bearers of sandals and a walking stick
Carriers of artificial white lotus (2)
Carriers of *shirohari* (2)
Chief mourner (heir)
Attendants bearing a wooden grave-marker
Family members
Friends

The mourners wore straw mourning hats. A pair of straw sandals and a staff were carried in the procession for the use of the spirit who must wander for forty-nine days, according to tradition, before it can enter heaven. The sandals and staff are now placed in the coffin.

Funeral arranging as a fine art nowadays is confined mainly to Imperial funerals. These are handled by a special firm which for generations has tended to such matters, having come to Tokyo from Kyoto at the time of the Restoration. These funerals are now conducted in strict accord with *Shinto* rites. In the case of Imperial funerals there is the special ceremony of mirror enshrinement. By this is meant that after the body has laid in state for a short time the ceremony for the transfer of the soul from the body to a mirror takes place. The mirror is afterwards taken to a special room called the *gonsha* where it is kept for a year. Other than this, the general features of such a funeral are similar to those of any *Shinto* burial.

"There have been four distinct types of burial in Japan at various periods of her history. First there was water burial when the body was consigned to the sea. At a later date live burial was practised. This occurred in event of the death of some one of high rank. His retainers were buried with him or else a human sacrifice was offered. People were also sometimes buried alive as a propitiatory sacrifice as when a great bridge was built which might be washed away in flood time. Such a sacrifice of the latter variety seems to have

happened as recently as a hundred and fifty years ago near Osaka. It was a very sad case as communication was left between the buried person and the surface. After willingly offering herself and allowing herself to be buried alive, the woman changed her mind and cried out to be released. Nobody knew what to do so they just left her buried," said Mr. Maki as he went on to explain how clay figures were substituted for live sacrifices and cremation began to be practised a hundred and fifty years after the introduction of Buddhism.

Mr. Maki stated that definite distinctions began to be made from the seventeenth century on between the now rare *Shinto* type funeral and a Buddhist one. As a result, there is the conspicuous absence of *Shinto* priests before death occurs, the use of natural rather than artificial decorations at a *Shinto* funeral and the great simplicity of *Shinto* rites as compared to Buddhist ones. Also, at a *Shinto* funeral, a sword is always placed in front of the casket to drive away evil spirits and the head of the deceased is covered. Once this headgear was elaborate. The poor, unable to afford the costly hats of yesterday, use a small piece of paper. After a *Shinto* funeral fear of pollution impels the occupants of the house to have it thoroughly

cleansed within a specified time and sometimes the clothes of the deceased are burned as well as those belonging to the mourners and immediate family.

Mr. Maki pointed out that Buddhists have had to accept the *Shinto* style of laying out the dead in a long coffin because of cremation. In the early Meiji period, and in remote places in Japan even to-day, Buddhists who are not cremated, are buried in a barrel-shaped coffin. The corpse is fitted into this container by a method of folding known as bone-breaking. But actually no bones are broken, Mr. Maki assured me on noting my strange expression.

"You see they have various systems. The most acceptable method is folding at the moment of death before rigor mortis sets in. Of course a priest is supposed to do this so he commonly stays around while one of his parishoners is dying," said Mr. Maki. Some people do not like the vulture-like aspect of the situation and sometimes a priest is not available. Then the ligaments beneath the knee and the big toe are cut by the priest. The knees are brought up to the chin and the body is roped.

Once, the head of the deceased was shaved to symbolize the giving up of worldly possessions and desires and in some districts a protective bow

was placed in a man's coffin while a woman was given a mirror. Now, however, the usual Buddhist burial rites in the country or among devout people in the city consist of brushing the dying man's lips with a piece of cotton or a feather dipped in water. Following this his body is given its last washing and is dressed in the white *kimono* of death along with a bag containing paper cut in the shape of coins. These coins are the six-way-money for the ferryman at the river *Sanzu* (the Oriental Styx). The bag is often put around the neck of the deceased. The body is then placed in an oblong coffin along with a rosary, scrolls containing prayers, a staff and straw sandals and favourite objects of the deceased.

If the family is well-to-do, some attempt is made to preserve the body by the addition of herbs and chemicals. Even poor families try to use some sort of a preservative if only in the nostrils and other orifices. The most effective substance used in the past seems to have been "*shu*." This mixture of mercury and sulphur called *shu* which was originally introduced from China, was popular with Emperors and *daimyo*. It was used in either liquid or powdered form and still is far too expensive for any but the wealthy to use. Tea is substituted for *shu* as the leaves

both absorb moisture and preserve with their tannic acid.

"The body seems to have been folded in that strange manner due to some sort of a desire to leave life as it was entered," elucidated Mr. Maki as he added that an old Japanese custom requires those who are present at a funeral to drink a good-bye toast to the departed before the coffin is taken from the house to be buried or cremated. Either *sake* or water is used for this purpose.

Deciding that in spite of Mr. Maki's many services his charges would in no way be exorbitant, I visited a Buddhist temple to find out how much religious fees would be. I chose the Tokyo Nishi Honganji, one of the Kwanto's most up-to-date and well-known establishments. One of the temple priests revealed that they had put things on a business-like basis and instead of accepting haphazard gifts, have specific charges for certain classes of funerals. The lowest fee is 300 yen. Wealthy families are known to donate 10,000 yen or more. For this fee the priests attend the dying man, say prayers and conduct the funeral service.

The funeral day is chosen by the family according to the Buddhist calendar. The Buddhist week, which is composed of six days, came origi-

nally from China. It is formulated according to the lunar year. The first day of the year is always one called *Sensho*. Thereafter the sequence is *Tomobiki*, *Sakimake*, *Butsumetsu*, *Taian* and *Sekko*. *Butsumetsu* is a most unlucky day and no one would consider being buried or married or anything else important on this day. For funerals, the lucky day of *Tomobiki* is equally unfortunate because *Tomobiki* means literally, to draw friends. *Taian* is the most auspicious day in the Buddhist calendar. This idea of an unlucky day seems to have been begun centuries ago by certain fortune tellers and later became an accepted custom.

The main task of the priest is to pray for the deceased after death. During the forty-nine days after death when the spirit is struggling to get from earth to heaven, there must be many prayers said for the wandering soul. Every seventh day during this important time a priest usually visits the home of the deceased. Thereafter there are rites to be performed on the hundredth day, the first year anniversary, the third, seventh, thirteenth, seventeenth, twenty-third, thirty-third, fiftieth and one hundredth year. The elaborateness of the rites or *kuyo* determines the size of the fee which is given on each occasion. Such fees are separate from the initial funeral charges.

The Buddhist priests are also called upon to read *sutras* for the dead at the time of the *Obon* festival which is celebrated especially in the country districts. This interesting festival which came from China along with Buddhism, is one of gaiety rather than of sadness. In fact, one of the most impressive facts about any Japanese funeral rite is the absence of weeping and gloom on the part of the mourners. Once it was considered to be the height of bad breeding and cowardliness for warriors to show emotion. This philosophy extended itself into other walks of life until still to-day a friend is more apt to smile than to look sad when she tells you her father, husband or child has just died. Western influence is gradually breaking down this embargo on emotions, however. But aside from restraint, *Obon* is a joyous time for it is then that the spirits return for a brief visit to their homes. It is the Japanese Hallowe'en or All Souls' Day.

Obon is celebrated in different ways in various districts of Japan. As a general rule, however, the ancestral graves are put in order and the house is thoroughly cleaned. In some places white lanterns are set up in the cemeteries and welcome fires are lit before the entrance of the homes in order that the returning spirits may not lose their

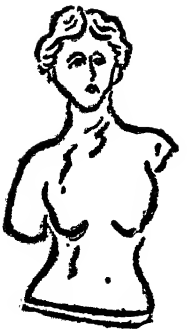
way. Special food is set before the family altar (*butsudan*) which contains the family tablets bearing the names of the deceased members. The meal is composed of favourite dishes of the deceased, cakes and dishes cooked with sesame. In a few places, imitation horses are made from egg-plants with stick legs and with corn tassels serving for the tail. These horses are for the dead to ride so they will not become weary. On the fifteenth day of July or August, depending upon whether the modern or lunar calendar is used, the spirits return to their other world abode. At this time the fire is again lighted before the house and the offerings are disposed of in various ways. In some places they are wrapped in large lotus leaves and thrown into a river while in others they are put in little paper boats and set adrift. In a metropolis like Tokyo the conservative folks find their problem more difficult. One of the common cries of the *Obon* season is that of the *Omukaesan* who roam the streets crying *Omukae! Omukae!* These men collect the offerings and take them away.

After the spirits have departed, the families who can afford it, call in a Buddhist priest to read *sutras* for the souls of the deceased.

So the work of burying the dead is never

done within the memory of any one person. There are always prayers to be said and priests to be paid. By careful estimation, with Mr. Maki's assistance, I discovered that the actual undertaking fee amounts to only about a tenth of what an entire funeral and putting to rest of the soul costs. The balance of the money is spent on gifts, proper equipment, and last but certainly not least, on prayers so that the soul of the departed may rest.

It costs a man as much to die in Japan as it would for him to live a year or more. In the case of the wealthy, the funeral cost is often many times equivalent to the cost of a year of living. Thus, though funerals are becoming more and more simplified all the time it is still too expensive to die.



VENUS DE MILO IS INDECENT

VENUS de Milo is indecent because her stomach is exposed, at least that is the verdict of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police. So Venus now stands demurely clad in an Alice Blue rayon gown in the Meiji Insurance Building in Kojimachi Ward at the Marble Restaurant.

"Venus has always led a hard life. This is just a Japanese version of it," said Mr. Gonhachiro Hiraoka, the restaurant's proprietor and one of Tokyo's better known artists. "They also confiscated a nude by Henri Matisse and another by Paul Gauguin which were hanging on the wall. The trouble is that the police are made responsible for public morals. That includes deciding whether a work of art is artistic or indecent. Naturally policemen know little or nothing about art. They have done some funny things before. When my teacher, Mr. Kiyoteru Kuroda, returned

from Paris 30 years ago, one of his nudes was censored by the police when he displayed it in Osaka. They finally compromised when he hung a cloth across the lower half of the picture. Then Japanese artists united and raised such a protest that they have been left pretty much alone ever since, that is until the China Incident and the desire to purify public morals began. The police are very hard on restaurants."

Last March the thirty-fifth exhibition of the Pacific Art Association was briefly interrupted when the nude drawings of the aged Fusetsu Nakamura, who was one of the pioneers in Western painting, were disapproved. Mr. Nakamura, who studied in Paris over forty years ago, now spends most of his time doing historical and fairy-tale paintings. He was persuaded to fill two rooms with a historical survey of his works. His exhibit included some charcoal sketches of nudes done in his student days. Mr. Nakamura has an intense disdain for the modern painters who cheat the public with their lack of sincere detail and is a lover of the art of Michael Angelo, so his nudes are graphic to say the least. The police who visited the exhibit on the second day expressed intense dislike for the frankness of his nudes, and pointed out that the less obvious modern art was far better for public

morals. Mr. Nakamura removed his paintings.

"So you see the police are correct when they claim that they have not removed any paintings during the past year. We artists are now so disorganized that we can't protest so we just take the all too broad hint," added Mr. Hiraoka who is quite resigned to the indignity to which Venus has been put during the past year.

"Since this morals drive began, all the statuary in the Mimatsu Restaurant at Hibiya has also been removed," he said.

Venus, it seems, was first subjected to a rather nondescript towel-cloth beach robe. But the Alice Blue number with white polka dots is much more becoming. However, the police have made no comment upon her new attire. Mr. Hiraoka said that he decided to cover her rather than find a new home where her charms would be more welcome because he feels certain that sooner or later the police will relent.

"She's quite a big girl to be moving about. Besides, I am fond of her. She was cast at the Ueno Academy and sold to me at cost. And where else could I put her? I don't want to sell her. After all, she stood where she is for two years before any one objected to her," he stated.

Sometimes, Mr. Hiraoka admitted, private

citizens complain to the police about what they consider to be immoral art. "But I know none of my customers did that," he protested. "I wouldn't blame them for complaining about some of this modern art which is highly indigestible with dinner, but I can see nothing wrong with a half-covered Venus whose proportions are perfect. But one can hardly ask a policeman to explain his actions." He learned this when he protested to the Metropolitan Police Board, he said, adding that he has a friend in the Kanebo Spinning Company to whom he wrote suggesting that his Venus be used for display purposes.

"They could leave her where she is and change her fashions with the season," he suggested. "That might please every one except my many artist friends who come to the Marble. It's in the same building as the Society for International Cultural Relations, you know, and art and culture students from all over the world come here. They just laugh at the reason for the plight of Venus."

"Worse things have happened to Venus elsewhere," Mr. Hiraoka recalled. In Chicago and Hollywood, for example, she has been rouged and dressed like a mannequin. They have even put hats on her head.

Though the public treatment of Western style

artists is a bit unsatisfactory at times, Mr. Hiraoka stated that privately they do pretty much as they like. "I guess they just figure we are a queer lot and let us alone," he said with amusement.

It seems there are about 6000 foreign style painters in Tokyo and 4000 Japanese ones. These figures include sculptors, painters, and commercial artists. The number of foreign style painters and sculptors is comparatively small and most of them have taken up art as a hobby. In exhibiting, the associations must put their stamp of approval on each painting with the exception of the chosen few who may hang up their works without permit. In Tokyo there are 95 Japanese style and 187 foreign style painters who are sufficiently well recognized to be so privileged. In the entire country there are 180 approved Japanese painters and 260 foreign style ones. The number of foreign style painters is evidently larger because the judges are more rigidly particular and there is quite a formalized basis on which Japanese style pictures may be judged. Foreign art is more nebulous.

Mr. Hiraoka stated that the two types of art are entirely different. The study of Japanese art seems to suit a man more admirably for modern art than for the realistic forms of a Michael Angelo wherein a thorough knowledge of anatomy is

necessary. Japanese art emphasizes line, suggestion and mood. Colour is not so highly regarded as black and white *sumi* painting. A Japanese painter does not draw from a model but from memory, but his eye is so keenly developed that he carries real forms into the art room. Thus the human form is merely suggested and graphic nudity and amorous intimacy are abhorred. Though the Japanese would be the last to protest actual nudity, sex appeal of the Rodin and Titian variety is frowned upon. This antipathy extends into every art form including motion pictures. Foreign films are censored or have parts cut out on the following scores: scenes which are meant to appeal to men only, hot kisses and scene showing sex excitement. Kisses are classed as *swabium*, *bium* and *osclum* and must be of the smacking variety even between parents and children to be acceptable. So it is little wonder that the police censor nude paintings. The taste of a thousand years cannot be overturned in a minute.

Foreign art and painting from nude models was once thought so disgraceful that an artist could not induce any one to pose for him. The first artist's model was Kikuko Miyazaki whose son, Ikutaro, now runs Japan's only artist model bureau. It was the dauntless Kikuko who induc-

ed her husband to allow her to pose for a French painter in Yokohama in the early days of Meiji. Later she moved to Tokyo and opened a tea house in Ueno Park. At that time Mr. Kakuzo Okakura, former president of the Imperial Art Academy, lived next door and used to discuss with her his needs for models at the newly established Imperial Art Academy. That was in 1890. So Kikuko was paid six yen a month to procure models for the needy students. Now there are 180 models on the official register. In summer, this number expands to about 200 because it is warmer and the girls don't mind taking their clothes off so much. It seems the big problem now is to get men models. About twenty years ago there were always twenty or thirty available but now they are scarce and painters usually prefer to use women models.

"It's a lot easier to do a female than a male nude because a real knowledge of anatomy is needed when it comes to the muscular male form. The female body is preferred by Japanese because it is easier to draw and appeals to the intuitive Japanese sense of line," explained Mr. Hiraoka.

A professional model in Japan gets about one yen and twenty sen for three hours of posing. The requirements are in foreign taste for the girls

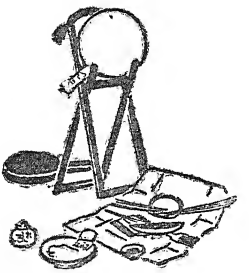
have to have curves. The artists who don't trust to Mr. Miyazaki's judgment can go on Sundays to his office and inspect the girls who come for that purpose. They judge the girl's figures by the proportions of their wrists and necks. Most of the girls earn around a 100 yen a month, they come from middle class families and are more often than not high school graduates. Those of lower class families are usually too prejudiced against modelling to go into the profession, for prejudice still exists even as in the West. As a result, the girls, most of whom marry, usually marry artists and they hate to pose for women because it makes them feel ashamed.

The model's guild is a monopoly; if an artist does not pay his bills or fails to behave in a gentlemanly manner he is black-listed and hasn't a chance in the world of getting a model anywhere else. So a model's life in Japan is not the precarious existence it is in many other countries where those in the lower reaches often pose for improvident artists.

Leaving Mr. Hiraoka with his swathed Venus I went to the police department to find out just how they felt about the foreign art situation. One policeman declared that he was thankful the artists removed their objectionable paintings with-

our protest and maintained that many artists deliberately display bad pictures in order to attract crowds by their obscenities. They like the publicity of police objection. Five years ago, he claimed, poor artists made quite a point of using this trick to attract publicity to themselves. But the situation has now improved. In like manner restaurant owners lure patrons to their places. In fact, Tokyo would be in a very bad way if the police didn't continually watch for obscenities and stamp them out.

No comment was made about Venus or on the fact that for hundreds of years she has exposed her maternal charms without any obvious ill-effects.



WHAT PRICE BEAUTY?

JAPANESE women are going modern. No one is more convinced of this than Mr. Ichiro Nakai, owner of the Hyakusuka Cosmetic Company. Gradually he has watched his sale of old-fashioned cosmetics wane until now they represent but thirty per cent of his income.

Preparing beauty aids is a tradition in the Nakai family. The business was started by an ancestor who had been a *samurai* of Takeda Shingen in the sixteenth century. After being wounded, he retired and opened a shop for purveying hair oils and strings to *buke*.[1] In those days, the male was more vain than the female. The Hyakusuke Cosmetic Company was founded about a hundred and fifty years ago when Mr. Nakai's great grandfather decided that after all it would be better business to cater to the whims of the

[1] Members of the warrior class. The term *samurai* is also used but *buke* is a more general appellation.

ladies. With such a background it was only natural that Mr. Nakai should prove to be a mine of information about Japanese beauty culture.

While face powder was used by both men and women in old Japan, especially in the Kwansaik, when on formal occasions both courtiers and *buke* applied it to their faces, it was not until the Tokugawa era that ordinary people began to use face powder and the dangerous white lead preparation called *to-no-tsuchi* was introduced from China. Users of *to-no-tsuchi*, especially men who did not have a protecting fatty layer like the women, sometimes suffered from stomach ache and even paralysis. The aged *Kabuki* actor, Utaemon Nakamura, still suffers from the effects of lead poisoning. Those who frequented sulphur springs and used this liquid powder found that they turned a permanent shade of ochre. They called it hot water tanning and were unaware of the true cause.

"The old principle of using powder is to cover up the skin," said Mr. Nakai as he put water on a small piece of hard powder about the size of a yeast cake and made a paste. This he applied to the back of his hand with a flat brush called *itabake*. He brushed away the powder streaks with a *mizubake*, or round water brush, and patted the liquid dry with a large, squat, round brush

called *botanbake*. The appearance of this reformed zinc-base white powder is exactly like that of the recently outlawed *to-no-tsuchi*. Both make the wearer resemble a white-washed fence for all such powder is dead white in colour.

"The strange custom of painting the neck whiter than the face was started by the *geisha* who wanted to rest their faces by removing the make-up from them," said Mr. Nakai. "They had to have an assistant paint their necks and in as much as this necessitated the removal of their *kimono* they often gave their necks an additional coat of white so it would stay on for a day or two. Moreover, a beautiful neck was once a woman's greatest asset, so the neck was always emphasized. The present custom of leaving a decided line where the neck powder ends and the face powder begins is just a perversion of the original practice."

Cold cream was unheard of in Japan until Western cosmetics were introduced. Actors first used it about fifteen years ago and the populace became interested around 1934. But Japanese ladies have always had ideas of their own. So Mr. Nakai still sells *oshiroishita*, a mixture of camellia oil and wax. A fastidious lady moulds the hard wax cube into a ball in her hands so as to soften the mixture and get a certain amount of the

preparation on to her fingers. She then rubs her fingers over her face thereby giving it an oily foundation over which the liquid white powder is painted.

Nuka was and still is used in place of cleansing cream and soap by the fastidious.

"While soap is too strong for the face because most of it has a fish oil base rather than one of animal fat, *nuka* never makes the skin coarse no matter how long the face is rubbed," revealed the cosmetic firm owner as he cited an old recipe for this native cleanser in which rice bran combined with coarse black sugar is used. The bran and the sugar absorb the fats and oils. The sugar also acts as a bleach and remains on the skin after washing as a sort of protection. Even Mr. Nakai's firm does not manufacture the old style *nuka* any more but purveys a modern version containing soap powders and perfumes. Old style *nuka* bags are prepared at home, the contents being changed each time the bag is used.

While liquid powder is still very popular, *beni*, or old style lipstick, is on its way to extinction, thinks Mr. Nakai.

"Perhaps the stage actors will keep on using it but even the *geisha* aren't too keen about *beni* any more. I may try to add an oil base to it.

It is most impractical as it comes off so easily," said Mr. Nakai, as he explained that it was introduced from China and is made from the juice of a grass called *benigusa*. At this juncture he opened a small black lacquer box containing an iridescent green substance which, he said, was *beni*.

"*Beni* is green when it is dry unless it is in contact with bodily warmth. It is still liked because of the unique dark blue-red colour it produces."

Beni is used both as rouge and lipstick. Inasmuch as the classical ideal of beauty seems to be that of a passive doll, small mouths are in order, so a girl seldom covers her whole mouth with *beni*. The lower lip is accented and the upper one is often left unpainted. Rouge on the cheeks is a foreign idea which came into use at the beginning of the Taisho era. But rouge on the eyelids, ear lobes, and back of the neck are native customs. Some fastidious *geisha* still mix a little *beni* in their white powder and paint three slim points like swallow's wings on the back of their necks to exaggerate the hairline. This and the custom of rouging the eyelids and ear lobes and of putting red dots in the corners of the eyes, are traceable to the influence of the *Kabuki*. It was only natural, being entertainers, that they should have adopted

this practice, for lighting in the old days was very bad. Now, what was once attractive, seems unnatural and mask-like under the glare of electric lights. Many women and especially entertainers used to paint their whole face with a mixture of *beni* and liquid powder. Only the nose bridge was left white, for it seems that a high nose was considered to be a great beauty point and by painting the top part of the nose white and the rest of the face pink, the nose appeared to be high by contrast. A few such painted faces may still be seen in the licensed and unlicensed quarters of the city.

Eyebrow blackening is another Japanese beauty trick. "Not every one had eyebrows in the good old days. When a woman married she shaved them off, perhaps to prevent the men from tempting her," said Mr. Nakai with a smile.[1] Those who had eyebrows, blackened them with soot made by the burning of fine oils. Mr. Nakai prides himself on his fine black soot which he sells after spreading it on to papers.[2]

"Eyelashes were never an important factor in Japanese beauty so they were never blackened," said the cosmetic manufacturer. "Now the girls

[1] This was a middle and lower class custom.

[2] See in the article entitled *Kill or Cure* the section on *kuroyaki*.

are taking to mascara which is all right if they are wearing foreign clothes, but certainly not with *kimono*."

Another neglected part of the anatomy is the hand. Japanese women have never done more than keep their nails trimmed short. But they did beat the Paris stylists by several centuries when it comes to the feet. Kamakura era ladies sometimes painted their toenails red.

Even more important than beautifying the face was the care which was given to the teeth and the hair.

"Until just before the turn of the century, all self-respecting married women blackened their teeth," said Mr. Nakai as he took out a book containing an old time recipe for preparing the blackening.

"This is what my mother used to use," he said as he read from a musty paper:

"Take three pints of water, warm it and add half a cupful of *sake* (wine). Add to this some red-hot iron filings and allow the mixture to stand for five or six days or until a scum appears on the top of the liquid. The scum should be poured off into a receptacle and placed near a fire. To the warm scum add powdered gallnuts and iron."

"I really think such a preparation helped to

preserve the teeth," added the cosmetic manufacturer.

Mr. Nakai did not know the origin of the teeth blackening custom but it seems that though the exact origin is unknown there are records of its existence as early as the eleventh century. Fastidious young ladies usually blackened their teeth just before their marriage and shaved their eyebrows directly after the wedding ceremony.

Later, even the men took up the custom, including the Emperor and members of the Imperial Court. Hanazono Arihito, who was Minister of the Left early in the twelfth century, started the fad among the courtiers. Hanazono, being over refined in his tastes, aped the ways of women. In the middle of the twelfth century court nobles who went to war all blackened their teeth as an emblem of fidelity as did the followers of the chiefs of the Hojo clan. As a result, the habit came to be called the Odawara custom after the castle town of the Hojo chiefs. For the women also, teeth blackening seems to have been a sign of fidelity.[1]

"The custom is quite an annoyance," said Mr. Nakai. "My mother had to blacken her

[1] *Tales of Old Japan* by Lord Redesdale, p. 294.

teeth every few days to keep them a nice ebony hue as the color soon wears off."

Black teeth are now a rarity and the author has encountered only three black-toothed women in Tokyo during the past two years.

"I think Japanese women have always been vainer about their hair than anything else," said Mr. Nakai. "There are some who still pride themselves on the blackness of their tresses and so use a shampoo made from *funori*, a kind of seaweed, eggs and wheat flour. The *funori* is boiled until it becomes starchy and is then mixed with the other ingredients."

One of the Hyakusuke's most important products has always been hair oil. It can be had in either wax or liquid form. Camellia, sesame and rapeseed oil Mr. Nakai considers to be the best. Modern oils are obnoxiously scented, even those used by men.

"You see, most Japanese have little knowledge about cosmetics and do not buy them for their quality but because of their scents and decorative designs, I am sorry to say. That is why so much perfume is used and foreign letters are prominently displayed on the wrappers. Some of the oil used by barber shops just has to be scented. Since the China Incident olive oil has been so scarce that bando-

line and hair oil manufacturers have been buying the oil drained from airplane engines and have had it refined. Most of this smells badly so more perfume than ever is necessary to disguise it," said Mr. Nakai.

Equally an important product is hair dye. A Japanese man or woman, until recently, would not even consider allowing hair to become grey unless his or her spouse had died. Nowadays, modern chemical dyes are used, most of them being applied at home, but previous to their invasion of Japan, products such as Mr. Nakai purveys were the only ones obtainable. Some conservatives still prefer them. In fact, it was just at this juncture in our conversation that an elderly woman entered the store and asked for some old style hair blackening. Many country women still use a mixture of lard and soot but more popular is a preparation of soot and vegetable oil. This is rubbed on in grease form and lasts until the hair is washed. His customer complained of the ease with which this type of colouring rubs off and was delighted to find that Mr. Nakai has something less exasperating on the market.

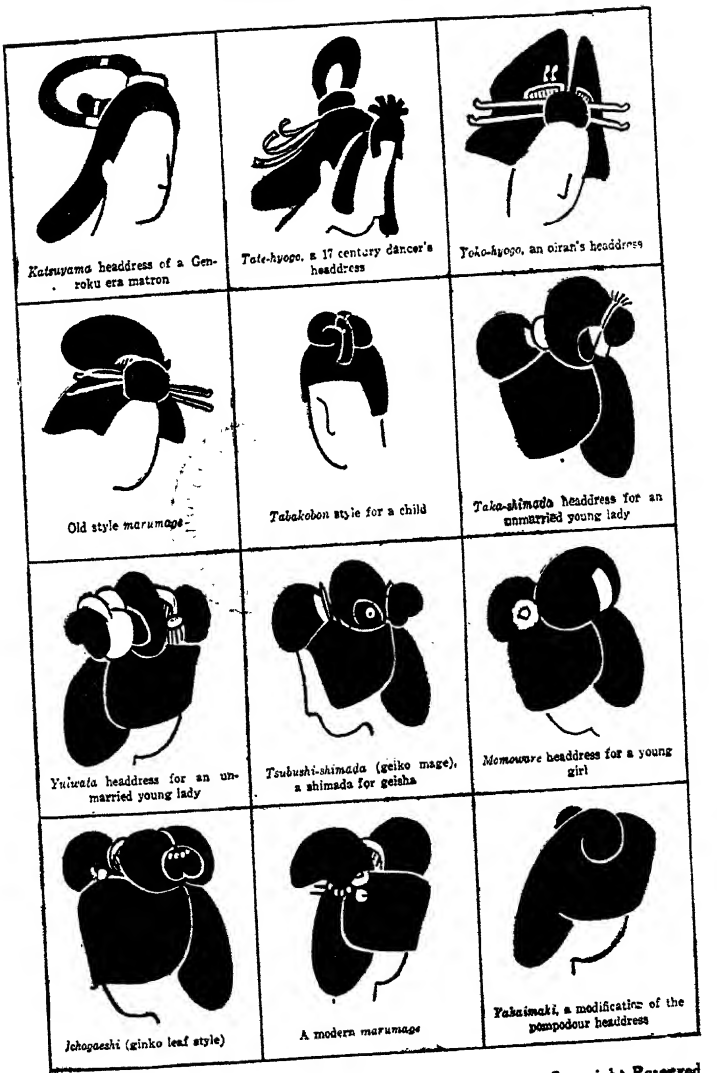
"You see they want to remain old-fashioned but are very glad of new inventions," said Mr. Nakai after selling her samples of both the old

and improved varieties, for the conservative fear to accept the new too readily.

Mr. Nakai pointed out that even in conservative Japan, styles in female beauty have frequently changed. Now permanent waves, natural make-up and figure with curves are the fashion. Tokugawa modes, on the other hand, decreed that girls have slender waists, long, horsey, almond-shaped faces with eyebrows formed like the leaf of the willow. They wore big *obi* which bent, forming the shape of the character "*ku*" (く) as if they could not endure the weight of the sash. Such fragile beings have little place in modern society where young maidens are active and lack the repose of more conservative times. Another fad which has come and gone is the wearing of two large beauty spots on the forehead such as were common in the Nara and Heian eras. In those days the hair was worn free so the forehead rather than the neck was considered to be the point of beauty. A lady was supposed to bend her head meekly in the presence of men. Accordingly, men could see only her forehead and her hair hanging gracefully on both sides of her face.

The voice, too, has lost its charm. In the old days high class women did not mix with men other than those who were members of the family.

Classical Hair Styles



So a male visitor knew the ladies of the house only by their voices and penmanship. The hostesses sat behind a screen while talking to outsiders.

Mr. Nakai is glad, in a way, that modern girls are more natural and thinks that the western style cosmetic industry will expand.

"In the old days only high class people, entertainers and city dwellers used cosmetics. At present, we have good transportation and the cosmetic idea is spreading to the country. Right now the cosmetic industry is worth about 500,000 yen a year in Japan, a sum which in no way equals that of the United States where so many women use cosmetics. But perhaps even our farmer girls will some day beautify themselves," he concluded with a laugh.

LADIES SHOULD WEAR UNDERPANTS

TOKYO'S biggest headache has always been its fires. Not a day goes by without two or three. Big fires such as that of Meireki in 1657 have been known to take no less than 107,000 lives. The Great Earthquake in 1923 is estimated to have taken 60,000 lives most of which were lost in the fire which followed the quake. In fact, people once called fires the Flowers of Yedo. Quite naturally the fire department has a lot to say for itself, but nothing is more eloquent than the demand which it made a few years ago requesting the ladies not to go abroad without their underpants.

"Something just had to be done about the women after the Shirokiya Department Store blaze about eight years ago," explained Mr. K. Ishiwata whose ancestors have been fire-fighters for two centuries. "A lot of salesgirls were trapped on the top floors of the building. Some of them wouldn't jump. Not even when the fire-

men commanded them to leap into their nets. So they were just burned alive. I found out later that they had refused to jump because they were too modest. They just weren't appropriately dressed for the occasion and so preferred death to jumping while the crowds looked up from below. Now the wearing of pants is more universal. They jump these days, I'm glad to say."

Mr. Ishiwata cannot guarantee that the demand is a hundred per cent effective as there seems to be no way of checking up on the matter, but he is proud of the fact that the city has thirty-nine full time fire brigades and 2,500 firemen.

"I belong to the old guard," he said. "I am what you call a volunteer fireman. There are some 566 volunteer companies and 26,926 volunteer firemen in old Tokyo. It's more of an avocation now than a vocation, but we come in mighty handy sometimes." The old fire associations have all the atmosphere of an exclusive gentleman's club. The fighters are proud of the records of their companies, like to doll up in their gay uniforms, practise acrobatics and keep their *matoi*, or standards, in the pink of condition.

Mr. Ishiwata is the chief puller of his section's glossy red firewagon which is nothing more than a handpump the size of a milkman's cart. Even

the volunteer companies often have modern equipment these days, but Mr. Ishiwata's company is situated in a not too prosperous section of the city.

"We've put out as many fires as the regular hook and ladder boys," explained Mr. Ishiwata with pride.

His plump and roundish contour belies the old criterion which once made his ancestors, the *gwaen*, or Government firemen, the Beau Brummels of old Yedo. The *gwaen* wore only thin cotton *happi* coats even in the coldest weather, and white *tabi*.[1] They disdained to cover their manly chests when walking down the streets, for to do so would hide the beauty of their tatoos which made the ladies' hearts go pitter-pat.

But Mr. Ishiwata is blithely oblivious of his bulging figure and very proud of his knowledge of the old time firemen. He explained in a never-ending stream of one way conversation that the *gwaen* first came into being after the fire of 1601 which levelled Tokyo to the ground. Such companies lived together in one large room and slept with their heads on a single, long, wooden pillow which was as uncomfortable as it sounds for when

[1] *tabi*—mitten-like socks.

a fire was sighted by the look-out, some one struck one end of this wooden pillow with a mallet and everybody woke up with a start and a ringing head.

By 1648 there seems to have been 15 units of firemen in Yedo, the men for which had to be supplied by the various lords. The men were on duty for ten days at a time, explained the old fireman.

"But it wasn't until we *machi* firemen got organized that things were put on a really efficient basis," he added.[1]

Later, Yedo was divided into forty-eight districts, each unit with its own fire brigade and named according to a sound in the alphabet such as *i, ro, ha,* etc.

"That's how this section gets its name," said Mr. Ishiwata, as he began to tell about his great-uncle Yori who was a fire-fighter for the *Daimyo* of Kaga.

"You see, the *daimyo* besides contributing city firemen, had their own companies to watch their homes and important places in the city. Uncle Yori belonged to the famous fire-fighters of the *Daimyo* of Kaga. Those men were called

[1] A *machi* is a small village unit. Tokyo is composed of innumerable *machi*.

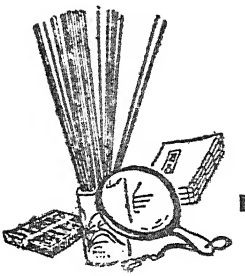
Kagatobi. They helped the *Daimyo*'s relatives and tended the Yushima district. I can remember my uncle telling about the magnificence of his company. Why their *matoi* were of real silver and they had a great drum ornamented with heavy paper strips which were twisted and used for beating the drum. This drum was a present from the famous Hideyoshi Toyotomi to the Lord of Kaga, uncle always used to say. Uncle loved his work but they all hated the muddling of the *mimai hikeshi*. These were country bumpkins who feudal lords sent to inquire about fires at their relatives' houses. They were lower retainers who had to hurry up and put on gay clothes ornamented with the family crest and go to the fire in solemn procession and were usually so slow that by the time they reached their destination the fire was out. If they did arrive in time to assist, they were more of a nuisance than anything else," said Mr. Ishiwata.

Mr. Ishiwata's pride and joy is his company's standard. It is adorned with the crest which the founder of this brigade used several centuries ago. Its cloth ribbons swing below a knob like a hula skirt. Mr. Ishiwata and his comrades would not think of fighting a fire without this *matoi*. The leader usually carries it like a battle standard

as he rushes into the flames. The old fireman reminded me of the Tokugawa era story of the burning of the gate of the Asakusa Temple when the fire was so fierce that not only was the company's *matoi* burned up but two or three spare ones besides. Finally, in desperation, some of the *matoi*-less men went to the toy shops in *Nakamise*, or shops nearby, and bought all the toy *matoi* they could find and, tying them together, made a new standard, led the way into flames and won the fight against the fire.

"We *machi* firemen preserve the nearest thing to the old fighting spirit," said Mr. Ishiwata. "But we don't have as much to do as we once did," a fact which probably accounts for Mr. Ishiwata's rotundity. "We keep up the old tradition in dress on state occasions. I always wear this old triple-cloth coat. It outwears these new-fangled ones three to one," he said as he held it up. The material had been hand-stitched by farmers during the winter months. "You never burn in these once they are wet. We used to have some very gay ones for state occasions with devils and flames on them. But no more. Not since everything went modern in 1916," he commented with a sigh, as he put on a new style fire bonnet which, like the old ones, closes over the face. The bonnet made

Mr. Ishiwata look more like a bandit than a fireman, and was enough to scare the flames away from any house.



WINKING AT FATE

THE art of divining the future has always been the stock-in-trade of the Orient. But at no time has this age-old art been more popular than now. The pursuit of the occult is a booming business in Japan due to the number of bereaved mothers, wives and friends who want to know if their sons, husbands or sweet-hearts are going to return home safely from the conflict in China. In fact, about 4,000 soothsayers are flourishing in the city of Tokyo alone. At the top of the list are such men as Kodama, Shozan Takashima and Sekiryushi, while at the bottom are hundreds of itinerant fortune tellers who set up temporary stalls at *machi* and temple fairs. Nor is fortune telling a hit and miss affair; like all other businesses it is highly organized. Of course, those with the greatest prestige who vehemently deny that they are fortune tellers, and call themselves scientists, disdain to join in with the others, but the rest have been content to or-

ganize into two unions. One, the Dai Nippon Yogen Kyokai, or Association of Prophets, held a convention not so long ago to discuss the future not so much by means of deer bones and the shape of the president's feet as on the basis of cold cash statistics. After all, even fortune tellers must make a living. This association includes about a third of Tokyo's soothsayers and has in its ranks those who are itinerants. Another association is composed of fortune tellers who have permanent residences.

Recently, the Metropolitan Police issued an ordinance to the effect that due to the present China difficulties, all fortune tellers must mend their ways and give their clients cheerful fortunes. In fact, the police, with amused disdain, control the affairs of Tokyo's prophets.

"We get to know quite a bit about them," confided a police official to me when I called at the police station to inquire about the prophets, "not because we control the fees they charge, but because they have to register with us and explain their particular brand of divination. We don't bother with the charges because we rarely get complaints. Usually the future they conjure up is couched in such ambiguous terms that the applicant can't help finding satisfaction somewhere in the recital and

he is satisfied to part with his money for such dalliance." Formerly, fortune telling rates were subjected to bargaining, but now the art of prediction has been organized along western business lines and fixed fees are the rule, said the policeman. Even such men as Sekiryushi and Shozan Takashima have their price lists posted in a conspicuous place in the anterooms of their offices, and one can see indicated such items as: "A single problem: 2 yen. A full fortune: 5 yen. Your entire life: 30 yen."

Fortune telling fashions have come and gone in Japan as frequently as the fashions of women's clothes. Before the Chinese brought their lottery sticks, the system of *futomani*, or telling fortunes from the bones of deer, was used at the Imperial Court. Then in the ninth century came foretelling by means of a tortoise shell. The Yoshida family cornered this art for itself. An ancestor of the family had originally gone to China to learn this type of sorcery. Later, both Chinese and Japanese methods of reading the future from the shell of the tortoise were popular. Some time in the sixth century lottery sticks were introduced. This type of fortune telling may still be seen at many Buddhist temples such as the Asakusa Kwannon in Tokyo. The client pulls out a bamboo

stick and the priest, after reading the number on the stick, opens a drawer and hands him a fortune printed on paper. The fee is a few sen. But fortune telling with a religious connection is exclusive of fortune telling as a profession.

The policeman with whom I discussed the prophets of Tokyo gave me the following list of some of the prevalent methods of divining the future: from deer bones, tortoise shells, the flight of birds, chicken bones, crows, mice, mud-snails, rice grains, rice gruel from *koto* (Japanese harps), *obi* tying, coins, bridges, water, tiles on the roofs, grass, poems, evening, lottery sticks, colour of the ink in handwriting, handwriting, *tatami* or straw mats in one's home, numerology, *soroban* or abacus, horoscope or the prediction on the basis of the stars and planets at the time of one's birth (astrology), appearance of one's house, direction of one's house, general yearly direction, swords, physiognomy and blood.

"That's but a few of them. Sometimes individual diviners concoct methods of their own. But on the whole the most prevalent methods in Tokyo are physiognomy, astrology, numerology, direction forecasting and the reading of the future from one's blood. The latter, it may be said, is not as popular as the others," stated the policeman.

The police only interfere with divination when clients have been given foolish advice.

"For instance, if a sick man is given advice which has a bad effect on him we feel we ought to punish the fortune teller. And we don't allow people to sell good luck. Sometimes too, fortune telling makes people start family quarrels, or it may cause a man to spend foolishly. We are very much opposed to prophets who tell their clients to rebuild their houses, erect fences and cause other foolish spending. But usually there is very little trouble. The fortune teller makes his living, the people feel relieved of their worries and everybody is happy," concluded the policeman.

By and large the greatest numbers of fortune tellers use the old Chinese divining rod system. At the edge of almost any *machi* fair one may see their gay booths with moons and stars decorating the walls. Inside, the diviners, some of them dressed in strange costumes, wait like spiders tempting in flies on the web of the future. Others indifferently thumb the greasy books which contain all the portents of the hereafter. The fortune teller does some quick manœuvring with a bunch of bamboo sticks and then arranges a set of peculiar blocks according to the numbers obtained from the sticks. The book is read on the basis of

the placement of the blocks. Their methods are vague, haphazard and mechanical. But not so Shozan Takashima, who is one of Japan's most important prophets who uses this age-old method.

Shozan Takashima, whose place is but a stone's throw from the Kanda Station, has an office which looks more like a dentist's or a doctor's establishment than a mysterious centre of the occult. He deliberately chose this prosaic spot in the midst of bustling traffic and clanging streetcars with an eye to business for most of his clients are merchants and business men.

One holiday afternoon I was ushered into the waiting room of Shozan Takashima, pre-eminent prophet of Tokyo. The room was arranged like any business office with an attendant boy, a desk, a large clock and a sign displaying the master's rates. After all, to Takashima, it is a place where people's lives are untangled.

"If this isn't a clinic I would like to know what it is," Takashima replied later to my comment. "After all, I am not a fortune teller. I am a scientist."

I was ushered upstairs to a *tatami*-covered room. Sitting majestically before the alcove and behind a table covered with glaring green felt was Takashima, the very picture of a Victorian

gentleman. He had on a frock coat, large pince-nez attached with a black ribbon, a stiff, high winged collar and a flowing moustache. He seemed to be cut from an 1890 fashion magazine. He had just returned from the meeting of his district counsel of which he is a respected member. His holiday attire did not soften the effect of his penetrating and fiery eyes which seemed to look right into me.

Takashima explained with great cordiality that he predicts the future on the age-old methods of heaven and earth, but that he has also added many tricks of his own so his predictions are not wholly dependent upon what the divining rods tell him.

"Just as nature has day and night, rain and wind, so man is good and bad and has prosperity and decline. Oriental prophets read the future of a man on the principles of nature," he began pompously. "Nature is eternal but man is transient. Nature never rests, but man must rest. So I have never felt that foretelling the future of a man only by the principles of nature is exactly accurate. I have mended this error after years of research," he added.

Mr. Takashima, upon request, will chart the ntire map of a person's life. A man's life has

cycles just as nature has seasons. They repeat and repeat. A man's cycle in Japan lasts twelve years, so if Takashima can figure out a fortune covering a twelve year period he has charted the man's whole life. The cycle for people in very cold countries lasts only nine years, while in tropical countries the cycle is fifteen years in length thinks this diviner. Moreover, just as seed sown at the wrong time does not grow well, so a man who does something in the wrong way will have poor luck. That is where a fortune teller can be of assistance. Evidently a lot of people think so, for Takashima has an average of ten clients a day and from fifteen to twenty during the busy days of spring when people flock to discuss the starting of new enterprises. Most of his clients are intelligent and many are well educated. He also plots from three to five lifetime fortunes a month. For regular fortunes he will use almost any method the client may request. His repertoire is limitless.

However, his main method, which he obligingly explained to me, is still the divining rod.

"There are sixty-four ways of placing the divining blocks," he said as he held up a set of six, smooth, mahogany sticks about six inches by two inches by a half inch in measurement. "These sixty-four ways may be used in three hundred and

sixty combinations," he continued as he counted out fifty long, slender bamboo sticks from the bunch he had taken from a jar which always stands on his felted desk. From the fifty sticks which he held in one hand, Takashima chose one stick and returned it to the jar. This single bamboo is what is known as the basic stick. The remaining forty-nine he divided with dramatic precision into two bunches which he designated as the negative and the positive, *in* and *yo*. The positive group is always the one held in the left hand. He explained that he divides the sticks into two bunches when his heart communicates with the gods.

Taking one stick from the negative bundle, Takashima shifted it to the positive side so that the negative and the positive could come together. Then he counted the positive sticks with a special system of eight counts: *ken*, *da*, *ri*, *shin*, *son*, *kan*, *gon*, *kon*. When he had finished counting, the mysterious number on which the counting ended indicated to him which of the six, flat, divining rods lying in front of him in orderly fashion to turn over. This dividing of the bamboo sticks and the counting procedure he repeated three times, each time moving a divining block to indicate the end number. Like the positive and negative hands, so the divining rods have positive and negative

sides. They remain flat down on their negative faces until the proper count indicates that they should be turned up on their positive sides. On the third count he pushed out of line from the others the block on which the count fell. This is the block which rules fate and indicates the future. So if a client knows he is going to get 10,000 yen and he asks Takashima when, Takashima answers his question on the basis of this displaced block. The first and second counts and block movements reveal the present and the past.

After getting the blocks in their proper positions, Takashima can either interpret fate according to his own learning and knowledge, or according to the famed Chinese book of fate which all diviners who use such a divining rod system turn to. This book, called *Shueki* (Chou-i) which was first compiled about four thousand years ago, was brought to Japan some fifteen hundred years ago and links the fate foretold by the divining rods with astrology. The client must tell the time of his birth before the fortune teller can read in its pages the exact fate decreed by the wooden sticks.

The most brilliant coupe made by Takashima in recent years occurred when Chiang Kai-Shek was kidnapped a few years ago. Takashima, on

the basis of this General's birthday date, was able to predict that he was alive and safe.

While Takashima and Kodama use relatively the same divining system, Sekiryushi is a prophet of an entirely different order. Like the others, he is extremely offended at being called a fortune teller, a point which has some basis in his case, for Sekiryushi is a graduate of a medical college and can look back to ancestors who for two hundred years have been both doctors and prophets.

Whereas Takashima endeavours to avoid as much as possible the appellation of mysterious, Sekiryushi has a fine setting in which to impress his clients. He lives sequestered on the edge of the Hamamatsu *geisha* quarter in Shiba Ward in a simple Japanese house fronted by a small but charming garden. Clients who sit in the anteroom which opens into his office and wait for their turn, may be impressed by his prowess which is largely dependent on sheer audacity. He dares to tell his clients anything, and if they deny it, he fixes a glittering eye on them in Ancient Mariner fashion until they are so fascinated that they willingly agree to the most awful of slanders. He fearlessly calls a spade a spade, and clients take the chance of finding themselves mercilessly unveiled right in the public eye.

Sekiryushi's clients never give their names or proclaim their identity, for whereas Takashima is personal, Sekiryushi is impersonal. This is part of his show, for he is able to tell with uncanny ability the condition of his clients. They go and come from seven o'clock in the morning until five o'clock at night. He sits serenely like the wise Dharma to whom he bears a remarkable resemblance in type, while his clients come and go. He often has as many as thirty visitors a day. Such a quantity of clients must bring him an income of between 1500 and 2000 yen a month, but he makes no show of ostentation for he wears simple Japanese clothes and his office is without ornament. It would hardly be good business, and would sadly weaken his pose as a man of great wisdom, should he stir his guests to speculate on his good fortune caused by their credulity.

Upon entering his house I lingered for a while in the small anteroom enjoying the view into his garden and listening to the woes of various clients and the advice he gave. He is a sort of father confessor as well as a seer for nearly all of his clients come to him because they have problems too great to solve or stand on the brink of decisions which are important in their lives. A few young men come to get advice concerning what careers

they should choose. Even politicians, military officers, officials and others of similar rank are not infrequent visitors seeking advice on weighty matters both personal and public.

Sekiryushi does not believe that fate is unchangeable. He tells his clients what the future has in store if they pursue their present courses or fulfil the destiny mapped out for them according to their faces. But he also advises that they resist and change certain trends through the exertion of will power. He firmly believes that the features of the face will take on a new appearance and show the change which takes place in a man's character. Just as the corners of a sad man's mouth turn up when he becomes happy, so a receding chin, bespeaking weakness, pushes forward and expresses strength when a man gains will power.

One of the most amazing feats of this fortune teller is his weird ability to foretell birth. Many times has he simply looked at a male client and stated that his wife was going to have a son or a daughter. In some cases the men have not even known that their wives were expecting children, least of all children of a certain sex. Sekiryushi also cleverly indicates which physical traits a client may have inherited from his mother or his father.

After the horde of clients had departed, Sekiryushi ordered tea and we sat down to discuss his work. The time was brief for he usually goes to bed around seven o'clock every evening.

"I have to rest my head.. I concentrate all day, so if I do not retire early I am slow in the morning and I cannot immediately see into the past, present and future of each client one after another," he explained.

Sekiryushi who has studied not only Western style physiognomy but also delved into the 3000 secret volumes which have been handed down to him from his ancestors, stated that the science of reading a man's character from the study of the face began in India before the birth of the Buddha, for it is recorded that King Jabon (or Sudahodana) called thousands of physiognomists to his court to foretell the future of his child which was still in the womb of Queen Maya. The first known notation on this art in China occurred in a book called *Reisuki* which is said to have been written about 2300 B.C. This document told how the inside of the body could be judged by the appearance of the outside.

"Since that date medicine and physiognomy have been one. You cannot consider them as separate. Physiognomy is not fortune telling,"

said the seer.

The first known book ever written in Chinese on this art appeared over 2000 years ago and was called Geppa-dochu-ki. In Japan, the first notable prophecy by a physiognomist was that of an old man living near Nara who predicted that the next Emperor would be Tenmu. (He reigned from 673—686). From then on the popularity of this type of soothsaying increased.

Sekiryushi's ancestors for several generations have been scholars and writers. One ancestor in the Tokugawa period protested against the supervision of the Tsuchimikado clan which was held responsible for the fortune tellers of the Empire by the Shogunate government. He claimed he was not a fortune teller and won his suit. But it was Sekiryushi's grandfather who first came to Tokyo and received the highest scholarly degree of *Hogan* from the Tokugawa government and studied Dutch in Nagasaki. This learned man, like Sekiryushi, was a doctor of medicine as well as a physiognomist.

Many of his tricks Sekiryushi naturally prefers to keep to himself but he did reveal in principle the method he uses. When a client enters and kneels before him he first takes up a magnifying glass about a foot in diameter and studies the

features of the face intently for a moment. Then, in his mind, he roughly classifies the visage into three sections. The top section, which is that region lying above the bridge of the nose, is called *Jotei*. The centre section, from the eyes to the bottom of the nose, is called *Chutei* and the lower section, *Katei*, includes the mouth and chin. The top section reveals the man, the central region tells inherited qualities while the lower region suggests the future.

If the *Jotei* is large and beautiful the client has intelligence, will be lucky and loved by his elders. It also shows that he loves his native land. A small, ugly forehead indicates the reverse. The *Jotei* section is divided into three divisions beginning with the region above the eyelids. Then there is the space between the brows and the hairline and finally the section of the head from the hairline to the top of the skull. The bottom section indicates animal propensity; the central region reveals intellectual capacity and the topmost part indicates moral courage or the lack of it.

In the *Chutei* region the feature of most importance is the ear. In fact, so important is the ear that Chinese and Japanese paintings have always emphasized that organ in painting the pictures of

wise men. By a man's ear Sekiryushi can predict the span of life, tell of the relationship between a child and his parents and point out inherited qualities. The higher the ear is placed upon the head the more fortunate and noble. A low ear is indicative of animal-like qualities. The shape of the ears, according to this famed seer, show a passionate, intellectual, aggressive, retiring or any other predominating temperament. A perfect ear should be just the same length as the nose. A man with big ears is usually a miser. If the ear is shorter than the nose then the mother was probably unstable at the time of the person's birth. The texture of the ear is also indicative of certain characteristics. Intellectual people tend to have pliable ear tissue while those of the motive temperament have stiffer cartilage. It is by the ear, also, that Sekiryushi can tell if the person in question is the youngest or oldest member of the family and what qualities have been inherited from the mother or the father. If the middle part of the ear is fleshy, then the owner has an independent spirit, while if the lobe is thin, then there will be bad luck in old age.

The nose also plays its part in character reading. Hitler's big nose, says Sekiryushi, shows high self-esteem and stubbornness. In fact, some

one feature in the *Chutei* region usually gives a very special clue to a man's character. In Mussolini it is high cheek bones as well as the nose. Sekiryushi stated that while Hitler has a motive temperament, Mussolini has what is known as the vital temperament. Mussolini he described as being aggressive but also defensive while Hitler is only aggressive.

The *Katei* region shows the relationship of a man with his family and associates. An old Chinese proverb illustrates this belief when it says that if the chin region is fat, not thin, a man has many oxen and horses. For said the seer, a man with a fat chin gets along well with others. A big chinned man is patriotic while one with a small chin is apt to wander and be lonesome in old age. A small chin also is indicative of an unhappy home, few good friends and unloving children.

To such general classifications, Sekiryushi adds innumerable other points which he has at his disposal. He spends his time advising people about their lives and gives them fatherly counsel.

"I feel that I contribute to the welfare of mankind by doing this work," he commented. It is certain that if he were less wise he could do irreparable harm but fortunately his social sense

is paramount and his advice is always kindly. Most of his clients who come many times to see him are children in his hands. And after all the power of fortune telling often lies in confession. If nothing else, people relieve themselves of their burdens by telling somebody all about their troubles. Add to this the advice of a wise man and not only is the client satisfied but relieved. Low class seers have neither this ability nor influence but even they play their part in a harassed world by allowing their clients to escape for a moment from the troubled present into the peace of the unknown.

A CHILD IS BORN

MRS. Suzu Kazami is a small, round gentle little woman in whom lurks the very soul of efficiency. During the past thirty-one years she has delivered over 2000 Japanese babies with only one catastrophe; once a mother died. She now is vice-president of the Tokyo Midwives' Association and when not engaged in deliveries, calls, association work and study, and hygienic education, is busy assisting in the placement of unfortunate babies who come to her attention.

Mrs. Kazami took one of her crowded hours to discuss the lot of women in old and new Japan. Midwifery, she explained, is a new profession, and, she added, "The greatest profession of all for women with ambitions for a career." Before the Meiji Restoration child delivery was a sort of hit and miss affair. When a child was due to arrive some clever grandam of the village or a handy relative, either male or female, was called upon to

assist. It was certainly not a scientific profession. If the case were difficult and the helper could not force the delivery by pressure upon the abdomen of the woman in child labour, the suffering woman was given two ropes to cling to in her agony. The ropes hung down from the high beams of the house ceiling. If the mother died, sometimes a sort of crude Cæsarian operation was performed. This was done not so much to save the child as to relieve the mother of the pain which was believed to have caused her death. Human sympathy demanded that her tired spirit be set at rest.

"It is surprising to learn that in spite of the lack of scientific knowledge in those days, the people had many ideas of value," said Mrs. Kazami as she went on to explain that they placed ashes of clean straw on pure white paper and used them in place of cotton for swabbing.

"The old idea of dieting during the period of pregnancy is of especial interest now that outstanding doctors in various parts of the world are advocating diets which keep babies small and assist the kidneys in bearing their double burden. An average child in Japan weighs between five and six pounds at birth," said the midwife. "Of course they didn't know why they advocated that a pregnant woman should eat the flesh of lean white

fish and not of fatty red fish, no meat and lots of vegetables, but none the less the fact that Japanese babies have always been small has saved the lives of many mothers in Japan. I think that less than 1 per cent of our women die in childbirth.[1] The diet, of course, was for the purpose of purification according to Buddhistic principles. Mild exercise was also advocated and the carrying of heavy loads and high reaching were thought to be injurious," she said.

"Many of the old ideas were based only on superstition. Most of them have now completely disappeared," said Mrs. Kazami. "For instance, as in other parts of the Orient, the women were afraid to give birth to a child while in a lying-down position lest their blood solidify inside." According to the Sho-rei Hikki which ceremoniously prescribes what a lying-in chamber should have, there must be two tubs in which to place underskirts, two tubs to hold the placenta, a wooden object for the mother to lean against, a stool for the midwife to use while supporting the mother in delivery, pillows so that the child-bed ridden women may be comfortable, various buckets, basins and other similar objects. Besides

[1] 93 per cent deaths of mothers from the effects of childbirth were recorded for the year ending in October, 1938.

this, the midwife must have an apron so that if the infant is high born it does not lie directly on her knees as she washes it. There must also be a fine towel of unhemmed cotton with which to wipe the baby. A wooden object for leaning against was very necessary, for after the birth the mother was required to remain a day and a night in a squatting position. For twenty-one days after that she could not recline completely, even when asleep. If she should recline before this period had elapsed it was superstitiously believed that there would be a dangerous rush of blood to the head.[1]

"I am glad to say the old ideas are part of the past. The few remaining beliefs which have to do with shrine worship, the obtaining of charms and the like, only serve to give the mothers confidence," said Mrs. Kazami.

As soon as a woman knows she is pregnant she goes to see a midwife. If she is rather old-fashioned and clings to tradition, she chooses the zodiacal day of the dog for this visit. Dogs are favoured because they give birth easily. At the time of this first visit the expectant mother gives the midwife the usual fee of two yen and a small gift.

[1] *Tales of Old Japan* by Lord Redesdale, p. 286.

The midwife determines on what day the child is apt to arrive and on what day the binding of the *obi* is to take place. This *obi*, called *iwataobi*, is worn under the regular *obi* from the fifth month and for three weeks after the birth of the child. The *iwataobi* is customarily the gift of the wife of the go-between who assisted at the marriage of the expectant mother and her husband, and is usually of red and white material and eight feet long. The binding frequently takes place on the day of the dog. After the binding, the expectant mother often goes to some shrine to pray for easy delivery. In Tokyo, the Suiten-gu Shrine in Kyobashi is famous as a place of resort for this purpose. Special charms are given out to the supplicants by the priests to assist in delivery.

Modern midwives are strictly trained and supervised by the authorities, according to Mrs. Kazami. They must be meticulous in matters of sanitation and must call a doctor if there is the least indication of complication at a birth. They are not allowed to perform any sort of a delivery where an operation is required. "When I go on a case I take with me a clean sheet, bandages, gauze, sterile cotton, medicine and other necessities. The first thing I do upon arrival is to boil my instruments," said Mrs. Kazami who stated that it is

very difficult to become a midwife because the examinations are so strict. The Tokyo Midwives' Association has 6000 members, and one local organization in each ward. These thirty-five associations together form the central organization. To join the society a woman must have studied methods of cleaning, physical structure of the body, sex differences between men and women, the special structure of the pelvic region, the names of the various bones and muscles and organs, pharmaceutical terms, menses, pregnancy symptoms, difficulties and sickness, treatment of pregnancy disorders, pregnancy dietetics, meals for after-birth, how to handle a case before the doctor arrives, how to care for a baby, how to nurse a baby, how to wean a baby, how to register a birth, how to dispose of the placenta and how to report a death. If they have learned all this and have passed the examination, the association may admit them. The girls practise first on dolls aud then usually become assistants to practising midwives. Usually two out of every ten who take the examination fail.

A midwife may perform the delivery at the mother's home or, in a few cases, the mother may go to a midwife's hospital. "I have worked very hard to help establish the small hospital we have

in conjunction with the association headquarters," said Mrs. Kazami. "It is greatly needed when conditions in the home are crowded or the girl is an unmarried mother and without care. We offer three classes of service so that it is within the reach of even the poorest and sometimes we even take charity cases. The rooms cost one yen and fifty-five sen and up for a day including meals and a nurse. The delivery fee is extra." Children of unmarried mothers are also kept in the hospital for 100 days after birth while homes are found for them. In this Mrs. Kazami has a great personal interest but she says such children are few and the demand for children to adopt is greatly in excess of the supply.

The profession of midwifery would hardly be called a poorly paid one. The average midwife earns around 200 yen a month. The fees are small but rich clients usually give generous gifts which offset the poor fees or charity cases which a midwife is bound to take on. The regular birth fee includes delivery, bathing of the baby and care of the child for a week after birth. Each day the midwife calls and inspects the child's naval dressing, cleans its eyes, washes its mouth out with salt and changes its clothes. "This treatment of the baby is a very practical affair

compared to the old days," said Mrs. Kazami. "I can remember my grandmother telling me about some of the old customs. At birth each baby was supposed to have twenty-four robes prepared for it, twelve cotton and twelve silk all with their hems dyed saffron colour. On the seventy-fifth or hundredth day after the birth the baby discarded its infant linen and a holiday was set aside for this purpose. Often in late Tokugawa and early Meiji times the baby was all dressed up on this day but the ancients thought this would cause the child to contract disease and so did not celebrate the event in this manner. On the hundred and twentieth day after birth the child was supposed to be weaned, but this was a ceremony rather than an actuality. At this time a regular meal used to be placed before the child. Actually, Japanese children are seldom weaned until after the eighth month and many women nurse their children up to two years. In the old days some poor women even kept their children at their breast until they were from five to seven years of age. It was thought that a woman who was nursing her baby would not become pregnant. Of course women of the higher classes usually had wet-nurses for their children but this is now an almost forgotten practice," she said.

Another task of the midwife is the disposal of the placenta. In fact, the problem of its disposal has brought into being one of the world's strangest professions. Tokyo is divided into six districts with one placenta disposal company in each district. "The companies send around postcards, so after a birth I just put the placenta in the white unglazed earthenware jar which the mother has purchased for the purpose, wrap it in paper and then drop the postcard in the mail with the house address on it. The company sends around a collection man who, for a fee of fifty sen, takes the jar to the company's furnace where it is burned at a white heat, the placenta being completely turned to ash and the jar thrown away. Such companies also do fumigation work and for an additional ten sen a call will remove any soiled garments and rags which I may wish to get rid of," said Mrs. Kazami.

A call at the Nihon Hoikaisha (Japan Placenta Company) later revealed that about one per cent of its district's inhabitants still cling to the old traditions. For this reason the company also has a burial ground where plots either first, second or third class may be rented for a five year period at a fee ranging from one yen and fifty sen to five yen. A shrine dedicated to deceased placenta

is situated in the cemetery and once a month a *Shinto* priest comes and performs rites in the cemetery and crematorium. Renters of the plots also come to pray. Most of the collections take place in December, February and March thus indicating that most births take place in the spring and winter months. The fewest births occur in July. The police strictly supervise such companies, visiting the plants about three times a month.

All placenta were once buried in the family garden in the no-god direction so that evil would not befall the child. Still, a few people throw the water from the first bath in the no-god direction of the year.

Naturally, a midwife finds herself being consulted on all sorts of personal problems besides babies. "Wives come to me for domestic advice," said Mrs. Kazami. "It has made me interested in the problem of hygienic instruction and I am glad to say that Japanese girls are not as ignorant as their grandmothers were. The day of the *makimono* and silence is past," she said, explaining that in the old days of the Tokugawa era, boys and girls of *samurai*, *kuge* or other high class families who were over seven years of age, and not of the same family, were not allowed in each other's

company as a matter of moral discipline.[1] The girls were kept completely in ignorance of sex matters. Such things were not spoken of until the night before marriage; then their mothers often handed them a scroll, or *makimono*, on which were pictured various sex practices. These scrolls which were sometimes painted by famous artists, were handed down from generation to generation and were kept privately in lacquered boxes. Mothers at this time also gave their daughters a list of duties towards their husbands such as: "Don't let your husband see you with your face unpainted, be obedient, get up earlier than your husband and go after him to bed."

"The midwife must fight ignorance which may be detrimental to the welfare of a young wife and mother. To do this midwives must be well-informed. One of the biggest problems of the association is to get a law passed forbidding women who are not girls' high school graduates to become midwives," said Mrs. Kazami, who admitted that while she does not approve of birth control, in rare cases where illness on the part of the mother makes pregnancy dangerous, she does give some advice. She also advises her clients in body

[1] The *kuge* were officials serving the Emperor at the court.

care and is against pain deadener at the time of birth. "Japanese women are more patient than western women and can endure pain. Anyway, I think that pain deadeners are bad for the health and prevent recovery on the part of the mother," said Mrs. Kazami.

Mrs. Kazami represents a high standard in midwifery. Her brother, Akira Kazami, was chief secretary of the Konoe Cabinet, and it is unusual to find a woman of such a background in midwifery. "You see I married young," said Mrs. Kazami when asked how she came to be interested in the profession. "My parents took me home against my will from the house of my husband because they thought he mistreated me. Then my husband died after an illness and my parents tried to make me remarry. I refused, and took up midwifery in order to make myself self-supporting. I have never cared about the fees I have earned, but I am more convinced all the time that this is the greatest profession for women of the future who want to be independent.

"Midwifery is especially important in country villages where there is often great ignorance and sometimes not even a doctor. I shall never forget my first case. She was a young wife of twenty-one and she wept with pain and I sympathetically

wept with her. I decided I couldn't go on with the profession after that, but I got over my first bad feeling and I have been in this work for thirty-one years now. I am glad I changed my mind. I love my work. It makes me happy to bring scientific assistance to hundreds of mothers who do not need a doctor. I serve all classes of society and have learned about them. One must have good health for this profession. It is good training both for the mind and body. I know it makes me keep fit," concluded Mrs. Kazami.

GEISHA

MEMORIES of an evening in far away Sadho where the old world traditions of Kyoto still cling, stirred my curiosity concerning that much talked of Japanese entertainer—the *geisha*. I recall even now an evening in a waiting house called Moon Flower which overlooked a garden with an ancient stone lantern and grotesque trees. The entertainers arrived in long trailing *kimono*: two young girls under fifteen and an older, but equally attractive woman, who acted as chaperone and musician. Chiharu, a thousand springs, was all that her name implied. She sang in a flute-like, childish voice and clapped her hands to emphasize the rhythm. Yaeko danced, her skirts trailing, her fan gracefully gesticulating. She took her position with her back facing us so that her stiff *obi* with its red sash tied below it was clearly visible. Then, with

mincing steps, she performed native dances. Her tiny face was chalky, her bottom lip accentuated with a splotch of vermillion. The girls were indeed more like animated dolls than human beings—relics of a slowly receding world. I wondered what place they could have in modern society. So later I visited Tokyo's Shimbashi, the most up-to-date *geisha* district in all Japan, and sought out Mr. Hidezo Kubo, the head of the Shimbashi *geisha* guild.

"Being a proprietor of a *geisha* house is a grand job," remarked Mr. Kubo with evident satisfaction as to his lot. Mr. Kubo has been in the *geisha* business since 1924 when he sold out his flour shop and took to flowers. Now he owns the Hanamasuya, or increasing flowers, *geisha* house.

"Shimbashi is the most modern and highest rated *geisha* district in all of Tokyo's fifty-four. We think its the best in Japan," Mr. Kubo said with pride as he twisted the watch fob dangling from his stylish western type vest. "The next best one is Akasaka. Then there are Yoshicho, Yanagibashi and Nihonbashi. They are all first class. The remaining ones are second and third class districts located in all parts of the city." The largest district is that of Asakusa which has 988 of Tokyo's 4,526 *geisha* houses serv-

ing 2,616 *machiai* and representing the city's 12,540 *geisha* (April, 1936). There were twice as many *geisha*, or 24,261, in Tokyo in 1889, a date when the *geisha* were at the peak of their popularity. However, *geisha* are definitely on the increase since the munitions workers are now booming the entertainment business and western style dance-hall girls and the like have been frowned upon. The police department listed 13,793 *geisha* in April, 1939. Whereas their monthly earnings before 1939 averaged 1,562,714 yen in any one month, though earnings vary according to the season, they were 2,165,000 yen in January, 1939 and 2,899,000 yen in February of this year.

Mr. Kubo seemed to be a bit at a loss when asked to explain the complexities of the *geisha* business. He wrinkled his jovial face as he said: "The trouble is Shimbashi is different from the rest. I only know about Shimbashi, but I'll do my best. In the first place we aim here to elevate the standards of the *geisha*. We do this by giving the girls a great deal of personal freedom, by maintaining the divided system of having the waiting houses, or *machiai*, where the girls go to meet customers, and the restaurants and *geisha* houses, all separate establishments. In Osaka and other less modern places, and even in some of the lower

class quarters of Tokyo, such functions are not so completely separated. Then, we give the girls every opportunity to educate and improve themselves at a small cost and hold seasonal *geisha* performances at our theatre, the Shimbashi *Embujo*, in order to encourage their personal improvement through competition in the entertainment arts. That is a large order, isn't it?" he smiled as he finished his explanation.

"The *geisha* have become true artists and are now greatly respected, thanks to our efforts in Shimbashi and similar districts, that is since the *samurai* began to patronize them back around 1830 and the profession has been completely separated from its origins. The trouble with most foreigners," said Mr. Kubo, "is that they still persist in thinking that the *geisha* are now what they originally were." Low class *geisha* are not always what they should be, and while it is against the law for *geisha* and *geisha* house owners to participate in anything like prostitution, the police do wink at this procedure in some third class districts. "One of our chief aims in Shimbashi is to break down erroneous conceptions. Really, *geisha* are comparable to stage actresses in the West," said Mr. Kubo with considerable emphasis. He might have more realistically said they are

actresses who are also clever, professional "gold-diggers." For a *geisha* without a patron is like a carriage without a horse. "We only wish that foreigners could be made to understand the true situation," added the *geisha* guild head.

I asked Mr. Kubo about the early *geisha* girls who seem to have brought so much odium on their modern sisters, but he was at a loss regarding their history. Later, other sources revealed that the first *geisha* were seemingly retired courtesans of the Yoshiwara. At least, the first so-called *geisha* may be traced there, the term having been originally used in 1761. But as early as the seventeenth century the retired Yoshiwara women who were especially talented sometimes doffed their traditional ornaments and clothing, put on simple attire and did entertaining. However, some of the ladies seem to have forgotten that they had retired, so the licensed house owners of the Yoshiwara and Shinagawa complained of this competition to the government which accordingly forbade retired courtesans to become entertainers of this type. Later, when the profession was revived, the girls were not ex-courtesans. But *geisha* troubles were not ended for even these entertainers, the more talented of whom were called *geisha* after 1761, were lax. The government settled the ques-

tion to the satisfaction of the licensed house owners by establishing a *kemban-cho*, or *geisha* registry office, in the Yoshiwara in 1779. Through this agency both *geisha* and *hokan*, or male *geisha*, most of whom were buffoons, were strictly regulated.[1] As a result of this, *geisha* were forbidden to go out of the Yoshiwara district except with very special permission and their reputation as entertainers, for which they are known to-day in Japan, became an actuality. The *kemban* controlled their dress, opposed magnificence, and preferred plain girls to attractive ones lest they compete with the *oiran* and so disturb business conditions or be tempted to forget to just entertain.[2]

There were various other rulings against *geisha* even in the early nineteenth century, so it was really not until the *samurai* took them up that the *geisha* can ever be said to have gained respectability and power. From 1830 on, the *geisha's* lot was improved and some think that the climax of their popularity was reached around 1887.[3]

[1] Among the many *hokan* now in Tokyo is an American, Mr. William Warren, who specializes in Japanese dancing. For the past three years he has been connected with the Asakusa *geisha* quarter and, like any entertainer, has his special Japanese patron.

[2] An *orian* is a high class prostitute.

[3] J. E. de Becker : *History of the Yoshiwara Yukwaku* (1906).

Association with the *samurai* seems to have instilled a sort of pride. Thereafter every effort was made to separate the *geisha* from any association with prostitution. If by some chance a young lady were improper, she was disgraced and driven from her house, and if the house owner had been a party to the affair, his house was taken from him. The disgraced *geisha's kimono* were confiscated and hung on display at the centre of the *geisha* quarter for all to see. At this time the *geisha* of the Yoshiwara were the proudest, most proper, and highest rated of them all. It wasn't until around 1870 that Shimbashi and Yanagibashi came to be ranked as the best and the prestige of the Yoshiwara declined.

By the end of the Meiji era, Shimbashi led all the rest. "It was in 1890 that Shimbashi and Yanagiwara first changed their registry offices into *geisha* guilds which are organizations of *geisha* house owners. One member is designated as guild head each year. A central office to which all calls come from the various patrons is also maintained by each guild. By 1903 all the *geisha* districts in Japan had followed suit. There is also a central union of *geisha* guilds in Japan," explained Mr. Kubo.

At this point in the conversation Mr. Kubo was interrupted for the third time by a telephone

call. "Life is just too busy around here," he commented. "You'd think that the clients would wait until later in the day and be satisfied with what the clerks downstairs can do for them. But they like to bother me hoping I can fix it up when the most popular girls are occupied. But that is all part of the business I guess," he sighed.

"But you want to know about the more intimate life of the Shimbashi *geisha*?" queried Mr. Kubo. "Well, I'll tell you what I can, then you had better go talk to some of the girls."

"In the first place, Shimbashi is not like other districts. Many of the *geisha* come here of their own volition. They are not contracted into the profession by their parents against their will as in some other districts where the house owners give the parents all the way from 150 to 500 yen as a loan, to be worked off by the girls for whom they contract. Because Shimbashi is at the top of the profession, our girls come from all over Japan. Less important districts get mainly local girls. It is every *geisha's* dream to be a Shimbashi *geisha*. Sometimes they come to us from other districts after they have been freed from their debts. In other instances we buy up the contracts of successful *geisha* in different districts just as we sell the contracts of unsuccessful *geisha* to less exacting

localities. We take on about fifty new girls a year. A girl is chosen for her voice, face, intelligence and health. *Geisha* are usually apprenticed between the ages of twelve and twenty-one, that is, after they have finished primary school. In the old days they began their study in a *geisha* house from seven years of age. Many of the Shimbashi girls have gone to girls' high school, and a few have had college work. This is not so in lower class districts where the girls are from poorer families and often very ignorant. Low class *geisha* are very superstitious too. The girls usually retire between the ages of twenty and thirty, that is, after their contracts have expired and their debts have been worked off," explained Mr. Kubo, who estimated that about twenty or twenty-five of the Shimbashi girls get married every year.

"When they get married or are taken on by a patron, they usually do well by themselves, because our clientele here is the best in the land," said the *geisha* manager as he recalled Okoi San who married the famous statesman, Taro Katsura, and Ohana San who was the mistress of Prince Saionji and was taken by him to Paris at the time of the signing of the Versailles Treaty.[1]

[1] Okoi San is now an abbess of a nunnery in Tokyo.

"Strictly speaking, *geisha* are classified according to their earnings," continued Mr. Kubo. According to this method there are six classifications: *Jimae*, or *geisha* who are also owners of *geisha* houses; *wake*, or *geisha* who divide their earnings on a half and half basis with the house owner; *Shichisan*, who divide their profits on a seven-three basis with three-tenths going to the *geisha*; *Shiburokubu*, who divide their earning with the house master on a four-six basis with four-tenths going to the *geisha*; *marugakae*, who must give all their income to the owner of the *geisha* house and receive money from the master in proportion to their debts; and lastly, *kambankari*, or girls who have not contracted with any special house but who pay a certain sum of money to a house for the use of its name. Usually the latter pay about 100 yen a month to first class houses and fifty yen to second class ones. Another method is to divide the income with the house owner on a three-seven basis with seven-tenths going to the *geisha*. *Kambankari* are quite free to terminate their relations with a house at any time.

Most of the Shimbashi *geisha*, unless they are novices, are *wake*, according to Mr. Kubo, who added that each house makes its own arrangements, however. "Most of our girls be-

come *wake* almost as soon as they reach *ippon* status," said Mr. Kubo. "What is *ippon* status? Well, an *ippon* is a true *geisha* or one who receives full pay. In pre-clock days a *geisha's* hour was determined by the length of time needed to burn *ippon*, or one stick of incense," he obligingly explained.

Full pay in Shimbashi means five yen for two hours and nine yen for three hours. That is a first class *geisha* rate. Third class *geisha* can be had in small towns for as low as seventy sen an hour. Before becoming *ippon geisha* the girls are called *hangyoku* in Tokyo. *Han* means half and *gyoku* means fee. In other localities they are called *maiko*, *oshaku* (*sake* pourers) and other names. A *haugyoku* in Shimbashi gets three yen fifty for two hours and five yen fifty for three hours. Since 1930 the prices have been standard. Not even the most popular *geisha* can get more. Nor is the old oriental practice of forcing up the price of a *geisha*, such as is still common among the sing-song girls of China, resorted to. By this method you can get your favourite entertainer from somebody else's party by sending her house your request. Then if her patron wants her to stay with him he has to pay a bonus, or let her go. In Shimbashi, it is entirely up to the girl. If she prefers your

company to that of her client, she may leave a party after a reasonable time. But the deserted client does not pay for the unoccupied time nor does he have to pay a bonus to keep her. You cannot keep your entertainer if she wants to go, provided she gets a substitute to take her place.

"*Geisha* are also classed according to their achievements," continued Mr. Kubo. "They are all either trained to sing *kiyomoto*, *tokiwazu*, *nagauta* or *utazawa* songs, or to dance, play drums, *samisen*, flute or cymbals.[1] Most of them sing or dance and also play some instrument. That is why we have a *geisha* school in Shimbashi. It gives the girls a chance to become accomplished at the small cost of a yen a month. There they can learn to dance both classic and modern ballroom dancing, play various instruments, and learn the art of conversation. The study hours are from twelve to three o'clock every day but no *geisha* is required to attend. The school expenses run to 10,000 yen a year, half of which is met by the student fees and half by the various *geisha* houses. Shimbashi is the first and nearly the only *geisha* district to have such a school," said Mr. Kubo with paternal pride.

[1] *Kiyomoto*, *tokiwazu* and *nagauta* are forms of ballad singing while *utazawa* songs are shorter and more lyrical. A *samisen* is a long handled instrument akin to a banjo.

Mr. Kubo also brought out the point that most foreigners mistakenly think that the only true *geisha* are those who can converse cleverly. Usually all *geisha* have some artistic achievement and a few of them may excel in conversation besides exercising their artistic talents. A successful *geisha* must be able to entertain in many ways. She must sense the tastes of her guests, and no matter what mood they are in, she must fulfil her function of softening the feelings and comforting those who are worn with daily cares.

The girls have a chance to display their many talents publicly about three times a year when the Shimbashi *geisha* put on shows at the *Embujo* under Mr. Kubo's direction. The first such venture was the *Miyako odori* of Kyoto which was soon followed by the *Azuma odori* of Tokyo. Nearly all the large cities now have these dance recitals.

"The show idea really began in the old days when various *geisha* districts used to put on entertainments called *osarai* at tea houses, but besides being dancing competitions for the younger *geisha* they were opportunities for the various houses, and girls to show their rivals what good patronage they had. Their patrons competed with each other in giving their favourites lavish *kimono*. But all this silliness is gone now," said the owner of

the Hanamasuya.

Thus one might accurately say that a *geisha's* work is to pour *sake*, converse lightly, and dance and sing or play some instrument. Conversational facility is something learned gradually long after a girl's apprenticeship has finished. Some are never apt at it. While working as *sake* pourers and artists the young girls listen to the more experienced *geisha* converse and pick up pointers.

Geisha girls in Shimbashi earn at least 200 yen a month upon becoming *ippon geisha*. Successful ones earn from 500 to 1000 yen a month depending on their popularity and the season of the year. New Year's time is the best. Then every one is giving parties and is gay. The summer months are the poorest. Weekdays are better than week-ends for on week-ends men usually stay home with their families. As a result, the girls in Shimbashi are given leeway in the freer time. They must wear the classic style headdresses except during June, July and August, and on Saturdays and Sundays. Other *geisha* districts are less strict about the wearing of the old style headdresses. Working hours are from about six o'clock to mid-night. From six to nine the girls attend private parties, and from nine o'clock on they are in attendance at waiting houses.

"A *geisha's* success is dependent upon her accomplishments even more than on her physical attractiveness," concluded Mr. Kubo. "Why, we have one *geisha* in Shimbashi who is fifty-nine years old!"

Fifty-nine years old! I decided that the house of this famed *geisha*, Aiyakko, would be the one to visit. Despite Mr. Kubo's lack of enthusiasm over the idea, for Aiyakko is a noted gadabout, he gave me the address and I set out for the Suehiroya, or folding-fan. As I left I passed the entrance counter where Shimbashi's 800 *geisha* have their names listed, each on a wooden tag. The tags are turned face to the wall when the girls are occupied.

Aiyakko was not in, but a charming, tittering, young miss asked if there were anything she could do. Aiyakko, she stated, never came in before dressing time. "Anyway, mother doesn't like to talk to people unless she has had some *sake* to drink," explained the young lady who was her daughter. I expressed willingness to bring *sake*, but the daughter, Tsuruko, replied that her mother would never drink except when working. In fact, she never even talks to her daughters very much. She did not add that perhaps mother was just a good business woman and didn't see why

she should talk unless she got paid for it. But Tsuruko was exceedingly hospitable and the next two hours were spent in the *geisha* house in animated conversation with the five girls who dwell there. The conversation proceeded between pats of powder and haircombings while they were making up for the day's work and putting on their elegant *kimono*.

Aiyakko, it seems, is a *jimae*, or *geisha* who also owns a house. She is in the business because she likes it, having retired three times to bear her three daughters. Two of the girls are now *geisha* and one has married. Aiyakko's mother was also a *geisha*. But this is a most unusual circumstance for *geisha*, it seems, seldom have children unless they retire permanently from their profession. Usually they adopt children whom they train to follow in their footsteps. Aiyakko, though fifty-nine, is Japan's number one *geisha* singer of *kiyomoto* songs.

Tsuruko (Miss Crane) does not like being a *geisha*, but her mother has insisted on her following the profession. She and her sister, Kotsuru (Miss Little Crane) expect to have *geisha* houses of their own later on. Tsuruko's suppressed desire is to be a teacher of the *samisen*. Now her forte is *kiyomoto* singing and playing the *samisen*. Her

salary would indicate that she is among Shimbashi's top-ranking *geisha*, for she confided that she averages about 800 yen a month.

I asked her if there were many *geisha* girls who dislike their profession. She answered that there were few in Shimbashi but stated that in the poorer districts some of the girls who have been forced into the work by needy parents are unhappy, and now and then try to run away.

"We are so free here. If we don't feel well or don't like a patron we can always refuse a call by getting some one else to go," said Tsuruko, who begged to be pardoned for her deshabillé. "You see I have just returned from a vacation. We cannot go off without the house owner's permission unless our patron pays for the time. My patron gave me the money to go. I went alone to a hot spring and now I feel very refreshed. Sometimes I go with my patron."

The atmosphere of the house was like that of a girl's boarding school. The five girls knelt before their mirrors and began to put on their make-up, gossiping and chatting as they adorned themselves. Tsuruko said that at least ninety per cent of the *geisha* house owners in Shimbashi are women. "That is so in other districts too. They are usually retired *geisha*," she added. This fact

makes for a co-operative spirit and the *geisha* groups are like large families.

"There is no trouble between the house owners and the girls, and no jealousy between us. Not in Shimbashi, anyway," said Tsuruko, "because the girls are high class due to the particular clientele which comes here."

I noticed that the girls were applying modern lipstick and dark powder to their faces and called attention to this break with tradition. One young girl with dimpled cheeks explained that they always made up naturally when going out in modern headdress. But why has the old style lipstick been abandoned, I inquired. "Because it's not kiss-proof!" burst out a young lady with a natural wave which would have been disgraceful in another age. A mischievous smile danced in her eyes as she giggled.

On a pedestal in the room I noticed a wig and asked if they used wigs instead of having their hair dressed. Tsuruko replied that Mr. Kubo didn't approve of them. In fact, they were strictly against the rules. "But you see, occasionally we get in a jam. For instance, I rise at nine o'clock every morning in order to get all my music lessons in because I don't go to the *geisha* school. That means I am not through until four o'clock when I

must begin to dress for the evening in order to be on call from six o'clock. To get my hair fixed, which is at least every other day and once a day for re-touching, I must rise earlier. Sometimes I oversleep because I don't go to bed until two o'clock in the morning. Then the wig is a saviour. Most of us have had one in reserve for the last few years. They are too heavy to be really comfortable, and anyway it isn't traditional."

Tsuruko also revealed that she goes to four or five parties during the course of an evening. Girls not so popular average about two or three. Out of the income which comes from such popularity she must spend at least 150 yen on clothes and accessories every month. A single *kimono* costs her around 200 yen while an *obi* costs about the same. Her many lessons also take a sizable sum.

"You see you have to dress well or your clients won't come again," explained Tsuruko who loves to perform for her patrons but sometimes finds them very silly in conversation.

"You have to be a natural coquette to converse well with everybody and enjoy it. Moreover you must make the men think they are clever no matter how dull they are," she said as she went on to explain the ins and outs of *geisha* con-

versation and customs.

"In some ways we *geisha* have a language and customs of our own. Or rather we used to have. The old-fashioned and lower class *geisha* still cling to some of the old ideas. Still we all use the old solution for names. We meet so many men when we go to four or five parties a night that it just couldn't be expected that we would remember the names of everybody, so when we first meet a client we generally call him "*nii-san*" (Mr. or Honourable Brother). Then, as the party progresses, and the *sake* has made even the stiffest relax, we give the client a nickname if he seems to be the sort who might be amused by it. Such names as Haa-San (Mr. Nose) and Tsu-San (Mr. Baldhead) are quite common. Old customers whose names we get to know, we may call by part of their name. Mr. Suzuki, for instance, might become Mr. Su, and Mr. Ono, Mr. O," said Tsuruko.

"Many of the old *geisha* customs and words developed because of superstitions, but most of us, at least in Shimbashi, are too well educated to pay much attention to these things any more," said Tsuruko. However, until a recent law due to the national emergency was enacted, three salt mounds were set in the entrance doorways of

even Shimbashi *geisha* houses for the purpose of purification and to bring good luck. Another old custom which has practically gone into oblivion is that of the sparking flint on the back of a departing *geisha* to bring her good luck for the evening.

The Shimbashi girls now seldom find themselves saying *nami no hana*, or wave flowers, in lieu of salt for they have ceased to fear the use of the word *shio* which was once shunned because *shi* means death. Nor are they prone to call *shoyu murasaki* though they may on occasion substitute this euphonious term for the regular name of soy sauce. And *nashi* (Japanese pear) is usually given its correct name these days instead of *arinomi*, or fruit in existence. *Nashi* used to be detested by superstitious *geisha* because *nashi* means nil. There are many similar words which have dual meanings, one of which is ominous, which were rigidly avoided in the old days and still are in some quarters. The word *suru* or *suri* was avoided because it meant to grind or wear away. *Atari* was usually substituted in such a case for it means to hit something or be lucky.

More commonly used are the phrases with special trade meanings to the *geisha*. A few still greet Mr. Kubo and his colleagues with "*imahodo*,"

or "please continue your favours towards me," or they may on occasion say "*konban ari*" to departing clients. The latter phrase is of Yoshiwara origin and is one which was evolved in the development of *sato kotoba*, a sort of Esperanto that came into being there because the girls from different provinces couldn't understand each other or the customers. But Tsuruko stated that she rarely hears such phrases used in Shimbashi though the old *geisha* word for *sake* bottle, *chosi*, or tune, is not so rare. "You see it came to be called *tune* because *sake* puts every one in tune," she explained as she smiled mischievously.

In some *geisha* houses the custom still persists of calling tea, *debana*, or honourable going out tea. "I have heard mother call it that," piped up Kotsuru. In *machiai* it seems this tea was once universally called *agari bana*, or going up tea. Both terms seem to imply that they, that is the *geisha*, were going to gather *hana*, or presents, from the guests, and so this is glorified "gold-digger" language. On bad nights tea is called O *cha o hiku*, or grind the tea, and *geisha* who are considered unpopular are called *Ochahiki*, or grinding tea girls.

Just at this moment Tsuruko noted that one of the younger *geisha* girls was putting on an exceedingly bright shade of lipstick and called her

attention to the fact that a darker shade might be more suitable. "We teach the girls how to make up and to act. Mother is very particular about that sort of thing because she has always performed before the very best people," said little Kotsuru as she returned to the room, having just completed her task of setting an offering before a small *Inari* shrine in the hallway. *Inari* is the god of the *geisha* and of merchants.

Tsuruko, who has a long, old-fashioned face, explained that the older men prefer girls with the traditional horse-faced beauty while the younger men like a more pretty, round type of face. She expressed fears for the young men who prefer beer-hall girls. "They have no artistic sense," she concluded.

Marriage is the *geisha's* worst problem, according to Aiyakko's young daughters. Only a very few have a chance to marry, and they do very well, but most families disapprove of *geisha* wives. "We usually have to be content with finding a patron and becoming *mekake*, or second-wives, or we end up as *geisha* house keepers. I think it is too bad, but perhaps this age-old prejudice against us will sometime lapse. It is hard to find a person who will assume your debts, too. I must say though that as yet the professional

geisha is the best paid woman in Japan and we have the satisfaction of having every opportunity to become trained artists," said Tsuruko as the girls began to go downstairs to have their elaborate *kimono* put on them by the maids and *hakoya*, or guild boys, who carry their instruments for them.

The *geisha* business is booming according to official sources. The *geisha* is definitely not a shadow from the past I was obliged to acknowledge as I walked down the street through the rows of unobtrusive but artistic *geisha* houses, recalling a remark made by Mr. Kubo: "Even if Japan some day has mixed society and men take their wives out to parties as only a very few do now, I am convinced that the *geisha* will remain. A man has to have some place to slip away to, after all, even if in secret."

ADVERTISING YOU CAN'T ESCAPE

ONE of the most colourful sights in Japan is the *chindonya*, or itinerant advertising band. Garbed in wild costumes, such bands roam the streets to a mad accompaniment of sound.

One day the author cornered Mr. Kenkichi Hirai in a noodle restaurant while he and his troupe were slurping in long stringy noodles and munching soft *mochi* cakes during their noon hour rest period.[1]

Mr. Hirai, who is the ambitious leader of one of Tokyo's many troupes, has espoused the profession because he loves it. His eyes sparkled with enthusiasm as he talked about his work between the movements of eating.

"This is a profession with a great future. It's

[1] *Mochi* is boiled rice beaten to a glutinous state.

big business. We draw the customers into the market or store or whatever it is we are advertising, and there our duties end. I don't care how dumb the people are, we attract them anyway. We even get those who won't read the newspapers. That's why this business has it all over newspaper advertising," he said with pride, as he brushed a bit of stray food off his red satin shirt which was wondrously bedecked with yellow and gold braid.

Mr. Hirai introduced the other members of his band. Next to him sat toothless and taciturn old Sawada, the banner man, resplendent in an orange and white shirt and a *happi* coat cut to make him look like a caricature of a feudal lord's retainer. With great difficulty he managed to eat in spite of being impeded by white cotton gloves which hitched around his middle fingers. Holding a cigarette gracefully poised between his only two front teeth seemed to be his sole interest in life. His dental difficulties also in large measure accounted for his silence, for when he did speak his words were reduced to a mumble understood by few. Grandpa Sawada carries the banner in Mr. Hirai's *chindonya* troupe and so he must prance in order to attract the attention of the passers-by. "Keeps him young; sort of a youth movement

I call it," laughed Mr. Hirai, for Grandpa Sawada is seventy-two.

All the colours of the rainbow battled on the *kimono* and *obi* of Mrs. Hirai. Above them rose a calsomined neck supporting a patient face topped by scraggly black hair.

"She's my wife," Mr. Hirai announced in a matter-of-fact manner. "She works, too. Always has to. Even when she's going to have a baby. She likes it. Good exercise. Keeps her fit."

The person in question responded with a smile and said that the job would not be so bad if only she could find a way to avoid using her feet so much. "They get awfully tired," mumbled Mrs. Hirai whose accomplishment is the *samisen.*

Mrs. Hashimoto suddenly realized that she was the next in line. Abruptly recalled to consciousness, she closed her perpetually open jaw and, for the moment, looked a little less stupid than usual. But she had nothing to say as evidently her thinking mechanism had atrophied during the process of handing out handbills which did all her talking for her. It made life very simple. She went back to eating and staring.

"That's the gang to-day. The trumpeter is out of commission with a hoarse throat. He

insisted on playing too complicated a tune yesterday, his first regular day on the job. He called it "swing" or something like that. I told him to take it easy but he wouldn't listen. You have to get so the music comes out without any effort. After all this isn't a classical orchestra."

Mr. Hirai revealed that he instructs his ten troopers in jazz music, but he favours Japanese folk tunes. "You have to play tunes everybody knows in order to arouse sympathy. We can't take the time to get the tunes down perfectly, so they have to have strong melodies. The more familiar they are, the easier it is on us. Our tune capacity has to be unlimited. We play from nine o'clock in the morning until five in the afternoon about twenty-three days out of every month," he explained. Mr. Hirai himself is a three man orchestra as he pummels the drum, alternating it with cymbals and bells.

"You must understand advertising psychology to make a success of the *chindonya* business," he went on. "We appeal to the eyes and ears rather than to the intelligence. No matter how indifferent the passers-by are, they can't miss our music, motion and colour. Curiosity forces the people to read the hand-bills. Even children stare and then run home and tell their parents,

and before they know it they have gone to the place we are advertising."

Once Mr. Hirai was a *naniwa-bushi-katari*, or professional story-teller. "This is the same idea but much better because now I get out among my audience instead of waiting for them to gather around me. *Chindonya* work is more healthy too. I always get good exercise and fresh air. I changed my profession about ten years ago. *Chindonya* have been in existence for about twenty years. In the Kwansai they call them *tozaiya*. When I started in the profession, foreign style costumes like the one I have on were just beginning to be used," he recalled, as he adjusted his attractive purple and green trousers which contrasted superbly with his red and gold shirt. "Before that they only had Japanese costumes, wildly coloured."

So successful has Mr. Hirai become during the past ten years that he is now a teacher of other itinerant advertisers. At present he has eight pupils whom he assists in getting appropriate noises out of drums, clarinets, trumpets, *samisen* and other instruments. "We use mainly foreign instruments in this business because *chindonya* came to the fore just after silent films changed over to talking pictures. A lot of theatre musicians were thrown out of work and many of them

took up the *chindonya* trade and brought their instruments along," explained Mr. Hirai who also teaches his pupils the proper methods of modelling the amazing costumes he designs and to participate as banner men. Sometimes Mr. Hirai has gone to the heights of ensemble work by creating a chorus number for the banner men so that two or three jig around at the same time. "But that's for terribly special occasions only," said Mr. Hirai impressed with his own genius.

At the time Mr. Hirai entered the profession there was a training school for *chindonya*. But now the school is closed and the whole profession has become an in-and-out affair for those seeking to earn money temporarily and quickly. The average man usually sticks to the profession less than two years, but Mr. Hirai is different, he is in it for life, he assured me.

"I think I'll be in the upper ranks when things improve because half of the *chindonya* men have quit since the China Incident; people aren't advertising so much and lots of men have gone into war industries. Three years ago there were at least 1600 *chindonya* workers; I know because I attended the convention we held at Ueno Park."

Costume designing gives Mr. Hirai the largest scope for his artistic aspirations. At present he

has to his credit some thirty Japanese costume changes, a Chinese and six foreign sets of clothes, the latter including such items as top hats of pink plush.

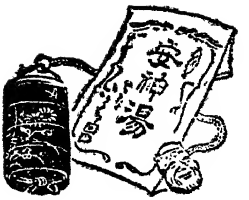
"Clothes must express the personality of the product being advertised. We use Chinese clothes to advertise a Chinese restaurant, for instance, and foreign clothes for foreign products. Anything goes for market advertising, however," said Mr. Hirai.

At this juncture, Mr. Hirai glanced at the clock and noting that he had just two minutes left in which to be back at work, cried to his crew that lunch hour was over and that they must get busy and earn their daily nine yen. The daily fee depends upon the number of people in the troupe. Electrified by Mr. Hirai's bubbling energy, old Grandpa Sawada got on his parenthesis legs, Mrs. Hashimoto clamped shut her jaws, Mrs. Hirai hastily smeared on another coating of white powder, and then they were off.

"The music sounds good to me," Mr. Hirai called over his shoulder as the *samisen* and drum with its bells and cymbals wobbled into "Old Black Joe." "I can't say it's inspirational but it does keep me pepped up."

With this, he fell in behind Grandpa Sawada

who was already dancing off with his banner fluttering in the wind. Mrs. Hirai followed patiently behind her husband, twanging her scratchy *samisen*, and Mrs. Hashimoto brought up the rear, passing out deep pink bills advertising Kiyooka's superior radish pickle and sugared grasshoppers.



KILL OR CURE

AFTER over sixty years of acceptance of western medical practices, Japanese doctors are beginning to revaluate the old nature remedies. *Okyu*, acupuncture, massage, herb and even insect specifics are now beginning to be scientifically used by a few graduate doctors who feel that they find in them values neglected by western medicine. Such a one is Dr. Chihiro Ikeda, an up and coming young graduate of the Kyushu Imperial College of Medicine who for the past ten years has been studying *okyu*, acupuncture and herb remedies and using them in his practice.

"I think it is a pity that a bad name and misunderstanding is brought upon such work as mine because so many uneducated people are allowed to practise this form of medicine," he said seriously as he removed his white doctor's apron and prepared for a long talk in his well-furnished office.

"Both *okyu*, and acupuncture have proved their value. Dr Shimeitaro Nara first found a scientific basis for this system of cure by shock to the nervous system. That was about ten years ago, ever since then *okyu* and acupuncture have been gaining ground in the medical world," he said. "I went into this work because as a boy I was cured by *okyu* of a grievous sinus infection, so during my medical study I resolved to practise this art in a scientific way."

Dr. Ikeda studied for eight years with Dr. Ken Sawada an *okyu* specialist, after graduating from medical school. "As yet *okyu* and acupuncture are not taught in medical schools, which is a great pity, but I think the day is not far distant when it will be a part of the regular medical training. Now, unless one studies privately as I did, you have to attend a school for masseurs in Osaka where it is taught," he said.

"My speciality is curing those suffering from tuberculosis, but I have many other patients, for *okyu* and acupuncture are also valuable in the treatment of rheumatism and stomach ache and they are universally used for relieving nerve pains. My greatest success with *okyu* so far has been the cure of a young girl who had St. Vitus Dance," he said confidently.

Okyu, Dr. Ikeda explained, was first introduced into Japan from China about fourteen hundred years ago. In Japan, it reached the peak of its popularity during the Tokugawa era, but became unpopular during the Meiji period because of the introduction of foreign medicine. Now it is practised mainly in the country districts. Dr. Ikeda averages about ten patients a day.

The biggest problem is to locate the point which pains the most and then discover which of the 365 possible spots for *okyu* burning or acupuncture is nearest the ailment. The task is to pick a spot which will affect the largest possible area. Having found the locality, Dr. Ikeda, if he decides to use *okyu* takes a pinch of soft, velvety, grey *mogusa* leaf and places it on the proper spot. A treatment consists of seven burnings on each spot, one minute pinch of the leaf being applied at a time. The leaves are ignited with punk. On the average, a patient gets about twenty spot burns or a hundred and forty individual burns in a full treatment. It is little wonder that Dr. Ikeda declares that the method cures due to nervous shock!

"The shock causes the white corpuscles of the blood stream to increase, thereby affecting a cure," he explained. "The number of burns adminis-

tered at one time is varied according to the patient's condition. It may be very dangerous in some cases when *okyu* is administered by ignorant masseurs," said the doctor.

The most common type of *okyu* treatment is given along the spine of the patient. *Mogusa* burns are made at one inch intervals on both sides of the patient's backbone.

"Not all *okyu* practitioners divide their leaves into seven pinches," said Dr. Ikeda. "Some burn their patients severely just once on each spot. But this is not as effective as the repetition of shock and, furthermore, one long burn leaves bad scars which are very noticeable."

A twenty-burn treatment given by Dr. Ikeda takes about forty-five minutes. "Of course it depends on the patient. Sometimes children get too wiggly and waste time. In the old days a common punishment in school for naughty children was a *mogusa* burn on the little finger. Maybe they have heard of that and so are afraid," the doctor said with a laugh.

Dr. Ikeda finds that most his patients are elderly men and women. "The younger people don't like *mogusa* because they are getting vain. They dislike the small brown scars it leaves."

"When my patients are too proud for *okyu*

burns I suggest acupuncture. It has much the same effect and works on the same principle," said the doctor. "It is especially good for nervous and rheumatic cases," he added as he opened a leather case and extracted a gold needle at least four inches in length. When in use, the head of the needle is fitted into a bone holder.

It seems that acupuncture is also a heritage from China and was developed in Japan after the time of Mommu Tenno (679–707 A.D.) It was very popular during the Nara, Heian and Kamakura periods, that is from the seventh century to the twelfth.

"Our system is a bit different from that of the Chinese," said Dr. Ikeda. "The Japanese had to adapt acupuncture to suit the Japanese physiognomy and climate."

While no disinfectant is needed in applying *okyu*, Dr. Ikeda is careful to sterilize his acupuncture needles and to cleanse with alcohol that portion of the skin to be pierced. The depth to which the needle is pushed into the patient's flesh depends upon the locality to be penetrated. The hips get the deepest thrusts, the maximum being three inches. The average depth of penetration is, however, from three-fourths to one inch. Sometimes the treatment draws blood, but usually it does not.

"Acupuncture in the good old days was all too often either a question of kill or cure," said the doctor as he explained that iron needles were often used, rust being not infrequent, and there was a complete innocence of asepsis. Now most practitioners use silver needles, but it is very doubtful if they are sterilized, though acupuncturists who learn their work from competent teachers are taught all the necessary precautions. The association of *okyu* and acupuncture practitioners also endeavours to elevate the standards of its members.

Dr. Ikeda gets two yen for his first *okyu* and acupuncture treatments and a yen for each treatment thereafter. Most patients return several times. "The number of patients wanting these treatments varies with the season," he said. "People don't like treatments during the hot summer or cold winter months, but they flock in spring and autumn when the changeable weather creates rheumatic pains."

Okyu seems to have been one of the earliest versions of vaccination. Dr. Ikeda explained that when plagues attacked the country, everybody used to rush to get burned as a preventative against contagious disease.

"It's too bad that foreign medicine and the

masseurs have put *okyu* and acupuncture in a bad light. I am sure the former objection will disappear one day and I am hoping that now that masseurs are being subjected to more rigorous examinations, *okyu* and acupuncture will be separated from that profession. It's like having barbers practise medicine. I like what Dr. Fusajiro Kato is doing about it. He is putting massage on a scientific basis, and is endeavouring to eliminate the professional masseurs by getting housewives to learn massage. It used to be the profession of the blind during the Tokugawa era but now, due to the traffic, the blind are finding it increasingly difficult to get around," said the doctor as he explained that Japanese massage is not a Chinese invention but developed on the battlefields when soldiers called men in to rub their tired muscles. These rubbers studied anatomy by observing the corpses of the slain and going to watch the rotting bodies of executed criminals which were hung on display.

Some of these early masseurs learned enough from Chinese, Korean or native doctors to be called upon to perform crude surgical operations such as sewing up intestinal wounds with thread made from mulberry bark.. Neither they nor the doctors understood the exact functioning of the body.

There was no knowledge of the nervous system but there was a fair knowledge of muscles. At least they were less ignorant than their patients who called in Buddhist priests to chant away the devils or foxes which they thought possessed them. This medieval belief in possession was not even completely dispelled by 1889 when it was rumoured, in the country, that a fox had taken the shape of a railroad train on the Tokyo-Yokohama line.

"Originally, massage was used to dispel weariness but now it is being used to cure headache and to calm the nerves as well. Like *okyu* and acupuncture, it is effective because it stimulates the circulation," said Dr. Ikeda. And like *okyu* also, massage reached its height of popularity in the Tokugawa era when all classes of people began to use it and every bathhouse kept masseurs. One of the many sounds of the night, even to-day, is the plaintive flute notes of the wandering, blind masseurs. Also, midwives still use the stomach massage methods perfected in the last century. Such massage is thought to alleviate birth pain.

"I believe massage has its place, but it certainly does not require a medical knowledge such as *okyu* and acupuncture do," said Dr. Ikeda.

Dr. Ikeda who is looking forward to the time

when Japanese experts will be showing the West how to use the age-old practices of *okyu* and acupuncture, treats his patients internally as well as externally.

While the poetic custom of rising early in the morning in order to catch with a piece of cotton the dew upon the upturned face of a chrysanthemum so that an ailing part may be rubbed with this moisture, has been out of date for over a hundred years, the old peony root compounds for the treatment of women's ailments are still very popular. Recently the head of the well-known Tsumura Botanical Gardens and Tsumura Laboratories, which specialize in raising herbs and experimenting on them, announced that he had found an ingredient similar to the male hormone in the yellow pollen of *gama* (cattail). And of course there is the famed ginseng which, since ancient times, has been recommended as a strength builder and cure all. It is the most costly of all herbs because of the constant care it needs.

In fact, herbs, thinks Dr. Ikeda, will make news in the near future. Their age-old curative qualities are just beginning to be investigated. Their effect is slower than that of chemical compounds, but safer and more lasting he feels. In proof of the effectiveness of herb remedies, Dr.

Ikeda pointed out the case of Chu Joto, a remedy which has made a millionaire out of Mr. Jusha Tsumura and gotten him the reputation of being the Lydia Pinkham of Japan. All Mr. Tsumura did was manufacture on a large scale what his ancestors had been making for centuries. The remedy was concocted by a Tsumura ancestor over five hundred years ago when the Princess Chu Jo Hime was in need of a remedy. That was in the Kamakura era when Buddhism interested people in doing charitable deeds, so the princess gave the medicine to the poor, and thereafter the Tsumura family was on its way. Now it is sold as a patent medicine.

So Dr. Ikeda feels that Japan is on the verge of many valuable discoveries in the old field of Chinese medicine which, through the past centuries, has become native to Japan. Though he has no personal interest in the Chinese *kuroyaki* remedies, he pointed out that even they are now being subjected to analysis. Before the Meiji Restoration in 1868 it seems that there were only two *kuroyaki* stores in Tokyo, but now there are three, a fact which shows that the belief in such specifics has not died.

At Dr. Ikeda's suggestion, I visited the Ito *kurokakiya* which has been flourishing for several

centuries. Mr. I. Ito, a bright young man who is now studying medicine at the Tokyo Imperial University, explained that *kuroyaki*, or burned black things, are medicines of the people rather than the inventions of learned doctors. A certain Cho-chukei, a Chinese doctor of antiquity, is purported to have conceived the method of curing ailments indirectly with *kuroyaki*. His plan was to find the true cause of illness which, he claimed, was usually psychic or mental, and then proceed to treat the difficulty indirectly through the elimination of the symptoms. His theories and remedies came to Japan principally in the Ashikaga era. The earliest written record of the use of such medicine was made in the fifteenth century when the wife of Sakanoue-no-Tamuramaro used the embryo of a deer as medicine at the time of the birth of her child.

"We call them *kuroyaki* because such medicines are composed mainly of various animals, insects and animal parts which have been put into earthenware pots and roasted until they are charred black," said the young man as he pointed to great piles of blackened pots which were stacked to the very top of the high ceiling of the store room, reminding me more of the finds of an archæologist than containers of useable medicine.

"We have about five hundred different kinds of medicine here, most of it of this type," he added, admitting that the sale of such nostrums brings in about 1000 yen every month.

Kuroyaki medicine is made in the company's own Tokyo factory from ingredients procured from the ends of the earth. The medicines are classified according to their use. For tuberculosis, for instance, Mr. Ito suggested *hakushusan*, a mysterious concoction of burnt black mole and snake. Their charred remains are ground into a flour which is mixed with powdered deer horn. Flour made of dried, stripped snakes taken in water before each meal is also supposed to be helpful. For heart disease, seals from Arctic water, burnt moles or mud turtles are advised, while dropsy may be remedied with *kamakiri*, or praying mantis. The insects are dried until they are crisp. To prepare medicine from them they must be boiled. The resultant broth is drunk. Maggots also prove to be handy little creatures for patients suffering from dropsy who can stomach them. They are taken in charred powder form.

In the old days, among the Ito *kuroyaki's* most steady customers were the frequenters of the Yoshiwara, for the store offers several cures for venereal disease. Among them is an herb called

akebi (akebia), which is taken in broth form; burnt mud snails taken from the paddy fields; toad and weasel. Also, charred newt is still sometimes sold to those desiring an aphrodisiac.

Cranky and nervous children may be calmed if wise parents make them eat the dried larvæ of dragon flies Mr. Ito avows, and the burned and pulverized *katatsumuri*, a kind of snail from which the shell is not removed, helps sufferers from kidney trouble as does powdered tortoise shell. He also suggests dried locusts to midwives who wish to be sure that all impure blood will be ejected by their patients after a birth, and *rohobo* or burnt bees, for mothers having trouble with their nursing.

In fact, Mr. Ito has a cure for everything. For stomach trouble he suggests burnt ox liver, and for general strengthening there is Ibota-no-mushi, or wax tree insects, which are purported to contain fatty acid and so assist the hormones which require high class, fatty acid for efficiency. Nor is female beauty forgotten. The black obtained from burnt bats will make a lady's eye brows more alluring than anything else for bat soot makes the hair very glossy. And pimply complexions may be cured and the skin made as white as snow by cleansing the blood with burnt

mole and toad flour.

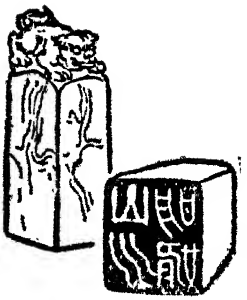
"There are some snake remedies which are impossible for me to keep here as we don't handle live things in our shop, but the stores to which we retail our medicines usually do, for there are people who prefer to take their snake remedies raw," said Mr. Ito rather apologetically as he explained the reason for the not infrequent store windows full of wriggling snakes which may be seen in Tokyo. It seems that there are those who, fortified by belief, acquire sufficient cannibalistic tendencies to eat raw snake livers as though they were just nice fresh oysters, and drink snake blood. Both of these items must be absolutely fresh, so when a customer feels inclined to imbibe clammy snake blood, he goes to one of these viper inhabited stores, the obliging proprietor picks one of his slithering pets, cuts its throat, turns it upside down and the customer waits until the blood has all drained out. Then he drinks the beverage and pays from a yen and a half to ten yen for the privilege. The cost depends on the rarity of the snake. Such remedies are recommended for tubercular and weak people who desire strengthening.

"Little is known scientifically about any of these remedies as yet, but Dr. Boku Fujita of the

Kumamoto Medical College is doing research on this subject to find out what elements the *kuroyaki* remedies contain which cause them to effect cures. I think that in *kuroyaki* all but inorganic matter is destroyed by the heat. Thus such medicines cure in the same manner as chemical concoctions," said young Mr. Ito enthusiastically. He, like Dr. Ikeda, looks forward to the day when old Chinese and Japanese medicine will be studied in medical schools.

"One good thing all this research is beginning to do is to bring to light new ways of preparing the old remedies so that they are often fifty per cent more effective now than in former times. We have learned about temperature, sealing, drying, the influence of the sun and other matters which once were just guess work. The Takushoku Daigaku, or Overseas Development University, has begun to study handling methods as well as assay the properties of the remedies themselves. Maybe others will soon be taking up the study too," he said as he turned to wait on a customer who wanted to buy forty sen worth of dried locusts for his wife.

"I never prescribe medicines to my customers. People just believe in them and come here to buy. Maybe when I am a doctor I can be of more help to my clients," he concluded.



A HAN MAKER LAMENTS

IT is the *han* that makes the wheels of Japanese life go round. Without it no picture is authentically signed, no business transaction completed, no divorce granted and no marriage registered; in fact, without the *han* the Japanese world would come to a standstill. The *han*, or Japanese seal, is more than a stamp or symbol, it is an individuality. But what is now an everyday necessity was once a great art and it still is if Mr. Koseiki Hattori, one of Japan's leading *han* makers, is to be believed, but he admits that it is a dying one.

I found Mr. Hattori at his workshop and home in Ushigome ward. He was kneeling on a dark red cushion, his head achingly bent over a tiny square of marble; his magnifying glasses had slipped down on his nose. He seemed glad for the interruption, laid down his tools, rubbed his tired eyes after removing his spectacles, and sat back to tell me about the *han*.

"You foreigners," he said, "don't appreciate the art of *han* making. Visitors always are surprised to find that *han* carvers are ranked among the artists of the nation. But we are proud of our art and occasionally hold exhibitions." "You want to know something about the identification of paintings by means of *han* impressions?" he asked in answer to my query. "That is very difficult to explain and even more difficult to illustrate to the uninitiated."

Mr. Hattori took out several scroll paintings of obvious antiquity and unrolled them. "Of course it is not always true that I can glance at a stamp or seal on a picture and accurately tell its age," he resumed as he pointed to a *han* impression on one of the scrolls. "But normally the *han* mark gives an adequate clue as to the age in which the painting was finished. A copyist or imitator may reproduce the painting or seal of some great artist but what he cannot do with any great success is duplicate the dye with which the artist stamped his name. Then too, certain colours are identified with certain eras. For instance, the paintings of the Ashikaga period were usually stamped with a purple-red dye. Those of the Tokugawa era show bright red imprints, while those of the Meiji era have yellow hued stamps. Age tones these dyes

in a way which is nearly impossible to imitate."

Mr. Hattori lamented the fact that cinnabar has become almost impossible to obtain since the present Sino-Japanese troubles began. "Artists of the future may not be able to get it at all," he said and explained that cinnabar, which is the basic colour of the pasty ink customarily used for Japanese seal imprints, is obtained from heated mercury. This mercury comes from China.

"And as though this cinnabar situation were not enough," continued the harassed Mr. Hattori, "there is now trouble getting alabaster too. Just as a painter must have the correct colours to express his ideas on a canvas, so a *han* carver must have pleasing and satisfying raw material to produce a masterpiece."

Mr. Hattori's favourite medium is snow-white alabaster. One really has to be particular when one is going to charge 1000 yen for three tiny squares of carved marble. But that is what Mr. Hattori calls his top price so it is little wonder he bewails the possibility of a depleted alabaster supply.

The master artist held out for my inspection several pieces of white marble which partly filled the palm of his hand. "This is going to be a set of *han* for which I am charging 800 yen," he said.

"The alabaster is the smallest part of the cost, the charge is for the hours of tedious, painstaking toil in which a slip of my hand by even a hair's breadth may spoil the entire work. Mistakes cannot be covered up by a *han* artist.

"But what is the matter with Japanese alabaster?" I asked. Mr. Hattori replied loftily, "It is too rough grained. It is all right for craftsman but not for true artists. Ivory, wood, copper and crystal are also popular. But none of these have the flawless perfection of alabaster," the artist assured me as he went on to amplify the problems of picture identification and *han* making.

"The day may come," he stated, "when many ways of writing characters will have been forgotten. The artists' names may not even be able to be read. This is almost so now that Japanese characters are being printed for there is no longer that consuming pride in the beauty of calligraphy which was once so prominent in Japan. If it were not for *han* makers and a few scholars, countless ways of writing characters would have been forgotten long ago. We *han* makers preserve for Japan the art of character formation."

Mr. Hattori had launched upon his favourite subject. He has spent the spare moments of his last thirty years compiling a dictionary of the

various ways of writing Chinese characters. So far he had completed twenty volumes and he expects to be finished with this tedious task by next year.

"There may even come a time when a painting can be dated by the style of the *han* writing," he said. "This is done to a certain extent now, but future readers of *han* may be able to gauge the era of a picture because they will know in what age certain writing styles ceased to be used and understood. That is why I am writing my dictionary. I hate to see variety in Japanese writing disappear. Tokyo has about five hundred craftsmen who can make a *han* for anybody in a few minutes. But they don't even endeavour to keep up the old standards. In fact, they cannot, for many of them are not well educated, and certainly few are artistic. So they are no help at all in my struggle to preserve various styles of Japanese character carving."

The study of old *han* imprints has made Mr. Hattori a student of *han* traditions. He has found that the history of the use of the *han* in Japan is really the history of Japanese governmental shifts and changes over a period of twelve centuries. The usage started about twenty-five centuries ago when a Chinese emperor gave seals to his officials

to indicate their rank in the empire. These seals were used just as in European countries. They were pressed against wax.

"It wasn't until later that seal imprints came to be used for identifying paintings and writings," said Mr. Hattori. The *han*, it seems, was first introduced into Japan in the time of Prince Shotoku (593–621) and at first was used only by the Emperor and high court officials and a few important shrines. At that time the *han* were made of copper. Then the *daimyo* and feudal lords of the Ashikaga period began to use *han* and when they assigned land to their dependents they gave each man a paper proof of his possession stamped with the official daimyal *han*. It was at the end of this era that artists and writers began to use *han* to identify their pictures. During this same period artists began to be interested in Chinese drawings mounted on scrolls and many of these pictures were imported.[1] It was fashionable to

[1] The hanging strips of cloth at the top of a *kakemono*, or scroll painting, are the *kakemono's* appendix. In China, sparrows were plentiful and windows remained open. Nothing seems to have pleased the pesty little birds so much as to use the top bar of the picture as a bird rest and contentedly soil the painting. Some clever person conceived the idea of attaching a band of cloth in strips to the bar so that it would move in the breeze and scare the birds away. Now but two such strips remain and they are commonly seen on all scroll paintings where they have been put to artistic use.

copy Chinese paintings so quite naturally artists wanted to imitate the *han* idea too," said Mr. Hattori. The first *han* used on pictures in Japan were made of ivory, copper or wood. It was not until the Tokugawa era that people other than officials and artists became seal conscious. By then the art had been highly developed. However, the *han* was still used only by the upper classes.

"Since the Meiji Restoration (1868), even middle and lower class people have acquired seals. Because of this the artistic standard has been lowered and the few real artists find their clientele decreasing," said Mr. Hattori.

"Now there are only ten first class *han* artists in Tokyo and about thirty in all Japan. I fear the number will become smaller and smaller as the years go on," said the artist sadly. "When we older artists die there won't be many who are willing to apprentice the long years in order to take our places. More and more our clientele is being confined to artists and writers. There will be less and less non-professional work."[1]

"To produce *han* which are really great works of art," said the artist, "a man must be something

[1] Mr. Hattori has made seals for such people as the former Marquis Tokugawa, Baron Takakimi Mitsui, Baron Kishichiro Okura and a host of others among Japan's elite.

more than a carver. He must be a philosopher. The artist must put his soul into his work. His philosophy gives him the control and fortitude necessary for cutting the stone or ivory as he wishes. An inestimable amount of control is necessary for this sort of work."

One can well understand what Mr. Hattori means by just looking at some of his fine products. His knives are used for shaping and chiselling microscopic corners and edges. The stone and ivory ridges emerge so thin that the light can penetrate through them as through a thin skin membrane or sheer silk. A mere twitch of the hand and the whole work would have been marred.

When Mr. Hattori begins a piece of work, he he first makes a sketch with charcoal on his minute piece of stone or ivory. Then he begins to carve. The smallest pieces measure about half an inch in width though those used on paintings are more imposing.

"No two artists paint alike. Neither do artists carve alike. I can always tell a left-handed carver. An assistant couldn't help me. Moreover, most of my plans are kept in my head. A charcoal sketch can't begin to portrary what I intend to create," said the artist.

Cheap *han* as made by the hundreds of *han*

dealers in every part of Japan, range from thirty sen upward in price. The more expensive ones which sell for around 200 yen are usually of crystal. Ivory also is a very popular medium for it is very light and its edges remain sharp through long years of use. A fairly good *han* which is frequently used, lasts for about twenty years. A fine product such as Mr. Hattori makes, may last a lifetime.

"When I endeavour to determine the identity of a picture or writing by looking at the *han* mark, one of the worst problems is to know how many different *han* that particular artist used," stated Mr. Hattori. "However, people usually clung to favourites and most artists use a set of three in order to get their whole name on to a painting."

RICHES FROM RAGS

GRANDPA Tanaka is glad he no longer has to use rotten fishheads to flavour his soup. Gone are the days of garbage pail fishing. He is now a prosperous ragpicker. He and his wife make eighty yen a month, fifty yen more than the usual wage for girl factory workers.

I found this venerable but agile gentleman seated upon a pile of filthy waste paper contentedly smoking his long, bamboo pipe at one of Tokyo's numerous dumps. He was enjoying the pause that refreshes between his labours of sorting old bottles, mildewed cloth, sodden paper, waste cotton, rotting leather and rusting iron and tin. As he smoked he gazed at the massing, white clouds as they raced across the blue, blue sky. No vulgarian is Grandpa Tanaka; he knows the beautiful when he sees it in spite of his profession.

Ragpicking, explained this would-be plutocrat, is one of Japan's most highly organized industries. The city is divided into districts and certain ragpicking chiefs operate in each division. In Shibuya ward, where Grandpa Tanaka does his collecting, there are five such organizations. His boss controls nineteen ragpickers. Each man brings his collection to the dump, sorts out his wares and ties them into bales of about a 125 pounds each. When the day's work is done they all gather in a nearby shanty which is their exclusive clubhouse, and exchange tips, information and current gossip.

Grandpa Tanaka has reached the top of his profession and is content to rest upon his laurels. He is now a "free-lancer." Not so fortunate are many other members. Jiro, a bright young boy who at this moment joined the circle, explained that he was just an apprentice. This means that he receives room and board and around fifteen yen a month. He has more than a year to go before he can become a full-fledged ragpicker. Already he has been doing this sort of work for a year.

I asked Jiro how he happened to take up this sordid profession.

"It's hard to get any kind of a job. My father could not support me any longer and, since

I had finished primary school, I had to do something. The master, Mr. Shimizu, pointed out to my father the possibilities in this profession. After next year I can be a real ragpicker. But even then it won't be so good because it's only those like Grandpa here who have been at it a long time and know the dealers as friends who can depend upon selling their stuff every day. I work eight hours a day and often longer now, but I can never get more than my fifteen yen," said the dirty looking youth.

Ragpickers who work on a percentage basis get fifty per cent of the value of their bales. If the bale is of paper, it brings a yen delivered at Hachioji where a firm converts the waste into low grade toilet paper sheets. A bale of cloth brings about five yen delivered at a paper factory. All other junk is disposed of according to its kind.

"My master gets about a third of the sale price after he has paid for the collecting, the handling, the hauling and the rent for the dump. The worst thing about this business is our hands." Jiro held up two, large grimy paws.

"Mine aren't so bad yet, but look at Grandpa Tanaka's. We can't work fast enough with gloves on."

Jiro was thinking that in a few years his hands

would be horny and callused too, and flesh and dirt would be one. Ragpicking is hardly an aesthetic pastime, but it yields a decent living. Grandpa Tanaka owns his own little home. Only a few years ago he had to be content with a *kichinyado* and went daily to a *rodoichiba*, or labour market.

Grandpa Tanaka is luckier than hundreds of other unfortunates in the city of Tokyo which, like all great metropolises, has its social problems. Once a country boy, he wandered to the big city, lost his menial job and become a vagrant. But unlike most of the city's down-and-outers of which there were 1117 on record in 1937, he was physically fit. Most men become vagrants and bums because of illness, deformity, old age or weak mentality. A few are just natural loafers, sots or petty criminals. Tanaka was not content to become a beggar. In fact he could not, for until a few years ago begging was a closed profession. The city was divided into sixteen districts each headed by a leader, or *oyabun*, whose word was law. The *oyabun* assigned various positions to his minions and when any particular spot reaped a very rich harvest, allotted alternate hours so that no one beggar could benefit more than another. There are still a few real beggars in Tokyo, about two hundred in fact, but they must operate when the police are not looking. The

begging business was badly disrupted about three years ago when a law was passed forbidding children to sell things on the streets or to solicit. Up to that time some clever people made a business of training children, especially girls, for they drew the most sympathy, and renting them as props to professional beggars.

So Tanaka sought odd jobs at labour markets. Sometimes he got a job as a sandwich-man or he pulled weeds for the city at sixty sen a day. Altogether he was lucky if he made ten yen a month. He could not put himself under contract with one of the city's some four hundred labour brokers because that would have meant that he would have had to live in a dormitory without his wife. Such brokers feed and give lodging to men and even loan them money on occasion. And being independent by nature, Tanaka was loathe to seek city aid in the poor house, though when he was sick he once received medical aid. Every year the city takes care of about 2700 such cases and also maintains a large tuberculosis sanitorium. But Tanaka stayed home and received eighty sen a day from the city's welfare bureau and his doctor's bills were paid.

For a short time he and his wife lived in a tenement house of which there are about five

hundred in Tokyo housing around 10,000 of the city's poor. For this dubious privilege the Tanakas had to pay ten sen daily and a few sen extra for their electric light.

Life in such a place is all that the imagination can conjure. Cooking is done in the narrow hallway just outside of the doorway of each battered room. Sometimes desperate occupants in need of a few sen have been known to mortgage their wives to a neighbour. I had occasion to visit one such exclusive residence known as a *kichinyado*. It was somewhat better than lodging houses located in the real slum districts and was presided over by a sloppy landlady who was terribly alarmed at my presence for she feared that I wanted to rent a room. Pushing back her greasy hair and wiping her nose on her dirty *kimono* she insisted that her rooms were too dirty and unfit. I assured her that I had no desire to dwell in her magnificent establishment but I did look at the rooms with their aged yellow *tatami* and clutter of personal possessions.

It was at this period in Tanaka's life that he and his wife had to subsist on food from *meshiya*, or cheap restaurants. Breakfast in such places cost eight sen, supper and dinner, twelve. In really

bad times they bought food from a *zanpanya*, a place which sells slops from restaurants and army barracks at fifty sen for a *kamme*.[1] That was enough to last them for two days. Occasionally the Tanakas had to stoop to having soup made from the fishheads they got out of waste cans, but that was on rare occasions.

Finally, when their son was old enough to help them, they rented a little house of their own in the slums of Minami Senju for which they paid about five yen a month, subletting enough space to three other people to make this colossal enterprise pay.

Minami Senju, like the city's other slum districts, is now gradually being cleared out. But there are still many families who live in streets less than four feet wide with shacks toppling on either side. Here Tanaka's wife made nut cups at a few sen a hundred, and Tanaka watched the waste paper collectors come and go with their burdens. He did a little collecting himself rather than go in for petty industry, such as *geta* throng making and the like, which is common among such people. It was after his son died that he decided that four eyes were better than two, and both he and his

[1] A *kamme* is equivalent to about 11 lbs, or 5 kilograms.

spouse decided to become professional waste paper collectors.

"And that is how I got where I am," concluded the old man with pride as he pointed out his elegant residence near the paper dump. It was a ramshackle contrivance with a multicoloured tin roof made from his many acquisitions and the boards were of dubious quality, but it was home, and like even the most sordid places in the slums, it was probably neat and orderly. Japanese beggars and paupers have pride. Even in the lowest conditions when they live on less than fifty sen a day they are gentle, fairly honest, not rebellious, and hold their heads high.

KIKUNOSUKE ONOYE IS A LADYLIKE GENTLEMAN

KIKUNOSUKE Onoye acts like a perfect lady but he is far from being one. In fact, Kikunosuke, who is one of Japan's leading *oyama*, or impersonators of female parts for the *kabuki*, loves to get his lily hands around the grimy grip of a baseball bat and feel the kick of a gun against his shoulder.

"The day has passed when there should be any stigma or implication of perversion attached to our profession," he explained to me in the green room of the Kabukiza one afternoon before his act went on.[1] "I admit that all of my colleagues do not agree with me, but there are a number of us who intend to make things different. I think the day will come when there will be no

[1] The Kabukiza is the top-ranking theatre where the *kabuki* dramas, or old-style popular plays of the people, are given.

more *oyama* and women will take their places even as they have in Shakespearian plays."

That Kikunosuke's ideas are regarded as being somewhat on the radical side in the *kabuki* profession was borne out by the Onoye troupe's business manager, Mr. Goro Makino, who was an actor for fifty years before he retired to manage the troupe for Kikunosuke's father, Kikugoro.

"He is young," said Mr. Makino, "he will come around to our way of thinking when he is older. Women can never act in the *kabuki*. They are unfit for it."

But Kikunosuke is firm in his opinions now, and dressed as he was in a neat, collegiate-looking business suit, there was little about him to suggest his calling. Only his slender, expressive hands bore evidence of his talent for playing women's parts on the *kabuki* stage better than women can play them.

"Dad and I both love to hunt," Kikunosuke said, "and he has learned to play baseball. I have played it since I was in college." Kikunosuke attended Keio University in Tokyo for two years before he joined the now defunct *kabuki* Actors' School which was headed by his illustrious father who is considered by many to be the foremost exponent of his art in Japan. But Kikunosuke

thinks he has learned more from actual stage experience and by observing life.

"I know some of the great *oyama* of the past must have turned in their graves when I took up baseball. They used to live a woman's life off stage as well as on, wearing women's clothing on the street and doing embroidery. They thought it helped them in their work," he said. It seems that the first effeminate *oyama* to come to Yedo was forbidden to appear in public in feminine attire by the authorities who thought such a proceeding would corrupt the people's morals. That was in 1642. Later they relented, however, though *oyama* were forbidden to appear on the stage in long hair like women. So they had to shave the front of their heads like other men and to hide this disfiguration they wore a silk cloth over the shaved spot. In old time *kabuki* plays the actors still wear these cloths on the front part of their wigs so as to be in keeping with tradition. In fact, so feminine did the *oyama* become that they set styles for women's dress and hairdressing. They even ate like women and were ashamed to let it be known if they were married. As salaries were then very low for even top ranking players, at one time it was the custom to allow part-time players and unpaid young men who hung around

the theatre to enact the feminine roles.[1] These perverted young men furnished their own costumes and acted in exchange for the privilege of exhibiting themselves on the stage in order to attract clients. Such practices as these brought the condemnation of the people upon *kabuki* actors and, as in Shakespearian England, no high class person dared show his face at the theatre.

People of rank would go by night to one of the *chaya*, or tea houses, near the theatre. The shows began at dawn and lasted until sunset. The intervals between the plays were long, so the *chaya* were indispensable as recreation places between acts as well as suitable retiring places for high class people who did not wish their identity to be known. *Samurai*, especially, were not supposed to attend the immoral *kabuki*, so they had to go incognito. Moreover, they could leave their long awkward swords at the *chaya*.

To the Tokugawa Government, the theatre was immoral, too democratic, and encouraged needless luxury. The actors were boycotted and lived apart in ghetto-like seclusion. When they went to town, they covered their heads with basket-like hats in order to hide their faces. On the census list of the time they were not listed like

[1] Salaries amounted to about Y 1.00 a day.

regular people but as numerical entities like cattle. In fact, they were but one degree removed from the pariah class.

"The feminine personality of the *geisha* was responsible in great measure for the former ostracism which attended the *kabuki* profession," said Kikunosuke. But odium was cast upon the *kabuki* profession almost from the outset. The *kabuki* was created in 1598 by a woman, an ex-temple dancer called Okuni. So the first troupes were composed of women. The women of the gay quarters in Kyoto and Yedo formed troupes of their own which were all right until men were added to the cast and the men sometimes took women's roles and the women took men's parts. At the height of this fad there were four such companies in Kyoto alone. This mixing of the sexes combined with the low character of the actresses soon brought disrepute upon the *kabuki*. The actors were called *kawara kojiki*, or riverside beggars, because Okuni held her first shows in a river bed at Kyoto. This term was handed down and besmirched generations of honest actors.[1] So it was only natural that in 1629 women were forbidden to act. Up to 1645 and beyond, there

[1] Mrs. Zoe Kincaid: *Kabuki*, The Popular Stage of Japan.

were frequent violations of the Government edicts. Thus when the *oyama*, or female impersonators, began to assume feminine characteristics off the stage as well as on, there was no abatement of the bad reputation of the *kabuki*.

"Now that we are highly respected and have been given our proper rating as artists, I went to make every effort to wipe out causes for stigma. There is no need of an *oyama* being a sissy. When I get a new part, I go and study the type of woman I am to emulate. At that though I've learned more about women since I got married than I ever did before," said the youthful actor.

Kikunosuke was married in May, 1938. He is twenty-five years old and the seventh generation of his family to become an actor. His training under his father began when he was seven years of age, he said. By the time he was seventeen he could dance, speak and enact almost any part a *kabuki* actor might be called upon to play, for like Shakespearian actors, *kabuki* players must have a large repertoire so that a rehearsal simply means practising for a few days in order to determine correct stage position and to gain unity of action for the cast. Then his father decided that Kikunosuke should be an *onnagata*. *Onnagata* is the real name for female impersona-

tors, explained Kikunosuke. The appellation, *oyama*, is derived from the name of a famed Osaka puppet handler of the Tokugawa era who was especially clever with female dolls.

At this moment a bell sounded and Kikunosuke announced that he would have to go to his dressing room in order to prepare for his forthcoming role. He invited me to come along. He shares his dressing room with several other players, for though there is much rank distinction in the *kabuki*, only the few top-notch stars such as Kikugoro and Uzæmon are allowed the privilege of having private dressing rooms.

In his dressing room, Kikunosuke explained that he quite naturally joined his father's troupe which is under contract to the Shochiku theatre chain which has also taken under its wing the famed Bunrakuza puppet theatre in Osaka, thus preserving the slowly waning theatre arts of the past. Within this modern frame the old theatre system is still maintained. Shochiku does not pay each actor individually, but gives Kikugoro Onoye, the head of the Onoye troupe, a lump sum for all his expenses. This sum is divided in the old manner, depending on the player's rank and the success of the play. Kikunosuke, in normal times, receives about 800 yen a month,

while his father is reputed to receive about 10,000 yen.

Kneeling before his low, Japanese mirror stand, Kikunosuke began to smear on cold cream as he spoke. Having wiped off the cream, he painted his face, neck hands, feet and ankles a chalky white.

"I play the part of a poor young woman this time," he said, "so my make-up will be very simple."[1] With this he added a little colour to his eyelids and covered his eyebrows with a heavy white paste. Some *onnagata* still shave their eyebrows, he said, but he has found that unnecessary. "Besides, it looks funny on the street," he added as he carefully penciled a high arch over each eye, far above his own eyebrows. He outlined his eyes in brown, touched the corners with red and finished up his make-up by painting a bright red blotch on his lower lip and merely suggesting colour on the upper one. All *kabuki* actors create their own make-up schemes though there are certain make-up patterns which are followed for general types and for specific characters.

Then came the costume. He began with a white wrap-around under-skirt. Then came a

[1] Refer to the article entitled What Price Beauty?

red one, an under-blouse, or *juban*, and finally the *kimono* held together by an *obi*. Last of all came a cumbersome wig which was put on very carefully with the help of an assistant. The weight of a *kabuki* wig, he said, is sometimes illogically given as the reason why women are not employed in *kabuki* companies.

The *kabuki* passed its heyday just before the great earthquake of 1923, stated Kikunosuke and some day *oyama* may cease to exist. Even the *kabuki* itself, he fears, will become a cultural relic. He pointed out that the many factors which make the *kabuki* what it is are at the same time anachronisms. The make-up is extreme and unnatural because in the old days lighting was poor. Action and voice also are unreal because the actors once had to compete with street cries, so they say their lines according to a certain emphatic rhythm. Crucial actions are overemphasized and the habit of posing is prominent. Moreover, the tempo is slow and cannot be speeded up. This makes the *kabuki* unsuitable for motion pictures though a colour film might improve matters. Not only do these factors give the *kabuki* a distinctive personality but also they make it an unnatural and highly visual art. It is this very lack of realism which one day may spell its doom. At present, the theatres are

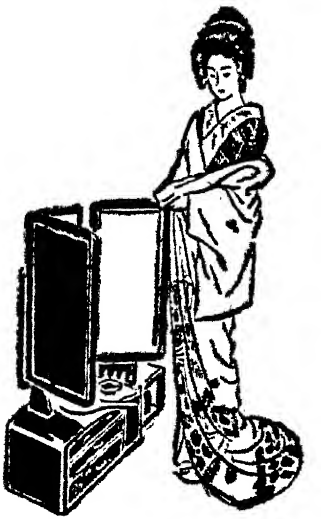
not always full but the *kabuki* is still a living art to a great many people. But publications of various sorts, motion pictures and modern plays are making their inroads.

Kikunosuke turned and faced me. He was no longer the collegiate young man of half an hour ago. His manner, gestures, bearing, everything about him had become completely effeminate.

"I begin to feel like a woman when I start making up," he stated as he smiled, "and by the time I have finished, I am a woman."

A warning bell sounded and Kikunosuke went to take his place in the wings to await his cue. As I left the theatre I peeped through the door at the rear of the audience. Upon the stage was Kikunosuke, a meek, dainty, little Japanese girl kneeling in tears before the leading man.

MILADY'S DRESS



WOE to the poor young Japanese husband, for the cost of dressing a wife in Japan is probably higher than in any other country in the world. An American woman of means would consider herself to be exceedingly well groomed in a 100 dollar dress, but not so a Japanese lady even of the medium salaried class. To be well dressed she spends around 300 yen per costume or more. Her wedding gown alone, exclusive of the *obi* and other accessories, will cost her from 300 to 1000 yen. The *obi* usually is as expensive as the *kimono* and then there are lining materials, sandals, *obi* strings, a *juban*, or short, shirt-like under-*kimono* edged with a fine embroidered neck band, an under-*kimono*, and perhaps a clasp for the front of her sash.[1] A Japanese wife,

[1] Women of all classes now wear white neckbands, a

if she is going to enter the fashion parade, is an expensive luxury. But there are some compensations. Colour and pattern styles may go but they return, and the cut of a garment never varies.

The cost of clothing has become increasingly high because Japanese women of taste still refuse to accept machine printed materials, and there are the added western luxuries: gloves, purses, parasols, scarfs, fur neck pieces and jewelled *obi* clasps. The western influence is particularly noticeable in the colour schemes of *kimono* material. In fact incongruity is the order of the day. Taste is declining, feel the conservatives.

"Munition makers taste!" exclaimed Mr. Seiji Ezaki as he surveyed the contents of the Mitsukoshi department store's main *kimono* section. He even fears that Japanese women, famed in the past for their exquisite taste, have lost it permanently. Mr. Ezaki knows whereof he speaks, for during his spare hours at the department store he studies the evolution of Japanese dress and design motifs. He is especially pained by the colour combinations now in use. The three

custom once peculiar to *samurai* wives. Wives of Yedo merchants wore bands of vibrant purple and red but only pastel shades remain to remind one of this though the black satin edgings the merchant wives used on the necks of their *kimono* are still to be seen on old women.

or four basic colours once employed have now been amplified to some 3000 hues and hue variations and it would appear that too many designers like to use as many of them as possible all at once.

Japanese women were once content with black, white, red and yellow; this was before the introduction of green from China, and before blue and purple were developed.

"Sometimes I almost wish we could have colour control like they did in the Nara era," declared Mr. Ezaki who admits to having definitely old-fashioned and conservative taste. "Particular colours were then assigned to certain ranks of society. Purple, white, black and dark red, or *ebicha*, were called the precious colours and only nobles could wear purple and dark red.[1] The

[1] While colours in personal dress are not now limited, only members of the Imperial Family can own *ebicha* (literally, lobster brown) automobiles. It was this colour, also, that was worn by school girls for their formal *hakama*, or divided skirts, early in the Meiji era when they first began to receive education. *Ebicha hakama* had previously been worn only by young princesses before they married and hence *ebicha* was a symbol of virginity. After marriage, princesses wore fire red *hakama*. School girl *hakama* are now of many colours. Green ones were first introduced by the Takarazuka Girl's troupe.

The *hakama* was worn by both men and women in old Japan. Originally, the formal attire of high class men was the *kamishimo*, a winged, sleeveless top with trousers so long that they extended far beyond the feet of the wearer. The

farmers were allotted black and yellow. Some time later dark blue cloth dyed with *ai*, a kind of grass, became the principal colour of the lower and middle classes. It was especially popular because it never seemed to fade and *ai*-dyed cloth was semi-waterproof. Such dark blue cloth became a symbol of good luck and good health and so it retained its popularity through the ages. In fact, dark blue is still a great favourite. It is only recently, however, that yellow has come into favour because of its former associations. During the Tokugawa era doctors adopted the habit of wearing the gold-yellow and brown striped or plaid cloth of Hachijo Island as a means of identification.[1] Such Hachijo cloth is now popular as a summer material for women. In fact, it is one of the few grass-dyed materials still in use in Japan.

"Colour fads have come and gone," Mr. Ezaki

custom is said to have developed in the court because it made the retainers appear to be kneeling in the presence of the Emperor even when they were standing. The *hakama* was part of the informal attire of *samurai* who used them for riding horseback. In the 8th year of Meiji the *kamishimo* was declared illegal and formal attire for men was prescribed. It was decreed that it should consist of a short black *haori*, a black *kimono* and *hakama*.

[1] Hachijo Island lies to the south of Oshima in Tokyo Bay.

reminded me as he pointed out the fact that while green was liked in the Momoyama era it was almost taboo in Tokugawa times. The Ashikaga lady of fashion favoured brown.[1] *Asagi*, a light turquoise shade, was most popular in Tokugawa days as was *mizuiro*, or water colour, and white has always been good until now. On the other hand the Tokugawa stylists disliked salmon pink and pastel yellow.

"There are many colours now in use which were never heard of in Japan before the advent of aniline dyes," said the pattern expert. "The colour problem has become tremendous. It is unfortunate that the improper use of colour mars so many fine designs. I feel it should be subservient. Perhaps that is because my hobby is the study of design motifs."

Until a short time ago no girl would wear red or pink after she married because for many centuries certain hues belonged to certain periods of life. As soon as a woman reached thirty she was supposed to discard all bright colours and take to drab browns, greys and blacks. Only her

[1] The tea ceremony of this era affected many phases of life. Its requirement of a subdued atmosphere caused women's fashions to take on a quiet tone.

under-*kimono* could retain colour.[1]

Every woman wears a robe of identical cut yet no two are alike. The author has yet to see two *kimono* with the same pattern designs adorning them. Mr. Ezaki thinks that the patterns of Japan are of sufficient interest for a lifetime of study.

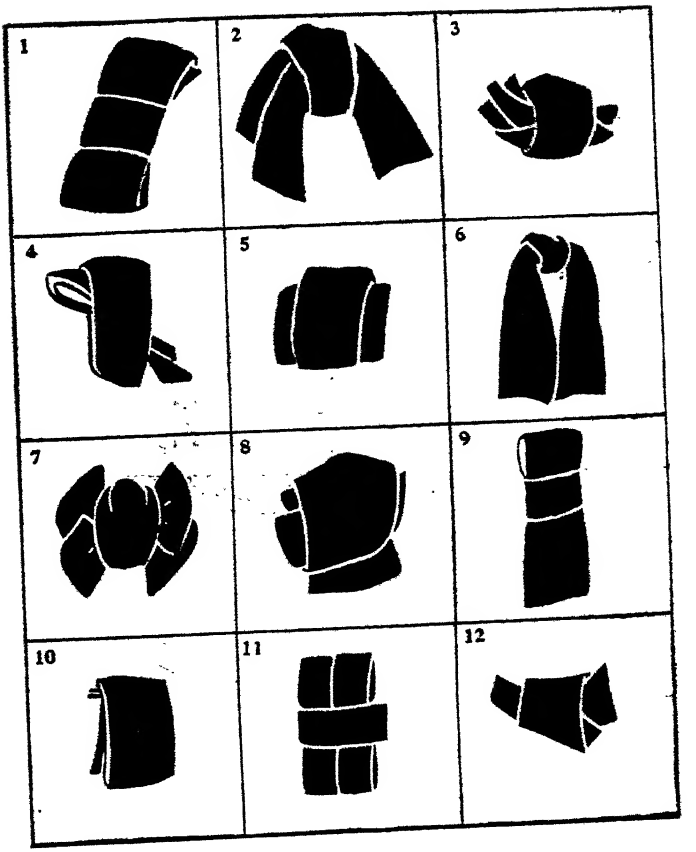
"The pattern art reached its height about two hundred and fifty years ago when the process of blocking off various dyes to keep them from running into each other was discovered. A special paste is used for this purpose.[2] Before that, patterns were either woven into the cloth, embroidered, or dyed in by the *shibori* or some similar method.[3] *Shibori*, or the system of shirring or

[1] Because of this love of under-colour, foreign style winter underwear for women in Japan comes in such colours as lavender, fire red, green, and various rainbow hues. Curiously enough the brillant red suits are sometimes worn by old women. This is in line with the old custom of a woman donning brilliant red upon reaching her 88th birthday and visiting some prominent shrine. It symbolizes her entry into second childhood, for red is worn by young girls, and female infants are dressed in either red or orange instead of delicate pink as in the West.

[2] The Mitsukoshi Department store has the only hand-dying factory in Japan. It is located near Takatanobaba station in Tokyo. Usually such work is done by individual artists in their homes.

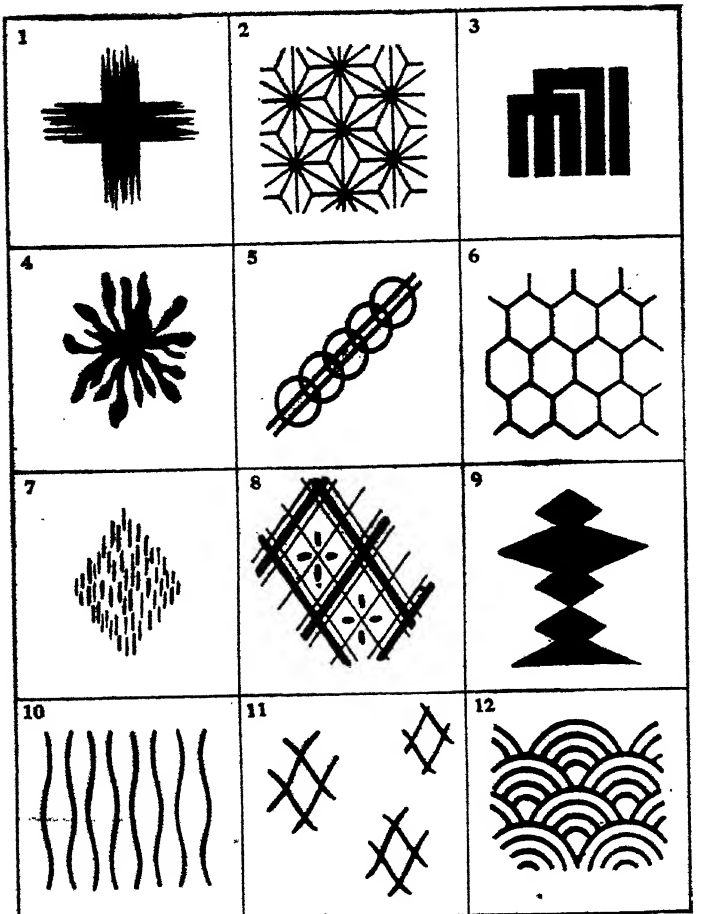
[3] Weaving of patterns into cloth other than the simple stripes, plaids, etc. was taught to the Japanese by Chinese weavers.

Styles of Obi Tying



1. *Hasami* knot of a lady's maid
2. *Kichiya* knot
3. Shimabara knot
4. *Hikiage* knot of a lower class wife
5. *Bunko* knot of a higher class wife
6. *Darari* knot of a young Kyoto geisha
7. Butterfly knot for a modern bride
8. *Taiko* knot
9. Knot of a prostitute's maid
10. *Hitotsu* knot of a merchant's wife
11. A *samurai's komageta* knot
12. *Kainokuchi* knot for a merchant

Samples of Kimono Patterns



1. *Ju* or ten
2. *Asanoha* (hemp leaf)
3. Incense
4. Seaweed
5. Pattern for oiran
6. Tortoise shell
7. Wood rot
8. *Narihira-bishi*
9. Bark of pine
10. *Tatewaku*
11. Kimono sleeve strings
12. Blue sea waves

tying and dyeing, reached its stride in the Momoyama era at which time *kimono* began to be treated as a single canvas on which the dye artists could work," he said.[1]

The first vivid patterns seem to have been executed in the Kamakura era and were worn by people of the *samurai* class. Embroidery assisted the weaving. But even centuries before this, patterns had already taken on social significance. During the reign of the Emperor Tenchi (662-667), the nobles were divided into five ranks and their colours, clothing styles and designs were fixed. Thereafter, pattern after pattern was created and most of them had social implications.[2] The peasants kept to the plaid, stripe, cross and other simple motifs such as the Chinese character for rice, the pine, coins with holes in their centre, the dragon fly and the like. Such designs are all the rage this year. People of the *samurai* and noble class preferred such motifs as the wedding flower-ball of incense, the thread wheel, drum, snow crystal, paper fans, the lines of cracking ice, the scales of snakes, the ripple of water, mist over the

[1] Samples of batik, *shibori* and board stencilling are to be found in the Shosoin treasure house in Nara indicating that dyeing had reached a high point as early as the 9th century.

[2] Even the prosititutes had their own designs.

Imperial Palace, cherry blossoms, bridges, seaweed, wood rot, tortoise shell hexagonal, *toridasuki*, or the lines made by strings which are used to hold up *kimono* sleeves, the bark of pine, *narihirabishi* which is a special kind of plaid originated by a famous Fujiwara poet named Narihira, the lines made by the drippings of porcelain, poem papers, and a multitude of others too numerous to mention. *Samurai* wives, daughters and servants were especially fond of arrow and other military patterns, pointed out Mr. Ezaki as he called my attention to the fact that again this year, due to the military atmosphere, they are very popular.

Dyeing did not displace weaving, however, for the brocades for priest robes and later, the *obi*, gave great importance to this industry. To-day, a lady of fashion chooses a hand-dyed *kimono* and a hand-woven *obi*. Nishijin, the famous weaving section of Kyoto, makes most of the fine *obi* of Japan.[1] There one may see finger-nail weaving wherein the weavers throw their shuttles by hand and use a comb or their pointed nails to push down the woof. Their nails are filed into ridges like the teeth of a saw.

Whereas weaving may have once gotten be-

[1] Nishijin was established in the reign of Tensho (1573-1591) when Hideyoshi invited Chinese weavers to Japan.

hind dyeing in the expression of creative patterns, this lapse was made up when the French pattern system was introduced early in Meiji times. To-day, attached to the century-old hand-looms, are paper patterns resembling player-piano rolls, the shifts of the thread being indicated by the holes so that the loom threads shift without the assistance of a boy. Boys used to stand above the looms and manipulate the threads.

In the Ashikaga period gold and silver leaf were pasted on to materials. Later, weavers learned how to weave metals into cloth. "We never use such precious metals any more. Now copper and aluminium are substituted and more recently lacquered thread has been taking the place of metal," said Mr. Ezaki.

Nearly any day on the streets of Tokyo one can see most of the traditional patterns of the past for foreign designs are still only a fad. Some of these old time patterns had strange origins. The imitation *shibori* motif which is so popular, dates from the Genroku era when dress and dress patterns became so lavish that the Government made decrees against extravagance. The performers of the *noh* stage were responsible for the creation of many designs before the *kabuki*, or the people's theatre, held sway in the Tokugawa era. Famous

actors set the fashions in women's dress styles and to them especially may be traced the development of the *obi*. On the other hand some motifs were practically taboo because of superstition. The camellia was disliked because its red flower falls from the stalk in one piece like a head falls under the blow of a sword. The lovely maple leaf, or *momiji*, now so popular, and the *ajisai*, or hydrangea, were ostracized because *iro*, or colour, may also mean love. Both the maple and the hydrangea change their colour and so imply that love will change.

The parade of the past is now interrupted by modern innovations. "Whereas ladies of but a few years ago would have shuddered at the thought of horses and pigeons tramping from one side of their *kimono* or *obi* to another, now such patterns are not unusual. In the old days, no birds except the noble phoenix and crane were used and sometimes the curl-tailed lion of China was depicted. The small print designs found on foreign clothes are now also used on *kimono* but more than likely they are old designs of a hundred and fifty years ago when small patterns were popular. They look foreign because they are produced in brilliant colours," stated Mr. Ezaki as he pointed out that the patterns of the past were just as bold as those

of to-day but that since the late Tokugawa times when plebeian taste overrode delicacy, patterns have gone wild. This wildness is best seen in the modern wedding *kimono*. At present, an all-over design is used on them and on most other *kimono*.

Design in formal *kimono* for women used to graduate from the hem of the *kimono* upward, unless it was small and inconspicuous. The back and chest regions were left plain. Less formal *kimono* had all-over designs but the subdued hues of the old dye caused one shade to blend into another. The custom of putting the pattern only around the hem of a *kimono* has almost gone out of style though some still prefer it for afternoon wear. Its origin, according to legend seems to have been in Ashikaga times when a certain *samurai* was killed in battle and his family was left destitute. Some years later the *samurai's* overlord sent for the young son of the family. The impoverished mother was desperate for want of a suitable *kimono*. Finally she took an old garment and put a fine piece of cloth across the sleeves and chest. A tea ceremony teacher on seeing the child at the *daimyo's* palace was so taken with the idea that he introduced the fashion. Later, this ornamentation was moved to the hem.

The *obi*, feels Mr. Ezaki, is more responsible for the decline of the beauty of the *kimono* than any one other device. By cutting the robe in two it destroys the unified plan of the dyer.

"The *obi* is a relatively modern innovation, you know," Mr. Ezaki reminded me.[1] Originally the *kimono* was only loosely tied with a narrow string. A narrow rope-like girdle came into being in the sixteenth century. The *obi* did not develop until women gave up wearing the loose outer *kimono*, or *uchikake*, which hid the waist. Wide girdles, such as are now worn, became stylish at the end of the Tokugawa era. *Kabuki oyama*, or women impersonators, are said to have set the style.[2] Now the *obi* is getting smaller again. Early ones were tied in front but as they got large and cumbersome, were shifted around

[1] The *taiko-bashi*, or drum-shaped bridges of the Tenjin Shrine in Kameido, Tokyo, are said to have set the fad for *obi* tying which is now used by old and young alike. The hump-back effect was created in imitation of the two round bridges when they were erected a little over a hundred years ago.

[2] In 1673 a *kabuki* actor named Kichiya Kamimura started the trend towards fancifulness in women's *obi* which soon distinguished them from those of the men. He put lead weights in the tips of his sash causing it to droop. Ways of tying the sash were soon numberless, the style depending upon the rank, status and age of the person and the particular social circumstance.

to the back. Only prostitutes now wear *obi* tied in front.[1]

"*Obi* were once without coloured designs and so did not disturb the pattern of the *kimono* so much as the multifigured ones do now unless they are very tastefully chosen," said Mr. Ezaki recalling that the ladies of the Taisho and Meiji eras frequently wore black satin *obi*. The only ornament was a Chinese character woven on the end piece. Such *obi* can still be seen on occasion. Mr. Ezaki is glad that the custom of painting pictures in oils on black satin *obi* is out of date. "I think they are in poor taste because oil painting is a foreign idea so most of the designs are roses and similar motifs that just don't belong with a *kimono*."

"Unfortunately, the loudest and gayest colours and patterns are reserved for the *haori*.[2] That is all right with a simple *kimono* but it simply destroys

[1] The *maeobi*, or elaborate *obi* knotted in front, seems to have originated about 1818 when girls of the tea houses in Kiyomizu, Kyoto, found themselves too busy at Gion Fastival time to retie their *obi* when they became loose. In order to save time they tied them in front. This custom was later taken up in Shimabara, the licensed quarter of Kyoto. The knot is still worn to-day on festive occasions.

[2] The *haori* is a short *kimono* coat which has been worn by both men and women since early in the Tokugawa era. It developed from a sleeveless jacket once worn by *samurai* relaxing in their barracks.

the effectiveness of the costume when both *haori* and *kimono* are bright and have loud designs which neither compliment nor fortify each other."

No one can predict the future of native dress but Mr. Ezaki feels certain that no advances have been made since the Meiji Restoration over seventy years ago. The most valuable innovation has been the development of *obi* weaving whereby the bulky linings have been eliminated. Most of the changes have been of a foreign and hence detrimental nature. The fine old materials get more expensive all the time. A few years ago no Japanese would think of renting a *kimono*, but now even a few people of good family rent wedding gowns which, after all, are very expensive and are used only once unless there is a younger sister in the family.[1]

But everyday clothes can hardly be rented,

[1] Complete wedding attire as well as afternoon *kimono* are rented by such firms as the Shimizu Shoten in Ushigome ward, Tokyo. Rental varies from Y 20.00 to Y 50.00 for the day depending upon the quality of the garments. For this fee the *kimono*, under-*kimono*, *obi*, *obiage*, (top ornamental cloth used above the *obi*), *obidome* (cord worn over the *obi* which supports the bow in the back), small purse holding paper fan, hair ornaments and *tsuno kakushi* (bride's head cloth) are furnished. Country people sometimes buy such equipment second hand for they must display their trousseau to the neighbours for several days after marriage and so they cannot conveniently rent clothes.

so hundreds flock daily to the department stores and the city's five exclusive dress material stores. The clients of the Erien shop, for instance, spend on the average of 100 yen a month and a single complete outfit for winter averages from 200 to 400 yen in cost. Clothes from such a shop are bound to be in good taste but department stores must appeal to the masses. Mr. Ezaki estimates that the woman whose husband earns between 120 and 150 yen a month spends between forty and sixty yen for a winter *kimono* and *obi* and even then she is not able to get anything of real quality. Fortunately there is but a small dressmaking fee in Japan. Women, as a rule, make their own *kimono*, have their servants do it, or pay a *kimono*-making expert from eighty sen to a yen for the labour. Japanese clothes never need a fitting.

TREE MAGIC

THE Japanese have achieved worldwide fame for their sleight of hand tricks. Children have stood with open mouths while a hundred paper parasols have been pulled out of a fish-bowl, but the greatest feat of all remains virtually unknown outside of Japan because of the strict laws which forbid the importation of plants into the various countries of the world. This amazing performance is enacted on Mother Nature herself. Magically, a hundred year old tree becomes four feet high yet a perfect replica of a mighty forest giant. But unlike sleight of hand tricks, this magic tempo is slow. A perfect, dwarfed tree may represent the painstaking labour of several generations.

Bonsai, or the art of dwarfing trees, seems to have originated in the 'Ashikaga era (1333-1593) in Kyoto and remained a strictly private

and guarded art until after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. In fact, during the Tokugawa era when horticulturists, both amateur and professional, had more interest in developing new species than working miracles with seedlings, the art nearly died out. In Meiji 8 (1876) the first *bonsai shop*, the Saikaen in Tokyo near Tameike, was founded. Since then, *bonsai* have tended to become a fad. The main limitation is the cost, for 10,000 yen is not a fantastic sum to pay for a single *bonsai*.

I found Mr. Seiji Uchiyama, proprietor of the Saikaen, puttering among his trees. At the moment of my entry Mr. Uchiyama was tending an imitation forest with maternal care.

"There are many secrets to *bonsai* success but the most important is patience," said Mr. Uchiyama as he put down his watering can and gently patted the soil of his little charge. "Even then you must expect half of your trees to die and to wait ten or twenty years before you get any real results."

There are ten varieties of *bonsai*, classified according to form rather than to the species of plant or tree, Mr. Uchiyama pointed out. The simplest form is the single, miniature tree trunk which is straight. Add to this the

complication of a slant and a tree growing on the side of a hill is suggested to the viewer. A third style is a tree with a curving trunk which is supposed to conjure up a picture of a tree distorted by sea winds. Another style is the overhanging plant which creates the illusion of a tree hanging over a cliff. *Bonsai* with two or more trunks make up other classifications. There is, for instance, the single root which forms more than two trunks from the base and there is the five-trunk *bonsai* with all trunks coming from one root. A seventh form creates the illusion of several separate trunks, though here also there is only one root. Other styles are more exotic. For instance, there is the lying-down trunk whose branches go up like separate trees, the *bonsai* with two or more different kinds of trunks in one pot, and the fantastic *bonsai* wherein a lonely tree clasps an enormous rock with its roots.

"The whole purpose of the *bonsai* is to create the illusion of a scene or forest. In fact, the ideal is to suggest all nature though a single tree," said the expert as he pointed out with delight a decrepit-looking specimen with its trunk lying parallel to the soil. This miniature of antiquity he had recently picked up

at an auction sale. It was about a foot high, was several hundred years old, and worth about 1000 yen.

Though the final aim may be aesthetic, the years of work behind the production of a worthy *bonsai* are sheer practicality. First, a plan must be made and the tender branches wired to form the picture desired. These wires corset the trees most of the time except when they are on exhibition. Moreover, they must be continually watched and changed before they begin to press on or cut the bark as the plant grows.

The actual problem of dwarfing begins with the roots which are cut so that the tree is undernourished. To assist this, the tree must be always moist and yet only a third of the normal amount of water is administered. The soil is also carefully tended. Usually the tree is replanted once a year either at the time of the spring or autumn equinox. This soil change is tended to only once in several years in the case of pine trees. The shoots are also picked in order to stunt growth. In the Nagoya district, opium is placed on the top soil to promote dwarfing but this is a delicate process for if the drug comes into direct contact with a major root or too much is used, the

plant is apt to die.

No tree is even worthy of the name of *bonsai* unless it is ten years old in the estimation of Mr. Uchiyama. Then, if all has gone well, his critical eye judges the plant for symmetry and the relative proportion of trunk to root. The roots must not look too big for the trunk nor the trunk for the roots. They must appear to really belong to each other even though the roots have been cut time and time again. Branches and leaves are of secondary importance. If perfection has been achieved, Mr. Uchiyama can imagine he is fording a stream in a valley or walking in a forest or some other scene as he looks at a newly born *bonsai*.

Actually, age is not a matter of supreme importance. It is the appearance of maturity which counts. This can be faked. Mr. Uchiyama explained that plums are especially amenable to this hurry-up process. New branches are added to old rotten ones by making a hole in the old bough and inserting dirt and the new branch. Grafting is also resorted to. Or a fresh new plum branch can be made to look as old as Methuselah in a year's time by having its trunk cut in half. Thereafter only the outer bark is watered and kept alive so that

the heart of the bough rots. In fact, Mr. Uchiyama guarantees to revive the most rotten of lichen-covered boughs provided the bark is still alive. Due to such faking, Japan's many *bonsai* stores are able to furnish fair-looking plants to the New Year's rush trade for as little as fifteen yen each. An average collector of modest means usually gets more patiently cared for trees at from 100 to 500 yen.

"Of course I realize the average person cannot afford such *bonsai*. Moreover *bonsai* have to be expertly cared for. So I have evolved a plan for renting out my trees for two weeks at a time. My men go every few days to the foster-homes to water the plants and look after them. I don't trust them to amateurs. It's too hard to condition them after they have been abused and you just can't take such a chance when a tree is several hundred years old. Anyway, I get attached to each of my fine trees. They have personalities of their own," said Mr. Uchiyama paternally as he told of the troupe of tree nursemaids he sends out to call on his little trees in their various adopted homes. This nursemaid service also extends to private collections, for Mr. Uchiyama advises that all owners of

high class *bonsai* call in an expert to inspect their trees at least three times a month.

Bonsai fashions come and go. A *bonsai* fancier might plant only pines and then find out ten years later that cherry trees are all the rage. "It isn't quite as bad as that, however," reassured Mr. Uchiyama, "for a really beautiful *bonsai*, like a beautiful painting, never goes out of date." It is the cheaper trees which change in style. Pines are always good but fruit-bearing trees were once all the rage. This year miniature forests of mixed trees, particularly cryptomeria and *keyaki*, are in style. These forests are the furthest away from the original plan of a *bonsai* which the art has yet reached, for, claims Mr. Uchiyama, the idea started as a sort of permanent flower arrangement.

Bonsai collecting has always been the fad of the wealthy, for few can afford such collections as Count Miyoshi's which is valued at 100,000 yen, or Mr. Keikichi Tanomogi's. Count Sakai has a group of tiny plum trees less than four inches high but valued at about seventy yen each. Some of these collectors own rare *toshio* which have been dwarfed by nature, they are so rare, however, that they offer little competition to man-made *bonsai*.

Such *toshio*, explained Mr. Uchiyama, come mainly from Sanshu near Shizuoka where they grow at high altitudes on almost soilless, shady cliffs. These pines are twisted and distorted by the wind so that their reputation for beauty is justly deserved. Some of them have been sold for as much as 15,000 yen.

But Mr. Uchiyama prefers to create his own *bonsai*. He is proud of his products and admits that they often send him off into day dreams about woods and cliffs above the sea. He works with trees as a painter does with the colours of his palate and his products are often just as startlingly beautiful.

"I hate to sell any of them," he said, fingering the budding bough of a delicate *kaido* tree whose limbs have the rhythmic poise of a ballet dancer.

DIVORCE

JAPAN is a man's country, the ladies have to give way. But things are going to be different, at least in the field of divorce, if Dr. Shigeto Hozumi of the Tokyo Imperial University Law School has his say. For thirty years Dr. Hozumi who is one of Japan's leading law experts, has studied the divorce situation and he dreams of a day when women as well as men may get a divorce on the grounds of adultery. He thinks the young people will approve this revolutionary change. In fact, his whole desire is to make men and women equal in the eyes of the divorce court. To achieve this, Dr. Hozumi and several other experts are now constructing a new divorce law. Among other items they are planning a Court of Conciliation. Couples will be sent to it by the trial judge and, conciliation failing, divorce will be granted.

But giving the woman a fair chance is unfortunately the least of the problem in a land where the family is more important than the individual. Centuries of tradition are against her. With this in mind it is only natural that Dr. Hozumi aims primarily to eliminate divorce rather than facilitate it. But if it must be granted it should be granted fairly, he contends. He is proud that divorce is on the decrease and feels that the whole matter is more kindly handled now than when he first became interested in the divorce problem as a young law student. He thinks that divorce is still far too frequent, however, because it is too easy to obtain. In fact, divorce by mutual consent, can be had in Japan, if one is in a rush, in about fifteen minutes, the cost being between ten and twenty sen. All a person has to do is to procure the proper form from a notary, fill it in, sign it, get the unwanted connubial partner to sign along with two witnesses and then take or mail the paper to the ward office. And that is that. The fee goes to the notary. Far too often the wife is coerced into consenting though nominally this is not legal.

One of the basic reasons divorce is so common in Japan is the confused marriage system,

according to Dr. Hozumi who, ensconced in his mammoth Victorian study with its own adjoining law library, spoke with enthusiasm about his plans for tackling this weighty matter of divorce. He explained that until some forty years ago marriage was strictly a family affair. It still is, for that matter, but now marriages are supposed to be registered at the neighbourhood ward office. Thirty to forty per cent of the marriages are still left unregistered, especially in the country districts.

When a woman marries she is no longer part of her own family and once it was considered a great disgrace to take back one's daughter. Thus, divorce has always been a heart-rending problem for women when marriage has been left unregistered. All a man has to do is to tell the wife to leave his bed and board. Legally, all children belong to the husband's family. Now, in very rare instances, the court may rule otherwise. The wife normally gets the children only if the man married into her family. The departing wife has the right to take away with her the dowry which she brought provided it was not cash which has been spent.

Dr. Hozumi laid before me one of his prized possessions, a *mikudaribon*. This old-style divorce decree stated that a husband was

divorcing his wife and once served as some poor wife's proof of freedom. A *mikudaribun* was always written in three and a half lines of script, hence the name. The *samurai* wives had more protection than the others for *samurai* could marry only with the permission of their *daimyo* and so the *daimyo* also had to attach his approval to the divorce decree. This made a *samurai* do a little thinking before he turned out his wife.

A thousand years ago, during the Heian era, when life was more strictly ordered in the Chinese fashion, a man was not supposed to divorce his wife except for barrenness, adultery, inability to get along with his parents, talkativeness, larceny, or theft, jealousy or bad disease, said Dr. Hozumi as he added that the first real change in the divorce system occurred in the Ashikaga period when the warriors were politically more powerful than the nobles. But even then women had little opportunity for escaping unbearable husbands. Their only chance was to run away and seek a "divorce temple." Dr. Hozumi said that he knew of two such places: the Tokiuji, a nunnery of Kamakura which was founded by a member of the powerful Hojo family, and the Mantokuji in Tokugawa village which had in-

fluence because of the Tokugawa family. If a woman remained at a "divorce temple" for three years then the nuns, convinced of her sincerity, would summon the husband and, after conciliation failed, try the case and pronounce a judgment. The woman gained her freedom but lost her dowry and children. Dr. Hozumi laid before me an old summons sent by the Tokiuji in the eighteenth century to some errant husband. It also was written in the traditional and ominous three and a half lines.

It was not until the civil code of 1898 went into effect that women had any legal protection, said the venerable divorce authority, adding that it was about time there was some reform of the laws, for nothing has been done about them since then. At that time registry was made a law. Many women still fail to avail themselves of this protection because it often entails a lot of troublesome detail. If there is no registry, the wife has only the legal status of a common-law wife. There is no social stigma attached to this. In fact, no one knows whether his friends' marriages are registered or not. It is just a legal form like a marriage licence, only it is gotten after the marriage.

Dr. Hozumi is sorry that many couples wait

so long to register. All too often they wait a year or so to see if the marriage is going to go well. This sort of marriage destroys moral responsibility, he feels. But of course in these days even a common-law wife can get some legal protection if she is deserted. The court will require that the father support his children and she can sue for damages. Proof of the prevalence of non-registered marriages may be found in the fact that in 1936 there were 546,116 registries of marriage but in 1937 this number increased by 125,000. This does not mean that more people married on account of the China Incident but that many soldiers decided to register their marriages before going to war so that in event of their death their families would benefit by Government pension. The Government, realizing this, has taken measures to assist the common-law wives in receiving pensions.

A modern wife, revealed Dr. Hozumi, can free herself from an unwanted spouse by going to court. But this is not as simple as it sounds for prejudice against a divorced woman has abated but little after forty years of legal divorce. She still finds it almost impossible to remarry. Women of high class families who cannot get a divorce by mutual consent usually stay married unless

their marriage is unregistered. But Dr. Hozumi, whose personality keynote is cheerfulness, looks forward to the day when such stigma will be a thing of the past.

Proof of the unpopularity of court divorces is seen in a perusal of statistics. In 1936 there were 48,528 divorces. This number decreased to 46,500 in 1937 to Dr. Hozumi's delight, though the war is partly responsible for this decline. Of the 48,528 divorces in 1936, only 394 were granted in court. But a small per cent of the court cases had men as plaintiffs; to wit, women were responsible for 305 cases and men for 89.

In present day Japan, divorce is granted for ten reasons, one of which favours only men and one only women. Dr. Hozumi's aim is to make the grounds the same for both men and women. Divorce can be obtained by both men and women for bigamy or registration of a second wife or husband before the first has been divorced. A wife cannot complain of an unregistered second wife, however, unless she is humiliated. So the second ground for divorce is ill-treatment. In this case the wife may sue the husband on account of a concubine only if the latter is treated with more deference and is better supported than the

wife. Participation in certain specified crimes, desertion, insults by in-laws, discord between relatives of the two families, unknown whereabouts after three years and adoption when the husband has been taken into the wife's family and the adoption has been subsequently annulled, form the other joint grounds. A wife may divorce her husband for certain criminal offences while a husband cannot divorce his wife for the same causes. A man may free himself from an adulterous wife but a woman has no recourse in this case.

One of the important factors governing divorce is the family system. Dr. Hozumi thinks it makes divorce less frequent but it does put an unregistered wife in a predicament for her husband's parents can divorce her from her husband as well as he can. It is not an unknown phenomena for the husband's parents, especially the mother, to take a dislike to the wife and, in the absence of or against the will of the husband, send the girl home. What does it matter if the husband and wife are in love, such a matter is a mere trifle. Such parental influence can be noted even in modern law. A man is under the thumb of his parents until he is thirty and woman until she is twenty-five. Moreover, the divorce laws

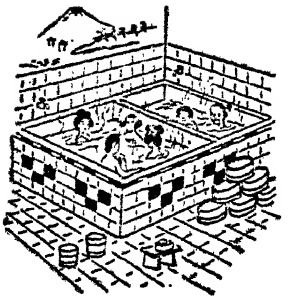
themselves show that the parents and relatives have to be considered. A husband cannot put his parents out of his home no matter how much trouble they make so if he decides to side with his wife against his parents, a most unlikely happening, he must leave the house with the wife.

Dr. Hozumi feels that the family system and the approach of the Japanese people to marriage make Japan one of the best places for happy marriage. The women, he says, are not selfish and parents give first consideration to their home and children as a general rule. He thinks that men should marry between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-eight and women between twenty and twenty-four. Educated women he feels, make the best wives and he thinks that the young men he knows prefer them. Things are not what they were in the old days before the Restoration when women married at thirteen and fourteen years of age.

The rising generation is more serious and moral, feels the Dean of the nation's number one law institution. The women are more chaste too, than in Tokugawa times. Therefore he is certain that marriage will become more secure. While he admits that most domestic troubles arise from economic difficulties, he does not

especially favour the dowry system though he does approve of arranged marriages.

"Young girls to-day seldom can afford a dowry and men are often ashamed of a wife with a large dowry because it makes them feel unimportant. It looks too mercenary and destroys idealism. The girls are ashamed when they bring a large dowry to their husbands because they feel that they are in themselves not beautiful or wise," he said as he added that all too often there is not enough care taken in the choosing of brides and grooms. A responsible *nakodo*, or go-between, is a guarantee of a happy marriage for he not only uses care in choosing proper mates but also helps the couple out of their marital difficulties for the rest of his life. Dr. Hozumi ought to know, to date he has been *nakodo* for twenty-five of his former students. He believes that young people ought to be allowed to become acquainted a little before they are married, all under proper chaperonage, of course. In this way they could find out beforehand if they were unsuited to one another. Then there wouldn't be so much matrimonial shipwreck and divorce.



ADVENTURE IN A BATH HOUSE

"I scrub and scrub and never get done," said Hori, the bath boy, disgustedly as he tossed down a large, coarse, bristled brush when I entered the deserted tubroom of my neighbourhood public bath house. Hori has ambitions to scrub the backs of the ladies instead of tubs though he admits that even such a promotion would have its drawbacks.

"Taji is always telling me the old ladies and servant girls are all right but the *geisha* are as fussy as can be. They coat their necks with this thick, white powder and then expect you to get it off without rubbing hard. They get awfully crabby when you wet their hair too. As though you can get a neck clean when those back sweeps of hair are hanging down their necks! But anything is better than just tubs!" he exclaimed as he began to arrange

small wooden basins around the great bath hall with its two large tubs which were really miniature swimming pools. The little tubs had just been brought in from the sun in which they are stacked on every bright day after being cleaned. One of the pools, explained Hori, contained medicated waters for the use of people with aching limbs and backs.

"The police are always looking in on us so we have to be particular about how we keep our bath house and watch who gets into our pools. We have to change the tub water every day, though it need not be disinfected as the heat takes care of that," he said. It seems that the police have been keeping close tabs on matters since 1921 when a set of strict regulations was made.

The prickly headed scrub boy also explained that he has to keep an eye on the patrons and see that they behave themselves and report any misdemeanours to his boss. There is no mixed bathing now, not in public bath houses anyway, but that only seems to make the baths more like a club house than ever. Most of the clients stay about an hour and discuss all the gossip of the neighbourhood. Once in a while there are some pretty hot arguments. Not so

long ago a couple of ladies in a neighbouring bath house got to hair pulling and as they couldn't be stopped, the police had to be called. The policeman must have gotten exceedingly wet trying to stop the quarrelling amid all the nude and dripping ladies. Many of the private baths still have mixed bathing, especially at the various hot spring resorts and there just isn't anything else in the Hokkaido and in Korea except in the main cities and foreign hotels.

The shift towards western prudery and segregation of the sexes has put a dent in an old flirtatious custom, for there was a day when young gallants would discover when their fiancées were going to the bath and arrange to be there at the same hour. This was an especially popular pastime in the country.

Hori, the scrub boy, knows a nice girl when he sees one. He can tell by the way she gets in and out of the tub. If a girl just washes and then gets into the tub without bothering about her towel she just hasn't any taste, but if she coyly holds her towel in front of her and demurely steps into the tub, then Hori's heart takes a leap. After all, human nature is the same the world over. It isn't the revealed but the half-concealed which attracts.

Just at this juncture two fat matrons came into the bath house dressing room which is also a community affair with a large, straw mat-covered floor. They undid their long *obi*, took off their *kimono*, neatly folded them and placed them in the wicker baskets on hand for that purpose. Hori had to excuse himself and hurried out to the back of the bath house to assist the proprietor who had just called him. The boy in the women's section took the full baskets and stacked them away as the women waddled into the tile room with their soap and towels. Every one must bring his own towel and other items as the law forbids the use of bath house equipment of this nature unless it is sterilized. The women squatted on small wooden benches the size of foot-stools and washed themselves with the water contained in the small wooden tubs which the bath boy had brought them. Having thoroughly cleansed themselves, they proceeded to get into one of the two large pools filled with clear, blue water. The boy then told me that I had better go or take a bath myself as bathers aren't used to being looked at by spectators. So I left recalling that until a few years ago, when tile was introduced, the tubs were great wooden affairs.

There is no "Saturday night" in Japan.

From dawn until midnight the bath houses of the city have a steady stream of patrons. Bathing places in residential quarters open at noon. Hori, the scrub boy, fortunately works in a residential bath house but once he had to work frantically between midnight and three o'clock in the morning in order to clean the tubs and change the water for the next day's patrons. Approximately 2,500,000 public baths are taken daily in about 8,000 public tubs in 2,847 bath houses in Tokyo, a city of 6,000,000 people. The average bath house, it seems, has about a thousand patrons a day and none of them seem to be the worse for the wear despite the fact that they all use the same tub water.[1] Besides this, there are private tubs of which there must be more than 50,000 judging by the number of homes over four rooms in size. Crafty landlords realize that a man who cannot afford a house with over four rooms also cannot afford to own a bath tub so they just don't instal bathrooms in small houses.

The custom of having tile tubs installed in private homes is not taking hold as enterprising merchants had once expected. "You see, you can't take them with you," explained a tub maker I

[1] It must be remembered, however, that washing and rinsing is done outside of a Japanese tub.

visited, as he crawled out of a half finished wooden tub whose inside he was smoothing down with a plane. "What good is a bath tub if you have to leave it behind? The landlord won't give you anything for it because his next tenant is sure to have his own," he continued as he extolled the virtues of his wooden tubs. He is glad that the fad for square tubs has disappeared. "Most unsensible, these square tubs. They rot at the corners," he commented. But then he is a conservative tub architect for he came from Kyoto where the old, round style is still prevalent. In Izumo, where Korean influence is noticeable, great pottery jars are in use in some places.

The problem of the round, pottery or stone tub is definitely a strategic one, the point being to get into it without missing one's aim. Boards are placed at the bottom to keep one's feet from roasting. The devilish boards float uncertainly between the surface and the bottom. Without the boards the bottom would be unbearable, for the water in all Japanese tubs, unless it comes from natural hot springs, is heated after it is in the tub by means of a fire box placed under the contraption. Once these boxes were of temperamental cast iron, but now that they have been improved the old ostracism has disappeared and

the tub room is part of the house. Private bathers in the Hokkaido and conservative country sections still have to brave the storms of winter to reach the tub which is kept in a separate building in the back yard because of the fear of fire.

The most popular shape for the modern tub is oval. It, like its old time predecessors, is made without nails. The boards are fitted together in perfect contact and roped with wire. When full of water, the tub swells so that it does not leak. The idea is a very admirable one but a nuisance, for just as people abroad fear to leave home because of their pets, so tub owners have to make special arrangements, when they go away, to keep their tubs from warping in their absence.

Bathing as a fine art has practically disappeared from the cities, though Japan as a whole probably has the world's most unusual collection of tubs. Not infrequently the tub rooms of many well-known hot springs are comparable to a Ziegfeld Follies set when the inn or hotel owners combine their love of water with their desire for a good tourist trade. But bathing traditions are left to the country folk. People are forgetting the autumnal citron bath taken on the year's shortest day in December and the iris bath which is indulg-

ed in during the boys' festival in May. For the former housewives cut up pieces of citron and put them into the tub thereby hoping that the bathers will be free from colds and illness during the long winter which is at hand. In May, when the boys' festival is held, iris leaves are cut and sprinkled on the water in belief that thereby the sons of the family who use the tub waters that day will be made strong and brave. This custom stems from the fact that the word *shobu* (iris) also means respect for martial courage.

Now and then one encounters an antique copper tub, an experience never to be forgotten. I accosted one in a secluded town in Shikoku. The great copper oval, more than eight feet long, had a ridge around its sides upon which bathers could sit. That was the only tub in Japan which I dared not enter, for not only were the waters scalding, but the coppery red of the tub itself almost paled with white heat. The Japanese take their baths so hot that the average foreigner cannot even step into them. One becomes accustomed after a while but I still doubt if even the hotel proprietor of that inn could have emerged from that scalding copper cauldron without having resembled a boiled lobster.

The Japanese bathing habit may be traced

partly to the *Shinto* faith which emphasizes purification and cleanliness at every turn, and partly to the desire to get warm as tubs are the nation's major heating facility.

During the Tokugawa era bathing seems to have reached a high point in sophistication. People retired to the baths for washing, tea drinking, flirting and more. In fact, the baths of Tokyo are not what they used to be. In the good old days there were about two hundred "shady" bathing places in Yedo. In 1665 the authorities decided that things had gone too far, so about five hundred of the so-called female shampooers were rounded up and taken to the Yoshiwara. Thereafter, bath houses were used strictly for bathing and serving girls were forbidden.

Old bathing traditions still remain at the spa of Dogo. For over a thousand years the hot waters of this Shikoku resort have been used by its occupants. Only the most unforgivable snobs would think of owning their own tubs in this city. So I, like the rest of the population, went to one of the public bath houses. The building turned out to be like a magnificent inn. Baths were first, second and third class. I felt very exclusive and paid twenty-five sen for a first class bath. Third class baths were five sen. For the sum paid I was

given a beautiful private room overlooking a garden and furnished with a hanging scroll, flowers, a small table and a low mirror. Tea was served while I relaxed. I was also given a fresh, cotton *kimono*. Having prepared for the bath, I was led down the long, highly polished halls, past the second class communal dressing room to the elegant white tiled bath. Here, along with other women, I took my place in the soothing waters. In fact, I was perfectly content when suddenly my neighbour, an elderly woman, turned her back on me. It was covered with newly healed round sores! As one electrified, I grabbed my towel, clutched for my soap, and fled in terror. Later, quite shaken, I left the bath house. It was only sometime afterwards, when my education about Japan was more complete, that I realized that the woman had no disease whatsoever but that she had just finished a series of *okyu* burnings for rheumatism or some similar pain.[1]

An equally amusing incident occurred in Korea. As in all Japanese inns there, the old traditions of friendliness and lack of self-consciousness prevail. No sooner had I arrived, tired and weary from my trip, than I sought the bath.

[1] Refer to the article *Kill or Cure*.

The landlord, having heard thath is first foreign guest had come, could not await my emergence from the bath. In neighbourly fashion, he came to the bathroom and sat on the edge of my tub while he made queries as to my name, residence and age. He seemed extremely taken aback when I expressed a desire to bathe without his company. But that was not all. A few minutes later, as I was standing facing the tub, in walked the bath boy, unconscious of the fact that there was a foreigner in the bathroom. Evidently he had been told that there was a female back to be scrubbed in one of the bathrooms. Without a question or apology he commenced to scrub my back. I was surprised to say the least, but decided to keep quiet. Then he finished my back and started to turn me around in order to complete his task. In a flash he realized that I was a foreign woman. His eyes popped, and with an excited cry he dropped his brush and fled from the room. I still don't know who was more surprised by that incident, he or I.

Bathing in Japan has its amusing incidents, but one thing is certain, though Japanese who are unused to foreigners may sometimes almost mob you in their anxiety to see the queer-looking visitors, they are totally indifferent and disinterest-

ed in your nude body when you repose with them in a bath tub. In Japan there is nudity, but nobody bothers to notice it. After all, it is only the unusual which attracts, and in Japan as in all other oriental countries, the natural aspects of life are naturally dealt with.

THE ART OF GIVING

JAPAN is the land of gifts. Nowhere else is there a people so accustomed to gift-giving. The slightest occasion provides an excuse, so it is only natural that much ado should be made about the nature of the gift, the manner in which it is wrapped and tied, and the mode of its presentation. Until recently it was considered ill-bred if a gift were not given at the correct moment and in the proper manner. This idea is so integral a part of the national life in the higher ranks of society that even now the receipt of a gift which cannot at the moment be returned demands at least a symbol of a return and so it is customary to place a piece of white paper upon the tray on which the gift was presented when handing the tray back to the giver.

Since ancient times one of the most acceptable gifts has been food or food symbolizing certain

ideas. For instance, a lobster symbolizes long life because, like an old man, its back is bent, or a *tai* (carp fish) symbolizes good luck and courage because it is brave and, though a gamey fish, once it is caught it stoically submits. Now these food gifts are often replaced by money.

Though it has been realized that the delivery of a large number of kegs of *sake* on one's door step, for instance, might be an inconvenience in these modern times the enthusiasm for giving and receiving *katsuobushi* has far from waned. Unlike the food gifts presented in western countries, a Japanese gives the practical things which make up an everyday meal and hardly a meal goes by but what a housewife can use *katsuobushi* in shaving form as a flavouring, or as a soup stock. Of course dried seaweed, fruit, bean paste cakes, dried squid, cuttlefish, chestnuts and innumerable other delicacies may find their way into one's home, but by and large the wooden, musty-looking *katsuobushi* is the most popular food gift which has survived from ancient times.

What cheese is to the Dutch, *katsuobushi* is to the Japanese. Just as formerly the Japanese questioned the foreigner about a certain strong-smelling, moulded curd called cheese, so the foreigner is still questioning the Japanese about

a mummified-looking fish called *katsuobushi*. Briefly, it is nothing more nor less than the common *katsuo*, or bonito (euthyunus pelamis tanaka), a fish about 810 mm. maximum length which is usually caught between May and October in the open sea.

For some 2000 years the Japanese have been transforming the innocent *katsuo* into *katsuobushi*, or homely pieces of dried fish about ten inches in length, dark taupe in colour, hard as a rock in texture, and with a surface flecked by remnants of a bluish-green mould.

Curious as to why *katsuobushi* is what it is, I sought enlightenment from my neighbourhood fish dealer, Mr. Hidezo Ishibashi. Once the tang of salty air had called him to the sea and, as a young boy, he used to help his father prepare *katsuobushi* on the shores of Izu but now he is living comfortably with his son who is a fish dealer in Tokyo.

Mr. Ishibashi obligingly took off his smelly apron and laid aside the gory knife with which he had been busily cleaning plump, scarlet *tai*, took the twisted towel from his head and sat down to discuss the secrets of *katsuobushi*. Before beginning to speak he drew a worn brass pipe from his ample *obi* and filled its diminutive bowl with a pinch of strawy tobacco. Then he was ready.

"*Katsuobushi* aren't all alike," he said as he held out two pieces of the wooden fish which his daughter-in-law had brought him from the kitchen. They are male and female," he added as he hurried to explain that the reason the male piece is long, thin and narrow while the female is wider and more roundish depends not upon the sex of the fish from which they are taken but upon the part of the *katsuo* from which they are cut.

"To transform the bonito into *katsuobushi*," explained the grizzled ex-fisherman, "is a painstaking process." Centuries of experience are behind it.

Generally speaking, first the head, fins and bowels of the fish are removed. Then the body is cut in half and each half is cut into halves. The spine pieces become known as the male and those from the underside as the female. The division of the pieces having been completed, the curing process begins.

"To cure the fish," said Mr. Ishibashi, "or change it into *katsuobushi*, I used to place the pieces in bamboo baskets which I helped father immerse in boiling water. They remained there for from fifteen to forty minutes. Then we removed them and I and other assistants scraped off bones, fat and dirty parts. The clean meat we left to cool until

the following day when we boiled the fish again. By that time the male pieces had become reduced to about half their former size and the female to a third."

Then came the repairing. All hollows and broken parts had to be repaired with fish paste made of pulverized *katsuo* mixed with water. When this was done, Mr. Ishibashi and his father used to place them once again in water boiling at 120 degrees centigrade. The fish were left there for about an hour. In connection with this boiling process the proper fuel had to be used. Mr. Ishibashi can remember his father's bad temper when the pine wood fuel didn't suit him, for pine is full of tannin and necessary to the proper curing of the fish.

Fuelling caused young Mr. Ishibashi many a backache for he not only had to prepare fuel once but twenty-five times for each batch of *katsuo*, for the boiling process must be repeated five times a day every other day for ten days. Then what was left of the much-boiled *katsuo* was exposed to the sun on long racks for a period of several days. Mr. Ishibashi's father was satisfied when the pieces had assumed the inflexibility of hardtack. Then young Hidezo, along with the others, had to help inspect each piece closely, remove bumps and

straighten out twisted shapes. After that the pieces were packed away in boxes. Mr. Ishibashi hurried to assure me that this was not the end of the process of *katsuobushi* making but just the beginning. In about a week bluish-green mould, a kind of mildew, would begin to appear on the surface of the *katsuobushi*. As soon as this mildew was heavy enough the fish had to be taken out of the boxes, brushed off and exposed to the sun again and then stored away to await a second crop of mould. The very best quality of *katsuobushi* takes several months to cure and has from seven to eight mildews. In fact, the mildew is the big point with every *katsuobushi* manufacturer. Old Mr. Ishibashi used to swell with pride over the stunning blue-grey shade which he was able to procure for this gains the highest price. Such pieces retail for as high as a yen each.

Despite the troublesome process of curing, *katsuobushi* is one of the staple foods of the Japanese people. Its popularity is due in part to the fact, that, in a land where extreme dampness and lack of adequate refrigeration devices go hand-in-hand, this cured food remains fit for use indefinitely. Another factor which has made it very popular, according to Mr. Ishibashi, is the symbolical implication found in the name which makes

the fish the most acceptable of gifts. The Japanese love puns and what could be a more fitting symbol of good luck than *katsuobushi* which may be interpreted to mean "victorious warrior."

Before the Meiji Restoration *katsuobushi* were presented mainly as wedding gifts but since that time they have come to be used at numerous other occasions calling for presents. It is not unusual for a well-to-do young couple to receive around two hundred pieces of *katsuobushi* as wedding presents.

The cost of a gift of *katsuobushi* lies not in the fish itself but in the wrappings, strings, boxes and other paraphernalia in which it is presented. Perhaps the democracy of *katsuobushi* also plays a part in its popularity for it can be afforded by rich and poor alike, the only distinction being the elaborateness of the wrappings. A rich man's present of *katsuobushi* may cost as high as 1000 yen while that of a man of modest means may represent an outlay of no more than a yen. *Katsuobushi* is often presented in magnificent lacquered boxes. But Mr. Ishibashi, whose function is merely to furnish fish to the neighbourhood felt he was getting beyond his depth when it came to the etiquette of giff-giving, knots, strings and wrappings, so I turned elsewhere for such

information.

One afternoon shortly thereafter I paid a visit to Mr. Zenzo Miyahara, proprietor of the Miyahara Yuinohinten, one of Tokyo's eight professional knot making and envelope folding establishments.

I found Mr. Miyahara in the throes of a very knotty problem. He was trying his hand at a new and fanciful pink plum blossom knot and not faring very well. But Mr. Miyahara never loses his temper. Twenty-five years of knot tying have taught him the futility of excitement. He sells his products mainly to *kimono* stores and to gift shops handling *katsuobushi* and other popular presents, for no gift can be a gift without the proper kind of a paper wrapping or knot to adorn it.

During his quarter of a century of twisting strings, Mr. Miyahara has acquired a repertoire of about three hundred different knots, all of different design, colour or colour combination and each with a symbolism of its own. And along with the knots go folded envelopes of red and white paper of which there are at least a thousand kinds.

"Why there are over a hundred kinds of envelopes just for holding money alone," said Mr. Miyahara. "Actually, however, there are only about twenty varieties of envelopes in common

use," he added, lamenting the decline of gift-giving formality. Now his main efforts are confined to dressing up wedding presents for, except among a few very formal and high class families, the niceties of gift etiquette have lapsed into the simplest of forms. Now one ordinarily sees only *katawa*, or one loop knots which are used on round presents; *cho*, or bow-knots, which are the traditional knots for flat presents, and *kiri musubi*, or square knots. The *cho musubi* is now used for all sorts of presents regardless of shape. Knot ends curled in three tiers called *oi no nami*, or waves of age, are also still very popular. They are never used on a funeral gift, however, because of the implication in their name.

But Mr. Miyahara, who is a chubby, good natured soul who loves to putter with his knots, finds his true self-expression in bigger and better *musubi*. He prides himself on his phoenix knot which takes two hours to make and depicts a peacock-like bird.

The treasure-ship style in which a whole ship, sails and all, is pictured with seven or eight long strings cleverly twisted together, is another of his masterpieces. Mr. Miyahara learned to do such difficult feats with string all on his own. He is self-taught and gets all his knot ideas from

looking at old pictures.

While knot forms are old, the strings and colours are new. Until the Meiji era only red and white string was used. The two colours are still joined together so that half of the full string is one colour and half the other. Then a cheap method of making imitation silver and gold was discovered. Now gold and silver strings threaten the popularity of red and white.

Twenty years ago strings of every colour in the rainbow were introduced so that Mr. Miyahara's mighty knots, such as the phoenix, are now made in many colours. This change has destroyed the true significance of the knot for, to be correct, the red or gold colour must always be on the right side of the package while the white or silver is placed on the left because, explained the knot expert, the left is the best or noble side for as one faces south as the flowers face, the sun rises on the left.

The string itself has also been improved. In the old days when all knotting was done non-professionally, string frequently cracked. Now it is wound about with rayon thread and so has acquired the pliability of fine wire.

Mr. Miyahara hopes that knot etiquette will not completely fade into the past. He is thankful

that some people still observe the sixty-first birthday of a male member of the family by giving him a gift surmounted by a *megane*, or eyeglasses knot, and that the eighty-eighth birthday of grandmother demands a gift tied with a *shimada musubi*. The *shimada* knot apes the *shimada* style of woman's hairdress. Baby's first *kimono* demands a knot called the *hinode*, or sunrise knot, because it depicts the sun on the horizon. And one should always remember to put a *sasa musubi* above a plain food gift if one cannot think of a more appropriate seasonal one. *Sasa*, a kind of bamboo, is very popular and Mr. Miyahara keeps one girl busy all day long making nothing but slender imitation bamboo leaves only they are green now instead of white and red. Originally, this knot came into being as a symbol of real *sasa* leaves which, together with *nanten* berries, were always placed on food gifts in the ancient times. This gesture was one of humbleness on the part of the giver and also relieved him of a lot of responsibility for if the receiver became ill from eating the gift food he could take the herbs, boil them, and drink the concoction to cure his illness.

There is an etiquette for seasonal knots also, Mr. Miyahara assured me. In autumn nothing could be more appropriate than a chrysanthemum

knot while at New Year's time, when most of the presents in Japan are given, plum, bamboo and pine motifs or combinations of the three are most appropriate. Sometimes a classical pine knot may be accompanied by sprigs of imitation plum and bamboo, but this is a new wrinkle. Pine is used because it is an evergreen and lives to a great old age and so symbolizes strength and longevity. Bamboo is straight and strong so it calls to mind honesty and sincerity, while the plum which blooms when snow is still on the ground, stands for courage.

The glory of Mr. Miyahara's knotting ability goes into wedding *musubi*. According to knot tradition, a daffodil *musubi* should ornament the birde's gift from her parents-in-law. An individual present to the mother-in-law demands a fine *kame musubi*, or tortoise knot, for the tortoise stands for long life. The father-in-law should receive a gift tastefully surmounted by a *tsuru musubi*, or crane knot, which also symbolizes long life. A joint present to the parents-in-law may have a combined crane and tortoise knot.

The most important wedding knot of all is the *ocho mecho*, or a pair of knots, one male and one female, representing butterflies. The string is usually backed by red and white paper. These

butterflies are attached to the two pots or bottles used for pouring the wine drunk by the bride and bride-groom at a *Shinto* wedding ceremony. The butterfly is chosen because it was thought to be both affectionate and fecund.[1]

There are knots and envelopes innumerable laid on the wooden gift table at the time of a wedding or engagement feast. The smallest number is five, but there are sets of seven, eleven and even more. A set of five contains an envelope with a double, protruding loop of white *asa* or native linen, symbolizing white hair and so expresses the wish that the couple reach old age together. Another contains two, joined paper fans of the *suehiro* type. The word *suehiro* may mean increasing good luck. A third contains seaweed and is also congratulatory in its implication, while the fourth is a money envelope. The last envelope of such a set contains a list of all the presents given to the couple. Larger sets have, besides the above mentioned envelopes, one with a seaweed called *kobu* because *kobu* is part of the word *yorokobu* which means to be happy. A dried fish called *surume* also finds its way to the gift table because it is supposed to represent the bride. *Katsuobushi*

[1] See the article entitled *Here Comes the Bride.*

is present too, to represent the groom. And there is the *yanagi*, or willow envelope, containing money with which to buy *sake* for use at the wedding celebration after the ceremony. *Sake* is always prepared in willow wood tubs, hence the name.

Mr. Miyahara's list of envelopes and knots was endless. He is an encylopædia for the etiquette of the Japanese world in which everything has its proper manner of execution. But alas, all this is gradually becoming a dream of the past. The knots remain, but they are as resplendent as a rainbow; the gifts remain, but the fine points of their meaning are lost. Gone are the days of Yedo when life from the cost of one's clothing to the hours of one's day was regulated either by custom or law. Custom remains but half-heartedly for the Japanese are feeling the surge of a new freedom.

A JAPANESE NUN CONFESSES

NAMUAMI *Dabutsu*! *Namuami Dabutsu*! *Namuami Dabutsu*. On and on went the monotone in the pitch darkness of the cavern beneath the altar of the Buddhist nunnery chapel. *Namuami Dabutsu*! chanted the young nun as she felt her way along the sutra-marked walls of the inky passage. With my left hand resting upon the nun's shoulder, I felt the walls with my right. The purpose was to touch a wooden lock somewhere on that strange wall. Whoever finds it in the course of his travels through these mysterious passages which commonly exist beneath temples of the Jodo sect, will also find good fortune, so the tradition runs. The white, wooden rosary swinging from my left arm made a faintly clicking sound as the beads touched each other. The rosary had been given me before entering the

passage to symbolize my abandonment of earthly desire.

Finally after fifteen minutes of wandering in the murky blackness, the closely-cropped scalp of the little twenty-four-year-old nun ahead of me emerged into the daylight of the entrance. We had returned to the point from which we started. There had been no luck that day despite the holy *sambukyo sutras* inscribed upon the walls and the figure of *Jizo*, god of roads and wayfarers, painted in bright colours at the entrance.

"Too bad. Perhaps your luck will change another time," the young nun said as she smiled and led the way towards the residence quarter of the head abbess of the Zenkoji in Aoyama, Tokyo.

First purification had to be achieved. This consisted simply of dropping a pinch of incense on the fire smouldering before the great altar in the temple's main hall. I noted the tremendous gold *doban* which dropped nearly to the floor and looked like chandeliers. The altar was draped with fringed hangings made from the *kimono* of deceased persons whose families had contributed them. Before the altar was the massive chair in which the head abbess kneels when she preaches.

"The Buddhist nun," explained Koen, the young nun who was conducting me, "has all the

rank and privilege of the monk. She may become a high church dignitary and conduct religious rites just like a man."

Abbess Seikan's reception room was a small one and in Japanese style, its furnishings being donations from parishioners. The *karakami*, or paper doors, bore the crest of the Imperial House of Fushimi, its motif taken from the back of the chrysanthemum. This was alternated with the *kiri* crest of Marquis Koga. Koen was about to explain this but she was interrupted by the entrance of the Abbess. The latter was attired in a splendid orchid robe with hem-length sleeves which, aided by her plumpness, made her look as wide as she was tall. As she knelt, she meticulously folded the twenty-one pleats in her wide skirt. Then, fingering her rosary, she was prepared for questions.

"Tokyo has very few nunneries," she stated, "only five in addition to the Zenkoji. This is the oldest and most influential one in Tokyo, and we have twelve nuns here. There are about fifty nuns in the Kwanto and over 12,000 in Japan. The Jodo sect is one of the few having nunneries. The others are the Sodo, Tendai and Shingon sects. In fact, some three hundred of the approximately 7000 Jodo temples are in charge of nuns. But

most of the nuns and nunneries are located in the Kwansai where nunneries originated.

The Abbess entered a nunnery when she was seven years old. As a rule, parents bring their children to a nunnery when they are between five and six years of age and the head nun chooses those whom she thinks show the most intelligence and willingness and have the right sort of background. Thereafter the nunnery is responsible for the children. Parents give their daughters money for clothes and personal expenditures until they take their vows when they are twenty-two or twenty-three years of age.

The Abbess turned to acknowledge the presence of a shaved headed moppet who had just pushed aside the *shoji*, or sliding door. The child was clothed in a regular school uniform and held in her hand a tray of cakes which she deposited before the nun with a deep bow. "That child is one of eight we now have here," she explained, "and like the rest she goes to regular primary school. When she has finished higher primary school she will be sent to our sect school in Kyoto for higher school work which will take five years. During that time she will study the regular higher school work, flower arrangement, tea ceremony, Buddhist theology prayers and also a little Eng-

lish. Then she will take her vows."

Life as a Japanese nun of the Jodo sect is anything but unpleasant. It is very utilitarian. The main work is to pray for those in need and to visit the homes of parishioners. The nuns believe in faith cures but do not hesitate to call a doctor when they see that their prayers do not drive away the devils and that the patient is seriously ill. Buddhism proscribes the use of animal products or flesh, so their diet is strictly vegetarian though the Abbess confessed that she had taken milk once when she was ill because of a doctor's orders.

"We rise at four o'clock in the morning," continued the Abbess, who at this point developed a very human hiccup. "From four-thirty to six-thirty we hold a prayer service in the temple. Rites are longer now with so many soldiers to pray for. Then we clean the house, offer food to the Buddha and place offerings before the ashes of the dead. This takes the next two hours and then there is breakfast. Neither breakfast nor any other meal is a time for fasting. We then go straight about the parish business which includes visits, funerals, death anniversaries, illnesses and the like. Those not engaged, read newspapers and books. More visiting and ceremonies follow lunch. At five o'clock an evening service

is held which, like the others, consists of unison prayers. Our sect is gregarious, not individualistic and meditative."

Abbess Seikan said she maintains her temple on money sent to her by the head Jodo temple in Kyoto, parishioners' gifts, and fees from funerals and prayers.

Just at this point the Abbess's hiccups became too much for her and fearing lest her dignity be disrupted she retired leaving Koen behind to finish the conversation.

"I like being a nun," confessed Koen. "I sew and pray and seldom wonder what is going on in the outside world. Several times I have visited my home and many times I go out of the temple grounds, but always with a companion. Life is so complete and well ordered that we soldom long for any other. Occasionally, however, a nun has broken her vows and gotten married. In such an event she is not expelled. We go to heaven through faith and are not kept out by sin," she added seriously.

Koen, whose name means circle of light, then began to explain the meaning of the temple crests. She led the way to the left wing of the nunnery as she talked. As we walked, we passed many great cases filled with family tablets and several boxes

tied in white cloth and containing soldier's ashes.

"You see the reason we use the Koga and Fushimi crests is that a daughter of Princess Fushimi and Prince Ipon spent her childhood here while preparing to take the vows. At this moment we came to the Princess's wing, which overlooks a lovely Japanese garden. "The Princess had to be adopted into the family of Marquis Koga before she could become a nun because since Meiji times members of the Imperial family have been forbidden to take the vows. She lived in this room and later became the head abbess of our sect," she added as she pointed to a picture of the scarlet-robed Princess hanging in her former bedroom. The room was severely plain but its *tatami* was raised above the rest.

Koen dreams of some day being an abbess herself. "I am very happy here. But then I don't know any other life," she concluded with a girlish giggle.

OLD CLOTHES ARE BETTER THAN NEW

YANAGIWARA is a narrow, winding lane decorated at intervals with piles of filthy rags, passè *kimono* and other cloth paraphernalia in the process of being sorted by clerks from the dingy stores which line the street. But let not its ragged appearance deceive you. For here dwells Mr. Kiyoshi Takahashi, who, along with others, makes a tidy income which runs into thousands of yen most any month. In fact, this dilapidated quarter thrives when other sections of the city are in the doldrums of economic depression. Its business goes up while others go down. And Mr. Takahashi, the second-hand clothes king of Japán, is its most prosperous resident.

Mr. Takahashi attributes his success, in large measure, to the importation of old clothes from the United States. "You see," he told the writer, "I make only seven or eight per cent profit on

selling Japanese clothes but I make twenty per cent on American imports." Perhaps amid Mr. Takahashi's stock may be found that discarded smoking-jacket or that pair of old duck-pants, the disappearance of which some disgruntled husband has been bewailing.

Amid a bevy of silk toppers, leather hunting jackets and gay golf pants, Mr. Takahashi sat cross-legged in a *kimono* which was obviously not second-hand, and explained the details of his business.

"All I handle is men's foreign clothes. There are about twelve other second-hand shops which also deal in old foreign-style clothes here in Kanda ward and, of course, many dealing in *kimono* and rags. I like this business very much because it assures a reliable profit. In good or bad times we second-hand men flourish equally well. The boom years just after the Great War were the most prosperous ones. Then I even made as much as 50,000 yen in one month. On the average though, I make about 20,000 yen a month. Right now business is getting better all the time. It has increased at least thirty per cent since the China Incident began."

Mr. Takahashi can tell more about business trends than any economist. "I knew they were having a depression in the United States long

before I read about it in the newspapers," he said. "I could tell by the clothes I got. I say 'got' because since the recent restrictions on imports I am no longer able to get second-hand clothes from America. The quality of American clothes has become noticeably poor of late. The last batch that arrived was much more worn than that previously received. Americans used to be so extravagant that the clothes I handled hardly were worn at all, and the materials were of the best quality. The fact that I am selling more clothes now indicates inflation of currency here in Japan. They say the cost of living has gone up thirty per cent, and because people find it thirty per cent harder to live second-hand clothes are thirty per cent more popular and my business thirty per cent better."

Mr. Takahashi explained that his father founded the second-hand clothing firm of which he is now the head. It was some fifty years ago when his canny sire noted the trend towards western clothes for Japanese office workers and the accompanying difficulty in obtaining them. He hit on the idea of importing them.

"Until recently, Japanese tailoring has been very bad and the materials have been inferior," said Mr. Takahashi. "Furthermore, good for-

eign clothes have been and still are, too expensive for the average Japanese purse, yet it has become compulsory for office workers to wear foreign clothes. It is only natural that foreign imports, though second-hand, should be popular because of the quality of the goods, fine tailoring, gay colours and low prices. There is a store in the Ginza which specializes in the retailing of my second-hand American garments."

Mr. Takahashi gets job-lots of American suits, waist-coats, hats, overcoats, golf pants, caps and innumerable other kinds of clothes. "When the clothes arrive," continued the merchant, "I always clean and mend them before I sell them. They bring a much better price then. The other dealers in second-hand foreign clothes do not import from America, nor do I exclusively, in fact, now all my supply must come from Japan. But I clean and mend all the clothes I handle. The other merchants do not."

Moths are one problem that the occupants of Yanagiwara never have to worry about. When asked about this strange phenomena Mr. Takahashi stated: "Though nearly all my clothes are winter woollens moths seldom visit me. They are just like men who have had too much *sake* to drink, I guess. The sight of so many woollens just makes

them sick. They fly away rather than come."

Though moths are nil, Mr. Takahashi has his worries for there is the acute problem of getting hold of old clothes now that the American market is shut off. In fact, Mr. Takahashi is but one link in the after-life of a pair of discarded pants. "I get my Japanese garments from an agent who gets them from a pawn broker who gets them from some person who is in need of money," the merchant explained as he traced the story of a cast-off overcoat. "Usually, some poor fellow takes his overcoat to a pawn broker and borrows money on it. The pawn broker normally charges him four per cent interest on any amount up to a yen. After that the rate is two and five-tenths per cent up to fifty yen. For a loan of fifty yen or more, the rate is two per cent. The time of the loan usually expires at the end of four months. Then, if the garment has not been redeemed, the pawn broker calls in an agent and dickers with him over the overcoat and other unredeemed garments he may have on hand. Suppose the man borrowed one yen on the overcoat from the pawn broker; then let us say the broker sells the garment to the agent for two yen. When the agent has collected a lot of clothes from many stores, he sorts them and then comes to me or some similar

place. I make him an offer, garment by garment. Sometimes he makes money; sometimes he loses or just breaks even. Perhaps I might pay him two yen and fifty sen for the overcoat under discussion. Then I have it cleaned and mended and sell it for about three yen and fifty sen to a second-hand clothes retail man who in turn may sell it for four or five yen to some one who happens to need a coat. There are more than a thousand second-hand retail stores distributed throughout the various wards of Tokyo. That is the story of a second-hand garment unless the ragman gets it. Ragmen also sell to me, but usually they have only Japanese clothes to offer and I do not handle them."

"My biggest problem is getting hold of old clothes," the merchant remarked as he shifted his bulky but agile body. "I like to get good clothes but that is rather hard in Japan because high class people seldom sell their clothes. The paternal system is such here that the discarded clothes of the well-to-do usually go to poor relatives or, in the case of death, are given out to various friends of the deceased as keepsakes. A few people are adopting modern ideas in this respect, though. In fact, I have had such a shortage of old clothes, especially during the past year when most people

have tended to redeem their clothes due to the present economic pressure, that I cannot come even near to supplying the demand. Most of the old clothes I get are collected during spring cleaning days. A few years ago I took measures to solve this old clothes shortage problem and went into the manufacturing business. That is why you always find some new clothes in second-hand clothing stores. We second-hand men just had to do something about it. My new clothes business now amounts to about 50,000 yen a year. Unfortunately these new clothes are more expensive than old clothes and do not compare in quality. I don't like them but it can't be helped."

A smaller source of revenue for Mr. Takahashi comes from what he finds in the pockets of cast-off garments. "Americans are very careless," he said. "I have found ten dollar bills and even watches and gold coins in some of the American suits I have imported. The pockets of Japanese clothes sometimes yield money but usually only name cards and letters are forthcoming. Once I found some coupons in an American coat and I saved them for years thinking they might be of value until a friend who had just returned from America explained they might, if I had fifty more, get me an alarm clock or something from a cigar

factory. Too bad," said Mr. Takahashi as he sighed deeply. "That's the way it goes." When asked if he ever reads the letters he finds in pockets, Mr. Takahashi vehemently denied such unethical procedure. Even second-hand clothes men must retain a high standard.

With such a shortage in the supply of old clothes, Mr. Takahashi's competition with his rivals is confined mainly to the procuring of saleable garments. But he leaves his competitors far behind as his shop is the oldest and pays the best prices. While he earns 20,000 yen a month, the others lag with an average of between 2000 and 5000 yen a month.

Dealers in Japanese style clothes are much more numerous than wholesale second-hand men who specialize in foreign style garments. Mr. Takahashi estimated that there are at least twenty or thirty of them in Tokyo, many of whom are also located in Yanagiwara. "The best of them average only about 10,000 yen a month in income, though," said Mr. Takahashi with visible self-satisfaction. "And they are so dirty. They get their clothes mainly from rag and trash men who buy them piece by piece from poor householders. The garments are never cleaned before they are re-sold. Of course there are some wholesalers

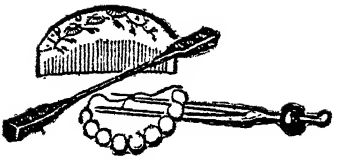
who specialize in high-class goods and draw on pawn shops just as I do."

Mr. Takahashi took me next door to a shop which deals only in Japanese style clothes. Great bundles of ragged clothing lay on the floor. Asked if it were not dangerous to sell such unclean garments, the proprietor replied that the police permit it and therefore it must be all right. "Such shops," explained Mr. Takahashi as we left, "make from twenty to thirty per cent profit on a garment as it passes through their hands on its way to the second-hand retail shops of Tokyo."

I asked Mr. Takahashi what sort of people buy second-hand clothes as a rule besides the very poor. "The very poor don't buy my clothes at all," he replied. "They are too expensive for them. As a rule my garments draw the low paid white collar workers and even better paid people. That is why the second-hand retail merchants like to buy from me. Occasionally, though secretly, very high class people buy second-hand clothes. Sometimes an official gets in a jam and needs a full dress suit in a hurry and he can't get one tailored in time. Then he sneaks around the corner to a second-hand store and buys one, probably from my shop, and his friends never know the difference. I don't see why people are so asham-

ed of wearing second-hand clothes. Some are as good as new," he added.

I suggested to Mr. Takahashi that he was not wearing a second-hand suit himself. He smiled and replied that he would do so only too willingly if he could get one to fit. "I am far too big for the average sizes which I get," he explained. "I have to buy average or small clothes because most Japanese are shorter than Americans. But maybe someday I'll find a suit which will fit me. Then I'll give up *kimono*," he said.



HIRSUTE GLORY

IMAGINE your embarrassment if your head flaunted to the world, your age and social status! Such was the general custom in Japan until fifty years ago and there are still many who cling tenaciously to the old styles and defy modern trends. One cannot but stand in awe of the great, billowing headdresses and wonder how long the ebony hair must be; how it ever got up into such folds and contortions; how it is kept continually poised at such a rakish angle; what is done with it on retiring; how long it takes to get it fixed, and a hundred and one other details. So just as curiosity killed the cat, my satisfaction brought me painfully back, for Japanese hairdressing is anything but painless. In Japan, women are "excruciatingly" beautiful.

Before I could change my mind, the *kami-yuisan* and her assistant had called. After much bowing and laughter we went into a long discussion as to the appropriate style of hair arrangement and I learned that there were, until about

forty years ago, at least thirty separate styles in use, to say nothing of their variations. Now one sees only about ten classic hair styles. In fact, practically all headdresses for children and young girls have been done away with since foreign dress came into use in the schools. Nearly gone is the *ochigo* which consists of hair twisted up into two knobs, a style once used by children of *samurai*. A slightly similar style called *tabako-bon*, or honourable smoking-box style, was used in Southern Japan and consisted of one knot piled high in smoking-box shape. Girls from seven to eleven years of age wore these buns.

At eleven, said my *kamiyuisan*, a young girl used to come of age and prepare for marriage. The headdresses once worn from eleven years of age on are now used from the seventeenth or eighteenth year.

"Now girls haven't enough hair for the old styles because they don't start to let it grow until shortly before graduation from girls' high school. But I am getting so I can build a headdress on any one whose hair hangs a little below the shoulders. We have a lot of new gadgets to help us out too. We need them, especially at New Year's time and for weddings when the old time styles are still preferred," said the hairdresser.

The *kamiyuisan* opened several old hairdressing books, and laid them on the table before me. In their pages I viewed the procession of a woman's life from birth to death. Life first becomes hirsutely complicated when a girl begins to come out socially. The *kamiyuisan* pointed out the ornate *yuiwata*, *ichogaeshi*, *momoware* and *shimada*. Once these styles had certain class denotations. Upper class young ladies liked the *shimada* while girls of the middle class preferred the *yuiwata*. It was from these styles that the hairdresser indicated I must choose. The *yuiwata* pictured in the book was a mass of vivid silk entangled in three great nests of hair. The *ichogaeshi*, a headdress for restaurant serving girls, endeavoured to imitate the *icho*, or ginko leaf. The *momoware*, or split peach style, looked more familiar for I had seen many of them gracing the heads of tiny Tokyo *geisha*, especially those of young dancers. It was pictured as a great, circular, doughnutty bun which was too fat to show the hole at its centre. The circle was split slightly at the back and through this opening the stiff, coloured, paper ribbon around which the hair ring had been formed, peeped through. But the most beautiful of all the styles was the *shimada*. This is the most formal headdress for young ladies and it is worn for the last

time at the wedding ceremony.

All these styles, as well as those for young married women and also most of the special arrangements used by courtesans, have one essential principle. The variation occurs in the central, top part of the headdress, explained the *kamiyuisan.*

"I divide the hair into five main sections which are turned into one front puff, two side puffs with a forward tilt, a long, sloping, back loop and the fancy top knot," said the woman, as she pointed out the special *shimada* style used for brides and called *hanayome*, or flower-wife. The top knot of this headdress was especially elaborate and the hair was decorated with tortoise shell pins and combs for, according to tradition, such tortoise shell ornaments stand for obedience. The *shimada* style itself seems to have been originated in the seventeenth century by a dancing girl who lived at Shimada, one of the "fifty-three post-towns" of the Tokaido highway.

Then my eye was caught by another very familiar style, that of the young married woman. The top piece of this edifice swung its great loop into space, swirling upward and back and gave a wind-blown effect as far as the topknot was concerned. Like shy violets under a stone, the decorations were discreetly placed under the shadow of the

central, top bun. Age in the Orient is never allowed to be frivolous and a married woman should be respected rather than admired though there is a gradual shift away from this idea.

The style book also contained many amusing variations of the old-fashioned circular "rat" stuffed headdresses which were worn by the missionary ladies who came to Japan in the late nineteenth century.

In fact, I learned that there are four definite stages of hairdressing in a woman's life: childhood, young lady-hood, the period of marriage and widowhood. As a married woman ages, her top knot and puffs gradually become smaller and smaller not only because age must not be ostentatious but because the rigours of wearing a classical Japanese headdress are such that thin hair is the general rule for women of fifty or better.

The widow, if she is both old-fashioned and sincere, does not dress her hair at all. She just cuts it off and lays it in her husband's coffin. After this, the hair is never allowed to grow long again nor is it dyed black any more.[1] The straggly locks are drawn into an ugly bunch at the top of the widow's head. Those who do not cut their hair

[1] See article entitled *What Price Beauty?*

off simply tie it with a string and allow it to hang down their backs. This latter style is called *kirisage*. It is the fashion in which a corpse's hair is dressed and is thought to suggest a shock of wheat.

"You never see *kirisage* any more except in *kabuki* plays. The widows have gotten vain so I just keep on dressing their hair in the style of married women and dyeing it black these days," said the *kamiyuisan*. "Only the old women cut their hair."

The ladies of the Imperial Court and courtesans did not follow the general hairdressing trends. Only on very special occasions, such as at a wedding, do the Court ladies now wear their old time hair styles in which the hair is left flowing down the back. Such styles date from the Heian era over a thousand years ago.

The courtesans always have had innumerable styles of their own as the popular *oiran* competed with each other and were responsible for the invention of many hairdressing fads. It was they who created wildly imaginative headdress in imitation of butterfly wings, flower designs, and other objects. These styles which seem to defy gravity, are seldom worn to-day except on the *kabuki* stage or in the annual march of the courtesans which was recently revived in Kyoto.

The *kamiyuisan* stated that fancy hairdressing is a comparatively recent event in Japan. Women used to pride themselves on their ability to fix their own hair.

"The men started it all," said the hairdresser. "The *samurai* were very vain and used to have professional hairdressers as early as the thirteenth century. The women got the idea from the *kabuki* theatre. The first professional hairdresser for women was a wigmaker for female impersonators. His wigs set the styles for years. Now my profession is handled only by women but men still dress the *kabuki* wigs."

The first woman to divide her hair and use the modern *mage*, or knot, seems to have been a courtesan named Yoshi Katsuyama who lived in the seventeenth century. Women did not adopt the fanciful stage styles and take to professional hair dressers, however, until the era of An-ei (1772-80).

The *kamiyuisan* also pointed out that *geisha* do not have special hair styles which denote their profession but wear the *yuiwata*, *momoware* and *shimada* though there is a *geisha* variation of the *shimada mage* which is called *geiko mage*, or *geisha* knot. It differs from the classical *shimada* in that the top loops are small and flat rather than high

and large and the main top loop does not have a stiff pillar-like support at its end but rests directly on the scalp.

After this long conference I chose a *shimada* and the hairdresser began her task. From that moment on disillusionment and wonder went hand in hand. I was a great problem for the poor *kan-iyuisan* for my hair was too soft and I continually squirmed and protested.

The assistant, after much combing, took out a lump of hard camellia wax and proceeded to rub it into my hair. I could only be thankful that it was not *bintsuke*, a wax so hard it must be melted before it can be used. *Kabuki* wig dressers use this in dressing actors' wigs. But then they have only copper scalps to pull.[1] In order to make the

[1] Frames for *kabuki* wigs are made of hand beaten copper and shaped to fit the various actors' heads. Originally they were made only of cloth but since early Yedo times they have come in three basic copper shapes which are like helmets or partial helmets. Special wigs also have special shapes. On this copper base silk is pasted. On the front silk strip human hair is sewn strand by strand with hair thread so the semblance of human hair is perfect. Behind such a front piece, rows of knotted hair are attached to the silk. Originally all wigs had only knotted hair strands and the hairlines seemed artificial. In cleaning, the silk is removed and washed, piece by piece. The hair must be replaced every two or three years. The wigs are very heavy and some weigh as much as 1500 grams. Leading actors, such as Kikugoro Onoye, have as many as 150 wigs. All of them are now

camellia wax smooth, the girl melted it into my hair with a hot iron. Next I had to suffer the most excruciating pains while she combed through my stiff, waxed hair for about fifteen minutes with two of the eight different varieties of combs she had brought along.

After my hair was smooth and stiff enough to suit her, the head *kamiyuisan* herself took charge, dividing my hair into five sections: forelock, two side locks, back lock and top lock. These she twisted into knots and began to work on the back. The back lock was combed down to the bottom of my neck and then bent upward so as to form a loop. The end was attached to the base of the top lock. This back lock covered a long strand of artificial hair which hung from the top lock. All attachments were made by string for a Japanese headdress contains not a single hairpin except for ornaments. This back piece was now carefully moulded with the hands until it sloped evenly from the centre down two sides like a mountain ridge and was, in shape, oval like a ripe loquat.

When the back was finished, work was begun on the front strand which was puffed out, stuffed

owned by the Midoriya Wig Company rather than individually as in former times. This company has around 15,000 wigs always on hand.

with artificial hair in order to make it round, and tied in with a string at the base of the puff. The long end of the lock was then attached, along with the back lock end, to the top hair division.

Then came the sides, and the weird-looking combs with their long, thin handles and pointed ends for parting the hair were used in great variety. False hair was added here, too, so that the wing-like sides would stay permanently in shape for a Japanese lady's hairdress must stay put for days at a time. One comb was used to draw the hair and back, where, with a quick twist, the rest was bent and drawn down and back to meet the top lock to which its ends were tied. Another comb now drew the hair down, back and up, just reversing the first angle. In this state it was temporarily left while the *kamiyuisan* turned her attention to the top lock.

As though I did not already have enough false hair on my head, the hairdresser now attached a huge switch weighing about four pounds. It was a good inch in diameter at its base and loaded with camellia wax. The hard end was firmly implanted upon my scalp and even more firmly tied to the already variegated collection of hair which made up the top lock: I felt as though a horse's tail were growing out of my head.

Then, with an expert twist, the *kamiyuisan* transformed this tail into a great loop which rose like a breaker ready to dash ashore. Another twist folded over the end of this wave and tied it firmly. The straggling ends had previously been attached to a buoy of cotton covered with black paper. It was about three or four inches long and a half-inch or more in diameter. This cotton and hair end was now wrapped in red and white paper ribbon and the bottom was firmly tied to my head.

But the headdress was far from being complete. Now I was curried for about thirty minutes with every conceivable kind of a comb. The sides were worked on until they approached my cheeks at just the right angle and were puffed out to just the right degree. At last my *kamiyuisan* was convinced that every hair was in just the right place and that the great central loop was glossy and smooth. The headdress was like a dark, shining mirror.

But I should not forget to mention the black crepe paper which was pasted with camellia wax under the top of the great central loop to keep it firm and always in shape. After the pasting, it was trimmed with a scissors. A wire frame is often used under the central dome and under the front puff instead of the black paper.

At last, all was in readiness, after two long painful hours. Only the addition of ornaments remained. The *kamiyuisan* was tired. Not in many years, she confided, had she worked on any one with so much hair. The whole top knob, especially in the *momoware* style, is apt to be entirely false and there are many permanently dressed attachments that short-locked ladies can buy. Such is the advance of civilization!

At present the *kamiyuisan's* main customers are the *geisha* who must have their hair dressed about three times a week. The fee varies from one yen to ten, depending upon the fame and proficiency of the *kamiyuisan*.

No headdress is complete without the proper ornaments. By the time the hairdresser got through I looked like a Christmas tree. I had a *kanzashi*, or hairpin with two prongs. It is used both for ornamentation and head scratching and once had an ear cleaner at one end. There was also a crimson butterfly and red, silver, gold and white tinsel.

When I stood complete, ornaments and all, I carried a good six pounds of perfection upon my head and every hair was tied to the one central switch which pressed painfully against my scalp. But the ordeal of standing did not compare with

that of lying down. In a reclining position, with my head, or rather cheek and neck, resting upon a tiny wooden pillow, I felt as though my very scalp were coming off. It is little wonder that so many of the women who have worn classical headdresses in their youth and early married life have tremendous bald spots on the tops of their heads in their old age. Though beautiful, the Japanese classical headdress will undoubtedly become a relic of the middle ages from which it sprang. Its beauty, elegance and impracticality are to be likened to that of the powdered wigs of France worn by the beauties of the eighteenth century. But whereas the French lady of fashion worried about coaxing her hair into curls upon which to float an imitation galleon or plant a garden of flowers, the Japanese lady, until the turn of this century, shrank with horror from the very thought of a truant wave. However, with all its inconveniences there can be little doubt that the classical style is most flattering to the Japanese face when the lady is attired in native dress.

MRS. TANAHASHI IS ONE HUNDRED AND ONE

KEEP active, be vain and don't worry," is the long-life formula of Mrs. Ayako Tanahashi, and she ought to know for she is one hundred and one and still active. Recently, for the first time in eighty-five years, she has felt too feeble to go about her normal duties.

Vanity is one of the greatest stimulators, according to this centenarian. "A person should not forget to be attractive," she explained through her son, Ichiro, an agile young man of seventy-seven. Mrs. Tanahashi still keeps her hair dyed black because she thinks white hair does not become her.

In 1938, on her hundredth Japanese birthday, she was decorated by the Emperor and given the rank of the fourth order of merit for her services to Japan. Years ago the Emperor Meiji awarded her a medal. In fact, she, along with one or two

others, was the first woman to receive Imperial recognition for her work in Japan. She has spent the long years of her life in the field of education and is proud of the fact that Tokyo now has eighty-four public and sixty-four private girls' high schools out of the 985 in Japan. There are 48,863 girl students in attendance.[1]

With her tastes definitely conservative, Mrs. Tanahashi still recognizes the need for coping with the present. In fact, she symbolizes in her own person the amalgamation of the old and the new in Japan. While her son spoke for her and translated the now almost inaudible mumbles of his mother, the venerable old lady warmed her small, wrinkled hands over a charcoal brazier and a benign smile lit her face. She sat in Japanese style on a cushion next to a snug footwarmer over which a blanket had been thrown in order that she might be warm, for she lives in the old manner in a Japanese house totally devoid of heat, and the day I visited her was a biting cold one in February. Her eyes which have acquired that dreamy far-away look so common to age, are still bright and

[1] Tuition in the private higher schools averages from Y 6.00 to Y 10.00 a month while equipment for one year costs around Y 100, including two uniforms, books and stationery. Mrs. Tanahashi's girls pay Y 6.00 tuition.

still without glasses. Nor has she had to obtain "store teeth."

"My mother was the daughter of an Osaka merchant and was well educated, an unusual circumstance for the daughter of a merchant in those days," recounted her son. "Her teacher arranged for her marriage when she was nineteen, to a famous student of the Chinese classics who had become blind from too much reading. He was looking for a wife to assist him in his work. Thus my mother's education continued after her marriage. The scholar, Daisaku Tanahashi, belonged to the *samurai* class so my mother had to be adopted by a *samurai* before she could marry him. Daisaku Tanahashi was in charge of the grain of the *daimyo* of Osaka, which in those days was equivalent to the position of treasurer, because all taxes were paid in rice. With the coming of the Meiji Restoration, Daisaku Tanahashi found himself without any means of support. It was then that mother found a use for her talents for she had to support her husband and three children."

Mrs. Tanahashi first became a teacher in a primary school in Nagoya. She soon started her own private school in Ichinomiya and three years later, in 1876, she became the first woman teacher in a Japanese women's normal school. At this

time she taught Chinese classics and sewing. During the next ten years she was alternately a tutor to children of noble families and a teacher of the Peeresses' School. It was in Meiji 19 (1887) that she headed her first school in Tokyo, the Kindei Shogakko, a primary school in Shiba ward. Her real life work did not begin, however, until the death of her husband in 1893. After another period of tutoring during which time she taught the Princess Kaneko Fushimino-miya and Marquise Yoshichika Tokugawa and headed the women's department of the Joshi Seiritsu Gakusha, she finally established, with the assistance of her son, the school which has made her famous, the Tokyo Koto Jo-gakko in Shiba ward. Mrs. Tanahashi has managed several schools at a time during her long career, but during the later years, as her strength waned, she has confined her efforts to her well-known girls' high school where she still teaches morals several times a week when she feels able.

Even at a hundred and one Mrs. Tanahashi is active. "She is active because she has always believed in disciplining herself," said Ichiro Tanahashi. Mrs. Tanahashi even now rises at between four and five o'clock each morning and, while sitting in bed, a recent concession, she practises

calligraphy. It amuses her to write "long life" on small strips of white paper shaped like the lucky fan, *suehiro*. These she gives out to friends and visitors. She has not felt strong enough to do large brush writings of late but still prides herself on her style and steady hand. Breakfast comes at nine-thirty. Eating is one of the topics about which she likes to argue. She thinks that people die young because they eat too much. "*Hara hachibun-me*," she mumbled to her son who translated her thoughts and explained that she meant that people should satisfy only eighty per cent of their hunger. She doesn't think it matters what you eat just so long as you don't eat too much. Mrs. Tanahashi eats everything, that is, everything but *omiso*, the popular Japanese fermented bean soup. For this she has an intense dislike for no special reason. She is also fond of foreign style food.

After breakfast, weather and her physical condition permitting, Mrs. Tanahashi goes to school where she remains until noon at which time she returns home. On the days she does go to school, she visits her girls and lectures to them on morals. She tells them of her own life and points out the sacrifices and duties of a good wife. She has many definite ideas about what kind of young wo-

men Japan should have. Mrs. Tanahashi definitely does not approve of the new-fangled modernism which has created the so-called *moga*, or modern girl, but she does concede that times do change. "After all, mother is pretty used to change by now, having lived through eighty years in which the whole character of the Japanese nation has been transformed," said Mr. Tanahashi.

To romantic marriages, however, Mrs. Tanahashi is vehemently opposed. She feels that easy marriage will lead to easy divorce, and divorce is bad for the stability of the nation. Mrs. Tanahashi is an ardent nationalist and always places the needs of her country before those of the individual. She believes that respect for the family and the Emperor should be paramount and one of the things that makes her most happy is the fact that she has lived to see the Imperial Family more respected than when she was a girl. In those long ago days the country was dominated by the Shogunate. Mrs. Tanahashi also favours education for women, but she feels that higher education is missing its true function because it all too often causes women to remain single for a long time, a fact which to her is deplorable for she thinks the initial duty of all women is to marry and bear children. Education should supplement marriage, not ex-

clude it. Moreover, she advocates that all girls should have some sort of work to fall back on in case their husbands become ill or die. It is especially important in case there are children to support. Education, she thinks, must be supplemented by home training, and she recommends that all girls spend at least a year at home helping their mothers after graduation from school.

Mrs. Tanahashi regrets that the *kimono* is being less and less frequently worn by young women. In the interests of health she approves of foreign clothes being worn during school days but she thinks that upon graduation the girls should return to the *kimono*. Modern cosmetics and permanent waves also have her approval, not because she likes them, but because she believes that women should make it their business to be attractive. "Mother always says that she isn't interested in what a girl is like outside so much as what she is like inside," remarked the son. "Character and health are the main things. She worries lest modern girls lose the fundamental principles of Japanese womanhood. When she talks to her classes, she is always stressing loyalty, faithfulness and obedience, and she thinks that a girl must be absolutely obedient to her husband and parents-in-law," he added.

Whereas Mrs. Tanahashi has an aversion to the factory girl, she does not, however, completely spurn the *geisha* or bar girl. "After all, the entertainers have to earn a living. One must be practical. Their presence can't be helped," she replied to the query through her son. But the idea of girls working in factories appals her. She feels that such work impairs their health and that the girls become selfish when they feel more free and have money of their own. It spoils them for marriage. She thinks it is far better for a girl to be apprenticed as a servant in some good home.

In spite of years of difficulty, Mrs. Tanahashi has never worried. "Worry makes you old," she said. She keeps from worrying by never reading the newspapers because "all they do is get me disturbed," she explained. As a result of this and her deafness she is totally unaware of the present Sino-Japanese conflict. She spends her hours in peace with her two surviving children, eight grandchildren and sixteen great-grandchildren. She may yet live to be a great-great-grandmother for her oldest great-grand-child is now a university student. Mrs. Tanahashi is looking forward to her next birthday, and at present has but one annoyance. She has to go to school in

an automobile in spite of the fact that she would prefer to ride on a street-car. She likes street cars "because they don't bounce."

TAMESHI-GIRI

JAPAN emerged from feudalism but seventy years ago so it is little wonder that many of the phases of this former state linger on even though in diminuendo. One of the most prevalent reminders of these bygone days is the sword which is still carried by Japan's policemen, most of whom were ex-*samurai* in the early days of the Meiji era. But even more suggestive of the past are *kendo* and *tameshi-giri*. At present, with the feeling for national valour running at a high pitch due to the China Incident, both of these old time sports are achieving a tremendous popularity. *Kendo* is required for boys attending middle schools, but the enthusiasm runs much beyond this stage. Mr. Hakudo Nakayama, one of Japan's most eminent teachers of this medieval style of fencing finds his academy filled to over-flowing. The boys, beginning with nine years of age, go there after school

hours or are sent by their parents to perfect themselves in the manly arts.

Mr. Nakayama is himself a reminder of bygone days with his courtly manner, his fierce "handle-bars" moustache and carefully adjusted *kimono*. He lives atop a hill in Hongo ward in a house which is a hybrid, having a Japanese interior and a modern, plaster front. Connected with his large mansion is a *kendo* practice hall. He has been a teacher since the seventeenth year of Meiji (1885). His father, who was a *samurai* of the *daimyo* of Nagaoka, came to Tokyo in the early days of Meiji and established himself as a teacher of *kendo*. His son is following in his footsteps as will his son's son.

The writer found Mr. Nakayama surrounded by a flock of youngsters clothed in medieval breast plates made of lacquered leather over bamboo with flounces of heavy stitched cotton hanging over their thighs. On their heads were antique helmets fronted with wire guards. Gauntlets and bamboo staffs made up the rest of the equipment. These miniature knights were taking time-out between bouts and Mr. Nakayama was giving them a little paternal advice.

With a command he sent them scuttling for places behind the practice floor where they knelt

on the straw matting to watch the head teachers demonstrate. Their bare feet were neatly tucked under the hems of their long white *hakama*.[1]

With the rhythmic movements of dancers, two of the advanced pupils demonstrated some of the more than five hundred positions of *kendo*. Slowly, steadily and gracefully, like two fighting cocks, they parried for the correct psychological moment before attacking each other with their bamboo staves. The cuts inflicted were symbolized by touches on the head, chest, arm or throat. The winner must "cut" his rival in all of the four above mentioned places.

As a pupil advances in *kendo* he abandons the stave for a real sword. Middle school students never get beyond the stave stage, but those desiring to become really expert must abandon bamboo for steel.

"You see the stave is round and light but the sword is flat, heavy and has a peculiar balance. In fact, there are certain movements possible in *kendo* which cannot be used when real sword fighting is indulged in," explained Mr. Nakayama as two men, without any sort of protection on either head or chest, entered the arena with heavy steel swords.

[1] *Hakama* are divided skirts.

In answer to a query regarding this singular lack of protection, Mr. Nakayama recalled that even in stave battles protection was not used in the old days by some schools. "You see the art of *kendo* was then held secret by the *samurai* and each *diamyo* had teachers for his soldiers. Some teachers used bamboo staves sheathed in cow hide and so no protectors were necessary. Others used solid wooden staves, and certainly when a man is expert enough to use a sword he does not need protection," he commented as the performers dramatically battled. "The virtue of sword fighting is that it develops control as well as force," he said as he called attention to the fact that in all their "cuts" the men stopped at just the required point to prevent injury to the opponent.

Whereas sword fighting is definitely a restrained art, *iai* is not. Mr. Nakayama who in spite of his sixty-eight years still goes to bed between ten and eleven o'clock at night and rises at four-thirty in the morning, practises *iai* every day.

"After I have done some studying and practised calligraphy I perform *iai* for an hour or so before breakfast," the teacher stated as one of his pupils began to demonstrate this old art of sword pulling and thrusting. The *samurai* used to practise *iai* by the hour, giving innumerable mortal

blows to an imagined enemy. The pupil worked with such swiftness and precision that he was soon panting heavily and the sweat stood upon his brow. It is not exactly child's play to wield a 300 *momme* sword even if two hands are used.[1]

"Two hands have always been used with Japanese swords because they are so heavy and large," said Mr. Nakayama. "They used to use them in Europe too until the rapier, which is light enough for one hand, was developed in the seventeenth century. The art of using two swords or a sword and a dagger is lost in Europe, but we still practise it in Japan. We parry with the dagger and thrust with the sword. We have never used a cloak or a shield as they did in Europe, but use the dagger as a shield. I am glad we have kept the two handed method here because I think it makes *kendo* a better all-around exercise. The western style fencing develops only one side of the body. Moreover, the principles of western and Japanese fencing are different. The western sword is primarily to stab with, but with the Japanese sword you both stab and cut. Also, foreign fencing is defensive while *kendo* is offensive in its purpose, developing bravery and daring in its participants."

[1] 300 *momme* is equivalent to about 3½ lbs.

Mr. Nakayama feels that sword play develops character. "You have to cut straight or else damage your sword. To do this you have to have a straight character. It takes only about a year to become proficient in bamboo stave battles but at least ten years to become expert with a sword. This expertness is most clearly demonstrated in *tameshi-giri*. It took me from twenty to twenty-five years to become expert in that," said the teacher who is considered to be among Japan's experts in this art of sword testing. There are about one hundred experts in *tameshi-giri* in Tokyo and only three or four hundred in the entire Japanese Empire.

One of the school assistants brought out a saw-horse surmounted with two rolls of rice straw tied tightly to the wood. With several quick movements, Mr. Nakayama cut the top straw roll into slices. Not a single straw of the bottom roll was cut, so controlled were his strokes. He next stood a straw roll on end and with a deft slice cut it crossways. He was so exact that the bottom part of the straw roll was left still balanced on the end of the horse, conjuring up visions of a perfectly severed head.

"Of course we never used straw for sword testing until after the Restoration. Before that

swords were tried out on criminals' necks at executions. Now that is forbidden. It is many times harder to cut straw than a human being. Cutting across the grain is the hardest. If the sword is not held perfectly straight it may be bent and is apt to break," said Mr. Nakayama admitting that he cracked several when he was first learning to cut. *Tameshi-giri* is the final test of precision in a cutting stroke.

Mr. Nakayama usually practises *tameshi-giri* every day too, and while he knows that art well, does not teach it to very many. One must be sure the character of the student is right, else it might prove dangerous. Some people just can't learn to do it, they haven't the right metal in them. While a few women have been known to study *kendo* and the use of *naginata*, I would never think of teaching them *tameshi-giri*, he said.[1]

Mr. Nakayama feels that modern *kendo* experts are far superior to those of the old days because the teaching is better and any one, not just a *samurai*, can learn the art. However, he does not think that the old spirit of chivalry always prevails.

"It seems horrible to me that sometimes

[1] *Naginata* are halberds which were once used by *samurai* wives in event of attack on their home in the absence of their lords.

modern soldiers forget that the purpose of the sword is to kill with responsibility, not for fun. In the old days after the position of the sword was changed from hanging far below the belt to within the belt because horses ceased to be so commonly used, the warriors tied their swords to their scabbards with a piece of paper. This was both to keep the sword from falling out of the scabbard and to make a *samurai* stop and meditate before he drew it. I think it was an excellent idea which should not be forgotten," he stated.

HERE COMES THE BRIDE

A JAPANESE may be buried as a Buddhist but he prefers to be married as a Shintoist.[1] In fact, until 1912 no forms for a Buddhist wedding seem to have existed in Japan. In that year the head of the Nishi Honganji sect decided to give the Shintoists a little competition so he created a Buddhist wedding ceremony which is a hybrid of the Shinto and Christian services.

Although the Shinto style wedding ceremony has been in use for centuries, it was not made into a religious rite until 1900. The marriage in that year of Emperor Taisho and Empress Sada-ko in the traditional manner before the Imperial Ancestor shrine (Kashikodokoro) started a trend, and the first civilian shrine wedding was arranged

[1] Antipathy against Buddhist marriage rites is due to the association of Buddhism with death.

soon thereafter by Baron Kenkan Takagi at the Hibiya Daijingu, now called the Iidabashi Daijingu, which automatically became the most popular wedding shrine in Tokyo.[1] Since then a great number of shrines in various parts of the nation have become popular for weddings.

Shrine marriages are now fashionable but still the great majority of the population enters the bonds of wedlock just as it always has. Marriage, to the average Japanese, is strictly a family affair in which the *nakodo*, or go-between, acts as the major domo. A father with an eligible son or daughter asks some reliable man to find a suitable mate for his child. This means that the social, financial, temperamental and health conditions of both parties are considered. When every one is satisfied, the young people are briefly introduced, the marriage date is set, an engagement feast is held, and the marriage rites occur in the home of the bridegroom. The family members, relatives and friends attend. The family ancestors may be informed but the priests and gods are not.

Foreign influence has probably made its greatest impression on marriage. While romantic

[1] This shrine is owned by the Taisho-kaku, a restaurant. It was originally the family shrine of the restaurant owner and became so popular that he moved it to the magnificent quarters which it now occupies.

marriage is still a rarity, more opportunity is being given the young people to know each other and a little recognition is being given to their wishes. There once was a time when it was considered indecent for a couple to fall in love before they were married and often they never laid eyes upon one another until the hour of the ceremony. Now honeymoons, shrine or temple weddings, simple rites, small dowries and foreign style banquets are the fashion. Furthermore, civil significance has been given to the function by the law of registration which, however, is not well enforced.[1]

The popular shrine ceremonies represent marriage in its simplest form.

"It is a big business which must be executed with efficiency," explained one of the officiating priests of the Iidabashi Daijingu. "We have on the average of a hundred to two hundred weddings here during a month, depending on the season. There are practically none in the summer months. April and November are the most crowded times, or just before or after Setsubun."[2]

[1] Refer to the article entitled *Divorce*.

[2] *Setsubun*, which occurs around February 2, is the lunar calendar New Year. If the passing year is bad, couples marry just after the year turns. If the new one is inauspicious, they hasten to marry before the old year departs. In Japan, years run in a cycle of twelve and each is named after

As he spoke he led the way to one of the wedding rooms.

The chamber had the usual matted straw floor and contained a large altar before which were set offerings of vegetables, grain, rice, wine, a seaweed called *kobu*, to represent the groom and *surume*, or dried cuttlefish, to represent the bride. There was also an offering of *kagomi jochi*, or glutinous rice cake. Stools were placed in two rows, the row on the right being for the groom and his family and the other, to the left of the altar, being for the bride and her attendants. Facing the shrine were rows of stools for relatives. Also present were three musicians clad in traditional Shinto garb. They were awaiting the arrival of the bridal party for which they were going to play on their antique instruments during the course of the ceremony.[1]

The bride entered with her head humbly

an animal and has its own advantages and disadvantages. The year of the tiger (*tora*) is especially bad for wedding because legend has it that a tiger will go a thousand miles and return in a day so a bride, they fear, will return to her parents. The year of the monkey (*saryu*) also has its disadvantages because the word *saru* means to leave. This type of superstition has practically died out except among country-folk, however.

[1] In this case the *sho* (a 17 reed mouth organ), *shichiriki* (small flute) and *fue* (large Japanese flute) were used.

bowed and took her place next to the wife of the go-between and the groom found his stool next to that of the *nakodo*. In such a modern institution as the Iidabashi Daijingu the participants sit in chairs and do not kneel on cushions as is the usual custom. When all was in readiness, two young shrine maidens with their long hair hanging down their backs and wrapped in white paper, brought forth two gold, lacquered pots. One of the pots had a long handle wrapped in white paper. *Sake*, or rice wine, from the small pot was mingled with that in the handled pot before the pouring of wine into the ceremonial cups. As the *sake* was poured from one kettle pot to another the two paper butterflies which ornamented each pot touched.[1]

[1] According to strict ceremony as once practised, the *sake* was kept in two bottles, one surmounted with the male, the other with the female butterfly. When the *sake* was poured into the kettles the bottle with the male butterfly was used first. The butterfly was detached by the attendant and laid on its back. Then the wine from the other bottle was poured into the pot, the male butterfly having first been laid on top of the female. After the bridegroom had drunk his first three cups, condiments were set out on the right corner of a small table. Then the bride drank and a different condiment was laid on the left hand corner of the table. The groom finished the ceremony of drinking and there was a recess while the food for a feast was spread and served to the bride's attendants as well as a single saucer of wine to each of them. When this had been completed, the bride and groom reappeared and silver and gold cups were placed

In the ceremony which I witnessed even the system of drinking the *sake*, called *san-san kudo*, (literally three times three, nine times), was greatly simplified. Formerly, *sake* was quaffed nine times. If the ceremony is performed in an old and strictly ceremonious manner the man drinks first, taking two sips from the top saucer of the three which are laid before him. Then he pours some of the wine from one pot to another after which he takes a third drink. Then it is the bride's turn. She takes three sips from the second saucer. The man completes the ceremony by drinking three times from the third cup. The wedding ceremony has always varied tremendously in different parts of Japan. Now it is usually the bride's privilege to drink the wine first. At the Iidabashi Shrine the bride drank first from the top cup which was then taken to the groom, and he drank. Then he took up the second cup and

on a tray which contained a representation of the islands of Takasago where the famed "mutual old age pine" stands which is noted because it consists of two trees growing from one root. The pine, being an evergreen, represents unchanging constancy and the figures of the old man and woman which accompany it are the spirits of the pine. The bridegroom then drank more wine from kettles surmounted by gold and silver butterflies and more condiments were offered. Then the feast commenced. The customs varied according to the social rank of the participants.

(Lord Redesdale : *Tales of Old Japan*)

drank and it was taken to the bride. She followed this with a sip from the third cup and it was passed to the groom. In all they only drank six times instead of the traditional nine. After finishing their wine, the couple and the *nakodo* and his wife retired to a nearby room while the shrine attendants rearranged the stools and the relatives filed into the facing rows. The couple returned and sat next to each other on the bridegroom's side and the wedding toast was drunk.[1] During the interval, the serving girls had placed before each guest a tray containing a dish in which there was a piece of *kobu* seaweed, cuttlefish and two chestnuts. There was also a saucer for wine. The two families drank to each other's health in silent unison. Then the ceremony was over, having taken about ten minutes. Not a word had been spoken except by the go-between who had originally announced the names of the bride and groom. There had also been a little music during the interval. Throughout the service neither the bride nor the groom looked at each other, but sat with silent, frozen faces.

Silence and seeming unresponsiveness is not due to disinterest but to custom. It would have

[1] The custom of the bride sitting at the bridegroom's side is a strictly modern and unusual one.

been most improper for a bride not to sit with bowed head.[1]

"That's our most inexpensive wedding. It costs twenty yen," said the priest as the wedding party departed. He further explained that the shrine has six classes of rites. The least expensive one is called plum. Then there is bamboo style for thirty yen, pine class for forty yen, tortoise class for fifty yen, the crane wedding which costs seventy yen and the very special *kotobuki*, the fee for which is a hundred yen. The cost depends

[1] The tremendous weight of a bride's headdress and *kimono* is enough to give her a drooped look. It must weigh around 30 pounds. In order to both rest and display her wardrobe the bride used to change her clothes several times during the long feast and reception which followed a wedding service. She was married in white to signify death to her father's house. Then she changed to a *kimono* bearing her husband's family crest. He also changed at this time to a *kimono* given him by the bride. Sometimes her second *kimono* was red to symbolize her birth into her husband's family. She also changed two or three other times during the course of the feast. This custom is dying out. Now most brides are married in a formal black *kimono* ornamented with elaborate designs. The changing of *kimono* and the wearing of white was an upper class custom. Now, even at the Iidabashi Daijingu which usually caters to an upper class clientele, only twenty per cent of the brides are married in white. The most interesting item of the brides outfit is the *tsuno kakushi*, or head cloth, which once was a long veil but is now just a piece of white cloth lined with red which covers her hair ornaments. Tradition says she wears it to hide her horns of jealousy.

upon the elaborateness of the ritual. The more costly services include prayers chanted by a priest and greater intricacy in the matter of serving the *sake*.

"We have to allow an hour and a half for the long services. We ask all wedding parties to be on hand thirty minutes before the wedding rites, however, so that no last minute details can delay the service. If the bride wants to touch up her hair we have a professional hairdresser attached to the shrine for that purpose. If the weather is bad the bride can just bring her clothes and even get her hair dressed here in our beauty parlour. Grooms forget things too. No one can be late as we have a schedule to follow," said the priest with a business-like precision which indicated a dislike of last minute rushes. In fact, things go so according to programme at the Iidabashi Daijingu that a couple must apply there for the privilege of getting married at least a week ahead of time. Sometimes there is a long waiting list during the rush season. Even a photographer is kept by the institution for the convenience of wedding parties.

Equally well organized for weddings is the Tokyo Nishi Honganji, but it has no waiting list. One of the priests informed me that Buddhist

weddings are so unpopular that even in the rush season there are only five or ten marriages in the course of a month. Usually there are only two or three a month.

Evidently the head of the sect who made up the service wanted couples to be sure to feel that they were married. Accordingly, not only do the couples exchange small bead circlets like a rosary but they also drink *sake* as in the Shinto service. The bridegroom gives the bride a string of red coral beads tied with a red ribbon and she gives him one of crystal tied with a white ribbon. The service resembles a Christian wedding in that the bride and groom stand before the altar facing the priest during part of the service.

The order, explained one of the temple priests, is as follows: the party enter and take their places and listens to music while the priest enters. The priest then announces to Buddha the names of those to be married. After this the couple advances and stands before the priest while the *nakodo* and his wife stand behind them. The priest asks certain questions of the groom who answers, and then the gifts are exchanged and the bride and groom take turns burning incense. After that they return to their places and are served wine in the Shinto manner. Then the priest makes his

exit and the relatives are served.

The serving maidens for the Buddhist ceremony in this temple wear black *kimono* and bright red skirts in summer while they don white *kimono* with sky blue crests in the winter.

As at the Iidabashi Daijingu, weddings are definitely business. Third class weddings cost fifteen yen which means they are held in a small, side room and no music is furnished. A second class wedding includes music and costs thirty yen. Only in the case of first class weddings, which cost fifty yen, is the large, main temple hall used. The quality of the wedding beads also varies with the wedding fee. Sometimes wedding rings are exchanged.

When weddings do not occur at home, the reception or feast is often held in a modern hotel. Many first class restaurants and hotels have wedding rooms. When a couple is modern enough to go to a hotel, foreign food is usually served. This may be a full course dinner or just a tea. During the course of the affair the *nakodo* recites the entire life history of the couple and various friends make speeches of appreciation. One such reception which I attended lasted for five hours. But such a time is short compared to the old days when the wedding and feast was an all day affair. It is little

wonder the bride had to retire at intervals, for throughout this long time she was never supposed to relax or be gay.