Warning!!

To A GI Wife Abroad

by Roger Blobaum
Agricultural Journalism Senior

WHILE YOU are taking home economics at Iowa State and thinking in terms of shopping for food where there’s deep freeze displays, super markets, pure food laws and Saturday specials, maybe it would be a good idea to think of what would happen if you didn’t have all these modern conveniences.

There are a lot of American women who don’t—probably most important of these are the groups that follow their husbands to other lands either for jobs or in the service.

Suppose your husband gets an overseas assignment to Japan shortly after you’re married. It isn’t as bad now as it was during the first years of the occupation when the food shortage made it necessary for occupation personnel to buy only from post exchanges or commissaries. But today food shortages aren’t as bad in Japan and a lot of American women buy on Japanese markets regularly.

Food is disease spreader

These women know that one of the biggest spreaders of disease in the Orient is food—the Orient is food is food—this is true in most countries where food handling is careless and unprotected. But it is more true in the Orient where the conditions are different than any other place in the world.

The common practice of using human waste for fertilizer of food crops results in soil contamination and a form of contamination of the food grown. Water that drains from this soil is also contaminated.

In addition to these conditions, raw vegetables and fruits may be contaminated by unclean food handlers. Many fresh vegetables are prepared for marketing by washing—and this washing usually takes place in streams and canals swirling with garbage and waste materials.

Intestinal diseases, such as typhoid fever, dysentery, and intestinal worms may be transmitted by eating raw fruits and vegetables grown in such soil or washed in polluted water. Foods, such as lettuce and strawberries, have to be avoided altogether.

Despite all precautions taken by occupation families in shopping, the only sure way to be safe is to cook the items thoroughly. This rules out salads as a part of the daily menu.

Merchandise looks harmless

Meats and poultry, even though they may look harmless in the store window—and some do have windows—cannot be relied on. Fowl is usually bought alive—in areas where it can be obtained at all.

Cooking will kill the parasites found in varieties of yellow-tail and trout. These are present even if they are properly prepared for market. Some fish caught in Japanese waters are also unfit for human food because they contain natural poisons.

Fishing areas are polluted

Polluted waters among the harbor and bay areas contaminate shellfish, clams and scallops but proper cooking will make them safe. However, American food authorities suggest leaving many sea foods alone entirely, whether they are well cooked or not.

The problem does not end with fresh products either and is even present in canned goods. Many canned products are processed on farms or in small family kitchens and contain toxins that produce the dread disease—botulism. It is considered wise to avoid all Japanese canned products.

Even ice cream, artificial drinks, candy and baked goods are often unclean, due either to contaminated ingredients or food handlers.

Most American housewives in Japan are extremely cautious in their food selection and buy only from

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The American housewife misses the corner grocery store when she shops at an open-air Japanese market
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Foreign Food—

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shops bearing A or B “sanitation cards.” But even these are no assurance that the food is safe as they only mark the shops that are above average and have made some effort to sanitation.

These problems, as well as the fact that all delicacies are almost impossible to obtain, make balanced meal preparation especially difficult even — more so if children are in the family.

The whole situation is one which you may have to face some day and which holds little hope in a land so many years behind the super-market-wise shopper of the U.S. who is used to loading up good, wholesome — and above all — safe food in a clean grocery store.

Our Political Door—

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of the League of Women Voters and a county Republican committee woman, has twice defeated the same man for her legislative seat.

All of these women are keeping the door ajar for us, the “first voters.” They know that the time will come for us to take over and assure us that we will be in demand.

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