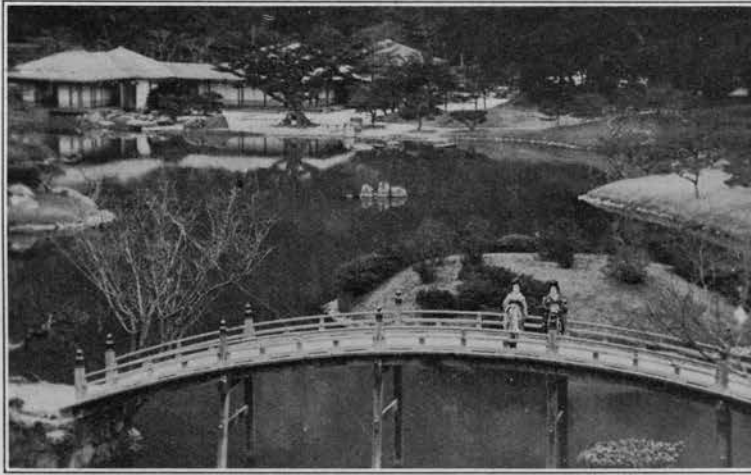


Japanese Life

Ruth Dean



THE Japanese people, according to Dr. Elizabeth Hoyt, professor of economics, at Iowa State College, might exchange their knowledge of art and social grace with the American people for their knowledge of applied sciences, and benefit both parties concerned.

A new interest in home economics is springing up in Japan. "The students," Dr. Hoyt said, "are hopping out of their seats in eagerness to learn." Higher education for women is very limited in Japan. A girl of good family does not necessarily go to college. The object of her education is to make as charming a wife as possible. She is instructed in flower arrangement, tea ceremony, and making landscapes in trays from gravel.

The home economics work done in the colleges, both American and Japanese, is similar to that carried on in our own colleges. All instruction, however is given in the Japanese language.

During her recent visit to Japan, Dr. Hoyt noted several customs and practices of the Japanese people that are especially interesting to students of home economics. She spent some time visiting with Miss Sarah Field who graduated from Iowa State College in 1915. Miss Field is now teaching in Kobe College, an American college in Japan.

Simplicity is the keynote of Japanese home decoration and furniture. Each room has one decorative object for the center of interest. They believe that additional objects distract the mind, that since they enjoy one piece of music at a time, the same should be true of the center of interest.

It is possible for the Japanese to live

in fewer rooms than Americans do because they do not use separate bedrooms. Beds are made up on the floor at night. In the daytime the bedding is rolled up and put in a closet. The rooms are separated by sliding partitions of paper in wooden frames. The partitions may be opened and the whole house made into one large room if desired.

The atmosphere of the Japanese home is very peaceful. The shoes are always removed upon entering the house. This little custom gives one the sense of going into a place set apart for rest and social intercourse.

Almost every house has a roofed veranda with a highly polished floor of beautiful wood. The floors of the rooms within the house are covered with matting.

The furniture is very simple and there is but little of it. Very low tables, perhaps six inches high, and several chests comprise the furnishings of a room. The rooms are sometimes cold in winter since they are heated only by small braziers or stoves.

A garden is an essential part of a Japanese home. Birds in cages and goldfish are generally found in the garden.

The Japanese customs of eating are quite different from our American customs. Often a family will gather around small braziers, similar to our gas plates and cook the meal right there. This practice of "guynabi," Dr. Hoyt suggests, would be an interesting way of entertaining our friends. Certain restaurants in Japan use this method exclusively. The food to be cooked consists of several kinds of vegetables including onions, and always thin slices of beef. The Japanese cook their food only long enough to kill the bacteria.

Bean curd is a very nourishing food made from the soy bean. It constitutes the chief source of protein for the poorer class of Japanese.

Some of the common foods consumed in Japan are fish, certain kinds of sea weed, cooked lily bulbs, mushrooms, vegetables, and rice in large quantities. As guest-of-honor at one dinner Dr. Hoyt was served with the fish's eye. The food is eaten with chop sticks. Soup, however, may be drunk. To make a noise while eating is to show appreciation for the food.

Motives in Clothing Selection

A study of the motive for the choice in purchasing clothing was made by Miss Frances Seeds for her master's thesis, which she completed in the Textiles and Clothing Department last year under the direction of Miss Katherine Cranor, Professor of Textiles and Clothing.

This study was made possible through the cooperation of 422 Iowa housewives, business and college women. These were interviewed as to purchasing habits and motives influencing the choice of clothing. Only hats, shoes and dresses were checked.

Becomingness of line determines choice of clothing more frequently than other motives. Next in importance are becomingness of color, to replace worn clothing, good quality and workmanship. Love of spending influenced less often than other motives. To suit a man's taste was given as a reason by over 25 percent of the women. The ranking of motives was not greatly influenced by training.

The motives determining the choice of the various articles of clothing are practically the same in all groups. In the purchase of sport and street dresses, quality and material is given first consideration, while for afternoon and evening dresses becomingness of color ranks first.

The data indicates that it is difficult to analyze motives for choice because they are so largely individual. Women do not purchase clothing for the reasons that they think should govern choice.

The reasons given for having unused garments on hand all indicate unwise selection.

More than half of the women interviewed do not follow a shopping plan of any kind. Trained housewives follow a plan more frequently than the other groups.