

of the book is to be seen in the fact that, thirty-two years before the outbreak of the Pacific war, the author predicted its course up to now with astonishing accuracy and made some very interesting surmises regarding its further course. As early as 1909, Lea made a pronouncement which to most of his countrymen must have seemed utterly beyond reason: "National opulence is a source of danger instead of power." He explained this seeming paradox to his countrymen, first, by claiming that the wealth of the United States formed an attraction for the poorer nations, thus by its very existence providing a cause for war, and secondly, by the following interesting sentences:

"[Opulence] produces national effeminacy and effeness, hence there spring up whole tribes of theorists, feminists and, in fact, all the necrophagans of opulent decadence. When wealth forms the criterion of all human ambitions, justice, emoluments, nay, of worth itself, then corruption sets in and patriotism departs."

He warns his countrymen that wealth might provide armaments, but not the morale necessary to a war. He predicts the probability of a defeat of the American fleet in the Pacific and the ensuing loss of the Philippines, Hawaii, Samoa, and Alaska. Since he reckons with the USA not being able to pursue war in a western Pacific controlled by the Japanese Navy, he believes that the war

between the USA and Japan will not be decided by the navy, but by the armies of both nations. Enumerating the weaknesses of the American army, he comes to the conclusion that, after the defeat of the American fleet, Japanese troops would be able to land on the American West Coast and conquer the states of Washington and Oregon.

The modern reader of this old book is struck above all by the passive attitude of its author. Although he analyzes the weaknesses shown by the American military system quite correctly and logically, he seems to be hypnotized by them and incapable of supplying an active thought or offering any suggestions toward rectifying those weaknesses he has pointed out. The author's pessimism is especially interesting at a time when his prophecies regarding the western Pacific have been fulfilled, and the lack of any activity, be it only on a mental level, on the part of American military quarters becomes more and more apparent.—B.P.

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RECEIVED TOO LATE FOR REVIEW:

Freedom, July issue. (*Shanghai, The Asiana Publishing House, 1942, 52 pp., CRB \$5.00*)

Photo-News, special edition "Wehrmacht." (*Shanghai, New World Publishing Co., 1942, 33 pp., CRB \$5.00*)

JAPANESE MAGAZINES

FOR once we will disregard the weighty matters discussed in the magazines to turn our attention to the very smallest things to be found there, namely, the letters people write to the magazines about their experiences and complaints and the suggestions they have to offer to the community. These letters are not numerous, and you have to search for them carefully, but they are there. Like all small things they have a strange faculty of engraving themselves on the mind to outlast the memory of bigger events. While one may soon forget what the magazines say about *shisosen* (思想戦, war of thoughts) or similar popular problems, one may be haunted for days by the tiny world of the letter writers and their desire to eat more bullfrogs or to re-educate the grocery man at the corner. Here are some excerpts from this type of literature.

IN THE BUS

In a letter to the *Sekai Ora!* a lady tells the following story: she had boarded a packed bus and was standing on the step with some luggage in her hands, whereupon a young man from inside the bus offered to hold the luggage for her. Later the writer herself succeeded in getting inside and was standing in front of a row of three students. Then the kind young man asked the students to draw closer together. They did this, but the resulting space was still too small for the lady to sit down. So the young man approached the students again, but the result of this second interference into the living-space of the students was more or less devastating. The young man was addressed with *kimi* (thou), which is about the worst thing that can happen between strangers, and had to swallow some other unpleasant remarks. The writer adds

that she felt badly about this incident the whole day, which shows the delicacy of the Japanese mind with regard to the very rare disturbances of the *kimochi* (氣持, feeling, atmosphere) occurring in daily life.

NO WAR WITHOUT LAUGHTER

In a letter to the *Jikyoku Zasshi*, someone announces his determination to have a big laugh as soon as he finds time. He thinks that the newspaper and radio should provide more fun. They supply plenty of serious articles and speeches, but, if they could contrive to draw laughter from us at night, we would get up with redoubled strength next morning. "A nation that stops laughing is to be pitied." In concluding, the correspondent repeats his grim intention of having a mighty ha-ha in the very near future, and we can only hope that it has been the real thing.

SCHEMING FOR SPUDS

In a letter to the same magazine, someone lets out the rucksack-wielding women who roam the countryside with a set purpose: "We are going to get vegetables aplenty!" The villages would gladly produce more eatables if there were more manpower handy, so the hiking go-getters should be induced to work in the fields. In this way townspeople willing to work in the green belt could reap the fruits of their own labors, and the towns would become more self-sufficient as regards vegetables. Practical experiences have shown that this plan works, the correspondent asserts.

"HATS OFF!"

In a letter to the *Bungei Shunju*, a correspondent remarks that in a certain department store the

photographs of fallen heroes were not greeted by all passers-by in spite of the notice "Hats Off!" However this may be, the further criticism expressed by the correspondent seems very unjust, for he says that only half of the people passing the Yasukuni Shrine and other places of worship take their hats off. One has only to take a bus passing one of these spots in Tokyo to see that all passengers bow or take off their hats.

"WE WANT BOOKS!"

In another letter to the *Bungei Shunju*, someone expresses his joy over the fact that a reading fever has seized the country and that so many new books are being printed. But the *inaka*- (country-) population should be enabled to participate in this wealth of information. Often an *inaka*-man unfolds his morning paper, sees an interesting new book advertised, and rushes to the bookstore to place his order; but quite often he is disappointed and is told that the customers in the big cities,

who are nearer to the source, have laid their hands on the new books, so that the wisdom-seeking *inaka*-people have to be on the lookout for the next ad. The correspondent confidently expects that some way will soon be found to satisfy the rustic bookworms.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RICE CAKES

The following is an extract from another letter to the *Bungei Shunju*: "When the Boys' Festival (May 5) was in sight I began to wonder what would become of our rice cakes this year. But we got them all right: the *tonarigumi* (neighborhood association) gave three to each household. As our family consists of five people not every one of us had his own rice cake, but the whole family prayed before the altar adorned with iris (and the rice cakes); so *ichi-oku isshin* (一億一心, a billion people, one heart) was brought about by three rice cakes, and the Boys' Festival became a transforming power for the nation."—P.

ON THE SCREEN

FATHER AND SON—FATHER AND DAUGHTER

"*CHICHI-ARIKI*" (There Was A Father). A Shochiku Film. Directed by Yasujiro Ozu. Principal players: Chishu Kasa, Shuji Sano, and Mitsuko Mito.

This is an artistic film depicting the lonely life of a middle-school teacher and his son. Owing to the accidental drowning of a pupil in his charge during a school excursion, the teacher resigns, holding himself responsible for the affair. With his son he returns to his native town and stays with a friend at a temple. The poetic atmosphere in the sentiment between father and son are described, and the scenes of the two taking a rest in an old castle or fishing in a mountain stream are done very naturally. The boy enters a middle school in a neighboring town as a boarder, and the father visits him one day to say good-bye, as he wants to go to Tokyo to find a job. The scene where the two have a farewell meal in a small restaurant is extremely moving. The love between father and son has never been depicted so well in Japanese films.



Some ten years later, the son graduates from university and becomes a teacher in a technical school in Akita Prefecture, while the father is still living alone as a clerk in a Tokyo factory. There the father meets an old friend, Hirata. Seeing Hirata's daughter (Mitsuko Mito), the wish grows in his heart that his son should marry her. Finally, one morning, while the son happens to be staying with his father, the latter dies of a sudden illness. With his last words, he asks Hirata's daughter to marry his son. Japan's national morality respects the will of a parent, and so the two young people get married.

Although the scenes of the father's death in a hospital are good, the film then skips to a scene in a train, showing the young couple going back to Akita, obviously hung on as a vague "happy ending" and therefore rather disappointing. The first half of the film is excellent, with a clean, typically Japanese touch. The director has done a good job with a story which, though undramatic, has drawing power. The acting of Chishu Kasa

as the father is remarkably good. *There Was A Father* stands a good chance of being ranked among the best ten Japanese films of the year.

"*NINGEN-DOSHI*" (Fellow Men). A Shochiku Film. Directed by Noboru Nakamura. Principal players: Michiko Kuwano, Makoto Saburi, Tatsuo Saito, and Reikichi Kawamura.

This is another story with a middle-class setting. After the death of his wife, the departmental head of a company leads quite a happy single life because of his affection for his daughter. But then he falls in love with a woman he knew as a girl. She is a widow, too, leading a lonely life and running a small restaurant. A young man employed in his department commits a serious mistake in a business deal. Because he knows his daughter is on friendly terms with this young man, the father takes the responsibility and resigns. The young man, thinking that his chief has ruined his life because of his contact with the widow, goes to her to remonstrate with her. From her he learns the true reason for his chief's resignation and feels deeply ashamed. The film ends with the indication that the young man and his chief's daughter are going to be married.

The most interesting thing about this film is the description of the daughter, who represents an aspect of the modern Japanese young woman. For instance, she sympathizes with her father in his lonely life and positively advises him to marry the widow. In contrast to her, the young man is shown as a coarse, brusque type. Among the actors, Tatsuo Saito as the father is the most convincing. Beside him, Reikichi Kawamura, a well-known supporting player, is very good as an intimate friend of the father and gets many a laugh for his humorous acting.

The film, which was directed by a new man, rather lacks compactness, which is a pity, since the story is quite original. *Fellow Men* does not exceed the level of the ordinary Japanese film.—H.T.