

HOW JAPAN CELEBRATES THE NEW YEAR



Of all the festivals and feast days, of all the many holidays of Japan, none is to be compared with that of the New Year. For many weeks all the cooks of many thousand houses of bamboo and wattle have been toiling over their cooking pots behind the rice-paper shojis preparing mochi, that quaint unleavened bread made of the more tenacious grades of rice—for the New Year in Japan that is without its mochi is as a Thanksgiving without its turkey, or a Christmas without its pudding. The bookkeepers have been busy, too, for New Year's eve is the big settling day. Like the Chinese, the Japanese have the custom of squaring accounts before the New Year begins, and for weeks before the holidays there are hucksters stalls by the roadside—the Ginza which is the Broadway of Tokio, is lined with booths at the roadside where men come to sell their belongings of all sorts to find money to pay their debts. What bargaining goes on at this great street fair, at the side of the Ginza; what haggling there is before goods finally change hands for often as much as a twentieth of the price asked. In the cross streets the flower stalls find a place but the Ginza is given over to the people who bring their belongings slung from poles in camphor wood boxes, and spread them out at the row side. The tourist finds many an objet d'art, much bric-a-brac at these New Year sales, and many a collector seeks additions to his bronzes, color prints, etc., at the sales where the men of Tokio vend their belongings to find money for the New Year settlements.

It is customary to pay all wages two days before the holiday, and to pay all debts, and the busiest people in Japan on New Year's eve are the collectors, plodding over the roadways with their stilted geta, paper lanterns in hand, seeking the debtors. The geisha, in the street of the Geisha, with its long rows of lanterns, and many rickshaws halted before the barred gateways are busy, too; for they have many visitors to entertain with song and dance. From every tea house comes the tinkle of samisens and high-pitched voices of geisha. Reflected by the mellow lights of many paper lanterns on the paneled paper which gables these houses by road and canal adds many shadowy forms of dancers are seen, while in the street groups or float on the ebbed tide in the mud of the canals beneath the arched bridges, there is merriment galore. It is the holiday of holidays. For the servants there are new clothing, presents, etc. Every house is cleaned; new mats are laid down, wherever people can afford them—and in certain sections of Tokio, where the more unfortunate live with the barest margin there will be no new mats. In the houses of the rich, though, fresh rice paper is pasted over the fretwork of the shoji, and the little finger holes of the children, so dearly loved by Japanese mothers are removed. There is an oft-quoted Japanese short poem regarding these finger holes made by the tiny fingers in the paper of the shoji, it goes:

"The shadow of a pine across the mat;
Oh, the little finger holes in the shoji."

As with all else in Japan, the New Year holidays are hedged round about with ceremony galore. The decorations, placed before each door, are prescribed by old-time custom. There is symbolic meaning for every component part. On the right there is a branch of matsu (pine), with reddish stem; and on the left pine showing the black trunk. According to Japanese idea, the black trunked pine is the male, and the redder, lighter branch the female. The symbol of the twain before the door is that the wish is that the occupants of the house, like the pine trees, may stand undisturbed by the storms of life, weathering them all in a good old age, like the pine trees. Then there is another symbol of hale life and fullness of years—the take-no-iki (bamboo), and from the beam of the decorated gate hangs the platted rope of the Shinto temples, which is intended to debar all evil and unclean things from crossing the threshold. Interwoven with the pine and bamboo and grass rope of the arch there are many things, among the more striking being lobsters, bowered in garlanded branches of yuzuri. The symbol of the lobster is that a kind wish is implied that all within may live until they are bent with years until they are doubled up like the lobster. There are ferns symbolic of conjugal happiness, orange fruits, whose meaning is that the family tree may flourish, seaweed as a memorial of good fortune. With all gaiety, the

quaint votive offerings of paper for the Shinto gods, is interwoven.

Many a youth and maiden of Japan has been tucked in on the tatami on New Year's eve with their pillow covered with a roughly drawn picture of the takare bune—the ship of riches, with the seven gods of good luck as the crew. The ship is one of the popular themes of the art of Japan. In the morning there will probably be junks of straw, little boats with masts of pine and sails of gold and scarlet. They are inscribed with good wishes. These little ships are similar to those which are set afloat on the waters of the Bon Matsuri, the feast for the dead in summer. The picture of the takare bune is placed on the pillow to induce good dreams—for so much depends upon dreams of the last night of the year, according to the superstitious people of the Island Empire. To dream of lightning means riches, but to dream of frost is considered bad fortune. To dream of a pair means divorce—this is the continual fear of Japanese women. A mirror or wine cup seen in slumber is considered to mean that a beautiful child will be born—and so on through a long list prepared by the fortune tellers of the land.

Like New Year's eve in other lands, the night is one of merriment in Japan, more especially in the larger cities. Strolling samisen players wander about singing ballads of old Japan, little bands of maskers go about, playing little burlesques to the amusement of small throngs. The celebrant, goes to the tea houses, sitting squatted on the mats while his favorite geisha plays her samisen or sings love songs to him, while fluttering muses bring straw-colored tea and sunbaked cakes. Housekeepers wander among the flower-mats where rows upon rows of blossoming plum trees are set out for sale. No Japanese House, great or small, is complete without its plum tree for the New Year. Great is the bargaining done here, no buyer ever offering the price asked. There first must be haggling and bargaining, and finally after a last summing up on the counting board, the purchase is made.

Meanwhile the elder daughters are at home making the mochi. The rice for this is steamed in a large barrel-shaped utensil which is placed on the top of a boiler. There the rice is steamed until it is soft enough to be kneaded into a dough. Then, a portion at a time, it is placed in a stone mortar. The muses men or women stand around the mortar, the men holding pieces of wood like axe handles with blunted points, and the women smaller pieces of blunted wood. One of the number starts a song—everything must be done to the rhythm of a song in Japan, even the loading of coal in the bunkers of a steamer. Keeping

time with the song the men swing their sticks, while the women stir the dough with their sticks. In fifteen minutes it is well kneaded and spread out on a large board, where the young women stand, with their kimono sleeves tied up, to cut up the dough and make it into michi cakes. An average family makes about a hundred cakes, including a number of large ones which are made to be offered to the family gods. It is usual to take half a dozen, surmounted by a Japanese orange to the temple of the family soon after New Year's day dawns.

Soon as midnight strikes the members of the Japanese household hurry to say; Omedeto, which is the equivalent of our Happy New Year. Then zoni is to be eaten. This is a delicious sort of soup, which must, perforce, be eaten as soon as the New Year begins. The otoso is to be drunk. In every home, rich and poor, is the sake cup, and visitors come and drink. The Shinto priest who is, as it were, the parish priest, starts on a ceremonial round which has a sad effect on his equilibrium before he completes his tour. He goes first to the yshiki of the rich, to the palace of the Daimyo, if there be palace of a daimyo in his district, and thence from house to house, with due regard for precedence. After a few calls the priest becomes an object of amusement to the children in the street and the merry priest is followed by a little throng. In each house he kneels before the tokonoma, the god-shelf, and murmurs Shinto rituals while the maid pours the sake into a lacquer cup for him.

After the visit of the priest the feasting goes on until it is time for the head of the family to issue forth to make his calls, first on the lord of the district, for the feudal customs still maintain, although democracy is supposed to rule. The calling is similar to that of the west. Meanwhile the household gives its itself over to New Year sports, goes to see the wrestling competitions, the sports of the fireman whose feats of agility are performed yearly on the New Year holiday, and enjoys itself in other ways.

The streets are filled on New Year's day with couples of gaily dressed girls, bouncing little balls and singing. Like, nearly every thing else appertaining to the season, these games are ceremonial affairs. The children sing as they bounce the ball. In effect the game is to see how many times the ball can be bounced without an error. Meanwhile the players sing a ballad, the last line usually being, "Now the ball counts one hundred." Many of those ballads are interesting little histories. The boys go in for kite flying at the New Year, and processioning; for young Japan is nothing if not of a military turn of mind. Many are the processions of New Year's

day. There is the bullock cart with a gaily decorated ox drawing the harvest rice, coolies in bran new head dresses and bright new haori of blue cotton, each marked with the big geometric ideograph of their master's house in glaring white. In Tokio, that Coney island of Japan, Asakusa temple, is thronged more than on any day of the year for the New Year holiday, and the people's temple, the street of theatres, lane of booths, gardens, etc., are crowded from morn to night. At various places in the cities, on platforms, usually arranged before the temples troupes dance the kagura, wearing masks, while an orchestra of drum and flute, and often a reed pipe plays an accompaniment. The show of the firemen, usually given in the parks, is the feature of New Year. The fireman of a Japan differs at night from day in comparison with the fireman of the west. A fire station, except in the recently formed modern brigades of the larger cities, consists of a high ladder with a bronze bell near the top. The watchman stands at the ladder top to scan the horizon and when a blaze is seen the bell is rung and the fire fighters rush off with bamboo ladders and buckets. At the New Year festival they assemble to do gymnastic and acrobatic feats with their bamboo ladders. The firemen gather at a conspicuous place and with a new banner floating from a lofty bamboo pole march, with ladders and lanterns, etc. At the appointed place the ladders are placed perpendicular and held with hooks while the agile firemen mount to the top and perform acrobatic feats that seem as dangerous as they are difficult. Meanwhile the comrades yell at the top of their voices—and one takes up a collection.

The classical feature of the New Year holiday, the delight of the student and literateur of Japan, is the making of New Year poems. Each year the officials of the court give notice that the Emperor has chosen a theme for a poem and thousands of poems are built at the New Year on this theme. The theme given out by the Emperor this year is "Snow in the Temple." Not only are classical poems written but there is a card game played when the lanterns are lit after nightfall, and the many night noises which ever recur to those who have left Japan and its warm color behind are heard. The cards each contain two lines of a poem, generally a love song or sonnet. The cards are spread out and a person reads out the couplet. As soon as this is done there is a rush for the cards, each one striving to locate first the card with the following lines.

This is how Japan celebrates the New Year, and the spirit of the festival remains in the air for over a week.

Centenary of Birth of Gladstone Celebrated Last Week

During the past week was celebrated the centenary of the birth of the Hon. William Ewart Gladstone, the last of a great company of illustrious men who were born in the eventful year of 1809.

In that company there are numbered Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Charles Darwin, Edgar Allan Poe, Abraham Lincoln, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Frederic Chopin, and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

One hundred years ago Wednesday, in a fine house where culture put wealth to its best uses, situated at 62 Rodney street, Liverpool, there was born a man child who, during the 89 years of his life, left an imprint on the political history of the British Empire that has never been surpassed. Today is the centenary of the birth of William Ewart Gladstone, three times prime minister of Great Britain, and during the later years of his life, England's Grand Old Man.

Gladstone was descended from the Gladstones of Lanarkshire, the Gladstones taking their name from their residence, the derivation of the name of the latter being apparent from the fact that "glad" signified "hawk" and "stones" stones, the stones about the Gladstones' residence or seat having been a favorite resting place for hawks.

William Ewart (named for a friend of his father) was the third son of John Gladstone, a Scotsman and a Lowlander, and Anne Robertson, daughter of a Highland Scotsman, and his advent in this world took place at a time when the world was passing through a critical period in its history. Napoleon was wading through rivers of blood to a throne,

upsetting the whole economy of Europe, and at home a crazy king and a profligate heir-apparent presided over a social system in which all of the civil evils were harmoniously combined. The results of this history-making were among the first impressions made upon the record of the young boy's sensitive mind.

Sir John Gladstone, Bart., the boy's father, was a man of considerable attainments, whose strong will and whose wealth made him a conspicuous and even a ruling figure in Liverpool politics. In the home circle he encouraged his children to friendly argument, and, it is recorded on good authority, the elder Gladstone and his sons were used to debate, in perfect good humor, but with sound logic, any and every question from the broiling or frying of breakfast trout to the foreign policy of the Empire.

Receiving his earliest training in this atmosphere, Gladstone soon developed traits that, to the shrewd minds, gave promise, even at so early a time in his career, of a brilliant future; but none guessed the true scope of that future.

In 1821 Gladstone first went away from the influence of his early home life; but it was only to pass, in an eminently suitable state of development, to the broader influences of Eton. Eton left its mark on Gladstone and Gladstone left its mark on Eton in common with other brilliant minds that were contemporary there. Eton, when Gladstone entered, was under the rule of the terrific Dr. Keate, and in proof that his arrival caused no heralding burst of pyrotechnics, the only record of an

observation on his entrance is that of Sir Rodrick Murchison, who said that Gladstone was then "the prettiest little boy that ever went to Eton."

At Eton, as afterwards at Oxford, Gladstone stood for what was manly and straightforward. He was a bit of a "snap" or "grind" according to report. He was not inclined to athletics but he kept a private shell and practiced sculling. In his studies, however, he was ever a leader, although his power lay not so much in brilliance of intellect as in breadth and power to grasp and retain. His insight was remarkable and his ability and fine character attracted several of the brightest boys of the school to him. He was not generally popular at Eton nor even well known, but his most intimate and perhaps his best friend was that friend of Tennyson who called forth and was worthy of "In Memoriam"—Arthur Hallam.

Gladstone left Eton in 1827, at Christmas, and for six months he read with private tutors. The following year he went up to Christ Church, Oxford, and in 1829 he was nominated to a studentship.

Gladstone's career at Oxford was characterized by his development as a debater and student. He was a leader among a select set, whose morals were rather above those of many of the men of that period, and whose relation with the men of other sets was, therefore, not intimate. Yet even men who ridiculed the scruples of Gladstone's friends admired Gladstone, as is shown in the comment of one of the men who were at Oxford at that time. This man wrote on one occasion that he regretted that Gladstone had associated himself with

that set who were "only fit to reside with maiden aunts and keep tame rabbits."

Gladstone distinguished himself at Oxford, taking a double-first, and in the year following he spent six months in Italy. Upon his return he stood for parliament, although he was but 22 years of age, and on January 29, 1833, in the first reformed parliament, he had a seat. At this time, one writer says, he was of a striking and attractive appearance. His features were strongly marked, his complexion pale and his eyes piercingly lustrous.

Early in his public career Gladstone startled England and won general attention by the publication of a book on church and state, which was declared by some to be the only book since Burke's that went to the bottom of the question.

Gladstone's public career was noteworthy almost from the time of the publication of that book, although, of course, it in no wise depended upon the book as a cause. The cause lay in his increasing power, his wonderful mental development, his generalship and his eloquence in debate.

On July 25, 1839, Gladstone was married to Catherine, the eldest daughter of Sir Stephen Glynne, of Hawarden. At this time he was fairly entered upon his remarkable career, one of the first responsible offices he held being the vice-presidency of the Board of Trade.

It would be out of the question here to give even a summary of the events of Gladstone's career. His hand wrote history and his personality is found interlarding the political records of his time. Pitted against brilliant minds he was always the unconquered, the masterful.

When, amid a momentary wave of waning popularity, he resigned in 1874 from active leadership, it was only to take the helm a second time in 1880, following the Liberal triumph. In 1886 he was a third time called to leadership as prime minister, and eventually, when his party went out and the Tories under Salisbury took up the reins, Gladstone, disgusted with the drift of the policy into which he and his followers had insensibly drifted, resigned. He declined an earldom at the hands of Queen Victoria, and took the platform despite his 76 years of age. And, until his 82nd year, when even his iron constitution gave way before the long test he had put upon it, he never ceased to champion, on the platform, and with his pen, the cause of self-government for Ireland, a policy which he had adopted as just years before.

July 25, 1889, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone celebrated the golden anniversary of their wedding. Mr. Gladstone passed away May 19, 1898, at the ripe age of eighty-nine years.

With the celebration of the centenary of Gladstone's birth today, the last of a remarkable list of famous centenarians that came in 1909, is observed. Among the others were those of Alfred, Lord Tennyson; Charles D. Darwin; Edgar Allan Poe; Abraham Lincoln; Oliver Wendell Holmes; Frederic Chopin, and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.

None gave to the world more than did Gladstone, and in no time was he surpassed in debate. Of him, Sir W. E. W. Hamilton has written:

"His choice of language was unbounded * * * his flow of words was not that of the mountain stream which comes tumbling down helter skelter. It was that of the river with an immense volume of water whose downward course is as regular as it is stately. He never gabbled; he never drawled. He was a living thesaurus or 'Gradus,' containing synonym after synonym, and it was this extraordinary wealth of words which laid him open to the charge—not without reason—of being verbose. Diffidence at times led to discursiveness."

On one occasion Mr. Bright, discussing Gladstone's fault, said:

"I sail, or try to sail, from headland to headland. Gladstone, making for the same point, sails round the coast, and whenever he comes to a navigable river, he cannot resist the temptation of tracing it to its source."

Gladstone's sentences were often very long, and sometimes the wonder was that he could extricate himself from the maze of words he flung about himself. Yet there was nothing faulty in the construction of his sentences. He might have parentheses and even parentheses within parentheses, but no sentence was ever ungrammatical or unfinished.

NO CHANCE OF A MIRACLE

One day Dr. Norman McLeod, who was a large and healthy man, and one of his burly elders went to pay a visit to a certain Mrs. MacLaren of the congregation, who lived in the Scottish Hills. She was a frugal woman, but determined that they should have the best in the house. So she piled the table with jellies and jam and preserves and shortbread, and they partook unsparingly.

After the meal the elder said to her: "Mrs. MacLaren, were you at the kirk on Sunday?" "Oh, ay," she said, "I was." "And what did you think of the treatment of the miracle?" (the sermon had been on "loaves and fishes"). "I thought it was good," said Mrs. MacLaren.

"And what is your idea on the subject, Mrs. MacLaren?" asked the minister.

"Losh!" replied her hostess; "I'm thinkin' that if you and the elder had been in the congregation there wadn't ha' been twelve baskets o' fragments for the disciples to gather up!"

NOT EXPERIENCED

Mr. Herbert Gladstone, who is to be the first governor-general of the Union of South Africa, was some time ago the hero of an amusing situation. He was addressing a woman's suffrage meeting in a northern English town, and waxed quite eloquent in praise of the ladies. In the course of his speech he remarked on the great pleasure which it gives the male sex to listen to a woman talking. Immediately he was answered by a voice at the back of the hall in broad Yorkshire dialect:

"Eh, lad, thou'st naan wed yet, I see."

RUN

NATURAL INCREASE OF

Daffodil bulbs split up and offsets. The natural increase in ties of daffodils is so great that year after planting, the number of trebled and in time, varying from years no matter what the var clumps will have become so dense need lifting and dividing. These ally attain full growth in about. Of course, the clumps may be left definitely, which they will do pr soil and other conditions are congl der to attain the best results, the be dug, lifted and sorted every tw smaller offsets being grown on. When the bulbs are about four ye produce the best flowers, and in year will develop into the double nosed forms—that is, two or more enclosed in one skin. These bulbs up the succeeding year. The cut flowers this season will not have do with the production of next. Of course, it will be better to next from ripening, thus encouraging, hand, the full growth of the foliage the bulbs about the time when the yellowed down to about one-third top—not later. The bulbs may the in a cool, airy, shaded place and ripen and cure until the old root when they are easily cleaned off an divided, and replanted as soon as replanting, give them new soil.

VINES FOR SHADED PL

Few plants will grow under tr larly under such trees as the ash which are notorious for sucking e moisture from the ground. All t done is to suggest, which will nece doing more or less experimenting, buy too many plants of a kind, to Buy a few, and if they succeed, the Some vines which are to be recom shaded places are woodbine (Ampe quifolia), Japanese ivy (Ampeol pidata), but usually spoken of by men as A. Veitchii), the running s (Euonymus radicans), and the f ing hydrangea (Schizophragma oides). The two species of ampeol cidous vines and thoroughly hardy itude. In the Mississippi Valley form of the woodbine which clings of disk-bearing tendrils; be sure t form rather than the one which doe the disks, because then it will be n constantly tack it in place. The Ja will cling to stone or wood, as will t spindle tree. This latter is an ever climbing hydrangea will succeed in and more or less shaded places, but bloom unless grown in the sun. climbing hydrangea prefers moist partial shade, but will thrive in full these are deciduous. For shrubs for hedge (Berberis vulgaris) will hedge six or seven feet high. Th hedge (Ligustrum) is the only pri is hardy in the central West, accordi fessor A. T. Erwin, of the Iowa Ag College. This will grow eight or high. The ground yew (Taxus Ca is also suggested.

DELPHINIUMS

The Delphinium of today is one of beautiful of all flowers, and provide blue—of which we have too little flowers. It is most rich, indeed g coloring, and its stateliness of habit i We know of no flower which exhib splendidly the various shades of t lovely color; blue; the Forget-me-not for its fresh azure; the Gentian for which is called by its name; the De possesses both of these in its repe tints, together with the depth of the and the hue of imperial purple; and mountain snows shine more resplend setting of blue sky, and the purity of mind adds to the effect of the sapphi striking white central petals of the rum form the best of all possible con the color of the surrounding sepals.

The foliage of the Delphinium is and classical in outline, possessing a s to that of the Acanthus, which, it is s was the model for the capitals in C architecture. The columnar spikes o are freely borne, and succeed one through a prolonged season with a lit agement. A bed or border of Delp will often remain in full flower fo months, and the whole of that time w color to the garden which would o be wanting.

DAFFODIL NOMENCLATURE

The poeticus, polyanthus (Tazetta), sus, the jonquil, and the large trumpe dil are varieties of different species in botanical genus Narcissus. The trum fodils are varieties of N. Pseudo-Na The polyanthus narcissus (including the White, Double Roman, etc.), are vari N. Tazetta. The poet's narcissus incl the varieties of the species N. Poetic jonquil is a species known as N. Jo The narcissus family is divided into t groups, called respectively, 1. Magni-c or large trumpet; 2. Medii-coronati, o fodils; 3. Parvi-coronati, or saucer da Most varieties of Group 1 are common daffodils, while those of Group 3 ar monly known as narcissus, including of the poet's and polyanthus groups. Gro