

Japanese Girls Shop for Husbands at City Marriage Bureau



Mrs. Tanaka, Graduate of U. S. Universities, Re-Writes Old Ritual

By Rose McKee

A MUNICIPAL marriage bureau where Japanese girls leave orders for husbands as simply as American girls order groceries is flourishing here in Tokyo, Japan. And, going the old time mail order marriage bureau a few better. Its patrons are so well pleased that there hasn't been a divorce among them yet!

The Tokyo municipal marriage bureau is three years old. It has had only one storm to weather. Faced by a budget deficit, the city fathers closed it a year after it was opened, but such a protest was set up by the public that in six months' time, Cupid was rehired.

He is now safely enthroned in a municipal building, doing a flourishing business. The only fly in his ointment is that there are not always enough men to go around. There are about twice as many girls applying for husbands as there are men seeking wives.

Cupid's spokesman in this matter is the bureau's manager, a wise, shrewd woman, Mrs. Taka Tanaka, graduate of two American universities—Stanford, where she got her B.A., and the University of Chicago, where she won a master's degree in sociology. To her have come 2300 love-starved girls and 1200 lonely men.

PATRONIZED by some of the "best people," the bureau serves one and all free of charge. It used to ask the equivalent of \$1 in American money, but the city decreed that the service must be free. Among the men whom it married off were a popular movie actor, several college professors, wealthy bankers, ambitious government officials, busy lawyers, doctors, dentists, merchants, and one newspaper man.

This is the way the bureau operates:

A girl registers her desire for a husband by filling out two large blanks. On one she tells all about herself. She is very business-like as she describes her looks. She is honest, too. If she wears glasses, she admits it, although she knows this will lessen her chances. Japanese men do not like girls who wear glasses. The prejudice has gone so far that the biggest department stores in Tokyo refuse to hire be-spectacled girls. On the other blank, she lists what she hopes for in the way of a husband.

Mrs. Tanaka, after studying her application, runs through the standing orders for wives. When she finds a man whose description leads her to believe he may fill the bill, she sends for him. He is given the card on which the girl described herself. If he is intrigued, Mrs. Tanaka tells him to wait a few days. In the meantime, she gives his description to the girl. If she, too, is satisfied, Mrs. Tanaka arranges a meeting.

Superb finesse characterizes this meeting. Conversation usually begins with the weather. After a polite and leisurely discussion on some such remote topic, talk creeps around to personal interests and Mrs. Tanaka tactfully withdraws.

When she returns perhaps an hour later, three things may happen. The couple may tell her the happy news and, with a motherly interest, she will help them set the date and plan the wedding. Or the two may bow deeply and politely to one another and to Mrs. Tanaka and express the desire that they will all see each other soon. This means that the meeting has flopped. However, defeat rarely occurs. Having made up their minds to marry, the two who have been brought together are usually quite willing to compromise.

The cautious arrange additional meetings, frequently without the presence of Mrs. Tanaka.

AMERICAN women will understand the first requirement listed by a Japanese girl. She does not ask for a handsome man; does not demand love (although at the end of the blank she may add



that she hopes the marriage will lead to love); nor does she request wealth. Instead, the Japanese girl asks first of all for a man with "few relatives!"

Relatives worry her the most, and well they may. When a Japanese girl marries, she becomes "dead" to her own family; she marries not only the man, but all his relatives, also. It is just too bad if they do not like her. Until recently, bride and groom invariably lived with his parents. Even today, if a girl marries an eldest son, she goes to live with her mother-in-law. In his description, an applicant for a wife always must state the number of his relatives and if his bride will have to live with his mother or if she will enjoy a home of her own.

ANALYSIS of more than 2000 applications reveals that Japanese girls seek a man who has:

- Good health.
- A job.
- An income of at least 80 yen a month. (Roughly \$26 in American money.)
- A university or college education.
- Attained the age of 30 or thereabouts.
- Capacity for affection.
- At least one outside interest, either in sports, music, drama or hobby.
- In the description of herself, the girl states her physical appearance and condition, her character, the income of her father and of herself if she has a job, her age, the occupation of her father, the names and addresses of all her relatives, her religion, education, likes, dislikes, and she lists what she will bring to her new home—her fortune, if she has one, number of kimonos or dresses she will have and the furniture she can supply.
- Men applying for wives ask first of all for a pretty girl. After that their requirements are short. They seek a girl:
 - Healthy.
 - Taller than 5 feet.
 - Economical.
 - A high school graduate.

Describing himself, an applicant for a wife must reveal his health, physical appearance, including height and weight, schooling, character, income,

It may lack romance to the western way of thinking, but the Tokyo municipal marriage bureau is proving a boon to young Japanese. Here are some scenes from modern Japan's marriage bureau. Left, a bride dressed for the wedding. Her coiffure, most important part of the toilet, is arranged in a style that has not changed for 100 years. Next, the bride completing her toilet—the last in her old home, for when she is married she belongs to her husband's family. The next panel, top, shows a typical meeting in the bureau between prospective bride and groom, with Mrs. Taka Tanaka, manager, in the center. Below, the modernized ceremony in the bureau with bride and groom facing a municipal official while Mrs. Tanaka, back of the bride, acts as a witness. The bride's family sits on one side of the room, the groom's on the other. Right, a bride ready for the ceremony, wearing the traditional pale pink silk cloth over the forehead of the head, believed, in the old days, to hide her "hours of jealousy."

occupation, social status, and personal habits—if he drinks, smokes, or frequents a tea house where smiling girls shower him with attentions. He must tell, too, if he has been married before, if he has children by that marriage, his reason for marrying again, and if his second wife will be expected to care for his children.

MRS. TANAKA believes that the reason all the bureau marriages have turned out so successfully is that they are arranged on a scientific basis rather than on a temporary physical attraction. She contends that the statements made in the applications are more revealing than are the giddy things boys and girls say to each other during their "dates."

Through the municipal marriage bureau, Mrs. Tanaka has brought a great innovation into the Japanese marriage ceremony itself. She has revolutionized it by modelling it after the Christian marriage ceremony.

For centuries, a Japanese marriage has been solemnized by the drinking of sake, a wine made from rice, which is the national drink. In 99 per cent of the marriages, this custom still prevails.

Those whose marriages are arranged by the bureau are not required or asked to be married according to the new way, but the majority of them prefer it.

Instead of being married at a shrine, or the home, which is the traditional place for the drinking of the nuptial sake, they are united in the marriage hall of the municipal building which houses the bureau. Sake is left out of the new ceremony. Instead of sipping liquor, the bride and groom exchange vows and they are given a marriage certificate by the city—which in itself is an innovation.

Facing an official of the marriage bureau, much as bride and groom face a pastor or judge in America, the man and woman repeat a vow; then husband and wife and their witnesses, who sit be-

hind them during the brief ceremony, sign the certificate. The ceremony takes less than five minutes. It is unaccompanied by music, just as the bride and groom are unaccompanied by attendants. Relatives and intimate friends of the couple sit in chairs along the sides of the small hall. Mrs. Tanaka is invariably one of the witnesses.

THE marriage bureau has reduced the cost of weddings, which undoubtedly are more expensive in Japan than in any other country. It costs from 2000 to 3000 yen for a daughter of a man of ordinary means to marry. To the Japanese the yen means even more than a dollar, for salaries are much lower than in America. A man whose income is 100 yen has a much higher social position than the American earning \$100 a month. The daughter of a university professor recently had what seemed to be an ordinary wedding, yet it cost her father 18,000 yen!

Through the municipal marriage bureau a wedding costs only from 300 to 500 yen. The ceremony in the marriage hall costs 10 yen, and this includes tea and cakes for the small reception which follows and a wedding picture. The bride, whose financial responsibility the wedding is, can spend the balance of the 300 or 500 yen on her trousseau. It is the trousseau that makes a Japanese wedding so expensive.

JUST now Mrs. Tanaka is looking for a bride for a millionaire from Formosa. The millionaire wants to marry soon and to leave immediately for a trip around the world. He is asking for a girl who speaks English, who is good looking and who comes from a respectable family.

Since the overnight success of the municipal marriage bureau, individual fortune seekers have opened private marriage bureaus. These imitations are regarded as out-and-out rackets. Girls must pay and pay handsomely when they file applications, most of which the bureau knows will not be filled.

Reno Preacher Says, 'Recovery Will Come Out of Earth!'

By BREWSTER ADAMS
For 25 Years Reno's Baptist Minister

THE old miner asked me to come out and sample this "prospect." His claim crossed an old wash from the hills, where an ancient wagon road had followed up the gulch.



Brewster Adams

Values lay there, as they often do, where the unobserving had passed them by. We miss a lot of good things that are buried in the dust of the road.

He took a shovel of dirt out of an old wagon rut, tossed it into his pan and splashed water over it. He panned out the dust with a peculiar and deft little swish of the water. Gradually a little line of glistening yellow began to show against the black sand in the bottom, following the water like a slimy snake.

"There's the old color, Doc! Right out of the dust of the road. Washed down, maybe, from up there. Kind of queer, ain't it? All the values come out of the dirt. There ain't no wealth except out of the ground."

I listened, rather than answered. Believe me, these old men of the hills do a lot of thinking. And

we folks who do much talking and less thinking can well listen.

"Yes, sir! And what's more, there's where recovery's coming from. Out of the dirt, it'll come. I puts my trust in God and the ground. They ain't never failed yet."

"I hed a pardner I used to kind of believe in. But a woman got him and he's ruined. I puts my hopes in the hard rock since then." Old-timers wander off in their thoughts as they do in their prospecting.

"YES, sir! What happened after the civil war?" He argued, for these gophers would rather debate than dig. "The country was filled with paper promisins' to pay and it wuzn't worth no more than your sermons. Excuse me, Reverend!"

"Wal, along came old Virginny City and out of those dumps they paid off in good money. Just fer good measure they laid a cable across the Atlantic; old Mackay did with the stuff out of the ground. And Fair made a pretty good camp out of San Francisco."

"After the panic of '93, what happened? They larned to cyanide ore, didn't they? Paid off the old bills with real money. Where did it come from? Out of the ground, eh?"

"Doc. There's more chance fer getting things back where they belong out of a shovel of dirt than with all these smart ideas folks have."

"What saved the country in the early days? It was the West, wuzn't it? And those fellows were living off the land what ain't been used up yet."

They cut the timber, ran their cattle on the grass, panned ore out of the hills and turned over the soil fer their crops. Nature beat the old wolf by stuffing him.

"Jumpin' tarantula! It jest looks as though we couldn't keep good times from comin' back, no matter what we did," he concluded. "Guess I'd better warm up the beans."

HE THINKS a great deal this old timer. His views are worth a lot for the thinking. He lives close to the ground and his ideas are as sound and as solid as the rock in which he works.

Since he talked with me I have been up in the great forests of northern California and Oregon. There are thousands of acres of trees that are growing too old. They should be cut. And yet they say our resources are being used up—exhausted.

I've been down to Boulder where a day of creation is just beginning. Tomorrow her electric furnaces will roast the mountains of non-metallies which lie by. A splash of water from the great dam and the sleeping desert will awaken and put on its glory.

I have been over the hills where the earth drops fatness and the ground yields its increase. Flocks and herds move among the valleys. Snow now lies a dozen feet deep in the mountains stored for the summer harvest.

Why watch the stock market or read a tape for the assurance of recovery? Turn over a shovel of dirt, and there is the promise of all we need to bring prosperity.