

Rob Wagner's

Script

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Tokyo Letter



ON THE WAY to the War Ministry this morning, it seemed as if all Japan were parading, men and women in colorful processions, all smiling broadly as they marched along carrying banners and signs. Today is May Day but in Japan it is known as The Boy Festival. The birth of boy babies is celebrated, and paper flags in the form of fish are flown from flagpoles.

Regardless of the festivities, the War Crimes Trials proceed as usual and the accused sit with earphones listening intently as the defense presents the China Phase.

Japan seems to be striving toward Democracy, their interest in government affairs has broadened, and the voting in the national elections showed their aroused general interest and desire to install a much more progressive form of government. Meanwhile, Japan is having a bad depression; the Japanese people do not have much to eat and there are always crowds of people waiting to board trains to the country to forage for food.

The Japanese people all have a definite goal to do or own something of value because they lack so many material comforts. An interpreter at the Crimes Trials told me the Japanese generally do not resent our occupation of Japan. A few of the younger men dislike the fact that American G.I.'s date Japanese girls, despite non-fraternization regulations, but I think this feeling existed even in England during the war.

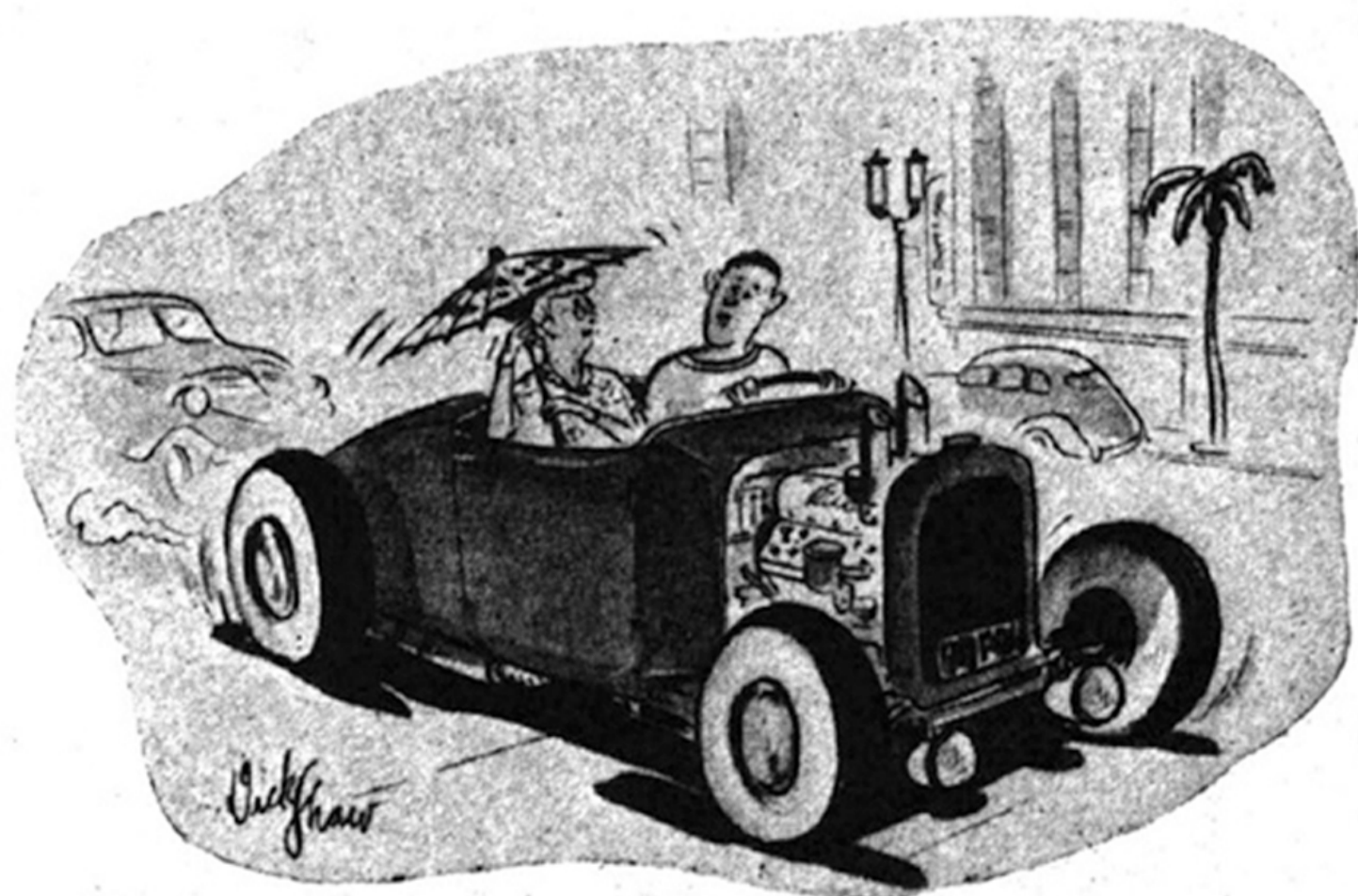
Life for Allied Occupationers is quite Stateside; there are bars and dances, libraries, movies, and symphonies, even night school classes in almost every subject at high school and college levels.

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At different clubs you can get almost any type of drink, even Alexanders made with canned milk. Japanese jazz orchestras, although they scorn mutes, play old favorites such as "Star Dust," "These Foolish Things," and especially "Sentimental Journey." There is almost always a floor show; Japanese tumblers or magicians, a tap dancer (à la Astaire), and an inevitably flat chested chorus line. It seems it is a Japanese custom to bind the chests of young girls so that nothing more than cancer will develop. So chorines find the use of gay deceivers quite necessary and also embarrassing on bouncy occasions.

Although there is the usual caste and class consciousness and bickering between governmental agencies that always exists in government circles, there is a fellowship and friendliness among foreigners in Japan that is quite novel. Nobody is striving to "beat anyone else out of anything"; there is a complete lack of "dog eat dog" attitude. Waiters and waitresses anticipate your wishes with a smile. Living costs are low (i.e., I pay \$3.00 a month for my billet and twenty-five cents a meal, which included four steak dinners last week). In fact, it was suggested at lunch today that the 25 per cent differential pay which government employees enjoy for overseas service should be extended to our fellow citizens in the States.

—FRANCES WAY



"Aw, Mom, please don't! . . . It ruins the lines!"