

Western Ideas of Comeliness Guide Japanese in Choosing Beauty Queen

(Continued from Page One)
"foreign" dressmakers, to the dismay of the nationalists.

It is a well-known fact that the judges at the recent beauty contest selected the girls who most closely resembled what they believed to be the "modern" type of girl rather than the traditional Japanese type.

Those girls who approached the judges' stand with a coat of paint so thick and colorless that they looked more like dolls than living creatures were the first to be ruled out. Next came those whose general makeup showed no signs of originality.

As in almost all beauty contests, there naturally were whispers, frowns, and general signs of discontent and rebellion. But what opposition there was was swept aside when the final selections were made and the prize winners brought before public view. There was little doubt that the judges had selected the most beautiful, or rather most beautifully painted, girls in the contest—perhaps in the nation.

It is probably not going too far to say that this contest has dealt a death blow to the pale, colorless painted type of girl, who made up her face to resemble an expressionless, ivory white mask. The rosy cheeks, crimson lips, colorful face, full of expression and gaiety, hereafter will reign supreme in Japan.

The strange thing about Japanese girls adopting American dresses is the fact that they cannot, on discarding their kimono and slipping into foreign attire, walk at all becomingly. Generations of squatting on floors and

considers matters from all angles the westernization of the Japanese woman has been to the nation's benefit. Since donning the kimono and donning western dresses the physique of the Japanese woman has improved considerably. The kimono restricted movement and stunted growth.

Now that the kimono is being discarded for the western attire which affords freer movement, the girls are able to participate in strenuous athletic exercises and games which serve to develop their bodies.

Investigations conducted by the ministry of home affairs reveal the fact that girls between 14 and 19 years of age today have gained an average in height between an inch and an inch and one-fifth over those of a generation ago.

It is, of course, between these ages that the girls go in mostly for outdoor sports, and as evidence of the

great advance that has been made in Japan of recent years in athletics mention might be made that Japanese girls now are competing in international athletic meets.

Probably the greatest transformation in the outward appearance of the girl of Nippon has been in her coiffure. This is due to the fact that the Japanese mode of hairdressing is the opposite in all particulars to that of America and Europe.

For instance, the first requisite in western



"... the most beautiful dancers in Tokio ... passed in review before a jury of thirty men in the first beauty contest of its kind in Japan ... dance halls of the empire were canvassed for candidates to be elected 'Miss Nippon.'"



"... startling change in the appearance of the Japanese girl ..."



"... more like dolls than living creatures." (Beauty, old style.)

Again, golden tresses are an incomparable treasure in western hairdressing, while anything but glossy raven-black hair is objectionable to the old type of Japanese coiffure. Oil is used lavishly in the setting up of the Japanese coiffure, while in the west as little oil as possible is employed.

The disappearance of the old form of hairdressing, therefore, has brought about a startling change in the appearance of the Japanese girl and has even made it necessary to alter the standard of her beauty. With the olden type of coiffure a long, narrow face was essential. With the western form of hairdressing the more roundish type of face is ideal.

However, the fashionable New York, Holly-

not be mere westernized examples of oriental beauty, but a harmonized product with the best features of the two hemispheres brought together.

Of course, everything has not been as rosy as one might imagine from what thus far has been set down. There are, for instance, woman leaders who pridefully appear before large audiences in the most grotesque foreign apparel, although their wardrobes may be filled with gorgeous kimonos. There are daughters of the rich and near-rich who would look far better in the charming national costume than they do in ill-cut western garb.

But on the whole the Japanese are prone to consider these things in a broad-minded way. The symbol of patience, they will casually remark that the older women will pass out of the picture before long.

The real turning point in the lives of the women of Nippon was the great earthquake of 1923. Following this catastrophic disaster, which necessitated the adoption of a new mode of living, many girls and women commenced entering business and commercial offices heretofore closed to them. They were mobilized in the emergency, for every available adult human being, man or woman, was needed in the gigantic task of reconstructing the vast devastated areas.

Just as the World War gave the women of America and Europe an opportunity to enter the men's sphere of business and industry, so the earthquake of 1923 in Japan afforded the women and girls of the land of demure kimono-clad women, whose place until then was strictly in the home, an opportunity to penetrate into their husbands' and brothers' domain.

Acquire Lipstick Habit

Upon taking positions in offices the women soon discovered that it was too expensive to wear their elaborate and costly kimonos to the battered, quake-shaken temporary business offices. Many women and girls consequently adopted the more practical European mode of attire, and with this apparel came naturally a coating of imported facial cream, a dab of rouge, lipstick, and the clipping, in some instances, of tresses.

What was more important, the women liked their new surroundings. Once established in offices, they have been averse to surrendering their newly acquired rights.

And why shouldn't the women desire to escape from the bonds which for centuries have tied them to a sorrowful life? It is declared that no women in the world are as ill treated as the women of Nippon. This probably is not

This will not seem strange when it is explained that the etiquette imposed on Japanese women is really an etiquette of fear, derived from an old-fashioned moral code which enjoined unconditional and therefore absurd and abject obedience to a superior. A woman was told to obey

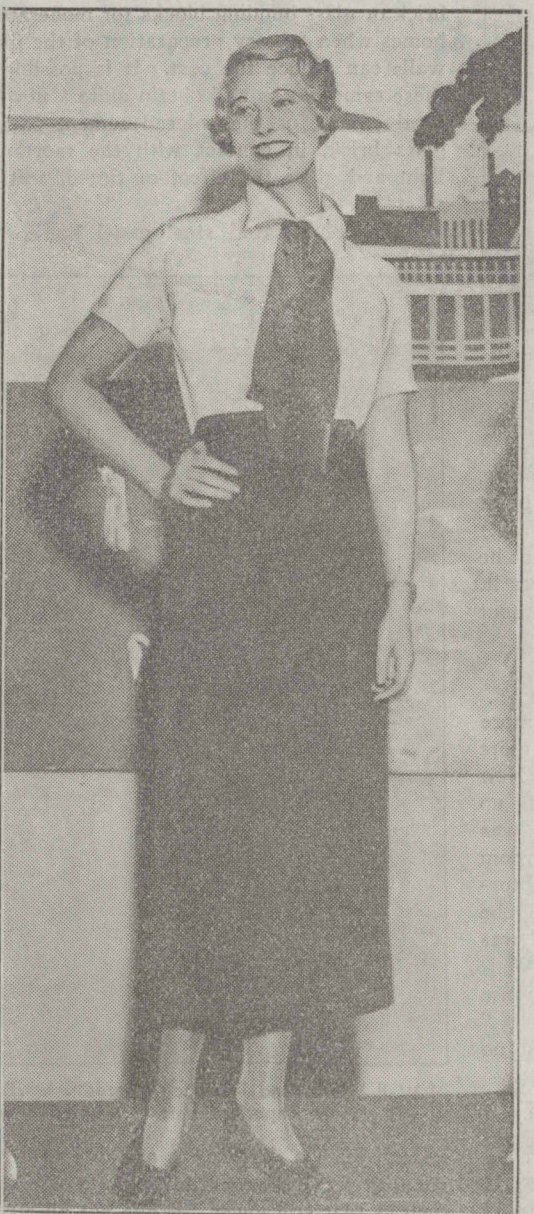
her father, husband, and brothers under every circumstance with "fear and humility."

She was solemnly instructed—this woman of old of glassy, straight tresses, chalk white cheeks, almond eyes, and broad kimono—from her early childhood to the end of her days, to be humble and meek in the eyes of all masculine Japan, and above all to bow obediently to every wish of her near kinsfolk of opposite sex. Few were the instances, until recent years, of her rebelling against the ancient code of behavior provided for her.

Today such obedience is impossible, especially when women earn their own living—there are at present more than a million and a half wage-earning women in Japan—and the Japanese lass is now fully awake to the birthright of her sex.



"... girls between 14 and 19 ... have gained in height ..."



"... selected the most beautiful ..." (Miss Mitsuko Iwasaki, "Miss Nippon" (above), as compared with Miss Lillian Anderson (left), Century of Progress queen, and Miss Blanche Waddell (right), queen of the Big Ten colleges.)



the wearing of wooden clogs have so disfigured their feet and legs as to make it almost impossible for them to walk faultlessly in western apparel.

So whenever opportunity presents itself Miss Cho Cho San goes to the movies and closely observes not alone the action of the photoplay but the every movement of Nancy Carroll or Joan Crawford, and painstakingly rehearses the steps—not dancing, but walking—which she has viewed on the screen. If she is a high school girl it is likely she will pick up a word or two of English for good measure, now that the talkies have invaded the orient.

So when one



"... colorful face ... will reign supreme ..." (Miss Masako Yamada, the runner-up.)

coiffure is to have the hair in curls and waves, which is an abomination in Japanese hairdressing. A lock or two hanging gracefully over the cheek in a ringlet is regarded as a sign of beauty in the west, but is, or rather was, decidedly intolerable in Japan.

wood, and Paris fashions in coiffure must be remodeled considerably before they can be made to harmonize with the general appearance of the Japanese girl. This also is true of other adaptations.

Fortunately, the daughters of Nippon are doing this, with general results that are quite satisfactory. At least they are evolving a type of oriental charm that cannot be branded as a simple and direct imitation. And it is for this reason that the judges of the beauty contest in Tokio are confident that the prize winners in Japan can be compared favorably with those of other countries. They will



"... 'talkies' have invaded the orient." (Miss Sumiko Kurishima, movie star.)



"... participate in strenuous athletic exercises and games which serve to develop their bodies."



"... evolving a type of oriental charm that cannot be branded as a simple and direct imitation." (Miss Satoko Date, a current queen of Japanese filmdom.)