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Far Eastern friends

Japan is so full of pretty girls, witty geishas and plain housewives that men, in the eyes of foreigners, are pushed into the background. The newcomer to Tokyo, for instance, wonders whether he will be able to hear something about the kind of friendship that interests him or whether he will have to be satisfied with nothing but stories of women. Japanese men usually do love women, there is no doubt about that, especially when they are slightly tipsy. But there are young men, those of a deeper nature, who feel revolted against the idea of being compulsorily married and who, in silence, suffer intimately for not being able to share their inner urge with a friend. There are others, the kind we disapprove of, who crowd certain parks at night and who have only sexual thoughts in their mind. Hibiya-Park, in the very centre of Tokyo, is well known for it. Japanese boys or men loiter about when darkness has set in and when a foreigner passes near-by, they follow him and keep asking «sampo? sampo?» meaning «going for a walk?»

Japanese young men are very shy. When you take a bath with them, they do not like to show their nakedness but very timidly step out of the water by holding a small towel (called «tenurui» and which everybody uses when bathing) against their lower belly. Japanese feel a great attraction towards foreigners with a hairy body. It is not unusual to have a Japanese young man touch your hairy chest in the bath, to grin and to say: «very nice»! Once you have made the acquaintance of a young Japanese (university students for instance who also like to share spiritual relationship with their foreign friends), he will come to your place and allow intimacy with you. A true Japanese friend is something touching. He wants you, and you only. He is like a faithful dog who cares but for his master, and each day, when you come home from your work, you can be sure that your friend will be waiting for you and will be beaming with happiness to be with you again.

Japanese friends among themselves do not, on the whole, enjoy the freedom of some of their European fellow-beings who can share a flat together or can live undisturbed by women for a long time. No. Family tradition has a tremendous influence in Japan and once it has been decided that the son shall get married, it will be very difficult for him to escape. Oh! how many tragedies develop afterwards! Being the unquestioned master of his new home, he will be able to keep his obedient wife at a distance without her revolting openly but, at night, it will very often be the wife who will start molesting him with intimate longings.

Certain large cities like Osaka, Moji etc. show at night whole streets crowded by men dressed in girl's kimonos. Foreigners will probably have difficulties getting in touch with them. This is a sufficient proof that Japanese men are not only interested in women.

Parents can sometimes show an astonishing understanding for our feelings. A student, for instance, had become the beloved friend of his British teacher. One day, the father of the young Japanese was invited over the week-end by the teacher. When he realized that they were more than usual friends, he shook a bit his head, grinned and said: «Oh! I see. How very funny!» and he continued enjoying the teacher's hospitality as if he knew nothing.

Reno