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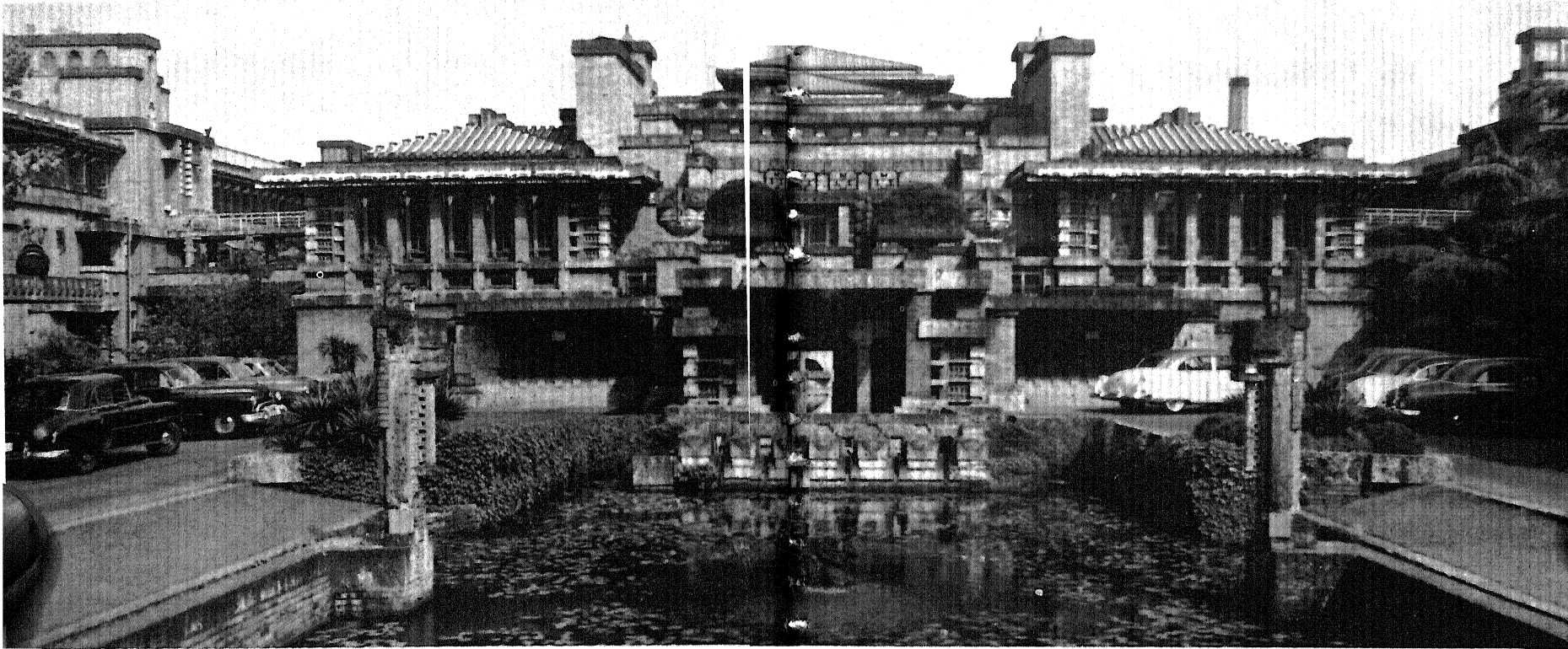
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THE WISE BAMBOO

The WISE BAMBOO



by J. Malcolm Morris

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*This book is dedicated
to
my whole damn family*



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book will not prove anything to anyone. It is presented for amusement only.

I have recorded events as I remember them happening. If anyone chooses to remember them differently, I have no quarrel with him.

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The Wise Bamboo

The Imperial Hotel was built for the Japanese by Frank Lloyd Wright, the American architectural genius. The Grand Opening was held at noon on September first, 1923 and five minutes later Japan was struck by the worst earthquake that history has ever known. Some think this was a device cleverly arranged by the Japanese to demonstrate that the building was earthquake-proof as claimed but I am certain it was the anger of the gods.

I was born under the sign of Aquarius, the water bearer, and the astrologers will tell you that this is a corker of a sign under which to be born. Aquarius people hold winning tickets in raffles, find money, are at the right place at the right time and, most important, they always manage to have things figured out in no time at all. It is all very well for the astrologers to feed you this sort of thing, but they might do well to check into a few more case histories. I have just finished a tour of six years as the manager of the Imperial Hotel and still have not figured the place out. I will admit freely that the hotel fascinates

me, but cannot name a single reason why I should like it. I departed from it still considering it to be much like a person who has every characteristic which should make loathing him a pleasure but whom I cannot dislike in spite of myself. And then, there are the Japanese people. Not even a Japanese born under Aquarius could figure them out.

I did not seek the position of manager of the Imperial Hotel. In November, 1945 I was assigned to take charge of it as a billet for senior officers of the Allied occupation forces in Japan. I was a lieutenant in the Army then and as such had learned to do as I was told. I did remain in the job for five years after I became a civilian in December, 1946 but by then I had become so deeply involved in the operation that I had to stay around just to see what could possibly happen next.

I arrived at the hotel in the evening. It was so dark that the building appeared to be just a large, black blotch. But then the moon came out from behind a cloud, brightening the lily pond before the entrance into a shiny rectangle of silver and silhouetting the north and south wings so that they looked like two great claws projecting forward from the center dome of the building. My first impression of the Imperial Hotel was that it looked like a giant crab eating a stick of chewing gum with the tinfoil still on it.

I was wearing combat equipment, musette bag on my back, bayonet on my belt and carbine slung on my shoulder. The Japanese management had a reception committee to meet me and after several speeches of welcome had been made I was presented with a huge bouquet of flowers. With this added to my burdens I was escorted by the committee down a series of long, winding

corridors to the room which had been specially prepared for me.

The committee left me at the door and I was immediately besieged by a flock of roomboys and room maids who unloaded me, unpacked my equipment, drew a bath, laid out my toilet articles, brought me a menu, brushed me off, turned down the bed. So many of them invaded the room and they moved so rapidly that all I could do was stand in the center and watch them go whizzing past. Each time one of them passed me, he or she would skid to a halt, bow graciously and say, "Hello, sir." I tried to ask them to stop but they spoke no more English than I did Japanese. I finally cornered the roomboy who seemed to be in charge.

"Look," I said, "everything very nice. Now okay. Now go. Everybody go."

He bowed and said, "Hello, sir." Then he dashed off and, returning in a moment, presented me with my razor. I gave up, took a seat and let them run down until there was nothing more they could possibly find to do. Then they lined up in a squad, bowed solemnly, said in a chorus, "Hello, sir," did a left face and marched out of the room in single file. I breathed a sigh of relief.

The next morning I bounced out of bed full of enthusiasm for the new job. The roomboy took my breakfast order, drew a bath, and I stepped into the first tub I had seen in six months. It was a great luxury after the cold water showers which had been the only bathing facility in Manila. As I was busy soaping myself there was a knock on the door and, without waiting for an answer, a pretty Japanese girl in a lovely kimono pushed the door open and started to walk into the room carrying my breakfast tray. I yelled at her to get out and she stopped with a puzzled expression on her face. Then she

shrugged her shoulders and resumed her entrance. I yelled at her several times more and then, when I saw it was having no effect, I picked up the soap and made as if to throw it at her. She uttered a shocked little scream and quickly backed out of the room. I could tell by the expression of her face that she was saying to herself, "What hath Buddha sent us?"

I was disconcerted by this lack of respect for my privacy and took the matter up with Mr. T. Inumaru, the president of the Imperial Hotel Company. Mr. Inumaru was a lively man in his late fifties, a mature ball of fire, short and compactly built and with a leonine cast to his features. His command of English was excellent though he spoke with an accent and in a staccato rhythm.

He explained to me that the room maid's conduct was perfectly proper by Oriental standards, that the Japanese have a saying, "The nude is often seen but never looked at." I told him that I did not care to be either seen or looked at and that henceforth we would consider room 12 (my quarters) to be a small part of the United States transplanted to Japan and within its confines western customs would prevail. He sent for the housekeeper, a little old elf whose constant bowing made him seem even smaller than he was. With Mr. Inumaru translating, I explained that, regardless of Japanese customs, it would embarrass me if a room maid entered my quarters while I was not properly dressed. Therefore, the system of knocking on doors and entering before an answer was given must cease at once. Just to make certain that he understood, I had him repeat the instructions in Japanese to Mr. Inumaru. When he finished, Mr. Inumaru looked at him silently for a moment, turned and looked at me, then looked back at the housekeeper.

"What did he say?" I asked.

"Well, he said he would instruct all the servants to knock on your door, then look through the keyhole and if you are not dressed, not to enter until you tell them to."

"What!"

"I will re-instruct him."

"Never mind," I said. "Just have the lock on my door changed to a peek-proof one and I'll keep the door locked from now on."

"Yes, sir," he said.

"Mr. Inumaru," I said, "I don't want you to think that my decision in this matter indicates that I will adopt a defeatist attitude towards the problems we are going to face in the future."

"Oh, no, sir," he assured me. "I think you have been very wise. We have a saying in Japan that one should be like the bamboo and bend with the big wind instead of resisting it."

"Oh, yes?" I said. "Well, you inform the employees here that they are to be the bamboos and I will be the big wind."

Now that I think back on it, I wish I had phrased that differently.

I did not expect any further trouble with the Japanese idea of modesty but, during my first inspection of the hotel, I ran into another aspect of it. While we were checking the section which included the employees' quarters, we passed a group of Japanese deeply engrossed in conversation, four men and a girl who was attired in her slip. As we approached they all bowed to Mr. Inumaru who was leading the way, then to his male secretary who had come along to take notes. But when she saw me, the girl uttered a frightened scream, clasped her hands over her bosom and scurried away into one of the dormitories. I had an uncomfortable feeling that I had

leered or smirked at her or given her an evil look though I knew very well I had not. I decided to forget the matter.

But then, later, when we entered one of the waiters' locker rooms, we interrupted a conversation taking place between a room maid, who was seated on a bench, and a waiter who had just removed his trousers and was standing there clad only in his cotton shorts. When he saw me he gasped and tried to cover his exposed torso with the trousers he was still clutching in his hand, his face taking on a mounting look of horror. I began to get an eerie feeling that there was something in my appearance which made these people think I was some sort of sex maniac.

Mr. Inumaru could not give me an explanation when I asked him what had frightened the girl and the waiter. I discussed it later with his secretary, Mr. Ishii, an Hawaiian *nisei* who had come to Japan to live before the war. He told me frankly that he was never certain of anything about the Japanese people even though he was one of them but that he summed up Japanese modesty as having nothing to do with sex. It was perfectly all right to appear unclad before anyone on the same social level but a gross insult to a superior to appear unclad before him. I could not reconcile this completely with the events of the day but it was the most logical explanation I could obtain. I still wonder about it occasionally.

When I finished that first inspection of the hotel I immediately sat down and refigured the number of points I had towards rotation to the United States. Even with chiseling, the largest amount I could accumulate would not have made me eligible for discharge until the following December. It looked like a long, hard winter because the Imperial Hotel was in appalling condition.

The entire south wing had been gutted by incendiary bombs, the furnishings were worn threadbare, the employees' uniforms were tattered, the rooms and corridors needed repainting and most of the experienced members of the staff had fled Tokyo during the last days of the war in order to escape the B-29 raids.

But that was not the worst. It seemed to me that the basic ideas in the design of this unusual building made it a hotel manager's nightmare. When they planned to build the hotel the Japanese had wanted to create a show-place to impress foreign visitors and in order to be certain that something extraordinary was produced they imported the genius of Frank Lloyd Wright from America. The original capitalization for the project was ¥1,500,000 (the yen was worth approximately fifty-two cents then) but by the time Wright finished with them the Japanese had spent over ¥9,000,000 on the building and I guess this would tend to indicate that there were many sides to Wright's genius.

The shape of the hotel is roughly that of a capital letter "H" with a capital letter "I" bisecting the crossbar. This design is a close approach to the shape of the crest used on the hotel stationery but which came first, the crest or the building, I never could learn. The guest rooms are located in the uprights of the "H," and the lobby, Main Dining Room, the ballroom, theatre and most of the operating sections are located in the "I."

From the front the building looks small. The roofs there are only four stories above the ground and a squat appearance is emphasized by the long, horizontal lines of the structure. Though the rear of the "I" does rise up seven stories, this height is diminished by the perspective and does not break the flat appearance. But the building is tremendous. It splatters out from the focal point of

the lobby in all directions. The corridor system is so winding and complicated that when you try to retrace a path you have followed, the pattern seems to have changed while your back was turned.

The ceiling of the entrance lobby is so low that a normal-sized person instinctively ducks his head as he enters the building. But after walking up the six steps to the main lobby a person suddenly finds that the ceiling is three stories high and he is standing in the middle of a huge space. This idea, I understand, is a clever adaptation of the design used for standard Japanese tea ceremonial rooms. The entrance to a tea ceremonial room is so low that a person must walk through it in a stooped position. The value of this is psychological; when a person straightens up inside the room it appears to be much larger than its actual dimensions. The Japanese spend a lot of time thinking up things like that. But in the main lobby of the Imperial Hotel there is no sensation of the freedom that is ordinarily associated with space. The walls are finished in a morbid brown brick trimmed with *oya* stone, a volcanic rock, soft, seedy-gray in color and perforated like an imported Swiss cheese, and these walls seem to project their gloom, making the atmosphere that of a poorly run penitentiary. Perhaps the lighting was different when Frank Lloyd Wright put his finishing touch on the lobby. Perhaps some feature he included had been removed but if, in 1923, the lobby of the Imperial Hotel was a cheerful place, the years had not been kind to it. In 1945 it deserved the nickname the Americans had tagged on it—"the morgue."

Actually, the lobby was not a major worry. I could see the possibility of overcoming its defects in time, when we could install new lighting, new furniture and carpeting. But some of the other technical faults of the build-

ing put me in despair for I could see no way of curing them. The washbasins were so low you had to do a deep knee bend in order to rinse your hands, the built-in tile bathtubs had an annoying tendency to corrugate the posterior, there were no room-service dumbwaiters or elevators and the kitchen was in a poor location. And I could see no way of heightening the low ceilings throughout the building, which, even on that first day, threatened to convert my skull into a textbook case for a phrenologist.

After a complete survey of the building I realized that the rehabilitation of the Imperial Hotel called for many long-range programs. Some difficulties could be foreseen and some were unexpected. I knew the redecoration program would be complicated by the lack of materials and that since few vacancies ever existed it would not always be possible to use the supplies which were available. But I learned through sad experience that, as an earthquake-proofing feature, the building rests on a mobile foundation and is built in three sections, roughly in thirds from front to rear, enabling it to ride the wave of an earth shock by undulating like a prone hooch dancer. Though this prevents the building from breaking apart it also causes the paint and plaster of newly finished walls and ceilings to crack. This delayed the redecorating work, as we were constantly touching up areas already finished. Refurnishing the hotel had to be put off to the distant future. There was no new equipment available and any already in process of manufacture had been earmarked for the homes being prepared for those families of occupation personnel scheduled to come to Japan.

But there were several problems which required immediate action whether we had equipment or not.

We were not exactly in control of the building. By

sheer force of numbers the rats and cockroaches seemed to have more right to be there than we did. Bugs and rats do not bother the Japanese, but besides being health hazards they give Americans a crawly feeling, so it was a question of the building not being big enough for all of us. Either they had to go or we did.

We were able to secure a good supply of rat traps through the Army supply channels and start an intensive trapping program. In the beginning our catch ran as high as thirty-five rodents each night. This trapping brought to light another *fauna* inhabiting the hotel at the time—cats, actually wild animals which lived in the underground tunnels and conduits and in the pipe shafts of the building. One night a guest called me and said that someone was torturing a baby in the hotel. He could hear it screaming. I went to his room and there could hear seemingly human cries of torment coming from the distance. I did not become excited because in my short time at the Imperial Hotel I had discovered so many unusual things that finding an abandoned baby on my hands would have meant just one more long-range program. I took some watchmen with me to trace the source of the sound and we finally located it in a pipe shaft in the attic. A cat had gotten one of its paws caught in a rat trap and was screaming its pain in an amazingly human voice. It was a vicious animal and getting it out of the shaft was a difficult task until one of the watchmen reached down and hit it on the head with a hammer. I had the carpenter's shop build some cat traps and for a while it seemed as if we were catching more cats than rats. These felines were no aid to our rodent control program because the rats were so big and fierce that it would have taken panthers to scare them.

We attacked the cockroaches in their home base, the

kitchen. There was no DDT available at the time but aerosol bombs were in surplus supply. Using them was an expensive method but it was the only one possible. I did not trust the Japanese staff with this operation for, though I was pleased with their attitude, I did not have confidence in their efficiency. After the kitchen had been closed for the night I took my staff of soldiers there, we sealed up all openings except one door, and set off twenty-four bombs throughout the room. The kitchen of the Imperial Hotel is huge and complex and has innumerable nooks, closets and small, useless dead-end alleys. It took the entire case of bombs to produce the cloud of gas we needed to do an effective job. When all the bombs were fizzing merrily we exited through the door which had been left open and then closed and sealed it, planning to give the gas an hour to do its work.

Scarcely fifteen minutes had passed, however, before we heard a thunderous hammering on the door and some excited screaming in Japanese. When the door was opened six Japanese kitchen employees, choking and gasping, their eyes bulging in fear and their hands raised high over their heads in token of surrender, marched out in a stumbling group. Before anyone asked them, they confessed they had pilfered food throughout the day and were eating it in one of the hidden closets when the gas started to seep under the door. They were firmly convinced that we had resorted to a chemical warfare attack in order to ferret them out and were amazed at this bit of Yankee ingenuity.

At the end of an hour we aired the kitchen and had a crew of Japanese sweep up the bodies of the cockroaches. When they finished there were two piles of dead insects, each reaching as high as my knee.

The layout of the kitchen had made it a heaven for

bugs. The counters and sinks were built of wood. Most of the stoves were placed about six inches away from the wall and there was exactly one quarter of an inch space between the dish warmers and the steam tables. The cracks in the wooden equipment and the narrow spaces which could not be properly cleaned were honeymoon havens for cockroaches. The insect menace was not completely overcome until we were able to replace the wood with metal and move the other equipment to allow enough space for a thorough cleaning job each day. When we did move these things we found the backs encrusted with food particles which must have been there since the first meal had been cooked in the Imperial Hotel.

Another problem which required immediate attention was the language barrier. The Japanese spoke very little English at that time and some of the few phrases they had picked up through contact with American soldiers were not the type to be used in dealing with the guests. I soon learned that ninety percent of the complaints received about service were traceable to this language difficulty.

For instance, one morning a colonel walked into the Main Dining Room and told the waitress that he wanted some eggs in a hurry. The waitress dashed out to the kitchen and the colonel began to toy with the silverware impatiently. A friend came in, joined him at the table and gave the waitress an order for fried eggs. The friend was served a few minutes later and the colonel complained to the waitress. She asked him to wait one minute more. Other guests came in and were served immediately but no eggs were forthcoming for the colonel. Each time he spoke to the waitress she put him off. He finally lost his patience and stamped down to the

kitchen to find out why the chef had taken a dislike to him. There he found an excited conference taking place among the majority of the cooks who had every cookbook available open to the section on egg dishes and though they could find recipes for Eggs Benedictine, Eggs Florentine and any number of unusual egg dishes, they could not find a recipe for "Eggs in a Hurry."

I installed a number system for ordering items on the menu and hired two *nisei* boys to conduct classes in English for the employees. That improved the situation, but the language barrier was never really completely overcome. This was not through any fault of the Japanese. They were enthusiastic about this program, as they were about every change we introduced in the operations. That was the bright spot in the picture; no program ever bogged down because of lack of effort on the part of the staff.

But in spite of enthusiastic co-operation, it sometimes seemed to me that I was beating my head against a stone wall in trying to alter the Japanese way of doing things. I would no sooner revise what seemed to be a particularly inefficient method than I would discover another which appeared even more senseless than the one which had been changed. I remember once sending for a painter and having him instructed to paint an "Off Limits" sign and post it on a telephone pole at a height of about ten feet above the ground. While I was still in the vicinity, he brought all the necessary equipment to the location, placed his ladder against the pole, climbed up and nailed a board firmly to the pole, then got his paint and brush, reclinced the ladder and started to paint the sign. Things like this put me into a rage because they seemed so unnecessarily stupid.

I had a set of instructions made up for the painting

department, informing it that the most efficient method of making a sign was to paint it in the workshop and post it after it had dried. As soon as that was finished, I found the laundry department insisted that the only possible method of washing the waitresses' cotton kimonos was to rip out the seams and take the garment apart, wash the pieces separately, stretch them on boards to dry, then reassemble the kimono. I tried the experiment of having a kimono run through the laundry without dissecting it, and pressed by a handiron. The result was excellent and the Japanese were flabbergasted. They had never thought of doing that. Then it dawned on me that years before, when the Japanese had no irons, it had been necessary to follow their method in order to guarantee an unwrinkled garment. I guess they had been so busy catching up on other modern steps that they just had not found time to consider modernizing the laundering of kimonos.

This realization made me feel that I had at last gotten a peek inside the Japanese mind and now could expect to make a great deal of progress. I decided to study the language as a means of getting a better understanding of the psychology of these people.

I started studying Japanese with a tutor, an excellent teacher who was very conscientious about developing my accent. He required that phrases be repeated over and over until he was satisfied I pronounced them as a Japanese would. During the second lesson he taught me to ask for a glass of water (*O mizu wo motte kite kudasai*), making me repeat the sentence so many times that in the end I needed a drink of something stronger. But he assured me when the lesson was finished that I would never die of thirst anywhere in Japan. He wisely advised me to get as much practice as possible by speak-

ing to the employees in Japanese whenever it was convenient.

I tried this the next morning while at the office. I called for a roomboy and asked him to bring me some water.

"O mizu wo motte kite kudasai," I said.

A blank look came over his square amber face.

"O mizu wo motte kite kudasi," I repeated.

He looked even blanker. (It is possible for a Japanese.)

"O mizu wo motte kite kudasai," I yelled at him, losing both my temper and accent. "A glass of water, damnit. What's the matter? Can't you speak Japanese?"

"Oh, water!" he said, breaking into a wide smile. "Yes, sir. Yes, sir."

He brought the water immediately.

I began to doubt the tutor's ability as a teacher and my ability as a student. The matter was still bothering me when Mr. Inumaru came to my office for our daily conference. Before we discussed any business I asked him what he would think I meant if I quoted the Japanese phrase to him.

"Why, you'd be asking for a glass of water," he said. "And your accent is excellent."

"Well, then will you tell me why the roomboy I said that to could not understand me?" I asked.

"That's funny," he said. "It's perfectly good Japanese and you said it beautifully. I'll check on it."

He did check on it and that afternoon brought the roomboy to my office. Mr. Inumaru had a stern expression on his face and the boy looked as if he had been flogged. Mr. Inumaru had uncovered what he considered to be an unforgivable sin.

"This boy is a part-time student in a language school,"

he told me. "He is studying English there and he thought that if he made you speak English to him it would be very good practice for him."

"I'll be damned," I said and I looked at the boy. He had bowed so low that I was looking straight at the top of his shiny patent-leather hair.

"He should be punished," Mr. Inumaru said. "Shall I discharge him?"

"No," I said. "Don't do anything as drastic as that. But tell him that in learning English he seems to be forgetting how to speak Japanese, so I want him to write out that phrase two hundred times for me. Then he'll understand it the next time he hears me say it."

The next day I was quite surprised when Mr. Inumaru came to me with a copy of the boy's employment record in his hand and told me the lad had requested to be assigned to work as my personal roomboy.

"You mean, after I punished him he wants to work for me directly?" I asked.

"Yes," Mr. Inumaru said, "and I think he would do a very good job. His name is Keigo Matsumoto. He's twenty years old and comes from a very good family. He's worked here eight months, first as a houseman and then as a roomboy. His work has been excellent. He's one of the most intelligent roomboys."

"Well, I can't quite understand this," I said. "Did he give any particular reason for wanting to work for me?"

"Oh, yes," Mr. Inumaru told me. "He said that you are a very strict man and he would like to work for you because it would be very good training for him. He feels he could learn a lot by being your roomboy."

"Mr. Inumaru," I said, "do you happen to know when this boy's birthday is?"

"Yes," he said, looking at the employment record, "it's January twenty-second."

"I thought so," I said. (January twenty-second is just inside Aquarius.) "Start him on the job tomorrow."

I bent with the wind.

Kampai! Tovarich!

The day after the Russian officers usurped Colonel Buck's favorite table in the Main Dining Room, the waitresses put a "Reserved" sign on it so they could keep it vacant for him. The Colonel did not want to give the Russians any excuse to feel offended so he asked me to keep the table on a first-come-first-served basis.

I had the three waitresses who served the table at various times instructed on this point. One day I asked them if they liked the Russians.

Chikako said, "Sukoshi." (A little bit.)

Miyoko said, "Shiranai." (I don't know.)

Ume had a GI boy friend. "I think they stink," she said.

Keigo took excellent care of me during the ensuing six years that I was in Japan. He was a neat lad, slim and clean-cut, and his movements were always quick and bouncy as though his muscles were stretched on a skeleton of springs instead of bones. He was anxious to learn American ways and had a burning ambition to become a

"western style gentleman." His spirit was typical of all the Japanese employees. I came to consider the most potent driving force within this race of people to be an intense hunger to learn western ways.

As the spring of 1946 approached I was pleased with the progress we were making in the rehabilitation of the building and in the training of the staff. I began to develop a sense of humor about the way the Japanese did things and I felt I could look forward to a period of smooth sailing. But I was living in a fool's paradise. There were several things I had not foreseen, among them, the rising of the Red menace.

The clientele of the Imperial was both exclusive and cosmopolitan. The south wing was being rebuilt under the supervision of the Army Engineers but completion was not expected until December, 1946. Therefore, the room space available was very limited and in order to be assigned quarters at the Imperial one had to be not only of the rank of colonel or above but also the chief or executive officer of a section in the headquarters. The heads of delegations from Allied nations were also billeted at the Imperial and in some cases it was necessary for guests in this category who did not speak English to have their interpreters live there for their convenience.

There were several Russians of high rank living at the Imperial, General Derevyanko, General Kislenko, who succeeded Derevyanko as the commissar of dirty work in Japan, Admiral Stetzenko and two interpreter-aides, Major Karamishev and Lieutenant Tulinov.

Lieutenant Tulinov was the first Russian with whom I had any direct contact. He came to my office one day and offered me two hundred American dollars for the Signal Corps radio which we had in the lobby of the hotel.

"That's impossible," I told him. "That radio is government property. I couldn't sell it without being dishonest."

"Oh, so. I did not know was dishonest," he said. "I give three hundred dollars, then."

"You don't seem to understand," I said. "I'm supposed to protect government property, not steal it. I'd have to violate my trust as an officer; I'd have to throw away my sense of honor completely."

"So." He thought for a minute. "I give another hundred dollars for the trust and honor," he said. "I give four hundred dollars."

"Look, Lieutenant," I said, "you'd better get this straight. You are not going to buy any radio from me for any price. It's impossible. Give up."

"Well," he said, after a moment, "I have only four hundred dollars. I don't understand but I give up."

As he left my office he was shaking his head in puzzlement.

I guess the greatest blow I ever struck for America was on the night I drank the Russians into the ground. That incident began to develop one morning in May, 1946, when Admiral Stetzenko checked out of room 320 and left word that he would not be returning. Shortly after lunch I was informed that General Kislenko had moved half of his clothing and equipment into room 320 and left the remainder in his own room. I called Brigadier General LeGrande Diller, the Secretary, General Staff of GHQ, Far East Command, who controlled the assignment of billets in the Imperial Hotel, and informed him that I was expecting some difficulty. He instructed me to pick up all the keys to 320 and not to let the Russian party add to the space they occupied in the hotel. He cautioned me not to touch Kislenko's belongings but to prevent his entering the room except to remove his

property. I had all the keys to the room sent to my office and then settled back to wait for the tempest I knew was brewing.

It came shortly after dinner. I received a call from Karamishev who was very confused by the desk clerk's explanation of why General Kislenko could not have the key to room 320. I went to the front desk immediately and explained the situation to him and Tulinov. (They always acted in concert, probably so they could check on each other and report any indications of deviation from the party line to Moscow.) They were very perturbed. Their plan had been to use room 320 for a Russian general named Alanov who was to arrive in Tokyo that evening. This was a new development so I called General Diller and informed him of it.

"That's what I've been waiting to hear," Diller told me. "Alanov does not have clearance to come into the theatre, much less into an occupation billet. Tell Kislenko that Alanov does not get into the hotel and that you wish he would remove his things from 320 immediately because you want to use the room first thing in the morning."

I passed this information on to Karamishev and Tulinov and it scared them to death. They were afraid to transmit it to Kislenko and asked me if I would see him myself and let them know how he reacted.

Kislenko became perturbed when I told him Alanov could not stay at the hotel and he became angry when I asked him to remove his things from 320. Though we had been speaking English he suddenly developed a complete ignorance of the language. I opened room 320 for him and he commenced pulling the hangers bearing his clothes out of the closet. I told him I would call a roomboy to do that but he grunted "Nouff" and con-

tinued grabbing at the clothes. I tried to assist him by taking some of the garments but when I took hold of a tunic he jerked it out of my hand and grunted "Nouff" again. It seemed to be a favorite word of his. I knew he was making a mistake in refusing help because he is a very small man with very short arms and there were quite a few pieces of clothing to be carried. He finally overloaded his right arm and all the garments slipped off, falling in a heap at his feet. He looked up at me expectantly. I leaned against the wall, placed a hand on my hip and crossed one foot over the other, indicating that he was on his own. That was a very rude thing for a lieutenant to do to a general, even a Russian one, but, frankly, I did not like his attitude. With a superior effort he managed to get the full load into his arms, we stepped outside, I locked the door and pocketed the key.

"Goodnight, General," I said.

"Nouff," said Kislenko.

When I returned to the lobby Derevyanko had entered the game at fullback. He is a giant bear of a man and he was giving a four-star performance, complete with arm gyrations and foot stampings. Every time Karamishev tried to translate the remarks to me, Derevyanko would interrupt with some more machine-gun chatter. He spoke directly to me in Russian though he knew I could not understand it, this being common courtesy, but he never let the interpreter bring me up to date. He finally stomped off, turning after he had gone about ten paces to give what must have been a corker of a parting shot because his stance and his gesticulations were magnificent.

"What did he say?" I asked Karamishev.

"He said he is displeased."

"Oh."

"Well, matter all settled, now we have drink," Karamishev said.

I did not have a chance. He grabbed my right arm and Tulinov grabbed my left and inasmuch as they were both very big men, accompanying them was the only course which would have been graceful. As a matter of fact it was the only course possible. This was at the time when all the tales of the vodka battles were coming out of central Europe and visions of water tumblers filled with the stuff began flashing through my mind. However, my fears of vodka were only horrible imaginings, for they had none. They had Nikka whisky, a Japanese product and a flagrant infringement of the patents which protect Listerine, as far as I am concerned.

Karamishev placed three water tumblers on the table, filled the first one half full of Nikka and handed it to me. He poured whisky into the other two glasses, but not as much as he had poured into mine. I was going to protest but then I saw Tulinov opening a can of pineapple juice and I realized there was hope for me. When he offered to add juice to my whisky I refused and he and Karamishev filled their drinks with it. I can think of more sickening combinations than Nikka whisky and pineapple juice but not without some mental effort. My strategy had to be one of speed, not strength.

We touched glasses in a toast.

"*Kampai!*" I called ("Bottoms up" in Japanese.)

I *kampai*-ed but they only took about half of their drinks. I could not speak and I knew I would not be able to for a few minutes so I pulled the old Chinese custom of holding my glass inverted over my head to show it was empty. They had to follow suit.

Karamishev filled the glasses again.

"Something, something, something," Tulinov said and

I took this to mean *kampai* in Russian and we all went Chinese.

I thought there would be a pause to refresh now, but I had no sooner placed my glass on the table than Karamishev had the Nikka merrily gurgling into it. Pictures of my life began to pass through my mind and I started thinking in a detached way of all the things that I had meant to do but had left undone.

Karamishev said, "Something, something, something," but as we raised the glasses to our lips Tulinov suddenly slopped his tumbler onto the table, grabbed his mouth with both hands and went running into the bathroom.

I stood up. My feet were not giving me any trouble because I could not even feel them but Karamishev's face was beginning to look like a saucer of yogurt so I knew I had to make an unhurried exit as quickly as I could. The sounds that Tulinov was making in the bathroom were doing worse things to me than the Nikka.

"Well, Major," I said, "I hate to drink and run, but I don't think that Lieutenant Tulinov is feeling very well."

"Yes," he said, "I think he is seek."

"We'll do this again sometime," I said.

"Yes," he said. "We do."

I remember going through the door of my room but I don't recall stretching out on my bed. When Keigo woke me in the morning I was on my back on top of the counterpane, completely dressed, and there was not a wrinkle in my clothes nor a hair out of place on my head. I had not budged in the eight hours I had been there.

The Russians all moved out of the hotel that morning, refusing to give a forwarding address and letting it be known that if one of them was not good enough for the Imperial Hotel none of them was. (They were so right.)

I called General Diller and told him about the mass protest.

"Good," he said. "Their embassy building has been ready for them for a month. We've been wondering how we were going to get them out of the Imperial."

I did not see Tulinov again until six years later, just before I left Tokyo. I was surprised that he was still stationed there but he informed me that he had been back to Russia and was now on another tour in Japan. He was eager to tell me something.

"I have good radio now," he said. "Russian radio. Very superior to GI type."

"So?"

"Yes. Every night get Moscow station. Come very clear, just like next door."

"So?" I said. "Do you ever get New York City on it?"

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed. "Only one station on this set. Radio Moscow."

The Land of Romance

The Imperial Hotel has seen many Great Lovers. Some were just curious about Oriental women, some just drank too much and lost control, some just needed a fling and some were just born that way. Some were smart about it and some were not,. Most of them tried to sneak a girl into their room but occasionally one of them made a pass at an hotel employee. One Navy captain made a grab at a room maid who was actually a Japanese female detective secretly installed on the staff to investigate a minor theft. She scratched him horribly.

After the Russians checked out of the hotel they seldom returned to it unless they were attending a social function, so we never had any more difficulty with them. But it was spring by then and the season seemed to get into the blood of some of the guests. I started off on an entirely new merry-go-round.

All hotel managers had been instructed to be cautious to the point of prudery about the relationship between American guests and Japanese women. One breath of scandal or one accusation by a Japanese woman would

have caused a terrific eruption, no doubt brought on a congressional investigation, and certainly would have made excellent copy for the Russian propaganda machine. Mr. Inumaru once told me that one of the proposals considered by the Japanese government during the preparation for the surrender had been to evacuate all females who had reached the age of puberty from the Tokyo-Yokohama area. The proposal had been discarded but this emphasized the caution we had to adopt. The headquarters published a memorandum prohibiting American personnel from entertaining Japanese females in bachelor officer quarters under any circumstances and this was a great help to hotel managers in the Tokyo area. Of course, it did not change the nature of man, it just hindered it a bit.

There were some wives on the way to Japan by this time but the first shipload had not yet arrived. Some of the men in the hotel seemed content to wait for that second, or third, or fourth honeymoon, but others either could not hold out, or perhaps, felt they should get back into practice. Having no interest in the sexual behavior of any American male other than myself, I was not concerned by the morals of the situation, but I was bound by directive to prevent any American-Japanese scandal from originating in the hotel.

The recreational facilities at the hotel were very limited in the early days. We had opened a small cocktail lounge which served mainly Japanese whisky and gin. Occasionally I could scrounge small quantities of American liquor by playing the old Army game with the Navy, for the Navy always had good whisky; however, these amounts were very small and were always exhausted very quickly. There was a movie theatre in the hotel and an outdoor badminton court. Nobody liked the Japanese

liquor, the badminton court could not be used at night, and some guests did not like movies. But a man has to have something to relax him at night after a full day's work.

Fortunately for me, the Japanese, in spite of their complicated language and their tendency to do things in a roundabout way, have a marvelous talent for G-2 type of work. Anything that smacks of intrigue fascinates them. Consequently, it was seldom that a Japanese female was sneaked into the hotel without my receiving a report on it immediately.

My nights were filled with delicate situations but none came up which could not be handled. Usually when a captain (I had been promoted) faces a senior officer he is at a distinct disadvantage whether he is in the right or not, but in these cases my strength was as the strength of ten because my heart was pure and the other fellow's mind was not. It was loss of sleep and the constant nervous tension the situation caused that finally made me an aspirin man.

There was a transient colonel who seemed so bent on keeping the fires of youth burning within himself that I came to think of him as a pyromaniac in that respect. He called me one night and requested that I have a Japanese call girl report to his room. I told him it was impossible, cited the pertinent directive and explained the rule.

"Look," he said, "these things can be arranged. I know this hotel business as well as you do. I worked as a bell-boy in New York hotels all four summers while I was in school. You're not kidding me."

"Colonel," I told him, "the Imperial Hotel does not employ call girls, it has no connection with bawdy houses

and I am not about to start pimping for anyone. And I'm certainly glad that you know I am not kidding."

He slammed the receiver.

The next night I received a call from the desk clerk. The colonel had tried to bring a Japanese streetwalker into the hotel through the lobby and the clerk had stopped him. He had tried bribes and threats but when these did not sway the clerk he stated that he was going to take the girl to his room and would like to see anyone stop him. That was when the clerk called me. I told the clerk I would come out immediately but when I arrived at the front desk the colonel had already beaten a hasty retreat dragging his tail behind him.

The following night, shortly before three A.M. I received another call from the front desk. One of the Japanese watchmen had reported seeing a Japanese girl climb the low brick wall bordering the north side of the building and enter the colonel's first-floor room through the French door on the balcony. The watchman had not stopped her because she was being assisted in her climb by the colonel.

I gave the colonel every chance to backtrack on his obvious plan for the night. I instructed the desk clerk to call him, inform him that it had been reported that there was a Japanese woman in his room and it would be necessary for her to leave immediately. The colonel denied angrily that he had any guest and told the clerk he had been waked from a sound sleep. I waited half an hour, hoping that the girl would leave the building via the entrance she had used but this did not happen.

I called Colonel Charles A. Mahoney, the Provost Marshal, who lived at the hotel and asked him if he would like to accompany me on a call to the room. I knew he would be interested.

I knocked on the door and after a moment a man's voice asked, "Who's there?"

"The manager," I said. "I'd like to come in and speak to you."

"Just a moment."

There was a hushed scampering about, the sound of garments being flicked and a door being closed gently. Then the colonel opened the door. He was clad in trousers and undershirt and wore a pair of Japanese *zoris* on his feet.

"Colonel, do you have a Japanese female in your quarters?" I asked.

"No. . . . er . . . yes, but I'll get her right out."

"I'm afraid I'll have to see her identification card."

The colonel was shivering and not from the cold, for Colonel Mahoney had stepped into view and was glowering under his beetle brows. He pushed the door completely open and we stepped into the room.

"She's in the closet," the Pyromaniac said.

I pulled the closet door open. The girl was crouched in a corner, dressed in her slip and a sweater and with a man's shirt draped over her head. I lifted the shirt and she looked up.

"You won't tell my custodian, will you?" she asked.

"Do you work for the occupation?"

"Yes, for the custodian of Palace Heights."

Colonel Mahoney fixed her with his piercing eye.

"I'm Colonel Mahoney-san, the Provost Marshal," he boomed. "This is very bad, very bad."

"She's not just ordinary trash," the Pyromaniac offered hopefully. "She's a banker's daughter."

"You won't tell my custodian, will you?" the banker's daughter repeated.

"Colonel," Mahoney-san said, "I guess you realize that you are in grave trouble."

"Yes, sir. I'll do anything to get out of it."

"There's no getting out of it. We have rules here and we enforce them. Now, get that woman out of this building, and quick."

"Yes, sir, right away," said the Pyromaniac, snapping to attention with a click of his heels, not an easy thing to accomplish in a pair of straw *zoris*.

But it was not necessary for him to take any action. Before he finished speaking the girl had donned her clothes and was sliding over the railing of the balcony. As her face disappeared from view she looked at everyone quite beseechingly and said,

"You won't tell my custodian, will you?"

I don't know that anyone ever did.

The Pyromaniac was very apologetic. He admitted that the whole fault was his, that he had nobody to blame but himself. I had explained the rules and he had ignored them. He did not blame me for being angry.

"After all," he said, "I wasn't fair to you."

"No," I said, "you weren't."

I was tired.

However, the next morning the colonel took a lighter view of his escapade. He came to my office to have a friendly man-to-man laugh about it with me.

"It was just my last little fling," he said. "My family is arriving in Japan to-morrow and once mama gets here I'm going to have to—haha—be a good little boy. After all, we're both men of the world, aren't we?"

I had no comment on that.

"After all, nothing was really going to happen in your hotel. I had—haha—transacted my business with her earlier in the evening. When I turn on the—haha—charm

it doesn't take until three o'clock in the morning to get—haha—results.”

I had no comment on that.

“After all, nobody got hurt. I'll bet even that little girl is home thinking of it as a pleasant memory right now.”

I had a comment on that.

“I doubt that she is at home yet,” I said. “She was picked up as a suspected streetwalker shortly after she left the hotel.”

“Oh! That's too bad. She won't lose her job, will she?”

“I don't know,” I said. “I guess it all depends on whether she passed her medical exam.”

“Her what?”

“Her medical exam. When they pick up those girls they always send them to the hospital to be checked for VD.”

I saw the blood start to drain from his face and a look of horror creep into his eyes. He was remembering something. He tried to speak but his throat had gone dry.

“Did she . . . I mean was she . . I mean . . .” his voice trailed off.

I walked over to my small liquor closet, poured a stiff hooker of brandy and handed it to him.

“I have no idea how the exam turned out,” I said, “but I guess you'll—haha—know before I do anyway, won't you?”

During the first half of 1946 there were not many American women in Tokyo, a few WAC officers, some civilians working in the headquarters, some personnel on the staff of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and a sprinkling of Red Cross girls. In general, the senior officers had the pick of this crop and there was

a great deal of speculation on the interesting situations expected to arise when the wives of these officers arrived in Tokyo. However, Tokyo romances usually followed a sensible pattern. An affair ran at lukewarm to torrid until time for the officer's family to arrive in Japan and then it just ceased, the girl progressing on to newer and often greener pastures. I remember when General Campbell, the Quartermaster General, informed me that his wife was due to arrive, I wondered who was going to inherit the blonde he had recently started bringing to dinner at the hotel. I would not have minded being the General's replacement but I was only a captain then and I did not think she would like such a drastic reduction in rank.

There was one Navy officer who did not choose to change his design for living after the arrival of his wife. He continued dating a Red Cross girl and his wife did not think it seemly. She took to drink.

The wife finally decided that she did not want her husband living with her any longer and demanded that I move him to another room. When I informed her that I could not do this she decided to move him herself, went up to their quarters and threw all of his clothing and equipment out the window of their third-story room. By the time I could man a crew of bellboys to recover the officer's belongings the word had been passed to all the street urchins and beggars of Tokyo and they had converged on the Imperial Hotel to reap their share of this gift from the skies. My bellboys had to fight to save some of the clothing and though we recovered ninety percent of it, to this day there are some ricksha pullers in Tokyo who scamper about dressed in genuine Navy blue.

I met General Campbell's blonde one evening while I was in the lobby and when I did I committed a cardinal sin for a hotel man—I did not catch her name and I did

not check to find it out. I had been talking to Mr. Inumaru about my trip to climb Mt. Fuji, scheduled to start the following day, and he had just informed me that there was some difficulty about the reservation at the Japanese inn where I was to stay. I had that on my mind and besides, General Campbell had approached me from the left which is my deaf side and by the time I could swing my right ear into range he had completed the introduction. Of course, I should have asked for a repeat of the name but I was anxious to get away and continue my conversation with Mr. Inumaru.

Mr. Inumaru got on the telephone and straightened out the reservation problem. It seems that the management of the Japanese inn could not understand my coming there for the weekend without a female companion and was certain there had been a mistake.

Shortly after noon of the following day I started my trip to Hakone by jeep. Inumaru had told me that the mountains were the true beauty of Japan and he was quite right. There is a dignity to them that is not describable, a majesty which does not appal you or make you conscious of your insignificance in the plan of things, but makes you more conscious of the good power of whatever God you may believe in. I stopped often to gaze down the long valleys, checkered with geometrically perfect paddies which gave the perspective an added distance. Outside its cities Japan is not of this modern age. The peasants in conical coolie hats, split-toed canvas shoes and black bandage leggings; the thatch-roof farmhouses, and the green and mud rice paddies are all there, just outside Tokyo. It is a good land to see.

Mt. Fuji, itself, is the most magnificent sight in the Japanese islands. It is almost perfectly conical and rises out of a plain, standing off by itself with no neighboring

peaks breaking the lines from base to summit. It is easy to see why the Japanese have attached a sacred significance to this mountain. Some sects even require that members make at least one pilgrimage during their lifetime to worship at the shrine located at the top.

I had a very pleasant room at the Japanese inn and had planned to spend Friday night there, rest all day Saturday, and start the climb Saturday night. But when the light began to fade the insect population of the district invaded my room. There were no screens on the windows and it was too hot to close them. Finally, while I was eating my dinner, the biggest spider I have ever seen ran out on the table and made a snatch at my food, so I decided it would be safer sleeping on Mt. Fuji than in that room.

The owner of the inn procured a guide for me, a local farmer named Kobayashi who was very enthusiastic about this particular trip because it would be his one hundredth ascent of the mountain and he was looking forward to a week of wild celebration at the end of it. We rode my jeep to the third station (there are ten of them spaced up the mountain) and then climbed to the sixth station where we stopped to rest for an hour. Kobayashi rolled up in a *futon* inside the little station hut but the size of the lice that lived there discouraged me from joining him so I wrapped my poncho about me and stretched out on one of the wooden benches in front of the hut. I could see nothing below me but a vast expanse of blackness broken by the few distant lights in Fuji-Yoshida, the village we had just left.

While I was lying there a small light came into view far below in the blackness, zigzagging up the path through the volcanic ash. Then I heard the tinkling of a small bell and I knew a group of pilgrims was climbing

the mountain. I watched until the people passed along the level just below my bench, three blurry white figures in the darkness. As they approached the circle of light which escaped from the door of the station hut the leader, a Buddhist monk, boomed out a hearty "*O-hayo gozai-masu*" (good morning). Then, as the light struck his face, I jumped up excitedly for the expression on his face had startled me. I had seen it only once before, on the face of a Catholic archbishop. It was a look of goodness, goodness and the happiness which comes from it when it has reached perfection. I would give my life to have inside me for one moment whatever it is that produces such an expression on the face of a man.

The pilgrims did not notice my sudden motion and passed off quickly into the darkness. I had a sudden overpowering urge to speak to that monk. The group had been walking rapidly but I could still hear the bell tinkling and see the blinking of the light. Snatching up my flashlight, I started to run after them in the darkness and almost immediately stumbled over a supine figure lying enveloped in a large *futon*. This person had been lying at the edge of a three-foot drop and as I went sprawling across the inert mass we both slid over the edge and skidded down the soft volcanic ash for about twenty feet before we came to a stop. We ended in a tangled heap, I as much enveloped in the *futon* as was its rightful occupant. A head emerged quickly from one of the folds and I heard a feminine voice say,

"Who invited you in here?"

I flashed my light on the speaker's face. It was General Campbell's blonde!

I made awkward apologies as we scrambled back up the slope and, being in a very confused state of mind, I could think of no sensible explanation so I told her exactly

what had happened. She asked me if I had been drinking.

But she was a very good-natured person. We made the rest of the climb together and though I had an aversion to rank-happy young women, I found myself enjoying her company. She was employed as a research analyst at the International Military Tribunal, the court which was to try the major Japanese war criminals, and though she did not take herself seriously, it was obvious from the way she discussed her work that she had a keen mind. The only thing I could not take was the casual way she, from time to time, referred to her relationship with General Campbell. She told me it was a great convenience to be able to use his room at the Imperial to change clothes or take a nap or soak in a hot tub. They had showers at the Old Kaijo Hotel, the women's billet where she was living, and she was a tub woman from way back. That sort of thing went against my grain.

Luckily, she told me that her first name was Fran and that I should call her by it. This averted the difficulty I would have had trying to learn her last name so that I could address her as Miss So-and-So. There are many ways of fishing for a person's name when you are supposed to know it but they are all potentially dangerous. You can say, in a very casual manner, "What is the exact spelling of your name?" but that can often prove embarrassing. I tried this once on a colonel whom I was supposed to know.

"J-O-N-E-S," he had replied, giving me a very strange look.

We saw my monk again, on top of Fuji as we were watching the sun come up. He was standing at the edge, very erect and grasping a tall staff in his right hand. The first rays of light caused golden tints to appear on his

white robes. That look of goodness was etched on his face in soft lines.

"Is that your man of goodness?" Fran asked, nodding towards him.

"Yes," I said.

"I can understand now what you meant," she told me.

She was gazing at him intently and I could see she had the same reaction which I had experienced. I felt as if I had just shared some secret corner of my mind with her and I had a sensation of being grateful to her for understanding me. That was the first time I looked at her with more than passing interest. She was tall and there was a healthy look about her. In spite of having climbed the mountain all night she still had a brushed and combed appearance. She was very beautiful.

All during the trip down the mountain I kept wondering how such an intelligent girl with so much to offer could choose to waste her time on an old goat just because he had a star on his shoulder. By the time I had dropped her off at the Fuji-View Hotel, the Army rest hotel where she was staying, I felt a mounting resentment towards her.

When I returned to Tokyo I found I could not keep the thought of this girl out of my mind. I would tell myself that she was a typical rank-happy young nincompoop with no more sense than the rest of them. Then I'd remember such things as the way she looked while she was watching that monk, her sincere understanding of my reaction to him, her healthy laughter and the happy expression on her face. I finally decided my interest was just a matter of hating to see her wasted in a ridiculous situation. I developed a yen to turn her over my knee and spank some sense into her.

The General brought her to dinner one night later in

the week. They were seated at his table when I entered the dining room and as I sat down at my place she waved to me from across the room. I waved back, then pretended to become engrossed in studying the menu but kept watching them out of the corner of my eye. Fran was talking to the General and he glanced over at me from time to time while she was speaking so I knew she was telling him the story of our climb up Mt. Fuji. When she finished the General burst out in loud guffaws and I imagined she had told him about sliding down the mountain with me.

The General was still laughing when he caught my eye and waved me over to their table. I did not want to join them but there was no way I could avoid it gracefully.

"Sit down, Morris, sit down," the General said. "Have dinner with us. I understand you pushed Fran off a cliff the other night."

"Well," I said, "it was . . ."

"Good man," he interrupted, "I've wanted to do the same thing for a long time but never had the chance."

I was not at ease during the dinner. I could see why Fran liked the General for he was a good-looking man even though in his late fifties and he had a fine sense of humor. I did not contribute much to the conversation. They did not ask me any personal questions and I certainly did not put any to them.

When the meal was over and we had walked to the lobby I thanked them for their company and started to excuse myself.

"Come up to the cocktail lounge and have a brandy with us," Fran suggested. "That is, if you have brandy to-day. Do you?"

"Yes," I said. (The Navy had come through that week.)

"Look, if you're going to have company I think I'll beg off and try to get a good night's sleep," the General said. "Mrs. Campbell is arriving early to-morrow," he explained to me.

"Oh, I see," I said. Actually, I did not.

As we were walking towards the cocktail lounge Fran was smiling to herself.

"Dad won't sleep a wink to-night," she said. "He's so excited about Mother finally getting here."

"DAD!"

"Yes. What's the matter?"

She was looking at me quizzically. I tried to recover my poise before I found myself in that familiar position behind the eight ball, but it was too late.

"He introduced me as his daughter, didn't he?"

I explained about my deaf ear.

"Oh, I see. Well," she said jokingly, "who did you think I was, his concubine?" Then, as she saw the red creep into my face, the realization popped into her mind. "You *did* think I was his girl friend!"

"After all," I started lamely, "everybody sort of took it for granted that . . . I mean . . ."

She erupted into a convulsion of laughter.

"Oh, brother," she said when she had recovered. "Wait till the old boy hears about this."

"For God's sake," I said, "don't tell him about it. I'll be court-martialed."

"Don't be silly," she said. "He'll be flattered to death."

I wanted to forget the matter but she brought it up again while we were having our drink.

"Say," she said, suddenly, "if you thought I was Dad's girl friend . . ."

"Look," I interrupted her. "Haven't I apologized enough?"

"Oh, but I was just wondering," she said, musingly, "if you thought I was that kind of girl, how come you didn't make a pass at me up on Fuji?"

Keigo thought Fran Campbell was an *ichi-ban* (number one) person and became very enthusiastic when I started having dates with her. I was flattered by his sincere interest in my personal life, but I also knew the Japanese mind well enough by this time to read his plan for the future. The idea was to get me married and moved into a house where he, naturally, would come along as number one boy and start to build his own little empire of servants. Keigo was also very rank-conscious. He could not see why I would go out with a colonel's daughter when there was a general's daughter available.

Keigo was delighted when I stopped seeing other girls and devoted all my time to Fran. But his impatience finally got the better of him and caused him to step out of line, the only time anything like that occurred in the six years I knew him. One evening just before I was leaving the room he asked me if I was going to marry Miss Campbell.

"Yes," I said automatically. I was more startled by the easy way the answer popped out than I was by Keigo's impertinence. I told him I might marry her; it would depend on Miss Campbell, but that the matter was none of his business and I did not appreciate such personal questions from my roomboy. He was crestfallen and apologized profusely.

I guess it was this incident which made me decide to ask the important question that evening but before I could get around to it I was handed a setback. It seemed as if every time I made up my mind about this girl some-

thing happened which knocked me flat on my back. She informed me that she would not be able to see me the following Saturday evening as she had a date with a New Zealand Air Force colonel whom she had known in Europe. The date had been made a month before by letter, before I had come to know her so well. The colonel was flying up from Kobe where he was stationed, to attend the ball the New Zealanders were giving in Tokyo to celebrate their national holiday. It was an understandable situation and I had no right to be resentful but, of course, at that stage of the game I was guided by emotion, not logic. It seemed as if fate were adding insult to injury when I learned that the colonel was to be billeted at the Imperial Hotel during his stay in Tokyo.

I met the colonel that Saturday evening and he was in an embarrassing predicament at the time. He had called me on the phone and asked me to come to his room. I thought his voice had sounded a bit muffled and when I saw him I found out why—his false teeth had disappeared.

"It's my own fault," he told me. "I'm such a damned absent-minded person. I'm always leaving the bloody things about because they're so damned uncomfortable. I thought I had put them there on the nightstand as I went in to bathe but when I came out I just dropped on the bed for a nap without noticing them. I should have put them in a glass of water, you know."

I called a couple of roomboys and we made a thorough search of the room but could not locate the missing teeth.

"I might have left them at the Marunouchi, to tell the truth," the colonel said. (The Marunouchi was the British hotel in Tokyo.) "I had a sort of reunion with some of my old mates, you know, and we tipped a few. To

tell you the truth, I was a bit woozy when I left to come over here. I called over there but the blighters seemed to have left for the evening. It's frightfully embarrassing, you know. I have a date with a most charming young thing. Can't very well show up without the teeth, though. Think the Marunouchi people might let me have a look in the room if I dashed over there?"

"I'm quite certain they would," I said. "I know the manager there and I'd be glad to call him about it if you'd like."

"Damned decent of you, old man," he said. "Would you mind awfully?"

His quest must have been unsuccessful because I received a phone call from Fran a little while after. She told me that her date had been taken ill and had suggested that she go on to the dance if she could find a friend to accompany her.

"Fine," I said. "Just think of me as an old buddy."

When I returned to the hotel that night, Keigo was waiting up for me, which was quite unusual. He said he wanted to know what time I wanted breakfast in the morning. This was ridiculous. I never ate breakfast on Sunday mornings. I knew what he was anxious to learn and I decided not to keep him in suspense.

"I'm going to marry Miss Campbell next June," I told him. "I proposed this evening and she accepted me."

"Oh, very happy," he cried, breaking into his full-faced smile, "very happy, Mori-san. Miss Campbell *ichi-ban* person. Very beautiful."

"Thank you, Keigo," I said. "I'm glad you approve."

He bowed a majestic goodnight and as he did I noticed something causing a bulge in the right chest pocket of his white jacket, giving him an unbalanced appearance. I asked him what it was.

"Oh, pencil," he said, pulling one out of the left pocket. I could see he was frightened.

"No, in the other pocket," I said.

He was the most miserable-looking person in the world as he removed the object and held it out for my inspection. It was a handsome set of false teeth!

I've Been to a Marvelous Party

The colonel's lady was giving a dinner for twenty guests. She wanted it to be something they would remember.

"I want it to be a marvelous party," she told me, "so don't hold back on anything. You can go as high as a dollar a person if you have to."

Things were looking up all over. I was engaged to marry a beautiful girl, the hotel was acquiring a clean look and the point requirements for discharge had been lowered so that I could expect to be promoted to civilian within a month. The Army Engineers had completed the reconstruction of the south wing and this had doubled the room space in the hotel. So many wives had arrived in Tokyo that the romantic movement at the hotel had been curtailed to the point of nonexistence. The ladies had set up a Women's Lobby Intelligence Group, a sort of unofficial G-2 organization which quickly achieved a reputation for seeing all, hearing all, learning all and telling all. This accomplished, indirectly, what all the directives and the vigilance of the hotel

staff could not as far as the activities of the boys who ate raw meat were concerned. Those whose wives had already arrived were, of course, out of the running and those wives were to arrive in the future found it wise to tread cautiously. I no longer had to spend the hours between midnight and dawn as a guardian of morals and as soon as I became used to sleeping at night again, I found I liked it.

But if the arrival of American women in large numbers cured one problem, it supplied another to replace it. It started a mad social whirl which moved at such a frantic pace that we had to revamp the banquet section to cope with it. The number of parties given was phenomenal and sometimes a vicious competition resulted when the various hostesses started trying to outshine each other. Each lady wanted a brand-new idea for her affair and insisted that it be more elaborate than the last one she had attended. When some conflict on ideas or reservation dates occurred, I usually ended up in the middle.

At this time Tokyo was ripe for the situation to magnify. The price of an Army meal was still twenty-five cents and there was no limitation on the number of guests who could be entertained by making use of the Quartermaster field ration. Facilities for importing foodstuffs, liquors and others items had become available and by using these things to supplement the Army food, a hostess could give a very elaborate party for a ridiculously low cost. Beverages were particularly inexpensive, the best American whiskies and imported French wines costing a little over a dollar per bottle. The most elaborate banquet did not cost a host or hostess much more than fifty cents per guest. The living was easy.

Steak dinners were the thing and people never seemed

to tire of them. Occasionally someone who wanted to use a local color motif would give a *sukiyaki* party but these were never very popular. I think this was indicative of the aspect which Tokyo assumed. There were two layers to it, the one which had all the characteristics of an American medium-sized city in which the occupation operated, and the other layer beneath this in which the Japanese moved. Fraternization was frowned upon so there was not much mingling between the occupation personnel and the native population on a social level. American society moved at its frantic pace and the Japanese, I guess, went along their way much as they always had.

In many ways the banquet section was easier to set up than the other departments in the hotel. Whereas decorating materials and furniture for the lobby and rooms were issued through Army channels and therefore subject to priorities and paper trouble, I was free to use the profits derived from cocktail lounges, banquet facilities and the club restaurant and snack bar to purchase the equipment needed for these operations on the open market. But this did not mean that I could turn my back on the department. There was still the Japanese mind to contend with, along with everything else.

Something I could never convince the Japanese of was that it is not impolite to say "No" if that is the proper reply to a question. I ran into this during the first large banquet given at the hotel to which the host, Major General Whitlock, had invited all the General officers from SCAP headquarters, among them Brigadier General Fitch, the Adjutant General of the command. General Fitch was undergoing some dental treatment at the time and had informed me prior to the affair that he might not be able to eat anything more solid than scrambled

eggs that evening. He was to let me know definitely but unfortunately it slipped his mind. I was keeping close watch on the service of that affair because it involved such a distinguished guest list and when it came time to serve the entree, *filet mignon*, I realized there would be a great deal of embarrassment if the General was served steak and could not eat it or if he could eat the steak and got scrambled eggs instead.

I had my interpreter speak to a waiter, Takahashi, from our observation post behind a screen, asking him if he could identify General Fitch. He assured us that he could. I then had him instructed to ask General Fitch quietly if he would prefer scrambled eggs to the steak. Takahashi bowed, then went straight—not to General Fitch but to General Whitlock and asked him if he would prefer scrambled eggs instead of *filet mignon*. The rage I felt when I saw this happen was tempered when I noticed the expression on General Whitlock's face. He was looking at Takahashi as if the latter had a bad case of halitosis. I can imagine the thoughts which must have been running through his mind: Have I had too much wine? Is this man crazy? Are my ears going back on me? He watched Takahashi out of the corner of his eye throughout the rest of the evening and I could tell he was uneasy every time the man came near him.

We tried another waiter and this time we were successful. It was a good thing we kept after it. General Fitch's teeth were giving him hell.

Filet mignon was not only the most popular entree for dinner parties, it seemed to be the only one which a hostess would select. I do not know whether it was the French name or the fact that it seemed like a greater saving when the stateside price was remembered. I con-

sumed so many *filet mignons* at parties at the hotel that a dish of *sukiyaki* came to be a treat. I had told Frances about this Japanese food and she was anxious to sample it but we were so busy we did not find time for it until a few days before we were married.

I had the banquet manager of the hotel make a reservation at the Komachi-en, a Japanese restaurant in Omori, midway between Tokyo and Yokohama, where Mr. Inumaru had once entertained me at dinner.

The Komachi-en is a sort of mass production geisha house, well run and well maintained. Dinner is served in private rooms which are set up in traditional Japanese style with *tatami* mat floors which give a peculiar but pleasant massaging sensation to stockinged feet, and décor complete to the last detail of the *tokonoma*, a shrine-like alcove containing a scroll painting (*kake-mono*) on the wall and a single blossom in a small, artistic vase. All woodwork is in a natural polished finish and the wooden floors of the corridors have a remarkable sheen, constantly improved by the movement of felt slippered feet sliding over them. The geishas there are well trained and the food is excellent.

I told the banquet manager that since this would be Fran's introduction to Japanese customs to make certain that everything was special. That happened to be an unfortunate word to use.

The evening started a bit awkwardly, for the Japanese hors d'oeuvres, different varieties of raw fish, threw us for a moment, and the presence of an American woman hampered the geishas whose training covered entertaining men only. But once we became used to the idea, the fish tidbits were pleasing to the tongue, the raw octopus being the tastiest, and when the *sake* jugs had been passed a few times everyone felt more at ease.

Geishas, like everything else Japanese, are an acquired taste for westerners. Their overdone hairdo's, gaudy kimonos and obis, the chalk-white powder with which they coat their faces and the elaborate ornaments worn in the hair tend to give them the aspect of an animated neon sign. But, inevitably, there is a peculiar charm about them and they certainly know how to make a man feel important.

When Kaneko, the star geisha of the house, made her dramatic entrance she paused for a moment, then, though she had seen me only once before, screamed, "Mori-san," skipped across the *tatami* floor to where I was sitting, and immediately started fussing over me, completely ignoring Fran. She patted my cheek, brushed some lint off the lapel of my packet, lit a cigarette and gave it to me, filled my glass, all the while chattering excitedly in Japanese. Suddenly Fran raised the left corner of her upper lip, baring her teeth, and emitted a low growl.

"Tell that cat to stop pawing you before I tear off her wig and beat her over the head with it," she said.

"Now, now, honey," I said. "She's only doing the job she gets paid for."

"Yes?" Fran said. "Well, tell her to quit trying to earn a bonus."

I thought it wise to introduce them at this point.

Kaneko beat her head on the floor twice in acknowledging the introduction and then gave me a look which said, "What did you drag her along for?"

The *sukiyaki* was delicious. It is a sort of Japanese beef stew, flavored with soy sauce, beef stock, sugar and *sake*. It is cooked right before you in a small saucepan heated over an electric hot plate, though in a Japanese home a charcoal *shichirin* (brazier) is used. The secret of making good *sukiyaki* lies in first cooking the onions

and paper-thin slices of beef and when these have added their flavor to the sauce, adding the other ingredients. Anything edible can be put into *sukiyaki*. That night we had leeks, *tofu* (beancurd), *konnyaku* (a gelatin-like vegetable which I could not identify), onions and bamboo sprouts. In the meantime the *sake* and beer flowed freely. The soy sauce causes a pleasing thirst.

After the meal, the geishas pushed back the sliding panels which shut off the adjoining room and the entertainment began. Geisha dancing is slow and postured, but surprisingly interesting. The first number was a solo, accompanied by drumbeating, singing in a high unnatural voice and the music of the *samisen*, a banjo-like instrument with three strings stretched over a drum of catskin. Its music sounds as if the cat were still protesting the loss of its hide.

The party really got on a friendly basis when Fran and I took some lessons in the simpler dances such as the *Tokyo Ondo* and *Sakura Ondo*, two folk dances.

The geisha dances were interesting but they went on and on until they became boring. Then suddenly, the singer-*samisen* player struck a chord on her instrument and started crooning in a sultry voice. Kaneko, who was sitting with us, reached up and turned out the light in our room. One of the geishas stood up from her drum and tied a red silk bandanna around the lamp hanging in the performance room.

"Oh, God, no!" I groaned.

"What's the matter?" Fran whispered.

"Shh," hissed Kaneko. "Now special dance."

There was nothing I could do about it. I had heard about the use of the red bandanna though I had never seen it. The Japanese introduced it when they took up

one of the first democratic institutions to be adopted in Japan—the striptease.

A panel at the far end of the performance room slid back, a tall Japanese girl stepped through, closed the door behind her and commenced a stately Japanese dance. She did not make a vulgar motion during her performance and as she shed each one of her kimonos she did it as unconcernedly as though she were alone, her face never losing the mask-like expression a geisha wears while dancing. When the last of her four kimonos slipped to the floor she struck a Juno-esque pose and the drum beat out in a loud crescendo. The end of the dance did not tax the imagination at all.

The geishas applauded loudly and long.

"Well!" Fran gasped.

"Look," I started.

"Shh," hissed Kaneko. "More special dance."

"Oh, God, no!"

The second dance was a repetition of the first. It was the end of a beautiful evening.

"Well!" Fran gasped again when we were back in the car on our way home. "So that's the kind of place you hang out."

"Now, look," I said. "I had no idea anything like that was going to happen. I was as disgusted as you were."

"You were what?"

"After all . . ."

"You were disgusted?"

"Well . . ."

"She had a beautiful build."

"Yes," I admitted, "but . . ."

"You mean you don't enjoy the sight of a beautiful woman?"

"Well," I said grudgingly, "do you know any man who wouldn't?"

"You had me worried for a minute," she said as she pulled a square of cloth from her pocketbook and began to fold it neatly. "I swiped this for the hope chest."

It was the red silk bandanna.

There was one other time the art of stripteasing caused me a bad moment. Each Saturday evening a dinner dance was held in the Peacock Room, the hotel ballroom, and of course, this was the most popular night of the week for giving large dinner parties. Next to trying to convince some of the women that they could not outrank their sister hostesses who had prior reservations, the biggest problem in this phase of the hotel operation was obtaining floor shows. Japanese performers are excellent when they stick to their own mediums, juggling, acrobatics, and Japanese dancing. But when they attempt western-style entertaining the results are usually quite sad. We avoided using this kind of show as long as we could but since the same guests came to the dances week after week we could not repeat any acts. The supply of Japanese-style talent was soon exhausted and we had to start hiring the imitation-American variety.

One of the first of these was a dancing troupe which had gained some fame in Tokyo. I auditioned it just to be on the safe side and when I did I thanked whatever power it is that watches over people like me, because a featured act on the program was that of BooBoo Shinozaki, a stripteaser. This was not the sort of entertainment appropriate for the clientele at the Imperial Hotel. I explained to the manager of the troupe that I had no personal objection to BooBoo Shinozaki but that the audience which would be present was not exactly the type

which would appreciate her art. He said that he understood and I agreed to hire the troupe with the proviso that there be no striptease included.

The show was so well received that when it came time for the finale I was beginning to congratulate myself. But then, instead of the chorus line which I expected to appear for the last number, out oozed BooBoo Shinozaki and she started to peel, American style. I was frantic but helpless. Most Japanese strip girls are awkward and bovine and BooBoo seemed to have pure Hereford blood in her veins. I stood there and each time a wispy garment hit the floor I flinched as though a bomb had just exploded. Wild ideas, such as running out on the floor and throwing a tablecloth over her, were bouncing through my mind by the time she had gotten down to the last long, filmy garment which stood between me and a fond farewell to the Imperial Hotel. Then, just as she pulled the last snap, the lights went out!

I had always cursed the frequent power failures which occurred in Tokyo but this one completely changed my attitude towards them. The lights came on again in a few minutes but by that time I had four of my heftiest waitresses backstage guarding BooBoo Shinozaki with instructions to stab her if she so much as moved a finger.

That was the last time I lost my temper with a Japanese but it was the most complete job of losing anything I have ever done. There was a hectic scene backstage after the finale. BooBoo was crying because her act had been ruined right at its climax. I was blasting the manager of the troupe with both barrels. I demanded to know whether the strip act had been a deliberate attempt to embarrass the Imperial Hotel or just a result of his natural stupidity.

"But this was not a strip act," he told me hurriedly.

"She has three feathers on under that costume. She wasn't going to take them off. See?"

He muttered something in Japanese to the stripper and before I could say anything she had jumped up and whisked off that last vital garment. She did have three strategically placed feathers left. Not big ones.

"See?" the manager repeated.

I could see. That was the trouble.

I found out later that the troupe manager actually was on firm ground. According to Tokyo police law, an act is a striptease only when it ends leaving absolutely nothing to the imagination, as had the Japanese one at the Komachi-en. All that a performer had to wear to keep within the law was a set of Coca-Cola bottle caps and a minute G-string.

Fortunately, there were no repercussions over this incident because the audience somehow got the idea that it had been designed as a satire on the burlesque houses which had sprung up all over Tokyo. BooBoo's actions had been so awkward that they did seem like a planned exaggeration and her costume had revealed less than some of the evening gowns in the audience. Then, the lights going off at the psychological moment lent credence to this idea. Some of the guests even went so far as to congratulate me on having discovered such a clever little comedienne. This eased my mind, but I was beginning to get a complex about the banquet section because too many of these little matters needed constant watching.

For instance, a simple thing like an ice carving caused trouble. It was the centerpiece for a buffet table at a party given by the Philippine embassy, a carving of a carabao, the water-buffalo of the Philippines. The first guest who arrived happened to be a very good friend of

mine and it was he who noticed the unusual stage effect.

"I knew you went in for realism," he told me, "but don't you think you've overdone it this time?"

He nodded towards the carabao and when I saw what he meant I had to go into action fast. The carabao is an animal with a very rounded belly and the curve of this one's abdomen was such that the melting of the ice caused a dripping at a point which gave, indeed, a most realistic effect. I pulled out my pocketknife and quickly chipped enough ice off the offending section of the statue so that by the time the next guest arrived, though the carving was one of a gaunt carabao, it was also a carving of one whose manners were impeccable.

The most splendid affair given at the hotel was a dinner-dance which Major General Edward M. Almond (General MacArthur's Chief of Staff) and Mrs. Almond gave in honor of General J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff of the Army. Everything was on a grand scale. I submitted the table plan to Mrs. Almond, including a design for a rectangular table framing a large garden done in an adaptation of the Japanese manner. She approved, and wanted the garden to be an exact reproduction of the drawing. I gave the sketch to the Japanese florist who handled all the banquet work at the hotel, cleared up the few questions he had, and thought no more about it. He had always done expert work for us.

I did not check the banquet hall until an hour and a half before the party was to commence and when I did I almost had the fit of apoplexy which people had become convinced would be my natural end. The garden, though very well done, bore no resemblance to the drawing which Mrs. Almond had approved. I called the florist to the banquet hall and demanded an explanation.

"What's wrong with it?" he asked.

"Wrong? Where's the cherry tree that's supposed to be in the middle? Why is the fish pond located in the corner? Where's the moss that's supposed to be on the rocks?"

"Oh. Well, there wouldn't be a cherry tree in the middle of a Japanese garden and that's where a fish pond would be located. And we don't have moss on garden rocks in this country."

"Who cares about that? Who said this was supposed to be a Japanese garden? This was just supposed to be an adaptation of the Japanese idea. It was to be a reproduction of the sketch. I told you that and you said you understood."

"Yes, but I thought you made a mistake."

"Mistake!" I said. "It will be a cold day in a hot place when I make a mistake on a party given by the Chief of Staff."

We had little more than an hour left in which to remedy the defects. I called two of my American assistants, we peeled off our coats and went to work. The biggest problem was procuring a small cherry tree. The florist did not have any available and it was too late to send to the country for one. I had the hotel gardener cut branches off some of the cherry trees on the hotel grounds and with wire and nails and fervent prayers we built a passable tree for the centerpiece. The stuff in that poem about who can make a tree is not correct.

We finished the garden with about five minutes to spare, time enough for Keigo to get me into a tuxedo and for me to get back to the banquet hall to meet and greet the Almonds. They were pleased with the arrangements. I was, too.

The garden was a tremendous success and people were very nice about complimenting me. The wife of

the Inspector General was particularly impressed. She thought the garden was the most unusual banquet decoration she had ever seen.

"You are very kind," I told her.

"Just leave it to these Japanese!" she said.

That was the most splendid party ever held at the hotel but the one I enjoyed most was my own wedding reception. The only unusual thing about the wedding was that everything went off perfectly, no rings were lost or fumbled, everyone showed up on time, no one was nervous.

The reception was a buffet supper for three hundred people held in the Peacock Room at the hotel. Everyone seemed to be as happy for us as we were for ourselves. It was a good party. Fran and I were enjoying it so much that at eight o'clock Captain Nathan W. Bard, USN, who had been one of the ushers, finally made us leave to get started on our honeymoon.

We spent our honeymoon at the Fuji-View Hotel, in the Fuji Bungalow, a small cottage which was an annex to the main building. It is located at Lake Kawaguchi in the Hakone lake district and is a perfect place for a honeymoon. The girl who had charge of making reservations at Army rest hotels recommended it to me. She told me that she did not have much prospect of being married in Japan but that if she ever decided to be led astray she could not think of a better setting for it than the Fuji Bungalow.

When I unpacked my suitcase after our arrival there was a package I did not recognize on top of the clothing. It was wrapped as a Japanese wedding gift, tied with gold and white cords in the traditional knot and with a paper *noshi*, the Japanese sign of a gift, on the wrapping. There was a card with it: "To Mr. and Mrs. Morris

from Keigo." When I opened the box I found a filled *sake* jug, stoppered with a makeshift cork, and three small *sake* cups. Tied to the neck of the jug was a clipping which had been cut out of a book on Japanese customs.

"A set of three *sake* cups are brought to the bridegroom who takes the topmost cup which is then filled with the *sake* in three pours. He drinks this in three sips. The same cup is taken to the bride and is filled and drunk in the same manner. The second cup is then offered to the bride and then to the bridegroom. The third cup is first offered to the bridegroom and then to the bride. The three cups are similarly filled three times each, the *sake* being drunk each time in three sips, the bride sipping delicately or feigning to do so. Thus is the marriage solemnized."

I think that *sake* set is the wedding present we treasure the most. Fran thought it was a sweet gesture on the part of the boy.

"I guess this means that Keigo approves of me as your wife," she said.

"Either that," I said, "or he just wants to be damn sure that you make an honest man of me."

Honeymoon in Hakone

The farmers of Yamanashi-ken are the most poverty-stricken in Japan. The soil in that prefecture is very poor and especially bad for growing rice. Some of the farmers try to get around this by raising corn and pumpkins, but it is like fighting a defensive action. I once asked Kobayashi why he did not move away from the valley.

"You must understand," he said, "there is no place else to go."

Our bungalow was located near the edge of a wooded cliff. There was a wide view; we could look out across the lake and see to the village of Funatsu huddled along the far shore. The Kawaguchi valley is a beautiful place and at many times of day takes on a sheen of unreality. In the early morning the walls of the valley are shrouded in mists; the mountains disappear into a gray veil and you can see white fumes rising from the black surface of the lake. When the sun starts to dissipate the fog it shines through the translucence as a huge white disk and glimmers whitely on the wetness of the

trees and grass so that everything seems newly washed and clean.

That was the time of day when we liked to take long walks along paths at the edge of the lake, for the high walls and the roof of fog seemed to be the boundaries of the earth and the silence and seclusion made us the only people alive. It seemed as if we owned everything that existed. That is the good feeling you should always try to keep. When the sun had scattered the mists and the world belonged to everyone there was no sense of loss, for we knew that it would belong to us again the next morning.

As the day brought the valley back to reality we could see those families that lived on rice farms working furiously in the paddies. The *nyubai* (rainy season) had just started, two weeks late, and though this had relieved the anxiety, there was time to be made up. This season is important to the people of the valley, for it is the unofficial end of spring when the slow miserable birth of things is over; the rice sprouts have grown high enough to be transplanted and the paddies have stored enough warm rain-water to receive them.

One morning we passed a little man who reminded us of Kobayashi, the farmer who had been my guide on the Fuji climb. That made us want to see him again to surprise him with the final result of his one hundredth ascent of the mountain. I knew his farm was in the vicinity of Funatsu so the next day on which riding horses were available at the hotel we rode around the lake to the village to look for him.

It was not an easy task to locate his place. Half the farmers in that district seemed to be named Kobayashi and the rest were named Watanabe. We followed several false leads and then finally, as we were passing a

stamp-sized little field, I saw Kobayashi in the middle of the paddy working with his wife and three small daughters, all of them bent almost double, plunging the green sprouts through the water into the floor of the earth.

Kobayashi did not recognize me when I first called to him but then, when he had come halfway across the paddy, he stopped and called to his family excitedly in Japanese.

"It is the American from last year!"

The family hurried across the paddy to bow solemnly and pay their respects. When I informed Kobayashi that Fran was now my wife there was a great clamor of excitement, a babbling of *O-Medetto gozaimasu* (extremely polite congratulations) and the three children giggled into their hands. Kobayashi and his wife were insistent that we come into their little farmhouse and permit them to honor us with a cup of tea, but I told Fran we should not accept because it would take them away from their rice-planting and that was something they should not neglect at this important time. But the Kobayashis were insistent and when he started apologizing for his poor hovel I did not see how we were going to avoid it without insulting the man. It was then that Fran had one of her brilliant ideas.

"Let's help them with their rice planting," she said.

"What!" I exclaimed.

"The exercise would do us good."

"What!"

"You've been away from the common touch too long."

"Oh, you mean a back-to-the-soil movement."

"Yes."

"Back-to-the-earth, sweat-of-the-brow stuff, eh?"

"Yes."

"Are you serious?"

"Absolutely."

"Well, anything you can do, I can do better."

When I explained the idea to Kobayashi in my halting Japanese he just stood there looking at me blankly. Mrs. Kobayashi, in an unbelieving voice, asked him what I had said. Kobayashi did not answer her. He just kept staring at me with that blank look of shock on his face.

"You mean . . . you want . . . to work in the paddy with us?" he asked after a moment.

"So *desu*," I said. (That's right).

Kobayashi turned to his wife.

"They want to work in the paddies with us," he said in a helpless tone of voice.

Mrs. Kobayashi looked at me and then looked at Fran and her face slowly took on that familiar "these crazy American" expression.

"Ah, so *desu ka?*" she said. (So that is what it is.)

We tethered the horses at the house, took off our shoes and socks and rolled our slacks up above our knees. As we walked back to the paddy I was beginning to pick up more and more enthusiasm for the idea.

"You know," I said to Fran, "when I was small I used to love to walk in the mud barefoot."

"So did I," Fran said. "Darling, we have so much in common."

"Oh, shut up," I said.

When we reached the edge of the paddy the Kobayashis still had disbelieving looks on their faces. We stopped at the edge of the embankment for a moment and looked out over the surface of the water. Then the Kobayashis stepped in and turned to help us down the slight incline.

"No, no," I said. "We can manage by ourselves." And

at that instant the edge of the bank gave way beneath my weight, I skidded down the incline and was suddenly sitting up to my armpits in thin mud gruel.

I was surprised. The Kobayashis were collectively horrified and Fran was laughing so hard she had to sit down.

"Darling," she said. "I know you always throw yourself right into a thing, but you didn't have to do that to prove it."

"You and your big fat ideas," I said.

It was funny but we had an immediate problem on our hands because to the Kobayashis a tragedy had occurred. Mrs. Kobayashi was berating her husband as if the whole thing, including the idea, had been his fault and no matter how we tried to convince him that the accident was really something to laugh at, he still looked ready for the *hara-kiri* knife.

Mrs. Kobayashi wanted to launder my clothes for me immediately, but I was anxious to get back to the bungalow and bathe. It was very hot by now so the wet clothing was not too uncomfortable but as the cloth began to dry on me I found I did not smell very nice.

We made one more futile effort to convince the Kobayashis that the incident was the funniest thing that had ever happened to us and certainly a matter of no importance but as we left we could see that it had made no impression. They still felt they had done me a horrible wrong.

I knew they had taken the matter seriously but I did not realize quite how deeply they felt about it until that evening when a package was delivered to me at the hotel. It was from Kobayashi. After his day's work in the field he had walked the long trek from Funatsu to

the hotel with a present for me. He had left immediately so I did not see him. There was a note with the package, most likely written by the village scribe, expressing Kobayashi's sorrow at the conduct of his rice paddy in causing me embarrassment and holding himself forever disgraced. The package contained a battledore, a paddle which Japanese children use for playing a type of badminton game at the New Year season. It was a little over two feet long and the back was decorated with pictures of *Kabuki* characters done in cushioned silk. It is something Japanese women keep all their lives and pass on to their children. I guess it was the only thing the Kobayashis had left to give away.

Both Fran and I felt very badly that our silly whim had brought the poor man so much grief and we could not leave things standing like that. So, the next day we loaded up with presents for each member of the Kobayashi family. We did not go to see them during the day because we did not want to interrupt their rice planting again. When the light was beginning to fade, I got a sedan from the hotel and we drove over to the little farm.

The Kobayashis were just coming in from the paddy as we drove up. They were delighted to see us, especially Mrs. Kobayashi, for I had the impression that she had expected us to hold the family forever in disdain. But right away we were in another spot, for Kobayashi insisted that we permit him to honor our marriage by serving us dinner. It was a delicate situation because, though we both ate Japanese food at times, a Japanese farmhouse is not the most sanitary place in the world nor are Japanese farmers very conscious of cleanliness. But Kobayashi seemed to be able to read my thoughts.

Mrs. Kobayashi would clean all the plates and chopsticks in boiling water as was the custom among Americans. And she would be very careful in cooking the rice and tea.

That was the dinner. Rice and tea. That was what these people existed on. I am not overly fond of rice, even though the Japanese cook it well, so that each grain remains individually separated, not resulting in a glutinous mass. But I ate it feeling that in doing so we were in some way making up for the trouble we had caused these people. And I am not fond of the green tea which Japanese brew for it is very weak and flavorless, only one degree removed from hot water. But when I had finished the first cup I felt I should compliment Mrs. Kobayashi in some way.

"The tea is delicious," I said to her. "May I have another cup?"

Then I could have kicked myself, for Mrs. Kobayashi threw a frightened glance to her husband and I noticed for the first time that none of the Kobayashis had taken tea.

"I regret that there is no more tea," Kobayashi said, "but my wife will purify some water by boiling it so that it will be proper for you to drink."

When I looked at Kobayashi he was neither ashamed nor defiantly proud. He had used his last spoonful of tea to honor us and since he had done his best, it was good enough for any man. I could see that he, somehow, knew this instinctively. You learn important things in unimportant places.

When we returned to Tokyo many people were very kind in giving receptions and parties in our honor. Most of them were lavish affairs and made us realize strongly

how good people are. But though all those martinis, *filet mignons* and Baked Alaskas had the same meaning, none of them had the same impact as that one spoonful of green tea that the Kobayashis gave us.

Metamorphosis

After I changed from military to civilian status some people still addressed me as Captain Morris, either out of habit or because they thought it was flattering. An English diplomat who was living at the hotel told me that in England I would still be addressed by my military title even though I was not on active duty.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "I think I'll still call you 'Captain.'"

"Okay," I said, "but smile when you say that."

I had completely forgotten the Imperial Hotel during those ten days in Hakone and when I returned to it I had quite a shock. It was then that I first recognized the changes which had taken place since the day I entered the building in 1945, changes which had been so gradual and subtle that they were not apparent to anyone as close to the operation as I. Everything had changed, the clientele, the administrative system, the facilities, the capacity of the building, its appearance, even the brown brick walls looked, if not different, at least cleaner.

Originally the Imperial Hotel had started out as a relatively simple proposition—a bachelor officers' billet for senior officers of the occupation forces. It had the same characteristics as any other GHQ billet. It operated under the jurisdiction of the Billeting Section of Headquarters and Service Group, the command to which I was assigned. There were many problems but none of them was particularly complex. Only the very senior officers in the headquarters were billeted there, but they were assigned through the normal billeting procedure in the Billeting Section.

I guess the first change in the operating procedure started when the personnel for the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, the court which was to try the major Japanese war criminals, began to arrive in Tokyo. They were important people and the Headquarters Commandant took an active interest in their welfare. Eventually I found that I was dealing with the Headquarters Commandant on the billeting problems at the Imperial instead of with the billeting office of the command as I had been doing.

When the Justices who were to sit on the tribunal were billeted in the Imperial, the accommodations there took on an international importance. These men were the most prominent dignitaries to come into the theatre since the end of the war and since they represented eleven different proud nations and were presumably the outstanding jurists in those countries, their wishes had to be handled with care. I think the most far-reaching change in the administrative control of the Imperial dates from the evening when one of the British Justices learned that, though members of the court were billeted in rooms with bath, some of the senior generals living at the hotel had two-room suites. He checked this with

me when he met me in the lobby and I told him it was true.

"But, good Lord," he boomed in his stentorian voice, "a justice outranks a general in any country."

His voice bounced around from wall to wall and the whisper of conversation in the lobby ceased abruptly. There never was much sound in "the morgue" at any time but at that moment it seemed as if a new body had just been carried in.

Perhaps I attach too much importance to this particular incident, but the next afternoon I was told to bring a floor plan of the hotel to a conference in the office of General MacArthur's Chief of Staff, a conference to be attended by the Chief of Staff, the Headquarters Commandant, the billeting officer, the Secretary, General Staff, the G-4 of SCAP and myself. The agenda had only one subject—the living accommodations for the eleven Justices of the International Tribunal for the Far East. I don't know the background which led to that meeting but I do know that the purpose of it was to make the Justices happy about their lot in Tokyo—and at all costs. The Chief of Staff told me to point out the suites which already existed and indicate rooms which could be converted into two-room apartments. He told me to forget about who was now occupying the rooms, regardless of the rank they held. The conference ended when I was instructed to submit a list of the personnel who would have to be moved in the hotel to make the eleven suites available and to prepare the suites for inspection by the Justices. This was accomplished in a few days. When the Justices did look at the suites, Brigadier General Harold Eastwood, the G-4 of General MacArthur's headquarters, came along to help conduct the tour, to lend importance to the occasion.

There were other accommodations offered to these dignitaries, in Japanese houses which had been taken over for use by the occupation forces. Whatever they were, they did not appeal to the gentlemen as much as the Imperial and they chose to stay there. The eleven suites were turned over to them and they drew lots to see who got what.

These Justices seemed to herald the flow of VIP's who came to Tokyo, a flow which had not ceased at the end of the occupation. Billeting at the Imperial Hotel became such a delicate matter that control passed from Headquarters and Service Group to the office of General MacArthur's Chief of Staff, being co-ordinated by the Secretary, General Staff. It continued to be handled on this high level until the day the hotel was turned back to the Japanese.

The system worked very informally at first. There were only one hundred and fifteen rooms available for resident guests so the billeting was easy to control. When radiograms were received, announcing the arrival of important personages in Tokyo the Secretary, General Staff, screened them and if he decided a person was prominent enough to warrant billeting in the Imperial, called me on the phone to make the reservation. This method worked very well until the south wing was opened, doubling the capacity of the building and creating a volume of business too large to be controlled so simply. A billeting policy for the Imperial was written in the office of the Chief of Staff, defining who would be billeted at the hotel, and the type of accommodations to which they would be entitled. General officers and admirals were given a two-room suite, colonels and Navy captains a room with bath, and a limited number of lieutenant colonels and Navy commanders were accommodated in

rooms without bath. The policy also delegated the responsibility for operation of the hotel to the Headquarters Commandant, but in spite of this, most of my orders still came directly from the office of the Chief of Staff, even those concerning operating procedures. This resulted in my having two bosses, but it worked out very well. Occasionally I found myself bouncing between the two offices when there was some difference of opinion between them, but this did not happen often.

When I became a civilian shortly before my marriage, my physical position in this administrative system did not change. I was still employed by the Department of the Army and I was still responsible to the same superiors. But the psychological difference was tremendous. A captain who has to serve two masters has no alternative but to bounce between them with a brave smile on his face, whereas a civilian does not bounce so easily—he can always quit.

The greatest impact on the character of the Imperial Hotel was the arrival of American women in Japan. Their effect was gradual but firm and permanent. At first, they were only billeted at the hotel for a short time while waiting for their houses to be put into readiness for occupancy. Still, many things were needed to make them happy, a larger cocktail lounge, more banquet facilities and a program of dinner-dances to accommodate the social whirl they started and, most pressing, facilities for them to obtain a mid-morning snack and afternoon tea. Actually most of them should not have been eating between meals but my responsibility for the shape of things was limited to the structure of the building.

The Army Field Ration mess, the only food service available at the hotel at that time, provided for only three meals a day. It was therefore impossible to serve food

except during the prescribed meal hours. However, when facilities for importing food opened up, it was possible to inaugurate, as a commercial enterprise, service of a sandwich menu, snacks, salads, beverages and light meals through room service and in the cocktail lounge at all hours of the day. This service caught on very quickly and mushroomed when a directive came out prohibiting the use of the Army Field Ration for social functions larger than twelve guests including the host and hostess. The food for parties larger than this had to be procured through the snack bar service. We were able to meet the new volume of business since we could now obtain food from all over the world, from every place except Japan itself. Occupation personnel were prohibited at that time from buying indigenous food. I had some regrets, for the Japanese seafood is excellent and, though Japan is not a meat-eating nation, the most delicious beef in the world is the tenderloin from cattle raised in the Kobe area in southern Japan. It was not widely known that before the war Japan was reputed to have the most delicious steaks and beer in the world. Mr. Inumaru attributed the fineness of these products to the water of the country. I do not know how true this theory is but it sounds reasonable.

We were able to procure some Japanese seafood, but this came to us in a roundabout and ridiculous way. Japan was exporting such items as crabmeat, lobster and frozen frogs' legs to America. It was legal for us to purchase these items from dealers in the United States since once they arrived there they were no longer considered to be Japanese. Consequently, the food had to make a round trip over the Pacific Ocean before we could put it on our stoves. I never did figure out the common-sense

reason for this but I imagine there was some logic behind it. There must have been.

The real difficulty I had in setting up this service was due to another one of the Army directives, a type of complication which I ran into often as the hotel expanded. This directive prohibited Japanese personnel from handling Military Payment Certificates, the money used by the occupation forces, a measure necessary to curtail black-market activities. The problem was to find a legal way of obtaining payment for all items sold through facilities operating on a commercial basis. Up until this time the cocktail lounge had been operated for the use of resident guests only, and the problem was overcome by having them sign a check for any order so they could be billed at the end of the month or when they checked out. However, after the women had moved from the hotel to their houses, they found they needed a social center in downtown Tokyo and the Imperial Hotel was it. For them and for any high-ranking personnel who were merely passing through Tokyo, the signature system was not feasible.

I called the office in which this particular directive had been written and explained that we had such a tight accounting system at the hotel that it would be very difficult for an employee to divert any money to the black market. I thought perhaps an exception to policy could be made.

"I'm afraid not," the officer to whom I spoke told me. "We could wink at your not complying with the regulation but what would happen if some IG from Washington came here and found out about it? You'd be in a spot and so would we. It's just too risky."

"Well, what would you suggest as a solution?" I asked.

"Use the loophole in the directive," he said.

"What is the loophole?"

"Oh, I don't know. But there must be one. There always is in these things. You just find it and you'll be all right. Oh, and you might let me know about it when you do figure it. We might have the same situation some place else."

"I see," I said. "Well, thanks."

"Not at all, Morris," he said. "I'm glad to help out any time I can. You call me any time you want."

The solution was not in finding a loophole but in the use of chitbooks. These chitbooks were made up in monetary denominations and sold through the cashier to guests who used them instead of money to pay for items. What it amounted to was creating our own currency for use in the hotel. It was a small inconvenience to the guests, but it did work successfully.

The snack service was the first step in the expansion of commercial facilities of the Imperial Hotel. In order to govern this expansion program a club organization was formed. It was controlled by a house committee which functioned as a board of governors and which, incidentally, became a third set of bosses to whom I was responsible. This House Committee was a great help to me. It was composed of five members, a General officer, who acted as the president, an Army colonel, a Navy captain, an Air Force colonel and a civilian of rank equivalent to that of the officers. Men seldom attain these ranks without having something to offer, so it was like having a brain trust at my disposal.

The organization was called the Imperial Hotel Club and under its jurisdiction came the cocktail lounges, banquet operations, snack bar service and any other facility which operated on a commercial basis. The membership privileges were extended to all guests who had ever been

billeted at the hotel and to all officers in the headquarters with the rank of colonel or above. The membership was therefore exclusive and there was some bitterness among people who did not have sufficient rank to rate the privilege. The club facilities operated on a healthy financial basis even though prices were ridiculously low. This made it possible to dispense with charging dues or initiation fees.

The innovation of snack bar service in the cocktail lounge increased the trade there tremendously. It became a favorite luncheon place for the ladies (they never did have a high opinion of the Army mess) and the volume of business during the cocktail hour also increased as the custom of dropping into the lounge for a social drink before dinner became popular. This social atmosphere was something which had not existed before the women came to the Imperial. The volume finally outgrew the size of the lounge and the need for a larger and more elaborate room became apparent.

However, before I could make an expenditure for such a change now I had to get the approval of the House Committee. The gentlemen who composed this body, while not being ultra-conservative, were extremely cautious. There were several reasons for this. Handling government funds, whether appropriated or non-appropriated, is a very delicate business and any errors can have a lasting result on a man's career. Also, there was a feeling on the part of some members of the committee that it was not sensible to spend money renovating the hotel when there was no way of knowing how long the occupation would last. It might mean that we merely spent the money to make a handsome present to the Japanese. There was some opinion that profits should be dissolved by reducing prices, even to the point of selling

at a loss, in order to give the benefit of any money accrued to the people who had spent it at the hotel in the first place. There was a great deal of merit to this theory but I did not see the occupation ending for some time to come and in a hotel, as in everything else I guess, you either move ahead or you find yourself slipping backwards. If the hotel facilities did not expand with new attractions for people, they would tire of what we did have to offer and seek diversion elsewhere, in newer surroundings. This last point was one of the biggest problems in operating the Imperial, for at that time and even as the clientele increased the same people came to the Imperial day after day and week after week. No matter how good a thing is, people will become used to it and tire of the sameness. This was another one of the problems which made operating the Imperial a unique proposition; it is not the type of problem you encounter in an ordinary hotel operation.

At any rate, before I could go ahead with the work on a new cocktail lounge I had to prove to the House Committee that it was necessary, feasible and would turn into a paying proposition. This was not an annoyance for it was excellent experience for me, acted as a checkrein on my enthusiasm and gave me the benefit of the guidance of men much older and far more experienced than I. Estimates and plans had to be complete to the most minute detail, and though they were thoroughly discussed and dissected at the monthly meetings of the committee, it was very seldom that I did not get what I wanted. After discussing the prospectus for the new cocktail lounge there was one member who voted against it. He was of the mind, not only on this proposition but on every other, that instead of spending money on improve-

ments the profits should be dissipated through reduction in prices. He was outvoted and I got my way.

The new cocktail lounge proved to be a worth-while investment for it paid for itself within two months. I saw that our profits were large and I could see this leading to a problem in dealing with the House Committee. If we accumulated a large surplus in the treasury, a reduction in prices would be mandatory, but what I feared was having to raise prices again when the surplus was dissipated or if some unforeseen contingency ate up the extra money. This would be an unpopular move as far as the patrons were concerned. I tried to keep the profit down in the cocktail lounge by serving free hors d'oeuvres during the cocktail hour but the device had an effect opposite to that for which I had hoped. The hors d'oeuvres seemed to create a much greater thirst among the guests and both our volume of business and profits increased.

However, a use for any money we could spare suddenly became apparent. The women began to tire of the Army Field Ration and the snack service could not counteract this completely. The reason for their complaints was not actually the quality of the food or its preparation, but the sameness of the diet. The Army ration was designed for troops in the field and though it was a healthy diet it was not a suitable menu for a first-class hotel. It was well-planned to give the fighting man the energy he needs but it will never include roast pheasant chablis or Châteaubriand nor will it ever provide such niceties as shrimp cocktail and lobster salad. In using the Army ration we could not take advantage of the talents of the Grand Chef of the Imperial Hotel, an old man who had been trained in France, Italy and England. When the Quartermaster issues frankfurters,

no matter how they are stuffed with cheese and masked with batter or wrapped in bacon, when you break through the camouflage you are going to be eating hot dogs and there is no way you can get around it.

The kitchen was supervised by an American mess steward and a crew of soldiers, all members of my staff. The steward at this time was a young sergeant who was wise enough to understand that the best results would be obtained if he made certain that proper sanitary standards were maintained, kept the kitchen records accurately, made certain that no food stocks were diverted, and took advantage of the talent of the Grand Chef by utilizing his knowledge—not trying to teach him how to cook.

The women with whom we had difficulty at the hotel usually fell into one of two categories, the expert Decorators and the expert Dieticians. The Decorators were not too hard to handle but the Dieticians were hell on aging legs. For some reason they blamed the lack of variety in the menu on the chef, not on the Army agency which dictated the diet. Each one of the Dieticians was certain she could outcook the chef with one hand. I finally gave one of the most persistent of these gripers a chance at it. I think of her as the "Gourmet." She came to my office one day and told me that any time that poor excuse for a chef wanted to learn something about menu planning she would be glad to give him the benefit of her twenty years' cooking experience.

"Fine," I said. "Let's start right now. How about suggesting the luncheon menu for to-morrow?"

"Fine," said the Gourmet, plumping herself down at my desk and becoming very business-like. "Now, you send for the menu he has planned and by the time you

get it up here, I'll have shown you what he could have done with it. Now, then, what were you issued for the entree?"

"Spaghetti," I said. "Eighty-three pounds of spaghetti and ten pounds of hamburger meat."

"Oh," she said. "Well . . . hmm . . . spaghetti, hmm? Er . . . anything else?"

"No," I told her. "Just eighty-three pounds of spaghetti and ten pounds of hamburger meat."

"Well," she said, "the way I prepare spaghetti is to . . ."

She ran through the recipe for the dish which we billed as spaghetti *à la Bolognaise*.

"Yes," I said when she had finished, "we call that spaghetti *à la Bolognaise*. I think it's delicious but, of course, it's still spaghetti and meat balls."

"Hmn . . . spaghetti and meat balls," she said thoughtfully. "Well, you just prepare it the way I told you and you won't have any trouble. There's nothing wrong with spaghetti. Everybody likes it."

"Everybody likes spaghetti?"

"You just prepare it the way I said and you won't have any trouble."

"I'll tell you what," I said, "I'll list it on the menu as spaghetti *à la Mrs. the Gourmet* this time."

"Oh, no," she said, quickly, "no, no, don't do that. I don't want these women to get the chance to. . . . What I mean is, I don't want any of the credit. After all. . . . No, don't put that on the menu."

"All right," I said.

I thanked her for her help and she told me to think nothing of it. That was exactly what I thought of it. I think she realized this because I learned later she was

letting it be known that young Morris had a mean streak in him.

It was obvious that the only way to stop these complaints was to open an à la carte restaurant serving a widely varied menu and making it possible for the Grand Chef to use his ability to the furthest limit. This idea became a pet project for me. It was the last facility that the Imperial needed to make it a full-fledged hotel and besides that, one of my favorite hobbies is eating good food. I wanted to make this restaurant the show place of the Imperial Hotel and to this end prepared elaborate designs for lavish drapes, indirect lighting, small fountains, glass-enclosed aviaries, and wall-to-wall carpeting. The financial prospectus showed that at our current rate of operation the expense could be easily absorbed.

When I submitted the periodic financial report at the next House Committee meeting, the eyes of the price-reduction member shone with a happy light. He looked the report over closely.

"Well," he said to the committee, "it looks as if we'll have to reduce prices at last. In another month we'll have so much cash on hand the IG will probably make us turn some of it in to the Army Welfare Fund. You will have too much on hand in another month, won't you, Morris?"

"Well, gentlemen," I said, "to tell you the truth, I've been thinking that what this hotel needs now is an à la carte restaurant to complement the Army mess, a really fine restaurant serving really fine food. If this is to be the finest hotel in Tokyo it should have the finest restaurant."

"That will take quite a bit of study," the Price Reducer offered. "There's a lot of things to be considered

before anything like that could be gone into. We'd need a complete study of it."

"Well, as a matter of fact," I said, "I brought along a study of the proposition and it looks to me as if the restaurant is not only a possibility but a necessity because people are getting tired of the Army rations. I think you'll see from the information in this folder that the restaurant would pay for itself just as quickly as the snack service and the cocktail lounge did."

I placed the folder of information in the middle of the table.

"Do you have enough refrigeration space for this?" the Navy member asked as he picked up the folder.

"Yes," I told him, "the figures are all in there."

"You know," he said to the other members of the committee, "I have heard some of the women complaining about not being able to get a good dinner unless they go to a party."

"Women! Women!" the Price Reducer said heatedly. "Everybody keeps talking about what the women want. I thought this was supposed to be a man's world."

"It's a man's world," the Navy officer told him, "but you'll find that the women run it."

I got the approval for the restaurant and within a week I also had the truth of the Navy man's statement brought home to me very forcefully. A housing shortage had occurred in Tokyo and in order to help alleviate it, the billeting policy for the Imperial Hotel was amended to permit families composed of husband and wife only, to elect to live at the Imperial permanently instead of taking up residence in a Japanese house as they had been required to do. Many of the women wanted to avoid the trouble of setting up a household and took advantage of the provision.

This happened just at the finish of the first phase of the redecoration program we had started in the north wing in 1945 and it knocked the bottom out of the whole plan.

The Best Laid Plans

The redecorating program for the north wing and lobby was one of the best laid plans of mice or men and it went the way of a lot of them. It started out as a plan of man but after the Decorators had kicked it around for a while, I developed an unnatural craving for cheese.

It all started one morning while I was holding a staff conference in my office to discuss the progress of the rehabilitation program. Much had been accomplished. The kitchen had been renovated and the coating of grime and dirt which covered the walls of the north wing had been removed and replaced with paint. This painting project proved to be a circular thing for by the time the last rooms were finished the ones which had been painted first were again in need of repair. But there was a great deal of satisfaction derived from seeing the first phase of our program completed.

Materials for draperies had been received and work on the draping of rooms had started. I decided to give the guest rooms in the north wing priority over other

locations in the hotel and this required revision of the work schedule. While we were discussing this my secretary interrupted the meeting to announce that one of the guests, a woman whom we later nicknamed the "Boudoir Girl," insisted on seeing me immediately about an urgent matter. I gave the staff members some last instructions and dismissed them.

The Boudoir Girl was so breathless when the secretary ushered her into my office that I had the impression she had just run a long distance. She was built like a fat sparrow so the exertion had been hard on her. She could not speak for a few moments after seating herself at my desk.

"Mr. Morris," she finally said between gasps, "they're hanging new drapes in my room."

"Yes," I said, happily, "we finally received the material to make them. We'll be able to redrape the whole north wing within the next six weeks."

"But they're gold!" she exclaimed. "Gold-colored."

"Well, yes," I said. "That was the color we selected when we made up the decorating scheme for the rooms. Cream-colored walls with light tan trim, gold drapes and, when and if we get them, beige rugs."

"But they're gold!" she exclaimed again. "And I'm not a gold type of person. I've elected to stay here permanently, at least for the next six months, you know, and well, I might be able to stand gold drapes for a week or so, but for six months . . . well, they'd just drive me to distraction, really. It's not that they're not nice-looking, but as I just said, I'm not a gold type person. I have to have something that will . . . well, you know, reflect my personality. Now, you just look at me and tell me what color you think goes with me."

"Well," I began cautiously, "that's not an easy thing

to do. You're not just a run-of-the-mill person and . . ."

"Oh, Mr. Morris," she said with a pshawing tone in her voice, "I'll bet you've met any number of people exactly like me."

As a matter of fact I had met people like her and such encounters had always left me sadder and wiser.

"Well," I started, "I'll . . ."

"I'll tell you," she interrupted. "I was out to dinner at one of the houses last week and they had the sweetest rose drapes in the powder room, just small ones but I fell in love with them right away. You get your drapes from the same place as the people in the houses, don't you?"

"Well, yes," I admitted. "The material for the rooms here is issued through the Quartermaster Section but . . ."

"And I was thinking," she interrupted, "for the bedspread, you know that lovely green material you've got in that banquet room. What's the name of it? The Komi Room?"

"The Kame Room," I corrected. "But that material is not issued through the QM. We have to buy it on the open market out of club funds. Anything you see in the club facilities is bought commercially."

"Oh. Well, I'm sure we could work out some sort of little switch, couldn't we?" She let a coy baby tone creep into her voice. I had heard her use it often. "You know," she said, "you could give me some of the green for the bedspread and use some of the QM stuff for the club some place. If I just have that rose and the green, the room will . . . well, you know, look more like me."

"I tell you, ma'am," I said, desperately, "we've already received the material for the rooms and I don't think we'd be able to exchange it now."

"Oh, I'm sure it can be done," she said. "I can have

Henry [her husband] go down and speak to the Quartermaster officer. We've been a colonel for a long time, you know, and Henry's serial number is very low. We can get pretty much anything we want."

"Let me check first and see what can be done," I suggested.

"All right," she said, rising to go, "and I just know we'll be able to make that room into my own little home away from home."

I could see a bleak situation arising. Every day more women were electing to stay at the hotel (they had to agree to stay there at least six months) instead of moving to a house. If one was permitted to design her own room, the privilege would have to be extended to all of them and this would cost us the advantages of having standard, interchangeable equipment in the rooms. I knew that most of them would want their quarters to be a "reflection of my personality."

I took the matter up with one of my superiors but the results were not good. The word was out to please the ladies and keep them off the backs of the higher-ups who had more important problems to worry about than the color of the draperies in the Imperial Hotel.

The Boudoir Girl got her rose-pink motif. She gave me a sketch of the design she wanted used. It called for a series of lavish loops and folds and for one entire wall to be covered with the drapery material. She thought the idea was unique. It was unique, indeed.

There was a mix-up in the placing of these drapes when they were finished. The housekeeper made an error in room numbers and hung them in the quarters of a Navy officer. I learned of this the following day and went to call on the officer to apologize for the mistake and explain that the drapes would be changed immedi-

ately. I told him they were not exactly appropriate for a man's quarters.

"Yeah," he agreed. "I was trying to decide what they would be appropriate for, but I couldn't make up my mind."

The Boudoir Girl was delighted when the drapes were placed in her room. She said she felt like a jewel that had just been placed in its proper setting.

The following afternoon she had the ladies of the hotel come in for tea to admire her little home away from home. That was the day the dam broke.

So many of the wives decided they wanted their own little homes away from home that the decoration plan for the north wing assumed a crazy-quilt pattern. The QM had a wide selection of poor designs and the women had a field day trying samples and deciding they did not like them. I tried to tell myself it was a punishment for some sin of my past life, but this was small consolation, for if that is the way fate plays the game, I could have done things much worse than I had and the scale would have been more in balance.

The rank problem came up again. I had run into this in the banquet reservation business so I was traveling across familiar ground. Some women had to be convinced they were getting a better deal than the ones married to officers with a junior date of rank. This acute consciousness about what they were entitled to is easy to explain. Many of them could not forget the days when they were wives of brand-new second lieutenants and had to swallow their pride daily in order to be a help rather than a hindrance to their husbands' careers. Now that they were in the upper brackets themselves they were going to make up for it. I could understand this attitude, but understanding it did not help me when I was

trying to convince a senior colonel's wife that I could not prevent another woman from selecting the same pattern of drapes for her room.

The problem was further complicated by the fact that we were able to buy much better quality things for the public rooms which were operated by the club than the QM could procure under the operating policies for that section. Some of the women were not interested in policies or problems—they knew what they wanted when they saw it and they could see no reason why they should not have it.

This attitude extended over into the painting of rooms. We had selected cream color for the walls for several reasons. The Army Engineer Section, through which we drew paint for the guest rooms, had assured me that this color was the one most likely to be always in good supply. Also, a light color was needed on the walls for, it seemed to me, most of the windows of the Imperial Hotel were designed for the specific purpose of shutting out as much daylight as possible. They vary in dimensions from eighteen inches by six feet to eight inches by eight inches. Some of the rooms have balconies and these require French doors which permit a reasonable amount of daylight to enter a room but this might have been an oversight on the part of the architect. There was a craze for dark walls at the time and I was beset daily by women armed with copies of *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine who pointed out the exact colors they wanted. I could not make them understand that the Engineer Supply Section had a very restricted variety of colors from which one could choose. They would point to the dark colors of the cocktail lounge and banquet rooms where we wanted a "soft lights" atmosphere. An explanation of the fact that the materials used in decorating these rooms

were purchased on the open market did not seem to complicate things in their minds. They merely dismissed it with some sort of comment to the effect that "I'm sure you can work it out somehow, Mr. Morris," and that seemed to settle the problem for them.

It is not surprising that the set-up was confusing to them. It was often confusing to me. The organizational structure of the Imperial Hotel was as paradoxical as anything the Japanese had ever thought up on their own—and they are experts at that sort of thing. In my position I wore several different hats. I was in charge of the billeting phase of the hotel operation and for that was called the *hotel manager*. I was in charge of the club operations and for that was called the *club manager*. I was in charge of the Army motion picture theatre which we installed in the hotel and for that was called a *theatre manager*. I was a member of the House Committee without vote and for that was called *secretary-treasurer* of the club.

The most complicating factor was the idea of trying to set up a first-class hotel under Army regulations. At a meeting of the Chief of Staff and the House Committee, the former stated that he wanted the Imperial Hotel to be operated as a first-class hotel. The trouble was this—the Imperial was still classified as a bachelor officer's billet under Army regulations and many directives which applied to it got in the way of the everyday operations of a first-class hotel. For instance, under the current directives, a bachelor officers' billet did not have any provision for bedspreads nor did it provide soap and towels for guests. This kind of problem finally turned me into the scheming sort of individual I am to-day. I was continually looking for loopholes and means of evading the spirit of the directives without violating the exact letter.

I got material for bedspreads by over-estimating the amount of material needed for draperies and then making up the bedspreads in such a fashion that they could be strung on to a curtain rod in a moment in case anyone caught up with me. The soap and towel problem was overcome when I convinced the House Committee that we had enough money to provide these items out of club funds. Eventually, the club provided all the small things which make the difference between a hotel and a billet.

The paint we obtained for the decoration of club facilities was of a higher quality than that issued for the painting of rooms but the latter stuff was not too bad. In the club we used oil paint as a base and covered it with coatings of water paint. This achieved the effect I wanted, though it shocked people who knew better than to do such a thing. For painting walls the Army issued water paint only. We did have some trouble with this item for the glue in it was never of standard quality. We could never tell until after the paint had dried whether it would stick to the walls or blow off like talcum. The only characteristic of that glue which never varied was the odor it gave off while the paint was drying. There was a soupçon of dead rat in the scent.

The women got their handpicked drapes and dark walls and I got ulcers and dark thoughts. Some of the women did marvelous things with the materials available and made their rooms very attractive but, on the whole, the situation thoroughly convinced me that there is no accounting for taste.

Finally, some of the ladies seemed to become intoxicated with the thrill of seeing their abstract thought in concrete reality. When the decorating possibilities of their own rooms had been exhausted, some talk arose about forming a committee to assist me in the redecoration of

the lobby. I do not know how the Women's Lobby Intelligence Group ferreted out the information but it learned that carpeting would soon be issued to the hotel for the lobby floor. I felt that if the women did come forth with such a committee, I would be able to get around its suggestions somehow but I wanted to avoid difficulty. I had enough trouble as it was.

I went to the Quartermaster Section and asked them to speed up the delivery of our carpeting. The people there were understanding and co-operated. They had three colors in stock, a bright blue, a bright green and a rich, dark burgundy. As it turned out, the only color of which there was a sufficient amount available at the time was the burgundy, but that is the color I would have selected anyway. It was ideal for the sombre main lobby of the hotel for it helped to minimize the dead look of the place.

When the carpeting was delivered I had all the preliminary cutting and sewing done in one of the storage rooms. I did not want anyone to get a look at it before it was permanently laid. We placed it in one night and the next morning I was up early to face the Decorators. I knew I was going to have an interesting day. It started as soon as I entered the lobby.

There were two Decorators standing there, a tall one and a short one, and I had the impression they had been waiting for me.

"New carpeting," the tall one said as I approached.

"Yes," I said, "we finally got it."

"But isn't it a shame you couldn't have gotten blue?"

"Yes," I said. "It's a shame."

The short one did not offer any suggestion at that point but she caught me later. She differed with the tall one.

"I didn't want to say anything in front of her," she told me, "but blue would be horrible in this lobby. Ugh . . . I wouldn't be able to stand it. What you should have used was a brown, a rich cocoa-brown, just about the same shade as the brick in the walls. It would all blend then. You see?"

"Yes," I said. "I see. And you're so right about that blue. Blue would be nothing."

There were forty-three women registered in the hotel that day and it seemed to me that before the day was over I had received nearly that many different suggestions about the color I should have used. None of the colors had a remote resemblance to burgundy.

The Boudoir Girl was the last one to speak to me about it. She caught me just before the dinner hour. She thought the new stuff was a great improvement.

"But did you ever think of using puce?" she asked.

I had to confess.

"No," I said. "I never did think of puce." (I looked it up later. It's a dark purplish-brown.)

"That's too bad," the Boudoir Girl said.

As we were talking a senior general's wife came by and stopped to chat for a moment. She was not a Decorator, she was not even a Dietician. She was just a healthy, normal, intelligent, middle-aged American woman. And very outspoken.

"We were just talking about the new carpeting," I told her. "What color do you think should have been used?"

"Color?" she said, looking out over the lobby. "Why, that burgundy you've got down there is the only color you can use in this lobby. Any nitwit can see that."

The Boudoir Girl looked abashed but I did not want her to feel badly.

"I'll keep puce in mind for the corridors," I told her.

That made her happy.

That main lobby was a problem until the day I left the hotel. The burgundy carpeting did brighten the place, but the dominant feature was still the morbid brown brick of the walls. The furniture, which could have served as a focal point for the eye, was in very poor condition and we still did not have any immediate hope of replacing it. The lobby chairs at that time were covered in worn black leather with cracked gold trim and they seemed to emphasize the walls rather than combat their depressing effect.

The floral displays placed in the lobby were usually lost in the huge expanse of the room, but as my acquaintance with Japanese people increased, I was able to borrow displays of Japanese art objects from art collectors I met and these exhibits were very effective.

There was one gentleman who was most helpful in this, Mr. Yamada of the Oriental Art Gallery, a Japanese firm which dealt only in the finest works of Japanese craftsmen. His firm had in its possession some of the fabulous national art treasures of Japan and Mr. Yamada was happy and proud to put these on display in the lobby of the Imperial Hotel. Of course it was a very good business move for him but I think his main idea was to show the American people some of the truly beautiful things produced in Japan.

Mr. Yamada was a small thin man with dark gray hair. His features were unusually aquiline for a Japanese and they were as delicate and precise as some of the ivory carvings he brought to us for display. Some of the items he showed me in the small conference rooms at the rear of his shop were so priceless that I would not let him bring them to the hotel for fear something might happen to them. There was a huge incense burner, about two

feet high and three feet wide, carved out of a single block of white jade, so delicately finished that it was translucent and with such intricate designs carved into it that you could not just look at it, you had to study it. There were rare brocades, three to four hundred years old, cloth of a fineness that cannot be reproduced to-day; rare jade and ivory carvings; porcelain; lacquer ware, and unusual screens.

The most impressive piece Yamada ever brought to the hotel was a two-panel gold screen made, not of gold leaf, but of solid gold. It was a magnificent thing and when I found it was valued at forty thousand dollars, I put two guards on it. Mr. Yamada thought this was unnecessary but it made me sleep easier at night.

I was impressed by the screen, but the one piece which I really wanted to own was a statue of Kannon, the Goddess of Mercy. There is a remarkable resemblance between the statues of Kannon and those of the Blessed Virgin which you see in Catholic churches. This one was carved in green jade, beautifully toned, Kannon standing in a gracefully contemplative pose flanked by two cranes. The carving was about eight inches high and six inches wide. There was a powerful delicacy to it. It is the most exquisite thing I have ever seen in my life.

The statue caught my eye the moment Yamada removed it from its case. I picked it up and looked at it for a long interval; good jade has a cold, clean feeling in your fingers.

"Mr. Yamada," I said, "this is something that I would like to own."

"Ah, Mori-san," he said, sucking in his breath. "You have good taste. I will make a special price for you. Seven thousand dollars!"

I did some quick mental arithmetic. I would have

given up smoking to save the money to buy the statue but that would have taken a very long time, what with cigarettes only one dollar a carton at the PX. I don't smoke that much. But if I ever hold a winning sweepstakes ticket, if I ever break the bank on a radio quiz show, if they strike oil in New Rochelle, the first thing I am going to buy with the money is that statue of the Goddess of Mercy.

Yamada continued to furnish exhibits for the hotel and he had enough of a variety of things so that the displays did not become repetitious. For one week each month we were able to push the brown walls into the background where they belonged and the lobby took on the look of a place where people lived instead of died.

Those exhibits were very effective, but actually the best decoration we ever had in the lobby was Judy Kelly, a dancer with the Bob Hope entertainment group, who, for a brief moment, embellished the lobby in a most invigorating manner. After her performance at the Ernie Pyle Theatre, instead of changing her costume, a strapless bathing suit that looked painted on, and flesh-colored tights, she just threw a hip-length fur cape over her shoulders, jumped into her sedan and drove to the front entrance of the hotel. When she entered the lobby everything stopped. A brigadier general who was about to light a cigar held the match too long and burned his hand. Clerks let the telephones ring without answering them. I had entered the lobby behind her and from the rear all that could be seen was a gorgeous head of blond hair, a luxurious fur cape and a long, long pair of lovely silken legs rapidly striding across the carpet. Her progress was marked by abrupt cessation of conversations, people dropping things in amazement, and elderly colonels and generals glancing up from their newspapers and then

sitting bolt upright in a motion more violent than they had made in twenty years.

The only guest who took it calmly was an English diplomat of whom I was very fond. He was gentlemanly beyond belief. There was only one thing about him that irritated me—after five minutes' conversation with him I would find myself speaking with a British accent.

"Damned fine pair of calves," he said to me after the vision had disappeared. "Never saw anything like that at the Imperial before. Pity, too. Livened up the old place a bit."

"Good show," said I. "Buy you a drink on that."

"Sorry," he said, "have to beg off. Have to dash up and change these clothes." (And this next proves he was a gentleman to the core.) "Don't like to appear in brown after six, you know."

You don't find a slob worrying about things like that.

If we could have had Judy Kelly as a permanent decoration, the lobby would have ceased to be a problem but, unfortunately, there was no way this could be arranged. I had to fall back on the original idea of putting some colorful furniture in to combat the effect of the walls. The Quartermaster Section could not help me with this at the time. It was not until a year later that we were able to put a matched set of newly covered chairs and sofas in the lobby. I had a great feeling of satisfaction as the last chair was put in place, for that was the final step in giving the lobby the appearance I wanted.

The new furniture was blue with a small conservative design for the pattern. I thought it gave the lobby a bright aspect without being flashy. As I was standing there, proudly drinking in the new atmosphere, one of the Decorators stopped to admire it with me. She con-

gratulated me on the accomplishment. But, of course, she had to let me know that she would have picked something different.

"Chartreuse," she said. "Chartreuse would have been a contrast to the carpeting and the walls and yet it would have blended at the same time. That might sound contradictory but, well, you see what I mean, don't you?"

As she was saying this the Boudoir Girl approached us. The latter was anxious for the other Decorator to leave so that she could give me her own ideas. I could see that chartreuse horrified her.

"Puce, Mr. Morris," she said when the other woman had left. "You must always keep puce in mind for this hotel. This is a puce type of building. Chartreuse! Chartreuse would kill me—absolutely kill me!"

I knew she was speaking figuratively, but that night I had a wonderful dream. I dreamt the Army was issuing a new type of ammunition—chartreuse-colored bullets.

Lebensraum

There was one couple at the hotel who lived in a very small room. In good humor they nicknamed their quarters "Mousehouse." They were good-humored about everything, and though their accommodations were not ideal they made the best of them and led a contented life at the Imperial. When one of the disgruntled wives heard of the nickname given the room she thought the couple very silly.

"They can call their room 'Mousehouse' if they want," she said. "I'll call mine the 'Rat Hole.'"

From my point of view it had been a mistake to permit women to live at the Imperial permanently. Couples who occupied suites had a pleasant set-up, but those who lived in one room found the going difficult. One room is not ideal living space for two people, especially if they are married to each other. When the situation caught up with some of the wives it caused an unhappy atmosphere at the hotel.

Generally, during her first month at the hotel, a wife was overwhelmed by the amount of service she received.

The pushbutton life was fine and everyone was happy. But at the end of a month she had seen all that Tokyo had to offer and became restless; by the end of the second month just sitting in her hotel room or the lobby waiting for her husband to return from work began to pall; at the end of the third month she could not stand the Japanese servants, she could not stand the food, she could not stand the atmosphere, but most of all she could not cope with the cooped-up feeling of living within the confines of one room.

The true problem was that these women did not have enough to keep them busy during the day. The worry of running a household would have been an excellent tonic for any one of them. Fran and I lived in one room at the hotel for over a year after our marriage and never felt particularly inconvenienced. This was mainly because Fran kept her position at the International Military Tribunal and did not have time to brood about living conditions. But most of the women who found their nerves wearing thin were convinced that the sole thing driving them to distraction was living in such a small space.

They learned quickly that there was no way they could talk me into giving them an additional room. This was not because I am an iron-willed person but because the policy governing the assignment of space in the Imperial Hotel very clearly defined the type of accommodations which would be assigned and any exception to this policy could be made by the Chief of Staff only.

Occasionally, there would be a case in which an honest hardship existed. In such circumstances all I could offer was sympathy because the one time I tried to do something about it I found myself out on the weakest limb of the tree of life.

That was in the case of the woman who adored her husband but could not stand his snoring. I do not know why this couple ever elected to take permanent occupancy in one room at the Imperial. His snoring could not have been something that developed after he came to Japan. Perhaps the lady had decided, wrongly, that between running a household and putting up with snoring, the latter was the lesser of two evils. The man could really boom out a bass melody. I often passed their room during night inspections and I was always amazed at his resonance and perfect tone quality.

The lady bothered the poor fellow about it so much by waking him up when his breathing became thunderous that he finally appealed to me to do anything I possibly could to help the situation. I felt sorry for him because he was a very nice person. One of the rooms adjacent to his was vacant at the time, so I arranged for him to sleep there until we needed the room again; not actually occupy it but use it at night. This was done with the understanding that the matter would be strictly confidential and both he and his wife gave me a solemn promise that no one would know of the arrangement. This was most important for at that time there were about forty female guests clamoring for additional space.

The arrangement worked fine the first night but the wife happened to be a charter member of the Women's Lobby Intelligence Group and at the next daily conference of that organization could not help boasting that her husband now rated two rooms. I was confronted by some very irate women who demanded an explanation. I told them they had received a mistaken impression, that the arrangement had been for one night because the wife had been ill and the Snorer had been afraid she might

have something catching. They swallowed that and I came in off the limb.

I called the Snorer on the phone and told him he had better buy his wife some ear plugs. He was very embarrassed and apologized for the trouble she had caused me.

"She didn't mean to cause you any trouble," he told me. "It's just that she has such a goddamned big mouth."

I do not know what he said to her in private when he came home that night but whatever it was, it cured her complex about his snoring.

The Snorer and his wife had my sympathy, if nothing else. The guests I could not stand were the ones who cooked up schemes which would not fool a cretin and then tried to dupe me with them. I enjoy a battle of wits most when I am up against an opponent whom I can out-think. But some of the things guests tried to pull on me were transparent enough to be an insult to my intelligence, such as it is.

There was a colonel's wife who came to me one Christmas week and informed me that they had received so many Christmas presents they were being crowded out of their room. She knew there were a few rooms vacant in the hotel and she thought that I might be able to let her have one of them in which she could store the presents for four or five days. This was the woman who had informed me the week before that they were going to have an especially nice Christmas this year because a young relative, an enlisted soldier, was coming to Tokyo to visit them during the holidays. I did not have to perform any mental gyrations to figure out what she wanted the additional room for. This took place shortly after the Snorer incident and I was not about to take any chances

for this particular couple. Even if I had liked them I would not have taken a chance.

"I think we can solve the problem very simply," I told her, "there's plenty of space in the baggage room. And you can get into it twenty-four hours a day so you can have the presents any time you wish."

"Oh, but it's so dusty down there!" she exclaimed.

She had pinched me in a tender spot. If there was one thing I was proud of it was the fact that we had cleaned up the Imperial Hotel and had kept it clean. She had gone too far. The Imperial Hotel was vulnerable but not in that section of the midriff.

"You must show me what you mean right away," I said, rising. "Let's go down there and you point out the dust to me."

"Oh, but I . . ." she started.

"But you must, as a favor to me," I interrupted. "That's something I should know about immediately."

I took her arm while she was still sitting in the chair beside my desk. I was fully prepared to yank her to her feet if she did not come willingly.

We went to the baggage room. It was spotless. We inspected the many suitcases and trunks she and her husband had stored there. They were spotless.

"Well," she said, defensively, "they must have cleaned the place since I saw it last."

"This room is cleaned daily," I told her. "It has been cleaned daily ever since we started using it."

"Well, it is clean," she admitted.

That evening while I was standing at the front desk meeting and greeting guests, the colonel and his lady came down to pay a bill. I bid them a good evening.

"You know," the wife said to the colonel in a coy

voice, "Mr. Morris almost made a liar out of me this morning. Ha-ha-ha."

"It did seem a bit peculiar," I said.

The colonel looked at his wife as if to say, "What the hell have you been up to now?" I had delivered a low blow and it did not make me feel good.

"Colonel," I said, "I understand you're going to have a visitor for the Christmas holidays. If he'd like to double up with one of the enlisted men on the staff we'd be glad to take care of him while he's here."

"Why that's fine, Morris," he said, "fine. The wife here has been trying to find a place for him to stay."

"Yes," I said, "I know."

I think that most of the people who lived at the Imperial Hotel did not realize just how attractive the life there looked to those who did not have the rank to enjoy it. There was a constant stream of requests made by people who felt that though their rank was not of the required level, their job or background or reputation or some other qualification entitled them to live at the hotel. The lengths to which some of them went in attempting to circumvent the regulations kept me in a state of constant amazement at the ingenuity of the human mind. The most interesting of these cases was that of the Character and the Beautiful Doll.

This incident actually took place outside the hotel. One Sunday evening I received a call from the Character who informed me that he was calling from the Dai Iti Hotel and that he had before him billeting orders signed by Major General Paul J. Mueller, Chief of Staff, directing that the Beautiful Doll, Civil Service Rating, CAF-2, be billeted in the Imperial Hotel in a room with bath, effective immediately. Several aspects of his story

gave it an ancient and fishy odor. Civilians were billeted in the Imperial only if their rating was CAF-14 or higher and General Mueller did not sign billeting orders.

I asked the Character to let me check on the vacancies available and call him back.

Instead, I pulled a letter bearing General Mueller's signature out of my file and took it over to the Dai Iti Hotel. The Character and the Beautiful Doll were at the front desk there waiting for my call. She was Beautiful and strictly a Doll. I asked to see the orders signed by General Mueller and the Character handed them to me. The signature was as phony as a wig. I told the Character I could not accept the orders and that perhaps the matter would best be settled by letting me take the orders and see General Mueller about them in the morning. The Doll stamped her foot and the Character went into a rage. He told me the Doll had already checked out of the Old Kaijo, the women's billet where she had been living, and had her bags with her ready to move into the Imperial. He told me that if I chose to ignore an order from the Chief of Staff I had better be willing to take the consequences . . . and they would not be light. He said he had handled the matter with General Mueller personally. The Beautiful Doll was to be his secretary. Her job would require that she handle numerous classified documents and that was the reason she was to be billeted at the Imperial even though she was not of the rank normally billeted there. He said that the Beautiful Doll was going to move into the Imperial that night and I could bet my bottom dollar on it. If he could let me look at his own orders I would understand but, unfortunately, they were so hush-hush that General Mueller and General MacArthur, himself, were the only two men in the headquarters to whom they could be shown.

He looked over each shoulder carefully and then leaned towards me.

"They have to do with the Russkis," he whispered, mysteriously.

The more he talked the more certain I became of the ground on which I stood. I moved off while he was still talking, hoping to take the phony orders with me but he made a frantic dive and ripped them out of my hand.

When I arrived back at the hotel I went to the front desk to warn the clerks not to honor the phony orders if the Character and the Beautiful Doll showed up that night. When I described the girl to them they told me she had come in just a moment before I did, asked for the checkroom, checked two suitcases and disappeared into the hotel. Nobody had seen her after she left the lobby.

In the morning the clerks informed me that they had not seen the Beautiful Doll again but that a male civilian had come to the hotel at seven-thirty A.M. and picked up her suitcases. To make certain that the Beautiful Doll had not somehow managed to get into a room in the Imperial, I called the Old Kaijo and asked the manager to find out if she had slept there the night before. He said he would investigate and call me back.

He called in about half an hour and told me that the Beautiful Doll's roommate insisted on talking to me. I agreed to listen.

"Who are you?" a querulous voice asked.

"The manager of the Imperial Hotel," I said.

"Well, what business do you have checking up on my roommate?" the voice asked.

"Frankly," I said, "there's a possibility that she might have stayed at the Imperial last night without authorization."

"Oh, no, you don't," the voice exclaimed heatedly.

"You can't accuse her of anything like that! She spent last night at the Dai Iti Hotel with Mr. the Character!"

"Oh," I said. "I see."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," the voice said. "If I had a suspicious mind like yours I'd kill myself. You ought to be ashamed."

After I had hung up the phone I told myself that I got paid for taking that sort of thing.

Usually in a hotel, the manager has the best suite in the building, but in the circumstances under which the Imperial operated it was not wise for Fran and me to have any better accommodations than the guests. Many of the guests never believed this. There was one woman who was convinced that we occupied a three-room suite and just to put her mind at ease we invited her to our room for a cocktail one evening. She was appalled when she saw that our room was even smaller than hers.

"My dear," she said to Fran, sympathetically, "how do you ever stand it?"

"Oh, we're too busy living to worry much about where we live," Fran told her.

I thought Fran must have read that some place in a book but she told me later it was made up on the spur of the moment. I was very proud of her. It was a bit on the corny side, but a *bon mot* if I ever heard one.

Square Pegs

At the first meeting of the new staff, one of the members asked me if I could give them a general rule for dealing with the guests. I told them about how I had scored a birdie on the first hole at Koganei Golf Course. It was a par five hole. My two wood shots were good and the approach shot landed at the near edge of the green and rolled to the far side but remained on the carpet. As we were walking to the green, three Japanese laborers came running out of the bushes calling, "Chotto matte, chotto matte" (Just a moment). One of them pulled the flag, the second pulled the cup out of the hole, the third plunged a hole-digging instrument into the green near my ball, filled in the old hole with the dirt he removed, the other two placed the cup and flag in the new hole and then all three scampered off out of sight. When we reached the green we found my ball was lying on the lip of the new hole.

"That, ladies and gentlemen," I said, "is the kind of service I want to see at the Imperial Hotel."

Everything at the Imperial Hotel changed except the immutable Japanese mind, and I doubt that this will ever

change. The Japanese learned many new habits from the occupation forces but never new habits of thinking. The Japanese mind was a problem for me until the day I left Japan, for though in time I came to the point where I could tell in a given situation what a Japanese would do, I could not always understand the logic behind it. I am not sure that the Japanese themselves understand why they do certain things in certain ways.

Many of the guests had difficulty because of this. They expected the Japanese to react as westerners, and often read an attitude of passive resistance and defiance into the situations which arose.

Of course some of the guests would have had trouble with servants no matter where they were. There was one woman who complained to me that the room servants did not seem to pay any attention to her orders and she thought they were very ungrateful. She was so kind to them. Every morning at ten o'clock she had them come into her room, sit down and have a Coca-Cola with her. She was teaching them the democratic way. Her spirit was fine but I explained to her that if she placed herself on the same level with them for fifteen minutes a day she would have to expect them to consider her on that level twenty-four hours a day and treat anything she said to them accordingly. She stopped the Coca-Cola sessions and never had any more difficulty with the servants. Though she thought the fault was with the way Japanese took advantage of a person, she was mistaken. The results would have been the same in any country and especially in the United States.

As the operations in the Imperial Hotel slowly but steadily expanded, the problem of the Japanese mind became heavier, for the staff had to mushroom to meet the expansion. Most of the original hotel personnel who

had brains enough to become executives also had had brains enough to get out of Tokyo when the bombs started falling there near the end of the war. Very few of the people left had any knowledge of English or had had any contact with western people.

Originally, I had a staff of American soldiers to assist me and at first this was composed of top flight men. But none of them were professional soldiers and as their points towards rotation mounted I gradually lost them. Their replacements were not very satisfactory. There was a shortage of GI personnel, and for many different reasons most of the men sent to me were not suitable. Some were just loafers who saw an easy life in the Army; some were youngsters who enlisted at the last minute to get in under the GI Bill of Rights, serve their eighteen months and get a free education; some sincerely tried but just were not equipped for the jobs they had to fill. One young man who was sent to me to fill the position of supply sergeant told me frankly when he reported for duty,

"Captain, if you had a field you wanted ploughed I could show you the straightest furrows you've ever seen but this bookwork just isn't something that I know how to do."

This particular lad did try hard but he was quite right about his place being behind a plough, not a desk. The Army could not be blamed for the assignments given such personnel. They were all it had to work with.

Some Japanese could serve in sensitive positions but they were rare. The average Japanese just could not change his way of thinking, no matter how eager he was to learn western ways. This factor carried through to the end and I eventually became reconciled to it.

For instance, when the *à la carte* restaurant, La Maison

Française, was set up, a typical incident took place. La Maison Française was my favorite operation in the Imperial Hotel for it was small enough so that I could give it a great deal of personal attention and I was certain that in time it would become the real showpiece of the hotel. I used it both for experiments and for testing new methods.

At this time I was giving a course of three lectures on efficiency to all heads of departments and their assistants. I ended the last lecture with a demonstration in La Maison Française. In setting the tables the Japanese had been carrying silverware from the storage closet to the tables by hand. Naturally, the amount which could be carried in any one trip was limited and a great many trips to and fro were necessary. Using a small section of the restaurant I demonstrated that, by using a tray, a waiter could transport all the necessary silverware from the storage area to the tables in one trip. This seemed to make a great impression on the audience. I asked if there were any questions. There were none. I asked if they all understood the principle illustrated. They bowed and sucked in their breaths; they understood. I asked if they would now apply the principle demonstrated in their own individual departments as much as possible. More bowing. I dismissed them.

The next day, while I was inspecting the hotel, I stopped in La Maison Française during the setting-up period to bask in the warmth of progress. The section in which I had given the demonstration was being set up in strict accordance with that demonstration—and the remainder of the restaurant was being set up by the old method. I felt a slow burn coming on. I called the maître d'hôtel and demanded an explanation.

"But, sir," he said, "this is the only section you showed us how to set up."

He had me there.

However, this did not mean that the average Japanese was incapable of quick thinking or always lacked foresight.

One day while I was making an inspection of the outbuildings, I looked in on a union meeting which was taking place in the employees' dining room in Outbuilding No. 1. I noticed that the office boy from my staff who had been excused from duty for several days on a plea of illness was sitting at the table with the presiding committee. By the time I had completed the inspection and returned to my office I found a letter on my desk, hastily typed in imitation of the official correspondence which went out of my office. It was a good letter.

13th December

TO: Mr. Morris, Manager, Imperial Hotel
FROM: I. Negishima, Office Boy, Managers' Office
SUBJECT: "The explanation of my presence at Japanese Dining Room on 13th December when I should be in Bed"

I was in Japanese Dining Room on 13th December to attend the Employees' Unions meeting to report what the result of the negotiation was.

When I came here for X-ray Inspection, I was told that they will have the meeting on the negotiation, Bonus Talks. I had been ordered by Mr. Kasuga to be a member of that talks. Therefore, the responsibility of reporting fall down to us, namely Mr. Kasuga & Mr. Wada and me.

At that day, as I had been sick and all of my skin, especially face & hands & legs, were swell up and

unable to get on duty, I had annual Leave for two days, 13th and 14th, and that was reported and acknowledged by Mr. Fujinari on 12th December.

(I have had phisical situation, hives or something very simmiler kind of sick distaub me when it is winter.

The reason is even unknown by doctor, it appears when I catch cold, or stamachache, and this happen every year.

Most of the page-boys know how I look like when I am in that sick-trouble.)

/s/ Iwao Negishima

Iwao Negishima, Office Boy

If I could have depended on the Japanese to handle all matters with this much dispatch there would have been no problem. The trouble was you could never tell whether they would come up with a stroke of genius or a complete dud.

Some of the most sensitive positions on the staff required men with qualifications and background the Japanese could not be expected to possess. I needed men familiar with American bookkeeping methods, men who could speak English, who could write correspondence, and who could understand American tastes and whims so that the thought barrier and the language barrier between them and the guests would not loom so large. The prospects of finding such personnel seemed nil and the situation looked desperate.

However, quite by accident I found the solution one day. I was passing a room service station when I heard a young voice speaking English with a decided American accent. I stepped into the station and there saw a room-boy speaking over the telephone.

"Well, tell mom and dad I'll be late but I'll get there sometime to-night," he was saying as I entered.

When he saw me he hung up immediately.

"Good afternoon, sir," he said, "may I help you?" He did not bow.

"Yes," I said, "who are you, where do you come from and where did you learn to speak English?"

"My name is Reo Hasegawa," he told me. "I'm a California *nisei*. I've just been repatriated."

"How long have you been here?"

"Two weeks in Japan, one week in the Imperial."

"Do you like your job?"

"No, sir, but it's the only one I could get."

"Who was on the other end of that telephone?"

"My brother, Sam. He works in the kitchen."

"How did you happen to come to Japan?"

"We were given the choice of coming back here when we were at the relocation center."

"You gave up US citizenship to come back here?"

He hesitated a moment before answering.

"Yes, sir, I did," he said.

That soured me on him right away. I could not see anyone giving up American citizenship to become a Japanese. I decided I did not have much use for that type of person.

But the following week I found myself in a spot trying to hire a driver for the hotel. There were no longer enough GI's to fill such positions and the headquarters had started using Japanese drivers. The hotel vehicle was a jeep, used as a combination pick-up truck, passenger conveyance, baggage truck and courier vehicle. We had gone through a succession of Japanese drivers but my nerves had not been able to stand them. I had always regretted that I had but one life to give for my

country, but I knew I would regret it doubly if I gave it in a jeep accident on a Tokyo street.

I sent for Reo, interviewed and tested him for the job. He not only was an excellent driver but I found he had a wide knowledge of mechanics and electronics. During that interview I also learned several things about the *nisei* repatriates which changed my prejudice against them. Reo did not want to be a Japanese. He had not wanted to leave the United States. But when the choice had been put up to his family he had been seventeen years old and had no alternative but to do as his parents ordered him. They had ordered him to elect to return to Japan. He had only one ambition left. That was to regain his American citizenship and return to America. I thought back to the time when I was seventeen and though I was never a particularly obedient son, if I had been in the same position I would have had no choice but to do as my parents ordered me.

Reo was transferred from room service to the position of driver. Within a few weeks, he showed such a talent for handling things efficiently and such a taste for taking responsibility that he was acting more like an aide-de-camp to a general than a jeep driver to a captain. He had planned to be an electrical engineer and he had an engineer's love of accuracy. I soon realized that I was wasting him by using him to drive a jeep.

I put him to work with the ploughboy supply sergeant and in a short time he was ready to take over the job. I relieved the ploughboy and sent him back to the billetting section for transfer. Reo remained as my supply chief for the next three years and during that time I never had a short inventory nor did I have to worry about the condition of the supply records. He set up an efficient information system by passing out cigarettes to the

Japanese laborers and warehousemen who worked in the Quartermaster Section and this enabled him to always be the first man in with a requisition when the QM received a new shipment of supplies.

Reo's success in his position gave me the answer to the problem of securing staff personnel. We tapped the pool of these young *nisei* repatriates and started an intensive training course for those we hired. They started in minor clerical positions at the front desk where they could get used to the rhythm of the hotel operation, then spent a short period of time as front desk clerks to get used to handling guests. Those who proved their worth were then placed as clerks in my office to train for executive positions. Some of them could not stand the pace, but enough of them came through so that at the end of six months we had a smoothly operating administrative staff.

Not all of the positions could be filled by the *nisei*. They were ideal for such posts as banquet manager, banquet clerk, assistant club manager, supply chief, repairs and utilities chief and secretarial and clerical positions. But my executive assistant had to be an American government employee authorized to act as a representative of the headquarters. Fortunately, I was able to hire good men for this job once the Billeting Section started employing civilians. The mess steward had to be a man with intensive training in Army methods of sanitation and his immediate staff had to be composed of men who had received the same training. I was not always lucky in the personnel assigned to this section of the hotel. Only about fifty percent of them worked out satisfactorily.

Once the *nisei* staff started operating as a unit it took much of the weight of the hotel operation off my shoul-

ders. They were particularly loyal and tried to keep as many problems as they could from reaching me. This irritated some of the guests and made many of the salesmen furious. But I backed up the decisions of the staff members as my own and their confidence grew with experience.

There were still many problems, which it was wise for me to handle personally. Anything that had to do with the Chief of Staff was strictly a matter for the manager, and when anything came up concerning this distinguished guest, I was called immediately. And things did happen.

One night a drunken sergeant, not a member of the staff, lost his way in the complicated corridor system of the hotel at three A.M. When he found himself lost in the maze he decided he might just as well step into one of the rooms and sleep until daylight. Of the two hundred and thirty rooms then in use, he had to pick the one in which Major General Paul J. Mueller, the Chief of Staff, was sleeping. The sergeant managed to knock over an end table, shatter a lamp, and startle General Mueller out of his sleep, making retreat, graceful or otherwise, impossible. General Mueller had a very sobering effect on the young man for he looks like a general, even in his pajamas. The night manager called me immediately after the General called him.

The story the sergeant gave out to explain his presence in the hotel was rich. He had been at a party at the American Club of Tokyo where a middle-aged lady in a green dress (he could give no better description of her) had picked him up and brought him to her room at the Imperial. He had spent a few hours with her and then she had put him out rather unceremoniously. We never

did establish the identity of the lady, but green dresses fell out of fashion for an extended period of time.

There was one incident concerning the Chief of Staff which I did let the staff handle. General Mueller was very particular that his name be pronounced correctly, i.e., "Miller," not "Mule-r." He was an enthusiastic hunter and customarily saved the bag from each of his hunts until enough game had accumulated in the hotel freezer to warrant giving a game dinner.

One morning his driver delivered three ducks to the kitchen office to be placed in the hotel freezer for future use. The kitchen clerk, having received the ducks with the verbal message that they were for General Mueller (pronounced Miller), looked down the guest list until he came to the name of Major General Luther Miller, then Chief of Chaplains, United States Army, who was living at the hotel while on an inspection tour of the Far East Command. The clerk made the entries in the record book under the name Miller (pronounced Miller) and sent the receipt for the ducks to General Miller's suite.

Several days later my office received a call from General Mueller's office passing on the information that the General would like to inspect his ducks while having lunch in the Main Dining Room that day. Shortly after I had given the necessary instructions, the mess steward, in a very bad state of nerves, came to my office, explained the error and the reason why it could not be rectified. General Miller had departed for the United States the day before and, assuming that the ducks had been a thoughtful present from the Chief of Staff, had taken them with him. I handled the matter in an executive manner by telling the mess steward to see General Mueller at noon as requested and settle the matter to the

latter's satisfaction. And to be sure to write me from whatever God-forsaken outpost he found himself transferred to when the dust had cleared.

The mess steward did a very foolish thing. He tried to fool the General, and General Mueller is not the type of man who fools easily. The steward got in touch with some of his colleagues at other hotels and managed to procure three recently killed ducks. When General Mueller called for the ducks during the noon hour the steward proudly presented them for inspection, properly tagged with the General's name and suite number. I think that General Mueller enjoyed the situation in a way because he asked several leading questions about the condition of the birds, and if there was any chance that there could have been a mistake made and these were not the actual birds he had shot. The steward gave the correct wrong answers throughout the conversation, something he deeply regretted when General Mueller reached into his pocket and drew out a note from General Miller which graciously thanked him for the present of three beautiful ducks. General Mueller did not say anything for a few minutes and the steward stood there trying to recall whether his National Life Insurance policy covered death by suicide. General Mueller then told him to go and return the ducks to the person from whom he had scrounged them. I am quite certain that General Mueller forgave the clerical error, but he is not the type of man who takes kindly to an attempt to fool him.

Some problems arose which were beyond the capacity of the staff to handle. As a matter of fact, many problems came up which were beyond my capacity to handle. When a colonel's wife came to my office the day after she registered, presented me with a WAC major's cap,

claiming she had found it under the mattress on her husband's bed, and asked me what I intended to do about it, I did not have a satisfactory answer on tap. I told her I could put an ad in the Lost and Found section of *Stars and Stripes*, and if anyone paid a reward for the return of the cap I would make certain that she received it. She viewed this suggestion with a jaundiced eye. She would not accept her husband's explanations that it must have been a practical joke played on them by some of his old buddies. She was certain I knew the identity of the WAC who had wronged her, but that I was protecting the colonel. Personally, I think that the matter was a practical joke. This particular colonel was not the type of man who could excite a woman enough to make her forget her hat.

Some of the guests felt it was beneath them to deal with anyone on a lower level than the man in charge. Usually the problems they brought up were insignificant things which could have been handled as routine matters by a section of the hotel staff.

There was one woman who would not discuss anything with a man unless he had a white skin. She called me one night at two A.M. She couldn't sleep because her husband was away on an inspection trip and this was the first night she had been alone in the hotel.

"I just don't know what to do, Mr. Morris," she said. "I thought maybe, you understand now, I'm not a drinking woman, but I thought maybe a little glass of sherry would relax me so that I can go to sleep. You know, something not exactly intoxicating but something that would just relax me a bit."

"I'll send you up a glass of Amontillado right away," I said.

"Oh, just send up the whole bottle," she said. "Then

the next time the colonel is away I won't have to bother you."

"All right," I said. "I'll send up the bottle. Oh, and by the way, ma'am, just so that we can give you quicker service, if you call the night manager, Mr. Kogure, on things like this, we'll be able to get things to you right away."

"But he's Japanese, isn't he?" she asked.

"Well, yes," I answered, "but he speaks English fluently."

"Oh, but Mr. Morris," she said, "I couldn't talk to a Japanese about a thing like that. He'd think I was a drinking woman. He'd think all American women were drunkards!"

That type of woman made my days and nights full. There was one who came to my office one afternoon and told me of a most un-nerving episode which had taken place that morning. She had just completed her bath when someone knocked on her door, which, fortunately, she always kept locked, being a natural coward. She had walked into the bedroom and when the knock was repeated she had said, "Yes?"—and the person had jiggled the doorknob and tried to come into her room! And she was nude! Completely nude! And it was a room-boy, a male roomboy, Ishikawa, who always seemed so nice. She lost her breath in fright, just telling me about it.

I suggested that she say, "Who's there?" instead of "Yes?" in the future as a positive means of avoiding an embarrassing situation.

It was a serious incident. Ishikawa was one of our best roomboys, a very strong character, but I was certain that if he had ever been shocked by the spectacle of that

roof of the Ernie Pyle Theatre. That man would have to be able to fly to get to this building. Besides, he happens to be the night watchman there making his rounds. You can tell that by his uniform."

"Oh. Oh, then it's all right, is it? But it's upset me so."

"Well, suppose I send up a glass of sherry," I suggested.

When I returned to the room Fran was still awake.

"Was it anything serious?" she asked.

"No," I said. "One of the guests just needed a glass of sherry."

"Why don't you send her some arsenic?"

"I wish I could, but it's expensive. How are you feeling? Worse?"

"No," Fran said. "For some reason I feel much better."

"You're sure?"

"Absolutely."

"Wife," I said, "you are the only woman in the world who doesn't give me trouble."

"Thank you, sir," she said. "Er . . . are you coming back to bed right away?"

"Yes, for a while at least," I said. "It's only four o'clock. Why?"

"Well, darling, I hate to bother you with something like this," she said, "but I suddenly have the strangest craving for a piece of raw octopus."

Children and animals were not allowed in the Imperial Hotel and, inasmuch as we were pretty well convinced that our offspring would be one or the other, we had to make plans to move to a house. Fran finished up the phase of the work she was doing for Sir William Webb and then went down to the Civilian Personnel Section to resign from her position. It was not an easy

thing to do. She called me from that office to give me some awkward news.

"They tell me that you are not authorized to have a dependent in Japan and if I resign they'll have to ship me home on the next boat," she told me.

"What!"

"That's what the lady said."

"Then tell them to get two tickets for that boat because I'll be on it with you."

"Do you want to speak to the people here about it?"

"Yes. Put somebody on the wire."

The clerk informed me that as far as Civilian Personnel was concerned I did not have a wife in Japan. Fran was just a Department of the Army civilian employee.

"It's just that officially you don't have a wife," she said.

"You shock me," I told her. "Do you mean I've been living in a state of quasi-sin for the past year?"

"Oh, Mr. Morris," she simpered. "What a thing to say."

"Hold on a minute," I said. "I have to take a call on the other phone."

"It's the Payroll Section of Civilian Personnel," my secretary told me.

"Oh," I said, "maybe they are in on this."

"Mr. Morris?" a female voice asked. "Do you have your wife living with you at the hotel?"

"Well, there's some question about that," I said. "I'm living with a woman I'm married to, but there's another office from your section on the other phone that has just informed me that I am not allowed to have a wife."

"Huh?"

"That's what they tell me."

"Well, I don't understand but all I know is that we

have been charging you and your wife the DAC rental charge but since she's your wife we should have been charging you the dependent rental charge. So you owe us nine hundred dollars."

"What!"

"Yes. You see the rental charge for a single DAC is much less than for a family."

"You mean it's cheaper to have a mistress than a wife."

"Huh? Oh, er . . . I . . . er . . . Mr. Morris, I just want to know if you have your wife living with you."

"Hold on a moment," I said. "I'll ask the lady on the other phone."

"Hello," I said into the other mouthpiece. "Now will you tell me again whether I have a wife, or not?"

"As far as this office is concerned, Mr. Morris," the girl said patiently, "you do not officially have a wife in this theatre."

"Hello," I said into the other phone. "The lady says that Mrs. Morris is not my wife."

"What?"

"That's what she said, she said that."

"Well, I don't think she knows what she's talking about. All I know is that you owe us nine hundred dollars and you'll have to pay it."

"Hold on a minute."

"Hello," I said into the first phone. "The lady in the Payroll Section says that Mrs. Morris is my wife."

"Well, I don't think she knows what she's talking about. All I know is that if Mrs. Morris resigns she'll have to go home on the next ship. She's not a dependent, she's a DAC."

"That's what I wanted to know for certain. Thank you, and good-by."

"Hello, are you still there?" I said into the other mouth-piece.

"Yes."

"Well, I'll tell you," I said. "I think I'm going to side with the Travel and Termination Section. Their rates are cheaper."

"Mr. Morris, you owe us nine hundred dollars and if you don't want to pay it, you'll have to talk to G-1 about it."

"Okay, I'll do that."

The colonel in G-1 who had jurisdiction in these matters lived at the hotel. When I called him about it he said he would check into it and call me back.

"The Travel and Termination Section is right," he told me when he called. "Mrs. Morris is here in a DAC status and if she resigns, she'll have to return to the States. You don't have official permission to have a wife here."

"But I got official permission to marry her here," I said.

"Oh, Headquarters and Service Group gives that permission," he informed me. "G-1 is the only one that can give authorization to have dependents in the theatre."

"I see," I said. "Well, you better book passage for two on that ship because I am going to resign and go home with my wife, whether she's official or not."

"Now wait a minute, Morris," he said. "You can't do that. Your employment contract has another year to run, and if you want to go back you'll have to pay your own passage."

"I'll attach a check to my letter of resignation," I said.

"Now wait a minute, Morris," he said. "You can't do that. We don't have a replacement for you. I don't know how soon we could get one. I don't even know if we could get one."

"You know something, Colonel," I said.

"What?"

"You've got a problem."

"Now, look Morris," he said. "Let me check into this further and see what can be done. Maybe we can work something out."

There was some sort of conference held that afternoon and they worked it out so that I put in a letter requesting permission to have my wife join me in Tokyo and after it was approved Fran was able to resign her position and become my official wife. This entitled us to have a house as living quarters and we were assured we would be assigned one within six months.

The whole affair was the result of one of those routine mix-ups that is easy to understand if you have a complicated type of mind. It ended happily for everyone and the only regret I had was that for a whole year I could have had the thrill of being a rakish devil living with a blonde mistress, but when I found out about it, it was too late because the regulations had made the relationship officially respectable.

Hoods and Robin Hoods

The Japanese word for robber is dorobo but the Japanese people often refer to thieves and gangsters as "Robin Hoods." I asked Mr. Inumaru to explain this to me. I told him that in western folklore, Robin Hood had actually been a good man.

"But, there is always some good in every man, isn't there?" he asked.

"That's what they say," I told him. "Sometimes I wonder, though."

In all my dealings with the Japanese people, I found them to be scrupulously honest—in their own peculiar way. Not all the guests agreed with me on this.

There was one lady who insisted she was robbed several times a week. She would call the office to report some item missing from her room and always add that she was certain one of the room servants had taken it. As soon as she left her quarters, I would have the room searched and inevitably the lost item would be found where she had misplaced it.

"They must have replaced it while I was out," she

would say when I returned the lost property to her. "Aren't they shrewd?"

The Japanese were shrewd, too shrewd to be caught in a situation such as she imagined. Besides that, when a Japanese does filch something he likes to keep it on an impersonal basis. It was rare that an article belonging to a guest was stolen. Of course, to some of the Japanese, pilfering a bit of sugar, a bottle of Coca-Cola, a pound of butter or some such commodity from the hotel itself did not seem exactly like stealing; no actual person was harmed by the act. I do not know how widespread this theory is among the Japanese people, I only judge from my experience with them. There were many things I came to know about them which I can never make clear to another person. I can say sincerely that I believe the Japanese people as a whole are probably the most honest in the world and yet if I heard of some particularly peculiar theft, I would probably say it was typically Japanese. I could give many illustrations.

The evening the Snorer called and asked me to come to the front desk, I went immediately because he never bothered me unless something really important had come up. He had good cause to be excited.

"It's gone . . . g-g-gone," he stuttered. "My car. It's gone. It's been stolen. From the parking lot, it's been stolen!"

It was hard to imagine a car being stolen from the hotel parking lot, for the security guards there were very well-trained.

"What time did you leave it there?" I asked.

"I didn't," he said. "I don't. I never do. I mean Takamatsu does. I mean he did. See the keys, he left them.

He always did . . . I mean he does. I mean he did it to-night, too. You see what I mean?"

"Well . . . er . . . not exactly," I said. "Who is Takamatsu?"

"My driver, my driver. You've seen him around. Look, I'll explain it again." He took a deep breath. "See, Takamatsu drops me here at the entrance when we come home. Then he parks the car in the lot and brings the keys back and leaves them at the desk in case I need the car during the night. He left the keys but the car is gone. It's not there!"

"The keys were at the desk?"

"Yes."

"Is there a duplicate set of keys?"

"Yes, but I've got them. Right here," he said reaching into a coat pocket. "Right here," hurriedly and worriedly running his fingers through the pockets of his vest. "Here, see," he said finally pulling them out of one of the vest pockets. "See."

"Let's go up to my office," I suggested. "I'll have the parking lot guards questioned."

When the guards were interrogated they denied having seen Takamatsu or the car that evening. They knew the driver and the vehicle, but the log which they kept on every car that entered or left the parking lot showed no record of the Snorer's car being parked in its space that evening.

"But they're wrong," he insisted. "The keys . . . they were left at the desk. He must have put the car away. Where could it be if he didn't leave it there?"

"Takamatsu has your car," I said and I regretted it immediately because there was no basis I could give for that conclusion. I was certain of it though there was no logical reason for me to think so. It is just that when

you have been there long enough you begin to get a sort of instinct about how things happen in Japan. The Snorer gave me a funny look.

"How do you know?" he asked, as if I had been holding something back from him.

My big foot was in my mouth up to the knee and there was not much I could do about getting it out. I could imagine what he would think if I told him I had an instinct about these things.

"What I mean is, I have a hunch that he has it," I said.

"Is that all?"

"Let me get the desk clerk up here," I said quickly. "Maybe he knows something about it."

I sent for Kaoru Suzuki, the English-speaking desk clerk. He reported that Takamatsu had left the keys at the desk shortly after the Snorer had entered the hotel but beyond that he had nothing to offer.

"Where do you think the car is?" I asked Suzuki as he was about to leave.

"Why, Takamatsu has it," he said as if it were the most logical thing in the world. The Snorer had done an admirable job of holding his temper but at that he began to lose it.

"I'll call the MP's," I said. "They'll send some investigators over right away."

Two Criminal Investigation Division agents came to the hotel in response to my call. They held a thorough interrogation session but could discover nothing that was not already known. The Snorer had to leave on his errand, so we called for a military car from the motor pool for him. After he left I suggested to the agents that they leave a man at the hotel to lie in wait for Takamatsu because I was still convinced that he would

eventually show up with the vehicle. They posted two MP's at the parking lot.

The MP's called me at six o'clock the next morning. They had arrested Takamatsu when he had driven the Snorer's car into the parking lot. They had also confiscated a duplicate set of keys for the car which Takamatsu admitted he had had made by a Japanese locksmith. On nights when he felt a bit tired he was in the habit of driving the car to his home instead of taking the long trip by trolley and train.

The Snorer was relieved when I informed him his car was back at the hotel but, of course, he was furious at Takamatsu.

"Don't worry," I told him. "He'll get what's coming to him. They'll try him before a Provost Court and hang him to the highest tree in Tokyo."

"Say," the Snorer said, "how did that clerk really know that Takamatsu had taken the car?"

"Well," I told him, "there was no real logic behind it. That's just the way a Japanese would figure it out."

"Oh, I see," he said. "Say, though," he added, "you said the same thing but you're not Japanese."

After he left I went to a mirror and checked my eyes closely. They were still the right shape.

There was a pilfering problem at the Imperial. The pilfering there was no greater than you would find in any other hotel, but it was certainly no less. The security system was good and very few of the employees ever got away with anything for very long.

There was an ingenious method for smuggling things out of the hotel. It was simple but so efficient that I discovered it only by accident. At about eleven o'clock

one night, I was standing at the gate through which the employees departed from the hotel grounds. They were required to show their pink identification cards to the guard at this gate when entering or leaving the premises. While I was there, a barman came running to the exit, waving his pink card and yelling to the guard that he was late for his train. But the guard was being very efficient because of my presence and made the fellow stop. He took the pink card and started to scrutinize it carefully; he wanted to impress the manager. When the barman saw me he pulled off his hat and made a gracious bow. While he was bent over, I heard a noise that sounded like "putfh" come from him and he straightened up very quickly. He gave a little hop on one foot, then on the other, and then suddenly let out a great shout and started dancing up and down. I was startled to see a dark stain appearing on his trousers. He kept up the wild dancing and then yanked open his trousers and pulled them down. There was a bottle of Coca-Cola taped to his thigh, fizzing a geyser of carbonated beverage up his leg and into his crotch. The cap must have been loose on the bottle and the running had agitated the Coca-Cola until enough pressure had built up to blow it off.

The next day we had a showdown inspection on the personnel to whom some suspicion had become attached and the guards uncovered a number of items being smuggled out of the building. The most serious was sugar, since there was a shortage of that commodity at the time. The pilferers made it up in very small packages and carried them in the crotch of the *fundoshi*, a G-string type of underwear worn by Japanese men. I cautioned the head watchman to watch for this particular item and he had a suggestion to offer. He thought that

if we could use nothing but lump sugar, it would make smuggling it a very uncomfortable proposition. I agreed with him but told him it would not be practical as we needed sugar in loose form for many things.

There was a wave of whisky thievery which baffled us for quite a while, thefts of bottles from rooms. I was certain that the employees were not responsible for this. The rooms which were robbed were widely separated and I was confident the servants would not steal from people for whom they worked. The first break in this case came when a room maid discovered a ragged little urchin, about twelve years old, in one of the third-floor rooms. The security guards took him to the head watchman's office and called me.

I questioned the boy, through an interpreter because my knowledge of Japanese was still not complete enough for the situation. He had a very pitiful story. He was a B-29 orphan and had climbed up the outside wall of the hotel to the room hoping that he might find some food. The climb was not difficult since the exterior walls of the Imperial Hotel are practically a staircase. The boy was a hungry-looking little beggar, scrawny, filthy and dressed in torn rags. When I asked him where he lived he pointed to the south of the hotel. There was nothing on that side of the building but a vacant lot covered with rubble which was all that remained of the building which had been there until the bombing caught up with it. There was no shack of any type on the property, but the boy said he lived in a hole in the ground.

I led the interpreter and a group of guards with the boy over to the lot and as we moved into the rubble, ragged little figures started popping out of the ground and running as if their lives depended on it. The guards rounded up eight of them but several got away. We

made them point out the holes in the ground where they had been living and in them we recovered ten bottles of whisky and several old tin containers filled with gleanings from garbage cans.

When we returned to the hotel there were several Japanese policemen waiting for us. The head watchman had summoned them. They frightened the urchins badly so it was not hard to get the true story from them. The lad whom the room maid had found was the ringleader and he did most of the talking while the others stood quietly, their eyes downcast, never raising their heads. They had all escaped from an orphanage a short time before and had been living in the vacant lot, depending on the garbage cans of the hotels in the neighborhood for most of their food. They had been robbing the whisky for a Korean who paid them a small amount of yen for each bottle and whom they knew only as "*Fu-ten*." I thought this was the man's name, but later learned it is the Japanese equivalent for a "fence."

The police were going to take them to jail but I did not have the heart to bring any charges against them. It might have been my imminent fatherhood or the fact that I am not sure that I would not steal myself if I were hungry enough, but I could not see tagging them as criminals. I asked the police if they could just see that the children were returned to the orphanage from which they had run away and not enter their names on the police blotter. They agreed that this was a very simple solution.

When the urchins understood that they were not to be put in jail their gratitude was pitiful to see. They bowed to me as if I were a god; they looked like whipped puppies trying to make up with the master who had beaten them.

As the Japanese policemen started to herd them away the ringleader asked if he might say something to me. The interpreter seemed to have a difficult time understanding him and he had to repeat his chatter several times. Each time he went through it, he bowed in my direction.

"I don't know if I've got it straight," the interpreter told me, "but what I think he means to say is that he is very grateful to you for not sending him to jail and that you are a very kind man and that he is sure you are the best hotel manager in Tokyo because, of all the garbage they have scrounged from the hotels in Tokyo, the garbage from the Imperial has always been the most delicious."

It was a queer sort of compliment, but I appreciated it.

We did break up one junior-type crime syndicate within the hotel and it was rather a complicated matter. One evening while I was making a round of the room service stations, I entered the station on the first floor of the south wing and noticed two pieces of apple pie on the counter ready to be served. The room maids on duty were making no move to deliver it. I questioned the head girl and was told the pie had been ordered by "the colonel in room 161."

I told her to serve it immediately. She picked up the two plates, placed them on a tray and started out of the pantry. I called her back.

"Where are the forks and the napkins?" I asked.

"Oh. Very sorry. Forget."

That made me suspicious so I followed her down the corridor. She went to room 161, knocked on the door and when the guest answered walked into the room. I began to chide myself for being unduly suspicious but

as I was about to leave, the girl came out of the room with three bars of candy on the tray. That seemed like an extraordinarily large tip so I decided to check a bit further. I went back to my office, called the colonel in room 161, apologized for bothering him, but told him there seemed to be some sort of mix-up on his order for apple pie.

"Well, that's a very funny thing," he said. "I didn't order any pie but one of the room girls came in a few minutes ago and gave me two pieces. She said they were a present. I thought it was very sweet of her."

"I see," I said.

"Is there anything wrong?" he asked.

"No, there's nothing wrong," I said. "That clears things up. Thank you, and I apologize again for bothering you."

"Not at all, Morris, not at all."

I had the girl questioned but she was not talking. She just clammed up and no one could get anything out of her. The personnel section suspended her without pay until she made up her mind to explain where the two pieces of pie had come from.

Then the rats entered the picture. It was really the rats which led us to the syndicate. As I have said, there had been a very bad rat problem at the hotel but by this time we had it pretty well under control. Traps were still set throughout the building but we were not catching more than one or two every twenty-four hours.

Then one day the rat-catcher's report showed that he was catching between five and six each night in Outbuilding No. 1, a small two-story building in the rear of the hotel which contained the laundry plant and the employees' dining room. This continued for several days and no one could understand it. I made an inspection of the

building but could find no sanitation defects which would have made it an appetizing location for rats.

When the rat-catcher's report continued to show the increase, I made another inspection and this time discovered a small door I had never noticed before, located under one of the staircases. It opened into a small tunnel which served as a conduit for the pipes running between the boiler house and the main building. As I swung my light about the dark interior the beam struck something on top of one of the pipes. It was a loaf of bread.

I went back to my office and called for the blueprints of the hotel. One of the drawings showed the tunnel. It led from the transformer room, located beneath the kitchen, to the boiler house, but the exit into the laundry building was not shown. It seemed to me that whoever was smuggling food from the kitchen had given a lot of thought to the method. Packages carried by employees were checked by the guards as they left the building, but at the exit gate only identification cards were checked. The individual concerned had figured out a difficult but efficient method of circumventing the package inspection and this led me to believe that the operation was one of more than minor proportions. I took a personal interest in it and decided to handle the matter myself.

That night at about nine o'clock, I put on some old clothes and went to the tunnel to wait for the thief to come for his loot. I took Keigo with me as a witness because I knew he could keep his mouth shut; I did not want the news that I had discovered something to hit the grapevine. Though I trusted the head watchman and his underlings, I was afraid that if one of them was missed from his ordinary duties, some bright employee might decide that something was up.

When I flashed my light down into the blackness, I saw that the loot had been increased by two additional loaves of bread. There were two large rats perched on the pipe having a feast but the light scared them and they scurried away into the dark. Rats and snakes give me the creeps but I had no other alternative than to swing down into the hole. Keigo came after me and pulled the small door closed behind him. It was eerie sitting there in the darkness with no sound but the dripping of water, the occasional scurrying of rats and, at intervals, the explosive sound of a spring trap going off as one of the rodents was tempted by the bait. I figured that the thief would have to come for the bread between nine o'clock and midnight because there would be too many people about before nine and at midnight the guard at the employees' entrance went off duty and packages were then checked at the gate.

We waited there for three hours but the only thing that developed was a head cold which I contracted from the damp air. When midnight passed we gave up. I left the bread there because I did not want to alert the thief and I planned to return the next night; I was certain he would show up then. But by the next evening my cold had become so much worse that I knew it would be foolish to spend another several hours sitting in that damp place. I told Keigo our detective work was postponed indefinitely.

However, shortly after ten o'clock that night, just as I was about to retire, Keigo knocked on my door. He very excitedly asked me to bring my flashlight and come quickly. He led me to the tunnel; he had taken up the watch there by himself and had heard something at the far end.

We lowered ourselves quietly into the darkness. I

heard a faint scuffling sound, just barely audible, but drifting down the tunnel in a slow, regular rhythm. The tunnel was just high enough for a small man to move along in a duck waddle. The scuffling sound became louder and louder and occasionally we could hear the chink of a glass bottle against stone. The sounds came to within two yards of where we were sitting and stopped. We could hear the gasp of heavy breathing but it was so dark that nothing could be seen.

I flashed my light at the point where the sounds had stopped and it hit squarely into the face of a small man in a cook's white uniform. It frightened him so badly his eyes nearly popped out of his head; he froze in his stooped position, staring into the beam of light, his mouth wide open in astonishment.

"Get him up out of there," I said to Keigo.

When Keigo's hand reached out of the darkness and grabbed the collar of his jacket, the man shuddered and I thought for a moment he was going to faint. He was still shivering when we got him up into the light. He had a bottle of Pepsi-Cola clutched in each hand and he was shaking so badly that I told Keigo to take them from him. He was the most frightened creature I have ever seen.

But by the time we reached the head watchman's office, he had convinced himself we were not ghosts and regained his composure enough to decide that he was not going to explain his actions. The head watchman worked on him and then I worked on him through an interpreter but there is nothing so immutable as a Japanese who has decided that he is not going to co-operate. Threats of jail, ruination and other punishment had no effect and, when he saw that he was defeating us, he even became a little derisive in his answers. At the end of half an hour we had gotten nowhere and I was about

ready to give up. Then Keigo, who had not uttered a word during the interrogation asked if he might put a question to the man.

"You might just as well," I said. "We don't seem to be getting anywhere."

Keigo stepped in front of the man and asked something in Japanese so rapidly that I could not catch a word of it. The man sneered at him. Suddenly Keigo shot his left hand out, grabbed the cook by the throat, forcing him to his knees, scooped up one of the bottles of Pepsi-Cola in his right hand, and swung it aloft as if he were going to brain the man. I jumped up to stop him but the cook had suddenly burst into a torrent of chatter, babbling as fast as he could talk.

Keigo released him and turned to me.

"He says he will be glad to tell you anything you wish to know," he said, simply.

I wanted to know where he had gotten the bottles of Pepsi-Cola. He had gotten them from one of the janitors on the night gang in return for a pound of hamburger meat. We sent for the janitor and questioned him. He had traded a bar of soap to one of the bakers for the bottles. The baker had gotten them from one of the mechanics. The chain grew with each person we questioned, so many people being involved that it was not until the following afternoon that all the employees concerned had been grilled. When the investigation was completed, the last link was found to be the room girl whom I had discovered with the pie at the beginning of the week.

She had bought the two bottles of beverage from the bar with chits she had accumulated by stealing them from chit books given her by guests who ordered items through room service. She had started the chain by pur-

chasing the Pepsi-Cola with bona fide chits, then trading them to a snack bar cook's helper for the pie and he, in turn, had traded them, and so on, and so on. . . . The two bottles had passed through fourteen hands during the week and had almost attained the status of legal tender for the employees.

I was grateful to Keigo for the work he had accomplished and even a little surprised at the initiative he had shown, but I was also worried that he might have done himself a great deal of harm as far as his relations with the other Japanese employees were concerned. Fourteen of his countrymen had been caught in wrongdoing due to his action and, though the average honest Japanese would not in any way condone their activities, being caught by a fellow employee put the whole affair in a peculiar light. If the pilferers had been caught by an American or even by one of the Japanese guards, they would have been getting exactly what was coming to them. But being apprehended by a Japanese who had no more interest in the affair than his loyalty to me, an American, was a different matter and I was afraid it might put Keigo in an awkward position.

The situation is difficult to understand unless you have known the Japanese for a long time. There was no barricade between the Japanese employees and me for I had always done my best to be fair to them and I knew that most of them liked me and respected me. But that gulf which exists between the Oriental and the Occidental minds was always there and though it is a space over which you can see very clearly, it is an area which can never be crossed no matter how long you live among the Orientals nor how well you think you come to know them. You can walk among them as a welcome stranger but that is the closest you can ever come to them.

Keigo thought I was needlessly worried.

"I have done what was a right thing to do," he told me, "and if the Japanese people do not think well of it, then it is a shame for the Japanese people. Besides, it does not matter what the people here think because we will be moving to a house soon, anyway."

That was the only time I remember him ever using the editorial "we" and that is the narrowest the gulf ever became.

The Blade of Democracy

The colonel accepted my offer of a scotch and soda so I rang for Keigo. When Keigo came in he bowed. The colonel did not like that. He asked me why I did not teach my servants to stop the dam subservient bowing. I explained that the bow has the same meaning to a Japanese as shaking hands has to an American.

"Then why don't you teach them to shake hands?" he asked. He spoke to Keigo as if he were addressing a child. "Boy-san, wouldn't you rather shake hands than bow?"

"I think hand shake is very good for Americans," Keigo said, "and bow is very good for Japanese."

We were assigned a house in Washington Heights, a development which the Army had built as quarters for occupation personnel. It was typically American. If it had not been for the Japanese servants, Washington Heights would have looked like any middle-class suburb in the United States.

It was an ideal location for us, just fifteen minutes by car from the hotel, and all the facilities for living were

included within the area, the super-market commissary, movie theatre, medical dispensary, gas station, tennis courts, golf driving range and other recreational facilities. The house was small, two bedrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom and servants' room and bath. We had no use for a dining room since I was never home for lunch and we liked breakfast in bed. Keeping a room for the purpose of eating one meal a day seemed silly, so we did the most sensible thing and turned it into a bar. This miniature barroom had such a cozy atmosphere that it eventually became the most popular room in the house.

Keigo became the executive type very quickly. We hired a houseboy to help with the cleaning and serving and a chauffeur to drive the car. Fran had inherited a jeep when her father completed his tour and returned to the United States, but as her condition progressed the doctors advised against jeep riding so we sold it and bought a Ford sedan. We had to have a driver so that the car would be available to her during the day while I was at the hotel.

As Fran's time approached we hired a girl to be the child's amah. Fran bought a large celluloid doll and started giving her instructions in diapering, burping and bathing babies. As the servants were hired, Keigo had a long talk with each in which he gave an orientation on the likes and dislikes of Mori-san and Mori-san *okusan* and also established his system of tyranny in the household staff. He ruled with an iron and efficient hand. The house ran smoothly and that was all we asked of the staff.

Our first house guest was Lieutenant Fanelli, an officer whom I met while in transit overseas and of whom I was very fond. He was an intense young man, very intelligent, and with a zealous patriotism, inherited from his

parents who had immigrated to the United States while they were young and who had never lost that enthusiasm for America which you find in newly naturalized citizens. Fanelli had been brought up with this zeal always before him.

It is good to know people like Fanelli and to talk to them often because their attitude makes you remember things which you are apt to take too lightly or forget to regard with the proper humility. When he wrote me that he had been transferred to the 4th Replacement Depot in Yokohama to await transportation back to the United States and civilian life, I invited him to stay with us during the waiting period. I was anxious to have Fran meet him because I knew she would admire him as I did and would enjoy the intellectual discussions he always seemed to inspire.

Fanelli enjoyed living in a home again and he was impressed by the smooth operation of our household. I gave all the credit to Keigo and Fran, and Fran gave the credit to Keigo, for we both were very proud of him. I explained about my first contact with him, the language incident, and how he had asked to work for me because he wanted his boss to be a very strict man.

"That's really typically Japanese, isn't it?" Fanelli commented.

"Well, yes," I said, "but you'd be surprised at how much he's learned about the American way since he's been with me. I think he'll be a dyed-in-the-wool democrat before I leave Japan."

"I wonder," Fanelli said and I was surprised to hear this coming from him.

"Your attitude seems to have changed," I said. "I remember when you came over on the boat, even before we knew the war was ending, you kept talking about

making the Japanese people over into a democratic nation as soon as we whipped them."

"Oh, I haven't changed my mind about that," he told me. "I'm just not certain any more about how you should go about it."

"Something big happened to you, I see."

"Yes."

"Well?"

"How much English does your boy Keigo understand?"

"Enough to pick up the gist of a conversation."

"Send him to bed and I'll tell you about it."

I had Keigo mix us two tall ones and then dismissed him.

Fanelli had been assigned to a job similar to mine, operating an officers' billet for a headquarters located on Kyushu, the southernmost of the four main Japanese islands. His problems had been the same as mine, but he became reconciled to the Japanese people sooner than I did for he was Italian and had a quicker understanding of people. The Japanese at the billet admired him because he was tall and good-looking and blond and blue-eyed and was scrupulously fair in dealing with them; though he was a happy person his habitual expression was a stern one and this was impressive to the Japanese. They like conquerors to be strong men. Fanelli took every opportunity to emphasize not only the efficiency of the American way of getting things done but also the beauty of democratic ideals and the happiness they make possible for all men.

He had been adamant about refusing presents from the Japanese but he did make one exception. A directive had been published, shortly after the occupation began, requiring the Japanese to turn in all weapons to the local police headquarters. One morning Maeko, the head

waitress of the dining room, a Japanese woman of about thirty, came to his office with Nakamura, Fanelli's *nisei* interpreter, and tried to present him with a *hara-kiri* knife. Fanelli wanted to refuse it but the girl had explained, through Nakamura, that the knife was an heirloom and she could not bear to think of its being tossed into a junkpile. She begged him to take it. She knew he would appreciate its beauty and care for it; she thought it would make an excellent letter opener. Fanelli was swayed because he liked beautiful things and because the symbolism appealed to him . . . a Japanese turning a weapon of destruction to a peaceful pursuit . . . something that would always remind him that the Japanese had turned from their feudal ideas. He finally accepted it but not as a present. He insisted on paying for it. Nakamura thought it would be better not to.

"I think it might be an insult to her," the interpreter told him.

"Well, then, you tell her I want to give her ten dollars' worth of yen to donate to that local orphanage," Fanelli said.

"That's a good idea," Nakamura said. "You know, that's the way a Japanese would have gotten around it."

When the girl had gone Fanelli examined the knife closely. It was exquisitely made. The handle and scabbard were of unfinished *kirin* wood devoid of decoration and the blade was narrow, about eight inches long, tapered and gracefully turned in a slight curve. The steel was beautifully tempered and had a glassy finish which caught reflections like a mirror. It was not a wicked-looking instrument. It had too much simple beauty for that.

"You know, Lieutenant," Nakamura said, "they didn't have to bother taking all those knives and swords away.

The Japanese have no fight left in them. They're not going to make any trouble."

"No," Fanelli said, "I don't suppose they are. But maybe the directive was meant for another effect. These *hara-kiri* knives and *samurai* swords are all pretty much symbols of feudalism to the average Japanese. Take away the symbols and they're more apt to forget the old ideals and learn new ones. I don't know if that is actually what the directive was aimed at but I think it's one of the good effects it's going to have. You see what I mean?"

"I see what you mean, Lieutenant," Nakamura said, "but if you think you're going to make democrats out of these people you're mistaken. They've been thinking the way they do for a couple of thousand years and you'll have to spend a couple of thousand years trying to change them if you want results. I know. I was brought up in California but my folks are old type Japanese even after living there thirty years. They're never going to change. That's why I'm here in this smelly country."

"Well, maybe someday you'll get back. In the meantime, see how much democracy you can drill into the people here."

"You're beating your head against a stone wall, Lieutenant. You can't change these people."

"Well, I'm going to keep trying."

Fanelli thought the *hara-kiri* knife, which he kept on his desk, was a good refutation of Nakamura's stand. He often told people who remarked at its beauty the story behind it and the meaning he attached to it. Whenever he saw the girl, he got a warm feeling—she represented the new Japan to him.

One day, several weeks later, Nakamura informed him that the girl had some sort of difficulty at home and wanted to leave the hotel employ. Fanelli was perturbed

at this and told Nakamura to get all the details for him. Nakamura brought him a sordid story.

"This girl's husband is strictly a bum," Nakamura told him. "The other day was payday here and he came to the hotel pretty drunk and demanded that she give him all her pay. When she refused, he socked her and knocked her down and then beat it. There were a lot of people saw it and she thinks she's disgraced the hotel so she wants to quit."

"It wasn't her fault. There's no reason for her to quit just because of that."

"Yeah, you and I know that, Lieutenant," Nakamura told him, "but that's the way these people think."

"Is she here to-day?"

"No. She hasn't showed up since the day the guy socked her."

"You send for her to come in and see me to-morrow. Maybe we can help her."

"Okay, Lieutenant."

When Maeko came in the next day she was dressed in a handsome kimono, purple, with lavish designs about the hem of the skirt, rich-looking but in good taste. Her face was too tired and haggard-looking to be attractive and there was a black eye patch covering her right eye.

Though he knew the background of the story, Fanelli, speaking through Nakamura, started at the beginning because that is the only place you can start with a Japanese. She recited the account of her husband's assault and the fact that it brought such disgrace on the hotel that she felt she must resign. She was crying at the end and had to raise the patch to wipe away the tears. The area under it was badly bruised and the ball of the eye was blood-colored.

"You explain to her that there is no reason for her to

quit," Fanelli said to Nakamura. "Tell her that in America when someone is in trouble we try to help them, not just get rid of them. You tell her I want to do everything I can to help her."

Nakamura spoke to the girl at great length in Japanese but it did not seem to do any good.

"She says there's nothing can be done. It seems this thing is nothing new. This guy has been beating her up ever since the day they were married. She's just like my parents, Lieutenant. That's the way Japanese are."

"Why hasn't she gone to the police about it?"

"Well, that's the way Japanese are, Lieutenant."

"Damn it, don't keep saying that, Nakamura."

"Yes, sir."

"I'm sorry, Nakamura. I didn't mean to jump you. I guess that's the real answer." He hated the sense of frustration he was beginning to experience. He had not realized how much he had magnified the symbolism of the girl's suggestion about putting the *hara-kiri* knife to a constructive use. He had attributed more understanding to her than actually existed. He felt the sharp disappointment of an unexpected setback.

The girl murmured something in Japanese to Nakamura and then broke into racking sobs. Nakamura looked startled.

"She says she wants to kill herself!"

"What!"

"Yeah. She really means it, too!"

"But . . . even Japanese women have to have more reason for suicide than that, don't they?"

"Well, yes. I'm a bit surprised, Lieutenant. I don't think she's told us everything, though."

"Neither do I. Get the whole story from her. Quick!"

Nakamura spoke to her but she kept shaking her head and sobbing into her kerchief.

"I don't think it's any use, Lieutenant," Nakamura said. "She's just not going to tell about it."

"Nakamura, you tell her that if she doesn't give us the whole story, I'm going to have the police pick her husband up and drag it out of him."

When Nakamura told her this, it seemed to shock her. She cast a frightened look at Fanelli and stopped sobbing for a moment. Then she spoke to Nakamura in staccato bursts, punctuated by dry sobs and when she finished, lapsed into uncontrolled weeping. Nakamura was unable to speak for a moment.

"Gees, Lieutenant," he said when he had recovered. "This guy is a worse stinker than I thought. He's trying to force her to become a prostitute, besides working, so she can make more money for him. Can you imagine a guy like that? His own wife!"

Fanelli looked at the girl silently.

"God, what a bastard," he said after a moment. "No wonder she wants to kill herself."

"Yeah. That's plenty of reason," Nakamura said.

"Nakamura, we've got to talk her out of this somehow."

"I don't know how you're going to do it, Lieutenant. That's the way Japanese women are."

"Yes, I know, I know, but we've got to try anyway." He lost the frustrated feeling in the excitement of this new challenge. "Let her cry it out for a few minutes and we'll try something."

When the weeping had diminished into sobs again, he knew the approach to use.

"You've got to translate this as exactly as you can,

Nakamura, and make it as convincing as you can. You tell her that she's got to forget all these old-fashioned ideas about committing suicide because she has trouble. Tell her it's no solution. That way her husband will just go on doing these things. It's all backwards. That's what's the trouble with Japan, the good things are destroyed and the bad things keep on. Tell her she's got to learn to face things in the democratic way, to make the good things permanent and destroy the bad things. Emphasize that. It's the democratic way. The good things are promoted and the bad things are destroyed. Now, go slowly. I'll repeat it for you as you go along if you want."

Nakamura spoke to her slowly. She sat quietly, staring into her hands folded on her lap. No expression showed on her face so there was no way of telling whether she was actually listening to the interpreter or not.

"Ask her if she understands," Fanelli said when Nakamura had finished.

Nakamura spoke to her and she nodded her head once more. Then she murmured something in Japanese.

"She said she understands, but then she quoted something, that there is nothing sadder than to be born a woman in Japan."

"She doesn't understand then. Nakamura, I don't care if it takes all day, we've got to make her see that all that sort of thing is over. It ended when the war ended. Go through it again."

"Okay, Lieutenant," Nakamura said resignedly.

As Nakamura went through the lecture a second time, the girl gradually regained her composure and paid more attention to him. She even made some comments to him as he spoke.

"She says she understands what you mean, Lieutenant. I think she's feeling a lot better now."

"Okay. You tell her I want to help her but I can't do anything unless she wants to help herself. That's important. Tell her I want her to think about what we've told her and come in to-morrow and talk to me again."

"Okay, Lieutenant."

"I don't think she'd better go home. Tell her I think she'd better stay at the hotel until she sees me to-morrow."

"Okay, Lieutenant."

After the girl had bowed herself out of the office murmuring honorific good-bys, Fanelli found he could not concentrate on his work. He felt himself drawn taut with nervous excitement and the impatience of anticipation, as if he were about to kick a field goal in the last play of a football game and was eager for the play to be over to know whether he had made good or not.

As he sat at his desk the next morning, he thought it was this that gave him the sense of incompleteness he felt, but as he picked up a letter to open it, he realized suddenly that it was something else. The *hara-kiri* knife was missing from his desk!

Apprehension caught at him like a claw.

"Nakamura," he said, nervously, "have you seen my *hara* . . . er . . . my letter opener?"

"No, Lieutenant," the interpreter replied. "Isn't it on your desk?"

"No, I guess I must have mislaid it some place." He tried to make his voice sound casual.

"Nakamura."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you . . . er . . . seen that girl Maeko around yet."

"No, Lieutenant. She hasn't come in yet."

"Have them check the hotel and see if she's in the building."

"Yes, sir."

Fanelli was frightened when the report came back that the girl was not in the hotel.

"Nakamura," he said, "I want you to get Maeko's address from the timekeeper and then meet me out at the jeep. I want to go see her."

"Is something wrong?"

"No, no. Nothing's wrong. I just want to see her and get that trouble cleared up. But hurry! Hurry!"

"Okay, Lieutenant."

Fanelli could not stand still while he was waiting for Nakamura at the jeep. He could not control his imagination and the pictures which flashed into his mind were frightening. When he saw Nakamura walking towards the jeep, he screamed at him.

"Hurry up, damn it. I told you to hurry!"

Fanelli drove so fast and so recklessly that Nakamura had several bad scares and clutched the side of the jeep tightly. After half an hour, he pulled up at the entrance to a small alley which the interpreter pointed out to him. About one hundred yards down the alley there was a large crowd of Japanese excitedly jabbering and several black-uniformed Japanese policemen were officiously pushing them about.

"Is that her house where the crowd is?" Fanelli asked.

"I don't know," Nakamura said. "I'll go find out."

As he watched Nakamura return along the alley, Fanelli wished he could vomit out the sensation he felt in the pit of his stomach. Nakamura had a peculiar expression on his face when he reached the jeep.

"It's her house, all right," he said, "and there's been a lot of excitement there. Somebody stabbed her husband to death last night while he was asleep."

"Oh, God! Oh, God Almighty!"

"Yeah. The cops think it was one of the gangsters he hung around with. They think it had something to do with a black-market deal, because they found a lot of PX goods in the house."

Fanelli started trembling. He closed his eyes and pressed his fists against his temples.

"Is . . . she . . . there?" he asked, haltingly.

"No. The cops are trying to locate her now to notify her. It's pretty surprising, isn't it, Lieutenant? But I guess he sure had it coming to him, a guy like that."

"Did they . . . find . . . the knife that was used?"

"No. All they know is that someone jabbed him in the throat while he was in bed."

"Get in," Fanelli said wearily. "Let's get back to the hotel."

When they arrived at the hotel, Maeko was waiting at the door of Fanelli's office. He could not look at her. He went in and sat down at his desk. The knife was back in its place!

He picked it up with trembling hands and slowly pulled it out of the scabbard. There was no mark on it, no smear, nothing to show that it had been away from his desk. He looked up at Nakamura.

"I'm glad the letter opener isn't lost," the latter said. "One of the roomboys must have taken it to clean it."

"Yeah," Fanelli said. His throat was dry and his voice sounded unnatural. "Bring the girl in now."

She was smiling and bowing as she came in with Nakamura.

"What is it?" Fanelli said.

"Well, you know you wanted her to think over what you told her and come back and talk to you this morning."

"Yes."

"Well, she says she thought about it all day yesterday and she couldn't sleep last night because she kept thinking about it and she was very confused. She kept thinking she couldn't face the disgrace and had made up her mind to kill herself, so when it was beginning to be light she walked down to a shrine. When she got there and knelt down, it seemed like something clicked inside of her and she could suddenly see how right you were about the Japanese way being so wrong, you know, and about keeping the good things and doing away with the bad things. All of a sudden she wasn't confused any more and she saw how right you were. She says that she won't cause any more trouble."

Fanelli looked at the girl and it seemed as if his eyes would not focus properly. He saw her bow and her smile became wider.

The girl spoke to Nakamura again and the smile never left her face.

"She says there won't be any trouble anyway because the police have just informed her that her husband was killed last night. She wants to take a week off to mourn for him. That's the custom, you know."

"Yes, I know." Fanelli could not take his eyes off the girl now.

"They always smile when they tell you somebody is dead, don't they?" he heard himself say.

"Yeah. They always hide their feelings."

"Is there anything else?"

Nakamura and the girl chattered back and forth in Japanese for a moment.

"She says that you are the kindest man she has ever known and she will never forget you because you taught her the true meaning of democracy."

"Okay."

After the girl had bowed herself out, Fanelli dropped his head into his hands on the desk. He was emotionally exhausted. He felt as if he had been through a physical beating.

"Nakamura," he said, looking up, "I don't feel well. If anyone wants me, tell them to call me in my room. I'm going to lie down a while."

"Yes, Lieutenant."

Fanelli started for the door.

"Say, Lieutenant," Nakamura said.

"Yes?"

"You know, I woulda sworn you could never have changed the way that girl thinks but it looks as if you did. You know, sometimes I think you know these people better than I do—and I'm Japanese."

"Yeah," Fanelli muttered as he turned to leave, "I know these people like nobody's business!"

The glasses were empty when Fanelli finished speaking. I picked them up without saying anything and mixed two more highballs.

"Did you ever find out what actually happened?" I asked as I handed his glass to him.

"No," he replied. "I don't know whether she took the knife to kill herself and then changed her mind, or if she used it on her husband or if it was just that one of the servants took it out to clean it. I could have found out,

I guess, but the answer might be something I don't want to know. It's better to just keep wondering about it. You can see that, can't you?"

"Yes," I said, "I see that."

My Son! My Son!

*"We haven't lost a father yet."
—Old American Saying*

The baby was overdue and my nerves were not holding up under the strain. Fran took it calmly. She told me to make sure we always had a supply of raw octopus in the refrigerator and leave the rest up to her; the baby would come when he was good and ready and nothing could be done in the meantime. We knew it was going to be a boy. Keigo had made the prediction, based on the Japanese method of determining these things. He said it was simple to figure out—if the mother's face assumed a strong expression during pregnancy, the child would be a boy, but if her face took on a soft expression, the child would be a girl. This was not something he had dreamed up himself. It is a widespread belief in Japan.

The baby had been due at the end of February and when it had not come by the beginning of the third week in March, I really began to worry. Then, at four-

thirty in the morning of St. Patrick's day, Fran nudged me awake.

"You'd better get up and eat a hearty breakfast," she said, "because I think you are about to become a father."

I jumped out of bed as though I had been jabbed with a hatpin.

"Now, now, calm down papa-san," Fran said, "these things take a little time. I shouldn't have waked you."

"Are you in pain?"

"No. Are you?"

"Fran, I can't joke about this," I said.

"Well, I can and I intend to," she said. "Cheer up, old man, they haven't lost a father yet."

"I'll have them get the car ready," I said.

"It's too early," Fran told me. "We won't go to the hospital for a couple of hours yet."

"Well, Minoru had better check it anyway. There might be something wrong with it." (Minoru was our chauffeur.)

"Okay, okay," she said. "Go ahead, it will make you feel better. I'm going to try to go back to sleep."

I went to the room where Minoru and Keigo were sleeping and shook them awake, telling them the baby was on the way. They jumped out of the covers immediately. They were fully dressed except for their shoes. I found that Keigo had been making the servants sleep in their clothes for the preceding week so that they would be ready when the emergency came. He never took chances.

They woke the amah who slept in the nursery and the three of them went to the kitchen to prepare breakfast. The buzz of excitement there was so loud that it reached the second floor. For some inexplicable reason, I never could determine why, they put a huge pot of water on

the stove to boil. I don't know whether they expected the baby to be born at the house or had just seen it done in the movies, but they never did put the water to any use.

The pains reached the five-minute rhythm at about eight-thirty so we left for the 49th General, the Army Hospital. The servants came out to the car to wave good-by and their faces were so solemn and worried-looking that it relieved my own tension a bit.

The nurse on duty was very sweet and understanding. She took Fran off to her room and then came back to get all the information from me.

"Will you call me when things start to happen?" I asked. "I'd like to be here when the baby is born."

"Oh, surely," she said. "We always call the father. Just leave your number here and as soon as things start happening we'll call you."

I gave her the hotel number.

"I'll be there all day and all night," I told her. "You'll be sure to call right away, won't you?"

"Yes, indeed," she said, "and now don't you worry about a thing, Mr. Morris. After all, you know we haven't lost a father yet."

I went back to the hotel and tried to lose myself in work. The news had been spread via the grapevine and many of the guests were kind enough to stop in at the office and congratulate me. I guess they could see I was worried because most of them tried to cheer me up. They told me not to worry because they had never lost a father yet.

I spent the legal visiting hours at the hospital with Fran and in between I would sneak up the back stairway of the hospital to see her. She had joined the contingent of expectant mothers who, on the advice of the doctor,

were walking up and down the corridor. It was supposed to help things along. During one of these illegal visits she reminded me to call up the host of the dinner party we were supposed to attend at the hotel and tell him that since she would be otherwise occupied she could not be present. I had completely forgotten about the affair. Fran wanted me to go without her but I knew I would not be in socially acceptable condition.

"Besides," I said, "suppose they called in the middle of the party."

"Don't be silly," she said. "These things happen in the middle of the night."

When I went back to the hotel, I called the host and gave our regrets. He understood, of course, and wanted me to come alone but I convinced him it would not be practicable. He told me to stop by the party and at least have a drink.

"And stop worrying," he added. "Remember, they haven't lost a father yet."

That evening I got into my tuxedo to meet and greet the guests who were coming to the party and then ran over to the hospital for the evening visiting hours. We played gin-rummy until Fran felt she could not be brave much longer and told me to go.

On the way out I stopped at the desk because there was a new nurse on duty.

"I just wanted to make sure you had my number so you can call me when things start to happen," I said.

"Yes, we have your number right here," she said pointing to a line on the desk pad. "We'll call you. And now, don't you worry about a thing, Mr. Morris. After all, we . . ."

"Yes, I know," I said. "You haven't lost one yet."

I went back to the hotel, had my drink at the party

and then tried to keep busy supervising the service from behind the scenes. When the affair was over and I had said good-by to the last guest, there was nothing I could find to do so I went down to my room and started playing solitaire. I knew I would not be able to sleep that night.

When I woke up I was still in the chair holding cards in my hand. Someone had come in during the night and stretched a blanket over me. It was still dark, but then I noticed that this was because the shades were drawn. I walked to the window and snapped one up. It was bright daylight out. I looked at my watch. It was half past eight. Fran had been in labor twenty-eight hours. Something was wrong.

I rushed to the phone and called the maternity ward at the hospital. I recognized the voice of the nurse who had been on duty when Fran had entered the place the day before.

"I'm calling about Mrs. Morris," I said. "Is she all right?"

"Oh, yes, she's fine, Mr. Morris," the nurse said. "Absolutely fine. She's doing splendidly."

"I see," I said, relieved, but baffled. "Er—do you have any idea of how soon the baby will be born?"

"Born?" she said, surprised. "Didn't anybody call you?"

"Call me?"

"Yes. You became the father of a fine son at ten minutes after four this morning! Didn't anybody call you?"

"No," I said. "Nobody called me."

I raced over to the hospital. Fran was awake when I arrived. She looked a little bit tired, as well she might. Lack of sleep.

"How are you, darling?" I asked after I had kissed her.

"Hungry," she said.

I breathed a sigh of relief. That is Fran's normal state. When I left, the nurse was at her desk.

"Well," she said as I passed her, "you seem to have had quite a celebration." She noticed I was still in my tuxedo.

"Oh, I had a ball!" I said.

"Well, you see everything turned out fine, didn't it?" she said cheerfully. "I told you everything was going to be all right, didn't I? After all, we've never . . ."

"Yes," I said. "I know, I know, I know."

We brought the baby home at the end of a week. The Japanese were eager to get their hands on him, but at first I would not trust anyone other than Fran and myself to handle him. Each evening after dinner I held a lecture class in the kitchen during which I sterilized the baby's feeding equipment and prepared the formula for the following day. For the first week I would not let anyone else touch this work. It was a simple task, of course, just a matter of boiling things. I boiled everything in sight, pots, pans, measuring cups, bottles, nipples, bottle-racks and my hands. Both Keigo and the amah insisted they could do all this but I told them I wanted to be certain they understood the importance of it and would give them a test run at the end of the week.

In spite of all the care I exercised, on the second day the baby started throwing up his food. Half an hour after taking a bottle, he would turn into a fountain and spew everything back up. Then, on the third day, a rash broke out all over his body. On the fourth day, both Fran and I were certain that he was either missing some

vital part of his internal equipment or that some mistake we were making was slowly poisoning him. We could not stand it any longer and took him to the dispensary to be checked.

The doctor who took care of us was very young, but capable and kindly.

"Your first baby, isn't it?" he asked when we were seated in his office.

"Yes," I answered.

"This must be the fourth day you've had him home," he said.

"Yes," I said, "how did you know?"

"They always come in on the fourth day," he told me. "New parents, that is. That seems to be as long as they can stand it."

"But, doctor," I said, "this baby is really sick. He's . . ."

"Yes, I know," he said, in a kindly tone, "he can't keep his food down because the formula is too rich and he has a body rash because you haven't been boiling the diapers."

"Well, it's not only that," I said.

"Yes, I know, I know," he said. "Well, get his clothes off and I'll go over him completely."

He tapped the baby's chest, listened through the stethoscope, peeked up his nose and ears, manipulated his arms and legs. He did give him a thorough going-over.

"You should be as healthy as this youngster," he told me. "He's in the pink of condition and his reflexes are perfect. Watch."

He shoved his little finger into the baby's mouth and the youngster immediately started gumming it for all he was worth.

"You see," the doctor said. "That shows he's . . . what's the matter? Why do you look so perturbed?"

"Oh, nothing," I said. "I take it for granted that you've boiled that finger."

VIP's and Vipers

*"Crabs dig holes according to their size."
—Japanese Proverb*

Most people had the wrong impression about VIP's—the idea that they were hard to handle and difficult to please. People confused them with Vipers. Vipers were guests who considered themselves VIP's but were alone in the opinion. I met many people from both categories and these experiences convinced me that you do not get to be big by acting small. Of course there were problems connected with the visits of VIP's but these seldom were the fault of the dignitaries concerned.

There was always the headache of the availability of accommodations commensurate with the status of the guest. When John Foster Dulles came to Tokyo to work on the Japanese Peace Treaty, he brought as members of his party Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, 3rd, and Assistant Secretary of the Army and Mrs. Earl Johnson. Making suites available for this party was a hectic proposition, for we were flooded with VIP's at the time. The suite which the Rockefellers occupied became vacant

exactly four hours before their plane landed. The same sort of situation existed when large groups of congressmen visited Tokyo; accommodations given these guests had to be as much alike as possible and that often took a bit of doing. Sometimes we had to give apologies in lieu of proper accommodations but, though this happened several times, I never had an experience where the VIP did not understand the problem and accept it gracefully.

This does not mean that they never checked to make sure they were getting the best we had to offer. When I showed Governor Thomas E. Dewey of New York the suite he was to occupy, he asked me if it was the quietest suite in the hotel.

"It is the quietest suite that I consider adequate," I told him.

"The quietest adequate suite," he murmured to himself. Then he nodded his head in satisfaction.

The one general rule covering the operation of the Imperial Hotel was that every guest must be pleased, but I was particularly anxious that the VIP's always receive a good impression. There were several reasons for this. The most important was that my job depended on it, but there were other considerations. A slip-up in the handling of a distinguished personage always seemed to be magnified because the spotlight was on the person involved. And there was the psychological factor which makes people want to appear at their best before someone they know is worth while. Then there is the fact that I found these VIP's, without exception, to be exceedingly nice people who understood the problems we faced and I enjoy being nice to people who are nice to me.

Vice President and Mrs. Alben Barkley were the most

prominent people who stayed at the hotel while I was there. General Ridgway was the most inspiring, Danny Kaye the funniest, John D. Rockefeller, 3rd, the richest, Cardinal Spellman the saintliest, former Ambassador William C. Bullitt the most dignified, and Bob Hope had the quickest wit. Jennifer Jones was the most beautiful, June Brunner the sweetest, Benay Venuta the peppiest and Monica Lewis was the most female-looking woman I have ever met at the Imperial Hotel or anywhere else.

The Japanese were always impressed by the high station of VIP's and did their best to make the hotel shine. But of course, they still thought along Japanese lines. The Japanese confusion over quality and quantity was a trait which had to be watched carefully. The Japanese recognize quality but they have difficulty realizing that there is a point of diminishing returns even with things of good quality. I think the absurdly heavy make-up a geisha girl wears must be the result of this quirk. When the Japanese realized that a touch of lipstick and a dusting of face powder would enhance the natural beauty of a woman, it was logical by their reasoning to think that two coatings of lipstick and several layers of face powder would then improve the beauty just that much more. It is hard for the westerner to understand this attitude, but it is typically Japanese. I watched for this sort of thing but could not catch it in every instance.

Whenever Mr. Joseph M. Dodge, (later) Director of the Federal Budget, was in Tokyo straightening out the Japanese economy, he always stayed at the Imperial. I happened to learn from Mrs. Dodge, during one of the visits on which she accompanied her husband to Japan, that his favorite breakfast cereal was Grape Nuts, not the flakes, but the original gritty kind. I told Mrs. Dodge I would lay in a supply but she told me not to bother;

she would pick some up the next time she went to the commissary. However, I purchased a case that afternoon and turned it over to the room service-captain in charge of the Dodges' suite, explaining that the Grape Nuts were for the exclusive use of the Dodges since it was his favorite food. The captain understood and wrote some large *kanji* characters on the outside of the box. I had them translated. He had marked the box "Mr. Dodge's favorite food." The next day I met Mrs. Dodge in the lobby and she thanked me for my thoughtfulness in obtaining the Grape Nuts. But it seems that the Japanese, upon learning that Grape Nuts was a favorite with Mr. Dodge, had dispensed with cereal bowls and that first morning had served a soup plate containing, as Mrs. Dodge described it, a "six months' supply of Grape Nuts."

The Viper who irritated me most we nicknamed "Gunga Din" because he thought he was a better man than any he had met. He stayed at the hotel for several weeks and when he left he still considered himself a cut above the common herd, but I happened to know that during his stay at the Imperial Hotel he pinched more than one kimono-ed bottom and that's a pretty common denominator. Gunga Din gave himself away the moment he registered because under the heading of rank, a heading there for the convenience of military guests, he filled in the letters "VIP." People who are really VIP's never think of themselves as such and the surest sign of a Viper is a subtle announcement that he is a VIP.

Gunga Din was not billeted in the Imperial Hotel on his own merits. He was either related to someone or knew someone who was important enough to request he

be extended the courtesy. He was not satisfied with the room assigned to him.

"Surely you have suites in this hotel?" he said accusingly.

"Yes, we do," I told him, "but unfortunately, they are all occupied at present."

"Well, couldn't you ease someone out of one of them," he suggested. "After all, you know WHO I am, don't you?"

"Of course, of course," I said, "but I'm afraid it would be impossible to 'ease' anyone out."

"Din" had to take the room I offered him. He did not have to like it and he advertised this fact. He was not a man who knew how to get the best out of people.

He did make a point of complimenting me on the operation of the Imperial when his departure date arrived. He was leaving on a plane which took off in the middle of the night so he said good-by in the lobby that evening.

"Morris," he said in a condescending tone, "it is with the greatest pleasure that I tell you I think you're making a fine effort here. Of course, there are a lot of things that could be done, but I don't want to tell you how to do your job, though I could, mind you."

He pulled out his handsome gold-plated cigarette case and removed a cork-tipped cigarette.

"I've stayed at all the best hotels in the world, you know. But the effort that everyone here makes, does in a little way make up for not knowing how to do things properly."

He tapped the cigarette nervously against the back of his hand, reversing it and tapping it several times—a most sophisticated gesture.

"Of course," he added, "there's really no substitute for knowing how to do things properly, is there?"

"You're so right," I said. It was with the greatest of pleasure that I watched him gracefully flick his gold lighter and ignite the cork tip of the cigarette which he had placed in his mouth backwards.

VIP's were the opposite of Gunga Din. They were never impressed with their own importance. When the late James Forrestal, then Secretary of the Navy, paid a visit to the Imperial Hotel, I was a lieutenant in the Army, a rank which is sneered at both from above and below. When the Secretary entered the building, surrounded by all the local Navy brass, I stepped up to introduce myself and welcome him to the hotel. When he saw me start towards him, he shoved out his hand.

"My name's Forrestal," he said, just as if he did not know that I knew he was the most important person in Tokyo at that moment.

Throughout the occupation, members of Congress and senators filtered through Tokyo in a constant stream, but their comings and goings never caused much excitement unless they came in committee or in a group to look into some particular phase of the occupation administration. When that happened, some section of the headquarters sweated it out and worried us at the hotel to make certain that the dignitaries had the best of everything. It was to their advantage to see that the group was kept in a good mood.

Their worry about this was unnecessary, since pleasing these people was our business. Sometimes we had to go to extraordinary extremes, but it was always worth it. There was one congressman who was certain that three of his shirts were missing from his laundry bundle.

He had not filled out the laundry list himself; he let one of the roomboys take care of it. We could find no record of the three shirts being received, processed or delivered but I did not deem it politic to contradict the congressman. He gave me a description of the style, size and make of the garments and I had a thorough search made for them, but they could not be located. When the congressman's supply of linen got low he became so perturbed I ran over to the PX and purchased three duplicates of the shirts which were missing, had them run through the laundry, and delivered them personally, just to be certain that there was no further mix-up. I apologized for the delay and told him the shirts had been placed in another bundle by mistake. He was very understanding and told me not to worry about it.

"And I must compliment you on the work your laundry does here," he told me. "It's worth waiting to get workmanship like that. Why, look at these," he said, holding up the three shirts I had just handed him, "they look like new!"

I was out three shirts but in good with Congress.

Some groups which came through were, as far as I could see, either on paid vacations or gathering material for magazine articles and books or snaring whatever absentee ballot votes they could. There was one group which I am certain came through for the latter purpose only. Each of them had long lists of GI constituents to contact. They were particularly anxious to find people from their home states, and when they did discover such individuals, there was much handshaking and backslapping. This was in the early part of the occupation when I had a staff of very bright young GI's to assist me. The chief desk clerk, a sergeant about nineteen years old, caught on to the congressmen quickly. He checked the

home state of each of the MC's and as each of them asked, as do all politicians, "Where are you from, friend?" he named off the appropriate home state. Where he got the widely diversified information, I do not know, but he described his home town in every one of the six states so well that each of the MC's mentioned he remembered some spot which the sergeant described. As he went through the roster of congressmen his stories got better and better. When I found out what was going on, I gave him a dressing down that should have blistered his hide. I told him he was supposed to be a grown man capable of fighting a war but he was acting like a damn kid playing high school tricks and asking for trouble.

"What do you expect to be when you grow up?" I asked sarcastically.

"You know, I just decided to-day, Lieutenant," he said enthusiastically. "I'm going to be a congressman. It looks like a good job and doesn't require much brains."

The congressmen never caught on to him. Several of them mentioned to me that he was an outstanding young fellow and had helped make their stay at the Imperial most enjoyable. I assured each of them that if I had half a dozen lads like him on my staff my problems would be different. They never knew how different I meant.

We had one incongruous congressman at the hotel when Major Harold Siemenski, a reserve officer on duty in Korea, was elected to Congress from the state of New Jersey. He was recalled immediately and was escorted to the hotel by a major general who was along to see that he received treatment according to his new station in life. The two hats he wore were of very different sizes for as a major he was the lowest ranking officer living in the hotel and as a congressman he was the highest

ranking dignitary registered at that particular time. There is some sort of moral to be drawn from this incident, but I am not particularly interested in it.

Some guests were disappointed by the Hollywood people who passed through the Imperial. They were safe and sane business people, usually a bit more conservative and sedate than the average person one meets. The only one who furnished anything like excitement was Judy Kelly when she walked through the lobby in her costume. There were no drunkards, libertines or zanies among them and this was bad for the gossip situation as a lot of people had been counting on them heavily.

The Hollywood people came through in a constant stream after the Korean War started. I admired them for donating their time and talent and for the tremendous amount of good they did for troop morale. I did my best to see that their visits to the Imperial were pleasant, but, of course, some days you can't make a dime. Two days before the Jack Benny group departed, there was an earth tremor and one quarter of the ceiling in Benny's sitting room fell to the floor. That was the only damage done to the hotel by that particular earth shock, but of course, it had to happen in the best suite in the hotel and to one of the most important guests. It did not seem to bother Mr. Benny for, though I offered him another suite for the remainder of his stay, he told me not to bother.

Occasionally we had difficulty with autograph-seekers and movie-struck Japanese. When Bob Hope was at the hotel we caught one ragged Japanese woman sneaking up a stairway to his suite. She said she just wanted to touch one of his garments as he passed.

VIP's were always inveterate shoppers but conducting

them on a shopping tour was more a pleasure than a problem. They could usually purchase things I wanted but could not afford, and helping someone else buy them was next best.

I usually conducted VIP's on a tour of the Imperial Hotel Arcade, a shopping center located in the street level of the hotel, and then took them over to meet my friend Mr. Yamada at the Oriental Art Gallery, for most of the art objects I would have liked to own were in the possession of this firm. Yamada enjoyed showing off his treasures and each time we came to his shop he had something new and fabulous to show us in one of the small conference rooms in the store.

One time when Fran and I took a VIP over there shortly before our son was born, Yamada brought out a collection of ten natural pearls, all the size of pigeon eggs and of finest lustre and color. The collection was priced at the yen equivalent of \$70,000.

Yamada had a sense of humor.

"Mori-san," Yamada said, "I think you should buy these pearls. They would make a very nice birth present for your child if it is a girl."

"Mr. Yamada," I said, "I would do it in a minute but we have been assured that the baby is going to be a boy. Our houseboy told us it is a certainty. He can tell by looking at Mrs. Morris' face."

Yamada peered at Fran intently for a moment.

"Yes," he said, "your boy is correct. The baby will be a boy."

"Too bad," I said.

"I will save them until the second baby comes," Yamada said.

He had not cracked a smile while this play was going

on and it was confusing to the VIP. The latter spoke to me about it at the hotel the next day.

"Does that Yamada really expect you to buy those pearls for your baby?" he asked.

"Well, no," I said. "They were very nice but they were not exactly what I was looking for." He could tell now it had been a joke.

"He seemed so serious," the VIP said. "I couldn't exactly figure him out."

"Mr. VIP," I said, "don't ever try to figure out the Japanese people. You'll be much happier that way."

A problem which VIP's caused, again not through their own doing, was the swarm of correspondents which usually trailed in their wake, hoping for the story of the year. I had several friends among the correspondents in Tokyo, men whom I liked and admired. Many of them were sincerely intent on doing a good job and reporting an honest account of events. Unfortunately, there were some novices among them who were eager to dig up an exposé type of story which would call for blaring headlines and make a name for the man discovering it. These men did not always use good judgment. To guard against this type of correspondent I adopted the general rule of trusting newspaper men just about as far as I could throw the Imperial Hotel. I learned that this was wise early in the game when I read an article in an American magazine which stated that the Imperial Hotel employed the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra for dinner music each Saturday night at a tremendous cost to the occupation. At the time the article was written, I was employing a string quartet for dinner music.

Then there was the night I walked into the lobby and found a news photographer from a nationally circulated

magazine setting up a debacle scene in the middle of the lobby—broken cocktail glasses, spilled whisky bottles, gin bottles, champagne bottles, cigar butts—all the earmarks of a wild party. He was going to take photos to show what went on in the lobby of the Imperial Hotel. The lobby of the Imperial was such a staid place that we did not even serve Coca-Cola there. The photographer was greatly incensed when I stopped his operations. He said I was infringing upon the inalienable right of freedom of the press. He said he would indict me before the bar of public opinion. I told him I would take my chances.

Not all the correspondents were like that. Many of them would not report a word they had not checked and double-checked and these men had the respect, not only of the general public, but even of their fellow correspondents.—and that's really being respected. I remember Bill Costello, the CBS correspondent in Tokyo, telling me that Nora Wahn had replied to a letter from her publisher, complaining that her copy was too slow coming in, by writing him that she had to get to know her subject before she could write about it. I do not think that Bill Costello liked me after that because I had to open my big mouth and say I had never heard of that stopping a correspondent before. That was not one of my good days.

The biggest battle we ever had with the correspondents was on the night General Ridgway arrived in Tokyo to assume the role of Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. His arrival was a closely guarded secret and I had been informed that he would not give any press interviews that evening. Shortly after the General entered the hotel the news leaked out and newsmen descended on the place by the platoon. I had taken

every precaution I could think of to protect the General's privacy and when they realized this, they tried to reason with me.

"Look," one of them said, "what you don't seem to realize is that it's our job to get in and talk to the General. It's what we get paid for."

I told him that I was fully cognizant of this but that it was my job to see that they did not get in to see the General that evening and that if I expected to keep getting paid for it, it behooved me to be better at my job than they were at theirs. They didn't like that.

"Listen," one of the more belligerent ones said. "We happen to be the people who give the American public the only picture they get of what goes on over here. It would be a good idea for you to be on friendly terms with us. We can do you a lot of good and we can do you a lot of harm."

"There is much to be said for what you say," I told him.

When they found that neither reasoning nor threats would work, they resorted to their normal methods and we found them sneaking all over the hotel. I finally had to station two assistant managers in the corridor outside the General's suite with orders to use violence, if necessary.

One of the photographers almost got through this screen. He went into a phone booth, called the front desk, announced himself as Colonel Quirk, General Ridgway's Public Information Officer, and asked for himself by name. Then he stepped outside the booth and when the desk paged him, walked over, picked up the phone and held a conversation with nobody. He ended it by saying, "Okay, Colonel Quirk, I'll be right up," and then told the desk clerk, who could not help overhearing the

conversation, that Colonel Quirk wanted to see him immediately in General Ridgway's suite. The desk clerk had received very strict instructions and sent for me. I happened to know that Quirk was in his own room, so I called him. He told me he had not spoken to the photographer and that it would be impossible for the latter to obtain an interview.

"Get rid of him," he told me, "but don't make him mad."

That would have been the neatest trick of the week.

Above and beyond the prestige it lent the place, there was one big advantage in having VIP's of such stature as General Ridgway or Vice President Barkley come to the Imperial. We kept five suites and fifteen rooms exclusively for the use of VIP's and, naturally, these rooms were always in good condition. But when someone of such extraordinary stature was billeted at the hotel, extraordinary accommodations had to be made available for him. This meant that I could have a small area of the hotel redecorated and refurnished with items not ordinarily available; supply sections did not dare refuse any request I made for materials or equipment for this work. Occasionally a requisition would be disapproved. Then I would call the person who had disapproved it and inform him I was perfectly willing to go along with his decision but, of course, if the VIP concerned was not pleased with his accommodations, he would have to bear the responsibility. That always brought about a change of mind.

The big difficulty was that the movements of people this big are usually closely guarded secrets because of security requirements, and therefore we seldom had adequate time to accomplish the work needed.

When the news of General MacArthur's replacement

by General Ridgway exploded on Tokyo, I did not wait for any reservation for the new SCAP. There was no assurance that General Ridgway would stay at the Imperial, but, just in case, one hour after the news was announced I started preparing an apartment for his occupancy. I was able to get six rooms redecorated and refurnished on that deal.

When we prepared to receive Vice President and Mrs. Barkley, there was a problem caused by the fact that the news was top secret and I could not tell any of the supply people the name of the VIP whom we were expecting. This made some of them act cagey about the requests I made, some of which they considered outrageous. I could not blame them. As a matter of fact, I respected their attitude since they were merely guarding the taxpayers' dollars. I finally had to have the Chief of Staff's office inform the supply sections, through channels, that any requests I made were to be filled with no questions asked.

That made the rumors about the identity of the VIP fly thick and fast. The best one was started by one of the QM officers. Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip were visiting the United States at the time and the officer decided they were going to return to England via the Pacific route, stopping off for a visit in Tokyo.

The advance contingent of Secret Service men assigned to guard the Vice President actually picked the section of the hotel in which the apartments were to be set up, since the prime consideration was security. They picked a good location. We had to move an officer of two-star rank and several in the colonel bracket, temporarily, in order to make the space available. They did not mind too much since their quarters got the best

redecorating job ever done at the Imperial. We pulled out all stops on that one.

Vice President and Mrs. Barkley were very gracious people, kindly and particularly careful to make certain that they expressed their gratitude to everyone who did anything for them. They were the best proof I have ever had that the bigger people are, the better they are.

But it does pay to be nice to everyone, whether VIP or underling. One of the nicest letters of commendation I have ever read came down through official channels for one of my assistant managers shortly after the departure of an Important Visitor who had a large entourage traveling with him. It said that the assistant manager had shown a fine devotion to duty in anticipating the desires of the Important Visitor and the members of his party. (Actually, the important visitor never knew about the duty which my assistant had performed for the members of his party nor of the particular desires involved.) I was glad to see the boy get the letter, but I could not exactly understand the reason for it, and neither could Mr. Andrews. We had handled all business concerning the Important Visitor and his party personally.

When I presented the letter to the lad I congratulated him and asked him if there was any particular service he had performed that I did not know about. At first he was embarrassed. He asked me if I would keep the matter confidential. I assured him I would and then he was bursting to tell me about it. He raced through the whole story in one sentence of several thousand words and I don't think he paused once for breath. He spoke so rapidly he was not exactly coherent but I did get the gist of the tale.

"I was standing there by the front desk one night when three of the small fry from the Important Visitor's party came up to me, see, and one of them asked me if I was the assistant manager but I told him I was only one of the assistants, that Andrews was THE assistant manager but I asked him if there was anything I could do for him and he asked me if I could speak Japanese so when I said yes he turned to the others and said I guess this is our boy and then he said this is our last night that we're free so we want to see the town and we want you to show it to us so I suggested that we go down to the Komachi-en and have a *sukiyaki* but he said they had had one and anyway, that was mild and what they wanted was something wild so then I knew what they were looking for, see, so I told them I didn't know any place like that and then they all laughed and asked me how long I'd been in Japan and said come off it and you don't have to kid us and you meet us here at eight o'clock, there'll just be the three of us, and we'll take care of your expenses so I was going to call you but you were out and so was Andrews so I called up the Miyoshi, you know, and made reservations and . . ."

"I see," I interrupted. "Well, I'm sorry you were put in a position like that but I'm glad you were able to handle it. That's all I need to know."

"But I want to tell you all about it, Mr. Morris. You see, we got there and the mama-san took us to this little house and collected thirty-nine hundred yen off each of us and then she brought in the girls, real dogs, and they started fussing over us and I didn't know how to act because that's the first time I've ever been in a place like that, honestly, and when it came time for everyone to go to the *o-furo* for the hot bath I was embarrassed

so I told them I had to talk to the mama-san about something so they went ahead but the girl with me thought there was something queer about me so when they came back I went over with her so we had the bath to ourselves and boy, does she give you a going over, you don't wash yourself, she does, and it's really like getting a rubdown especially between the shoulders but I don't think I would have gone except they'd been pouring drinks into me and I didn't exactly know what was going on so then we went back and the others had all disappeared and there were the *futons* spread out on the floor so we got into them and . . ."

"Er, that's all I need to know, I guess. I'm sorry . . ."

"But I want to tell you the rest, Mr. Morris, because as soon as I got into bed I passed out because I don't ever drink much, see, and the next thing I knew it was six o'clock in the morning and they were banging on the door and yelling at me to hurry up because the taxi was waiting and they had to get back to the hotel so I hurried up and that was the way it ended."

"Did they make good the thirty-nine hundred yen to you?"

"No. I guess they forgot about it."

"You should have told me. I would have put it on their bill for extraordinary services. Don't ever let anyone push you into a thing like that again."

"Okay, Mr. Morris."

"I'll make good the thirty-nine hundred yen to you."

"Oh, that's all right, Mr. Morris. I don't mind paying it."

"But you spent nearly eleven dollars and didn't get a thing out of it."

"Oh, I got something out of it. This is the first letter

of commendation I've ever gotten and . . . and . . . you ever been to the Miyoshi, Mr. Morris?"

"No," I said, "I never have."

"Well, I'll tell you, that's really one hell of a bath they give you."

The Young Master

"Bring up your beloved children with a big stick."
—Japanese Proverb

The Japanese have a saying *Kawaii ko wa bō de sodateyo* which means "Bring up your beloved children with a big stick," but they don't really believe in it. A Japanese child is not disciplined during his first six years since he is not presumed to know the difference between right and wrong and a spank or cuff is not considered to be a good training aid.

When we brought the baby home, Fran and I found we did not exactly rate any more—the baby was the center of attraction around which the whole household revolved. First he was known as *Aka-chan* which is the pet name for all new-born babies, coming from their redness at birth, then *Boku-chan*, a Japanese nickname for little boys, and then, when his hair came in blond, the servants gave him his final Japanese name of *Kintaro* which is a dilly of a tag since it translates as "Golden Eldest Son."

He was also referred to as "the young master," something that Minoru, the chauffeur, had picked up while he was working for an English family. This was, in fact, a pretty good description of the boy's position in the household for the servants transferred their hero worship from me to my son. This hero-worship business is a phenomenon among the young Japanese. It develops overnight and is usually a lasting thing, bringing on a determined imitation of the person on the receiving end. All the Japanese servants we employed at the house were young for I found through my experience at the hotel that it is easier to train an inexperienced young Japanese to do things the way you want rather than an experienced older servant who is permanently settled in his habits.

The hero worship for me as *danna-san* was very flattering but sometimes had complications. When I entered Jochi University to study for a degree in Philosophy, the three boys on the staff immediately decided they wanted to further their educations. Keigo, who had dropped out of the English language school he had been attending, decided he had made a mistake in doing so. This upset the working schedule we had been using and the new one was difficult to arrange in such a way as to permit their attendance at classes. The sudden desire for education also gave me an additional task, since the boys continually came to me for help with their homework. This was actually just a fair turn about as I had been making them help me with my homework in Japanese.

Minoru, the chauffeur, finally had to leave us because of his passion for good music. He had a squeaky Japanese wind-up phonograph on which he played Chopin records incessantly. It was the only interest he had in

life, but it preyed on the nerves of the other servants and finally led to some bad blood between Minoru and the other two boys with whom he shared the living quarters. He found a position in another occupation household where he was provided with a room to himself.

Minoru's replacement was a very colorful young man who announced to us on the first day that his Catholic name was Antonio and he would be indebted if we would refer to him as Tony. He had been a first lieutenant in the Japanese Air Force during the war and had just been graduated from Meiji University before coming to work for us. He intended to start a taxi company eventually and took the job as driver in order to get experience and because he had used up all his money going to college.

Besides being so well educated, Tony was an excellent driver and mechanic. His services cost us the sum of eleven dollars a month. This was not actually his salary. At the time, all Japanese servants were paid in yen by the Japanese government. Payment by occupation personnel was made in dollars to the Army Finance Section, and these sums found their way by some tortuous means into dollar credits in one of the funds which needed them. The scale of salaries was not commensurate with the exchange rate of 360 yen to the dollar. Though houseboys and maids cost a householder \$6.50 to \$7.50 a month, a housekeeper ten dollars a month and a cook fifteen dollars a month, the yen salaries of these people usually ran in a ratio of one thousand yen to the dollar.

Tony had many unusual talents. One evening I walked into the kitchen and found him reading palms for the other servants. That sort of thing intrigues me so I had him come into the bar and read palms for Fran and me.

He had difficulty with mine for there was one short line just under my little finger that had a meaning for which he knew the Japanese word but not the English. We tried to find it in the dictionary but it must have been some term of fortune-teller's jargon for it was not in any of the books I had on hand. We finally gave up on it.

Half an hour after the palm reading was over, Tony suddenly popped into the bar, bowed and excused himself for intruding. His eyes were shining and I assumed he had found the word he wanted.

"Mori-san," he asked, "do you speak Burmese?"

"Well, no," I said, "that's one of the languages I really do not speak."

His face fell.

"It is too bad," he said. "I have remembered Burmese word for line in hand."

It was an awful spot to be caught in without a Burmese dictionary.

As soon as the baby learned to crawl he had to be either tied down or under the constant surveillance of someone. This was due to the layout of the house in which we lived. There was a steep center stairway down which he could have taken a bad fall. We had to set up folding gates as barriers at the top and bottom. But there was nothing much we could do about the gas heater on the first floor. This heater was sunken in the floor, just inside the front door, and extended from the front doorsill to the stairway which led to the second floor. I always wanted to meet the man who designed that heating system to find out just what he had in mind when he dreamed it up. Since it was located at the foot of the staircase, all hot air from it rose straight up the stairway and left the first floor just a few degrees cooler than the outside temperature while the second

floor eventually had the atmosphere of a blast furnace. The top of the gas heater was covered by a waffle-iron-shaped grill which permitted the heat to rise from the gas flames. This grillwork became hot enough to burn a stockinged foot and the action of the hot air rising rapidly had a modified fun-house effect on women's skirts. The only method of preventing a child from crawling onto the grill would have been to put a small portable fence around it, but this was not practicable since it would have effectively sealed off all sections of the house. A person would not have been able to enter or leave through the front door, get into or out of the living room or barroom, or mount or descend the stairs. This gas heater was the standard heating equipment for two-bedroom units in Washington Heights and, as far as I could learn, posed an unsolvable problem for families with young children. It was not uncommon to notice a toddler walking about Washington Heights with a slight waffle brand burned on to his cheek. There was never a need to ask for an explanation.

We could not keep the heater burning through the night because of the fire hazard it presented. Located where it was, if it exploded or if, through some mishap, the flames spread from the burners, any escape from the second floor would have to be effected by flying. The first thing to catch fire would have been the stairway.

Fire was the big dread in Japan. Our instructions for the servants in case of fire were very simple—"Grab the baby and run!"

When Kinto took his first step, Tony, who had been a track man in school, immediately started teaching him the sprinter's starting position. All the servants were bent on teaching the boy something. I had informed them that I wanted him to be athletic and to learn to

speak Japanese as he learned English. Consequently, they spoke nothing but the former language to him from the start. It was amazing to me that the child absorbed both tongues as he learned to speak and never confused the two. He would use Japanese phrases with the servants and English words with Fran and myself. And if I spoke to him in Japanese he would still speak to me in English.

The Japanese assumed that as the boy developed the capacity for it, he should take his place in the affairs of the household. My hours were very irregular and I could not always be home for dinner, but when I could make it I would call Fran before leaving the hotel and dinner would then be put on the stove. By the time I reached home Keigo would have my lounging clothes laid out and cocktails and canapés waiting for Fran and me. As soon as Kinto was big enough to hold a glass, Keiko, his amah, added a cocktail glass of milk to the cocktail tray and placed Kinto's small bamboo chair at the coffee table in the bar. She also made up a special tray of canapés out of baby food and Kinto then became the center of the cocktail hour. He lapped up the atmosphere; he was a born gay blade.

The Japanese celebrate a Boys' Festival on May fifth of each year and one of the customs on this day is to fly a silken balloon carp from a pole, the wind filling out the carp and making it undulate with swimming motions. The carp is held up to Japanese boys as an example of determination and power because it fights its way upstream, never giving up no matter what obstacle it encounters. On Kinto's first Boys' Day I gave Keigo one thousand yen and told him and Tony to go purchase a carp which we could fly over the porch to honor the pride and joy of the house. These silken carp run all

sizes. Tony and Keigo came back with one nineteen feet long and a bamboo pole twenty-five feet high. They tried to tell me they had bought them for one thousand yen but when I backed them in a corner they admitted paying forty-five hundred yen, making up the difference out of their own pockets. There was a house about a block away which had put up a carp fifteen feet long and they were not going to see Kinto outdone by anyone. We raised the carp over the house and it dwarfed the place so badly that the picture was of a tremendous fish dangling the building from his mouth. I made the boys accept the difference in the price though they tried to refuse it. They wanted to do what they considered their part. Sometimes I think they felt they had more of an equity in my son than I did.

One day shortly after Kinto began to walk, Keigo asked me if I would buy a football and teach him how to kick it so he could teach Kinto. I told him to teach the boy Japanese sports and I would take care of the strictly American ones. Thus, Kinto started learning Judo, Sumo and archery as soon as he learned to stand upright. A sport he took up on his own was golf. Fran and I were both enthusiastic golfers and one day the boy picked up my putter and shattered a beautiful porcelain doorstep. However, he showed such excellent form that I cut down an old putter to his size and Keigo took him over to the driving range, purchased a bucket of balls, and let the boy swing away. He was amazingly good. Keigo tried to take up the game to keep up with him, but he just did not have it. The only time he ever connected with the ball was pure accident. This hurt; he used to get furious—I guess he felt he lost face in front of the baby. Things like that never bothered me. The only time the boy ever irritated me was when he would outthink me.

I couldn't stand that because I knew I would not always be bigger than he.

Keigo was very proud the day he gave Kinto his first lesson in *ken-jutsu*, the art of handling the Japanese sword. It is practiced with bamboo sticks in lieu of the actual weapon. The Japanese sword runs about four feet four inches long, including the handle, and is held with both hands, spaced about five inches apart. Keigo had cut a bamboo stick to a proportionate size for the boy and had spent the afternoon teaching him how to dismember his fellow men. He was very proud of the pupil's progress and wanted to show off the new accomplishment as soon as I came home. We went out on the lawn and they squared off, Keigo on his knees so that the boy could swing at his head. I knelt down beside them and the boy, instead of swinging at Keigo, immediately beamed me on the pate with his stick, the blow sounding as if either the stick or my skull had been shattered. The boy laughed merrily and Keigo stood silently in shocked surprise.

"*Kawaii oya wa, bō de sodateyo*," I said, clutching my head. Translated it means, "Bring up your beloved parents with a big stick."

It was the funniest thing I have ever said in Japanese but Keigo was too horror-stricken to appreciate it.

Menopause

"The moon waxes and wanes; that is the way of the world."

—Japanese Proverb

The period of change which commenced with the outbreak of the Korean War was the menopause of the occupation. Wars always seem to break out on a Sunday while I am en route to a cocktail party. World War II started on a Sunday while I was driving to a party in New Jersey and it wasn't enough that a war had to start that day, but I also got a flat tire in the middle of nowhere, which is the middle of New Jersey, and had a devil of a time getting back to New York and civilization. The Korean War started while we were going to a party at Major General George Eberle's house in Tokyo. Tony, our new chauffeur, was listening to a Japanese news broadcast as we entered the car. He had an odd expression on his face.

"New war start," he said when he had taken his place in the front seat.

"Yeah," I said. "Who's fighting whom?"

"Korea fighting Korea," he said.

"What!"

"North people fighting south people."

We switched to the Armed Forces radio station but there was no announcement about it. When the official announcement did come later, Tokyo was a frightened place.

As the UN Forces entered the war there was a great influx of Allied personnel into Japan. The tempo of things was hectic at first and then seemed to settle into the even but rapid rhythm it held from that time on.

In a few months the new situation had caused a shortage of bachelor officer billeting space and a surplus of dependent housing. The advent of the war had brought an abrupt end to the transportation of dependents to Japan and a mushrooming of the headquarters to meet new demands. The sensible solution to the problem was to move all families living in space which could be used for bachelor officer occupancy into dependent housing facilities. This was the decision made by the headquarters. There was much weeping and gnashing of teeth when this news was announced, and the funny thing is that the women who complained most about moving were the ones who had complained most about the hotel.

I did have one regret about the women leaving the hotel for with them went the Women's Lobby Intelligence Group, which, though it was sometimes a thorn in my side, kept me well-informed on the latest news in Tokyo and especially in the Imperial Hotel.

The exodus of the women caused another problem, for some of them tried to proselytize trained personnel away from the hotel to become servants in their homes. They all had their favorite roomboys and room girls and some

of the offers they made were fantastic. I was having trouble enough keeping my key personnel from being lured away from the hotel by the newly opened Japanese restaurants which were approved for patronage by American personnel, so I put my foot down on that right away. I received the backing of the headquarters on this and the problem was nipped in the bud. I had already lost my chief baker, a real artist, who was enticed away by a restaurant who offered him triple the salary I was permitted to pay him.

The new restaurant advertised this fact as a come-on for customers, and one of the lady guests who had not been able to steal away two of the room maids tried to rub in the fact. She raved to me about the pastry at the new restaurant.

"It was marvelous," she told me. "It was really the best I've ever tasted. Why, even just the breads taste like cake. I had a slice of raisin bread there that tasted better than the angel food cake you serve here. That restaurant manager must be pretty smart to have stolen a baker like that away from you."

"Oh, I don't know," I said. "If he had any brains he'd know better than to go into the restaurant or hotel business in the first place."

The big change in my personal life at this time was the return of my family to the United States. It was not the result of a sudden decision. The thing had been in my mind ever since the morning Tokyo woke up and found that General Derevyanko, the chief of the Russian delegation in Japan, had packed practically the whole Russian contingent and taken it back to Moscow. I got an uneasy feeling at the time. There was no reason or explanation given for the move by the Russians, but any-

thing a Russian does never seems good to me. Fran scoffed when I told her that something with a repulsive odor was in the wind. She said I had it in for the Russians because they had gotten me drunk one night. She would not listen to any suggestions about taking the boy back to the States. When the Korean War broke out, the uneasy feeling came back and I brought up the subject again. Fran's objections this time were not so strong but she still managed to talk me out of it.

Then one night several months later she woke up with that strange craving for raw octopus again. That settled the matter. I told her she was going back to my family in New York to wait for me and there would be no argument about it. She did not have any objections this time because since our last debate about the subject we had noticed that wives of high-ranking personnel in the headquarters were suddenly finding reasons which required their immediate presence in the United States. These wives easing out of Japan worried Fran more than the Korean War or the Russian exodus had, and rightly so. The women in Tokyo always knew what was going on.

Fran and Kintaro flew home in April, 1951, three weeks after his second birthday. That was the saddest night of my life. The plane had no sooner disappeared into the darkness than I realized I had made a big mistake in not quitting my job and going home with them. In spite of all its attractions, Japan was no longer a place for me to live. Before I had returned to the house in Washington Heights, I was already formulating plans to resign and return to New York.

I moved back into the Imperial Hotel and took up a bachelor's life again. I did not like it. One month later I turned in a letter of resignation, requesting a release

from my employment agreement and agreeing to pay my own transportation back to the Zone of the Interior. I was flattered that several of my superiors tried to talk me out of it. The reason I gave for resigning was the fact that I was not making enough money and felt I could do better back in the United States. I had checked with the Civilian Personnel Section and had been assured that there was no possible way my civil service rating could be upped, so I felt safe in giving this reason.

The president of the House Committee at this time was General K. B. Bush, the Adjutant General of the Far East Command, the shrewdest, yet kindest, man I have ever known in my life. He called my bluff. At the next House Committee meeting, he asked me to name a figure for which I would remain as manager of the hotel. I named a figure which I was positive the House Committee would laugh at, but I guess General Bush had done some groundwork because no one batted an eye. General Bush, who always claimed he had no head for figures, did some rapid calculation, decided the club could pay the difference between my present salary and the one I wanted, and I was set for a long stay in Japan. That was the only time I ever remember having my bluff called but, at the price, I did not mind.

The greatest shock to rock occupied Japan was not the outbreak of the Korean War, but the removal of General MacArthur as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers. I received this news a bit before other people in Tokyo. A member of the now-defunct Women's Lobby Intelligence Group passed it on to me as I was walking through the lobby. Several hours later the news was officially announced over the radio and Tokyo was thrown into a state of consternation. There was an air of disbelief. General MacArthur had come to mean

the occupation to many people and they could not conceive of its continuing without his presence.

There were quite a few worried people in Tokyo. Many of the empire-builders who had carved out comfortable little niches for themselves in the headquarters saw their security in danger. General Ridgway, the new SCAP, was an unknown quantity.

The change in SCAP seemed to presage a series of changes, not due to the change of commanders, but changes due to happen in the normal course of events. Japanese restaurants were put on limits to occupation personnel. American clubs and hotels in Tokyo were permitted to buy Japanese food for use in restaurants and snack bars. Japanese nationals could be entertained in occupation installations.

This last change was far-reaching and broke down the last physical barrier existing between Americans and the Japanese population. It was not without its difficulties. At one of the first cocktail parties held at the hotel, an American woman, who was used to considering the Japanese as servants only, handed her glass to the nearest kimono-clad girl and told her to bring another scotch and soda. The Japanese countess to whom the glass had been handed did not appreciate the gesture and she and her husband departed quickly. It was a very embarrassing incident.

The use of Japanese food improved the cuisine tremendously. I was able to serve the Kobe beef and a wide variety of the excellent Japanese seafood.

On July 1, 1951 the cost of living for occupation personnel took a tremendous jump. In early June a directive came out requiring that, effective July first, Japanese employees, except those actually necessary to the maintenance of occupation facilities, be paid directly

in yen by their employers. This affected all billets since it meant that the system of making dollar payments to the Army Finance Section was ended and the high ratio of exchange was lost. This practically quadrupled the payroll cost which had to be met.

The impact on the Imperial Hotel was heavy. Since the clientele was so exclusive, it was too small to bring in revenues which would cover the increased operating expense. The situation called for an increase in the clientele we served, but there was the rank matter to be considered, and I knew the people who had enjoyed the exclusive atmosphere for years would not take kindly to the idea of opening the facilities of the hotel to the general public.

The only means of increasing the market was through the Imperial Grill, an Army mess which we operated for people who lived in dependent housing and for transients. The Grill was located in the north side of the building and had a separate entrance so that it did not interfere with the operations of the hotel proper. I was certain that if we opened a cocktail lounge in the Grill lobby and served food from the snack bar and La Maison Française kitchen in the Grill dining room, the returns would be enough to cover the increased payroll costs. I proposed this idea to General Bush, a man with a keen business mind, who agreed that this was the solution to the problem. The House Committee voted unanimously for the idea at the next meeting.

I did not wait for July first, but opened the new cocktail lounge during the third week of June. By the end of the month it was a going concern. By the end of July, I found that one third of our gross sales were accounted for by this new installation. Luncheon in the new cocktail lounge became so popular that I had to

open an annex to it. The Quartermaster menu was still served in the Grill dining room but in time the orders for club food were double those for the Army ration. This Grill dining room came to be known as the Peasants' *Maison Française*.

The Japanese caught the change-fever and started developing plans for exploiting the expected post-occupation tourist trade, plans which as far as I can see, they had formulated a few weeks after the surrender in 1945. Mr. Inumaru, besides being the president of the Imperial Hotel Company, was also the president of the Japan Hotel Association, and in this capacity was vitally interested in preparing Japanese hotels for the influx of visitors expected in the future. He had been particularly impressed with the sanitation education the Japanese had received from the occupation forces and this factor weighed on his mind—the idea that the knowledge must be put to use after the Japanese got their country back.

Some officials from the Tokyo Metropolitan office asked him to investigate the operations in the slaughterhouses of Tokyo, which were not exactly what they should be. Mr. Inumaru knew I had worked for a meat-packing concern in the United States before the war and asked me to make an inspection of one of the metropolitan packing houses with him and a representative of the city government.

The inspection was an experience which made me very careful about purchasing Japanese beef for use in *La Maison Française*. We entered the packing house, were greeted by the men in charge, and went immediately to the kill floor. They were slaughtering horses—nothing but horses at the time, and not for dog food. I was reminded of a sign I had once seen on a small, hole-in-the-wall Japanese restaurant during a time when there

was an anthrax epidemic among the Japanese cattle. "Come in and eat safely. Our beef is not anthrax beef. IT IS HORSE MEAT."

The Japanese slaughterhouse had borrowed many of the American production methods but none of the sanitation methods. The moving chain system was used on the kill floor as well as a series of chutes for conveying products to processing departments. But the only sanitation inspection in the entire plant was done on the kill floor by three veterinarians and they were in the employ of the packing company, not on a separate government payroll. The internal parts of a carcass were transported to the chutes by being skidded and kicked along the floor by one of the workers.

When the officials of the company considered the inspection over, there was still one more part of the operation I wanted to see. I asked to be shown the refrigeration rooms and the freezer. The officials looked startled. They did not consider that really a part of the slaughtering process. It took them a few minutes to find a man who had the keys to these locations. The freezer had apparently been built with the size of average Japanese men in mind, not the length of a side of beef. Most of the carcasses hung with the lower portion resting on the floor. There were no thermometers in the rooms. I pushed my index finger into the fat of one of the sides hanging in the freezer. It sank in up to the first knuckle.

Mr. Inumaru was very proud of me when we had finished. He told me I was the first man who had ever asked to see the refrigeration arrangements.

It seemed to me that the Japanese underwent many changes at this time. Fees for services suddenly skyrocketed. It first came to my notice when Takashi Nakamura, the *nisei* club manager, informed me that the

group of caroleers we had hired each year to sing at the hotel on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day had quadrupled their price. We tried to arrange for a different group, but caroleers were suddenly very expensive in Tokyo. Nakamura said he thought they were getting in practice for rooking tourists. I considered it a hold-up play and did not want any part of it. The problem was solved in a way I had to resort to many times when I could not obtain what I needed from outside agencies—I fell back on the staff of the hotel. The employees of the Imperial Hotel always came through for me, though sometimes the things I asked of them made them turn pale.

I organized an employees' glee club and started it practicing Christmas carols immediately. There were only three weeks in which to prepare, but the employees worked hard and rehearsed incessantly. The performance they gave was the best Christmas program we had ever had at the hotel and the surprise of the guests at seeing employees, who waited on them daily, performing as singers gave it an added novelty.

This was not the first time I had turned the employees of the Imperial Hotel into performers. One of the biggest social events of the year at the Imperial was the annual Cherry Blossom Costume Ball, held during the first week of April each year at the height of the cherry blossom season. The floor show was always a program of traditional seasonal Japanese dances. For the finale of this standard program, I wanted a real super-spectacle number, a tremendous number of girls in colorful kimonos doing a Japanese dance in chorus with clouds of fake cherry blossoms falling from the ceiling. We could not find a theatrical troupe which could supply this, so I recruited a chorus of fifty girls from the room maids and

waitresses on the staff. They entered into the spirit of the thing enthusiastically. The routine consisted of two old Japanese folk dances, the Tokyo *Ondo* and the *Sakura Ondo*, dances which children learn in grade school. They are simple enough to be learned in a few minutes but the spectacle effect gave that finale a glamour we never achieved in any other floor show.

The unsettled times had an unsettling effect on some of the employees at the Imperial. One night at about 1 A.M. I passed the cocktail lounge, which had been closed since midnight, and heard some happy Japanese voices raised in song. The singing was not very accomplished. When I knocked on the locked door the music ceased abruptly. There were eight waiters and bartenders inside having a drinking party. They had saved the leavings from drinks served at cocktail parties held that evening and were enjoying them as a sort of bonus for their labors. They had been very fastidious about it, too—they had separate pitchers for martinis and manhattans and for the different types of highballs. The thing that irritated me most was that two of them could not stomach mixed drinks and were imbibing scotch on the rocks—from a bottle of the best scotch in the bar. And scotch was hard to obtain at that time.

There was a strict rule at the Imperial prohibiting employees from drinking on the premises, but I did not want to fire the men because some of them were our best waiters, and firing a person from the hotel never made much impression on the staff. A man trained at the Imperial Hotel could get another job within twenty-four hours, just on the basis of his training. To make an example of these employees I had them divided into two groups of four and each group dug me a hole in the ground, eight feet by eight feet by eight feet. When the

holes were dug I went to inspect them with Mr. Inumaru. He thought I had planned them for some improvement in the hotel landscaping. He was very much surprised when I told him the next step was to have the men fill the hole up. The men themselves were amazed and a little crestfallen. The holes had been beautifully dug.

Usually the Japanese at the hotel would pass off such a thing as another one of Mori-san's crazy ideas, but Mr. Inumaru never did. He always wanted to know the why of things. I told him that a punishment is never effective if a person gets a sense of accomplishment out of it. That was why I had the men do something that was not a worth-while task. Mr. Inumaru thought of that for a moment.

"That is a very good idea," he said. He turned it over in his mind. "It is especially good for Japanese people," he added.

The supervisor of the errant barmen was a woman, and though she had not been directly implicated in the incident, she had to be disciplined for permitting it to happen. This particular Japanese woman was one of the strongest characters I have ever met. She had been a head waitress in the Main Dining Room but I had transferred her to the cocktail lounge when I could not find a man tough enough to control the young bar waiters. She kept a tight rein on them. The barmen regarded her as a soldier regards his First Sergeant. I decided to exile her to the new Grill cocktail lounge for three months to teach her a lesson. However, at the end of the three-month period she begged not to be transferred back to her former position, even writing me a pleading letter of request to be left where she was. I asked her reason for this and she told me frankly that she liked

the patrons of the Grill. "No all time yappity-yappity," were the words she used to describe them. "No complaints. Everything very nice."

This put me in a bad spot for she had been popular with the guests of the main cocktail lounge and members of the House Committee had received several inquiries as to her whereabouts. When the committee asked me why I had not returned her at the end of the three months I told them she was too valuable in the Grill. A couple of the members asked her themselves if she would not like to come back to the main cocktail lounge and I think they were a bit surprised to learn that she preferred the lower caste Grill.

Another great change was that the new SCAP started holding official entertainments at the Imperial Hotel. This added much to the prestige of the social life there. These parties were well-prepared down to the most minute detail, but there was always some contingency which could not be foreseen. The first party given by General and Mrs. Ridgway was a reception in honor of Vice President and Mrs. Barkley. One of the details planned at the request of the Secret Service men who guarded the Vice President was that the elevator which ran from Peacock Alley to the Peacock Room, where the reception was to be held, would be used to transport the Barkleys and the Ridgways only. To make sure it would be ready when the SCAP and the VEEP arrived at the door, no guest was to use it. These Secret Service men were very efficient. Every step of ground over which the VEEP traveled was pre-checked by them, even if it was just a length of public corridor. When the party composed of General and Mrs. Ridgway and Vice President and Mrs. Barkley left the latter's suite they sent a runner

ahead to inform me at the elevator so that I could have the door opened and the car ready.

As soon as I received the word I had the door to the elevator opened and at that instant the one person in the world whom I could not keep out of the elevator without causing an international incident stepped past me into the car—Mr. Shigeru Yoshida, the Prime Minister of Japan! I jumped into the car and ran it up to the Peacock Room, unloaded the Prime Minister's party and ran it back down to Peacock Alley. The doors opened just as Mrs. Ridgway and Mrs. Barkley arrived. It was a close call and one of the things which account for several hairs which have waved good-by to me.

Flags of All Nations

At General Willoughby's dinner party I found myself seated between a Spaniard and a French officer. I introduced myself to the Spaniard first. He told me he did not espeak Eeenglisha. Oh, I said, I see. ¿Habla Español? he asked. No, señor, I said. Parlez-vous français? he tried. Un peu, I said. Ça! Bien! said the Spaniard. The Frenchman told me he spoke English. I estoodied eet een Paree, he said. Ça! Bien! I said.

As a matter of fact, it turned out that I could understand the French with a Spanish accent better than the English with a French accent. My hotel life was fraught with situations like that.

When Mr. Koichi, the executive housekeeper, became rich in years and grace but too old to stand the pace, we made him a sort of professor emeritus of housekeeping at the hotel and promoted Anna Stachowski, a Viennese woman in her late thirties, to the position he had held. Anna was the most colorful character on the hotel staff. She had served as a desk clerk for several years and in

that capacity had proved herself a happy combination of Teutonic efficiency and a sort of Parisienne explosiveness. She spoke Japanese and English as well as her native German, giving them all a guttural accent.

Anna's background was unusual. In the 1930's she had been a student nurse in a Viennese hospital where she met a Japanese doctor, fell in love with him and married him. She divorced him shortly before the war but remained in Japan because the Nazis had taken over Austria by then and her family advised her not to return. She had gone under the name of Tachibana after Japan entered the war because the German embassy in Tokyo had constantly badgered her to declare herself a Nazi. She had consistently refused and both the Japanese and Germans had given her a bad time.

I could always count on Anna to brighten my day.

Some time after she had been promoted to the position of housekeeper, we received a reservation for a commission of eleven diplomats from a southeast Asian country. Anna came to my office in a very excited state.

"Mr. Morris," she sputtered, "you should let me der good furniture take oudt from dose rooms. The oldest stuff vee should put in. Nothing good should dere be in dose rooms."

"Why, Anna?" I asked. "What's the matter?"

"Der matter?" she cried. "Drinks dey're schpilling on der upholstery, der end tables dey're burning mit cigarettes. Everything dey're ruining. Always so dey're doing. Dot's dem demn furriners, Mr. Morris."

When Anna realized what she had said she burst into a guffaw.

"So," she said. "I'm furriner, too. But dot's vot dey're doing."

Anna, because of her linguistic ability and understand-

ing of Europeans, was of great value in caring for the foreign clientele at the Imperial. We were used to dealing with foreign peoples. At the beginning of the occupation the Justices of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East were billeted there, and this gave us experience with widely diversified nationalities. There were eleven nations represented in that group of distinguished men—The United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Russia, China, India, The Netherlands, the Philippines, France, and the United States.

These Justices were favorite guests of mine for besides being distinguished men of law, each was an unusual personality. Sir William Webb of Australia, the president of the Court, was a quiet, soft-spoken amiable man to meet socially but when presiding over the Court he could be a terror. When he let an attorney know that he was out of line, he did it in such a way that the man did not wilt, he withered. Sir William had a splendid nose which at times was marvelously eloquent. I visited the Tribunal often while it was in session, always keeping my eye on Sir William's nostrils, for when the lobes started to flare it was a signal that something exciting was going to happen. I wish I could express myself as clearly with my voice as Sir William could express himself merely by dilating his nostrils.

I always enjoyed talking to the Britishers, especially Lord William Donald Patrick of Great Britain and Sir Erima Harvey Northcroft of New Zealand. They kept up a running repartee that was so smooth and polished I sometimes thought they must have a script for it. I first got to know them one evening when we happened to meet in one of the corridors. The chlorinator which purified the drinking water for the hotel was out of

commission and I had placed signs all over the hotel reading, "Water not safe to drink."

"You know, Morris," Justice Northcroft said, "Patrick agrees completely with your sign there. He's never considered water safe to drink."

Northcroft invited us to his suite for a liqueur. He was a man who liked fresh air and kept his windows wide open the year round. It was an autumn evening and Northcroft's rooms were quite chilly.

"You are a perfect host, Northcroft," Lord Patrick said as he took his glass. "Your wines are always at room temperature. Brrrrr."

Justice Pal of India was very learned and very dignified. He was a great walker and I sometimes joined him for an evening stroll. He usually talked about his family, for he was very proud of his wife and children. He told me he had been married when he was seventeen and his wife was ten, and as the years went by, ten children were born of this marriage. I told him I hoped my marriage turned out half as successfully and when I said that I meant exactly one half.

I had been manager of the Manila Hotel before coming to Tokyo so it was interesting to reminisce with Justice Jaranilla of the Philippines about the good days in late 1945 when Manila was a playground and everything was wide open. One evening he suggested that it would be a fine idea for me to return to Manila when the occupation ended and take over the management of the Manila Hotel. He described the fine life in Manila in peacetime, the pleasant existence one could lead there. An American could live exceptionally well for a very reasonable expenditure. And the life was interesting, never a dull day. The idea really intrigued me, for I had enjoyed my stay in Manila and I like the Filipino

people. After we parted, I picked up a copy of *Stars and Stripes* on the way to my room. The headline of that issue was an eyecatcher—MURDER IN THE MANILA HOTEL. A jeep had pulled up to the main entrance of the hotel, two men had jumped out, shot a couple of people in the lobby and made their getaway. It was a real proof of Justice Jaranilla's statement that life in the Philippines was never dull, but as I went about my business I found I was humming "God Bless America" over and over again.

Even the Russian member of the court, Major General of Military Justice Zaryanov, was interesting and likeable. He was not a small man but he always wore such a happy, pixie-ish expression on his face that I thought of him as a character out of a Walt Disney movie. He could not speak a word of English but he had a marvelous talent for telling funny stories through an interpreter and still making them funny. Even when the punchline was a play on Russian words and the story consequently meant nothing to me, I enjoyed his telling of it for his face would light up and his hearty laughter would become infectious. I had never realized that men like that were allowed to be born in Russia. I hate to think of what might happen to him if they ever find out what a nice fellow he is.

The most prominent foreign dignitary to visit the Imperial Hotel was President Syngman Rhee of the Republic of Korea. He had stayed at the hotel briefly a few years before being elected to office, but that particular visit did not cause much excitement in Tokyo. When he returned as the President of Korea he stayed at the American embassy and his activities were the big news in Tokyo during the period of his visit. Ambassador William Sebald, the political adviser to SCAP, gave a

huge reception in his honor in the Peacock Room of the Imperial. The security measures taken were the most thorough I have ever seen. I thought they were overdoing it a bit when battalions of Japanese police showed up just before the reception started and practically enclosed the Imperial Hotel inside a protective human fence. But in a few minutes I realized how wise this precaution was. There was a communist rally scheduled to be held during the same hours as the reception and the location of that rally was Hibiya Park, directly across the street from the Imperial Hotel.

There was one other member of the Korean government who visited the Imperial quite regularly. Each time he came rumors of assassination by Korean communists in Japan would start flowing. The headquarters would have to take such security measures as putting Japanese detectives in roomboy uniforms and stationing them near the gentleman's quarters. I was always uneasy while he was in the hotel for, though bloodstains can be cleaned up quite easily, someone might have thought of using a bomb and that could have been messy.

The cosmopolitan veneer never disappeared from the Imperial. Foreign dignitaries passing through Tokyo were billeted there and the diplomatic missions made constant use of the banquet facilities for entertaining. (The chief of each diplomatic mission, in deference to his position, was tendered a membership in the Imperial Hotel club.) The most colorful of these functions were those given to celebrate the national holidays of the various countries. There was a feeling that the country's honor was at stake and consequently the affairs were always very lavish. These parties were simple to handle. It was just a matter of spreading the national emblem and flag of the country about in as great a quantity as

was consistent with good taste. And where the nation concerned had some particular feature for which it was noted, the task was even simpler. For instance, decorations for The Netherlands holiday meant filling the Peacock Room with ersatz tulips and fake windmills.

Hotels are always dressed up by the people you see in them, and the Imperial was at its best when some country such as India or the Philippines was holding a social function there. Many of the women attending would be dressed in costume native to their land—the Filipino women in the colorful *mestiza* dress with high-collared *piña* cloth fichu—the Indian women in the delicate, flowing *zaris* and wearing a dot of rouge in the center of the forehead.

A colonel and his wife had an argument about that red dot and asked me to settle it. I did not have the faintest idea of its significance.

"It means that she's married," she insisted.

"No, no," the colonel contradicted vehemently, "it means that she's happy."

"Perhaps it means both," I suggested diplomatically.

The colonel looked at me for a moment as if he expected me to say something more. Then he looked at his wife and sighed.

"That's stupid," he said.

A factor which led to the success of most of the European-sponsored social functions held at the Imperial was the pride the Europeans seem to take in their talents as hosts. They are extremely particular about finesse, polish and protocol, and they love performing in the grand manner.

None of them could approach Major General Charles A. Willoughby, G-2 of SCAP in this phase of the game. There's a man who is truly the complete cosmopolitan.

He was born to the grand manner and has all the equipment, both physical and mental for it. When he gave a dinner at the Imperial, I usually handled the details personally. It was a pleasure to watch the perfection of the man in the role of host.

His parties were usually international functions and the General was always at his best when carrying on conversations in four or five languages. The wines he used were the pick of our cellar and the foods were never commonplace. When we were making arrangements for one of his first parties, before we could import food into Japan, I happened to mention to his aide that it was a shame we could not procure pheasant for the entree as that would not only be an unusual dish but the platters could be decorated magnificently with plumage from the birds. The next day I received a call informing me that General Willoughby had arranged for hunters in northern Honshu to shoot the pheasants—how many did I require?

General Willoughby's grand manner was not an act put on for social functions. It was a natural talent, always with him. I remember once having a chat with him in the lobby. We were speaking English in deference to its being my native tongue and because it was the only language in which I could carry on a rational conversation. Emma Jaranilla, the Filipino Justice's pretty daughter, passed by.

"Ah, señorita," said the General. "*¿Que tal?*"—and then chatted in Spanish for several minutes.

A moment later Madame de la Chevalerie, wife of the Belgian Ambassador passed us.

"Ah, *bonjour*, Madame," followed by a flow of fluent French. Then, as he left me and passed the front desk

where Anna Stachowski was on duty at the time, full-throated German rolled out.

I once thought of ringing Tony, my chauffeur, with his fluent Burmese into a conversation, just to see if it would stump Willoughby but that would have been a low blow and I liked the man. How could I help it? For all his princely manner, he was never condescending nor patronizing, nor did he ever talk down to me. And always the grand manner—the *grand geste*. One day just as I was about to knock on the door of his suite to see him about some minor matter, the door opened and there stood General Willoughby, clad in his English tennis shorts and tennis cap, racquets under his arm, a can of tennis balls in his hand—obviously about to depart for a game of tennis.

"Ah, Morris," he said, "what can I do for you?"

I told him it was just a minor matter, that I would catch him at a more convenient time.

"Nonsense, nonsense, come in," he said, stepping back. As I entered, he tossed the racquets and balls into an easy chair with such a marvelous flourish that I could hear trumpets in the distance.

"Sit down, sit down. Have a drink? No. Well, then," settling himself into a chair and devoting himself entirely to his important visitor. "Now, then, what can I do for you?" He had completely dropped the idea of tennis until he could be of service to me.

Then one Saturday night when we were having a dinner dance in the Main Dining Room, located across the court from General Willoughby's suite, his maid came into the dining room with a carton of cigarettes. It was for the orchestra. General Willoughby had enjoyed hearing the music and please play a tango if possible. That was a *grand geste*.

The Korean conflict brought an increase in the international clientele at the Imperial. As the United Nations started sending troops from different member nations to the Orient, the senior officers of each contingent were billeted at the hotel. Eventually so many different languages could be heard in the main lobby that I was inclined to put out one of those signs which reads, "English Is Spoken Here." There were Greeks, Turks, Canadians, Danes, English, Thailanders, Ethiopians, Australians, Koreans, French, practically every nationality represented in the United Nations except Russians.

The man who was responsible for keeping these diverse nationalities happy with their lot in Tokyo and with each other was Colonel Edward Farnsworth, a very capable young officer. His job was probably more hectic than mine, but he never lost his sense of humor. As a matter of fact, I sometimes wished he would lose it. It was he who taught the men's-room attendant in Peacock Alley that the proper way to greet guests was to bow and say, "Go home." Colonel Farnsworth was in a vulnerable position for practical jokes. A phony message that a Greek aide had stabbed a Turkish general in the lobby would tear him away from anything at top speed. He could not afford to take anything with a grain of salt. When I left Tokyo, our score was just about even.

Many French guests lived at the hotel, but the one I remember best was a lieutenant about my own age. He was aide-de-camp to a commander of the French forces fighting in Korea. I enjoyed the many conversations we had over nightcaps in the cocktail lounge.

He was very proud of his country and told me that I must visit it some day.

"You weel like eet very moch," he said. "I geeve you

my card. I may not be zair but you most veeseet my wife. She has a nice castle I theenk you weel like."

I am a sucker for castles.

I asked him what it was in particular that made so many people fall in love with Paris. I had heard it was the atmosphere but that was a very vague explanation.

"I theenk eet ees per'aps because everyzeeng ees so casual," he said. "Everyzeeng ees . . . pouf, maybe yes, maybe no. You go een a café, zey zay you like zeess, you like zat . . . pouf, maybe yes, maybe no . . . you see, a preety girl, you say you have dreenk weez me . . . pouf, maybe yes, maybe no . . . you say, you like to kees me . . . pouf, maybe yes, maybe no . . . you like to sleep weez me . . . pouf maybe yes, maybe no. Everyzeeng ees so casual, like zeess."

I imagine there is more to it but I guess that is enough by itself.

The lieutenant was a much-decorated soldier. His career in World War II had been like a series of Hollywood thrillers. He had been a spy in the French underground, parachuted behind German lines, been captured, escaped, recaptured and escaped again. He had been wounded so many times that his body bore more scars than skin. He did not often speak of his adventures and when he did he mentioned them so casually that he seemed to be talking of something he had read in a book.

One of the lieutenant's duties as aide-de-camp was to care for a bottle of rare old brandy which the commander owned. I heard it had been specially distilled for the Emperor Napoleon and that the French commander used it as a type of morale-raising device. After each victory in Korea the staff officers of the French forces would gather in the commander's CP, he would open the bottle and each individual would drink a thimbleful of the rare

old liqueur in a toast to the victory and the men who had won it.

Shortly after the commander and the lieutenant left the hotel to return to Korea, one of the officers from the GHQ Visitors' Bureau, which furnished transportation between the hotel and the airport for VIP's, informed me that a pageboy, while loading a musette bag into the commander's sedan, had dropped it on the floor and cracked the bottle of precious brandy, making it a total loss. The commander had been heartbroken.

I called Mr. In Kogure, the assistant manager in charge of front desk operations, to my office to reprimand him for the carelessness of his pageboys. But Kogure knew what was coming and was well-prepared.

"Mr. Morris," he said, "if you could come with me for a minute I can show you exactly what happened."

He led me to the tile-floored lower lobby where a very alert pageboy stood, apparently guarding some unseen object. Kogure pointed to a small spot of moisture at the pageboy's feet.

"The lieutenant brought that musette bag out by himself," Kogure said, "and laid it down there while he paid the bills. He wouldn't let anyone else touch it. He carried it out to the sedan himself, and the first time a pageboy touched it was when it was put in the car. The bottle must have broken when the lieutenant laid it down there."

I stooped, ran my index finger over the spot of moisture and sniffed it. The bouquet was exquisite.

"Did you explain that to them?"

"Well, no. The commander was very angry and gave the lieutenant a big hell. I didn't want to make it worse for the lieutenant. He was awfully nice to us at the front desk. I know I should have—"

"No, that's all right," I told him. "I'm glad you didn't

make it worse for the lieutenant. He's a good friend of mine."

When the French commander returned to Tokyo the following month en route to France, the lieutenant was no longer with him. There was a captain in the group, a rather dull and pedantic fellow who drank nothing stronger than Coca-Cola. I asked him about the lieutenant and he informed me that the latter still had a year more to do on his tour of duty so had remained with the French forces in Korea.

"Do you know what sort of assignment he has?" I asked.

"Mais, oui. He ees weez zee combat troops," the captain told me.

"Well," I said jokingly, "I hope he was not sent into the front lines just because he broke that bottle of brandy."

"But, Monsieur," said *mon capitaine*, as the inner tips of his eyebrows slowly floated upwards, "thees was Napoleon's own brandy. Pouf—who can tell?"

The Peacock Room

While we were inspecting the Peacock Room the Colonel asked me how we had come to name it that. He said he did not see anything Peacock-ish about it. I pointed out the four huge bas-relief decorations carved in the oya stone. They were futuristic carvings of Japanese cranes but I did not think the colonel knew this.

"Are those really peacocks?" he asked.

When I'm caught in a spot like that I usually fall back on something I've heard someone else say.

"Pouf," I said, "who can tell?"

The pre-occupation advertising brochures published by the Imperial Hotel claimed that the Peacock Room, the hotel ballroom, could seat one thousand people at dinner. I can see how this would be possible but the guests would have to be very thin.

The Peacock Room was located at the rear of the "I" section of the hotel and was the highest level in the building. That section of the hotel had been gutted by incendiary bombs during the war. The Army Engineer Section

started work on its rehabilitation in 1945. There were many photographs which could be used as guides so the finished product came fairly close to being an exact replica of the pre-war ballroom. Work was not completed until June, 1946.

Like the rest of the hotel, the Peacock Room was both impressive and forbidding. It was built in the form of a cross and had a high-domed ceiling, faceted like a turtle's shell. The interior was finished exactly like the outside of the building—the same morbid brown brick, trimmed with gray *oya* stone—and gave one the impression he was looking at the outside of the hotel.

This atmosphere was overcome at the dances, which we held in the Peacock Room every Saturday night, by using candlelight as the only means of illumination. The less you could see of it, the better it looked.

There were three big annual social events held in the Peacock Room, the Army-Navy football party in the autumn, the New Year's Eve party and the Cherry Blossom Costume Ball in April. They were always sell-out affairs.

The high point of the Army-Navy game party was a football game played between a goat and a mule, both animals made of burlap with Japanese bellboys inside as a means of animation. Serving as the legs of these animals was an honor and competition among the bellboys was keen. Another feature of the evening was parading a live goat clad in a Navy blanket about the room while the old grads gave out lustily with the alma mater. There was some criticism from the Army and accusations about favoritism because we provided a live mascot for the Navy but no mule for the Army cheering section. Some thought we should have had both but I could not see it. The indiscretions of a goat are not too difficult to cope with but those of a mule are quite another thing.

For some reason we could not rent the animals, we had to buy them. It was not practical to keep a goat the year round just for use one night each November, so we resold them for whatever price we could. The only time we broke even on this deal was the first year. Tony Story, General MacArthur's pilot, was an animal-lover. He had chickens, ducks, rabbits and dogs at his house and it occurred to me that a goat would make his barnyard complete. Christmas was only a few weeks away so I bought the goat from the club as a present for Tony and kept it in the rear of the hotel.

Tony and Judy Story were very close friends of ours and though we both had many commitments for Christmas we agreed we would get together for at least one drink on that day. It was eleven-thirty P.M. before Fran and I were free. We raced back to the hotel, packed the goat into the jeep, which was our conveyance at the time, and drove to the Storys' house. It was two minutes before midnight when we arrived and Tony and Judy had given us up and gone to bed. We honked them awake and Tony stuck his head out the second-story window and told us to come up to the bar on the second floor. We did, but let the goat precede us into the room. That animal made a fine appearance. He had been scrubbed white and wore a handsome red ribbon with a Christmas card attached, to give him the appearance of being gift wrapped. The Storys were a bit overwhelmed. I asked Tony if he liked our present.

"Why, of course," he said. "It's just what I wanted."

The drinks he mixed were strong.

Unfortunately the goat met a sad end. It became very friendly with the Storys' dog and the two animals spent so much time together that the dog eventually came to smell like the goat and all the deodorants that Tony tried

on him were not completely successful. Tony gave the goat to some neighboring Japanese and they made him the main course of a barbecue. I hate to think of the poor animal ending his days on a spit, but at least he had his one moment of glory when his ears rang to the plaudits of the crowd and that is a better score than most goats carry away from the game of life. If you want to look at it philosophically, that is.

The Storys usually starred at the Cherry Blossom Costume Ball, for their costumes were always unique. One year they won the best couple prize and the next year Judy won an award for having the best woman's costume. Tony always insisted that I influenced the judges so that I could come out to his house and drink up the champagne which they won as prizes. This was not true. I had enough trouble trying to get people just to act as judges. People very wisely shied away from this task after one of the women took a dim view of the judges' decisions. She let it be known that in awarding a prize to her husband but ignoring her and giving the woman's prize to a young chit who came dressed as a French maid and showed off her legs in black silk stockings, the judges proved themselves to be lecherous nincompoops with extremely bad taste and poor eyesight. She did not care who heard her opinions. After that year I had to resort to trapping unwary newcomers who had not heard the story.

The Cherry Blossom Costume Ball officially ended at one A.M. but usually went on until much later. The gayer guests always had a songfest around the piano for several hours after the dancing had stopped. I enjoyed songfests myself except when they took place after the New Year's Eve party. The New Year's Eve party lasted until four A.M. and we had to have the Peacock Room ready

for the Chief of Staff's annual New Year's Day reception by eleven o'clock. This did not give much time for the necessary work to be done and once a guest got at the piano and voices were raised in song, there was no telling how long the merriment would last. In an ordinary hotel it is not too difficult to make guests leave when they should but at the Imperial there was a matter of rank to be considered. I solved the New Year's Eve problem by putting a lock on the piano, giving the key to the pianist and telling him that when the band hit the last chorus of "Goodnight, Sweetheart," he was to stop playing, lock the piano and deliver the key to me.

In the spring of 1950, during a routine safety inspection of the hotel, an engineer officer discovered a crack in one of the concrete pillars which supported the roof of the Peacock Room. This was a matter to cause great concern, for part of the decorations of the room were huge hanging stone masses located at the four points where the arms of the cross intersected the main stem. Each one of these stone formations weighed several tons and the prospect of one of them breaking loose and plunging through the floor was academically interesting. These huge masses hung from cantilever supports extending from the main pillars. Cantilever construction is one of the interesting features of the Imperial Hotel where balconies hang like grapes in a vineyard. I had confidence in the structure, but I never stood under one of those balconies if I could avoid it. I asked one of the inspecting engineers if the cracked support in the Peacock Room was the result of faulty engineering theory.

"No," he said. "As a matter of fact, the engineering design is really ingenious. I've never seen anything like it before. And remember, those balconies have stayed up

for thirty years. The day one of them falls down, then I'll feel free to criticize."

"Keep in touch with me," I suggested.

The Peacock Room had to be closed while the roof supports were repaired. This meant moving the weekly dances down to the Main Dining Room. The arrangement worked out very well, for the Main Dining Room is really beautifully designed and we were able to attain more of a night club atmosphere there than in the Peacock Room.

The discovery of the defect in the Peacock Room led to a thorough survey of the construction of the Imperial Hotel with safety factors in mind. The first thing the engineers asked for were the original blueprints of the building. I had news for them. There were no original blueprints. I had asked for them as soon as I had arrived at the hotel in 1945 and had been informed that Mr. Wright had taken all of them with him when he left Japan after completing the construction of the hotel. I do not know how true this is, but it is no stranger than many of the stories I heard about the construction of the Imperial. The only blueprints in existence were ones which had been made up as different parts of the building were repaired. The Army Engineer Section brought in teams of surveyors and architects and eventually a complete set of plans of the building was drawn.

This survey shed an incidental but interesting sidelight on the earthquake-proofing features of the building. The concept of the earthquake proofing I had heard most often was this: The ground where Tokyo now stands was formerly swampland. When the foundation of the Imperial Hotel was laid, instead of driving piles to support the footings of the building, the hard crust of the earth was dug away until mud silt was reached and huge concrete mats were laid on top of this mushy earth. The building

was then built on these cushions so that it could bounce with an earth shock. However, the engineers, as part of their survey, dug into the foundations under the rear section of the south wing which had been damaged beyond economical repair, and water-jetted a concrete pile out of the earth. The pile was twenty-four feet long. It would appear that the building does not rest on concrete mats, but on concrete piles which more or less hang down into the mud silt so that the building is on a mobile foundation. This is what would appear to be true, but I know better than to make a definite statement about any part of the structure of the Imperial Hotel.

The Engineer Section went right to work on the Peacock Room, but for some reason, would not let me in on the plans for the work. I asked to see a set of the drawings but was told that since I was not an engineer I had best run along and manage my hotel and let the engineers who were experts proceed without bothering them. That was too much for me and I went to the executive officer of the Engineer Section and told him some theories I had about common sense. He got me a set of the blueprints for the construction the next day.

A lot of people had their fingers in the pie, practically everyone except the manager of the Imperial Hotel. The main idea was to make the Peacock Room and the area under it completely safe. The plans not only made it safe—they also made it unusable. In order to prevent any fire which might start in the kitchen, five stories below, from spreading to the Peacock Room, the elevator and dumb-waiter shafts which served the ballroom were to be sealed off and plastered up! The executive officer of the Engineer Section hit the ceiling when I called him up and informed him of this.

"I'll change that right away," he assured me. "Is there anything else like that?"

"Well, I don't know," I told him. "I've only had time to look at one drawing. I'll call you if I find anything else."

I called him often. The plan for the fire escapes was to place one at each end of the main stem of the cross. The one at the east end was fine. People could step out onto it and walk down to the ground without re-entering the building. There was only one drawback to its location as far as I could see. That end of the room was where the orchestra was located for dinner dances and in order to keep the exit clear I would have to keep a path four feet wide through the center of the band! The other fire escape I could not understand. It was to run from the west end of the Peacock Room to the roof of the Main Dining Room, two floors below. When an escapee reached there, he would have to walk about one hundred yards along the roof towards the front of the building, enter the fourth-floor-level mezzanine of the main lobby, walk to the front of the mezzanine, then hike down four flights of stairs to the street.

Instead of placing the fire escapes in these locations they could have been placed at the ends of the crossbar of the cross. As in the case of the one located at the east end of the room, evacuation would have been a matter of stepping out onto the fire escape and walking down the stairs to the ground without ever re-entering the building. And these locations would have been ideal as far as operation of the room was concerned.

I called up about this but I was too late. Work had already started, the materials had been purchased and it would have been too expensive to start over again. The escapes were built as the plans called for them and after

the room was reopened we had to keep that four-foot path down the center of the orchestra. We did our best to camouflage the sight by using archways, *torii*s and such over the path, but we never quite killed the effect of one half of the orchestra being angry at the other half. Fortunately, the arrangement did not affect the playing of the Japanese musicians. They did not even blink when I explained the set-up to them. It was just another Yankee way of doing things.

When I got to the bottom of the pile of blueprints I found the prize plan. The nicest of the small banquet rooms was the *Kiri no ma*, a small room which would accommodate parties no larger than sixteen guests. It was paneled in *kiri wood* (hence the name), a very expensive type of wood with a beautiful satiny finish. The plan was to rip out this expensive paneling and replace it with plaster. Wood was inflammable.

I called the executive officer of the Engineer Section again and told him about it. I was in a rage but I did not get a chance to let off steam.

"Don't say it," he said. "I know what you're going to say and I'll just run over it mentally and we'll both save time. I'll have them change that right away. By the way, how many more drawings do you have to go over?"

"That was the last one," I told him.

"Thank God," he said in relief.

We held the Grand Reopening of the Peacock Room in the fall of that year. There were conflicting opinions about the redecoration which had been done. There were always conflicting opinions about anything related to the Imperial Hotel. Some people thought removing the heavy hanging stone formations had given the room a more clean-cut look. Others thought it had destroyed the artistic atmosphere.

That reopening had a high point. Bob Hope and his group had just returned from entertaining the troops in Korea and attended the dance. At the end of the floor show, I asked him if he would mind being introduced to the audience and saying hello to them. He not only said hello, he put on an hour floor show, calling up the members of his troupe, Marilyn Maxwell, Jimmy Wakely, Judy Kelly and Les Brown to take part in the performance. It was a great show.

Later that evening when the dance was over, people congratulated me on the reopening. I commented to one of the guests that it had been very nice of Hope to put on the special show for us.

"Yeah," he said. "But then, that's what he's over here for anyway, isn't it?"

Well, that's the way it goes.

I can well remember the day I finally was satisfied with the Imperial Hotel. The redecoration was complete, the billeting policy was firm, there were no neurotic guests registered, the Japanese employees were on an efficient operating basis, the last shipment of draperies and furniture had arrived and been put in place. There was no problem the staff could not handle as a routine matter. At last I could relax and enjoy the place.

That afternoon SCAP headquarters decided to give up the Imperial Hotel as an occupation billet and return it to the Japanese.

The Final Score

At the start of a sukiyaki dinner, I always assumed the proper Japanese position which you achieve by kneeling down and then sitting back on the heels with your legs doubled under you. It is an uncomfortable contortion for a westerner. I used to time myself to see how long I could stand it.

One night a guest asked me why I did this. I told him that the day I found this position felt comfortable I would know it was time to go home to America. My record at that time was ten minutes. Another guest gave a long discourse on the importance yoga gives to position. It was very interesting. When he finished I realized suddenly that I had been sitting on my heels for over half an hour and my muscles still were not cramped.

It was time.

The official announcement informed the general public that the Imperial Hotel would be returned to the Japanese owners on the first day of April, 1952. There was a mild scramble to get aboard for the last run on the gravy train. The reservations for banquets and cocktail parties nearly

doubled. Much rumor and speculation arose about the course the Japanese would take when the hotel was back in their hands.

I did not want to be there for the wind-up. I had many reasons for being anxious to leave. Much of the equipment in the hotel was on Army inventories, drapes, rugs, carpets, beds, furniture and fixtures, and I did not want to be there when the Imperial was stripped of its finery and left a skeleton. It would seem too much like undoing all the work to which I had been applying myself for the past six years. Also, though Japan still had many things to interest me, it had nothing which could kill the loneliness for my family. And on top of that, Fran had borne a daughter in August and I wanted to get acquainted with the child before she grew into the brat stage.

I put in a request to be released a month before the expiration date of my contract and since I had ample leave time to cover that period, the request was approved. I started making preparations for return to the United States in January.

Many things started to round themselves out, as if someone had given a signal to step up the finish of the third act of a play.

Reo Hasegawa, the first *nisei* repatriate I had hired, came in to see me one day about a problem. Reo had stayed with me for three years as supply chief of the hotel. He had married a pretty girl who worked in the Main Dining Room and a year later became the proud father of a son. When Pan American Airways offered him a position similar to the one he held at the Imperial, but at a much larger salary, I had to advise him to take it for I could not meet the offer and he now had a family to support. I never lost contact with him for he was stationed in Tokyo and dropped by the hotel to keep me posted on the liti-

gation by which his citizenship would finally be determined.

This time Reo had a real problem. The case had been settled. He had just received his reinstatement as a citizen of the United States and could obtain an American passport simply by applying at the American consulate. But the joker was that the passport would be issued only with the provision that he return to the United States immediately. Due to the prejudice in our immigration laws, there was no way he could get permission for his wife, a Japanese citizen, to return with him. Reo would not part with his wife under any circumstances but was afraid that if he did not pick up the passport immediately something might arise to jeopardize his reinstatement.

I did not know of any solution to his problem but called up some friends in the State Department and made an appointment for Reo at the Consulate. The answer was waiting for him when he showed up for the interview—a simple solution I had not known was possible. If Reo enlisted in one of the armed services, his reinstatement would not only be firmed up, but he could also, as an American service man, remarry his wife in accordance with American laws at the Consulate. When his tour of duty ended, he would then be entitled to bring her back to the United States, regardless of her citizenship. This was a perfect solution for Reo was eager to enter the armed services to pay a debt he felt he owed to the country.

The matter had to be handled quickly for the law under which his wife could enter the United States expired in March, 1952, and it was already the middle of January. Reo leaned towards a career in the Air Force so I asked a colonel in FEAF headquarters whom I knew quite well to help in any way he could. He became interested in

Reo's case and eased the way for him. Before the end of January, Reo was an airman in the United States Air Force. He came to see me on the first day he was in uniform. He made a fine-looking military figure. The only thing about the whole deal which had fased him was the idea of marrying the woman he had been married to for over two years.

Graduation Day at Jochi University finally arrived and I received my degree in Philosophy, rounding out my education. That seemed to touch off a series of ceremonies. Mr. Inumaru called a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Imperial Hotel Company and that group voted me an honorary member of the Board of Directors of the firm. The citation and scroll which were presented to me were very impressive. A small, but formal, ceremony was held in the Chief of Staff's office and General Hickey, then the Chief of Staff, presented me with a certificate of achievement. I began to feel like big stuff.

Friends gave parties to say goodbye to me and then I, in turn, gave parties to say goodbye to friends.

I wanted to make certain that the servants who had worked for Fran and me were settled in new positions before I departed. Keiko, the girl who had been my son's amah, was working in the front office of the hotel. When we had broken up the household upon Fran's return to America, Keiko said she did not have the heart to take care of another baby after having practically adopted my boy as her own. Fortunately, as part of the educational renaissance in the house which came about when I entered Jochi University, Keiko had started taking lessons in English and typing. She was adept enough at both to qualify for a clerical position at the hotel and had proved herself a worth-while employee. I was certain that her position at the Imperial was protected. The number two boy

had come to the hotel as an apprentice waiter and now had achieved a full-fledged status. He had already realized his life's ambition. Tony, who had stayed on as my chauffeur after Fran left, now felt he was ready to enter the taxi business and I was able to place him as a dispatcher with the Kokusai Taxi Company in Tokyo.

I had a terrific surprise when I spoke to Keigo about his future plans. He already had a clerical position with a local business firm lined up. The job had been offered to him eight months before, but he had refused to take it then since he felt that out of loyalty to me he should remain in my employ until I left Japan. This loyalty of the Japanese people is something fine to behold but difficult to understand. They develop that case of hero worship, they imitate their idol, they are intensely loyal against all comers, yet, somehow they always manage to do what is best for themselves at the same time. I have never known any of them to be different. Keigo's attitude was that he had done the natural thing in turning down the offer when it was first presented. Perhaps there was some facet to the situation that I could not see or understand. By refusing to leave me, perhaps he proved to his prospective employer that he was a man who took his responsibilities seriously. At any rate, I did not worry about it. I was confident that Keigo was not going to come out on the short end of the stick because of his loyalty to me. Things just seem to work that way in Japan.

G-1 informed me I could be booked for passage on a ship which sailed from Yokohama on January nineteenth. This was a week earlier than I expected but I told them I would be ready. Charles Lorincie, my replacement, had been working with me for almost a month and was prepared to take charge. I started my final packing but I should have known better than to think it would be so

easy. Lorincie was a captain in the army who had just completed the maximum length tour of foreign duty. The plan was to obtain his release from active duty so that he could take the job as a civilian and move on to the new VIP billet after turning back the Imperial. Managing the VIP billet in Tokyo had long ceased to be a job for a junior officer, no matter how brave he was.

The paperwork for Lorincie's release had been sent through channels as soon as he came to the Imperial to learn the job. The day after G-1 called me the answer came back. There was no possible way Captain Lorincie could be released from active duty. The Billeting Section had to find a civilian replacement and the breaking-in process started all over again. I informed G-1 I could not make the ship leaving January nineteenth and the booking was changed to February twelfth.

Of course, the sequel to this was natural. The day after Lorincie reported to his new post in the United States he was informed he could be released from active duty if he so desired.

I do not know exactly how to figure up the final score of my six years in Japan. I do not know how much the Japanese with whom I worked learned from me. There is no way of knowing. I had taught them many new methods, how to keep the building clean, how to save time and labor, how to maintain equipment, new bookkeeping methods, all that sort of thing. I knew they had absorbed these methods. I had concrete proof of it daily as I watched them at work. They could do these things well. But whether they did them because they understood the practical theories behind them or simply because Mori-san, Lord High Potentate of the Payroll, ordered it done so, I did not know and I will never know. That is because, though in six years I learned to think *like* a Japanese, in all

the rest of my life I could never learn to think *as* a Japanese. Only a Japanese can do that. It is a gift or curse of birthright.

I, myself, learned many important things while I was in Japan, either because of the Japanese or in spite of them. Perhaps the most important thing I learned was what Mr. Inumaru had mentioned to me on my first day there. The bamboo is a much wiser tree than the oak; during a storm it bends with the wind and when the wind subsides, it springs back to its normal position. But the oak tries to show its strength, to stand up to the wind, and for its pains usually ends torn up by the roots. I don't know how the point was brought home to me most forcefully, by the Japanese who live by this philosophy, by the more troublesome guests who gave me no alternative but to bend with the wind, or by the Army way of doing things—now there's a real wind for you.

The evening before I left Japan Keigo came to my room and asked to speak to me on a matter of importance. He was very serious. He kept his eyes directed at the toes of his shoes except when he was speaking.

"I wish you to give me a presento," he said slowly.

"So?" I was surprised at this. I had already given him half my wardrobe and a silver cigarette case with an appropriately sentimental commendation engraved on it. "Is there something in particular you wanted?"

He stared at the floor for a moment.

"Next month," he said hesitantly, "I will become Christian!"

"*Banzai!*" I said. This was a bigger surprise.

"Next month, first Sunday, I will be baptized," Keigo continued.

"Congratulations. But what is this presento you want?"

"I wish you to give to me your name."

"My name!"

"Yes. For baptism name."

This was the biggest surprise of the evening. I was flattered. No one has ever paid me a greater compliment.

"You are welcome to my name, Keigo," I said. "I will be proud to have the same name as you."

"*Arigato gozaimasu,*" he murmured. (Thank you.)

He bowed low, turned and slowly walked towards the door. Then, suddenly he ran the last few steps and pulled the door closed behind him without looking back.

The next morning employees started coming to my room at six o'clock to say goodbye. Despite the stoic exterior they present to the world, the Japanese are very sentimental underneath and some of them broke down and cried. I had a hard time controlling my own emotions, for the realization that I would never see many of these people again suddenly became strong. When I walked through the lobby there was a long line of them waiting patiently for me to pass. It was something like a troop review.

Many people came down to Yokohama to see me off at the boat. Mr. Inumaru took my solemn promise that I would come back to Japan as soon as I could. He told me I would be his guest from the moment my foot touched ground in Yokohama until the moment I left.

When the boat pulled away and we were too far from shore to do any more waving, I went down to the cabin. There was a letter lying on my bunk. It was from Keigo.

12th Feb 1952

Dear Mori-san,

Thank you very much for your kindness. I can't never forget all about that. Sometime I got a mistake you make angry but I could get big successful by

them. So I learn. I just want to say "work hard and make more exprince," I'll done it. You got too many, many in Japan. Well speak Japanese and know story of Japan but I must try to be as like as you, it's sure.

Please remnber to you family.

And I hope that your well with good luck to you.

Thank you very much
your friend roomboy

J. MALCOLM MATSUMOTO

