

Esther Suzuki

TOO-POLITENESS

Japanese custom is such that when one asks a Japanese woman how her son is, she will reply, "Thank you for asking about my worthless son." She will then commence to tell of his late doctorate, his \$58,000 home and his ten children. Faced with these accomplishments, you begin to wonder what her worthwhile sons are like.

Etiquette behooves one not to complain of a chilly house when visiting. One might even lie and say they enjoy cool rooms. Then the host to comply with the guest's preference will lower the thermostat. The next time if the guest wears a bulky knit to ward off pneumonia, the host will lower the thermostat even more. The only thing to do in a case like this is to cut off the friendship.

Upon being complimented, a hostess will reply her cooking is unfit for pigs. (Then you wonder why you are eating it, but never, never say it.) After the 12th course, she will say apologetically, "This was a simple meal." The hostess presses her guests to eat. One may be starved but it is politeness to refuse at least three times. A true Japanese hostess will play ball and continue to coax. My friend who married into a Syrian clan claims a Syrian uncle starved to death on a cross-country train ride since no one offered him food more than once. So I begin to wonder if it is only the Japanese who have a monopoly on this or whether it is "old world." When the hostess says: "I am a terrible cook, I can't cook," one must hastily say, "To the contrary." And the secret is never to stop contradicting the hostess and this takes care of any polite table conversation worries. Sometimes from sheer exhaustion and from a sense of being too argumentative, I have stopped. The result, of course, is disaster.

When I have been asked how my husband is, I have replied: "Oh, so-so." The next time around we hear that we are on the brink of divorce or some other calamitous conclusion. A non-Japanese will say her husband is a sheer genius, that her boy is a potential genius besides being the best catcher in the Little League and add that "catchers" are more important than "pitchers."

When returning a phone call to a woman, I explained that I was out collecting for the mentally retarded children's drive. She said, "Now this is one drive you will really benefit from." I suddenly remembered years ago when she asked how the children were, I had replied with sincerity: "The monsters are idiots!"

So this custom is unplayable unless the other party follows the rules. My solution is to ask a stranger, I might engage in conversation, if she practices Japanese custom and if a blank look appears on her face, this is my cue to start bragging for all I am worth.

The Japanese have this sense of o-re which is the practice of politeness in the nth degree. For example, one must never return a platter empty to anyone. So when a

(Cont. on page 7)

BUDDHIST ASSN. NEWS

About a dozen young women members have been meeting at the Center on Monday evenings to receive instruction in the art of cake decoration from Takeshi Kojima. We thank Mr. Kojima for generously giving of his time and talent.

An unusually long power stoppage in the JA Center district on October 10 turned the Issei-Nisei Service scheduled for that evening into an unexpectedly beautiful "Candle-light" Service. Many members braved the heavy rain to hear Rev. Takashi Tsuji, the National Director of Education of the Buddhist Churches of America. The lights came on in time for the tea after the service.

Rev. Tsuji also lectured the following evening at Murphy Hall Auditorium on the U Campus to a capacity audience. His lucid presentation of a complex subject, "Buddhism, the Enlightened Way of Life," was appreciated by the students and faculty members attending. A lively question and answer period was brought to a close only by the lights-out warning at ten. A number of TCBA members were also present.

Everyone is cordially invited to the annual Halloween party to be held on October 28 at the Center.

YCO PARENTS TO MEET

The YCO Parent Group will meet Wednesday, November 1 at the J A Center. Discussion will center on the future of the Young Citizens Organization, an evaluation of the recent EDC-MDC Convention from the parents' viewpoint, and the selection of new advisors.

金星麵廠

KIKKOMAN SHOYU 姫印

AJINOMOTO

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TOO-POLITENESS -

neighbor brings me eggplant casserole after an operation, I must quickly roast a beef to put on the plate before I can return it. (I have the largest collection of assorted plates than anyone I know.)

But in the wilds of the Lake of the Woods in Canada, you'd think you would be safe. Next to our campsite came five boy scouts with their Ukrainian leader, a refugee to Canada some twelve years ago. He came to our site and started by saying, "You're Americans." (I immediately wondered how he could tell.) It ended up by his giving us a five lb. salami he had made in an Ukrainian friend's sausage factory, plus 2 lbs. of wienerschnitzel and 7 rolls of pepperoni. He said he had brought too much food for the six of them. Right away we all got panicky trying to think of ways to repay him which, of course, proved impossible. George thought of American cigarettes. (Although many people hate Americans--the "Yankee go home" bit--it appears they do love American cigarettes.) He said only one pack would do, but George pressed four on him.

But our wiener roast was so good, I baked a chocolate cake in the Coleman oven loaned us by our neighbor--and frosted it chocolate. John and Mark took the cake over to the next tent and thanked them for the delicious wieners. A half hour later one of the scouts appeared with 4 more lbs. of wieners. So the next day I told them they could use the boat for an hour while we ate supper. At that particular point we honestly believed we were pulling ahead. That evening the scoutmaster came with 2 lbs. of homemade bacon. Of course, there was only one thing for us to do... leave.


Briefly Speaking (cont.)

At MRS. CHIKA URASHI'S 61st birthday celebration last month, the comedy team of CHESTER FUJINO and GEORGE ONO put on a hilarious skit that had everyone holding their sides.. Might be a good thing to remember for the next Whingding....

Our best wishes to newly-weds MR. AND MRS. SAM SHIMADA.. MRS. SHIMADA is the former Tsuyako Shijo of St. Paul.. SAM is one of those quiet fellows who can always be depended on to run his movie projector for the Center activities or to help in the kitchen during Bazaar time.. We wish them both much happiness....

A friend of BILL HIRABAYASHI'S took some 8 x 10 glossy prints of some of the girls who rode on the Aquatennial float.. These pictures will be displayed at the UCL meeting on Nov. 4 and sell for one dollar.....

It's about that time of year again when the JA JOURNAL will be asking for Christmas ads ..As most of you know, the JOURNAL is "free for the asking," and each month over 400 copies are mailed out ..The Journal has been operating "in the red" for several years. Your donations for a Christmas ad and the monthly ads in the paper are the only source of income for the paper ..So, when the request for ads is made, won't you please help? Just tuckabuckortwo in an envelope and know that in this way, you are helping to keep this paper going.. We had always taken the Journal for granted, and if it arrived late, we did a little griping, but after a year of working on this paper, we have come to realize the enormous amount of work that goes into putting such a monthly out... Perhaps a two-page mimeographed paper might be the solution, or perhaps we can discontinue the paper entirely, but we feel that there is need for a means of communication in the community, and the Journal seems to be the answer.. So let's all support our paper so for once we can start operating "in the black"....




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