

OTHER SCENES

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Although Japan has the reputation in some quarters of being the erotic capital of the world (a vast "eroduction" porno movie industry, nude mixed bathing, innumerable "special massage" parlors, dozens of sex magazines) its authorities are especially uptight about foreign imports. Pubic hair appearing in movies and mens' magazines is a particular *bete-noir* and a corps of students are hired as censors—a much sought-after job—to peruse publications from abroad and brush out any traces of hair displayed by *gaijin* (foreign) nudes.

For a while this could be countered merely by erasing the ink marks but now, with much fanfare, Japanese censors have proudly announced a "magic" ink that can't be removed. And

so the technology advances. Japanese censors, incidentally, have traditionally used their ink-dipped fingers to blot out the offending pubic region, a phallic gesture whose symbolism is best left to psychologists to speculate upon.

The incredible hypocrisy in all this, plus the discriminatory arrest of two men for selling porn books in station vending machines while allowing bookstores to offer the same wares, only demonstrates that the Japanese have nothing to learn from the West in the area of petty prudery.

But, as in the West, if the product is officially labeled ART (i.e., its creator is dead), it's okay. At the same time as customs' officials were blotting out nude centerfolds they were allowing the import of Goya's famous "naked Maja"



そ、田も、チヤ、ヤ、し、れ、せ、こ、の、ろ、に、は、ず、い、ぶ、ん、醬、油、味、の、ラ、ー、メ、ン、な、ん、て、

ひ、と、つ、

だ、か、

決、め、た、ん、で、ご、ざ、い、ま、す。

ラ、ー、メ、ン、屋、を、始、め、た、こ、

ラ、ー、メ、ン、を、作、っ、て、み、よ、う、と、

日、本、人、

つ、て、ら、っ、し、ゃ、い、ま、し、て、お、ジ、イ、さ、ん、に、近、い、年、

齡、な、の、で、あ、り、ま、す。し、た、が、っ、て、自、分、が、店、に、

立、つ、と、い、う、こ、と、は、も、う、ほ、と、ん、ど、な、い、の、で、あ、

り、ま、す。一、

感、じ、な、の、で、

土、木

for a widely-publicized exhibition. The picture was extensively reproduced, in newspapers, on television and even on cigarette packets.

Personal Polluters

The Japan Monopoly Corporation, which grows, imports, manufactures and distributes the country's entire output of tobacco and cigarettes, recently introduced a new brand with all its customary meticulous planning. Sixty-two new designs for CHERRY ("milder, less tar, new production techniques!") were launched simultaneously—the basic maroon and white package plus various full-color photos of different regions. The dedicated collector of cigarette packets (and JMC is thoughtfully assisting some such groups to get organized) learns geography the easy way.

In view of the increasing worldwide tendency for governments to condemn smoking as a health hazard, JMC is somewhat sensitive to its image as the country's number one tobacco salesman. But as its annual contribution of around \$700 million to the public treasury represents almost 4 per cent of the national budget, it tends to salve its conscience by limiting advertising only to the launching of a new product. Hence the increasing number of brands. There are now about 30 and the next one, due for introduction this spring, will be called "Mr. Slim."

JMC also devotes the considerable revenue from selling space on the side of some of its packets to such general welfare projects as the Winter Olympics or various charitable funds. Advertising on cigarette packets, by the way, costs 20 million yen (about \$63,000) per two billion packets.

Japanese smokers prefer light, mild cigarettes (the so-called "Oregon type") and the country imports about 20 per cent of its tobacco consumption, the rest being grown in every section of the country except the Hokkaido and Tokyo areas. Local and imported tobaccos are blended in varying quantities to produce the more than two dozen brands that cover the range of differing tastes, 90 per cent of them with filters.

Japan's hi lite, which claims to be the world's top seller, is among the cheapest (25c) but somewhat mild to American



tastes; stronger, and better-known outside the country, are hope and PEACE (32c).

Despite minimal advertising Japan is high in the world chart of smokers, consuming almost 3,000 per head of the population per year. Corresponding figures are 4,186 for Americans; about 2,300 for West Germans.

Travelling Cheaply

Japan's economic successes throughout the world and its accompanying rise in the standard of living back home has driven prices up all around and nowhere more than in the tourist business which, anyway, has always been more or less geared to the expense-account bigspenders. Spurred on by hosting EXPO and two sets of Olympic Games within the past decade, Japan's tourist tycoons have built scores of ever-bigger and more elegant hotels, making little or no concession to the adventurous travelers who were once able to do Japan on five dollars a day. (That biggest-selling guidebook, incidentally, is now Japan On \$10 a Day, and even that takes some doing).

About the only way to travel cheaply through Japan today is by using its excellent system of youth hostels most of which, in return for bargain rates of

\$1.15 per night, insist upon the kind of purity reminiscent of Boy Scout camps: in by 9 P.M., lights out at 10, girls and boys on separate floors, loudspeaker commands to put your shoes away and, at 6:30 A.M. reveille, to "arise with energy and vigor". Stamped in the hostel cards at Sapporo: "Boys be ambitious".

Of course, there are happily lax exceptions, mostly in country resorts, such as Noboribetsu in northern Hokkaido where sleeping (and bathing) in mixed-sex groups may be tolerated, late rising is the rule and a free pachinko machine entertains hostellers waiting for the toilet.

Naked Nudity

When Japanese naturists opened the country's first nudist camp near the hot spring resort of Shirahama, it lasted only three days before authorities closed it down with the inscrutable explanation: "We welcome the nudists as long as they do not go around in the nude."

The Water Business

Two of the current top-drawing "mama-sans" on the Tokyo nightlife circuit are foreigners, neighbors -- and bitter rivals. On one side of Roppongi-dori is sixtyish Anne Dinken, colorful owner of Asia's only kosher delicatessen ("You'll love the decor. It's gorgeous! Bronx, circa 1965"); on the other, 27-year-old blonde Romy, British-born bombshell whose basement bistro features "beautiful girls on both sides of the bar".

Romy and Anne both speak fluent Japanese, have both earned considerable respect in Japan's notoriously rough



misu shobu ("water business", euphemism for night-time trade). But there the similarity ends.

"I sell pastrami, she sells ass", sniffs Dinken.

"Not a bad reputation to have even though it isn't true," responds Romy.

"What customers do after hours is none of my business. One thing I've learned, though, is that the men who are always the first to stick their hands under skirts in the bar are always the most uptight, prissy ones when I meet them with their wives."



Sex in the Sky

Romy and her Japanese husband Akira were among the score of "mixed" couples recently married somewhere over Asia by the flight captain of an outward-bound jet from Tokyo, a publicity stunt that provoked a local columnist to suggest extending the idea to cheap divorces.

"If an airline captain can perform a wedding in the air he should equally be able to perform a divorce . . . All (the couple) would have to do would be to commit adultery in front of the captain or qualified members of the crew", suggested the columnist for Tokyo's Shipping and Trade News. "Instead of merely 20 couples you could double the number by having the husband and wife each accompanied by their favorite adulterer or adulteress.

"On arrival at the next airport the captain could hand over a report that so many dozens of couples had committed adultery during the flight and that he had granted each of them a divorce and celebrated the occasion with magnums of champagne."

New Inventions

A two-seater bicycle with enormous beach balls turned by screw propellers and pedalled just like any other cycle

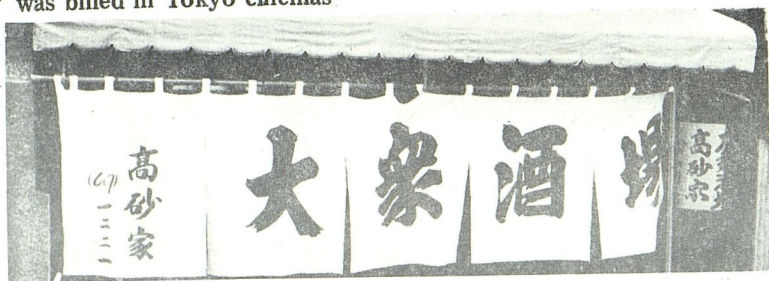
has been devised by Tokyo's Bridgestone Company for use on lakes, rivers or in the sea. Costs \$280 . . . Also for water vacationers: floating tents, constructed from air mattresses fashioned together in triangular shape . . . Sekisui Plastics Co. is selling food containers made from a new plastic that completely disintegrates upon six months' exposure to sun . . . A mechanically operated "hostess" who bows and grates out her tape-recorded "welcome" as you step on the entrance mat at pachinko pinball parlors . . . Self-igniting incense which needs to be barely touched with a lighted cigarette.

Cream in the Coffee

A few years ago Japanese and tourists alike were flocking to the Funabara Hotel on Izu pen-insula to take a \$3 bath in a solid gold bathtub the hotel had installed at a cost of \$300,000. (The bath was finally removed, pocked with teethmarks). This year's fad is the Coffee Bath -- Brazilian and Colombian coffee beans with pineapple juice, fermented at 140 degrees in a mansize tub. Chef du bath Yoshimatsu Baba says that 20 minutes' immersion should make you perk up.

IN BRIEF: The movie "Brewster McCloud" was billed in Tokyo cinemas

as "Bird Sht" . . . Keeping people waiting is a Japanese characteristic concludes a Yokohama office equipment company which has just conducted a survey on the subject. Most people, however, feel ashamed of it, the report adds. Most tardy businessmen are those in their thirties and employees of small firms are more punctual than others . . . Vegetables from mainland China are selling well in Tokyo stores—at prices averaging 50 per cent less than home-grown vegetables . . . Japan National Railways claims that its new superexpress (in service by 1980) will cover the 300 miles between Tokyo and Osaka in one hour by operating on a new system of "mutually repulsive magnetism" which causes it to float literally above the track . . . All major Tokyo hotels are now showing regular English-language programs, including news, over closed-circuit television . . . Date to remember: December 8 is celebrated as *hari-kuyo* "a religious festival for the spirit of the sewing needle". On that day, historians explain, girls bring broken or rusted sewing needles and "stick them in bean curd or other soft material as an expression of sympathy with the tools that have served them well."



THERE'S hardly a shop or store in Japan whose door is unadorned by its own noren, the short, trisected curtain bearing the owner's name or insignia in Kanji characters. Blue cotton or matting is the most common though liquor stores usually sport nawa-noren made of straw rope.

The noren's origins are obscure, although it was believed to have originated in China's Buddhist temples and first came to Japan in the 14th century. For a time, the noren was a sort of patented permit and during the Tokugawa era their issue was limited as a control over the number of dealers in each business.

For at least the last century the noren has been regarded as an integral part of the shop's goodwill and in the custom of "splitting the noren", was duplicated and handed on to an apprentice setting up on his own with the blessing of his former master.

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