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## Pat Young Goes To Dinner In Japan

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Pat Young Goes To—

# Dinner In Japan

**Katherine Young, who is never called anything but Pat, spent the summer in Japan with her Air Force father, her mother and sister. She returned to Iowa State, 2 weeks after fall quarter started, with a 10-word Japanese vocabulary, fans and a kimono and such tales as the following one.**

**W**E were pessimistic about Japanese food. Cheerful friends in the States had gaily cautioned us about such delicacies as aged fishheads and cold boiled rice garnished with seaweed. But an invitation to a genuine *sukiyaki* (you say skoo-yah-kee if you want to sound Japanese) dinner promised to be an experience too interesting to overlook.

We were invited one night to the home of a Japanese friend of a missionary friend of ours. Our houseboys, Sano, Kuboto and Taeko, bowed us out the door and ceremoniously ushered us into the car. Squinting against the headlights, they wiggled their fingers goodbye at us as we drove away.

It's hazardous going anywhere after dark in Japan. There are no street lights—electricity is rationed.

And for seemingly added adventure, Japanese cars observe no safety laws so far as I could ever tell, and car lights seem to be just an added luxury. This holds true with streetcars, too. Nevertheless, we arrived at our destination intact.

## Native Greens

It was raining, so our Japanese hosts sent their most menial housemaid to meet us with an umbrella. Obviously, five of us could never share her one small parasol, so we took off at a dead run for the house, leaving the confused girl alone with her umbrella.

Our hostess greeted us in true Japanese fashion, kneeling in the entrance to welcome us into the house after we had first removed our shoes. Since my mother, sister and I were dressed in good American hose and elastic underneath our best dresses, we had to take time out to unhitch before we could squat

oriental fashion on the floor covered with its usual ten thicknesses of *tetami* rice straw mats.

Our dinner began immediately. The small charcoal table stoves called *shibachi* were placed one for every three people. Our hostess filled the saucepans that exactly fitted into the tops of the stoves with Japanese *shoyu* sauce and began to place the ingredients for our meal into the hot liquid. First came pieces of long stringy cured root, similar to our sauerkraut; then the Japanese onions, mild, and much like the leek; the soft, pure protein bean curds; and last, thin, thin, pieces of beef—all added in order of which cooked slowest.

## Confused Housemaid

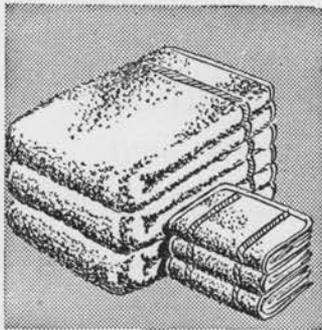
To pacify us until the food cooked enough to eat, small bowls of broth filled with bits of chicken and barley were placed before us. These, served with individual tiny salads of native greens topped with generous slices of white fish meat, held our immediate attention.

Delicious perfumes now drifted up from the bubbling mass before us, and just as we thought we couldn't stand to wait any longer, the food was finally done. Pieces of steaming meat were dished into our individual bowls followed by bits of the other ingredients. Armed with chopsticks, we proceeded to eat dish after dish of the delicious mixture.

Our hostess, Mrs. Katsuta busied herself serving us to repletion with cries of *dozo! dozo!* (please). Only when we could eat no more, did she herself eat anything. Almost bursting, we were amazed when one of the maids placed a lovely red lacquer

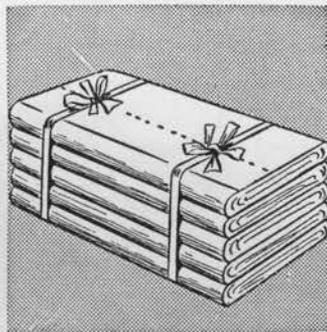
*(continued on page 24)*

# Mothers Enjoy Useful Gifts



gray, watermelon,  
wine, green, deep  
blue, aqua, blue,  
rose, pink, peach,  
chartruese, yellow  
bath towel \$1.69  
hand towel .89  
wash cloth .35

Matching Towel Sets by  
Fieldcrest



Pacific combed  
percale sheets  
81" x 108" \$4.25  
72" x 108" 3.98  
pillow cases .93

Sheets and Pillow Cases

Christmas wrapped, if you wish

*The Fair*  
AMES FOREMOST STORE

225 MAIN STREET

PHONE 100

(continued from page 3)

box full of sliced tomatoes from the Katsuta's garden before us. They were beautifully arranged after the Japanese fashion. The old red lacquer with its delicate tracery of gold set off the fresh lushness of the parsley garnished tomatoes so beautifully it seemed almost a crime to disturb the design.

At last, our friends allowed us to cease eating temporarily, and the men took over the conversation. Talk circled around mention of the Russians, but soon was channeled into Mr. Katsuta's favorite subject, which surprised us—Walt Whitman's poetry. Interspersed with inspection of Mr. Katsuta's superb collection of old books and magazines containing Whitman's work was occasional discussion of Mrs. Katsuta's sister's years in the United States when she obtained her college degree and traveled extensively. Language seemed a very small barrier, for though the Katsuta's spoke very little English, both understood most of what was said and the sister and our friend translated very capably.

## Colorful Confections

Our discussion was temporarily curtailed by the announcement of dessert. Another beautiful lacquer box was uncovered and inside we saw six or eight colorful confections. Seeing our skeptical glances, our friends explained that these were the most popular Japanese sweets—beancakes made of pure bean paste, colored and sweetened. Captivated by their rich colorings of chocolate brown, intense pink and warm ochre yellow, we took slim slices of the different pieces and sampled them.

Our first disappointment of the evening had arrived! Tasting much like cold boiled beans plus an over-generous helping of sugar, the candies were a distinct failure to our western tastes. The whole family covered up nobly. I finally hit upon a reasonably effective measure for choking the unpleasant morsels down. I held my breath, took as large a bite as I could swallow, followed it with an enormous gulp of tea and gagged the whole mouthful down. We were embarrassed but glad when our hostess, tactfully ignoring the large portions of "dessert" on our plates, suggested we move to the living room for our last cup of tea.

## Departure Time

The time for our departure arrived all too soon, but we began our leave-taking a good hour before we expected to arrive home—mindful of the lengthy farewells and the long drive home. After having complimented the head cook and maid on the dinner, we were escorted to our car by our host and hostess. Here again, complicated farewells were necessary, but finally, we were on our way home.

Our servants bowed us into the house, locked and barred the gate of the compound, the front and back doors, and the many windows, and we trudged to bed deeply impressed by the cordiality of a people we had "conquered."

