



Photo by Tito U. O'Kamoto

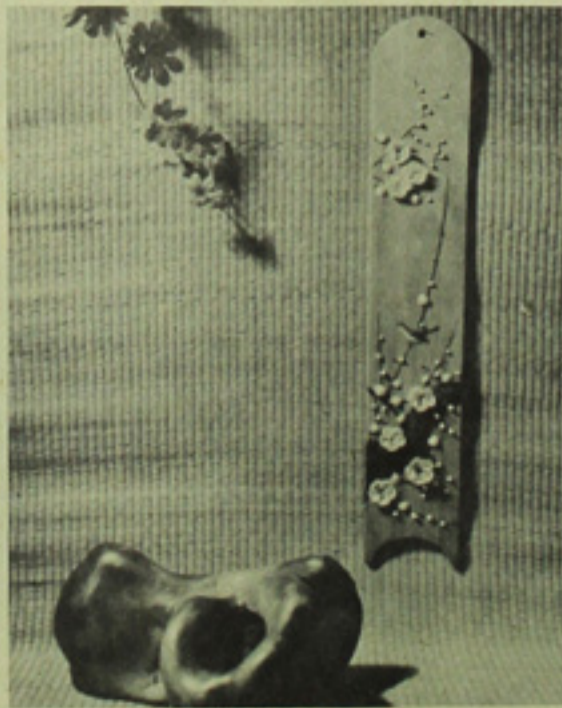
DR. ALLEN H. EATON stands before an evacuee-made sign of "Topaz Japanese Language Library" which was presented to the Columbia U. Oriental Language Library.

Art of the evacuees

By Tooru Kanazawa



CALLIGRAPHY was diligently practiced in every relocation center. This evacuee (T. Usui) was a Rohwer (Ark.) inmate.



ARTIFICIAL vine from Gila River, "Plum Blossoms" made of shells from Tule Lake and *koku* from Jerome, Ark.

DR. ALLEN H. EATON, was a small boy when, in the "yellow peril" days of the 1880's, he watched his grandfather persuade a posse of excited men not to hang the Chinese and burn their homes in a village in eastern Oregon.

His memory of that courageous act of fair play burned brightest when he saw 110,000 Japanese, 70,000 of them American citizens, sent to 10 relocation camps built in the desert. Since then he has directed much of his energy toward righting the wrong which he felt was done to his fellow citizens.

On this the tenth anniversary of the evacuation Dr. Eaton, in his book *Beauty Behind Barbed Wire*, to be issued by Harper's this spring, gives the key to his philosophy: "When our government, through some act, wrongs a citizen or a group of its citizens, there is no established way by which it can make a retraction.

"But one of the advantages of a democracy as ours is that its citizens, individually or collectively, profiting from experience, can change unjust and unfavorable situations for the better; first, by admitting mistakes where mistakes were made, and then by doing whatever they can to prevent their happening again."

Prevention, he believes, can best be insured by encouraging better understanding among the races and nationalities that make up America. Here, with text and numerous illustrations, he presents for the first time for the appreciation of fellow Americans the arts created by Japanese Americans behind barbed wire. Although the alien Japanese are ineligible for citizenship he considers them as American as their sons and daughters.

"For their length of residence, achievements and contributions to American life they have earned the right to citizenship," he believes.

While he was collecting material in the relocation camps he was often reminded of an experience years ago which gave him a clear insight into the Japanese mind and heart. He and a Japanese student, Jo Tominaga, were rained in in his classroom at the University of Oregon.

As they listened to the sound of rain on the skylight he said, "It reminds me of our farm home in eastern Oregon where we children, sleeping in the attic, loved to listen to the sound of the raindrops on the roof."

After a long silence Jo said: "It reminds me of home too. My father was



HEART MOUNTAIN (Wyo.) relocation center produced "Autumn Mood," an informal flower arrangement in a drain pipe; a lunchbox and a poem on scroll.

a workman. We lived in a neighborhood of out-of-door laborers. He built our little house and made a special garden on our stony plot of ground. When he had completed the garden, he collected all the leftover stones and piled them carefully along the edge of the house, below the eaves. On rainy days, when the neighbors could not work, he would call them in and they would all make poems to the music of the rain falling from the roof to the stones below."

Dr. Eaton, who served 13 years in the Oregon state legislature, was well equipped for his task. He is of pioneer stock. He reminds one of an honest, independent, Down East Yankee. His grandfather, Jim Hendershott, drove an ox team across the plains from Iowa to the Oregon Country in 1852. Young Allen grew up on a farm where he learned to appreciate the beauties of nature.

With the years he became known for his activities on behalf of immigrants. His appreciation of their contributions was expressed in his book, *Immigrant Gifts to American Life*. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, who writes a forward to his latest book, has recognized him as the foremost authority on the handicrafts of America and has written books on the handicrafts of New England and of the Southern Highlands.

For the work he has done and in recognition of his foresight and courage



ISSEIS SAW beauty in the commonest of American desert plants, the sagebrush. At Minidoka, Idaho, K. Yuasa took pleasure in making an informal arrangement.

as citizen and legislator, the University of Oregon conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

While director of the Department of Arts in Social Work of the Russell Sage Foundation he organized the first national exhibition of rural arts. He was a member of an ECA mission two years ago which was invited by the German government to study with them their refugee problem.

His interest in Japanese culture was kindled when he visited the Alaskan-Yukon Exposition in Seattle in 1905.

"I was fascinated by the brush work of the Japanese artists," he says today. He wanted to share his pleasure with his fellow villagers, so, "I induced two of them to return with me to my home. One of them, Ikka Nagai, who extended his visit, was considered the second best crow painter in Japan. A store window was turned over to him for his use. With a few strokes of his brush he would create a branch, a flower, or a crow.

"Can you picture one of Japan's great artists painting crows in the shop window of a small Oregon village, bringing the culture of Japan to a frontier settlement?"

Of the evacuation he still remembers how he and thousands of others were "shocked at the unprecedented action and angered by the suspicious motives and sinister forces that seemed to be in the background."

Approaching Dillon S. Myer, director

JAPONICA

CONFESSION GOOD FOR STOMACH

It happens in Japan, too. An ex-convict named S. Aoyama, discharged recently from jail, surrendered to police, Asakusa (Tokyo), confessing he had committed a theft. He showed officers two packets of candy he had stolen from a confectionery stand near the station. Why had he surrendered? Aoyama said life outside jail was too precarious. He said he was unable to find a job after his discharge and



soon found himself starving. He had never experienced that discomfort in jail, he explained, and wondered if thievery wasn't enough to get him back into jail and its three square meals a day. It was.

SOMETHING FOR ALMOST NOTHING

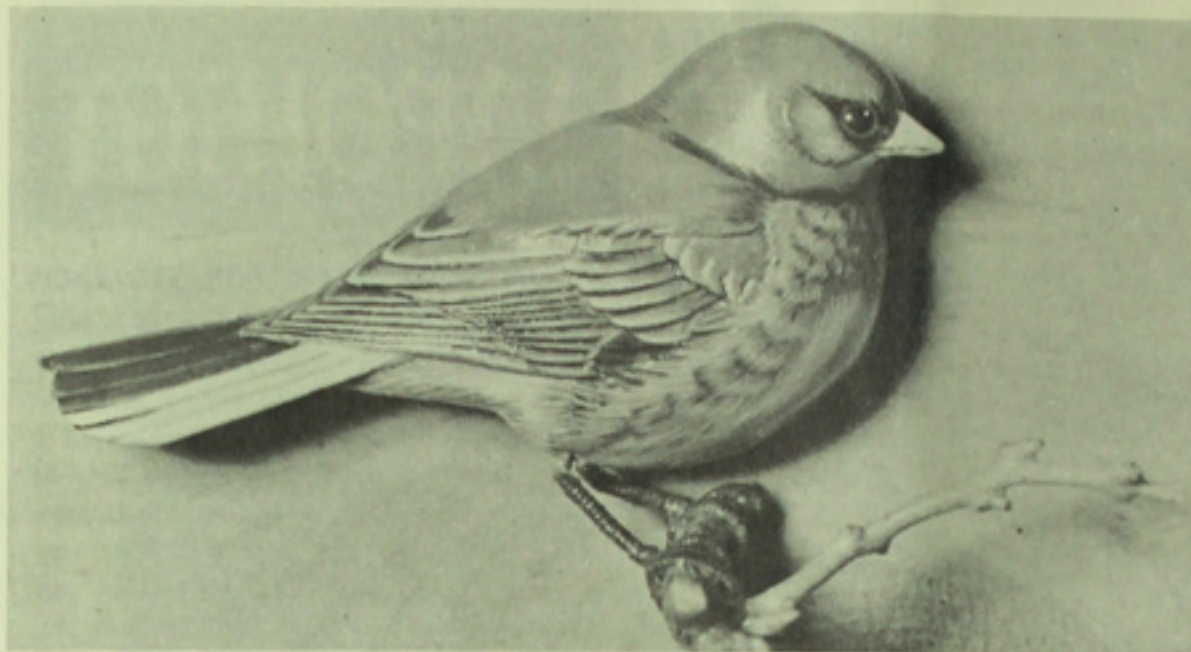
The Japanese Government lotteries are getting a lot of competition from merchants who have found the lottery an effective way to promote sales. Big city department stores as well as the neighborhood shops are handing out lottery tickets with purchases of almost any amount. A Sendai clothing store is offering a Y50,000 (\$138.89) prize and giving out tickets with purchases of Y100 (27.7 cents) or more. Other prizes range from free trips to swank hot springs resorts to an all-expenses paid tour of the United States.

MONEY-MAKING SCHEME

Japanese banks recently noted that they were getting more than the usual number of mutilated banknotes. Under present currency regulations, mutilated notes are redeemable provided two-thirds of the damaged bill is in good condition. Investigation disclosed that a lot of schemers



were deliberately mutilating perfectly good banknotes, cashing them in and using the torn off portions to patch together other mutilated notes which they would again turn in at banks. Y1,000 notes were usually used. Close examination always reveals the patch job but the bills usually pass at first glance. The only catch in the process is that you've got to have money in order to make money.



LIFE-LIKE BIRDS carved out of wood and painted were produced in every center. This one was made in the Poston (Ariz.) camp.

of the War Relocation Authority, he outlined a plan for an exhibition of attractive handicrafts made by Americans of different ancestry, carrying the traditions of their homelands, for circulation in the centers.

The display would, he felt, span the barriers of language. It would give the

evacuees a feeling of relatedness with the outside world. Most important of all it might encourage handicraft in the camps, thereby relieving the mental strains of internment and contributing to the growth of community spirit.

Although Mr. Myer was sympathetic he said that special attention to the

arts would lay his administration open to charges of coddling. There were people waiting, he said, for just such an opportunity. "But if you," he said, "as a citizen, could organize and promote such a program, the WRA would give you full cooperation."

Because of the pressure of his work Dr. Eaton was unable to follow through but he kept in touch with the people in the camps. Because of this he was due for a great surprise. The evacuees, on their own initiative, began to create beauty out of almost nothing. He knew the Japanese had a genius for this but the objects that were sent to him in increasing numbers from more and more camps revealed talents beyond his expectation.

He asked the evacuees to photograph the evidences of their handicrafts, but they were not permitted to use cameras. Then he turned to the WRA staff, but its photographers were fully occupied in taking documentary pictures for the government and most of them were not familiar enough with the arts to locate, select and photograph examples to the best advantage.

The only alternative was to send photographers into the centers. Raising



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funds for the purpose consumed more time. The year was 1945. The Jerome camp had already been closed. All the others were to be shut down.

With them would disappear the rock and cactus gardens, rugs woven from unravelled gunnysacks, artistic name plates and mail boxes, locust hedges, interior decoration, bon odori festivals, classes in flower arrangements, sand painting, embroidery, sculpture. Objects that could be carried would be scattered with their creators.

Working against time, Dr. Eaton visited five camps himself and sent assistants and photographers into the remaining four. In Denver, at the photographic division of the WRA, he went through 60,000 prints and negatives and selected a few that pictured life in the camps. Most of the pictures that appear in his book, however, were taken in the field for this specific purpose.

At Amache, Colo., Dr. Eaton had to do a little detective work. Everywhere he went he was advised to contact Miss Hall who would show him the finest examples of carving art. Miss Hall continued to elude him until he finally discovered that Miss Hall was the Mess

Hall where the carvings were on display.

The illustrations of handicrafts in Dr. Eaton's book represent the flowering, for the most part, of Issei talent. Until the evacuation they were forced to devote their entire energies toward establishing an economic beachhead on the Pacific coast. The evacuation gave them leisure for self-expression.

Dr. Eaton attempted to capture the spirit of their love of beauty. In the prefatory part of the book he quotes the late Eric Gill, the great English artist and writer: "The things men have made . . . are inevitably the best witness. They cannot lie, and what they say is of supreme importance. For they speak of man's soul and they show who are his gods."

Dr. Eaton believes that the art of a people is the true index of their minds and hearts. By revealing the contributions of the immigrants to American life and culture his ambition is to help promote understanding and appreciation of the many strains that make up the population of America.

This will help establish a social environment in which the rights of not a single citizen will ever be abrogated.



AN EVACUEE at Minidoka, Idaho, found this gnarled piece of wood in the desert, polished it and made it resemble a crane.

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