



Smithsonian Institution

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Set of Underwood & Underwood stereographs of Japan

Extracted on Apr-24-2024 07:46:53

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In smaller towns, where foreigners are less numerous, you would see old-fashioned one-story structures of Japanese design, but Yokohama, being a treaty port with a large international business and the near neighbor of Tokyo, shows the effect of the new impetus given during recent years to educational affairs. The schools here are not absolutely free but call usually for a fee of one yen (50 cents) per year.

Three school children whom you see in the yard are classified into grades just as they might be in America. Reading, writing, drawing and number-work are studied by the younger children; the older ones have geography and history. The Japanese have, besides their alphabet of forty-seven syllable-characters, an enormous number of complex characters standing for whole words. A well educated boy would need to know several thousand word-signs so thoroughly that he could not only recognize them without mistake and remember their meaning, but also produce them in perfect shape and proportion, using brush and ink instead of pencil or pen.

Many of the games they play here in this schoolyard would be perfectly familiar to American boys and girls--hop-sotch, blindman's-buff, puss-in-the-corner, all these Japanese boys and girls know very well. They are very fond of kite-flying, and walking on stilts is favorite fun. The older boys play baseball just as American boys do and play well, too. Japanese girls are devoted to dolls.

See the gay clothing of these neighbors looking over the fence; the babies are usually gayest of all with bright colored baggy kimonos, cut exactly like the clothing of their mothers. All babies are carried in this way on the backs of their mothers or their big sisters--they even take their naps there.

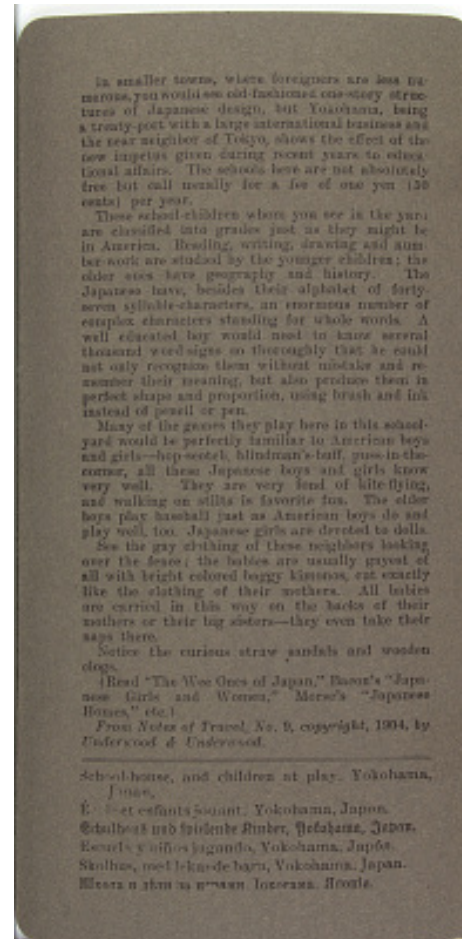
Notice the curious straw sandals and wooden clogs.

(Read "The Wee Ones of Japan," Bacon's "Japanese Girls and Women," Morse's "Japanese Homes," etc.)

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[[double line]]

School-house, and children at play. Yokohama, Japan.
Ecole et enfants jouant. Yokohama, Japon.
Schulhaus und spielende kinder, Yokohama, Japan.
Escuela y niños jugando, Yokohama, Japón.
Skolhus, med lekande barn, Yokohama, Japan.
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