

# RICE PLANTING IN JAPAN



STRIPPING OFF THE RICE GRAINY DRAWING STALK THROUGH TOOTHED FRAMES

**I**N THE early spring, when the cold winds are still sweeping over the rice fields in Japan, there is an aspect of lifelessness and desolation about them. To the European eyes accustomed to dry-cultivated soil, or green grass meadows with feeding cattle in them, the sight of so much mud and water in the landscape appears depressing, and there is a great absence of human habitations and people as well; but the character of the crops under cultivation makes it necessary that the peasants should be housed in settlements or villages away from the large wet areas given up to the growing of rice and other crops.

These rice areas are divided up into fields or plots of all shapes and sizes by small grass-grown ridges a few inches in height, and averaging about a foot in breadth, thus enclosing the soft mud in which the rice is planted. The preparation of these fields is extremely arduous work, involving much hoeing and careful construction of these mud dams, and it includes a whole system of terracing, whereby the water necessary for irrigation is led gradually down from field to field, for all high-class rice requires flooding. The little streams and rivulets which provide the water for these terraced hills and wide valleys are very often shaded by bamboo plants, and these streams feed the ditches cut for water channels; narrow tracks or footpaths are also made through the rice fields. But if these fields look desolate at springtime, there is no lack of life in them when the planting season begins in June, for then they are filled with men and women busily engaged in transplanting the young rice plants; and, fortunately for this industry, Japan possesses a large supply of cheap labor. The seeds of the rice are first thickly sown in the small wet fields, or nursery beds, in the early spring (April), and when the young plants have attained the height of four inches or thereabouts, they are very carefully transplanted to the larger fields, at wider intervals, in rows, and, as may be imagined, this is an exceedingly laborious kind of work. When one looks at the innumerable little plants in the nurseries, with their vivid green shoots and delicate-looking roots, the removing of them by hand to the larger fields and planting singly seems an almost impossible task, and with European labor it might be so; but the peasants of Japan have been accustomed to this tedious method of agriculture through many centuries and, from habit, it is taken as a matter of course, and the men and women, standing knee-deep in the mud and water and stooping over their tollsome work, spare no pains in the planting out of the young rice in the soft mud. The value of the harvest is probably in their minds as the reward for all this labor.

The eastern agricultural laborer must be seen to be fully realized. Japanese backs are supple, but the sight of so much stooping and bending is enough to make a European feel the pains of lumbago in his back from the mere contemplation of it.

When the rice is growing up then the fields show a very brilliant green, and they are kept under a few inches of water all the time the young crops are growing, which is only drained away just before the harvesting of the rice. The rice plant blooms early in September, and the crops are reaped in October, and hung up to dry on short poles. The threshing is done with flails or heckles, a kind of comb. Various methods of fertilization are used by the Japanese farmer, some of them most unsavory to the European nose; in fact, the "smells" that emanate from the ground in the agricultural districts in Japan often destroy one's sense of appreciation of their fine cultivation when inspecting it closely, and the Japanese people must either have less keen noses than ours or else do not mind the odors, for they appear in no way to affect them as they do ourselves. If a European takes a walk in the rice fields, or "paddy fields," as he calls them, during the hot months he is sure to get severely bitten by mosquitoes, and for Europeans living near the rice areas these pests are a great trial during the summer.

Some Europeans have stated that Japan pro-



WHERE LABOR IS CHEAP

duces two crops of rice yearly, but this is an erroneous idea, speaking generally. The winter prevents the growing of more than one crop yearly, but there is a part of Japan that does produce two crops, viz., the Tosa province, in one of the southern islands, but this is owing to the difference of climate there, caused by the Kuro-shio, or "black current," which, flowing northward from the direction of Formosa and the Philippine islands, warms the southern and southeastern coasts of Japan, very much the same way as the Gulf stream warms the coasts of western Europe; and partly on account of her position geographically, with her long stretch of country from north to south, and the influence of winds and ocean currents, Japan has a large variety of temperature throughout the whole empire.

Rice is very largely grown in the southern islands as well as in the southern part of the main island, where one sees very extensive rice fields, but not in the north. There is a kind of dry rice grown, but this is not of good quality.

The rice grown in Japan is reckoned among the best in the world, and she takes third place among the rice-producing countries, and exports very large quantities. She imports rice as well, and this may sound strange in a rice-growing country; but the quality of her home-grown rice being so very fine, she exports all she can and imports cheaper rice for her home consumption from Korea and China and India that is of inferior quality to her own; but mixed with Japanese rice it is used freely among the poorer classes. Although it is the staple food, other kinds of grain are used as well—millet, barley and wheat are cultivated, and have been grown for food during past centuries in the country. Crops of these are grown during the time when the rice fields lie fallow. Two kinds of potatoes are grown as well for consumption.

Hitherto the rice consumers in Japan have been mostly the people living in the towns, the peasantry looking upon it as somewhat of a luxury. But the classes of consumers have been widening out and the standard of living is growing higher in Japan, and more rice is being consumed in the country than formerly, and this, in addition to the fact that the population is rapidly increasing, means that the question of the production of the food supplies in the country in the future is one that has to be seriously considered, and for these reasons the Japanese government has considered the question of the increasing demand for food supply very carefully.

Many years ago the institutes for agricultural experiments were established, and these are doing their work well. Much has been carried out for the rearrangement of the farm fields, in the partitions, and in the irrigation systems of furrows and canals; works of this kind carried out in sufficient extent will enlarge the farm areas very considerably and lessen the necessity for opening up any new land for cultivation. It is by following these methods that Japan is preparing herself to meet the increasing demand for food. Failure of crop and consequent famine have to be met by larger imports, but necessarily cause great distress among the people.

Times and seasons are scrupulously regarded by the peasantry for all their agricultural operations. The terrible storms in the typhoon season are very much dreaded early in September. When

## MUST INSTALL PHONE

RAILWAY COMMISSION TO MAN-DAMUS M. P. ROAD.

## STATE BUILDINGS NEED REPAIR

Structures At Kearney Industrial School Are Said to be in Dangerous Condition.

Lincoln.—District Judge Stewart granted the state railway commission a writ of mandamus compelling the Missouri Pacific railroad to place a telephone in its station at Panama. The attorney for the road gave notice that an appeal will be taken to the supreme court. The case is a test case to determine the constitutionality of the law passed by the legislature in 1909. Yale Holland of Omaha represented the railroad, and Deputy Attorney General Ayres appeared for the state.

The railroad contends that the legislature exceeded its police powers in passing a law forcing on the railroads of the state the expense of installing telephones in their stations. It was also argued that such legislation constitutes an interference with the interstate commerce act. Another objection raised was that anyway the law was not properly passed, as it was signed by the presiding officer of the senate.

Says Buildings Are In Bad Shape.

Lincoln.—"Every building at the Kearney Industrial school for boys is defective, and I consider the main building dangerous," said Henry Gerdes of the state board of control recently on his return from a visit to the state institution at Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney and Milford.

"The state will have to spend a lot of money for the repair of buildings," he continued. "The soldiers' home at Grand Island is cracked, and is settling and must have attention. The older buildings owned by the state have not been repaired when they should have been. The result is that a considerable sum must now be spent."

Hospital Liable for Negligence.

Lincoln.—A hospital incorporated and conducted for private gain is liable in damages to patients for the negligence of nurses and other employees is the opinion of the supreme court in an opinion handed down in a case brought by Fannie Wetzel, administratrix of the estate of Alva J. Wetzel, deceased, against the Omaha Maternity and General hospital.

The action was brought to recover \$20,000 for alleged negligence which resulted in the death of Mr. Wetzel, who was a patient at the hospital suffering from typhoid fever. In the absence of an attendant he jumped from the window of his room on the third story of the hospital and was killed.

The case was tried in the Douglas county district court and damages awarded in the sum of \$5,500. The court affirms the judgment of the lower court, but Judge Sedgwick dissents.

The judgment of the Douglas county district court is affirmed in a case against the Omaha General hospital wherein Tillie Broz, administratrix, secured a verdict for \$7,000 against the hospital for the alleged death of her husband, Adolph F. Broz, a farmer, who lived in Saline county and was a patient at the hospital.

It is alleged that Broz, though suffering from a mental disorder, was left unattended and while alone took poison, from which he died.

Complains of Charge.

J. W. Shorthill, secretary of the Nebraska Farmers' Co-operative Grain and Live Stock association of Hampton, has filed a complaint with the state railway commission against the South Omaha Stock Yards association, claiming that the stock yards company makes yarding charge of 8 cents on hogs when but 6 cents is charged by Kansas City and St. Joseph.

Arrests Alleged Fire Bug.

Lincoln.—Fire Commissioner Ridgell has received a letter from H. F. Requart, one of his deputies, stating that he had arrested William Carson, accused of setting fire to the hotel at Sutton, and that he had confessed to the act and also to setting fire to a livery barn in Hastings some time ago. He has been bound over to the district court.

New Depot Ordered.

Lincoln.—The State Railway commission has issued an order to compel the Burlington railway to build a new depot at David City, as the result of a complaint made by the business men of that city some time ago. The company is given ten days to notify the commission of acceptance of the order.

Accepts Populist Nomination.

Lincoln.—Governor Morehead is not a candidate for the populist nomination for governor, the same as G. W. Berge, as well as being in the democratic race. A petition placing Mr. Morehead in the populist race filed and the governor filed an acceptance under it. The petition was from Wahoo and it contains twenty-eight names, headed by Oscar Hanson.

A petition for renomination as republican candidate for congress from the Fourth district has been filed for Charles H. Sloan.

## NEBRASKA IN BRIEF.

Henry Watt of Guide Rock, who recently suffered his third stroke of paralysis, is fatally ill.

The Fremont branch of the Atlantic Canning company is installing \$8,000 worth of new machinery.

Nick Sur, pioneer of Cuming county, has returned from a two months' visit to his old home in Oldenburg, Germany.

The wheat yield near Ohiowa is averaging twenty-five bushels to the acre and the corn crop is in good condition.

The Harvard Community club is planning for a fall festival. Committees have been appointed to arrange a program.

C. C. Sodman has just closed a thirty-five-year term as members of the school board in district No. 62, in Nemaha county.

A divorce was granted Zoo Wallin of Beatrice who was given the custody of three minor children and \$50 a month alimony.

Judge G. T. Graves of Pender is holding an adjourned term of the district court at West Point for equity purposes only.

The fall festival at Fremont will be held in October. A tractor and farm machinery demonstration will be given in August.

A. W. Hawkins of Norfolk has filed for the republican nomination for county clerk. F. J. Dover is also a candidate for the nomination.

Charles Gerrish of Beatrice has filed a suit asking for a divorce from his wife on the ground that she has cruelly refused to live with him.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Schissler, sr., of Hastings, will leave this month for a visit to their old home at Baden, Germany. They will return in October.

Ross Foster threshed a ten acre field of fall wheat and got 440 bushels. He lives on the O. B. Foster farm, three miles northwest of Ansley.

E. E. Burr and L. W. Ely of Guide Rock are erecting a cement and brick building, fifty by one hundred feet, on land formerly occupied by two frame buildings.

When Marshal Caton of Grafton attempted to arrest a tramp the man resisted and was shot through the leg by the officer. The marshal was bruised severely.

Olin M. Mayfield is suing the city of Norfolk for \$10,000 for injuries alleged to have been sustained because of a pile of bricks left in a street by city employees.

Wheat in the vicinity of Fairfield is ranging from fifteen to thirty-two bushels an acre. Corn is in good condition and the second crop of alfalfa is doing well.

John M. Ward of Geneva has filed for the republican nomination for float representative for the Forty-third district, comprising Clay, Fillmore and York counties.

Frank A. Brown of Sioux City, formerly of Omaha, has brought suit for divorce against Ella H. Brown of Norfolk. He alleges cruelty and asks for the custody of a minor child.

The southeast corner of Webster county and the southwestern part of Nuckolls county are badly in need of rain. Corn is not damaged as yet, but it is in no shape to stand a continued drought.

Mrs. Bohart, the wife of Rev. C. W. Bohart, an early pioneer of Hoosier valley, is critically ill at her home in Anselmo. She is suffering from cancer of the stomach and there is said to be no hope for recovery.

J. W. Kenna, Jr., of Auburn sustained a broken foot when a wagon load of sand passed over it. He was standing near the wagon when the horses became frightened and ran away.

A. L. Roberts who filed for the democratic nomination for school superintendent of Nemaha county and by petition became a republican candidate also, has withdrawn from the race.

Action to foreclose a \$25,000 trust mortgage on the People's State bank building of Beatrice has been brought on behalf of the bondholders by the Union State bank against John Penner, et al.

The Nemaha county commissioners have voted to macadamize the road east of Auburn for a considerable distance. The old wooden bridge over the Nemaha will be replaced by a concrete structure.

S. R. McFarland has filed for the office of state senator from Madison, Stanton and Colfax counties. C. H. Sibley of Tilden has filed for the democratic nomination for representative of the Twenty-fourth district.

Charles Dvorak was drowned near Schuyler while bathing in the Platte river with three companions. Two of the men were caught in the eddy where two currents came together. The body has not been recovered.

Pete Albrared, Eighteenth and Burt streets, a Mexican laborer working on a sewer ditch at Thirty-first street and Lincoln boulevard, Omaha, was buried alive. He died before fellow workmen could remove the dirt.

T. E. Conley of Beatrice has filed for the republican nomination of representative from Gage, Jefferson and Thayer counties.

A small tornado passing through the section of the country eight miles east of Beatrice caused considerable damage to crops and farm buildings.

Miss Bessie, May and Nina Hull, Fremont girls, have started a ranch on their claims near Newell, S. D. They were former school teachers and stocked their ranch with the money earned by teaching. They are the daughters of the late A. C. Hull, a well known Fremont man.

## FISH RETORTS.

Redd—It is said that more than 300 species of fish are possessed of voices that are audible to human ears.

Greene—Perhaps, but you have to do more than drop them a line to get an answer.

## IT CERTAINLY DOES.

Bacon—I see a youth was arrested at Calcutta and fined \$100 for having climbed up a water pipe 120 feet long, in order to hold converse with his sweetheart.

Egger—That seems a good deal to pay for a water-scout.