

Thirty-six hours later, we came to Nagoya. Since the ship moored at a spot far from town, we had to take a taxicab to go to town. Here I must stop and advise you that if you have heart trouble, please do not ride in a Japanese taxi. The taxi drivers there are really crazy. You can imagine what it would be like to drive at a speed of sixty mile per hour in downtown districts where the traffic is heavy and the roads are wide enough for only two cars to go through! There is a joke about the cab drivers in Japan. It says that before you hire the cab, ask the driver first whether he has a family or not. If he has not, you had better look for another one, or just walk instead. I am sorry that is all I can tell you about Nagoya, for most of the time of my sightseeing trip was spent in the taxi—praying.

The next stop was Shimizu. As I had not yet recovered from the excitement of the taxi ride in Nagoya, I preferred to stay on board ship. Anyway, the ship's Captain told us there was not much to be seen there. Finally, we came to the most famous seaport of Japan, Yokohama. I enjoyed myself very much here because we did not need to take a taxi downtown. In addition, I had the courage to go ashore alone now. Yokohama is very beautiful and possesses all the trade-marks of a great commercial seaport. But happy hours go by easily and swiftly; soon we were on the open sea again.

Here is a final point about Japan, something special for the gentlemen. The typical Japanese costume is called a "kimono". The design is always the same for men, but for the ladies, you must pay attention. If you find at the back of her dress an attachment in the form of a bow-tie, you still have a chance. But, if the attachment is in the form of a bag, I'm sorry, you are a bit late.

—ALFRED TSANG

LIFE OF A SHOE-SHINE BOY IN HONG KONG

It is a blustery winter dawn breaking. On yonder mountain top the glimmer of the early rising sun can be seen in the skies. Another day has arrived. Out in the harbour there is a fleet of fishing junks just returning after an abundant harvest. You can hear the morning song composed by the even sounds of the oars. In the big factories busy workers have started their new day at the usual time. Smoke is coming out through the tall chimneys, trying to infuse the pleasant atmosphere. On the streets, hawkers and newspaper boys are seen rushing everywhere to try their luck.

In a small wooden cabin a little boy has just finished his simple breakfast and is ready to go out to work. "Good-bye, Ma," says Ah Ming to his mother, "I'll be back back before supper. While uttering this, he leaves their simple cabin with a wooden box in his hand and begins his daily work. "Take care of yourself, son," says his mother reluctantly behind him. Tears have already found their way into her eyes. She seems very unwilling to let her eight-year-old son be a shoe-shine boy. But they have to eat in order to live, and to live, they have to work. Emotion at length gives way to reason; she tries to suppress her feeling.

Ah Ming loiters on the street, and as he approaches the toy-shop which he passes by every morning, he stares at the beautiful toys very fondly; and in his mind is this childish thought:—every child of a well-to-do family can afford these and he cannot! It is his habit to gloat on those

things for a short while. When he regains his wits he starts off. His first stop is in a crowded tea-house where he may get some business. On arriving at the familiar tea-house, he can see there on the counter sits a kind old man who is the owner of the place. He always bears a friendly smile on his face when he sees Ah Ming coming in. In return, Ah Ming greets him, "Hi, Mr. Chan." This morning there were quite a few customers. "Sir, do you want to have your shoes shined?" Ah Ming remarks to a young gentleman at his right. "No," says the young man, who seems to be offended by the interruption. Ignoring him, he falls into another conversation with his friend.

After several attempts, he becomes rather disappointed. With a heavy heart he begins to depart. As he comes to the doorway he hears a voice shouting behind him. "Sonny, how much for shining a pair of shoes?" says a fat man. Seeing the opportunity, Ah Ming rushes back immediately and says, "Just twenty cents, mister. "But he insists that the charge should be a dime. After some argument the little boy has to give way. Despite the little reward, Ah Ming is quite happy because he has secured his first job this morning. He does a pretty good job too!

Before long, the young lad is already trying his luck in another part of the town. Here he meets some of his fellow shoe-shine boys. Greeting one another, they sit down to take a rest. Some of them begin to smoke while some of them start to gamble. They also encourage Ah Ming to join them, but the young lad realizes that none of these things are good for him. Even though he is so young he fully understands what is good. Just as he is about to leave from them, he finds that the dime in his pocket has disappeared. He turns around and asks the other boys if they have seen it, but none of them admit. Ah Ming is so full of grief that he bursts into tears, because it means he has lost the price of his dinner. With tears still in his eyes, he takes his leave. Presently, he approaches a restaurant hoping to find one or two customers. Finally, after several tries he is lucky to obtain two dimes. He goes off happily to a nearby food-stall where he gets a bowl of porridge and two pieces of cake.

The worst is to come; just as he comes out of the food-stall he sees a policeman approaching. He wants to run but it is too late—according to the law, he has to obtain a license in order to practice his occupation—before long the policeman's big hand is resting on his tiny shoulder and catches him. Ah Ming tries to struggle and urges the policeman to set him free, but to no avail.

He is placed in a dark room with several other boys of the same fate. Ah Ming puts himself in a corner weeping. He is thinking of his beloved mother who is waiting for him to go back. And when he thinks about not having any money for her, his tears pour out again. He always wishes to make his mother happy by bringing something home, but this time he is going to disappoint her. It seems as though quite a long time has passed before he is led to the officer in charge. Fortunately, this is the first time he has offended the Law; and the officer, seeing his young age, warns him of the Law and sets him free.

After he is set free, darkness has descended upon the whole place. Being as free as a bird again, he hurries back to see his mother who is already waiting for him by the doorway, because he is half an hour later than the usual time. In both hearts there is some joyfulness, the mother is happy because her son is back while the son is cheerful