

The Crooked Beam

Prints' talk.

We sat on the ~~ground~~ and the air filled with the song of the cicada, each insect's body an organ pipe. "Has ever singer exerted himself to his utmost limits as these insects do?" I asked.

~~Very occasionally the~~ ~~craftsman~~ ~~raised~~ ~~hand~~ ~~from~~ ~~above~~ in recognition to a gentle breeze, and ~~only~~ ~~the~~ ~~highest~~ the bamboo gossamer only in their highest leaves.

"What is an artist?" asked Mona.

A man who paints, or draws, an apprentice to the plastic arts — I knew Mona meant none of these things.

"I don't know," I said easily. The sun shone on my wrists, and on the clean, unstained boards, and back of me, the deep, cool places of the Buddha hall.

I wanted to feel — not think.

Samsu - Sam came out and sat beside us holding

a bundle on his back. Suzuki San was
the young best and wisest of the bunch.

"What's ~~that~~? in that Suzuki San?" we asked him.
"This?" said Suzuki San, looking at the bundle
with an air of interest, as though it had slid off the roof
into his lap. "Oh this is a little thing."

"Open it up" we demanded. Suzuki San laughed. He
was getting used to our blunt, unmanly English way of
going straight to the point.

As we hesitated, graceful hands pulled the knot
and laid back the folds of the forerider.

What went we out for to see? My mouth was
working in anticipation of a watermelon. And then

"But Suzuki San - where did you get them - they are
lovely - oh - they are exquisitely lovely - tell us,
tell us about them."

Suzuki San had us as offered - five plates. We
passed them nervously from hand to hand. Lifting one
his gaze stayed over the uneven surface of the pattern.
They were all so different, unusual, so beautiful.

They all differed so from one another.
The thickness of unburnt glaze, which would cover the
edges — The balance of the willow bough which
looked as if it had been turned from the plate and
~~to be~~ baked in with green glaze.

They were exquisitely lovely and here was
Suzuki San wrapping them as though they had
been water melons.

"Tell us, tell us about them. Why haven't you
shown them before —"

"They have only just come; they have been
exhibited in Tokyo —"

"They must be worth a lot!"

"Oh yes, more than 100 yen each."

"But, Suzuki San, you are a very little friend!"

"Oh, I only gave ~~for~~ 5 yen for the lot." Would
Suzuki San ever care to attend us, "I'm

Kiyoko I went to ~~buy~~ a father to buy plates. He
had a hundred like this ~~in his shop~~ in his shop
'which do you like?' said the ~~man~~ We checked him. 'I
like these best' I said

'What will you give me for them O priest?'

'I leave 5 you here in my bag.' I said
They are yours for 5 you he laughed. I have
just made these hundred plates. I select five for
an exhibition. The rest I destroy. They are not
perfect. You have ^{one} chosen the best five, the fine
of my choice ^{for they are perfect}. They ~~are~~ must go to the
exhibition where they will be valued at 100 you;
~~when it is over they will be yours~~ for five you. They
are yours. And now they have just this moment
they have just come I said I wish I an.

I killed my hat off and forehead. Oh to be
so simple and to have such perfect taste.