

Salda

RECREATION: DANCES

Introduction: Significance of Dances

In a Japanese community, dances are worth special attention; for they reflect the social structure of the Nisei World in a striking manner. First, the acceptance of dancing on the part of a Nisei generally reveals a certain degree of Americanization or acculturation. Secondly, dancing itself and the type of dances indulged in serve to determine the status of a Nisei. Thirdly, dancing serves as an important means of determining important primary group relationships, the establishment of in-group ways and the elimination of non-conformists.

Dancing, probably more than anything else, reveals the cultural conflict between the "Japanesy" ways of the Issei and the American ways. Dating and dancing are an accepted part of the life of most American youths in the community in which the Japanese lived. Within the narrow confines of the Japanese community or within the family circle, activities of this sort have, in general, viewed with repugnance by the Issei. Because of their own Japanese training since childhood, they believed that it was not proper for their children to show overt interest in the opposite sex or to display affection in public. The good Japanese daughter was supposed to be quiet, modest, obedient, industrious. The idea of seeing her participate in the modern dance, being held close by a boy, flitting from partner to partner, staying out till late at night was at first repugnant to a parent. This parental resistance to dancing was gradually broken down in some families

and communities until a large number of Niseis were permitted to participate in this activity. Some parents and communities, however, continued to oppose dancing or dating and consequently created an important split in the interest and activities of Niseis. On the one hand were Niseis who accepted the opposition of their parents to dancing and refrained from it. On the other were Niseis who were permitted or who broke away from their parents to take up dancing.

This type of split into the Japanese way and the American way among Niseis caused by the cultural conflict situation was observable in other fields, such as language, occupation, religion, but was brought out most clearly by dancing. The split was widened by the fact that the ways of one group tended to crystallize around behavior acceptable to the first generation, whereas the ways of the other group tended to exclude Japanese ways almost entirely and become almost wholly American. It is for this reason the dancing taken up by a Nisei is an indication of a greater degree of acculturation than one who does not take it up. Acceptance by Niseis who have taken up these American ways signified conformity to these ways.

Since there is still considerable amount of opposition to dancing on the part of many parents, for many children taking up this sort of activity means a break-away from parental control. Quite often, those who have not taken up dancing are those who have adjusted themselves to the cultural conflict situation by submitting to the ways of their parents as much as possible to satisfy their own needs. Taking up dancing, on the other hand, for many Niseis have meant a more aggressive adjustment pattern, the opposite of submission. Since people do not change their basic adjustment pattern radically, and dancing often holds the clue to this difference in adjustment, it becomes significant in the study of the Japanese

people in America.

It should also be noted that when dancing is indulged in by Niseis it is almost always among themselves and practically never includes any other racial group. Although the ways maintained are strictly American, the crowd is strictly Nisei. In other words, the identification of the Nisei who dances is with American ways, but not with Caucasian Americans. This distinction is important, because this distinguishes these Niseis from Niseis who identify themselves with Caucasians and try to approach them as much as possible, as well as act American. Because of their identification with Caucasians the latter type of Nisei often finds it difficult to be satisfied in a group composed wholly of Niseis and is therefore less likely to be found dancing in a Nisei group. On the other hand, the identification of the more "Japanesy" group is with ways of their parents and with their parents and other Niseis like themselves. It is because of these characteristics that dancing serves to reflect the degree of acculturation of a Nisei. In general, a Nisei who dances tends to have a non-submissive adjustment pattern, accept American ways, and identify himself with other Niseis like himself, but not directly with Caucasians.

Within the Japanese community dancing is also important in determining the status of a Nisei. For one reason or another those who indulge in dancing tend to concentrate almost all of their energy in this direction. This is revealed by the frequent exclamation from those who have not been accepted by this group that all the others can talk about are dances and dates. Their discussion tends to be limited to talk about the opposite sex or a party they have attended or are going to attend. Except for

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some interest in sports, perhaps, the range of interest of this group is very limited, and hardly ever extends into more intellectual or scholastic topics. For this reason dancing and dating have come to be employed to stamp individuals as being of a certain type. This distinction has served as a means of determining the status of a Nisei.

Dancing has been peculiar in that it has had both a positive and negative value in terms of prestige value. In the eyes of the parents, especially, it generally had a negative value--it was thought degrading and immoral and something that at best should be only tolerated because it was an American custom which Second Generations had taken up. The type of Nisei that tended to accept dancing most easily and indulge in it excessively were those who were disrespectful to their parents, who did not take intense interest in their studies, who were not industrious in their work, who did not think very seriously of their future. While parts of this stereotyped concept cannot be applied to a large number of people who have taken up dancing, still the concept is prevalent enough among both Isseis and Niseis themselves to give one who dances an undesirable reputation.

On the other hand, the fact that dancing is an American way and that this group has maintained American ways as much as possible, have given the activity a positive value in raising prestige which cannot be underestimated. In a cultural conflict situation acceptance of the ways of the majority group by the minority group is one of the commonest means of raising prestige. The fact that dancing provides fun, that it affords an opportunity for contact with the opposite sex, have added to the desirability, although not necessarily the prestige value, of this activity.

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Undoubtedly, concentration of overt and covert behavior on this type of activity served as an escape from criticism from parents, racial discrimination, consciousness of inferior status. There were many grades of dancing which further served to distinguish status. There were the public dances in taxi dance halls and bars which were in bad repute. The informal jitterbugging of high school adolescents wherever they could get together was not quite as objectionable. The more formal dances which tended to be participated in by more respectable people had definite prestige value. It was by making dances more formal and by drawing "respectable" people only to these dances that attempts were made by certain Nisei groups to raise their own status and the status of dancing as a whole. This was undertaken especially by "white collar" groups. While their interests were still centered around dates and dances, they made every effort to keep at a distance boys who were "rowdy"--poorly dressed, irresponsible, lacking social manners, with unskilled jobs. To maintain a barrier between the "desirable" and the "undesirable" dances were made as formal as feasible, strictly private, and jitterbugging often tabooed. The standard of the dance, being with the informal dances participated in by high school adolescents, tended to be raised as the participants grew older. Attendance at a college or affiliation with certain occupational groups served to crystallize these more formal ways into definite group ways which were maintained by the group.

Thus dance ways and non-dance ways more generally, Americanized ways and "Japanesque" ways have competed for prestige within the Japanese community. Status could be maintained within a community

by keeping away from dances, studying hard, working diligently, being obedient to parents and receiving general recognition as a serious person. Within a large rural Japanese community where many Japanese ways were apt to prevail, this mode of adjustment was likely to be satisfactory. There were limits, however, especially in urban districts, where a great degree of Americanization existed among the Niseis. While the stigma of being frivolous, happy-go-lucky, and the like could be avoided, prestige in terms of popularity on dates, participation in social activities could not be attained. Since even such relatively conservative organizations as the Young Buddhist Association sponsored a number of dances during the year and often made it a feature of their periodic conferences, social prestige was difficult to attain without knowing how to dance and without accepting the ways of the dance group. There were several ways of compensating for lack of acceptance by this group, however, such as getting a good job, having intellectual interests, making money, and maintaining a high standard in music, art, etc.

The raising of prestige of the dancing group had its limitation too. While the standard of dance parties could be raised to include formals and corsages and the use of one of the best hotels in the city (use of Biltmore Hotel for the Coronation Ball for Nisei Festival in Los Angeles), the number of participants had to be reduced as the standards were raised. Beyond this point it seemed that prestige could only be raised by addition of intellectual interest, such as seeing plays and reading best-sellers; interest in more classical art, such as operas, concerts, and literature; attainment in occupational line, such as medicine, law, teaching, research work and the like, or contact with Caucasians, especially

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of the upper class. The general dislike of the dancing group to intellectual pursuits was likely to make these higher attainments difficult for them. Because of their tendency to avoid direct contacts with Caucasians, they were unlikely to make contacts with them. To one who had viewed the higher standards maintained by the elite class of the majority group, the efforts of the Nisei to maintain a semblance of imitation of such standards were likely to seem only superficial and only poor imitation at that.

For the understanding of status relationships within the Japanese community it is necessary to study dating and dancing activities.

Among Niseis the dancing group is likely to monopolize most of the "social life" in the Nisei World. Selective factors have worked to maintain certain group ways at these events, attract certain type of people and exclude others. On the one hand, those who maintain Japanesey ways and who are afraid to go against the wishes of their parents who are opposed to dancing are likely to be left out of the dancing group. On the other hand, those who make their adjustment to the Caucasian group are likely to find it difficult to gain entrance into the Nisei group because of the difference in attitudes. The Kibei as a rule, because of their adherence to Japanesey ways are usually unable to find entrance into the dancing group. While many of the so-called "rowdies" attempt to gain entrance into the social group, attempts are made to keep them out by raising barriers against them. Girls who are not attractive enough to have dates, persons who are disliked by others because of personality difficulties, persons who have not learned the ways of the social group, people whose interest is only in the intellectual field and lacks common interests with the

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social group are all likely to find themselves repulsed when they attempt to gain entrance into the dancing group and to compete for attention from the opposite sex. Because the dancing group constitutes the largest group and the core at the present time of the Nisei World, its study became important. It affords a good opportunity to study the factors which make membership in this group selective, and how the ways of the group become crystalized.

A study of dancing in Tule Lake should reveal some of the effects of changed condition within the camp. The most interesting is to see how a system of barriers is built up to raise the prestige of the dancing group beginning with the community-sponsored public dances to the more elaborate private dances. It will also be interesting to see whether dancing is more or less accepted by the Japanese people, both Isseis and Niseis. Again, the interaction of the dancing group with other groups which it attempts to keep out will be of interest. To what extent do out-groups attempt to gain admittance to the dancing group, and to what extent do they succeed. These questions should be kept in mind in probing the characteristics of the dances and those who participate in them in Tule Lake.

(Written December 8, 1942)

Group Characteristics

From observation of most of the public dances held to date at Tule Lake it can be said that the vast majority of those that crowd the dance halls are adolescents, 16 to 22 years of age. Very few married couples have been observed at the dances. Single boys up to twenty-eight or nine are present, while the

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age range of girls is more restricted. People above 22 have been heard to remark that they felt very silly dancing among youngsters or to notice that there weren't very many of their own age group about. It seems to be common experience among girls to be dated out often while going to school and below twenty, but thereafter to stay at home more and more. There is always a large number of stags at public dances when there are no prohibition on stags. They have crowded halls on all sides so that often only about half of the actual hall space could be used for actual dancing purposes.

One important characteristic of the dancing group is its Americanization. Conservative and "Japanesy" Niseis do not attend dances. Signs of Japanese culture, such as Japanese songs,^{1/} Japanese attitude toward girls,^{2/} or even speaking Japanese are usually taboo. Those attending dances like popular swing music, observe dance etiquette, and speak English. However, another class which shuns the dance is the intellectual group. This is quite in contrast with certain American circles where attempt is made to maintain interest in both dances and in intellectual pursuits. Discussion of philosophy, Nisei problems, religion, and kindred subjects cannot be expected from those on the dance floor.

A comparison of those attending music concerts and ondo (Japanese dances) with those who come to dances would be of interest.

^{1/} J.S. Journal, 6/6/42. People laughed when a Kibei fellow sang in Japanese.

^{2/} Men-before-women attitude, the attitude that it is unmanly to be too polite to a girl or to be affectionate toward her.

Group Ways

At first most of the dances put on in the Colony were public dances, sponsored by the Recreation Department. ^{1/} On July 22 it was announced in the Dispatch that dances would be sponsored by wards in rotation, but this arrangement seems to have been dropped soon. ^{2/} The dances were held in messhalls which had hall spaces of about forty by seventy feet. Messhall 720 had no tables in it and was constantly employed for dances. When other messhalls were needed for dances the tables had to be taken out and then put back again. The linoleum floor had to be swept, mopped, waxed and polished before the dance, and the messhall left in order after it. These jobs were usually done by workers in the Recreation Department and by volunteer helpers. Music was at first furnished by radios, nickelodeons, and record players, but the latter with a loud speaker system, predominates at present.

Public dances were held sporadically before the Walerga group came in, but after they started to come in, around the middle of June, dances became a regular Saturday night affair with few exceptions. Until June 20 only mess hall No. 720 was used for the public dances. On June 27 and July 4 No. 720 and No. 820 were employed. ^{4/} From then on three messhalls in various parts of the Colony have been used whenever public dances were sponsored. If the capacity of one messhall is estimated at about 250 the total attendance at a dance would not exceed 700 or 800. If it is

^{1/} See A.M. and C.M. (J.S. Journal) R.K. (Records office).

^{2/} See Dispatch for June 6, June 20, June 27, July 3, July 18, July 25, August 1, August 8, 1942.

^{3/} Dispatch June, June 20. 1942

^{4/} Dispatch, June 27, July 4, 1942.

again estimated that about 5,000 of the 15,000 odd people here are Niseis between the ages of 16 and 25, it can be seen that a large percentage of them do not attend these dances at any one time. ^{1/} And it is usually the same people that attend these dances week after week.

At first no admission was charged and expenses were evidently defrayed by soda pop sold. ^{2/} On June 20 a charge of five cents per person was made. Thereafter, however, couples and stags were charged ten cents while stagettes were admitted free of charge. This change of policy seems to reflect two things. One, the difference between the dance-ways of the people from the Northwest and those of Californians, and second the desire to keep out stags as much as possible. Both of these will be discussed more fully further on.

At first affairs were quite simple; couples danced and stags cut in when they could. The evening was varied by some entertainment, usually popular music numbers by various talents in the community. ^{3/} On August 1, however, a Tolo Dance was held, where girls invited boys, corsages of artificial flowers were compulsory, stags were not admitted, and program dances were varied with tag dances. The corsages worn by the boys were judged for the prettiest, the most unique, and the most comical. Coupled with this elaboration, was an attempt to make the dance more formal by having program dances and keeping out the stags. The next weekend "Stag and Stagettes" was the theme, and each person was charged five cents each, again introducing a novel

^{1/} Both of these estimates will have to be verified.

^{2/} Dispatch, June 6, 1942.

^{3/} Is this a northern custom?

idea, although it was a move back to less formality. The clothes worn to public dances were usually very informal. Girls wore simple dresses, blouses and skirts, sweater and skirts, and usually low or medium-heeled shoes. The boys were even less formal. Only some wore a coat and tie and looked dressed up. Sport shirts, shirt and tie, sweaters were very common. Because of the heat, they usually took off sweaters and coats when they danced, and some could be seen in suspenders. A few came in jeans, dirty cords, and work clothes.

Sectionalism

When the Walerga group started to pour into the Colony at the rate of 500 a day beginning on June 16, there were 1,852 persons in the Colony already. Of these 482 were from West Sacramento and Clarksburg, and the rest were from various sections of the Northwest. ^{1/} Immediately, a sectional clearage appeared in the Colony, and evidences of this clearage were found at the dances, also.

The habits of the Northwest group differed from those of the Californians. Many Northwestern girls came to the dances as stagettes in groups of twos and threes. After dancing these girls generally went back to their seats. Their style of dancing favored walking steps very few of them indulged in jitterbugging. These Oregonians or Washingtonians came from scattered districts and on the whole were not acquainted with each other well. Whatever the cause, they came more as individual boys and girls rather than as couples.

The Californians, on the other hand, were more original; they

^{1/} See Information Bulletin June 9, 1942.

used steps of their own, and many of them went in for jitterbugging. The latter required a different sort of music than did "smooth" dancing, and took up more space, and required some amount of practice to learn. Girls from California were not used to going to dances as stagettes, so that usually they were either asked to go by a boy or they stayed at home. Even when they were on the dance floor, they did not expect to sit down unless they wanted to. Either someone cut in on them, or partners were exchanged. This group was characterized by a large number of stags, but few stagettes.

By June 20 about 2,500 people had come in from Walerga and at the dance held in a single hall that night the feeling of sectionalism flared up.^{1/} According to J.S., the hall was well-filled with an equal number of boys and girls. People from Walerga, however, gathered on one side of the hall. Here there were many stags, some very sloppily dressed. Some of them were jitterbugging away and this seemed to amuse the others. They were rather noisy and laughed a great deal. There were no stagettes on this side of the hall. On the other side of the hall were many girls lighter in complexion than those on the California side of the hall. They seemed quieter, and many of them just sat and watched others dancing. They were dancing conservatively and did not jitterbug.

After the dance comments were heard that people from the Northwest thought the Sacramento people were rowdies. Some of the latter were heard retorting that the others were "a bunch of softies." The Northwest people also complained that the jitterbugging of the Sacramento people kept them from dancing, which was true because of the space and the type of music required

^{1/} Dispatch, June 20, 1942. J.S. Journal, June 20, 1942.

for jitterbugging. ^{1/}

The next dance was held in two messhalls, Nos. 720 and 820, which were close together. ^{2/} There was talk of restricting one hall to jitterbugging and the other to smooth dancing, but this idea was not carried out. As the boys paid their dime the back of their hands were stamped so that they could go from one hall to the other. No. 720 was opened first so that those who came early had to dance there. It was soon filled to capacity. The music was mixed with the jitterbug type about every third record. Only a small proportion of the dancers were on the floor when fast music was played. While the hall was at first filled with people from both sections, gradually those from the north left for No. 820. The drift of the unattached girls to the other hall was evident, leaving many stags in No. 720. Fast music was occasionally being played in No. 820, too, but fewer people were jitterbugging. Most of those from the Northwest seemed to have gathered in this hall.

The next dance was similar and was held in the same two halls. ^{3/} Some of the unattached girls had ceased to attend dances, and there was no longer the conspicuous groups of stagettes. Jitterbugging still went on in both halls, and the large number of stags crowding the dance floor from all sides was conspicuous. The dance habits of the people from the Northwest were evidently giving way to those of the Californians. Only a few couples continuing their particular way of dancing showed that they were from the Northwest. Some of the Northwesterners had

^{1/} J. S. Journal, June 24, 1942.

^{2/} Dispatch, June 27, 1942. J.S. Journal, June 27, 1942.

^{3/} J.S. Journal July 4, 1942.

even begun to learn jitterbugging.

At the dance two weeks later three halls were utilized and only one hall was designated as a non-jitterbug hall. ^{1/} In spite of the fact that stags were kept out of this hall until 10:00 P.M. it was crowded while the other two halls were relatively empty. At the Tolo Dance on August 1 jitterbugging was allowed in only one of the three halls. ^{2/} In the Stag-Stagette Dance that followed the dance-ways of the Northwest were apparently followed and stags given a chance to participate fully, but stagettes did not appear in any noticeable number. ^{3/} By this time traces of sectionalism seem to have vanished, while much attention was being paid to the handling of the stags. In fact, public dances were gradually being replaced by private dances.

The Battle Against Stags

By definition, of course, a stag is a male who attends a dance without a partner. Therefore, by merely dating a girl a fellow can cease to be a stag. Such terms as "rowdy" ^{4/} or "ungentleman-like," then which have been employed toward them at various times, cannot be applied generally. However, the tendency has been for stags to approach those descriptive terms, in comparison with boys who usually came to dances with a partner. As a group they dressed more poorly than others, some even coming to dances wearing jeans and work shoes. They were usually

^{1/} Dispatch, July 18, 1942. J.S. Journal July 18, 1942.

^{2/} Dispatch, August 1, 1942, July 25, 1942. J.S. Journal August 1, 1942.

^{3/} Dispatch, August 8, 1942. J.S. Journal August 8, 1942.

^{4/} For a discussion of rowdism see J.S.'s As They Await Evacuation, "Impact of the War on R." p. 31-3.

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noisy. Some of them came in groups of four or five, while others were members of organized gangs. Dance crashers and trouble makers were usually stags.

There are probably many reasons why a boy does not come to a dance with a partner if he can help it. It may just be a matter of trouble of asking a girl and then seeing to it that she enjoys herself during the evening. There is enjoyment in being able to tag and dance with whomever one liked, and then take her back to her partner and then flit on to the next girl. ^{1/} A fellow who is shy finds it easiest to go to a dance as a stag. Inexperienced adolescents who had not learned "society" ways and who have not learned to get along easily with girls usually prefer to go to dances with their male friends. More serious, however, is the fact that some stags do not know girls well enough to ask them to dances. Or if one of them does ask a girl he may be refused either by the girl or her parents because the parents do not approve of him.

The feeling of insecurity on the part of stags because, for one thing, they are looked down upon is evident in the behavior of many of them. Many come to dances with chips on their shoulders. When they are asked to step back to make room for the dancers, they do not usually do it. ^{2/} J.S. describes this attitude in the following manner:

They were asked to keep against the wall, but they kept moving into the middle of the floor, till on one side people were dancing behind the stag line. I bumped into the stag line purposely several times just to push them back, but I could sense a defiant attitude on the part of those who didn't choose to move. Some seemed to stand with chips on their shoulders. Fumiko stepped on the toe of one of

^{1/} J.S. Journal August 8, 1942 "Stags."

^{2/} J.S. Journal July 11, 1942.

stags when I tried to push the line back, and it ended up by another stag laughing it off by telling the other that he saw him put his foot out.

Stags often come to the dance and stand all evening in the stag-line, trying to make up their minds to ask for a dance. ^{1/} Sometimes only toward the end when they realize that the dance is going to be over do they get up enough courage to cut in. The sight of a young adolescent fellow jitterbugging away on the sideline with another stag shows something of this attitude.

The problem of the presence of a great number of stags at public dances arose in the assembly centers. Many of them were thought to be undesirable pleasure seekers, often poorly dressed, without refinement, and ready to pick quarrels. In Santa Anita it was said that girls were refusing to attend public dances because of the obnoxious boys, and the situation was handled by limiting dances to couples only. ^{2/} This method was also used in Walerga and Tanforan. At Tulare Assembly Center where the population was for the most part rural this was not necessary.

The struggle against the stag is not horizontal-- i.e., between groups from different section of the country or between conservative and progressive (in terms of Americanization) elements in the Nisei population. It is clearly vertical, and social status and prestige is definitely involved. Stags pull down the prestige of dances, and attempts at keeping them out is just another way of raising the prestige value. Of course, the mere presence of many stags often make dances less enjoyable, but certainly there is more than just that involved in the effort to

^{1/} J.S. Journal August 8, 1942 "Stags."

^{2/} J.S. Report No. 1, May 6, 1942. Peacemaker, May 1, 1942.

keep stags out of public dances.

On July 4 stags were conspicuous by their large number as they were admitted without restriction. ^{1/} An interesting incident occurred at the end of the dance. At eleven P.M. the last dance was announced and the stags expected to leave. Some shouted, "Goodby stags." Then during the middle of the number it was announced that there was a mistake and that four or five more records would be played. It may have been accidental, but again it may have been a scheme to chase out stags.

On July 11 at the last moment a public dance was announced and held in only one hall. ^{2/} The dance began at nine, and stags were not admitted for some time. It was said that stags would not be admitted till 10:00 P.M. They were indignant because it was not announced beforehand, and to avoid trouble they were allowed to come in before ten. The single hall was crowded and stags were asked to keep against the wall, but they kept moving into the middle of the floor, till finally on one side people were dancing behind the stag line.

At the next dance stags were kept out until 10:00 P.M. ^{3/} A few stags sneaked in before 10:00 P.M. From 11:15 to 11:30 dances were for couples only. At the Tolo Dance stags were kept out entirely. ^{4/} At the stag-stagette dance on July 8 the stags

^{1/} J.S. Journal, July 4, 1942.

^{2/} J.S. Journal, July 11, 1942.

^{3/} J.S. Journal, July 18. Dispatch, July 18, 1942

^{4/} J.S. Journal, August 1, 1942, Dispatch, July 25, 1942.

were given their final all-evening enjoyment of the public dance.^{1/}
Thereafter public dances became less frequent and private dances increased in number and importance.

Most of the private dances were put on by departments, clubs, blocks, and the like. They were usually invitational and not open to the public and to the stags. Some of them, such as the one put on by the Cal Club, were a tie-and-coat affairs. At some of these dances an orchestra furnished the music.

Disorganization and Reorganization

Before the war dances were usually held by private organizations for the benefit of its members. Sometimes one club invited the members of another club. These activities helped to maintain the prestige of the members.^{2/} With the bombing of Pearl Harbor and subsequent restriction on traveling and instituting of curfew hours for Japanese on the Coast, almost all social activities had to cease. Extreme dissatisfaction followed as girls had to stay home night after night without dates, and the importance of dates and dances faded away. How quickly reorganization would be effected and the former prestige regained in the relocation center was a question of interest. At first at the public dances differences were levelled, and stags took part on equal terms with couples. Gradually, however, stags were barred from taking part in the major portion of the dances. With the organization of different clubs and departments and blocks, which put on private dances, a semblance of the former social structure appeared.

^{1/} J.S. Journal, August 8, 1942. Dispatch, August 8, 1942.
^{2/} See "Impact of the War on E.S." in As They Await Evacuation by J.S.

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The reorganization, however, is by no means complete. The individual organizations are not as yet closely knit, and group ways have not crystalized. The social barriers raised are not as high as before evacuation. In fact, because of the economic situation here, it is doubtful that barriers can be as high as before. Those desiring to maintain standards have declared that dances ought to be for couples only or that they would go to private dances but not public ones.^{1/} But so far no one organization stands out as achieving more evident prestige than others in this respect. Signs of further organization should be watched for.

Block 25 Dance

The dance given by Block 25 sheds an interesting light on the more conservative elements of the Colony here. Most of the people in Block 25 are either from Walnut Grove or Isleton, both in the Delta Region near Sacramento. The Japanese in this region were concentrated and isolated. Orientals were forced to attend separate schools from Caucasians. Hence the population adheres closely to conservative Japanese ways of behaving. Niseis from that region usually speak Japanese well, and many can converse in English only with a slight accent, as in the pronunciation of "th." It was not customary to hold dances in either Isleton or Walnut Grove.

From Block 25 Grace Matsune was put up as candidate for Labor Day Queen. While other candidates were publicized quite widely, it was decided by the Block Manager and others that not much campaigning would be done from Block 25. When

^{1/} See K.A. New Record Office

candidates were introduced at a rally on the outdoor stage, other queen candidates were publicized by popular songs, stunts, and the like, all of which were typically American. For Grace, however, the Block Manager came out and made a speech in difficult Japanese, and for entertainment a Kibei fellow sang a Japanese song, which amused even the Issei listeners because it was so out of form.

Grace, however, qualified for the semi-finals, and became one of the six queen's attendants, and to celebrate this event, a dance was held in the messhall. ^{1/} The dance was more or less public, but was not publicized. The girls who worked in the messhall seemed to look forward to the dance, and the cleanup committee worked hard to get the hall ready. This was the first social function held by the block. The lights were dimmed and the music began to play around eight P.M. By eight-thirty there were only one or two couples dancing, and they were outsiders from other blocks. The girls from the block were gathered at one corner, while at another some of the boys pretended to be learning to dance. Some of the boys and girls were playing cards at the side tables.

Most of the girls knew how to dance, but the boys didn't. Girls generally are attracted to dancing early and usually manage to learn from friends at home, if not at public schools. It was only after more stags came in that gradually more of the girls were asked to dance, and after some time most of them were dancing. Some of the boys in the block were practising, but that was as far as most of them got, it seems. When the last dance

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was being played, many boys were cutting in, either they did not know their dance etiquette, ^{1/} or did not hear that it was the last dance.

It seems that only three or four girls from Block 25 have gone to dances. ^{2/} Only a few of the boys have gone, and that usually stag. One girl mentioned that the parents were narrow-minded and didn't let their children go to dances in a place like this. They had heard about "these bad boys that hang around dances." She said that parents did not even approve of block dances. After the last dance there had been a fight, and the sort of comments made by elders was: "Dances always end up in fights."

It seems that many girls are desirous of attending dances. Two obstacles, however, lie in their path. One is the opposition of the parents, and the other is the inability or reluctance of the boys in the block to date them for dances. One method of solving this problem is to have private block dances, inviting perhaps another block, and having several dance practices before the dance. By this means boys can learn how to dance and girls can all come to the dance without necessarily being dated. How this state of affairs will progress will be an interesting development to watch.

Last Words

Not all of the questions raised in the first part of this section has been answered, and they will have to be kept in mind.

^{1/} Don't leave a girl on the middle of the floor. Dance the first and last dances with your escort. Don't cut back right away. No cutting in during the last dance.

^{2/} J.S. Journal, September 10, 1942.

While the relative prestige value of dances has been definitely raised, it is not clear yet how high it is, in comparison, say, to such activities as music concerts, sports, ondo. It must be remembered, too, that the attitude of the first and second generation Japanese are different and require separate observations.