

One of the happiest interludes in the life of Rizal was the sojourn in the Land of the Cherry Blossoms for one month and a half (February 28 – April 13, 1888). One day one of the children, a bright young boy, asked Rizal: "Do you know, sir, a famous man in Manila named Richal?" He wrote a novel, *Noli Me Tangere*. In great joy the boy rushed to his mother, informing her that the famous man is their fellow passenger, she felicitated Rizal, feeling proud that they were traveling with a celebrity. RIZAL AND TETCHO. Another passenger that Rizal befriended onboard the *Belgic* was Tetcho Suehiro, a fighting Japanese journalist, novelist, and champion of human rights, who was forced by the Japanese government to leave the country, just as Rizal was compelled to leave the Philippines by the Spanish authorities. At the beginning of the voyage from Yokohama, Tetcho was miserably alone, for he knew only his own Japanese language and so he could not communicate with the ship officers and the passengers. Learning of his predicament, Rizal, who knew many foreign languages, including Japanese, befriended him and acted as his interpreter during their long trip from Yokohama to San Francisco, across the U.S. to New York until they reached London, where they parted. Rizal and Tetcho were kindred spirits. Both were valiant patriots, implacable foes of injustice and tyranny. Both were men of peace using their trenchant pens as formidable weapons to fight for their people's welfare and happiness. Rizal told Tetcho the story of his life's mission to emancipate his oppressed people from Spanish tyranny and of the persecutions which he and his family suffered from the vindictive Spanish official and bad friars, causing him to flee to foreign countries where he could freely carry on his libertarian activities. During their intimate acquaintanceship of almost eight months (April 13–December 1, 1888) Tetcho came to admire Rizal, whose patriotism and magnificent talents greatly fascinated him and influenced him firmly to fortify his own crusade for human rights in his own country. On December 1, 1888, after a last warm handshake and bidding each other "goodbye," Rizal and Tetcho parted ways --- never to meet again. On the eve of his departure, he wrote in his diary: "Japan has enchanted me. The beautiful scenery, the flowers, the trees, and the inhabitants --- so pleasant. O-Sei-San, Sayonara, Sayonara! I have spent a happy golden month; I do not know if I can have another one like that in all my life. Love, money, friendship, appreciation, honors -- these have not been wanting. To think that I am leaving this life for the uncertain, the unknown. There I was offered an easy way to live, beloved and esteemed... To you, I dedicate the final chapter of these memoirs of my youth. No woman, like you, has ever loved me. No woman, like you, has ever sacrificed for me. Like the flower of the chodji that falls from the stem fresh and whole without falling leaves or without withering -- with poetry still despite its fall -- thus you fell. Neither have you lost your purity nor have the delicate petals of your innocence faded -- Sayonara, Sayonara! You shall never return to know that I have once more thought of you and that your image lives in my memory, and undoubtedly, I am always thinking of you. Your name lives in the sight of my lips, your image accompanies and animates all my thoughts. When shall I return to pass another divine afternoon like that in the temple of Meguro? When shall the sweet hours I spent with your return? When shall I find them sweeter, more tranquil, more pleasing? You the color of the camelia, its freshness, its elegance... Ah! The last descendant of a noble family, faithful to an unfortunate vengeance, you are lovely like . . . everything has ended! Sayonara, Sayonara! With this tenderly tragic in his own diary, Rizal bade farewell to lovey O-Sei-San." He left Japan with a heavy

heart, for he knew that he would never again see this beautiful "Land of the Cherry Blossoms" and his beloved O-Sei-San. Truly, his sojourn in Japan for 45 days was one of the happiest interludes in his life.

O-SEI-SAN AFTER RIZAL'S DEPARTURE. As everything on earth has to end, the beautiful romance between Rizal and O-Sei-San inevitably came to a dolorous ending. Sacrificing his personal happiness,

Rizal had to carry on his libertarian mission in Europe, accordingly, he resumed his voyage, leaving behind the lovely O-Sei-San, whom he passionately loved. Broken-hearted by the departure of Rizal, the first man to capture her heart, O-Sei-San mourned for a long time the loss of her lover. Eventually,

she became resigned to her fate, cherishing unto death the nostalgic memories of her romance with Rizal. "Together, they visited the interesting spots of the city -- the Imperial Art Gallery, the Imperial Library, the universities, the Shokubutsu-en (Botanical Garden), the city parks (particularly Hibiya Park),

and the picturesque shrines. Shortly after Rizal's arrival in Tokyo, he was visited at his hotel by Juan Perez Caballero, secretary of the Spanish Legation. O-Sei-San reciprocated his affection, for it was the

first time her heart palpitated with joys to see a man of gallantry, dignity, courtesy, and versatile talents. He thought: "How admirable was the rendition. I wonder how these Japanese people have assimilated modern European music to the extent of playing the beautiful musical masterpieces of the great European composers so well!" Rizal was then a lonely physician of 27 years old, disillusioned by his frustrated romance with Leonor Rivera and embittered by Spanish Injustices at home. If he were a

man of lesser heroic mold, of lesser will power, he would have lived permanently in Japan -- and happily at that with O-Sei-San, but then the world, in general, and the Philippines, in particular, would

have lost a Rizal. Onboard the ship, he met a semi-Filipino family -- Mr. Reinaldo Turner, his wife Emma Jackson (daughter of an Englishman, their children, and their maidservant from Pangasinan. In 1889, shortly after his return to Japan, he published his travel diary which contained his impressions of Rizal, as follows: Mr. Rizal was a citizen of Manila in the Philippines. He visited Meguro, Nikko, Hakone, Miyanoshita, and the charming villages of Japan. Rizal saw in lovey O-Sei-San the qualities of his ideal womanhood -- beauty, charm, modesty, and intelligence. Mrs. Chalton (O-Sei-San), as a widow, lived in a comfortable home in Shinjuku district, Tokyo World War II, but her home was destroyed in 1944 by

the U.S. bombing of Tokyo. A Japanese inscription on their tomb read as follows: Alfred Charlton, 5th Order of Merit, and wife Seiko. Rizal remained in London to conduct historical research on Mora at the British Museum, while Tetcho returned to Japan. 'Rizal being an intelligent man realized that the Spanish diplomatic authorities were instructed from Manila to monitor his movements in Japan. The things which favorably impressed Rizal in Japan were: The beauty of the country -- its flowers, mountains, streams,

and scenic panoramas. Rizal made inquiries among the legation employees and learned from one of them (a Japanese gardener) that she was Seiko Usui, who lived in her parents' home and that she used to pass by the legation during her daily afternoon walk. Seiko-san was mildly amused at the gallant

gentleman from the Philippine who spoke in halting Japanese. On April 13, 1888, Rizal boarded the Belgic, an English steamer, at Yokohama, bound for the United States. About 1897, a year after Rizal's execution, she married Mr. Alfred Charlton, a British teacher of the chemistry of the Peers' School in

Tokyo. Despite his sorrowing heart, Rizal enjoyed the pleasant trans-Pacific voyage to the United States. "Here you have your friend, Rizal the wonder of the Japanese, who has the face of a Japanese

but does not speak Japanese. On the streets, when I go shopping, people look at me and ill-educated children laugh because I speak such a strange language. In Tokyo, very few people speak English, but in Yokohama, many speak it. Some believe I am a Europeanized Japanese who does not want to be taken as such."He browsed in the museums, libraries, art galleries, and shrines.As he approached the park, Rizal heard the Tokyo band playing a classical work of Strauss."Paisano, taga saan po kayo?"Yes, .hijo, I am Richal," replied Rizal.RIZAL IN TOKYO