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One of the finest, indeed one of the finest film comedies ever made, was Yasujiro Ozu's (*I Was Born, But . . .*) (*Umarete wa Mita Keredo*, 1932), a picture which contrasted the world of the adult with that of the child, which found the former lacking, yet at the same time recognized that innocence must have an end. The theme is the title: one is born . . . then the trouble begins.

A typical married Japanese salaried man—so typical that he might have stepped out of any *shomin-geki*—moves up the social ladder when he moves into the suburbs, near where his boss lives. His two young sons, however, do not adapt as well. They fight with the neighbor children, including the boss's son, and while attending an evening of home movies at the boss's house they

suddenly see their father as adults see him, when he makes a fool of himself for the boss's camera. Angry, ashamed for him, they ask why he cannot be boss. He explains that that is not his position, that if he did not work, they would not eat. So the boys make the heroic decision to eat no more. The elder, voicing a truth apparent only to the innocent, says that he makes better grades and is stronger than the boss's son, that if he has to work for

him when he grows up he might as well not even go to school any more. But the boys are only children. Their moment of truth over; seduced by empty stomachs, they forget and life goes on. They are not yet ready for the problem awaiting them.

That this sad, true, and moving film was also an extremely funny comedy is an indication of just how swiftly the Japanese cinema had matured. Films like this one and directors like Ozu are rare in any country, but seen in the context of history both are perfectly natural developments of a cinema that in only ten years had accomplished what others had taken thirty to create: the formation of a national cinematic style. It was a style based upon the ability of the camera to reflect perfectly things as they are.

This interest in the way things are accounts for much in Japanese life. The carpenter works with the natural grain of the wood, the stonecutter observes the natural form of his material; the gardener, the flower arranger, all begin with an observation of the nature of whatever they are working with. Films are about life, and it is not