

## Geography and Climate

earthquakes and the subsequent fires—a result that was almost as devastating as one atomic bomb!

Japan has innumerable rivers, varying in the volume of water they carry according to the seasons. Delightful scenery is provided by the numerous wooded lakes scattered throughout the country and by countless leaping waterfalls of great scenic charm. Thermal springs and health spas are naturally not unknown in a land of so much volcanic activity.

Japan is a wet country as far as quantity of rainfall is concerned, there being three wet seasons in all—the first, from the middle of April to the beginning of May; the second, from the middle of June to the beginning of July; and the third, from early in September to early in October. September is the wettest month; January the driest. Only about 18 per cent. of the entire year's rainfall occurs during the four months from November to February, inclusive. In a normal year there are about four sunny days for every three on which rain or snow falls, the actual figures being 150 days of snow or rain and 215 days of sunshine. The most trying period of the year is probably the rainy season arriving in June (known as *bai-wu*, or Plum Rain, due to the fact that this is the season

when the plum ripens), when anything up to four weeks of almost continuous rain may be experienced.

Northerly and westerly winds prevail throughout Japan during the cold season, which begins in October and ends in April. These winds come with some force from the continent of Asia. However, in the warm season, from May to September, the prevailing winds are light breezes from the west and south. The country is subject to frequent visitations of rotary storms or cyclones in early summer, and of typhoons in late summer and autumn. Although their season extends from June to October, typhoons are most frequent in September—an unfortunate fact when it is remembered that the rice plant is in flower at this time of the year and the fate of the rice crop is at the mercy of the weather. Under the influence of the north-westerly winds from Siberia, Japan in the cold season experiences considerable falls of snow, particularly on the west coast and in the mountainous provinces of the interior, where deep snow frequently covers the ground throughout the winter. In the eastern district of the main island (Honshu), however, the snowfall is insignificant, seldom attaining a depth of more than four or five inches and generally melting rapidly.



Left: The Kabukiza Theatre, Tokio, in reinforced concrete, and an interesting combination of modern construction and the traditional native style of architecture. Right: Modern Tokio