

Notes

THE STORY OF MIMI-NASHI-HOICHI [1] See my Kotto, for a description of these curious crabs. [2] Or, Shimonoseki. The town is also known by the name of Bakkan. [3] The biwa, a kind of four-stringed lute, is chiefly used in musical recitative. Formerly the professional minstrels who recited the Heike-Monogatari, and other tragical histories, were called biwa-hoshi, or "lute-priests." The origin of this appellation is not clear; but it is possible that it may have been suggested by the fact that "lute-priests" as well as blind shampooers, had their heads shaven, like Buddhist priests. The biwa is played with a kind of plectrum, called bachi, usually made of horn. (1) A response to show that one has heard and is listening attentively. [4] A respectful term, signifying the opening of a gate. It was used by samurai when calling to the guards on duty at a lord's gate for admission. [5] Or the phrase might be rendered, "for the pity of that part is the deepest." The Japanese word for pity in the original text is "aware." [6] "Traveling incognito" is at least the meaning of the original phrase,-- "making a disguised august-journey" (shinobi no go-ryoko). [7] The Smaller Pragna-Paramita-Hridaya-Sutra is thus called in Japanese. Both the smaller and larger sutras called Pragna-Paramita ("Transcendent Wisdom") have been translated by the late Professor Max Muller, and can be found in volume xlix. of the Sacred Books of the East ("Buddhist Mahayana Sutras"). -- Apropos of the magical use of the text, as described in this story, it is worth remarking that the subject of the sutra is the Doctrine of the Emptiness of Forms,-- that is to say, of the unreal character of all phenomena or noumena... "Form is emptiness; and emptiness is form. Emptiness is not different from form; form is not different from emptiness. What is form -- that is emptiness. What is emptiness -- that is form... Perception, name, concept, and knowledge, are also emptiness... There is no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind... But when the envelopment of consciousness has been annihilated, then he [the seeker] becomes free from all fear, and beyond the reach of change, enjoying final Nirvana."

OSHI DORI [1] From ancient time, in the Far East, these birds have been regarded as emblems of conjugal affection. [2] There is a pathetic double meaning in the third verse; for the syllables composing the proper name Akanuma ("Red Marsh") may also be read as akanu-ma, signifying "the time of our inseparable (or delightful) relation." So the poem can also be thus rendered:-- "When the day began to fail, I had invited him to accompany me...! Now, after the time of that happy relation, what misery for the one who must slumber alone in the shadow of the rushes!" -- The makomo is a sort of large rush, used for making baskets.

THE STORY OF O-TEI (1) "-sama" is a polite suffix attached to personal names. (2) A Buddhist term commonly used to signify a kind of heaven. [1] The Buddhist term zokumyo ("profane name") signifies the personal name, borne during life, in contradistinction to the kaimyo ("sila-name") or homyo ("Law-name") given after death, - religious posthumous appellations inscribed upon the tomb, and upon the mortuary tablet in the parish-temple. -- For some account of these, see my paper entitled, "The Literature of the Dead," in Exotics and Retrospectives. [2] Buddhist household shrine. (3) Direct translation of a Japanese form of address used toward young, unmarried women.

DIPLOMACY (1) The spacious house and grounds of a wealthy person is thus called. (2) A Buddhist service for the dead.

OF A MIRROR AND A BELL (1) Part of present-day Shizuoka Prefecture. (2) The two-hour period between 1 AM and 3 AM. (3) A monetary unit.

JIKININKI (1) The southern part of present-day Gifu Prefecture. [1] Literally, a man-eating goblin. The Japanese narrator gives also the Sanscrit term, "Rakshasa;" but this word is quite as vague as jikininki, since there are many kinds of Rakshasas. Apparently the word jikininki signifies here one of the Baramon-Rasetsu-Gaki,-- forming the twenty-sixth class of pretas enumerated in the old Buddhist books. [2] A Segaki-service is a special Buddhist service performed on behalf of beings supposed to have entered into the condition of gaki (pretas), or hungry spirits. For a brief account of such a service, see my Japanese Miscellany. [3] Literally, "five-circle [or five-zone] stone." A funeral monument consisting of five parts superimposed,-- each of a different form,-- symbolizing the five mystic elements: Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth.

MUJINA (1) A kind of badger. Certain animals were thought to be able to transform themselves and cause mischief for humans. [1] O-jochu ("honorable damsel"), a polite form of address used in speaking to a young lady whom one does not know. (2) An apparition with a smooth, totally featureless face, called a "nopperabo," is a stock part of the Japanese pantheon of ghosts and demons. [2] Soba is a preparation of buckwheat, somewhat resembling vermicelli. (3) An exclamation of annoyed alarm. (4) Well!

ROKURO-KUBI [1] The period of Eikyo lasted from 1429 to 1441. [2] The upper robe of a Buddhist priest is thus called. (1) Present-day Yamanashi Prefecture. (2) A term for itinerant priests. [3] A sort of little fireplace, contrived in the floor of a room, is thus described. The ro is usually a square shallow cavity, lined with metal and half-filled with ashes, in which charcoal is lighted. (3) Direct translation of "suzumushi," a kind of cricket with a distinctive chirp like a tiny bell, whence the name. (4) Now a rokuro-kubi is ordinarily conceived as a goblin whose neck stretches out to great lengths, but which nevertheless always remains attached to its body. (5) A Chinese collection of stories on the supernatural. [4] A present made to friends or to the household on returning from a journey is thus called. Ordinarily, of course, the miyage consists of something produced in the locality to which the journey has been made: this is the point of Kwairyo's jest. (6) Present-day Nagano Prefecture.

A DEAD SECRET (1) On the present-day map, Tamba corresponds roughly to the central area of Kyoto Prefecture and part of Hyogo Prefecture. [1] The Hour of the Rat (Ne-no-Koku), according to the old Japanese method of reckoning time, was the first hour. It corresponded to the time between our midnight and two o'clock in the morning; for the ancient Japanese hours were each equal to two modern hours. [2] Kaimyo, the posthumous Buddhist name, or religious name, given to the dead. Strictly speaking, the meaning of the work is sila-name. (See my paper entitled, "The Literature of the Dead" in Exotics and Retrospectives.)

YUKI-ONNA (1) An ancient province whose boundaries took in most of present-day Tokyo, and parts of Saitama and Kanagawa prefectures. [1] That is to say, with a floor-surface of about six feet square. [2] This name, signifying "Snow," is not uncommon. On the subject of Japanese female names, see my paper in the volume entitled *Shadowings*. (2) Also spelled Edo, the former name of Tokyo.

THE STORY OF AOYAGI (1) An ancient province corresponding to the northern part of present-day Ishikawa Prefecture. (2) An ancient province corresponding to the eastern part of present-day Fukui Prefecture. [1] The name signifies "Green Willow;" -- though rarely met with, it is still in use. [2] The poem may be read in two ways; several of the phrases having a double meaning. But the art of its construction would need considerable space to explain, and could scarcely interest the Western reader. The meaning which Tomotada desired to convey might be thus expressed:-- "While journeying to visit my mother, I met with a being lovely as a flower; and for the sake of that lovely person, I am passing the day here... Fair one, wherefore that dawn-like blush before the hour of dawn? -- can it mean that you love me?" [3] Another reading is possible; but this one gives the signification of the answer intended. [4] So the Japanese story-teller would have us believe,-- although the verses seem commonplace in translation. I have tried to give only their general meaning: an effective literal translation would require some scholarship.

JIU-ROKU-ZAKURA (1) Present-day Ehime Prefecture.

THE DREAM OF AKINOSUKE (1) Present-day Nara Prefecture. [1] This name "Tokoyo" is indefinite. According to circumstances it may signify any unknown country, - or that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns,-- or that Fairyland of far-eastern fable, the Realm of Horai. The term "Kokuo" means the ruler of a country, - therefore a king. The original phrase, Tokoyo no Kokuo, might be rendered here as "the Ruler of Horai," or "the King of Fairyland." [2] The last phrase, according to old custom, had to be uttered by both attendants at the same time. All these ceremonial observances can still be studied on the Japanese stage. [3] This was the name given to the estrade, or dais, upon which a feudal prince or ruler sat in state. The term literally signifies "great seat."

RIKI-BAKA (1) Kana: the Japanese phonetic alphabet. (2) "So-and-so": appellation used by Hearn in place of the real name. (3) A section of Tokyo. [1] A square piece of cotton-goods, or other woven material, used as a wrapper in which to carry small packages. (4) Ten yen is nothing now, but was a formidable sum then.

INSECT STUDIES BUTTERFLIES (1) Haiku. [1] "The modest nymph beheld her God, and blushed." (Or, in a more familiar rendering: "The modest water saw its God, and blushed.") In this line the double value of the word *nympha* -- used by classical poets both in the meaning of fountain and in that of the divinity of a fountain, or spring -- reminds one of that graceful playing with words which Japanese poets practice. [2] More usually written *nugi-kakeru*, which means either "to take off and hang up," or "to begin to

take off," -- as in the above poem. More loosely, but more effectively, the verses might thus be rendered: "Like a woman slipping off her haori -- that is the appearance of a butterfly." One must have seen the Japanese garment described, to appreciate the comparison. The haori is a silk upper-dress,-- a kind of sleeved cloak,-- worn by both sexes; but the poem suggests a woman's haori, which is usually of richer color or material. The sleeves are wide; and the lining is usually of brightly-colored silk, often beautifully variegated. In taking off the haori, the brilliant lining is displayed,-- and at such an instant the fluttering splendor might well be likened to the appearance of a butterfly in motion. [3] The bird-catcher's pole is smeared with bird-lime; and the verses suggest that the insect is preventing the man from using his pole, by persistently getting in the way of it,-- as the birds might take warning from seeing the butterfly limed. Jama suru means "to hinder" or "prevent." [4] Even while it is resting, the wings of the butterfly may be seen to quiver at moments,-- as if the creature were dreaming of flight. [5] A little poem by Basho, greatest of all Japanese composers of hokku. The verses are intended to suggest the joyous feeling of spring-time. [6] Literally, "a windless day;" but two negatives in Japanese poetry do not necessarily imply an affirmative, as in English. The meaning is, that although there is no wind, the fluttering motion of the butterflies suggests, to the eyes at least, that a strong breeze is playing. [7] Alluding to the Buddhist proverb: Rakkwa eda ni kaerazu; ha-kyo futatabi terasazu ("The fallen flower returns not to the branch; the broken mirror never again reflects.") So says the proverb -- yet it seemed to me that I saw a fallen flower return to the branch... No: it was only a butterfly. [8] Alluding probably to the light fluttering motion of falling cherry-petals. [9] That is to say, the grace of their motion makes one think of the grace of young girls, daintily costumed, in robes with long fluttering sleeves... And old Japanese proverb declares that even a devil is pretty at eighteen: Oni mo jiu-hachi azami no hana: "Even a devil at eighteen, flower-of-the-thistle." [10] Or perhaps the verses might be more effectively rendered thus: "Happy together, do you say? Yes -- if we should be reborn as field-butterflies in some future life: then we might accord!" This poem was composed by the celebrated poet Issa, on the occasion of divorcing his wife. [11] Or, Tare no tama? [Digitizer's note: Hearn's note calls attention to an alternative reading of the ideogram for "spirit" or "soul."] [12] Literally, "Butterfly-pursing heart I wish to have always;" -- i.e., I would that I might always be able to find pleasure in simple things, like a happy child. [13] An old popular error,-- probably imported from China. [14] A name suggested by the resemblance of the larva's artificial covering to the mino, or straw-raincoat, worn by Japanese peasants. I am not sure whether the dictionary rendering, "basket-worm," is quite correct;-- but the larva commonly called minomushi does really construct for itself something much like the covering of the basket-worm. (2) A very large, white radish. "Daikon" literally means "big root." [15] *Pyrus spectabilis*. [16] An evil spirit. (3) A common female name.

MOSQUITOES (1) Meiji: The period in which Hearn wrote this book. It lasted from 1868 to 1912, and was a time when Japan plunged head-first into Western-style modernization. By the "fashions and the changes and the disintegrations of Meiji" Hearn is lamenting that this process of modernization was destroying some of the good things in traditional Japanese culture.

ANTS (1) Cicadas. [1] An interesting fact in this connection is that the Japanese word for ant, *ari*, is represented by an ideograph formed of the character for "insect" combined with the character signifying "moral rectitude," "propriety" (*giri*). So the Chinese character actually means "The Propriety-Insect."