

The Wonderful Adventures of Funakoshi Jiuyémon

By A. B. Mitford (Lord Redesdale)

The doughty deeds and marvellous experiences of Funakoshi Jiuyémon are perhaps, like those of Robin Hood and his Merry Men, rather traditional than historical; hut even if all or part of the deeds which popular belief ascribes to him be false, his story conveys a true picture of manners and customs. Above all, the manner of the vengeance which he wreaked upon the wife who had dishonoured him, and upon her lover, shows the high importance which the Japanese attach to the sanctity of the marriage tie.

The 50th and 51st chapters of the "Legacy of Iyéyasu," already quoted, say: "If a married woman of the agricultural, artisan, or commercial class shall secretly have intercourse with another man, it is not necessary for the husband to enter a complaint against the persons thus confusing the great relation of mankind, but he may put them both to death. Nevertheless, should he slay one of them and spare the other, his guilt is the same as that of the unrighteous persons.

"In the event, however, of advice being sought, the parties not having been slain, accede to the wishes of the complainant with regard to putting them to death or not.

"Mankind, in whose bodies the male and female elements induce a natural desire towards the same object, do not look upon such practices with aversion; and the adjudication of such cases is a matter of special deliberation and consultation.

"Men and women of the military class are expected to know better than to occasion disturbance by violating existing regulations; and such an one breaking the regulations by lewd, trifling, or illicit intercourse shall at once be punished, without deliberation or consultation. It is not the same in this case as in that of agriculturists, artisans, and traders."

As a criminal offence, adultery was, according to the ancient laws of Japan, punished by crucifixion. In more modern times it has been punished by decapitation and the disgraceful exposure of the head after death; but if the murder of the injured husband accompany the crime of adultery, then the guilty parties are crucified to this day. At the present time the husband is no longer allowed to take the law into his own hands: he must report the matter to the Government, and trust to the State to avenge his honour.

Sacred as the marriage tie is so long as it lasts, the law which cuts it is curiously facile, or rather there is no law: a man may turn his wife out of doors, as it may suit his fancy. An example of this practice was shown in the story of "The Forty-seven Rônins." A husband has but to report the matter to his lord, and the ceremony of divorce is completed. Thus, in the days of the Shogun's power, a Hatamoto who had divorced his wife reported the matter to the Shogun. A Daimio's retainer reports the matter to his Prince.

The facility of divorce, however, seems to be but rarely taken advantage of: this is probably owing to the practice of keeping concubines. It has often been asked, Are the Japanese polygamists? The answer is, Yes and no. They marry but one wife; but a man may, according to his station and means, have one or more concubines in addition. The Emperor has twelve concubines, called Kisasi; and Iyéyasu, alluding forcibly to excess in this respect as *teterrima belli causa*, laid down that the princes might have eight, high officers five, and ordinary Samurai two handmaids. "In the olden times," he writes, "the downfall of castles and the overthrow of kingdoms all proceeded from this alone. Why is not the indulgence of passions guarded against?"

The difference between the position of the wife and that of the concubine is marked. The legitimate wife is to the handmaid as a lord is to his vassal. Concubinage being a legitimate institution, the son of a handmaid is no bastard, nor is he in any way the child of shame; and yet, as a general rule, the son of the bondwoman is not heir with the son of the free, for the son of the wife inherits before the son of a concubine, even where the latter be the elder; and it, frequently happens that a noble, having children by his concubines but none by his wife, selects a younger brother of his own, or even adopts the son of some relative, to succeed him in the family honours. The family line is considered to be thus more purely preserved. The law of succession is, however, extremely lax. Excellent personal merits will sometimes secure to the left-handed son the inheritance of his ancestors; and it often occurs that the son of a concubine, who is debarred from succeeding to his own father, is adopted as the heir of a relation or friend of even higher rank. When the wife of a noble has a daughter but no son, the practice is to adopt a youth of suitable family and age, who marries the girl and inherits as a son.

The principle of adoption is universal among all classes, from the Emperor down to his meanest subject; nor is the family line considered to have been broken because an adopted son has succeeded to the estates. Indeed, should a noble die without heir male, either begotten or adopted, his lands are forfeited to the State. It is a matter of care that the person adopted should be himself sprung from a stock of rank suited to that of the family into which he is to be received.

Sixteen and upwards being considered the marriageable age for a man, it is not usual for persons below that age to adopt an heir; yet an infant at the point of death may adopt a person older than himself, that the family line may not become extinct.

An account of the marriage ceremony will be found in the Appendix upon the subject.

In the olden time, in the island of Shikoku¹ there lived one Funakoshi Jiuyémon, a brave Samurai and accomplished man, who was in great favour with the prince, his master. One day, at a drinking-bout, a quarrel sprung up between him and a brother-officer, which resulted in a duel upon the spot, in which Jiuyémon killed his adversary. When Jiuyémon awoke to a sense of what he had done, he was struck with remorse, and he thought to disembowel himself; but, receiving a private summons from his lord, he went to the castle, and the prince said to him— So it seems that you have been getting drunk and quarrelling, and that you have killed one of your friends; and now I suppose you will have determined to perform *hara kiri*. It is a great pity, and in the face of the laws I can do nothing for you openly. Still, if you will escape and fly from this part of the country for a while, in two years' the the affair will have blown over, and I will allow you to return.”

And with these words the prince presented him with a fine sword, made by Sukésada,² and a hundred ounces of silver, and, having bade him farewell, entered his private apartments; and Jiuyémon, prostrating himself, wept tears of gratitude; then, taking the sword and the money, he went home and prepared to fly from the province, and secretly took leave of his relations, each of whom made him scum parting present. These gifts, together with his own money, and what he had received from the prince, made up a sum of two hundred and fifty ounces of silver, with which and his Sukésada sword he escaped under cover of darkness, and went to a sea-port called

¹ *Shikoku*, one of the southern islands separated from the chief island of Japan by the beautiful “Inland Sea;“ it is called *Shikoku*, or the “Four Provinces,” because it is divided, into the four provinces, *Awe*, *Sanunki*, *Iyo*, and *Tose*.

² *Sukésada*, a famous family of swordsmiths, belonging to the Bizen clan. The Bizen men are notoriously good armourers, and their blades fetch high prices. The sword of Jiuyémon is said to have been made by one of the Sukésada who lived about 290 years ago.

Marugamé, in the province of Sanuki, where he proposed to wait for an opportunity of setting sail for Osaka. As ill luck would have it, the wind being contrary, he had to remain three days idle; but at last the wind changed; so he went down to the beach, thinking that he should certainly find a junk about to sail; and as he was looking about him, a sailor came up, and said—“If your honour is minded to take a trip to Osaka, my ship is bound thither, and I should be glad to take you with me as passenger.

“That’s exactly what I wanted. I will gladly take a passage,” replied Jiuyémon, who was delighted at the chance.

“Well then we must set sail at once, so please come on board without delay.”

So Jiuyémon went with him and embarked; and as they left the harbour and struck into the open sea, the moon was just rising above the eastern hills, illumining the dark night like a noonday sun; and Jiuyémon, taking his place in the mows of the ship, stood wrapt in contemplation of the beauty of the scene.

Now it happened that the captain of the ship, whose name was Akagôshi Kuroyémon, was a fierce pirate, who, attracted by Jiuyémon’s well-to-do appearance, had determined to decoy him on board, that he might murder and rob him; and while Jiuyémon was looking at the moon, the pirate and his companions were collected in the stern of the ship, taking counsel together in whispers as to how they might slay him. He, on the other hand, having for some time past fancied their conduct somewhat strange, bethought him that it was not prudent to lay aside his sword, so he went towards the place where he had been sitting, and had left his weapon lying, to fetch it, when he was stopped by three of the pirates, who blocked up the gangway, saying—

“Stop, Sir Samurai! Unluckily for you, this ship in which you have taken a passage belongs to the pirate Akagôshi Kuroyémon. Come, sir! whatever money you may chance to have about you is our prize.”

When Jiuyémon heard this he was greatly startled at first, but soon recovered himself, and, being an expert wrestler, kicked over two of the pirates, and made for his sword; but in the meanwhile Shichirohei, the younger brother of the pirate captain, had drawn the sword, and brought it towards him, saying—

“If you want your sword, here it is!” and with that he cut at him; but Jiuyémon avoided the blow, and closing with the ruffian, got back his sword. Ten of the pirates then attacked him with spear and sword; but he, putting his back against the bows of the ship, showed such good fight that he killed three of his assailants, and the others stood off, not daring to approach him. Then the pirate captain, Akagôshi Kuroyémon, who had been watching the fighting from the stern, seeing that his men stood no chance against Jiuyémon’s dexterity, and that he was only losing them to no purpose, thought to shoot him with a matchlock. Even Jiuyémon, brave as he was, lost heart when he saw the captain’s gun pointed at him, and tried to jump into the sea; but one of the pirates made a dash at him with a boat-hook, and caught him by the sleeve; then Jiuyémon, in despair, took the fine Sukésada sword which he had received from his prince, and throwing it at his captor, pierced him through the breast so that he fell dead, and himself plunging into the sea swam for his life. The pirate captain shot at him and missed him, and the rest of the crew made every endeavour to seize him with their boat-hooks, that they might avenge the death of their mates; but it was all in vain, and Jiuyémon, having shaken off his clothes that he might swim the better, made good his escape. So the pirates threw the bodies of their dead comrades into the sea, and the captain was partly consoled for their loss by the possession of the Sukésada sword with which one of them had been transfixed.

As soon as Jiuyémon jumped over the ship's side, being a good swimmer, he took a long dive, which carried him well out of danger, and struck out vigorously; and although he was tired and distressed by his exertions, he braced himself up to greater energy, and faced the waves boldly. At last, in the far distance, to his great joy, he spied a light, for which he made, and found that it was a ship carrying lanterns marked with the badge of the governor of Osaka; so he hailed her, saying—

“I have fallen into great trouble among pirates: pray rescue me.”

“Who and what are you?” shouted an officer, some forty years of age.

“My name is Funakoshi Jiuyémon, and I have unwittingly fallen in with pirates this night. I have escaped so far: I pray you save me, lest I die.”

“Hold on to this, and come up,” replied the other, holding out the butt end of a spear to him, which he caught hold of and clambered up the ship's side. When the officer saw before him a handsome gentleman, naked all but his loincloth, and with his hair all in disorder, he called to his servants to bring some of his own clothes, and, having dressed him in them, said—

“What clan do you belong to, sir?”

“Sir, I am a Rônin, and was on my way to Osaka; but the sailors of the ship on which I had embarked were pirates;” and so he told the whole story of the fight and of his escape.

“Well done, sir!” replied the other, astonished at his prowess. “My name is Kajiki Tozayémon, at your service. I am an officer attached to the governor of Osaka. Pray, have you any friends in that city?”

“No, sir, I have no friends there; but as in two years I shall be able to return to my own country, and re-enter my lord's service, I thought during that time to engage in trade and live as a common wardsman.”

“Indeed, that's a poor prospect! However, if you will allow me, I will do all that is in my power to assist you. Pray excuse the liberty I am taking in making such a proposal.”

Jiuyémon warmly thanked Kajiki Tozayémon for his kindness and so they reached Osaka without further adventures.

Jiuyémon, who had secreted in his girdle the two hundred and fifty ounces which he had brought with him from home, bought a small house, and started in trade as a vendor of perfumes, tooth-powder, combs, and other toilet articles; and Kajiki Tozayémon, who treated him with great kindness, and rendered him many services, prompted him, as he was a single man, to take to himself a wife. Acting upon this advice, he married a singing-girl, called O Hiyaku.³

Now this O Hiyaku, although at first she seemed very affectionately disposed towards Jiuyémon, had been, during the time that she was a singer, a woman of bad and profligate character; and at this time there was in Osaka a certain wrestler, named Takaségawa Kurobei, a very handsome man, with whom O Hiyaku fell desperately in love; so that at last, being by nature a passionate woman, she became unfaithful to Jiuyémon. The latter, little suspecting that anything was amiss, was in the habit of spending his evenings at the house of his patron Kajiki Tozayémon, whose son, a youth of eighteen, named Tônoshin, conceived a great friendship for Jiuyémon, and used constantly to invite him to play a game at checkers; and it was on these occasions that O Hiyaku, profiting by her husband's absence, used to arrange her meetings with the wrestler Takaségawa.

One evening, when Jiuyémon, as was his wont, had gone out to play at checkers with Kajiki Tônoshin, O Hiyaku took advantage of the occasion to go and fetch the wrestler, and invite him to a little feast; and as they were enjoying themselves over their wine, O Hiyaku said to him—

³ The O before women's names signifies “*Imperial*,” and is simply an honorific.

“Ah! Master Takaségawa, how wonderfully chance favours us! and how pleasant these stolen interviews are! How much nicer still it would be if we could only be married. But, as long as Jiuyémon is in the way, it is impossible; and that is my one cause of distress.”

“It’s no use being in such a hurry. If you only have a patience, we shall be able to marry, sure enough. What you have got to look out for now is, that Jiuyémon does not find out what we are about. I suppose there is no chance of his coming home to-night, is there?”

“Oh dear, no! You need not be afraid. He is gone to Kajiki’s house to play checkers; so he is sure to spend the night there.”

And so the guilty couple went on gossiping, with their minds at ease, until at last they dropped off asleep.

In the meanwhile Jiuyémon, in the middle of his game at checkers, was seized with a sudden pain in his stomach, and said to Kajiki Tónoshin, “Young sir, I feel an unaccountable pain in my stomach. I think I had better go home, before it gets worse.”

“That is a bad job. Wait a little, and I will give you some physic; but, at any rate, you had better spend the night here.”

“Many thanks for your kindness,” replied Jiuyémon; “but I had rather go home.”

So he took his leave, and went off to his own house, bearing the pain as best he might. When he arrived in front of his own door, he tried to open it; but the lock was fastened, and he could not get in, so he rapped violently at the shutters to try and awaken his wife. When O Hiyaku heard the noise, she woke with a start, and roused the wrestler, saying to him in a whisper—“Get up! get up! Jiuyémon has come back. You must hide as fast as possible.”

“Oh dear! oh dear!” said the wrestler, in a great fright; “here’s a pretty mess! Where on earth shall I hide myself?” and he stumbled about in every direction looking for a hiding-place, but found none.

Jiuyémon, seeing that his wife did not come to open the door, got impatient at last, and forced it open by unfixing the sliding shutter, and, entering the house, found himself face to face with his wife and her lover, who were both in such confusion that they did not know what to do. Jiuyémon, however, took no notice of them, but lit his pipe and sat smoking and watching them in silence. At last the wrestler, Takaségawa, broke the silence by saying—

“I thought, sir, that I should be sure to have the pleasure of finding you at home this evening, so I came out to call upon you. When I got here, the Lady O Hiyaku was so kind as to offer me some wine; and I drank a little more than was good for me, so that it got into my head, and I fell asleep. I must really apologize for having taken such a liberty in your absence; but, indeed, although appearances are against us, there has been nothing wrong.”

“Certainly,” said O Hiyaku, coming to her lover’s support, “Master Takaségawa is not at all to blame. It was I who invited him to drink wine; so I hope you will excuse him.”

Jiuyémon sat pondering the matter over in his mind for a moment, and then said to the wrestler, “You say that you are innocent; but, of course, that is a lie. It’s no use trying to conceal your fault. However, next year I shall, in all probability, return to my own country, and then you may take O Hiyaku and do what you will with her: far be it from me to care what becomes of a woman with such a stinking heart.”

When the wrestler and O Hiyaku heard Jiuyémon say this quite quietly, they could not speak, but held their peace for very shame.

“Here, you Takaségawa,” pursued he; “you may stop here to-night, if you like it, and go home to-morrow.”

“Thank you, sir,” replied the wrestler, “I am much obliged to you; but the fact is, that I have some pressing business in another part of the town, so, with your permission, I will take my leave;” and so he went out, covered with confusion.

As for the faithless wife, O Hiyaku, she was in great agitation, expecting to be severely reprimanded at least; but Jiuyémon took no notice of her, and showed no anger; only from that day forth, although she remained in his house as his wife, he separated himself from her entirely.

Matters went on in this way for some time, until at last, one fine day, O Hiyaku, looking out of doors, saw the wrestler Takaségawa passing in the street, so she called out to him—

“Dear me, Master Takaségawa, can that be you! What a long time it is since we have met! Pray come in, and have a chat.”

“Thank you, I am much obliged to you; but as I do not like the sort of scene we had the other day, I think I had rather not accept your invitation.”

“Pray do not talk in such a cowardly manner. Next year, when Jiuyémon goes back to his own country, he is sure to give me this house, and then you and I can marry and live as happily as possible.”

“I don’t like being in too great a hurry to accept fair offers.”⁴

“Nonsense! There’s no need for showing such delicacy about accepting what is given you.”

And as she spoke, she caught the wrestler by the hand and led him into the house. After they had talked together for some time, she said—

“Listen to me, Master Takaségawa. I have been thinking over all this for some time, and I see no help for it but to kill Jiuyémon and make an end of him.”

“What do you want to do that for?”

“As long as he is alive, we cannot be married. What I propose is that you should buy some poison, and I will put it secretly into his food. When he is dead, we can be happy to our hearts’ content.”

At first Takaségawa was startled and bewildered by the audacity of their scheme; but forgetting the gratitude which he owed to Jiuyémon for sparing his life on the previous occasion, he replied—

“Well, I think it can be managed. I have a friend who is a physician, so I will get him to compound some poison for me, and will send it to you. You must look out for a moment when your husband is not on his guard, and get him to take it.”

Having agreed upon this, Takaségawa went away, and, having employed a physician to make up the poison, sent it to O Hiyaku in a letter, suggesting that the poison should be mixed up with a sort of macaroni, of which Jiuyémon was very fond. Having read the letter, she put it carefully away in a drawer of her cupboard, and waited until Jiuyémon should express a wish to eat some macaroni.

One day, towards the time of the New Year, when O Hiyaku had gone out to a party with a few of her friends, it happened that Jiuyémon, being alone in the house, was in want of some little thing, and, failing to find it anywhere, at last bethought himself to look for it in O Hiyaku’s cupboard; and as he was searching amongst the odds and ends which it contained, he came upon the fatal letter. When he read the scheme for putting poison in his macaroni, he was taken aback, and said to himself, “When I caught those two beasts in their wickedness I spared them, because their blood would have defiled my sword; and no they are not even grateful for my mercy. Their crime is beyond all power of language to express, and I will kill them together.”

⁴ The original is a proverbial expression like “Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.”

So he put back the letter in its place, and waited for his wife to come home. So soon as she made her appearance he said—

“You have come home early, O Hiyaku. I feel very dull and lonely this evening; let us have a little wine.”

And as he spoke without any semblance of anger, it never entered O Hiyaku’s mind that he had seen the letter; so she went about her household duties with a quiet mind.

The following evening, as Jiuyémon was sitting in his shop casting up his accounts, with his counting-board⁵ in his hand, Takaségawa passed by, and Jiuyémon called out to him, saying—

“Well met, Takaségawa! I was just thinking of drinking a cup of wine to-night; but I have no one to keep me company, and it is dull work drinking alone. Pray come in, and drink a bout with me.

“Thank you, sir, I shall have much pleasure,” replied the wrestler, who little expected what the other was aiming at; and so he went in, and they began to drink and feast.

“It’s very cold to-night,” said Jiuyémon, after a while; “suppose we warm up a little macaroni, and eat it nice and hot. Perhaps, however, you do not like it?”

“Indeed, I am very fond of it, on the contrary.”

“That is well. O Hiyaku, please go and buy a little for us.

“Directly,” replied his wife, who hurried off to buy the paste, delighted at the opportunity for carrying out her murderous design upon her husband. As soon she had prepared it, she poured it into bowls and set it before the two men; but into her husband’s bowl only she put poison. Jiuyémon, who well knew what she had done, did not eat the mess at once, but remained talking about this, that, and the other; and the wrestler, out of politeness, was obliged to wait also. All of a sudden, Jiuyémon cried out— “Dear me! whilst we have been gossiping, the macaroni has been getting cold. Let us put it all together and warm it up again. As no one has put his lips to his bowl yet, it will all be clean; so none need be wasted.” And with these words he took the macaroni that was in the three bowls, and, pouring it altogether into an iron pot, boiled it up again. This the Jiuyémon served out the food himself, and, setting it before his wife and the wrestler, said— “There! make haste and eat it up before it gets cold.”

Jiuyémon, of course, did not eat any of the mess; and the would-be murderers, knowing that sufficient poison had been originally put into Jiuyémon’s bowl to kill them all three, and that now the macaroni, having been well mixed up, would all be poisoned, were quite taken aback, and did not know what to do.

“Come! make haste, or it will be quite cold. You said you liked it, so I sent to buy it on purpose. O Hiyaku! come and make a hearty meal. I will eat some presently.”

At this the pair looked very foolish, and knew not what to answer; at last the wrestler got up and said—

“I do not feel quite well. I must beg to take my leave; and, if you will allow me, I will come and accept your hospitality to-morrow instead.”

“Dear me! I am sorry to hear you are not well. However, O Hiyaku, there will be all the more macaroni for you.”

As for O Hiyaku, she put a bold face upon the matter, and replied that she had supped already, and had no appetite for any more.

Then Jiuyémon, looking at them both with a scornful smile, said—

⁵ The *abacus*, or counting-board, is the means of calculation in use throughout the Continent from St. Petersburg to Peking, in Corea, Japan, and the Liukiu Islands.

“It seems that you, neither of you, care to eat this macaroni; however, as you, Takaségawa, are unwell, I will give you some excellent medicine;” and going to the cupboard, he drew out the letter, and laid it before the wrestler. When O Hiyaku and the wrestler saw that their wicked schemes had been brought to light, they were struck dumb with shame.

Takaségawa, seeing that denial was useless, drew his dirk and cut at Jiuyémon; but he, being nimble and quick, dived under the wrestler’s arm, and seizing his right hand from behind, tightened his grasp upon it until it became numbed, and the dirk fell to the ground; for, powerful man as the wrestler was, he was no match for Jiuyémon, who held him in so fast a grip that he could not move. Then Jiuyémon took the dirk which had fallen to the ground, and said—

“Oh! I thought that you, being a wrestler, would at least be a strong man, and that there would be some pleasure in fighting you; but I see that you are but a poor feckless creature, after all. It would have defiled my sword to have killed such an ungrateful hound with it; but luckily here is your own dirk, and I will slay you with that.”

Takaségawa struggled to escape, but in vain and O Hiyaku, seizing a large kitchen knife, attacked Jiuyémon; but he, furious, kicked her in the loins so violently that she fell powerless, then brandishing the dirk, he cleft the wrestler from the shoulder down to the nipple of his breast, and the big man fell in his agony. O Hiyaku, seeing this, tried to fly; but Jiuyémon, seizing her by the hair of the head, stabbed her in the bosom, and, placing her by her lover’s side, gave her the death-blow.

On the following day, he sent in a report of what he had done to the governor of Osaka, and buried the corpses; and from that forth he remained a single man, and pursued his trade as a seller of perfumery and such-like wares; and his leisure hours he continued to spend as before, at the house of his patron, Kajiki Tozayémon.

One day, when Jiuyémon went to call upon Kajiki Tozayémon, he was told by the servant-maid, who met him at the door, that her master was out, but that her young master, Tônoshin, was at home; so, saying that he would go in and pay his respects to the young gentleman, he entered the house; and as he suddenly pushed open the sliding-door of the room in which Tônoshin was sitting, the latter gave a great start, and his face turned pale and ghastly.

“How now, young sir!” said Jiuyémon, laughing at him, “surely you are not such a coward as to be afraid because the sliding-doors are opened ? That is not the way in which a brave Samurai should behave.”

“Really I am quite ashamed of myself,” replied the other, blushing at the reproof; “but the fact is that I had some reason for being startled. Listen to me, Sir Jiuyémon, and I will tell you all about it. To-day, when I went to the academy to study, there were a great number of my fellow-students gathered together, and one of them said that a ruinous old shrine, about two miles and a half to the east of this place, was the nightly resort of all sorts of hobgoblins, who have been playing pranks and bewitching the people for some time past; and he proposed that we should all draw lots, and that the one upon whom the lot fell should go to-night and exorcise those evil beings; and further that, as a proof of his having gone, he should write his name upon a pillar in the shrine. All the rest agreed that this would be very good sport; so I, not liking to appear a coward, consented to take my chance with the rest; and, as ill luck would have it, the lot fell upon me. I was thinking over this as you came m, and so it was that, when you suddenly opened the door, I could not help giving a start.”

“If you only think for a moment,” said Jiuyémon, “you will see that there is nothing to fear. How can beasts⁶ and hobgoblins exercise any power over men? However, do not let the matter

⁶ Foxes, badgers, and cats.

trouble you. I will go in your place tonight, and see if I cannot get the better of these goblins, if any there be, having done which, I will write your name upon the pillar, so that everybody may think that you have been there.”

“Oh! thank you: that will indeed be a service. You can dress yourself up in my clothes, and nobody will be the wiser. I shall be truly grateful to you.”

So Jiuyémon having gladly undertaken the job, as soon as the night set in made his preparations, and went to the place indicated —an uncanny-looking, tumble-down, lonely old shrine, all overgrown with moss and rank vegetation. However, Jiuyémon, who was afraid of nothing, cared little for the appearance of the place, and having made himself as comfortable as he could in so dreary a spot, sat down on the floor, hit his pipe, and kept a sharp look-out for the goblins. He had not been waiting long before he saw a movement among the bushes; and presently he was surrounded by a host of elfish-looking creatures, of all shapes and kinds, who came and made hideous faces at him. Jiuyémon quietly knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and then, jumping up, kicked over first one and then another of the elves, until several of them lay sprawling in the grass; and the rest made off, greatly astonished at this unexpected reception. When Jiuyémon took his lantern and examined the fallen goblins attentively, he saw that they were all Tōnoshin’s fellow-students, who had painted their faces, and made themselves hideous, to frighten their companion, whom they knew to be a coward: all they got for their pains, however, was a good kicking from Jiuyémon, who left them groaning over their sore bones, and went home chuckling to himself at the result of the adventure. The fame of this exploit soon became noised about Osaka, so that all men praised Jiuyémon’s courage; and shortly after this he was elected chief of the Otokodaté, or friendly society of the wardsmen, and busied himself no longer with his trade, but lived on the contributions of his numerous apprentices. Now Kajiki Tōnoshin was in love with a singing-girl named Kashiku, upon whom he was in the habit of spending a great deal of money. She, however, cared nothing for him, for she had a sweetheart named Hichirobei, whom she used to contrive to meet secretly, although, in order to support her parents, she was forced to become the mistress of Tōnoshin. One evening, when the latter was on guard at the office of his chief, the Governor of Osaka, Kashiku sent word privately to Hichirobei, summoning him to go to her house, as the coast would be clear.

While the two were making merry over a little feast, Tōnoshin, who had persuaded a friend to take his duty for him on the plea of urgent business, knocked at the door, and Kashiku, in a great fright, hid her lover in a long clothes-box, and went to let in Tōnoshin, who, on entering the room and seeing the litter of the supper lying about, looked more closely, and perceived a man’s sandals, on which, by the light of a candle, he saw the figure seven.⁷ Tōnoshin had heard some ugly reports of Kashiku’s proceedings with this man Hichirobei, and when he saw this proof before his eyes he grew very angry; but he suppressed his feelings, and, pointing to the wine-cups and bowls, said—

“Whom have you been feasting with to-night

“Oh!” replied Kashiku, who, notwithstanding her distress, was obliged to invent an answer, “I felt so dull all alone here, that I asked an old woman from next door to come in and drink a cup of wine with me, and have a chat.”

All this while Tōnoshin was looking for the hidden lover; but, as he could not see him, he made up his mind that Kashiku must have let him out by the back door; so he secreted one of the sandals in his sleeve as evidence, and, without seeming to suspect anything, said—

“Well, I shall be very busy this evening, so I must go home.”

⁷ *Hichi*, the first half of *Hichirobei*, signifies seven.

“Oh! won’t you stay a little while? It is very dull here, when I am all alone without you. Pray stop and keep me company.

But Tōnoshin made no reply, and went home. Then Kashiku saw that one of the sandals was missing, and felt certain that he must have carried it off as proof; so she went in great trouble to open the lid of the box, and let out Hichirobei. When the two lovers talked over the matter, they agreed that, as they both were really in love, let Tōnoshin kill them if he would, they would gladly die together: they would enjoy the present; let the future take care of itself.

The following morning Kashiku sent a messenger to Tōnoshin to implore his pardon; and he, being infatuated by the girl’s charms, forgave her, and sent a present of thirty ounces of silver to her lover, Hichirobei, on the condition that he was never to see her again; but, in spite of this, Kashiku and Hichirobei still continued their secret meetings.

It happened that Hichirobei, who was a gambler by profession, had an elder brother called Chōbei, who kept a wine-shop in the Ajikawa-street, at Osaka; so Tōnoshin thought that he could not do better than depute Jiuyémon to go and seek out this man Chōbei, and urge him to persuade his younger brother to give up his relations with Kashiku; acting upon this resolution, he went to call upon Jiuyémon, and said to him—

“Sir Jiuyémon, I have a favour to ask of you in connection with that girl Kashiku, whom you know all about. You are aware that I paid thirty ounces of silver to her lover Hichirobei to induce him to give up going to her house; but, in spite of this, I cannot help suspecting that they still meet one another. It seems that this Hichirobei has an elder brother—one Chōbei; now, if you would go to this man and tell him to reprove his brother for his conduct, you would be doing me a great service. You have so often stood my friend, that I venture to pray you to oblige me in this matter, although I feel that I am putting you to great inconvenience.”

Jiuyémon, out of gratitude for the kindness which he had received at the hands of Kajiki Tozayémon, was always willing to serve Tōnoshin; so he went at once to find out Chōbei, and said to him—

“My name, sir, is Jiuyémon, at your service; and I have come to beg your assistance in a matter of some delicacy.”

“What can I do to oblige you, sir?” replied Chōbei, who felt bound to be more than usually civil, as his visitor was the chief of the Otokodaté.

“It is a small matter, sir,” said Jiuyémon. “Your younger brother Hichirobei is intimate with a woman named Kashiku, whom he meets in secret. Now, this Kashiku is the mistress of the son of a gentleman to whom I am under great obligation: he bought her of her parents for a large sum of money, and, besides this, he paid your brother thirty ounces of silver some time since, on condition of his separating himself from the girl; in spite of this, it appears that your brother continues to see her, and I have come to beg that you will remonstrate with your brother on his conduct, and make him give her up.

“That I certainly will. Pray do not be uneasy; I will soon find means to put a stop to my brother’s bad behaviour.”

And so they went on talking of one thing and another, until Jiuyémon, whose eyes had been wandering about the room, spied out a very long dirk lying on a cupboard, and all at once it occurred to him that this was the very sword which had been a parting gift to him from his lord: the hilt, the mountings, and the tip of the scabbard were all the same, only the blade had been shortened and made into a long dirk. Then he looked more attentively at Chōbei’s features, and saw that he was no other than Akagōshi Kuroyémon, the pirate chief. Two years had passed by, but he could not forget that face.

Jiuyémon would have liked to have arrested him at once; but thinking that it would be a pity to give so vile a robber a chance of escape, he constrained himself, and, taking his leave, went straightway and reported the matter to the Governor of Osaka. When the officers of justice heard of the prey that awaited them, they made their preparations forthwith. Three men of the secret police went to Chôbei's wine-shop, and, having called for wine, pretended to get up a drunken brawl; and as Chôbei went up to them and tried to pacify them, one of the policemen seized hold of him, and another tried to pinion him. It at once flashed across Chôbei's mind that his old misdeeds had come to light at last, so with a desperate effort he shook off the two policemen and knocked them down, and, rushing into the inner room, seized the famous Sukésada sword and sprang upstairs. The three policemen, never thinking that he could escape, mounted the stairs close after him; but Chôbei with a terrible cut cleft the front man's head in sunder, and the other two fell back appalled at their comrade's fate. Then Chôbei climbed on to the roof, and, looking out, perceived that the house was surrounded on all sides by armed men. Seeing this, he made up his mind that his last moment was come, but, at any rate, he determined to sell his life dearly, and to die fighting; so he stood up bravely, when one of the officers, ceasing up from the roof of a neighbouring house, attacked him with a spear; and at the same time the several other soldiers clambered up. Chôbei, seeing that he was overmatched, jumped down, and before the soldiers below had recovered from their surprise he had dashed through their ranks, laying about him right and left, and cutting down three men. At top speed, he fled, with his pursuers close behind him; and, seeing the broad river ahead of him, jumped into a small boat that lay moored there, of which the boatmen, frightened at the sight of his bloody sword, left him in undisputed possession. Chôbei pushed off, and sculled vigorously into the middle of the river; and the officers—there being no other boat near—were for a moment baffled. One of them, however, rushing down the river bank, hid himself on a bridge, armed with a spear, and lay in wait for Chôbei to pass in his boat; but when the little boat came up, he missed his aim, and only scratched Chôbei's elbow; and he, seizing the spear, dragged down his adversary into the river, and killed him as he was struggling in the water; then, sculling for his life, he gradually drew near to the sea. The other officers in the mean time had secured ten boats, and, having come up with Chôbei, surrounded him; but he, having formerly been a pirate, was far better skilled in the management of a boat than his pursuers, and had no great difficulty in eluding them; so at last he pushed out to sea, to the great annoyance of the officers, who followed him closely.

Then Jiuyémon, who had come up, said to one of the officers on the shore—

“Have you caught him yet?”

“No; the fellow is so brave and so cunning that our men can do nothing with him.”

“He's a determined ruffian, certainly. However, as the fellow has got my sword, I mean to get it back by fair means or foul: will you allow me to undertake the job of seizing him?”

“Well, you may try; and you will have officers to assist you, if you are in peril.”

Jiuyémon, having received this permission, stripped off his clothes and jumped into the sea, carrying with him a policeman's mace, to the great astonishment of all the bystanders. When he got near Chôbei's boat, he dived and came up alongside, without the pirate perceiving him until he had clambered into the boat. Chôbei had the good Sukésada sword, and Jiuyémon was armed with nothing but a mace; but Chôbei, on the other hand, was exhausted with his previous exertions, and was taken by surprise at a moment when he was thinking of nothing but how he should scull away from the pursuing boats; so it was not long before Jiuyémon mastered and secured him.

For this feat, besides recovering his Sukésada sword, Jiuyémon received many rewards and great praise from the Governor of Osaka. But the pirate Chôbei was cast into prison.

Hichirobei, when he heard of his brother's capture, was away from home; but seeing that he too would be sought for, he determined to escape to Yedo at once, and travelled along the Tôkaidô, the great highroad, as far as Kuana. But the secret police had got wind of his movements, and one of them was at his heels disguised as a beggar, and waiting for an opportunity to seize him.

Hichirobei in the meanwhile was congratulating himself on his escape; and, little suspecting that he would be in danger so far away from Osaka, he went to a house of pleasure, intending to divert himself at his ease. The policeman, seeing this, went to the master of the house and said—“The guest who has just come in is a notorious thief, and I am on his track, waiting to arrest him. Do you watch for the moment when he falls asleep, and let me know. Should he escape, the blame will fall upon you.”

The master of the house, who was greatly taken aback, consented of course; so he told the woman of the house to hide Hichirobei's dirk, and as soon as the latter, wearied with his journey, had fallen asleep, he reported it to the policeman, who went upstairs, and having bound Hichirobei as he lay wrapped up in his quilt, led him back to Osaka to be imprisoned with his brother.

When Kashiku became aware of her lover's arrest, she felt certain that it was the handiwork of Jiuyémon; so she determined to kill him, were it only that she might die with Hichirobei. So hiding a kitchen knife in the bosom of her dress, she went at midnight to Jiuyémon's house, and looked all round to see if there were no hole or cranny by which she might slip in unobserved; but every door was carefully closed, so she was obliged to knock at the door and feign an excuse.

“Let me in! let me in! I am a servant-maid in the house of Kajiki Tozayémon, and am charged with a letter on most pressing business to Sir Jiuyémon.”

Hearing this, one of Jiuyémon's servants, thinking her tale was true, rose and opened the door; and Kashiku, stabbing him in the face, ran past him into the house. Inside she met another apprentice, who had got up, aroused by the noise; him too she stabbed in the belly, but as he fell he cried out to Jiuyémon, saying—

“Father, father! I take care! Some murderous villain has broken into the house.”

And Kashiku, desperate, stopped his further utterance by cutting his throat. Jiuyémon, hearing his apprentice cry out, jumped up, and, lighting his night-lamp, looked about him in the half-gloom, and saw Kashiku with the bloody knife, hunting for him that she might kill him. Springing upon her before she saw him, he clutched her right hand, and, having secured her, bound her with cords so that she could not move. As soon as he had recovered from his surprise, he looked about him, and searched the house, when, to his horror, he found one of his apprentices dead, and the other lying bleeding from a frightful gash across the face. Within the first dawn of day, he reported the affair to the proper authorities, and gave Kashiku in custody. So, after due examination, the two pirate brothers and the girl Kashiku were executed, and their heads were exposed together.⁸

Now the fame of all the valiant deeds of Jiuyémon having reached his own country, his lord ordered that he should be pardoned for his former offence, and return to his allegiance; so, after thanking Kajiki Tozayémon for the manifold favours which he had received at his hands, he went home, and became a Samurai as before.

⁸ The exposure of the head, called *Gokumon*, is a disgraceful addition to the punishment of beheading. A document, placed on the execution-ground, sets forth the crime which has called forth the punishment.

* * *

The fat wrestlers of Japan, whose heavy paunches and unwieldy, puffy limbs, however much they may be admired by their own country-people, form a striking contrast to our Western notions of training, have attracted some attention from travellers; and those who are interested in athletic sports may care to learn something about them.

The first historical record of wrestling occurs in the sixth year of the Emperor Suinin (B.C. 24), when one Taima no Kéhaya, a noble of great stature and strength, boasting that there was not his match under heaven, begged the Emperor that his strength might be put to the test. The Emperor accordingly caused the challenge to be proclaimed; and one Nomi no Shikuné answered it, and having wrestled with Kéhaya, kicked him in the ribs and broke his bones, so that he died. After this Shikuné was promoted to high office, and became further famous in Japanese history as having substituted earthen images for the living men who, before his time, used to be buried with the coffin of the Mikado.

In the year 858 A.D. the throne of Japan was wrestled for. The Emperor Buntoku had two sons, called Koréshito and Korétaka, both of whom aspired to the throne. Their claims were decided in a wrestling-match, in which one Yoshirô was the champion of Koréshito, and Natora the champion of Korétaka. Natora having been defeated, Koréshito ascended his father's throne under the style of Seiwa.

In the eighth century, when Nara was the capital of Japan, the Emperor Shômu instituted wrestling as part of the ceremonies of the autumn festival of the Five Grains, or Harvest Rome; and as the year proved a fruitful one, the custom was continued as auspicious. The strong men of the various provinces were collected, and one Kiyobayashi was proclaimed the champion of Japan. Many a brave and stout man tried a throw with him, but none could master him. Rules of the ring were now drawn up; and in order to prevent disputes, Kiyobayashi was appointed by the Emperor to be the judge of wrestling-matches, and was presented, as a badge of his office, with a fan, upon which were inscribed the words the "Prince of Lions." The wrestlers were divided into wrestlers of the eastern and of the western provinces, Omi being taken as the centre province. The eastern wrestlers wore in their hair the badge of the hollyhock; the western wrestlers took for their sign the gourd-flower. Hence the passage leading up to the wrestling-stage was called the "Flower Path." Forty-eight various falls were fixed upon as fair—twelve throws, twelve lifts, twelve twists, and twelve throws over the back. All other throws not included in these were foul, and it was the duty of the umpire to see that no unlawful tricks were resorted to. It was decided that the covered stage should be composed of sixteen rice-bales, in the shape of one huge bale, supported by four pillars at the four points of the compass, each pillar being painted a different colour, thus, together with certain paper pendants, making up five colours, to symbolize the Five Grains.

The civil wars by which the country was disturbed for a while put a stop to the practice of wrestling; but when peace was restored it was proposed to re-establish the athletic games, and the umpire Kiyobayashi, the "Prince of Lions," was sought for; but he had died or disappeared, and could not be found, and there was no umpire forthcoming. The various provinces were searched for a man who might fill his place, and one Yoshida Iyetsugu, a Rônin of the province of Echizen, being reported to be well versed in the noble science, was sent for to the capital, and proved to be a pupil of Kiyobayashi. The Emperor, having approved him, ordered that the fan of the "Prince of Lions" should be made over to him, and gave him the title of Bungo no Kami, and

commanded that his name in the ring should be Oi-Kazé, the “Driving Wind.” Further, as a sign that there should not be two styles of wrestling, a second fan was given to him bearing the inscription, “A single flavour is a beautiful custom.” The right of acting as umpire in wrestling-matches was vested in his family, that the “Driving Wind” might for future generations preside over athletic sports. In ancient days, the prizes for the three champion wrestlers were a bow, a bowstring, and an arrow: these are still brought into the ring, and, at the end of the bout, the successful competitors go through a variety of antics with them.

To the champion wrestlers—to two or three men only in a generation—the family of the “Driving Wind” awards the privilege of wearing a rope-girdle. In the time of the Shogunate these champions used to wrestle before the Shogun.

At the beginning of the 17th century (AD. 1606) wrestling-matches, as forming a regular part of a religious ceremony, were discontinued. They are still held, however, at the shrines of Kamo, at Kiyôto, and of Kasuga, in Yamato. They are also held at Kamakura every year, and at the shrines of the patron saints of the various provinces, in imitation of the ancient customs.

In the year 1623 one Akashi Shiganosuké obtained leave from the Government to hold public wrestling-matches in the streets of Yedo. In the year 1644 was held the first wrestling-match for the purpose of raising a collection for building a temple. This was done by the priests of Kofukuji, in Yamashiro. In the year 1660 the same expedient was resorted to in Yedo, and the custom of getting up wrestling-matches for the benefit of temple funds holds good to this day.

The following graphic description of a Japanese wrestling-match is translated from the “Yedo Hanjôki”:

“From daybreak till eight in the morning a drum is beaten to announce that there will be wrestling. The spectators rise early for the sight. The adversaries having been settled, the wrestlers enter the ring from the east and from the west. Tall stalwart men are they, with sinews and bones of iron. Like the Gods Niô,⁹ they stand with their arms akimbo, and, facing one another, they crouch in their strength. The umpire watches until the two men draw their breath at the same time, and with his fan gives the signal. They jump up and close with one another, like tigers springing on their prey, or dragons playing with a ball. Each is bent on throwing the other by twisting or by lifting him. It is no mere trial of brute strength it is a tussle of skill against skill. Each of the forty-eight throws is tried in turn. Front left to right, and from right to left, the umpire hovers about, watching for the victory to declare itself. Some of the spectators back the east, others back the west. The patrons of the ring are so excited that they feel the strength tingling within them; they clench their fists, and watch their men, without so much as blinking their eyes. At last one man, east or west, gains the advantage, and the umpire lifts his fan in token of victory. The plaudits of the bystanders shake the neighbourhood, and they throw their clothes or valuables into the ring, to be redeemed afterwards in money; nay, in his excitement, a man will even tear off his neighbour’s jacket and throw it in.”

Before beginning their tussle, the wrestlers work up their strength by stamping their feet and slapping their huge thighs. This custom is derived from the following tale of the heroic or mythological age:

After the seven ages of the heavenly gods came the reign of Tensho Daijin, the Sun Goddess, and first Empress of Japan. Her younger brother, Sosanôô no Mikoto, was a mighty and a brave lucre, but turbulent, and delighted in hunting the deer and the boar. After killing these beasts, he would throw their dead bodies into the sacred hall of his sister, and otherwise defile her dwelling. When he had done this several times, his sister was angry, and hid in the cave called the Rock

⁹ The Japanese Gog and Magog.

Gate of Heaven; and when her face was not seen, there was no difference between the night and the day. The heroes who served her, mourning ever this, went to seek her; but she placed a huge stone in front of the cave, and would not come forth. The heroes, seeing this, consulted together, and danced and played antics before the cave to lure her out. Tempted by curiosity to see the sight, she opened the gate a little and peeped out. Then the hero Tajikaraô, or “Great Strength,” clapping his hands and stamping his feet, with a great effort grasped and threw down the stone door, and, the heroes fetched back the Sun Goddess.¹⁰ As Tajikaraô is the patron god of Strength, wrestlers, on entering the ring, still commemorate his deed by clapping their hands and stamping their feet as a preparation for putting forth their strength.

The great Daimios are in the habit of attaching wrestlers to their persons, and assigning to them a yearly portion of rice. It is usual for these athletes to take part in funeral or wedding processions, and to escort the princes on journeys. The rich wardsmen or merchants give money to their favourite wrestlers, and invite them to their houses to drink wine and feast. Though low, vulgar fellows, they are allowed something of the same familiarity which is accorded to prize-fighters, jockeys, and the like, by their patrons in our own country.

The Japanese wrestlers appear to have no regular system of training; they harden their naturally powerful limbs by much beating, and by butting at wooden posts with their shoulders. Their diet is stronger than that of the ordinary Japanese, who rarely touch meat.

¹⁰ The author of the history called “Kokushi Riyaku” explains this fable as being an account of the first eclipse.