A JAPANESE THOREAU OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

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NOTES FROM A JÔ-SQUARE HUT[2]

CHAPTER I

Of the flowing river the flood ever changeth, on the still pool the foam gathering, vanishing, stayeth not. Such too is the lot of men and of the dwellings of men in this world of ours. Within City-Royal, paved as it were with precious stones, the mansions and houses of high and low, rivalling in length of beam and height of tiled roof, seem builded to last for ever, yet if you search few indeed are those that can boast of their antiquity. One year a house is burnt down, the next it is rebuilded, a lordly mansion falls into ruin, and a mere cottage replaces it. The fate of the occupants is like that of their abodes. Where they lived folk are still numerous, but out of any twenty or thirty you may have known scarce two or three survive. Death in the morning, birth in the evening. Such is man's life—a fleck of foam on the surface of the pool. Man is born and dieth; whence cometh he, whither goeth he? For whose sake do we endure, whence do we draw pleasure? Dweller and dwelling are rivals in impermanence, both are fleeting as the dewdrop that hangs on the petals of the morning-glory. If the dew vanish the flower may stay, but only to wither under the day's sun; the petal may fade while the dew delayeth, but only to perish ere evening.

CHAPTER II

Now since first I had conscious knowledge of the world about me have

1 My friend Mr. Minakata is the most erudite Japanese I have met with—equally learned in the science and literature of the East and of the West. He has frequently contributed to *Nature* and *Notes and Queries*. He now lives near the town of Wakayama in Kishiu. In the second volume of the Life of Sir Harry Parkes, by Mr. S. Lane-Poole and myself (p. 160), will be found an interesting account by Lady Parkes of her husband's visit to the last Daimyô of Wakayama in March, 1870. The narrative ends with the sentence "It was like being in fairyland." The translation has been entirely remade by myself upon the basis of that of Mr. Minakata. The notes, save where otherwise indicated, are his, somewhat remodelled by myself.

2 A 10 feet square hut; the name is explained later on.

some forty Springs and Summers gone by, and of many strange events have I had experience.

On the 28th day of the 4th month of 3 Angen [May 28th, 1177], while a violent storm was raging about the hour of the dog [7–8 p.m.], a fire broke out in the dragon [south-east] quarter of the city and extended to the dog and hog [north-west] quarter as far as the Shuzaku[1] Gate, the Daigoku[2] Hall, the Daigaku ryô,[3] and the Mimbushô[4]—in the course of that one night the whole was reduced to ashes. Folk say the fire began in a cottage used as a temporary hospital situated in the lane known as Higuchi-tomi. Favoured by the wind the conflagration spread fanwise. Distant houses were smothered in the smoke, the nearer spaces were enveloped in coils of flame. The air was filled with clouds of dust, which reflected the blaze, so that the whole neighbourhood was steeped in a glow of fire amid which tongues of flame darted over the adjoining streets. Amid such horrors who could retain a steady mind? Some, choked by the smoke, fell to the ground; others in their bewilderment ran straight into the flames trying to save their property, and were burnt to death; great stores of wealth were utterly destroyed—in very truth the loss was incalculable. Sixteen mansions of *kugyo* were consumed, and innumerable smaller houses. A full third of the city was destroyed. Thousands of persons perished, horses and cattle beyond count. How foolish are all the purposes of men—they build their houses, spending their treasure and wasting their energies, in a city exposed to such perils!

CHAPTER III

Again, on the 29th of the hare [4th] month of 4 Jijô [May 25th, 1180] a hurricane devastated the city from the Nakamikado Kyôgoku[5] quarter as far as Rokujô[6]. Not a single house was left standing within the circuit of several wards. Some were levelled with the ground, some were left with beams and uprights alone standing, the cross-pieces of the gateways were blown off in some cases and carried three or four *chô* [one chô=360 yards] away, fences were blown down, and neighbouring compounds thus

1 Gate of the Red Sparrow—in the middle of the south face of the Palace at Kyoto.
2 Or Hachishô In, Hall of the Eight Boards of Government.
3 The University of Chinese Learning, etc.
4 One of the Eight Boards—answering nearly to the Home Office.
5 In the northern part of the capital.
6 In the southern part of the capital.

thrown into one. Needless to say, the contents of houses were scattered in all directions, while the shingles filled the air like leaves in Winter, and clouds of dust like smoke obscured the sky and blinded one's eyes. The roar of the wind was fearful, one could not hear a word spoken, the storm seemed a true hell-blast. Not only were houses destroyed, but the numbers of those who were injured or maimed in their attempts to save their dwellings was incalculable. The wind finally veered towards the goat and ape quarter [south-west] and did much harm in that region. It was a whirlwind, but what a one! An extraordinary hurricane! People doubted not it portended some evil of like dimensions.

CHAPTER IV

Again, in the same year in the waterless [6th] month a change of capital was suddenly made, against all expectation. Kyoto had already been the capital for some centuries since its choice by the Mikado Saga [A.D. 810–823].[1]

As there was no sufficient reason for this removal the people were discontented beyond words. Their complaints, however, were of no avail, and the Mikado and his Court betook themselves to Naniwa in Settsu. Who, then, if he regarded the ways of the world, would care to remain in the deserted city? But those who hankered after place and rank and courted great men's favour strove their utmost to forestall their fellows in removing, if only by a single day. Others whose home was lost, whose hopes were frustrated, and whom the world neglected, remained sorrowfully behind. The mansions of those who had vied with each other in the height of their roofs [i.e. in wealth and show] fell into ruin, houses were demolished, and the parts floated down the Yodo to the new city, gardens were turned visibly into mere fields. Even men's dispositions changed, only horses and harness were thought of, and there were none to use ox-drawn carriages. Lands in the south and west rose in demand, and property in the north and eastern provinces fell in value.

CHAPTER V

At this juncture I had occasion to visit the new capital, and found it too confined for the due laying out of streets and avenues. To the north lay

1 Kyoto was really founded by Kwammu in 784, but the next Mikado, Heizei, resided for three years at the former capital, Nara (hence he is often known as the Nara Mikado), so that the founding of Kyoto is ascribed to his successor, Saga. The removal was decreed at the instance of the famous Taira no Kyomori.

the slopes of a chain of hills, on the south it was washed by the sea. The roar of the waves sounded everlastingly in one's ears, the briny gales blew everlastingly in one's face, the Palace right among the hills reminded one of the Round Timber Palace,[1] though it was not without design and elegance.

Daily were dwellings taken to pieces and sent down the river to be rebuilt in the new City-Royal, yet many were the open spaces and few the completed mansions, and while the old capital was desolate the new town was unfinished, and men seemed to themselves to be drifting with the clouds. The old inhabitants were unhappy because their property was lost, and the newcomers had to live amid the unpleasant bustle of construction. As one scanned the ways one saw carriage-folk on horseback and vestments of state and elegance replaced by common tunics. The grace of manners of the former capital all at once vanished, and country fashions reigned. Such were clear signs of public disturbance; every day grew the agitation, and the minds of folk became unsettled. Nor was this confusion without cause, and when the Winter came the people could not be restrained from returning to Kyoto. But what became of the houses that had been pulled down and removed? We know not, but this we know, that the old state of the city was not restored. According to dim tradition, in the wise days of old the sovrans[2] ruled compassionately, their palaces had but thatched roofs, nor were the eaves adjusted to them [no verandahs – a luxury?]. When no smoke was seen ascending from the hearths the taxes were remitted. One knows only too well how ill these modern days compare with the days of yore.

CHAPTER VI

Once more—it would be in Yôwa [A.D. 1181], but so long ago is it one

1 The Empress Saimei died in A.D. 661 at Asakura in Tosa, where she was at the head of an army assembled to assist the Koreans against China. Her son Tenji lived in the same place, mourning for her, and ordered his Palace to be constructed of kuroki (timber with the bark on), which later mikados imitated on ascending the throne as a symbol of frugality and humility (a Chinese, not a pure Japanese idea). He made (or caused some court poet to make) the following verse on the occasion:—

Asakura ya
ki no marudono ni
ware woreba
nanori wo shitsutsu
yuku ha taga ko zo! (Mannyôshiu).

[In a rude palace, at Asakura, of round unbarked timber, dwell I, and as men pass shouting their names, I ask whose sons they be.] The meaning of this quintain is not apparent.

2 The Mikado Nintoku (A.D. 313–399) is more particularly referred to.

cannot be sure—for two whole years a famine raged in the land, a very miserable time. Either there were droughts in Spring and Summer, or floods and storms in Autumn and Winter. So the evil went on, and of the five grains[1] no crops were reaped. To till the land in Spring was vain, in Summer to plant was foolishness, in Autumn there was no reaping, in Winter nothing to store. So that many people in the different provinces deserted the land and crossed the frontiers [of their proper districts?], or fled from their homes to pick up a living among the wild hills. Many prayers of various kinds were offered up, and unusual rites were practised, but without avail. The town, of course, depends upon the country, but nothing came from the country, and so it was that the city lost, so to speak, its countenance.[2] While folk begged for aid they offered their goods recklessly for sale, but caught never a purchaser. Gold was held cheap and grain dear. Beggars whined in misery by the roadsides, dinning one's ears with their cries, and so in misery came to an end the first of those two years.

CHAPTER VII

The following year it was hoped matters would mend, but instead a plague was added to the famine, and more and more vain the prayers offered up appeared to be. It seemed as if the whole population would starve to death like the fish in the proverbial pool [none of which survive on its drying up]. At last even men who wore hats and whose feet were covered and who were well dressed began to go around begging from house to house. Such poor wretches would often fall to the ground from weakness as one looked at them wondering how they could stand on their feet. The number of those who perished of hunger is incalculable, they lay dead under walls and by roadsides, and as there were none to carry away the bodies the air was filled with the stink of their corruption, and sorry indeed were the sights that met one's eyes. Of course, the banks of the river[3] were impassable for horses and vehicles [because they were crowded with corpses]. Even the poor woodcutters lost their vigour, and faggots became scarce, so that men in their helplessness destroyed their own dwellings and took the wood to market, but the value of a man's load was

1 Rice, wheat, *awa* (*Setaria*, Italian millet), *kibi* (*Sorghum, Panicum miliaceum*), and *biye* (*P. frumentaceum*).

2 Misao tsukuru.

3 The dry parts of the bed of the river are meant—foreshores, a sort of no man's land. The river, of course, is the Kamogawa.

not enough to buy a single day's food. A strange thing was that among these faggots were to be seen pieces of wood painted with red lead or showing patches of gold and silver foil. On inquiry it was discovered that destitute wretches had plundered the temples of images of Buddha and broken sacred vessels and ornaments for mere firewood. That one should be born into such a world of dross and evil as to witness so sinful a deed, which I, alas, did!

CHAPTER VIII

Pitiful scenes there were. There was a sort of rivalry in death among those men or women who could not bear to be separated. What food one of such a pair procured by begging would be reserved to keep the other alive, while the first one was content to die. Both sexes displayed this tender self-sacrifice. With parents and children it was almost the rule for the parent to die first. And there were cases in which infants were found lying by the corpses of their dead parents and trying to suck the mother's breast.

CHAPTER IX

In the great temple of Ninwa [Benevolence and Peace] was a chief priest of the Jison [Compassion and Respect] temple named Ôkurakyô Ryûgyô, who, moved by commiseration for the countless numbers who died, made arrangements, with the help of other saintly men, to write on the foreheads of the dead the holy character *a* [Sanskrit अ] as a seal to Buddha. He kept count of the bodies marked during the fourth and fifth months, and found in the portion of the capital bound by Ichijô on the north and Kujô on the south, Kyôgoku on the east and Sujaku on the west, altogether about 42,300 corpses. To these must be added many others in different quarters of the city and in the suburbs to give a correct idea of the vast numbers of deaths that took place at this time. Lastly, must be counted in the numbers of those who perished in the provinces. Not very long before, under the Mikado Sutoku, in the period Chôshô [A.D. 1132–4], a like catastrophe occurred, but the details are unknown to me – what I saw with my own eyes was strange and terrible enough.

Again, in 2 Genryaku [A.D. 1185[1]] a great earthquake occurred. It was not an ordinary one. Hills were shattered and dammed up the rivers, the

1 Bramsen gives Genryaku one year only: 1 Bunji is probably intended, the nengo were sometimes changed in the course of the year.

sea toppled over and flooded the shore-lands, the earth gaped and water roared up through the rents, cliffs were cleft and the fragments rolled down into the valleys, boats sculled along the beach were tossed upon the bore, horses on the roads lost the ground beneath their hoofs; all round the capital, it is hardly necessary to add, in various places not a single building was left entire; house or temple, tower or chapel,[1] some were rent and cracked, others were thrown down; the dust rose into the air like volumes of smoke. The roar of the quaking earth mingled with the crash of falling buildings was like thunder. To remain within doors was to run the risk of being crushed; to rush out of doors was to be swallowed up in some gaping fissure, unless you had wings to fly up into the air, or could ride on the clouds like a dragon. In the midst of all these horrors one felt that of all dreadful things an earthquake is the most dreadful. Amid all this ruin I will mention a piteous case. The son of a samurai, six or seven years of age only, had built himself a little play-hut under a shed against a wall, in which he was amusing himself, when suddenly the wall collapsed and buried him flat and shapeless under its ruins, his eyes protruding an inch from their orbits. It was sad beyond words to see his parents embracing his dead body and hear their unrestrained cries of distress. Piteous indeed it was to see even a samurai, stricken down with grief for his son thus miserably perished, forgetting his dignity in the extremity of his grief.

Such violent shocks did not last long, but the aftershocks continued and twenty or thirty times a day were repeated with a force that under ordinary circumstances would have been felt as most alarming. This went on for some weeks, the shocks diminishing in frequency from four or five to two or three in a day, or even one only, with intervals of quiet days, but for three months the disturbance continued. The other three of the four great calamities, flood, fire, and storm, leave the great earth almost unchanged – not so earthquakes.

Long ago in the period Saikô [A.D. 854–6] it is said there was a great earthquake which did vast damage, and amongst other calamities threw down the august head of the great Buddha of the temple of Tôdai. But that earthquake was far from being as disastrous as the one described, and people accordingly for some time talked of nothing but the misery of this world and the foulness and frivolity of the human heart. Days and months, however, summed up and years passed, and after a time no one so much as spoke a word about the great earthquake of Genryaku.

1 Tomb-chapels or mortuary shrines.

CHAPTER X

What is so hateful in this life of ours is its vanity and triviality, both with regard to ourselves and our dwellings, as we have just seen. According to our position so are our troubles, countless in any case. A low man under high protection may have his moments of delight, but not an abiding happiness. For he must restrain his tears when in distress, his natural emotions must be kept down, he is always uneasy as to promotion or disgrace, standing or sitting [constantly] subject to alarms, he is like a sparrow that finds itself close to a hawk's nest. If a poor man lives next door to a rich one he is oppressed with shame at his shabby appearance, and tempted to flatter and cringe before his neighbour. He is never quite at ease; as he looks upon his wife and children and servants he envies his wealthy neighbour of whose contempt for him he gets wind. Should he live in a crowded quarter he can scarcely escape if a fire break out; is his house situate in a remote district, it is hard to get at and the ways are infested by thieves. The great man grows avaricious, the solitary man is disliked by the world. Wealth, too, brings cares from which the poor man is free. To depend on the protection of another man is to be his slave, to protect other folk is to be the slave of your own emotions. To follow the world is a hardship to oneself, to disregard it is to be counted a madman. Where or how shall we find peace even for a moment, and afford our heart refreshment even for a single second?[1]

CHAPTER XI

For many years I lived in the house of my paternal grandmother. When that relation was interrupted [death of grandmother] my health suffered, and I could no longer remain there. Just over 30, I built myself a house to suit my own ideas, one-tenth of the size of my former home. It contained one room, in fact it was hardly a house at all. It had a kind of wall, but a gate I could not afford. The uprights were bamboos, the construction was like a shed for vehicles. When the snow fell or the wind blew it was scarcely safe. It was close to the river-bed, in the way of floods and handy for thieves.[2] There I passed my time reflecting on this world of nothingness. Thirty years and more thus slipped by, during which I

1 The characters seem to mean "while a pearl (or gem) tinkles" (as part of a beadlace or chain).

2 Lit. 'white-wave [fellows],' from a place so named in ancient China much haunted by robbers. So we might say 'Hounslow Heath fellows.'

surveyed the vicissitudes of my wretched life in relation to events around me. Attaining my 50th Spring, I left my house and turned my back on the world. As I had never wife or child there was nothing to hinder me. I was no official, I had no emoluments; what interest had I in the world? And so I lay idly five more Springs and Autumns amid the clouds of Mount Ôhara.

When the 60th year of my life, now vanishing as a dewdrop, approached, anew I made me an abode, a sort of last leaf as it were, just as a traveller might run himself up a shelter for a single night, or a decrepit silkworm weave its last cocoon. This compared with the dwelling I had in my middle period was less than one-hundredth of its size; as I wax in years my lodging wanes in space. It is not an ordinary sort of hut I live in. It measures only 10 feet square, and is under 7 feet in height. As I had no fancy for any particular place I did not fasten it to the ground. I prepared a foundation, and on it raised a framework which I roofed over with thatch, cramping the parts with crooks so that I might remove it easily if ever the whim took me to dislike the locality. The labour of removing, how slight it would be!—a couple of carts would suffice to carry the whole of the materials, and the expense of their hire would be that of the whole building.

CHAPTER XII

Now since I hid me in the recesses of Mount Hino the manner of my abode is this. To the south juts out a movable sun-screen [a sort of pent-roof?] with a matting of split bamboos, bound together parallel-wise. Westwards a small shrine with a Buddhist shelf and a picture of Amida so placed that the space between the eyebrows shines in the rays of the setting sun. Before the curtain-doors of the shrine are fixed the figures of Fugen and Fudô.[1] Above the paper-paned sliding doors of the north side runs a small shelf, on which stand three or four black leather boxes containing collections of Japanese poetry, books on music, and such works as the Wôjôyô shiu [book on Buddhist Paradise]. Besides these is a *sô* [sort of koto or flat harp with thirteen strings] on one side and a *biwa* [lute] on the other side — what are known as bent harp and jointed lute. Along the east side are spread large bundles of bracken fern, which with bundles of straw make me a couch. There is a window opening in the east wall with a writing-desk. Near the head of the couch is a brazier to burn faggots in. North of the hut is a small garden surrounded by a low hedge of

1 This description of the interior is not very clear. I have done my best with it.

wattled branches. Here I grow some medicinal herbs. Such is the fashion of my temporary cabin.

CHAPTER XIII

To describe the situation I must tell you that to the south is a bamboo pipe and a reservoir made of piled up stones. A copse stands close by the eaves, so that firewood is not far to fetch. The name of the place is Toyama. All traces of man are hidden by the coils of *masaki* [*Euonymus japonica,* Thbg., var. *radicans*]. The valley is thickly wooded, but open to the west, so that the place is not unfitted for philosophic meditation. In the Spring I can gaze upon the festoons of the wistaria, fine to see as purple clouds. When the west wind grows fragrant with its scent the note of the *hototogisu* is heard as if to guide me towards the Shide[1] hill; in Autumn the shrill song of the cicada fills my ears, sounding like a regret for his cast-off moult or may be a complaint of this mortal world;[2] in Winter I watch the snow-drifts pile and vanish, and am led to reflect upon the ever waxing and waning volume of the world's sinfulness.

When I get tired of reciting prayers or of reading the scriptures I can rest at will; no one is by to prevent me, no friend to reproach me. I have made no vow of silence, but my lonely life stops my lips' play. I do not need to trouble myself about the strict observance of the commandments, for living as I do in complete solitude how should I be tempted to break them? When I bend my steps towards the white waves of the stream I watch the morning boats cleaving the flood in their passage to and fro across the river, and recall to mind the beautiful verse of the acolyte Mansei;[3] at eventide, when I hear the rustle of the laurel leaves[4] under the breeze, my fancy carries my thoughts to the waters of Jinyô,[5] and I touch my lute in the manner of Gentotoku.[6] When my spirits are exuberant and my

1 A hill in Hades crossed by souls on their way to Paradise or Hell. The *hototogisu* is the *Cuculus poliocephalus.*

2 A pun on *utsusomi,* which means 'mortal,' and also an insect's empty moult.

3 Or Mansami, the religious name of Kasa no Ason Maro, a poet of the eighth century.—M.K.

The allusion is to some verses of his—

Asaborake
kogi-yuku fune no
shiranami,

"the white waves left in the track of the boat sculled forth at daybreak."

4 *Katsura—Cercidephyllum japonicum.*

5 A place in China mentioned in a poem by the celebrated Hakurakuten on a girl famed for her skill on the lute.

6 Minamoto no Tsunenobu, the founder of the Katsura school of lutists.—M.K.

imagination active, I liken the music the wind makes among the pine groves to the melody known as the Winds of Autumn, or the murmur of running waters to the air of the Flowing Fount. I have no skill in the arts of song or music, but I do not strive to please other men's ears, 'tis but to nourish my own mind that in my solitude I play and sing.

At the bottom of my hill stands another cabin, made of wattled bush-work. There the hill-ward dwells. He has a son, a youth who sometimes comes to see me, and we ramble about together. He is 16 and I am 60, yet we enjoy each other's company despite the difference in years. Sometimes we gather *tsubana*[1] shoots, or the berries of the *iwanashi*,[2] the bud-like bulbs of the yam,[3] or the leaves of the *seri*.[4] Sometimes we roam among the tanks for the paddy-fields that lie around the foot of the hill to pick up fallen rice-tufts to make *hogumi*[5] of. On sunshiny days we climb the peak of my hill, and I gaze upon the distant skies that loom over my old home, over Kowada's hill, Fushimi's town, over Toba and Hatsukashi. No owner claims any rights here, so I am in full possession of my pleasure.

When the fancy takes me to look further afield I need not undergo the labour of walking. I follow the line of hill-tops, cross Sumiyama and Kasatori, and pray at Iwana's[6] shrine or bow before that of Ishima, or force my way amid the jungles of Awazu, not forgetting to do honour to the monuments of the old sage Semimaru[7]—without moving a step. Or I cross Tanokami's stream and seek out the tomb of Sarumaru; on the way home, according to the year's time, we gather cherry sprays in full blossom, or ruddy-leaved autumn maple, or collect fern fronds, or pick up

1 *Imperata arundinacea,* Cyr., var. *Koenigii,* Hack., a sort of grass, the young shoots of which are edible.—M.K.

2 Lit. 'rock-pear'—*Epigea asiatica,* Max.— M.K.

3 *Dioscorea japonica.*—M.K.,

4 *Œnanthe stolonifera,* D.C., Max.—M.K.

5 A kind of coarse matting.

6 Here is a shrine of Kwannon.

7 A celebrated recluse and minstrel, totally blind, who flourished in the tenth century. A courtier named Hakuga no Sammi invited him to leave his retreat and live in the capital. Semimaru sent a quintain by way of answer—

Yo no naka wa
totomo kakutomo
sugushiten
miya mo waraya mo
hateshi nakereba.

"In this world of ours, palace or straw-roofed hut, what matters it—wherever we dwell will there be yet something unattained." Now the blind poet was the only man who knew the secret modes of the Ryusen (Flowing Fount manner) and the Takuboku (Woodpecker manner), and the nobleman for three years spent every night, fair or foul, in the neighbourhood of the hut in the hope of hearing these. One full-moon

fallen nuts; and some of these treasures I humbly present to Amida, and some I keep for presents.

On tranquil nights I gaze upon the moon's orb shining in through my window, and think of the great figures of the men of old, or am moved to tears that drench my sleeves by the mournful cries of the monkeys in the neighbouring thickets. I note the fireflies in the jungle, and seem to see the flares of far-off Makijima,[1] while the patter of rain at daybreak reminds me of the rattle of a storm amid the leaves of the woods. The *horohoro* of the *yamadori*[2] makes me wonder whether 'tis my father or my mother that crieth, and the tameness of the deer that roam under the peak tells me how far removed I am from the world of men.

On cold nights I often stir up the ashes of my brazier to renew the embers, the comfort of an old man just waking from a nap. My wild hill is no dreadful place, but the melancholy hootings of the owls give it one of the characteristics of hilly tracts, whereof the aspects are so various, giving rise to many reflexions in the minds of learned and thoughtful men.

CHAPTER XIV

When I first came to this place I did not intend to stay long, but now I have dwelt here these five years. My cabin has weathered with the course

night in the eighth month he was there, and the blind minstrel, thinking himself alone, sang the following verses:—

Ausaka no
seki no arashi no
hageshiki ni
shiite zo itaru
yo wo sugosu tote.

"Notwithstanding the gales that roar down the pass of Ausaka I still do pass here the days of this present life of mine (i.e. the middle of the three existences—past, present, and future)."

On hearing the chant Hakuga began to weep. The singer meanwhile soliloquised, "How I should love to converse with anyone who should visit me on so fair a night as this!" Then Hakuga went in and told his story, whereupon the old man was delighted and instructed him in all the lore of the lute. (江談抄, Kodanshô, eleventh century, in Hanawa's 群書類従, Gunshô ruishiu, ed. 1902, vol. xvii, pp. 592—3.)—M. K.

1 Of the fishing-boats by the island of Maki.

2 The copper pheasant. The Buddhist saint Gyogi, 行基, has a verse upon this—

Yamadori no
horohoro to naku
koe kikeba
chichi ka to zo omou
haha ka to zo omou.

"When the copper pheasant uttereth its cry 'horohoro,' I listen and wonder whether 'tis my father who crieth or whether 'tis my mother who crieth."—M.K. [The allusion is, of course, to the doctrine of transmigration.]

of time, the eaves are loaded with dead leaves, the ground it stands on is green with moss. From time to time news of what takes place in City-Royal reaches me in my solitude, and I hear continually of the deaths of persons of importance; of smaller men who disappear the roll is endless. I hear, too, of houses burnt down in numbers, but my humble cabin remains a safe shelter for me. 'Tis cramped, indeed, but it has a bed for me to sleep on at night, and a mat to sit on during the day, so I have no reason to be discontented. The hermit-crab is satisfied with a narrow shell for its home, which shows that it knows its own nature; the osprey dwells on high crags because it fears man. So is it with me. A man who knows himself and also the world he lives in has nothing to ask for, no society to long for; he aims only at a quiet life, and makes his happiness in freedom from annoyance. But those who live in the world, what do they do? They build mansions, but not for their own pleasure; 'tis for their wives and families, for their relatives and friends, for their masters or teachers, or to store their property, or to house cattle and horses. Now I have built my cabin for myself, not for any other man. And why have I done so? As the world now goes I find no congenial minds in it, not even a servant to trust to. What profit, then, were a larger house to me? whom should I invite to it? whom could I take into it to serve me? One usually seeks the friendship of rich men, and thinks most of public personages; men of good hearts and honest souls are not sought after. More wisely, I make friends of lutes and flutes. One who serves another is apt to be always thinking of rewards and punishments, he hankers after favours, and is not content with mere good treatment and kindness and the peace that ensueth. To me, then, it seems better to be one's own master and one's own servant. If there is something to be done I prefer to use my own body to do it. This may be bothersome, but easier than to see that other folk do it for you. If I have to walk, I walk; it means some toil, but less than that of looking after horses or carriages. In one body I possess two servants: my hands do what I want, and my feet bear me where I would go—both serve me just as I desire them. Again, my mind knows exactly what the body has to endure, so it lets it rest when tired, and does not task it save when fresh and vigorous. And when it does use the body it does not abuse it, nor would the mind be put out by the body being sometimes in a dull mood. And besides, plenty of exercise and plenty of work are good for the body; too much idleness is bad for the body. In addition, to impose a burden upon another man, to constrain his will, is a sinful thing—we have no right to take possession of another's powers.

CHAPTER XV

About my clothing and food I have something to say. Wistaria cloth and hempen fabrics are enough to hide my nakedness, sprouts of *Imperata* grass and nuts picked up on the hills suffice to sustain my body. As I don't live in the world I need not care about my appearance; in the absence of luxuries even coarse fare is sweet. I do not address these observations to wealthy folk, I merely compare my former way of life with my present one. Since I got quit of society and forsook the world I know nothing of envy or fear. I commit my life to the care of Heaven, without regret and without anxiety. I liken my body to a cloud in the sky; I neither put my trust in it nor despise it. All the joy of my existence is concentrated around the pillow which giveth me nightly rest, all the hope of my days I find in the beauties of nature that ever please my eyes.

CHAPTER XVI

Now the three realms of existence—past, present, and future—depend on the soul only. If the soul is ill at ease, of what profit are cattle and horses and the seven treasures? Palaces and mansions and stately towers give no pleasure. On the other hand, in this solitary cabin I know the fullest joy. When I chance to go to City-Royal I may feel some shame on account of my beggarly appearance, yet when I come back to my hut I feel nothing but pity for the men who squirm amid the dusts of the common world. If anyone doubt me, I beg him to consider how birds and fishes do pass their lives. Do fish ever tire of the simple water they dwell in? As we are not fish we cannot say. Do not the birds always long for their woods and copses? Again, as we are not birds we cannot tell. So it is with those who choose the life of a recluse—only those who do choose it can know its joys.

To resume. My life is now like the declining moon approaching the edge of the hill which is to hide it. Ere long I must face the three realms of darkness. What deeds in the past shall I have to plead for there? What the Buddha has taught to men is this—Thou shalt not cleave to any of the things of this world. So 'tis a sin even to grow fond of this straw-thatched cabin, and to find happiness in this life of peace is a hindrance to salvation. Why, then, should I let the days be filled with the vanity of exultation in an empty joy?

In the peace of daybreak I once meditated upon this doctrine, and this is the question I asked myself—"You have fled from the world to live the life

of a recluse amid the wild woods and hills, thus to bring peace to your soul and walk in the way of the Buddha. You have the appearance of a saint, but your soul is full of turbidities. Your cabin is a slur on the memory of the habitation of Jômyô Koji[1]; in virtue you are below even Shuri Handoku.[2] Is your degradation the result of your poverty and mean condition, your inheritance from a previous existence, or have your trains of thought destroyed your mind?" What answer could my soul give? None. I could but move my tongue as it were mechanically, and twice or thrice repeat involuntarily the Buddha's holy name. I could do no more.

Written on the last day of the yayoi month of 2 Kenryaku [May 1st, 1185] by the Sômon Ren-in in his cabin on Toyama.

Alas! the moonlight
Behind the hill is hidden
In gloom and darkness.
Oh, would her radiance ever
My longing eyes rejoiced!

[In Dr. Aston's "History of Japanese Literature" a translation of part of these "Notes" will be found. Another version—to my mind very imperfect—

1 Koji, 居士, parishioner, the 'bourgeois' of Hindoo society (Eitel). Jômyô is Vimalakîrtti, a fabulous person (?), said to have lived contemporaneously with the Buddha in the city of Viyari. He excused himself from attendance on the Buddha on the ground of sickness. Many holy men are sent to inquire into the case, but Jômyô eludes them all. At last Mañdjuśrî appears and engages the pretended sick man in a subtle discourse. Upon this Jomyô performs a miracle—in his one room he manages to find seats for all the 3,000 saints and 500 disciples of the Buddha. In addition, at the request of some of those present, he divides in half the remote universe of Mudô (*akchôbhya*, 'motionless'—containing denizens represented by a number consisting of unity followed by seventeen ciphers), and brings them, too, into the room, with the Buddha himself preaching to them. In the fourth century a Chinese traveller in India saw this very room, and found it measured 10 feet square (*hôjô*). Chômei borrowed the name for his own hut; but it is not the hut, after all, that makes the saint.—M.K.

2 Shuri Handoku was the most foolish of all the disciples of Buddha. He forgot not only his family name, but even his own personal name. Popular rumour credited him with carrying a tablet hung round his neck with his name thereon. After his death a kind of ginger (*Zingiber myoga*, Rose.) grew on his grave, which makes those who eat it forget everything. This story is based upon the name 名荷, the characters of which mean 'name-bearing,' i.e. carrying away the name. *Suri* or *shuri*, it may be mentioned, means 'small'; *handoku*, 'path.'

Some additional remarks by the Rev. S. Takafuji, a well-known doctor of the Avatanisaka system:—"The mother of Handoku was the wife of a wealthy man, with one of whose slaves she eloped, and in the course of time gave birth to two sons. Her parents left all their wealth to the boys, after which the elder one became a disciple of the Buddha and attained the rank of arhat, transferring his share of the inheritance to the younger one, Handoku. The latter refused the gift, and desired to be instructed in the law, but as he was found unable to remember a single clause of the sûtra he was set to study he was expelled. On this he wept and was pitied by the Buddha, who gave him instruction on the doctrine of Nirvana, whereupon he became also an arhat."

has been published, I find, in the Trans. of the As. Soc. of Japan of 1892.]

THE LIFE OF KAMONO CHÔMEI[1]

In youth he was known as Kiku Dayu [Master Chrysanth], also as Minami Dayu (the south [quarter] Master). For generations his family had furnished wardens to the shrine of Kamo in Yamashiro. In the period Ôhô he was promoted to the junior lower fifth rank. In the next reign [of Takakura] he asked for but was refused the Kamo wardenship. Annoyed at this failure he shaved his head, and took the religious name of Ren-in. In the reign of the second Toba, when the Chamber of Poesy was instituted, he was offered a seat, which he accepted, but after a short time resigned. At a later period he went to visit the Shôgun Sanetomo at Kamakura, but nothing came of the visit and he returned to Kyoto, whence he betook himself to retirement among the neighbouring hills. There he dwelt contentedly enough and attained the age of 63. He was a good musician, a student of Buddhism, and a follower of the philosophy of Ch'wangtzu. He wrote the Hôjôki, the charm of which is still as much felt and admired as it was hundreds of years ago.

NOTES ON CHÔMEI BY MINAKATA KUMAGUSU

The god of Kamo is said to have been the offspring of a thunder-god and a woman. When Kyoto was founded the shrine became an important one.

On renouncing the world in consequence of his failure to obtain the wardenship of the shrine he sent the following verse to a certain recluse:—

Izuku yori
hito wa irikemu
Makuzu hara
akikaze fukishi
michi yori zo koshi.

"From wherever he may have made his way [to the real realm—the way of Buddha, a religious life], he hath come, 'tis certain, by a path o'erblown by autumn winds across the waste o'ergrown with *kuzu* [*Pueraria*]." The

1 Not Kamo Chômei; the *no* is as necessary as any *von* or *de*. Nor must Chômei be read *japonicè*—Nagaakira.