

FOREWORD

SOME years ago, on becoming a dweller by these picturesque shores—the present-day version of the once “mighty city of the *Shōgunate*, the ancient seat of feudal power,” many and frequent were the expeditions made into ‘Undiscovered Kamakura.’ Aware that these fascinating and apparently unexplored regions were teeming with landmarks of a long-vanished civilization, with history and the phantoms of dead centuries entwining every cave and stone and tree, it soon became manifest that whatever information one might wish to elicit must be sought elsewhere than in the few and scanty accounts that appear to be extant in the English language. Hence by extracting intelligence from many and varied sources—a labour of love extending over several years—I venture to send these notes to the press in the hope that other enquiring spirits may exist who would appreciate the charm and romance of these old-world nooks and corners if the history attached to them and their quaint legends could be rendered available.

The main fount of information regarding Kamakura’s thrilling and momentous past is the ‘*Azuma Kagami*’ (Mirror of the East). This most important work is a detailed record of fifty-one volumes, extending over a period of eighty-five years, from the 4th year of *Chishō* to the 3rd of *Bunyei*; 1180–1266. Another valuable source is the ‘*Shimpen Kamakura Shi*’ (Description of Kamakura)—whose ten volumes were compiled by a scholar of the time named Tsunehisa Kawai, with various

associates, at the command of Lord Mitsukuni of Mito: a work abounding in illustrations and containing a preface written by one of the authors in the year 1684. A third most valuable publication is the '*Sagami-no-kuni Fudoki*,' (Description of the natural features of the Province of Sagami). This book, also illustrated, is on a minute and extensive scale, its contents from vol. 58 to vol. 106 give exhaustive information regarding the Kamakura district, the remaining sections being concerned with other parts of the Province of Sagami. The '*Fudoki*' was compiled by a committee under the presidency of a celebrated savant of the Tokugawa régime named Hayashi; the undertaking was begun in 1830, its completion occupying a period of twelve years.

In preparing the present humble attempt it is hoped that mistakes and discrepancies have been avoided, but in cases of error—that 'hardy plant that flourisheth in every soil,' the customary indulgence must be craved.

As Kamakura is so closely associated with the great saint and reformer of the 13th century, Nichiren, a brief sketch of his eventful and dramatic career has been included.

It is surprising to what extent the interest and imagination may be stimulated by study of the works of art and Buddhist figures that are still treasured by these ancient temples—some possessed of great beauty, and in not a few instances of an antiquity almost fabulous. Sanctified by the worship of centuries, and in many cases originally credited with occult powers, these venerable and hoary deities should be approached in a due spirit of reverence, as sacred emblems of the convictions of a creed that has 'shaped the nobler courses of human'

conduct for thousands of years.' According to the Buddhist poem—"Obscured by mists and shadows, many are the paths winding up the mountain-side; but when the summit is attained, the pure beams of the full-moon pour their radiance upon every wanderer alike."

Lafcadio Hearn has so exquisitely written of Enoshima that after the gossamer of his magic pen it would seem sacrilege to attempt any description of the fairy islet—born of legend, dedicated to the Sea-goddess Benten, and with its rocky heart pierced by the great mysterious cavern of the Dragon that is said to penetrate even to the sleeping fires of distant Fuji: the 'Sea-girt City of Pearl' that casts a spell upon all pilgrims to its forest-shadowed heights, and seems to rightfully belong to the kingdom of fantasy, with no visible link to the material realities of the present prosaic age.

It is hoped that idealisation has been avoided: the inevitable *couleur de rose* that is always hard to lose sight of in venturing to write of what makes an irresistible appeal to one's own instincts. Regarding this subject the same prince of writers concerning things Japanese has said:

"To view men or nature with delight we must see them through illusions, subjective or objective. How they appear to us depends upon the ethical conditions within us. Happiest he who from birth to death sees ever through some beautiful haze of the soul—best of all the haze of love, which like the radiance of this Orient day, turns common things to gold."

I. M.

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