

TOMB OF YORITOMO

“But kings and mightiest potentates must die;
For that's the end of human misery”

A short distance to the east of Hachiman is a wooded eminence called Okurayama: here, in a lonely grove high upon the hill-side, lies the historic site where the great Yoritomo, founder of Kamakura, was buried. Embowered by tall forest trees, whose interlacing boughs cast a tracery of heavy shadows upon the mossy sward beneath, it is a beautiful and tranquil spot, and well befitting the long sleep of a hero.

The tomb is impressive in its extreme simplicity. Enclosed within a massive stone fence is a stone pagoda-shaped monument of some five feet in height, heavily coated with the rich velvet of dark green moss; a stone lantern stands on either side, and before it an incense-burner for offerings to the soul of the departed; these simple emblems are all that mark the sepulchre of one of the greatest warriors and statesmen Japan has ever known, and one of the greatest names of the most heroic period of Japanese history. Upon the level ground below—now a net-work of ricefields and gardens—was situated Yoritomo's official residence; it is recorded that during his lifetime the family shrine was erected upon this terrace on the hillside where his monument still exists. In course of time the shrine disappeared and the tomb was gradually falling into decay; but in 1779



Tomb of Yoritomo.

Prince Shimazu came to the rescue—restoring and embellishing this important link to those early days when Kamakura was at the zenith of her glory. Prior to that time the tomb was but three feet high, but at the Prince's instigation it was raised to its present height; the fence was added, with the stone lanterns, and also the font for the holy water of purification.

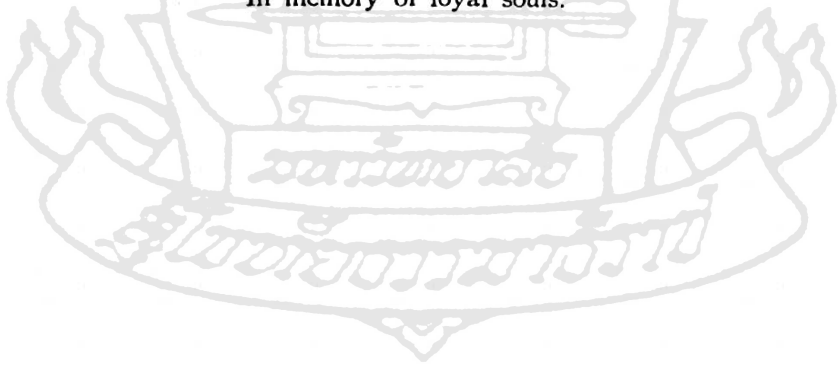
It is recorded in ancient writings that after the death of Yoritomo in 1199 it was customary for the Hōjō Regent, and many other distinguished personages, to repair to this tomb to do homage to the illustrious departed. To the right of the plateau upon which the monument is situated, a small and precipitous track ascends the hill: this leads into a comparatively broad and easy path gently winding upwards to the tombs of two other important functionaries belonging to the same epoch. However steep this track be considered too steep and forbidding, a short distance to the right (from below) lie two imposing flights of steps spanned by large stone *torii*, which form the orthodox approach to these historic monuments.

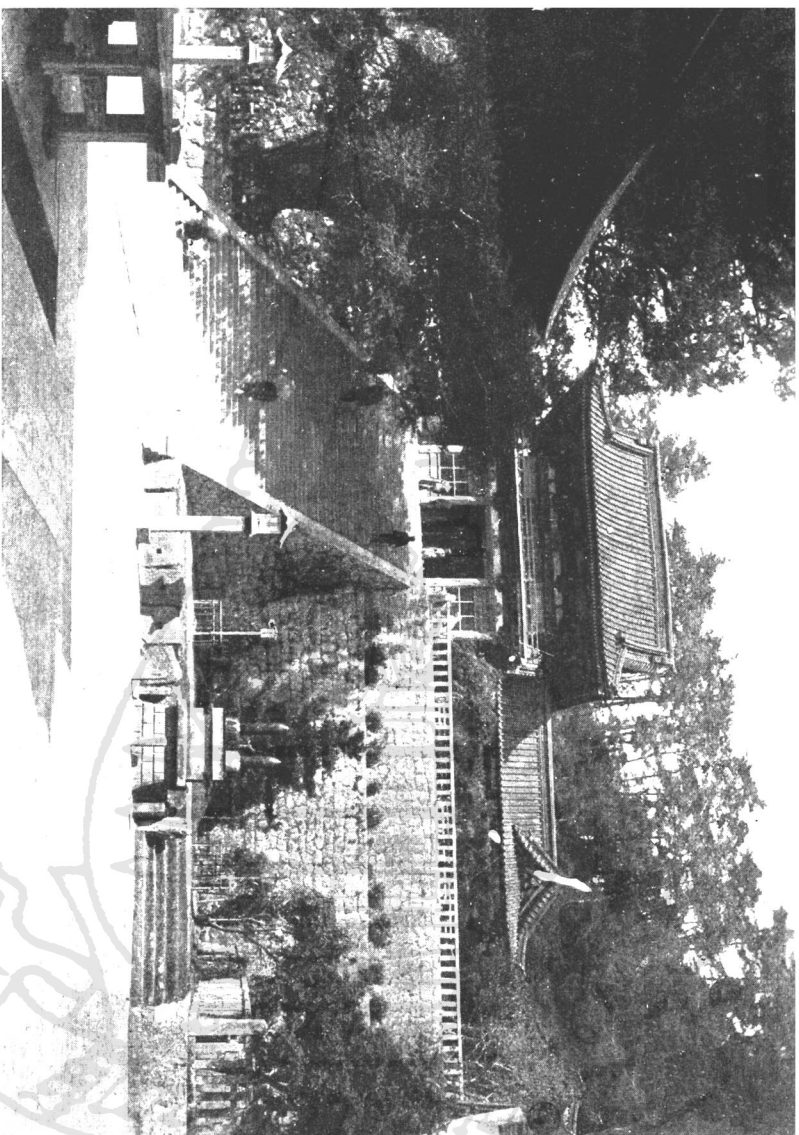
The cave on the left contains the ashes of Yoritomo's celebrated counsellor Oye Hiromoto. This distinguished scholar is said to have been the most important factor in the conception and organization of the Kamakura system: indeed, according to some historians, without his assistance and wise counsels Yoritomo would hardly have risen to fame. When the *Shōgunate* was first established Oye Hiromoto held the position of supreme adviser to the *Shogun*: but the power was gradually assumed by Yoritomo's father-in-law—Hōjō Tokimasa. This great statesman and legislator died in the same

year as Yoritomo's widow Masako, 1225, at the age of 78; he is said to be an ancestor of the house of Prince Mōri: to the left of the enclosure stands a stone monument upon which his history and virtues are recorded. The cave on the right marks the grave of the illegitimate son of Yoritomo, Shimazu Tadahisa, said to be an ancestor of the house of Prince Shimazu.

Below the approach leading up to the tomb of Yoritomo is a large railed-in space suggesting a cemetery, and containing numerous stone lanterns and monuments. This is a memorial to the soldiers from this district of Kamakura who fell in the Russian War (1904-5). To commemorate the Coronation of the present Emperor (1915) this garden consecrated to the spirits of those dead heroes has been encircled with pine-trees: this was due to the generosity of the women of the neighbourhood, a tablet of slate has been erected near the entrance gate recording their names. The inscription upon the large central monument was traced by the late General Count Nogi, and signifies:

“In memory of loyal souls.”





The broad flight of stone steps ascending to the Shrine of Hachiman ; scene of the tragedy that was enacted in the assassination of the Third

Shogun Sanetomo, 1219.