

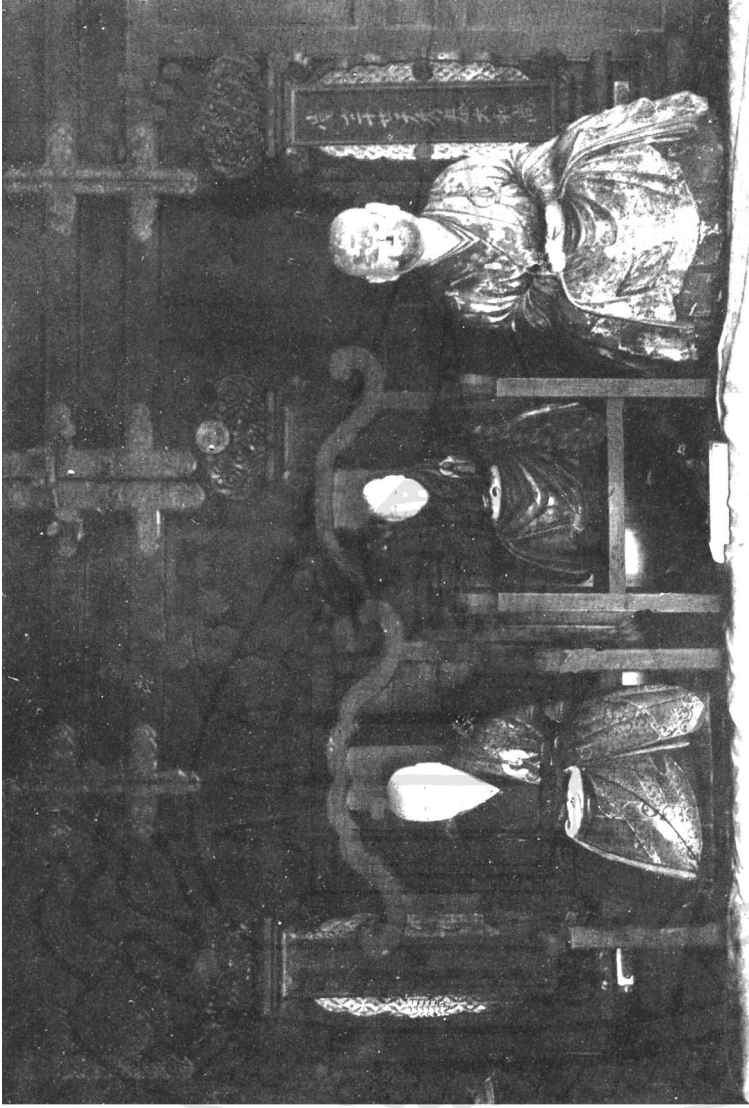
TŌKEIJI

“ Remote from stormy haunts of man,
The quiet haven of repose.”

Proceeding in a northerly direction towards Ofuna, a short distance brings the pilgrim to the iron gates of Tōkeiji; a small temple of unusual associations, whose original foundress is said to have been the kinswoman of Yoritomo—a lady known as Mino-no-Tsubone.

Re-established in 1205 by the wife of Tokimune, sixth Hōjō Regent, Tōkeiji was a nunnery popularly known as the divorce-temple: a peculiar feature of this foundation being that it afforded sanctuary to any woman who might be desirous of escaping the thrall of connubial woes. This prerogative was conferred by Imperial sanction with the object of providing the unfortunate wife with a means of rescue in cases where the conditions were so infelicitous that, possessing no other alternative, she might be driven to desperation.

The fugitive was allowed to take refuge for three years on condition she helped to serve in the temple, and none could molest her. When that period had elapsed she was legally entitled to a divorce from the undesirable spouse. However when the sympathetic Princess Yōdō, daughter of the Emperor Go-Daigo (1318-1339) became the fifth abbess, she considered three years an undue length of time, and curtailed the period of service to two years. The nunnery enjoyed this



Abbesses of the Nunnery of Tōkeiji.

The Princess Yōdō,
Fifth Abbess
d. Aug. 6th, 1396.

Consort of Tokimune,
First Abbess
d. Oct. 9th, 1366.

Tenshu, grand-daughter
of Hideyoshi, 20th Abbess
d. Feb. 7th, 1645.

privilege until the latter days of the Tokugawa *régime* : the wife of Tokimune herself was the first abbess, and was followed by a long line of successors, certain of their number being of very exalted rank. The last abbess of Tōkeiji was named Junsō. She died as recently as May 7th 1902, and with her demise the nunnery became a thing of the past.

Tōkeiji is moreover distinguished by becoming the residence of the eminent and widely-travelled present Lord Abbot of Engakuji, Shaku Soyen : to commemorate his recovery from an attack of severe illness the present beautiful and artistic belfry was constructed in 1916.

Without the entrance to the temple stands an ancient copper statue of the Buddha : the bell moreover found a temporary shelter beneath the eaves of the thatched roof pending the construction of the new belfry. These relics of the Kamakura era were acquired in a somewhat unusual manner, having been unearthed by farmers while labouring in some fields belonging to Tōkeiji in the part of Kamakura called Nikaido : from the inscription carved upon the bell it apparently had been in former times the property of a temple known as Fudarakuji—a foundation that was established upon an imposing scale by Yoritomo near the sea-coast at Zaimokuza.

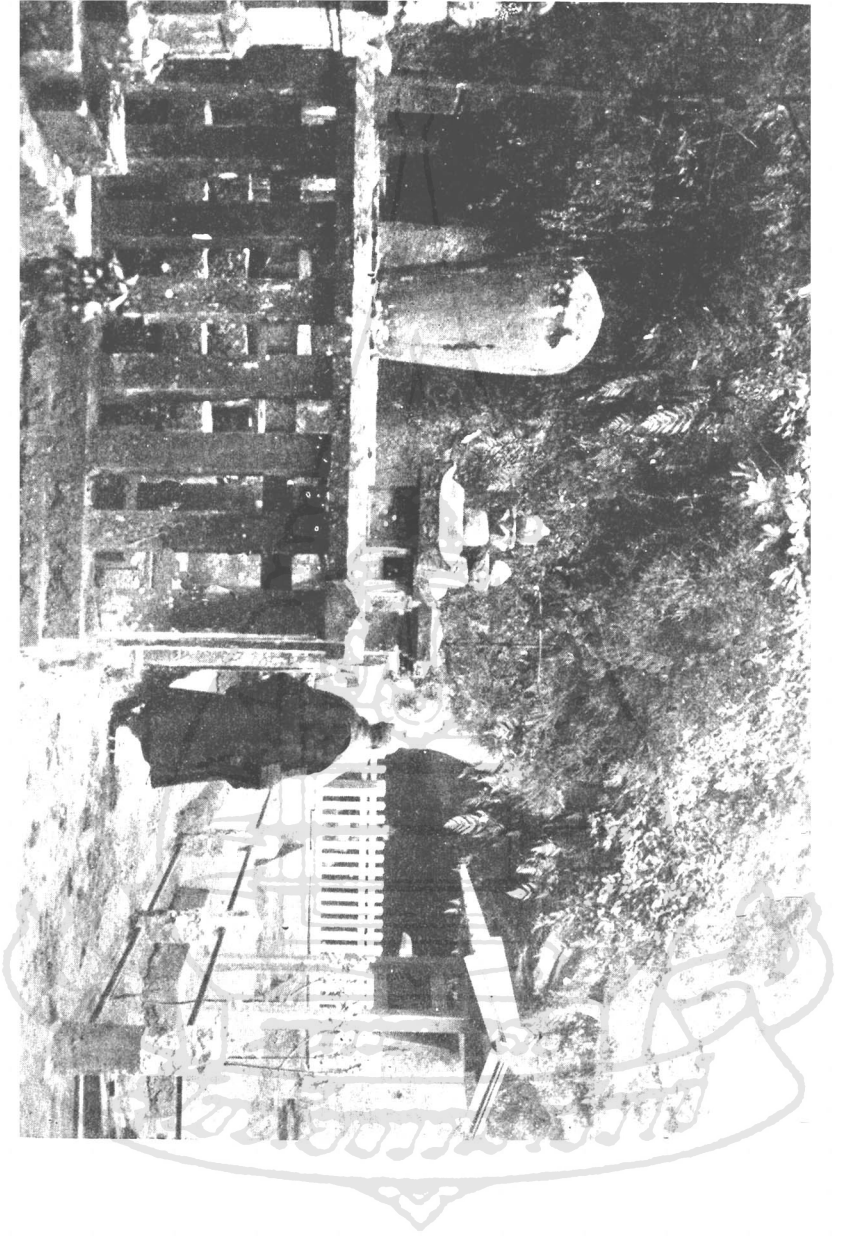
Although the temple of Tōkeiji is on a small scale, it is scrupulously well-kept and inviting in appearance. The chief treasure, an ancient statue of Kwannon attributed to Unkei, is enshrined in a large black case veiled with curtains of purple silk. Framed with an aureole of gold and blue, the goddess of mercy is crowned with a curious and elaborate head-ornament : a long archaic necklace reaches almost to her feet, near inspection revealing a

a beautiful design of flower-tracery upon her garments. The lotos upon which the figure stands is resting upon a golden lion of somewhat mythological shape ; this valuable statue is included in the list of National Treasures.

A large representation of the Buddha forms the centre-piece of the altar, whose golden mandorla bears a design of flames and copper-coloured disks : while below, the quaint figures of Fugen and Monju Bosatsu are poised upon their curiously carved elephant and lion respectively. The term *Bosatsu* is applied to any saint who has attained to a degree of enlightenment only one stage below Buddhahood itself. Twenty-five Bosatsu are especially worshipped, each one being supposed to represent a virtue of the almighty and infinite Buddha : the Fugen is considered typical of the supreme goodness which characterises the Ultimate Reality of the Universe ; Monju is the personification of wisdom.

The right-hand section of the altar is of great interest. Here we find the statue of the foundress and first abbess of the nunnery : with shaven head this saintly lady reposes in a chair of ecclesiastical design, her nun's habit being lacquered in red and gold. To the left is a larger figure of the daughter of the Emperor Go-Daigo : her well-preserved robes are elaborately gilded and lacquered in colours, but the face is somewhat impaired by the passage of time. This imperial priestess died Aug. 6th, 1396, and was interred in the cemetery of the nuns on the hill behind the temple.

The central case contains Daruma in his customary attitude of abstraction, while the effigy on the left represents the daughter of Hideyori, only son of the great Hideyoshi. After the dramatic episode of the storming



Tombs of the Nuns of Tokeiji.

and fire of Osaka castle, when Hideyori lost his life in the flames, his daughter Tenshū (who had entered the novitiate at the early age of eight) escaped, safely reaching the peaceful haven of Tōkeiji, where she spent the remainder of her life and was consecrated as the twentieth abbess of the convent.

Behind the temple, through leafy and shaded alleys a path ascends to the beautiful graveyard. Here, beneath the green shadows, reposes the mortal dust of those mediæval abbesses, who in the dim centuries so long ago renounced the vanities and glamour of the world, seeking rest and peace where alone true peace is to be found:

“Here are no storms, no noise, but silence and eternal sleep.”

Should the spirits of those pious and long-departed functionaries be permitted to revisit the scene of their spiritual labours upon this earth below, surely they must rejoice at the poetry and tranquil beauty of their last resting-place: these ancient monuments are feathered with silvery and dull golden lichens, and deep mosses from which spring a myriad fronds of little ferns, relieving the sombre aspect of this silent spot with the paler green of their delicate lace traceries.

The tomb of the Imperial lady, as befitting her royal descent, is apart from the others, being enshrined within a mossy cavern hewn from the rock and secluded within the precincts of an inner and outer enclosure, spanned by a large *torii*. The largest monument, resting upon a stone lotus-blossom and enclosed within a lichen-cruste*d* fence, is the burial place of Tenshū; while the tomb of the consort of Tokimune is of pagoda shape, and stands within a smaller cave near the more imposing sepulchre of the Princess.