

ROAD TO ENOSHIMA

“A shore with deep indented bays,
And o'er the gleaming water-ways
A glimpse of islands in the haze.”

The road to Enoshima abounds in beautiful scenery and spots of historic interest. The main route passes through the *Gokurakuji Kiridoshi*, or cutting: immediately before the hill is ascended the famous *Hoshi-no-ido*, or 'Well of Stars,' is passed on the right. This well is frequently referred to in ancient literature relating to Kamakura: according to tradition its waters were of crystal purity and possessed the mystic faculty of always reflecting the stars in its depths, even in broad daylight. However a kitchen-maid from the neighbourhood came to draw water and heedlessly let fall a knife into the starry depths below: the spell was broken—since that hour of profanation the magic reflection was no longer visible.

The little shrine upon the hill above is the *Kokuzudo*, and was also known as 'Temple of the Star-well.' Legend relates that in the reign of the Emperor Shomu (8th century) strange luminous gleams were observed radiating from the well. This phenomenon arousing the curiosity of the villagers, an investigation was made which revealed an effigy of Kokuzo—a saint typifying infinite benevolence and wisdom, and generally represent-

ed with a sword and jewel in either hand. These circumstances becoming known to the Emperor, he commanded the priest Gyōgi to carve a statue representing the newly-acquired deity, and which was duly installed as the chief object of worship. As this small shrine was falling into decay, restoration and redecoration has recently been effected by popular subscription: it is under the jurisdiction of *Shōju-in*, a temple situated on the lower slope of Reisangasaki, and entered from the top of the cutting. *Shōju-in* was founded by Yasutoki, third Hōjō Regent (1224–1242): it is recorded that in the 9th century the saint Kōbō Daishi, on the occasion of a visit to Enoshima, made a sojourn on this site to perform the rite of 'goma,' or invocation by holy fire.

This road intersecting the hills was constructed by a famous priest—Ryōkwan, (also known as *Ninshō*), first head of Gokurakuji,—who thus furnished a main approach to the temple from Kamakura. At the time of Nitta Yoshisada's invasion (July 5th 1333), the great general attempted to pour his troops down into Kamakura from this cutting. But the resistance experienced from the soldiers of the Regency was so powerful, and the pass had been so strongly fortified with stakes, fences, and other works, that the loyalist army was unable to advance.

Adjoining the temple of *Shōju-in* and almost opposite the six crude representations of Jizo, is an entrance on the left, with a notice-board to the effect that this path ascends to the monument of Dr. Koch. The scenery upon this promontory is delightful—the summit commanding far distant views of great beauty in all directions. The height is known as *Reisangasaki*: recently, owing

to the generosity of an inhabitant of Kamakura, it has been converted into a public park. In the 'sun-embroidered green gloom' beneath the shade of lofty trees, rest-houses and rustic seats lure the wanderer to repose, and exorcise the city's toil and dust in communion with this wide symphony of azure, green and golden sunbeams: his meditations lulled by the music of the long curved breakers upon the rocks below—'the thunder-chant of the sea which echoes round the world, eternal yet ever new.'

Upon the southern crest of the hill stands the stone monument recording the fact that this beautiful spot was the favourite retreat of the eminent bacteriologist Dr. Koch during his sojourn in Kamakura: nearby stands a fenced-in camphor-tree, planted when a small sapling by the doctor's own hands as an emblem of his gratification. The town, with its forest of roofs and pines, lies beneath, stretching away across the hill-surrounded plain: the sandy crescent of beach curves around to the rocks and cliffs of the little fishing hamlet of Iijima: beyond lies another fishing village, Kotsubo—the green hill of Dzu-shi—Hayama—and the peninsula of Miura, which sweeps out seaward towards the east, and culminates in the town of Misaki—forming the eastern barrier of the Sagami Bay, and also the lower entrance gate to the Gulf of Tokyo. All around glitters the immensity of sapphure water. Oshima's smoking cone is silhouetted upon the horizon on the south-east: from the western side glimpses of Enoshima appear between the tall pines and cryptomeria, backed by distant ranges and crowned with Fuji's 'ivory altar to the dawn' soaring above the Hakone peaks into the 'luminous mystery of the blue': to the north, the grey-green figure of the mighty *Daibutsu* can

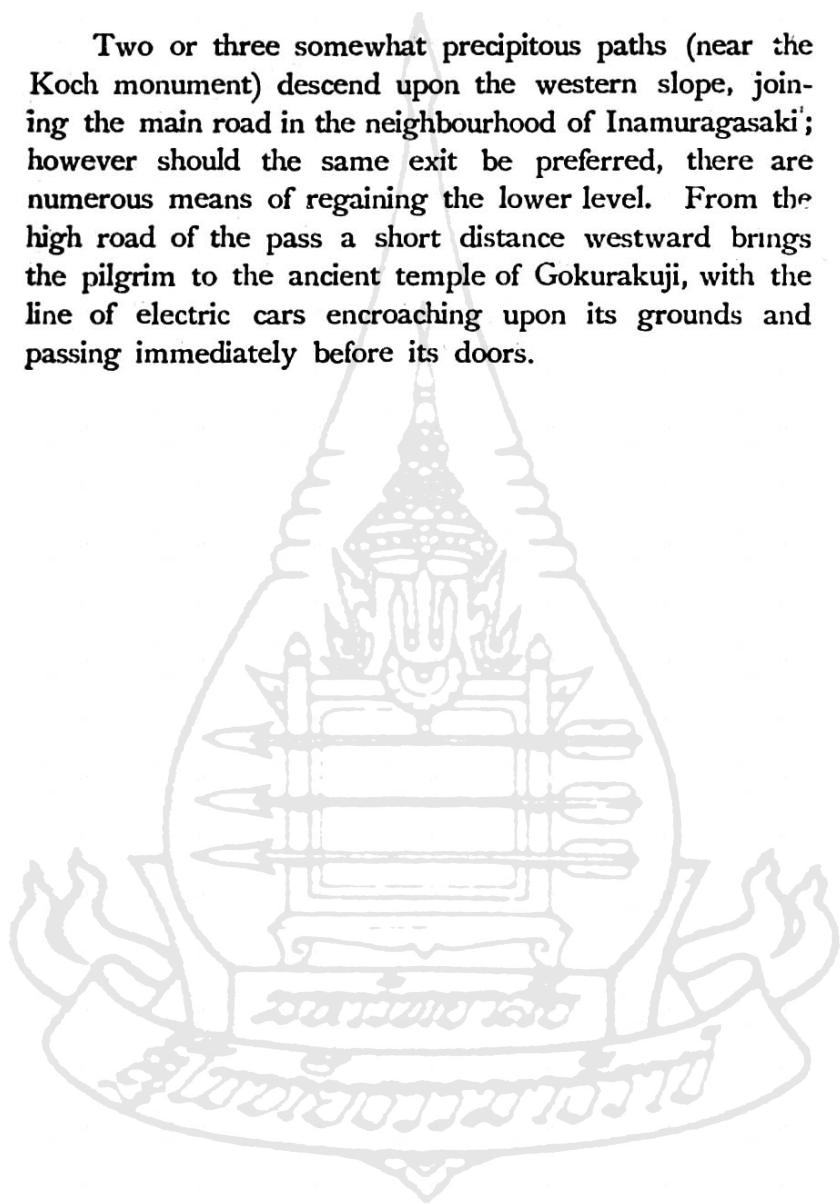
be plainly discerned, enthroned in solitary grandeur amidst the dark foliage of his sacred grove.

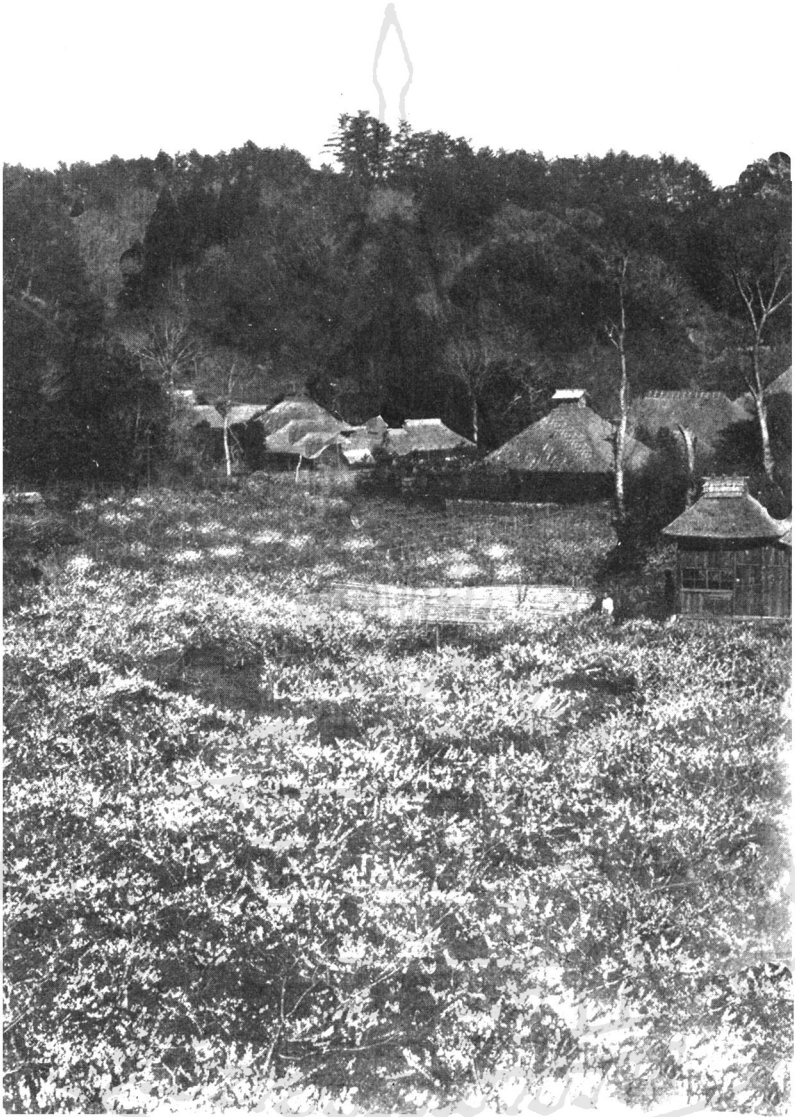
On the northern side of the summit of *Reisangasaki* are many ancient tombs collected within a small enclosure: these, with various coins and other antique relics, were unearthed a few years ago when excavations were made to level this part of the hill: evidence that in the bygone centuries this lovely spot sheltered a vanished and forgotten garden of the dead. In those remote days this part of *Reisangasaki* belonged to the temple of Gokurakuji; it is recorded that the first abbot Ryōkwan used a vassal temple called *Buppoji* (Teaching of Buddha) that was situated upon this height for his own residence: the same record states that from here the famous priest employed his mystic ritual in the prayers for rain. Nichiren also invoked the compassion of the gods to terminate a severe drought from this commanding site: upon that occasion the saint moreover is said to have inscribed texts of scripture upon slips of wood and cast them into the sea below—these were eagerly rescued by fishermen and treasured as holy relics.

On the lower slope is a small but historic pool lying in the shadow of lofty trees: this is known as the *Ama-goiike* or 'Pond of the Rain-Prayers'. A notice-board records the following statement:—

'In the 8th year of *Bunyei* (1271) there occurred over one hundred days of drought, and distress was rife in the land. Consequently the Regent Tokimune commanded the head priest of Gokurakuji, Ryōkwan, to offer prayers for rain. This functionary, accompanied by many other priests, erected an altar upon the mountain beside this pond, where the gods were earnestly besought to alleviate the peoples' suffering.'

Two or three somewhat precipitous paths (near the Koch monument) descend upon the western slope, joining the main road in the neighbourhood of Inamuragasaki; however should the same exit be preferred, there are numerous means of regaining the lower level. From the high road of the pass a short distance westward brings the pilgrim to the ancient temple of Gokurakuji, with the line of electric cars encroaching upon its grounds and passing immediately before its doors.





The Peach-Orchard of Gokurakuji