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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

Accents and diacritical marks have generally been standardised. Where there is a single instance of a word with an accent, and one without, no change has been made to the original (e.g. Shigenari/Shigénari, Uesugi/Uésugi).

The letter o with a macron is represented as ō.

The letter u with a macron is represented as ū.

The letter e with a macron is represented as ē.

If you cannot see the above letters with macrons, you may need to change the font in your browser.

The italicisation of Japanese words has been standardised.

Hyphenation and capitalisation has been standardised.

Punctuation and obvious printer's errors have been corrected. For a complete list, please see [the bottom of this document](#).



LEGEND.

The outline of the map is that found in Volume I. of the Edo Sunago, published Keio 2nd year (1866). The detail of district maps found in the book is worked in, together with that from the sectional map of Edo published Ansei 4th year (1857), and from the Go Edo Zusetsu Shūran published Kaei 6th year (1853). The map therefore shows in rough outline the state of the city just before the removal of the capital from Kyōto; the distribution of the castes.

The Pre-Tokugawa villages (Eiroku: 1558-1569) indicated on the map found in the "Shūran" are:—

North and South Shinagawa: Meguro-Motomura: Gin-Mitamura: Mitamura: Ōnemura: Upper and Lower Shibuya: Harajuku-mura: Kokubunji: Azabu: Kawaza Ichi: Ōzawa-mura: Imai-mura: Sendagaya: Yamanaka-mura: Ichigaya: Ushigome: Kobiko-mura: Upper and Lower Hirakawa-mura: Ochiya: Sekihon: Ikebukuroya: Tomizaka-mura: Ishibukero-mura: Tanibaragaike: Neruma-mura: Okurikyōakarai-mura: Koishikawa: Zoshigayatsu: Ōji: Shimura: Takinogawa: Kinsoboku-mura: Harajuku-mura (II.): Komegome-mura: Taninaka-mura: Shimbori-mura: Mikawajima-mura: Ashigahara-mura: Haratsuka: Ishihama-mura: Senjū-mura: Suda-mura: Sumidagawa: Yanagijima: Jujō-mura: Itabashi: Sugamo-mura: Arakawa (river): Kandagawa pool (*ike*): Kanda-mura: Shibasaki-mura: Shin-Horima-mura: Yushima-mura: Shitaya-mura: Torigoe-mura: Shirosawa-mura: Asakusa-mura: Harai-mura: Some-Ushigome: Ishiwara: Kinoshitagawa: Ubagaike (pool): Negishi-mura: Kinsoki-mura: Kameido-mura (near Ueno): Shinobazu-ike (pool).

From South to North circling by the West.

Shinagawa: Mita-mura: Takanawa:

Near Imai-mura is a Myōjin shrine,
close by the mouth of the present Akabane river.

Ikura: Hibiya: Tsukiji: Tsukuda: Tame-ike (pool): Tsukuda Myōjin: Ota's castle: Sanke-in: Hirakawa-mura: Sakurada-mura: Honjū-mura: Ōtamage-ike: Kametaka-mura. To the East.

77 villages, total.

Pronounce as in Italian, giving vowels full value: ch- as in "church."

[NIROKUDŌ ISSUES]

TALES OF THE TOKUGAWA II

BAKÉMONO YASHIKI

(THE HAUNTED HOUSE)

RETOLD FROM THE JAPANESE ORIGINALS

BY

JAMES S. DE BENNEVILLE

"Woman's greatest need,
The base of all governance,
Is governance; Seldom
found,
And rarely applied."

—*Seishin*

YOKOHAMA
1921

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PREFACE

In 1590 A.D. the Hōjō were overthrown at Odawara by the Taikō Hidéyoshi, and the provinces once under their sway were intrusted to his second in command, Tokugawa Iyeyasu. This latter, on removing to the castle of Chiyoda near Edo, at first paid main attention to strengthening his position in the military sense. From his fief in Tōtōmi and Suruga he had brought with him a band of noted captains, devoted to his service through years of hardest warfare. He placed them around his castle ward, from East to South in a great sweeping arc of detached fortresses, extending from Shimōsa province to that of Sagami. Koga was the chief stronghold on the North, against what was left of the Uésugi power. The most devoted of his captains, Honda Tadakatsu, was established at Kawagoé. Odawara, under an Ōkubo, as always, blocked the way from the Hakoné and Ashigara passes. In the hands of Iyeyasu and his captains, the formidable garrison here established was not likely to offer opportunity of a second "Odawara conference," during

which dalliance with compromise and surrender would bring sudden attack and disaster. At this period there is no sign that in his personal service Prince Iyeyasu made changes from the system common to the great military Houses of the time. The castle ward and attendance always were divided up among the immediate vassals of the lord. The basis was strictly military, not domestic. Even the beautiful *kami-shimo* (X), or butterfly hempen cloth garb of ceremonial attendance was an obvious reminder of the armour worn in the field.

Great statesman and warrior that he was, the Taikō Hidéyoshi must have realised the difficulties confronting his House. The formidable power he had created in the North was no small part of them. On several occasions he sought a quarrel with Iyeyasu; sought to humiliate him in small ways, to lower his prestige and provoke an outbreak. Such was the trifling incident of the lavish donation required of Iyeyasu to the Hachiman shrine at Kamakura. But Hidéyoshi, as with Elizabeth of England, looked rather to the balance of cost against result, always with possibility of failure in view. When he died in 1598, and left Tokugawa Iyeyasu practically regent of the land, his expectation can be judged to be, either that the loyal members of the council of regency would at least balance the Tokugawa power for their own sakes, or that the majority of his son Hidéyori, then a mere infant, would witness no question of supremacy. In the one event the glory and prestige of his House would stand. In the second case the safety of his posterity would be assured. With his experience, and belief in the over-riding power of Nobunaga and himself, the first was as likely to happen as the second; and the influence of the Toyotomi House was the means necessary to insure to Iyeyasu the position already secured, against the jealousy of the other lords. Time showed that he granted a perspicuity and energy to the members of his council which Iyeyasu alone possessed.

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With Sekigahara (1600) the situation was definitely changed. In 1603 Iyeyasu was made Shōgun, and the first steps were to organize the Eastern capital at Edo on an Imperial scale. The modest proportions of the Chiyoda castle of Hōjō times—the present inner keep—had already grown to the outer moat. Around these precincts were thrown the vassals of the Shōgun. The distribution at first was without much method, beyond the establishment of greater lords in close proximity to the person of the Shōgun. This feature was accentuated in the time of the third Shōgun Iyemitsu. Immediately allied Houses and vassals occupied the castle ward between the inner and outer moats, from the Hitotsubashi gate on the North, sweeping East and South to the Hanzō gate on the West. The Nishimaru, or western inclosure of the castle, faced this Hanzō Gomon. From this gate to a line drawn diagonally north eastward from the Kanda-bashi Gomon to the Sujikae Gomon, the section of the circle was devoted to the *yashiki* (mansions) of the *hatamoto* or minor lords in immediate vassalage of the Shōgun's service. Kanda, Banchō, Kōjimachi (within the outer moat), the larger parts of Asakusa, Shitaya, Hongō, Koishikawa, Ushigomé (Ichigaya), Yotsuya, Akasaka, Azabu, and Shiba, were occupied by *yashiki* of *hatamoto* and *daimyō*—with an ample proportion of temple land. It would seem that there was little left for commercial Edo. Such was the case. The scattered towns of Kanda, Tayasu, Kōjichō, several score of villages on the city outskirts, are found in this quarter. The townsmen's houses were crowded into the made ground between the outer moat of the castle and the *yashiki* which lined the Sumida River between Shiba and the Edogawa. In 1624 the reclaimed ground extended almost to the present line of the river. The deepening of the beds of the Kanda and Edo Rivers had drained the marshes. The use of the waters of the Kandagawa for the castle moat had made dry land of the large marsh just to the south of the present Ueno district. Thus Hongō, in its more particular sense, became a building site.

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With elaboration of the outer defences went elaboration of the immediate service on the Shōgun. There was no sudden change. The military forms of the camp stiffened into the etiquette of the palace. The *Shōinban* or service of the audience chamber, the *Kōshōgumi* or immediate attendants, these were the most closely attached to the Shōgun's person. To be added to these are the Ōbangumi or palace guard, the *Kojuningumi* and the Kachigumi which preceded and surrounded the prince on his outside appearances. These "sections" formed the Go Banshū, the *honoured* bodyguard. In the time of Iyemitsu a sixth *kumi* or section was formed, to organize the service of the women attendants of the palace, of the *oku* or private apartments in distinction from the *omoté* or public (men's) apartments, to which the Go Banshū were attached. Given the name of *Shinban* (New) this *kumi* was annexed to the Banshū. This aroused instant protest. The then lords of the Go Ban inherited their position through the merits of men who had fought on the bloody fields of war. Now "luck, not service," was to be the condition of deserving. The protest was made in form, and regarded. Iyemitsu gave order that the Shinbangumi retain its name, but without connection with the Banshū.

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At this point the confusion of terms is to be explained. All through the rule of the first three Shōgun a gradual sifting had been taking place. Into Edo were crowding the *daimyō* who sought proximity to the great man of the land. Then came the order of compulsory residence, issued by Iyemitsu himself; seconded by the mighty lords of Sendai and Satsuma, who laid hands on sword hilts, and made formal statement that he who balked nourished a treacherous heart. The support of one of them was at least unexpected. The acquiescence of both cut off all opposition. Most of the ground now within the outer moat was devoted to the greater lords in immediate service on the Tokugawa House. The *hatamoto* were removed to the outer sites in Koishikawa, Ushigomé, Yotsuya; to the Banchō, the only closer ward they retained; or across the river to Honjō and Fukagawa. Those in immediate service were placed nearest to the palace. From the beginning the favoured residence site had been just outside the Hanzō and Tayasu Gomon, across the inner moat from the palace. Hence the district got the name of Banchō. *Go Ban* (御番) in popular usage was confused with (五番)—"five" instead of "honoured." In course of time the constant removals to

this district made it so crowded, its ways so intricate, that one who lived in the Banchō (Ban ward) was not expected to know the locality; a wide departure from the original checker board design on which it had been laid out, and hence the characters 盤町 (Banchō) used at one time. This, however, was when Edo had expanded from its original 808 *chō* (20200 acres) to 2350 *chō* (58750 acres). The original Banchō included all the ground of Iidamachi, and extended to the Kōjimachi road. Kōjimachi (the *mura* or village) was then in the Banchō, and known as *samurai kōjimachi* 小路 (by-way), not the present 麴 (yeast). In the time of the third Shōgun the Banchō was as yet a lonely place—to the west of the city and on its outskirts. The filling in process, under the Government pressure for ground, was just under way. Daimyō-kōji, between the inner and outer moats, through the heart of which runs the railway spur from Shimbashi to Tōkyō station, was being created by elimination of the minor lords. At the close of Kwanei (1624 A.D.) all the Daimyō-koji was very solid ground; an achievement of no little note when the distance from the Sumidagawa is considered. At Iyeyasu's advent to Edo the shore line ran close to the inner moat of the castle. The monastery of Zōjōji then situated close to the site of the present Watagaru gate, was converted by him into the great establishment at Shiba; and placed as close to the waters of the bay as the present Seikenji of Okitsu in Suruga—its fore-bear in the material and ecclesiastical sense.

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The same rapid development of the town took place on the eastern side of the river. Honjō and Fukagawa became covered by the *yashiki* sites, interspersed with the numerous and extensive temple grounds. Iyeyasu was as liberal to the material comforts of his ghostly advisers, as he was strict in their supervision. One fifth of Edo was ecclesiastical. One eighth of it, perhaps, was given over to the needed handicrafts and tradesmen of the Kyōbashi and Nihonbashi wards along the river, with a moiety of central Honjō—and to the fencing rooms. The balance of the city site was covered by the *yashiki*. Thus matters remained until the Meiji period swept away feudalism, and substituted for the military town the modern capital of a living nation. So much for the Edo with which we have to deal, apart from its strange legends and superstitions, its malevolent and haunting influences, working ill to the invaders, daring to encroach upon the palace itself and attack the beloved of the Shōgun and his heir, only to be quelled by the divine majesty of his look—as expounded in such tangle of verities as the Honjō-Nana-fushigi (seven marvels of Honjō), the Azabu Nana-fushigi, the Fukagawa Nana-fushigi, the Banchō Nana-fushigi, the Okumura Kiroku, the temple scrolls and traditions, and many kindred volumes.

In reference to the Banchō: the stories outlined in the present volume date from the period of the puppet shows and strolling reciters, men who cast these tales into their present lines, thus reducing popular tradition to the form in which it could be used by the *kōdanshi* or lecturers on history, or by those diving into the old tales and scandals connected with the *yashiki* of Edo town. In the present volume main reliance for the detail has been placed on the following *kōdan*:—

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"The Banchō Nana-fushigi" of Matsubayashi Hakuen.

"The Banchō Sarayashiki" of Momogawa Jōen.

"The Banchō Sarayashiki" of Byōhaku Hakuchi, in the "Kwaidan-shū" published by the Hakubunkwan.

"The Banchō Sarayashiki" of Hōgyūsha Tōko.

"Yui Shōsetsu" of Kōganei Koshū.

These references could be extended. The story of the Sarayashiki figures in most of the collections of wonder tales. The Gidayu of the "Banshū Sarayashiki" by Tamenaga Tarōbei and Asada Itchō finds no application. It deals with Himeji in Harima. As for the stories from an esoteric point of view, as illustrations of the period they have a value—to be continued in those more historical, and which deal with the lives and deeds of men of greater note and influence in this early Tokugawa court. The present volume instances the second class of wonder tales referred to in the preface to the Yotsuya Kwaidan.

Ōmarudani,

14th November, 1916.

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PART I

TALES OF THE EDO BANCHŌ WHO AOYAMA SHŪZEN WAS.

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CHAPTER I

THE *Chūgen* ROKUZO

Rokuzo the *chūgen* sighed as he faced the long slope leading to the Kudanzaka. Pleasant had been his journey to this point. From his master's *yashiki* in Ichigaya to the shop of the sandal maker Sukébei in lower Kanda it had been one long and easy descent. Sukébei had gratified Rokuzo with the desired and well established commission or "squeeze." Orders for sandals in the *yashiki* of a nobleman were no small item. Rokuzo was easily satisfied. Though of a scant thirty years in age he had not the vice of women, the exactions of whom were the prime source of rascality in the sphere of *chūgen*, as well as in the glittering train of the palace. At the turn of the road ahead Rokuzo could eye the massive walls of the moat, which hid the fortress and seraglio built up by the skilful hands of Kasuga no Tsubone in her earnest efforts to overcome the woman hating propensities of the San-dai-ke, the third prince of the Tokugawa line, Iyemitsu Kō. Rokuzo was a *chūgen*, servant in attendance on his master Endō Saburōzaémon, *hatamoto* or immediate vassal of the commander-in-chief, the Shōgun or real ruler in the land of Nippon since the long past days of Taira Kiyomori.

Rokuzo had no great lady in charge of his domestic arrangements, one whose obsession it was to overcome his dislike of man's natural mate. Nor had he such mate to administer reproof for his decided liking for the sherry-like rice wine called *saké*. Sukébei had rigidly performed his part in the matter of the "squeeze"; but Rokuzo considered him decidedly stingy in administration of the wine bottle—or bottles. Willingly would he have sacrificed the commission for an amplitude of the wine. But even *chūgen* had their formulae of courtesy, and such reflection on his host would have been too gross. With a sigh therefore he had set out from the shop of the sandal maker, eyeing the wine shops passed from time to time, but not fortunate enough to chance upon any acquaintance whose services he could call upon in facing him over a glass. Rokuzo had the virtue of not drinking alone.

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Kanda village once passed, the *yashiki* walls hemmed in the highway which ran through a district now one of the busiest quarters of the city. This sloping ground was popularly known as Ichimenhara, to indicate its uniformity of surface. There was not a hint of the great university,

the long street of book-stores close packed side by side for blocks. Their site was covered by the waters of the marsh, almost lake, of the Kanda River, then being slowly drained into the castle moats. The top of the hill reached, at what is now South Jimbochō, the shops and houses of the one village hereabouts, Tayasu-mura, offered a last chance for diversion. The steep slope of the Kudan hill was now before Rokuzo, and beyond he had to pass through the lonely wood which harboured a temple to the war god Hachiman, and which covered the site of the present Shōkonsha or shrine to the spirits of the soldiers killed in Nippon's wars. This road ran through the San-Banchō, then a lonely quarter in which stood isolated from each other *yashiki* of the *hatamoto*. The district was filling up, under press of the needs of the castle service for space immediately round about. But the process was a slow one, and the district one much suspected by the lower classes.

Rokuzo was not fat. He was short, thick necked, sturdy with a barrel-like roundness, and, owing to his drinking propensities, endowed with legs the thinness of which found the conveyance of the upper massiveness no mean task. Hence he stopped at the foot of the hill to wipe the sweat from his face. He eyed with envy a low caste being, a *heimin* and labourer. Clad in a breech-clout the fellow swung rapidly down the hill with his load of charcoal balanced at each end of the carrying pole. It was etiquette, not modesty, which confined Rokuzo to the livery of his master. He was compelled to a coat which, light and thin as it was, cut off all the breeze from his muscular shoulders. Well! Up the hill he must get. The rolling down was a matter of the past. The *yashiki*, the house officer (*kyūnin*) to whom report was to be made, lay beyond. About to make the start a voice spoke in his ear. Though soft and gentle it would have had no particular attraction for the now thirsty Rokuzo. But apart from thirst Rokuzo was of the thoroughly good natured kind. He was surprised at the beauty of the face on which his eyes rested; still more so at the size of the bundle she was trying to carry, and which plainly was far beyond her strength. The rashness of benevolence overcame the not too energetic Rokuzo. Sigh as he did over the conveyance of his carcass up the steep hill, he sighed still more at thought of this fragile creature attempting to carry such a burden.

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She followed his eyes to the bundle. "Alas! Honoured Sir, what is to be done? The *furoshiki* is far beyond one's poor strength. Though the distance is not great—only to Go Banchō—yet it could as well be a pilgrimage to Isé. Surely the hills of Hakoné and Iga are no steeper than this Kudanzaka." She sighed; and apart from a weariness of voice there was a suspicion of moisture in her eyes. The more Rokuzo looked at her, the greater waxed his pity and benevolence. Barely of eighteen years she was a beautiful girl; not a servant, yet not one of the secluded and guarded daughters of a noble House. Perhaps she was the young wife of some soldier, and he was surprised at her being unattended. She noted this, and readily explained the fact. There were purchases yet to make, close by in Tayasu. Here a servant was to be at hand, but wearied by waiting the woman had made off. "To offer a wage, good sir, seems impolite; yet the way being the same deign to grant the favour of your strength." In the petition her face was wreathed in admiring smiles at Rokuzo's fine figure of a man. A light in the eyes, captious and coquettish, the furtive glances at his broad shoulders and stout neck, betrayed him into the indiscretion of volunteering a service promptly accepted. This done, the lady, without losing sight of display of her charm of manner, was all business.

Rokuzo had much to learn, and he was not one to profit much by his lessons. If he was virtuous, he was by nature a very Simple Simon. A greater liking for women might by contact have sharpened wits rather dulled by drinking. As it was, anyone in the *yashiki*, who wished to shift some unpleasant obligation, found in Rokuzo the one to be impressed by the most specious excuse, and the one whose kindness of heart undertook and carried out the purpose of avoidance by assumption of the task. Instead of concocting some pretext to carry off Sukébei, or one, or all, of his apprentices to the neighbouring street and a grog shop, his inexperience and diffidence had carried him away still thirsty. Instead of bumping into some passing fellow *chūgen* on the street, and wiping out the insult with wine, he had idled along, leaving to every man his share of the roadway, and to the thirsty with burdens more than their share. Hence this uncongenial company of thirst and a woman. She had halted at a grocer's shop, and his eyes were soon agog at sight of her investments—mushrooms, not of much weight, but in bulk forming almost a mound; the dried sliced gourd called *kambyoku*, of which she seemed very fond; marrow, *tōgan* (gourd-melon),^[1] the new and expensive potato (*imo*), for money was no object in her purchases. A second shop close by caught her eye. Here were added to the pile the long string beans, doubtless to roast in the pod for an afternoon's amusement and repast, *kabocha* or squashes, large stalks of *daikon* (radish) two feet in length, *gōbō* or burdock, and a huge watermelon. The list is too long to quote except for the report of a produce exchange. Indeed it was rather a case of what she did not buy, on a scale to furnish forth a *yashiki*. Then she made her way to a confection and fruit shop just opposite the scene of her last purchases. Pears were coming into season—weighty in measure and on the stomach. But the lady was not frightened. She bought for yesterday, to-day, and to-morrows, in fruit and cakes of all kinds. Conveyed by the divers attendants her goods lay piled up at the last source of supply. Puzzled, she regarded the huge mass; then took eye measure of the shoulders of Rokuzo. They inspired confidence. She laid a gentle and admiring hand on his massiveness. She looked into his face with enticing smile. There was a silvery little laugh in her voice. Concealing their grins the shop attendants fled to their different haunts. Here they smothered cries and roars of coarse merriment; and one man nearly smothered himself by sticking his head in the brine cask. This *chūgen* was no servant of the lady. He was a volunteer conveyancer caught by a pretty face. They knew her.

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Rokuzo had more than sturdy shoulders. He stuck to his bargain. Plainly something must be

done; and the lady did it. In a trice she haled him to a draper's shop. "A five-fold *furoshiki*—at once." The draper gaped not; he obeyed. The cloth was produced, and his several apprentices were engaged in sewing together one of those square package cloths, so convenient in the conveyance of scattered parcels. It was a portentous product, a very sheet. Obsequiously offered and accepted, the draper watched his customers depart with curious eyes. It was not the first of its kind bought by the lady. He hoped it would not be the last; for his own sake and that of his fellow traders. The money at least was always good. The girl must be popular and rich. A number of *chūgen* were employed in her service. Never did she bring the same man. Then the purchases were piled into one bundle. At this both Rokuzo and the dispenser of sweets were skilled hands. The lady looked anxiously up and down the road. She tripped into this place and that. Finally she came back to the bundle, looking as if about to cry. Of the servant's return there was no sign. Stolidly the shop-keeper maintained his pose. His shop could not be left to itself; the lady could not wait. Outside was the blazing sun of the sixth month (July), then at its hottest period of the hour of the ape (after 3 P.M.). She looked at Rokuzo. He twisted uneasily.

His good nature yielded again to the caressing glance. "Come! As boy this Rokuzo has carried many a farmer's frame of grass from the mountain to Shibukawa village. Nay; many a sick man has he shouldered on the hills leading to the healing springs of Ikao and Kusatsu." He ran an eye over the bundle. "Ah! A terrific bundle; one to cause fright. There is nothing else to do." He would have liked to measure strength with this truant servant; doubtless a terrific female. The confectioner puffed and blew, with straining, swelling neck. The *furoshiki* at last was on the shoulders of the unhappy Rokuzo. Fortunately the shops of Nippon have no doors. A most mountainous and monstrous wrestler, a very Daniel Lambert, can be carried forth feet first from such a front. The shop keeper followed the pair with his eyes. He passed his hand over the money. Then he looked again. The lady went lightly up the hill. Puffing and blowing at last Rokuzo was compelled to zig-zag on its steepness. Then she followed after his movements, gently encouraging him with words, and a cheerful pleased giggle that was a very goad in his rear. The grocer crossed to consultation with the baker. "Bah! He has a ring in his nose." Said the man of confections—"He is Rokuzo, *chūgen* of Endō Sama. But the other day it was Isuké, *chūgen* of Okumura Sama, who did her service. And so with others. Truly entertainment at Yoshiwara costs less effort and wage. These cats are all one colour in the dark." The philosophic and cynical shop-keepers, each departed to his own place, arguing more shrewdness in a *chūgen*, and the greater freedom, if less honour, implied in the gains and amusements of the townsman. Again and again the baker inspected his coin. There were still houses for women in the Kōjimachi road. This satisfied his doubts.

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Encouraged by the lady Rokuzo reached the top of the Kudan hill. In all his experience of burden bearing never before had he shouldered the like. It seemed at times as if the lady herself had floated up on its broad surface, to deposit a weight far beyond her appearance. Perhaps she did; for Rokuzo, blinded by the pouring sweat, hardly knew what occurred. From time to time the sweet voice gave direction. Skirting the castle moat she led him up the short slope of the Gomizaka. A fitting name, thought Rokuzo. There were more than "five flavours" on his back, without counting the nasty taste in a very dry mouth. His journey was almost at an end. At least he had so determined, when suddenly the destination was reached. The lady knocked at the side door of a splendid gate set in a long stretch of wall. So much Rokuzo could see through the damp stream from his brow; and that the surroundings were very rural. A rattling of the bar and he turned eagerly to the gate. Its opening gave a vision of beauty. Clean swept was the ground beneath the splendid pine trees; graceful the curves of the roofs of the villa seen beyond; and still more beautiful, and little more mature than his companion, was the figure of the girl framed in the doorway.

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Forgetful of his burden Rokuzo gaged. Forgetful of etiquette the girl stared. She scanned Rokuzo from head to foot. The squat and sturdy figure of the man, in combination with the huge burden, turned him into some new and useful kind of beast. Astonishment passed into a smile; the smile into a mad burst of laughter in which the other girl more discreetly joined. "Nēsan (elder sister) the hour is late, but to-day the opportunity of assistance was slow to appear. With such sturdy support it was thought well to make ample provision."—"Provision indeed! Merry will be the feast. Truly sister, great has been the good fortune. Honoured Sir, deign to furnish forth the entertainment." Again came the merry peal, this time from both the girls. Rokuzo hardly appreciated such reward of his efforts. He had a strong suspicion that this merriment was directed at him; that the courtesy and gentle voices were on the surface. There was a snappy nasal sneering ring in the laughter, most unpleasant and savouring of derision. However there was certain to be something at the end of the task. Why neglect to take the reward now close to hand? He passed through the large gate, opened by the elder maiden to admit the size of his burden. Under her guidance he struggled along past the corner of the house and into the more removed privacy. Of this he could note the carefully kept inner garden, the massive old well curb standing in its centre, and the scent and strange beauty of the flowering plants. Attention was attracted by the conduct of his three employers; for another and older girl now made her appearance at the *rōka* (verandah). She too gave the same short sharp exclamation of amusement at the sight of the porter and his portentous load. She leaped down quickly from the verandah and ran up to peer into his face. Then she went off into the same mad peal of laughter, in which she was joined without stint by her sisters.

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Rokuzo was now angry beyond measure; yet as a man and good natured he found it difficult of expression with such beautiful women. All the terms of revilement came to his lips—rude rascals (*burei na yatsu*), scoundrels (*berabōmé*), vile beasts (*chikushōmé*). These were freely loaded on

himself in time of displeasure of master or fellows. But somehow now they stayed in his throat. "Rude"—yes; "rascals"—yes. These words reached to a murmur. But the crowning insult of calling these beautiful women "beasts" stuck in his gorge and he nearly choked. Said the oldest girl—and she was not over twenty years—"Sister, you are wearied by the heat and your efforts. Deign to enter the bath. All is ready. Come! We will enter it together." Hand in hand the three were about to depart. Rokuzo found speech. He stuttered in his indignation—"Honoured ladies! Heigh there! This bundle—how now? Truly it is as if this Rokuzo had been carrying a child. His back is wet through. It is very unpleasant. Where is the package to be bestowed? Deign to indicate." At the sharpness of his tone the elder girl turned in surprise. His anger dropped before the attraction of smile and address. Truly these creatures had attention but for the passing moment. "Ah! In joy at the sister's return the burden and its bearer have been completely forgotten. This is to be very rude. Aré! Honoured Sir, you are melting away with heat. Place the burden here. At the well yonder is water. Deign to wipe off the sweat which pours from your honoured person."

At once with more than relief he deposited the huge package on the *rōka*. Pending its disposition Rokuzo devoted himself to his ablutions with decent slowness, to allow the idea of remuneration to filter into the somewhat fat wits of these ladies. At first he was inclined thoroughly to sluice himself inwardly. The water was deliciously cool to the outer person on this hot day. But on approaching the bucket to his mouth there was an indefinable nauseating something about it that made him hesitate. Again he tried to drink. Decidedly it was bad, this water; offensive for drinking. With a sigh he diverted the stream from his gullet to his shoulders. So pleased was Rokuzo with the experience that he repeated it again and again from the inexhaustible coolness of the well. Then with his head towel he began to wipe the nudity of his person, taking in at leisure his surroundings as he did so. Oya! Oya! It was indeed an extraordinarily beautiful place, this which he had entered. The care lavished upon plants and ornamentation was carried to extravagance. The eyes of Rokuzo opened wider and wider. Here was a splendid cherry tree in the full magnificence of its bloom. The square of this inner garden was completed by half a dozen plum trees laden with the scented blossoms, although the fruit hung heavy from the branches. At the opposite corner the polished red of the ripe persimmons made the mouth water. Beyond these trees and the house was a large and splendid bed of iris, the curious and variegated bloom counterfeiting some patterned screen. From the *rōka* extended a wide trellis heavy with the blossoms of the wisteria. Lotus was in flower in the pond. Wherever he turned his eyes the affection of these ladies for colour and scent showed itself. Jinjōki, hibiscus, pyrus spectabilis, chrysanthemum, peonies, ayamé or the early iris, all were in mad bloom to please the eye. With growing fright Rokuzo gazed from side to side. What could be the social condition of these women, thus treated so familiarly by a mere *chūgen*? The gardener surely was an extraordinary genius, such as would serve none but the truly great. This was a suspicious place.

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These thoughts were interrupted. Abruptly he approached the part of the house that seemed a sort of kitchen. The huge bundle had disappeared. The elder sister showed herself. The two younger girls held back diffidently in the rear. All showed amusement, but the freshness of the bath had wrought a change in manner, and made them still more lovely than before. Said the elder—"Thanks are due for the kindness shown. Though ashamed, deign to accept this trifling acknowledgment as porter's wage." She held out to Rokuzo a *hana-furi-kin*. This gold coin, worth a *bu* (the quarter of a *ryō*) was an extravagant fee.^[2] Somewhat strange withal; struck off in the Taikō's day the savour of disloyalty was compensated by the "raining flowers" stamped in the gold. Rokuzo was still more frightened. Ladies of course were ignorant of values. Plainly these were ladies, of but little contact with the world. As an honest and somewhat simple fellow he would have refused the over-payment. But he was not eloquent in explanation, and the acceptance meant the speedier departure. Prostrate with extended hands he gave thanks. Then he thrust the coin into his bosom and rose in good earnest to depart. Here follows the fall of Rokuzo from the grace of good behaviour.

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On her way to a room at the end of the garden passed the youngest of the sisters. She was bearing a tray, the burden of which was *saké* bottles. In the other hand was the heating apparatus, flask included. Rokuzo's nostrils opened wide at the delicious perfume. He stood stock still. As in some surprise the elder sister regarded him. Thereupon the wine bearer halted, in her pose holding the grateful steam directly under his nose. Said the first girl—"Is the wage insufficient? If so..." Rokuzo's nostrils twitched. The younger sister stopped a movement as of further bestowal. "Ah! This honoured Sir can carry more than burdens." She broke into a merry laugh. Said the sister—"Is that so? The *saké* is object of desire." Beauty was now enhanced a thousand times by the benevolence of their demeanor. With tongue at last eloquent—"Ah, ladies! This Rokuzo is dying of thirst. The well here offers no means to quench it. But for the honoured encounter at Kudanzaka long since would the company at the wine shop of Ichigaya have been sought. For reward deign wine rather than coin." He made a movement as if to restore the gold, but the elder girl stopped him. "So then, Rokuzo likes wine. He shall have both wine and coin, and entertainment in addition." With the request from him their manner had changed. It was now more sedate and purposeful. Rokuzo hardly understood the further course of his experiences. Emerged from the bath he found himself seated before a plentiful repast. The viand contents of the monumental burden together with what sea and hill could provide—these figured. Rokuzo drank first, and plentifully. Never had he tasted such delicious wine. He knew that the Tono Sama drank no better *saké*; nor did his master occupy a more splendid apartment than this one of the wine feast. The silken figured *fusuma* (screens), the fretwork crowning them, the many lamps—it was now dark—in bronze and precious metals, dazzled his small understanding.

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The women acted as attendants. Rokuzo sat long, now thoroughly fuddled. He listened to an

orchestral theme, interpreted by *koto*, *fué*, *biwa*, or the *taiko* (drum). Perhaps there were better voices. Even in their singing the three girls had that sharp, derisive, unpleasant, nasal twang. But Rokuzo was past criticism. To their questioning he told who and what he was; a *chūgen* in the service of his lord, Endō Saburōzaémon, *hatamoto* in the land, and now in office at the fireward of the palace. Had he a wife? A *chūgen* is not one to have a wife. At this all the women seemed very pleased. They exchanged glances.

The elder girl now came close to him. She nestled by his side and took his arm, looking coquettishly and smilingly into his face. "Rokuzo Dono has done much for three lonely women. Will he not do more? Why not remain as now, perform the tasks of this house? Does not the change of masters attract?" Rokuzo's latest remembrance of encounter with the honoured house officer (*kyūnin*) of his master was the six days turn in the *yashiki* prison, on very scant fare. His face was long at the thought. He was very remiss on this present occasion. What would happen? In the haze of his wine the voice of the girl continued. Her face was very close as she pressed on him. "Rokuzo Dono, deign to serve this house, meet its difficulties." For a moment Rokuzo broke the spell. "Difficulties? Of luxurious living and a splendid home? Such 'difficulties' make one laugh."—"Yet there are real difficulties. Three women—they have their difficulties. Be the man of the house; the man in the house. Condescend the favour." Restraint was thrown off. She held him in her arms and drew him close. Rokuzo's brain was in a whirl. Women? Women? Ah! The wine! His lips eagerly sought the cup she held to them. When she rose he allowed her gentle persuasion. The two other girls busied themselves in the preparations for the night. They whispered to each other; and there seemed to be some ground of division, but the elder had her way. She and Rokuzo were left alone.

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If Rokuzo sought solace in the arms of his mistress he certainly failed to find it. Never had such a nightmare descended on his slumbers. Through the night he was battling with most fearful visions, seeking to avoid tortures of hell. He had pursued his beauty into some huge cave. Now possession was secure. From this there was no escape. But it was no escape for Rokuzo. Now she turned into a huge obscene object, a very *rokurokubi*, one of those hideous monsters with lengthy neck, gleaming teeth, and distorted human-like face. Again there was change. He lay supine and helpless; and extended full length over him was a fox of portentous size. The sharp, yelping, nasal voice sounded in his ears. "Coin, wine, then lechery: Rokuzo would drink, then play the beast. The porter's wage is insufficient. Now let him pay the beast's wage." The sharp gleaming teeth were at his throat. The foul breath filled his lungs. Rokuzo struggled for air, shouted for an aid not at hand. "Drunkard; lecher." By a final effort he would free himself from the succubus—"Liar!... Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu! Holy the Lord Buddha!"

A heavy chill went through his body, shaking him from head to foot. He opened his eyes. In amazement he looked around him. The magnificent apartment, the women, the garden, the feast, nothing remained of his night's experience. It was the chill of early dawn, and he was lying on the bare ground, in the midst of a wild grass grown and deserted moor. A tree root was his pillow. He rose to find the waters of the Kanda marsh under his eyes. He was still on the Ichimenhara. The Kudanzaka was yet to be climbed. Ah! He had been foxed, bewitched by reynard or *tanuki* (badger). Then remembrance of the *hana-furi-kin* came to mind. Here would be proof. He thrust a hand into his bosom—to draw out the leaf of a tree. There was no doubt about it. And the banquet? At the very thought of the viands Rokuzo squirmed. He made a gesture of nausea and disgust. The *saké*—was excrement. The food—worse yet. He felt very ill.

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His aching limbs and heavy head accompanied him to his lord's *yashiki* in Ichigaya. Rokuzo took to his bed. At the porter's lodge the *kyūnin*, Naitō Kyūsaburō, inspected the tickets of the *chūgen*. At last Rokuzo had made his appearance; and had made no report. He was not long in reaching the *chūgen's* bedside. With severe face he questioned him as to his absence and neglect. "Gluttonous fellow! Something eaten is the cause of the sickness. Rascal that you are, a good purge is the thing. Then a fast in the jail will restore the stomach. This the punishment, if great your good luck. Otherwise—it will be the garden front. Report is to be made." He turned to go. Rokuzo detained him. He spoke with timidity, but under spur of the greater retribution. He admitted his fault. "But..."—"But what?" impatiently interjected Naitō. "Is not the food furnished by his lordship ample supply for the belly? Does a *chūgen* question his lord's generosity? What banquet tempted this rascal...?"—"Indeed it was a banquet." Rokuzo went into details. Kyūsaburō's rage increased. "You are lying. Or does illness follow food partaken in a dream? Perhaps the rascal Sukébei has not been paid. Is Rokuzo a thief?" Rokuzo groaned in pain and discomfiture. He would make a clean breast of it; confess to more than mere food. And he did. "Nor is Rokuzo the only victim. Isuké, *chūgen* of Okumura Sama of the Banchō, nearly lost his life. Others have been trapped; and others knew enough to refuse service and run away. Truly this Rokuzo is a fool. Condescend the honoured intercession. Ah, that banquet!" He shuddered at the thoughts aroused. At sight of the receipt of Sukébei perforce Naitō Kyūsaburō believed. He pitied Rokuzo, administered the stoutest purges in his pharmacy, and left him somewhat relieved in mind and body. The tale was soon known all over the *yashiki*—to the profit of all and the amusement of most. With gleeful malice Rokuzo would be asked to describe his meal, the superlative flavour of the wine, for past fact and present fancy became strangely mixed in his recital. Thus, through the report of the *kyūnin*, Naitō Kyūsaburō, the experience of his *chūgen* Rokuzo came to the ears of Endō Saburōzaémon, *hatamoto* of the land, of four hundred *koku* income, and officer in charge of the Hiban or fire-ward at the Ushigomé gate.^[3]

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CHAPTER II

THE *Bakémono Yashiki*

Endō Saburōzaémon heard the report of his officer. A slight frown puckered his brow, and he contemplated the big toe of his immaculately white *tabi* (sock). "A vexatious matter! *Hatamoto* of the land, official duty gives occupation enough. Yet for such things to take place, and so close to the person of the suzerain, this is not to be permitted. Beyond his love for wine Rokuzo has shown himself trustworthy. He is not lying?" Kyūsaburō bowed low—"As your lordship says. Of his illness there is no question; and that not merely from a drunken debauch. Rokuzo is not one to be tempted by women; and to those beyond his station he dares not raise his eyes. It was the wine which tempted him beyond discretion. He has tried all patience, been most disloyal. The honoured dismissal or severe punishment at the least is his due. The Tono Sama summoning him to the garden front, and deigning the kindness of putting him to death (*te-uchi*) ... yet...." Hesitating he brought out the once *hana-furi-kin*, wage of the unfortunate Rokuzo, now in such danger of drastic remedy for his aching head. Respectfully pushing forward a knee the *kyūnin* presented it to his lord. Saburōzaémon examined it with much curiosity. "And this?"—"The wage for his porter's work," answered the officer, his face respectfully wrinkled with the trace of a smile. "Though one could say from his exhaustion that he received other favour than coin. The very thought of his filthy repast drives the rascal to most fearful retchings. He is in a parlous way, and if your lordship deign forbearance...."—"Heigh!" He was interrupted by the exclamation of Saburōzaémon, now examining the leaf most intently. "I say now! An oak leaf, the broad reminder of the *kiri* (paulownia imperialis), such might come from last year's fall. This leaf never sprang from Nippon's soil."—"Just so," replied the *kyūnin*. "Hence petition for delay in administering punishment."—"And of course the fellow is useless. Ill, and besides he knows not whither he went, and came to himself on the Ichimenhara."—"Yet, while still in his five senses, he recognized Go Banchō; and it is fact that the *chūgen* of Okumura Dono suffered likewise in the Banchō."—"Of Kakunai and the strange horse this Saburōzaémon has heard. And the other man?"—"One Isuké, a stout fellow, but in good fortune the twin brother of this rascal Rokuzo."

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Endō Saburōzaémon rose to his feet with an elasticity and snap denoting decision. His wife standing close by laid hand upon his arm. He turned to meet her frightened questioning look. He spoke reassuringly. "Don't be afraid. Such things so near the suzerain's honoured dwelling are not to be permitted. This Saburōzaémon goes to learn the facts as to this suspicious house. The *samurai* has no fear of apparitions; and less of thieves, as is likely to be the case. Let the rascals look to themselves if they would avoid the taste of Saburōzaémon's sword. Kyūsaburō is to see that the *Yashiki* is well guarded. To-night Ōkubo Hikoroku Dono holds the fire ward. The occasion fits." At once he was busied with his preparations for out door service. His wife, granddaughter of old Nagasaki Chiyari Kurō—he of the "bloody spear"—was the *samurai* woman, to aid her lord in his duty, not to hold him back with tears and complaints. The pair were admirable specimens of their caste. Endō Saburōzaémon's grand-father had been a retainer of that hard hitting Asai Nagamasa who had to bow the head before the sword of Hidéyoshi. The son Kiémon perforce had served the Taikō, and well. It was with more than readiness that he had appeared in the army of the Tokugawa at Sekigahara, to be killed in all loyalty before Ōsaka in Genwa 1st year (1618). Saburōzaémon was then but five years old. But the early Tokugawa did not forget loyal service. When of age he was summoned to Edo from his native province of Ōmi, given duty in the palace service, to become with years a *hatamoto* with income of four hundred *koku* and a *yashiki* in Ichigaya, just beyond the Gomon or great gate at the outer moat.

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In the present matter night must be awaited. When the bell of the Gekkeiji, the huge temple of the district, struck the watch of the pig (9-11 P.M.) Endō prepared to set forth. "In case of necessity ask the aid of Hikoroku Dono, of Jurōzaémon."^[4] This to his wife. "At least one attendant? Kyūsaburō is old enough to know that these rascals never deal with more than one human." This to the old *kyūnin*, who with anxiety watched him depart into the darkness. With a sigh the officer shut fast the outer gate. Then, sword over his knees, he squatted himself at the house entrance, to slumber and await his lord's return.

As officer of the fire ward Saburōzaémon met with little difficulty in passing the Ichigaya gate, beyond which lay the suspected district of the Banchō. To the sharp hail and protest at his appearance without a lantern he sought the service of those of the guard. Surprise and abject apology followed the bringing of face and equipment into their light. As on urgent mission to the palace he explained the one and disregarded the other. For form he borrowed a lantern at the guard house, to leave it in a hedge close by, to hand for his return if in the darkness. Straight ahead he walked for some distance. Now he was in the very centre of the Banchō. It was a most lonely place. The district had been set apart for the *yashiki* of *hatamoto* and the houses of *gokenin* who showed no haste to apply for its ample space. Its highways and byways showed lines of bamboo fences, plaster walls, broken at intervals by gates. Between the far *yashiki* there was much waste land. Suspicious were its precincts in these days when the haunting spirits and apparitions, attendant on once owners and their wars, were being driven out by the advent and aggression of the new lords from the South. Still fresh in men's minds was the wondrous *mami-ana* of Azabu—the cave of the *tanuki* (badger)—with the implied curse on the Tokugawa. The cohorts of apparitions, driven northward to the land of savages, had suffered severely at the hands of Ii Naomasa on the banks of the Ueno Toshima ferry. Thus the curse came down the centuries on the Tokugawa House.

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Once in the heart of the district Saburōzaémon stood uncertain. All sense of locality was lost. The Banchō by day and by night greatly differed. The wind sighed through the great pine trees and whispered in the long *suzuki* grass. He thought to reach the neighbourhood of the Gomizaka. The noise and bustle of the Kōjimachi would give direction. Just then a lantern came in sight at the turning in the lane. As it drew near it was seen that to all appearance the bearer was a *chūgen*. Endō drew back into the shadow. He would take a good look at him. He allowed the man to pass. Then from behind—"Heigh! Wait!" Instead of waiting the fellow took to his heels. Endō pursued and soon caught him. In terror the fellow sank on his knees before the two sworded man. "Deign, honoured sir, to spare the cutting test. This Isuké is yet young. He loves life. Condescend not to cut short his breath." Saburōzaémon was struck by the name fresh to his ears. Coldly he looked the man over; played on his terror—"Yet you are fat; just of the girth to give fair test to a new blade."—"Nay! Your lordship can deign to observe it. Isuké is stuffed out with a recent meal. It would be but a case of tripes. His bones are young and soft, his muscles wasted by mere feeding. It would be as cutting *tōfu* (bean paste). Deign to spare him."

Said Saburōzaémon. "'Tis no cutting test. Thus passing carelessly at the side that fat paunch was an easy mark. Be more careful henceforth.... You live hereabouts?"—"Honoured Sir, 'tis so. Isuké is *chūgen* at the *yashiki* of Okumura Sama."—"Ah! Then you know the haunted house (*bakémono yashiki*) of the Banchō."—"Just beyond? Isuké knows it too well."—"Life spared, act as guide thither." The man's knees bent under him. He plead for forbearance. Plainly he must die. Only to this dreadful sentence and sight of Endō's sword did he yield. Reluctantly he went ahead of the *samurai*, as far as a gate the massiveness of which attracted attention. Saburōzaémon looked it over, then carefully considered his guide. He held out a coin. The fellow respectfully drew back. Said Endō with impatience—"As lord of this mansion the money of guidance is offered. Accept it without question. Here lies my purpose." This was but addition to obvious terror. With wabbling knees the fellow persisted in refusal. "Honoured lord, deign forbearance. Already has this Isuké accepted entertainment here, with fearful results; nearly quaffing the waters of the Yellow Fountain in Meido." Said Saburōzaémon sourly—"What has the purpose to do with a low fellow's entertainment? Take the coin, and be off with you. Darkness acts as screen." The man did but whimper, "With purpose in hand: truly darkness the screen, upside down; the balsam an incense, the sticks to hand in the clay dishes. This? 'Twill turn out but the leaf of a tree, to bring sorrow on Isuké. Your lordship has said it."—"It is good coin," replied Endō briefly. Then with some curiosity—"But what has a tree leaf to do with purpose?"—"Pine leaves denote purpose, and are so named."^[5]—"A clever fellow after all! No wonder he escaped.... But be off with you. The coin shall ring true with daylight. So much is promised on the word of a *samurai*. Fear the living man, not the inanimate object; and say nothing of meeting the donor. Otherwise Isuké ends badly. Now—off with you!" The voice was very human, the peremptory gesture surely that of a two sworded man. The *chūgen* took confidence in the fact that he could not help himself. Whatever doubts he possessed, these he kept with the coin in his bosom. With scant thanks cut short by fear he obeyed the order to depart into the shades. Gathering impetus with distance he fairly took to his heels.

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Saburōzaémon waited for the lantern to disappear. Then he turned to inspect the gate. There was no entrance through its solidity. It was a *yashiki mon*, almost house, with two posterns. He must get a look within. A long high plaster wall ran on both sides into the distance. The moonlight, flooding the scene, showed him a breach opened by long neglect. Once within he felt convinced that he was on the scene of Rokuzo's experience. But the pine grove was anything but swept clean. Branches torn off by storm and wind, fallen trees, lay scattered everywhere. It was a very winding course which took him to the eaves of the building some distance off. Plainly the once occupant had been a person of position, perhaps a minor *daimyō*. At the corner of the structure he found himself in the garden more particularly attached to the house. An exclamation of regret at sight of such desolation came to the lips of Saburōzaémon. A master hand had laid out this beautiful piece of work; but trees and plants, no longer trained and trimmed by man's hand, had run wild. In the centre was a wide well curb rising some three feet from the ground. A single stone step allowed easier access for those drawing water. The well-sweep had rotted off and lay upon the ground. There was no bucket. Saburōzaémon leaned over. From the still surface of the water came an indefinable putrescent odour, perhaps from the decaying plants, or refuse blown into the depths. He drew away, disgusted and convinced. Carefully he made the round of this pleasaunce. At the bottom of the garden near the confines of the well, was an artificial mound—a *tsukiyama* or moon viewing hill. Before this was a little lake, for fish and lotus, of perhaps a couple of hundred feet in length by narrow width. In places he could jump across it; and elsewhere stepping stones offered passage. An Inari shrine in a plum grove offered no particular interest, beyond recent inclosure showing a neighbour's hand. There was swampy ground for the *shobu* or iris and beds of peony plants. In front of the line of towering pines was a row of Yoshino cherry trees, all broken and neglected. The one time owner had loved flowers. Endō turned to the house.

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The moon was pouring full on the closed *amado* (rain doors), its cold silver globe lighting up the scene. "Solitary is the moon of winter glorious that of autumn." This was the tranquil moon of summer, pacifying yet saddening men's hearts, as does all moonlight. It was plain there was no entrance on this side of the house, unless unseemly force was used. This was unnecessary. Endō noticed the lattice work of the bath-room. A few strokes of his dagger, and the frame was lifted out. Then it was easy to draw back the heavy wooden panels and allow the moonlight to flood these exposed chambers. Carefully he scanned his immediate surroundings. The paper of the *shōji* was torn and eaten by the rats. In places the frayed *tatami* (mats) bent under his feet,

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evidence of decay of the supporting floor. There was the mouldy damp smell common to places long closed to the freedom of the outer air. It sent a chill to the bone; which Endō noted with surprise as he turned to the dark inner rooms. He must have some kind of light. Almost the first step into the semi-obscurity offered the means to hand. Stumbling over an object at his feet he picked up a staff. On examination it proved to be one of those *kongo* canes, the support to feet and belly of the devout in their long pilgrimages, sign manual of the pious intent of the bearer. He had taken a candle from his pocket, and, with small respect to the "six worlds" of its rings, used the spiked end to improvise a torch. Then an unexpected voice caught his ear; a sad, wailing cry which chilled the heart. Then followed low, rapid, disorderly speech, the meaning of which rendered indistinct by distance could not be made out. Then came the unearthly startling shriek which rang through the whole mansion.

Endō Saburōzaémon now had his torch fastened and blazing. Loosing his sword in the scabbard promptly he set forth into the darkness beyond. The candle cast a feeble light, making the darkness still more apparent. However, he could see the splendour of these once inhabited rooms. Screens worked in silk were dirty and frayed, but they were by master hands, and still showed the outlines of beautiful designing. The *rama-shōji*—the fret work between the rooms—was broken in places, yet it displayed the erratic course of Nature's handiwork, the most bizarre and effective of all. And always just before him went the shuffling drag of sandals—as of some one on the *rōka*, further on, at the room beyond. He sprang forward in haste, to fling back the closed screens, but still the object eluded him; always there, yet never seen. Thus it led him from room to room—reception rooms, sitting rooms, the women's apartments; all gorgeous, all unfurnished, not a single object of the value to tempt stray visitor or intentional thief. Even the kitchen was stripped bare of equipment. Not even the stones to support the furnace had been left. Thieves, or others, had long since accounted for all movables.

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Dumbfounded Saburōzaémon stood at the foot of the stairway. Patter, patter the footsteps had led him to this point. The width was coated thickly with dust, swept by breezes from without, and from the disintegrating plaster (*kabé*) walls. The webs of spiders were woven across it; across the aperture. Yet—again came the wild sounds of riot above. This time the voices were distinct and close at hand. A woman was struggling, pleading under torture. "Alas! Alas! Deign to show pity. What has been the offence, thus to inflict punishment. Condescend the honoured pity. Ah! Pardon there is none. The child is consigned from the darkness of the womb to the darkness of death. Alas! Most harsh and unkind! How avoid the eternal grudge? Unending the hate of...." The voice, like to the sharp rending of silk, ended in the fearful shriek, chilling, heart rending, paralysing even the stout heart of Endō Saburōzaémon. "Ki-i-i!" There followed the ineffectual gurgling wailing cries of one struggling for breath. Drawn sword in hand Saburōzaémon sprang up the stairway. Nothing! The *amado* thrown back in haste light enough was given to show the emptiness of the room. Still the voice was heard. He passed beyond. As before—nothing; except the voice, now plain, as at his very side.

Saburōzaémon was now assured of some witchery. "This is Endō Saburōzaémon Takékiyo, *hatamoto* of the land. Whoever, or whatever, be present, assume the proper shape. Fox or *tanuki* (badger), strip off all disguise; stand to the test of Saburōzaémon's blade." But the sad wailing voice made answer—"Unkind the words of Endō Sama. This is no trick of fox or badger. Meeting an untimely end, the Spirit now wanders as an unworshipped demon; as one deprived of all honour in the grave. Brave has been the deed of Endō Dono. Others have come; to depart in fright. He alone stays to challenge. For so much, thanks. Deign worship to my spirit, the security of rest from its wanderings." Saburōzaémon in amazement looked around. The voice was clearly heard, and close to him; yet naught was to be seen. "Whoever you be, if wronged the sword of Saburōzaémon is here to avenge the wrong. If in life, the perpetrator shall pay the penalty of the misdeed; yourself shall secure worship. Such is the office of a *bushi*—to aid the helpless. But cannot the shape be seen? Why this concealment from the eyes of Saburōzaémon?" And the voice made answer—"Has Endō Sama no eyes? Concentrate the thoughts. Here! Here!" Carefully and long Saburōzaémon scrutinized every spot. Following the voice he sought to get nearer and nearer. Thus he was brought right before the *tokonoma* (alcove). For a moment he shielded his eyes with his hands, then boldly removed the screen and faced the spectre in the plaster. At first faint, then more strongly outlined was the vision of a young girl. At one time the face perhaps had had great beauty. Now there was a weird expression of life amid the wasting and decay of death. The living eyes gleamed a deadly hate and distress which showed the torment of the spirit. Framed in the wild disordered masses of long black hair the face of the apparition sought to plunge its own unhappiness into the soul of its visitor. It was a strange vision; one to rouse the desire for the beautiful woman in man's heart, the wish to shield; together with repulsion toward the most evil passions of a malice which inspires fear. Long and steadily the man gazed; the woman answered the challenge. Then again Endō was the *samurai*. "On with the tale. To the wronged Endō Saburōzaémon gives right and worship. A *samurai*, he has passed his word, not to be broken." He would have taken seat before the alcove. Said the voice—"Honoured Sir, the tale is long. On the *rōka* without is a stool. The *tatami* are dangerous with the wet. Later deign the honoured hearing." With surprise Endō followed these household directions. At the room close by he found the object indicated. Here met his eye a sign unmistakable. In the very centre of the *tatami* was a huge red-brownish stain; by the verandah a second stain; at the further entrance a third of kindred character. Plainly the tale he would hear was of no peaceful exit from life. To the tragedy of death had been added violence. Thus fortified he returned, to take his seat before the vision in the alcove; steadily, with the harsh official manner of his caste, to meet the evil, strangely seductive, malice of its look and suggestion. Then it spoke:

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CHAPTER III

NAKAKAWACHI SHŪZEN

Honoured sir, long past the source of this offence. It was the fourteenth year of Kwanei (1637). As now, the summer heat was stifling. To seek relief this Shimo had left the house, to stroll the neighbourhood close by. Thus idly engaged, listening to the song of the *suzumushi*, watching the fireflies flitting over the tops of the *suzuki* grass, and bending to cull a few lilies to arrange in the *hanaike*, the presence of a stranger was felt. Ah! He was indeed a handsome man. Not too young to seem a callow youth to the eyes of Shimo's sixteen years; not too old to look on her merely as one of different sex. Indeed he was not yet thirty years, a soldier, carrying his two swords and his person most nobly. At very sight of him Shimo was carried into the gust of the love passion. Her cheeks were "dashed with the maple leaf, her heart swelled as the noon-tide." Her confusion did not escape the notice of one already surprised at sight of a girl so young strolling alone on the byways of the Banchō. At once he spoke, with the confidence of one who has the right to question—"And who may this little beauty be, unaccompanied, with night so close at hand? The Banchō is said to be no safe place with coming of darkness. If on some mission and belated, this Shūzen will protect from harm. Or perhaps, though young in years, this is some new wife. Or is it a lover who is in question?" He spoke with kindness and authority, coming very close to get his answer, his eyes fastened on my person, to the greater increase of embarrassment. Vain was the attempt to throw some indignation into the reply. Lover there was none. Of but sixteen years, Shimo was in the hands of father and mother. To admit a lover would be unfilial.... The father? Kawasaki Chōbei, attached to the palace stables. Humble was his rank in the minor office he held; but a one time *ashigaru* (common soldier) his service had entitled him to the position and the suzerain's stipend of twenty *koku*. Hence he was of some consequence among his neighbours. At this information, given with some heat, the *samurai* smiled and praised my father's service.

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He did more than praise; on this night, and other nights. Frequent were the meetings. Yet never did this Shimo pass the bounds of propriety. Carried away by the gust of passion, incited by the lover's presence and solicitation, yet Shimo's filial duty kept her person pure. A night came when he failed at the rendezvous. So with the next, and following nights. He had laughed at parting, and said that where was the will, there a means would be found. Plainly the will was lacking, and he was too proud and too highly placed even to endure the presence of Shimo at his side. With these thoughts, and overcome by love and vexation, I sickened. Great was the anxiety of the parents. Doctors were called in; the priest's charms were sought. They were of no avail. It was the advice of the wise old Saitō Sensei to leave me to myself and time. "It is her years," said he. "Time will effect the cure; unless she herself sooner indicates the means." Laughing he departed, as one convinced that the cure was a simple one. Long had the determination been held to tell all to the mother; always put off at sight of the kindly anxious face. With such a lover she would have felt alarmed and helpless.

Time brought the cure. The summer heats were nearly past; the eighth month (September) close at hand. One day came a *chūgen* to the house, bearing a message. At once all was in confusion. Nakakawachi Dono was a *fudai daimyō* of twelve thousand *koku* income. He was a new-comer in the district, and known to be held in high favour at the palace. A goodly portion of the site of the former Yoshida Goten in Banchō Kōjimachi had recently been assigned to him. With the removal of the Takata no Kata^[6] to quarters closer to the castle the greater portion of the palace had been removed to build the prior's hall of the Inuma Kugyōji. The villa part (*bessō*) of the structure had been left intact, and with much of the park and garden had been secured by favour to Nakakawachi Sama. For such a great lord in his passage to condescend to rest at the humble house of a mere *go-kenin* caused much disturbance. The limited household staff was put energetically to work at cleaning and making all preparations for the honoured visit. Treading with cat's paw my parents went from room to room, to see that all was befitting. The articles of greatest value were set forth for his lordship's view. An instinct set dancing my barely restored nerves. Why did this great lord, so near home in his progress—his fief was in Kōshū—deign thus to rest? What command would he urge? His name was Nakakawachi Shūzen. The *samurai* lover of the Banchō spoke of himself as Shūzen. Thus was the watching and waiting, in a flutter of trepidation and newly aroused passion.

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Then he came. My parents prostrated themselves on the ground in his presence. "With your permission—" Haughty he swept on, to be ushered to the inner rooms. Even the officer in charge remained at a distance. Prostrate at the sill my father gave thanks for the honour of this unexpected presence, for his lordship's deigning to halt the palanquin. On command Shimo served the tea, not daring to raise face from the *tatami* under the satisfied scrutiny of this honoured guest, exercising all her self control, which yet did not prevent a trembling of the fingers in presenting the salver with the cup. In due course, on withdrawal of the service, he noted the one who served, and indicated his wishes. He was a new-comer in the district. He would have his service therefrom, at the hands of those close by. No girl was better spoken of than the daughter of Chōbei San. He would ask that Shimo be sent to the *yashiki* to attend as *koshimoto* (maid in waiting) to her ladyship. His short stay in this house he regarded as most fortunate. He spoke through his chamberlain, now present; but followed the officer's words with close attention. My father was overwhelmed by the honour. Profuse and earnest were his astonished thanks. Shimo was the only child of people now entering into the coldness of age. This

was of small moment. But there had been no opportunity to give her the training required for such service. Beyond an awkward touch on *samisen*, mainly due to her own practice, she was a moor girl, a very rustic. She could keep house—yes; like a wardsman's daughter. Polite accomplishments she lacked. Deign in this instance his lordship's honoured forbearance. The girl was too young and awkward for such service.

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Polite was the withdrawal; without knowledge of his lordship's disposition and previous acquaintance. Shūzen Dono was not so easily balked. All the objections were brushed aside. Youth was everything in my favour. His eyes twinkled with inward amusement as he spoke. All the easier came the practice which everyone must go through. If Shimo was incurably awkward she would not be dismembered, but dismissed. Great would be the forbearance. That she had everything to learn pleased him all the more. She would be the more readily moulded to his service. At the *yashiki* youth was an object, and not the experience of long time service which had left the adept far too experienced. Such women had their lord's service little at heart. Shimo had youth and beauty. These were a girl's treasures and accomplishments. He had never seen one better fitted for entrance on such service. All this the chamberlain conveyed with an authority which put aside opposition. The lord's will was spoken. First the mother gave thanks for the honour condescended to one so insignificant. She claimed the promised forbearance of his lordship to any faults. My father followed her example, and gave his thanks. Such entertainment as the humble house afforded was now produced. After partaking his lordship departed in state. The neighbours had been agape at the great lord's train stationed at the gate. For them and for the curious and discreet questioning, the congratulations at such promotion in the world, this Shimo cared little. His lordship's will had prevailed. Henceforth Shimo would live close to his side.

I had fled to the little working room, as one taking refuge amid the constant household sewing. But needle could not be seen through the veil of tears. "What joy! What joy!" Thoughtless the words were spoken out loud. The mother's hand was laid on my shoulder. The look was kind, yet with some reproach at this unfilial rejoicing. Apology was made. To her doubts eager was the answer. "How else succeed in life? Service at the *yashiki*, its life always under eye, its etiquette, even its dangers—this experience alone can teach how to meet its requirements; and so close at hand, near to home and parents. Others had succeeded in such promotion. Why not Shimo, thus offered the chance to rise from the status of a wardsman's daughter, or not much more, to become an attendant in a lord's *yashiki*?" Sadly my mother smiled. Grave would be her anxieties concerning one so inexperienced. "The child thinks but of self and pleasure. The mother thinks but of the child, and sees the dangers." This in lower tones—"If Shimo becomes the favourite of her lord, how is such inexperience to meet the evil passions roused in those around her? Always place her ladyship first. Resist the solicitation of Shūzen Dono; unless the *okusama* chooses to favour what would be but a transient passion. Keep this well in mind.... And now—to the preparation of what is needed." She had detected the motive of his lordship's summons, thought him captivated by a pretty face and figure come across by accident. Thus she understood the inner feeling of this Shimo. With the words of advice she turned to the subject of my needs. Willingly this was left to her skilled hands; and the advice received as little attention. To speak of resistance to his lordship, to one who hungered for his presence, was but to set the brain devising all the means to secure his favour. Thus outwardly busied with needle and garments, the self was existing as in a dream. The preparations in any event could not be elaborate. Shūzen Dono was urgent. A lucky day was chosen, and with my modest equipment I entered on the service of the *yashiki* of Nakakawachi Sama.

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Introduction to the immediate presence of her ladyship, O'Hagi was anything but pleasing. Seated with her were two maids, O'Tsugi and O'Han. The first named was a buxom masculine woman of nearly thirty years. The girl O'Han was a recent promotion from the scullery; and, as was learned later, she owed the favour to the goodwill of the chamberlain (*yōnin*) Nishioka Shintarō, a cold, smooth spoken, evil eyed man, mainly notable for the uncompromising readiness with which he carried out the wishes of her ladyship. Over them all, of greatest influence with O'Hagi Dono, was an old woman, O'Saku. She had accompanied her ladyship from the original House, was utterly unscrupulous in her service, and her sharp voice, like that of a file scratching glass, sent shivers down the spine as I prostrated myself before the group. Cold was the reception. "A likely wench! Plainly his lordship's choice, without reference to your ladyship. But time will show.... Meanwhile no service as yet is assigned. With this girl his lordship's orders are first to be heard. O'Han, show the new comer to the quarters of the *koshimoto*, that she stand in no necessity or likelihood of forgetting where they are. For to-day there is remission of service." Thus spoke the harsh voice of O'Saku, passing over my head. The cold, knife like glances of all were like steel plunged into my body. With obeisance I withdrew, to follow O'Han, who gave no greater welcome and was no kinder than the rest. Almost at once she left me, and several days were passed in solitude awaiting a summons. This came one evening. With evil dubious smile O'Han presented herself. "His lordship summons O'Shimo Dono to his service this night. You are to attend. Deign not to forget the good services of this Han." She laughed, with a bitter suggestiveness. What would anyone have done, thus treated at start as evil doer, as intruder? With joy his lordship's command was heard. The whole person of Shimo showed a well restrained love and joy. He was pleased at the effect wrought on me by his presence. Small the experience, beyond what love's attention could afford. The night's banquet was plainly not the dullest of its kind. At its close O'Shimo had command to accompany him. With morning I was a woman.

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In the period which followed every night came the summons to attend my lord. Foolish and inexperienced, in this whirlwind of passion Shimo was but a leaf driven by the storm. The

assignment to duty in the *yashiki* never came. There was the daily report for duty at her ladyship's rising, the cold and curt reception, the quick dismissal. O'Hagi Dono was past her thirtieth year. Of the great Doi House, she brought to her husband a dower of influence and prestige. Older than her husband the love passion had never taken root. An ugly woman, there was small chance for other good qualities to secure a fictitious esteem with a man so easily captivated by beauty as Shūzen Sama. Furthermore her ladyship did not possess such amiable traits. She was a proud, hard, jealous woman; with the natural graft of a bad temper. Soon abandoned to a lonely bed she was no longer treated as a wife. Though the marriage had endured some five years there was no child, and little prospect of one. On occasions of ceremony the *okugata* presided at his lordship's wine feasts, attended by her band of furies. With the exception of O'Han, who possessed the freshness of youth, none of them had any pretence to good looks. Outwardly all due respect was paid to his lordship, but the private apartments (*oku*) were in league against him. For weeks the contact was through the *yōnin*, Nishioka Shintarō, who acted as messenger of his lord's commands, and conveyed to his lordship any intimation of the wishes of her ladyship. Hence Shūzen Sama knew and cared little as to what passed in the inner apartments of his wife. She knew everything which passed in those of his lordship. This tacit divorce appeared welcome to both.

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The object of his lordship's passion, in a household in which one side or the other of the existing feud must be taken, the position of this Shimo was quickly determined. Not by her, for short experience of her ladyship inspired a terror which would even have counselled cooler treatment from his lordship in one more experienced. The other girls were all honey, to disguise the bitterness of gall. There was not one of them who would not gladly have obeyed her lord's call to Shimo's place. Hence to partisanship was added jealousy. At the daily tasks there was but one topic of conversation—O'Shimo's favour with her lord. The charms she used were evident enough, for Nature had been lavish with the kind to meet his lordship's wishes. How was it their own parents had spawned such incapacity? "Deign, O'Shimo Dono, to teach the art so sadly lacking. How bring to prominence such meagre gifts of proportion as one does possess? In turn shall be taught the art of the *hanaike*—the arrangement of flowers, of the *koto* and the *biwa* in accompaniment of old songs of heroes and their ladies, the ceremonial grace so necessary in attendance, the conduct of a lady. From a wardsman's daughter little is expected, beyond good looks. Alas! O'Shimo Dono is the *yamabuki*, the yellow rose, beautiful in its out of season bloom (April), but only too likely to be nipped by the frost. Deign to enlighten, O'Shimo Dono. Beauty soon wanes, and pregnancy kills good looks as completely as the chill wind does the flowers." Then they all broke into mad laughter; and whispered to each other.

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Their suspicions were correct. The constant companionship of his lordship had the natural effect. When told great was his pleasure. If a boy, the child should be acknowledged as heir of the House. If a girl, it should be the solace of his years. So great was his joy and pride that he spoke to the retainers as if it was the *okugata* herself who was at issue. Thus the news must have reached her ladyship's ears with the first telling, for Nishioka usually was present at his lord's repast. He was the black cloud hanging over all. A tall, gaunt, suave, determined man of nearly forty years, the smile he cast upon this Shimo chilled her. Always courteous in his lordship's presence, elsewhere his courtesy conveyed a threat and insult which made me as the bird before the snake. I feared the man; and feared him all the more when one day, with small disguise of malice, he told me that his lordship had departed in all haste for the fief in Kōshū, not to return for some weeks. Considering the state of affairs, this should inconvenience me but little. This open reference to the pregnancy was a first alarm. It showed how well known it was to the whole household. Indeed concealment now was impossible. The fifth month had been entered upon; the supporting band had become a necessity. But the climax was at hand.

That very day—toward noon—the summons came through the girl O'Han. With sinking heart I took my way to her ladyship's sitting room. What was going to take place. Passing the *chūgen* Jisuké on the *rōka* he called to someone in the garden—"His lordship's absence gives the chance to clean out the house." Covertly glancing below—there was no one. Was it in malice, or as warning? Probably the latter. Jisuké always had been active in little services; often the chosen messenger of my lord. His look in passing conveyed no insolence; rather kind intention. It took away the exhibition of surprise at my reception. Her ladyship was seated at the upper end of the room. The maids O'Tsugi and O'Han stood close by. Nishioka Shintarō was just behind her ladyship. The old hag O'Saku was seated at the front. She motioned me to make salutation. The *okugata* spoke harshly, with contempt and dislike of the one thus brought before her at the white sand of judicial process. "The affair at issue is a simple one. Shimo is to answer the questions—without tergiversation or lying. To Saku is left the matter of the examination."

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The old woman bowed with respect and smiling gratitude at the pleasing task. The smile conveyed to her ladyship promise of satisfaction, even amusement, in the torture of a forced confession from this child who would play the woman. Turning to me her face, with cheeks fallen in, long sharp nose, hard bright glittering eyes of a bird of prey, the snowy hair piled high around the temples, it was that of one keenly searching out the tenderest spot into which to drive the knife. Her first words were all flattery. "Much has been heard, and little seen, of O'Shimo Dono since her entrance into the *yashiki*. What has been heard is all to her advantage. Her devotion to the service of his lordship has been carried to the utmost—even, some say, to extremes. Of that there can be no criticism. His lordship's wishes are paramount. The action of O'Shimo Dono contains nothing but merit. It is for the malice of others to say that O'Shimo has sought and stolen the fruit belonging to her ladyship; that her cat's eyes have been quick to fasten upon the place of the mistress of the house; that it is she who would furnish forth an heir to his lordship.

Such is not to be believed. But the truth is to be told. An heir to his lordship is a matter for her ladyship. No child has fallen to her lot. If O'Shimo Dono be the first to give birth to a child in the *yashiki*, it must be between the knees of her ladyship. Deign then to make full confession.... Ah! There is no need to beg for mercy and reprieve from the examination. Saku is old. Her ladyship is a married woman. Both possess experience. On refusal personal examination is to be made. O'Tsugi, O'Han, are to aid." The two women had come forward and passed behind me. Seized and thrown down the clenched fist of O'Tsugi was roughly pressed into my abdomen. In fright and pain, in dread for the unborn child, I cried out. Then the violent old woman dragged out the confession of all that had passed with his lordship. Minute and shameful the details to be told in the presence of a man. But Shimo was an animal with powers of speech, and must tell all. With the confession the old woman's smoothness departed. "Vile slut! A townsman's brat, sprung from the stable dung, you would play the adulteress, take her ladyship's place, and supplant her with an heir got by some stranger's seed.... She is gone to the sixth month? High time for interference. She shall be kept here, until the separation of persons takes place. No wonder his lordship abandoned the shameless hussy—for some fresh country wench in Kōshū. For such loose jades to please the taste of the Tono Sama causes surprise. But off with her, to the room for confinement. There she is to lie, until her affair is settled." At a sign O'Tsugi and O'Han seized hold of me. Clothes torn and in disorder, the person vilely exposed, roughly I was dragged over to this barred and retired apartment. Always I made effort to preserve my body and its fruit from their harsh violence. O'Tsugi roared with laughter at the feeble resistance. The woman was strong as a horse. To O'Han—"Look at her big belly. Ah! Her ladyship is none too wise. Let the matter but be left to Tsugi, and the midwife soon would be needed." She raised a massive leg with suggestive gesture. In some fright O'Han stopped her, on plea of no such orders. The girl was young, of full figure and not without attraction. Perhaps she harboured hopes, and would not in a rival's person set precedent for her own. O'Tsugi spun me around, as a child would a top with the cord. Then suddenly she released me. With a crash my body fell against the wall. Sick and faint I tried to rise, and failed. They watched me for a time as I grovelled and retched in sickness. Then the bar fell on the outer passage and my imprisonment.

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The day light waned. The sound of the birds going to roost came to the ears. It was now spring, the gladsome period of the year. The cooing and chirping brought no charm to the prisoner's ear. These birds were as the birds of Shidéyama (in Hell). Mournful the dirge they sang. Filled with foreboding, with dread for self and the passing from the darkness of the womb to the darkness of death for the unborn child, faintness of heart was made worse by the faintness of hunger. I sank into a kind of slumber, more racking than the working hours. Then the harsh cries of the crows aroused me. Daylight was again streaming through the window bars. At a corner of the sill was a jar. The water in it was stale and foul smelling. None other was to hand. A *mimitarai* (hand basin) was found in the closet. Thus was the nauseating ablution performed. Near mid-day, when ready to cry out with hunger, for sake of child not self, the door opened. It was O'Han who brought me food. One strip of *takuan*, the bitter pickled radish; for drink, ice cold water. Such was the meal. At night some pickled greens replaced the radish. On my knees I plead with O'Han, besought her mercy for the unborn child. She laughed at my misery. "Good living on forbidden fruits has made O'Shimo Dono fat. Her big belly is perchance to be reduced by diet. Such are the orders of the *okugata*. Han can do nothing; and would do nothing if she could. What a fool! Cannot one please his lordship, all night and every night, without promise of an heir to the House? Condescend the vacancy and leave such matter to this Han...." Perhaps she felt that she had said too much. Abruptly she turned and left the room.

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I was not long alone. At least it seemed not so, for the light slumbers were disturbed by the pangs of hunger. Then came a hand fingering the outside bar. It was done stealthily. In aid or menace? A deadly fear came over me. With wild staring eyes, loosened hair framing an anguished and distorted figure I faced the object without, seeking its entrance. The terror was not relieved by the appearance of the chamberlain, Nishioka Shintarō. His face was set and drawn, as of a man who has a problem to work out, as of one who would carry out the purpose with certainty and expedition. He closed the door, set the lamp carefully on the floor in a distant corner. Not a word was spoken. Eyes bright with terror I watched his movements. He carried something in one hand. Shaken loose it was allowed to trail behind him. His preparations made he came toward me with decision. Retreating before his advance the wall was reached. By this time he was on me. Then I saw what it was he held; a slender rope, its dreadful meaning plain. I screamed in terror. Roughly he silenced me, one hand on open mouth. In stifled tones I plead for mercy. Then failing sign of respite, by desperate effort my struggles called for all his strength. My screams resounded loud in the room. "Aré! Aré! Murder! Deep the grudge, to seven lives! Nishioka San! The grudge of one dying against Nishioka! Against man and woman who would cut off the life of Shimo and her child. Ah! Her ladyship! The grudge!" The cord had tightened round my throat. The ends were in the strong hands of Nishioka Shintarō. I mocked and stuck out my tongue at him. I know I did so, as the breath came with greater and greater difficulty. His face, that of a demon, grew to huge proportions, bright scarlet. Now heart and lungs were bursting with fullness. Dreadful the agony, dreadful the grudge for this ill deed. Thus I died. Then followed the ruin of the House of Nakakawachi Shūzen.

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CHAPTER IV

On the following night all were gathered in the apartments of her ladyship. O'Tsugi was engaged in putting back the *koto* (harp) into its cover. O'Hagi Dono touched the instrument with no mean skill, and on this night had deigned to please herself and those who heard her. O'Han was engaged in heating the *saké* bottles. Rarely did her ladyship retire without this indulgence. The old woman, O'Saku, aimlessly moved about the room. She seemed to be awaiting some news. A sound of steps in the corridor, and with pleased countenance she made sign to her ladyship. A moment later and Nishioka Shintarō entered the room. There was not a trace of difference from the ordinary in his composed harsh reverential manner to her ladyship. The latter gave a look at O'Saku. The old woman asked the momentous question. "The matter in hand—has all gone well? The wench no longer troubles the peace and future of the *okugata*?"—"Everything to perfection: the *chūgen* and servants were given tasks to take them far removed. There was barely a struggle. By the hands of this Shintarō the affair was soon carried to completion." With complacency he displayed two lean strong hands, regarded with fondness and admiration by her ladyship. They could bestow a more tender embrace than that suffered by the unfortunate *koshimoto*. "And later; the traces of the deed, these are to be removed?"—"There are none. The time was waited until the body grew cold. It was safe to do so. The weather is yet raw, the room one seldom entered, and the bar key in the hands of Shintarō. But just now the task of dismemberment and disposal has been completed. On pretext of repairs to the *ashigaru* quarters much plaster was obtained. With this the severed fragments of the hussy and her foetus were mingled, and thus concealed in the wall of the *tokonoma*. The whole new surfaced no trace of the deed appears; nor is there fear of stench from the corpse. Her ladyship can be assured that all is well. O'Shimo no longer will give trouble with her pretensions to his lordship's fondness. In a few days Shintarō will notify the father that the girl has run off with some lover. A worthless jade, thus dismissed the *yashiki*, he will be too ashamed to make inquiry here; and his searches elsewhere are not likely to bear fruit.... How strange!" He brushed away a firefly which had flown into his face. With surprise those present watched the bug flitting here and there in the darkness of the corners and the open corridor. It was barely the middle of the third month (April), and no season for the appearance of those insects of the hottest period of the year. Failing to catch it, O'Tsugi drove it into the outer darkness. Then closed the screens.

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More lights were brought. Her ladyship would take wine, and talk of nothing but the joy and relief. "For life this deed shall not be forgotten. Always in the ready courage and resource of Nishioka has support been found; many awkward corners turned. If he finds favour with his lord, still greater the regard of this Hagi. A cup—Shintarō!" Herself she offered it, leaning fondly toward him. Her hand trembled in her passion as he took it, with purposed glance and pressure. Always formal in outward seeming, the intimate relations of the pair for past months were more than understood by these immediate attendants and abettors. Nishioka Shintarō long had been the honoured substitute of his lord—the shadow, the O'Kagé Sama, of Nakakawachi Dono. In this case the shadow was the substance. This ugly virile woman was boiling over with passion. In the old O'Saku she had a bawd to her service. She had entered this House as friend or enemy, according as the event would turn out. Neglected by Shūzen, unable to rule him by will or personal attraction, she sought to do so by substitution, to the satisfaction of both. Hence she made Nishioka Shintarō her lover. He was nephew of O'Saku and foster brother of O'Hagi. Once introduced into the house he easily made his way into the confidence of Shūzen Dono, by taking all cares off his shoulders, beyond those of ceremonial attendance and pleasure. The minutest details of everything were looked to by Nishioka. This pleased Shūzen, who placed confidence in the readiness and proved resourcefulness of the man. Nishioka was an infallible guide in all minutiae of the palace service and intrigue; his knowledge gained by a long experience in attendance on the great Doi House. Here he had risen from *chūgen* to *kyūnin* (house officer). When he came to the *yashiki* of Shūzen he soon replaced the *karō* (minister) of the fief in his lord's intimacy, and the latter official found honourable banishment in continued occupation and residence at the fief in Kōshū, where Shūzen played the rôle of a castle lord (*jōshū*), a *fudai daimyō*, a subordinate and spy on his greater neighbours. The new comer was source of congratulation to her ladyship. As O'Saku—and perhaps O'Hagi Dono intended, revenge was sought on Shūzen by promptly throwing the mistress into the arms of Nishioka. Behind the impenetrable shield of the inner apartments—a place that Shūzen only sought to avoid—they could live as husband and wife. Other arrangement now was met by the cold reception meted out to her lord by the lady of the House. Any compunction Shūzen might feel as to what he thought to be the enforced sterility of O'Hagi thus was salved.

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Merry almost to madness was the progress of the wine feast. Her ladyship went beyond the bonds even of a decent veil of sobriety. Her loving attitude to Nishioka found more open expression than usual in the presence of the others. Her abandonment was undisguised. All rejoiced with her; congratulated the strong man on his ready energy. Only the girl O'Han showed some lack of spirit, which she attributed to headache. In kindness her ladyship forbade further concern with the service of the wine, with the aggravation of its fumes; but she had too little consideration for those about her to relieve the suffering girl from attendance. Then the hour came to retire. According to the decent formula in practice, Nishioka, notified of the fact, rose to take his leave—to the next chamber. Here the O'Kagé Sama did his disrobing. The girl O'Tsugi was the first to leave her ladyship, on some mission. She came behind Shintarō, to administer a rousing slap between the shoulders which brought him almost to his knees. Grumbling and gasping he turned to meet her admiring looks. "A fine figure of a man! And one to act as well as pose. For us his lordship has but pretty words. O'Shimo alone profited otherwise. But the O'Kagé

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Sama of his lordship is of another kind. Deign to favour this Tsugi from time to time." Shintarō volunteered a grimace which could pass for a consenting smile. His shoulders burned under the heat of the lady's passion. In search for a reply the screens again parted, and O'Saku made her appearance. O'Tsugi at once took to flight, somewhat in derision. The old woman followed her with eyes of suspicion. Then she marched straight up to Nishioka—"An impudent jade! Shintarō is to place no confidence in her or her words. She brings nothing but shame, and perhaps worse. There is not a serving man in the *yashiki* who does not know her. And remember this well. It is this Saku who holds the string of her ladyship's favour. O'Hagi Dono is not so far enamoured as not to accept a substitute at Saku's hands.... But he is a fine figure of a man! Too fine to be spoiled by his lordship's hand." To avoid the threatening lascivious gleam in the eyes of this withered branch Nishioka made pretence of trouble with a knot in his girdle. The whispered invitation grazed a negligent ear, to be interrupted by the sound of her ladyship's voice. O'Saku was in no haste to leave or to say more. O'Han was the last to appear. There were anger and tears in her eyes as the girl stopped a few feet from him. She spoke half turned away, as ready to take flight at expected interruption. "Nishioka Dono keeps faith with her ladyship! Does he keep faith with Han? Earnest was the promise that at all events Han should share his favour with O'Hagi Dono. Nearly a month has passed since he has deigned a visit. Surely her ladyship is not so exacting. Give fair answer. Is will or power lacking?" She waited the reply, eyes cast down on the *tatami*, for she at least had some remains of modesty. Thus the almost despairing gesture of Shintarō escaped her. He spoke in low voice, with emphasis, to this fairest of his bevy of fair ones—"As for the *okugata*, O'Han knows her almost as well as this Shintarō. What would be the fate of both if their treachery were suspected? Deign to be patient. The fountain of plenty has not run dry. Shintarō would go but so far. In this horde of women he must look to himself. The dependence now is on her ladyship and O'Saku Dono. Shūzen Sama is cajoled by having thought for nothing. The *karō* now is very old. This Shintarō surely will take his place. A break then with her ladyship finds punishment in exile to Kōshū. Then comes the time for O'Han openly to join Shintarō, for the happy bond of two lives." The girl's lips barely moved. Both were startled at peremptory call from the neighbouring room. She spoke rapidly—"Tis small matter, even with her ladyship. But from time to time a visit to this Han? Condescend it."—"Agreed!" was the impatient answer. "But with O'Hagi Dono, O'Tsugi, O'Han.... O'Saku, the occasions must be limited." He suddenly seized her in his arms and silenced her protest in an embrace. Then with hasty steps he passed to her ladyship's bed-chamber, leaving O'Han with wide staring eyes which shifted from the room of the lovers to the door through which she had witnessed the old woman's departure.

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Such was the vileness of the life in which was engaged Nishioka Shintarō. A week had barely elapsed. There was occasion to make purchases for the *yashiki*. The *chūgen* Jisuké remained respectfully prostrate before the officer. Nishioka again ran over the list required. "These are to be got at the Owariya in Mikawachō. The month's settlement is yet far off. The order stands sufficient. Now off with you." The man did not budge. Rising to a sitting posture he looked fixedly in the face of Nishioka. "What now?" grumbled the *yōnin*. Answered the *chūgen* with respect—"Something of a tip will be well."—"A tip!" said Nishioka in astonishment. "For what is the month's wage paid to a *chūgen*? Is he to be given drink money for carrying out his duties? Take the *furoshiki*; and now out with it and yourself." "Out with it; just so." Such the answer; but the fellow did not budge. The steady insolence of his attitude made Nishioka straighten up as by a shock. He was too surprised to speak. The *chūgen* spoke for him. "Yes—out with it. Ah! It is quite private with Shintarō. Jisuké can speak at ease. Drink money is just the thing for Jisuké. Jisuké Dono is fond of drink. The O'Kagé Sama will supply the coin, three *ryō*, in return for the silence of Jisuké."

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At the suggestive nickname, known only to the few in the secrets of the *oku* Nishioka fairly gasped. Jisuké did not give time for answer. He drove the matter home. "'Heaven knows, Earth knows, Man knows.' So does this Jisuké, of the doings of Shintarō with the Okusama. Naruhodo! No strange sight. When the honoured Sun (Tentō Sama) disappears toward Kōshū, the honoured Moon (Tsuki Sama) appears in the ascendant in Musashi. The matter is a most important one, not to be brought to an end by a gesture. Bring the Okusama on the head and shoulders of Jisuké; and Jisuké tells all to his lordship. The proof is easy, and this Jisuké the fitting messenger between these lovers.... Oh! Don't lay hand to sword. Jisuké is active, and the way of retreat is open. The honoured Jisuké is not one to perish by the hand of the low fellow (*yarō*) Shintarō. In plain terms, the rascal is male concubine of her ladyship; who knows little of the even balance with which her paramour shares his favours with her women. Surely Shintarō was born under the sign of the goat. But that is not all. The very walls can talk. At least that in which the unhappy O'Shimo, seven months gone with child, stands walled in. Naruhodo! Such punishment is inflicted on bugs, and worms, and creeping things; not on human beings. How does Jisuké know? Go question the plaster, you coward; or learn that Jisuké is, and has been, everywhere present at council and at deeds. But a word to Chōbei Dono, and Nishioka crouches at the white sand for confession."

At first astonishment and incredulity, then wrath, now dismay filled the heart of Nishioka Shintarō. The fellow's insolence, the honorifics bestowed on Jisuké, the vile terms heaped on himself, showed the secure ground on which Jisuké stood in his full knowledge of events. For whom was he spy? He must find out. Jisuké, however, volunteered the information. "Spy? Jisuké Dono is spy for no one's interest but that of Jisuké Sama. He would have warned O'Shimo Dono, but repented in time to have all more completely in his hands. She passed on to her death, carried out under the eyes of Jisuké, and at the hands—Yes, the hands of the low fellow Shintarō. Ah! Did beautiful eyebrows inspire this deed? Was it the love for O'Hagi now, or love for O'Han

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hereafter? As rival to his lordship the rascal Shintarō had no chance with O'Shimo Dono. The clothes prop is the most useful instrument of the house. It brings things long unseen to light and sight. Jisuké Dono will be the clothes prop for this completed wickedness—unless his silence be well bought. Come! Fifty *ryō*: not down: but ten suffices for the occasion.... Come and demand it of the Okusama? No indeed! Before her ladyship the prescribed etiquette demands obeisance, and off is whipped the head of Jisuké. It is money and—a sword cut. On the contrary, off with Shintarō to beg the needed sum. The tongue of Jisuké Sama is silenced only by the coin which secures his absence."

Nishioka could not help himself. "Jisuké is right. It is a matter of importance. But her ladyship alone can supply the sum. Remain here, where safety has been so well secured." Then he betook himself to the inner apartments. At his tale O'Hagi was aghast. She touched the root of the matter at once. "The man must have the money demanded. And afterward...." Nishioka smiled grimly at the kindred thought. "Into the *oku* he is not to be inveigled. Leave the matter to this Shintarō. After all he is but a *chūgen*, plainly a fellow with two eyes; but despite his long experience he must leave the *yashiki* or conform to the etiquette of the service. He will not leave a place where lies his future mine of gold, no matter what his insolence in private. All will be well. His ignorance and position offer chance to play upon. Shintarō surely will find a way to kill him." With this solace and the coin he took his way back to the waiting Jisuké. "I say now! His lordship's shadow indeed! This rascal Shintarō has but to shake the tree and the golden fruit falls into his hands. The kind of friend to possess! Ask; and one receives. Sheet metal too! A very thief, he is more generous than the Tono Sama! So far thanks. And now—*sayonara*! Jisuké Dono is off to the pleasant land—the Amatsuki of Fushimichō, the land of reed plains (Yoshiwara). The knave Jisuké, values higher than the knave (*yarō*) Shintarō. The Honoured Sir pays for the favours of his queen; his queen pays the *yarō* Shintarō." With this parting shot Jisuké was up and out into the open. With some surprise he halted for a moment. Nishioka had received the sally in good part. He was laughing, half in amusement, half in vexation. Thought Jisuké—"Truly this rascal of a *yōnin* matches even the honoured Jisuké. Both spring from the farm, and the jest touches him, and not his rank. Between the two, lord and lady are like to pay dear."

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Nishioka returned slowly to the inner apartments, to make report as to this rather doubtful progress. For several days nothing was seen of Jisuké. For a time, as one satisfied, he resumed his duties in the old respectful rôle. Only a sly veiled jest would show the wolf lying in wait. Then came further demands, promptly responded to by Nishioka. He began to be curious as to the adventures of Jisuké. He made the *chūgen* talk; whose experiences were painted in glowing colours. With a sigh Nishioka handed over the cash demanded, granted the leave of absence. Grumbled Jisuké—"Tis like digging the metal from the ground. Few are the miners of another's hoard. Why grudge this Jisuké what costs Shintarō nothing!" Nishioka grasped at the opening. "What costs nothing, carries no grudge. But Jisuké has the cash at the cost of this Shintarō, only obtained in the company of an ugly old woman. With this coin it is Jisuké who commands the selected beauty of Nippon. Come! There has been enough of this. To-night Shintarō takes Jisuké as guide. He too will take his pleasure amid the beauties of the Yoshiwara." He spoke expansively, with far off smile and look, as if the beauties were ranged before his vision. Jisuké stood with mouth wide open. "What! Not even the whole private apartments of a *daimyō* satisfies this lecher? Ah! The rascal would plant horns on the Okusama. Husband and wife alike adorned! How now: is not her ladyship already something of a demon? Nishioka Dono will be impaled on one or the other." With mock respect he gave advice and bowed before his officer. His interest in this rebellion was plain. Nishioka was seen to hesitate. He looked doubtfully at Jisuké, as if seeking counsel in this questionable matter. To Jisuké the matter was a jest; thus to involve all three victims in a common treachery to one another. The temptation was great, and he was a match for any underhand design on the part of Nishioka. No safer place for him than Yoshiwara, in which his enemy might be still more involved. *Samurai* were particularly marked in the place. Meanwhile the chamberlain would be his butt for the evening. Jisuké's hints as to his source of revenue were broad enough to the companions of his evening pleasures. They would be delighted at a sight of this generous official.

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Hence he urged objections to his company, and himself found answers. Said Nishioka—"It is agreed. To-night all is propitious. The old girl has taken cold. She intends a sweating. Such the notice to this Shintarō. It is his time to be fickle. He accompanies Jisuké." His mind was made up, with some evident tear and reluctance. Jisuké aided him in his preparations. Wearing *zugin* (hood) he passed out the gate with Jisuké. The latter handed in two *chūgen* tickets to the *momban*, and none knew that the honoured *yōnin* had left the *yashiki*. In merry company they descended the Gomizaka. Shintarō was as a boy just out of school, so merry was he. He lagged behind, then went ahead. At the top of the Kudanzaka he halted. "On with you, Jisuké. Shintarō stops here a moment." He passed to the side of the road. Jisuké in turn halted. He was standing in the moonlight. Said he, with a touch of his usual insolent jesting—"How explain to the ladies the presence of the honoured chamberlain? Shintarō *yarō* wears two swords. Jisuké Dono is but a *chūgen*. Odd company! Notable will be the compliment."—"No explanation is required." Terrible the voice from the shadow beside him. "Ei!" Quick as a flash Jisuké made a spring forward, not too soon to prevent arm and back being ripped open by the keen weapon.—"Ah! The low fellow Shintarō is not the one to kill the honoured Jisuké. He has already said it.... The beast! He has cut me. The devil lies between Jisuké and the lights of the Ōmon. With Chōbei San is found safety and vengeance." With all speed he fled up the Ushinakizaka to seek safety in the darkness of its wood. Nishioka pursued with determination. The rip of cloth and flesh showed him that he had reached his man. Loss of blood would bring him down. Jisuké aimed for the middle of the grove, for the Hachiman shrine, now the site of the Shōkonsha. Under the dark shadow of the trees he hoped to

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escape the pursuer. Alas! A tree root caught his foot and threw him on his face. As he rose the sword ran him through from back to breast. Staggering, grasping at air, he turned on Nishioka; spitting out his grudge with the clots of blood. His last words of hate were mingled with the rumblings of the storm close over head. The moon's brightness had disappeared. Heavy clouds rolled up, illuminated time and again by a glare of dismal light. Big gouts of rain began to wet the clothes of living and of dead in this solitude. For surety Nishioka gave the final thrust through the throat. Just then the bell of Ichigaya Gekkeiji reverberated through the thick wood. In the night hour it sounded sharp and sudden, like a harsh call to men to rise and witness. Nishioka wiped his sword on the dead man's dress. A flash of lightning lit the face, horrible and mocking in the death agony. As the chamberlain leaned over the corpse a voice spoke behind him, harsh and as if half stifled with the blood filling gorge and lungs—"Yai! Shintarō has his way. He murders Jisuké—not once, but twice. Deep the grudge! Deep the grudge!" Then it broke into a wail, chilling in the helplessness of the malice expressed. Nishioka sprang to his feet and whirled around. In the uncertain light close by stood Jisuké. His hair in wild disorder, cheeks fallen in and corpse like with the bluishness of clay, the *chūgen* grinned and threatened. The living man could match him with his pallor. "Namu Amida Butsu! Get you hence vile spectre, or stay the test of Nishioka's sword." He made a sweep with the weapon. The figure disappeared. A mocking laugh resounded far and wide, followed by the same chilling hopeless wail. In haste, and pursued by the wild laughter, stumbling over stones and roots, Nishioka fled the wood, to make report at the feet of her ladyship. For long the figure of the *chūgen*, crying, wailing in baffled malice, haunted the wood of the Ushinakizaka. Men hastened to pass by, none would enter; and in time the apparition became one of the seven marvels (the Nana-Fushigi) of the Banchō.

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CHAPTER V

THE REPORT TO THE TONO SAMA

On the dull evening of the rainy season (June) Nakakawachi Shūzen sat looking out on the dripping plants and trees. The home coming had brought no pleasure. The treachery of the favoured Shimo was assured. The father himself admitted the search made for the lover; wept and grovelled in shame and apology. O'Saku had seen him in person, when he came to the *yashiki* several weeks before the flight. O'Tsugi had heard him call—"choi! choi!" had overheard O'Shimo's surprised exclamation—"my lover! my lover!" After several mysterious absences, on excuse to see her father lying ill, she had disappeared. On inquiry it was found that Chōbei had never known a day of illness. The excuse was all a lie. "A case of the wild duck; the cock had come." Whose was the child she bore? O'Hagi laughed, and her attendant woman smiled, at his credulity.

Shūzen never suspected the deceit. Something of a *dilettante* for the period he was learned in the Chinese tradition. Seventeen years, and a woman has no heart. This Shimo was a debauched wench. Truly she had foxed him with her superficial charms, picked him up thus easily in the Banchō. With gesture of weariness and disgust he turned to the papers and scrolls on the desk before him. They were house accounts submitted by Nishioka, and none too pleasing. A round sum was missing on the person of the *chūgen* Jisuké. Sent out to make important payment, he had run off with the money, leaving no sign of his whereabouts. Just then the bell of Gekkeiji struck the hour of the pig (9 P.M.). With impatience Shūzen swept the papers together. Her ladyship as companion of his wine feasts chilled the bottles with freezing glance. The monotonous talk of debts and expenses, exchanged with those around, added a bitter flavour. Always demands, or hints of demands, which made the meal a very time of penance.

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With some slowness he rose to attend the repast. Then from the garden side came a sad wailing voice. "Grateful the honoured return, so long delayed. Fond the thoughts of the past long weeks. Deep the longing for the honoured presence. Report is to be made to his lordship. Alas! Alas!" A chill went to the very heart of Shūzen. Lamentable and grievous as was the sound, he had no difficulty in recognizing the voice of O'Shimo. Startled he turned in indignant anger to the *rōka* whence the sound had come. He looked out into the darkness of the dripping night. Nothing was to be seen. Plainly he had thought too much of the girl, of her condition and the disappointment. He gave his body a violent shake to throw off this cold oppression and foreboding. Then slowly he took his way to the wine feast. The *saké* would bring warmth. This was not the case. Freely as he drank, it added to powers of vision. His mind now always on the missing girl, the familiarity between spouse and chamberlain seemed strange for the relation between mistress and servant. As usual, with the finish of the last bottle, Nishioka accompanied him to his retirement. Shūzen spoke sharply of the large increase in the expenses of the inner apartments. To meet these the revenues would have to be forestalled, the income anticipated. The smooth fellow met him more than half way in agreement. His lordship was too estranged from the *okugata*. Greater familiarity toward the women's apartments would be the needed restraint. Deign his presence this very night. Nishioka Shintarō spoke in no hypocrisy. The O'Kagé Sama now was longing for the rightful substitution. His nest well feathered, he would seek safer quarters with the softer charms of O'Han. On Shūzen's abrupt gesture and refusal he took his departure, almost betraying his own disgruntlement. Comical was his despairing gesture as he took his way to the bed of her ladyship.

The temple bell struck the seventh hour (3 A.M.). It roared and reverberated through the room. Shūzen opened his eyes. He was tormented with the thirst inspired by his copious libations. His head was heavy and whirling. He took a long draft from the jar close by his pillow. Then he rose to tread the corridor. On his return he sought to wash his hands. Turning to find the towel, close by him he saw a woman. Dressed all in white, slender to emaciation, her face concealed by the long hair which hung in heavy disordered masses over shoulders and bosom, she presented to him the desired article. As he would take the towel he spoke in surprise—"Who may this be, awake at this late hour for Shūzen's service?" Again the sad lamentable voice made reply—"Fond the thoughts of his lordship. Long waited his return. Report is to be made." At sight of her face he gave a cry—"Shimo!" At the words the figure faded away. The outstretched towel fell to the ground. A slight rustle of the breeze swept the corridor. "Shimo! Shimo!" In amaze and suspicion came the words. Something had gone wrong here. Shūzen pressed the towel to his lips, as to get rid of the nauseating taste in his mouth. Then came the voice from the garden. With hasty movement he threw back the *amado*. The wind sighed through the pines; a gentle patter of rain came in gusts. Close by the voice spoke again—as from a *yukimidōro*, one of those broad capped stone lanterns, like to some squat figure of a gnome, and so beautiful an ornament with white snow cap or glistening with the dripping mirror of the rain.

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"Report is to be made. Long has Shimo waited her lord's return. In this Shimo was no treachery of heart. Devoted was her service to her lord. By the hand of Nishioka Shintarō, by the malice of O'Hagi Dono, Shimo and her unborn babe met a miserable end. Nor has the ill deed ended there. Go now to the chamber of the wife, and witness the adulterous deed. Deign to learn the truth from Shimo." The voice ceased. Shūzen passed a hand over his wine heated brow. Fox or badger? Did some over bold and infamous apparition seek to delude him? With a bound he sought his chamber and the sword at his pillow. He would deal harshly with such lies. Then came a second thought. Why not ascertain the fact? He was the husband. His presence was a right. Softly he made his way to the inner apartments. At the outer ward he stumbled in the darkness against some object. "Aré! The Tono Sama!" With a cry of alarm up sprang the sleeping O'Han. She would have outstripped him in a race to the inner rooms, but Shūzen was too quick for her. With hand over mouth he dragged her to the garden side. She would have cried out, and made resistance. Then he changed her tune. Lacking confession he held her flat and prostrate under him. Firmly grasping both wrists tight together, he forced his dagger between the hands, and began to twist the keen blade. Unable to resist the torture she soon told all she knew, confessed her own part of watch and ward in the offense. This done, he drove the weapon through her throat and left her pinned to where she lay, the limbs feebly twitching in the last throes.

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Assured of his suspicions Shūzen now sought to surprise the lovers. Cautiously he approached the sleeping room of her ladyship from the inner side. There was no doubt of it. In the very throes of her passion O'Hagi was without disguise. Shūzen threw back the screens on this vileness. "Lechers! For this disloyalty Shūzen finds revenge! Make ready!" Nishioka Shintarō sprang to his feet, only to sink down in a pool of blood which soaked the bed he had dishonoured. Severed from shoulder to pap he died forthwith. With wild screams O'Hagi fled to the corridor. As she reached it the point of the weapon was thrust through her back, to come out at the navel. As she writhed and twisted on the floor, Shūzen measured the blow and nearly cut the body in twain. "Ah! In good season the old bawd presents herself." In fright the old woman's head had been thrust between the screens into the room close by the master. An easy mark it fell severed to the ground, the blood spouting its powerful streams from the arteries as from a pump. The woman O'Tsugi was a sterner task. Aroused by the noise she came stalking into the middle of the room, still rubbing eyes confused by sleep. "Ah! The villainous cuckold. He has murdered these, and now would add the next (*tsugi*). Not so!" With her wild jest she threw herself upon him. Trained soldier as he was Shūzen found the contest no easy one against this virile woman. Getting the worst of it, she fastened her teeth deep into his hand. Grunting with pain Shūzen flung her off, and quickly brought down the sword. Prostrate she lay, the blood stream pouring over the real lord of this harem.

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With a long breath Shūzen surveyed his work. It was complete. Then he went to the outer ward of the apartments. To his call no one came. Repeated, in the distance of the *rōka* appeared from the outer ward (*omoté*) the old and faithful Nakamura Saisuké. At sight of his lord, dyed in blood from head to foot, he threw up his hands. Without undue haste or any words Shūzen led him to the scene of the punishment. Respectfully Saisuké brought a cushion. Then prostrate he waited for his lord to speak. Long endured the silence. Then said Shūzen briefly—"Caught in the act of adultery this Shūzen has put to death the guilty. The results are most important. The lack of discipline in the House is sure to lead to the honoured punishment by the suzerain. From this there is no escape." Saisuké surveyed the scene with the calm eye of experience. "Be in no haste, my lord. This Saisuké in his long experience has seen many deeds of violence. For the present this matter need not be published. Of the outer apartments (*omoté*), the *chūgen* and servants need know nothing. In any case they do not count, and can be sent away. The others are not curious; moreover they are loyal, as *samurai*.... Of the inner apartments—a very clean sweep has been made. Deign to leave matters for the present to this Saisuké." With approval the old man examined the handiwork of his lord. It was most thorough, even to the eye of this remnant of the battle field. Then he went to work. The bodies he conveyed to the side of the artificial mound in the garden. Digging out part of the hill, here he buried them; forced in, dove-tailed together, in the smallest space; the old man grumbling at the ground they occupied. Then with water he washed out the blood stains on the wood work. When dry he would plane out tell-tale marks. Meanwhile he would serve his lord, to the exclusion of all others. Would the Tono Sama deign to rest? With sad misgivings the *kyūnin* (house officer) watched Shūzen as he retired to his room.

Himself he mounted guard at the women's entrance, to prevent all intrusion.

Nakamura Saisuké's heart was pure. His age beyond recall. For two days he struggled, alone in his task. On one pretext or another the *samurai* were sent off, one here one there, on lengthy missions. Perhaps the old man's efforts had been too great. In the course of the day a *chūgen*, come on some affair, found him flat on his belly, groaning with pain as in the very last extremities. To the man's inquiries he could but cry out with colic and distress. Aid was brought, but only to find him dead. Then a second discovery was made. Report was necessary to his lordship. Here all was found closed against reception. On making their way into the inner room Shūzen was found, clad all in white, the bloody dirk in hand, the body fallen forward on the ceremonial mats. He had cut his belly open, on retiring for the night. All now was in confusion. Should the *karō* be awaited. None knew this exile to the Kōshū fief, beyond his reputed morose severity. Official there was none to whom to make report. They were afraid, and took their own part. With everything of value they could lay their hands on they fled in different directions. The open gate and abandonment attracted attention. The dead body of Shūzen was proved a voluntary *seppuku* (cut belly) for some cause; that of the old man required no explanation. The inquiry set on foot led only to confusion, and was soon lost in the greater question of the heirship. Placed in charge of Yamada Dono, a caretaker was sought for the *yashiki*. A property tangled in a long dispute, this would seem a pleasing task and one to summon many applicants. But this was not the case. Successful candidacy was followed by early exodus. None could endure the frightful sounds heard every night; the cries of pleasure followed by the screams of those in the agony of a painful dying. Spectral lights were seen, the old well in the garden poured forth its confined spirits, all the evil influence of the place was rejuvenated in the minds of people by this last disaster. "Thus the matter rests. 'Tis not this Shimo who is the cause of these nightly scenes of strife and pain. In mad chase Shūzen Dono, the Okusama, the villainous Nishioka and his concubines, act the scene of their cutting off. Shimo has but her part, to find Nirvana in the worship of the upright. Deign this act of kindness." At the fierceness of the voice Endō Saburōzaémon started. The red light of dawn was pouring into the open room. All sight of the dreadful vision had faded from the wall before him. Vision, or fact? It had been too vivid to doubt. Yet as he came to the mound he passed around it. On the side next to the lake now he noticed that it was all caved in, an obvious depression. The tale then had truth. Thus he took his way from the haunted precincts, determined to secure the *yashiki* as his own, and the future rest and peace of Nirvana to the unhappy O'Shimo.

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CHAPTER VI

THE SHRINE OF THE O'INARI SAMA

Something has been already said of the *chūgen* Isuké, unwilling guide of Endō Saburōzaémon to the haunted house of the Go Banchō. Thus is the second person of the name of Shūzen introduced into the traditions and history of the Banchō. Of him and his experiences with its denizens something is to be said.

Okumura Shūzen had distinguished himself in the Amakusa uprising of 1637-8. A retainer of Matsudaira Nobutsuna he had not been the last man to force his way into the blazing ruins of Arima castle. He did his very best amid the struggling mass of halt, maimed, and blind, after the real defenders of the castle had died weapons in hand. He was able to present himself before his lord with a reasonable number of his own company with heads on their shoulders; and a phenomenal number of heads minus shoulders, of all ages and sexes—men, women, and children—of the castle inmates. Against the once owners Shūzen had little grudge. So much was to be said of him. In private he railed against the bad rule which had brought him and his fellows into the field against the embattled farmers. But this was a thing to be endured; not cured, except by time. Rebellion against the liege lord, under the leadership of *samurai* once retainers of the cowardly Konishi Yukinaga, added edge to his sword and point to his spear. His service brought him in the train of his lord's progress to Edo. In the report made Okumura Shūzen figured so well, that request—amounting to command—transferred him to the Tokugawa over-lord. Made *hatamoto* with fief of four hundred *koku* he was as well liked by his greater lord as when in the humbler service of a *daimyō*. Five years of faithful work, and the necessities of Government for his *yashiki* site in Mita received the reward of a liberal grant of another site in the Go Banchō, together with the thousand *ryō* of costs of removal.

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The work of transfer was pushed forward. The more modest abode of a lord of moderate income, and the massive gateway with its supporting walls and fence of closely woven, sharp pointed, bamboo retiring into the distance now were ready to shut in Shūzen to the privacy of his share in the suzerain's defence. Plainly Shūzen Dono put more confidence in his own prowess, or insignificance, than in the strength of outer defences against sudden attack of those at feud with him. Part of his tract inclosed a shrine of the Inari goddess. This had still its worshippers. On his inspection Shūzen noted the loneliness of the building, its desolation. Yet it was clean swept and kept, and a money box for offerings was proof of attendance at the shrine. Whether this was of man or beast was not so easy to determine, for traces of the latter were plain to the eye. Their tracks swarmed about the building itself. As Shūzen stood in some uncertainty, a woman of the middle class appeared. To inquiries she admitted that the care of the shrine was due to herself

and her piety; a care gladly rendered to its efficacy. It had returned to her a son once sent adrift to the provinces; and to her affection a husband who had gone astray much closer home, for the intruding female was a minor member of her own household. Finding excuse in some domestic misdeed, the worthy cit had sent forth the damsel into the wilderness of the world with the fruit of her experience. The relief of this incubus, and the return of a more rightful heir than promised, the good lady attributed to the virtue of her prayers to the Inari Sama. She was urgent to bring support to her views in the general opinion of all the neighbourhood, mainly of the Kōjimachi village. These corroborated what she said as to the shrine's efficacy and petitioned for its continued support. Made the tutelary shrine of the *yashiki*, separated therefrom by a mere brushwood fence, this Inari Jinja of the Banchō continued to exist for the good of the public and the annoyance of the amiable Okumura Shūzen. Its *kannushi* (Shinto priest) he could never find. The woman and others said that he lived at Ushinakizaka. At least the money contributions were always accounted for, although they had never seen his face. A few days before the formal opening of the *yashiki* the *chūgen* Isuké and the workmen stood with puzzled faces before a hole discovered underneath the flooring of the shrine. It led to some passage or cave. None were in humour to investigate, perhaps to the annoyance of the O'Inari Sama. At Isuké's direction, and with difficulty in the cramped space, it was found possible to shove into place the massive granite slab which fitted tightly into the aperture, and plainly belonged to it. "A one time store house of the god," quoth Isuké. With that he and the others betook themselves to their divers tasks of finishing the clearing up of building and surroundings. In the excitement and confusion of moving in there was little thought of the cavity in this twelfth month of Kwanei twentieth year (January 1644), and the idea of making report was lost sight of until other conditions brought up again the subject.

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The ceremonial visits of the New Year, the congratulations and presents, were to be made to the suzerain by his attendant *hatamoto* and the *daimyō* then in Edo town. Every *yashiki* was in a turmoil of excitement and confusion. Even in the greater *yashiki* there was demand for outsiders to carry the *hakomochi* or long boxes, for the *rokushaku* (six footers) or tall fellows to carry the sedan chair, for others to bear the *kappakago* or rain-coat boxes. *Samurai*, *ashigaru*, spearholders, *chūgen*, *zōri* holders—these were attendant in the *yashiki*. But the minor establishments were mainly dependent on outside aid to swell the lord's train. Hence the rôle of Bandzuin Chōbei and his successors was no sinecure, in addition to the exercise of the art of arranging time and place so that the inferior lords would be least inconvenienced by the necessary and often humiliating deference to their superiors in rank. The guild patron looked well to the interests of his employers—*daimyō*—with small regard to those who shifted for themselves; which was one of the causes of grudge by the *hatamoto* against Chōbei, later removed from the scene by assassination.

Every horse in Edo, destined for the morrow's ceremony, underwent the pampered treatment that the groom Kakunai devoted to his master's nag. On the preceding day Kagé (Fawn colour) had been treated to all the luxuries of horse diet. He must eat for to-day and for to-morrow, and perform all the offices connected there with beforehand. Said Kakunai—"Kagé, be circumspect and constipated. To-morrow the master offers congratulations at the castle. Kagé is stuffed beyond measure to-day, that he be able to fast to-morrow. Show no discontent. For the passage of the sun there is to be no eating, and but a modicum of drinking. Halt not the procession for unseemly purposes." He stroked the horse, and the pleased animal purred and whinnied with the contentment of a cat at being petted. Then harshly said a voice in the ear of the bending Kakunai—"For this feed of the year's end thanks are rendered. Though not exactly of the kind desired, the intent has been good and the stomach filled. Hence congratulations in turn for the New Year season."

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Kakunai jumped as if some one had thrust the unblunted end of a spear into his posteriors. He looked around, and over, and under the horse. "Who speaks? Where from? And what concerning?... Yai! Yai! It's Kagé!... Is no one hiding hereabouts, to make a fool of Kakunai?" With eyes bolting out he backed away in terror. The horse grinned broadly, showing its ugly yellow teeth in attempt at graciousness—"It is true. Kagé, addresses the honoured *bettō* Kakunai, gives congratulations to his friend." Kakunai did not wait to receive them. Now he bolted forth in person, to burst into the room of the *chūgen* Isuké, just then struggling to arrange garments and hair for attendance on his lord's progress. Head throbbing from not unliberal potations due to the seasons festivities this was no pleasant task. To Kakunai's report the answer was prompt and sour—"Kakunai is a liar or a fool; or if he would play a jest on Isuké, his own head shall ache as badly." Kakunai accepted the challenge and asseverated the truth of his report. Not at all convinced, and with a gloomy satisfaction of the idea of having it out with Kakunai on failure of the proof, Isuké accompanied the groom to the stable. Kakunai gingerly made up to the horse—"Kakunai has been friend to Kagé. Hence he is called liar or fool or mountebank. Deign to prove his truth, Kagé Dono." Respectfully he bowed to the horse. The latter at once turning to the *chūgen*, brayed into his face—"Tis fact. Kagé is at least as human as these his brothers. He speaks to whom he wills. Not so with Isuké and Kakunai. A word to the Tono Sama, and Kagé will kill and eat these his friends. Keep his good will by friendship." Gently the horse raised a front hoof. The voice was harsh; and the push, though gentle—for a horse—sent Isuké flat, with reminder of Kagé thus closely applied. Without a word the *chūgen* wallowed from the floor, none too clean, and took to flight. Kakunai followed after, holding his nose. In the privacy of the *chūgen's* room Isuké changed to sweeter garb and discussed the matter with Kakunai. Should his lordship be informed? Kakunai, as immediate attendant and in greatest danger, earnestly protested. Isuké at any time might be brought into closest contact with Kagé in his office of *chūgen* attending his master. They agreed that it would be very disagreeable to be killed and

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eaten, especially with such evidences of Kagé's powers of disposition. Hence nothing was to be said; or rather each agreed to leave the matter of report to the other.

Great was the crush and excitement on this day of the year. Long and continuous were the processions (*gyōretsu*) of *daimyō* and *hatamoto* making their way to and from the castle. The rule of the day was to avoid unnecessary collision, as far as possible; not only in the matter of precedence, but of order. Commoners, male and female, old and young, *rōnin*, *samurai*, according to their caste squatted or prostrated themselves in reverential attitude as the palanquin of some lord passed by. Caustic or benign, generally malicious, the comment of the Kidahachi and Yajirōbei—"Ōkubo Hikoroku Dono; 'tis true he possesses influence, and the roughness of Hikoza Sama, but the keen wit of the honoured father lacks."—"Yet the lord Ōkubo has much kindness beneath his roughness. The latter is passport to the favour of the suzerain." Iyeyasu Kō ruled by statecraft; Hidétada Kō by benevolence; the third Shōgun Iyemitsu Kō, by rough energy. Such the tradition of the personality of these three men handed down in Nippon's history. With the passage of Tadamune Kō, of the great Sendai fief, heads went very low. Great his wealth, and greater still was his influence with the Suzerain. Tadamune swept proudly on; the future disasters represented in the boy who rode close to the palanquin, and whose licentious life later threatened to wreck the wealth and position of the great house.

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At the dismount notice (*geba-fuda*) Okumura Shūzen, accompanied by two pages, donned *zōri* (sandals) and betook himself to the palace. He was a small figure in this crush of great nobles, but as *hatamoto* had his right and duty of being present at the palace; both rigidly enforced, and assuredly with greater regard and welcome than most of the men of much greater rank, always regarded with suspicion. The modest train of a four hundred *koku* lord was squeezed into a corner of this mass of underlings waiting the return of their masters from audience. Close companion to his beloved and now feared Kagé, the groom Kakunai was well satisfied with his insignificance. Great was his consternation to hear the harsh voice of his equine friend in his ear. A whisper to Kagé meant a roar to the crowd—"Naruhodo! The stench of these humans excels even that of the stable. One is as much confined here as there. His lordship has now departed. Deign, Kakunai San, to indulge in amusement. Let's be off—to the Kwannon of Asakusa, to the Yoshiwara. Here there is naught but press and riot. In the pleasure quarter both convey diversion. Deign so to regard it." With wide open mouths those around turned to the quarter whence came these uncomplimentary terms. Kakunai was sweating with fear—"Shut up!... Rude? Then deign to be silent. Great the press. To withdraw is difficult; to desert his lordship impossible. Silence is the part of the inferior." At this exercise of authority the horse grumbled loudly—"Away from the stinking stable one feels gay and at ease. Quicksilver runs in the veins. At Yoshiwara the *hatsudochū* will be in progress. Following the processions of the honoured *oiran*, liberal will be the *saké* offered at the tea houses. Deign, Kakunai San, to reconsider your purpose to remain."

At this Kakunai almost melted into the icy puddle on the ground. He shivered as he wiped the cold sweat dripping from his forehead. At first voices said—"Who is speaking in these ribald terms? Kakunai San is it not? Who the companion?... Oya! 'Tis the horse which talks! Asakusa and Yoshiwara? What say the women to the presence of the beast? Eh! Off with you, Kakunai San, to show which is horse and which groom." They crowded around the pair, not daring to come close. Kakunai felt extremely unwell. He could not deny the fact. "Like boys, he boasts beyond his powers. The power of speech runs loose. Yet as a horse it is a wise beast, the treasure of a four hundred *koku yashiki*, since none other possesses his like. Deign to note his own proclamation of his tastes." This was to throw the consequences of discovery on the animal, to file the sharpness of teeth against the promised mauling of Kakunai's flesh. Then he waxed eloquent and proud—"A fine horse indeed! Such a horse in battle is unequalled. Is it not so, Kagé?" And Kagé promptly answered to his friend's praise. "A horse of noble quality, with good deeds to his credit, gains reputation. At the astonishment of the foe the rider runs them through with the spear. Hence gain of heads, and reputation to both steed and master." Kagé spun round, letting fly hoofs in all directions, shaking his head and biting savagely. At this display of battle fire those too close fled in disorder. At a safe distance wonder and advice was expressed. "Deign to be off, Kakunai San. Truly the animal is foxed, and foxes enough are to be found in Yoshiwara. He will find company without fail." Kakunai, as he restrained the beast, now full at ease—"Of that we are assured. Alas! He cannot squat. In that he is clumsy, as is the red haired, green-eyed western barbarian. Otherwise it is not Kakunai who would bring coin to Nakanochō, but convey money hence." Some agreed, and some disagreed, and all congratulated. Thus did horse and groom get much advertisement at the Ōte-mon, to the subsequent profit of both.

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Shūzen, audience granted, appeared at the castle gate. Respectfully the crowd drew apart, and watched the lord depart with his train. Never had one of the minor *hatamoto* attracted greater attention; and of these many were notable men for personal exploits. Entirely unconscious of this notice Shūzen rode off to his *yashiki*. In the course of the succeeding days many visits were to be paid, and the wondrous fact had chance to spread from the under world to the surface. At the *yashiki* of Abé Shirōgorō the salutations were exchanged; the spiced *saké* to preserve life—the *tōso*—was brought forth. Shūzen detected in his host a quizzical, even amused attitude. Said Shirōgorō—"Shūzen Uji, did he deign to ride, or mount the *kago* (palanquin)." The question was abrupt, and seemed not over courteous. A *hatamoto* of four hundred *koku* possessed steed and spearmen. Abé Shirōgorō was a great lord, and Shūzen answered smoothly, seeking any source of offense. To his affirmative, said the host—"Then Shūzen Dono perhaps deigned to mount the favourite and talking horse.... Surely he knows of the animal's great gift.... Congratulations are due, for what is the talk of the castle precincts." Shūzen's astonishment was too great not to be

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genuine. He was the first to propose to Abé Dono the taking of a look at the noted beast. He was eager to inspect an animal, which, it seemed, he had as yet never seen. The two lords came forth to the *genkwan* (house entrance). On summons Kakunai brought forward the horse, expecting his lord to mount, not exactly understanding the presence of the lord of the mansion. Shūzen's first words enlightened him unpleasantly. With some severity—"Kakunai, does this horse talk?" Thunderstruck Kakunai did not know what answer to make. Kagé could bite. His master could do worse, if enough angered. He hesitated—"Hai!" Quoth Shūzen—"Hai' is no answer. Has the horse power of human speech?" Kakunai put his hand to his head, then turned to Kagé, who was obstinately silent. He gave him as hard a blow on the neck as he dared, without result. "The Tono Sama has heard the tale; as has this Kakunai. His head in a whirl, Kakunai knows not whether it be true or not. By an humble groom such matters are not understood. To report idle gossip or the illusions of one's brain, savours of impudence. Deign the question in person. Kagé refuses answer to this Kakunai."

Thus skilfully he lied. Kagé eyed him with approval; Shūzen with some doubt. He turned to the horse—"Kagé, it is said you speak. Shūzen is the master. Answer without lying." Kagé spoke, indifferent to rank and without circumlocution of polite society—"Tis so; and just as does a human being. Truly Shūzen Sama has supplied a most foul smelling place to learn the art." Abé Shirōgorō snickered—"Kagé Dono is too precise. Would he learn the art of converse over his master's wine?"—"Not unwillingly," replied the nag. "But in any case he would have Isuké and this lazy groom make better and more frequent use of broom and bucket. The good offices of Abé Dono are requested." By this retort courteous the two noblemen were silenced and amused. Uncertain as to the course of further converse with the beast Okumura made salutation, mounted and departed homewards. As he gave the horse into the groom's charge he said—"It is for Kakunai to keep in mind the words of Kagé." As he vigorously applied broom and water to the stall and vicinity of the favoured animal, Kakunai mentally determined that on the whole Shūzen Dono was the more dangerous of the two. Hence-forward he would be careful to remember all that Kagé said—and make report.

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CHAPTER VII

THE LUCK OF OKUMURA SHŪZEN

The first efforts of Shūzen at solving this mystery were not overly successful. A *samurai*, he betook himself to the highest exponent of the caste cult. In search of illumination he hit upon Hayashi Daigaku no Kami Dono. This man, learned in all the lore of Morokoshi (China), head of the certified institute of letters—the University—could but confess his ignorance—vicariously. Rats nesting in the tails of horses formed part of the experience of books, but not of that of men. Of talking horses there was no authenticated case. The whole matter remained without proof. He had never heard of such. Shūzen squatted in a drowsy stupefaction as an incomprehensible learning was poured into his ear. He choked with the dust raised from the ancient volumes, tenderly and reverently pawed over by the learned doctor, who seemed dust-proof. Finally through the mist he heard the asseveration that it must be the work of fox or badger. It was matter for the diviner, not the divinity of the learned. With this Hayashi Dono gave the pile of dusty script before him a mighty thump, and disappeared behind the cloud he had raised.

Okumura Shūzen sought the open air and respiration. Where now should he go for counsel? He would sell the beast. Kakunai sought mercy. He was but a groom, and death was easy at his master's hand. At all events easier than the one promised by Kagé, if Kakunai should lead him out to the market, and with fluent lies send him forth to earn the cruel livelihood of his kind between the shafts of a cart. Shūzen was a kindly man; the horse one deserving better treatment. The groom's terror and the beast's threat added a new and interesting element to this search into the unknown. On the next day was to be heard memorial service for the ancestral tablets. This was to be performed in person by the abbot of the Seishōji of Shiba, Bankei Oshō known to fame. Shūzen snoozed and exercised patience as the abbot read and expounded the lengthy *sutra* scroll. Over the subsequent repast he broached the subject of the talk of beasts, and his own particular difficulties. Bankei Oshō was most interested. All animals had speech and memory according to their kind. Food, a master's kindness, their own particular concerns, were matters of great intelligence among them. Why then should speech be aught else than to possess the organ? Such was the case with parrots. Monkeys evidently understood each other well, understood the gestures of men. As to the horse, there were very ancient records of the speech of such; so dim in the memory of men that probably they were mere talk of ignorance. But he would see this wondrous beast. Deign that guidance be supplied.

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Shūzen grasped at the offer. The abbot spoke with an ease and glibness that only the ecclesiastic on his own ground can show to those ignorant of his subject. He wrapped his lore, made easy for the beginner, in such technical phraseology, that Shūzen could grasp at the meaning without knowing anything about what the abbot said, and hence had all the greater respect for the immense truth which he could see and not understand. Appreciation is as good as knowing—for the one who would pose—and soon Shūzen and the cleric stood at the house entrance, waiting the production of the horse. Isuké in haste had carried the message to Kakunai. Kakunai, assured of his master's forbearance and Kagé's accomplishments, had been none too sober since that

happy day. Said he aloud—"A horse is not an ass; and a talking horse is one of his kind. Tip money to see the wondrous beast has flowed into the stable; and wine has flowed into Kakunai. For Kagé there has been soft rice paste (*mochi*) and dumpling (*dango*) in unstinted quantities. The pastry cook has been overworked. Kagé, now seize the opportunity. Speak with fluency and argument. Ah! If you had but the taste of this Kakunai! Wine would be an inspiration."—"Just try me!" chimed in the brute's voice. "Follow up the wine with rice cakes in syrup (*shiruko*). Otherwise Kagé opens not his mouth, except to bite. Grievous is it to exercise speech, and to witness the benefits accruing to the human hog. Henceforth Kakunai must share alike with Kagé." At this rebellion Kakunai was dumbfounded—"Nay, Kagé! *Shiruko* and *saké* for a beast? Never would such come to the inside of the belly (mind) of Kakunai. If you did but know its content...."—"Shut up!" was the nag's discourteous response. "Kagé knows it well. You have eaten *takuan* (pickled radish), and it smells none too sweet. A little further off, good Sir: now—who is this would be interviewer?"

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Reduced to proper proportion Kakunai made humble reply. "Most fitting company for the honoured Kagé Sama. The abbot Bankei deigns his presence." The horse gave a violent snort, and plunged back to the limit of his halter. "Kagé talks not with a priest, nor henceforth with anyone." Kakunai was all consternation—"But Kagé Dono ... the tips! This refusal is terrific. Why not favour the curiosity of the Oshō Sama? Deign to reconsider. The dainties of Kagé, the wine of Kakunai, are at stake. Silent before the Oshō, the Danna Sama in anger will strike off the head of Kagé. Kakunai loses friend and fortune at a blow." The animal duly mused. "It is so. Shūzen Dono of late has been short tempered. It cannot be avoided. Better had it been for Kakunai to take this Kagé and depart to country fairs and towns; to pick up much coin for wine and dainties. However, all may go well. Delay not past the coming night to join yourself with Kagé. Between the service of Shūzen and that of Kagé this low fellow (*yarō*) Kakunai must not hesitate."—"Just so," agreed the groom. "It is mere matter of gambling anyhow that any ill occurs. Drinking wine, does Kagé also gamble?" A shudder went through the frame of the horse—"Why speak thus? Of horses' bones the dice are made. Would Kagé trifle with the relics of his kind? Make answer, Kakunai." He spoke with a fierce earnestness. Kakunai stammering sought answer. Just then Isuké appeared, to urge all speed.

With lowered heads man and beast appeared at the house entrance. Kakunai touched three fingers to the ground. To insure due reverence Kakunai had haltered Kagé so that he could talk, but hardly move a limb. At sight of the beast Bankei Oshō took his most severe ecclesiastical pose. Dressed in violet robes, the gold embroidered stole (*kesa*) over his shoulders, the rosary of crystal beads in hand, he approached the horse. With the brush of long white hair which clears away the dust of the world's offences (*hossu*) he swept the circumambient air. Long he observed the nag. Then coming close to it he grasped the forelock. Kagé raised his head, with open mouth as if about to snap. The abbot continued his recitation of the holy *sutra*. Mouth still wide open, clumsily the horse sank on his knees before the priest. Then suddenly and deftly Bankei thrust a bolus into the open mouth, which closed as moved by springs. Sweeping the air with *hossu* and his rescued arm—"Acquire the heart of virtue. Assume the true nature, and seek Nirvana." He kept on stroking the beast's head with the rosary. Once or twice Kagé opened his mouth as if to speak. Then incontinently the body rolled over lifeless. The bystanders looked on with fear and amazement. Without speaking the abbot took the arm of Shūzen and accompanied him within.

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Kakunai, left to himself, rolled to the ground as speechless as his four legged charge. Tears of sorrow and anger flowed copiously. "Ah! He is dead! Kagé is dead! Wise was he to advise flight. Alas! This beast of a *bōzu* (priest), what purge did he use, thus to cut off at once the breath of Kagé? No more gambling, no more wine, with Kagé nicely bedded and asleep in his stable, and Kakunai with equal luck asleep in the pleasure quarter! Alas! Alas! Kagé is no better now than a dead ass—while Kakunai still lives." Thus he vented his grief, to the amusement of his fellows who had shared but little in his fortunes. Meanwhile Shūzen and the abbot were otherwise engaged. Said Bankei—"Deign to relate something of how Shūzen Dono came to this *yashiki*. Honoured Sir, was not the former site in Mita? How came the change?" Shūzen explained the conditions and the time of change to his new site and experiences. If there was aught of grudge, it attached rather to place than person. To this Bankei Oshō was agreed. "The fact of the case is plain to Bankei. The spirit directing the actions of the horse is not the spirit of the animal. The possession brought to an end by the exorcism, the alien spirit departed, and the carcass of the animal deprived of this influence, it fell to the ground an inert mass, like to the abandoned shell of the cicada. But the malevolent influence is to be found. This is the task of Shūzen Dono. Deign, honoured sir, then to have memorial rites performed by this Bankei, and no longer will the *yashiki* be haunted by such unusual and unseemly performance.... Daigaku no Sensei? He is but a Confucianist, bound to the letter of material substance. Nor would he confess the ignorance of the spiritual world he undoubtedly is gifted with, of the law of punishment for deeds performed in a past existence (*ingwai*) as taught by the Lord Buddha. The materialist has his nose to earth, and can see naught else. The idiot has his nose to heaven, and can see naught else. The Buddha's Law comprehends Heaven and Earth. Hence its truth." With this expression of the *odium theologicum* the worthy abbot departed templewards, accompanied, as gage for further proceedings and profit, by the carcass of the horse. Bankei had this inhumed in the ground behind the main hall of the temple. Kakunai superintended these last obsequies. The abbot's words, as to the malevolence of the influence involved, was proved to Shūzen the next day, when report was brought that the groom had hanged himself at the gratings of the stall once occupied by Kagé. Moved by this strong hint, Kakunai was sent to join his equine friend in one common grave.

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Warned by the unusual nature of these events Shūzen determined at once to trace out the source

of this evil influence. It was his duty as a *samurai* to suppress such manifestations occurring so close to the suzerain's dwelling. It was to his own interest to free the *yashiki* from such noxious vapours. The *karō*, Beita Heima, set on foot an investigation. Then it was that Isuké the *chūgen* had thought of the hole detected under the shrine of the O'Inari Sama. On Shūzen's order the *karō* undertook the task of examining this suspicious adjunct to the *yashiki*. Torches in hand several *chūgen*, under the direction of the *samurai*, were appointed to the work. The men hesitated a little to violate the precincts of the shrine. Growled Beita—"The carpenters did not hesitate to build it. What they put up, men can destroy. Up with the boarding. Thus the stone easily will be raised." The directions were carried out. There were many tracks of beasts, all of which seemed to converge to this spot. With removal of flooring and joists, soon the massive lid of granite was raised on edge. With a thud and cloud of dust it fell to one side. The men drew away, not only checked by the dark aperture exposed, but by the foul odour which poured up from the confined space. Holding his nose the *karō* took a lighted torch for further inspection of depth and means of entrance. "Um! A shallow place; not more than a *jō* (10 feet). Who volunteers to enter? Come! Don't be backward on his lordship's service. Isuké, eh?"

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Isuké came forward readily enough at the call. He was a brave man, and moreover a little angered at the fate of his one time friend, Kakunai. If the beast of a horse, or the spirit beast, held occupancy here, Isuké would deal with him. The kick of spiritual hoofs and the bite of immaterial teeth had no terrors for Isuké. Carefully inspecting his ground he took the leap. A lighted torch was lowered to him. With this he marched off, the light growing quickly faint in the darkness. "Oya! Oya! 'Tis strange. The stench—it is unendurable. The darkness too thick even for the torch. It fails to burn." For a time his voice was heard rumbling off with increasing distance. To repeated shouts no answer was returned. Said Heima—"Isuké has gone too far, out of range. Some other must bear him aid.... What! All milk livers? You, Gensuké, love the wine cellar. Its care would seem to be your calling. Now down with you! Here is one made to hand for the *yashiki*. Make report of the discovery to his lordship." Gensuké was most unwilling, but his comrades loudly applauded the choice. He was lowered into the hole by hands energetic to lend him assistance in reaching its depths. Provided with a light he too started off on his march into the darkness. "Iya! Iya! What stench! 'Tis past endurance. Ah! There is a loud roaring yonder. Gensuké will investigate. Deign support in necessity." His voice also faded off with the distance. Then all was silence. Those outside now could hear the faint reverberation spoken of. To their shouts there was no answer. All were much alarmed. They looked into each others' faces. At the *karō's* order there was now no hesitation, though there was some grumbling at the rashness of those who risked the wrath of the O'Inari Sama by the heedless undertaking.

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Three or four men at once jumped down into the hole. With dimly burning torches, and holding each other by the hand, they made their way into the blackness of the cavern. Almost at once came a cry, answered by others. Those above leaned eagerly over the aperture. Some took the leap. Soon the men appeared, dragging along the limp and helpless body of Gensuké. The trouble now was clear. The men had been overcome by the vicious air of the cave. Soon Isuké also was brought to the upper air. With the removal all the roar and reverberation was transferred to the surface. The two men lay unconscious, breathing noisily, and to all appearance in great extremity. Beita San at once ordered local aid. While friction and cold water was being applied, the leech summoned, Saitō Sensei, came on the ground. Heima questioned anxiously as to the men's condition. The Sensei reassured him—"It is but the noxious air of the cavern which has overcome them. A day or two, and they will be as good as ever." The old man wrinkled his face and chuckled a little as he surveyed the victims of the O'Inari Sama. Greatly was the reputation of the shrine for efficacy added to in this punishment. "Boy and man this aging Saitō Genan has known the place. Evil its repute. The cave is very ancient, and in the past much feared by people round about. Failure to worship has been followed by misfortune. Horse or cow has disappeared, house been burned down, or pregnant wife frightened into miscarriage by apparitions. Young girls attending at the shrine have disappeared. Its reputation is as evil as that of the Kōjimachi well yonder." He jerked a finger in the direction indicated, at the neighbouring site beyond the bamboo fence. "A bolus, and these fellows are restored to consciousness." From his wallet he prepared the drug. Gensuké showed signs of life, opened his eyes, uneasily moving first this limb, and then that. Isuké sat bolt upright, with most stentorian snort. He waved both arms with a violence which sent his two supporters to the ground. In wrath he sprang up, but the malign effect was still too powerful. His legs wavered under him, and they had to come again to his aid. However, it was necessary to carry off Gensuké limp and helpless; with the support of the arms on each side of him, Isuké made his way back to the *yashiki* on his own legs.

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Heima made report to his lord of what had passed, of the history of the place as reported by Saitō Sensei. Shūzen pursed his lips, and inquired as to the condition of Isuké. The *chūgen* was a favoured attendant; one much trusted. At the end of a week he was summoned to his lord's presence. "And Katai (tough) Isuké, his experience has gone beyond his powers?" Shūzen spoke with that slight jeering condolence which arouses obstinacy. Isuké, prostrate on his hands, expressed gratitude for his lord's reproof. The fault was not his. Overcome by the foul air he became giddy, then lost all sensation of time or place. "And the roaring and noises, these did not frighten Isuké into his faint?"—"Roaring, noise, there were none; beyond the gentle drip of water often heard in such places. The roaring heard must have been due to the snoring of Gensuké. The cowardly fellow still clings to the bed, sucking in the dainty fare of the invalid; not so, Isuké." Shūzen had an idea. All the others were too struck by fear to be of aid—"Then Isuké fears not the work of fox or badger. He will again make the venture?"—"For the Tono Sama; though none too willingly," was the *chūgen's* reply. "Fox or badger? Let them but come under the knife of Isuké, and he will make soup of them; a better soup than they supply otherwise. But the stench!"—"And

the foxes of Nakano (Shinjuku)?" Isuké blushed. His master was far too knowing.

At Shūzen's order that night Isuké met his lord at the steps of the Inari Shrine. The adventure pleased Shūzen. He was still young enough to delight in exposure and difficulties. Plainly old Beita was not the man for this task. His retainers readily would obey their lord's direction. But Shūzen hungered for a more direct credit. He stripped to his loin cloth in the cold winter night. Isuké followed his lord's example. The job would be no clean one. Then the two men dropped to the floor of the cavern. Isuké spoke in surprise. "Naruhodo! At night the place seems much brighter than by day." He looked around in some suspicion and astonishment. Then his eye rested on the torches. "Oya! The torch burns brightly, not dimly as before. Pfu! The stench is unaltered, but the air at least is breathable." Preceding his master by some ten paces, Shūzen heard him give a shout. Hastening up, with Isuké he bent over the aperture of what seemed to be a well. What was its depth? "In with you, Isuké," said Shūzen. The *chūgen* protested—"Nay! The Tono Sama deigns to jest. Is Isuké a bat (*kōmori*), one to fly off into the darkness.... Ah! The depth is terrific. The light hardly shows the blackness of the place. It may reach down to Meido itself." Shūzen lit a second torch, then cast it down into the cavity. He broke into a laugh. The light continued to burn brightly. "Meido then is not far off. The bottom of the well lies not five *shaku* (feet) below. Now in with you!" Anticipating the *chūgen* he sprang down himself.

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Isuké spoke, holding his nose—"Heigh! Tono Sama, deign to go no further. The stink passes beyond measurement. It increases with distance gone. Peugh! It blows from yonder." He pointed to a low aperture in one corner of the roundish space in which they stood. Shūzen could understand better now. The whole cave was due to water; had been formed by water in the loose volcanic soil. The well was a mere passage way by which it once had risen, and been drained off again. Isuké was right. With decuple vigour the stench now rose close to hand. "In with you," was the peremptory order. "Anything found in way of gold and silver belongs to Isuké; and caves are always rich in such finds."—"Is that so?" said the *chūgen*—"It is the tale of old books; which often lie. But in with you, and find out." Under spur of avarice and command Isuké crawled into the passage. He had gone but a bare ten feet when Shūzen heard a most fearful yell, saw the rapid progress outwards of the posteriors of Isuké. The man's face was chalk white—"Deign, Danna Sama, to go no further." He choked for utterance. "How now!" said Shūzen in pretended astonishment. "Fox or badger? They were to be converted into soup for Katai Isuké, soft food for his grinders."—"For fox or badger Isuké cares not. He invites their presence.... Kiya!" Shūzen in sport had placed a cold wet hand on his neck. "Ah! The Danna jests. Of fox and badger soup is made. With human stench it is not savoured. There is a dead body within. Hence the frightful odour."

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Shūzen at once began to twist his head towel around his nose. With feeblest protest Isuké saw him take the torch and disappear into the passage. Soon his voice was heard. "Isuké! Isuké! Is he milk livered? How about the gold and silver? Would Isuké abandon it?" Isuké would not. In a trice he was on hands and knees, to rejoin his master who was roaring with laughter. "Gold and silver may be here," Shūzen explained. "Otherwise Isuké would have backed out of the undertaking, all the way to the cave's entrance. Turn the body over. See whether it is of man or woman." Much put out Isuké did as he was bid. "Pfugh! Stirring does no good. The very flesh is melting from the bones. The hair of the beard and head show it to be a man." Shūzen turned to a wider passage, plainly due in part to hand. By crouching he could enter into a larger chamber. In wonder and admiration he called to Isuké. In so far, the *chūgen* would pursue the venture. Besides would he not follow his master to Meido itself? "Look, Isuké! Such groining of the roof is only made by Nature's hand. The cave of Fudō Sama at Meguro shows no finer sight." He pointed to the mass of interlacing roots of some huge *ichō* rising from the ground above. Isuké grumbled assent, without much vigour. He was getting tired of this adventure. It was a satisfaction they could go no further. Shūzen meanwhile was rummaging the place, which evidently had been a kind of dwelling. In a closet were found some coarse cooking utensils and crockery for food. A supply of firewood in one corner, and a box, completed the furniture. With curiosity Shūzen turned over the books in the box. A cry brought Isuké to his side. "Your share, Isuké." He pointed to three shining silver *ryō* which lay below the scrolls. Isuké looked incredulous at the find. Then he prostrated himself before his master in deepest gratitude. With joy he pocketed the coin and shouldered the scrolls. There was nothing more to do. They sought the open air.

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The strange sight reported to him, Beita Heima the *karō* appeared before his master. In the early morning light Shūzen was pouring buckets of cold water over Isuké, having himself undergone the same treatment at the *chūgen's* hands. "Kan mairi, Heima,"^[7] said Shūzen with a laugh. Then he explained matters to the astonished *karō*. Isuké's further ablutions were left to other hands. The affair now was cleared up. The removal of the slab, the fresh air penetrating the cavern, made the removal of the body easy. This was to be sent to Bankei's care for proper burial and rites. Meanwhile Shūzen with interest and increasing gravity examined his prize. The books were all on war. One was in the suspected script of the western barbarian. From its plates, it was a work on fortification, and the art of attack and defence. Shūzen did not understand the Dutch words, but he regarded the find as of importance, at least as adding to his own merit. So likewise did Abé Bungo no Kami, minister for the month, and with a great liking for Shūzen. He saw to it that the affair was to the latter's profit. The *Ometsuké* inspected the books, inspected the cave, drank Shūzen's wine, and commended the vigilance and energy of the *hatamoto*. The report was worth an added hundred *koku* to his modest income. Isuké also counted his gains with joy; a means of continued defiance and pursuit of the foxes of the Nakano pleasure quarter.

As to Bankei—the funeral rites had been performed, the *sutra* read, the body inhumed in the

same mound with those of Kakunai and the horse. Liberal had been the gift of Okumura Shūzen for all these divers interments, and great the unction of Bankei at the accomplishment and solution of the mystery of the cave in the Banchō. But one thing rested uneasily on his mind. What the identity of the evil spirit which caused these wonders? That night, as the abbot rested in his bed, there appeared at his pillow a man of some thirty odd years, tall, gaunt, hairy, ugly, and much dejected. "His eyes were prominent in his head, his lofty nose showed ability, he had the mouth of a shark." Plainly very great had been his wickedness. Prostrate the apparition gave thanks to the saint. All the spice and joy of evil doing had been exchanged for the insipidity of Paradise. Now he was threatened with Nirvana through the prayers of the saintly abbot. In life he had been the wicked Sōja Mushuku (lodgeless). A famous thief, he was the source of the raids on purse and person, on *yashiki* in particular and the common people in general, which had caused much fear and distress in Edo. The cave of the Inari, a lucky discovery, had been his safe haunt from pursuit. None could betray him, for none of his band knew his lair. He would betray no one; but he would tell the abbot of his fate. It was Isuké who had sealed him up in the cave by thrusting into place the heavy cover. Here he passed miserable days in hunger until the poisonous air, gradually accumulating, had put an end to him. His spirit, however, had haunted the place, with no disposition to leave. With the opportunity he had entered the body of Kagé, in search of human requirements and enjoyments. Betrayed by appetite he had been driven forth by the prayers of the abbot, and solaced by his petitions for the future life. Deign to let the matter rest there, and not pursue him into the inanity, the nothingness of Nirvana. To this the practiced ear of the holy Bankei gave deep thought. This fellow already had forced the unhappy Kakunai to follow in his tracks. What might he not do to others in whom the abbot had far greater interest? "To such wickedness the gift of Nirvana is not likely. Bankei wastes his breath, and Shūzen Dono his substance. Deign to enter Meido, be wholly purified of wickedness, and in a second birth, if in human form, be of a virtuous House. For present and past sins atonement is to be made. For those still living Bankei holds not his lips silent. Off with you at once to these insipid joys." He thrust the rosary of crystal beads into the vision's face. At once it disappeared, and Bankei woke amid a nauseating odour. He stretched himself in weariness—"A dream? Tribulation of the Five Viscera?" Yet he would report it to Shūzen, and on the uncertainty of the truth secure further aid for man and horse. Hence the monument of the Batō (horse-headed) Kwannon, which long stood on its mound behind the *hondō* of the Seishōji of Shiba.

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CHAPTER VIII

AOYAMA SHŪZEN

These events could not fail to cause comment. It was in the general room of the *hiban*, the fire guard of the castle, that the discussion came to a head. There were a number of these guards for different quarters of the castle inclosure; and for better drill and coordination the officers met, apart from the site of their particular duties. This made the office of the *hiban* a sort of club of the *hatamoto*, bringing together the members of the more particular cliques, known respectively as the Shiratsukagumi (white handle club), the Kingingumi (gold and silver clubs), the members of which knocked out a conspicuous tooth, replacing it with the metal ensign of their affiliation, and the Kubo no Shiro-oshigumi. These organizations, something like the Otokodaté of the townsmen in the closeness of the relations of their members, had by no means the same worthy object. They were often merely a way of ruffling it through the town, particularly at the amusement quarter of Asakusa; seeking quarrels with *rōnin*, abusing women, and literally gravelling the discomfited townsmen, not seldom left on the ground, subsequently to be put into it. The Otokodaté, or chivalrous band, were indeed needed in this state of early Edo. They could hold their own, inasmuch as the *samurai* involved dared not bring a quarrel to light. He had the advantage of his training; and by the rules of his caste did not hesitate to have assassinated a plebeian he could not overcome, and chose to regard as impertinent. Collisions with these, however, were rare. *Rōnin* were the particular object of dislike of the Tokugawa adherents. It was the great exception made, when Hida no Kami (Yagyū Matajurō) admitted Kumé no Heinai to his fencing room and discipleship. The *rōnin*, of course, deserved the proscription, being often the devoted adherents of a lost cause—Hoōjō or Toyotomi—and unwilling to transfer their fealty to a second lord. The most noted and hated of the *rōnin*, though free from any taint of rebellion to the Tokugawa, was this Heinaibei; the vilest assassination, that of his friend Bandzuin Chōbei by Mizuno Jurōzaémon aided by other members of the Shiratsukagumi.

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Endō Saburōzaémon had related the mishap of his *chūgen*, his own experience in pursuing the offenders. The old fellows, heroes of the Genwa and Kwanei periods, were gathered close to a *hibachi*. Despite the season age sought pretence of warmth or closer company. Said the veteran Matsudaira Montarō—"Ōkubo, what think you? Surely the ice water of gathering years runs in our veins. Such happenings, so close to the dwelling of the Ue Sama, never would have taken place in former days. But we are old. The stiffened joints and the wrinkles would not deceive such miscreants. 'Twould be a palpable fraud, our presentation."—"True," growled Shichinosuké; "but ice water runs in other veins than those who are old." Kondō Noborinosuké, verging toward his fifties, now chimed in—"Naruhodo! The talk of these young chaps infects one with their own complaints. This one can but thump himself on the chest and speculate as to whether he has one lung, or two of the kind. This other limps and dreams of *kakké*. His tongue hangs out a yard, that he can better inspect its colour; and his legs are black and blue from efforts to detect a dropsy. A

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third excuses himself by a flux, which he would cure with hot wine; and a fourth is assured of a cold, to lead to all these and other ailments, and hence steeps himself night and day in the hot bath, the one to be most easily excused. Emma Dai-Ō in Hell^[8] could not afflict these fellows more than they grieve over themselves. Only in talk of their ailments do they find company. Plasters and medicaments for their persons, instead of armour and the quietus of the foe, these are the objects of their quest." The two old rascals, and their middle aged abettor, looked slyly over each other's heads at the younger men grouped in the rear, then at each other. Thus it was with these violent fellows of the actual battlefield. They would stir someone to action.

"Heigh! Heigh! Not Endō Uji: he at least has proved his mettle. The pressing offices of the day do not call for sleep all night. He is of the stock of Kiémon Dono. Old Hikoza never tired of tales of his father's prowess." Kondō chuckled as he continued—"The old fellow (*oyaji*) spoke well of the dead. The living had need to take care of his praise of them. Witness Torii Dono and Akiyama Dono, at the two extremes of age. Good luck, as well as management, extricated them from the results of a commendation like to cost them much. Alas! His place is not to be filled." Ōkubo Hikozaémon, governor of these wild fellows, keeper of the suzerain's conscience, had left his seat vacant these past five years. Sorrow for his loss did not prevent Noborinosuké bringing a bright and beady eye on Aoyama Shūzen. Ōkubo Shichinosuké followed the look. All of the old ones fastened Shūzen with inquisitive glare. The object of their attention neither quailed nor showed undue eagerness. "The honoured ancients favour this Shūzen with the task." His laugh was so cold and purposeful, his look so derisive and comprehending, that the old fellows in some confusion sought comfort in each other. This Aoyama Shūzen was a very devil of a fellow. He had a perspicacity in finesse that the plain, keen, and honest bluntness of former days could not deceive. Aoyama was not one to charge with effeminacy in any form. He had a wife—whom he neglected. He had a page, whom he favoured. He had all the harsh vices and capabilities of the warrior age. Turning to Endō Saburōzaémon—"Endō Uji has seen the vision, not fox or *tanuki*. This has been the experience of the *chūgen*?" Saburōzaémon did not like the connection; nor did he like Shūzen. "It is fact. Rokuzo was bewitched, not Endō. See to it that Aoyama Dono has better luck." Thus tacitly he would force the mission on Shūzen. The latter suppressed his anger at the assumption. "Endō Dono, as with this Shūzen, is *hatamoto* of the land. Such vile rascals as these do not make them object of their tricks."—"Don't be too sure of that," replied Endō. "Neither fox nor *tanuki* would care for the company of the vision. This Saburōzaémon does but seek to give it rest—and himself." He spoke with some gloom. Said Aoyama with decision—"Agreed! What may be the reward?" A chorus of protest went up. "Reward! Reward!... The applause of all.... The interest in the tale, as with that of Endō Dono, just recited." But Shūzen smiled and shook his head—"Endō Dono seeks the good will of an unworshipped demon." Saburōzaémon shot a glance at him. "Shūzen too has his object. Otherwise, let others volunteer." The force of what he said was made plain by the silence of the company. The stories told, none longed for the experience. Thought Montarō testily—"This fellow always has something in his sleeve." With hesitation—"Endō deserves reward, and claims it not. Aoyama would have it in advance. How now: a sword?" All looked inquisitively at Shūzen. They were surprised and disgruntled at his gesture of dissent. He knew the ancients, and could suspect a trap. "Shūzen knows the kind. As with buying radishes at Yanagibara; one good for nothing, and bringing anything but honour.... Shūzen selects his own weapon, nor asks reward apart from the issue." Kondō Noborinosuké clapped his hands. The younger man was a favourite and kindred spirit of his own, near enough in age to be congenial. "The presiding chair at the Endurance Society meeting. We are *samurai*, *hatamoto* of the land. Gold is not to the purpose. A sword is bought with gold. Let Aoyama Uji make report to the meeting, and on that hang the office." Shūzen was the first to nod eager assent. All agreed; with no great joy at prospect of the coming test, yet afraid of his refusal. Thus the company separated, committed to a meeting of the Gaman Kwai at the house of Noborinosuké, to hear the report of Aoyama Shūzen's venture into the Banchō.

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His preparations made, the next night, at the hour of the rat (11-1 A.M.), saw Aoyama in his turn climbing the slope of the Gomizaka. Attached to the immediate service of the palace, the place was very desolate and strange to him. At a loss where to look for the objects of his search he sauntered at random, attention drawn to footing in this darkness. Thus it was that the Gekkeiji bell sounded over the moorland, striking the first watch of the hour of the ox (3 A.M.). He stopped to listen his eye fixed at the time on the long line of wall and fine gate of a *bessō-yashiki* (country villa), evidently of a great lord. He had passed from here some little distance, to the turning of the wall, when hasty steps and the hard breathing of one who had just breasted the hill struck his ear. Shūzen standing at the corner was almost knocked down by the dark bulk which bounded out of the shadow. Both parties sprang back in attitude of watchfulness. Shūzen had never seen such a fellow. At least seven feet in height, hairy of arms and legs and face, his eyes shone like bright mirrors. Bulging forth these made him like to the ghost of some huge dragon fly. Did he not have an eye in the middle of his forehead? Shūzen could not have denied it. Of size to inspire fear, decidedly the rascal was to be suspected. Shūzen was the first to question. "Who and where from? Answer at once, or this Aoyama deigns the death cut." The man, or monster, merely opened and shut the plate like eye holes. Then with a roaring derisive lip—"Ha! Ha! This is Tanuki-baké, come hither to find and fetch Aoyama."

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"Ya! Ya!" Aoyama was in a great rage. In the act of drawing his sword he would cut the rascal down. Thus to insult a *hatamoto* of the land, lord of twelve hundred *koku*! "Make ready!" Apparition or not, at a bound the man was some ten feet off. Then followed a space, during which Shūzen made every effort known to the fencing room. He would have impaled a real dragon fly more readily. Without attempt to flee the object merely darted hither and thither. Shūzen was

dripping with perspiration. He felt badly and discouraged. For a moment he would rest—"To see this Aoyama?" He grunted. "Just so," was the reply. "Fools at close quarters give entertainment. Aoyama is not the clever one to cut down the *tanuki-baké* (badger-ghost). Get you hence to your quilts, good sir; to your fool companions who wear summer garb in depth of winter, and triple garments in the heats of the sixth and seventh months; stuff themselves with hot food and wine in summer, and freeze the viands and *saké* in winter. Get you hence to your companions of the Gaman Kwai (Endurance Society). Make report to them of Aoyama's venture, and bray and brag to them of spending a night outside the sheets." Shūzen strove to be calm on receipt of these insults to his kind. In haughty condescension he explained—"Those of the Gaman Kwai wear *katabira* (light summer wear) in winter, triple gear in summer, to undergo the hardships of the battlefield. In war one regards not heat or cold. He drinks from the puddle on the field, and cooks the rice straw for food in his helmet. This is the great time of peace. The experiences and the hardships of the battlefield are lacking. It is as substitute for these...." He was interrupted by a mighty burst of impolite merriment from the heavy man, who held his sides as like to split from laughter. "Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Naruhodo! These chitterlings; stuffed sausages! 'Sufferings of the battlefield; hardships!' They are not to encountered in such childish sport. He who would face these must practise the art of the inner belly (mind). It is by hardening the belly that the trials of war are met. You fellows practise but the outer cult. Of the inner and secret precepts you are ignorant. Degraded fools (*bakéyarō*)!"—"Shut up!" roared Shūzen. He could take the fellow at a disadvantage in his fit of outrageous merriment. Close to hand he leaped on him. In effort to avoid the blow the miscreant tumbled head over heels into the close deep waving *suzuki* grass. With satisfaction Aoyama felt the sword sink deep into the resisting substance. Great his disgust to find that he had cleft an old and hidden stump to the very root. He seated himself upon it.

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At least he was in the centre of disturbance. Should he await further encounter, or depart elsewhere to find it. He had a mind to abandon the lanes and plunge into the waste land. Just then screams and cries were heard; the sound of rapid flying feet coming in his direction. A young woman in flight was now close at hand. Her hair unbound streamed behind her. She was in night clothes, and the knot of the narrow *obi* or band come loose in her flight, exposed a figure all attraction. On reaching Aoyama she threw herself at his feet, clasping his knees. "Aid! Aid from the honoured *samurai*! Thieves breaking in threaten with death and pillage. Deign, honoured sir, to aid." Shūzen was very willing to do so. The lady was very urgent and very beautiful. He himself was uncertain as to goal, and the matter of the ghost could wait on her extremity. To his inquiry she made reply—"Just yonder." With her he retraced his steps. To his surprise the gate of the *yashiki*, already noticed, was wide open. In all haste she urged him to the entrance, yet in his rapid passage he seemed to have seen this place before. The girl gave a call, then another. Shūzen joined her in chorus and the search. The mansion was thrown wide open and abandoned. Not a soul was to be seen. All had either been killed, or had fled. The wailing of the girl brought him to her side. Prostrate she lay on the bodies of an old man and old woman, who had been put to death without mercy by the miscreants. Great was the pity of Aoyama. "The bodies still smoke in blood; the perpetrators cannot be far off. It would be well to seize them. This lantern ... how now? Is it of the house?" The girl raised her head to observe it. "No," she said. "The house lanterns have not the bow handle. This is of the thieves.... What's that?" A noise was heard above. Aoyama, hand on his sword, sprang to the stairway. The girl, all smiles at the prospective vengeance, followed him.

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Three fellows were busy at the closets and chests. The contents were scattered over the floor, evidently for purpose of selection. Aoyama burst upon them. "Heigh-ho! Vile rascals! Submit your necks at once to the blow, your arms to the cord." At first the pillagers were greatly astonished and put out. "A *samurai*! Our work is interfered with. Alas! We must away." Said the leader, a determined looking fellow—"Umph! 'Tis nothing but a board wages *samurai* (*sampin*). He is alone. Kick him down. Teach him the lesson of interference." With yells all made for Shūzen. Disregarding those at the side he delivered his blow at the man in front. Kiya! He split him in two as one would green bamboo. Shūzen drew back with a side sweep which cut another clean across the girdle. He stopped to rub his eyes with amazement. Was it not witchcraft? Not three, but five men now confronted him; and lively rascals they were. Strive as he would Aoyama's blows seemed but to multiply his foes. He was but one man. A kick to this side sent a rascal flying to the wall; an elbow shot sent another through the screens. Then all took to flight. One closely pursued sought the roof, the drying frame its heights. Aoyama was about to cut him down, when the fellow sprang off into the darkness like a flying bird. At the same time came most urgent and piteous cries from below. "Danna Sama! Honoured *Samurai* Sama! Deign rescue. The thieves! They force me to extremities." Reluctant Shūzen turned back. On reaching the lower stair he came upon the rascals who were gathered round the girl. At sight of him all took to flight. To Shūzen's astonishment the girl in her turn fled in pursuit. Out of the house rushed the whole band, Shūzen joining in the mad race. Down the slope went all. Then *dobun*!... Shūzen's foot caught in a hole, or root, or some obstacle. Head first he went into the ditch. Struggling, gasping, spitting out the dirty water of the drain, Aoyama scrambled up on the bank. He looked around in amazement. The white light of dawn illuminated the scene; the ill fated tree stump and the dirty drain close by. House there was none. Girl and thieves had disappeared. He stood on the moor, shivering in Nippon's always cool dawn and dripping wet with the filthy fluid of the ditch or stream flowing through these fields and the valley. With discomfiture he took his long way homewards to the *Dōsanbashi*. Plainly he had been bewitched and derided. So believing, he was startled to find himself again before the *yashiki* gate; but in the light of day it showed the obvious neglect of years. Shūzen at once sought entrance, not by the gate, but over the wall for lack of other means. He recognized the scene of last night's exploit, and its description as given by Endō

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Saburōzaemon. Besides, he recognized the place in his own experience of long past years, the favour and support of one to whom he was much indebted. Ah! Truly these were dangerous rascals he had encountered.

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CHAPTER IX

SHŪZEN MEETS SHŪZEN

Aoyama Shūzen was not likely to brag of this exploit. All day he sat biting his thumbs, and drinking wine to obviate the effect of his nasty bath. An idea began to crystallize in his brain. But this matter pressed. The preparations for the night were to be made. He hoped for better luck in his vengeance on the miscreants. The watch of the rat again saw him skirting the Ushigafuchi on his way to the Banchō. He had just started up the slope of the Gomizaka when he heard steps behind him. Oya! Oya! Two *chūgen* and a lady. About these there was nothing suspicious. But the lantern they carried? It was marked with the *mitsuba-aoi*, or triple leaf holly hock crest of the suzerain's House. Plainly the bearers were on mission from one of the San Ke (Princes of the Blood), or perhaps from the palace itself. Reverence must be done to the lantern. On his present mission, and thus arrayed, Aoyama sought to avoid notice. He disappeared into the long *suzuki* grass at the road side. He could hear the lady express her anxiety and haste. Then with curiosity Aoyama watched their strange behavior. A bare sixty feet beyond they came to a halt. The lady shrank back as in terror. Haténa! Aoyama recognized him by his size, the antagonist and critic of the previous night. Without delay, or giving time for flight, the huge ruffian with one hand grasped the bosom of the lady's dress, with the other the arm of a *chūgen*. A kick sent the other fellow very willingly to the ground. Tremendous was the apparition as he towered over his victims. He seemed taller than ever. His hair stood out like iron wire. His mouth grinned open wide from ear to ear; and now Aoyama could see distinctly the horns sprouting from his temples. Did he not have claws? Aoyama could not remember.

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He would rescue the lady, beautiful of course. Rapidly passing through the grass Aoyama burst out upon the group. He took aim at the knave's breast bone. "Yai!" The fellow let go. The two prisoners, thrust violently into the knees of Shūzen, brought him to the ground. When he had recovered balance the rascal had disappeared. The lady was in a dead faint. One *chūgen* seemed to be dead. The other was squatting at some distance, eyes saucer like in fright. He regarded Aoyama with grave suspicion. The *samurai* called to him. "Here you! Your mistress has fainted. Water at once!" But the fellow did nothing but answer "Hei! Hei!" without sign of motion. "Don't sit and purr like a cat," roared Shūzen. "Off with you, and fetch water." At last the man took courage to approach. "Alas! Danna Sama, this Banchō, where the thieves are apparitions, and apparitions turn to women, frightens this Isuké."—"Fear or no fear, water must be had. Such milk livered fellows are not for man's work. Weakness of loins won't do. Off with you."—"But how?"—"In your scabbard, fool." For answer the *chūgen* made a wry face and tugged at his weapon. As often the case with those men, it was of wood. Shūzen laughed. Then he gave his own scabbard to the *chūgen*. Off the fellow crawled, with gait and speed of a maimed insect.

Meanwhile what was to be done. Shūzen put his hand into the bosom of the lady, and rummaged. Women were always dosing and fainting. Doubtless she was provided for such contingency. Surely a perfume reached his nostrils. Ah! Here it was. He drew out the fragrant package. Medicine without doubt. The drug savoured strongly of musk. At last the fellow was on hand with the liquid. Shūzen made a pellet from the drug. "Raise up your mistress. Take her in your arms." But the man drew away in horror. He prostrated himself flat on the ground. "Deign forbearance. To touch with a finger one of the ladies of the palace is not to be ventured."—"Ah! Is that so?" grunted Shūzen. "Circumstances of course don't alter cases. He who will not touch a woman is usually a most lecherous rascal." With this comment he roughly shoved aside the awkward efforts of this meticulous attendant. Taking the operation upon himself, he gently pressed the back of the lady's neck, forcing her to open her mouth. Inserting the drug he poured in water from the scabbard. A sudden slap on the back and down went the bolus. The lady opened and shut her eyes. Then they remained open. "Be firm," commented Aoyama Sensei. "Thanks," replied the dame. "Ah! What fright! With hand on dagger was this Banchō entered on. So near, how suspect misfortune at hand? Truly honoured sir, great your trouble and inconvenience."

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Aoyama accepted the thanks, to satisfy curiosity. "But so late abroad ... and doubtless of the honoured San Ke...." Replied the lady—"The mission was of Kishū Ke, said to be of grave import. Hence the late hour of the night. This insignificant person is lady in waiting at the San no Ma of the palace; Takigawa by name. The *yashiki* of Okumura Shūzen, my father, lies close at hand. Great the cowardice shown by this Taki." Shūzen grasped the whole affair. Between Kishū Ke and the parent House the feeling in those days was none too good. Grave suspicion on the part of one, angry resentment on that of the other. He would see more of the matter. It was his duty as *hatamoto*. "To go abroad with *chūgen* is no safe thing. At this hour and place *samurai* could well have been taken as company. As for courage—of that kind it is not expected of a woman. Valour was shown in undertaking the mission. And this fellow...." He turned sharply to the *chūgen* and pointed to his fellow. "Mujina-také."—"What!" roared Shūzen. He looked from *chūgen* to lady, and from lady to *chūgen*. They seemed surprised. Stammered the man in fright—"It is but a nickname. His name is Také, and he is very worthless. Hence he is called Tanuki-také. I am called

Yōkai Isuké (Apparition Isuké), being nothing but wind." Aoyama grunted a ready assent to this self critic. The fellow's ignorance and cowardice was as gross as the material flesh which Shūzen tested with a well applied kick in the buttocks, bringing Isuké in position to render first aid to his companion. This was done by passing on the application. A vigorous snort followed the thump on the back administered to Mujina. He sat up and regarded his mate with astonishment. "Ah! The Yōkai... No more of that. 'Tis Mujina's turn." This, when his fellow proposed a second application. The return came sooner than anticipated. A terrific sneeze followed. Up came his head sharply, and the *yōkai* rolled over backwards on the ground. He rose in fury, holding his jaw. Shūzen was laughing, the lady smiling. "The distance is but short? Plainly those fellows are next to worthless. This Shūzen will act as guard." Thus did Aoyama go in company to the *yashiki* of Okumura Shūzen; and thus was his second night's venture brought to naught.

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The arrival of the Ojōsama (lady daughter) in company with Aoyama caused much excitement. Okumura was of five hundred *koku*; Aoyama of twelve hundred *koku*. The latter was at once ushered to the inner apartments. The lady wife of Okumura came forward to urge his stay for some entertainment. Aoyama in turn was curious to know more of this mission in connection with a *hatamoto* like himself. He spoke gravely of the dangers in this neighbourhood, apart from the strange tales told. Okumura Shūzen heartily agreed. The charge being to Kishū Ke was not to be declined. Himself he had many strange tales to relate. Though the hour was late, every effort was made. Aoyama Shūzen was gratified with a beautiful repast. The wine was served in person by Takigawa Dono. The talk passed from personal affairs to tales of war. Here Aoyama was in his element, both from experience and the tales of others heard in the *hiban* and at the meetings of the Gaman Kwai. This was a first meeting, not to be too long drawn out. Okumura was a new comer in the Banchō, his service was in connection with the public works. Aoyama had been of the palace staff until very recently. Both expressed deepest gratification at their encounter. As he took his way home in the morning light, Aoyama Shūzen could but contrast with pleasure his present arrival with that of the previous morning. He had feasted well, and made an acquaintance of some value.

The following day he would make his acknowledgments. Aping no great style he walked accompanied by a page and two *chūgen*. Inquiry soon brought him to the *yashiki*. Inquiry soon introduced him to a sitting room. "Lucky fellow!" thought Aoyama. "The influence of Matsudaira Kō lands him in affluence. A modest income; a double *yashiki*!" This part of the house was different from that of his last night's introduction. Then he stated his business to the *karō*. The night before he had accompanied the Ojōsan to the *yashiki*. He would make acknowledgment of the courtesy then received. The face of old Beita Heima was a puzzle. Deep the respect due to twelve hundred *koku* Aoyama, but had he been drunk or dreaming?—"Has not your lordship mistaken the *yashiki*?" Aoyama was a little severe at what seemed gratuitous assumption. "You were not on the guard last night." Beita spoke, prostrate and with great respect, but with an earnestness and obstinacy not to be mistaken. He had been on the guard—from sunset to dawn. Aoyama began to feel uncomfortable. Veiling the sharpness—"Is this not the *yashiki* of Okumura Dono?" Heima gulped assent. "Is not Takigawa Dono, of the San no Ma, the Ojōsan of the House?" Here Heima was on sure ground. "Ojōsan of the House there is none. It is very rude; but surely there is mistake as to the *yashiki*." Aoyama now was beginning to see light. He felt very hot and uncomfortable. He ventured a last question for surety. "And Okumura Dono?"—"The Tono Sama absent in Shimoso, the *yashiki* has been in this Heima's charge for this past month's course." With such grace as he could in his discomfiture Aoyama Shūzen took his leave. The astonished page and *chūgen*, still retaining the intended presents of acknowledgment, with difficulty kept up with their master. Ah! The beasts again had scored. Detestable! Shūzen thought with horror of his repast of the previous night. He had no better fare than Rokuzo the *chūgen*. In rage he sought his room, and swallowed all the purges and emetics to hand. Occupied in retching, and thinking, and other matters germane to his condition, he concocted the plan by which he hoped to bring the foe to book, and himself to the presiding chair which surely he had earned.

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CHAPTER X

THE MEETING OF THE GAMAN KWAI

With the fall of Ōsaka castle (1615), and the culmination of the uneasy movements of the years following in the conspiracy of Honda Masazumi, the country entered on a long peace—the Tokugawa Taihei. The Arima rebellion after all was but an affair of farming folk, in far off Kyūshū. Masazumi struck right at the person of the Shōgun himself. A special ceiling was constructed in his castle at Utsunomiya. This was to collapse on the sleeping Iyemitsu Kō sheltered beneath it. Caught between the heavy boulders above and beneath the couch, the Shōgun was to be sent to rest with, not worship of, his divinized grandfather at Nikkō. Iyemitsu slept the night at Edo castle, owing to the valour and strength of Ishikawa Hachiémon. Masazumi had failed, and the set field of battle between the factions of the *samurai* was a thing of the past. The duel, forbidden in theory and compulsory in practice, was to take its place. The substitute always had existed. It tried men's courage, not the sustained endurance of campaigning. How then was the old spirit of the warrior to be maintained? The desire to emulate their sires worked on the younger generation. The relics of the Tenshō, Keichō and Genwa periods (1573-1623) Ōkubo Hikozaémon,

Matsudaira Montarō, Nagasaki Chiyari Kurō, were heroes who could boast of having stood before the horse of Iyeyasu in his earlier trials of battles, trials in which the veteran commander would pound with his fist the pommel of the saddle until it was red with the blood from his bruised knuckles. Their tales of actual war, the sly jeers at the softening manners, spurred on younger members to find ways by which to simulate practical experience of campaigning. The result was curious. One of the organizations was the Undameshi Kwai, or Fortune Testing Society. Loaded firelocks were stacked in the middle of the room of meeting. Around them sat the members of the club, squeezed into full armour, from helmet to the warriors shoes of skin. The match was set. The weapons were exploded, sending a shower of balls in every direction. "Ah! Ha! The bullet grazed my helmet."—"The gorget caught it."—"The corselet has saved me."—"Congratulations are in order. Surely your pension will be increased during the year."—"Oya! Oya! And Genzaémon Uji?" The unfortunate Genzaémon had not fared so well in the mimic war. At all events he sat the meeting out—if he could. To be reported dead, in the course of duty; or be overcome with regrets at showing such clumsiness in being wounded; or, if actually incapacitated, to go home and die of "illness" (cut belly).^[9]

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The Gaman Kwai, or Endurance Society, was another form the movement took. In the season of great cold its meetings were held as if in the height of the *doiyō* or dog days; vice-versa with the time of great heat. It was the beginning of the seventh month (first half of August). The heat was intense, and had been for the past weeks. The farmer watched the steamy vapour rising from the rice fields and rejoiced. The plants were growing luxuriantly, the leaves of the willow trees were hanging yellow and wilted. Passers by on city or village streets sought the shade under the buildings, walking with languid lagging step, and, home once reached, removing every garment which etiquette—not decency—had hitherto compelled. Great was the dismay of the weaker members of the Gaman Kwai on receipt of a circular letter couched much as follows:

"In this season of great cold the continuance of the honoured health is observed with joy. On the seventeenth day it is desired to make offering of a cup of indifferent wine. It is begged that the use of the honoured *kago* (palanquin) be condescended. This the purport of the missive. With reverence and respect.

KONDŌ NOBORINOSUKÉ.

To...."

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The weaker allowed this missive to float gently and despairingly earthwards. Gasping for breath in the stifling heat they sought to fan themselves into a semi consciousness. "Terrific! Terrific! Yet refusal is out of the question. Ah! This Kondō is a doubtful sort of rascal. He is of the cruel kind. No mercy is to be expected of him. Yet if one fails to attend there will be but jeers and taunts of cowardice. One could not appear in public. Alas! Alas!" The stronger received it with equal impatience, but with the purpose to put in the evil hours with the best possible face, and score on the host—if they could. All left strict orders at home for a cold bath to be in readiness for the return. To this rash step the weaker groaned and yielded. The Nipponese fear and detest cold water—even for drink.

Thus they sallied forth—from Ichigaya to Honjō Kameidochō, from Shitaya to Shinagawa; some on horseback, some in *kago*; all arrayed in triple set of thickly wadded winter garments, in *hakama*, or trousers with double folds, in shirts and leggings, and fur shoes of the warrior on winter campaign. The gate keeper of the *yashiki* in Owarichō called their names on arrival—"Ōkubo Hikoroku Dono, Endō Saburōzaémon Dono, Abé Shirōgorō Dono, Matsudaira Montarō Dono, Ōkubo Shichinosuké Dono, Mizuno Jurōzaémon Dono, Ishikawa Hachiémon Dono,^[10] Okumura Shūzen Dono, Kusé Sanshichirō Dono, Aoyama Shūzen Dono...." The list was a long one. One and all were met by Kondō Noborinosuké in person at the entrance. Over his triple winter garb he wore a wadded coat or *kosodé*. Others had donned the longer *kataginu*. These were of the weaker kind. It did not fit so closely; pressed the warmth of its tissue less lovingly to the person. All complained of the intense cold. "Never was such cold felt," blandly agreed Noborinosuké. "An old fellow of the gardeners says that for sixty years such cold has not been experienced. It is a marvellous cold year. The ground will not be thawed this season. Deign to enter. Warmth is provided against this intensity of cold." And his hearers bowed and offered thanks, as well as their unwieldy wrappings would allow. At all events in the room yonder there would be the breeze from the garden side. They knew the place and its delights. Kondō was of the age to provide himself with quiet comforts. With eager stride the banquet room was sought.

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"Oya! Oya!" The speaker gasped in dismay and for breath. They had been introduced into a furnace. Explained Kondō gently—"Everything has been done to shut out the intense cold. The *amado* are tight closed, the braziers well supplied.... Heigh-ho! Allow none of these to get dark. More charcoal! More fuel!" The attendants obeyed, urging the fires before each guest. Seated close together to conserve the heat, the sweat poured off in streams. Unable to get breath some groaned and grunted—to pass it off as due to the intensity of cold. Soon they "would be thawed out with the genial warmth." Kondō and Aoyama were immensely pleased in their assent and at their sufferings. But the more discontented sought the fly in the ointment of the content of their hosts. Aoyama really was such. He was the one responsible for the call; Kondō his ready abettor. Said one—"Intense the cold, yet how explain the freaks of Nature. If it were not so freezing the blue clusters hanging in Kondō Dono's garden, just traversed, could well pass for wisteria." They laughed at him—"Wisteria in the seventh month? That would be as great a marvel as the cold."—"Not so the grape," replied another. "Kondō Uji long since promised sight of the new plant. To be sure the barbarian fruits are as ill trained and uncouth as the denizens of the land

they grow in. They flower and fruit in winter season. If not wisteria the clusters must be of the grape."—"Not so," promptly put in Aoyama. "Truly it is the green eye of jealousy which colours the vision. They are icicles; and no seasoning for the repast or the conversation of this cold occasion."—"Which brings the sweat to the face of Aoyama Uji." Aoyama turned calmly on the rash interloper. "It is not sweat; 'tis mucous. The intense cold causes flow of mucous. Are not others so affected?" He looked around grimly on the steaming shining faces before him. "Mucous?" questioned a doubter. "Yes: face mucous," was the calm rejoinder.

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All turned to Kondō Noborinosuké who would explain the more particular purport of the meeting. There was report to make, a new member to introduce. All turned with respect and salutation to Okumura Shūzen. It was a long and painful ceremony in the bulky winter garb. But they were in relays, took turns. Ah! If it was but Aoyama, thus long bent double, murmuring apology and compliment. Then Aoyama Shūzen made his report. He made it as one sure to please his hearers, many of whom regarded him with no particular liking. In fact at the tale of his discomfiture there was some joy, and tendency to show it. "Then, as with us, Aoyama Uji meets Okumura Dono for the first time." Aoyama nodded an amused assent. Said one more malicious, "And the repast? Surely the *hatamoto* was as well entertained as the *chūgen*?" Shūzen skilfully dodged the issue. "The hour was very late. Such could hardly be expected or offered to this Shūzen without raising doubts. Fortunately it was thus." Said one more persistent—"At least a cup of wine...."—"Without fire or heating? More than rude the implication!"—"Yet beasts know but little of etiquette; and if fox or badger...." Kondō Noborinosuké came in with—"That shall be at once determined. It is time for the repast. The *tanuki* killed by Aoyama Uji furnishes the soup." At a sign the retainers brought the beast in his own skin. All rose in marvel at the sight. Truly it was a huge fellow. "An old rascal, too. See! The hair on the back is of different colour from that on the rest of the body."—"Showing the great age and wickedness. Many are those he has gulled to their destruction. Now in turn he furnishes forth the repast." Said Kondō—"How did Aoyama Uji secure the beast."

"This Shūzen was much put out. Plainly by no ordinary means could these miscreants be eliminated. How meet them in true shape? Against the usual weapons they were secure in their transformations. Only the flying bullet could reach such mark; and the discharge of a gun in Edo town means banishment at the least. Then an idea came to Shūzen. At the hour of the ox again the Banchō was sought. Position of great dejection and weariness was taken, on a stone amid its greatest desolation. The wait was not long. Unexpectedly the sound of a gunshot was heard. This was surprising, for the reasons given. Hardly believing in an apparition, thinking it rather due to some rascally outlaw, his coming was awaited. Slouching along appeared a man in hunter's garb. He carried a fowling piece, and evidently was the criminal. Taught however by past events this Shūzen took no action. Merely hailing him, his purpose and game was inquired. He was ready in answer as to both. Yonder on Matsuyama harboured a huge and dangerous boar. It was this boar he sought. Kindly he gave warning, and advised return to safer quarters. On my part great enthusiasm was expressed for the sport; his company was sought. At this he jeered; then denied attendance as lacking a gun. 'Not so,' quoth I. With these words the punk carried in the hand was touched to the fuse of the fire crackers concealed at one side. 'Kiya!' So startled was he that his gun fell to the ground and he took his proper shape. At once this Shūzen in the act of drawing cut him into two parts. Thus he died. Awaiting dawn another beast appeared, this time in true form. Approaching the prostrate body it wept and wailed. This too 'twas sought to slay, but the beast had the advantage of being forewarned. For the time it has escaped. Meanwhile, returning from its pursuit, was found an admiring crowd of plebeians gathered round the slaughtered *tanuki*. The priest for his exorcisms took cash; the *samurai* were the ones to act. Their joy and wonder was turned to good account. Under penalty of sharing the fate of the beast two of them shouldered it to the *yashiki*. Such the tale of Shūzen. And now for the results!"

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Kondō gave a sign, and the gaping wonder of the assembly at the deed was stifled in the wave of heat which poured in from the neighbouring room. "Ah! Truly these are cruel fellows!" Here a furnace had been erected for the cooking of the *tanuki*. It sent its streams of hot air into the already crowded and stifling room. Aoyama in person supervised the cooking. The animal was cut into small portions. Smoking hot the viands were placed under the noses of the gasping guests. With the great age of the beast it had accumulated great toughness. The younger members had the consolation of their jibes at the old fellows. They tore at, struggled with, the leathery fragments. But the latter had no teeth, and the malicious Aoyama would see to it that it stuck in their throats. "How, now, ancients? Is not the meat of this *tanuki* tender beyond measure? Truly one cannot call this engaging in the practice of war; to enjoy such a delightful mess."—"Just so," grunted Montarō. "One can then eat the knobs off one's helmet. The flesh of this fellow is so tender it sticks in one's throat, as unwilling to allow it passage.... G'up! G'up! G'up!"

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Said another—"The wine thus steaming hot, the viands sizzling, truly the feed is most beneficial. One even sweats in this intensity of cold."—"Of course," was the matter of fact reply of the wise. "Thus does the heat of spring thaw out the cold ground into a perspiration; thus does the frozen body burst into a sweat with the hot food and drink." All accepted the explanation without argument. They were in haste to end this meeting, even at cost of swallowing whole the *tanuki* and Aoyama Shūzen with it. Despite the prospect of attendance at his *yashiki* all rapturously agreed. Aoyama was an original. He would not repeat the experiment of Kondō. They had nearly a six month's respite before them. With this the entertainment was brought to a close. In almost unceremonious haste the guests took their leave, fairly galloping out of the entrance, hanging out of the *kago* or over the horse's neck, urging attendants to full speed homeward. Here the stifling garments were torn off, the plunge into the cold tub followed; and many paid for this rashness

with an illness of days. Meanwhile Aoyama Shūzen had learned one important fact. Endō Saburōzaemon in application for the *bakémono yashiki* had met with flat refusal. The field was open to himself. Moreover he had said nothing of the fact that, in the exercise of his new office as magistrate for the apprehension of thieves and fire-bugs, he was in fair way to suppress forever and in great torments the Mujina-baké and his fellows, residuary legatees of the prowess and field of action of the late Sōja Mushuku.

END OF PART I

PART II

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THE BANCHŌ SARAYASHIKI

OR

THE LADY OF THE PLATES WHAT AOYAMA SHŪZEN BECAME.

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CHAPTER XI

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THE YOSHIDA GOTEN

When Prince Iyeyasu consolidated his power at Edo, more particularly on his becoming Sei-i-tai-Shōgun, some provision had to be made for the great *daimyō* brought by the necessities of occasion to personal interview with their chief and suzerain. In the suburbs rose beautiful structures devoted to the entertainment of these *kyakubun*—or guests—as the greater *daimyō* were then termed. The Yatsuyama Goten, the Hakuzan Goten, the Kosugé Goten, the Yoshida Goten, other and elegant, if minor, palaces arose. Their first use disappeared with the compulsory residence of the *daimyō* under Iyemitsu Kō, but some were still maintained as places of resort and entertainment for the Shōgun in his more relaxed moments. Others were devoted to the residences of favoured members of his family. Others were maintained for the entertainment of State or Church dignitaries, on occasion of particular mission from the court in Kyōto to that of Edo. Others were destroyed, or put to temporal uses, or their use granted to favoured retainers or church purposes.

One of the most beautiful of these was the Yoshida Goten in the Banchō. The site originally had been covered by the *yashiki* of Yoshida Daizen no Suké. One of those nobles favouring the Tokugawa against Ishida Mitsunari, as their designs became clearer with the years following Sekigahara, at the attack on Osaka castle he was found within its walls. Thus the "Overseer of the kitchen" fell under the wrath of his suzerain. Hidétada Kō was a man of much kind temperament, but he was a strict disciplinarian and a rough soldier. Whether or not the dishes furnished for his consumption and digestion had anything to do with the matter, there was serious cause enough. With many others the Daizen no Suké was ordered to cut belly, and his tribe suffered extinction—of rank and rations (*kaieki*). Such the reward of this turn-coat. His disappearance from the scene was followed by other removals. Daizen no Suké was head of the Kōshōgumi. With the confiscation of his *yashiki* site five other Houses of the "company" were ordered to remove to other sites at Akasaka. Thus 2,500 *tsubo* of ground (24 acres) were obtained for the building of a new *kyakubun goten*. Erected on the ground of Yoshida's old mansion, now waste (更), it got the name of Sarayashiki. Time confused this character 更 with the events which there took place; and it was written Sara (皿) *yashiki* or Mansion of the Plates. Thus was the unhappy tale of O'Kiku written into the history of Edo and the Yoshida Goten.

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The second daughter of Hidédada Kō, the Nidai Shōgun, had been married to the lord of Echizen, Matsudaira Tadanao. At the time of the Osaka campaign Tadanao sulked. Prince Iyeyasu was very angry with him. However, when finally Echizen Ke did appear, he acted with such bravery, and to such effect in the campaign, that the old captain's anger was dispelled in his appreciation. To this connected House of the Tokugawa he thought to be liberal enough; not to meet the inflated scale of the ideas of Tadanao, who spent the next half dozen years in so misgoverning his lordly fief as to render necessary an adviser, planted at his side by his powerful cousin in Edo. In Genwa ninth year Tadanao rebelled—with the usual result to him who acts too late. He was suppressed, largely by the aid of his own vassals, and exiled to Hita in Bungo province. Here he shaved his head, took the name of Ichihaku. It was of no avail. Promptly he died. It seemed to be a dispensation of Providence—or dispensation of some kind—that exiles usually and early developed alarming symptoms; in the shortest possible time removing themselves and all cause of irritation to the overlord by their transfer to another sphere.

The Tokugawa Shōgun was generous to his relations. The exit of Tadanao was promptly followed by the induction of his infant son Mitsunaga into his fief. However, for the child to govern the

great district of 750,000 *koku* appeared to be a doubtful step. Its government actually being invested in the *daimyō*, it was not to be made a breeding ground for trouble through the action of subordinates. Hence the main fief with the seat at Kita no Shō (Fukui) was given to the uncle. Fukui to-day is a dull provincial town, and excellent stopping place for those who would have eyes opened as to the great wealth and wide flat expanse of these three provinces of Kaga, Echū, and Echizen. Their lord was a mighty chieftain, entrenched behind mountain barriers; and the great campaigns, which figure in pre-Tokugawa history, were fought for a great object. The Maéda House, however, had had their wings clipped, and were confined to Kaga. The Matsudaira were established in Echizen. Echū was much divided up. The reduction of the fief of Echizen Ke to 500,000 *koku* brought him within reasonable bounds, and he could well be left to ride with his hawks along the pretty Ashibagawa, or to take his pleasure outing on the crest of Asuwayama, the holy place of the city suburbs, and where Hidéyoshi nearly lost life and an umbrella by a stray shot. Then would follow the return, the ride across the wide moat, its waters dotted with the fowl he went elsewhere to shoot, but safe within these precincts. Whether he returned to any better entertainment than that of the present day Tsuki-mi-ro or Moon viewing inn, one can doubt. He certainly did not have the pretty outlook from its river bordered garden front.

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Sen-chiyo-maru, later Mitsunaga, was relegated to Takata castle in Echigo, with the minor income of 250,000 *koku*. Perhaps this fact, together with his youth, and the more entertaining expenditure of the income at an Edo *yashiki*, rather than in a mountain castle town, brought the Takata no Kata to the capital. Takata Dono, or the Takata no Kata, so named from the fief, is not known to fame or history under other appellation. She is said to have possessed all the beauty of her elder sister, the Senhimégimi, wife of Hidéyori Kō, son of the Taikō, he who fell at Osaka castle. Furthermore, with the training of the *samurai* woman, the greatness of her position and personal attraction, she possessed all the obstinacy and energy of the male members of her family, with few of the restraints imposed on them by public service. Takata Dono frankly threw herself into all the pleasures she could find at the capital. Established in the Yoshida Goten, the younger *samurai* of the *hatamoto* quickly came under her influence. There was a taint of license in her blood, perhaps inherited from the father who was most unbridled in his passions. The result was a sad falling off from the precepts of Bushidō in herself and her paramours. The Bakufu (Shōgunal Government) was compelled to look on, so great was her power at the castle. In the earlier days sentence of *seppuku* (cut belly) was a common reward for open misconduct. A word from Takata Dono, and the disgraceful quarrels over her favours were perforce condoned; and her lavish expenditures on her favourites were promptly met. Alas! Alas! The up to date histories of Nippon sigh over and salve these matters. "They were the inventions of a later age; were not current in her life-time." Nor likely to be put too bluntly by those tender of their skins. But an old poem has come down to express the popular belief:

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"*Yoshida tōreba nikai kara maneku;
Shikamo kano ko no furisode de.*"

Somewhat irregular, like the lady's conduct, but which can be interpreted,

"Passing Yoshida, from above the signal;
Furthermore, the waving of long sleeves."

Of little deer (or dears) for the style of sleeve, the *kano ko*, can be read young deer. Bah! Was there not a "parc aux cerfs" half way round the world? Nor were such confined to the capital cities of Edo and Paris.^[11]

The poem refers to the unbridled licentiousness the little lady developed on her translation from her provincial residence; though locally she had not failed to distinguish herself. What follows is part of the tales current. At the time the *himégimi* (princess) was thrown on her own devices in Takata-jō the *karō* or chief officer of the household was one Hanai Iki. This fellow owed his position entirely to his good looks and her ladyship's favour. This favour he met, not in the spirit of a loyal vassal, but in that of a professed and bold lady killer. As *karō* his attendance on her ladyship was constant and intimate, and it took no particular acumen to find out that the intimacy was of a more peculiar relation. Hence great was the under current of comment, and regret at the unbridled conduct of the lady. None, however, dared to interfere with the caprices of one so highly placed; and the only means was to work on the decent feelings of Iki himself. Thus the tale was brought to his wife's ears. It is to be said that with her all jealousy was suppressed. It was for her to find the cure for her husband's unbridled conduct. As Hanai Iki was a mere official, and with no great claim to unusual or able services, it was hoped that his removal or reform in conduct would bring back the *himégimi* to a befitting conduct. There was no suspicion that her passion was a disease raging in her very blood, and that it was the man, not his personality she sought.

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The wife first adopted the orthodox method of formal remonstrance. Without chiding, with a smile and great indulgence of one at no particular fault himself, she enlarged upon the subject in the service of the tea. "It is not a matter between Iki Dono and this Chiyo. There is no unseemly jealousy in the wife to bring forward the complaint. In fact the marital relation is not in question. As the husband pleases, so should the wife submit. But great is the talk aroused at these too private meetings with the *himégimi*. It is the House which is at stake. Its influence and prestige is threatened by a mere retainer. This in a short time can but lead to ruin. The caprice of a woman is well known. In some cooler moment the eyes of her ladyship will see another colour. The one to suffer will be Iki Dono, for now he has no other support but in his mistress. Deign to regain the

confidence of the household, and no great harm can result beyond neglect. Honoured sir, you stretch out for what is far beyond reach; and in the end can but fail. Deign to be circumspect." If there was any tone of contempt and depreciation in the protest it was in the last few words. At all events the eyes of Iki were opened to the fact that it was sought to reach him through the wife's remonstrance. He expressed surprise and discomfiture at what he asserted had no real basis in fact. His office brought him in close contact with her ladyship; the more so as the management of the fief was in her hands. Matters were to be discussed which necessitated the exclusion of all others. However, if such was the talk of the palace, or even beyond its walls, he could but give thanks for the kindness of the remonstrance. Henceforth he would be more careful, and would trust to her good feeling to believe in his good faith.

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With joy the wife heard what he said. With all good will she made herself the apostle of this explanation. No one believed her and facts soon belied words. Her ladyship, just entering on her passion, became more exigent in her calls for the *karō's* attendance. Iki now seldom appeared at his home. Long absences from the castle town, pressing business, any excuse to hand came to the alarmed ears of the wife. All the rumours gathered were sure to reach her in exaggerated form. Hanai Dono was the constant companion of her ladyship's wine feasts. He was her acknowledged paramour, and lived in the private apartments of the castle as in his own house. All talked—except the ladies in waiting of the *himégimi*. These were selected and trained by her; selected for beauty and trained to discretion. She would have no ugly thing about her; and all was to be for her use. Iki was handsome, and discreet. To her he was an object; as were the maids; the same apart from sex. He filled his rôle admirably, never introduced his favour with her ladyship into the public affairs of the House, or solicited for such personal advancement as made toward outward display. But circumspection of conduct never yet closed the mouth of gossip. There were those who were jealous of what he might do; and jealous of a favour they would gladly share themselves. The *himégimi* was the prize which all coveted, and which no one should possess to the exclusion of others.

Hence the buzz of talk rose loud, and the criticism stung the wife. She determined herself to learn the truth of these tales. Hitherto they were but the scandalous talk of people. Wife of the *karō*, naturally her ladyship did not require her attendance; but as such she had ready access and an intimate acquaintance with the palace routine. Her mind made up, she presented herself on some trifling pretext. Certainly in her manner there was nothing to arouse comment. Received in the inner apartments (*oku*), her plea, the introduction of a page into the service, was readily granted. On retiring she would speak with the superintendent of the *oku*, the old and experienced lady in waiting in charge of the *himégimi's* service. Thus she found the opportunity to wander the inner precincts, to disappear and to slip into the bed room of the *himégimi*. Here she stepped into a closet, pulled to the screen, and crouched down behind the heaped up quilts. For the companionship of her wandering lord she did not have long to wait; nor for proof of his inconstancy. Iki came into the room, holding by the hand and drawing after him one of palace ladies in waiting, Takeo by name. The girl was by no means unwilling. Her blushes and confusion added to the great beauty which made her the favoured attendant on the *himégimi*. Iki pressed her close and openly. The girl plead ignorance and inexperience. She was ashamed. Iki laughed. "Does not her ladyship set the example for others to follow? Deign...." The plea of his relations with the mistress came quite fit to the coarse feeling of Iki. Not so to the girl, who was warmed into some indignation, and drew all the more from him. He would persist; but just then her ladyship called from the next room—"Takeo! Takeo!" The voice was impatient, as of one in haste. Iki had time to thrust a letter into the girl's hand, which she quickly transferred to her bosom. All the boldness of O'Chiyo was at stake as the maid came to the closet. Close down she crouched; but Takeo had one eye on Iki, and only one careless eye on the heap of *futon*, of which she drew from the top. Iki made a grimace, for the benefit of the one he really loved. Her ladyship's appearance was received with the warm and flattering affection of the favoured lover; and O'Chiyo had proof positive that the relations of the two were kind indeed.

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The suicide of the wife, the letter of protest she left behind, had more influence on the public than on the conduct of Hanai Iki. It simply removed the last restraint and means of reaching him. All now depended on her ladyship's infatuation. Old vassals sighed with joy when they heard of the proposed removal to Edo. As *karō* Hanai Iki would be left in charge of the fief. Not so: it was soon learned that his name headed the list of those transferred for household service. The grumbling was as open as it dared to be. The fief was to be contented with the service of two vice-*karō*; no great loss, except in matter of prestige in dealing with other Houses. The *karō* became a kind of male superintendent of the *oku*! But at all events the fief was rid of him. Nor was Iki particularly pleased. He had been feathering his nest in the material sense. The severance of the connection, without loss of esteem, meant to him a quicker consummation of his wishes with Takeo Dono, whom he would ask for as wife. Their relations had gone forward at a wild pace. Once thrown into the whirl of passion Takeo sought but to meet the wishes of her lover. The passion of the *himégimi* stood between them.

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Established in Edo, at the Yoshida Goten, all went mad with content in their beautiful surroundings. The palace gardens were noted. A hint of the fine construction of the buildings is found to-day at the Kugyōji of Iinuma, built subsequently from the materials. For the use of the Shōgun Ke in entertainment of his visitors, every art had been exhausted in its adornment. The screens were objects of beauty, and separated the large rooms with their fine pillars and ceilings of grained and polished woods. The *rama-shōji* were carved by Nature's handiwork, and the polished lacquer and brass reflected a thousand times the beauties roundabout. Whether the garden be viewed from the apartments, or both from the *tsukiyama* or artificial hill beside the

little lake, it was a scene of balanced beauty, showing every nicety of man's hand in Nature's own proportion, and not guided into the geometrical designs of a carpet square or a surveyor's working table. Instead of the dry dullness of a provincial town, in which themselves they had to fill the stage to give it life and pompousness, Edo was close at hand, and they were part of, and actors in, the luxury and magnificence of the Shōgun's court. It is not surprising that the *himégimi* returned to all this glitter and activity as one long banished from its seductions to a wilderness; added her own dissipation and lavish entertainment to the constant round of festivity and luxury rapidly supplanting the hard military discipline of the first Shōgun's camp; a luxury itself to crystallize into a gorgeous rigid formalism, as deadly to the one not meeting its requirements as the lined and spotted beauty of some poisonous serpent.

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The wine feast was at its height. The cup passed more freely in this chilly season of the year; and in the tightly closed apartments the warmth of association and the table's cheer were sought. The *himégimi* was more expansive than usual under the influence of the wine. Iki was positively drunk, and in his state over-estimated the condition of her ladyship. Takeo was serving the wine. Beyond stolen interviews of moments the lovers had found no opportunity for the longed for clinging of soul to soul, of person to person, during the night's long hours. The girl's hands trembled with passion as furtively she sought those of her lover in the passing of the wine cup. Iki was absolutely careless. Her ladyship too far gone to note his conduct? He seized the arms of Takeo and drew her to his side. The display of amorous emotion on the part of both was too open to escape notice. The *himégimi* rose to her feet as on springs. The beautiful flushed face took on a deeper tint as she scowled on the guilty and now frightened pair. Her breath came hard and with difficulty. Then reaching down she wound the long tresses of Takeo in her hand, and dragged her to her knee. Twisting and twisting, until the agony made the girl cry out, she berated her—"Ah! Wicked jade! Thou too have eyes for a man's person. Disloyal wench, would you aim to make the beloved of your mistress partner of your bed?... What's this?" From the girl's hand she tore the answer to the lover's plaint. The sharp eyes of her ladyship sought the maid's person. A nervous hand fumbled the folds of her *obi* (sash). "Ah! The treasure house is not far off. Such valued gems are carried on the person." Thrusting her hand into the gentle bosom the *himégimi* drew forth the guilty complement.

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Wrote Iki—

"How act to drop the mask;
Many the pledges breathed in truth."

And the girl made answer:

"Ah! The night of meeting, love's consummation;
The hindrance, thing or person, object of hate."^[12]

The words were too plain. There was a certain savage tone of exulting wrath as the *himégimi* read out loud the contents of the missives. It chilled the hearts of those who heard her. She spoke: at first in low concentrated tones of bitter jesting hate. "Ha! Ha! Disloyalty goes beyond mere thought; would strike at the person of its lord. What lascivious slut is this, who thus would creep into the mistress' bed, to take her place?... Look up! Naruhodo! In that face is too much beauty. Vile huzzy, you would seek the favour of my lover. Hence forth neither he nor any man shall look on you, except with loathing." Close beside her was the *hibachi*, its burden of the hard burning charcoal from Ikéda now a bright cherry red. Dragging the girl to the brazier, twisting both hands more firmly in the long black hair, she forced her, face downwards, into the heated mass, pressing into the back with her knee. In terror the other girls looked away, or hid their faces in their sleeves. Before the towering anger of the princess none dared apology or intercession. The smell of burning flesh rose sickening. Takeo feebly moaned, and writhed a little under the nervous pressure of those delicate powerful hands. Then she was silent. The inhuman punishment had reached its end. Roughly her ladyship threw her aside, face upward on the *tatami*. Those who took a hasty glance turned away in horror from the face, black here, red and swollen there, the mouth filled with ashes, the eyes—one totally destroyed.

The *himégimi* was on her feet. "Iki—here with you!" In fear the man prostrated himself before the vision. "Not yet did the demon's horns sprout from her head; but the eyes injected with blood, the hair standing up to Heaven, converted her ladyship into a veritable demon." In slow and measured wrath she spoke—"Ah, the fool! Admitted to the favour of his mistress, the long continued object of her affection, with all at his command and service, he would sacrifice these for the embraces of a serving wench. Truly the man has gone mad with lust; or rather it is a man's face and a beast's mind. Thus before my very eyes he would dally with his whore and make me cuckold. Of such miscreants one feels no jealousy. Hate and punishment follow the insult." A quick movement backward and her halberd hanging at the wall was in her hand. The scabbard stripped from the shining blade was held over head. "Namu San! Holy the three sacred things!" Iki sprang to his feet, coward and fool he sought not to grapple with her, but to flee. The command of the *himégimi* rang sharp—"He is not to escape!" In this company of her maids, all *samurai* women, the discipline was complete. If they would not suffer the punishment of Takeo, they must respond. Whatever the backbiting and division among themselves, in her ladyship's service they would sacrifice life itself. Besides, more than one hated Iki with the heart-whole hate of neglected love and advances. Takeo had been more favoured than her companions, not through any fault of theirs in seeking this lady killer. Hence the alarm was quickly given. Iki was beset by this female army, every one armed, himself with but his dagger. There was no outlet for

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escape. Then they came to close quarters. The boldest threw themselves on him. Dragged to the ground, bound fast, he was pulled and pushed into the garden. Breathless and dishevelled the female horde parted to allow the approach of the *himégimi*—"Such open insult and vile conduct is difficult to overlook. The disloyalty intended is past pardon. For this, too great the grudge." The keen blade flashed, and the head of Iki rolled some feet distant. Without a glance in the direction of the miserable Takeo, the princess took her way back to her apartment. At last some attention could be given to the suffering and disfigured girl. She was paying the penalty for her treachery and disloyal thoughts. The pains which followed were aggravated by neglect. The face and chest one mass of burns, the wounds soon became putrid. The stench was so frightful that none would go near her. They brought her food; then fled her presence in disgust. As she grew weaker, unable to feed herself, the pangs of starvation were added to her woes. The continued cries of agony grew feebler and feebler, became a mere low moaning; then ceased altogether. "Thus trifles lead to death, and lechery finds its punishment." The bodies of the guilty pair, thrown into the garden well, there found the only interment.

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Her ladyship was not to escape. Following this scene her passions broke out of all bounds. She took no new lover; it was lovers. Men were beckoned to the Yoshida Goten as to a brothel—with waving sleeves from the upper story. For a night, for a week, for a month they would be entertained. The weaker sort soon displeased her, and were dismissed; to find their end in the well of the willow, the Yanagi no Ido, of the inner garden of the palace. It would seem as if some wicked demon had entered the person of Takata Dono, to lead her into this course of debauchery.

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CHAPTER XII

THE KŌJIMACHI WELL

One day a toilet dealer came through the Banchō. The sun was already on its decline as he passed the front of the Yoshida Goten on his way to his home in Kanda. It shone, however, on a fellow who at once attracted the attention of the look-out maid. She gave an exclamation—"Ma! Ma! What a handsome man! Such a loveable fellow! Her ladyship...." Then a feeling of pity seemed to close her mouth. But further speech was useless. The *himégimi* lacked company for her night's feast. Herself she responded to the incomplete summons. A glance and—"Bring him here; without delay. Such a fine specimen is not to be allowed to escape." It could not be helped. At once the beauty, all smiles and gestures, with waving sleeves sought to attract the attention of the itinerant trader. The district was new to him, his sales had been poor. This summons was the direct favour of the Buddha. From this great mansion surely his pack would be much lighter on return. Timidly he approached the *samurai* at the gate, fearing harsh repulse. The officer, however, was very amenable, transferring him at once to the guidance of the maid already waiting close by. Thus was he brought to the women's apartments; to be surrounded by a bevy of the sex, of a beauty of which he had had no experience. They began looking negligently over his poor stock, and closely over his own person. Then—"Tis at her ladyship's order that the summons is made. Come this way." At this unusual conduct in a *yashiki* he had some misgivings. His hesitation met with small consideration. The crowd of women surrounded him and pushed him forward, exercising a violence which astonished and paralysed resistance at being thus exalted above his sphere. Protesting he was taken to the bath. This office completed amid admiring comment, he was dressed in *hakama* (trousers) and blouse, of stuff perfumed and of silky softness, which made him feel as if he moved in some dream. Thus purified and arrayed he was led through a long range of magnificent rooms, the sight of which sent his heart further and further into his heels. Finally he was introduced into an apartment of no great size, but with dais and bamboo blind. Led before this, his guides drew apart and prostrated themselves in obeisance. The toilet dealer followed the excellent example.

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The screen slowly rose and the Takata Dono appeared in all her beauty. At this period she was barely thirty years, in the full development of her charms. To the eyes of the poor toilet dealer it seemed as if Benten Sama, the goddess of love, was thus gravely regarding and measuring every line of face and body. Finally she seemed satisfied with this close inspection. A sign and the formality of the scene vanished. "Come closer.... The *saké* cup!" Anxiously wriggling himself to her very presence, she then questioned him as to age, business, habits. Her voice was as silvery gentle as her face was beautiful. Soon he found himself looking up into it with confidence, as well as with awed respect. The *saké* utensils brought, she condescended herself to fill the cup. This was filled again; and yet again. When the liquor began to show its influence her manner became more familiar. With a quick movement, which surprised him by the latent strength shown, she drew him close to her side, began openly to show her favour for him. "Such fine figure of a man is no such fool as not to know he can please a woman. The very trade leads him to study women's taste. Now sir: for test of your qualities...." But frightened the toilet dealer disengaged himself, and springing back a little he prostrated himself flat on the ground. "Deign not an unseemly jest. Close to the person of a great lady, such as is the honoured presence, the poor artisan finds but distress. His wares have no market amid this magnificence. Dependent on him for means of life are two aged parents. A bare subsistence is secured for them. Condescend his dismissal, that he may return to relieve their anxieties."

The speech met with but poor reception. Gentle was the laugh of the *himégimi*, yet a little

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wrinkle knitted her brow. She seemed to regard him in a somewhat strange light. "Have no misgivings as to their fate. An ample sum shall be sent to assure them against need. Meanwhile Nature and the occasion has furnished forth the toilet dealer—for the lady's toilet.... Now for the wine feast." In the scene of riot and merriment which followed the one thought of the unfortunate trader was to escape. There was no strict order in the banquet, no formality. The idea of the *himégimi* was to get the greatest pleasure out of everything to her hand, and all vied with each other, by song and art, with voice and musical accompaniment, by a minute attention to needs of host and guest to make the sensual effect of the scene complete. There was not a jarring element in the well trained bevy of women devoted to pleasure. The toilet dealer was free, yet bound. If he would seek occasion to leave his place, to move uneasily hither and thither in these wide rooms, as did the women with their carelessness and ease, always he found himself balked by their presence. Escape there was none. Soon he found himself again by her ladyship's side, to be plied with the wine until sense and caution gave way before the spell of the beautiful woman. To her it was an amusing game, a stimulant to her passion, the conquest of this reluctance in a man found to lack the brazenness and vulgarity of his caste. In the end he could but murmur at her feet that he was hers—to do with as she would. "Would that this dream could last forever! In this Paradise of the wondrous Presence."

The scene was changed. Her ladyship rose. In the company of a few of the women he was led still further into the recesses of the palace. Here he was arrayed for the night, amid the merry jesting and admiring criticism of his attendants. Accompanied to the bed chamber the *fusuma* (screens) were closed, and he could hear the fall of the bars in the outer passages. Submission now was easy, as inevitable, as taken by the storm of this woman's passion. With but short intervals of dozing she would draw him to her embrace, and intoxicate him with her caresses. "When the poison be taken—let the plate be full." With clearing brain, though under the spell of her beauty he never lost sight of the purpose to flee this doubtful snare. When at dawn she really slept, he rose to seek exit; to run into the ever vigilant guard. "Naruhodo! Truly an early riser the honoured guest. But all has been made ready. The bath is at hand. Deign to enter." Thus surrounded and compelled he began the second day. As the maid dressed him after the bath she broke out in admiration of his physical presence. "The handsome fellow! No wonder her ladyship was seized by the love wind." In the evening's entertainment he had proved himself no fool in interesting anecdote of the town, and a quaint and naive description of the view the lowly take of those who call themselves the great. Under the skilful questioning of one or other this simple fellow—of keen wit and observation—had shown a phase of life unknown to them, beyond the careless view afforded from between the blinds of the curtains of the palanquin. The vulgar boldness of his predecessors was conspicuously lacking, as was the tedious talk of war and discussion of court etiquette of noble and more formal guests. Not only her ladyship, but the maids thoroughly enjoyed him.

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His astonishment and fearful protest at the gorgeous robe put on him turned them from pity to amusement. Said a bolder wench—"Take and enjoy the gifts of her ladyship as offered. The chance is not likely again to present itself. Put aside all thought of past; seek pleasure in the present, without regard to the future." Though spoken with a smile which showed the whole row of beautiful teeth, there was a menace in the words which came home to him. If he had had some suspicions of his whereabouts, he felt sure of it now. There were but rumours and suspicions, slanders of course, of which he seemed destined to prove the truth. The knowledge seemed to add dignity to his pose. He would await her ladyship's exit from the bath. Conducted to the garden he strolled its beautiful inclosure, noted the high roofs on every side. Standing by the *tsukiyama* he heard the shuffling of sandals. Turning he prostrated himself before the *himégimi*. Rosy, with sparkling eyes, long flowing black hair, regal presence, she was indeed the goddess Benten Sama in human flesh and blood. Without rising the toilet dealer made request—"Deign the honoured pity. To spend one's life in the service of the honoured Presence, this has been said; and for the words regret there is none. It is for those dependent. Condescend that no harm come to them, no distress from this visitation of gods and the Buddha. Willingly the price is paid for the delicious dream, no grudge felt for what is to follow."

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The *himégimi* stopped short. For some time she was lost in thought. This man was keen enough of wit to know the price at which her favours were bought; brave enough not to flinch, or to make abortive effort to avoid his fate. Her whole experience brought feeling of disgust toward men, when once satiated. With this man the chord of pity was touched. The honoured sleeves were wet with the honoured tears as she made answer to the plea. Without slightest effort to deny her once purpose she consoled and reassured him. "It was determined, that granted favour you should never leave this place." Her brow darkened for a moment at the ominous words; than cleared radiant. "Those who enter here ascribe to their good fortune the pleasures they enjoy. Instead of modest gratitude they show the arrogance of possession. Purpose was first shaken by the filial love expressed for those who gave you being, the tender care and anxiety for their welfare. A man like you, one is assured of his faith and silence. At night you shall depart from here unharmed." She took him by the hand, and when he would show respect, with familiarity drew him along with her. Thus they walked the gardens, talking of varying subjects; she listening to his explanations and instances of life in the common world, and questioning him adroitly as to his past and future. Then the return was made to the inner apartments of the palace. From this stray honey bee the little lady sucked the last juices of its nature. The day was spent in the same riotous merriment and feasting. At the order of the *himégimi* he had withdrawn for the moment from her presence. When the maid came toward him, it was with expectation of another summons that he followed after. She took him to a little room. Here were his coarse garments and his pack. To these were added the gifts heaped on him by her ladyship. The change of garb

completed suddenly the girl took him in her embrace, pressing the now soft perfumed hair and warm moist skin of his neck. "Ah! You lucky fellow! But know that silence is golden." With this she as suddenly seized his hand and led him swiftly along the dark corridor. At its end an *amado* was slipped back, and they were in the garden. To a postern gate she fitted the key. Pack adjusted he would turn to make salutation. Two slender firm hands laid on his shoulders sent him flying into the roadway. The gate closed with a sharp bang, and all sign of this fairy palace disappeared.

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Every day the toilet dealer had prayed to *kami* and Buddha, made his offering of "cash" at the favoured shrines, performed such pilgrimages (*sankei*) as his limited means and scanty time permitted. To this alone is to be ascribed his escape. Not so with others: to turn the page to a second instance—One day a maid from above called to the gate guard—"Stop that man!"—"Who?" The guard was at loss, not what to do, but whom to stop. Promptly the highway was roped off. None were allowed to move until inspection was made. As the plebeians lay prostrate with noses on the backs of their hands they marvelled and spoke to each other. "Truly a wondrous event! Some great rascal must have been detected. Thanks to the *kami* and the Buddhas the heart of this Tarōbei is clean."—"And of this Jimbei. To pay the debt to the *saké* shop he has not hesitated to contract Tama to the Yoshidaya of Yoshiwara."—"Well done!" quoth his friend. "Then credit at the Echigoya is good?"—"Deign to come and drink a glass of poor wine, to the pleasure and good luck of Jimbei." The edifying conversation was interrupted by call for inspection. All passers by but men were summarily motioned on. A maid stood by—"No, not this one ... nor this one ... nor that.... Ah! That big brown fellow, with huge calves. He is the man." At once the "big brown man" with enlarged pediments was cut out from the heap of humanity, with whispering fear and looks the others went about their business. "Truly his crime must be very great. Yet who would suspect it! He is not an ill looking fellow by any means." Others shook their heads as they went away, vowing never again to take this road to work, or home, or pleasure.

Before the *yakunin* the prisoner fell on his knees. "Deign the honoured pardon. Doubtless grave is the offence; but of it there is no remembrance. An humble wheel-wright of Kanda, this worthless fellow is known as Gonjurō. It is work at Nakano which brings him hither." He turned from one officer to the other. They disregarded his prayers, and delivered him over to the maid, directing him to obey her orders, or suffer for it. In dumbfounded surprise and gathering confidence he followed after. Surrounded by the army of maids he more than readily submitted to their ministrations. The freedom of the bath, the donning of the gorgeous robe, pleased him beyond measure. To their quips and words of double meaning he made ready answer, meeting them more than half way with the obscenity of the Yoshiwara. "Tarōbei is tricked out like an actor." At this all the greater was their merriment and boisterousness. Introduced into the presence of her ladyship, his first confusion at the magnificence of the surroundings was quickly removed by his cordial reception. The *himégimi* laughed at sight of him; laughed still louder at his uncouthness. Then she passed to more earnest measures; praised his thickness of limb, the sturdy robustness of neck and loins. To his apologies—she urged him not to be frightened or backward. Pushing the thick shock of hair back from his eyes he eyed her with growing comprehension. After all a woman was a woman. "'Tis no fault of this Tarōbei. The *yakunin* compelled his presence. For such a noble lady he would make any sacrifice." He spoke with bold look and manner, thoroughly understanding now the nature of his summons at the caprice of some great lady. Had he not suffered equal good fortune with the beauties of Yoshiwara? He treated lady and maids with the same free familiarity and sportive roughness as if in one of his favoured haunts.

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All the more was the *himégimi* amused at his extravagance. She made no sign of displeasure, and the girls made little resistance to the fellow's boisterous manifestations as he tousled them. Always her ladyship had eyes of the greatest appreciation on this splendid animal. The feast set before him he looked on with small favour. "What then tickles the palate of Jurō?" She leaned toward him, her face flushed with this struggle to cage her latest prize. The silvery and enticing voice had for answer—"Také (bamboo); just plain boiled, with syrup and *shōyu*." Then timidly, as he sought her good will—"Just a little wine; two *go* (a pint) ... say five *go*." She laughed with good humour. His choice among this bevy of beauties at last had fallen spontaneously on herself. The conquest pleased her. Then he was well stuffed with coarse foods, hunted out of the supplies for the grooms and stablemen in the palace kitchen, with *saké* of a harsh and burning kind—"which had some taste to it." Indeed never had he drunk such! The *himégimi* sipped a drop or two of the acrid liquor, made a wry face, and sought to bring the scene to its climax.

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With the bath next day he was all grumbling and exigencies. The maids bore this with patience, and glances interchanged. Her ladyship had promised him breakfast to restore exhausted Nature—"And such was promised as that this Tarōbei would never need another." He roared his dissatisfaction. The hint was taken up at once. "This way: it is for the *yakunin* to carry out her ladyship's order, and to stop your gullet." The brusqueness of the *samurai* was poor exchange for the noisy amorous atmosphere of the inner palace. With indignation the worthy wheelwright obeyed the order to march ahead. "Ah! Just wait my fine fellow. A word to the lady of the mansion, and you shall learn the cost of insult to the man she favours. This *yarō* Gonjurō has no other wife. Her ladyship takes him as adopted husband." The officer winked and blushed a little at this very crude specimen. By this time he had led the man to the well curb in the inner garden. Harshly—"Now down with you. Favoured by the gods and Buddhas you cannot even hold your tongue. Ladies like not boasting of their favours. 'Tis now the time to express pity for you. Make ready!" Deftly he tripped him up, to send him an all fours. The sword flashed, and the wheelwright's head rolled on the ground. Just as it was the body was cast into the well.

Such was the fate of those who found favour with the *himégimi*. More and more suspicious became people of the strange disappearances traced to the precincts of the palace. Strange tales went around, to gather force with numbers. Kwanei 8th year (1635), whether for closer supervision of the lady or actual necessity, she was removed to the castle precincts, and there given quarters. Time doubtless it was, that tempered these crazy outbursts of the *himégimi*. She lived until Kwambun 12th year. On the 2nd month 21st day (12th September 1672) she died at the age of seventy two years. Grand were the obsequies of one so favoured by the Shōgun. The *daimyō* went up in long processions to condole with the suzerain at the death of a rich aunt, and congratulate him on the possessions seized. On the 24th day the lord of the land sent lavish incense and a thousand pieces of silver, by the hand of Inaba Mimasaka no Kami Masamori, to Matsudaira Echigo Ke the son and heir, doubtless glad enough to get this much out of his lady mother's rich furniture and dower. From the Midai-dokoro, the Shōgun's consort, by the Bangashira (Superintendent) of the women's apartments of the Shōgunal palace, he secured another thousand pieces of silver. All was treasure trove toward the heavy expense of the imposing funeral. On the seventh day of the decease—the 27th day (18th September)—the obsequies took place at the Tentokuji of Shiba, where she was to rest, well weighted down by massive sandstone and an interminable epitaph—of which the posthumous name of Tensō-in can be remembered. The Shōgun Ke was present in his proxy of Tsuchiya Tajima no Kami Kazunao.

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The Yoshida Goten had shorter shrift than its once occupant. The *daimyō* were moving into *yashiki* under the compulsory residence edict. The *kyakubun* were still met at the outskirts of the city, but the many different palaces for their entertainment became superfluous. The main part of the Yoshida Goten was pulled down, and its magnificent timbers and decoration went to the equipment of the prior's hall of the Kugyōji of Iinuma. This great temple, situate one *ri* (2-1/2 miles) to the north of Midzukaido-machi, in the plain at the base of Tsukuba-san, is one of the eighteen holy places of the Kwantō, and under the charge of the Jōdō sect of Buddhists. In former days the notice board was posted at the Chūmon (middle gate), ordering all visitors to dismount from horse or *kago*. The *bushi* removed their swords on presenting themselves for worship. The temple itself is of moderately ancient foundation, being established in Oei 21st year (1414) by the two Hanyu lords, Tsunésada and Yoshisada, who built the castles of Yokosomé and Hanyu, close by here in Shimosa. Grand is the *hondō* (main hall); and grand the magnificent old pines and cedars which surround it and line its avenues. These are set off by the girdle of the flowering cherry, famed among the ancient seven villages of Iimura. Moreover it was the scene of the early labours in youth of the famous bishop—Yūten Sōjō; who solved so successfully the blending of the pale maple colour of its cherry blossoms that he gave the name *myōjō no sakura*, a new transcript of the "six characters." Here he grappled with and prevailed over the wicked spirit of the Embukasané. In later writers there is a confusion as to the tale of the Yoshida Goten. The palace material was used for the construction of the prior's hall.^[13] In the Genwa period (1615-23) the Senhimégimi, eldest daughter of Hidétada Kō the second shōgun, cut *short* her beautiful hair and assumed the name of the Tenju-in-Den (as nun). The hair was buried here under an imposing monument; and later one of the ladies-in-waiting of the princess—the Go-tsuboné Iiguchi Hayao. (The name of the princess Tsuruhimé in *kana* is probably a later and mistaken addition.) Thus were the many adventures of the Takata Dono transferred to her equally well known and beautiful elder sister. The Senhimé, wife of Hidéyori, suffered and did quite enough herself for which to make answer. Meanwhile the site of the Yoshida Goten in the Banchō became more than suspected. Jack-o-lanterns, the ghosts of the victims of the *himégimi*, came forth from the old well to haunt and frighten passers-by. Nor were subsequent attempts to use it encouraging. Thus the ground lay idle and uncalled for, with no one to occupy it until the grant of a large tract in Dosanbashi as site for the *yashiki* of Matsudaira Higo no Kami compelled removal of several of the *hatamoto*. Among these were Ōkubo Hikoroku and Aoyama Shūzen.^[14]

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CHAPTER XIII

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THE SEN-HIMÉGIMI (Princess Sen)

The Sen-*himégimi*, eldest daughter of Hidétada the second Shōgun, figures little in our story; enough so, however, to necessitate the telling of one of the not least striking episodes in a life full of event. Married at the mature age of six years to the Udaijin Hidéyori, son of the Taikō Hidéyoshi and lord of Ōsaka castle, those childish years were the happiest of that period. Clouds were rising between Toyotomi and Tokugawa as the princess approached nubile years. On her the Yodogimi, mother of the Udaijin, visited the more personal effects of her resentment. For the growing girl it was a period of tears and affliction. In truth she well knew the weight of her mother-in-law's hand. So wretched was her life that there was some fear of her killing herself. A powerful influence in screening her in these later years was that of the famous Kimura Nagato no Kami. Shigenari and his wife Aoyagi were the guides and friends of the *himégimi* during this trying period; her councillors to forestall cause of the Yodogimi's wrath. Moreover the pleasant relations between the young husband and wife were an incentive to bear a burden patiently, which time might remove. Nevertheless the Yodogimi was inexorable. The night screens were set up in different chambers. When the Sen-himégimi made her escape from Ōsaka castle she was sixteen years old, and in all likelihood a virgin.

As to the stories of her escape from the besieged castle, then in the very throes of the final

vigorous and successful assault by the three hundred thousand men surrounding it, these vary. According to one account Iyeyasu Kō, brows knit with anxiety as he watched his men pressing to the attack, thumped his saddle bow as vigorously as waning years now permitted—"The Senhimé to wife, to him who brings her safe from the castle!" Not a man in his train moved. They looked at the blazing mass before them, the flying missiles—and staid where they were. Then came forward a Tozama *daimyō*, Sakasaki Dewa no Kami Takachika.^[15] Prostrating himself he announced his purpose to make the attempt. Making his way into the blazing pile of the burning castle he found the Senhimé amid her frightened maids. Wrapping her up carefully he took her in his arms, and with great regard for her person, and none for his own, he sought her rescue. The last chance was through the blazing mass of the great gate. Just as he was about to clear it, down came the tottering superincumbent structure almost on their heads. The red hot tiles, the sparks like a fiery deluge, the blazing fragments of wood carried and tossed by the air currents, surrounded them as in a furnace. Nearly all the train perished in the attempt. Dewa no Kami succeeded in presenting himself before the Ōgoshō (Iyeyasu). Even the old captain could but turn with pity from the hideously disfigured man. The Senhimé in all her beauty was saved. Bitter was her resentment against all—father, grandfather, their partisans—who had refused the gift of life to the young husband. Rescue or no rescue, she absolutely refused to carry out the agreement and become the wife of this—mask.

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Other tales are less romantic. The most prosaic sends Dewa no Kami to Kyōto, on orders of Hidétada Kō. For the princess a second bed was to be found among the Sekké (the five great *kugé* Houses of the imperial court). The mission was not unsuccessful, but by the time the messenger returned Hidétada had changed his mind.^[16] Brusquely he offered her to Dewa no Kami. The Senhimé got wind of these movements. Her resentment toward the Tokugawa House determined her hostile stand. She would not be an instrument to their advancement. Family relations were taken very seriously. It is to be remembered that her uncle Hidéyasu, adopted into the Toyotomi, was so fiercely loyal to that House that his natural father, the Ōgoshō Iyeyasu, poisoned him, by his own hand and a gift of cakes, it is said. Those likely to hitch and hamper the movement against Ōsaka, such as the famous Katō Kiyomasa, found short shrift in the soup bowl. At all events the insult of refusal fell on Dewa no Kami. After all, by the most authentic tale, he seems to have deserved no particular credit. As to the actual escape from Ōsaka-Jō either of the following versions can be accepted. As suicide was the inevitable issue for the defeated, the Yodogimi, with some reluctance, had announced her purpose; and her intent to involve the *himégimi* in the fate of herself and son. This was but the ethics of the time; and was neither cruel nor unusual. It was thoroughly constitutional. Fortunately the fears of the Lady Dowager made her add—"the time is not yet propitious." She left the keep, intending to ascertain in person how matters went on outside, before going on with the ceremony inside. The maids of the Senhimé at once surrounded her and urged flight. Overpowering any resistance, moral and physical, these energetic *samurai* women bundled their mistress well into *futon* (quilts). Then with no particular gentleness they lowered her over the castle wall. Others followed her—to destruction or better luck, without *futon*. Some twenty of them risked the descent. Horiuchi Mondō, a gentleman of Kishū Kumano, noticed the unusual group. They besought an aid for the princess he readily gave. Dewa no Kami happened to come on the scene, and promptly took the responsibility of the safety of the princess on his own shoulders.

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Here the two versions join, for by the other Ono Shuri, captain of the defense and hence most seriously involved, sought the safety of his own daughter. The princess therefore was sent from the castle, under the care of his *karō* Yonemura Gonémon, to plead for the lives of the Udaijin and his mother the Yodogimi. Ono was careful to include his daughter in the train, and the *karō* followed his illustrious example. Dewa no Kami met the party outside the castle, and grasped the chance of being agreeable by escorting it to the camp of the Ōgoshō. Honda Sado no Kami here was in charge. His mission to the grandfather was eminently successful. Iyeyasu, overjoyed at the escape of the beloved grandchild, consented; provided that of the actual Shōgun be obtained. All rejoiced, with little thought of Hidétada's harsh feeling. Perhaps the message expressed this; perhaps it was spoken to cover refusal, for he had deep affection for his children. But as in greatest wrath he made answer—"The thing is not to be spoken of. Why did she not die together with Hidéyori?" The Senhimé was safe enough now in his camp; and he did not purpose the escape of his rival Hidéyori, to be a permanent danger to his House. The princess, worn out by many days of suffering, went to sleep in the shed which furnished her with quarters, and never woke until high noon on the following day. By that time she could choose between the tales of her husband's escape to Satsuma; or his suicide and her widowhood, the only proof of which was the finding of the hereditary sword of the Toyotomi House. She clung to the former story, despite the ascertained suicide of the Yodogimi, who hardly would have allowed the escape of the son and her own destruction. Thus disgruntled, later the *himégimi* was removed to Kyōto, fiercely hostile to all the Kwantō influence.

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A word in conclusion as to the fate of the attendants, thus skilfully foisted on her. The daughter of Ono Shuri had escaped, with all the sufferings and passions aroused by family disaster. When subsequently the princess was removed to Edo she went in her train. They were companions in misfortune. In the hostile atmosphere she was taken with a consumption, long to undergo its torments. Overcome by homesickness she would return to former scenes, and worship at her father's grave. Permission was now granted. Yonémura accompanied the dying girl to the capital. Here Ono Shuri had lost his head in the bed of the Kamogawa (the execution ground). Here at Kyōto the daughter found her tortured end. Gloomy the old vassal prepared the funeral pyre of his mistress. As the flames shot high and wrapped the corpse, a woman's figure darted forward

and sprang into the midst. Unable to distinguish the bones of his daughter from those of the honoured mistress, Gonémon placed the remains of both within the same casket, to rest at the last beneath the pines and cedars of the holy mountain of Kōya.

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On June 4th (1615) the castle had fallen. The date is important in connection with one of the current scandals. Later the Senhimé was escorted down to Edo by Honda Mino no Kami Tadamasu, in whose train was his handsome son Tōnosuké (Tadatoki). He is said to have been like enough in appearance to the Udaijin Hidéyori to act as his substitute in the most intimate sense. The fierce little lady fell violently in love with him. By the time Edo was reached she ought to have married Honda, and in the passage of the months and days would have to. At all events this rather disproportionate marriage was early proposed to the council of the Bakufu, and after some discussion accepted. This decision was not reached until Genwa 2nd year 9th month (October 1616), or more than a full year after the fall of the castle. The failure to carry out the agreement with Dewa no Kami afforded ample reason for the extremity to which this latter's rage was carried. By all accounts he had lost a bride, the acknowledged beauty of the land, apart from the great influence of the connection. Perhaps his own hideous disfigurement was involved. He determined to lie in wait for the journey down to Himeji, Honda's fief; and kill or carry off the lady. The Shōgun's Government got wind of the purpose. The lords were storming with wrath, and a public fracas was feared. All composition had been refused. Dewa refused to see his friend Yagyū Munénori, sent to him as messenger of greatest influence. Secret orders then were sent that Dewa no Kami must be induced to cut belly, or—his vassals ought to send his head to Edo. The Shōgun's word and bond must be saved. The vassals knew their lord, and had not loyalty enough to act otherwise than to sever his head, as he lay sleeping off a drunken fit in broad daylight. It was against rewarding this disloyal act that Honda Masazumi showed open opposition to the council's decision; and Hidétada Kō himself disapproved enough not to inflict extinction (*kaieki*) on the family of the dead lord, the usual process. The continuance of the succession was permitted on the Shōgun's order. All these matters were so public that little credit is to be given to the rôle assigned to Sakasaki Dewa no Kami in the event about to be described; the issue of which was so unfortunate in the carrying out, that Sakasaki, in command of the bridal cortege and keenly feeling the disgrace, cut open his belly in expiation; and that the Government, to hush up talk as to attack on the train of the princess, put forward as explanation the proposed treachery and resultant death of Dewa no Kami.

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As to the event itself: with greatest reluctance, uncertain as to her former husband's fate, the Senhimé had been forced into agreement with the Honda marriage. From the Nishimaru (western) palace the bridal cortege took its way to the *yashiki* of Honda near the Hitotsubashi Gomon. Time was at a discount in those days, and by no means was the shortest route to anything taken. The procession filed out of the Sakurada Gomon, to circle with its pompous glitter the outer moat. All went very well. The *yashiki* walls bordering Tayasumura were slipping by. Then the steadily accumulating clouds poured forth their contents. It was a downpour, blinding in effect. The *rokushaku* of the Kurokwagumi—stout and tall palanquin bearers, "six footers"—floundered and staggered in the mud. The heavy palanquin came to the ground. Great was the rage of the princess at this unseemly precedent for such an occasion. "Rude ruffians! By this very hand this scum shall die!" *Te-uchi* was to be the lot of the miserable fellows prostrate in obeisance and seeking pardon in the blinding storm from the lady's dagger, menacing them from the open door of the palanquin. The Lady of Ōsaka was quite capable of carrying out her threat. Abé Shirōgorō, later the famous Bungo no Kami, was equal to the occasion. With soft words he would soothe her. "Congratulations to the *Himégimi*! May her highness deign to accept the so happy augury of present ill luck bringing good fortune throughout a long and happy life. Deign to regard with future favour the words of Shirōgorō." He got as near the mud as he dared in his respectful salutation. The lady's face softened. She was appeased.

Then she held up the hand, with the dagger still ready for action. Shirōgorō sprang to his feet. Something else than storm was in progress. In the escort ahead there were other sounds than the rumbling and sharp crash of the thunder, the swishing of rain wind driven. The flashes of lightning showed that the cortege was the object of a most determined attack, which sought to make its way to the palanquin of the princess. Abé Shirōgorō would have leaped forward, but the flashing eyes and presence of the *himégimi* held him to her nearer defence. The number of the assailants could not be ascertained in this darkness like to night.^[17] The tower of defence was Yagyū Tajima no Kami, greatest master of the sword in Nippon. He had the support of the younger Ōkubo, of Kondō Noborinosuké, of Mizuno Jurōzaémon even then noted as expert with the spear. In general command was the beloved superintendent of the *hatamoto*, Ōkubo Hikozaémon. In daylight the affair would have been easy. But in this darkness they had to stand to their defence. That it was an attack by Ōsaka *rōnin*, enraged at the marriage of the princess, there was no doubt. But what their numbers? So far the defense was impregnable. There was nothing to fear. Three of the leaders of the *rōnin* lay on the ground. Their chief, visible in the lightning flashes, could not hope for success. It was the old and still active Hikozaémon, the *oyaji* (old chap), the hardened warrior of Iyeyasu, who scented out the threatening move. He sprang off into the dark wood, almost as the crack of the musket was heard. They would seek the life of the *himégimi* with deadly missiles! How contemptible; for great as yet was the scorn of such use. Vigorous was the old man's pursuit of a foe, seeking to ascertain his success and reluctant to flee. "Ah! Ah! Rascal! Just wait! Wait for this Hikozaémon!" The fellow did wait, a little too long. Noting the lessening darkness, the discomfiture of his train, he turned to flee in real earnest. As he did so, Hikozaémon, despairing of success, hurled his dirk. Deep into the fellow's shoulder it went. "Atsu!" Savagely he turned on the old man. Hikozaémon was skilled in defence, but

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stiffening with age. His opponent showed himself an able warrior. "Ah! Ha! 'Tis Hikozaémon Dono. With him there is no quarrel. Deign to receive a wound." The old fellow's sword dropped helpless under a sharp rap over the wrist from the back of the blade. This was enough for the man's purpose. With laughing and respectful salutation, of short duration, he turned to a more successful flight.

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The storm cleared away, the cortege was re-formed; to enter in state the *yashiki* of Honda Sama. It was said that he got but a cold bride—one on whom only "the bed quilt lay light." Time, the ascertained fact of Hidéyori's death, worked a change in the insanity simulated by the princess. Then she was so taken with her lord that she proved fatal to him. He died at the age of thirty-one years, was buried in his castle town of Himeji, leaving but one daughter as issue by the princess. The lady returned to residence at the Takébashî Goten, to be a disgruntling influence in her brother's court. But Honda Ke had not done badly. This consort made him a minister in the Shōgun's household (Nakatsukasa no Tayu), a more likely promotion than one at the age of sixteen years, at this date of the Shōgunate. From 10,000 *koku* his fief was raised to 150,000 *koku*; and he secured a wife so beautiful that his exodus to the houris of Paradise was a bad exchange. Meanwhile what was the cause of objection, thus expressed by force of arms, to the conduct and nuptials of the Sen-himégimi?

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CHAPTER XIV

SHŪZEN ADOLESCENS

The struggle between Toyotomi and Tokugawa was of that embittered character which follows from two diverse theories of political structure. The Taikō Hidéyoshi, by force of military genius and constructive statesmanship, had assumed the pre-eminent position in the land. In doing so he had drawn to himself a sturdy band of followers whose whole faith and devotion lay in the Toyotomi. Such were the "seven captains," so conspicuous in the defence of Ōsaka-Jō in later years. Such were the doughty fighters Susukita Kanéyasu (Iwami Jūtarō) and Ban Danémon. The latter unceremoniously shook off allegiance to his lord on the latter's treachery at Sekigahara, and turned *rōnin*. Such were great recalcitrant nobles thumped into complete submission, granted unexpected and favourable terms in their capitulation, devoted henceforth to the Toyotomi House, and of whom the Chōsōkabé of Tosa are representative. It is the fashion of modern historians to regard and speak of these brave men as irreconcilables and swashbucklers; thus tamely following after the Tokugawa writers of contemporary times, and imperialistic writers of to-day, to whom all opposition to the favoured "Ins" is high treason. As matter of fact, if men like the Ono were lukewarm and seeking their own advantage; if Obata Kambei Kagemori was a mere traitorous spy of the Tokugawa; Sanada Yukimura and Kimura Nagato no Kami, and in humbler sense Susukita Kanéyasu and Ban Danémon, if they had much to gain by the victory of their lord, yet were willing to endure hardship, face a defeat early seen, and accept the inevitable death which was meted out to him who refused the attempts at bribery and corruption of the victor. The "*rōnin*," of whom the then Tokugawa chronicles and captains spoke so contemptuously, were in the bulk not only "the outs," as opposed to "the ins," but they were too devoted to their party tamely to accept service with the enemy. Large were the bribes actually offered to Sanada and Kimura; and any or all of the seven captains could have made terms of advantage—to themselves.

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"The scent of the plum, with the flower of the cherry;
Blooming on branch of willow 'tis seen."^[18]

Iyemitsu Kō hung this poem on the flowering plum tree to which he gave the name of Kimura no Ume; a conscious tribute to the chivalry of Shigénari. And Ōkubo Hikozaémon risked life and favour in the destruction of the plant, and rebuke of the bad taste shown to men who had lost fathers, brothers, gone down before the deadly spear of the young captain.

The fall of Ōsaka-Jō decided the fate of the Toyotomi House. Not at once, for the rumour of the Udaijin's escape to Kyūshū kept alive hopeful resentment in the minds of the scattered *samurai* whose captains had perished in the battles around Ōsaka, had died or cut belly in the final assault, or had lost their heads by the executioner's sword in the bed of the Kamogawa. Among those who found refuge in the hills of Iga was a certain Ogita Kurōji; a retainer of Nagato no Kami. This man gathered a band of kindred spirits, among whom his favoured lieutenant was Mōri Munéoki, although he much leaned to the astonishing acumen of Kosaka Jinnai, a mere boy in years, but hiding in his short and sturdy form a toughness and agility, with expertness in all feats of arms, which discomfited would be antagonists. In the discussions as to future movements there was wide difference of opinion. Munéoki, the true partisan, proposed to rejoin Hidéyori in Satsuma. "The prince is now harboured by Higo no Kami; Shimazu Dono of Satsuma, close at hand, will never permit the entrance of the Tokugawa into his borders. It is at Kagoshima-Jō that the prince will reorganize his party; and thither duty calls." But Kosaka Jinnai was equally positive in the opposite sense. He turned Munéoki's own argument against the proposal. The prince could well be left to organize the West. It was for others to see how affairs went in the North. Therefore the first thing was to hasten to Edo, to ascertain the position of Daté Masamuné and the great northern lords at this final triumph of the Tokugawa, when at last their jealousy

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and fear might be aroused to opposition.

Adventurous inclination, the desire to meet rather than run away from the enemy, turned the scale to Edo. Reluctantly Munéoki agreed. With Jinnai he proceeded, to learn the state of affairs as to the great northern House, so devoted to the new creed of Yaso (Jesus) as certain to be angry and alarmed at the savage persecution now entered on by the second Shōgun. They returned to meet Ogita and the other captains at Odawara, and with unpleasant news. Masamuné Kō, luckily for his would be interviewers, was absent at Sendai. However there was no difficulty in finding out that far from dreaming of further embassies to Rome from the Prince of Ōshū, he had and was acting so vigorously that probably in no quarter of Nippon was the hostile and treacherous creed so thoroughly stamped out. The watch and ward of the north country was practically left to a loyalty of which the Tokugawa felt assured. Munéoki made this report with bitter joy, and Jinnai could not say him nay. Then the former carried out his first plan. He made his way to Kyūshū, to learn the truth as to the Udaijin's fate. Assured of this he harboured with the malcontents of Higo and Hizen, to take his part and perish some years later in the Amakusa uprising.

Perhaps the tartness of Mori's criticism made his company unacceptable. Ogita preferred to follow the urging of Jinnai and his own inclination to observe how matters were going in Edo. Most of the company followed him, to establish themselves as best they could in the confusion of the growing town, rendered a thousand times worse by the settlement of the later troubles and the flocking of all classes to this eastern capital. Ogita set up as a doctor in Daikuchō (carpenters' street) of the Nihonbashi ward, under the name of Gita Kyūan. His chief lieutenant, Jinnai, settled close to his leader in Kurémasachō, figuring as a physiognomist, of near enough relation to excite no comment in the companionship with the older man. His own years were disguised by an ample growth of hair and the past experience of an accomplished rascal. Jinnai could have passed himself off for a man of thirty odd years. The house of a physiognomist was overrun with visitors, whom Jinnai knew how to sift, and who had no particular wish to encounter each other. Hence the presence of the leaders, with his own particular followers, Watanabé Mondo, Ashizuké Tōsuké, Yokoyama Daizō, Hyūchi Tōgorō, excited no comment among the neighbours. The question of the marriage of the Senhimé, the honoured widow of the Udaijin Kō, soon was stirring up a ferment in higher circles than these in Edo town. Sakai Uta no Kami and Doi Oi no Kami of the *rōjū* (council of state) were keen to urge the match. She was young, and they plead the cruelty of forcing celibacy on her. She was the centre of the ill disposed and most willingly so. The stern old soldier Aoyama Hoki no Kami took the opposite ground. It was for her to cut short her hair and pray for the soul of the husband perished in the flames of Ōsaka-Jō. Such was the precedent, and, he hinted with good ground, the disposition of the princess, then coquetting with Toshitsuné lord of the great Maéda House of Kaga. Besides he knew that Kasuga no Tsuboné, powerful influence in the private apartments of the palace, was urging on the match. The mere fact of her constant interference in the public affairs irritated Hoki no Kami beyond measure. He was acting through sentiment and conservatism. Kasuga and her allies were acting on political motives. They carried the day; to the great indignation of Hoki no Kami, and of an assistance he never dreamed of.

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Among the band of *rōnin* the matter was discussed with all the greater heat and bitterness of purpose, inasmuch as they had to do so mouth to ear. Ogita expressed their feeling when he summed up the matter as an outrageous breach of chastity on the part of a princess, who could not positively know whether the husband was yet living, or really had died at Ōsaka—"Hence she is doubly guilty, of treachery and pollution of her living lord; or of shameful lechery in this open neglect of his memory and seeking another bed. Moreover to put her to death will strike terror into the partisans of the Tokugawa, and give courage to all the adherents of the cause, of whom thousands are gathered here in Edo. A display of vigour will maintain those inclined to the new service true to the cause." All rapturously agreed. The occasion of the marriage and procession was settled upon for the attack, in which the leaders and some eighty men were engaged. The result, as told, was disastrous to them. Watanabe and Ashizuké were killed by Tajima no Kami's own hand. Kondō Noborinosuké thrust his spear through the belly of Yokoyama Daizō. Jinnai brought off in safety the bulk of the party. Ogita had tried to bring down the lady princess by a gun shot. In the straggle with Hikōzaémon he purposely did the old man as little injury as possible. Respect for the grand old warrior, an amused interest in one whose influence lay in plain speaking, held his hand. If Ōkubo Dono was entitled freely to express his opinion of the Shōgun Ke, Kurōji took it as no insult to endure the same himself. He reached his home with a painful but not dangerous wound in the shoulder, to grunt over the infliction and this latest discomfiture.

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His nurse was not at all to the taste of Kosaka Jinnai. O'Yoshi was a bare twenty-three years in age. She was a beauty and a flirt. Ogita indulged in the greatest expansion with her; as would the man of fifty years to the girl, a mistress young enough to be a daughter. The months and weeks passed following the attempt on the Senhimé. The effort to hunt out the perpetrators had been given up in despair. The population of Edo as yet was too fluid and shifting to take very exact account of its movements. Doubtless they were *rōnin*, and had promptly scattered on failure of the attack. Then the constant attempts at incendiarism, in many cases successful, began to attract attention. The two *machibugyō*, together with the particular office for detection of thieves and incendiaries, were at their wits end to trace out this gang of fire bugs. One day O'Yoshi was just leaving the bath house in Daikuchō called the Chōsenya, when she met with an adventure. A young *samurai* coming along the street attracted her admiring attention. He was barely twenty years of age, of good height and commanding presence. In black garb and wearing *hakama*, his

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two swords tucked in his girdle, and his cue trimmed high, attended by a *dōshin* and several *yakunin*, the procession greatly flattered a woman's feeling. She tripped along, towel in hand, and her eyes anywhere but on her footing. Suddenly the strap of her clog broke. She was pitched forward, just able to keep her balance. The *samurai* trod sharply on the discarded *geta*. A cry of pain followed, and O'Yoshi was all discomfiture at sight of the blood staining the white *tabi* of the young lord. At once she was humble apology for her awkwardness, very badly received by the *dōshin* who scolded her most severely—"Careless wench! Such rudeness is not to be pardoned." He would have laid rough hands on her, but Aoyama Shūzen interfered. The woman was pretty, the injury painful, and he was young. "Don't scold her. It was by accident.... Don't be alarmed.... Ah! It hurts!..." He looked around, as seeking a place to rest.

O'Yoshi was very solicitous over the handsome young man. "Deign to pardon the careless action. Alas! The foot of the young master is sadly injured. My husband is a doctor, Gita Kyūan, of wondrous skill in the Dutch practice. Condescend to enter the poor house close by here, and allow drugs to be applied to the wound." Shūzen really was suffering inconvenience and pain from his wound. Besides, as attached to the office of the *machibugyō*, he sought all means of contact with the class whose offences were to be dealt with. He at once agreed. Ogita was absent when they entered. O'Yoshi tended the wound herself. The salve really had wonderful effect. Flow of blood and pain ceased. Cakes and tea, for refreshment, were placed before Shūzen. O'Yoshi entertained him with amusing talk of the wardsmen of Nihonbashi, not the most stupid in Nippon. She retailed the bath house gossip, and Aoyama carefully took in costume, manners, and the conversation of the beauty, which did not at all accord with her station in life. If she was connected with a doctor now, at some time she had been intimate with men of affairs in his own caste. He thanked her graciously and would have forced lavish payment on her. O'Yoshi was all pained surprise and refusal. That her reluctance was genuine he could easily see. "I am Aoyama Shūzen, and live in the *yashiki* at Surugadai. The kindness shown is not to be forgotten, and perhaps some day this Shūzen can serve his hostess." With compliments he took his leave. O'Yoshi watched the handsome youth well out of sight. She could not hear the remark of Shūzen to the *dōshin*—"A suspicious house; no frowsy doctor shows such favour to his dame. Dress, manners, language, betray contact with the *samurai*." The officer nodded admiring assent to his young lord's acumen.

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Ogita Kurōji came limping home, to find O'Yoshi—Chōsenburō Yoshi, as this adventure dubbed her—overflowing with her experience. At first he was rather pleased at such addition to his acquaintance. O'Yoshi was a bait to all but Jinnai, who would detach him from her. The others sought his favour to secure hers with greater ease. At mention of the *dōshin*, subordinate officials of the legal machinery, the official grade of the visitor, his brows knit. "Of official rank—that will never do! Deign Yoshi to be careful in relations with this man, if he should again appear. Engaged as is this Kurōji, the slightest hint, a suspicion, would be most disastrous."—"Then the affair of the Senhimégimi did not block matters? This Yoshi yet is to ride in palanquin, to be a *daimyō's* wife?" The tone was a little jeering, and she laugh as of one sceptical. With thoughts on this new love the reference to this futile scheming annoyed her. She would push this acquaintance to the full effect of her charms. Ogita took some offence. He spoke braggingly, but disastrously to the point—"Assuredly 'tis Yoshi who shall be the lady of a *daimyō* of high place, not of a meagre fifteen or twenty thousand *koku*. Kaga Ke, Maéda Toshitsuné, is grinding his sword. The great Houses in the west—Hosokawa, Bizen, Katō, Mōri, Satsuma, will follow him. Give them but the opportunity in the disorder of Edo, and the sword will be drawn. In a month, Edo, fired at a hundred points will lie in ashes. Then...." He stopped a little frightened. But she feigned the greatest indifference, teased him into opposition. Sitting down before the wine she got out of him the whole affair. Reverting to the accident—"But yourself, an accident has been deigned. Has another Yoshi encountered Kurōji Dono?" To the tender solicitude half laughing he made jesting answer. "A Yoshi with beard and wearing two swords. To-day the contract was signed by all with the blood seal. The wine feast followed. The talk was earnest, some of it rash. Interposing in the quarrel, the dagger intended for the belly of one, was sheathed in the thigh of this Kurōji. A trifling flesh wound; well in a day or two, at present rest is needed."—"A dangerous affair; if it gives rise so easily to dispute." Such her comment. "Not so," answered the infatuated veteran. "They are too far in to withdraw." Before her eyes he unrolled the scroll. Her eye quickly ran along the crowded columns of the names—by the score. Here was indeed a big affair. Out of the corner of one eye she watched him put it away.

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The salve Ogita Kurōji used for his wound had no such benefit as that offered Aoyama Shūzen; and perhaps O'Yoshi could have told the reason of its failure. By the next day the wound was inflamed enough to make movement difficult. Feeling the necessity of repair, Kurōji left all matters to his mistress, and sought early recuperation in complete rest. On plea of needed articles O'Yoshi was out of the house and on her hurried way to the Aoyama *yashiki* at Surugadai. The distance was short; yet her plan was already laid. Her dislike for the ageing Ogita was sharpened into hate by her love for the handsome young *samurai*. Close to the *yashiki* on pretext she entered the shop of a tradesman. To her delight she learned that the Waka Dono, Aoyama Shūzen, as yet had no wife. She had a hundred yards to go, and her purpose and ambition had expanded widely in that short distance. Her application for an interview with his lordship was quickly granted. She had often been subject of talk and comment between Shūzen and his subordinate officer. The *dōshin* happened to be present, and the attendant announced her at once. Passed to the inner apartment she found Shūzen as if he had been eagerly awaiting her coming for hours. Her reception was flattering. The ordinary salutations over they passed to most familiar talk, as of oldest friends between man and woman. When Shūzen would go further, and in love making press still greater intimacy, her refusal was of that kind which sought compliance.

Said she with a smile—"Make Yoshi the wife of the Waka Dono and she will make the fortune even of one so highly placed as Aoyama Dono." To his incredulity and astonishment she would say no more. Shūzen now was determined not to let her go. He feigned consent, agreement to everything, with much regard for her, and small regard for the promotion at which he jested. Now they were in the very height of love. She resented his scepticism, and in the heat of her passion gave him everything—including the contract. His mistress by his side, seated in the confidence of an accomplished love affair he listened to her stream of revelation. This "doctor" and "husband" was neither doctor nor husband. His name was Ogita Kurōji, an Ōsaka *rōnin*. With Kosaka Jinnai and others of the same kidney he had been the head and front of the attempted rape of the Senhimé. Shūzen knew enough to discount all the talk as to Maéda Kō, of the Hosokawa, and other great Houses. They were beyond his sphere. But here in his hands lay the web of a most important affair; so important that it frightened him a little. As his brows knit O'Yoshi too grew a little frightened; regretted that she had told so much all at once. She had babbled beyond measure in her transport. She had misgivings. Shūzen reassured her. For her to return to Daikuchō would never do. A breath of suspicion, and Ogita's sword would deprive him of his mistress. Safe quarters were to be found in the *yashiki*. He called the *dōshin*, one Makishima Gombei, and put her in his charge. The two men exchanged glances as she was led away.

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The office of the south *machibugyō* was in a ferment when Aoyama made his report. All available *yakunin* were at once gathered. The list was carefully gone over with the minister for the month, Hoki no Kami. Despatched on their various missions the squads departed. To Shūzen was assigned the capture of Ogita Kurōji, leader of the conspiracy. This latter was chafing at the prolonged absence of O'Yoshi. Some accident must have happened to her. Then he remembered. She had gone to Hachōbori. Here lived a sister, whose delivery was daily expected. Doubtless this commonplace event, yet surpassing in interest to every woman, detained her. A confusion outside attracted his attention. There was a crowd, and some disturbance. Hatsu! The people were being kept back by *yakunin*. "The thoughts of Kurōji were those of the wicked." At once he attributed their presence to himself. A look out at the rear and he quickly shot to the wooden bar. Between the bamboo of the fence men could be seen passing to and fro in numbers; and they were *yakunin*. He had been betrayed. The counsel of Jinnai came to mind, and he ground his teeth as he stood with drawn sword before the empty drawer of the cabinet. The scarlet of the *obi* of his false mistress flashed before his eyes. He had to die unavenged. "On his lordship's business! On his lordship's business!" The harsh voices sounded at the front. Those who would enter uninvited found themselves face to face in the narrow space with the old Kurōji, the man who had fought from Sagami to Tosa, from Chōsen to Kyūshū. The more incautious fell severed with a cut from shoulder to pap. A second man put his hand to his side, and rolled over to breathe his last in a pool of blood. Visions of "Go-ban" Tadanobu came to mind. Kurōji would die, but he would leave his mark on the foe. Shūzen's men could make no progress, except to swell the death roll or their wounds. In rage their lord sprang to the encounter. Shūzen was young, but it is doubtful if the issue would have been successful with this man turned demon by the double injury and treachery. But Ogita amid this horde of assailants had suffered in his turn. In a parry his sword broke off short near the hilt. With a yell he sprang to close quarters, dealing Shūzen a blow with the hilt that sent him reeling senseless to the ground. Then, unable to accomplish more, and taking advantage of the respite caused by the rescue of his foe, he sprang to the ladder leading above. Once on the roof he saw that escape was hopeless. Already they were breaking into the rear. Men were approaching over the neighbouring houses. In the old style of ages past he waved them back with drawn dagger. There was no Shūzen to give command—"Take him alive!" They were only too glad to halt and let him do his will. Stripping to his girdle, before the assembled crowd he thrust his dagger into his left side and drew it across his belly. Then he made the cross cut through the navel. "Splendid fellow! A true *bushi*!" Admiring voices rose in the crowd. The body of Kurōji fell forward and down into the street. Thus he died.

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This affair had ended in a way to redound greatly to the credit of Aoyama Shūzen. Others had not been so successful. Of nearly two hundred names only eighteen prisoners were secured. Shūzen stamped with impatience on learning of the escape of Kosaka Jinnai. He had learned much about him from the hate of O'Yoshi. "That man is the real leader of the band, the inspiration of Ogita Kurōji. Ah! Why could not this Shūzen be in two places at once!" Older officials bowed low, and smiled to themselves and each other at youth's self confidence. O'Yoshi now found short entertainment. Shūzen had no further use for the woman, for the means of his promotion. One day a *chūgen* led her to the postern gate of the *yashiki*, put a paper containing a silver *ryō* in her hand, and unceremoniously shoved her into the roadway. The gate closed behind her. At first she hardly comprehended the meaning of this treatment. Then, as it filtered into her mind, her rage passed all measure. "Ah! The beast and liar! Yoshi was not fit to be the wife; nay, not even the female companion of this arrogant lord?" She had been juggled out of the secret of such value to him, then cast forth with the wages of a prostitute summoned to the *yashiki*. The woman was helpless. Broken in spirit she dragged herself off, to undergo a severe illness brought on by despite. Her foul rôle ascertained, friends and family would have nothing to do with her. Once recovered, she found herself deprived of all means of subsistence, even that of beauty, by her disease. Never more would she deal with the noble class, to be left with such a legacy. She would pray for the salvation of the man she had betrayed. On her way to the Asakusa Kwannon she passed the jail, then near the Torigoébashī. Stumbling along just here she raised her head, to confront the long line of rotting heads there set forth. Just facing her was that of her ex-lover Ogita Kurōji. It took on life. The eyes opened and glared fierce hate. The lips moved, and the teeth ground together. Then the other heads made measured movements. "Atsu!" With the cry

she fell fainting to the ground, and it was difficult to restore her to consciousness. For several years the half crazed beggar woman sought alms near the jail, to act as guide and comment on the fresh heads exposed, until as nuisance she was driven off by the guard. Then the shameful swollen corruption of the body was drawn from the canal close by; thus to end on the refuse heap the treachery of Chōsenburo no O'Yoshi.

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CHAPTER XV

THE GOD FAVOURS SHŪZEN

The influence of a House close to the person of the Shōgun was no drawback to the close attention Aoyama Shūzen gave to official duty throughout his career. The Aoyama stood high in the council of the governing power. Even an old blunderbuss like Hoki no Kami could not shake this influence. When Yukinari tore the mirror from the hands of the young Shōgun Iyemitsu Kō, berated him roundly for effeminacy, and dashed the offending object to pieces on the stones of the garden, this wanton treatment of the prince could not be overlooked. "Invited" to cut belly by his intimates and opponents in the council (*rōjū*) he defied them, laid hand to sword, and swore they should join him in a "dog's death." The timely entrance of Ōkubo Hikozaémon prevented the unseemly spectacle of three old soldiers and statesmen enjoying the fierce and deadly pastime of one of the duels of Keichō (1596-1614). Hoki no Kami in his own way was right—and knew it; and he had the tacit approval of Hidétada Kō. The result was not *harakiri*, but the offending noble was consigned to the care of his brother. He and his were "extinguished"; for the time being, and to the greater glory of his other relatives near the Shōgun's person. Such was the rough discipline in Hidétada's camp of Edo. The second Shōgun, now retired (Ōgoshō—*inkyō*), never lost the manners or the methods of the battle field.

The career of Aoyama Shūzen therefore was a steady rise in the Government service; in younger years attached to the immediate train of the prince, in greater maturity to the enforcement of the edicts through the legal machinery of the Bakufu. At this time he ruffled it bravely with the other young blades. The younger *hatamoto* on their part opposed to the *otokodaté* of the townsmen the far more splendid *jingumi* or divine bands. Yamanaka Gonzaémon knocked out several front teeth and inserted in their places gold ones. Hence the rise of the *Kingumi* or Gold Band. Aoyama Shūzen did likewise with substitution of silver. Hence the *Gingumi*. They were all of the Mikawa *bushi*; that is, drawn from the native province and closely affiliated to the Tokugawa House. Hence these *hatamoto* carried themselves high even against the greater *daimyō*, sure of support from their over-lord the Shōgun. As for the town, they did as they pleased, seeking quarrels, distributing blows, and only restrained by wholesome reprisals of *rōnin* or the *otokodaté* of the townsmen, who in turn relied on such *daimyō* as Daté Kō and Maéda Kō, valued allies of the Tokugawa House, yet showing no particular liking for the encroachments of the palace clique on their own privileges.

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The necessity of moving quarters was equally an embarrassment to Aoyama Shūzen and to his intimate and neighbour Ōkubo Hikoroku. Ōkubo suggested Honjō—"The water lies close by. Hence in winter the place is warm, in summer cool."—"And of mosquitoes swarms," interjected the practical Aoyama. "If the hillside be cold, it surely is no drawback to Hikoroku Uji." The one named made something of a wry face, and Aoyama smiled apart. He knew that Hikoroku was not so affectioned to the meetings of the Gaman Kwai as himself. However, smoothly—"This matter of the Yoshida Goten coming up offers fair opportunity. The failure of Endō Uji need not discourage Ōkubo Dono and this Aoyama." Both smiled a little. They could put palace influences better to work. "It is two thousand *tsubo*," said Shūzen. "Just the thing; moreover, it is close to palace duty. On this point Honjō is not in the running. Besides, the site has its own attraction. Of course Shūzen takes the well, in the division." Ōkubo interposed a lively objection, the shallowness of which Shūzen could detect. He humoured his friend's obstinacy. "Leave it to the lots." In haste the slips were prepared—"Hachiman, god of the bow and feathered shaft, grant your divine aid and bestow the old well ghost haunted on this Aoyama." Ōkubo laughed at his earnestness. "Aoyama Uji leaves this Ōkubo no resort but in the Buddha. Good fortune to Ōkubo, and may the will of the Lord Buddha be done.... Naruhodo! 'Tis yours after all. The shaft of the war god is stronger than the Buddha's staff." He took his disappointment so well as to be the more urgent in securing the transfer. This was granted, with expenses of removal.

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Aoyama Shūzen superintended in person the preparation of his new residence. This was soon in readiness as little was to be done. Ōkubo took cash and construction. The former villa, fallen to Shūzen's part, needed mainly air and light, and repairs to its rotten woodwork. When it was time to think of the water supply Aoyama ordered the cleaning out of the old well. The workmen began to talk—"Tis the old well of the inner garden, the Yanagi-ido of the Yoshida Goten. Danna Sama, deign to order exorcism made, and that the well be filled up and covered from men's sight." The Danna laughed at them, and was obstinate in his purpose. He took upon himself all the wrath of the disturbed and angered spirits. He hoped that they would not furnish material for more. To hearten them, he and his men descended to the level of the water. With headshakes and misgivings the chief ordered his men to the task—"Pfu! It stinks of ghosts, or something. Surely there will be dead men's bones for harvest; and perhaps those of the living. The old well has not seen its last ill deed." As for the dead men's bones, the well refuse was laid aside, and on

Aoyama's order buried with no particular reverence in the bowels of the *tsukiyama* close by. "Let all the spirits of the place find company together," he jeered. The *yashiki* of Komiyasan in Honjō had its processions of marvels—dead men, frogs, *tanuki*, and fox—to shake its *amado* at night and divert the monotony of those who lived therein. The portentous foot perhaps he could not match, but he would share in this contest with ghostly visions. Chance had offered him the opportunity. All was prepared. Shūzen had established himself. Nightly with his camp stool he took his seat by the old well, to smoke his pipe and drink his wine—"Now! Out with you, ghosts! Here present is Aoyama Shūzen, *hatamoto* of the land. He would join in your revels. Deign to hasten.... What! The ghosts would rest this night?" Thus night after night passed with his jeering and no sign of the supernatural objects, not thus to be conjured. Time made the pastime stale—as stale as the waters of the Yanagi-ido which never furnished supply for the house or its tasks. Aoyama had the excuse of drinking wine. As for the household, the women would not even use the water for washing. They said it stunk too badly. In so far Shūzen failed.

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It was about the time of his entrance on this new possession that more good fortune came to Shūzen. He was made the magistrate whose office covered the detection and punishment of thieves and incendiaries. It showed the estimation in which he was held, and satisfied both the vanity and the hard cold temper of Aoyama Shūzen. Looking to results, more than method, the selection was most satisfactory; if return of the number of criminals was the index assumed. Until a method attracted unfavourable attention by some scandal, only results were regarded by the Bakufu. But his household could not regard with any easiness a devotion of his lordship to the wine cup, which turned his court into a wine feast. Up to this time Aoyama Shūzen in all official duty had shown himself hard, unbending, callous, conscientious. Now the element of cruelty appeared, to develop rapidly with exercise until it was the predominant tone. Some illustrations are to be given from events occurring in these first three years of Shōhō (1644-6).

Aoyama would show himself the strict disciplinarian. His chamberlain (*yōnin*) Aikawa Chūdayu close beside him, his *dōshin* seated at either hand, he gave his orders and rebuke to the assembled constables. He scowled at them. Then with voice harsh from the contents of the big wine cup beside him he commanded—"Diligence is to be expected of all. He who fails to make many arrests shows sloth or ill will to his lord. Anyone against whom there is the slightest suspicion, even if he or she be abroad late at night, is to be brought to the jail. No explanation is to be allowed. There must be many arrests. Examination in the court is to follow; and many crimes, discovered under the torture, will be brought to punishment.... Heigh! Call up that old fellow there.... Who? That Ryūsuké." At Shūzen's order Ryūsuké forthwith came close to the *rōka*. "You, fellow ... what manner of man to act as constable are you? Days pass without a single prisoner being brought in. This jade, found in the street at the hour of the rat (11 P.M.) pleads excuse of illness and the doctor. This lurking scoundrel, seeking to set half the town on fire, pleads drunkenness as keeping him abroad. Thus many of these villainous characters, whores and fire bugs, find field for their offenses. No more of such leniency. Failure to arrest means dismissal from the service and punishment as an ill-wisher. Oldest and most experienced, the greatest number of prisoners is to be expected at your hands. Shūzen shows mercy. Your age remits the punishment, but dismissal shall afford example to the rest as to the wisdom of showing energy." Thus he cast forth without pity an ageing officer whose only offense was an experience which sought the mission of the night straggler, and allowed the harmless to go free. Ryūsuké went forth from the office of the *bugyō* stripped of the means of living and of reputation, and assured of the unforgiving character of his lord. That night he cut belly, recommending his family to mercy. This was soon found—in debt and the debtor's slavery allowed by the harsh code. Thus was the jail kept full, with the innocent and a sprinkling of the guilty. No one dared to be lax; for life hung on salary, and on zeal the continuance of the salary. Moreover all revelled in the reward of the wine cup liberally bestowed for zealous service—and the more liberally as Shūzen took his turn with his big cup, every time he sent down the *saké* to his underling.

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In Bakurachō lived one Zeisuké, a poor but honest fellow who made his living by peddling the smaller kinds of fish and the salted varieties, for his trifling resources allowed no larger outlay for his trays. In this way with greatest difficulty he managed to support an old mother, a wife, a young child. Locally he was known as "Honest Zeisuké" for the not often found quality of representing the antiquity and character of his wares much as they were. When bad weather forbade the opening of the fish market, Zeisuké readily found some task at day labour by which a few *mon* could be secured, and for which his character for honest service recommended him. One night, when on his way homeward, he was passing the Asakusa Gomon just as the cry of fire was raised. Knowing the alarm of his aged mother Zeisuké at once bolted towards home. When all were running toward the fire this at once attracted attention. By the law it was the strict duty of the citizen to betake himself to his ward, and to be ready for service in preventing spread of the often disastrous conflagration. His action was noted by the ever present myrmidons of Shūzen. In a moment they were after him. Surrounded he was quickly caught. His explanation was not heard. "Say your say at the white sand, under the strokes of the *madaké*," was the rough answer. Thus he was dragged off to the jail.

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The next day Aoyama's first motion was to reward the captors with the wine cup. Harsh was the vinous scowl he cast on Zeisuké now cringing at the white sand. "Ha! Ah! A notable criminal; a firebug caught in the act, and attempting to escape. Make full confession. Thus much suffering is escaped, and the execution ground soon reached." Zeisuké had no confession to make, and to his explanation Aoyama turned a deaf ear. "Obstinacy is to be over-ruled." He made a sign. At once Zeisuké was seized. His head drawn downward two stout fellows now began to apply in rhythm the *madaké*—strips of bamboo to the thickness of an inch tightly wound together with hempen

cord, and making an exceedingly flexible and painful scourge. The blood quickly was spurting from his shoulders. Aoyama and his chamberlain sat enjoying the scene immensely. At the seventieth blow the peddler fainted. "A wicked knave! Off with him until restored." Then he settled himself for the day's pastime; for the torture had come to have the zest of an exhilarating sport. The cries of pain, the distortions of agony under the stones, or the lobster, or suspension, the noting of the curious changes of flesh colour and expression under these punishments, the ready assent to absurdly illogical questions, all this not only amused, but interested Shūzen. The naïveté and obstinacy of the fisherman was just of the kind to furnish the best material. The fellow was sturdy of frame, and under skilled hands readily submitted to this dalliance for days without bending from his truth.

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Meanwhile things went on very badly at the house in Bakurachō. The disaster of the arrest fell like a thunderbolt on the wretched little household. Day after day, hoping for the acquittal and release, one article after another went to the pawn shop. Reduced to absolute misery the house owner and the neighbours came to the rescue with a small sum raised among them. The long continued official suspicion affected even these toward the "Honest Zeisuké," and their support grew cold. Then came the news that Zeisuké had died in the jail under the torture. Tearless, aghast, deprived of all support, the wife and mother long looked in each other's faces. Said the old woman—"Alas! Alas! Neither gods nor the Buddha exist. Faithful and devoted was Zeisuké to this old mother. Unfortunate in his life, he has been equally unlucky in death. What now is to be done!" She put her sleeves over the old and wrinkled face, and bending low concealed tears and a long farewell to the beloved in the person of her grandchild.

The wife was in little better case, but had to soothe this grief. A few coins remained. She would buy the necessaries for the evening meal. "But a moment, honoured mother. The return is quick. 'Tis but for the needed meal." Taking the child on her back she started off into the darkness. For a moment she turned to look at the mother. The old woman was following her with eyes tear dimmed in the sunken hollows. Thus they parted. For a moment the wife halted on the bridge over the Edogawa. The dark slimy waters were a solution, but she put it aside in the face of a higher duty. Soon she was on her way back. To her surprise the house was in darkness. Surely a little oil was left in the bottom of the jar. She called, without getting an answer. In alarm she groped her way in the darkness, to stumble over the body of the old woman, lying limp and helpless. Something wet her hand. Now she was in all haste for a light. "Ah! Ah! The honoured mother! What has occurred? Has not ill fortune enough fallen upon the home of Zeisuké?" Alas! the hand was stained with blood. The old woman had intended the parting salute to be the last. Left alone she had bit off her tongue, and thus had died. Rigid, as one stupified, the wife sat; without tears, but thinking. Now she was left alone. But what as to the child? A girl too? Ah! There were enough of her sex in this hard world. She reached out a hand to the long triangular sharp blade close by. She touched edge and point of the *debabōchō* (kitchen knife) with the finger.

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Here was the solution. Rapidly she loosed the child and lowered it to the ground. It took but a moment to open the little dress and expose the breast. Then knife in hand she leaned over it. As she did so the child opened its eyes, smiled, then laughing began to finger her bosom seeking sustenance. The feelings of the mother came over the woman. She put aside the knife to give the babe the breast. Alas! Starvation afforded but scant milk. Failing its supply the child cried peevishly. This last stroke of poverty was too much. The original purpose came back in full sway. With quick motion she put the child beside her and held it firmly down. The sharp pointed knife was thrust clean through the little body. A whimpering cry, the spurting of the blood, and the face began to take on the waxen tint. With the same short energetic movements the mother now sought her own end. Guiding its course with the fingers the knife was now thrust deep into her own throat. Both hands on the heavy handle she tore it downward; then fell forward on the mats. The wardsmen made report.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE AFFAIR OF THE ASAKUSA KWANNON

Aoyama Shūzen stalked forward to his cushion near the *rōka*. Carefully adjusting his robes he scowled—most heavily; mainly at the almost boy crouched before him at the white sand. Expectant the *yakunin* stood by. Their leader stated the case against this outrageous criminal captured in the dead of night on the very steps of the Jizōdō, in the very shadow of the great temple of the Asakusa Kwannon. The sacred structure, object of his nefarious design guarded his slumbers; the healing Yakushi Nyōrai, Jizō the god of youth and childhood, casting stony glances of benevolence through the closed lattices. "A most hardened wretch, an evident firebug, and probable thief; at once make full confession of the offence. Thus the torture is to be avoided, the punishment in so far mitigated." The voice was harsh and unrelenting, admitting of no explanation. The look accompanying it was without trace of pity, but full of the official scorn and dislike which would anticipate the turns and doubles of its quarry. The hare in this case but thought how best to meet this unforeseen and disastrous turn to events. He had heard much of the Yakujin—the god of disease and pestilence—under which pet name Aoyama Shūzen was known by a certain element of Edo town. He would tell the truth, with the certainty that in the

effort enough lie would slip in to make out a good case.

The story at root was a simple one. Great of reputation for beauty and attraction in the Yoshiwara was "Little Chrysanthemum"—Kogiku. In company with friends this Masajirō, second son of the wealthy Iwakuniya of Kanda Konyachō, (dyers street), had met and loved the *oiran*. He had been favoured in turn by the great lady of the pleasure quarter. Hence the displeasure of his father, who learned the fact by the unanticipated and unpleasant presentation of bills he thought had been settled long before by the diligence of Masajirō. Hence the preceding night, on the boy's return from dalliance with his mistress, he had been summarily turned out.... "Ha! Ah!" roared Shūzen. "A self confessed vagrant; a thief! Gentle the face and wicked the heart it conceals. Plainly a case for the jail and torture. The truth is to be learned. The scourges will bring it out. Make full confession...." A sign, and the attendants with their *madaké* stood forward. In his terror Masajirō crawled toward the *rōka*. "Confession! Confession!" he bawled out. With grim smile Shūzen signed a halt. The *dōshin* prepared the scroll.

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Yes: he had been turned out, but not as vagrant. The mother, so severe in the presence of the father, had fondled and wept over him. The Bantō Shōbei had grave and kindly words of admonition. All would be well, and forgiveness follow in time. He was to go at once to his nurse at Koshigeyatsu. Such effects as were needed would follow him. Money he was better without; beyond the little needed for the short journey. The father's anger was not to be aggravated. Soon he would enter for his night's draught, so haste was to be made. Thus he was bundled forth, to make his way in the darkness to the distant country village. The Baya's kind aid in the little conspiracy was assured at sight of her once ward. Overwhelmed with advice and woe he departed into the night, his step growing slower and slower with separation from his home. No money! That meant no Kogiku. The idea of never again seeing her face made his stomach turn. It did turn the direction of his footsteps, which now was toward the Yoshiwara.

Kogiku was overjoyed at sight of him. He had but just left her, and now returned to her side. What greater proof of love could she have? The favouritism of the Go-Tayu found favour for her lover's presence. Seated together she soon noticed his gloom, which all her efforts failed to lighten. Somewhat nettled she showed displeasure, charged him with the fickleness of satiation. Then he took her hands, and told her that this was the final interview. His dissipated life, the discovery of their relations, had so angered his father that under sentence of banishment from Edo he had come for a last look at her face. "What's to be done! What's to be done!" The lady wrung her hands in genuine grief over the handsome youth thus torn away. She had welcomed his presence as means of escape from her own difficulties. But a few hours before the master of the Uedaya had announced her sale and transfer to a wealthy farmer of Chiba. Ransomed by this country magnate she was to leave the gay life and glitter of the Yoshiwara, for a country life and the veiled hardships of a farm. In exchange for the twenty years of Masajirō—she obtained this settlement and a master passing fifty odd. She was in despair. The brilliant beauty, thus to sink in a few year's course into a farm wench, felt the sacrifice too great. Finding no aid in the boy lover, long she lay weeping, her head on his knees, hands pressed against her temples.

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Masajirō was at no happier pass. "Up to the arrow point in love" his idea at bottom had been of a temporary separation. To find another Kogiku, a petted *oiran*, whose fame and beauty flattered any lover, was a stroke of good fortune not likely to occur. His own expression showed how little real idea of separation was in his mind. She noted it. Looking steadily in his face—"Constant the vows of this Kogiku, met by the love of Masa San. No matter how remote the prospect, the bond is that of husband and wife. With this old suburban drake Kogiku pollutes not her charms. Condescend to agree to a mutual suicide. Thus the obligation is avoided. Together the lovers pass to Meido (Hades) to wander its shades until the next and happier existence unites them in the flesh." In amazement and discomfiture Masajirō hung down his head. He would conceal the shock to his boyish timidity this proposal gave. His mind was full of such stories. He knew the earnestness of Kogiku. Then and there would she not draw her dagger to accomplish the deed? He was dreadfully frightened. Never would he have sought her presence, if such result had been anticipated. Now he must accompany her in death, or endure her grudge if successful in escaping her insistence. He temporized. Pointing to his plain disordered garb—"As to that—heartily agreed. But there is a seemliness about such procedure. A more befitting, a holiday costume, is to be sought. Then together, as on a joyful occasion, Masajirō and the Oiran will consummate the vows of husband and wife in a joint death." She looked him over, and was easily pacified by the evident truth and good sense. Again herself, in prospect of this avoidance of the unpleasant future she sought to entertain her lover with all the skill and charm she was so noted for. At midnight he left her, to secure an interview with Shōbei on plea of forgotten needs; then he would return in more fitting garb.

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His course lay through the now silent precincts of the great temple. More than the sun's circuit passed in these excesses, physical and mental, weighed upon him. He would rest a moment and consider his course amid the holy surroundings. Yakushi? The god was the physical healer in his theology and his services the strong and healthy youth did not need. Jizō Sama, or the six Jizō Sama, but a little way off? Probably the gentle divinity no longer regarded him as under tutelage. But the Lady Merciful—Kwannon Sama—why not make his petition to her? It was an inspiration, and earnest was the prayer which followed it—"Lady of Mercy, deign to regard with pity the unfortunate lovers. Grant that some exit be found for their woes, less harsh than the severance of the vital knot, offence to the Lord Buddha. Kwannon Sama! Kwannon Sama!... may the Buddha's will be done!" As he spoke a heavy object fell from above, to graze his shoulder and land at his feet. He stooped and picked it up. With astonished delight he noted the glittering coin within the

bag. Ah! Ah! Away with all ideas of self destruction. Here was the means to escape the guilty consequence. Here was the ransom of Kogiku. He had shuddered at thought of return to the side of that woman, in death to wander the paths of Shidéyama (in Hell) with the unhappy ghost—bald headed! Here now was the solution, in wine and the flesh and blood of the living long-tressed Kogiku, a very different person. His thought now turned to Yoshiwara. But—Naruhodo! Here was a second petitioner at this extraordinary hour. With amazement he saw a girl come flying across the tree and lantern dotted space before the great temple. There was something in gait and manner that he recognized, despite the deep *kōsō-zukin* concealing her features. From the shadow of the steps he sprang forward to confront her. It was so! The face beneath the *zukin* was that of O'Somé the beloved of his brother Minosuké. The great dye house of the Iwakuniya sent much work to the minor establishment of Aizawayaya in Honjō. His brother had such matters in his charge. At sight of Masajirō the face of the sixteen year old O'Somé was dyed like unto the maple. "O'Somé San! Here; and at this hour! Is it some visit to the shrine that in such haste...." In place of answer she wrung her hands and plead to be released. She must die. The river was not far off; there to end her woes. The scandal caused in the affair between herself and Minosuké had brought her to shame. Solemn had been the vows passed between them, tender the acknowledgments. By some retribution from a past existence thus she had found pollution with a beast. The heart yet was pure, and there was nothing to do but die. Deign forthwith to release her.

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In his amazement he nearly did so. Alas! All these young girls, at least the desirable ones, wanted only to die. To become a divinity by death—*Shingami*—seemed to the feminine brain in youth the height of fashion. Very well: but he would seek to dissuade her. His pockets full of gold the present beauty of O'Somé dimmed the past charms of Kogiku. She yielded to force and his urgency in so far as to accompany him to a refreshment stand just opening with the dawn. The mistress greeted them with kindness and affection. She showed them to an inner room. Here he urged his suit; flight and a home with the devoted nurse at Koshigayatsu. But O'Somé was unwilling. She had been "foxed"—herself was but a mere moor-fox. Deign to leave her to her own sad fate. It was the brother that she loved. Since she was deprived of him, she would seek the embraces only of the waters of the river. She urged and plead so prettily that her sadness and gloom entered into his own heart. She should be his companion. Kogiku in despite would join them. Thus the three together would find comfort in the shadow land of Meido. He gave up all attempt to persuade the girl. Briefly and almost harshly—"Be it so. Then we will die together. This Masajirō is under contract to die; and too tired to walk so far to find a partner. Condescend to await the night. Then we will take the shortest course to the river."

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To this O'Somé joyfully agreed. The day was passed in such harmless dalliance and favour as a young girl can show, who has had her own way; with a young man willing to dispense with thought during the intervening space of time before a not overly agreeable ending; and under the auspices of an honoured hostess fee'd by the glitter of coin into a consenting obtuseness. With the night they set forth in the rain. The river bank was not far off, but such vulgar plunge from the edge of the coarse promiscuity of Hanagawadō was not to the taste of either. Then, as now, a ferry not far from the Adzuma bridge crossed to the pretty sounding "Eight hundred Pines." *Yashiki* then surrounded, a palace to-day covers the site. They watched the ferryman pushing off into the river's darkness. Then hand in hand they strolled up the bank of the stream, under the gloomy trees, seeking the favoured spot of their undoing. Suddenly O'Somé stopped; sank at the feet of Masajirō. His hand sought the handle of the dagger. The weapon raised he was about to plunge it into the tender neck. Then a shout startled his ear. "Rash youths—Wait! Wait!" A powerful grasp was on his arm. With a shiver he came to consciousness. O'Somé, the river, the bag of gold in his bosom, all had disappeared. He was lying on the steps of the Jizōdō, surrounded by the *yakunin*. All had been a dream!

With open mouths the *yakunin* in the court looked at each other. Lo! They had nabbed a mere dreamer. How would his lordship take it? One more quick witted and thirstier than the rest answered for all—"Ha! Ah! A wretched fellow! Not only thief and firebug, but murderer also!" To the astonished and stammering protest of Masajirō there was the answering scowl of a very Emma Dai-Ō on the bench. "Miserable wretch! What is in the heart at best comes to the lips. This matter is to be sifted to the dregs, the witnesses examined. For offence so far disclosed he can take the lash. Then off with him to the jail." Masajirō, his back torn to ribbons and bloody with the fifty blows, was supported out of the court. Then the wine cup was condescended to the energy and acuteness of his captors. Enlivened by the morning's entertainment and his own big cup Aoyama Shūzen rose and departed.

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CHAPTER XVII

EMMA DAI-Ō GIVES JUDGMENT

Great was the excitement and lamentable the experience of the Aizawayaya. The matter of O'Somé had been under discussion with the Iwakuniya. Beyond good words and cold courtesy little satisfaction could be obtained; nor could it be expected. The offence had been the work of a fox, and the jewel of a girl's reputation had been trodden in the mire. Returned to the saddened home, the nurse of O'Somé was found awaiting them. At the news she had hastened from the

country to console her old mistress and to take her one time charge in her arms. "Alas! Alas! Is the matter so beyond remedy? Surely with a good dower the Iwakuniya...."—"'Tis no such affair," answered the mistress, wiping away her tears. "As fact the girl is a wretched wench, disregardless of the parents. The little fool fell madly in love with the figure of the eldest son of the dye-shop. It seems that daily she made pilgrimage and prayer to the Ushi no Gozen, to the Gentoku Inari. What more malign influence could be invoked! One day Minosuké came on a mission to the shop. She followed him to the street, and for hours her whereabouts was unknown, until this return in disgrace. Accompanying him to Asakusa, there she exchanged vows and pillows with him at a convenient assignation house. Alas! On the return he was taken with a fit in the street. The prior of the Kido-ku-In, the great priest of the Shūgenja (Yamabushi), was passing. His aid invoked, at once he recognized the rascal's disguise. Under the charms recited by the priest the true appearance was assumed, and a huge fox with a long tail darted away from the gathered crowd. No reputation has the girl gained by consorting with such a mate."

The nurse listened with amazed horror, turning first to the mother, then intently regarding the damasked face of O'Somé, dyed red at the story of her shame. "Oya! Oya! Possessed by a fox! Alas! Truly it is almost irreparable. If it were mere defloration by the young master of Iwakuniya, that could be endured. But a fox mixed up in the matter.... Truly it would be well to take her off somewhere, to some hot spring in Idzu. There the influence can be removed, and O'Somé San at least restored in mind." With this advice and gossip, with whispered consolation and laughing cheer—"Tis no great matter after all; in the country—will be found girls a'plenty, quite as lucky or otherwise"—the kind and jovial dame took her leave.

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The advice as to the hot spring seemed so good that preparations were under way in all haste. The straw baskets with their convenient deep covers to fit the larger or smaller needs of travel (*kōri*), the *furoshiki* or large square wrapping cloths, lay in the middle of the room, amid the pile of wraps and clothing for daily and more formal use. Skilled hands of maids and youths (*wakashū-kozō*) employed in the house were fast packing these latter into convenient parcels. Then to the hustle and bustle within the house was added the more unusual murmur of voices and tread of many feet without. The house owner (*ienushi*), accompanied by the head of the house block (*gumigashira*), entered in haste. Close at their heels followed the land owner (*jinushi*), the two bails (*jiuki* and *tanauki*). All looked with surprise and suspicion at these hurried preparations for departure. "Oya! Oya! This will never do. Honoured Sir of Aizawaya, the *yakunin* are now at hand from the office of Aoyama Sama. Your daughter is summoned to the white sand. Remove at once these signs of what looks like a flight." Eyes agog the frightened parents watched their neighbours and the servants hustle goods and parcels into the closets. They had hardly done so when the *dōshin*, followed by several constables, burst into the room. "The girl Somé, where is she? Don't attempt to lie, or conceal her whereabouts." Eyes ferreting everywhere, the parents too frightened to move, the *yakunin* soon entered, dragging along the weeping O'Somé. "Heigh! Heigh! The rope! At once she is to be bound and dragged before the honoured presence." Amid the bawling and the tumult at last the father found opportunity to make himself heard. He prostrated himself at the feet of the *dōshin*, so close to O'Somé that the process of binding and roping necessarily included his own ample person. "Deign, honoured official, to forbear the rope. There is no resistance. The girl is very young, and ill. We accompany her to the presence of his lordship." Weeping he preferred the request. Iyenushi, Jinushi, Gumi-gashira, in pity added their own petition to the officer. This latter surveyed the slight figure of this fearful criminal. Besides, notoriously she had been foxed. He grumbled and conceded. "The rope can be forborne; not so as to the hands, which must be securely tied to prevent escape. The affair is most important. Delay there cannot be. His lordship is not to be kept waiting." Then he swept them all into his net. *Dōshin*, *Yakunin*, *Jinushi*, *Iyenushi*, *Gumi-gashira*, *Ban-gashira*, *Jiuki*, *Tanauki*, debtors, creditors, all and every in the slightest degree connected with the Aizawaya fell into the procession. But Edo town was growing used to these. 'Twas merely another haul of the active officers of the honoured Yakujin. "Kimyō Chōrai"—may the Buddha's will be done, but spare this Tarōbei, Jizaémon, Tasuké, or whoever the petitioner chanced to be.

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Aoyama Shūzen stalked slowly forward to the *rōka*. Scowling he ran his eye over the crowd, taking in each and every. Then his eyes fell—first on Kogiku, the harlot of the Uedaya; then on the shrinking beauty of O'Somé of the Aizawaya. Shūzen was improving in these days. The Ue-Sama (Shōgun) spoke harshly of those retainers who made no provision for issue to support loyally the fortune of his House. Let him who would seek his lord's favour furnish forth such noble and lusty issue as in the Kamakura days, when Hōjō Tokimasa, Wada Yoshimori Hatakeyama Shigetada, the Kajiwara, Miura, Doi, attended the hunting field of their suzerain followed by a dozen lusty heirs of the line—direct and indirect. Hence of late Shūzen had renewed his matrimonial venture, and taken to his bed a second partner. For side issue and attendance on his household affairs, his office was a fruitful field. The families of those condemned suffered with them, and the more favoured served in Aoyama's household, in all offices, from that of ladies in waiting to menial service—down to the *yatsuhōkōnin*. These latter, slaves for life, were more fortunate than their sisters *yatsu yūjō*, who were condemned to be sold for life service as harlots in the Yoshiwara. It was a hard law; but it was the law of the Tokugawa, of before the days of the ruling House. Shūzen profited greatly by it in the domestic sense. The harlot and the girl budding into womanhood would be acceptable addition to the companionship of his then bachelor existence.

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His manner softened as he took his seat. His robes were more carefully adjusted. His cue bristled more erect. He was strikingly good looking. Dismissing all minor offenders he took up at once the great case of the day. The wretched Masajirō, his back bloodily marked by the scourge, was

crouching in shame at the white sand before him. Shūzen gave him one savage glare, which added terror to his confusion before those once friends and relations. Then Shūzen began carefully and insistently to scan the faces of the girls. They were well worth attention. O'Somé, sixteen and a beauty, had these aids to her other charms—a *kimono* of the fine striped silk of Izu, made in the neighbouring island of Hachijō by girls well fitted themselves to give grace to the beautiful tissue, an *obi* (sash) of fawn and scarlet into which was woven the shadowy figure, here and there, of a landscape—sketchy but suggestive. The belt which girded it within was of egg coloured crape, and the orange tissue broadened and hung down to add its touch of carefully contrasted colour. The hair was built high in the *taka-shimada* style, tied on top with a five coloured knot of thick crape. The combs and other hair ornaments were beautiful, and befitting the cherished daughter of the well-to-do townsman. Then Shūzen's look wandered to the harlot. Kogiku, Little Chrysanthemum, was noted in Edo town. Her beauty was more experienced, but hardly more mature than that of the town girl. Sedately she met the look, and without movement eyes plead smilingly for gentle treatment. She was dressed^[19] in a robe of gauzy water coloured silk. The sleeves were widely patterned—as with her class—but worked with rare harmony into the light grey colour of the robe. The long outer robe thrown over the inner garment (*uchikaku*) in these brilliant colours, in its tamer shades yet harmonized. Taken with the broad sash of the *obi* it made her rival the peacock in his grandest display. Her hair dressed high, was a bewildering harmony of the costly tortoise shell combs and pins (*kanzashi*) arrayed in crab-like eccentricity. The gold ornamentation glistened and sparkled amid the dark tresses. Truly Shūzen was puzzled in this claim for priority between the unrivalled beauty and the fresher and naiver charms of inexperience. Ah! Both should be the cup-bearers. But the sequel! Benten Sama alone could guide the lot.

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It was ordered that the confession be read. Once more the judge, Shūzen carefully watched the faces before him of those most concerned. It was not difficult to detect amid the confusion of O'Somé, the growing wrath of Kogiku, an unfeigned astonishment. With some satisfaction he noted this evident discrepancy in the plea. Suave, yet still somewhat harsh, he addressed O'Somé. "The confession of this wicked fellow has been heard. What has Somé to say in answer thereto." For a moment the girl raised her head to that of this Emma Dai-Ō. Then in confusion she half turned as seeking support—"Mother! Mother!" It was all she could say in her fright, and more than the mother could stand. She was the townswoman; self-assured in her way. She boldly advanced a knee. "With fear and respect: the girl is but of sixteen years, and the white sand has paralysed her thought and utterance. Deign, honoured lord, to pardon the mother's speech." Then she went into details as to the late unfortunate occurrence. With indignant looks at the crushed and unfortunate Masajirō, she gave her own testimony which rang with truth. "Well he knows all this matter. For the past six days the girl has not left home or parents caring for her afflicted body. 'Tis only this fellow Masajirō who claims to be the lover, to take the place of his brother Minosuké; a poor exchange in either case, with fellows who do but run after the harlots of Yoshiwara, to the bewitching of innocent girls." Tenderly she took the now weeping O'Somé in her mother arms, and added her own tears to the soothing.

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Shūzen slowly leaked a smile. He left the pair to themselves and turned to Kogiku. "And you?" Kogiku was not so easily confused. Readily she confessed to the contract between herself and Masajirō. "This affair of the rich purchaser from Kazusa came up suddenly. There seemed no outlet but suicide—if the dreary life away from Edo was to be avoided." Shūzen took her up harshly—"Bound to the Uedaya for a term of years then you would cheat your master out of the money he expended on you. This is theft, and most reprehensible. For such it is hard to find excuse." His roughness puzzled and frightened even the experience of Kogiku. She became confused. Shūzen was satisfied with the impression. He was unwilling further to delay his own prospects. Sending the matter over to the next sitting for final settlement he remanded all the accused—Masajirō to the jail and repeated scourgings for the lies contained in his confession; the girls to his own care. His experiences for the time being would largely condition the final judgment.

Shūzen was regular in his irregularities. Promptly, the case again convened, he gave judgment. There was none of the customary roughness in his manner. Even the official harshness was smoothed down. He dilated on the importance of the case, the necessity of making an example of this evident depravity of manners and morals affecting Edo town—"As for the girl Somé, it is matter of question with whom she is involved, Masajirō or Minosuké; both well could be her lovers. Thus she has fallen under strange influences and been foxed. Such a girl is not to be allowed to wander at random. As act of benevolence henceforth charge is continued as in the present conditions. Kogiku is still more reprehensible. The attempt to cheat her master being so brazenly confessed is hard to overlook. Owing to her previous life perhaps the feelings have become blunted. The same benevolence and punishment is awarded to her—with hope of future amendment." The master of the Uedaya, crouching close to his head clerk made a wry face. The two men exchanged glances, and the clerk opened a very big round eye for his master to observe. The latter sighed. Continued Shūzen severely—"As for this Masajirō, he is not only liar, but would-be firebug and thief. What is harboured in the mind he would put into deed. It is but chance which has saved the life and purse of the passing citizen, and the sacred structures from the flames. To him the severest punishment is meet. However benevolence shall still hold its sway. Instead of the sword, banishment to the islands for the term of life, to serve as slave therein to the Eta—such his sentence. To this judgment there is no appeal." Abruptly he rose. The weeping father and mother were baffled by the nonchalance of the daughter, who had no chance to give them comfort, but was at once removed in company with the willing lady of pleasure and

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experience. The huddled form of Masajirō was hustled roughly out with the kicks and blows to which he was becoming accustomed. Two or three years, under the rough charge of his new masters, were pretty sure to witness his body cast out on the moorland to the kites—or into the sea for fishes to know.

It was the *bantō* (clerk), faint with the hunger of long waiting, who led the parents into the first cook shop encountered on the way. Here over greens and cold water the father sighed, the mother wept apart, the clerk eyed biliously the meagre fare. Then in poured the company of Kogiku—a noisy, merry crowd. There were expressions of amused discomfiture, caught by the sharp ears of the clerk; suggestive references. He watched them; heard the lavish orders for food and wine—"Plenty of wine, and piping hot"—"Respectfully heard and understood." The waiting girls were at their wit's end. The feast in progress the *bantō* came boldly forward. "Honoured sirs, deign to note these parents here, deprived of their daughter. Your honoured selves have lost a girl of much value to your master. How is it then that you thus deign to rejoice? Plainly the grief of these must be out of place." The man addressed more directly looked him over coldly; then cast an eye on the distressed father and mother, at their meagre fare. His manner changed. He became more cordial. "Good sir, the affair is not to be taken thus! Sentence has been given, but...." He laughed—"it can be revoked. Already in the inner room the master is in consultation with the agent of Takai Yokubei San (Mr. Highly Covetous), Aikawa Dono,—the honoured *yōnin* of Aoyama Sama. A round bribe, and the girl will be released...." The words were not out of his mouth when the father was on his feet. Led by the *bantō* he made the rounds of all—pimps, bawds, and bouncers—soliciting their influence—"Honoured gentlemen of the Yoshiwara, deign to interfere in the matter, to plead with the master of the Uedaya. House, lands, goods, all these are nothing if the cherished daughter be restored." He wept; and they took pity on his inexperience. The first speaker at once sprang up and went to the inner room. The master of the Uedaya cordially desired their presence. Added funds were no drawback to his own petition in the dealings with Yokubei San. The parents introduced he told them—"It is but a matter of cash. Kogiku, within the next three days, must be delivered to the *gōshi* of Kazusa, or else a large forfeit paid. She can kill herself on the day following. 'Tis no affair of the Uedaya. Add your gift of a hundred *ryō* to the bribe of the Uedaya, and Saisuké San, here present, can assure success. Aikawa Dono surely has not left the court. He awaits report, with as great anxiety as your honoured selves. As for the Tono Sama, he has had the presence of the girls for the six days, and will be all the more easily worked on. But from all accounts the honoured daughter had little to lose in the experience. She would make a splendid Go-Tayu." Seeing no sign of acquiescence he shrugged his shoulders, and continued to the honoured Saisuké San—"A most annoying affair: a hundred *ryō* to this shark, and only the premium and the debts of the *oiran* will be paid. But he will take no less?... Be sure she shall learn the use of the *seméba* (punishment cell) before she finds her new master." Saisuké San with slow smile made answer—"Be sure that by night she will be in your hands, ready for the experience."

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Rejoicing the parents gave thanks, and betook themselves to their home. Half ruined, again O'Somé would gladden their hearts. But the mother had an eye to the expense, and promised a reception hardly better than that awaiting Little Chrysanthemum. Why show favouritism? There was small difference between the two. But this the father energetically denied. Meanwhile Aoyama Shūzen was preparing for his wine feast, one of a pleasant succession extended over this interval. With misgiving and no pleasure he saw the entrance of Aikawa Chūdayu. The chamberlain brought with him the account books. Shūzen's experience, however, noted past profit as salve to annoyance. He was a bitter hard man in domestic administration; cutting down food, and by fines the wages, of those more regularly employed in the household. This made the threatened loss of women serving by compulsion the more severe. Chūdayu knew how to deal with his master. Affairs in the household were not going well, under the free indulgence of Shūzen toward himself and his pleasures. Besides he was about to deprive him of his new favourites. At a sign Kogiku and O'Somé, already present by the lord's favour, withdrew. The younger girl had aged ten years in experience with this companionship of the week. Chūdayu watched them depart. Then sighed heavily. "Ah! Ha! So it's *that*." Shūzen moved testily, as sharply he regarded his satellite. "Acting under the instructions of your lordship, the box of cakes has duly been received from Saisuké. The affairs of the household require a large sum. Her ladyship's confinement is to be considered, the entertainments required by custom for the expected heir. To return the gift means to your lordship—the sacrifice of two hundred *ryō*. May the Tono Sama deign to consider a moment. Such double good fortune is rare—and the messenger waits upon this trifling sacrifice of a pleasure for which substitutes easily can be found." He drew the *furoshiki* from the box. Shūzen sighed; but did not hesitate. "Hasten Saisuké off at once; with the exchange." He placed the box in a closet close by. "As for the wine feast, Chūdayu shall be the cup-bearer. Shūzen is in an ill humour." He had an ugly look. Chūdayu, however, did not draw back. Leaning forward with a smile—"This Chūdayu would make report, to the pleasure of the Tono Sama."—"Of what?" asked Aoyama, in some surprise at his chamberlain's earnest manner. "Of the whereabouts and close proximity of Kosaka Jinnai."—"Ah!" The tone of voice had the depth of years of expectant hate.

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CHAPTER XVIII

KOSAKA JINNAI

When Takéda Shingen swept down upon the lower provinces in 1571, fought a rear guard action at Mikatagahara, in which he nearly extinguished Tokugawa Iyeyasu, with a taste of the latter's remarkable powers of recuperation, he went on to his real aim of a trial of strength with the main Oda forces in Mikawa and Ōmi. The great captain lost his life by a stray bullet before Noda castle. His death for long kept secret, until the northern forces had withdrawn into the fastnesses of Kai, the war languished, to be renewed with greater activity under the rash and ignorant leadership of his son. Katsuyori and his tribe cut belly at Temmoku-zan, the last and successful bid of Iyeyasu against his former enemies. Then the Tokugawa standard was planted from Suruga to Mikawa, and Iyeyasu became indisputably the first of Nobunaga's vassals—and one never thoroughly trusted.

Among the twenty-four captains of Takéda Shingen was a Kosaka Danjō no Chūden. His son Heima inherited the devotion, as well as the fief, of the father. Unlike many of the Takéda vassals in Kai he clung to Katsuyori Kō through all the bad weather of that unlucky prince. Kai was no longer a safe place for vassals true to the native House. Better luck could be assured with the old enemies, the Uesugi in the North. But Heima would not seek other service than that of his once lord. He only sought a place to live.

When the ex-soldier appeared with his wife in the village of Nishi-Furutsuka at the base of Tsukuba, the people thereabouts had more than strong suspicion that he who came so quietly into their midst was not of their kind. However his presence was accepted. His willingness to take up farm labour and another status, to become a *gōshi* or gentleman farmer, his valued aid and leadership in the troubled times which followed, were much appreciated. The year 1599 found the old fox Iyeyasu Kō planted in Edo castle; and Jisuké, as Heima now called himself, leaning over the cradle of a boy just born—a very jewel. Jisuké's wife was now over forty years in age. Hence this unexpected offspring was all the dearer. In the years there had been losses and distress. The new-comer surely was the gift from the Kwannondō nestled on the slopes of the mountain far above the village. To the Lady Merciful many the prayers for such aid.

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The child grew and prospered. A farmer's boy, yet he was the *bushi's* son; made plain in every action. Under the tutelage of the priests of the neighbouring Zen temple he learned all that they chose to teach, far outstripped his fellows, and in class room and in sport was their natural leader. Sport was the better test. With years Jinnosuké tired of the clerical teaching. The leader of the village band he was its mainstay in the wars with boys of rival hamlets thereabouts. These were soon driven away, and their own precincts invaded at will. The mountain became distinctively the property of Jinnosuké and his youthful companions, whose whole sport was devoted to mimic warfare. Their leader, thus unchallenged, became more and more reckless; more and more longed to distinguish himself by some feat beyond mere counterfeit war. One day, under his direction, in the storming of the hill which represented the enemy's castle, much brushwood and dried leaves were gathered. "Now then! Set the fire! The foe, blinded by the smoke, perishes under our blows. On! On!" The other children eagerly obeyed. The blazing mass towered up and up. The trees now were on fire. The wind blowing fiercely drove the fire directly on to the Kwannondō, which stood for the citadel of the besieged. Soon the temple itself was in flames. Greatly excited the boys swarmed amid the smoke and confusion as if in real battle. "Now—for the plunder!" At Jinnosuké's order the furniture of the temple was made the object of loot, heaped up at a safe distance for future division.

Thus engaged loud shouts met their ears. In fright the band of youngsters turned to meet the presence of the enraged incumbent, the *dōmori*. The temple was his charge and residence. His small necessities were supplied by visits to the villages below. "Oi! Oi! wretched little villains! Thus to fire the temple in your sport is most scandalous. Surely your heads shall be wrung off—one by one. Terrible the punishment—from Heaven and the Daikwan."^[20] The boys in confusion began to slink away. Then the voice of Jinnosuké rose above the tumult. "On! On! This priest stinks of blood. Be not cowards! The commander of the castle would frighten with words. 'Tis he who is afraid. It is his part to cut belly in defeat and die amid the ruins." In a trice the whole pack had faced around. Boldly with staves they set upon the priest. Numbers brought him helpless to the ground. There was a large stone lying close by. Heaving it to his shoulder Jinnosuké stood over the prostrate man. "According to rule the matter is thus to be conducted. This fellow is to be given the finishing stroke; then buried in the castle ruins." He cast down the heavy block with all his force. The priest's brains were spattered on the ground. Under the direction of Jinnosuké the body with feebly twitching limbs was thrown into the now blazing mass of the temple. Then forming in line, and raising the shout of victory, the youthful band of heroes marched off to the village. Under pain of his displeasure—which meant much—Jinnosuké forbade any bragging or reference to the affair. Wisely: a day or two after a peasant came on the scene. In fright the man hastened to make report. At once buzz was most tremendous. Was it accident or the work of thieves, this disaster? Said one man sagely—"The *dōmori* was a great drunkard. Deign to consider. The temple furniture is untouched. Thieves would have carried it off. He carried it out to safety, to fall a victim in a further attempt at salvage. The offence lies with the priest, not with the villagers." The report pleased all, none too anxious to offend the bands of robbers ranging the mountain mass and the neighbouring villages. Thus report was made by the village council to the Daikwan's office. The temple authorities had a severe reprimand for allowing such a drunkard to be in charge of the shrine. Jinnosuké stuck his tongue in his cheek. "Trust to the valour and skill of this Jinnosuké. These constables are fools." But his companions were a little frightened with this late exploit. Their numbers fell off. Many of them now came to the age fit for farm work. Jinnosuké was not long in finding substitutes in the real thieves who haunted the neighbourhood. Their spy, and often engaged in their raids, yet in his own district he was only known as a bad

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and dissipated boy.

Something of this had to come to the ears of Jisuké; but not the full extent of his son's wickedness. He sought a remedy for what he thought mere wild behaviour. Now in the town, years ago, there had lived a poor farmer and his wife; "water drinkers," in the local expression for bitter poverty. The man laboured at day tasks, and the wife laboured as hard with him, bearing her baby girl on her back. Jisuké aided as he could, and as was his wont, and when the pair were taken down and died with a prevailing epidemic disease, it was Jisuké and his wife who took the child to themselves, to bring her up as their own. O'Ichi San grew into a beautiful girl, and at this time Jisuké and his wife trusted to her favour and influence to bring Jinnosuké to the sedateness and regularity of a farmer's life. The girl blushed and looked down as she listened to what was more than request, though put in mildest form. "One so humble is hardly likely to please the young master. Filial duty bids this Ichi to obey, and yield her person at command." The mother was more than gratified at the assent and modesty—"Dutiful you have always been. We parents have no eyes. The whole matter is left to you. If Jinnosuké can be taken by your person, perchance he will devote his time to home and the farm work, now so irksome to his father. Where he goes in these long absences is not known; they can be for no good purpose." Thus the arrangement was made. The girl now busied herself about and with Jinnosuké. She was the one to attend to all his comforts, to await his often late return. Thus used to her he soon began to look on her with anything but brotherly eyes. Was she not the daughter of old Tarōbei, the water drinker? He knew the story well. Thus one night he took O'Ichi to himself. She pleased him—as with the parents. No objection was anywhere raised to the connection; a village of Nippon has cognizance of such matters; and in short order public notice was given of the marriage.

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The influence was not of long duration. With his wife's pregnancy Jinnosuké disappeared. From the age of thirteen years he had been hand in glove with all the rough fellows of the district. These were stirring times in the south. There was something to pick up. After all was not he a *samurai's* son. Jinnosuké was too late for action. Although but seventeen years old his short sturdy and astonishingly active frame and skill with weapons was a welcome addition to the band that Ogita Kurōji had gathered after the fall of Ōsaka-jō. Now Jinnosuké figured as Kosaka Jinnai. Here first he came in contact with the law and Aoyama Shūzen. On this failure he betook himself at once to the disguise of his native village; to enter it as quietly as if he never had left it, to find himself the father of a baby girl, Kikujō, and to procreate another on his patient wife. But before this second girl, O'Yui, was born Jinnosuké, as the village still knew him, had again disappeared. This was in strict accordance with his principle, of which something is to be said.

Of these Ōsaka *rōnin*, determined not to take another master, there were three Jinnai. In council over past failure, said Tomizawa Jinnai.^[21] "The ambition of this Tomizawa?" He laughed. Jinnai was no distinctive term in this gathering. "It is to collect all the beautiful costumes of Nippon."—"Admirable indeed!" chimed in Shōji Jinnai (or Jinémon, as he called himself). "But why stop at the surface? As you know, the ambition of this Shōji had long been to see gathered together all the most beautiful women of Nippon. And you, Kosaka?"—"To see all distinction done away with between other men's property and my own."—"Splendid indeed! But don't poach on our ground." The two others clapped their hands and laughed. Kosaka Jinnai did not. "Well then—to put the matter to the test," said he callously. Tomizawa Jinnai forthwith took up the collection of old clothing and costumes of divers sorts. He can be said to be the ancestor of the old clothes trade of Edo—Tōkyō; and the Tomizawachō at Ningyōchō no Yokochō, the place of his residence, is his memorial. To this day it is a centre for old clothes shops. Shōji Jinnai pressed the petition he had once put in (Keichō 17th year—1612) as Jinémon before being finally convinced of the righteousness of a Tokugawa world. He was lucky enough to find oblivion and reward in the permit for a harlot quarter. As its bailiff (*nanushi*) he assembled three thousand beautiful women for the service of the Yoshiwara, then at Fukiyachō near Nihonbashi, and of which Ōmondori is the chief relic. Kosaka Jinnai, under such encouragement and auspices, betook himself more vigorously than ever to robbery; enhanced by a mighty idea which the years gradually brought to ripeness in his mind. From being a sandal bearer Hidéyoshi the Taikō had risen to rule. He, Jinnai, would emulate the example and rise to rule from being a bandit. He was not, and would not be, the only one of the kind in the political world. Hence his wide travels through the provinces, his seeking out all the most desperate and villainous characters, for he had "trust" in few others, his weaving together of a vast conspiracy of crime, not to be equalled in any time but the closing days of the Ashikaga Shōgunate—and that not so far off. Of this period of Jinnai's life there is a tale to relate.

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CHAPTER XIX

A MATTER OF PEDESTRIANISM

Up to the very recent days of Meiji the precincts of the Shiba San-en-zan Zōjōji, now known more particularly as the most accessible of the burial places of the Tokugawa Shōgun, were an excellent example of the old monastic establishments. The main temple with its wide grounds was completely girdled by a succession of halls or monastic foundations, some of which were famed through the land for their theological teaching of the principles of the Jōdō sect. Conspicuous among these were the Tenjingatani and the Mushigatani, seminaries widely sought

for the erudition of the professors. In all nearly three thousand students attended the halls, with an eye to an ecclesiastical future.

On the dawn of a cold winter morning a priestly clad man, a *shoké* or one of the lowest clerical order, mainly notable for the vastness and robustness of his proportions, could have been seen leaving the gate of the Tokuchō-in. His size alone would have attracted attention, for the mouse coloured *kimono*, the white leggings and mitts (*tekkō*), the double soled *waraji* (sandals) fastened on a pair of big feet, were usual travelling equipment of his kind, made sure by the close woven *ajiro* or mushroom hat covering his head; admirable shelter against heat in summer, and a canopy—umbrella like—against falling snow in winter. By somewhat devious route he strode along a narrow lane, crossed the Gokurakubashi and halted before the Chūmon on the broad avenue leading up to the temple. A glance thither satisfied him for a leave-taking, which yet displayed some sentiment. A few moments carried him without the entrance gate, and but few more saw him crossing Kanésujibashi, evidently on some long tramp, if the steady swing of a practised walker, in no haste and conserving his strength, is any test.

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The road in those days passed through a long succession of village houses, the *chō* of Shiba village, broken very occasionally by a *yashiki* wall. It was not until he reached the barrier at Takanawa, Kurumachō, that he came full out on the bay just lighting up with the coming day—a beautiful stretch of water, now spoiled by the ugliness of the railway and the filling in which has turned the haunt of thousands of wild fowl into a prairie, soon to be covered by hideous factories and other sites of man's superfluous toil. Close by the little saddle at Shinagawa, now a railway cutting, a stream came into the bay from the west. On the bridge the priest Dentatsu stopped for a moment. Throughout, from the time of leaving Kanésujibashi, he had had a feeling of being followed. Now he determined to get a good look at his pursuer, it was not particularly satisfying. "Iya! An ill looking chap—with an eye like a knife." The object of these remarks had halted with him, at the further side of the bridge. He was contemplating the water with one eye, the priest with the other. A short sturdy man of forty odd years, Dentatsu noted the good but thin upper garment, the close fitting leggings, the well chosen *waraji*, the copper handled dagger in his girdle. Furthermore he noted a cold decision in the glance of the eye that he liked least of all in the fellow's equipment.

This was a man he would not choose for companion—"Bah! Short Legs, this Dentatsu will soon leave your stumps in the rear. A little speed, and this doubtful fellow is left behind beyond hope." So off started his reverence at the full pace of his huge legs and really great endurance. Through Ōmori and Kamata, crossing in the same boat at the Rokugo ferry, through Kawasaki and Tsurumigi—totsu-totsu-totsu the stranger's legs kept easy pace with those of the priest. "A most extraordinary fellow," thought Dentatsu. "He moves as on springs. It would be well to settle matters at once with him." Halting he waited for this pursuer to close up the few score feet maintained between them. His frowning manner had a genial greeting. "Ah! Ha! Truly the Go Shukké Sama^[22] is no mean walker. But even then company on the road is good. From the Zōjōji; by that *kesa* (stole), dress, and carriage? Probably the honoured priest has a long journey before him—to the capital?" Dentatsu duly scanned his company—"To the Chion-In, the parent temple, and none too fond of companionship on the road. Deign, good sir, to spare yours; with such short legs the task of precedence would be out of the question. Drop the useless effort of this pursuit, which becomes an annoyance."

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Dentatsu's manner was truculent, his grasp on his stick even threatening. The fellow met this rough greeting with the suavest determination. "Oya! Oya! Naruhodo, Go Shukké Sama! A very rude speech indeed! After all the highway is free to all, and I too travel the Tōkaidō toward the capital. Deign to grant your company and the entertainment will be all the better. Don't be deceived by length, or lack of length, in one's legs. The promise will be kept not to detain you.... That you came from Zōjōji is plain from your garb, if you had not been seen to turn into Tōkaidō from the temple avenue.... I too travel Kyōto way.... See! In our talk already Hodogaya town is passed. This climb.... here is the top of the Yakimochizaka. The mark stands here to bound Sagami and Musashi. Ha! Ha! The Go Shukké Sama has splendid legs, but he is handicapped by his weight. Surely it cannot be less than two thousand *ryō* in coin that he carries in the pack on his shoulders. That contains no bills on the Shōshidai (Governor) of the capital."

Ah! The matter now was fully lighted. The fellow then had known his mission from Zōjōji to the parent temple, to remit this sum to the capital. Dentatsu had not anticipated difficulty so early in his journey, nor did he much care for the contest which was offered him. He judged the man by his legs, and these were almost miraculous in swiftness, activity, and strength. "Alas! A dangerous fellow indeed. The luck of this Dentatsu is bad. What now is to be done?" The cold sweat at his responsibility gently bedewed his forehead. Yet Dentatsu was a brave man. The tradesman—or robber—laughed lightly. "Don't look so queer, so put out, honoured Shukké Sama. Truth is told in saying there is business on Tōkaidō. Even if highwayman, the last thing thought of would be to meddle with the funds of the honoured Hotoké Sama (Buddha). Be reassured; and as such be more assured in having a companion. The coin? Pure guess, and from the small size of the parcel and the evident difficulty found in carrying it. It weighs too much on one shoulder. Trust not only the thief, but the trader to know the signs of cash.... You would breakfast at Totsuka town? Did they send you forth with empty belly? Surely the monastery kitchen has no such reputation for stinginess among the vulgar." His manner was so reassuring that Dentatsu gained confidence in him and his profession. Gladly now he accepted this failure to relieve him of his precious burden, and this offer of company. He resented however the reflection on the monastery kitchen—"Not so! Nor is this foolish priest so at odds with the cook as not to find a bit

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of mountain whale (flesh) in the soup. Repletion is the aim and object of a monastic existence."—"Ha! Ha! Ha!" laughed the fellow. "Yet the honoured Shukké Sama would breakfast so close to Edo town! Good sir, deign to leave the matter to me. Both are in haste—you to the capital; I almost as far.... This Fujisawa is a wondrous place. As priest you know its temple and its wandering prior, the precious relics of the Hangwan, but the woman Teruté of course the priest despises; yet Oguri owed much to her—life and success in his vendetta. Besides in a copse, just over yonder hill, is the shrine of the other Hangwan—Yoshitsuné. A prayer to his head there buried brings success in warlike adventure, no great affair for cleric or tradesman.... Already the Banyū ferry is close at hand. Surely if we would reach Sumpu (Shizuoka) this day there can be no lurching short of Odawara town."

Dentatsu would have stopped short, if such halt had not involved the rapid disappearance of this elastic and now entertaining companion. As it was both had to slow pace to let him get breath taken away by pure amazement. "Odawara town! Sumpu before night! Tradesman, have you gone mad? To Sumpu it is full forty-eight *ri* (120 miles). You talk like a fool. Who is there, to walk such a stage in a day?"—"The honoured Shukké Sama and this tradesman. In talk and argument the ground flies under the feet of such walkers, and the promise to keep pace will be maintained. Just see—this is Kodzu town; yonder the waters of Sakawagawa. 'Tis early yet, but time can be spared for food. For exercise belly timber is needed. A good lining of wine and food to the inwards is the tonic to more talk and exertion. Now in with you, to this broad space leading to the castle—the keep of Ōkubo Kaga no Kami, with his hundred thousand *koku* and the trust of the suzerain worth all his other honours. Ah! Here is the eight roofed Minoya, best of its kind in the town. And what a town. Between wine, food, and singing girls, one loiters as long as a second Odawara conference; at times to one's ruin.... Ah! Ha! A stop for the mid-day meal. Nēsan, no more delay than needed. Speed is urgent, yet food and wine of the best. The honoured Shukké Sama is affected toward vegetable food.... What! The Buddha called wine *hannyato*—hot water bringing wisdom? Nēsan, the honoured Shukké Sama is a man of sense, no ascetic when unsatiated—or on a journey. He would wear out belly and *waraji* (sandals) on the same service. Fish boiled with a little salt, *sashimi* (sliced raw fish)—and *don't* forget the *kamaboku* (fish paste). Two bottles for each, with as much more heating. Bring a large bowl, empty. Never mind the change.... And now, honoured Shukké Sama, deign at least to the uninitiated the basis of this wondrous argument." Dentatsu could not take offence at his merry humour. Himself he smiled, as he poured from the second bottle of the wine. "Yes; the Buddha has called wine *hannyato*, thus permitting its use to the initiated; just as stronger foods, properly labelled, are fit for the belly. Thus by the mouth is purified what goes into the belly. If the mouth can perform lustration in the one case, it can do so by its exercise in another and more intimate fashion." The fellow was immensely pleased. Leaning over he had drunk in the countenance of the priest in the course of his argument—"Naruhodo! A big body: 'twas feared the mind would be small. Deign, honoured sir, to wait a moment; a purchase to make...." Off he bolted with the *domburi* or large bowl, something of a mystery to the priest. It was soon solved by his reappearance with the vessel filled with the small salted squid (*ika*). "There! Honoured Shukké Sama, sample the best of Odawara town, noted for *kamaboku* and its small fish-salted; and of these the *ika* is unsurpassed." As they drank the wine, urged on by the savoury relish, he gave few and brief directions. The food was wrapped up by the *nēsan*, several bottles of wine put in the package, for use in a journey that must be pressed. "Now—the bill; for you, *nēsan*, what is left over. Honoured Shukké Sama, a gentle pace for the time being. The belly full, one loiters to let it do its work. From here to Yumoto is a *ri* (2-1/2 miles), of most gentle rise. And what a pretty scene; the valley narrowing to its clinging hills hiding the strange and beautiful scenes beyond, yet which cause a little fear even to the stoutest hearts. This river seems alive, twisting, and turning, and pouring in multitudinous and minute falls over the rounded boulders. The greater falls are naught else—on the larger scale. All day one could watch the twists and turns of one spot in a rivulet, white, green, almost black, yet never the same.... Note how the pass narrows. This is Hata, beyond is the monkey's clinging hill—well named. More than one rock from the steep above has torn away the traveller's grasp and crushed a skull as if an egg shell." They breasted the steep hills through forest, came out on the gentler upper slopes covered with the long bamboo grass through which could be seen the rough heaped up surface of volcanic debris. The trader came to a halt. "A request to make."

"Ah! Now the fellow's mask is off—in this lonely spot.... He shall have a tussle for it." Dentatsu was as much enraged as scared. Grasping his staff he faced the townsman with harshness and visible irritation. Said the latter testily—"Put off the honoured scowl. Truly the distrust of the Shukké Sama is most uncomplimentary. But—as priest of Zōjōji, and on its mission, there is a passport. Women or guns with such, and those unfurnished, cannot pass the barrier. I am unfurnished." Dentatsu showed his amazement—"Yet you would journey to the capital! And...."—"Started in great haste, without time even for equipment, as can be seen—in a way. Deign to grant the request of entering in 'companion.' With this favour all will be well, and the obligation greater." Said the priest gravely—"True: and companions for the day, breaking food together, it is no great matter. But a townsman as company—the barrier guards would certainly make question."—"Write the matter in; write the matter in. They shall have answer.... For whom? The name is Jimbei, of Kanda ward; but just now a servant of Zōjōji. Jimbei will be a credit to the honoured Shukké Sama. Write it in." His manner was so peremptory that the priest drew forth his writing materials. With one hand grinding his tablet of ink, with one eye watching Jimbei, he saw him disappear into the bushes. With misgiving the characters were added to the passport, a gentle forgery easy to the cleric in mind and hand. Who would not cheat barrier and customs, and feel all the better for the deed? To the misgivings were added a gasp of astonishment. From the bush appeared Jimbei clad in full raiment of a temple servant, carrying pole and the two

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boxes (*ryōgaké*) on his shoulders, and so like to the rôle that Dentatsu felt as travelling in the style of his betters. "But ... in this lonely place how effect such change? How...." Jimbei quietly removed the document dangling from his fingers. "How—and why—and which—and where—all these are for later explanation. Time presses if Sumpu is to be reached at night. Jimbei answers for the credit of the Go Shukké Sama. Now, honoured sir—down the hill with you." They were standing on the crest overlooking the lake far below. Jimbei set the example by starting off at a rapid pace. Never had priest better attendant, or one more skilled in dealing with barrier curiosity. He was loquacious, without giving information. The matter was clear, and Jimbei gave hint as to the mission and the burden. Dentatsu was given early clearance. At the top of Mukōzaka Jimbei loyally restored to him the precious burden until then assumed. "Now, sir priest, be assured of Jimbei Dono's good faith. The favour has been great. The acknowledgment shall be as great. In this life the Go Shukké Sama and this Jimbei are bound in brotherhood." If Dentatsu felt grateful, he also felt a little chilled.

"A wonderful fellow! Such legs on such a small body have never been seen.... Nor such an eye. This man is as much brains as bulk. Every member is intelligence—Extraordinary!" He kept this opinion to himself. Aloud—"This Dentatsu admits his inferiority. He is worn out. Since Jimbei balks Mishima town, from there onward this foolish priest takes nag or *kago*." Was he speaking truth, or trying to get rid of him? Jimbei stopped and observed him keenly. Bah! His was the master mind over this poor cleric. "The Shukké Sama already has had test of Jimbei's wit and talk. Deign not to spit folly. Leave the matter to Jimbei, and be assured that the passage of time and space will go unobserved." Nor did the priest find it otherwise. The leagues passed on apace. At this rest shed they stopped awhile for tea, and to consume provision. At another Jimbei halted to order *saké* for himself and companion. The sun was far down as the ferrymen landed them on the further side of the Fujikawa. Okitsu? Mio no Matsubara? No indeed: passing under the walls of the Seikenji, Jimbei spoke with enthusiasm of the place famed for eatables—Sumpu town. Tōtōmi-wan, Suruga-wan, furnished the fish, unsurpassed; the *tai* (bream) of Okitsu, famed for *sashimi*—all these, including the best *saké* in Nippon. Dentatsu sighed with weariness and anticipated pleasure of the table set. Passing through the darkness of full night the mass of a castle bulk could be made out. Then they came into the blaze of such light as a large provincial town afforded. Said Jimbei, with some exultation—"Sumpu town, and its inns of note. Eh! Honoured Shukké Sama!"

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CHAPTER XX

THE AFFAIR OF KISHŪ KE

Jimbei, as of one born and bred in the town, at once led his companion off from the castle precincts. The many lanterns hung out in the narrow streets showed this Jinshukuchō to be the lodging quarter of the town. Approaching the entrance of one more conspicuous—"The Yorozuya.... Ah! Shelter for the night." The maids kneeling at the entrance chorused their welcome. Keenly they took in the prospective guests, garb mainly, possessions less conspicuous. All Nipponese travel light, and tea money is to be judged by outward appearance. "Deign to enter;" the usual mechanical and none too enthusiastic greeting. Jimbei was at home—"And the eight mat room over looking the street?... Oh! Nēsan is without memory." The girl, a little puzzled, admitted the defect and made apology. Alas! The room had been taken for one of the train of Kishū Ke. They were *samurai*, on their lord's business, and would have no near neighbours. Another room of size and suitability was available. "Honoured Shukké Sama, water for the feet." Deftly he stripped off the sandals of Dentatsu, acted the servant to perfection, and attended to his own purification with practised swiftness. Then under the guidance of the maid the room was sought. The host appeared almost as soon with the inn register. "Dentatsu, *shoké* of Jōjōji; one companion—from Mishima this day." With grave face Jimbei made the entry; and Dentatsu gave all the approval of an outraged weariness.

"And now—the bath? Nēsan, the Danna Sama is large of body and liberal of needs. No vegetation as repast for him. Just a...." Jimbei went into a huge order of food and wine to repair their tired bodies. The girl sighed in relief—"The honoured *bōzu*-san (sir priest) is most considerate. He asks but what is easily supplied." To Jimbei's supposed inquiry—"To furnish out of the usual course is never easy. The honoured priests often give trouble." A serving man stuck his nose within the *shōji*. "For the honoured guests the bath...."—"Danna, the bath." The girl stood expectant. Following her guidance the weary Dentatsu, under the manipulation of his more active companion, underwent this partial renovation. Before the *zen*, well covered with the eatables, Dentatsu sighed—"Ah! Ha! This Dentatsu is weary beyond measure. To-morrow he will rest here. The distance...." Jimbei cut him short—"The Danna deigns to jest. The rest of a night, and all the weariness departs. Wine and food, sleep, will show the folly of such thought. Besides, the temple's important affair...." Dentatsu did not seem to be so solicitous concerning temple matters as his attendant. Jimbei gave him little chance to show it. He prattled and talked, had much to ask of *nēsan*. This shortly, and as decided—"With an early start let the beds be laid at once." Off he dragged the unwilling Dentatsu. When they returned from preparation for the night the beds were laid. Dentatsu tumbled incontinently into one, and in a moment was snoring. Jimbei sat smoking, watching him and the girl making the final preparation of the chamber for the night. As she passed close to him suddenly he seized her and drew her down to him—"Ara! Danna, this

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won't do at all. A maid in the inn, such service must be refused. Condescend to loosen." But Jimbei did not let her go. He drew her very close.—"Ha! Ah! Indeed one is much in love. However don't be alarmed. It is another affair. The Go Shukké Sama has a little soul in a big body. He is wearied beyond measure; yet the temple affairs require an early start. Deign to call us at the seventh hour, but be sure to say it is the sixth. Is it agreed?... For a hair ornament." The maid understood the coin and the innocent deception. Dimming the night light she took her departure. An inn of Nippon never sleeps.

Dentatsu was aroused, to find the lamp still burning brightly in the room. The maid, somewhat frightened, was vigorously shaking him. "Oya! Oya! To shake up such a big Danna, 'tis terrific. He may deign to bestow a beating." Said Jimbei, with calm philosophy—"For the *kerai* to inconvenience his master is not to be permitted. You are of the inn service. Hence not to be reproved by strangers. It is your function to arouse."—"The sixth hour!" grumbled Dentatsu. He rubbed his eyes as one who had just gone to sleep. Jimbei carried him off to the cleaning processes of early morn. The return found the table laid with the meal. With quietness and despatch Jimbei settled all matters with the aplomb of the practised traveller. Before he was well awake Dentatsu found himself following after through the dark streets. "Surely the maid has mistaken the hour.^[23] 'Tis yet the darkness of night."—"Not likely," interjected Jimbei, as swiftly he urged him on. "The girl sees to departure every day in the year. It is the darkness of bad weather, and all the more need for haste." He looked around in surprise. They had reached the ferry at the Tegoé crossing of the Abégawa, at the edge of the town. "Naruhodo! Not a coolie has yet appeared. There is no one to carry us across the river. How now! Has the girl really mistaken the hour?... Return? Why so? That would be to look ridiculous, and the woman is not worth scolding. However, this Jimbei knows...." With misgiving and protest Dentatsu followed him a little up stream, toward the Ambai-nai or Nitta crossing. Here the broad middle space is usually left bare of flood. Jimbei began to strip.

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"Naruhodo! Townsman, surely the crossing is not to be trod without the practised guidance of the coolies? This Dentatsu budges not a step...."—"Deign to be silent," was the reply. Jimbei was already in the water; with the priest's luggage and his own. With fright and interest Dentatsu watched him feel his way through the stream. Surely he was a most surprising fellow. On the other bank doubtless he would disappear at once. The big legs of Dentatsu trembled under him. He had thoughts of entrance, but the impossibility of overtaking these legs of quicksilver prevented him. "Ora pro nobis"; these departing treasures. No! Now he was returning. "Now, Go Shukké Sama, up with you." He made a back for Dentatsu, but the big man backed away. "Jimbei! Are you mad? Is Jimbei one to carry the big...."—"Body in which is lodged such a small soul? Be sure, sir priest, this Jimbei easily could shift double the weight. Up with you!... Don't put the hands over my eyes. A little higher: that's it." Off he started into the flood. The first channel was easy; barely to the thigh. Dentatsu walked across the intervening sand, with more confidence and not a word of doubting protest. Again, and readily, he mounted this surprising conveyance. The second attempt was another affair. The river flowed swift. The legs of Dentatsu were wound around the neck of Jimbei, now in water to his chest. He looked in fright and some pleasure at the waves, flicked here and there with white. Jimbei halted—"A fine sight, sir priest. Note the deep blue. It shows depth, yet this is the ford. Just below it runs far over man's head, with swift undercurrent. He who once is caught in it rises not again until the crossing is reached, far below." Said Dentatsu, scared and annoyed—"Why loiter then in such a dangerous place?"—"Because just now the world is Jimbei's world." The tone of voice, the look up he gave, froze the soul of Dentatsu.

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"Just consider, sir priest. A movement, and the honoured Go Shukké Sama is food for fishes. His disappearance accounted for, his luggage, the two thousand *ryō* of the temple, pass to Jimbei as his heir, and none to make report. The honoured Shukké Sama, is he prepared?" Dentatsu was no fool. This man was in earnest for the moment. With all the calmness of a desperate position he made terms—"Life is everything. Deign to place this foolish priest on solid ground. Jimbei takes the coin, goes unscathed, without word now or hereafter. The priest's word for it—and surely Jimbei fears not for himself." He clung fast to Jimbei's neck. The latter had gone off into a most outrageous peal of laughter which almost shook his freight from the perch aloft. Then slowly and carefully he proceeded into the shallows, set down his charge on the further bank—"A magnificent compliment: but no more of this. Perhaps now the Go Shukké Sama will have trust in Jimbei, submit to his guidance. For once in earnest, the escape was a narrow one.... Ah! Ha! Ha! Ha! How scared!" Dentatsu did not deny it—"More than frightened; thoroughly scared." He scanned his companion. "A most surprising fellow! Surely...." He was perplexed. But Jimbei paid no attention to his questioning deferential manner. He was plainly the master—"Come now! All haste is to be made." Urging the pace soon they were amid the hills. The white light of dawn was approaching as they were reaching the top of a difficult climb. "The Utsunoya-tōge (pass)," said Jimbei. A peculiar vibration in his voice made Dentatsu look at him with surprise. His mouth was set. His eyes shone colder than ever. Every faculty of the man was awake and alert. Silent he halted, put down the pack on the steps of a little wayside shrine, drew out his pipe to smoke. "Beyond is the Tsuta no Hosomichi, running along the mountain side for some *chō*; the 'slender road of Ivy,' for it is no wider than a creeper."—"A bad place!" mechanically murmured Dentatsu. "A very bad place!" was the grave reply.

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Then the sound of steps was heard. A man, puffing, came up on the run. He addressed himself with respect to Jimbei—"Honoured chief, they enter on the pass."—"Good: now—vamoose; but be at hand." The man saluted, to Jimbei and the priest, and disappeared in the direction whence he came. "Vamoose? Vamoose? What and why this word vamoose?"—"Shut up!" was the emphatic

reply of Jimbei. His eye turned to wayside shrine, close by at the summit of the pass. "Now, in with you, sir priest. No word or motion, if life be valued.... In with you." Dentatsu looked him all over. In resentment? If he felt it, he did not dare to show it. Mechanically he turned and huddled himself within the grating. Jimbei forced it in on him, for the space would but hold the big body of the priest. He had hardly done so when another man came running up, almost breathless—"Chief! They are at hand."—"Good: vamoose."—"Again 'vamoose'", grumbled Dentatsu openly.

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[24] "Why such strange words; and at least why not explain them?"—"Ah! Ha! A noisy priest; these clerics can do nothing but clack, clack, like a parcel of geese or women. Even the best of them—who thus consorts with Jimbei. Remember, Bōzu—silence, or the Go Shukké Sama finds Nirvana—not Gion; or was it Chion." With a silent ferocious laugh, or expression of such, he disappeared into the bushes.

But few moments passed. Dentatsu wriggled uneasily in his robes, the only motion space permitted. Then was heard the merry sound of bells. A pack train appeared; or rather two horses, one as carrier. A *samurai* rode in front; another followed on foot. Four or five grooms were in attendance. Close by the shrine, at the top of the ascent, they halted to get wind after this last steep pull. "What a splendid sight! Naruhodo, Gemba Dono! The sun rises from the bosom of the waters. How blue they seem! The hills take shape in the dawn's light. Truly the start, so inconveniently early, is repaid in part. One could stay here forever ... what call you this place?... Tsuta no Hosomichi? And the resort of highwaymen. But the *samurai* has his sword. Such fellows are not of the kind to trouble. Much more so a *tanka* couplet to celebrate the beauty of the spot." He laughed, and his companion swaggered to the front of the shrine, with that peculiar hip motion of his caste. Dentatsu held his breath. The grooms chanted the few lines of a song—"The eight *ri* of Hakoné—the horse's pack; the Oigawa—its wide flood, not so." Slowly they rose to follow the masters. He who walked preceded. The pack horse followed. The rider was well engaged in the narrow way. The grooms were preparing to follow. Then a man burst forth from the bushes at the roadside. "Atsu!" The *samurai* had but hand on his sword hilt when his assailant had cut deep into shoulder and pap. His companion tried to turn. Then Dentatsu saw the animal he rode stagger and fall. The rider had but time to throw himself to the ground. Before he could rise his head rolled off a dozen paces, then bounded down the steep slope. Striding over the body smoking in blood, Jimbei grasped the rein of the pack horse. The grooms, who had looked on eyes agog, took to flight down the pass as they had come. The whole affair had not taken two minutes.

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Gasping with fright Dentatsu allowed himself to be dragged from the shrine. "Ah! Ha! Ha! A surprising fellow! Such activity was never shown by man. Truly Jimbei is of the hobgoblin kind." Jimbei was once more transformed. His costume of priests' attendant had been resumed. The carrying boxes, now much heavier, were ready to shoulder. Gravely he indicated the burden. "Four thousand *ryō* there; a thousand *ryō* to be carried elsewhere. But now there is need for great haste. Neither Jimbei nor the Go Shukké Sama is to be found in these parts. On with you, sir priest."—"Ah! Jimbei! Jimbei! A strange fellow indeed! What manner of company has this Dentatsu fallen in with?"—"This is no time for questions—or answers," was Jimbei's stern reply. "The relation evidently is for life. Jimbei recognizes it.... Yes, the crest is that of Kishū Ke; the money, funds remitted to his treasury. Hence all the greater need to hasten." Speed they did, by paths and shorter ways unknown to Dentatsu as frequent traveller of this road, and which spared the Hamana bight and rest at the tea sheds of the Tōkaidō. Fright urged on Dentatsu without protest; settled purpose hastened Jimbei. Thus Yoshida post town was reached in good time to inn, for the priest was half dead with fatigue.

Jimbei surveyed his charge, critically and with much kindness, as one does what has been of greatest use to him. "Not a step further can this Dentatsu go." It was not refusal; it was plain assertion of fact; and Jimbei agreed. "There is no longer need for haste. Two, three days stoppage, with the best of food and wine shall be the reward of the honoured Shukké Sama. Nay, until thoroughly restored." They had come from the bath and were seated at a table loaded with wine and food. Dentatsu prepared to eat. Just then the landlord stuck his head in between the *shōji*. His face was anxious and frightened. "Regret is felt. On Utsunoyama, at the crossing of the pass, the honoured money train of Kishū Ke has been held up and robbed. 'Tis a great affair; by some notable robber! At Yoshida none are allowed exit or entrance during the next six days. People and strangers are to undergo strict examination. Deign the honoured pardon, but ... after all the charges are to be met for the detention." The morsel then being conveyed to the mouth of Dentatsu stopped short. A warning look from Jimbei nearly made him choke. The townsman was all suavity and glee—"How fortunate! The honoured Shukké Sama, foot sore, would rest several days. And at no expense! The generosity of Matsudaira Kō passes measure. Are we not lucky, Danna?" To the host—"So it makes no difference. But at this distance...." The host shrugged his shoulders. "It would seem so; but the order is official. The notice came by boat from Oigawa. The whole Tōkaidō is up—from Yoshida to Numazu town."—"And why not to Edo and the capital (Kyōto)," Jimbei laughed. The host laughed too. Well satisfied with his guests' satisfaction he withdrew. Dentatsu did but blink.

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The meal removed Jimbei sat in apparent thought. "A boat—and Yoshida! Who would have thought it? Ah! The wicked are not to escape punishment. Three feet nearer Heaven—on a stake; and one's belly full of wind holes—from the spears. Go Shukké Sama, the crime was a dastardly one. Five thousand *ryō*! Surely it means crucifixion on the embankment. We will furnish poles for plover—to roost upon." [25] Dentatsu made a sign of frightened repulsion. He could not speak. Jimbei seemed to catch an idea. "Nēsan! Nēsan! keep the honoured Shukké Sama company over his wine. There is a purchase to make.... By the house? No such trouble asked. It is for *waraji*, with cloth in front and rear, indispensable.... Not found here? Nay, these eyes saw them on

entering the town. Someone will get ahead in the purchase—with great regret. The place was seen, but not knowing the streets it is not to be described." When the girl carried out the dishes, to bring in more wine, Dentatsu raised heavy reproachful eyes—"Then Jimbei would run away, leave the priest in the lurch." He cast a look at the hateful *ryōgaké*, stuffed with recent spoil. Jimbei froze him into silence—"From the town there is no escape. Leave the matter to Jimbei. Drink: even if the liquor chokes."—"A means of escape will be found?"—"Truly a big body and a cowardly heart. Why, man this but a difficult place. Jimbei leaves, to find an exit."—"Just so!" was the gloomy answer of the priest. He put his head in his hands. Meanwhile Jimbei betook himself to the front. To avoid annoyance he borrowed an inn lantern. With its broad mark of "Masuya," the name of the inn, he sallied out into the darkness.

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He was gone nearly a whole watch. Dentatsu, assured of his desertion, was in despair. He had relied on the fertile mind of this scamp. Ah! What a predicament this fellow had got him into. Then the voice of Jimbei sounded at his shoulder. Dentatsu almost leaped up. Instead he gulped down the *saké*, until then barely touched, to the maid's great astonishment. "Surely the Danna Sama must be ill."—"More likely tired, than unwell. But the wine will make it pass. The *waraji*? Here they are." He laughed as he drew them from his bosom. The girl was all astonishment. They were just as described; such as were never seen west of Hakoné. Truly a sharp-sighted guest! When alone Jimbei spoke briefly—"Take courage. The matter is arranged." Said Dentatsu, heavy-eyed—"The mission settled? Has some other lost his life at Jimbei's hand?" Jimbei laughed; then frowned. "Neither blood nor coin does Jimbei spill for mere pastime. He has purpose." He handled the *waraji*. Said Dentatsu in some amaze—"Where did you get them?"—"In Odawara."—"Has Jimbei been to Odawara?"—"Just so: but not now. Jimbei is no Tengu Sama. Did not the Go Shukké Sama take food at Odawara? This kind are only found there; and pretexts are always needed to range a town in darkness. The mission is performed. Be assured that before day these very people will urge departure.... How so? Jimbei is not without friends; and has done his own part as well. The train is laid, and in all quarters of Yoshida town the fire will break out. The wind blows strong, and ... 'tis them or us." His look was so cold as to freeze. Dentatsu, in ecstasy of gratitude did but seize his hands and murmur—"Wonderful man—truly a great captain!" For the first time Jimbei looked a genuine benevolence.

Dentatsu pushed the covers partly away and sat up in bed. Severe had been the chiding of Jimbei—"Honoured Shukké Sama, such conduct will never do. Fortunate it is that the event is postponed but an hour or so. Nēsan surely is amazed at the sudden abstinence of the Go Shukké Sama from food and drink. Moreover there is work to be done. The body unnourished, it gives way. Deign to rest. Be assured the urging will come from others." These the final words before the townsman-bandit had himself dropped off into soundest slumbers. Dentatsu watched him, with confidence and some awe. Smoothed out in sleep and under the influence of some pleasant dream, Jimbei was as harmless looking as one of the doves in the temple of the war god Hachiman. He leaned over and would wake him. "*Urusai!* Annoying fellow! Ah! This *bōzu* is part hare, part ass, part swine. When not braying, he is stuffing, or ears up in fright. Deign to rest, honoured priest. Legs and body will soon have enough to do." Again he turned over; and again the snores rose loud. Dentatsu could not sleep. He lay awake, listening to the diminishing sounds of inn life.

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The temple bells were striking the sixth hour. The sound was a strange one. The strokes of the hour ran into one continued roar. Jan-jan-jan—pon-pon—gon-gon—cries of men, the racket of wooden clappers and of drums, were now added to the uproar. For a few moments Dentatsu stood the increasing excitement. Through the cracks of the closed *amado* he could see a reddish glare, becoming brighter and brighter. He sat up and roughly shook Jimbei by the shoulder. "Oh! This rascally cleric. Nothing will satisfy his stupidity, but to carry it to extremes. Honoured Shukké Sama, wait the urgency of others; don't supply it. We at least lack not preparation.... Ah!" The *shōji* were thrown hastily back. The host of the inn appeared, his face pale and lips trembling. "Honoured guests! Still in bed? Deign at once to flee. The town is in a blaze. Every quarter has its conflagration which walks apace; and in this gale hopeless to overcome...."—"Don't talk folly," sleepily answered Jimbei. "Is not the town in ward for these six days. Why disturb oneself? Let all burn together?" The host wrung his hands—"Honoured sirs, the blame and punishment falls on this Masuya if injury befall its guests. All lies wide open. Deign at once to leave.... Naruhodo!" His mouth was wide open. Jimbei and Dentatsu rose as on springs, full clad, *waraji* on their feet. The way "lies wide open." This was the watchword to Jimbei. "Edokko (sons of Edo) always are ready, and need no urging." With this genial explanation he and Dentatsu shouldered past the astonished landlord. If the latter would have had suspicions they were thwarted or postponed by the cries which rose below. His own main house was now in flames. Hands to head in this confusion of ideas he abandoned all thought of his guests and rushed down below. As if in his own home, with no guide but the outer glare Jimbei passed to the inn rear. In the darkness of the passage he had stopped, leaned down and struck a light. The precious *ryōgaké* on his shoulders, with the priest he took to the fieldpaths in the rear of the town. The ground was level; the land rich rice field with its interspersed and picturesque clumps of trees and bamboo, its verdure bowered villages. From time to time they looked back at the sky, flaming red, and in its darker outer parts a mass of glittering flying sparks "like the gold dashes on aventurine lacquer ware."

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For two days they had lain at Okazaki town, Dentatsu incapable of movement after the mad run along the classic highway in the darkness of that fearful night. As refugees from the stricken town they met with kind reception. The greater part of Yoshida town lay in ashes; and so great the disaster, so unsuspected the cause, that men looked rather to the hand of Heaven than of

human kind for the source of such punishment. Jimbei spoke gravely as the two stood on the long bridge leading to Yahagi across the river. "The luck of one, the misfortune of another—'twas the life of the Go Shukké Sama and of this Jimbei against the lives and fortunes of those wretched people. And is there aught to outweigh life?" The priest nodded a lugubrious and pleased assent to this plain doctrine. "It is just as well the host of Masuya lost life as well as goods. He might have made plaint, and had too long a tongue.... Jimbei could not foresee such weakness in so huge a body." He looked Dentatsu over with a little kindly contempt. "And so the honoured Shukké Sama would ask the name of this Jimbei? Honoured sir, the favour of your ears—for Kosaka Jinnai, son of Heima of that name, descendant of the Kosaka known to fame in service with Shingen Kō of Kai. Times have changed, and misfortune driven Jinnai to seek revenge for his lord's undoing." He mocked a little; the tone was too unctuously hypocritical. Then abruptly—"Sir priest, here we part. Your way lies ahead to Gifu town. Delay not too much, until the lake (Biwako) is reached. Travel in company, for Jinnai, though his men are numbered by the thousand, controls not all the craft. A priest can scent a true priest. Seek out your kind.... Ha! You make a face.... Here: two hundred *ryō*. The monastery is none too generous, and would have you live—abroad. *Sutra* and prayers are not amusing. By face and years the honoured Shukké Sama loves the sex as well as the best of his kind. The very shadow of a monastery is prolific. More merriment is to be found with the girls of Gion than with those who dance the *kagura* (sacred dances) at Higashiyama. Besides, these are for your betters. If further off—seek Shimabara (the noted pleasure quarter). Go buy a Tayu; the funds are ample and not to be hoarded.... There need be no hesitation. 'Tis money of no thief. The prince robs the public; and Jinnai robs the princely thief. No trader ever has hung himself from the house beam for act of Jinnai; and more than one owes credit and freedom from a debtor's slavery to his aid."

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It was with thanks, the parting with a man famed by deed before one's eyes, that Dentatsu slowly passed on to the bridge. From its further end he could see the road leading into the Nakasendō hills. Long he waited until a diminutive figure, hastening along it, appeared from time to time between scattered houses on the outskirts of Okazaki town. Then in earnest he took his own way, partly impelled by fright and anxiety at loss of his companion and being thrown on the resources of his own wits. He felt for a time as a blind man deprived of his staff. It was years after that Yoshida Hatsuémon, he who died so bravely at Ōsaka, accompanied Marubashi Chūya to the new fencing room opened at Aoyama Edo by the teacher of the *yawatori*—a new style of wrestling introduced from Morokoshi (China)—of spear exercise (*sōjutsu*), of jūjutsu. Marubashi Chūya had tried the new exponent of these arts, and found him master in all but that of the spear, in which himself he was famed as teacher. At this time (Shōhō 3rd year—1646) the crisis of Jinnai's fate and the conspiracy of the famous Yui Shōsetsu were both approaching issue. To his amazement Hatsuémon recognized in Osada Jinnai the one time Jimbei of the days when he had journeyed the Tōkaidō in priestly robe and under the name of Dentatsu. The recognition was mutual, its concealment courteously discreet on the part of both men. Shōsetsu appreciated the merits, the audacity, and the certain failure ahead of Jinnai's scheme. The better remnants he would gather to himself. Yui Shōsetsu Sensei aimed to pose as a new Kusunoki Masashigé, whose picture was the daily object of his prayers and worship. All was grist to the mill of his designs; but not association with such a chief—or lieutenant—as Kosaka Jinnai. Forewarned Marubashi and Yoshida (Dentatsu) held coldly off and sought no intimacy. Thus watched by keen wits of greater comprehension Jinnai rushed on his course into the claws of Aoyama Shūzen and the meshes of the Tokugawa code for criminals of his class.

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CHAPTER XXI

IF OLD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT

Thus Kosaka Jinnai, under the name of Osada, at the beginning of Shōhō 2nd year (1645) was established at Aoyama Harajuku-mura. For a gentleman of such abilities his pretensions were modest. It is true that he hung out a gilt sign before his fencing hall, with no boasting advertisement of his qualities as teacher. Yet his fame quickly became such that students flocked to him by the score. In a few months, on plea of being over-stocked, he was turning away all who would seek his instruction. Some he could not refuse—retainers of *yashiki* in his vicinity. But the generality of his disciples were a very rough lot; and this finer quality of his flock were carefully segregated, came and went at their appointed time apart from the common herd; and as matter of fact profited much from their teacher, and knew very little about him. Which was exactly the aim of Jinnai. This was remembered of him later.

There is but one domestic episode connected with this period, so short and purposely obscure in its duration. About the time of his first establishment a villager, on visit to Edo town, chanced upon the practice hour of Jinnai. The years had passed, yet the rustic had no difficulty in recognizing in the Sensei the one time Jinnosuké. When later he sought a more personal interview the great man was found courteous but freezing cold in the reception. The news from Tsukuba district was of that mixed character not to afford any exuberant pleasure. His reputation for bad company had gone abroad, though no great deeds of wickedness had been attributed to him. With the devotion of a daughter his wife had nourished the old folk, brought up her two daughters. On her shoulders during all these years had rested the management of these small affairs. The girls grew toward womanhood. When O'Kiku was in her seventeenth year Jisuké had

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died—unconsoled at the ill turn fortune had played him in this unfilial son. These grandparents had lingered out the years, crippled and helpless, urging a re-marriage on O'Ichi—always refused on the plea that such relation was for two lives. Jisuké Dono had united them, and he alone could separate her from Jinnai. She sought no second relation herself and plead against it; and Jisuké would not force it on this filial daughter, who thus would block the disinheritance of the son. Thus the farm stood, ready for the master on his return. Truly the whole village wondered, and admired her filial conduct.

To most of this Jinnai listened with indifference. "These girls—their looks and age?" Replied the man—"O'Kiku now is seventeen years; O'Yui Dono has fifteen years. Truly they are the village beauties, and rarely found in such life, for they would spare the mother all labour." He spoke with enthusiasm. "Then the mother lives?" The man shook his head—"The grave mound yet is very fresh. When she died she spoke no word of Jinnosuké Dono." Boldly he looked in rebuke at the unfilial man. Jinnai, if anything, showed annoyance. The old woman alive would have kept the inconvenient wife—the three women—at the distance of Tsukuba's slopes. His plans admitted of no possible descent on him at Aoyama Harajuku. Briefly he made request for the favour of bearing a message. Gladly the mission was accepted. With a discouraging cordiality in the leave taking the old acquaintance took his way back to the village. With something of a flutter O'Ichi opened and ran out the scroll he brought—"Unexpected and gratifying the meeting with Tarōbei San. The news of the village, not pleasing, is subject of condolence. Deign to observe well the instructions here given. The time will come when a summons to Edo town will be in order. At present the establishment is new and tender, and stands not the presence of strangers to the town. Condescend to show the same care in the present as in the past. The farm and its tenure is left to the hands of Ichi. As for these girls, look well to their care. They are said to be handsome and reputed the daughters of this Jinnai. Obey then his command. These are no mares for the public service, or for the private delectation of some rich plebeian. Service in a *yashiki* need not be refused, and jumps more with the plans and purposes of Jinnai. Keep this well in mind, and await the ripeness of time. With salutation...." Such the cold greeting through the years. "Reputed the daughters of this Jinnai." Ah! He thought and knew the years turned the beauty Ichi into the worn and wrinkled country hag of nearly forty years, only too ready to market her girls for her own necessities. She was ill and worn in her service. Here Jinnai was to be recognized. He was the man of his caste, with contempt for the plebeian he turned to his uses, but who must have no intimate contact with him or his.

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Edo town was in a turmoil. North, East, South of the town the lives and purses of men who walked were at hazard. Plainly some band was operating in these quarters of the town. Aoyama Shūzen was hard put to it. His arrests, outrageous and barbarous, increased with his difficulties. Some specimens have been instanced. His bands of *yakunin* lay out in a wide net around the threatened quarters of the city. On the outskirts of Honjō a country mansion would be fired and plundered. In Ōkubo a temple (the Jishō-in) was clean gutted of its treasury—without notice to its neighbours. Not a sign of the spoil could be traced until the Shōshidai of Kyōto sent as present to the suzerain a most valued hanging picture (*kakémono*) of Shūbun, picked up for him in Ōsaka town, and worthy of being seen by the eyes of Edo's ruler. Murder and rape were the common accompaniments of these crimes, the doers of which left no witness, if resisted. *Tsujikiri*, cutting down wayfarers merely to test the value of a sword blade, found revival. Such murders in the outward wards of the city were of nightly occurrence. Yet they all centred in Aoyama's own precinct; starting forth from the fencing hall of Osada Jinnai. What a band they were! At this long distant date the names read with that tinge of the descriptive which such nomenclature gives—Yamaguchi Chiyari, Kanagawa Koni, Sendai no Ōkami, Okayama Koshin, Kumamoto Kondō, Tsukuba Endé;^[26] their great chief being Kosaka Jinnai.

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The eleventh month (December) was closing its first decade. The wine shop at Shiba Nihon Enoki was celebrating a first opening, a feast in progress for some hours, and to be maintained for the few ensuing days. The enthusiasm was at its height, and the wine flowed like water. Some few guests, who could, tottered home at midnight. Clerks and domestics—there is little difference in Nipponese practice—shut up the premises as well as their drunken state permitted. Those who had still some trace of sobriety proceeded to guzzle what was left in the opened casks. When the hour of the ox (1 A.M.) struck, not a man in the place knew front from rear. They lay sprawled out dead drunk—as were some of the women. This was the hour watched for and chosen by Jinnai. Such of the females as could give the alarm were bound and gagged by the masked invaders. Then they gutted place and store-houses. With bending backs they betook themselves over the hills the short distance to Harajuku. Here Jinnai, in the unwise benevolence of the bandit chieftain, gave rein to the licentiousness of these favourites of his mature age, to these lieutenants and agents in the great movement for which all this loot was gathered. The circuit was formed. The heads of wine barrels just stolen were broached. The grizzled, tousled member who officiated as cook, and as such had been left behind to his own offices, produced the feast of fish and delicacies in celebration of the great deed and accomplishment. "Now is the turn of this company," said Jinnai in pleasant reference to the victims of the raid. "A real banquet of extreme intoxication."^[27] Alas! We have no *tabo*.... Too dangerous a loot," commented Jinnai amid the roar of laughter and approval. "Use and abuse go together; and the necessity to slit the throats of such chattering parrots. For this company the remains would give trouble, and might bring unexpected visitors about our ears. Be virtuous—and spare not the wine." The advice was followed to the letter. Soon the house of Jinnai was a match for that of the looted wine shop.

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With the light of the December dawn a metal dealer (*doguya*) was trudging his way over the sifted cover of an early snow fall. He lived thereabouts; often had had small jobs of mending the

weapons and implements of this sturdy establishment of Jinnai, hence had some good will to its owner, which was more than could be said of most of the neighbours. To his surprise he noted the wide open gate to Jinnai's entrance, the many tracks leading within. Strange sounds were heard. He would venture on a look. "Oya! Oya!" The man stood stock still, half in fright and half in a wondering concupiscence of curiosity, as he took in the riotous vision of the fencing hall. Some twenty men lay scattered in different postures—all dead drunk. The noise arose from their wide open snoring mouths and nostrils. A score of wine casks lay tumbled, the liquor spilled on the *tatami*. Mingled with the remains of food and vomit were stained cups and dirty plates. More suggestive to his frightened eyes was the heap of packages laid out at the side. Some of them had been opened, and displayed the varied assortment of the contents. Most conspicuous was Jinnai, who had gone to sleep with the bag of all the coin found in the wine shop as pillow. Ah! Ha! The scene needed no interpreter. This was a mere band of thieves, the house their den. The man stole to the kitchen. He knew his ground, and that in these bachelor quarters no women would be stirring. Jinnai was a misogynist—on business principles. Hearing a stir he would have fled at the rear, but the body of the drunken cook, the intermediary of their dealings, lay square across the exit. Fearful he made his return. As he passed out the front—"Alas! Alas! What is to be done? The Sensei, so just and prompt in his dealings, so kind in his patronage, is a mere thief. Report is to be made. As witness this Sentarō will send the Sensei to the execution ground. But the honoured mother—no trouble is to be brought on her. By other discovery ... and perchance someone has seen this entrance! What's to be done? What's to be done?" He did one thing in his perplexity. He shut the outside door, closed fast the big gate, and departed by the service gate. Thus no others should intrude on this rash man; and likewise Jinnai had no inkling of his visit. Then the *doguya* fled to his home, so blue in the face and overcome as to frighten the household. They gathered round the unhappy man with hot water to drink as restorative. "Had he seen a ghost?"

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All day he pondered. Then he told his story to Aikawa Chūdayu. The officer was indebted to Sentarō; for many a hint in his operations. "Deign somehow, honoured *yōnin*, that the Sensei be allowed to escape. For this Sentarō to appear as witness will bring down the curse of one sure to be visited with execution. Condescend this favour." Chūdayu looked on him with approval, but shook his head in doubt—"Never mind the curse of one dead. The service to the suzerain is most opportune. Thus surely there will be reward, not punishment. For the present you cannot be allowed to leave, but the mother shall suffer no anxiety. There is much serious matter against this man; perchance no testimony will be called for.... Strange he should be caught thus; on both sides, and in accordance." He looked over the scroll he held in his hands, and with it took his way to his master's apartment. Thus it was he could spring on Shūzen the greater affair concerning the long missing man. Making his report of the tale of the *doguya* he passed over the scroll he held in his hand—"The fellow is caught in both quarters. There are three of these *rōnin*, most intimate. Of this Marubashi Chūya little favourable is known, but he has the support of Yui Sensei, the noted master of the Ushigomé Enoki fencing room, and favourite of all but Hida no Kami, whom he would rival in attainment. Shibata Saburōbei and this Katō Ichiemon seem honourable men, of clean lives and reputation beyond the fact of being *rōnin*. All experts at arms they live by teaching one form or other of the practice. Curiosity led Chūya to the encounter of this Osada at his fencing hall, to find him more than his match at everything but his favourite art of the spear. But here lies the point. Later he returned, in company with a one time *shoké* of the Zōjōji. As Dentatsu the priest had met with Jinnai, and nearly suffered at his hands. In what way he did not say, but told Chūya that the man's real name was Kosaka—of the stock of Kosaka Danshō no Chūden of Kai; of him your lordship already has had experience in early days. At last he comes into the net and under such fair terms."

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Aoyama did know his man; even after all these years. He had ripened much. Why not Jinnai? He would have gone himself, and chafed at not doing so; but his satellites showed him the lack of dignity in such procedure. The magistrate in person to take a common thief! Darkness offered chance of escape; so with dawn a host of *yakunin* was sent under a *yoriki*^[28] and several *dōshin*. Aikawa Chūdayu himself volunteered. Jinnai and his men were not yet up. On the previous day awaking amid the unseemly debris of the night's debauch, with no clear recollection of its progress and ending, the chief's first alarm had been dissipated by finding the outer gate locked. The unbarred wicket was attributed to an oversight which hardly would attract notice from the outside. Indeed he had not been the first to rise and take tale of his companions, to ascertain which one had occasion to open it and go without. With such a chief few would admit negligence. The day passed without notice. Confidence was restored. Now from the outside was heard a hum of voices. "On his lordship's business! On his lordship's business!" The cries came together with an irruption of *yakunin* into the entrance hall, Jinnai and his men promptly sprang to arms. A scattered fight began, with none too great stomach of the officers before the stout resistance offered. It was no great matter to reach a ladder to the loft. Jinnai was the last man up. The more daring to follow was laid low with an arrow shot from above, and the ladder disappeared heavenward. Panels now were thrust back, short bows brought into use, and almost before they had thought to fight or flee the constables had five of their men stretched out on the *tatami*.

Before the shower of missiles they could but retreat. At the request for aid Aoyama Shūzen was in a rage. There was now no preventing his departure. Mounting his horse off he rode from Kanda-mura toward Harajuku-mura. But it had taken some little time for the messenger to come; and more for Aoyama with his staff to go. Meanwhile much had taken place. The ward constables had joined the *yakunin* of Shūzen. The place completely surrounded, *tatami* were taken from the neighbouring houses for use as shields against the arrows. Then on signal a concerted rush of the hardiest was made. Pouring in, with ladders raised aloft; tumbling each other into the ditches, in

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the confusion pummeling each other with mighty blows, and in consequence securing stout whacks from the enraged recipients; the unlucky constables were soon indistinguishable in their coating of mud and blood. The outrageous ruffians, however, were soon tumbled from the posts of vantage and precise aim by well directed thrusts. A dozen men poured up the ladders and through broken panels into the loft above. Here in the uncertain light they hesitated. The figures of the foe could be seen, armed and ready for an arrow flight. Then a shout was raised from below. Stifling smoke poured up from every quarter. The scene was illuminated by the blazing figures of the archers, for these were old armour and weapons, lay figures stuffed with straw and meant but to gain precious moments of respite. The *yakunin* now had themselves to save. The retreat was as disorderly as at their first advent, but their rear was not galled by aught but flying sparks and burning timbers. Discomfited they watched the blazing mass of Jinnai's once establishment; watched it until it was a mere mass of ashes and charred beams.

Jinnai had been long prepared for such an adventure. The *yakunin* at first driven back he followed his company through the tunnel^[29] leading to beneath a subsidiary shrine in the grounds of the neighbouring temple of the Zenkwōji. Here he dismissed them, with hasty division of the raided coin, and instructions to their chiefs to meet him at the festival of the Owari no Tsushima in the fifth month (June). Himself he would go north, to give notice and gather his recruits. Thus exposed at Edo, the great uprising now must centre in Ōsaka. They scattered to their different courses; and thus Jinnai failed to meet the enraged Aoyama Shūzen, now present on the scene. But even the harsh discipline of their master had to yield to the piteous appearance of his men in their discomfiture. Aikawa Chūdayu bent low in most humble apology. They had underestimated the man, had virtually allowed him to escape—"Naruhodo! The figures were of straw, and no wonder yielded so readily to the spear. Only the sight of the flames rising amid the armour betrayed the deceit in the gloom of the loft. Deign to excuse the negligence this once." A *dōshin*, an old and experienced officer, spoke almost with tears. Aoyama gave a "humph!" Then looking over this mud stained, bleary eyed, bloody nosed, ash dusted band of his confederates he began to chuckle at the battered and ludicrous composition. All breathed again. But when he had re-entered his *yashiki*, and was left to himself, without concubine for service, or Jinnai for prospective amusement, then indeed he stamped his feet, his belly greatly risen. Alas! Alas! How could Yokubei Sama find a substitute for the one; and secure the real presence of the other?

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CHAPTER XXII

THE SHRINE OF THE JINNAI-BASHI

It was one of those small Fudō temples, tucked away on a shelf of the hillside just above the roadway, embowered in trees, with its tiny fall and rock basin for the enthusiastic sinner bathing in the waters of this bitterly cold day. The whole construction of shrine, steep stone steps, and priestly box for residence, so compactly arranged with the surrounding Nature as to be capable of very decent stowage into a case—much like those of the dolls of the third or fifth month. The nearest neighbour was the Shichimen-shi—the seven faced Miya—in this district so dotted even to day with ecclesiastical remnants, from Takénotsuka to Hanabatakémura on the north edge of Edo—Tōkyō. However it was not one of their resident priests who stood at the *rōka* of the incumbent cleric seeking a night's lodging. The kindly oldish *dōmori* (temple guardian) looked him over. Nearly fifty years of age, two teeth lacking in the front, his head shaved bald as one of the stones from the bed of the Tonégawa, a tired hard eye, thin cruel and compressed lips added nothing to the recommendation of the rosary (*juzu*) and pilgrim's staff (*shakujo*) grasped in hand; and indeed the whole air of the man savoured of the weariness of debauch, and of strife with things of this world rather than of battles against its temptations. Yet the wayfarer was greeted with kindness, his tale of woe heard. His own quarters—a flourishing tribute to the mercies of the eleven-faced Kwannon, with a side glance at Amida—had gone up in smoke the day before. Naught remained but the store-house, with its treasure of *sutra* scrolls and hastily removed *ihai* of deceased parishioners. The disaster was not irreparable. His enthusiastic followers already sought to make good the damage. Himself he would find aid from the cult in Edo.

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Kosaka Jinnai, for the unfortunate cleric was none else, seated himself in the comfortable quarters of the *dōmori*, to earn his shelter by a talk which in interest richly repaid the meagre fare, and made amends for no prepossessing exterior. On his pleading weariness the *dōmori* got out *futon* and spread a couch for the guest. This suited Jinnai's real purpose, which was not to loiter close to Edo and Aoyama's claws, but to push on that night toward Tsukuba and old friends, and recent ones he knew he would find on its none too savoury slopes. But Heaven does not permit the wicked a continued license in ill deeds. The weariness and indisposition pleaded, in part genuine, rapidly grew worse. The chilled feeling passed into its palpable and physical exposition. With alarm the *dōmori* watched the progress of this ailment. His hot drinks and solicitude would not produce the needed perspiration. Instead the chill was followed by high fever and delirium. The medical man, summoned from the village, was taking leave—"A plain case of ague from Shimosa's swamps. Is he friend or relative of the honoured Shukké Sama? No?... Alas! A case of resting under the shade of the same tree; of drinking from the same stream.
^[30] Deign to have a care with this fellow. He says strange things, and raves of robbery and strife —'I am Kosaka Jinnai; the famous Jinnai.' Truly you are to be pitied at being saddled with such a guest. Doubtless it is affliction for some deed committed in a previous life, a connection of two

worlds between the honoured Shukké Sama and this doubtful guest."

The *dōmori* was an old and foolish fellow; but still able to catch the warning tone and manner of the leech. With anxiety he went to his guest. Jinnai was sleeping under influence of the draught administered, and on the word of the medical man was insured for some hours unconsciousness under the drug. Placing food and drink close to hand, out into the darkness went the sturdy old chap. The day saw him at Harajuku-mura, wandering around the site of ashes and charred beams of the late conflagration. No sign of renovation was there found. For satisfaction and a meal he turned to the benches of a near-by eating shed. His inquiries confirmed his own fears and aroused the suspicions of others. "Truly the honoured Bōzu San must live far from this part of Edo. These ruins are of no temple. Here stood the fencing room of one Osada Jinnai, a *rōnin*. This fellow turned out to be a famous bandit and escaped criminal; no less a person than the Kosaka Jinnai engaged in the attempt of years ago to carry off or slay the Tenju-in-Den of the suzerain's House. Heaven's vengeance long since visited the others. Now Aoyama Dono seeks this fellow. Is he friend or relative that thus inquiry is made?" The *dōmori* in fright cut short his meal and questions. Paying his scot he made off in a hurry. Soon after one of Shūzen's spies passing, he was informed of the matter. Then the hue and cry was raised through the ranks to find this suspicious cleric.

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From Jinnai the *dōmori* got little satisfaction on return at dark. He found him sitting, with natural and restored presence, smoking, and measuring him with the cold cynical glance which froze the marrow in his spine. "Ha! Ah! The honoured Shukké Sama wanders far and long." The priest did not attempt to conceal fright or mission—"Honoured guest, the poor quarters of this foolish cleric are open to the afflicted of his kind. But Kosaka Dono, deign at once to remove from here. Already the *yakunin* are on the trail. Yourself, in the mad fits, you make no concealment of name and exploits. Found here, discredit is brought upon the Buddha, and ruin to this his follower. Condescend at once to seek other quarters." He looked earnestly and pleadingly at the bandit chief, with squawking groan to lower his head almost to the *tatami*. Jinnai's eye went through him in his cold wrath—"Be assured of it; that I am Kosaka Jinnai; and hence one without fear. Let the *yakunin* come—to their own destruction. These quarters just suit this Jinnai—for the time. Cowardly and foolish cleric, you would prattle and bring trouble on yourself with that wheel of a tongue. Then get you hence. This Jinnai undertakes the charge and exercise of the weapons of the furious god. Bah! They are but of wood." To the horror of the priest he gave the wooden Fudō which adorned the chamber such a whack that the unfortunate and flawed divinity parted into its aged fragments. "What! You still delay!" A hand of iron was laid on the old fellow's neck. Jinnai bent him to the ground. He looked around for implement. None was better to hand than part of the outraged god. Holding firm his victim, and raising his robes, a vigorous hand applied to the priest's cushions such a drubbing as he had not had since childhood's days. Then grasping him neck and thigh Jinnai cast him out onto the *rōka* and down the steps which led to it. The old fellow heard the *amado* close tight with noise. Thus the unwilling god entered on the service of this new satellite.

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The hue and cry was loud. In the cold of the night the *dōmori* wandered, afraid in his shame and trouble to approach parishioners; afraid in the chill outside air to sleep. A hail came to his ears—"Sir priest, have you not dropped coin?" Ah! Here was a stranger; and his tale he did unfold. Parlous his case; and for him the sky was upside down. "Most lucky! At our place to-day a prayer of *hyakumanban* (memorial service) is to be held. Food, sleep, and counsel, wide enough for this weariness and distress are offered. Deign to go in company." Thus the spy led him to his officer, a *yoriki* established at Fuchiémura in the attempt to net this desperate fellow. With joy the news of Jinnai's close proximity was heard. Entrusting the tired and barely conscious priest to the village head-man, officer, *dōshin*, and *yakunin* set out. Jinnai had overrated his capacity. Again the fit was strong on him. He shook and shivered, helpless under the weight of every covering he could find, and dared not move or turn in fear of the chill aroused. Then at the outside came the shout—"His lordship's business! Make no resistance; submit at once to the rope, in hope to secure grace." The *yakunin* roughly broke down the doors of the priest's house. They found Jinnai on foot. Growled he—"You are not the kind to face Jinnai. A rush—to freedom; with such of you as stand for carrion." He boasted overmuch. His fit was too strong even for such iron resolution. The crisis of the fever was at hand, and his legs bent under him. A shove from behind sent him weakly sprawling in a heap. Then they all fell on him, bound him hand and foot, and carried him to the village.

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The cortege halted on its way to Edo town. Loud had been the lamentation of the unfortunate *dōmori*. He was a ruined priest. At best a witness, perhaps to be regarded and tortured as the accomplice of this desperate villain; jail or the execution ground awaited him. He plead with this one and with that. With sympathy they heard, but in stolid silence. The spy, who had accosted him, knew the old man well—holy, pure, somewhat simple and guileless of mind, he was object of reverence and gentle derision of the parishioners who sought his service in every trouble. The man spoke to the *dōshin*, explained the matter. The *dōshin* took him to the *yoriki* seated beneath a tea shed. The officer nodded; then called for the report. "There is an error of transcription." Thus he altered the characters 过堂 to 过捕. Instead of *tsujidō* a cross road temple, now it read "taken at the cross roads"—"Call the old man here." To the priest—"Through no fault of yours has this man visited you. Be better advised as to other guests.... But now—take this coin. This man's course is run. He surely will be ordered to the execution ground. Great has been his wickedness, and his grudge is not to be visited on others. Prayers are to be said for his soul in the next world. The *dōmori* of the Fudō, his zeal and honesty, his purity of heart and manners are vouched for by those who know. Pray for him.... Now—get you hence!" He put a gold *koban* in the priest's hand,

allowed the joyful reverence, and cut short the protests of inconvenient gratitude. The *dōshin* shoved him off to the rear. The friendly spy carried him apart and pointed to a path running through the fields behind the houses of the hamlet. None cared to observe his departure. Thus Jinnai came to Edo, minus his ghostly purveyor.

First carefully was his body nourished for the coming entertainment. With clement genial smile Aoyama Shūzen claimed the acquaintance of this one time antagonist. As to the past and recent events there was no doubt. Aoyama had hazy, but little confirmed, ideas of greater objects; knowing as he did the early nature and history of Jinnai. But the Tokugawa were now so firmly seated. Confession was to be secured in the first place, to legalize the execution; and information in the second place, if such existed. Of confession there was none; not even answer. Jinnai closed tight his lips in scorn. Then first he was scourged; the scourging of he who is already condemned. The stout fellows stood forward with their *madaké*; those thin slips of rattan, two feet in length, wrapped into a bundle an inch in thickness with stout hempen cord. Ah! How flexible and painful! As they laid on quickly the welts and bloody stripes appeared. At the hundred and fiftieth blow the medical man and legal procedure demanded forbearance. He was removed. "Cure his back!" roared Shūzen. "Rub salt into the cuts. Next time the tender surface will force at least words from his lips." But he underestimated his man. Bound to a stake, with arms behind, kneeling on the sharp grids, Jinnai hugged the stones—five, six, seven—Chūdayu leaped down to aid the *dōshin* in pressing down the weight of nearly eight hundred pounds resting between chin and doubled hams. The body of Jinnai grew lobster red, his lips were tinged with bloody foam and gouts appeared. The hours passed. The black colour of the feet rose upwards. Then the sign was given and the man taken away in a dead faint, without the utterance of word or groan.

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Thus the game went on. Now it was the lobster. Aoyama would not go to the prison, nor miss the sight. For a whole morning with curiosity he watched the progress of the torture. Jinnai lay on a mat. Arms pulled tight to the shoulders and behind the back, the legs drawn together in the front and dragged up to the chin. The body at first had the dark red of a violent fever, but the sweat which covered it was cold as ice. Then the colour darkened to a purple, changed to an ominous blackish green. Suddenly it began to whiten. In alarm the doctor ordered relief. With wrath Shūzen rose from his camp chair close by; still no confession.

What was suspension to this? Jinnai hung limp as a dangling fish from the beam. Arms drawn behind his back and upward to the shoulders, a weight added to the feet made any movement of the limbs agony to the whole body. It was a sort of prolonged crucifixion. When blood began to ooze from the toes again removal was ordered. Of the latter part of the torture Jinnai knew little. He was unconscious. This hardy body of his was adding to his torments. Even Shūzen could not help admiring this obstinate courage. He would try one other means—flattery; genuine in its way. "Useless the torture, Jinnai, as is well known with such a brave man. But why prolong this uselessness? Done in the performance of official duty, yet it is after all to our entertainment. Make confession and gain the due meed of the fear of future generations, their admiration and worship of such thorough paced wickedness. Surely Jinnai is no ordinary thief. Shūzen never can be brought to believe him such." He spoke the last somewhat in scorn. At last Jinnai was touched with anger. He opened eyes, and, for the first time, mouth—"Aoyama Dono speaks truth. But why regret past failure? My followers? They number thousands. Why rouse envy or show favour by giving name of this or that lusty fellow? The object? As to that exercise your wits. Fat wits; which in these twenty years could not hunt out this Jinnai. Ah! 'Twas but this unexpected illness which played this evil trick; else Jinnai never would have faced Shūzen; except sword in hand. This Jinnai is a thief, a bandit; the tongue grudges to say. Such is his confession. Not a word more—to Aoyama Uji." He closed his eyes and mouth. Enraged at the failure and familiarity Aoyama shouted out—"The wooden horse! The water torture!" They mounted the man on the sharp humped beast. Lungs, belly, abdomen wide distended, in every physical agony, his body could but writhe, to add to the torture of his seat as they dragged down on his legs. Eyes starting wildly from his head, gasping for air, the unfortunate wretch was given the chance to belch forth the liquid. "Atsu!" The cry was between a sigh and a yelp of agony. Then he fainted. With chagrin at his failure Aoyama Shūzen put official seal to the confession bearing the thumb print of Kosaka Jinnai. Thus ended this phase of the contest between the two men.

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Jinnai's body was too racked by the torture for immediate sentence. When he was brought in the court Aoyama Shūzen had another wicked surprise to spring upon him. Jinnai's rejuvenating eye noted the band of peasants, the two beautiful girls brought captive in their midst. He knew at once who they were; even if the viciously triumphant look in Shūzen's eyes, the piteous fright and affectionate sympathy in theirs, had not enlightened him. The presence of O'Kiku and O'Yui was due to an ill freak played by fortune. In the fall of the year an illness of the mother—cold?—came to its end and herself with it. What was to be done with farm and girls? To the villagers this question was of serious debate. Of one thing they were in dense ignorance. Three years before a new farm hand appeared in Jisuké's household, and men could well wonder at the favour he found with the old man. With some misgivings they had warned him against recklessly introducing a strange *muko*, without first consent of the village. Jisuké assured them against what was actual fact. Wataru Sampei was a *samurai*, of *samurai* stock, and liegeman to his own old masters of Kai province. It was with the consent and approval of the dying man that O'Kiku was united to him. The household in Nippon is adamant in its secrets to the outside world—and that against the most prying curiosity anywhere found. O'Kiku lay in of her child and nursed the babe in her own nurse's house. Thus in full ignorance the council met to consider the request made by the girls to communicate with Jinnai—Osada Sensei—at the famous *yashiki* of Aoyama.

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Most of them were ready to consent. Then rose one Jinémon, smarting under the sense of having fields adjacent, coupled with flat refusal to his son of the simple girl O'Kiku. He suspected this virginity of nearly twenty years; and with an ill turn to this obstacle might do himself a good one. "Take heed, good sirs, what counsel ye come to. News fresh from Edo couples the name of Osada Sensei with Kosaka Jinnai; makes him out a violent bandit and would be ravisher years ago of the Tenju-in-Den. Surely his fate will be hard. Send them to the *yashiki* of Aoyama—but to that of Aoyama Shūzen Dono. Thus their request is met; and no blame incurred. The honoured *bugyō* (magistrate) answers for the district (Aoyama), and the girls will not suspect the destination. Otherwise, look well to yourselves. Aoyama Sama is known as the Yakujin. Great his influence in Edo, and sour his wrath as that of Emma Dai-Ō. It will fall heavy on you." This intimation, that he would do what they would avoid, soured all the milk of human kindness. Wataru Sampei, departed in all haste to Edo, returned in fright to announce his discovery of the state of affairs. The father Jinnai then was undergoing the harsh tortures of Shūzen. He found the farm in charge of Jinémon and his son; the two girls already sent in all ignorance to the *yashiki* of Aoyama. Receiving a harsh dismissal he dared not punish, from the house and tears of the old nurse he received as if by theft his infant son. With him he took his way to Edo; to establish himself as gardener at Honjō Koumé; or at Narihira, some say.

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In daily rounds of the jail the *dōshin* stood over Jinnai. In three days this man was to go to Torigoébash. Here he was to be crucified and speared—"with many spears" ran the sentence, to indicate the prolongation of the torture. "Jinnai, you have shown yourself brave, have refused to name even one associate. The time passes. Perhaps some wish, not incompatible with duty, comes to mind." Jinnai opened his eyes at the unexpected kindly tone and words. It was as if one soldier looked into the eyes of his compeer on the battle field, as well could be the case with this man older and of more regular experience than himself. The answer came with the measured slowness of an earnest thanks and appreciation—"The offer comes from a kind heart, shown on previous occasions.... There are women held here." He hesitated. "Deign the last cup of cold water at their hands." The officer did not refuse. O'Kiku and O'Yui knelt beside the couch on which lay the broken body of the father. Said Jinnai—"The end is most unseemly; words grudge to speak that mere accident thus should determine the fate of Kosaka Jinnai; he who sought to determine the fate of Tokugawa Ke. A dagger would have secured the fitting ending, that you two should not bear the public service of the town, a certain fate. This remedy Jinnai now forbids. With life changes occur; old scores are wiped out. Hearken well: live with patience; serve well to the hour. Now the last cup of life is to be drained; this first meeting brought to an end." Tears running down her face O'Yui, mere child budding into womanhood, presented to her sister the vessel never used as yet and filled with the cold liquid. From the hand of O'Kiku it was accepted. Jinnai drank, looked long and earnestly into the face of both, then with a wave of the hand dismissed them. He had had his say. The hardness of the man returned, and all his courage with it.

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Three days later—Shōhō 2nd year 12th month 1st day (17th January 1646)—the procession was formed to move to the execution ground at Torigoébash. The assembled cits marvelled at sight of the man and rumour of his extraordinary wickedness. There was a concentration of mind and energy in the face of Jinnai, which under any condition would attract attention. The centre of the scene, he bore himself splendidly. Despite the pain he suffered no incapacity was pleaded. Thus he forced nature. The costume of the famed robber at this noted execution in Edo's annals? He wore—"a wadded coat (*kosodé*) of fine silk from Hachijō in Izu, and that of quintuple stripe. The *obi* (sash) was seamless and of a purple crape. Into brick coloured leggings was twisted bias white thread, and his straw sandals (*waraji*) matched them." The jail had given to a naturally fair colour a somewhat livid greenish tint, rendered more commanding and terrible by the piercing cold eyes. Those far off said—"How mild looking! How tranquil!" Those near at hand shuddered and were glad at the removal of such wickedness. The *yoriki*—informed of the purport—let him speak. Jinnai turned to the crowd. His voice reached far. "Brought to contempt and a punishment words grudge to mention, this Jinnai holds not evil thoughts against those who carry out the law. The ill fortune of unexpected disease made capture easy, and has brought about this vile ending. Hence on death Jinnai will not leave this place; but as an evil spirit remain to answer those who pray for relief from the mischance of this ill disease. Those afflicted with *okori* (malaria) shall find sure answer to their prayers. Held now in no respect, this later will be bestowed. The last purposes of those about to die are carried out." He ceased speaking. A sign and he was stripped and raised on the implement of torture 卐 ill described as a cross. For hours he hung, revived from time to time with vinegar. Then signal was given for the end. First one, then another, *yakunin* thrust a spear into his belly, seeking least injury and greatest torture. As he approached the utter prostration of a dissolution the *yoriki* gave sign. The spear point thrust into the vitals showed through the left shoulder. And Jinnai died.

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To the north, just beyond the present Torigoébash, is the Jinnai bash, relic of this episode. On the north, close by the Torigoé Jinja stands the shrine to Jinnai, the god granting cure to sufferers from ague. No mean resort is it; nor modest the offerings of wine to his service. There it has endured through these hundreds of years. Jinnai bash, Jigokubashi (Hell Bridge) is a relic of the place of execution soon abandoned. After the fifth year of the period the jail was removed to Temmachō; the execution ground to Kotsukabara.

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CHAPTER XXIII

Aoyama Shūzen was in conference with Chūdayu. Preparations were to be made. It was with something like dismay that the members of the Endurance Society received the missive—"At this season of the great heat your honoured health is matter of solicitude. More and more may it thrive. Hence the condescension of the honoured (your) litter is requested on the coming sixteenth day. The wish is expressed to offer a cup of inferior wine. With fear and respect:—

To..."

Alas! Alas! If they could have but reached the ceremonies of the New Year.^[31] This rascal Aoyama would have been too occupied with the official visits to press his right to a meeting in the season of extreme cold (the *tai-kan*). But now—on the 16th day of the 12th month (2nd February): Ah! Ha! He was a wicked fellow. The grudge properly lay against Kondō Noborinosuké who had sweated the juice out of them in the intense heat of the hot season. Now Aoyama proposed to freeze it on the surface of their bodies. But to refuse was out of the question. Charged with weakness and effeminacy one would be laughed at as a fool; be unable to show his face. After all perhaps one could escape the ordeal with life.

The 15th day, on which the invitations were issued, was threatening. The 16th day fulfilled the promise. Cold blew the blasts down from snow clad Tsukuba, with full sweep across the Shimosa plain. As it caught the unfortunates crossing the Ryōgokubashi in their progress toward the Banchō, they shook and shivered with more than anticipation. An occasional flake of snow heralded the heavier fall. At the *yashiki* of Aoyama all was in readiness to welcome the guests. Shūzen stood at the house entrance to greet them. With thin open silken robe thrown over his *katabira* or summer robe, lacking shirt, and wearing the wide woven grass cloth *hakama* (trousers) which sought every breeze, he carried a fan in his hand. The *kerai* met the guests with ice cold water for such as cared to dip the hands—and none dared refuse. Shūzen fanned himself vigorously; and his guests were zealously supplied with fans, or the heat inspired by their progress was dissipated in the draught raised over them by energetic hands. The door-man (*toritsugi*) monotonously sang out the new arrivals—"Abé Shirogorō Sama, Kondō Noborinosuké Sama, Ōkubo Hikoroku Sama, Yamanaka Genzaémon Sama, Ōkubo Jizaémon Sama, Endō Saburōzaémon Sama, Kanématsu Matashirō Sama, Okumura Shūzen Sama..."; and Shūzen had greeting for all. "Ah! Ha! Such terrific heat! Not for sixty years has such been experienced. An old fellow in the *yashiki* will answer for it. But be sure all has made ready for comfort. Truly the honoured presence in these dog days in a gratification. The viands, the drink, all have been carefully cooled. Deign to come within, to a cooler place, away from this desolating heat. Condescend to notice how the very leaves have been withered off the trees."

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With inward groans, their teeth chattering and their bodies shivering, they followed this merciless fellow. "Ha! Ha! For tobacco there will be fire in the braziers. At least one's fingers are assured of warmth." They smirked at the anticipated pleasure. Warm fingers and the heated *saké!* But—Oya! Oya! Bare were swept and wide open thrown the rooms. Screens (inner and outer) had all been taken away. From the garden came the cold blast, blowing icily through this wide bare space. For cushions—the straw *zabuton*; for fire in the braziers—punk! Explained Shūzen in all kindness and suavity—"Fires in the braziers in this heat were too terrific even to think of; so punk (*hinawa*) has been substituted.... No need for thanks; the mere duty of the host. And now—no ceremony: off with the garments of all. A middle cloth answers purposes of decency. Deign the trial. Here is cold water to cool the heated body." Promptly he stripped to the skin. The *kerai* were bringing to the verandah black lacquered basins filled with water in which ice floated. Before this terrific fellow there could be no hesitation. They followed his example in being soused from head to foot. In the wiping—"Let the rag hang loose. Don't wipe with knotted towel. Stupid fellows! The cool wetness clinging to the skin gives a shiver of delight." Thus shouted Shūzen to his officiating satellites. Then all the guests took seats. The mucous was running from the noses of the old fellows who had fought campaigns at Odawara, Sekigahara, Ōsaka. Aoyama noted it with delight; and even Kondō felt a grudge against him, yet was compelled to laugh.

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The viands were brought—to send a chill down the spines of all; macaroni in cold water (*hiyamugi*), and the equally heating sea ear in frozen salt water (*mizugai*). Shūzen urged the latter, as better fitted for the season. As piles of *sashimi* (sliced raw fish), resting on neat beds of shaven ice, were brought eyes looked to heaven—to hide the expression. When the wine appeared, the bottles immersed to the neck in tubs filled with salted ice, the more recondite parts of the room echoed groans. Even Shūzen smiled with complacence. He felt he had scored success. It was Endō Saburōzaémon who showed no sign of discomfiture. "Naruhodo! Aoyama Uji, in this great heat how explain a thing so strange? Deign, honoured sir, to look. This white substance falling from the sky; if it were not so hot, one would call it snow." Said Aoyama undisturbed—"Not so, Endō Uji. It is but from wild geese fighting in the sky, their feathers; or perchance *kanro*—the sweet dew which falls from heaven when a virtuous lord condescends to rule. Who more virtuous than the honoured suzerain?" All bowed in heartfelt enthusiasm and respect. Then said Saburōzaémon—"Tis a thing to note closer at hand; a stroll in the garden, to seek its coolness in this heat." He leaped down into the fast accumulating snow.

Others too stole away, at least to get protection from the outrageously cold blasts of the exposed rooms, and the further exactions to be anticipated from the ingenuity of their host. Growled Kanématsu—"It is the value of one's life risked with such a fellow as Aoyama. Where Kanématsu

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sits the snow drifts in on his shoulders. He is without consideration or mercy."—"For any: his women must find service in such a *yashiki* a substitute for the torments of Emma Dai-Ō."—"Not so," sneered Kondō. "Even the wife is but a wooden figure; much like Kondō's fingers." An idea seemed to come to him. He left them for the time being. The others stood sheltered from the wind, to talk and shiver, Endō joined them from his garden stroll. Seeing Kondō on his return, said Abé Shirōgorō—"Eh! Naruhodo! The smile of pain relieved! Kondō Uji, has he found means to unbend, to thaw out those fingers? Ha! The rascally fellow knows the way about. There is hot water at hand. Deign to give the hint, Kondō Dono." Kondō leaked a smile, then snickered—"It was but an idea. Hot water in this *yashiki* on such a day there is none. But it is always to hand for the effort. The fingers of Kondō were turning white, were in danger, and so...." He held out his fingers for inspection. Abé looked with envy. "They fairly steam!" Then suddenly putting his fingers to his nose—"Oh! Oh! The filthy fellow! Kondō Uji! Deign to wash your hands. Indeed hot water is always carried on one's person. But...." All grasped their nasal members and protested. Noborinosuké laughed outright, and submitted to the ablution. Abé in malice gave the hands a copious libation. For the nonce his fingers had been saved and Kondō was satisfied with the outcome.

A woman dressed in the summer garb for service came from a room close by. The opening and closing of the *shōji* gave Endō Saburōzaémon a glimpse. At once—"This way...." His tone commanded attention. Abé Shirōgorō, Kanématsu Matashirō, Ōkubo Hikoroku followed him. It was the maids' sleeping room they entered. "Aré! Aré! Have not the honoured sirs made a mistake? Deign to return to the other apartment. This is the maids' dressing room."—"And in no better place can one be," grumbled Shirōgorō. His eyes took in the room with avid curiosity. Here the girls quickly slipped into winter garb, until called to the banquet hall for service. But it was not the glimpse of shoulders of the one so engaged at the moment, as the brazier covered by a quilt and placed in the centre of the room. From this the girls had emerged in confusion. Said he reprovingly—"Eh! Eh! In this great heat to have a brazier—it is more than out of season. Surely it is against the order of the master of the house." The girls, uneasy and at a loss, had but for answer—"It was the idea of O'Kiku...." The beauty, still flushed with the suddenness of her effort, came forward smiling. The attention of all was riveted. A little taller than the average of her sex, very fair of skin, the sparkling eyes in the pure oval of the face framed in tresses reaching almost to her feet, the tiny feet and long fingers appearing from the edge of the robe, the incomparable poise of head and neck, this woman was a beauty, to be rivalled by few in Edo town. The voice too was as musical as were her words to the frozen men—"It is but a water *kotatsu*; so that one can be cooled in this extreme of heat.... Within? Ice—of course. Deign to enter." The suppressed groan of Abé was cut short. He looked fixedly at the bright laughing face before him. The smile was pained and stereotyped, but the sympathy was evident. He understood. "Ho! Ho! Endō, Kanématsu, Ōkubo, deign to try this delicious coolness. Ah! Ha! This water *kotatsu* is a splendid idea. In this great heat it restores one to life. Truly Kiku is as clever as she is beautiful; one apart from all the others." The men crowded together under the *kotatsu*—"More ice! More ice! The *hibachi* grows warm." Laughing O'Kiku brought the necessary supply with the tongs, blew it into life with a little bellows.

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All the time Endō observed her closely. To Abé—"Truly she is a beauty.... Your name is Kiku.... And age?... Twenty years only!... So Kiku is sempstress in the house of Aoyama Uji. So! So!" He and Abé regarded her attentively. They praised her beauty. The crimson blush spread over face and neck, adding to her charm. Thoroughly warmed the men left the room. Said Endō—"Oh, the liar! This Aoyama poses as a misogynist, takes a wife—perforce, and charges those of us who like women with effeminacy. Ōkubo, how about this Kiku.... The Sempstress? Oh, you stupid fellow! Why—there is no more beautiful woman in Edo. She is the mistress of Aoyama; who deceives and mocks us all. And now—to bring him to open shame." Aoyama Shūzen, quick to note their absence, and the return so refreshed, was much put out. "Where have these fellows been?"

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Endō Saburōzaémon was not slow in the attack. "Truly, Aoyama Uji, words do not fit deeds. Are you not a bit of a rascal?"—"Why so?" was the calm reply of Shūzen, always ready to a quarrel. "You pretend to hate women; you charge us with effeminacy who have wives; and take your own but on compulsion. Yet in this very house there is not only a wife, but the most beautiful woman in Edo for concubine." Shūzen's astonishment was too manifest. "Who?" said Endō, with some misgiving that he had missed fire. "This Kiku; would you deny it?"—"Surely so," was Shūzen's assured reply. Then seeing the curiosity of those around he added with courtesy—"This Kiku is a slave girl, a criminal under judgment, a *yatsu-hōkōnin* by favour. Would you know about her? She is daughter to the robber Jinnai, not long since put to death. The law may be harsh, yet it condemns the line of such men to extinction, and sends their issue to the execution ground. Whether through good will, or mistaking the Aoyama Harajuku, the resort of this Jinnai, for this *yashiki*, the villagers brought the two girls Kiku and Yui from near Tsukuba. In pity one was taken into the life service of the *yashiki*. For his business Jinzaémon of the Yoshiwara Miuraya considered the younger Yui as more fitting. To him she was bound as *yatsu-yūjō*.... Husband? No: and thus all posterity of the robber is stamped out. Yui serves for life as harlot in the Yoshiwara, with no recognized issue. Kiku serves for life at the *yashiki*. The case is a pitiable one." All present echoed what he said. "It is the offence, not the person, which is to be hated. Truly it is a hard lot." They were curious to see her. Said Shūzen—"Surely she has been rated too high, but—summon Kiku here." As the girl stood in the midst for all to observe, blushing and panting a little with fright at all these eyes upon her, there was no gaze more intent than that of Aoyama Shūzen. The pity expressed and the praises lavished reached his ears. He studied her from head to foot, heard the caustic criticisms—"Such a beauty, and a serving wench! Aoyama is a fool."

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CHAPTER XXIV

THE TIGER AT THE FRONT GATE; THE WOLF AT THE POSTERN

Thus it came about that O'Kiku was an inmate of Aoyama's *yashiki*. He had told the tale, the fatal error drawn by the mother from the peasant's message. It was her own deed. Thus "evil seed produces evil fruit. In one's posterity is punishment found." All knew Kiku's story. Promptly with her appearance in the household she was named Shioki—O'Shioki San, O'Shioki San; when not addressing her these companions called it to each other for her to hear. Shioki? It means "the execution ground."

A flower blooms but to wither; and this flowering branch was to be tended by the master's hand. Now she was faced with a new and terrible danger. O'Kiku was quick to note the state of Shūzen's household. Of the *koshimoto*, two were the favoured concubines during the incapacitation of the wife. The lowliness of her own position—menial servant and mere serving wench—would seem to protect her. Moreover she was not brought into contact with the house master. But after all she was the *bushi's* daughter, brought up by a mother trained from youth at the hand of the *samurai* grandmother. Thus dragged out into the light by indiscreet curiosity the tiger's eye had fallen upon her. Shūzen marvelled at his stupidity, his oversight. This woman was indeed a beauty, the concubine for long sought, and to hand free of her charms. He stood adjusting his robes; then lost in thought. There were obstacles—in the girl's position. But that night O'Kiku was ordered to serve the wine. The intelligence and training, corresponding to the outward physical charms, aroused in him a very fury for possession. Abrupt, blunt, overbearing he approached her in the coarsest way—"Kiku, first pity and now love has seized upon the heart of Shūzen. With women all his relations have been those of cold formality—the business of connection or the necessity of an heir. Now an entirely different feeling is aroused. The very sight of Kiku's figure inspires fondness, an exclusion of all others of her sex. 'Tis Kiku alone who remains the object, all others are mere lay figures. You are a woman, and by nature know of such things. Is not this truly love? Consent to become the concubine of Shūzen. Let this very night seal the union."

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He attempted to draw her close to him, but she shrank away in confusion and fright. Shūzen was amazed—"What! You refuse?... Ah! Then it is hate of this Shūzen which is felt. Most unreasonable hate, for he acted but as *bugyō* of the land. It is a disloyal hate." In his mad and thwarted lust his lips trembled. The girl humbly remained prostrate—"Condescend the honoured forbearance. Such could not be the case. Great the favour of Heaven, of your lordship as its agent, in saving this Kiku from the final punishment, the coarse assault of menials. But deign to consider. Kiku is the daughter of Jinnai. She is a reprieved criminal in the land, can be naught else but of lowest status. Kind the honoured words, great the gratitude inspired; but is not the summons unseemly. Deign forbearance; add not to the offence of Kiku." In her mind was the last scene with her father Jinnai; the tortured, distorted, suffering body of the condemned bandit. Pollute her body with this man who had thus played with the one to whom she owed life and duty; to the man who had sent the father to the execution ground? She would have used her dagger first on herself, rather than on him. His words did inspire uncertainty. He was the officer in the land, the representative of the suzerain, hence guiltless. But that made not the idea of his embraces less repulsive, though she wavered in thoughts of vendetta—between filial duty and loyal service to the suzerain. Her attitude puzzled Aoyama. The unusualness of his proposition he put aside. Her claim to loyalty, in his hopes as the successful lecher, he was disposed to accept. Was there not something deeper?

Then the battle began between them, to last for those weeks of the winter months. Force matters he would not. There was a zest in this pursuit, far apart from any mere sensual gratification. The desire he felt for her person was all cruel. It was joined to the desire to humble her, to force her to consent by her own lips and motion and against reason, to grant the gift of herself even if unwilling. There was an enjoyment in soiling the body and mind of this beauty. Thus with refusal love began slowly to turn to a hatred full of malice. One night Aikawa Chūdayu was present. O'Kiku as usual served the wine. Shūzen turned to him impatiently—"The speech of the overlord is without effect. Chūdayu, try your hand, and bend Kiku to consent to my wishes, to become my concubine." Shamed before the whole household? O'Kiku had grown used to this grossness in the determined pursuit of Shūzen. Now openly addressed before the chamberlain and others she looked down; a little flushed, and hearing with astonishment the words which came from such a quarter. Chūdayu spoke slowly; addressed her with a severity of tone which belied his intent. "O'Kiku Dono, why are not thanks given for such condescension on the part of the Tono Sama? Apart from his rank is not the experience of his fifty years, on the battle field of war and love, to count in his favour? Most imposing and strong his figure, despite his age. All bow in respect before the lines marked by the wisdom of years in his lordships face. Why refuse to follow the example of the other women of the household—and share with them? These are indeed *koshimoto*; your promotion to the position, from the vilest status, but a caprice and kindness. You should obey the order of the Tono Sama. His face alone would inspire fear. All regard it with awe, as if in contemplation of that of Emma Dai-Ō. And who refuses to obey the mandate of the king of hell? Answer—who?" He leaned far over toward her. O'Kiku looked at him; then hid her face in her hands.

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These were not her only trials in this Jigoku *yashiki* (Hell mansion). There was her ladyship to

take into account. Says the proverb of the Nipponese—"dabble in vermilion, and one is stained red." Contact with Shūzen had developed all the harsher traits in this stern *samurai* dame. She despised the former character of her husband, and now was mad with jealousy at his unrestrained lechery. However there was some consolation in this new pursuit. Promiscuous in his intercourse with all and every other of her household, she could do but little. These were women of more or less position. Now he threatened to turn all devotion in the one direction of this beautiful girl, to condescend to a serving wench.

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"The Rangiku: it has a fox's shape."^[32]

Thus sneered her fellows. O'Kiku now was punished as scapegoat for all the others. The natural harshness of her ladyship's character turned to barbarity. This "slave"—O'Shioki—in no way could satisfy her. The slightest fault, of self or other, was visited on O'Kiku. One day her ladyship in her rage seized her and dragged her by the hair over her knees. A short baton of bamboo was to hand, and with this before all she put the girl to the shame of childhood's punishment, and with a malice and heartiness of will and muscle which left O'Kiku lame, and thus victim in other derelictions of duty. This so pleased the *okugata* that it became a favourite pastime, whenever the girl was at hand and her own arm had rested. She would have starved her, but the rest contributed of their store out of mere fellowship. Her ladyship recognized the uselessness. She did not dare deface her beauty. Believing in Shūzen's love her vengeance was confined in its exercise. With despair she regarded her bloated disfigured person, the wan faded aspect due to her advanced pregnancy. Ah! If she could but fasten some offence upon her. She would bring about this interloper's death. With delight she noted the signs of dislike and malice in Shūzen. Surely the tales were true that the beauty was holding out for the price of her charms. It should be a case where beauty would not secure pardon.

It was at this time that, with Shūzen's consent, she put O'Kiku in charge of ten plates condescended in trust to the House by the Tōshōgū (Iyeyasu). It was a bid of Shūzen, the mark of the conference of position as *koshimoto* in his household. Only in the madness of love—or lust—would he have risked such impropriety. The regular time for counting had arrived. O'Kiku carefully replaced the beautiful objects, marked with holly hock crest, into their lacquered box. Again Shūzen importuned her with his suit. Then in vexation—"Ah! Truly a rebellious and wicked grudge is held by this Kiku. Attempt at denial is useless, it is not only rebellion against the master, but against the decree of the master of all. Decide at once. Either be the concubine of Shūzen; or suffer the sword cut." Again she plead with him, and Shūzen's eyes opened wide with astonishment. "Condescend the honoured hearing. Kiku has plead as one no longer of this world. 'Tis true. But before now she has already taken the vow of two worlds."—"What!" said Shūzen in amazement. His mind lighted up as she proceeded—"It is true. Under guise of farm hand at the village lived Wataru Sampei, a *samurai* and *rōnin* of the Takéda House of Kai. By him there is a child—now three years old. Alas! The father lives in direst poverty. Twice in the month—the 15th day when the festival of the Ichigaya Hachiman shrine is held, the 25th day when that of the Hirakawa Tenjin Sama is held—with the child Jumatsu he is to pass. A wave of the hand—"Is it Kiku?... Is it mother?' The relationship longed for and regarded as enduring to the whiteness of the hair thus is reduced to the wave of a hand. The chaste wife suffers not the embrace of two men. Oh! Husband! Son!" Weeping O'Kiku hid her face in her sleeves as she made her plea.

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Harsh and triumphant was the voice of Shūzen as he pressed on this newly discovered weakness. "Then you lied; Jinnai lied, in calling you a maid. This Sampei and Jumatsu rightly are gallows-birds, doomed to the execution ground. Shūzen has but to say the word. Seized they are put to the torture; the child to know the bitterness of the scourge. Such a tiny body will be cut to ribbons. Listen well! Obey the command of this Shūzen. 'Tis the choice between the jewelled palanquin of the favoured mistress, or torture for these two. The kind offices of the bed for Shūzen, or the rottenness of the jail for these two criminals. The gift of Kiku's chastity secures for them oblivion.... You would ask time? To-morrow night, after the counting of the plates, the answer will be received." He ceased—to turn to Chūdayu, who for a little time had stood by, as one waiting on a matter of business. O'Kiku, face white and drawn, tottered away to her room.

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She had played false, and at a cast lost all. Gloomy, the long hair framing the distraught and unhappy face, she sat. "Unhappy the lot of this Kiku. The sisters left without a father's sanction, to witness the shadow on the mother's life; to know that father but as criminal ready to be sent to the execution ground; and now, by rashness of the tongue, to condemn husband and infant son to such a hideous fate! Remedy there is none. Perchance the life of this Kiku in sacrifice for both arouses kindness to pardon; or at least secures them in ignorance." Now she was all decision. Rapidly she loosed the girdle of her sash. The safety of her beloved was at stake, and no father's command held. The feet bound she seated herself before the mirror, took up the dagger and felt its keen point, then the morbid soft flesh of the neck. As she raised her arm it was seized at her side. Noiseless Chūdayu had entered and acted in prevention. With a grunt he bent down and severed the sash cord which restrained her. Then holding the dagger daintily he spoke his will—"Is not this madness, O'Kiku Dono? The Tono Sama has issued his summons, and the heart does not conform. The secret thought is known to this Chūdayu. Turn therefore to a friend. Safety is not to be sought by the drastic method of the steel. Look to flight. Chūdayu aids—nay goes in company. Against him there can be no grudge. If Sampei and this boy exist, they are not to be met within the *yashiki* of Aoyama Shūzen—either by submission and riding in the jewelled palanquin, or by the argument of the dagger. It is an easy matter for Chūdayu. An error confessed in conducting of the accounts, and with purse well lined with the gold of Shūzen this *yashiki* is abandoned. O'Kiku Dono goes in company. Between the two known connection there is

none, and without the wife this Sampei and Jumatsu go unharmed. In the relationship with Jinnai the link is missing and Edo too wide a mark to pick them out. So much can Chūdayu answer for."

"Ah!" At times a Buddha is met in Hell itself. With astonishment and reverence O'Kiku regarded this saintly apparition. Noting the impression made Chūdayu sat close by her. A little disturbed and restive she moved away. "The words of Chūdayu Dono are more than kind; never to be forgotten in this world. By such means are Sampei and Jumatsu really to be saved?"—"Most assuredly," was the smooth reply. "Chūdayu acts at once. Deign but the required pledge..."—"The pledge?" O'Kiku spoke now with misgiving filtering into a sinking heart. Said Chūdayu with impatience—"Pledge: don't feign innocence, O'Kiku Dono. Does Chūdayu sacrifice all for the mere amusement of the affair. Amusement there is indeed for him. O'Kiku must consent to accept this Chūdayu. Deign to change ox for horse. Failing Sampei, it is to Chūdayu she grants her favours. This is to be agreed—and right now, as pledge, a proof offered of her sincerity." Now there was no mistaking the words in invitation made plain by eye and gesture. She wrenched away the detaining hands laid upon her; sprang up. "Ah! Villainous man! You would rob your lord, deceive and betray this Kiku. Such speech is pollution to the ears; the touch of such a creature is loathsome. Chūdayu has the weapon of Kiku; but Kiku can still cry out and bring the household about your ears. Beast—away from here!" Armed as he was Chūdayu was afraid—"Pollution!—'beast'? Ha! The woman's thought rises after all to the surface in her hate. For this you shall pay. Just wait." He left the room in haste, to betake himself at once to the apartments of the *okugata*. O'Kiku crouched on the *tatami*, her eyes wide open, fastened on the texture of the straw surface, saw nothing but this new and terrible position. She could not die; she could not live; and yet the tiger was at the gate, the wolf at the postern.

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A maid came to summon her to Shūzen's presence. Knowing her position, her feelings, the solidarity of sex had veered to kindness for this unwilling rival. The girl was shocked at sight of her. "O'Kiku Dono! Tis but for the counting of the plates—as usual." She aided her to don the ceremonial costume. In all the magnificence of her apparel, with hair dressed high, she followed after the girl. In her beauty a splendid sight, in her heart "she was as the sheep going to the butcher." Her ladyship sat close beside Shūzen. Other *koshimoto*, with Chūdayu and several retainers, were present. Despite the customary nature of this vicarious reverence to the spirit of the Tōshō Shinkun (Ieyasu) there was an oppression, a suppressed interest, which seemed to fasten every eye on O'Kiku as slowly and gracefully she bore the box before her lord, made salutation. "Open;" the word from Shūzen's lips came dry and harsh—"One"—"Um"—"Two"—"Um"—"Three, four"—"Um"—"Five"—"Um"—"Six, seven"—"Um"—"Eight"—"Um"—"Nine.... Oya! Oya!" Then in fright—"What shall I do!" With horror O'Kiku gazed at the fragments of the tenth plate lying at the bottom. Shūzen, all moved by his wrath and excitement, leaned forward. The holly hock crest ground to powder was almost indistinguishable. Hardly able to believe her eyes O'Kiku mechanically began to finger the pile of porcelain—One, two, three ... they followed up to nine.... "What shall I do!"

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The malice and ferocity of Shūzen's tone sent a thrill through those present—"Vicious jade! This is a sample of Kiku's hatred to this Shūzen, through him of her disloyalty to the revered House. What explanation can be offered? What expiation?" Slowly and in despair O'Kiku raised her head. She caught the triumphant glance passed between the *okugata* and Chūdayu. All was illuminated. This was Chūdayu's threatened vengeance. As of one dying her voice—"This is not the deed of Kiku. Daughter of the criminal Jinnai she holds no grudge against lord or suzerain; would but pray in this world for oblivion of those offences in a future existence. Deign, my lord to believe this Kiku. Malice acts here. But a short time ago Chūdayu..." The man sprang forward—"Lying hussy!... Tono Sama, this woman would save herself by slander. Plain has been her ill feeling against the honoured lord in refusal to obey his summons. Here lies the proof of ill intent and rebellion against the suzerain's House. Surely there is no punishment for such but death!"—"Surely there is no punishment for this but death!" The harsh voice of the *okugata* was heard in repetition.

Shūzen spoke—"A twig broken on the flowering branch of plum, and the whole is to be cut off.' Such the words of Kurō Hangwan Yoshitsuné. Kiku, you are a vile, treacherous woman; undeserving of Heaven's favour and the kindness shown by Shūzen. Now you lie—with the fancy tale of child and husband, in order to escape the bed of Shūzen; with slanderous insinuation to throw your crime against others.... Here!" At the command the *kerai* came forward and dragged her within reach. Shūzen seized a hand. "Ten the plates: one broken, the tale destroyed. Apology is to be made. Make full confession. No? For the one, ten are due." There was a *hibachi* close by his side. He dragged her arm over the brazier, drew his dagger—"One." At the middle joint the finger fell severed into the ashes. "Two"—"Two," faintly answered O'Kiku. "Three"—"Three"—"Four"—"Four"—"Five"—"Five." Shūzen laughed. "Kiku cannot hold grudge as being maimed. The stumps remain." Chūdayu sprang forward at Shūzen's sign. Roughly holding the bleeding stumps he pressed them into the harsh cautery of living coals. A suppressed wailing cry from Kiku, a shuddering and turning away of the frightened women; her ladyship laughed out loud. Kiku raised her head and gave her a long look. Shūzen grasped the other arm. The punishment went on. "Six.... No confession?" One by one the remaining joints fell. Only the thumb remained. Like a demon the *okugata* sprang forward. She snatched away the keen weapon, and pressing down the edge of the blade triumphant raised the severed digit torn away to the wrist. Shūzen himself rose in astonishment at the act. All were in a wild excitement. The violent woman strove to shriek, but choked in her rage and utterance. They surrounded her and bore her off to her own apartment.

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A wave of the hand and all but Chūdayu had departed. Shūzen was divided between his hate and the certainty of having been deceived. Besides, only the body was maimed, and in the malice of his heart he would soil this woman's soul. He leaned over the helpless figure. "Your own deed, Kiku: make confession and submission. There is yet life to plead for. Ha! 'Tis true. Vicious wench, you would seek the destruction of Shūzen by temptation; the grudge is to be carried to the end." From far off came the answer—"Alas! To this Kiku are imputed the wet garments. A lie destroys her to whom life is displeasing. Aye! The grudge is to be carried to the end. Against this treacherous Chūdayu, against Aoyama and his House the grudge. Remember well!" In fury Shūzen sprang to his feet—"Chūdayu, take hold of this woman. Out with her to the garden!" With practised hand the chamberlain bound hands and feet. Then following after Shūzen he dragged her through the snow to the old well. "'Tis here," said Shūzen briefly. Removing the bucket the rope was tied under the arms of O'Kiku. "Your own act and deed, Kiku. In your punishment apology is made to the suzerain House. Go join your father Jinnai at the Yellow Fountain (Kwōsen) in Hell... Chūdayu, kill her by inches." Seeing the chamberlain's hesitation Shūzen gave the body a push. Swift the descent. The splash of the water was heard. "Heave up!" With eager energy Chūdayu brought O'Kiku to the curb. "No confession yet?"—"Aye! Grudge the last thought; grudge against Chūdayu; against this Aoyama, him and his." The long wet hair hanging about the chalk white face, the bulging glaring eyes, the disordered saturated garments of the half drowned girl, were too much for Chūdayu. The man now was struck with fright. He sought to save her. "Tono Sama, is not the purpose satisfied? A request...."—"Coward! Are you afraid of the ghost? Surely Kiku will visit the couch of Chūdayu—as perhaps to his desire." But Chūdayu now openly was afraid and not ashamed. "Deign to spare her, Tono Sama.... O'Kiku Dono, this is no affair of Chūdayu. As ghost deign to haunt the Tono Sama. 'Tis the Tono Sama who kills you." He plead; but inexorable the whispering voice—"The grudge! Against Chūdayu...." Then in terror Chūdayu sought the end—"Ah! Vile bitch!... Tono Sama, deign to cut short the curse, and with it the breath of this hussy."—"Your act and deed, Chūdayu...." Shūzen took up the rest of the sentence. "Pass your sword into her belly, Chūdayu; the lord's order." Chūdayu hesitated. Then looking away he thrust—once, twice. There was a squishing sound, as of steel entering something soft. A heart rending scream rang through the air. It was like the ripping apart of silk. Shūzen stepped to the curb, looked into the agonized staring eyes. Then he gave the final thrust of his dagger into the windpipe, and cast the weapon to Chūdayu to cleanse. As if an automaton the man went through his task: brought the heavy stone to bind into the long trailing garment. Seeing his helplessness Shūzen shrugged his shoulders with contempt. With his dagger he severed the rope. *Dobun!* A final splash of water at the end.

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CHAPTER XXV

CHŪDAYU WINS HIS SUIT

Chūdayu's legs bent under him. "Ah! My lord! O'Kiku grasps my neck!" A cold hand laid upon him he shrieked in fear. Shūzen turned—"Fool! 'Tis a clod of snow from the tree above, fallen on your collar. Off with you to bed. Truly in these days such fellows are good for nothing." Off he strode to the *rōka*. For a moment he looked out—on the heavy flakes coming down like cotton wadding, at the figure of Chūdayu staggering like a drunken man to his quarters. With a laugh he closed the *amado*, seated himself before the heated wine. Yet the woman would not get out of his thoughts. "What a fool! A matter of no import would have given her position with others and influence with this Shūzen.... Ha! Ha! How frightened was Chūdayu! It is not the shadowy fingers of the dead which do good or ill, but the flesh clad muscles of the living. As to your ghosts...." He snapped his fingers and drank wine in derision. Thus he spent the early hours of the night.

"What's that!" He put the bottle down at the sound of voices in excitement, of running feet. Soon an officer appeared. The *okugata* was threatened with premature delivery. A physician was to be had at once. Shūzen shrugged his shoulders with indifference. Five months—seven months—nine months—what a matter to trouble a man with! So angry was he that they dared not tell him more. Matters were going very badly with her ladyship. In her delirium she raved over the past scene of the punishment. The tortures of this present delivery were added to an hundred fold by the disorders of the over-wrought brain. Then the child was born. The assembled women whispered to each other. A very monster had seen light: perfect in its main parts, but with the face of Emma Dai-Ō as a foetus—with the fingers lacking on the hands. They dared not let the sick woman see it. She detected their confusion, asked to see the child. She grew more and more excited with refusal, and they were at a loss what to do. Finally the child was brought, to her distress and confusion. Then—as from the ceiling—"Shame on the House of Aoyama Shūzen. A maimed child, a monster is born as its issue." And the voice began to count, followed by the moving lips of her ladyship—"One"—"One"—"Two"—"Two"—"Three"—"Three"—monotonously it went on to—"Nine.... Ah! What shall I do! One is missing. Wa! Wa!" So lamentable the crying voice that a chill went to the hearts of all. Again the count went on; again the failure and the lamentable cry and weeping. Her ladyship sat up. They strove to restrain her, but in her madness she shouted back in answer to the counting—"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.... Ha! One is missing! Vile slut! Thus to maim the child in malice." She raved and tore at the covering. From the disordered hair streaming around face and bust looked out at them the wan face of O'Kiku. In disorder the women fled. Driven back by the necessity of their duty they found her lying dead in a pool of blood. As for the maimed and deformed monster, he took well to the nurse's breast. Such

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they always do.

Where was Chūdayu in all this confusion? Shūzen had men hunting him high and low. Angered at his absence, his own dislike and suspicion of him as possible rival grew with the night and the hours, rendered bitter by these household scenes. He would settle matters with Chūdayu. "Yokubei" he had heard him called; and covetousness turns not only to gold and such like. As fact Chūdayu had good excuse for absence. Much out of sorts he had betaken himself to his own rooms and the care of the old woman in charge, his only female companion in lieu of wife. Ah! What weather! The snow changed to sleet and rain drove into and chilled to the marrow those out in the storm. The *baya* (old woman) at his entrance was all astonishment—"Danna Sama! The garments are wet through. Condescend at once to make a change." Gruffly Chūdayu accepted her aid. Stripping off first one and then another of the outer garments he too grumbled in his turn—"What a fool the woman was! To lose life against the sacrifice of such a trifling thing. Ah! She was a maddening beauty; of the kind to drive the blood to boiling heat. Never again.... What's that?" Pon-pon: the sound of someone knocking ashes from a pipe into the receiver came from the inner room. The *baya* was laughing—"Ha! Ah! The Danna Sama is a sly one. He is the one to make friends with the beauties. The lady regretted the Danna's absence, said that she would wait the honoured return.... Who? 'Tis she so sought by the Tono Sama himself; and who instead favours the Danna. O'Kiku Dono...." Before the wild stare of Chūdayu, the clutch on her wrist, the old woman stopped in fright. Then from within came the counting—"One, two, three, four, five"—"Six," Chūdayu mechanically joined in. "Seven"—"Seven"—"Eight"—"Eight"—"Nine"—"Nine"—the words were followed by the chilling lamentable wail of a soul in agony. "What shall I do! What shall I do!" With a yell Chūdayu dashed to the *shōji* and threw them back. No one! With astonishment and terror the old woman gazed at him as seeking an explanation which did not come. "The lights in the Butsudā! Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu! Praise to Amida, the Lord Buddha!... Wine! Wine, and much of it; very hot!"

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He sat, his head in hands, watching the flickering light in the altar stand. "Ha! 'A woman and a man of small comprehension: these are hard to govern.' Kōshi (Confucius) says it. This Chūdayu has played the fool to the Tono Sama's extravagances." The bell of Gekkeiji began to strike the hour of the watch. It came clear and mournful across the snow. "How like a woman's nature," says the native scribe. "One"—"One"—"Two"—"Two"—"Three"—"Three." ... Chūdayu went on, mechanically following the blows hammered into his brain. Then came the heart rending hopeless wail which chilled his very soul. The old woman in amazement and pain gave a howl as the hot wine ran over hands and fingers. Chūdayu on his feet stupidly gazed at the bottle rolling to the end of the room. "'Tis of no import," he muttered. "Now—to get hence. Close up all. To-night Chūdayu returns not."—"But Danna Sama! Condescend to consider! The Danna Sama is not himself. Truly he will be ill. Deign the honoured couch." The couch in that room! He shuddered all over. The old woman wrung and wiped her scalded fingers, and would persuade him to seek rest. She simpered in her blandishment. "Where could she possibly have gone, for *baya* saw no exit? Perhaps the lady comes again; and in the *yashiki* there is no greater beauty than O'Kiku Dono. Fortunate the Danna...." Truly she thought him gone mad. "Shut up!" roared Chūdayu. His eyes blazing under the heat of the quantity of his hot stimulant he thrust her, a heap huddled into a corner of the room. Trembling hands adjusted what garments he could lay eyes upon. Over all he threw a long wool cloak with hood and eyelets against the snow. Turning to the entrance he glowered at her, hand on his dagger—"More words of that vile jade, and *baya* joins her own beneath the stone. This Chūdayu goes to Nakachō, to a public woman. If that O'Baké comes again.... Ha! Ha!... Let her lie with *Baya*.... Why! She's not even rotten yet!" He left the old woman stupefied and quaking, himself to leap out into the storm and darkness.

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Outside the gate he had a shock. In the shadow he ran into a woman standing by, who turned at his greeting. O'Kiku's face? With clenched fist he would have struck, but the vision faded. "Truly the *baya* is not wrong. Chūdayu is mad, or drunk." His knuckles had near encounter with the brazen crest fastened into the post. This brought him to himself. Rapid was his descent of Gomizaka. At its foot was a *kago* stand. "The Danna Sama from the Aoyama *yashiki*—he condescends the *kago*. One all closed? The Danna Sama will lie as snug as in a *koshi* (*kwanoké* = hearse)." Chūdayu took the joke badly. The fellow sprawled on the ground under the blow—"Is this a funeral procession? Truly the night itself is bad enough—without the joke."—"A scurvy knave," humbly explained the *kago* chief. "A country recruit, just to hand. Deign to pardon his impertinence." He edged the fellow off, called up another man—"The Danna stands not on the fare? Truly 'tis such a night as rarely has been seen. With wind and sleet the men can barely stand. But the Danna is in haste. Surely a woman is at the journey's end.... Not a palanquin but with mats." Chūdayu was neatly bundled into the litter. The mats were lowered at the sides and covered with oiled paper. "To Nakanochō; and at good round pace." He hardly heard the functionary's words. "Ah! How she hated this Chūdayu! How she glared into the Tono Sama's eyes as he dealt the blow into her pap!... A vicious jade; yet a beauty. Where could such beauty be encountered? May the *kami* (gods) grant Chūdayu the same good fortune this night!" More pleasing vision soothed him. He was filled with hot wine and fast grew dazed and sleepy. The gentle motion of the *kago* rocked him as in a cradle. Yet he could not get sleep. Her voice was in his ears; without, in talk with the *kago* men? He raised a corner of the mat. With surprise—"Heigh, *kagoya*! What place is this?" He was passing the moat on his right not left; the hill sloped down, not up toward Nakano (Shinjuku). "Danna Sama, it is Suidōbashi."—"Suidōbashi! And does one go to Nakanochō by Suidōbashi? Knaves! About with you, and to the right course as directed."

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The men, after their kind, grumbled; but to themselves; and in a way their fare should hear. "Naruhodo! What a beast of a night is this! Mate, it is to Nakanochō; but Nakanochō whither? The Danna Sama is testy. He is not to be questioned. He might give a cut. Jubei is lucky. He has changed head for rear. A care there! A care there! What? Again around? What a night, and what a Danna to deal with!" The unconscious Chūdayu was borne onward. Again the vinous fumes passed off. To his amazement he saw the water on the left; but not what he sought. "Heigh! Heigh! *Kago* men, whither now? What place yonder?"—"Yanagibara, Danna Sama." Chūdayu's voice was big with wrath. "True *kago* men as guides! Does one go to Yanagibara to go to Nakanochō of Shinjuku."—"Oya! Oya! The Danna always tells us to go this way, that way. Nakanochō, Nakachō—is it Yoshiwara, or Fukagawa, or Naitō Shinjuku to which the Danna goes? 'Tis but the lady at the pole who has a clear head and forces us to go this way.... Danna, never mind the fare money. Condescend to alight. It is a hard night; too hard for such a baffling task.... Here is your pretty friend again!"

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Chūdayu raised the mat and looked out. Vaguely outlined in the again whirling snowy darkness stood O'Kiku. With wild cry he sprang out, sword drawn. The *kago* men dropped the litter and took to their heels. Dazed Chūdayu looked around him. Ah! He was drunk with wine, and visions haunted him. Yanagibara? Let it be Yoshiwara then. Stalking through the Ōmon he made his way to the Nagatoya, a tea house at which he was known. "Oya! The honoured Danna Sama of the Banchō *yashiki*. In good season Aikawa Dono; the lady awaits the honoured *buké-sama*."—"A lady waiting? Fool! Who brings a woman to this market where he comes to purchase?" The *bantō* (clerk) of the tea house insisted. "Aikawa Sama, is it not fact? She is barely of twenty years; outstripping in beauty the greatest of the Go Tayu.... Her name? O'Kiku San...." In his amazement the man rose from his kneeling salutation, craned his neck to watch the flying figure of Chūdayu disappear. Perhaps the Danna had gone mad. Surely he was mad; and not one to come on foot on such a night and all the way from the Banchō. He sighed at loss of such an eager customer.

Chūdayu walked into the first tea house to hand when he had stopped for breath. A first visit, his tea money (*chadai*) was munificent. Such a customer deserved good treatment from the Izuzuya. Hence the attendant guided him to the Miuraya, where was bespoken the presence of the brilliant *oiran* O'Yodo. The hour was late. The *oiran* was detained. Chūdayu was sleepy and demanded his room. Hardly had he taken to his couch to await her presence than he was asleep. Leaving her other guest O'Yodo pushed open the *shōji* and entered. She deserved her reputation for beauty. A splendid girl, for she was not more than woman yet. A little tall for her sex; fair and with but little powder, an oval face, long trailing hair, and shapely hands and feet for all this business. *Batan-batan* the sound of the *zōri* (sandals). She dropped these on the outside. The stranger was asleep. Sitting beside him she gathered the folds of her crape night robe about her bare feet. With a deft touch she adjusted the knot of the pink sash which confined it; then turned attention to the long silver chased pipe and the face of the sleeping man. Some feeling was aroused she could not understand. There was much she did not yet understand in this bitter toil of hers.

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Chūdayu began to speak; at first in halting and broken sentences; then in a continued flood—"Ah! Ha! That look of hate! Chūdayu acted most foully. 'Twas he who took the plate, to secure his safety and O'Kiku's death. Deign to pardon. It was not Chūdayu; 'twas the Tono Sama who dealt the fatal blow.... What? The suffering?... Ah! But the suffering of mind.... Now she begins—one—two—three—four—five—six—seven—eight—nine.... Kiya!" The shriek rang through the room, bringing O'Yodo to her feet. Crouched beside the *andon* was outlined vaguely the figure of her sister O'Kiku. "Nēsan! Here! And what...." At the words she turned to meet the wide open frightened gaze of Chūdayu. The matter of fact, gentle tones calmed him. "A first meeting with the honoured guest. Deign to pardon the awkwardness of Yodo." Chūdayu came out of his sleep reassured. He had dreamed; a frightful dream. She told him so, and pressed him curiously as to why he had called out. "The honoured *samurai* (*buké-sama*), who then favours Yodo?" He spoke, as being again himself—the military man, and no less a person than the chamberlain of Aoyama Shūzen Sama, *hatamoto* with a *yashiki* in the Banchō. "Perhaps then a serving maid called O'Kiku is known to the honoured sir." Again Chūdayu's doubts were raised at evident resemblance—to be reassured. "No kin: we knew each other well in early life. The father was a great criminal, and O'Kiku, it was heard, was condemned to be a slave for life. Entered in this business nothing has been seen of each other. She is well—in mind and body?" The question was timid, and Chūdayu did not notice the unnatural eagerness. "In Kiku's place mind and body are assured their lot; to undergo no change." Captivated by this beauty he was now eager for his good fortune. Reluctant and with misgiving she allowed him to draw her close.

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CHAPTER XXVI

SAMPEI DONO

He was poor; coarsely and scantily clad as he came on his return through the darkness and snowflakes now coming down wet and moist, whirling and twisting under the increasing gale and gradually turning into a penetrating chilling sleet against which the straw raincoat was poor protection. In this guise Wataru Sampei was the gardener, making a precarious living at which his skill was accidental and vicarious. In his shabby home he was the *samurai*, his two swords

treasured, carefully wrapped and put away in the closet; struggling to live in order to bring up this boy Jumatsu in his own cult, to better times and retribution on the upstarts from the South. This night too had been part of his *samurai's* duty, in its *sankei* or pilgrimage to the Asakusa Kwannon. O'Kiku believed in efficacy of prayer to the goddess of mercy. A hasty word, implied rather than spoken, as to a passer by during the first sight of her, and the gesture of acquiescence on his part who had little faith. But the gesture was as strong in its obligation as an oath written and signed in blood.

On approaching his home with surprise he noted a woman by the door. She seemed to be in the act of coming or going. Surely he could not mistake that figure; nay, throwing the light of his lantern ahead a glimpse of the white wan face startled him. His heart leaped within him—"Is it Kiku? How comes the wife here at this hour? How has exit from the *yashiki* been permitted?" But the woman answered not. Instead she moved away from him, into the darkness. More and more astonished Sampei called after her and followed. Always she eluded him. Thus he was led away two hundred, three hundred yards. There she was, halted beneath the willow tree on the river bank. His pace broke into a run. Now she did not move or attempt to elude him, but as he came up the figure was but a stela to point the way to a near-by shrine. Sampei passed his hand over his brow. Kiku was too much on his mind; this forced widowerhood with charge of a toddling boy. Ah! If pity and affection would but allow him to transfer the child to others! Better would it be for both. But how face the mother without the child—and then, the lot of one's favoured child in the house of strangers and under their cold glances? Sampei himself could not part with Jumatsu. Easy was it for him to cut belly—and leave mother and child in this desolate condition. Meanwhile his uneasiness of mind at their present outlook was driving him to delusions.

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Taking off his wet outer garments he stole into the bedroom. Now it was very late in the night; he would not disturb the child. To his surprise he found him sitting up on the quilts, shivering and weeping. "Bōchan! What's gone wrong?" He took the child's hands, anxious to note any sign of distress or fever. But Jumatsu made answer in his turn—"Mother has just been here. She was crying. She said—'Bō, the parting is for long. Never again will the mother be seen. Grow up, Bō; grow up to be a fine man.' Then she cried more than ever." A hand seemed to grasp the heart of Sampei—"Mother here, Bōchan!" Surely the child could not lie, even make up the story at this age, so fitting into his own uneasy vision. Continued the little fellow mid his tears—"It was not her fault. Someone broke the holly hock plate and charged mother with the crime. Then the Tono Sama killed her. He wanted her for his concubine; and so came to hate her and easily took the tale. It was not her fault. She said this—then went away."—"Whither?" Sampei's tone was so abrupt and harsh to startle the child into quiescence. He pointed to the house altar on its stand—"Mother just went away; into the Butsudan.... And she hasn't come back—to Bōchan." He ended in a wail and childish weeping. Ah! The hands now grasping at Sampei were of ice. Slowly he approached the Butsudan. Startled he saw the snow within it. This wild tale was taking the hold of certainty on his mind. He lit first one light, then the other in the altar stand. Then sharply of itself rang the little bell. A cold sweat stood out on Sampei's body—"Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!" Earnest the prayer for some departed soul. Unconvinced, yet feeling the truth of the impression he passed the night with eyes wide open. With dawn he would go forth to make inquiries at the Banchō *yashiki*. This would be the fifteenth day. Anyhow Kiku would be expecting him.

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He set out early, carrying the boy on his back. Humbly and with experience of such places he approached the gateman. "An inquiry to make."—"What is it?"—"At this *yashiki* is there not a woman labouring, one O'Kiku?" The man eyed him with the contemptuous tolerance of him who knows—"Woman labouring? In the *yashiki* there are two score and more. Of Kiku more than one; although those of the men's quarters have nothing to do with such matters. Perhaps the slave girl Kiku is intended.... See her! Good fellow, are you mad? One under condemnation is not to be seen.... You have come far? Even if you had come from Ōshū or Kyūshū you could not see her.... But all the way from Honjō; it's too bad." The man looked at him with more benevolence. After all he had some heart, and many distressed people came to this *yashiki*; entered into it. "Are you thirsty?... No? In that case entrance there is none; although the water of the well in the *yashiki* is said to be superior to all other, sovereign to cure thirst.... Ah! You have been dying with thirst all night. Your tongue cleaves to the roof of the mouth. Then the case is altered. For the silver thanks are felt. Just enter. Perhaps some maid will come to the well to draw water. Perhaps this Kiku herself. One so ready—of tongue—can easily excuse his presence and this Yōzaémon, if there be question."

With humble thanks and joy Sampei followed the instructions. The well was at the corner of the larger paved space and from it he could see into the inner garden and the greater privacy of the establishment. Here he could note more life at this early hour, and even the stir of excitement. People were running to and fro as under some unusual stimulus. Slowly he drank, delayed as long as he could, unnoticed and unquestioned. He could not thus act too long. Indeed as he moved off a foot soldier (*ashigaru*) passing asked his business. He gave excuse as on mission to a servant, whose name he picked up from one just gone by. As the man had taken a message outside his answer was a safe one. Sharply the *ashigaru* repeated the fact of absence, and Sampei had no excuse not to leave. The excitement now was spreading to the front quarters of the *yashiki*. Fragments of talk showed him that his visit was most inopportune. Her ladyship had just died, and the household was in a buzz. When he would again speak to the gateman, the functionary's manner did not encourage it, Sampei took the hint of his cold unrecognizing eye and bowed in humble acknowledgment to all in going out the gate. "Chūdayu Dono—where is Aikawa Sama to be found?"—"The honoured chamberlain? He left the *yashiki* last night in the other watch. There

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has been no return during this of Yozaémon." So much he caught in passing.

Slowly Sampei passed down the Gomizaka and along the moat of the castle. It was with greatest reluctance he left this place. The child began to whimper. "*Otosan* (father), this Jumatsu is hungry." The little fellow's whimper turned to genuine tears. The father heartened him. Just ahead, on the Kudanzaka, all that should be remedied. Of the number of small shops Sampei noted the sign of the Kikkyōya—the House of the Full Well Bucket. Bending under the curtain strips hanging at the front he entered the cook shop. "Deign to come up here.... For food? Of the best: clam soup, a stew of vegetables and fish, hot boiled *tōfu* ... and *saké*, none better." The place did not promise much despite the advertisement. Avoiding the doubtful stew Sampei ordered wine for himself and hot boiled bean paste (*tōfu*) for Jumatsu. As he fed the child, and at opportunity sipped his wine, a blind shampooer entered; in this tiny place to take a seat close by. Apparently he was well known thereabouts. In bringing wine the host sat down beside him to talk—almost into the ear of Sampei.—"Toku no Ichi San, you are early abroad. Does illness or luxurious idleness summon the honoured *Amma San* to the couch?... But yourself, you do not look well. Work late into the night goes not with early rising. This is going to excess." The man coughed and drank, turned his sightless eyes on Sampei. What he said made this latter all attention.

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"It is no early call brings out this Ichibei. Ah! What a night this last!"—"Truly so," replied the matter of fact host. "And no sign of the storm's cessation." He looked out for a moment on the flakes of snow, again coming down thick and heavy. "Drink your wine, Ichibei Dono. In truth you are as white as yonder falling flakes which you do not see. And 'tis said your kind cannot see ghosts."—"See them; no. To those whose eyes are darkened by the night of blindness the gods have granted grace against such visions. But alas! Other faculties have been sharpened. He who cannot see, can hear. Listen Jirōbei San. Last night this Ichibei was called to the *yashiki* of Ōkubo Sama. The *okugata* was in pain and needed his treatment for the limbs. It is a kindly house, one good to go to. The storm kept Ichibei in the *yashiki*: Food and the mat was granted, for his lordship would not send a cur, once granted shelter, out into storm and darkness. But next door it is very different. Here is the *yashiki* of Aoyama Shūzen Sama—the Yakuin of Edo. Jirōbei San knows of him. His lordship took the *yashiki* for the old well of the Yoshida Goten. 'Tis said at nights he takes wine and pipe, sits by the well, and in his hardiness and defiance of weather and season challenges the ghosts to appear. Last night.... Ah! The scene rung into the ears appears before the eyes even of the blind. It was the sound of blows—as of a wet cloth striking bare flesh. A woman plead for mercy. 'Vile wench.... Kiku.' These words were heard. Then such a scream—'Kiya!' as of rending silk—that yet it rings into the ears of this Ichibei; to banish sleep and peace of mind for the rest of the night. What could it be? Had the ghosts appeared? Or had some maid displeased the Tono Sama, and hence suffered death at his hand (*te-uchi*)? He is not one to spare suffering.... Ah! How she suffered! All night Ichibei has lain awake and suffered with her. It seems as if her cry never would depart from these ears. With dawn I fled—without food, and doubtless to the astonishment of all. Feeling faint, your shop offered refreshment."—"Another bottle?... O'Kabé! At once: for Toku no Ichi San.... Honoured guest, thanks. Deign again the honoured patronage. Sixty *mon* the price, *sayonara*."

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Sampei paid the scot, and with Jumatsu carefully wrapped up against the storm passed out into the open air. Now he was himself again; the *samurai* of Kai, with the old traditions of his province and his liegeship to the great Takéda House. Against this Aoyama double was the vendetta—for Jinnai, for his wife Kiku. His ears had drunk in the convincing tale of the blind shampooer. His decision was as ready. His steps now were bent to the Miuraya in the Yoshiwara. At his name the *bantō* expressed surprise. "The *oiran* was about to send a message; most opportune the honoured coming. Deign for the moment to wait." Related to their great attraction Sampei had every attention. Shortly the sound of *zōri* was heard, and O'Yui entered the room. Jumatsu viewed her beauty and splendour with grave approval, astonishment, and fear. "Obasan (auntie)? But she is young; beautiful, just like mother. Oh! Just like the pictures of the great Tayu." The two elders listened, preoccupied and with pained smile. "What book; and where seen?... Oya! Oya! In the priest's room at the Fukuganji? That should not be. Priest and *oiran* are not of kin." O'Yui's laugh was so silvery that Jumatsu in admiration pressed close to her knee. Claspng him she spoke to Sampei. Ah! How great was her anxiety. As she told her tale the heart of Sampei was filled with wrath and certainty—"This Chūdayu is such a strange fellow. The weather still holds him to the place. Hence by good luck it was possible to ask for a consultation. Has not some injury befallen the person of Nēsan? The ravings of this man in his drunken sleep, the vision of the sister, the face and garments all dyed with blood, cannot these find confirmation or disproof? In the embrace of this man Yui shudders." She wept.

With growing weight and terror at heart she noted the increasing gloom of Sampei's face. "Kiku is no longer of this world. It is true. Herself she told the tale to Jumatsu. At the *yashiki* all is confusion with the death of the lady of the House. By accident Jumatsu's vision is corroborated by the blind shampooer, led into the cook shop of Kudanzaka by the same hand which led Chūdayu to the arms of the *oiran* O'Yodo. The evidence is complete for this Sampei. To-night—at the first opportunity—Sampei kills this Aoyama Shūzen; then cuts belly. As for Chūdayu, Kiku has brought him to O'Yui San. Deign to accept the charge. Last night he has been the lover, and the chance of the weather and the charms of O'Yui have kept him here. Let the coming night be his last." He put a restraining hand on the sleeve of O'Yui. In vengeance at once she would have rushed off to poniard this obscene fellow. Be once more the object of his embraces? Alas! Hers indeed was "the bitter toil," which led her to the arms of this scoundrel dripping with a sister's blood. But she listened to the cold and cautious counsel of Sampei, and nodded comprehension and assent.

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When she re-entered the room where Chūdayu was drinking and roistering there was not a sign of any emotion. Once again she was the harlot, to charm and inveigle him into remaining with her. Ha! Ha! The gods had granted his prayer. "Kiku? She was a beauty—and the impression of childhood would be corroborated by her later appearance. But even thus she is a faded old woman to the honoured *oiran*. A bag of bones!" He roared with drunken laughter; and O'Yui fingered the handle of the dagger in her bosom, in frenzy at the vile jest. "Come now! Kiku has been the object of Chūdayu's love. He confesses it. But now—away with such an O'Baké. He seeks the greater solace of O'Yodo's arms." The wine nearly choked him. His eyes stood out. He gasped and choked. Anxiously the *oiran* nursed him back to breath.

Late that night he had gone to bed very drunk. The ninth hour struck (1 A.M.). O'Yodo, who had sought temporary excuse, entered. Chūdayu again was dreaming, horribly. Ah! This vision would never pass. O'Kiku was standing by him. At first faint, then loud came the voice, and Chūdayu counted with her—"One"—"One"—"Two"—"Two"—"Three"—"Three"... On went the count. Now she was astride of him, pressing him down, throttling him. "O'Kiku Dono! It was not Chūdayu. The treachery was his; but the Tono Sama gave the blow." He writhed and struggled in his sleep. Then O'Yui dealt the thrust, straight downward. "Yai! Yai! Ah!" The scream rang out, startling all around. Alas! A little misdirected the dagger glanced from the bone and pierced the shoulder. As the man rolled her off the girl made one desperate effort. Deep she thrust the blade into his right side, ripped it up and side ways. "Kiya!" Chūdayu staggered and rolled over, hands to his side to hold in the severed liver and guts. When she would strike again her hands were held. The bawd (*yarité*), aroused and passing, saw the shadow of the raised dagger. The *bantō* had come to her aid. While some sought to aid the desperately wounded man, others drew away O'Yodo, again the woman and overcome with tears of regret at her failure.

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Jinzaémon of the Miuraya questioned her. Was it *shinjū*—a mutual suicide to insure happiness together in the next life? Had she really known the man before, and not pretended new acquaintance? Then, without mention of Sampei, she told the story of her vision, her certainty that inquiry would establish the truth of its accusation. Jinzaémon had no recourse. The Yoshiwara *bugyō*, with *dōshin*, was soon at hand. "To kill a man on such evidence...." But before applying torture he would question the victim. Chūdayu's case was hopeless. The liver was almost severed. Death was but a matter of an hour or two. During that time his ravings in delirium, his confession in lucid moments, added a new and momentous phase to the case in corroborating the tale of the *oiran* as to the strange vision. The *bugyō* did not dare to go further. He must consult those higher in authority. A *hatamoto* of the land was involved; one just favoured with appointment as *tsukaiban* (staff officer) to the suzerain. The *machibugyō* himself had no power in this case. Hence the affair—its nature and its proof—must be submitted to the *waka-toshiyori*, the officer of State in immediate charge of the *hatamoto*, their control and interests. Meanwhile the affair must be smothered and strict search made for the recent visitor Sampei, who had completely disappeared. Jumatsu readily was traced to the care of the house master (*iyenushi*) at Koumé. His tenant, on plea of business in Kai, had left the child with him. Thus they went astray, and thus failed to act. Meanwhile Shinano no Kami at last determined to send for and question Aoyama Shūzen. The seventh day following the retribution was reached—to the great enlightenment of these puzzled magistrates.^[33]

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CHAPTER XXVII

AOYAMA WINS HIS SUIT

Aoyama's *yashiki* blazed with light. The guests looked around, at the many lamps, the waiting-women in dainty attire, the ornament of service and of substance; and then looked into each other's faces. The unseemliness of the thing was on the minds of all these dozen to twenty gentlemen. The body of the wife had hardly been carried from the house to the funeral pyre. It was true that grief was to be given no display in the *samurai* code. The new promotion offered excuse for its celebration. But on the whole this feast seemed an indecent exhibition of rejoicing. "Aoyama Uji is not the Shūzen of old. What has got into the man this past month?" Thus Okumura Shūzen spoke of his namesake. "Bah! It is the shadow of Kiku, the 'sewing girl.' Aoyama rejoices in thus replacing old material. May he get a better heir on her than his last. 'Tis said to be a monster!" Endō Saburōzaémon whispered, half in jest and half in a savage earnest of disapproval.

Ōkubo Hikoroku first broached the matter openly at table. "Aoyama Uji, is this not a strange meeting? Here we are, all members of the Gaman Kwai; as *hatamoto*, men close to the suzerain's knee and ready for the call to battle. But this—with the glitter of apparel in substance and women, it is show and feast for *kugé* (court nobles), a meeting to view the moon and its light upon the snow. Deign to explain." Aoyama smiled. He might have made some formal excuse for this eccentricity. Saburōzaémon spoke out for him—"Don't be obtuse, Ōkubo Uji. The one lacking here is the cause of the feast. O'Kiku Dono still delays. Is it not so, Aoyama Uji?" He spoke with cold certainty, a curious intonation in voice. Aoyama was black with a fury about to burst forth when Ōkubo sprang up. He looked around. "Just so! Wait but a moment. We'll have her here." Aoyama was turned aside, and would have detained him. "Hikoroku Dono, it is useless. Kiku is not in the *yashiki*." To the dubious look of astonishment—"It is fact. She was a vile disloyal woman. Breaking the holly hock plate, the trust gift of the Tōshōgu, this Aoyama put her to

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death. This shall be apology to the suzerain's House." Ōkubo sat down again in pure amazement—"For what is said one feels regret. The apology is made; but surely...." Endō Saburōzaémon laughed outright. He seemed with intention to egg him on. Ōkubo turned indignantly. "Why laugh, Endō Uji? Is the life of a human being to be put against a piece of porcelain?"—"Saburōzaémon laughs at your credulity, Ōkubo Dono. It is but a ruse to put us from the search. Kiku certainly is not far off."

Ōkubo danced up in a fury. This time he was not to be kept. "'Tis true! But the badger's lurking hole, the place where he keeps her, is known. Soon she shall be here." Defying Shūzen's wrath he and Endō left the room. Ōkubo was ahead. Throwing open the *shōji* of the maid's room he looked within. Ah! Standing by the closet in the dim light was the figure of O'Kiku. "Kiku, why are you here, not joining in the feast? The beauty and the lady, whose love seduces so stern a man as Shūzen to soft ways, is not to neglect the guests. Come to the banquet hall." He seized her sleeve. Said Saburōzaémon from the *rōka*—"Whom do you address, Ōkubo Uji?" He looked around the room. "There is no one here.... Kiku? You grasp a garment hanging on the clothes rack." It was true. Dazed and somewhat upset Ōkubo returned to the banquet room. Aoyama met defiantly the hard look of Endō, the inquiring question of Ōkubo—"Is it true Aoyama? Did you really value a human life against a plate, and kill her?"—"It is plain fact," was the answer.

Again the strange looks passed between the guests. Some shrugged their shoulders. Others looked at him and whispered. Some laughed, with glances at the frightened faces of the waiting women. "It's not to be believed," said the emphatic tones of Ōkubo. Suddenly a breath seemed to go round the room. Every light went out; except the one before Hikoroku. Dimly outlined by Shūzen's side could be seen the figure of O'Kiku. The wan face amid the long disordered dangling hair; the gore smeared face, and neck, and bosom, sent a thrill and shudder through those present. At the exclamations Shūzen turned. He saw her—"Vile jade! You too would reproach Shūzen. A cut for you!" He sprang up, dagger in hand to cut her down. Then followed a wild scene with the raving man. The maids sought to avoid death; happily with success beyond trifling injuries, for sight of a woman made him frantic. Surrounding Shūzen the men drew him on. From behind Ōkubo, Okumura, Endō rushed upon him. Overpowered he was secured. With the madness of the host the banquet came to an end. As they left Ōkubo said to Endō Saburōzaémon—"Really Endō Uji, why so rough in speech with Aoyama? With those of one band quarrels are not to be sought."—"Nor will be," answered Saburōzaémon with a slight tinge of contempt. Then he added slowly—"There is a strange affair in Yoshiwara. The chamberlain of Shūzen, one Chūdayu, is involved; and Shūzen with him. This matter of Kiku threatens grave issue with the *waka-toshiyori*. It is said that the two murdered the woman—because both wanted her for concubine." He laughed harshly—"Why tell these facts to neighbour Ōkubo?" Said Hikoroku, with his blunt truth—"The sounds and sights from Shūzen's *yashiki* are not always pleasant. There are tales in the household of a night—that on which Shūzen's wife died. All there was in confusion. It is for fellow-members to protect the reputation of each other." Endō was rebuked in turn.

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Shūzen was himself again. With the passing of the wine, the guests, the confusion, he was the cold, collected, dreaded master of a few hours ago. Respectfully the *kerai* withdrew. Left to himself he pondered the events of these hours. He recognized and measured the concentrated dislike expressed in the words and actions of Endō Saburōzaémon, egging on Ōkubo, irritating himself to desperation. To Shūzen it was a question as to just what was meant. At his age even in his caste men did not seek each other out to draw the sword. The issue was much more serious, involving disgrace. He would like to get at the inner motive of this fellow's action. How invaluable the aid of Chūdayu, who knew the ins and outs of the *yashiki* of all Edo, and particularly of his lord's intimates. But he had disappeared—as if the earth had swallowed him. Shūzen had condoned too many instances of the chamberlain's free use of his lord's funds, to come upon him harshly for any peculation. The man had been useful in many dubious actions; in bribery, solicitation, pimping, as a useful and facile witness. Chūdayu would worm himself to the bottom of this matter in short order.

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Thus he went to rest. Despite disordered brain his sleep was sound. It was Gekkeiji's bell striking the ninth hour (1 A.M.) which roused; or else the throat fouled and dried his mouth. He was parched beyond measure; his tongue seemed to fill the whole cavity. Impatiently he called—"Heigh there! Water! Is there no one to attend?"—"At the lord's service...." The gentle tones of a woman made answer. She knelt at his pillow. The water pitcher was offered. He took it and drank greedily. Then—"What maid is this? Does she seek Shūzen's bed? He is in no humour for such favour." And the girl wailed in answer—"Ah! Ah! Harsh his lordship's tone, harsh his words. Has not long since his command been issued? The fault lies not with Kiku. A lying officer stands between the Tono Sama and his handmaid." Shūzen sat bolt upright, glaring. Framed by the long trailing hair there appeared to his eyes the wan, blood smeared face of O'Kiku. With a yell he was on one knee—"Wretched woman! Does Kiku still pursue and solicit Shūzen? Make ready! Again a cut!" He sprang to his feet, grasped and drew the pillow sword. With smothered cry of terror and anguish the figure turned to flee; but he cut her down from shoulder to pap. As he did so the *shōji* were flung wide apart. The moonlight from the opened *amado* flooded the room and lighted up the intruder.

Rage and hate growled in the tones of Shūzen—"A bandit thief and doubtful fellow, thus to push himself into the presence of a *hatamoto* of the land! Fellow, name yourself: who thus by night breaks into Shūzen's presence, intrudes upon his pleasure." Harsh and insulting the laugh of Sampei. He pointed with his drawn sword to the bleeding prostrate corpse of the unfortunate waiting maid, cut down by Shūzen in belief of the apparition of her namesake. "More than one

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Kiku harbours in the lair of Aoyama. Would he slay them all in sacrifice to his lust? Wataru Sampei comes to ask account of his wife Kiku, daughter of Jinnai, *rōnin* of Takéda Ke of Kai, as is himself. Now—to the contest! God of the bow and feathered shaft, favour this Sampei!"—"Favour this Shūzen!" Both men made invocation almost in the same breath as they sprang at each other. Sampei was pushed on by rage and vengeance; Aoyama by a savage joy in combat. Here was a worthy antagonist, a true taste of old of the battle field. If Sampei was the younger man, he was also in worse training than Shūzen; and in his poor condition hardly a match for the practised soldier. However Shūzen was compelled to admire a resourcefulness in parrying his own fierce attack, the beauty of his enemy's Muramasa blade, which seemed itself to act and seek his life. "Shūzen's prize—the sword of Sampei!" He shouted in exultation. Sampei was forced back to the *rōka*. At the sill he tripped and fell. "Now off with you—to Meido and the Yellow Fountain, to join wife and parent thief." Shūzen in joy swung high his blade for the fatal blow. Sampei without sword was helpless at his feet. But the blade did not descend. Shūzen's arm was held fast. By the outraged wife, O'Kiku, as later tradition would assert? At this pass Sampei used his dagger. Plunged straight into the belly of Shūzen with it he disembowelled him. Abandoning hold on his weapon, with a screech Aoyama fell, twisting and writhing in the pool of his blood. When the *kerai*, roused by the disturbance, the shouts and the clashing of swords, fell on Sampei, to disarm and make short work of him, the *karō* Makishima Gombei prevented them. With difficulty he dragged Shūzen's sword out from the deep cut it had made in the beam of the partition. "Stain not good weapons with the blood of a rascal and thief, who shall undergo the torture and the disgrace of the execution ground. Be sure his lordship will be well avenged. It is better so."

Thus with bitter regret Sampei found himself avenged, but still in life. The next day, with the presence of the messengers from Shinano no Kami, the situation changed. With the report from Makishima was demanded the person of Wataru Sampei, whose story fitted into present evidence obtained. Deeper and deeper went the investigation into Aoyama's house affairs. Here was great disorder—harshness, lust, ill discipline. On this latter charge—lack of discipline—official displeasure gladly fell. The tale of the monster, obviously unfit for any service to the suzerain, came out. The *kaieki* of the House—deprivation of rank and income—followed. As far as posthumous action could disgrace, so far did Shūzen suffer.

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Much better was the fate of Sampei. The case of the Banchō *yashiki* no longer could be hid under a bushel. It was the affair of a *hatamoto*, so hated by the *daimyō*. Satsuma no Kami sought and obtained his charge. During the weeks which followed Sampei was the object of respect and solicitude of those who had the care of him. As *rōnin* of the Takéda House this was all the greater in this *yashiki* where the Tokugawa were held in no great affection. The breaking into the *yashiki* of a *hatamoto*, the slaying of its lord, could not be condoned. The official world was glad to combine this with the lack of discipline decision. When the inevitable order came to cut belly it was a chamberlain of Satsuma no Kami who acted as *kaishaku* (second); and Sampei knew that to this man would fall the possession and adoption of his little son. Thus came he to his end, and his House into this brave heirship. Thus was disappointed the malice of Shūzen, in his last breath denouncing his slayer as the husband of O'Kiku. Announced Horibé Izumi no Kami, the *machibugyō* who made final disposition of the case—"Between Sampei and Kiku no marriage being proved, the issue belonging to the man, the child Jumatsu is held sinless; for the woman Yui detention for further examination of conduct and condition." This examination never came; nor was intended to come. For some months she was detained in the *yashiki* of Horibé Sama. Then the third Shōgun died; a general pardon followed of all ordinary offenders. Under this order she was released, and the Miuraya had the hint or good sense not to press for renewed service. A nun, she cut off the long and beautiful hair, to pray in this world for the souls of father, sister, he who had acted as more than brother in the vengeance taken. Thus through the long years to her final and irrevocable release without any earthly condition.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SARAYASHIKI

Again the site of the Yoshida Goten lapsed to waste land. Through the years stood the *yashiki* of Aoyama Shūzen, in wall and roof and beam gradually going to rot and ruin. Passing by on nights of storm wayfarers saw most frightful visions—the sports and processions of spectres issuing forth from the old well of the one time inner garden. Their wailing cries and yells were heard. Conspicuous among them was the sight of the unfortunate Kiku, her wan face framed in the long rank disordered hair; the weird beauty frightful in its expression of horror, as with the stumps of fingers she counted—"One, two, three ... four, five, six ... seven, eight, nine." Then came the haunting fearful cry—"Alas! What's to be done? One lacks. Oh! Oh!" Sight, sound, glare went to the hearts of the stoutest witnesses. Soon the ill fortune of those thus favoured with the vision of the Lady of the Plates was rumoured abroad. Wounds, money losses, even death fell on them or on their households. Men no longer were curious. They fled the neighbourhood of this ill omened gap in Earth's surface, unseemly exit for these foul spirits. On nights of rain and storm none passed that way. Even by day the children were rebuked and forbidden to approach the well.

Many are the stories as to the place. To instance one of these: It was Hōei third year (1706)—the approach of winter in this tenth month (November). Then came to Edo town a wandering pilgrim

(*shugenja*) and his wife. Tramping the land all summer to Nippon's varied shrines and sights, now they were on the return to their home in Michinoku (Ōshū). Much had they heard of Edo, capital seat of Nippon's great lord. Every day busied with its sights they returned wearied to their inn in the Shitaya district. This day they had wandered far. Returning from Renkeiji of Kawagoé they passed the Naitō Shinjuku quarter. Almost as great, if of different kind, was the woman's curiosity at sight of the caged beauties, waiting the summons of those far better supplied with cash than her own spouse. Finally in indignation she dragged away the loiterer; and muttering rebuke followed after the jingle of the rings on his pilgrim's staff. They were passing through the Go Banchō, along the long stretch of *yashiki* wall. From a postern gate came forth a woman. The light of her lantern fell on the man and his equipment—"Oya! Oya! Good fortune indeed: honoured *shugenja*, a moment's stay. To-night a memorial service is to be said for the mansion's lord. Condescend to enter and grant service." Willingly husband and wife heard the invitation to rest their wearied bodies. Passing through the garden water was supplied to wash the feet. Then they were seated before an ample feast fit for their kind; of glutinous rice balls coated with the sweet bean paste (*botamochi*), of macaroni the savour of which tickled the nostrils, *saké* followed, in generous quantity and of quality to match.

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Said the girl—"It is an all night service that is requested. Deign to undertake the watch and prayer. Ample shall be the reward." Prostrate the *shugenja* spoke his thanks. The Butsuma, or room containing the little shrine, was close at hand. Seating himself, his woman just behind, he bowed and made reverence. "Thanks for the honoured entertainment so generous and excellent. May the honoured spirit find rest, at once entering Nirvana ... and now, the Hannya Shinkyō —*Sutra* of the divine intelligence."^[34] He began the recitation, accompanied by his wife. Both intoned the *nembutsu*—"Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu! Praise to Amida the Lord Buddha!" Again the recitation of the *Sutra* was begun. The hours of the night advanced. Man and wife became more and more drowsy; slower and slower came the words of the sacred writing. Then the man nodded off to sleep; as long before had the wife. The hour of the ox struck at Gekkeiji, filling this whole district with its heavy boom. The man woke with a start. What fearful shriek was that? Close by in the next room a woman's voice began counting. But such a voice! "One, two, three...." on it went to "nine.... Ah! Woe is me! One lacks. What's to be done!" Shriill, blood chilling the cry of anguish which followed. Curiosity overcame terror. The man stole to the screens and gently opened the merest slit. Over his shoulder looked the startled wife.

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A shudder went through both at the sight. Wan, frail, the beautiful anguished evil face of a girl could be seen through the long tangled hair framing it. Slender to the emaciation of great suffering she knelt before the pile of plates she was counting—"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine...." The wild chilling scream froze man and woman. For at the moment in sprang another female, in whose worn emaciated face and figure was displayed such concentrated evil passion of hatred and jealousy as rarely to be seen on human being. Like the flying hateful god Idate she sprang upon the girl, grasped her long black hair, and hurled her to this side and that. Helpless the victim held up the bloody stumps of fingers. Now the face was seen to be dyed in blood, the garments dyed red with blood, the girl again agonizing in a pool of blood. With horror the pilgrim and the woman hid their faces. The man's hands trembled as he struck the bell and intoned the holy recital. Thus in a daze, amid the counting, the cries and shouts, the weeping and the wailing, he went on. The cry of the cock was heard. As if by magic all the wild sounds ceased. The wanderers looked around in amazement. The altar was the stone curb of a well. The *yashiki* and its magnificence stood close by; but the building was roofless and in ruins. Chilled to the bone, half dead and half mad with fright, the two fled—to reach their inn.

At their tale host and those assembled shook their heads. "It is the Sarayashiki of the Banchō, the well that of the old Yoshida Goten, whence ghosts issue; unless by good fortune the vision be a trick of fox or badger. Honoured Sir, have prayers said to avoid ill fortune." But a merry, foul, cynical old fellow—peasant turned townsman—twinkled in his laughter. "Then O'Kiku San has favoured the *shugenja* and his spouse with feast and gifts?"—"Twas very strange," naively replied the pilgrim. "Copious and splendid the entertainment. Of the reality there can be no doubt. This Jubei did not feast in a dream on those dainties." The host and other auditors broke into coarse laughter—"Feast! The *botamochi* was of horse dung, the macaroni was earth-worms, the wine—was urine." All roared in their great joy. The unfortunate pilgrims, much put out, made gesture of discomfiture and fright. Said the peasant-townsman, in sly hit at the host—"Perchance O'Kiku brought the viands from near-by inn or cook shop. Surely these furnish little better." Laughing he left the now angry innkeeper to aid his wretched guests, writhing and retching in all the pains, actual and imagined of such a feast.

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Command went forth to the holy man—and from the Shōgun Ke himself. A halt must be brought to these unseemly proceedings so close to the suzerain's dwelling. These priests of the Dendzu-In, in the shadow of whose temple rested so many of the Tokugawa dead, were famed for learning and for piety. The founder of the Hall, Ryōyō Shōnin, had set to his successors this standard as necessary accomplishment, bequeathing to them perhaps the ability to meet the demand of his title of Mikatsuki Shōnin. Between his eyes was a mole in shape like to the crescent moon of the third day. Hence the appellation and its meaning application; for as the moon waxed to its full, so did the Shōnin with advancing years wax great in learning, and throw his increasing light upon mankind. Of this first prior there is a tale. It was the period of the Ashikaga wars, and the Shōnin, for safety and on business of his order, was resident for the nonce at Asonuma in Kotsuké province. As he prayed and wrought in the night, without rose violent sound of fighting and disturbance. Rising he looked forth. Two bands of men at direst odds displayed the greatest cruelty to each other. But what men! Emaciated to flesh and bone,

weird and unhappy of face, the Shōnin saw that these were not of this world. His determination was at once taken. Rosary in hand and intoning the *nembutsu* he stepped forth. The strife parted before him; its actors were prostrate in his presence. "What means this fierceness of battle?" asked the prelate. "Surely ye are not of the world, thus without mercy to strive to do such pitiless cruelty."—"Not of this world," said one raising his head; "but no more cruel than men in the flesh. In the Gempei wars, fighting we lost our lives. Our bodies tumbled promiscuously into one common ditch, without rites or worship, the grudge still continues through the decades. Deign, honoured priest, the aid of prayers of one so holy, for the rest of all." Gladly the prior grasped the opportunity—"For such surely is the charm of the Sacred Name—the paper with the sacred characters of the Nembutsu, Namu Amida Butsu. Not this ignorant foolish cleric, but the vow of the Nyōrai, Amida, relieves you from the Hell of fighting (Shuradō). Deign to accept the charm and enter Nirvana." Gladly the outstretched hands received it. Then all vanished in a mist. On the following day with discretion and modesty the prior told his experience to his open mouthed and credulous disciples. An ancient man of the place was found to point out where tradition placed the burial and its mound. The bones found on digging were sorted, and with rites found burial. Never after were prior, disciples, or villagers troubled with these visions. But the prior's reputation took an upward bound, to the credit of his sect.

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Thus it was with his successor—himself a true Mikatsuki Shōnin in the illumination of his learning—"From his youth he had abandoned the world, and all the scripture had passed under his eyes. At eighteen years he knew all the *sutra* and the doctrines of Shaka (Sakyamuni), and books whether exoteric or esoteric. Moreover he understood thoroughly astrology and almanacs, the poetry of Morokoshi (China) and Nippon, and instrumental music. Truly once heard he knew ten times, so clever he was." It was to this Saint, in his eighty-second year, that the order came to lay the ghost of O'Kiku, to dispel the disorderly spectres of the well of the Yoshida Goten. "A difficult, nay a severe task; but one well within the power and mercy of the Buddha. To-night we go forth to the attempt. Let all exert themselves." His subject clerics bowed low—"Respectfully heard and obeyed." They liked it not. The nights were cold; the place noted for bad company, and bad weather. But the order of their head was not to be disobeyed.

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With the first watches of the stormy night the Shōnin and some thirty priests were assembled about the well curb. Earnestly the Shōnin read the sacred writing. Vigorously his followers made the responses. Louder the voices and greater their confidence as the night progressed without sign of visions. Then said the Shōnin—"Surely great is the efficacy of the *sutra*. Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu! All evil visions and spectres vanish; to seek the peace and oblivion of Nirvana. Let the event prove the efficacy of the charm."—"Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu!" Loud the voices of the priests, but now in terror. The bell of Gekkeiji was striking the hour of the ox (1 A.M.). Crouching and shivering they saw the spectral lighting up of the well. The blue glittering points began to dot its mouth. Then swarms of spectres began to pour forth, obscene and horrible. Among them appeared the ghost of O'Kiku. Stricken with fear the priests stopped all reading of the holy writ. Flat on their faces, their buttocks elevated high for great concealment, they crouched in a huddled mass. "Namu Amida Butsu! Namu Amida Butsu! Spare us, good ghosts—thus disturbed most rudely in your nightly haunt and revels. Ha! Ah! One's very marrow turns to ice. No more! No more! Away!" But the Shōnin held firm. Surrounded by the jibing menacing mass of spirits, steadily and without fear he hung on to his scroll, read the *sutra*, intoned the *nembutsu*. One by one his company stole away; as did the spectres with approaching dawn.

He did not reproach his flock. Said the prior to the shamed assembly—by daylight: "Surely this is a very difficult undertaking. This curse of the dead is no ordinary one. It is a soul without light, of some highly debauched sinner, of some woman vowed to eternal hate. Deep the malignancy; but deeper yet the efficacy of Mida's vow. Seven nights will do it. Let all make every effort." He looked around, with trace of gentle rebuke—"We are men who have left the world (*shukkē*). Why then fear the dead; when ye are part and parcel of them? Perhaps greater company is needed." He sought it from his fellow priors. From Shiba to Asakusa they swarmed. With fifty, with seventy, with a hundred and seventy priests, all reciting the *Sutra*, intoning the *nembutsu*, the noise and confusion rose high above the sound of storm and spectre. Sleep was banished far and wide thereabouts. But this could not last. "One, two, three, four...." with the counting of the plates the chilling heart rending shriek, the wail of the unhappy girl, the stoutest volunteers quailed and with their hands shut out the spectral vision. These volunteers disappeared with the second week of recitation entered on by the Shōnin. Even his own band began to fail him. They sent substitutes, in the shape of the temple servants, the lowest grade, the Shoké Sama. When a third week was announced, as sure to accomplish the exorcism, there was open rebellion. It was with sadness and admiration that the Shōnin saw his band thus reduced to a few faithful men, the oldest of his flock, almost as old as himself—and these deaf, blind, and almost dumb. "Ah! It is a tremendous affair. Deep the malignancy of this curse. This foolish priest has overrated his reputation with the Buddha. Great the discredit to the sect and temple at the wide heralded failure." He felt as ill and out of sorts away from the presence of the vision, as did his disciples in its presence. He was old and foolish and over-confident.

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The prior slept on his cushion, his robes still wet with the storm and rain of the previous night. Then came a woman, dressed in sombre garb. Approaching the sleeping priest she wrote upon his sleeve the character *ki* 機, bowed reverently, and disappeared. He awoke seeming to hear her footsteps. How clear was this dream! The character *ki*, what did it portend? The Buddha would not fail his priest. Taking himself to the altar he prostrated himself before the seated figure. Then he prayed. And as he prayed—perhaps resumed his nap—wonderful to say again the character 機

appeared, this time on the Buddha's sleeve. The Shōnin rubbed his eyes. Was he awake or dreaming? He did not know. "*Ki*," the chance, the opportunity that the successful man in every undertaking grasps, where others fail. He must apply it to his own calling and the crisis. They exercised their brains; he was reputed to be well furnished. This next night was the last of the third seven days. Failing favourable issue he would take up his staff and depart to other place, never to reappear in the beloved precincts of his hall. Thus inspired he thought and thought. The grave, kindly, piercing eyes became brighter and brighter. Then his monks came running in surprise and alarm. The reverend prior was laughing—not in merriment, but with the joy of him who has found the successful issue to be so plain and easy.

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This last and critical night in storm and riot proved to be the worst of all. Said the Shōnin with grave kindness—"This night the Shōnin goes; others need not accompany." All rejoiced—until they saw his preparation to face the rain and cold. Then they weakened, and all plead to accompany him. Splendid the train assembled around the well curb. Again the reading of the *sutra* began, the intonation of the *nembutsu*. Again the clerics cursed their ill timed enthusiasm, which brought them out in the storm and to such unseemly company. Again the ghosts issued forth from the old well in their obscene riot. Jeering, menacing they swarmed around the frightened priestly band. Immoveable the prior. Natural and supernatural seemed to hang on the issue between priest and spectres. The figure of O'Kiku, wan, sad, malignant appeared. She counted—"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine...."—"Ten!" shouted the Shōnin, extending the Junen. "Ara! What joy! None lack. Ah! By the Shōnin's virtue this Kiku secures Nirvana. Gratitude and obeisance are due." With the words the figure faded, the spectres disappeared, the storm rumbled and passed off rapidly to the distance, and the stars shone out on the cold clear sky of a perfect fall night with its studded firmament.

Thus did the Shōnin find the secret in the *ten* repetition of the sacred formula—the *ju nen*. On her finger stumps O'Kiku counted—counted as does the successful man in the business of life. But O'Kiku was maimed. The thumb was lacking. Hence the tale went but to nine. The missing factor once supplied her count found completion. Long had been accomplished her vow of indignant vengeance, but still the plates remained to count for her own release, and this she could not effect. Great was the reputation thus acquired to priest and temple. Probably it was this feat which has confused him with his greater predecessor, the founder of the temple; transferred most anachronistically to this latter the tradition of the actual laying of the ghost.

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There is an old book^[35] in which the matter is discussed—"It was in the old well that Kikujō was drowned, says tradition in Shōhō 3rd year (1646). By the ability, merit, and power of Mikatsuki Shōnin her soul was saved, and at once she became a Buddha. Though such be the story, by the temple register the founder of the Dendzu-In, Ryōyō Shōnin, entered the Hall in Ōei 22nd year 9th month 27th day (29th October 1415). One smiles. Ho! The Shōnin lived two hundred and fifty-six years before, and dates do not amalgamate. How many generations had the Shōnin seen when Kikujō became a Buddha! The Mikatsuki Shōnin becomes a bubble Shōnin. The learning of this Mikatsuki Shōnin was notorious, and it has been banded down to people of later generations in matters concerning Ryōyō Shōnin. Deign to take a glance at facts here indicated. The 'Edo Bukkaku Ryakuden' (Epitomised Record of Buddhist teaching in Edo) says under the heading 'Muryōzan Jukyōji Dendzu-in'—

'Koishikawa Ji-in: 600 *koku* (income). The founder was Yurensa Ryōyō Shōnin, early in the Meitoku period (1390-1393). This Shōnin had between his eyebrows the figure of the moon on the third day. Later people called him Mikatsuki Shōnin. Native of Jōshū he was the son of the castle lord of Iwasé in Kujigōri, Shirayoshi Shima no Kami Yoshimitsu. Through prayer at the Iwasé Myōjin his mother became pregnant. He was born Riaku-Ō 4th year 1st month 24th day (11th February 1311). Later his father was killed in battle, and the mother took him to the Jōfukuji, at Sōjiyama. Putting him in charge of Shōjitsu Shōnin his head was shaved. At eight years old he was received at the Mikkyō (Shingon) Hōdon-In Yuzon. Taishū (secret cult) was learned through the teaching of Shingen Hōshi. The Zenshū was taught by the aged Tajima no Temmei and Gwatsuryū. Shintō by Jibu no Tayu Morosuké. In the poetry of Nippon he followed Tona, for ancient and modern example. He wrote ten books of importance. Noted for learning, in Eiwa 4th year (1378) he was transferred to Taitei-san Ōshō-in Nan-ryūbō in Shimotsuké no Kuni. Here he taught the seed of the Law. The son of Chiba Sadatané, Toku Sendai Maru, had a younger brother. It was he who founded the Zōjōji and became Yūyō Shōnin. Ryōyō Mikatsuki Shōnin died in Ōei 27th year 9th month 27th day (3rd November 1420). The San-en-zan Kwō-dō-in Zōjōji had to fief 10540 *koku*. It is the chief seat of the Jōdō sect in the Kwantō, and its schools swarm with students.'

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The large hanging bell of this Zōjōji (*tsurigané*) has the thickness of a foot. At the time it was the largest of all bells. In the temple record it says that the Shōnin of Shiba San-en-zan, generation following generation, were highly noted for learning. From Ryōyō Shōnin the predecessor the principles must have been inherited. Hence in the foolish talk of people the honoured name of the Shōnin was borrowed and adopted into the affair of Kikujō, as of the noted and erudite priest Mikatsuki Shōnin; no matter of offence."

But no such laboured explanation is required. The sanctity of learning, the inheritance in these bishops and priors of the merits of those who went before, has kept and keeps the appellation in the minds of the generations of the Nipponese. Ryōyō Shōnin, his merits and his nickname, passed in the public mind to his successors. It is the laboured and learned effort of these days

which fastens on the prior of Dendzu-in the tales of the long past founder of the temple. It was the learned Oshō of the time of Tsunayoshi Kō, that fifth Shōgun—the Inu Kubo—basely devout and devoted to the Buddha's Law, when to save the life of a dog (*inu*) the lives of men were sacrificed on the execution ground.^[36] The piety and learning of the great priest surely is needed to counterbalance the cruel folly of his master. Both qualities of this later cleric were the needed light in this period so dark for men. In which the wife, more faithful to tradition and the land, drove her dagger into the Shōgun's heart, and kept from his seat and succession the favoured person of his catamite.^[37] To be sure the little lady, of *kugé* not *samurai* stock, daughter of the Kwampaku (Premier) Takatsukasa Fusasuké, of courage and truly noble stock, then used the dagger on herself; and has kept busy ever since the historians of Nippon, official and other kinds, in explanation of how "it didn't happen." This is but a tale of outside scribes, to explain the taking off between night and morning of a perfectly well man (or divinity)—not sanctified with official and Tokugawal benediction; and no wonder. The tale and the event was not one to brag of. And the lady died too—very shortly.

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The eagerness to ascribe a local habitat to the story of the Sarayashiki has led to-day to some curious confusions, dovetailing into each other. To follow Hōgyūsha—in the far off quarter of Yanaka Sansaki, near the Negishi cut of the Northern Railway, is the Nonaka well. Despite its far removal this *pool* is ascribed to O'Kiku, as the one time well of the Yoshida Goten. As fact—in Shōhō a harlot, by name Kashiwaki, ransomed by a guest here established herself. Death or desertion cut her off from the lover, and she turned nun. The place at that time was mere moorland, and the well near by the hut had the name of the Nonaka no Ido—the well amid the moor. In time the lady and her frailty disappeared, and the kindly villagers buried her close to the hut, scene of her penance.

"Vain the tranquil water mid the moor—mere surface;
Gone, nought remains—of the reflection."

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Her well? People call it now the *yobi-ido*, the calling well, a pool furnished by springs and some thirty feet in diameter. Now only a few *chō* (hundred yards) to the north of Sansaki, at the Komizo no Hashi of Sakanoshita, is an old mound called the grave of O'Kiku. "Here a small seven faced monument has been erected. But this is not the O'Kiku of the Sarayashiki. This woman named Kiku died of an incurable disease. As her dying wish she asserted that any who suffered pain from incurable disease had but to pray to her to receive relief. With this vow she died." It is the connection between this Kiku and the *yobi-ido* which has so transferred the well established site of this old story.

Thus comes to a finish these tales of the Edo Banchō, the story of the Sarayashiki with its cruel fate of the unhappy Kikujō, the Lady of the Plates. Long had the distressed figure of the wretched girl ceased its wailing over the never completed tale of the porcelain plates. But the memory of her misfortunes, of the ill-omened well of the Yoshida Goten has remained for centuries in the mind, and thought, and speech of Nippon. Up to the early years of Meiji the Kōjimachi-ido still existed, to be pointed out to the superstitious ever present in this land. The Banchō, for many decades of years, had become the crowded Banchō of the proverb which asserts that one born and living out life therein, yet could not be expected to know the windings and intricacies of its many ways and byways. In time the *yashiki* of *hatamoto* disappeared; in recent years to make way for a residential quarter of prosperous tradesmen, minor officials; nay, for bigger fish who swim in the troubled waters of court and politics. The old Kōjimachi village, with its bustling street and many shops, remains. True the old well has gone the way of the ruined *yashiki* of Aoyama Shūzen, of the waste land (皿土) on which at one time both stood. But to this very day the tradition remains firm and clear. So much so that those who leave their homes, to fail of reappearance ever after, are spoken of as having met the fate of the unhappy victims of the Kōjimachi-ido. To quote again the very ancient poem in assertion of the verity of its evil influence:

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"Yoshida: to passers by the token;
Long sleeves wave invitation."

Yokohama—21st September to
14th November, 1916.

—FINIS.—

To follow—The Hizakurige (Tōkaidō) of Jippensha
Ikku—in English.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Benincasa hispida (Brinkley).
- [2] Of about fifteen dollars in terms of present money.
- [3] Comments the scribe of Nippon (Matsubayashi Hakuen)—"This kind is not the animal known as fox. There are foxes in human shape which extort money. They dwell round about Yoshiwara and Shinagawa. These are found in the Shin-Yoshiwara. In Meiji 33rd

year 8th month liberty was granted to give up their occupation. Blowing wide cast a fox fever, the brothels of the Yoshiwara displayed a magnificent confusion. In round terms Tokyo town was in an uncontrolled disorder. Among these human foxes there was a guild, and this was the source of the tumult."

- [4] Mizuno Jurōzaémon Shigemoto, son of Hiuga no Kami Katsunari. He was ordered to commit *seppuku* (cut belly) for the assassination of Bandzuin Chōbei: Kwanbun 4 year 3 month 27 day (22 April 1664).
- [5] *Kokorozashi wa matsu no ha to moshimasu.*
- [6] Second daughter of Hidétada; wife of the Prince of Echizen.
- [7] At the severest cold, clad in breech clout, or thinnest of white linen, the pilgrim after sunset makes his round of the temples for worship.
- [8] The Pluto of Indian (Yama), Chinese and Japanese (Emma) mythology. Dai-Ō (Great King). Cf. Eitel's "Chinese Buddhism," p. 207.
- [9] Other accounts say that these heroes used—pith bullets.
- [10] He was of great strength, and is said to have carried the Shōgun in his palanquin on his shoulders himself back to Edo in the flight from Suzume no Miya. With the approval of Iyemitsu he forced his way into the castle gate, thereby incurring official censure and banishment to an island—to Hitotsu no Jima, or the present Ishikawa Jima at the mouth of the Sumidagawa! The sentence was purely formal. His favour with Iyemitsu was very high owing to this Tsuritenjō (hanging ceiling) affair.
- [11] These stories were not likely to be published under a paternal Government; except in the mouths and tales of the people. Too many scandals have been "excerpted" from the official histories and records of Nippon to have a robust confidence in what is left. The *kōdan* lecturers and writers make the Senhimégimi, eldest daughter of Hidétada, the heroine of the scandals emanating from the Yoshida Goten. History refers them to the Takata no Kata. But this lady left powerful issue. Not so the Senhimégimi (Princess Sen), in ways a splendid woman. Better known as the Tenju-in-Den she lies buried under a most imposing monument at the Dendzu-in in Tokyo. Tenju-in-Den lived to over eighty years; the Takata no Kata died, aged seventy-two years.
- [12] *Itsuwari to omoi sutenaba ikani sen; Sue kakete chigiri mo aru wo afu yo sae; Iku sue to fuku chigiru makoto wo.* (1) *Hedatsu koro mono urami to zo omou.* (2)
- [13] Burned down a few years ago: a fire disastrous to the temple records.
- [14] Dosanbashi is the site facing the castle and lying just north of the wide avenue facing the main entrance to Tōkyō station. It ran north to Kanda bridge. It formed part of the Daimyō-koji, which extended from Kandabashi to the Hibiya-bashi and the Sukiya-bashi at the south. Roughly speaking this Daimyō-koji was the district between the inner and outer moat and the bridges mentioned, now traversed by the elevated railway from Shimbashi to the Tōkyō station. The Dosan bridge crossed a wide canal which connected the inner and outer moats with the Sumida river. The street running from Gofukubashi to the castle moat covers the site of this canal, and the bridge itself was about where the spur of the elevated railway crosses the present highway (1916). The Embukasané inspired the famous tale of Enchō—the "Shinkasané-ga-fuchi"—and, like many Nipponese stories, is founded on actual occurrence.
- [15] Also called, Naomori, or Narimasa, or Nariyuki.
- [16] There was great opposition to the introduction of *Kugé* (court noble) influence into the Shōgun's household at this time. The same reasons of course did not apply to marriage of Tokugawa women into the Kyōto circle. The Shōgunal Court was to be ruled by *samurai* code and influence.
- [17] Marriages at that date were performed in daytime. Note in the original.
- [18] *Ume ka ka wo sakura no hana ni motase tsutsu;
Yanagi no eda ni sakashite zo min.*
- [19] Momogawa Jōen: *kōdanshi* differ in their treatment of such detail. Some emphasize it, after the manner of the chronicle; others do not.
- [20] The *Daikwan* was the chief representative of the feudal lord in the particular circumscribed district. His authority rarely passed beyond a few miles. Note the Daikwanzaka and the site of his *yashiki* in Yokohama (*Motomachi*).
- [21] Momokawa Jōen.
- [22] Shukké, one who has left the world—turned priest—"Honoured Mr. Recluse."
- [23] The Nipponese "watches" covered two hours. Hence he had been aroused between 3-5 A.M., not 5-7 A.M. as expected.
- [24] *Dentatsu*—"Jimbei, mata 'fukeru' to itta na. Nan no kotta (kotoba) sono 'fukeru' to iu no wa." *Jimbei*—"Yai! Yai! Bōzu" etc. To the erudite is left closer approximation to *fukeru* (in *kana*). This story is told, following the details of Koganei Koshū ("Yui Shōsetsu"). Gion, equally known for its *hetairai*.
- [25] In the vernacular.
- [26] The first—Yamaguchi etc.—are place names, from Kyūshū to Ōshū; widely scattered. Otherwise—"Bloody Spear" (Chiyari), "Iron Chin," "Wolf," "Fox-heart," "Iron head," "Monkey hand."

- [27] He has played on the ideographs—*極酔の宴* and *曲水の宴*, *kyoku-sui no en*; the last meaning—"Winding water entertainment," cf. "Benkei" Vol. II. p. 195.
- [28] The *yoriki* is hard to place—"commanding officer." He was not of the office, yet as of rank was chosen to lead these more dangerous and trying expeditions, or to act in more important arrests.
- [29] In the conspiracy of Shōsetsu such did exist, directed to the house of one of his followers, placed not far off in another street. [But recently such a tunnel was discovered under the garden of Baron Sakatani at Haramachi, Koishikawa, Tōkyō; believed to belong to the Hakusan Goten, and dating 250 years back. 20th May, 1917].
- [30] Brinkley's Dictionary gives it—*Ichiju no kagé ni yadori, ichiga no nagare wo kumu mo, mina kore tashō no en narubeshi*.
- [31] Shōhō 3rd year the New Year fell on 16th February (1646) of the modern calendar.
- [32] *Rangiku ya: kitsuné ni no se yō kono sugata. Rangiku = Caryopteris mastachantus.*
- [33] In Buddhist theology the seventh day is one of the important dates of the *hotokés* (deceased spirit) sojourn upon Earth.
- [34] Pradjna—"highest of the six pāramitā, principal means of attaining Nirvana, knowledge of the illusory character of all existence." Eitel—p. 119.
- [35] The quotation and what follows is from Hōgyūsha Tōkō—"Banchō Sarayashiki." The exactness of these old temple registers in essential dates is worth noting.
- [36] Tsunayoshi 1646-1709. A vassal of Akita Danjō killed a swallow. He was executed; his children were executed; and he and his are but one case out of many.
- [37] Or son, by the more respectful account. Yanagizawa Yoshiyasu took the name of Matsudaira. His son Yoshishige, said really to be the son of Tsunayoshi by the wife of Yoshiyasu, was to be adopted by Echizen no Kami Tadanao, brother and heir to the Shōgun. Tadanao "removed," left the field open to the success (and succession) of the powerful premier. Yanagizawa as *tairō* (premier) was an irregularity in itself.

Typographical errors corrected in text:

- Page [v](#): The modern kanji character has been used for yeast (*kōji*)
- Page [11](#): chrysanthemum amended to chrysanthemum
- Page [22](#): masterhand amended to master hand; rotten amended to rotted
- Page [26](#): embarassment amended to embarrassment
- Page [29](#): on amended to an
- Page [41](#): missing /s/ in gesture added
- Page [47](#): made amended to make; pallour amended to pallor
- Page [51](#): villanious amended to villainous
- Page [57](#): dependant amended to dependent
- Page [59](#): state raft amended to statecraft
- Page [63](#): circumambiant amended to circumambient
- Page [69](#): spoken off amended to spoken of
- Page [73](#): milklivered amended to milk livered
- Page [95](#): galloping amended to galloping
- Page [102](#): herhaps amended to perhap
- Page [105](#) et seq.: superintendant amended to superintendent
- Page [132](#): preceded amended to proceeded
- Page [140](#): lead amended to led
- Page [143](#): Aoyoma amended to Aoyama; embarassment amended to embarrassment
- Page [147](#): exhilirating amended to exhilarating
- Page [169](#): astonishly amended to astonishingly
- Page [171](#): mits amended to mitts
- Page [173](#): he amended to be

Page [175](#): quid amended to squid

Page [176](#): multidinous amended to multitudinous

Page [182](#): peel amended to peal

Page [192](#): exhuberant amended to exuberant

Page [212](#): condescenscion amended to condescension; effiminacy amended to effeminacy

Page [213](#): icely amended to icily

Page [214](#): maccaroni amended to macaroni

Page [221](#): conferrence sic, meaning conferring

Page [227](#): squshing amended to squishing

Page [232](#): yashihi amended to yashiki; impertinance amended to impertinence

Page [239](#): Ototsan replaced with Ootosan

Page [241](#): feint amended to faint

Page [252](#): maccaroni amended to macaroni

Page [254](#): maccaroni amended to macaroni; apellation amended to appellation

Page [260](#): apellation amended to appellation

Where two different spellings occur an equal number of times in the text, both spellings have been retained (Koshigeyatsu/Koshigayatsu; Surugadai/Suragadai).

Where there is an equal number of instances of a word occurring as hyphenated and unhyphenated, the hyphens have been retained: Ban-gashira/Bangashira; fire-ward/fireward; go-kenin/gokenin; Kanda-bashi/Kandabashi; Mita-mura/Mitamura; new-comer/new comer; overlord/over-lord; raincoat/rain-coat; Tayasu-mura/Tayasumura; wheel-wright/wheelwright; yatsu-hōkōnin/yatsuhōkōnin.

The Senhimégimi: Hyphenation and/or word separation, as well as italicisation, is varied. The variations of Sen himégimi, himégimi and Senhimé have been retained as they appear in the text.

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