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Hanakatsura: The Works of Famous Literary Women in Japan

Tei Fujiu (trans.)

Kaho Miyake

Ichijo Higuchi

Usurai Kitada

Otsuka Kusuo

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Authors

Tei Fujiu (trans.), Kaho Miyake, Ichiyo Higuchi, Usurai Kitada, Otsuka Kusuo, and Paul Royster (ed.)

HANAKATSURA

The Works of Famous
Literary Women in Japan



Originally published in Tokyo in 1903, *Hanakatsura* (literally “garland of flowers”) features a biographical sketch of the activist and author Kishida Toshiko (Baroness Nakajima) plus four short stories by Japanese women writers of the Meiji era:

Akebonozome: A Cloth Dyed in Rainbow Colors,
by Kaho Miyake

Ōtsugomori: The Last Day of the Year,
by Ichiyo Higuchi

Onisenbiki: The Thousand Devils,
by Usurai Kitada (Mrs. Kajita)

Shinobine,
by Otsuka Kusuo

Compiled and translated by Tei Fujiu, four memorable and affecting stories depict women experiencing the frustrations of traditional family roles within an emergent commercial society at the turn of the century. The men seem preoccupied with buying and selling votes, fighting foreign wars, ignoring their families, or going out on the town; and they are fully capable of rejecting a bride for her looks or just letting a new wife walk away. Meanwhile, young female characters cope with overall shabbiness, lost samurai dignity, orphanhood, servitude, poverty, indebtedness, jealous sisters, stepmothers, and mothers-in-law, and the combined challenges of being blind, ugly, alone, and empathetic.

Cover: Shodo Yukawa, *Woman in Tokyo* (1897)

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Hanakatsura

THE WORKS OF FAMOUS LITERARY WOMEN IN JAPAN



Translated
by
Tei Fujiu.



Illustrated.



PUBLISHED IN 1903 BY
IKUSEIKAI TOKYO
JAPAN



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2022

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BARONESS NAKAJIMA.



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BARONESS NAKAJIMA.

Who has said that, "Japanese women are like dressed up dolls?" We are thought by many to be weak beings who cannot move, act, even eat unless directed by men. We regret that we are so misrepresented to the people of foreign countries, but, since the doors of our country have been opened to the entrance of people of other nations, some of these misrepresentations have been corrected, and we are better understood as to our *real* natures. These corrections, however, are exceptions, and we are yet misunderstood by many. I do not hesitate to state that we have many great and learned women, and, with pride in our

HANAKATSURA

women in general, I can state yet further that many of them are chaste and virtuous, even though some persons say to the contrary.

Some of those women have been concealed from the eyes of the world by the curtains of past ages, but the time has now come for the appearance of a number of them before the great public, and I have written brief sketches of the life and works of the more modern of these women. I regret, however, to say that some of the most beautiful of these flowers have faded and died, and are gone from this world, yet the fragrance of their memory sends sweet perfume into the hearts of thousands of their people. Not more than three years ago we lost one of the most famous of these ladies and I here give a short history of her life. By the reading of her life and character you will see that we are not tools only.

Yoshiko Kishida was a literary woman by nature, and she was also a brave and

BARONESS NAKAJIMA

fearless politician, notwithstanding her frail and delicate body. Her birthplace was Kyoto, where the beautiful scenery, and the old time places of interest, are well known to visitors from other countries. Her father was a merchant. From a child Yoshiko was peculiar in her disposition, and when she became older and went to school she was a surprise to those about her and was called "a goddess-like child." As she advanced in her studies, she was obliged to attend a boys' public higher school, as there was then no high school for girls in this country. Even here she excelled in her studies and was singled out from amongst the other students as an uncommon scholar.

Her fame in this direction became known to the Court and one day an order came appointing her as a teacher of learning to the Empress, and her faithful services were highly appreciated by Her Majesty, the Empress of Japan. After retiring from this service she made a journey about

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the country for special observation. It was a rare thing for an unmarried woman to travel about alone and to give lectures on scientific and political subjects.

At one place while lecturing before a large audience she was arrested and taken to jail, as she was suspected of plotting against the Government. She was frail in body and suffered much during her confinement in this miserable place. Her aged mother was much distressed and visited her daughter, but this only added to the sad state of affairs, as the mother's anxiety was very great and pitiful to see; but, Yoshiko became more and more troubled about the condition of her country, and she felt more and more the necessity of having good and eminent men at the head in order to reform matters.

She wrote many poems in the Chinese language—Chinese being the high class language of the book writers of Japan—during her imprisonment, and these poems show how sad she felt about the

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corrupt condition of the nation. She was finally released from this imprisonment and was once more free with even greater fame than before.

She was a beautiful woman, and her attractive face and slender form made her very pleasing in appearance. She was bright and sociable in her manners and extremely lady-like and gentle. Some time after this she met a gentleman who was a newspaper man and much interested in the political condition of his country. Similar tastes drew these two persons together and before long she became his wife and was a great help-mate to him. He gradually rose higher and higher in his profession and when the first Diet was opened in our land he was appointed as President of the House of Commons.

Previous to this time both he and his wife became Christians, their introduction to Christianity being due to Mrs. Nakajima in the English language, and the study of the Bible, by and with Mrs.

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J. P. Moore, a missionary of the Reformed Church of America; and later on, both she and her husband openly professed their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, accepted Him as their Saviour, and were baptized by the Rev. Dr. J. P. Moore. They both worked for the public welfare of Japan. Soon after their political opinions were looked upon as disloyal. They were called disturbers of peace, and were expelled from the Capital City.

They moved to Yokohama and continued to interest themselves in political matters. During this time they spent a great deal of money in this work and became poverty-stricken. The brave wife toiled steadily on, encouraging her husband, and helping in their support by teaching in schools. It is said that when she heard of a meeting of exultation which was held by the opposite politicians, she burst into tears and the sadness of her heart was expressed in poems which, to-day, are read by many.

BARONESS NAKAJIMA

Later on Mr. Nakajima was appointed by the Government as Japanese Minister to Italy and was also made a Baron, and the newly-made Baron and Baroness sailed for their new home, where they found peace and repose under fair Italian skies. They were no doubt highly honored by the people amongst whom they lived and the flag of Japan floated high above the Legation where they resided. But the Baroness had always been delicate and her health gradually declined; so they were, ere long, obliged to bid adieu to their fair home beyond the seas and return to Japan. The Baron was also stricken down and, at a quiet place along the sea where they had built for themselves a retired and comfortable home, the Baroness nursed her dying husband. Weak as she was, she continued to nurse him to the end. Before passing away this noble man spoke most feelingly and strongly of his continued belief in his Saviour and he passed peacefully to the new home which

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was awaiting him. It might be well to state here, as an additional proof of what *Japanese women* can do, that when the Baron was deep in politics and seemed to be in danger of forgetting his religion, his wife remained staunch, and we believe her influence had much to do with his continuing in the good way.

Although the Baroness had expected this separation and was prepared for it, the blow fell heavily upon her when it came and was too severe for so delicate a constitution as hers to bear. From that time her health declined and about two years after the death of her husband she, too, entered the Unknown Land and was again united with her husband. Their troubles had ended and they had entered the land of eternal rest.

It is not an easy task to translate the literary works of Baroness Nakajima; they are so numerous and besides she was so famous for her fine penmanship that a part of the beauty is taken away in putting

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these works into a different language and a different hand writing. Her last work, which was a daily record of her life, is indeed very interesting. She wrote very minutely of passing events and illustrated these details with fine drawings, or comic sketches. This work she continued until five days before her death.

Not long ago I visited her former residence—the home at Oiso where she and her husband were living when they passed away from this world,—and received a kind welcome from her aged mother, who is seventy eight years of age and who is still well and active. We spent the whole afternoon talking about the late Baroness. This aged lady has retired from the too active life of the noisy city and spends her time in charitable works and in reading and writing. She has an excellent memory for past events and is a very interesting person. While we were talking I noticed a great many pebbles on her desk and asked why they were there. To this

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query she replied, "I am writing the sacred words of Budda. They are contained in eight volumes, and in those volumes there are seven millions of them. I write on each stone one word, or letter, and I shall finish the work in about three months. After these are all written, I shall put the pebbles into white sacks and then I shall bury them under the ground with much ceremony. I shall then put up a large stone monument in memory of them. This is my second one, and after this one is finished I hope to put up a third, as it is said three will make one worthy to receive blessings from Budda, not only for myself but for all the dead souls." A sketch of her stone offering will accompany this history, so that the readers may see what it is like.

One night a number of burglars entered her house, tied up the servants, and then went to the old lady's bedroom. With glittering drawn swords they demanded her for money, but she most composedly replied, "You miserable men, if you can so

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shamelessly demand other people's property, take what we have, but do not disturb us any longer." When these men were later on arrested, they confessed that the old lady's quiet manner, and her composure frightened them so much that their blood ran cold in their veins. It is a fact that noble mothers make noble daughters. This woman was educated in the old style of nobility and bravery. Let me say to our foreign friends that we have been sadly misrepresented to the rest of the world, but I hope the time has come when our merits will become known to the other countries.

—...—

AKEBONozOME.

(A cloth dyed in rainbow colors.)

BY MRS. KAHO MIYAKE.

“Oh Taka, come here quickly!”

The girl who has just come back from her school, heard her mother calling, and she wondered what had happened during her absence. She rushed into the room and said, “Oh my, what is the matter?” The mother was just measuring some beautiful cloth, and then she looked up into her daughter’s face with such happy smiles. There were many fine and beautiful dresses stretched out on the mat.

“My dear, don’t you think these are pretty? Just look at them!”

“Oh mother, these are so fine and beautiful! They are all dresses with long sleeves.”

KAHO MIYAKE

“Oh yes, I have sent an order to Mitsui’s silk store to bring up all these clothes for you dear. You see the new year is before us and they won’t be finished in time unless we buy some colored ones. They are all done so beautifully. You like rainbow colors so much, do you not? I think this one with plum blossoms looks so pretty, and your father said to take anything you like best. Now choose one which you like best. Will you take this with the pine and storks or that one with the peonies?” The girl was entirely puzzled which to choose and how to decide.

“Oh mother, you did not tell me a word about it before, so this is quite a surprise for me.” The girl has passed sixteen summers, and is a young lady at this age, but being an only child, she was treated like a baby, and they had petted and loved her like a tiny one. Her requests are always granted and she was allowed to do anything she wanted. Her mother often wished to take her on her lap and pet her. She was her mother’s idolized and fondled child.

A CLOTH DYED IN RAINBOW COLORS

“Now my dear, I thought you don’t like to be dressed in the same dress every new year’s day, and besides it has become so shabby and old-fashioned and you have grown so big. You are such a nice girl too, never teasing me for new things like other girls of your age. And listen dear, your father gave me enough money to get you these fine clothes and it was an unexpected gift from him. You knew very well he has spent a great deal of money for his election to the Diet. Many kind friends have helped him, but he made lots of debts which he must pay back. So I thought it was in vain to hope to get you a new dress when our purse was rather empty. You see then it was a quite a surprise when he gave me such lots of money.”

The tale was told, and they were so happy and so glad. The girl said, “Why mother, father is so kind and so good to me, but won’t you make one also for yourself? I know your old dress is not fit for you any more, though it may not be too

KAHO MIYAKE

small for a grown-up mother. Isn't it true, mother?"

The mother laughed out merrily at such an innocent remark. "Oh I am afraid, I won't grow up any more, dear, and don't be anxious about me, for I don't need any new things just now. But you choose any thing you like best, my dear."

At last they decided to buy a crape dress with long sleeves, dyed in beautiful rainbow colors with plum blossoms beautifully painted all around the sleeves and skirt. It was a fine dress indeed! They, ordered the man at the silk store to be sure to make it soon.

How happy they were then! They had been hoping for the new dress for a long time, and now their desires were granted. Filled with joy, the girl brought out a box of hair ornaments and took out many nice ribbons, and asked her mother which would be best to tie her black hair when she wears the new dress.

A CLOTH DYED IN RAINBOW COLORS

She said, "Look please, mother, which do you like, this white or pink one? And do you think this embroidered white collar which aunt Nishino gave me will look well with my new dress? Ah! I will make a call first in the New Year at aunt Nishino's house, then go to my music teacher's concert, and afterwards to my school-mates. But I am sure at Shigeo San's house I will be detained to stay and play the game of poetry cards. Do you think, mother, I can take an active part with my long sleeves? Shigeo San and Matsuko San will feel jealous of my new dress because they have none so fine. We tell each other everything without reserve but this time I won't tell my secret. Please mother, when you fix my hair, do it in the present fashion."

Just then the mother was thinking about something very serious. The girl saw her mother did not pay any attention to her talking, so she called out in a louder voice, "Why mother, please listen!"

KAHO MIYAKE

“What is it, my dear?” She turned toward her and smiled. “Oh yes, I understood you, you want me to fix your hair in a very stylish way. Of course I will, but I must remind you, my dear girlie, that you must be more careful about your etiquette than about your hair; you know you are now a young lady, so people will pay special attention to what you say and do.” The mother was of course proud of her daughter’s beauty and she knew people would admire her child.

The girl replied very gently and said. “Yes mother, I will be very careful about what I do.” The mother was much pleased to see her dear girl obeyed her so nicely.

“Well I was just now thinking that old sash may not suit with your new dress, so I want to get you a new sash too; now write a postal card to the silk store and tell them to bring some good ones soon.”

“Oh I mother, a sash too? Is it really so, mother?”

A CLOTH DYED IN RAINBOW COLORS

* * * * *

The rain was falling gently outside on a winter's eve, and within a cozy parlor two gentlemen sat talking very earnestly, while clouds of tobacco smoke filled the room. One of the gentlemen said, "Well! I think or rather hope it is only a rumour, my friend, for I do not believe you can possibly be guilty of such a mean conduct. But people have begun to suspect you, because the newspapers are writing pretty badly against you; they intimate that you have changed your opinions and bowed before the opposite party; you know the day after to-morrow our hard battle is to be fought to get as many approvals as we can for our unanimous opinion, and you are of course counted as one of our party. I am sure you will never change your mind for only five or six hundred yen and sell yourself. Unless you are crazy or a fool, can you possibly do such an ignoble thing? People often make mistakes and suffer from false accusation and I wonder by what mistake

KAHO MIYAKE

you are suspected like this! I feel quite strange, and am sorry for you. Ah, my friend, our friendship has continued from our childhood; we played together and cried together. I believe you, and know you, so let people say as they please. To-day at our club I told some of them that their suspicions will be cleared up at the day after to-morrow's assembly. One thing I have found out is that you have paid some of your debts, and people are beginning to call out loudly, 'Where did you get your money?' Ah! I know, the devil is always trying to tempt us by many means and if we once yield to these temptations, why we are lost forever,—fame, friends, and our position will be gone. You know those who have common sense will struggle to resist temptation. We have many defects or faults, yet when we repent of our mistakes it is nobler and better than to try to cover up all our mistakes by more wrong doing." Now the guest has stopped his talking, and with gentle smiles upon

A CLOTH DYED IN RAINBOW COLORS

his manly countenance he began to smoke his cigar thoughtfully.

The master of the house listened very meekly to what has been said, and when he smoked his last cigar, he opened his mouth for the first time and spoke, "You seemed to be quite intoxicated, my friend, I will call for some refreshments now. Bring some oranges," he called out from the door.

Now the wife and daughter had been standing timidly at the paper doors on the opposite side, and unnoticed by each other, they had listened to the men's talk, because they suspected that some very serious matter was being discussed between them, but when the master called for some oranges, they made ready and brought in tea and fruit. The wife, though past her young days, was still a very handsome woman, and it was fortunate that her daughter was just the image of her beautiful mother, when she was in the prime of her beauty.

KAHO MIYAKE

“Ha, young lady, you have grown up into such a big maiden. But of course, if you had grown to be a small girl, it would have been a wonder, ha! ha! ha!” and they all laughed very loudly and merrily. After some more pleasant talk, these two left the room, and again the men were sitting alone face to face. The guest seemed so anxious to hear some words from his friend, but he was disappointed, because not a word did he utter, looking very much troubled and sat with knitted brow lost in thought. The guest was somewhat discouraged, and seeing there was no use of talking any more he rose to go and said,

“Well, I have staid long and talked to you on a very unpleasant subject, but if you hear of any mean man, please tell me so, because we are ashamed to produce such a body from our party. Now good-bye, we will meet to-morrow at our club.”

The master was left alone to reflect and consider. His wife quietly came into the room and looked up timidly into her husband's face. She said gently, “I am afraid

A CLOTH DYED IN RAINBOW COLORS

it is cold here, I think you had better go to your room."

"Oh, don't bother me!" he spoke very harshly, and remained seated with folded arms and cross looks.

Her eyes were filled with tears, and she could not endure the sight any longer, so she hurriedly went out of the room and when she came to the dark dining room, she heard low sobs from someone in the corner. It was her daughter! Suddenly the girl clung tightly to her mother, and burst out crying,

"Oh, mother, could my dear father do any such things as that guest said? What shall I do, mother?"

"Dear child, have you heard all?"

"Yes, mother, I have heard all, and I feel so sad, but I do sympathize with my dear father. He did it because he needed money so much for many reasons. Oh mother, I do not need the new dress and sash, and all the other things. So do sell all my treasures and make my father a noble gentleman, and don't let him be called a mean and dishonest man!"

KAHO MIYAKE

They embraced each other and cried softly in the dark room, while the father was still sitting alone in the parlor.

* * * * *

The next day mother and daughter were very busy in collecting all their valuable things. They piled up their dresses, and on the mat the new long sleeved rainbow-colored dress was spread out that they might take a last look at the beautiful garment which the poor girl had only used once a few days ago. She bravely encouraged her mother, and they decided to change all their things into money.

“Now mother, will these dresses, your hair things, and these my rings be enough for the money we want?”

“Well, my dear, I think we can manage in some way with them, I have still fifty *yen* left, and I will ask my brother and your grandma to let me have some money. I can borrow from them. Don’t be anxious,

A CLOTH DYED IN RAINBOW COLORS

my dear child, yet I feel so sorry for you to give up all your things, you dear girlie!”

The tender mother clasped her child to her bosom, and cried very hard, but the daughter was very brave and being well prepared in mind, did not even cry, and soothed her mother very tenderly.

“Dear mother, please do not feel badly about my dresses, for I would rather have nothing than to be the daughter of a dishonest father. But you see, if we get money enough for father to pay back all he got, why, he will be all right, and his name will not be stained. So dear mother, do not grieve any more. I wonder what has changed my father so! He loves me so dearly and is so kind to us, but this time he did not breathe even a word to us about the money. I can live with poor food and in poverty, if only our lives are pure and honest, for then poor-living will be no pain to us. The other day when I visited my schoolmate, she gave me a sneering hint and said, ‘Oh, those who suddenly become rich are very uncertain, and one who is

dressed in unbecoming fine clothes looks like a monkey crowned as a man.' Well I don't care whether we are monkeys or cats, if we are only pure and do right. We are happy, isn't it true, mother?"

"Oh baby!" cried the mother, who thought her girl was still a baby, but now she was soothed and comforted by her daughter's wise words, and when she saw her daughter so composed and so brave to meet her fate, it helped her to be brave too. All their best things were sold very secretly and the money was ready, but now the trouble was how to give it to him? The wife knew very well what a proud spirit her husband had. So she thought, she would let her daughter write some loving words from her innocent heart and leave them with the money on his desk.

It was noon when the master came home. He was excited and rushed into his study with very uneasy looks. He sat like a statue at his desk, when suddenly he glanced at a note addressed to him in a

A CLOTH DYED IN RAINBOW COLORS

woman's hand-writing. He fixed his blood-shot eyes upon it, and with a strong emotion he tore it open hastily and read as follows:—

“Dear father, with this money please let your daughter be a noble and good father's child.”

His hand trembled, his hot face became pale and his feet seemed as if glued to the floor. Suddenly he thrust the money into his pocket and with a look of decision he rushed out of his house again. The wife and daughter kept very quiet and dared not meet him before he had read the letter, but now he was gone, both went into his study. The money was gone!

“Oh mother, father took the money, how glad we are!” Their eyes met, and they were full of happy tears. A sweet perfume of plum blossoms from the flower-pot filled the room where those two stood.





THE MAIDEN AT THE TOMB OF MISS HIGUCHI

ŌTSUGOMORI

(The Last Day of the Year.)

BY MISS ICHIYO HIGUCHI.

“Ah! it is a pity to be a maid servant! The well is unfathomably deep to get water and when standing on the north side of the kitchen the fierce wind blows in from the cracks of the doors, piercing one’s hands and face, and making one shiver with severe cold in the dead of winter.

“When that old woman brought me here,” the girl murmured, “she said, ‘There were six children in the family beside the masters, but two of them are not at home. The mistress has a somewhat changeable temper, but if you once understand her disposition, it is very easy to flatter her and she may give you some nice presents

ICHIYO HIGUCHI

when she is in a good humour. They are the richest people around here and are notorious for their stinginess. But the master of the house is a very good, kind-hearted man, so you may receive some compensation in time. However, if you don't desire to remain here, just send me a postal card, and I will find you a better place. Anyway you must learn their weak points and work them out for your own benefit.' What a dreadful old woman to teach me with those unkind words! Yet if I am only true to my master, I am not at all afraid to have a hard mistress."

It was a cold, cold morning, when the mistress called out loudly from her bedroom, that the hot bath must be prepared early in the morning, for a young daughter was to attend a dancing party in the afternoon, and must take a bath as she needs a careful toilet.

Hastily she obeyed and began her task on that cold morning. When she stood by the well the last shade of the moon fell on

THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR

the frozen ground and the keen wind made her wide awake from her half-dreamy mind. Now she must fill the bath-tub, at least twenty bucketfulls. She did her work very fast and became wet with perspiration. Just then she slipped and fell, and alas! the bucket was broken into pieces when it struck the ground. Not only a severe cut on her snow white leg was the result of the mishap, but she was harshly scolded by her mistress, as if all her property were being destroyed; and all that day she was looked upon very sharply in her every moment and not a word was exchanged between her and her mistress. From the next day she was told over and over again, that even a little thing was not made without costing some money, so if she was so careless she would receive punishment from heaven.

She felt so ashamed when her fault was told to everybody who happened to call on that day. After that she took special care in every thing.

ICHIYO HIGUCHI

It is hardly possible to count the number of servants who came in and out of this house; it was a common thing to see two or three changes in a month; but strange to say, this maid, whose name is Mine, made up her mind to stay and serve.

She served so faithfully, though she had many sad hours and the neighbors used to say that if her mistress would treat this gentle and faithful girl cruelly, heaven would surely punish her and no more good servants would come; while young men said that Mine was too pretty to be a servant; and indeed, it was painful to see her work in the kitchen and do rough work with those soft, white hands.

Early in the autumn, Mine's only uncle became very sick. Poor man! he was obliged to shut up his shop. He had kept a green-grocery but now he was obliged to retire to an humble cot in the rear of the shop.

As he was so very sick in bed, Mine desired to visit him; but she was like a bird

THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR

in a cage. She had already asked for her wages before they were due, so she was considered like a slave by her hard mistress, who gave her not a minute to leave her work. When she was sent out on an errand, even her steps were counted. And if she lost any time, you can imagine what the result was!

She wrote to her uncle comforting words and encouraged him, telling him that she would visit him before long.

In every country the month of December is the busiest time in the year, yet it was the custom in this family to go and see the theater on a certain day, partly to display their opulence to others; and moreover, as this was such a rare event, even a servant was allowed to accompany them. Now the girls were all excited over the coming pleasures. As for Mine, she was so anxious to go and see her uncle that she said timidly that she would be very thankful to be excused from the party and to be allowed to go and visit her sick relative.

ICHIYO HIGUCHI

Very fortunately, her petition was granted and she was so happy that she could go on the next day. When the day came, she left the house hastily and turned towards her uncle's home, though the angry words of her mistress, "Come back as soon as you can," were ringing in her ears. She got into a jinrikisha, but the runner seemed to move very slowly and the distance to her uncle's seemed so very great. It was very sweet to think that her poor uncle lived in Hatsu-ne-Cho, which means the first note of a singing bird (nightingale); yet it was really one of the very poor streets and the poorest people lived there.

Her uncle "Honest Yoshibei," as he was called because of his honest dealing, was favored with many customers. Though he could not afford expensive vegetables, yet he was known as an honest and faithful man and when in good health, he was able to support his family. He sent his boy, eight years of age, to a five *rin* school. And now it was so sad to see him sick in bed.

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At first it seemed to be a very slight illness but when Mine went to visit him, he had been confined to his bed for three months. Everything had been sold and they had been obliged to move to their present squalid lodging.

After much searching, Mine came to the entrance to her uncle's lodging, when she recognized the slender form of a boy with a bottle of medicine in his hand. She hastily came to him and looked into his face, "Why, are you not San Chan?"

"Yes, and you are Nei San! (sister) I am so glad you have come. Let us go into the house." He was so glad to see her that he called from outside the door; "Oh, mother, I have brought Nei San along!" How glad they were to have their dear niece for a visitor to their humble home!

"Is it true that O Mine San has come?" the sick one cried out, while the aunt ran out to receive the loving visitor, saying, "Indeed! how welcome you are!" They were so happy and everyone's face beamed

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with the greatest joy. When she entered the house, she saw just a few poor utensils and every thing was so shabby and old and useless. The picture was so utterly desolate and she felt so sad she could not help crying.

“Oh, what a pity!” thought she; “while things are in such a sorrowful condition here, at my master’s house there is plenty of money to be used for their vanities and useless things. My dear, only uncle so sick, surrounded by squalor and wretchedness and I’ve nothing with which to comfort him. What a world this is!”

“Please, uncle, do not get up; just lie still in bed, for this cold wind may hurt you.” So saying, she softly covered him with a poor thin covering and continued; “Indeed, you have suffered a great deal, dear uncle, and dear aunt, you must not hurt yourself by too much worrying. I longed and hoped so much to come and see you all, but as you see things are not so easy as one would wish them to be. Oh,

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never mind about the shabby house; don't speak about it. When uncle gets well, you can have a good house again. I wanted to bring that sweet candy which you are so fond of, but as I came hastily in a jin-rikisha I could not afford it. Though it is a very small amount, please use this money. Now, please listen, dear auntie; if we are true and dutiful, we are sometimes rewarded with unexpected favors. The other night we had an old lady guest who suddenly became sick and I nursed her all night through and she gave me this money. This *cri* (a kind of collar) may fit you, auntie, and this purse is for San Chan. Dear brother, come here, you dear boy. Do you go to school now? Then show me your writings, dear."

She talked kindly to them and comforted them and she had lots to hear and tell! Her father's death had been caused by an accident while at his work and her mother, who was a sister of this beloved uncle, sad to say, soon followed her

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husband into the other world, and Mine came to live with this family. From that time until she was eighteen years of age, she was brought up as a true daughter and was much loved and petted by them.

Naturally San Chan was like her true brother. She called him lovingly to her side and putting her arm around him, said, "Dear San Chan, it is very hard on you when your father is so sick, but my dear boy, be patient. When the New Year comes, I will get you something very nice. Now don't be naughty or give trouble to your dear mother."

"Oh! no, no," the father interrupted, "listen, O Mine; since I became sick, this brave boy has proved himself clever beyond his years; you cannot imagine what a great help he is to us, How he works with those small but brave hands! He goes out selling shells every day with our neighbor's son, and if that fellow earns eight sen, my boy usually earns ten. May heaven bless him for his faithfulness to his

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parents! His hard earnings cover the expenses of my medicine. Oh, do praise him, O Mine."

He covered his face and was choked with tears as he said this. "Yes, indeed," the mother said, "he used to be such a diligent boy that he never missed school and his teacher always gave a good report of him. How sorry we are to see him day after day go from street to street, with heavy burdens upon his small shoulders, selling shells!"

She, too, was crying as she spoke, and O Mine embraced him warmly and addressed him thus, "Ah, you are a dear, good, brave boy. Your burden must be too heavy, my dear brother. Are you not tired? Did you not get hurt or bruise your feet? I, not knowing of all your hardships, thought my work too hard; forgive me, dear, and from to-day I will take leave of my master's service and stay at home and help you." She cried bitterly as though her heart would break.

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“Here, O Mine,” her uncle interrupted, it is very good of you to sympathize with us, but your first duty is to your master, and as you have received your wages before they were due, you cannot leave them just now. When the New Year comes, I shall be well again, so you must be patient for a while and everything will come out all right. Now, O Mine, please eat something which your aunt has prepared for you and try and be merry.”

To Mine, their homely love and kind words were more than the nice dishes served her. When she was about to leave the house, her uncle told her sorrowfully about a debt which he owed and which would be due the last of December, and he continued, “If I pay the interest now it may be postponed for a while. Now as I have heard that your master is very rich — I am very sorry indeed, to ask it of you — but if you could borrow two yen of your wages, you can set me free from this troublesome debt.”

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And this, of course, she heartily agreed to do, and promptly replied, "Oh, that will be all right. I will manage to let you have the money you need. Never be anxious about it. Just send San Chan in a few days; and to-day I will return, though I wish to remain longer." Leaving behind her words of comfort and cheer, she started towards her hard task again.

* * * * *

Ishinosuke, the elder son of Yamamura by his deceased wife, was not the pet of his father, chiefly on account of his not being the son by his present wife. There was some talk of disinheriting him and substituting one of his sisters by his stepmother, but the law does not allow this. The son somehow overheard these things, and his character underwent wonderful changes. He became desperate and took to evil habits and spent an idle life among vagabonds. He had a very fine looking face and

young ladies used to say, "He is a splendid young man."

The step-mother pleaded with her husband many times to look after the properties of her children, for in case of his death, the elder son would inherit all the properties and what would the consequences be! "The son will surely spend all that he possesses," she used to say, "and I and my children, must become beggars." She continually spoke evil of the son to his father. "If there is no one to adopt him, will it not be wise to give him his share of the properties and let him go free?"

But the father did not take much account of this and the son would say: "Well, all right. Then my share will be one million yen, besides a monthly allowance of what I may need for my pleasure. In case my father dies, you must honour me as the head of the family and obey my word in all the family affairs. If you agree to these terms, it will be rather convenient for me to be free from all family troubles."

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Everybody would shut their mouths, when they heard him speak in such a manner, and he became more indulgent and behaved himself as though driven by a wild spirit. In the midst of that busiest time he crept into the fire place (*Kotatsu*) and soon dropped into a sound sleep. Then he awoke from it and called for water to quench the burning thirst caused by wine and then again fell into a stupor.

The step-mother — though hating him in her heart — treated him kindly and very carefully covered him with a nice quilt, putting it over him with her own hands. And then she attended to the work of preparing for the New Year.

O Mine also was working very hard in the kitchen, never for a minute forgetting the promise she made to her sick uncle, and eagerly watching for an opportunity to ask her mistress for the loan — as the mistress had promised to let her have the money on that day. Now the time drew near when her dear little cousin would

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come for the money and she must ask for it now. Slowly and hesitatingly she came to her mistress and asked very humbly about the money which she so kindly promised to lend her. But the mistress turned to her and looking very gravely upon her said, "Why, Mine, what mistake is this? I never said a word about lending you money; of course, I remember that you told me your uncle is poor and sick, but it is all nonsense to speak about the promise of a loan."

It was always so with this woman. It was her usual way to say, "I never understood it so." It was an unfavorable time to ask for a loan now, for she was very much irritated at her step-son (who was sleeping idly in his room) and thinking of how to get rid of him.

She wanted to take out her daughter's new dresses and look at them and put some more stitches in them, but as he was in the house, he might say something against her conduct if he should discover

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her extravagance, and she was not in an amiable mood.

Mine had a good cry in the kitchen. What should she do? If she could not give her uncle that two yen he would be very much disappointed and the poor family would not be able to meet the New Year's obligations.

She must get the money by some means. She spied some money in the drawer of a writing box. To touch it was just the same as to take it; would she commit that awful crime for the beloved one's sake? Her mind was like a tangled thread and she felt as if she would go mad. It was about noon when a jinrikisha-man came from the first daughter's house asking her mother to come at once, because it was her first experience in confinement and she was much in need of a mother's help.

The mistress was very anxious to go, but she feared her step-son might do some mischief during her absence. She was very much vexed at her husband's easy-going

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methods — going off fishing when the world was so busy. But, finally she made up her mind and went off, telling Mine to be very careful about everything during her absence.

With a smiling face, her shabbily dressed cousin came to the kitchen door, fearing lest some one should notice his appearance. Yet he was so glad to see Mine, and he asked timidly for the money which she had promised to give him. Now she was obliged to decide whether she would give disappointment to him or become a great sinner. She decided not to listen to the voice of conscience and with faltering steps and a beating heart she stealthily walked into the mistress's room. There was not a moment to lose — she thrust her hand into the drawer and took two yen out of the roll of bills and hastily made for the kitchen where she found her cousin waiting with a happy face. She was as one deluded. All she said and did was as if in a dream, "It was so fortunate," she thought,

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“that no one noticed this awful deed.” But fortunate or unfortunate it was all seen by an unknown eye.

Toward evening her master came home from fishing, and the mother returned from her daughter's house, and the family seemed to be in jovial spirits. Only the mistress, hearing that the step-son was still in the house, looked very unhappy, and called out in a loud voice, “Here, O Mine, have you made everything ready for tomorrow? Are all the New Year's dishes cooked? Oh, how busy I am! I wish some lazy person would lend me a hand.”

Ishinosuke awoke from his lazy slumber, and with a very modest face went to his father and in a grave manner he spoke as follows: “Father, I ought to be at home and welcome the happy New Year, but I am not fitted to sit very soberly and I hate all this fuss and etiquette and besides I am tired of being rebuked and scolded by all around me — so I think I would better go off somewhere

and make myself free. And may I ask you, father, how much you will give me for pocket money?" Ah, this rich man! Though in the midst of abundance and though he had a good, kind heart, he had to suffer a great deal in secret, because of this extravagant son! How sad it was to let him go to mingle with profligates and sinners! He could not deny him and say he was not his son; nor could he say before the world that he has nothing to do with him. For by so doing he would call down shame upon this noted and respected family. And what then would the result be? The mother sat at his side and heard the request and waited anxiously for the answer from her husband. She did not utter even a word which was very unnatural and unlike her usual rattling manner.

With a grave face the father unlocked the safe and took out a fifty yen bundle and laying it before him, spoke in a solemn voice, "My son, I give you this money that

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you may not behave unbecomingly and bring shame upon our family name, and also for the sake of your sister who is married, that you might not do anything to annoy her. Now, you can go — I have nothing more to say to you, but just consider well whether you will be a true and noble son as you ought to be. In the New Year we shall have to make calls and what help you might render me! But instead, you give agony and grief to your old father! You have read many books and ought to know how to be good and diligent. Now go, and sin no more!" Having spoken these words, he rose and went into his room, leaving his son to consider well and repent. Ishinosuke was silent, but the money was thrust into his pocket.

"Well mother, I wish you all may have a good and happy New Year. Now, good bye." So saying he called O Mine to bring round his *geta* (shoes) to the front door and he went away gayly with his money which would all be spent in vain pleasures that

night. In all the wide world what is sadder than to have a prodigal son and a step-mother who brings up such a one!

The mistress was very glad that the hated one left the house, for now she could have her own way. "How sorry I felt when that fellow took away the money! How cunning that fellow is! I would like to look upon the face of the mother who gave birth to such a fellow," she muttered.

Mine could not realize what was going on. Her heart was beating fast, yet she could not believe that she had committed a great wrong. "Was it a dream?" she thought, "Surely the suspicion will come upon me, when the money is counted; what shall I do then? I care not what may befall me, but if my sick uncle becomes the object of suspicion — as he is poor — what shall I do?" Poor girl! she was in agony of suspense for her conduct and her tearful eyes followed every movement of her mistress and her spirit hovered around the money drawer.

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Late in the night yearly accounts were begun. It was the mistress who received twenty yen from a debtor and put them in the drawer. Now she called out, "O Mine, bring that box here." "Now," the girl thought, "the time has come — life or death! Then I will go straight and tell my master all about the unkindness of my mistress and also about my uncle's innocence. I alone am guilty of it, but in case he does not believe me, I will only have to die before them."

Now her mind was fixed. She stood up resolutely but her step was like that of a sheep led before the butcher. Tremblingly she brought the box to her mistress and the drawer was pulled out. There was no money, and to the great surprise of the girl, who had taken only two yen, the whole twenty yen were missing. A scrap of paper was left in the drawer, on which was written: "I also borrow the money in this drawer" and it was signed "Ishinosuke."

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Now everybody thought that he had taken all the money and not a particle of suspicion fell upon Mine. She believed that God showed mercy upon her and thus rewarded her for her faithfulness.

Now the question is whether Ishinosuke knew what Mine had done and purposely took her crime upon himself? Or, did he act so unintentionally? How we would like to know the end! No doubt, Ishinosuke was her guardian God!



ONISENBIKI

(The thousand devils.)

BY MRS. KAJITA.

“A woman though low in birth can ride in a sedan chair ornamented with beautiful gems.” Thus spoke the old man to his daughter who was sitting before him. “How fortunate you are, my daughter, to marry such a promising and rich gentleman as Mr. Matsumiya. You are like the peach blossom which has bloomed in the dark but has arrived at the time to be transplanted into a sunny garden. It has been a grief to me to see you working so hard in our poor home, but we will now forget this and think only of your coming happiness and the luxury of your new home, where you will be called ‘Okusama’ (Mistress, or Madam). I tell you, you are the most fortunate girl in Japan. Ah, I feel as though a heavy burden had been

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removed from my shoulders. Are you not glad, my dear girl?"

He fixed his twinkling eyes upon the girl before him. His daughter's name was O Aki, and, although she was poorly dressed, her fair complexion and gentle manners attracted the attention of many admirers. She had passed nineteen summers and was then in the prime of her womanhood. When her father had ceased speaking, her mother, who was sitting near them, began to cry and her eyes were dimmed with tears.

O Aki felt sad at seeing her mother cry and rose to leave the room, but her father detained her and said, "Stay, O Aki, you need not go, I have many things to say to you." Very solemnly he turned toward his wife and said, "Why do you cry, my wife? This is our daughter's most happy time, and yet you cry. We must be glad; such a joyful event may not happen but once in her lifetime and I think it is her parents' duty to encourage her and all be happy

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together." His voice sounded deep and his looks were grave.

The gentle wife wiped away her tears and said, "I cry not because our daughter is going to be married, but memory takes me back to the years of our past glory when we were Samurai at the time of the feudal system, and I cannot but wish that we were yet in the same condition as before, so that we could buy beautiful wedding dresses for our daughter and give her a fine dowry. My heart aches to see our only dear girl with nothing but shabby clothing to wear, and only a small bundle, such as a maid carries with her when she goes to a new master. Oh! how can I bear this sight? Nay, my husband, don't scold, and call me a vain woman. You are changed in spirit since the olden times, and your words just now sounded to me as though you love only fame and riches, and do not care for true piety. How can I help crying when I hear and see these sorrowful things?" She was

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choked with sobs and she covered her face with her hands.

"Oh! my wife," said her husband, "Don't misunderstand me, dear, I did not mean that I care only for fame and riches, I am only speaking the truth." The wife could not understand her husband's true spirit, but she felt that he could not be mean, or ignoble, so she trusted him, and he, with a smiling face, gave hint to her to cheer up their daughter and help her not to become discouraged because of the new and untried life before her.

The wife understood his meaning and spoke in a cheerful manner. "I was thoughtless to have cried at such a happy time, and I spoke very foolishly of the past. You, my daughter, will now be called Mrs. Matsumiya and I shall feel so proud when I see you dressed so finely, and your visits to us will give us so much pleasure."

To O Aki her shabby dress, and her lack of fine clothing to take with her to her new home meant but little. She felt

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sad because of having to leave her dear parents and her old home, and a feeling of timidity and awe took possession of her when she thought of the new life before her.

The time had indeed passed away when O Aki's father was honored as a lord of high rank; he was now poor and earned his living by writing for others, and the street children called him "An old style knight" when he walked along the road. But though poor and living in a humble manner he taught his daughter strictly and she was brought up like the girls of olden times.

This, he thought, would be his last opportunity to instruct his daughter, and so he turned to her and said, "Now listen, my daughter, I know you remember all that I have taught you about a woman's duty, and the time has now come for you to use my teachings in a practical way. Your husband, Mr. Matsumiya, is a very eminent gentleman and he

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is also very rich, so he is free to marry a beautiful woman of high rank and of good society, but he has chosen you. Do you know why he has done so? It is because he has heard you are very gentle and lady-like in your manners and obedient to your parents. He loves you for these reasons and he wishes you to be his faithful wife as you have been our faithful daughter. You need not be ashamed to go as a poor bride. Remember the less fortunate days of your life and never be selfish or proud. Remember also that we were not of low birth and that we did not always live in poverty. Do not bring shame upon our family by misconduct and be careful as to how you speak and act. You have been taught that, 'A woman has no home of her own in the past, present, and future worlds.' So when you go to your husband's home think that it is the only place in which you may live and die. Obey your mother-in-law and love her with all your heart

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and be a true and noble wife to your husband. Nothing will give us more comfort than to hear your praises."

The earnest father and the kind mother spoke their parting words to the loving daughter who listened to them with much earnestness. She had learned before about a woman's duties but at this time her father's words took a deeper root in her mind than ever before.

Her father opened a book and read as follows, "Firstly, a woman has no lord to serve but her husband. She must obey and honor him as her only lord and master. Be cautious. Never despise nor slight his words. A woman's first duty is obedience. She should be careful about the expression of her face, and never show anger or excitement in her looks. The words she speaks must be gentle, and quiet, and humble. She must be patient, and never be proud or impolite to others." These lessons O Aki must remember and live in obedience to their instructions.

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The gentleman she was to marry was called Kanji Matsumiya. He was a first lieutenant in the navy, was thirty-two years old, and looked yet older as he wore a long beard, but he had such a cheerful and pleasant countenance that when he smiled even little children loved him. He was always in good humor and talked freely and laughed merrily. He was also a warm-hearted and brave soldier. As to the mother-in-law, she was a good-natured old lady and loved her children very much. She was also gentle and quiet in her manners. O Aki was bashful and timid at first, but after a time she became accustomed to her new surroundings. She thought she was indeed a very fortunate woman to have such a good home, comforts, and a kind and affectionate mother-in-law. She had heard it said, that the hardest part of a bride's lot was to please her husband's mother, but this mother was kind and loved O Aki as her own daughter. So O Aki served them all

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as best as she could and the days passed as a pleasant dream.

One day her husband was very busy in his study and she thought he must be tired, so she prepared nice hot tea and placed it before him. He was pleased to be so kindly remembered and spoke pleasantly to his wife, and they were having a happy time, when their mother came in and said, "Do come and see your sister Tomi Ko for she has just returned from the country and has become healthy and stout. Let us welcome her home. Come both of you to meet her."

To O Aki this was a surprise, and she asked her husband what it meant. He replied, "Have you not heard that I have a younger sister who was very weak and who went to the country for a change of air? I think she has come home well and strong. Do not be afraid of her. She is a light-hearted girl and mother's pet. She was a student in a girls' school when she was strong." O Aki had not heard of this

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young sister and was anxious to know about her, so she followed her husband along the verandah with many varied thoughts.

When she appeared before the mother and the new sister she bowed very politely, but, bashfully. The sister appeared to be over twenty years old and her expression was not pleasant. She was gaudily dressed, and, judging from her appearance, was a person who would be hard to please. This was the first trial that came to O Aki since her marriage. The mother was very happy and related to Tomi Ko all that had occurred during her absence from home, and when the conversation turned to O Aki she said, "She is a kind-hearted and gentle girl and so pretty."

At this, the brows of Tomi Ko were knitted and she looked critically at O Aki. At this time all the rest of the family left the room and O Aki was left alone with Tomi Ko who hummed a hymn tune to show that she understood foreign music. Soon

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she turned with a haughty air to her new sister and said, "Have you studied any foreign language and what school have you attended?"

O Aki answered very humbly "I attended a common school, but I have not studied any foreign language."

"Then you are not fit for our society," said Tomi Ko, as she looked scornfully at O Aki. The poor girl felt ashamed of her ignorance and hung her head in shame. It was very unpleasant for her to listen to these insulting words, but, as Tomi Ko saw that her sister was gentle and humble she took this occasion to speak plainly about her brother's standing, and his acquaintance with books, and also of his dislike of such a humble and retiring woman.

She hinted to O Aki to conduct herself differently if she desired her husband to love her, and when O Aki heard her sister speak in this manner she feared her husband's love for her might perish if she continued to show so much modesty and

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so retiring a disposition. So after that she tried very hard to speak more brightly and to be more gay in her manners; yet she was continually fearful of saying something which might sound foolish or show that she was not a highly educated woman. Day by day she became more timid and fearful and allowed her mind to be bent and twisted as a willow tree is tossed and blown by every passing gale of wind.

She strove to please every one, and served her husband with fear and reserve, being troubled in mind lest he should cease to love her. She was living contrary to her true nature and instead of making her husband love her more caused a barrier of coldness and misunderstanding to grow up between them, and they became a most unhappy couple.

Tomi Ko was peevish and cross and continually accused O Aki of doing things in a wrong way. She was jealous of O Aki's beauty and showed her dislike of her sister

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by criticising her mistakes and faults. Even the formerly kind mother-in-law was influenced by Tomi Ko and became unkind and cross. O Aki hoped and prayed that Tomi Ko would leave the house but she overheard the servants say that the girl had lost all chance of marriage because of her haughty and proud spirit. She thought, "Must I remain here and serve these ill-natured people? Will the past happy time never return?"

She could not forget those joyous days before Tomi Ko came to the house, but she felt it was her duty to make the best of present circumstances. She tried hard to do this, but the more she tried the more she was found fault with and reproved by her mother-in-law and Tomi Ko. She was not allowed to have anything to do with the management of the household affairs, and this was one of her greatest trials, for her parents had taught her that a wife, no matter how rich she might be nor how many servants

she might have in her home, ought always to look after and control wisely the affairs of the house, and, in fact until Tomi Ko's return she had obeyed these instructions.

This state of affairs became at last unbearable and one day O Aki went to her mother-in-law and asked to be allowed to assist in the business of the home. O Aki's room opened to a beautiful garden and, as she passed along the verandah her troubled eyes caught sight of the trees and flowers then in full bloom. The green grass was nicely cut and looked like soft velvet; streams of sparkling water flowed at the foot of the little hillocks; birds were singing their sweet songs and the soft wind carried with it the fragrance all about her, and O Aki felt refreshed as she breathed the pure air. "Ah!" she thought, "if I could but enjoy these beautiful works of God and man with loving friends."

As she stood there lost in thought she heard footsteps behind her, and turning

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saw her mother-in-law coming towards her. She tried to appear cheerful and turned toward the old lady hoping to receive a kind word, but her mother-in-law passed by without paying any attention whatever to her, not noticing her presence by a word or look of any kind. O Aki was disappointed and discouraged, but she followed her mother and took hold of her dress, and trembling with great emotion cried out, "Oh! mother, I beg you to let me know what I must do to please you."

Tears were falling fast from the poor girl's eyes and she looked appealingly into her mother's face, but her mother replied sneeringly, "I am at your service, madam."

O Aki was filled with shame and fear, but she again spoke bravely, "Please, dear mother, I beseech you to forgive all my faults; teach me, and command me to something of service to you."

Again the mother answered, "I never accused you of being idle or lazy."

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Once more O Aki besought her to be allowed to be of service in the home, saying, "I pray you to let me wait on you and to help in domestic affairs."

Her mother, however, replied coldly, "Do not be troubled about me nor about our housekeeping. You were born in a nobleman's family and it is too much to ask a nobleman's daughter to do work in our poor house, so please yourself in your own way. Our garden may be worth nothing to your elegant eyes, but write poetry about it or do anything you like to entertain yourself."

With contemptuous looks and with a mocking smile the mother left O Aki, who knelt on the floor, her face white as marble and her heart beating as though it would break. For a moment she was still as a statue and then she burst into violent sobbing. "How can I bear such insults, and such cruel treatment?" she cried, "I cannot tell my husband of this woman's cruel treatment because she is his mother and

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yet this burden is too hard to bear. What shall I do and to whom shall I go for help and comfort?"

She was crying bitterly when she heard footsteps approaching, and, merrily singing a war song, her husband came toward her. In haste O Aki stood up and tried to hide all traces of her tears. Had she not been of so timid a disposition she would have told her husband of these trials, but, indeed, she tried to slip away from him. He, however, saw that her pretty face was stained with tears, so he put his arms about her and said smilingly, "What are you crying for, my baby wife? Are you homesick?"

"O, no, sir, I am not crying, only looking at this beautiful garden," replied his wife.

"You don't say so, my child," said her husband, "I think you want to see your own mother's face. Am I not right in this?" He patted her shoulder and laughed merrily not dreaming of her trouble. In a few days he sailed away in a man-of-war to the

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far away land of China, and O Aki was left alone to battle with her trials.

Although she was of a very timid nature, and had feared that she might displease her husband, she missed him sadly and felt very lonely with no one to comfort or cheer her, and her sleep was often broken by unpleasant dreams. After the departure of the master of the house the ill-natured Tomi Ko claimed the right to rule the household and gave all the orders. O Aki was treated with the utmost rudeness. Sometimes she would be told to sew on a dress and if it was not finished in a day she would be severely scolded, and when Tomi Ko's ugly remarks were too severe, and the mother tried to stop the abusive flow of words, she was quieted by Tomi Ko who insisted on ruling and governing all the household. Not a day passed without sorrow and tears and the nights were spent in a lonely and dreary room.

It was at this time that O Aki realized she would soon be a mother. This

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knowledge brought with it both comfort and sorrow, but she faintly hoped the news of this might soften the hard hearts of her mother and sister. She felt that she must now learn how to take care of her health, and that she must be taught many things, so she decided to ask for permission to visit her own dear mother and seek advice from her.

Soon after breakfast O Aki went to the room where her mother-in-law was sitting and timidly asked for permission to visit her old home, but she received no reply. Again very humbly she asked if she might be allowed to visit her parents for a short time.

"No, you cannot go," cried the mother-in-law, and Tomi Ko, who was looking contemptuously at the trembling girl, added, "What a selfish woman! When your husband was here you did nothing to help us, but spent your time in waiting upon and flattering him. I do not understand how you can be so self-willed and selfish."

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O Aki could no longer endure such treatment and with a beating heart she told these women her reason for wishing to see, and consult with, her own mother. Upon hearing this, the mother-in-law's face beamed with joy, but Tomi Ko cried out, "Mother, don't allow yourself to be blind-folded by this woman. If the child was of proper birth she would have come directly to you with the news instead of wishing to go to her own mother first. Her idea was to get her parents to assist her in blind-folding us, for I believe she is a bad woman and had conceived before she came to our house. You must see that she is divorced from my brother at once in order to save our family name from disgrace. She ought not remain in this house. My brother, who is the head of the house, would not wish such a woman to remain here, and, as his substitute, I command you to go away this very minute."

O Aki threw herself upon the floor and sobbed with indignation and anger, "Do

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you speak with a sober mind," she cried, "think who and what I am!" Her voice trembled and her cheeks were white as lilies.

"We have no ears to listen to your fine speeches," answered Tomi Ko.

"God knows I am pure and innocent," cried O Aki. Her voice was choked with sobs as the two women turned their faces from her and closed their ears to her pitiful cries. Like one in a dream she reached her own parents' home and told her sad tale. The grave father and tender mother listened to her story and were filled with joy at the news of the coming of a grandchild; but, while they sympathized with O Aki in her distress, they felt that she had done wrong in leaving her husband's home and urged her to return immediately.

They talked most kindly to her and she, in deference to their wishes, and feeling sorry to have troubled them so much, promised that she would not again return to them until her husband came back. Wiping

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her tear-stained face she took final leave of her dear old home. It was twilight when she again entered her husband's home.

Again she pleaded with her mother-in-law and Tomi Ko, but the sister cried out, "Go out, you noisy woman! take leave this moment. If you don't go I will call a policeman and have you arrested." O Aki could bear no more. Trembling with fatigue and excitement she felt she could go no further and she begged that she might be allowed to remain but that one night.

She could say no more and her strength failed utterly as she tried to plead for mercy. The night was far spent when she opened her sunken eyes and raised her weak body. She felt she must leave this place but where to go and what to do she did not know. After thinking over the matter for a while she decided where and how she would put an end to these persecutions.

She thought, "If I had not married I might yet be a free and happy girl." And yet she had been happy before Tomi Ko returned to her home, but since her return all

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the brightness and joy had been changed to darkness and misery. She wondered where her dear husband was at this sad time and wished that he could be with her to help her out of her misery. She thought of her dear father and tender mother and of how surprised and sad they would feel after she had passed away from them in this world forever, for she had decided upon her destiny.

When it was almost day-break Tomi Ko awakened and took an early morning walk about the garden where the autumn flowers lifted their many colored and beautifully tinted heads and where the morning dew sparkled like gems upon the leaves. She was admiring these works of nature and the path led her close to an old well when her sharp eyes caught sight of some object lying near the brink. The tale was told and the owner of the shoes was buried deep in the old old well.



SHINOBI.

BY MRS. OTSUKA.

There was a blind girl, who about two or three years ago appeared on the sea-shore at Kamakura. She was an *amma* (that is one who practices massage, a profession in Japan peculiar to blind men or women).

Her name was Take, and every morning she came out on the beach and about sunset the sound of her hobbling tired steps helped by her cane was heard as she went back to her unknown shelter.

“There comes blind Take-chan!” The village children would shout along her way home. Ah, though she was blind, she knew so well that she was mocked because of her exceeding ugliness, and in her poor mind she understood that the beauty of women is their only life and pride, but how could she throw away her ugly face and become a pretty woman! Filled with jealousy and

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crooked thoughts, she made of this wide earth a place of narrowness and smallness. Though the wind was harsh and the rain was cold and the hand of poverty always inflicted hard blows upon her poor soul and body, she yet did not wish to lead a life entirely apart from others and without love.

It is the same in every country during the summer time that people come in crowds from hot cities to the sea-side to be refreshed by cool sea-breezes.

During this season Take the blind girl was quite busy, being called for here and there, but she never worked hard, being satisfied to get enough money to spend for her daily living. She was often very strange in her manner. Sometimes she seemed to be walking very slowly with the help of her cane and then she would hasten her steps and suddenly stop. Sometimes she seemed to be crying and then would wipe her tears and laugh with such pitiful expressions upon her thin cheeks.

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She never told her age, but she must have been about twenty-four or five. Her body was too short and her dark face with scars from burns cruelly stamped all over it was awful to see. Her uncombed hair looked like a bird's nest, and the old tattered clothes she wore with a shabby sash, the ragged ends of which always hung behind her back, made her appearance both miserable and repulsive.

People were accustomed to hear the tremulous sound of her small whistle now so faint and then so loud. Her faithful cane always led her up and down hill all along the rough and stony paths. She hummed the same tune with a funny and peculiar voice: "Oh! Shall I bid farewell to this world where I find no joy, but only sorrow!"

It was a hot summer morning, when the blind girl stood under the shadow of an old tree; steps were heard approaching and she was called loudly, but she did not hear the calling as she was lost in thought.

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“Ha, Take-chan, have you forgotten your promise?” The question was asked by a man about forty years of age or perhaps more, who looked like a workman. Without waiting for the blind girl's answer, he took hold of her cane and pulled her along with his strong grasp, saying. “Now come quickly, for I have worked hard and I want you to rub my back which is so stiff and painful.” She was led by him until they reached his dwelling house. Her way of earning money was to rub and flap lightly on the shoulders of men and women. She worked about an hour and finished her rubbing. “Ah, I feel so good now. Well ma'm, how are you getting along?” He lighted his pipe and began to smoke. Being lonely he wished to kill time by making fun of the blind girl. She was very sober and kept touching with her fingers some object in her sleeve. He was watching her and asked, “What valuable thing have you got in there. ma'm?”

“Oh never mind what I have got, it is

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my dearest whistle, sir." She spoke out very harshly to him. "Well, well, must we always look at your beautiful countenance, madam?" She was angry then at his teasing, and stood up and said, "I will go home?" In haste she came to the doorway and searched for her cane, but could not find it. "Oh, pray, madam, don't be angry with me; there is the price of your work."

"I don't want any money."

"Ha, ha, you and I are not always on good terms."

"Of course, sir, you always make fun of me."

"Well then, hereafter we will be good friends; won't we, O Take-chan? Now I want to tell you a piece of news. Have you heard that the artisan Tamekichi has sent back his dear wife?"

"What, is that true?" the blind girl was very much astonished, and in a rather agitated manner, she turned towards him, asking eagerly, "Why, what was the reason?"

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"O well, it's often the case with young couples. They love each other so dearly, and then they have a sweet quarrel, and then, he says, 'go away!' and the woman says, 'Very well, I'll go this minute,' and you see that's the end of their play."

The blind girl was silent for a while and spoke out with a quite low voice, "That's all the man's fault, I am sure. Well, I must go home now, good-by."

"Ah, be careful, there is a big stone before you!" He told her very kindly this time. It was twilight and the evening bells of the neighboring temples echoed far and near, and the last rays of the setting sun faintly glimmered behind the dark clouds which hung low as if to enclose earth and waves. The fishermen's deep voices, crying, "Hay, ho," sounded high and low when they pushed their boats into the bay. Soon the stars began to sparkle like diamonds in the dark sky. The beach, which in the day-time was made noisy by many people and the children's restless feet

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romping and playing all day long among the rocks and in the pools of water, was now changed as by a magic touch into a serene and calm world.

One could hear distinctly the songs of the murmuring waves, and the lights from the houses on the opposite beach could be faintly recognized as they cast their shadows on the wide deep sea.

O Take lost her way and was wandering alone in the evening hours. "Oh my, I was lost in thought and missed my usual path. Why, I am sure I will walk into the sea, if I am not careful."

She was murmuring these words and standing on the way-side where reeds and tall grasses made her way difficult.

Pretty soon, some foot-steps were heard and the figures of two women came along the path where the blind girl stood. One woman said, "Why, I feel so sad because it does not seem right for our young madam to look so ugly while she is so smart and wise. I don't understand why she should

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look so ugly, when her mother is so pretty and fine-looking."

"Yes and I feel so sorry for that young madam, because the gentleman she was engaged to has refused to marry her. They were betrothed to each other from their childhood, and now he is unkind enough to reject her. I do believe women's happiness only depends upon their beautiful countenances. Indeed, that's true!"

They were talking thus, when suddenly they were surprised to see some dark object right on their way who seemed to have heard all their talk.

"Oh that's a blind girl, how pitiful!" said one woman with a low voice to her partner beside her. The blind girl was murmuring some words very faintly when they passed her.

Those two women were no doubt the maids belonging to a noble man's house, and the subject of their talk was about their unfortunate young madam.

"Ah, what a misfortune to be born an

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ugly woman!" the blind girl cried. "But it is even more sad to have lost one's eyesight. What is there to suffer, if she is a noble man's daughter and has every other comfort!"

* * * * *

There lived a bamboo artisan in the village at a cottage near Hase, who was noted for his fine workmanship and his honest skilful works. His small shop was always crowded with customers and he was kept busy with his work.

It was quite dark, and the artisan lighted his work lamp and had seated himself to begin his evening task.

When and how the blind girl, who had lost her way, came home nobody knew, but suddenly O Take entered his workroom unnoticed by him. She stood now in full view and abruptly cried out, "Why, Tame san, may I ask you to tell me the reason about sending away your loving wife?"

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As she spoke, her voice was trembling and with her hollow cheeks and sightless eyes she looked very pitiful.

Tamekichi was much surprised with this sudden visitor in his shop. He turned toward her with a smiling face and said, "How have you come here at such an hour and for what business?" He was not quite bright and in his usual good humour then, for his mind was like a tangled silk and filled with regret that he had sent back his loving wife the day before. The blind girl spoke out with a decided tone, "Oh, I am so anxious to hear why you have sent your dear wife away?"

He thought she was very strange in her manners and queer to ask such a question. Again she said with rather an excited voice, "I am very sober this time, Tame san, and I must and will hear the reason, sir?"

"Why, because she wanted to leave me!" He spoke harshly but with a strong emotion.

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O Take supported herself by the cane in hand, and with her back against the doorway spoke in a sad tone, "Ah! Tame san, it is all your fault, and not hers. You speak so coldly about it, but I know the depth of your heart, sir, Please listen now to what I say. Think of my poor and miserable condition! Nobody will care for me though I cry or laugh. People don't have a bit of sympathy. No, not more than they care for dogs. With no sight to look at things and with such an ugly face, I am fooled and mocked at by everybody. But, oh, I know what love is. Though I am a deformed girl and you may think I am too bold to say it, yet my heart is confused with a hopeless love, and since I have realized what love is, I struggled in sorrow with the vain hope and in order to conceal my secret I acted as though I was a fool and a queer girl. But when I heard you married that sweet O Kimi-chan, ah, well, I was glad!"

Her voice trembled and tears rolled down from her dark eyes. She continued,

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“And then the people said, that fool has become crazy. Why, when you took your sweet-heart for your loving wife, I was so glad that you had got such a beautiful woman. Since I came to this city I don't know why, but I am anxious to know about everything concerning you.”

Now her voice was very low and then she spoke out loudly and continued her talking, “Well, I am suffering with pain and grief, so I can well sympathize with your wife. She loved you so much, and she is such a gentle and modest girl. She might do something unhappy if you don't call her back soon. Do bring her home again! You know that even a nobleman's daughter with riches and fame cannot marry if she is ugly in appearance. Of course nobody will care for and love a poor and ugly creature like myself. Ah, in this hopeless world I will trust my fate to heaven, but please remember, when you do not hear the sound of my dear flute, why then, I shall not be in this world. The flute you

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give me is my life and comfort. I will live with this as long as I am breathing?" She sighed deeply and again she put up her sightless face and said, "Be sure to call your wife back, Tame-san, and now I feel so happy because I have said all I want to say. Forgive my interruption."

She took up her cane and she stepped out hurriedly out of the house, and the night was very dark. The man was listening like one in a dream, and the blind girl's words took strong hold of and deeply affected his mind and heart. He had no chance to speak, when suddenly she went off without waiting for his words.

"Yes, I understood you, indeed. I understood your kind words. Oh stay one moment! Do stay." He cried in an earnest and deep voice. But it was too late. He could only hear the faint quivering sound of the flute echoing in the lonely night air.

Of course it was the young couple's sweet quarrel and the next day the young husband went to bring his dear wife again

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to his lonely home, and what chattering and pleasant laughter was heard there!

Outside there on the hill top was the blind O Take, walking to and fro with staggering steps, aided only by her cane, and singing in her faint voice that sad old song, "Oh! shall I bid farewell to this world where I find no joy but only sorrow!"

Since that time nobody saw the poor O Take any more and none knew whence she came and how and where she has gone?

THE END

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tei Fujiu] 藤生, てい共 An aspiring novelist and an admirer of Nakajima Shōen, she acquired, co-edited, and published the final two years of Shōen's diaries, entitled *Shōen nikki* (Tokyo: Iku-seikai, 1903)

Baroness Nakajima] Kishida Toshiko 岸田 俊子 (1861-1901) wrote and published under the name Nakajima Shōen. In 1884 she married Baron Nakajima Nobuyuki, a political activist in the Liberal Party who became the first Speaker of the House of Representatives of Japan and Japanese ambassador to Italy. In addition to her political speeches and essays for the Popular Rights Movement, she published articles, novellas, and translations. She is widely recognized as a pioneer of the women's movements in Japan.

Mrs. Kaho Miyake] 三宅花圃 (1868-1944) Novelist, essayist, and poet who published *Yabu no uguisu* ("Songbird in the Grove") in 1888. Born Tanabe Kaho, daughter of Tanabe Taichi, a government official. Married Setsurei Miyake in 1892 and with her husband published the magazine *Josei nihonjin* ("Japanese Women") beginning in 1920.

HANAKATSURA

Miss Ichiyo Higuchi] 樋口一葉 (1872–1896) She was born Natsuko Higuchi, the daughter of a minor Tokyo government official who died in 1889 leaving the family in financial difficulties. She began writing in 1891, inspired by the considerable success of recent novels by her former classmate Kaho Miyake. Her first stories were published in 1892. “*Ōtsugomori: The Last Day of the Year*” was published in 1894 in the magazine *Bungakukai*. Despite her literary successes, she, her mother, and younger sister struggled financially until her death of tuberculosis at the age of 24. She chronicled the last 5 years of her life in an extensive diary.

Mrs. Kajita] Usurai Kitada 北田薄氷 (1876–1900) Born Kitada Takako in Tokyo, daughter of Kitada Masatada, a lawyer. Following graduation from school she became a student of the writer Ozaki Kōyō. Her first successful publication was “Three Widows” in 1893. She entered an arranged marriage with Japanese painter Hanko Kajita in 1898, with whom she had a son. She died of tuberculosis in 1900, and her husband collected and illustrated her works, published posthumously as *Usurai ikō* (“Thin Ice”) in 1901.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mrs. Otsuka] Otsuka Kusuo 大塚楠緒子 (1875-1910) Novelist and poet. After graduating from a women's school affiliated with Tokyo Women's Normal School (later, Ochanomizu University), she studied poetry and novel writing under Sasaki Nobutsuna and Natsume Soseki. In 1895 she published *Kureyuku Aki* (Autumn Deepens) in the magazine *Bungaku Kurabu*. In 1905 she released the anti-war poem *Ohyakudo Moude* (One Hundred Visits to Shrine) in the magazine *Taiyo* (The Sun) and received attention along with Yosano Akiko. (Courtesy National Diet Library; <https://www.ndl.go.jp/portrait/e/datas/6297/>). The story *Shinobine* ("A Faint Tune") appeared in 1897.

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ABOUT THE TEXT

This edition reproduces the English text of the *Hanakatsura* as published in 1903. Additional paragraphing has been added in some passages of dialogue for greater clarity.

Paul Royster
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