





JAPAN'S YEAR.

TEXT BY

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Illustrated by Japanese Artists.

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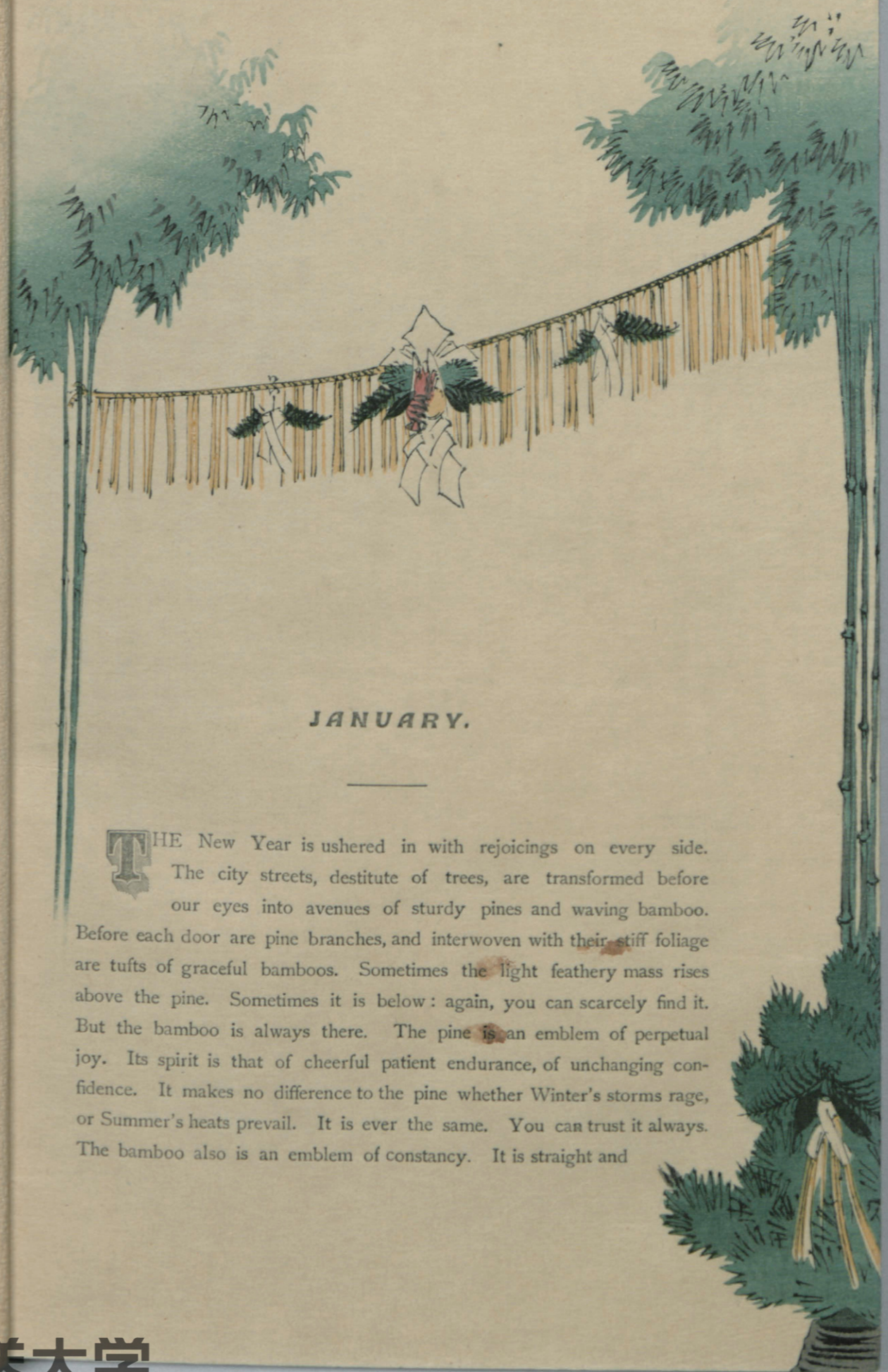
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## JANUARY.

THE New Year is ushered in with rejoicings on every side. The city streets, destitute of trees, are transformed before our eyes into avenues of sturdy pines and waving bamboo. Before each door are pine branches, and interwoven with their stiff foliage are tufts of graceful bamboos. Sometimes the light feathery mass rises above the pine. Sometimes it is below: again, you can scarcely find it. But the bamboo is always there. The pine is an emblem of perpetual joy. Its spirit is that of cheerful patient endurance, of unchanging confidence. It makes no difference to the pine whether Winter's storms rage, or Summer's heats prevail. It is ever the same. You can trust it always. The bamboo also is an emblem of constancy. It is straight and



its nodes regular, so it represents virtue to mankind. Its spirit is that of uprightness and virtue combined with exquisite grace and beauty. There are often plum blossoms with the pines and bamboos. The plum sends out its pretty flowers in cold, snowy weather. It teaches men to be cheerful in adversity. There is a note of sadness in all this.

“ At every door  
The pine trees stand ;  
One mile-post more,  
To the spirit-land ;  
And as there's gladness,  
So there's sadness.”

It is a poetical conception. The New Year's decorations but mark another station in the road to the unseen and the eternal. Over the doorways are fringes of straw hanging from a straw rope. The latter is in memory of the rope stretched across the entrance of the dark cave. *Ama-no-iwato*, from which the Sun-goddess, *Amaterasu* had just emerged. The interior of the cave was supposed to be the unclean and inauspicious, and the rope fenced it off from the clean, smiling, outside world. This rope is also used at the entrance of *Shinto* temples to protect them from exterior pollution. At the door of dwelling houses it is a boundary over which diseases and evil spirits may not pass. The rope must be woven towards the left, as that is the fortunate side. The fringes are of straws in odd numbers—three, five, seven, etc.—each group being distinct from the others. Mingled with the other ornaments are strips of white paper called *gohei*. These were originally intended to represent the clothing and jewels swung on branches of trees to tempt the Sun-goddess out of the cave. The *daidai* or a bitter orange is used also. Its name signifies from generation to generation, and denotes perpetuity of family. A crab shows the desire for long life. The fish skin is a sign of politeness and indicates desire to have a gift graciously received.







The streets on new year's day are filled with people dressed in their best. The bright sashes and gay hair-pins of the girls, the gaudy coats of the babies, the brilliantly painted toys, the flowers, the kites, the balls, the busy battledores and flying shuttlecocks, make the scenes wonderfully full of life and color, of changing hues and varied movements. The people when they meet bow low and say "*Omedetō*," which means great happiness, or many congratulations. All of the little girls have battledores and shuttlecocks, and are very happy as they toss the pretty feathers counting all the time. Some of the battledores are very large and handsome—the under side being of figures made of crape. All of the little boys are flying kites made in various shapes and painted in bright colors. Some of them represent men with arms extended. Some are birds or immense insects. Others, which they appear particularly to like, are dragons, devils or evil spirits. There are singing kites which high in the air emit sounds like the passing of the wind over wires. And whilst flying them the boys chant :

" Blow, Wind, blow !

The god of the wind is weak :

The god of the sun is strong :

Blow, Wind, blow ! "

Fathers and mothers are playing with their children. All Japan is filled with pleasant sights and sounds. The New Year's feast lasts seven days. The schools are closed. There is nothing but play and rejoicing.

Early in the morning of the second of January the wholesale merchants send their goods out to the local traders. These goods are called *hatsuni* and are piled on wagons drawn by horses or oxen, and decorated with flags bearing the names of the houses from which they are despatched. Some of the horses are dressed in long scarves of various colors ; red, blue and purple being a favorite combination. Some are yellow, pink and green reaching quite over the body and trailing on the ground at either side. This gives the animal a most peculiar appearance. Some have only one or two strips, others are entirely covered. They also have brass and gilded ornaments



about them. The foremost wagon in a train often bears emblems of good luck, the "seven gods of fortune," the rising sun, the crab or pine tree. There usually follows a train of men supposed to be employees of the firm represented. They are all dressed alike. Some play the flute: some beat drums. The whole has the appearance of a religious procession. In the evening of the second day men go about the city calling out: "Otakara! Otakara!" and offering for sale the picture of a pleasure boat carrying "the seven gods of fortune," which, if placed under the pillow, is supposed to induce happy dreams.

The houses are all made beautifully clean. Some families ornament the inside walls and posts with the *shimé* and the *noshi*. The *shimé* is in imitation of the outside decoration of the rope and the fringe. In this case, the rope is short and tied in a ring with a few pendent straws. The *noshi* is the bit of sea-weed called *kombu* in the prettily folded paper. It is always given with a present and, like the fish-skin, signifies the desire for gracious acceptance. With the *shimé* and the large *noshi* are mingled the usual designs and emblems, the rising sun, the crab, the pine, the crane or the plum blossoms. But whether these ornaments are to be found or not, every house has the sets of round rice-cakes called *kagami-mochi* — or mirror cakes — in memory of *Amaterasu's* famous mirror, one of the three sacred treasures of Japan. This pyramid of cakes is crowned with bitter orange, dried persimmons, fern, evergreens and a crab, the whole being set on the wooden stand called *sambō*, and is placed in *toko* or the ornamental recess which is a feature of every Japanese parlor. Presents are given and received at New Year's time. There are often gifts of fruit, tea, sugar, cakes, sweet meats or pieces of silk-crape or pretty cloth of some description, especially *tōchirimen*, which is so much in vogue at the present time. The practice of calling on New Year's day has been somewhat discontinued as in other countries.

The especial new year's food is *mochi* or pounded-rice. It is used in various ways, but chiefly in little square cakes. The pounded-rice flour is mixed with water, then kneaded, and baked over the *hibachi*. The round







*mochi* cakes always have some religious significance as in the case of those placed on the *sambō*. The large ones are offered in the temples. *Zōni* or *mochi-soup* is eaten for breakfast on the first morning of the new year. This must be eaten for three days or seven days as a preventive of taking cold. Each family has its supply of *tosō*, a spiced *saké*, and a certain compound of rice cake, vegetables, fishes and birds.

There are feasts in some houses:—sea-weed in beautiful colors and prepared in various ways, *mochi*, salted fruits and pretty sugar ornaments representing flowers. On the seventh day *nana kusa* or seven kinds of vegetables—turnip, radish, parsley, shepherd's purse, celery, endweed and henbit—are cooked with salt and eaten together with *kayu* or rice gruel. The eleventh day is called *kagami biraki*: The *mochi* is taken off the *sambō* and made into the *mochi-soup* or *zōni*. On the fifteenth day, *mochi* is cooked with sweet beans and rice. These are old customs and observed until this day.

In the evenings the younger people, and older as well, play games or tell stories over the *hibachi*, while tea and sweets are passed around. There are several games with cards. Of these "the One Hundred Poems" is the most classic. The usual Japanese poem is very short and a distich, divided into two parts—the second being a sort of complement to the first. There are two hundred cards—one hundred has the whole poem written on each card; the second hundred has the second half only. The first hundred are given to a reader, and the second hundred laid faces upward on the floor or mats. The reader reads the first part of the poem, whoever first spies the second part grabs it, the game being to the one who gets the most cards. There are other ways also of playing this game. There is a simpler game on the same principles in which the cards are chiefly pictures.

January in Japan as elsewhere is king of the months of the year. But its spirit is that of uncertainty, expectancy and hope. It is beauty dormant, possible. There may be plum blossoms. There may be snow. There is promise of both in the air. The beauty is yet unrevealed. It is



the promise of the bud, the incipient loveliness held in the bare plum branch, the possibilities of the infant, the unfolding of the new year. You know not what it will bring, but it is big with hope, pregnant with blessings. Now an early plum branch bursts forth into bloom, now an exquisite camellia unfolds itself before your wondering eyes, and now a swelling bud, and now an opening leaf. The azalea bushes are dark red. They do not seem to lose their leaves, only change their color. The pines and the bamboos are always the same. There are some hardy species of oak that are evergreen. The rest of the trees are leafless, making beautiful lace work against the blue or gray of the winter sky. At sunset there is often a faint glimmer of light, or a broad band of gold behind them, and shining through them. We have a dash of cold rain, a gust of icy wind, then floods of golden sunshine. The long line of the Hakones is all white, while Fuji raises his snow-crowned head above them. Beautiful and cold! That is January.



## FEBRUARY.

The snow which has fallen softly in December and January now comes flying before the wind in masses of feathery whiteness. It piles itself up in the streets. It lies in heaps in the corners. It weighs down the roofs. It pencils the bare brown or gray branches of the leafless trees. It mixes itself up with the dark hues of the pines. It powders the glossy greenness of the camellias. City and country are alike transformed. Outlines are softened. Rough edges are concealed. Dirt and ugliness are covered up. Stains and spots are no longer visible. The beauty of the Winter is with us; cold, pure, immaculate. In Tokyo, Fuji and the Hakones seem to have moved up close to the city. You can see the seams and depressions in their



sides as you look through the clear still atmosphere. They are glorious—Fuji above all the rest lifting himself in “solemn grandeur” to the skies. All Japanese love the etherealization and spiritualization of landscape in the snow. To them, as to all nations, it suggests purity of soul, of thought, and of conception. Their poetry is full of it. Their art is chastened by it. The people will tramp in the snow for miles to see some charming snow landscape. Among the most famous are Asakusa temple in Tokyo, when the great pagoda shows phantomlike through a white mist; and the evening snow on Mt. Hira on Lake Biwa. This last is one of the “eight beauties of Ōmi province” of which we have the lovely pictures by Ōkyo. But all landscapes are beautiful in the snow. The snow is plum blossoms in Winter. The plum blossoms are snow in Spring. Thus a little poem has been translated for us.

“Icy flakes are falling fast  
Through the chilly air, and snow  
Yonder trees with snow bloom laden.  
Do assume the wild plum's guise,  
With their mass of snowy flowers,  
Gladdening Winter's cheerless time.”

The plum blossom is the earliest flower of the year. The delicate petals begin to unfold in January. It is lovely to see them amidst the snow and a unique experience to stand in a snow drift and pluck delicate flowers from a branch of a tree above you. The dashes of color against the browns and grays of the leafless trees and under the gray of the winter sky are exceedingly beautiful—a greenish white, an exquisite delicate pink or deeper red of an early variety. As sometimes you see a row of plum trees in full bloom against the dark rich greens of the pines, you are reminded of *geisha* girls dancing before a sober audience, especially when the light branches are tossed by the breeze, and the gay boughs move to the music of the wind. It is novel to see such a sight and to inhale the fragrance through the

crisp cold air. There are a thousand or more of old plum-trees in the temple-garden of Sugita near Yokohama. They are very old, rugged and worn by the storms of many Winters and by the heat of many Summer suns. Their branches are gnarled and twisted. They are of all sorts of fantastic shapes—bent and broken and without symmetry of form. But the people love and cherish these ancient trees. They are propped, and protected by fences. You always find a crowd of admirers around these aged ones. To see these hard hollow trunks and these stiff ugly branches burst out into bloom every year is a wonder and a delight. They will go on as long as there is a scrap of them left. They will shed joy and sweetness about them to the very end. It is no wonder that they are a poem and an allegory and an example to men, charming in youth, beautiful in old age, giving out their blessings amidst snow and frost and cold and icy rains. That is the plum tree. The fruit amounts to little value except as a pickle. The pickle has a peculiar dark, dull, red color caused by the admixture of a certain herb. There are a number of famous plum gardens in Japan. Tsukigase in Yamato (near Kyoto) Komukai and Kameido near Tokyo, and Sugita near Yokohama, being the most noted. *Gin Sekai* or “Silver World” in the suburbs of Tokyo is one of the most beautiful. There are massed hundreds of plum trees—a special attraction being two that were planted many, many years ago by one of the *Shoguns* or *Tycoons*. There is scarcely anything left of them, except the trunks. In the early Winter they seem destitute of life. But they are fenced and supported, and always surrounded by admirers, and never fail in February or in young March to burst into bloom. When the trees are in full blossom and one stands amongst them, it is as though clouds of flowers had floated down over the earth from the skies. One almost expects to see calm, passionless, desire-freed Buddhas standing motionless and undisturbed upon them as in the old religious pictures of the Paradise of the Saints, where sweet colors, sweet odors and sweet sounds combine to charm every sense. Such is the “Silver World” of the Japanese.



The Feast of Inari, the deity who presides over cereals, especially rice, is celebrated during February — on the day which in the Calendar is marked by the sign of the horse. Then the ways to Inari's temples, which are guarded by a pair of foxes, are lined with flags and lanterns, and the people flock in crowds to do honor to their favorite deity. Inari protects the rice, the precious grain. The fox assists in this good cause by destroying smaller animals who would otherwise eat the seeds. Thence the fox became sacred to the worshippers of *Inari*, as the horse is honored in connection with *Hachiman*, the god of war. One of Inari's most famous temples is at Oji, a suburb of Tokyo. It stands on a hill in the midst of trees and fountains and running streams of water. From "Cherry Hill" in the neighborhood of the temple one can see the river Sumida looking like a silver thread in the distance. But there are little shrines to *Inari* all over the country. One sees them in many a rice-field and in many lonely garden corners, sometimes lighted by a solitary lamp or taper at night.

The eleventh of February is *Jimmu Tenno's* day, the date of that hero's accession to the throne — also the day on which the new constitution was adopted 1889. All of the cities and towns are gay with the floating national flags displayed in honor of *Jimmu Tenno*, Japan's first Emperor, a character part mythical part historical. This first Mikado was the sixth in descent from the Sun-goddess. He led an expedition from Kiushiu to the main island. After various vicissitudes and experiences on the way, by the special intervention of the gods he finally prevailed against all enemies and overcame all difficulties settling at last in the neighborhood of Kyoto and fixing his capital at Kashiwabara. No one knows the actual facts, but the era of Jimmu marks the starting point of Japanese history, and his birthday and date of accession to the throne are celebrated all over Japan. He is deified by the Shintoists and thousands of shrines dedicated to him.







### MARCH.

The Vernal Equinox is also welcomed with joy. It is the return of Spring. Some householders prepare *Botan mochi* (peony cake), round cakes of boiled rice covered with a paste made of beans and sugar; or *dango*, cakes of rice shaped like a sausage, covered with sweet red beans. These cakes are offered to images of Buddha and distributed amongst relatives and neighbors.

Winter and Spring begin their fight for supremacy. There comes a warm, bright day, a sweet surprise. But even as we are enjoying it a bitter icy wind rushes down upon us. It is the breath of Winter who says "Not yet, not yet." But the sun is shining, and the plum trees still a mass of

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bloom. Then there comes a rainy day, dull, cold miserable, and after that again another surprise — a warm sunny perfect day. Spring laughs in one face and shakes her merry head and says: "I shall conquer, never fear." But the next day is Winter and we begin to think—"What if he should win the battle this time and we should never have any Spring in the world again!" Oh see, the camellias are coming out, those slow buds are unfolding at last. The bushes are filled with the lovely double pink flowers. This is the Japanese rose. How wonderful that the bushes should burst forth into bloom while Winter is still king? The elegant daphne is out, too. The air is filled with its sweet fragrance. Everything is a dull gray except the evergreens, the pink camellias, the white and purple daphnes and the dull red of the azalea bushes. It is cold, cold, cold, we cannot keep warm in the house, the wind penetrates everywhere. Sometimes there are clouds lying low in the sky, sometimes it is bright and clear. The mountains come out in full force — Fuji, and the Hakones all white and glistening. There is no change apparently in grass or trees except that the magnolia buds are swelling. There is one solitary rose bud, no signs of leaves on the trees but the sweetest suggestion of faint color against the browns and the grays. The rain pours, yet the breath of the Spring is in the air. She is surely near us somewhere! And here at the Equinox we have snow! The lawn is white early in the morning, the wind roars and rages. Old Winter is shaking his fist in our faces. But there are splashes of rich color everywhere, plum blossoms, camellias, daphnes, and now and again in sheltered spots a touch of spring green. The sun is gaining power. There is a dull calm gray sky, wet and shining leaves, a flash of red, a shimmer of white, a dash of pink. And after this it is warmer. The leaf-buds begin to swell. The gardens are lovely even in the rain. There are signs of buds on the cherry trees and the maples. But still the leafless trees stand out like exquisite lace work against the sky, and still the bitter wind. The magnolia buds are swelling. Oh there are violets on the south side of the hill lying to the sun! Surely violets! It is



the gift of Spring. And now the magnolias are dreams of beauty one mass of white flowers, all open together, and all amongst the pines. There are peach blossoms. Camellias and daphnes still everywhere, bursting buds leaf-buds flower-buds everywhere. Spring is here. It was a sharp conflict but she has prevailed. Winter was determined, but he was old. *Welcome to Spring.*

The third of March is a holiday called *Jomi no Sechiye*. In houses where there are little girls, there is a pretty display of dolls and small figures called *Hina Matsuri*. The figures are dressed to represent the costumes of former days. They are arranged on tiers. The figures of Emperor and Empress are given the highest place. Below them in succeeding ranks are warriors, court ladies, and musicians. The ordinary dolls are also used as part of the show, and there is sometimes the model of a small carriage drawn by oxen used by the Emperor in former days. At the bottom are little articles, — models of things necessary for a bride going to the house of her husband, a chest of drawers, a long box for bed clothing, called *nagamochi* or receptacle for long things, a towel rack, a mirror, a writing table, a letter box, a full set of toilet articles, a *koto*, a *samisen*, a chest for paper, ink-horn, sewing materials, a quantity of small boxes, dusters, complimentary cards, clothing, for day and night and other things. These articles are not always displayed in full. Some stands have only a few of them. There are always eatables, of course. The little bowls are placed in regular order on four square tables. They contain rice, soup, vegetables and fish roe and pickles. Large diamond shaped cakes called *hishi-mochi*, made of rice and boiled mugwort, are offered to the figures and these given to the friends who presented the dolls. A special feature is the sweet *saké*, which is not strong nor intoxicating and is greatly relished by the children. Peach blossoms are always used in connection with this ceremony. They make the flower decorations. There are also always shells, candy imitation being often used instead of the real article. There is usually a box shaped like a small, very fat puppy in connection with the other ornaments. Just what this means it





is hard to say, but the whole affair is a great pleasure to the little girls, who themselves are dressed in their best and eat the sweet meat and drink the sweet *saké* with a great deal of satisfaction.

On a pleasant afternoon in March you will see a fleet of fishing boats go out into the ocean, not far out, but beyond the river. At night, if you look, you can locate the spot where they are anchored by the long line of lights, the torches with which they attract the fish, which can sometimes be caught by the hand. Well for the fishermen, if a sudden strong wind does not arise to scatter their fleet and make return to shore difficult and dangerous. March cannot be trusted. He may lead you to trust in him for season, but up he starts with his pranks again, before you know where you are. But the torches are very beautiful across the trembling waters, flickering and dancing and moving from side to side. All honor to fishermen. Many a one goes forth in his boat never to return. Many and many are the wrecked vessels that strew the shore after a storm. A pretty custom is that of the clam and shellfish hunt which takes place about this season. Late in March or early in April, along the sea-coast especially on the Eastern shores at *Sumiyoshi no ura*, *Sakai no ura*, and *Shinagawa* the people amuse themselves hunting shellfish. They go out in boats, wait until the tide is all out step from the boats and look for shells, returning with the tide in great triumph. Women and children go with the men and it is a day of general rejoicing. March now is the month for examination and commencements. Most of the schools close their year's work in March and begin in April. Those who have completed some proscribed course receive their diplomas in the midst of flowers, — camellias, daphnes, plum and peach blossoms. There is a breath of Spring in the midst of lingering Winter, a nation permeated by new ideas moved by a new civilization, a struggle, an endeavor a march on to victory.



#### APRIL.

April is all cherry blossoms. Of a sudden you notice that some of the trees about you, have been touched with a faint, invisible red. You scarcely know what it is, nor whether it is really there or not. You look and look again. Yes, surely! They are powdered with a red dust. The spring has done it. The color deepens, it becomes more defined. There are little knobs and pencillings. You can see them if you stand under the trees and look up at the branches as they are outlined against the sky. They are flower buds. The days go on, cold or rainy or sunshiny as it may be. But the buds have started. They are there. They are full of life. The energetic spirit of the Spring is in them. They burst forth into flowers. The



whole country is as through a pink snow storm had struck it. These are the cherry blossoms. This beautiful blossom is called "king of Japanese flowers." It is enthroned in the hearts of its subject. That is why it is king.

The *Yoshino* is the earliest variety. It is found in all the parks. It is a beautiful tree, tall, straight with spreading branches. The flowers are the half double pink. It blooms early in April when the leaves are first appearing on the trees. The flowers are exceedingly lovely mingled with the fresh green of the willows or with the darker hues of the pines. There is also an early variety with red flowers, a deep brilliant color, never in masses like the pale pink, but usually one tree alone just to give tone to a landscape, otherwise all dark greens and grays and browns. The large double pink are later, and are scattered amongst the *Yoshino* to lengthen the season which is short at the best. Truly the spirit of April is that of fleeting loveliness. The season of cherry flowers comes and goes before you realize that it is here. The most beautiful tree of all is the *Ito-sakura*, the drooping cherry. Its branches droop as do those of the weeping willow. It is a rare tree, and wherever you see one you are sure to find a crowd of admirers about it. The double cherry flowers range in color from deepest pink to purest white. Some of the cherry blossom poems have been thus translated.

"How slowly roll the mists  
Off Miyoshino's hillside,  
Hiding still from our longing eyes,  
All the blooming wild cherry flowers.  
The dark massed shadows flecked  
By the mountain cherry's bloom."

"The hearts of men are glad,  
'Tis the happy month of Growth,  
And the slopes of the valleys,  
Hidden as by fleecy clouded.  
Gleam with snowy *Sakura* bloom."





There are certain noted places in Japan for cherry blossoms. Arashiyama in Yamashiro, Yoshino in Yamato, Mukojima and Ueno in Tokyo and Asukayama and Koganei in the suburbs of Tokyo. There are new places opening up all the time. Cherry trees are planted in all the parks and along the castle moats in Tokyo, and even along the public streets. Almost every one who possesses a plot of ground has a cherry tree. Those who have not much room patronize the dwarfed trees in pots. At Mukojima the trees are planted in an avenue almost three miles in length on the bank of the river Sumida. There the branches meet over head, and one wanders at will under clouds of pink flowers. At Ueno the trees are massed in clumps or in long lines like distant mountains covered with snow, touched by a pale sunset tint. In Shiba park they are mingled with the pine trees, a row of cherries and a row of pines. The effect is very pretty. At Koganei the flower-laden branches meet over a stream. But they are everywhere, on the mountains, in the valleys, by the side of rushing torrents or reflected in the calm still waters of the lakes now a mass of flowers, and now a single tree, all in pink, lifts itself up amidst the forest of pines and oaks, and now the branches of the drooping variety come trailing, along, or you get a glimpse of beauty through an open gateway. You see them along the castle moat mirrored in the calm water a mist of pink above and below. The trees are lovely, massed clouds of flowers, but still more entrancing where mixed with the fresh young green of the willow — the earliest trees to get their leaves in all Japan. Then, perhaps, you get a glimpse of a single tree a deep pink, giving a touch of bright color to the otherwise sombre landscape and you conclude that you like that best of all. There is so much beauty in cherry blossom time that you cannot take it all in. You long for more eyes, for wings to fly from place to place, for a more rapidly expending soul. You have not the capacity to carry it all with you. There is too much!

Then all Japan turns out to do honor, to this the favorite flower. Everybody goes to see flowers — *hanami*. It is a festival season. These



are the flowers of the year, the sweetest, the fairest, the best beloved of all Flora's gifts. The gaily dressed crowds, move in kaleidoscopic groups under masses of pink clouds and amidst showers of tinted petals. You meet whole families from grand-mother and grand-father to the tiny baby who is gorgeously arrayed in a long cloak of brilliant *tōchirimen* or imitation crêpe of large and gaudy patterns, yet somehow not displeasing to the eye. The colors seem to blend prettily with the rest of the kaleidoscopic effects. The little tots come toddling along with short uncertain steps, some, carried on the back, hold frail gaily painted toys in their hands, generally of paper, wind-mills, wheels, streamers, anything which will fly or flutter in the wind or



add to the general brilliancy. The little girls have on their brightest sashes and wear hair-pins made to represent cherry blossoms, usually of paper. They do not believe in indestructible toys or ornaments in Japan. The frailer the better so that they may be often renewed. The mothers are more soberly dressed also the men and the boys, but all are in their best, even the good natured servants who pack the heavy baskets and babies. You are attracted now by a group of school boys with their teacher. There is more to see in Ueno park than these cherry blossoms and the boys are evidently more interested in the Zoological garden the elephants, the bears, and the monkeys. Then comes along a soberer group of school girls, You can tell them by their *hakama*, the skirt worn by girls attending the various city schools. It makes a dignified modest dress. It is pleasant to see how much care is taken of the old people and to note how tenderly they are led along. Old and almost blind as some of them are, they still can enjoy some of the sweetness and the fragrance of the flowers. At Mukojima you meet the country people a rougher crowd generally. Soldiers and sailors, some of them have too much of their *saké* aboard, are pretty noisy. There are booths all along the avenue with all sorts of attractions, dances, music, acrobatic performances, small theatricals, and all around are stands where refreshments are sold and gaudy toys are displayed, and everywhere the cherry blossom hair-pins. It is a perfect "Vanity Fair." At Ueno where the more aristocratic crowds go, there are refreshment stands where you can get tea, lemonade, cakes and sweet-meats. Most of the tables and benches are covered with red cloth. Groups of people are seated on benches or mats or red blankets spread on the ground. They open their *bentō* (lunch boxes) and ply their chop-sticks. The tea-house girls supply them with tea and lemonade. Many of the people carry large branches of trees in their hands. They are almost concealed behind the mass of blossoms. You wonder how there are any cherry trees left in Japan as this seems to have been going on for hundreds of years. But there seem to be always cherry trees and never a cherry. You need not think that all these flowers are a promise of abundance



of fruit. The trees are cultivated solely for the flowers — for a few days of fleeting loveliness. It was an ancient custom to write poems and hang them on to favorite trees. Komachi in one of her poems speaks of fading flowers.

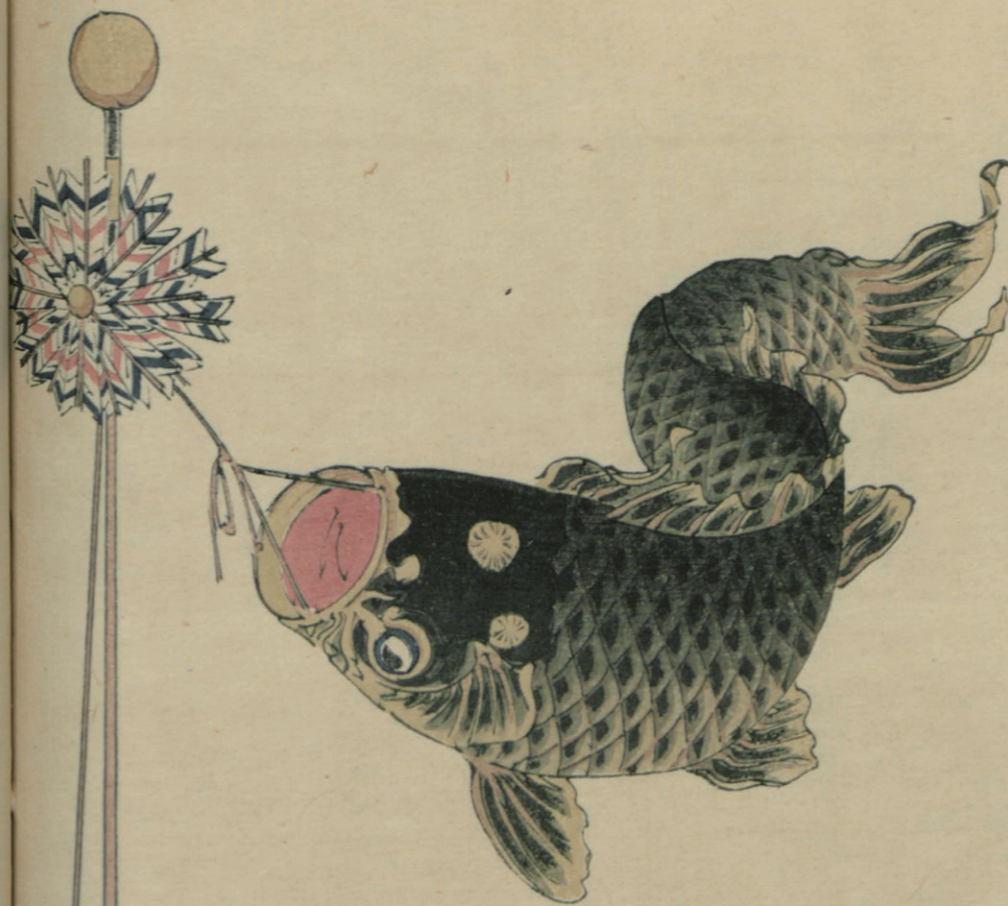
“Flowers fade and pass away  
My body will likewise fade.”

She was noted as poetess, and beauty as well.

The passing of the cherry blossom is often in this wise. There comes a day of rain with a little wind. The trees are still beautiful through the falling rain drops. The flower petals fall, the effect is peculiar, rain and snow together. The damp air is sweetly perfumed. It is lovely. But the next day is bright. You notice that the flowers have lost their first, fresh beauty. Then the April wind gets up to see what it can do. It blows cold and strong. The petals fall like snow flakes out of a blue sky. The ground is covered with them. They are whirled into heaps like snow drifts. They fall on the fir trees like feathery snow. The flowers are passing away. But not to leave the naked boughs again. There has been a suggestion of green for some days. The leaf-buds are coming out. When the last flowers disappear the trees will be full of leaves. The fresh, bright green is almost as lovely as the flowers. Yes, surely, and we shall have them all the summer. The plum and peach blossoms have all gone long ago. The camellias also but the azaleas are beginning to show their bright colors, and the wistarias are in bud, and the peonies will soon be with us. The Spring is passing into Summer. The poetess Jito-tenno signs about “white things.”

“Although Spring is past.  
There are still white things  
White cloth spread out to bleach.  
Snow on Fuji.”

This expresses the idea of purity. Such is the passing of the cherry blossom.



MAY.

May comes in with all the air a sea; fish flying or swimming in the sky which may be either blue or gray. Paper carps in great numbers are suspended from high poles, and curiously resemble the real articles as they swell out to the breeze, or when four or five, attached to the same pole, tumble over one another and move their fins like the carp in a pond. Some are bright red, others dark browns, and gray touched with red, others yellow. They vary in size from three feet to six feet and more. Their eyes are wonderful. It is a singular spectacle — the sky filled with fish. This is the Boys' Festival, the *Feast of Flags*. It is called *Tango no sekku*. It is more specially celebrated in households where a boy baby has come during



the past twelve months, but in all houses where there are boys under seven, it may be observed. The fish are presented by relatives and friends. The day is May Fifth, but the fish begin to fly in April. The pole is usually surmounted by a basket covered with gilding, with long and narrow streamers attached to it and a little wheel at the top turned by the wind. The carp is a fish which resolutely conquers all difficulties it may encounter, seven swimming up streams and ascending water-falls, and finally becoming a dragon. So the boy is to set forth in life with a determination to be as enterprising as the fish. Often banners are set up before the doors. These bear the family crest and figures of dragons, warriors, tigers, anything that suggests power and attainment and high ideals to the youthful mind. Inside of the house are stands somewhat similar to the one for the little girls' festival in March on which are ranged figures representing celebrated men. The Empress Jingo is favored with a place on the boys' table being the mother of Hachiman, the war deity; Kintaro, the strong boy, is there, and any one who has distinguished himself in any way for bravery, loyalty, devotion or learning is entitled to a place. Conspicuous among them all is Shoki, a fierce looking man with a sword in one hand and a devil on the other. His figure is placed on the stand or painted on a *kakemono* and hung on the wall as protector of the boys. In ancient times, leaves of the iris were hung on the eaves of the houses but now are used only as inside decoration. Dried iris leaves were formerly steeped in *saké* and drank as a preventive of disease but this custom is disappearing. The leaves are however still placed in the bath. The Fifth of May is a day of general rejoicing and feasting and giving of presents.

The Azalea — one of Japan's favorite flowers — is in its prime during this month. It grows wild, and the mountain sides in some sections are covered with it. But there are special azalea gardens and one Imperial garden which is very beautiful. The most noted place for azaleas is Okubo in the suburbs of Tokyo. These gardens are not so large now as in former days. But they are still very extensive and at the height of the season are a perfect blaze of glory. The mass of flowers and of color is something which cannot

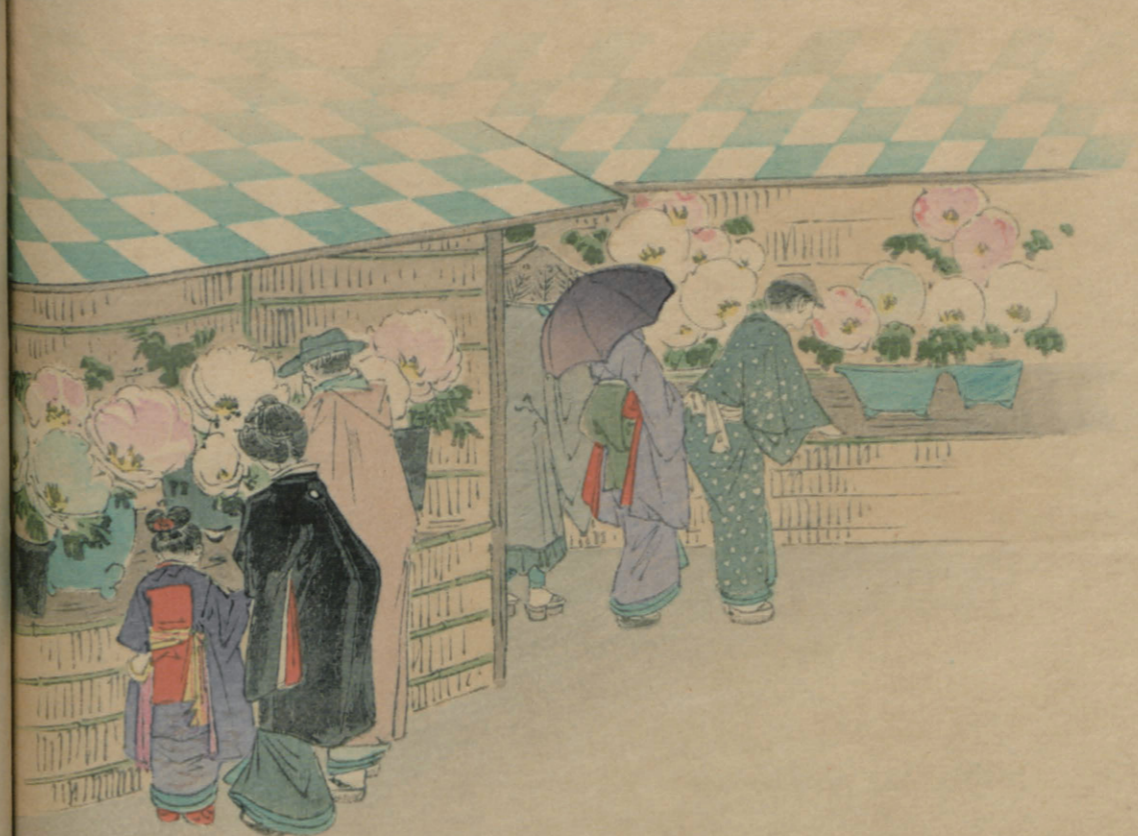




be described; the prevailing hue is a brilliant red. Thousands of people dressed in gayest garb flock to Okubo to see these flowers. There are booths arranged just outside of the gardens where figures are on exhibition as in the chrysanthemum season. The heroes are dressed in azalea flowers and leaves instead of chrysanthemum and are almost equally beautiful.

The wistaria blooms at this season also. This flower is trained to grow over trellises. Some of the vines are wonderful, the gnarled and twisted trunks being like those of old trees in thickness. The light purple variety is most highly prized by the people. The white variety is not much of a favorite although pretty. It is the custom for school yards to have a wistaria vine so that the thick leaves may form a roof under which the children can play and take exercise in the hot weather. The finest one of these is in Hongō at the model kindergarten. The sight of the children gathered under this immense green roof is very striking. The most famous wistarias of Tokyo are in the Kameido temple-grounds. There are clusters which measure from two to three feet in length. Tea-houses are built over the water of the artificial ponds whose ceilings are these long festoons of purple wisterias, When the water is clean and still, the flowers are reflected, making a purple bower which is very, very beautiful. At Kameido are the famous round bridges. During the season the place is crowded with flower lovers and pleasure seekers. The little girls have wistaria hair-pins.

The peonies are in the height of their beauty during May. This is a favorite flower also — the Flower of Prosperity — the Flower of Eternity. The plants are on exhibition under paper roofs which throw a subdued light over the gorgeous blossoms tempering them in a measure, yet bringing out the colors in a wonderfully effective way. The plants are about three feet in height and bear usually from three to five flowers. The colors are rich beyond description, red, pink, crimson, purple, white, and of surpassing richness and beauty, and some very large. The first impression on entering one of these exhibition gardens is very striking, the shade, the coolness, the apparitions of color, which gradually take shape into beautiful flowers

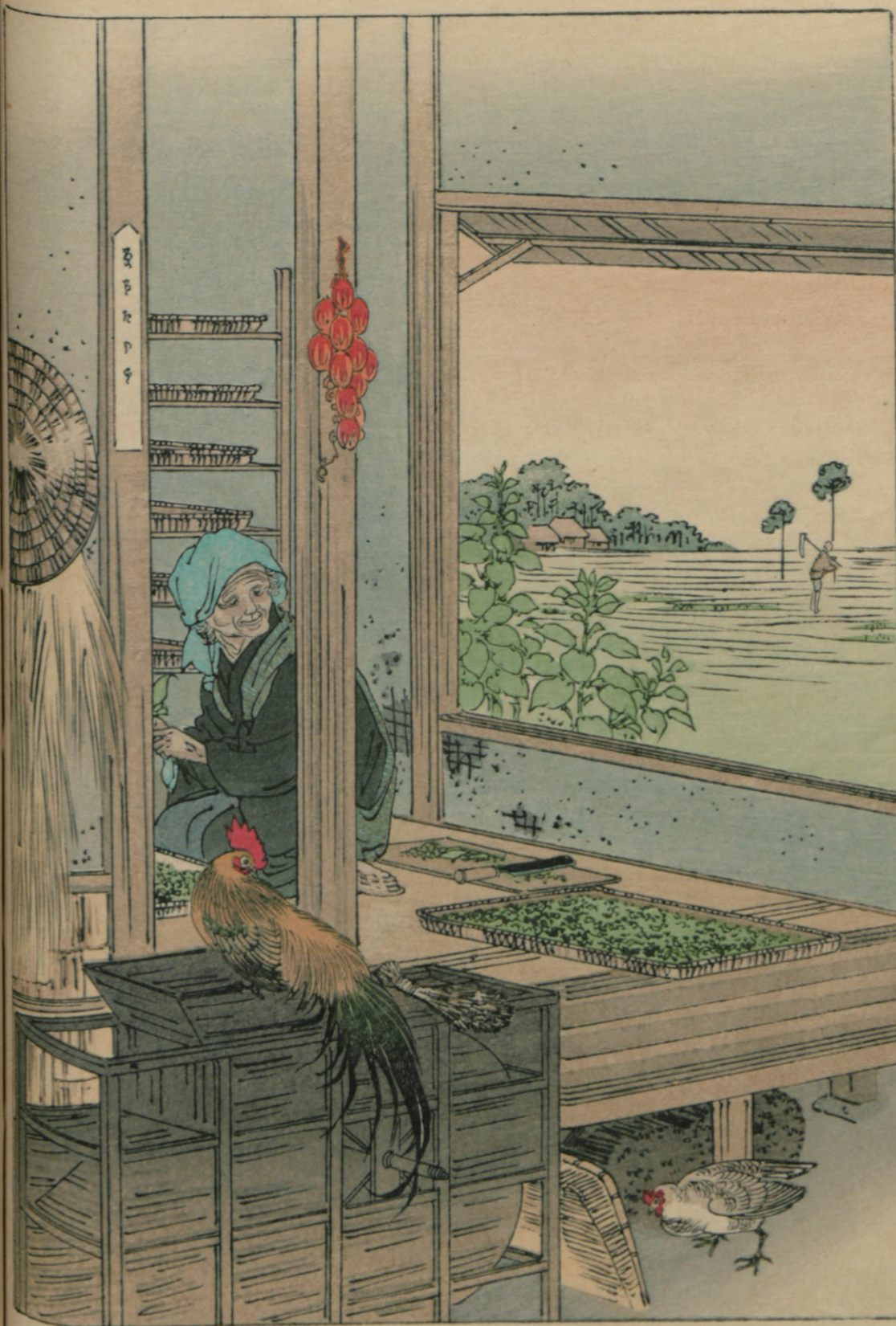




as you look, are all something wonderful, like a dream or a vision of loveliness.

The silk industry begins in this month. Silk Manufacture is one of Japan's most important industries. The work begins this month, although, of course the exact date varies in different sections. For five or six weeks after the mulberry leaves are gathered and while the worms are being fed, the country people scarcely take time to eat or sleep. The worms are to be fed day and night. There is great anxiety early in the season lest the mulberry leaves come out too soon to be killed by a late frost. This is a dire misfortune in the country. When the worms go into cocoon some time in June, and the white and slightly colored balls are rolled together on great trays, then the silk cultivators have rest for a season until Winter and time for drawing the thread spinning and weaving begins. Some of the women are very skilful in mending broken threads which are fine as gossamer.

May is the month for sowing rice. It is done early in the month. Sticks with fluttering rags on them for scare crows are set up over the fields to keep the birds from the seeds. The rain comes often cold and chill. The wind blows both hot and cold. Then a warmer rain, almost a typhoon, a terrible wind with stray hot blasts. More rain, some sunshine, occasionally a hot day, a goodmany rainy ones. May seems almost a month of petulancy and discontent. But through it all the seed is sprouting. By the end of the month the green blades appear. The rice has sprung up. The harvest will surely come.







JUNE.

The Iris, the beautiful iris, is the especial flower of June. There are a number of iris gardens. The flower grows best in damp and swampy places. The most famous garden in the vicinity of Tokyo is that of Horikiri, in the suburbs, across the river Sumida and far to the north. It is known to be two hundred years old, and how much farther back it has existed, no one can tell. The way to this garden lies through Mukojima, the famous cherry avenue. The cherry flowers are gone by this time and the avenue almost deserted, still it is beautiful with the green arches over head and the river flowing peacefully along. Beyond Mukojima you come to a place where you have to leave your carriage, if you are in one, and take a jinrikisha across a regular

garden district where flowers are cultivated for sale in the city markets. The gardens are in perfection about the tenth of June. Then the whole place is covered with the flowers rising out of the water of the swamp where they are planted, rocking on their slender stems the midst of their cool leaves, a wonderful display of color and variety in a single flower, or rather plant. There are one hundred and fifty varieties, different in color, in marking and in development. The colors are deep purple, pink or rather, a salmon shade, blues, white, brick-reds, but these are all marked with pencillings of other shades, a blue with yellow spots and lines, purple with yellow, red with crimson, white touched with various hues, all in such wonderful variety. There are also hair-pins for these gardens. From various little artificial hills you can survey the whole scene as you stand. It is lovely.

The bamboo is most beautiful in June for then it puts out its new sprouts and leaves, and the groves are most fairylike and fascinating. But it is hard to tell when the bamboo is most beautiful. It is always lovely. Some one has said "*No Bamboo no Japan*" and it is certainly hard to picture Japan and its people without it. Imagine the landscape without the graceful quivering clumps of bamboo moving to the slightest breeze, ever responsive, ever in motion, the sunshine glinting off the leaves in perpetual chase. There it is used so constantly in the daily life of the people in the construction of houses, utensils for houses and tools for gardens, for ornament and for use in a thousand ways. All praise and honor to the bamboo! It is the peoples chosen symbol for constancy and uprightness. Every one loves it, the beautiful bamboo the same Winter and Summer!

The rainy season is supposed to begin about the middle of June, although it is not always so regular now as it used to be. The rains continue for about a month a weary, persistent down-pour with great heat so that everything is damp, steamy, miserable. Then you must look out for your clothing, the woolen garments which you have put away for the Summer, the shoes, the kid gloves, anything, everything which will mould,—and, for food. That is the time when sugar and salt must be kept in bottles sealed



and when you must be careful about your flour and your rice lest little worms be bred. Day after day down comes the rain, for many days you do not see the sun, — doors and drawers swell with the dampness. Sometimes you have to kindle fires in the house to relieve the situation. This is the rainy season and it lasts from five to six weeks. The celebrated *Sannō* festival is held in Tokyo every second year on the fifteenth of June. It is in honor of *Oyamazumi no Kami*, the God of mountains. A car called *mikoshi* is brought out from a shrine. This is ornamented with a mirrors and strips of white paper, *gohei*. This car is carried around on men's shoulders and then left to rest in some temporary shelter during two nights. At this time, however, ornamented cars are drawn about the main streets. They are called *dashi* and are usually pulled by oxen. Some of them carry figures of celebrated men, and swords, and often apes. Others have bands of children who give theatrical performances when the car halts. Following these cars are crowds of people, men, women, children, in gay attire. It is a time of great excitement and of such lavish display that it is said to often land men in bankruptcy. Immense paper lanterns are hung under the eaves of the houses, banners float in the breezes, some bearing the inscription "*Hiyei Sanno Gosairei*," — Festival of Hiyei Sanno. The warrior Empress Jingo Kogo often appears on these occasions.

On June thirtieth there is a Shinto religious ceremony called *Nagoshi no harai*. A priest lays a mat on the ground near a running stream or in place of a stream a tub of water will do. On the banks around the tub are bamboo poles with *gohei*. The priest then proceeds to exorcise evil spirits. People cut figures of men and articles of clothing out of paper and hand them with offerings of rice or fruit to the priest who numbles an exorcism and throws them into the water. It is said that this will avert evils or diseases, or punishment for sin. Large rings of bamboo and straw dragons are used sometimes during this ceremony. People often pass through the rings. Often, too, a large wooden sword called *bonden* is carried out and dipped into the sea.





The rice which is now well up is replanted during the month of June. This is a season of great toil and labor to the farmers especially to the women who work in the fields. They have to stand in the wet, marshy ground, the rain pouring over them, or the hot sun-beating down upon them, taking up the young plants and resetting them in beautiful, regular rows. In some part of the country voracious leeches fasten themselves upon the feet and legs of the toiler causing much uneasiness and pain. The exposure causes severe headaches. But the workers toil on. It will soon be done and next month they will have the beauty of the July rice paddies and the promise of an abundant harvest.



JULY.

The rainy season begins in June and continues through July. For six weeks the rain pours. It is hot, damp, steamy, — everything moulds. You must expect it to rain, and you are fortunate if it does not forget to stop at the end of the six weeks. Bright little red and yellow chrysanthemums come about this time. We mass them in place of sunshine. It is the time for a flitting to the mountains. Even through it rains the mountains are beautiful. The rainy day scenes never lose the charm of novelty, the straw rain-coats the thatched hats which serve some of the people instead of umbrellas are always picturesque. The rain pours over the trees and down over the roofs of the houses. It runs in streams down the gutters. Dogs, ducks and



chickens, even though the ducks are water birds, crowd close to the house looking wet and miserable. Travellers, when possible, seek the shelter of the inns, which are crowded with wet, steamy people. But Japanese artists love the rain effect in their pictures. They are the best rain artists in the world, and no wonder. They are able constantly and at all seasons to study these effects. Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, the rain is with us, the persistent rain. The artists love the softening of mountain outline through the summer rain. The mountains almost disappear yet are softly discernible like a cloud, then come out a little more distinctly. You can see their shape, distinguish the peaks. Now you see the trees. One realizes for the first time the meaning of "Invisible green." The mountains form a back ground for the trees. You know that there is greenness, you can see it, and you can not see it. There is a difference between the back ground of those trees and the other trees which stand out against the sky. Yet everything is gray, but there is a green gray and a gray gray. We watch the mists gather and lift on the mountains. Now we see the trees, now we do not see them. The veil is drawn too heavily and closely. Now the trees are plainly out lined. Each leaf is clear cut. It is all very beautiful, but still we wish sometimes that it was dry, and bright, and warm.

The festival of the "Weaver and the Herd boy" is celebrated yet in the country districts. The "Herd boy" is a star. School boys and school girls set up bamboo poles with many branches to which they tie narrow strips of paper on which are written little poems about the stars; they also cut articles of clothing out of paper. Boys and girls think that this will ensure them proficiency in the arts of writing and sewing. The pupils of the various schools are given entertainments. Vermicelli is eaten, boiled and steeped in cold water. It is said that this festival is more than a thousand years old.

The solemn "Festival of the Dead" is celebrated for three days in July. The people are busy preparing for it some days in advance. Houses are swept, mats carefully cleaned, food prepared all ready for the spirits of the







dead to return to their homes for a visit. A temporary shelf is put up in the homes to hold wooden tablets on which are written names of the deceased ones — posthumous names given after their departure from this world. The spirits are supposed to arrive on the thirteenth of the month and remain until the fifteenth. They find their names on the tablets with the date of death. They are ancestors and relations of the family. Before the tablets are offerings of rice cakes, fruits and flowers. Buddhist priests are employed to recite prayers from the sacred books. On the evening of the arrival of the spirits a fire is kindled outside of the houses to welcome them, and water is placed in basins that they may wash their feet. Sometimes a family will go out to the suburbs of the city to meet them. This is the case more especially if the family has moved. During the festival the people go to the temple and recite prayers at the graves. They hang lanterns of peculiar shape about the tombs, for this is the *Bon* or "Feast of Lanterns." On the evening of the fifteenth or sixteenth the shelf is taken down, and thrown into the river or sea, and another fire is kindled in front of the house to light on their dreary way the departing spirits of the dead. The people also send little tapers on chips or tiny boats down the river where they are carried out to sea. It is a curious and beautiful sight these thousands and thousands of lights dancing on the waters, each guiding some disembodied spirit back to Hades. At this time the celebrated "*Bon odori*," a lantern or fan dance comes off, a weird, strange performance which must be seen in order to be appreciated. The dance is by common people — even coolies joining. It is in front of a temple, lanterns being suspended from pillars but their light being feeble, the dance is almost in the dark. The queer shadowlike forms move in a circle with fans keeping time to the beating of a drum, chanting a peculiar, solemn song in unison. This custom is said to have continued for over twelve hundred years.

The *Kawa biraki* or "River opening" is celebrated some evening during the month of July in Tokyo. The date does not appear to be fixed. It seems to depend somewhat on the weather — an uncertain quantity at all seasons



in Japan. The river Sumida is covered with boats. In the olden times the pretty little house-boats were ornamented with Chinese lanterns, all lighted, while in the boats people were dancing, singing and playing on *Samisen*, fifes and drums. The dancing was of course with the hands, and not with the feet. The houses along the shore were also decked with lanterns, and banks and bridges were lined and filled with people. It was an animated scene. It is not certain just how this custom originated. Some say that it has something to do with a fabulous water monster called the *Kappa*, who requires to be periodically aroused. There is always a display of fire-works by the famous makers Tamaya and Kagiya.

The rice fields are at their prettiest in July — a rich brilliant green over which the summer wind sweeps in long rolling waves like unto an emerald sea, on which the cloud shadows chase in fascinating play, now a mass of brilliant light, and now a whirl of shade. Here and there through the rice paddies are clumps of trees, possibly hiding a Buddhist temple. Everywhere are tiny shrines to Inari, protector of cereals. At night one often sees a solitary light away off in a field. It is a taper in one of Inari's shrines. The frogs are at the best. They give their finest concerts during the nights of July and August. The land is filled with their music, such as it is. The mosquitoes swarm. Woe to the hopeless traveller who has nothing with which to protect himself against their attacks; one lies under the green mosquito-nets listening alternately to the brass band of the mosquitoes and violin-cellos of the frogs. All through the summer days the cicada makes music in the trees and there are thousands of invisible little bellringers in the grass. This is July in Japan.







**AUGUST.**

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The glory of August is the lotus. The great, gorgeous flowers rock idly on, or amongst the magnificent leaves like Egyptian princesses on swinging couches. Everything is elegant, big, voluptuous. The lotus comes with the Buddhist religion from India through China to Japan. It is the symbol of the purity to which a follower of Buddha may aspire. "As the lotus flower arises from the muddy pool, solemn, stately and chaste so will the believer's soul arise from this sinful world into freedom to live a purer and higher life with Buddha." The finest lotus beds are found in the temple gardens. A lotus pond in the early August morning is a sight never to be forgotten. The immense leaves rise high above the water. Held by a



single stem they are continually moving and rocking, bowing to each other like so many Japanese of the olden times, bending to the breeze, dallying with the flowers. The dew of the morning sparkles on their velvet surface like so many diamonds dropped from the sky. Amongst the leaves the glorious gigantic flowers unfold themselves, purest white, deepest rose, darkest red, the perfection of beauty, the height of elegance. They are the Buddhist flower. The chosen ones float on a lotus leaf or rest on a lotus flower. There they are unassailable, calm, passionless unmovable forever. The most famous pond in all Japan, perhaps, is Shinobazu at Ueno. It is very large. Jutting out into it is a little peninsula on which there is a temple. There the people assemble in crowds before the early dawn while the flowers are calling to the sun, unfolding themselves, waiting for the sunrise. As the first rays reach them the colors appear, faint and indistinct a suggestion of white, of pink, of red, gradually increasing in intensity until the whole pond is one indescribable area of varied hues, trembling in sweet confusion under the rays of the morning sun. These are the finer variety of lotus. There is a more common white flower found in many of the rice fields, cultivated principally for the bulbs which is highly prized as an article of food. The lotus is the glory of August.

The Japanese lilies which we prize so highly, are not such favorites at home. Japanese artists seldom give us lilies. They grow wild on the mountain side in July and August. To us they make the Japan's Summer exceedingly beautiful. The lady-lilies rocking on their stems amidst the ferns and grasses are a great attraction, tempting the foreign traveller to climb to high and dangerous places. There are a number of varieties. Japan is the home of the lily, not without honor save in its own country, for foreigners are wild over them while the native Japanese cultivate them solely for their roots which they eat, and for exportation, which is enormous. Certainly, to see a field of these exquisite flowers all in bloom is a wonderful sight. To us the lily is the symbol of all that is pure and chaste, the flower of the Annunciation, of Easter and the Resurrection — the blossom of Paradise. To us its form







is the perfection of beauty, its golden pencillings, the quintessence of loveliness. To the Japanese the lily suggests nothing, one of the modern artists calling it a "foolish flower." We have two favorite flowers — the Rose and the Lily.

In August the pale pink, and blue and lavender hydrangeas make the gardens beautiful as the lilies decorate the fields. The original hydrangea is a native of the forests of Japan. It has a small pink flower. There are no flowers more beautiful in the moon-light than hydrangeas and lilies. To see them in a moon-lighted garden or in a room into which the moon-beams are streaming is a perfect dream of beauty.

The Japanese are especially fond of morning-glories. The fair, frail little flowers have won their way into the hearts of the people. There are morning-glory gardens in Tokyo to which the crowds resort in the summer mornings. The sweet delicate colors and exquisite texture of the blossoms seem to appeal to them. They imitate them in paper. They paint them on their fans. Last Summer they have them on towels with a dear little poem.

"My neighbor's morning glories trail over the wall  
And mingle with my flowers."

the idea being that virtues like trailing blossoms will in time climb over every obstacle until heart mingles with heart and separations cease. The morning-glory, we are told, was brought over to Japan by Buddhist priests. It grows wild in China.

The farmers have an anxious time from about the middle of July until the middle of August. That is the critical period for the rice. It may not rain enough. If there is drought for a number of consecutive days the precious grain is in danger of perishing for want of water. If such is the case the farmers employ the services of a Shinto priest that he may pray to the local god for rain. If this fails, the people of several villages unite in a procession. Large drums are beaten and sometimes men, women and children unite in simple theatrical performances. Then again, sometimes it rains too much. Day after day the heavens pour down torrents of water



until you think certainly there can be no more left. Day after day the sun hides himself behind heavy clouds, when his light and heat is so much needed to ripen the grain. Then the hearts of the people are sorrowful and sore and heavy with care. If the rice fails, there is want and distress in the land. August is a glorious month of lotus flowers, and hydrangeas, lilies and morning glories. It is a splendid, full, sweet generous month. But August is an anxious month. One looks at the skies often. Will it rain? when rain does not come. Will it cease? when too much falls. There is corn in the fields. There is rice in the paddies. There are melons on the vines. There are vegetables in the earth, fruit on the trees, waiting for mingled rain and sunshine enough of both, not too much of either, that the kindly fruits of the earth may be preserved to mankind.



### SEPTEMBER.

The Moon holds sway in September, although the fifteenth day of the eighth month is the moon's festival really, and so observed by the Chinese. Then offerings were made to the goddess of the night, and poems written in her honor. But now September is the moon month, and with the moon is associated the sea, the calm, smooth, placid sea, silvered by the full moon, breaking in white foam over the rocks and gently lapping the shores. It is strange that the crying, complaining Susano-o was made ruler of the sunny smooth sea, while the jolly Yebisu holds sway in the rougher waters. But if you listen you can always hear sobbing and murmurings under the dancing waves — Susano-o mourning for his mother, or the Princess grieving for her



love, Urashima, who will never return. And in the midst of the storm and the tumult, of the tempestuous ocean you will discern the voices of joy and victory, a shout of praise.

"Japanese poetry" says one of the poets "is like a tree with its roots, trunks and branches." It is a little difficult to understand exactly what this means, but history and symbolisms seem to be the root, the short poems themselves the trunk, and the various renderings and interpretations the branches. The poems are very difficult. The words used differ so materially from the ordinary book language and the vernacular, that even a Japanese cannot understand their meaning unless he attends a regular poetry school. The old poem is in the form of a distich consisting of two parts, each of which must be of a certain number of syllables, so that the second line answers or is a complement to the first. The improvising of poems is a great accomplishment and any one who can give spontaneously a happy turn of expression or skilful putting forth of thought is sure to receive abundance of praise, especially in answering the first phrase of a distich. Some of these poems are very celebrated. The best of them have been compiled into a book called "*Hyakunin Isshu*" or the One Hundred Poems of the One Hundred Poets. The first poem of the book was written by Tenchi Tenno. It is about the "Full round harvest moon." It consists of only thirty one characters. In fact, the words above quoted are about all, there is to it. And yet its meaning is so hidden and it demands such an unfolding of symbols and such a bringing forth of historical and ethical lore that it is said to require the most learned men to expound it. It is also hinted that it would take a long life time to fully master these one hundred poems, yet they can all be put into a book three inches and a half in length, two inches and a half in width, and half an inch in thickness and two thirds taken up with margin and illustration. The poetess Jito Tenno sings about "white things" as quoted elsewhere.

"Although Spring is past  
The cherry blossoms gone,  
There are still little white things.  
White cloths spread out to bleachth,  
Snow on Fuji."

Komachi was a beautiful woman. She thus replies to the praises of her admirers.

"Flowers pass away,  
My body will also fade."

Ise and Ukon tell us of love.

"Time is short  
Yet we think it long  
When separated from those we love.

Izumishikibu's is strain familiar.

"In this world we love,  
Shall we love again?  
I am far away from the one I love.  
Shall I meet him again in this world,

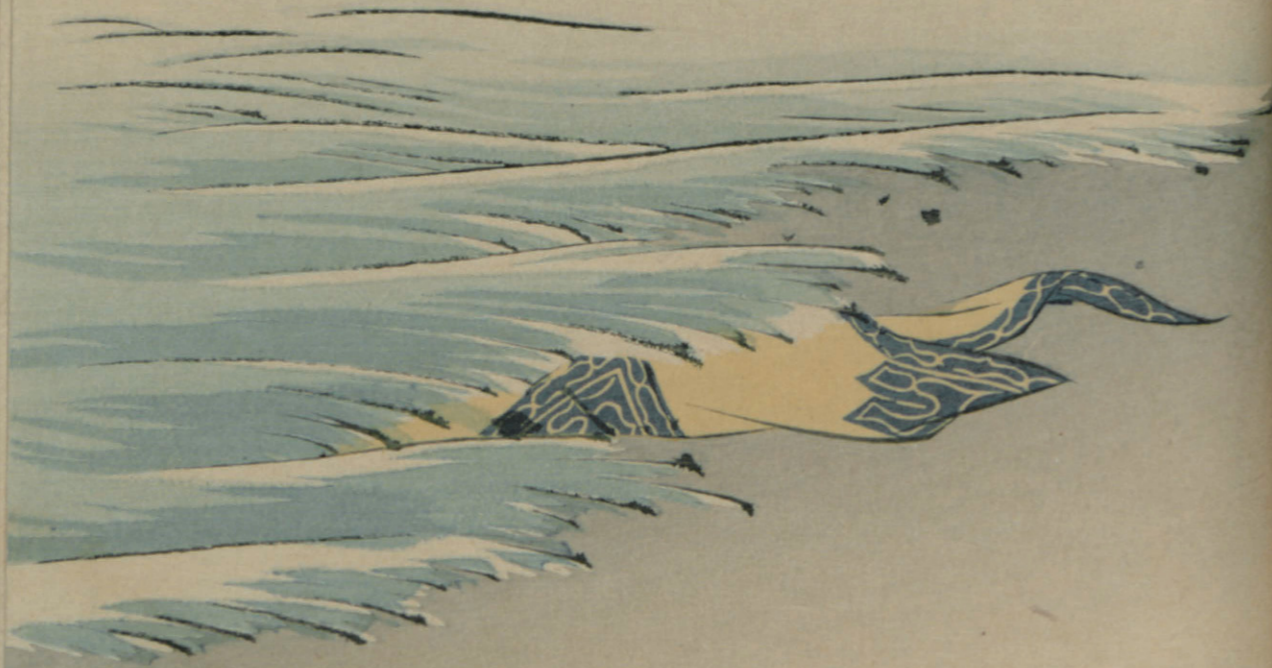




But if not shall we love in the next.  
Even then, I would see him here again.

September is the poetry month.

But September is also the month of the typhoon. In the Autumn the north and south winds have terrible battles which prevail until the north wind gains the victory and brings cold, clear weather and occasional snow in the middle and southern portions of Japan, and deep and lasting drifts in the north. In the Spring the conflict again begins and the south wind gains the day and we have heat and dampness and frequent rain. But the September typhoons are usually the most severe. Rain and wind and sound of angry waves and flying tiles and sometimes crashing of houses make a time of terror. And woe to the ship out in the sea, and to the brave fishermen caught out in the storm in their little boats. When it is over and all is quiet again the shores are strown with wrecks and dead bodies of men. Hundreds lose their lives every year in the great typhoon.



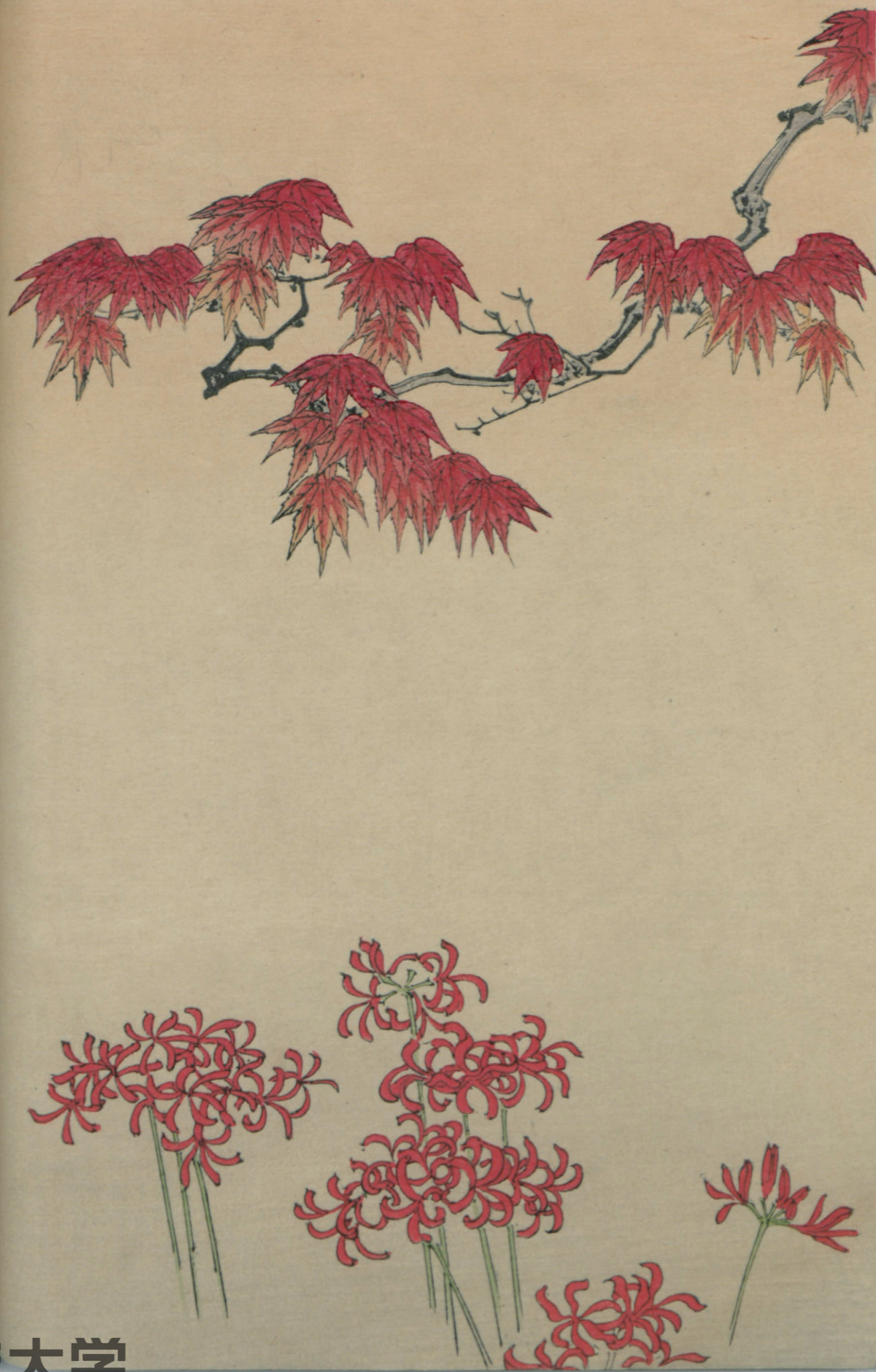
### OCTOBER.

October is brilliant with little suns. It is the month of Chrysanthemums although the flowers do not actually attain perfection before the first of November. But they begin to bloom in October and the great exhibitions are in this month, although the Emperor's Chrysanthemum Garden Party does not take place until November. The great chrysanthemum show is at Dango-zaka or Dumpling hill in Tokyo lined with light buildings, where you have glimpses of the gay flowers even before you enter, a touch of color, a collection of curious shapes. Inside, you find scenes from the history of Japan and representations of famous warriors and heroes. The faces are masks, of course, but the figures and dresses are all made of the gay flowers



which are certainly ingeniously put together. There are even little dramas enacted before your eyes. This is done by means of a revolving platform, so that four sides can be consecutively displayed to the spectator giving you the four acts of a play or rather, different scenes. It is usually a tragic affair and ends with decapitation or disembowelment. Every one admires the pretty combination of color, and there is one piece representing the sea made of white chrysanthemums and green moss which is an especial favorite. But the most beautiful exhibits used to be in the open air at Uyeno. The display of chrysanthemums was magnificent, all colors and all sizes were on exhibition. Sometimes the plant bears one immense flower. This often has to be supported by wires. Some of the bushes carry from three to four hundred blossoms growing from one root, some have had as many as five hundred, the largest number of flowers ever known on a single plant was seven hundred and one. There were many figures displayed in this October exhibit, *Kintaro* or Red boy, *Momotaro* or Peach boy, and some of the great heroes. The most beautiful of all was a white stork. The gorgeous flowers and the glorious trees with their rich varied foliage, — red, yellow and different shades of green in some places grouped together and looking like enormous bouquets against the deep blue of the October sky made a scene beautiful beyond description and one never to be forgotten. Add to this the old days of the gaily colored sun-umbrellas, with the children flitting about like butterflies of various hues, and you will have some idea of the brilliancy of the whole effect. One scene was especially gorgeous. Going through a avenue of trees with dark green leaves we passed some red maples through which the sun was shining, producing a most wonderful mass of color. October is the month of a thousand suns.

In October the beautiful " Jersey lilies " hide amongst the grasses on the edges of the rice paddies. To us with their deep crimson petals and their brilliant stamens they are beautiful beyond all the flowers of the field.







But the Japanese hate them as a very flower of death. They never gather them, never use them for ornament, never want them in their homes. It is a flower of disaster of dismay of death. So it blooms away in its rich beauty despised and dreaded. Poor flower!

In the days of the old calendar the twentieth day of the tenth month was observed by merchants as the festival of Ebisu, the god of wealth or Yebisu, as the name is sometimes written, the same merry fellow whose especial domain was the stormy sea. In the room where the merchants all met to spend the evening in merry making, they hung a picture of Ebisu with his fish and his rod. To this picture, they offered *tai* the finest fish of Japan and *saké* and round *mochi* cakes. As the feast went on and all grew merrier and merrier some one would seize a cup or a bowl or any thing that come to hand and would demand some fancy prices for it one hundred or even one thousand *yen*. Some one would buy it at a mock bargain and the whole affair would be concluded with a great clapping of hands and with shouts of laughter. This was considered a foreshadowing of success in future real bargains.

October is the month for the rice harvest. If the year has been good — no storm, no drought, no insect pests, this is the happiest time for the farmer. The ingathering of the rice is the crowning season of the year. The precious grain is first taken to a mill called *kara-usu* turned by a horse. This is constructed of wood, bamboo and clay. There are cylinders made of clay into which strips of bamboo are inserted longitudinally, as the upper cylinders revolve the husks are scraped off the grain. The mixture of rice and chaff which falls from this mill is then taken to another machine called *tō-mi* where a current of air is produced by the turning of a wheel. This blows away the chaff. The rice is considerably purified by this time, but it still contains unhusked grains. It is next taken to the *mangoku* a sieve of copper wire. Through the meshes of this the clean rice falls to the



ground where there is a net or something to receive it. It is then ready for the straw bags called *tawara*, from the number of which the wealth of the country is determined. This all being accomplished, and the quantity of rice being sufficient the people breathe freely and are ready to enjoy the chrysanthemum and the red maple leaves which are now coming on fast.



NOVEMBER.

This is the month for picnics, garden parties and excursions — the month of the maple and the great chrysanthemums. This flower begins to bloom in October, but reaches perfection early in November—the color month, not the delicate hues of April, but the rich gorgeous tints of the Autumn blue skies — golden sunshine mingled with sudden clouds and dashes of rain — with something in the air which reminds you that Winter is coming. With the reds and yellows and purples and blues, there comes a foreshadowing of ghostly snow and penetrating winter winds.

The leaves of the maple are at their best during the middle and latter part of the month. The northern section of Hondo has the finest show of





color — the red of the maple is mingled with the yellows of the rich brown of the oak. The whole country is aflame. When the trees are reflected in some river or stream the effect is beyond description. In a boat on the water one is suspended in color. The mountains of Nikko are all glorious in their crimson Autumn dress. The poets and artists are filled with enthusiastic admiration. The most famous places near *Tokyo* are *Kai-anji* and *Takinogawa*, and in *Kyoto*, *Takao*, *Togano-o* and *Tsūten*. Crowds of gaily-dressed people frequent these places and others. *Oji* near *Tokyo* is a favourite resort both in April and November, first for the cherry trees and second for the maples, that grow by the fountains and bend over the rushing streams. Yet the maple leaf is a symbol of unconstancy of change. For a lover to send his sweet heart a maple leaf is equivalent to letting her know that his love for her has gone or his heart is changed. Still the people are fond of the beautiful maple leaf and we see it in many an art design.



The third of November is the Emperor's birthday. Flags are displayed everywhere. Every one has a holiday. His Majesty in person reviews the troops on the Aoyama parade ground in *Tokyo*, and the garrison troops are reviewed in other towns. Now is the thirty seventh year of the present Emperor's reign. It is called the era of Meiji and is marked by progress and development in every direction. The Mikado is no longer the puppet of former times. This one — the one hundred and twenty third of the dynasty — has shown himself a man in every particular, independent and self-sacrificing, with his people's interests at heart. He lives in a plain, simple manner without ostentation or display. The Empress is active in all works of education and charity. The Crown Prince and Princess follow in their foot-steps. The three baby princes are idolized by the nation, and rejoiced over as legitimate heirs.

The Emperor's Chrysanthemum Garden Party takes place early in



November. It is a festival in honor of this, the national flower. The imperial seal for all public business is the chrysanthemum. Those who are invited to this function are the higher Japanese officials, the foreign ministers and their families, any foreign residents of distinction, and tourists who have special letters of introduction. One who has attended, thus describes the scene: "The Spring Festival with its mist of cherry blossom may be the prettier daintier scene, but the Chrysanthemum Party is in every way royal. The glittering uniforms — the gay colored gowns, here and there a beautiful *kimono* the flower booths dressed in purple silk, and filled with gorgeous chrysanthemums and over all the blue Japanese sky make a truly Imperial garden party." More modest yet almost equally beautiful garden parties are given by the nobility or by individuals who take pleasure in cultivating the gorgeous flowers. Some of these are for charity sake where an entrance fee is charged, and the proceeds used for the relief of unfortunates. The Japanese respond well to such things and such are usually well patronized.

One festival of November is eagerly looked forward to by some children. The practice of shaving babies' heads is not so general as it used to be. Many infants are allowed to have their hair. But when a child's head has been shaved, it is kept so until the fifteenth of November after the child is three years old according to the old way of reckoning which counts a part of the year as the whole. Then a tuft of hair is allowed to grow on top of the head. A boy of five years may on this day put on trousers, and a girl of seven may wear the broad sash or *obi*. The little girls are sometimes taken to a temple in state followed by near relations. Infants born during the preceding twelve months are carried to a Shinto shrine. The presenting the *hakama* to a boy, or the *obi* to a girl or the taking of the infant to the shrine is followed by entertainment in the evening.

On the "Bird days" in the November calendar, there is a fair in Tokyo called the *Torinoichi* — Bird fair. Those who go usually buy a bamboo

rake. This rake is called *kumade* — bears paw. It is ornamented with imitations of account books, money boxes, and the smiling mask of *Okame* and sometimes with emblems of good luck. The rake typifies the raking together of the good things of life. Restaurant-keepers display large rakes. The fairs are quite popular.





## DECEMBER.

By the middle of December the trees that shed their leaves are quite bare, the naked branches make a beautiful tracery against the winter sky. The *keyakis* are like lace work. The prevailing tints are browns and grays and the dark greens of the pines and the cedar. Sometimes the snow falls early, and the December landscape is all white. Often, however the *ko-haru* or "little spring" which comes in November lingers along through December. The days are lovely, the skies a deep blue, the air keen and invigorating. The birds fly south. Even the crows desert their summer homes. The children sing.



[ 71 ]

"Great cold, little cold,  
Oh the winter wind.  
See, see, see the crows  
One, two, three, four, five.  
Kah, kah, kah, kah  
Crying, they fly,  
Say, say will they go  
Back to empty nests?"

Great cold, little cold,  
Oh the winter wind.  
See, see leaves of trees  
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten.  
Softly, softly, softly see  
Look how they fall.  
Say, say as they fall  
Where do they go?"

December was formerly the great month for weddings. Now it is not so generally observed. Weddings take place at all season of the year. Marriages are arranged through an intermediate party called *nakōdo* or go-between. The consent of the lady's parents and brothers must be obtained. The intending bridegroom presents gifts, usually an expensive sash, a piece of silk, the high priced fish — *tai*, and some *saké*. The day before the wedding the bride's trousseau contained in chests of drawers and long boxes called *nagamochi* are sent from the bride's home to that of the groom, also various domestic utensils and presents. At the time of the ceremony, the bridegroom takes his place solemnly in front of the *toko* — an ornamental recess. A small stand or table has on it, the usual emblems, bamboo, plum, pine, the tortoise and the crane — constancy, cheerfulness, long life and happiness being typified. The bride, clad in a long sleeved garment of beautiful white silk, her head covered with like material is led in by two



attendants, the bridegroom being already seated. The bridesmaid sits beside the bride, and near them the lady go-between, — a young boy and girl are always in attendance to pour out the *saké*. When all is in readiness the silence is broken by a song sung in an adjoining room.

“The oceans four that gird our strand,  
Are calm and quiet, in our land,  
No branches bend, no breezes blow,  
There new set pines in blue will grow.”

A small wooden stand bearing three cups, one above the other is then placed before the bride. One of the attendants pours into the top one some *saké* from a vessel which is ornamented with pretty butterflies. The bride takes a sip and the cup is passed to the bridegroom who does the same, so with the second and the third cups. The bride and bridegroom now retire and when the bride reappears she is in a colored gown. Then comes the feast. There is no religious ceremony, but the marriage is always duly recorded and is a civil rite.

December is a very busy month. As it draws to a close, preparations are made for the new year. Houses are thoroughly cleaned, the mats renewed or beaten that no particle of dust may lurk in any corner. Fairs for new year decorations are held. One of the most famous of these is conducted yearly at Asakusa. Beside the decorations all sorts of miscellaneous articles are for sale. People are busy buying and preparing presents to send to their friends. These vary according to the wealth and ability of the donors. They may be pieces of silk, or *crêpe*, or *tô-chirimen* the imitation *crêpe*, or simply fruit, or cake, or sweet meats, in neat, wooden boxes tied up in a peculiar manner, with red and white string the red always to the right. Slipped under the string is the *noshi* a triangularly folded paper usually red and white with a bit of fish skin to signify a kindly presentation and a gracious acceptance. These *noshi* are often very pretty and artistic in design. Those designed for wedding present are especially



handsome the strings being of gilded and silvered cord, or of red and white mixed in fantastic design, the ends being curled. Sometimes the new year's gift is but a pound of sugar or a little tea or some dried fruit, but there is always much enjoyment in taking and receiving the presents, and children in Japan are as fond of opening bundles as any other children in this great round world.

The especial preparation is that of the *mochi*. This is boiled rice pounded a long time and with great vigor. In olden times each family made its own *mochi*, and it was a particularly merry season — a time of songs and jokes, of music and household jollity. Later on, professional *mochi*-makers went from house to house with their tubs and their clubs for pounding, and especial songs. This also makes a great time for the children. Now *mochi* can be bought almost anywhere and in the cities



particularly, it is not made at the houses. The *mochi* is boiled after being made into cakes, and is put into soup, or toasted on both sides. It is very nice prepared in this latter way, but rather indigestible. There is a millet *mochi* which is much easier to digest. Sometimes the *mochi* is colored a delicate pink.

The last day draws near. Business men are busy in collecting their bills and settling up their accounts. On the very last night of the year, shop-keepers light up their shops brilliantly, booths are erected in the streets and decorated with lighted lamps and lanterns. Gaudy trinkets and toys of all descriptions are displayed for sale; kites in all imaginable shapes; battledores and shuttlecocks of varied hues; balls, tops, rattles, whistles, shoes, shirts, articles of clothing, bottles, lamps, purses,—everything you can think of—all on the street. The whole population turns out, one can scarcely move for the crowds. There is something to look at on every turn—great candy lobsters and crabs for *omedetō* or good luck; for the new year towels also, new designs for good luck. Men, women, boys, girls and babies are out until midnight. The air is sharp and frosty. The silent stars shine bright in the clear winter atmosphere. The great bell at Shiba begins to toll the hour. The year has ended.



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