

the old Japanese, such as he was and had been for centuries when we found him eleven short years ago, will have become extinct. It has appeared to me that no better means could be chosen of preserving a record of a curious and fast disappearing civilization than the translation of some of the most interesting national legends and histories, together with other specimens of literature bearing upon the same subject. Thus the Japanese may tell their own tale, their translator only adding here and there a few words of heading or tag to a chapter, where an explanation or amplification may seem necessary. I fear that the long and hard names will often make my tales tedious reading, but I believe that those who will bear with the difficulty will learn more of the character of the Japanese people than by skimming over descriptions of travel and adventure, however brilliant. The lord and his retainer, the warrior and the priest, the humble artisan and the despised Eta or pariah, each in his turn will become a leading character in my budget of stories; and it is out of the mouths of these personages that I hope to show forth a tolerably complete picture of Japanese society.

Having said so much by way of preface, I beg my readers to fancy themselves wafted away to the shores of the Bay of Yedo—a fair, smiling landscape: gentle slopes, crested by a dark fringe of pines and firs, lead down to the sea; the quaint eaves of many a temple and holy shrine peep out here and there from the groves; the bay itself is studded with picturesque fish-craft, the torches of which shine by night like glow-worms among the outlying forts; far away to the west loom the goblin-haunted heights of Oyama, and beyond the twin hills of the Hakoné Pass—Fuji-Yama, the Peerless Mountain, solitary and grand, stands in the centre of the plain, from which it sprang vomiting flames twenty-one centuries ago.<sup>1</sup> For a hundred and sixty years the huge mountain has been at peace, but the frequent earthquakes still tell of hidden fires, and none can say when the red-hot stones and ashes may once more fall like rain over five provinces.

In the midst of a nest of venerable trees in Takanawa, a suburb of Yedo, is hidden Sengakuji, or the Spring-hill Temple, renowned throughout the length and breadth of the land for its cemetery,

<sup>1</sup> According to Japanese tradition, in the fifth year of the Emperor Kōrei (286 B.C.), the earth opened in the province of Omi, near Kiōto, and Lake Biwa, sixty miles long by about eighteen broad, was formed in the shape of a *Biwa*, or four-stringed lute, from which it takes its name. At the same time, to compensate for the depression of the earth, but at a distance of over three hundred miles from the lake, rose Fuji-Yama, the last eruption of which was in the year 1707. The last great earthquake at Yedo took place about fifteen years ago. Twenty thousand souls are said to have perished in it, and the dead were carried away and buried by cartloads; many persons, trying to escape from their falling and burning houses, were caught in great clefts, which yawned suddenly in the earth, and as suddenly closed upon the victims, crushing them to death. For several days heavy shocks continued to be felt, and the people camped out, not daring to return to such houses as had been spared, nor to build up those which lay in ruins.

which contains the graves of the Forty-seven Rōnins,<sup>1</sup> famous in Japanese history, heroes of Japanese drama, the tale of whose deeds I am about to transcribe.

On the left-hand side of the main court of the temple is a chapel, in which, surmounted by a gilt figure of Kwanyin, the goddess of mercy, are enshrined the images of the forty-seven men, and of the master whom they loved so well. The statues are carved in wood, the faces coloured, and the dresses richly lacquered; as works of art they have great merit—the action of the heroes, each armed with his favourite weapon, being wonderfully life-like and spirited. Some are venerable men, with thin, grey hair (one is seventy-seven years old); others are mere boys of sixteen. Close by the chapel, at the side of a path leading up the hill, is a little well of pure water, fenced in and adorned with a tiny fernery, over which is an inscription, setting forth that "This is the well in which the head was washed; you must not wash your hands or your feet here." A little further on is a stall, at which a poor old man earns a pittance by selling books, pictures, and medals, commemorating the loyalty of the Forty-seven; and higher up yet, shaded by a grove of stately trees, is a neat inclosure, kept up, as a signboard announces, by voluntary contributions, round which are ranged forty-eight little tombstones, each decked with evergreens, each with its tribute of water and incense for the comfort of the departed spirit. There were forty-seven Rōnins; there are forty-eight tombstones, and the story of the forty-eighth is truly characteristic of Japanese ideas of honour. Almost touching the rail of the graveyard is a more imposing monument under which lies buried the lord, whose death his followers piously avenged.

And now for the story.

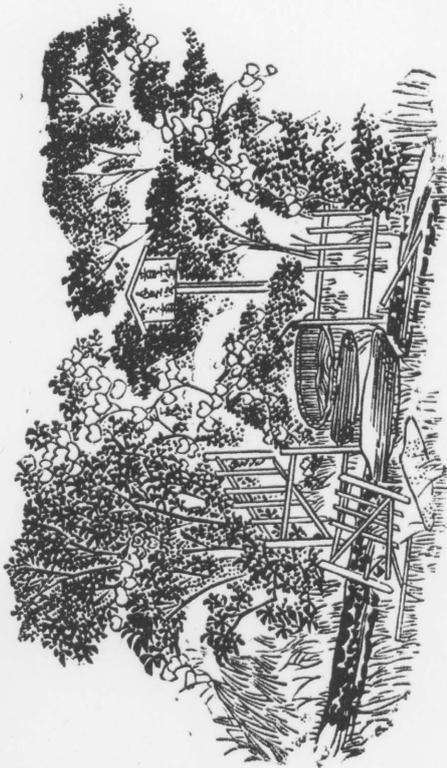
At the beginning of the eighteenth century there lived a daimio, called Asano Takumi no Kami, the Lord of the castle of Akō, in

<sup>1</sup> The word *Rōnin* means, literally, a "wave-man"; one who is tossed about hither and thither, as a wave of the sea. It is used to designate persons of gentle blood, entitled to bear arms, who, having become separated from their feudal lords by their own act, or by dismissal, or by fate, wander about the country in the capacity of somewhat disreputable knights-errant, without ostensible means of living, in some cases offering themselves for hire to new masters, in others supporting themselves by pillage; or who, falling a grade in the social scale, go into trade, and become simple wardsmen. Sometimes it happens that for political reasons a man will become Rōnin, in order that his lord may not be implicated in some deed of blood in which he is about to engage. Sometimes, also, men become Rōnins, and leave their native place for a while, until some scrape in which they have become entangled shall have blown over; after which they return to their former allegiance. Nowadays it is not unusual for men to become Rōnins for a time, and engage themselves in the service of foreigners at the open ports, even in menial capacities, in the hope that they may pick up something of the language and lore of Western folks. I know instances of men of considerable position who have adopted this course in their zeal for education.

資料 5-1

40 13, 14 7)

the province of Harima. Now it happened that an Imperial ambassador from the Court of the Mikado having been sent to the Shogun<sup>1</sup> at Yedo, Takumi no Kami and another noble called Kamei Sama were appointed to receive and feast the envoy; and a high official, named Kira Kōtsuké no Suké, was named to teach them the proper ceremonies to be observed upon the occasion. The two nobles were accordingly forced to go daily to the castle to listen to the instructions of Kōtsuké no Suké. But this Kōtsuké no Suké was a man greedy of money; and as he deemed that the presents which the two daimios, according to time-honoured custom, had brought him in return for his instruction, were mean and unworthy, he conceived a great hatred



THE WELL IN WHICH THE HEAD WAS WASHED.

against them, and took no pains in teaching them, but on the contrary rather sought to make laughing-stocks of them. Takumi no Kami, restrained by a stern sense of duty, bore his insults with patience; but Kamei Sama, who had less control over his temper, was violently incensed, and determined to kill Kōtsuké no Suké.

One night when his duties at the castle were ended, Kamei Sama returned to his own palace, and having summoned his

<sup>1</sup> The full title of the Tycoon was Sei-i-tai-Shogun. "Barbarian-repressing Commander-in-chief." The style Tai Kun, Great Prince, was borrowed, in order to convey the idea of sovereignty to foreigners, at the time of the conclusion of the Treaties. The envoys sent by the Mikado from Kiōto to communicate to the Shogun the will of his sovereign were received with Imperial honours, and the duty of entertaining them was confided to nobles of rank. The title Sei-i-tai-Shogun was first borne by Minamoto no Yoritomo, in the seventh month of the year A. D. 1192

龜井の家来花造  
 栄光のついで

龜井の家来、行部  
 上野介、昭、川、内

councillors<sup>1</sup> to a secret conference, said to them: "Kōtsuké no Suké has insulted Takumi no Kami and myself during our service in attendance on the Imperial envoy. This is against all decency, and I was minded to kill him on the spot; but I bethought me that if I did such a deed within the precincts of the castle, not only would my own life be forfeit, but my family and vassals would be ruined: so I stayed my hand. Still the life of such a wretch is a sorrow to the people, and to-morrow when I go to Court I will slay him: my mind is made up, and I will listen to no remonstrance." And as he spoke his face became livid with rage.

Now one of Kamei Sama's councillors was a man of great judgment, and when he saw from his lord's manner that remonstrance would be useless, he said: "Your lordship's words are law; your servant will make all preparations accordingly; and to-morrow, when your lordship goes to Court, if this Kōtsuké no Suké should again be insolent, let him die the death." And his lord was pleased at this speech, and waited with impatience for the day to break, that he might return to Court and kill his enemy.

But the councillor went home, and was sorely troubled, and thought anxiously about what his prince had said. And as he reflected, it occurred to him that since Kōtsuké no Suké had the reputation of being a miser he would certainly be open to a bribe, and that it was better to pay any sum, no matter how great, than that his lord and his house should be ruined. So he collected all the money he could, and, giving it to his servants to carry, rode off in the night to Kōtsuké no Suké's palace, and said to his retainers: "My master, who is now in attendance upon the Imperial envoy, owes much thanks to my Lord Kōtsuké no Suké, who has been at so great pains to teach him the proper ceremonies to be observed during the reception of the Imperial envoy. This is but a shabby present which he has sent by me, but he hopes that his lordship will condescend to accept it, and commends himself to his lordship's favour." And, with these words, he produced a thousand ounces of silver for Kōtsuké no Suké, and a hundred ounces to be distributed among his retainers.

When the latter saw the money their eyes sparkled with pleasure, and they were profuse in their thanks; and begging the councillor to wait a little, they went and told their master of the lordly present which had arrived with a polite message from Kamei Sama. Kōtsuké no Suké in eager delight sent for the councillor into an inner chamber, and, after thanking him, promised on the morrow to instruct his master carefully in all the different points of etiquette. So the councillor, seeing the miser's glee, rejoiced at the success of his plan; and having taken his

<sup>1</sup> Councillor, lit. "elder." The councillors of daimios were of two classes: the *Karō*, or "elder," an hereditary office, held by cadets of the Prince's family, and the *Yōnin*, or "man of business," who was selected on account of his merits. These "councillors" play no mean part in Japanese history.

上野介は、昭、川、内、の、御、用、に、  
 二人に、お、か、り、を、お、し、や、う、と、い、ふ、  
 二人に、お、か、り、を、お、し、や、う、と、い、ふ、

leave returned home in high spirits. But Kamei Sama, little thinking how his vassal had propitiated his enemy, lay brooding over his vengeance, and on the following morning at daybreak went to Court in solemn procession.

When Kôtsuké no Suké met him his manner had completely changed, and nothing could exceed his courtesy. "You have come early to Court this morning, my Lord Kamei," said he. "I cannot sufficiently admire your zeal. I shall have the honour to call your attention to several points of etiquette to-day. I must beg your lordship to excuse my previous conduct, which must have seemed very rude; but I am naturally of a cross-grained disposition, so I pray you to forgive me." And as he kept on humbling himself and making fair speeches, the heart of Kamei Sama was gradually softened, and he renounced his intention of killing him. Thus by the cleverness of his councillor was Kamei Sama, with all his house, saved from ruin.

Shortly after this, Takumi no Kami, who had sent no present, arrived at the castle, and Kôtsuké no Suké turned him into ridicule even more than before, provoking him with sneers and covert insults; but Takumi no Kami affected to ignore all this, and submitted himself patiently to Kôtsuké no Suké's orders.

This conduct, so far from producing a good effect, only made Kôtsuké no Suké despise him the more, until at last he said haughtily: "Here, my Lord of Takumi, the ribbon of my sock has come untied; be so good as to tie it up for me."

Takumi no Kami, although burning with rage at the affront, still thought that as he was on duty he was bound to obey, and tied up the ribbon of the sock. Then Kôtsuké no Suké, turning from him, petulantly exclaimed: "Why, how clumsy you are! You cannot so much as tie up the ribbon of a sock properly! Any one can see that you are a boor from the country, and know nothing of the manners of Yedo." And with a scornful laugh he moved towards an inner room.

But the patience of Takumi no Kami was exhausted; this last insult was more than he could bear.

"Stop a moment, my lord," cried he.

"Well, what is it?" replied the other. And, as he turned round, Takumi no Kami drew his dirk, and aimed a blow at his head; but Kôtsuké no Suké, being protected by the Court cap which he wore, the wound was but a scratch, so he ran away; and Takumi no Kami, pursuing him, tried a second time to cut him down, but, missing his aim, struck his dirk into a pillar. At this moment an officer, named Kajikawa Yosobei, seeing the affray, rushed up, and holding back the infuriated noble, gave Kôtsuké no Suké time to make good his escape.

Then there arose a great uproar and confusion, and Takumi no Kami was arrested and disarmed, and confined in one of the apartments of the palace under the care of the censors. A council was held, and the prisoner was given over to the safeguard of a daimio, called Tamura Ukiyô no Daibu, who kept

手の上で... 御前へ参り候... 御前へ参り候... 御前へ参り候...

him in close custody in his own house, to the great grief of his wife and of his retainers; and when the deliberations of the council were completed, it was decided that, as he had committed an outrage and attacked another man within the precincts of the palace, he must perform *kara-kiri*,—that is, commit suicide by disembowelling; his goods must be confiscated, and his family ruined. Such was the law. So Takumi no Kami performed *kara-kiri*, his castle of Akô was of them took service with other daimios, and others became merchants.

Now amongst these retainers was his principal councillor, a man called Oishi Kuranosuké, who, with forty-six other faithful dependants, formed a league to avenge their master's death by killing Kôtsuké no Suké. This Oishi Kuranosuké was absent at the castle of Akô at the time of the affray, which, had he been with his prince, would never have occurred; for, being a wise man, he would not have failed to propitiate Kôtsuké no Suké by sending him suitable presents; while the councillor who was in attendance on the prince at Yedo was a dullard, who neglected this precaution, and so caused the death of his master and the ruin of his house.

So Oishi Kuranosuké and his forty-six companions began to lay their plans of vengeance against Kôtsuké no Suké; but the latter was so well guarded by a body of men lent to him by a daimio called Uyétsugi Sama, whose daughter he had married, that they saw that the only way of attaining their end would be to throw their enemy off his guard. With this object they separated and disguised themselves, some as carpenters or craftsmen, others as merchants; and their chief, Kuranosuké, went to Kiôto, and built a house in the quarter called Yamashina, where he took to frequenting houses of the worst repute, and gave himself up to drunkenness and debauchery, as if nothing were further from his mind than revenge. Kôtsuké no Suké, in the meanwhile, suspecting that Takumi no Kami's former retainers would be scheming against his life, secretly sent spies to Kiôto, and caused a faithful account to be kept of all that Kuranosuké did. The latter, however, determined thoroughly to delude the enemy into a false security, went on leading a dissolute life with harlots and winebibbers. One day, as he was returning home drunk from some low haunt, he fell down in the street and went to sleep, and all the passers-by laughed him to scorn. It happened that a Satsuma man saw this, and said: "Is not this Oishi Kuranosuké, who was a councillor of Asano Takumi no Kami, and who, not having the heart to avenge his lord, gives himself up to women and wine? See how he lies drunk in the public street! Faithless beast! Fool and craven! Unworthy the name of a Samurai!"

And he trod on Kuranosuké's face as he slept, and spat upon <sup>1</sup> *Samurai*, a man belonging to the *Buké* or military class, entitled to bear arms.

法師, 如飯  
大家御絶

大坂上御介之木下  
此御前江守家老  
上, 江守家老

大坂の御守  
金一舟橋立之古良



BOOK THE FOURTH.

THE SEPPUKU OF YENYA.

**I**N accordance with the sentence of seclusion pronounced against Yenya Hanguwan, that nobleman was strictly confined in his mansion of Ogiga-yatsu, all communication with which was rigorously prohibited. While things were thus, the ladies of the household in the inner apartments passed the time in all manner of elegant diversions. One day, shortly after the event mentioned in the Third Book, young Rikiya was in attendance upon the Lady Kawoyo and in the hope of cheering his lord had brought a basketful of rare eight and nine-fold wild-cherry blossoms, gathered upon the hills around Kamakura; himself more pleasing for the eyes to dwell upon than the flowers themselves. Presently Hara Goyemori, the chief of the retainers, passing under the verandah in front of the willow-room,\* followed by Ono Kudainu approached the son of Yuranosuke.

\* The partition-slides of which were ornamented with paintings of willow-trees. Similarly decorated apartments were common in the mansions of the old nobility, doubtless in imitation of the "willow halls" of the Imperial Palace at Kiyôto.

梅谷の邸  
持屋  
親世  
大地  
原  
大郎  
和  
和波

THE MEANNESS OF KUDAINU.



場ノ居住音顔

"Ho there, young sir," cried the chief of the retainers, "you are early in your attendance."

"It is my duty, as you know, sir," replied Rikiya, "to be at hand from morn till night until my father returns from the provinces."

"And well you perform that duty." So saying, Goyemon prosecuted himself, and addressing the Lady Kawoyo, exclaimed, "We venture to inquire after our lord's health."

"I thank you heartily, gentlemen," said the wife of Yenya. "Of late my lord has looked far from well, and I am in sad trouble lest some illness should declare itself. Night and morning he keeps his eye fixed upon yonder mound, now brilliant with flowers: and seems to take so much pleasure in the contemplation of their bright hues that I have caused rare cherry blossoms to be sought out, and have had them arranged as you see, in the hope of affording him some distraction."

"Ah! lady," cried Goyemon, "I understand your thought. As the flowers open out so will the gates be thrown open, and the order of confinement rescinded. It is well thought of. Would that your servant, Goyemon, too, were a less clumsy fellow, and could hit upon some such mode of alleviating our lord's distress. However, lady, I would ask your attention for a moment. I have something of importance to communicate to you. I understand that commissioners are to come here to-day, and I do not doubt but that their orders are to set our lord at liberty. What do you think, Kudaiu?" turning suddenly to his companion.

"Well," answered the latter, "if you ask my opinion, Goyemon, why—do you see those blossoms there? they are pleasant enough to look upon just now; but let a puff of wind come, and their beauty is all blown away in a moment. So too with your words. They are pleasing enough to hear, but think you it is fitting that you, a *samurai*, should utter such honeyed phrases, as devoid of meaning, if stripped of their show, as mere New Year's compliments? You know what I mean. You know the gravity of our lord's offence, how, honoured by His Highness with a post at Court, in connection

with the festivities at Tsuruga-oka, he yet dared to lift his hand against the *Shiutô*! Within the palace precincts too! The punishment for such a crime is banishment, if viewed leniently; if not, an order of self-dispatch. What but misfortune can be expected to result from opposition to the Lord Moronaho?"

"Enough, enough," broke in Goyemon. "You talk of banishment and self-dispatch as if you rather desired our lord should be so punished——"

"Not so! *ya!*" exclaimed Kudaiu, in some haste; "I desire nothing of the kind. But I am a man of plain speech, and speak the plain truth. And let me tell you, Goyemon, that all this trouble is caused by your own parsimony. If you had but plastered Moronaho's face with gold, things would never have come to this pass;" trying to dissimulate the mean expression of his face, that displayed so plainly his true nature.

"No, *samurai*," said Goyemon; "no one wearing the two swords of a gentleman could condescend so to grovel before any one. Rikiya will bear me out in what I say."

Desirous of keeping matters smooth, Kawoyo interferred:—

"Pray let there be no quarrelling, gentlemen. It is I, in truth, who am the unfortunate cause of my husband's distress; and I only. Some few days ago, at the festivities at Tsuruga-oka, Moronaho, who is an unmannerly fellow, dared to speak to me, a wedded wife, of unlawful love. Pestered by his importunity, but without saying a word to my husband, I tried to make him understand how shameful was his conduct, and how vain were his attempts, by a few lines from a well-known song which I sent to him. Enraged by my refusal, he wreaked his vengeance upon my husband by covering him with insults, and Yenya, who is of a hasty temper, at last lost command of himself, and so committed the offence for which he is now confined."

The cause of their lord's disturbance of mind was now plain to Goyemon and Rikiya, and their faces betrayed their concern. At this juncture the sound of voices was heard proceeding from the parlour by the entrance porch, and presently the arrival of the Commissioners was

announced, who were demanding to be at once conducted to the inner apartments. The Lady Kawoyo upon this came down into the body of the apartment, and with Goyemon and Rikiya advanced to meet the Commissioners, who presented themselves the next moment. The Commissioners—there were two of them—were an esquire of Moronaho's named Ishido Umanojo, and a *samurahi* called Yakushiji Jirozayemon. As they were on duty they did not return the salutations offered them, but seated themselves at once at the upper end of the apartment. Hardly had they done so when a partition was moved back, and Yenya Hanguwan entered the room with dignified composure.

"Ha! Ishido dono, you come officially? I am ashamed of being the cause of so much trouble to you. Ho, there! offer *saké* to the gentlemen. There can be no harm in a draught to chase away bad spirits; and the purport of your visit can meanwhile be explained to me."

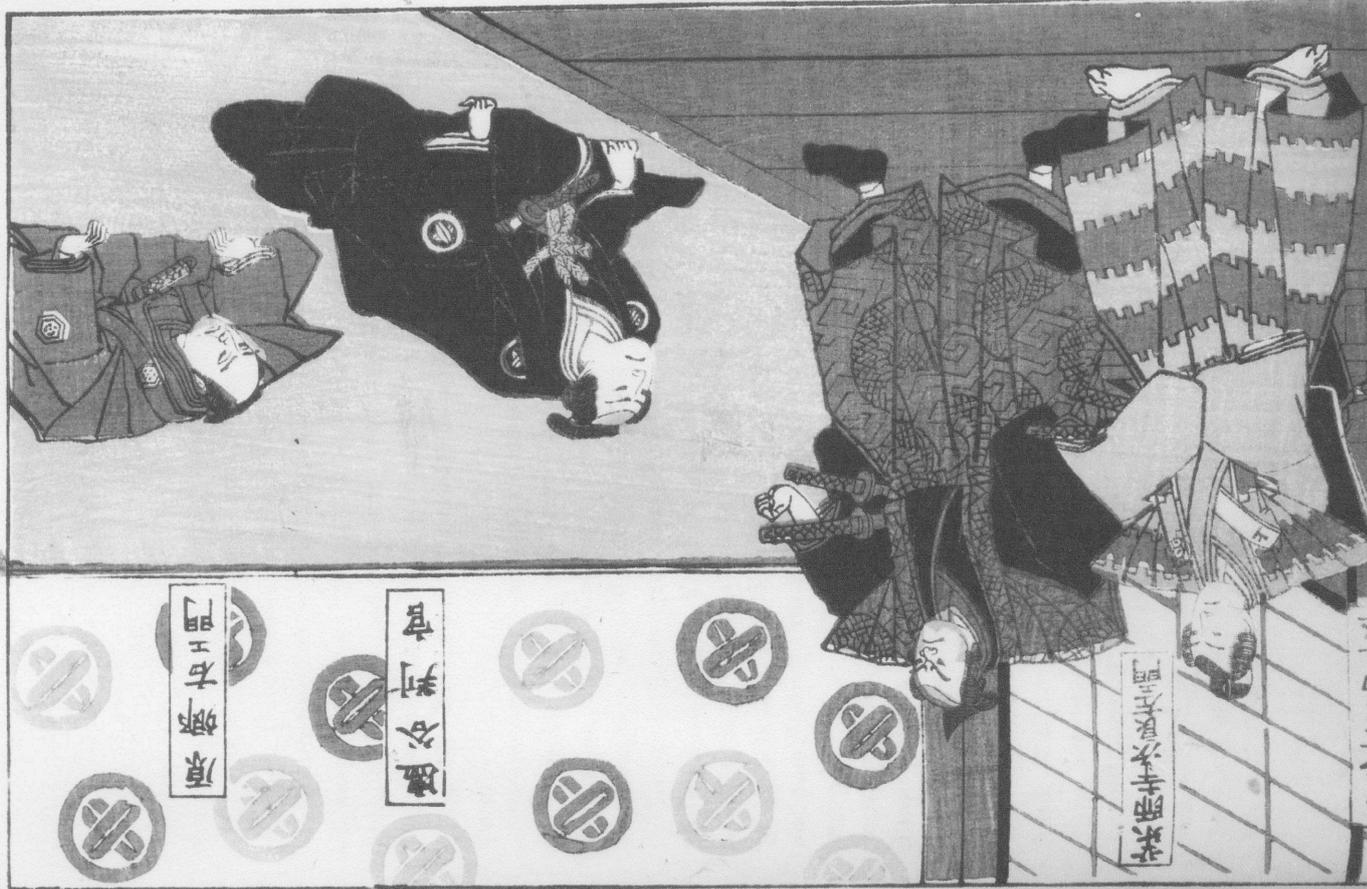
"Capital!" cried Yakushiji; "I have no objection, I am sure. But," he continued with a sneer, "if you knew the purport of our visit, I think the *saké* would stick in your throat."

Ishido now said: "We are ordered to make an official communication to you, to which we demand your attention."

So saying, the Commissioner drew a paper from his breast, and unfolded it, while Hanguwan arranged himself on his mat, and assumed an attitude of respectful attention. Ishido then read out the paper, which was to the following effect:—"Lately, Yenya Hanguwan Takasada, following the promptings of private malice, drew his weapon on the Shiuttô, the Lord Moronaho, and created a tumult within the precincts of the palace, on account of which crime his estates are hereby ordered to be confiscated, and himself is decreed to commit self-dispatch."

As the Commissioner concluded, the Lady Kawoyo and the assembled retainers were filled with sudden terror, regarding each other with trembling amazement. Hanguwan, however, remained unmoved. Without changing a muscle of his countenance he exclaimed, quite calmly, "I understand perfectly. But now, gentle-

場一使上



城守上使登場

如服命命子

men, will you not take some refreshment, one draught of *saké* after your labours?"

"How now, Hangwan?" exclaimed Yakushiji. "Silence! Your crime merits decapitation like a common criminal; but His Highness, in his clemency, permits you to expiate it by self-dispatch, for which you ought to be grateful, I think. Let the usual preparations for self-dispatch be made without delay. But what means this? You are still wearing your usual long upper dress trailing behind you. Are you drunk, or have you had a stroke? You are failing in respect to the Commissioner Ishido and to myself."

And the brute chuckled gleefully as he concluded his insolent speech.

"I am not drunk," said the condemned nobleman, "neither have I had a stroke. As soon as I heard that a communication was to be made to me I knew what the end would be, and so I have caused everything to be prepared beforehand—as you will see."

Throwing off his upper dress, and casting away from him both his swords as he spoke, Yenya revealed himself attired in short-sleeved white garments with a *kamishimo* bare of device, and completely prepared for death. A thrill of horror ran through all who were present, and even Yakushiji was unable to utter a word, silenced by the angry expression of his colleague, who, approaching the condemned man, exclaimed gently, "I can well understand your feelings, sir. My duty I must fulfil; but I pray you not to be hurried in your preparations."

"I am deeply grateful for your kindness," said Yenya. "Ever since my attack on Moronaho," he added in a passionate tone, "I knew this would be the result, and have therefore made ready beforehand. Through the intervention of Kakogawa Honzō, Moronaho, to my bitter disappointment escaped me at the palace; and an inextinguishable rage filled me to the very marrow of my bones. Like Kusunoki Masashige of Minatogawa—who, in his agony, still possessed with an intense longing for vengeance upon his enemy, swore that he would come to life again to have it—I, too, living or dead, will have my revenge upon Moronaho."

Meanwhile a confused sound of knocking in the partition resounded from the adjoining apartment, and the voices of a number of clansmen were heard clamouring for permission to look once more upon their lord's face while in life, and begging Goyemon to obtain that favour for them. Goyemon, accordingly, asked the condemned nobleman to allow the retainers to enter.

"What is this?" cried Yenya. "Yet their request is proper enough! But they must wait until Yuranosuke returns."

Goyemon bowed assent, and addressing himself to the clansmen, exclaimed: "You have heard our lord's will. You cannot enter yet; not one of you."

They did not utter a word in reply, and complete silence reigned in the apartment in which they still remained assembled. Rikiya, meanwhile, at a sign from Yenya, had placed the sword with which the self-dispatch was to be accomplished, and which had been previously got ready, before his lord, who, after composedly throwing back the shoulder-folds of the *kamishimo*, arranged himself in a suitable position.\*

"And now, Sirs," said Yenya, addressing the Commissioners; "I call upon you to be witnesses to my obedience."

He drew a three-cornered stand towards himself as he spoke, and taking up the short sword that lay upon it, lifted it respectfully to his forehead.

"Rikiya, Rikiya."

"My lord."

"Yuranosuke?"

"He is not yet returned, your lordship."

"Alas! and yet I wished so greatly to see him once more in life. There is so much to be arranged—but now——"

As he uttered the last words the unfortunate nobleman grasped the sword, point downwards, in his bow-hand, and with one movement ripped himself open.

\* So as to fall forward in the death-agony. To fall backwards was considered ignominious.

The Lady Kawoyo closed her eyes with horror and anguish; and with the tears streaming down her cheeks, muttered to herself a Buddhist prayer for the dying.

Presently a panel of the partition that separated the apartment where this scene was being enacted from the outer corridor, was pushed suddenly back, and Ohoboshi Yuranosuke burst into the room, followed closely by Senzaki, Yazama, and a crowd of other retainers. As soon as he saw his lord's plight he started, and then made his obeisance.

"Hah, Yuranosuke!—you see I could not longer delay."

"At least I am thankful that I am in time once more to look upon my lord's face in life."

"And I, too, am glad to see you, Yuranosuke, ere I die. You know all, doubtless. 'Tis a pitiful story enough of unsatisfied vengeance."

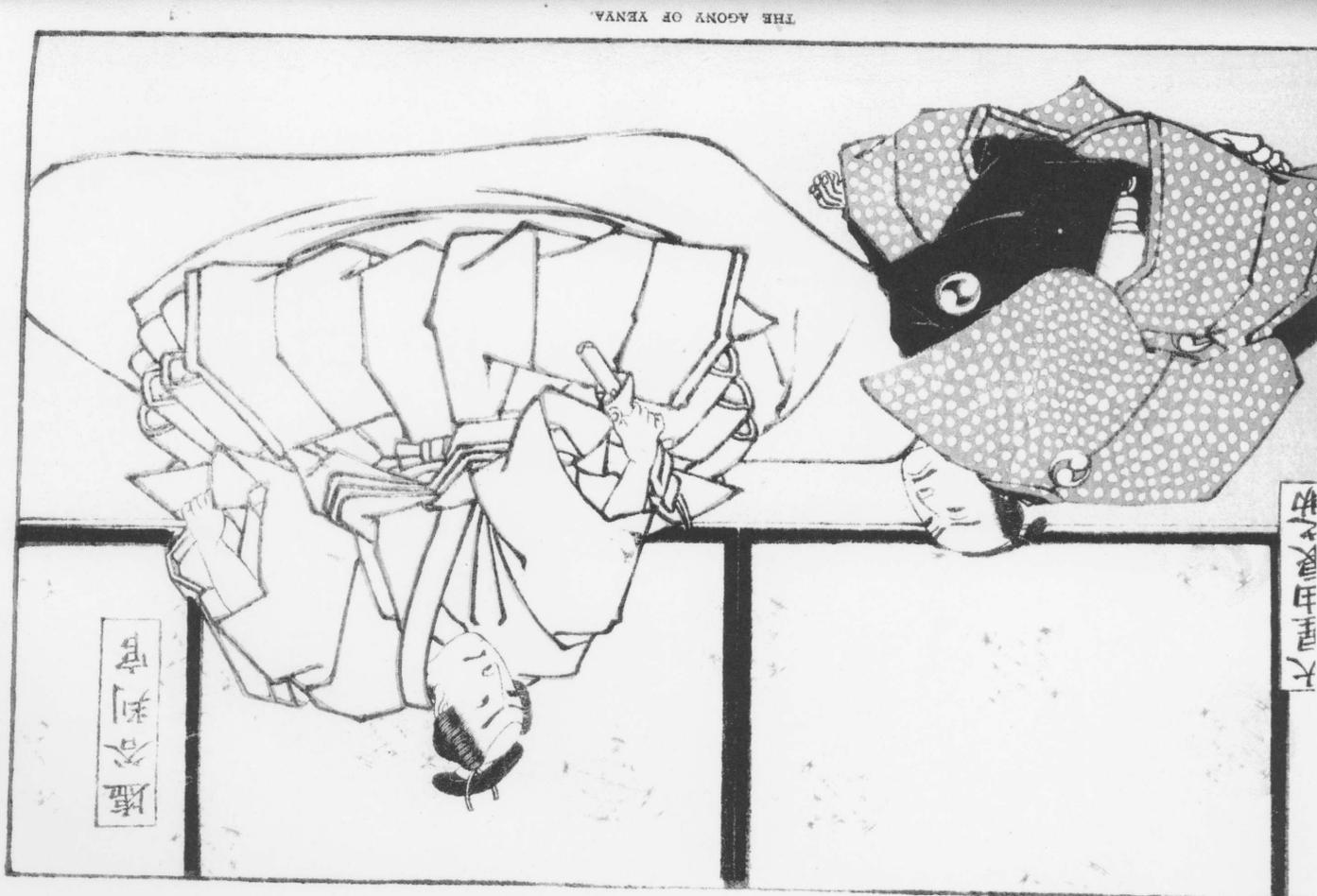
"Ay, my lord, I know all. But this is not the time to dwell upon the details of what has happened. My only prayer now is, that my lord's death may be such as befits a brave *samurai*."

"Do not fear for that," cried Yenya, and, seizing the sword with both hands, he widened the gash he had already inflicted upon himself. Gasping for breath he continued, speaking with difficulty: "Yuranosuke—this sword—my dying gift to you—you will exact vengeance. Then stabbing himself in the throat, he threw aside the blood-stained weapon with a last effort, and Yenya Hanguwan Takasada rolled over on his face—dead.

The Lady Kawoyo and the retainers present started back in affright, closing their eyes horror-struck at the terrible sight; while their sobs and the grinding of their teeth showed the grief and rage that were in their hearts.

Yuranosuke meanwhile dragged himself\* close to the corpse, and grasping the fatal weapon, lifted it reverently to his forehead. Fixing his eyes earnestly on the blood-stained point, he clenched his fist

\* Lit., shuffled—a peculiar theatrical gait.



THE AGONY OF YENYA.

convulsively; while in a flood of tears he gave vent to the sorrow and passion that consumed him.

The misery of his lord's agony had penetrated to the inmost depths of his retainer's heart,\* and it was at this moment that there arose in Yuranosuke's breast those sentiments of unswerving devotedness and loyalty to his dead chief's memory, that have made the name of Ohoboshi famous for ever.

Yakushiji, springing suddenly to his feet, exclaimed:

"Now, my masters, Hanguwan is dead and done for. You can take yourselves off. Away with you."

"You are too hasty, Yakushiji," said his colleague. "Yenya Hanguwan was a lord of province and castle; and proper arrangements must be made for the funeral rites. Therefore," turning to the clansmen, "pray understand that there is no intention of driving you hurriedly away from the castle. I will myself draw up a brief report showing that I have, in the execution of my duty, witnessed the self-dispatch of your master. And now, Sir Yuranosuke," addressing himself to the *Karô*,† "I fully understand your distress. If I can render you any service pray do not forget to avail yourself of my assistance."

As he concluded, the Commissioner courteously saluted the retainers of Yenya, and composedly took his departure.

"For my part I want this dead body removed, at any rate," cried Yakushiji. "Meanwhile I will snatch some repose within yonder. Ho! Some of you, throw these fellows' rubbish out of doors. As to Yenya's property—and you," turning to the clansmen, "away with you and turn into *rôin*‡ as fast as you please." Glaring fiercely round, he then strode out of the apartment. As soon as he had gone the Lady Kawoyo suddenly lifted up her voice and exclaimed in a piteous tone:—

"Alas! alas! my friends, was ever condition more distressful than

\* Lit., wrung his five entrails and six viscera—an expression borrowed from the Chinese.

† Lit., "house-elder," the title of the chief councillor of a Daimiyô.

‡ Clansmen dismissed from, or who had abandoned, the service of their master: lit., "Wave-men;" *i.e.*, "Vaṛabonds."

yours! Oh! that I had said all that I wanted to say to my lord in his agony! But I did not know what to do. I was afraid of exciting the contempt of the Commissioners; and so I have forborne from speaking until now. I cannot tell you how miserable I am." And falling upon the corpse, her grief overwhelmed her, and she burst into a flood of tears.

Yuranosuke now called to his son: "Rikiya, you will accompany our mistress, and at once convey the body of our dead master to the family burying-place at the Temple of Kômyô. I shall follow close after you, and charge myself with the ordering of the funeral ceremonies. Hori, Yazama, Odera, Hasama, and the rest of the retainers will go with you as escort."

A norimon was immediately brought forward, and the body reverently lifted and placed within, amid the tears of all present.

Yuranosuke tried to console the Lady Kawoyo, who was beside herself with grief, while the clansmen strove each to be one of the bearers, or, at least, to accompany the corpse. At last all was ready, the more fortunate bore off their dead lord, while their comrades, who remained behind, looked wistfully after them. As these seated themselves, Kudaiu, who was amongst them, exclaimed:

"Well, Ohoboshi, the office of *Karô* has been hereditary in your family ever since the days of your ancestor Hachiman Rokuro. And I, too, have been accorded a place at the right hand of him whom they are bearing off yonder. But now we are all made *rôin*; and as we have to find food for our wives and children, why should we not lay hands upon the treasure amassed by our lord, divide it amongst ourselves, and leave the castle without further delay? For Yakushiji is sure to be offended if we stop here much longer."

"I think quite differently from Kudaiu," said one of the clansmen, Senzaki by name. "It seems to me that as long as our enemy, the Lord Moronaho, lives, vengeance is our care. Let us wait here until he comes to dislodge us; and die, if necessary, upon our own ground."