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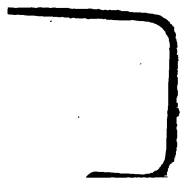
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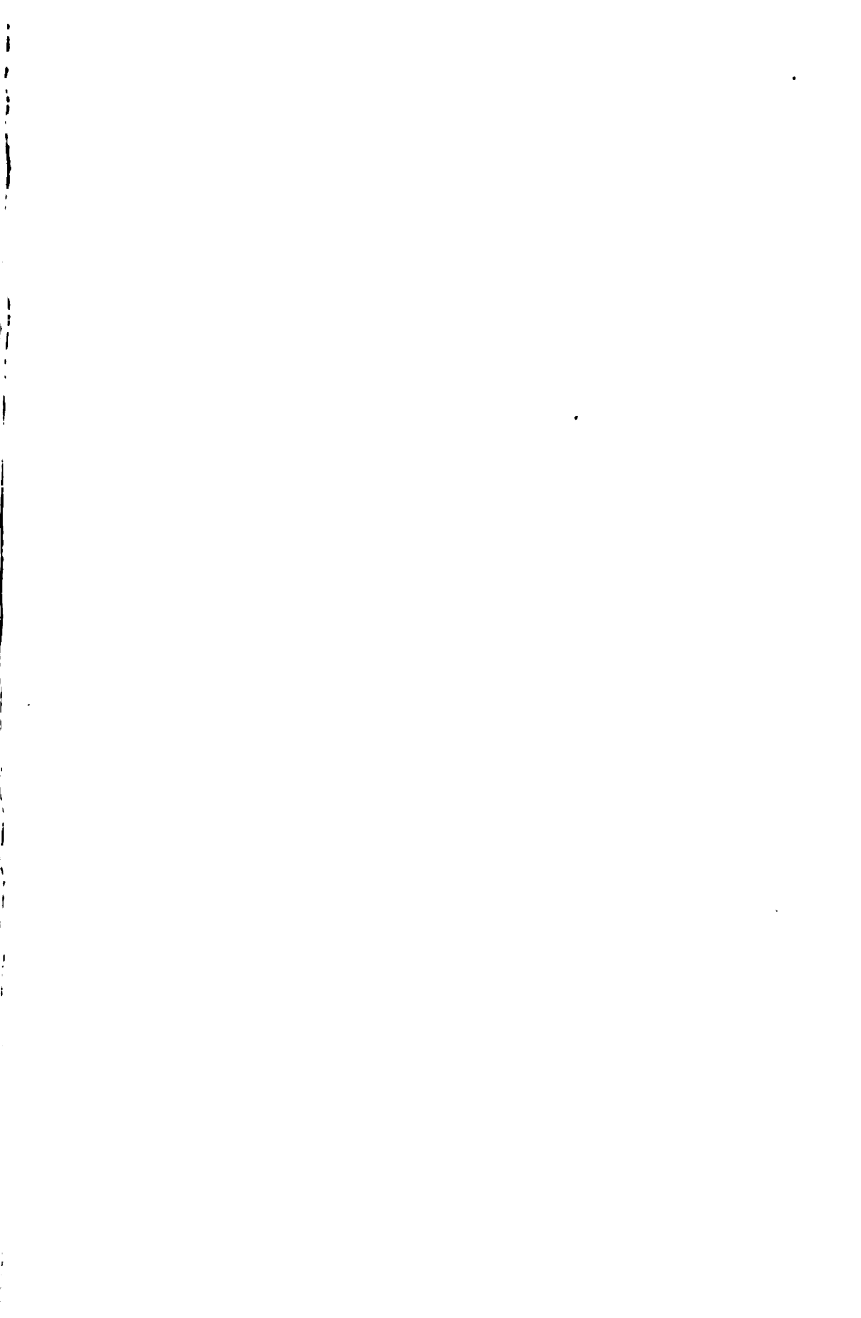


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# Japan in Days of Yore

III

The Life of

Miyamoto Musashi

PART I

By

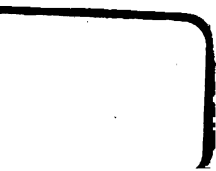
Walter Dening

Kyōbunwan

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1905



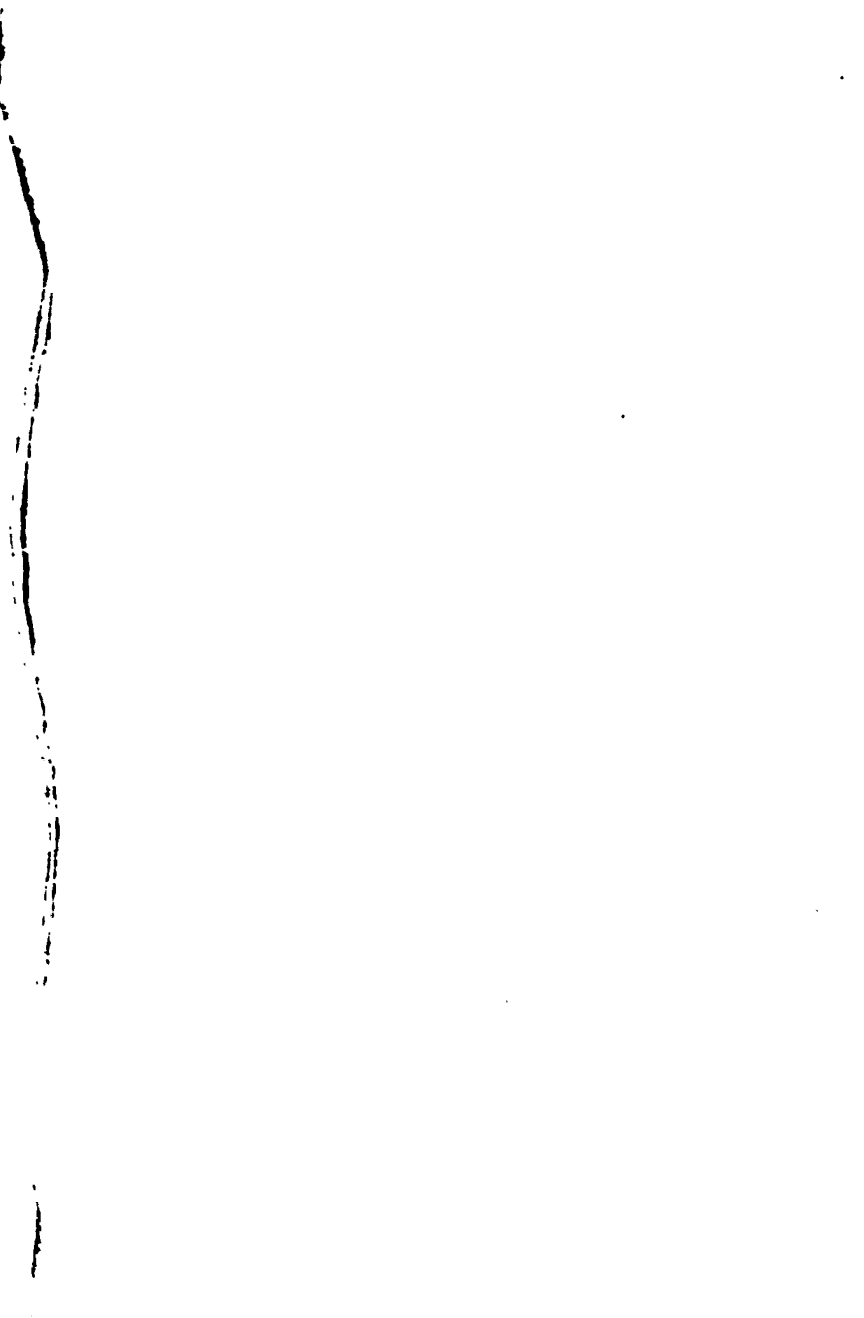


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# *Japan in Days of Yore*

III

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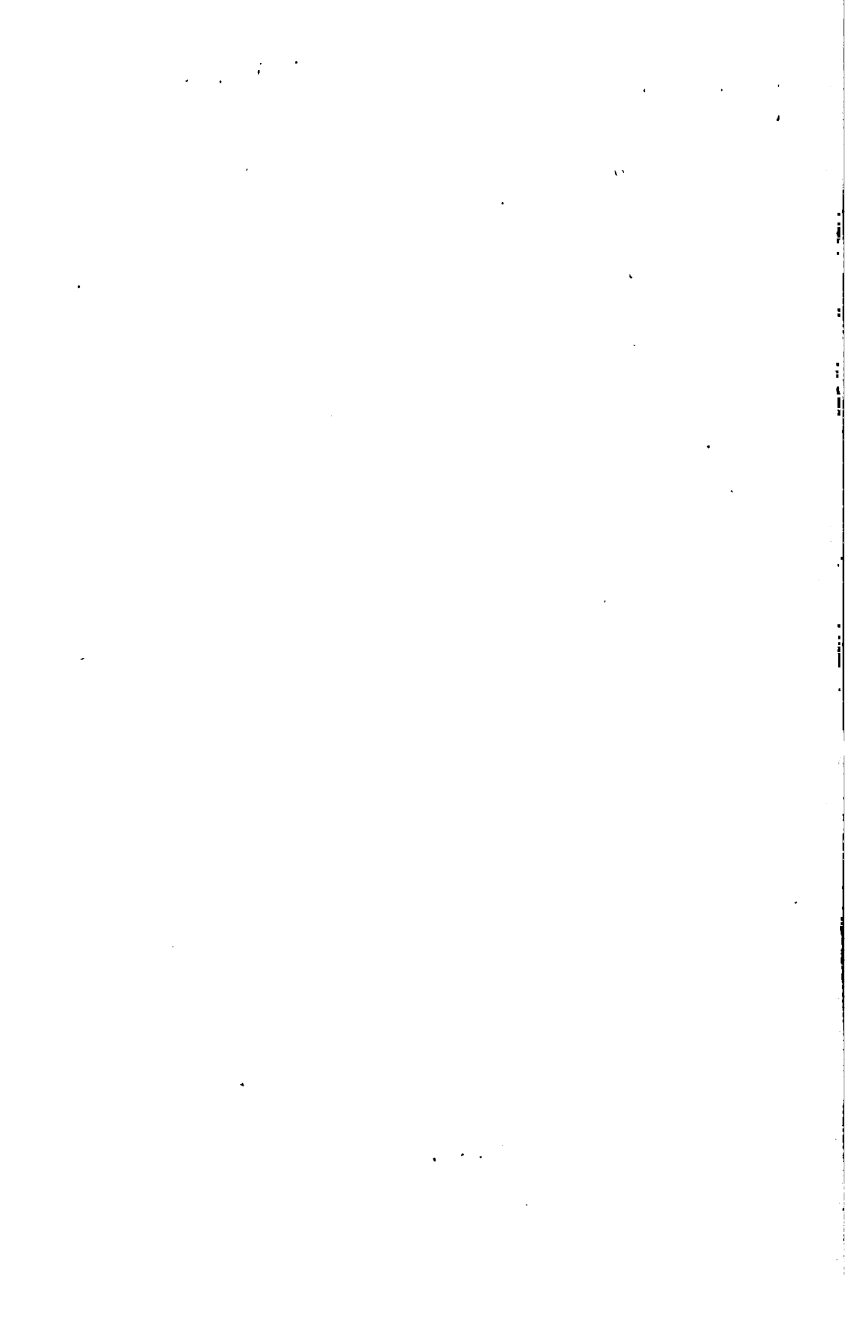
PART I

By  
Walter Dening

Kyōbunhwan

TŌKYŌ

1900



# JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

BY

WALTER. DENING.

III.

SECOND EDITION.

1905

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TŌKYŌ

KYŌBUNKWAN

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# JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

## III.

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### THE LIFE OF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

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#### PART I.

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#### CHAPTER I.

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#### INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE military and moral code known as *Bushidō* was elaborated and reached the height of its fame during the Kamakura era (A.D. 1185-1333). With the fall of the Hōjō family and the assumption of power by Ashikaga Takauji the system grew lax in various ways. Takauji's own power being founded largely on disloyalty, this Shōgun naturally treated traitorous acts with indifference. He neither punished those who left him nor refused undersirable persons who wished to fight under his flag. Thus the fine old knight's ideal of Kamakura days was no longer respected during the lives of the first two Ashikaga Shōguns, Takauji and Yoshinori. But the third Shōgun, Yoshimitsu (A.D. 1368-1393), to a certain extent succeeded in reviving interest in the *Bushidō*. He appointed such men as Ogasawara Nagahide, Imagawa Noritada and

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Ise Sadayuki to draw up regulations to be observed by all knights ; and instructors in archery, horsemanship, fencing, etc. were encouraged in diverse ways. During the last years of the Ashikaga Shōgunate\* various schools of fencing came into existence. For instance, in Shimōsa, Iizasa Yamashiro-no-Kami invented a style known as the 天真正傳神道流, *Tenshin-seiden-Shintō-ryū*†. He alleged that the two great war gods Kashima and Katori had graciously condescended to make known this method of fencing. Among the pupils of Yamashiro-no-Kami was Tsukahara Tosa-no-Kami, whose son Tsukahara Bokuden became a fencer of great fame in those days. Bokuden, first practised a style known as the *Shinkage-ryū* ; but he subsequently invented a style of his own known as the *Mute-kachi-ryū* (The Handless Victory Style.)‡ Bokuden used to go around the country for the purpose of giving lessons in his style, and it is recorded that on these occasions he travelled like some rich nobleman, with some 100 attendants and with spare horses led along for his use on the road.

The art of fencing was doubtless much improved at this time by the diligence in studying various styles shown

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\* The last Ashikaga Shōgun was Yoshiaki, whose deposition took place in 1573.

† "The genuine and correct Heaven-revealed Divine style."

‡ For an amusing story bearing on this, vide Appendix.

by those warrior-pilgrims known as *musha-shugyōsha*, who went around the country with sword or spear for the purpose of fencing with all experts whose fame had reached their ears. When they won in a match they became the instructors of their defeated opponents. When they were beaten, they became the pupils of their betters. Thus a very high state of proficiency was reached. The cause of chivalry generally was doubtless greatly advanced by the action of three great barons who were contemporaries and for some time rivals of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Takeda Shingen, Uesugi Kenshin and Hōjō Sōun, who all subjected their retainers and dependants to very strict discipline. In order to give some idea of the kind of rules under which warriors lived in the days of Miyamoto Musashi, whose many adventures I am about to relate, I furnish here a literal translation of Katō Kiyomasa's seven ordinances, which were doubtless scrupulously observed by Musashi during the latter part of his life.

I. "In service there must be no negligence of any kind. Rising at 4 (*tora no koku*), the warrior is to practise fencing with the sword and the spear before breakfast. After breakfast the forenoon is to be occupied with archery, musket practice and horsemanship. Those who are proud of their masters and serve them well will be rewarded with extra grants of land.







II. "As pleasures knights should choose hawking, deer-hunting, wrestling, and the like.

III. "Dress is to be of cotton or pongee. Extravagance in dress and consequent embarrassments in living will be regarded as a misdemeanour. A warrior must take delight in his military equipment above all other things, and should be economical in time of peace, so as to be able to spend freely in time of war.

IV. "On all ordinary occasions a knight is not to invite more than one guest at a time. Intercourse with one friend and with his master is enough for a warrior. His food is to consist of unhulled rice (*kuromeshi*)\*. On occasions when fencing matches or other military exercises are taking place, there is no objection to his meeting a number of people.

V. "A *samurai* must know military etiquette thoroughly. But the study of showiness in ordinary life will be regarded as a misdemeanour.

VI. "Unsheathing a sword under the influence of liquor or as a mere idle amusement is strictly forbidden. To draw a sword is to threaten other persons. From this practice serious disturbances often arise. Those who

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\* In this connection it is implied that the guest was to be regaled with the same homely fare.

use their swords merely as playthings or for purposes of intimidation will be ordered to commit *seppuku*.\*

VII. "The warrior must give his whole mind to study, reading books on the military arts and on loyalty and filial piety. Verse composing and verse-linking (*Haikai no renga*),† since they tend to encourage pretence, showiness, and the like, are forbidden. Such practices are certainly effeminate and ill suited for the man whose ambition it is to live and to die a brave warrior. A warrior must give his whole soul to the study of war and to his duties as a knight, in order that when he dies he may die in a superior way. It is only by cultivating the warlike spirit continually that the knight can reach a high ideal.

The above ordinances are to be strictly followed day and night. If there be men who find these regulations too stringent for them to observe, their cases will be inquired into, and on its being found that they have deliberately declared themselves unable to perform manly duties, they shall be branded, so that all may recognize their inferiority."‡

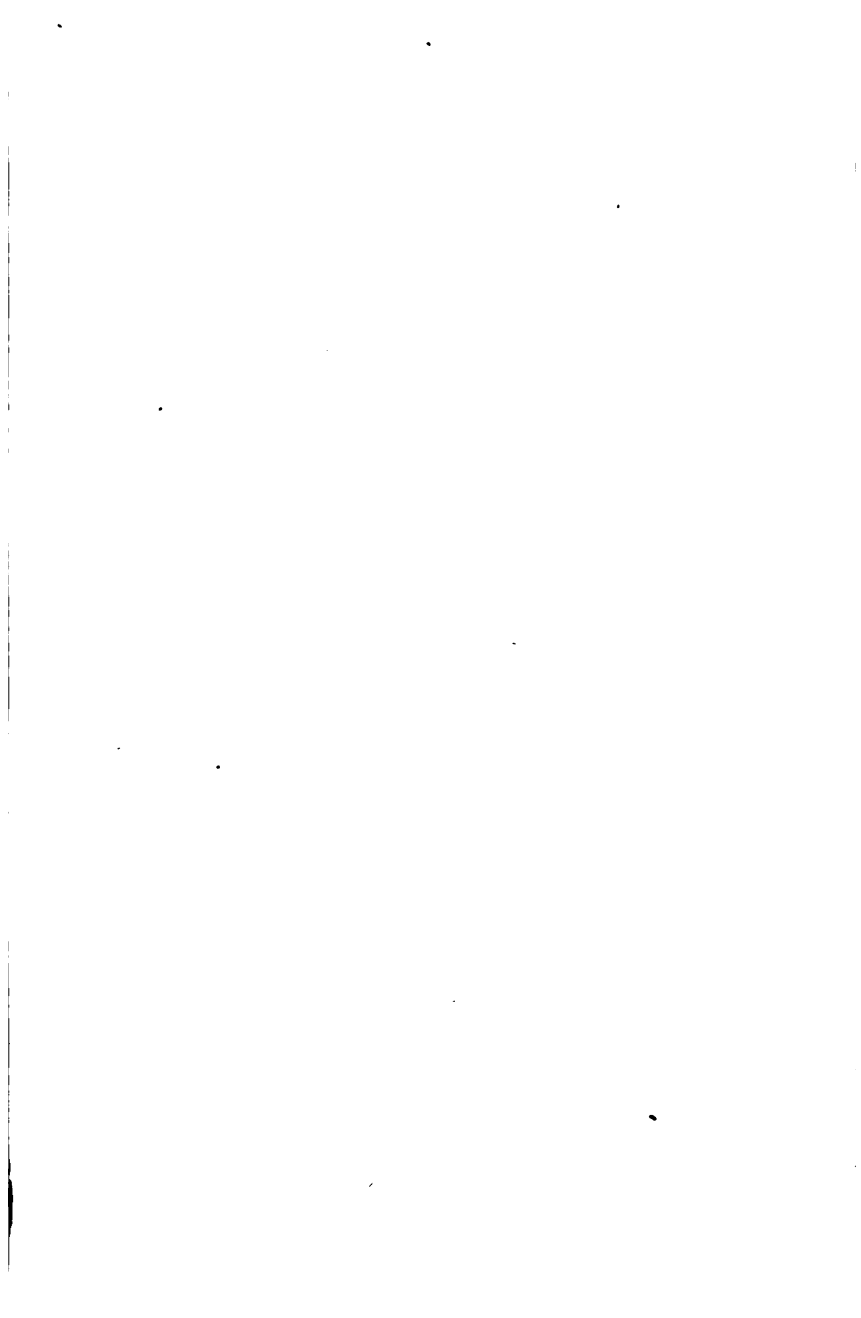
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\* Disembowelment, called also *harakiri*.

† For a description of the process *vide* my "New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, p. 363 *et. seq.*

‡ The branding of criminals was much practised in the Tokugawa era. In No. II of this series of Tales, p 107, a case is given in which private persons tattooed a thief and then let him go free. The story reminds one of the branding of Milady in the "Three Musketeers." But a brand as a mark of effeminacy is certainly rare in any country if not altogether unique.





Of all the military rules in force in these warlike times perhaps those of Uesugi Kenshin were the most remarkable. It was an established law in this baron's dominions that the greatest of all disgraces which could overtake a *samurai* was to have his sword cancelled by his lord. It once happened that one of Kenshin's retainers had committed an offence which called down upon him the extreme penalty of the law. He was ordered to deliver up his two swords and to be solemnly expelled from his lord's castle. But certain of his comrades interceded with Kenshin and pointed out that there were extenuating circumstances in the case of which their lord had not taken note. So Kenshin was induced to reduce the sentence to an order for suicide; to be carried out in the usual fashion. This decision gave general satisfaction to the guilty man and to all his friends, and was regarded as a proof of the extreme generosity of Uesugi Kenshin.

It appears then that the "Way of Chivalry", or the *Bushidō*, consisted of two things:—(1) High culture of the warrior's mind; (2) the most assiduous study of all military arts. But the ordeal to which a warrior of these times was subjected was an extremely severe one and many a knight passed his days in perpetual fear that he might live to disgrace in some way or other the illustrious name by which he was known among men. The feelings with

which not a few *samurai* regarded their position are well expressed in the following verse :—

*Toreba ushi ;  
Toraneba, mono no kazu narazu ;  
Sutsubeki mono wa,  
Yumi-ya narikeri.*

To take to arms, is to be constantly solicitous.  
Not to take to arms, is to be a nonentity. ;  
Among things to be rejected  
Is the military profession.\*

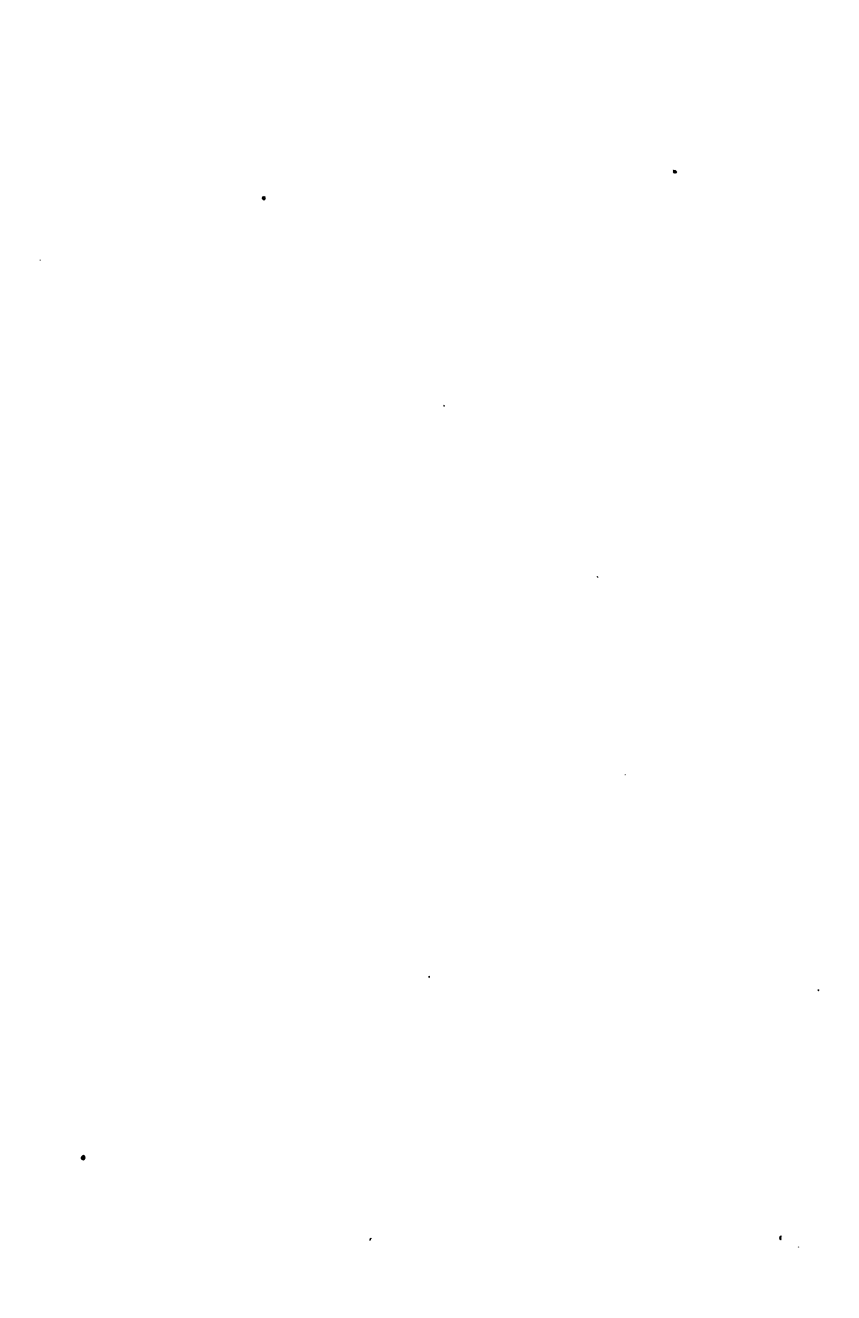
The warrior had to be prepared not only to die himself but to risk the sacrifice of wife and children as well, for there were occasions when the extinction of whole families was ordered.

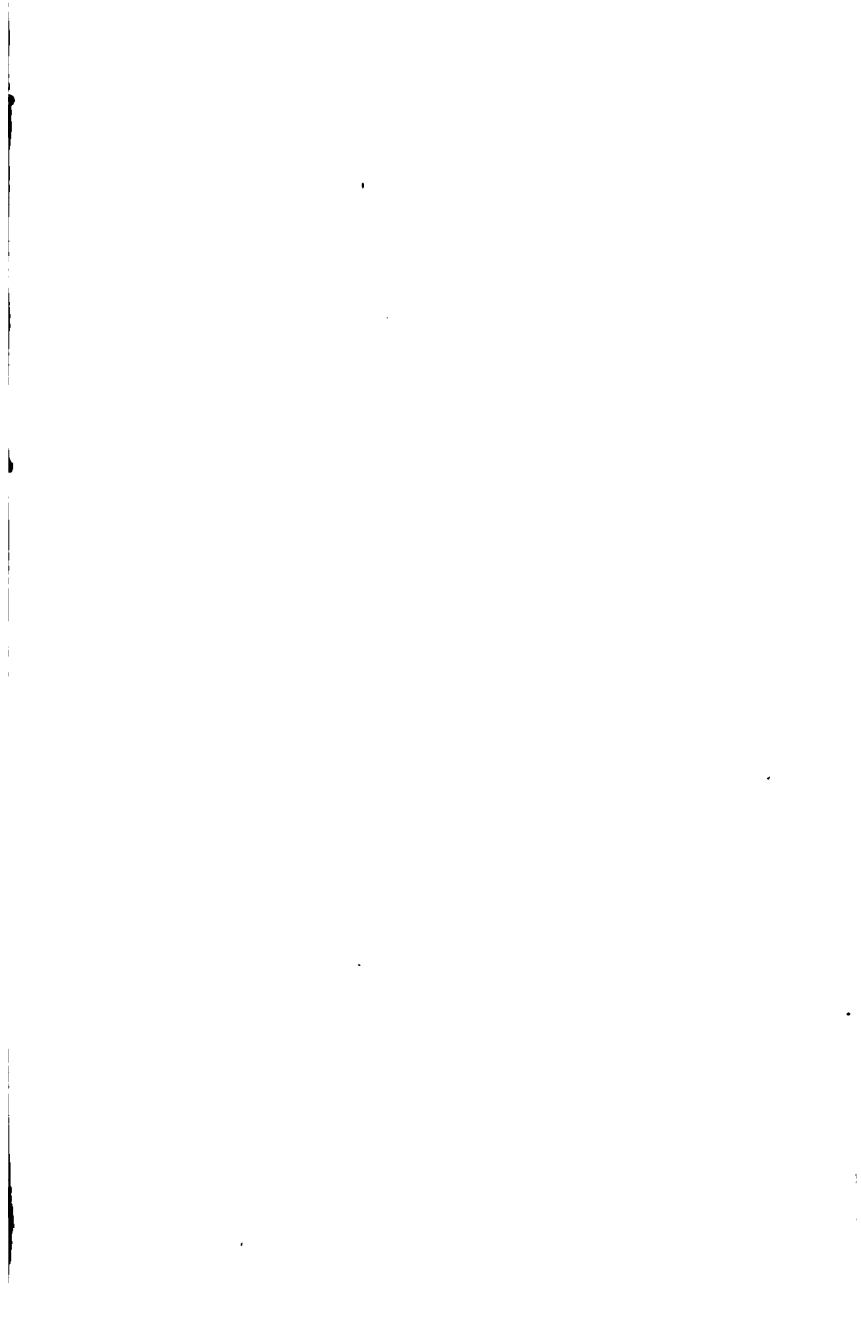
At the time of which I am now writing the vendetta received general approval and was never more universally practised throughout the country. The number of vendetta cases which originated with a defeat in the fencing ring that, instead of being borne in a manly way, was resented and prompted the worsted man to some dastardly act such as that committed by Sasaki Ganryū in the tale I am about to tell, was very large. In such instances the sympathy of the public was naturally with the men

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\* *Yumi-ya, lit*, bows and arrows, is here put for the profession of a soldier. *Mono no kazu narazu*, is to be unworthy of being counted; hence quite insignificant. The conclusion come to by the writer of this verse was that the warrior's life has more drawbacks than recommendations.







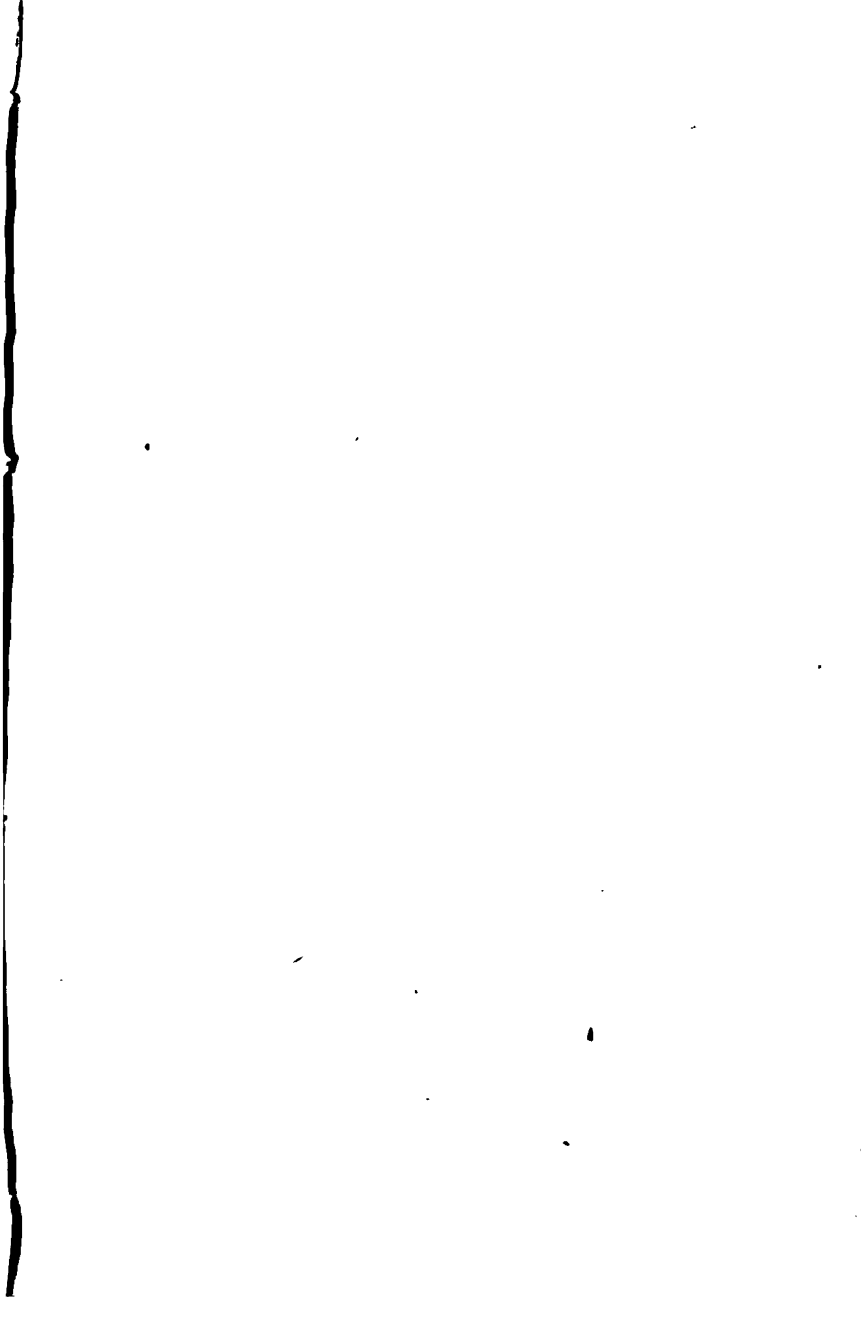
who avenged the deaths of parents, brothers or other near relatives. Not all the influence of the *Bushidō* was powerful enough to prevent the commission of mean and cowardly acts by certain *samurai*. Precautions were taken against crimes such as that perpetrated by Sasaki Ganryū. Before fencing matches began, which were very frequently held in the presence of the *Daimyō* governing the province in which they took place, it was customary to publicly remind the combatants that defeat in a match should not be allowed to engender personal hostility to the victor. The existence of such a practice as the vendetta must of course be regarded as a proof of the imperfect administration of the law in old Japan. But it is only fair to state that while the authorities did not succeed in suppressing this form of lynch law, they certainly controlled it in many ways—often punishing those who had killed their foes without reporting their intentions to the proper Government officials or without complying with other regulations in force at that time. On the other hand, where, as in the case of Miyamoto Musashi, the Government regulations were conformed to, the act of vengeance was regarded by leading Government officials with complacency.

The skill with which the Japanese used the sword at this time is constantly alluded to in Chinese annals. The Japanese depredators who visited the coast of Shantung

and other provinces, known in China as *Wo-kou* (倭寇), "Japanese foes," were a perfect terror to the inhabitants of villages lying on the sea-coast. Chinese writers even refer to the practice of using two swords at one time in the manner described in this tale. Wherever the Japanese swashbuckler appeared, the Chinese, we are told, fled in terror; as the rapidity and skill with which his weapon was handled was such that no Chinaman was a match for him. Into the broad subject of sword manufacture and ornamentation I cannot go here.

In a paper written for the Asiatic Society of Japan entitled, "The Sword of Japan: Its History and Traditions," published in Vol II of the Society's Transactions, Mr. T. R. H. McClatchie says, "There is perhaps no country in the world where the sword, that 'knightly weapon of all ages' has, in its time, received so much honour and renown as it has in Japan. Regarded, as it was, as being of divine origin, dear to the general as the symbol of his authority, cherished by the *samurai* as almost a part of his own self, and considered by the common people as their protector against violence, what wonder that we should find it spoken of in glowing terms by Japanese writers as 'the precious possession of lord and vassal from times older than the Divine period,' or as 'the living soul of the *samurai*!'"





The ornamentation of sword handles and engraving on the blades were arts that were brought to a high state of perfection prior to this time. Of the Japanese words used for a sword the *ken*, a long straight, double-edged weapon, is the oldest form. It is said to be between seven and eight hundred years old. The modern *katana* is a single-edged weapon. The *wakisashi* was a short dirk, worn with the *katana* as a sign of gentle birth in olden times. The *wakisashi* it was that was used for committing *harakiri*. It was then presented to the principal in a small square tray made of white wood such as is used in temples. Hence the point of a verse written at the time of the Revolution:—"The gift I wish to present to my lord of Aizu is nine and a-half inches on a temple tray."\*

One of the names Japan bore in ancient times was the land of "Many blades." The metal used by Japanese swordsmiths, was certainly of a very superior quality and the art of forging weapons was in a highly advanced state at the time of which I am writing. Even in recent years it has been the practice of many Japanese officers when ordered to the front to exchange their foreign blades for well tested Japanese ones—the Japanese metal being in their opinion so much more reliable. In ancient times

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\* The dirk, which was formerly of greater length, was lessened to about nine and a-half inches prior to the Meiji era.

the profession of a swordsmith was deemed very honourable and many persons belonging to good families joined it. In an article in the *Nichi Nichi Shimbun* published a few years ago it was maintained that the old art of sword manufacture is in danger of being forgotten. The writer deplores the loss to the country that this would involve.

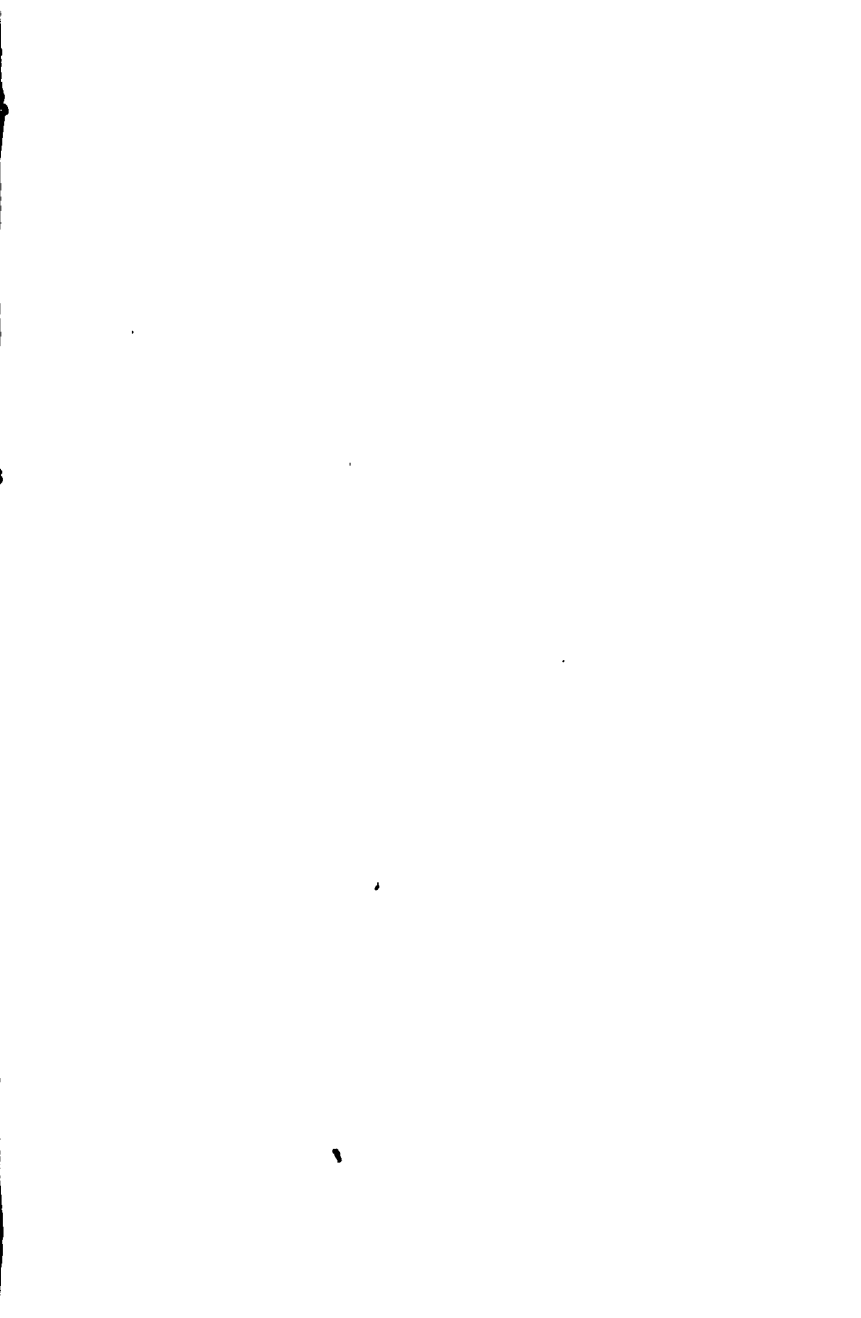
The following tale concerns fencers and fencing. It may perhaps be said that the day for the employment of this art with any effect having passed, there is little interest attached to the various styles of fencing practised in ancient times. But, apart from the light they throw on the opinions, feelings, tastes and modes of life of the personages introduced into the narrative, such stories as the following show that the imaginative or inventive faculty of the Japanese was not as dormant in ancient times as we are sometimes led to suppose, and hence they cannot but be of special interest to all who aim at obtaining some idea of the various phases through which the native mind has passed in reaching its present state. The day has not arrived for the preparation of an exhaustive history of purely Japanese art.\* The materials for such a history, however, are being steadily, if slowly,

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\* Since these words were first penned nearly 20 years ago, Captain Brinkley's elaborate work on Japanese art has been published. But though very full, it does not claim to include everything by any means.







prepared. When the collection and classification of facts bearing on this subject have been completed, and the results of the researches of the scholars now giving their attention to the matter are made known to the world, we shall be in a position to decide with certainty to what extent and in what age most effectually the noblest of all man's faculties, the imagination, was cultivated in Japan. That certain military arts were pure Japanese inventions is unquestionable. Some of the styles of fencing alluded to in the following narrative display a considerable amount of inventive genius.

The life of Miyamoto Musashi, on account of its being full of the most exciting adventure, and in that it is the history of a man who for over twenty years with unflagging zeal and dogged resolution pursued one object, is well worthy of finding a place among the portraits of ancient Japanese life that I am now preparing. It is undoubtedly the most entertaining of the numerous vendetta stories which appear in ancient Japanese books, and as such bears being translated somewhat fully.

In the eighty-eighth section of the *Hakkenden*, Bakin furnishes us with an account of the various weapons of war used in China and Japan in ancient times. As an introduction to the record of a life spent in fencing, I give an epitome of this account.

“In China there were from ancient times eighteen military arts. They consisted of the use of:—(1) the bow<sup>1</sup>; (2) the cross-bow<sup>2</sup>; (3) the spear<sup>3</sup>; (4) the sword<sup>4</sup>; (5) the double-edged sword<sup>5</sup>; (6) the lance<sup>6</sup>; (7) the shield<sup>7</sup>; (8) the broad-axe<sup>8</sup>; (9) the axe<sup>9</sup>; (10) the halberd<sup>10</sup>; (11) the bludgeon<sup>11</sup>; (12) the basket-work shield<sup>12</sup>; (13) the straw shield<sup>13</sup>; (14) the bamboo-spear<sup>14</sup>; (15) the pitchfork<sup>15</sup>; (16) the iron-bar<sup>16</sup>; (17) the rope-hook<sup>17</sup>; (18) sleight, or tricks<sup>18</sup>.\* To these must be added the use of clubs, guns, slings, and the like, and wrestling.

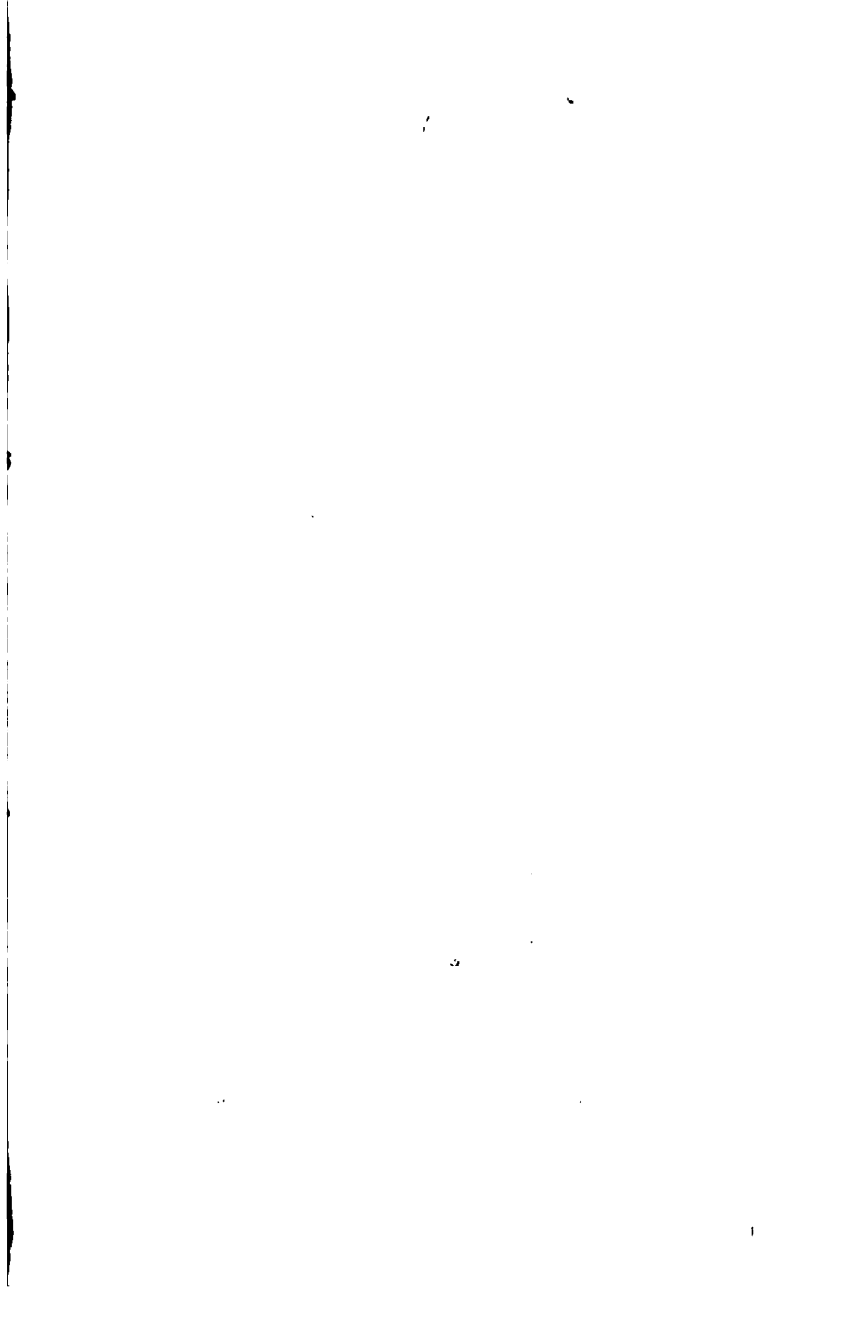
“If we come to ask why the number of military arts was fixed at eighteen, we find that it was owing to a man called 李通, Ritsū [flourished about A.D. 1460] having given instruction in military arts under these eighteen heads.

“What are known as the eighteen military arts of

1. 弓, *yumi*. 2. 弩, *ōyumi*. 3. 槍, *yari*. 4. 刀, *katana*. 5. 劍, *tsurugi*. 6. 矛, *hoko*. 7. 盾, *tate*. 8. 尖, *ono*. 9. 劍, *masakari*. 10. 戟, *edahoko*. 11. 鞭, *muchi*. 12. 簡, *amitate*; made of twisted bamboo. 13. 篋, *waratate*. 14. 叉, *takehoko*. 15. 叉, *sasumata*; pitchfork is the nearest English word. This weapon was used by constables in ancient times, and is employed by firemen in modern days. 16. 把頭, *tsukubō*. These were made in various ways, some being knotted, others having sharp teeth. 17. 繩繩套字, *menjōsōbotsu*. This weapon was something like the Japanese chain-hook. The rope was used for throwing around and entangling a foe. 18. 白打, *yawara*.

\* Bakin remarks that he is not sure whether his rendering of the Chinese characters in Nos. 12, 13, and 17 is correct.





Japan do not precisely correspond to those of China. There are, in fact, twenty-eight in this country; which are as follows:—(1) The use of the bow; (2) the use of the sword; (3) horsemanship; (4) the use of the hurling-sword<sup>1</sup>; (5) the use of the spear; (6) swimming; (7) espionage<sup>2</sup>; (8) tricks; (9) the use of the gun, (10) the perforated-headed-arrow<sup>3</sup>, (11) the fire-arrow, or rocket, (12) the club, (13) the crook<sup>4</sup>, (14) the iron-bar, (15) the pitchfork, (16) maces, (17) beacons, signals, (18) and cannons.

“The additions to the above are as follows:—(19) Horseback target-shooting; (20) ordinary target-shooting; (21) horseback dog-shooting; (22) horseback cow-shooting; (23) river-crossing on horseback; (24) the art of drawing a long sword<sup>5</sup>; (25) the use of the chain-hook<sup>6</sup>; (26) horseback bow-shooting; (27) horseback gun-shooting; (28) dirk-throwing. In very ancient times there were spears, but no lances; there were bows, but no guns. War-tricks (*yawara*) were introduced into Japan about

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1. 眉尖刀, *naginata*. 2. 隱形, *shinobi*. 3. 蓑目, *hikime*. This term included a kind of conjuration by means of a bow and arrow, for the purpose of nullifying evil influences. 4. 鉤, *mojiri*, called also *sodegarami* or sleeve-coilers, because they were used for seizing the sleeve of an opponent's dress. The dress was then wound round and round the weapon, and the wearer was thus captured.

5. This is by no means an easy accomplishment. 6. 鎌鐵, *kusarigama*.

the beginning of the sixteenth century<sup>1</sup>. The chain-hook has been in use in our country from ancient times. Nakatomi Kamatari killed a wicked minister of state with this weapon<sup>2</sup>."

Among all the above-mentioned arts that of fencing and *jūjutsu* (*yawara*) are the only two that have survived down to the present time, they are now practised more as gymnastic exercises in the national schools of the country than as military arts. The *naginata* or hurling-sword was much used throughout the Kamakura era and during the earlier part of the Ashikaga age, but after that it seems to have been abandoned by male warriors. But throughout the Tokugawa era this weapon was regularly used by women. The pitch-fork (*sasumata*) and the iron-bar (*tsukubō*) were used by constables for some time after they had ceased to be weapons of war. Archery was of course quite superseded by the employment of firearms in early Tokugawa days.

Much has been written respecting the Japanese form of athletic exercise called *Jūjutsu* or *Jūdō*. This form of

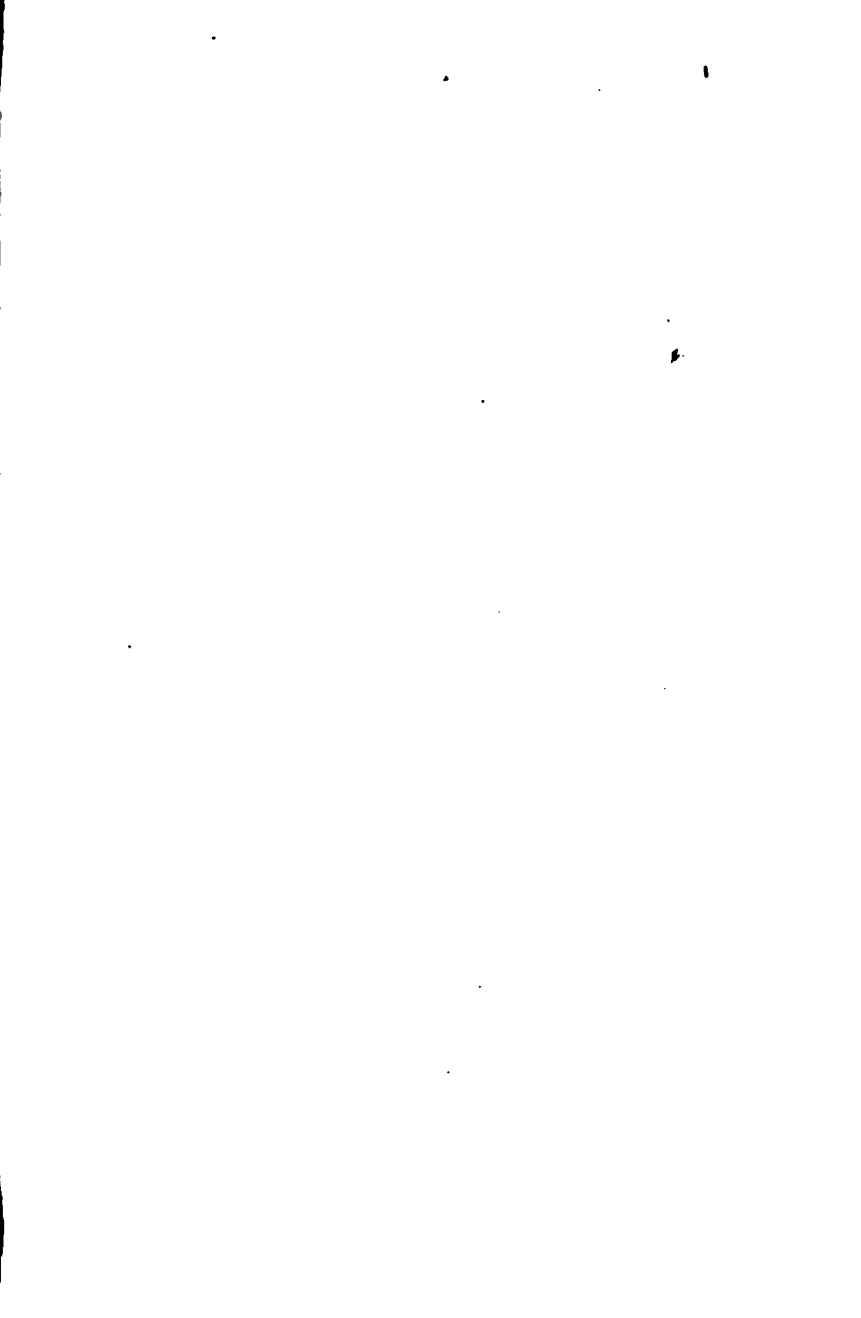
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1 Some say however, that this art was introduced by 陳元贊 Chin Cempin in the seventeenth century. As explained by him, it consisted of knowing how to take people captive, but in what way he does not explain.

2 With the exception of Nos. 24 and 28, the additions to the eighteen arts given above are entirely superfluous, consisting as they do of nothing but branches of the same arts.







exercise was known in feudal times and practised as a means of defence in case of a hand to hand tussle. It went by various names, *taijutsu*, *kogusoku* (小具足), *kempō* (拳法), *hakuda*, and *yawara*,\* the last being the best known term. The origin of the term *jū* (柔) in *Jūjutsu* and *Jūdō* seems traceable to the fact that according to this art victory is gained by yielding or pliancy rather than by the output of strength. It is owing to this circumstance that it differs essentially from ordinary wrestling, though when watched it seems to many foreign observers to be indistinguishable from wrestling. The origin of *jūjutsu* is veiled in obscurity. Mr. Kanō Jigorō, the great modern authority on the art, in a paper read before the Asiatic Society of Japan in 1888 and published in Vol. XVI. of the Society's Transactions, does not favour the notion that the Chinaman named Chin Gempin, who came over to Japan in the second year of Manji (A.D. 1659) and died in the 11th year of Kwambun (A.D. 1671), was the originator of the art as far as Japan is concerned. Other writers on this subject as well as Mr. Kanō have pointed out that Chin Gempin did no more than introduce a Chinese method of boxing known as 拳法 (*kempō*), in which kicking

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\* Though, following Mr. Kanō Jigorō, I have given these names, it seems to me that they referred to different practices. The *yawara* only represented the modern *jūjutsu*.

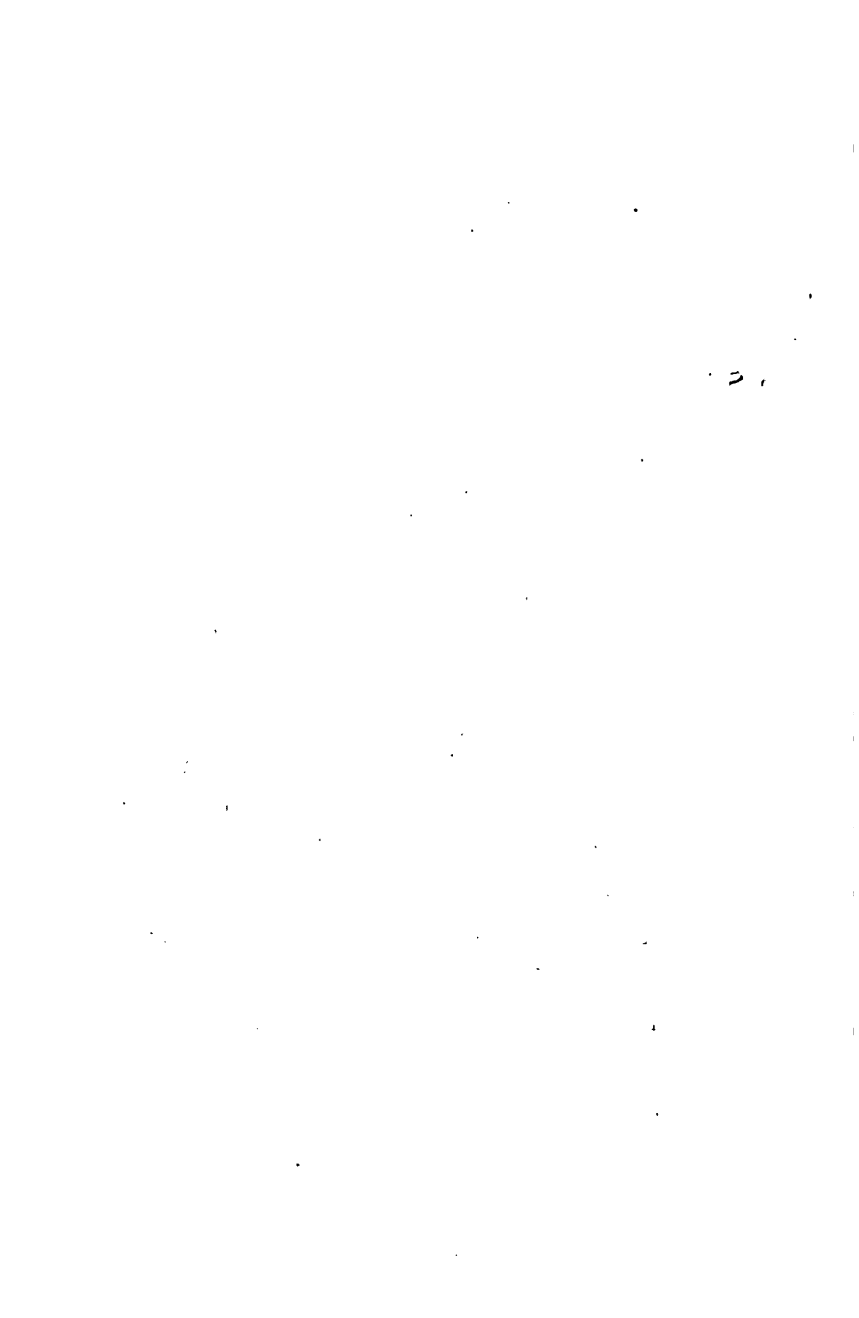
as well as pushing and striking, was resorted to. It is indubitable that *yawara* was known in Japan long before Chin Gempin's arrival here. There is a passage in the Life of Miyamoto Musashi which describes his meeting with Sekiguchi Yazaemon, who was a famous teacher of *Jūjutsu* at that time and the author of a special style of *yawara* called the *Sekiguchi-ryū*. Now Musashi died A. D. 1645, and his meeting with Yazaemon took place many years before his death. This of itself is sufficient proof that Chin Gempin was not the originator of the *Jūjutsu*. Here is the opinion of Mr. Kanō and the Rev. T. Lindsay on the point given in the Asiatic paper referred to above:—  
“It seems to us that the art is Japanese in origin and development for the following reasons:—(1). An art of defence without weapons is common in all countries in a more or less developed state, and in Japan feudalism would necessarily develop *Jūjutsu*.

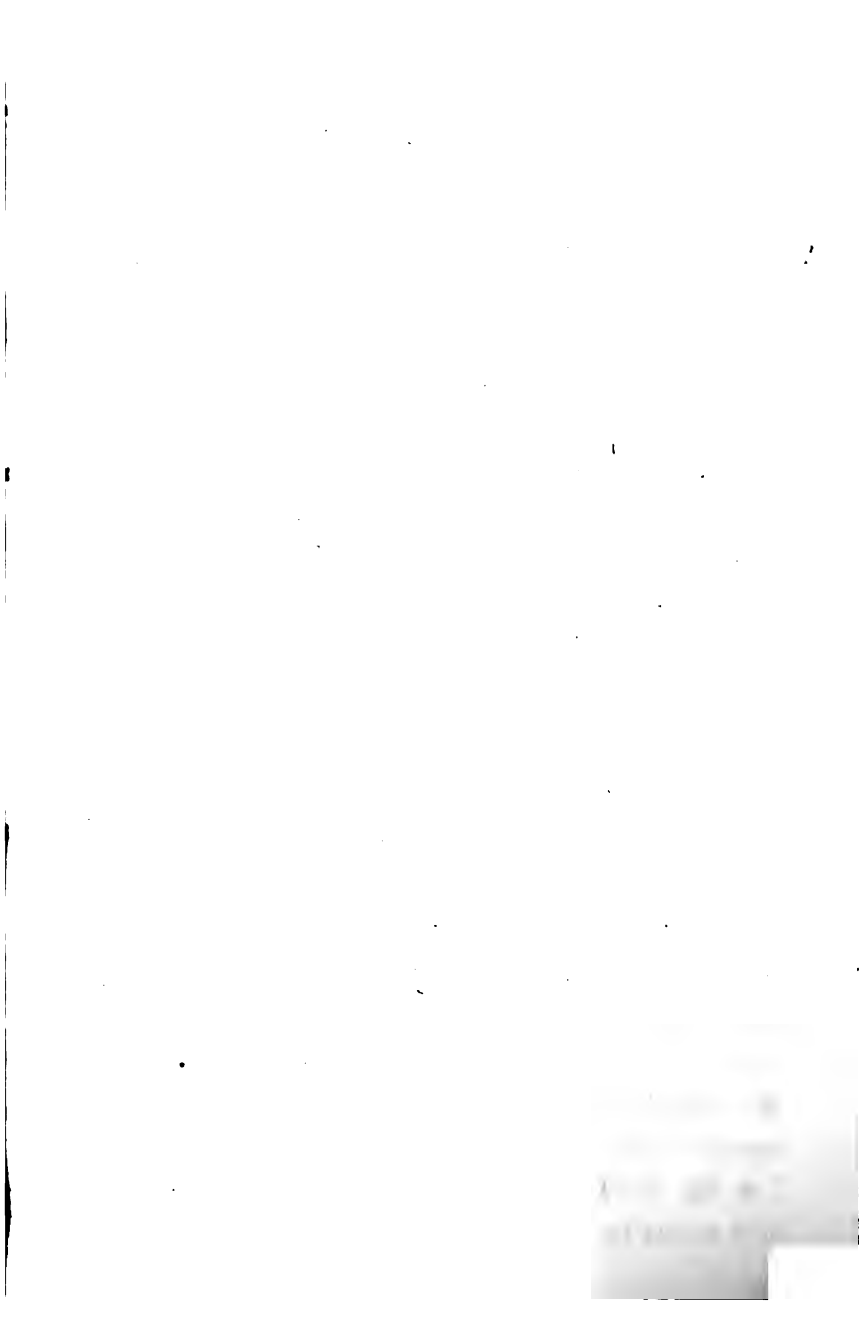
(2). The Chinese *Kempō* and the Japanese *Jūjutsu* differ materially in their methods.

(3). The existence of a similar art is referred to before the time of Chin Gempin.

(4). The unsatisfactoriness of the accounts given of its origin.

(5). The existence of Japanese wrestling from very early times, which in some respects resembles *Jūjutsu*.





(6). As Chinese arts and Chinese civilization were highly esteemed by the Japanese, in order to give prestige to the art, *Jūjutsu* may have been ascribed to Chinese origin.

(7). In ancient times teachers of the different branches of military arts, such as fencing, using the spear, etc., seem to have practised this art to some extent.


In support of this position we remark first that *Jūjutsu*, as practised in Japan, is not known in China."

Messrs. Kanō and Lindsay gave an account of the five great schools of *Jūjutsu*: (1) The *Kitō-ryū*, (2) the *Kyūshin-ryū*, (3) the *Sekiguchi-ryū*, (4) the *Yōshin-ryū*, and (5) the *Tenjin Shinjō-ryū*. In some of the schools, in addition to the ordinary instruction common to all *Jūjutsu* establishments until quite recently two special methods were taught: one being *atemi*, the art of kicking or striking some parts of the body so as to disable or kill opponents, and the other *kuatsu*, the art of resuscitating those who have apparently been killed by violence. This latter art was considered a secret and was only taught to pupils who were far advanced in their knowledge of *Jūjutsu*, and only to those on the condition of their taking an oath not to divulge the secret to any one.

Mr. Kanō Jigorō prefers that the system taught by him should be known as *Jūdō* rather than *Jūjutsu*, as he

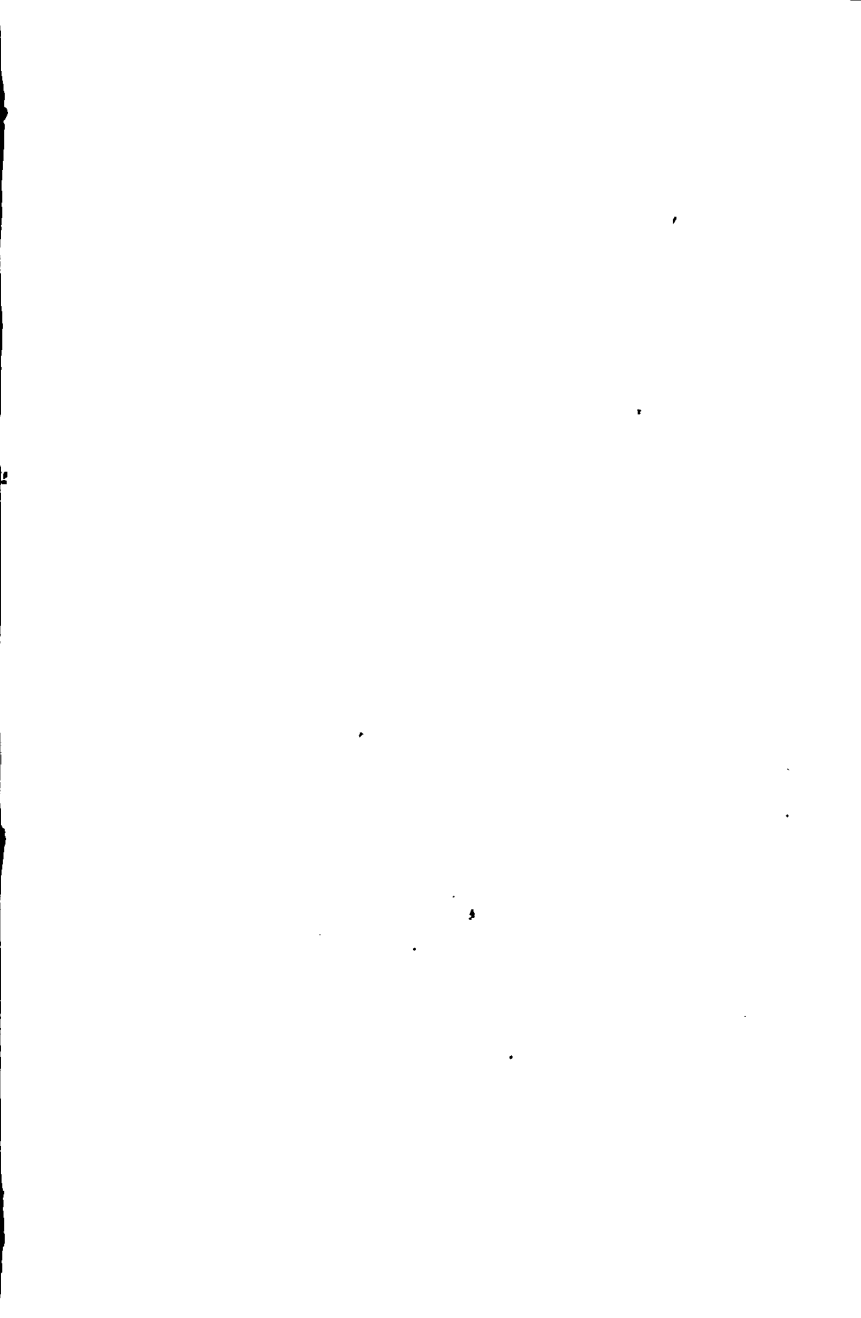
has made moral and mental training a leading feature in teaching *Jūjutsu*. His *Jūjutsu* may be said to have no rival in Japan at the present time, the system not only having been adopted by the Department of Education for athletic purposes in schools, but having also been selected by the Police as constituting necessary training for all constables. Hence there has been a great demand for the graduates of Mr. Kanō's School of Athletics all over the country for many years past.

Bakin says, or rather he makes one of his characters, Inusaka Keno, say that there are some other military arts that might be mentioned, besides those given above, but that he fears wearying his audience by going into further details. Actuated by a similar feeling, I will linger no longer on the threshold of my story, but at once proceed to relate the adventures of Miyamoto Musashi Masa-akira, the retainer of the Lord of Higo, Katō Toranosuke Kiyomasa, and the illustrious author of "The Two-Sworded Style."









## CHAPTER II.

Among the retainers of Ashikaga Yoshiteru, the thirteenth Ashikaga Shōgun [A.D. 1546—1567], there was a man called Yoshioka Tarozaemon.\* Tarozaemon was a good type of the knights of that time: brave and honest, a diligent student, as study went in those days, a kind parent and a steadfast friend. He was, too, an exquisite fencer, and one who had distinguished himself in battle over and over again.

Yoshiteru heard of Tarozaemon's skill in fencing; and, so at one time he assembled noted fencers from all parts of Japan and set him to fence with them. On this occasion Tarozaemon defeated some sixteen well-known fencers one after another. Yoshiteru, overcome with astonishment at the victor's great skill, bestowed on him the name of Mu-ni-sai, or the "Matchless one."

On the fall of Yoshiteru, his followers were scattered hither and thither, each one being forced to make a living as best he could. Munisai had a few acquaintances in the castle-town of Himeji, Harima; so he took up his residence in an outlying village of that town called Shimmi,

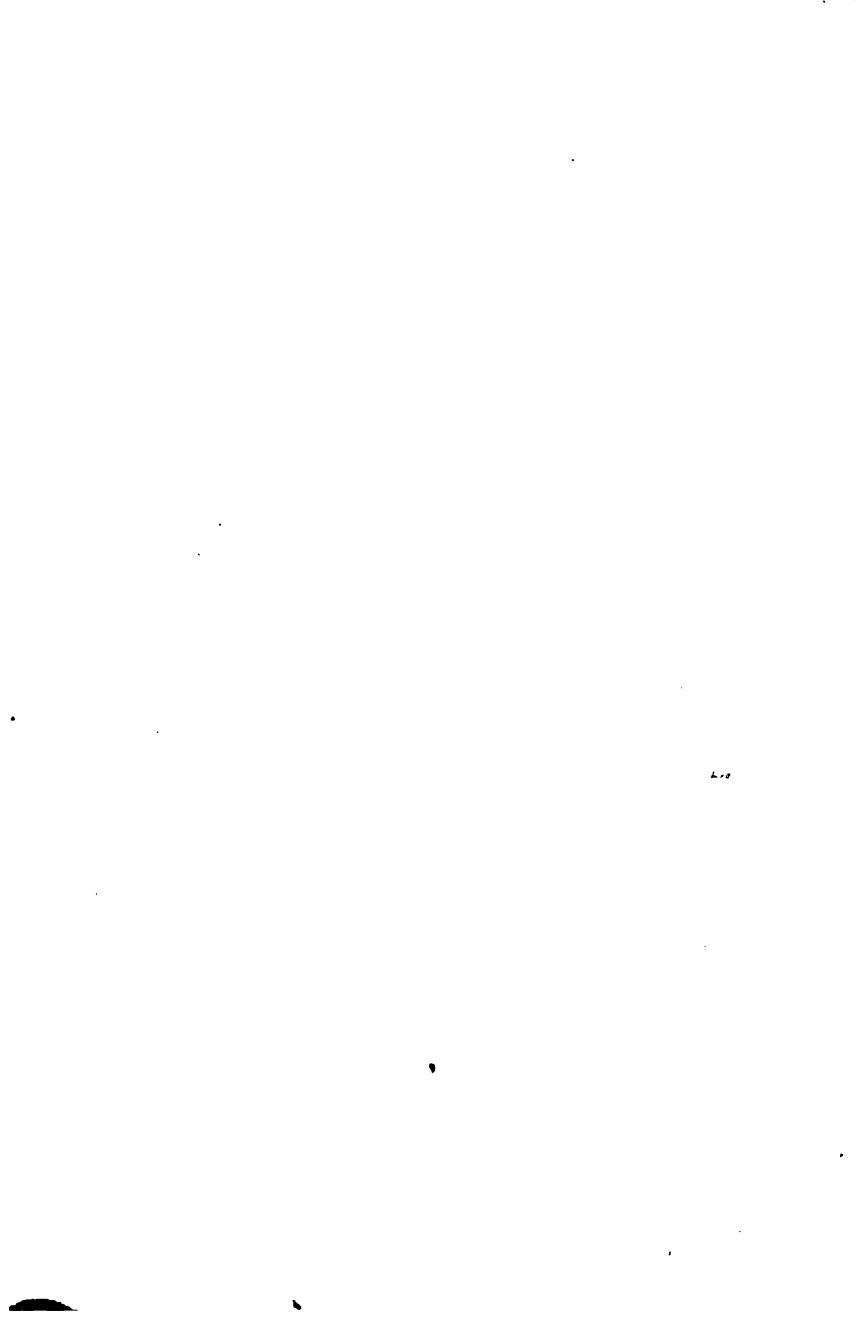
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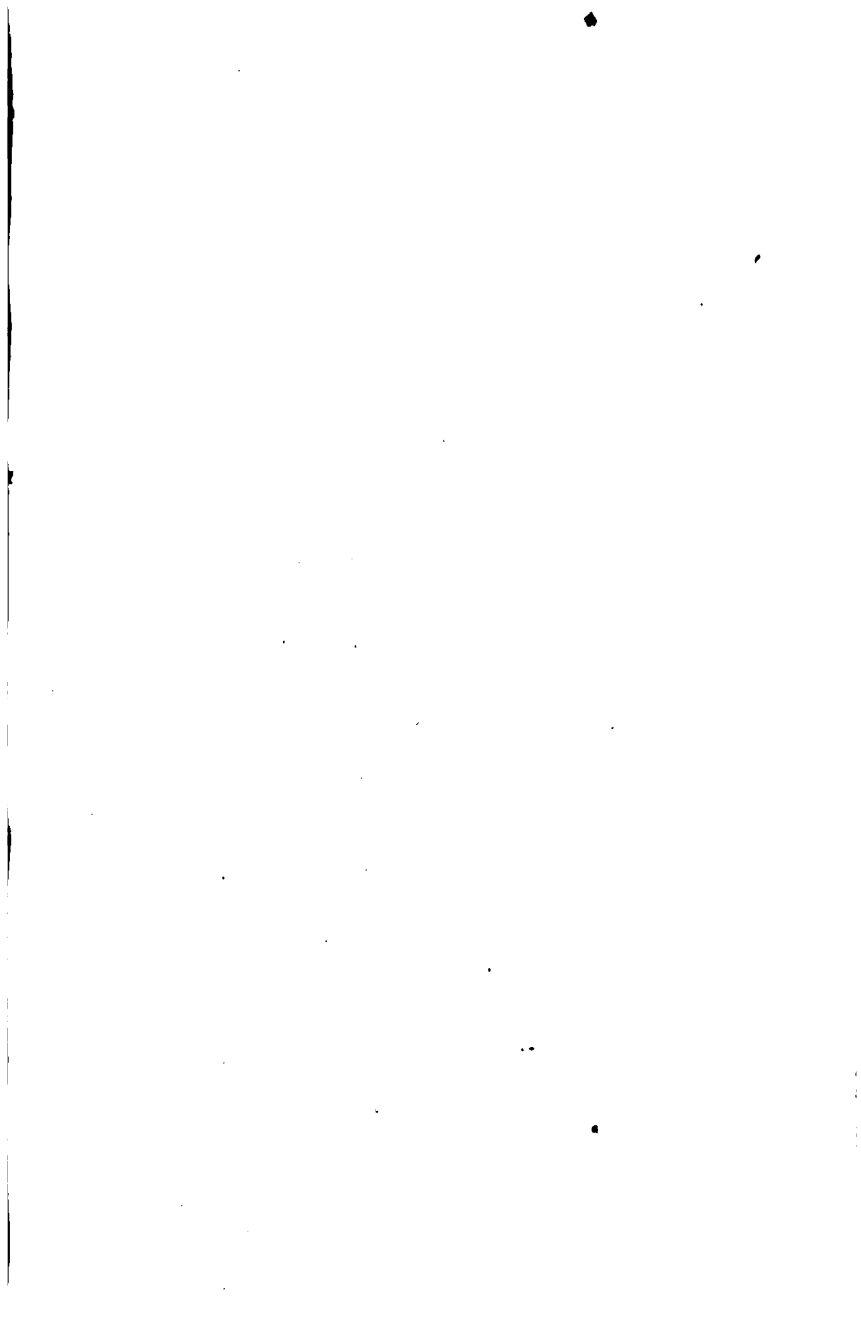
\* The materials for the following tale have been mostly taken from an anonymous work called the 古今實錄英雄美談, *Kokon-jitsuroku-eyūbidan*.

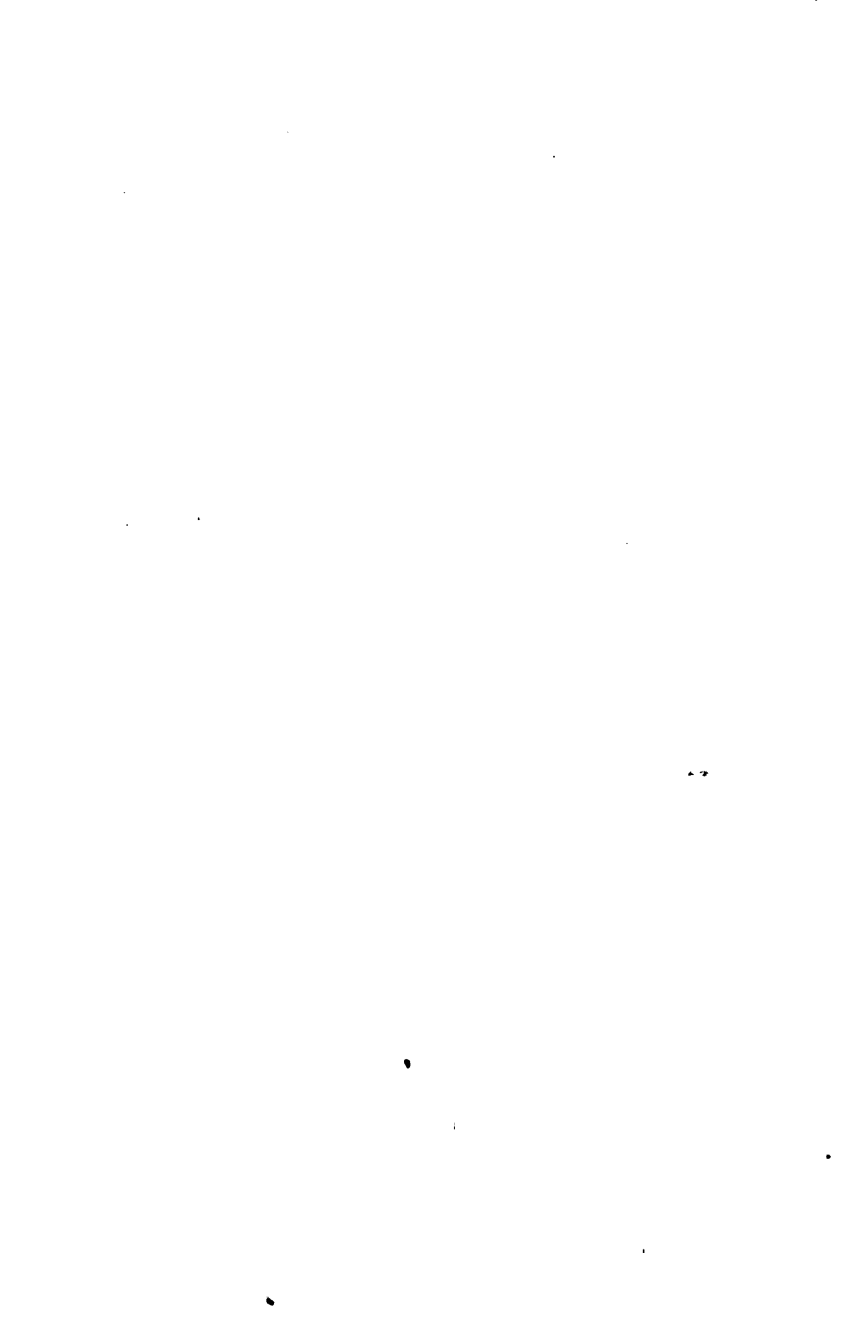
where he rented a small house for himself and his family and succeeded in making two ends meet by teaching fencing.

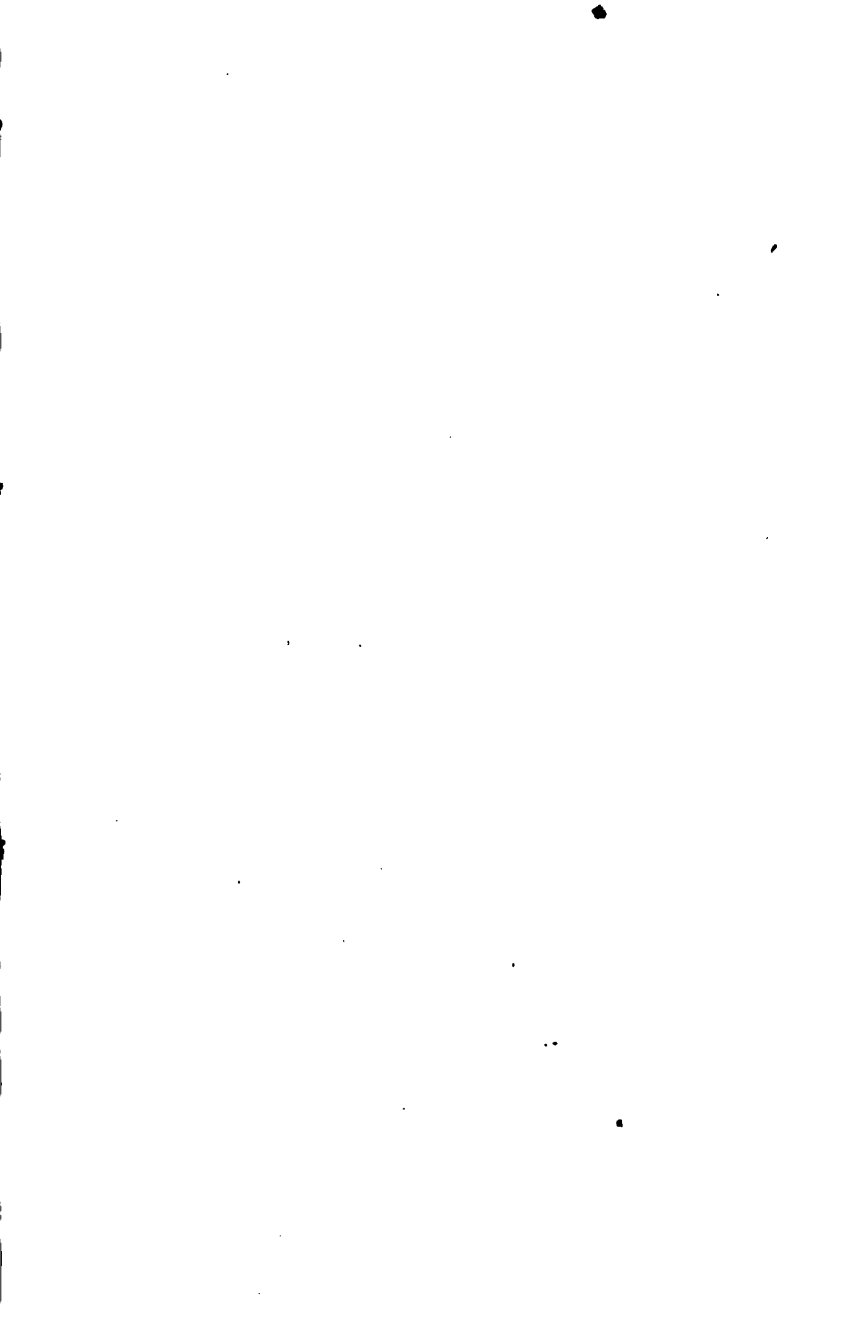
Munisai had two sons: the elder was called Seizaburō, and the younger Shichinosuke. Munisai was extremely fond of his children, regarding them as the greatest treasure he possessed. The elder boy was of a quiet, retiring disposition, which well accorded with a physical constitution that was by no means strong. The younger brother was from early days full of an almost superfluous amount of vivacity, daring and enterprising, quick in acquiring anything to which he applied himself. His father's mode of fencing early engaged his attention, and the readiness with which he imitated it astonished his neighbours and acquaintances.

At the age of twelve Shichinosuke found himself endowed with the intelligence of a man of twenty, and the bodily strength of a youth of seventeen or eighteen years of age. This led to his gradually becoming impressed with the idea that his equal was not to be found in Shimmi, even if elsewhere. Invariably coming off victorious, he eagerly sought for combatants among the young men of the village, with whom he fought or fenced as the case might be. Nothing delighted him more than to find himself pitted against a lad twice his own size. Though











so pugilistic, of the bullying spirit he had none; the weak he was always ready to help. Many a lad had to thank him for a speedy deliverance from his persecutor.

But this consciousness of superiority to others—this love of self-assertion in one so young led to self-will, conceit, and a total disregard of the rights of others. Complaints reached Munisai's ears from all quarters from men whose property or persons had been injured by Shichinosuke. Munisai was no indulgent parent. He had observed with natural pride numerous signs of his son's high endowments. The ability and courage which Shichinosuke had displayed on all occasions delighted no one so much as his parent. But at the same time Munisai saw very clearly that unless the lad was taught how to practise self-control, he would grow up worthless, if indeed, in those days of danger to human life, his career were not cut short by the sword of some expert fencer. Munisai repeatedly reproved Shichinosuke for his misbehaviour; but nothing that he said made the slightest impression on his wayward son. So he determined to try whether he could not frighten him into obedience.

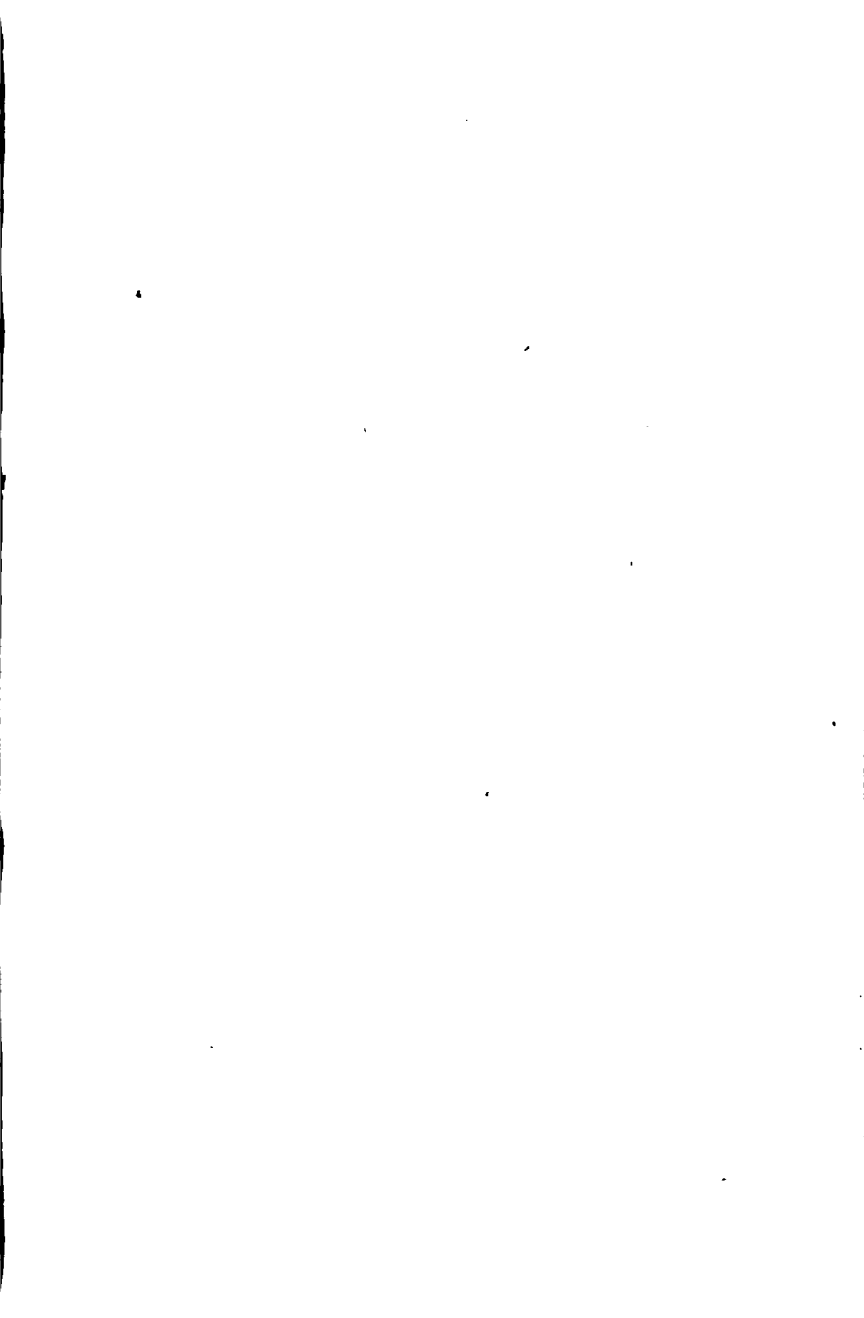
Accordingly, one day, when Shichinosuke was at home, Munisai went out into his court-yard and commenced to throw dirks at a target. Munisai was extremely proficient in this art; but, with the object of exciting

Shichinosuke's ridicule, he purposely missed the target several times. Shichinosuke, seeing this, laughed aloud. Whereupon Munisai turned round and said:—"You abominable young scoundrel! How dare you laugh at your parent? Let me hear that again, and see whether I will not cut you in two pieces."

Without the slightest sign of fear, Shichinosuke replied:—"Though you are my parent, you surely don't think that I can help laughing at a thing of this kind. Were you not close to the target and yet missed it? Is not that enough to make any one laugh?" Here he burst out laughing again.

In an instant, Munisai's sword was drawn and, rushing at Shichinosuke, he made a fierce cut at him. The latter, as quick as lightning, dodged behind his father and avoided the blow. Round and round the yard ran the lad, swiftly followed by his father. Adroitly Shichinosuke avoided stroke after stroke. This made the father appear to be more angry still and led to his doing his utmost to intercept the lad's flight. Having succeeded in bringing his sword down within a few inches of Shichinosuke's head, the lad thought it was high time to make his escape; so he leapt over the fence and fled as fast as his legs would carry him.





Not far from Himeji there is a village called Nomura. In this village there was at the time of which I write a temple called the Kōshōji. The priest of this temple was the brother of Munisai's wife. Shichinosuke was in the habit of frequently visiting his uncle, so, being afraid to confront his father after what had occurred, he hastened to Kōshōji. He reached the temple in a great state of agitation: and his uncle, seeing this, asked:—"What is the matter? What makes you so flurried?"

Wiping the perspiration from his forehead as he spoke, Shichinosuke related all that had happened, and added:—"I have often heard people talk of my father's superior swordsmanship, but I had no idea he was so formidable. I am afraid to go into his presence again until he has forgiven me. Please go and ask him to pardon me."

"Do you mean to say that you have been all this time finding out that your father's swordsmanship is not to be matched anywhere?" asked the priest. "This is just your way of going on—as full of conceit as possible—with no respect whatever for your superiors! Munisai is at once your father and your teacher. The kindness with which he treats you is deeper than the sea and higher than Shumisen.\* And yet—scamp that you are! you

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\* 須彌山, the Sanscrit Sumaru, a fabulous mountain of great height forming the axis of every universe and composed of gold, silver and other precious substances.

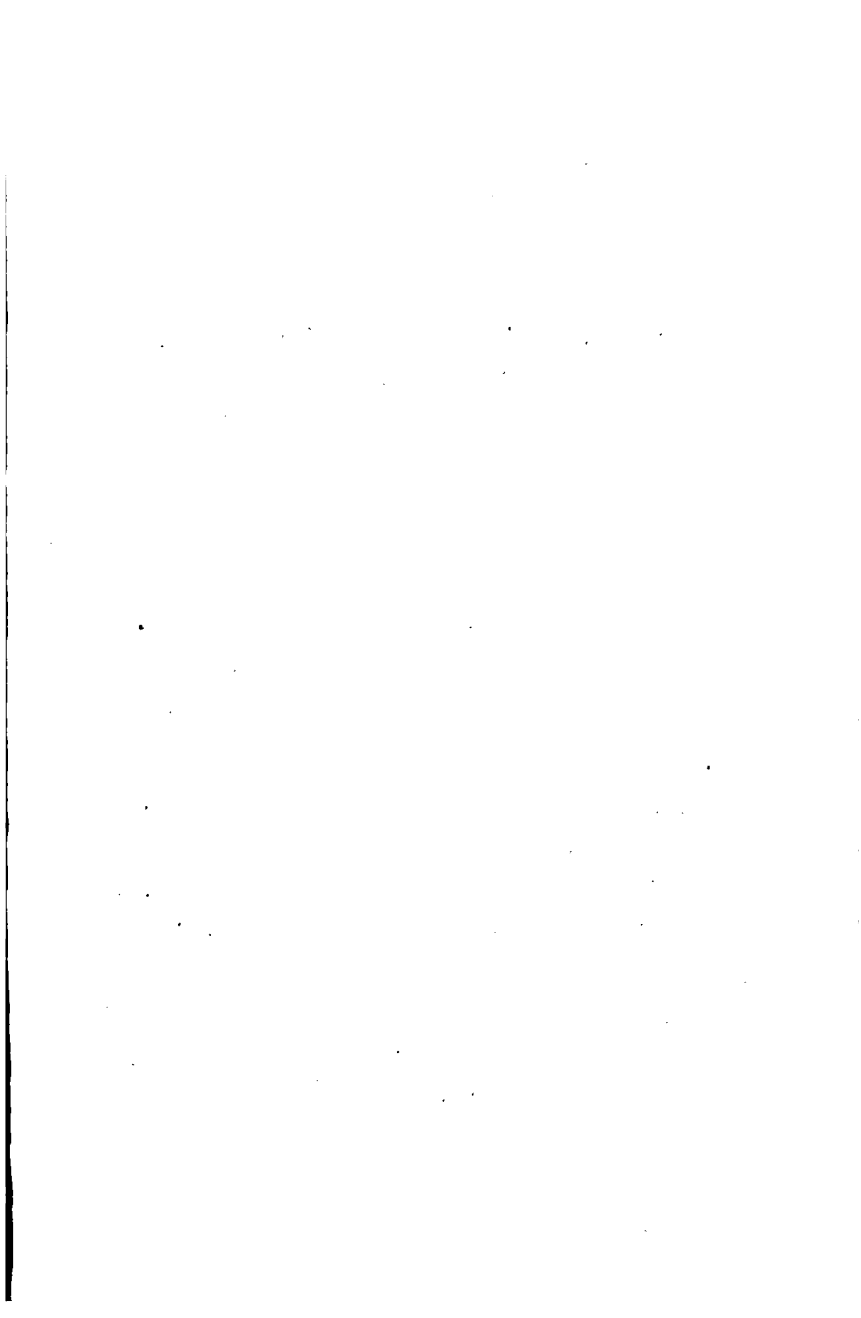
despise this paternal affection. I go and plead for you!—what am I to say?” Then, after a pause, he continued:—“Well, well! as you are my nephew I will do what I can for you, but the chances are against my succeeding.”

Quickly the good old man wended his way to the village of Shimmi, for, to tell the truth, despite Shichinosuke's self-will and conceit, he was a great favourite of his uncle's. The numerous noble traits of the lad's character more than outweighing the imperfections to which I have alluded, the priest felt deeply interested in him.

“Shichinosuke has behaved in an outrageously impolite manner to you, I hear,” commenced the priest to Munisai; “and I have no doubt you find it hard to pass over his offence. But since he is your own child, may I venture to ask you to pardon him this time? He has been very much frightened by what has occurred and is afraid to confront you unforgiven.

“I knew,” replied Munisai, “that he would come to you, and therefore did not trouble about him. I am much obliged to you for your kindness to him. Though no doubt I look on him with a father's eye, yet it seems to me that Shichinosuke is no ordinary lad, and that if he lives to grow up he will make a name for himself some day. But lately I have noticed that he has been getting







more and more puffed up with conceit. He has no respect whatever for the opinions or feelings of other people. Vanity of this kind leads to remissness in duty, to the neglect of rules of etiquette, to all kinds of evil. I have repeatedly reproved him for his arrogance, but to no purpose; so I think it best that he should be banished from the house for a while. To act in this way may seem to you to proceed from want of parental affection; but in truth it is not so. It has more real affection in it than a less indulgent course could possibly have. Shichinosuke pays little attention to his books, I am sorry to say. As you know very well, learning and war are like the two wheels of a chariot: by means of these man makes progress. If one of them is lacking, the other becomes useless. I think that it is possible that you may be able to induce him to study. Do me the favour of allowing him to remain at the temple until you think he is thoroughly reformed. If you will thus oblige me I shall feel grateful to you for life."

To this the priest agreed. Returning to the temple, he informed Shichinosuke that his father was far too angry to receive him into his house, and that therefore there was nothing for it but for him to stay where he was; and that, as of course his remaining there idle was out of the question, he should expect him to apply himself

to books in right earnest. This Shichinosuke promised to do.

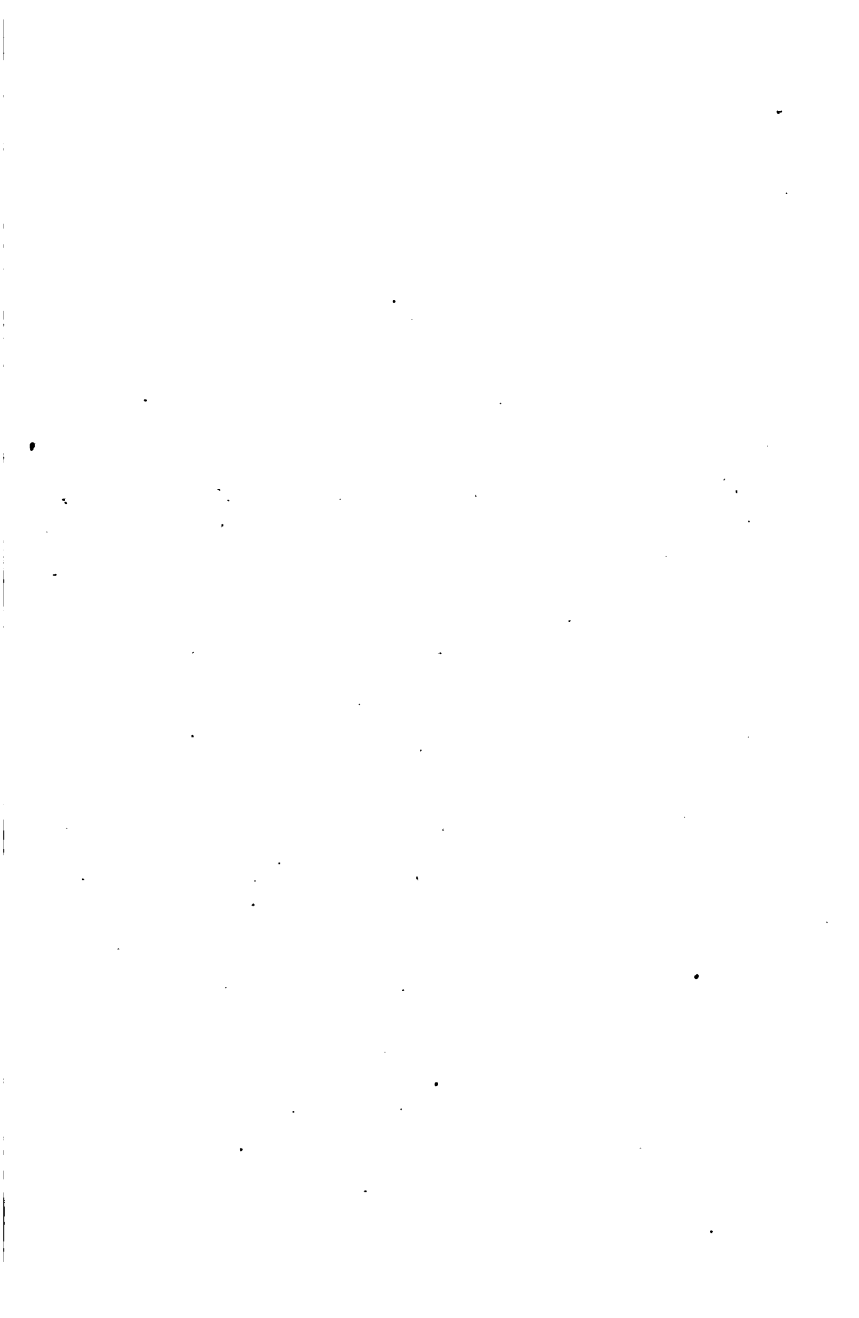
There was at this time in Himeji a renowned fencing-master, who boasted of the name of Arima Kiheiji Ichiyōken Nobukata.\* Nobukata taught a style of fencing known as the *Arima-ryū*. He had in accordance with the custom of those days spent years in traversing the country in order to perfect his style, and on the termination of his wandering had settled down in Himeji, where he had opened a fencing-school which was attended by some three hundred pupils, the elite of the neighbourhood being included among them. His popularity as a fencing-master is said to have been unprecedented in Himeji. Outside his door stood a notice painted in gold letters which stated that he was the originator of a style of fencing the like of which had not been known since the creation of the world.

One day, when sent on an errand by the priest, Shichinosuke happened to pass Nobukata's house, and this notice caught his eye. "What cheek!" exclaimed the lad. "One would think to see this notice that Nobukata was the only fencer in existence. I have heard my father say that the men who have originated styles of fencing

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\* This multiplication of names in many cases indicates pomposity.





are innumerable ; and yet this man tries to make out that the style which he has invented is superior to everything else in the fencing line. It is rightly said that it is people's vanity that is the cause of their destruction. I will act in Heaven's stead and punish this man for his presumptuous folly."

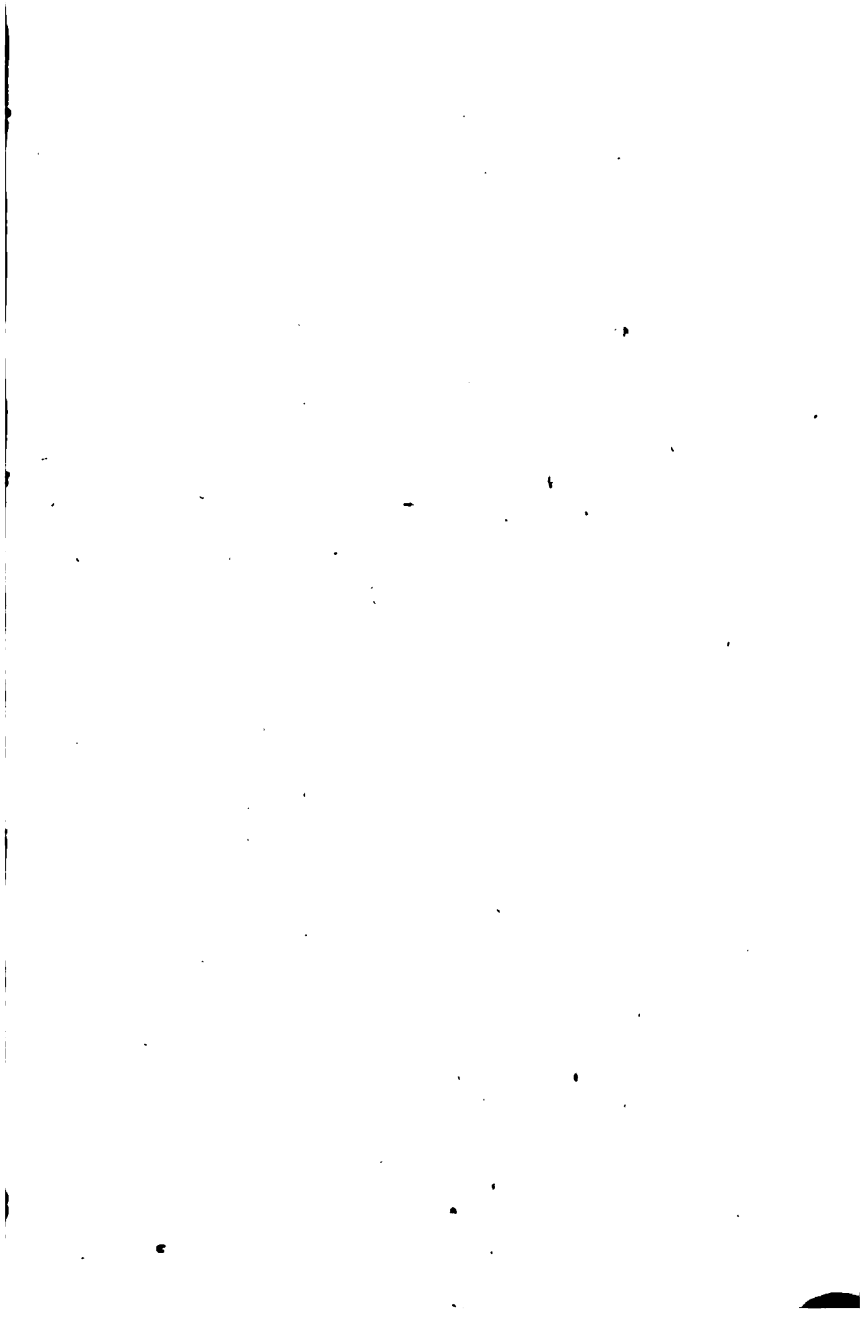
So saying, Shichinosuke took his pen from the case in which it was carried and, mounting the water-tub which stood near the gate, wrote the words:—"The frog in the well knows nothing of the great sea,"\* and by the side of it added:—"This was written by Yoshioka Shichinosuke, of the Kōshōji, Nomura."

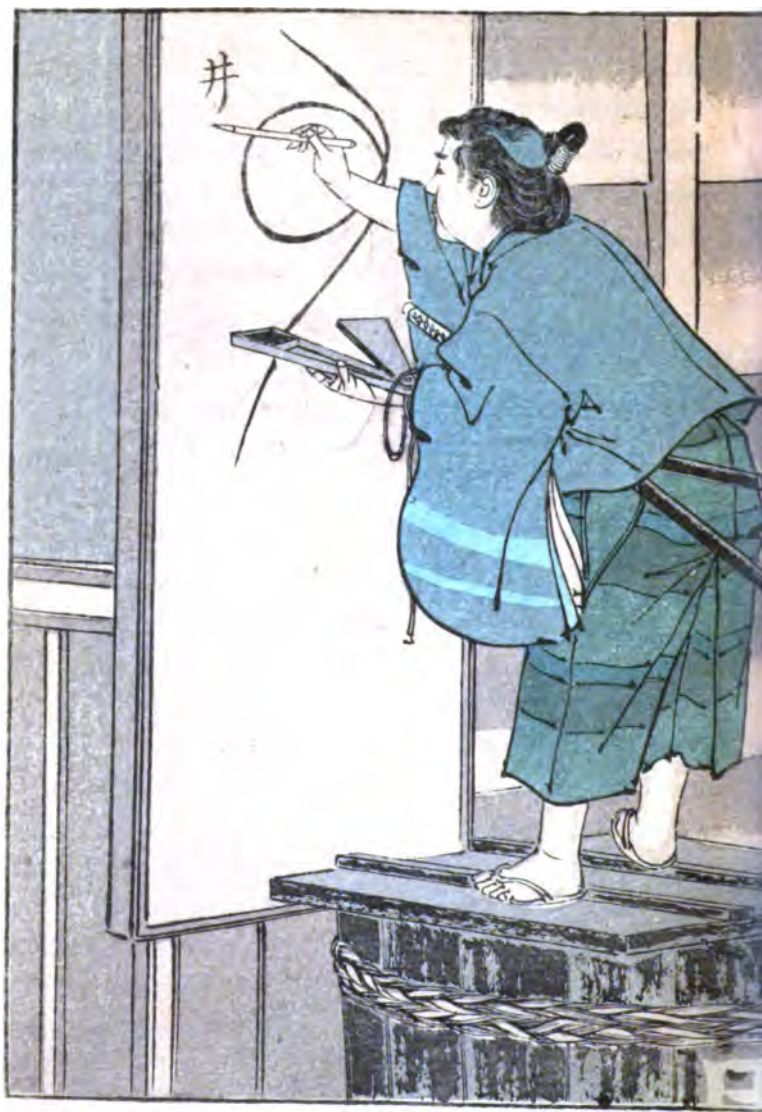
Nobukata was giving his lessons as usual when his attention was attracted by a great hubbub at the gate. Something was evidently amiss. What could it be? He sent one of his pupils to see.

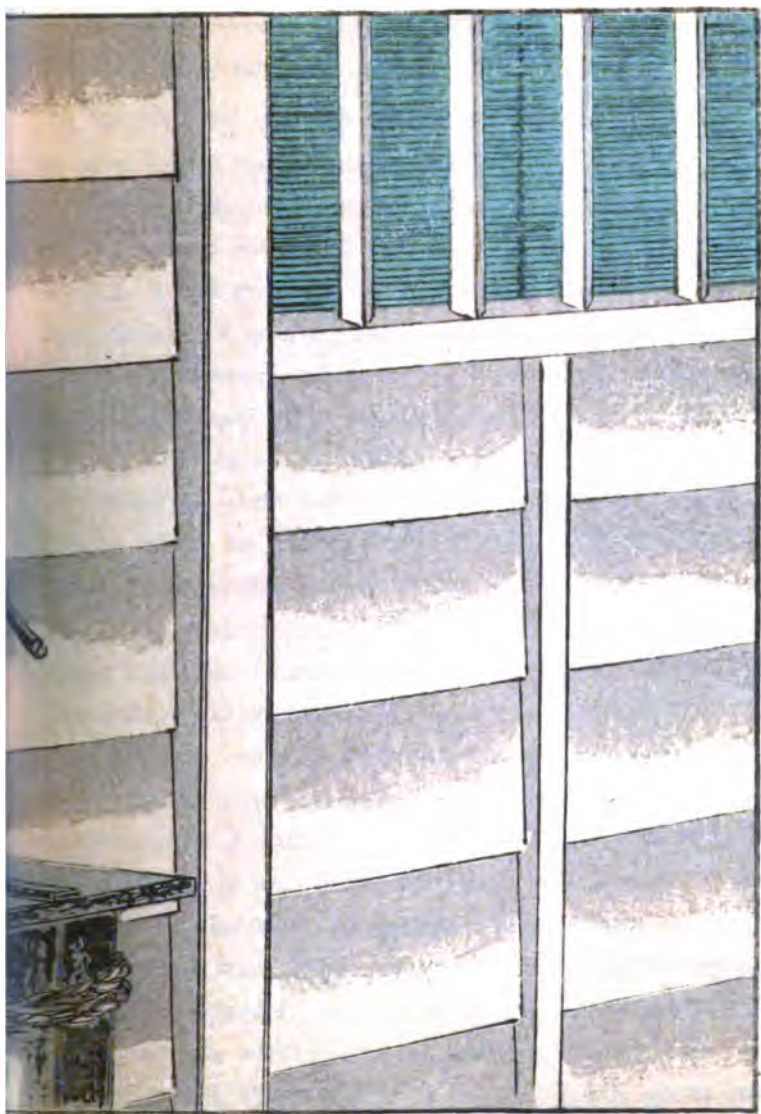
On hearing what had occurred, the fencer grew livid with rage. "The work of some abominable scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "He that defaces my sign-board is as though he defaced me. A reproach cast on the fencing that I teach! an insult to Arima the like of which never was!—Anyhow, we will see who is the better man,—and that with real swords too! So go, one of you and, laying hold of that scoundrel Shichinosuke by the hair of the head, drag him to this place."

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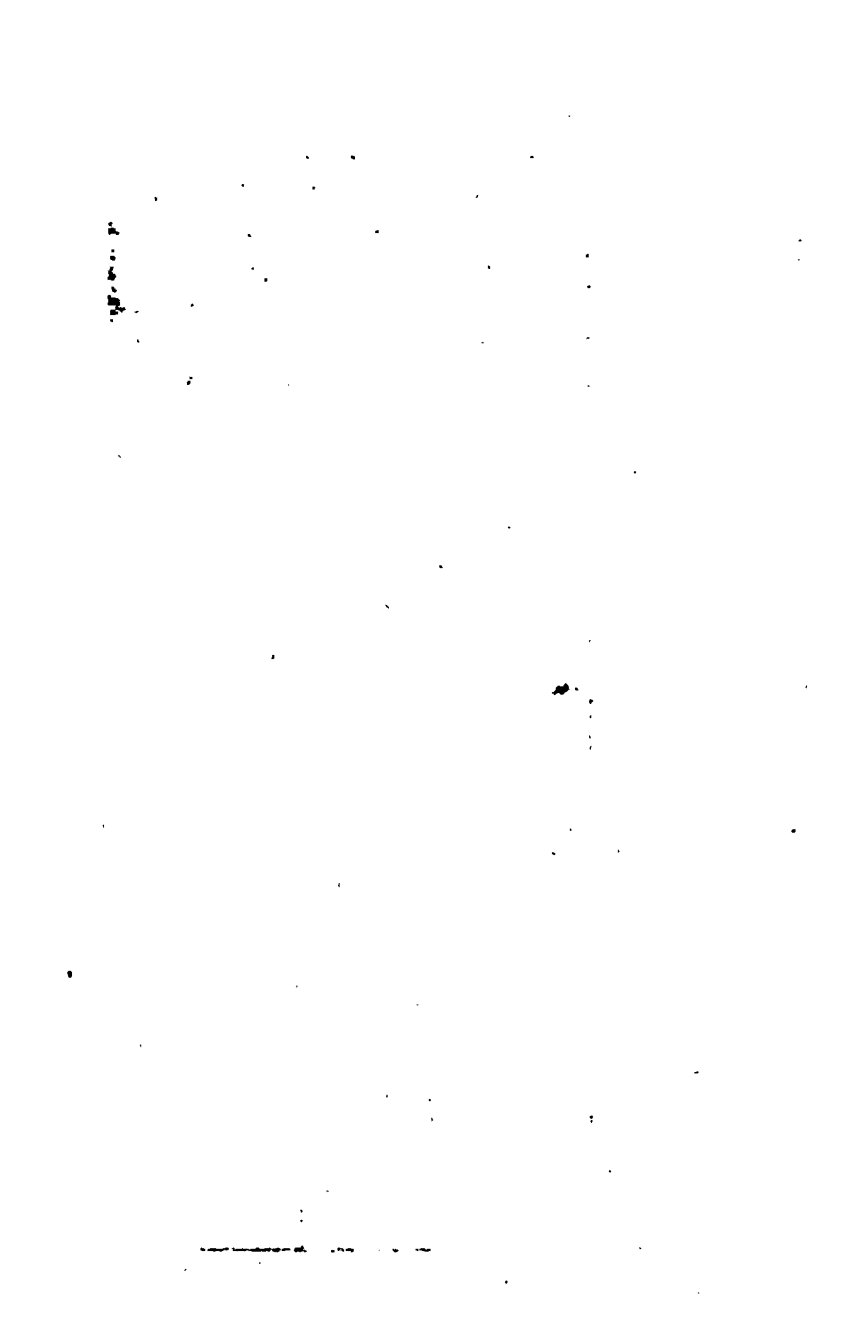
\* *I no kawaru daikai wo shirasu.*











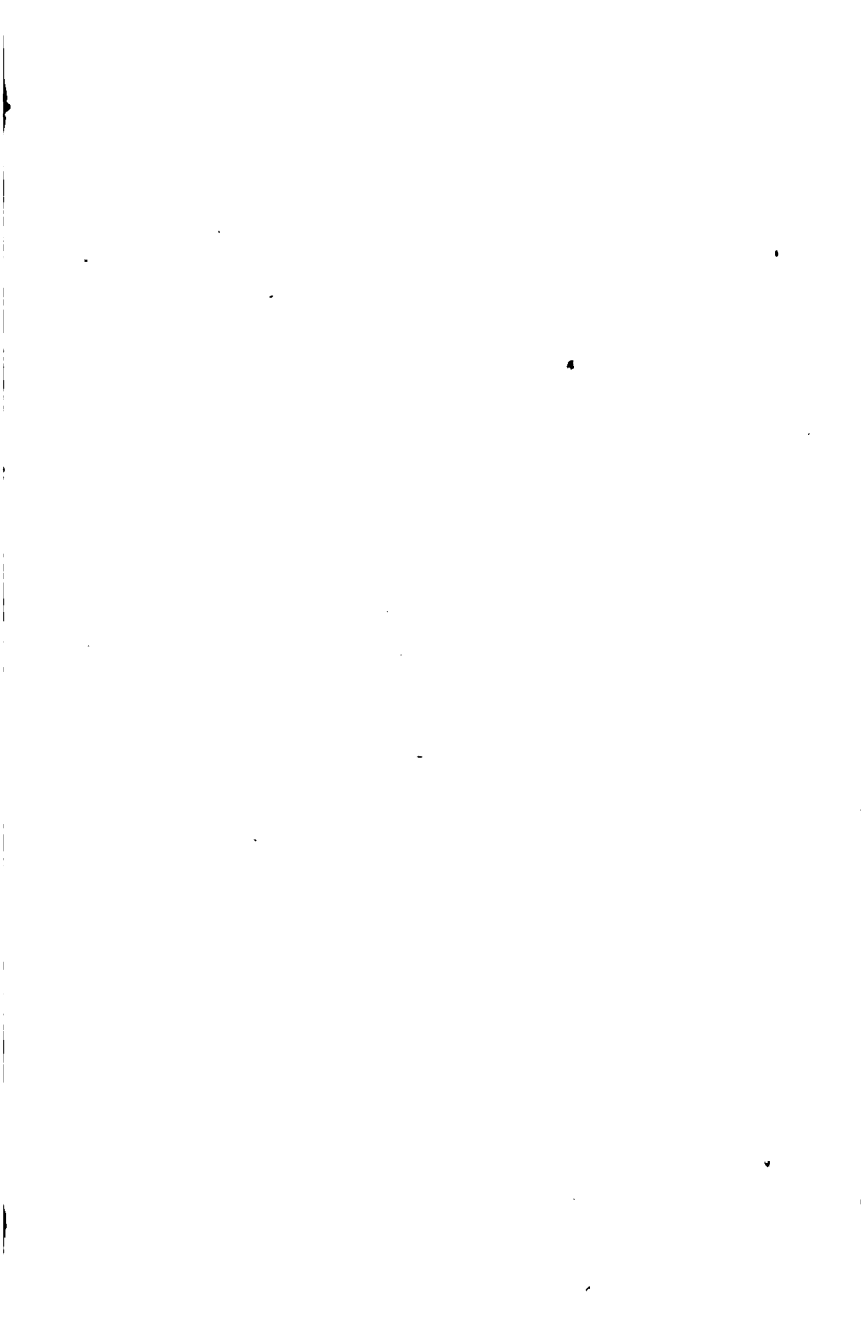
One of Nobukata's disciples immediately set out for the temple, and demanded of the priest that Shichinosuke be sent to his master without delay.

The priest, on hearing what had occurred, was frightened out of his wits, and replied:—"I cannot decide this myself; I will go and see Shichinosuke about it. He has been unwell of late, so that what can be the meaning of this freak of his I cannot tell. He must be slightly demented I should say. Anyhow I will see him about it and let you know the result."

"What on earth have you been doing now?" exclaimed the priest to his nephew. "Do you know that you have provoked the fencing-master to send a man here to insist on your fighting with him with a real sword? What could have induced you to act in this way? Are you aware that you have put your life in danger?"

"Please, uncle, not to trouble yourself about this matter in any way," replied the lad quite calmly. "This fellow Arima Nobukata is a man who seems unaware of the existence of any one in the world but himself. It was because he placed an outrageous notice outside his gate that I wrote what I did. It was done by way of reproof, and not as mischief. And now for the fellow to say he wishes to see which of us is the better man with real swords!—well, this is a joke! Anyhow I will go at once





and cross swords with him: so don't trouble yourself any more about it, uncle."

"An audacious young scamp, indeed!" replied the priest. "It is hopeless to expect to do anything with such a one as you: just stay where you are, will you. I will set the matter to rights."

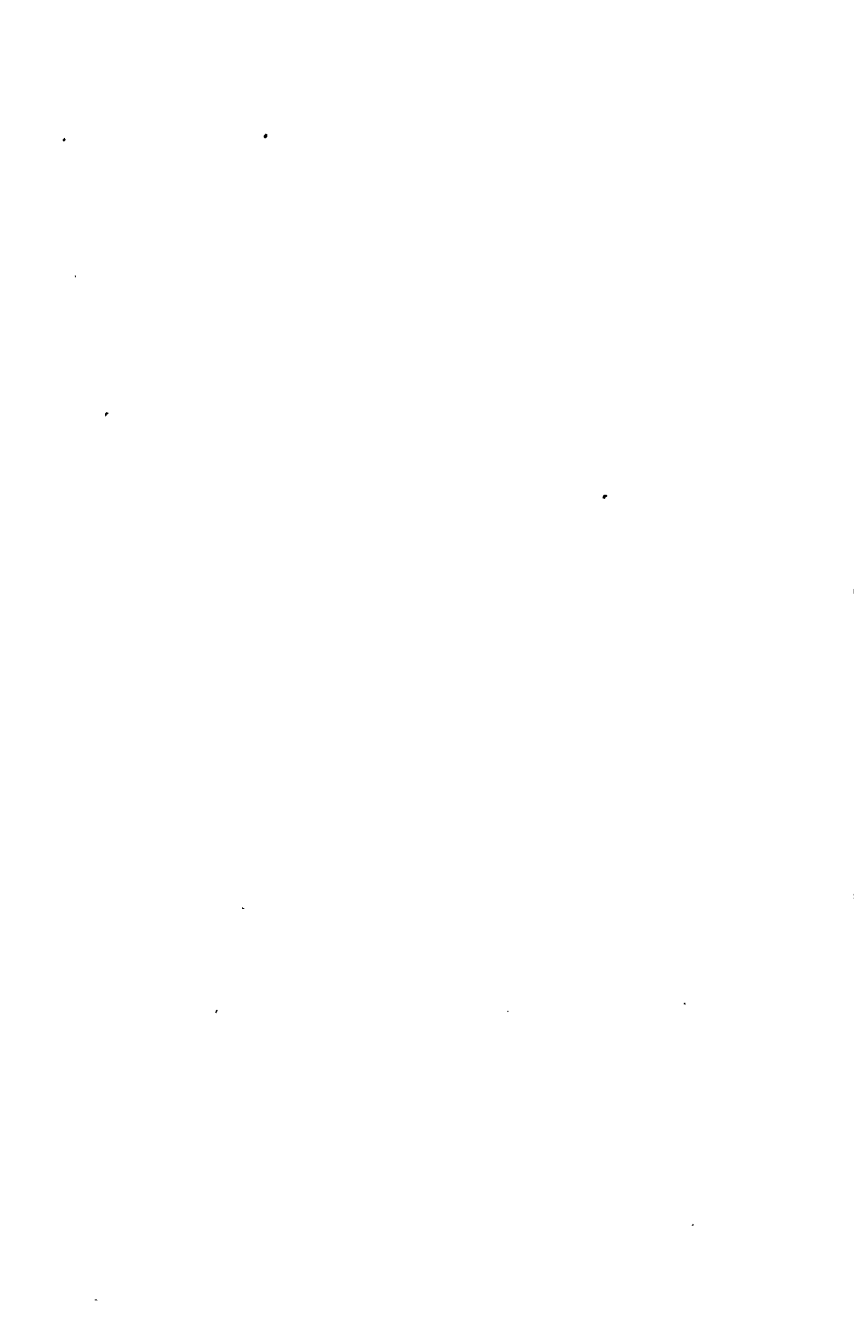
The priest went out to Nobukata's messenger and said:—"Really, sir, I find that your master's august wrath has not been uncalled for. The mischief that has been perpetrated is absolutely outrageous. This Shichinosuke, I must tell you, sir, is my nephew. I have no reason to be proud of him, as you may imagine. He is only a lad of twelve. I have noticed that of late he has been growing very arrogant, and I have observed too that he gives way to fits of passion every now and again. I have not allowed him to leave the temple for some days. But yesterday I sent him on a little errand to Himeji; and this is the result. I beg, sir, that you will be good enough to offer my humble apologies to your master, and ask him to pardon this boy's misbehaviour."

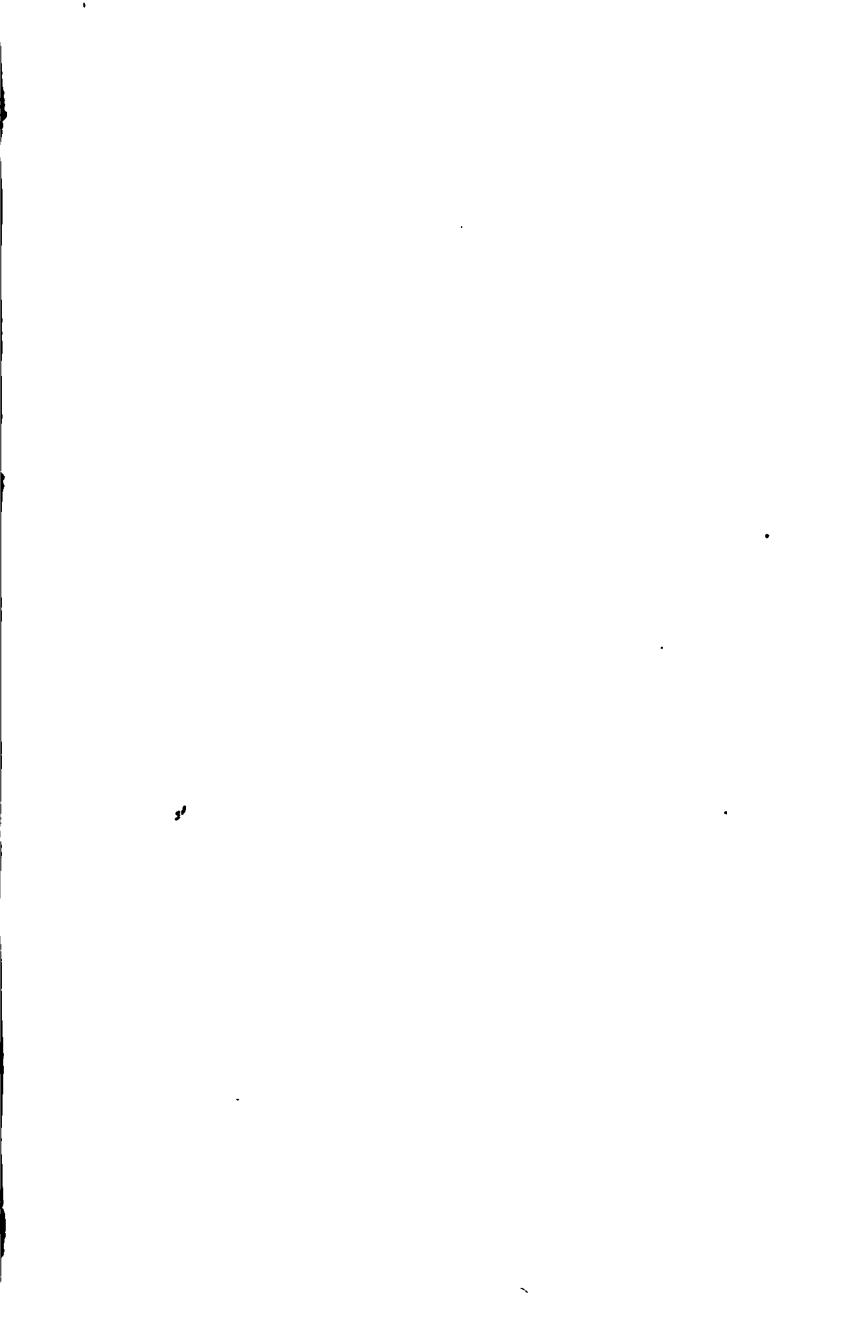
"I thought," replied the messenger, "that the person who was audacious enough to scribble on my master's notice-board was probably some noted fencer, but when you tell me that it was the work of a child who is ill and given to fits of passion, why, then there is no reason for

my master's taking any further notice of the matter. But as I have no power to settle anything without consulting him, I will return and tell him what you say and let you know the result."

Nobukata, after hearing the report of the messenger, remarked:—"I thought that it was something of this kind. But had I done nothing to discover who the culprit was, of course it would have been said that I was afraid to encounter the man who had insulted me. It being a boy that has defaced my notice-board, to fight with him would be unmanly and undignified. Yet something must be done to wipe off the seeming disgrace which the disfigurement of the notice-board involves. Who knows but ourselves that it is a child who has committed this offence?"

Here Nobukata put his head on one side as though in deep thought, and, after a moment, addressing the messenger who had come from Nomura, said:—"I am sorry to trouble you so much, but just go again to the priest and say that, in accordance with his request, I will not enforce Shichinosuke's fighting with me, but that, as the lad is evidently very ignorant of manners, he is to bring him to-morrow at twelve o'clock to the pine-plantation on the outskirts of the town, where I will meet and instruct him."







On the messenger's reporting this to the priest, the latter replied :—" I am extremely grateful for this kindness. And that your master should not only be good enough to overlook Shichinosuke's offence, but should condescend to instruct him as well—this is beyond all my expectations. Thank you very much for your trouble in coming a second time. He shall be at the appointed place to-morrow at noon."

Nobukata was interested in making this as public as possible. So he had notices placed in different parts of the town, which stated that on the following day at noon Arima Kiheiji would impart instruction to Shichinosuke of Nomura, and that listeners would be welcome.

The next day Nobukata, having arrayed himself in his best clothes, a little before twelve entered his palanquin and, attended by some fifty of his pupils made his way to the pine-plantation on the outskirts of the town, and on arrival pompously seated himself in a chair that had been prepared for him in the midst of the assembled multitudes.

Punctual to time, the priest of Kōshōji shortly after arrived, with his rosary in his hand, and Shichinosuke walking by his side.

The priest approached Nobukata and, bowing, said :—" As you see, sir, Shichinosuke is but a lad. He is very

ignorant ; I hope you will be good enough to instruct him."

Nobukata did not rise from his seat, and condescended to do no more than show by a slight movement of his eyes that he was aware that the priest was addressing him. Treating the priest with cold indifference, he turned to the lad and said. "Shichinosuke, come here!"

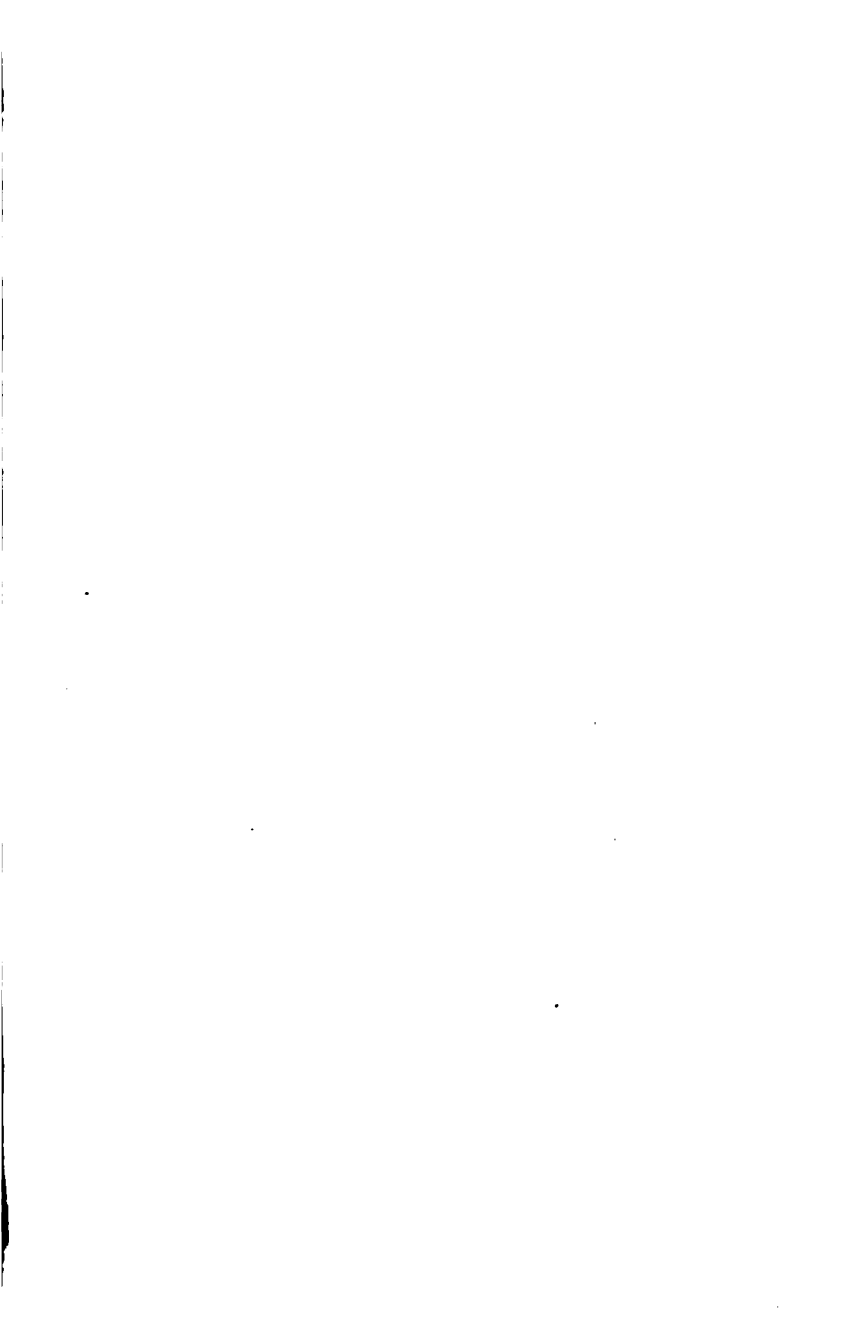
Shichinosuke advanced in a careless, slouching manner and bowed to the fencer.

"I am no other than the noted Arima Kiheiji," commenced the fencer in a pompous voice. "Your scribbling on my notice-board was an outrageous piece of mischief. Since you are only a child, I will magnanimously pardon you, but listen well to what I have to say. You have learnt a little fencing, I understand. Such a smattering knowledge as you possess, however, is in the possession of most lads of your age. You should not allow this to puff you up with conceit."

"Impudence, indeed!" thought Shichinosuke as he listened to these words. "This fellow would do well to apply to himself the advice he is so ready to give to others." But as his uncle was there, Shichinosuke did not venture to show any signs of resentment, but simply bowed assent to the fencer's remarks.

"So you assent to what I say, do you?—well, that's good. Now let's see what style of fencing you have





learnt. Come, lad, suppose I put you through your cuts and guards."

"If you specially wish it," replied Shichinosuke, "you shall see what I can do."

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when, as quick as lightning, he drew from his bosom a short fencing sword, measuring about one foot two inches, and before Kiheiji knew what was intended or had time to rise from his seat, he brought it down with tremendous force on his forehead.

"Ah!" ejaculated the fencer, and, reeling in his chair, he dropped dead on the spot.\*

The greatest commotion imaginable followed. Kiheiji's pupils were mad with rage. One of them, rushing at Shichinosuke, attempted to seize him; but in an instant the latter caught the pupil by the hair of his head and sent him flying through the air. Two others now attacked him. One of these he kicked, and tumbled head over heels; the other he struck with his fencing sword so effectually that he did not care to approach Shichinosuke again. Whereupon a number of others drawing their swords, and exclaiming to each other: "Take care what you are at! he is no mean foe," set on him pell-mell.

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\* It should be borne in mind that Kiheiji was sitting when Shichinosuke killed him. Had he been standing the lad could not possibly have reached his forehead.

Shichinosuke, nothing daunted, dashed about hither and thither, dealing blows where they were necessary, and avoiding stroke after stroke in a way that astonished spectators and assailants alike till, watching his chance, he escaped scathless, dragging his old uncle, who was half dead with fright and bewilderment, after him.

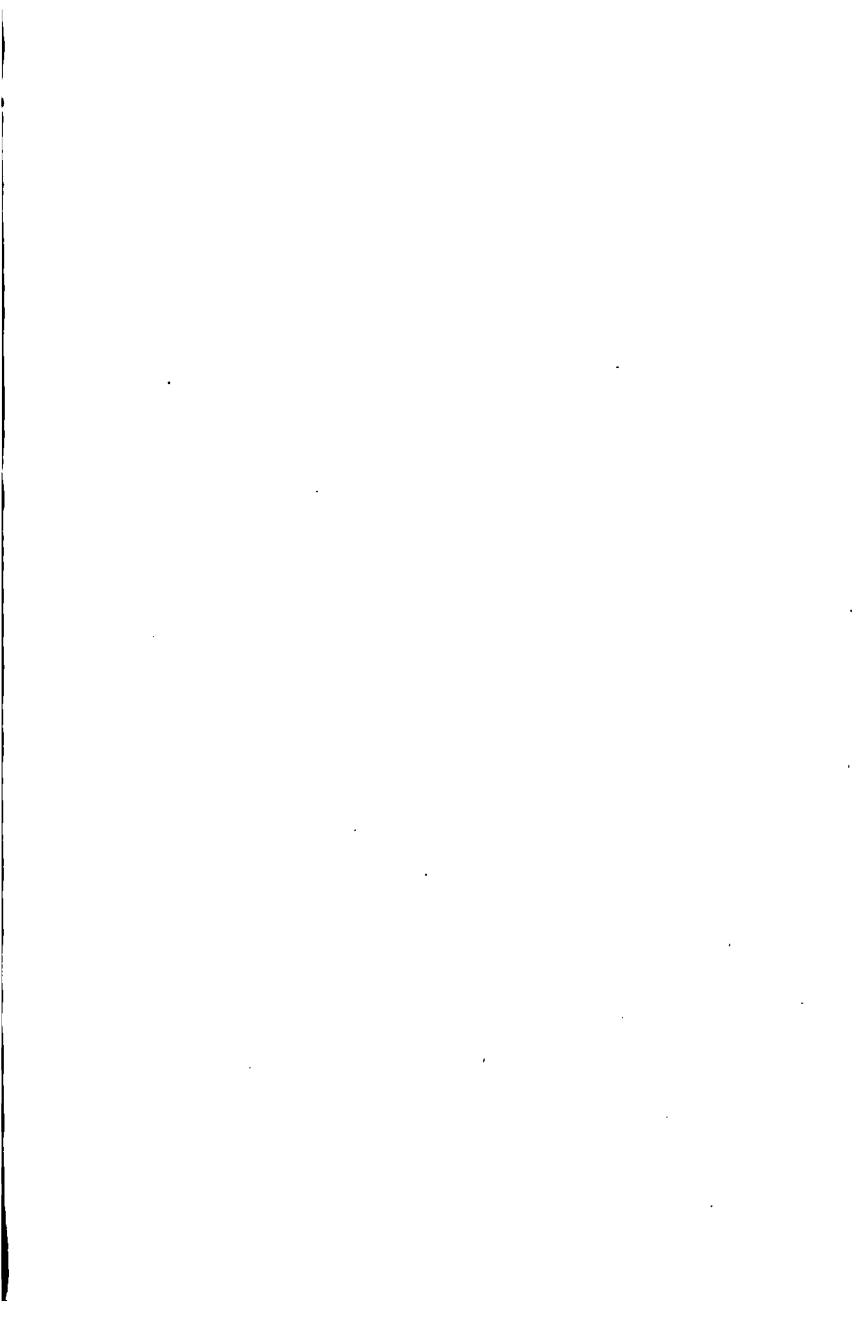
The two had not gone far before they met a troop of *samurai*. Their leader was evidently a man of some importance. Shichinosuke ran up to the troop and said:—  
“Please, Sir Knights, to take pity on us: our foes are at our heels. What becomes of me I care not, but do take compassion on this old priest.”

“We know nothing of the rights of the case,” replied the leader of the troop, “but since you appeal to us because we are *samurai*, we cannot well refuse to help you.”

Orders were given that the two refugees should be put into an empty palanquin that was being borne in their midst. Shichinosuke and his uncle had no sooner entered it than some thirty or forty of Arima's disciples came running up, and inquired of the *samurai*:—“Have you not seen a boy of some twelve or thirteen years of age with a priest pass this way?”

“No;” replied the leader of the troop, “we have seen no one of the kind. You had better search for them elsewhere.”







"It is not so;" replied one of the pursuers. "We saw them come thus far. They cannot have escaped without your observing them. They are here."

"They are in the palanquin! They are in the palanquin! Let us search the palanquin!" exclaimed one of Kiheiji's followers.

"Look into a palanquin that I am guarding without my leave!—a piece of rudeness such as this I will never allow," replied the leader of the troops. "I am no other than Miyamoto Buzaemon, the retainer of Katō Kiyomasa, the Lord of Higo. I will not allow any one to point a finger even at a palanquin that I am guarding, much less look into it." Thus saying, Buzaemon seized his spear and stood ready to run any one through that approached, and then said: "Look into the palanquin, as many of you as please!—Come on!—don't be shy!"

As Buzaemon stood thus, he looked as fierce as the *Ni-ō* that stand at the entrance of the Buddhist temples; \* or like the Chinese Chōhi when he stood on the bridge of Chōhan and withstood the Gi army.

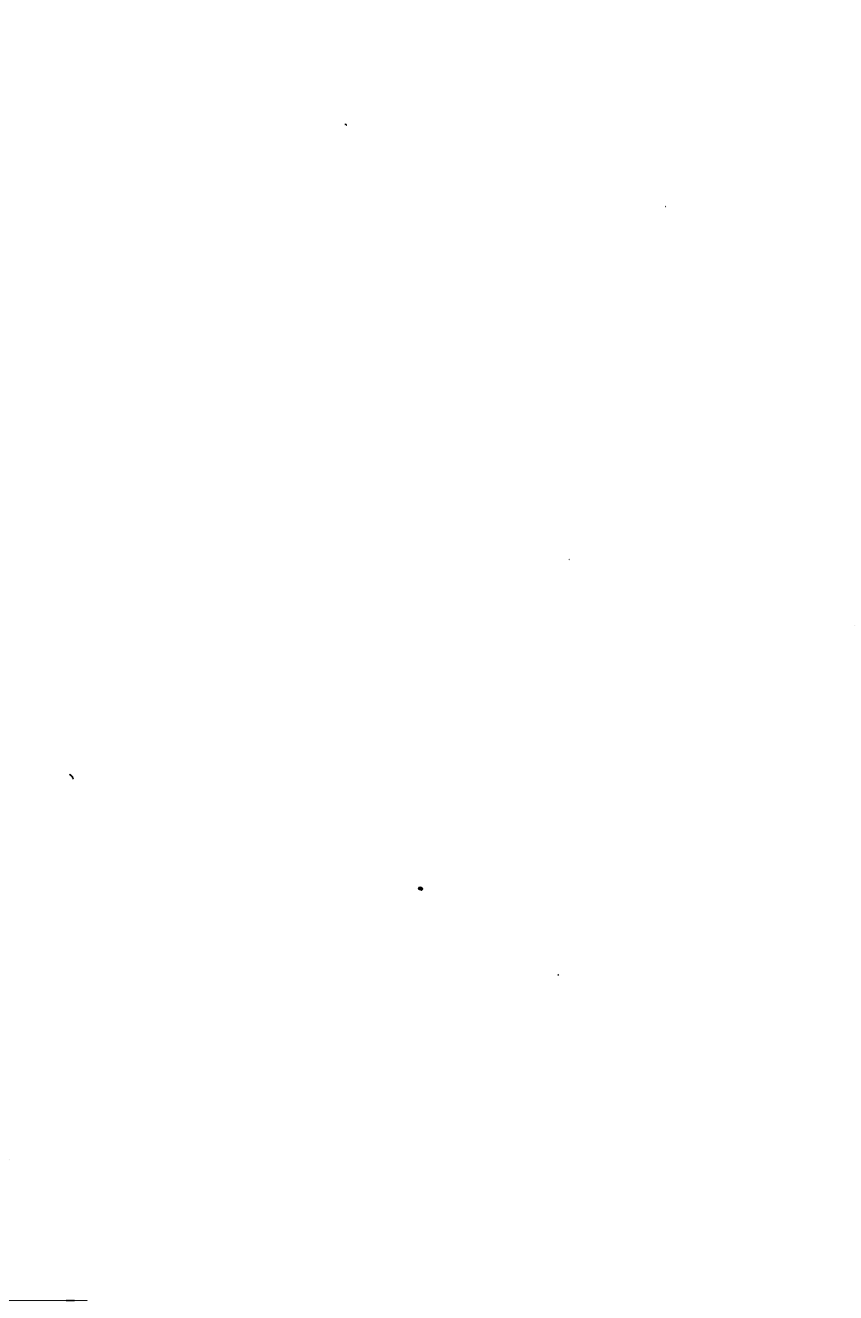
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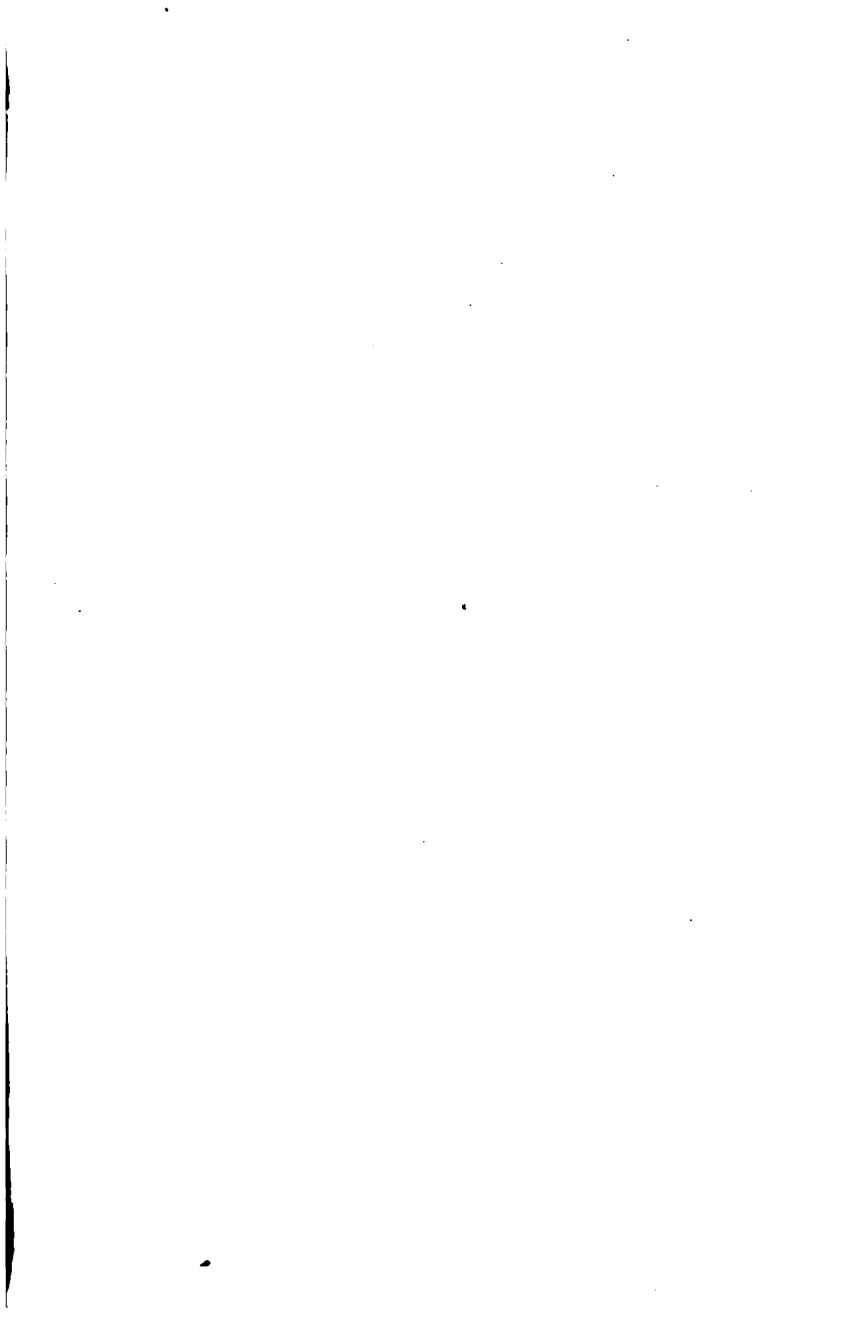
\* The *Ni-ō* [二王] are the two Deva Kings; two gigantic figures, one red, and with an open mouth, representing the *Yō*, or male principle, of Chinese philosophy; the other green, and with compressed lips, representing the *in*, or female principle. They are emblems of strength. Small printed *Ni-ō* are often pasted on door-posts to protect houses from burglars.

Kiheiji's disciples were overawed when they heard Kiyomasa's name and saw how formidable a foe they would have to contend with in his follower; and so, though they knew that such was not the case, they said:—"We have no doubt made a mistake; we will search for them elsewhere," and immediately went away.

Buzaemon smiled and ordered his men to proceed. When they had gone about five miles from the place where this incident occurred, he stopped the cavalcade and had the refugees brought before him. He had been struck by the magnanimous way in which Shichinosuke had pleaded for protection for the priest while professing himself careless as to his own fate. And now when he looked at Shichinosuke more narrowly and perceived that he was but a child, he was still more impressed by the courage and generosity which he had displayed.

The priest thanked his benefactor in a most polite manner. "You rescued us 'sir' at a time when we despaired of life," said the priest. "Your kindness is more than we can possibly repay." He then proceeded to relate the history of the whole affair described above. At the close of the story Buzaemon, turning to Shichinosuke, said:—"I admire immensely the pluck you have shown to-day. Whose son are you?"





On Shichinosuke's giving his father's name, Buzaemon looked very pleased and replied:—"Why, your father and I then served together under Ashikaga. At that time he and I were bosom friends, our relation to each other being very much like that of fish and water.\* Since the Shōgun's fall I have lost sight of your father. I *am* glad to know that he is still alive. I will accompany you to his house."

"I am not allowed to go to my father's house, sir," replied Shichinosuke. "I am under punishment."

"Why?—what has happened?" asked Buzaemon.

The priest now came forward and gave the reason for Shichinosuke's banishment from his father's house. After which, Buzaemon, addressing the priest, said:—"I have a matter about which I wish to speak to you: we will go to your temple together."

On their arrival at Kōshōji, Buzaemon remarked:—"Shichinosuke has killed Kiheiji and several of his pupils.† Of course their companions and friends will come here to avenge their death. So what I advise is, that you dispose of your goods and chattels and leave this place at once. I will take the lad back to his father and make arrangements for secreting him somewhere."

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\* Intending to convey the meaning of close interdependence.

† This is the first mention of the fact that in the scuffle which followed Kiheiji's assassination several of his pupils were killed.

To this the priest agreed, and forthwith, assuming the garb of a mendicant friar, and not forgetting to take his lute, an instrument on which he played with great skill, so much so that subsequently he was known as the Lute-devotee,\* he set out on his journey.

Buzaemon, under the guidance of Shichinosuke, made his way to Munisai's house. Munisai had heard that his son had been guilty of defacing Nobukata's sign-board, and had anticipated that the priest of Kōshōji was on this account greatly troubled, and was sorry enough that he undertook the charge of so wild a lad as Shichinosuke. Just as he was wondering how the affair had ended, Buzaemon reached his door. Seizaburō went to the door.

"Is this the house of Mr. Yoshioka Munisai?" asked Buzaemon.

"It is;" replied Seizaburō. "Who may the gentleman be that I have the honour of addressing? My father is at home to-day, sir: please walk in."

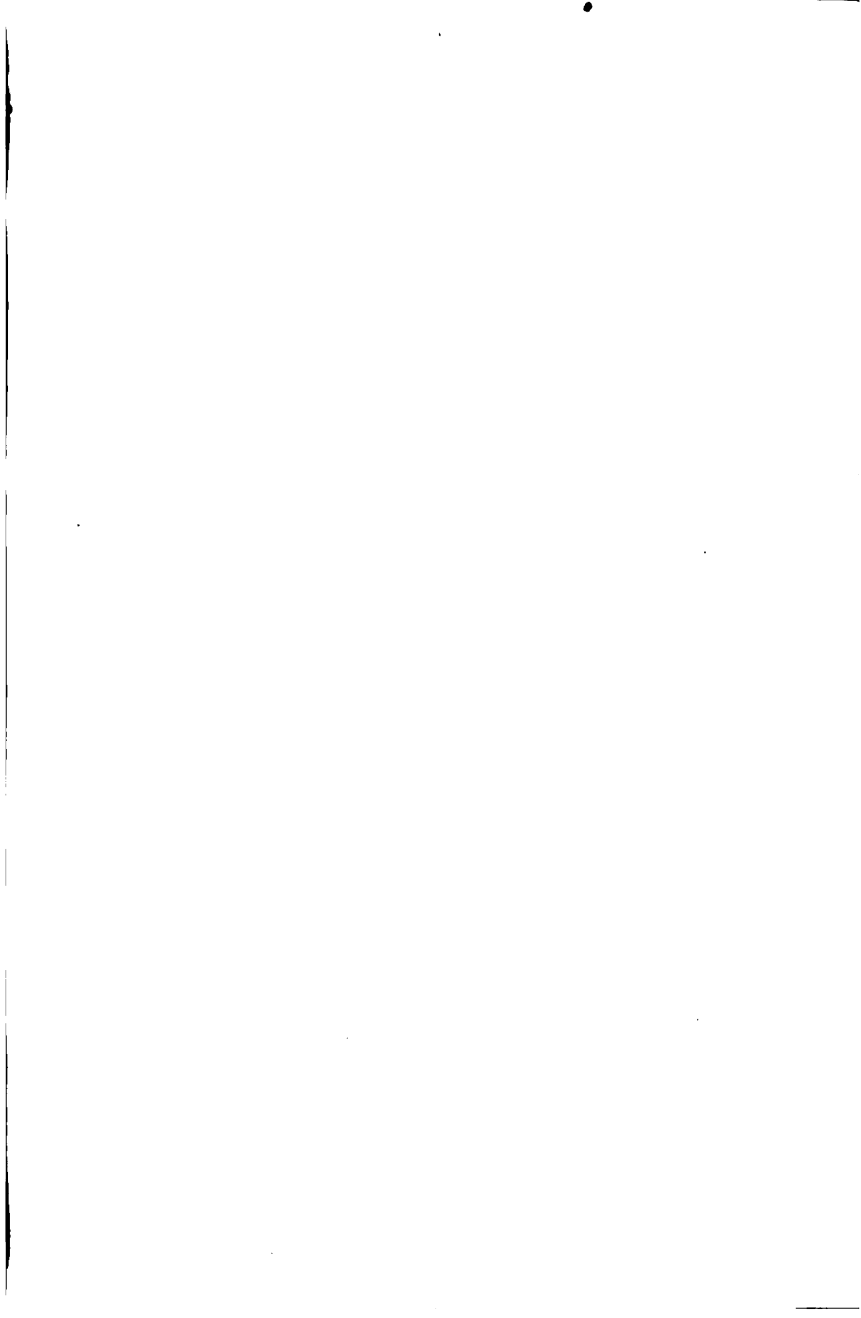
"I am an old friend of Munisai's," said Buzaemon as he passed into the house, "so I will enter without further ceremony."

Here the two knights met; and, after going through all that the etiquette of the gentlemen of those days

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\* *Btwa-dōjin.*







demanded in the way of salutation, which, it is hardly necessary to say, occupied a considerable time, as is the custom with old friends, they related to each other the experiences of the years that had intervened since their separation.

"I," said Buzaemon, "having been fortunate enough to be patronized by Kiyomasa, am getting on splendidly. If there is anything that I can do to help an old friend, I hope he will not be backward in letting me know."

"Thank you", replied Munisai. "Though I am in the unbecoming plight in which you now see me, yet, since I enjoy good health, I have really no cause to complain and am in no need of assistance, kind as it is of you to offer it nevertheless."

While the two were thus conversing, Seizaburō was preparing for the guest such refreshment as the house afforded. In offering it to Buzaemon, Munisai said:—"We have nothing whatever to give you worth eating. Notwithstanding its unpalatableness, let me beg of you to partake of a little *sakana*.\* It is but vegetable *sakana*, I perceive."

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\* Literally anything taken with *sake*. As fish is usually taken with *sake*, the term is as a rule used as a general name for fish. In the present instance, however, it is to be understood in its original sense.

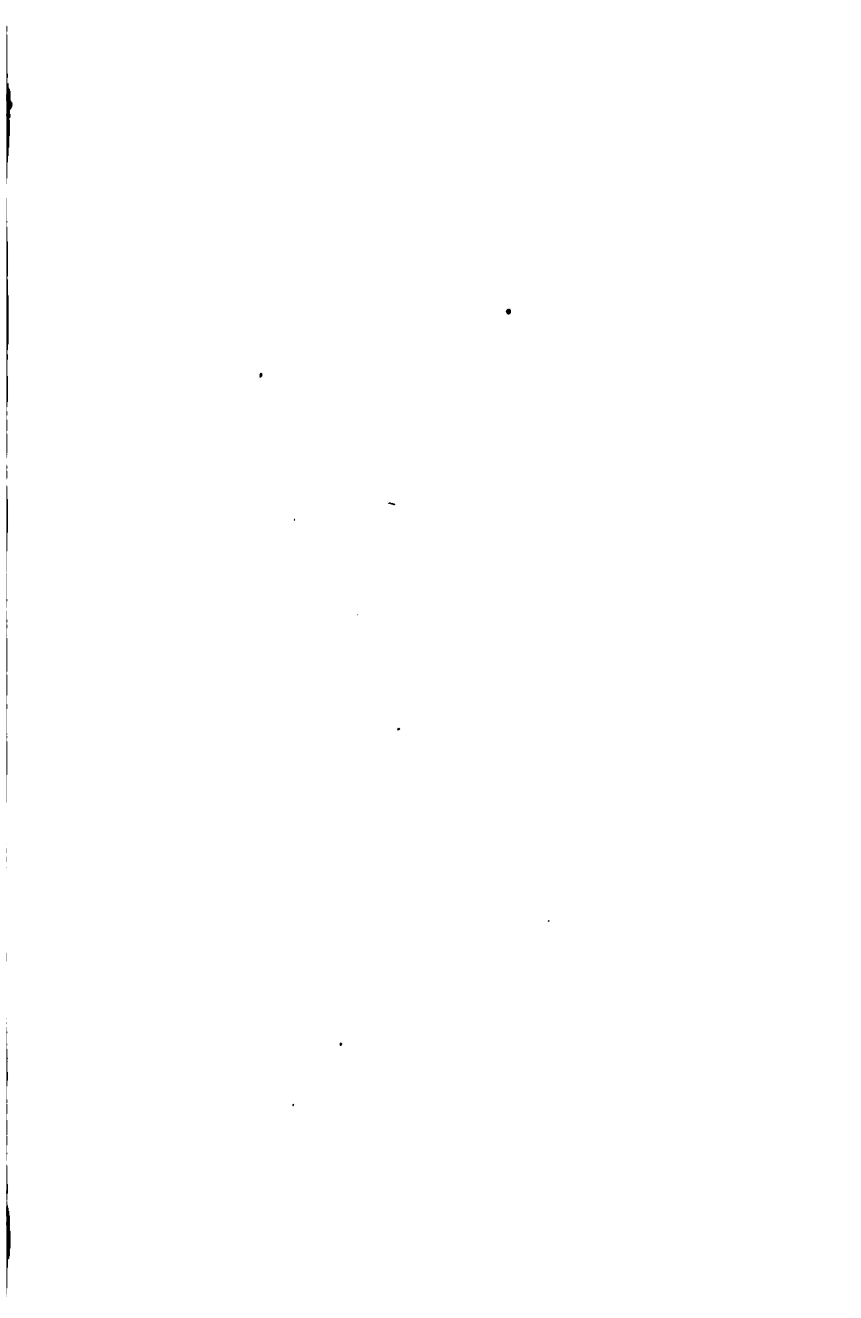
"If the dish," replied Buzaemon, "be an evidence of the friendly feeling that Munisai entertains towards Buzaemon, then vegetable *sakana* has a better flavour attached to it than any *sakana* lacking this association could possibly have. But there is a special kind of *sakana* that I wish to ask you for. Will you not give it to me?"

With a smile on his face, Munisai replied:—"Never mind about that now; just take what's set before you, that's a good fellow!"

"Ah," rejoined Buzaemon, "I perceive that you do not know to what *sakana* I am referring. It is to your son Shichinosuke that I allude."

Here Buzaemon informed Munisai of the manner in which he had come into contact with Shichinosuke. "And," said he, "I am overcome with admiration at the boy's courage and true nobleness of nature. I have never been blessed with a son of my own, so that, if you can consent to part with him, nothing would give me more pleasure than to adopt Shichinosuke and take him with me to Kumamoto. In my opinion it will never do to leave him here. Kiheiji's pupils will most certainly search the neighbourhood for him. If you can make up your mind to part with such a noble lad, it will have the effect of cementing the friendship of years in a lasting manner; and I shall feel indebted to you for life."





Munisai hardly knew how to reply to this request. A variety of emotions were contending for the mastery within his breast. He was an affectionate parent, and Shichinosuke was his favourite son and a lad of whose superior abilities and high moral qualities he was justly proud. And, now, to think that this son had been so near death, and that the hand which rescued him was that of an old friend. The boy was evidently immensely improved too: his anxiety to save his uncle's life and his carelessness about his own was a touching proof of this. And now must he part with this boy, perhaps for ever? Yet no other course was open. The lad's safety first and next his future prospects must take the precedence of all besides. Parental feeling must bow to the voice of reason. Buzaemon's request was no less reasonable than opportune—deny it, he could not. So after giving in the most honest manner possible a detailed account of the boy's failings, Munisai said:—"If, after hearing all, you still wish to adopt him, then I willingly intrust him to you, being confident that I could not place him in better hands."

A tear, whether of joy or of sorrow it would be hard to say, was seen to roll down the father's cheek as he thus gave his consent to his son's departure.

Shichinosuke was now called and his father addressed him as follows:—"Notwithstanding that you are such a

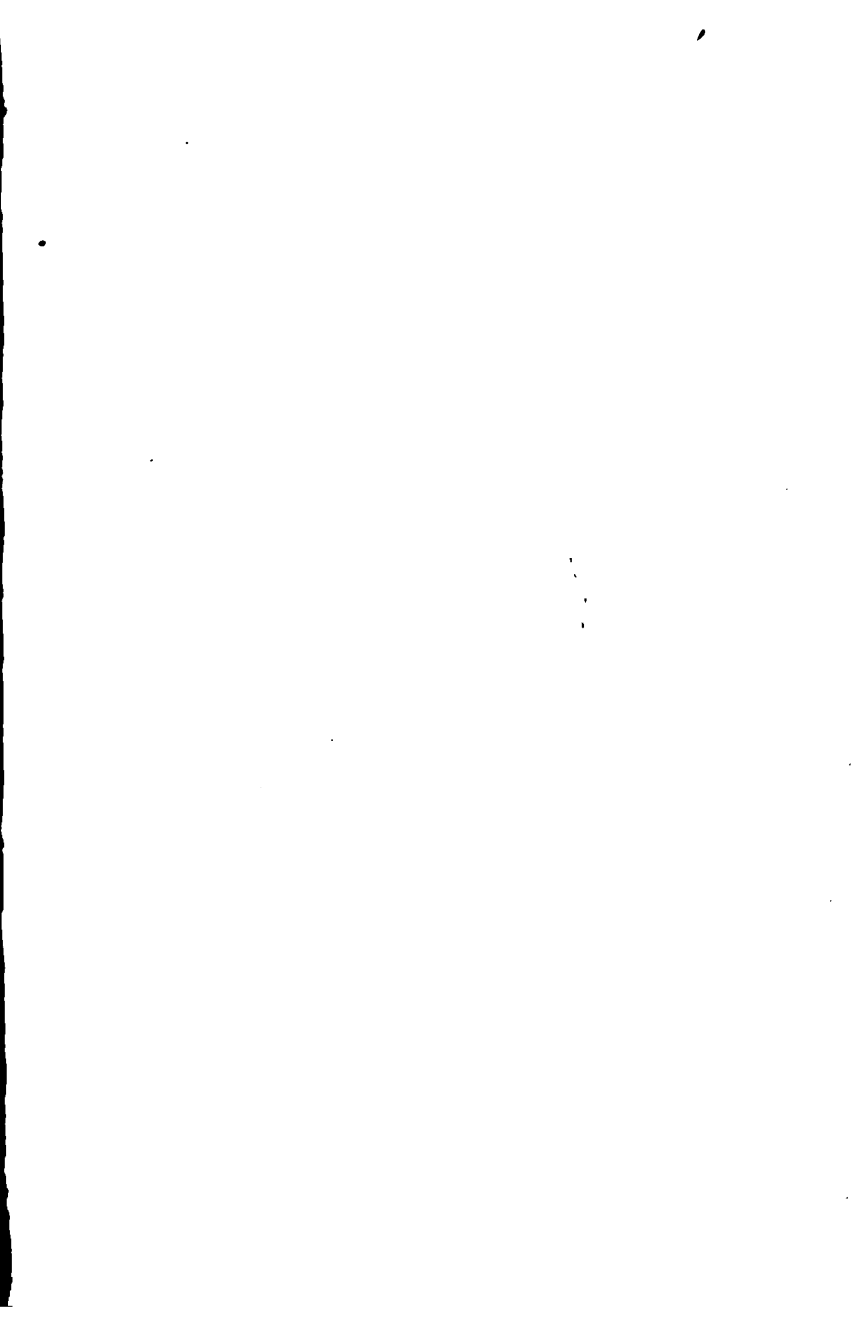
good-for-nothing lad, Mr. Buzaemon has been gracious enough to say that he will adopt you as his son. I have decided to allow you to accompany him to Kumamoto."

Munisai, being anxious to give some private instructions to his son before his departure, requested Buzaemon to excuse them, and, taking the lad into an adjoining room, addressed him as follows:—

"My object in sending you to the Kōshōji was to induce you to study. Knights are persons who from early years must give attention to learning. By learning it may seem to you as though I referred to something very extensive. But such is not the case. Described briefly, learning consists of two things, and two things only: one being loyalty, the other filial piety. Warriors are men who, when occasion calls for it, must be ready to throw away their lives as though they were dust. In the cause of justice they must look upon their persons as no more worthy of consideration than a feather. If they strive to be brave and to do what is right, they will bring no reproach on their parents.\* But to be

\* Here is the original of the first part of the passage, which is worth preserving:—*Bushi taru mono wa kotosara ni yōshō yori gakumon sezarubekarazu. Gakumon to iu toki wa hiroki yō naredomo, tsumaru tokoro wa chū-kō no futatsu wo idesu. Mata bushi wa setsu ni nozomi, gi ni yotte inochi wo jinkai ni hi shi; mi wo kō-mo (tori no ke) yori karonji, giyū wo hagemubeshi—kore fubo no itas wo hasuka-shimezaru tokoro nari.* These utterances make it plain that in the conception of educated warriors at this time learning was another name for morality. Among the sayings of Tokugawa Ieyasu there are several parallel passages to this one.







putting forth strength on all occasions without an adequate cause, this is wrong. Prompted by the anger of the moment, to kill people, and thus be the means of one's own destruction—this is courting a death that only befits a dog, and making oneself a butt for the ridicule of the world. As Confucius remarks:—‘ We are not to be like the tiger that in his fury throws himself into the river and loses his life without an adequate reason for doing so.’”

Shichinosuke was much moved by these words. Separation from his father had had the desired effect: it drew out his natural affection for his parents, and suppressed the unseemly arrogance the display of which had so often given Munisai pain.

“I will bear in mind what you say, sir,” replied Shichinosuke. “Hitherto, in my ignorance and folly, I have done nothing but behave in an impolite and arrogant manner, henceforth I shall act differently. The clouds that darkened my heart have been dispelled, and it is bright again.”

This mild and submissive answer from the lips of one who had never uttered anything like it in his father's hearing before, had the effect of intensifying the sorrow with which Munisai took leave of his son. But, having made up his mind to a course, Munisai was not the one to change; and he was averse to showing emotions that

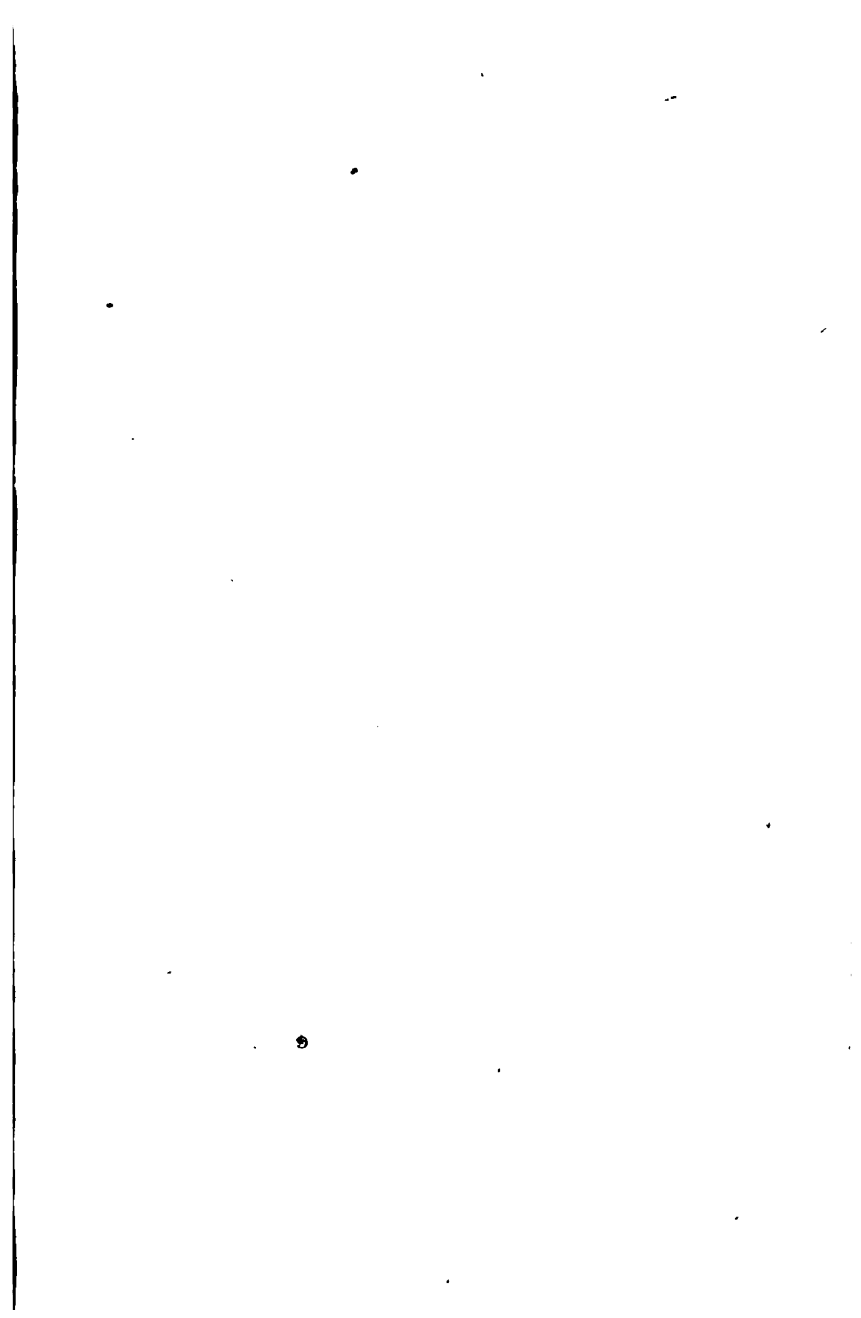
would only have tended to unnerve Shichinosuke and unfit him for entering on his new duties with heart and soul. So he abruptly put an end to the interview by saying :—  
“Mr. Buzaemon has a long journey to make. Already he has been greatly delayed on our account : he must not be detained any longer ; so make haste and get ready to start.”

Thus, as is so often the case, the pain of separation was alleviated by the bustle of the necessary preparations for the journey, and Shichinosuke set out for his new and distant home.

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### CHAPTER III.

Nothing special happened on the way to Kumamoto. But the journey was full of interest to a lad who had never been far away from home before. Shichinosuke observed everything with a keen eye as he went along the road; and the knowledge of places and things acquired at this time served him to good purpose in later years.

On Buzaemon's arrival at the Kumamoto castle, he reported the results of his journey; and, finding that Katō Kiyomasa was in the mood for chatting, he related to him the episode connected with Shichinosuke and asked for permission to adopt him.\* Kiyomasa was taken with the story of the lad's brave deeds and immediately said:—"Adopt him of course. You are lucky to have found such a boy to be your son."

Buzaemon instructed Shichinosuke day after day in those arts and accomplishments with which at that time gentlemen's sons were expected to be acquainted: in all of which the lad made astonishing progress, being sharp

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\* It was usual when a retainer wished to adopt a child for him to obtain his lord's permission to the step. For an account of adoption as practised in Japan, *vide* a paper by the present writer in Vol. XV., Pt. I., p. 58 *et. seq.* of *The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan.*

enough to infer from any one thing that he acquired some ten others.

Buzaemon's style of fencing differed considerably from that of Munisai. Munisai was the author of a style known as the *Jiken-ryū*, in which a very short sword (about 1 ft. 2 in.) was used. Buzaemon, on the other hand, practised a style known as the *Kurama-ryū*, in which a sword measuring about 2 ft. 3 in. was employed. Buzaemon was an adept in the *Kurama* style. Shichinosuke, whose aptitude for fencing was something astonishing, soon acquired the new style. At the same time, the lad did not at all like the idea of relinquishing his father's style. It seemed to be giving up that which connected him with Munisai more than anything else.

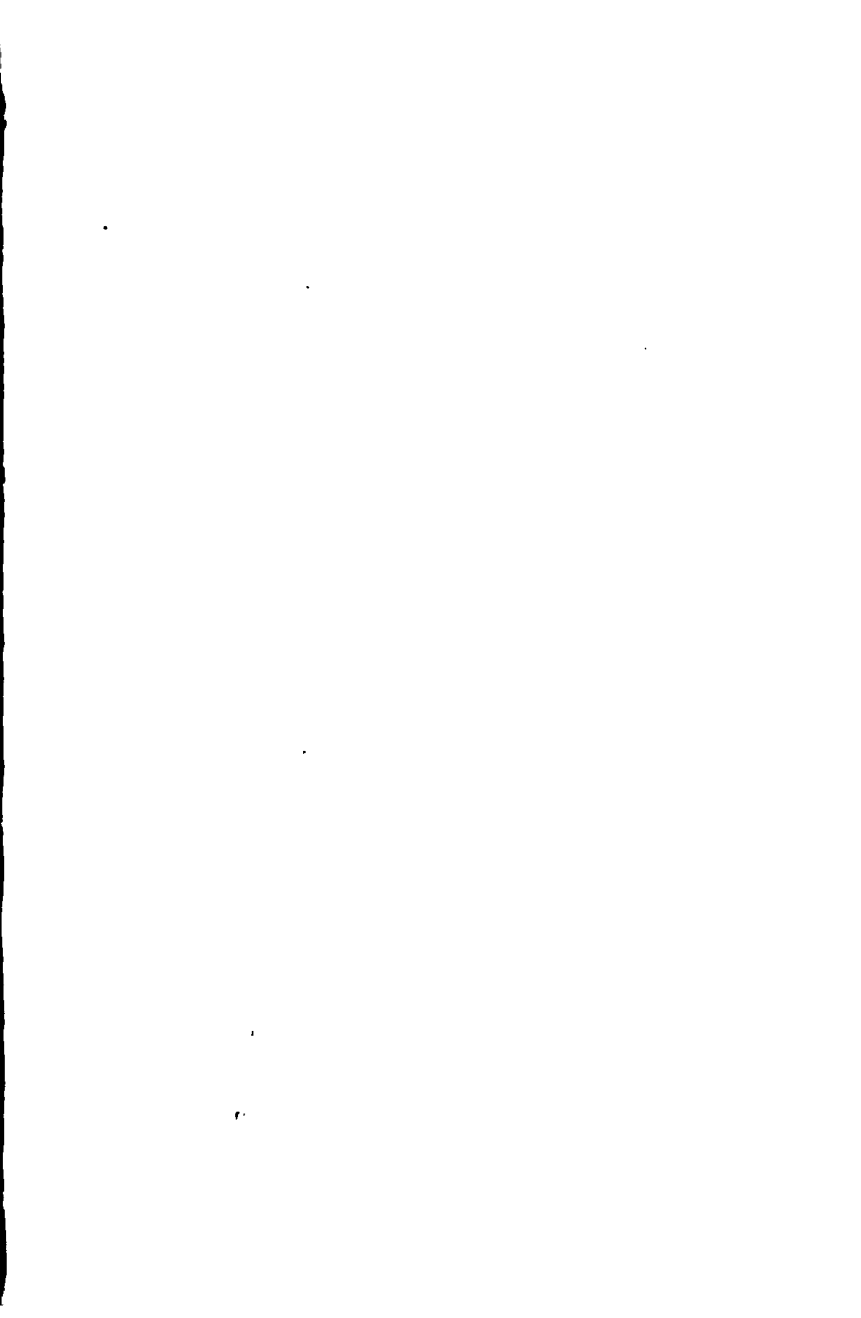
One day, after these thoughts had been filling his mind, he went to Mount Aso, where there was a famous temple erected in honour of the great god Aso. Here he prayed that war might become more, and more prosperous in the country reaching down to distant generations.\*

The day on which Shichinosuke visited Mount Aso was a festival day, and all sorts of theatrical performances

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\* Instead of asking for personal advancement, as so many Japanese who pray are in the habit of doing, he asked that that in which he took delight might prosper; knowing that were there plenty of war, abundance of opportunities for accomplishing feats of valour would be afforded him.







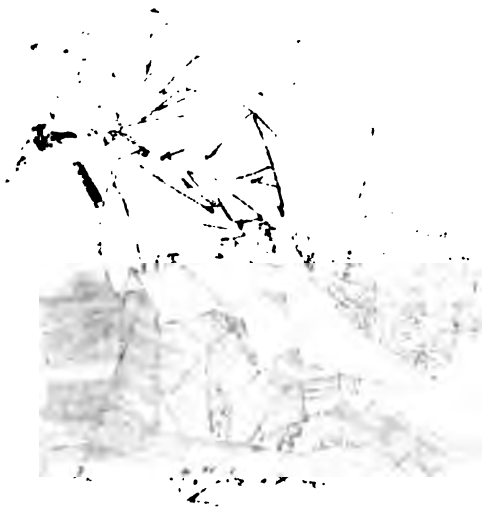
were going on in front of the temple. One of these consisted of the dancing of a woman. As she danced, she flourished about in an extraordinarily skillful manner two swords. As Shichinosuke watched these manoeuvres, the thought instantly struck him that if two swords could be thus made to perform all kinds of wonderful exploits they might, if skillfully handled, be used for fighting, and that with great effect too.

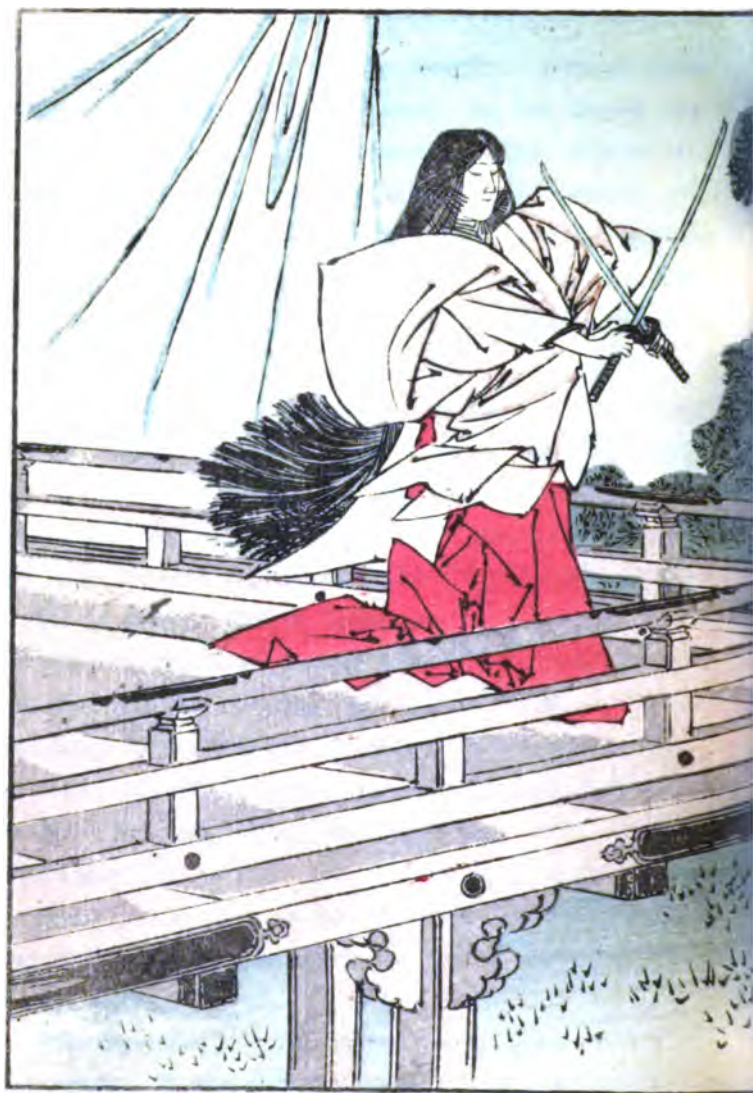
“Here” said he to himself, “is the way out of my difficulty about the two styles, that of my father and that of Buzaemon. If I can discover a way of using effectually both a long and a short sword at the same time, then without relinquishing my father’s style I shall be able to practise that of Buzaemon.”

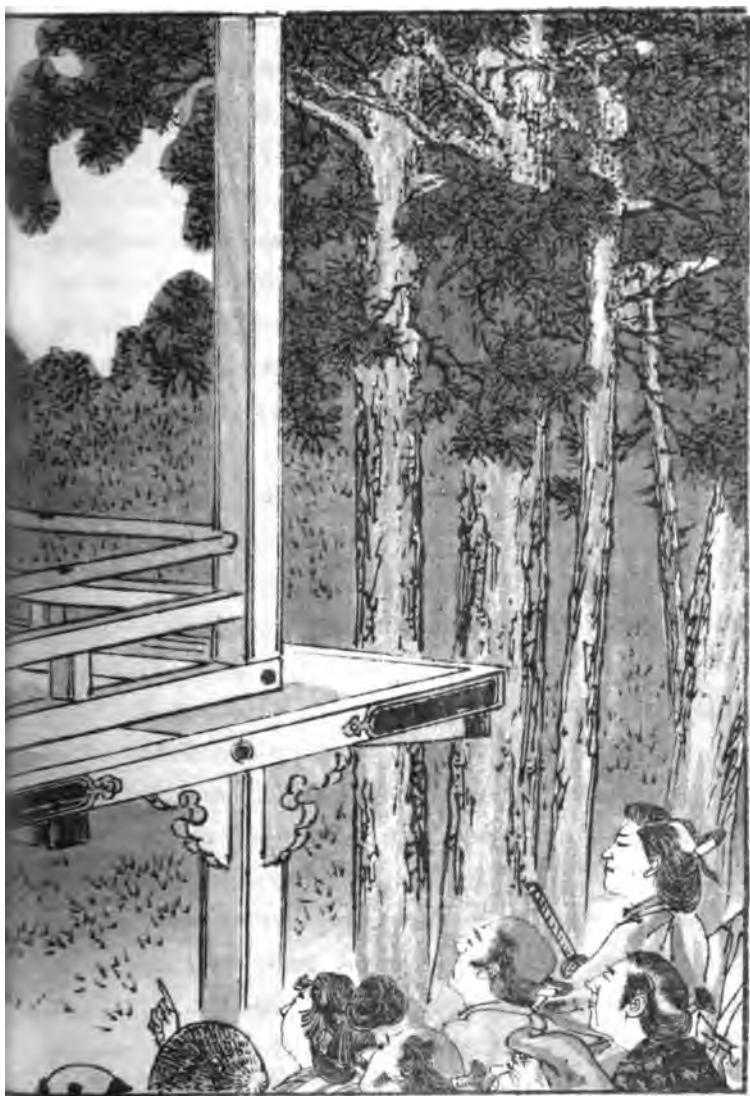
Shichinosuke went to the temple and uttered solemn vows and prayers, invoking the gods to assist him in the elaboration of his scheme. Then he returned to his house, and week after week and month after month assiduously practised the new style until he had brought it to perfection. When he felt confident of its success, he gave out to the world that he had invented a new style of fencing, which he had named the Two-sworded-style (*Nitō-ryū*).

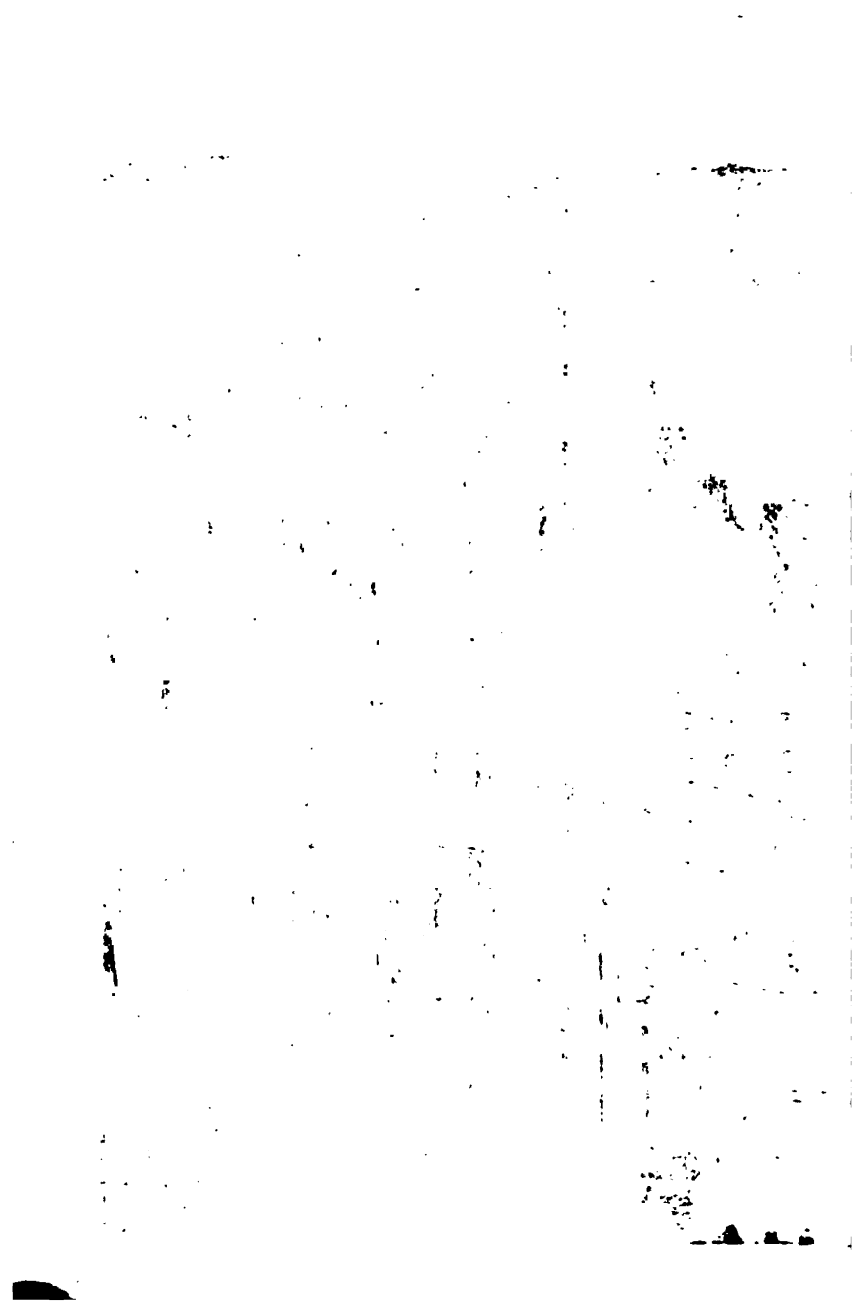
This invention has an interest of its own. Its origin was curious. It was the result of an attempt to solve a

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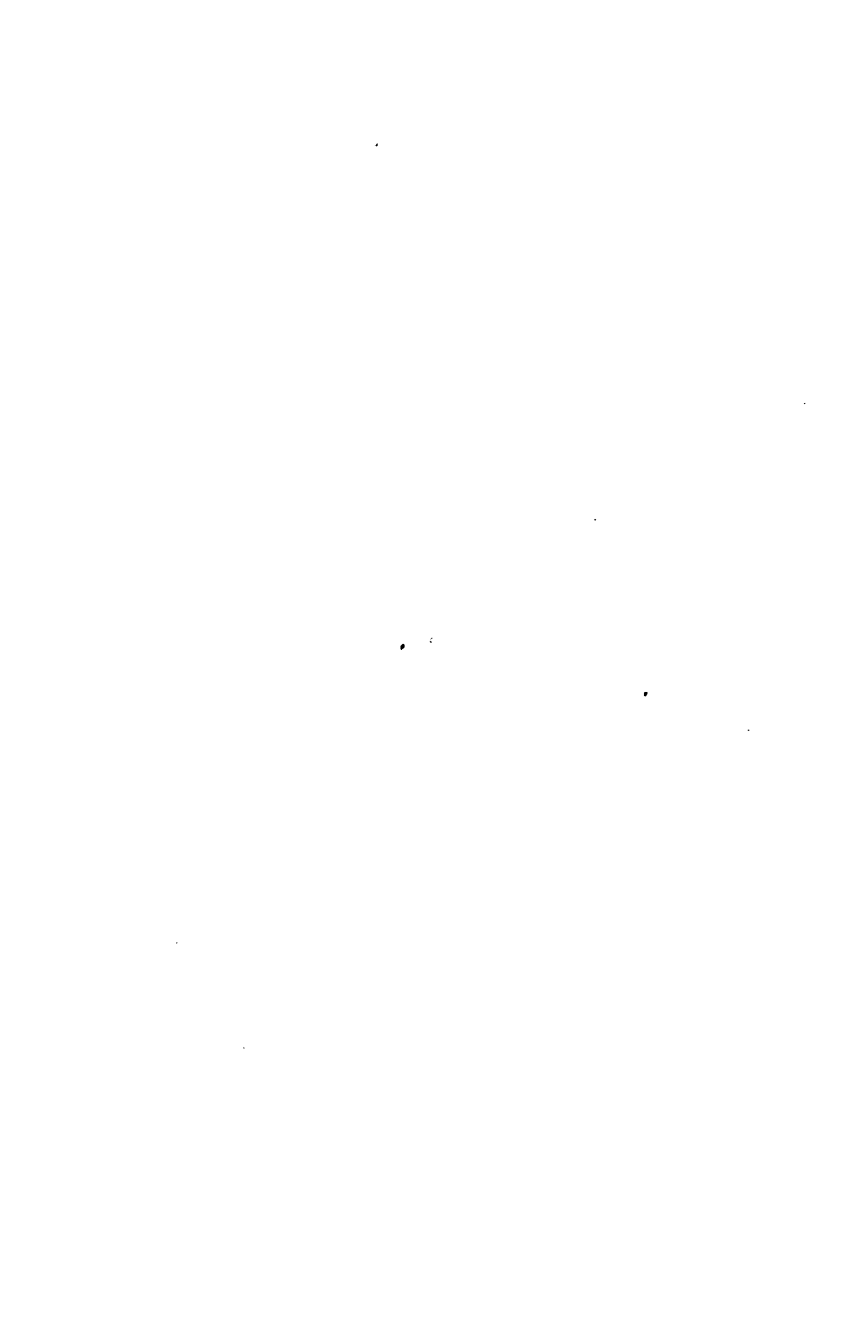


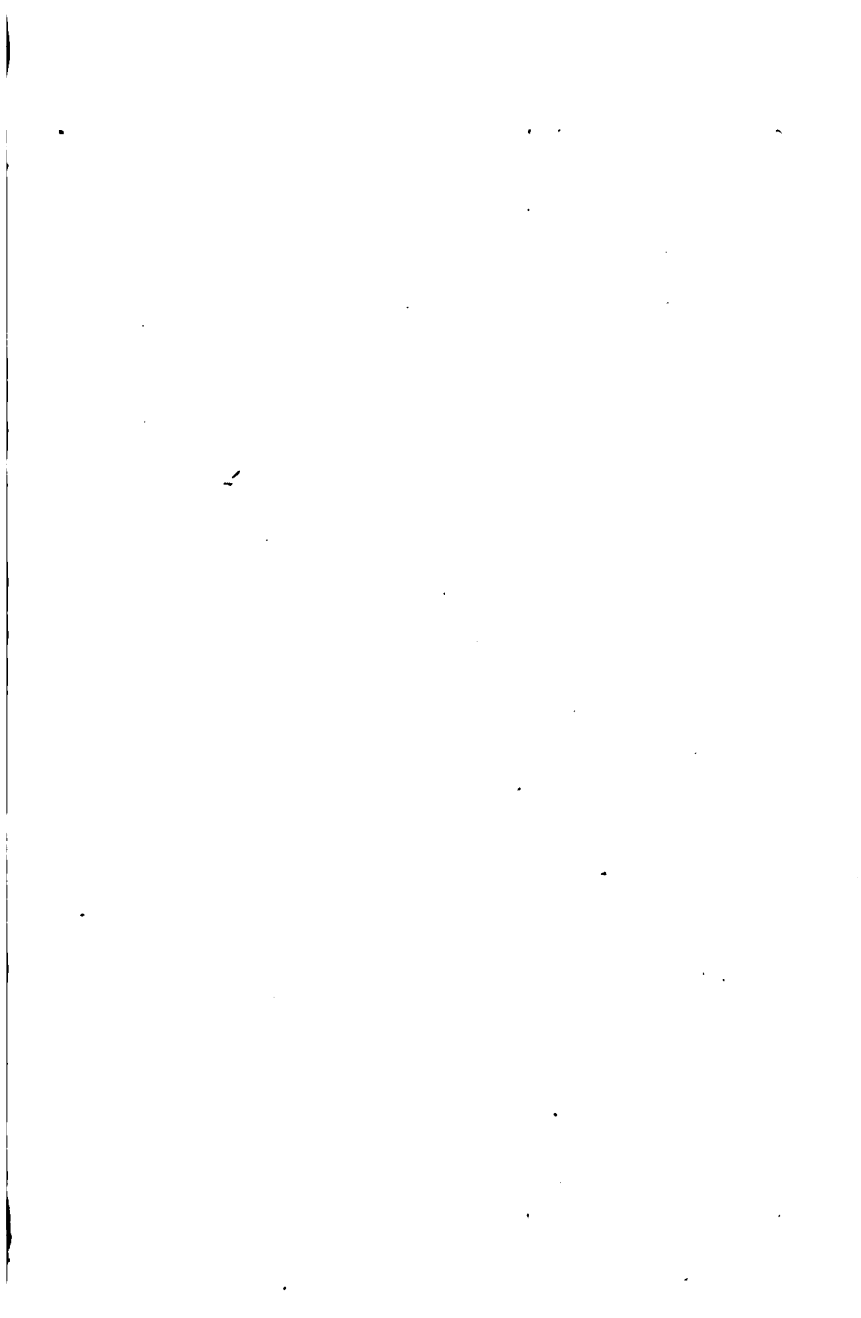


problem, as most inventions are. But what is peculiar about it is that it originated in a moral feeling. It had its source in filial affection. Had Shichinosuke cared less for either his real or his adopted parent, he would have practised the *Jiken* to the exclusion of the *Kurama* style, or the *Kurama* to the exclusion of the *Jiken*. It was his ardent affection for both parents that led to his attempting to incorporate both their styles in his *Nitō-ryū*.

Buzaemon, having heard that Shichinosuke had been practising a new style of fencing, one day, called him and said:—"I hear that you have invented a new style of fencing. What is it like?"

"Well" replied Shichinosuke, "to speak of *inventing* a new style to one's parent, is perhaps saying more than is proper. But, as you are kind enough to inquire what the style is like, I will tell you. The way it is practised is as follows:—Two swords are taken, one in each hand, a long one in the right hand, which corresponds to the male principle (*yō*), and a short one in the left hand, which corresponds to the female principle (*in*). At first the two swords, like the two principles, remain together, and seem as though they were hesitating how to act: then, they part from each other, the male sword ascending, and thus corresponding to heaven, the female descending, and becoming earth. Then, coming together again in the form







of a cross, they produce all manner of results. This crossing of the two it is that, like the combining of the two principles, begets a universe of things. By a slight movement of the swords, the defensive posture known as the *Seigan* is assumed. There is no difficulty about changing the positions of the swords a thousand times to suit the ever varying movements of an opponent—their advance or retreat, their moving up or down is free and unimpeded by any hindrance whatever. But still, since I am young and inexperienced in such matters, I have little doubt that the style possesses a great many defects. I trust therefore that you will be kind enough to point out to me what you consider to be its weak points.”

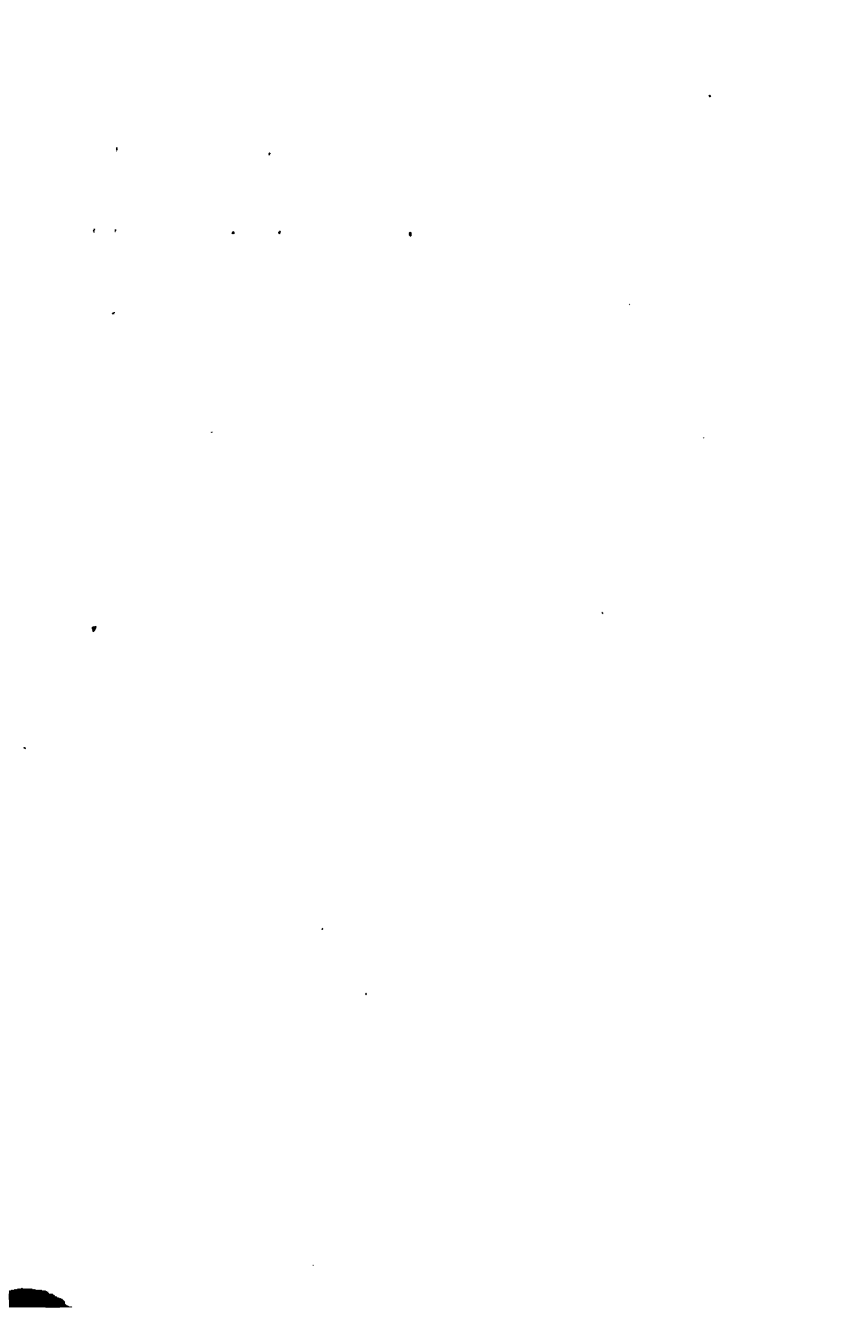
“Splendid! splendid!” exclaimed Buzaemon. “A magnificent theory! a great feat! a clever discovery, indeed! But as it not unfrequently happens that there is a discrepancy between theory and practice, we will put your theory into practice and see how it acts.”

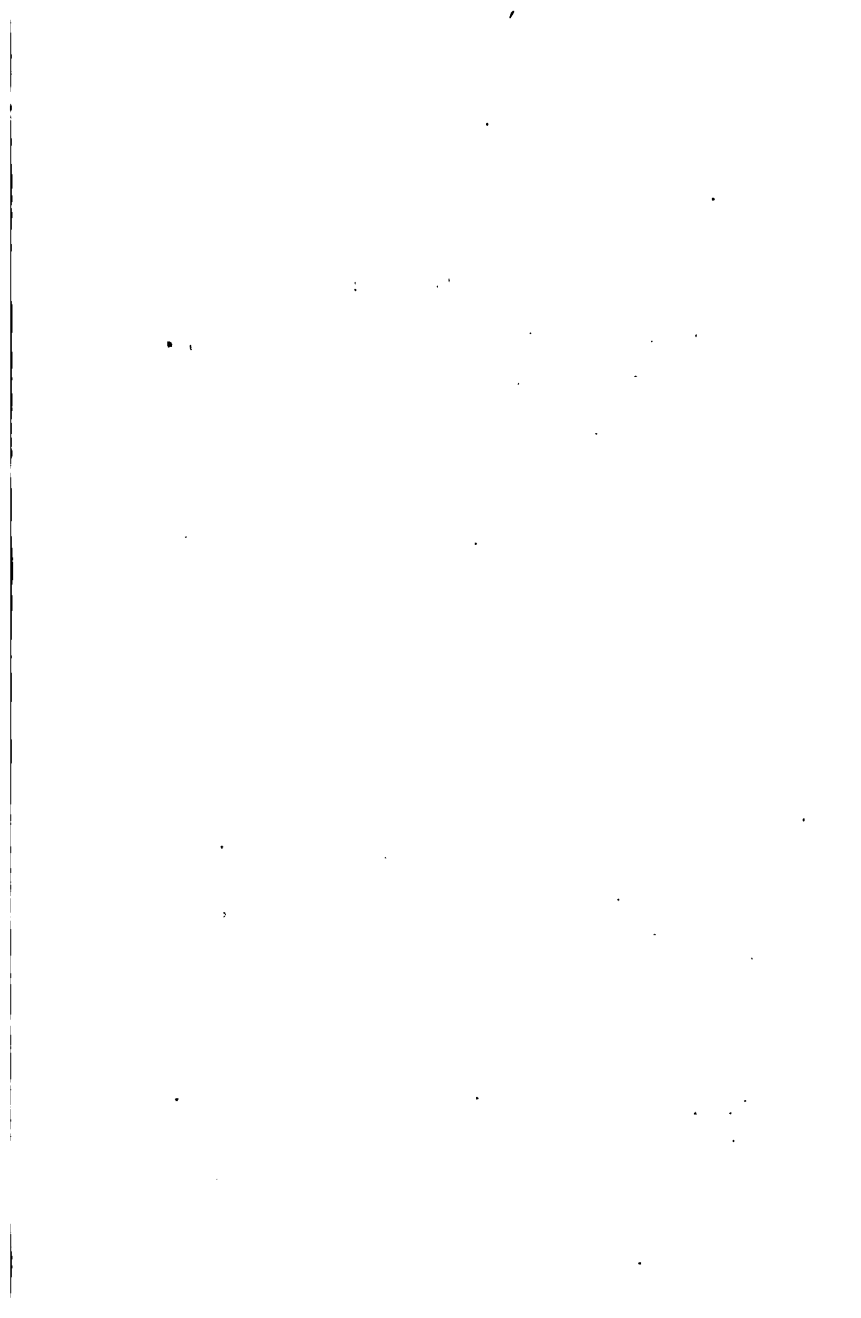
Accordingly, with apologies for assuming the position of an opponent to his father, Shichinosuke took two swords and placed them in position. Buzaemon with his usual long fencing sword, commenced the attack by a shout and a cut at Shichinosuke’s head. The latter, in an instant, had his crossed swords up to receive the blow. Buzaemon pressed his opponent’s swords hard to try and

break through the combination, but in vain. He then tried to withdraw his own sword; but there was no chance of doing it without the risk of being pierced, as Shichinosuke held his upper sword close to the blade of his opponent's weapon while supporting it from beneath with his under one. Had Buzaemon removed his sword, Shichinosuke would have run his under sword into his body before Buzaemon's sword could be lowered to parry the thrust. So Buzaemon, seeing that there was nothing to be done, threw away his weapon and retired. He tried another mode of attack, but with no better success. "This is a style," said Buzaemon, "of which you need never be ashamed anywhere."

As time went on, the Two-sworded-style became more and more popular in every part of the country. Fencers crowded to Shichinosuke's place to fence with him, but were invariably defeated.







## CHAPTER IV.

Subsequent to the death of Arima Kiheiji, a fencing master of wide repute established a fencing school in the town of Himeji. His name was Sasaki Ganryū Yoshitaka. Ganryū was the son of Sasaki Shōtei, a man who, previous to his defeat by Oda Nobunaga, wielded enormous power in the province of Ōmi.\* Ganryū, after his father's death, was taken by his mother to Mogami, Dewa, where he remained many years.

From early days Ganryū's mother used to tell him of his father's great prosperity previous to his fall, and to impress upon him the duty of endeavouring to retrieve the lost fortunes of his house.

When Ganryū was not more than eleven or twelve years of age, his mother died. Before her death, she solemnly charged her son not to neglect the duty that she had impressed upon him.

The lad when left to himself in this way, tried his very best to fit himself for the arduous task that devolved on him. He went out into the mountains and practised fencing by aiming blows at stocks and stumps of wood ;

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\* For further information on this point *vide* my *New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, p. 114.

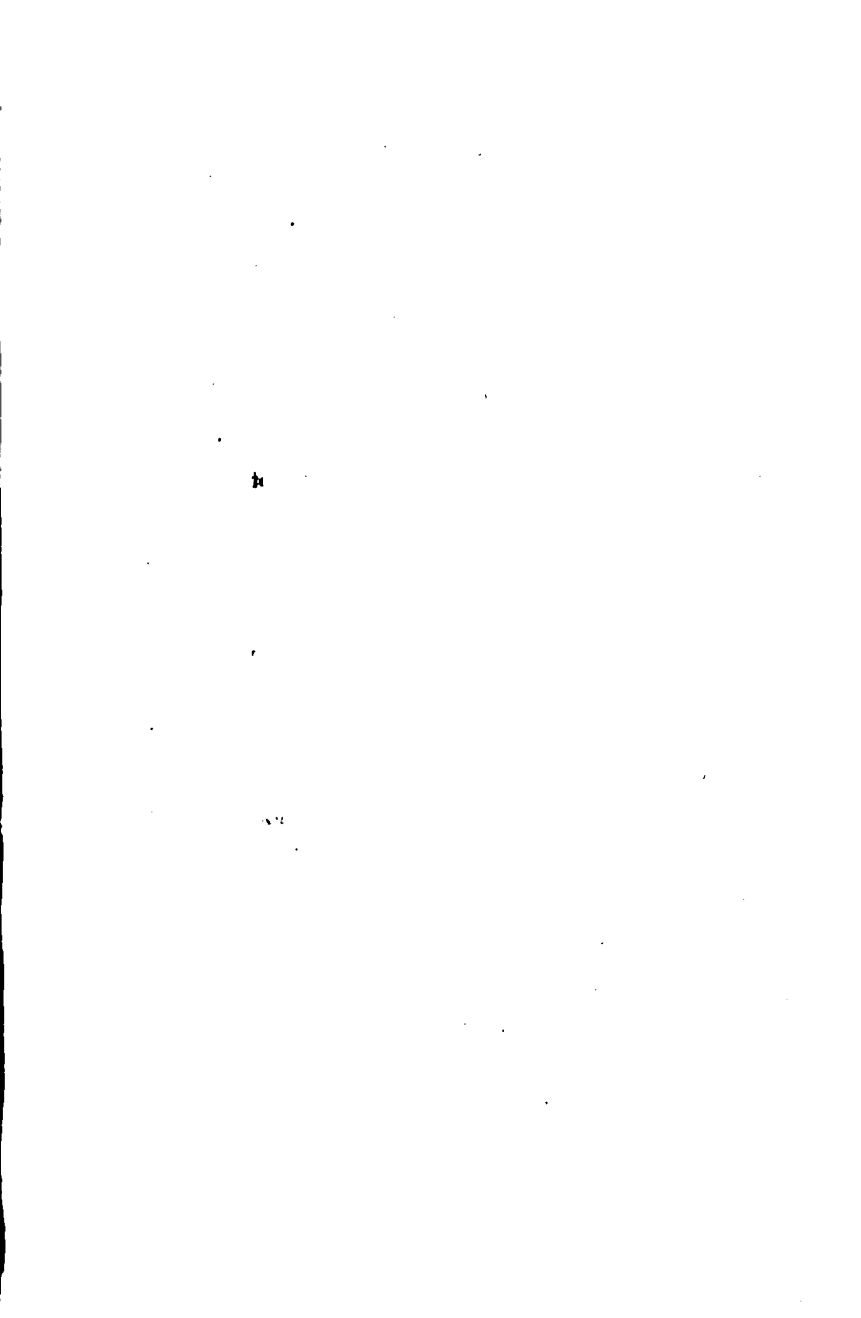
he climbed trees, ascended mountains, went down into deep ravines, and swam across rivers: his aim in all this being to accustom himself to toil, hardship, and danger.

One day, when Ganryū was fishing on the banks of the river Mogami, he espied a child floating down the stream, half dead and half alive. Springing into the water, he rescued it. On inquiry he found out that the child was the son of a fencing-master in the employ of Mogami Yoshifusa, the Baron of Dewa, whose castle was situated in Yamagata. The fencing-master's name was Noda Daizen, a swordsman of some note. To this man Ganryū related his history, and, as a result, was adopted into his family and instructed in his style of fencing. Ganryū made rapid progress in the art, and Daizen soon perceived that he would grow up to be a man of whom his adopted parent would have reason to be proud.

Ganryū lived to fulfil these predictions. He became the successor of Daizen as instructor at the Baron's mansion, and was a far more skilful fencer than his predecessor.

After giving instruction for some years, Ganryū began to think that he ought to be doing something to prepare the way for the realization of his mother's wishes. So he obtained permission from his master to start off on a fencing pilgrimage.







Over his pilgrimage he spent several years and had some exciting adventures, which I cannot stay to relate. Subsequent to this he returned to Yamagata, where he resumed his duties as an instructor in fencing.

The early death of both his parents deprived Ganryū of the firm discipline which had been the making of Shichinosuke. Growing up with a sense of his importance as the son of an illustrious man and the destined retriever of the fortunes of his house, and proud of his success as a fencer, gradually he began to treat those whose strength or skill was not equal to his own with undisguised contempt. This made him extremely unpopular at the castle. Seeing how little he was respected, he determined to try his luck elsewhere. On considering where he should go, it seemed to him that he could do no better than proceed to Kyōto and endeavour to obtain an interview with Toyotomi Hideyoshi. "Hideyoshi always estimates men at their proper price," said he to himself. "I have no doubt that as soon as he sees me he will recognize my superior powers and give me a good position. Thus shall I rise to fortune and to fame and my mother's dying wishes will find their fulfilment."

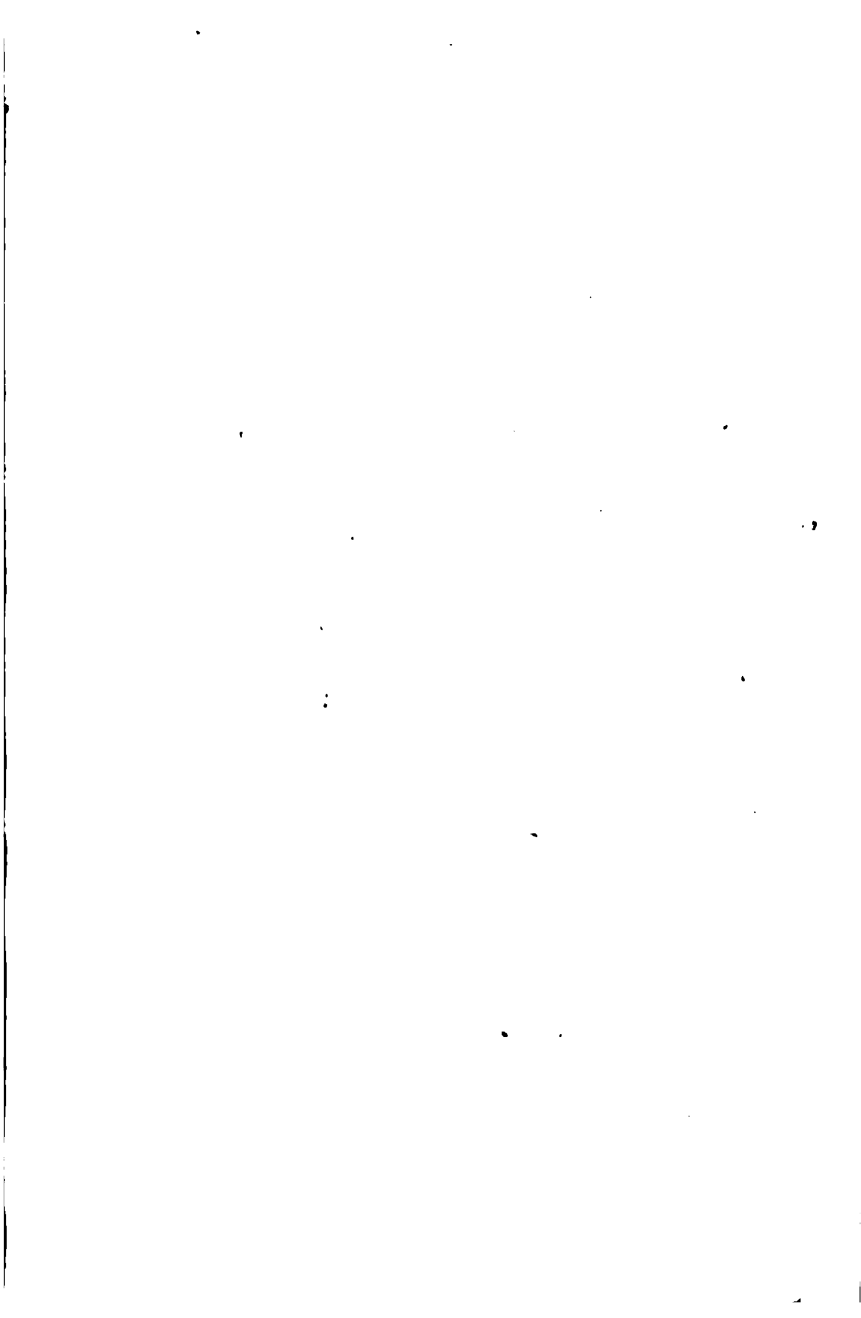
So, making his way to the capital, he traversed the streets in search of a suitable place in which to establish a fencing school. In a street known as Matsubara-dōri

he saw a large house to let. This he hired and had done up in first-rate style. He placed outside the front door the following notice :—"The first Fencing School in the Country! Sasaki Ganryū Yoshitaka undertakes to fence with ten or twenty opponents in succession, and to guard himself against any number of arrows, darts, or missiles."

This notice attracted scores of fencers from all quarters of the town. Many of these would have been glad enough to have taken the conceit out of Ganryū, but he was too good a man for them all. One after another his opponents were defeated. So it happened that by degrees those who had witnessed or heard of the contests which had taken place grew to think that Ganryū was the first fencer in the country. Numbers of men who were on their pilgrimage for the purpose of perfecting their styles crossed swords with him, and were forced to acknowledge his immense superiority. All this tended to increase his fame.

Among the five officers who held the post of *Ie-bugyō*, and whose duty it was to superintend the affairs of Hideyoshi's house, there was a man called Masuda Nagamori. Nagamori had a retainer called Ukijima Kazen. One day, when transacting some business for his master, Kazen passed Ganryū's place, and was attracted by the





pompous notice. "Impudence indeed!" he exclaimed. "I will go in and kill this insolent ass and put an end to his boasting."

But on second thoughts, Kazen did not consider it right for him to neglect his master's business for this. So he went home and asked Nagamori to allow him to go and fight with Ganryū.

"You need not go to him," replied Nagamori. "If you wish to fight with him, I will have him called and will watch the fencing myself."

Ganryū was summoned to Nagamori's house, and he fenced with Kazen there. With nothing but an iron fan in his hand\* Ganryū beat his opponent out and out; and subsequently all the other retainers of Nagamori who had any pretence to the name of fencers were worsted in like manner.

Nagamori was very pleased with Ganryū: after entertaining him handsomely, he sent him home, determining in his own mind that he would take the first opportunity of recommending him to Hideyoshi.

Not many days after, Nagamori related all that had

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\* Fencers who were conscious of great superiority to their opponents, did not deign to use a fencing-sword, but defended themselves with anything that happened to be at hand. Fans with an iron framework were very frequently used for this purpose.

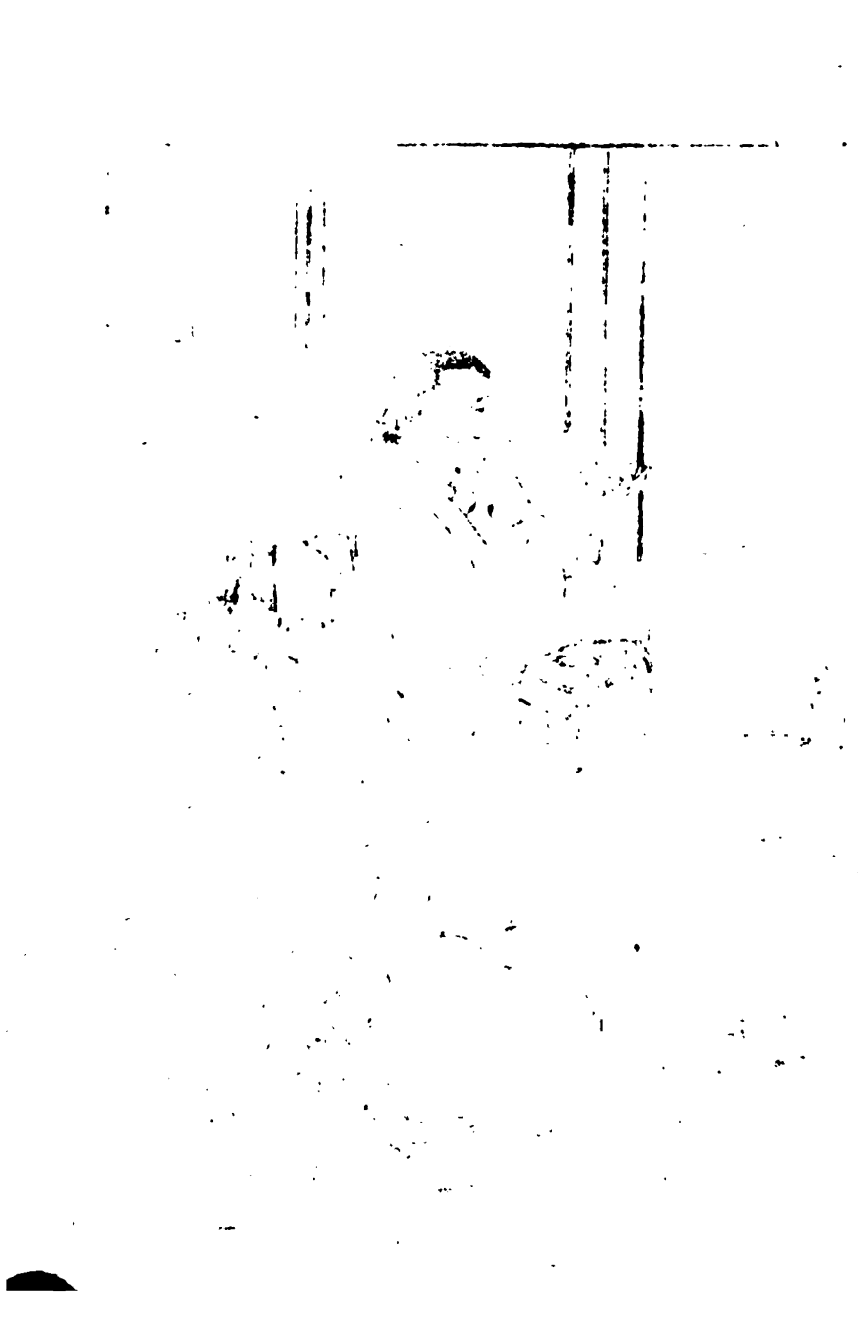
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occurred to Hideyoshi and spoke in the highest terms of Ganryū's skill as a fencer. This met with no response whatever from Hideyoshi; who, when Nagamori had finished, simply said, "You can go home."

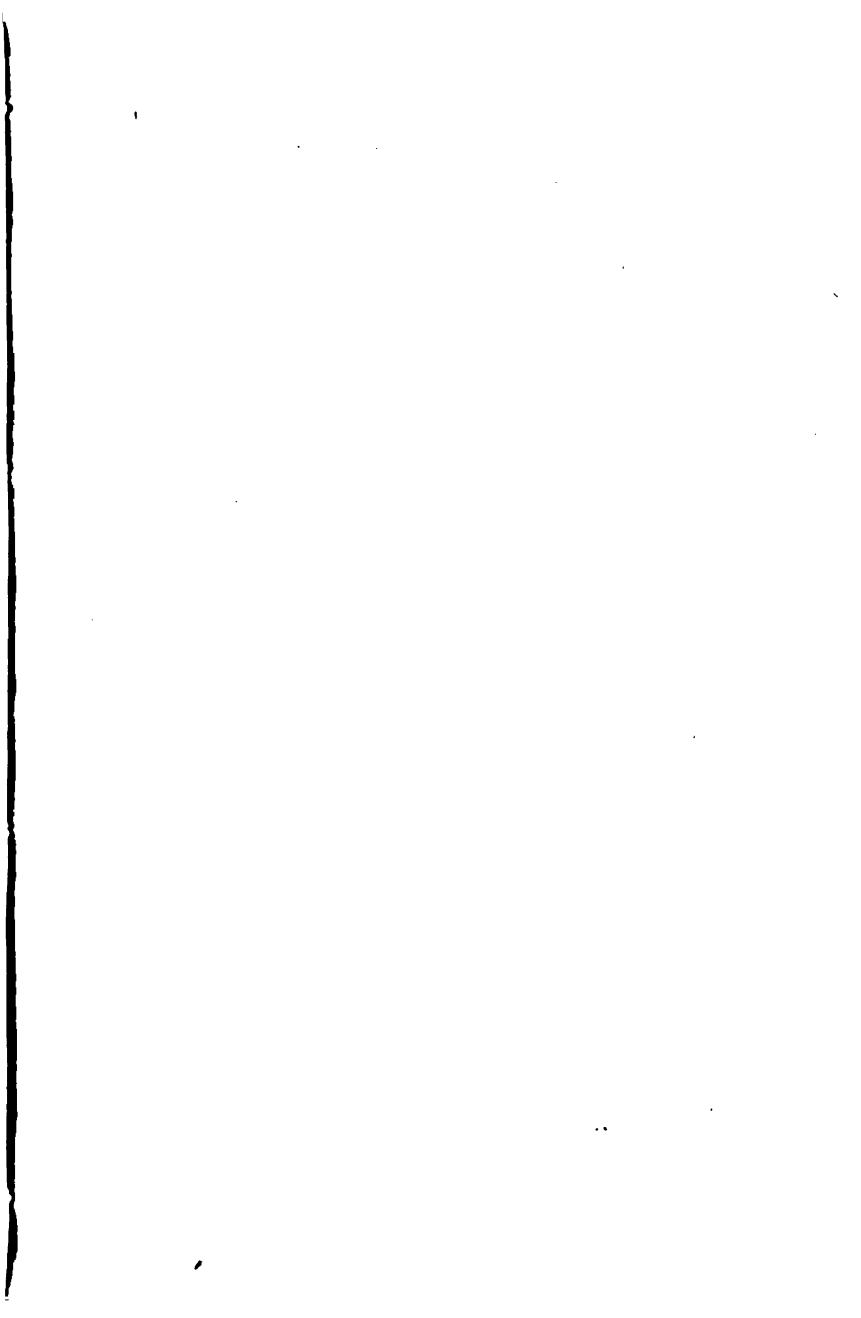
Ganryū, on his return to his house after fencing with Nagamori's followers, felt highly gratified with the day's accomplishments. He called his two chief retainers and told them all that had happened, and added:—"Nagamori will be sure to recommend me to Lord Hideyoshi, and the result will be that (to name the lowest figure possible) I shall receive an income of ten thousand *koku* a year, and in that case, I shall be able to confer emoluments on you both."

A few days after this a summons from the Mayor of Kyōto reached Ganryū. He was ordered to appear before the Mayor without delay. Susukida Hayato-no-shō, a man with a somewhat remarkable history, a great warrior and a noted fencer, was Mayor of Kyōto at this time.

"A red letter day in my history," exclaimed Ganryū when the summons reached him. "To-day shall I rise to power." Thus saying, he set out in great pomp for the office of the *Machi-bugyō*.

His retainers, after their master's departure, did nothing but converse about the various emoluments that would within a very few weeks be theirs; and, acting on the





proposal of one of the party, they determined to celebrate the occasion with a good drink.

On Ganryū's reaching the Mayor's office, he was addressed as follows :—" Sasaki Ganryū, you have taken up your quarters in Matsubara-dōri ; and, without regard to the deference due to the place in which His Highness\* is pleased to reside, you have put up a bombastic notice outside your house, which has caused great excitement in the city. This offence merits heavy punishment ; but by special favour you are let off with banishment from the city. You are to leave the capital this very day."

Ganryū's disciples waited in anxious suspense for his return. When he entered the house, he looked crest-fallen. He was bound to tell them what had happened, which he at once did, with the result that with the exception of two they all absconded.

Ganryū completed his preparations as rapidly as possible and set out. After he had proceeded a few paces along the road, he turned round to take a last look at the fencing-school by means of which he had acquired so illustrious a name. For about his being a great man, Ganryū himself neyer entertained the shadow of a doubt. It was one of those dogmas of his creed which

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\* Referring to Hideyoshi.

were too sacred to be questioned—in fact, it was self-evident—any one with eyes must see its indisputableness in an instant. But he seemed to himself to be in a world where discernment of true merit was an extremely scarce commodity. Well, he would try his luck elsewhere: but before doing so he would go back and record the thoughts that were passing through his mind. And so, retracing his steps, he took out his pen, and wrote on a piece of paper the following lines:—

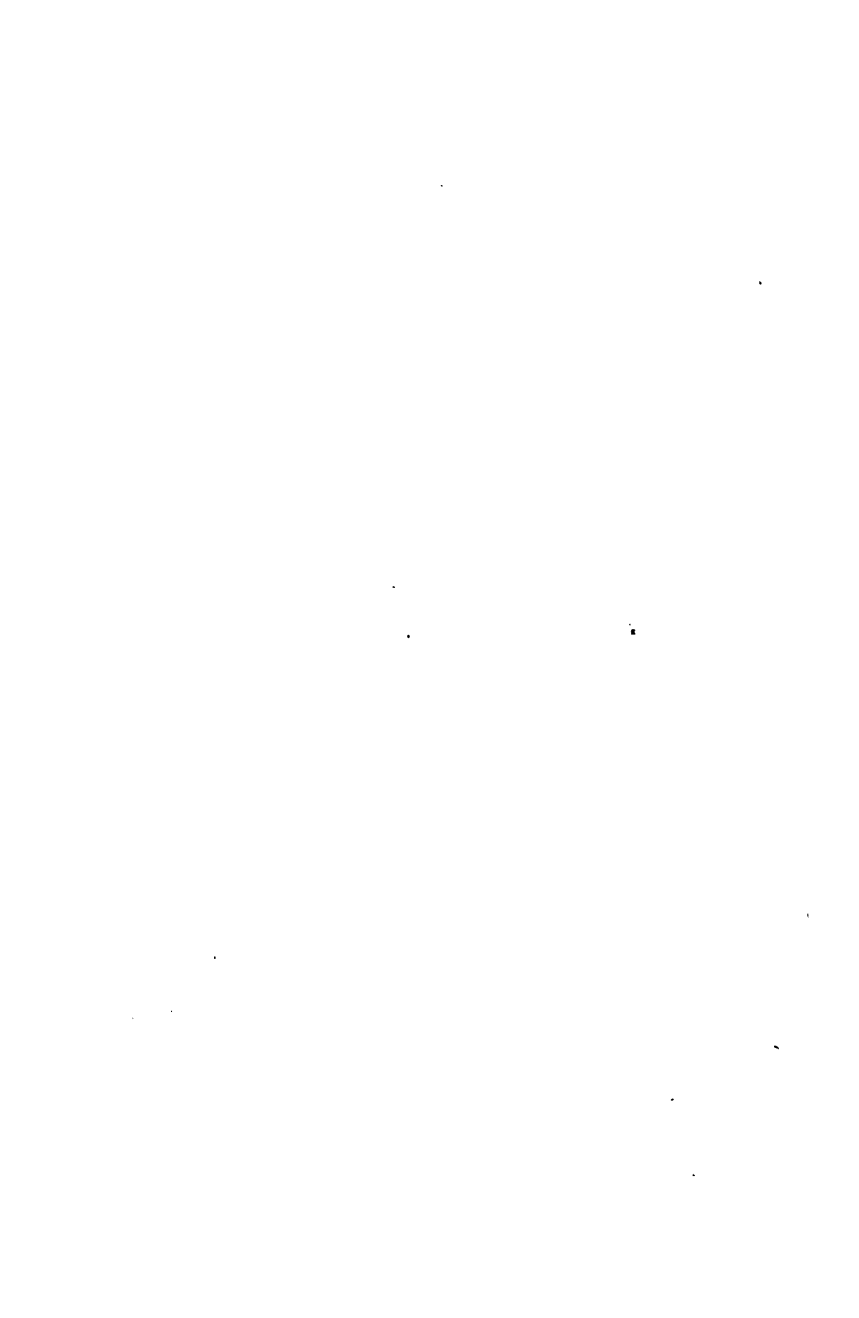
“Loud neighs the horse  
“That can do his thousand miles a day.  
“But, alas! he neighs in vain.  
“For the man that knows his worth exists not.  
“Ganryū's day has not come; so he departs.  
“But when that day does come,  
“Let there be no vain regrets!” \*

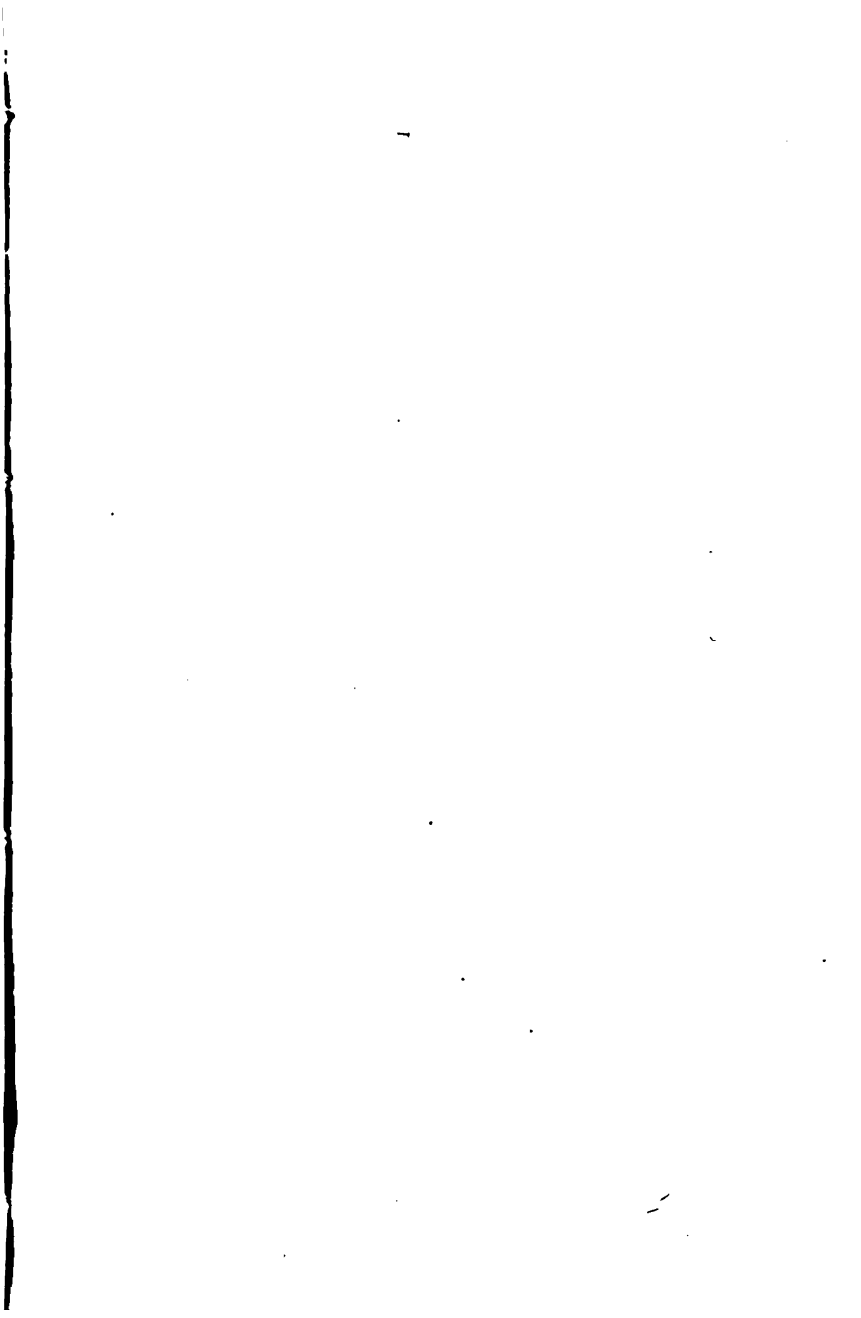
After pasting the verse to the gate of the house he had occupied, he set out for Chūgoku.

Nagamori was utterly at a loss to account for the turn events had taken. With the object of finding out what had induced Hideyoshi to act in this manner; for he it was that had ordered the banishment, Nagamori sought and obtained a private interview with the *Taikō*.

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\* Ganryū thought that Hideyoshi would live to regret that he had banished such a great man as himself from the capital.







"What do you think of Ganryū?" asked Hideyoshi of Nagamori.

"That he is a first-rate man" replied Nagamori, "such as is not to be matched nowadays."

"If that is how you look at men," replied Hideyoshi, smiling, "it is to be questioned whether you are fit to act as one of my *Bugyō*. To me this Ganryū appears to be one of the most insignificant of men. Fancy a man being foolish enough to put up a notice outside his gate stating that he is the first fencer in Japan! In a large country like this who is to know how many expert swordsmen there are? The provinces swarm with good fencers. A greater fool than this man it would be difficult to find. 'He that knows himself and knows the enemy, may fight a hundred times and always come off victorious,' says a passage in the *Hyōhō*.\* But as for this fellow, he neither knows himself nor any one else, and therefore he has no title to our esteem. His coming to settle down here under my very nose and sounding his praises in my ears, was a piece of impudence that I could not tolerate, so I banished him from the city. I knew the other day, when you were speaking so highly of him what kind of

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† A term that includes a number of books treating of military matters; of which the *Sonshi*, *Goshi*, *Shōbahō*, *Rieikō-monō*, *Utsuryōshi*, *Sanryaku*, and *Rikufō* are the chief.

a man he was, but, as others were present on that occasion, I did not care to say anything to you about it: as we are alone to-day I have spoken my mind fully."

"I am astonished at your sagacity," replied Nagamori. "Please pardon me for my carelessness in recommending such a man."

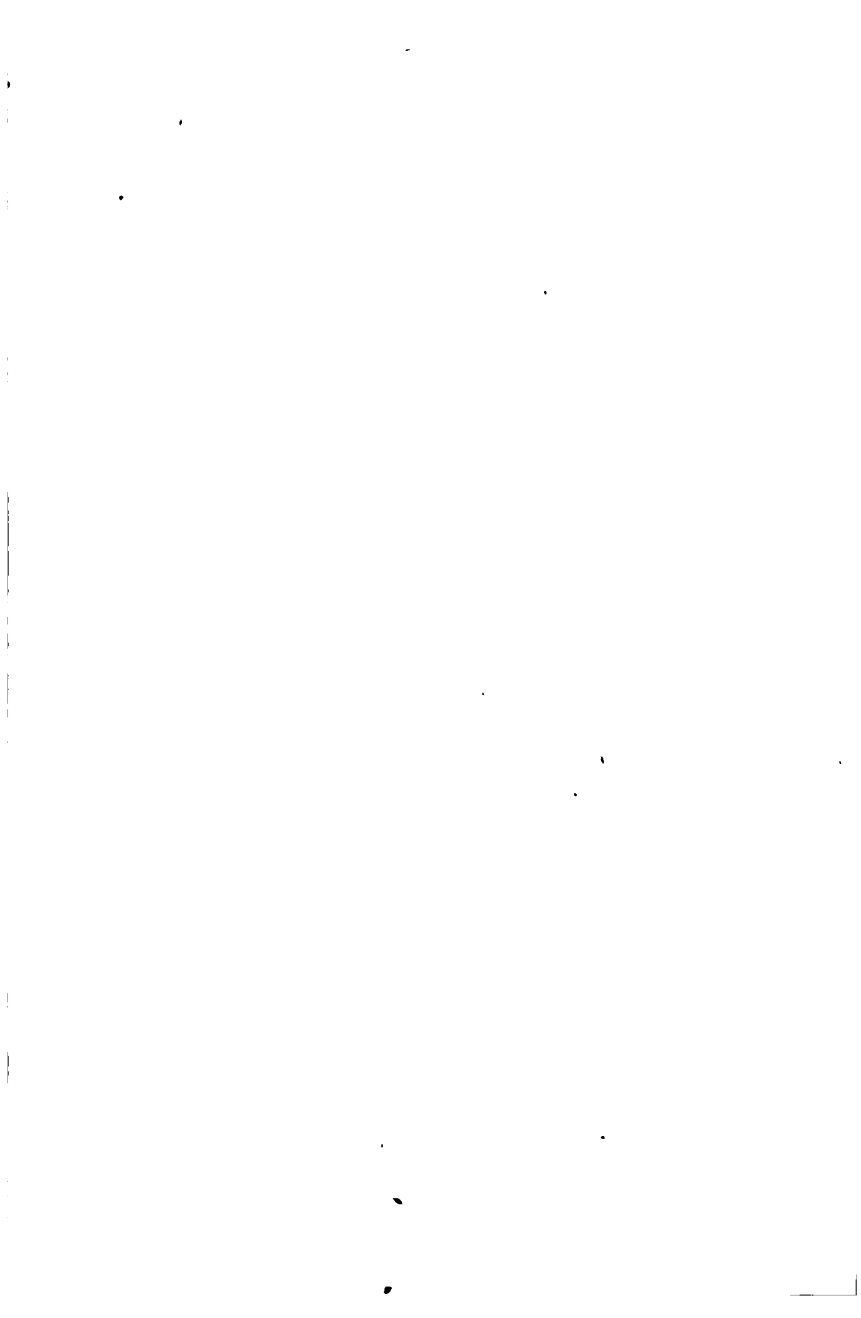
"It was not carelessness at all," replied Hideyoshi. "You meant well, only you mistook your man. In future be more cautious as to whom you recommend."

Not long after this, it was reported to the Mayor of Kyōto, and by him to Hideyoshi, that Ganryū had pasted a verse on his gate which contained some impolite references to the *Taikō*.

When Nagamori was informed of this, he went in post-haste to Hideyoshi and, after acquainting him with what had occurred, exclaimed:—"Abominable villain! I have come to ask Your Highness to give me some troops that I may pursue him and bring him back a captive to the city."

Roaring with laughter at the new turn that his impulsive retainer's feelings had taken, Hideyoshi replied:—"Such a man as Ganryū, if you give him a rope long enough, will be sure to hang himself. Self-destruction being certain with a man of this kind, you need not be so anxious to make a captive of him."





Ganryū wended his way to Himeji, where he had a few acquaintances. Here he hired a house and opened a fencing school, outside of which was placed a notice similar to the one put up in Kyōto.

He soon grew popular in the town, and before very long his praises were sounded in the ears of the nephew of Hideyoshi, Kinoshita Katsutoshi, a baron who at that time was in receipt of an income of two hundred and forty thousand *koku* a year. When Katsutoshi heard of the circumstances under which Ganryū had left Kyōto and of his great skill as a fencer, he remarked :—"Doubtless my uncle was jealous of Ganryū, and that is why he was expelled from the city. I will make use of him."

So Katsutoshi sent for Ganryū and gave him the post of fencing-master at his mansion. While filling this post, Ganryū still continued to carry on his fencing school in the town; so that his time was fully occupied. Two years passed without anything special occurring, Ganryū's popularity still keeping up, and as a consequence his conceit becoming more and more a part of his inmost being.

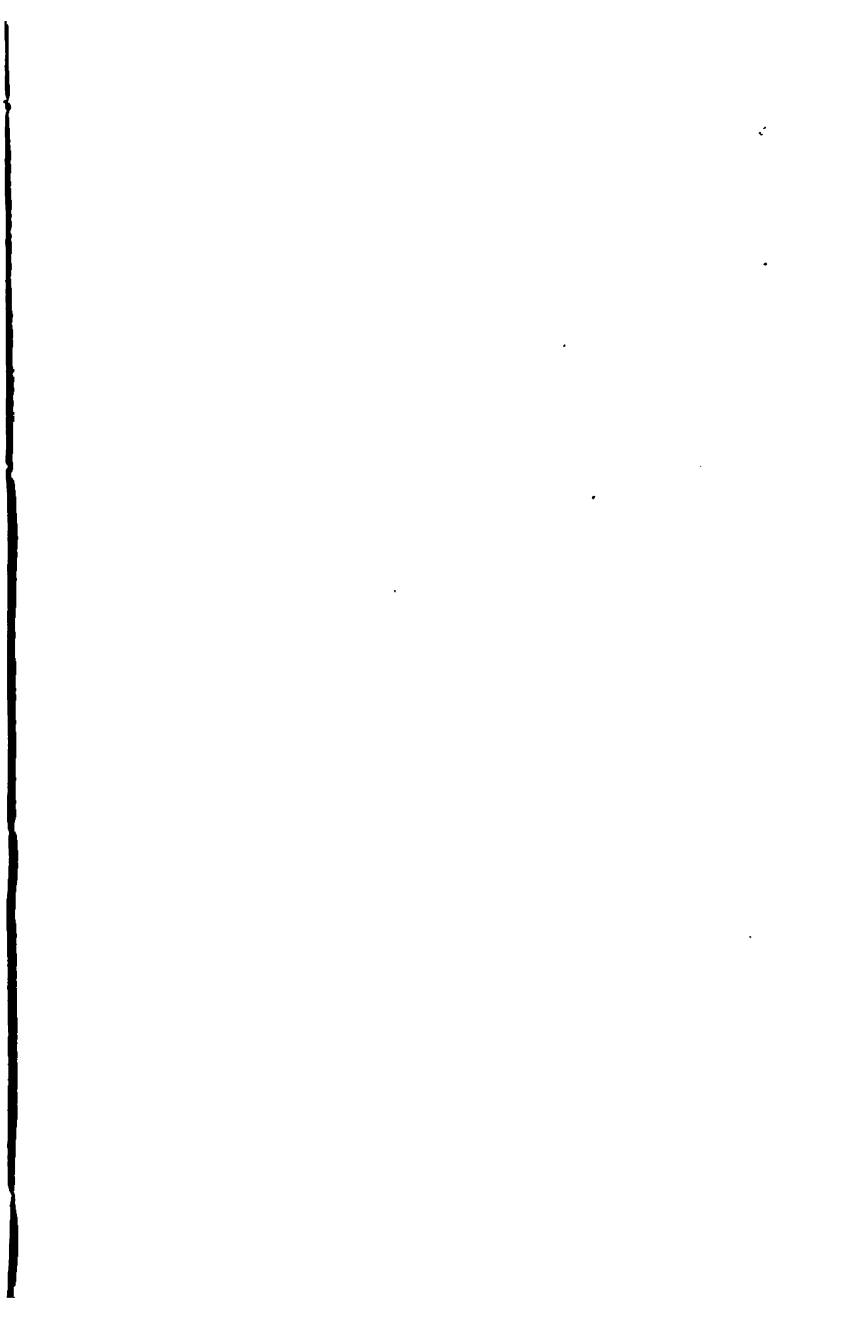


## CHAPTER V.

My story now returns to Munisai. Munisai's reputation as a fencer, through what channel we are not told, reached the ears of Mōri Terumoto. In this nobleman the old fencer found a patron, who supplied him with an income of eight hundred *koku* a year. This involved his moving to Hiroshima, where he gave lessons in fencing for some time. But he was over sixty years of age; he had taken part in many a battle and had often been wounded. His wounds now commenced to give him trouble, as is so often the case with old warriors. With a view to remedying this, he asked and obtained leave from his lord to visit the Arima hot-springs. Thinking that for an invalid to travel with a number of followers would be tedious, he only took one servant. The servant's name was—Kyūsuke.

After spending a fortnight at the Arima spa, Munisai felt quite another man. Consequently he determined to return to Hiroshima. But before doing this he thought it would be pleasant to see the noted places of the neighbourhood. So he made the round of the sights, and among other places visited the castle-town of Himeji.







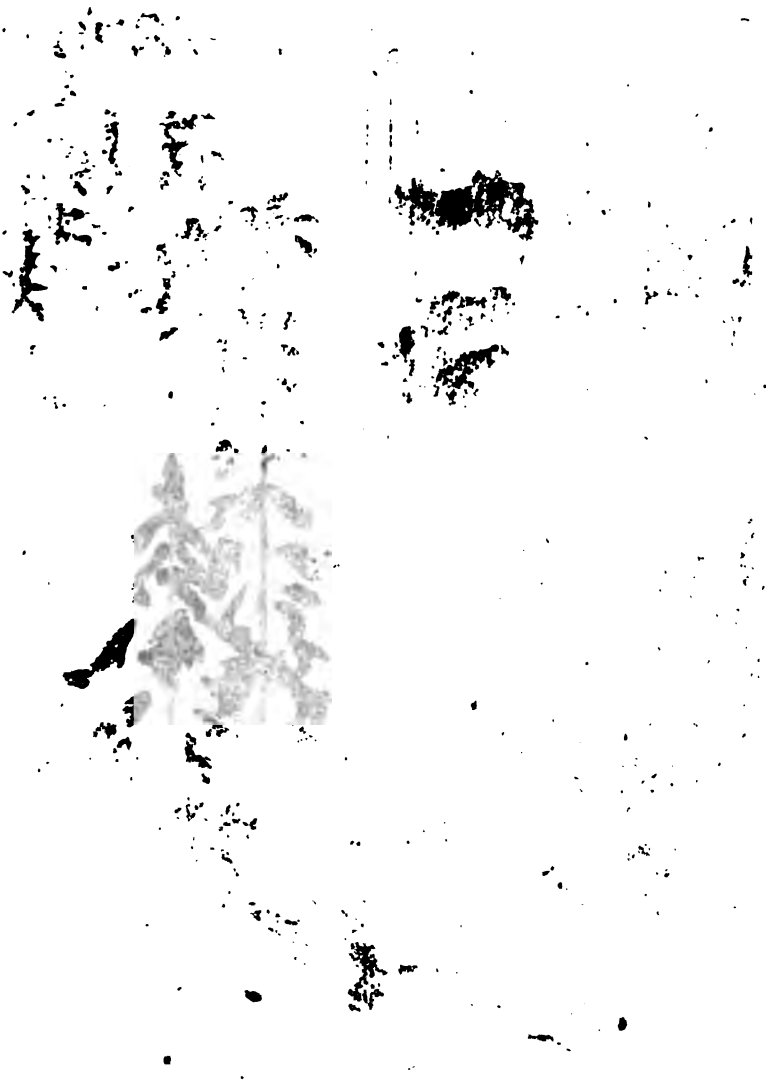
While in Himeji he put up at an inn in Fukui-machi, kept by one—Jirobei. Here, owing to a slight indisposition from which he was suffering, Munisai remained a fortnight. During this time Kyūsuke, who was excessively fond of children, was in the habit of whiling away the hours by playing with the landlord's child. One day he took this child out into the garden attached to the inn, and when the child cried for a persimmon that was hanging from a tree which was the property of the next door neighbour, Kyūsuke stretched over and picked the persimmon. He was discovered and instantly arrested.

The next door neighbour was no other than Sasaki Ganryū. When the landlord of the inn heard what had occurred, he exclaimed:—"Here's a pretty business! I had rather it had been any one but this Ganryū that we had offended. He is a nasty cross-grained fellow who takes umbrage at the slightest thing."

"An unfortunate affair, indeed!" remarked Munisai, when the matter was reported to him. "Anyhow, do you go and beg the man's pardon for my servant's offence. But be sure and not say who I am. If you let him know that I am a *samurai*, he will make no end of fuss, and there is no saying how the thing may end."

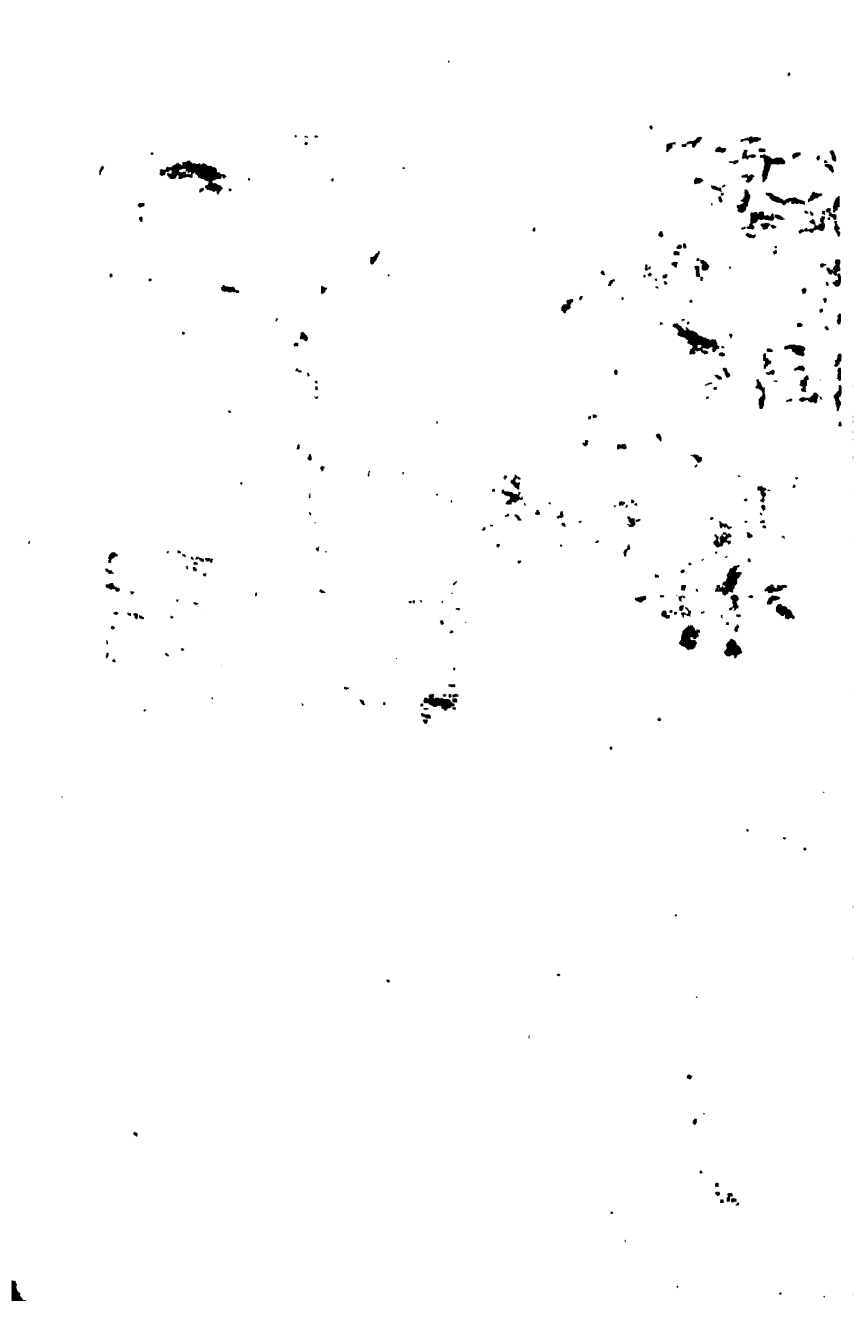
Jirobei went to Ganryū's house to try to get Kyūsuke out of the scrape. Ganryū immediately asked Jirobei

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whether the perpetrator of the offence was one of his own servants or that of a guest.

“A guest's,” was the reply.

“Is the guest a peasant or a warrior?” asked the fencer.

“Jirobei wished to carry out Munisai's instructions; but he thought that if he told a lie and it were discovered, with such a man as Ganryū to deal with, there was no saying what would be the consequence and therefore he felt obliged to reply, “A warrior, sir.”

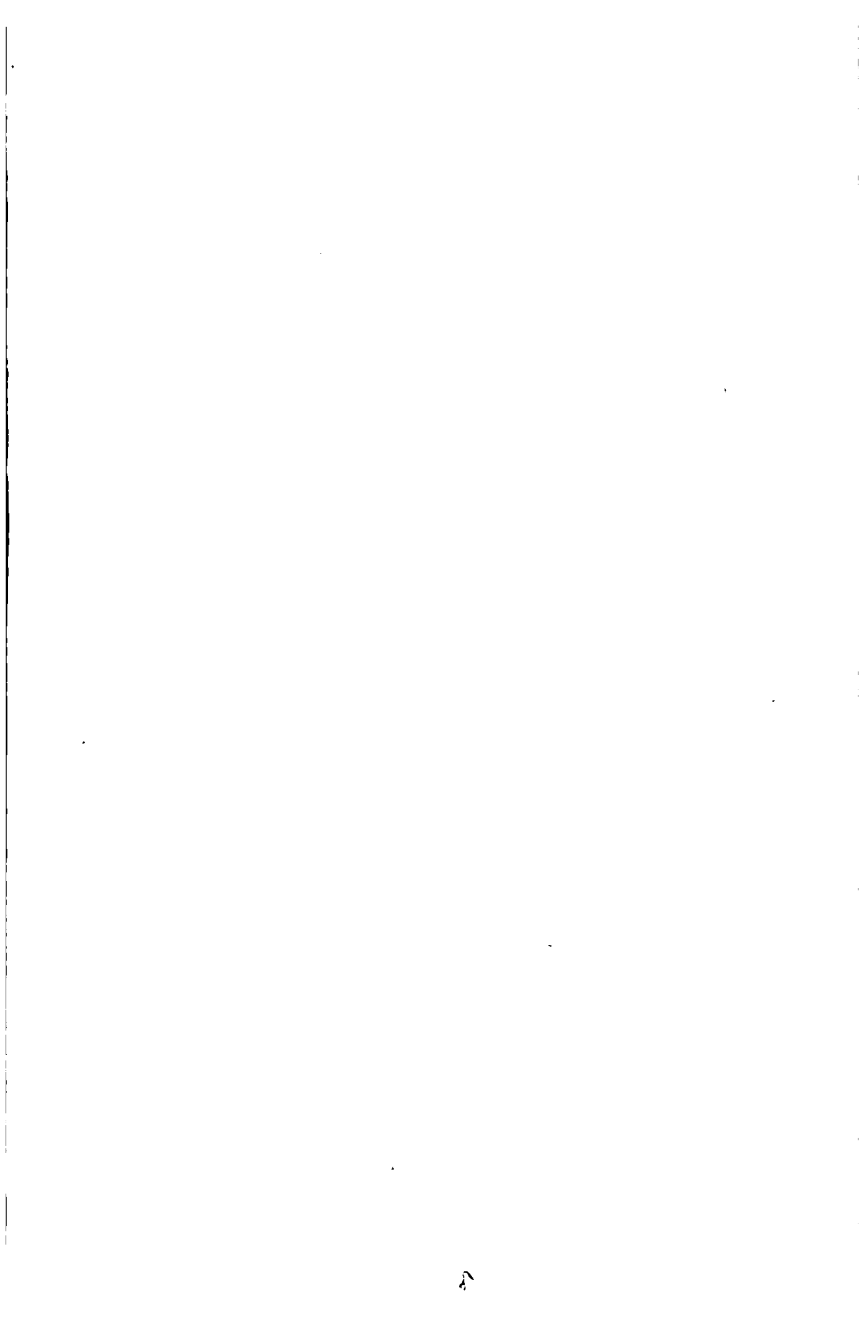
“Whence is he?”

“He is a retainer of Lord Mōri; his name is Yoshioka Munisai.”

No sooner did Ganryū hear this name than he thought to himself:—“This is no other than that famous fencer of the west whose equal, it is said, is not to be found in those parts. If I allow his servant to go off scott free, of course what has happened will ooze out, and people will say that Sasaki Ganryū was afraid to fence with such a noted man as Munisai and therefore it was that he released his servant.”

So, turning to Jirobei, he said:—“Why did your guest not come himself and ask that his servant might be pardoned? To employ another person to do this for him shows a want of due respect to me. Go and tell







him that if he wishes his servant released he must come himself."

Jirobei returned and related this to Munisai.

"There, there! I thought so," exclaimed Munisai, "A pretty mess we have got into! If you had only done as I ordered—concealed my name—but, there, it is no use regretting now. I must go and see this fellow."

So, arraying himself in his dress suit, Munisai, went to Ganryū's house and said:—"I, sir, am Yoshioka Munisai. I have come to ask that you will be good enough to overlook the offence that my servant has committed."

"The offence is a trifling one" replied Ganryū, "and your magnifying it so much makes me feel quite uncomfortable. Of course I will pardon it. But now, to come to another matter, I have heard, sir, that you are the most noted fencer in the whole of Japan. Your praises have often been sounded in my ears, but I have never been privileged to meet you till to-day. Though but a poor hand at it, I, too, have been engaged in teaching fencing, and I have a notice outside my door which states that I am the first fencer in the country. Now, sir, of course there cannot be two firsts; so what I propose is that you and I have a turn together to see which of us is the better man."

Munisai thought to himself as he listened to these remarks:—"This fellow is a fool who is not worth fighting. I must put him off somehow or other." So he replied:—"I, sir, am, as you see, an old man. It would be little use for me to fence with one so active as you. Without a contest, you may take it for granted that I am not equal to you; so we will settle that I am defeated and reckon you as the first fencer in the country. I beg to be excused from fencing with you."

Ganryū would not hear of a refusal. "Either you fence, or I keep your servant as my prisoner," he persisted.

Seeing that there was no choice, Munisai replied:—"Very good, then I will fence. Not being a private person, however, but the retainer of a great lord, I must obtain permission before I can fight. I will send a request to your baron, Lord Katsutoshi."\*

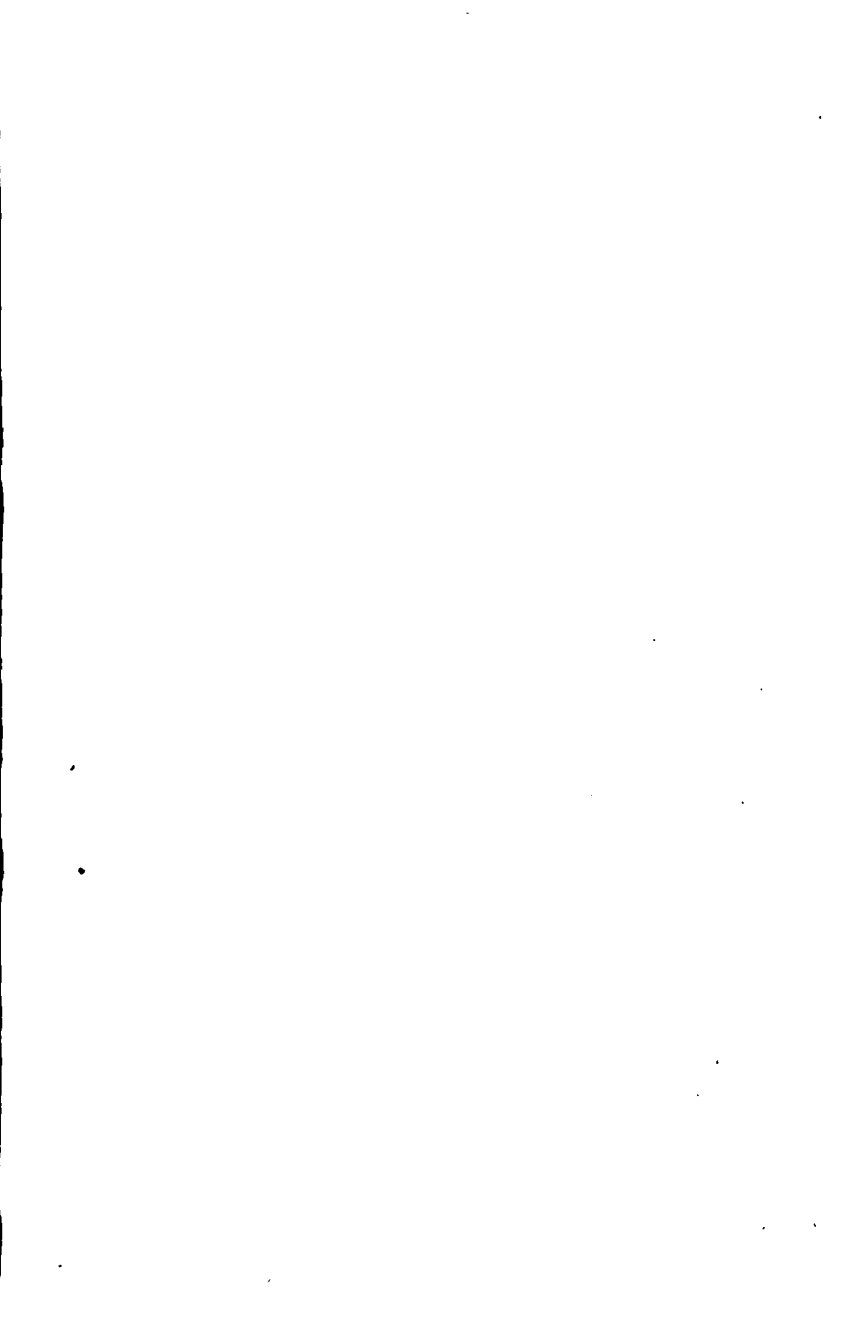
"It is quite natural for you to wish to do this," replied Ganryū.

The two men both sent petitions into Katsutoshi, and permission to hold the match was at once granted, the

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\* When his own master lived at a great distance and a retainer wished to engage in a contest, it was usual for him to obtain permission to fence or fight from the baron in whose dominion he happened to be at the time; and the permission thus obtained was looked on as though it had been granted by the retainer's own lord.





more readily as the baron was desirous of displaying to the world the superior skill of Ganryū.

The place decided on for the contest was Kamejima ; the time, ten o'clock on the following day.

Before the hour appointed a large number of distinguished persons had assembled on the spot where the contest was to take place. Ganryū, with two of his retainers, arrived first on the ground ; and, after paying his respects to the local officials present, sat down in a chair and awaited the arrival of Munisai. The old man soon made his appearance, accompanied by his faithful servant Kyūsuke.

As the spectators looked at the two men before the contest commenced, they were struck with the contrast between them. Ganryū, a man with a magnificent physique, about six feet one inch in height, his limbs well proportioned, his figure erect, was well dressed, and fenced with a sword about three feet long. As he stood in the middle of the fencing ring, he looked like a being endowed with supernatural strength a blow from whose hand would mean instant death.

Munisai, on the other hand, was a poor shrivelled-looking old man : in height, only a little over five feet ; grey-headed, thin, and weak in appearance. As the spectators gazed on him, they said :—" It is pitiable to see

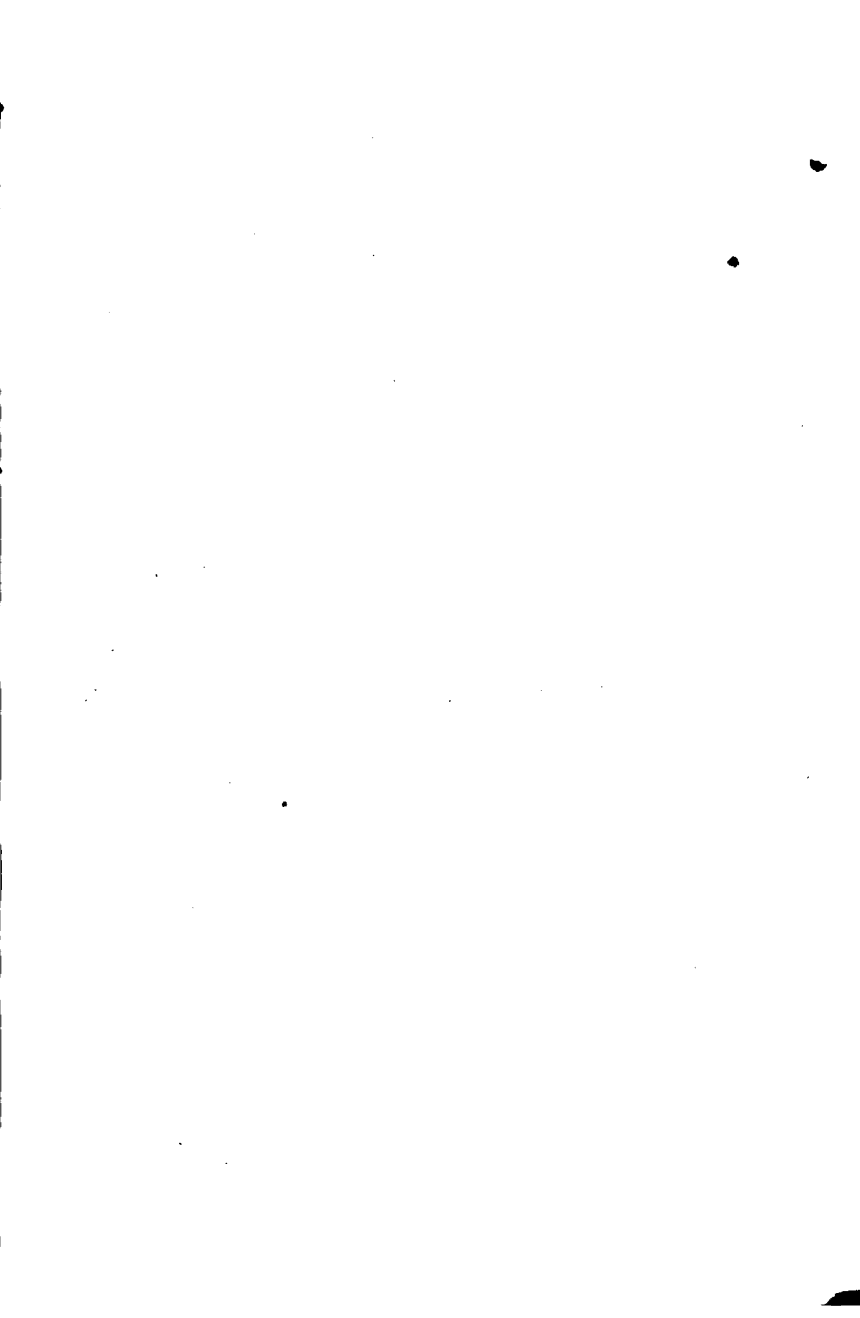
such a poor old man confronting a giant like Ganryū; one good blow will do for him." Here they held their breath and anxiously awaited the commencement of the contest.

Ganryū, in his usual pompous fashion, came forward and said to Munisai:—"If I am defeated to-day, then the sign-board that declares me to be the first fencer in the country becomes yours." The words were no sooner out of his mouth than, with a shout, he rushed at Munisai and dealt a heavy blow at his head.

Munisai parried the stroke. The fight now began in right earnest. The fencing swords moved so rapidly that it was almost impossible to see them. It was not long before Ganryū received a sharp stroke on the shoulder, which had it been from a real sword would have cost him his life.

Munisai, in accordance with the etiquette of the fencing ring, immediately retreated a few steps; and, bowing his head, was about to leave the ring. But Ganryū, in defiance of the rules observed by all fencers, attacked Munisai whilst the latter was in the act of observing the etiquette proper to the occasion. So Munisai had to defend himself; and in the contest which ensued he again struck his foe. This time he delivered a sharp blow on Ganryū's hand—the hand in which he held his sword, causing the sword to fall out of Ganryū's hand.







Ganryū now grew furious and, regardless of all propriety, rushed at Munisai, seized him by the collar of his coat and attempted to throw him down. But Munisai was too quick for him, in an instant he eluded his grasp, and, furthermore, sent him flying through the air to a distance of about four yards. This feat was greeted by an exultant shout from the spectators that rang through the surrounding hills, startling the deer that grazed on the mountain slopes.

Ganryū did not venture to approach such a formidable antagonist again. Though overcome with chagrin, in feigned humility, he addressed Munisai as follows:—"Like the frog in the well, I have lived in ignorance of the existence of such a deeply experienced fencer and such a brave man as you. I have represented myself to be the first fencer in Japan. My remorse knows no limit. I beg that you will take possession of my notice-board."

"Please not to talk in this way," replied Munisai. "Defeat and victory depend on luck. My having been victorious to-day is no reason why I should always be so; there is no need therefore for you to remove your notice-board."

"Let me entreat you to take it," continued Ganryū. "I said that it should be handed over to you, and I am bound to keep my word."

"No," persisted Munisai, "nothing will induce me to consent to this. I have no such feeling as would lead me to do a thing of this kind. So please say no more about it."

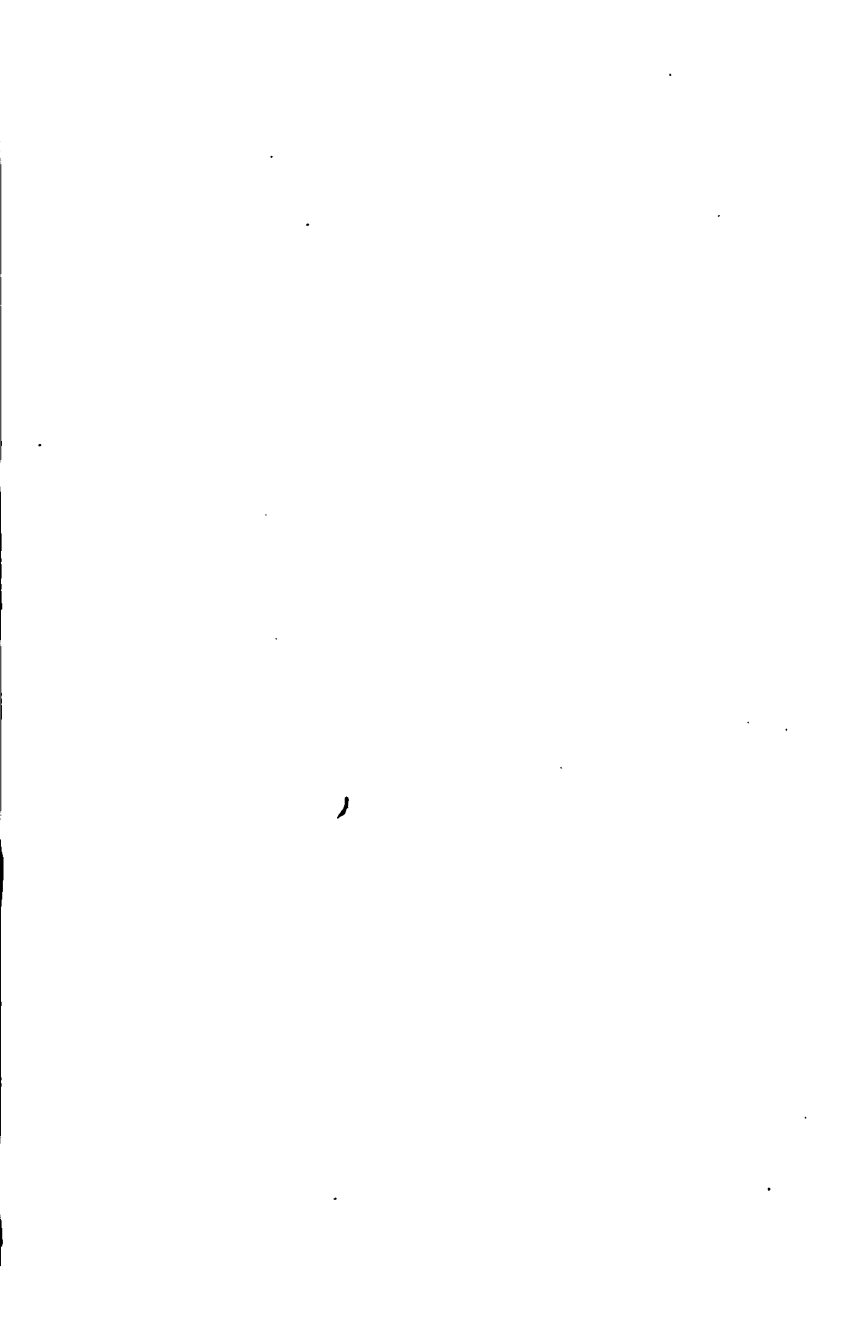
Here Kyūsuke came forward and said:—"Pray do not dispute about the notice-board. As I knew there was no doubt about my master's coming off victorious, before I came here this morning, I removed Ganryū's notice-board and deposited it at our inn."

Munisai was naturally excessively annoyed by the indiscretion of Kyūsuke and he at once reproved him sharply for his insolence.

"You see how I am situated," observed Ganryū to the assembled multitudes. Then turning to his pupils, he said:—"I can no longer act as your teacher. I would not, however, have you look upon this as a misfortune that has befallen me. It is not so. On the contrary, it is a piece of good luck. For I have been taught by my defeat how much I have to learn. Henceforth I intend traversing the country to study the art of fencing more perfectly; when I become sufficiently proficient, I shall return to this place and commence to teach again."

Ganryū then returned to his house, sold off his things as rapidly as possible; and, with Aoyama Mompei and Oshida Sakichi, the two disciples who had followed him from Kyōto, he left the place.





Munisai, too, after paying his respects to the local officials, set out for Hiroshima.

Though Ganryū feigned to have been humbled by his defeat, such was not the case. He said to himself:—“Were it not for the existence of this Munisai, I should be the first fencer in the land. So I will kill him out of the way.”

Ganryū seems to have been entirely ignorant of the existence of such men as Tsukahara Bokuden, Tsukahara Kosaiji, Itō Ittōsai, Kembō Matasaburō, Ono Jirozaemon, Tamiya Tanomo, and Takenouchi Kaganosuke. All these were contemporary noted fencers, and undoubtedly superior to him.

As Munisai had set out on his journey, and Ganryū was ignorant of the route he had taken, the latter thought that it would be impossible to kill his foe then; so he followed him up to Hiroshima. Even here he found that it would be no easy matter to accomplish his purpose; for Munisai, being a man of some importance, always went out attended.

For some time Ganryū failed to hit on a plan that seemed likely to prove successful. But one day, when walking on the outskirts of Hiroshima in a place called Imado, near a bank he saw assembled a large number of beggars: Imado being a favourite resort of vagrants of all kinds.

"I will employ these beggars to effect my purpose," said Ganryū to himself. So for the space of seven days he feasted them with rice and *sake*. This did not appear in any way strange to the recipients of his bounty, as they thought that Ganryū was observing the custom of aiding the spirits of the deceased by bestowing alms on the poor.\* While the beggars were feasting day by day, Ganryū tested their courage and strength of purpose in various ways. After a while he chose out four that seemed to him promising men and told them that he was desirous of saying something to them.

They, thinking it probable that he wished to try a new sword on them,† were afraid to approach him.

Ganryū assured them that there was no cause for alarm. So they accompanied him to a retired spot, where he asked:—"Do you know a man called Yōshioka Munisai?"

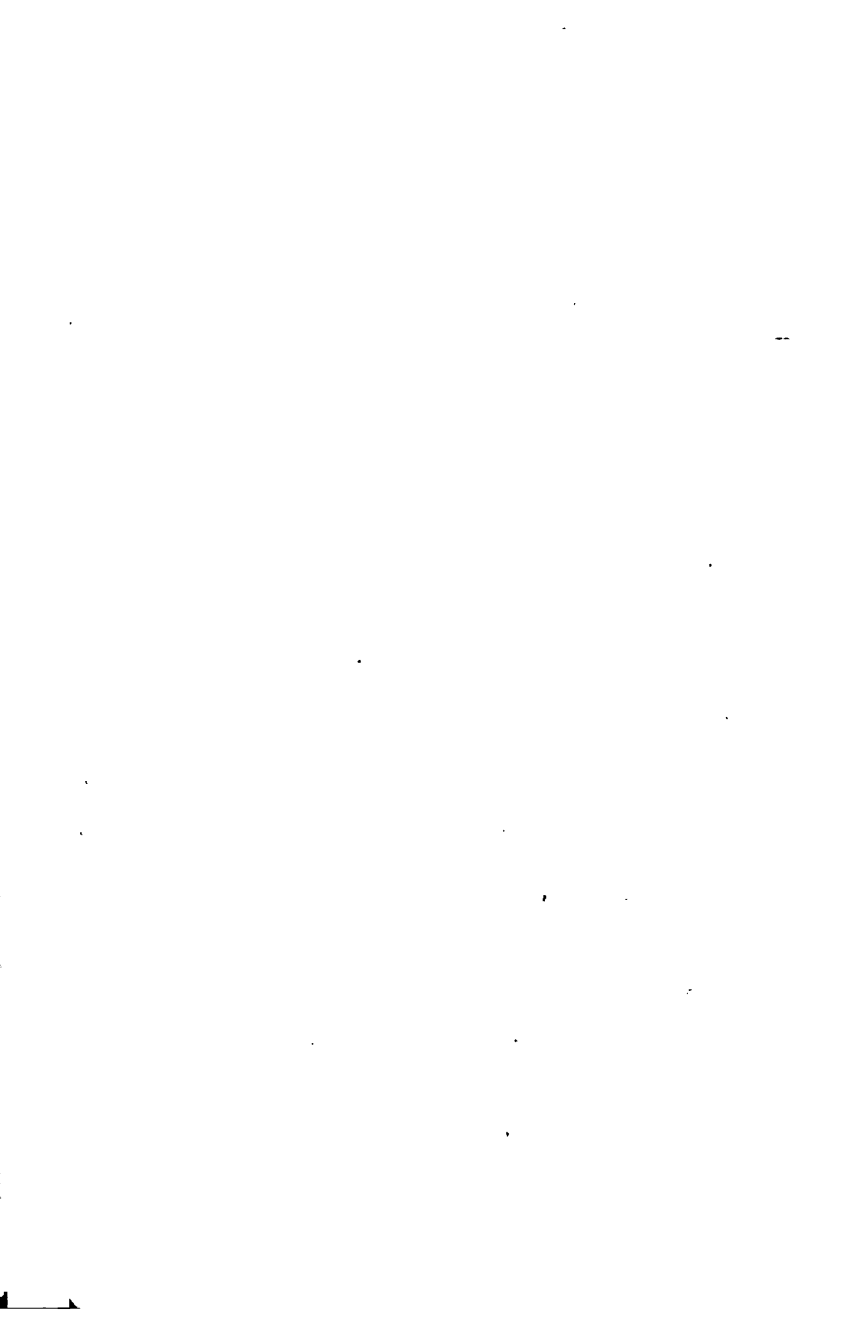
"Know him! Of course; everybody knows him," replied the beggars. "He is a very noted fencer."

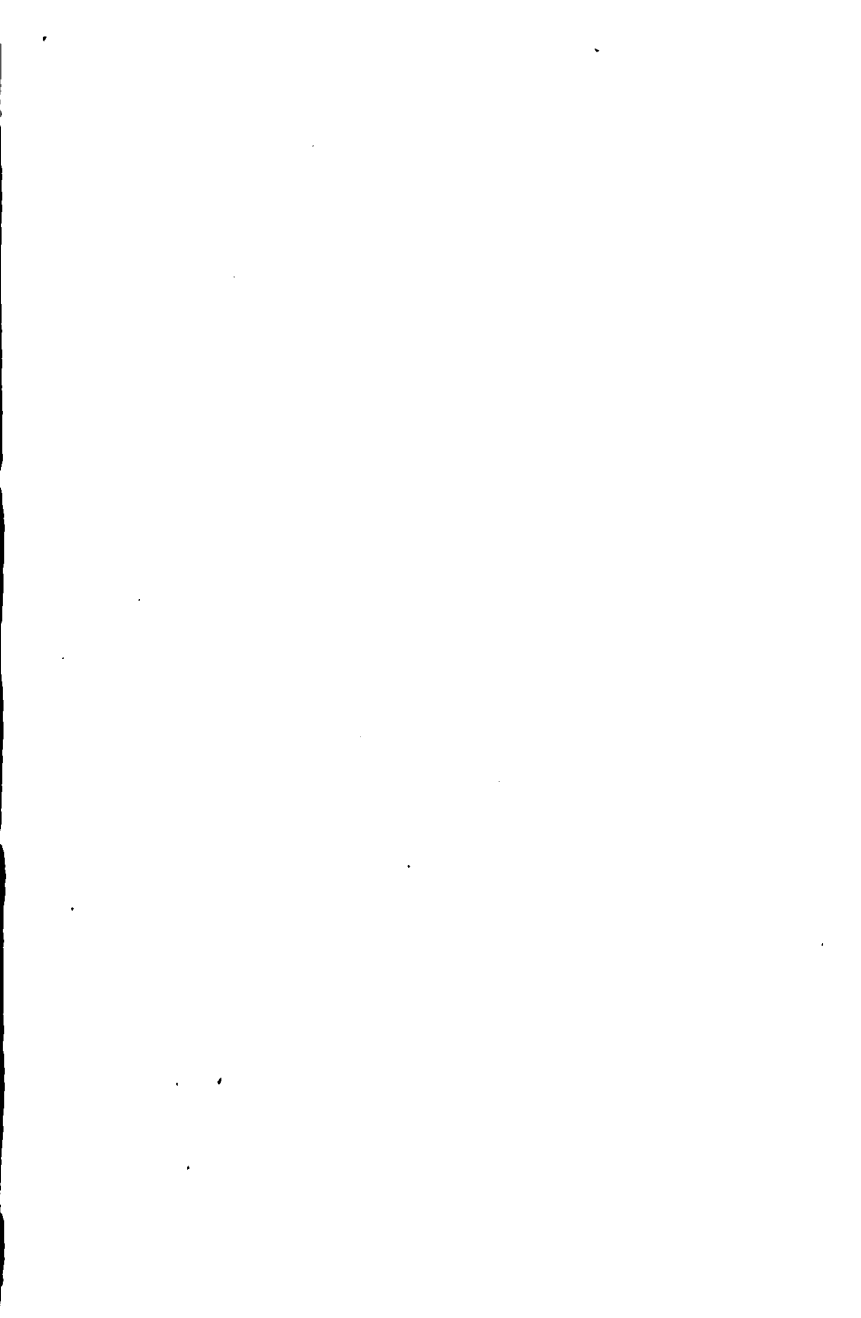
"Well," said Ganryū, "I must tell you that this Munisai is a mortal enemy of mine. He slew my father: and filial piety makes it incumbent on me to avenge my father's death. I might break into his house and endeavor

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\* This custom originated with Buddhism.

† A very common practice in those days.







our to slay him there. But, surrounded as he is by attendants, this plan would not prove successful. I wish therefore to kill him as he passes along the road on his way to or from some place. And what I want you to do is to give me information as to his movements." Here Ganryū gave them a *ryō* each.

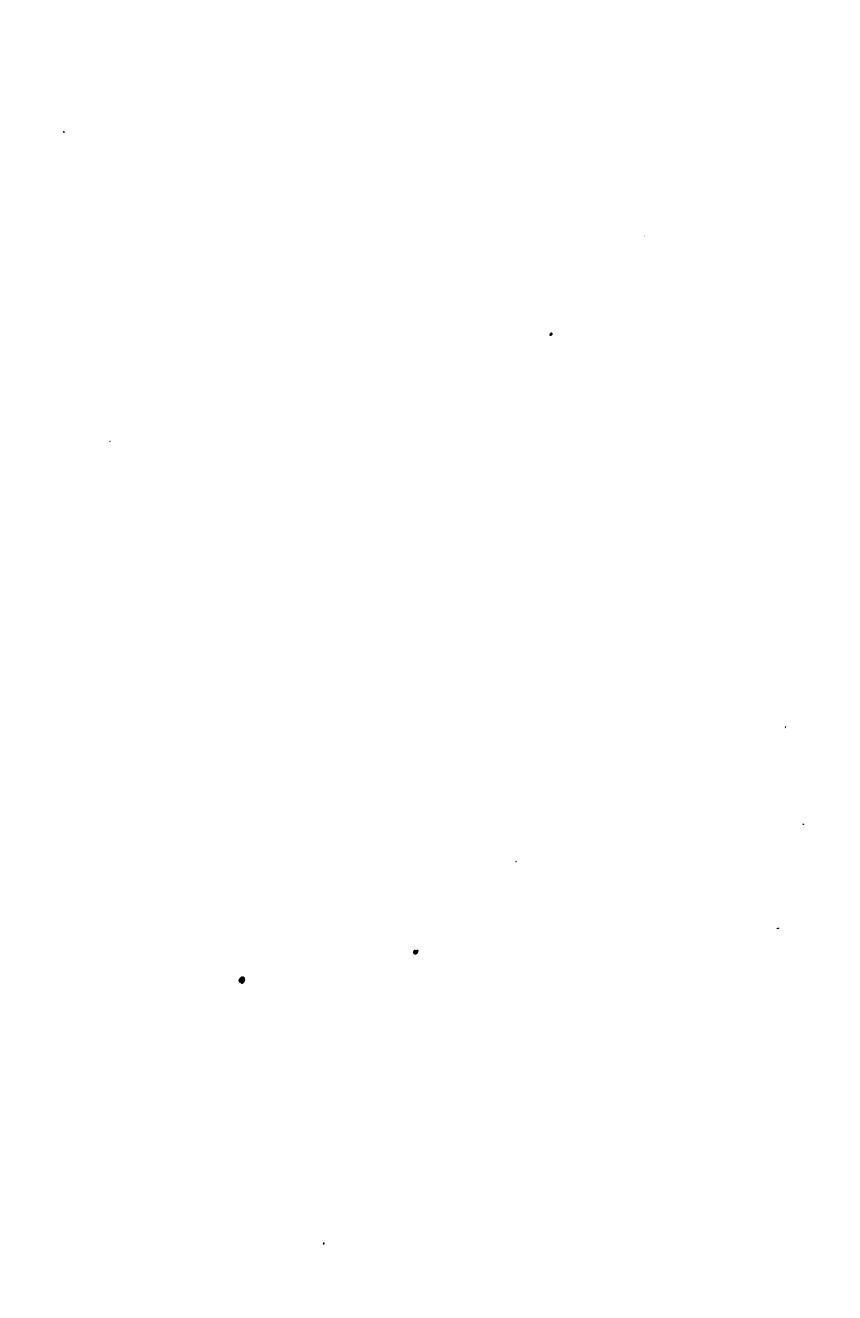
"Nothing is easier than this," replied the beggars. "We will give you all the information we can obtain."

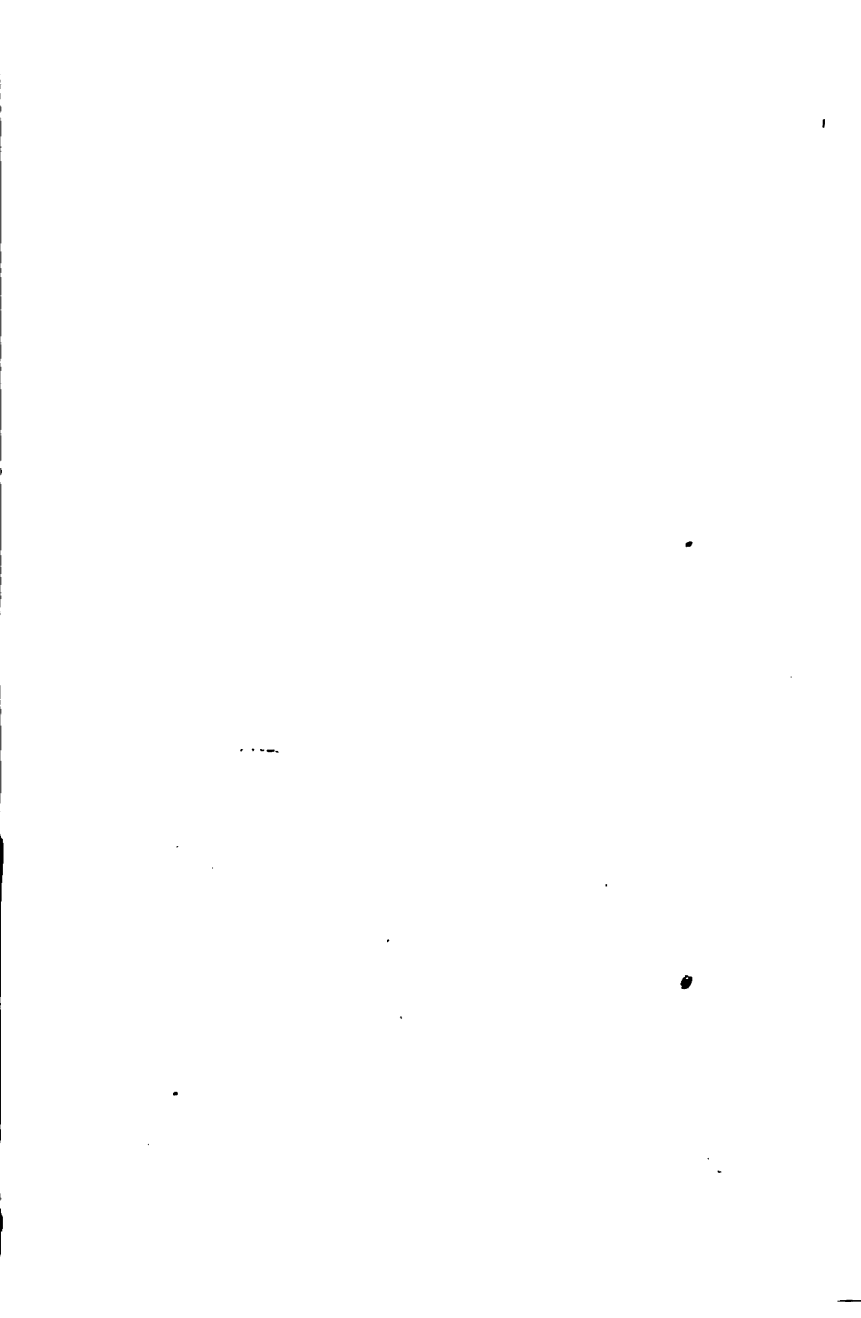
Munisai, while on his way from ~~Himeji~~ to Hiroshima, had kept a sharp look out; being well aware that it was customary for defeated fencers of bad dispositions to plot the destruction of their victors. But once having reached Hiroshima, he deemed caution unnecessary. That the enmity of Ganryū was deep enough to bring him all the way to Hiroshima to seek out his foe, he had no idea. Munisai was a man whom natural goodness had made blind to the inherent wickedness of others. Never having been the subject of the strong passion that impelled Ganryū to such dread acts as the ones I am about to describe and that eventually was to consummate his ruin, he did not suspect its presence, much less measure its power, in other hearts. So, on his return to his house he gave his friends an account of his contest with Ganryū as the one exciting event of his trip, and then dismissed the subject from his thoughts. By some means or other, however, the

successful contest with Ganryū reached the ears of the lord of the manor, and Munisai's income was increased by one hundred *koku* a year on its account.

The beggars watched Munisai closely day after day. Advanced in years, he did not go out often unless in connection with his duties as a fencing master, when his route lay through places that afforded no facilities for the meditated assassination. What Ganryū wanted was to hear of Munisai's going to some place a little removed from the populous part of Hiroshima and, if possible, that he was to return to his house after dark: for, by attempting the assassination in the day, he would certainly risk being apprehended.

The opportunity looked for came. At the house of one of Munisai's pupils an operatic performance was to take place, and Munisai was invited to be present on the occasion. He accepted the invitation. Early one forenoon he left his house to attend the performance. His route lay through Imado, so he was seen by numbers of the beggars who were loitering about there. They at once hastened to inform Ganryū of what had occurred. "Munisai has passed through Imado, and has gone to a place about five miles distant," said the beggars. "He will certainly return by the same road as he went."





Ganryū was extremely pleased to hear this, and early in the afternoon, concealing himself in the grass that grew by the side of the bank, he awaited the arrival of Munisai. He told the beggars to go on the road in the direction in which the old man was expected to return, to keep a sharp look out, and to let him know when his enemy was in sight.

Munisai was handsomely entertained by his pupil. After having imbibed more *sake* than was good for him, he proposed to take leave of his host and return to his home. It was a dark, rainy, dreary night; so the host begged him not to think of venturing to set out so late in the evening. "Stop the night here," said he. "It is hardly safe to be out on such a night as this, and you an old man too!"

"No, no;" replied Munisai. "Old as I am, I am good for six or eight assailants any day in the week. I will go home. Many thanks for offering to put me up all the ~~same~~."

Munisai set out with only two followers. A blazing torch was borne in front of him, for at this time no lanterns such as are seen nowadays were in use. The torch-light on such a pitch-dark night rendered Munisai conspicuous in the distance. So Ganryū was apprised of the approach of the man whose life he sought to take in

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time for him to complete all his preparations before Munisai drew near. Hastily did he give the beggars who brought the information twelve *ryō* and enjoined on them the strictest secrecy: "We shall all be killed," said he, "if this matter be divulged."

When Munisai approached the place where his foe lay in ambush, he seemed to have a mysterious presentiment of some impending danger.\* He stopped and asked his attendant whether the little bridge which he was crossing was quite safe.

"Quite safe," replied the attendant; and Munisai proceeded, but only to be greeted by the voice of Ganryū who, relying on the loaded gun which he held in his hand, ventured to acquaint his foe with his presence thus:—"Villain, Munisai! remember the enmity that you caused in Himeji."

Instantly Munisai's hand was on the hilt of his sword; but before the weapon had left its sheath the deadly firearm had been discharged by the cowardly hand of Ganryū. Alas! the assassin's aim was only too true. Munisai dropped dead to the ground.

One of the attendants attacked Ganryū, but was im-

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\* In Japanese stories such remarks as this are very frequent, writers and readers alike apparently believing in omens of good and evil. But some of Japan's great heroes made a point of showing their disbelief in omens of all kinds. *Vide* Appendix II.





mediately killed; the other threw away his torch and fled.

Ganryū, after running his sword through the throat of his foe, whistled for the four beggars who had assisted him to carry out his deadly purpose. They approached him with smiling faces, expecting to receive the reward promised them. Horrible to relate!—the poor wretches were all brutally murdered one after the other by the villain whose dupes they had been.

Having thus, as he thought, rendered the crimes of that night absolutely undiscoverable, Ganryū fled.



## CHAPTER VI.

The attendant of Munisai who escaped hastened home and reported what had occurred. Seizaburō was ill at the time and not fit to leave the house, but, leaning on a stick, he made his way to the scene of the murder. On seeing his father's corpse lying in a pool of blood, he was overcome with grief and despair. He called on Heaven to witness the cruel spectacle, and vowed vengeance on the author of the crime.\* But to avenge his father's death Seizaburō had neither the strength nor the skill. There was his brother, however, who was as robust as he was brave, a skilful fencer and fond of fighting, to him he would commit the task of slaying the fiend who had perpetrated this deed of blood.

Accordingly Seizaburō immediately despatched a letter to Shichinosuke, informing him of what had occurred and requesting him to lose no time in taking vengeance on their cruel foe.

Shichinosuke presented the letter to Buzaemon and asked to be permitted to set out on this errand. "I know," said Shichinosuke, "that, having been adopted by you, it is not incumbent on me to avenge my father's death; but the circumstances are peculiar. My elder brother is not equal to the task, so unless I undertake it this

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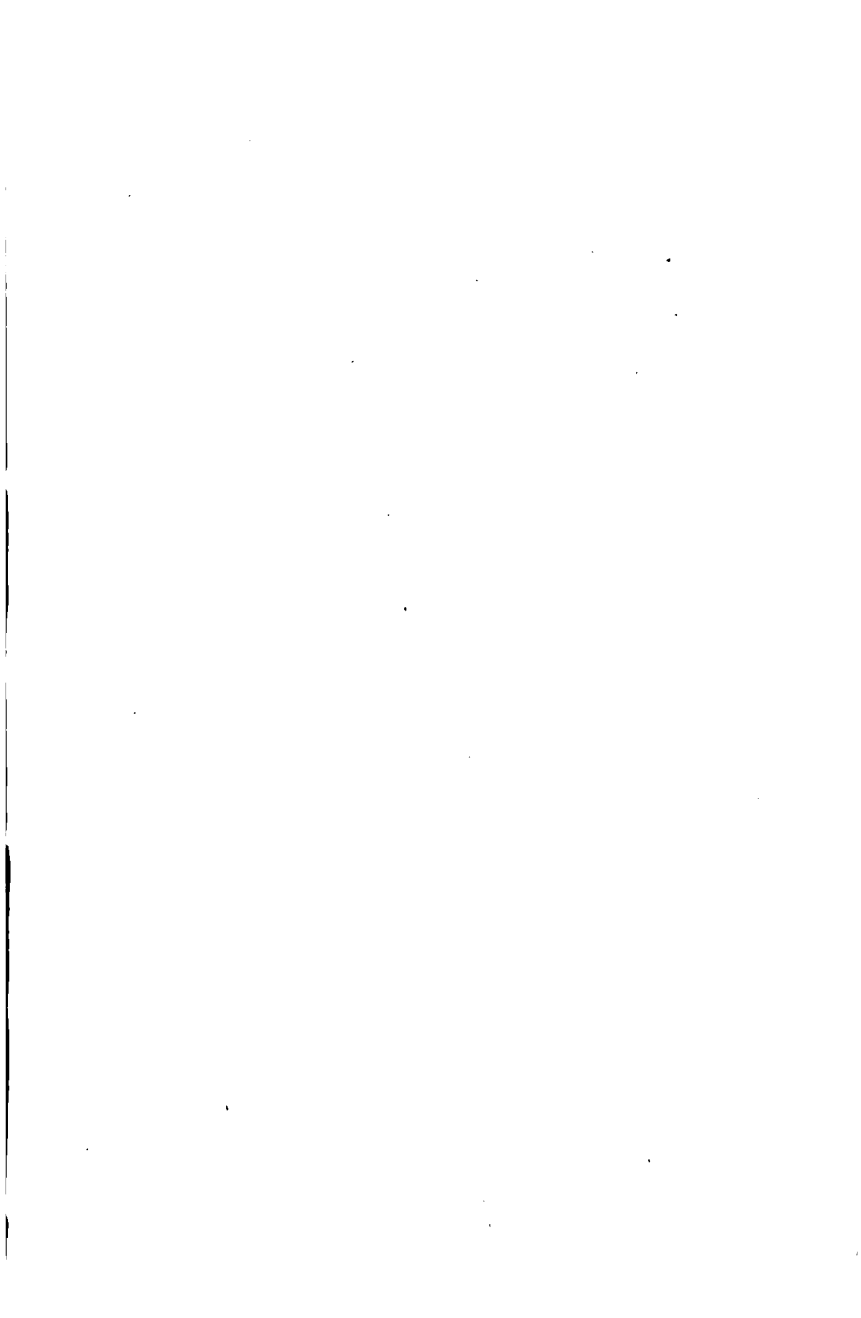
1993-1994

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1997-1998













had been Kiyomasa's great support in the numerous wars that he had waged, with the baron himself in their midst, and a large number of persons of less note.

On the arrival of Shichinosuke there was a whispering among the heroes as to who should confront the author of the Two-sworded-style. This resulted in Kimura Matazō's coming forward and requesting to be permitted to act as Shichinosuke's opponent. "Very good," replied Kiyomasa, "you will do."

Matazō was the disciple of Tsukahara Kosaiji (Bokuden's nephew). He was a skilful fencer and a man of immense strength. It was said that his strength was equal to that of some twenty ordinary men. He sprang into the ring: and as he wielded a fencing-sword some three feet long, looked as though he could cleave an iron bar in two. He struck at Shichinosuke's head with all his might. Shichinosuke received the stroke on his crossed swords. Matazō tried to break the combination, but in vain.

Kiyomasa watched this feat with intense interest, and when he perceived that Matazō could neither break through the combination nor withdraw his sword, he exclaimed:—"Fine! fine! Now let me see how the position can be changed."

Whereupon Shichinosuke separated the swords, and stood ready to defend himself against any blow that might

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be dealt at him. Matazō tried to find an unguarded place at which to aim a blow, but in vain. So he gave it up, and Kiyomasa, seeing this, ordered that the contest should close. The spectators, to most of whom the style was quite new, were loud in its praises; and the whole of that day and on a good many following ones Shichinosuke and his new style formed the chief topic of conversation among the heroes of Kumamoto, who never felt thoroughly interested except when conversing on military affairs,—warriors to the backbone that they were.

Kiyomasa now called Shichinosuke and said to him: —“Your style is certainly a very striking one; but in a large country like Japan there are a great many noted fencers; and therefore it would be premature to say that your mode of fencing is superior to all others: it needs to be tested. With a view to your putting it to the test, it is my pleasure that you set out on a pilgrimage. Those whom you may meet with on your travels that are inferior to you, teach; those that are superior, make your teachers. If circumstances require it, there is no objection to your testing the superiority of your style with a real sword.\* Here is a sword that I value very much: I now make you a present of it. It is one of Shizu Samurō Kaneuji’s

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\* This was a tacit permission to his executing the *vendetta* on his father’s murderer.





weapons.\* Hereupon I change your name to Musashi. The meaning of this term (武藏) is 'the storing up of military knowledge'; and it is given to you because henceforth you are to be employed in acquiring a more minute knowledge of the art of fencing."

The appellation of Masa-akira was also given to Shichinosuke, or Musashi (as we shall now call him) at this time.

Musashi returned to his house and made his preparations for starting.

On leaving Kumamoto he directed his steps to Hiroshima. On arrival there he consulted with Seizaburō as to who was the author of the murder and as to the best way of discovering the assassin's lurking-place.

It must be remembered that all that Seizaburō had to guide him in discovering the murderer was what the surviving attendant heard on the night of the murder about the enmity caused in Himeji. But the two brothers knew that their father, being an extremely inoffensive man, was not at all likely to have excited anyone's enmity intentionally, and that therefore the ill-will referred to was no doubt caused by the display of Munisai's skill in fencing during his stay in Himeji. "Ganryū is the murderer," said Musashi; "and I will go in search of him."

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\* Shizu Kaneuji was a very noted swordsmith.

He first went through Chūgoku,\* but could hear nothing of the whereabouts of his foe; then, turning his face northwards, he passed through that part of the country known as the Hokurikudō,† and entered the province of Dewa.‡ Here he fought with a robber-chief, whom he killed. From thence he went on to Mutsu,§ and subsequently to Hitachi, where he fenced with that noted fencer Moro-oka Ichi-u.

Ichi-u was the author of a style of fencing known as the Moro-oka style. He was residing at this time in a place called Edogasaki. He was a man of a noble disposition, and he and Musashi at once became great friends. Ichi-u had some three hundred disciples. With a number of these Musashi fenced in Ichi-u's presence. Seeing that his pupils stood no chance before the author of the Two-sworded-style, eventually Ichi-u came forward himself. After trying his best for a little while, putting aside his sword, he said to Musashi:—"Your knowledge of the art of fencing is superior to anything I have seen for a long time. I am no match for you. I know of

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\* Embracing the San-indō and the San-yōdō; each of these terms includes eight provinces.

† The Hokurikudō contains seven provinces.

‡ Including Uzen and Ugo.

§ The ancient Mutsu included Rikuzen, Rikuchū, and the modern Mutsu.







only two men who can teach you anything. One is Tsukahara Bokuden and the other Itō Ittōsai. The former is still alive, but where he lives I cannot tell you. The latter I have entirely lost sight of, whether he is dead or alive I do not know. I advise you in the course of your travels to endeavour to find out Bokuden's whereabouts and to fence with him."

Musashi was pleased to hear this, and, after putting up for the night with Moro-oka, he set out for Edo, where he spent some weeks. Edo was at that time the residence of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and a stronghold of the central feudal government established by Hideyoshi.

On leaving Edo, Musashi travelled over the Tōkaidō to Himeji, and held a consultation with the keeper of the inn in which Munisai had stayed. Hearing that Ganryū had a number of pupils and admirers in this town, and that he had been heard to say that he would return and give them instruction again when he had become thoroughly proficient in fencing, Musashi decided to take up his quarters in Himeji. He was somewhat wearied after all his travels and hardships. Hope deferred had made the heart sick, and he was beginning to feel doubtful whether he would ever find his enemy by wandering about the country without any clue as to his whereabouts. So, with a view to conceal himself as much as

possible and yet be where he could hear everything that was going on, he asked the landlord of the inn to endeavour to get a place for him as a domestic servant of some kind in Kinoshita Katsutoshi's palace. He was the more anxious to obtain work in this house, as he thought it probable that Ganryū having been employed by Kinoshita, would on his return be sure to report his arrival to this baron, and perhaps seek to enter his service again. If this were the case, Musashi would be able to slay him whenever a suitable opportunity occurred.

The landlord succeeded in obtaining a situation for Musashi as a domestic servant in Kinoshita's palace. In this capacity Musashi performed the most menial tasks with his usual assiduity: so much so that his diligence attracted the attention of his employers, and it soon got to the ears of the Earl of Harima (Katsutoshi) that there was among his domestics a man who looked very different from ordinary servants. Kinoshita made inquiries about him, and when he found out who Musashi was sent for him and addressed him as follows:—"I had no idea that I had in my employ such a noted man as the author of the Two-sworded-style. If you will consent to become my retainer, I shall be happy to give you two thousand *koku* a year."

"I am extremely obliged to you for your kind offer, my Lord," replied Musashi; "but as I am the retainer





of Lord Katō, of Higo, I am not able to accept it. I am on a pilgrimage with the view of improving my style of fencing, and in the course of my wanderings have come here."

"Well, then," replied Kinoshita, "if you cannot become my retainer, still remain as my servant. I will order that two hundred bags of rice a year be set aside for your use."

Musashi thanked the baron and accepted the offer. While in Kinoshita's service, owing to an incident occurring the particulars of which it would take too long to relate, Musashi was accused of having stolen a sword. The fact was that he had had a sword put into his hands in a mysterious way. Doubtless he was duped by some sharper, who, on inquiry being made for a missing sword, took advantage of Musashi's simplicity to induce him to take the weapon as a present.

But this is not how the matter is explained in the *Kokon-jitsuroku Eiyū-bidan*.\* True to the spirit of the age in which Musashi lived, and following the records of his life which appeared shortly after his death, the author of this work relates that Musashi had various dealings with foxes that had assumed the forms of men. The foxy nature of these creatures was discovered by the rapidity with which they acquired the art of fencing.

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\**Vide supra*, p. 174, foot-note.

Musashi's being found with the missing sword in his possession was supposed to have been the result of the machinations of one of these transformed foxes. Musashi himself believed this, and his biographer states it as an historical fact. In those days Renard was supposed to be the author of anything and everything that it was difficult to trace to its real source.

Though Musashi was confident that a fox had been playing tricks with him, he did not care for the world to know that he had been thus deceived; specially as he had shortly before, to show his contempt for the vulgar superstitions about ghosts and apparitions, night after night slept in a part of the castle that was said to be haunted by transformed foxes. So, when accused of thieving the sword that was found in his possession, he did not deny the charge, but allowed himself to be placed under custody.

Kinoshita, thinking there was something mysterious about the matter, did not allow Musashi to be punished, contenting himself with placing him under the surveillance of one of his retainers.

The most exciting part of Musashi's life was yet to come. His wonderful adventures during the long and weary search for his foe and his final triumph will be described in Part II of this Biography.









24.

## APPENDIX.

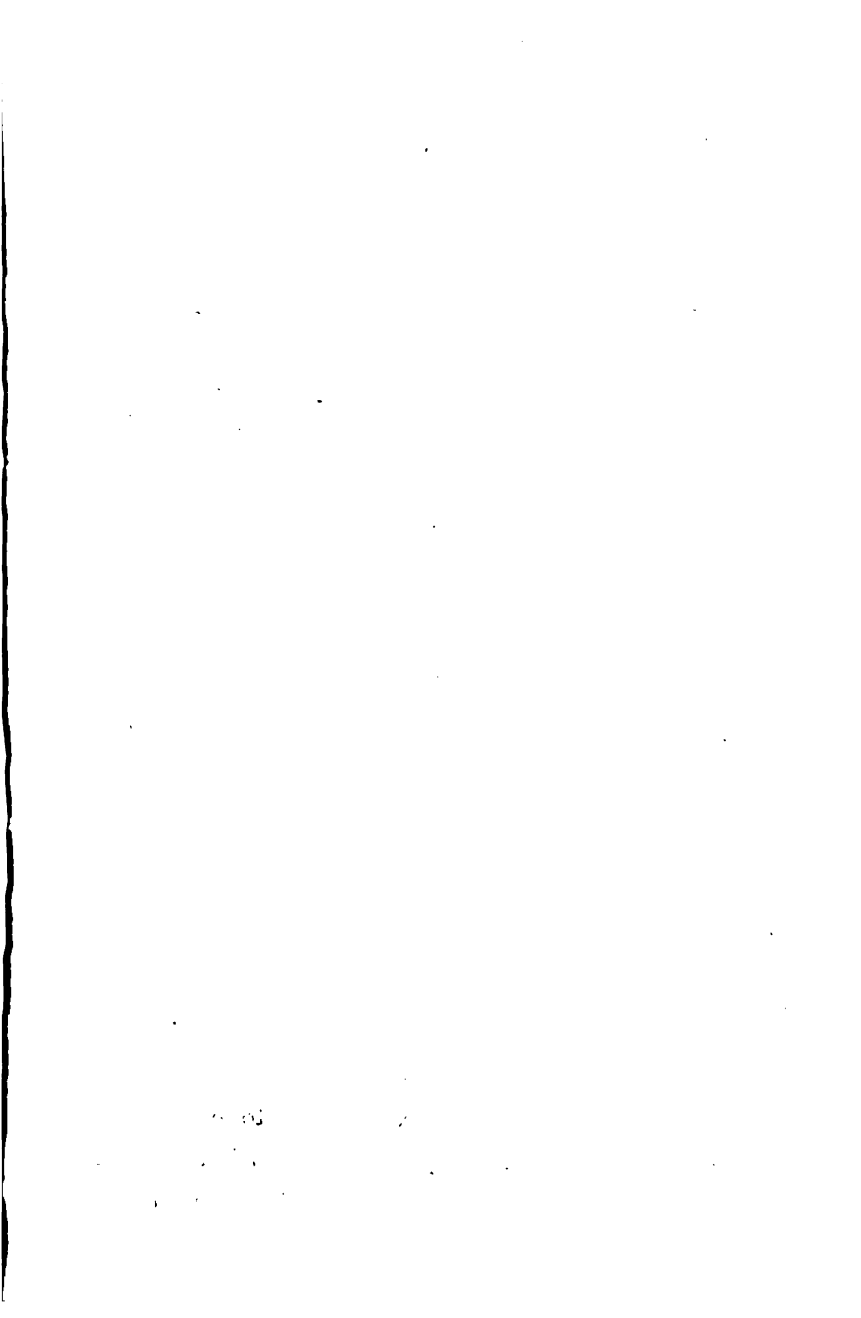
### I

Tukahara Bokuden, who is frequently mentioned in the Life of Miyamoto Musashi, was a noted fencer and teacher of spear-exercise who lived in the time of the Shōgun Ashikaga Yoshiaki [made Shōgun A.D. 1565]. He was the author of a style of fencing called the *Mute-kachi-ryū* (The Handless-victory-style).

It happened once that Bokuden, on his way eastward from Kyōto, was crossing the lake at Yabase, Ōmi, in a ferry-boat, in company with some seven or eight men. Among his fellow-passengers there was a man about thirty-seven years of age, who was tall in stature, had a black beard and who used extremely rough language. He was talking in the most vulgar, pompous fashion of his various powers, and boasting especially of his skill as a fencer. Any one listening to his bombastic language would have imagined that there was no one in the world to be compared to him.

Bokuden tried not to pay any attention to what this fencer was saying. He lay down and endeavoured to go to sleep, but though he dozed a little, he still heard the man going on in the same strain, till he felt it was beyond





all bearing. "You have been talking on all kinds of topics," said Bokuden to the man, "and you have said a great many extraordinary things. But what I find it difficult to pass over without comment are the remarks you have made on the subject of fencing. I have paid attention to fencing from my earliest days, but I have never done, as you have been doing, boasted of conquering this man and the other. All I have aimed at doing is to avoid being beaten by others."

"Your mode of fencing seems to be a very mild one," replied the man. "May I ask what style you practise?"

"I have no special style," replied Bokuden. "The mode I adopt is, without using my hands, to avoid being defeated, and therefore I win."

"Then," rejoined the man, "if you conquer without using your hands, why do you wear two swords?"

"The reason of my possessing these swords," replied Bokuden, "is one of those things which cannot be explained by word of mouth, and can only be thoroughly comprehended by a mind that is in sympathy with mine. What can be told of it, however, I will tell you. The object of my wearing these two swords is to enable me to cut off the vanity which is apt to spring up in the heart to the injury of the man, and to cut away all the buds of those evil thoughts which I find sprouting within my breast."

“Come! we will have a bout together;” exclaimed the man; “and we shall soon see whether you can conquer without using your hands or not.”

“The swords of which I have been speaking,” replied Bokuden, “are designed to preserve life. But in the case of a bad man they destroy it.”

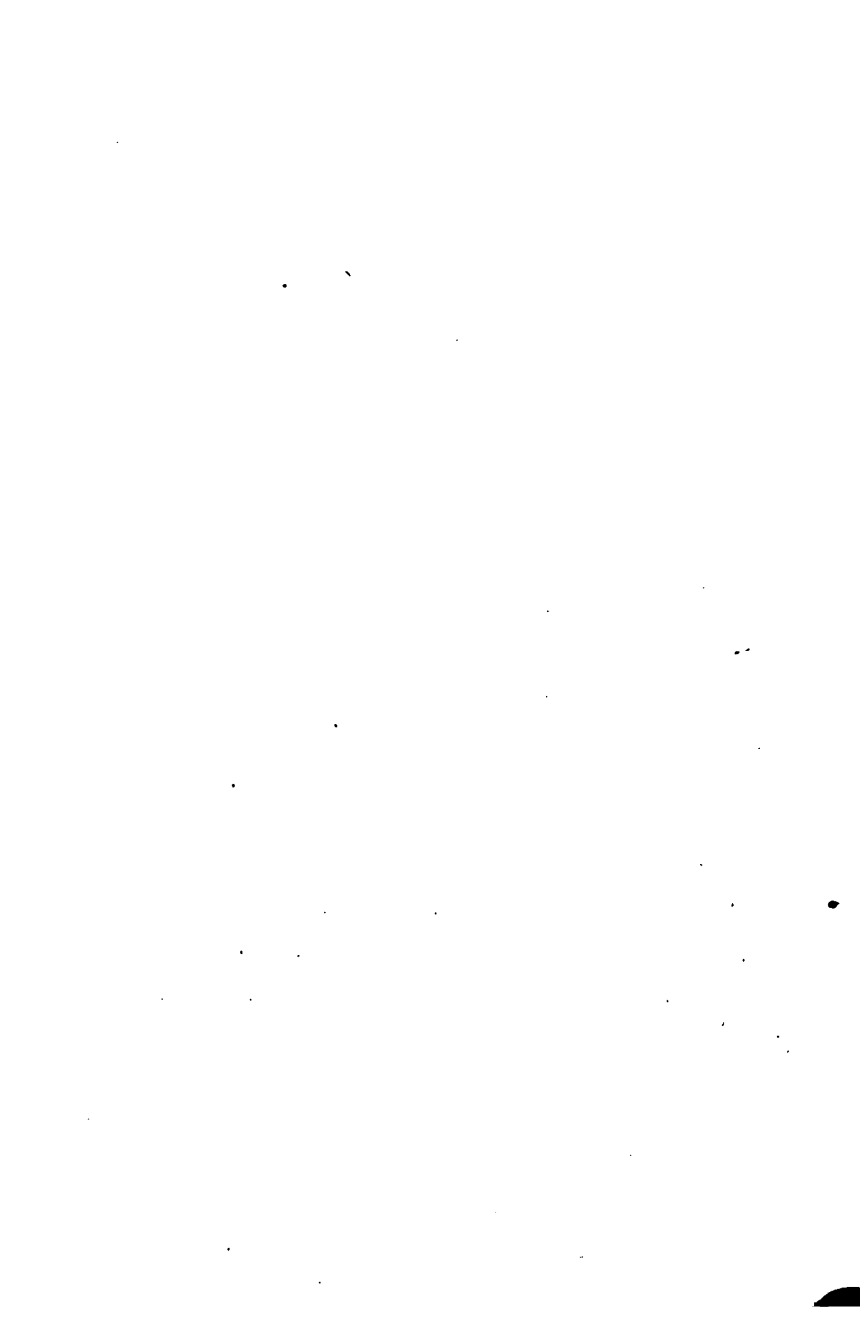
The man was still more enraged by this remark, as it seemed to contain an imputation. He told the sailors to land him at the nearest spot. “We will see,” said he, “which of us is the better man.”

Here Bokuden remarked:—“If we land at the ordinary place, there will be such crowds of people in our way that we shall not be able to fence. There is, as you know, away yonder a detached island, called Karasaki. Let us make for it. There will I show you ‘The Handless-never-lose-style of fencing.’”

Whereupon Bokuden turning to his fellow-passengers, said:—“I have no doubt you are all in a hurry to get on your way, but stretch a point and have a look at our fencing.”

The sailors pulled hard, and the boat soon reached the appointed spot. No sooner did it run aground than the man who had been talking so grandly sprang out of it and drawing a sword about three feet eight inches long, shouted to Bokuden:—“Now, come on! and I will cut you in two pieces.”







“ Wait a little ;” said Bokuden coolly. “ My ‘ Handless-victory-style ’ is not one that admits of so much hurry. I must go about it quietly.” Here Bokuden tucked up his garments, and made it appear as though he were preparing for a great contest. Then he took off his sword and, addressing the sailors, said :—“ No sword is needed for ‘ The Handless-victory-style ’ of fencing, so I will leave this with you. Instead of the sword please lend me a pole.”

They gave him one of the poles used for pushing off a boat when she is grounded. He took the pole and made as though he were about by its means to spring on shore, but, instead of this, he thrust the pole into the sand, and with it rapidly pushed the boat off into deep water.

“ Why don’t you land ?” shouted the other fencer in his fury to Bokuden.

“ There is no reason why I should ;” replied Bokuden. “ Though I am sorry to put you to so much trouble, you had better swim out here to me, and then I will kill you, and so assist you to go to the place prepared for such as you. This is ‘ The Handless-victory-style ’ of fencing of which I spoke just now,” shouted Bokuden, roaring with laughter.

“ You abominable scoundrel ! you mean, scurrilous villain ! come back, come back !” cried the man.

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Bokuden, without taking the slightest notice of him, set the sailors to row the boat away. And when they had rowed out a long distance, standing up in the boat, he opened his fan, and waving it to and fro as a signal, said with a loud voice:—"I have given you a lesson in an abstruse part of the art which I practise. I have no doubt you are filled with admiration of it. Should you wish it, on some future occasion I will instruct you further. For the present, Adieu! Adieu!"

There are those who assert that Sakmua Ichimu was the subject of this tale. But probabilities are in favour of Bokuden's being the person concerned.

## II

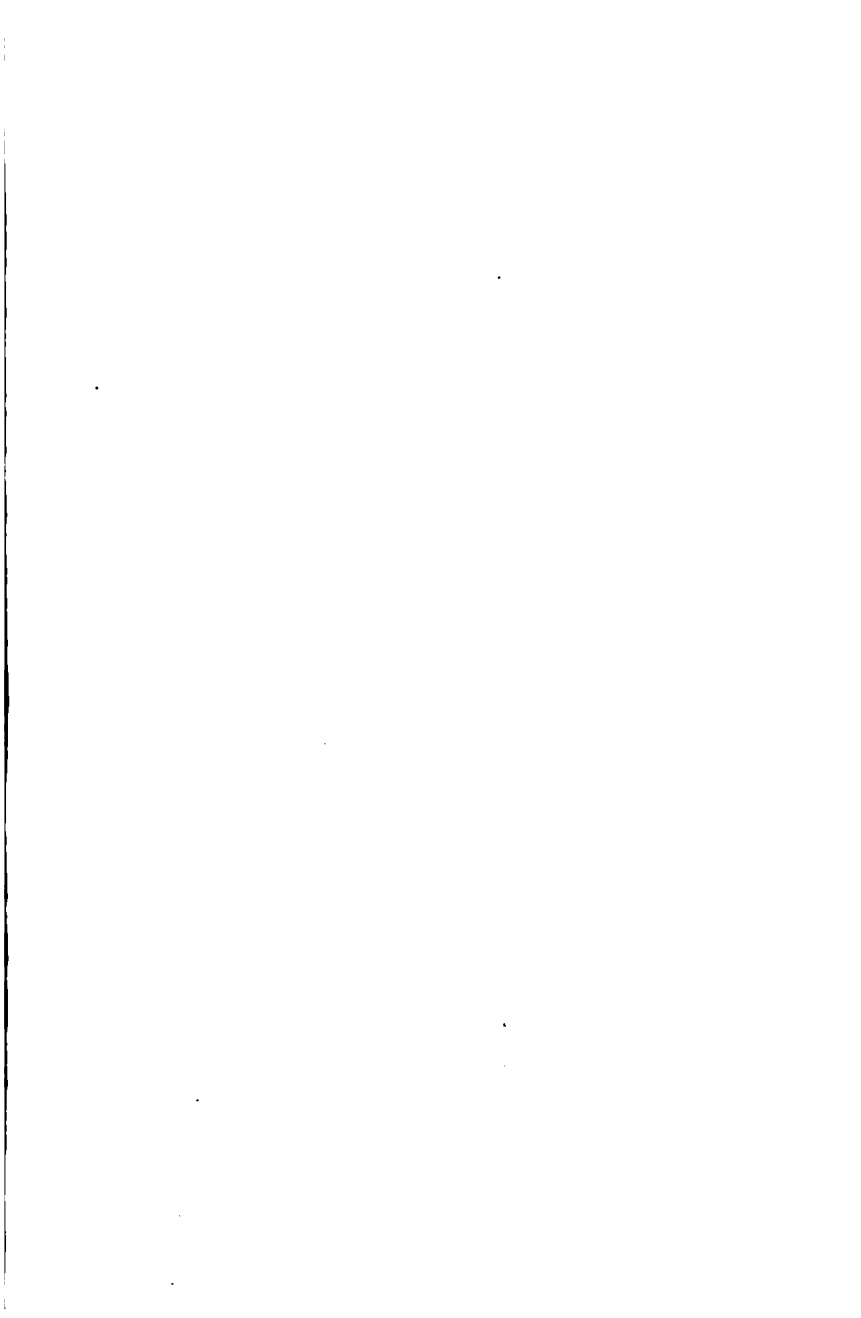
On one occasion when Takeda Shingen was going out to battle, a pigeon alighted on a tree near the place where the troops were assembled. The men were delighted at this good omen and showed it by their faces. Shingen, asking the reason of this, was told that according to the experience of old soldiers, the appearance of a pigeon shortly before an expedition started was always an indication of a great victory to be won later on. Without even waiting to hear the end of this explanation, Shingen took a gun and shot the pigeon, intending by this to show his contempt for such notions and to prevent his troops from being discouraged on future occasions when no pigeon made its appearance.\*

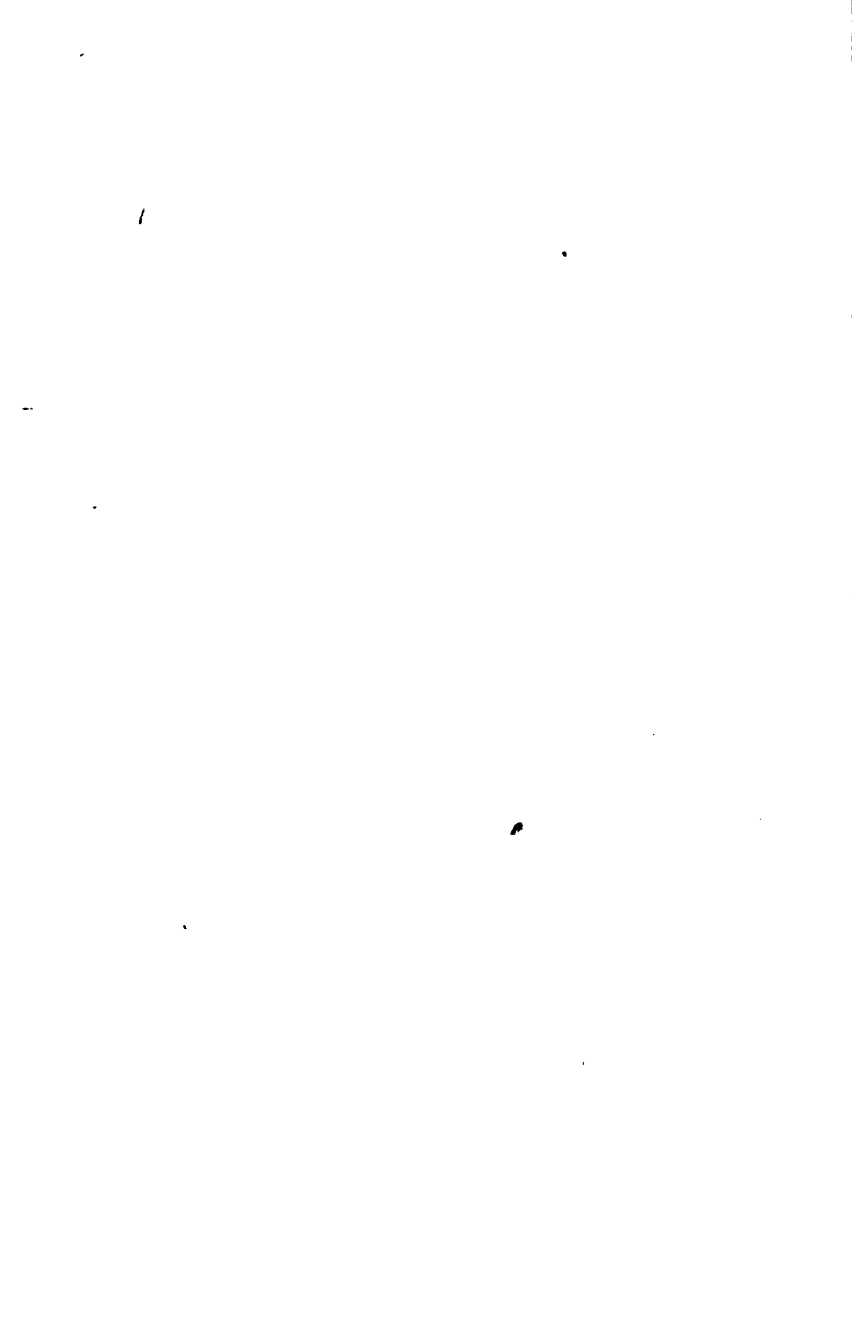
## END OF PART I.

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\* Compare what is related of Hideyoshi in my "New Life" pp. 117, 118.









印刷所

南町七丁目一番地  
東京府豊多摩郡澁谷村大字青山  
青山印刷所

發行所

東京京橋區銀座四丁目三番地  
教文館  
(電話新橋二五二六)

印刷者

東京京橋區銀座四丁目三番地  
ゼー、エル、カウエン

發行人

東京京橋區銀座四丁目三番地  
堀田達治

著者

ワルター、デニング

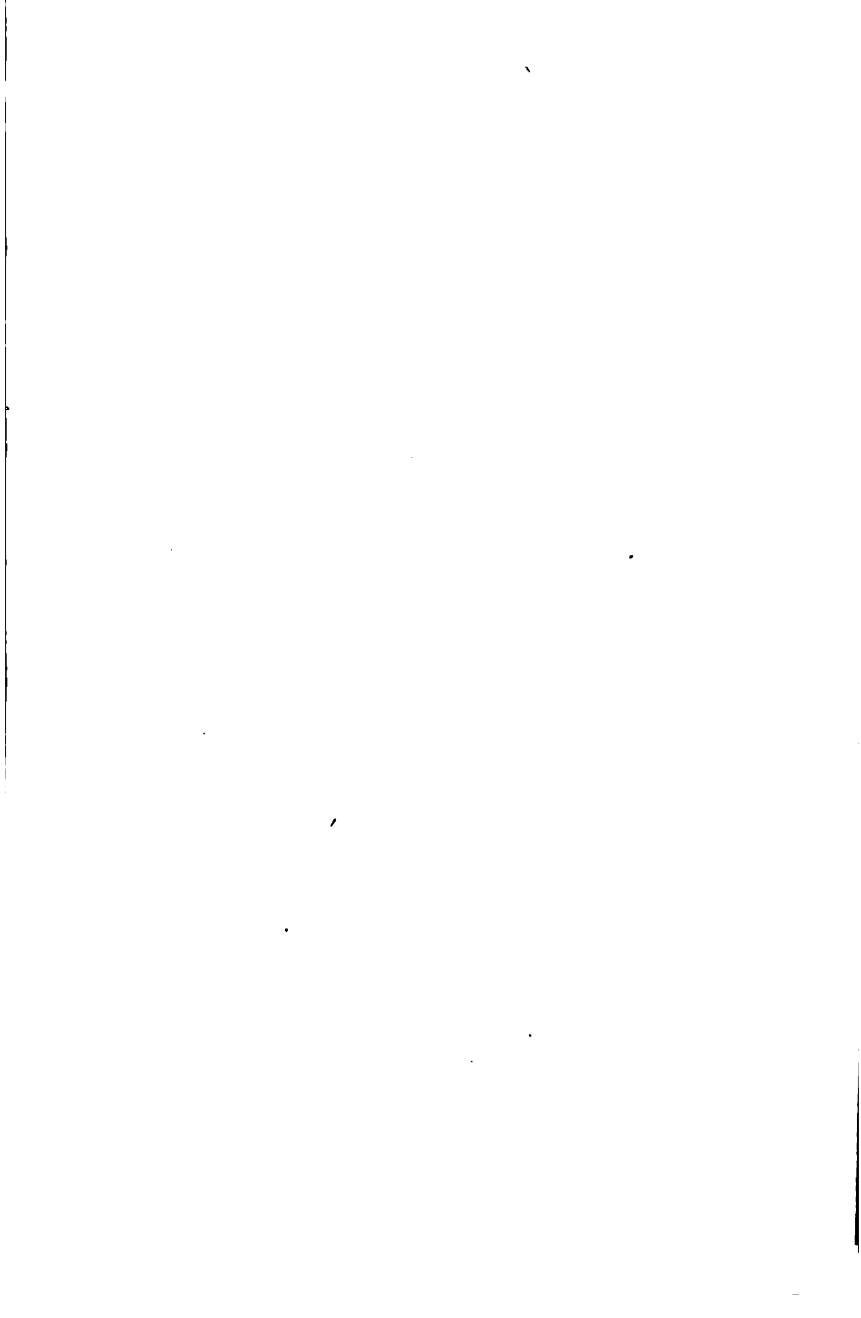
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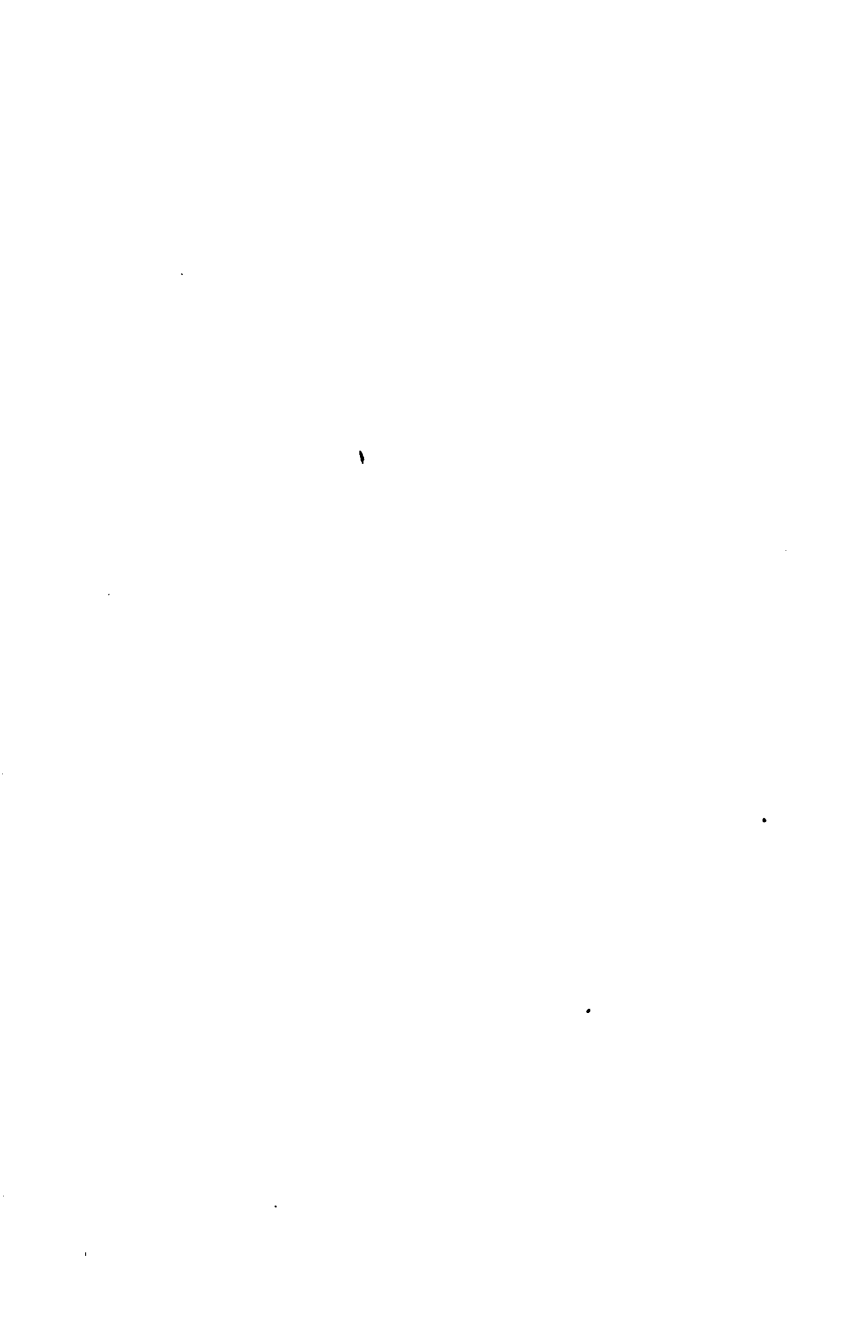
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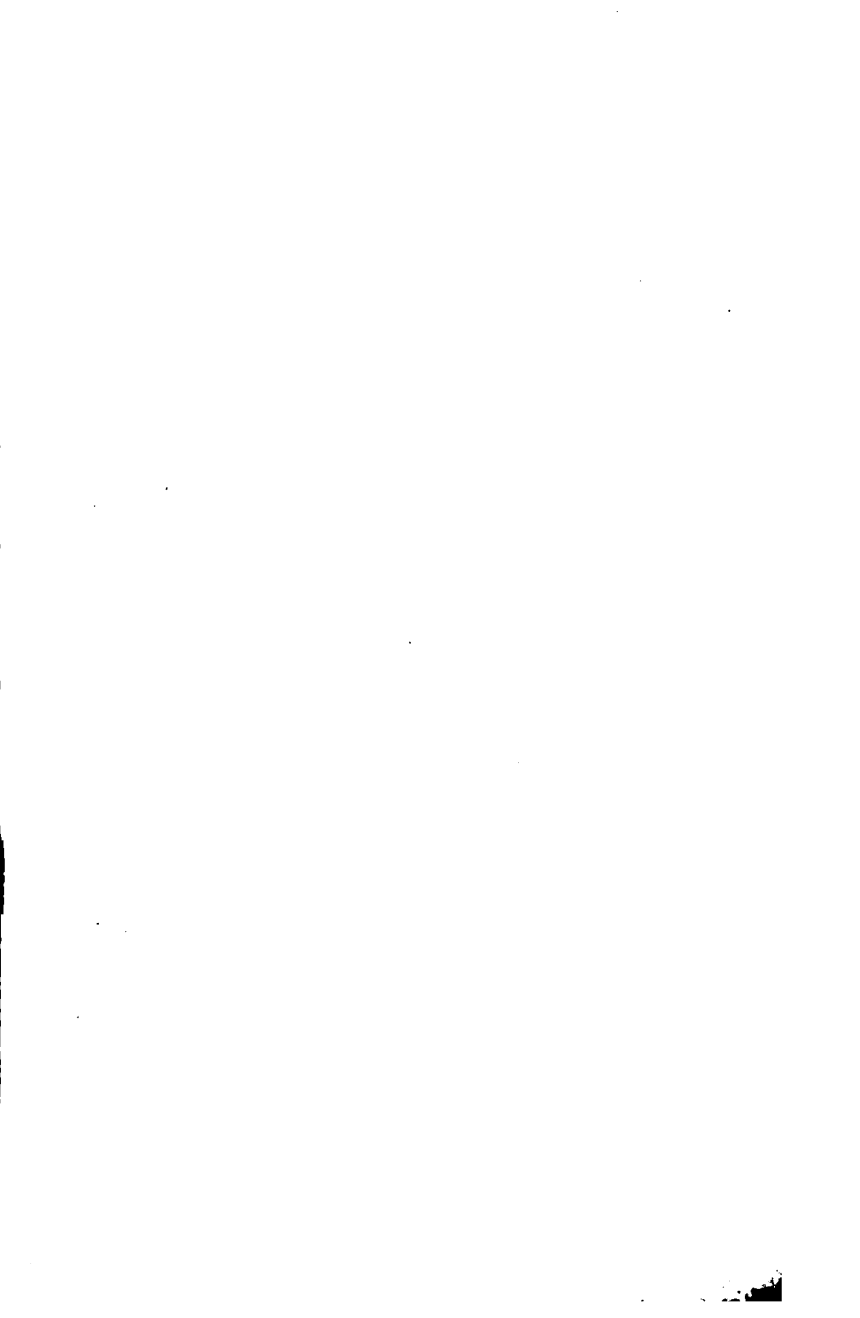


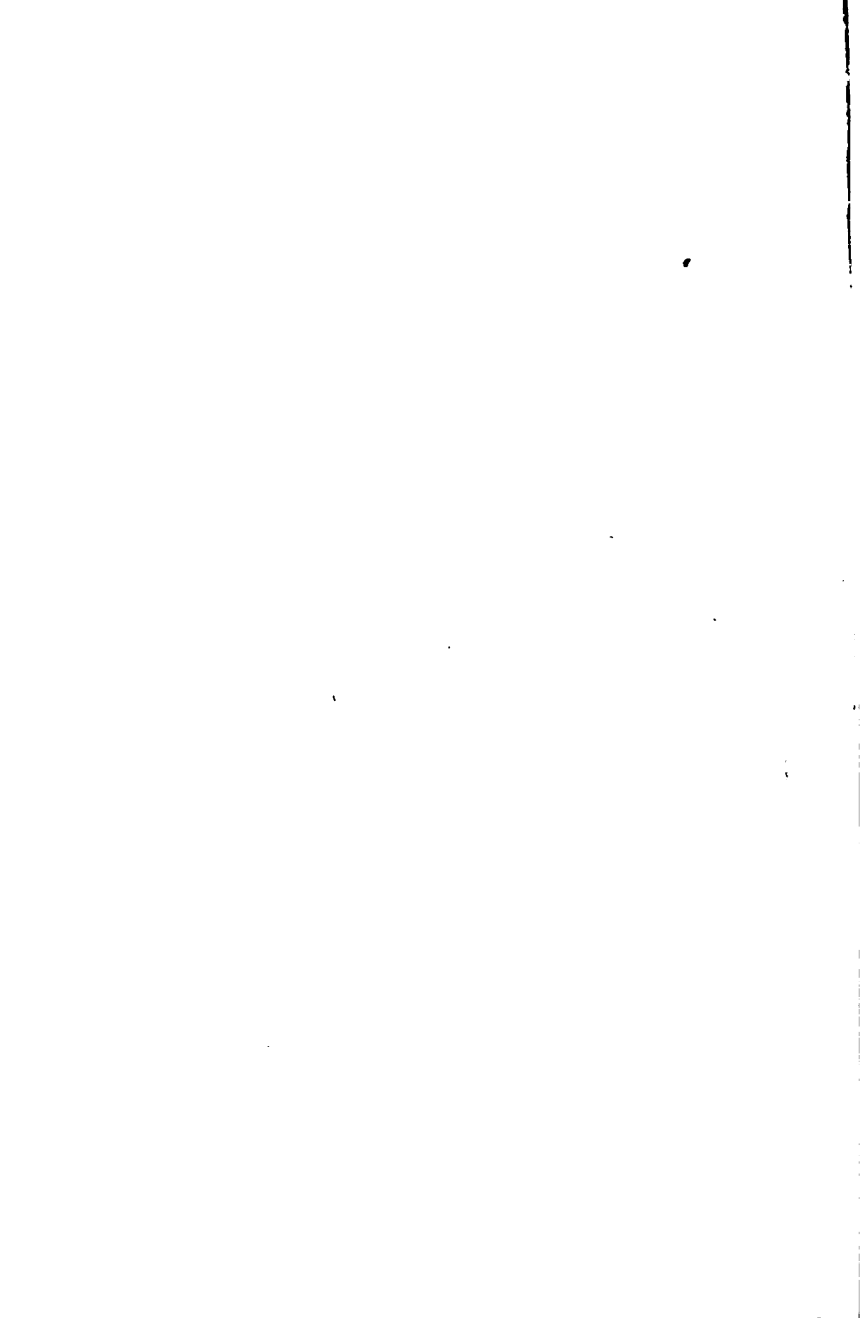






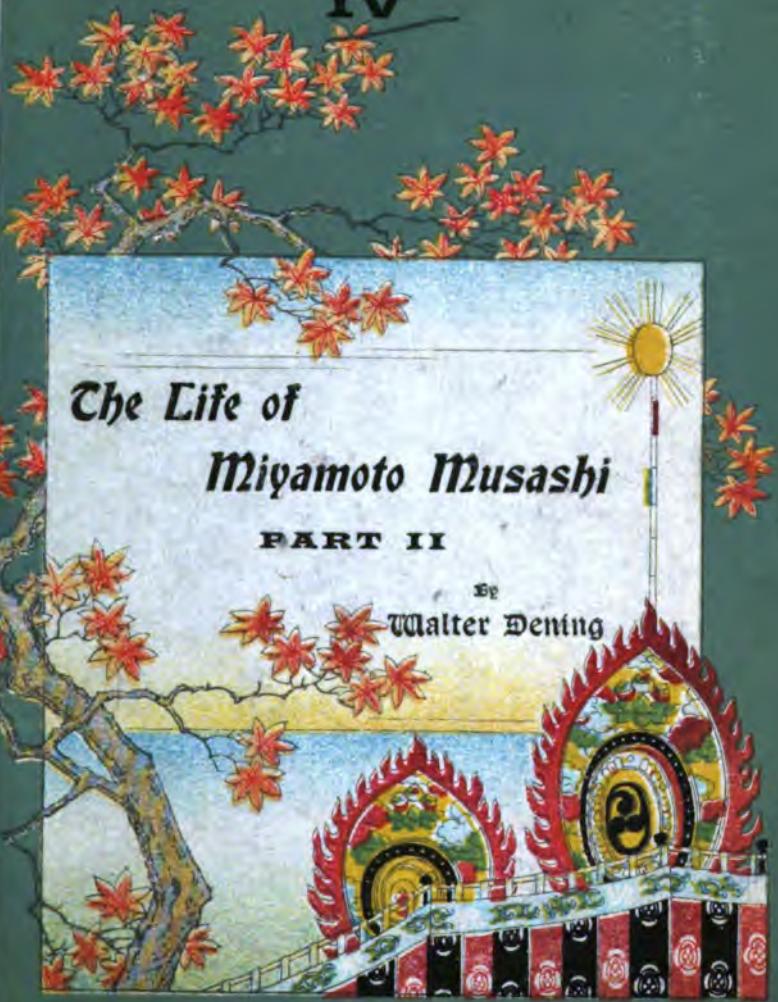






# Japan in Days of Yore

## IV

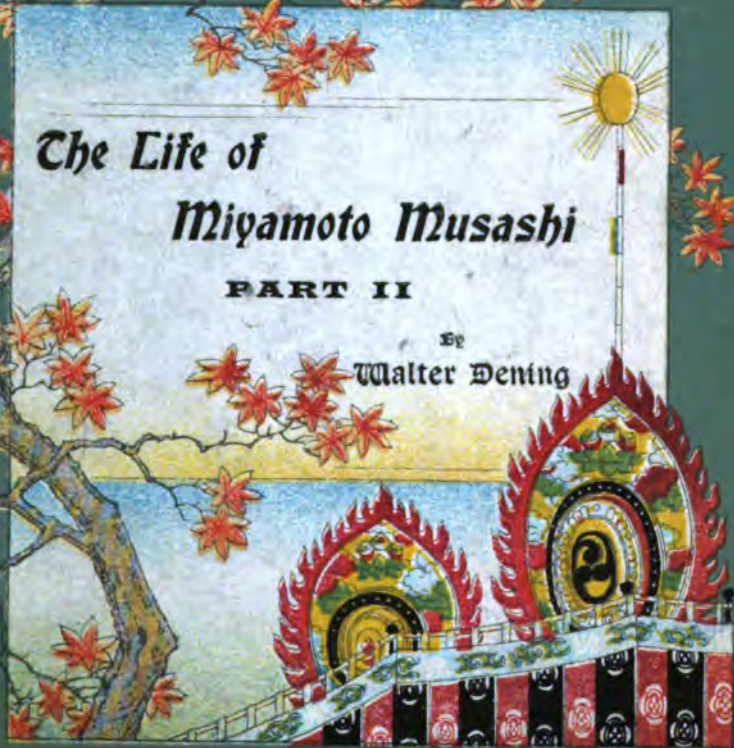


*The Life of*  
*Miyamoto Musashi*

**PART II**

By

Walter Dening



Ryōbunkwan

1905

1905



# JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE

BY

WALTER DENING

IV

SECOND EDITION

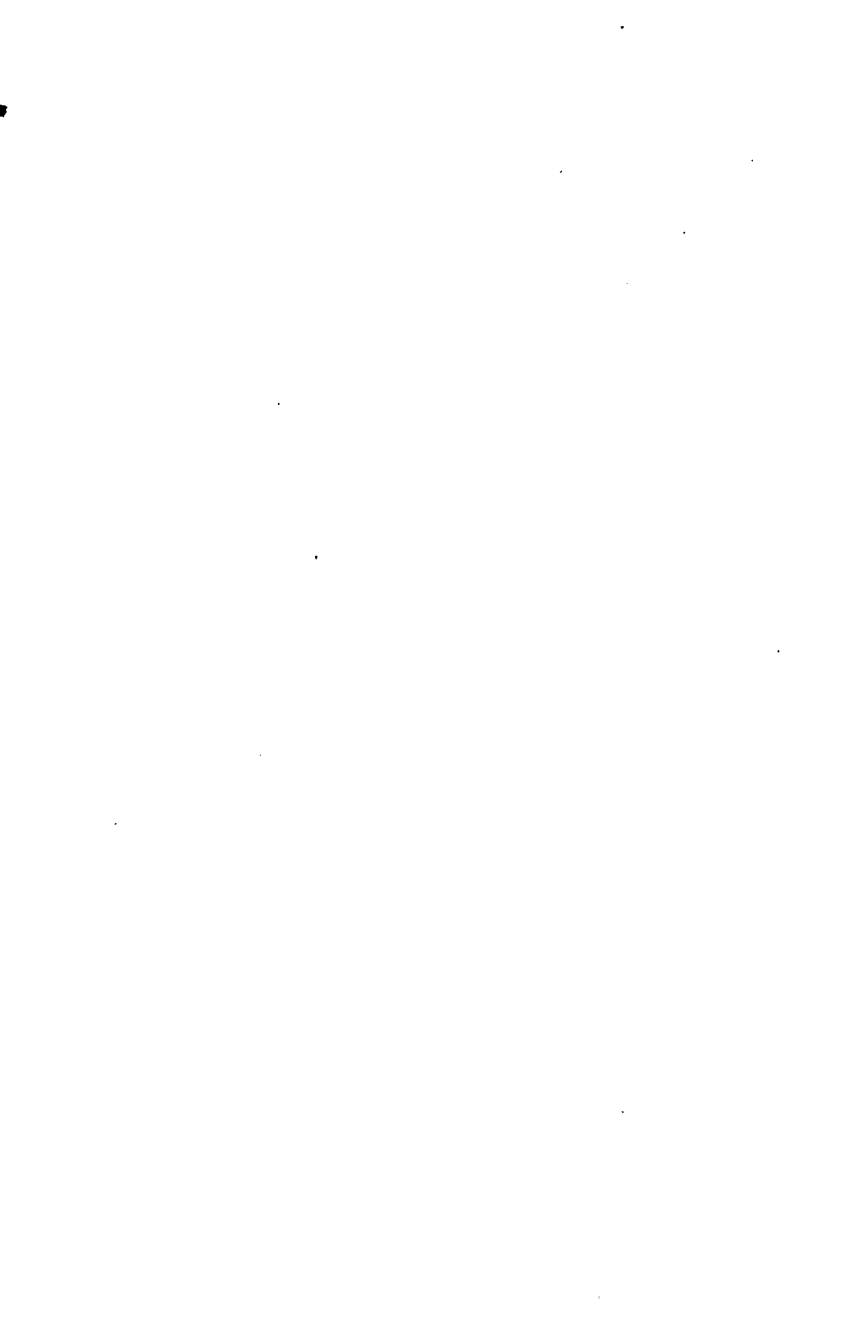
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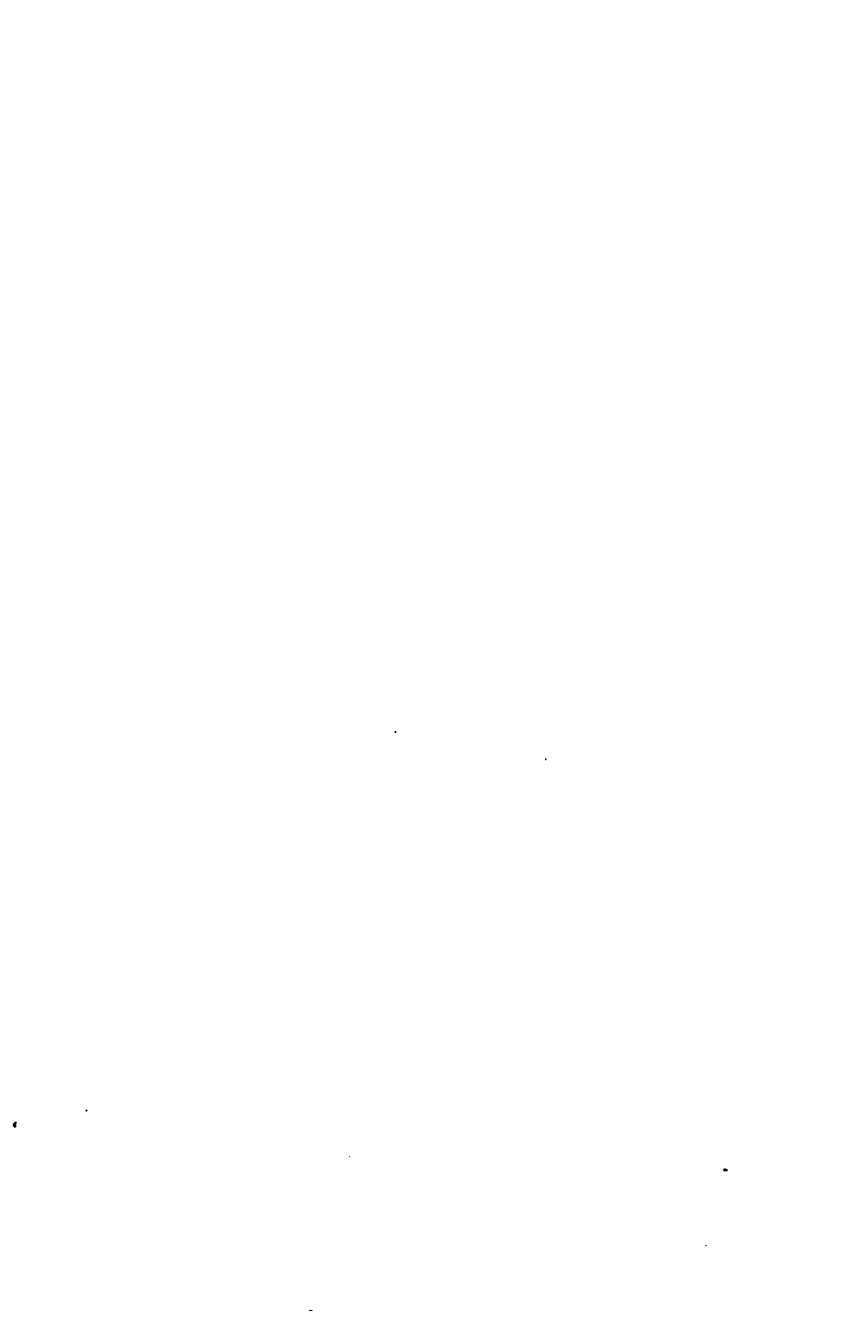
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# JAPAN IN DAYS OF YORE.

## IV.

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### THE LIFE OF MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

#### PART II.

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##### CHAPTER I.

**I**T was about six years subsequent to the death of Munisai when Sasaki Ganryū, after having wandered from province to province, said to himself one day :—"Come! I have travelled far enough. The reproach brought on my name by my defeat in Himeji has now been wiped off. And Munisai being dead, I need not fear defeat again: I will return to Himeji and seek employment under the Earl of Harima."

This resolve he at once put into execution. On his arrival at Himeji, his old pupils began to gather around him. To some of them he said that his defeat by Munisai had proved of great benefit to him. "I regret to have to say, however," he added, "that not long after the fencing match the man who assisted me to attain the knowledge I now possess was killed by some unknown hand."

Ganryū's arrival and his superior swordsmanship were reported to Kinoshita. The baron sent for him and expressed a wish to see him perform some special feat of skill.

"As most of the men present are my pupils," replied Ganryū, "there is no one that will make a good match for





me in fencing, so I will try something else." Looking around, he caught sight of a checker-board covered with the white and black small pebbles used for draughts. "Take," said he to some of those standing near, "these draughts and throw them at me. I will defend myself against them, and will at the same time divide the white from the black ones."

This they did; and Ganryū separated them without a mistake. The trick was a new one to the spectators, and they applauded the performer with one accord. Katsutoshi himself was immensely pleased. Handing some wine to Ganryū, he said:—"I am afraid I cannot find a swordsman to match you. 'Tis a pity though, as I should like to see how you fence. Let me think now—is there no one that can be found?—Yes, I know of some one. There is a man called Miyamoto Musashi here, who has been guilty of a crime. I have spoken several times of having him beheaded, but have always been prevented by the intercession of Amamori Nuinosuke, one of my retainers. We will get up a match between him and you. If he is defeated he is not worth keeping alive, if he conquers then I will spare his life, for he will have proved himself to be one of a thousand."

Ganryū no sooner heard the name of the son of the man whom he had so basely murdered than an involuntary thrill of fear shook his whole frame; but he immediately suppressed it, and replied:—"Certainly, I shall be glad to fence with any one you may like to appoint."

“Another crisis of my life has come,” said Ganryū to himself after he had left Katsutoshi’s presence. “This Miyamoto Musashi is the author of the Two-sworded-style. His fame is great in the world. Unless I am careful just as my reputation is approaching its zenith I shall be thrown back by another crushing defeat. I will not encounter him hastily. I will endeavour first to get some idea of his style.”

Accordingly Ganryū gave out that he was ill and not fit to take part in the match. He then went to a man called Masaki Uneme, one of his old pupils, who had been made one of Katsutoshi’s councillors, and asked him what kind of a fencer Musashi was.

“Musashi is no ordinary fencer” replied Uneme: “His crossed swords no mortal can break through. He is not one that you can afford to despise for an instant.”

Ganryū’s anxiety was increased by this remark; and he replied:—“Before fencing with him myself, I should immensely like to see one of my pupils have a contest with him. Can you not manage to bring this about?”

Uneme did not at all relish having to act the lie in the way suggested; but the request having come from his old teacher, he did not know how to refuse. So he went to Amamori Nuinosuke’s house and said that one of his friends, a *samurai*, had come from Kyōto and was desirous of seeing Musashi’s style of fencing.







Musashi, after trying in vain to put him off, agreed to fence with Uneme's friend. The friend was one of Ganryū's disciples. He brought a companion with the request that he too might be allowed to act as Musashi's opponent.

Ganryū and Uneme watched the contest from a concealed spot. Musashi fenced with fans; explaining to his opponents that it was not from contempt of their fencing powers that he did so, but on account of his having been accused of crime. "If the baron were to get to know that I had been fencing with a sword," said he, "I should get into a scrape." One of his opponents, thinking that this was only feigned humility, attacked Musashi with great fierceness; but stood not the slightest chance before him. The other tried his best, but with a similar result. They both returned to their houses, and Ganryū immediately asked them to explain to him the peculiarity of Musashi's style.

"That we cannot do" they replied. "All we know is that pressing against that cross of his was like pressing against a stone wall; and as for the way he handled the fans, it was something too complicated for us to follow."

"I agree with you," said Ganryū. "This fellow is no ordinary fencer. His movements were perfectly wonderful. He is not to be outdone in a hurry. But I should like to discover some way of overcoming him nevertheless.

Night and day Ganryū puzzled his brains to try and find out some mode of outwitting his foe. At last a thought struck him which seemed to promise success. Musashi would certainly get the better of him if he (Ganryū) confronted him with any ordinary weapon; but he could deceive Musashi by using some weapon with which he was not likely to be acquainted. He would encounter him with one of Hōzōin's *furisue*.\* Ganryū was delighted to think that at last he had hit on a plan that would enable him not only to conquer but perhaps to kill the man who was obstructing his path. He accordingly gave out that he had recovered from his sickness, and was prepared to fence with Musashi.

On conferring with Katsutoshi in reference to the contest, Ganryū remarked:—"I am confident that I shall defeat Musashi, but as his life depends on the result of this combat, it is not to be supposed that he will admit that he is defeated. I would advise therefore that constables be placed in readiness to arrest and slay him. Otherwise he will most certainly make his escape."

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\* The *furisue*, or brandishing-stick, was a stick about three feet long that contained a chain with an iron ball attached to it. When the stick was projected the ball came out with sufficient force to kill a man. Hōzōin was a priest who invented what is called the *kudayari*, or tube-spear, which consists of a spear within a spear. By his name being connected with the *furisue* in the text, we may infer that he too was the inventor of this formidable weapon. Hōzōin took his name from the temple to which he belonged. He was a native of Yamato, a contemporary of Musashi's, and his original name was In-ei.





There was not much logic in these remarks of Ganryū. Since if he were man enough to defeat Musashi, it is natural to infer that he ought to be man enough to prevent his effecting his escape. Any baron with his wits about him would have seen that there was treachery in the heart of the man who spoke in this way. Ganryū was afraid of Musashi. He knew that, being his mortal enemy, in case the mean trick he intended to play on him was unsuccessful and no one interfered, it was more than likely that Musashi would kill him on the spot. The presence of the constables to assist him, if assistance were necessary, or to hurry off Musashi to execution, in case the bullet happened to stun but not kill him, was deemed by Ganryū to be a precaution absolutely essential to the success of his scheme. Katsutoshi agreed to act as Ganryū had advised.

On the day appointed, Katsutoshi and all his chief retainers assembled to see the contest. Before the fencing commenced, Ganryū addressed Musashi as follows:—"We meet for the first time. I am no other than Sasaki Ganryū Yoshitaka, the teacher of the best fencing in the country. You are a man who, though condemned to death, owing to the special favour of the baron, are allowed to fence with me. If by any possible chance you should succeed in defeating me, your life will be spared; otherwise you are to be put to death. Since, then, your life depends on the issue, it behoves you to do your very best."

“You” replied Musashi, “are a man whom I have long desired to meet. There is a matter about which I wish to make inquiry of you, but as it only concerns us two, it can be deferred till after our contest. Now we will see which of us is the better man.”

Ganryū's guilty conscience made plain to him the import of these words.

Musashi now took his two swords and Ganryū his brandishing-stick, and the two confronted each other, looking very much like two tigers. The people waited in anxious suspense to see the result of the conflict. For a moment the combatants eyed each other, each watching his chance to attack the other. Then Ganryū, with a shout, made a cut at Musashi's head. Musashi received the blow on his crossed swords in his usual good form. But, to his surprise, immediately after the warding off of the blow, he felt a good deal of pain in his forehead, and the blood came streaming down his face. Knowing that Ganryū's weapon had not come near his face, he was at once aware that there had been foul play. Quickly he wiped the blood from his forehead and, turning to Ganryū, said :—“You mean fellow! You have acted treacherously! Such conduct is unworthy of a soldier. Come, fight like a man!”

With a smile of contempt, Ganryū replied :—“I am not going to argue with you. You have been defeated, and so







I leave the matter in the hands of the baron." Here he turned and looked at Katsutoshi, intending to intimate that he thought it time for the constables to be summoned.

On Musashi's again urging a renewal of the contest, Katsutoshi became very excited and, rising in his seat, said:—"When the contest has been decided against you, Musashi, you wish to fight again, do you?—scoundrel that you are! Arrest him."

Whereupon the constables who had been lying in ambush sprang up and, shouting *go jōi*,\* surrounded Musashi on all sides. These men were armed with iron maces. Musashi, with his usual coolness, adroitness, and determination, knowing that his life depended on the issue, held his own against his assailants, knocking over some and kicking over others. Before many minutes had elapsed, the ground was strewn with the wounded and the dead. The constables, seeing with how little success their efforts met and with what ease Musashi killed or disabled any one who approached him, paused and stood watching the fencer like huntsmen watching a lion that has baffled all their attempts to capture him—alike disinclined to attack and to desist.

This gave Musashi an interval for thought, and immedi-

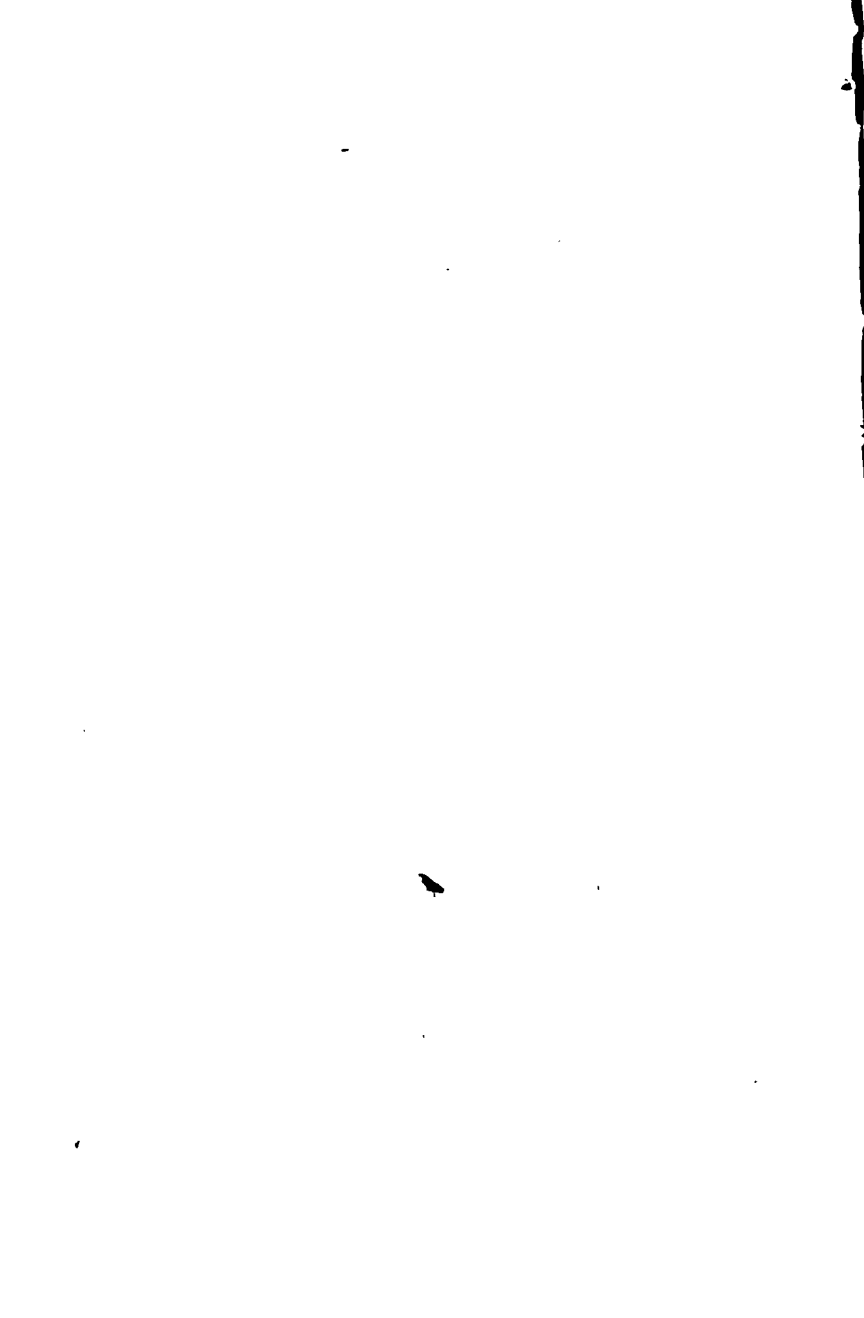
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\* Lit. "The will of a superior"; used when arrests were made, to signify that those who made the arrest were acting under orders from the authorities.

ately he made up his mind that his best plan would be to escape from the place as rapidly as possible. "I could kill Ganryū here," said he, "but in that case, I might lose my own life, as they would certainly do all that lies in their power to arrest me."

So, when Ganryū came forward with a real sword in his hand to attack Musashi, the latter, while quickly parrying stroke after stroke, receded till he reached the fence that surrounded the ring, then, with the agility for which from early boyhood he had been so noted, to the astonishment of the spectators, he cleared the high paling at a leap, and, as fleet as a deer, fled across the plain, his well trained legs in a very short time bearing him far away out of the reach of his numerous foes.

Leaving the hero of our story running at a wild pace in the direction of the capital, I proceed to relate what took place in Himeji after his departure. Lord Kinoshita, ignorant of the mean trick that had been played on Musashi, expressed before the assembled multitudes his admiration of the skill displayed by Ganryū on the occasion described above, and was just commencing to inform him that he intended to make him his instructor again, when he was suddenly interrupted by Amamori Nuinosuke; who came forward and said:—"Excuse me, my lord, for interrupting you, but it might be well to defer for the present the reward-





ing of Ganryū." Then, addressing Ganryū, he said, "You may return to your house : the baron will communicate with you later on."

Ganryū retired : and immediately after Nuinosuke made his way to the baron's private apartments and spoke to him as follows :—" The contest of to-day, my lord, as you are well aware, was only intended to be a trial of skill in one special line ; namely, in the use of fencing-swords. It was not designed to test which of the two men concerned was the better able to endanger or to destroy the life of his opponent. Ganryū's using a *furisue* therefore was an unfair advantage to take over an adversary. But, in addition to this, it was an insult offered to the spectators, since it seemed to imply that they were all too blind to see what was attempted. Of course had Musashi been aware that this weapon was to be used against him, he would have been on his guard against it. That taken unawares, he received a blow from the ball was no disgrace to him in any way whatever. Musashi, my lord, is an upright man. The accusation brought against him in reference to the sword he might easily have proved to be false had he been so disposed. What restrained him from taking any steps to justify himself was the fact that your lordship had given evidence that you considered the charge brought against him was not without foundation. With rare delicacy and nobleness of feeling,

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he was unwilling even to testify to his own innocence if his testimony were likely to prove a means of exposing the hastiness of your lordship's decision in reference to him. If such a line of action had been adopted by one of your own retainers, you might with reason have been proud to know that you possessed a follower who would thus sacrifice, not only his own interests, but even, what is much dearer to the heart of a knight, his own reputation for integrity for the sake of preserving your name from reproach or dishonour. How much is all this intensified by the fact that Musashi is the retainer of another man, and one who is indebted to you for nothing but a small annual allowance of rice! Between these two men there can be no comparison. They move in different spheres. Ganryū is a mean-spirited, crafty fellow, and if your lordship decides to employ him there is no saying what trouble he may cause in the future. Then, excuse me for saying so, but I think you ought to pay some deference to your uncle Hideyoshi's opinion of this man. You took him into your service some years ago notwithstanding the fact that he had been previously banished from the capital by the express order of your uncle. He did not turn out to be the man you expected to find him. Now if, after his displaying such abominable meanness, you decide to receive him back into your employ, will it not appear as though you bestow







patronage irrespective of the merits or demerits of those whom you patronize—as though vice and virtue meet with a like reward at the hands of Lord Kinoshita ? ”

“ You are right,” replied Katsutoshi. “ I had no idea that Ganryū was the kind of man you represent. Deal with him as you think best.”

So, the day after the fencing match, when Ganryū was expecting the arrival of a messenger from Lord Kinoshita to inform him of the emoluments that had been bestowed on him, his servant announced that one of the retainers of Nuinosuke solicited an interview with him. On being ushered into the fencer's presence, the retainer addressed him as follows :—“ Ganryū, yesterday by means of a wicked device you obtained the victory over your opponent. Your attempt to deceive the baron and all his attendants by a trick of that kind, was a piece of insolence and effrontery that it would be difficult to match. For this offence you are banished from the precincts of Himeji. Not even for another day will we endure your presence here. If you are slow in taking your departure, orders will be given to the *Bugyō* to expel you from the town by force.”

“ Again my hopes are dashed to the ground ! ” exclaimed Ganryū. “ Am I never to succeed in making for myself a name ? Am I for ever to be tantalized by seeing the prize snatched from me just as it seems to be within easy

reach?" But the orders were peremptory and they had to be obeyed or, instead of becoming the baron's teacher, he would find himself his prisoner. So, packing up his traps, with a heavy heart, Ganryū set out, once more turning his back on Himeji; to which he was destined never to return.

Two faithful disciples, Aoyama Mompei and Oshida Sakichi, whose hearts being equally wicked with his own, had sympathized with the many base acts of Ganryū's life, left the town in his company. To them, after clearing the town, he spoke as follows:—"I have never yet told you that it was I who killed Yoshioka Munisai. I hear that the man with whom I fenced yesterday was no other than Munisai's second son. Before commencing to fence he said that there was a matter about which he wished to make some inquiry of me. I have no doubt that the subject of the inquiry he purposed making was no other than his father's death. This being the case, there is nothing for it but for me to change my name and make a living by teaching fencing in some retired spot. I therefore am obliged to dismiss you from my service. If in the near or distant future I should find myself in a position in which I can with safety employ you, nothing would give me more pleasure than to have the advantage of your counsel again: till then farewell."

I now revert to the fortunes of Miyamoto Musashi. With his hair hanging down his back, his clothes torn or





cut, and blood-stained in various places, with no sandals on his feet, a fencing-sword in his hand, swiftly dashed Musashi through village after village, much to the astonishment of the spectators. On and on he went, for he thought it not improbable that Ganryū would induce Katsutoshi to send soldiers after him : day and night he travelled, hardly stopping to take food, till he reached Kyōto ; when he found himself quite exhausted. Feeling as though he could not walk another step, and yet not possessing the wherewithal to purchase food, he knew that his only chance was to find some fencing-school where he might beg a meal.

While passing through Matsubara-dōri, he caught sight of a fencing-master's notice-board :—" A fencing school—Arima Kihei," were the words inscribed on the board.

" Very much like the name of the man I killed when I was a boy," exclaimed Musashi. " However, being a fencer, he will not refuse me a meal, I know."

So, walking up to the front-door of the house, Musashi said to the servant :—" Please go and tell your master that a warrior-pilgrim\*, exhausted with hard travelling, has arrived and is desirous of obtaining a meal ; since your master is of the same profession as himself, he begs that he will take compassion on him."

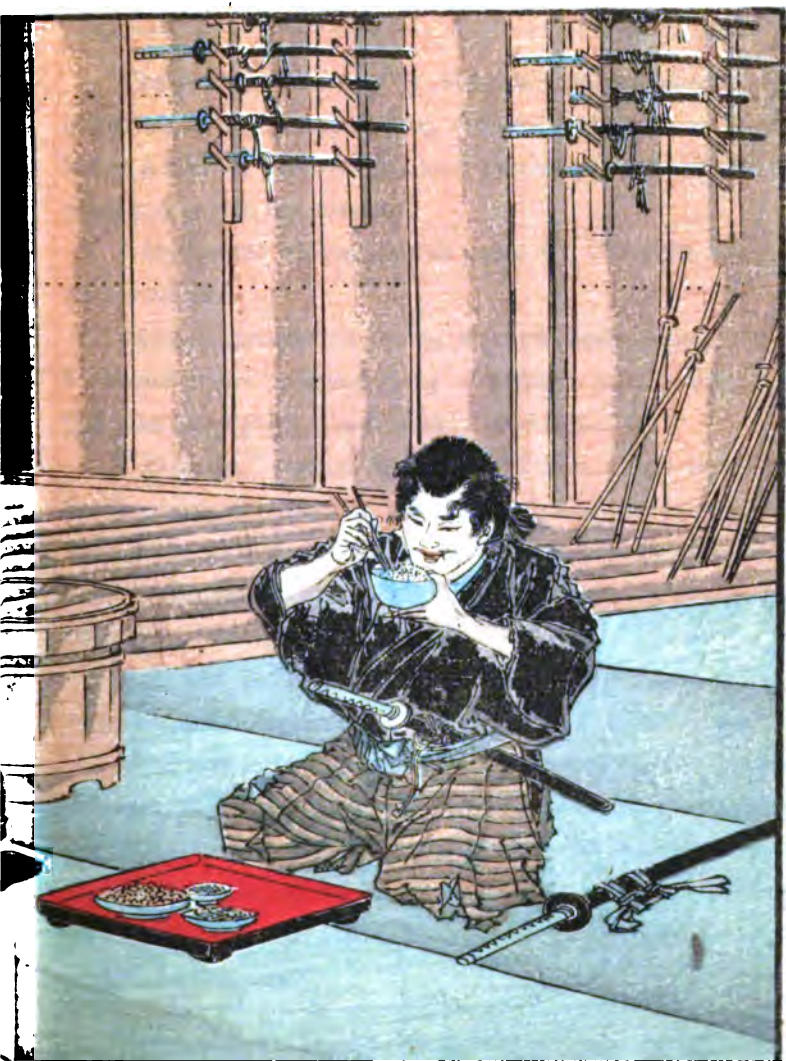
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\* *Vide* Tale II. of this Series, p. 84, foot-note.

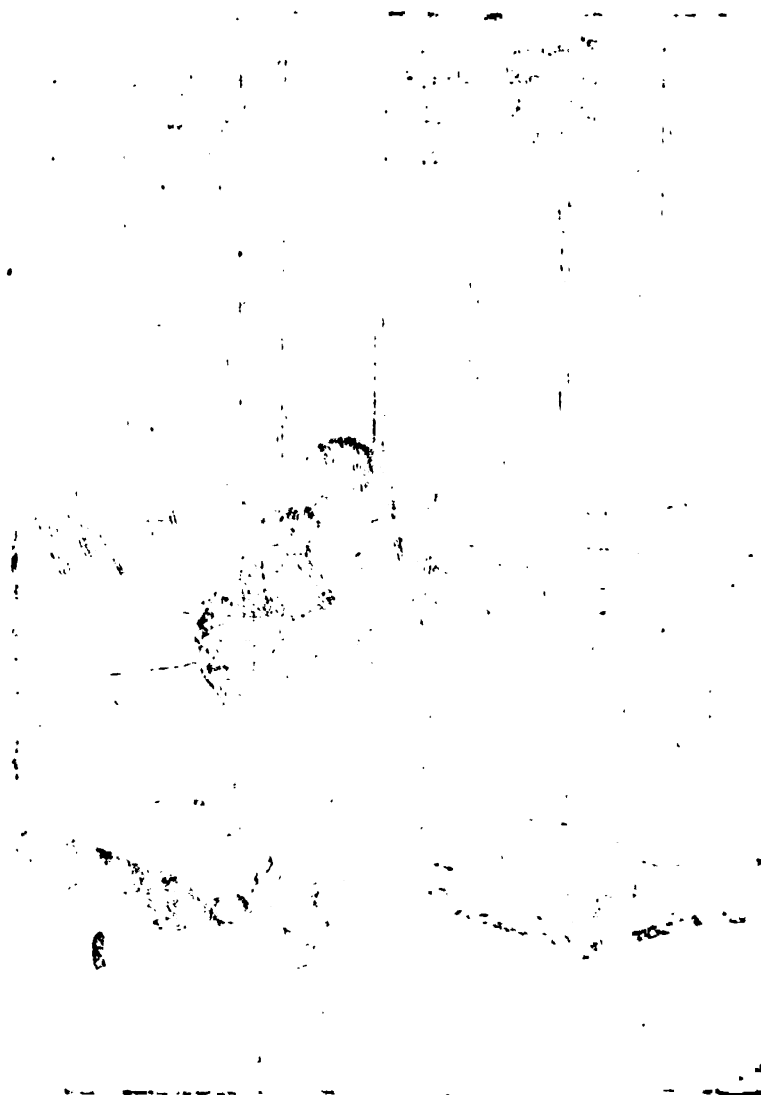
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The servant, alarmed by Musashi's blood-stained garments and general appearance, did not wait to hear more, but in a flurried manner said :—"Excuse me ! I will report what you say to my master."

"My master wishes you to come in ;" said the servant on his return.

Musashi proceeded to the fencer's sitting-room, where he found Kihei surrounded by a number of his disciples. "A warrior-pilgrim, I understand," said Kihei.

"Even so," replied Musashi. "I have come here, not for the purpose of fencing, but simply to ask you to be good enough to give me a meal. I have met with a disaster that might have cost me my life and have had to travel rapidly : I am quite exhausted."

"If that be the case, then here's rice," said Kihei. "Please take no notice of us\* but eat to your heart's content."

Rice was served up, and Musashi commenced to devour it voraciously. Kihei's pupils had been intensely amused by the beggarly appearance of the visitor, and now they were none the less tickled by the enormous quantity of rice that he ate. "Well—'tis astonishing what some people can eat," exclaimed the pupils.

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\* It is customary in Japan, as elsewhere, to ask pardon for the rudeness of taking a meal before a looker-on ; so to set his visitor at ease Kihei made this remark.





Musashi having finished his meal, Kihei said :—" Being a warrior-pilgrim, I have no doubt you are a good fencer. Now that you have refreshed yourself, suppose you give us an idea of your style by having a turn with one of us."

" From this I beg to be excused," replied Musashi. " It is my place as a student of fencing styles to ask you to allow me to cross swords with you, but having entered your house in this unexpected and somewhat impolite way, I do not wish to interrupt your pupils' exercises further by taking part in fencing."

Kihei looked well at Musashi, and perceiving that he was of a mild disposition, said to himself :—" This fellow is evidently not much of it. He does not look like a man who can fence. I will force a contest on him. His defeat will have a good effect on my pupils." So he replied :—" Now do please fence, sir, it will be no interruption to our exercises in any way ; on the contrary, it will be helpful to them."

Musashi persisted in refusing.

" What style do you practise ? " asked Kihei.

" The Two-sworded," replied Musashi.

" The Two-sworded, eh ! Miyamoto is the author of that style. You are a pupil of his then ? "

" No : I am Miyamoto himself."

A look, half of surprise and half of joy, came over Kihei's face as he listened to these words. For he was no

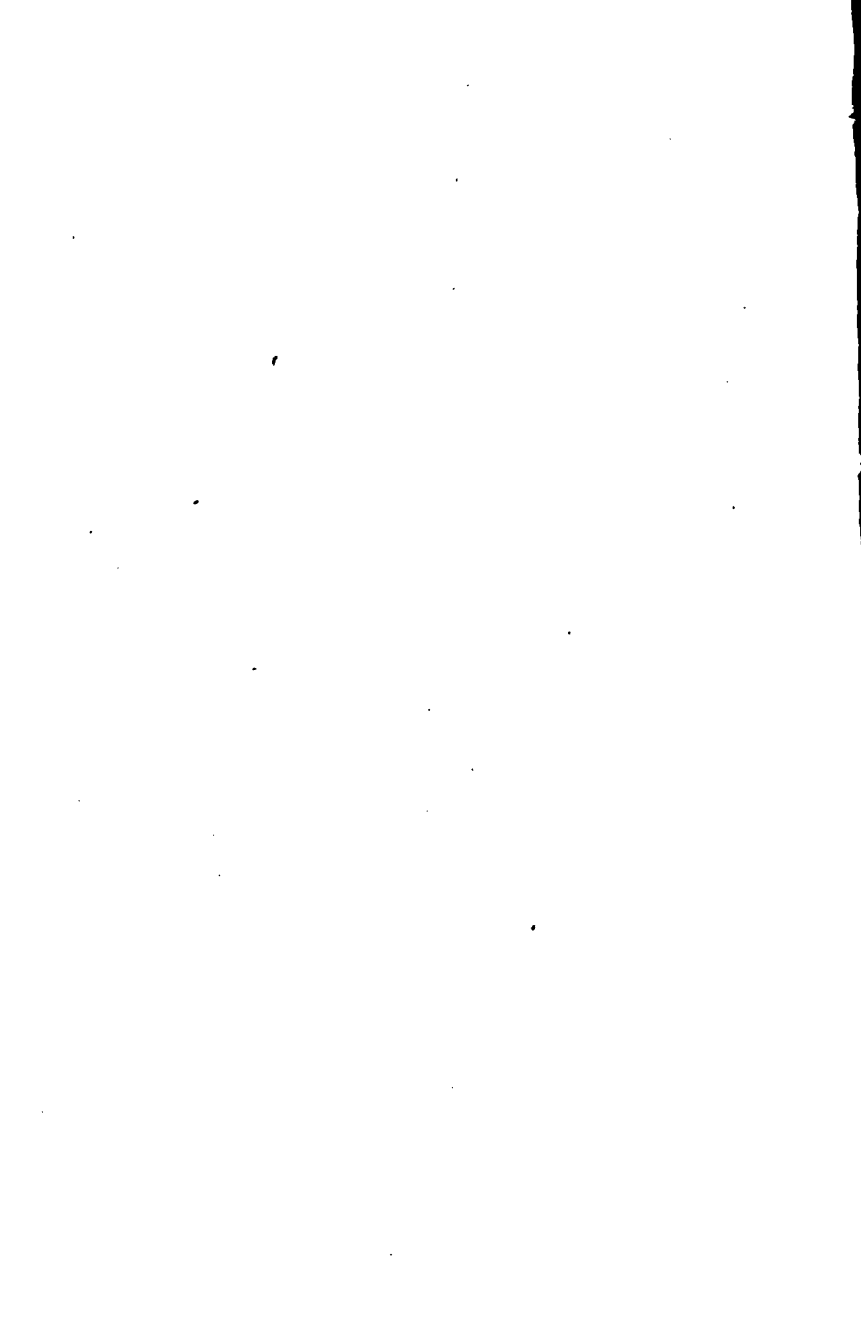
other than the adopted son of that Arima Kiheiji of Himeji whom Musashi had slain when a boy.\* Kihei had long been desirous of avenging his adopted father's death by killing Musashi. He therefore said to himself:—"Now I have him in my power. I will slay him here. But it will not do to let him know who I am, lest he attempt to escape." So he replied:—"I have heard of your fame, sir, but this is the first time I have had the privilege of meeting you. I cannot possibly allow you to leave my house without seeing your style. Please fence with one of my pupils first, I will cross swords with you afterwards."

The pupils all looked at each other in mute astonishment and dismay at this proposal. They had been overawed by hearing Musashi's name even, and now when told to encounter the author of so far famed a style they grew pale with fright.

Kihei, seeing this, said to himself:—"There is nothing so much to be afraid of in the author of a style as these chicken-hearted fellows imagine. I will encounter him. Should I be defeated,—why, then I can kill him by some stratagem or other." So, turning to Musashi, he said:—"As none of my pupils seem to relish a bout with you, though but a poor opponent to one like yourself, I will try what I can do." Then, without further prelude, rushing at

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\* *Vide* Pt. I, p. 188.



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Musashi, he dealt a heavy blow at his head : which Musashi received in his usual style on his crossed swords. Enraged by finding that he could do nothing against his foe, Kihei drew a dagger from his bosom and hurled it at Musashi. Parrying the weapon with his left sword, Musashi brought his right sword down with great force on Kihei's shoulder. Kihei staggered and rolled over with the force of the blow. His pupils were enraged by the sight of their master's fall and, full of chagrin, all set on Musashi pell-mell.

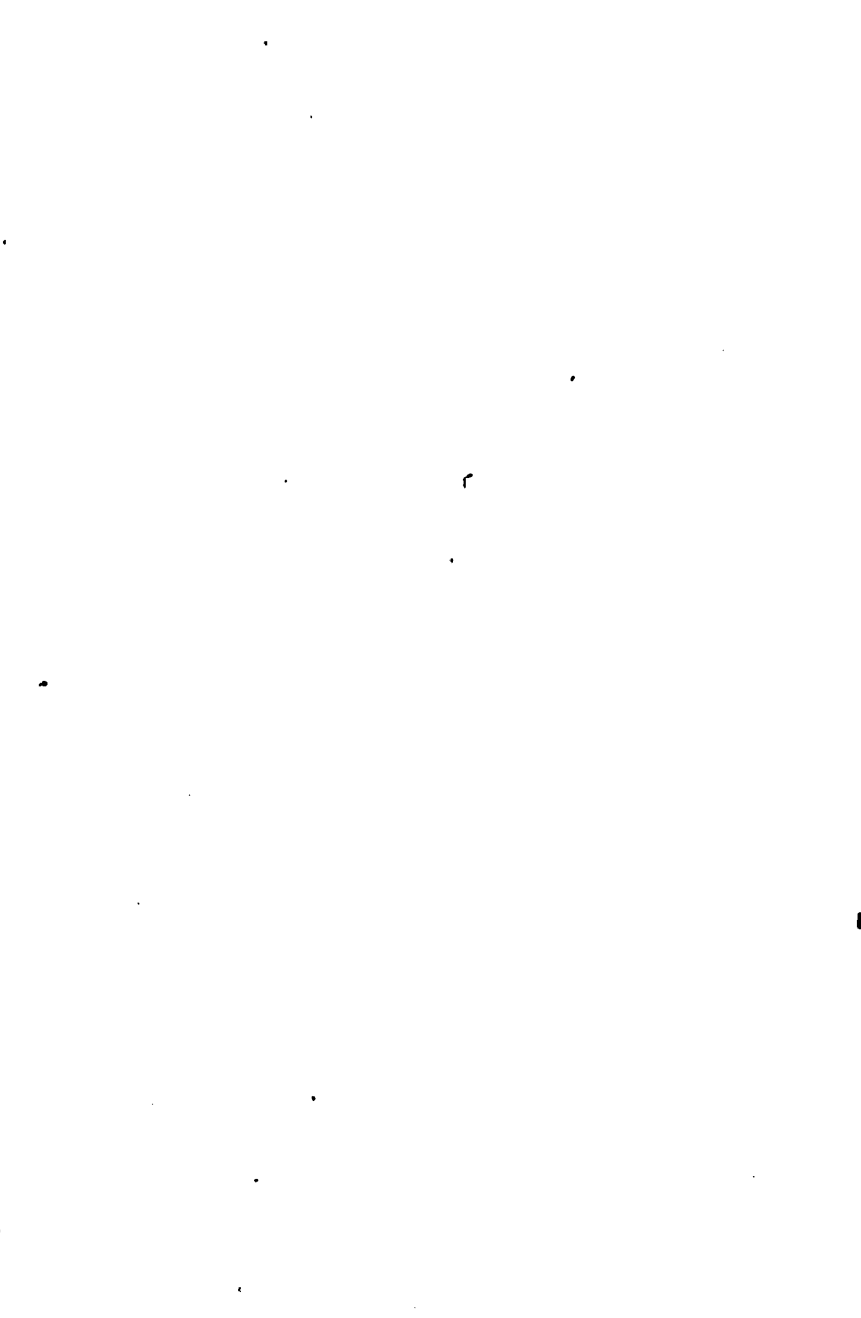
Musashi, while adroitly defending himself against them, raised his voice and said :—" You set of fools ! Do you think that because a man is defeated in a fencing-ring that therefore all present should set on the victor ? " He laid to right and left, and soon knocked over some seven or eight of his foes. Then, while the remainder were crouching away in the corner of the fencing-yard looking too frightened to approach him, he said :—" There is not one of you that deserves to live, but out of consideration for the rice of which I have partaken in this house, I will spare your lives, that is, if you will keep quiet : any fresh attack on me shall be the signal for my cutting you to pieces one after another." Thus saying, our hero calmly walked out of the house ; and there being no one that cared to follow him, he went on his way unmolested.

Musashi now left Kyōto and travelled westward. He supposed that Ganryū was still in Himeji, but after what had happened he thought it would not do to proceed to that town at once, and yet he felt very anxious to know how things were going on there; so he went as far as Tsuyama, in Saku-shū. At this place he fenced with a very noted swordsman, Yoshioka Kembō. This fencer was one of Munisai's old pupils, but had been expelled from the school owing to his licentious conduct.\*

Musashi and Kembō fenced in the presence of the Earl of Tsuyama on this occasion. The match was a drawn one. The fact was that their styles closely resembled each other. Kembō was a thorough master of Munisai's style, and consequently in the use of one of the swords was quite equal to Musashi. Musashi spent some little time with Kembō, disclosed to him the mission in which he was engaged, and related to him the adventures he had met with on his pilgrimage. The two fencers had warm sympathy for each other, for, though Kembō lived such a licentious life and though his lack of self-control subsequently led to his death, he was in disposition honest, generous, and brave. His love for his old fencing master Munisai was genuine and fervent, and

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\* It was one of the conditions of discipleship in the best ancient fencing schools that the pupils should live honest and moral lives. Rules bearing on morals were drawn up whose violation involved expulsion from the school.





his delight knew no bounds when he found that the Shichinosuke of whom he had often heard in days gone by was no other than the illustrious author of the Two-sworded-style.

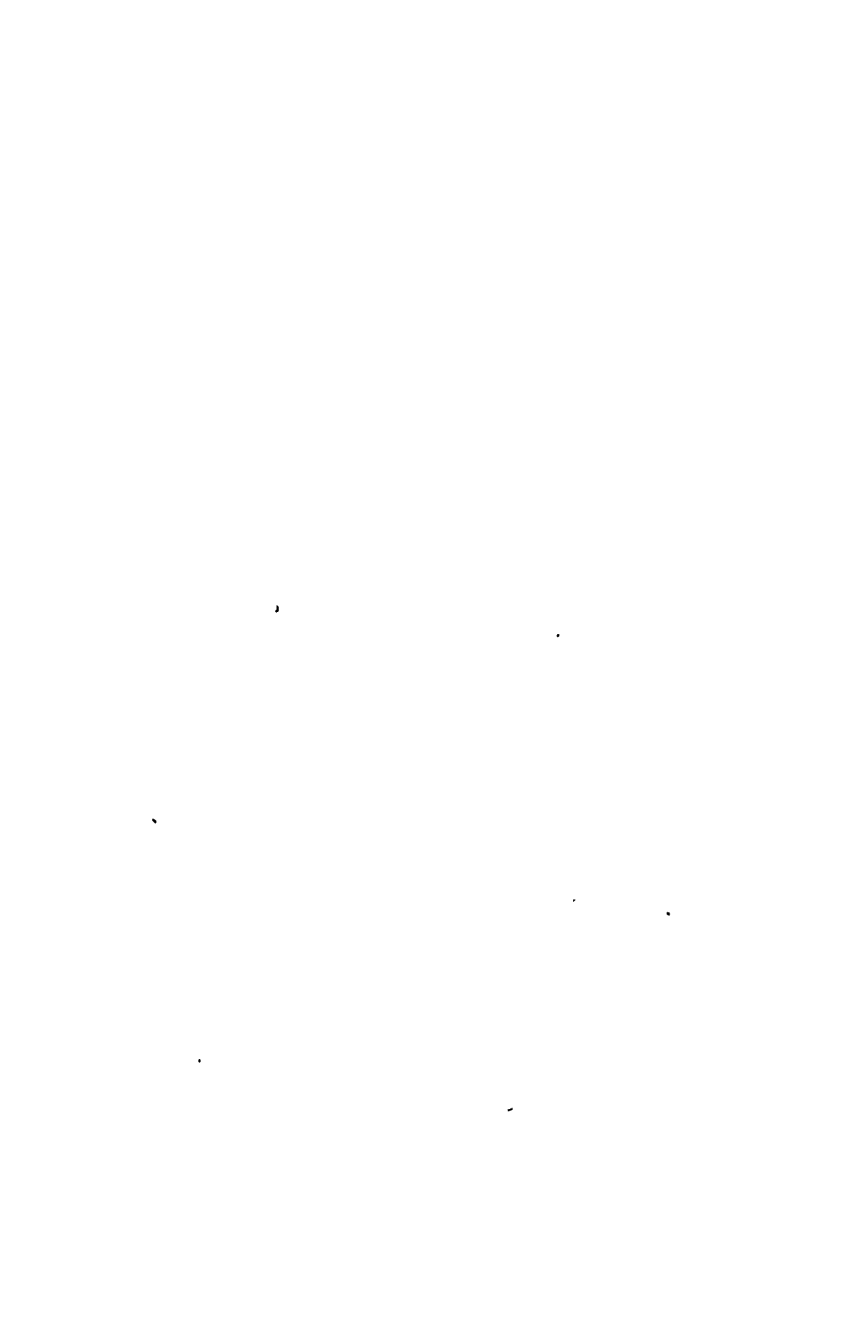
“Were you less skilled,” said Kembō, “I would willingly assist you to kill Ganryū; but I plainly see that you are fully qualified for the task you have undertaken. Take care of yourself, my lad, and that you will accomplish your purpose I have not the slightest doubt.”

The few happy days of his stay with Kembō having rapidly passed, as happy days are wont to do, disregarding an earnest request from the Earl of Tsuyama that he would remain some time at the castle, Musashi, who never for a moment allowed anything however pleasant to divert him from the one great purpose of his life, turned his back on Tsuyama and directed his steps to Himeji.

Musashi felt a pang at parting with Kembō. For, though a man of great strength of purpose, independence of spirit and with extraordinary powers of endurance, our hero was not without a softer side to his nature which often yearned for sympathy. In all his wanderings few were the men that he met with whom his heart beat in concord or whose principles and lives he held in admiration. Kembō was one of those men whose ideal was high though in some respects his attainments were low and who therefore when sober made a most charming companion. His conversation

was lively and high-toned, and, like Musashi, there was nothing that pleased him more than to have to use his sword in the defence of innocence or in the punishment of guilt.

In this connection it may be remarked that in Japan as a rule drink does not debase the whole character. There was in ancient times and there is still to-day a large number of well educated and much respected men given to habitual heavy drinking. Such men are most scrupulous in the performance of all their duties and never drink when on duty. They are highly honourable in all their dealings, kind-hearted, generous, unselfish and in many ways even self-denying. Intoxication seems to be with them quite separate from their ordinary lives. But drunkenness is going out of fashion in Japan as it has long since gone out of fashion in England. There is one thing that is worth remembering in connection with Japanese tipplers. Most of them can refrain from excess whenever they think it obligatory on them to do so. Hence it is that cases of officials, military or civil, being found tipsy when on duty are almost unheard of in this country. It is because occasional intoxication has not interfered with the even tenor of everyday life, has not blunted the sense of honour, has not made those who have been guilty of it less estimable as friends in their sober hours, that it is no great detraction to the Japanese gentleman to-day to hint that he







is fond of the bottle. In old Japan drunkenness may be said to have been regarded as a harmless weakness;\* and it is so regarded to-day by all Japanese of the old school. But Japanese educated in Europe or America usually object to drunkenness because it is not the fashion in the West or because of its preventing men from being at their best on all occasions. Keen competition is stamping out the habit here as in Western countries.

To return to my story, on his reaching Himeji, Musashi made inquiries as to the fortunes of Ganryū, and was told that he had been dismissed from the baron's service. So, retracing his steps, he passed through Sakushū, and pushed on to Bizen. He heard that at Okayama there was a noted fencer called Shirakura Gengoemon who had lately been taken into the service of the baron of that place. He inquired about this man and was informed that he was a most plausible talker—that he always had the knack of saying something which pleased his master. "This is no doubt Ganryū," said Musashi to himself. So, changing his name, he went to visit Gengoemon, but was disappointed to find that this fencer was not the man he sought. "Gengoemon evidently is not a man of much skill," thought Musashi, "if one can judge by his pomposity. However, as I have

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\* Vide the description given of Hideyoshi's drunken carousal in my *New Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, pp. 204, 205.

come here for the purpose of fencing, *nolens volens*, fence I must." A number of Gengoemon's pupils were set to fence with Musashi first; but being defeated one after another, Gengoemon himself came forward. He was no match for the author of the Two-sworded-style. His sword was knocked out of his hand, and subsequently a heavy blow on one of his legs upset his balance and brought him to the ground.

Gengoemon saw that there was nothing for it but to feign humility. So, bowing his head, he said:—"I am not your equal, sir. It has been reported of late that the author of the Two-sworded-style, Miyamoto Musashi, is on a fencing tour round the country. A man who uses two swords as skilfully as you can be no other than he."

"To see a performance and to know by its character who the performer is argues keen discernment," replied Musashi. "You are right, I am Miyamoto. For a special reason I changed my name before I came to fence with you, please forgive the deception."

To which Gengoemon replied:—"That a man of your attainments should have crossed the threshold of my house, is a piece of good luck which I never expected to have. Come, dear sir, and be my guest." Taking Musashi by the hand, he led him to the chief seat in his sitting-room, and continued, "I have long heard of your fame, and my





desire to meet with you can only be compared to the longings of a child for its mother. I trust that you will consent to become my teacher and that the bond which binds a pupil to his instructor may bind us two together indissolubly."

"If this be your mind, I will most gladly teach you," replied Musashi, who never seemed to doubt professions of friendship however insincere they might be.

Though Gengoemon spoke thus, in reality he was smarting under the defeat which he had experienced, and had determined to kill Musashi whenever a good opportunity offered itself.

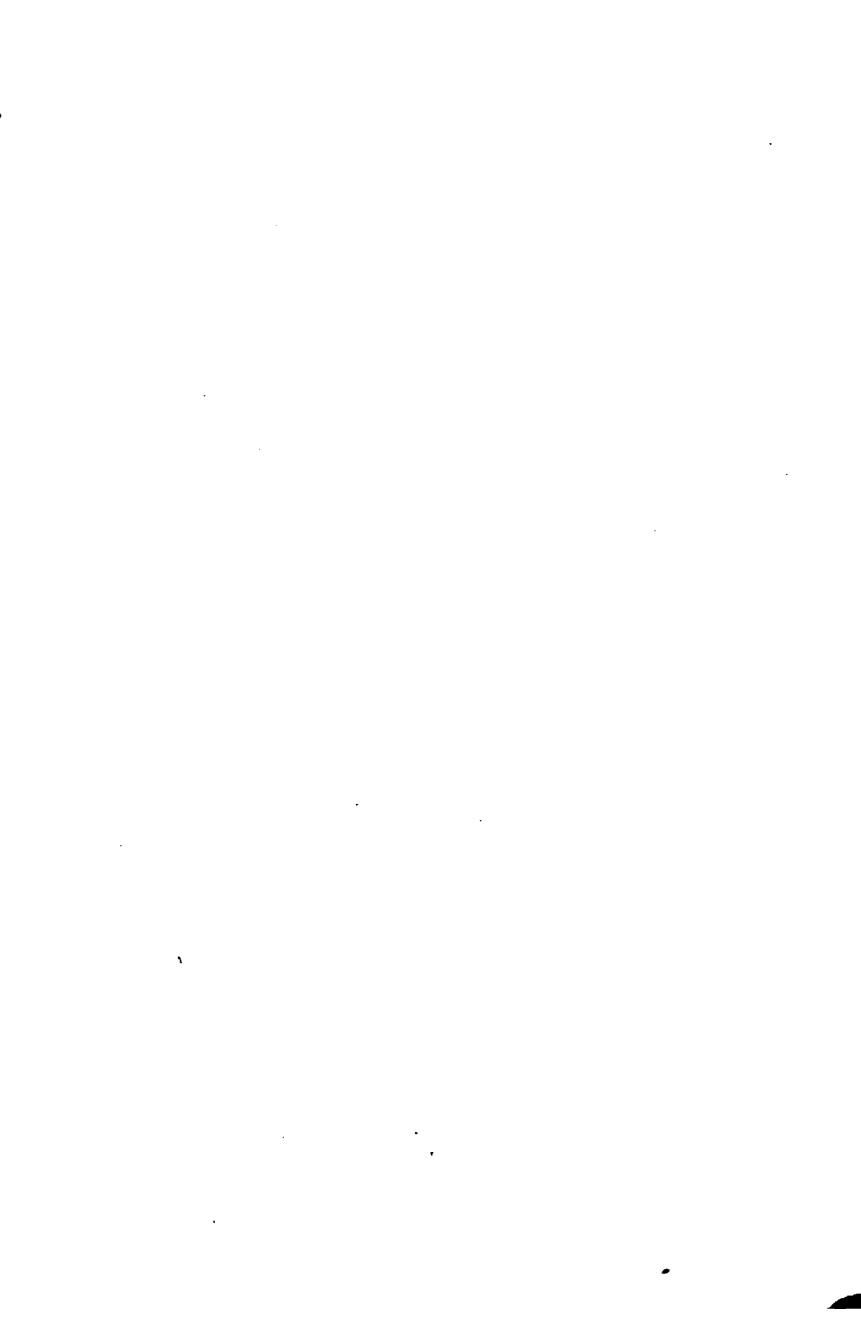
Three or four months rolled by; Gengoemon taking lessons from Musashi day by day. The latter did not begrudge the time spent in this manner; for in those days one of the best ways of obtaining information on almost any subject was to reside at a fencing-school; since such places were visited by hundreds of fencing tourists. Hardly a day passed but one or two adventurers arrived, who, after fencing with the master of the school, related their experiences. Musashi thought that it was probable that Ganryū would set up a school of fencing under some false name or other, and that it was not unlikely that some itinerant fencer who dropped in casually at Gengoemon's fencing-yard would reveal something that would give him a clue to the whereabouts of his foe, so day after day and week after week he

listened attentively to the longest and prosiest of yarns. But when a good time had elapsed without any special news reaching him, he began to grow impatient, and felt that it would not be well for him to remain in Okayama any longer. Gengoemon, it seemed to him, was not a fencer who promised to become a credit to his teacher; and as a man he did not grow on acquaintance. In fact, sometimes Musashi seemed to see signs of downright insincerity in his professed friendship. But in this he thought he might be mistaken: as long as Gengoemon's outward acts all appeared to be honest and straightforward, it certainly was not for him to show that he suspected that his host's innermost thoughts and intentions were far otherwise.

While these and similar surmisings were passing through Musashi's mind, Gengoemon was plotting his death. Well aware that though he had made considerable progress in his study of the Two-sworded-style, he was no match for its author in fencing, Gengoemon felt that it would be fruitless to attempt to kill Musashi in any ordinary way—that he must resort to treachery of some kind or other. So one day, when Musashi was away, Gengoemon assembled some dozen of the most unprincipled and unscrupulous of his pupils, revealed to them his intention of killing Musashi and asked each of them to say what he thought would be the best mode of carrying out his design.

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Whereupon each one made his suggestion. "I will take him to a restaurant," said one, "and get him to drink *sake* till he is dead drunk, and then when he is off his guard I will run my sword through him."

"Very easily said, but not so easily accomplished," replied one of his companions. "Do you think that a man like Musashi, even though tipsy, would not be more than a match for you? If you wish to throw away your life foolishly, that I should say would be a good way of doing it."

"Why not make a hole in the ceiling of some room or in the roof of some passage where Musashi is likely to pass, and then as he passes under the hole run a spear through him?" asked another.

"An excellent device, if you could only insure its success," replied a third. "But suppose the spearman were to miss his aim, as it is not improbable he would, do you think that either he or those of us who stood ready to assist him would leave the house alive?"

Two other proposals somewhat resembling these were made: one being that a man should hide beneath the veranda and run a spear through Musashi as he walked along; and the other that a heavy stone should be suspended by a rope over the room that he occupied: and that when he was under it, the rope should be cut and the stone allowed to fall and crush him.

Gengoemon disapproved of all these plans, and had one of his own which he proposed as follows:—"In my opinion your plans would none of them be likely to succeed. I have a better one. You know that I have been making a bath of late.\* Well, it is now finished; but no one has used it as yet. Suppose I invite you and some others to an entertainment given in connection with the commencement of hot water bathing in this house. Then we will ask Musashi to enter the bath first, and when he is in, we will shut down the cover, pour in hot water, and boil him to death."

"Good, good!" they all exclaimed. "You may be excelled in fencing, teacher, but in fruitfulness of resource, in general shrewdness—never."

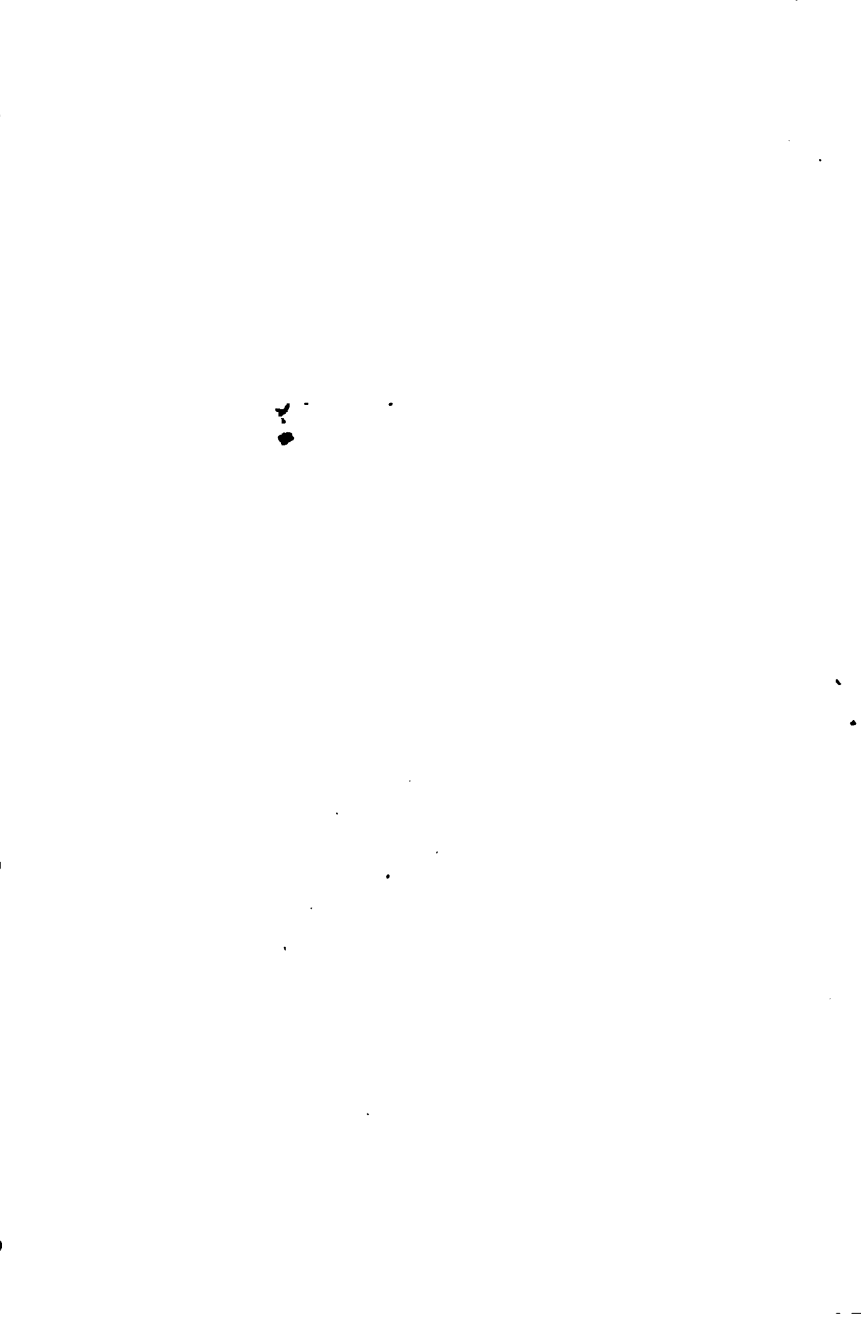
Some few days after this, Musashi was informed that there was to be a feast in Gengoemon's house that evening and was asked to be present. Without any suspicion he accepted the invitation. Gengoemon was very pressing with his *sake*, and Musashi drank freely. When slightly tipsy, he said:—"I feel as if I had had a drop too much. I should like to retire. I beg you to excuse me."

"Don't be in such a hurry," replied Gengoemon. "I have been constructing a bath lately, as perhaps you have heard. Well, it is now ready for use; and to-night we are all going to bathe in it for the first time. The water

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\* Sometimes made of wood and sometimes of plaster.





is now hot and I should take it as a great favour if you would be the first to enter. It is but right that our teacher should bathe first."

"Thanks: no;" replied Musashi. "As I feel rather the worse for liquor to-night, a hot bath would do me no good. Please excuse me."

"The bath here is not one of those small low ones, sir, in which there is no room to breathe," remarked one of Gengoemon's pupils. "There is lots of space in which to move about, so you need not fear its bringing on dizziness of the head or anything of that kind as the ordinary baths do."

Musashi consented; and entered the bath. No sooner was he in than the cover was put on and barred, and hot water was poured in from the side. "It is too hot," cried Musashi, "give me some cold water, will you."

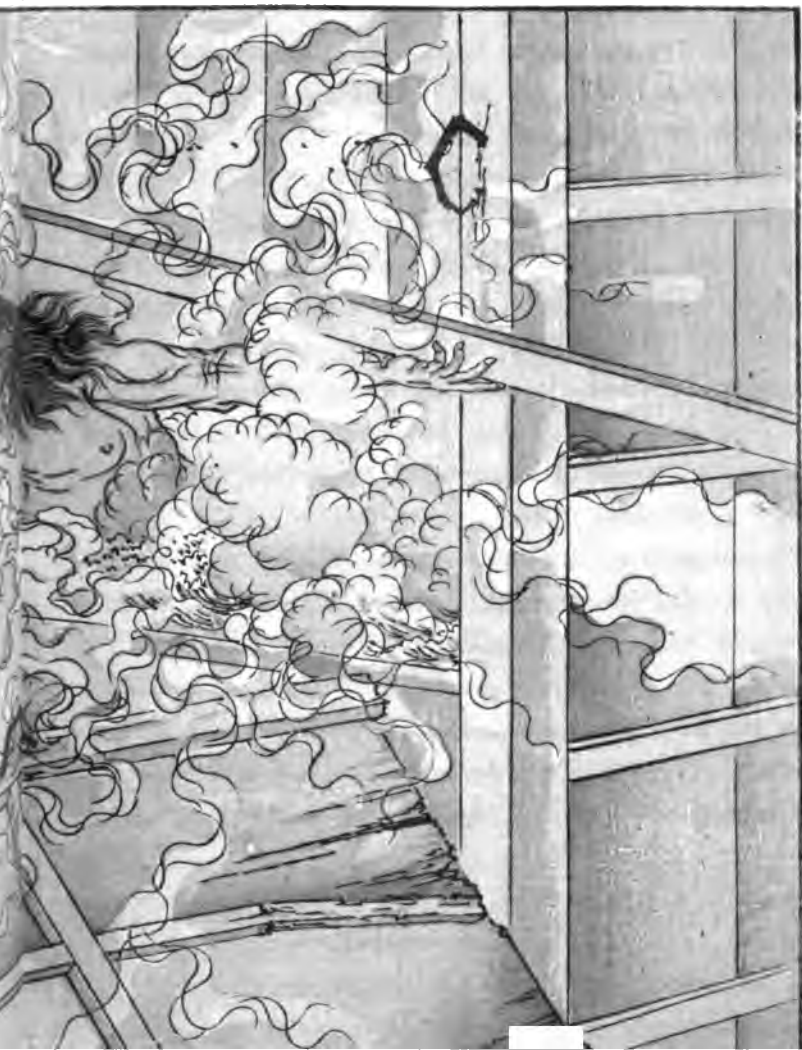
No reply was heard, and more hot water came rushing into the bath. Again Musashi called; but still no answer. He now suspected foul play; and, in a frenzy of rage and despair, exclaiming, "You abominable villain!" put forth all his strength, and, smashing the cover into shivers, sprang out.

"He is out! he is out!" shouted Gengoemon to his followers. "Quick! quick! don't let him escape!"

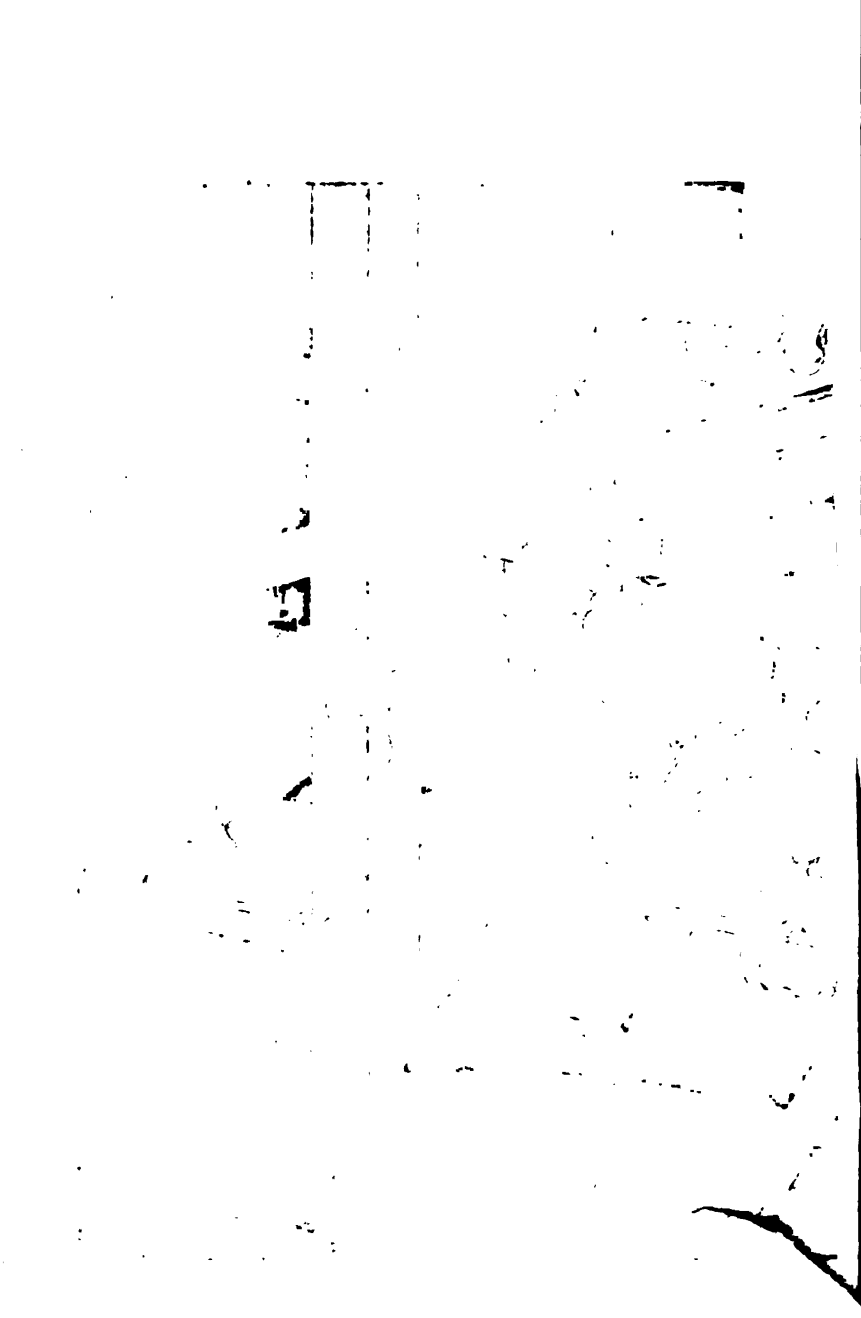
Musashi was more than a match for them all. From his boyhood numbers had never alarmed him. With the

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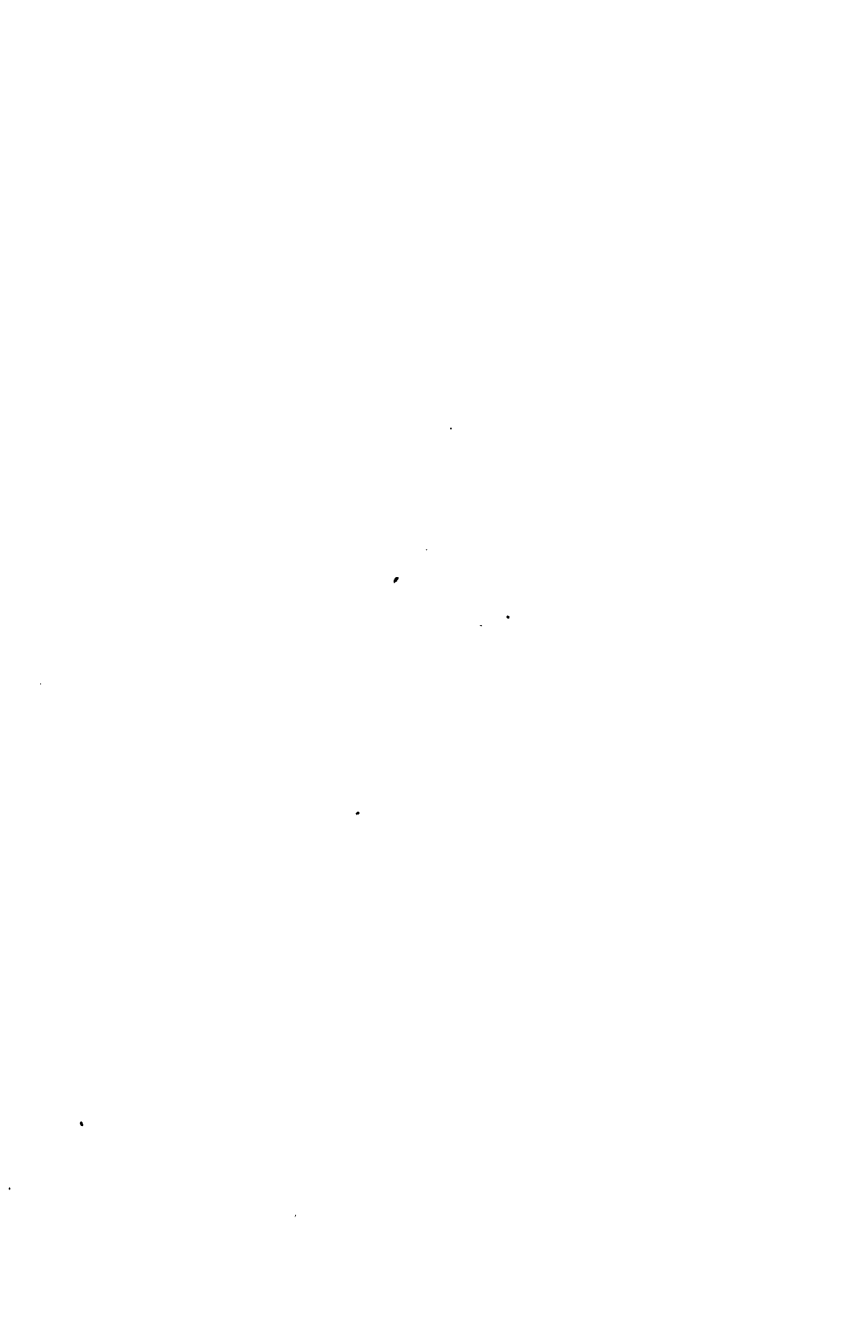


most extraordinary coolness and agility again and again in the course of his life he had leapt about scathless in the midst of his foes. When he issued from the bath he was weaponless, and yet surrounded by men with drawn swords. Though mad with rage, he never for a moment lost his presence of mind. In an instant he kicked or knocked over some five or six of Gengoemon's pupils, and then, catching sight of the large wooden bar that had been used to secure the cover of the bath, "a god-send, indeed!" he exclaimed, and, snatching up the bar, immediately singled out Gengoemon as the one object of attack. Felling to the ground two or three pupils who attempted to stop his progress, he was on Gengoemon's heels just as the latter was commencing to flee:—"You craven-hearted, unprincipled villain, die the death!" muttered Musashi between his clenched teeth.

Gengoemon drew his sword and warded off one or two blows, but he was no match for his foe: one heavy stroke from whose bar brought him to the ground a dead man.

His pupils, seeing this, fled helter-skelter in all directions, shouting:—"Murder! murder!"

A few minutes after the above tragedies, just as Musashi was drinking a little water to stay the most tremendous thirst that he had ever experienced, (brought





on doubtless by the *sake* and the over-heated bath combined), he saw Gengoemon's wife approaching him, with a halberd in her hand. "I cannot allow the slayer of my husband to escape," she exclaimed.

"Are you simple enough to think that your husband's foe is one that can be killed by a woman?" asked Musashi. "Your attempt is a foolish one. I am sorry to have to send you to the other world." The woman attacked Musashi desperately. He treated her as he had treated her husband, killing her outright.\*

No sooner had he accomplished this than a sense of the danger to which he was exposed as long as he remained in Gengoemon's house came over him. So, rushing back to the bath room, he snatched up the thin garment in which he had gone to the bath. (all his fighting, it must be borne in mind, having been done while quite naked), and, taking his two swords, which, as luck would have it, he found lying untouched in his room, he dashed out of the house and tore along through back

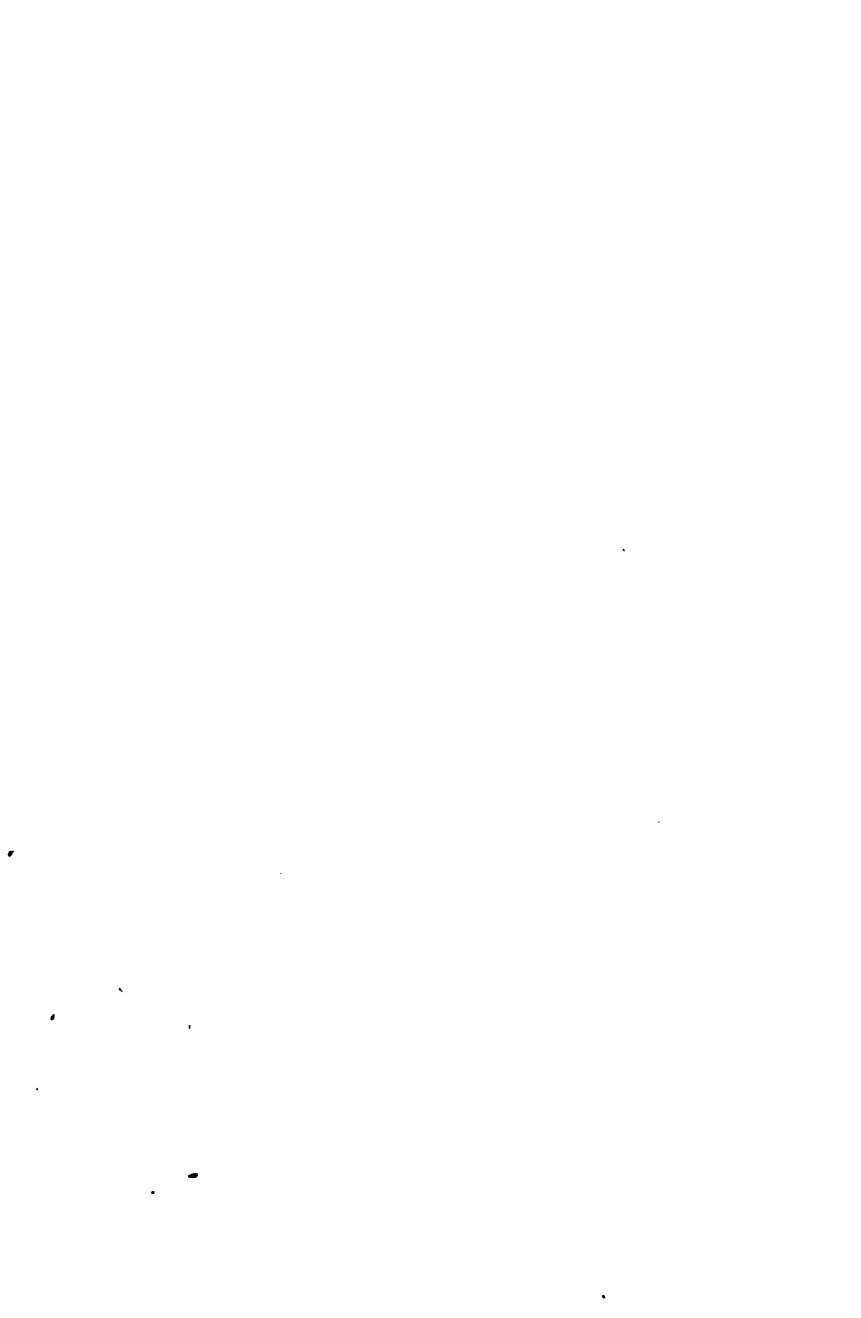
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\* It will doubtless strike the reader that this act was out of harmony with the rest of Musashi's life. It was his invariable practice to spare the weak. But the circumstances were peculiar. Musashi was mad with rage at the abominable treachery with which he had been treated, and hence it is probable that he hardly stopped to think of what he was doing. But if he did think about it, then the assent of Gengoemon's wife to the actions of her husband would have seemed to him to justify his killing her: Alike wicked, Musashi thought that husband and wife merited the same punishment.

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streets with the speed of a hare fleeing before the hounds. It was a bitter night ; snow was falling heavily ; a cutting wind was blowing, and few people were about, so Musashi cleared the town unobserved and unpursued.









## CHAPTER II.

Gengoemon's pupils reported at the castle that their master had been slain.

The Baron, Ukita Hide-ie, sent officers to the house to inquire into the matter. They found the dead bodies of Gengoemon and his wife, and, near them, the corpses of five of Gengoemon's pupils. In different parts of the house there lay some eight wounded and disabled men—all pupils of Gengoemon.\* The door of the bath, shivered in bits, showed what had taken place. From the wounded men the officers learned that an attempt had been made on Musashi's life, and that the scene of desolation and death that they now beheld was the result.

"Then Shirakura has died the dog's death that his abominable treachery merited," said the officers, "and we are not the ones to take any steps to punish the man who killed him, even were he found."

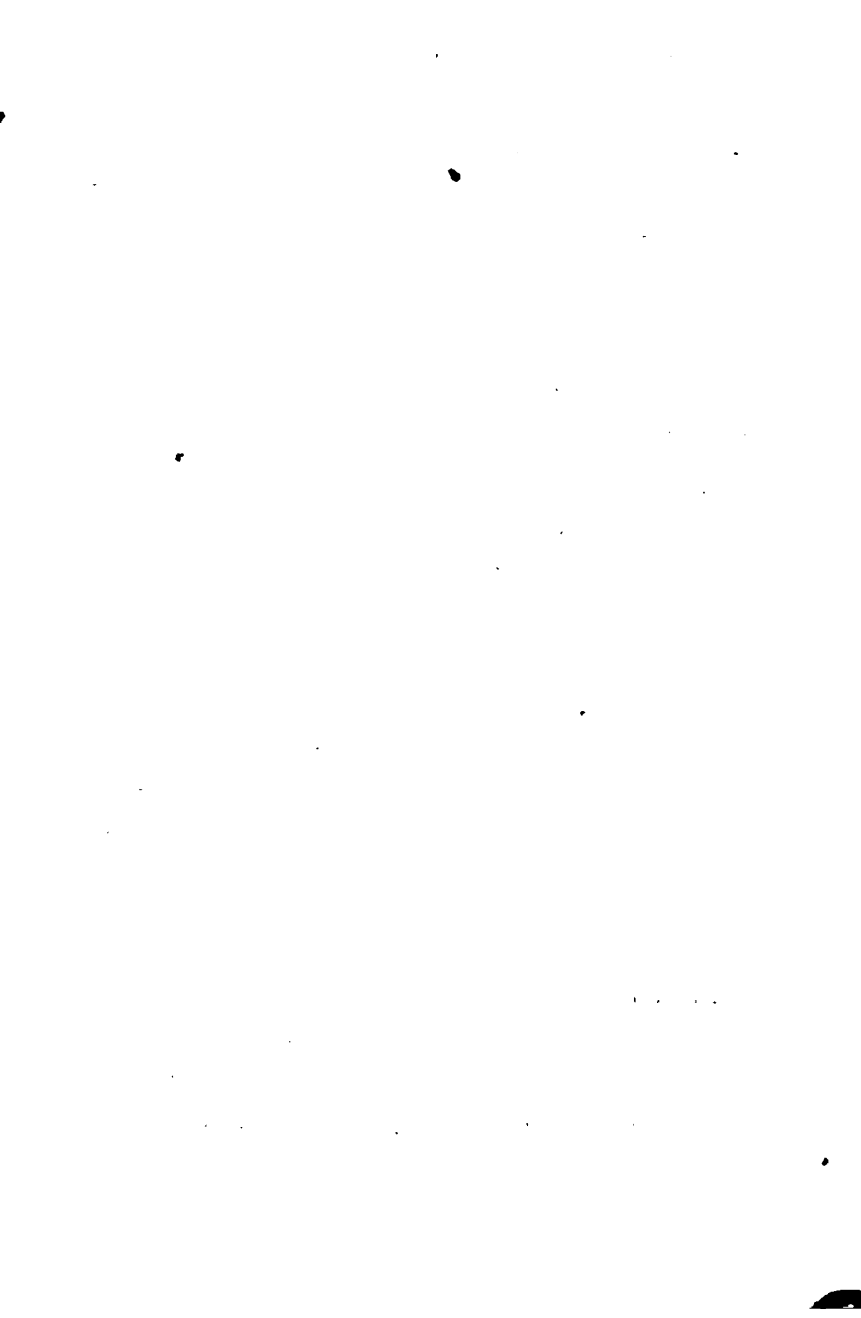
Musashi made his way to the mountains, intending to cross over to Bitchū. In feudal times any one who feared being arrested had only to cross the frontier that divided the territory in which he had committed an

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\* Allowing for those who fled, the number of men that took part in the plot must have been over twenty.

offence from that belonging to the neighbouring baron and he was safe, unless in some very special cases. Musashi had a good idea of the direction he was to take, but having to avoid the public roads, and it being a snowy dark night. after he had gone on some little time, he found himself surrounded on all sides by mountains too lofty to be ascended. He wandered about hither and thither, hoping to discover some mountain-path running in the direction that he wished to take, but no such path did he find. Cold, hungry, and miserable, he tried now this direction and now that, until even *his* indomitable will seemed as if it must succumb to the force of adverse circumstances. He thought that there was nothing for it but to perish of cold or run the risk of being arrested by going to some house and asking for shelter. Just as his spirits were at their lowest, he stumbled across a small unused shrine. Into it he entered and searched about for food. Finding nothing, he tore down the old tattered curtain that hung before the entrance and, coiling himself up in it, lay down on the bare boards. But the wind whistled through the crevices of the little shed and the snow drifted in at its entrance : sleep was out of the question. Just as he was thinking that he must seek shelter elsewhere he heard voices in the distance. The sounds came nearer and nearer. He





gazed intensely into the darkness and presently discerned the forms of two stalwart men leading a woman. "A cold night, with a vengeance," said one of them as he approached the shed.

"Anyhow we have a prize, replied his companion."  
"Let's make a fire, cook some rice, and warm up a bit."

"Well said;" answered the other.

The two now commenced to gather fuel; and having lit a fire, warmed themselves by it. The woman they bound to a tree. She was gagged, and looked the very picture of misery.\* "These fellows are robbers," said Musashi to himself. "A piece of ill-luck their having encountered a man like me!—as they will discover presently." Drawing himself up with an air of importance, Musashi now marched between the two men and said:—"Let me warm myself a little, will you."

The two looked at Musashi with utter astonishment. Observing that he had only one thin garment on, they thought that he was doubtless one of those ascetics who in cold weather are in the habit of going to pray to the gods with little or no clothing. "What request have you come to this out of the way place to make?" asked one of the robbers.

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\* It was customary in those days to steal women and sell them to the keepers of brothels.

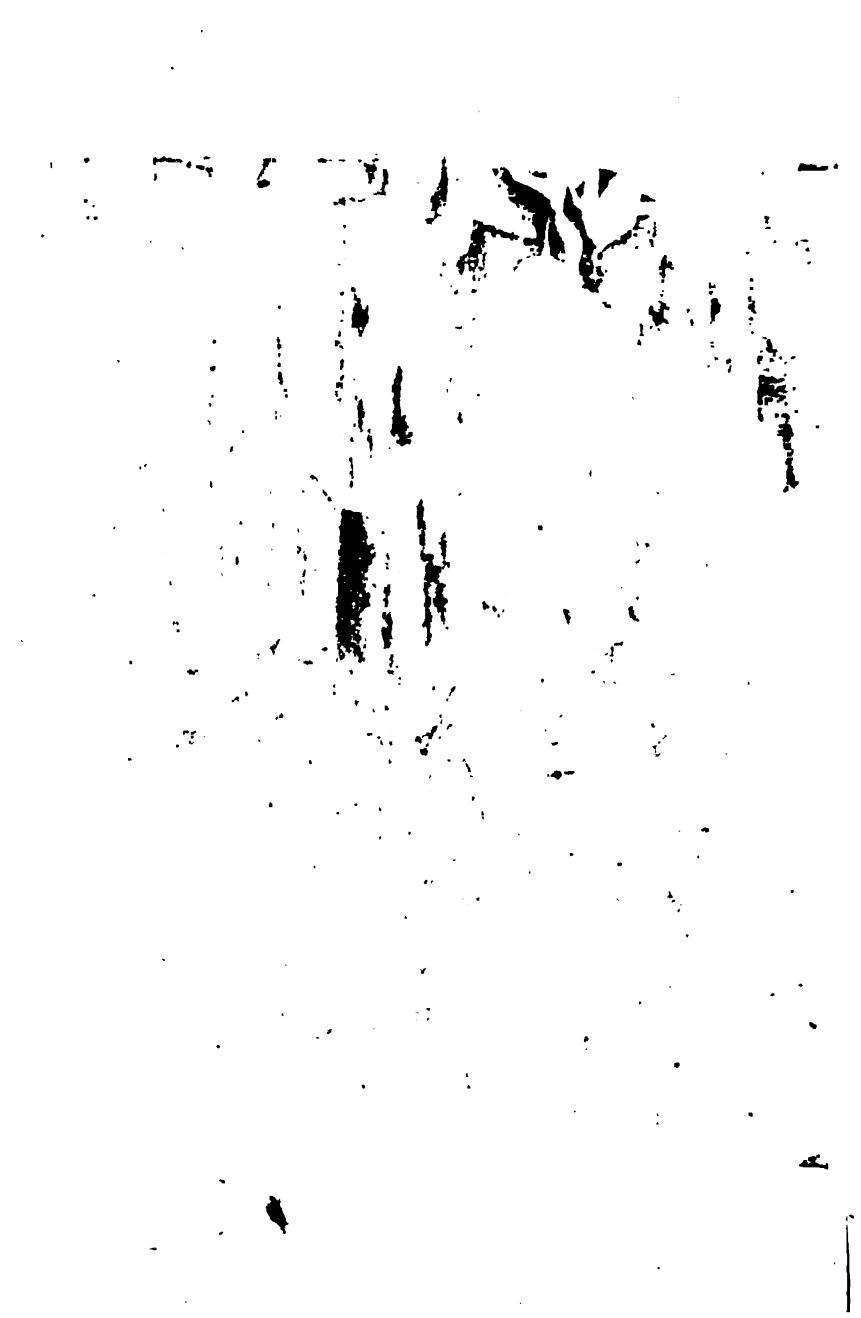
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"I have come to pray," replied Musashi, smiling, "that I may be enabled to punish all robbers and put a stop to their evil doings."

"What stuff!" replied the robber. "For a half-naked man like you to think that he can subdue all the robbers in the land, is like expecting to ladle out the water of the ocean with a shell. If you have any regard for your safety, you had better be off. We are robbers."

"If that be the case," replied Musashi, "then I have a request to make of you: I have been deprived of my clothes by a robber; and, since robbing is your trade, suppose now that you give me the clothes you have on, they were doubtless stolen, and that you go and take the clothes which were stolen from me, they are in the hands of one of your associates no doubt."\*

"You said just now," replied the robber, "that you had been praying for strength to subdue all robbers; and now you say that your clothes have been taken from you

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\* Musashi's clothes were of course left in Gengoemon's house. What he meant was that the man who had deprived him of his clothes was a rogue, and hence one of the same class as the man to whom he spoke, and that therefore the robber before him was the right kind of man to search for them; as the saying goes, "Set a thief to catch a thief." The whole thing was a joke, however, and perhaps intentionally obscure, the object of Musashi being to keep the men quiet while he warmed his limbs, anticipating that he would soon need to make use of them.





by a robber. Is it likely that one who is too weak to prevent his clothes being stripped from his back will ever be able to suppress robbery? We shall not give you our clothes. It is our trade to take clothes but not to give away what we have taken."

"Well," replied Musashi, "if you don't know how to hand me the clothes, I will teach you how it can be done."

"You talk big, indeed, you naked rascal! What do you mean by it?" said the robber, drawing a long hunter's sword that hung in his belt and attacking Musashi. Not deigning to use a weapon against foes so ignominious, Musashi sprang at his assailant and, seizing his right arm, sent him flying through the air.

The other robber came to the rescue. Avoiding the stroke aimed at him by this man, Musashi thrust his fist into his side, taking his breath away and rendering him quite helpless.\*

It was some little time before the two men recovered from the effects of this rough dealing: when they did, they united in imploring Musashi to spare their lives; and

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\* The first of the feats described above was one often performed by ordinary wrestlers; the second was a trick well known to all students of *yawara*.

*Vide* Part I, p. 169 *et seq.* for an account of *yawara*.

the man who had been asked for his clothes immediately stripped them off and said:—"They are very poor, sir, but such as they are please take them."

"What is in that box?" asked Musashi, pointing to a box that stood near the fire.

"Boiled rice," replied the robber.

"Bring it here."

"And in that bottle?" asked Musashi.

"*Sake*." replied the robber.

"Bring that too."

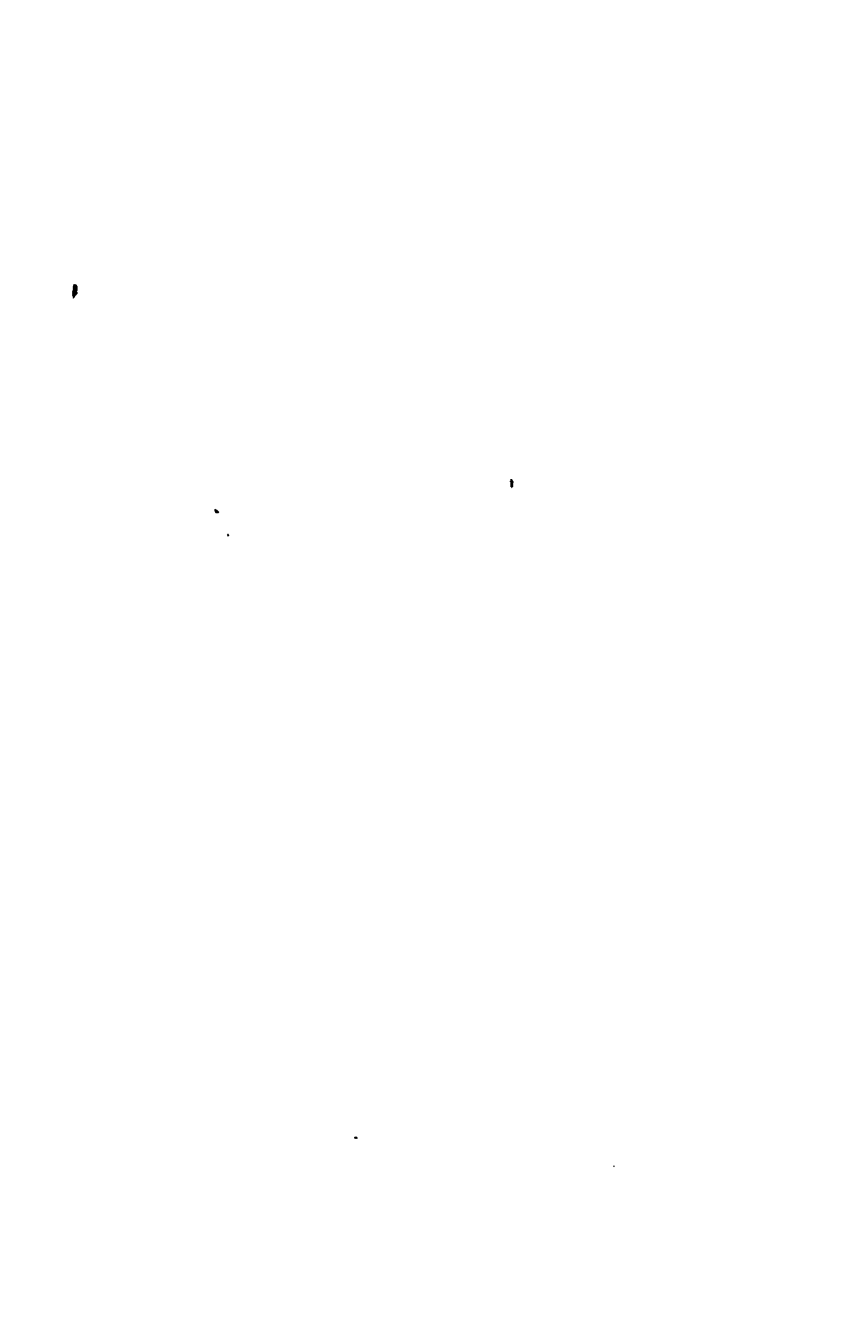
Sitting down, Musashi took a hearty meal, and after it felt himself again. "Now," said he to the men, "I want to know who this woman is."

"A woman whom we have captured and whom we proposed selling," replied the robber.

"Free her," said Musashi. "Such creatures as you are not worthy of being kept alive, but since I am indebted to you for food and clothing, I will spare your lives."

Approaching the woman, Musashi said:—"Set your mind at ease, my good woman, you are safe in my hands. I am no other than Miyamoto Musashi, now on a fencing tour round the country. I will see that you are sent back to your house in safety. From whence do you come?"

"From Bitchū, sir," replied the woman, "from the







neighbourhood of Matsuyama ; my husband is a large farmer named Takata Jūbei. I was on my way to a shrine to worship when this calamity overtook me."

Seeing that Musashi was engaged in talking to the woman, and thinking to take him unawares and kill him, the robbers drew their swords and rushed at him. But again he was too quick for them: in an instant they were both within his iron grasp. "You villains! I will spare your lives no longer," exclaimed Musashi.

"Please do, sir, please do," ejaculated the robbers.

"I was so cold, sir, that I could not refrain from attacking you," said the robber who had delivered up his clothes.

"Well, then, I will save your lives," replied Musashi; "but you shall work for them. One of you is to carry this woman on his back, and the other to make a torch and bear it before us to her husband's house." Thus they made their way to Jūbei's house where, as may be imagined, they received a hearty welcome.

Musashi remained with Jūbei for some time, owing to an illness from which he had been suffering, brought on by the over-heated bath.

Musashi had heard from some traveller, either while in Gengoemon's house, or while staying with the farmer, of a fencer in Tsuruga who by the description given he thought

might be Ganryū. So, with a good sum of money in his purse—a thank-offering from the farmer—Musashi set out for that place. On his way he missed the road and wandered away into the mountains. The paths that he followed became narrower and narrower and the forest thicker and thicker. He might have retraced his steps when he found out his mistake, but, to tell the truth, Musashi's extreme love of adventure and his steadfast belief in his power to extricate himself from any number of difficulties that either the machinations of his foes or fortuitous circumstances might place in his way, led him to go where it was not absolutely necessary that he should go and to encounter dangers that a more cautious, not to say a less brave, man would have shunned. Thinking that if he climbed one of the surrounding hills he would certainly see some place in the distance for which he could make, Musashi chose one of the least steep of them and commenced to ascend. But he found that he had been deceived in the height of the hill, and that after climbing for some time he seemed to be no nearer its summit than when he started. All his attempts either to find a broad path near at hand or to get a glimpse of a village in the distance proved fruitless. In the midst of his perplexity he caught sight of two men who looked like hunters, to whom he shouted :—" I have lost my way : please tell me which path to take."





The men looked at Musashi for an instant and then ran away as fast as they could.

Wondering what could have made them so much afraid of him, Musashi determined that he would go on till he arrived at some place where he could ask the way. He followed the direction which the men had taken, and before long came to a magnificent gate which seemed to be the entrance to somebody's residence. Near the gate was a shanty, in which lived the gate-keeper. To him Musashi said:—"I have lost my way; and as it is now getting late, I should be glad if your master would put me up here for the night."

The gate-keeper forthwith went to his master and reported the arrival of the stranger, and presently returned and invited Musashi to enter. The visitor was treated with the greatest deference and politeness, water being brought for him to wash his feet and various other little civilities shown him. Nevertheless, as he passed through the house to the back rooms, the general appearance of the place excited his wonder: not a woman was visible anywhere; the house had none of the usual ornaments or appendages of dwelling-houses, the walls being lined with nothing but swords, spears, bows, arrows, and the like. Musashi was shown into a small room, and told to wait there while the servant went to see whether his master was ready to receive him.

After Musashi had remained in this room some little time, the servant returned and said that he would now conduct him into his master's presence, but that first he must request him to take off his swords and entrust them to his care.

"I know of no rule which obliges a *samurai* to take off his swords before being received by a host," replied Musashi.

"I am aware, sir," said the servant, "that such is not the rule in most houses, but in this house it happens to be so, and all who visit us are obliged to conform to it."

"Well, then; I will conform," replied Musashi, thinking to himself as he said it, "Swords or no swords, I am a match for any one of them, or all of them combined, for that matter."

The house in which Musashi found himself was no other than that of the famous robber-chief Ikazuchi Gonkurō. The two highwaymen Musashi encountered on the night of his leaving Gengoemon's house were followers of Gonkurō; and they too were the men who had caught sight of him in the mountain-pass a little time before. They had hurried on to acquaint their chief with the approach of Musashi, having previously informed him that Musashi was one of the most formidable of men. Gonkurō, therefore, had set to work and made the most elaborate preparations for







encompassing Musashi's death. The house was filled with armed men, who all stood in readiness to assist their chief in preventing Musashi's escape. The robbers in immediate attendance on Gonkurō were four in number—all of gigantic size. Their names were—Yamabachi Gontarō, Arakuma Tarō, Imomushi Dampei and Mogura Rokuzō.

Into the presence of these men and a number of other robbers, all armed to the teeth, then, Musashi was ushered.

“You are on a fencing tour, I hear,” said the robber-chief, with a supercilious smile on his lips. “A wonderful thing, indeed, for one like you! What may your name be?”

“I am no other than Miyamoto Musashi Masa-akira, the retainer of Katō Kiyomasa, Governor of the Kumamoto castle and Lord of Higo,” answered Musashi, in a cool and dignified manner.

“Ah, you are Musashi, are you. Then,” continued Gonkurō, “I have something about which I wish to speak to you. You will doubtless recollect that last year you seized a woman who belonged to two of my followers. On that occasion too I hear that you vainly boasted that you were appointed by Heaven to subdue all the highway-men in the land. I am no other than the chief of the men whom you are ambitious of subjugating. How do you feel about the matter now, after seeing me in my own dominions?”

Raising his voice, Musashi replied:—“There is no

place under heaven, be it ever so out of the way, that is not included in the dominion of the king of the country in which it is situated? How then shall a set of mountain-robbers who do nothing but break the king's laws, escape the judgment of Heaven? I am one that bears two swords: I bear them for no other purpose than to enable me to punish wrong wherever I find it. I therefore cannot allow such as you to go unpunished."

"You speak of having two swords," replied the robber; "but are they not at present in my possession? What then can you do? If you talk in this boastful manner I'll send your head flying through the air in a brace of shakes."

"Do you think that a wicked man's blade would cut the body of a righteous man like Miyamoto Musashi?—not a bit of it!" retorted Musashi.

"You jabbering young monkey!" interposed Yamabachi. "We'll stop that tongue of yours by cutting it out."

Thus saying, Yamabachi, drew his sword and attacked Musashi. Musashi avoiding the stroke, with the speed of lightning rushed at his assailant and, delivering a sharp blow on the arm in which he held his sword, caused it to drop out of his hand.\* Musashi had no sooner got rid of

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\* Experts in *jūjutsu* are acquainted with the art of striking or pressing a muscle of the arm so that anything held in it falls to the ground, and of pressing a muscle of the hand when in the grasp of an antagonist and thus loosening the tightest grip.





this robber than he found himself enveloped in the arms of another—a man of gigantic size. Again resorting to a trick, he pressed the man's hands, disentangled himself from his embrace, and, striking a particular muscle of his thigh, sent him rolling to the ground. This was the signal for a general attack: all the robbers in the room and several others, who on hearing the scuffle had hastened to the scene of the affray, set on Musashi pell-mell. He held his own magnificently against them all. Gonkurō, seeing this, with a loud voice gave a signal. Whereupon, sliding doors were thrown back, and five or six men standing with loaded and pointed guns were revealed. Orders were given to fire. But instantaneous discharge of the deadly weapons was out of the question; as the room in which the contest was going on was still half full of robbers, whose lives would have been jeopardized by any attempt to shoot Musashi. This gave the latter time to protect himself against this new and formidable danger. His mode of doing it was no less amusing than clever. He seized Gonkurō and placing him between himself and the pointed guns, quietly awaited the result. "Hold, hold! Don't fire! don't fire!" shouted the robber-chief.

Musashi handled Gonkurō as though he were a child. His struggles were all in vain: and so tight was he squeezed that he groaned with pain.

The effect of this on Gonkurō's followers was very remarkable. They had followed and obeyed Gonkurō hitherto in the belief that the man who could master him was not to be found. They had bowed to superior brute strength with the blind instinct of men whose natures had lost most of their distinctively human qualities. But now they saw him whom they thought to be invincible as helpless as an infant in the hands of a man not much more than half his size. The spectacle overawed and subdued them. The respect which they had felt for the robber-chief passed away like a dream, and there took its place an intense veneration for, amounting almost to worship of the man whose captive Gonkurō had become. "Please, sir, spare our chief," they all exclaimed. "We beseech you not to kill him. We have treated you badly; but, oh, please forgive us, and spare our master's life."

Squeezing Gonkurō still tighter, until his groaning was something pitiable to listen to, Musashi replied:—"No, no; I will do as I said, I will make an end of you lawless miscreants one and all. Your master shall die first and all of you afterwards."

"Till now," exclaimed Gonkurō, "I have never known what mercy meant; not even in my dreams has a notion of its nature ever crossed my mind. Often have I subjected victims to cruel deaths, and often have they pleaded for







mercy, but their entreaties have fallen on the ears of a man who, being ignorant of pain, knew not what mercy was. Now, sir, you have taught me to value mercy and kindness above everything else. I humbly beg that you will spare my life; and, as you say that you cannot spare the life of a robber, I solemnly promise that henceforth I will refrain from robbery—that henceforth I will live the life of an honest citizen.”

“If this be your resolve,” replied Musashi, “then I will save your life. But, being a robber, your simple word is not to be depended on. If I were to set you free now you would at once attempt to kill me. Till I have a satisfactory guarantee that not you only but every one of your followers will from this time forth renounce the lives of robbers and become honest men, I shall not release you. The first thing that I demand is, that the guns yonder be all fired off outside the house, and then that they and all the bows and arrows in your possession be collected and burnt. The next that a document be prepared in which it be stated that you all from henceforth solemnly renounce robbery. This document is to be sealed with the blood of everyone of you in turn.”

To this they all agreed: the weapons were burned, the document prepared and sealed as directed, and Gonkurō was set free.

The robber-chief rose, and, taking Musashi by the hand, in a profoundly reverential manner led him to the most honourable seat in his room and, bowing down before him, spoke as follows:—"I was not originally a highwayman but, like yourself, a warrior. I grew poor, and so by degrees commenced to steal, and the occupation not being without its charms for one so fond of adventure as I was, I gradually grew deeper and deeper involved in crime until I became a robber-chief. I hail with delight this opportunity of returning to my former life. I beg, sir, that before we part you will do me the favour of drinking my health."

"Certainly, certainly," replied Musashi. "'Be not ashamed to repent of a fault when you have committed it.' Golden words these! Those that aim to live the lives of brave knights, should take care that they are not the means of bringing dishonour on their noble ancestors and that they hand down to posterity a name untarnished by evil deeds."


The highwaymen parted the money which had been accumulated by years of crime, and then, after burning the house in which they had lived, they took leave of each other. As they stood watching beam after beam and rafter after rafter of their mountain-home disappearing until nothing but a heap of burning embers was left, Musashi





said to them :—" So disappears all ill-gotten gain ! Its glory exists for a moment and then passes away ! It is as the sage says, ' The honour which proceeds from unrighteous gain vanishes like a cloud.' Consequently, if we wish to be esteemed by our descendants as well as by our contemporaries, we must do what is just and right. We shall all meet again somewhere or other, I doubt not. Take care of yourselves. Let each one of you do what is right and act the man, and so our meeting will be a mutual pleasure."

Gonkurō, Yamabachi, and Arakuma, under other names, subsequently became retainers of Mōri Terumoto : Gonkurō and Arakuma went to Korea and lost their lives there. Yamabachi lived to the age of seventy-eight and died in his bed.



### CHAPTER III.

Musashi reached Tsuruga in Echizen without further adventure, and visited the various fencing schools of the neighbourhood, but neither saw nor heard of Ganryū. Kanazawa, in Kaga, was then a large castle town situated near Tsuruga, so Musashi thought it well to visit it before leaving that part of the country. Though he obtained no information here as to the whereabouts of his foe, he heard that there resided in the hills near an old priest who was a most skilful fencer.

“What an idea!” exclaimed Musashi to the man who informed him of this. “An emaciated old priest living in the hills being able to fence! What shall we hear next?—Anyhow I will go and see the old man, as reports of this kind are seldom altogether without foundation.”

Musashi inquired the way to the old priest’s dwelling, and on reaching it found an infirm-looking old man sitting by the hearth warming his hands. “I have heard of your fame, sir,” said Musashi, “and, being on a fencing tour, have come to ask you to give me a few lessons.”

“Ah, young man! So you have found your way here, have you,” observed the old priest. “Ah, well! the time was when I was fond of fencing, but, as the saying is,







'An inexpert fencer comes in for heavy blows.\*' This was my experience and so I gave it up. Now, old as I am, were I to fence it would only end in my defeat."

"I have doubtless been misinformed," said Musashi to himself. "This old fellow evidently knows nothing about fencing. If he were a fencer there would surely be some signs thereof in his house. The house does not seem to contain a single fencing sword. It would be of little use to fence with an old fellow like this, but still, having come all this way, I should like to convince myself that he is not specially skilled before leaving his house."

"Excuse me," said Musashi, and seated himself by the old priest's side: then, snatching up a piece of firewood, he aimed a blow at his head.

The old man instantaneously dodged his head on one side and avoided the blow; then, seizing a fire-iron, with it won an easy victory over Musashi, on one occasion during the contest throwing him violently to the ground.

Overcome with astonishment, Musashi knelt down before the old priest and said:—"A novice in fencing, I came here to-day in entire ignorance that I was visiting

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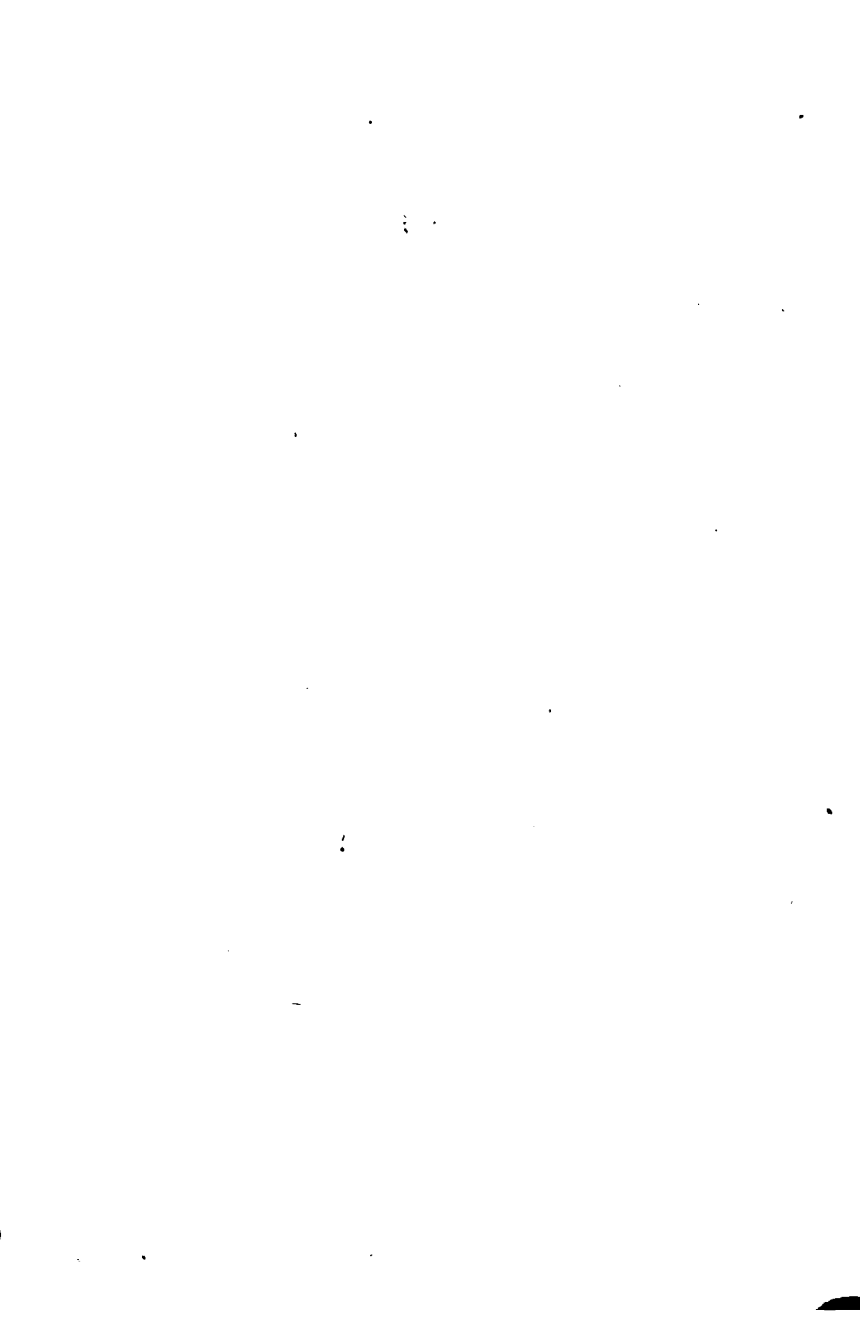
\* The old man intended this remark for Musashi—the meaning being that in fencing as in other things a little knowledge is dangerous, and that probably Musashi was one of those whose limited knowledge of the art made him desirous of fencing with every stranger that he met.

a swordsman so perfect as yourself. I have behaved most rudely to you. Your superior skill overawes me, and I have no words with which to excuse myself. I beg that you will kindly allow me to become your disciple."

"I admire your style very much," replied the old man. "You fence remarkably well. But there is something I have to say to you, so come in here," leading the way into a little room. The old priest commenced to talk about fencing. His remarks were such as Musashi had never listened to before. He drank them in with rapt attention. The conversation over, Musashi quietly set to work and cleaved wood, drew water and cleaned the house, in fact, did all the work of a servant. The old priest, seeing this, made up his mind to entrust Musashi with the secret of his style.

Every author of a fencing style had an occult art which he never disclosed to any but his most trusted disciples. This art the old man taught Musashi. Of what exactly it consisted the narrative gives us no idea. The terms used in describing such occult arts are so vague and so impregnated with popular superstitions that it is seldom possible to get any clear notion from them of the nature of the acquirements which gave some fencers such superiority over their foes. Of whatever the art consisted with this Musashi became acquainted, and he left the old man's





house feeling as elated as if he had been on a visit to paradise. On taking leave he inquired, "May I ask your name?"

"My name I cannot reveal to you," replied the old priest. "All I can tell you is, that I am a single sword that has buried itself in the mountains."

Musashi thought over this and said to himself:—"There are not many men in the country who excel me in fencing—of this I am sure. The old man says he is "a single sword." He is no doubt Ittōsai (the one-sworded man) of whom Moro-oka Ichi-u spoke to me."

Musashi's conjecture was correct. The old priest was no other than Itō Yagorō Tomokage, the author of the one-sworded style, and hence known as Ittōsai. In his younger days he had searched the country through in vain in the hopes of finding an opponent more skilled than himself. Having made many enemies by his fencing, he thought that the best way of ending his days in peace was to enter the priesthood and retire to a secluded spot. But even here his fame was known to a few persons or Musashi would never have discovered his whereabouts.

To return to my story, Musashi, after leaving Ittōsai's house, went back to Echizen again, still in search of his foe. Not discovering any trace of him there, he pushed on to the province of Shinano. This province, as is well known to

tourists, is one of the most mountainous in the whole of Japan. Hither and thither Musashi wandered through various parts of the province till one day again he missed his way. He found himself winding through apparently endless mountain passes. He heard the flowing of water at a little distance from him and went in the direction of the sound to see whether by following the stream he could discover a path. On his way he met a man arrayed in the costume of a hunter: a bear-skin coat on his back, a bamboo hat on his head, a gun in his hand. Informing him that he had lost his way, Musashi begged that as it was very late he would kindly put him up for the night at his house.

To this the hunter consented, and conducted Musashi to his dwelling. On their arrival there Musashi was received by an old woman, who immediately served up some boiled millet for him, which, having been a long time without food, he was not long in demolishing. When Musashi had finished his meal, the hunter and the old woman took a hearty repast; after which the hunter excused himself on the plea that he had some business to transact, ordering the old woman to look well after his guest during his absence.

The old woman having prepared a bed for Musashi, urged him to retire to rest. "You must be done up, sir,







after the fatigues of the day," said she. "Please not to mind me but go to bed whenever you feel inclined."

"If you will excuse me then I don't know but what I will," replied Musashi, "for I have had a long day of it." Before retiring Musashi had a good look round the place; and it seemed to him that again he had become the guest of a robber. And as firearms seemed plentiful in the house, he thought it would never do for him to be off his guard. Anyhow, having been asked to go to bed, to avoid showing that he had any suspicion, he had better do so; but sleep he would not.

This house was, as Musashi had conjectured, the haunt of a gang of highwaymen. The heads of the gang were no other than two followers of Ganryū, Aoyama Mompei and Oshida Sakichi, of whom mention has been made several times already.\* To them now the robber had gone. Despite his resolve to the contrary, Musashi dropped off into a doze, but a slight noise of persons moving in an adjoining room roused him to consciousness. The noise continued. It was caused by the footsteps of, in Musashi's opinion, some seven or eight men. "They will be plotting something or other," said he "I will listen to their conversation and will be ready for them."

Presently he heard them say:—"This fellow being a

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\* *Vide supra*, p. 256, *et passim*.

warrior-pilgrim, if he should wake up he'll be hard to deal with. Why not cut off his head as he lies there?"

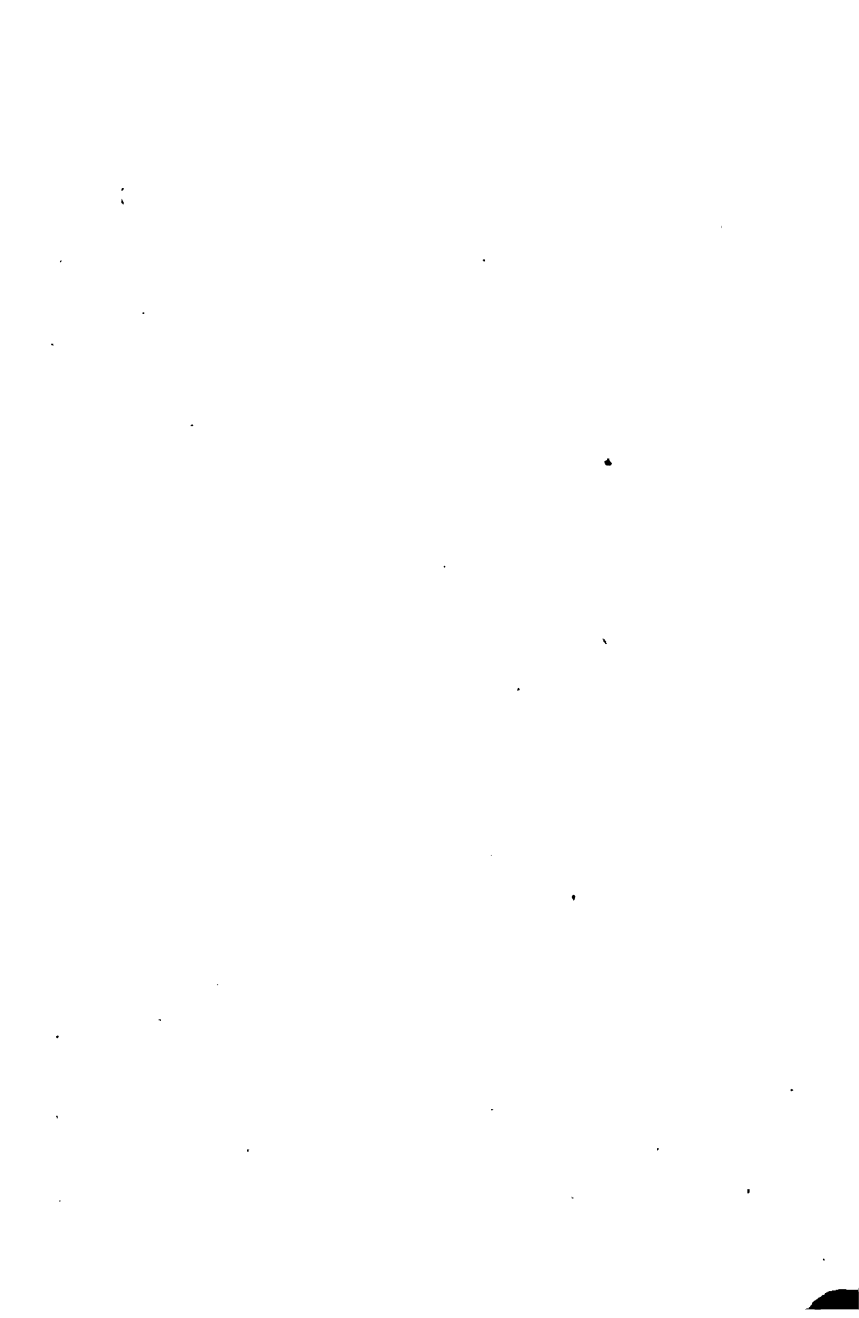
"No, no," replied another; "that would never do: why, the place would be half full of blood. The fellow, you may depend upon it, has not much money with him, and the worth of his two swords would never make up for the things in the room that would be stained by his blood."

Some suggested one thing and some another; till at last Ganryū's two pupils came forward and Mompei said:—"You need not puzzle your heads nor alarm yourselves so much about this matter. Even though the devil were in the next room, we two should be equal to the task of binding him. I will go in and see what kind of a fellow he is."

Musashi heard all this, and just as Mompei was approaching his bed he gave a loud snore.

Mompei took a peep at the face of the visitor and, in a great state of alarm, instantly returned to his companions and said:—"Heavens! Here's a pretty business! We have got some one worse than the devil in the house. Why, 'tis no other than Miyamoto Musashi who sleeps in the next room. Some fifty of us might attack him—but all to no purpose. I tell you what, in my opinion, we shall do wisely to let this man alone. We'll give him his breakfast





in the morning and send him on his way. If we wish to save ourselves from broken crowns or something worse, depend on it, this will be our best course."

"Well, to be sure! What shall we hear next?" replied Sakichi. "The leader of a band of robbers talking in this weak manner! Granted that Musashi is a formidable fellow, are we not numerous? And what is more, are we not well supplied with firearms? The idea of allowing the foe of Sasaki Ganryū to escape now that we have him in our power!"

"Very good, then," said Mompei, "if such be your will, so let it be: get ready your guns, all of you!"

"'Tis come to this, is it," said Musashi. "Then it is time for me to clear out. But wait a moment: is there no means of defending myself against firearms?" In an instant his mind ran through a score of modes of defence, but they all seemed to him alike powerless against firearms. "No, nothing will stop a bullet," said he: "I must flee." Snatching a rain-coat and a rain-hat that hung on the walls close to his bed, and cutting a hole in the wall with his sword, he made his escape.

The robbers in the adjoining room, hearing the noise, exclaimed:—"He has escaped! he has escaped!" Quickly they lit their torches and followed him up. Musashi was a swift runner; but it was night, and he was entirely ignorant

of the best road to take. Consequently he had not proceeded far before he was overtaken by the robbers. He felt that his life could only be saved by a resort to stratagem. In an instant he thought of one : climbing up to a high rock, on its summit he stuck his sword, and by the aid of a few sticks made the skeleton of a figure, which he covered with the rain-hat and the rain-coat, and arranged it all so cleverly that in the darkness it looked exactly like a human figure. Then, crouching down near the form, but on a lower elevation, and so out of danger's way, he awaited the approach of his foes.

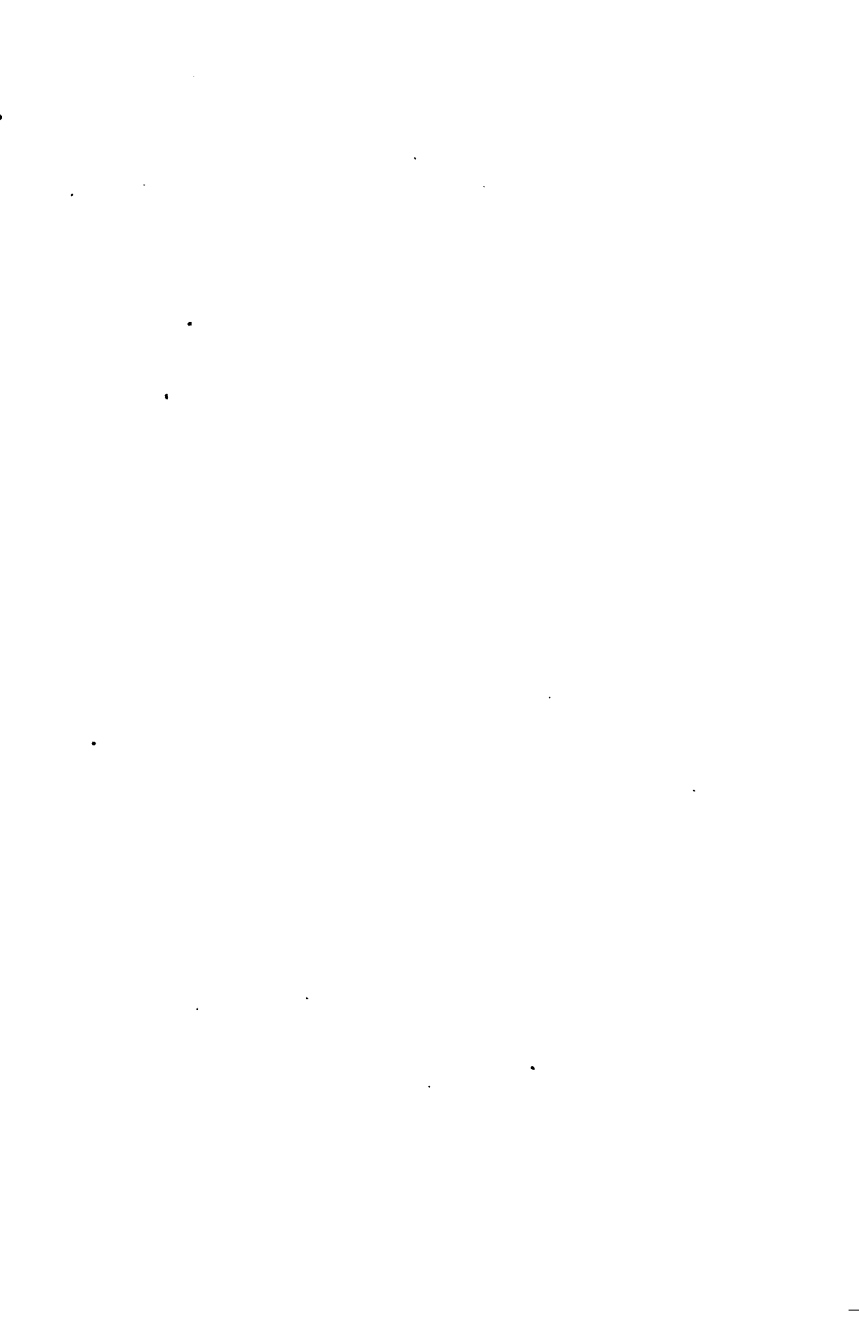
The robbers were not long in discovering what they took to be the object of their search. They gathered round the figure, and at a given signal all discharged their guns at it. It fell.

"He is killed," shouted Mompei and Sakichi as they rushed to the spot.

Springing from his lurking place Musashi cut down Mompei and killed him. Sakichi commenced to flee, but Musashi instantly overtook and seized him. Sakichi pleaded hard for his life.

"I don't know that there is anything to be gained by killing such a fellow as you," replied Musashi ; "so I will spare you, but only on the condition that you tell me where Ganryū is."







"I know nothing of Ganryū," replied Sakichi. "Since he killed Munisai I have lost sight of him."\*

"Then you can go," said Musashi, taking him up and flinging him with great force to a distance of several feet—an ill-advised act on his part as will presently be seen. Musashi's absolute fearlessness made him neglect to take even ordinary precautions against the dangers that beset his path. That a pupil of Ganryū would, if left alive, become a source of danger in such a place as that in which Musashi now found himself a moment's reflection would have convinced any ordinary person. It was not long before Musashi found out his mistake. Sakichi blew a horn, gathered his scattered followers together, and gave directions that they should guard every path by which escape was possible. Their lighted torches soon convinced Musashi that he was surrounded on all sides by his foes and that none of the numerous mountain foot-paths could be made use of. But he was on an elevation, and the robbers were in the paths below; so one mode of escape was left open to him, and, hazardous as it was, he determined to attempt it. He climbed a tree and swung on its branches till he reached the bows of another, which he seized. By repeating this feat, he succeeded in passing from tree to tree very much as monkeys do. He crossed

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\* This was the first *positive* proof that Musashi had that Ganryū was his father's murderer.

several deep ravines in this way, and was soon far out of the reach of his enemies. He scrambled on over rocks and steep places until he thought there was no chance of any one's finding him, when he sat down under a tree to rest. Whilst here the day dawned. He arose, and, after walking a little, discovered a narrow path, by following which for a little time he reached a broader one, where he met a man who had none of the looks of a robber about him. To him Musashi related what had occurred, and asked for guidance and shelter.

"My master," replied the peasant, "is a man who holds no intercourse with the world, and therefore it is not allowable for me to take any one to his house."

"If that be the case, your refusal is reasonable enough," replied Musashi, "but all I ask is that you will kindly take me as far as the door of your master's house and announce my arrival to him. If he refuses to give me shelter, I will go elsewhere."

The man led Musashi as far as the entrance to the house, and then went ahead to inform his master of the arrival of a visitor.

Musashi was invited into the house, but told that his stay must be short. An aged man, with magnificent white hair, sitting by the fire-side, looked up as the stranger entered, and revealed a pair of eyes that seemed capable of piercing





through almost anything. Musashi, whose respect for old age was very great, saluted the host in a most-reverent manner, and, after making a few casual remarks, proceeded to relate to him the story of his experiences on the previous evening. The old man listened with great attention. The animation which lit up his features and partly concealed the marks of age with which they were stamped showed that tales of exciting adventure acted as a charm on him.

After taking some refreshment, Musashi looked well around the house in which he found himself, and came to the conclusion that it was neither the haunt of a robber nor the dwelling of a peasant. His host was evidently a warrior, and as such doubtless knew something about fencing. So, with the object of seeing what he could do, Musashi requested him to give him a few lessons.

"The time was," replied the aged man, "when I paid attention to fencing. But there was such a fuss made about victory and defeat all over the country that I grew disgusted with the whole affair and came away to live in the woods here. As for fencing with a young man like you—this I have no inclination to do."

Musashi thought to himself:—"What this man says very much resembles what Ittōsai said. I wonder who he is."

"May I ask, sir, with whom I have the honour of staying?" asked Musashi.

"What is the use of an old man like me giving his name?" replied the host.

This only increased Musashi's suspicions, and he begged earnestly to be allowed to remain the night with his host; who, after many apologies for the poorness of the accommodation, consented.

During the evening the two conversed freely together. The old man was evidently more interested in fencing than anything else, and his remarks on the art fully convinced Musashi that he had the good luck to have again fallen in with one of the great fencing celebrities of the land. After they had talked a long time, the old man dropped off to sleep.

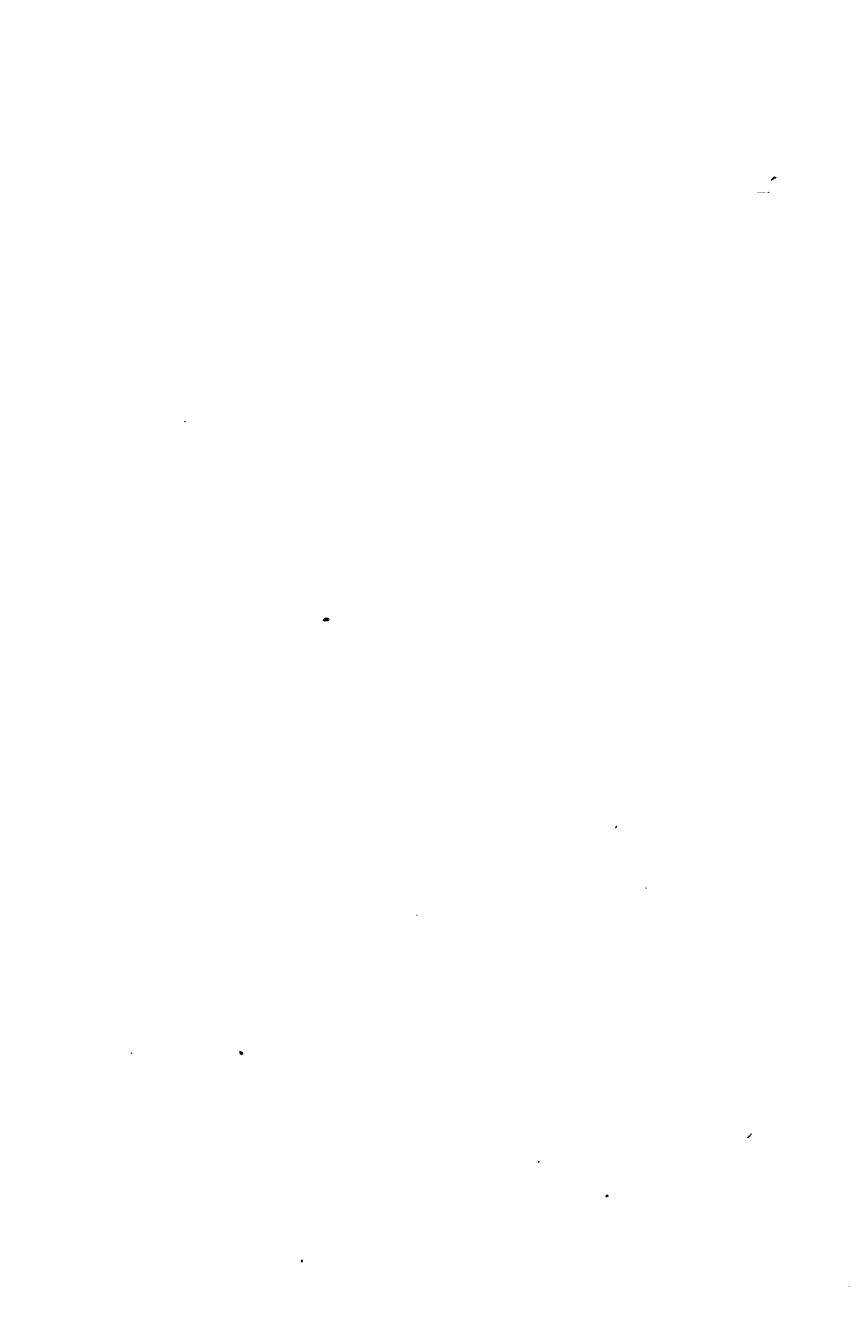
Musashi now commenced to chat with the servant. He found him too a most interesting companion and well versed in fencing matters. After talking to him some little time, "You seem very well up in the art," said Musashi, "suppose that you and I have a turn while the old gentleman is asleep."

"That would not do;" replied the servant. "He would soon wake up, and I should be found fault with for fencing with a visitor without his leave."

"Never mind that," replied Musashi. "I will excuse you to him and make it all right."

The servant agreed; and, having lit torches, the two







stole outside and commenced to fence. For a long time their contest was undecided. the servant fencing remarkably well, but at last he was struck by his opponent.

In the meanwhile, the noise of the swords had aroused the old man, who even in his sleep had a keen ear for such sounds, and he had stolen over to a spot where he could watch the contest. "Fine! fine!" he exclaimed when Musashi struck his opponent. He then praised Musashi and in the course of the conversation that ensued gave him some hopes that he himself would fence with him on the morrow.

The next day after breakfast Musashi again pressed his request. And his host, remarking that there was something very expert about the way that he handled his swords agreed to fence with him, but first wished to know why he used two swords. The old man was impressed by the account Musashi gave of the circumstances that led to the invention, and agreed to fence with him.

Musashi, in great glee, went out to the court-yard and, with his two swords in his hand, stood waiting for his opponent. But the latter did not make his appearance for some time. After a while, however, in a most lazy slouching way he came poking along on a pair of pattens. "Shall I fetch a sword?" asked Musashi.

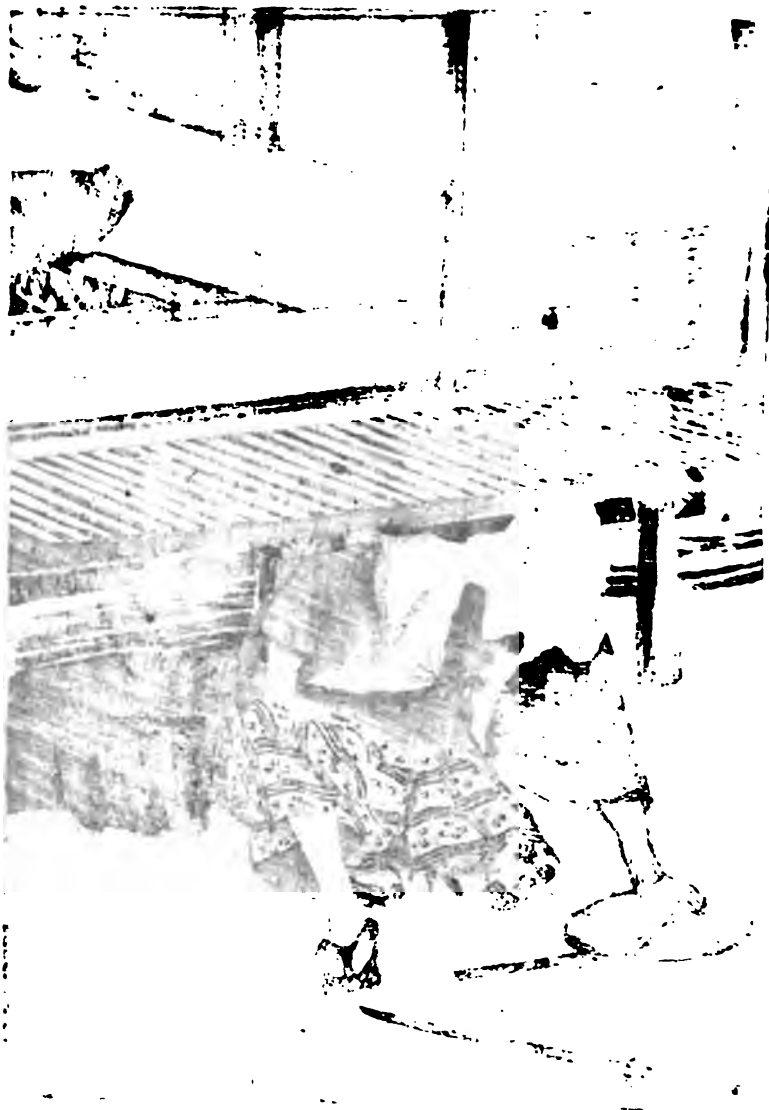
"No need to do that," replied the old man. "Anything will do. Here's a pot-lid; it will serve my purpose

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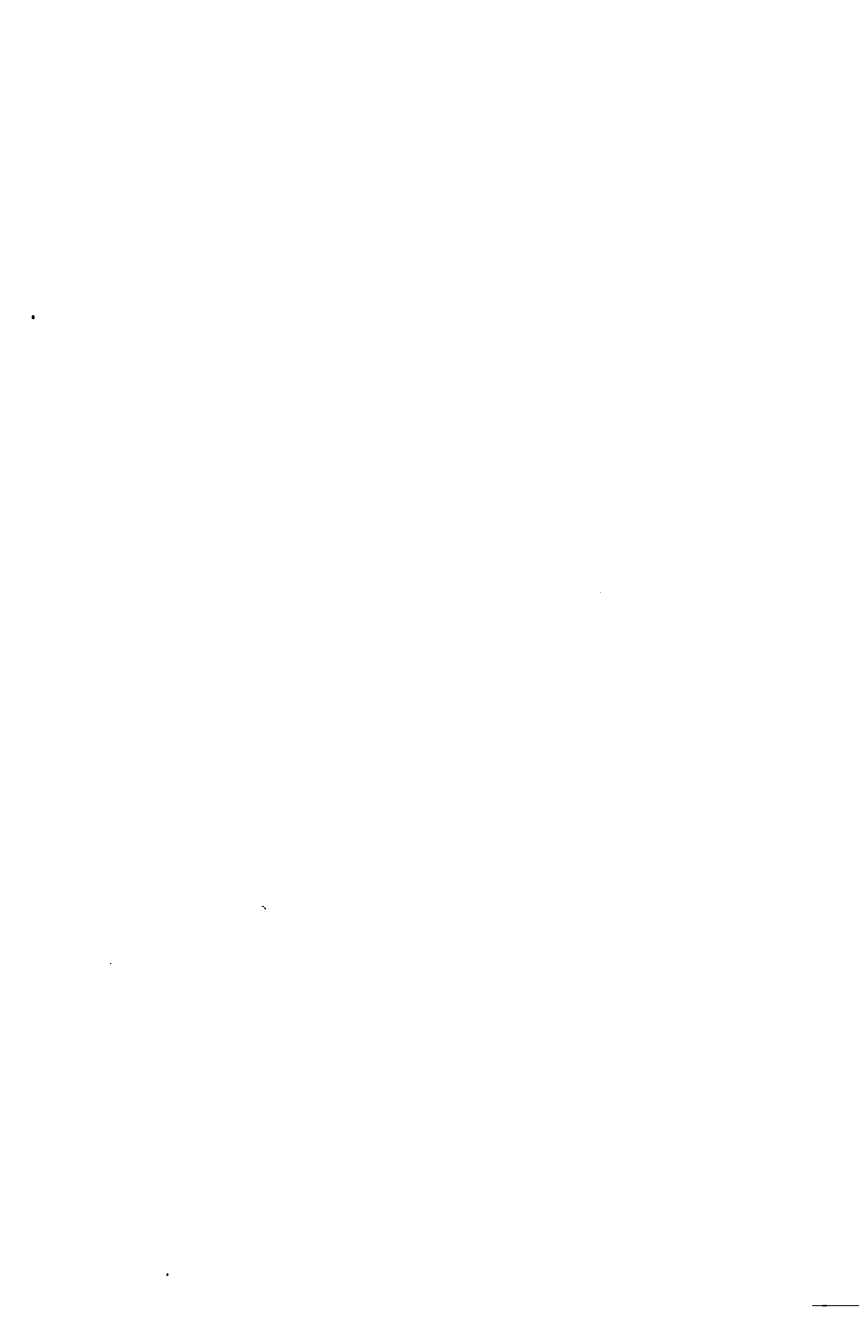


as well as anything. Thereupon the old man, after removing the lid as deliberately as possible, fumbled about putting the pot to rights, taking as long about everything as he well could. Musashi, thinking this to be an indication that his host despised his foe, began to grow very impatient and angry, and on the old man's approaching him, said:—"This is the first time that I have heard of a man's coming to fence with a pot-lid. A curiosity, indeed!"

"What stuff!" replied the old man, "fancy one who has invented a two-sworded-style entertaining such notions! What's the difference whether a spear, sword, halberd, stick or a pot-lid be used? The principle is the same. If you have any doubt about it, then, see how it acts."

Here they commenced to fence. No sooner did the fencing begin than the fire of youth lit up the old man's eyes: his bent and decrepit form assumed an erect and commanding attitude and he seemed in an instant to have grown twenty years younger. Look as he would, Musashi could see no unguarded spot of his opponent's body to strike. While he was considering what to do, the old man, with a shout that, it is said, had a most discouraging effect on his opponent, advanced towards him. For a moment, quite unconsciously Musashi retreated, but, recollecting himself, again renewed the contest. With his left sword he aimed a blow at the old man's head. This being warded







off, Musashi instantly made a cut at his side. This, too, was received: and, as the sword was being withdrawn, the old man delivered a sharp back-handed stroke on Musashi's arm, which caused him to drop his weapon. Musashi, now somewhat annoyed, commenced to slash furiously at the old man, but all to no purpose: the latter's agility, quickness of eye, and adroit handling of the pot-lid were perfectly marvellous. After a few vain attempts at self-defence, for with such an antagonist attack was out of the question, Musashi suddenly found himself on the ground. He was held down by the old man's lid so firmly that till the latter voluntarily released him he was unable to rise. When the pot-lid was removed Musashi sprang up, and was in hopes of catching his opponent off his guard and thrusting his sword into his side. But instead of this he was again knocked down, and this time his fall was so violent that he lost his senses. The contest over, the old man quietly walked into his room and sat down as composedly as if nothing had happened.

In a few minutes the servant came to him and asked:—"What is to be done with Musashi? He can't be left as he is or he may die."

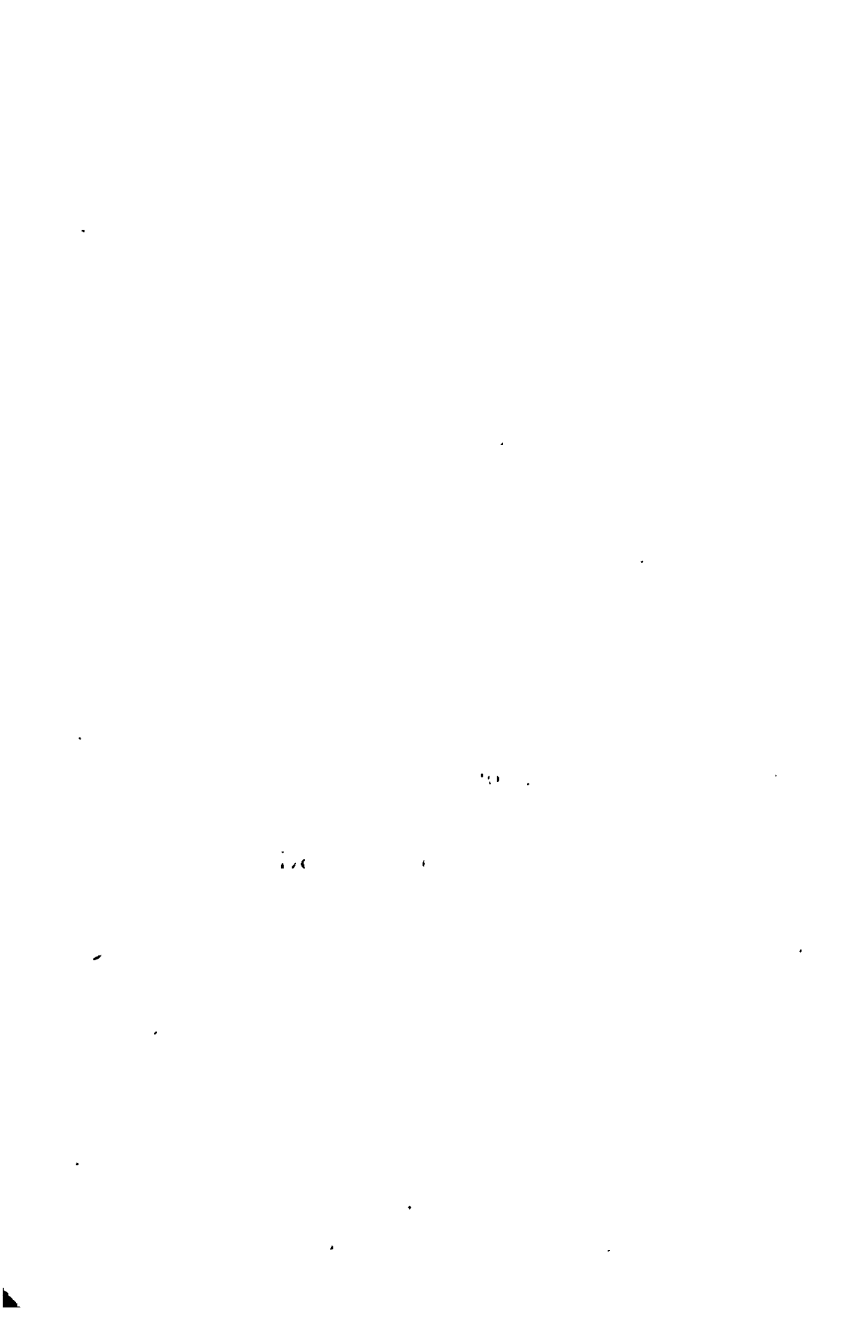
"Let him alone," replied the old man; "he will come to directly: if not I will do something to bring him round." This a few minutes after he accomplished.

Musashi had no sooner recovered his senses than he approached the old fencer, and in a kneeling posture humbly begged his pardon for having been so presumptuous as to contend with such an expert swordsman. "Though I possess eyes, it was as though I had none," said he, "for I failed to see that I was in the presence of a superior man."

"No, no;" replied the old man, "no apology is needed. You are, I perceive, no ordinary fencer. When I was young I went around the country on a fencing tour, as you have been doing. There was a man with whom I fenced whose style was very much like yours. I remember that our contest was undecided. Dear me! how my memory fails: for the life of me I can't remember his name. In what part of the country were you born?"

On Musashi's stating from what province he had come and giving the name of his father, the old man exclaimed:—"To be sure! to be sure! Well, when I was young, Munisai's fame was very great, and I found that he was quite a match for me. I suppose he is an old man with grey hairs and a bald head like myself by this time: I have heard nothing of him for an age."

This remark touched a tender cord and awakened sad recollections in Musashi's mind. He at once related to the old man the story of his father's cruel murder.



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"Who was the perpetrator of the foul deed?" asked the aged fencer.

"Though you are my teacher, "replied Musashi," such a matter, sir, as you are aware, is not one that may be disclosed to any but the most tried and trusted friend. I am practising fencing for the purpose of killing my father's murderer: but his name, sir,—excuse me—but—"

"Don't apologize further," said the old man. "You feel just as you ought on this point. But in order to assure you that I am worthy of your confidence, I will tell you who I am: I am no other than Tsukahara Bokuden."\*

A thrill of delight passed through Musashi's soul as he listened to this disclosure. For Bokuden was the one man of all others whom he had for years been longing to meet. He had, as we have already mentioned, been informed that Bokuden could teach him something, and he felt that in view of Ganryū's being a fencer of note and of the certainty of his making use of every available means of increasing his proficiency, it was the solemn duty of the man who sought to slay him to qualify himself for the deadly conflict by placing himself under the instruction

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\* For an amusing incident connected with this fencer *vide* Appendix to Part I of this Life.

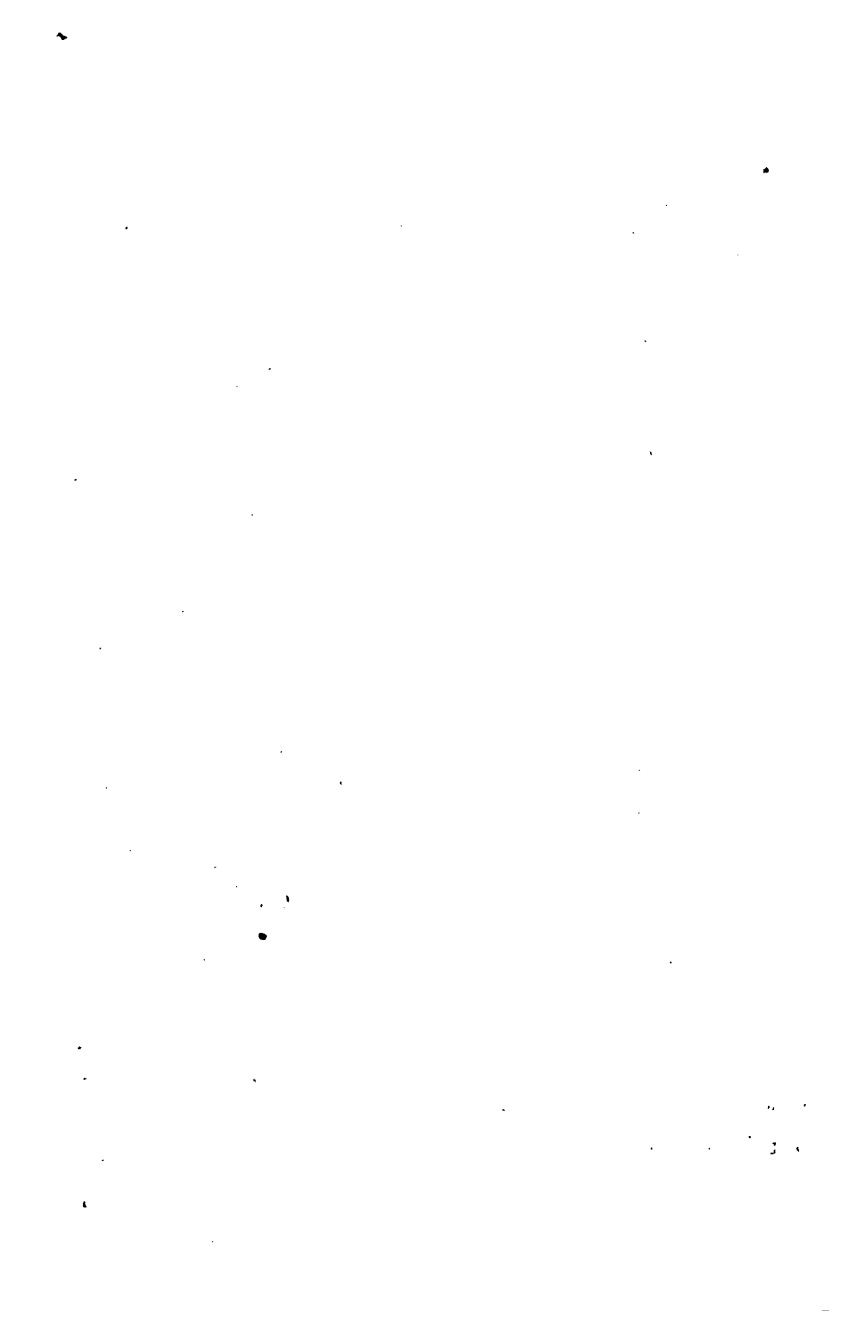
of the great masters of the art and by gaining a knowledge of the secrets of their superiority to other men.

Bokuden was born in the province of Hitachi ; being the second son of Tsukahara Tosa-no-Kami, a very noted fencer. Bokuden was not long in learning his father's style and subsequently went around the country on a fencing tour. After acquiring the good points of the styles of all the men with whom he fenced, he invented a new style known as the *Bokuden-ryū*, or the *Mu-te-kachi-ryū* (the "Handless-victory-style"). It obtained the latter name owing to its author's depending more on quickness of eye and keen perception of the intentions of an adversary than on any adroit handling of the sword. In making this remark I do not intend to imply that Bokuden did not handle his sword adroitly ; but where fencers are very equally matched superiority in one important particular often decides the contest in favour of one or the other. It was in great proficiency in reading the thoughts and intentions of his opponents that Bokuden excelled other men.\* He tested his style by traversing the country in search of combatants. He failed to find a man who could defeat him anywhere ; and his superiority being acknowledged on all

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\* Hence Handless-victory must be taken in a somewhat restricted sense, signifying only that it was not on the quick movement of his hand that Bokuden chiefly depended for victory.








sides, he first became the instructor of Ashikaga Yoshiteru and subsequently of Ashikaga Yoshiaki. On the fall of the latter he retired into obscurity.

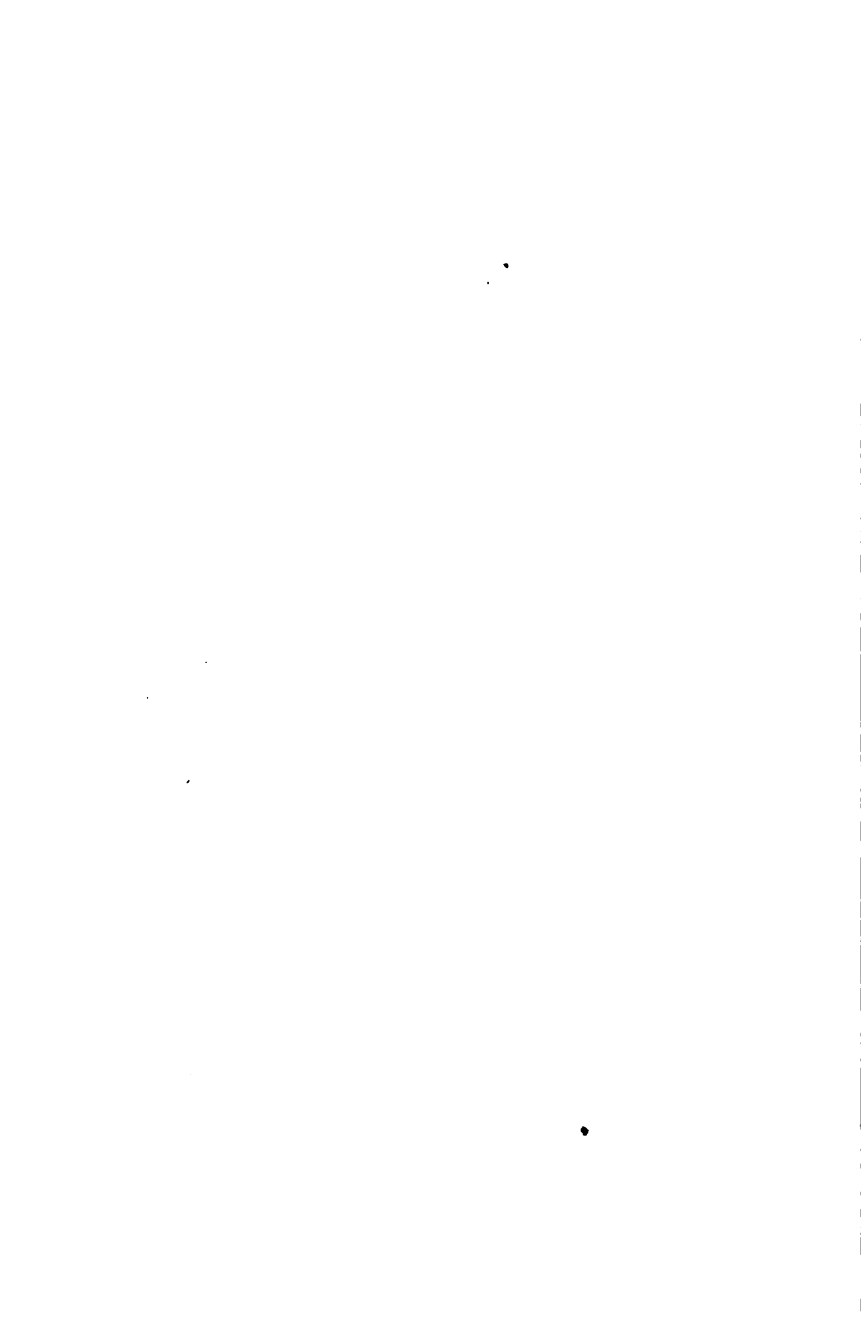
To resume my narrative, on hearing that the main purpose of Musashi's wanderings was the slaying of Ganryū, Bokuden promised to disclose to him the secret of his superiority to other fencers. "It would never do for you to encounter your foe and be overcome by him," said Bokuden, "and so I will intrust to you a secret that will make you victorious everywhere. The imparting of the knowledge whereby to enable you to slay his murderer is the offering that I make to the spirit of my deceased friend Munisai."

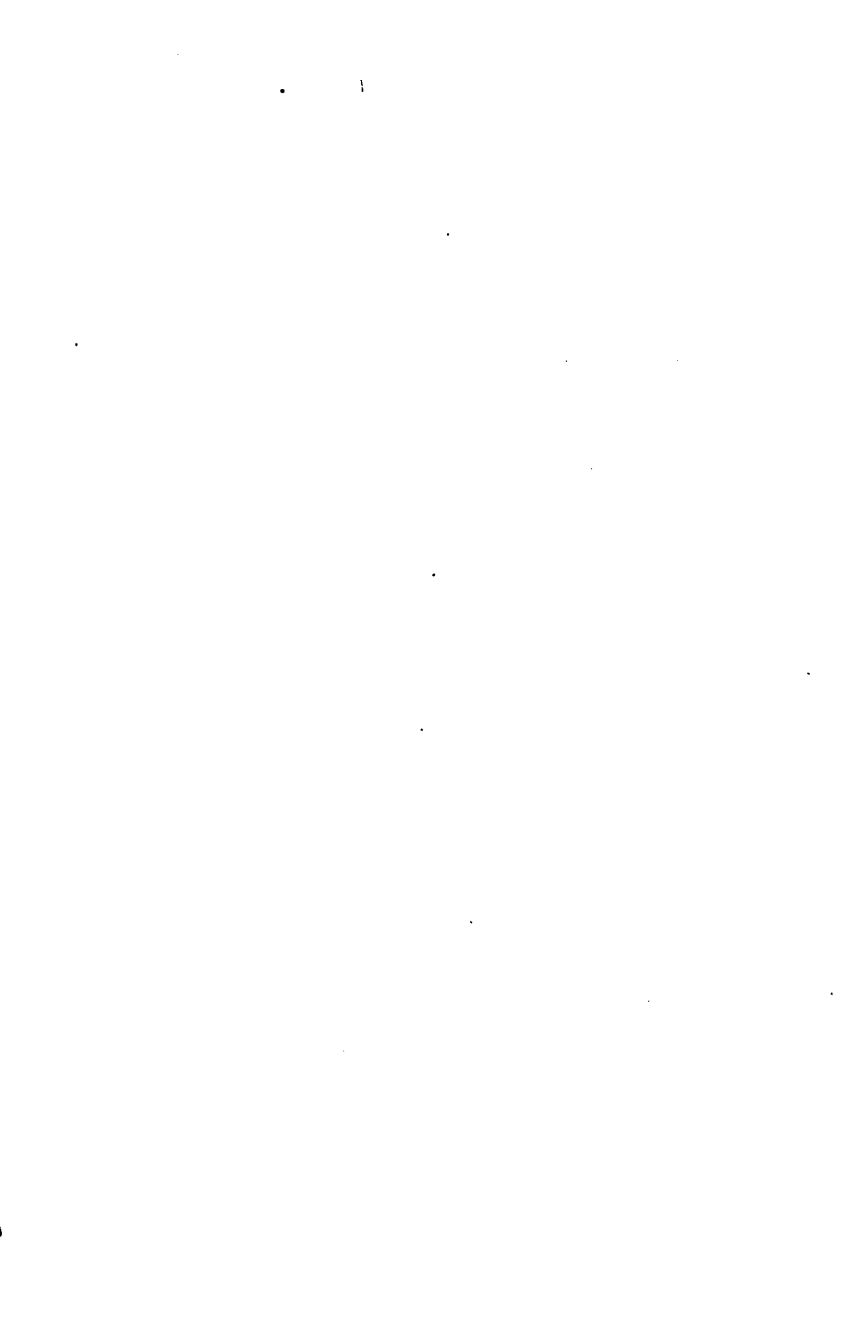
Musashi was highly delighted with this promise, and in consequence of it for the space of half a year remained with Bokuden, studying his style most diligently day by day.

The six months having expired, Bokuden informed Musashi that he had nothing more to teach him, and that he thought it high time that he went in search of his foe. Musashi's profound respect and ardent affection for Bokuden made him extremely sorry to have to take leave of him. He had found the old man not only a good fencer but a most pleasant companion: from him he had learnt a number of things about the politics of former days that were very interesting to him. Then Bokuden, like all noted fencers of those days, had during his pilgrimages met with all

kinds of adventures and had often been within an inch of losing his life owing to the treachery of defeated fencers: and, so, agreeable to that characteristic of old men—the love of retrospect—the veteran fencer would go over the exciting parts of his life again and again, and no matter how frequently a story was repeated, the memory of his deeds of daring never failed to fire his soul afresh and to give new animation to his features. But at last the pleasant intercourse had to be broken off, and our hero was obliged to resume those sterner duties which as an avenger of blood he had solemnly vowed not to leave unperformed.







## CHAPTER IV.

On leaving Bokuden's house, Musashi directed his steps towards the Tōkaidō, *en route* to Shikoku. Having reached the crossing, he embarked in one of the ferry-boats which at that time ran across the Sea of Harima. After proceeding a little distance, a huge shark appeared above the water, and the sailors became too much alarmed to go further. On being informed what was the matter, Musashi sprang into the water and slew the fish,\* and the vessel crossed over to Shikoku without anything further occurring.

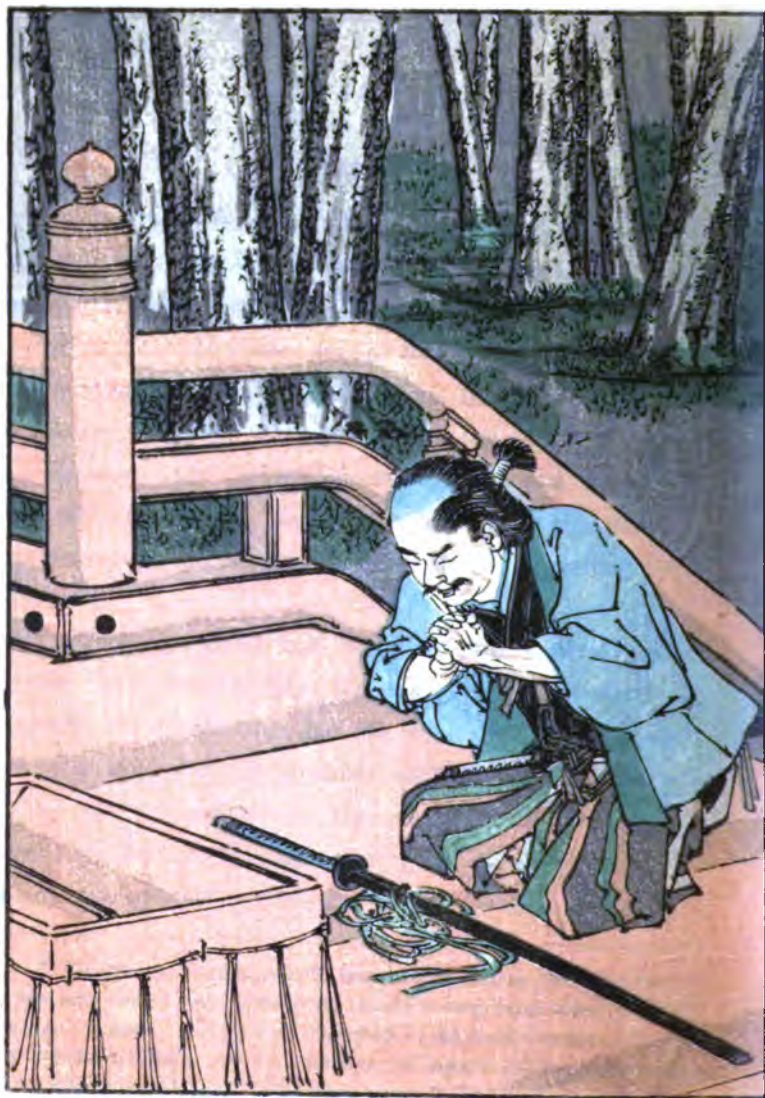
Having searched the northern and central parts of Japan very thoroughly without success, Musashi was strongly of opinion that the foe whose life he sought must be concealing himself in some secluded part of the west. After visiting several of the provinces of Shikoku, he made his way to Sanuki, visiting a place called Takinomiya, situated in the Nanjō district, where there was a

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\* Though this incident sounds somewhat fictitious, there are recorded in Japanese annals other instances of sharks having been killed in a similar manner. Asaina Samurō, who flourished in the twelfth century of our era, is said to have killed a shark in the Sea of Sagami in the presence of one of the Kamakura Shōguns in the same way.

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temple dedicated to Tenjin.\* To this deified scholar Mushashi offered up his prayers.

Another worshipper was visiting the temple at the same time and he, like Musashi, had a definite request to make. He repeated his prayers aloud. Musashi listened with great interest as his fellow-worshipper, in a deeply earnest manner, poured forth his supplication as follows:—

“O thou all powerful Tenjin, with profound reverence I approach thee. I am one whose occupation is fencing. Day by day have I persevered in the study of the art. But there exists a man called Miyamoto Musashi, whose skill in swordsmanship is superior to mine. Him I cannot defeat. Nevertheless, being the slayer of my adopted father, he is my mortal foe. I beseech thee, O God, to strengthen me and teach me, and enable me to overcome my foe.”

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\* Sugawara Michizane was deified under this name. Michizane is one of the most popular of the national heroes, though his achievements were all of a peaceful nature. He was a court noble who flourished in the latter part of the ninth century. He was considered the greatest scholar and prose writer of his age; for which reason he is now regarded as the patron of learning and more especially of calligraphy, an art always held in high esteem in Japan. He died in exile in Kyūshū A.D. 903, and a recumbent image of a cow frequently adorns the temples where he is worshipped, as he was in the habit of riding about on a cow in the land of his exile. Since the plum was his favourite tree, plum trees are often to be seen in the grounds of temples dedicated to his honour.





The lips from which these words proceeded were no other than those of Arima Kihei, who, after his defeat in Kyōto\* had shut up his school and retired to his native province (Sanuki), where, week after week and month after month, he had been practising on the forks of trees with a view of finding out some way of breaking through the crossed swords of Musashi. In cleaving these forks in two he had become very skilled, and was just thinking that he would be a match for Musashi.

Musashi admired the spirit that actuated Kihei and at once made himself known to him. "You are Kihei, if I am not mistaken," said he. "I am Miyamoto Musashi, I have been listening to your prayer and have been very much struck with its tone. The spirit that it displays is most admirable."

"Ah, a rare thing, indeed, to meet you here, Miyamoto!" replied Kihei. "Pray do not think that, on account of my defeat at Kyōto, I bear any malice in my heart against you. Such is not the case. But, as you know, my duty to my adopted parent requires that I should avenge his death. Therefore it is that I have been asking for strength and skill to slay you. As my feelings on this point are just as they should be, I beg

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\* *Vide supra*, p. 261.

that you will afford me an opportunity of fencing with you."

"Certainly;" replied Musashi, "and at once."

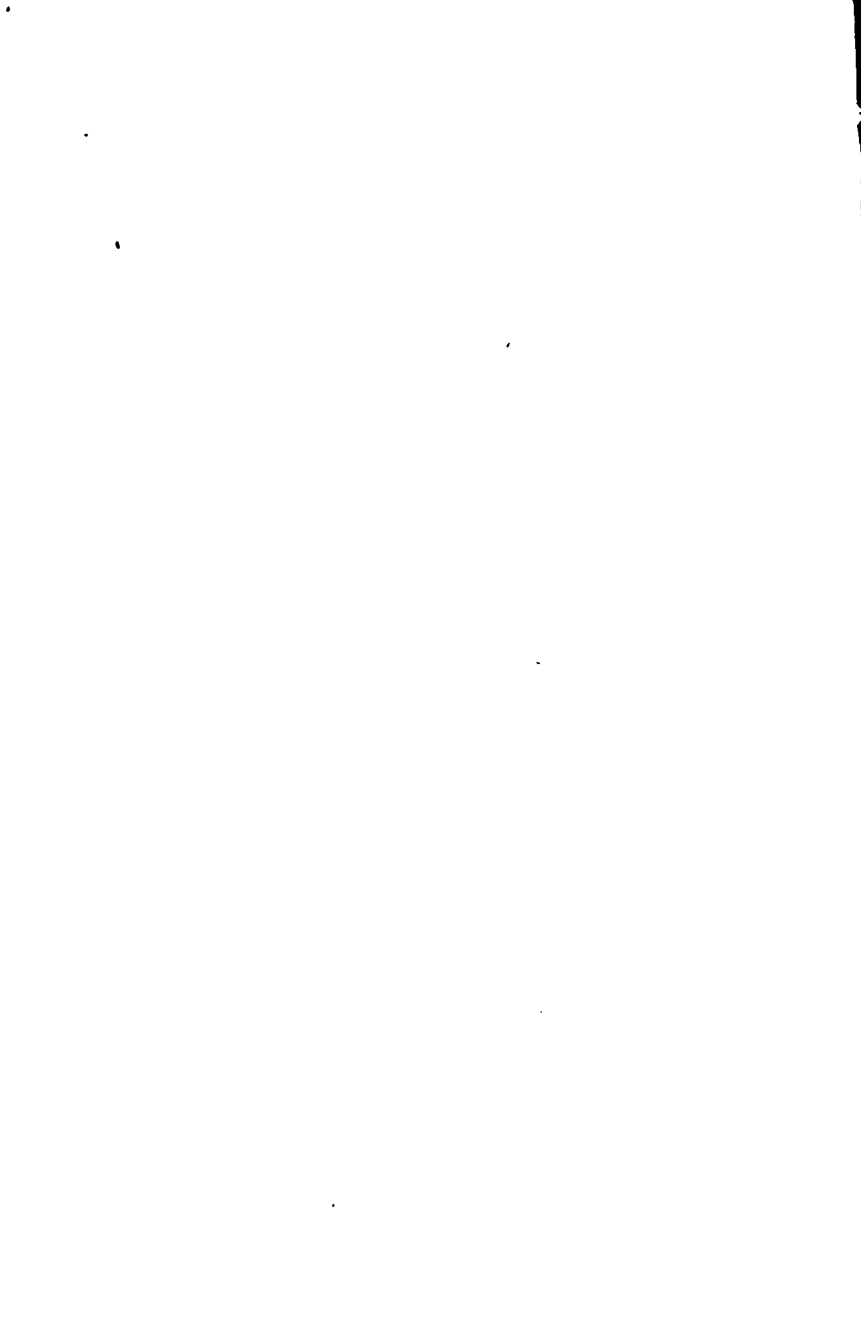
They both instantly drew their swords and commenced, Musashi, profiting by the instruction that he had received from Bokuden, held his swords somewhat differently from what he had previously done, and Kihei for a while saw no exposed part to strike. But, after a while, Musashi presented his crossed swords to his opponent, which was a signal for Kihei to deal one of the tremendous blows that for months he had been dealing at the forks of trees. It was so effectual that Musashi's left-hand sword was severed in two. Musashi, seeing this, darted on one side, and the resisting force being thus suddenly removed, Kihei was thrown violently to the ground. Had he desired it, Musashi might have killed him there and then. But this he never dreamt of doing.

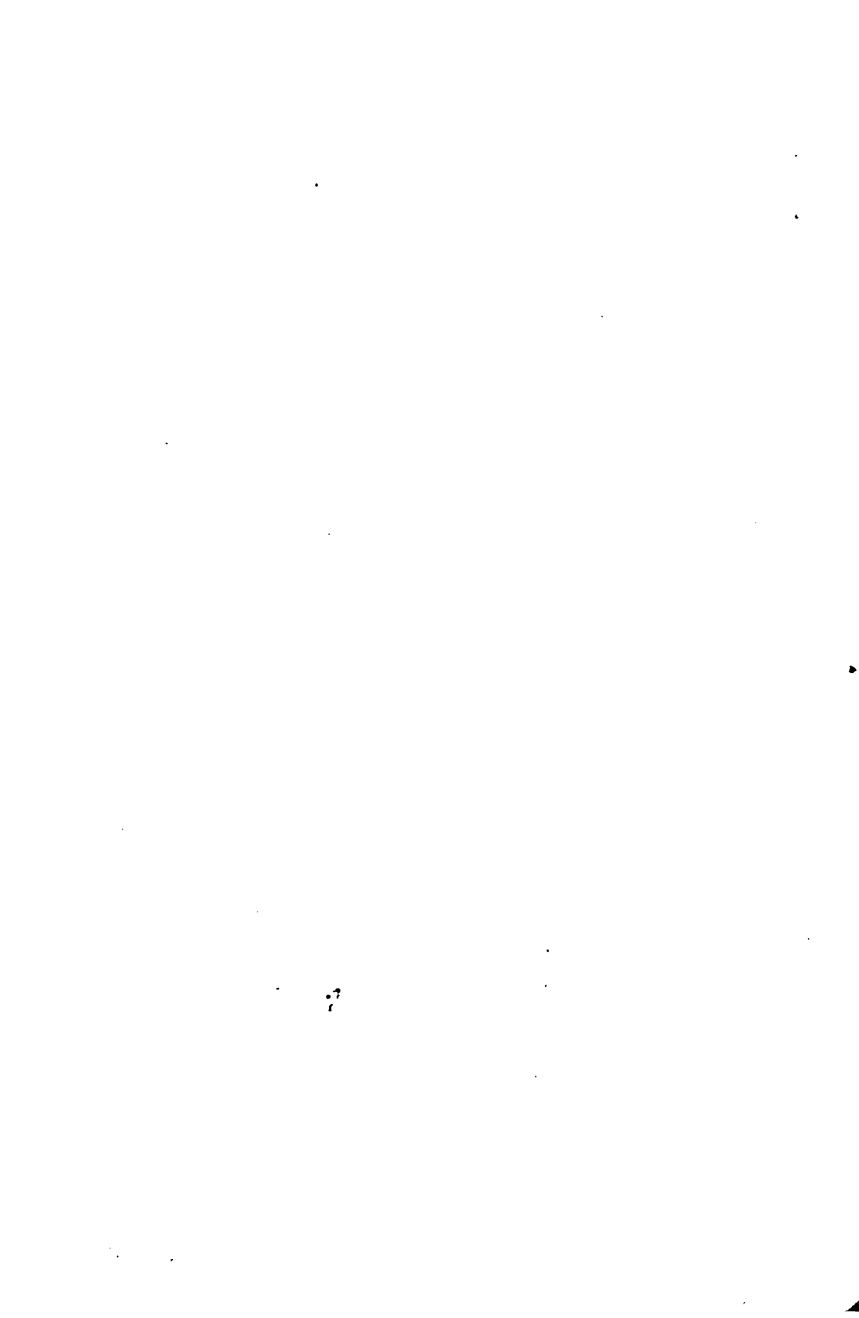
"Kihei, Kihei! what is the matter? what is the matter?" exclaimed Musashi.

For a while Kihei neither moved nor spoke, but presently he arose and quietly sheathed his weapon.

"Why don't you fight again?" asked Musashi. "What ails you?"

"I looked upon you as my enemy," replied Kihei; "but I can no longer view you as such. Your forbearing to slay me as I lay on the ground, your asking,







'what ails you?'—this has taken away all the enmity I bore to you. Despite the fact that you were the slayer of my adopted parent, I cannot find it in my heart to fight with you. I have often heard of enmity being requited by kindness, but have never had such a practical proof that this is possible as you have given me to-day. Knights such as you are rare, Sir. My adopted father was, as you know, a worthless man, ignorant, bombastic and licentious, with no such noble feelings as those which actuate you. As the custom of slaying the murderer of one's parent is so universally observed among us, I thought it incumbent on me to attempt to kill you. I have broken one of the swords that formed a part of that, until now, invincible cross of yours. With this I am content: and with this the spirit of my deceased parent will have to be content too. Will you not henceforth make a friend of me and assist me to get on in life?"

"That I will, and gladly," replied Musashi.

The two fencers went to a neighbouring tavern and cemented their brotherhood with a cup of *sake*, agreeable to immemorial custom. While here, Kihei said:—"Since we have become brothers, what do you say to our exchanging some article by way of strengthening the bond of friendship between us? Suppose now that you give me your sword, the one that I broke, and I give you the

one with which I broke it. I should like to take the broken sword and present it at the tomb of my adopted father as a trophy : so shall I fulfil my duty to his departed spirit."

"Good! good!" replied Musashi. "So let it be."

They exchanged swords and, after conversing further, separated, Kihei setting out for Himeji, where his father's tomb was, and Musashi making for Chūgoku.

My tale returns to Sasaki Ganryū. We left him outside the castle-town of Himeji bidding farewell to the two disciples of whom we have heard since. From thence he made his way to the province of Hida, where he retired to the mountains and for three years practised all kinds of tricks and rapid movements of his limbs. "That Musashi is a most extraordinary fellow;" said he to himself, "and nothing struck me more than the rapidity with which he darted about: there was no knowing where to find him. In this art I will perfect myself, so that in case I run against him, or, as is more likely, he runs against me, I shall be ready for him." The three years having passed, Ganryū set out for Echizen, with a view, if possible, of getting into the employ of some baron residing in that province. But not knowing a soul in that part of the country, and no opportunity of bringing himself into notice by the performance of some brave exploit occur-





ring, he failed to find an opening there. After having determined to leave the province, one day, while strolling leisurely along, his mind still bent on the one purpose of his life—the qualifying himself for the great contest which he knew must sooner or later take place—a number of swallows flying to and fro attracted his attention. The rapidity with which they turned struck him as something very wonderful, and he said to himself:—“Is there no possibility of imitating the rapid movements of these birds?” He tried all sorts of ways, and at last invented what was known as the *tsubame-gayeshi*, or “swallow-somersault.” Having added this accomplishment to his many others, Ganryū felt little anxiety about encountering his foe. Not meeting with any one in Echizen willing to employ him, he proceeded to Kyōto. Before reaching the capital, remembering the circumstances under which he had left it some years previously,\* he thought it advisable to change his name. He assumed the name of Kandayū as a substitute for Ganryū.

He was not successful in obtaining a position anywhere in the vicinity of the capital, so he set out for Kyūshū. Having entered the province of Buzen, he was about to ascend the Adachi hills, when he noticed a large number of people assembled at a little distance who seemed

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\* *Vide supra*, Pt. I, p. 211, *et seq.*

excited about something. One of them, approaching him, said :—" Please, Sir, not to go any further. To-day the baron is hunting in yonder hills, and the woods are full of men armed with guns. We have orders not to allow any one to pass."

" Thanks for the information," replied Kandayū ; " but I am on important business and cannot stop. I know you cannot give me permission to pass , but I shall be obliged by your allowing me to pass under the rose."

" But you will put your life in jeopardy."

" Never mind that."

" Well, then, if you don't object to be killed, pass on."

Kandayū proceeded and ascended the hill. He heard guns going off on all sides, and presently saw a huge wild boar coming down the path in which he was walking. He had previously spied the baron's tent, surrounded with armed men, at a little distance off. To tell the truth, his object in ascending the hills while the shooting was going on, was to bring himself into notice by performing some feat of valour in the presence of the baron or of some of his chief retainers. The sudden appearance of the boar afforded him the opportunity he sought. Being a man of prodigious strength and undaunted courage, he determined to attack the animal, despite the fact that it was mad with the pain caused by two or three bullet







wounds; and, as to have used his sword would have rendered the feat less remarkable, with nothing but an iron fan in his hand he encountered the animal, and after a desperate struggle succeeded in killing it.\*

The baron whose patronage Kadayū was seeking was no other than Kuroda Nagamasa, Kai-no-Kami. He commanded his retainers to call the man who had performed this brave exploit. On Kadayū's informing Nagamasa that he was a fencer, he was immediately asked what style he practised.

"I practise," replied Kadayū, "a style of my own invention known as the *Sasaki-ryū*. Its merits, my Lord, almost defy description. If you can imagine a combination of the prowess, the speed, the determination of the tiger with all the miraculous powers of the dragon, you will have some idea of what my style is like."

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\* It must be borne in mind that these fans were quite formidable weapons, those used by fencers often being of considerable weight. Numerous instances of death being caused by a blow from a fan are given in authentic histories. The origin of the use of fans as weapons is a peculiar one. They are said to have been invented as a protection against the foul play sometimes resorted to during visits of ceremony. It occasionally happened that when a knight was paying his respects to a baron, while kneeling in the veranda of the baron's sitting-room, the sliding-doors were suddenly closed and the knight's head secured between the doors. To prevent the closing of the doors at such times, and to provide a weapon of defence on occasions when swords were not allowed to be worn, the iron fan was invented and it saved many a man's life.

“Have you ever been defeated in fencing?” asked the baron.

“Never;” replied Kandayū. “For over ten years I have been travelling around the country seeking for a man who could teach me something, but have failed to find one.”

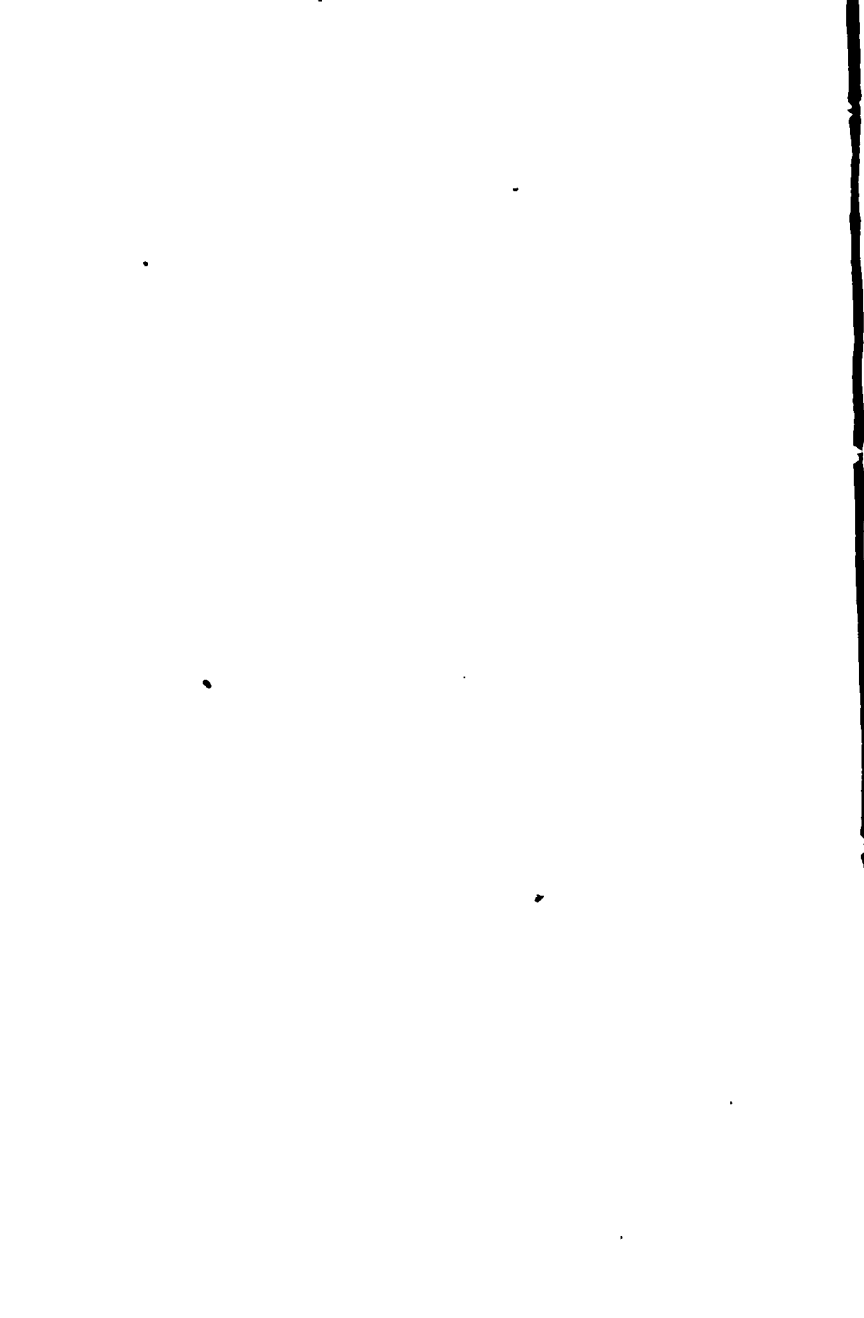
After presenting three gold coins to Kandayū, Nagamasa told him that he might take up his quarters in Kokura, pending further communication from him.

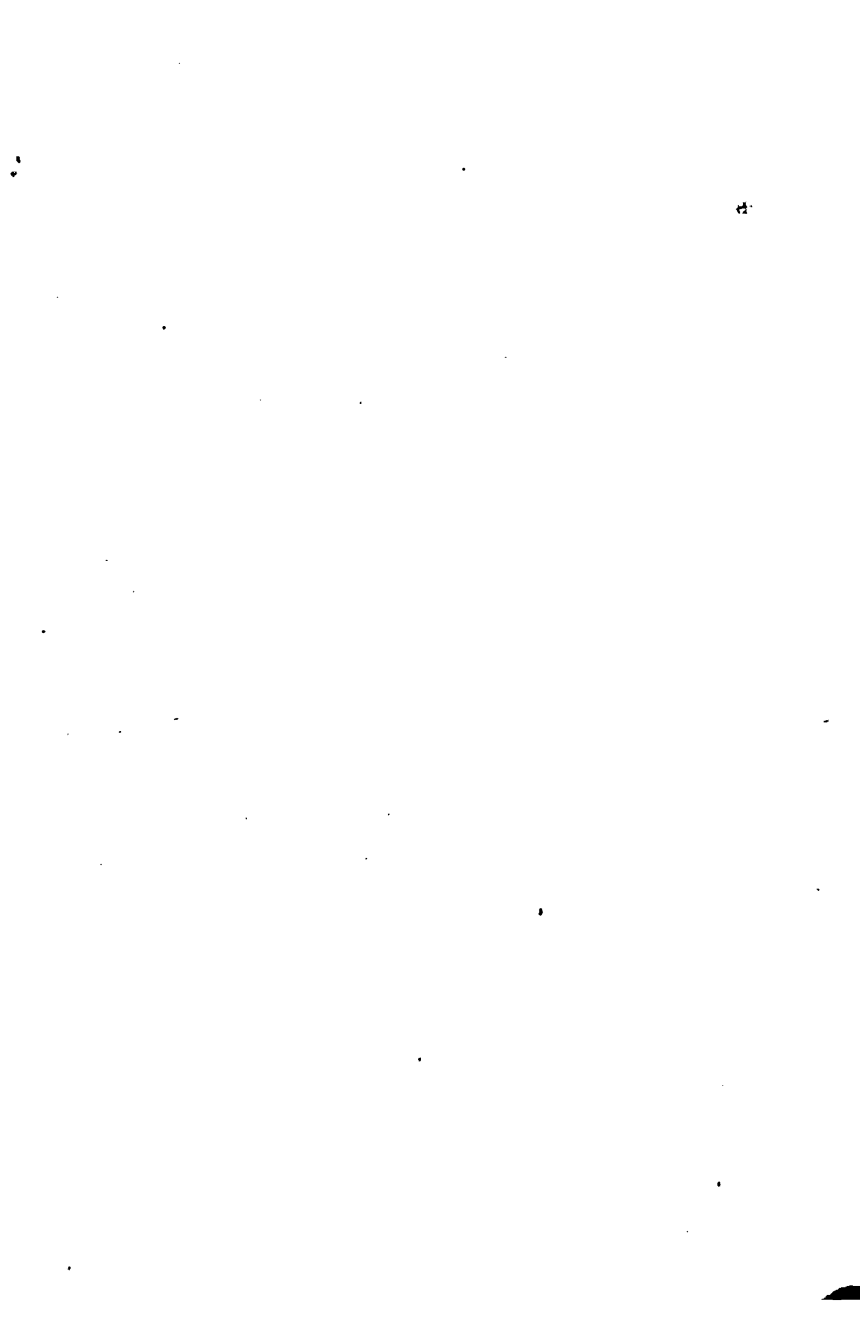
A few days after this event a messenger arrived at the house where Kandayū was staying to inform him that the baron did not feel disposed to take him into his employ, but that he would grant him an income of two hundred bags of rice *per annum* and allow him to open a fencing school in Kokura.

The reason for Nagamasa's thus acting was that he judged by Kandayū's boastful manner that were he employed he would be the cause of trouble.

Kandayū was far from pleased with the offer, but he thought it better to accept it than to wander about the country doing nothing, so he settled down in Kokura. Being more skilled in fencing than any one in the neighbourhood, his fame spread far and wide.

In the meantime, Musashi had determined to leave Chūgoku and proceed to Kyūshū. While carrying out this





resolution, he was crossing the Iwakuni mountain, one day, when suddenly somebody walking behind him seized one of his swords and pulled it back. Not knowing what was meant by this piece of rudeness, Musashi thought of killing its perpetrator; but, on second thoughts, decided that it would be beneath him to notice the affair; so, quickly withdrawing his sword from the man's hand, he went on. But presently a voice from behind called out,—  
“Wait a minute! wait a minute.”

“Who are you that dares to stop a traveller in this way? What do you mean by this strange proceeding?” asked Musashi.

“Excuse me, Sir,” replied the man. “I saw as you passed that you were a swordsman whom no one dare insult. Struck by the superiority of your gait, I felt a desire to know your name. I am Sekiguchi Yazaemon, an expert in sleight. I am now on a pilgrimage with the object of perfecting my art.”

“I am very glad to meet you,” replied Musashi. “Of course your name has been familiar to me for a long time. I am a fencer: my name is Miyamoto Musashi.”

After they had proceeded a little distance, they agreed to put up at the same inn for the night. In the course of conversation, Yazaemon remarked:—“Some time ago I went to Kokura, in the province of Buzen, and there

fenced with a man called Sasaki Kandyū. Though I won the match, I must admit that Kandyū is a very skilful fencer. But he is a great hypocrite. In him flattery and bitter enmity are combined to a degree that I have never seen in anybody else. It does not do to be off your guard with him for an instant.\* He asked me to stop the night with him; and I did so. But I felt as though I were sleeping on needles the whole night long, knowing that Kandyū is one of those men that cannot endure defeat."

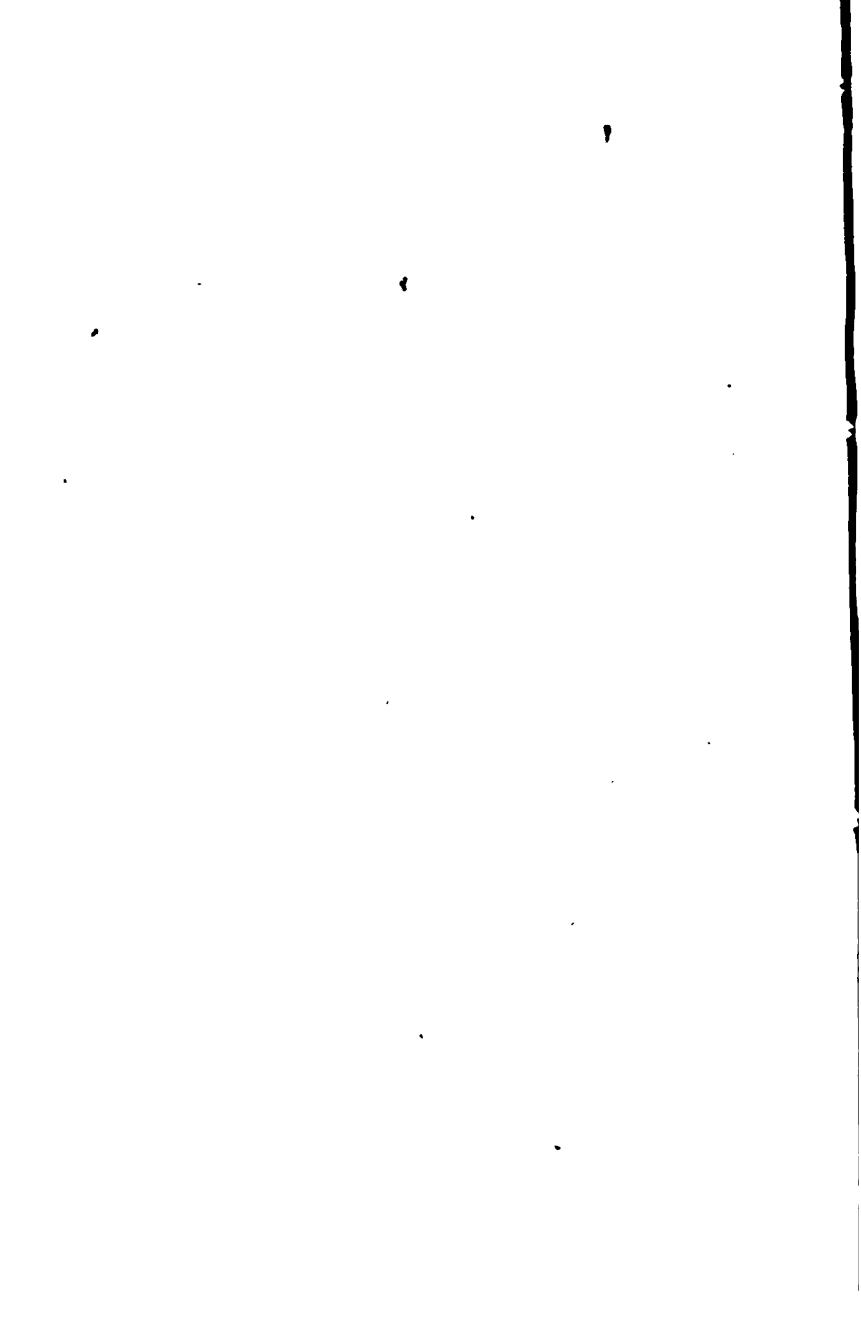
In an instant Musashi's face beamed with excitement and, drawing close to Yazaemon, in an undertone he asked:—"How old was this fencer? and, judging by his speech, from what province would you say he was?"

"He is about forty years of age," replied Yazaemon, "and his dialect is that of one of the eastern provinces."

Musashi now inquired minutely about Kandyū's general appearance, his crest, &c; and, after hearing all that Yazaemon said in reply, was thoroughly convinced in his own mind that Kandyū was no other than the man for whom he had been searching so many long years.

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\* During the evening that Yazaemon spent with Kandyū, while the two were taking a meal together, the latter threw several daggers at his guest with the intention of killing him. When the daggers were skilfully warded off by Yazaemon, Kandyū pretended that he had thrown them in joke, to see how adroitly they would be turned aside by his guest.







Yazaemon could not but notice how excited Musashi had become, and asked:—"Why are you so anxious to find out the history of this man? Do you know him?"

Instantly quieting his feelings, with a careless air, Musashi replied:—"Oh, nothing particular! Being a fencer myself, you know, I was thinking that I should like to go and give this fellow a good drubbing and prevent his using his hands or feet for a long time to come."

Musashi felt very much inclined to start for Kokura that very night, but not having disclosed his purpose to Yazaemon, he deemed this indiscreet. So he waited anxiously till the morning and then set out.

Sekiguchi Yazaemon was originally from Ōmi. He was one of the most famous masters of sleight\* of his time. It is related that one day while watching a cat fall from a roof, and observing how it turned over and over and came down on its feet, he thought that it would be worth while trying to imitate this accomplishment. He practised it from that time forward until it was said that he always fell on his feet from whatever height. He invented a style of sleight, known as the *Sekiguchi-ryū*. Subsequent to his meeting with Musashi, Yazaemon was employed by Tokugawa Yorinobu, Lord of Kii, down to the close of his life.

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\* 柔術, jūjutsu. *Vide supra*, Part I, p. 169, *et seq.*

On Musashi's arrival at Kokura, he put up at an inn kept by one Tomoeya Gorobei. On the evening of his arrival, it being the middle of August at the time, he went out for a stroll in the back yard of the inn to cool himself. Hearing a noise of some one hammering away at a tree not far off, he went to see what it was, and found a young man practising sword exercise by dealing heavy blows at a tree with a fencing sword.

"Good, good!" said Musashi.

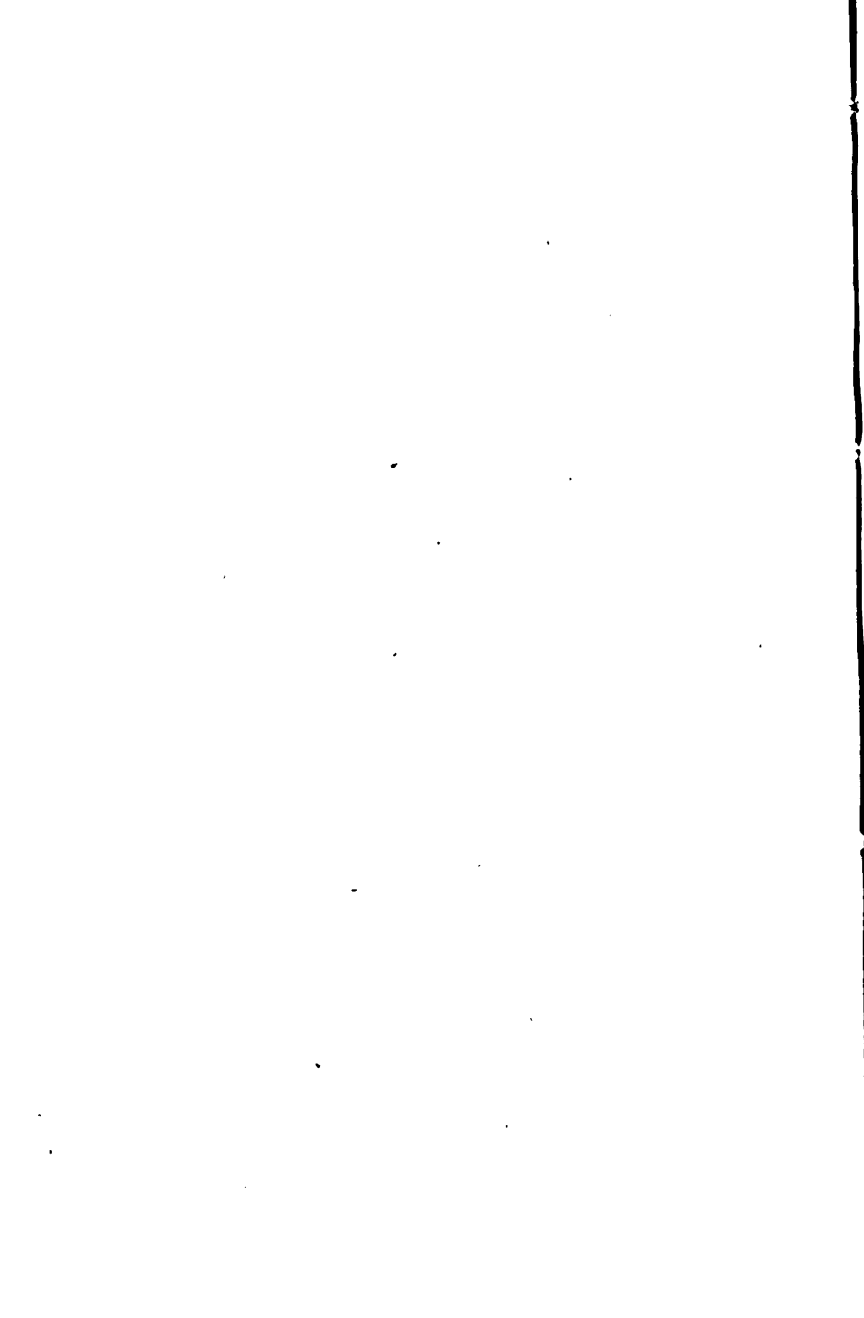
"Who may you be that bestows his praises on me?" asked the youth.

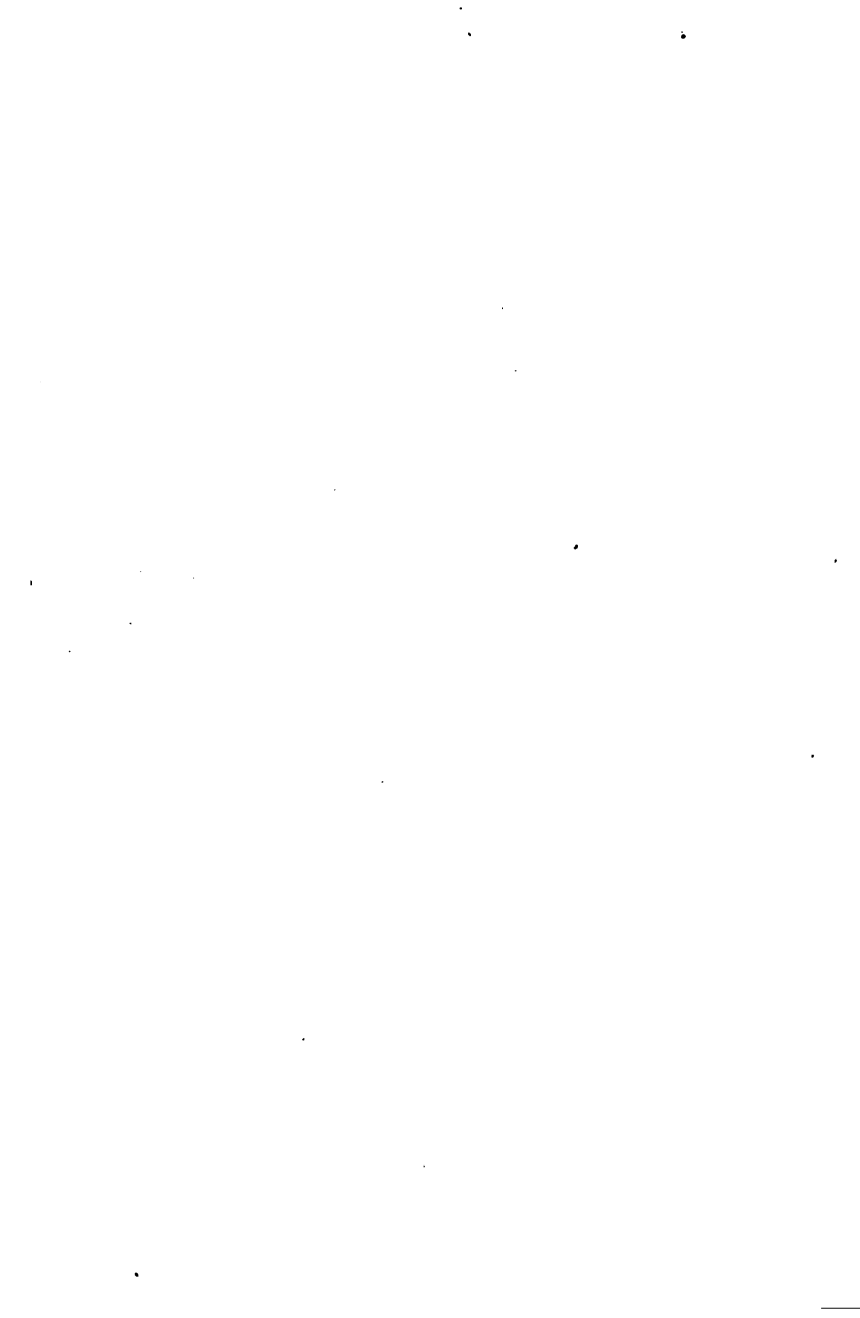
"A guest at your father's inn," replied Musashi. "From whom have you been learning fencing?"

"From the most celebrated fencer in the whole of Japan," replied the young man. "His name is Sasaki Kandyū."

"Ah! I should like to fence with your teacher," replied Musashi. "Will you not introduce me to him?"

"It would be of little use your attempting such a thing," replied the young man. "Of late scores of noted fencers have visited my teacher but, with one exception, they have all been defeated. The exception was Sekiguchi Yazaemon. The match between him and my teacher was a drawn one. You may be a very good fencer, Sir, but you are not equal to acting as the opponent of Sasaki Kandyū."





Here a voice interposed from behind:—"Daijirō, hold your tongue: you are a rude fellow! What do you know about who is first or who last in fencing?"

The voice was that of Daijirō's father, Gorobei, who, turning to Musashi, said:—"My son has been speaking very impolitely to you, Sir, please pardon his rudeness. If you will come into the house there is something that I wish to say to you about Kandayū."

The two entered the inn together. And Gorobei, after ordering tea, sat down and commenced as follows:—"In reference to your fencing with Kandayū, Sir, if you will take my advice, you will refrain from doing so. I do not say this because I fear your being defeated by him. Of course, Sir, I know nothing of your abilities as a fencer and therefore cannot possibly say whether you are his equal or not. My reason for dissuading you from fencing with him is on account of his character as a man. He is a sour-tempered, mean-spirited fellow that will not brook a defeat."

"But still, replied Musashi, "since I am on a fencing tour with the express object of testing the powers of every fencer of any note in the country as compared with my own, were I to leave Kokura without fencing with Kandayū, it would be a blot on my fame as a fencer that I could not easily efface."

“Your desire to fence with him,” replied Gorobei, “is a very natural one, but nevertheless I have a special reason for trying to induce you to desist; which, with your leave, I will now proceed to state. I was born in Hiroshima, Aki. My name originally was Kyūsuke:\* my occupation that of a vegetable vendor. For some time I served Yoshioka Munisai, and was with him when he went to Himeji and fought with Ganryū. Who it was that killed Munisai I don’t know for a certainty, but I have a strong suspicion that it was Ganryū, for I know of no one else who would be likely to make an enemy of a man like Yoshioka. This Kandayū, I must inform you, Sir, is no other than Ganryū himself.”

“Well, Sir, Munisai had two sons whose duty it was to avenge their father’s death. The elder of the two, however, was in bad health when his father was killed. He asked for permission to slay his father’s murderer, but, owing to his state of health at the time, it was refused. This preyed on his mind and he committed suicide. The younger brother was sent to Kumamoto; and what has become of him since I do not know. I have often thought that I should like to avenge my master’s death myself, but not being a warrior, it seemed an impossibility. Since Yoshioka met with his death on

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\* This and many other parts of the story are of course largely fictitious.







my account, however, I could no longer bear to live in Hiroshima where the sad event took place; so, having a few acquaintances in this place, I took up my quarters here. My reason for sending my son to learn fencing from Kandyū, is to enable him to kill or to assist some one else to kill my master's foe. Thus I hope to do something to atone for the piece of folly\* that cost my master his life."

Musashi was no longer able to contain himself. "And you are actually Kyūsuke, then?" he exclaimed. "Though a tradesman, you have the courage and integrity of a noble knight." Then, lowering his voice, he continued:—"I am no other than the Shichinosuke who was sent to Kumamoto. That my father was killed by Ganryū I know for a certainty, from a casual remark made by one of the latter's disciples, Oshida Sakichi, to me; and by conversation with Yazaemon I found out that Ganryū was in this place. This is the first that I have heard of my brother's death. Poor fellow! he was always sickly, but the shock to his nerves caused by the news of father's death doubtless hastened his end, and so this villain Ganryū may be said to be the slayer of my brother as well as of my father."

Gorobei, delighted with the news, replied:—"To-

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\* *Vide supra*, Pt. I, p. 217 *et seq.*

morrow, then, we will make arrangements for your encountering Ganryū."

Musashi, too excited to sleep that night, watched anxiously for the dawn of day. At daylight he aroused Gorobei and at once consulted with him as to the best way of bringing about a meeting between himself and Ganryū. Gorobei took all kinds of precautions to prevent Ganryū's escape from the town: he bribed guards and officials right and left for this purpose.

After much consultation the plan agreed to and carried out was as follows: Musashi and Daijirō went to Kandyū's fencing school. Daijirō entered the school as usual, asking Musashi to remain outside. After going through the ordinary morning salutations, Daijirō said:—"A distant relation of my father's has arrived at our house, and, hearing from me of your fame, has expressed a wish to receive instruction from you. He is now waiting outside. May I invite him to come in?"

"Certainly," said Kandyū, "a praiseworthy young fellow no doubt, wishing to make the best of his time whilst here!"

Daijirō went out and conducted Musashi into the fencing yard. The two fencers recognised each other instantaneously. Ganryū quailed before his foe, but not wishing his disciples to see this, restrained himself, and





waited for Musashi to address him. Musashi commenced thus :—"Sasaki Ganryū! It is a long time since we met. You are he, who, many years ago, under cover of night, assassinated my father at the Imado dike near Hiroshima. Of this I am positive, having heard it from the lips of your pupil Oshida Sakichi. I have long been in quest of you, but until now all my efforts to find you have been baffled. At last I am rewarded with a sight of the man who is my mortal foe—who may not be allowed to live under the same sky as myself. Come, and fight like a man!"

With a forced smile on his face, Ganryū replied :—"Well, people say strange things, indeed! Yoshioka Munisai was a man who treated me like a child—who said all he could to provoke me. I bore it a long time, but as he persisted in insulting me, I was obliged to kill him. Are you not from Higo? And was not Mnnisai from Aki? What then have you to do with avenging his death?"

"Stuff and nonsense?" replied Musashi, "though I went to Kumamoto when a lad of twelve, your foul deed was reported to me there, and I received permission from my lord, Katō Kiyomasa, to slay you. What's the use of shilly-shallying and beating about the bush in this way? Come let's set to at once."

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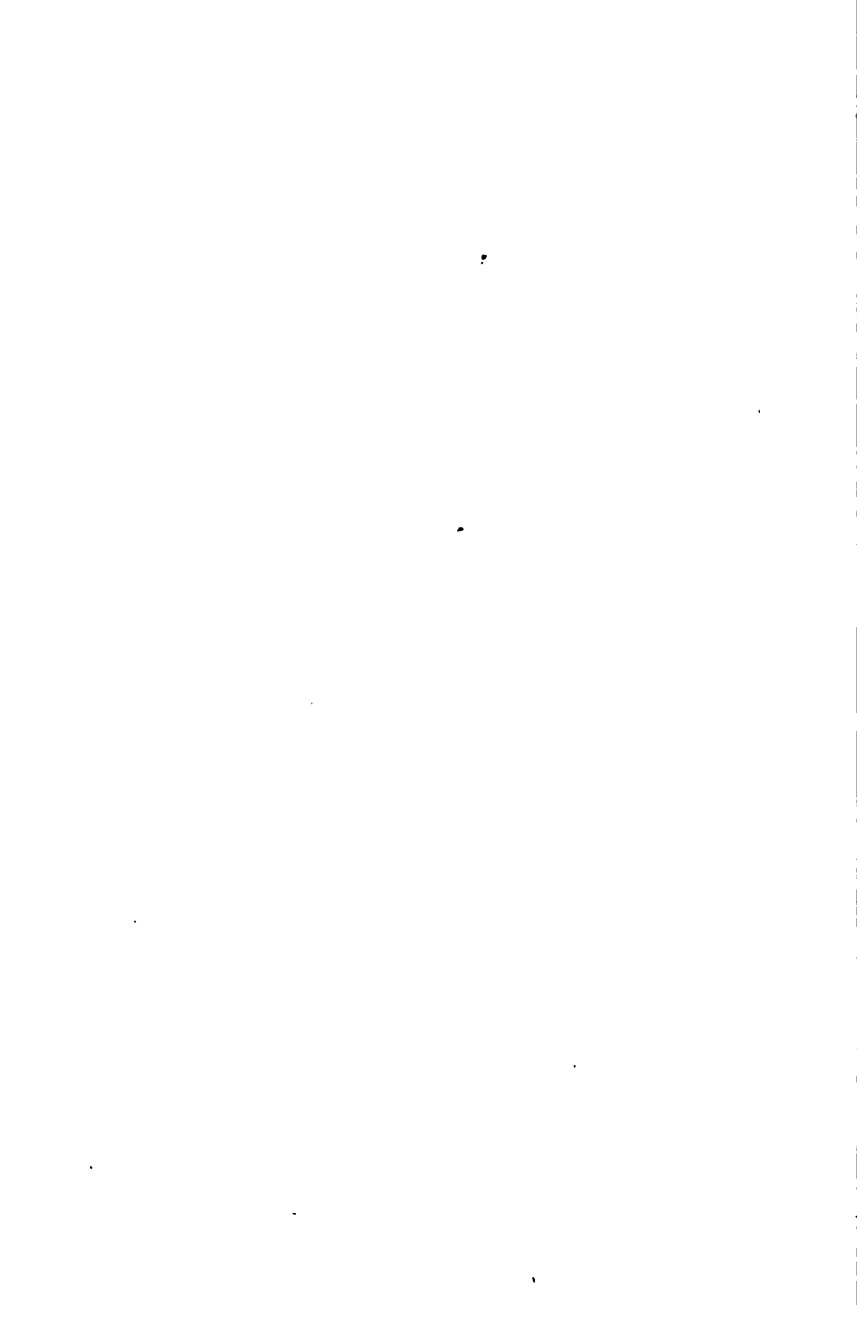
Ganryū's disciples now came forward and, drawing their swords, said to their master:—"There is nothing to be afraid of in this fellow, teacher: we will attack him and kill him. Even the author of the 'Two sworded-style' will never prove a match for all of us."

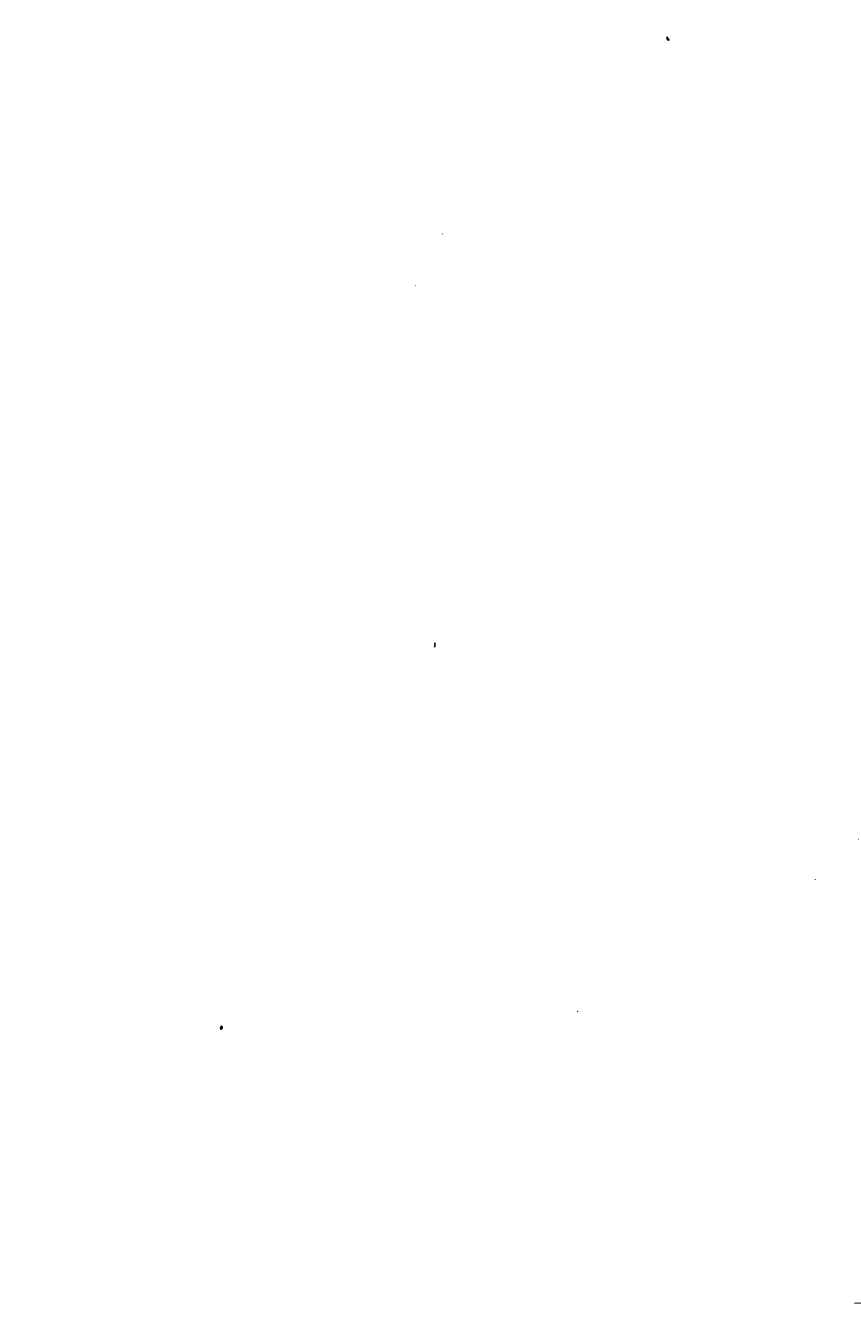
Kandayū, raising his voice, replied:—"I admire your devotion to me; but you forget that it would ill-become one who too is the author of a style of fencing to allow it to be said that he was afraid to encounter Musashi alone but depended on his pupils for help." Then, turning to Musashi, he said:—"Since you are determined to look on me as an enemy, we will fight; but, being in the employ of a baron, I shall have to obtain permission from him first."

"Nobly spoken!" returned Musashi. "Now you speak as becomes a man who is the author of a style of fencing. I too am not my own master: I shall need to send in a petition at the same time as yourself." \*

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\* *Vide supra*, Pt. I., p. 220; foot-note.







## CHAPTER V.

The two fencers sent in their petitions. Nagamasa, on receiving them, said :—“ This is a weighty affair ; and the more so as one of the would-be combatants is the retainer of no less a personage than Lord Katō of Higo.” Having satisfied himself that Musashi’s reasons for looking upon Ganryū as his foe were valid, Nagamasa gave the required permission : but took the precaution of strictly forbidding any attempt to assist either of the combatants. The men selected to superintend the necessary arrangements were his most trusted retainers, and the place chosen for the conflict was determined on with the object of preventing any interference. It was fixed that it should take place on a small island known as Nadajima.\* This island is about a mile from the shore and only about half a mile in circumference. The day fixed for the match was the eighteenth day of the eight month of the fourth year of Keichō [A. D. 1599]. From the time that permission was given to hold the duel till the appointed day, the two men were closely guarded, not being allowed to leave their houses.

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\* Since often called Ganryū-jima.

The two fencers had spent a decade of years in preparing for this eventful day. Month by month they had each been improving their styles. Musashi had received the benefit of instruction from the two most noted adepts in the art of fencing that the country contained at the time. Ganryū, on the other hand, had been more incessantly engaged in practising and testing his style at the fencing schools which he had opened than Musashi's wandering life admitted of his doing. The two men hated each other with a deadly hatred which was intensified by the antipathies of their natures. In the duel that was about to take place there were to be arrayed, on the one side perfidy, pomposity, cruelty and utter callousness to most of the nobler feelings of human nature; on the other, honesty, humility, benevolence, and a rare mental and moral refinement. But notwithstanding this, the trial was one of skill and not of moral qualities. It was an ancient, but a long since exploded, notion that elements of virtue or vice affect such contests. The pages of history abound with instances in which skilled vice has been triumphant and unskilled virtue has been defeated, so that the rule is well established that the battle is neither to the strong, the brave, nor the virtuous, but to the expert. That the presence or absence of moral good in the combatants influences such conflicts is a pleasing but superstitious idea





which, despite its having been immortalized by the eloquence with which Shakespeare and others have expressed it, is now no longer seriously entertained by any but the most unenlightened and ill-informed.

The news of what was about to take place spread far and wide. People all felt that the meeting of two such noted fencers in mortal combat was an event that would not happen twice in a lifetime, and so at daylight on the appointed day they flocked to Nadajima in such numbers that the sea was black with boats. A large number of constables had been previously despatched to the island: and not without reason, for not long after their arrival there they were informed that some twenty or thirty of Ganryū's disciples had determined to assist their master, and with this intention had resolved to surround the fencing ring. The constables peremptorily forbade any one but Government-officers landing on the island. They galloped their horses hither and thither shouting:—"He who lands, lands at his peril! We have orders to cut down any man who sets foot on the island." Thus Ganryū's disciples were defeated in their designs.

At the sound of the drum the two combatants entered the ring: Ganryū from the western side, and Musashi from the eastern. After the two had saluted each other, an officer produced a white tray, on which were two un-

glazed earthenware plates. The plates contained a little soft-boiled rice. By the side of them stood a small kettle, which in former days contained *sake*, but which on the present occasion was filled with water. The same tray contained a small quantity of salt. On the tray being placed between the combatants, they each took a little salt, deliberately placed it on the rice; after eating which they drank a little water. Then, after simultaneously dashing the earthenware plates to the ground and smashing them to bits, they placed themselves in a fencing attitude.

Before the fight began, Musashi thus addressed his foe:—"Ganryū, the murderer of my father! I am here to call you to account for your crime. The same world may no longer contain us both. We are here to-day to see which of us is the better man."

To which Ganryū replied:—"Grand words, indeed! But, however, you are no doubt actuated by a proper motive. In order to gratify you I might allow you to kill me,—but this is rather more than you can expect."

"You need not multiply words; I have heard enough. Come let's to it," replied Musashi, drawing his swords.

The fight commenced: but with two such wary fencers at first there was little done but keen fierce scrutiny of the movements of each other's weapons. After eyeing each other for a few minutes, Ganryū aimed a







blow at Musashi's head, this was received on the latter's crossed swords, and for a while the two men stood quite still; Ganryū being well aware that if he withdrew his sword he would give Musashi an advantage over him. But Musashi saw no use in maintaining this attitude long; so, removing his upper sword, with it he aimed a blow at Ganryū's head, which was instantly received. To this there succeeded a variety of flourishes and feints, sundry advances and retreats, cuts and guards, the both men acting with the greatest coolness and caution. This continued for about an hour, when the combatants being somewhat fatigued, a drum sounded, and officers came and separated them by placing a long pole between them. They each drank a little water, and doctors were called to attend to sundry scratches received in the fight.

During the interval Musashi said to himself:—"This fellow has improved in his fencing immensely since I last fenced with him. I have been treating him with too much contempt. I did not deem it necessary to resort to the use of the secrets which I learnt from Bokuden, but I perceive that unless I do so, I shall not win."

Consequently on the renewal of the contest Musashi, retreating to the further end of the ring, approached Ganryū with flourishes of his sword and gestures such as the latter had never witnessed. The effect of this new

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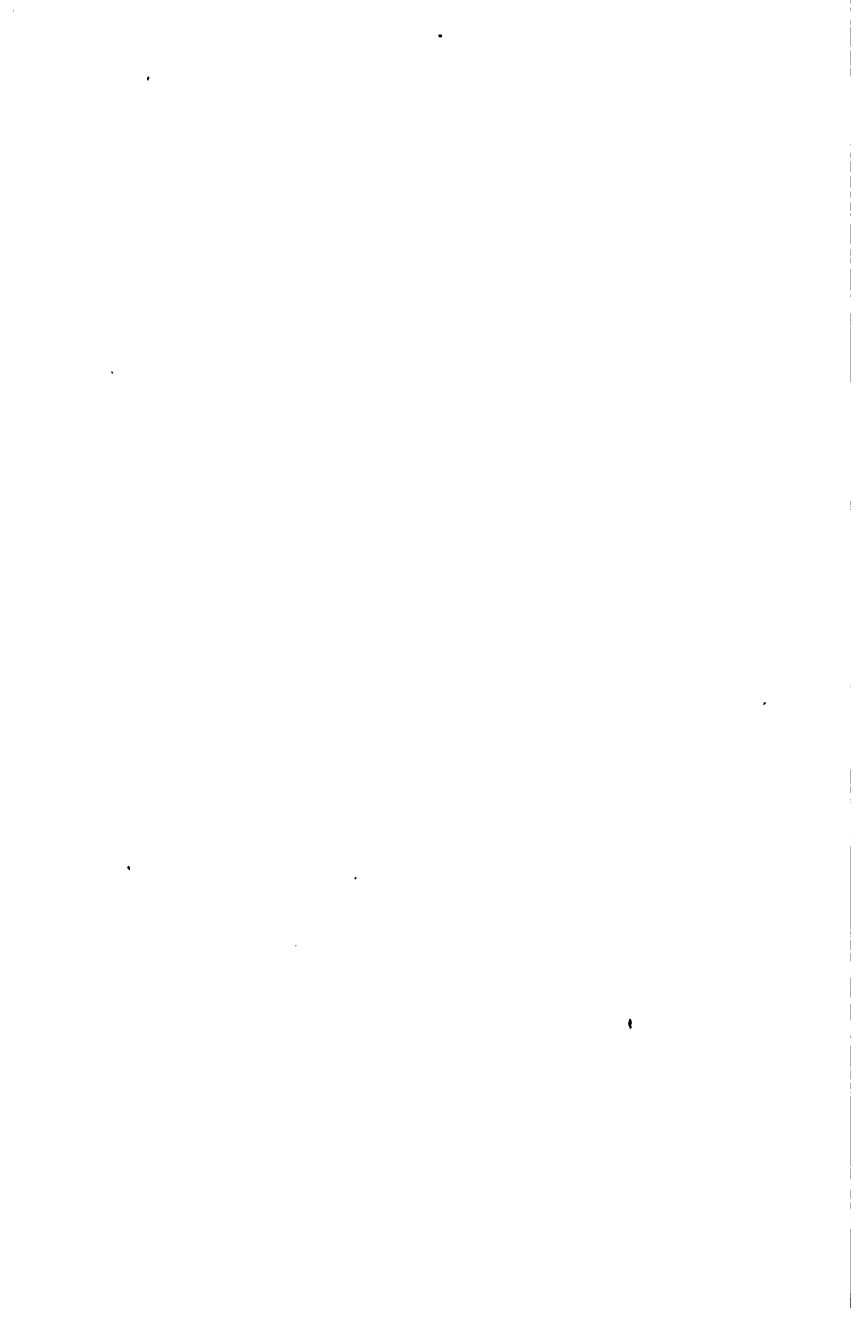




move is said to have exercised a most mysterious influence over Ganryū, causing him to retreat as Musashi advanced. When near the edge of the ring Musashi dealt a blow at Ganryū's head. Ganryū, too, it should be mentioned, had made up his mind to make use of the art on the knowledge of which he specially prided himself. So, now, avoiding the stroke aimed at his head by dodging on one side, he instantly took a somersault\* in the air and aimed a cut at Musashi's legs as he descended. The performance was new to Musashi, and hence not unattended with danger. His quick eye, however, saw the sword coming, and in an instant he leapt high into the air; but even then a good piece of his loose trousers was cut off, so that he was within an inch or two of losing one of his legs. The battle continued: but Ganryū was disheartened by the failure of the trick on which he had set so much value. With men equally matched in any kind of conflict even a slight depression of spirits in one of the combatants gives his adversary an advantage over him. This is eminently the case in fencing, where so much depends on high spirits. The failure of his somersault and the novelty and peculiarity of Musashi's new movements had produced loss of spirits in Ganryū. This was the embryo, as it were, of his defeat. The relaxation of his attention

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\* The *tsubame-gaeshi*: the swallow-somersault.







soon revealed itself in his failing to ward off a slashing stroke dealt at his forehead by Musashi with his left-hand sword. The gash inflicted brought the blood streaming into his eyes and prevented his seeing distinctly what his adversary was doing. Subsequent to this, with such a foe as Musashi, the end could not be long delayed. Ganryū did his best up to the last, but presently he received a cut extending from the shoulder to the centre of the breast, and fell, never more to rise.

Agreeable to ancient custom, Musashi stood across the body of his fallen foe and, as he thrust his sword through Ganryū's throat, said:—"Witness, O spirit of Munisai, that I have slain your murderer!" Then deliberately cutting off Ganryū's head, he took it to the officials in charge, and said:—"I beg that you will grant me permission to take this head to the tomb of my deceased parent." The request was granted.

Musashi was summoned to Lord Kuroda's presence and congratulated on his success. This baron despatched messengers to Kumamoto to inform Lord Katō of what had occurred, and Buzaemon was immediately sent to Kokura to thank Nagamasa for the kindness shown to Kiyomasa's retainer.

Musashi now lost no time in conveying Ganryū's head to his father's tomb, which was, it will be remembered,

situated in Hiroshima. There he had an interview with Lord Mōri, who urged him to settle in his dominions. Musashi respectfully declined his offer and returned to Kumamoto, where he was constantly in the company of Lord Katō, to whom he related the many interesting experiences of his life.

Kihei subsequently found him out, and received a position under Lord Katō, with an income of three hundred *koku* a year.

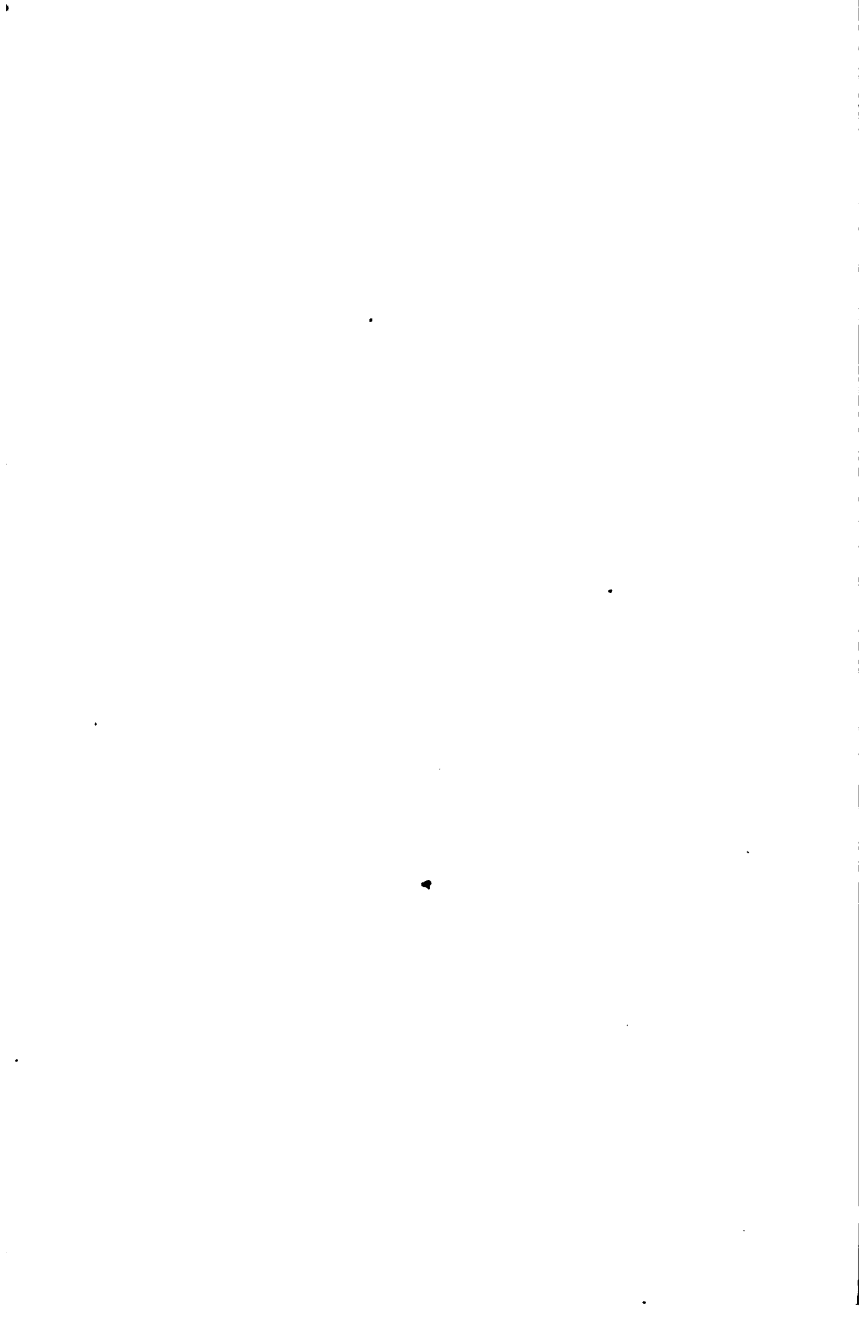
Musashi taught fencing in Kumamoto for many years, remaining there till Buzaemon's death. After this event, bequeathing the property that he had received from Buzaemon to one of Kihei's children whom he had adopted, he set out on another pilgrimage.

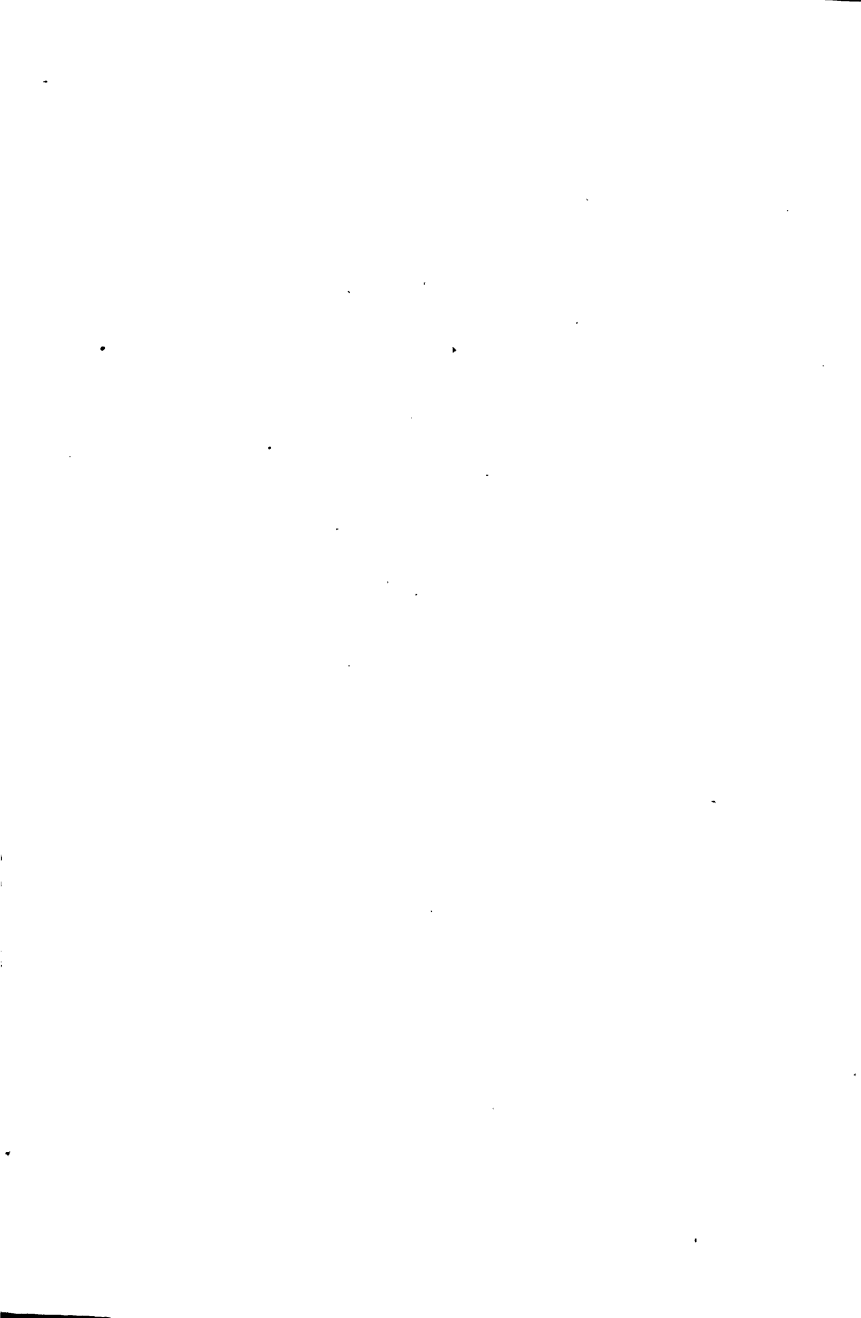
There is no record of our hero's adventures on this his last journey. He returned to Kumamoto at the age of sixty-one, and there died, worn out with the many privations and hardships of his life.\*

On the road that leads from Kumamoto to the province of Bungo, about six miles from Kumamoto, there is a tomb called "Musashi's tomb." The tombstone faces the hedge. The stone is said to have been turned towards the hedge owing to a report that certain farmers

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\* The date of his death was May 19th., 1645, but as to the length of his life authorities disagree, some affirming that he died at the age of 94.



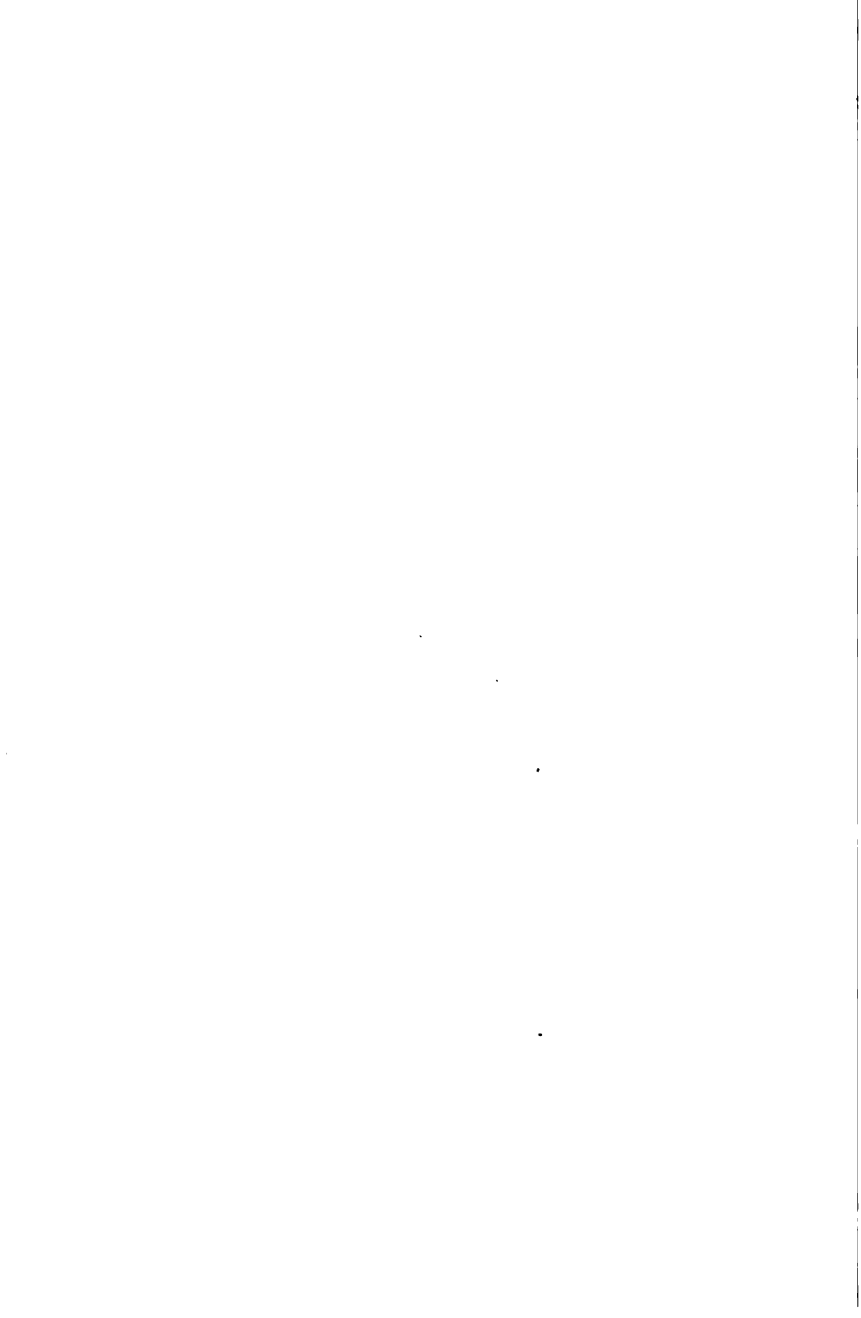


had received punishment from the offended spirit of Musashi for tying up their horses near or for resting their burdens on the tombstone. But Musashi was not buried at this place. His remains lie in Kumamoto, in the Hommyōji Cemetery.

It is recorded that in addition to being an accomplished soldier Musashi was a man of considerable literary and artistic taste, that he wrote good verses and painted well. Some of his paintings are still extant, representing a dragon ascending to the sky on a cloud. Being known by their bearing the *nom de plume* of 二天, *Ni Ten*. His wandering life must have prevented his giving any very close attention to books. Moreover, his intense love of excitement and wild adventure would have the tendency of rendering much of the literature of those days unbearably prosy to him. The cultivation and refinement which in modern days are acquired by wide reading, however, he obtained by means of close intercourse with some of the noblest spirits of one of the noblest ages of Japanese history. Though of course a product of the age in which he lived, in many respects both as a warrior and as a man Musashi had few if any superiors among contemporaries whose lives are known to us. His amiableness, generosity, unselfishness, indomitable perseverance and humility made him beloved as a man, and

his extraordinary adroitness as a fencer created a name for him unsurpassed by any of his predecessors or successors. Despite the narrowness of its outlook, such a life as the one whose history I now close, in that it displays so many of the nobler aspects of human nature, is calculated to inspire confidence in humanity : and, allowing for the modifications which the spirit of the present age must necessarily put on them, such lives, in that they are permeated with an ideal—in that they have some great object in view for the realization of which every nerve is strained, are the great desiderata of modern times. The singleness of aim, the steadfastness of purpose, the untiring exertion of Miyamoto Musashi, would make its mark anywhere.

➤ THE END ◀



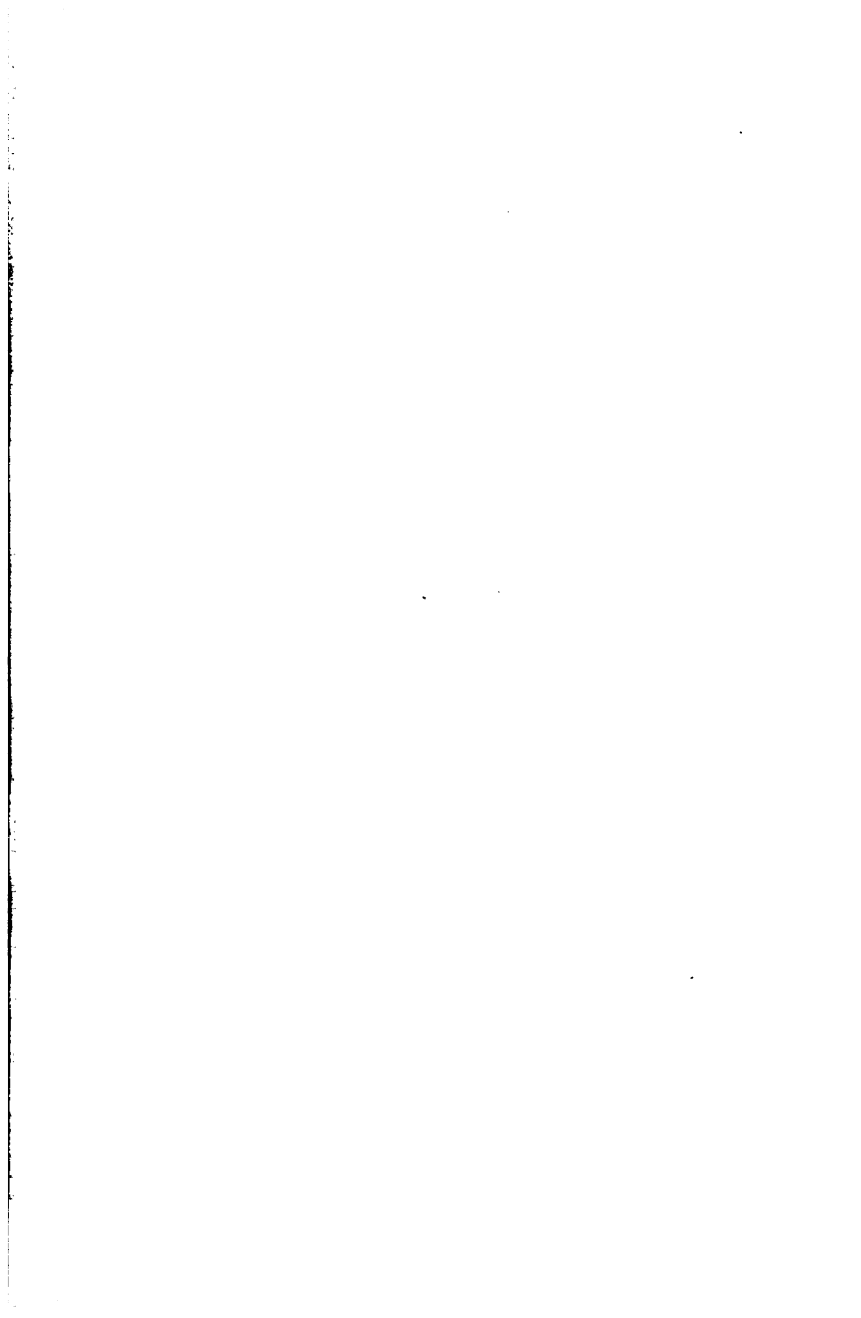




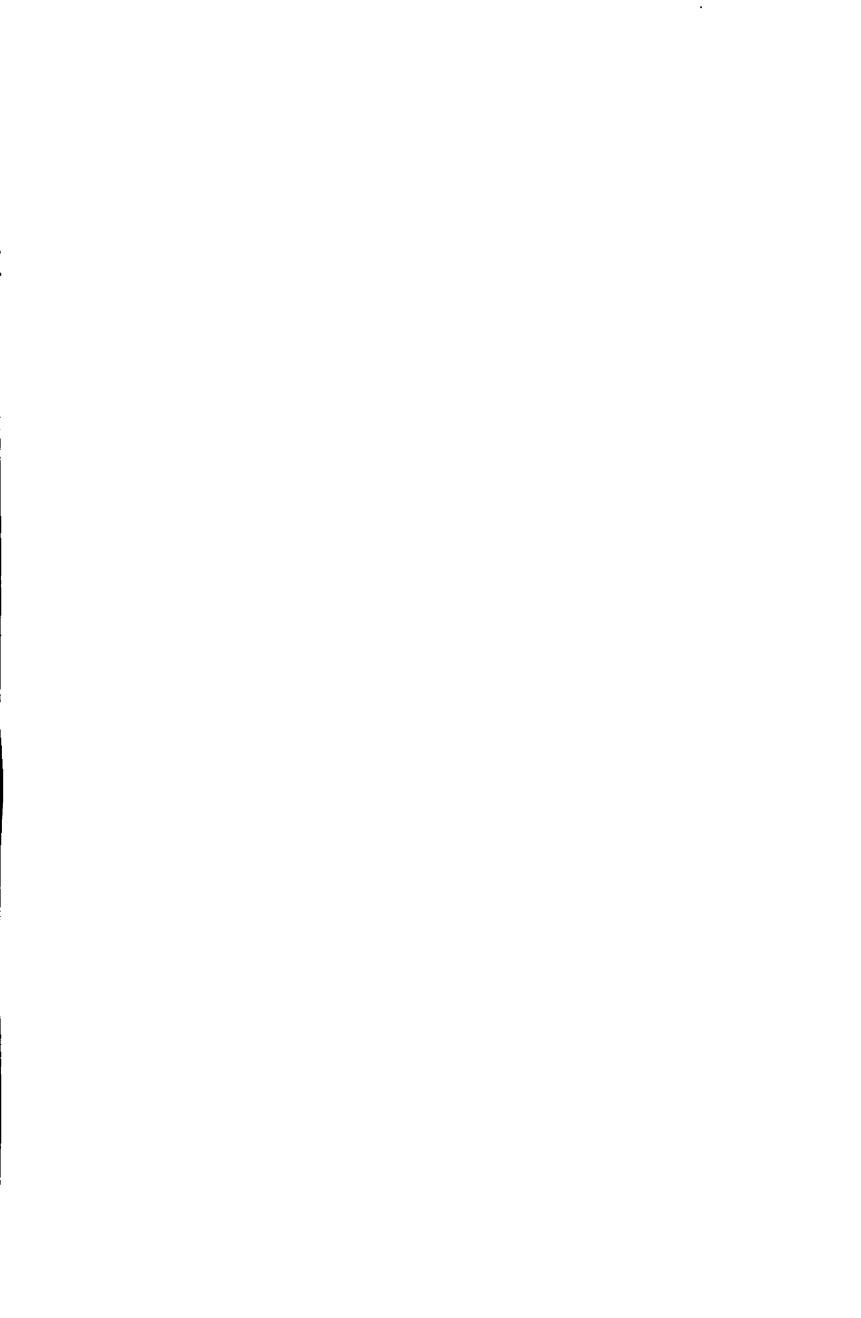


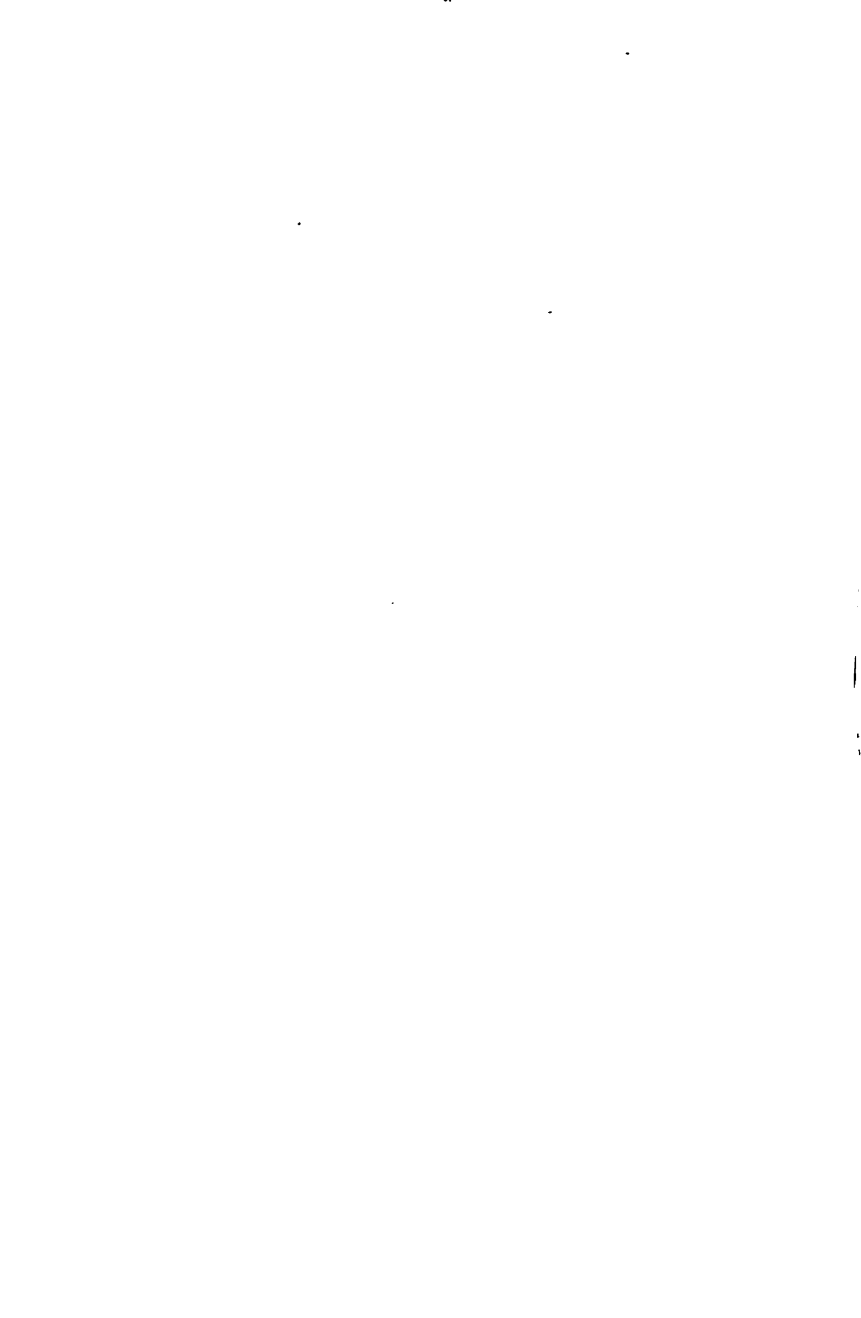


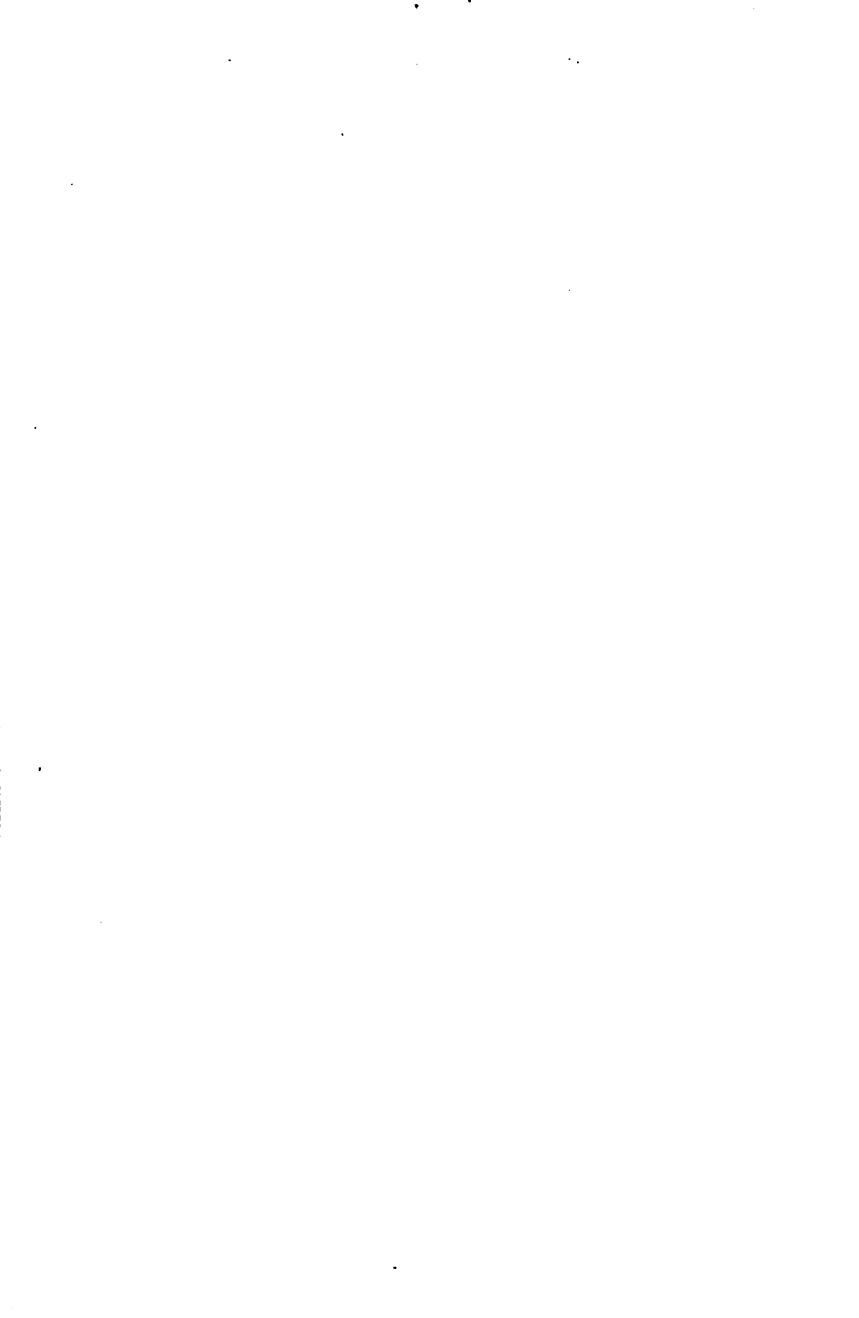
















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