

初版の序文

The Lafcadio Hearn Library was presented to the Toyama High School by Madame Haruko Baba in celebration of the opening of the institution in the spring of the thirteenth year of Taisho(1924). It was this same lady who, with her generous disposition, made a magnificent donation of yen 1,500,000, nominally as legal representative of her son Mr. Masaharu Baba, a minor, for the establishment of the School.

The Library consists, needless to say, of the collection originally made by Lafcadio Hearn, otherwise Yakumo Koizumi, with some slight addition acquired by the family after his death. Of the former, those books marked with asterisks in this catalogue belong to his New Orleans days. As to the latter, it consists chiefly of those posthumous publications of his works presented by the publishers, with the important exception of two manuscript volumes of "Japan : an Attempt at Interpretation," the last production from his fruitful pen, a crystallization, as it were, of his life-long study of this Land of the Rising Sun. Hearn was in the habit of making two clean copies, whenever a work of his was finished, on torinoko paper specially ordered from the famous Hai-bara's, Nihombashi, Tokyo. One of these he sent to the press, keeping the other himself in case of loss in the mails. The manuscript in question is one that thus passed through the press.

The number of volumes altogether amounts to 2435, of which 1352 are English, 719 French, and 364 Japanese and Chinese books. These last were, no doubt, occasionally dipped into by Hearn himself, but were chiefly used by his faithful helpmate, who thereby supplied her husband with nuclei for many of his marvellous stories.

It was soon after the great seismic disaster in and around the city of Tokyo four years ago that Madame Hearn began to be seriously concerned about the Library, then still in her possession. It might, at any moment, share the fate of so many unfortunate private libraries in the devastated districts. What she earnestly prayed for, was that it might be transferred somewhere within easy distance of her home, to some one of the universities in the metropolis, where it should be kept safe against all forms of danger. Indeed, she took means to make her wishes known, but in the confused state of things still prevailing at the time, no definite response came from the expected quarters, or, if it came at all, it was in the unwelcome form of haggling over the price. It was exactly at this juncture that I incidentally heard from Mr. R. Tanabe about the affair. Only a few days before, I had consented to accept the position I now occupy,

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and I hailed the news as something providential. I made an offer through him, on behalf of the School, for the Library at the price asked, paying down the earnest required. Madame Hearn could not at first reconcile herself to the idea of sending the precious mementoes of her beloved husband into a remote country district which had had no connection whatever with him in his lifetime. But she finally consented, reflecting that I was a brother of the intermediary who had been a favourite pupil of his, and that the School in question, though not a university, had as its origin the commemoration of a most auspicious marriage in the Imperial Family for which her husband had always entertained such profound veneration.

On arriving at my post, being rather at a loss where to look for a voluntary offer of the necessary fund, I consulted with Governor Ito, who suggested that, all things considered, it would be improper not to disclose the matter to Madame Baba first of all, as she was practically the founder of the School. I took his advice, with the happy result that she at once offered of her own free accord to make the purchase in behalf of the School, not in lieu of her son as on the former occasion, but out of her own purse. It may be noted here in passing that she was afterwards awarded by the Government the Dark Blue Ribbon Decoration for the act.

The books, carefully packed in fourteen cases through the good offices of Mr. Nakatsuchi, proprietor of the Hokuseido, arrived in Toyama safe and sound in December of the same year. As the School had as yet no building of its own, the Library was deposited for a long time in one of the godowns attached to the Prefectural Office and was formally transferred as School property the next spring, but it was only in the spring of last year that the School was enabled to receive the Library in its entirety, the ferro-concrete book depository not having been completed till then.

Since its installation in the School, much has had to be done in preparation for the actual opening of the Library, besides repairing those volumes which were badly worn. In this connection it may be noted that those in black cloth with typewritten titles belong to this group.

But, repaired or not, every one of them is stamped with one or another of the original owner's seals, all of which, moreover, indicated that his name should be pronounced < her n >, not < h : n > as some would still have us believe. Indeed, the venerable widow states that it was on account of the similarity of sound between heron and Hearn as pronounced by himself, that he adopted the former as his family crest when he was naturalized as a Japanese subject. The crest may be seen on the cover of this catalogue.

And now the long-wished-for treasury is open at last. May it forever serve as a Pierian spring, alike to professors and to students!

In conclusion, I would express my sincere thanks to Madame Hearn for her kind consent, to Madame Baba for her priceless gift, and to all those in the School who were in any way connected with the arrangement of the Library and the compilation of the catalogue, especially to Professors Takata and Hiraoka, the former for his painstaking labour in reclassifying the whole Library in general and the English books in particular, the latter for the same with regard to the French. And last but not least, I must make special mention of Mr. Miura, proprietor of the Yuhodo, who was so generous as to undertake willingly the printing of the following pages, notwithstanding that his hands were full, and that at approximately half the usual charges.

November 3rd, the 2nd year of Showa(1927)

Tsunetaro Nannichi,

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