

**JAPANESE PLAYS
(VERSIFIED)**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649514489

Japanese Plays (Versified) by Thomas R. H. McClatchie

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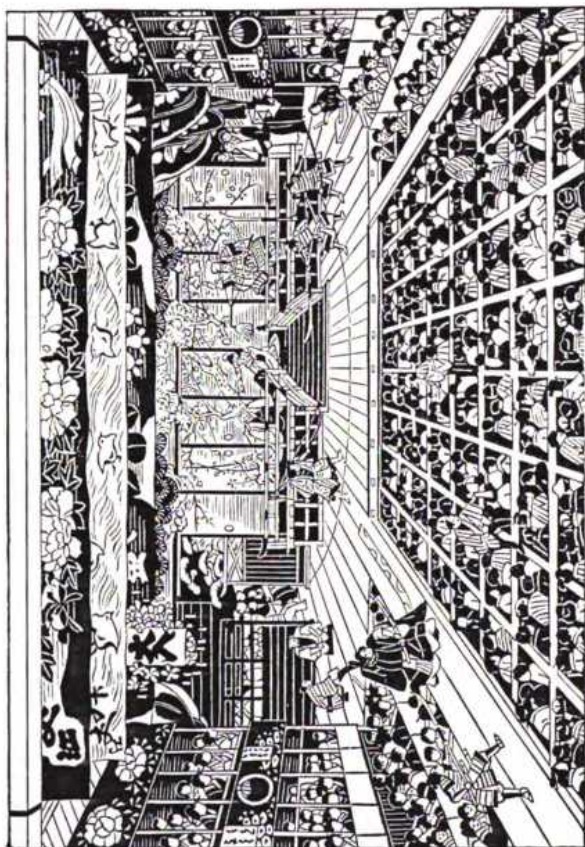
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THOMAS R. H. MCCLATCHIE

**JAPANESE PLAYS
(VERSIFIED)**



A JAPANESE THEATRE.

JAPANESE PLAYS,
(VERSIFIED.)

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS,

DRAWN AND ENGRAVED BY JAPANESE ARTISTS.

YOKOHAMA:

1879.

~~10pl. Pl 887. M25 MHN~~

YOKOHAMA :

PRINTED AT THE " JAPAN DAILY HERALD " OFFICE.

PL 887
M25
1879a
MAIN

In compliance with current copyright
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this replacement volume on paper
that meets the ANSI Standard Z39.48-
1984 to replace the irreparably
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E.L. 507
175

PREFACE.

THE following rhymes must not be taken as translations of the dramas to which they allude. They are merely efforts to sketch, in a cursory manner, the general outline of the plots of those dramas, for the especial benefit of Western readers. The great improvements that have recently been introduced on the Japanese stage have naturally given rise to a desire on the part of many foreign residents here to make some slight acquaintance with the general style and character of the plays represented. A Japanese play, as a rule, lasts for many hours, and it is questionable whether it would, if literally and fully translated, possess any interest for the foreign reader. The plan here followed has been to select one personage as the hero or heroine, and to give an outline of those scenes only in which that particular personage appears; for this reason several of these rhymes are termed 'Fragments.' A Japanese audience, though certainly sympathetic, differs considerably from a foreign one: the spectators here are by no means averse to showing their amusement when an unfortunate woman is murdered by mistake, but are easily moved to tears when the murderer finally commits suicide after a long speech garnished with grandiloquent allusions to the spirit of 'loyalty' that caused him to perpetrate the

PREFACE.

outrage in the first instance. Thus, in endeavoring to versify these plays, no style has appeared so apt as that of the "Ingoldsby Legends,"—that delightful mixture of pathos and bathos, of true poetic expression and of jingling rhyme. This idea has been kept in view throughout.

The illustrations are from the clever pencil of Mr. Tachibana Unga, an official of the Imperial Japanese Military Department, and have been cut on blocks by Hisanaga Heizō, a wood-engraver of Tōkiō.

All these rhymes have already appeared in the columns of the "Japan Daily Herald," at Yokohama, and it is to the kind courtesy of the editor of that journal that the author is indebted for permission to reprint them in separate form.

Yokohama, August, 1879.

