

**DIARIES OF COURT  
LADIES OF  
OLD JAPAN**

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Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan by Annie Shepley Omori & Kochi Doi & Amy Lowell

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**ANNIE SHEPLEY OMORI & KOCHI DOI & AMY LOWELL**

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COURT LADIES OF OLD JAPAN

TRANSLATED BY  
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AND

KOCHI DOI

*Professor in the Imperial University, Tokio*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
AMY LOWELL

*And with Illustrations*



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1920

### TRANSLATORS' NOTE

THE poems in the text, slight and occasional as they are, depending often for their charm on plays upon words of two meanings, or on the suggestions conveyed to the Japanese mind by a single word, have presented problems of great difficulty to the translators, not perfectly overcome.

Izumi Shikibu's Diary is written with extreme delicacy of treatment. English words and thought seem too downright a medium into which to render these evanescent, half-expressed sentences and poems — vague as the misty mountain scenery of her country, with no pronouns at all, and without verb inflections. The shy reserve of the lady's written record has induced the use of the third person as the best means of suggesting it.

Of the "Sarashina Diary" there exist a few manuscript copies, and three or four publications of the text. Some of them are confused and unreadably incoherent. The present translation was done by comparing all the texts accessible, and is especially founded on the connected text by Mr. Sakine, professor of the Girls' Higher Normal School, Tokio, published by Meiji Shoin, Itchome Nishiki-cho, Kanda-ku, Tokio. As far as possible the exact meaning has been adhered to, and the words chosen to express it have been kept absolutely simple, without complexity of thought, for such is the vocabulary in

### *Translators' Note*

which it was written. Sometimes the diarist uses the present tense, sometimes the text seems reminiscent. The words in square brackets have been inserted by the translators to complete the sense in English of sentences which literally rendered do not carry with them the suggestion of the Japanese text.

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### COURT LADY'S FULL DRESS IN THE HEIAN PERIOD

*Colored Frontispiece*

From *Kokushi Daijiten*, by kind permission of Mr. H. Yoshikawa. The figure was drawn for the purpose of showing the details of dress and therefore gives no indication of the grace and elegance of the costume as worn. It shows the red *karaginu*, or over-garment; the dark-green robe trimmed with folds, called the *uchigi*; the *saishi*, or head-ornament, in this case of gold but sometimes of silver; the unlined under-garment of thin silk; the red *hakama*, or divided skirt; and the train of white silk painted or stained in colors.

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From an old book.

COURT DRESS OF MILITARY OFFICIAL (in color) 90

From *Kokushi Daijiten*, by kind permission of Mr. H. Yoshikawa. The figure shows the *zui*, or ornament of the head-strap holding the head-dress in place; also the method of rolling up the gauze flap of the head-dress. Tucked into the red state coat appear a half-spread fan and some folded sheets of paper, and at the back is seen a quiver made of lacquered wood. Underneath the red coat the *hakama* is shown. The shoes are of Chinese pattern.

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From old prints.