

I was told by a Japanese that once in a certain number of years an assemblage of persons collects together and holds a sort of festival, and clears the area of the character from overgrowth; the ceremony thus exactly corresponding to the "scouring of the white horse." On certain occasions the character is illuminated with lanterns so as to show out on the hill side at night. I have a Japanese coloured sketch of it thus lighted up.

The Japanese are extremely fond of gadding about, and of sight-seeing, and especially of beautiful scenery. Near Kobe is a very pretty waterfall. It is crowded, wherever a good view is to be obtained, with tea-houses and resting-places for picnic parties, and I never saw the place without plenty of holiday-making visitors. When visiting such places the Japanese express their delight, and describe the beauties of the scene in short poems which they write out in the evenings at their inns. A Japanese clerk of Mr. Dickins's, a Mr. Tanaka, who accompanied us on our journey and was a very pleasant companion, often wrote thus short poems about our day's doings.

One of the walks from Kobe is to the Moon Temple, which is perched at the summit of a steep mountain ridge, clad with beautiful woods. The climb to the temple is a severe one, up many hundreds of steps. I was amused to see a Chinaman and a Japanese toiling up together to the top, to consult the Oracle about some matter of business. It seemed extraordinary that a Chinaman, so sharp in business matters, should come so weary a journey to take the opinion of the foreign gods. Yet the two men were evidently equally anxious as to the result of their inquiry. The Oracle was consulted by shaking out a lot from a number of inscribed slips of wood packed in a case. The men received the case of lots from an attendant priest, and hastened off with it to one of the shrines.

From Kobe, the large city Osaka is reached by rail. As we left the railway station at Osaka, a crowd of pilgrims was just entering it. The pilgrims were clad in white, and carried long staves, and had bottle-gourds of water or saki slung round their necks. They were returning from the holy shrines. A passer-by begged a blessing of one of these pilgrims who was lagging behind the rest. The suppliant crouched down in the street, and the pilgrim blessed him, making passes over him with his wand. This looked strange in front of a brand new railway station.

Pilgrimages are extremely popular in Japan. On the journey along the Tokaido, the road was thronged with pilgrims, going to the ancient shrine of Ise, the oldest temple in Japan