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Isabella Lucy Bird

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Unbeaten Tracks in Japan

Isabella Bird's *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan* was published in 1880 and recounts her travels in the Far East from 1876. Bird was recommended an open-air life from an early age as a cure for her physical and nervous difficulties. She toured the United States and Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the Sandwich Islands, before travelling to the Far East in order to strengthen herself to marry Dr John Bishop and live in Edinburgh. Created out of the letters Bird wrote home, primarily to her sister, Volume 1 recounts her experiences as a solo woman traveller living among the Japanese in Yokohama and Niigata. It includes descriptions of clothing, food and drink, education, housing, theatre, women's lifestyles, religion, plant life, medicine, shopping and other day-to-day activities, as well as the vicissitudes and excitement of the conditions and process of travelling, including by boat and pack-horse.

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Unbeaten Tracks in Japan

*An Account of Travels in the Interior, Including
Visits to the Aborigines of Yezo and the Shrines
of Nikkô and Isé*

VOLUME 1

ISABELLA LUCY BIRD



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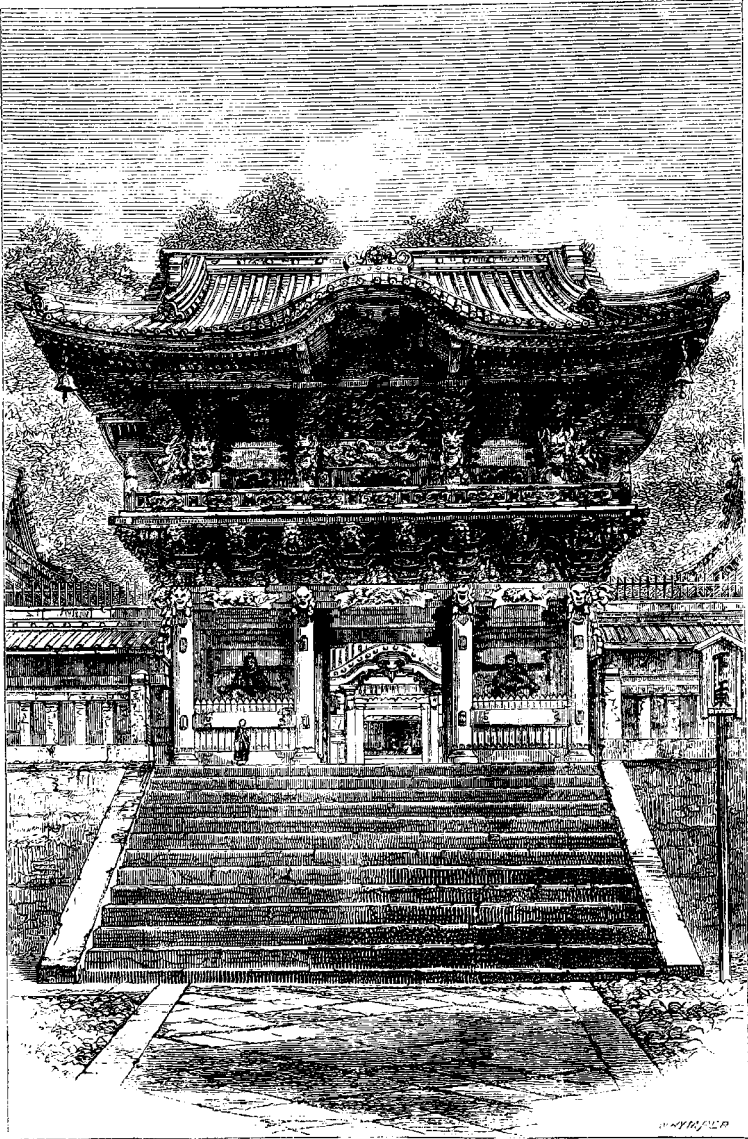
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THE YOMEI GATE, SHRINES OF NIKKÔ.

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UNBEATEN TRACKS IN JAPAN

AN ACCOUNT OF TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR,
INCLUDING VISITS TO THE ABORIGINES OF YEZO AND
THE SHRINES OF NIKKÔ AND ISÉ

By ISABELLA L. BIRD

AUTHOR OF 'SIX MONTHS IN THE SANDWICH ISLANDS'
'A LADY'S LIFE IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS'
ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET
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To the Memory
OF
LADY PARKES,
WHOSE KINDNESS AND FRIENDSHIP
ARE AMONG
MY MOST TREASURED REMEMBRANCES OF JAPAN,
THESE VOLUMES ARE
GRATEFULLY AND REVERENTLY
DEDICATED.

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P R E F A C E.



HAVING been recommended to leave home, in April 1878, in order to recruit my health by means which had proved serviceable before, I decided to visit Japan, attracted less by the reputed excellence of its climate, than by the certainty that it possessed in an especial degree those sources of novel and sustained interest, which conduce so essentially to the enjoyment and restoration of a solitary health-seeker. The climate disappointed me, but though I found the country a study rather than a rapture, its interest exceeded my largest expectations.

This is not a "Book on Japan," but a narrative of travels in Japan, and an attempt to contribute something to the sum of knowledge of the present condition of the country, and it was not till I had travelled for some months in the interior of the main island and in Yezo, that I decided that my materials were novel enough to render the contribution worth making. From Nikkô northwards my route was altogether off the beaten track, and had never been traversed in its entirety by any European. I lived among the Japanese, and saw their mode of living, in regions unaffected by European contact. As a lady travelling alone, and the first European lady who had been seen in several districts through which my route lay, my experiences differed

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more or less widely from those of preceding travellers ; and I am able to offer a fuller account of the aborigines of Yezo, obtained by actual acquaintance with them, than has hitherto been given. These are my chief reasons for offering these volumes to the public.

It was with some reluctance that I decided that they should consist mainly of letters written on the spot for my sister and a circle of personal friends ; for this form of publication involves the sacrifice of artistic arrangement and literary treatment, and necessitates a certain amount of egotism ; but, on the other hand, it places the reader in the position of the traveller, and makes him share the vicissitudes of travel, discomfort, difficulty, and tedium, as well as novelty and enjoyment. The "beaten tracks," with the exception of Nikkô, have been dismissed in a few sentences, but where their features have undergone marked changes within a few years, as in the case of Tôkiyô (Yedo), they have been sketched more or less slightly. Many important subjects are necessarily passed over, and others are briefly summarised in the "Chapter on Japanese Public Affairs."

In Northern Japan, in the absence of all other sources of information, I had to learn everything from the people themselves, through an interpreter, and every fact had to be disinterred by careful labour from amidst a mass of rubbish. The Ainos supplied the information which is given concerning their customs, habits, and religion ; but I had an opportunity of comparing my notes with some taken about the same time by Mr. Heinrich Von Siebold of the Austrian Legation, and of finding a most satisfactory agreement on all points.

Some of the Letters give a less pleasing picture of

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the condition of the peasantry than the one popularly presented, and it is possible that some readers may wish that it had been less realistically painted; but as the scenes are strictly representative, and I neither made them nor went in search of them, I offer them in the interests of truth, for they illustrate the nature of a large portion of the material with which the Japanese Government has to work in building up the New Civilisation.

Accuracy has been my first aim, but the sources of error are many, and it is from those who have studied Japan the most carefully, and are the best acquainted with its difficulties, that I shall receive the most kindly allowance, if, in spite of carefulness, I have fallen into mistakes.

The Transactions of the English and German Asiatic Societies of Japan, and papers on special Japanese subjects, including "A Budget of Japanese Notes," in the *Japan Mail* and *Tōkiyō Times*, gave me valuable help, and I gratefully acknowledge the assistance afforded me in many ways by Sir Harry S. Parkes, K.C.B., and Mr. Satow of H.B.M.'s Legation, Principal Dyer, Mr. Chamberlain of the Imperial Naval College, Mr. F. V. Dickins, and others, whose kindly interest in my work often encouraged me when I was disheartened by my lack of skill; but, in justice to these and other kind friends, I am anxious to claim and accept the fullest measure of personal responsibility for the opinions expressed, which, whether right or wrong, are wholly my own.

The concluding chapter, which treats briefly of Public Affairs, is based upon facts courteously supplied by the Japanese Government, and on official documents, and may be useful in directing attention to the sources from which it is taken. The illustrations, with the exception of three,

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which are by a Japanese artist, have been engraved from sketches of my own, or Japanese photographs.

I am painfully conscious of the defects of these volumes, but I venture to present them to the public in the hope that, in spite of their demerits, they may be accepted as an honest attempt to describe things as I saw them in Japan, on land journeys of more than 1400 miles.

Since the letters passed through the press, the beloved and only sister to whom, in the first instance, they were written, to whose able and careful criticism they owe much, and whose loving interest was the inspiration alike of my travels and of my narratives of them, has passed away, and the concluding chapter has been revised and completed under the shadow of this great grief. I have, therefore, to request my readers to pardon its faults of style and somewhat abrupt termination.

ISABELLA L. BIRD.

September 1880.

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ERRATA.

P. 14. *For* "Treaty Port" *read* "Treaty Point."

P. 171. *For* "It has of late been exported to China to the amount of £200,000 annually," *read* "The ginseng exported annually from Japan is worth, on arrival in China, £200,000."

P. 190. *For* "Feng Kwai" *read* "Fan Kwai," *and* "foreign" *for* "Barbarian Devil."

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GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE WORDS

FOR WHICH ACTUAL ENGLISH EQUIVALENTS DO NOT EXIST.

SIMPLE RULES FOR THE PRONUNCIATION OF JAPANESE WORDS.

The vowels are pronounced as in Italian, with the exception of *u*, which takes the sound given to the same letter in English in "put," "full," etc.

Consonants are sounded as in English; but *g*, except at the beginning of a word, is pronounced like *ng* in singing. The *h* is distinctly aspirated. *Hi* is almost like *sh*.

Amado. Outside shutters sliding in grooves; lit. "rain-doors."

Andon. A square or circular paper lantern in a lacquer or wooden frame, 3 feet high.

Bentô bako. Occasional meal or luncheon box of varnished wood or lacquer, with several compartments.

Butsu-dana. Buddhist altar shelf.

Chaya. A house where tea and other refreshments are sold, to be eaten or drunk on the premises; lit. "tea-house."

Daimiyô. Territorial nobles under the old régime, with annual revenues estimated at 10,000 *koku* of rice, and upwards; lit. "great name."

Daidokoro. An open kitchen.

Doma. A small yard within the entrance of houses; lit. "earth-space."

Eta. Men who had to do with dead animals, hides, etc. A pariah class estimated at 3,000,000, whose disabilities are now removed.

Fusuma. Sliding screens covered with wall paper.

Geisha. A professional woman, possessed of the accomplishments of playing, singing, and dancing.

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GLOSSARY.

Hakama. Full petticoat trousers, formerly worn only by the *samurai*.

Haori. A short, sleeved mantle worn by both sexes.

Heimin. The commonalty. All classes below the nobility and gentry.

Hibachi. A charcoal brazier.

Itama. An unmatted floor. Applied to the polished ledge on which people sit to wash their feet at the entrance of a house ; lit. "board-space."

Irori. A square depression in the middle of a floor, used as a fire-place.

Jishindo. A small door in the *amado* ; lit. "earthquake-door."

Jôrôya. A house of ill-fame.

Kago. A covered basket, in which a traveller is carried by two men.

Kakemono. A hanging picture.

Kal'ké. A disease similar to the *beri-beri* of Ceylon ; lit. "leg-humour."

Kaimiyô. The name given to persons after death.

Kaitakushi. Department for the colonisation of Yezo.

Kamado. A kitchen fire.

Kami-dana. A Shintô shrine-shelf.

Kashitsukeya. A non-respectable *yadoya*.

Kimono. A long, sleeved robe, open in front and folding over, worn by both sexes with a girdle.

Kugé. Nobles of the Mikado's court under the old *régime*.

Kura. A "godown." A fireproof storehouse.

Kuruma. A *jûnrîkisha* or man-power carriage ; lit. a "wheel" or "vehicle."

Kuwazoku. The new name for the nobility in general.

Makimono. A picture roll, or illuminated scroll.

Mago. A pack-horse leader.

Maro (Polynesian). A loin cloth six inches broad.

Matsuri. A religious festival.

Mekaké. Concubine.

Saké. Rice beer containing from 11 to 17 per cent of alcohol.

Sakura. A species of wild cherry. [*Prunus cerasus*.]

Samurai. The retainers of the *daimiyô* under the old *régime* ; "two-sworded" men.

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GLOSSARY.

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Shizoku. The gentry. Equivalent to *Samurai*.

Shōgun (Tycoon). The Mikado's chief vassal; erroneously styled by foreigners "The Temporal Emperor." Abolished. Full title, Sei-i-Tai Shōgun, "Barbarian-quelling generalissimo," bestowed by the Mikado upon his son, Yamato-daké-no-mikoto, conqueror of the aborigines of the north and west of the main island, B.C. 86. The first hereditary Shōgun was Minamoto Yoritomo, A.D. 1190, the greatest, Iyēyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa dynasty two centuries ago, the last, Keiki, now living in retirement at Shidzuoka.

Shōji. Sliding screens with translucent paper.

Shōmiyō. A territorial noble with an annual revenue of less than 10,000 *koku* of rice; lit. "small name."

Tabako-bon. A wooden tray with fire-pot and ash-pot.

Tatami. House-mats, 5 feet 9 inches by 3 feet, stuffed to a thickness of 2½ inches, and covered with a finely-woven surface.

Teishiu (pronounced *teishi*). Used for the house-master, or host of a *yadoya*; also for husband by wife.

Tokonoma. An alcove with a polished floor; lit. "bed-place."

Torii. A sacred gateway. A portal over entrance of avenue leading to temples and shrines; lit. "bird's rest."

Yadoya. A Japanese inn.

Zen. A small lacquered stand 6 inches high, supplied as a dining-table to each person at a meal.

WORDS USED IN COMBINATION.

Bashi. A bridge, as Setabashi.

Kawa or *gawa.* A river, as Kanagawa.

Machi. A street, as Teramachi.

Sawa. A swamp or defile, as Shirasawa.

Togé. A pass, as Sannotogé.

Yama. A mountain, as Asamayama.

Zan or *san.* A syllable affixed to mountains whose names are supposed to be of Chinese origin, as Nikkōzan.