



Smithsonian Institution

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Set of Underwood & Underwood stereographs of Japan

Extracted on Oct-25-2021 06:23:00

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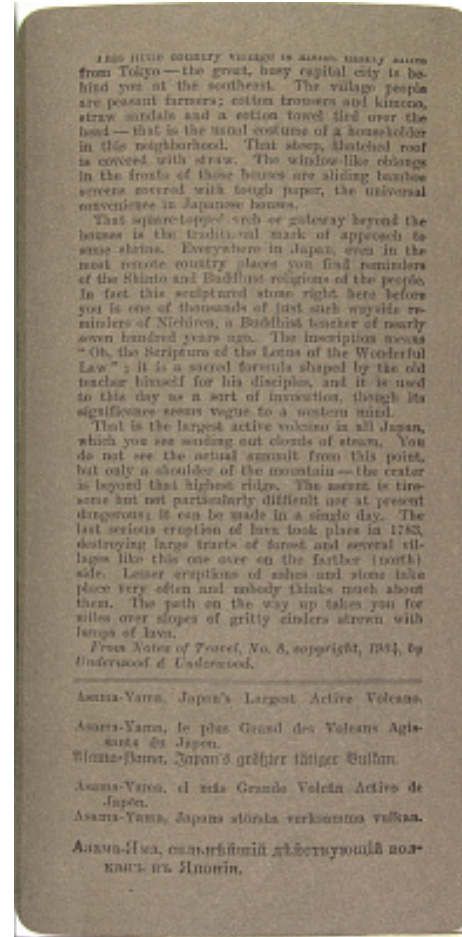
This little county village is about ninety miles from Tokyo - the great, busy capital city is behind you at the southeast. The village people are peasant farmers; cotton trousers and kimono, straw sandals and a cotton towel tied over the head - that is the usual costume of a householder in this neighborhood. That steep, thatched roof is covered with straw. The window-like oblongs in the fronts of those houses are sliding bamboo screens covered with tough paper, the universal convenience in Japanese houses.

That square-topped arch or gateway beyond the houses is the traditional mark of approach to some shrine. Everywhere in Japan, even in the most remote county places you find reminders of the Shinto and Buddhist religions of the people, in fact this sculptured stone right here before you is one of thousands of just such wayside reminders of Nichiren, a Buddhist teach of nearly seven hundred years ago. The inscription means "Oh, the Scripture of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law"; it is a sacred formula shaped by the old teacher himself for his disciples, and it is used to this day as a sort of invocation, though its significance seems vague to a western mind.

That is the largest active volcano in all Japan, which you see sending out clouds of steam. You do not see the actual summit from this point, but only a shoulder of the mountain - the crater is beyond the highest ridge. The ascent is tiresome but not particularly difficult nor at present dangerous; it can be made in a single day. The last serious eruption of lava took place in 1783, destroying large tracts of forest and several villages like this one over on the farther (north) side. Lesser eruptions of ashes and stone take place very often and nobody this much about them. The path on the way up takes you for miles over slopes of gritty cinders strewn with lumps of lava.

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Asama-Yama, Japan's Largest Active Volcano.
 Asama-Yama, le plus Grand de Volcans, Agissants du Japon.
 Asama-Yama, Japan's grösster tätiger Vulkan.
 Asama-Yama, el más Grande Volcán Activo de Japón.
 Asama-Yama, Japans största verksamma vulkan.



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