



Smithsonian Institution

Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Set of Underwood & Underwood stereographs of Japan

Extracted on Apr-19-2024 11:50:48

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You are in central Japan, twenty-five miles southeast of Kyoto, the ancient capital of the empire. This road is part of a mile-long avenue lined all the way with beautiful old pines and gigantic cryptomerias; it leads to a famous Shinto temple founded more than ten centuries ago. From time immemorial there have been sacred deer in these woods, and people have fed them and petted them as they went up to the temple for prayers; there is no necessary connection between the acts, for the deer are not worshipped, but merely respected in their liberty and kindly treated. It is curious to think that all this was here, almost the same as you see it now, during the long centuries of the Middle Ages, when Europe knew nothing whatever about Japan. Kasuga temple was founded about the time of Alfred the Great, in England.

(One thing at least was different here in the old times; there were none of these odd, two-wheeled jinrikishas, for the vehicle is said to have been the invention of an American missionary.)

Notice the gay parasol of bamboo and paper that harmonizes so well with the girl's bright-colored kimono—such sunshades are rapidly going out of use now, being superseded by cloth umbrellas imported from Europe. The use of heavy oiled-paper umbrellas for rainy days still continues. Women never wear hats. They indulge in a loose wrap over the head in the bitterest cold or a hard storm, but on all other occasions they go bareheaded like this.

Those tall stone monuments are votive offerings from devout Shintoists—there are several thousand of such structures in different parts of the park. The hollow chambers near the top are intended to hold lighted lamps at festival-time.

(See Hartshorn's "Japan and Her People," Scidmore's "Jinrikisha Days in Japan," Bacon's "Japanese Girls and Women," etc.)

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[[Double-line]]

Girl feeding deer in the temple garden; Nara, Japan.

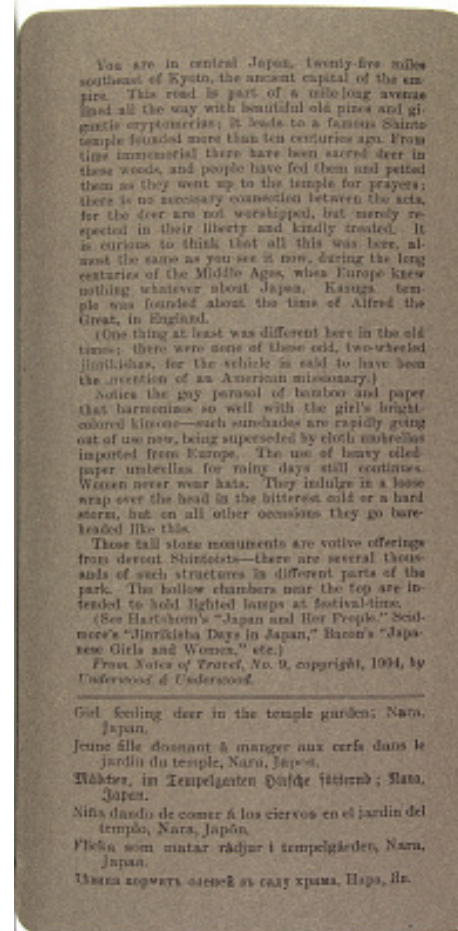
Jeune fille donnant à manger aux cerfs dans le jardin du temple, Nara, Japon.

Mädchen, im Tempelgarten Hirsche fütternd; Nara, Japan.

Niña dando de comer á los ciervos en el jardín del templo, Nara, Japón.

Flicka som matar rdjur i tempelgrden, Nara, Japan.

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