



*Garden view at Hearn's former residence at Kitahori, Matsue ©Furukawa Makoto*

## **Finding Homes in the Unfamiliar** Glimpses of Lafcadio Hearn's Japan

Clara Kumagai, Ireland/Japan

## Finding Homes in the Unfamiliar

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View of Matsue, around 1907-1908 ©Imaoka picture frame shop

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**Motivation** Patrick Lafcadio Hearn, born in 1850, was a writer of several names and many places. Son of an Irish father and Greek mother, Hearn lived in and wrote of the US and the West Indies, but it's for his writings about Japan that he is most famous. While his books of ghost stories, such as *Kwaidan* and *In Ghostly Japan*, are his best known, he also wrote extensively on Japanese life, culture and people until his death in 1904.

As a writer drawn to folklore, I first encountered Hearn through his collections of legends and supernatural stories. But as a person also of mixed heritage – Irish and Japanese – now living in Japan, I became interested in Hearn's own identification with Japanese culture, and how, after travelling across the world, he found a home here.

**Objective** Hearn lived in Kobe, Kumamoto, Matsue, and Tokyo, and travelled to many other places in Japan. However, he wrote of Matsue most fondly, where he met and married his wife Koizumi Setsu. Hearn's account of the Oki islands, in the second volume of *Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan*, is also representative of the remote places he explored – places where, even today, many Japanese people have not visited.

By retracing some of the paths Hearn walked, more than a century later, I hope to see what inspired him. In Matsue and throughout Shimane Prefecture, the Shinto shrines and the sacred sites that captivated him still exist. The landscape of the Oki Islands, Nishinoshima and Nakanoshima, remains as enthralling and beautiful as it does within the pages of Hearn's books. Hearn wrote from a personal point of view, as will I. So much of Hearn's talent lies in the details of his own perspective, and I, too, want to immerse myself in these places, stories and experiences.

Hearn has been called *profoundly homeless*\* but I would argue that, on the contrary, he found a home in many places. I also have several places I could call home, in Canada, Ireland, and Japan, and it can cause as much confusion as pleasure.

\* Mary Gallagher, in Irish Times ([url.japan-insights.jp/irishtimes\\_AXER](http://url.japan-insights.jp/irishtimes_AXER))

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Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904)  
Courtesy of Koizumi Family Collection



Former residence of Hearn on 516  
Bourbon Street, New Orleans; Courtesy  
of Koizumi Family Collection



Family portrait of Hearn, Setsu, and his  
first son Kazuo; Courtesy of Koizumi  
Family Collection

Hearn didn't return to Ireland, but he remembered it, as can be seen in his writing, in his references to stories or the sea. He truly began his life as a writer in Cincinnati as a rather lurid newspaper journalist, where, in defiance of the state's anti-miscegenation laws, he married an African-American woman called Mattie Foley. They later divorced, and Hearn moved to New Orleans, where he explored cultures that others didn't – the Creole, and the communities of people of colour. He went on to live and write in the French West Indies for two years.

In 1890, Hearn came to Japan with a short-lived job as a correspondent for Harper's; later that year he found new employment as a teacher in Matsue in Shimane Prefecture. It was there that he married Koizumi Setsu, with whom he went on to have four children. Hearn would later say that he loved Japan *more than any Japanese*, and while it's a statement of perhaps some hyperbole, it's certainly true that he wrote with reverence of Japan, distancing himself from western societies.

Today, Japan is striving to be more international, and is home to more foreigners than ever before. There are also more people of mixed Japanese heritage, whether they be *hafu* or otherwise, and these are identities that deserve to be encouraged and embraced. Hearn represents an early such exchange of culture and understanding.

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*Gozu Tenno and Inadahime, from the series Lives of Heroes of Our Country (Honcho eiyu den), 1847-1852 by Utagawa Kuniteru I; Courtesy of the Tsubouchi Memorial Theater Museum, Waseda University*



*Yaegaki Shrine outside Matsue, where Kushinadahime hid while Susanoo slayed the dragon ©Shimane Tourism Federation*

Lafcadio Hearn took the name Koizumi Yakumo when he became a naturalised Japanese citizen in 1896. Koizumi was his wife's, Setsu, family name; Yakumo he chose himself. It was taken from the first line of the first Japanese poem, in the first written record of Japan, *Kojiki*. This 8th century account of Japan's creation established the imperial lineage as descending from the gods. In it, the first waka poem is attributed to the god Susanoo, also referred to as Gozu Tenno. Newly exiled from heaven, Susanoo met a couple who had lost seven daughters to an eight-headed, eight-tailed dragon, which was about to devour Kushinadahime, the last daughter they had left. Susanoo killed the dragon by getting it drunk on sake and cutting off its many heads – we do strange things for love. He married Kushinadahime where Yaegaki Shrine now stands, and at his wedding, Susanoo composed the poem, which began

*Yakumotatsu izumo yaegaki...  
Eightfold are the clouds that rise...*

It was a line that became synonymous with Shimane, too; Hearn took his name from not just a story, but from a place.

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*Mirror Pool at Yaegaki Shrine ©Shimane Tourism Federation*

The Mirror Pool, where Kushinadahime looked at her reflection and drank to quench her thirst, is beside the shrine, in a grove surrounded by trees. The pool is small, and the water really is as still as a mirror. The custom is to buy a particular piece of paper at the shrine, rectangular and faintly inscribed with kanji, set it on the water and place a coin in the center. Watch it and you'll see your future in love: the longer it takes for the paper to sink, the longer you'll have to wait; the distance it travels is how far away your lover will be.

I do this, placing a hundred yen coin carefully on top of the smooth paper. I watch it drift not very far away from me. Beneath it there are tadpoles like lost punctuation, and dark newts climb over the curls and soft piles of paper that layer the bottom of the pond. My paper is still afloat, and I wonder if it's ever happened that a paper has never sunk, or has been blown away by the breeze instead.

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If the newts approach and touch the paper, lovers believe their happiness is assured by the will of the gods –  
*Lafcadio Hearn in Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan, 1894*  
©Furukawa Makoto



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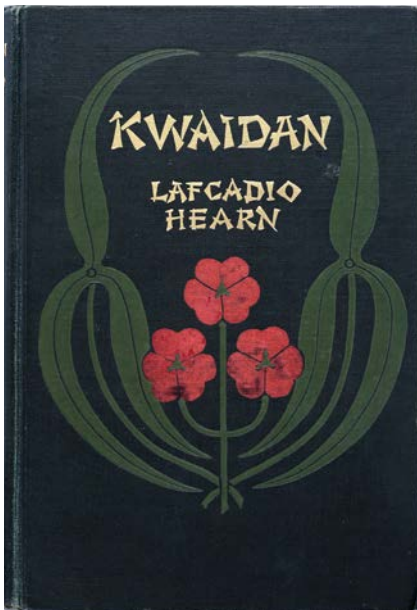
I don't know if Hearn ever did this, too, though he wrote of the tradition of people petitioning their lovers on little paper boats, and of the newts being valued as aphrodisiacs. He noted, with indignation, that one lover had written on his little paper boat in English: *Praying – in this ancient grove – in this ancient Land of Izumo – unto the most ancient gods in English! Verily, the shyest love presumes much upon the forbearance of the gods...*

Hearn did find a happy marriage with Setsu, who was influential not simply as a wife and mother, but as storyteller in her own right. They devised a private language called *Hearn-ben*, a mixture of English and Japanese. In her own book, *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*, Koizumi relates how she would lower the lamp on quiet nights and tell Hearn ghost stories until his face was pale. Afterwards, she wrote that, *At those times our house seemed as if it were haunted*. Hearn never wanted her to read from books, insisting that she tell it *all from your own thought*. They worked on some books together, weeping over the story *Tanabata* and acting out the parts of others until Koizumi worried that if anybody ever saw them they would look like *two mad people*. Together, they made those stories come to life.

My paper and coin finally sink. One of my guides says, *Within fifteen minutes is still good*. He looks slightly relieved. I buy omamori for two recently married couples I know. One couple, a Canadian woman and a German man, is moving from Vancouver to San Diego. The other couple is in Ireland, where my partner's brother and his Filipino-American husband now live. When I give it to them, I say that it is an amulet from the land of the gods, and tell them stories of other marriages that crossed oceans and heaven and earth.

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*Kwaidan*, first edition in 1904;  
Courtesy of Lafcadio Hearn Memorial  
Museum



View of Kukedo ©Shimane Tourism Federation

Lafcadio Hearn is famous for ghost stories – perhaps his best-known works of fiction are *Kwaidan* and *In Ghostly Japan*. One of Hearn's favourite tales is *The Woman Who Bought Syrup*, about a pale silent woman who bought syrup every night, until she was followed home by the shopkeeper. He found her grave and her living baby, born after her death and nourished by her ghost and the syrup. Proof, the story ends with, that love is stronger than death.

But one of Hearn's most haunting stories is not one that appears in his fiction, but in his memoir, *Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan*. It's particularly haunting because it is not folklore, but what he himself saw and felt in Kukedo, a cave on the coast of Shimane Prefecture.

Wherever Hearn went, he sought the remarkable. By boat he travelled a sea that it was forbidden to cross if there was *wind enough to move three hairs*, passing cliffs and rocks, to Kukedo. *A more beautiful sea-cave could scarcely be imagined*, he wrote of it. Hearn and his companions went onwards to Old Kukedo, or Sai No Kawara, which translates to *a riverbed to the underworld*. Hearn called it *The Cave of Children's Ghosts*. It was a little cove, difficult to get to, with statues of jizo, the small gods that watch over children. There were piles of small stones that the ghosts of children built every night, and in the sand were footprints of little feet; these ghosts had weight.

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*It is told that souls of children are sent to Sai No Kawara as a punishment for causing great grief to their parents. They build stone towers for salvation and jizo stay with them to protect them from evil ©Fukui Tetsuya*



*A friendly-faced jizo watches over the young souls, Kukedo ©Fukui Tetsuya*

A boat tour from the Marine Plaza Shimane follows the journey that Hearn took, across water that is a clear and marvellous blue. I have to resist the urge to dive in – much like Hearn, who was only dissuaded by the boat-woman yelling *Sharks!* in his ear. It is July, but in that little cove the air is cool. As Hearn had seen, there are stacks of stones, not much more than ankle high; a quiet metropolis of tiny towers. I step carefully between them, along a narrow path that weaves through the cave. There are statues of jizo, wearing their red knitted caps and bibs, and there are gifts. These are offerings to jizo, and for children to play with: plastic cars, sea-washed dolls, figurines of Pokémon and Anpanman, bunches of artificial flowers. Hearn had heard murmuring, but as I walk slowly to the back of the cave, a silence wraps itself around me, muffling the sound of the ocean and of the voices of those who have come with me. The roof of the cave lowers as I go further, and there are fewer toys, but it doesn't seem to end. I peer into the quiet gloom, and feel the back of my neck tingle. I decide to go no further. It is a sacred place.

Women have come here for centuries, praying for children in this world and the next. They are the ones who have left these presents and offerings; who stacks the stones I don't know. There is a nearby island with a campground and one of my guides tells me that on quiet nights, the voices of children have been heard. I return to the bright sunshine and clear water. As the boat motors past the reddish rock of cliffs and sea stacks, I think that, yes: love is stronger than death.



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*The scenery evokes a feeling of home for everyone; Matengai Cliff, Nishinoshima ©BGC*

Hearn approached the Oki Islands by boat, sitting atop a number of watermelons. I'm lucky enough to have a seat – in fact, I had a nap – on the ferry from Shichirui Port in Shimane Prefecture, but our view must have been almost the same. Hearn had described the appearance of the islands as almost magical: *...mountain-gates revealing league-long wondrous vistas of peaks and cliffs and capes of a hundred blues, ranging away from velvety indigo into far tones of exquisite and spectral delicacy. A tinted haze made dreamy all remoteness...* As I see it, the hundred years between us hadn't made any difference to stone or sea.

Islands solidify into hills, peaks, cliffs as the ferry rumbles onwards. This is only some of the Oki Islands, an archipelago of about 180 islands, four of which are inhabited. On one side, there is bright sunlight and a blue and white sky; the other has been shaded in with grey watercolours. Sailors call the white tops of waves *jumping rabbits*, and the more rabbits, the worse the weather will be. There are only a few now, but as I look, a single fork of lightning flashes from the sky to the horizon, brief as a blink.

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*Over 600 horses and cattle are put out to graze on Nishinoshima ©BGC*

When we disembark in Nishinoshima, the rain is pouring down. It eases off as we drive, climbing higher along curving roads, until by the time we stop it's only a light drizzle. We stop on Matengai Cliff, surrounded by hills and the sea, urged along by the wind. A small chestnut pony crops grass and ignores us. I look across green grass, down to the waves rolling against the stone cliff faces and say that it looks like Ireland. Yes, says Fukuda, our Oki Islands guide. Everybody says that – people from Bhutan and from Europe. They say, this looks like my home.

I wondered if Hearn felt this way, too. Did he think of Ireland, the ocean at Tramore? The Oki Islands are remote enough that two emperors were exiled here, hundreds of years ago. One, GoToba, composed waka poetry, inspired by nature and people. While in Kyoto he had been surrounded with riches – here he saw people planting rice, which he had never seen before. The other emperor, GoDaigo, escaped, smuggled out by local fishermen who hid him beneath a pile of squid.

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Bronze statues of Hearn, Setsu, and a crow ©Furukawa Makoto



Squid is one of the famous marine products of the Oki Islands. Hearn recounts the legend where the distinct smell of squid helped Emperor GoDaigo escape from the islands ©BGC

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When Hearn came to the Oki islands, he found a place that had never seen anybody non-Japanese before. Now, with the islands designated as a UNESCO Geopark, there are visitors from all over the world. The islands maintain an easy-going calm; there is only one traffic light in Ama cho on Nakanoshima. And that, I'm told, is just to teach children what a traffic light looks like.

The Oki islanders I meet have an eagerness and passion not just to preserve the history and culture there but to infuse it with new energy. I find that our guide, Fukuda, has recently discovered a new species of snake; there are events and initiatives where local people write waka poetry; on the land opposite the Oki Shrine a vineyard will soon be planted.

In Ama cho, there are small monuments to Hearn: a large copper replica of a letter from an Irish ambassador, images and details of beaches in Greece and Ireland, a statue of Hearn, Setsu, and a crow sitting on a bench. I perch beside them and we look out at the little bay. The harbour is modern and concrete, the boats have motors. But beyond it, the hills slope greenly and clouds like white whales cast shadows upon them.

I see no reason to leave, even without a blanket of squid. Hearn, too, thought of escape and the Oki islands, but he wrote about it entirely differently: he had felt the *full joy of escape* by being here. Here, he said he had *the delight of knowing one's self*, and I understand why.

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Lafcadio Hearn – Koizumi Yakumo – truly loved Japan. His admiration reverberates through his sentences, romantic as they sometimes are. Even now, Matsue and the Shimane Prefecture preserve the beauty and spirituality that Hearn so admired. Travelling to shrines, through cities, along the coast, these places are rich and rewarding to visit. On the Oki Islands, with its energizing mix of peace and energy, one can experience nature and the landscape in one of the most remote and beautiful places in Japan.

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The beauty and mystery that Hearn saw remains, but the changes are also clear. As in all of Japan's rural areas, the population has declined, especially in the younger generations. Hearn described the towns on the Oki Islands as lively and surprisingly modern, but they are quieter now.

There is another aspect of Hearn that we can do more than read about, but can advance, which is identity – what it is to be Japanese. In the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum in Matsue, there are photos of Hearn's family. His sons were handsome – they received many love letters, I'm told. One of them had light-coloured eyes, and in times of war or anti-foreigner feeling, he would keep his eyes on the ground. Of course, it's not only in Japan that I find my own identity questioned, but in Ireland, as well. It's the same for others I know: *hafu*, mixed, and foreign. But in Japan, where I now live, it is a matter of importance that we are understood and accepted as having found a home here – not just for us, but for Japan, too.

Hearn came here as a foreigner, with a richness of experience and an eye open to the unfamiliar. He sought and received help and knowledge from Setsu and many others who welcomed him. Understanding and the work that reaches towards it can inspire and create; if Hearn's legacy is to grow, it's not just through reading him but in continuing to pursue the curiosity and exchanges between cultures and people. It's in the exploration of places, people, and stories; everything that could become home.

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Clara Kumagai is a writer, editor, and lecturer. Her fiction and nonfiction has been published in Ireland, Japan, Canada, and the US. She currently lives in Tokyo, where she teaches at Tsuda University and Tama Art University. She was born in Vancouver and raised in Ireland by an Irish mother and Japanese father. As a *hafu*, *daburu*, or *hapa*, she is interested in stories about the intersection and exploration of identity and experience.

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[www.clarakumagai.com](http://www.clarakumagai.com)  
[twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

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**Places**    **Gesshoji Temple**

One of Lafcadio Hearn's favourite temples. A notable feature is the statue of a giant tortoise, which inspired Hearn to create a story about a priest who put a large stone pillar on the shell of a troublesome tortoise to keep it in place.

690-0875, Shimane, Matsue shi, Sotonakabara cho 179

[web-site](#)

**Kaka Kukedo Sightseeing Boat, Marine Plaza Shimane**

The terminus of the Kukedo Sightseeing Boat has a tourist information office and a café serving local food. The second floor houses an informative exhibition on the history and geography of the surrounding area as well as an area for temporary art exhibitions.

690-0401, Shimane, Matsue shi, Shimane cho, Kaka 6120-14

[web-site](#)

**Kukedo**

Kukedo, literally *Old and New*, are the sea caves that Hearn wrote about. The Kukedo Course, a sightseeing tour by boat leaving from the Marine Plaza Shimane, includes a visit to the largest sea cave on the coast of the Sea of Japan, as well as a walk around Old Kukedo.

690-0401, Shimane, Matsue shi, Shimane cho

[web-site](#)

**Kuniga Coast**

Hikes and walks of varying lengths along clifftops where ponies and cattle roam freely, offer magnificent views of the ocean, cliff, and the island itself. Recommended spots are the Matengai Cliff, Akao Lookout, and Onimai Lookout.

684-0303, Shimane, Oki gun, Nishinoshima cho, Kuniga

[web-site](#)

**Kuniga Shrine**

A small shrine on Nishinoshima built in the 1980s situated at the bottom of the Kuniga Coast walk, reached by a narrow concrete path that winds down the small bay

684-0211, Shimane, Oki gun, Nishinoshima cho, Urago, Kuniga

[web-site](#)

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**Places**    **Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum**

An excellent museum run by Lafcadio Hearn's great-grandson, Koizumi Bon, containing a wide collection and extensive information on Hearn's life and work

690-0872, Shimane, Matsue shi, Okudani cho 322

[web-site](#)

**Lafcadio Hearn's Former Residence**

Next to the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum is Hearn's former residence, home to his very idiosyncratic writing desk and the small Japanese garden that he so much loved

690-0888, Shimane, Matsue shi, Kitahori cho 315

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

**Mount Kinkoji**

Mount Kinkoji's elevation of 164m offers a beautiful view of Nakanoshima Island and the sea. There is also a picnic area and rest place.

684-0403, Shimane, Oki gun, Ama cho

**Oki Shrine**

A beautiful shrine built in 1939 to make the 700th anniversary of Emperor GoToba's death. The grounds also include GoToba's grave. Visitors in small groups can experience a night time ceremony, guided by the head priest of the Shrine, where they write their own prayers by candlelight.

684-0403, Shimane, Oki gun, Ama cho, Ama 1784

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

**Shichirui Port Ferry Terminal**

The ferry port for services to the Oki islands. Buses to and from Shichirui Port run from JR Matsue Station, JR Yonago Station, and JR Sakaiminato Station.

690-1311, Shimane, Matsue shi, Mihonoseki cho, Shichirui 3246-1

[web-site](#) (Japanese)

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### Places **Yaegaki Shrine**

A shrine dedicated to love and marriage, on the site where Susanoo killed an eight-headed dragon and married a princess. The Mirror Pool on the shrine grounds is where visitors can float a coin on a special piece of paper to discover their future in love.

690-0035, Shimane, Matsue shi, Sakusa cho 227

[web-site](#)

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### Publications **Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan (Volumes 1 and 2)**

Hearn, Lafcadio; 2016; Rutland: Tuttle Publishing

Hearn's account of his travels around Japan, the stories heard, places visited, and people met, first published in 1894

### **In Ghostly Japan**

Hearn, Lafcadio; 2007; Rutland: Tuttle Publishing

This collection of supernatural stories is one of Hearn's most famous books. It contains twelve stories from Japanese folklore, which range from ghost stories to parables.

### **Kwaidan**

Hearn, Lafcadio; 2005; Rutland: Tuttle Publishing

Published in 1903, not long before Hearn died, a collection of both fiction and non-fiction: supernatural stories as well as a personal account from Hearn's childhood and a short study on insects

### **Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn**

Koizumi, Setsu; 2010; Charleston: Nabu Press

This memoir of Hearn's wife, written after his death is a fascinating account of Hearn and the life they had together with many interesting anecdotes. It also gives an insight into their collaboration on Hearn's books.

### Web-Sites **hafu2hafu.org**

A photo project by photographer Miyazaki Tetsuro featuring people of mixed Japanese heritage

[web-site](#)



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#### Glossary

##### **Ama cho**

Main town on Nakanoshima. Ferries to the mainland and other islands dock at its Hishiura Ferry Port Terminal. There is a tourist information office as well as hotels, inns, and restaurants; the Oki Shrine is at a short distance.

##### [web-site](#)

- ▶ Emperor GoToba (1180-1239)
- ▶ Nakanoshima
- ▶ Nishinoshima
- ▶ Oki Islands

##### **Amaterasu**

The sun goddess. A daughter of Izanagi and the sister of Tsukuyomi (the moon god) and Susanoo (the storm/sea god). The Japanese emperors are regarded as her direct descendants in Shinto and Japanese mythology.

##### [web-site](#)

- ▶ Shinto
- ▶ Susanoo

##### **Anpanman**

Japanese cartoon character where the head is an *anpan*, a sweet bun filled with red bean paste. Anpanman is one of the most popular characters in Japan, and appears on a lot of merchandise and children's toys, originating in the 1970s, in a picture book series by Yanase Takashi, which later became an anime.

##### [web-site](#)

##### **Emperor GoDaigo (1288-1339)**

The ninety-sixth Japanese emperor who lived in exile on Nishinoshima from 1331 to 1333. After escaping Nishinoshima he returned to Kyoto to resume the throne. He died in 1339, one day after he abdicated to pass the throne to his son.

##### [web-site](#)

- ▶ Nishinoshima
- ▶ Oki Islands

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#### Glossary **Emperor GoToba (1180-1239)**

The eighty-second Japanese emperor who was exiled to Nakanoshima in 1221. He spent the rest of his life there, composing poetry. He is particularly recognized for his waka poems.

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Ama cho
- ▶ Oki Islands
- ▶ Waka

#### **Hafu**

A casual term for people where one of the parent is Japanese. It originates in the Japanese pronunciation of the English word *half*. It has been adopted and embraced by many of the hafu-Japanese community who consider it a positive identity. Other terms are *daburu* or *double*, and *hapa*, though the latter is a broader term from Hawaii, signifying any person of mixed Asian heritage. The following web-site presents projects that document and explore the hafu identity.

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Lafcadio Hearn, Patrick (1850-1904)

#### **Hearn ben**

Also known as *Hearn-san Kotoba*, is the private language that Hearn and his wife Setsu devised to communicate with each other. It was a simplified Japanese that also contained many unusual and amusing words or pronunciations. Hearn once said that it was much easier for him to understand this language than some of the English spoken by his Japanese friends.

- ▶ Koizumi Setsu (1868-1932)
- ▶ Lafcadio Hearn, Patrick (1850-1904)

#### **Jizo**

A Japanese god, the protector of children, particularly those who died at birth or while very young. The small Jizo statues, usually with friendly, peaceful faces, are very common in Japan. They are often dressed in red bibs and caps, and offerings of fruit, food, and flowers are given to them.

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Sai no Kawara

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### Glossary **Koizumi Setsu (1868-1932)**

Koizumi Setsu came from an old samurai family in Matsue, and it was there that she married Hearn in 1891. She told him many stories of Japanese folklore and legend, and often helped him translating and adapting them for an English audience. *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn* (1918) is her own account of life with Hearn.

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Hearn ben
- ▶ Lafcadio Hearn, Patrick (1850-1904)
- ▶ Matsue

### **Kojiki**

The *Kojiki*, *Record of Ancient Matters*, is the oldest written document of Japan's history, dating from the 8th century. In stories, songs, and poems, some of which originated in oral folklore and legends, it chronicles the country's creation by the god. It was commissioned by Empress Genmei to confirm the imperial family's genealogy as directly related to the gods.

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Shinto
- ▶ Susanoo

### **Kushinadahime**

Also known as Inadahime, the eighth daughter of Ashinazuchi and Tenazuchi, who Susanoo saved from being eaten by the eight-headed and eight-tailed dragon

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Susanoo

### **Lafcadio Hearn, Patrick (1850-1904)**

Arriving in Japan in 1890 as a magazine correspondent, he settled in Matsue, Shimane Prefecture, where he later took on the Japanese name Koizumi Yakumo. He is foremostly known for his collections of Japanese folk tales and ghost stories.

- ▶ Hearn ben
- ▶ Koizumi Setsu (1868-1932)
- ▶ Matsue
- ▶ Mattie Foley
- ▶ Shimane Prefecture
- ▶ Tramore, County Waterford

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### Glossary

#### Matsue

The capital of Shimane Prefecture, also known as the *City of Water*, features one of the twelve original (non-reconstructed) castles in Japan, surrounded by canals and waterways.

##### web-site

- ▶ Koizumi Setsu (1868-1932)
- ▶ Lafcadio Hearn, Patrick (1850-1904)
- ▶ Mirror Pool
- ▶ Shimane Prefecture

#### Mattie Foley

An African-American woman who was born into slavery but later became free. Hearn and Althea *Mattie* Foley met in Cincinnati, where they also married in 1874. Hearn wrote profusely about her gift for storytelling, and the many tales that she would enthrall him with. They divorced in 1877.

- ▶ Lafcadio Hearn, Patrick (1850-1904)

#### Mirror Pool

A pond close to Yaegaki Shrine. The *Kojiki* reports how Kushinadahime gazed into it to see her reflection, which is how it got its name. Today, people can float a coin on a special piece of paper in order to see how soon they will find love, and how near or far their love will be.

##### web-site

- ▶ Matsue

#### Nakanoshima

The third biggest of the Oki Islands, also sometimes referred to as *Ama*. Oki Shrine and Mt. Kinkoji are situated there amongst other attractions. Nishinoshima is a short and easy boat ride away.

##### web-site

- ▶ Ama cho
- ▶ Emperor GoToba (1180-1239)
- ▶ Oki Islands

# Finding Homes in the Unfamiliar

## Glimpses of Lafcadio Hearn's Japan

### Glossary **Nishinoshima**

The second largest and westernmost of the Oki Islands. Home to spectacular scenery, beaches, and campgrounds.

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Emperor GoDaigo (1288-1339)
- ▶ Nakanoshima
- ▶ Oki Islands

### **Oki Islands**

An archipelago located in the Sea of Japan. Nishinoshima, Nakanoshima, Chiburijima, and Dogo are the four largest and inhabited islands, designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark.

[web-site](#)

- ▶ Ama cho
- ▶ Emperor GoDaigo (1288-1339)
- ▶ Emperor GoToba (1180-1239)
- ▶ Nakanoshima
- ▶ Nishinoshima
- ▶ Shimane Prefecture
- ▶ UNESCO Geopark

### **Omamori**

Amulets or talismans sold at both Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. Commonly in the form of a small package, they contain prayers written on paper or wood. Kept for good luck, they are thought to help with everyday issues such as childbirth, academic success, or travel.

### **Pokémon**

The name is a contracted version of *Pocket Monsters*, inspired by the popular Japanese childhood leisure activity of collecting imaginary creatures. Pokémon began as a trading card and video game in 1995 and went on to gain so much popularity that it was adapted into manga, a cartoon series, and multiple movies.

[web-site](#)

# Finding Homes in the Unfamiliar

## Glimpses of Lafcadio Hearn's Japan

### Glossary

#### **Sai no Kawara**

Riverbeds that mark the boundary between life and afterlife, where the souls of deceased children pass over. These are sacred places, usually protected by jizo statues and honoured with offerings.

▶Jizo

#### **Shimane Prefecture**

On the coast of the Sea of Japan, sometimes called the province of the gods. Many legends and myths are situated in Shimane. With some of the oldest shrines in Japan, it is considered as a powerful area of the Shinto religion.

#### **web-site**

- ▶Ama cho
- ▶Emperor GoDaigo (1288-1339)
- ▶Emperor GoToba (1180-1239)
- ▶Matsue
- ▶Nakanoshima
- ▶Nishinoshima
- ▶Oki Islands
- ▶Susano

#### **Shinto**

The traditional religion of Japan, literally *The Way of the Gods*. A combination of spirit, nature, and ancestor worship, among other elements.

▶Shinto Shrine

#### **Shinto Shrine**

A place of worship that houses one or more Shinto deities, though they may also include Buddhist or Taoist gods. These shrines range from very large ancient ones to ones at roadsides, and even smaller ones in private homes. Ise Jingu in Mie and Izumo Taisha in Shimane are believed to be the oldest Shinto shrines in Japan.

▶Shinto

## Finding Homes in the Unfamiliar

### Glimpses of Lafcadio Hearn's Japan

#### Glossary **Susanoo**

Also called Gozu Tenno, he is the God of Storms and the brother of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. Following a long-running conflict with Amaterasu, he was exiled to earth, where he descended to today's Shimane Prefecture and married Kushinadahime.

**web-site**

- ▶Kojiki
- ▶Shimane Prefecture
- ▶Shinto

#### **Tanabata**

Also called the *Star Festival*. It is based on the story of Orihime and Hikoboshi, two deities represented by stars, who are married but can only meet once a year, on the seventh of July. The two are separated by the Milky Way, that they must cross via a bridge of flying magpies. Rain on this day is an unlucky omen as the lovers will not be able to meet.

#### **Tramore, County Waterford**

A town on the east coast of Ireland, where Lafcadio Hearn spent some of his childhood living with his aunt, Sarah Brenane. It is now home to the Lafcadio Hearn Japanese Gardens.

**web-site**

- ▶Lafcadio Hearn, Patrick (1850-1904)

#### **UNESCO Geopark**

Designated areas of particular geographical significance, protected and sustainably developed with the involvement of local communities.

**web-site**

- ▶Oki Islands

#### **Waka**

A Japanese form of poetry, structured as five lines, with each line measured in distinct number of syllables: 5-7-5-7-7

- ▶Emperor GoToba (1180-1239)
- ▶Susanoo

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Glimpses of Lafcadio Hearn's Japan

## Imprint

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