

Lafcadio Hearn and Setsu



After he became blind in his left eye, photos of Hearn generally depict him looking to his left. This is the only known picture of him taken from the front. (Photographed ca. 1889)

Setsu Koizumi

Setsu was born in 1868 in Matsue, as a daughter of a samurai, Shimane Prefecture. She grew up during the downfall of the samurai class, and her family lived in poverty. In 1891, she met Lafcadio Hearn when she worked as his housekeeper while he was working in Matsue as an English teacher, and they later married.

Hearn became a naturalized Japanese citizen, as Yakumo Koizumi. Setsu, who had been a lover of stories since childhood, served as a storyteller for Hearn's works, contributing tremendously to books such as *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*. After Hearn's death, she dedicated herself to managing his writings and maintaining his estate while raising their four children. In her later years, she developed an interest in Noh chanting and tea ceremony. She died in 1932 at the age of 64.



Hearn and His Family

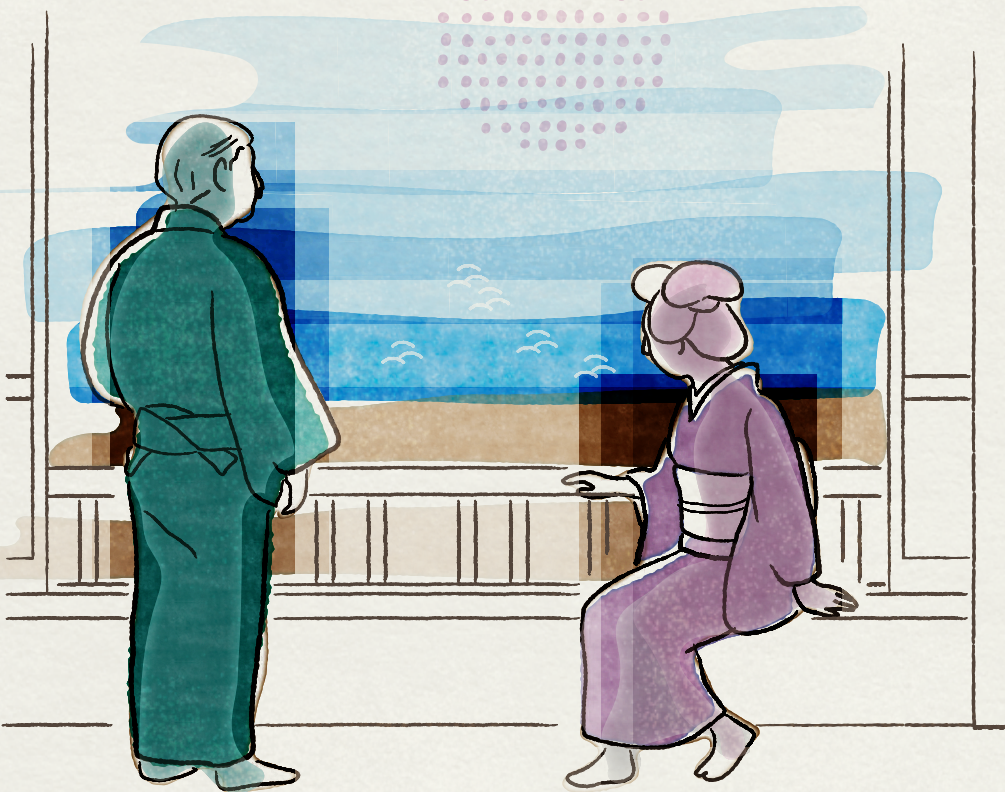
Hearn is pictured here with his wife Setsu to the right, and his oldest son Kazuo in the center. Kazuo was born in Kumamoto after Hearn left Matsue. Kazuo, incidentally, was the grandfather of the Japanese folklorist Bon Koizumi. (Photographed ca. 1896)

Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan

This book, published in the US in two volumes, was the first of Hearn's works to arrive in Japan. In this iconic work, his writings paint vivid sensory images of everyday life in the San'in Region, including a chapter on the Bon Odori dance.

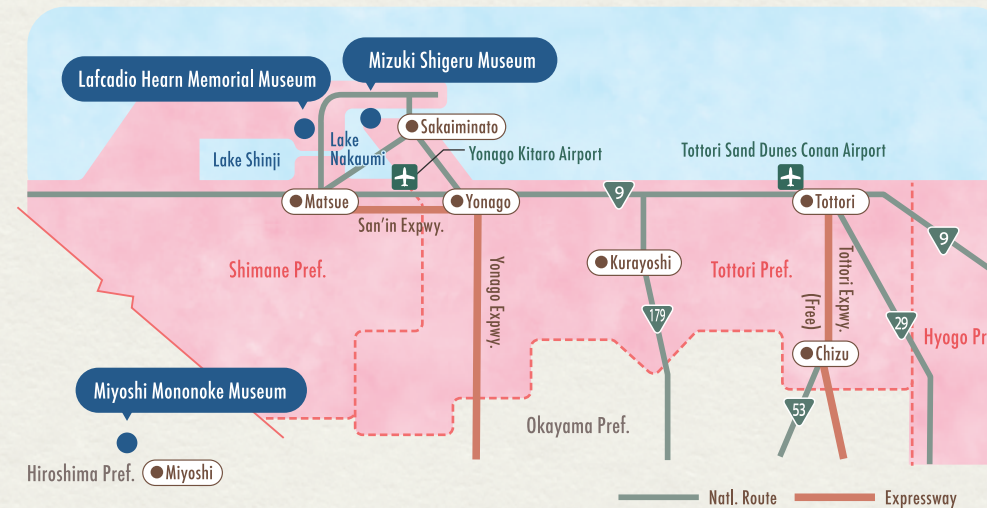
Photographs Courtesy of the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum

Lafcadio and Setsu's Journeys in San'in



Once upon a time,
there was a couple who visited Tottori on their honeymoon...

Discover the World of Yokai



Mizuki Shigeru Museum



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5 Honmachi, Sakaiminato,
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Website

Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum, Mizuki Shigeru Museum, and Miyoshi Mononoke Museum

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Tottori Tourist Information

Lafcadio Hearn, Setsu, and Tottori Prefecture

Bon Koizumi

Lafcadio Hearn, who would later take the name Yakumo Koizumi, arrived in Japan at the age of 39. His first assignment in Japan was in Matsue, Shimane Prefecture. To make his way there, he first took a train to Himeji, then traveled by rickshaw through Inubasari Pass to Shimoichi, located in the town of Daisen, Tottori Prefecture. He arrived at the end of August 1890. There, he witnessed the Isai Odori dance, and was so moved by the "untaught spontaneous harmony of that chant with Nature's most ancient song" that he came back to the area the following August.

For that next trip, though, he was accompanied by Setsu Koizumi — it was, in a sense, their honeymoon. In Daisen, they visited the sacred tree of Kinone Shrine, then headed to Kotoura. He excitedly wrote to his friend Basil Hall Chamberlain about how he had "discovered Yabase." There, he learned from children how to surf on planks, and the couple had a splendid stay at the Nakai Ryokan inn. They made a stop at the hot spring resort town of Togo Onsen, but found it too crowded and noisy, so they continued further east, eventually arriving in Hamamura Onsen. Here, he had a curious dream of "a woman of Izumo singing a Celtic lullaby. And as she sang, she loosed with one hand her long black hair, till it fell coiling upon the stones." Perhaps he felt a resonance between the cyclical view of life of the

Celtic people of his native Ireland, and the worldview of the people of the San'in Region. He was also stunned by the Hanamigata Cemetery in Akasaki, Kotoura. He was impressed by the seaside cemetery's size — "a cemetery so long that our [rickshaw] men, at full run, take a full quarter of an hour to pass the huge congregation of its perpendicular stones" — and this in turn led him to consider the relationship between the human soul and the sea.

Hearn encountered unforgettable foods during his travels, as well, such as the *nara-zuke* pickled vegetables he had in the post town of Yurashuku. He would consistently refer to *nara-zuke* as "yura," though, saying that he wanted to eat "yura" even until the end of his life.

In Matsue, the arrival of winter is heralded by the snow covering the peak of Mt. Daisen. As Hearn put it, once the mountain dons its winter attire, it is never removed until the summer returns. His 1902 work, *Kotto: Being Japanese Curios, with Sundry Cobwebs*, published in his final years, includes the story of "Yurei-daki, or the Cascade of Ghosts," set in the village of Kurosaka in what is now Hino. This ghost story serves as a reminder of the importance of awe, of both the natural and supernatural worlds.

For both Lafcadio and Setsu, the San'in Region was a lifelong treasure.

Bon Koizumi

Born in Tokyo in 1961, Bon Koizumi relocated to Matsue in 1987, after studying folklore at Seijo University Graduate School. His work uses *yokai* and ghost stories as a jumping-off point for practical activities to unearth cultural resources and apply them to tourism and cultural creation. He also dedicates himself to projects that bring the "open-minded" spirit of Lafcadio Hearn to places around the world connected with him. He was awarded the 2022 Academia Prize by the Academic Society of Japan. Director of the Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum, honorary director of the Yaizu Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum, and professor emeritus at the University of Shimane Junior College.

His main publications include *Folklorist Lafcadio Hearn* (Kobunsha), *Kwaidan Yondaiki: Yakumo no Itazura* (Kodansha), and *Koizumi Yakumo to Yokai* (Tamagawa University Press). Bon is the great-grandson of Lafcadio Hearn (Yakumo Koizumi).



The Castle Town of Matsue, Beloved by Lafcadio Hearn



Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum

A museum dedicated to the life and literature of Lafcadio Hearn. The displays include his handwritten manuscripts and treasured personal possessions, giving visitors an opportunity to learn more about his lived experience of Japanese culture.



Former Residence of Lafcadio Hearn

The samurai estate where Lafcadio Hearn once lived in Matsue. The garden and house remain the same as they were at the time, giving visitors a better sense of those days.

Matsue Castle

This National Treasure is known for its beautiful moat, and prized for the glimpse it gives us into Matsue's historic atmosphere. Lafcadio Hearn described it as a "veritable architectural dragon, made up of magnificent monstrosities," and wrote about legends related to its construction. (Lafcadio Hearn, "The Chief City of the Province of the Gods," from *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*)



1890 Places Hearn Visited while Working in Matsue

II Yaokuri Shrine

To get to Matsue for his work, Hearn took a train to Himeji, then traveled by land route via Tsuyama and Yubara. Along the way, he visited Yaokuri Shrine when he was in present-day Sekigane: "At one little village I see, just beyond, the *torii* leading to a great Shinto temple, a particularly odd small shrine, and feel impelled by curiosity to examine it. ... I see only a mask — the mask of a goblin, a Tengu," he wrote. (Lafcadio Hearn, "Bon-odori," from *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*)

447 Yamaguchi, Sekigane-cho, Kurayoshi, Tottori Prefecture
Kurayoshi Tourism MICE Association Phone : (0858) 24-5371

I Myogenji Temple

On his way to Matsue, where he had found work, Hearn stayed at the Makino Ryokan inn in the village of Shimoichi, in present-day Daisen. That night, he was enraptured at the sight of his first Bon Odori dance since arriving in Japan: the Isai Odori, at Myogenji Temple. (Lafcadio Hearn, "Bon-odori," from *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*)

56 Shimoichi, Daisen-cho, Saihaku-gun, Tottori Prefecture
Daisen Tourist Information Center Phone : (0859) 52-2502

1891 Lafcadio and Setsu's Honeymoon Travels

III Kinone Shrine

Lafcadio Hearn was fascinated by the Bon Odori dance he saw in Shimoichi on his way to Matsue, and when he returned on his honeymoon, the couple visited Kinone Shrine. Later, in his travelogue, he wrote, "Near a sleepy little village called Kanii-ichi I make a brief halt in order to visit a famous sacred tree. It is in a grove close to the public highway, but upon a low hill." So begins his extensive introduction of Kinone Shrine. (Lafcadio Hearn, "By the Japanese Sea," from *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*)

221-1 Matsugawara, Daisen-cho, Saihaku-gun, Tottori Prefecture
Daisen Tourist Information Center Phone : (0859) 52-2502

IV Hanamigata Cemetery



Lafcadio Hearn wrote about this "cemetery so long that our [rickshaw] men, at full run, take a full quarter of an hour to pass," which he and Setsu encountered during their honeymoon travels. (Lafcadio Hearn, "By the Japanese Sea," from *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*)

Akasaki, Kotoura-cho, Tohaku-gun, Tottori Prefecture
Kotoura Tourism Association Phone : (0858) 55-7811

V Yabase Beach



During his stay at the old Nakai Ryokan inn, Lafcadio Hearn often enjoyed swimming here. Today, there is a monument here commemorating his and Setsu's visit.

Yabase, Kotoura-cho, Tohaku-gun, Tottori Prefecture
Kotoura Tourism Association Phone : (0858) 55-7811

Lafcadio Hearn Biwa Performance and Storytelling

Venue: The Old Nakai Ryokan Inn

Price: ¥15,000 for parties of up to 15 people
(plus ¥1,000 per additional person for parties of 16 or more)

An immersive retelling of ghost stories collected by Lafcadio Hearn, illustrated with *kami-shibai* picture cards or a slideshow, accompanied by music played on the *biwa* lute.



Website

Reservations
Required

VI The Old Nakai Ryokan Inn



Lafcadio Hearn stayed at this inn during his honeymoon travels, near Yabase Beach. The inn closed in 1989, and underwent major renovations in 2009, but it still looks much as it did at the time. In a letter to his friend, Prof. Basil Hall Chamberlain, Lafcadio noted that "Yabase is an extremely quiet, pretty little town, with a much better inn than I have seen for quite a while."

1398 Yabase, Kotoura-cho, Tohaku-gun, Tottori Prefecture
Kotoura Tourism Association Phone : (0858) 55-7811

VIII The Inn at Lake Togo

Lafcadio and Setsu originally planned a week-long stay at this inn by Lake Togo, but found it so noisy that they left the day they arrived. (Setsuko Koizumi, from *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*)

Yurihama-cho, Tohaku-gun, Tottori Prefecture
Yurihama Tourism Association Phone : (0858) 35-4052

VII Otsuka

During their stay at the old Nakai Ryokan inn, Lafcadio and Setsu walked from Yabase to Otsuka, roughly 2 km away, to watch a Bon Odori dance.

Otsuka, Kotoura-cho, Tohaku-gun, Tottori Prefecture
Kotoura Town Tourism Association Phone : (0858) 55-7811

IX Hamamura Onsen

Lafcadio and Setsu stayed in Hamamura Onsen during their honeymoon. "I was hoping to see the Bon-odori at Hamamura, but I am disappointed. At all the villages the police have prohibited the dance. Fear of cholera has resulted in stringent sanitary regulations," he wrote. (Lafcadio Hearn, "By the Japanese Sea," from *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*)

682-41 Kachimi, Ketaka-cho, Tottori City, Tottori Prefecture
Ketaka Tourism Association Phone : (0857) 82-0829

Ghost Stories Set in Tottori, Collected by Lafcadio Hearn



怪 The Futon of Tottori

This ghost story is an old legend from Tottori, as told to Lafcadio Hearn by Setsu Koizumi. When a *futon* at a small inn begins to speak, the innkeeper investigates what could be behind this phenomenon, bringing the *futon*'s sad history to light... (Lafcadio Hearn, "By the Japanese Sea," from *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*)

Ketaka Tourism Association Phone : (0857) 82-0829

怪 Yurei-daki, the Cascade of Ghosts

This ghost story is an old legend about Ryuo Falls (located in Takiyama Park, in present-day Nakasuge, Hino), as told to Lafcadio Hearn by Setsu Koizumi. A brave woman brings her baby with her when she goes to Ryuo Falls in the middle of the night to demonstrate her bravery, taking a shrine's money box back with her as proof of her trip. When she gets back, though, she finds her baby's head has been torn off. (Lafcadio Hearn, "The Legend of Yurei-Daki," from *Kotto*)

Hino Town Hall Industrial Promotion Division Phone : (0859) 72-2101



Supervision: Bon Koizumi