

Lafcadio Hearn and Setsu

Patrick Lafcadio Hearn, a.k.a. Yakumo Koizumi

Lafcadio Hearn was born in 1850 on the Greek island of Lefkada. He spent his early years in Ireland, and later attended schools in England and France. At sixteen, he lost vision in his left eye, and at nineteen, he emigrated to the United States on his own. He found work as a newspaper reporter, and through his encounters with various cultures, he decided to go to Japan after reading an English translation of the *Kojiki*, a collection of ancient myths, legends, and oral tradition. In 1890 he arrived in Japan, where he worked as a teacher in Matsue, Shimane Prefecture and in Kumamoto City, Kumamoto Prefecture. Later, he taught English literature at Tokyo Imperial University. In 1896, he officially married Setsu Koizumi, and became a naturalized Japanese citizen, taking the name Yakumo Koizumi. He died in 1904 at the age of 54, leaving behind a body of work spanning roughly 30 books, primarily in the genres of translations, travelogues, and recorded folklore.

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.

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.

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)

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

Explore the Life and Works of Mizuki Shigeru, Manga Artist and Yokai Researcher

The Mizuki Shigeru Museum offers visitors a fun opportunity to discover the world of Mizuki's works. Explore exhibits of his famous manga series *GeGeGe no Kitaro*, *yokai* paintings, and more, including precious original comic artwork on display nearly year-round.

5 Honmachi, Sakaiminato, Tottori Prefecture 684-0025
Phone: (0859) 42-2171
<https://mizuki.sakaiminato.net/>

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

Exhibitions on Yokai and Japanese Ghost Stories

Special Promotion for Museums of the Arcane in Three Prefectures

Supernatural Museum Tour Pass

Tickets are available at the ticket counters of all three museums.
Price: ¥1,500 per adult (Normally ¥2,600 if purchased individually)

Visit All Three and Save!

Bon Koizumi

Bon Koizumi, 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 Shin'ichi, 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 Kotorua. 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 Naka 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 loosened 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 snow covering the peak of Mt. Daisen. As he arrived, it once the mountain dons its winter attire, it is never removed until the summer returns. His 1902 work, *Kotto: Being Japanese Curios, with Unusual Curiosities*, published in his final year, includes the story of "Yureidai, or the Castle of Ghosts," set in the village of Kurasaka in what is now Hiroshima. This ghost story serves as a reminder of the importance of awe, of both theatural 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 Ei Yu Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum, and professor emeritus at the University of Shimane Junior College. His main publications include *Folklorist Lafcadio Hearn (Kōhōsha), Kwaidan: Yakumo no Itazura (Kodansha)*, and *Koizumi Yakumo to Yokai (Iwanaga 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

On his way to the Shimane Prefectural Common Middle School and Normal School in 1890, Hearn visited Tottori Prefecture, and wrote about how he was particularly impressed by the Bon Odori dance he saw in the village of Shimoichi, in present-day Daisen.

The following year, he and his wife Setsu spent many days along the Sea of Japan coast, particularly in Tottori Prefecture, on their honeymoon in August 1891. There are a number of monuments throughout Tottori today commemorating their travels there at the time.

Follow in the Footsteps of Lafcadio and Setsu's Journey in Tottori

1891 Lafcadio and Setsu's Honeymoon Travels

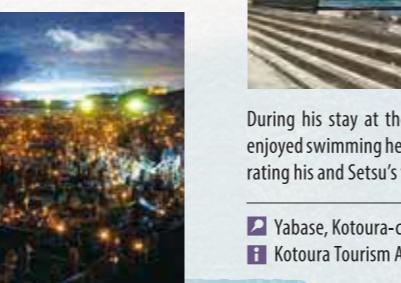
III Kinone Shrine

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



IV Hanamigata Cemetery



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)

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

VIII The Inn at Lake Togo

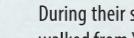
Reservations Required

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

Website

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.

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 Bon Odori dance.

Otsuka, Kotoura-cho, Tohaku-gun, Tottori Prefecture
Kotoura Town Tourism Association Phone : (0858) 55-3711

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 was disappointed. All the villages the public highway passed through had the dance. Fear of cholera had resulted in stringent sanitary regulations," he wrote. (Lafcadio Hearn, "By the Japanese Sea," from *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*)

8-2-41 Kachimine-cho, Tottori City, Tottori Prefecture
Kotoura Tourism Association Phone : (0858) 2-029

Superiorish: Bon-odori

Ghost Stories Set in Tottori, Collected by Lafcadio Hearn

I The Futo of Tottori

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



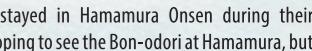
II Yurei-daki, the Cascade of Ghosts

This ghost story is an old legend about Ryuofalls (located in Takiyama Park, in present-day Nakasuge, Hino), as told to Lafcadio Hearn by Setsuko Koizumi. A brave woman brings her baby with her when she goes to Ryuofalls in the middle of the night to demonstrate her bravery, taking a shrine's money box 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 *Tottori*)



Hino Town Hall Industrial Promotion Division Phone : (0858) 7-2101

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