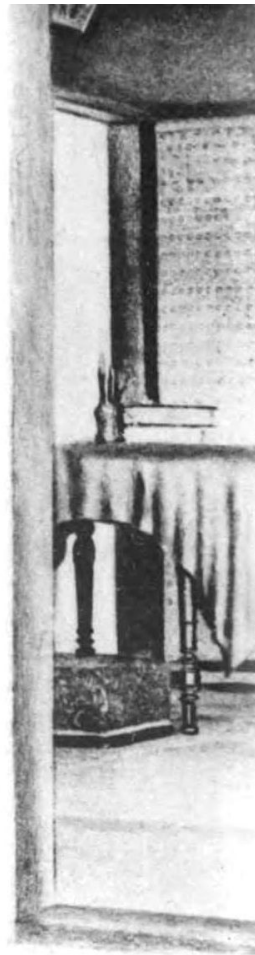




1925-26



NATURE AND MAN: An Annotated Edition

By
Tokutomi Roka

Translated by
Arthur Lloyd
M. von Fallot
H. Ono

Edited by Earl Trotter

Peach Blossom Press



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Frontispiece: Photograph of Tokutomi Roka c. 1900.
Source unknown.

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1. Tokutomi Kenjirō aka Tokutomi Roka (1868 -1927).
2. Japanese Belles Lettres.



Editor's Foreword

Tokutomi Roka

Tokutomi Kenjiro (徳富 健次郎) – he later assumed the pen name Roka (蘆花) – was born on December 8, 1868 in Minamata (Kyushu) to a family of the samurai class. After the Meiji Restoration the family fell on hard times. Kenjiro joined his elder brother, Ichiro, at Doshisha College, a Christian school, in Kyoto in 1878. Ichiro (pen name Soho) was later a prominent journalist and influential intellectual. He started out as fairly radical but after the Sino-Japanese war, became a conservative nationalist, even being suspected as a war criminal after World War II. Kenjiro was always in his shadow and conflict between the two was prominent up until Kenjiro's death. Kenjiro fell in love with a student at a girl's high school in Doshisha. This relationship was frowned upon and eventually he had to give her up (and she died young). This episode had an impact that lasted the rest of his life.

Eventually he went to work at his brother's newspaper in Tokyo. As well as writing articles, he had novels serialized in the paper. He converted to Christianity in 1885. In 1894 he married and had a stormy relationship with his wife, but they did remain a couple until the end. They moved to Zushi in present day Kanagawa Prefecture, which figures prominently in the present book, in 1897. He published a life of Tolstoy in 1897 and later (1906) made a memorable visit to Tolstoy's estate at Yasnaya Polana. Other influences were Wordsworth, Emerson and Carlyle. His most famous novel, *Hitotogisu (The Cuckoo)*, published in 1899, sold very well (a half million copies in 25 years) and he was able to abandon journalism and assume a full-time career as a novelist. He was one of the most popular writers of his time. *Omoide no Ki (Footprints in the Snow)*, 1901, also sold well.

On his return from the Tolstoy visit and under Tolstoy's influence, he went to live in the countryside at Kasuya outside Tokyo, where he spent the rest of his life. His house, now a part of urban Tokyo, is a museum and park dedicated to his memory. To simplify matters, he may be considered to have been a fairly

radical Tolstoyan in his latter years. He died on September 18, 1927.

Shizen to jinsei (Nature and Man, 1900) was also immensely popular. It was reprinted 400 times and sold about the same as *Hototogisu*. As Strong, in Tokutomi (1970) says, “(it) may be said to have shaped the sensitivity to nature of a whole generation of Japanese. It is a miscellany. It begins with a long story, “Glowing Embers”, which is a melodramatic tale of the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877, originally published in 1899. This story may reflect underlying ill feelings towards his brother. See Tokutomi (2011) for a modern translation. The next three parts are for the most part, in a prose-poem format. “Five Minutes with Nature” is a series of short philosophical reflections in the midst of nature. They are mostly set in Zushi, where he lived, and what is now Gunma Prefecture. “Sketch Book” is somewhat similar but has more “human” content and ends with “The Moon after Rain,” a long moralistic tale. “Miscellany Written at Shonan” is the most popular section among Japanese readers. It depicts in a series of vignettes, the passing of the year starting at New Year’s Day. The natural descriptions have aspects of a Japanese sensibility mixed with Western Romanticism and the structure follows the tradition Japanese grouping of waka and haiku into the various seasons. It is easy to see why this book was so popular and it is refreshing dipping into the various sketches.

There are two items that were missing in the translation. First, there is an introductory quote from Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey”. We have included it just prior to the “Contents” section. And there was a concluding piece, which is not included, on the French painter Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796 – 1875) who influenced landscape painting and Impressionism in nineteenth-century France. It would be mere speculation to determine why it was omitted. The essay was originally published in a journal as “Poet of Silence: The Painter Corot” in 1897. It was retitled for this collection.

In the absence of this essay we will say a few words on Roka and Corot. Roka first came across an article on Corot in Scribner’s Magazine and his essay is to some degree based on that. As he states, he knew Impressionism but was unaware of Corot. He took Corot’s use of light and colour to inform the way he viewed nature.

Corot, along with Wordsworth, Emerson and others, was part of the influence of Western romanticism on Roka.

Getting back to omissions, there was a pagination error and one page was included twice in the original edition resulting in missing material. We have rectified this by translating the last sentence of “The First Day of Autumn” and the following short section, “*Mukai-bi*.”

There were a number of spelling and typographical errors. We have rectified these issues. Many hyphenated words have been modernized for smoother reading. For example “to-day” is rendered “today.” Also we have updated the odd antiquated romanization of Japanese place-names and added footnotes (all the footnotes are editorial) for the translation of Japanese words in the text. Also in footnotes are annotations of the text that are allusions or require explication. The title is perhaps better rendered *Nature and Life*, but we have retained the original to avoid confusion. In spite of many changes, this is Arthur Lloyd’s translation which reads very well indeed.

Arthur Lloyd

The prime translator of this volume, Arthur Lloyd, was born on April 10, 1852 in Shimla, India, his father being an army major. He was educated in England then took orders in the Anglican church. He studied in Germany and then married and had a family. He went to Japan in 1884 as a missionary. In addition to his church work, he was an academic and lectured at various universities. Due to his wife’s health he went to Canada in 1890 to teach classics at the University of Toronto’s Trinity College and later became headmaster of Trinity College School in Port Hope. His wife died and he returned to Japan in 1893 for good. From 1903 – 1905, he was president of the Asiatic Society of Japan. He remarried, to Mary von Fallot, who helped translate many of the literary works (but is curiously omitted in U. S. editions). She left Japan in 1910 due to poor health and died shortly thereafter.

Lloyd published several works on Buddhism in Japan and wrote *Every-day Japan* (1908), a description of the country and its people. He saw Jodo Shinshu as mirroring Christianity. He translated a book of Japanese poetry by Tetsujiro Inoue based on a

German translation from the *kanbun* (form of Chinese used by Japanese literati) and also a couple of novels. The book at hand was published posthumously, I presume the named Japanese translator, Hidetaro Ono, readied it for publication. Another posthumous publication included four Doppo Kunikida stories. He died October 27, 1911. See Powles (1968) for the fullest coverage on Lloyd, and Ion (2010) for a recent biography in English.

Further Reading

There is not much written about Tokutomi in English other than allusions to the man and his work in scholarly studies of other authors or more general topics. However, Strong in Tokutomi (1970) has a very full biography in the introduction and is highly recommended. We have included the original edition of the work at hand as well as entries on the translator Arthur Lloyd in the bibliography. There are no studies specific to this text.

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_____ “For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing often times
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue.”

– Wordsworth

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[END]

**Five Minutes
with
Nature**

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分
時

“And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brook
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.”

– Shakespeare.

Dawn on Mt Fuji

此頃の富士の曙

(January, '98)

Let him, who has a mind to enjoy, watch the dawn on Mount Fuji to-day. At six in the morning you must stand on the beach at Zushi³⁸ and look. Before you, you will see the Sagami Sea³⁹ with blue vapours whirling in the air, and along the horizon is a dim blue colour. Unless you can trace Fuji's outline in the same dim blue to the north, perhaps you may not be able to find the mountains of Ashigara⁴⁰, Hakone and Izu all wrapped in the same colour.

The sea and mountains are still sleeping.

Suddenly a line of pink trails sidelong above the summit of Fuji. Endure the cold air yet a little while, and watch again. See how the rosy light is nearing the summit second by second – first it is ten feet above, then five and three and one, till the top is reached. Fuji is about to wake from her sleep – now she is awake.

Look how the eastern edge of her summit has been painted pink. Now watch closely: while you gaze, the crimson hanging haze moves down, down, sweeping away Fuji's morning darkness, first from her shoulder, then from her breast, till a coral-pink mountain stands out against the sky. Her snowy skin is tinged with peach-colour, she is beautiful in her transparency.

Fuji is now awake and clothed in rosy light. Look a little longer; the crimson haze is hanging over Oyama's⁴¹ head in the north and then moving to the Ashigara and Hakone hills. See how fast dawn's footsteps hurry after darkness! The crimson melts from the sky, followed by the deep blue, and Izu mountains have been dyed with peach-colour. When the rosy feet of dawn have passed over Amagi⁴², then turn your eyes towards the foot of Fuji, and you will

38 Now a city in Kanagawa Prefecture.

39 Also known as Sagami Bay, it spreads south from Kanagawa Prefecture.

40 Also known as Mount Kintoki, near Hakone.

41 A mountain in Kanagawa Prefecture.

42 A mountain in the Izu Peninsula, Shizuoka Prefecture.

suddenly see two or three bright golden sails against the purple rock of Enoshima⁴³

The sea is already awake. If you have patience to stand a little longer, you will see the awakening of Koshigoe Point over against Enoshima and then that of Kotsubo Point⁴⁴. Then when your shadow falls long before you, you will see the vapours of the Sagami Sea dispersing, and the bright blue sea, like glass, lying wide and calm at your feet.

Look up again at the mountains; their crimson has faded, and the sky has changed from yellow to blue. And Fuji, clothed in white snow, rises high in the glorious sky.

Let him, who may appreciate it, watch the awakening of Fuji.

A Large River 大河

Standing on the bank of a river Confucius said,

“That which passes away is like this river
Day and night without ceasing⁴⁵.”

The sentiment of a man for a river is well expressed by these two lines, a thousand words of a poet can hardly surpass the oral language of the sage.

The sea is indeed immense – when calm, it is like the bosom of a loving mother; and once angry, it makes us think of the wrath of God. But the spirit and meaning of a great river “flowing day and night” is something quite different from that of the sea. Suppose you stand by a large river and gaze upon the calm silent stream flowing, running and forever running.

“That which passes away is like this.”

Truly we come to think of Time forever passing, flowing over eternal space from millions of past years to millions of future years. Ah, a white sail has appeared, passing just before me; passing but soon to disappear. Did the so-called Great Empire of Rome pass away like this? Ah, a bamboo leaf comes here floating,

43 A small offshore island in Sagami Bay.

44 Koshigoe and Kutsubo are villages on Sagami Bay near Zushi.

45 *Analects* 9.17.

Sketch Book¹⁰⁸

寫
生
帖

¹⁰⁸ In Lloyd's edition, there is, following this page, the page preceding it in the original Japanese edition. Clearly an error of some kind and omitted here.

Sad Music

哀音

Have you ever listened to the notes of a *samisen*¹⁰⁹ played by a woman wandering from house to house on a quiet night? I am not easily moved, yet I can hardly hear this melancholy music without shedding tears. I know not the reason why, but music always moves me to sadness. A man of old says that all good music makes the listener sad, and indeed it is so. The wailing sound of a violin, the reedy note of a flute, the serene music of a *Koto*¹¹⁰, lute or piano, all arouse sorrowful thoughts in our hearts, if we give heed to what we hear.

But he who weeps, lessens his suffering, and sad music brings us consolation through tears. I have travelled far and wide, and heard many kinds of music. One night at Akamagaseki¹¹¹ my heart was almost rent by hearing a pathetic song that harmonized with the sound of the waves. Once while making a journey in Hokuetsu¹¹², I wept on hearing the strain of *Oiwake*¹¹³. One quiet moonlight night on the sea of Chugoku¹¹⁴ I heard some fishermen singing, and again one morning, when the snow, lay deep, I heard the song of a carter on a road in Southern-Satsuma¹¹⁵. My heart was stirred by all of these, but nothing can compare in melancholy with the sound of a *samisen* played in the street.

On nights when the frost is white on the ground, and distant sounds are plainly heard, on nights when the moonlight shines clear as water and on nights when the hurry and bustle of the busy

109 A three-stringed traditional Japanese musical instrument played with a plectrum.

110 A Japanese plucked zither instrument.

111 Formally in Nagato Province. Now called Shimonoseki, in Yamaguchi Prefecture.

112 Likely a town in what is now Kanagawa Prefecture.

113 Originally a horseman's song (*mago-uta*) from Oiwake village in Nagano Prefecture but spread throughout Japan during the Edo period and developed into a folk song in Esashi, Hokkaidō.

114 The Seto Inland Sea or simply Inland Sea, likely the part off Hiroshima.

115 Satsuma Province, now in Kyushu Prefecture.

street has died away, suddenly the note of a samisen breaks the stillness. First high then low, the sound-waves travel on, and die away. I open the window, but I see nothing but the moonlight. Listen a moment, my friends, with a quiet mind. The one who thrums the notes, does so in ignorance: but to me who listen it seems as if the strings of the instrument were the fibres of a million souls twisted into cords. The high and low notes sounds like a man sobbing. The plaintive air seems to have gathered all of human suffering and agony to itself, to send it forth again in appeal to Heaven.

One air beats out in tune the misery of life. I must weep as I hear it, I know not why. Is it sorrow for myself or for others who are suffering? I can not tell. Only at this moment all the agony and grief of sorrowing humanity seem mine.

It is not always given to great poets to touch our hearts with the burden of human sadness; rather does some nameless woman make appeal to Heaven for sympathy. The sorrow which can find words to express itself is not the hardest to bear. The music of this unknown woman moves me more deeply, for in it there is suffering of blood and tears.

Do not laugh at me; when I hear the strolling *samisen* player, I think of the repentant sinner weeping at his mother's feet, or of the wandering lover seeking his lost love. Whenever I read the line "Still sad music of humanity¹¹⁶," my mind recalls the plaintive melody of the *samisen*.

Poor Child

可憐兒

(I)

The sun was sinking behind the Izu mountains, the golden waves advanced and receded along the Hayama beach¹¹⁷. I was returning from a walk to the Choya Promontory¹¹⁸.

116 Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey." In English in the original.

117 In Isshiki, a region in Hayama city, in the middle of the Miura peninsula.

118 A land feature on the peninsula.

**Miscellany
at
Shonan¹⁷⁰**

湘
南
雜
筆

170 A region along the coast of Sagami Bay in Kanagawa Prefecture. This is the area Roka lived in, at Zushi.

わ	同	青	戲	家
が	じ	い	に	兄
ま	雲	雲	よ	官
ゝ	で	白	み	に
空	ま	い	て	就
な	ま	雲	送	か
飛	ゝ		り	れ
ぶ	に		け	し
			る	頃

蘆花

(An ode sent to my elder brother when he entered the Government service.

Roka)

Blue cloud;
 White cloud;
 Both may the same cloud
 Be; but let me ever be the
 White cloud, floating freely
 And willfully in the sky.

The New Year's Day 元旦

Getting up early, I washed my face with the first water which had been drawn on this morning, and celebrated the beginning of a new year by eating some *zoni*¹⁷¹. After this I ascended Mt. Sakura¹⁷² for a view of Fuji, but it had not yet come out from the clouds.

Disappointed, I went down the hill and strolled about the village of Zushi, and there in a garden I saw a flowering camellia with thirty or forty blossoms on it; near it stood a gnarled old plum-tree dotted with little white things that looked like butterflies' wings. Going nearer I found they were the first plum-blossoms that had bloomed on the old tree. Further on I came upon a violet and a dandelion that had peeped out in the warm sunshine.

The boats in the river were gaily decorated with the national flag and the conventional pine branch, and the children of the village were out in their best, the girls playing battledore and shuttle cock and the boys flying kites; there was a holiday air about the scene, though the gaiety had not yet risen to its height

(Jan. 1st).

Winter's Cold 冬威

The snow had not yet melted, and the ground was hard with frost; every bit of water had turned to ice; nature was frozen into silence, and the warmth of life in everything was child to death.

Passing through a pine grove on the sands. I reached an open field, where the north wind whipped my face and nearly froze the hand in which I carried a walking-stick. The heavens were overcast with snow clouds, and as far as the eye could reach all things on earth – on hill and in field – were completely withered. As I

171 A Japanese soup containing *mochi* rice cakes and associated with the Japanese New Year.

172 Now a park in Zushi, it's in fact a hill.

as a fertilizer for the barley, and the usual price of a ship load was from thirty to forty *sen*¹⁷⁵. (Jan. 16th)

A Mountain Fire in Izu

伊豆の山火

One evening I noticed dots of fire floating on the dark sky above the horizon; they were too glowing for stars and too high for the lights of fishing boats, what could they be? They were a mountain fire in Izu.

In the daytime they had appeared like the smoke of incense sticks, faintly curling up here and there on the opposite shore, but at night they glowed into wonderful brilliance. Mountain fire! Were you kindled by men inhabiting the land over the sea? Are you not beacon-fires sending a message across the water to the men who live on the opposite shore? (Jan. 20th).

A Clear Day

霽日

The air was as serene as could be. The river was full of vapour, the road was frozen as hard as iron, and the fields were white with frost on this clear, crystal day. The water in my washbasin was frozen, and I broke the ice and plunged my hands in the cold water; I looked out toward the hill that rose behind the house, and heard, some men talking as they warmed themselves at a fire just below a shrine dedicated to the cough-curing god. Blue smoke crept up the side of the hill and vanished in the eastern sky, as the sun rose.

By and by the men went higher up the hill and set about cutting down the frost-covered miscanthus, which fell in rustling heaps till the hill was evenly shorn of its white covering from the crown downwards, and before long the whole side was bare. The cut miscanthus, tied up in bundles, were rolled down one after another, and formed heaps at the foot of the hill.

175 1/100 of a yen.

The morning sunshine flooded the whole yard, where a neighbour's wife was washing busily with her sleeves girded up with a cord, while our landlady, enjoying the warm sunshine, was cutting the roots off radishes preparatory to pickling them. Three or four children were playing merrily round the two busy housewives, and people all accosted each other with, "What a warm day it is!"

In the afternoon when the ebb tide had exposed the bar at the river-mouth, there were children gathering *aonori*¹⁷⁶ (*Ulva intestinalis*) on it, and digging for oysters. The rustling noise of miscanthus being cut floated down the stream.

In the cold shadow of the mountains the ice on the rice-fields still gleamed chilly and white; but in the warm sunshine, sharp sounds of cracking showed that it was gradually thawing. I visited the shrine below which the fire had been lit that morning; a quince tree was covered with lonely blossoms, but the flowers of a loquat near it were all withered. Down the mountainside came the villagers, bamboo rake in hand, bearing heavy loads of pine and bamboo leaves. The sound of chopping wood came from my neighbour's house. (Jan. 25th)

Hatsu Uma

初午

(The first horse day in the 2nd month, old reckoning, when prayers are offered to the God Inari for good crop or protection against conflagrations)

It was *hatsu-uma*, drums were beating loudly, the plum-blossoms were nearly at their best, but the ears of barley were as yet far from ripe. In the villages banners were set up with the inscription, "Respectfully dedicated to the august God of Inari." Boys and girls were out in their holiday clothes, and the men were all under the influence of their friends' sake. (Feb. 1st.)

176 A green algae. Common names are sea lettuce or grass kelp.

The Winter Solstice

冬至

Today is the winter solstice.

I wandered about in the fields, treading on frost-bitten grass; as far as I could see, all was chill and desolate. The rustle of dried reeds in the wind, the song of a wagtail in a leafless willow, and the whisper of the scanty trickle of water in a rivulet, all announced that the close of the year was near at hand.

(Dec. 22nd.)

The New Year's Eve

歳除

Although it did not rain, the weather had not cleared up. What a gloomy New Year's eve it was! To welcome the new year, however, the door of my humble lodging was decorated with branches of pine trees from a neighbouring hill, as were also the boats moored on the river flowing before my house, with pine trees and *shimenawa*²³⁷. The whole world was at peace; my home too, was at peace. I had neither guests nor debtors to disturb the tranquillity of my home nor any superfluous money to spoil my simple life with. It was, indeed in the most quiet and indifferent spirit that I sped the departing year. (Dec. 31)

²³⁷ Lengths of rice-straw rope used for ritual purification in the Shinto. At New Year's they are hung outside the door to keep out evil spirits.