

## THE BUDDHA OF KAMAKURA.

BY THE EDITOR.

UNDER the warlike Minamoto shogunate during the feudal days, Kamakura was the capital of Japan, but when the government passed into other hands it ceased to be a political center, yet it retained its significance as the home of historical recollections, antiqui-



ENTRANCE TO HACHIMAN TEMPLE AT KAMAKURA.

ties, venerable temples and quaint traditions which are so attractive to travelers. In Kamakura too stands the famous colossal statue of Buddha, grand in its noble simplicity, and beautiful from whatever side we may see it. Here are Shinto temples of national reputation



THE GREAT BUDDHA STATUE OF KAMAKURA.  
As seen from a hill.

among which is especially worthy of notice the temple of the war god Hachiman, the favorite deity of the Minamoto government.

Kamakura is not so much a city as it is a conglomeration of villages nestling in peaceful beauty among the wooded hills, and this natural attraction had made it one of the famous summer resorts of Japan.

The great statue of Kamakura represents Amitabha, the Buddha of Infinite Light. It was erected in 1252 of the Christian era in imitation of an older statue of the ancient Japanese capital Nara. Its height is forty-nine feet, and we can form an idea of its immense proportions when we consider that its mouth is three feet long.



THE TEMPLE OF NARA.

When a friend of ours, residing in Japan, sent us at our request a photograph of the Buddha statue at Kamakura we were surprised to note that the plate from which the photograph was printed must have been defective, for the picture shows an exhalation of light emanating from the head of the statue and rising above it into the air like a luminous vapor. It strongly resembles some photographs taken by a lover of occult phenomena in which the psychical emotions of the photographed persons can be seen in the shape of such luminous emanations curling and whirling when indicative of excitement, and peaceful and restful when denoting a dignified and calm attitude of mind. Our occult friends would insist that in this case the super-





THE NARA DAIBUTZ.



THE ORIGINAL NARA STATUE.

(Reproduced from Murakami's *History of Japanese Buddhism*.)

sensitive plate has been impressed with the spiritual atmosphere that surrounds the statue. We reproduce the picture without removing



THE BUDDHA OF KAMAKURA.

Front view.

the spot since tampering with the original would only spoil its beauty.

Because of its extreme antiquity the Nara Daibutz\* which the Kamakura Buddha is intended to imitate, must be sheltered against the inclemency of the weather. It has suffered greatly from the effects of time, and parts even of the face have been restored when decay made it necessary, so that the present statue no longer represents accurately the ancient famous original. Photographs of this statue are very rare, and usually very unsatisfactory, because the light is poor on account of the shelter which is built closely around it. Not without difficulty we have finally procured a photograph which was taken by Mr. William Nash of Ottawa, Illinois.

An ancient picture of the Nara statue is preserved in Murakami's "History of Japanese Buddhism" (Nippon Bukkyo Shi), a description of the ancient Japanese fanes, and being inaccessible in this country we here reproduce the illustration.

The Nara Daibutz is less accessible to visitors than the Kamakura Buddha, and on account of its unfavorable surroundings can not be fully appreciated. For this reason the Kamakura statue is better known both at home and abroad.

Visitors are agreed that the famous Kamakura Daibutz exercises a peculiar influence upon the spectator. It is an extraordinary and masterful piece of skill and the product of a deeply religious mind. It has a calming effect upon the soul and appears like a glimpse into the peaceful realm of Nirvana, soothing the sorrows of life, assuaging pain, and lifting us above the many tribulations and distractions of our daily trials.

\* Daibutz is the Japanese name for Buddha.