EMMEIJI

In the neighbourhood of the station is a bridge known as Emmeiji-bashi. Besides this bridge stands an unpretentious temple of modest proportions—Emmeiji, but the possessor of a remarkable statue to which a remarkable legend is attached.

An ancient history of Kamakura records that in the remote ages a certain nobleman upon one occasion was playing sugoroku with a lady opponent. (Sugoroku is a game of chance, played on a board with dice). After several contests, and becoming wearied of the ordinary stakes, he insisted that the next game should be played with the condition that the loser should discard all clothing, and stand disrobed upon the board. The lady lost! In confusion and consternation at such a prospect she closed her eyes and fervently prayed to the compassionate Jizo for rescue. Immediately a vision of the divinity appeared upon the board; his garments falling away, the form of a woman was disclosed.

The present statue of the Jizo was carved in illustration and commemoration of this incident, being known and celebrated as the Hadaka (or Naked) Jizo—unique specimen of its kind in Japan. The Hadaka Jizo is enshrined within a curtained niche on the left of the altar, it is of life size and realistically tinted in natural colours. Arrayed in the silken robes of a priest and holding the customary emblems, the statue gives no sug-
gestion of its unusual form—but when the vestments are
removed the body is revealed to be of feminine shape.
In conformity with the legend the feet of the divinity are
resting upon a sugoroku board: the temple guardian
asserts that formerly the latter was constructed of beautiful
and valuable wood—but owing to the cupidity of a priest
this trophy has disappeared, at the present time the Jizo
being reduced to an ordinary board for his pedestal.

The original temple of Emmeiji was founded in 1332,
and was of imposing proportions. However at the begin-
ing of the Meiji Era the building had become so decayed
that its destruction was considered advisable. At the
same time the Kyō-do, or Hall of the Scriptures, be-
longing to Kōmyōji was also done away with; so the
timbers of the latter were procured wherewith to recon-
struct Emmeiji, the present small structure being the
result. Upon the altar are several statues of great anti-
quity, the centre-piece being a venerable image of Amida.
At one time a son of Okajima Yasoemon (one of the
Forty-seven Rōnins) was a priest of Emmeiji, and formerly
the temple was in possession of a valuable painting of
the immortal Forty-seven, but alas, like the sugoroku
board this has also become 'the evidence of things un-
seen'.