The Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi

Dening Walter
THE LIFE OF YOTOMI HIDEYOSHI.
PART I.

BY WALTER BENING.
THE LIFE
OF
TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI.

BY
Walter Dening.

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PREFACE.

The preparation of the Life of the Taiko has proved to be a work of greater difficulty than I anticipated when, at the solicitation of the publishers, I agreed to undertake it. The difficulty experienced is one which to a greater or less extent attends all attempts at reducing to an historical and rational order a mass of miscellaneous information furnished by uncritical writers. It is unavoidable that a halo of romance and legend should enshroud the lives of great men like Hideyoshi. It has been my aim to separate fact from fable in the account I have given of him; but I am not sure that I have in every case succeeded.

In the matter of style I have endeavoured to reproduce Hideyoshi's real thoughts and sayings in language resembling that used by him as far as the idioms of the English tongue allow, being of opinion that the embellishing of these to suit the taste of foreign readers would rob
the biography of all real value. I am aware that it is the custom of some writer to make Japanese heroes give utterance to sentiments and opinions that are purely western, to represent them as acting as a foreigner would most probably have acted under any given set of circumstances. But this always seems to me to be no more than a western tale with Japanese names and to give the reader no information as to what the lives and thoughts of ancient Japanese actually were.

The work has involved a great deal more research than may be apparent to a casual reader. Doubts as to the authenticity of certain stories told of the *Taiko* have only been solved by a careful comparison of their various versions with a variety of contemporaneous circumstances.

In a work of such extent I shall not be surprised to find that there are some inaccuracies and oversights, and shall feel obliged to any one who will point these out.

Hongô, Tôkyô. W. D.
June 1888.
"The longer I live the more I am certain that the great difference between men, between the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant, is energy—invincible determination—a purpose once fixed, and then death or victory! That quality will do anything that can be done in this world, and no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities, will make a two-legged creature a man without it."

Sir Thomas Tawle Buxton.