

**A  
JAPANESE BOY**

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A Japanese Boy by Shiukichi Shigemi

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**SHIUKICHI SHIGEMI**

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JAPANESE BOY**



# A JAPANESE BOY

BY HIMSELF



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1890

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## PREFATORY LETTER.

PROF. HENRY W. FARNAM:

*Dear Sir:*—My motives in writing this jejune little volume are, as you are aware, two:

1st. There seems to be no story told in this country of the Japanese boy's life by a Japanese boy himself. The following rambling sketches are incoherent and extremely meagre, I own; but you must remember that they are a boy's talks. Give him encouragement, and he will tell you more.

2d. The most important of my reasons is my desire to obtain the means to prosecute the studies I have taken up in America. Circumstances have obliged me to make my own way in this hard world. If I knew of a better step I should not have resorted to an indiscreet juvenile publication—a publication, moreover, of my own idle experiences, and in a language the alphabet of which I learned but a few years ago.

To you my sincere acknowledgments are due for encouraging me to write these pages. This kindness is but one of many, of which the public has no knowledge.

I am, sir,

Yours very truly,

SHUKICHU SHIGEMI.

NEW HAVEN, CT., September, 1886.

# A JAPANESE BOY.

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## CHAPTER I.

I WAS born in a small seaport town called Imabari, which is situated on the western coast of the island of Shikoku, the eastern of the two islands lying south of Hondo. The Imabari harbor is a miserable ditch; at low tide the mouth shows its shallow bottom, and one can wade across. People go there for clam-digging. Two or three little streams empty their waters into the harbor. A few junks and a number of boats are always seen standing in this pool of salt-water. In the houses surrounding it, mostly very old and ramshackle, are sold eatables and provisions, fishes are bought from the boats, or shelter is given to sailors.

When a junk comes in laden with rice, commission merchants get on board and strike for bargains. The capacity of the vessel is measured by the amount of rice it can carry. The grain merchant carries about him a good-sized bamboo a few inches long, one end of which is sharpened and the other closed, being cut just at a joint. He thrusts