

The Making of *Kwaidan*:
Lafcadio Hearn as a Reluctant Imperialist

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss Lafcadio Hearn as a reluctant imperialist through examining his making of *Kwaidan*. It is regarded as the author's best work, for which he is now remembered. It has been reprinted and translated especially in Japan, where he is well known by his another name Yakumo Koizumi.

It was in Japan that Hearn wrote *Kwaidan* by collecting and retelling old Japanese ghost stories with the help of his Japanese wife. When he arrived in Japan, he became attracted to its tradition, its way of life and its oldness. At the same time, that led to his denouncement of the western civilization; admiring Japan, he tried to repudiate what is western in him. When we look at his life at length, however, it is clear that, while trying to flee from the Western, he was closely connected to its prosperity and progress, which was achieved with the expansion of imperialism.

Lafcadio Hearn was born in 1850 on Lefkada of the Ionian Islands in Greece. Although Greece had been established as an independent kingdom by the London Conference of 1832, the Ionian Islands were left under British protection by the treaty of November 5, 1815; the British government found the Islands useful as naval bases. It was not until 1863 that the British evacuation of the islands was completed. Lafcadio's father, Charles Bush Hearn, was Anglo-Irish. He was stationed in Lefkada as a military doctor. There he married Rosa, a Greek woman of humble background. Born between this couple, Lafcadio was doomed to be a traveler from the start.

Lafcadio and Rosa were dispatched to Hearn family in Dublin in 1851 when Charles was ordered to serve in the West Indies and in the Crimean War. Unfortunately for her, Rosa, who did not speak English, felt alienated from the

family, while Charles was serving in the war. Eventually, while Rosa was visiting her family in Greece, Charles had their marriage annulled. After that Rosa never saw her son.

Left by the parents, the young Hearn was forced to have an unhappy life with his relatives. And at the age of nineteen, because of a financial difficulty, he immigrated to Cincinnati, U. S. Living in bitter poverty, Lafcadio first got a job with a kind and uncle-like printer, Henry Watkin, and then was employed by the *Enquirer* as a cub reporter. The sensational articles that Lafcadio wrote made him a star reporter very soon.

In 1877 Lafcadio moved to New Orleans. Fascinated with the Creole life and literature, he started to collect enthusiastically local legends, folklores, proverbs and music. Exploiting these materials, he produced two prominent books on Creole, *La Cuisine Creole* (1885) and *Gombo Zhebes* (1885). From 1887 to 1889, he was in the West Indies on assignment for the *Harper's Magazine*, which resulted in *Two Years in the French West Indies* (1890), and his novel *Youma* (1890), a story of a slave insurrection.

It was at the age of forty that Lafcadio traveled to Japan by way of Canada, with a commission of the *Harper's Weekly*. Shortly after his arrival in Japan, he took up a job as an English teacher at a secondary school in Matsue. There he met Setsuko Koizumi, a lady of high samurai rank, with whom he got married the following year. In 1891, he transferred to the Fifth Higher Middle School in Kumamoto, where he remained for three years. After leaving Kumamoto, he worked for an English-language paper, the *Kobe Chronicle*. In 1896, he moved to Tokyo, and got a teaching post as a lecturer of the English literature at Tokyo Imperial University. At the age of forty six, he became a Japanese citizen and assumed a Japanese name, Yakumo Koizumi. He lived in Tokyo until his death in 1904.

This paper consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, the social and historical background of the nineteenth century, which gave him necessary information with which to write his works, is reviewed. As we have seen briefly above, throughout his life, he kept collecting materials for his writing by doing much traveling. This was indispensable for him to live as a writer. So we shall start with an analysis of the development of traveling and transportation in the world. In the mid-nineteenth century, the scope of British interests in the world market broadened dramatically to cover the South Pacific, the Far East, the South Atlantic and Africa. This expansion brought about much development of the transportation system. Lafcadio made the most of it to be a writer.

On the other hand, collecting exotic materials became a kind of craze in the nineteenth century. It was one of the causes of the development of transportation, and what is more important, made another characteristic of the imperialism. We shall discuss this, especially focusing on the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the vogue of plant hunting. It must be noted that Lafcadio made *Kwaidan* through collecting stories. As the Great Exhibition shows, collecting materials was a symbolic act of the imperialism. In the last section of the chapter, we shall look at his attitude towards traveling and collecting exotic materials.

In the second chapter we shall survey the rise of a subgenre of the novel, the ghost story in the Victorian era. First and foremost, *Kwaidan* is a collection of ghost stories. When it was published in London, the genre of the ghost story came to maturity. He wrote his stories taking into account the public demand of English readers. Significantly, the golden age of the English ghost story was also that of the British Empire. To make clearer the argument on the relationship between Lafcadio and the imperialism, we will mention the case of Rudyard Kipling, who also had a very close relation to the British imperialism and wrote prominent ghost stories,

thus gained a literary fame.

In the third chapter, we shall examine mainly his making of *Kwaidan*. The tales collected in the book are 'retold' stories, which come from the old Japanese ghost stories and weird tales. The sources the author drew upon have been traced in detail; we know their authors and the year of publication. These data help us analyze the process of Lafcadio's writing. We compare the retold tales with the original ones and thus study his technique of writing and his intention. Here his wife Setsu Koizumi played a significant role in making *Kwaidan*; he could not read Japanese well enough to understand the original text fully. So she read them for him and explained him what was written in them.

It is also an important fact that Lafcadio wrote *Kwaidan* in the last phase of his career. Since starting as a journalist in America, he had been writing essays and travel-writings mainly. It was for a travel-writing *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894) that he was first praised as an eminent writer on Japan. After *In Ghostly Japan* (1899), however, he began to move away from the travel-writings; from then on, retold tales came to occupy a larger part of his books. *Kwaidan* was the last of them. Writing it was very important to Lafcadio. We shall also take it in the last chapter.

Chapter I : Imperialism

(i) Transportation

First of all, to make *Kwaidan*, it was necessary for Lafcadio to travel from Greece to Japan. For this long journey the development of the worldwide transportation system was indispensable. Importantly, it had a close relation with the expansion of the imperialism. The nineteenth century was the age of imperialism. Economic and political control by the leading powers reached almost the entire world. For this control, the development of transportation system was inevitable. Lafcadio made the most of it.

The railway was an enormous boost to the economy of Britain, and provided the country with one of the most efficient transportation systems for the remainder of the century. The railway transformed the Empire. It increased business activity and allowed commerce to flourish in the areas that previously would have been impossible to make a living. It enabled officials to move rapidly over the areas that they had to govern. It also enabled troops to be dispatched over great distances in short time. The established colonies like India leapt at the railway and built a railway system that would even rival the mother country in scope and scale. An India's line, the East Indian Railway Company, was registered as early as 1849; the first line between Bombay and Thana was opened in 1853. The railway network was spreading so swiftly around the subcontinent that by 1910 there were more than 32,000 miles (51,000 kilometers) of lines in it. These newly established railways were often financed by British industrialists who were keen to export the primary and secondary products of India to Britain and its factories.

Maritime transportation was also developed during this period. In 1869, the Suez Canal was completed. It connected the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and

established the shortest water route between Europe and Asia. Steam power opened the avenues for explorations that had previously been difficult for mariners to pursue. The ability to power a vessel upstream meant that many of the world's rivers could be opened up to the European explorers and traders. This allowed the new parts of the world to be explored and the new commercial and political relationships to be established.

The development of transportation also brought down the cost of travel so that all but the poorest could afford to travel. In the process of the popularization of travelling, Thomas Cook was very famous and played a significant role. He was born in Melbourne, Derbyshire in 1808. As a strict teetotaler, he used the development of the railway system in order to provide a new recreation for the workers who had no other pleasure than drinking. In 1841, he persuaded the Midland Counties Railway Company to run a special train between Leicester and Loughborough for a temperance meeting. It is said to be the first publicity advertised excursion train in England. In the following years, he took numerous visitors to many different places such as Edinburgh, the Lake District, the Isle of Man, and Belfast.

When the Great Exhibition of 1851 was opened in London, Cook arranged the Exhibition tours for working people who were poorly paid and could not afford to participate in the tour. He established saving clubs so that they could pay for their trip to London. Then, to advertise the tour, he published a magazine named the *Cook's Exhibition Herald and Excursion Advertiser*. These campaigns worked very well. Cook conveyed over 165,000 people to the Exhibition¹.

Having succeeded in conducting domestic tours, he planned a travel abroad.

¹ Piers Brendon, *Thomas Cook : 150 Years of Popular Tourism* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg Limited, 1991), p.57

During the Paris Exposition of 1855 he conducted excursions from Leicester to Calais. In the 1860s he took many groups to Switzerland, Italy, Egypt and the United States. And in 1872, he finally planned a trip around the world. This included a steamship across the Atlantic, a stagecoach across America, a paddle steamer to Japan, and an overland journey across China and India. The tour, leaving Liverpool on 26 September 1872 and returning seven months later, turned out to be a great success. Thomas Cook made it possible for common people to travel around the world more easily and safely.

In the nineteenth century, the idea of travelling around the world became familiar, not a mere fancy. Jules Verne took it in his novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*, which was published in 1872. In the story, Phileas Fogg of London and his servant Passepartout travel around the world in eighty days. This inspiration came from the breakthrough in 1869-1870: the completion of railways across America and India, and the opening of the Suez Canal. During the nineteenth century, the United States was keen to penetrate the American continent. In 1869, the first transcontinental route was created, when the Union Pacific Railroad met the Central Pacific Railroad at Promontory, Utah. Its completion was a matter of national importance. Each company was granted the financial support from the government and awarded the sizable parcels of land along the entire length of the track. These made it possible for the railway companies to push lines across prairies and mountains that were almost undeveloped and very sparsely settled.

Travelling was simplified, cheapened, and popularized by Thomas Cook. The development of it owed a great deal to the spread of the Empire. This was clearly demonstrated in Passepartout's remark. Walking along the street in Hong Kong, he said to himself:

With a few exceptions, it was Bombay, Calcutta, or Singapore all over again...

There is a trail of British towns right round the world².

As Cook and Verne clearly showed, the world got small enough for common people to travel around the world before Lafcadio began his travelling. Like Phileas Fogg, he used trains and ships fully for his travelling. Travelling was always an important part of his writing. Particularly after gaining literary fame in America, he kept on moving to get materials for his articles. And as he moved from one place to another, his career advanced more and more.

At the age of nineteen, he crossed the Atlantic to New York with many immigrants. From New York he travelled westwards by railway and arrived at Cincinnati. Living in poverty, he got to know an English painter Henry Watkin. Helped by him, he started to write for Cincinnati newspapers, and in 1872, became a reporter for the *Enquirer*. He wrote many articles on a wide range of subjects. In 1875, however, because of his illegal marriage with a mulatto girl, he was fired from the *Enquirer*.

In 1877 he separated from his wife and left Cincinnati for New Orleans. First he took the train to Memphis on the Mississippi River. From there he went to New Orleans by way of the river. In New Orleans he lived at a boarding house on Baronne Street and wrote some article for the *Cincinnati Commercial*. When the *Times-Democrat* was newly published in 1881, he became a literary editor and translator for the paper. In August 1884, exhausted by overwork, he took a vacation in Grand Isle in the Gulf of Mexico. Around this time, his friend George Washington Cable told him the story of the storm in 1856 that destroyed Grand Isle. Inspired by

² Jules Verne. *Around the World in Eighty Days*, trans. from the French by William Butcher (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.96-97

the story, he decided to write his own version of the story of the hurricane, which he named *Chita*. He began to write it while on the Grand Isle in 1886 and finished it on another visit there in 1887. The book was praised by Henry Alden, the editor of the *Harper's Magazine*, and was accepted for publication.

In 1887 he resigned the *Times-Democrat* and left New Orleans for New York to meet the editors of the *Harper's*. Having got a commission with the magazine, he traveled to the West Indies aboard the *Barracouta*, on which he described "a long, narrow, graceful steel steamer, with two masts, and orange-yellow chimney"³ and visited St. Cox, St. Kitts, Monserrat, Dominica, and Martinique. This trip turned out to be an important one for him. On the basis of it, he produced the two eminent books: *Two Years in French West Indies* and *Youma*. During the trip he wrote an essay named "A Midsummer Trip to the Tropics." He stayed in Martinique until his return to New York in September; Henry Alden at the *Harper's* bought his essay.

The following month he returned to Martinique to write more articles. He took a room first in St. Pierre, and then after the outbreak of smallpox, rented a cottage in a small town of Morne Rouge. Returning to St. Pierre in 1888, he started to collect voodoo tales from his neighbors and send nonfiction sketches to Alden, which became a book *Two Years in the French West Indies*. At Grande Anse (now Lorrain), he visited a plantation and heard a story of a slave girl entrusted with a white child during the 1848 slave rebellion. The story became the basis for his novel *Youma*. When he returned to New York, he found himself famous. The sketches and essays from the West Indies had made a great impression on the American readers. Fortunately for him, William Dean Howells wrote an approving review of his works in the *Harper's*. He came to be known as an exotic writer among the American

³ Lafcadio Hearn, *Lafcadio Hearn: American Writings*, ed. Christopher Benfey (New York: Classics of the United States, Inc., 2009), p.159

writers.

Inspired by Percival Lowell's *Soul of the Far East*, he decided to visit Japan to write some articles on it. In 1890, he started to make an arrangement to travel to Japan and got the commission from the *Harper's*. With the help of William Patton, an art director at the *Harper's*, he gained a great patronage of William Van Horne. Van Horne was a president of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the first Canadian transcontinental railway. Patton made great efforts in preparing for Lafcadio's travel. He visited Van Horne in Montreal to talk about the plan. Fortunately, Van Horne was very interested in Japan and was a collector of Japanese porcelains⁴. He willingly consented to give Lafcadio a free transportation ticket from Montreal to Japan. In addition, he promised to give a cash gift of \$ 250. In return he promised to write an article to publicize the CPR. With C. D. Weldon, an illustrator of the *Harper's*, he crossed the continent by the CPR train. At Vancouver, they boarded the trans-Pacific steamship and about two weeks later, in the morning of April 4, they got to Yokohama. Lafcadio thus made the most of the world wide transportation systems, which were the very products of the imperialism. And in the point that he enjoyed the benefits of it, we may call him a kind of imperialist. This is not too much saying, which will be made clear in the following sections.

⁴ This account is based on Valerie Knowels, *From Telegrapher to Titan: The Life of William C. Van Horne* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2004), pp.295-296

(ii) Collecting

Lafcadio Hearn was an excellent collector. In addition to travelling, collecting was one of the symbolic acts of the imperialism in the nineteenth century. In this regard Lafcadio had close ties to the imperialism. The nineteenth century witnessed a great change of the map of the world, which was caused mainly by the British Imperialism. The Great Exhibition of 1851 was the embodiment of its political and economic achievements, where many different exhibits were brought together from all over the world to display the prosperity of the British Empire. After that, a world exhibition became a kind of vogue in Europe and America: London in 1862, Paris in 1867, Vienna in 1873, Philadelphia in 1876, Sydney in 1879, Milan in 1881, New Orleans in 1884, Barcelona in 1888, and Chicago in 1893. Lafcadio reported the New Orleans exhibition in 1884, and, in Japan, he often visited its domestic expositions.

The idea of making the Great Exhibition was developed by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, who was a patron of the industrial and technological progress. He stated as follows:

We are living at a period of most wonderful transition, which tends rapidly to accomplish that great end—to which all history points—the realization of the unity of mankind...Gentlemen, the Exhibition of 1851 is to give us a true test of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in this great task, and a new point from which all nations will be able to direct their further exertions⁵.

⁵ Michael Leapman, *The World for a Shilling: How the Great Exhibition of 1851 Shaped a Nation* (London: Head Lone Book Publishing, 2002), pp.23-24

Of the exhibits which were to be gathered and displayed a member of the committee said:

In the class of animal substances, we shall probably have enormous elephants' tusks from Africa; leather from Morocco and Russia; beaver from Baffin Bay; the wools of Australia, Yorkshire and Tibet; silk from Asia and from Europe and furs from the Eskimos... We shall have spices from the East; the hops of Kent and Sussex; the raisins of Malaya and olives of the Pyrenees...gold from California and the East Indies; silver from Mexico, Russia and Cornwall; iron ore from Wales, Wolverhampton and Tunbridge Wells⁶.

From these statements it is clear that the Exhibition was intended not to be a merely local or even national exhibition, but to embrace the entire world. The exhibits were housed in a magnificent glass and iron building called "the Crystal Palace", which was designed by Sir Joseph Paxton. The main building was '1848 feet long, 408 feet broad and 66 feet high, with 330 iron columns, 2,300 girders and 24 miles of guttering' and 'the central transept with its curved roof at 108 feet.'⁷ The Crystal Palace was a kind of an emblem of the great progress of the Empire. Thomas Cook sent to the Exhibition 165,000 people, which included even 3,000 Sunday school children from Derby, Leicester and Nottingham. According to Michael Leapman's *The World for a Shilling*, "The Times calculated that to give every exhibit in the Crystal Palace the attention it deserved would mean spending 200 hours in the building. It would therefore take more than a month of daily visit to complete a thorough circuit."⁸

⁶ *Ibid.*, p.33

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.57

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.133

Among the British colonial sections was Indian section, which was “one of the most notable and extensive areas.”⁹ ,where were displayed examples of rich silks and cottons, furniture, minerals, medicines, cereals, dyes, India rubber, foodstuffs, leather, ceramics, agricultural machines, and models of traditional boats. Above all, a luxuriously decorated throne and two palanquins with stuffed elephants greatly excited the curiosity of visitors.

As the leading manufacturing nation of the world, Britain displayed an extraordinary number of products: “an array of gas fittings, brass bedsteads, buttons, needles, pins, steel pens and countless other domestic items that added to the comfort and convenience of middle-class life and were now, thanks to mass production, within the price range of many more people.”¹⁰ A huge number of exhibits were collected not only from the European countries but also from their colonies. The increase of exploration and the spread of the European leading powers enabled them to collect these exhibits. As the Great Exhibition clearly shows, collecting was closely linked to the expansion of the imperialism.

Another instance which demonstrates the close relation between collection and the imperialism is plant hunting. The importation of plants to Britain was increased with the spread of the Empire. Different kinds of exotic plants were introduced to the country by plant hunters, who engaged in travelling and collecting plants which were new to their country. As the transportation system developed, plant collecting became more systematized and consequently more facilitated. Expedition to foreign parts were rapidly organized and financed by nurserymen, botanical gardens, and private gardeners.

In 1804, the Horticultural Society was founded in London with the aim of

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.134

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.137

collecting information about all plants, and of encouraging the improvement of horticultural practice. The Society developed rapidly. Within two decades, the members were over fifteen hundred. In 1821 the Society leased the land from the 6th Duke of Devonshire, where it began to show the flowers which they collected. In 1861, a new charter was arranged by Prince Albert, giving the society its name, the Royal Horticultural Society.

Among the plant hunters who were commissioned by the Society, the most distinguished botanist was a Scottish, David Douglas. He was born on June 25, 1799, in the village of Scone, northeast of Perth, Scotland, as a son of John Douglas, a stonemason. After leaving school around 1811, he started working for the garden of the Earl of Mansfield at Scone. After taking the position of a gardener on the estate of Sir Robert Preston, near Dunfermline, he attended the botany lectures in the University of Glasgow. The Professor William Jackson Hooker was also a plant hunter who had been to Iceland, France, Switzerland, and Italy. Having acquainted with Hooker, Douglas was recommended by him to the Horticultural Society which was then keen to recruit an excellent hunter to collect new plants.

In 1823, Douglas was dispatched to North American. During this journey, he hunted plants in Pennsylvania, New York, the both side of the Niagara River, and the Canadian coast. He introduced a yellow-leaved honeysuckle, *Lonicera hirsute*, and a large number of fruit trees including twenty-one varieties of peach. The Society welcomed him, stating that he had “obtained many plants which were much wanted, and greatly increased our collection of fruit trees.”¹¹

The following year, he sailed from Gravesend to the west coast of America, and he finally landed on the estuary of the Columbia River. He collected the seeds of

¹¹ Maggie Campbell-Culver, *The Origin of Plants: The People and Plants that have Shaped Britain's Garden History since the Year 1000* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2001), p.194

Pseudotsuga menziesii, which is now commonly known as the Douglas Fir commemorating his discovery. The same year, he collected the Western Yellow Pine, *Pinus ponderosa*, and in 1827, found the largest of all the pines, *Pinus Lambertiana*. He was also notable for the introduction of numerous garden shrubs and herbs that were gathered mostly around the Columbia River and the Cascade Mountains: Brown's peony (*Paeonia brownie*), Flowering Currant (*Ribes munroi*), Garden Lupin (*Lupinus polyphyllus*), the California Bay (*Umbellularia californica*), and so on.

In 1830, another expedition to the west coast of America was organized. This expedition turned out to be a great success for Douglas. The first year he collected the Giant Fir, *Abies grandis*. The next year, he gathered the Noble Fir, (*A. procera*), the Sitka Spruce, (*Picea sitchensis*), the Beach Peach (*Pinus contorta*). Other notable introductions include the Digger Pine (*P. sabiniana*), the Big-Cone (*P. coulteri*), and the Monterey Pine (*P. radiata*). In 1830 and 1831, he visited as far as Hawaii and there he died. Before his death at the age of 35, Douglas had spent ten years for traveling and collecting rare plants and trees. He made a great contribution to transforming the gardens in Britain. According to Maggie Campbell-Culver, 'His total tree and shrub introductions amount to about 200 different species.'¹²

As the Great Exposition and the plant hunting shows, collecting became a kind of vogue in the nineteenth century. It owed a great deal to the expansion of the colonies. Lafcadio Hearn, like a plant hunter, also engaged in this symbolic act of the imperialism. In America, he hunted scoops for the paper. Even after earning a literary fame, he was keen on collecting materials for his books. Throughout his life, he collected materials, the tangible and the intangible, from sensational scoops to mere curiosities: folklores, local songs, dialects, recipes, old books, talismans, pipes,

¹² *Ibid.*, p.198

miniature insects. Almost all of them became essential ingredients of his writings.

New Orleans especially excited his curiosity. Fascinated by the Creole life there, he intently collected their language, proverbs, songs, and folklores, with the help of George Washington Cable, who was a pioneer writer on the New Orleans Creoles. His first book *Old Creole Days* (1879) is full of dialects and the New Orleans locales. He had read Cable's stories before coming to the city. Collaborating with Cable, he collected Creole songs, proverbs, and legends. He also wrote such articles as "The Creole Doctor", "Creole Servant Girls", and "Some little Creole Love Songs."

Fortunately for Lafcadio, New Orleans was receiving a fair amount of attention from the world, with the opening of The Cotton Centennial Exposition in 1884. It was not only an exhibition of cotton, but also one which displayed a wide range of exhibits gathered from all over the world. Lafcadio visited the Exposition as a reporter and wrote articles for the *Harper's Weekly* and the *Harper's Bazar*. Taking advantage the vogue of the Exposition, he published two books, *La Cuisine Creole* and *Gombo Zhebes*. These two books illustrate Lafcadio as an excellent collector. The former is a collection of unique recipes which he gathered from his Creole friends. The following is a recipe of Petit Brulé described in the book:

Take an ordinary-sized, thick-skinned orange; cut through the peel entirely around the orange like the line of the equator, then force off the peel by passing the handle of a spoon between it and the pulp. Into the cup thus formed put two lumps of sugar and some cinnamon, and fill with fine French brandy (cognac). And ignite it the same as the above and pour into glasses.

The brule will be found to have a pleasant flavor given to it by orange.¹³

¹³ Lafcadio Hearn, *Inventing New Orleans: Writings of Lafcadio Hearn*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Mississippi: University press of Mississippi, 2001), p.197

Gombo Zhebes is a book of Creole proverbs and epigrams collected from the six Creole dialects. Lafcadio collected as many as five hundred proverbs with the help of his friends in New Orleans and the several books of the Creole grammar and proverbs. Out of them he selected some three hundred and fifty for publication, and then translated them into French and English with comments. Here is one example of them:

Tambou tini grand train pace endidans li vide. (Le tambour va [lit: tient] grand train parcequ'il est vide en dedans.) "The drum makes a great fuss because it is empty inside."- [Trinidad.]¹⁴

New Orleans was a place full of exotic materials which inspired Lafcadio. There he intently collected and exploited them for his books. In New Orleans, he developed his ability to collect materials. Later in Japan, when he began to make *Kwaidan*, he again showed clearly his ability as a collector.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.219

(iii) The Case of Hearn

As we have seen in the previous sections, travelling and collecting were closely linked with each other in the nineteenth century. And both of them were the striking features of the imperialism. Lafcadio moved towards the frontiers such as New Orleans, the West Indies, and Japan, and engaged in collecting local materials. Traveling and collecting were the one and only pleasure for him. He innocently devoted himself to them. This is clearly shown in his works and letters. In 1887 he visited the West Indies and wrote an essay named "A Mid Summer Trip to the Tropics," which is full of his excitement at the islands. Here is his first impression of the islands:

Then a high white shape like a cloud appears before us,—on the purplish-dark edge of the sea. The cloud-shape enlarges, heightens without changing contour. It is not a cloud, but an island! Its outlines begin to sharpen,—with faintest pencillings of color. Shadowy valleys appear, spectral hollows, phantom slopes of pallid blue or green. The apparition is so like a mirage that it is difficult to persuade oneself one is looking at real land,—that it is not a dream.¹⁵

His lust for travelling never ceased. In Japan, Lafcadio, the former outcast, got married and found a home. Travelling far away, however, was always in his mind. When he lost his illusions about Japan and found a difficulty in writing on it, he often revealed his plan for travelling abroad. He complained to B.H. Chamberlain as follows:

¹⁵ Lafcadio Hearn, *Lafcadio Hearn: American Writings*, ed. Christopher Benfey (New York: Classics of the United States, Inc., 2009), p.174

Perhaps I have exhausted capacity for sensation in Japanese city. Things which used to seem to me wonderful now produce no effect at all. I must try to make occasional voyages to the tropics.¹⁶

When he was disillusioned with one place, he moved to another. There he could enter the new life and renew himself. In the following letter, his lust for traveling was most clearly revealed:

I am apt to become tired of places,—or at least of the disagreeable facts attaching more or less to all places and becoming more and more marked and unendurable the longer one stays. So that ultimately I am sure to wander off somewhere else. You can comprehend how one becomes tired of the very stones of a place,—the odours, the colours, the shapes of Shadows, and tint of its sky,—and how small irritations become colossal and crushing by years of repetition...¹⁷

Wandering around, however, he always had a clear purpose. It was collecting materials for his works. As a reporter, he always walked around the area to procure materials for his articles. In Cincinnati, the gaiety and the misery of the levee life first inspired his curiosity. With a notebook, he approached the roustabout there and induced them to sing their songs. He wrote them down and reported in the article named 'Levee Life:'

¹⁶ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* III, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.349

¹⁷ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* II, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.49

She's on her way to New Orleans!
Good-bye, my lover, good-by!
She bound to pass the Robert E. Lee,
Good-bye, my lover, good-by!
Oh, let her go by!¹⁸

When he came to New Orleans, he was immediately attracted to the Creole life there. He was so interested in it that he initiated a friendship with George Washington Cable, who was the most eminent writer on the Louisiana Creoles. They roamed the streets together and took down the words and the melodies of the street songs. In his letter to his friend, Lafcadio said that he had assisted in collecting the songs and that Cable was going to publish a book of them accompanied by the musical scores.¹⁹ Collaborating with Cable, he collected notes on proverbs, songs and street calls.

In a letter to his friend he said that he felt some zeal for collecting the Creole legends, traditions, and songs of Louisiana.²⁰ These collections all became the basis of his many articles on Creole. In "The Creole Doctor: Some Curiosities of Medicine of Louisiana", he listed the recipes of Creole medicine. "Some Little Creole Love Songs" is an introduction of 'a famous refrain of Creole songs that is attached in various forms to at least half a dozen ditties.' Even servant girls offered him a material. In "Creole Servant Girls", he described and classified their characteristics one after another:

¹⁸ Lafcadio Hearn, *Lafcadio Hearn: American Writings*, ed. Christopher Benfey (New York: Classics of the United States, Inc., 2009), p.630

¹⁹ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters I*, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922)p.164

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.182

They will do anything that any imagination can conceive for money; and are very friendly, indeed, as long as the money holds out. They are actually very cleanly, oddly superstitious, and very diligent. They have a way of working very hard without appearing to work, and of doing little or no work while appearing to be working themselves to death....and it is probable that none but Creoles know how to manage them. The type is fast disappearing; but it certainly affords one of the most extraordinary studies of human nature possible to conceive.²¹

After leaving New Orleans, Lafcadio kept on gathering materials. In the West Indies, he was immersed in local songs, languages, legends, and folklores. With his new camera, he approached canoe boys, washerwomen, and carrier girls, and wrote down all the stories and the songs that they told. In "La Guiabliesse", he described his way of collecting:

Adou is the daughter of the kind old capresse from whom I rent my room in the little mountain cottage. The mother is almost precisely the color of cinnamon; the daughter's complexion is brighter,—the ripe tint of an orange.... Adou tells me creole stories and *tim-tim*. Adou knows all about ghosts, and believes in them.²²

In 1890, he came to Japan and his life changed dramatically. He got a Japanese

²¹ Lafcadio Hearn, *Inventing New Orleans: Writings of Lafcadio Hearn*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Mississippi: University press of Mississippi, 2001), p.131

²² Lafcadio Hearn, *Lafcadio Hearn: American Writings*, ed. Christopher Benfey (New York: Classics of the United States, Inc., 2009), p.326

wife Setsu Koizumi. Having become the head of the family, he had to support the whole Koizumi family, including Setsu's mother, her father and her grandfather, as well as relatives who occasionally visited them. In addition, he had two sons and a daughter. Throughout his life, however, he remained an intent traveller and collector. In 'The Chief City of the Province of the Gods,' he showed his zeal for collecting as follows:

I perceived that upon the sliding doors, or immediately above the principal entrance of nearly every house, are pasted oblong white papers bearing ideographic inscriptions; and over hanging every threshold I see the sacred emblem of Shinto, the little rice-straw rope with its long fringe of pendent stalks. The white papers at once interest me: for they are ofuda, or holy texts and charms, of which I am a devout collector.²³

Collaborating with a Japanologist, B. H. Chamberlain, he collected many different kinds of sacred charms and sent them to the museums in Britain. He had a strong inclination towards small things. Japanese pipes were particularly his favorites. He collected them at every opportunity. His wife said in her memoir:

He preferred a long kind of pipe. He had about a hundred of them. The oldest one he had the year he came, and the others ha been added. Each pipe was carved. Among the carvings were: Urashima (the Rip van Winkle of Japan); the *kinuta* of autumnal nights (the *kinuta* is a wooden mallet used by women to pound linen); eggplants; praying demons; crows on a leafless branch;

²³ Lafcadio Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, First Series (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2006), p.84

utensils of the tea ceremony; and verses of poems, for instance, "To-night of last year." These were the favorite ones among the hundred.²⁴

As 'a devoted collector,' he gathered not only the tangible materials but also the intangible ones. He was absorbed in collecting Japanese local traditions, like he did in New Orleans and the West Indies. For example, he took down the Japanese ditties and introduced them in his books. 'Bon-odori' is an article on the dance that he saw at a remote village in the deep mountain of Izumo. He wrote down the songs which the dancers sang as they danced:

...a strain of song, full of sweet, clear quavering, like the call of a bird, gushes from some girlish mouth, and fifty soft voices join the chant:

Sorota soroimashita odorikoga sorota, Soroikite, kita hare yukata.

'Uniform to view [as ears of young rice ripening in the field] all clad alike in summer festal robes, the company of dancers have assembled.'²⁵

In 1894, Lafcadio moved to Kobe. Kobe was one of the most westernized cities in Japan. He was disgusted at the city, saying that:

Carpets—pianos—windows—curtains—brass-bands! How I hate them! And white shirts! —and yofuku! [Western clothes] Would I had been born savage; the curse of civilized cities is on me...²⁶

²⁴ Setsuko Koizumi, *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*, trans. from the Japanese by Paul Kiyoshi Hisada and Frederick Jhonson (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2008), p.78

²⁵ Lafcadio Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, First Series, (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2006), p.76

²⁶ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters II*, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.310

Although he was within the western civilization, his concern, as always, was in collecting the dying traditions. One day two women visited his house to sell their songs:

One took samisen and sang; and people crowded in tiny yard to hear. Never did I listen to anything sweeter. All the sorrow and beauty, all the pain and the sweetness of life thrilled and quivered in that voice...Then, too, for the first time, I noticed that the singer was blind. Both women were surprisingly ugly, but the voice of the one that sang was indescribably beautiful; and she sang as peasants and birds and semi sing, which is nature and divine. They were wanderers both. I called them in, and treated them well, and heard their story. It was not romantic at all—smallpox, blindness, a sick husband (paralyzed) and children to care for.²⁷

Lafcadio bought the ballad from them and translated it into English. It was a song about lovers who committed a double suicide:

“On their arms they tattoo a Raindragon, and the character ‘Bamboo’—
thinking never of the troubles of life...

“But he cannot pay the fifty-five yen for her freedom—*O the anguish of
Takejiro’s heart!*

“Both then vow to pass away together, since never in this world can they
become husband and wife...

“Trusting to her comrades for incense and for flowers—*O the pity of their*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.331-332

*passing like the dew!*²⁸

Lafcadio never stopped traveling and collecting materials. As his own remark, 'a devoted collector' shows, he really devoted to them, without knowing well that they were very imperialistic behaviors. He was innocently involved in the imperialism. He was always an alien. In Ireland, and later in Britain, he was treated as an exotic child. In America he was one of the numerous Irish immigrants. In Japan, even though he got a Japanese nationality, he was still a foreigner. Belonging nowhere, he had no choice but to keep on moving towards the frontiers. He was not a typical imperialist, of course. But he was a kind of imperialist, as it were, a reluctant imperialist.

²⁸ Lafcadio Hearn, *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life* (Boston and New York: Tuttle Publishing, 1972), p.44

Chapter II : Ghost Story

(i) Development

Kwaidan is a collection of ghost stories. Lafcadio began to write it when the English ghost story blossomed into a huge craze. Importantly, the rise of the English ghost story has a close relation to the growth of the working class, which was caused by the prosperity of the British imperialism. Here Lafcadio again got involved in the imperialism.

The English ghost story was an entertainment for workers. The expansion of the British Empire in the nineteenth century led to the economic growth in the mother country. So great was its prosperity that even the working class could enjoy the parcel of it. This is illustrated well by the expansion of franchise and the rapid development of labor law. Both of them were the good evidence that workers had been identified socially and granted a certain amount of social power. In 1832, the Reform Act was passed. The Reform Act 1832 became a momentum for the working class to campaign for further reform. Chartism was the first mass working class labor movement in Britain. The workers campaigned in order to represent the interests of the class, with the People's Charter of 1838. It demanded the six main aims of the movement such as, a vote for every man twenty-one years old and no property qualification for members of Parliament.

In 1867, the government carried out the second Reform Act. It doubled the electorate and gave the vote to many workingmen in towns and cities. After this, the working class came to be regarded as a major political force more than ever. In 1870, the Elementary Education Act was introduced. Its political aim was to educate the workers who were recently given the right to vote. Education of their children was also emphasized. Children learned simple mathematics and English, which were

needed to work efficiently in factories. The following year, the Trade Union Act was passed. It legalized many trade unions such as unions of agricultural workers, gas workers, and dock workers. They demanded nation-wide collective bargaining, legal minimum wage, and an eight hour-day. In 1884, the trend toward universal male suffrage was further advanced. The Third Reform Act tripled the number of voters.

Importantly, these developments within the country were in parallel with the expansion of the British Empire. During this period, the scope of the British Empire also broadened dramatically. In 1842, under the Treaty of Nanking, Hong Kong was ceded to Britain. This provided British traders with a harbor where they could unload their goods. In 1857, the Indian mutiny was suppressed. The following year, the East Indian Company was abolished and the new title of viceroy was instituted. In 1875, the government purchased the shares of the Suez Canal from Egypt. It tightened the imperial control over the area. Parts of Australia, New Zealand, Natal, and Cape Colony also came under the British control.

In the nineteenth century, the political and economic power of the working class was greatly increased in Britain. This led to the expansion of the periodical industry. It was a great pain for workers, who were less educated, to read a whole book. And they were too busy to enjoy reading books. The periodicals were best adapted to the needs of them. They were sold much more cheaply than books and can be read through in a few hours. The repeal of the newspaper tax and the spread of literacy also played a key role in the boom of periodical publishing. It was in these periodicals that a host of ghost stories appeared. Their sensation and frightfulness fully satisfied the public demand. The periodicals owned and edited by Charles Dickens—*Household Words* and *All the Year Round*—regularly carried the ghost stories, and encouraged many followers. In them were *Temple Bar* in 1860, *St James's Magazine* in 1861, *London Society* in 1862, *The Argosy* in 1865, *Belgravia*

in 1866 and *Tinsley's Magazine* in 1867. All of them helped to satisfy the growing demand for the genre throughout the century.

In this period English ghost story matured into a distinct form and the genre's masterpieces appeared one after another. The stories of J.S. Le Fanu, who is one of the pioneering writers of supernatural tales, began to appear in the periodicals from the 1830s. Most of his stories first appeared in the periodicals and were later gathered together in a book. His skilful and well crafted stories made significant contribution to the development of the English ghost stories.

Another noteworthy figure who pioneered the genre was Charles Dickens. Not being a specialist as Le Fanu, he forayed into the genre, and produced such fine stories as 'The Story of the Goblin Who Stole a Sexton' (1836), 'The Haunted Man' (1848), 'The Trial For Murder' (1865), and 'The Signal-man' (1866). Another important role which Dickens played in developing the English ghost stories was to foster it through the medium of the periodicals, particularly in the Christmas editions. Because of an unprecedented success of *A Christmas Carol*, the ghost story became strongly associated with the season of Christmas. From 1850 to 1870, he edited the weekly publication called the *Household Words*, which was later retitled the *All the Year Round*. They made a significant contribution to the spread of the public interest in reading. According to Richard Altick's *The English Common Reader*:

...with the coming of mass circulation periodicals, the gift annual was transformed into the spread Christmas number or supplement, building with verse, stories, and pictures. From about 1860 to the end of the century, activity in the periodical trade reached its feverish peak in December. The sales of some of these annual supplements were tremendous, eclipsing even the

records set by Christmas numbers of *All the Year Round* under Dickens' editorship. They were admirably fitted to the tastes of those whose pocketbooks were opened a little wider than usual under the mellowing influence of the Christmas season, their presence in English homes had a powerful effect on the spread of reading interest.²⁹

From the discussion so far, it is clear that the market for the ghost story had matured fully before Lafcadio Hearn began to retell the Japanese ghost stories. He knew well about the market. It is important to note here that he made his debut as a professional writer when he published supernatural and ghost stories. In 1884, he published his first book *Stray Leaves from Strange Literature*. It was a collection of the exotic tales which were collected from the Egyptian, Hindu, Finnish, Arabic and Jewish legends. The following year, he began to retell Chinese ghost stories and contributed them to his paper, the *Times Democrat*. These stories were collected in a book form and published as *Some Chinese Ghost* in 1887.

In 1890, Lafcadio came to Japan. The ghost story was always in his mind. This is clear when we look at his lecture at the Tokyo Imperial University. He discussed the genre in such lectures as 'English Fiction in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century,' 'Monk Lewis and the School of Horror and Mystery' and 'The Value of the Supernatural in Fiction.' For example, he took Bulwer-Litton, who was one of the eminent writers of the genre, saying that:

One of his short stories is generally acknowledged to be the greatest ghost story that was ever written...I mean the little story called "The House and the

²⁹ Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, 2d ed. (Ohio: The Ohio University Press, 1998), p.363

Brains,” but afterwards called “The Haunted and the Haunters.” By this little story Bulwer is attached for all time to the highest literature, as it has become a classic.³⁰

When Lafcadio began to contribute and publish his stories, the notable writers of the genre appeared one after another. For example, M.R. James was one of the specialists who wrote dozens of ghost stories in the same period as Lafcadio. While being a scholar of medieval manuscript and early Christianity, he first published ‘Canon Alberic’s Scrap-book’ and ‘Lost Hearts’. After this, he regularly wrote short stories such as ‘Number 13’, ‘The Ash-Tree’, ‘The Treasure of Abbot Thomas’, and ‘Martin Close.’ In 1904, he published his first book *Ghost-Stories of an Antiquary*. The market for collections of ghost stories in a book form was so buoyant that the mainstream writers also forayed into it. Among them were Rudyard Kipling, R.L. Stevenson, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Henry James. Like Lafcadio, being outside Britain, James produced the eminent ghost stories, such as ‘The Romance of Certain Old Clothes’ (1868), ‘The Ghostly Rental’ (1876), ‘Owen Wingrave’ (1876), ‘Sir Edmund Orme’ (1891), ‘The Turn of the Screw’ (1898), and ‘The Real Right Thing’ (1899).

Collections of short stories by individual authors also became increasingly popular. In them were *The Phantom’ Rickshaw* (1890), *Life’s Handicap* (1891) by Rudyard Kipling, *The Lesson of the Master* (1892), *The Real Thing* (1893) by Henry James, *Grim Tales* (1893) by E. Nesbit, *The Plattner Story* (1897) by H.G. Wells, *The Seen and the Unseen* (1900), *Between the Dark and the Daylight* (1902) by Richard Marsh, *Stories in the Dark* (1901) by Barry Pain, and *The Lady of the*

³⁰ Lafcadio Hearn, *On Art, Literature & Philosophy* (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1941), pp. 341-342

Barge (1902) by W. W. Jacobs. All of them include more than one ghost story.³¹ *Kwaidan* was published in 1904. This year saw the publication of *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* by M. R. James, *A Book of Ghost* by Baring-Gould, and *Traffics and Discoveries* by Rudyard Kipling.

Lafcadio published his Japanese ghost stories when the genre was at the height of its prosperity. Importantly, as we have seen above, it had a close relation to the rise of the working class, which was caused mainly by the expansion of the Empire. The Ghost stories were as essentially parts of the cultural and literary fabric of the age as the other imperial prosperities. In addition to travelling and collecting, which were the striking features of the imperialism, Lafcadio again enjoyed the benefits of it to be a writer.

³¹ The data provided here is taken from Michael Cox and Gilbert R. A., ed. *The Oxford Book of Victorian Ghost Stories* (London: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp.495-497

(ii) Market

Lafcadio knew well about the trend of the English ghost story. He was writing his ghost stories at the time when the genre was at its prime. In order to discuss the relationship between the making of *Kwaidan* and the imperialism, it is necessary for us to look at Lafcadio's connection with the English literary market. He was connected to it through America. So, first we have to look at his connection with the American literary market.

From the beginning, being a journalist, he was very sensitive to the cotemporary literature. In America, he wrote dozens of reviews, which ranged from literature, philosophy, religion, music, to travel. In 1884, he published his first book *Stray Leaves from Strange Literature*, which was a collection of exotic and supernatural tales. He published the book with the help of Page M. Baker, who is the editor of the *Times-Democrat* in New Orleans. Page wrote a letter of recommendation to a publisher, J. R. Osgood of Boston. Lafcadio gained his first connection in the publishing world of Boston, and reached a new stage in his career as a professional writer. He got another foothold in New York through Washington Cable. According to Arlin Turner, in 1882 Cable proposed that Lafcadio should be sent in his place to the West Indies.³² In 1883, when one of Cable's friends came to New Orleans with the proposal that Cable should write the articles accompanying the drawings he would make for the *Harper's Weekly*, Cable passed the work to Lafcadio.³³ Beginning from this, he wrote dozens of articles for the magazine, and later he was commissioned by the publisher to visit the West Indies. Before coming to Japan, he established his position among the American writers in Boston and

³² Arlin Turner, *George W. Cable: A Biography* (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), p.233

³³ *Ibid.*, p.233

New York. William Dean Howells wrote a long favorable review for his book:

In Mr. Hearn the public has learned to know an artist of those who think with color; and perhaps one doubts whether it might not be better for him to paint his sketches rather than to write them. As a painter he is of the most modern school: an impressionist who puts on pure color, and loves to render light in its fiercest and brightest and gayest tints; it is as a fictionist [however] that he seems a reversion.³⁴

Having established fame in the American literary world, Lafcadio came to Japan with a commission of the *Harper's*. On arriving in Japan, however, he quarreled with the editor about the editorial policy, and severed the connection. After that he came to work together with the Boston publishers. He contributed his articles on Japan mainly to the *Atlantic Monthly*. The *Atlantic* was one of the quality magazines in America. It was founded in 1857 in Boston by a group of writers and intellectuals such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry Wordsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and James Russell Lowell. From its foundation, it had been known as a distinctively New England magazine. It represented middle- and upper-middle class American culture in the second half of the nineteenth century. During its first fifty years, it published the major works by notable authors such as, Emerson, Hawthorne, Stowe, Thoreau, Whittier, Howells, Henry James, Sarah Jewett, and Mark Twain. It was a great success for Lafcadio, who began his career as a minor journalist, to write for such a quality magazine.

As cultural elites, the editors regarded themselves as missionaries of high

³⁴Elizabeth Stevenson, *Lafcadio Hearn* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961), p.186

culture, and believed that the primary purpose of life was not the social prestige but the development of intellect and moral character of the individuals. In the eighties and nineties, however, this idea of culture came in conflict with the rise of industrial mass culture and commercial forces. Each of the editors at that time was required to refocus the editorial policy of the magazine under the pressure of the majority.

When Lafcadio became a regular contributor of it, the editor was Horace Scudder. Scudder was born in 1838 in Boston. After graduating from Williams College, he taught school in New York, and subsequently re-moved to Boston, where he devoted himself to the literary work. Showing a lifelong interest in the children's literature and the educational values of fiction, he edited the magazine for children, and produced a series of children's books. He is also well known for a biographer of James Russell Lowell. He became the editor of the *Atlantic* in 1890. In *A History of the Atlantic Monthly 1857-1909*, the author Ellery Sedgwick described his editorial policy as follows:

Scudder considered the key to his editorial policy a balancing of the magazine's contents. The *Atlantic's* "singular advantage," Scudder wrote to Houghton, in addition to its traditions, was that rather than being limited to one function, it combined the elements of a "review" of current affairs, a "popular miscellany" containing essays and fiction, and a "critical journal" of comment on literature. "The educated man," he continued, "has two sides to him, one appealed to by discussion and criticism, and the other by creative literature. Every number of the *Atlantic* should have in good balance literature par eminence and the literature which is occupied with topics."³⁵

³⁵ Ellery Sedgwick, *A History of the Atlantic Monthly 1857-1909: Yankee Humanism at High Tide and Ebb* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press), p.213

Scudder sought to connect the magazine with contemporary American life, through an emphasis on current affairs and contemporary literature. As an admirer of the literature of the founders, however, he tended to place more emphasis on the canonical works. He endeavored to preserve and propagate them in the age of industrial mass culture. This was represented in his choice of articles. He published the articles that criticized "the modern tendencies to treat old texts as academic-historical documents rather than sources of moral value and displace humanistic with scientific knowledge."³⁶ Importantly, this emphasis on the cultural past led to the publication of many articles on the traditional Eastern culture. Among them was Lafcadio's one. From 1891 to 1904, he contributed twenty five articles, which included such well-know writings as 'The Chief City of the Province of the Gods,' 'The Japanese Smile,' and 'In a Japanese Garden.' In them he often criticized the western culture and its civilization while admiring the oldness and simplicity of the Japanese culture. Fortunately for him, it was attuned to the editorial policy of the magazine. In 'In a Japanese Garden,' he compared the Japanese flower arrangement with that of the Western:

After having learned—merely by seeing, for the practical knowledge of the art requires years of study and experience, besides a natural, instinctive sense of beauty—something about the Japanese manner of arranging flowers, one can thereafter consider European ideas of floral decoration only as vulgarities...I cannot think now of what we Occidentals call a 'bouquet' as anything but a vulgar murdering of flowers, an outrage upon the colour-sense, a brutality, an abomination. Somewhat in the same way, and for similar reasons, after having

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.214

learned what an old Japanese garden is, I can remember our costliest gardens at home only as ignorant displays of what wealth can accomplish in the creation of incongruities that violate nature.³⁷

In another article titled 'The Genius of Japanese Civilization,' he revealed a sense of aversion to industrialized metropolises, saying that they were grim and dumb, and admired the simplicity of the Japanese way of living.

We must have meat and bread and butter; glass windows and fire; hats, white shirts, and woolen underwear; boots and shoes; trunks, bags, and boxes; bedsteads, mattresses, sheets, and blankets: all of which a Japanese can do without, and is really better off without... Yet even the linen shirt, the so-called "badge of a gentleman," is in itself a useless garment. It gives neither warmth nor comfort. It represents in our fashions the survival of something once a luxurious class distinction, but to-day meaningless and useless as the buttons sewn on the outside of coat-sleeves.³⁸

It was fortunate for him that the magazine was also looking to the past for values. Its cultural conservatism and resistance to the current provided him with a platform which allowed him to write the articles mentioned above. They got a favorable reception among the American readers. Ellery Sedgwick writes as follows:

For the next decade, Scudder and the *Atlantic's* audience delighted in Hearn's

³⁷ Lafcadio Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, Second Series (Gloucester: Dodo Press, 2007), p.2

³⁸ Lafcadio Hearn, *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life* (Boston and New York: Tuttle Publishing 1972), pp.31-32

account of a society that valued tradition, reflection, mysticism, and aesthetic beauty and therefore seemed the antithesis of the modern, scientific, materialistic, industrial culture in which they lived.³⁹

He had published three books on Japan until 1896, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, *Out of East*, and *Kokoro*. They were praised so highly among the American readers that they were published in Britain and other European countries. On the successes Lafcadio himself told in his letter:

My other books have had success in Europe as well as America;—the leading French review (“Revue des Deux Mondes”) had a long article about me; and the “Spectator,” the “Athenaeum,” the “Times” and other English journals have been kind.⁴⁰

First he gained a reputation among the American readers, and then, through it, he came to be connected to the English literary market, which was the center of the imperialism. His major books were published both in America and in London. In 1904, *Kwaidan* was published by Houghton, Mifflin and Company in Boston and New York. In the same year, its first UK edition was published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company in London.

³⁹ Ellery Sedgwick, *A History of the Atlantic Monthly 1857-1909: Yankee Humanism at High Tide and Ebb* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press) p.214

⁴⁰ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* III, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.26

(iii) The Case of Kipling

Lafcadio Hearn made the most of the development of the imperialism to be a writer. He travelled around the world, engaged in collecting materials, and wrote many ghost stories. When we consider the relationship between Lafcadio and the imperialism, it is useful to mention Rudyard Kipling, who, like Lafcadio, made the most of the development of the imperialism, and was regarded as one of the most imperialistic figures. Comparing them shall serve a great deal to reveal Lafcadio's attitude toward the imperialism more clearly. As a contemporary writer, Lafcadio had a great interest in Kipling. For example, in a letter to his friend, he praised Kipling, saying that:

I feel I still underrate Kipling. He grows bigger every day to me—looms up colossally—reaches out like a stupendous shadow, over half a planet at once. But oh! the hardness of the tone—the silent cynicism of facts—the self-repression—the “matter-of-course” way of seeing things—the extraordinary objectivity and incomprehensible subjectivity cruel as fate!... Goodness! how small it makes me to read that man; how blind I am—how stupid I am—what an egregious ass I am to waste a page upon what that mind hurls into half-a-line!⁴¹

Lafcadio and Kipling had a lot in common with each other. From the beginning, they were deeply linked to the British Empire. Lafcadio was born on Lefkada of the Ionian Islands, which was then under the British protection. His father, Charles

⁴¹ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters IV*, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.316

Bush Hearn, was a surgeon and officer of the British regiments. He was an Anglo-Irish from Dublin, whose father and grandfather was also army officers. Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India, in 1865, at a time when the country was one of the most important colonies of the Empire. He grew up in a white middle-class artistic family. His father, John Lockwood Kipling, was an arts and crafts teacher at the Jeejeebhoy School of Art. His mother, Alice, was a sister-in-law of the famous painter Edward Burne-Jones, who was one of the most important figures of the Pre-Raphaelites. His most famous relative was his first cousin, Stanely Baldwin, who became the Prime Minister three times in the 1920s and 1930s.

In the United States, Lafcadio worked hard to find scoops for his paper. In Cincinnati, he went deep into the life of the black laborers, and in New Orleans, he made every effort to collect the Creole traditions. In India, Rudyard started his career as a journalist. In 1882, he began to work on the *Civil and Military Gazette* and later on its sister paper, the *Pioneer*, where he engaged in collecting and editing the local news. As a journalist of the frontier, he also explored in the heart of India. In 1888, the *Pioneer* commissioned him to write a series of travel pieces about Rjputana, south of Delhi on the edge of the Bikaner Desert. Rjputana was one of the Native States, which were self-administering territories, officially independent, but recognizing the supreme authority of the British Government in India. He spent a month visiting the old Indian ruins such as Taj Mahal and Chitor, and produced some nineteen articles. They were serialized in the *Pioneer* and later collected in *From Sea to Sea*, a collection of travel pieces, which was published in 1899.

Rudyard made his debut as a professional writer by writing ghost stories, like Lafcadio. In addition to collecting and editing the local news, Rudyard contributed poems and ghost tales to his paper. The stories he wrote during 1888 were collected

into six volumes: *Under the Deodars*, *The Phantom' Rickshaw*, *Wee, Willie Winkie*, *Soldiers Three*, *The Story of the Gadsbys* and *In Black and White*. All of them were published in the Indian Railway Library and became an important step to get a connection with the literary market of London.

Lafcadio and Rudyard followed the almost same track to be a writer. Their ways of commitment to the imperialism, however, contrast with each other very strikingly. Here it is important to note that they travelled around the world in the opposite direction. Rudyard made an eastwards trip from India to London. Having gained great fame in India, he decided to go to London, the center of the literary world in the British Empire. In March, he left India and reached Liverpool in October 1889. During the trip, he visited Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, Canada, and the United States, and wrote travel sketches for the *Pioneer* that were collected in *From Sea to Sea*. Rudyard visited Japan. He visited Nagasaki, Kobe, Osaka, Kyoto, Yokohama, Nikko and Tokyo. In a letter to B.H. Chamberlain, Lafcadio compares his writing with that of Rudyard:

I hope Mason has preserved for you the pretty lines of Rudyard Kipling about the Daibustu at Kamakura. I enjoy him—not the poetry of the effort, but the prose of it. It is delicious. Alas! I had written my commonplace stuff about the Daibutsu long ago;—long before. Would I could atone for it now! But then Kipling is a giant in all things compared to me.⁴²

It is very interesting that they were in the same place around the same time. For Rudyard, however, Japan was only a point to pass. He soon left there. After Leaving

⁴² Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* III, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.347

Japan, he kept on travelling towards London. When his stories were published in the Indian Railway Library, Rudyard sent copies for review to London literary magazines. The market of the ghost story matured so fully in Britain that these stories could become an important step for him to be a professional writer. In London, he worked hard for the magazines, such as the *Macmillan's Magazine* and the *St James's Gazette*. His books were published both in Britain and the United States. Among them were included *The Phantom's Rickshaw, and other tales* (1890), *Life's Handicap* (1891), and *Traffics and Discoveries* (1904). Their exoticism fully satisfied the curiosity of the English readers.

With his poems and tales, Rudyard became the writer of the British Empire. The 1890s saw him at the height of his popularity. In 1893, he was nominated for the Poet Laureate following Tennyson's death in the previous year.⁴³ For him the year 1897 was that of the Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It was from this point that the popular imagination of Rudyard Kipling—a writer of the British Empire—began to take hold. For the Jubilee, he wrote a poem titled "The White Man's Burden." In the poem he urged the United States to take up the burden of the empire:

Take up the White Man's burden—
Send forth the best ye breed—
Go bind your son in exile
To serve your captive's need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered folk and wild—

⁴³ Harry Ricketts, *Rudyard Kipling: A Life* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishing, INC., 2001), pp.196-197

Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.⁴⁴

Although it allowed mixed interpretations, because of its theme and title, the poem has been looked on as an emblem of the Eurocentric racism and of the Western aspirations to dominate the developing world. The term “the white man’s burden” has been interpreted as imperialistic, and taken as a metaphor for the cultural and economic ascendancy of European nations. It proposes that the white people should have an obligation to rule over, and encourage the development of the people in the non-European nations to adopt the Western ways. This poem made him a kind of a spokesman of the British imperialism.

On the other hand, Lafcadio made a westwards trip from Greece to Japan. After leaving Greece, he moved to Ireland, London, the United States, the West Indies, and Japan. Unlike Rudyard, who moved from the frontier to the center of the imperialism, he moved from one frontier to another frontier. Even in Japan, which was the margin of the world, he kept moving towards the innermost of it. When Rudyard began to get a reputation in London, Lafcadio visited the outcasts in Matsue, who were called *yama-no-mono*, and engaged in collecting their traditions. They were strictly cut off from the nearby society, and did jobs such as the handling of rags, waste paper and junk. Persuading his friend Nishida to guide him, Lafcadio visited these people. He wrote an article for an English-language paper, the *Japan Mail*, which was published on June 1891. Three years later, he used the material for a talk at the Asiatic Society of Japan in Kobe. The article appeared again in his book, *Kokoro*, in 1896:

⁴⁴ Rudyard Kipling, *Rudyard Kipling: Selected Poems*, ed. Peter Keating (London: the Penguin Group, 2000), p.82

Few Japanese of the better class have ever visited such a village; and even the poorest of the common people shun the place as they would shun a center of contagion; for the idea of defilement, both moral and physical, is still attached to the very name of its inhabitants. Thus, although the settlement is within half an hour's walk from the heart of the city, probably not half a dozen of the thirty-six thousand residents of Matsue have visited it.... A crowd soon gathered to look at the strangers who had come to their village,—a rare event for them.... There were no exchanges of civilities, as upon meeting *heimin*; a Japanese of the better class would as soon think of taking off his hat to a *yama-no-mono* as a West-Indian planter would think of bowing to a negro.⁴⁵

Lafcadio talked to the people, watched their dances, and took down notes on their songs, like he did in New Orleans and the West Indies. He was particularly attracted to their dance called *Daikoku-mai*, on which he described as follows:

When the first three girls had sung a certain number of lines, the voices of the other three joined in, producing a very pleasant though untrained harmony; and all sang the burden together. Then the Daikoku party began another verse; and, after a certain interval, the chorus was again sung. In the mean while the old woman was dancing a very fantastic dance which provoked laughter from the crowd, occasionally chanting a few comic words.⁴⁶

The song that the dancers sang was entitled 'Yaoya O-Shichi.' It was a ballad about

⁴⁵ Lafcadio Hearn, *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life* (Boston and New York: Tuttle Publishing 1972), pp.327-331

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.333-334

a girl who set fire on her own house because of her lover, and was condemned to be burnt alive.

In 1890s, Rudyard got at the top of the career in London, where he was hailed as the national poet, and became the writer of the imperialism. Around the same time, Lafcadio also came to the turning point of his career. In 1896 he became a Japanese citizen and took the name Yakumo Koizumi and began to retell Japanese stories, which resulted in *Kwaidan*. Both Rudyard and Lafcadio were fully connected to the development of the imperialism to be a writer. Rudyard very consciously made the most of it. During the period when he was hailed as the greatest writer of the Empire, the British imperialism was at its highest.

Lafcadio followed the same track as Rudyard to be a writer. In this regard he was undoubtedly an imperialist as much as Rudyard was. The one and only difference was that Lafcadio remained on the frontier. This fact has a great significance when we consider his way of commitment to the imperialism. As the route of his traveling shows, Lafcadio was trying to go away from the center of the imperialism. In fact Japan was the farthest away from the center of the British Empire. The act of naturalization also makes a big difference between Lafcadio and Rudyard. It would be impossible for Rudyard, who had to be at the center of the Empire, to throw away his nationality. It can be said that becoming Yakumo Koizumi was, as it were, Lafcadio's last effort to deny being an imperialist, although he could not escape from the imperialism to the end. He was, as it were, a reluctant imperialist.

Chapter III: *Kwaidan*

(i) Process

Kwaidan was published in 1904. It was the year when the author died. The fact that Lafcadio wrote it in his last years has a great significance for us to discuss the making of it. He visited Japan as a travel writer. During his stay, he shifted from writing travel sketches to retelling old Japanese tales.

Lafcadio came to Japan in 1890. He visited many different places such as Kamakura, Enoshima, Kizuki in Matsue, and the Oki Islands. His experiences resulted in *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* and *Out of the East*. Both of them were a collection of travel sketches and essays on Japan. *Glimpses* particularly received a favorable reception among the readers. It had the third edition within the year of the publication and was translated into several languages. He happily introduced the country to his readers:

It is with the delicious surprise of the first journey through Japanese streets...that one first receives the real sensation of being in the Orient, in the Far East so much read of, so long dreamed of, yet, as the eyes bear witness, heretofore all unknown. There is a romance even in the first full consciousness of this rather commonplace fact; but for me this consciousness is transfigured inexpressibly by the divine beauty of the day.⁴⁷

In 1895 he moved from Kumamoto to Kobe in order to work as the editorial writer of the *Kobe Chronicle*. In Kobe he decided to change his nationality. In 1891,

⁴⁷ Lafcadio Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, First Series (Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2006), p.8

he married Setsu Koizumi. By the law at that time, when an English man married a Japanese woman, she had to become an English citizen. In addition, he had his first son Kazuo in 1893. Lafcadio wished his son to be a Japanese citizen; then he had to register him in his mother's name. If he registered the son in his name, he would become a foreigner. He says in his letter that 'By becoming myself a Japanese citizen, everything would be settled.'⁴⁸

In order to become a Japanese citizen, he had to be adapted by a Japanese family. He was therefore to take his wife's name, Koizumi. He chose his first name Yakumo for himself. Lafcadio himself explained to his friend:

I am writing every day for the sanction of the minister to change my name; and I think it will come soon. This will make me Koizumi Yakumo, or—arranging the personal and family names in English order— "Y. Koizumi." "Eight clouds" is the meaning of "Yakumo," and is the first part of the most ancient poem extant in the Japanese language...Well, "Yakumo" is a poetical alternative for Izumo, my beloved province, "the Place of the Issuing of Clouds." You will understand how the name was chosen.⁴⁹

It is important to note here that he began to think about his naturalization as early as 1891 when he married Setsu Koizumi. It took some five years for him to decide to become a Japanese citizen. Changing the nationality was not easy even for Lafcadio, who was a racial and cultural hybrid. In fact it was a great loss for him. Having been a British subject, he could travel around the world for his writings. As we have seen above and in the previous sections, travelling was indispensable for him as a

⁴⁸ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* II, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.267

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.384-385

writer. Changing the nationality meant that he lost the privilege as a travel writer.

He began to write his retold tales after the naturalization. In fact, around this time, he showed an interest in writing stories:

One little story which would never die, might suffice—or a volume of little stories.... I might write an essay on some topic of which I am now quite ignorant—by studying the subject for the necessary time. But a story cannot be written by the help of study at all.... It must be a “sensation” in one’s own life—and not peculiar to any place or time.⁵⁰

He moved from Kobe to Tokyo. As soon as arriving there however, he revealed his hatred towards it:

In this Tokyo, this detestable Tokyo, there are no Japanese impressions to be had except at rare intervals. To describe to you the place would be utterly impossible—more easy to describe a province.⁵¹

Although he hated the city so much, it was in Tokyo that Lafcadio made almost all of his retold tales. There he got the teaching post as lecturer at the Tokyo Imperial University. There were such notable foreign scholars as Raphael Koeber and Karl Adolf Florenz. Among them was Ernest Fenollosa, the famous scholar of the Japanese art. Lafcadio heard a story called “Mountain of Skulls.” Based on it he made “Fragment,” which was one of his earliest retold tales. He writes to Fenollosa:

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.359

⁵¹ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* III, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.64

As for the Mountain of Skulls—yes: I have written it—about seven or eight times over; but it still refuses to give the impression I feel, and can't define—the impression that floated into my brain with the soft-flowing voice of the teller. I shall try again later; but, although I feel tolerably sure about the result, nothing but very hard work will develop the thing. Had I only eleven more stories of such quality, what a book could be made out of them! Still, it is quite impossible that a dozen such tales could exist. I read all the Jatakas to no purpose: one makes such a find only by the rarest and most unexpected chance.⁵²

The story was collected in *In Ghostly Japan* (1899). The book also contains “Ingwa-Banashi,” which Lafcadio made for the first time by drawing on a Japanese text, *Hyaku-Monogatari*. After *In Ghostly Japan*, his book came to be made mostly from retold tales. “Ingwa Banashi,” and “A Passional Karma,” in *In Ghostly Japan*, “The Reconciliation,” and “The Corpse-Rider,” in *Shadowings* (1900), and “Of a Promise Kept,” “Of a Promise Broken,” and “The Story of Kwashin Koji” in *A Japanese Miscellany* (1901) were the prime examples of them. In 1902 Lafcadio published his ninth book on Japan, *Kotto*.

Lafcadio sent Setsu to Kabuki and other theaters, and when she came back, he asked her to tell the plot of the plays for him. He also sent her to secondhand book stores in Kanda to get old story books. In her memoir, Setsu says:

Hearn was extremely fond of ghost stories, and he used to say, “Books of ghost stories are my treasures.” I hunted for them from one second-hand bookstore to another...He asked me not to fail to see the play by Danjuro. When I came

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.117

back from those plays, I would have to tell him all about the stage, the audience, and all the details. He would listen most attentively and delightedly.⁵³

For example, “A Passional Karma” comes from the well known drama *Botan-Doro*. “The Reconciliation” is a story of a young samurai who visits his former wife, who turns out to have died a few years before. The story is from *Konjyaku-Monogatari*. “The Story of Kwashin Koji” comes from a tale in *Yaso-Kidan*, which was published in 1894. “The Legend of Yurei-Daki” in *Kotto* is based on an article in a magazine, the *Bungei-Kurabu*, which was published in 1901.

In 1902, Lafcadio had a Japanese style house built in rural neighborhood in Nishi-Okubo. There he increasingly shut himself in his room, worked on writings more eagerly than ever, and began to make *Kwaidan*. He intently collected Japanese weird tales in every opportunity not only from books but also from the people he met. He tried to get stories from whoever visited his house, such as a shopkeeper, a workman, a farmer, a pilgrim and a beggar. For example, according to Lafcadio himself, “Yuki-Onna” was told to him by a farmer who was from Chofu.⁵⁴ To make *Kwaidan*, he collected some twelve Japanese texts—such as *Gayu-Kidan*, *Tama-Sudare*, *Yaso-Kidan*, and *Hyaku-Monogatari*. Having known that his wife was an excellent teller, Lafcadio urged her to talk about the stories which he had collected:

On quiet nights, after lowering the wick of the lamp, I would begin to tell ghost

⁵³ Setsuko Koizumi, *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*, trans. from the Japanese by Paul Kiyoshi Hisada and Frederick Johnson (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2008), p.62

⁵⁴ in the Preface for *Kwaidan*

stories. Hearn would ask questions with bated breath, and would listen to my tales with a terrified air.⁵⁵

With the help of his wife, he made fourteen ghost stories. Among them were such well known tales as “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi,” “Oshidori,” “Mujina,” and “Rokuro-Kubi.” He finished *Kwaidan* in 1902, and it was published in 1904. For the making of it, he made the most of his ability which he had developed in his American days. In New Orleans, he became attracted to the Creoles there and intently collected their traditions. After leaving New Orleans he traveled to the West Indies, where he also collected songs, proverbs, and folklores. Lafcadio came to Japan as an expert collector, and displayed his ability, gathering numerous Japanese songs, proverbs, legends, and ghost stories for his books.

⁵⁵ Setsuko Koizumi, *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*, trans. from the Japanese by Paul Kiyoshi Hisada and Frederick Johnson (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2008), p.36

(ii) A Kind of Translation

One of the most important characteristics of *Kwaidan* is that it was a retold story. Retelling is the mixture of translation and creation. It has in common with translation. It also has original texts and aims to convey their meanings to the readers who cannot understand the originals. Lafcadio was a competent translator of French literature. In New Orleans, while editing his papers, he energetically introduced to his readers those works by Gautier, Flaubert, Maupassant, Anatole France, and Pierre Loti.

His competence as a translator is shown clearly in Japanese stories. He made them for English readers. But it was quite difficult for them to understand the Japanese culture and custom at that time. Lafcadio often puts his comment into the story so that they can understand the background of it. For example, in "Of a Mirror and a Bell" in *Kwaidan*, he explains a Japanese word in detail. In this story, a woman contributes her mirror to the temple, to be used for making a big bell. Afterwards she regrets it. However it is impossible for her to get back the mirror, because she doesn't have enough money to give the priests in place of the mirror. When all the mirrors contributed for the bell have been sent to the furnace, the priests discover that only her mirror won't melt. They say that it is because she has not presented her offering with all her heart, and her selfish soul makes it difficult for them to melt the mirror in the furnace. The woman becomes very ashamed, and eventually drowns herself after having written a letter which says that to the person who breaks the bell by ringing it, great wealth will be given by the ghost of her. Having read the letter, the people went to ring the bell one after another. The noise is so annoying that the priests get rid of the bell and roll it into a swamp. But persons who regret the loss of it begin to strike and break objects imaginatively

substituted for the bell. To describe this behavior, Lafcadio takes up the Japanese word *nazoraëru*, and explains it:

The word itself cannot be adequately rendered by any English word; for it is used in relation to many kinds of mimetic magic, as well as in relation to the performance of many religious acts of faith. Common meanings of *nazoraëru*, according to dictionaries, are “to imitate,” “to compare,” “to liken;” but the esoteric meaning is *to substitute, in imagination, one object or action for another, so as to bring about some magical or miraculous result.*⁵⁶

Lafcadio devoted much space to the explanation of the social and historical background of the story. For example, at the beginning of “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi,” he described in detail the history of the battle between the Genji and the Heike, and added copious notes to the text. As a translator, he skillfully retold Japanese stories so that his readers could understand and enjoy them fully. This has a great significance when we consider the imperialistic aspect of the making of *Kwaidan*. In the previous sections we have discussed the Great Exhibition as an emblem of the prosperity of the British Empire. Lafcadio collected many exotic tales, and displayed them to his readers in Britain and America by way of retelling. In this regard the making of *Kwaidan* was very imperialistic.

While it has a lot in common with translation, retelling was also a creation for Lafcadio. Fully expanding his imagination, he made “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi” from an old short story. Hōichi is a blind man who is famous for his skill in recitation and in playing the *biwa*. One night, a *samurai* comes to

⁵⁶ Lafcadio Hearn, *Kwaidan*, ed. Rintaro Fukuhara (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1953), pp.36-37

order him to play the *biwa* for his lord, who is “a person of exceedingly high rank.”⁵⁷ Obeying the order, he goes with the samurai. They arrive at a large gate. There the samurai stops and says a Japanese word which means “Open the Door.” Lafcadio rewrote the scene again and again. His wife says as follows:

He thought that “*Mon o aké*” (Open the door) was not an emphatic enough for a samurai, and he made it “*Kaimon*.” (This latter word means “Open the door,” like the former, but would be more fitting in the speaker’s mouth.)⁵⁸

Lafcadio also portrays the thoughts and feelings of Hōichi, and reveals clearly his character, which cannot be found in the original text. Conducted by the samurai towards the house, Hōichi reflects on the situation:

Hōichi donned his sandals, took his *biwa*, and went away with the stranger, who guided him deftly, but obliged him to walk very fast. The hand that guided was iron; and the clank of the warrior’s stride proved him fully armed,—probably some palace—guard on duty. Hōichi’s first alarm was over: he began to imagine himself in good luck:—for, remembering the retainer’s assurance about a “person of exceedingly high rank,” he thought that the lord who wished to hear the recitation could not be less than a daimyo of the first class.⁵⁹

It is interesting that Hōichi’s first fear gradually shifts to the hope of his success.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p.4

⁵⁸ Setsuko Koizumi, *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*, trans. from the Japanese by Paul Kiyoshi Hisada and Frederick Johnson (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2008), p.38

⁵⁹ Lafcadio Hearn, *Kwaidan*, ed. Rintaro Fukuhara (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1953), p.5

Lafcadio describes the process so well that it becomes easier for us to feel familiar with his character. In her memoir Setsu speaks on his attitude towards the writing:

For example, take the story “Okatsu San of Yurei-dake,” in the first part of the book, “Kotto.” As I was narrating that story, his face became extremely pale and his eyes fixed. That was not unusual, but this once I suddenly felt afraid. He sighed one long breath, and said, “Very interesting!” when I finished it. He asked me to say, “Alas! blood!” and repeat it several times. He inquired how it had probably been said, and in what tone of voice; what kind of night it was, and how the wooden clogs would sound. “I think it was in this way,” he would say; “how do you think yourself?” and so forth,—all of this was not at all in the book,—and he would consult with me about it.⁶⁰

He rearranged old stories again and again, subtracting what he found unnecessary, and putting new flesh on them. Retelling required the full functioning of his creativity.

As was observed above, retelling is a very ambiguous form of literature, which lies between translation and creation. This has an interesting analogy to the life of Lafcadio, who was always wandering back and forth between an imperialist and an anti-imperialist. All his life he tried to go away from the center of the imperialism. As the making of *Kwaidan* shows, however, he got involved in the tide of the imperialism to the end. For our consideration of Lafcadio Hearn as a reluctant imperialist, it is also necessary to note that retelling is a reconstitution of original texts. Strictly speaking, it is impossible to be entirely original in the writing or the

⁶⁰Setsuko Koizumi, *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*, trans. from the Japanese by Paul Kiyoshi Hisada and Frederick Johnson (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2008), p.37

telling of a story: a story one makes is inevitably a reconstitution of the already written or told. All the writer can do is to re-develop preexisting materials. To retell a story, as it were, is to challenge the literary idea of the author as an originator of a story. In this regard, retelling as an art form which was a very suitable for Lafcadio Hearn, a reluctant imperialist, who became a Japanese citizen to refuse his origin as a British subject.

(iii) A Kind of Oral Literature

Retelling was an ambiguous form of literature, which hung between translation and creation. It was suitable for Lafcadio, who is also an ambiguous man, a reluctant imperialist. Another important characteristic of *Kwaidan* is that it is a kind of oral literature. In oral literature, the storyteller transmits stories to their listeners in spoken form rather than through writing or printing. Most pre-literate societies had a tradition of oral literature. It includes short folk tales, myths, legend, and riddles, as well as longer narratives. As an ancient form of literature, it can be considered to be opposed to the more constructed short story, which is the product of modernization. Oral storytelling was a very suitable form of literature for Lafcadio. While the imperialistic behaviors permeate the life of Lafcadio—travelling around, collecting materials, and writing ghost stories—he always showed an antipathy towards the modernization of the West.

Whenever he went to a modernized city, he portrayed it with disgust. When he visited New York in 1899, he cursed the city, saying that “The city drives me crazy, or, if you prefer, crazier; and I have no peace of mind or rest of body till I get out of it,”⁶¹ and showed his longing for primitiveness:

I want to get back among the monkeys and the parrots, under a violet shy among green peaks and an eternally lilac and lukewarm sea—where clothing is superfluous and reading too much of exertion—where everybody sleeps fourteen hours out of twenty-four. This is frightful, nightmarish, devilish!

⁶¹ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* II, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.70

Civilization is a hideous thing. Blessed is savagery!⁶²

Even in Japan, his hatred for modernization never ceased. In Kobe he was tired of its westernization. In Tokyo he complained that “there were no Japanese impressions to be had.”⁶³ In “Hōrai,” he compared Japan to *Hōrai*, a legendary mountain in China, and worried about the future of Japan, which was rapidly being modernized:

— Evil winds from the West are blowing over; Hōrai and the magical atmosphere, alas! is shrinking away before them. It lingers now in patches only, and bands,—like those long bright bands of cloud that trail across the landscapes of Japanese painters...Remember that Hōrai is also called Shinkirō, which signifies Mirage, the Vision of the Intangible. And the Vision is fading, —never again to appear save in pictures and poems and dreams...⁶⁴

For Lafcadio the making of *Kwaidan* was an ideal process of creating a story. As he could not use Japanese well, he asked his wife to translate the stories he collected. Lafcadio was very sensitive to voice and sound. He had been blind in the left eye because of an accident which he had in his school days. He showed a particular fascination with the ditties of black laborers in Cincinnati, and the Creole songs in New Orleans. He was writing with ears, not eyes. As a good listener, Lafcadio listened to the voice of Setsu with much interest and attention:

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.70

⁶³ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* III, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.64

⁶⁴ Lafcadio Hearn, *Kwaidan*, ed. Rintaro Fukuhara (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1953), pp.121-122

When I told him the old tales, I always first gave the plot roughly; and where he found an interesting place, he made a note of it. Then he would ask me to give the details, and often to repeat them. If I told him the story by reading it from a book, he would say, "There is no use of your reading it from the book. I prefer your own words and phrases—all from your own thought. Otherwise, it won't do." Therefore I had to assimilate the story before telling it.⁶⁵

Lafcadio inquired repeatedly about the words that stimulated his inspiration. He asked her to describe in detail how they had been said, and in what tone of voice. Based on it, he rearranged and made his own stories.

Oral storytelling is a very personal and intimate form of literature. When a story is told, the teller expresses himself through telling the story, and shares it with the listeners. The listeners also reveal themselves through their reception of the story. The intimacy between the teller and the listeners makes oral literature flexible. It allows the story to be arranged freely according to the request of the listeners, and the location or environment of the telling. This characteristic of oral storytelling applies to the case of Lafcadio and Setsu. When Lafcadio heard ghost stories from Setsu, he often lowered the wick of the lamp. Setsu naturally emphasized the exciting parts of the stories. They shared the creative process of making a story. Setsu says:

We both knew the heroine of the "Diary of a Woman" in "Kotto," and we kept the secret and never mentioned her name, but we often took an offering of incense and flowers to her grave.

⁶⁵ Setsuko Koizumi, *Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*, trans. from the Japanese by Paul Kiyoshi Hisada and Frederick Johnson (Montana: Kessinger Publishing, 2008), pp.36-37

While writing "Tanabata" Hearn wept, and I wept also, and thus we completed that book.⁶⁶

Setsu played a very important role in the making of the retold works of Lafcadio. Without her, it would have been impossible for him to make *Kwaidan*.

Setsu Koizumi was born in 1868 as a daughter of the Koizumi family in Matsue. The family belonged to the class of samurai. After the Restoration, they had declined rapidly because of the lack of ability to make a living in the wholly changed world. Unfortunately, the young Setsu was compelled to leave school at the age of eleven. She married Lafcadio in 1891, and soon began to help his work by telling him old Japanese stories. She was ashamed of her lack of higher education. Then Lafcadio comforted her, saying that if she would be a woman with higher education, she would deride ghost stories and weird tales as a mere fancy. It was the homeliness and artlessness of her speech that Lafcadio needed for his writing. In fact, he began to consider more critically his own style, and struggled to gain simplicity. He wrote to Chamberlain in a letter in 1893:

After years of studying poetical prose, I am forced now to study simplicity. After attempting my utmost at ornamentation, I am converted by my own mistakes. The great point is to touch with simple words. And I feel my style is not yet fixed,—too artificial. By another year of study or two, I think I shall be able to do better.⁶⁷

In the tales of his last years, he got simpler and simpler. He often used common

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.40

⁶⁷ Lafcadio Hearn, *The Writings of Lafcadio Hearn: Life and Letters* III, ed. Elizabeth Bisland (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), p.384

verbs and nouns. He showed a special liking for the sentence that was succinct and direct. He put it into practice most successfully in *Kwaidan*. Here is a noted paragraph from “The Story of Mimi-Nashi-Hōichi.”:

At that instant Hōichi felt his ears gripped by fingers of iron, and torn off! Great as the pain was, he gave no cry. The heavy footfalls receded along the veranda,—descended into the garden,—passed out to the roadway,—ceased. From either side of his head, the blind man felt a thick warm trickling; but he dared not lift his head.⁶⁸

“Oshidori,” is a story about a hunter named Sonjō, who saw a pair of *oshidori*, and killed it. Later the hunter felt an inner summons to revisit the same place:

...and there, when he came to the river-bank, he saw the female *oshidori* swimming alone. In the same moment the bird perceived Sonjo; but, instead of trying to escape, she swam straight towards him, looking at him the while in a strange fixed way. Then, with her own beak, she suddenly tore open her own body, and died before the hunter' eyes...

Sonjō shaved his head, and became a priest.⁶⁹

Lafcadio really mastered his style in *Kwaidan*, and as we have seen above, it owed a great deal to the simple storytelling of Setsu.

Lafcadio was a writer with limitations. He was not good at inventing a well-made plot, and begged his friends to tell the stories so that he could have

⁶⁸ Lafcadio Hearn, *Kwaidan*, ed. Rintaro Fukuhara (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1953) p.14

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.19

something to write about. He had little power of construction beyond the limits of a short essay or a folk tale. In his novelettes like *Chita* and *Youma*, the atmosphere is more important than the story. They are collections of shorter pieces that might have appeared in the magazines. Even in making *Kwaidan*, he had some difficulty. He could not read Japanese classical books. Setsu could hardly speak English. Setsu found it hard to put into words what she wanted to say when she told Japanese stories to Lafcadio. His retelling was necessarily limited by these linguistic difficulties. This is the greatest difference between the books he wrote in America and *Kwaidan*.

In his New Orleans days, Lafcadio wrote two books, *Stray Leaves from Strange Literature* and *Some Chinese Ghost*. Both of them were a collection of retold tales which came from foreign legends. The former was a collection of tales which came from the Egyptian, Hindu, Finnish, Arabic and Jewish legends. The latter was also a collection of supernatural tales from Chinese legends. As he could read French, he retold these tales with the help of French translations. Using the written texts, he could more clearly know which tales to choose and which details to emphasize. Ironically, however, the books are not regarded as his best retold works.

In Japan, hardly speaking the language, Lafcadio depended on oral literature. He became more sensitive to the voice of Setsu. It was her own words that he needed for his writing. This is clearly shown in his remark that "There is no use of your reading it from the book. I prefer your own words and phrases—all from your own thought. Otherwise, it won't do." The speech of Setsu gave his tales homeliness and simplicity, which is a remarkable feature of *Kwaidan*. Compared with the more sophisticated modern short stories, it seems rather artless and immature. But it is these elements that allow a dozen of translations of *Kwaidan* particularly in Japan, and thus make it a classic.

Conclusion

In this paper we have discussed Lafcadio Hearn as a reluctant imperialist. The nineteenth century was the age of the imperialism. The European powers founded their colonies all over the world. This led to the rapid development of transportation system and the vogue of collecting exotic materials. Lafcadio was part of this pan-European movement; nevertheless, we usually hesitate to regard him as an imperialistic figure. It is because he committed to it reluctantly. While being fully involved in the expansion of the imperialism, he tried to go away from the center of it all his life. In Japan, he finally refused his origin as a British when he assumed a Japanese citizenship and even a Japanese name, Yakumo Koizumi.

In Chapter II, we have compared Lafcadio with Rudyard Kipling. Both of them were born in the frontier of the British Empire, traveled around the world, and wrote many ghost stories. Their way of commitment to the imperialism, however, were quite different. Rudyard went to the center of the Empire straightforwardly and became the most exponent writer of the imperialism. Compared with him, Lafcadio had a relation to the imperialism very ambiguously. He distanced himself from the Empire and always moved towards the frontiers of it. In the nineteenth century, various writers committed to the imperialism in their own way. Among them Lafcadio and Rudyard, as it were, stand at the other end of the spectrum of the imperialism each other. Rudyard willingly resigned himself to the development of the imperialism. Lafcadio was reluctantly involved in it. Considering the relationship between Lafcadio and the imperialism would give us a better understanding of the wide spectrum of the imperialism itself.

Lafcadio's literary output was immense. The best of them are folktales adapted from various foreign literatures. It took many years for him to make the works for

which he is now remembered. Even the books he wrote in New Orleans had not yet been his mature writings. It was not until after his first years in Japan that he really mastered a subject and style. *Kwaidan* was a culmination of what he had been developing since his early years. To make the book, he showed his ability as a collector. We tend to regard his works as mere translation, but it was more than that, as become apparent when we see how Lafcadio produced them.

As we have seen in Chapter III, one of the most striking features of *Kwaidan* was that it was a retold work. Retelling was the mixture of translation and creation. To retell a foreign story, the reteller has to be able to read the original text. Lafcadio was not able to read Japanese well, and Setsu could hardly speak English. The making of his retold tales was limited by their linguistic difficulties. Fortunately for Lafcadio, however, this led to a happy outcome. To compensate what he could not understand, he used fully his imagination. He rewrote a story many times with the flexibility of oral literature. This arrangement and rearrangement made his works more than mere translation. The analysis of his way of retelling gives us a useful hint about what the originality and the creativity of literature. We usually set the creation of a story above translation or retelling of it. It is meaningful that Lafcadio made *Kwaidan* in his last years. It took him a lot of trouble to be able to retell Japanese stories. This means that retelling a story, in a sense, is more difficult than creating it. Through studying his retelling, we can rediscover the importance of translation and retelling in literature.

There were many writers and scholars who attempted to mediate between Japan and the outside world. Of them Lafcadio Hearn has always been regarded as pre-eminent by the Japanese themselves. How this came about is due in great part to the attitude with which he viewed the country. He had a respect for the Japanese, cherished their traditions, and embraced their way of life. Even today, Japanese

publishing houses regularly reissue his works, which are rightly considered one of the classics. Abroad, such works as his *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, *Out of the East* or *Kokoro* are translated into a dozen languages and widely admired for their insight into the Japanese life. As we have seen in this paper, however, Lafcadio Hearn is a very ambiguous figure to discuss. He always hung between an imperialist and an anti-imperialist. As a writer, he dedicated himself to retelling a story, as if he tried to refuse his own originality. To label him simply as a mediator of Japanese culture, however, diminish his achievements. His ambiguity as a reluctant imperialist may be seen as a positive literary event, which gave us a group of works having a wealth of originality and literary imagination.

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