

## II.

## THE ABORIGINES.\*

IN seeking the origin of the Japanese people, we must take into consideration the geographical position of their island chain, with reference to its proximity to the main-land, and its situation in the ocean currents. Japanese traditions and history may have much to tell us concerning the present people of Japan—whether they are exclusively an indigenous race, or the composite of several ethnic stocks. From a study, however imperfect, of the language, physiognomy, and bodily characteristics, survivals of ancient culture, historic geology, and the relics of man's struggle with nature in the early ages, and of the actual varieties of mankind now included within the mikado's dominions,† we may learn much of the ancestors of the present Japanese.

The horns of the crescent-shaped chain of Dai Nippon approach the Asiatic continent at the southern end of Corea and at Siberia. Nearly the whole of Saghalin is within easy reach of the continent by canoe. At the point called Norato, a little north of the fifty-second parallel, the opposite shore, but five miles distant, is easily seen. The water is here so shallow that junks can not cross it at low tide. After long prevalent favorable winds, the ground is left dry, and the

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\* I use the term "aborigines" for the sake of convenience, being by no means absolutely sure that those I so designate were the first people *in situ*. It has been conjectured and held by some native scholars that there was in Japan a pre-Ainō civilization; though of this there is scarcely a shadow of proof, as there is proof for an ancient Malay civilization higher than the present condition of the Malays. By the term "aborigines" I mean the people found on the soil at the dawn of history.

† In compiling this chapter I have used, in addition to my own material and that derived from Japanese books, students, and residents in Yezo, the careful notes of the English travelers, Captains Bridgeford and Blakiston, and Mr. Ernest Satow, and the reports and verbal accounts of the American engineers and geologists in the service of the Kai Takū Shi (Department for the Development of Yezo), organized in 1869 by the Imperial Government of Japan. Of these latter, I am especially indebted to Professors B. S. Lyman, Henry S. Munroe, and Thomas Antisell, M.D.

each governed by a head-man. Conquering first the aborigines of Kiushiu and Shikokū, they advanced into the main island, fought and tranquilized the Ainōs, then called Ebisū, or barbarians, and fixed their capital not far from Kiōto. The Ainōs were not subjugated in a day, however, and continual military operations were necessary to keep them quiet. Only after centuries of fighting were they thoroughly subdued and tranquilized. The traveler to-day in the northern part of the main island may see the barrows of the Ainōs' bones slain by Japanese armies more than a millennium ago. One of these mounds, near Moriōka, in Rikuchiu, very large, and named "Yezo mori" (Ainō mound), is especially famous, containing the bones of the aborigines slaughtered, heaps upon heaps, by the Japanese shōgun (general), Tamura, who was noted for being six feet high, and for his many bloody victories over the Ebisū.

For centuries more, the distinction between conquerors and conquered, as between Saxon and Norman in England, was kept up; but at length the fusion of races was complete, and the homogeneous Japanese people is the result. The remnants of Ainōs in Yezo, shut off by the straits of Tsugarū from Hondo, have preserved the aboriginal blood in purity.

The traditional origin of the Ainōs, said to be given by themselves, though I suspect the story to be an invention of the conquerors, or of the Japanese, is as follows: A certain prince, named Kamui, in one of the kingdoms in Asia, had three daughters. One of them having become the object of the incestuous passion of her father, by which her body became covered with hair, quit his palace in the middle of the night, and fled to the sea-shore. There she found a deserted canoe, on board which was only a large dog. The young girl resolutely embarked with her only companion to journey to some place in the East. After many months of travel, the young princess reached an uninhabited place in the mountains, and there gave birth to two children, a boy and a girl. These were the ancestors of the Ainō race. Their offspring in turn married, some among each other, others with the bears of the mountains. The fruits of this latter union were men of extraordinary valor, and nimble hunters, who, after a long life spent in the vicinity of their birth, departed to the far north, where they still live on the high and inaccessible table-lands above the mountains; and, being immortal, they direct, by their magical influences, the actions and the destiny of men, that is, the Ainōs.

The term "Ainō" is a comparatively modern epithet, applied by the

Japanese. Its derivation, as given by several eminent native scholars whom I have consulted, is from *inu*, a dog. Others assert that it is an abbreviation of *ai no ko*, "offspring of the middle;" that is, a breed between man and beast. Or, if the Japanese were believers in a theory called of late years the "Darwinian," an idea by no means unknown in their speculations, the Ainōs would constitute the "missing link," or "intermediate" between man and the brutes. In the ancient Japanese literature, and until probably the twelfth century, the Ainōs were called *Ebisū*, or savages.

The proofs from language of the Ainō ancestry of the Japanese are very strong. So far as studied, the Ainō tongue and the Altai dialects are said to be very similar. The Ainō and Japanese languages differ no more than certain Chinese dialects do from each other. Ainōs and Japanese have little difficulty in learning to speak the language of each other. The most ancient specimens of the Japanese tongue are found to show as great a likeness to the Ainō as to modern Japanese.

Further proofs of the general habitation of Hondo by the Ainōs appear in the geographical names which linger upon the mountains and rivers. These names, musical in sound, and possessing, in their significance, a rude grandeur, have embalmed the life of a past race, as the sweet names of "Juniata" and "Altamaha," or the sonorous onomatopoes of "Niagara," "Katahdin," and "Tuscarora" echo the ancient glories of the well-nigh extinct aborigines of America, who indeed may be brethren of the Ainōs. These names abounding in the north, especially in the provinces north of the thirty-eighth parallel, are rare in the south, and in most cases have lost their exact ancient pronunciation by being for centuries spoken by Japanese tongues.

The evidences of an aboriginal race are still to be found in the relics of the Stone Age in Japan. Flint, arrow and spear heads, hammers, chisels, scrapers, kitchen refuse, and various other trophies, are frequently excavated, or may be found in the museum or in homes of private persons. Though covered with the soil for centuries, they seem as though freshly brought from an Ainō hut in Yezo. In scores of striking instances, the very peculiar ideas, customs, and superstitions, of both Japanese and Ainō, are the same, or but slightly modified.

Amidst many variations, two distinctly marked types of features are found among the Japanese people. Among the upper classes, the fine, long, oval face, with prominent, well-chiseled features, deep-sunken eye-sockets, oblique eyes, long, drooping eyelids, elevated and arch-

ed eyebrows, high and narrow forehead, rounded nose, bud-like mouth, pointed chin, small hands and feet, contrast strikingly with the round, flattened face, less oblique eyes almost level with the face, and straight noses, expanded and upturned at the roots. The former type prevails among the higher classes—the nobility and gentry; the latter, among the agricultural and laboring classes. The one is the Ainō, or northern type; the other, the southern, or Yamato type. In the accom-



The High and the Low Type of the Japanese Face—Aristocratic and Plebeian. (Lady and Maid-servant.)

panying cut this difference is fairly shown in the strongly contrasting types of the Japanese lady and her servant, or child's nurse. The modern Ainōs are found inhabiting the islands of Yezo, Saghalin, the Kuriles, and a few of the outlying islands. They number less than twenty thousand in all.

As the Ainō of to-day is and lives, so Japanese art and traditions depict him in the dawn of history: of low stature, thick-set, full-bearded, bushy hair of a true black, eyes set at nearly right angles with the nose, which is short and thick, and chipped at the end, muscular in frame and limbs, with big hands and feet. His language, religion, dress, and general manner of life are the same as of old. He has no alphabet, no writing, no numbers above a thousand. His rice, tobacco, and pipe, cotton garments, and worship of Yoshitsuné, are of course later innovations—steps in the scale of civilization. Since the Restoration of 1868, a number of Ainōs of both sexes have been liv-

ing in Tōkiō, under instruction of the Kai Takū Shi (Department for the Colonization of Yezo). I have had frequent opportunities of studying their physical characteristics, language, and manners.

Their dwellings in Yezo are made of poles covered over with thick straw mats, with thatched roofs, the windows and doors being holes covered with the same material. The earth beaten down hard forms the floor, on which a few coarse mattings or rough boards are laid. Many of the huts are divided into two apartments, separated by a mud and wattle partition. The fire-place, with its pot-hooks, occupies the centre. There being no chimney, the interior walls become thickly varnished with creosote, densely packed with flakes of carbon, or festooned with masses of soot. They are adorned with the implements of the chase, and the skulls of animals taken in hunting. Scarcely any furniture except cooking-pots is visible. The empyreumatical odor and the stench of fish do not conspire to make the visit to an Ainō hut very pleasant.

Raised benches along two walls of the hut afford a sleeping or lounging place, doubtless the original of the *tokonoma* of the modern Japanese houses. They sit, like the Japanese, on their heels. Their food is mainly fish and sea-weed, with rice, beans, sweet-potatoes, millet, and barley, which, in Southern Yezo, they cultivate in small plots. They obtain rice, tobacco, saké, or rice-beer, an exhilarating beverage which they crave as the Indians do "fire-water," and cotton clothing from their masters, the Japanese. The women weave a coarse, strong, and durable cloth, ornamented in various colors, and ropes from the barks of trees. They make excellent dug-out canoes from elm-trees. Their dress consists of an under, and an upper garment having tight sleeves and reaching to the knees, very much like that of the Japanese. The woman's dress is longer, and the sleeves wider. They wear, also, straw leggings and straw shoes. Their hair, which is astonishingly thick, is clipped short in front, and falls in masses down the back and sides to the shoulders. It is of a true black, whereas the hair of the Japanese, when freed from unguents, is of a dark or reddish brown, and I have seen distinctly red hair among the latter. The beard and mustaches of the Ainōs are allowed to attain their fullest development, the former often reaching the length of twelve or fourteen inches. Hence, Ainōs take kindly to the "hairy foreigners," Englishmen and Americans, whose bearded faces the normal Japanese despise, while to a Japanese child, as I found out in Fukui, a man with mustaches appears to be only a dragon without wings or tail. Some, not all, of the

older men, but very few of the younger, have their bodies and limbs covered with thick black hair, about an inch long. The term "hairy Kuriles," applied to them as a characteristic hairy race, is a mythical expression of book-makers, as the excessively hirsute covering supposed to be universal among the Ainōs is not to be found by the investi-



An Ainō Chief from Yezo. (From a photograph taken in Tōkiō, 1872.)

gator on the ground. Their skin is brown, their eyes are horizontal, and their noses low, with the lobes well rounded out. The women are of proportionate stature to the men, but, unlike them, are very ugly. I never met with a handsome Ainō female, though I have seen many of the Yezo women. Their mouths seem like those of ogres, and to stretch from ear to ear. This arises from the fact that they tattoo a wide band of dirty blue, like the woad of the ancient Brit-

ons, around their lips, to the extent of three-quarters of an inch, and still longer at the tapering extremities. The tattooing is so completely done, that many persons mistake it for a daub of blue paint, like the artificial exaggeration of a circus clown's mouth. They increase their hideousness by joining their eyebrows over the nose by a fresh band of tattooing. This practice is resorted to in the case of married women and females who are of age, just as that of blackening the teeth and shaving the eyebrows is among the Japanese.

They are said to be faithful wives and laborious helpmates, their moral qualities compensating for their lack of physical charms. The women assist in hunting and fishing, often possessing equal skill with the men. They carry their babies pickapack, as the Japanese mothers, except that the strap passing under the child is put round the mother's forehead. Polygamy is permitted.

Their weapons are of the rudest form. The three-pronged spear is used for the salmon. The single-bladed lance is for the bear, their most terrible enemy, which they regard with superstitious reverence. Their bows are simply peeled boughs, three feet long. The arrows

are one foot shorter, and, like those used by the tribes on the coast of Siberia and in Formosa, have no feather on the shaft. Their pipes are of the same form as those so common in Japan and China; and one obtained from an Ainō came from Santan, a place in Amurland.

The Ainōs possess dogs, which they use in hunting, understand the use of charcoal and candles, make excellent baskets and wicker-work of many kinds; and some of their fine bark-cloth and ornamented weapons for their chiefs show a skill and taste that compare very favorably with those exhibited by the North American Indians. Their oars, having handles fixed crosswise, or sculls made in two pieces, are almost exactly like those of the Japanese. Their river-canoes are dug out of a log, usually elm. Two men will fashion one in five days. For the sea-coast, they use a frame of wood, lacing on the sides with bark fibre. They are skillful canoe-men, using either pole or paddle.

The language of the Ainō is rude and poor, but much like the Japanese. It resembles it so closely, allowing for the fact that it is utterly unpolished and undeveloped, that it seems highly probable it is the original of the present Japanese tongue. They have no written character, no writing of any sort, no literature. A further study may possibly reveal valuable traditions held among them, which at present they are not known by me to have.

In character and morals, the Ainōs are stupid, good-natured, brave, honest, faithful, peaceful, and gentle. The American and English travelers in Yezo agree in ascribing to them these qualities. Their method of salutation is to raise the hands, with the palms upward, and stroke the beard. They understand the rudiments of politeness, as several of their verbal expressions and gestures indicate.

Their religion consists in the worship of kami, or spirits. They do not appear to have any special minister of religion or sacred structure.\* They have festivals commemorative of certain events in the

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\* Some visitors to the Ainō villages in Yezo declare that they have noticed there the presence of the phallic shrines and symbols. It might be interesting if this assertion, and the worship of these symbols by the Ainōs, were clearly proved. It would help to settle definitely the question of the origin in Japan of this oldest form of fetich worship, the evidences of which are found all over the Nippon island-chain, including Yezo. I have noticed the prevalence of these shrines and symbols especially in Eastern and Northern Japan, having counted as many as a dozen, and these by the roadside, in a trip to Nikkō. The barren of both sexes worship them, or offer them *ex voto*. In Sagami, Kadzusa, and even in Tōkiō itself, they were visible as late as 1874, cut in stone and wood. Formerly the toy-shops, porcelain-shops, and itinerant venders of many wares were well supplied with them, made of various materials; they were to be seen in the cor-

past, and they worship the spirit of Yoshitsuné, a Japanese hero, who is supposed to have lived among them in the twelfth century, and who taught them some of the arts of Japanese civilization.

The outward symbols of their religion are sticks of wood two or three feet long, which they whittle all around toward the end into shavings, until the smooth wand contains a mass of pendent curls, as seen in the engraving, page 32. They insert several of these in the ground at certain places, which they hold sacred. The Ainōs also deify mountains, the sea, which furnishes their daily food, bears, the forests, and other natural objects, which they believe to possess intelligence. These wands with the curled shavings are set up in every place of supposed danger or evil omen. The traveler in Yezo sees them on precipices, gorges of mountains, dangerous passes, and river-banks.

When descending the rapids of a river in Yezo, he will notice that his Ainō boatmen from time to time will throw one of these wands into the river at every dangerous point or turning. The Ainōs pray raising their hands above their heads. The Buddhist bonzes have in vain attempted to convert them to Buddhism. They have rude songs, which they chant to their kami, or gods, and to the deified sea, forest, mountains, and bears, especially at the close of the hunting and fishing season, in all affairs of great importance, and at the end of the year. The following is given as a specimen :

“To the sea which nourishes us, to the forest that protects us, we present our grateful thanks. You are two mothers that nourish the same child ; do not be angry if we leave one to go to the other.”

“The Ainōs will always be the pride of the forest and the sea.”

The inquirer into the origin of the Japanese must regret that as yet we know comparatively little of the Ainōs and their language. Any opinion hazarded on the subject may be pronounced rash. Yet, after a study of all the obtainable facts, I believe they unmistakably

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nucopia-banners at New-year's, paraded in the festivals, and at unexpected times and places disturbed the foreign spectator. It was like a glimpse of life in the antediluvian world, or of ancient India, whence doubtless they came, to see evidences of this once widely prevalent form of early religion. Buddhist priests whom I have consulted affirm, with some warmth, that they arose in the “wicked time of Ashikaga,” though the majority of natives, learned and unlearned, say they are the relics of the ancient people, or aborigines. In 1872 the mikado's Government prohibited the sale or exposure of these emblems in any form or shape, together with the more artistic obscenities, pictures, books, carvings, and photographs, sent out from the studios of Paris and London.



point to the Ainōs as the primal ancestors of the Japanese; that the mass of the Japanese people of to-day are substantially of Ainō stock. An infusion of foreign blood, the long effects of the daily hot baths and the warm climate of Southern Japan, of Chinese civilization, of agricultural instead of the hunter's method of life, have wrought the change between the Ainō and the Japanese.

It seems equally certain that almost all that the Japanese possess which is not of Chinese, Corean, or Tartar origin has descended from the Ainō, or has been developed or improved from an Ainō model. The Ainōs of Yezo hold politically the same relation to the Japanese as the North American Indians do to the white people of the United States; but ethnically they are, with probability bordering very closely on certainty, as the Saxons to the English.\*

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\* I need scarcely, except to relieve, by borrowed humor, the dull weighing of facts, and the construction of an opinion void of all dogmatism, notice the assertion elaborated at length by some Americans, Scotchmen, and others too, for aught I know, that the Ainōs are the "ten lost tribes of Israel," or that they are the descendants of the sailors and gold-hunters sent out by King Solomon to gain spoil for his temple at Jerusalem. Really, this search after the "lost tribes"—or have they consolidated into the Wandering Jew?—is becoming absurd. They are the most discovered people known. They have been found in America, Britain, Persia, India, China, Japan, and in Yezo. I know of but one haystack left to find this needle in, and that is Corea. It will undoubtedly be found there. It has been kindly provided that there are more worlds for these Alexanders to conquer. It is now quite necessary for the archaeological respectability of a people that they be the "lost tribes." To the inventory of wonders in Japan some would add that of her containing "the dispersed among the Gentiles," notwithstanding that the same claim has been made for a dozen other nations.

*The Ainō Arrow-poison.*—Dr. Stuart Eldredge, who has studied the properties of the Ainō arrow-poison, states that it is made by macerating and pounding the roots of one or more of the virulent species of aconite, mixing the mass into a paste, with (perhaps) inert ingredients, and burying it in the ground for some time. The stiff, dark, reddish-brown paste is then mixed with animal fat, and about ten grains' weight of the paste is applied to the bamboo arrow-tips which are used to set the bear-traps. The wounded animals are found dead near the trap, and their flesh is eaten with impunity, though the hunter cuts off the parts immediately near the wound. The Ainōs know of no antidote for the poison. (See "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, 1876.")