

## VII.

## YAMATO-DAKÉ, THE CONQUEROR OF THE KUANTŌ.\*

A NEW hero appears in the second century, whose personality seems so marked that it is impossible to doubt that within the shell of fabulous narration is a rich kernel of history. This hero, a son of the twelfth emperor, Keiko (71-130 A.D.), is pictured as of fair mien, manly and graceful carriage. In his youth he led an army to put down a rebellion in Kiushiu; and, wishing to enter the enemy's camp, he disguised himself as a dancing-girl, and presented himself before the sentinel, who, dazed by the beauty and voluptuous figure of the supposed damsel, and hoping for a rich reward from his chief, admitted her to the arch-rebel's tent. After dancing before him and his carousing guests, the delighted voluptuary drew his prize by the hand into his own tent. Instead of a yielding girl, he found more than his match in the heroic youth, who seized him, held him powerless, and took his life. For this valorous effort he received the name Yamato-Daké, or, the Warlike. Thirteen years after this victory, A.D. 110, the tribes in eastern Japan revolted, and Yamato-Daké went to subdue them. He stopped at the shrine of the Sun-goddess in Isé, and, leaving his own sword under a pine-tree, he obtained from the priestess the sacred sword, one of the holy emblems enshrined by Sūjin. Armed with this palladium, he penetrated into the wilds of Suruga, to fight the Ainōs, who fled before him from the plains into the woods and mountain fastnesses. The Ainō method of warfare, like that of our North American Indians, was to avoid an encounter in the open field, and to

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\* Kuantō (east of the barrier). The term Kuantō was, probably as early as the ninth century, applied to that part of Japan lying east of the guard-gate, or barrier, at Ōzaka, a small village on the borders of Yamashiro and Omi. It included thirty-three provinces. The remaining thirty-three provinces were called Kuansei (west of the barrier). In modern times and at present, the term Kuantō (written also Kantō) is applied to the eight provinces (Kuan-hasshiu) east of the Hakoné range, consisting of Sagami, Musashi, Kōdzuké, Shimotsuké, Kadzusa, Awa, Shimōsa, and Hitachi. Sometimes Idzu, Kai, and the provinces of Hondo north of the thirty-eighth parallel, formerly called Mutsu and Déwa, are also included.

fight in ambush from behind trees, rocks, or in the rank undergrowth, using every artifice by which, as pursued, they could inflict the greatest damage upon an enemy with the least loss and danger to themselves. In the lore of the forest they were so well read that they felt at home in the most tangled wilds. They were able to take advantage of every sound and sign. They were accustomed to disguise themselves in bear-skins, and thus act as spies and scouts. Fire was one of their chief means of attack. On a certain occasion they kin-



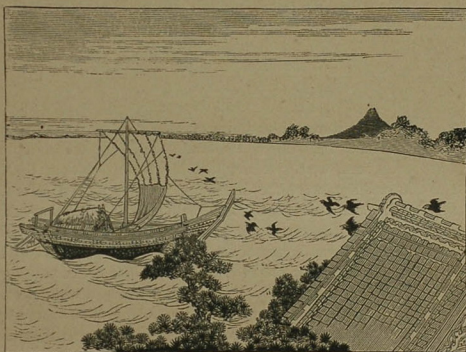
Japan, as known to the Ancient Mikados before the Fifth Century.

dled the underbrush, which is still seen so densely covering the uncleared portions of the base of Fuji. The flames, urged by the wind, threatened to surround and destroy the Japanese army—a sight which the Ainōs beheld with yells of delight. The Sun-goddess then appeared to Yamato-Daké, who, drawing the divinely bestowed sword—Murakumo, or “Cloud-cluster”—cut the grass around him. So invincible was the blade that the flames ceased advancing and turned toward his enemies, who were consumed, or fled defeated. Yamato-Daké

then gratefully acknowledging to the gods the victory vouchsafed to him, changed the name of the sword to *Kusanagi* (Grass-mower).

Crossing the *Hakoné* Mountains, he descended into the great plain of the East, in later days called the *Kuantō*, which stretches from the base of the central ranges and table-land of *Hondo* to the shores of the Pacific, and from *Sagami* to *Iwaki*. On reaching the Bay of *Yedo* at about *Kamizaki*, near *Uraga*, off which *Commodore Perry* anchored with his steamers in 1853, the hills of the opposite peninsula of *Awa* seemed so very close at hand, that *Yamato-Daké* supposed it would be a trifling matter to cross the intervening channel. He did not know what we know so well now, that at these narrows of the bay the winds, tides, currents, and weather are most treacherous. Having embarked with his host, a terrific storm arose, and the waves tossed the boat so helplessly about that death seemed inevitable. Then the frightened monarch understood that the *Sea-god*, insulted by his disparaging remark, had raised the storm to punish him. The only way to appease the wrath of the deity was by the sacrifice of a victim. Who would offer? One was ready. In the boat with her lord was his wife, *Tachibana himé*. Bidding him farewell, she leaped into the mad waves. The blinding tempest drove on the helpless boat, and the victim and the saved were parted. But the sacrifice was accepted. Soon the storm ceased, the sky cleared, the lovely landscape unveiled in serene repose. *Yamato-Daké* landed in *Kadzusa*, and subdued the tribes. At the head of the peninsula, at a site still pointed out within the limits of modern *Tōkiō*, he found the perfumed wooden comb of his wife, which had floated ashore. Erecting an altar, he dedicated the precious relic as a votive offering to the gods. A *Shintō* shrine still occupies the site where her spirit and that of *Yamato-Daké* are worshipped by the fishermen and sailors, whose junks fill the Bay of *Yedo* with animation and picturesque beauty. As usual, a pine-tree stands near the shrine. The artist has put *Mount Fuji* in the distance, a beautiful view of which is had from the strand. *Yamato-Daké* then advanced northward, through *Shimōsa*, sailing along the coast in boats to the border, as the Japanese claimed it to be, between the empire proper and the savages, which lay at or near the thirty-eighth parallel. The two greatest chiefs of the *Ainōs*, apprised of his coming, collected a great army to overwhelm the invader. Seeing his fleet approaching, and awed at the sight, they were struck with consternation, and said, "These ships must be from the gods. If so, and we draw bow against them, we shall be destroyed." No sooner had

Yamato-Daké landed than they came to the strand and surrendered. The hero kept the leaders as hostages, and having tranquilized the tribes, exacting promise of tribute, he set out on the homeward journey. His long absence from the capital in the wilds of the East doubtless disposed him to return gladly. He passed through Hitachi and Shimōsa, resting temporarily at Sakura, then through Musashi and Kai. Here he is said to have invented the distich, or thirty-one-syllable poem, so much used at the present day. After his army had been refreshed by their halt, he sent one of his generals into Echizen and Echigo to tranquilize the North-west and meet him in Yamato.



Junk in the Bay of Yedo, near the Shrine of Tachibana himá.

He himself marched into Shinano. Hitherto, since crossing the Hakoné range, he had carried on his operations on the plains. Shinano is a great table-land averaging twenty-five hundred, and rising in many places over five thousand, feet above the sea-level, surrounded and intersected by the loftiest peaks and mountain ranges in Japan. Ninety-five miles north-west of Tōkiō is the famous mountain pass of Usui Tōgέ, the ascent of which from Sakamoto, on the high plain below, is a toilsome task. At this point, twenty-six hundred feet above Sakamoto, unrolls before the spectator a magnificent view of the Bay of Yedo and the plain below, one of the most beautiful and impressive in Japan. Here Yamato stood and gazed at the land and water,

draped in the azure of distance, and, recalling the memory of his beloved wife, who had sacrificed her life for him, he murmured, sadly, "Adzuma, adzuma" (My wife, my wife). The plain of Yedo is still, in poetry, called Adzuma. One of the princes of the blood uses Adzuma as his surname; and the ex-Confederate iron-clad ram *Stonewall*, now of the Japanese navy, is christened Adzuma-kuan.

To cross the then almost unknown mountains of Shinano was a bold undertaking, which only a chief of stout heart would essay.\* To travel in the thinly populated mountainous portions of Japan even at the present time, at least to one accustomed to the comfort of the palace-cars of civilization, is not pleasant. In those days, roads in the Kuantō were unknown. The march of an army up the slippery ascents, through rocky defiles, over lava-beds and river torrents, required as much nerve and caution as muscle and valor. To their superstitious fancies, every mountain was the abode of a god, every cave and defile the lurking-place of spirits. Air and water and solid earth were populous with the creatures of their imagination. Every calamity was the manifestation of the wrath of the local gods; every success a proof that the good kami were specially favoring them and their leaders. The clouds and fogs were the discomfiting snares of evil deities to cause them to lose their path. The asphyxiating exhalations from volcanoes, or from the earth, which to this day jet out inflammable gas, were the poisonous breath of the mountain gods, insulted by the daring intrusion into their sacred domain. On one occasion the god of the mountain came to Yamato-Daké, in the form of a white deer, to trouble him. Yamato-Daké, suspecting the animal, threw some wild garlic in its eye, causing it to smart so violently that the deer died.

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\* The cold in winter in the high mountain regions of Shinano is severe, and fires are needed in the depth of summer. Heavy falls of snow in winter make traveling tedious and difficult. I went over this part of Yamato-Daké's journey in 1873, completing a tour of nine hundred miles. As I have gone on foot over the mountain *togés* (passes) from Takata, in Echigo, to Tōkiō, in Musashi, and likewise have been a pedestrian up and over the pass of St. Bernard, I think, all things considered, the achievement of Yamato-Daké fully equal in courage, skill, daring, patience, and romantic interest to that of Napoleon. The tourist to-day who makes the trip over this route is rewarded with the most inspiring views of Fuji, Asama yama, Yatsugadaké, and other monarchs in this throne-room of nature in Japan. In the lowlands of Kodzuké also is the richest silk district in all Japan, the golden cocoons, from which is spun silver thread, covering the floors of almost every house during two summer months, while the deft fingers of Japanese maidens, pretty and otherwise, may be seen busily engaged in unraveling the shroud of the worm, illustrating the living proverb, "With time and patience even the mulberry-leaf becomes silk."

Immediately the mountain was shrouded in mist and fog, and the path disappeared. In the terror and dismay, a white dog—a good kami in disguise—appeared, and led the way safely to the plains of Mino.

Again the host were stricken by the spirit of the white deer. All the men and animals of the camp were unable to stand, stupefied by the mephitic gas discharged among them by the wicked kami. Happily, some one bethought him of the wild garlic, ate it, and gave to the men and animals, and all recovered. At the present day in Japan, partly in commemoration of this incident, but chiefly for the purpose of warding off infectious or malarious diseases, garlic is hung up before gates and doors in time of epidemic, when an attack of disease is apprehended. Thousands of people believe it to be fully as efficacious as a horseshoe against witches, or camphor against contagion. Descending to the plains of Mino, and crossing through it, he came to Ibuki yama, a mountain shaped like a truncated sugar-loaf, which rears its colossal flat head in awful majesty above the clouds. Yamato-Daké attempted to subdue the kami that dwelt on this mountain. Leaving his sword, "Grass-mower," at the foot of the mountain, he advanced unarmed. The god transformed himself into a serpent, and barred his progress. The hero leaped over him. Suddenly the heavens darkened. Losing the path, Yamato-Daké swooned and fell. On drinking of a spring by the way, he was able to lift up his head. Henceforward it was called Samé no idzumi, or the Fountain of Recovery. Reaching Ōtsu, in Isé, though still feeble, he found, under the pine-tree, the sword which he had taken off before, and forthwith composed a poem: "O pine, were you a man, I should give you this sword to wear for your fidelity." He had been absent in the Kuantō three years. He recounted before the gods his adventures, difficulties, and victories, made votive offerings of his weapons and prisoners, and gave solemn thanks for the deliverance vouchsafed him. He then reported his transactions to his father, the mikado, and, being weak and nigh to death, he begged to see him. The parent sent a messenger to comfort his son. When he arrived, Yamato-Daké was dead. He was buried at Nobono, in Isé. From his tomb a white bird flew up; and on opening it, only the chaplet and robes of the dead hero were found. Those who followed the bird saw it alight at Koto-hiki hara (Plain of the Koto-players) in Yamato, which was henceforth called Misazaki Shiratori (Imperial Tomb of the White Bird). His death took place A.D. 113, at the age of thirty-six. Many temples in the Kuantō and in various parts of Japan are dedicated to him.

I have given so full an account of Yamato-Daké to show the style and quality of ancient Japanese tradition, and exhibit the state of Eastern Japan at that time, and because under the narration there is good history of one who extended the real boundaries of the early empire.\* Yamato-Daké was one of the partly historic and partly ideal heroes that are equally the cause and the effect of the Japanese military spirit. It may be that the future historians of Japan may consider this chapter as literary trash, and put Yamato-Daké and all his deeds in the same limbo with Romulus and his wolf-nurse, William Tell and his apple; but I consider him to have been a historical personage, and his deeds a part of genuine history.

\* The names of the various provinces of Japan are given below. Each name of Japanese origin has likewise a synonym compounded of the Chinese word *shiu* (province), affixed to the pronunciation of the Chinese character with which the first syllable of the native word is written. In some cases the Chinese form is most in use, in which case it is italicized. In a few cases both forms are current.

*Go Kinai* (Five Home Provinces).

*Yamashiro*, or *Joshiu*.  
*Yamato*, " *Washiu*.  
*Kawachi*, " *Kashiu*.  
*Idzumi*, " *Senshiu*.  
*Settsu*, " *Sesshiu*.

*Tōkaidō* (Eastern-sea Region).

*Iga*, or *Ishiu*.  
*Isé*, " *Seishiu*.  
*Shima*, " *Shishiu*.  
*Onari*, " *Bishiu*.  
*Mikawa*, " *Sanshiu*.  
*Tōtōmi*, " *Enshiu*.  
*Suruga*, " *Sunshiu*.  
*Idzu*, " *Dzushiu*.  
*Kai*, " *Kōshiu*.  
*Sagami*, " *Sōshiu*.  
*Musashi*, " *Bushiu*.  
*Awa*, " *Bōshiu*.  
*Kadzusa*, " *Sōshiu*.  
*Shinōsa*, " *Sōshiu*.  
*Hitachi*, " *Jōshiu*.

*Tōzandō* (Eastern-mountain Region).

*Ōmi*, or *Gōshiu*.  
*Mino*, " *Noshiu*.  
*Hida*, " *Hishiu*.  
*Shinano*, " *Shinshiu*.  
*Kōdzuké*, " *Jōshiu*.  
*Shimotsuké*, " *Yashiu*.

*Dowa Mutsu* }  
*Iwashi*, }  
*Iwashiro*, }  
*Rikuzen*, }  
*Rikuchiu*, }  
*Michinoku*, }  
*Uzen*, }  
*Ugo*, }  
 Divided since 1868.

*Hokurikudō* (Northern-land Region).

*Wakasa*, or *Jakushiu*.  
*Echizen*, " *Esshiu*.  
*Kaga*, " *Kashiu*.  
*Noto*, " *Nōshiu*.  
*Etchiu*, " *Esshiu*.

*Hokurikudō* (Continued).

*Echigo*, " *Esshiu*.  
*Sado* (island), " *Sashiu*.

*Sanindo* (Mountain-back Region).

*Tamba*, or *Tanshiu*.  
*Tango*, " *Tanshiu*.  
*Tajima*, " *Tanshiu*.  
*Inaba*, " *Inshiu*.  
*Hoki*, " *Hakushiu*.  
*Idzumo*, " *Unshiu*.  
*Iwami*, " *Sekishiu*.  
*Oki* (islands).

*Sanyodō* (Mountain-front Region).

*Harima*, or *Banshiu*.  
*Mimasaka*, " *Sakushiu*.  
*Bizen*, " *Bishiu*.  
*Bitchiu*, " *Bishiu*.  
*Bingo*, " *Bishiu*.  
*Aki*, " *Geishiu*.  
*Suō*, " *Bōshiu*.  
*Nagato*, " *Chōshiu*.

*Nankaidō* (Southern-sea Region).

*Kii*, or *Kishiu*.  
*Awaji* (island), " *Tanshiu*.  
*Awa*, " *Ashiu*.  
*Sanuki*, " *Sanshiu*.  
*Iyo*, " *Yoshiu*.  
*Tosa*, " *Toshiu*.

*Saikaidō* (Western-sea Region).

*Chikuzen*, or *Chikushiu*.  
*Chikugo*, " *Chikushiu*.  
*Buzen*, " *Hōshiu*.  
*Bungo*, " *Hōshiu*.  
*Bizen*, " *Hishiu*.  
*Higo*, " *Hishiu*.  
*Hūga*, " *Nisshiu*.  
*Ozumi*, " *Gōshiu*.  
*Satsuma*, " *Sasshiu*.

The "Two Islands."

*Tsushima*, or *Taishiu*.  
*Iki*, " *Ishiu*.