

HOW THE AINU BECAME JŌMONESE: AINU ANCESTRY THROUGH JAPANESE EYES

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Abstract

Despite only being declared Japan's indigenous people in 2019, the Ainu within its borders have long been associated with the Jōmon, the archipelago's earliest known inhabitants. Unpacking the labels of "Jōmon" and "Ainu" reveals the traits that caused these two peoples to be almost exclusively joined together in the first place, which in turn helped to influence the Ainu's ability to claim indigeneity. Through this paper, I aim to show that the ways in which the Japanese have looked at the Ainu, from the time when Japanese chroniclers first started recording their state's history to the present day, has contributed to the association of Hokkaidō's indigenes with the Jōmon. Starting with the Emishi, the people(s) living on the outskirts of the Japanese polity were looked down on as barbaric or backwards in comparison to the refined Japanese. These views, while generally remaining static into the Meiji period, could shift depending on socio-political necessity and the acquisition of new ways of understanding their subjects, eventually culminating in a theory that the Neolithic residents of Japan and the Ainu were related. This theory was later confirmed by bioanthropological findings. Further reinforcing the bond are the ways in which the Ainu and their culture are currently presented to the Japanese public through museum exhibits and events.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
List of Figures.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: What's in a Name: The Jōmon.....	7
Background.....	8
Geographic Origins of the Jōmon.....	9
Genotype.....	12
Phenotype.....	16
Conclusion.....	26
Chapter 2: Barbarians Through the Ages: The Emishi, Ezo and Early Modern Ainu.....	28
The Emishi and Ezo.....	28
Emishi-as-Ainu.....	35
The Ainu.....	39
Conclusion.....	48
Chapter 3: Like Attracts Like: Modern Ainu and Ancient Ancestors.....	49
Early Views.....	49
The Jōmon as non-Japanese.....	54
Battle of the Theories.....	57
The Impact of Biological Anthropology.....	61
The Ainu as Japanese.....	65

The Jōmon and Ainu Today.....	68
Conclusion.....	71
Conclusion.....	73
Bibliography.....	83

List of Figures

Fig. 1 (Frontal view of Jōmon skulls).....	Page 17
Fig. 2 (Reconstructed faces of a Jōmon man and woman).....	Page 17
Fig. 3 (Painting detail of Emishi submitting to Shōtoku- <i>taishi</i>).....	Page 31
Fig. 4 (Painting detail of an Ainu man and a Japanese man)	Page 47
Fig. 5 (Plate showing Jōmon and Ainu skull outline comparisons)	Page 59
Fig. 6 (Diagram of the dual structure hypothesis)	Page 64

Introduction

Over the course of his decades-long missionary work among the Ainu in Hokkaidō, English reverend John Batchelor (1855 – 1944) authored several detailed texts pertaining to their customs, language, and other facets of their lives. As a man of faith, he naturally had an interest in their folklore and spiritual beliefs and wrote about them frequently, sometimes where they are not expected: in his 1892 work *The Ainu of Japan: The Religion, Superstitions, and General History of the Hairy Aborigines of Japan*, for instance, he chooses to open his chapter on “Causes of Ainu Decrease” with fabled accounts of their origins. Sakhalin Ainu whom he spoke with believed their ancestors were the *koropokkur* (also romanized as *koropokkuru*, from the Japanese pronunciation of the word, and translated by Neil Gordon Munro [1863 – 1942] as “dwellers below”), a people of small stature who lived under the leaves of Japanese butterbur plants. Some Ainu claimed descent from Aeoina Kamui, a man (not a deity, as the word *kamui* would usually suggest) from whose name the designation “Ainu” was supposedly derived. In other renditions, Aeoina Kamui *is* a deity, who manually crafted man out of natural materials. One elderly man told Batchelor that his people were descended from the son of Okikurumi, a prominent hero in Ainu folklore who, according to the old man, came to Biratori in southern Hokkaidō from the heavens.¹

Nowadays, the origin story of the Ainu is more uniform, and far less fantastical than those that came before it. It is commonly accepted that the Ainu are directly descended from the first

¹ John Batchelor, *The Ainu of Japan: The Religion, Superstitions, and General History of the Hairy Aborigines of Japan* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1892; CreateSpace Publishing, 2014), 49 – 50; John Batchelor, *Ainu Life and Lore: Echoes of a Departing Race*, Landmarks in Anthropology (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 1927; New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), 115; Neil Gordon Munro, *Prehistoric Japan* (Yokohama, 1911), 663.

inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago, known as the “Jōmon.” As the theory goes, following the spread of immigrants from the mainland (the “Yayoi”), the Jōmon were forced to move north where, over time, they and their culture evolved into that of today’s Ainu. It is easily inferred from multiple anthropological and historical discussions that Ainu ethnogenesis wasn’t so simplistic, especially on account of evidence of admixture between a northern, non-Japanese people likely descended from the Jōmon and a near-by population of northeast Eurasian origins (to be touched on later). This has done little to affect popular belief, which continues to support a direct transition, seemingly removed from the rest of the populace in the archipelago, from the Jōmon to the Ainu.

On closer inspection, the near-exclusive relationship between the two peoples does not hold up as well as it initially appears to. From a biological point of view, there is no questioning that the Ainu are the Jōmon’s descendants. So are the Ryūkyūans, who share many of the same Jōmon-derived traits as the Ainu (albeit typically at a lower frequency). So are the ethnic Japanese, although there is a strong tendency for them to identify more closely with their Yayoi progenitors from whom they inherited the majority of their genes. In other words, to one degree or another, the ancestry of all three of the Japanese archipelago’s native inhabitants can be traced back to the Jōmon. Yet despite this shared genetic heritage, it is the Ainu who are predominantly associated with the Neolithic society, to the point where “descendants of the Jōmon” is a major part of their socio-ethnic identity.

In light of the fact that inherited Jōmon features are not restricted to the Ainu, the almost automatic linkage of one with the other becomes dubious. Even if the genetic contributions of the Jōmon are not equally dispersed among the three peoples, it is curious that one should be elevated over the others when it comes to claiming ancestry from a certain population.

Nonetheless, evidently, that is exactly what has happened. Why, when there is clear evidence to the contrary, does that exclusivity exist?

Finding an answer to this question requires approaching the matter from historical Japanese perspectives. The idea itself was arguably the brainchild of Westerners, but as the Japanese strongly supported the concept of a connection between the two peoples, it is necessary to look at how they previously viewed the Ainu in order to understand why they accepted that conclusion.² By doing so, it will become apparent that the linking of the Hokkaidō indigenes with the Jōmon is ultimately the result of Japanese elites' long-held beliefs about the Ainu merging with interpretations of modern scientific findings, said interpretations depending on their mindset and socio-political interests at any given time. Furthermore, it continues to be reinforced by the nature of publicly-displayed portrayals of the Ainu and their culture.

A similar undertaking, though in a different context, was carried out by Alexander Bukh, who explores how the construction of Ainu identities reflects back on the identity of Japan by looking at political and ethno-historiological debates of the modern age. He identifies two camps which have squabbled over how the Ainu and their history should be thought of. The first, made up of conservative Japanese, tried to put positive spins on the state's relationship with the Ainu that made Japan look good. They wanted to paint the annexation of Hokkaidō and the "Northern Territories" (Sakhalin and the Kuril islands) as peaceful and beneficial for the Ainu, or even as a rightful reunifying of lands once shared by the peoples pre-dating the Ainu and Japanese. If the Ainu were "noble savages" who came before the Japanese and embodied the earliest, purest form of their culture, then it was their "hunting spirit" that was responsible for

² Mark J. Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Archipelago* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 32.

Japan's economic success in the later decades of the twentieth century.³ The other consisted of Ainu activists and more liberal-minded Japanese who preferred to portray the Ainu as victims. They decried the colonization and annexation of Hokkaidō, Sakhalin, and the Kurils as an egregious crime inflicted on the Ainu by brutal oppressors. The Ainu and their culture, they said, were being exploited by the conservatives.⁴ As part of his argument, Bukh indicates that Japanese perspectives, right-wing or left-wing, have been instrumental in manufacturing Ainu identities. The Jōmon controversy is mentioned, but it is just a small component of his overall analysis.

Ordinarily (and somewhat predictably), the task of uncovering the relationship between the Jōmon and the Ainu has belonged in the realms of anthropology and archaeology. Those fields are just about the only ones in which the Jōmon really *can* be studied, having left only their bones, genes, and parts of their material culture behind as their “records.” While undeniably essential to understanding their ethnogenesis, there are other avenues that would further aid in determining how the two peoples are interconnected. Along with the archaeological and anthropological aspects of Jōmon-Ainu relations, it would be beneficial to supply a historical perspective to supplement the scientific data in order to gain a broader picture. Even though the presence of a connection is evident, and appears to be an open-and-shut matter, it would be imprudent to leave any relevant stones in other disciplines unturned lest they provide additional information for consideration.

It also ignores the diversity of ways in which ethnic shifts are made. Debatably, ethnogenesis can be broken down into two complimentary forms. The first, cultural ethnogenesis, is what

³ Alexander Bukh, “Ainu Identity and Japan's Identity: The Struggle for Subjectivity,” *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 28, no. 2 (2010), 39, 42 – 44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 40 – 42, 43.

initially comes to mind: a population's defining cultural features undergoes a metamorphosis, triggering the creation of a new group identity. This form is the one that anthropologists are usually concerned with. The second form is what could be referred to as intellectual ethnogenesis. Intellectual ethnogenesis is ethnic development within a group's mentality, a construal of what is being witnessed by those who take it upon themselves to define what those external changes mean. Perhaps more simply put, it is awareness of change, and putting a name to the new entity; the transformation takes place internally, driven by what is being learned or observed. It is this latter form of ethnogenesis that will be explored in the following pages, as the Japanese mind is probed for clues as to how their ideas of Ainu ethnicity developed and changed.

The first chapter is an analysis of Jōmon biology from a dual genetic and physiological angle. Although the term "Jōmon" did not exist prior to its coinage by Edward Morse (1838 – 1925) in the nineteenth century, the people themselves did, and carried their own distinctive biological fingerprints. By consulting studies dedicated to sorting out the silent stories of Jōmon DNA and skeletal remains, it is possible to reconstruct their genetic code, and gain an idea of what they most likely looked like. Given the length of the human genome, however, identifying *all* Jōmon-specific genes would be a difficult task beyond the scope of this paper, so I will limit my overview to only a few.

In the second chapter, the focus will be on Japanese views of Ainu and those thought to be their immediate predecessors, the Emishi and Ezo, over the course of the early modern period. Based on what was written about them, how they were portrayed in paintings, and the ways in which the Japanese government interacted with them, the attitudes of the Japanese towards those outside the state become clear, and an idea of the Ainu's place in the Japanese worldview prior to

the Meiji period can be ascertained. At this point, the Emishi, Ezo and Ainu were typically outside the concern, if not the awareness, of the general populace, which only serves to underscore the elites' position as their image-maker.

The third and final chapter gives an overview of how the Ainu have been perceived from the Meiji period to the present day. Archaeological and anthropological ways of thought that emerged in the islands, not without their dose of nationalism, had tremendous influence on how Japan's ancient population, their remains, and the modern Ainu came to be understood, prompting the first association between the Jōmon and the Ainu; this bond has only been strengthened with the advent of DNA analysis. The latest rationale behind the joining of these two peoples, formed roughly two hundred years ago, can still be seen in the ways in which information about the Ainu and their culture is presented to the general public.

Questioning whether or not the assigned relationship between the Jōmon and the Ainu is valid is not the purpose of this study; that point is beyond refutation. Recognizing the chain of events and the accompanying thought processes that led to the construction of the link between the Jōmon and the Ainu, however, is essential to comprehending the base on which Ainu claims to indigeneity are constructed. In endeavoring to shed some overdue light on the subject, this paper will add another layer of understanding to the matter, and serve as a jumping off point for further research. Most importantly, it will hopefully make a small contribution towards returning to the Ainu the historicity that has been so frequently denied them.

Chapter 1. What's in a Name: The Jōmon

In today's increasingly admixed world, tracing concise ethnic roots is no easy task, but it has to start somewhere. In exploring the origins of today's Ainu, as well as the Japanese and Ryūkyūans, it is necessary to begin with the island chain's "Jōmon" inhabitants. The complexities of unravelling the mysteries of the Jōmon and their way of life are undoubtedly part of their academic appeal, yet it is a job that serves a greater purpose beyond academia. Understanding Jōmon biology is essential in understanding ethnogenesis in the Japanese archipelago, both in the sense of knowing the initial genetic roadmap that modern populations evolved from, and in determining how gene flow from outside peoples (Yayoi, Okhotsk, etc.) affected the odds of a "Jōmon" phenotypic trait being maintained within or phased out of subsequent groups.

To that end, this chapter strives to show what it is that makes Japan's Jōmon people "Jōmon," beyond the distinguishing "cord-marked" pottery they are associated with: their biological essence, the quantifiable features that, when combined, are uniquely theirs. An overview of how researchers have attempted to determine their origins will lead into how their genotypic evidence intersects with the identification of distinctly "Jōmon" genetic markers. This will be followed by a description of the standard Jōmon phenotype (both observable traits and those gleaned from investigation into genetics) and additional characteristics, as well as why they may have developed in the ways that they did. When pieced together, the various parts should provide a reasonable portrayal of who the "Jōmon" are considered to be.

Background

The islanders who came to be known as the “Jōmon” are thought to have been the descendants of a nomadic people who migrated to the archipelago during late marine isotope stage (MIS) 3 (40,000 – 30,000 years before present [BP]), although the exact relationship between the Jōmon and those migrants is subject to debate.⁵ Courtesy of the archeological record, a good deal is known about Jōmon material life. Though they primarily relied on hunting, fishing, and gathering various kinds of vegetables and nuts for subsistence, they also engaged in limited agriculture; they typically lived in pit dwellings, sometimes as part of larger semi-sedentary communities; and, famously, they were actively involved in pottery production. What is still largely unknown is the identity of the Jōmon ancestral population(s), and how much influence their DNA has on today’s Japanese, Ainu, and Ryūkyūans. It is thought that up to a quarter of a modern ethnic Japanese person’s genes are derived from their Neolithic Jōmon ancestors (though estimates have gone as high as 40%), while the percentage is higher in the Ainu (estimated between 30.9% and 75%) and Ryūkyūans (estimated between 28% and 60%).⁶ For there to be such a sizable portion of genes potentially derived from the Jōmon, especially among the Japanese, is a sign that their contributions to modern genotypes are by no means insignificant. By getting to know Jōmon biology, the ways in which it continues to manifest in the DNA and physiology of Ainu, Japanese, and Ryūkyūan descendants can also be inferred.

⁵ Yuichi Nakazawa, “On the Pleistocene Population History of the Japanese Archipelago,” *Current Anthropology* 58, Supplement 17 (2017), S543; Yuichi Nakazawa and Christopher J. Bae, “Quaternary paleoenvironmental variation and its impact on initial human dispersals into the Japanese Archipelago,” *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology* 512 (2018), 153.

⁶ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 81; Michael F. Hammer et al., “Dual origins of the Japanese: common ground for hunter-gatherer and farmer Y chromosomes” *Journal of Human Genetics* 51, no. 1, (2006), 54; Timothy A. Jinam et al., “Unique characteristics of the Ainu population in Northern Japan,” *Journal of Human Genetics* 60 (2015), 570; Noboru Adachi et al., “Ethnic derivation of the Ainu inferred from ancient mitochondrial DNA data,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 165 (2018), 145.

Geographic Origins of the Jōmon

A continuing source of fascination about the Jōmon lies in determining where their predecessors originally came from. According to what was once the most commonly-advanced hypothesis (now highly criticized), the ancestors of the Jōmon migrated into the Japanese archipelago from what is now southeast Asia, making the journey while the region was still connected to mainland Eurasia.⁷ The Sundaic region, a landmass comprising the Malay Peninsula, Borneo, Sumatra, and Java that was periodically exposed during the Pleistocene, in particular has been proposed as the cradle of proto-Jōmon life.⁸ Dental morphology is the primary reasoning offered in defense of this theory: like Southeast Asians, the Jōmon were Sundadonts, with dental characteristics not found in other Asian groups.⁹ Sundadonty is characterized by a number of traits, including a low frequency of upper incisor shoveling and lower first molars with only three roots, and a fairly high frequency of lower second molars with four cusps; this configuration tends to be considered more simplistic than the Sinodonty prevalent among other Asian peoples.¹⁰ While a spatial pattern of Sundadonty is usually among the hypothesis' primary supporting evidence, there is also a genetic basis for the argument. Work by Horai et al. (1989, 1991) involved sequencing and analyzing mtDNA from Jōmon

⁷ Hammer et al., "Dual origins of the Japanese," 49.

⁸ Ann Kumar, *Globalizing the Prehistory of Japan: Language, genes and civilization* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 90; A.-C. Sarr et al., "Subsiding Sundaland," *Geology* 47, no. 2 (2019), 119.

⁹ Christy G. Turner II, "Major Features of Sundadonty and Sinodonty, Including Suggestions About East Asian Microevolution, Population History, and Late Pleistocene Relationships With Australian Aborigines," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 82 (1990), 296; Hideaki Kanzawa-Kiriyama et al., "Ancient mitochondrial DNA sequences of Jomon teeth samples from Sangajji, Tohoku district, Japan," *Anthropological Science* 121, no. 2 (2013), 89.

¹⁰ Christy G. Turner II, "Dental Morphology and the Population History of the Pacific Rim and Basin: Commentary on Hirofumi Matsumura and Mark J. Hudson," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 130 (2006), 456; G. Richard Scott et al., "Sinodonty, Sundadonty, and the Beringian Standstill model: Issues of timing and migrations into the New World," *Quaternary International* 466 (2018), 235.

remains dating between 3000 – 6000 BP (from the mid-Early period to the mid-Final period), comparing them with genomes from additional groups and using that information to determine which other populations they clustered with on a phylogenetic tree. They finally concluded that the Jōmon were in some way distantly related to Malaysians and Indonesians.¹¹ For a while, the southeast origins hypothesis was the de facto explanation for where the ancestors of the Jōmon originated.

In the mid-to-late 1990s, another hypothesis emerged to challenge the status quo. This new theory argued that the Jōmon were instead descended from immigrants from *northeast* Asia, not southeast. There are different means by which this could have taken place. One possibility is that the migrants crossed over at a time when there was still enough viable landmass for a sizable group to make the journey to the Japanese islands from the mainland, becoming isolated once the landmass was submerged following a rise in sea level. Alternately, if a land bridge was not exposed at the time, they could have made a maritime journey from the coast of present-day eastern Russia to Sakhalin, then continued south into the archipelago. Unlike the southeast origins hypothesis, the northeast origins argument relies primarily on DNA evidence for support. Studies such as those by Omoto and Saitou (1997) and Kanzawa-Kiriyama et al. (2013) suggest that there are strong genetic bonds between the Jōmon and mainland Eurasian populations. With reinforcement from archaeological findings, this hypothesis has been rapidly gaining traction in recent years.¹²

¹¹ Kumar, *Globalizing the Prehistory of Japan*, 90.

¹² Noboru Adachi, Ken-ichi Shinoda, Kazuo Umetsu, and Hirofumi Matsumura, "Mitochondrial DNA Analysis of Jomon Skeletons From the Funadomari Site, Hokkaidō, and Its Implication for the Origins of Native American," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 138 (2009), 255 – 256; Atsushi Nakashima et al., "Nonmetric Cranial Variation of Jomon Japan: Implications for the Evolution of Eastern Asian Diversity," *American Journal of Human Biology* 22 (2010), 782.

While northeastern Eurasia and Southeast Asia are still the two major contenders for the home region of the Jōmon's ancestors, they are not the only areas that have been suggested. Hammer et al. (2006) have put forward that at least some founders of the Jōmon's male ancestral lineages arrived in the islands from Central Asia between 12,000 and 20,000 BP, based on Y chromosome studies. One of the Y chromosome haplogroups in Japan that the team speculates was inherited from the Jōmon, and which will be discussed in greater detail later, belongs to a subgroup of haplogroup D; they discovered that D subgroup lineages found on the mainland are especially common in Central Asia and occur at a frequency of 50.4% in Tibet, the highest in the area.¹³ Other researchers, including Temple and Matsumura (2011), also entertain the possibility of origins further inland, yet Central Asia still does not garner as much attention as the north- or southeast.¹⁴

Oposing the theories which attribute the Jōmon's ancestral origins to a single source, recent research by Nakazawa (2017) suggests a two-stage peopling of the archipelago, with each stage undertaken by migrants from two different areas. Out of six potential routes, he proposes that the earliest major migrations to the islands were most likely made by peoples from Korea and China who crossed the Tsushima Strait and the East China Sea, respectively, and landed in the part of Paleo-Honshu that is now Kyūshū around 40,000 to 37,000 BP; movement into what is now Hokkaidō from the Russian Far East via the Paleo-Sakhalin/Hokkaidō/Kuril (Paleo-SHK) Peninsula occurred later, around 30,000 BP.¹⁵ However, Nakazawa and Bae (2018) note that, based on comparisons of Paleolithic stone tools from both regions, it is unlikely that peoples

¹³ Hammer et al., "Dual origins of the Japanese," 55 – 56.

¹⁴ Daniel H. Temple and Hirofumi Matsumura, "Do Body Proportions Among Jōmon Foragers from Hokkaidō Conform to Ecogeographic Expectations? Evolutionary Implications of Body Size and Shape Among Northerly Hunter-Gatherers," *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 21 (2011), 277 – 278.

¹⁵ Nakazawa, "On the Pleistocene Population History," S540, S545.

from Paleo-Honshu frequently crossed the Tsugaru Strait into the Paleo-SHK Peninsula or vice versa, raising the question of where each population stands in relation to the Jōmon.¹⁶ Therefore, determining how much influence these groups had on Jōmon development is an area which warrants additional study.

Genotype

Due to the alleged morphological homogeneity observed among Jōmon remains throughout Hokkaidō, Honshū, and Kyūshū, it would be easy to fall into the trap of thinking that the islanders were all almost exactly alike in terms of genetic composition, with more or less identical genomes.¹⁷ However, this was not the case. Despite being isolated from the Asiatic mainland, and thereby subject to minimal gene flow, the Jōmon were far from being a homogeneous entity; on the contrary, they were rather genetically diverse. In one study, nine different mtDNA haplotypes were sequenced from the teeth of twenty-nine separate people recovered from the 2500 BCE Nakazuma shell midden, and were later discovered to be dispersed throughout the modern Japanese population with no discernable clustering.¹⁸ The implication of such a pattern is that matriline descendants were considerably mobile, and intermixing of genetic material between individuals from different matrilineages led to genetic diversity.

On the other hand, while essentially agreeing that the Jōmon were heterogeneous, other scholars propose that there is some potential regionalization involved with their genetic diversity. The mtDNA of individuals found in Okinawa and Kyūshū generally belong to the M7a1 subhaplogroup of haplogroup M7a, while remains found in eastern Japan typically have N9b as

¹⁶ Nakazawa and Bae, "Quaternary paleoenvironmental variation," 153.

¹⁷ Bin Yamaguchi, "A Review of the Osteological Characteristics of the Jomon Population in Prehistoric Japan," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Nippon* 90, Supplement (1982), 85.

¹⁸ Kumar, *Globalizing the Prehistory of Japan*, 90.

the dominant haplogroup.¹⁹ Even then frequency varies, with comparisons showing that the N9b haplogroup appears in Hokkaidō Jōmon at a rate of 64.8% and the Tōhoku Jōmon at a rate of 63.2%, while among Kanto Jōmon there is a frequency rate of 5.6%.²⁰ Such stark division hints that there was little admixture between especially far-flung populations with different matriline; contrarily, the results found by Kanzawa-Kiriyama et al. could indicate genetic dilution that caused N9b to be slowly overshadowed by another mtDNA group in the Kanto region.

Regardless, within this diversity is an underlying state of unity. Although other haplogroups have been identified in Jōmon remains, Nb9 and M7a are the ones that are encountered the most often. Therefore, based on mtDNA analysis, haplogroups N9b and M7a (the former, especially) have been suggested as definitive Jōmon markers.²¹

Of particular note is that the N9b and, to an extent, M7a haplogroups are rare outside of two populations: the modern inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago (Japanese, Ainu, and Ryūkyūans) and the Udegey, an ethnic minority from Primorye in eastern Russia. Furthermore, subhaplogroup M7a1, which is prevalent among modern ethnic Japanese (as well as Koreans, it appears), is generally absent from Hokkaidō Jōmon and Udegey M7a mtDNA lineages.²² This potentially lends support to the northeast origins theory, as well as ancestral links specifically between the Udegey and the Jōmon, although it cannot be said for sure.

Research into Y chromosome haplogroup distribution exposes an alleged Jōmon trait as well. Based on analysis of single nucleotide polymorphisms and short tandem repeats in both Japanese

¹⁹ Noboru Adachi et al., “Ancient genomes from the initial Jomon period: new insights into the genetic history of the Japanese archipelago,” *Anthropological Science* 129, no. 1 (2021), 19.

²⁰ Kanzawa-Kiriyama et al., “Ancient mitochondrial DNA sequences,” 94.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 96; Adachi et al., “Mitochondrial DNA Analysis,” 261; Fuzuki Mizuno et al., “A study of 8,300-year-old Jomon human remains in Japan using complete mitogenome sequences obtained by next-generation sequencing,” *Annals of Human Biology* 47, no. 6 (2020), 558.

²² Kanzawa-Kiriyama et al., “Ancient mitochondrial DNA sequences,” 89; Stanislav V. Dryomov et al., “Genetic legacy of cultures indigenous to the Northeast Asian coast in mitochondrial genomes of nearly extinct maritime tribes,” *BMC Evolutionary Biology* 20, no. 1 (2020), 5.

and other East Asian populations, Hammer et al. have proposed that lineages D-P37.1 and C-M8 are the most likely to have been passed down from pre-Jōmon ancestors.²³ Of the two, D-P37.1 in particular is worth examining more closely. The D-P37.1 lineage represents one of the earliest Y chromosome groups present in the island chain. It is also one of the more common haplogroups in Japan, occurring at a frequency of 34.7% among six modern Japanese populations spanning the archipelago.²⁴ Additionally, the tests conducted by Hammer et al. indicate that D-P37.1 is most frequently seen in the northern and southern ends of the island chain, where the Ainu and Ryūkyūans (who are considered to be more closely descended from the Jōmon) primarily live, while it is considerably less present in southwestern Japan.²⁵ This pattern falls in line with models of post-Yayoi habitation dispersal. From this data, Y chromosome sub-clade D-P37.1, at least, can plausibly be considered a “Jōmon” marker.

Traits that can be said to represent a “Jōmon” signature are also present in blood typing. According to a study conducted by Sato et al., compared to modern Japanese populations, Hokkaidō Jōmon and Epi-Jōmon possessed higher frequencies of A and B blood type alleles, and a lower frequency of the type O allele. However, solely among the Hokkaidō Jōmon and Epi-Jōmon remains sampled, the type O allele, specifically the subtype O102, had the highest frequency.²⁶ At first glance, this seems to suggest that the two groups had selected for greater resistance to viral infections overall, while still having an edge over modern Japanese (who presumably possess the O allele as their dominant type as well) in bacterial resistance. Yet issues with the study’s methods make this conjecture dubious. The article does not give

²³ Hammer et al., “Dual origins of the Japanese,” 55.

²⁴ Ibid., 51.

²⁵ Ibid., 47.

²⁶ Takehiro Sato et al., “Polymorphisms and allele frequencies of the ABO blood group gene among the Jomon, Epi-Jomon and Okhotsk people in Hokkaidō, northern Japan, revealed by ancient DNA analysis,” *Journal of Human Genetics* 55 (2010), 693.

approximate dates for the samples used, and the authors lumped Jōmon and Epi-Jōmon specimens into a single category to compensate for the sparsity of successful genotyping in each individual group, introducing the possibility of skewed data and contributions from any previous Yayoi admixture borne by the Epi-Jōmon.²⁷ Nevertheless, it is a good place to start in comprehending what caused the prevalence of certain blood types in the prehistoric archipelago.

Other alleles may have originated with the Jōmon, at least as far as the Japanese islands are concerned. The polymorphic rs2294008-T/C allele located on the prostate stem cell antigen (PSCA) gene is associated with the occurrence of gastric cancer. Because the T “risk” allele acts as a protein which signals for an immune system reaction, people with that particular form of allele are at greater risk of developing diffuse-type gastric cancer compared to those with the C “non-risk” allele, which does not initiate an immune response.²⁸ While researching why the rs2294008-T allele is so common among Japanese living in Tokyo, Iwasaki et al. discovered that rs2294008-T was consistently found on Jōmon PSCA genes, leading them to theorize that the T allele variant became dominant following the Jōmon’s ancestors’ migration to the islands, and that they contributed the haplotype to the genomes of modern Japanese.²⁹ Therefore, it can be reasoned that the rs2294008-T allele is another “Jōmon” marker, and, as regular carriers, the Jōmon may have experienced higher rates of diffuse-type gastric cancer than populations on the Eurasian mainland.

The studies that have been reviewed here are certainly not exhaustive of all the genetic work conducted on fossilized Jōmon remains, yet hopefully this overview serves as a decent introduction to the genetic composition of the Jōmon. It may also be of use in identifying

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Risa L. Iwasaki et al., “Evolutionary History of the Risk of SNPs for Diffuse-Type Gastric Cancer in the Japanese Population,” *Genes* 11, no. 7 (2020), 15.

²⁹ Ibid., 11, 15.

enough common traits to help generate the beginnings of a basic genetic profile unique to the indigenes. While they are not exclusive to the Jōmon world-wide, mtDNA haplogroups N9b and M7a, Y chromosome sub-clade D-P37.1 of the D haplogroup, type O blood expressed through subtype O102, and the rs2294008-T allele on the PSCA gene are seen frequently enough in remains that they can be associated with the indigenes in the limited context of the Japanese environment. Future studies may reveal additional attributes that fall into the category of “Jōmon,” or discover new ones altogether.

Phenotype

With genetics at least partially covered, what of physical characteristics? Based on the available DNA data and skeletal remains, it is possible to reconstruct the typical Jōmon phenotype. On average, Jōmon males measured around 158 – 159 cm (about 5’2” to 5’3”) in height, while females were slightly shorter at 148 cm (about 4’10”). Both had low-set faces with square jaws, thick lips, a wide nose, a prominent brow ridge, teeth that met edge-to-edge, and, it is said, double-fold eyelids. The double-fold eyelid would have given them the appearance of having larger, rounder eyes compared to the more almond-shaped eyes with mono-lids commonly associated with East Asians.³⁰ Postcranial skeletal morphology generally consists of long, thick, and relatively flat limb bones.³¹ Finally, genome analysis of a Late Jōmon female dubbed F23 discovered at the Funadomari site on Rebun Island, Hokkaidō, revealed that she carried the genes for thinner hair, a medium skin tone, and medium-colored irises.³² Although

³⁰ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 62; Kumar, *Globalizing the Prehistory of Japan*, 76; Laura Kurek, “Eyes wide cut: the American origins of Korea’s plastic surgery craze,” *The Wilson Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2015), 2.

³¹ Yamaguchi, “A Review of the Osteological Characteristics,” 80 – 82.

³² Hideaki Kanzawa-Kiriyama et al., “Late Jomon male and female genome sequences from the Funadomari site in Hokkaidō, Japan,” *Anthropological Science* 127, no. 2 (2019), 93.

F23 is a single sample, without evidence of gene flow from the south, she likely represents the Jōmon's general appearance.

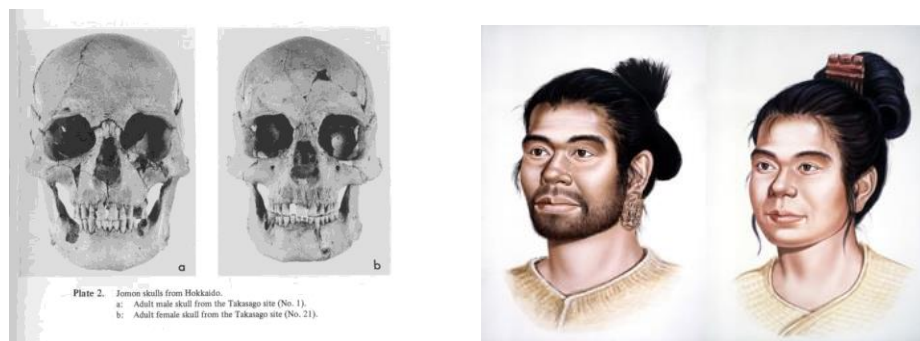


Figure 1 and Figure 2. Two Jōmon skulls belonging to an adult male (left) and an adult female. "The Jomon of Japan, 15,000 BC to 300 BC," Mathilda's Anthropology Blog, March 18, 2008, <https://mathildasanthropologyblog.wordpress.com/2008/03/18/the-jomon-of-japan-13000-bc-to-300-bc/>. On the right, approximate appearances of a Jōmon male and female. "JOMON PEOPLE (10,500–300 B.C.): THEIR LIFESTYLE AND SOCIETY," Facts and Details, Jeff Hays, <https://factsanddetails.com/japan/cat16/sub105/entry-5278.html>.

There was one area where, compared to other groups, the Jōmon were physiologically unusual. Per Bergman's rule, the Jōmon's sturdy build suggests a population adapted to a colder climate. However, it has been observed that their limb length more closely resembles that of populations living in warmer climates.³³ Potential causes for the disparity that have been suggested are (1) the Jōmon's robust physique is a remnant from their ancestors, who lived in a colder environment, (2) a micro-adaptation to contemporary climate change resulted in longer limb length, and (3) nutrition and the specific activities that the Jōmon engaged in impacted the ways in which their bodies and limbs developed.³⁴ Temple and Matsumura have also proposed

³³ Temple and Matsumura, "Do Body Proportions Among Jomon Foragers," 278; Noriko Seguchi et al., "An assessment of postcranial indices, ratios, and body mass versus eco-geographical variables of prehistoric Jomon, Yayoi agriculturalists, and Kumejima Islanders of Japan," *American Journal of Human Biology* 29, no. 5 (2017), 4.

³⁴ Seguchi et al., "An assessment of postcranial indices," 12.

that it emerged within a single population, subsequently spreading throughout the archipelago as a result of interregional gene flow.³⁵

The first two hypotheses can easily be explained by the same event. Under the assumption that the Jōmon's ancestors came from northeast Asia and that their anatomic features did not undergo modification since that time, they would have already possessed a physiology adapted for the cold. Between 10,000 BP and approximately 4,300 BP, there was a period when annual temperatures in Japan reached upwards of 3°C (about 37.4°F) higher than they do presently, and the Jōmon's extremities grew longer in response to that change.³⁶ In the meantime, torso dimensions remained the same. Among Hokkaidō Jōmon specimens, it is theorized that, despite rising temperatures, Hokkaidō's naturally colder climate led to selection for thicker body types.³⁷ This produced a physical form that retained longer limbs from the recent warming, yet with a trunk adapted to the northern clime. Why temperatures would have only affected one part of the body and not the other during the warming period is not entirely clear, although it is possible genetic heritability from the ancestral population overrode (or had to coexist with) environmentally-driven needs.

The problem with that theory lies in its limited perspective. The increasingly widespread acceptance of northeast Eurasia as the ancestral homeland of the Jōmon's progenitors has made it so that hypotheses are frequently proposed against that backdrop. As a result, the angle of the southeast origins hypothesis tends to be overlooked. Therefore, studies that investigate whether it is possible that the Jōmon's limb length is the ancestral trait and the stockier bodies evolved following migration into Japan's colder climate from Southeast Asia should be carried out.

³⁵ Temple and Matsumura, "Do Body Proportions Among Jomon Foragers," 269.

³⁶ Seguchi et al., "An assessment of postcranial indices," 13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

Per the third hypothesis, diet and lifestyle are not two separate suggestions lumped together under the same hypothetical umbrella; it is imperative that they be considered together. The idea that nutritional changes on their own were capable of producing such a specific, pronounced alteration in physical morphology would be just as ludicrous as it sounds. The effects of nutrition have to be considered in tandem with other factors such as migration (as well as any resulting gene flow and/or genetic drift), population composition, and natural selection.³⁸ How they led to the development of the precise physiology witnessed in Jōmon remains unclear, and warrants either greater elaboration from those who proposed the process, or further study.

Along those same lines, nutritional modifications can potentially trigger a chain reaction that can alter physiology in other ways. An observed decline in stature among Late to Final (~2000 – 500 BCE) Jōmon people in western Japan when compared to those from the Middle-to-Late period (~3000 – 1000 BCE) may have been the result of increased systemic stress caused by higher rates of chronic illness, driven by changes in diet (including seasonal availability of resources) and greater population density.³⁹ Plant-based diets are low in nutrients that are important in promoting growth, such as zinc, vitamin A, and iron.⁴⁰ As a result, members of groups which subsisted mainly on vegetation before reaching maturity are more likely to be shorter on average than those who consumed a more varied diet. It would make sense, then, that between the Jōmon becoming more reliant on plants and their bouts of communal living, they began to experience a higher frequency of disease (having a large number of people clustered together in a settlement is excellent for disease transmission, after all). Malnutrition and chronic

³⁸ Ibid., 17.

³⁹ Daniel H. Temple, "What Can Variation in Stature Reveal About Environmental Differences Between Prehistoric Jomon Foragers? Understanding the Impact of Systemic Stress on Developmental Stability," *American Journal of Human Biology* 20 (2008), 432.

⁴⁰ Daniel H. Temple, "Dietary Variation and Stress Among Prehistoric Jomon Foragers from Japan," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 133 (2007), 1040; Temple, "What can Variation in Stature Reveal," 437.

illness, in turn, would have caused systemic stress, resulting in Late to Final Jōmon in the west being shorter than their Middle to Late predecessors.

Given their heavy reliance on terrestrial flora, it would stand to reason that stature among Jōmon in the west should have differed markedly from that of the eastern Jōmon, whose diets were supplemented by the consumption of seafood, and who were not as profoundly influenced by agrarianism. Yet Temple notes that there is no evidence of height disparity between eastern and western Jōmon adults, despite the latter having higher rates of enamel hypoplasia, indicating elevated systemic stress. He suspects that canalization (meaning that outside influences are less likely to impact a creature's physical development as it matures), catch-up growth, or both played a role in the lack of regional disparity.⁴¹ If either canalization or catch-up growth took effect, a child who experienced stunted growth could plausibly reach the average height for their population group as an adult. If this were the case, then diet ultimately would have had little to no bearing on Jōmon stature, and the loss in height would have had to be attributed to something else.

That is not to say that physical variety in the archipelago did not exist, or was only expressed through height. Depending on the time period and location, there was a great deal of physical variation among the Jōmon as there was genetic diversity. The stout Jōmon body type is the assumed standard, but other remains that have been labelled "Jōmon" exhibit more gracile dimensions.⁴² Shigehara, for instance, notes that while remains from Nagano prefecture's Kitamura site dating to around 4,000 – 3,000 BP (corresponding with the Middle to Late Jōmon periods) are on the robust side – more robustly-built than known initial or early Jōmon period skeletons, in fact – male skulls from that site exhibit a narrower face breadth which "gives a

⁴¹ Temple, "What can Variation in Stature Reveal," 435.

⁴² Kumar, *Globalizing the Prehistory of Japan*, 76.

delicate impression as compared with late Jōmon people in general.”⁴³ The more gracile build of Initial and Early Jōmon people by comparison suggests that the trademark robusticity seen in later Jōmon skeletons may have been an adaptation; morphological variation among Jōmon skeletons could also be on account of the differences in physical types among Paleolithic foragers (especially if they arrived from multiple disparate regions), gene flow, and/or genetic drift.⁴⁴ Regardless of how it occurred, it is logical to assume that variety among the Jōmon was much greater than is usually thought.

The Jōmon’s relative seclusion on the islands and the genetic bottlenecking that it entailed has led to speculation that such corporeal diversity would have been a recent occurrence. The “isolation” model suggests that, due to being separated from the mainland following glacial melting, the Jōmon retained many physiological traits from their Paleolithic forebears (with explicit comparisons drawn between their skeletal morphology and those of “Cro-Magnon” populations) as recently as 1000 BCE, when their form finally began to change.⁴⁵ Fossilized Early Jōmon remains are speculated to have exhibited smaller body sizes than those from later periods, with females being as short as 135 cm (roughly 4’5”) and males as short as 152 cm (just shy of 5’), mirroring the statures of Upper Paleolithic peoples from southeastern Asia.⁴⁶ This hypothesis, however, ignores the potential effects of environmental factors such as the previously mentioned climate change, which occurred much earlier, and is incongruent with the maritime

⁴³ Nobuo Shigehara, “Human Skeletal Remains of the Middle to Late Jomon Period Excavated from the Inland Kitamura Site, Nagano Prefecture,” *Anthropological Science* 102, no. 4 (1994), 323, 336.

⁴⁴ Osamu Kondo, Hitoshi Fukase and Takashi Fukumoto, “Regional variations in the Jomon population revisited on craniofacial morphology,” *Anthropological Science* 125, no. 2 (2017), 94 – 95.

⁴⁵ Yamaguchi, “A Review of the Osteological Characteristics,” 84; Nakashima et al., “Nonmetric cranial variation of Jomon Japan,” 782.

⁴⁶ Yamaguchi, “A Review of the Osteological Characteristics,” 85.

mobility exercised by Paleolithic peoples in Asia as indicated by Nakazawa and Bae, making it highly unlikely.

In discussing physical Jōmon features in relation to the environment, it is appropriate to revisit the subject of Sundadonty mentioned above. The evolutionary history of Sundadonty is fuzzy, but whether or not the crown, and possibly the roots, of a tooth display “Sundadont” or “Sinodont” characteristics is at least somewhat determined by the rs3827760-370V/A allele located on the ectodysplasin A receptor (EDAR) gene, a pleiotropic gene which also codes for traits such as hair thickness and earlobe shape.⁴⁷ Having evidently been passed down through the islands’ indigenes with little to no modification, it could be thought that the tooth structure somehow complimented their forager lifestyle. The Jōmon menu chiefly consisted of wild terrestrial game animals, some freshwater fish, and vegetation; coastal communities often included seafood as well.⁴⁸ That Sundadonty can still be found among the Ainu (who were predominantly hunter-gatherers until the eighteenth century) further implies that it was beneficial for populations whose diet was largely wild flora and fauna, as opposed to cultivated crops. However, due to the EDAR gene’s pleiotropic nature, Sundadonty may merely have been a “hitchhiking phenotype” inherited alongside another trait that was actively chosen for.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Keiichi Kataoka et al., “The human EDAR 370V/A polymorphism affects tooth root morphology potentially through the modification of a reaction–diffusion system,” *Scientific Reports* 11, no. 1 (2021), 5143-1.

⁴⁸ Temple, “Dietary Variation and Stress,” 1035; Soichiro Kusaka, “Stable isotope analysis of human bone hydroxyapatite and collagen for the reconstruction of dietary patterns of hunter-gatherers from Jomon populations,” *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 29, no. 1 (2019), 36; Aiko Saso and Osamu Kondo, “Periodontal disease in the Neolithic Jomon: inter-site comparisons of inland and coastal areas in central Honshu, Japan,” *Anthropological Science* 127, no. 1 (2019), 22; Minoru Yoneda, Ryo Suzuki, Yasuyuki Shibata, Masatoshi Morita, Tomohiro Sukegawa, Nobuo Shigehara, and Takeru Akazawa, “Isotopic evidence of inland-water fishing by a Jomon population excavated from the Boji site, Nagano, Japan,” *Journal of Archaeological Science* 31 (2004), 104 – 105.

⁴⁹ Jeong-Huey Park et al., “Effects of an Asian-specific nonsynonymous EDAR variant on multiple dental traits,” *Journal of Human Genetics* 57 (2012), 513.

Research also indicates that the Jōmon were fairly prone to poor oral health. Among the problems they were plagued with were dental caries, antemortem tooth loss (AMTL) and enamel hypoplasia, all pointing towards periodontal disease.⁵⁰ A study by Saso and Kondo carried out on molars from Middle and Late Jōmon remains (mostly the latter) indicates that the rate of periodontitis varied anywhere between 31.8–38.6% and 38.8–66%, depending on whether it was measured in relation to the alveolar crest or alveolar septum. Their samples also showed signs of dental caries and AMTL.⁵¹ However, the dental remains from the three sites they tested – Kitamura, Nakazuma, and Ubayama – displayed a range of dental differences. The authors suggest that the variation was on account of disparities in regional diet, which made populations more or less prone to periodontal disease, dental caries, and ATML.⁵²

Compared to what is known about the development of oral health issues, some of Saso and Kondo's results appear abnormal. Of the three target sites, they reported that dental caries were more prevalent among Jōmon from Nakazuma (17.0%) and Ubayama (11.4%). The Kitamura site, where the rate of caries was a mere 1.9%, is located farther inland than the others, and it has been postulated that the inhabitants subsisted primarily on carbohydrate-rich C₃ terrestrial flora.⁵³ This is in direct opposition to the hypothesis that Jōmon people living largely or solely on terrestrial or plant-based diets had more dental caries than did those who incorporated marine food sources.⁵⁴ No explanation for why this may have been was offered.

⁵⁰ Temple, "Dietary Variation and Stress, 1035; Saso and Kondo, "Periodontal disease in the Neolithic Jomon," 14.

⁵¹ "Periodontal disease in the Neolithic Jomon," 21 – 22.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 18; Yuichi I. Naito et al., "Evaluation of carnivory in inland Jomon hunter-gatherers based on nitrogen isotopic compositions of individual amino acids in bone collagen," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 40 (2013), 2914; Anithadevi K. Sivaram et al., "Comparison of plants with C₃ and C₄ carbon fixation pathways for remediation of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon contaminated soils," *Scientific Reports* 8 (2018), 2.

⁵⁴ Temple, "Dietary Variation and Stress," 1036; Kusaka, "Stable isotope analysis," 37.

What makes Saso and Kondo's findings particularly unusual are the aforementioned dietary shifts that favored greater consumption of plants during the transition from the Middle-to-Late period to the Late-to-Final period.⁵⁵ Climate change that occurred between 5,000 – 4,400 BP, when the warming that had been taking place over the previous millennia reversed course, may have decimated vegetation that the Jōmon usually relied on and forced them to seek out new food sources.⁵⁶ Tubers and roots such as taro may have grown in popularity on account of being resistant to cooler temperatures. Being carbohydrates, they are also responsible for causing tooth caries when eaten frequently, which the western Jōmon (whose diets were more plant-centered than those of the Jōmon in the east) may have done.⁵⁷ With the majority of Saso and Kondo's samples coming from Late Jōmon period remains, it is possible that the Nakazuma, Ubayama, and Kitamura dentition patterns are representative of the environmental variation present among different populations at the time. Additional investigations into why Kitamura is such an anomaly may be necessary before any definite conclusions can be drawn.

As well as displaying a propensity for poor oral hygiene, if we are operating based on the prevailing assumption that their ancestors came from northeastern Eurasia, it could plausibly be argued that the Jōmon should have been more likely to have dry earwax than wet, the product of genotype AA, which is produced by the polymorphic rs17822931-G/A allele located in the ABCC11 gene.⁵⁸ The rs17822931-A allele mutation (which is recessive in relation to the wet wax-coding rs17822931-G allele) is more frequent in northern populations than southern, indicating that it emerged in response to environmental factors (perhaps the colder weather) in

⁵⁵ Temple, "Dietary Variation and Stress," 1042; Temple, "What Can Variation in Stature Reveal," 432.

⁵⁶ Temple, "Dietary Variation and Stress," 1042.

⁵⁷ Ibid.; Temple, "What Can Variation in Stature Reveal," 432.

⁵⁸ Koh-ichiro Yoshiura et al., "A SNP in the ABCC11 gene is the determinant of human earwax type," *Nature Genetics* 38, no. 3 (2006), 324; Jun Ohashi et al., "The Impact of Natural Selection on an ABCC11 SNP Determining Earwax Type," *Molecular Biology and Evolution* 28, no. 1 (2011), 849.

the north.⁵⁹ It has also been proposed that populations from northeastern Eurasia developed an adaptation to emit less axillary odor as a result of living in a cold climate, and that there is a correlation between axillary odor and earwax type.⁶⁰ Though determining whether or not the Jōmon were prone to axillary sweating would be tricky to pull off, that there is a correlation at all possibly indicates pleiotropy of the ABCC11 gene, making it more probable that if they had less axillary odor, they also had drier earwax as well.

While the Jōmon's possession of dry earwax would strengthen their bond to the northeastern mainland as opposed to Southeast Asia, there are issues confounding the potential theory. It has been observed that dry earwax is typically found in "Mongoloid" populations, being the most common in Koreans (100% frequency in a test sample) and Han Chinese (90.4%).⁶¹ In addition, the same ABCC11 analysis that indicates the A and G allele frequency in Koreans and Han Chinese shows that the frequency of the rs17822931-A allele in Hokkaidō Jōmon subjects was 47.6%. In fact, the Jōmon reportedly have higher frequencies of the G allele than do other Northeast Asians, leading to the conclusion that they had *wet* earwax more often than not.⁶²

The origins of the dry earwax genotype found in the islands' early inhabitants aren't difficult to guess, or to produce evidence for. It has been suggested that the rs17822931-A allele originated in northeast Asia, subsequently spreading throughout the rest of the world.⁶³ Furthermore, research conducted on the origins of the rs17822931-A allele indicates that it emerged approximately 2,006 generations (~50,150 years) ago, six generations (~150 years)

⁵⁹ Hisako Kazuta et al., "Genotype frequencies of the ABCC11 gene in 2000–3000-year-old human bones from the Epi-Jōmon and Jōmon sites in Hokkaidō, Japan," *Anthropological Science* 119, no. 1 (2011), 81.

⁶⁰ Yoshiura et al., "A SNP in the ABCC11 gene," 324, 328.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 325; Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 75 – 76; Kazuta et al., "Genotype frequencies of the ABCC11 gene," 84.

⁶² Kazuta et al., "Genotype frequencies of the ABCC11 gene," 84; Kanzawa-Kiriyama et al., "Late Jōmon," 93.

⁶³ Yoshiura et al., "A SNP in the ABCC11 gene," 328.

before the estimated time when Europeans and East Asians diverged.⁶⁴ If this is the case, the considerably high rate of the dry earwax genotype among the Jōmon could have been residual of the genotype most common among the initial migrants into the archipelago (once again working off of the hypothesis that they came from the northeast, of course), and which continued to be selected for due to the positive correlation between dry earwax and axillary odor. The question then becomes why wet earwax was dominant among the Hokkaidō Jōmon, especially when advantageous cold-climate adaptations are linked to the opposite allele. Without understanding the function of earwax (a subject about which, as Yoshiura et al. and Ohashi et al. point out, there is little to qualitatively speak of), it is a question that must presently remain unanswered.⁶⁵

Conclusion

In closing, regarding the samples that yielded the above phenotype results, there is something to bear in mind: several of the studies cited were carried out using remains identified as being from the Middle Jōmon period or later. This could have been on account of early fossil availability or condition, or there being little viable genetic material dating to the millennia between the Incipient and Early Jōmon stages. With few possible exceptions, any given attributes espoused by researchers should be taken as representative solely of Jōmon from the specific time or region their materials came from; their findings cannot be applied to the Jōmon as a whole. That being said, they do allow for comparisons between individuals from the same period and from one period to the next, shedding light on how the inhabitants may have evolved.

This chapter has attempted to piece together a genetic and phenotypic picture of the Jōmon, from which information about their development could be extrapolated. Jōmon mtDNA, as well

⁶⁴ Ohashi et al., "The Impact of Natural Selection," 855.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 856; Yoshiura et al., "A SNP in the ABCC11 gene," 328.

as additional genetic traits, strongly suggests roots in northeast Eurasia, while dental morphology points towards Southeast Asian origins, and Y chromosomal analysis hints at partial patrilineal descent from Central Asian groups. Certain genetic markers, including mtDNA haplogroups N9b and M7a, Y chromosome sub-clade D-P37.1, blood subtype O102, and the PSCA gene's rs2294008-T allele, are common enough in the Jōmon genome to constitute the beginning of a genetic thumbprint. Their physiology indicates adaptations to ancient climate change, perhaps combined with a body size inherited from their ancestors and nutritional influence. Finally, while alleles for both wet and dry earwax were found, they were more likely to have had the wet kind, and their plant-based diet left them vulnerable to periodontal disease and systemic stress, the latter of which possibly having affected their stature. Above all else, the greatest take-away is that the Jōmon were a heterogeneous population. The degree of variation present in their genetic make-up and physiology makes it clear that, while there are common traits, there is no single "Jōmon" type. This will likely have no effect on how the Jōmon are perceived in popular imagination, but provides much to think about concerning Ainu, Japanese and Ryūkyūan ethnogenesis.

Chapter 2. Barbarians Through the Ages: The Emishi, Ezo and Early Modern Ainu

The first wave of migrations from the mainland during the first millennium BCE marked the beginning of the end of indigenous dominance in the Japanese archipelago, but dual occupancy of the islands persisted. While a cohesive proto-Japanese society gradually emerged in the west, around it, multiple populations lived on in societies of their own, developing their own distinct cultures. By the time the state of Yamato was established around the sixth century CE, it was surrounded by diverse communities of people who had no cultural affiliation with the new polity.⁶⁶ From their earliest days, the Japanese were never alone.

This chapter will explore Japanese attitudes towards those with whom they shared the islands from the early historic period to the end of the Edo period, what contributed towards the formation of those attitudes, and how they were expressed. After investigating why certain labels were applied to peoples living beyond the borders of Japanese territory, it will become clear that the Edo-period Ainu were the latest victims of a millennium-long tactic used by the Japanese to define themselves and their state, a constant machination found in the series of sociopolitical frameworks that propped up each successive governing structure. It was a system that worked so well, its basic premises hardly changed over time.

The Emishi and Ezo

Although the Ainu do not emerge as an identifiable ethnic group until the thirteenth century, their story begins earlier, with the Emishi (also sometimes referred to as Mōjin, Ebisu, or a

⁶⁶ While the exact date of the founding of Yamato is debated, according to Barnes, some archaeologists identify the sixth century CE as the point by which a centralized government was fully formed. Gina Barnes, *Protohistoric Yamato: Archaeology of the First Japanese State* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988), 31.

number of other appellations) who dwelled in northeastern Honshū. The Emishi have been presumed to be the ancestors of the Ainu since at least the Edo period, and as early as the fourteenth century; they are still frequently seen as an intermediary link between the Jōmon and the Ainu on account of their hunter-gather lifestyles, having lived in the same region (northeastern Honshū being Jōmon territory following Yayoi expansion), physical descriptions in ancient records, and archaeological evidence of cultural continuity.⁶⁷ How the Yamato state regarded them and whether they deserve to be assigned their current role in Ainu ethnogenesis, then, are the first factors that need to be addressed before moving on to the Ainu themselves.

The earliest known mentions of the Emishi in Japanese texts are found in the *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihongi* (720), as a people who the early *tennō* needed to vanquish in the name of territorial expansion and, later, acquiring resources. In these works, the Emishi are described in a less than flattering manner – they are crude and bestial, far removed from anything Yamato Japanese elites would recognize as civilized human beings. A lengthy description of these fiends' alleged attributes can be found in Book Seven of the *Nihongi*, under the reign of Keikō-*tennō*:

Amongst these Eastern savages the Yemishi are the most powerful, their men and women live together promiscuously, there is no distinction of father and child. In winter they dwell in holes, in summer they live in nests. Their clothing consists of furs, and they drink blood. Brothers are suspicious of one another. In ascending mountains they are like flying birds; in going through the grass they are like fleet quadrupeds. When they receive a favor they forget it, but if an injury is done them they never fail to revenge it. Therefore they keep arrows in their top-knots and carry swords within their clothing. Sometimes they draw together their fellows and make inroads on the frontier. At other times they take the opportunity of the harvest to plunder the people. If attacked, they conceal

⁶⁷ Karl F. Friday, "Pushing beyond the Pale: The Yamato Conquest of the Emishi and Northern Japan," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 23, no. 1 (1997), 4; Mimi Hall Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi: Buddhist Art and Regional Politics in Twelfth-Century Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1998), 17 – 18.

themselves in the herbage; if pursued, they flee into the mountains. Therefore ever since antiquity they have not been steeped in the kingly civilizing influences.⁶⁸

This characterization is too outlandish to be factual, but it serves a crucial purpose. Portraying the Emishi in such a way – as violent, incestuous blood-drinkers who live like wild animals – dehumanizes them, and turns them into something to be looked down on. Interactions between the Yamato state and the “Eastern savages” at its borders were defined by this discourse on multiple levels, making it a cornerstone of their relationship.

One noteworthy aspect of the Emishi’s position as the Other was that it was a status that could not be altered. A 774 CE edict decried them as possessing “wild hearts,” implying an innate inhumanness.⁶⁹ Taming them was possible, but under those circumstances, their having lived in territory to where the “kingly civilizing influences” did not originally extend was what distinguished them from Yamato-born Japanese. Even Emishi who submitted to the polity and entered its fold could not shed the stigma of being outsiders, being referred to as *fushū* (“captives”) or *kemin* (“converts”) instead of *heimin* (“commoners”).⁷⁰ When cultural practices and values aligned, maintaining a distinction between those who were raised at the source of those customs and those who came from outside it became essential. Subsequently, an Emishi was always a ferocious, uncouth alien, no matter how integrated into Yamato society they were; it was simply their nature.

This belief that they lacked any “human” qualities can be seen in the way Emishi were represented in pre- and early modern art. One example is the sixteenth-century *Seisuiji en’gi*, a

⁶⁸ W.G. Aston, trans., *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., Ltd., 1896; repr., Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1982), 203.

⁶⁹ *Shoku Nihongi*, quoted in Friday, “Pushing beyond the Pale,” 8, 10.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7; Brett Walker, *The Conquest of Aizu Lands: Ecology and Culture in Japanese Expansion, 1590 – 1800* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 21; Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi*, 31.

pictorial history of Seisuiji, the temple where Sakanoue no Tamuramaro (758 – 811), who became a legend for his role in putting down an Emishi uprising in 801 CE, was buried – the fleeing insurgents being skewered by Tamuramaro’s men were given fiendish, goblin-like visages by artists who had no real references for their actual appearance.⁷¹ The way an individual was dressed also made him easily identifiable as a Japanese person or a barbarian. A screen painting from Hata no Chihei’s 1069 version of the *Shōtoku-taishi e-den* (*Illustrated Biography of Prince Shōtoku*) portrays what is thought to be one of the earliest known artistic renderings of the Emishi: a trio of half-naked men with long, tied-back hair (but, it is worth noting, no beards), one of whom is sporting a bird-feather skirt.⁷² While their hair can be either dressed or undressed, the wearing of animal skins (or feathers) is one trait that appears typical of Emishi in visual depictions. Being clothed in animal pelts metaphorically transformed them into animals.

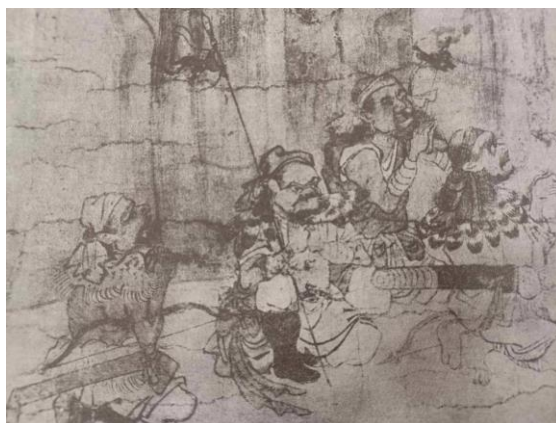


Figure 3. Detail of Emishi submitting to Shōtoku-taishi. Note the bird feather collars on two of the men, and a fur collar on the man on the left. Artist unknown. Reproduced from a larger image in Takakura Shin’ichirō, *Ainu-e shūsei* (Tokyo: Banchō Shōbō, 1973), 2:13.

⁷¹ Toshikazu Sasaki, “Ainu-e: A Historical Review,” trans. Ritsuko Howson and Chang-su Houchins, in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, ed. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil (University of Washington Press, 1999), 80 - 81.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 79 – 80.

The condescending attitudes shown towards the Emishi were shaped by the Yamato elites' worldview. Among the many imports from the mainland adopted by the polity was the Chinese concept of *huá-yí* (J. *ka-i*); usually discussed in the way of a core-periphery model, it is telling that the phrase is a compound of the ideograms for “magnificent” (華) and “barbarian” (夷). According to this philosophy, the central state – in this case, Yamato – embodied the zenith of civilization, while those outside it were considerably less refined; the farther away from the core, the more uncivilized peoples from other states or regions were thought to be. That the court fully believed in *ka-i* ideology is obvious in how it recognized three kinds of savages on the islands: *niki emishi* (熟蝦夷, “sophisticated barbarians,” who were the closest to the capital, as well as the most acculturated), *ara emishi* (麤蝦夷, “unrefined barbarians,” who were more distant and not quite as influenced by the state's culture), and *tsugaru* (都加留, who lived the furthest from the capital and were considered completely uncivilized).⁷³ Portraying those in the periphery as coarse and subhuman was a way of legitimizing both Yamato's place in the center of the world, and its right to be there.

Likewise, having a barbarian population it could claim to have subdued enhanced Yamato's own sense of its standing as a polity. The *Shoku Nihongi* (797) notes that Emishi were present at the New Year's celebration of 701, standing alongside delegates from the “Southern Islands” (the islands south of Kyūshū, including Tanegashima and the Ryūkyūs) as representatives of the Yamato state's conquered enemies (though there are accounts of Emishi submitting to Yamato as

⁷³ Haruhito Kōchi, “Tō kara mita emishi: chūgoku shiryō no bunseki wo tooshite,” *Shigaku zasshi* 113, no. 1 (2004), 47. *Kanji* readings obtained from Kotobank (<https://kotobank.jp>).

early as 581), as well as vassals from Silla on the Korean peninsula.⁷⁴ The configuration of the emperor and his visitors from distant lands facing each other during this assembly with a standard bearing a statue of a three-legged bird between them, recalling the subjugation of the island's barbarians at the hands of Jimmu-*tennō* (with assistance from his three-legged messenger crow, Yatararasu) as recorded in the histories, reinforced the perception of Yamato's place as a central power with authority over "all under Heaven" (*tenka*).⁷⁵

As well as being an uncultured foil against which the Japanese could define themselves politically, groups like the Emishi had an important role to play in creating a sense of unifying Japanese-ness and polity cohesion, namely in that their existence was a necessary component in the intellectual establishment of "Yamato" and, later, "Japan." Once a "Japanese" template had been adopted, "[t]o posit these defining Japanese qualities, one must assume the presence of the foreign Other as the fundamental condition. In response to the Other, it became possible for an awareness of Japan to emerge, to be sought, and to be represented."⁷⁶ This practice would emerge time and again throughout Japanese history, but for Yamato, with the existence of *any* large, unified entity being a comparatively recent development in the islands, the perception of solidarity would have been exceptionally crucial.

There were other political advantages to such a dichotomous outlook. The Yamato state's eastward expansion and resource acquisition depended on the displacement of the Emishi, which necessitated additional rationalization that would not have been needed if the target regions were

⁷⁴ Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 171, 310n85. It is worth noting that there has been some debate as to whether or not the "Southern Islands" in question refer to the Ryūkyūs or Taiwan. As an example (from a Chinese angle), see Liang Chia-pin, "An Examination of the Accounts of Liu-Ch'iu Kuo in the Sui-Shu," *Chinese Studies in History* 17, no. 2 (1983): 63 – 74.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 36, 168 – 170.

⁷⁶ Nobuko Toyosawa, *Imaginative Mapping: Landscape and Japanese Identity in the Tokugawa and Meiji Eras* (Cambridge, Mass. And London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019), 258 – 259.

vacant. Much in the same way that Europeans in colonial America used the idea of Native American savagery as an excuse to usurp land within their territories, assigning the Emishi barbarian status effectively meant that they had no rights to the land they inhabited, making it free for the taking by a more cultured people.⁷⁷ Also, in the arena of international diplomacy, the existence and exhibition of a subjugated, obeisant barbarous people was seen as a way for Yamato to negotiate its regional status, particularly with regards to China. An envoy to the court of Emperor Gaozong (628 – 683, r. 649 – 683) in 659 CE included one male and one female *niki emishi*, supposedly showcasing their docility as a means of demonstrating the Yamato king's virtue to the Tang emperor in hopes of his state being acknowledged as a “little China” (*shōchūka*).⁷⁸ Although the state was trying to craft a Yamato-centric sphere domestically, when it came to its position in East Asia, it still sought recognition from the original Middle Kingdom.

The internalized image of the Emishi as savages, however, led to complications for Yamato during the pacification campaigns conducted between 709 and 811 CE. The court nobles assumed that, because Yamato had more manpower, more resources, and more advanced weaponry than the Emishi, subduing them would be easy; when subjugation took longer than expected (partially as a result of underestimating their opponents), they grew frustrated at the perceived ineptitude of their own armies.⁷⁹ After all, how else could their vastly superior military be thwarted by a people as underdeveloped as the Emishi if it were not a case of total incompetence? Ultimately, the century-long conflict ended in a stalemate, although the court preferred to present itself as victorious and declare its opponent pacified.⁸⁰ Yamato's views of

⁷⁷ Nathan Hopson, *Ennobling Japan's Savage Northeast: Tohoku as Postwar Thought, 1945 – 2011* (Cambridge, Mass. And London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), 126.

⁷⁸ Kōchi, “Tō kara mita emishi,” 47 – 48.

⁷⁹ Friday, “Pushing beyond the Pale,” 12 – 13.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

the Emishi directly affected expectations of how its conquest would proceed, and required it to falsify its official version of events when the results did not turn out as anticipated.

As the ineffective military attempts at suppression show, reality was not always what the national histories made it out to be, which is also true of Emishi culture. Their societies took the form of independent tribes, which banded together when necessary and whose leaders (one during peacetime, and a different one during times of war) were chosen based on merit. Contrary to the image of savage beasts, they are thought to have been actively involved in farming, metal-working, gold-mining, rearing horses, and interregional trade with not just the Yamato capital, but possibly mainland Eurasia as well.⁸¹ Such complex activities point to a sophisticated, well-developed society, but acknowledging this reality would have been inconvenient for the court, which, as we have seen, relied on the impression of the Emishi's being inferior to achieve its own ends. Denying the Emishi's social complexity was a way for Yamato to continue controlling the narrative that was supporting their legitimacy.

Emishi-as-Ainu

Though there is no doubt that they were treated as cultural counterparts to the Japanese, the question still remains, can the Emishi be definitively connected to the Ainu? Based on the national histories, it certainly seems like they can. The Emishi's alternate name of "Mōjin" and the *kanji* used to write it (毛人, "hairy people") call to mind the famed hairiness of the Ainu, especially in comparison to Yamato Japanese. They are also described in the *Nihongi* as people who "tattoo their bodies," a custom that was observed among Ainu women up to modern times.⁸²

⁸¹ Ibid., 4; Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi*, 14 – 16.

⁸² Aston, *Nihongi*, 200.

Furthermore, there is the point that some Emishi hailed from the north, the later domain of the Ainu. With such strong similarities in appearance and the shared locale, it is easy to see where a transition from one to the other could be inferred.

The Watarishima Emishi in particular can be used to argue for a strong theoretic association between the Emishi and the Ainu. The name of these northern people roughly translates to “barbarians who cross (to/from) the island,” indicating that they came from a land on the other side of the Tsugaru Strait (i.e. Ezo) to conduct trade with the Japanese. Said to have been under the authority of Dewa by the eighth century, the contents of their tribute – animal pelts and furs instead of horses, which the government continued to receive from Emishi in Mutsu – shows that their culture differed from those of other Emishi that Yamato had dealings with.⁸³ Based on these ascribed attributes, it may be that the Watarishima Emishi were the Satsumon people, whose culture dominated southern Ezo between 700 and 1200 CE. The Satsumon, who were influenced by agrarian communities in northern Tōhoku, actively traded with the Japanese, exchanging bear, seal and deer hides, salmon, and kelp for rice, sake, and iron tools.⁸⁴ If the Watarishima Emishi and the Satsumon were one and the same, then the Watarishima Emishi would have been the direct predecessors, as well as the ancestors, of the Ainu.

While the records provide tempting evidence, from a biological standpoint, the answer is far from clear. A study on mummified Ōshū Fujiwara carried out at Chūsonji in 1950 concluded that there were no physical similarities between the bodies of the Ōshū Fujiwara, who were of matrilineal Emishi descent, and the Ainu.⁸⁵ In addition, skeletal remains in Hokkaidō that are

⁸³ Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 22; Susumu Emori, *Ainu no rekishi: Hokkaidō no hitobito* [2] (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1987), 17.

⁸⁴ Kiyoshi Yamaura and Hiroshi Ushiro, “Prehistoric Hokkaidō and Ainu Origins,” in *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People*, ed. William W. Fitzhugh and Chisato O. Dubreuil (University of Washington Press, 1999), 44 – 45.

⁸⁵ Hopson, *Ennobling Japan’s Savage Northeast*, 120.

determined to be from the times of the Emishi and Ezo are usually categorized based on the specific cultural period they date to (Epi-Jōmon [approximately 500 BCE – 700 CE] or Satsumon), and cannot be said to belong to a particular population. Although their cranial morphology is often said to resemble that of modern Ainu skulls, this is no marker of ethnic identity, especially when there is no agreement on who the Emishi were ethnically in the first place (One homogenous group? Numerous disparate peoples? [Proto-]Ainu? Japanese?).

Regardless of their actual identity, it is unlikely that the term “Emishi” specifically referred to people of a certain physio-biological disposition, or, more simply put, biological race. Foucault (1926 – 1984) espoused that “two races exist whenever one writes the history of two groups which do not, at least to begin with, have the same language, or, in many cases, the same religion... [and] have not become mixed because of the differences, dissymmetries, and barriers created by privileges, customs, and rights.” In other words, pre-modern racial delineations were dictated by the gatekeepers of history based on perceived, sustained inter-population differences.⁸⁶ Because the concept of race as it is known today did not exist in pre-modern Japan, it has been said that elites at the time were a more or less “race-agnostic” bunch who did not necessarily see peripheral barbarians as being racially (that is, biologically) different; that they are considered as such now is the result of anachronistic readings of the ancient texts in the Meiji period, when the notion of “biological race” was beginning to take hold.⁸⁷ To that end, it is more probable that “Emishi” was a political label, not the name of an ethnic group.

In the end, the exact identity of the Emishi may not matter. Among some researchers, there is a consensus that trying to prove any link between the Emishi and Ainu is “meaningless,” that the

⁸⁶ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, ed. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador [St. Martin’s Press], 2003; Internet Archive, 2017), 77.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 132.

Emishi are only considered relevant in Ainu matters to the extent that “some legacy of their ‘backwardness’ persisted in the Northeast,” and that “it is better to focus on ethnic diversity in northern Honshū instead of attempting to reconstruct the Emishi as a unified population that became the Ainu.”⁸⁸ As far as they are concerned, attempting to find a correlation between the two peoples is a waste of time. In that sense, they might be right. There is no concrete proof that the Emishi were ethnically connected to the Ainu in any way; it is possible, but until more definitive evidence is produced, the “Emishi-to-Ainu” theory remains speculative.

The same could arguably be said of the Ezo, who succeeded the Emishi as the Japanese polity’s “barbarian” neighbors. Although written with the same characters and carrying the same meaning, “Ezo,” which is speculated to be a corruption of the alternate reading “Ebisu” and which started to replace “Emishi” in the Japanese vocabulary in the twelfth century, refers to a population with a markedly different language and culture from their predecessors, and who lived on the island of Ezogashima in the north.⁸⁹ However, like the Emishi, the identity of the Ezo is vague. The matter is further complicated by the fact that modern Ainu were also called “Ezo” by the Japanese, making it difficult to distinguish between the two (if there was anything to be distinguished). Its later use for non-Ainu peoples like the Russians – the “Red Ezo” (*aka ezo*) – as well as the written and semantic affiliations with the Emishi makes it possible that “Ezo,” too, was a term that had greater political significance than it did racially or ethnically.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Kazurō Hanihara, “Emishi, Ezo and Ainu: An Anthropological Perspective,” *Japan Review*, no. 1 (1990), 43; Hopson, *Ennobling Japan’s Savage Northeast*, 117; Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi*, 18.

⁸⁹ Hudson, “Ainu Ethnogenesis and the Northern Fujiwara,” *Arctic Anthropology* 36, nos. 1 and 2 (1999), 79; Sansai Kikuchi, *Ezo to Ainu* (Tokyo: Hihyōsha, 1995), 17; Richard Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 29.

⁹⁰ John J. Stephan, “Ezo Under the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1799-1821: An Aspect of Japan’s Frontier History” (PhD diss., University of London, 1969), 35.

If the Emishi and Ezo ever had words for their self-identity, they have long been lost. To Yamato, what they called themselves did not matter as much as what they represented in early Japanese socio-politics. That view flowed into the following centuries, with the state gradually placing greater importance on managing the way their barbarian acquaintances were presented.

The Ainu

The population that would come to be identified as the “Ainu” was the recipient of cultural influences from both the Satsumon and the Okhotsk, a culture concurrently living in northern Ezo with ancestral ties to northeastern Eurasia. Though customs in southern Ezo changed in other ways during the transition from Epi-Jōmon to Satsumon, the Satsumon people retained the Epi-Jōmon’s hunter-gatherer lifestyle, supplementing it by growing wheat and barnyard millet.⁹¹ Additionally, although the Okhotsk were a maritime people, the frequent presence of bear skull remains (determined to belong to bears raised in captivity, presumably for ritual purposes) inside the back wall of Okhotsk houses attests to bears being of some importance.⁹² This is significant where the Ainu are concerned: the *iyomante* (“bear-sending ceremony”), which became a popular element in later paintings centered around Ainu and their way of life (*Ainu-e*), bore strong resemblance to other sending ceremonies found among communities in Sakhalin and northeast Eurasia, indicating that it was likely an import from the mainland. Their most iconic practices were inherited from their Satsumon and Okhotsk forebears.

Contact between Japan and Ezo did not subside after the Kamakura *bakufu* collapsed and the land entered a protracted period of civil war – trade continued to flow between the Tsugaru

⁹¹ Yamaura and Ushiro, “Prehistoric Hokkaidō and Ainu Origins,” 44; Toyohito Moriya, “A Study of the Utilization of Wood to Build Pit Dwellings from the Epi-Jomon Culture to the Satsumon Culture in Hokkaidō Region, Japan,” *Journal of the Graduate School of Letters* 10 (2015), 72.

⁹² Yamaura and Ushiro, “Prehistoric Hokkaidō and Ainu Origins,” 44.

Peninsula's Tosaminato port and Ezo, and periodic Ainu uprisings frequently required martial intervention.⁹³ The Edo period, though, marked a turning point in Japanese-Ainu relations. Starting in 1604, with the formal establishment of Matsumae *han* on the Oshima peninsula, the government's interactions with the Ainu became more frequent, and it became increasingly familiar with the people in whose land it now had a foothold. For almost two hundred years, administrative dealings with Ezo's indigenes were conducted solely by the Kakizaki family (which later took the name Matsumae, and will be referred to as such going forward), who imposed strict regulations on how they could dress and behave. Concerns over potential Russian encroachment eventually prompted the Edo *bakufu* to assume direct control (read: proto-colonization) over Ezo, a move that set the stage for the Ainu being permanently drawn into the Japanese sociopolitical sphere.

The enduring use of "Ezo" in the designation of the island (and its inhabitants) suggests that political perceptions of the Ainu had changed little over the centuries – they were still savages existing at the edges of Japanese territory. For the Matsumae family, the purported barbarity of the Ainu took on personal significance. Based in the far north of the archipelago, where the environment was not suitable for rice agriculture, the *han* relied on overseeing trade between the Ainu and the Japanese in northern Honshū as the source of its authority.⁹⁴ The nature of their association was formalized in a way not unfamiliar to Japanese politics: the recognition of a civilized core and uncivilized periphery, predicated on the basis of cultural dissimilarities. *Han* officials strictly forbade the Ainu's assumption of Japanese customs, and official relations between the Ainu and the Matsumae were almost theatrically carried out to symbolically

⁹³ Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 26. For a timeline of Ainu-related events, see Emori, *Ainu no rekishi*, 244 – 261.

⁹⁴ David L. Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California press, 2005), 113.

reinforce their differences. Each year, Ainu chieftains from western Ezo would travel to Fukuyama Castle for an audience with the Matsumae *daimyō* that they referred to as *uymam* (J. *uimamu*, “trade,” though it had more the feel of a tributary mission). At these audiences, the Ainu would be seated in a position that emphasized their subordinate status in relation to the *daimyō*, and afterwards be given *kudasaremono* (“gifts bestowed from above,” as Brett Walker so eloquently translates the term), a word which denotes the inferiority of the recipients; moreover, on these occasions the Ainu chieftains were forced to wear *jittoku* (Chinese silk clothing) as a symbol of their otherness.⁹⁵ Ezo effectively became a microcosmic representation of Japan’s *ka-i* ideology, with Matsumae at the center.

The Matsumae family’s monopoly over the Ezo trade, and therefore its source of authority, was lost in 1799, when the Edo *bakufu* assumed direct control over the island. Growing awareness of Russian advancement in the north made making the government’s presence known on Ezo a matter of import, fueled by concerns over how the foreigners’ meddling affected its clout in the region. There were suspicions that Russians may have helped instigate the Kunashir-Menashi Rebellion (1789), though they were later disproven; furthermore, by allowing the Russians to indirectly trade with Japan via the Ainu, the Matsumae had opened a new door to foreign trade without the *bakufu*’s approval.⁹⁶ Ideas about how to best manage the precarious situation merged with the pre-existing intellectual construction of an Ainu archetype, shaping the nature of interactions between the Ainu and the *bakufu*.

Once it assumed direct authority over the island, the *bakufu*’s policy towards the Ainu became one of assimilation. This was driven at least in part by fears that Ezo’s indigenes might side with

⁹⁵ Walker, *The Conquest of Ainu Lands*, 136, 216 – 217, 220.

⁹⁶ Stephan, “Ezo Under the Tokugawa Bakufu,” 59 – 60; Viktor Shmagin, “The Imperial Peace of 1813: The Golovnin Incident and Tokugawa Authority in Ezo,” *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 48, no. 1 (2022), 70 – 71.

Russia in the event of an incursion – Ōhara Sakingo (1761? – 1810), who had uncovered under-the-table trading between Matsumae *han* retainers and Russians from a colony on Etorofu (Itorup, in the Kuril Islands) in 1795-96, alleged that “[s]ince the Ezo are uncivilized and easily impressed by size, they would surrender in no time were the Russians to bring their battleships along.”⁹⁷ In light of this potential hazard, measures had to be taken that would both ensure the allegiance of the indigenes and dissuade the “Red Ezo” from advancing further south. In imposing an at least superficial adoption of Japanese customs onto the Ainu, the *bakufu*’s goal was to give the appearance of Japanese occupation without mobilizing sizable groups of settlers, which were hard to come by; the pretense that Ezo was inhabited by “Japanese” people could be used to argue that since Ezo was already claimed by Japan, Russia had no business showing interest in the island, and any foray would be tantamount to invasion.⁹⁸ The aim of assimilation, in this case, was not just to civilize the Ainu, but to make them Japanese.

By and large, though, government interference in the daily affairs of the Ainu was framed as a mission of mercy, something that was meant to improve their lives and lift them out of a boorish, substandard existence. In defense of its intentions, a decree from the *bakufu* to the Ainu regarding their impending lifestyle changes claimed that “the Ezo have a poor standard of living and know little of industry [...] The Bakufu has great sympathy for this condition and desires to show the natives new methods of work, introduce the customs of Japan, and gradually try to change the customs and manners of the Ezo.”⁹⁹ The Ainu’s abandonment of their traditional practices in favor of those of Japan would be for their own good. The assumption underlying

⁹⁷ Stephan, “Ezo Under the Tokugawa Bakufu,” 50; Ōhara Sakingo, *Chihoku Gūdan*, quoted in Takakura Shinichirō, *The Ainu of Northern Japan: A Study in Conquest and Acculturation*, trans. John A. Harrison (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1960), 54.

⁹⁸ Takakura, *The Ainu of Northern Japan*, 51 – 52.

⁹⁹ “Instructions to the Ezo, June 16, 1799,” quoted in *ibid.*, 57.

this rationale was that the Ainu were culturally backwards and needed help to achieve a higher standard of living, namely via the introduction of elements from Japan's more advanced culture.

Nothing was stressed more in the *bakufu*'s assimilation policies, nor signified as much in terms of sociocultural interpretation, than the Ainu's transition to an agricultural lifestyle and the adoption of rice as a dietary staple. Rice is frequently upheld as an intrinsic part of the Japanese identity, an example of what Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney calls "metaphors of self." In the construction of a "self" and "other," characteristics associated with each group, whether positive or negative, become synonymous with the foods that the people eat; since rice was so closely linked to being Japanese, and the Japanese saw themselves as civilized, rice also became imbued with connotations of civility.¹⁰⁰ That the Ainu customarily ate meat, by contrast, made them no better than animals. From this perspective, the rice/meat dichotomy was an extension of the *ka-i* ideology. In general, a particular group of people not having knowledge of or not eating "the five grains" (*gokoku*) was used to convey that they were uncivilized, compared to the grain-consuming Japanese (never mind that rice was not widely eaten).¹⁰¹ Growing and eating rice was a marker of Japanese-ness; anyone, like the Ainu, who did not do so was a lesser kind of being.

That the "subhuman Ainu" was not just an intellectual trope, but considered to be a real creature is more than apparent in the way they were treated among those who had direct dealings with them. The Japanese in Ezo tended to look at them as lazy and simple-minded; they were liable to ridicule any Ainu who tried to learn Japanese customs for "mimicking the ways of

¹⁰⁰ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities Through Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 4, 131.

¹⁰¹ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 236; Charlotte von Verschuer, "Nihon kodai ni okeru gokoku to nenchū gyōji," *Shigaku Zasshi* 118, no. 1 (2009), 46. According to von Verschuer, rice was often, though not always, counted among the five grains.

humans;” and one popular myth was that the Ainu were descendants of a dog and a human woman, prompting insults that conflated the Ainu with canines. Even the *dekasegi* (migrant workers), who were mostly sons of poor farming families from Tōhoku and men of the scoundrel sort, looked down on them as something less than human, possibly influenced by rural Japanese notions of outsiders as dangerous and often possessing supernatural powers, or even being demons.¹⁰² Habuto Masayasu (1752 – 1814), one of five men acting as an Administrator of Ezo (*Ezochi torishimari goyō gakari*) at the time of *bakufu* hegemony, may have been one of the most charitable when he said that “[t]he natives in Ezo, although they are human beings, are a very ignorant people.”¹⁰³ Popular beliefs about the nature of their associates, and a sense of their own relative superiority, undoubtably motivated Japanese abuse directed towards the Ainu.

The irony is, Japanese officials had plenty of opportunities to “humanize” the Ainu by introducing them to Japanese culture, as they initially intended to do. Prohibitions on Ainu practices including tattooing, wearing earrings, and settling disputes through *caranke* (a formal debate between the two parties involved) were enacted, while plans were made in 1798 to eliminate the Ainu’s animistic spiritual beliefs by proselytizing Buddhism.¹⁰⁴ Trade provided an avenue by which material goods from Honshū could be supplied, and, as previously mentioned, instructing Ezo’s indigenes in the ways of farming was on the *bakufu*’s to-do list. It would appear that, barring any strong resistance from the Ainu, everything was in place for their goal to be achieved.

¹⁰² Ibid., 43 – 45; Teigo Yoshida, “The Stranger as God: The Place of the Outsider in Japanese Folk Religion,” *Ethnology* 20, no. 2 (1981), 88.

¹⁰³ Takakura, *The Ainu of Northern Japan*, 54; Stephan, “Ezo Under the Tokugawa Bakufu,” 69.

¹⁰⁴ “Instructions to the Ezo, June 16, 1799,” quoted in *ibid.*, 57 – 58; Stephan, “Ezo Under the Tokugawa Bakufu,” 65.

Despite the government's determination to uplift the Ainu, the desire to delineate ethnic difference (and status) via cultural displays, combined with concern over economic interests, won out. Once the threat of a Russian invasion had subsided and management of affairs in western Ezo was restored to Matsumae, many of the measures enacted to acculturate the Ainu were reversed.¹⁰⁵ Previous regulations that forbade Ainu from wearing Japanese clothes or learning the Japanese language were re-enforced, and ultimately the full-scale dissemination of agriculture did not occur (the *bakufu* dropped its agriculturalization policy in 1802 once it came to realize that the demands of agrarian labor would take Ainu away from the fisheries where many now worked, and the Matsumae likely discouraged the practice for the same reason); political economist Honda Toshiaki (1744? – 1821?) believed these measures were “all designed to keep barbarians forever in their present condition.”¹⁰⁶ In other words, the notion of “Ainu as Other” was purposefully maintained by the Matsumae; the same held true of the *bakufu* officials, though they could reverse their stance when it suited them. The *bakufu* again assumed direct control over Ezo in 1855, when foreign interests in the north were again made evident by the presence of Russians in Karafuto and Westerners in Hakodate; once again, Japanization of the Ainu (now referred to as *dojin*, “natives,” instead of Ezo) became a major part of their governing policy.¹⁰⁷

For some, the conviction that the Ainu could adapt to a Japanese way of life was rooted in an ancient precedent. As mentioned above, by the Edo period the idea that they were descended from the Emishi had already taken shape. When it was first proposed that agriculture be introduced among the island's native population, Habuto drew parallels between a group that

¹⁰⁵ Stephan, “Ezo Under the Tokugawa Bakufu,” 85; Siddle, “Ainu: Japan's Indigenous People,” 22.

¹⁰⁶ Siddle, *Race, Resistance*, 42 – 43.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 52 – 53; Howell, *Geographies of Identity*, 139.

appears to have been the Emishi and the Ainu, asserting that “[i]n the early days the Ezo occupied what is now Miyagi gun in Sendai and it has, [sic] over the years come into its present condition... so with the passage of years it would not be an impossible task to achieve the same with Ezo.”¹⁰⁸ Due to the multiple applications of the term, it is unclear what exactly Habuto meant when he said “the Ezo”; he could have been referring to the Emishi of old, or it could have been the contemporary Ainu. However, the allusion to Miyagi *gun*, which became part of the modern prefecture of the same name in northeastern Honshū, suggests that he may have seen the previous Ezo people and the Ezo Ainu as having some connection.

While officials looked backwards, artists were more focused on the present. In the Edo period, *Ainu-e* were increasingly geared towards portraying the Ainu as they were, not solely how Japanese artists thought they should look (though there were plenty of those kinds of images circulating as well).¹⁰⁹ Depending on what the *Ainu-e* were being used for (and, presumably, the views of the artists), their subjects took on a variety of appearances. The stylistic executions ranged from the undifferentiated, barely-detailed figures of Murakami Shimanajo’s (1760 – 1808) guides faithfully describing Ainu culture, to the breathtakingly gorgeous (though probably fanciful) full-body portraits of important Ainu by the Matsumae family’s Kakizaki Hakyo (1764 – 1826), with all manner of overlapping in between. Significantly, actually travelling to Ezochi was not required to paint *Ainu-e* – artists had a slew of common assumptions and stereotypes about their subjects to draw from.

Unlike the Emishi, the Ainu may not have been depicted as demons per se, but in many *Ainu-e* there are characteristics that emphasize just how different they were from the Japanese. Their hairiness is pronounced, and sometimes exaggerated through the presence of unibrows and

¹⁰⁸ Habuto Masayasu, *Kyumei Kōki*, quoted in Takakura, *The Ainu of Northern Japan*, 55.

¹⁰⁹ Sasaki, “*Ainu-e*,” 82 – 84.

excessive body hair; the men's skin is frequently depicted as darker than that of the Japanese (women are generally exempt from this); and their eyes are large and round, giving them a particularly exotic look. Even Kakizaki appears to have been unable to keep himself from following the trend, often illustrating his male subjects in postures that show off their furry legs. This treatment was not unlike that inflicted on Westerners, who were the topic of the *Nagasaki-e* and *Yokohama-e* genres of painting.¹¹⁰ Large noses were common, as were wide, round eyes (curiously, more frequently on men than women) and wavy or curly hair which, if long and on a man, was unbound; some men were also given short, thick beards or other facial hair. Though odd-looking by Japanese standards, white foreigners were still shown to be human; those with darker skin, such as the African or Javanese sailors who served on the crews of Western vessels, were more often than not depicted as devils.¹¹¹ Like the Ainu, the calculated appearance of Westerners was linked to foreignness, which was occasionally equated with barbarism.



Figure 4. Detail of a painting showing an AINU man being led into an audience at Matsumae. Such imagery shows how the Japanese saw the AINU physically compared to themselves. Attributed to Kodama Teiryō, *Ezo Fishing Grounds (Ezo-no-kuni gyoba)*, ca. 1751 – 64, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/scenes-of-the-ezo-fishing-grounds-ezo-no-kuni-gyoba/33120/>.

¹¹⁰ Willa Jane Tanabe, *First Impressions: Japanese Prints of Foreigners from the Melvin P. McGovern Collection* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Art Gallery, Dept. of Art, 1985), 7, 14.

¹¹¹ Siddle, *Race, Resistance*, 49.

As a final remark, it is worth pointing out how one particular *Ainu-e* from among Kakizaki's works possesses an intriguing detail: Shimochi, a chieftain from Atsukeshi, poses with a bow and nocked arrow, with two additional arrows in his left hand, one in his mouth, and two sticking into his hair. This visual is reminiscent of the line from the *Nihongi* describing Emishi as people who "keep arrows in their top-knots," a reminder of their predilection towards violence and savagery. Whether or not such a reference was Kakizaki's intent is debatable, but his decision to include that specific accessory in his painting cannot be ignored.

Conclusion

The peoples who lived alongside the Japanese prior to the modern era were never able to escape the stereotypes of backwardness and barbarity that were forced upon them. Throughout premodern Japanese history, the Emishi and Ezo were looked down on as foreign savages in accordance with the Yamato state's core/periphery worldview. Their supposed natural primitiveness, though factually fictitious, was used by the state to justify its perceived place in the East Asian world order (both domestically and internationally), its territorial expansion, and its own Japanese identity. Their political value as an identifiable population with certain qualities was more important than any possible racial or ethnic differences there may have been. The Ainu inherited the mantle of "barbarian" when their turn came in the medieval period, and continued to wear it (or rather, were made to wear it) over the course of the early modern age. This association with ethno-cultural backwardness and inferiority would have consequences for theories surrounding Ainu ethnogenesis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when scientific advances added new layers of complexity to an old stigma.

Chapter 3. Like Attracts Like: Modern Ainu and Ancient Ancestors

The formal annexation of Ezo (renamed Hokkaidō) in 1869 brought the Ainu into the Japanese nation-state at a time when Japan was undergoing monumental changes. Along with political restructuring, social reorganization, and military reforms, Meiji elites also altered the way they approached their land's history, albeit not completely. Science coexisted alongside myth, which created a chimeric foundation from which Japan's past could be understood anew. Subsequently, old ideas about the characters of the people who lived on the islands took on new meanings, altering socio-ethnic identities in the process.

The final stop on our tour of the Japanese people's perceptions of the Ainu through the ages is the modern period, a time of transformation, reorientation and broadened horizons. It was at this point that the views about the Hokkaidō natives' origins crystalized into their present form. This chapter will look at the development of notions pertaining to the relationship between the Jōmon and the Ainu, the environment in which they took shape, and the mechanisms behind the continued acceptance of those beliefs today. With a literary beginning that stretched back to the days of the deities, the saga of modern Ainu intellectual ethnogenesis is a story that concludes with a transition from outsider Other to indigenous.

Early Views

Just two of several imports borne from the West, the introduction of anthropology and formal archaeological methods simultaneously introduced new ways of looking at the peoples with whom the Japanese now shared their nation. They absorbed the scientific views of their American and European mentors, who are not known for having been the least offensive people

when it came to non-whites. Biological “race,” as mentioned in the previous chapter, was a metaphorically foreign concept to pre-Meiji Japanese; the novel, literally foreign concept of peoples differing at an intrinsic biological level was accepted by intellectuals, and became embodied by the term *jinshu* (“race”). Piggybacking on the notion of biological race was racial essentialism (the idea that certain qualities were characteristic of certain races) and social Darwinism (the idea that people[s] who are best suited to their social environment will thrive, while those who are less fit will go extinct). Social Darwinism, especially, found a receptive audience among Japanese intellectuals who adopted it as an extension of the Confucian “natural order.”¹¹² The two doctrines, therefore, became part of the Japanese scholar’s mentality, changing how they comprehended their world and those who lived in it.

Naturally, the Ainu were not exempt from being viewed through the filters of the new concepts. Many, though not all, Europeans and Americans who took an interest in them in the late nineteenth century were disparaging, and admitted them “into the hierarchical classification of humanity on its lowest rungs as a race of primitive savages.”¹¹³ Comments on their supposed character included how they were “incapable of improving themselves” and “low unlettered savages without moral courage, lazy, and strongly given to drunkenness.”¹¹⁴ The Japanese followed suit, assuming a view of the Ainu as being naturally idle and underdeveloped. Officials from Nemuro, tasked with managing funds allocated for the Ainu’s conversion to agrarian life, complained in 1882 that they “lack the spirit of activity and progress,” and were “a purely primitive people.”¹¹⁵ Their perceived inability to cultivate themselves in a way suitable for a

¹¹² Sherrie Cross, “Prestige and Comfort: The Development of Social Darwinism in Early Meiji Japan, and the Role of Edward Sylvester Morse,” *Annals of Science* 53 (1996), 326.

¹¹³ Siddle, *Race, Resistance*, 78 – 79.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in *ibid.*, 64 – 65.

“civilized” society earned them the label of being a “dying race.” The Ainu were no longer merely culturally backwards – they were now human beings in a permanently retrogressed state, doomed to extinction.

While taking on new dimensions, the thought that the Ainu were in some way living relics of bygone times was not entirely innovative. Ancient stone artifacts, including arrow heads, flint, and hammers, were being attributed to the “archaic” Ainu since the 1820s, allegedly under the influence of Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796 – 1866), a German physician staying at Dejima.¹¹⁶ Von Siebold likely never saw any Ainu himself, but he received a great deal of information about northern Japan (and its inhabitants) from geographers Mogami Tokunai (1754 or 1755 – 1836) and Mamiya Rinzō (1775 – 1844).¹¹⁷ He compared Ainu culture to what was known of that of older peoples, although his arguments weren’t always the most compelling by current standards. He commented on how Japanese researchers agreed with his conclusion that flint arrow heads they examined belonged to “inhabitants of Ezo” (*Ezo no jūmin*, whom he identifies as the Ebisu [Emishi], quite possibly also meaning the Ainu), dating them to the first century CE; he also claimed that, like the “people of olden days” (*mukashi no hitobito*) who strung *magatama* and other precious items on cords, early nineteenth-century Ainu did the same with rare objects they considered valuable, such as hand guards from *katana*.¹¹⁸ If the supposition is correct, and von Siebold was among the first to ascribe ancient objects to the Ainu, then the bond between them and the Jōmon had its start quite some time before Meiji-period archaeology.

¹¹⁶ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 32 – 33.

¹¹⁷ Arlette Kouwenhoven and Matti Forrer, *Siebold and Japan: His life and work* (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2000), 38 – 39.

¹¹⁸ Philipp Franz von Siebold, *Shiboruto nihon kōtsū bōekishi*, trans. Kure Shūzō (n.d. [1929?]; National Diet Library Digital Collections, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/en/pid/1122159>), 516, 536.

In another act of continuity, the Ainu continued to be thought of as an “aboriginal” population and referred to as Hokkaidō’s “natives” (*dojin*) even after the Japanese government turned over its territories in Sakhalin and the Kurils to Russia in the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1875) and the threat of encroachment receded into the background.¹¹⁹ Archaeologist Mizoguchi Koji has theorized that the change in status was largely symbolic, meant to foster a narrative that would aid in promoting Japan’s rebirth as a modern nation-state. The absorption of the Ainu into the Japanese polity, he argues, would have been reminiscent of the founding myths recorded in the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, where the ancestors of the Japanese created their state by first subduing and assimilating the native peoples they came across.¹²⁰ With Japan reinventing itself as a nation and entering a new phase of statehood, there would have been no better time for an emblematic reenactment of the circumstances leading to the emergence of Yamato. However, Mizoguchi fails to address whether or not their association with the archipelago’s Stone-Age material culture had any bearing on the Ainu being designated as *dojin*; presumably it did to a degree, but clarification on his part would have been beneficial.

Not even a decade into the new era, a chance episode occurred which triggered a modest complicating of the Ainu’s position in Japan’s prehistory, and a years-long debate over how exactly that position was assumed. In 1877, American zoologist Edward Morse was passing through Ōmori when he spotted shell middens dotting the landscape. Upon later excavation, the middens yielded various implements made of bone, horn, and (less frequently) stone, fractured bones of humans and other animals, and pottery shards with designs that bore no resemblance to then-known Japanese artistic styles. Drawing on the shards’ unique decoration for inspiration,

¹¹⁹ Koji Mizoguchi, *Archaeology, Society and Identity in Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 67. Examples of the Ainu being called *dojin* can be found in Watanabe Masaru’s *Hokkaidō dojin tsūgo* (1891), among others.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

Morse named the pottery after its “cord marked” pattern: “*jōmon*.”¹²¹ The word was not widely applied to the pottery-makers themselves for quite some time – authors still referred to them with terms such as “*sekki jidai no jūmin*” (“Stone Age inhabitants”) and “*genjin*” (“primitive people”) well into the 1920s.¹²²

The nature of the finds instigated an argument over whether or not the Ōmori middens were the work of the Ainu. Some Western scholars, such as John Milne (1850 – 1913) and Frederick V. Dickins (1838 – 1915), believed that they were, and were of a much later date than the antiquity that Morse assigned to them. In response to Dickins’ first review of Morse’s book in an 1880 issue of the journal *Nature* where he asserted that the middens were made by “an Aino race” no later than the thirteenth or fourteenth century, one S. Sugiura submitted a blurb to the journal where he countered that the Japanese had already expelled the Ainu from the region where the middens were found by that time: “if, as he thinks, the heaps were the remains of the thirteenth or fourteenth century, they cannot be the works of the Ainos; if, on the other hand, they were the works of the Ainos, a much higher antiquity ought to be assigned to them.”¹²³ Allusion to the displacement of the Emishi aside, Sugiura’s logic demonstrates the extent to which the Ainu had become bound to Japanese prehistory. Even though their recognition as a culture was in its infancy, the people who came to be known as the Jōmon and the Ainu were already being linked.

¹²¹ Edward S. Morse, *Shell Mounds of Omori* (Tokio: University of Tokio, 1879), 6 – 8.

¹²² From the titles of Koganei Yoshikiyo’s *Nihon sekki jidai no jūmin* (1904) and Kiyono Kenji’s *Nihon genjin no kenkyū* (1924). The word “*jōmon*” does not appear in either text.

¹²³ Frederick V. Dickins, “Pre-Historic Man in Japan,” *Nature* 21, no. 537 (1880), 350; S. Sugiura, “Prehistoric Man in Japan,” *Nature* 21, no. 538 (1880), 371.

The Jōmon as non-Japanese

While the Ainu's ethnic identity was being renegotiated, the Japanese were going through an identity crisis of their own. The loss of the society they once knew and interactions with the wider world had them questioning who they were as a state and as a people. Their search for their new identity directly dictated the course of the formation of a Jōmon-Ainu link. Just as critical a component as the concept of the Ainu being living antiquities was the belief that the Jōmon had little or nothing to do with the development of the Japanese, a stance which they actively sought to promote.

Ever since the introduction of the scientific fields to Japan in the late nineteenth century, anthropology, archaeology, and nationalism have gone hand in hand. As a solution to the existential problem the country faced, intellectuals looked to the past for clues which would aid in defining the budding nation. Prior to the end of the Pacific War, the contents of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* continued to be upheld as historical fact by Japanese academics, providing a backdrop for any ancient remains they came across. With mythology as their guiding force, sciences introduced by Westerners were applied to affirm the chronicled accounts, with archaeologists trying to relate findings from excavations to peoples and events recorded in the two texts as proof of their historical veracity. They also became obsessed, and have been obsessed ever since, with identifying how ancient Japanese cultures were related to each other, and proving that Japan had as chronologically deep a rich cultural history (which emerged simultaneously throughout the islands, no less, save for Hokkaidō) as other countries in Asia.¹²⁴ As the country

¹²⁴ Mark J. Hudson, *Conjuring Up Prehistory: Landscape and the Archaic in Japanese Nationalism* (Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing, 2021), 39, 40, 43.

worked to put itself on equal footing with the West, the “correct” interpreting of any findings was a matter of national pride.

The ethnic pride of the Japanese was also at stake. If they were truly a superior people, as they liked to think they were, their ancestors must have been exceptional in their own right. Nineteenth-century intellectuals refused to consider the possibility that the Japanese were descended from the inferior population suggested by Jōmon artifacts, instead insisting that they were the descendants of the progeny of the deities who made the islands their new home as described in the national founding myth. The crude hunter-gatherers, they decided, must have been the islands’ very first inhabitants, who were displaced by those same deities.¹²⁵ Claiming descent from those primitive savages was useful when it came to proving that the Japanese occupied the islands since time immemorial, but was anathema when it came to presenting them as a people who had always exuded cultivation and refinement. For the sake of their ethnic self-image, the Japanese tried to keep the Jōmon at arm’s length, looking for any way to disavow them.

A coincidental answer came in the form of the discovery of pottery fragments in 1884 which differed stylistically from Morse’s *jōmon* variety, named “*yayoi*” in 1896 after the district in Tokyo where the pieces were first found.¹²⁶ Like *jōmon*, the term “*yayoi*” was eventually applied to the pottery-manufacturers, introducing another culture to Japanese prehistory. The question then became where this new population fit into the history of the Japanese islands, and their people. For archaeologists and academics, the Yayoi represented the divinely-fathered prehistoric migrants who were the forebears of the imperial family and, by virtue of being the

¹²⁵ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 35.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 39.

tennō's "children," the Japanese.¹²⁷ Morimoto Rokuji (1903 – 1936), an early-Shōwa-era scholar, proposed that the Yayoi must have been the ancestors of the modern Japanese on account of cultural features analogous with those of traditional Japanese life, such as the use of bronze objects and the practice of rice agriculture.¹²⁸ Making the idea more plausible was an earlier theory that the Jōmon and Yayoi had been two separate races. Before the 1930s, variations in artifacts were thought to have been the result of their being made by people of different ethnicities, not people who merely differed in culture.¹²⁹ With two distinct ethnic groups present in the modern archipelago (Ryūkyūans were, for all intents and purposes, considered Japanese), each must have had a corresponding ancestor among the early inhabitants. The Japanese claimed Yayoi descent, and the Jōmon definitively became the ancestors of the Ainu.

As may have become apparent by now, there is an observable trend present in the Japanese brand of anthropological and archaeological methodology. Archaeologist Richard Pearson has noted that "[i]n Japan it is more common to treat archaeology as long-term history, searching up and down the strands of history for suitable analogies."¹³⁰ Though Pearson made his observation in 1992, the same idea regarding cultural continuity over time can be seen in the way early Japanese archaeologists and anthropologists tried to make sense of the Jōmon within their systematic framework. In seeking to understand the ancient people who lived on the islands long before them, they turned to the Ainu as Japan's resident Neolithic hold-overs, the closest thing they would have had to the earliest inhabitants themselves.

¹²⁷ Mizoguchi, *Archaeology, Society and Identity*, 64.

¹²⁸ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 44.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 41, 44.

¹³⁰ Pearson, "The Nature of Japanese Archaeology," 120.

The discovery of *yayoi* pottery changed the trajectory of how the Japanese looked at the Ainu, if not necessarily themselves. Establishing Yayoi culture gave them an alternative to the Jōmon, but also created a dilemma of deciding which lineage they belonged to. Although the Japanese could, and would, position themselves as the Jōmon's descendants when they found the association useful, most of the time the more culturally-advanced Yayoi were their chosen predecessors. Distancing themselves from the Jōmon made ascertaining a relationship between them and the Ainu that much easier.

Battle of the Theories

Once it was determined that Japan's earliest known population and the native people of Hokkaidō were related, the issue of where exactly they came into the picture of Japanese history in relation to each other (and the Japanese) became a matter of specifics. Were the Ainu the producers of the archipelago's Neolithic culture, or did they come later? Were they early Japanese? Were they Japanese at all? The efforts of archaeological and anthropological research to answer such questions yielded theories that had lasting effects on how the Ainu came to be regarded.

By the turn of the twentieth century, there were two prevailing hypotheses concerning the origins of the Ainu and their relationship to the Jōmon. The first, advocated by anthropologist Tsuboi Shōgorō (1863 – 1913), came to be known as “replacement theory” (sometimes also referred to as the *koropokkur* theory), in which he suggested that the Japanese islands were historically populated by a series of societies, with the people in each new arriving wave supplanting the ones before them. He found inspiration in the Ainu legend of a group briefly mentioned in this paper's introduction: the *koropokkur*, the diminutive race which was thought to

have lived in Hokkaidō prior to the arrival of the Ainu. Tsuboi interpreted this story to mean that the *koropokkur* represented an earlier population whom the Ainu replaced as the dominant people. To literally illustrate his point, an image included in his essay on the “Customs of the *Koropok-kuru*” depicts women making pottery, not-so-subtly asserting that the Jōmon culture was *their* culture.¹³¹ The Ainu, therefore, may have replaced the Jōmon, but were not related to them.

The second, which became more influential, was that of Tokyo University’s first Professor of Anatomy, Koganei Yoshikiyo (1858 – 1944). Based on similarities in skeletal morphology between the bones of the ancients and those of Ainu (166 skulls and 92 skeletons, some of which he pilfered from burial sites), he proposed via his “Ainu theory” that the Jōmon people *were* the Ainu, who were forced northward by the Japanese.¹³² Ainu tibias, for instance, are on the flatter side compared to ethnic Japanese; Koganei associated tibia platycnemia (a flat tibia) with primitive peoples, comparing the Ainu leg bone to those of African and Austronesian indigenes.¹³³ He found support from other researchers, Japanese and Western, including Neil Gordon Munro, H. Matsumoto (1887 – 1975), and, ironically, Tsuboi’s disciple Torii Ryūzō (1870 – 1953), who became convinced of the hypothesis’ factuality based on his own studies of the Kuril Ainu.¹³⁴ By saying that the Ainu and the Jōmon were essentially one and the same, Koganei’s theory contributed to the impression that the Ainu were “living fossils of a subhuman progenitor.”¹³⁵

¹³¹ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 37.

¹³² Morris Low, “Physical Anthropology in Japan: The Ainu and the Search for the Origins of the Japanese,” *Current Anthropology* 53, Supplement 5 (2012), S59; Michael Roellinghoff, “Osteo-hermeneutics: Ainu racialization, deindigenization, and bone theft in Japanese Hokkaidō,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 10, no. 3 (2020), 300.

¹³³ Nanta, “The Anthropological Society of Tokyo and the Ainu,” 317.

¹³⁴ Ryūzō Torii, *Yoshi izen no nihon* (Tokyo: Isobe Kōyōdō, 1918), 9; Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 37.

¹³⁵ Roellinghoff, “Osteo-hermeneutics,” 302.

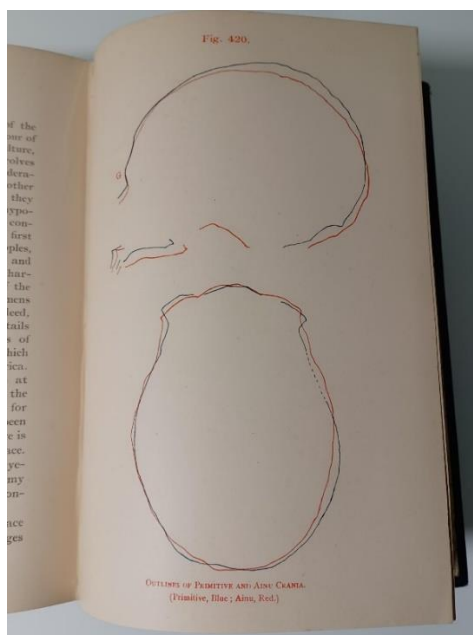


Figure 5. Profile and birds-eye view outlines, drawn by Koganei, of a "primitive" skull (blue) and a modern Ainu skull (red) superimposed on each other to show structural similarities. Munro (1911). Photo by author.

Here we can see a stark contrast between the methods of analysis used by each man. On one side, the archaeological record was connected to a mythologized past, with the story acting as its own proof (not surprisingly, no skeletal remains tiny enough to belong to the fairy-like *koropokkur* have ever been found, in Hokkaidō or anywhere else in Japan); this approach harkens back to how the Japanese formerly made sense of prehistory.¹³⁶ On the other, remains were looked at within their own context, interpreted via a more grounded, methodical approach. The divergence in method mirrors the dichotomy between the old way of interpreting ancient finds and the new. By offering more substantial evidence, it is little wonder that Koganei's Ainu theory enjoyed greater academic popularity than Tsuboi's *koropokkur* theory.

¹³⁶ Munro, *Prehistoric Japan*, 670.

Replacement theory died along with Tsuboi in 1913, leaving Koganei's Ainu theory as the leading hypothesis concerning Ainu ethnogenesis until the mid-1920s, when Kyoto Imperial University's Kiyono Kenji (1885 – 1955) suggested that the Jōmon were ancestral to the Ainu *and* the Japanese.¹³⁷ Kiyono praised Koganei for discovering the physical similarities and the “blood relationship” (*ketsuzokuteki kankei*) between the Ainu and Japan's “Stone Age inhabitants” (*sekki jidai jūmin*), but went a step further by insisting that interbreeding between these inhabitants, who he believed initially came from the mainland, and other, unidentified peoples living in the island chain resulted in the Ainu in the northern part of the archipelago, while the Japanese emerged in the southern part. Morphological variances, he alleged, were the result of regional differences in climate and customs.¹³⁸ Looking back from the twenty-first century, Kiyono's “hybridization theory” is clearly flawed, yet some aspects bear a striking resemblance to what is currently known or surmised about ethnogenesis in Japan (the Jōmon's ancestors potentially coming from the continent, admixture, etc.).

The theories put forth by Tsuboi, Koganei, and Kiyono were not the only ones circulating, but they were the ones which had the most bearing on Ainu ethnogenesis and modern concepts of their identity in the early years of their fields. For the latter two in particular, as inaccurate as their hypotheses were in some regards, they were groundbreaking in others. Reliance on skeletal examinations as a means to explain the history of a population instead of cultural comparisons or folklore was a novel method at the time, and would be just as important in decades to come.

¹³⁷ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 37; Low, “Physical Anthropology in Japan,” S61.

¹³⁸ Kenji Kiyono, *Nihon genjin no kenkyū* (Okashōin, 1925; National Diet Library Digital Collections, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/1017571>), 7 – 9, 333.

The Impact of Biological Anthropology

Time marched on, and new advances in anthropological approaches shed further light on the Jōmon-Ainu question. Physical anthropology and its successor, biological anthropology, in particular made the greatest contributions by utilizing anthropometrics and DNA analysis to ascertain the ways in which the two peoples were or were not similar, thereby verifying what their exact relationship likely was. While what might now be termed cultural anthropology was responsible for the initial yoking of the Jōmon and the Ainu, biological anthropological studies helped to make the association permanent by supplying quantitative evidence of its existence.

When it came to morphologically labeling the dead, it started with the identification of distinct sets of coeval corporeal features among the living. Another German physician, Erwin von Baelz (1849 – 1913), was the first to put names to the two sorts of physical types he witnessed among the Japanese in the 1880s. The “Satsuma” type possessed a stocky, compact frame and a wide face with thick lips, a broad nose, and large eyes with a double-fold eyelid. The “Chōshū” type, by comparison, had more narrow features. They were taller than “Satsuma” Japanese on average, slender, and had a longer face with thin lips, a narrow nose, and narrow eyes with single eyelids.¹³⁹ The greatest distinction he made between the two, however, was that the Chōshū-type features were more prevalent in aristocratic families; the hoi polloi were generally Satsuma-type.¹⁴⁰

Recognition of these clusters of characteristics by the scientific community continues, but they have since been rebranded. A souvenir book from the 2005 “JOMON vs YAYOI” exhibition at the National Science Museum in Tokyo opens by asking its Japanese readers if they have a “three-dimensional Jōmon face” (*rittaiteki na jōmon kao*) or a “flat Yayoi face” (*heitan*

¹³⁹ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 74 – 75.

¹⁴⁰ Kumar, *Globalizing the Prehistory of Japan*, 74.

na yayoi kao).¹⁴¹ The World Heritage webpage for Jōmon sites also echoes many of the same attributes, adding that double-fold eyelids and thick lips were among the “special features” (*tokuchō*) of the Jōmon.¹⁴² Over time, dominant archaeological categories did away with the labels of “Satsuma” and “Chōshū,” replacing them with “Jōmon” and “Yayoi.” This act simultaneously led to the establishment of ethnic archetypes for each population.

The Jōmon’s physical qualities as given in Chapter One may bear repeating at this point. Such traits, it may be recalled, include a robust body with comparatively long limbs, flat limb bones, a square face, a Sundadont dental pattern, round eyes with double-fold eyelids, and wet earwax. It will come as no surprise that many of the same attributes have been observed among the Ainu. As discussed above, similarities in Jōmon and Ainu skeletal morphology, including flat tibia, were initially noticed by Koganei (a follower of von Baelz, coincidentally), who used them as evidence to support his Ainu theory; Batchelor described the Ainu as “strong, thick-set, squarely-built and full-chested,” indicating that they exhibit the same sturdy physique that the Jōmon possessed.¹⁴³ The limbs of both the Jōmon and the Ainu have also been judged to be longer than those of the Japanese.¹⁴⁴ Munro noted that they have round eyes with “but little of the falciform fold of skin from the upper eyelid to nose, known as the Mongolian fold” (double-fold eyelids in modern parlance), and, as previously mentioned, the Ainu are also dental Sundadonts.¹⁴⁵ Finally, when it comes to the all-important earwax, the Ainu display a higher frequency of the wet variety, which falls in line with the Jōmon’s predominant type.¹⁴⁶ From

¹⁴¹ The National Science Museum, Tokyo, *JOMON vs YAYOI* (Tokyo: Yomiuri Shinbun Tokyo Headquarters, 2005), 12.

¹⁴² “*Shiru: Jōmon jidai nitsuite* (Learn: About the Jōmon Period),” *Jōmon Japan*, World Heritage: Jōmon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan, accessed October 22, 2022, <https://jomon-japan.jp/learn/jomon-culture>.

¹⁴³ Siddle, *Race, Resistance*, 81; Batchelor, *The Ainu of Japan*, 2.

¹⁴⁴ Wataru Takigawa, “Metric Comparison of Limb Bone Characteristics between the Jomon and Hokkaidō Ainu,” *Anthropological Science (Japanese Series)* 113 (2005), 44.

¹⁴⁵ Munro, *Prehistoric Japan*, 662.

¹⁴⁶ Sato et al., “Polymorphisms and allele frequencies,” 692.

their build to their facial features to what is inside their ears, Ainu physiology does generally conform to that of the Jōmon.

While the mutual resemblance of their physiology and skeletal morphology is an important factor, the Ainu-Jōmon connection is not bone deep. As another refresher of what was reviewed in Chapter One, genetic traits that can be considered “Jōmon” identifiers include mtDNA haplogroups N9b and M7a, Y chromosome subhaplogroup D-P37.1, blood type O (specifically subtype O102) and the rs2294008-T allele. Dispersal patterns of these traits throughout the archipelago implies a strong correlation between the Jōmon and the Ainu. Among modern Japanese populations, mtDNA haplogroup N9b has the highest frequency amongst the Ainu at 7.8%; while haplogroup M7a is more common in Ryūkyūans (23.3%), it is still found at a higher rate among the Ainu (15.7%) than in ethnic Japanese (10%).¹⁴⁷ Y chromosome haplogroup D-P37.1 has been found among the Ainu at a rate of 75%, though one study estimated it to be as high as 87.5%.¹⁴⁸ Per ABO blood type frequency, 35% of Ainu from a 1968 study in Shizunai and 47.5% of “pure Ainu” from a 1970 study in Niikappu exhibited type O, but there is currently no data available on subtypes.¹⁴⁹ As for rs2294008-T, the Ainu instead display a 97.5% frequency rate of the T allele form on the closely-related rs2976396 allele.¹⁵⁰ Overall, while genetic analysis was not a component of the first Ainu-Jōmon associations, it does confirm them.

A direct genetic connection between the Jōmon and the Ainu is exemplified in Hanihara Kazurō’s (1927 – 2004) famed dual structure hypothesis. First proposed in 1991, the dual

¹⁴⁷ Adachi et al., “Mitochondrial DNA Analysis,” 262.

¹⁴⁸ Hammer et al., “Dual origins of the Japanese,” 51.

¹⁴⁹ Shogo Misawa and Yoshiko Hayashida, “On the Blood Groups among the Ainu in Shizunai, Hokkaidō,” *Proceedings of the Japan Academy* 44, no. 2 (1968), 84; Shogo Misawa and Yoshiko Hayashida, “On the Blood Groups among the Ainu of Niikappu, Hokkaidō,” *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Nippon* 78, no. 3 (1970), 179; Sato et al., “Polymorphisms and allele frequencies,” 695.

¹⁵⁰ Iwasaki et al., “Evolutionary History,” 14.

structure hypothesis suggests that all Asians are descended from populations living in the southeast during the Paleolithic period. Migrating north, some moved into the lands that became the Japanese archipelago and evolved to become the Jōmon, while others who drifted into the continent became the ancestors of the Northeast Asians. When immigrants from the mainland came to the islands during the Yayoi period, they mated with the Jōmon and produced offspring who later developed into the modern ethnic Japanese; Jōmon who did not breed with the Yayoi immigrants, Hanihara claimed, became either the Ryūkyūans (in the south) or the Epi-Jōmon (in the north), the latter eventually becoming the Ainu. Hanihara's hypothesis has been questioned, particularly regarding his designating Southeast Asia as the region of origin of the Jōmon's ancestors, but is still the baseline model for prehistoric migratory patterns which terminated in the Japanese islands.

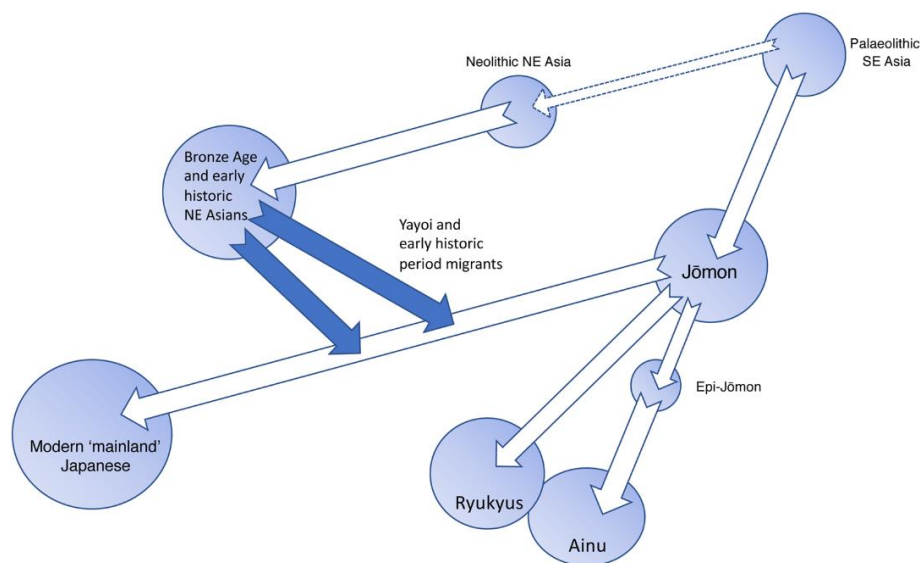


Figure 6. Diagram of the dual structure hypothesis. Based on Hanihara's 1991 model, this chart was updated to reflect current beliefs regarding Yayoi migrants. Hudson, Nakagome and Whitman (2020).

The Ainu as Japanese

As an indication that phenotypes and genetics do not always have the final say in ethnic debates, the Ainu are still subjected to inconsistent modes of identity. More frequently described today as a minority group in the archipelago, they have also been situated as part of the larger ethnic Japanese populace since the Meiji period. In their role as the black sheep of the Japanese family, the nature of the Ainu was determined in a way that had little to do with anthropological observations, and more to do with socio-national prestige.

Despite the shared skeletal traits and lifeways, there was initially a heated debate as to whether there really was any connection between the Ainu and the archipelago's early settlers. Some early researchers denied any links between the two groups on the grounds of cultural differences. The Ainu, noted Morse, did not produce pottery, whereas the archaeological record showed that Japan's original inhabitants clearly did; this led him to theorize that there had been a "pre-Ainu" people living on the islands before them.¹⁵¹ Others cited the difference in designs found on ancient pottery versus the carved wooden items used by the Ainu.¹⁵² On the other side of the aisle, it was pointed out that Sakhalin and Kuril Ainu *did* utilize pottery (with some of similar construction discovered on Hokkaidō), and designs on Ainu-made products were deemed comparable to those found on neolithic objects, though not exactly identical.¹⁵³ While the detractors in this instance were proven incorrect in their rationale, pushback on recognizing them as having any connection to Japanese prehistory suggested that the Ainu were in danger of

¹⁵¹ Siddle, *Race, Resistance*, 81; Ikawa-Smith, "The Jōmon, the Ainu, and the Okinawans," 46.

¹⁵² Munro, *Prehistoric Japan*, 665.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 665 – 666.

potentially being excluded from the nation's historical narrative, and therefore of belonging within the state.

In addition, several Europeans and Americans who traipsed through Hokkaidō throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed the Ainu to be Caucasian, a sister race which somehow ended up in East Asia. When they looked at the Ainu, they saw people who bore a greater physical resemblance to their own race than to the Japanese – Batchelor said of them that “[t]he skin is whiter than that of the Japanese,” and one Ainu man who was on display in the Human Pavilion during the 1903 Fifth Domestic Industrial Exhibition in Osaka was reported to look just like Leo Tolstoy.¹⁵⁴ Going beyond looks, American minister and author W.E. Griffis (1843 – 1928) asserted that “Ainu intelligence is limited, but it seems to be of the same kind as our own and not of the Asiatic order.”¹⁵⁵ It was those similarities in appearance and, supposedly, intellect which led Albert Smith Bickmore (1839 – 1914) of the American Museum of Natural History to declare in 1868 that the Ainu “must be regarded as a branch of our own Aryan family.”¹⁵⁶

The Japanese did not share this sentiment, and argued vehemently that the Ainu were in fact Japanese. They did not actually believe this, of course, but admitting it would have risked shattering the fiction of ethnic unity upon which the stability of the polity depended. Japanization of the Ainu was critical to remaking them as citizens of the new nation-state, where multiculturalism was not an option.¹⁵⁷ Under the auspices of the Rules for the Education of Former Aborigine Children (*Kyūdojin jidō kyōiku kitei*, 1901), Ainu children were put through a

¹⁵⁴ Batchelor, *The Ainu of Japan*, 2; Ziomek, *Lost Histories*, 32.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted in Hudson, *Conjuring Up Prehistory*, 40.

¹⁵⁶ Quoted in Hisatoshi Fukuda, “The Strange Career of the Caucasian Ainu: Japanese and Western Discourse on the Japanese ‘Race,’ 1870 – 1920” (MA thesis, University of Nevada, Reno, 2015), 33.

¹⁵⁷ Howell, *Geographies of Identity*, 172.

curriculum which was designed to instruct them in cornerstones of Japanese-ness that would make them good citizens, including ethics and the Japanese language.¹⁵⁸ Later, when nationalism was reaching a fever pitch during the Pacific War, the same concern is evidenced by government disapproval of any references to the Ainu as being racially different from ethnic Japanese on the grounds that it could destroy the image of everyone in the country being the Shōwa emperor's ethnically-homogenous family/subjects.¹⁵⁹ A lamb sacrificed for the greater good, the Ainu were inducted into the Japanese sphere socially and politically, as well as territorially.

In the mid-twentieth century, there arose a popular theory which condoned a biological bond between the Ainu and the Japanese.¹⁶⁰ Looking at the degree of variation seen in ancient human remains in Japan – not just among the Jōmon, as discussed in Chapter One, but also among the Yayoi, whose bones were sorted into categories depending on their features (such as the north Kyūshū/Yamaguchi-type Yayoi [subdivided into Yoshinogari Yayoi and Doigahama Yayoi] and the south Kyūshū-type Yayoi), it might be difficult to argue for *any* continuity, but argue anthropologists did.¹⁶¹ Suzuki Hisashi (1912 – 2004), running with the same theory as his mentor, Hasebe Kotondo (1882 – 1969), contended that the Jōmon and Yayoi were biologically of the same population, but their physiological differences emerged as a result of their cultural differences, such as whether or not they practiced agriculture.¹⁶² Therefore, the Ainu and

¹⁵⁸ “*Kyūdojin jidō kyōiku kitei*, 1901 (Meiji 34),” *m’s Academe*, Hideaki Miyashita, published January 24, 2017, http://www.w.m-ac.jp/ainu/post/law/kyu_dojin_kyoiku/index_j.phtml.

¹⁵⁹ Which is not to say that such claims never occurred. The geographer Fujita Motoharu, in his book on Japan-Korea exchanges and ancient beliefs, bluntly states that “the Ainu are not Japanese” (*ainu wa nihonjin de nai*). Motoharu Fujita, *Nissen kōtsū to kodai no shinkō* (Kyōto: Kanpeitaisha Yasaka-jinja, 1940; National Diet Library Digital Collections, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/1095467>), 28; Takakura quoted in Siddle, *Race, Resistance*, 145.

¹⁶⁰ Hudson, *Conjuring Up Prehistory*, 43.

¹⁶¹ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 62, 65.

¹⁶² Hudson, *Conjuring Up Prehistory*, 43 – 44.

Japanese were also of the same blood. The Ainu were behind their Japanese brothers and sisters culturally, but the two peoples were still members of the same family (so it was said).¹⁶³

Between bureaucratic censorship, their reeducation, and anthropological statements, the Ainu became not just Japanese citizens, but Japanese. In the 1960s and 1970s, their culture was considered by the government to be a regional variation of Japanese traditions, and as recently as the 1980s, it was suggested that, as permanently-archaic Japanese, studying the Ainu was the key to understanding ancient Japanese culture.¹⁶⁴ Philosopher and theologian Umehara Takeshi (1925 – 2019) romanticized the Jōmon as well as the Ainu, saying that it would be good for the Japanese to learn from the ways of their ancient ancestors as a means of combatting the destructive effects of Westernization, and that the Ainu were carrying on their customs.¹⁶⁵ The assertion seems contradictory, given the predilection among ethnic Japanese to align themselves with the Yayoi instead of the Jōmon, but, as the episode with Russia during the Edo period demonstrated, such manipulations were not uncommon when it came to the defense of the polity's interests.

The Jōmon and Ainu Today

Depending on their feelings about their heritage and the level of concern over being discriminated against, whether an Ainu individual presents themselves as ethnically “Ainu” or “Japanese” is now a personal choice. Yet for the Ainu people in general, much of the way they are being presented to others is being decided for them. The Jōmon and the Ainu's positions as

¹⁶³ Ibid., 44.

¹⁶⁴ Naohiro Nakamura, “The Representation of Ainu Culture in the Japanese Museum System,” *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 27, no. 2 (2007), 344; Hirofumi Kato, “Indigenous Archaeology of the Ainu: Shifting from Archaeological site to Native Property,” in *The Ainu: Indigenous People of Japan*, ed. Henry Stewart (Hokkaidō University Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies, 2014), 72 – 73.

¹⁶⁵ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 53 – 54.

progenitor and descendant are their best-known relative aspects, but the influence they have had on each other is not limited to those roles. It is because of their association with one another that the underlying belief which first made the connection possible – that the Ainu are a people stuck in the past – continues to be subliminally, and at times unintentionally, conveyed to the general populace.

To an extent, the notion that traditional Ainu culture reflects that of the Jōmon lives on. On August 30th, 2014, a “meeting of the Otaru Jōmon” (*Otaru jōmon no tsudoi*) was held by the Hokkaidō Jōmon Culture Promotion Council (*kita no jōmon doumin kaigi*) in Otaru, Hokkaidō. Events included a pottery exhibition, Jōmon-inspired *koto* and *taiko* performances, the recitation of Jōmon culture-focused poetry, and lectures by researchers of Jōmon culture. Two additional performances mentioned in the list of events stand out: one of Ainu songs, and another of the Ainu *mukkuri* (mouth harp).¹⁶⁶ Incontestable musical instruments dating to the Jōmon period have not been discovered; similarities in form to *tonkori* (a guitar-like stringed instrument) used by the Sakhalin Ainu have been suggested as evidence that “arrow-shaped” pieces of wood discovered in Aomori and ascribed to the Jōmon formed the body of an analogous object, while another candidate for a later rendition of a Jōmon instrument is a clay object from the Epi-Jōmon period that is speculated to be an ocarina.¹⁶⁷ With no way of verifying what kinds of instruments or songs the Neolithic inhabitants had, to say that traditional Ainu music represents Jōmon music is a matter of assumption, and demonstrates how it is still believed that at least some aspects of Ainu culture are synonymous with Jōmon culture.

¹⁶⁶ “*Oshirase: hachigatsu sanjūnichi (do) otaru jōmon no tsudoi wo kaisaishimasu* (Notifications: On August 30th (Saturday), a meeting of the Otaru Jōmon will be held),” *Jōmon Japan*, World Heritage: Jōmon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://jomon-japan.jp/news/3325>.

¹⁶⁷ Toshiyuki Tsuchitori, *Jōmon no oto* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2007), 182 – 184; Kumiko Uyeda, “The Journey of the Tonkori: A Multicultural Transmission” (PhD diss., University of California Santa Cruz, 2015; accessed through ProQuest Dissertation, UMI 3715286), 49 – 50.

Such treatment is not uncommon since, as Henry Stewart points out, the Ainu tend to be relegated to the past. In 2012, eighteen museums out of twenty-two that Stewart surveyed only depicted the Ainu in a historical context, omitting any mentions of their current ways of life; he found a similar issue with Ainu representation in middle and high school textbooks.¹⁶⁸ National mass media often ignores day-to-day contemporary Ainu affairs, but will actively promote “traditional” cultural activities.¹⁶⁹ As a result, many ethnic Japanese assume that they still live the same lifestyle that they did before the modern era. An exhibition of modern Ainu handicrafts, which travelled throughout Japan in 2003 and 2004 and was created based on the input of Ainu people, sought to remedy this problem by formatting itself so that, according to one Japanese curator involved, it “actually described Ainu people as those living in the present while continuing to inherit their ancestor’s cultural traditions.”¹⁷⁰ “Without this exhibition,” stated Ainu craftsman Kaizawa Toru, “museum exhibits of Ainu culture must have been only ‘traditional old’ things.”¹⁷¹

While it is tempting to place the blame for disenfranchising the Ainu solely on Japanese curators and educators, the Ainu themselves have had a hand in their own misrepresentation. Economic reliance on tourism meant that Ainu only presented the most “traditional” aspects of their culture to museum visitors, at the cost of making the people appear irrelevant to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Docents working at museums or tourist villages in early twentieth-century Hokkaidō, for instance, guided sightseers around *cise* (traditional Ainu homes), some of which were constructed for that sole purpose, while not letting them see the

¹⁶⁸ Henry Stewart, “Representation of the Ainu in Textbooks and Museums: Historical and Contemporary Ramifications,” in *The Ainu: Indigenous People of Japan*, ed. Henry Stewart (Hokkaidō University Center for Ainu and Indigenous Studies, 2014), 7 – 9.

¹⁶⁹ Nakamura, “The Representation of Ainu Culture,” 357.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 349 – 350.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 351.

modern buildings where they actually lived.¹⁷² Yoshihara Hideki, curator of the Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum in 2001, claimed that because Japanese visitors expect to see “traditional” Ainu culture during their visit, museum staffers hesitate to showcase any contemporary cultural works because they do not conform to the image of “Ainu” held by Japanese society.¹⁷³ Japanese tourists’ demands for displays of “authentic” Ainu life have driven the Ainu involved in running museums to stress older traditions, ultimately becoming complicit in their own antiquation.

Handling of the Ainu in Japan’s history continues to be a tricky endeavor. David Howell claims that current Japanese historians rarely omit Ainu history from their texts on Japanese history on account of the message it would subliminally send to Ainu citizens: that they do not belong in the national or social collective.¹⁷⁴ However, the type of history they do include and how they choose to portray it – Only material up to the Meiji period, or more recent events as well? How is the relationship between the Ainu and Japan depicted? – can have greater influence than just whether or not they include Ainu history in the first place. People depend on scholarly institutions and authorities for guidance on what to believe about a subject. When it comes to the Ainu, they are currently sending the wrong message.

Conclusion

A review of Ainu-directed viewpoints in modern Japan reveals just how malleable perspectives on the Ainu can be, but their association with the Jōmon has become a constant. As new understandings of the past and the concept of race began to take hold, they were transformed from uncivilized barbarians to primitive human beings, a people frozen in time.

¹⁷² Ziomek, *Lost Histories*, 315.

¹⁷³ Nakamura, “The Representation of Ainu Culture,” 356.

¹⁷⁴ Howell, “Is Ainu History Japanese History?,” 101-102.

Their comparable appearance, skeletal structure and lifeways contributed to several, though not all, early Japanese anthropologists decisively linking them to (or conflating them with) the Jōmon, a link that has been strengthened by the discovery of a significant number of Jōmon contributions to the Ainu genome. Always lurking in the shadows behind the implementation of the fledgling disciplines was the need for the Japanese to organize their prehistory in a way that left their pride as Japanese intact and promoted national unity, characterized by the continuation of the politicization habit prevalent among Japanese elites since the days of the Yamato state. In some ways, being declared the Jōmon's direct descendants has been detrimental to the Ainu. They continue to be haunted by the more negative legacy of the Jōmon – being deemed irrelevant and archaic, consigned to the past while struggling to be seen in the present. But it has also supplied them with a platform from which they can demand that their rights be recognized.

Conclusion

April 19th, 2019, witnessed the passing of a statute designed to promote greater support for Ainu rights, signaling a major step forward for Ainu activists. Another policy addressing Ainu affairs was previously ratified in 2008, but it did not offer any guidance beyond how the Ainu *should* be treated going forward; the 2019 law places greater emphasis on the preservation of Ainu traditions and outwardly takes a (slightly) harder line against discrimination. Just as important as the actual contents, however, is the wording used by the authors. In both pieces of legislation, the Ainu are described as Hokkaidō’s *senjūminzoku*, a term that translates to “indigenous people.” The approach to their indigeneity in each law is slight, but important. The 2008 policy describes the Ainu as a *senjūminzoku* “native to the area of the northern part of the Japanese islands, especially Hokkaidō” (*Nihon rettō kitabu shūhen, toriwake Hokkaidō ni senjūshi*), a vague position that, again, *should* be acknowledged. The 2019 statute, by comparison, calls them “Hokkaidō’s indigenous people” (*Hokkaidō no senjūminzoku*), explicitly defining their place in Japan.¹⁷⁵ By referring to the Ainu as such, the law formally recognizes the Ainu’s indigenous status, at least of Hokkaidō.

The 2019 law codified a consensus that had gradually emerged over the course of a century, supported by beliefs reaching back over a thousand years. The Ainu’s claims to indigeneity have long rested on their association with the Jōmon people, the earliest inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago. This joining might not have been made if it were not for long-standing Japanese

¹⁷⁵ See *Ainu minzoku wo senjū minzoku to suru koto wo motomeru ketsugian* (2008; The House of Representatives, Japan, https://www.shugiin.go.jp/internet/itdb_gian.nsf/html/gian/honbun/ketsugian/g16913001.htm) and *Ainu no hitobito no hokori ga sonchōsareru shakai wo jitsugensuru tame no shisaku no suishin ni kansuru hōritsu*, Section 1 (2019).

perspectives about the Ainu (and their supposed predecessors) that appeared to be in accord with archaeological findings of the nineteenth century, and genetic discoveries in the twentieth. Said perspectives varied little with the times, and were largely politically-motivated, often constructed in ways designed to benefit the state and/or society in some manner. In other words, the Ainu identity that came to be associated with the Jōmon was ideologically manufactured.

In understanding how this association came to be, the Ainu are only one facet of the conversation – the Jōmon must also be evaluated, particularly in terms of their biology, which has been one of the central foci of research into their lives. It is possible to determine some general commonly-seen biological features of the Jōmon people – facial characteristics, skeletal morphology, and certain genetic markers – but studies that dive deeper into these elements show that there was more variation among them than is usually thought. For this particular study, the important thing is less what their genetic and phenotypic make-up says about their society, and more about how it relates them to the Ainu. To be sure, the phenotypic and genetic traits of the Jōmon, when compared to those of the Ainu, continue to lend credence to the notion of their relationship.

With the adoption of writing, beginning with passages from the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, how the Japanese looked at their extraterritorial neighbors from a socio-historical standpoint becomes much clearer. If this chapter came off as redundant, that is because the way Japanese elites perceived others outside of their polity during the Edo period had barely changed since the days of Yamato. Statesmen and intellectuals from the Heian court to the Edo *bakufu* adhered to *ka-i* ideology, which meant that all peripheral peoples in the island chain – Emishi, Ezo, and Ainu – were considered inferior barbarians. Application of the same trope to different groups of outsiders across time made it possible for Japanese elites to see teleological continuity from the

Emishi mentioned in the histories to the Ainu of Ezo, which was also supported by perceived continuity in physical characteristics (especially body hair) and customs. Because there is still no conclusive identity for the Emishi, any connection remains conjectural. Japanese views of the Ainu did change slightly in the Edo period, when the *bakufu* came to consider them more backwards than barbaric. However, the notion of the Ainu being unrefined and culturally substandard remained intact.

While the seeds of Ainu primitiveness were planted in the early modern period, it was in the Meiji period when they started to grow, eventually sprouting several branches of thought. The embracing of Western beliefs about race, including biological essentialism and social Darwinism, led to Japanese intellectuals reassessing Hokkaidō's indigenes, turning them from uncultured savages to primitives stuck in their ancient ways. A flurry of scholarly debates about the antiquity of the Ainu and their exact relationship to the Japanese archipelago's earliest residents – some pointing to mythology for support, some to Western science; some saying that the two groups were the same, at least one saying that the former supplanted the latter – swirled before it was finally settled that the Neolithic potters who ultimately became known as the Jōmon preceded the Ainu, and were very likely their ancestors; after the implementation of DNA analysis, genetic comparisons affirmed this theory. Through the anthropological and archaeological communities' efforts, to adapt Tessa Morris-Suzuki's findings from a slightly different context, by identifying the Ainu's differences as being more a matter of chronology than locality, "it became possible to conceive of a single national community in which the

differences between centre and periphery represented not the products of separate histories, but different positions along the timeline of a single historical trajectory.”¹⁷⁶

However, the occurrences which led to recognition of the Jōmon-Ainu link have had their drawbacks. Nowadays, there is still a tendency for the Ainu and their culture to be seen as something that belongs to the past. The behavior of current visitors to Ainu cultural museums differs little from that described in the accounts of Kaizawa Tōzō, a thoroughly modern early-twentieth-century Ainu man who wore modern clothing, much to the surprise of Japanese tourists.¹⁷⁷ The contents of textbooks, museums (even those curated by Ainu), and public events only serve to bolster such perceptions by failing to place the Ainu in any contemporary context.

The role of culture in the creation of the Jōmon-Ainu connection cannot be understated. Japanese perspectives of the Other were based on their ideas of what was or was not civilized culture more than any biological differences, even amount of facial hair (which, admittedly, has its cultural side). When they looked at the practices of the Neolithic islanders and the Ainu, it made sense that there should be some relationship between them. It was primarily their shared lifestyle as hunter-gatherers, and their consumption of meat and lack of rice agriculture, which made them different from the Japanese and perfect counterparts to each other. (Early-)modern Japanese views of the Ainu and their predecessors exemplify how, instead of being predicated on the basis of biological race, “[e]thnicity is a constructed, *cultural* phenomenon” (emphasis in the original).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “A Descent into the Past: The Frontier in the Construction of Japanese Identity,” in *Multicultural Japan: Paleolithic to Postmodern*, ed. Donald Denoon, Mark Hudson, Gavan McCormack and Tessa Morris-Suzuki (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 90.

¹⁷⁷ Nakamura, “The Representation of Ainu Culture,” 358 – 359; Ziomek, *Lost Histories*, 319.

¹⁷⁸ Hirofumi Matsumura, Mark J. Hudson, Kenichiro Koshida and Yoichi Minakawa, “Embodying Okhotsk Ethnicity: Human Skeletal Remains from the Aonae Dune Site, Okushiri Island, Hokkaidō,” *Asian Perspectives* 45, no. 1 (2006), 2.

Along with their “Japanese” status, perhaps reliance on cultural aspects as a means of denoting ethnic relationships may also help to explain why Ryūkyūans are not as closely associated with the Jōmon as the Ainu are. As posited by Hanihara and indicated by their DNA, Ryūkyūans are also descended from the Jōmon and viewed as such scientifically, but not to the same extent as their northern relatives in the popular thought of the general public. For answers, we must return to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when genetics were all but unknown and inferences had to be made based on what was observable. The predominantly hunter-gatherer lifestyles of the Jōmon and Ainu made it simple to find parallels, and come to the conclusion that they were two points along the same genealogical line; the agrarian Ryūkyūans, by comparison, had a society and culture that could be considered more civilized than that of either group, making a similar claim difficult. Clearly this is an oversimplification of Ryūkyūan intellectual ethnogenesis, which is deserving of its own paper, but the example of the Ryūkyūans does imply that biology was (and perhaps still is) somewhat less influential in designating ancestral links than culture and lifestyle in Japanese ethnic discourse.

Even if the significance of one variable was promoted over that of another, the cumulative value of all three elements was equal to the power of those who interpreted them. Before the end of the Pacific War, control over how the respective Other was understood was always dominated by the upper echelons of Japanese society: court aristocrats, *bakufu* officials, military bureaucrats, and scholars across period lines. The ordinary villager or townsman was unlikely to ever encounter the Emishi or Ainu, or even know of them. Therefore, it can be assumed that images of any “Ezo” were engineered for the government’s (if not necessarily the state’s) own benefit. Often times, that benefit was the elevation of the state by having something lesser to compare it to.

Not to undermine the efforts of activists, but it can hardly be denied that the Ainu have a continuous thread of barbarism and primitiveness winding itself around them and the Emishi in elite Japanese thought for over 1,500 years to thank for aiding their ability to claim indigenous status. The commonly-recorded trait facilitated the associating of one population with the other via the national histories as go-betweens, leading to the ability to identify an ancient past. Furthermore, because the Japanese construed them first as savages and then as prehistoric holdovers, the idea that they were the first inhabitants of the islands (later on, descendants of those first inhabitants) became even more plausible. In a roundabout way, elite Japanese attitudes are partly responsible for the Ainu's calls for indigenous recognition.

Compared to other indigenous peoples from around the world, the Ainu's situation is not entirely unique. The association of today's Basques with ancient tribes relies partially on descriptions of the tribes based on second-hand knowledge recorded in Greco-Roman writings, with their identities interpreted from the point of view of the Romans.¹⁷⁹ However, the Basque also have clear linguistic continuity they can point to as an indicator of ancestral ties to their native land. Their language, Euskera/Euskara, is a philological isolate with no known affinity with any other Indo-European language; furthermore, "Bascoïd" anthroponyms were especially abundant in Roman inscriptions about the ancient region of Aquitania, and Aquitanian is thought to have been the precursor to historic Basque.¹⁸⁰ Ainu is also considered a linguistic isolate, but the same retrograde tracing method is not so simple in the Ainu's case. The greatest potential signpost there is – that the numerous place names in the Tōhoku region ending in "-nai" and "-betsu" are evidence of the Jōmon-descended Emishi being Ainu-speakers ("nai" and "pet," from

¹⁷⁹ Mikel Martínez Areta, "Towards a history of Basque anthroponymy," *Anuario del Seminario de Filología Vasca "Julio de Urquijo"* 50, no. 1-2 (2016), 303.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 304; Nina M. Ray and John P. Bieter, "It broadens your view of being Basque': identity through history, branding, and cultural policy," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21, no. 3 (2015), 243.

which the suffixes could be derived, are Ainu words) – is, though thought-provoking, circumstantial.¹⁸¹ Not having a recorded Jōmon language to compare it to, like the Basque do with Aquitanian, makes it nigh impossible to make a definitive linguistic connection.

The tendency among Japanese academics to look for cross-epoch equivalents as support for indigenous standing is not atypical, either, as archaeologists and anthropologists studying other indigenous peoples have drawn parallels between their subjects and peoples of the past in order to promote assertions of indigeneity. Reminiscent of Koganei, Basque anthropologists have pointed to skulls, discovered in caves located in the Basque autonomous region, which they claim have the same features as modern Basque as evidence to support the notion that their ethnic group has lived in the territory continuously for a long span of time.¹⁸² On the other hand, searching for chronologically-varied cultural trends and interpreting those customs, says Pearson, seems to be done differently among Japanese researchers. While Western archaeologists usually attempt to uncover the purpose of artifacts by studying peoples who continue to use similar objects (or did until fairly recently), the Japanese operate within a contained worldview, limiting themselves to the later, even modern, periods of their own history to comprehend the distant past instead of comparing ancient relics to those of other archaic cultures to see what *they* might have used them for.¹⁸³ Reflecting on the environment in which Japanese anthropology and archaeology evolved makes the practice at least more understandable, though not any more practical.

So what, if anything, do the mechanisms behind the joining of the Ainu with Japan's past mean for the concept of Ainu indigeneity? Part 1, Article 1, Section 1(b) of the International

¹⁸¹ Hudson, *Ruins of Identity*, 98.

¹⁸² Ray and Bieter, "It broadens your view of being Basque," 244.

¹⁸³ Pearson, "The Nature of Japanese Archaeology," 119 – 120.

Labour Organization's Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention, 1969 (no. 169) defines indigenous people as indigenous "on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions."¹⁸⁴ The Ainu seem to fit the bill, considering their cultural promotion activities and their theoretic descent from conquered or colonized peoples: the Jōmon (by mainland immigrants, if one wants to call their settlement colonization) and the Emishi (by the Japanese). The internal colonization of Ezo/Hokkaidō, especially, makes indigeneity relevant to them.

Are the Ainu indigenous to Hokkaidō? Absolutely. But if their ancestral relationship with the Jōmon is neither unique to them nor wholly organic, can the Ainu rightly be called indigenous to Japan? According to an unnamed Ainu man quoted in Tsuboi's *Nihon Kōkōgaku* (*Archaeology of Japan*, 1898), the answer would be unequivocal. Speaking of the Hokkaidō Ainu's ancestors, he asserts that "We Ainu originally lived in *shamochi* (Japan's Honshū)" before migrating to their new home in the north.¹⁸⁵ This opening to the *koropokkur* legend gives the Ainu an identifiable place of origin and shows that, among the Hokkaidō Ainu as well, the notion that their forebears had once dwelled in the Japanese islands was taking root. That idea alone, not the biopolitics of its creation, has influenced their concepts of what their legal status in Japan should be.

It is cut-and-dry reasoning that is hard to argue with, but determining indigeneity is a more complex matter than identifying a location as the homeland of one's prehistoric ancestors. As

¹⁸⁴ "C169 – Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention, 1969 (no. 169)," *NORMLEX*, International Labour Organization, accessed January 15, 2023, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169.

¹⁸⁵ Shōgorō Tsuboi, *Nihon kōkōgaku* (Aizensha, 1898), 55.

another factor, race once again rears its ugly head, since “being Indigenous is so closely but, at the same time, ambiguously connected to being nonwhite both historically and as understood internationally,” especially within a colonial context.¹⁸⁶ The distinction between indigenous/non-white and newcomer/white shows up time and again: Native Americans and First Nations peoples, and European colonists in North America; Mesoamericans and Spanish conquistadors (granted, whether or not the Spanish are technically white can be debated); and just about any of the peoples in the British empire, New World or Old World, and their English conquerors. Race, with (non-)whiteness in particular, has been an enduring part of determining indigeneity.

This benchmark sounds like it should not apply to Japan, given the tendency for Asians to be labeled as “yellow” on the racial color spectrum, yet in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries several Japanese intellectuals attempted to position their countrymen as a “white” race in Asia on account of “white” being considered synonymous with cultural refinement and superiority.¹⁸⁷ They only thought of the Ainu as such when they wanted to make themselves feel better about being called “yellow” by seeing “white” people living such an uncivilized existence.¹⁸⁸ Note how, in this case, “white” and “non-white” do not refer to complexion or a category of biological race, but are defined by the level of civilization achieved by each population. Degree of civility being subjective, indigeneity is as much a social construct as it is an ethnic or genetic one.

It is also not universally agreed upon in the case of the Ainu, regardless of what the Japanese government or scholarly community says. In his contribution to the edited volume *Cultural and*

¹⁸⁶ Astri Dankertsen, “I Felt So White: Sámi Racialization, Indigeneity, and Shades of Whiteness,” *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 6, no. 2 (2019), 115.

¹⁸⁷ Fukuda, “The Strange Career of the Caucasian Ainu,” 6, 14.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

Social Division in Contemporary Japan: Rethinking Discourses of Inclusion and Exclusion (2019), Mark Winchester discusses an increasingly-visible Ainu ethnicity/indigeneity denial movement which has manifested through hate speech and right-wing historical revisionism. One of the deniers he profiles, physician Matoba Mitsuaki, has asserted that mtDNA research indicates that the Ainu were *not* descended from the Hokkaidō Jōmon, who he believes they genocidally supplanted, but were actually descended from the Okhotsk and the Japanese; the claim, says Winchester, gives the impression that the Ainu were on the islands just as long as the Japanese, and therefore could not be indigenous.¹⁸⁹ How much of his hypothesis is indebted to Tsuboi's replacement theory is unclear, nor is it important. Matoba's hypothesis is merely one of multiple recent statements, some of them just as jaw-dropping, calling the Ainu's indigeneity and/or identity as an ethnic group into question. At least among ultra-conservatives, perspectives of the Ainu are shifting once again.

Because of limitations surrounding the early pottery-makers, Ainu descent from the Jōmon has not been examined much outside of anthropology or archaeology. As the preceding pages have hopefully demonstrated, that has been a mistake. The association between the Jōmon and the Ainu is not just cultural or genetic, but intellectual as well, born from the ideological viewpoints of the Japanese. For that reason, evaluating Ainu history reveals additional means of understanding why that belief exists and persists today. The views the Japanese held of the Ainu could, and did, change, which is what allowed for the Jōmon-Ainu bond to be established in the first place. And the journey may not be over yet.

¹⁸⁹ Mark Winchester, "Backlash: Hate speech, Ainu indigenous denial and historical revisionism in post-DRIPs Japan," in *Cultural and Social Division in Contemporary Japan: Rethinking Discourses of Inclusion and Exclusion*, ed. Yoshikazu Shiobara, Kohei Kawabata and Joel Matthews (Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), 87, 93 – 94.

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