

REPLY TO MR. BATCHELOR ON THE WORDS "KAMUI"
AND "AINO."

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Mr. Batchelor's details, derived from his unequalled experience, concerning the various uses to which the Aino word *Kamui* is put, or rather the various objects to which it is applied, are extremely interesting on account of the light which they throw upon the workings of the mind of the uncultured race, which he has done so much to raise to a higher level. "The God who created the world," the Sun and Moon Gods, the Gods of Sea, Fire and Water, the God or Demon of Sudden Death,—what natural ideas these are! Every thing very great and strange, very powerful, very beautiful, very terrible, in fact, *very* anything, is apt, all over the world, to be looked upon with awe. I therefore see variety, not so much in the *ideas* conveyed by the word *Kamui*, as in the *objects* to which it can be applied. "God," "supernatural," "wonderful," are perhaps our nearest approximations to it; but we have no exact equivalent, for the simple reason that we are no longer in the stage of thought out of which such a word grows. The Japanese were, at the dawn of history, not far removed from that stage; and the great Shintō scholar Hirata's account of the uses of the word *Kami*, as summarised by Mr. Satow in Vol. III, Appendix, pp. 48-49 of the present "Transactions," is as follows:—

"As to the signification of the word *kami*;¹—it is applied in the first place to all the *kami* of heaven and earth who are mentioned in the ancient records, as well as to their spirits which reside in the temples where they are worshipped. Further, not only human beings, but also

¹This passage is copied by Hirata almost word for word from vol. iii. of the *Ko-shi-ki Den*, without any acknowledgment. [This and the two following footnotes form part of the quotation from Mr. Satow's paper.]

birds, beasts, plants and trees, seas and mountains, and all other things whatsoever which possess powers of an extraordinary and eminent character, or deserve to be revered and dreaded, are called *kami*. Eminent does not mean solely worthy of honour, good or distinguished by great deeds, but is applied also to the *kami* who are to be dreaded on account of their evil character or miraculous nature. Amongst human beings who are at the same time *kami* are to be classed the successive Mikados, who in the Mañ-yefu-shifu and other ancient poetry are called *towo-tsu-kami* (distant gods) on account of their being far removed from ordinary men, as well as many other men, some who are revered as *kami* by the whole Empire, and those whose sphere is limited to a single province, department, village or family. The *kami* of the Divine Age were mostly human beings, who yet resembled *kami*, and that is why we give that name to the period in which they existed. Beside human beings, the thunder is called the 'sounding god' (*narukami*). The dragon, goblins (*ten-gu*) and the fox are also *kami*, for they are likewise eminently miraculous and dreadful creatures. In the Ni-hoñ-gi and in the Mañ-yefu-shifu the tiger and the wolf² are spoken of as *kami*. Izanagi gave the name of Oho-kamu-dzu-mi no mikoto to the fruit of the peach-tree, and the jewels which he wore on his neck were called Mi-kura-tama no mikoto. In the *Zhiñ-dai-no-maki* and the *Oho-barahi no kotoba*, rocks, stumps of trees, leaves of plants and so forth are said to have spoken in the Divine age; these also were *kami*. There are many cases of the term being applied to seas and mountains. It was not a spirit that was meant, but the term was used directly of the particular sea or mountain,—of the sea on account of its depth and the difficulty of crossing it, of the mountain on account of its loftiness."³

² *Oho-kami*, literally, great god.

³ *Kami*, god, is evidently the same word as *Kami* applied to a superior, as to a master by his servant or to the sovereign by his subjects, to the chief officer of a sub-department of the administration, and in ancient times to the governor of a province. Its primary meaning is 'that which is above,' and hence 'chief.' So that *Izanagi no Oho kami* would mean Great Chief Izanagi. *Mikoto*, which is a title applied to gods, and forms part of the word *Sumera-mikoto*, the ancient name of the sovereigns of Japan, is composed of the honorific *mi* and *koto*, word, and hence, thing. It might be rendered augustness, and *Izanagi no mikoto* would mean His Augustness Izanagi.

So far Hirata and Mr. Satow.—Naturally enough, the Japanese left several of these applications of the word *Kami* behind them as they advanced in civilization; but all were current in early days, and traces of them may still be found in literature.

So far then as signification is concerned, the Japanese word (and idea) *Kami*, and the Aino word (and idea) *Kamui* seem to me to be identical. With regard, however, to the question of the existence of an etymological connection between the two terms, the position is somewhat different. It is dangerous to assume too positively, and unless further evidence is forthcoming, that one word is derived from another, simply because the two sound alike. Japanese *aru* has nothing to do with English "are," though it has the same meaning, nor Japanese *hone* (sometimes *bone*) with "bone." Mr. Batchelor may therefore possibly be correct in rejecting the theory that Aino *Kamui* comes from Japanese *Kami*. At the same time, the example of the insertion of a *u* in the word *pashui*, "chopstick," which is undoubtedly borrowed from the Japanese *hashi*, would seem to be another index pointing in the same direction. The absence of the *b*, which Mr. Batchelor thinks we should find inserted after the *m* of *Kamui*, were the latter a borrowed word, seems to me likewise far from conclusive. What indeed is the *vera causa* of the Aino distortions of Japanese words? Simply the fact that the Ainosh borrow their Japanese from the Northern *patois*, which has corrupted the standard Japanese pronunciation of certain letters. But the Japanese word *Kami* has, I venture to think, not suffered any change in the northern *patois* of Japanese (though I cannot be quite positive on the point),—possibly owing to the sacredness of the word. Such exceptions to general rules of phonetic change occur in all languages under certain exceptional circumstances. This argument, if valid, would account for the form being *Kamui* rather than *Kambi*, which latter we should otherwise have expected. Or else we may appeal to the probability (if there *was* any borrowing on the part of the Ainosh) that the borrowing took place many hundreds of years ago, further south in the main island. I do not, as before said, mean to state that I consider it certain that the Ainosh did borrow the word in question from the Japanese,—for indeed somewhat like-sounding names for "God" occur in other parts of Asia, and we may therefore have before us a case

of mere coincidence,—but merely to suggest that such a loan does not seem improbable, philologically speaking, much less impossible.

Mr. Batchelor's argument from the psychological side appears to me much more subtle and ingenious,—his question, viz., "Had then the Ainos no deity before they heard of the word *Kami*?—Is it not improbable that a borrowed word should grow to such gigantic proportions?" Nevertheless borrowed words and borrowed ideas do unquestionably often grow into gigantic proportions, as the whole religious history of the Western world may testify. Ingenious as Mr. Batchelor's pleading is on behalf of his favorite islanders, I cannot therefore, on the psychological side either, see any sufficient reason for attributing to them originality in this matter. Surely originality is the rarest thing in the whole world. *Ceteris paribus*, similarity always finds a more likely explanation in borrowing than in independent invention, especially when the similarity is between two races living side by side, fighting together, marrying together, as we know the Japanese and the Ainos to have done for centuries, if not for millenniums past. History is there to prove that religious ideas and terms, though touching the inmost spring of a nation's life, are almost as easily borrowed as are the most superficial material inventions. We do not find, however, that barbarous races communicate their religious ideas and terminology to more civilized races; or if they ever do so, as might be alleged in the case of the Arabs proselytizing Syria and Persia, the circumstances, as well as the genius of the race, must be altogether peculiar. We find no trace, in the history of the Far-East, of such an upsetting of the usual course of nature. The rule is for the richer to lend to the poorer, not the poorer to the richer. Early Japan, for instance, gave nothing to China, just as the American Indians have given nothing to the New-Englanders. If, therefore, we are to reject on *a priori* grounds, as Mr. Batchelor would have us do, the notion of a loan made by the Ainos from the Japanese, then very much more are we bound to reject the notion of a loan by the Japanese from the Ainos. We know with absolute certainty that the Japanese were already far advanced in civilization fourteen hundred years ago; and it is simply incredible that they should have borrowed their word (and idea) *Kami*, which occurs over and over again in the most ancient documents, from

the Aino word (and idea) *Kamui*,—if indeed *Kamui* existed at all at that early date, a fact which we have no means of knowing. The only thing which we are justified in holding with regard to Aino culture is that it was still more meagre in ancient days than it is now; and few, I think, who have mixed with the Ainos, will assert that the latter are even now the sort of people likely to start new ideas and communicate them to others.

I fear I am taking up an unconscionable amount of the Society's time. But pray bear with me a few moments while I touch, as briefly as possible, on another point of disagreement between Mr. Batchelor and myself. He wishes us to say "Ainu." I am for "Aino." Why? Simply because Europeans have said "Aino" for the last two hundred and fifty years. What is the good of purism? We do not say "Nihon"; we say "Japan." We do not say "Wien"; we say "Vienna." Neither do we consider it necessary to upset our established habit of saying "Calcutta" and "Bombay," and to enthrone in their place "Kalkatte" and "Bambai." Nor, though our knowledge of the Maoris of New Zealand is much more recent than our knowledge of the Ainos of Yezo, and it might therefore be supposed easier to upset existing usage in their case, do we give up our pronunciation of "Maori," and say "Maui," as some enthusiastic New Zealand scholars may perhaps wish us to do, on the ground of that being the real native sound of the name. This question of native purism *versus* established English usage has been fought over and over again in every part of the world, with the almost invariable result that usage,—ignorant usage, if you will,—prevails over the purists. It is too much trouble to say, for instance, "Thoukudidés" when "Thucydides" is just as clear, and has long been in everybody's mouth. If we followed the plan advocated by Mr. Batchelor and by several other eminent authorities in various special lines,—Carlyle, for instance when treating of German names, simply because the Germans were his special pets, as the Ainos are Mr. Batchelor's—we should have to do nothing less than turn all our old associations topsy-turvey, from "Adam" and "Eve" downwards. Just imagine "Eve," for example, as "Khavváh!" Yet that is the Hebrew word which we mispronounce "Eve;" and surely there is ten thousand times more to be said in favour of preserving Hebrew words intact than of

preserving Aino ones. Moreover, which of the purists was ever consistent? Each purist is a purist only within his own small domain. Carlyle is particular about German names only. The "Thuokudidés" man lets "Calcutta" slide. The "Kalkatte" man says "Thucydides" along with the rest of mankind; and so on right round the ring. No! I, for one, am very fond indeed of Oriental studies; but I am still fonder of English, and of our established habits of speech and pronunciation. I cannot therefore side with Mr. Batchelor in this matter, though I know that in venturing to disagree with him, I, the merest of tyros in Aino—or Ainu—am so rash as to run counter to the chief authority on the subject, the man on whom are founded all our hopes for the further investigation, as well as for the mental and moral raising of that race whose name, in order to end by trying to keep the peace, I will not now pronounce again.