YUKARA
EPPOS OF THE AINUS

BY
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STUDY AND TRANSLATION
OF
KAMUY-YUKARA
Yukara, Epos of the Ainus By Kiyoko Miura.
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CONTENTS

Introduction
Two Songs That Were Sung And Danced By Owl God
Three Little Songs
Three Saghalien Songs
Two Songs That Were Sung And Danced By Goddess Ermine
Two Songs By Shellfish
Four Märchen-Like Songs
Song That Was Sung And Danced By Oynakamuy And His Wife
Song That Was Sung And Danced By Young Lord Of Matsumae
INTRODUCTION

MY DEAR UNCLE "T" had so enthusiastically recommended me to read the Ainu epics and given one of the books as a special present. The title of the book as translated into English might read: "The Appreciation of the Yukara". When I had just opened it to take a quick look through, I had never imagined that the book would have captivated my mind so much as to as to make myself go right ahead to pick some of the most beautiful expressions and gradually to drag myself into the dreadful work of translation of all the poems in the book. But, this came only shortly after I had begun to read closely. Thus, this presentation of translation is simply to show my friends and readers the multitudinous and peculiar beauty of the Ainu sentiments as expressed in this book of "yukara" as much in its original manner as possible. Although I didn’t go deep to dig the cultural and traditional customs of the Ainu people, something must yet be said about the people and their "yukara" in order for the readers to comprehend more easily.

It is now known that the Ainu is the oldest tribe having once occupied the land of Japan before some strong tribes came from the Southern Asia and landed and pushed the Ainus gradually up northward. They finally had to be settled in the northern-most island of Japan called Hokkaido and the southern part of the Saghalien Island. Although they had their own religious faith, tradition and culture quite different from those of Japanese, they have been gradually disappearing; and the true descendants of the Ainu today are scarce. For many generations they have been thoroughly Japanized and their legends and traditions have become more commercialized, to be the means of living, rather than their life itself.

The Ainu people had always been very spiritual and religious creating and worshipping many gods and goddesses; and their spiritualism has remained through centuries in a very ancient and primitive form which might be similar to the totemism or animism of the American Indians and other ancient tribes.
Very well known among the scholars of the Ainu culture, Rev. John Bachelor who had come from England on mission and lived for long among the Ainu people early in this century tells in one of his books, "Ainu and their Legends": what they worship for is not an object itself, or for instance a tree, but the spirit that dwells in an object, or the tree. And, spirits are entirely separately thought in their nature from visible objects. Perhaps that is why they could have done two contradicting things simultaneously, i.e., to kill animals and to worship them as gods. To them the world beyond the cemetery is a mere extension of this world where spirits of one kind of beings remain as a unit, possessing its character permanently. That is, the spirit of an owl, for example, transmigrates after the death of its body and may reborn still as an owl. This does not conform with the Budhistic concept of transmigraiton.

As for their own origin, or the origin of mankind, they believed in the long-handed legends that say: "God created man with soil for bodice, chickweed for hair, and willow branch for back-bones; and that causing man to hunch as he grows old." From this, willow tree is considered sacred and symbolistic, out of which the people make sacred symbol, called "inaw", in the Ainu language meaning sacred wooden stick. The collective name for the "inaw" is "nusa". Every family keeps "inaw" that is used at every and all occasions of ritual performance. Wherever there is Ainu living, there must be this "inaw" with which they decorate the house and the object they are to worship, together with other offerings. Therefore, it is very important that such "inaw" must be kept in the best condition, as they believe certain spirit dwells in the "inaw". Further, they believe that when the "inaw" withers its divine power is also terminated, or, for even worse, that the possessor of the "inaw" may be ceased to live. There are various ways to prepare the "inaw". A tree or a branch of tree may be shaven upwards or downwards and at the either end the shavings are left as decorations; or, it may be shaven in both directions. Various trees are used, but principally willow tree is considered most important for the reason as above mentioned. Thus, it is essential for us to understand the religious faith and traditions derived thereof, which are thoroughly woven into the stories of the "yukara".

As above said, the religious faith and the wooden symbols, "inaw", are the central subjects in their legends and folklore. Their "yukara" is lately more widely introduced and more seriously searched by a small number
of the "yukara" collector-translators working together with the few existing Ainu story-tellers. The Ainu people have never invented letters of their own; and at every rite a story-teller or a medium used to sing and dance with the stories that had been handed down from mouth to mouth and from generation to generation. Therefore, there is no way to trace up the origin or to know how old a particular legend could be. Some are quite ancient in source; and still some are but a few centuries back as estimated from the social structures and cultural background as suggested in stories. But, for many the exact date cannot be located.

The "yukara" in the Ainu language means the singing voice. Basically it is a cry or singing of animals, insects, birds and so forth; and as they are gods themselves, it means the singing voice of gods. On the other hand, the word, "yukar" as verb, means "to imitate". It might be quite sensible to say that the word had been derived of another Ainu word, "yuk-kar", that meaning "to make doings of the animal captured" or "to imitate the animal captured". In the ancient Ainu society like any primitive tribes, a "dance dmma" imitating animals is the central activity in which the shaman or medium disguised as the animal caught and to be worshipped, that is, a God of whatever it is; and acted with the cry of the animal. Songs had never existed by themselves. However, as time advanced, they took independent forms and were established singularly as a form of litereture. So, the "yukara" in original sense involves the whole performance of acting and singing after animals and other objects.

So, what is today generally called as the Ainu literature is the "yukara" itself. It is told either in verse or prosaic form. There are two types of "yukara": "Gods yukara" and "Human yukara". The former can be further divided into two categories: "Kamuy-yukara", or epics in which natural beings such as animals, plants, solid materials and nature phenomena tell about their experiences or doings; and "oyna", or epics in which "human" gods or personified gods tell of their experiences. Since this translation deals with the "Gods yukara", further details of it are given hereunder.

Such natural objects as told and sung in the "Gods yukara" are generally grouped as follows:

1. Animal gods: bear, wolf, fox, ermine, weasel, owl, orc, snake, frog, shellfish, etc.
2. Plant gods: aconite, yew, etc.

3. Gods of solid material: boat, anchor, etc.

4. Nature gods; fire, wind, thunder, etc.

The peculiarity of their belief is that the gods of all kinds appear in man's shape up in their domain but disguise according to their kinds when they come down to the man's land for the purpose of protecting the land or supplying foods and animals by sacrificing their bodies. The moment they are shot and killed by men, they become gods and sit upon their respective bodies "between their ears". Such expression as "sitting between ears" is found practically in all the stories presented here. This does not have any significance of further symbolism, but may be merely what they had long believed.

On the other hand, the "oyna" or the "yukara of human gods" are such stories as centered upon completely personified gods as heroes. The names such as Oynakamuy, Ainuruckle, Okikurmi, and Samaykur widely appear in the stories of this category. And, they are in the position to govern human societies as absolute authority. Therefore, by the time the idea of such personified gods occured, the Ainu society might have grown to develop into the classes of the rulers and the governed. The hero, for instance, Ainuruckle, the name meaning "man-like god", was himself a shaman or chief in the actual primitive Ainu society; therefore, behind the story of "oyna" there is seen the Ainu society at the height of shamanism.

Some outstanding characteristics of the "yukara" must be mentioned. The "gods yukara" is characterized by the use of the first person, "I"; and the whole story is told autobiographically. Although this is an important element, it is not absolute one, for there are some exceptions. With the use in general of the first person, it ends as: "... So told the God of such-and-such about himself." Such ending was said, however, a later addition when the "yukara" was established as oral literature and such explanatory ending was desirable. Saghalien "yukara" however do not follow this pattern.

The "yukara" both in verse and prose is written in narrative. Sometimes a series of happenings is plainly told one after another; and sometimes quite sophisticated plottings are employed. Most and
particularly the long narrative pieces have dramatic charm and effectiveness. For instance, the story of Oynakamuy captures the reader’s mind with its colorful descriptions unfolded one by one. The main characters are shaman and his wife, the personified gods, and the story gives a historical background of perhaps 16-18th century, when the Japanese shogunate took the reign over Hokkaido and their misrule and tyranny oppressed the Ainu people so badly. Though long, this story is free from the sloppy tediousness, with the variety of plots employed.

The perhaps most important factor in the "Gods yukara" may be the use of "refrain". Each story contains at least one refrain. When the central character is changed in the middle of the story, the refrain changes also. Or, when the theme of a story changes with the same central character, the refrain changes. Some refrains come at the opening of each phrase, some at the end; still some at every important position; and still other at specific place in the whole story. Most of them come at the openings and this is the most natural and accepted pattern, for the refrains designate the God’s self-introduction. The use of refrains as above-described is very characteristic and has effects: sometimes they have effects of refreshing and heightening the tone in a long narrative that goes on in quite a length; often such refrains are short and beautifully poetic as contrasting to the narrative. A typical and most outstanding example is that in "The Song of an Owl (I)" which goes: "fall, silver tricklings, fall . . . / fall, golden tricklings fall . . ." In the Ainu language this refrain denotes a singing voice of Owl God, but also characteristically an expression to heighten the whole tone with poetic effect. This piece happens to be the only long story here that renders the poetic tinge to the entire expression; for that, this is one of the most exquisite pieces.

As the readers may note, the stories here are mostly told naively and with no real villains therein and with full of good will. Often stories give reason, for example, why men had to suffer from disaster, which men understand and adjust their wrong deeds. Often, then, the narratives are so plainly told that we may tend to read through without thinking deeply of their religious implications. For instance, the story of Ermine goes on to tell why men had to suffer from famine, and how they were saved. To kill animals with stones and rotten sticks is quite contrary to their religious belief, for all the living things are disguised gods. The
communications between gods and men are commonly done through dreams; so in above story men were told through dreams of the very reason for the famine they had to suffer.

Some or rather many expressions are found peculiarly beautiful and plain. And, I personally feel they are quite highly refined as describing some states and actions. From gracefulness in expression and good faiths given in stories, I feel also that the Ainu people have gentle heart towards their own people and things around, and love a good harmony with the surroundings in their lives.

My knowledge of the Ainu folks and their "yukara" is very scanty; all what I have ever read are those ten story-songs as translated here. Nevertheless, I think I could have touched their heart and sentiments therein. Although the stories before translation are presented not in the Ainu language but in the Japanese version, so this making a secondary translation, the book was excellent which being written and edited by the well-known Ainu-Japanese anthologists, Mashio Chiri and Kunio Oda, and I believe they were specially careful in selecting words. I regret the lack of the depth of my learning; and above all I most regret that I have never met the Ainu people and never yet visited their "kotan" or village.
TWO SONGS THAT WERE SUNG AND DANCED BY OWL GOD

I.

"Fall, silver tricklings, fall . . .
Fall, golden tricklings, fall . . ."
So singing I flew
Along a stream.
As flying over the hamlet, I looked
And there I saw the people--
Those who had once been poor were now rich,
Those who had once been rich were now poor.
At the seashore,
The children were playing
With their little toy bows
And with little toy arrows.
"Fall, silver tricklings, fall . . .
Fall, golden tricklings, fall . . ."
So singing I went
Gliding over the children.
Running below my eyes,
The children said each and all:
"Beautiful little bird!
Divine little bird!
Come, now, come quickly!
Whoever would shoot that little bird first,
Whoever would fetch that divine bird first
Will be our hero!
And be our leader in the true sense!"

The children of those-once-poor-but-now-rich
Notched their little golden arrows
Upon their little golden bows, and
Off they shot!
But, I let those golden arrows
Go beneath my body
And above my body.
Then,
There was a boy
Among those children,
Who had an ordinary little arrow
And an ordinary little bow.
I looked at him.
From the cloth he wore
He appeared to have come from a poor family.
But--
From the looks in his eyes
He appeared to be descended from an illustrious family.
So he stood out among all other boys
Like a bird of virtue!
And, he too
Notched his little arrow
Upon his little bow.
As he drew his bow,
The children of those-once-poor-but-now-rich
Said scornfully:
"How funny!
Such a cub of a wretched tribe!
Even our golden arrows
Can’t reach
That bird--
That holy bird!
It’ll be a wonder
If that bird--
That holy bird--
Would ever take
This ordinary wooden arrow--
This arrow of rotten wood--
That this son of a wretched
Would dare to shoot!"
Abusing thus,
The children gathered around the boy
Giving him kicks and cuffs.
But--
The poor boy did not hesitate and
Drew his bow at me.
Watching at him, thus,
I felt sympathy toward him.
"Fall, silver tricklings, fall . . .
Fall, golden tricklings, fall . . ."
So singing I went slowly
Gliding over in a big circle
In the sky.
The boy stood
On one foot drawn far back
And on the other stepped forward.
And, biting his lower lip,
He drew his bow at me.
Then--
Off he shot his arrow!
The tiny arrow glittered in the air
As it flew toward me;
And, as I saw it nearing me,
Soon I held out my hands
And took that little arrow.
And, while I was descending round and round,
The wind whistled by my ears.
Then--
The children all ran toward me,
Striving with one another,
And leaving sand storm behind.
As soon as I fell on the ground,
The poor boy reached
And grabbed me before anyone.
So, the boys of those-once-poor-but-now-rich
Who arrived late called him
With a score of bad names,
And pushed and beat this poor boy calling
With ten and a score of cursing names:
"Abominable cub!
Son of the wretched!"
How dare you would take the lead
In what we were doing!"
But, the poor boy
Covered me again and again,
Held me under his stomach,
And escaped from the crowd of those boys
Taking as long as an age.
Then, after such hubbub
His footsteps on a run
Sounded light and rhythmic.
The boys of those-once-poor-but-now-rich
Threw stones and chips of wood
After him, but he ran
Without the least attention to them,
Leaving sand storm behind,
Until he at last arrived at a little house.
Then, the boy took me in
From the window of the honour room of the house,
And he began and told the story
Of what had happened.
From the house appeared
An old man and his wife
Shading their eyes with their hands.
They seemed, the man and his wife,
To bear an air of dignity,
In spite of their poor attire.
As they looked at me,
They were so astonished,
They doubled their bodies from the waists.
The old man then tightened his belt
And bowed at me:
"Owl, our God!
Our heavy God!
In spite of our poverty,
You have come to our house.
We thank our God a thousand times!
We had once counted ourselves among the rich,
But now we are poor and worthless as you see."
So, God of the village!
Heavy God!
We have no right to beg you to stay
At our house . . . ; but,
As it is already after sunset,
We should offer our heavy God
The place to rest
And we shall perform a ceremony tomorrow
To send our Heavy God to where He belongs
At least with the sacred wooden symbols."
Thus saying, the old man
Bowed twenty times
And bowed thirty times.
The wife of the old man
Spread a "flower" matress
Over the seat of honour
Below the window I entered
And put me upon it.
Then--
They went to bed and
Soon started snoring.
I sat on my empty body
Between my ears.
But, as the night advanced,
I got up:
"Fall, silver tricklings, fall . . .
Fall, golden tricklings, fall . . ."
I sang softly and went round and round
To the left and to the right
Dancing in this small house;
And, the sound I made as I danced
Was so beautiful as a rustle of gold.
When I flapped my wings,
There was about me
A mount of precious jewelry,
The God’s treasures falling from heaven,
Making sound so beautiful as rustles of gold.
In a quick moment
I filled this tiny house
With those shining jewelries,
The God’s treasures.
"Fall, silver tricklings, fall . . .
Fall, golden tricklings, fall . . ."
While I sang,
I made this tiny house
Into a large house,
A golden house,
In a quick moment.
In the house,
I built a magnificent altar and
Quickly wove a magnificent silk robe
And decorated the house entirely.
I decorated the now great house,
Far grander than any house of other rich people.
As I finished this job,
I sat between the ears of my body,
Just as I had been placed.
Then, to the family of this house
I sent dream to their sleep
And let them know that I saw
And took sympathy of them,
For the family-once-rich-but-now-poor,
By an ill fortune,
Have been despised and ill-treated
By those-once-poor-but-now-rich;
And that I therefore came down
To stay at their house,
Although I was not a small god,
And thus to make them wealthy again.
In a short while
The night’s black news began to thin away;
And the people of the family awoke and got up.
Rubbing their eyes still,
They looked about and instantly
They fell down on their buttocks.
The old woman
Cried in a loud voice,
The old man
Dropped big drops of tears.
But, quickly
He got up and came
Where I was, and bowed
Scores of times,
Hundreds of times;
And spoke in the meantime:
"I thought it was
But a dream I saw in sleep!
How could we imagine
To see all this in our real life!
In spite of our poverty,
In spite of our wretched life by the ill-fortune,
You have come to our humble cot.
That only gave us honour
Beyond our words of gratitude.
But, above this all,
Our God,
Our Heavy God,
You took sympathy upon us
For being misfortuned,
And bestowed a favour of us
With the heaviest of all
The heavy gifts from Heaven!"
Saying thus in tears,
The old man bowed deeply and worshipped me.
Then--
This old man cut trees,
Began to shave them to make into a bunch
Of beautiful sacred wooden decorations
With which he decorated about me.
The old lady tightened her sash
And, with a help of the little kids,
Gathered some kindlewood,
Drew water
And prepared to make Sake.
In a short while,
Six casks of Sake
Were placed at the seat of honour.
Then--
I had a pleasure
Of speaking with the "old granny of fire"
About things in Heaven.
In two days since
The aroma of Sake,
Which the Gods favour,
Began to fill the house.
Then--
The little boy who had brought me to this house
Was clothed in a ragged kimono in purpose,
And was sent to the village on an errand
Carrying invitation to the feast
Given to all those-once-poor-but-now-rich.
As I watched after him,
The little boy
Went to each house
And delivered the message;
Then, those-once-poor-but-now-rich
Laughed hard and said:
"How strange!
How dare would those poor folks invite us!
With what sort of Sake and food
They are going to entertain us!
Let’s go and see,
Then, have a good laugh
Over their doings!"
So, they came
In a big crowd.
But, when they saw the house
From a good distance,
They were amazed:
Some went back
As they were so embarrassed;
But others still came to the house
Where they were taken aback.
Then--
As the lady of the house
Came out
And led them in the house
By taking their hands, one by one,
They all
Came in
Creeping
On knees and hands,
Not a single person being able to raise his face!
Then--
The master of the house
Got up
And spoke
With the voice so rich and resonant
Like a cuckoo singing,
And he told them all about
Such-and-such that had happened.
"Having been so poor,
We could not visit you folks;
But, the Heavy God
Took sympathy on us
And had mercy on us,
Since we had never had vicious thoughts in the past.
Therefore, from this time on,
I beg you, illustrious ones,
Do be friends with us
And visit with us,
As we are in one
And belong to one same family."
As the master of the house spoke,
All those-once-poor-but-now-rich
Apologized again and again for their wrongs
By rubbing their hands.
And, they swore among themselves
To become good friends with each other
From this time on.
I was, then, worshipped by them all.
And, then,
They became casual
And open-hearted
And held a grand feast with Sake.
I, myself, enjoyed a good talk
With the holy goddess "granny" of fire
And the god of the household
And the old goddess protecting the yard
Of the sacred woods standing;
And watched the men and women
Singing and dancing,
To my heart’s content.
The feast went on
For two days,
For three days.
Looking at everybody
Happy and friendly,
I was relieved
And thus I bade farewell
To the old goddess "granny" of fire,
To the god of the household,
And to the old goddess of the sacred wood yard.
Then--
I returned to my own home.
Before I reached,
My house had been decorated
With full of beautiful sacred wooden symbols
And with good Sake.
Then--
I sent my messenger for to invite all
The lower gods
And the higher gods,
And held a magnificent feast.
And, I told the gods
My experiences,
Giving detailed accounts
Of the circumstances,
Of the people in the village
Where I visited,
And of the happenings in consequence.
So, the gods
Praised me.
When they were leaving,
I gave them each
Beautifully decorated sacred wooden symbol
In twos and in threes.
As I look now and then towards the village,
I can see things are now in peace;
People are keeping good friendship;
And the man I made rich is now the village chief.
That little boy
Is now
A grown-up man
And has a wife
And children,
And is taking care of his father
And his mother.
Each time he makes Sake,
He worships me
With it
And with the sacred wooden symbols,
Before having the feast of Sake.
I, too,
Sit forever
Behind
These good men and women
To protect them and
Their village.
--So told the Owl God of his experiences.

II.

In old days, I used to speak in the voice so sonorous
As it rebounded at the middle of the bow . . .
But, alas! how aged and weak did I become!
"At any rate, if there is anyone
Who is fluent in speech and confident
In diplomatic negotiations, him I wish to send
To Heaven with five-and-a-half messages!
This I said, tapping on the top of the pile of food boxes.
As I heard someone at the door, saying:
"Who else but I, do you know,
Would speak fluently and confidently
At such negotiations?"
So I looked up, and there was a man-crow.
I let him in my house,
And . . .
Tapping on the top of the food boxes in a rhythm,
I spoke, and three days went on while giving him the messages
For to send with him on the mission.
When I finished just three of the messages,
I looked up and there I saw the man-crow
Dozing by the fireplace.
At this sight
I was enraged
And beat the man-crow to death.
So, again, tapping on the top of the pile
Of food boxes, I said:
"If there is any one who is confident
In diplomacy, him I wish to send to Heaven
with five-and-a-half messages!"
As I heard again some one at the door, saying:
"Who else but I, do you know,
Would speak fluently and would be so suited
A messenger to Heaven with your messages!"
So I looked up, and there was a mountain-jay.
I let him in my house,
And, again, . . .
Tapping on the top of the food boxes in a rhythm,
I went on with the five-and-a-half messages.
On the fourth day while I was giving him
The fourth message, I looked up and there I saw
The mountain-jay dozing by the fireplace.
I was so enraged,
I beat the mountain-jay to death.
So, again, tapping on the top of the pile of food boxes,
I said:
"If there is my one who is fluent in speech
And confident in diplomatic negotiations,
Him I wish to send to Heaven
With five-and-a-half messages!"
As I thought I heard some one approaching quietly,
I looked up, and there I saw a water-ousel
Who sat by my left so graciously like a god.
And, then...
Tapping on the top of the food boxes in a rhythm,
I went on days and nights
Delivering the five-and-a-half messages.
I looked and there I saw the water-ousel listening to me,
Who didn’t appear tired in the least;
When, after days and nights,
I finished my messages on the sixth day,
Off he went through the skylight
And was gone to Heaven.
The messages in brief went as such:
In the world of man
There is a famine,
And the people are about to die of starvation.
I wondered what could be the cause and found
That there were two Gods in Heaven--
One authorizing over deer and the other, over fish--
Who between themselves conferred
And agreed not to send their deer and fish down,
And therefore they went on nonchalantly
Even when other gods entreated in any way.
Hence, the people could find no deer as they went
Up the mountain to hunt; or could they find no fish
As they went down to stream to fish.
At this I was infuriated and thus I have sent
A messenger to the deer God and to the fish God.
Many days have passed since;
And, one day, there was heard from afar in the sky
Flapping of wings; soon
Entered somebody in my house.
I looked and there was the water-ousel,
Looking even more beautiful
With the gallantry air.
He soon started delivering the return message.
The reason why the deer God and the fish God stopped
Sending their deer and fish down was such:
When men caught deer,
They beat deer’s heads with stick;
After they skinned,
They threw away deer’s heads.
When men caught fish,
They beat fish heads with rotten wood.
So, deer returned to their God,
Crying and naked;
Fish returned to their God,
Carrying with them the rotten wood.
Such enraged their Gods
Who between themselves conferred
And agreed not to send deer and fish down.
Howsoever, if men would take good care
Of their deer and fish in future,
They would send their deer and fish down again.
Thus the water-ousel repeated what the deer God
And fish God told.
After I listened to this,
I gave the water-ousel my thanks.
Then, as I observed again with much care,
To be sure,
Men had been ill-treating deer and fish.
Therefore, I showed them in their dream in sleep
What had become of deer and fish;
And, they too realized their wrong doings.
Ever since, they would have made the stick
So lovely as the sacred wooden symbols,
With which they would have gone to fishing;
When they caught deer,
They would have decorated deer’s head for to worship. Fish would have been pleased and return to their God, carrying with them lovely decorated wooden stick; Deer would have been pleased and returned To their God with their heads newly shaven. So pleased were the fish God and the deer God, That they sent even more fish and more deer. Men are now living With no more famine to suffer. I was eased to see it; As I had grown aged And physically weakened, I had wished to resign and go back to Heaven; But, how could I have gone leaving the people Who had suffered with famine and almost died of hunger! Thus I remained ‘til now When there is nothing to worry of. Now that I have the truly brave, young one To take my place To protect the world of man, I am leaving for Heaven.

--So saying, the old Owl God, the Divine Protector of the village, went to Heaven, as the story ended.
THREE LITTLE SONGS

I. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Red Cuckoo

For many a day that returned
And for still many that went away,
I did nothing but wept.
I cried and cried so as to take up
All the waters
Of rivers,
Of swamps
And of marshes.
One day,
I looked, and--
There was a small man
Dressed in a golden silk garment,
With a little golden helmet fastened tight on his head;
His face shining like the rising sun.
This divinely beautiful man yelled
Looking up at me upon a tree,
And threw at me all kinds of curses.
"Shut up!
You, good-for-nothing cuckoo!
Just as you want to know of your birth,
You have been crying from dawn to dark,
And from dark to dawn, until rivers,
Swamps
And marshes
Get all dried up.
And, all the gods, great or no,
Settled upon this land,
The land of man,
Are now falling dead in drought.
If you are so anxious to know of your birth,
I'll let you hear: once upon a time,
When a white man from the land beyond the sea
Envied us and came to this Ainu land,
He dropped a red leathered cigarette case
While passing through this mountain deep.
A god took mercy upon this cigarette case
Which might otherwise have gone rotten and earthened,
Thus making a red cuckoo out of it.
Now, let me finish you off.
Before you become a god,
Remember what I just told you!"
Saying thus,
The small man posed with a little silver arrow
Upon a silver bow, and let off the arrow;
Then, I did not know what happened afterwards.
When I came to myself,
There was a dead body of red cuckoo,
And I was sitting between its ears.
It was this time
When I did find about my birth.
The man who had told me of it was the "God of Civilization".
Now that I know of my birth,
I can go to Heaven, to Gods.
--Thus told Red Cuckoo of his own story.

II. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Viper

Leaves above
Leaves below,
Wavy
And long--
Thrust a wooden pestle--
In full length,
Put up a wooden pestle--
In full length . . .
So singing,
I bent my body up and down
In pounding rice.
Then,
God Sammayunkur appeared
Coming down from mountain
With loads of venison on his back.  
"Give me some," I said,  
And he threw out a piece.  
As I ate,  
It tasted divine.  
Leaves above  
Leaves below,  
Wavy  
And long--  
Thrust a wooden pestle--  
In full length--  
Put up a wooden pestle--  
In full length . . .  
So singing,  
I bent my body up and down  
In pounding rice;  
And, this time,  
God Okikirimuy appeared  
Coming down from mountain,  
With loads of venison on his back.  
As I said, "give me some,"  
He first threw a sharp glance at me, instead, and  
In an instant showed his anger all over his face,  
And cried out:  
"Idiot!  
How dare you ask for man's food!  
Wherever do you say you have eaten it?"
So saying,  
He picked up and threw a big wooden stick at me.  
Then, I did not know what happened afterwards.  
When I came to myself,  
There was the corpse of a viper, as big as a pestle,  
And I was sitting between its ears.  
I died such a foolish and ignoble death;  
So, you, the vipers,  
Do not ever fool man.  
--Told the viper his story.
III. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Otter

I had set in a stream a fishweir.
I went and saw in the fishweir
A salmon caught in.
I took it out and was about to return
When a young man came from the upper stream;
And he said to me:
Qui-oo-oo-oo A younger sister
Qui-oo-oo-oo I have:
Qui-oo-oo-oo I shall give her to you
Qui-oo-oo-oo In exchange with
Qui-oo-oo-oo Your salmon.
I was pleased to hear
About the girl
And gave my salmon away.
Then, the young man turned back
As he went up the stream
And said to me:
Qui-oo-oo-oo That serves you right,
Qui-oo-oo-oo A blockhead!
Qui-oo-oo-oo Ugly blockhead!
Qui-oo-oo-oo How do you know I have a sister?
Qui-oo-oo-oo I only fooled you
Qui-oo-oo-oo And you took it simply.
Qui-oo-oo-oo Bah!
This the young man said and ran away.
I was all in anger and ran after him,
Ran until I came to a hole;
Then, I jumped into the hole.
There I saw a fox
Who was grinding eggs of my salmon
In a wooden bowl.
In a fit of rage,
I snatched the bowl away from him
And threw all the ground salmon eggs
Over his head.
That is why
The fox is ever red like that.
--So the Otter's story ended.
THREE SAGHALIEN SONGS

I. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Dolphine

As my little babies
Cried and fretted
Craving for food,
I went to the shore
Of the village
Of Pahlyonna. But, . . .
At the villagers
This Pahlyonna
Yelled and said:
The God of the Sea
Has been washed up here.
Ugly women,
Cover him with dust.
So,
I left the village
And went to the shore
Of the village
Of Yeiresp.
With much respect
Yeiresp bowed low
And said thus:
The God of the Sea
Has made a visit with us.
Villagers,
Bring to the God
Sake,
Sacred wooden symbols,
Dried fish, to present.
Thus,
I returned
With loads of good gifts
And good foods
To my babies,
Those gifts pleased
My kinsmen also.
Thus,
One day,
I caught and sent
An ill whale having diarrhoea
To the shore
Of the Pahlyonna’s village;
And also sent
A fat whale
To the shore
Of the Yeiresp’s village.
Pahlyonna ate with his villagers
The ill whale that gave them diarrhoea,
And they all died;
Yeiresp ate with his villagers
The fat whale,
And they are living
A happy life.

II. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Yeiresp

Hol-liphna  Dream brought him this to see . . .
Hol-liphna  Sleep brought him this to see . . .
Hol-liphna  The river stretching up
Hol-liphna  In my native village;
Hol-liphna  And, going up along the river
Hol-liphna  A little swamp there was
Hol-liphna  Between hills
Hol-liphna  Visible and invisible.
Hol-liphna  By the swamp
Hol-liphna  There was a young goddess
Hol-liphna  Mowing the grass,
Hol-liphna  Singing a love song
Hol-liphna  That went:
Hol-liphna  "How would be the looks
Hol-liphna  Of Yeiresp?
Hol-liphna  Even aroong gods were
Hol-liphna Passed the whispering words
Hol-liphna About him!
Hol-liphna How do I wish
Hol-liphna To meet him
Hol-liphna Within this very day!"

. . . Just as in the dream I had seen,
There was a swamp
Between hills
Visible and invisible,
As I walked up along the river
In my native village.
By the swamp,
There was a young goddess
Mowing the grass.
Her face was radiating.
Stealthily I neared her
And covered her eyes with my hands from behind.
"Who’s this playing on me?"
"It’s Yeiresp."
"Now, listen!
I have six treasure houses on hillside
And six treasure houses down the beach.
I cook rice in a little bronze pot
And eat it from a golden bowl
And eat from a silver bowl."
"I too have
Six treasure houses on hillside
And six treasure houses down the beach.
I cook rice in a little bronze pot
And eat it from a golden bowl
And eat from a silver bowls."  
. . . We were evenly matched in wealth,
And so we were married.
Two boys and two girls we had.
A couple of them, boy and girl,
We let them live in our house.
The other couple
We let them establish a home
In the neighbouring village.
III. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Guide-Dog

Listen, my wife!
I am going to travel
On business.
So keep the house
And take care of
The sleigh dogs for me.
Leaving these words to his wife,
Our master went to travel
On business; nevertheless,
His wife gave us no food
And left us with no care.
I, though poor as I am,
Was the chief
Of all the guide-dogs.
Because we had nothing to eat,
We sometimes became swollen
Like little whales;
And, sometimes, we became so thin and wizened
As cow-parsnips, stripped and dried.
In the meanwhile,
One day,
A nice breeze blew hitherto.
This might be the day
That our master should return!
I opened my eyes with great effort.
Then, I saw
The master’s wife
Having taken out the treasures
Of the house, one after another,
Stamping over them and crushing with
And she ran away!
Before long
A big ship arrived.
Our master landed
With the boat’s oar on his shoulder.
The minute I saw him,
I passed out and didn’t know what after.
Suddenly,
I felt somebody over me
And opened my eyes with effort;
There, I saw my Master Yeiresp
Pouring into my mouth
Some medicinal drink he made.
There were a pillow and little things to dance with,
Of shaven wooden symbol
That he made for me.
So, now,
I recovered the vigor of my youth.
Thereafter,
My master
Lived the life of an even wealthier man;
And the vicious wife
Has now fallen
Completely.
TWO SONGS THAT WERE SUNG AND DANCED BY GODDESS ERMINE

I.

While governing the lower heaven,
I on the other hand devoted myself to embroidery
Day in, day out.
And, one day,
There appeared a shadow upon a window
Above the higher seat;
As I looked up, there was
A great golden cup filled with Sake up to the brim,
And a pair of sticks upon the cup
Decorated with sacred shaven-wood symbols,
That sticks delivered a message
Again and again:
"Goddess of the lower heaven!
Please listen carefully to what I am going to say.
Truly speaking,
Gods and men have enjoyed big catches for long;
But, this year a severe famine hit the village
Where not a hare is found in mountains
And not even a small fish is caught in streams.
Even nuts
And berries disappeared.
Men are being thrown to starvation,
With the weaker ones to die first.
Though I entreated various gods for help,
None of them would even see to it.
Goddess!
Pray take pity on men and their land
And help them get settled with foods.
Then,
We’ll make you the highest God
And worship you forever.
Since, now, there’s scarcity of food,
We could have made but this little of Sake
To offer to you.
But, when there’ll be plenty of food brought
In the village, we’ll have more and in abundance
To offer to you.
Please do save us,
. . . So, the chief of the village Urashbitts sent me to you."
Such was told by the pair of sticks;
And, as I looked round,
Alas!
The village was under famine, indeed!
All men and women were suffering black as peat!
So I arose,
Taking up the golden cup;
And raising it high and low;
I poured Sake therefrom into six containers,
Each container being placed upon the window pane;
Then, I went fluttering down to the earth.
Two or three days later
The aroma of good Sake filled up the whole house.
There
All the gods, heavy or otherwise,
Were invited to the feast,
And, I, all dressed up, busied myself among them
Entertaining them with Sake.
Gods were very high-spirited
And chattered over reverend hearsays.
Meanwhile,
The chief wren, in the excess of mirth,
Ran out of the house and brought back
A salmon roe in his mouth;
Dancing around the Sake containers,
He dropped the salmon roe he had held in his mouth
Into a container.
Gods were amused with his doings,
And their claps and laughters
Were nearly to shake the sphere.
And next
Ran out the chief wild-jay
Who also brought back acorn
And, while dancing around the Sake containers,
Dropped the acorn into one.
Gods’ laughter and claps
Arose even more than before
As if almost cracking the house.
Then, Uncle Crow
With his mischievous eyes
Ran out of the house.
Brought back a large turd
And started dancing with it around the containers.
Gods looked rather displeased with it and became speechless.
So astounded
I was struggling with myself to say a word
When the turd was dropped into a container.
Gods arose all at once,
Beat that Uncle Crow to death,
Took him out to the rubbish heap
And poured off the Sake with turd
Thus emptying the container.
Since there was scarcity of Sake
In the Heaven,
Gods were much disappointed to lose any of it:
Some were furious and still some, railing against
Wren and wild-jay for their doings, said
That unless they had started such a thing
At the first place, Crow wouldn’t have brought turd.
Having many quick-tempered gods among them,
They finally all got up
And fell into a great tumult
Stamping and kicking and beating!
Astounded I ran up and down
Trying hard to quiet them down,
But no one would have listened to me.
As the tumult went on even worse,
I pleaded Captain Shrew, saying,
"We can do nothing at all now to calm them down. 
Please go and call God Snipe. 
Quickly, quickly!"

So Captain Shrew dashed out of the house.

(Monologue by the Shrew)

As the errand of Goddess Ermine,
I ran and ran through in the grass
Sometimes bumping my nose right into the grass roots,
Jumping and turning a somersault,
Lying faint as long as a potful of food might have been cooked . . .
Or sometimes even longer,
And passing away twice and thrice;
Thus, after taking so long a time,
I finally arrived at the house of God Snipe.

As I looked into the house,
I saw God Snipe sitting
Upon the higher seat busying himself to carve
Upon the sheath of a holy sword.
Although I cleared my throat as I entered,
He didn’t turn around.

I sat at his left
And spoke out the message I carried;
Then he finally looked up
And opened his mouth with a smile upon his lips:
"Huntchpijak. 
When in this village, wha-ha-ha, 
Good things come, 
They forget me, Huntchpijak. 
When in this village, wha-ha-ha, 
Things nuisance come, 
They remember me! 
Great as they are, 
They feast and have fun among themselves
And their conducts thereafter 
Are indeed extravagant! 
Such is no business of mine!"

After saying such words over his shoulder,
He went right back to his carving.
However hard I might have cried and asked, 
He feigned ignorance.
So I gave up and started back the same way, 
Bumping my nose right into the grass roots, 
And passing away twice and thrice; 
When, after a long time, 
I finally returned, 
I heard abruptly on my way 
The gods dancing, 
Laughing 
And clapping 
Just as before, long, long ago. 
Thinking it strange I ran into the house, 
And, lo and behold, God Snipe had long ago come here 
Disguised as a party guest; 
And it was after he had already pacified the gods’ wrath, 
With his eloquent speech. 
So very cordially the Goddess thanked me. 
"The gods’ argument was all quieted down 
Because of you!"
While she said so, 
Other gods also thanked for my deed 
And served me plentiful of good Sake. 
So, I too became very cheerful. 
(Back to the Goddess’ story) 
Thus, the gods in great argument 
Were brought down to a peaceful resolution; 
And, I to my relief, got up with a smile upon my lips 
And began to dance moving up and down across the room. 
My white silk garment bore the golden butterfly embroidered 
And little bells tied here and there tinkled 
Leaving lovely sound behind as I moved about. 
My beautiful singing voice was like a thunder 
Echoing towards the Heaven, so I flutterd myself. 
The gods were utterly marvelled 
And threw yells in unison: hay! hay! 
I sang in my song: 
"The god of deer!
Please send your deer.
The god of fish!
Please send your fish.
Famine attacked the man’s land,
And the chief of the village Urashbitts
Came to me for help.
Sake you are having were brought for this purpose."
The god of deer and the god of fish were listening
Intensively with their eyes closed;
But in the meantime the god of deer began to talk:
"The truth is this:
Now, Goddess, please listen to me!
Once man had reverential heart
And worshipped whatever animals he killed.
At that time, our fellow animals returned
To Heaven happily with ornated arrows
And sacred tree decorations.
However,
Man’s mind grew degraded and began to use
Rotten wood to kill animals;
So they now return to me weeping and crying
Over rotten woods.
This is no joke to me,
And I cut off the supply of deer
To punish man for such deeds."
As soon as the god of deer finished,
The god of fish opened his eyes widely and began:
"Indeed, the god of deer spoke the truth!
Once man used a special stick to kill our fellow fish,
And therefore all the fish returned
To me in high spirits with brand new sticks . . .
But, now, he kills with rotten woods or stones
So, they return to me with these woods and stones,
Weeping and crying over those woods and stones.
That’s no joke to me, either,
And therefore I cut off the supply of fish!"
The god of fish told this.
Now, I knew the very cause of the famine.
The god of deer and the god of fish
Had good reasons to be angry.
But, I thought that men folks perhaps wouldn’t
Have known of this when they treated deer and fish
Badly, and, that if we could let them know
Of these circumstances,
They would certainly correct their wrong deeds;
So, dancing ever beautifully, I said:
"The god of deer!
The god of fish!
I know you are angry at man’s deeds,
But, if you keep going on like this
To make man suffer
And finally to bring all the men to death,
Then, none of us, gods, will have the Sake
And sacred tree-decorations
Which they make and present to us.
What a sad thing would it be!
If you rather warn them and thereafter forgive them,
All of us, gods, will be thanked
By them and given sacred tree-decorations
And Sake in plenty!
Pray, send deer down!
Send fish down, pray!"
As I asked smiling gently,
Other gods too said in unison:
"Goddess says it right!
If the whole village is suffering of famine
And every one of the villagers dies
Of starvation, the gods who were sent down
To the man’s land will resent us,
Up in their Heaven.
So, prithee, think it again
And send deer down,
Send fish down. Wouldn’t you?"
So, the god of deer and the god of fish seemed
Convinced; and, as if saying to themselves,
"True!", they got up.
The god of deer opened the doors of six deer-houses
From which dashed out in great flocks--
Male deer
Female deer
And young ones;
They passed through the gate of the Heaven,
Stood upon woods and fields of the man's land,
And raced away happily.
The god of fish also opened the doors of six fish-halls,
From that dashed out in great schools--
Salmons, trouts
Amemasu and so on;
They passed through the gate of the Heaven,
Arrived down in the river and sea of the man's land!
And swam around, laughing and merry.
Looking them down, with the gods,
At the gate of the Heaven,
I felt relieved now
And thanked the god of deer and the god of fish deeply.
Thereafter
I again devoted myself to embroidery day after day,
And, one day, there appeared a shadow upon a window
Above the higher seat;
As I looked up, again there was
A great golden cup filled with Sake up to the brim
And a pair of sticks over the cup
Decorated with sacred shaven-wood symbols,
That sticks delivered a message
Again and again:
"Goddess of the lower heaven!
The village was saved by your favour!
Though but in a small amount,
I would send to you here Sake
And sacred wood decorations.
. . . So, the chief of the village Urashbitts says."
Such words were delivered by the pair of sticks;
So I arose,
Took up the golden cup,
And, raising it high and low,
Poured the Sake therefrom into six containers.
And, lo and behold, from the upper window
Came sacred wood decoration, one after another
That stood in lines on the treasure dais;
After this came grains
And dried fish glittering like gold
In large amount so that they made big piles.
I rejoiced
And with all the gods and goddesses invited
Held even grander feast.
At the end and when the gods were to leave,
I gave them, gods, sacred wood decorations,
Twos or threes to each, and gave them, goddesses,
The grains and Sake-cakes;
They bowed and thanked me many times and went home.
Thereafter,
I communicated with the Urashbitts people
Through dreams and taught them
Not to kill fish and animals in rough manners;
Then, the Urashbitts men conveyed my message-via-dreams
On to their fellows and people of other villages;
And, thus, they treated deer with decorated sacred wood
And killed fish with the beautifully made sticks
All the time from then on.
Therefore, deer returned to their god happily
With the decorated sacred arrows and wood symbols;
And fish returned to their god happily
With beautiful sticks.
The god of deer and the god of fish were so pleased
To see this and sent away many more deer and fish;
Therefore, there was now no short of food
At the village. The chief of the village Urashbitts
Thanked me very deeply and, as having promised,
Made me the highest god and worshipped me so
With Sake,
Sacred wood decoration,
Grains,
And whatever the gods and goddesses wish to have;
Thus, he would worship me,
And then I am living also very happily.
--So told Goddess of Ermine, as governing the lower heaven.

II.

Day in
Day out
I spent devoting myself to embroidery.
As tired,
I turned round and looked down the land of mankind,
Where,
In the spring time,
Many young girls go to the mountains
To dig out the roots of lilies and garlic,
Calling after one another
And laughing at one another;
Their voices mingle
Into merriment:
In the autumn
Again young lasses and lads
Go to the mountains
To pick grapes and pears,
Singing and laughing;
And their voices echo through the fields and hills
With happiness.
One day,
I left home as I wished so,
Came down and stood at the heart
Of the mountains behind the man’s land,
By the water source
There was a golden spruce
Whose upper branches swung high towards the sky;
Whose lower branches spread wide covering the earth.
I then sat on an upper branch
And took my silk garment off.
My naked skin beamed like the sun.
I remained thus upon the tree all day long,
Viewing with a little smile upon my lips
The lasses and lads along the stream
Or in the fields and hills,
Talking to each other
And picking berries and nuts.
How refreshing
And delightful it was!
But, soon,
As the twilight approached,
They went back to the village.
Then, but all of sudden,
Somebody’s hands reached my breast from behind
And grabbed the two lumps of my flesh
Like two bowls swelling upon my breast,
As if hooked with an anchor;
That I had never expected to happen.
So frightened,
I suddenly produced the thunder
And flew up in the sky and ran into the house.
As I turned round,
There was a mound in the thick mist
Thunder-struck,
Stretching long and stiff,
Under the spruce.
Way up from the Heaven
I looked many times trying to see through
The thing in the mist;
But, after twice or thrice,
I nearly caught a man-like form--yet,
I finally could not see through the true form.
After spending as long as an age,
I finally caught his true sight;
And at that moment my eyes were electrified.
Where had he been hiding his true form from people
So as not to be talked of by them?
But, now, he lay unconscious--
The green youth with beard not yet fully grown--
Dressed in the embroidered golden silk garments,
With the golden obi-sash tied around his waist,
His face seen beneath the golden helmet,
As beautiful and brilliant as God Himself;
He was holding a quiver fastened with rope
On his back and the bow of cherry-tree skin,
In his hand firmly.
Then I tried to seek for his ancestry
But I couldn’t get hold of it at all.
Feeling strange,
I but stared at him.
In the meantime,
He came to himself
And as soon as getting up, he walked away in fury.
As my eyes followed him all the way,
He went passing the man’s land,
Heading towards a summit, behind the man’s land,
And running into a golden house on the very top
Of the summit.
As soon as running into the golden house,
He untied his sash,
Threw his body upon the bed
In front of the altar,
And stayed in bed sulked,
With his mouth buried in the neckband of his garment
And his legs tangling with the garment.
Yet, in his mind he seemed to wonder
Where did the woman he met today come from;
And he seemed to be seeking for my birth.
But, I hung mist before his eyes using divine power
And hid my true birth as much as possible.
"Never shall I get up until I meet that woman again."
Thus, he stayed in bed eating nothing.
On my side, too,
I sought for his birth
Thinking who he may be, a man or a god,
Fully using my power that went
Through to the ancestry, seeking upon
Its second ancestor, third ancestor:
But never it was known.
Since I had grown into a mature woman,
I sought for my husband
Among various gods
But found not a single one I liked.
Even among the gods
Was found none so beautiful
As the young man who was now lying on bed here
Deeply in love with me.
Up ‘til this time
I had never let any, even the same female,
Touch the lumps of the flesh on my breast,
Even in the darkest of dark nights;
But, then, in the middle of a day,
Why had I undressed like that
Upon the tree!
So he, man or god, approached stealthily
From behind by divine power surpassing mine,
And, grabbed suddenly the lumps of my flesh on breast.
To think of such made me feel ashamed;
But, on the other hand, it made me pine for him.
So I too stayed on bed eating nothing
But kept watching the young man below on the earth.
As days went by,
The young man grew thin--
Now looking as though the empty night-cloth was spread on bed.
As I saw him like this,
I grew more and more worried.
God or man,
He loved me and grew withered;
So should he die like this,
I could not be excused--
I as a goddess to protect the lower heaven.
Thus, one day,
I thought of some trick
And got my weak body up;
I got two bamboo leaves and crumpled them in my hand;
Then, they became two big golden butterflies.
These golden butterflies went out--
Flying together and going separately--
Down to the man's land, to the summit behind
And finally to the golden house on the summit;
Going into the house.
They kept flying together and apart,
Over the altar and over the young man, shinningly,
The young man must have felt them;
He put his head up abruptly
And watched the butterflies flying,
With a smile upon his lips,
His eyes following the butterflies as they moved about.
But after a while,
There fell two bamboo leaves upon his bed.
Then he lost colour
And covered himself up completely with his garments,
In spite of the pain he had held for me,
This time determining to die.
To watch him thus was painful for me now,
So I packed all the finest, embroidered clothes
In the golden suitcase;
Fastened silver pot and golden pot
Over the suitcase;
Put many packs of medicine in the breast of kimono;
And after locking all the windows and doors,
I then left with the packed suitcase for the earth.
Down on the earth I went and entered
That his golden house from the window
Going through quietly as wind;
And sat on his right without noise.
The divinely beautiful young man
Who, though lying as if dead,
Had such a sharp ear
That he sensed a faintest sound of my existense;
He must have peeped at me through the sleeve of his garment.
I raked the fire
And with the silver pot in hand
Went out this time from the door.
Outside the house,
There were silver well and golden well:
At the silver well was
A silver dipper;
And at the golden well was
A golden dipper.
I dipped out the water from the silver well
Into the silver pot, with the silver dipper;
Then I put the pot over the fire
And cooked miraculous medicine.
Then, as I put my face up and looked about the room,
At a cloth rack on the righthand comer I caught
A sight: there was flaring flame from the skirt
Of a thick outer garment woven with elm-tree skin,
Whose neckband was covered with wide gold
Flashing like lightning.
Also, there was a celebrated sword, so brilliant
As coming out of crystal ice,
Encased in the sheath whose end was flaring,
And hung with a golden helmet.
Then, for the first time,
It became clear to me,
That this beautiful young man
Was really the hero, God Ainurackle
With such a shock as to know his true birth,
I all of sudden became enervated
And sank like a drooped leaf of grass.
Being such a great one as to be called Ainurackle,
How marvelously divine he was!
Although I had thought that
I only could have veiled my birth in mist
To hide away from his eyes;
He had done the same.
For the first time now
I knew of his true birth.
He too seemed to know of mine now,
As he got up on his bed
That looked nearly empty with a thin undergarment on.
Then he advanced towards the fireplace--and,
Quite unexpectedly held me across the fireplace
And let me sit by him. Imagining him to be weak,
I was amazed at his strongness.
The divinely beautiful young man laughed a good laugh
And said this:
"Now, Goddess.
Your divine power even won over mine!
Although I am an off-spring of a brave hero,
I had held affection towards you
Whose birth I could not find;
And thus worn out
Almost to death,
But, fortunately
You have come and saved me.
I thank you, indeed!
After all, we were destined
To meet soon or later!
Even if you say no word,
I know now so well
What’s in your mind.
Therefore,
Let’s be a man and wife from now on
And together protect the man’s land
As to make gods and men happy!"
So speaking, he embraced me,
And calling me,
"My dear! my heart!",
He held my head with his hands and shook.
Thus,
My heart was suddenly softened
And so weeping I apologized
And at the same time confessed how painfully
I had fallen for affection towards him;
Thus I returned my greetings
By shaking with hands his knees and arms.
Then I served a cupful of miraculous medicine;
That he drank as many cups
As could regain his strength.
So
I made soup with dried fish crumpled
And torn into pieces and that we drank.
From then on--
Looking up to him, the God, as my husband,
I have been living safe and sound.
--So told Goddess of Ermine.
TWO SONGS BY SHELLFISH

I. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Stream Shellfish

Our screech shook
The surface of a swamp.
Suddenly,
From the shoreside
Came cracking the sound of withered trees.
And, there approached
The young Okikirimuy accompanied
By many dogs.
He said
As he saw us:
"What are these ugly things
Screaming for?"
Then,
He tread upon us
And went away to the hillside.
When, again
We were crying hard,
Came cracking the sound of withered trees
Far from the shoreside.
And, there approached
Sammahykur accompanied
By many dogs.
As he saw us--
"What is this?
The God of Stream Shellfish!
You are crying like this on the shore . . ."
Saying thus,
He picked me
And placed me in the river.
When I got home,
Father and mother were sick in bed
Because I was missing for long.
But, as I returned to them safely,
They were at last relieved and got out of bed.
Then, as we made rice soup and ate it,
We were all revived.
We brought famine to the village of Okikirimuy;
We sent plentiful of deer and salmon to the village of Sammahykur.
--So told a Stream Shellfish.

II. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Swamp Shellfish

A long-lasting drought
Dried up
Even our swamp!
We were now
All going to die!
"Wish somebody would bring water
And would save us!
Water, water!"
As we were screaming this,
There, far from the shoreside,
Came a woman with a basket on her back.
As we were crying,
She said, walking by and
Looking down at us:
"Crazy swamp shellfish!
Hateful swamp shellfish!
What’s so sad about,
To make you cry loud?"
So saying,
She trampled down--
She kicked us
And she smashed us, the shell and all;
Then, she went away to the hillside.
"Ah, pain!
What a pain!
Water, water!"
As we were screaming,
There, far from the shoreside,
Came another woman with a basket on her back.
"How we wish
Somebody would bring water
And would save us!
Ah, pain,
What a pain!
Water, water!"
As we were crying,
This maiden,
As beautiful as a goddess,
Came and said, looking at us:
"What a pity!
Under such heat
Even the swamp bed was dried up!
You are wanting water, aren’t you?
What is this?
Seems somebody has stamped over you . . ."
Saying thus,
She picked us all
And enclosed in the butterbur leaves
And placed in a clear water,
In the cold, clear water,
We were all revived
And gained strength.
So, thereafter,
We searched for the identities
Of the two women who came across:
The first one,
A hateful, vicious woman,
Who smashed us,
Was the young sister of Summayunkur;
And the young gentle maiden
Who pitied and saved us
Was the young sister of Okikirimuy.
The sister of Summayunkur was so hateful
That we blighted all her millet;
On the contrary, we took a good care of the millets
That belonged to the sister of Okikirimuy.
At the harvest season,
The sister of Okikirimuy
Gathered crops in great abundance;
As she realized that we had done this,
She picked the millet's ears with the shell
Of swamp shellfish,
Each year thereafter,
Women took it habit to pick the millet’s ears
With the shell of swamp shellfish.
--So told a Swamp Shellfish.
FOUR MÄRCHEN-LIKE SONGS

I. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Otter

One day
I went down a stream
Swimming and bathing--
Down to where Summayunkur draws water;
Then, I saw the Summayunkur’s sister,
Beautiful as a goddess,
Coming hitherto with a pail in one hand
And with a bunch of reed maces in the other.
Then, protruding my head
From the river-bank, I said:
"Have you father?
Have you mother?"
The maiden was frightened at this
And looked around with goggling eyes;
But, when she found me,
Her face flared up quickly
With anger.
"What a blockhead!
Ugly blockhead!
You, fooling of me!
Come, growling dogs, come!"
As she said,
Gigantic dogs
Ran to her
And clattered their fangs at me.
I was startled at them,
Dived into the water to the bottom,
And, along the river bed,
Came further down the stream--
Down to where Okikirimuy draws water;
Then, protruding my head
From the river-bank,
I saw the Okikirimuy's sister,
Beautiful as a goddess,
Coming hitherto with a bunch of reed maces in a hand
Then, I said to her:
"Have you father?
Have you mother?"
The maiden was frightened at this
And looked around with goggling eyes;
But, when she found me,
Her face flared up quickly
With anger.
"What a blockhead!
Ugly blockhead!
You, fooling of me!
Come, growling dogs, come!"
As she said,
Gigantic dogs ran to her.
Being now amused at the thought of
What happened a short while ago,
I dived into the river
And was about to run away
When the dogs, whom I never imagined to do this,
Ran after me down to the river bed
Clattering their fangs--
Jumped at me--
Dragged me up on the shore
Then, bit and crunched all my head
And my body into pieces--
Into pieces they chewed . . .,
And I don't know
What happened thereafter.
When I came to myself,
I was sitting between
The ears of a big otter.
Knowing both
Summayunkur
And Okikirimuy
Had no fathers
And no mothers,
I poked fun at them;
So, by return
I was killed by the Okikirimuy’s dogs
And died in this foolish way--
Ugly death I died.
So, you, otters,
Do not ever fool others.
--So told an Otter the consequences of his doings.

II. Song That Was Sung and Danced by the Son of Okikirimuy

One day
I went up along a stream
And there I met a young demon.
Beautiful appearance, beautiful face,
He ever had;
Clothed in black, and--
Having in his hand a little bow
And arrow of walnut tree,
He smiled at me and said:
"Son of Okikirimuy! Let us play a game!
Now, I shall smash fish altogether."
Then,
Taking his little bow of walnut
And pulling a little arrow of walnut across the bow,
He turned towards the riverhead and shot!
From the water source flowed
Muddy water of walnut tree
That met salmon swimming upstream.
Crying and weeping they turned
And went their way back.
The young demon
Smiled at this.
As I got angry at this,
I put my little silver arrow
Across the silver bow I carried about;
When I shot it off towards the riverhead,
Silvery water, crystal water flowed
Out of the water source,
And the weeping salmon were revived
With this clear water
And swam up again,
Whooping up
With noise of splashes.
The young demon flared up
Showing his lost temper upon his face.
"Indeed!
If you do such a thing against me,
I shall then root out the deer!"
So he said
And put his little arrow of walnut
Across his little bow of walnut;
As the arrow flew towards the sky,
There occurred over the forest on the hill
The wind of walnut, the whirlwind
That caught up male deer
And female deer--
Grouping them separately and
Carrying them way up to the deep sky.
The demon smiled at this.
The anger came up in me
And, then, with my little silver arrow
And my little bow, I shot towards the deer;
There occurred from the sky up above
Silvery wind, cool wind
That carried down male deer
And female deer
Grouping them separately
Down to the forest.
Then,
The young demon again flared up
Showing his lost temper upon his face.
"What an impertinence!
If you do such a thing,
Then let’s compete . . ."
So saying, he unclothed.
I too got only in a thin undergarment;
And we wrestled.
We wrestled with each other.
Wrestling--holding and
Being held by each other--
I was astounded at his strength.
However,
Gradually
I used all my strength
In hip and arms
And with it, I carried the demon on my shoulders
To the rocky mountain,
To the top of the rocky mountain
Where I threw him down.
The sound of bang
Echoed for some while--
And followed dead silence.
As I came back
To the stream,
I heard in the stream
Jolly voices of salmon
Laughing and playing
And splashing in their swimming;
And in the forest
The voices of male deer
And female deer laughing
And playing spread all over,
And hither and thither
They were seen eating grass quietly.
I was, too, relieved
And came back to home.
--So told the son of Okikirimuy of his heroic deed.

III. Song That Was Sung and Danced by the Son of a Wolf God

One day
I was roving down the shore
As feeling depressed;
And there came a little man.
Then--
As he walked down stream,
There I went and stood in his way;
And as he walked up stream.
There I went and stood in his way.
Repeating thus,
We went down six times,
And we went up six times
When the little man said with anger on his face:
"Peet-tzen-tzen, peet-tzen-tzen.
This monkey, a rascal!
stop it unless
You can give me
The old name of this point!"
So I laughed and answered:
"The names, old and new, for this point--
Who doesn’t know them?
In the old days, the mountain prospered
And this point was called, ‘The Point Where Appears God’;
Now, the prosperity declined
And it is called ‘The Point Where Is Gohei’.
"Then, this little man said:
"Peet-tzen-tzen, peet-tzen-tzen.
This monkey!
If you say so,
Give me the names, old and new, of this stream!"
So I answered:
"The names, old and new, for this stream,
Who cannot tell?
Once upon a time,
When this river prospered,
It was called ‘The River Innundated’;
Now as the water decreased,
It is called ‘The River Flowing Slowly’.
"Then, this little man said:
"Peet-tzen-tzen, peet-tzen-tzen.
As you say so,
Why don’t we guess each other’s birth!"
So, hearing this,
I said:
"Who wouldn't know your birth?
Long time ago when Okikirimuy went to the mountain
And built a hunting cot,
The fireplace he made of an alder
That however was dried up
By the heat of the fire: therefore--
As Okikirimuy stood on one edge,
The other raised.
Okikirimuy got angry at this
And threw the wooden frame out
Into the river.
So, the frame went on floating
Along the stream of the river
Into the sea--afloating
Here and there, and up and down over the waves.
Seeing such, the gods thought
It was a downright sin to leave it floating
And floating like that until it would rot--
They thought such as sin
As it was made by Okikirimuy himself;
And, therefore, the gods made
A little fish out of the wooden frame
And named after that 'fireside' fish;
But, this 'fireside' fish
Still doesn't know his own birth
And, so roaming about in the shape of man.
The very 'fireside' fish you are!"
Then, the little man listening to this
Changed his countenance.
"Peet-tzen-tzen, peet-tzen-tzen!
You
Are the son of a little wolf!"
Saying such, the little man jumped
Into the sea
With a splash.
As I looked,
A reddish fish
With tail and fin wagging
Went away far, far off the shore.
--So told the son of Wolf God of his heroic deed.

IV. Song That Was Sung and Danced by Frog

One day
I was jumping about in the field,
Until suddenly I found a house.
As I went up to the door and peeped,
There I saw a young man sitting
On stool before the beautiful altar
And carving upon the sheath of a sword
With all his heart and soul.
There I sat upon the threshold
With a mischievous thought.
"Toaro-ro, hanrock, hanrock!"
So I sang.
Then
The young man looked at me smiling,
With the sword held up.
"Is it your story-song?
Or, your drinking-song?
Let me hear more of it."
As he said thus,
I was pleased and sang again:
"Toaro-ro, hanrock, hanrock!"
And, the young man said:
"Is it your story-song?
Or, your drinking-song?
Let me hear it more closely."
So I was pleased and jumped into the house
And further on to the fireplace and . . .
"Toaro-ro, hanrock, hanrock!"
So I sang
And again the man said:
"Is it
Your story-song?
Or, drinking-song?
Let me hear it more closely."
I was indeed pleased and jumped across
Over the other side of the fireplace and . . .
"Toaro-ro, hanrock, hanrock!"
As I sang,
The young man stood up abruptly,
Grabbed a big, half-burned log,
And threw it upon me;
My arms were all paralysed
And I don’t know what came after.
When I came to myself,
There on a comer of the yard
Was a dead frog with the swollen belly;
And I was sitting between the ears.
As I looked closely,
The house that I thought quite ordinary
Was the house of Okikirimuy, a strong, god-like man.
Not having known that the man was Okikirimuy himself,
I made fool of him.
Now
I died a shameful death,
A dreadful death, like this.
Fellows,
Never you play on men.
--Thus saying, the frog with swollen belly died.
SONG THAT WAS SUNG AND DANCED BY OYNAKAMUY AND HIS WIFE

I am truly a fair lady
Married to a chief-in-true-sense,
Eat meals so fine as God’s,
Am dressed so beautifully,
And have thus lived a life so happy.
In a certain year
I bore a baby boy.
As he was so beautiful as God,
We both loved him extremely.
My husband in particular
Loved him and held him day and night,
Kissing and
Calling his name in gentle tone.
He let me have a hold of the baby
Only when I had to feed him from my breast.
Such we raised him,
And, now, he began to run about
And to speak words;
And we adored him ever more.
One day,
My husband was all prepared to go hunting,
Putting on his back a quiver with rope
Holding in his hand a bow made of cherrytree;
And out he ran towards the mountain.
Thereafter I put myself in embroidery,
Until the sun was near to set,
When I heard footsteps of many a man.
Then I saw some one entering the house;
And lo! they must be the Japanese
I never dreamed of facing in actual life
Though many rumours of them I heard!
All wearing wadded silk garments
And tying on their heads things like crow’s bill,
They were carrying swords around their waists.
They opened their mouths and said in unison:
"Look, woman of Ainu!
Ainu lady!
Listen to us carefully.
We are what you folks call ‘Japanese’
And have come here from our Lord’s province to work.
We brought our ship to all over
This Ainu land and observed many,
Many Ainu folks,
Men and wornen, who are so very gentle,
Loving and being loved.
From what we hear,
There upon the hill of Sicilymuka upland of Ainu
Live a couple with one child
And the beauty of the wife is beyond comparison
Among so many beautiful Ainu women.
The master of our ship heard of this woman
And expressed his wish to meet her.
Not only that,
He wishes to possess her as his wife.
But, as the woman having been a married one
And mother to a child, such of his wish could not be
Attained; he has been disconsolated and almost
Sick with his body weakened.
But, today he got refreshed suddenly and said
In a great smile,
‘I hear that woman’s husband’s gone hunting
In the mountain! Fellows! Go to her
And tell her everything. If she consents to become
My wife, then tell her
I shall send for her husband and child
Rice, miso and whatever needed by loads
On the Ainu boats, by two and by three.
If she refuses,
Then abduct her and bring her by force.
If only we take her as far as to our Lord’s province
She can no longer run away from us.
And there shall be nothing
For me to fear.
Bring that woman by all means!
Then, I shall reward you in plenty.
I know you want money, don’t you?’
So we rejoiced
And landed here.
Now, woman, what do you say?
You wouldn’t say no?
You certainly will be better off to have the shipmaster
As husband than an Ainu man . . ."
Just when I heard these words,
I lost myself in fury,
And grabbed the hook hanging over the fire before me
And swaying the rope before those Japanese shouted
All kinds of abuses.
"Abominable men!
How disgusting!
Go to the devil, you cursed Japanese!
I heard so far that those called Japanese
And their lords have good souls,
But what vicious hearts you have!
Even if I had had no husband
And no child,
Never I wish to have the ship master as my husband.
We call ourselves Ainu,
But, never are we those ordinary Ainu,
The kind you can think of.
Nay I say:
Who wants to go to such a ship master!
Get away and better tell him to get away
The shore quickly!
Or else,
All your lives will be out off
By this vicious thought of such a man.
If my husband hears even the talk of
This villianous plot,
He won't leave the matter as it is
Even if it occurs in any lord's province.
I would rather
You make no more mess.
Run away with no fuss
Before things get worse!"
So saying, I requested these Japanese to go away quickly.
But, they only laughed at me
And said,
"You, woman of Ainu!
You dare to say such hard words against us!
What's your husband?
Just one of those Ainus!
What to be afraid of him?
A single stroke of sword will finish him off.
Now, any word you may utter
Won't help you.
If you still resist, you'll see what we'll do!"
Then, they, in twos and in threes, grabbed my arms.
My little child was then playing alone
But, as he heard me arguing with these men,
He got scared and rushed to me
Crying and calling, "Mother!"
Although I wished to hold him on my back,
I could do nothing
For my arms were caught by the men, in twos and in threes.
They tried to drag me towards the door.
I resisted standing firmly and bending my body.
In a fit of anger
I with all my strength struggled
Kicking and stamping.
They were now all in a rage
And made an attack on me.
By this a really hateful man
Grabbed my little child,
Swang him up
And flung him down on the fireside.
Poor child!
He collapsed there
Like a log!
You can't imagine how vexed I was
To see it, unable to do anything for him!
Now, things before me became blurred
In two-fold and in three-fald.
And, my head turned round and round.
Hateful Japanese
Despised me as but any woman
And killed my poor dear child
Who had known nothing of the sort,
In such a cruel manner. They killed
The child whom my husband and I loved so dearly . . .
"Ah, how I wish my husband would come back quickly!"
So thinking in mind.
I still kicked and bit
Resisting against those hateful men;
But, there were many against me
And they finally dragged me out
And dragging me went to the shore.
There was a little boat upon the sea,
Onto which I was carried;
Thereafter these men took the oars
With which they twisted and pushed down the water.
The boat sailed fast like a dead leaf upon the water,
'Til there upon the open sea
Was seen a famous "benzaisen" ship,
That I had thought small
But was like a mountain lying now before me.
As we approached the "benzaisen" ship,
These villains shouted at the ship.
Then,
A long ladder was let down from the ship
And the villains climbed up carrying me in their arms.
Up on the deck.
Many more Japanese men walked about.
They took me to the master's cabin
Of this famous "benzaisen" ship.
However I might have struggled and wrestled,  
All the strength of a woman went for naught.  
"Ah, well!  
Whatever they say,  
I won’t answer and will pretend to be ignorant.  
I shall leave all to the God’s will!"  
As I said this to myself,  
I closed my eyes  
And did but cry out loudly,  
"My dear child!  
My heart!"  
The notorious master of this "benzaisen" ship said:  
"Poor thing,  
Woman of the Ainu!  
How roughly you fellows have treated her!  
She looks terribly tired.  
And, what about the child?  
For she cries like this calling the child’s name!"  
As he said,  
The villains gave the detailed account  
And said,  
"We killed the child."

Then, the master got very angry at them:  
"How did you ever kill the child.  
Ainu folks love women and children  
So dearly and take so good care of them,  
That, if the chief finds his wife stolen  
And moreover his child killed by you,  
He won’t remain quiet.  
Ainu people are God-possessed.  
God guards them; so by augury  
They soon can find the ruffians  
And must then bring the negotiation to our Lord."  
I could see him now being apparently  
Afraid and repentant.  
"What shall I do?  
Is she but an ordinary woman of Ainu?  
How were the things in the house?"
As the master asked,
They, the villains, told him as they saw
That the house, from inside to outside,
Was splendidly grand.
Since he heard of it,
He became ever more anxious.
"It is too late now
To take this woman back.
I wish you hadn't killed the child!"
When he said this,
The men said laughing unanimously,
"The master of the 'benzaisen' is a coward!
Chicken-hearted!
Merely an Ainu man!
What's so terrifying about?
Being so cowardly,
How can you make love?
The very moment this Ainu woman opens her eyes
And looks at you,
She will fall in love with you."
As I heard their words and contemptuous laugh
I lost my head with rage!
"Hateful Japanese!
Cursed Japanese!
You insult me as a mere woman,
An ordinary woman of Ainus;
And never you admit your own wrong deeds.
If you go on like this,
You shall have before too long
A good return, I warn you.
I don't care if I should die.
I only wish to go to my child.
I with only my force can't avenge you;
But, after my soul leaves my body and I
Thus become Goddess,
I shall come back to you to repay!"
Then, I stood up and ran out of the cabin;
But, when I was about to jump into the sea,
Many men caught me again
And tied me on to the big center mast.
So, this time, I couldn’t move an inch.
"Damnation!
Ah me!
What wrong have I ever done?
So as to suffer like this?
What’s my husband doing now?
How will he feel
When he comes down from the mountain
And sees that dreadful sight of our beloved child?
How can he find who had done this?"
These my thoughts
Pushed my sorrow out with an endless flood of tears.
And I did but cry and cry.
In the meantime,
The sound of waves parted by my ears,
As this big "benzaisen" ship moved forward;
And, now I felt we were already far into the open sea.
(Follows the husband’s story.)
Although I had come up in the mountain for hunting,
Strangely enough
All the lairs were empty,
Where I would usually find bears.
Wherever might they go?
Why nothing today?
Little foxes,
Badgers, squirrels, hares
Sciuroids, and even birds . . .
None of them had shown up!
Since I hadn’t hunted for some time,
I really wanted something good and new for dinner.
"How my wife
And my child
Had rejoiced when they saw me off
Going to mountain for hunting!
How are they now waiting for me!
At least I wish to catch even a small hare."
When I thought these things,
I walked over hills, in two-folds and in three-folds,
But met no game at all.
In the meantime,
I somehow began to feel a flutter inside me
And suddenly became anxious about my wife and child.
Therefore, I turned around
As quickly as fish turns
And headed towards home
Leaping and running.
And, lo, what was the matter?
It was about the time
When my wife would kindle the fire to prepare supper;
But, I saw no smoke coming up from my house!
Nor did I smell burning wood!
When I finally came home, only the shadow
Was there where my wife had been sitting and sewing;
The sewing materials scattered here and there,
And all over.
Besides that
And to my utmost surprise,
There was my child dead like a log by the fireplace;
Sad cloud was hanging over his corpse,
In two-folds and in three-folds.
Just at this scene,
My heart turned black with swelling rage
Like the burned bottom of a scallop.
"Who the devil did this mess in my absence
Only to hurt my heart and make me grieve?
Why today?"
I dashed out of the house
And looked around carefully.
There were footprints of men jumbled;
And I realized
This was done not by a few;
Many men must have grabbed my wife’s hands
And dragged her out;
Then, the child clung to her in terror;
And, they took him away from his mother and threw him
Down on the floor by fireside.
It became all so clear.
It appeared that my wife had been kidnapped
To somewhere in distance.
Tracing their footprints,
I came down from the hill to the seashore.
The footprints disappeared there;
This led me to guess that they had taken her in a boat.
Now, I was so outraged and all in fury,
My fingers cracked; two purple veins
And three purple veins stood upon my face;
And my eyes set and glared like two little stars.
I drew out my sword
And stood on one foot drawn far back
And on the other stepped forward;
I looked firmly over the sword
With one eye goggling
And the other tight-closed.
Then,
As I correctly guessed,
I saw vaguely a thing like a ship
Far upon the sea,
That seemed to be moving away.
I put my sword back
And jumped up towards clouds in the sky;
Then transforming into a bird with wings,
I flew throughout the clouds in two-layers and in three-layers.
I flew the boundary between the foreign sea
And my island’s sea where,
As I looked down,
The big "benzaisen" ship was afloating to and fro,
In fear, but running in full speed.
The waves ahead crashed and splashed.
Now again I became wind and went down,
And, lo, what was this!
My wife was tied upon the mast!
She must have cried as long as an age,
As her face was smeared with snivels
And her eyes all swollen.
It must be that she had fought against men
With all her power,
As her clothes were torn in pieces hanging about her.
And her face looked pale and wearied.
Breathing or no
Her head fell back for long
Being deadly tired.
Seeing such state of her
My sympathy increased and spilled out;
Tears came up on my eyes
And blurred the things around.
After I turned about the mast,
I cut the rope into pieces with sword
And took her to embrace.
Frightened, she opened her eyes; but,
When she caught sight of my face,
Her heart’s rejoice was brought upon her face
To most extraordinary extent, crying
"My husband!"
And she held me with all her strength.
Then, I said,
"Quick! Get back to home first!"
She sprang into the sky out of my arms
Like a twig,
And headed towards home,
Accompanied by thunder,
Leaving behind roaring sound.
Now, I was relieved
And went into the water
Where, with my sword,
I shaved the bottom of the ship
And with a big stone
Hammered it. Calling the name of gods
Second and third, of our ancestry in mind
And praying for gods, I repeatedly shaved and hammered.
With all my strength in hip and arms.
Finally, on the bottom of the ship was a great big hole.
Therefore, I came up on the surface
Breathed a long breath of relief
And flew up high into air as a wind, looking down the ship.
Now it appeared the water flowed into the ship;
Men, yelling and screaming,
Climbed upon the deck.
I saw a mob of Japanese in helter-skelter
Being pale as seaweed soaked in water for long.
"What is the matter?
The sea is peacefully calm,
The weather is so beautiful,
And we have been sailing fine going through no danger;
Yet why? How can the ship
Be dilapidated like this?"
Everyone complained and shouted.
"Hay!
The Ainu woman’s gone!
Fastened so very tightly,
How could she get herself freed?
Uah!
The rope’s out into this small a piece!
There must be somebody taking her away!"
So they said to one another.
"Master, come and see, quick!"
When they said,
A man rushed up,
A man distinguishingly handsome among them all,
Who wore fine silk garments.
They said abusing unanimously;
"By the ill-willed command of our master,
We had kidnapped the Ainu woman.
She had said all sorts of things then,
But, we simply thought her an ordinary woman
And only laughed her away.
But, after all,
We shall have to meet our deaths in this shameful way,
Ugly way.
You’re to get all the blames, Master!"
Hearing them shout like this,
I, for the first time, realized how my wife
Had been taken away.
I was being even more infuriated.
And finally the words of anger slipped out of my mouth:
"You, cursed Japanese!
You never know, you bastards,
How you would be punished
For your ill-deeds.
Despising me as a mere Ainu,
You have done such a vicious, unforgivable thing.
Damnation!
Hateful bunch of bastards!
I have come just to pay you back!
After you all die, you’ll know who I am!"
When I finished,
The master and all the men
Were even more surprised
And, looking up towards the sky,
Looked at the mist that enclosed me.
The master got stiffened with terror,
Fell flat on his knees, and--
Rubbing his head against the floor, said:
"The young God of Ainu!
The young Chief of Ainu!
Whatever you said is correct.
Indeed, I was the one, the worst of all.
Pray save us.
I can repay you with whatever you demand."
He bowed twenty times, thirty times; repeating the words
And praying. But, I simply refused.
"No!
Never!
It is too late!
My dearest son was killed.
And my wife was treated almost as badly.
I cannot bring you back to life!"
While I was saying this,
The ship was being flooded rapidly
And finally sank into the sea.
The hateful Japanese struggled in the water,
For a while, appearing and disappearing upon the surface
Of the water; but, soon, all drowned
And disappeared into the sea.
I felt good at heart
And returned to home on divine wind.
My wife had, too, just arrived,
A moment earlier.
In spite of her weary body,
She was crying a bitter cry, shrieking,
"My beloved son! My heart!"
Holding the dead body of my son in my arms,
I prayed gods, calling for the names of gods,
Second and third, of our ancestry.
My voice of prayer sounded clear and far
Like a cuckoo singing.
In some time,
The face of my son gained colour.
His toes and eye-lashes wiggled.
Then, he opened his eyes wide.
"Daddy! Mommy!"
Calling us,
He rose with his hands against the floor.
Together we took him on our laps
And cried out the cry of joy
Overjoyed by his return.
Then I also cried for joy
And celebrated my wife’s safe return.
My wife told me
All the detailed account
Of how the hateful Japanese had come in
And what they had said and done.
I also told her
In every detail
How I cut a big hole on the ship of those
Hateful Japanese and sank them all into the sea.
My wife said,
"It serves them right!
It serves them right!"
Thus saying,
She danced with joy by the fireside.
Free from any fear,
We are living as usual
Loving our son even more.
And watching over the Ainu folks as ever.
--Thus told Oynakamuy and his wife their experience.
SONG THAT WAS SUNG AND DANCED BY YOUNG LORD OF MATSUMAE

I had father
And mother
And an elder brother
And two sisters, elder and younger.
My father served his Lord;
Since he not only excelled at reading and writing,
He was also expert at abacuses
And attained a high skill of swordsmanship;
He was favoured by his Lord.
He used to say to us, sons, preaching;
"Listen, sons.
Girls can be good and useful
As long as they are acquainted with the skills of
Needle and cookery.
But, boys are different:
They are promised to serve their lords
When grown up.
So, since their boyhood
They must endeavour
To achieve a good swordsmanship
As well as reading, writing and abacuses."
Therefore, we, brothers,
Learned and studied hard
From early days--
Day after day,
Year after year.
My brother learned quickly
Whatever taught,
He not only attained the skills of reading, writing,
And abacus; but also could he perform a sword-dance
Nimbly as wind. But, woe’s me!
I learned nothing of whatever taught!
Not of reading and writing,
Not of abacuses
And not even of sword.
Father took it seriously
And tried everything he could think of to teach me.
However hard he might have tried,
I never learned.
Finally he lost his temper
And hit me with an abacus--
With a sword smote me.
Mother and sisters
Took pity on me
And cried for me behind things.
Brother too sympathized with me
And taught me in various ways,
When without father’s supervision.
And, I myself tried
Whatever the best I could,
Endeavouring days and nights.
But, did the God forsake me?
Never I learned!
Then, one day,
Father to me said
With tears flowing:
"Listen, son,
Listen to me carefully.
You have fine body and countenance,
Far superior to others.
Yet, I don’t know why you can’t learn things.
It is a disgrace to us
To have such useless one as you with us
Forever . . . and,
It is unpardonable a thing before the Lord.
Therefore,
Under the circumstance,
I, as your father, may have to commit ‘harakiri’
For apology to the Lord; or else,
You are to leave this house.
There’s no other way we can take.
You may choose whichever way you like;
So, think it over and answer me."
When father finished his words,
I thought:
"What my father said is quite true.
Because of my existence,
All my family must feel awkward all the time;
Above this,
I can’t bear to think
Of my causing father to commit ‘harakiri’
And of throwing everyone into a great sorrow.
Only if I get away from this house,
Things will go well for all.
Besides, if I work hard
At the risk of my life
In a faraway country,
Even I may learn
Something worthwhile."
When I answered expressing my thought,
Father and mother,
Brother and sisters,
All cried and wept.
Weeping so, mother put medicine in a small bag;
Father brought a long sword and a short sword,
Put both swords upon my waist,
And put a little golden hat upon my head.
Then--
At parting,
We had a little Sake;
And mother came to the gate to see me off.
Thus I left my home and village;
And walking aimlessly and sobbing,
I came to the shore of a large unknown river.
There by the shore
A lad of my age was sitting with his package
Whose countenance was as beautiful as the God’s.
I wondered where he came from.
He also had a long sword
And a short sword on him.
As he saw me,
He bowed at me smilingly
As if he had known me already.
So I too bowed.
Then, he took something out of his front pocket
And gave it to me.
As I looked,
It was a long letter folded.
I thought:
"I had to leave my home
And village because I couldn’t read
And now I am on the way to travel.
Whoever is this fellow
Who’s making a fool of me
By showing me this letter to read!"
When such thought came up to me, I was enraged.
And suddenly pulled out my long sword
And gave a fierce thrust to him.
Before the tip of my sword reached him
At a hard thrust, he jumped as light as zephyr
And landed across this wide river like a bird.
I too jumped running after him and holding
My sword, in such manner as had never occurred to me.
And I landed near him as lightly as the wind.
He drew his long sword
And gaw a fierce thrust of his sword upon me.
As I would have dared not die in vain,
I jumped as light as zephyr
And landed across the river, back to this side
Just like a bird,
Before his sword reached me.
After I leapt back,
He slashed his sword down in vain
As deep as going into six layers of earth.
Thereafter he ran again after me,
Thrusting his sword.
As such
We fought with our swords
Tens of times.
There was no end.
So, the lad talked to me smiling:
"Say, the young Lord of Matsumae,
Wait a moment,
And listen to me, please."
So saying, he came near me
And, taking my hands smilingly,
He began to talk:
"You are the second son of a retainer to the Lord.
Who lives at the center of Matsumae;
And I am the last one of another retainer
Who lives at the far east of Matsumae.
Just as you were,
I was no good at fencing, reading and writing,
And abacus since my childhood
And I never learned these properly.
For this reason
I was turned out and thus came here.
This big river is called Sanpitarrha,
And, I met the God of Sanpitarrha
Who told me this story:
A word came to this God of Sanpitarrha
From the God’s domain,
That reads:
There is in man’s domain
A village called Apta.
There is a a big lake
That is somewhat dangerous.
Therefore,
A god to guard the lake was to be chosen;
But all gods are reluctant to take the duty.
So, at last, it was decided to choose one
From among men to do this big task.
As the God of Sanpitarrha lived long in men’s domain
And must’ve been well informed of the circumstances,
The Gods would have appointed him to choose a man. They thus wish him to choose two strong, Honest and wise young men: One to guard at the center and The other, at the upper area of the lake of Apta. So-- The God of Sanpitarrha Looked over the men’s land From one edge to the other, And finally chose you and me. But, If I tell you the truth, The God made us appear by the divine power The good-for-nothing to others’ eyes and so acted Towards us as to be thrown out of our home, Because he was afraid That our parents and family Might have refused to send us away. The reason why we had to fight here Was, to tell you the truth, That the God of Sanpitarrha made us do Because he wanted to see our true skills. Here is the divine Sake for us to drink, In two bottles, Sent from the god’s domain. First of all, read this!" Thus he handed me the letter again. Was his word so true! True or otherwise, I received it half in doubt. Unfolding long And unfolding short, I read: To my astonishment, I could read every single word Which I had never been able to understand; And that was but why I had been despised, scorned And finally been turned out of home!
Now I could read easily
And the detailed account of the circumstances was
Written in it. Then, with that young Lord,
I started up towards the lake of Apta.
After we walked
For six days
And six nights,
We came to the lake.
And, sitting there,
We drank the divine Sake together.
Then,
Strangely enough,
Suddenly we gained the divine power
And were able to see everything there
In our land
And in the Gods’ domain,
As I looked toward my village,
I could see my parents
And all the family clearly.
After I had left them,
They seemed to be crying all the time.
I threw the empty Sake bottle
Toward the middle of the lake.
Then,
There was a little mountain instantly raised.
The young Lord who stood by me
Also threw his bottle
Toward the upper lake.
Then,
There was a little mountain instantly raised.
As I went to my mountain,
There was a golden house
Shining brilliantly.
There were in the house
Full of beautiful treasures and above all
A beautiful girl, my wife-to-be,
Herself dressed in many silk kimonos
And, embroidering by the fire, was awaiting me.
As I looked at my fellow young man,
He was in the same condition as I was.
Then,
As having married the girl,
I let my parents at home know
All the circumstances in detail
In the form of dream
And eased their souls.
Then, together with that other young man,
I have since been guarding the lake of Apta.
--Thus told the young Lord of Matsumae, now a God of the Lake of Apta.