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NUMBER 18

PAPERS READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY  
OCTOBER 27, 1931





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MINUTES OF A PUBLIC MEETING  
OF THE  
HAWAIIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OCTOBER 27, 1931

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The meeting was held in the lecture room of the Library of Hawaii, Bishop H. B. Restarick presiding. About sixty members and guests were present to hear the program which had been arranged.

The first number was a translation, by Mr. Soga, editor of the *Nippu Jiji*, of a Japanese account of the first recorded visit of shipwrecked Japanese to Hawaii (in 1806). The paper was read by Mrs. Restarick and called forth an interesting discussion. President Restarick drew attention to Delano's nearly contemporary account of the same incident.

Mr. John F. G. Stokes presented a paper in which he indicated the probable Japanese origin of the iron found among the Hawaiians at the time of Captain Cook's first visit to the Islands.

Dr. T. T. Waterman of the University of Hawaii then gave a very entertaining talk upon certain similarities between the Hawaiian language and the language of the Yurok Indians of northern California. The discussion which followed was participated in by Dr. P. H. Buck, Mr. Kenneth P. Emory, Mr. Stokes, and several others.

The meeting was then adjourned.

R. S. KUYKENDALL,  
Secretary.

## IRON WITH THE EARLY HAWAIIANS

---

By JOHN F. G. STOKES

(Formerly Curator of Polynesian Ethnology and Curator-in-charge  
of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii.)

In this paper will be discussed some points regarding the early Hawaiians' knowledge of iron, and the probable source of the iron found by Captain Cook's officers in the hands of the Hawaiians.

### *Iron widely known in Polynesia*

Among practically all the Polynesians, as recorded by the European voyagers, iron was immediately recognized and was by far the most desired commodity which the foreigners could supply. In Hawaii, according to native tradition (13, p. 83) the desire for it caused a raid on Captain Cook's vessel as soon as he arrived, and led to the death of the thief.

### *Knowledge not of common origin*

This apparent widespread knowledge of iron might imply a common and ancient Polynesian acquaintance with the metal. Any such conclusion, however, might be very erroneous because the terms applied by the various islanders to the substance are too greatly at variance. If anything, the variation in terms would imply that the knowledge of iron reached the different islanders from sources independent of each other. In addition, since some of the terms for "iron" also are applied to "foreigners", the indications are that the various Polynesians learned of iron while in Polynesia, either directly through foreigners, or by means of wreckage from foreign ships.

### *Did not produce iron*

In any case, the early Polynesians were not iron producers, because, valuing the metal as they did, they apparently were unable to obtain it by smelting. That iron in condition for recovery



by such means exists in the high islands inhabited by the Polynesians may be assumed from the presence of the ferruginous soils to be there observed.

For an indication of this, we need go no further than this island of Oahu. About a decade ago, the local chemist Mr. Thos. F. Sedgwick smelted a small bowl of his garden soil from Kaimuki, and recovered from it enough metallic iron to make a knife or small adze blade. This exhibit of iron (with the slag and soil examples) is on view at the Bishop Museum (No. 475).

The Hawaiians also shaped nodules of iron ore for such crude implements as sinkers, examples of which are also preserved (Bishop Museum, No. 9498 etc). This iron ore would probably be easier to reduce than the ferruginous soil.

A fair conclusion would be that the Hawaiians (and inferentially the other Polynesians) were not iron smelters, and their acquaintance with iron was limited to the finished material made by other peoples.

#### *Probably heard of smelting*

Some objection might be raised to the preceding conclusion, first on account of other applications of the Hawaiian term for iron, and secondly by the fact that the Hawaiians seemed to be able to work and reshape the iron they acquired.

According to Andrews (1), the ancient Hawaiian term for iron was *meki*, the present term *hao* being modern. However, *meki*, as a substantive, was also applied to "(2) A nail; an iron spike used for pinning. (3) A secret pit or pitfall in the mountains into which, if one fell, he never came out."

The suggestion of a mine shaft, as in No. 3, is of particular interest in view of the applications of *meki* as an adjective, namely: "Used with *lua*, pit, as an intensive. Hence, *lua meki*, an unseen (secret) bottomless pit; he *lua meki ia aina meki*, full of *deep pits* is that land of *pits*. Note—Hawaiians couple the idea of *lua meki* with that of *lua ahi* as they read *lua ahi* in the Bible." *Lua ahi* is a fire pit or volcano, and in the biblical application, as Andrews points out, is "the pit of fire" or "hell" of the old missionaries.

We may thus have in the Hawaiian term *meki*, an ancient term for iron, a term for a deep pit and a reference to a pit of fire, or, in other words, references to the metal, its mining

and its smelting, the last two being only vaguely understood by the Hawaiians. Obviously the production of iron had been explained to the Hawaiians by some foreigners. Furthermore, the explanation was probably made after the cessation of communication between the Hawaiians and other Polynesians because the term *meki*, with its associations, was limited within Polynesia to the Hawaiian Islands.

It may also be assumed that the information was imparted before the discovery of the islands by Captain Cook, whose officers were informed on arrival at Kauai that the term for iron was *meti*, the Kauai pronunciation of *meki*.

In brief, between about 1300 A. D. (the time assumed for the last communication between Hawaii and the southern Polynesians) and 1778 when Captain Cook arrived, the Hawaiians had communication with non-Polynesian peoples who made them acquainted with iron or with its existence.

#### *Hawaiians could work iron*

King (5, III, 131) noted the rapidity with which the Hawaiians learned to shape the iron they received: "The eager curiosity, with which they attended the armourer's forge, and the many expedients they have invented, even before we left the islands, for working the iron they had procured from us into such forms as were best adapted for their purpose, were strong proofs of docility and ingenuity." Gilbert (9, p. 29) was equally enthusiastic and wrote that the Hawaiians were the only natives "we met with that ever attempted to work iron themselves into different forms, agreeable to their own fancy; which from seeing our armourers on board they accomplished neater than could possibly be imagined by heating and beating it with a stone." These accounts were written by Cook's officers after they had had opportunities of comparing the Hawaiians not only with the other Polynesians, but with the natives of the north-west coast of America.

Perhaps King and Gilbert attributed too much to the influence of their armourer or blacksmith. It seems more likely that the Hawaiians, in studying the work at the forge, were endeavoring to improve a technic they had previously acquired. Cook's vessels were at Kauai only a few days in January 1778. When they

returned thirteen months later, it was observed by Samwell (12) and Edgar (6) that the natives had made a dagger from an iron bolt which had been drifted ashore with wreckage five months before. Edgar remarked: "It was very well beat out into the form of their own wooden daggers." The Hawaiian wooden dagger, as then described, was pointed at one end and, at the other, perforated for a cord for attachment to the wrist. Edgar continued: "we saw a great many daggers beat out of our long spike nails we left here last year."

Before these native-made daggers were seen on Kauai, many of the officers had observed at Maui (November, 1778) two iron objects, referred to as follows: "Two long pieces of iron, made like our skewers, well worn" (6); "Skewers or daggers" (12); "Iron spikes which were supposed to be daggers" (11); "Long spikes of iron, with a string through a hole at one end to fasten it to the wrist, the iron was wore very bright . . ." (10). The officers made enquiries regarding the source of these skewers or daggers, and getting no answer they could comprehend, concluded that the articles must have come from earlier visitors. Obviously they were some of the daggers made from the spike nails from Cook's vessels and no further mention of them was made apparently when the officers later came to a realization of the Hawaiians' skill described in the preceding paragraphs.

Such relative excellence of workmanship performed with such iron-working tools as could be improvised, must have required more than a few days of observation for its acquirement. It is not even known how long the ships' forges were in operation on the first visit to Kauai, if at all. It is more than probable that the Hawaiians had been working flotsam iron for many generations before the arrival of Captain Cook. It may have been an acquirement from their ability to shape stone implements, or, more probably the information was received from castaways.

#### *Iron observed in Hawaiian hands*

Cook's officers observed in native hands five pieces of iron which it was thought did not come from Cook's ships. Of these, the two iron skewers or daggers seen at Maui have, I believe, been correctly identified above as ship spike nails reshaped by the Hawaiian people.

A third piece was the native-made dagger made from a ship's bolt which was floated in wreckage to Kauai about October, 1778. King (5, III, 97), who did not see it, was told that the iron was of lighter color and the bolt differently shaped to what the English were accustomed to.

The other two pieces were observed on the first visit of the ships to Kauai in January, 1778. They were described as: "A piece of hoop iron, about two inches long, fitted into a wooden handle" and, an edged tool "which our people guessed to be made of the point of a broad-sword." (5, II, 240).

#### *Source of the iron*

The so-called sword point caused much interest both in regard to its probable source and its identification. Burney (3) recorded "a piece of a sword . . . from an island to the S. E." Bayly (2) noted that there were "several little bits of iron" which the natives had secured from the island of Oahu (to E. S. E.). Captain Clerke's record (Jan. 23, 1778) is very important: "This morning one of the midshipmen purchased of the natives a piece of iron lashed into a handle for a cutting instrument; it seems to me a piece of the blade of a cutlass; it has by no means the appearance of a modern acquisition; it looks to have been a good deal used and long in its present state; the midshipman . . . demanded of the man where he got it; the Indian pointed away to the S. E. ward, where he says there is an island called Tai, from whence it came."

In the light of the foregoing observations, it might appear that the implement reached Kauai from the island of Oahu. However, on the second visit of the ships (1779), Bayly (2) ascertained that all the iron seen in the hands of the Kauai natives had floated ashore in wreckage, a statement which Edgar (6) also made on his second visit after a close enquiry of one of the chiefs.

Referring back to the midshipman's information, it may be noted that there is no island named Tai to the south-east of Waimea, Kauai, where the matter was discussed, and since *tai* is the Kauai term for "sea" and the current sweeps up to Waimea from the south-east, it is evident that the implement was floated in from the sea.

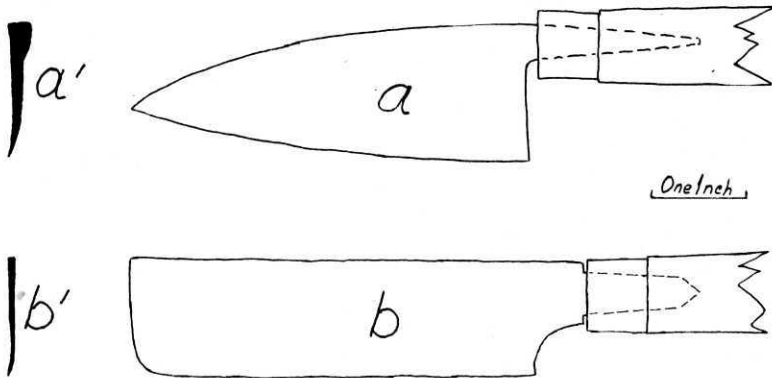


FIGURE 1. Japanese Knives

(Profiles are outlined, cross-sections of blades black, and handles in part. The blade is hafted by insertion of tang or tenon into the end of handle. Latter, of wood, is reinforced at joining with a metal ferrule—a modern method supplanting the older lashing of fiber. The examples are unused.)

*a, a'*. Fish knife, *debabocho*. Always carried on Japanese sampans. Used for slicing and chopping. Note the heavy back and stoutness of the blade as shown in the cross-section *a'*.

*b, b'*. Fish and vegetable knife, *sisimibocho* and *usubabocho* or *nakilibocho*. Generally carried on Japanese sampans. Note, *b'*, the thinness of the blade and the fairly even sides, together with, *b*, the parallelism of the margins.

*Flotsam iron in Hawaii*

Thus, so far as is known, the iron observed in the Hawaiian islands when Cook's vessels arrived, was iron brought by means of the currents. For its source, there are many possibilities, because, sweeping through the Hawaiian group are currents which may bring material from any part of the Northern Pacific Ocean.

Examination of the flotsam on the windward beaches of these islands reveals principally logs from the north-west coast of America and floats from Japan. After comparing and considering the possibilities in 1778, it would soon be decided that Japan was the more likely source of the iron.

*Japanese knives*

The adherence of our local Japanese to their native implements, in place of American goods, is a matter of some interest. In the present enquiry it has been a distinct aid, because thereby we may purchase in Honolulu implements made by the Japanese themselves. Also, it might be mentioned, the conservatism maintained is an indication that the form of the implements has not changed for centuries.

In figure 1, may be seen an outline and cross-section of the *debabocho* or Japanese fish-knife, an implement which I am informed is present on every sampan and in every Japanese household. These knives vary much in size. The blades of those examined ran from 4 to 13 inches in length. There is but little variation however in the proportions. I observed the same type in 1900, and the form is undoubtedly early Japanese.

The *debabocho* illustrated has a ferrule on the handle for reinforcement where the tang is driven into the wood. This is a recent development because formerly there was a fiber binding at this point, as, apparently, on the object Clerke described.

*Not a sword-point*

The resemblance of the end of a broad-sword or cutlass to the *debabocho* blade is remarkable: Outlines, in profile, convex and converging in one direction to a point; cross-section thick, particularly so at the back.

Cook's officers gave no hint as to how the point of a broad-

sword could conveniently be “lashed *into* a handle” for use as an edged tool. Swords generally break straight across. The article seen must have had, for attachment, a tang which was concealed or rendered inconspicuous by the binding. These men, “accustomed to the sword”, would naturally think first in terms of weapons. It is certain they were unfamiliar with Japanese domestic utensils because Japan had then been isolated from foreigners for more than a century.

On the basis of present information, I have no hesitation in offering as identification of the edged tool which Cook recorded some of his “people guessed to be made of the point of a broad-sword”, a *debabocho* or Japanese fish-knife which had reached the Hawaiian Islands with wreckage.

#### *Other Japanese Knives*

If the identification offered be acceptable, I may add another. In every Japanese household and generally on the sampans is another type of knife used as a fish-slicer and for vegetables. It is termed by the Japanese according to its uses, namely: *sisimibocho* and *usubabocho* or *nakilibocho*. An outline of the blade is given in figure 1, *b*. Note the thinness of the blade and the parallelism of the sides and margins. There is yet another Japanese domestic knife with a blade as thin and even as the last, but much longer and narrower. Hoop iron is thin, and of even width and thickness. Is it not possible that the knife thought by Cook to be of hoop-iron with a blade “about two inches long, fitted into a wooden handle” was a worn and broken portion of one of these Japanese thin knives? The character of being “fitted *into* a wooden handle” was and is the usual method of affixing Japanese blades, as shown by the present knives as well as in choppers, saws and other implements. Such a method of attachment is not Hawaiian. If the hoop-iron knife of Cook’s identification were a Japanese knife of the *sisimibocho* type, as I suggest, it was probably seen by Cook in its original handle.

Two of the enquiries thus far followed, namely, with regard to the Hawaiian term *meki* and the Hawaiian knowledge of iron working, have suggested a contact with people from outside the Polynesian area. The third enquiry has pointed to flotsam iron

from Japan. Might the term *meki* and the other information have also come from Japan? A complete answer to this question would require further research.

However, we have the interesting record of a Japanese sampan drifting with survivors to Waialua in 1832 (7, p. 296). Fornander (8, p. 81) states that there were two such arrivals between 1778 and 1880. Why not arrivals before 1778? Being fishermen and sailors, these Japanese might know how to work iron, but not to smelt it, hence, it is probable, such knowledge by the Hawaiians and its limitations.

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## JAPANESE ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST RECORDED VISIT OF SHIPWRECKED JAPANESE TO HAWAII

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Translated by Y. Soga from a chapter entitled, "Accounts of the Drifting of Zenmatsu Hirahara of Geishu (Hiroshima)," in "Ikoku Hyoryu Kidanshu" or "Tales of Castaways to Foreign Lands," a book compiled by Kendo Ishii and published in Tokyo in 1927.

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### *From Iwakuni (Yamaguchi) to Yedo (Tokyo)*

Zenmatsu Hirahara, 35 years old, was a native of the Toyota district of the village of Kitani of Hiroshima Prefecture. He became a castaway in the fourth year of Bunka (1807), according to the lunar calendar, and was later returned to Nagasaki on a Dutch ship.

As a result of a restriction against the entrance of Christian converts into the country at this time, Zenmatsu was asked to step on a picture of Christ [crucifix?] upon his return to Nagasaki, after having drifted about in foreign lands, as a proof that he was not a Christian. He was also required to list all goods which he took out of the country and everything he brought back. In addition to this, he had to give a full account of his stay in the various countries he visited.

In his account, Zenmatsu revealed that three years before this time a boat belonging to Kichiemon Dempoya and known as the "Inawaka Maru" set sail for Yedo under command of Captain Ginzo and six members of the crew, including Sadagoro, Kasanji, Matsujiro, Wasazo and Zenmatsu of the Kitani village, and Bunyemon of Yamaguchi Prefecture, leaving Iwakuni (Yamaguchi) on November 27, 1805, with stock feed and matting as principal freight.

The ship reached Port Anori of Ise on December 7 and she waited here for favorable winds. On December 12, she left this port and called at Teppozu in Yedo on December 21, unloading her cargo here. Getting paid for the freight transportation, she left Yedo on December 27, and arrived in Kanagawa that evening.

Remaining in Kanagawa for a few days, she sailed for Uraga on January 1, 1806, leaving the latter port that same day and reaching a point off Shimoda on January 5. Kasanji, one of the crew, had taken ill in the meantime and a man named Sojiro of Iwakuni who was in Shimoda at the time was employed.

The ship sailed from Shimoda on January 6 and her voyage back to Ise was greatly aided by an East wind. At noon on January 6, rain began to fall and the wind suddenly started to blow from the opposite direction. The sea became stormy, and all those on board the ship worked hard to fight the rough weather but they were forced to lower the ship's sails for safety's sake. They were kept busy bailing out the water which entered the ship.

The same West wind continued the following day. Some of the ship's paraphernalia were washed overboard in the storm. All prayed for safety. A written oracle told them that only by cutting the masts of the ship could they survive the storm, and so they did.

The high wind continued and the ship became water-logged. All just about gave up hope and they clipped off their hair in despair. They drifted for 70 odd days until sometime in March. They collected rain water for drinking purposes. They lived on boiled rice for a while and were without food for twenty days. All were tired and hoped only for a glimpse of land.

While drifting in this way, a swordfish landed from somewhere on board the ship one day like a gift of God, and they ate it. They took the needles which they had on board ship to repair torn sails and converted them into fish hooks. With parts of the swordfish as bait, they succeeded in hooking two yellow-tails and the eight members of the crew lived on this for a while.

#### *Rescue by an American ship*

On the morning of March 20, the men sighted a ship resembling a large Dutch vessel. All on board yelled at the top of their voices for help.

The ship heeded to the call for help and lowered a boat and the castaways boarded the rescue ship. The rescued men noticed that the rescuers had red hair and that the color of their eyes was light, this being the first time that they had seen such men.

The men received a note from the ship's captain written in strange characters. It was later translated for them by a Dutchman, as follows:

"These Japanese men were wrecked at 'Narudokyusto' in America. They were helpless and so we rescued them." This note was signed by a Captain "Yahoka."

There were 32 men on board the rescue ship which was known by the name of Moku or Waheemoku. The rescued men were given boiled rice, beef, pork, a little salt, bread, something resembling tea, which is believed to be coffee, for food. They observed that there were three holidays every month, when "chicken stuffed with bread" were eaten.

#### *Four Months in Oahu*

After sailing for several days, the ship reached Oahu on April 28. The men landed on May 5 and turned over to the native officials, the ship setting sail immediately.

The eight survivors noticed that the people on Oahu, both men and women, were almost bald. The complexion of the natives was dark, although the women tended to be a little fairer than the men. They were tall and wore no clothing except for a loin cloth made of paper. All were barefooted and there was apparently no distinction in dress between the ruling class and their followers.

They noticed no cereals under cultivation. The natives neither possessed pot nor kettle and employed a strange method of cooking. A hole was dug in the ground and stones which were placed in this opening were burned until red hot when water was poured over and potatoes were placed there became cooked by a steaming effect. The natives ate the same sort of meal every day. Some strange species of fish, beef, and pork were eaten. They also saw the people eating dogs.

The houses were made of grass, without walls or doors. The people slept on the ground over which was placed a paper covering. They sometimes shared their sleeping quarters with their dogs.

For two days the rescued castaways lived in the native grass huts. On the third day, a man who appeared to be the head of the village came to them with ten men, who were later joined by

200 others, some carrying lumber. Within two days, these men built a grass hut, 24 by 30 feet in size and without walls, for the visitors. Grass was placed on the ground as well as a matting made of a material called "monai." A fence was built around the hut and two guards placed on watch.

The men saw about one thousand grass huts in the neighborhood of where they were. There were also hills surrounding them. They did not notice any irrigated land and the soil was bad, appearing like ash. No farm implements excepting very crude wooden things with which to dig the ground nor fertilizers were employed by the natives.

They didn't note any change in the climate from May to August. It was always hot. The natives did not bathe; they only swam. Among the domesticated animals on the island were the cow, pig, dog and chicken.

#### *From Oahu to Macao*

During the middle of August in the third year of Bunka (1806), a "Meriken" (American) ship arrived in Oahu. It appeared that plans were afoot to ship the castaways elsewhere.

On August 15, the men were taken on board the ship, which sailed two days later. All those on board had red hair, and eyes were light, resembling the Dutch. Among the food served to them twice every day were rice, potato, beef, pork, and strange fish.

On September 30, they reached Macao. All of the men disembarked, accompanied by the ship's captain. While in Macao, they were quartered in buildings like those belonging to the Dutch. The captain asked some of the people of Macao to take care of the men but they refused. He conveyed this news to the men by means of signs made with his hands.

The castaways asked the captain to take them back to Japan. From Macao, they sailed for "Kalapa," two men, Bunyemon and Captain Ginzo, dying of illness on the way. Out of the remaining six men, Sadagoro, Kasanji and Sojiro, died on board ship while en route to Japan. On June 18, they finally reached Nagasaki. Wasazo, who had been ill, passed away shortly before the ship's arrival in Nagasaki.

Zenmatsu and Matsujiro, the only two remaining men out of

the original crew of eight men who were picked up after drifting for a long time, got off at Nagasaki, but while they were being examined, Matsujiro suddenly became insane and committed suicide by hanging three days after landing on Japanese soil.

Zenmatsu was, therefore, the only castaway, who lived to tell the tale, and his accounts have been recorded for posterity in the chapter entitled "Accounts of the Drifting of Zenmatsu Hirahara of Geishu (Hiroshima)."

Note: This is only a rough translation of the original in Japanese. Several explanations have been inserted by the translator to clear up certain passages.

DELANO'S ACCOUNT OF THE  
SHIPWRECKED JAPANESE

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Extract from: *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels . . . in the Pacific Ocean and Oriental Islands*, by Amasa Delano (Boston, 1817).

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Pages 400-401

On my arrival at Wahoo [Oahu] in 1806, I found eight Japanese, who had been taken off a wreck at sea by captain Cornelius Sole, of Providence, Rhode-Island, who was bound from China across the Pacific ocean to the coast of America. After he had passed by, and considerably to the eastward of the Japan Islands, he fell in with the wreck of a vessel that belonged to those islands. He found eight men on board, whose history will be given, after mentioning the conduct of Captain Sole . . . This generous man took the sufferers on board his vessel, the *Tabour*, and being then near the longitude of the Sandwich Islands, steered for them and landed the eight men with all their clothing and effects at Wahoo, where I found them.

He left them in the care of the king [Kamehameha I] with whom he made an agreement to take care of them and provide for their support, until something should turn up for their relief. He left one of the anchors which was taken off the wreck, forty axes, and some other articles, to compensate for their living while at this place. He also left a letter with them, describing their situation at the time he found and relieved them, and recommending them to the care and assistance of any visiter that might touch at this island. I regret very much my having mislaid the copy of this letter, as it would do the writer much honour to have it published; but let it suffice to say, that it was replete with the principles and feelings of a generous, humane disposition. I never had the satisfaction of knowing captain Sole in person, but his good deeds speak loud in the wake of his course.

When I arrived at this island, I found that the Japanese had pretty much exhausted their welcome. The king informed me that they had lived out more than the worth of what was left by captain Sole, and if something was not done for them soon by some one, he should turn them out amongst his people to get their own living.

I went to see them and after reading the letter alluded to, concluded to take them with me, either to the place of their nativity, which was the town or city of Osaca, on the island Niphon, (the principal of the Japanese group,) or to Canton. I took them on board and proceeded to sea, after which I maturely considered the danger of going to this port in the month of October, on account of its being so late in the season, that I should most probably have to encounter severe gales of wind, on a strange coast, with a ship going on the fourth year of her voyage, and very much run out in sails and rigging, and the cables worn out; that however great my inclination might be to visit Japan, and return those unfortunate sufferers to their friends and country, yet motives of prudence forbade the attempt. I therefore continued my course for China, where I arrived in safety in the month of November.

On our arrival at Canton, I was enabled to obtain a tolerably correct narrative of the Japanese, who I had with me. I ascertained that they write the same characters as the Chinese though they pronounce the language so differently that they can not understand each other; but by the assistance of a servant I had in the factory there, who was one of the natives of China, and who understood the language grammatically, I could ask them questions, and receive their answers. Some of the questions with their answers to them, I shall here insert, as they were written down at the time.

*Question.* What place did you leave last, previous to your being shipwrecked?

*Answer.* The town or city of Osaca, on the island of Niphon.

*Question.* What time did you leave it?

*Answer.* Some time last February or March, (as near as I could understand by comparing their time with ours).

*Question.* How many men were there of you on board, when you left Osaca?

*Answer.* Twenty-two,

*Question.* What happened to the other fourteen?

*Answer.* Some were washed overboard in the gale of wind in which we lost our masts, rudder, and were otherwise materially injured, and a still greater number were killed and eaten for food to save life; all of which died by *lot*, fairly drawn.

*Question.* How were you treated by captain Sole?

*Answer.* We acknowledged him as our saviour; next to God, we adore him. He not only took us away from that horrid death, which stared us in the face; but he gave us victuals, and carried us safe to land; after which he befriended and provided for us.

Many other questions were put to them, all of which they satisfactorily answered. I could discover the greatest number of favorable traits in the character of these people, of any that I ever saw. They were remarkably religious; but I could not find out exactly their tenets. . . . They kept a religious and constant care over all their actions towards each other, which convinced me that they had lived under a good government, where merit was rewarded and crimes punished.

*Pages 410-411*

After our arrival in Canton with the Japanese on board, they were visited by some of all nations, who were at that place, and many questions were asked concerning them. The Chinese seemed to wonder as much as any of the other visitors, to find men they could correspond with by letters, and still could not speak one word of their language. After much being said about them, the Dutch supercargoes offered to take charge of them, and send them to their own islands, by way of Batavia. I accordingly delivered them, and Mr. J. H. Rabinal, then chief of their factory, made me a present of five hundred dollars. They were sent to Batavia accordingly by a Chinese junk. I saw them afterwards all in good health, on my arrival at that port, which was occasioned by stress of weather. I was particularly noticed by the governor general, and other persons in that government. They made me several valuable presents, amongst which was a Japanese sword, for the kindnesses shown to those distressed islanders. They were afterwards sent to their own country, by an American ship called the Mount Vernon, Capt. Davison, of Philadelphia, and arrived safe, as I have been informed by authority I have no reason to doubt.



## COMMENTS ON THE JAPANESE NARRATIVE

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By HENRY B. RESTARICK

In 1806, when Captain Amasa Delano, of Massachusetts, arrived in Honolulu, he found eight Japanese who must have been those referred to in the article translated from the Japanese by Y. Soga. There is a discrepancy in the accounts as to the number of Japanese who left Japan in the junk from which eight men were rescued by Captain Cornelius Sole, of Rhode Island and brought by him to Honolulu.

On April 27, 1929, an article written by me, appeared in the *Star-Bulletin*, in which there was a summary of Delano's story of these Japanese, taken from his book of travels published in 1817. In that was Delano's statement, which will be seen in the full extract printed above, that the eight survivors had maintained life by eating some of their comrades.

Several Japanese came to me and objected to this statement as it appeared to them to reflect upon their countrymen. I told them that it was no uncommon thing for shipwrecked sailors, or others in dire distress, to eat human flesh in order to sustain life. I cited instances of this when American and British had eaten some of their companions, who had been chosen by lot or had died from injury or hunger.

To quote from the *Encyclopedia Americana* under "Cannibalism" the following is found: "Cannibalism has been practised by members of civilized nations from time immemorial, when in dire distress from want of food. Travelers in desert lands and shipwrecked sailors have often resorted to this method of preserving the lives of the many at the expense of the few, and perhaps as a general rule this has been done by mutual agreement to abide by the hazard of a lottery to decide who should be the victim."

It has been suggested that the Japanese account says there were only eight men in the original crew of the junk, in order to escape any reference to cannibalism, from which the Japanese shrink as much as any Europeans or Americans.

Despite any agreement among men to consent to a decision by lot as to the one who shall be killed, it is generally held to be murder and to be punishable. This may lead survivors to conceal their acts.

As to requirement of Japanese who returned to their country to tread on the crucifix (a picture of Christ) this was a political measure and did not originate as a persecution of religion. After St. Francis Xavier reached Japan in 1549, Christianity spread rapidly. In 1582 a Japanese embassy was sent to Rome where its members were required to make obeisance to the Pope. This made the Japanese authorities believe that the missionaries were emissaries of a foreign power which sought to subjugate Japan. This led to the banishment of the Roman Catholic missionaries, the persecution of Christians, and the proscription of the Christian religion. This law was not rescinded until some years after the opening of Japan by the treaty of 1858, made through Townsend Harris, the Consul General for the United States in Japan.



