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AINU FOLK-LORE¹

BY BRONISLAS PILSUDSKI

I. THE OWL

I WAS living happily in the Horokaruru² settlement, in that part of it which is near to the big forest. But then I heard that the sister of Self-brought-up-Man (Yairesupo)³ was very beautiful. Therefore I wanted to see her by my side, always sitting at my knee, nearer to the door.⁴ So I went to Self-brought-up-Man's house and sat down. Self-brought-up-Man bade me good-morning, but he never turned to speak to me. I said, "Although I am not very powerful, nevertheless I should like to see thy younger sister in my house, at my knee. That is why I have come to see thee." But Self-brought-up-Man answered, "Oh, thou scapegrace! thou art only a useless bird, a little man-owl, covered with bristly feathers,— a small owl,— and I have no idea of letting my sister marry thee." When I heard those insulting words, a mighty anger arose in my heart. I went out furious, and perched on the top of a big "inau"⁵ built at the back of the house. There I sat, full of wrath, and began to screech and to shout towards Self-brought-up-Man's house. My cries from on high fell on the women's corner.⁶ I shouted down at them from the "inau." And Self-brought-up-Man's guardian spirit, the angel (*šeremaki*),⁷ was taken ill, and Self-brought-up-Man himself nearly saw the lower world.⁸

For two days, for three days, I screeched; and at last Self-brought-up-Man said, "Little man-owl, do not be angry any more! I am no longer going to withhold my sister from thee. I shall allow thee to take my sister, and to look at her, while she shall sit at thy knee." So I kept my temper, and married the woman, and took her with me everywhere I went. Therefore I am of one blood with mankind (*entsiu*). I am only a little man-owl, but next of kin to man.

¹ The specimens of Ainu folk-lore here given were gathered among the Ainu of the Island of Saghalin. Nos. 1-3 are legendary songs (Oyna); Nos. 4-6, 11, tales (Utšaškoma); Nos. 7-10, fables (Tuita); No. 12, a poem (Hauki).

² The name of the place is often found in Ainu folk-lore. It means "the back sea."

³ The first Ainu, half god and half man,— the usual hero in all Ainu legendary tales in Saghalin. The literal meaning of the word is "the man who brought up himself."

⁴ This is the usual place of the wife in an Ainu house.

⁵ A stick or pole with shavings partly cut off and hanging down from it. It is considered to be an offering to the gods.

⁶ The women's corner in an Ainu house is the left-hand rear corner, the men's the right-hand rear corner, standing with face towards the door.

⁷ *š*, *k*, are used to express palatized *s* and *k*.

⁸ Pohna kotan ("the lower world") is the world of the dead.

2. THE OTTER

I lived at home, but tidings reached me of the death of a man who was drowned at sea. In order to hear the news, I went to the door; but I forgot my sword,¹ and went back, and then to the door again; but then I had forgotten the scabbard, and returned once more; then I forgot the hilt, so I went back again; then I forgot the belt on which the sword was to hang, and a fourth time had to return. At last I went out into the yard. The bringer of the news had gone; so I went off to the forest, on his trail. Where the river bends I waded through the water. As I walked by the side of the river, crossing the stream from one bank to the other whenever I arrived at a bend, "Muĕ tantaĭse, muĕ tsahtse tsahtse."² I saw the devil-bird sitting on a tree. He was terribly angry. "Kanitsin, kanitsin, kanitsin, halloo, little sea-otter, kanitsin, kanitsin! I want to catch Self-brought-up-Man's soul,—kanitsin, kanitsin!—but I cannot." That is what he said. Dissatisfied, I went away,— "muĕ tantaĭse, muĕ tsahtse tsahtse," walking along the river, and came to a place where two streams part. Between the two river-beds there was a huge maple-tree, with branches stretching to the east. Among these branches the evil spirits had built their house. In that house there was a big case. I prayed, and brought on a flood. The maple-tree was uprooted, and the evil spirits were carried away by the water. I took the case, carried it to the house of Self-brought-up-Man, and gave it to him. He thanked me, and gave me the "inau," and I became a new being (*kamui*). I am living happily, and am now the guardian of Self-brought-up-Man.

3. THE MAN IN THE MOON

My elder sister brought me up. Every day she went out to fetch water. She hit the pail, she struck the scoop. Once she went out and I waited for her in vain. Three nights I waited, and she came not. At last I got anxious. I built an "inau" to my grandmother the Fire, and asked her about my sister, but got no answer. Then, angry, I built an "inau" to the god of the house (*tziĕ atamba kamui*), and asked him, but he gave no answer. So I went out, full of wrath, to the river's side, and asked the river-god, but got no news. I went also to the forest and built an "inau," and asked my grandmother the Red Fir (*Picea*), but she did not know; so I asked the Siberian Silver Fir (*Abies Veitchi*), but in vain. Full of anger, I left them, and went to my grandmother the Willow-Bush Thicket, and asked her; and she said, "I am a willow-bush thicket, and fond of talking; so listen to what I shall tell thee. Thy sister went up to the moon, and got married to the Man in the Moon."

¹ When news of a man having been drowned is brought to a village, the people who bring it, as well as those who hear it, are armed with old Japanese swords.

² Sounds representing the slow marching of the otter.

I got very angry and marched away, with evil steps, back to the house. As soon as I arrived there, I took an arrow with a black feather, and another one with a white feather, and went out. First I let fly the arrow with the black feather, then the one with the white feather, and, holding the ends of the arrows with my two hands, I rose up into the air among the clouds; and there was my elder sister, who stepped out of her house smiling, and the ends of her eyebrows drooped. She was holding the hand of a little girl. I never had seen such a girl before. From her face, beams of light were darting forth. That light spread out on all sides, and struck my head. Beautiful eyes looked at me. All my bad feelings vanished. My sister said, "Why art thou angry, my boy? Dost thou not see, that, thanks to the Man in the Moon, thou wilt be able to marry this beautiful little girl?"

From that time I was in high spirits, and my anger was gone. I entered the house, and there was my divine brother-in-law sitting on an iron stool, and smiling at me amiably. I was contented and sat down. Never had I seen a man like that before. Near the corner where the "inau" to the god of the house is set, there was a high case¹ which reached to the roof; and at the women's corner there were likewise cases leaning on beams. In the middle, on an iron stool, sat the divine man, and he was looking at me. He looked kindly at me, as though he might have seen me before.

Then the mistress of the house gave me to eat; and the master said, "I am a god, and I wanted to have thy sister; therefore I took her who was handling the pail and the scoop to my house. There I married her, and we are living very happily. Take my child now, and marry her, though she be miserable, then wilt thou at least have somebody to fetch thy water."

Since that time I have been related to the Man in the Moon. He married my elder sister, and they had two children, — a boy and a girl. We were powerful, and had no children, and grew old. And my elder sister had children and brought them up, and then grew old. This we heard from the birds.

4. ORIGIN OF SEAL ISLAND ("ROBIN ISLAND")

At Tokes² there lived in former years a great many Ainu people. The wife of an Ainu man happened once to be pregnant. The Ainu got angry³ and hit his wife with a thong made out of a sea-lion skin. After

¹ In cases usually set at this place the Ainu keep their treasures, — swords, arrows, bows, and quivers. According to the height of this place, people used to judge of the wealth of the inhabitants.

² Tokes (literally "the end of the lake") was an Ainu settlement situated on the Bay of Patience. It no longer exists.

³ Because the woman was only his by law: she was betrothed to him, but she had not yet lived with him.

his wrath had subsided a little, he slept at the woman's side, and was quiet again.

After this, two girls were born to him. One of them became a shaman, and her name was Saunnonnu.¹ Before this, there was no island in the sea near Siretoh.² Saunnonnu was the sea-god's daughter, and the second girl was the daughter of the land-god. But Saunnonnu was a shaman, and she pulled out of the sea for the first time an island which had not existed before.

This island comes after the one that is next to the land. It is only visited by one-year-old seals, so it had two names,—Tukara koro mosiri ("the island of the one-year-old seals") and Pompe koro mosiri (another name of the one-year-old seals). And there were lots of seals on the island and in the surrounding waters. But Saunnonnu swam to the island which she had pulled out of the sea, and lived there on one of the rocks. And her people came to the island in boats, killed many seals, loaded the boats with the dead animals, and returned to their country. In this way Saunnonnu's kinsmen lived very well.

Once it happened that some people who lived in the same village quarrelled with one another. The dispute became very hot; and some of the inhabitants got into a boat, taking along their wives with their babies in their arms. They all sailed away to the island where Saunnonnu was living, and went ashore. Saunnonnu, who had seen them come, received them all; and they never returned to the land where they used to live.

After a time, however, there were no more seals³ left on the island, only sea-lions.⁴ Those, however, also died out after a while, and there was only a lot of sea-bears;⁵ and sea-lions appear only seldom, and one at a time. Thus the old tale.

5. THE SABLE-HUNTER

I went hunting to the mountains, by my little river. I built a house, and the next day I put up an "inau" at the back of it. Then I set some snares (to catch sables), spent the night in the house, and for two days I attended to the snares. That makes three days during which time I was out hunting. Returning home, I looked at my snares, and had caught a lot of game, which astonished me a little. Very glad, I made a large bundle of them, and, looking at my tent, I saw some smoke coming out of it. Astonished, I came nearer; and when

¹ Literally, "the flower from near the sea."

² The Ainu call long tongues of land, like the Cape of Patience, "ends of the earth" (*Siretoh*). The myth is about Seal Island.

³ *Phoca*.

⁴ *Ottaria Stelleri*.

⁵ *Ottaria ursina*.

I was quite close, I heard a noise as if something were boiling. I was just wondering who could have come to my tent, and be sitting there, when, stepping in, I beheld my wife. I looked at the fire, and saw that she was cooking something while sitting on my bed. I took off my boots; and, as she asked for them, I handed them over to her, doubting in my mind whether she really was my wife. "Perhaps she wants to make me rich," I thought. When I glanced at her once more, I recognized my wife. She was sitting on the bed with a satisfied air. We spent the night in the tent, but we slept apart.

The next morning she got up, and began to go in and out of the tent, preparing the food. I rose later, and, having refreshed my face with water, I sat down to eat. After breakfast the woman said, "After I am gone, I will give thee a sign." After having uttered these words, she left me. "It is a female bear," thought I, and carved out an "inau;" then I looked up, and saw her actually turn into a bear. I was frightened, and placed the "inau" wherever she had been, and I spent the night alone.

The next morning I went out to attend to my snares. Beginning at the nearest one, I took out a lot of game from each one, especially sables. Then the time for setting snares was over, and I went out hunting during the summer, and was very lucky. I killed a great many seals, and got rich, and lived very well.¹

6. SEAL ISLAND

My grandfather had brought me up, feeding me on the flesh of sea-animals which he brought home. Thus we lived. One year, as usual, my grandfather went out to sea to kill some animals, that I might have something to eat. When he came home, late in the afternoon, he had killed no game. Then he said to me, "I have been on the island where I go every year to get game for our living, but there was not one seal on the island. I heard their roaring, though, far out at sea,—the roaring of old beasts. So I thought that the old seals had wandered away from our island to another place. It is a long time since the island that has fed us for so long has been crowded with seals. Now there is not one animal left there; so I came back without killing anything." This is what my grandfather said.

From the moment I heard his words, I kept thinking how I might reach this far-off island. The thought kept me awake nights. One night, when my grandfather was sound asleep, I went down to the seashore. There I took the boat which my grandfather used for hunting, pulled it out on the water, and steered in the direction of

¹ The Ainu legend relates that the inhabitants of the forests come to the Ainu people in the shape of men or women, to help them hunt. They are called *Kimukaiku* ("people of the forest") or *oken ohkayo* ("man of the forest"), *oken mahneku* ("woman of the forest").

the other sea. Rowing with all my strength, I soon came in sight of an island far out at sea. A few more strokes of the oars brought me quite close to it, and at last I was able to land.

There were lots of seals everywhere. But from the end of the island a miserable little man appeared. He approached, and soon began to scold me. "Why did you come? Why did you come out on this island? The creatures here are much worse than elsewhere, so why did you come? It is very dangerous to stay here. Hide your boat in yonder cave in the rock, fill it with killed seals, and secrete yourself among their bodies. The awful god of the island is near, so you must hide before he sees you."

The god then arrived; and I heard him ask, "What is this boat?" And Self-brought-up-Man answered, "It is my boat."—"But the little sitting-board is fastened to it with a rope which was twisted with the left hand, and it smells like the smell of a human being," said the evil god again. "I am only half god and half man," Self-brought-up-Man answered, "so the boat may be human, and its smell is human."—"Self-brought-up-Man," said the god, "you are mighty and fearless, and so are your deeds; but to-day we shall measure our powers." This is what he said, and I heard it.

Then the evil god went home; and Self-brought-up-Man turned towards me, and said, "My child, go back to your village as quickly as you can; and when you are sailing near the head¹ of the island, carve an "inau" out of a birch-tree, and one out of an ash-tree, and put them into your boat. Carve out an "inau" from the "uita" tree,² which is the tree of the evil god, and leave it on the island. Your father was a great friend of mine in my youth, therefore I warn you not to come here again, because this land is very dangerous. When you have gone, and are in the middle of the sea, you will hear the din and roar of the battle between the god and myself, and a bloody rain will fall on your boat from above. This will be a sign that I am hurt. But you will go farther still, and again a bloody rain will fall (at the rear of your boat this time), and you will look back and see me kill that evil god. As long as you are away from home, your grandfather will be uneasy about you. He is walking to and fro on the path on which you went away, to the end of it, leaning on a big stick. He knows that you are on this island, and he is praying to me to help you. His words strike the clouds, and his prayers fall on my head from above. Direct your boat under that rainbow!"

On looking up, I saw that I was near my home, and my grandfather

¹ Usually the north or east side of a land is considered as "the head" or beginning; the south or west, as "the foot" or end.

² The "uita" tree is seldom found in the southern part of Saghalin. I never saw it, and do not know what it is like. Its leaves, soaked in water, produce a beverage which is considered to be a remedy for coughs.

was walking on the sand of the shore, leaning on a thick stick. He was looking so hard up at the sky, and was praying so fervently, that he never noticed me, though I landed just in front of him. I took two seals out of the boat, one in each hand, carried them to my grandfather, and threw them down in front of him. He was so frightened that he fell down on his back. Then only did he look at me, and he was very glad to see me. He patted me on the back and on the chest, and began to scold me gently. "What have you been doing? Why did you go to that island? If it had not been for my friend, the god Samaye,¹ I should see your body no more."

So I went home, skinned the dead animals, cut out quantities of meat, cooked it, and gave my grandfather to eat. After a time my grandfather said to me, "I am old, and my death is near. After I am dead, do not go to the island whence you have just come, because it is dangerous for you."

7. WHY FOXES' EYES SLANT, AND WHY THE HARE HAS NO TAIL

A Bear was living with a Fox. They made a sledge and dragged each other along. First the Bear dragged the Fox, but he got tired. So afterwards the Fox dragged the Bear, but he ran into a narrow place between some trees. The Bear screamed, "You are frightful! Where the trees grow so thick, do not run so fast; but where there is room enough, you may run!" This the Bear said, but the Fox did not listen to him. They soon arrived at a hill. Up they climbed to the top of it; but there the Fox upset the sledge, and the Bear rolled down and was killed. The Fox skinned him, took him home, and ate his meat. When he had finished eating, he tied a bladder to his tail.

Soon the Fox felt hungry again, so he went to the seashore to look for food. He saw a herd of reindeer; and one of them said, "Listen, Fox! Why is it that you have that funny thing tied to your tail?" Thus he asked. "Let me stand among you," said the Fox, "and you butt at me with your antlers, and you also will have such things tied to your tails." So two reindeer took the Fox between them, and tried to toss him with their antlers; but the Fox leaped away, and they only hit each other and died. The Fox skinned them, and took them home and ate their meat.

When he had eaten it all, however, he was hungry again; so he went to the seashore to look for some food. After a while he perceived a hare. The Hare said, "Man-Fox, what did you do that you have such a thing tied to your tail?"—"You could also have such a thing if you would follow my advice. Dig a hole in the ice, put your tail

¹ This is another name of Self-brought-up-Man, given by people who have lived in Yezo. It seems to be derived from the Japanese *Sama*-, an honorific term.

into the hole, and strike the snow with your fore-paws, then you will get something tied to your tail." This the Fox said; and the Hare believed, and did as he was told, but his tail froze to the ice. The Fox sprang at him; but the Hare jumped up, and tore himself loose.

The Fox, in dismay, went to the seashore, where he saw a bird sitting on the ice. He stole near the bird; but it flew away, and screamed, "You empty bag! Fat meat is good to eat. You thought you would get me!" and off it went. But the Fox was grieved to have lost his prey, and looked after it a long time.

This is why foxes' eyes slant, and the hare once had a tail, but, because of the fox's deceit, he now lacks a tail.

8. THE CROW AND THE MUSSEL

There was once an old Crow who had a daughter. This little one went to the seashore to look for something to eat among the things which the waves had thrown up on land. Seeing a mussel, she began to peck at the shell; but it closed suddenly, and squeezed the nose of the little Crow. From the sea came a bird, who shouted, "Squeeze tighter!" But the little Crow implored, "Let me out, mussel!" after which she walked home, groaning, "E, e!" The old Crow asked, "What did you do, that you have your beak broken off?" And the little one answered, "As I went out on the seashore, I saw a mussel, and began to peck at it with my beak; but I got my nose caught, and it broke off. Mother, send for the little bird Turn-Head (*Iynx torquilla*)¹ to cure me!" said the little Crow.

So the old Crow went out, and called, "Little woman Turn-Head, come and cure my child!" The old Turn-Head arrived, and healed the beak, and it got well. "When you go out to pick grass *ahrturi* (an edible grass of the *Ranunculaceæ* species), do not take too much at a time!" she said, and went away.

After a time, however, the little Crow took too much grass into her beak. The old woman Turn-Head was summoned; but she said, "When I told you not to take much *ahrturi*-grass, you did not obey, and you pulled too much of the dry grass. Now I cannot help you any more." The beak of this little Crow decayed, and the bird died.

9. IN QUEST OF THE SEA-LION

My elder brother lived with me. I was longing to see the Sea-Lion, whom I had never seen. Yearning for him, I sang; knowing only his name, I loved him dearly. I kept asking my brother (to take me to the Sea-Lion), till he got tired of my entreaties, and began to build a boat. He took an axe and struck the wood: "Kotohno, tohno, kotonu-tonu!" When he had finished the boat, he came into the house, and said, "Quick, get ready for the journey! You shall go with

¹ This bird is considered in fables as a physician.

me to the Sea-Lion, whom you have never seen, and whom you are longing to see." This he said. And I put two ear-rings into the lower ear-hole, and two ear-rings into the upper ear-hole. I arranged my hair, and went out with my elder brother.

We got into the boat, and he took me to a small island, visible from afar. I thought we had arrived at the Sea-Lion's den. We knocked against the rocks which stood out of the water. The hills near the shore were hidden now; also the mountains, that were farther inland. We went quite close to the reefs, and I looked around in order to see whether there were any signs of men having passed; but there was not a trace of a man about us. We went into a house, and I perceived an old Sea-Lion. On his old wound there was purulent matter, and on the fresh wound was a scab. My brother led me into the house, then he left me alone and returned. I remained, and lived very miserably at this place.

10. THE WOMAN AND THE DEMON

I was the only woman living. Once I heard the steps of some one approaching the house. I went out to see who it was, and saw a mighty demon in the shape of a beautiful man. I returned to the house, spread out mattings on the floor, and the man came in. I gave him something to eat; and he said, "As you are such a beautiful woman, I cannot marry you without offering you precious things as a reward. Therefore I shall go back to my country to fetch some jewels." Thus he said, and, having cut enough wood to fill the room and the passage, he disappeared. "Use your wood economically," he said on parting.

One day I heard the steps of a man near the hut, and soon I saw a stranger coming in. His hair was shaggy. He began to burn the cut wood in the house, and burned whole piles of it until it was all gone. Then he requested me to go towards the forest with him, but I refused. He would carry me on his back. He took the icicles which were hanging from my nose and stuck them on the door; he cut off the hair on my temples and hung it up at one side of the door. Then by main force he put me on his back and carried me to the forest, and we arrived at a house.

While living with him, I once heard a man who came to our house crying. As soon as the man who lived with me heard him, he hid me away in a corner. The other came in from outside. As soon as I looked at him, I recognized him as the one who had once promised to marry me, and who had gone to get precious things for me. "While living here, did you not see a woman?" he asked. "Though I live here, I never saw any woman around," answered my companion. And the mighty demon said, "When, on stepping out of the hut, you see

fog at the end of the island, and fog at the beginning, and fog in the middle, you will know that I am dead." Thus he said, and went away.

I also stepped out of the hut, and saw fog at the end of the island and at the beginning and in the middle, and was sure the man had died, and went to see. I stumbled over a dead man whose head was lying on a case containing jewels. I put my head on his and wept. But from the opposite side came a godlike, beautiful man. "Why do you pity the mighty demon?" he asked. "His face is handsome to look at, but his soul is black." Thus saying, he took me with him, and from that time I lived quite well.

II. SAMAYEKURU AND HIS SISTER

I was the god of the upper heaven. There were many gods around, but, looking at the places where they lived, I nowhere could find a woman like myself. In the lower world in the Ainu land, the younger sister of Samayekuru,¹ though she was only an Ainu woman, had a face like mine. She seemed to be quite like myself. So I came down to the lower world. In the yard, near Samayekuru's house, fresh fish were hanging out on sticks to dry. Samayekuru himself was out hunting with his sister, and so was not at home. I entered the empty house. As Samayekuru was only a man, I thought he must be weaker than I. I went to the sticks on which the fresh fish were hanging, threw down one big salmon (*Salmo lagocephalus*), and assumed its shape. Then I waited till Samayekuru and his sister brought home a big litter full of bear-meat. They pushed the litter in through an opening in the back wall, after which Samayekuru's sister went into the hut and pulled in the litter. They were both tired, so they lighted a big fire; and Samayekuru said, "I am tired of eating bear-meat all the time. Go and get some fresh fish for me to eat." His sister went out, approached the sticks with the fish, and tried to select one. At last she took me down, and carried me into the house. Samayekuru said, "The fresh fish is too cold, warm it a little at the fire." Thus he said; and she tied a thread to my tail and hung me, head down, on the hook on which the kettle usually hangs. But Samayekuru remarked, "The fire is not big enough: put on some more wood, and make it bigger." His sister then went out to get some wood, and brought in a whole pile. A huge fire blazed up, and my head became hot. It crackled aloud "putsi!" so violently that it burnt me. My soul went up to the tail, and was nearly burning. I got frightened, pushed aside the beams of the roof with much noise, and got out into the fresh air. Making a terrible ado, I returned to the upper heaven.

When I reached home, I cried, "Samayekuru was only a man born on the poor earth, and I was a mighty god!" and I thought that a man

¹ Another name of Self-brought-up-Man (Yayresupo).

born on the poor earth would be weaker than I, but he was stronger. Angrily I went down to earth again. Samayekuru was out hunting with his sister, as before, and I entered the empty house. I hid away Samayekuru's dish, and turned into a dish myself and waited. At last I heard the steps of Samayekuru and his sister, who were coming home. Through the opening in the back wall they pushed in the litter with the bear-meat. The younger sister came in by the door, and took the litter with the meat. They were tired, and made a big fire, after which Samayekuru said to his sister, "Did you wash your dishes this morning before going out hunting?"—"No, I did not wash them," answered the sister. "Then prepare some hot water and wash them now," he ordered. So she got up, took her big kettle, filled it with water, and hung it over the fire to get it hot. As soon as the water was boiling, she brought her brother's dish. I thought I should die if she should throw me into the boiling water. And she threw me in; but I jumped out of the kettle, pushed away the roof near the door with a loud rumbling noise, and flew out. Then I noisily raised myself to the upper heaven, and returned to my divine home.

When I was inside, I began to think, "Samayekuru is a man only, so he ought to be weaker than I am, but he has turned out to be stronger." Full of anger, I sat brooding a long time. At last I decided to go down once more, without changing my shape, in my own divine, beautiful body. So I did, and went down to the yard near Samayekuru's house, and stood there; but I did not want to enter the house as a guest. Samayekuru's sister went out in the yard, and said, "I know that you do not care to step into our house. You are walking angrily about, so I shall not lead you in; but yonder there is my little metal hut, and you will do well to go there." So I went towards this little house, and at night I stepped in and sat down.

"Samayekuru surely is angry with me," I thought. "Though I be a mighty god, and though Samayekuru be born on this poor earth, he has beaten me," I thought, and decided to tell him so. Suddenly, however, I smelled the smell of dung. I thought I had come to a little silver house. But why this nasty smell of dung? I looked around, and there I was, sitting in a very filthy place; and Samayekuru and his sister had poured out their dung on me, and soiled me from head to foot. "I am a mighty god, and Samayekuru is only a man, born on earth; but as to power, he has entirely beaten me," thought I. "Whatever I might do, I could never surpass Samayekuru in power, so I had better calm down."

From the filthy place where I was sitting, I leaped up with a terrible noise, went to the upper heaven, and returned home, quite soiled with dung from head to foot. I took off my iron armor and washed it, after having washed my head and my whole body. I was quite angry,

and sat down full of wrath. My brothers, the other gods, talked with one another, and said, "As we walked around the house, in the yard, we perceived a nasty smell." I heard these words, but made no reply, and sat quite ashamed. One day, however, when I was seated, my elder brother came and began to scold me. "What is it? Samayekuru is so powerful, that he wants to beat every one, and you are stupid to have roused him." Thus they all scolded me.

12. A POEM

From childhood I was brought up by my aunt, who fed me with fine food. She fed me very well indeed, and brought me up splendidly in my father's house. On the floor there was a large pile of iron cases¹ on which iron pots were standing, one within another; and iron pans in a row, also one within another. It was a splendid house, a fine house! In this house on the seashore I was living. My aunt gave me every day a plate of good meat and of grease, so full that I could not even hold it. I ate, and thus we lived.

At last I grew up and became a large girl. So my aunt took out different kinds of silk, and bade me sew. But I did not know how to sew. I tangled the thread, and that ended it. My aunt scolded me. "My niece does not know how to sew! Why are you such a dullard?" Thus she spoke. After trying each day, I at last learned how to sew.

My aunt said, "Far off in Otasam lives your betrothed one. He is the younger of three brothers. A piece of silk was torn in halves for you and him.² He must be grown up now. He is very rich, and will not come to you; therefore you had better go to him, to the *nispa* ('rich man')." This she said; and I heard it, and thought, "Until now my aunt has brought me up well. If I leave her for one day only, I rejoice to see her again." I was grieved, and remained. My aunt, however, spoke to me again about it, and every day she repeated the same words.

So at last I gathered the most necessary of my things, made a bag in which to take them on my back, and put my clothes in properly. I prepared many different things; and when I was ready to start, my aunt said, "In Otasam, where you are going, there are three brothers *nispa* ('rich men'). The eldest one lives in the house nearest to us; in the middle one lives the youngest, with his younger sister; and the third one lives at the end of the settlement. When you arrive, you will do well to enter the hut that is in the middle, which belongs to the youngest brother." This my aunt told me while I was taking leave.

Then I went away. Soon I saw before me a place situated high up. I stopped at the mountain Tomisan; then I walked on, and

¹ A sign of wealth and order.

² This is the usual ceremony of betrothal in such cases.

turned around and looked. There was my aunt, standing in front of her house, and she was following me with her eyes. I continued my march again, and, turning around, I still saw her looking after me. Finally I directed my steps towards the village Otasam, and set out on the way to it. I looked, and there was a big house, just as my aunt had described it to me; and behind it, as she had told me, was to be the house of my betrothed one, but, glancing around, I saw only one house in front of me. I began to think, and came to the conclusion that I was walking on the road to the house of the eldest rich brother. When I looked around, I saw another path, which I took; but soon I noticed that it led to the same house. I understood. "They are brothers," I thought; "and if I go to the eldest of them, the gods will have made me do it." So I entered the house, which was full of furniture, quite uncommon and divine. The rich man himself was living here. He met me full of joy, as if he had already seen me. He prepared food, and gave me to eat.

In the mean time it grew dark, and evening arrived. The rich man said, "You would do well if you would spend this night here." I went to sleep angry; and when I woke up, I saw the rich man sleeping with me. I got up weeping, and was just going to depart, when the rich man said, "What evil god made me do this! I had no bad intentions. You have been my younger brother's betrothed wife since childhood, and, though I did not think any evil concerning you, I did this. So when you come to your husband's house, and give him to eat, put this into his dish." Thus saying, he gave me the basket hilt of a sword. The hilt was inlaid with silver on one side, a little silver net was spread out, and a little silver man was pulling at it, and in the net were a whole lot of little silver-fishes. I was quite delighted, turned it over, and saw on the other side a little gold net spread out, and inside it a whole lot of little gold-fishes, and little gold men pulling at it.

After I had looked at it well, I put it under my shirt and went away. I walked on the path which I saw in front of me, and arrived at the house of the man who had been promised to me since childhood. Above the house two thick clouds were floating, and I entered the house. "She is as old as I am," said the rich man when he saw me. "The beautiful maiden is living." I was still at the door as he smiled at me. As soon as he saw me, I approached the fire and remained near it. When I sat down, he wanted to say something. "My little brother," he began, "has not eaten since last month, and he sleeps all the time. Therefore he has a swollen belly¹ (*tsepukaha*). I do not know the reason of this, and am very much astonished. Now that you have come, when he hears you are here, perhaps he will eat." This he said, and at the same time we heard footsteps near the house.

¹ *Tsepukaha* ("dropsy") is an illness which is often mentioned in ancient tales, but which very seldom occurs now.

I looked up, and thought that my betrothed one was coming, but in reality it was the swollen sick man. As soon as he came in, he sat down near the fire. The girl of the house prepared some food, put it into an iron dish, and gave me to eat; she also fed the owner of the house, my husband. As soon as we had finished eating, I gave back the rest of the food, and put on the dish the hilt which I had pulled out from the back of my shirt. Now even I looked at it with pleasure and admiration, and handed it over to my husband. He took it, and said, "My elder brother did not act according to his will when he forced you to spend a night with him. It is well for the gods to marry one another, and men and women should also marry. I am only a man; but the god of the upper heaven has a younger sister, who wants to marry me. She desires so strongly to take me up to heaven with my body, that I have not felt at all like eating since last month."

After having said these words, he seized me, ran out on the place in front of the house, and carried me towards the forest. At the back of the house there was a little iron hut, built on piles,—a house which had feet. He pulled the hanging door¹ aside, carried me into the hut, and there we lay down together. "Now we are married, therefore we sleep together for the first time. But if you are weak, the goddess will take me up, body and all. If you are strong, we shall live together a long time." This he said, and fell asleep.

When I woke up and looked around, I felt something pushing me. I looked, and saw an iron ring put around my husband's body, and an iron chain attached to it went up through the opening in the roof, and somebody was pulling at it from above. I seized the chain, naked as I was, and began to pull it down with all my strength. But the girl from heaven, being a goddess, was stronger than I. I began to weep and to scream. I called the younger sister (of my husband). She came in; but as soon as she saw me, she fled, shouting, "Oh, what is this! a naked woman!" I screamed again, and called the elder brother. He opened the door, came in, looked at me, and said, "A naked woman!" after which he ran away. At last my husband slipped out of my hands, and the goddess pulled the chain as hard as she could. She grasped it with one hand, then again with the other, and pulled my husband up quite close. Smiling, she pulled him into heaven and closed the door.

I could do no more, and began to cry. While weeping, I suddenly heard somebody coming from my native country, on the Tomisam hill. It was my aunt who had brought me up. She was carrying a sword without a scabbard. She brandished it and struck. I thought she had killed me; but suddenly I was changed into a little bird, and flew out through the hole in the roof. As I did not know where to fly,

¹ The Ainu use doors which may be shut or opened by pushing them to one side.

I looked down, and saw the parts of a naked woman's body lying near the house; and my aunt was sitting on them and crying, and was trembling all over.

I made a bridge out of clouds, and, walking on it, I arrived in heaven. When I came to the house of the goddess in the shape of a little bird, I fluttered my wings; and the gods said, "A maiden is walking around in heaven quite naked. We smell her body, and it makes us sick." This they said; but I entered the house through the upper hole in the roof. There was the goddess, holding the dying soul of my husband like a coral between her hands, and she was busy preparing medicine for him. I snatched my husband's soul away and returned to earth, having put it into my mouth. As we had no place to go to, I crept into the mouth of the cut-up woman, and lost all consciousness. When I recovered, I looked around, and saw my husband, who at the same time returned to life again.

This is how I resuscitated one of the three brothers of Otasan. My aunt, whose power had brought my husband back from heaven to earth again, was also alive. From that time on, we all lived happily together. I related tales about the gods, and lived with the others. This is the legend.

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