

A WORD RESPECTING THIS GRAMMAR

The first edition of this Ainu Grammar appended in the Memoirs of the Literature College, Imperial University of Japan in vol. 1. 1887 (20 Year of Meiji), and was published in Tokyo. The present is the fourth edition thereof.

Anent this matter my good friend Prof. Basil Hall Chamberlain wrote as follows.

The Aino* language has hitherto stood outside the pale of philology. Foreign writers, from Titsingh and Dawydof downwards, have mostly contended themselves with collecting lists of words. Even the Japanese, whose acquaintance with the Ainos dates from the dawn of their own history, have done little more than collect words, sentences, and a few specimens of such scanty unwritten literature as the Ainos possess in the shape of rude songs, together with translations of certain Japanese edicts.

The first regular attempt at submitting the language to a grammatical analysis was that made by Dr. A. Pfizmaier of Vienna, who, in the year 1851, published a work in a hundred and ten pages octavo, entitled "*Untersuchungen über den Bau der Aino-Sprache.*" Considering that this grammar was founded on little else than one imperfectly printed Japanese vocabulary, the "*Moshiogusa,*" the results obtained by the Austrian *savant* are truly marvellous. One only regrets, when perusing it, that a fraction of the vast trouble taken in collating each passage, comparing each word, noting each apparent grammatical phenomenon, should not have been devoted to a journey to Aino-land itself, where a few months' converse with the natives would have abridged the labour of years,—would indeed not only have abridged the labour, but have rendered the result so much more trustworthy. As it is, Dr. Pfizmaier's "*Untersuchungen,*" are rather a monument of learned industry, than a guide calculated to lead the student safely to his journey's

*The Prof. alway writes Aino, but the name is certainly Ainu, which means " man," " husband," " father " according to context.

end. The circumstances under which Dr. Pfizmaier worked were such as to render success impossible.

Many years later, in 1883, Professor J. M. Dixon, then of the Tokyo Engineering College, and now of the Imperial University of Japan, published in the "Chrysanthemum" magazine a sketch of Aino grammar founded partly on earlier European notices, partly on enquiries made by himself on the spot. Unfortunately, the results obtained by this conscientious worker were impaired to some extent by the want of that intimate acquaintance with Japanese, which, in the absence of a thorough practical knowledge of Aino itself, is the first condition of the successful investigation of any subject connected with the Island of Yezo.

At last the right man set to work in the right way, and a "grammar of the Ainu* Language," by John Batchelor, Esq., of the Church Missionary Society, is the result. Mr. Batchelor's five years' intercourse with the Ainos in their own homes, and close study of the language as it falls from the lips of the people, enable him to speak with an authority belonging to no other investigator, unless it were Dobrotvorsky, who unfortunately wrote no grammar. For this reason, the present writer deemed himself fortunate to be admitted to Mr. Batchelor's intimacy at the very time when the "Ainu Grammar" was in course of preparation. He can, from the results of his own Aino studies, carried on under a variety of native teachers from different parts of Yezo, testify to the general correctness of Mr. Batchelor's views. He has therefore been glad to recommend the inclusion in the present volume of the work in question. It is one which must, for many years to come, continue to be the text-book for those Aino studies which it is the desire of the Imperial University of Japan to foster. We now await the publication of the Dictionary, which Mr. Batchelor promises for next year. When placed in possession of that, the student will have all his tools at hand.

So far as the traditions of the Ainos are concerned, short

*The author's studies of the Ainu language began in the year 1877 and have continued on till this very day, namely September 30th 1936.

notices of them are to be found in various books, both Japanese and foreign. The best is that given by the compilers of the "*Ezo Fuzoku Isan*." The present writer, during his intercourse with the Ainos in Yezo, went all over the ground again, interrogating the natives, but carefully abstaining from putting into their mouths anything which they did not spontaneously communicate. For leading questions are generally answered by barbarians, less in accordance with truth, than with that which they believe their interlocutor desires to hear. The result was to confirm most, but not all, of that which previous travellers had been told, and to add a large store of myths and fairy-tales hitherto not printed in any language. A selection of a few of the most representative of these is given in Section III. of the present Memoir.