

fluenced by Babylonian institutions,²⁹ and Judaism is a creation of the Persian empire.³⁰

HUMAN SACRIFICES IN JAPAN.

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IT is remarkable that the tradition of human sacrifices was so widespread in old Japan that there is scarcely any old Japanese who has not heard some story or another of human sacrifices known as Hitomi-goku or Hitobashira. Such traditions arose very early in Japanese history.

According to the *Nihon Shoki* ("Chronicles of Japan"), the Kitakawa and Mamuta rivers overflowed in the eleventh year of the reign of the Emperor Nintoku (323 A. D.). Protection against the torrent was quite beyond the ability of the stricken populace. Meanwhile the Emperor had a divine revelation in his august dream to the effect that there was a person called Kowakubi in the province of Musashi, and one more person named Koromono-ko in the province of Kawachi, and if they should be sacrificed to the deities of the two rivers respectively, the work would be easily achieved. Hereupon a search for the two persons was started and they were caught.

Kowakubi, the poor victim, was then thrown into the torrent of the Kitakawa river, with a prayer offered to the deity of the

²⁹ See my paper "Bable and Bible" in the *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, No. 163, p. 48. Not only the inspection of the intestines of slaughtered animals (*bēdiqūtā*) but also the Jewish method of slaughter (*shēhitā*) seem to be derived from Babylonia; see *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 36, p. 259.

³⁰ Apart from the articles cited above, especially in notes 6, 8, 12, 13, 28, 29, additional details and fuller bibliographic references may be found in my papers "Archæology and Mineralogy" and "David's Dirge on Saul and Jonathan" in the *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, No. 163, pp. 51, 53; cf. *ibid.*, p. 59;—also in the articles on the Aryan descent of Jesus and His disciples; David's and Christ's birthplace; the ancestors of the Jews, the name *ΙΥΝΗ*; the passage of the Hebrews through the Red Sea, published in Peiser's *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, Vol. 11, col. 237; Vol. 12, cols. 65, 162, 211, 245.—"The Ethnology of Galilee" in the *Transactions of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions* (Oxford, 1908), Vol. 1, p. 302.—Leah and Rachel in the *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Vol. 29, p. 284; cf. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 32, p. 17.—Midian and Sinai in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Vol. 63, p. 506.—"An Ancient Protest Against the Curse on Eve" in the *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 50, p. 505.—*The Book of Micah*, (Chicago, 1910), especially pp. 19, nn. 17, 18; 36, n. 38; 50, n. 10.—The Battle of Taanach in the *Wellhausen Festschrift* (Giessen, 1914), p. 193, especially nn. 1, 12, 13, 15, 17, 21, 27, 30, 33, 41, 46, 48, 49, 81, 85, 90, 94, 102.

river. Now through his sacrifice it was possible to construct the bank completely.

Not so Koromono-ko. He brought out two gourds, and throwing them into the torrent he addressed the deity of the river thus: "I came here," said he, "to sacrifice my life to thee, because thou art inflicting the calamity upon the people of this district. If thou dost sincerely want my life, sink these gourds so that they may not float again; then I shall know thee as the true deity of this river and offer my body to thee. But if thou canst not sink them, thou art not the true deity, and it would be in vain for me to throw away my life." At this time a whirling wind blew as though trying to submerge the gourds. But dancing on top of the waves, they did not sink, and floated away. For this test, the agitation of the water lessened and the bank was made strong and Koromono-ko had saved his life.

Let us pause here to reflect a little.

The *Nihon Shoki* which contains this tradition was compiled by Prince Toneri and Ono Yasumaro and completed in the fourth year of Yoro (720 A.D.), the work being entrusted to them by the Empress Gensho. It contains the mythological ages and the early historic times of Japan, from the accession of the Emperor Jimmu (660 B.C.) to the abdication of the Empress Jito (697 A.D.), being one of the most important works for the student of ancient Japan. But these records of human sacrifices we regard as mere mythological traditions which were accepted by the people at least at the time when the *Nihon Shoki* was compiled, four centuries after the recorded events occurred.

The motive for the deification of the river may seem to be in the calamity-causing power of the water rather than in any real being supposed to be in it. It is, however, a very noteworthy point that in other cases gourds are connected with serpents. According to the same book, there was living in the river a large serpent which, frequently leaving its abode, emitted poisonous vapors and inflicted pains on the passers-by which often proved fatal. This is reported to have happened during the sixty-seventh year of the same emperor (Nintoku). To put an end to the annoyance, Agatamori, the official of the place, visited the affected part of the bank and threw three gourds into the water, as was done in the case cited above, and said to the serpent that if it could sink the gourds he would spare its life, but otherwise he would kill it. The serpent, however, could not sink them. Thereupon he killed it.

Considering these records, the tests of the river-deity and the

serpent seem to have some intimate relation. Moreover, who is not reminded of Grendel, slain by Beowulf, and other mythological tales of the West? Also the ancient Mexicans worshiped a fabulous beast called Ahuizotle living at the bottom of the water.

According to the *Kojiki* ("Records of Ancient Things," completed 712 A. D.), a monstrous eight-forked serpent devoured seven maidens every year one after another, but finally at the eighth time, it was cut to pieces by Prince Susa-no-o, and the maiden who was rescued by the prince became his wife. This record is also a mythological narrative, and it could not be indigenous in Japan because no large harmful serpent ever lived in Japan according to the zoologist. Its origin, therefore, should belong in some foreign land.

There are three elements in these tales of a serpent being killed, viz., the monster wants human sacrifices, a girl to be sacrificed is rescued, and the rescued girl is married to the hero by whom she is saved. These elements reappear very often in the later folktales of a similar nature.

The following tradition is still living in the memory of the people of Aihara in the province of Buzen. According to this tradition, this district was the parish of the Usa-hachiman shrine in the twelfth century, and was governed by Yuya-danjo Motonobu and six other parish commissioners. But the people suffered bitterly every year from the inundation of the Yamakuni river. Therefore the seven commissioners opened a council and decided to offer their prayers to the Hachiman shrine day and night for a whole week to receive a divine revelation. It was finally revealed to them that there was no other means than to offer a human sacrifice to the water-deity. But they could not find any man willing to be used for the purpose. Hereupon Yuya-danjo proposed to his six comrades to take off their trousers and throw them into the river, under the agreement that the owner of the trousers which sank should offer his life to the deity. This was approved by all and was tried as proposed. Alas! the trousers of Yuya-danjo sank and his life was forfeited. Tsuru, a daughter of one of his retainers, and Tsuru's son, called Ichitaro, heard of their master's ill lot, and both begged to be allowed to give their own lives in behalf of their master. Nothing of the kind being granted, each of them separately offered his life to the deity. This is said to have happened on the 15th of August, the first year of Hoyen (1135 A. D.). And since that time the banks of the river are said to have been very strong and no inundation was experienced there until modern times. The faithful mother and her son are said to be enshrined in the Tsuru-

ichi shrine which now stands there. The origin of this tradition seems to be in the record in the *Nihon Shoki*.

The tradition of human sacrifices is also concerned with the building of large bridges. For example, in the *Yasutomi-ki*, a diary of the fifteenth century, a famous tradition is contained, called Nagara-no Hitobashira (*hitobashira*, "human pillar"). According to the tradition, a woman who was carrying a boy on her back was caught while she was passing along the river Nagara, and was buried at the place where a large bridge was then to be built.

There are also similar traditions in connection with the crossing of the sea. The oldest record of the kind is also in the *Nihon Shoki*. According to this, while the Emperor Jimmu, the founder of the Japanese Empire, was crossing the sea on his expedition to the east, a typhoon broke and his boat was soon adrift on the waves. Then Ina-ihino-mikoto, deploring the disposition of the deity, sacrificed his own body to the deity of the sea; thus the emperor could proceed.

A similar but more popular narrative which is concerned with Tachibana-hime is recorded in the same book. When Prince Yamatodake was crossing the sea to subjugate a revolt in the east, his boat was nearly capsized by a sudden storm. But his consort, Tachibana-hime, thinking it to be a punishment visited upon them by the deity of the sea, threw herself into the deep to calm the agitation of the waves, and thus the life of the prince was saved.

There is a little different story in the *Taiheiki*, written in the fourteenth century. According to it, a passenger-boat was passing through Naruto of Awa when it suddenly stopped and could not proceed. The passengers conjectured that this was caused by Riu-jin, the dragon deity, with the intention of getting something in their possession. So they threw their swords, arms and armor, and other things which they thought the deity coveted, into the water. But the whirlpool would not become calmer. Meanwhile a steersman crying out from below said that, the place being the eastern gate of Riu-gu ("Dragon Palace"), some precious thing should be given the dragon for regaining their freedom. He then proposed to sacrifice a noble among them so as to rescue the rest, for nothing less, he claimed, the deity wanted this time. Thus the ship was released and could pass.

There are many more traditions of this nature, but we think it is not necessary to repeat them.

Besides stories concerning the water-deity there is another kind

of traditions in which human sacrifices are said to have been offered to monstrous monkeys.

The oldest of these is contained in the *Konjaku Monogatari* compiled by Minamoto Kunitaka in the eleventh century. This work contains various kinds of traditions of Japan, China, and India. According to one of them, there were once upon a time two deities, one called Chusan and the other Kōya, in the province of Mimasaku in Japan. The body of the Chusan deity was a monkey and that of the Kōya deity was a serpent. To them a human sacrifice was offered annually, always consisting in a virgin who was selected from among the inhabitants. This custom had been observed from ancient times. Now in this country, there was once living a very beautiful maiden extremely beloved by her parents. But the maiden was selected as a victim for the next year's festival. So she was given special nourishment that she might be fat on the day of the festival as it was always a rule. The parents, counting the days, lamented more and more bitterly as the end approached. Meanwhile a man came to this province from the eastern part of the country, a hunter, and he began his hunting business with many dogs which were trained to bite animals to death. This man heard about the matter of the maiden and one day called upon her parents and personally heard their lamentation which excited him to deep sympathy; so he proposed to deliver their daughter from her death. When the day of the festival came a Shinto priest with others visited the house, carrying a large chest into which the maiden was to be put. Now the man secretly entered the chest (instead of the maiden), but with a sharp sword and two of his dogs which were trained to kill monkeys. The chest was then carried to the shrine escorted by many; the strings then being cut off, it was left there as a sacrifice to the monkey deity. The tradition then proceeds to describe that the man, pushing up the cover of the chest just a little, found near-by a large monkey, seven or eight feet tall, with a few hundred smaller monkeys around him. After a little while the large monkey came to the chest and opened the cover, being assisted by the smaller ones. At this moment, the man, giving a signal to his dogs, jumped up and out of the chest. The monkey was first caught by the two dogs and then pulled down by the man. "Thou hast killed," said the man, with his sword over the monkey, "many virgins; therefore thy time is now come, but if thou be a true god, kill me this instant." Meanwhile the smaller monkeys were mostly killed by the two dogs. At the same time, a revelation was made to the Shinto priest who had brought the chest, saying, "I (the

monkey) need no more human sacrifices from now on, so come and deliver me from death." Now the priest and others rushed into the shrine and told the man about the revelation. The man, however, did not want to listen to them and answered that he wanted to kill the monkey for his many misdeeds and that he did not care about his own life for this. But after repeated implorations he allowed the monkey to regain his freedom. The monkey ran away into the hills and the man went back to the maiden's parents and married her, and formed a happy home for many years. Thus the people were delivered from human sacrifices.

It is remarkable that such traditions gave rise to religious customs and manners in commemoration of them, and that such services were observed even until recent years in remote parts of the country. We shall here introduce some instances.

It was on the 4th of February, 1895, that my friend Mr. S. Wada personally witnessed a service of this kind called *Oto*. According to his information it took place annually on the 10th of January (of the old calendar) at Hojo, Shikito-gun, in the province of Harima. In this village there is a shrine called *Ten-man-gu*. According to the tradition remembered by the people of the village, there once was a large bamboo bush at the back of the shrine, and here lived an eight-eyed weasel. To propitiate the weasel and to get rid of its evil doings from which the villagers suffered, a boy and a girl had to be offered to it annually as its food. But one day a *Yamabushi* priest called *Doshingasaka* came to this village and killed the weasel before it caught the poor boy and the girl who were then being offered to it. The commemoration of this noble deed of the *Yamabushi* priest is said to be the origin of the *Oto* service. The service is very peculiar and interesting. Two families are selected beforehand by divination. One of the families must have a boy of five years who must be their eldest son, and the other family a girl of five years who must be their eldest daughter, and the parents must be living. Every one who wants to take his seat in the ceremony must cleanse his body and eat only vegetables from the previous day until the ceremony ends. On the morning of the festival day the boy and the girl proceed to the shrine followed by their parents, servants, and neighbors. When they arrive at the shrine, the boy, the girl, their parents, and two waiters respectively take their seats in the sanctuary, together with the priest and the shrine-keeper. Then the priest offers a prayer to the god. After the prayer, they are to be served with sacred *sakê* wine and other vegetable food. Villagers who throng to the shrine are also served

with the sakê and other food and make merry. Such merry-making represents their delight in the rescue of the children by the Yamabushi priest. At the close of the ceremony, the priest draws a lot to select two families for the next year.

At the Sakato-no shrine at Sakato-ichiba in the province of Kazusa, there is a service which also has some relation with human sacrifice. A person is selected from among the parishioners of this shrine by lot, and he is brought before the shrine and there he is put to a chopping-block. A person called Hitotsu-mono performs a mimic ceremony as though to kill him. The rite is said to be the relic of a human sacrifice which it was once a rule to offer to the god of this shrine.

There is also a ritual at the annual festival of the Juzo shrine at Wajima-cho in the province of Noto, which is symbolic of a human sacrifice. The essential offering in this ritual consists in the so-called sacred water kept in a chest covered with a shoulder costume and a rosary, and this offering is carried to the shrine at midnight.

It is well known that many races observed the custom of human sacrifices in some stage of their development. Human sacrifice, Bunsen says, was abolished in the very earliest times by the Egyptians, who declared it to be an abomination to the gods, whereas in Palestine, in Syria, and in civilized Phenicia and Carthage, such sacrifices continued to be offered to Moloch as the very climax of religious worship. Some of the kings of Judah and Israel caused their children to pass through the fire. Even the Romans, in the time of the Cæsars, buried their Gallic prisoners alive in order to appease the wrath of their gods; nor were the Greeks entirely free from these atrocious practices. It is also well known that among the Aztecs of Mexico human sacrifices were a matter of ordinary occurrence. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that also in Japan this custom should have been practised once. But it is doubtful whether it was really practised in the Japanese historic period, namely since the Yamato race organized the present Japanese nation more than two thousand years ago. Where shall we then find the origin of the traditions which we have characterized above? No scholar could give any definite answer to this question.

The custom, however, is also found in ancient China, for, as it is recorded in the *Ch'un T's'ew*, with *Tso Chuen* compiled in the fifth century B. C., it must have been practised in the remote ages of Chinese history. The intercourse between China and Japan being preeminent from the beginning of the Yamato race, there should

have been some influences upon the traditions of human sacrifice in Japan. The story of Riu-jin, the dragon deity, is the most conspicuous one evidently introduced from China. Some other traditions probably originated with the Stone Age people who lived in Japan before the Yamato race came and subjugated them.

According to our investigations of the Japanese tradition of human sacrifices, those connected with the water-deity are the oldest and most numerous, and then those concerning baboons. It should be noticed that the water-deities and monkeys were often tempted by their opponent to do something or another, e. g., to sink the gourds as we described above, to disclose their inability. The Hito-bashira or "human pillar" traditions are always connected with some important enterprise and mostly with water. In large enterprises human lives are often lost in the work itself, therefore in some cases such loss of human life would have been looked upon as a human sacrifice.

It is, however, most remarkable that stories of human sacrifice were most numerous composed in the Tokugawa period, i. e., during the last three centuries. The killing of monstrous serpents or baboons to rescue poor victims, or to give happiness to the people, was an indispensable element in the popular heroic stories of this period. These stories were mostly derived from the older traditions which we described. By such popular traditions, a spirit of self-sacrifice was inspired in the people. It is, therefore, highly interesting to note that the Japanese traditions of human sacrifice were made use of, in a pretty well advanced stage of society, for social education both by means of popular literary works and religious customs and manners.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

LIBERAL JUDAISM AND HELLENISM, AND OTHER ESSAYS. By *C. G. Montefiore*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1918. Pp. xii. 328. Price, 6s. net.

The essays—many of them undelivered lectures—which make up this interesting and persuasive volume all deal with aspects of liberal Judaism, and are mainly concerned with the question whether the Jewish religion, which survived the changes and chances of so many centuries, can survive the more