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RECORD

JAPANESE VESSELS

DRIVEN UPON THE

NORTH-WEST COAST OF AMERICA

AND ITS OUTLYING ISLANDS.

BY HORACE DAVIS.



WORCESTER, MASS.: PRINTED BY CHARLES HAMILTON, PALLADIUM OFFICE, 1872.



AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY.

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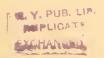
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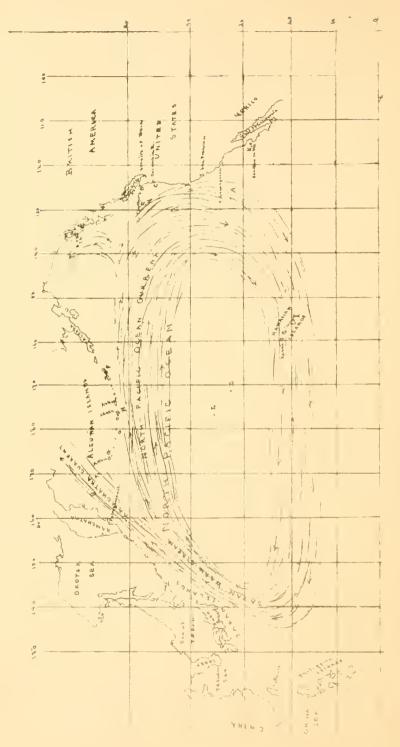
BY HORACE DAVIS.

Read before the American Antiquarian Society, at their April Meeting, 1872.

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ON THE LIKELIHOOD OF AN ADMIXTURE OF JAPANESE BLOOD ON OUR NORTH-WEST COAST.

BY HORACE DAVIS.

WITHOUT any speculation upon the origin of the Indian Tribes, I desire to bring together a few *facts* regarding the possibility of an admixture of Japanese blood on the northwest coast of America; and shall confine myself to this narrow point, leaving it for others to draw wider conclusions from these premises, or kindred facts.

The great North Pacific Ocean current is so well known as to need only the briefest description. Leaving the coast of Lower California between lat. 15° and 25°, the great Northern Equatorial Current crosses the Pacific in about that latitude. Towards the Asiatic Coast it is gradually deflected to the northward and sweeps by Japan in a well defined stream, called by the Japanese the "Kuro-Siwo," commonly termed the "Japan Warm Stream." Further north, about lat. 38° North, it divides, one part flowing northeasterly along the Coast of Asia, called the Kamtchatka Current, while the other portion, which more nearly concerns us, sweeps away to the eastward and crossing the Pacific Ocean south of the Aleutian Islands is deflected by the continent of America to the southward, and following its western shores, finally reaches the point of beginning. A vessel dismasted off Japan would inevitably be drifted past the shores of Kamtchatka, or following the other branch would reach the neighborhood of the Continent of America.

This has actually happened in repeated instances. Within the ninety years which comprise the history of the N. W. Coast, several disabled Japanese vessels have reached our shores. Two have been wrecked upon the main land, four upon the islands now belonging to the United States, one upon islands immediately adjacent to Lower California, and one at least, if not two, have been boarded at sea but a short distance from our shores, and in every case of which we have record, living men were rescued from the wreck. It is my object simply to collect these incidents and present them in a connected form, giving in each case the original authorities, and such explanation as the case may require.

I shall quote first from Kotzebue's "Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea and Behring's Straits," London, 1821, Vol. 1. On page 324 he speaks of meeting at Honorara (Honolulu), Woahoo (Oahu), a brig in the royal Hawaiian service, named after Queen Kahumanna. She was built by the French as a privateer and named "La Grande Guimbarde." Having been taken by the English, she was sold to English merchants, who gave her the name "Forester of London." Capt. Piggott brought her out to the "South Sea" and sold her to Tamaahmaah (Kamehameha), King of the Hawaiian Islands. Capt. Alexander Adams, Capt. Piggott's second officer, then entered the King's service and became her commander. On page 352 Kotzebue says, "Capt. Alexander Adams dined with us to-day, whose conversation delighted us very much." And in a note, p. 353, he gives this interesting incident, "Looking over Adams' journal I found the following notice, 'Brig Forester, the 24th of March, 1815, in the sea, near the coast of California, lat. 32° 45' N., long 233° 3' East, [57' W.] During a strong wind from W. N. W. and rainy weather, we descried this morning at 6 o'clock, a ship at a small distance, the disorder of whose sails convinced us that it stood in need of assistance. We immediately directed our course to it, and recognized the vessel in distress to be a Japanese, which had lost her mast and rudder. I was sent by the Captain on board, and found in the ship only three (3) dying Japanese, the Captain and two sailors. I instantly had the unfortunate men earried to our brig, where they were perfectly recovered, after four months careful attendance. We learnt from these people that they came from the port of Osaco [Osaca], in Japan, bound to another commercial town, but had been surprised immediately on their departure, by a storm, and had lost their mast and rudder. They had been, up to this day, a sport of the waves for seventeen months; and of their crew of thirty-five men only three had survived, who would have died of hunger."

Prof. Geo. Davidson, in "Coast Pilot of Alaska," Washington, 1869, page 63, quotes this passage and says the position indicated is about 350 miles W. S. W. (compass), from Point Conception. Prof. Davidson adds, "supposing this junk to have kept on the S. side of the axis of the great current, and to have been carried directly down the American coast on the western part of this current, it must have traversed 5,300 miles in 516 days, or a trifle over ten miles per day for that whole period."

The next instance I shall cite is to be found in Alexander Forbes' History of California, written at Tepic, 1838, published in London, 1839, part 2d, Upper California, chap. VII., pages 299-301. Forbes says, "The British brig Forester, bound from London to the river Columbia, and commanded by Mr. John Jennings, fell in with, in the year 1813, a Japanese junk of about 700 tons burden, one hundred and fifty miles off the northwest coast of America and abreast of Queen Charlotte's Island, about 49° of N. lati-There were only three persons alive on board, one tude. of whom was the captain. By the best accounts Capt. Jennings could get from them, they had been tossing about at sea for nearly eighteen months; they had been twice in sight of the land of America, and were driven off. Some beans still remained on which they had been sustaining themselves, and they had caught rain water for their drink. This vessel had left the northern coast of Japan loaded with timber for some of the islands to the southward, and had been blown off the coast by gales of wind. She had no masts standing, but in other respects was not much injured. Captain Jennings took the survivors on board of his vessel and delivered them at the Russian settlement of Norfolk Sound, the governor of which, owing to the friendship existing between Russia and the Japanese, sent a vessel on purpose with them to their own country."

The position here indicated is somewhat uncertain, as Queen Charlotte's Island lies between about 51° and 54° N. latitude, but in Forbes's time the geography of this coast was uncertain. The identity of the name of the vessel, of the number of rescued men and of the length of the junk's voyage, leads to a suspicion that this may be the same as the last instance; but the differences are greater than the coincidence, viz: the Captain's name, the junk's port of departure, Osaca being at the southern end of Niphon, the wreck's position, over 1200 miles from that of Capt. Adams, and the year. Forbes was in Calfornia himself, and evidently from the minuteness of this account, gathered it from something more than mere rumor; he may have heard of the rescue by the "Forester" and confused the two events. It is very singular that no writer that I am aware of has ever noticed this remarkable story, and that Prof. Davidsou is the only one who has cited the note from Kotzebue.

Capt. C. M. Scammon, of the U. S. Rev. Marine, who was the discoverer of the wreck I am now about to describe, has kindly furnished me with the following facts, contributed by himself to the Daily Alta California, of April 22, 1860. "In 1853 there was found on the southwest and largest of the San Benito Group, the remains of what was supposed to be a Japanese junk; whether it was some part of those said to have been east away on the coast of Oregon several years ago, or the relic of some other eastern [Oriental] sailing craft, is a subject of conjecture. That it was one or the other there can be no doubt. The planks were fastened together on the edges with spikes or bolts of a flat shape, with the head all on one side. The seams were not straight, although the workmanship was otherwise good. It appeared to be the bottom of a vessel that was seen here and gave evidence of

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having been a long time on shore." San Benito Islands are off Lower California, near Cerros Island, lat. 28 N., lon. 116 W.

Capt. Scammon has since furnished me with the following memorandum, from Chief Engineer Jas. A. Doyle, of U. S. S. "Lincoln:" "In July, 1871, while attached to the U. S. Rev. Str. Lincoln, I visited the island of Atton, which marks the extreme western limit of our new possessions. I went on shore and was kindly received by the natives. I was shown the remains of a Japanese junk that had been wrecked on the island not far from the harbor. The people told me that they saved four of the crew and kept them for nearly a year until they were taken off by one of the Fur Company's vessels on her annual visit to the island. The old chief (he was about seventy) told me that during his time three junks had been lost on the surrounding islets, and jokingly remarked that the people would thank the Almighty if he would direct the wrecked junks into their harbor, as they were very badly off for wood."

I presume the first one mentioned by Mr. Doyle is the same vessel as that alluded to by Prof. Davidson, which stranded on Atton, in 1862. The other three are entirely new instances.

I will next cite the wreck of a vessel on Point Adams, the southern shore of the mouth of Columbia River, probably somewhere from 1810 to 1820. My oldest authority on this vessel is Capt. Sir Edward Belcher, who was at Astoria in 1839. In his "Voyage around the World," London, 1843, Vol. I., page 306, he says: "A wreck likewise occurred in this bay, [meaning the indentation of the coast off the Columbia River], many years ago. * * * * It appears that a vessel with many hands on board, and laden with bees-wax, entered the bay and was wrecked; she went to pieces, and the crew got on shore. Many articles were washed on shore, and particularly the beeswax. This latter is even now [1839] occasionally thrown upon the beach, but in smaller quantities than formerly. I have one specimen now in my possession."

Prof. Davidson, in his "Coast Pilot of California, Oregon and Washington Territory," U. S. Coast Survey, 1869, alludes to her as a "Chinese or Japanese junk." He says, "there are occasionally, after great storms, pieces of this wax thrown ashore, coated with sand and bleached nearly white. Formerly a great deal was found, but now it is rarely met with. Many people on the Columbia possess specimens, and we [in 1851] have seen several pieces." See also Overland Monthly, Jan'y, 1871, article entitled "Mouth of Columbia River." I do not know on what authority Davidson confidently pronounces the vessel a "Chinese or Japanese junk," nor do I know what became of the crew. This wreek has been very generally confounded with the one of which I am now about to relate.

Early in 1833 a Japanese junk was wrecked somewhere on the coast of Washington Territory, between Point Grenville and Cape Flattery. The authorities in this case are Capt. Wyeth, in a note, in the appendix of Irving's "Adventures of Capt. Bonneville," Sir Edward Belcher, as above, and Wilkes' Exploring Expedition. She had been out a very long time, whence, or whither bound, does not appear, and many of her erew had perished by starvation or disease before she was wrecked, and Belcher adds that "several dead bodies were headed up in casks." After stranding, the wreck was plundered and the survivors enslaved by the savages. Wilkes says the officers of the Hudson Bay Company, at Astoria, became aware of this disaster in a singular manner. They received a drawing on a piece of China-paper, in which were depicted three shipwreeked persons, with the junk on the rocks and the Indians engaged in plundering. This was sufficient to induce them to make inquiries, and Capt. McNeal was dispatched on the H. B. Co.'s vessel 'Lama' to Cape Flattery. He had the satisfaction to find the three Japanese, whom he rescued from slavery. There were two men and a boy, and there was some trouble in purchasing the boy. The H. B. Co. subsequently sent them to England, whence they were sent to Maeao, and it is stated in Perry's Japan Expedition, that in 1837 they were sent to the bay of Yeddo, in the "Morrison," by Mr. C. A. King, an American merchant; the "Morrison" was fired upon and sailed away to Kagosima, was again fired upon and returned to Macao, with the Japanese on board. As a memorial of this extraordinary incident, says Wilkes, porcelain of Japanese manufacture, which was purchased from the Indians who plundered the junk, was seen in possession of Mr. Birnie, the agent of the H. B. Co., at Astoria. Capt. Wyeth says he saw two of the men. Davidson alludes to this vessel in "Coast Pilot of Cal. &c." p. 181. See also Schoolcraft's Indian tribes of U. S., p. 217, and Haven's Archaeology of U. S. (Smithsonian Cont., 1856), p. 8. The reference may be found in Belcher's Voyage, chapter XII., Vol. I., p. 303, Wilkes' Exploring Expedition, Vol. IV., chap. IX., page 295, Rev. F. L. Hawkes' Account of Com. Perry's

Expedition to Japan, Wash. 1856, Vol. I., p. 47. Wyeth errs in locating the wreck on Queen Charlotte's Island, and Hawkes errs in placing her at the mouth of the Columbia.

About 1800–1805 a Japanese junk was wrecked on the coast of Alaska, probably near Sitka. This incident was furnished me by the kindness of Prof. Davidson, and so far as I know has never been published. Davidson has failed to find the account in the Russian Documents, but obtained the information during his survey of the coast of Alaska. The Japanese sailors were landed and assigned by Wrangell to Japonski Island, opposite Sitka, the Island receiving its name from them. They were taken thence to Japan, either in a Russian vessel, or in one built by themselves; Davidson thinks they built one from the wreck. The compass of the junk, many stone carvings &c., are in possession of Dr. Hough, of the U. S. Army, and now stationed on Alcatraz Island, in San Francisco harbor. Prof. Davidson also has some of the earvings.

In the latter part of the 18th century, probably about 1780, a Japanese junk was wreeked on one of the Aleutian Islands, (name unknown). This information may be found in the history of the Russian-American Shelikoff Company, by P. Tichmeneff, part I., p. 100, and in Hawkes' Account of the Perry Expedition, Vol I., p. 45. Tichmeneff, whose account I have copied from Prof. Davidson's notes, says: "These Japanese were saved by a clerk in the employ of the Shelikoff Company, named Delaroff, who was temporarily in one of the Aleutian Islands. On that Island he found a wrecked Japanese junk. Delaroff took all the Japanese in his vessel to the city of Oekotsk and thence to Irkutsk. They had little hope, however, of seeing their native land, as some of them had already been converted to the Christian religion. The father of Lieut. Lakmann, [the embassador heading the expedition which finally returned them to Japan], a scientific German gentleman, living at that time in Irkutsk, and engaged in a manufacturing establishment, advised Shelikoff, (Chief of the Company bearing his name), to confer with the Empress Catherine and suggest that the wrecked Japanese be forwarded to their country, as through this means Japan might become better known and a successful commercial treaty established. The Empress answered that the plan was excellent, and immediately [1792] ordered an expedition to carry the Japanese home. Accompanying the expedition was a letter from the Governor-General of Siberia and valuable presents to the Japanese Government. The embassador entrusted with the enterprise was Lient. Adam Lakmann, the Captain-Commanding Larkoff. The expedition was kindly received by the Japanese Government, and the Emperor gave permission that one Russian vessel should yearly be allowed to enter Nagasaki for the purpose of commercial intercourse with Japan."

Hawkes gives a somewhat different account of their return. He says they were detained ten years in Russia, and sailed in the fall of 1792, from Ockotsk, in a transport ship, called the "Catherine." They soon made a harbor in the northern part of the Island of Jesso, and there wintered; in the succeeding summer they entered the harbor of Hakodadi The Japanese were polite, but refused to take back their country-men, and Lakmann left without landing the Japanese.

"In September, 1862, a Japanese vessel was wrecked on

the Island of Attou. They had been driven off the coast of Japan two or three months before, with a crew of twelve men, of which she had lost nine before going ashore; and she had thus been drifted 1800 miles in the Kamtschatka current, at an average velocity of twenty miles per day." Davidson's Alaska Coast Pilot, p. 64. Prof. Davidson told me he got these particulars from the officers who rescued them. Attou is in lat. 52° 40 N., lon. 170° 40' *East*, and is the westernmost point of the territory of the United States. Still it is not over 700 miles from the main land, and connected with it by a chain of islands.

On Saturday, 16th December, 1871, the schooner II. M. Hutchinson brought into San Francisco three Japanese castaways, taken from Atka Island, in lat. 52° 30' N., lon. 175° west. The junk Jinko Marn of Mats Saka, province of Isè, of 180 kogus measurement, sailed from Isè with a eargo of rice for Kumano province. She met with a severe gale on the 28th day of November, 1870, lost her rudder and was obliged to cut away her masts. She drifted till the 15th May, 1871, when her crew sighted the Island of Adakh, and let go her anchor about a mile from shore. They had eaten up her eargo of rice, and only three of the erew remained alive. The Alentians came off, and hove up the anchor, and towed her into a little harbor, where she drove ashore in a gale soon after. The Japanese lived two months on Adakh, being kindly treated by the Fur Company's agents. Thence they sailed in their own boat to Atka, arriving July 10; whence the Ilutchinson took them (Sept 9), to Onnalaska, and thence to San Francisco. Adakh is very near Atka, to the W. S. W. It is about 520 miles from the nearest point of the continent of America, but it is connected with the main land by the chain of islands between Alaska and Attou.*

Before closing this singular catalogue of waifs, I will add three cases of drifting upon islands in our half of the Pacific Ocean, though far removed from us, and two of dismasted junks, found near the Aleutian Islands. Belcher, Vol. I., p. 304, says: "About the same time [1833], another Japanese junk was wrecked on the Island of Oahu, Sandwich Islands. From the Hawaiian Spectator, Vol. 1., p. 296, I have the details. 'A junk, laden with fish, and having nine hands on board, left one of the southern islands of the Japanese Group, for Jeddo, but, encountering a typhoon, was driven to sea. After wandering about the ocean for ten or eleven months, they anchored on the last Sunday in December, 1832, near the harbor of Waialea, Oahu. Their supply of water had been obtained from easual showers. On being visited, four persons were found on board; three of these were severely afflicted with seurvy, two being unable to walk and the third nearly so. The fourth was in good health and had the sole management of the vessel. After remaining at Waialea five or six days, an attempt was made to bring the vessel to Honolulu, where she was wrecked off Barber's point, on the evening

^{*}Since writing the above I have met Capt. Anton Barth, who rescued the survivors from the Island of Adakh, in 1871. He has resided in Atka for many years, and has married an Aleutian wife. He informs me that the old people of his wife's family tell him that about twenty years ago a Japanese junk was cast away upon Atka, and only three of her crew saved. He also confirms the wreck on Attou, having been there and seen the Japanese, in 1863. They were eventually taken to the Amoor River, by a Russian vessel, and thence in a man-of-war, to Japan. He said he had heard of other wreeks on the Aleutian Islands, but could give no particulars. He spoke of the similarity between the Japanese and Aleuts, both in personal appearance and in the sound of the language.

of January 1st, 1833. Everything but the crew was lost with the exception of a few trifling articles. The men remained at Honoluln eighteen months, when they were forwarded to Kamtschatka, from whence they hoped, eventually, to work their way, by stealth, into their own country, approaching by the way of the most northern islands of the Group."

A condensed account of the same incident may be found in Forbes's California, (quoted above), p. 300. Forbes adds that her burden was only eighty tons.

In the "Old and New" magazine, of June, 1870, is an article entitled "Our Furthest Outpost," by C. W. Brooks, Esq., Japanese Consul at San Franeisco. Speaking of the cruise of the bark Gambia, in 1859, among the small islands to the northeast of the Hawaiian Group, he says, "On these and many other islands and rocks visited were found wrecks of Japanese junks." Again, speaking of the Midway Islands, the subject of the article, he says, "On the East side are the remains of two Japanese junks, their lower masts stranded high up on the beach. The northeast shore is lined with drift-wood, among which are many redwood logs of formidable size, evidently from the coast of California." Midway Islands are in lat. 28° 15 N., lon. 177° 22' W.

Mr. C. W. Brooks has also informed me that Capt. Brooks of the Gambia, found remains of a junk on "Ocean Island," lat. 28° 24' N., lon. 178° 21 W., very near Midway Islands.

There are many Japanese wrecks strewn among the islands of the Pacific, but I allude to these on Oahu, Ocean and Midway especially, because they are situated partially in the return flow of the great current, and, as is shown by the character of the drift-stuff thrown on their beaches, these Japanese wrecks had very likely once been near the American shores.

I will here mention two dismasted vessels met at sea, which were furnished me by the kindness of Mr. Brooks, but I have been unable to ascertain the authorities from which he derived them.

"In 1848, Capt. Cox, of New London, Conn., picked up 15 or 20 Japanese, from a disabled junk, in lat. 40° N., lon. 170° W. He kept them on board during a cruise in the Okotsk sea and finally landed them at Lahaina."

"In 1855, Capt. Brooks, of Brig Leverett, picked up an abandoned junk in lat. 42° N., lon. 170° W." Both these are about in the longitude of Alaska, and south of the Aleutian Islands."

If I had time and opportunity, I have no doubt I might greatly extend this list. These cases have been gathered in the course of a few weeks, mainly by inquiry among my personal friends and amidst the prosecution of an active business. The further I extended my enquiries the greater results I obtained, and I am convinced that a much larger number of cast-aways will eventually come to our knowledge, besides the many which have perished from exposure, or died in captivity among the savages.

Many wrecked junks have also been found on the islnads nearer to Japan, but as they are foreign to my purpose, I deem them only worthy of general mention, as increasing he sum of probabilities. Perry found them on the Bonin Islands. See Hawkes's account of Perry's Exped., Vol. I., p. 199. Brooks mentions them among the islands between the Hawaiian Group and Japan. Many others have found such wrecks among the islands further west, nearer Japan.

I have been told also that there is one near Petropauloski in Kamtschatka, and one on Kauai, the northernmost of the Hawaiian Islands, but I am unable to find proper authority for them.

The number of cast-away Japanese who have been picked up at sea, and brought into San Francisco and Honolulu, is also considerable, taken from a score or more of vessels, but I have been unable to obtain any correct data of their posit tions at the time of rescue, which alone would render them valuable for my purpose. Besides, many of them, perhaps all, were picked up very far to the westward of America. For example, during 1871, two crews were brought into San Francisco. On Feb. 2, lat. 23° 45′ N., lon. 141° 31′ East, the ship Annie M. Small took four men from a wreck; and on May 23, lat. 34° 54 N., lon. 143° 32 East, the steamship China rescued five men.

In this connection it is worthy of mention that when the Japanese Government adopted the policy of non-intercourse, about 200 years ago, they not only forbade their vessels to trade with foreign ports, but they altered by law the construction of their junks, rendering them unfit for anything but coasting voyages. By prescribing an open stern and a huge rudder like our river steamboat rudders, they made their vessels very liable to a loss of the rudder, which must be speedily followed by cutting away the masts, and then the junk was helpless. A look at the preceding list of disasters will show how often this took place. Of course thus contining them near the shore would very much lessen the chances of their falling into the course of the Great Ocean Currents, which would sweep them away to America. Those laws have now been abrogated; an account of them may be found in Perry's Expedition.

The evidences of any local influences resulting from a contact with the Asiatic nations are very slight, and all that has come under my knowledge in this search can be stated in few words. Of the Alents, Davidson says, in Alaska Coast Pilot, p. 52, "The Alents are very distinct in their looks, manners, language and customs, from all the other Indians of the northwest, and many of them bear a close resemblance to the less marked of the Japanese, so much so that the question at once arises whether this people has not been derived from cast-away or shipwrecked inhabitants of Japan, carried thither by the Kamtschatka branch of the great Japanese stream; but it is not our province to investigate the problem in this place."

An agent of the Alaska Commercial Company, who brought down the three Japanese from Atka on the "Hutchinson," said they had no difficulty in making their wants known to the Aleuts, for they had many words in common. This gentleman had resided long at the northwest, and spoke the Aleutian language.

Wilkes also noticed among some of the tribes of Indians he visited on the Straits of Fuea, the presence of some simple acts resembling the Chinese, such as a style of weaving rush mats, the conical hats, &c., and he speaks of the presence of the "oblique" eye among the coast tribes only, and a variety of complexions in certain localities, as suggesting a kinship to the Asiatic nations. I may add, however, that in San Francisco, where house-servants, both of Chinese and Indian extraction, are common, it is often very pnzzling to detect their nationality, when dressed in European style. I have often been deceived myself. But these questions, as well as that of a similarity in language, are out of the range of my knowledge and foreign to my purpose.

To sum up then the sure results obtained, we have in the ninety years, from 1781 to 1871, nine junks, either stranded on our shores or drifted to their immediate neighborhood, and one at Oahu — and in every case where we have a record of the wreck a part of the erew saved alive, and this too at a period when the Japanese commercial regulations were most unfavorable to such voyages as brought their vessels within the influence of the Great Stream which could bear them to our shores. Recapitulating the list with approximate dates, we have, in

1815, Ju	ink board	led at Sea, lat. 32°	45 N., Ion. 166° 57′ W.
1813,	er er	about 49°	" 131°.
1820,	•• stran	led on Point Adam	ns.
1833,		Cape Flatte	ы ў .
1805,		near Sitka.	
1782,	66 <u>66</u>	on an Aleutian	Island.
1862,		" Attou	66
		" Adakh	66
1832,		" Oahu, Hawa	aiian Islands.
Date un	known, w	reck on San Benit	o Island.

Date unknown, several wrecks of junks on Midway and Ocean Islands, and Group between there and Oahu.

So much has come to our knowledge unquestionably, without counting the other cases which rest upon rumor. There is still remaining a possibility of more, whose crews have perished among the savages, or been absorbed. It is an interesting inquiry whether before the days of Japanese exclusiveness there may not, with freer navigation and stronger vessels, have been many more. And as Japanese History is opened to our study, it will be a enrious question whether some crew may not have returned home with the tidings of a new world far across the Ocean. However this may be, these facts are very interesting to illustrate the possible course of migration, and any anomalies observed among the northwest coast Indians may possibly receive some light from the likelihood of an infusion of Japanese blood.







