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JOHN BATCHELOR & KINGO MIYABE

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*With the respect
of K. Miyabe.*

198)

AINU ECONOMIC PLANTS.

By REV. JOHN BATCHELOR AND DR. KINGO MIYABE.

[Read April 12, 1893.]

INTRODUCTION.

There is no field in the domain of economic botany more interesting and full of promise than that among a barbarous race which has wholly subsisted for untold ages on the products of the forest and the sea, and the spoils of the chase. Such a field one naturally finds among the Ainu of Hokkaidō.

That a subject of such interest should have been almost wholly neglected by recent foreign writers on this race is easily to be explained by the nature of the subject, for it demands in an author a happy combination of the thorough knowledge of the flora of the region with that of the language and customs of the people. If, therefore any explanation be sought for the joint authorship of this paper the reason will be found in this fact.

Works on this subject by Japanese writers and botanists are not wanting. As early as the later part of the eighteenth century, the Tokugawa Government sent a young doctor and artist named Tani Buntan (谷文且) to Yezo to investigate the natural products of the island, having special regard to medicine. The results of his

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researches are supposed to be embodied in a manuscript called the Tōi-Bussanshi (東夷物産志) which is a treatise on the natural products of Eastern Yezo.

About the year 1810, a work called the Yezo Sō-moku-shiryō (蝦夷草木志料) or "Materials for a Flora of Yezo," by So Shōkei (曾約啓) appeared; and about the year 1850 a manuscript in two volumes was written on the natural products of Yezo, and called the Yezo Bussanshi (蝦夷物産志). This work is said to be the result of the joint authorship of several naturalists then residing in Hakodate and among whom is to be counted Kurimoto Jyoun (栗本鶏雲) who is now a member of the Gakushi-in of Tokyo. In the diaries of travel in different parts of Yezo by Matsunura Takeshiro (松浦竹四郎) are to be found many interesting facts with regard to Ainu economic plants.

All the statements found in these volumes were collected and published in the year 1883 by one of the authors of the present work in the 34th volume of the Hokkaidō-shi (北海道志). The most recent contribution to the subject is also by the same author and is to be found in the first and second numbers of a journal called the Keirin (藁林) published in Sapporo in the months of May and July 1892. It is on the medicinal plants and also on the trees and shrubs used by the Ainu.

These works were consulted by us in the preparation of the present paper, but those statements which have not been confirmed by the Ainu we have personally questioned about them have been all excluded. They may be published by us on some future occasion, as some of them have uncommon interest. The present paper therefore contains little but what we have seen used ourselves, or are perfectly certain are known and used by the Ainu.

In the preparation of this paper the Ainu of Oshamambe, Repunge, Aputa, Usu, Horobets, Chitose, Osatnai, Mukawa, Saru, Tokachi, Kushiro, and the Kurile Islands

among others have been questioned, and though one plant may not be known in one district, it is sometimes found to be both known and used in another.

Our best thanks are due to K. Jimbo, Esq., who has most assiduously laboured in the matter of collecting and verifying Ainu names and in procuring specimens for identification.

This little work must not be considered exhaustive; we feel that the subject has but just been commenced and intend steadily to pursue our studies. We hope on some future occasion to present a paper to this Society on the fibrous plants and on the trees and shrubs used by the Ainu.

PART I.

AINU MEDICINAL PLANTS.

1.—ARIKKO.

Thalictrum aquilegifolium, L.

KARAMATSO-SO. カラマンサウ. The Feather Columbine.

The roots of this plant eaten either raw or roasted are said to cure pains in the stomach. They are very bitter to the taste. Sometimes, however, on occasions of stomach-ache a decoction is made by steeping the roots in boiling water, and a good strong dose taken. This is said to work wonders. Should a person wound his hand when at work, or thrust some sharp object into his foot when walking through the forest, he will take the roots of this plant, chew them to a paste, and apply to the wounded part to prevent suppuration.

Some of the Ainu take the leaves of this herb, roll them between the hands to bruise and make them soft, and then plaster over any part of the body where there should be an internal pain or contusion.

2. HORAP or ORAP.

Paeonia obovata, Maxim.

YAMA-SHAKUTAKU (ヤマシヤクタク).

The root of this plant is dug up, dried and preserved for medicinal purposes. It has a bitter taste. In cases of stomach-ache some Ainu take a piece of the root, and swallow it with water. It is said to have an immediate effect. The root chewed to a paste is sometimes applied to aching joints of the body. For ordinary slight ailments, a decoction of this root is commonly recommended.

In Mukawa and elsewhere, the seeds of this paeony are recommended as a remedy for sore eyes; when used for this purpose, the seeds are chewed up and put in a piece of clean white cloth; the juice is then squeezed out into the eyes. In Usu, when a person suffers from a pain in his ears, the smoke from a mixture of tobacco and powdered seeds is blown into them.

3.—OPKE-NI OR OMAUKUSH-NI.

Magnolia Kobus, DC.

KOBUSHI (コブシ).

The bark is the part employed as medicine. A decoction is taken in time of colds. As in the case of *Pukusa* (see No. 99 and 120) and *Nikin-ni* (see No. 18 and 58.), the bark of this *Magnolia* is believed to have the mysterious power of driving away the demons of disease. In times of a pestilence, a piece of the bark is commonly put into the drinking water as a preventive. Branches are placed over doors and windows as a charm. A thin decoction is often made and drunk in place of tea.

4.—REPNIHAT.

Schizandra chinensis, Bail.

CHŌSEN-GOMISHI (チウセンゴミシ).

The vines are the part generally used as medicine, although the fruit is also sometimes so used. By some Ainu it is believed to be a specific for colds. When

taken for colds, a piece of the vine is rolled up and put into a cup containing boiling water. The thin decoction thus made is taken. It is also recommended by some Ainu as a remedy for sea-sickness.

5. OTOMPUI-KINA.

Chelidonium majus, L.

KUSA-NO-WO. (クサノヲカ). The Common Celandine.

The stem and leaves, after having been softened by dipping into hot water, are applied externally to any place where there are internal pains caused by a fall or confusion. Some Ainu believe the yellow juice of this plant destroys warts. This may possibly have been learned from the Japanese. It is also reputed to be an antidote against snake-poisoning. Some Ainu apply this plant to the stomach to relieve internal pains. A most peculiar practice is, when a child suffers from constipation, to place a small piece of bruised stem in the anus. This is said to have an immediate effect.

6.—RITEN-KINA.

Stellaria media, L.

HAKOZE (ハコゼ). The Chickweed.

This common weed is widely used for external application to bruises or to any part of the body where the bones ache. The stems and leaves are steeped in hot water before being applied.

7.—KUTCHI-PUNGARA.

Actinidia arguta, Planch.

KOKUWA (コクワ).

In the spring of the year, when the vine of this climber is cut, sap flows out freely and in large quantities. The sap is used as a medicine and is believed to be a good expectorant. (See No. 51).

8.—SHIKEREBE-NI.

Phellodendron amurense, Rupr.

KIWADA OF SHIKORO. (キハダ, シコロ).

The inner bark of this tree is much esteemed by the Ainu as a medicine. It is yellow in colour and extremely bitter to the taste. It is applied externally over any portion of the body where there should be internal pain, particularly such as may have been caused by falling from a horse, or by any similar accident. It is also applied to burns, scalds and sore eyes. The bark is bruised and made damp either by chewing or with water before it is used. Persons who travel in the interior of this island and who are called upon to wade streams the greater part of the day, suffer greatly from a skin disease called *mizu-mushi* by the Japanese. This disease attacks the spaces between the toes, quickly making them quite raw. An application or two of the inner bark of the *shikerebe-ni* is said to remove the malady.

The berries of this tree are much prized by some Ainu as a medicine; they are said to be a good expectorant. In some places the berries are used in cases where the muscles have been strained and caused to swell. On such occasions a few of the berries are chewed into a pasty mass and put upon the affected part. The fruit is also used as an article of food.

9.—SHIU-NI or YUK-RAIGE-NI.

Picrasma ailanthoides, Planch.

NIGAKI (ニガキ).

The bark of this tree has a very bitter taste which is believed by the Ainu to be poisonous. A strong decoction is often used to kill head-lice. Eruptions on the scalps of children are also sometimes washed with it. It is said that should deer eat the bark of this tree they die very soon after. Hence the name, which means "Deer-killing-tree."

10.—TOCHI-NI.

Æsculus turbinata, Bl.

TOCHI-NO-KI (トチノキ). The Horse-chestnut.

The nuts of this plant are often used as a medicine. They are taken and dried for future use. When required they are soaked and well scraped. The scrapings are then steeped in water and the decoction used to wash wounds with. The Ainu often use it for washing the eyes of horses when they run water or discharge matter.

11.—OIKARA.

Pueraria Thunbergiana, Benth.

KUZU. (クズ)

The root of this plant is dug up and used as a remedy for aches and bruises. The root is thoroughly roasted at a fire and the affected part of the body well rubbed with it. The root-stock of the *Pueraria* is rich in very fine starch and is much esteemed by the Japanese; but the Ainu know nothing of it as an article of food.

12.—CHIKUBE-NI.

Cladrastis amurensis, Benth. var. *Buergeri*, Max.

INU-ENJU (イヌエヌ).

The bark of this tree is believed to have a poisonous property. It is externally applied on the body where there is internal pain.

13.—KIKIN-NI.

Prunus Padus, L.

YEZO-UWAMIZU-ZAKURA, (エゾウハミツザクラ). The Bird-Cherry.

The bark of this tree is sometimes steeped in hot water and used as a remedy for stomach-ache. The decoction is drunk.