

Remembering a More Layered Past in Hokkaido: Americans, Japanese, and the Ainu

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I THE ADVENTURE OF CHARLES LONGFELLOW

It was a “cool” and “bracing” morning in the southern part of Hokkaido (Figure 1). The day was September 16, 1871, and fall had already come to the northern island of Japan. But Charles Longfellow did not mind the chill. Rather, he and his travel companion, Charles De Long, the American Minister to Japan, felt that the morning was quite “pleasant.” As they walked along the coast, they enjoyed the calm sea on one side and the “richly wooded undulating hills or mountains” on the other. Following them were a group of Japanese officials acting as an escort to the guests from abroad. A group of Japanese coolies also followed, carrying heavy luggage and leading pack horses.¹

Longfellow was more than six thousand miles away from his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where his father, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and his family led a life of cultivated comfort, surrounded by friends and visitors of considerable intellectual and material sophistication.² Despite the lack of such material comfort in Hokkaido—walking on narrow paths, riding untrained horses, and spending the nights in makeshift shelters—Charles’ spirits remained high. He and De Long, a “rough and ready Colorado man who would shine more in the field than the cabinet,” were excited because they knew they were finally going to

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Figure 1 Map of Hokkaido, Japan

have a chance to satisfy their longstanding wish: they were scheduled to see the Ainu, the indigenous people of the island.³ The men had come all the way to Hokkaido just to see the natives, described by the Japanese in Tokyo as “the queer people.” The Americans had heard that the Ainu men were “hairy” and “wild,” while the women were said to “succle [sic] bear cubs, fatten and eat them.”⁴ The adventurous men desired to observe these “queer people” with their own eyes. When De Long managed to obtain permission from the Japanese government to travel to the island, Charles Longfellow decided to accompany him, explaining to his family that there would be “hundreds of fellows who would give all their old loots to do this.”⁵

Soon the Americans and their Japanese retinue arrived in a small Ainu village called Urap, which consisted of about thirty houses. Longfellow quickly left the column on a horse and excitedly galloped into the village to have a closer look at the “queer people.” But his sudden arrival caused great “dismay” among the Ainu residents, particularly among the women who “either ran away or crouched down covering their mouths and uttering a peculiar low wailing sound.”⁶

Although Longfellow’s first encounter with the Ainu ended in a fiasco, he had other opportunities to satisfy his desire to visit Ainu communities during the following days of traveling. On September 21, for example, he arrived in a larger Ainu village where he “cornered two bright-eyed girls of about eighteen” as “captives” and struck up “quite a talk with them.” He showed them his tattoo which they admired “very much[,] it being so much better than their own rude work.” He completed the conversation with these “captives” by giving them some money and receiving a carved wooden spoon in return.⁷

Three months later, the *New York Times* ran a report on Longfellow and De Long’s journey. It included a description of the “hairy aborigines of Japan” and detailed activities not fully recorded in Longfellow’s diary. According to this unknown journalist, during the journey the Americans had the opportunities to enter several Ainu houses, to see at least one performance of traditional Ainu dance, and to go hunting with the Ainu men. They apparently also got a close look at the natives when traveling in “a junk, rowed for a long time by Ainos.” “It was a curious scene,” the article reported, “to behold those wild, long bearded fellows (an exact picture of first-class theatrical pirates,) singing to their oars, and chanting a wild and not unmusical song.”⁸

Although Charles Longfellow's account of his travel to Hokkaido remains virtually unknown today, his experience is significant because it points to a dimension of the past that has not been sufficiently recognized by historians interested in the intercultural history of the United States and Japan. Despite the presence of numerous works that have analyzed the variegated dimensions of the history of the two nations, few, if any, scholars have paid close attention to the encounters between Americans and the Ainu. This is a rather curious oversight, because many of the works that focus on the history of the U.S.-Japan relationship have dwelled upon the history of the northern island of Hokkaido, where for many centuries the majority of the population had been Ainu.⁹

Scholars who have investigated the history of Hokkaido have disclosed a great deal about the extent of the American "contribution" to the Japanese "development" of the island during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Americans such as Horace Capron and William Smith Clark played a critical role in the Japanese Colonization Commission, a government agency established in 1868 to colonize and develop the northern island, which had been relatively unoccupied by the Japanese until that time.¹⁰ They provided the Japanese with technical expertise in a wide range of areas including modern methods of surveying, mining, logging, agriculture, and education. As a result, these "American pioneers" did much to transform the "Japanese frontier." As Fumiko Fujita has noted in her research of American involvement in the island, the works of American advisors "left a distinctively American imprint on the history of Hokkaido."¹¹

Although it is important to recognize the significance of American activities in Japan's mission of colonization, it is also necessary to recognize that the relationship of Americans with the Japanese was only one part of the "American imprint on the history of Hokkaido." Another equally, if not more, important dimension was many encounters between Americans and the Ainu, who had been living in the area for centuries before the arrival of the Japanese and Americans. Although only a few concrete cases of such encounters are available for historical scrutiny today, I believe it is important to retrieve them and move them to the foreground of our historical memory, so as to construct a more complex and multilayered vision of the past in Hokkaido.

In this paper, I would like to suggest a new way of conceptualizing the past relationship between the United States and Japan by calling attention to the presence of the Ainu and thereby complicating the nature

of that relationship. Specifically, by dwelling upon the records of two encounters—the account of Charles Longfellow’s travels to Ainu villages and a photograph of William Smith Clark and Sakhalin Ainu women—I will call attention to the possibility of expanding the scope of understanding the intercultural history of Japan and the United States. The Ainu were often “victimized” in such encounters because the balance of power and privilege between the Ainu and Americans was far from equal. However, I will also point to the important and somewhat paradoxical role the indigenous people played in facilitating the presence of Americans and their work in the island, and thereby potentially subverting the seemingly firm hierarchical power relations of the two groups. By doing so, I hope to initiate a re-evaluation of the entire terrain of the understanding of the intercultural history of the United States and Japan in the nineteenth century.¹²

II THE IMPERIAL EYES

Despite his strong wish to see the “queer” natives of the northern island, Charles Longfellow’s description of the Ainu suggests he was not really seriously interested in understanding these people and their culture. His choice and sequence of words in describing the Ainu indicate that he regarded the natives not as fellow human beings but more as creatures who shared less with a man like himself than they did with the native birds and animals of the island. For example, when he saw a group of Ainu men making oil from sardines on the beach, he noted in his memo that it was an “interesting scene[;] Inos [Ainu] drawing net and boiling sardines for oil, [while] dogs, women and crows assist [them].”¹³ His impression of the Ainu dance was favorable, but he also considered it more bestial than human. He noted that “their songs were pretty and sad[,] the dances were hopping about[,] beating hands and making noises like young bears.”¹⁴

In short, Longfellow’s interest in the Ainu was that of a detached observer who wished to satisfy his curiosity by seeing the strange and the different. He saw his life as being far different to that of the natives and he simply wished to relish a quick taste of the “queer” customs and traditions of the Ainu before returning to civilization.

The structure of power embedded in Longfellow’s encounter with the Ainu was clear. As a part of the group that included the official delegate from the U.S. government, Longfellow was a privileged tourist. He and

his fellow travelers had such strong political and financial power that most Japanese they met found it necessary to take the utmost care in hosting them. Longfellow described how he was pleasantly “struck by the attention we received.” On one occasion, for example, they were met by Japanese men “in their best clothes, and katowing before speaking, while the whole tea house was given up to us.” As he and his fellow westerners traveled, the Japanese on the street would lead their animals “out of the road” and would “take off their hats or handkerchiefs[,] often dismounting[,] many even going down on their knees, out of respect.”¹⁵ The power Longfellow enjoyed over the Ainu was even stronger and more privileged. He could easily “corner” the Ainu women, enter into their houses and observe a ritual dance, transforming the Ainu into mere objects, remnants of wild savagery to stare at before returning to civilization. Encounters like these between Americans and the Ainu would continue long after Longfellow’s departure. Whether the Americans were tourists, advisors to the Colonization Commission, or anthropologists, their position in Hokkaido was so politically powerful that their relationship with the Ainu remained firmly hierarchical. Americans and the Ainu seemed to stand at opposite ends of a spectrum of dominance and deference, as the former commanded respect and power from the Japanese while the latter were rapidly losing control of their autonomy in their own land.

* * *

The pattern of hierarchy which organized American–Ainu interaction is visibly demonstrated in a photograph taken in Sapporo about five years after Longfellow’s visit to that town (Figure 2). It was taken some time between the fall of 1876 and spring of 1877 in the town of Sapporo, the capital of the northern island.¹⁶ The scene, captured by a Japanese photographer named Seiichi Takebayashi, shows a total of eight figures, but only two are identifiable today.¹⁷

The American man standing to the right is William Clark, who was employed by the Colonization Commission as the first president of Sapporo Agricultural College (SAC). SAC was modeled after the Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst, Massachusetts, where Clark had also served as president. Its mission was to teach Japanese students a scientific approach to agriculture. According to Clark, the goal of the school was “the proper training of the students . . . in practical



Figure 2 William S. Clark and a group of Sakhalin Ainu, 1876–77. Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum.

agriculture, and especially in the correct mode of farm management, with due regard to economy of labor, the production of profitable crops and stock, and the maintenance of fertility in the soil.”¹⁸

The Japanese man standing at the far left of the group is Seitaro Hori, a graduate of Massachusetts Agricultural College. He was an employee of the Colonization Commission and served as Clark’s personal secretary and interpreter.¹⁹ Although considerably shorter than Clark, Hori looks much like him in the photograph. The beard, the moustache, and the hairstyle, as well as his set of western clothing—including a jacket, a vest, and a white shirt—all emulate the style of his American boss. The only accessories missing are a bowtie and a watch chained to his vest.

Clark and Hori stand behind a group of unnamed young Ainu women and an infant, all of whom wear traditional Ainu garb. While the small girl to the right and the mother in the center nursing the infant wear dresses made of animal hides (perhaps deer or seal), the other figures, looking slightly downwards, wear outer garments made from woven tree bark fibers. They all wear shoes made of animal skin. Hardly anything is known about these women today except that they were “Karahuto

[Sakhalin] Ainu,” who had been relocated from their home on Sakhalin Island to Hokkaido by the Japanese government as a result of an international treaty made between Russia and Japan in 1875.

The 1875 treaty settled a long-standing border dispute between the two nations by granting Russian sovereignty over Sakhalin in exchange for recognition of the Japanese claim over the Kurile islands. Although the Ainu had claimed that “Karahuto [Sakhalin] belonged to the Ainu,” the Japanese government was not inclined to listen to the voice of this minority group in an age of unrelenting imperial territorial ambitions.²⁰ The government argued that the Ainu in Sakhalin were Japanese citizens and encouraged them to leave the soon-to-be Russian territory. A total of 841 Ainu men and women, who were more accustomed to living with the Japanese than with the Russians, consented to leave for an area called Soya in Hokkaido, directly across the strait from Sakhalin. But fearing that the “stubborn and stupid” Ainu would eventually “escape back” to Sakhalin and trigger a border dispute, the Japanese government decided to move them to a more distant area called Tsuishikari, near Sapporo. The Sakhalin Ainu strongly opposed the idea of being relocated to an area so far from home and petitioned to have the plan canceled, expressing their fear of smallpox in the unaccustomed climate and their concern over the lack of desirable fishing areas. But the government forced the relocation by rounding up the Ainu like “sheep and pigs,” as one outraged Japanese advocate of the Ainu complained at the time. Because the Ainu continued to oppose the idea of the relocation to Tsuishikari, they were first taken to the port of Otaru with a new promise that they would instead be relocated to an area called Atsuta, which was closer to the ocean. But the Japanese officials deceived them again by suddenly redirecting the ship to Tsuishikari. The Ainu strongly protested, but they were forced to give up as the Japanese police were sent to the port to prevent possible resistance. The bitter involuntary relocation to Tsuishikari was completed in June 1876, only two months before Clark’s arrival in Sapporo.²¹

The scene in the photograph thus brought together two different and unequal cultures that were increasingly at odds with each other. Clark represented the arrival of a new social system in the colonized island. His goal was to establish many large-scale farms in Hokkaido that would be administered rationally by professionals (like himself) and that would produce crops of great exchange value in distant markets. He argued that the “most rational and approved system of farm economy should be

adopted” for the island and “only such crops and stock should be raised as are likely to be worth their cost.” He also recommended that “hand implements and human labor should be replaced by agricultural machines and the working of horses and cattle.”²² Accordingly, he devised an academic curriculum for his Japanese students at SAC that encouraged the gaining of both a scientific and a practical knowledge of agriculture and “farm economy.” He ordered textbooks, equipment, seeds, and domestic animals from the United States. He also emphasized the importance of developing in Japanese youth a sense of self-will, self-help, and self-discipline, as well as the Christian faith, so that they could fully direct their attention and energy to the goal of becoming the “most useful and most noble Christian men” in modernized Japan.²³

The way Hori stands in the photograph suggests that he had paid attention to and mastered Clark’s instructions. He presents himself as modern and non-traditional in his outfit, particularly at a time when many Japanese officials were still wearing the more traditional Haori and Hakama. In growing a beard, he had defied the stereotypical image of a Japanese man. At the time, many Westerners were often struck by the “hairless” and “feminine” features of Japanese men, but there is little in the visual image of Hori that evoked a sense of femininity.²⁴ Rather, he stands as a mini-Clark or as a visual double of Clark, somewhat less completely westernized than his master but sharing the same outlook on the future of the island. As a graduate of Massachusetts Agricultural College, he was a believer in Clark’s ideology and would have fully agreed with one of the Japanese students at SAC who wrote that he wanted to become like an American “scientific farmer” or a man of “independent, self-reliant spirit, [with] steady, vigorous character and healthy, sound constitution.”²⁵

In strong contrast, the cosmology of the Ainu men and women differed profoundly from Clark’s vision. The Sakhalin Ainu in the photograph had traditionally lived by hunting sea animals and gathering plants for their livelihood. To accommodate their hunting and collecting expeditions, they moved from one point to another depending on the season. The food and other materials they collected were more important for using and consuming within their local community than for the potential benefits they could bring from market exchanges. Members of the Ainu communities discouraged personal ambition and gain and emphasized the harmony of their community and its relationship with their gods. True, any description of the culture of these people as “simple,”

“stable,” “pure,” or “completely self-sufficient” is grossly inaccurate, as the Ainu had their own complex needs and expectations, as well as a system of exchange with neighboring cultures. But it is reasonable to argue that they were not much concerned with the “system of farm economy” and the “scientific” farming Clark vigorously advocated. The Ainu related to their land differently from the American and Japanese colonizers.²⁶

The photographer Takebayashi captured these two different cultures in a series of contrasts: men with names versus women without names; individuals versus a group; western outfits versus indigenous outfits; clothing materials processed in factories versus raw materials worked by hand; adult versus children; standing high versus sitting low; looking straight versus looking down; fully clothed versus partly naked. And it was clear which side enjoyed the power. Clark and Hori represented the antithesis of the Ainu, who, according to Clark’s judgement, had “made little or no progress in the art of civilization during the last thirty centuries.”²⁷ Whereas the Ainu in the photograph had recently been relocated from their native land against their wishes, the newcomer Clark boasted that he had “plenty of business, plenty of influence, plenty of money and plenty of happiness” in the island.²⁸ While the men represented the glorious future of the island, the women were considered a relic of the past, fast disappearing from the face of earth. The scene in the photograph signified the arrival of the new forces that had overtaken and overcome the local social system and confirmed the triumphant victory of modernity sustained by the expansive political ideology of western imperialism.²⁹

III THE EROTIC SUBMISSION

Analysis of the formal qualities of the photograph further illuminates the relationship between the two groups. The composition of this photograph is well balanced and seems to have been carefully crafted. Each man stands behind two Ainu women. The triumvirate placement of the figures requires attention because they are strategically located to emphasize one central point in the scene: the naked breast. Both triangular clusters of figures look slightly inward, thereby directing the gaze of the viewer to the center. The pose of the figures further directs the gaze to the lower half of the photograph as Hori and the women on both sides (except for the little girl) project their eyes downward. Thus the direction of the bodies and eyes as well as the placement of the figures

directs the gaze toward the woman with an exposed breast. This woman sits in a way that maximizes the exposure of her breast to the viewer. If the gaze had been intended to focus on the woman herself, she would have sat looking straight into the camera lens—in fact, such a posture would have made the entire scene well-proportioned because her body would then be the central line of axis for the two contrasting triangular clusters. But she is posed looking slightly to the right, ensuring that her breast remained visible. (Looking left was apparently unacceptable as the infant's head would have obstructed the view.) Moreover, unlike the other women in the photograph, she is dressed not in a skin-colored dress made of woven tree bark fibers but in a dark-colored coat made of animal hides which produces a sharp and emphatic contrast with her white skin and further attracts the viewer's gaze to the breast. Thus the partial nudity in this scene is carefully calculated in its effect: the placement of the figures and their postures in this scene draws the viewer's attention to the woman's breast as if the whole scene were subsumed under the image of her nudity.

It is difficult to imagine that the Ainu woman in the photograph exposed her breast simply to feed her child. Ethnographic accounts from the past indicate that the Ainu often objected to being photographed. According to John Batchelor, the well-known missionary and ethnographer who lived among the Ainu for nearly a half century, this was because it was believed that, by "being sketched or photographed," "their natural life was . . . shortened in some mysterious way or other." Batchelor tells of an account of a western traveler who visited Sakhalin without knowing of the Ainu's aversion to photographs. The man "took an almost endless amount of trouble to develop" a few photographs he had taken in the community, thinking that they would please and surprise the local Ainu. But when he presented the photographs, the chief and his associates became so distressed and enraged with this act of transgression that they burnt all of his photographs and even his "poor kodak" into ashes.³⁰

Furthermore, evidence suggests that the Ainu women in particular had strong reservations about exposing their skin in public. For example, Benjamin Lyman, an American engineer who conducted a series of mineralogical surveys of the island in the late nineteenth century, noticed that while Ainu men readily stripped "to their waist cloth" when crossing rivers, the women "only replaced an outer garment." "It is plain," he observed, "that among Aino women there exists the desire to conceal the

greater part of the body.” Other reports corroborate Lyman’s observation. Jan Havlasa, who traveled to Hokkaido in 1912, noted that the Ainu women would not take their clothes off in a public bath, in sharp contrast to Japanese men and women who seemed to have little reservation about showing their bodies. The Ainu women were said to hide their breast even when breast-feeding by tucking their child inside the shirt.³¹ Such reports suggest that the nudity in the photograph was not an outcome of a mere coincidence. Rather, the male choreographers of this *tableau vivant* coerced the Ainu woman to act against her cultural norm and forced her to strip in a photographic studio.

This attention to the breast was consistent with Charles Longfellow’s interest in the story of Ainu women who were said to suckle the cubs kept in the community. At the same time, the scene undoubtedly satisfied the sexually interested gaze of the contemporary viewers who were, given the overwhelming predominance of men in the Colonization Commission (and the town of Sapporo), almost certainly male.

No recorded contemporary response to this photograph exists today, but I believe the juxtaposition of the exposed Ainu woman and Clark in the same scene offered a kind of visual pleasure to the Japanese viewers that was not so different from the pleasure Laura Mulvey detected in Hollywood “narrative cinema.” Using psychoanalytic theory, Mulvey identified three elements that constituted the basis of the pleasure male audiences find in popular Hollywood films. First is a “scopophilic instinct” or a desire to subject the female body as an erotic object. The men project their “phantasy on to the female figure” for the sake of their sexual enjoyment. Second is a form of narcissism that makes the male viewer “fascinated with the image of his like [i.e. the handsome male protagonist] in an illusion of natural space, and through him gaining control and possession of the woman.” Third is related to the classic Freudian psychoanalytic concept of the problem of the female figure who, because of “her lack of a penis,” implies “a threat of castration and hence unpleasure” to the male audience. According to Mulvey, there are two avenues of escape from this “castration anxiety.” One is to fetishize the woman so that she becomes “reassuring rather than dangerous.” The overvalued “cult of the female star” is a good example of such fetishization. The other strategy is to subject the woman to “voyeurism”—to investigate and demystify her and subsequently devalue, punish or save her. The latter processes, which are typified by the conventions of the *film noir*, have sadistic associations because the pleasure of the male viewer lies in

“ascertaining the guilt [of the woman] . . . asserting control and subjecting the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness.”³²

Although this feminist analysis of the male gaze has been critiqued by a number of scholars, I believe Mulvey’s analysis is helpful for exploring the kind of feeling evoked in the mind of the male viewers of the photograph in nineteenth-century Sapporo.³³ The viewers’ “scopophilic instinct” forced the Ainu woman to expose herself in front of the camera despite her cultural norm and turned her into an object of sexual fantasy. The men eroticized the woman by subjecting her to their gaze, dominating her and giving them a feeling of arousal and mastery over her.³⁴ Meanwhile, their “narcissistic instinct” was projected onto the two men, particularly to Clark, who had assumed at the time an almost deified image among the Japanese as a great teacher of modernization.³⁵ As Clark was highly respected not only by Japanese but also by his young American assistants, he acted as a “more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego” or the “controlling figure with whom the spectator [could] identify.”³⁶ He signified a greater and glorified future for the island. Through a narcissistic identification with Clark (or with Hori, who served as Clark’s alter ego), viewers could confirm their mastery over the future and through him gain a sense of control over the Ainu, who symbolized the past that needed to be suppressed and abandoned.

According to Mulvey’s psychoanalytic framework, it is also necessary to consider the significance of the “lack” represented by the Ainu women and the attendant “castration fear” they created in the male audience. The avenue the men took to repress this fear was not through “fetishization.” Fetishizing the people who represented the past was not appropriate for the Japanese, as they were interested in change and the future. Rather, they opted for the “voyeuristic mechanism.” To justify and assert their control over the Ainu, the men searched for the “guilt” of the natives. The voyeurism of the Japanese and American travelers, engineers, and anthropologists would therefore find the Ainu guilty of, among other things, not making any “progress” in the “last thirty centuries” and of the “savage” custom of nourishing the cub at a woman’s breast. It would also reveal the “stupidity” of their not understanding the border dispute between Russia and Japan. Upon finding these spheres of “guilt” the colonizers “punished” the Ainu by depriving them of their land, but also “helped” them with measures such as relocating them to Tsuishikari.

IV THE EROTIC SUBVERSION

The psychoanalytic interpretation of this photograph locates the intertwined feeling of fear and domination unfolding under the erotic male gaze. Yet, I sense another way of reading the photograph because the presence of an infant here differentiates the scene quite sharply from most Hollywood narrative films. (After all, Garbo and Dietrich did not nourish babies in their films.) It is perhaps true that the “scopophilic instinct” of the men forced the Ainu woman to uncover herself so as to eroticize her. At the same time, however, the presence of the naked breast and the infant makes it possible to argue that the Japanese male viewers were also dependent upon her. This is because the utmost eroticism of the men’s sexual fantasy could only be derived through imaginary identification with the infant, who, like the famous cub, was allowed to “suckle” the woman’s breast in public. While narcissistically identifying themselves with the standing, soaring Clark, the scopophilic male viewers could only fantasize the tactile experience of touching the woman’s breast through identification with the infant. This pleasure, however, required the men to become infantile, cuddled and nourished by and dependent on the mother who would offer their regressive imaginary selves the bare breast.

This image of the male viewer as an infant serves as a counterpoint to the male viewer who finds the “guilt” of the woman and asserts control over her. Clark and other men had the power to strip the woman and point to her “lack,” but once the breast was exposed, they could exercise their erotic imagination only by transforming themselves into a dependent baby in her arms. As Homi Bhaba suggests in his discussion of the “other” question, the colonial “body is always (if conflictually) inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power.”³⁷ While the body of the Ainu served as an object of material and sexual exploitation, the sexual attachment between the dominant and the dominated mediated by the naked breast in this photograph simultaneously leads to a potential for transgressing that hierarchy.

Indeed, in real life, power and dependency were intertwined within the seemingly rigid hierarchical relationship of the colonizers and the colonized, because the very identity of the colonizers was dependent upon the colonized. This is because it was the Ainu who, by occupying the island for centuries, had rendered the land sufficiently “alien” and

“foreign” as to require “colonization.” The very *raison d’être* of the Colonization Commission was based upon the presence of the Ainu men and women living on the island.

The presence of the “alien” Ainu in Hokkaido was particularly relevant to the employment of Americans. Immediately after the establishment of the Colonization Commission, the Japanese began searching for foreign advisors who would help transform this unfamiliar and unexplored land. Who would be the best qualified for colonizing such an “alien” environment and transforming it into a useful land? The Japanese had no experience in confronting an “alien” “frontier.” Kiyotaka Kuroda, who was the Deputy Chief Minister of the Commission at the time, decided that he had to find “an advisor experienced in the opening of a new land . . . from a country whose meteorological and topographical conditions are similar” to Hokkaido.³⁸

After some deliberation, Kuroda decided to recruit men from the United States, rather than from European nations. This decision was based on his regard for the United States as “a prosperous country with the experience of ‘opening up a new land [while] pushing back the frontier.’”³⁹ The logic of inviting Americans to Hokkaido was based upon his understanding that the practical experience of “opening” the western land proved the American capacity for confronting and transforming the closed and unfamiliar land in Hokkaido. In other words, the Japanese invited the Americans because the land was an alien frontier land inhabited by equally alien Ainu men and women. In this respect, Americans owed their employment to the Ainu, who made the land sufficiently “alien” to the Japanese.

Indeed, had the land been a familiar, non-frontier land, the Japanese would not have employed Americans. In the nineteenth century, Americans were under-represented as advisors and teachers in all other areas of Japan. Americans made up only 13% of all the foreigners employed by the Japanese government between 1868 and 1889. But the number jumped to 58% in the “frontier” of Hokkaido.⁴⁰ More significantly, virtually all the men hired for the most prominent positions in Hokkaido, such as the chief advisor to the Colonization Commission (Horace Capron) or the presidents of SAC (William Clark and William Wheeler), were Americans. The Japanese government consciously altered its pattern of foreign employment in Hokkaido because it believed that only Americans could effectively colonize and people a “frontier” environment. The rationale for inviting American men to

come to Hokkaido rested upon the presence of the Ainu men and women who, according to Clark's allegation, had "made little or no progress" in "the last thirty centuries."

V A MORE LAYERED VISION

Charles Longfellow's description of the Ainu and the photograph of William Clark standing with Seitaro Hori and the Ainu women suggest a new way of conceptualizing the significance of the American involvement in the modern history of Hokkaido. The analysis of these visual and documentary records points to the importance of recognizing a dimension of the past that has yet to be given a full recognition. It is a modest step toward constructing a more balanced historical narrative that foregrounds a wider variety of historical agents involved in the past scene.

In order to gain a more complex, nuanced, and multilayered vision of the human interactions that took place in the island in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to reclaim the presence of the Ainu as a significant third party and insert them into the existing narrative of a dual encounter between the Japanese and Americans. However, this act of insertion should not be regarded as an attempt to enrich the existing Japanese history and the history of Japanese relationship with the United States by simply making their past more multicultural. Rather, it complicates and problematizes the very framework of the existing understanding of the U.S.-Japan relationship in the northern island by arguing that the Ainu occupied a position that was profoundly integral to the whole terrain of cultural interactions in nineteenth-century Hokkaido. Although the Ainu suffered greatly in the face of the inauspicious collaboration of the Japanese and their American assistants, they were not simply the helpless victims of colonization. Rather, despite their serious loss of political and economic resources under colonization, they remained a critical force in the making of the colonial history of the island. Recapturing that force from the layered sediment of the past renders a simplified narrative of binary exchanges and encounters between the Japanese and Americans no longer tenable. A full recognition of the Ainu and their subversive force, made without any underestimation of the degree of their victimization, will enable a reappraisal of the whole significance of the intercultural history of the northern island.

NOTES

¹ Charles Longfellow to Alice Longfellow, 16–19 September 1871. The letters are written in the form of a diary addressed to Charles' sisters, Alice and Edie, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They are available in the archives of Longfellow National Historic Site in Cambridge today. Longfellow's letters and journals written in Japan were recently published by the Longfellow National Historic Site. Christine Wallace Laidlaw, ed., *Charles Appleton Longfellow: Twenty Months in Japan, 1871–1873* (Cambridge, MA: Friends of the Longfellow House, 1998). The quotations in this paper are taken from the original manuscript.

² For a useful summary of the life at Longfellow house, see U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Final Master Plan: Longfellow National Historic Site* (Cambridge, MA: Longfellow National Historic Site, 1978).

³ Charles to Alice, 3 August 1871. Charles Longfellow's information about De Long was a mistake. De Long was born in New York and had been a politician in Nevada. Laidlaw, *Charles Appleton Longfellow*, 38.

⁴ Charles to Edie, 13 September 1871. Longfellow was traveling with several other men including a Dr. Ugo Pisa, the "Italian Secretary" in Japan, and Elisha Rice, who was the American consul in Hakodate.

⁵ Charles to Alice, 3 August 1871.

⁶ Charles to Alice, 16–19 September 1871.

⁷ Charles to Alice, 21 September 1871.

⁸ Although the writer of this article is unknown, its tone suggests that the reporter was a part of the traveling group. "Travels in Japan: Additional Notes of Minister De Long's Journey in the Interior," *New York Times*, 3 February 1872, 12.

⁹ See, for example, Foster Rhea Dulles, *Yankees and Samurai* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 174. Merle Curti and Kendall Birr, *Prelude to Point Four: American Technical Missions Overseas, 1838–1938* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954), 39–65. John A. Harrison, *Japan's Northern Frontier: A Preliminary Study in Colonization and Expansion with Special Reference to the Relations of Japan and Russia* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1953).

¹⁰ Merle Curti and Kendall Birr, *Prelude to Point Four*. John A. Harrison, *Japan's Northern Frontier*. Issa Tanimura, *Kepuron Shogun* [General Capron] (Tokyo: Kenkyu Sha, 1937). Shingo Osaka, *Kuroda Kiyotaka to Horesu Kepuron* [Kiyotaka Kuroda and Horace Capron] (Sapporo: Hokkai Taimusu Sha, 1962). Shingo Osaka, *Kuraku Sensei Shoden* [A detailed history of Professor Clark] (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1956; repr. 1965). Masatake Oshima, *Kuraku Sensei to Sono Deshi Tachi* [Professor Clark and his students] ed., Tomo-o Oshima (Tokyo: Kyobunkan, 1993). Kazunori Harada, "Kaitakushi no Oyatoi Gaikoku Jin to Amerika" [Foreign Employees in the Colonization Commission and the United States] in *Hokkaido to Amerika* [Hokkaido and the United States] (Sapporo: Sapporo Gakuin Daigaku, 1993), 139–173. Of all the writings on Americans in Hokkaido, the most reliable and carefully researched is Fumiko Fujita, *American Pioneers and the Japanese Frontier: American Experts in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994). Fujita has also published an abridged version of the book in Japanese. Fujita, *Hokkaido wo Kaitaku Shita Amerika Jin* [Americans who developed Hokkaido] (Tokyo: Shincho Sensho, 1993).

¹¹ Fujita, *American Pioneers and the Japanese Frontier*, x. The popular use of the word "frontier" to characterize the island of Hokkaido has remained. See, for example, Douglas Lee, "Japan's Last Frontier: Hokkaido," *National Geographic* 157 (January 1980): 62–92.

¹² Although in this paper I discuss the Ainu within the context of the history of *Japanese-American* relationship, it is *not* my intention to recreate a vision of the past in which the Ainu are incorporated into a national history of Japan or the Japanese. As I will argue later in the conclusion, it is not my wish to have the Ainu subsumed under the Japanese national history. Rather, my goal is to question the very framework of conceptualizing the past in terms of simplified national identities by indicating how the seemingly binary national relationship between Japan and the U.S. not only involved a participation of an ethnically non-Japanese population but, more importantly, was enabled by them. David L. Howell discusses the danger of “regionalizing” and “domesticating” Ainu culture without significantly challenging the nationalistic framework. David L. Howell, “Ethnicity and Culture in Contemporary Japan,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 31 (January 1996): 171–190. On the “racial” significance of Ainu for the Japanese, see Richard Siddle, *Race, Resistance and the Ainu of Japan* (London: Routledge, 1996).

¹³ Journal of Charles Longfellow, 23 September 1871. Longfellow National Historic Site, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Besides writing letters to his sisters, Longfellow kept this journal as he traveled the island.

¹⁴ Journal of Charles Longfellow, 29 September 1871.

¹⁵ Charles to Alice, 17 and 18 September 1871.

¹⁶ Today, the original photograph is at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. The photograph was given to the museum by Mrs. Russell Robb in 1918. The reason why the photograph turned up in Salem is unclear. However, the town had strong connections with Japan and its northern island because of Edward Morse, who served as the director of the museum between 1880 and 1916 after teaching at the University of Tokyo between 1877 and 1879. He traveled extensively while he lived in Japan, including a visit to Sapporo and other areas of Hokkaido in 1878. The exact date of the photograph is not known but it was either 1876 or 1877 (the latter will make it six, rather than five years, after Longfellow’s visit to Sapporo) because William Clark, the American pictured in the scene, arrived in the fall of 1876 and left in April of 1877. As I will indicate later in the paper, these women were Sakhalin Ainu. It is important to remember that the Ainu were a diverse group of people and their lifestyles and customs differed significantly depending on where they lived. As Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney showed, the Sakhalin Ainu, in particular, differed from the Ainu in Hokkaido. However, virtually every Ainu group was influenced by the Japanese colonization through the destruction and deprivation of their tradition, land and means of livelihood. Thus, in this paper I treat the Ainu as a single group whose members generally experienced the same historical transformation in the latter half of the nineteenth century. On Sakhalin Ainu, see Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *The Ainu of Northwest Coast of Southern Sakhalin* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1974); Ohnuki-Tierney, “Regional Variations in Ainu Culture,” *American Ethnologist* 3 (May 1976): 297–329.

¹⁷ Takebayashi came to Sapporo in 1872 and became the only photographer in town. From 1872 to 1873, he was briefly employed by the Colonization Commission to keep a visual record of the colonization. In 1876 (when Clark arrived in the city) he built a new studio that turned out to be a successful business venture. This photograph was likely to have been taken in the new studio. Soichi Koshizaki, *Hokkaido Shashin Bunka Shi* [History of Photography in Hokkaido] (Otaru: Shinsei Sha, 1946).

¹⁸ William Clark to Kiyotaka Kuroda, 8 September 1876, in *First Annual Report of Sapporo Agricultural College, 1877* (Sapporo: Kaitakushi, 1877).

¹⁹ Clark specifically requested of the Colonization Commission that Hori be his assistant and interpreter. See the correspondence between William Clark and Kiyotaka

Kuroda on 14 September 1876 and 15 September 1876, Hokkaido Prefectural Government Archives.

²⁰ The statement is quoted in Genzo Sarashina, *Ainu to Nihonjin* [Ainu and Japanese] (Tokyo: Nihon Hoso Kyokai, 1970), 128. For a detailed historical account of the relocation, see Karahuto Ainu Shi Kenkyukai, *Tsuishikari no Ishibumi* [The stone monument of Tsuishikari] (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shuppan Kikaku Senta, 1992).

²¹ Youko Kaiho, *Kindai Hopposhi: Ainu Minzoku to Josei to* [Modern Northern History: About the Ainu and Women] (Tokyo: San-ichi Shobo, 1992) 102. The opposition was noted in a letter from Juro Matsumoto to Kiyotaka Kuroda, 25 May 1876, in Matsumoto Juro, *Ishikari Tokachi Ryo Kiko* [Travel Notes from Ishikari and Tokachi Districts], quoted in Kaiho, 102. The historian Shinichiro Takakura suggests that the government intended to use these Ainu as coal-miners for the Horonai mine, discovered by Benjamin Lyman, who was one of the American advisors to the Colonization Commission. Takakura, *Takakura Shinichiro Chosaku Shu* [Writings of Shinichiro Takakura] 1 (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shuppan Kikaku Senta, 1995), 364.

²² Clark to Kuroda, 8 September 1876, in *First Annual Report of Sapporo Agricultural College, 1877*.

²³ Letter from Clark to Kiyoshi Uchida, 1 July 1877, Hokkaido Kaitaku Kinenkan [Hokkaido Historical Museum]. Uchida was one of Clark's students.

²⁴ Yujin Yaguchi, "The Politics for the 'Copper-Colored Strangers': Japan and the Impending Crisis in 1860," *ALETHIA* 10 (1994): 49–69.

²⁵ Shosuke Sato, "Agriculture and its Development," *Amherst Record*, 14 August 1878. Reprinted in Naoki Onishi, ed., *Clark no Tegami* [The correspondence of W.S. Clark and his Japanese students] (Sapporo: Hokkaido Shuppan Kikaku Senta, 1986), 240, 245.

²⁶ Scholars argue today that the Ainu's system of exchange with other cultures was complex and far-reaching. Evidence suggests that the Ainu traded with the Chinese as well as with Russians and Japanese. But the mode of exchange can be distinguished from the system of international market exchange mediated by money, through which Hokkaido was incorporated into Japanese political economy in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Ohnuki-Tierney, *The Ainu of the Northwest Coast of Southern Sakhalin*. Isao Kikuchi, *Ainu Minzoku to Nihonjin* [The Ainu and Japanese] (Tokyo: Asahi Sensho, 1994).

²⁷ William S. Clark, *The Agriculture Of Japan* (Boston: Rand, Abery, & Co., 1879), 6.

²⁸ William Clark to William B. Churchill, 19 November 1876, Hokkaido University Library.

²⁹ Such a way of thinking was sustained by the logic of the "survival of the fittest," an idea from Spencerian social Darwinism, which was first introduced to Japan by two American scholars, Edward Morse and Ernest Fenollosa. Many leading Japanese intellectuals enthusiastically received the idea because it not only justified the need for Japan's drastic modernization program but also the nation's invasions into other nations and territories in Asia. Naohide Isono, "Shinkaron no Nihon he no Donyu," [Introduction to the Theory of Evolution to Japan] in Takeshi Moriya, ed, *Kyodo Kenkyu Mosu to Nihon* [Collaborative Research on Edward Morse and Japan] (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 1988), 295–327.

³⁰ John Batchelor, "Items of Ainu Folklore," *Journal of American Folklore* 7 (January–March, 1894), 43–44. Similar accounts by foreign visitors are found frequently. See, for example, Herbert G. Ponting, *In Lotus-Land Japan* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1911), 312–313; L.H. Dudley Buxton, *The Eastern Road* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1924), 54.

³¹ Lyman's report is found in Horace Capron, Commissioner and Adviser, and His Foreign Assistants, *Reports and Official Letters to the Kaitakushi* (Tokyo: Kaitakushi, 1875), 481. Jan Havlasa, *Japonsky podzim. Zlomky života*, trans. Susumu Nagayo (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1988), 143–144. On how the Ainu women nourished their babies in public, see Genzo Sarashina, *Ainu no Minzoku* [Ainu Ethnography] (Sapporo: Miyama Shobo, 1982), 191. Ainu Bunka Hozon Taisaku Kyogi Kai, ed., *Ainu Minzoku Shi* [Ethnography of the Ainu] (Tokyo: Dai-ichi Hoki Shuppan, 1969), 468.

³² Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16 (Autumn 1975): 6–18.

³³ See, for example, Tania Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Film Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 1–15; Edward Snow, "Theorizing the Male Gaze: Some Problems," *Representations* 25 (Winter 1989): 30–41.

³⁴ In his discussion of Thomas Eakins' painting of "The Agnew Clinic," David Lubin discusses how the male gaze appropriates, dominates and objectifies a woman's body to derive a sense of "mastery" over and "arousal" from her. Lubin, *Act of Portrayal: Eakins, Sargent, James* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 77–78. Susan Sontag puts it more bluntly: "to photograph someone is a sublimated murder." Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 14.

³⁵ See, for example, Shingo Osaka, *Kuraku Sensei Shoden* [A detailed history of Professor Clark] and Masatake Oshima, *Kuraku Sensei to Sono Deshi Tachi* [Professor Clark and his students].

³⁶ Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 12.

³⁷ Homi Bhaba, "The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism," in Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67.

³⁸ Quoted in Fujita, *American Pioneers and the Japanese Frontier*, 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 6, 7. Fujita also suggests the influence of Kuroda's friends, Yukichi Fukuzawa and Arinori Mori, who had favorable opinions of the United States as "the rising power of the future." In addition, John A. Harrison writes that the Japanese turned to "the United States for help for three main reasons. Meteorological conditions on the frontier and in the northeastern States were the same; America led the world in the use of farm machinery; the United States was isolated from any international controversy, especially from Russia." John A. Harrison, "The Capron Mission and the Colonization of Hokkaido, 1865–1875," *Agricultural History* 25 (July 1951): 136.

⁴⁰ Sapporo Shi Kyoiku Inkaï ed., *Oyatoi Gaikokujin* [Foreign Employees] (Sapporo: Sapporo Shi Kyoiku Inkaï, 1976), 12. From 1867 to 1889, a total of 1,364 foreigners were employed by the Japanese government. The British were the largest group with 626 employees, followed by French (236) and Americans as a distant third in rank (178). In the Colonization Commission, however, 36 out of 62 foreign employees were Americans.