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## Gustav Kreitner's Asian Travel Account – The Aino People in Japan

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“As geographer of the expedition, I was in the position, to explore land and people within their mutual dependence, and I hope, regardless of some shiny but mostly untruthful attachment, I have been able to explain everything open-minded and impartially. Furthermore, I hope, to have brought to the reader, partially in humorous, partially more seriously, the image of the big empires and countries of the East.”<sup>1</sup> (Kreitner, 1881, Vorwort, n.i.)

### Introduction

In the globalized Western world of the 21st century, information transfer takes only seconds via media like the internet, and news is shown daily on television. Therefore, it appears hard to realize that not so long ago, information that we take for granted today, did not exist or was not accessible to the majority of population in the world. Different countries, cultures and societies were to be discovered and explored and knowledge had to be transferred back to the home country, where this information was distributed to an interested audience. Not much longer than a century ago, the above described process

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by author (t.b.a.)

appeared not only to be a relatively time consuming but also a highly nontransparent one regarding reliability. The first explorers were automatically the first custodians of knowledge. They would bring back valuable and scarce information either collected as an eye witness or provided by other informants. It appeared rather difficult to critically investigate information and its reliability. Therefore, it remained rather unclear whether information was transferred in a trustworthy, impartial and rational manner.

This paper investigates and analysis the book *Im fernen Osten. Reisen des Grafen Béla Széchenyi in Indien, Japan, China, Tibet und Birma. In den Jahren 1877-1880* by Gustav Kreitner. Its focus lies on the section on Japan, the travel, expeditions and observations there. In particular it will examine the content of Kreitner's chapter 'The Island of Jesso and the Aino' and analyze his observations. The Aino, an ethnic minority in Japan, were observed and described by Kreitner, and it appears rewarding to analyze these descriptions in terms of "otherness", that is how he highlights the differences between the Aino, the Japanese and the Europeans. Despite their inevitable cultural bias, Kreitner's detailed and informative descriptions in *Im fernen Osten* still stand out as an important document on the Aino. It should therefore, be taken serious as a travel report that influenced and shaped people's imagination and opinion on the Japanese culture and society representing one of 'the Other' to the European reader.

## Historical and biographical context

First lieutenant Kreitner was an intellectual from the Austrian-Hungarian empire, who specialized in geography, geology and topography. Born 1848 in Odrau, Moravia (now Czech Republic), he entered the military in 1866 where he specializes as a geographer (Senft, H.&W., 1999, n.p.). From 1871 to 1877 he was engaged in mapping the Hungarian monarchy (Meyers). He then was engaged as a cartographer by Count Béla Széchenyi (1837-1908) from Hungary, in order to accompany him during a long expedition to India, Japan, China, Tibet and Birma. It was during that expedition that Kreitner wrote his book. The Count was also escorted by the linguist Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna and the geologist Lajos Lóczy.

The Széchenyi family line was well established within Hungary; the Count was Member of the Parliament and strongly supported equality rights for the Hungarian Jews (Széchenyi, 1880). Kreitner recognizes and acknowledges in his preface the importance of the social status of both Count Széchenyi and his father, and the advantages that come with it, such as contacts within Asia. He stresses the "blessed historical influence regarding the intellectual development" of the Hungarian people this mission has had (Kreitner, 1881, n.i.).

Previously, Count Széchenyi had travelled to North America in 1863 and to Algier in 1865. Besides his personal passion for travel, the expedition to East Asia had been arranged for a variety of reasons. Hungary strived for political and cultural emancipation among other European nations during the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Scientific knowledge and new findings and discoveries added towards international recognition and status. Hungary's scholars turned towards Asia, investigating the anthropological and linguistic roots of their nation-state and striving for more expertise. The Russian scholar Nikolay Przhevalsky (1839-1888) had published several books on Central Asian geography and its nature in previous years, which could have represented another motivational aspect for Széchenyi to travel to Asia. Moreover, Béla Széchenyi's father founded the Hungarian Academy of Science in which the Count was admitted as a member after his expedition to Asia (Cull, 2007, n.p.). The expedition's main goals were of geographical and geological nature and was financed by the Széchenyi family itself, which indicates the independence from any government or organization at the time (Senft, H.&W., 1999, n.p.). It can therefore be assumed that scholarly prestige dominated the mission rather than an internal political agenda. The main aim of the expedition was the exploration of China and Tibet. Kreitner mentions in his preface the importance of contacts in China, and mentions Japan only in passing. Tibet was isolated and closed for foreigners, a fact that created major obstacles for the expedition and eventually led to an early end and return. However, major discoveries were acknowledged within Tibetan territory, such as Kreitner's observations about the Tsangpo/Brahmaputra stream (ibid).



**Fig 1:** Gustav Kreitner, Count Széchenyi, and János Lóczy

Source: Kreitner, G. (1881). *Im fernen Osten*. Wien: Alfred Höldner, Hof- und Universitäts Buchhändler.

Even though the core focus of the Széchenyi expedition was not particularly lying on Japan, Kreitner could accomplish significant successes. Besides his numerous descriptions and examinations of Japanese geography, Kreitner's main achievement on this expedition appears to be the observation and investigation of the only indigenous ethnicity in Japan: the Aino people of Jesso (today's Hokkaido, the most Northern island of Japan). Even after the mission, he remained loyal to this part of the globe and continued working diplomatically as the Consul of Austria in Yokohama till his death in 1893 (Bruder, 1995).

## *Im fernen Osten* by Gustav Kreitner

The travel book by Kreitner is divided into twenty three chapters, over 991 pages. In the Maastricht University Jesuit Library there is only an incomplete copy of the first 496 pages. It appears that in other libraries *Im fernen Osten* is also sometimes bound in two or more volumes, but it also happens that it is bound as one book.<sup>2</sup> Those books might also differ in content as well, however, the book studied for this paper is identical with the original version. As indicated in the full title, the book covers India, Japan, China, Tibet and Birma. The largest part of the book is dedicated to China and Tibet (Chapter IV-VI, IX-XXI). Furthermore, it contains 200 illustrations and three maps: of Central-East-Asia, China and East-Tibet and, lastly, one of Japan's island Jesso.

The book was first published in 1881 by Alfred Hölder, the Court- and University Bookseller in Vienna. The Hölder Verlag mainly published scientific work. In 1881 it was also acting as the publisher of the academy of science (Ziegler, 2011, n.i.). The book is published in German and was printed by the R. von Waldheim Druck in Vienna. Kreitner's travel account complements the scientific report Count Béla Széchenyi published in three volumes between 1890 and 1897, summarizing the conclusions and discoveries of his Asia mission (Széchenyi, 1893-1899). Kreitner points out in his preface, that his intentions are to both inform scientifically and correctly and entertain with anecdotes in a more humorous way. Kreitner is not familiar with the Japanese language and therefore relies on interpreters and translators. He writes about his position as a scholarly member of Széchenyi's expedition, from his point of view, as a first-person-narrator. Aiming for a wide audience, Kreitner's approach seems rather comprehensible. His work should not be regarded as strictly academic or scientific, however, essential parts appear to be exactly that.

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2 The version studied for this paper is the incomplete, first part. Maastricht University, Bibliotheek Canisianum 134543, Reference 46 D 20

## Travel Literature and 'the Other'

"After we learn 'to be' and 'to have' in a new language, we learn 'to go'" (Campbell, 1988, p.2). Travel literature has always been an essential part of our culture. Campbell describes it as a "self-consciously artistic genre" influenced by the past and present of the concerning time period (ibid). She also states that travel literature, which seeks to describe the unaltered truth, represents an ideal analytical basis to show the "fundamental fictionality of all representation" and explains in how far the author influences his work consciously or unconsciously (Hulme & Campbell, 2002, p.263).

"How, for instance, does one distinguish fact from fiction, either as writer or as reader, in the case of unverifiable records of private experience taking place in profoundly unfamiliar surroundings? How do the pressure of audience expectation and the writer's predispositions transform the language and content of such records? Are they records at all, or only literary occasions for compensatory fantasies on the part of disillusioned, the nostalgic, the bewildered?" (Campbell, 1988, p.2)

It is believed that every author's work is shaped and influenced by his own identity and therefore never completely impartial and neutral. This is particularly relevant in travel literature since it seeks to explore, investigate and describe foreign countries, societies and cultures. Thompson (2011, p.9) describes "othering" as an "interplay between alterity and identity, difference and similarity". 'The Other' can be shaped or even produced "politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively" (Said, 1978, p.3). "Othering" regarding superiority would often be motivated by ideology, seeking to justify certain actions or courses (Thompson, 2011, p.133). This can be noticed particularly in the context of colonialism. Roy Bridges claims that technological superiority justified the alleged ability to portrait and interpret other cultures (2002, p.53). He furthermore examines travel literature of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century within the context of "international competition and territorial annexations accompanied by considerable anxiety" (ibid, p.54). Commercialism and Industrialization emphasized on different attributes and encouraged a different point of view than in previous decades. He quotes David Livingstone, a popular British explorer and missionary, who explains that individuals, who had different intentions before, e.g. religious, imperialistic etc., would now all work towards the same interests. Territorial colonialist interests were not as prominent anymore, economic strength, trade relations and expansion of the market was prior. Metaphorically, scientists, military, missionaries, merchants would now all work for the same big company, the state

and its economical and international prestige (ibid, p.60). “Many pilgrims were soldiers, many missionaries were military spies, most early explorers were conquistadores” (Campbell, 1988, p.4). This indicates the “Zeitgeist” many travel authors in this period found themselves in. Gustav Kreitner, even though prioritizing more scholarly interests in his mission and work as an author, was part of an expedition that did not have a solely economic, scientific or social aim but included many aspects. Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was the peak of imperialism (Thompson, 2011, p.137), colonial curiosity probably also represented a key motivation. This should be taken into consideration when investigating Kreitner’s conscious or unconscious use when he describes ‘the Other’. Campbell claims it had been advantageous once authors realized and acknowledged political interests of ‘the Other’, too (2002, p. 264). Realizing that not only Western cultures and individuals acted according to certain agendas and interests supported interpreting ‘the Other’. ‘The Other’ had interests and agendas of their own and also used the concept of ‘the Other’ in their work. It erased the notion of the West being the only superior and relevant political player and led to post-colonial theories, where travel writing changed accordingly.

Peter Rietbergen explains in his work *Europe: A Cultural History* that he “involve[s] [his] own culture and self” into his own academic literary work. A contemporary picture of the past is necessary to fulfill the contemporary reader’s expectations but if the picture appears too “period-bound” it will quickly lose its relevance (Rietbergen, 2006, p.xxvi). Kreitner, if he wanted his travel account to have a significant relevance in his time, had therefore to maintain the balance between including his own identity and history and keeping a more neutral distance to his work, if he wanted to make it relevant for other generations to come, too. This essentially means he had to distance himself from the period-specific influences, prejudices, literature etc.

The concept of ‘the Other’ in the field of travel literature is an essential one. The reader has to constantly be aware of the self-awareness or -unawareness of the author’s intentions, identity, intended audience, background, period etc. to develop and ensure a critical understanding. Authors can be affected by a countless number of influences and it is fairly difficult to find out retrospectively in how far the author has altered supposedly objective and impartial reports. Edward Said, one of the most famous scholars to have investigated the concept of ‘the Other’ in an oriental context, asks the following questions: “How does one represent other cultures? What is another culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one’s own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the ‘other’)?” (1978, p.325). Even though, those questions appear rather complicated to answer, it represents a readers obligation to be aware of the

concept of 'the Other' to strive to critically analyze and understand travel literature, or, as a matter of fact, any kind of literature, to his or hers best ability.

## From Shanghai to Kioto and from Kioto to Hakodate

In his book, Kreitner devotes 3 of his 23 chapters in total on Japan: VI. 'Shanghai to Kioto' (pp.119-197), VII. 'From Kioto to Hakodate' (pp.198-227), VIII. 'The Island Jesso and the Aino people' (pp.228-278). Those chapters are individually divided into numerous subchapters on multiple topics of Japan. Of two hundred original woodcarvings within the book, 27 of them represent Japan and Kreitner, furthermore, included a detailed map of the island of Jesso. In this part, the paper concentrates on chapter VI and VII as for they seem to be very different in nature than chapter VIII, which main focus appears rather anthropological considering the Aino people. However, since chapter VIII embodies an exception, the previous chapters resemble in structure and content.

As pointed out by Kreitner himself, in his preface, he tends to follow a rather two-parted narrative style: "Furthermore, I hope, to have brought to the reader, partially in humorous, partially more seriously, the image of the big empires and countries of the East" (Kreitner, 1881, Vorwort n.i.). Indeed he differs between laying down the apparent "hard facts", such as population numbers, which he claims he retrieves from different sources, and the story telling. Hence the liability of those facts remains debatable. Contrary to this, he is telling anecdotes, stories or experiences, depending on the topic. This is another indicator that Kreitner seems to be trying to address a rather wide audience. It is not a purely scientific report but also a visual and loose description for the purpose of entertainment. This in combination with his first person narrating makes *Im fernen Osten* a travel report, which appears, also because of its independent financial sponsors, a quite objective, rational and specific one regarding factual knowledge and a rather exaggerated, humorous and therefore at parts slightly unreliable one regarding Kreitner's own individual experiences. Abovementioned shows fairly well in the first to chapters on Japan, chapter VI and VII.

Kreitner starts his chapter VI 'From Shanghai to Kioto' with pointing out the date of his departure from China, the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1878. Two days later he arrives at his first port in Japan, Nagasaki. He firstly describes the bay area and the landscape, scenery. He continues by describing the history of Japan's isolation and the role of the Dutch as the first European and foreign settlers (p.198 ff.). The ports of Nagasaki, Kobe, Osaka, Yokohama, Tokio, Niigata and Hakodate are open for European traders and explorers at the time. However, Kreitner still struggles to receive particular permissions to enter certain ports and regions of

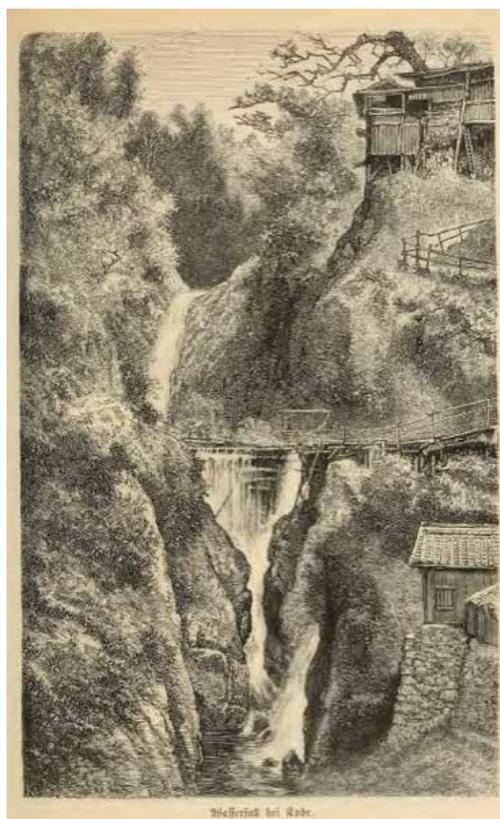
Japan (e.g. Simonosaki [p.202]). Significant seems his style of comparison: he compares Japanese geography with European ones; for example the Japanese continental sea with the Bosphorus or the rural area of Urima with the Steiermark (p.223). Furthermore, it indicates again the “Othering” of the Japanese. He is pointing out both differences but also many similarities to achieve familiarity for the reader (p.203). The author being Austrian-Hungarian does not seem to lose his focus on the topics of main interest to the European reader and provides supposedly hard facts about the development of the country: infrastructure, communication via telegraphs, modern ports and centers of business, agriculture, factories and, very detailed, the military and armory (pp.212-218). At times, Kreitner appears to provide scientific explanations or proof (p.224). Whether his sources are qualified and reliable and how he received the information remains unknown. Furthermore, he delivers dates for his travels and major destinations.



**Fig. 2:** Amusement in the Templepatio in Kobe.

Source: Kreitner, G. (1881). *Im fernen Osten*. Wien: Alfred Höldner, Hof- und Universitäts Buchhändler, p.208.

In the next chapter, 'From Kyoto to Hakodate' Kreitner retains the previous structure. It appears to be informative but the focus is the entertainment of the reader. Like writing a novel, Kreitner narrates his climb and descent of Mount Fuji, explaining its significant godlike position within Japanese culture (pp.255-264). He also continues to point out similarities between Europe and Japan, e.g. the "Voralpen" to the Japanese mountains (p.264) and the European architectural influence in Yokohama (p.267) to achieve accessibility and relation to the reader. When Kreitner arrives in Tokyo he describes the political system and Westernization within Japan, indicating the tendency of the Japanese leaders towards the West after the rapid opening of Japanese isolation one decade prior. Woodcarvings illustrate the book mainly representing scenery, at times events or people.



**Fig. 3:** *Waterfall near Kobe.*

Source: Kreitner, G. (1881). *Im fernen Osten*. Wien: Alfred Höldner, Hof- und Universitäts Buchhändler, p.209.

Chapters VI and VII indicate the continuity of Kreitner's writing structure. He mainly focuses on geographical descriptions, possibly due to the fact that this was his main task on the mission. However, he divides up the factual parts of the book with personal anecdotes and observations of the Japanese political, social, cultural, religious and economic life. In how far his personal experiences are imaginary or real can hardly be discussed. The novel like writing style suggests that exaggerations and irony might falsify the truth. However, regarding the scientific work or "hard facts" such as population numbers, infrastructure etc. it seems like Kreitner tried to research as much as possible within his possibilities at the time. Sources remain mostly unmentioned and therefore facts are rather hard to prove. Kreitner creates a familiarity towards the Japanese. The majority of the time he emphasizes similarities rather than differences, and if so, the differences are represented in a humorous manner. Certainly, the Japanese still are represented as 'the Other' in contrast to the European reader, however, creating a fairly positive image.

## The Island of Jesso and the Aino People

Kreitner arrived in Hakodate, Jesso, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1878.<sup>3</sup> He starts the chapter following his previous structure describing the landscape, the structure of Hakodate and his meeting with the governor, "representative of the British, Austrian, Prussian, French, Italian, Turkish, Americans and many more" (p.279). Although, Kreitner still needs a permission from the governor to enter Jesso, it shows, that many countries had already established and built up relations with Japan only shortly after the end of the isolation. Kreitner mentions critique on the development and implication of Westernization in Japan: "The Japanese Emperor may be an eager and intelligent leader, with the most honorable concerns for his empire and people- and this is also the opinion of most of the European immigrants- if he does not care for the complaints of many dissatisfied people and together with the European civilization strives to improve the country. But there's no use of the most serious and great thought when the implicating officials see the importance of their tasks as amusement, give orders without any thought, which prove that they don't understand their position and profession. The control is insufficient"<sup>4</sup>(p.285). This critique stands out solely within his descriptions of Japan and is therefore worth mentioning even though Kreitner dedicates this chapter to a very different topic.

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3 Hakodate still exists today as a major port on the South end of the most Northern of Japan's islands Jesso, today's Hokkaido.

4 Translated by author

## Kreitner's description of the Aino in a historical context

When arriving in Inbutz, the Aino capital, in the South of Jesso, Kreitner has his first encounter with the indigenous people of Japan. He would decide at a later stage to dedicate the major part of chapter VIII to them. He must have been particularly fascinated by and interested in observing those, to him barbaric people. The tribal life is something he would observe in more detail than any of the other topics before. Other authors had dedicated their works to the Aino people in previous years. However, it remains unknown to what extent Kreitner had been coming across the topic or any sort of literature on the Aino before or whether his encounter with the tribes was a rather coincidental one. In any case, he strives to provide detailed observations for his European readership and a structured anthropological overview of the various differences between the Aino and other people.

Kreitner portrays Inbutz as rather poor with only 32 run-down huts inhabited by people who only eat rice (p.294). He illustrates how he, as a European, connected well with the Aino, who represent a colonized indigenous ethnicity, suppressed by the Japanese. He points out their hospitality and benevolence (p.296-299). He continues to travel through several Aino settlements, arranging to find some companions to escort him, until he reaches the capital of Jesso, Saporu, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 1878. He visits a European agriculture school, one indicator of Westernization in Jesso (p.306). Complying his stylistic writing, Kreitner illustrates how he tries, partly legal, partly illegal, to purchase an Aino skull to bring back to Europe, to furthermore investigate the origin of the only indigenous group in Japan (pp.306-308). After he finishes the travel observation and description part of the chapter with his return to Hakodate, the reader expects Kreitner to end here and continue with another chapter. However, the noticeable difference is his ten extra pages, dedicated entirely to anthropology, investigating the Aino.

Kreitner estimates the decreasing number of remaining Aino, who had been also living on Nippon, Japan's main island in previous decades, of 26-27.000 (p.318). He even mentions the probability of an extinction of this ethnicity mainly due to the colonial suppression by the Japanese. The Japanese perceived the Aino as inferior to them and were fond of the idea to erase the race in a long-term by, particularly in later years, encouraging mixed marriages and enforcing their culture upon them. This information differs severely from previous sources. Forbes estimated the number of 50.000 Aino in 1866 (Forbes, 1866, p.170) without revealing any sources of information. In 1873, Watson wrote about 16.000 Ainos,

relying on information given by Japanese authorities (Watson, 1873, p.227). Holland, on the other hand, admits in 1874, that there is not only very limited knowledge about the Aino, but no numerical statistics, at all (Holland, 1874, pp.233-243). This represents a good example of provision of contradicting information in this time period. It can be assumed that because of the progress of technology and methodology regarding exploring unknown territory and its inhabitants, Kreitner's estimations might have been approximately correct at the time. In any case, he appears to be correct when pointing out the rapid decrease of the population numbers of the Aino regardless of detailed numbers.



**Fig. 4:** *The Aino village Yorop.*

Source: Kreitner, G. (1881). *Im fernen Osten*. Wien: Alfred Höldner, Hof- und Universitäts Buchhändler, p.312.

The origin of this indigenous people had not yet been determined. "A superficial observation convinces us that the Aino don't have anything in common with the Chinese or Japanese. The skull formation is more noble, the forehead higher and wider, the prominent nose is stronger, but mainly the horizontal position of the big, brown eye, connects the Aino more closely to the Caucasian race" (ibid). Racial theories and research was popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many authors dedicated their work to it. Robert Knox's "The races of men"<sup>5</sup> from 1850 or George Robins Gliddon's and Josiah Clark Nott's *Types of mankind* published in

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5 Knox, R. (1850). *The races of men*. Philadelphia: Lea&Blanchard.

1854 provide a brought overview of racial theories.<sup>6</sup> It is noticeable though, that the Asian races remained largely uncovered and particularly the Aino's racial background had not been clarified. Kreitner had described in previously in his book his attempt to get hold of an Aino skull (pp.303-304). He would take it back to Europe with him to provide further research material. He bribes both Japanese and Aino for this grave robbery and finally receives a skull. He "treats it like a sacred treasure" and would bring it back with him to Europe. It would only be the second or third Aino skull in Europe at the time and Kreitner describes it as one of the most valuable pieces of his travel collections (ibid).

He furthermore structures his Aino observations into the topics of anatomy, education, accommodation, language, clothing, hair, jewelry, tattoos, the role of women, ancestry, family life, ceremonies, greeting, work life, religion, marriage, traditions, funeral and the important role of the bear for the Aino (pp.319-328). Even though, in previous chapters he has touched upon several similar topics regarding the Japanese, it had not been anywhere near as structured and precise as in his observations of the Aino. Kreitner had not been the first one to observe or portrait the Aino people, several of his observations had been similarly described by previous authors. Yet, he concentrates on some issues more in depth than it had been common during this time. Kreitner copying the work of previous authors does not seem to be very likely. Regarding the anatomy of the Aino, for example, several authors have pointed out their strong growth of hair (Kreitner, 1881, p.319; Holland, 1874, p.234; Charmichael, 1874, p.304). Furthermore, total and absolute illiteracy and the lack of a written language of the Aino had been a core issue for transmitting the history of the Aino (Kreitner, 1881, p.319; Holland, 1874, p.234; Watson, 1874, p.230). Several authors indicate the little knowledge there is in Europe about the Aino, even only a few years before Kreitner's detailed observations and publishing of his work (Holland, 1874, p.233; Forbes, 1866, p.170) and Carmichael, suggests that 1873 the first photograph of the Aino had been brought to Italy (1874, p.304). All in all, existing information of the Aino appeared rather scarce, superficial and confusing at times.

Therefore, it seems like Kreitner has achieved to provide multiple and more detailed information and observations about the Aino. How reliable those descriptions are has to be estimated with a critical skepticism. Kreitner could have related to previous travel reports about the Aino, plagiarizing or copying other authors or hesitating to give out other information than expected by the reader to meet the audience's expectations regarding the indigenous people. However, it has to be acknowledged that the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was influenced by commercial and scientific interest, particularly in regards

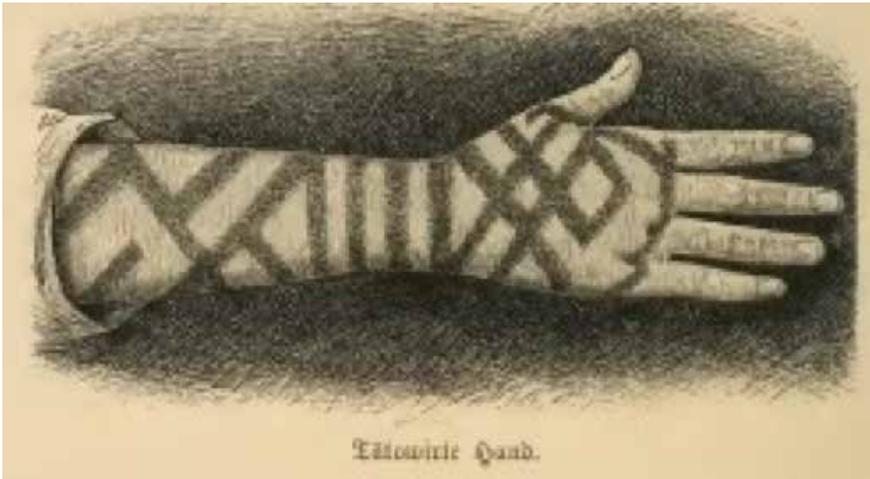
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6 Gliddon, G. R.& Nott, J. C. et al. (1854). *Types of mankind*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo& Co.

to racial theories, with post-enlightened and industrialized civilization and therefore, Kreitner, being employed in Count Széchenyi's scientific expedition, embodies a rather trustworthy and reliable source of information to his readers.

## The Aino – 'the Other'

Kreitner's description of the Aino can be analyzed in light of the concept of 'the Other'. Stylistically, he clearly establishes an "us versus they" image for the reader. It is furthermore a twofold "othering": the Aino in contrast to the Europeans and in contrast to the Japanese. The abovementioned clear structure and division into many sub-topics regarding the Aino culture appears as one significant stylistic device. He covers the essential aspects mentioned by Said in his definition of creating 'the Other': "politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively" (Said, 1978, p.3). This structure can be interpreted as a classification and division into certain markers to define another culture. The European reader can identify with those categories being part of his/her every-day life, Kreitner lists the significant distinctions and therefore, a direct comparison is established. "Us vs. they" seems to be created effortlessly for the readership. Kreitner describes the Aino as "weird" people (p.318) who are generally unclean and careless (p.319). Furthermore, he indicates the absolute illiteracy of the "intellectually run-down people" (ibid). Their accommodation is "miserable" and "neglected" (p.320) and their possessions of "lower quality" (ibid). In those examples the choice of adjectives appears to indicate a clear division between Kreitner and his addressed reader from the indigenous people of Japan. He experiences them as a barbaric and backwards, however friendly and generous people. The concept of 'the Other' nevertheless, is omnipresent. Interestingly enough, he points out previous times when the Japanese, now superior to the Aino, appreciated them and brought them great gifts. Contrarily, the Japanese are now middlemen between foreigners and the Aino, who are treated and described as the servants or slaves, and will not allow direct contact (ibid). The clothing of the Aino is also portrait as "shabby" and "neglected" and is not worn inside the house unless foreigners are present (p.323). Kreitner elaborates on the tattooing tradition of the women and the equal role of women and men, uncommon in Europe at the time.



**Fig. 5:** *Tattooed Hand.*

Source: Kreitner, G. (1881). *Im fernen Osten*. Wien: Alfred Höldner, Hof- und Universitäts Buchhändler, p.324.

Moreover, he points out that the Aino not only worship the “sun, moon, stars, fire, water, bears” as gods but also “Europeans”. This clearly indicates the high rank of Europeans in Kreitner’s opinion, since even the most unknown, indigenous people of Japan admire them. He explains traditions, which are difficult to grasp for the reader at the time: feuds or disputes are still settled through violence and fights. Furthermore, the relation between the Aino and their most important animal, the bear, appears to be a fascinating one for the European reader. According to Kreitner, Aino women who lost their child, raise a bear baby until it is strong enough to represent a danger to the community. They then get killed in a ceremony and the mother “is the only person who cries for her dead child” (p.327). Those traditions are hardly comprehensible for Europeans, certainly not in the late 1800s and represent one of Kreitner’s attempts to entertain through curiosity and fascination for the unknown and shocking. Kreitner then concludes that the *Colonisationswert*, the value of colonization, has hardly increased during the 10 years of Japanese leadership. Agriculturally, he describes the Aino as “useless” (p.328). He finishes his chapter illustrating a Japanese tradition, where big pots which are used to produce fish oil, are also used as bathing tubs. “When the flames of the vividly burning fire burn along the brown sides of the big kettle, where the cleanliness loving Japanese sits comfortably, one could think, he witnesses a man cooking himself” (p.329).



**Fig. 6:** Pot to produce Fish oil.

Source: Kreitner, G. (1881). *Im fernen Osten*. Wien: Alfred Höldner, Hof- und Universitäts Buchhändler, p.328.

Kreitner establishes and follows the concept of 'the Other'. It is he, who seems to experience this feeling of unfamiliarity himself, because of his own identity, background and time period he lives in. He experiences and observes the Aino within his own "past and present" and transfers this message onto his readership. Via choice of words, writing style and emphasis he encourages and confirms the concept further. The reader clearly receives an outside perspective, from an observant point of view, not involved in the Aino culture or even integrated but only describing and interpreting behavior and situations with the author's mind before it gets transmitted to the reader. The concept of 'the Other' is omnipresent when Kreitner is observing and describing the Aino, which might have falsified his interpretations to a certain extent. Nevertheless, the information Kreitner provided about the Aino for the European reader in the late 1800s appeared to be a highly valuable one, mostly portraying observations and giving precise information, however, interpreted within his own opinion and shaped by his identity.

## Conclusion

This analysis of Kreitner's work *Im fernen Osten. Reisen des Grafen Béla Széchenyi in Indien, Japan, China, Tibet und Birma. In den Jahren 1877-1880* has shown that he achieved to provide an informative and valuable book for a wide ranging audience in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. His investigation of Japan delivered some highly relevant outcomes particularly regarding the indigenous people Aino. According to Thompson (2011, p.14) Kreitner has provided a typical travel book. They "may include illustrative material, such as maps or pictures, but usually these elements are secondary to the main prose narrative". Furthermore, it is a "retrospective, first-person account of the author's own experience of a journey" (ibid). Moreover, Thompson confirms that Kreitner seemed to struggle, likewise any author of a travel book, between the two-folded roles: on one hand being a reporter, on the other hand being a story-teller. This is why the distinction between fiction and non-fiction within travel writing is not always clear (ibid, p.27).

Firstly, it has been established that concerning travel literature, the reader has to be aware of the concept of 'the Other'. Information is often shaped, consciously or unconsciously, by the author's intentions, identity, background, historical circumstances or intended readership. Reporting about 'the Other' essentially consists of allegorizing the differences or similarities in contrast of yourself or any other. The sense of superiority of European citizens in previous centuries might have led to the misunderstanding of ability to interpret and judge observed cultures and societies. They might have been misinterpreted in several cases. Kreitner himself appears to have been influenced by the present and past of his own time, influenced by a period of post-industrial commercialism and early globalization, looking for new markets. He certainly focuses on the topics of high interest for the European reader. It is essential that the reader is aware of the concept of 'the Other' to critically examine Kreitner's work and understand it and interpret it. It can be concluded that Kreitner's two-parted stylistic writing was aiming for a wide range audience and readership. He alters between scientific, neutral and objective writing and humorous, novelistic, story-telling to reach both, academically interested and simply curious readers. The twenty-seven illustrations support this picturesque style. It appears that his book would have been read by people from different age groups and different social classes, therefore, representing a more commercialist work than purely scientific. He furthermore uses a large number of comparisons to the known for the European reader, such as landscapes and architecture. Moreover, he addresses the reader directly on several occasions, never losing focus of topics of high interest, curiosity and relevance for Europeans at the time, mainly of economic nature. Kreitner emphasizes the new European

influence, politically and culturally, after the opening of Japan for world trade. However, in chapter VIII, which he dedicated to the indigenous people of Japan, Kreitner restructures his writing. He appears to give more detailed and a wider range of information about the Aino than authors in previous years. It has to be acknowledged that Kreitner's book was published in German, when most of other previous literature about Japan had been published in Danish, Dutch or English and translations would take a significant amount of time to reach a German-speaking readership. He partly investigated the same points of focus other authors had however, he partly enters new terrain. His anthropological investigation stands out of the other chapters on Japan. In addition, the concept of 'the Other' is omnipresent and way more significant regarding the Aino people than in previous chapters when Kreitner touches upon the Japanese. Within his positioning as an observant, not integrated into the life of the Aino, partly acknowledging the fact of different behavior triggered by his presence, Kreitner strives for objectivity. In how far he is self-aware of his "own burden", his background, intentions, identity etc., which he brings into interpreting and writing about the Aino is difficult to be estimated. There is no self-critique or mentioning of this by Kreitner himself. His choice of words, his emphasis on certain topics appears to create an "us versus the Other" image to the European reader. It is of superior nature, Europeans being closer to the Japanese, but definitely not close to the Aino.

Kreitner has achieved to provide valuable information about Japan to the German-speaking reader in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He already explains in his preface that his intention is objectivity. Even though, he seems to achieve this most of the time within his ability, he fails at other times, especially concerning the only indigenous people of Japan, the Aino.

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China



Source: Kircher, A. (1667). *China monumentis, qua sacris qua profanis, nec non variis naturae & artis spectaculis, aliarumque rerum memorabilium argumentis illustrata*. Amsterdam: Jacobus à Meurs.