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Source: *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 11 (1882), pp. 401-405

Published by: [Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2841767>

Accessed: 14/06/2014 21:09

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From the INSTITUTE.—Catalogue of the Library of the Royal Colonial Institute, October, 1881.

From the SOCIETY.—Proceedings of the Birmingham Philosophical Society, Vol. II, Part 2.

— Journal of the Society of Arts, Nos. 1512, 1513.

— Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. L, No. 243.

— Journal and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New South Wales, 1880.

— Bulletin de la Société Impériale des Naturalistes de Moscou, 1881, No. 1.

— Zwanzigster Bericht der Oberhessischen Gesellschaft für Natur-und Heilkunde.

From the EDITOR.—“Nature,” Nos. 627–629.

— Revue Scientifique. T. XXVIII. Nos. 20, 21.

The election of C. PFOUNDÉS, Esq., was announced.

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The following paper was read by the author :—

*Notes on the ASIATIC RELATIONS of POLYNESIAN CULTURE.*

By EDWARD B. TYLOR, D.C.L., F.R.S., V.P.A.I.

THE following informal remarks are made with the view of bringing some lately noticed facts to bear on the problem of tracing certain drifts of culture, which appear to have been going on for ages, from the interior of Asia over the south-east or Indo-Chinese region and the Indian Archipelago, and thence into the island groups of Melanesia and Polynesia, even touching points of Australia. Of late years several papers on this subject have appeared in the “Journal of the Anthropological Institute,” among them Colonel Yule’s tracing of Asiatic customs into the Indian Archipelago, and Mr. Keane’s account of recent researches on the Khmer language of Cambodia as related to the Oceanic tongues.

The author of the present remarks has mentioned the spread of Asiatic games over the Oceanic islands, and the wide acceptance there of the cosmic-theological doctrine of the world being divided into upper and lower stages, seven or more in number, an idea which seems plainly a broken-down remnant of the Brahmanic and Buddhistic doctrine of series of successive heavens and hells, itself apparently the outcome of the theory of concentric planet-spheres, known to the Pythagorean philosophy, and seemingly traceable to yet older Babylonian astronomical ideas, to which the seven-staged temple of the seven planets at Birs-Nimrud still bears witness. The theory of the Asiatic drifts of culture over the Pacific having now a

substantial basis, it is desirable to call attention from time to time to points likely to affect it.

Mr. Carl Bock's lately published "Head Hunters of Borneo," gives a clearer idea than heretofore of the civilisation of the Dayaks, as holding an intermediate place between the Hindu civilisation, which has acted on them both in its Brahmanic and Buddhistic form, and the lower culture of the South Sea Islands. Had this traveller taken his ideas of Dayak architecture only from their village-houses, he would have underrated the traditions of ornamental design and artistic skill which he discovered when allowed to visit and sketch the secluded burial-houses of the royal families, structures on posts, adorned with animal carvings and wooden sculpture of remarkable lightness and beauty, the carved roof-projections somewhat reminding us of Cambodia and Siam. To those who have examined such types of architecture in the Malay Archipelago, it cannot seem probable that Polynesian architectural design, such as is seen in New Zealand, was the result of merely native development, but rather that it involves inherited, though broken-down traditions of Asiatic art. Attempts thus to connect Polynesia with Asia have not yet been carried far in detail, except perhaps in tracing the dwellings supported on posts or piles from such Asiatic districts as Asam far away into the ocean islands, and in General Pitt Rivers' identification of the Buddhist loop-coil ornament with a similar pattern used in New Guinea and New Zealand.

It seems worth notice that one of the Dayak musical instruments figured by Mr. Bock lies in an instructive way on the supposed line of drift of civilisation. This is the nose-flute (*op. cit.*, Plate XIX, fig. 2) a specimen of which from his collection has come to the British Museum. There is a drawing in Williams and Calvert's "Fiji and Fijians," p. 163, which shows a native girl performing on this instrument with the right nostril, while she stops the other with the thumb. In the Polynesian Islands, from the time of Cook's voyages, there are several mentions of the nose-flute. Ellis's account of the *vivo* of the Society Islands ("Polynesian Researches," Vol. i, p. 197) describes its being played much after the Fijian manner, but usually with the left nostril, and it is an instance of the slight variations of custom which establish themselves as fashions, that Mariner's "Tonga Islands," Vol. ii, p. 332, describes the *fango fango* as always filled by the right nostril. The instrument is commended by travellers for its soft plaintive tones, which often served as an accompaniment to singing. It may be traced as far as New Zealand (*see* Williams, "New Zealand Dictionary," s. v. *Kōauau*). In Waitz, Vol. vi, p. 752, it is

stated to have been observed at Port Essington, in North Australia, where probably it had been introduced by Malay traders. In all these districts the nose-flute seems not to have any practical reason, at least it is hard to imagine that any flute-player should find his nostrils to have any musical advantage over his mouth. In India, however, where the *vansi* or *pungi* have long been filled with the nostrils by snake charmers, performers at the festival of Nila-pûja, &c., a reason for this practice is currently given which may be the true explanation of its origin. A high-caste Hindu will not touch with his mouth a pipe or flute which has touched the mouth of a lower-caste man who made or may have used it, but it does not defile him to blow it with the nostril. This explanation (*see* Engel, "Music of Ancient Nations," p. 59) is stated to me as unquestionable, in answer to an enquiry made of Dr. Sourindro Mohun Tagore, of Calcutta, the best authority on Hindu music. If it be accepted as the real explanation, we may think it probable that the nose-flute, thus introduced for ceremonial reasons, followed the course of Hindu colonisation and influence, so as to become established for ordinary musical purposes in islands of the Pacific where its ceremonial caste-origin was unknown. Another Asiatic musical instrument which has found its way far out into the Indian Islands, is the simple kind of jew's harp made of a slip of bamboo.

Professor Adolf Bastian's lately published "*Heilige Sage der Polynesier*" gives, among the valuable results of an anthropological journey, some fresh details as to the Maori and Hawaiian mythology, which suggest to him the thought of derivation from Old World religion and philosophy. Are these, he asks, the simple playful children of nature, whom we look down on from our heights, as on men climbing the lowest steps in the development-ladder of civilisation, and yet out of whose dark primeval night there sound chords of remotest and earliest creation-history? In the Polynesian creation-poems of evolution, from zoophytes and insects to fish and pigs and man, or along the metaphysical stages of existence beginning with night, nothing, ignorance, which Bastian compares with the Buddhist chain of existences, there is, perhaps, rather a likeness in principle than an absolutely proved connection in detail with the mystic philosophies of Asia. To come to something more definite in mythological resemblance and perhaps connection, Professor Bastian lays stress, not for the first time, on the similarity between the Polynesian myth of the land being a huge fish drawn up from the depth of the ocean, and the old Scandinavian myth of Thor fishing up the great earth snake, the Midgard-worm. The resemblances are, indeed, remarkable,

even in minor points, as when in the Norseman's tale, Thor goes out in the boat with Ymir, but is obliged to provide his own bait, much as in the New Zealand story is done to Maui by his brothers. Even the name of the ox Himinbrjót, or Heaven-breaker, whose head Thor takes for his bait, reappears in the Hawaiian mythology, where the noonday sun is called the Heaven-splitter. Looking at the myth of the raising of the land-fish in its different forms in the South Sea Islands, its being a myth of Day and Night is hardly doubtful, for the fisher who hauls up the earth from the abyss below is called in one version Noon, and in another Day, while the statement that Maui's fish, the North Island of New Zealand, was drawn up from the region of the underworld of night, occurs in the most distinct way. Without asserting a positive connection between the South Sea Island and the Scandinavian stories, the subject may be taken as pointing to further enquiry likely to lead to interesting results. The possibility of such connection in mythology between the South Sea Islands and Northern Europe is proved almost beyond dispute by the occurrence in both districts of versions of the Swan-maiden or Swan-coat story, where a heavenly nymph comes down to earth to bathe, and is seized by a mortal man, who makes her his wife, but at last she flies back to her home in the sky. The original of the story may be Aryan, from Central Asia, whence it found its way, perhaps in times of no great antiquity, westward over Europe, and eastward down to the Indian Ocean, where one of its best versions is found in Celebes, another lying yet further across the ocean in New Zealand (*see* Tylor "Early History of Mankind," p. 355).

The present slight notes, only to be taken as suggestions in a problem which has to be worked out more elaborately, refer not to questions of race, but merely to the drift of civilisation from Asia across the further Eastern and Oceanic districts. How far this culture was carried by actual migration of tribes, or by slighter influences of intercourse of races with one another, is a difficult problem on which it would be premature to enter here.

#### DISCUSSION.

MR. A. H. KEANE expressed the pleasure with which he had listened to Mr. Tylor's able paper, tending as it did to bring the Continental and Oceanic races into still closer connection. At the same time he could not accept the numerous points of resemblance in manners, customs, and habitations, as arguments strengthening the position he had himself taken with regard to the fundamental

unity of those races. These common features could at most prove nothing more than later contact, and the spread of Asiatic culture to the adjacent Eastern Archipelago. For the history of civilisation the paper was very valuable, and seemed to show that intercourse had been established between the more advanced Eastern peoples at a far more remote epoch than is commonly supposed.

Dr. HACK TUKE said he hardly thought the difficulty or criticism suggested by the last speaker (Mr. Keane), namely, that Dr. Tylor's argument might prove an example of *quod nimis probat, nihil probat*, would really be so if used with the caution which Dr. Tylor would no doubt employ. In the lecture on Games, for instance, which he had heard him deliver at the Royal Institution, he remembered that in taking kite-flying as an illustration, he pointed out that that game alone would not be an evidence of the contact of two nations, but that it might fairly be so if the kites were constructed in a special manner in both instances. The value of this kind of reasoning altogether depended upon the care with which it was employed. Again, he understood the author of the paper just read to employ this argument to prove, not identity of races—for of that it could be no proof—but that there had been contact and intercourse between them. Whether the instance chiefly referred to—that of the nose-flute—was a convincing instance or not, he did not feel prepared to say. It certainly did seem possible that different people, without copying the custom, might independently use their noses instead of their mouths to blow with. On other points he regarded Dr. Tylor's paper as a fair proof that the stream of civilisation, or rather habits and customs, had spread from the Asiatic continent to these islands, and regarded it as an illustration of the kind of reasoning applied to ethnic questions, in which Dr. Tylor appeared to him to excel.

M. DE LA COUPERIE, Mr. PARK HARRISON, and the CHAIRMAN also took part in the discussion.

Dr. TYLOR stated, in reply to a question, that although the doctrine of the planet-spheres first appears in a distinct form among the early Greek astronomers, there are strong grounds for inferring its connection with the seven stages of the Babylonian planet-temples. With regard to the question of race-connection between Polynesia and Asia, his present argument of course in no way opposed this, but could contribute nothing to its establishment, such things as musical instruments and myths migrating from nation to nation by mere intercourse, quite independently of race and language.

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Dr. TYLOR, in the absence of the author, read the following paper:—