

Japanese Mythology Collection

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2026-07

Synopsis

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inLanguage	english		

Discover fascinating ancient Japanese fairy tales as well as the folk tales of the Ainu/Aino, who are the indigenous people of Japan

Japan is known for producing the best horror movies of all time. The creatures from these movies were often inspired by Japanese mythology—ghosts, demons, and monsters with backstories as colorful as they are scary.

These supernatural beings are often formed from complex emotions that linger beyond death, hence why they are so interesting and terrifying.

The annotations include:

- The history of Japan
- The history of the Aino people

The first book in this collection, titled *Japanese Fairy Tales*, was written by Iwaya Sazanami and translated by Yei Theodora Ozaki. Yei was a translator of Japanese short stories and fairy tales who worked in the early 20th century. Her translations were known to be quite liberal, yet despite this, they were rather successful and were reissued several times after she passed away.

Here is a look at some of the fairy tales inside:

- My Lord Bag of Rice
- The Tongue-Cut Sparrow
- The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad
- The “Shinansha”, or the South Pointing Carriage
- The Adventures of Kintaro, the Golden Boy
- The Story of Princess Hase: A Story of Old Japan
- The Story of the Man Who Did Not Wish to Die
- The Bamboo-Cutter and the Moon-Child
- The Mirror of Matsuyama a Story of Old Japan
- The Goblin of Adachigahara
- The Sagacious Monkey and the Boar
- The Happy Hunter and the Skillful Fisher
- And many more

The second book in this collection is a rare one that is not usually available in audio format. Its title is *Aino Folk-Tales* by author Basil Chamberlain. Basil was one of the most prominent British Japanologists who was active in Japan during the latter half of the 19th century. He taught Japanese at Tokyo Imperial University. In addition to that, he is responsible

for some of the earliest translations of haiku into the English language.

The book goes over the old stories from the Ainu, and although Chamberlain was a bit quick to judge them with distaste, it is clear that his interest in them was genuine. As many say, the book is a product of its time and its author. It is advised to skip the intros by Chamberlain and jump right into the 54 short stories.

Unlike fairy tales, which are made up, folk tales derives from real life phenomena. They are passed on through generations and have a huge importance and influence in the culture of the people as they aim to teach important lessons.

Here is a quick peek at some of the folk tales inside:

- The Rat and the Owl
- The Loves of the Thunder Gods
- Why Dogs Cannot Speak
- Why the Cock Cannot Fly
- The Origin of the Hare
- The Owl and the Tortoise
- How a Man Got the Better of Two Foxes
- The Man Who Married the Bear-Goddess
- The Stolen Charm
- The Two Foxes, the Mole, and the Crows
- The Punishment of Curiosity
- The Kind Giver and the Grudging Giver
- And many more

The Ainu way of life was inextricably linked to the land. They have endured a challenging past, as you will discover in this book, and their ancestry is still a mystery to this day.

Reader's comments

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