

four thousand in number. The Sea of Japan is truly a sea of islands.

By way of the sailing clouds, and the blue sky which rests upon Kirishima's snowy top, the gods stepped down from heaven to earth. Down this celestial path came Jimmu's ancestors, of whom there were four between him and the mighty Sun goddess. Of course no one is asked to accept this for fact. Somewhat too many of the fathers or nations were sons of the gods. It may be that Jimmu was an invader from some foreign land, or came from a band of colonists who had settled at the mountain's foot some time before, but the gods have the credit of his origin.

At any rate, Hiuga, as the region in which he dwelt was called, was not likely to serve the ends of a party of warlike invaders, there being no part of Japan less fertile. So, as the story goes, Jimmu, being then fifty years old, set out to conquer some richer realm. He had only a few followers, some being his brothers, the others his retainers, all of them, in the language of the legends, being *kami*, or gods. Jimmu was righteous; the savages were wicked, though they too had descended from the gods. These savages dwelt in villages, each governed by a head-man or chief. They fought hard for their homes, and were not easily driven away.

The story of Jimmu's exploits is given in the *Kojiki*, or "Book of Ancient Traditions," the oldest book of Japan. There is another, called the *Nihongi*, nearly as old, being composed in 720 A.D. These give us all that is known of the ancient history of the island, but are so full of myths and fables that