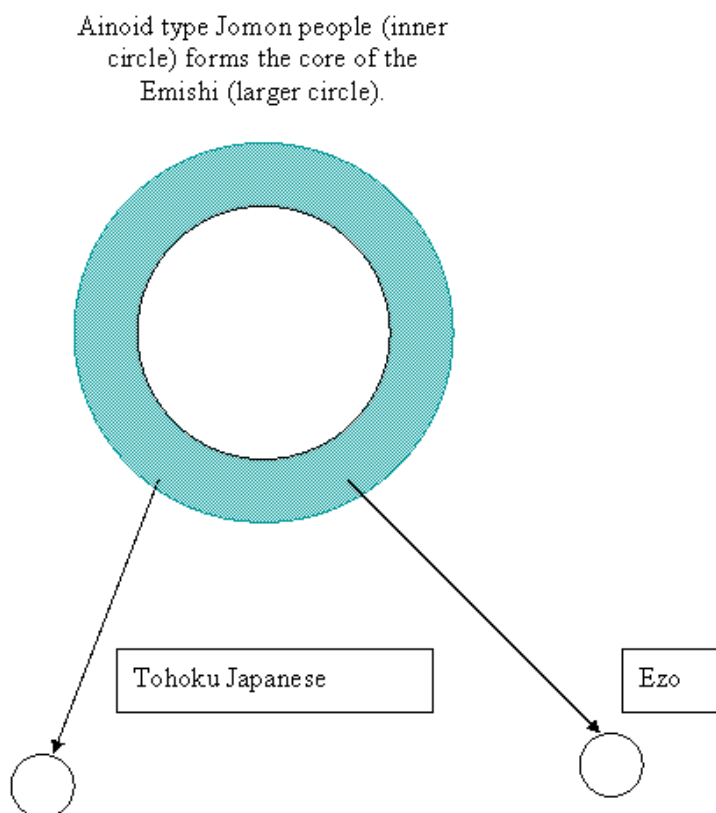


## Diagrams: Two perspectives on the Emishi and synthesis

Before 100AD	AD 400 to 850	AD 1000 to 1500	AD 1500 to present
Jomon	Emishi	Ezo	Ainu
Pre-history	proto-historic Tohoku	post Heian Aomori and Hokkaido	pre-modern and modern Hokkaido
Jomon culture	Epi-Jomon culture	Satsumon culture in Hokkaido	Ainu culture
Kamegaoka culture	Tohoku Yayoi culture	Hiraizumi culture in Tohoku (post conquest culture)	

This diagram represents a summary view of the website, and shows a straight line from the Jomon people of pre-history to the Emishi, and from the Emishi to the Ezo (and Ainu), though the two were distinctly different culturally due to historical circumstances and changing cultural influences. They were not exclusively made up of those with Jomon ancestry, as those in the Tohoku gradually mixed with frontier Kofun people during and after the conquest as they were integrated into the *ritsuryo* government hierarchy, and those in Hokkaido mixed to some extent with the former Okhotsk peoples when Hokkaido was settled and came under Ezo control. So that as centuries went by the separation between the Emishi who came under Japanese rule and those who settled in Hokkaido diverged, both in terms of cultural influence and even ethnically.

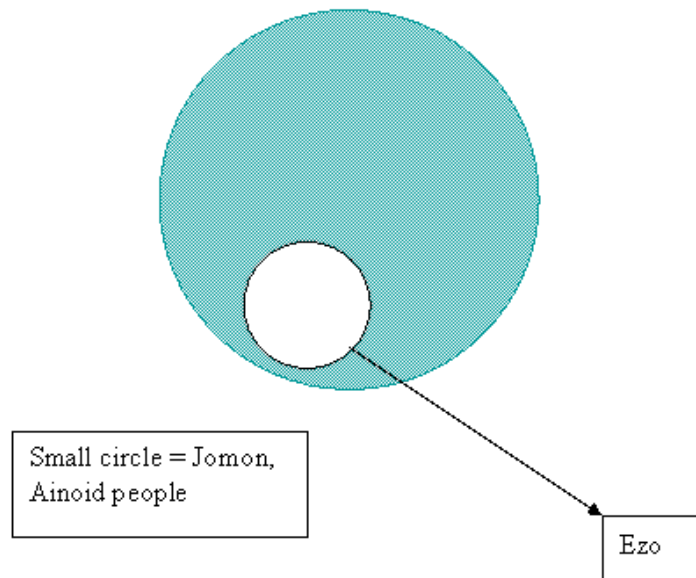


The above diagram shows that the Emishi proper, those who resisted the Japanese Yamato state, were mainly Jomon with the addition of mixed descendants of half Japanese Kofun and half Jomon Emishi. These latter were not Japanese but rather Emishi since they adopted the latter's culture and presumably their language. Even those with half Japanese parentage were mainly Jomon since they were settlers who were descendants of Kanto Kofun and Jomon Emishi. The Emishi later split into two groups: the ones who submitted to Yamato rule became Tohoku Japanese, and became more culturally and ethnically Japanese; the second group became known as the Ezo, the people who continued to resist Japanization both culturally and politically who lived further north on the Tsugaru peninsula, and on the island of Hokkaido. Those living in Hokkaido eventually became the Ainu.

This view is shared by the earliest scholars working in the fields of history and archeology as well as some of the latest in Japan. The following scholars can be included here even though there may be nuances to their views that may differ from each other. Kindaichi Kyosuke, a pioneering scholar whose works such as *Gongogaku ue yori mitaru emishi to Ainu*, 1923, appeared before the war. Much of the pre-war literature in Japan and the West were of this viewpoint. Western scholars of Japan such as historian George Sansom shared this view in his work, [A History of Japan to 1334](#), Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958.

More recently, Takahashi Takashi in *Emishi*, 1986, was of the view that conservatively the Emishi were an Ainoid people who spoke an Ainoid language in areas of the Tohoku in what is today Iwate and Akita and Aomori prefectures. Other scholars I have referenced on this site, in particular Ninno Naoyoshi in *Emishi no Sekai* (see [Emishi fushu and ifu](#) page) also shares this view.

This diagram summarizes the view of such scholars as Takahashi Tomio

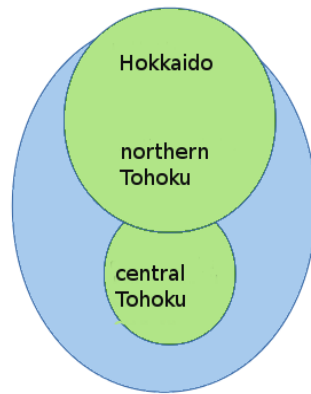


The larger circle represents the Emishi, primarily Tohoku natives who have not submitted to the Yamato state, but are not too different ethnically from contemporary Kofun Japanese. Within their ranks are Ainoid people who are part of the larger group Emishi, but are not central to that group. They are located further north in northern Tohoku and Hokkaido, and become known as Ezo.

This viewpoint emerged after the war, and has become influential among a sizable number of archeologists who have influenced historians in both Japan and the West. Those who share this view are not at all similar, and range from seeing the Emishi as an entirely different group of people from both the Japanese (Yayoi) and from the Ezo (Jomon/Ainu), such as Ito Nobuo in *Tohoku kodai no bunka no kenkyu* (1976) to those who see the Emishi as simply rebels in the Tohoku who fought the central government (but not ethnically distinct). Takahashi Tomio in *Emishi*, 1986, changed the terms of the argument from seeing or not seeing them as a separate ethnic group to simply seeing them as peoples who resisted incorporation into the Japanese state. This had the unfortunate effect among recent scholars to downplay their cultural and ethnic differences.

Recently (2009) a concentration on [studying skeletal remains](#) of areas where the Emishi are thought to have predominated, such as in areas of what is now northern Miyagi prefecture from 500 through 700 AD have yielded surprising and somewhat unexpected results for scholars (including the author of this website). Contrary to the first hypothesis (first diagram above), the influence of Yayoi immigration was much earlier and deeper geographically than the historical literature accounts for. The evidence seems to corroborate Takahashi Tomio's view at least in part, that in central and northern Miyagi the Emishi conflict arose from their desire to be politically independent from the Japanese state not due to ethnic or cultural differences. Of course I reject the view that political independence is the only reason for their resistance as these people spoke a different language and thus were culturally different. On the other hand, population changes were occurring mainly as a result of ongoing Japanese settlement into the area.

The view that the Jomon/Ainu were just one component of the Emishi group as a whole does have merit and now seeming confirmation. Simply, the issue comes down to numbers for both arguments. Were the majority of the Emishi made up of Jomon ancestors? Depending on how this is answered scholars find themselves on one side or the other. If Yayoi migration took place into this area before the Japanese state emerged, did the settlers forge a different identity as Emishi, separate from the Japanese (see [Nagaoka's argument](#))?



The third diagram illustrates the incorporation of the latest data to suggest that the Emishi group was composed of the Kofun (blue) and epi-Jomon (light green) in such a way that further south (bottom of the diagram) there was a smaller epi-Jomon population compared to the Kofun component, and further north (top) the epi-Jomon component of the population becomes greatest in Hokkaido where this population predominated. As described above and elsewhere the Kofun population was halfway between the Jomon and modern Japanese. Therefore, the mixed population which the Emishi embodied was already that of Kofun and epi-Jomon. This could have occurred through the gradual incorporation of pre-Japanese Yayoi settlers into the Emishi group as allies and through intermarriage. This may have been enough to change the population without altering the culture and language of the group. This is a possibility in ancient society because the local settler had no concept of "*Nippon*." Japan had not yet been "created." The establishment of the monarchy under the Emperor system was the first state that tried to become a national government. The Japanese or Yayoi settlers were in fact known as "captives" of the Emishi, and were in fact not captives at all, but were instead settlers who lived in the Emishi controlled territory. They were called captives for propaganda purposes by the Japanese state.

This diagram incorporates the first diagram as the ethnic make-up of northern Tohoku (present day Aomori, Akita and Iwate prefectures), and the second diagram as the ethnic make-up of central Tohoku (Miyagi and Yamagata prefectures) during the sixth through eighth centuries. Of course no population remains static, so that as northern Tohoku was incorporated into the Japanese state, and more Japanese moved there the population became like central Tohoku used to be, and central Tohoku lost its distinct Jomon population.

The evidence suggests a much larger role played by the Kofun people in central Tohoku, who were allied to or made up part of the Emishi who fought against the Japanese conquest. The evidence for northern Tohoku is not available. However, going by the fact of epi-Jomon dominance in Hokkaido most likely this area had a larger Jomon population. These diagrams do not at all reflect hard numbers, but reflect the finds in some of the tombs in central Tohoku: the lower circle reflects one-third Jomon and comes from the finds at Yamoto *yoko ana bogun*. These are simply rough estimates as the recovered skeletal remains in different tombs are quite random as to the distribution of Jomon and Kofun remains. These do not suggest ethnic lines among the Emishi, but are used to clarify the views about the make-up of their population. To the Emishi they saw themselves as one group.