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*Japan***demonium**

ILLUSTRATED

The Yokai Encyclopedias of Toriyama Sekien

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY Hiroko Yoda and Matt Alt

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Toriyama Sekien, Japanese, 1712-1788
(*Gazu*) *Hyakki yagyō*
Japanese, Edo period, 1776 (An'ei 5)
Woodblock printed book; ink on paper
Overall: 22.4 x 15.7 cm (8 3/16 x 6 3/16 in.); hanshibon
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Gift of Mrs. Jared K. Morse in memory of Charles J. Morse
2009.3763

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Bibliographical Note

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Introduction

Without knowledge of Far Eastern superstitions and folk-tales, no real understanding of Japanese fiction or drama or poetry will ever become possible.

Lafcadio Hearn
Goblin Poetry
1905

This book contains the artist Toriyama Sekien's four illustrated encyclopedias of creatures from Japanese folklore:

Gazu Hyakki Yagyō (1776)
The Illustrated Demon Horde's Night Parade

Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki (1779)
The Illustrated Demon Horde from Past and Present, Continued

Konjaku Hyakki Shūi (1781)
More of the Demon Horde from Past and Present

Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro (1784)
A Horde of Haunted Housewares

The islands of Japan abound with tales of shape-shifting creatures, collectively known as *yokai*. They are superstitions with personalities, the things that go bump in Japan's night. A few resemble what the West thinks of as demons. Others are humanoid, animal, or plant-like creatures. Many are simply weird phenomena. An entire "sub-species" called *tsukumo-gami* are essentially haunted housewares—tools, objects, and even articles of clothing with minds of their own. Although tales of the *yokai* have been passed down from generation to generation since time immemorial, Sekien's four books represent the first mass-produced illustrated compendiums of these wonderfully weird creatures. Groundbreaking in their day, they have continued to inspire in their home country for centuries. This compilation you hold in your hands represents the first time they have ever been available in the English language in their entirety.

Today, Japan is widely hailed as a pop-cultural powerhouse. Gameboys and Playstations, *anime* cartoons and *manga* comics. Characters like Totoro, Pikachu, and Godzilla are instantly recognizable icons around the world. Sekien's books, bestsellers from an era long ago, prove that the business of creating and marketing monsters is nothing new in Japan.

Japan's public face of high-tech manufacturing and entertainment is built upon a deeply entrenched foundation of animism and polytheism. Unlike the monotheistic major

religions of the West, both Japan's local religion of Shinto and the later import of Buddhism abound with deities. In fact, there's a saying the country is home to some eight million gods (a number intended to represent an uncountable multitude rather than a specific figure). *Kami*, as divine presences are referred to in Japanese, take a great many forms. Some are worshipped on high; others are more ethereal. But nearly anything, living or not, is a potential vessel for a spirit: the sun, the forests, the terrain, even abstract concepts such as words. There's even, as a popular song goes, a god of the toilet.¹

That said, it's important to note that yokai aren't Shinto in nature. For one thing, they aren't worshipped or venerated. But they represent another facet of this polytheistic worldview. Unlike the holy gods of the heavenly plane, they actually dwell among us and even interact with us—usually in the form of giving a good scare. In their long history this grotesque menagerie has been known by many names, including *oni* (ogre/demon), *mononoke* (strange things), *bakemono* (transformed things), and *ayakashi* (spooky things), among others. While all of these words are still in use today, they are more commonly described by a newer catch-all term: *yokai*.

Sekien was the first to attempt to systematically catalog them. When the first volume of his encyclopedia was published in the fall of 1776, top-knotted samurai still strolled the streets of Edo, as Tokyo was then known, twin swords at their sides. Japan was in the midst of two centuries of self-imposed isolation, all contact with foreign nations harshly regulated and limited to just a few highly restricted ports. But in spite of this quarantine from the rest of the world, Edo was one of the world's largest cities. As the metropolis grew and prospered, so too did its residents, who cast about for new ways to entertain themselves.

One of their favorite pastimes was reading. The combination of advanced printing techniques and a highly literate populace fueled the growth of a thriving publishing industry in Japan's urban centers. By one estimate, some 22,000 books were released in the cities of Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto between the 1720s and 1815, an average of 300 new titles a year.² For those who couldn't afford to buy, book-lenders provided access at a nominal cost.³ Eager citizens availed themselves of texts in wide variety of genres ranging from popular fiction to high literature, illustrated stories, gazetteers, tabloid "true tales," poetry anthologies, religious texts, reference books, and classics from Japan and China.⁴ Sekien managed to incorporate facets of nearly all of these genres into his encyclopedias, giving a sense of just how sophisticated Edoites' tastes had grown.

¹ "Toire no Kamisama" (2010), written and performed by Uemura Kana. Thanks to the success of the song, the album went gold.

² As calculated by van Zanden on p. 189 of his excellent *The Long Road to the Industrial Revolution: The European Economy in a Global Perspective*. (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2009).

³ McClain, James L., et. al., ed. *Edo and Paris: Urban Life and the State in the Early Modern Era*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.) p. 336, 342-343

⁴ The gold standard for scholarship about Edo era publishing in English is Peter Francis Kornicki's *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century*. (Leiden: Brill, 1998.) Here we reference p.139–140.

The Man Behind the Monsters

Toriyama Sekien is a pen name. (All names in this book are rendered Japanese style, family name followed by given, but Sekien is generally referred to as Sekien even in Japanese.) He was born Sano Toyofusa in 1712. He must have had a privileged upbringing, as he was born into a prestigious hereditary line of *obōzu*.⁵ The term is often mis-translated as “monk” or “priest,” and *obōzu* did sport shaved heads, but they were actually high-ranking servants of the Shōgun. Some were akin to valets or butlers; others were more like secretaries or assistants.⁶ Presumably this connection is how Sekien’s parents were able to arrange him a first-rate education including tutelage under the artists Kanō Gyokuen and Kanō Chikanobu, both masters of the state-sanctioned style of painting known as the Kanō school.

When he came of age, it seems he inherited the *obōzu* title himself, but it isn’t clear what form his service took. And although he mastered its techniques, Sekien doesn’t seem to have been officially recognized as a Kanō painter himself.⁷ Perhaps, given his wild imagination, he found its inherent conservatism and hyper-focus on convention stifling. Whatever the case, this combination of outsider status and insider knowledge allowed him the freedom to adapt venerable Kanō techniques for the populist art form of woodblock printing. He authored or contributed art to more than a dozen books, many of which proved deeply influential, such as the 1773 *Toriyamabiko*. Playfully named with a fusion of his pen-name and the word *yamabiko* (mountain echoes), it introduced an innovative technique called *fuki-bokashi* that allowed artists to more easily add color gradations to their woodblock prints — key to achieving richer imagery.

Throughout his life Sekien took on many apprentices, and he must have been quite a teacher, for several of his pupils went on to become stars of the Japanese art world.⁸ Two of the most well known are the great Utagawa Toyoharu (c. 1735-1814), who would found the hugely influential Utagawa school of Ukiyo-e prints, and Kitagawa Utamaro (c. 1753—1806), who lived and studied with Sekien from childhood. Utamaro’s highly stylized prints of glamorous beauties from the pleasure quarters enchanted consumers of the day. Decades after his death, they would help fuel the “Japonisme” movement in Europe when re-discovered by Western artists such as Whistler, Toulouse-Lautrec, Monet, and Van Gogh. But Utamaro was a chip off the old block who also dabbled in demons, monsters, and other strange creatures. This “creepy DNA” manifested throughout the work of Toyoharu’s disciples as well, emerging most spectacularly in the prints and paintings of

⁵ The widely cited source for this fact is Sawada Akira’s 1927 *Encyclopedia of Japanese Painters*.

⁶ Examples of this usage can be seen in Olof G. Lidin’s translation of Ogyū Sorai’s *Discourse on Government (Seidan)*, specifically pages 163 and 198-199.

⁷ Davis, *Partners in Print: Artistic Collaboration and the Ukiyo-e Market*, p. 25.

⁸ Yoshida Teruji’s *Encyclopedia of Ukiyo-e* lists seventeen disciples; Hara Sakae’s *Lineages of Ukiyoe* claims “roughly thirty” but doesn’t go into detail.

Utagawa-trained artists Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (1839-1892) and Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831-1889), whose striking portrayals of yokai and ghosts still dazzle today.

By the time he passed away in 1788, in his mid-seventies, Sekien was a towering presence among the Edo literati and in Japanese art as a whole. Given the techniques he pioneered and talents he tutored, it's tempting to speculate that had he never lived, the groundwork would never have been laid for geniuses like Utamaro, Hiroshige, and Hokusai to create their masterpieces—let alone influence the course of art on the other side of the planet.

Which makes it somewhat ironic that today he is pretty much only remembered for the yokai bestiaries contained in this book.⁹ Great though they are, they must represent but a tiny fraction of his lifetime artistic output, the majority of which has been lost forever. Sekien was no demonologist, and his books are not manuals of the occult. What they are is entertainment from a bygone era. Sekien was as much a poet as a painter, and these books teem with linguistic wordplay, puns, and cultural, literary, and religious references, marking them as the work of a man with a particularly wry sense of humor. That these-tongue-in-cheek encyclopedias not only became his calling card, but Japan's most authoritative texts on the subject, is something that he would undoubtedly have found very amusing.

A Supernatural Riot

The basic concept of parading monsters was nothing new. Its origins reach back to at least the 10th century, with the concept of *Hyakki Yagyō* (the Demon Horde's Night Parade). This supernatural riot on the streets of Kyoto was a popular subject for illustrated scrolls, which in being unrolled to reveal the progress of the monsters' revelry could be called an early form of interactive entertainment. Sekien's books are deeply indebted to this artistic tradition, and to one scroll in particular, a 1737 masterpiece by Sawaki Sūshi called *Hyakkai Zukan* ("Illustrated Creeps") that provided a visual reference for many of the monsters in the first book.¹⁰ Later, Sekien tried his hand at painting a traditional yokai scroll himself, and it still exists today, in the collection of the Museum of Fine Art, Boston.¹¹ It is a thing of beauty, like a high-definition version of the illustrations in these pages. But as great as it is, it was just another scroll. His books were game changers. Although they lacked the color and intensity of paintings, they represented the dawn of something entirely new.

⁹ Typical of this treatment can be seen in Hara's *Lineages of Ukiyo-e*, which launches into its short entry thusly: "Sekien is barely known today, but earns a brief mention because he produced several famed disciples..."

¹⁰ Selected imagery from this scroll can be seen at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyakkai_Zukan

¹¹ It can be found, in frustratingly low resolution, here: <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/night-procession-of-the-hundred-demons-26501>

For one thing, most scrolls simply portrayed the creatures against empty space. Sekien placed his yokai against backdrops that situated them in a time and place—essentially little “habitats.” But the far bigger innovation was printing his work in book form. Scrolls were one of a kind pieces of art, treasured by the collectors and institutions that owned them, available only to those few with the wealth to own them or connections to request a viewing. These mass-produced books, on the other hand, unleashed an easily referenced database of the yokai upon the population at large. Today, yokai-related items represent some of Japan’s most popular products. Sekien’s books are the very first of them.

They emerged in the midst of a boom for encyclopedias and almanacs in Japan.¹² The most sophisticated of these, and one of Sekien’s direct inspirations, was the eighty-one-volume opus *Wakan Sansai Zue* (“An Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms”), published right around the time Sekien was born in 1712. It represented, somewhat incredibly, the handiwork of just a single man: an Osaka doctor named Terajima Ryōan. Terajima spent decades cataloging information from Chinese and domestic sources on such varied topics as astronomy, botany and pharmacology, geology, geography, zoology, and daily activities such as carpentry and fishing. Think of it as something like the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of its day. Although intended as factual, this was an era before science and the line between natural and supernatural was blurrier than it is today. Mixed in among the Three Realms’ entries are many things that we would consider totally fantastic by a modern yardstick.

So Sekien didn’t create the concept of encyclopedias or yokai. But mashing up the two resulted in something that was more than the sum of its parts. His skillful curation of this wild bunch from all over Japan and China resulted in a new standard desk reference that ushered in the yokai’s transition from superstitions into pop cultural superstars.

In the end analysis, perhaps Sekien’s greatest legacy is launching what might be called the yokai brand. In the second half of the 20th century, the meteoric rise of Japanese firms like Sony, Canon, Toyota, and Nintendo defined the nation’s image as a high-tech superpower. In the early 21st century Japan began pivoting from manufacturing of hardware to “soft power”: the video games, anime, and manga that form the cornerstone of what has been called the nation’s “gross national cool.” Sekien’s bestiaries are the direct ancestors of the character franchises that fuel this cool factor. Today, yokai fare such as Mizuki Shigeru’s *Kitaro* comic series, the bestselling suspense novels of Kyōgoku Natsuhiko, and the video game based *Yo-kai Watch* represent some of Japan’s blockbuster entertainment franchises. All of them owe a large debt to Sekien’s books, not only visually but in the way that they catalog and index their own yokai characters.

¹² Michael Dylan Foster does an excellent job covering this trend in the “Natural History of the Weird” chapter of his book *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yokai*.

About the Books

Sekien penned four yokai encyclopedias, with each book being subdivided into three volumes. The first two books were conceived as a set, but for whatever reason they were not published together. The first was released in 1776 and the second in 1779. The third, which came out in 1781, delves into increasingly more obscure yokai. The fourth was released in 1784 and is filled with yokai largely out of Sekien's own imagination. Unlike its predecessors, it has a rudimentary narrative framework: the record of a strange dream. In a testament to the series' popularity, the books were reissued by a new publisher in 1805, nearly twenty years after Sekien's death, and then again at some point thereafter.

The four books are generally referred to by the title of the first in Japanese: the "Sekien's *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* series." But this is cumbersome in English, so we have invented an umbrella term to make discussing them easier: *Japandemonium Illustrated*.

The reason deals with the titles of the books. *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (sometimes rendered as *Ezu* or *Gazu Hyakki Yakō* - the pronunciation is not precisely fixed) transliterates into the "Illustrated Hundred Demons' Night Parade," echoing that legendary yokai invasion of the ancient capital Kyoto. Perhaps "invasion" isn't the best word; by most descriptions, it was less of an attack than a regular swarm or manifestation. They were feared mainly as harbingers of ill fortune. On nights when the grotesque procession worked its way across what was then the furthest edge of town, residents were obliged to take refuge in their homes lest they wind up sick, mutilated, or blinded by the sheer sight of its monstrous participants.¹³

As translators, we have never been comfortable with the standard transliteration of "Hundred Demons' Night-Parade" for *hyakki yagyō*. Although *hyakki* is written with the characters for "hundred" and "oni" (demon) and *yagyō* with the characters for "night" and "procession," the effect is more poetic than a word-for-word translation implies.¹⁴ "Hundred" and variations on it are widely used to refer to vaguely large numbers: encyclopedias are *hyakka-jiten* (one hundred entries) and greengrocers *yaoya* (eight hundred vegetables). Just as neither of these cases is intended literally, here it is closer in meaning to an uncountable legion. Meanwhile "demon," with all of its associated Judeo-Christian baggage, is a really poor substitute for "oni," a broad term that encompasses not only the beings that dish out punishment in hell, but ogres and other powerful presences beyond human control.¹⁵ As for "night," yokai and their ilk are often

¹³ As detailed in Mabuchi Kazuo's 1999 modern Japanese translation of the 12th century *Konjaku Monogatari-Shū* (Anthology of Tales from the Past).

¹⁴ 百鬼夜行. Even if you can't read the language, the compactness of the four-character phrase is evident in comparison to the English, which labors over 28 letters to deliver the equivalent meaning.

¹⁵ Entire books can and have been written about oni. We recommend Noriko T. Reider's *Japanese Demon Lore* (Utah State University Press, 2010), available for free download as of this writing from http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/usupress_pubs/59/

associated with the twilight hours, and rather than an orderly “parade,” pandemonium—as in a raucous revelry of creepy-crawlies—probably captures the spirit better. So what do we have? A hundred demons who probably number far more than a hundred and aren’t exactly demons, appearing at what may or may not be night and who may or may not necessarily be parading. Even more to the point, *hyakki yagyō* is a succinct, evocative expression in Japanese. Thus we propose “Japandemonium” as a localization, and *Japandemonium Illustrated* to refer to our translation of the four books Sekien authored on the topic.

It isn’t known precisely how many copies were originally published altogether. In Sekien’s day and for close to a century after, making a book involved carving woodblocks by hand, which required studios of trained craftspeople including artists, designers, carvers, inkers, and printers. Although printing press technology was first imported to Japan via Korea in the late 16th century, Japanese readers seem to have preferred the visual appearance and personality of cursive handwriting to the stand alone characters of typeset fonts. The additional advantage of woodblocks in being able to render full-color images as well as text made them the gold standard for Japanese publications until close to the 20th century.

18th and 19th century booksellers generally commissioned books for their own shops. Logic dictates that they generally wouldn’t go to the expense unless they planned to print large numbers of copies: from the hundreds to several thousand in the most popular cases.¹⁶ And woodblocks themselves, being bulky and hard to store, were often planed down and re-carved for new books after a print run. The blocks for Sekien’s encyclopedias were kept for decades, and the books reprinted by at least three booksellers over the course of the Edo era. That would seem to suggest that they sold very well in their day.

Japandemonium in Context

Japanese society in Sekien’s era was deeply stratified, with very little in the way of social mobility. Who your parents were generally determined who you were: samurai, farmer, craftsman, or merchant. Anyone could potentially join a Buddhist order and become a monk, but severing one’s worldly ties to devote life and soul to religious study was as daunting a prospect then as today.

However, in practice things were more complicated than a fixed hierarchy would suggest. The wealthiest merchants enjoyed lifestyles exceeding that of many aristocrats, while down on their luck samurai eked out menial existences, and less pious monks snuck into brothels. All of this provided rich fodder for the social satire running through Edo’s popular entertainment. But criticizing the status quo could land one

¹⁶ Kornicki quotes an estimate of a single woodblock being able to print a maximum of roughly 8,000 copies. (*The Book in Japan*, p. 137.) The degraded condition of third-edition copies of Sekien’s yokai encyclopedias suggests that at least that many were printed.

in jail or worse. Poetic allusions, ghost stories, ancient history, and monsters allowed sly creators to express opinions at a discreet enough of a remove to ensure their own heads weren't. Sometimes even this wasn't enough: in 1804 Sekien's former disciple Utamaro was punished with fifty days in chains for publishing a series of prints seen as insufficiently reverent of the 16th century warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

There was one place where Edoites could freely mingle regardless of class: Yoshiwara, the city's walled and guarded "pleasure quarter."¹⁷ This government-sanctioned prostitution district thrived for two and a half centuries, from 1617 until 1872, when its indentured women were granted freedom from servitude. Yet it was more than just a collection of cathouses. It was the hippest section of the city, a place to see and be seen (unless you were a monk or samurai, that is, in which case you had to don a disguise helpfully rented by special purveyors near the gates). A huge number of "teahouse" bordellos offered entertainment services catering to a wide variety of tastes, ranging from simple companionship (ala modern-day "hostess clubs") to sex in all its varied forms. The Yoshiwara fueled Edo's popular culture. The shared experience of visiting the quarter and interacting with people outside one's social class fostered trends, spread new slang and fashions, and inspired legions of poets, writers, and artists—including Sekien.

It's impossible to truly understand Sekien's encyclopedias without discussing *kyōka*: "mad verse." Although satirical poetry had existed in various forms for centuries, it took Edo by storm in the 1760s and 70s. Citizens gathered to swap verse in local clubs, spawning poetry contests and parties that attracted the city's intellectual and creative elites.¹⁸

Kyōka verses resemble conventional *waka* poems, which begin with a haiku-like 5-7-5 syllable stanza, and end with an additional two lines of 7, for 31 syllables altogether. However, where elegant *waka* conveyed sophisticated observations of the aristocratic elite, *kyōka* (and their pop-haiku cousins *senryū*) focused on more down to earth topics like sex, booze, money, marital strife, or simply sounding funny. Steeped in double entendres, some *kyōka* resemble that venerable Western form of verse, the dirty limerick. Others are bawdy parodies of famous poems, making them something like the Edo-era equivalent of "Weird Al" songs. And their compactness makes it tempting to compare them to those mad verses of the digital era, Twitter's tweets.

¹⁷ J.E. de Becker's 1899 investigation *The Nightless City: Or the History of the Yoshiwara Yukwaku* is a fount of first-hand information on this topic. Cecilia Segawa Seigle's *The Glittering World of the Japanese Courtesan* is another excellent resource.

¹⁸ Makoto Ueda's *Light Verse from the Floating World* offers an excellent scholarly overview of satirical poetry, but for comedic impact, we are fans of robin d. gill's "localized" *kyōka* in his excellent *Japan's Comic Verse: A Mad in Translation Reader*, from which both of the samples here are quoted.

Here's one by the famed master Kobayashi Issa that your poetry teacher would undoubtedly rather you not recite in class:

*Sukashi-he no kie-yasuki koso aware nare
Mi wa nakimono no omoinagara mo*

*Pity the silent fart, vanishing without a trace,
Though nothing of substance in the first place:
who is?*

Here's another, perhaps more suitable for our subject matter:

*Me wa kagami, kuchi wa tarai no hodo ni aku:
Gama mo keshō no mono to kososhire.*

*Looking-glass eyes and a mouth that opens like a basin;
A toad's a goblin you can look and wash your face in!*

Don't bother counting the beats – almost impossible to catch along with the meaning in translation, though translator robin d. gill (lowercase intentional) has tried heroically here. In fact comic verse of this sort remains very popular in Japan today – there's even an annual "Salaryman Senryū" contest in which company men compete with comical poems that best capture the humiliations of daily work and family life.¹⁹

Sekien was deeply "plugged in" to this culture of satire, and *Japandemonium Illustrated's* punny illustrations can be seen as a visual counterpoint to kyōka poetry. There's definitely something kyōka-like about the subject matter, monsters and demons of the sort normal folk "shy away from," as the poet Maki Tōei says in his introduction to the first volume. The influence of satirical verse can be felt throughout *Japandemonium Illustrated*, and particularly so in the final two books, which teem with witty commentary and creatures straight out of Sekien's own dreams.

About the Translation

Although printed in relatively large numbers in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, copies of Sekien's books are rarities today. Not only Edo's books but its buildings were products of wood and paper. Conflagrations caused by earthquakes, accidents, or simple carelessness swept Edo on a semi-regular basis, and the entire city was leveled twice in the first half of 20th century, once due to the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 and

¹⁹ Launched in 1987, the Salaryman Senryū contest continues to this day, sponsored by the Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company. <http://event.dai-ichi-life.co.jp/company/senryu/index.html>

then again at the end of World War II. Given this tragic history it's a miracle as many copies survive as they do. Precious items today, they reside in the hands of collectors and institutions such as museums and libraries. Many are incomplete or in poor condition.

We have greatly benefitted from a recent push by these same institutions to digitize and upload the public domain portions of their collections to the Internet, making it far easier to find copies. But as of this writing no single organization seems to possess a full run of complete copies. Some are in tatters and worm-eaten. Others are in excellent condition but incomplete. Piecing together the best quality imagery sent us on a real-world yokai hunt through the digital archives of museums and libraries in Japan, Europe, and America.

Complicating things is the fact that the series was originally published in three editions from five different booksellers. The first were **Izumoji Izumi-no-jō** and **Enshū-ya Yashichi**, who originally commissioned and published the four books in 1776, 1779, 1781, and 1784, respectively. Then came **Maekawa Yahei** and **Maekawa Rokuzaemon**, a pair of apparently related booksellers who partnered to purchase the blocks and reprint the series in 1805.²⁰ And finally there is **Nagano-ya Kankichi**, who acquired the blocks from the Maekawas and reprinted a third run at some point thereafter. Nagano-ya Kankichi didn't add a date of printing to the colophon, so the precise timing of their release isn't known. And by this late date portions of the text had gone missing and the blocks themselves had deteriorated, seriously compromising the print quality.²¹

The majority of the imagery in this book is from the 1805 Maekawa run. We stumbled across it in the digital collection of the Smithsonian Institution's Freer and Sackler Galleries, and it was in spectacularly good condition. This was a real find, as the fourth book, *Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro*, has until now been known mainly from blurred and incomplete third-edition Nagano-ya Kankichi copies. Unfortunately, the second volume of *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* is missing from the Smithsonian's copy. We acquired the imagery from a 1776 first-edition Enshū-ya Yashichi in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Taken together, we believe they represent the cleanest copies of the art ever published in the modern era. Equally exciting is that they include assorted descriptions and two key prefaces to the fourth book that are missing from the third editions.

Our background is in entertainment translation—what is commonly known as “localization.” We run a company that specializes in helping Japanese content producers bring their video games, comic books, toys, and other products into English and European markets. We have long had an interest in Japan's tales of the weird, and first began reading Sekien in depth as we wrote *Yokai Attack! The Japanese Monster Survival Guide* (Tuttle

²⁰ They seem to have done well for themselves, still being in business close to twenty years later in 1824, the year they both appeared under the “book wholesaler” section of a guidebook called *Edo Kaimono Hitori Annai* (Your Personal Guide to Shopping in Edo). Izumoji Izumi-no-jō and Enshū-ya Yashichi are not listed in the guide, suggesting they were no longer in business.

²¹ Nagano-ya Kankichi, located not in Edo but distant Ise, also took the liberty of appending a “new” introduction to the first book from an unrelated text. In the interest of completeness, we have included a translation.

Publishing, 2011), a tongue-in-cheek handbook to encounters with creatures from Japanese folklore.

Reading Sekien was one thing. Actually localizing him required us to take a crash course in Edo-era Japanese. Simply deciphering his beautiful handwriting, a distinctive Edo shorthand called *kuzushi-ji*, was a hurdle in and of itself. In this we are indebted to numerous primers and a variety of transliterations into standard Japanese text, published both in print and online. Even with the great help of these sources, it would sometimes take us entire days to properly research, translate, and annotate merely a few lines of text. Quite often the annotations ran significantly longer than the original. The result is, to paraphrase the title of a hit anime, a ghost in a shell: Sekien's spooky art cradled both literally on the page and by an explanatory framework that augments its already significant charms for modern readers.

As challenging as it was, translating the illustrated entries was a cakewalk compared to the multilayered wordplay of the prefaces and afterwords. There is surprisingly little scholarship on this ancillary text even in its native country. Perhaps this is due simply to the fact that they are very difficult to read. Several aren't even written in Japanese, but rather *kanbun*, classical Chinese annotated so it can be read phonetically in Japanese. It's the local equivalent of Medieval European scholars using Latin in their texts, and is all but incomprehensible to the vast majority of modern readers. Even deciphered into classic and then modern language, the intros teem with jokes, self-deprecating humor, references to foreign philosophy, and simple turns of phrase that haven't been in use for decades or centuries. Tackling these sections with the help of knowledgeable friends and advisors proved among the most satisfying work on the project, both in teamwork and the sheer thrill of translating something few have ever read abroad.

It's a little humbling to realize that all of this was intended as light reading back when it was first put to paper just a few hundred years ago, which isn't really very long in the grand scheme of things. A similar fate awaits all writers fortunate enough to have their work still being read centuries hence. But in all cases we took the same essential approach as we do in localizing video games, manga, or anime: teamwork in translation, using natives of both languages, with the intent of making the final product as accessible as possible to the target audience without compromising the creator's original meaning. Sekien intended his books as entertainment, not academic treatises. We wanted to keep them that way.

That said, there's no denying many of the entries seem downright cryptic even in translation. Some were undoubtedly intended as such, but for a great many others it is simply due to the passage of time. Sekien quotes works that were well known to educated readers of his day, from the aforementioned *Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms* to the ancient Chinese *Analects of Confucius*, just to name a very few. Unraveling these now-obscure references is a hint of what's to come for scholars attempting to decipher the world's blog posts, Twitter screeds, and Facebook feeds decades hence.

For the sake of modern readers, particularly those who might not be familiar with yokai lore, we generally include brief explanations or expansions on Sekien's text. There's

nothing un-funnier than a joke explained, but sometimes there's simply no way around it. A careful examination of the imagery of each monster and its background can reveal further detail beyond the text as well. It's also important to pay attention to the page layouts, as it seems Sekien designed the two-page spreads to complement one another both visually and contextually, often placing yokai that have some sort of a connection on adjacent pages.

For the names of the yokai, we provided English translations where not doing so would compromise understanding. But many others are either proper names, or terms that express peculiarly Japanese concepts that aren't easily translated, such as "Tengu" or "Oni." For these we have left the Japanese names as-is.

A brief word on romanization. In order to assist in pronunciation, we use macrons to denote long vowels (such as "senryū"). However, we drop them in cases of place names (i.e., Tokyo rather than Tōkyō) and well-known loanwords (i.e., shōgun instead of shōgun; yokai instead of yōkai.) One exception is Noh drama, which is traditionally rendered with an h in English to denote its long vowel.

Fans of yokai entertainment, whether classic or modern, will notice that Sekien's entries often differ from the descriptions in current sources. Because yokai stories originate in the oral tradition the details can differ greatly from era to era, region to region, place to place, and even person to person. Even in the cases of yokai that Sekien created himself, generations of subsequent artists and storytellers have embellished the often rudimentary explanations with their own additions. Although it is tempting to describe Sekien's text as "canon" simply because of its age, it's important to remember that he himself was expanding upon the work of countless predecessors and the oral traditions that in turn inspired them. When it comes to fantastic creatures like the yokai, the question of what is truly "real" or "authentic" is extremely difficult to pin down. Sekien's work represents simply another interpretation of these wild characters from Japanese folklore, not a definitive take on the subject. Even he knew this, which is why he spelled the names of many of his yokai with different kanji than commonly used. Deciphering this wordplay is half the fun of yokai studies.

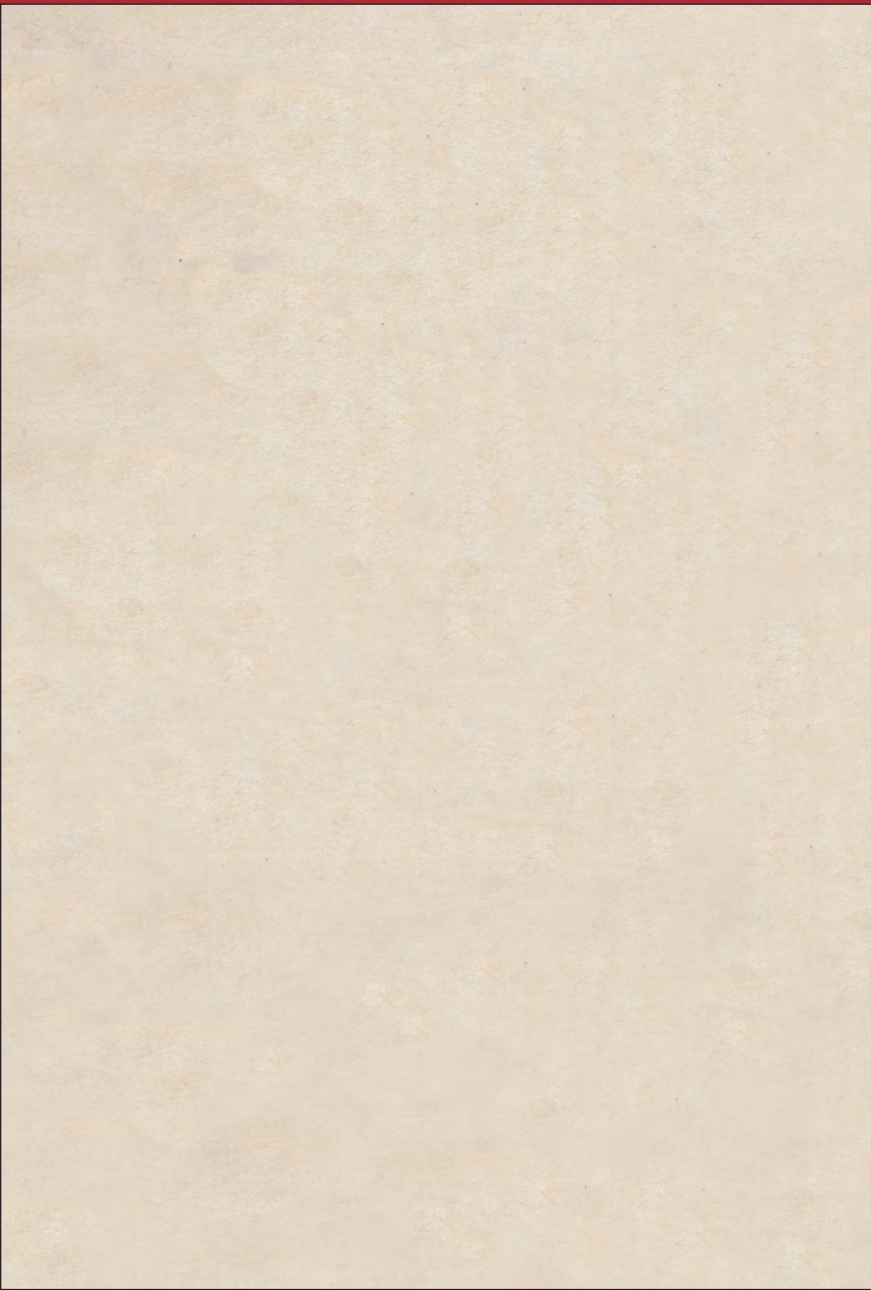
One final note. Sekien completed the first book of *Japandemonium Illustrated* in fall of 1775, which corresponds to "kinoto-hitsuji," the Year of the Wooden Sheep, the 32nd of the 60-year period of the traditional lunar calendar. As we were wrapping up our work we discovered to our pleasant surprise that 2015 just so happens to be kinoto-hitsuji again, precisely four sixty-year cycles of the calendar later, even down to the same season in which Sekien penned his afterword. In honor of this coincidence, we conclude this Introduction as Sekien did his Afterword: gazing up at the moon. In fact, we tracked down the address of his studio from old maps in Japan's national library, and type these last words from that very spot, on the very same day in the cycle he penned his.

Hiroko Yoda and Matt Alt
Tokyo (formerly Edo), Japan
Fall, 2015

畫圖百鬼夜行 陰 上
Gazu Hyakki Yagyō
(In) (Jō)

The Illustrated Demon
Horde's Night Parade (Yin)
Volume 1





Foreword

Let us speak of shape-shifting things, like stone-swallows or inkbrush-crickets.¹ The man who created this book, Toriyama Sekien, has enjoyed himself in the field of art for some years. His very brush shape-shifts; in fact there is nothing in all of creation it cannot evoke. He is already famed for his book *Toriyamabiko*.²

凡物乃化す。や石の燕となり筆
の蟻蛸と化する。よく化すといへ
あふ鳥山石燕なるもの画にあそび
こと年何里その筆亦よく化し
赤羅糸象ふさくとい婦との南
さあはる山彦を著し世人を驚
おとしけし古画の石鬼抱けし據

¹ Certain species of fossil shells with bird-like shapes were called “stone-swallows” in China and Japan. This is also a play on Sekien’s name, which is written with the same two characters. *Fudetsu-mushi* (“inkbrush-bugs”) is an archaic, poetic term for crickets.

² Published in Spring of 1774, this influential art book’s name has been translated as “Toriyama’s Echoes” but also evokes the name of the yokai “yamabiko” (see p. 11). The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston has made their copy available online.

Foreword

This time, he took the ancient Hyakki Yagyō scrolls as inspiration, to which he added his own inimitable personal touch. A publisher took note and prepared blocks for printing a book.

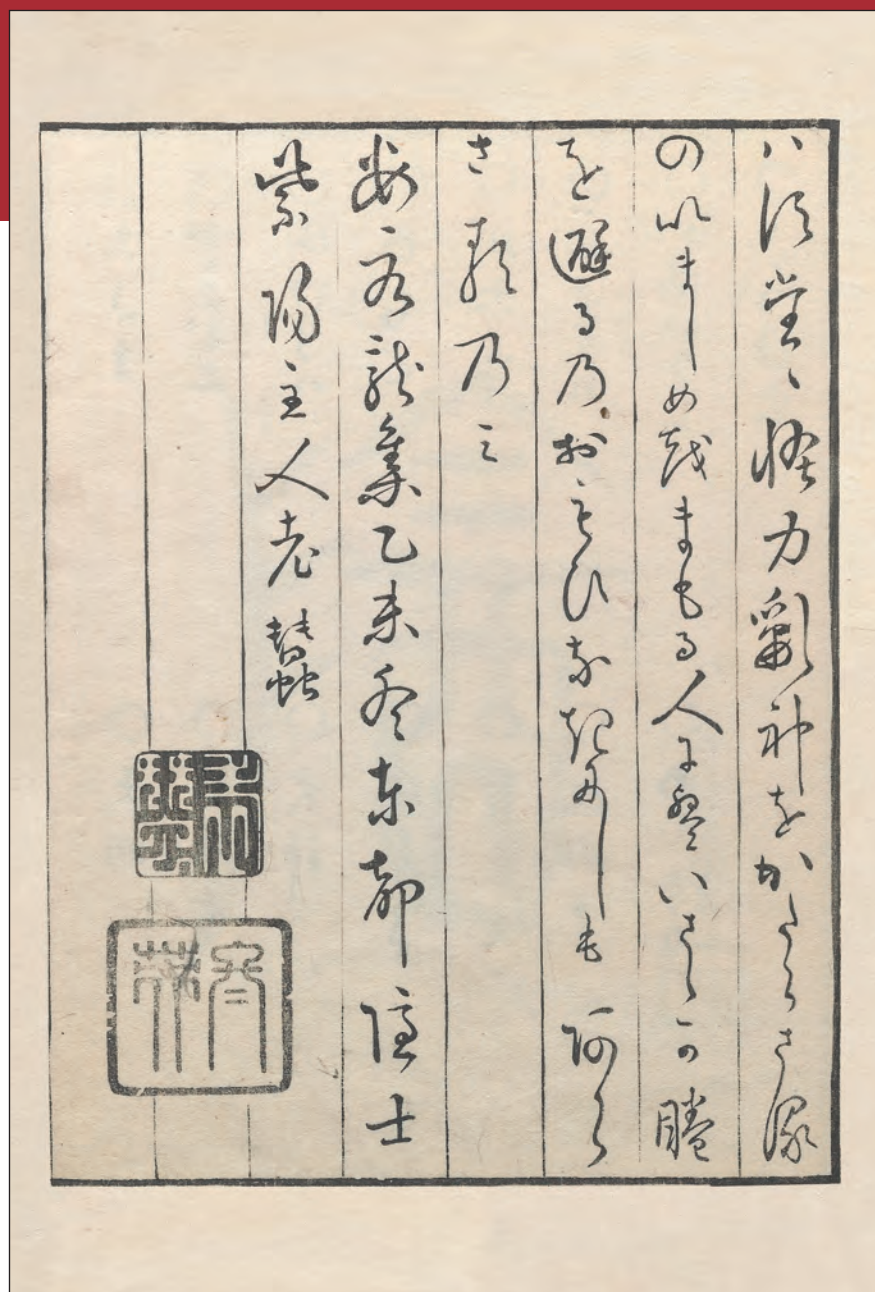
Sekien split his work into six volumes: Yin, Yang, Wind, Rain, Darkness, and Light. These are the first three, entitled, naturally, *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (*The Illustrated Demon Horde's Night Parade*). By and by he asked me to pen a Foreword. Sekien and I have long been traders of verse, so I could hardly refuse.

意を加へ密に補ふは群何れぞやく
見とえて梓と毒とんやとふ
授けよとふ六とふ一陰陽風
雨晦明とふとふ其歸とふ
畫圖不夜夜行と歌一己尔
前編三冊来ぬとふ於わき序
とふ子もとふ燕と歌の女と
とふ誠ととふとふ辭とおく

Foreword

But if you're the sort who follows the conventional wisdom of shying away from talk of spirits and demons, you might find yourself wishing to avert your eyes.

Anei Era, the Year of the Wood-Sheep³, Winter
by the Hermit of the Eastern Capital⁴
Rōsan, master of Shiyō⁵



³ This corresponds to the 4th year of the Anei Emperor's reign: 1775.

⁴ Edo (Tokyo).

⁵ A combination of pen names of the poet Maki Tōei (1721-1783), who also wrote under "Rōsan" (Old Silkworm) and "Shiyō-kan" (Hall of Violet Light), among others.

Contents

Kodama
 Tengu
 Yamabiko
 Yamauba
 Yama-warawa
 Inugami
 Shirachigo
 Nekomata
 Kawatarō
 Kawauso
 Akaname
 Tanuki
 Kama-itachi
 Ami-kiri
 Kitsune-bi

○ 山つゝハ	○ 白ちど	○ 川太郎	○ あうなめ	○ かほいしら	○ きつゝ火
○ 天狗	○ 山うむ	○ 犬神	○ 祓あま	○ かはうそ	○ たぬき
					○ あみきり

Yin

Calligraphy by Rōsan



木魅

Kodama
(TREE-SPIRIT)

It is said that ancient trees have *kami* that reveal themselves.

○ 木魅
百年の樹は
神ありてかたちを
あらはれり



In the play *Takasago*, the Takasago Pine is considered one of a pair with the Sumino-e Pine growing in distant Sumiyoshi; together, the two are renowned as the *Aioi-no-matsu* (Paired Pines). The protagonist, a Shinto priest, encounters an elderly couple sweeping up needles under the former. In a discussion of poetry, the old man explains that pine trees are blessed, as they live for a thousand years. Then he reveals that he and his wife are actually manifestations of the souls of the paired trees.



Kami is Japanese for a divine presence. Although the original text states “trees of one hundred years,” this is a poetic flourish indicating a large number rather than a specific one. In his illustration, Sekien portrays the tree as a pair of intertwined pines and the Kodama as an elderly couple carrying rakes and brooms. All are symbols of longevity and prosperity, popularized by the Noh play *Takasago*.

天狗 Tengu (TENGU)



Among the most well-known of the yokai. There are traditionally two forms: the bird-like “raven” tengu (shown here) and the humanoid “longnose” tengu (masks of which are common decorations in Japan.) Deeply associated with the religion of Shugendō, they are viewed as guardians of mountains. According to legend, some of Japan’s top martial artists, such as Miyamoto no Yoshitsune, learned their tricks from Tengu.

In the 12th century chronicle *The Tale of Heike*, raven-tengu are described as “men, but not men; bird, but not bird; dog, but not dog; they possess the head of a canine, a pair of wings, and are capable of both flight and walking.” They are believed to be localized versions of the winged deity Garuda of Indian Buddhist and Hindu lore.

幽谷響

Yamabiko

(MYSTICAL-VALLEY-ECHO)



Yamabiko is a common term for the echoing of mountains and canyons. Here the phenomenon is portrayed as a monkey-like creature that presumably causes the echoes. Although the common phrase is written with the characters for “mountain” and “boy,” Sekien has chosen three characters reading “mystical-valley-echo.” Like many of the yokai that appear in these pages, the portrayal resembles similar illustrations that appeared in earlier scrolls, such as the 1737 *Hyakkai Zukan* (*Illustrated Creeps*) by Sawaki Sūshi.

山童

Yama-warawa
(MOUNTAIN BOY)



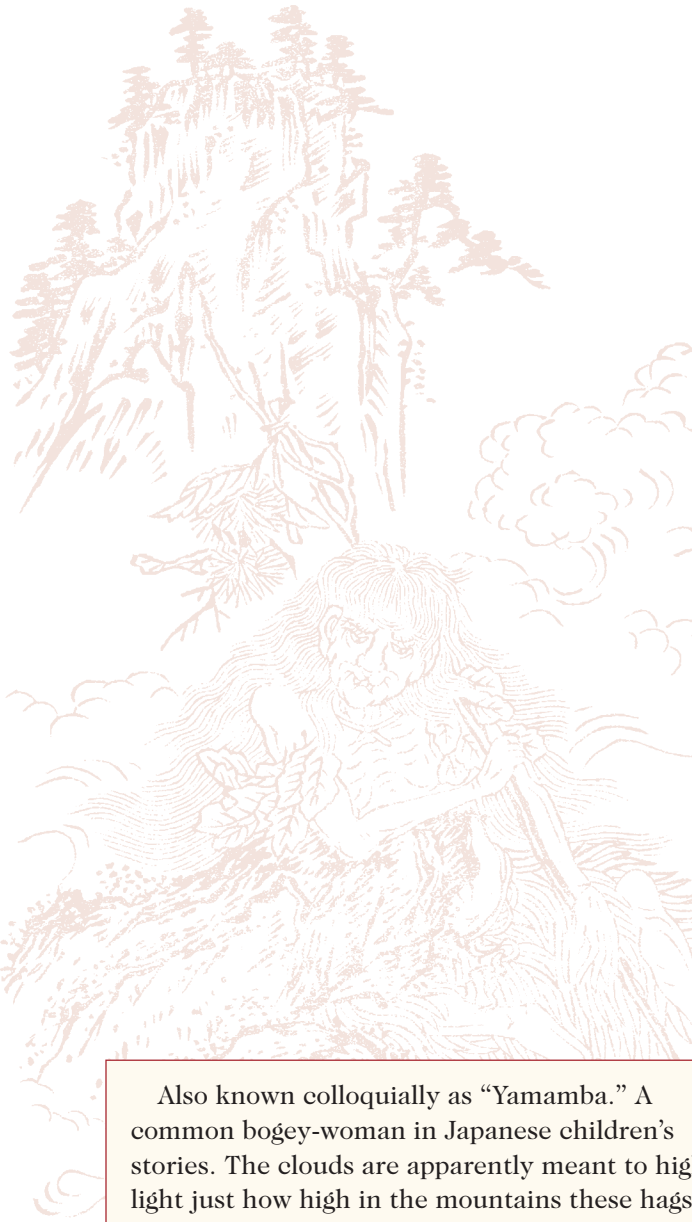
This yokai originates in Chinese folklore, specifically the 2nd century *Shenyi Jing* (*Classic of Divine Marvels*). It was introduced to Japan through its inclusion in the 1712 *Wakan Sansaizue* (*Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*). That book provides the Japanese

reading *Yamawaro* for its name, elaborating that it resembles a ten year old boy, is capable of human speech, and has a taste for roast crab. Over the years, alternate spellings and pronunciations emerged, including the one Sekien uses here.

山姥

Yamauba

(MOUNTAIN HAG)



Also known colloquially as “Yamamba.” A common bogey-woman in Japanese children’s stories. The clouds are apparently meant to highlight just how high in the mountains these hags dwell—a height few elderly humans would normally be able to scale.

On the other hand, Komparu Zenchiku’s 15th century Noh play *Yamauba* portrays her existence as more akin to that of Mother Nature. She is

described as being as old as the mountains themselves, bringing snow in winter and blossoms in spring. Arthur Waley translated the play’s chorus as “*On and on, from hill to hill / Awhile our eyes behold her, but now / She is vanished over the hills / Vanished we know not where.*” The hill, says the commentator, is the “Hill of Life, where men wander from incarnation to incarnation, never escaping the Wheel of Life and Death.”

犬神 / 白児

Inugami / Shirachigo

(DOG GOD / WHITE-CHILD)



Inugami legends are associated with Western Japan and the island of Shikoku in particular, where they are venerated as powerful spirits capable of possessing, protecting, and cursing humans. The scrolls from which Sekien took inspiration for this illustration tend to portray the Inugami dressed in Buddhist robes, but here it wears the garb of a Shinto priest. The Shirachigo appears to be acting as its scribe. It isn't known why Sekien combined

these two seemingly unrelated deities into one image, but it seems obvious that the Shirachigo is taking dictation, presumably of some shamanistic prophecy. Sekien may be parodying the concept of *kamigakari*, or spirit possession, which served an important function in ancient Japan for discerning the will of the gods. It is generally accompanied by a physical and mental transformation, as seen in the Inugami's intensely-focused expression.

猫また

Nekomata

(FORKED CAT)



According to legend, when cats reach a certain age, their tails split, they begin walking on hind legs, and they acquire the ability to speak. Sekien's illustration contains three cats, in an apparent "before, during, and after" transformation sequence. Note also the flowering plants in the background: *hagi*, Japanese clovers. Yamaguchi prefecture's Hagi City is home to a neighborhood called Neko-chō: "Cat-Town." It is so named for a famed incident in

which a distraught samurai named Nagai Motofusa committed suicide to follow his master into the afterlife. Nagai was a cat lover, and his pet refused to leave his grave, eventually killing itself there in a samurai-esque act of loyalty to its owner. The sound of phantom meowing was heard ever after from Nagai's home, and locals renamed the neighborhood Cat-Town.

河童 Kappa (KAPPA)

Also known as Kawatarō.



Quite possibly the single most well-known yokai, kappa are a ubiquitous presence in Japanese folklore. They are literal frogmen, with tortoise-shell backs and water-filled depressions on their heads. If this liquid spills for any reason, they lose their power. Famed for their love of cucumbers and sumo wrestling. Essentially a personification of the dangers of water, they are notorious for attacking

swimmers, circling below to pluck out the *shiri-kodama*, a mysterious source of life-force said to reside in the human colon. They are known by various names throughout Japan; Kawatarō is one such naming variation. Here the kappa is shown emerging from a thicket of lotus flowers. Sekien's home in Edo was located near Ueno's Shinobazu Pond, famed for its lotus display during the summer months.

獺

Kawauso

(OTTER)



The Japanese river otter (sadly believed to have gone extinct in the 1970s) is a trickster and shape-shifter of folklore. They are said to emerge from the water and take human form, often that of a beautiful woman, in order to bewitch unwary travelers. In nature, river otters are known for arranging fish on the ice or shoreline before eating it. The otter in this illustration appears to be carrying a bucket from the local saké-seller, presumably to drink as an

accompaniment to his catch. This could well be a play on the phrase *saké no sakana*—literally, “fish for saké,” but colloquially meaning any small dish served as an accompaniment to alcohol. The rice-straw decoration above the otter’s head was traditionally displayed by saké merchants to advertise that the year’s first batch was in stock. This generally happened early in the season—hence the snow on the ground.

垢嘗

Akanamé

(FILTH-LICKER)



A strange creature that licks the scum out of dirty bathtubs. Note that traditional Japanese baths are not associated with toilets; each were built in their own separate outbuildings. In the era before electricity, bathhouses were damp, dark places, and during the warmer months sometimes home to natural creepy-crawlies such as toads and insects. Note the

kimono draped over the wall; the Akanamé seems to have interrupted a bather in this scene. The Akanamé is often portrayed as being red in color as the word *aka*, or filth, is a homonym for red (and evocative of the flushed skin after emerging from a hot bath).

狸

Tanuki

(RACCOON-DOG)



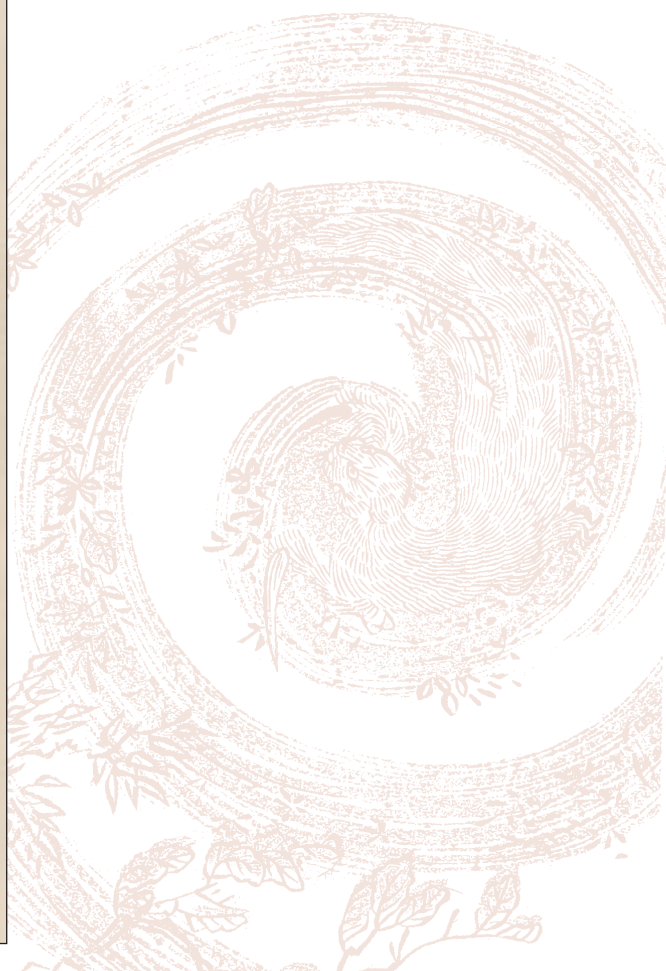
This real-life animal, sometimes translated as “raccoon-dog” for its superficial resemblance to the North American animal, is a notorious trickster in Japanese folklore, though its pranks tend to be gentler than that of the kitsune (fox). Sekien’s naturalistic depiction stands in stark contrast to highly stylized modern portrayals of yokai tanuki, which often feature enormous testicles (a later addition to the folklore). Both the moon in the sky and the Tanuki’s pose, with its fists balled as though

drumming its belly, are undoubtedly an homage to the famed folktale *Shōjōji no Tanuki—bayashi* (*The Tanuki Drum-Dance at Shōjōji Temple*). This popular story, later to become a well-known children’s song, involves a pack of tanuki holding wild nightly drum-parties in Shōjōji temple’s garden. Another intriguing connection: the monk who founded Shōjōji temple in the mid-1600s also happens to be the son of a Kanō school painter—the same style in which Sekien studied.

窮奇

Kama-itachi

(SICKLE-WEASEL)



A well-known mystery phenomenon attributed to the Japanese weasel (*itachi*), in which a sudden whirlwind whips up and nicks one's skin.

Although written with the characters “sickle-weasel,” Sekien here writes it with characters used for a totally different creature from Chinese folklore called the Kūyūki. That is described in the 4th century BC Chinese *Classic of Mountains and*

Seas as looking like an ox with a spiked pelt akin to a porcupine, that howls like a dog and devours humans. Meanwhile, a later Chinese book called the *Huainanzi* elaborates that the Kūyūki also causes powerful winds. It isn't known why Sekien fused the domestic Japanese sickle-weasel with this Chinese beast of wind, but both share the concepts of sudden gusts and injuring humans.

網剪

Ami-kiri
(NET-CUTTER)

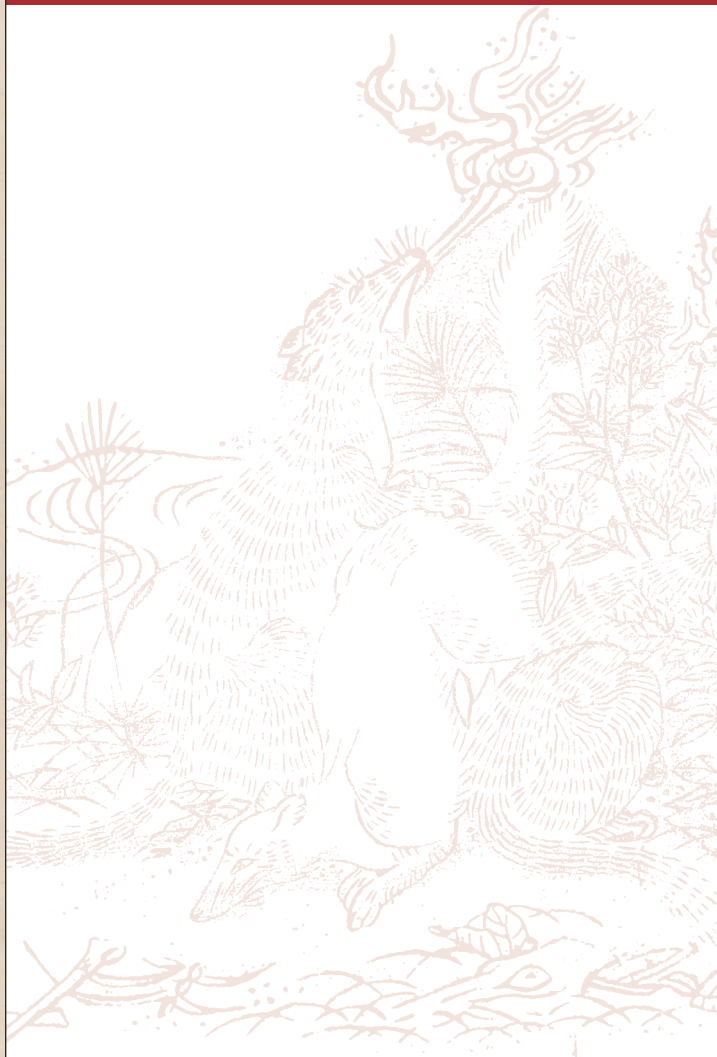


Ami is a homonym both for net and a species of tiny shrimp-like crustaceans sometimes harvested for food. Although the Ami-kiri outwardly resembles a sea creature, its appearance here in a home in the summer (as indicated by the open shutters and a paper fan) suggests that it targets mosquito netting. The Ami-kiri appears to be Sekien's "riff" on the similarly-named Kami-kiri (Hair-cutter), a yokai that appeared in painter Sawaki Sūshi's 1737 scroll *Hyakkai Zukan* (Illustrated Creeps).

狐火

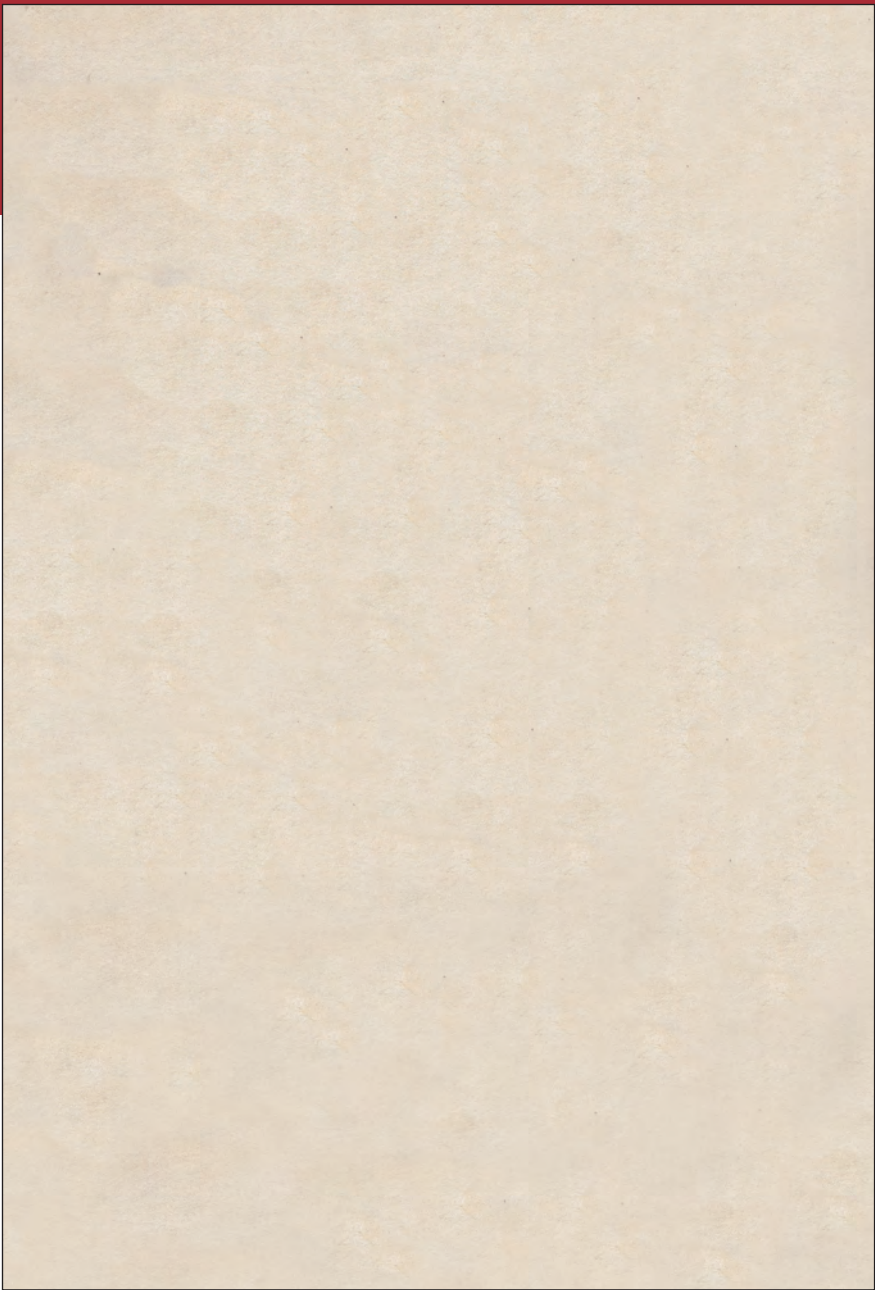
Kitsune-bi

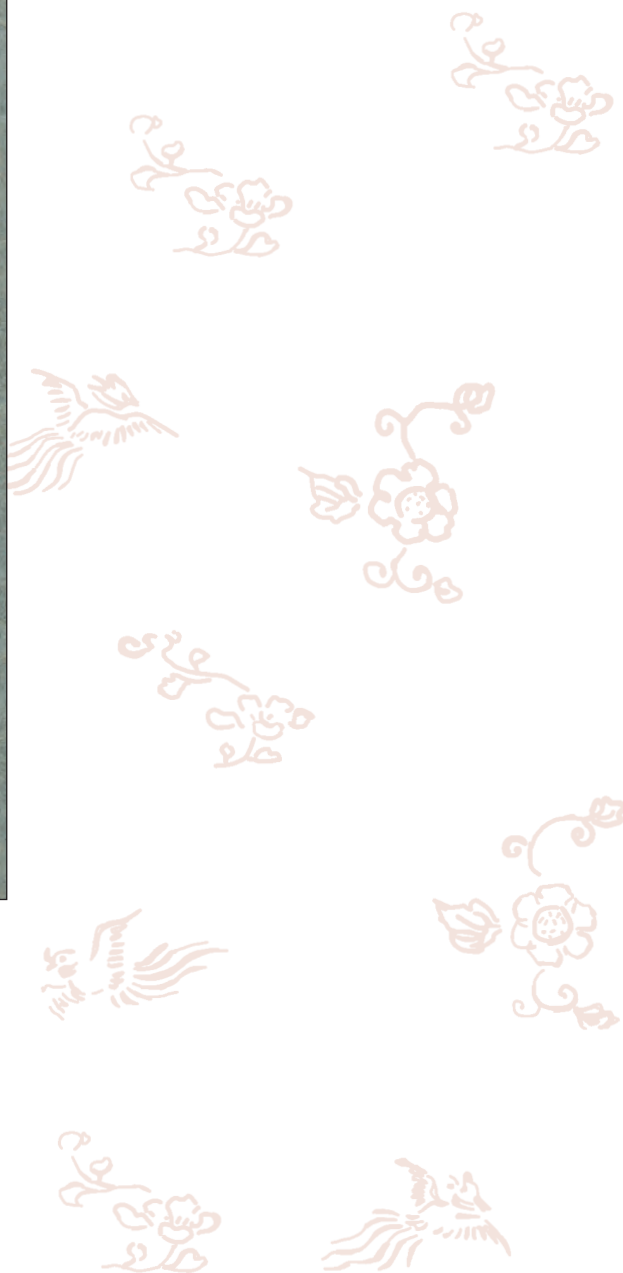
(FOXFIRE)



According to legend, foxes from all over the Kanto region gathered to pay their respects at Edo's (Tokyo's) Ōji Inari shrine on the last day of the year. Once there, they exhaled fire out of their mouths and noses. These fires were then observed and gauged by locals to predict the coming harvest. A fox traditionally shape-shifts by clenching a human bone between its teeth—thus the pile at bottom center.

The Ōji Inari fox-conclave was a popular subject for Edo-period artists. One of the better known is the woodblock by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797—1858), from the famed *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* series. That it is the only one of his *Famous Views* with a supernatural bent hints at how popular the legend was among residents. Incidentally, the Utagawa school of Ukiyo-e was founded by Sekien's disciple Utagawa Toyoharu.

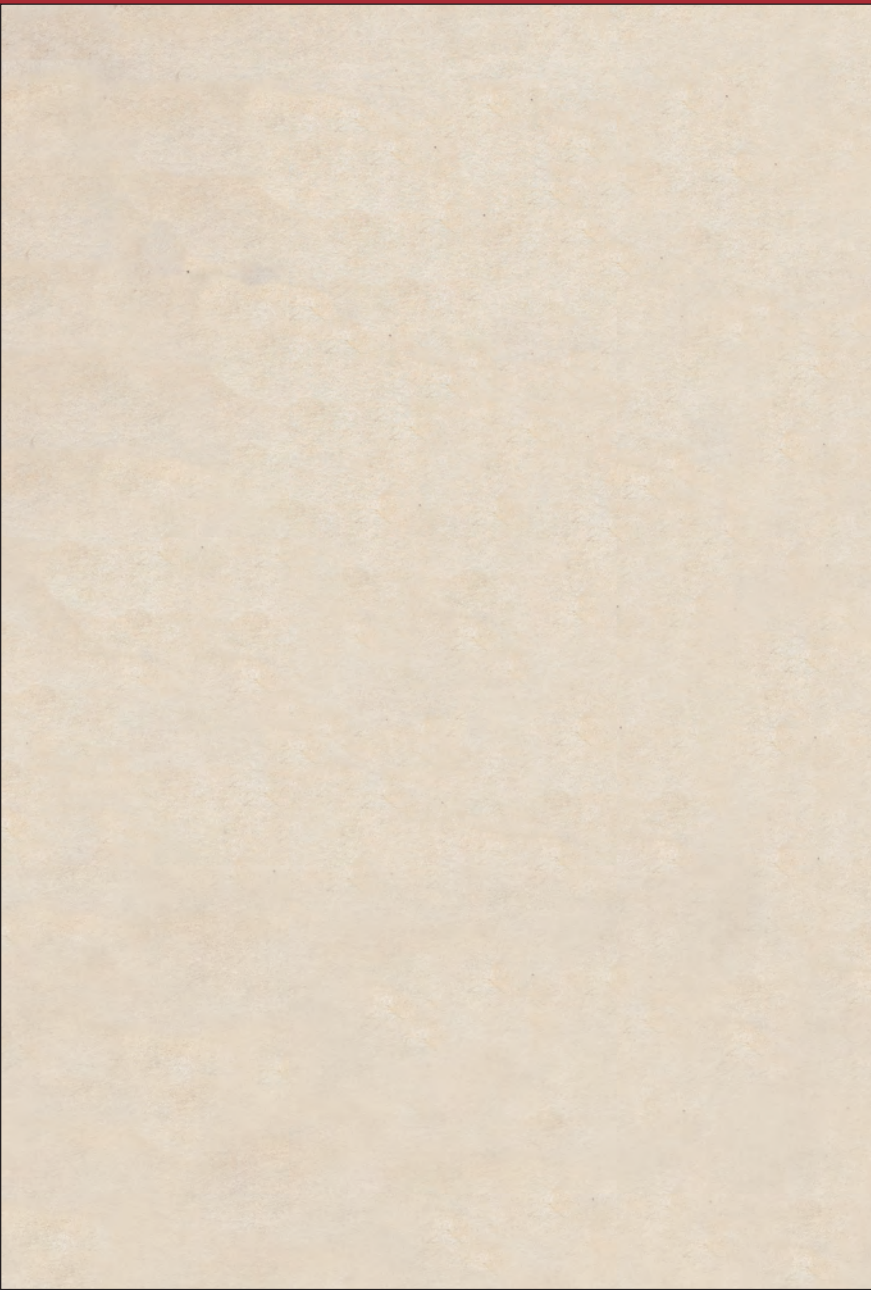




画図百鬼夜行 陽
Gazu Hyakki Yagyō
(Yō)

The Illustrated Demon
Horde's Night Parade (Yang)
Volume 2



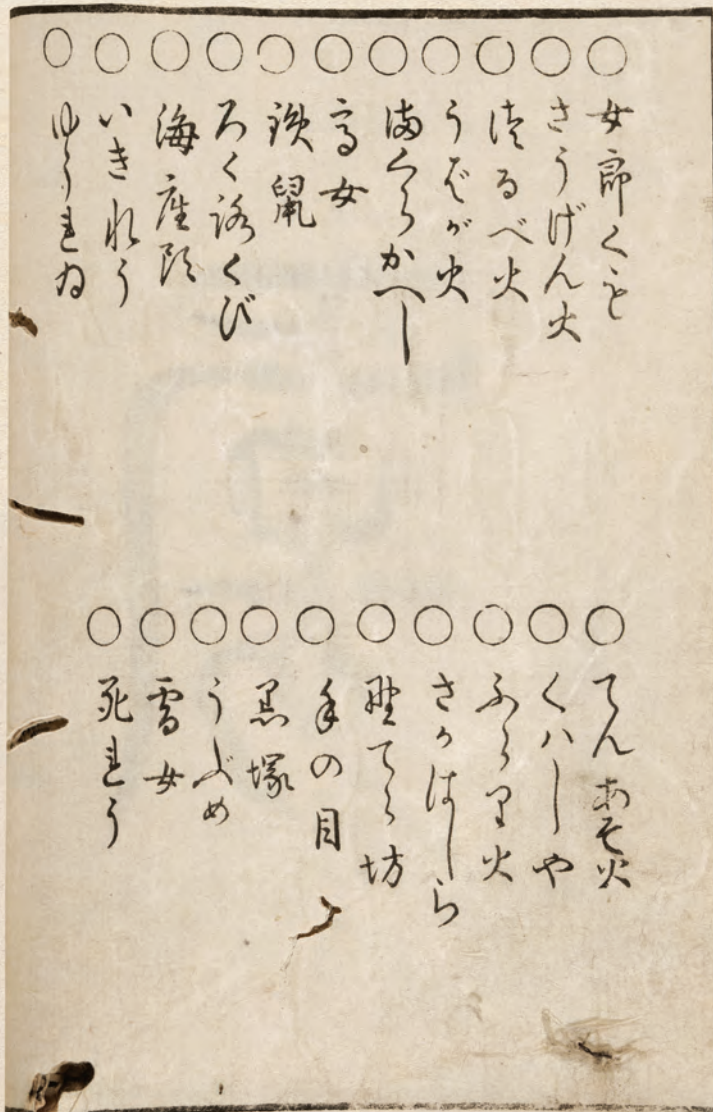


Yang

Calligraphy by Rōsan



Contents



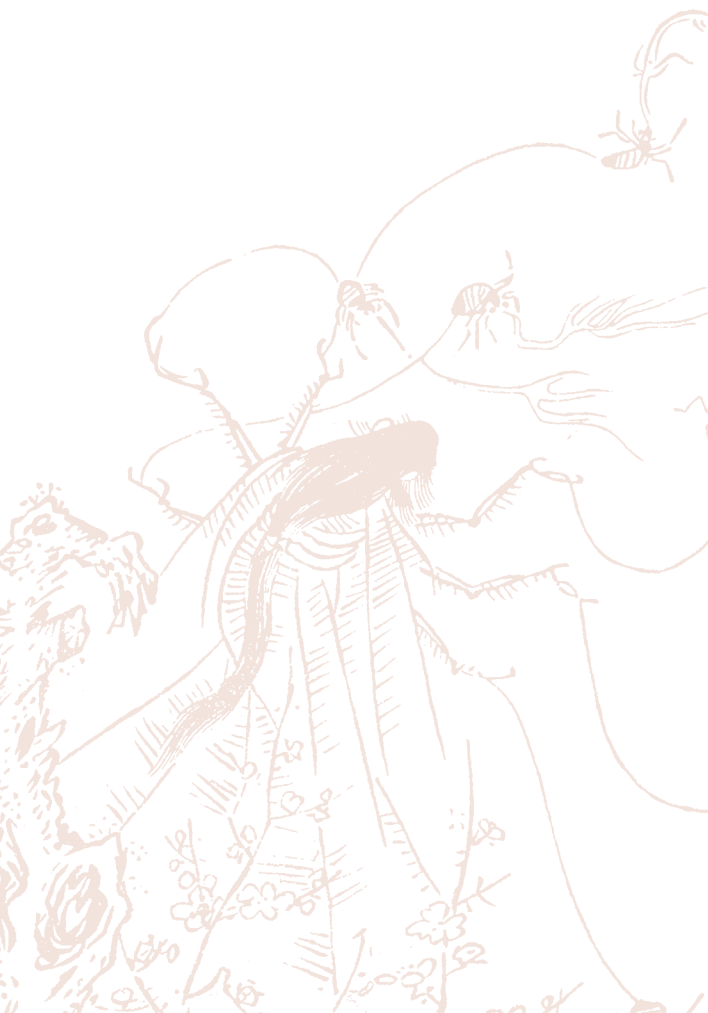
Jorō-gumo
 Ten-asobi
 Sōgen-bi
 Kasha
 Tsurube-bi
 Furari-bi
 Uba-ga-bi
 Sakabashira
 Makura-gaeshi
 Noderabō
 Taka-onna
 Te-no-me
 Tesso
 Kurozuka
 Rokuro-kubi
 Ubume
 Umizatō
 Yuki-onna
 Ikiryō
 Shiryō
 Yūrei

Note: Some names differ from those listed on the actual entries (such as Ten-asobi); others are missing (such as Yanari).

絡新婦

Jorō-gumo

(SPIDER BRIDE)



This spider-woman is a classic yokai. Although Sekien has written it with the characters for “bride” in this entry, he uses the more common reading of “harlot-spider” in the table of contents. Jorō-gumo is also the common name for a species of large golden orb-weaver spiders found throughout Japan.

In this scene, she is perched atop a cherry tree in bloom, a traditional sign of spring, but orb-weaver spiders only grow to adulthood in early fall. The unnatural combination adds to the unsettling atmosphere of the illustration.

鼬

Ten

(MARTEN)



Like the tanuki and fox, martens are famed shape-shifters and tricksters of folklore. Although Sekien provides the reading “marten,” the character he writes it with is actually that of *itachi* (weasel). It is unknown if Sekien’s swapping of the characters was intentional. The illustration appears to reference a line from the weasel entry in the 1712 *Wakan Sansaizue* (*Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*). It describes weasels as being capable of forming a pillar of fire to damage human dwellings.



(THICKET-FIRE)



Sekien references a story already close to a century old by his era, from a 1683 collection of spooky stories called *Shin Otogi Bōko* (*New Hand Puppet Tales*). A wicked monk named Sōgen steals the offerings of money and lamp-oil left at his temple, and after he dies he is punished with the fires of hell. His soul later reappears as a mysterious blue fireball near the temple. *Suzaku*, the legendary “vermillion bird of the south,” is a feng shui term that refers to the south—in this particular case, the south of Kyoto.

釣瓶火

Tsurube-bi

(WELLBUCKET-FIRE)



A tsurube is a bucket suspended over a well for drawing out the water. This yokai is so named for its penchant for dropping on the heads of unsuspecting travelers walking beneath old trees. Also commonly known as Tsurube-otoshi (Wellbucket-dropper), which happens to be an idiom for a big fall or drop.



ふらり火

Furari-bi

(WANDER-FLAME)



Also known as *Burari-bi*. The word *furari* means to wander without destination. A similar illustration appeared in the 1737 scroll *Hyakkai Zukan* (*Illustrated Creeps*) by Sawaki Sūshi. In Sawaki's portrayal, it is a white bird-like creature surrounded by red flames.

姥が火 Uba-ga-bi (HAG-FIRE)

Said to dwell in Kawachi province.

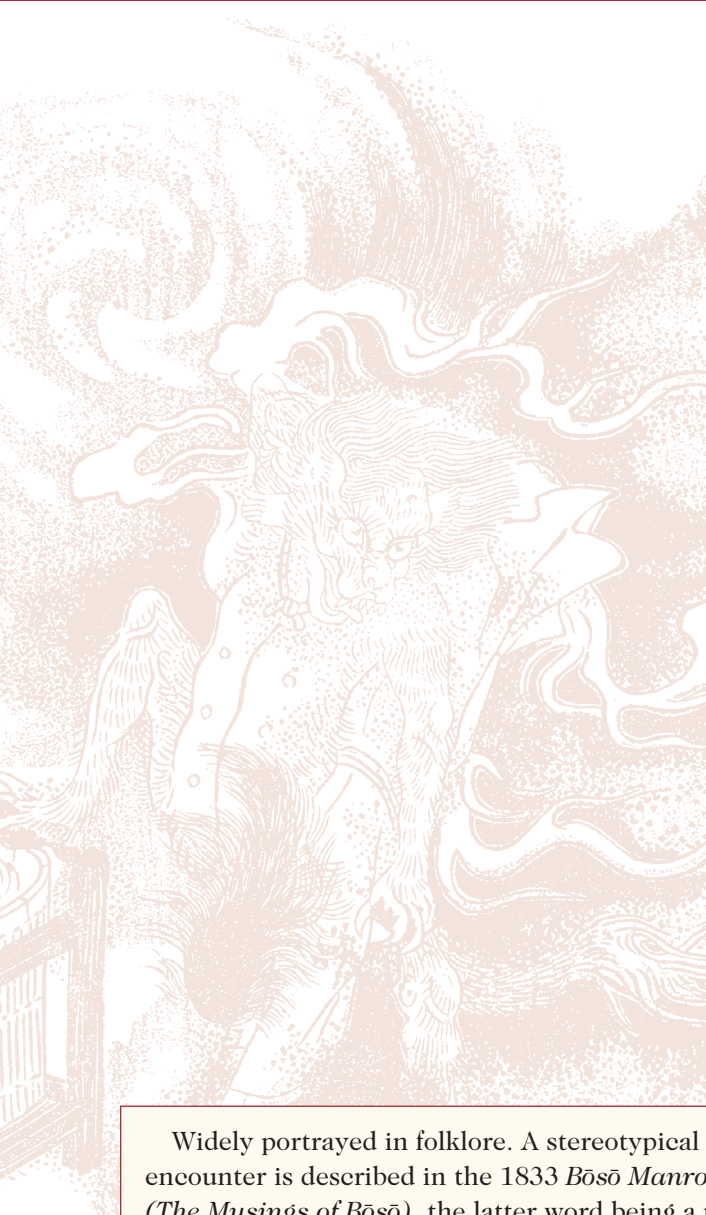


Kawachi province corresponds to the modern-day Osaka area. The Uba-ga-bi appeared in a 17th century book called *A Record of Famous Places in Kawachi*. It describes a fireball that spontaneously appeared near Hiraoka Shrine and flew into the nearby village. Locals believed it to be the soul of a recently deceased old woman with a bad habit of stealing lamp-oil from the shrine. That Sekien felt no need to elaborate in detail seems to indicate the story was well known in his day.

火車

Kasha

(KASHA)



Widely portrayed in folklore. A stereotypical encounter is described in the 1833 *Bōsō Manroku* (*The Musings of Bōsō*), the latter word being a pen-name of the author Chihara Kyosai.

During funerals, its appearance is heralded by great winds, powerful enough to knock over mourners and even lift the coffin into the sky. If a monk is present and throws his

rosary, this will stop. If there is no monk or rosary, the coffin will continue to rise and the body will be lost. People say this is the work of the Kasha. It is terrifying and shameful. They say that if the body is of one who committed many sins in their life, that Kasha will come out of hell for it. Kasha will tear the body apart, hanging the pieces on tree branches or rocks.

鳴屋

Yanari

(HOUSE-CREAKERS)



Those strange noises one hears in an old house just might be the handiwork of these little creatures. Normally, the same kanji characters would be read *naru ya* (“creaking house”), but Sekien has amusingly reversed the reading, giving the sense that a “something” is responsible for causing the sounds.



姑獲鳥

Ubume

(UBUME)



The spirit of a woman who died in child-birth. The river setting evokes the concepts of *ryūzan*, literally “washed-away birth,” but meaning miscarriage, and *mizuko*, literally “water baby,” but meaning stillborn.

In the 12th century *Konjaku Monogatari-shū* (*Anthology of Tales from the Past*), a group of samurai dare one of their members to seek out the terrifying Ubume (written with characters meaning “birthing-woman”), said to appear on the banks of a nearby river. The Ubume asked the samurai to hold her baby, which he did, but when she demanded it back, he refused and walked away. When he looked back she was gone, and the bundle in his arms



merely fallen leaves.

Sekien’s illustration appears to be based upon this story, but he has chosen to name it with a kanji-character reading taken from the 1712 *Wakan Sansaizue* (*Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*), which has a different take on the legend. It describes ubume as birds common to China, capable of transforming into the guise of women to kidnap infants. This entry is an excellent example of how Sekien blended bits from various versions of stories.

海座頭

Umizatō

(BLIND MAN OF THE SEA)



A yokai taking the form of a blind lute-player. Itinerant musician was one of the few occupations available to the blind in times of old. Sekien's portrayal may be a variation on the giant ocean-dwelling yokai known as umi-bōzu (sea-monks), or a reference to the famed tale of *Hōichi the Earless*, in which a blind lute-player finds himself entertaining the ghosts of the Heike warriors who drowned in the 1185 battle of Dan-no-Ura.

野寺坊

Noderabō

(NODERA'S MONK)



Based on a story called “The Bell of Nodera.” Farmers dig out the roots of some unusual-looking potato vines and find them entwined around a magnificent temple bell, which they cart to local Mangyō-ji temple for advice. The astonished head monk explains that it is the bell of long-lost Nodera Temple. According to legend, in a time of war Nodera’s head monk had buried the prized bell to keep it out of the hands of marauding armies, and it had never been seen again. Thus Mangyō-ji found itself in the possession of a wonderful bit of antiquity.

As it so happens Mangyō-ji still stands in Saitama prefecture, so we actually placed a call to see if this bit of pre-modern archaeology truly occurred. They explained that their bell was once thought to have possibly been Nodera’s, but, in any event, it doesn’t



exist anymore as it was confiscated and melted down for the war effort in the 1940s. Alas.

Whatever the case, Nodera temple and its bell really did exist; a 9th century poem attributed to the great Ariwara no Narihira (more about him on p. 196) mentions both. Sekien’s personal twist is portraying the monk alongside the bell; note his ragged, mole-like appearance, suggesting long years spent underground.

高女

Taka-onna

(HIGH WOMAN)



Taka-onna seems to be related to the pleasure quarters. High-class courtesans traditionally worked on the second floors of the “teahouses” of Yoshiwara. Also note the blackened teeth, classy makeup in times of old. Did this phantom courtesan sneak up behind someone and scare them out of their sandals?

The “high,” of course, refers to this creature’s extended height, but also plays on the idea that high-class courtesans came at a high price, meaning that they were also very hard to get. It also evokes a famed idiom: *takane no hana*, “a flower on a high peak”—an unattainable dream.

手の目

Te-no-me

(EYES-IN-HANDS)



Sekien's operating theme here seems to be one of revealing the true nature of things. The idiom *te no me wo ageru* (to lift the eyes of one's hands) is a gambling term meaning to reveal someone's tricks or cheating. The folded-in ears evoke the proverb *jibun wa mokuken ni shikazu*, meaning "trust what you see rather than what you hear." And note also the backdrop of *susuki* grass, which evokes the proverb *yūrei no shōtai mitari kareobana*, literally, "when you're scared, even dry grass looks like a ghost."

鉄鼠 Tesso (IRON RAT)

They say Raigō's spirit transformed into a plague of rats.



Chronicled in the 14th century *Taiheiki*, the story dates back to the era of the Emperor Shirakawa, who reigned from 1073 to 1087. Mii-dera Temple's head monk, Raigō, was tasked with praying for the safe birth of a son for the Emperor, with the promise of expanding his temple if successful. However, political maneuvering on the part of Raigō's rivals

resulted in the Emperor reneging on the deal. Infuriated, the monk went on a fatal hunger strike, cursing his enemies until his dying breath. He was reborn as a plague of rats that ravaged the libraries of Kyoto's temples, Enryaku-ji in particular, and the Emperor's son passed away at the age of four.

黒塚

Kurozuka

(KUROZUKA)

A demon-hag that was in
Adachi-ga-hara of Ōshū. She was
also written of in an old poem.



Based on the famous tale of an old hag who preyed on pregnant women to feast upon the livers of their unborn children. Also known popularly as the Onibaba: demon-hag. The poem referred to is from the 10th century *Yamato Monogatari* (*Tales of Yamato*.) Stanza 58 reads:

*At Kurozuka, in Adachi of Mutsu Province,
lurks a demon, they say.
Could it be true?*

飛頭蛮

Rokuro-kubi

(FLYING-HEAD BARBARIAN)



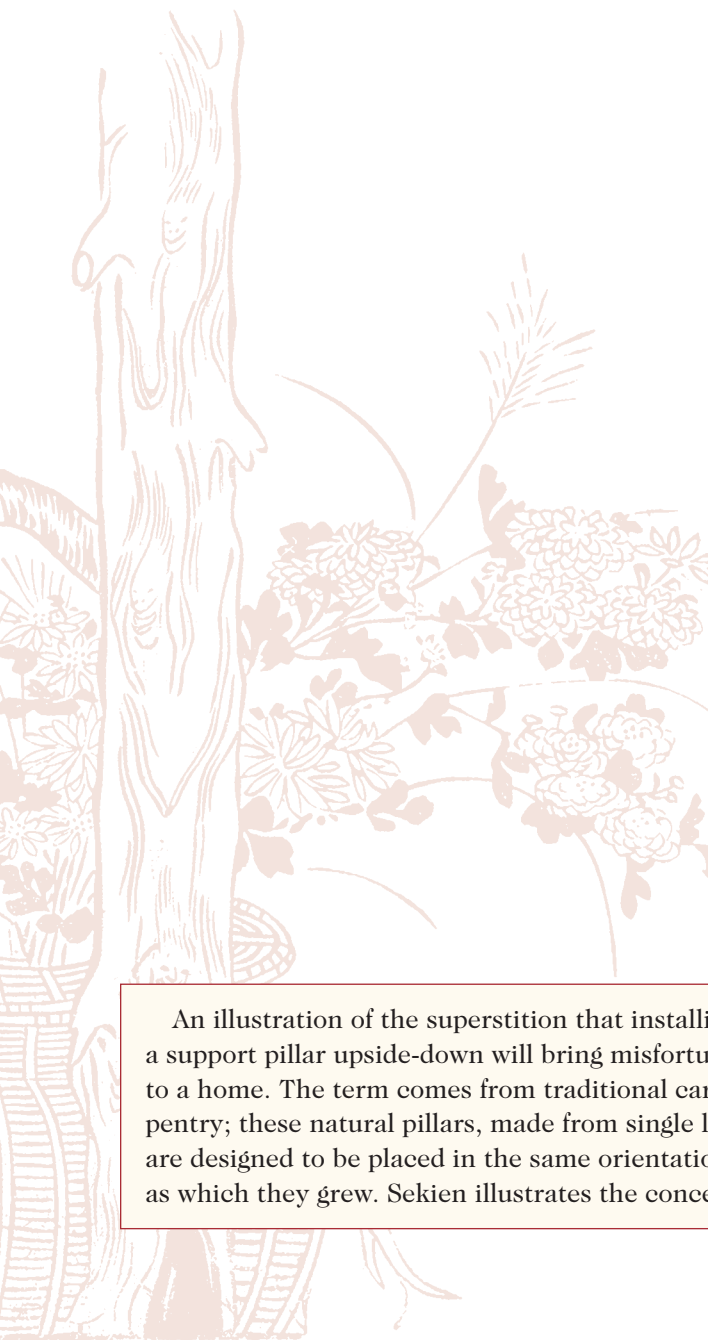
A popular presence in Japanese folklore. Normally, it is written with characters meaning “potter’s-wheel neck,” in reference to the long coils of clay used in ceramics making. For some reason Sekien chose to render her name with characters meaning “flying-head barbarian.” This is Chinese for a

related but different “species” of yokai capable of launching their heads off their bodies. Whatever the case, despite the name she seems quite pampered, reaching for a comb to style her hair in the mirror across the room without leaving the comfort of her own bed.

逆柱

Sakabashira

(REVERSE-PILLAR)



An illustration of the superstition that installing a support pillar upside-down will bring misfortune to a home. The term comes from traditional carpentry; these natural pillars, made from single logs, are designed to be placed in the same orientation as which they grew. Sekien illustrates the concept

with a series of weird ghouls “dripping” down into the room, presumably released by being upended from the direction in which they were interred. The weird atmosphere is accentuated by the chrysanthemums in the backdrop, which are associated with Buddhist offerings for the dead.

反枕

Makura-gaeshi

(PILLOW-FLIP)



Makura-gaeshi refers simply to the concept of a pillow being flipped; the image floating over this victim's head is intended to represent an unpleasant vision.

The pillow is more than a simple cushion in Japanese folklore. It is a portal to other worlds and presences. For example, placing an illustrated poem of the Seven Lucky Gods under one's pillow on the first days of the New Year will ensure auspicious dreams. This same custom will play a key part in Sekien's fourth book, which begins on p. 229.

雪女

Yuki-onna

(SNOW WOMAN)



A personification of cold. She is known abroad for her inclusion in Lafcadio Hearn's 1904 compilation of Japanese folk stories, *Kwaidan*. Yuki-onna is said to dwell in the mountains and freeze unwary travelers to death.

In a unique touch, Sekien has rendered her hands with hair on them. Perhaps this could be intended to accentuate that she isn't human, or that her manifestation is the work of a trickster-animal behind the scenes, such as a *kitsune* (fox.)

生靈

Ikiryō

(LIVING SOUL)



If a person's jealousy is sparked by a perceived slight, it can split off as a living spirit while the owner sleeps. This phenomenon was the plot device for a key chapter of the 11th century novel *The Tale of Genji*.

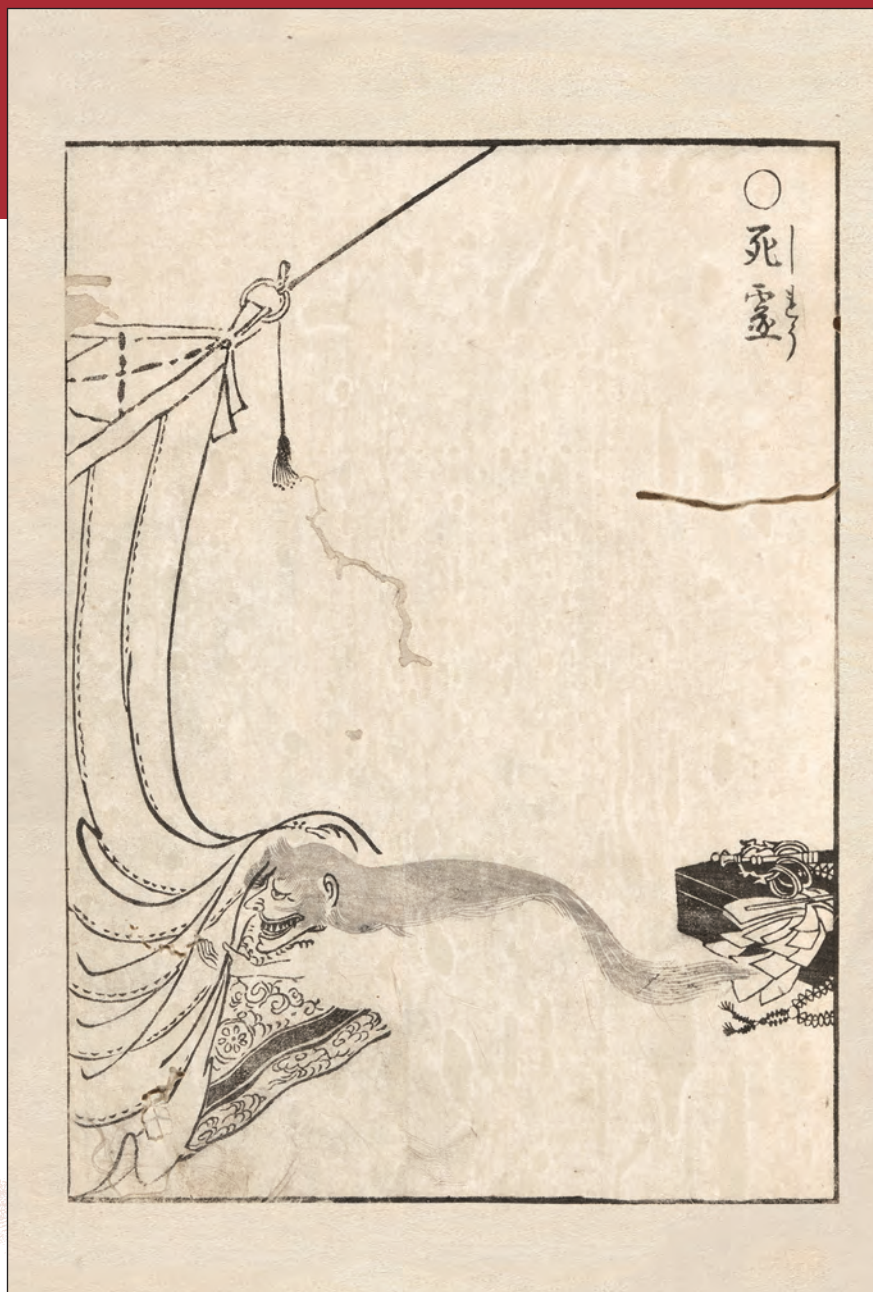
That said, Sekien's entry seems not to be based on this episode, but rather a more prosaic situa-

tion. At bottom center is a samurai sword. The box behind it is a traditional pillow for letting a woman rest without disturbing her elaborate hairstyle. It seems the unseen samurai has been caught in the act by the living spirit of his understandably furious wife!

死霊

Shiryō

(DEAD SOUL)



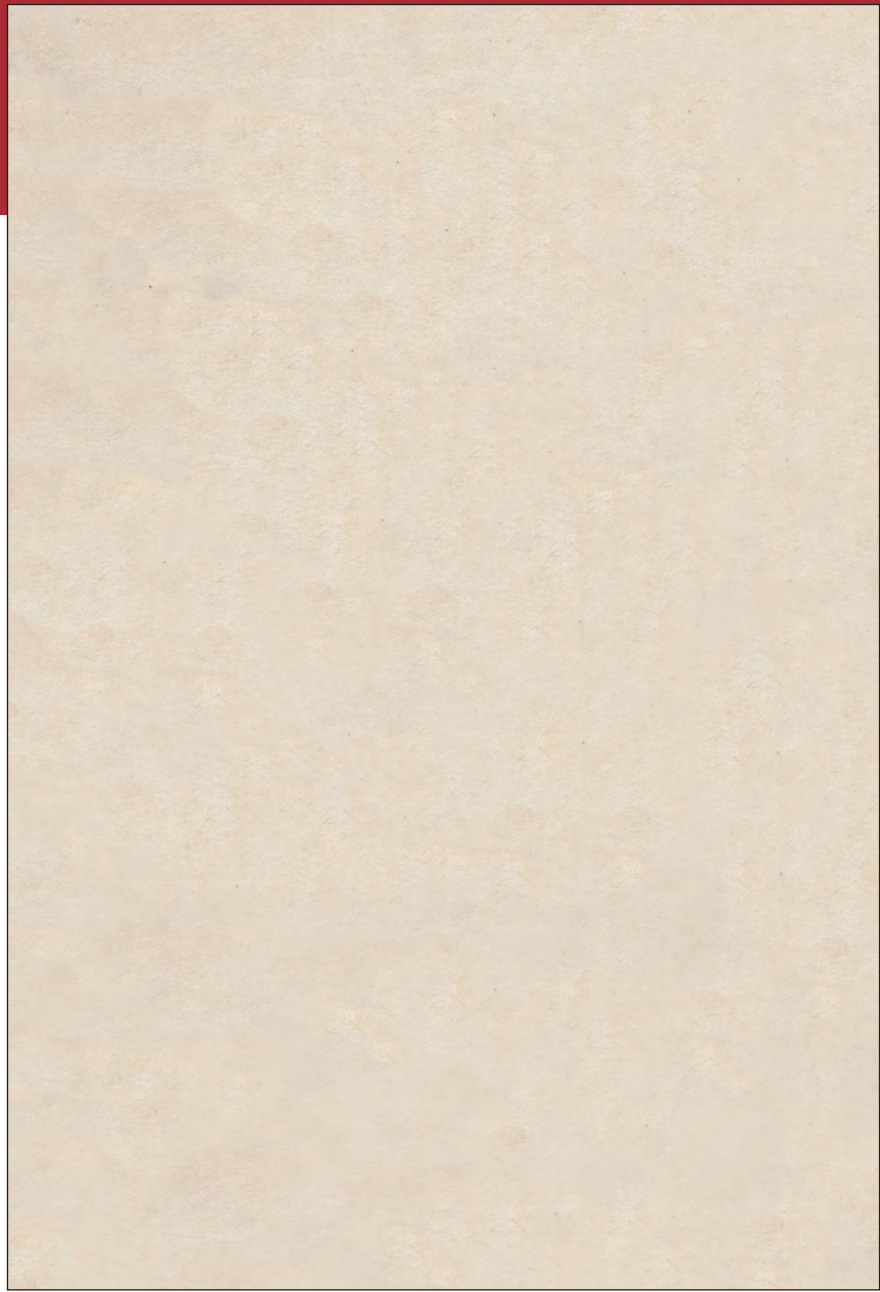
Essentially a synonym for *yūrei* (see next entry). Sekien's portrayal hints at a failed exorcism. In back are holy accoutrements of two religions: Buddhist ringed staff and rosary, and Shinto folded paper, all associated with keeping evil spirits at bay. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to have worked. The items sit abandoned while the spirit lifts the netting covering the victim's bed.

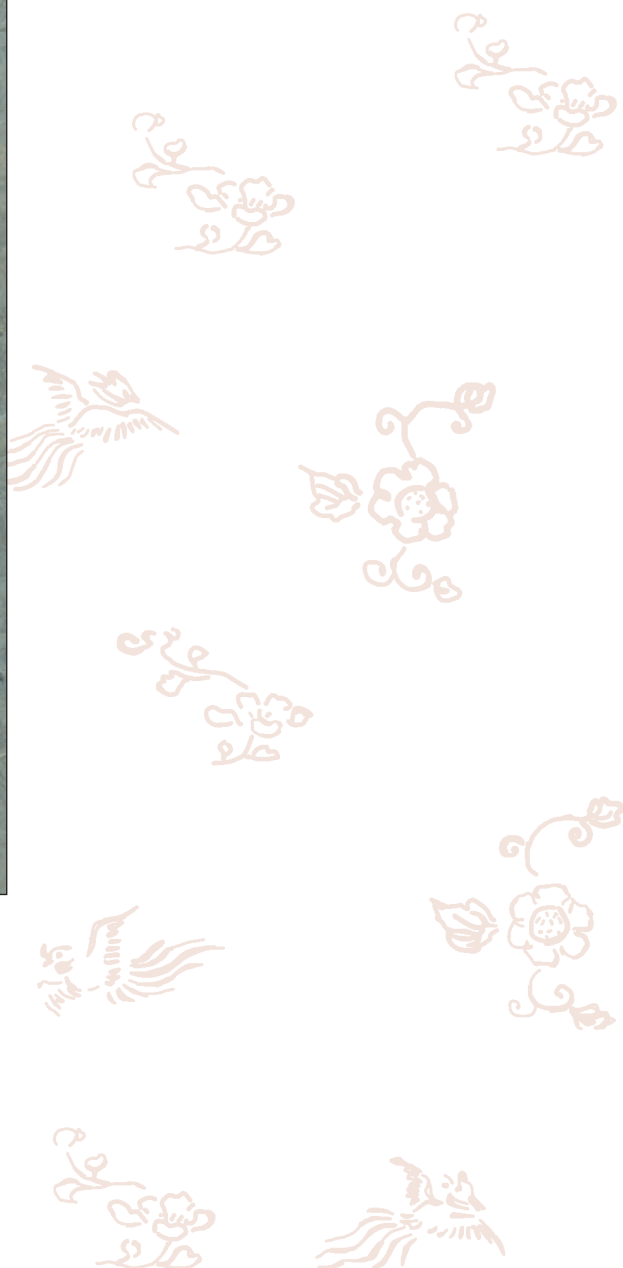
幽霊
Yūrei
(GHOST)



Just as in the West, Japan has its share of souls unwilling or unable to shuffle off the mortal coil for whatever reason. Sekien's female Yūrei emerges from a Buddhist graveyard, surrounded by Sanskrit-inscribed wooden sotōba markers and weeping willow trees, whose dangling arms evoke those of

Japanese ghosts. In contrast to the fearsome Ikiryō (p. 48) and Shiryō (previous entry), she wears a placid smile, hinting that rather than settling in for a haunt she's on her way out. The setting sun evokes the paradise of the afterlife, said to be located in *Saihōjōdo* ("far to the West").





画図百鬼夜行 風下 Gazu Hyakki Yagyō (Kaze) (Ge)

The Illustrated Demon
Horde's Night Parade (Wind)
Volume 3





Wind

Calligraphy by Rōsan



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 ○ ひやうま
 ○ おとろし
 ○ ぬき女
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 ○ うきん
 ○ せうけら
 ○ さいら
 ○ ぬき佛
 ○ ぬきりひん
 ○ おうに
 ○ 赤い
 ○ 牛か

Mikoshi
 Shōkera
 Hyōsube
 Waira
 Otoroshi
 Nuri-botoke
 Nure-onna
 Nurarihyon
 Gagoze
 Ouni
 Ao-bōzu
 Aka-shita
 Nuppeppō
 Ushi-oni
 Uwan

見越

Mikoshi

(LOOKOVER-MONK)



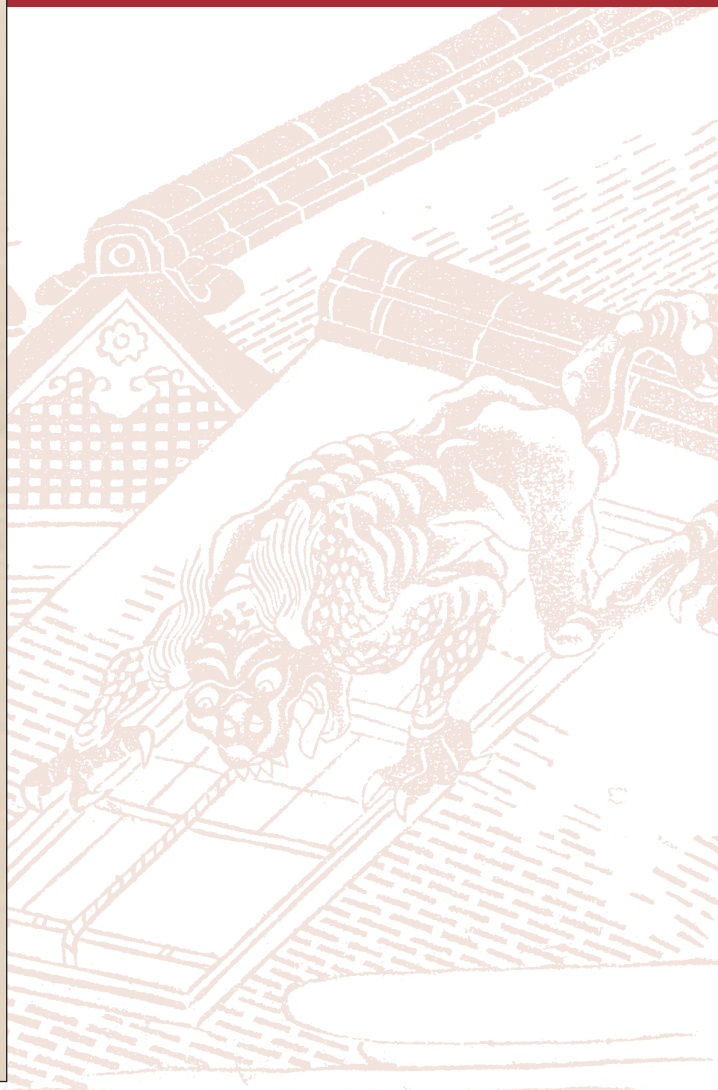
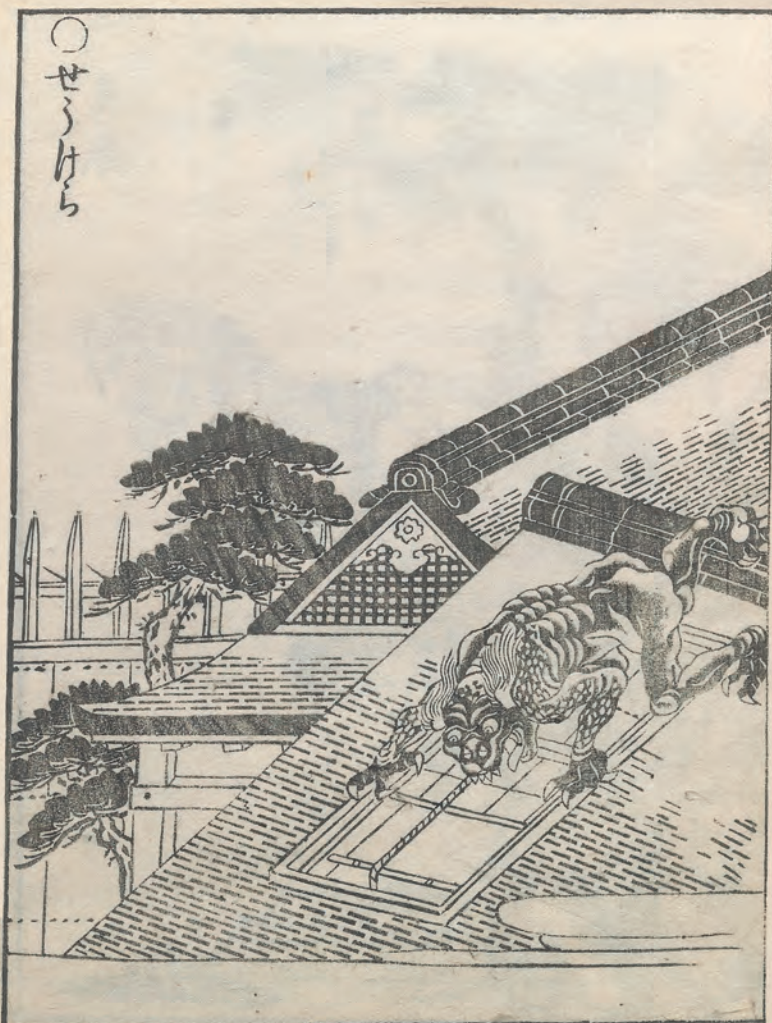
More popularly known as the Mikoshi-Nyūdo (Lookover-Monk), infamous for sneaking up on unsuspecting travelers in the mountains and spooking them from behind. The 1712 *Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms* describes it as six meters high, dark of complexion, with red eyes and yellow hair. (Although in the actual illustration the Mikoshi is bald.)

Sandals dangle from the tree, apparently trophies from victims he's frightened. The Lookover-monk

was a yokai star even before Sekien's day, described in a variety of books and art. Earlier portrayals tend to resemble human monks; later ones often exaggerate the length of the necks in the manner of another old favorite, the Rokuro-kubi (p. 44).

Every one of the yokai in this "Wind" volume is based on a corresponding illustration from Sawaki Sūshi's 1737 *Hyakkai Zukan* (*Illustrated Creeps*) scroll.

せうけら
Shōkera
(SHŌKERA)



The folk religion of *Kōshin* is a mixture of Buddhist and Taoist beliefs that took root somewhere around the 9th century AD. It isn't widely practiced today, but its beliefs hold that all humans are inhabited by "worms" that record all of our good and bad deeds. These "worms" emerge every sixty days to report to the heavens, but can only do so if their humans are asleep. As such, adherents would make sure to stay up until dawn on the final night of every cycle. *Shōkera* is a word that appears in a *Kōshin* chant to

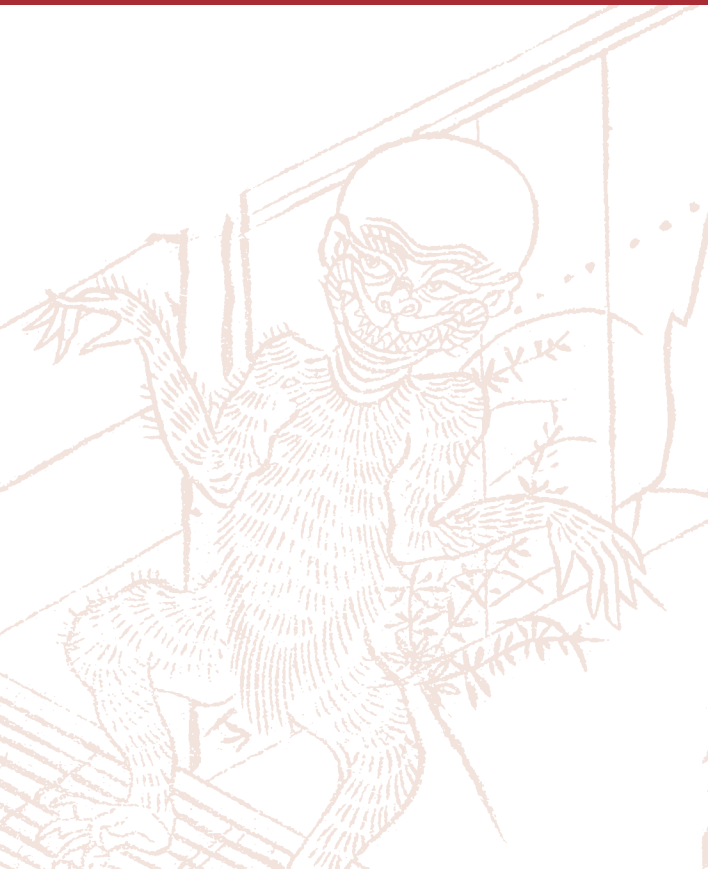
keep the worms at bay, and here Sekien is visually "quoting" an older scroll that portrayed the creature as a humanoid figure. As it watches over the residents of a home through a skylight, we watch it.

Kōshin statuary can still be found throughout the country to this day. These stone markers are often adorned with images of monkeys, as the practice of staying up all night occurred on the "day of the monkey," according to the traditional astrological calendar.

ひやうすべ

Hyōsube

(HYŌSUBE)



According to the legends of Shiomi Jinja shrine in Kyushu's Saga prefecture, Nara's resplendent Kasuga Grand Shrine was constructed with the help of enchanted dolls. Once the work was complete, they were carted off down to Kyushu and unceremoniously dumped in the river near what is today Shiomi Jinja. The infuriated dolls transformed into a variation of Kappa (p. 16), emerging from the waters to attack the populace. A man by the name of Hyōbu-taifu dealt with the menace, and thereafter locals referred to the creatures as Hyōsube.

Sekien's illustration, however, situates a Hyōsube in a far more everyday location: the toilet. In times of old, superstition held that tripping on the way to the privy would bring misfortune upon you or your family. As such, it became customary to place



nandina shrubs on the path to the loo. Their Japanese name, *nanten*, evokes the phrase “flipping bad luck,” and so touching it would erase the supposed negative effect of a stumble. The presence of the nandina, the kettle without a cup (hinting it's meant for washing rather than drinking), and what appears to be an incense burner at top left (an air freshener) are all associated with toilets, which were known in times of old as the *kawaya*—literally “river-room.” Has the Hyōsube surprised someone here, or is that a look of relief on his toothy face?

わいら
Waira
(WAIRA)



A mysterious creature of which little information exists in the folkloric record save for illustrations like this one. The portrayals tend to follow similar lines: a flabby, crawling creature with single-claw hands. The visual is suitably grotesque, but it remains unclear as to if there is a deeper meaning in the design. Perhaps it is an example of a creature that was well known in its day, but whose particulars have been forgotten over the course of time.

おとろし
Otoroshi
(OTOROSHI)

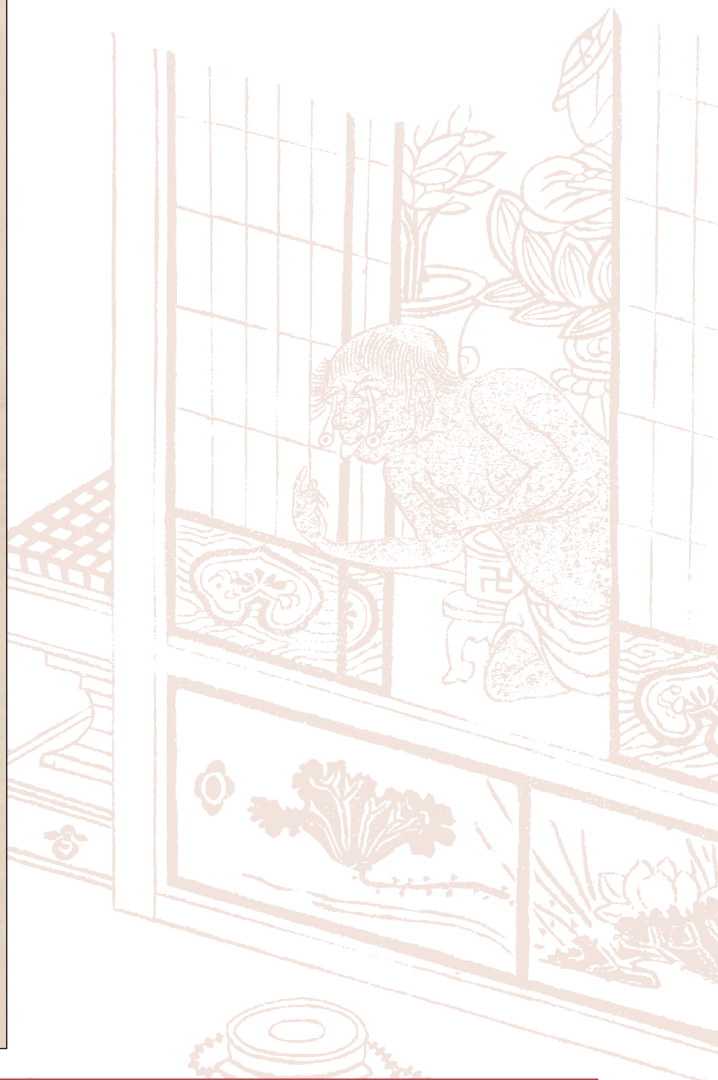


A punning name based on the words *osoroshii*, or scary, and *odoro*, which means an unkempt and weedy patch of land. The tree growing from the top of the torii gate hints that this may be an abandoned shrine, a classic haunt for all sorts of yokai. The bird caught in Otoroshi's talons may be a dove, a messenger of Hachiman, a widely-worshipped god of war.

塗仏

Nuri-botoke

(NURI-BOTOKE)



Sekien portrays the Nuri-botoke as emerging from a Buddhist altar, and imagery of death abounds in his illustration: the dark coloration evoking the concept of *kuro-fujō* (“black impurity,” which is associated with death), the dangling eyeballs (*meotoshi*, “fallen eyes,” an idiom for death), and what appears in the bucket to be *shikimi*, a shrub

whose branches are a traditional graveside offering. While *hotoke* or *botoke* literally means Buddha, it is also colloquially used to refer to those who have died. Sekien’s portrayal features a dark complexion, but older illustrated scrolls portray the Nuri-Botoke as jet black in color, often with a fish-like tail emerging from its back.

濡女

Nure-onna

(WET-WOMAN)



A serpentine female that haunts sea coasts and river shorelines. In the legends of Shimane prefecture, she takes the form of a young woman who asks passersby to hold her baby, then walks into the water and vanishes. The name derives from her drenched appearance. Sekien's illustration, with its waving hair, deviates from earlier portrayals that show her locks plastered to her head. See also Ushi-Oni (p. 70).

ぬらりひょん

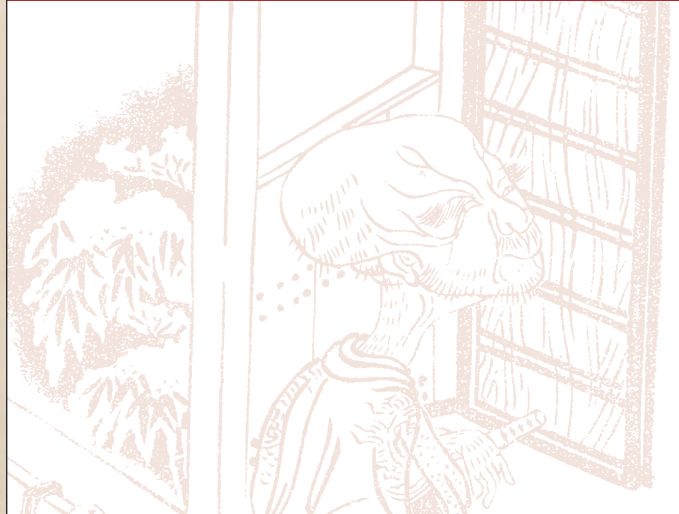
Nurarihyon

(NURARIHYON)



Nurari evokes something floppy and slimy. Hyon, “bizarre,” is derived from *hyō*, another name for the more commonly pronounced *yadorigi*, a parasitic bush that grows on other trees. The image is one of flaky, weasly, leech-like behavior. Today he’s widely referred to as the “leader” of the yokai, but this is actually a recent addition to the folklore, dating to a 1929 book by Morihiko Fujisawa. Perhaps Fujisawa was inspired by Sekien’s portrayal of Nurarihyon emerging from a palanquin.

That palanquin is key, as we speculate that this



is a political cartoon. Sekien’s splendidly dressed, self-satisfied Nurarihyon exits a palanquin designed for relatively high-ranking aristocrats. But he carries a single sword rather than the standard two, marking him as a wealthy townsman rather than a samurai. While in the official pecking order merchants occupied the bottommost rung of society, financial transactions were their lifeblood, and they were exempt from the taxes levied on the aristocracy. This meant that, as the 1812 tell-all *Seji Kenbunroku* (*Things I Have Seen and Heard*) put it, “they rise above their status and look down on samurai ... the profits that they have embezzled have accumulated to such an extent that nowadays the financial means of townspeople [is] vast.” More venal merchants operated as loan sharks whose

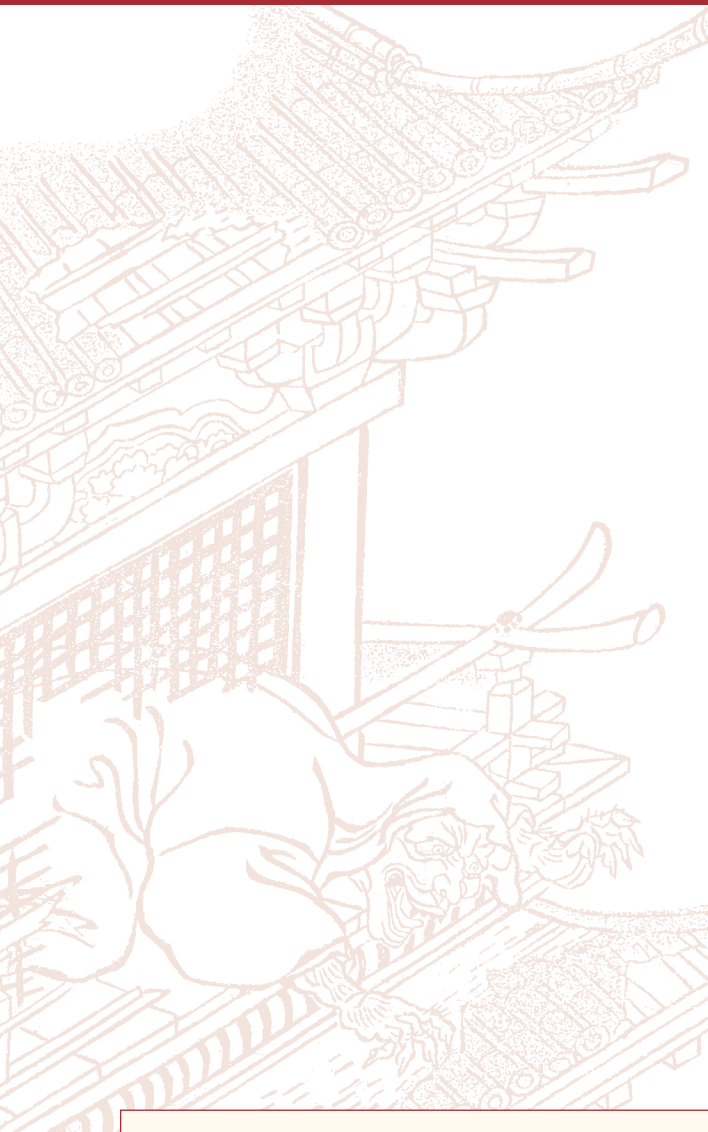
balance books—such as the one sitting inside the doorway in Sekien’s drawing—gave them tremendous power over the social classes supposedly above them.

A side note. While the conventional wisdom among Japanese yokai scholars is that Sekien misspelled the name Nurarihyon as *Nūrihyon* here, we believe this to be incorrect. It is spelled Nurarihyon in the table of contents, and the penmanship here, though stylized, appears to read “Nurarihyon” as well.

元興寺

Gagoze

(GAGOZE)



Also known as Gagoji. A well-known traditional bogeyman. In certain regions, such as Tokushima prefecture and Awaji-shima Island, its name is still invoked to shush crying children.

Although pronounced Gagoze, the name is written with the characters Gangō-ji, referring to a temple in Nara. Gagoze's tale originates in a 9th century text called the *Nihon Ryōiki* (*A Record of Strange Ghostly Happenings in Japan*.) It tells of a farmer who, in the midst of a sudden downpour, finds a "thunder child" fallen from the sky. He moves to

kill it, but the thunder child stays the farmer's hand by promising him he will soon father a strong child. Later, his son is born with snakes entwined around his head, and grows into a powerful young man who enters training to become a monk at Gangō-ji. His fellow disciples begin dying one after the other, killed near the temple's bell tower. An investigation reveals that "the *oni* Gagoze" dwells inside. The young man offers to take care of the fearsome creature, dragging it out and driving it from its haunt.

芋うに
Ouni
(OUNI)



Sekien's expanded take on a hag-like creature that appeared in earlier illustrated scrolls variously as *Wau-wau* and *Au-au*. He chose a different name for his portrayal; the “o” is Japanese for the ramie plant, widely used throughout Asia for making textiles and paper. Perhaps the hair is intended to evoke its fibers.

青坊主

Ao-bōzu

(BLUE MONK)



Sekien portrays the Ao-bōzu standing in front of what appears to be a run-down teahouse with a loquat tree in the background. There is an old wives' tale that planting a loquat tree on your property invites misfortune. Buddhist sutras describe the leaves, bark, roots, and fruits of loquat trees as therapeutic, and temples often planted them to harvest

for materials to treat those suffering from a variety of maladies. Presumably this connection with sickness lies at the root of the superstition. And similar to the way "green" is used in English, *ao* (blue) can be an epithet for a rookie in Japanese. Perhaps the idea here is of a monk too inexperienced to actually cure anyone.

赤舌

Aka-shita

(RED-TONGUE)



A strange beast emerging from a cloud above a water sluice used to irrigate fields and rice paddies. Competition for water was a critical issue for farmers in times of old.

The name “Red-tongue” evokes the concept of *shakuzetsu*, written with the exact same “red tongue” kanji characters. In *onmyōdō* (traditional cosmological divination), *shakuzetsu* occurred every six days. In popular superstition, it came to be treated as the most inauspicious day of the week.

Note that both the Aka-shita’s mouth and the sluice gate are open. These evoke a pair of old proverbs: *shita wa wazawai no ne*, “the tongue is the root of all disaster,” and *kuchi wa wazawai no mon*, “the mouth is the gate of all disaster.” Of course, it’s really about talking too much, but here on the page it’s playing out literally: an “opening of the floodgates” that unleashes the potential for the unexpected to happen.

ぬっぺっぽう

Nuppeppō

(NUPPEPPŌ)



A nearly featureless blob. Its name is derived from the word “nupperi” (a slack-faced, dazed expression). The operating theme here appears to be one of forbidden foods. The bronze bell is of the type rung to call the monks for meals. But the temple appears abandoned, and the Nuppeppō stands in front of what appears to be a bush of *nira* chives. It’s one of five plants considered taboo in Buddhist cuisine because of their stimulating properties and overpowering aromas, including leeks, onions, garlic, chives, and scallions. And according to at least one legend, the Nuppeppō itself is edible as

well. The story was first put to paper by Maki Bokusen, a student of Sekien’s disciple Utamaro. It concerns a fleshy, Nuppeppō-like creature showing up in the gardens of the Shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu. The Shōgun promptly has the unsettling-looking thing, described as a *nikubito* (“meat-man”), taken away and left far out in the mountains. Later, a wise man tells the Shōgun he missed an opportunity: the creature resembled the legendary *Hō*, described in the book of the Hakutaku (p. 223), and a bite of its flesh was said to reinvigorate one’s constitution.

牛鬼

Ushi-oni

(OX-DEMON)



Earlier illustrated monster scrolls often depict the Ushi-oni as a bull's head on a spider's body. Here Sekien takes a more animalistic approach.

The Ushi-oni has quite an ancient history, getting a brief mention in Sei Shōnagon's 11th century *Pillow Book* ("far more terrifying in appearance than its name suggests") and the later 14th century historical epic *Taiheiki*. In regional legends, it is said to be married to Nure-Onna (p. 63). In these tales, Nure-Onna appears on the coastline, hands an

infant to a passer-by, and then walks into the waves; the baby's weight increases crushingly, pinning the passer-by to the spot, whereupon the Ushi-oni emerges from the waters and attacks them.

In traditional *onmyōdō* (cosmological divination), the "unlucky" northeastern direction is referred to by a variety of names including *kimon* (oni's gate) and *ushitora* (ox-tiger). This yokai echoes these inauspicious concepts. See also Oni, p. 88.

うわん
Uwan
(UWAN)



Little is known about this threatening-looking creature save for its appearance in earlier illustrated scrolls. In Sekien's portrayal, it emerges from a willow tree, apparently haunting an abandoned home. In the dialect of certain regions in Kumamoto and Kagoshima prefectures, the generic term for monster is variously *wan* or *wan-wan*. However, whether this inspired the naming of this particular creature remains unclear.

Afterword

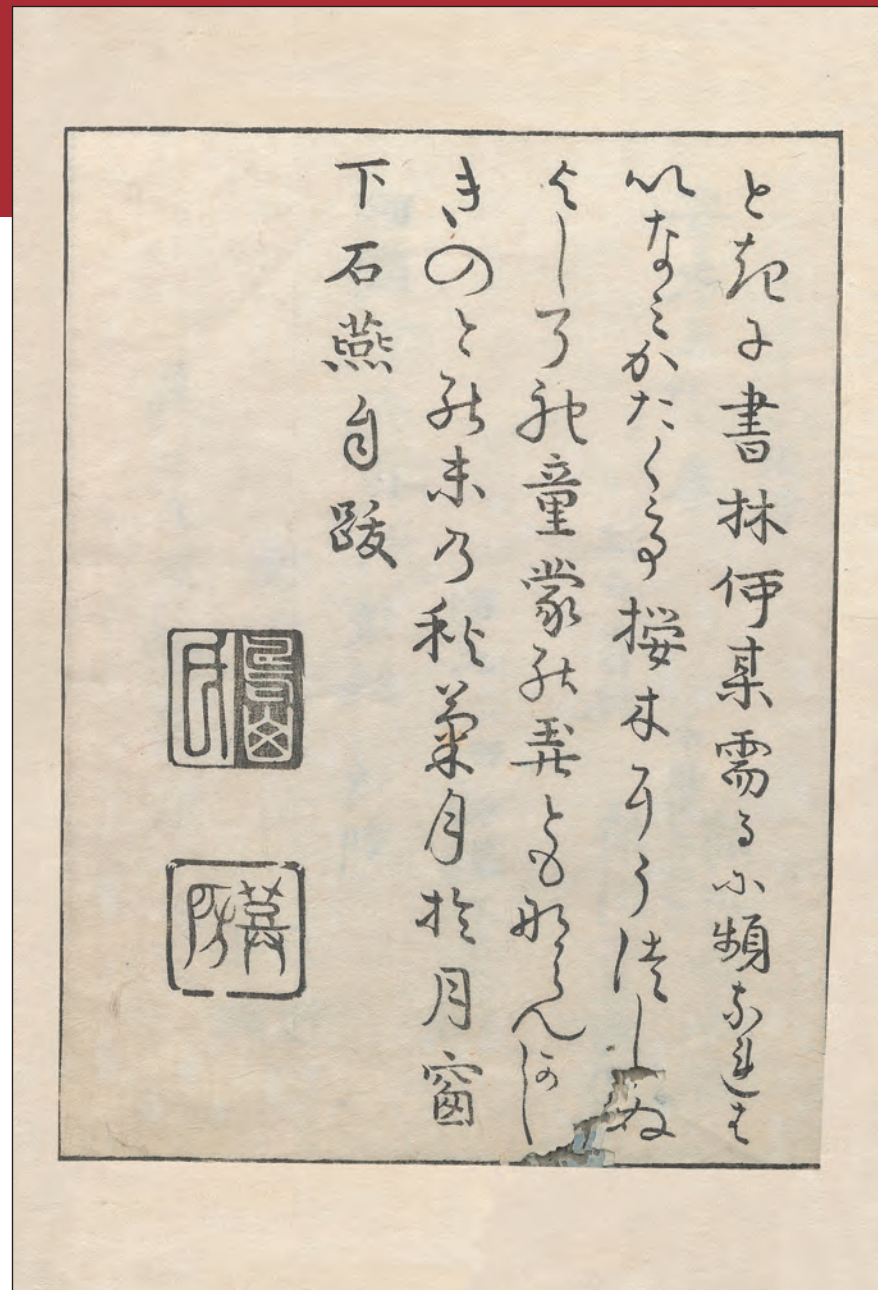
If poems represent the voice of the human heart, then pictures are voiceless poems. Possessing form, yet without voice. Each one triggering emotion and inspiring feeling. After pondering China's *Shan Hai Jing* ["Classic of Mountains and Seas"] and [Kanō] Motonobu's *Hyakki Yagyō* [scrolls], I sullied paper with my pen.

詩も人心に物ゑ感へて聲を發
す多と云はれ画ハはるゝ毎声の詩
や形あるもて聲素くみえと
くみえりて情をたへて感を催す
さ神をも語みし山海經 吾朝々
元信の百鬼夜行の巻を予これに
學ぶは多なりと帝筆紙汚る

Afterword

A certain bookseller approached me so insistently I couldn't refuse, and my art was transferred to blocks for printing. And that is how this trifle of a book came to be.

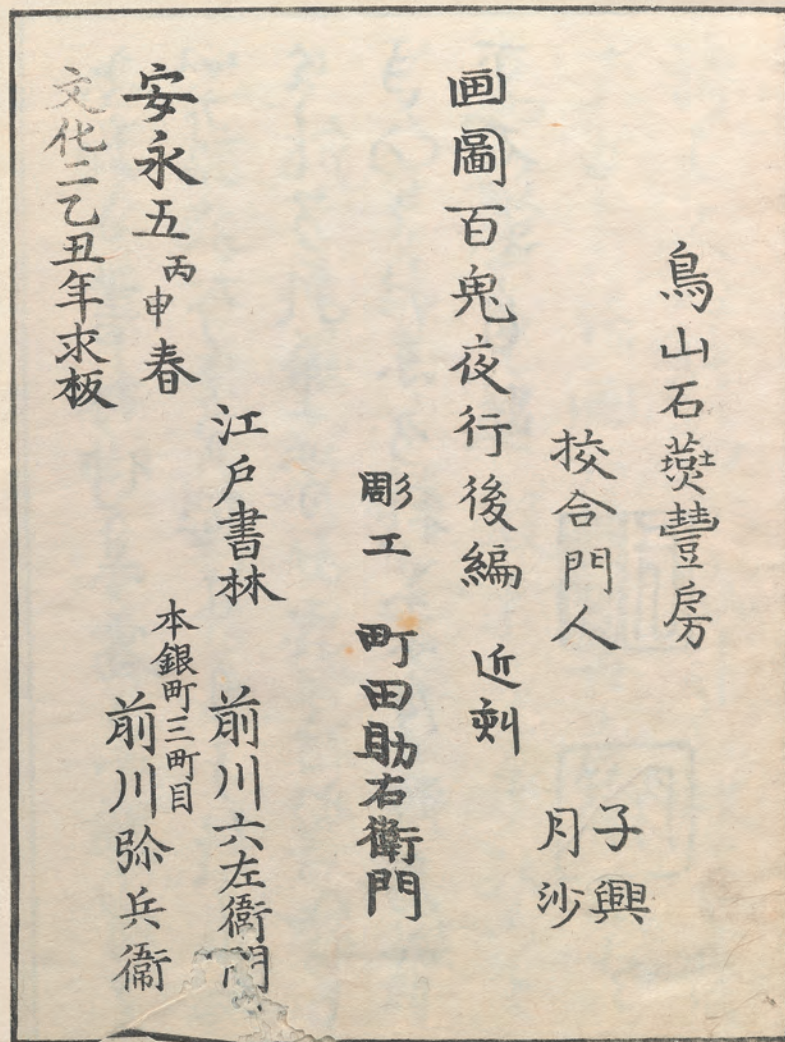
*Fall of the Year of the Wooden Sheep¹,
Kiku-zuki²
Sekien,
Gazing at the moon from my window³*



¹ 1775. Literally, “kinoto-hitsuji,” the 32nd of the 60-year period of the lunar calendar, widely used in China, Korea, and Japan. It consists of combinations of the 12 zodiacal animals paired with five elements of wood, metal, fire, earth, and water, each of which in turn is divided into yin and yang versions.

² The 9th month of the lunar calendar, which corresponds to late September or early October.

³ A double entendre, as one of Sekien's many pen-names was Gessō, which is written with the characters for “moon” and “window.”



Art: Toriyama Sekien Toyofusa

Apprentices: Shikō and Gessa

Gazu Hyakki Yagyō part two coming soon

Carver: Machida Sukeemon

Edo Booksellers:

Maekawa Rokuzaemon

Maekawa Yahei

Honshirogane-chō, 3-chōme

First edition printed Anei 5, Hinoe-saru, Spring

Blocks acquired Bunka 2, Kinoto-ushi

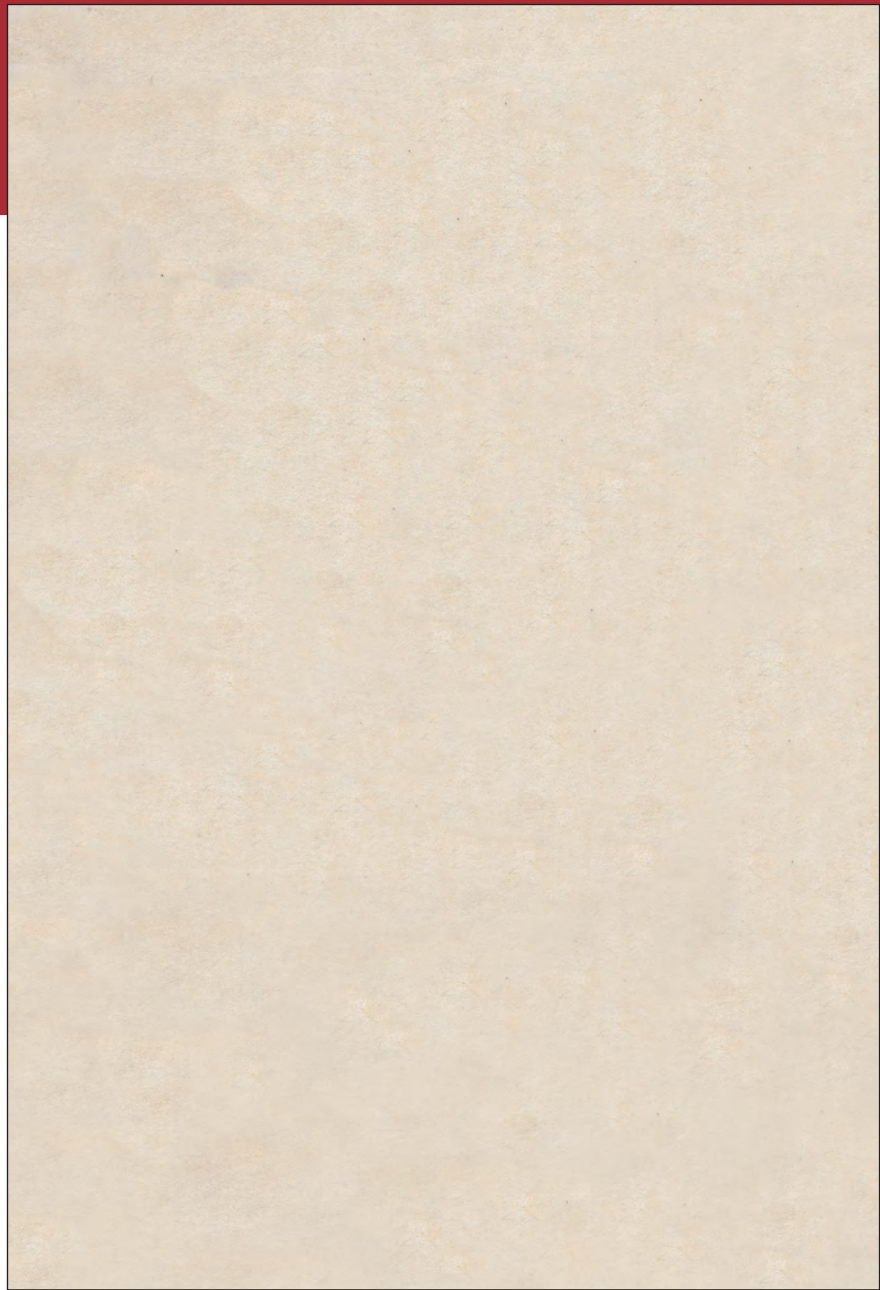
This colophon is from the second edition of the book, published after the two Maekawa booksellers acquired the blocks from the original bookseller-publisher, Enshū-ya Yashichi. Although presumably related, the two Maekawas were separate companies.

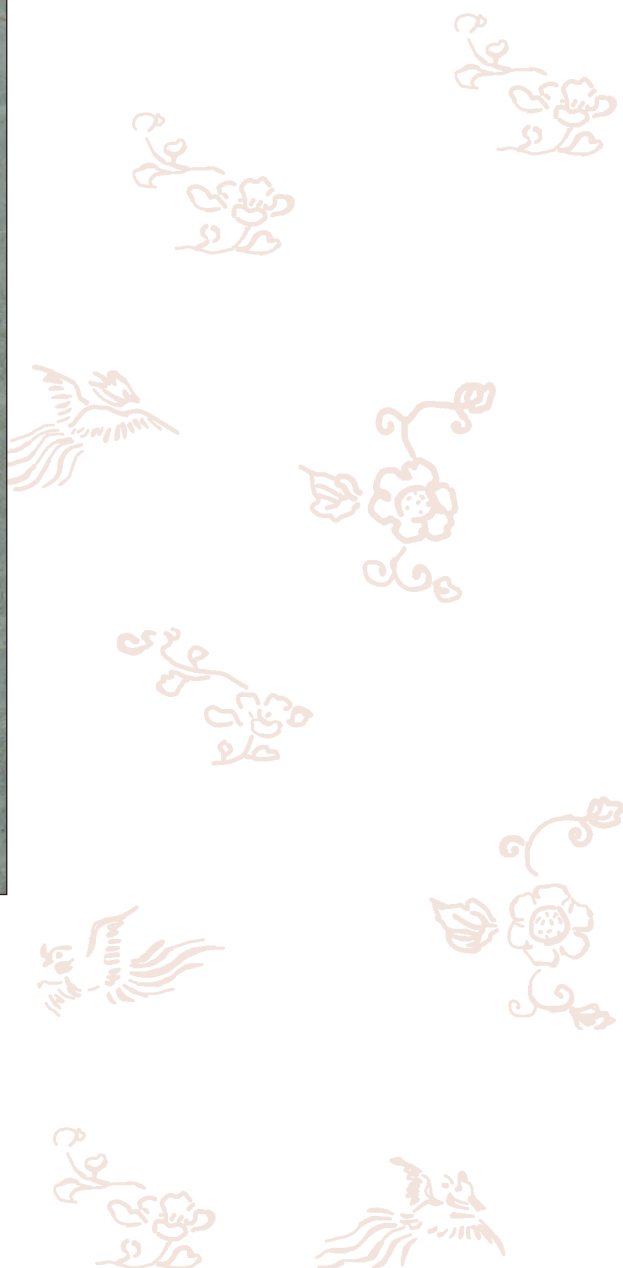
Honshirogane-chō is the address for Maekawa Yahei; it corresponds to what is known in modern Tokyo as Nihonbashi-Muromachi.

Anei 5 is the fifth year of the Anei emperor's reign: 1776. Hinoe-saru means Year of the Fire-Monkey, which corresponds to the 33rd of the 60-

year period of the traditional lunar calendar, widely used in China, Korea, and Japan. This "sexagenary cycle" consists of combinations of the 12 zodiacal animals paired with five elements of wood, metal, fire, earth, and water, each of which in turn is divided into yin and yang versions.

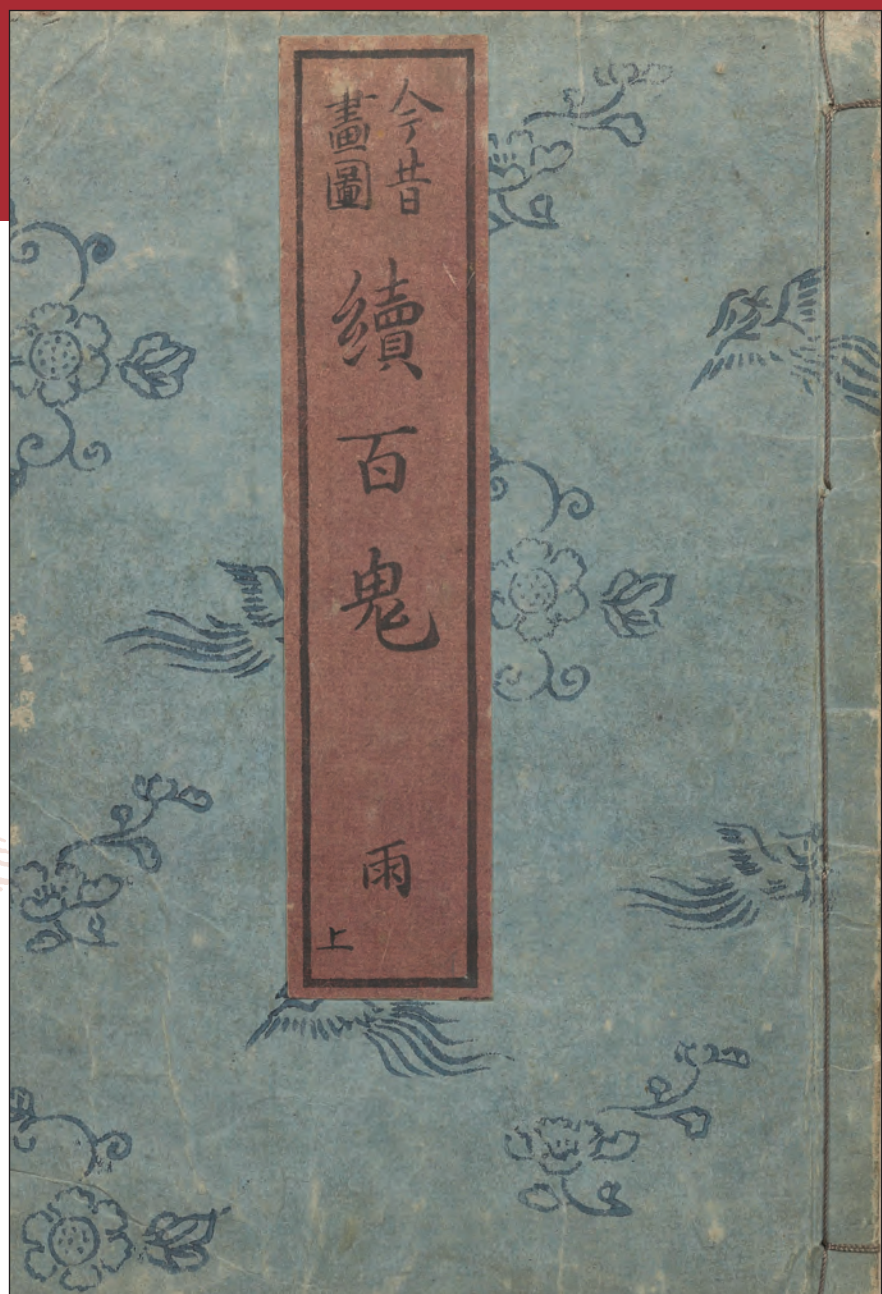
Bunka 2 refers to the second year of the Bunka emperor's reign: 1805. Kinoto-ushi is the "Year of the Wood-Ox." This is the year this second edition was printed by Maekawa.

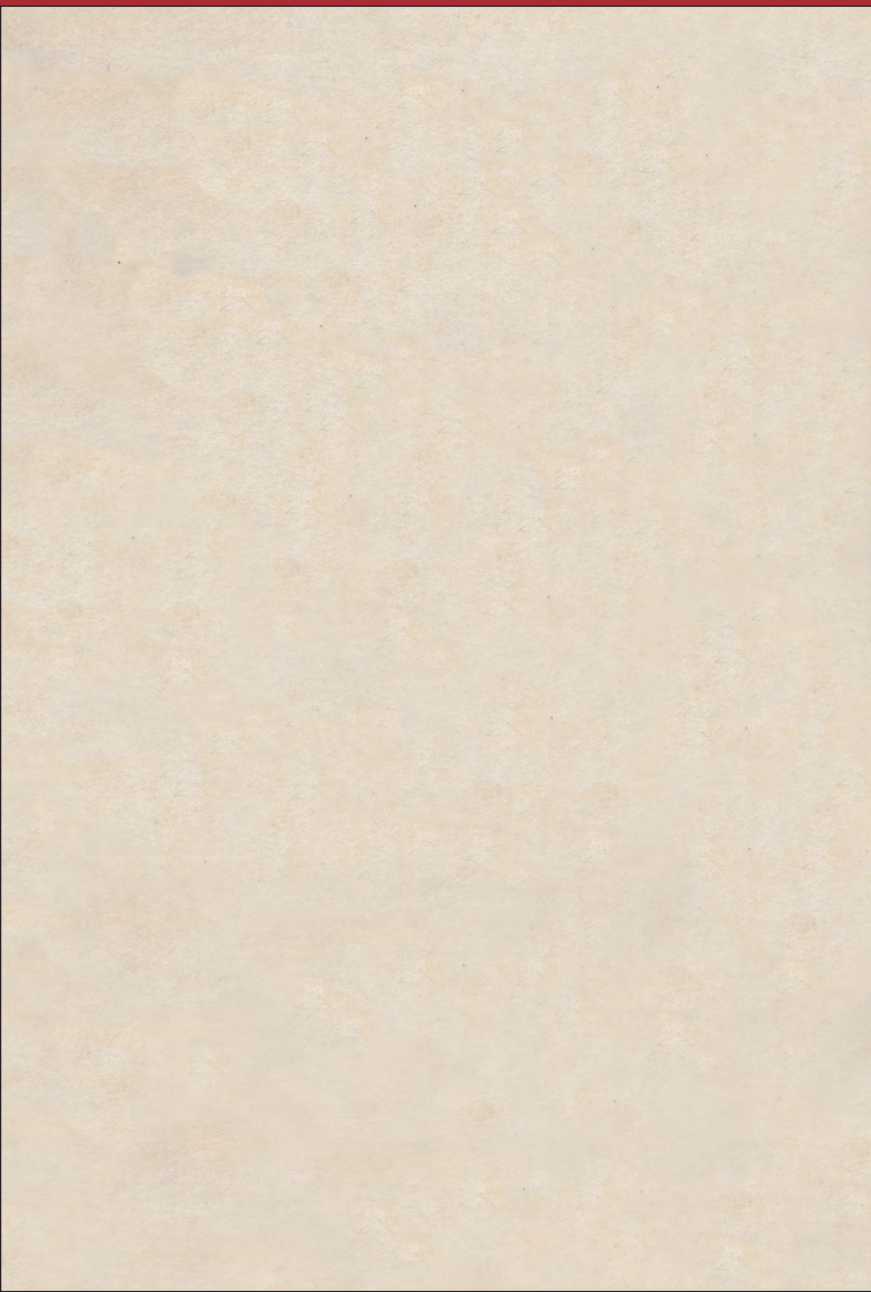




今昔畫圖続百鬼 雨 上
Konjaku Gazu Zoku
Hyakki (Ame) (Jō)

The Illustrated Demon
Horde from Past and Present,
Continued: Volume 1

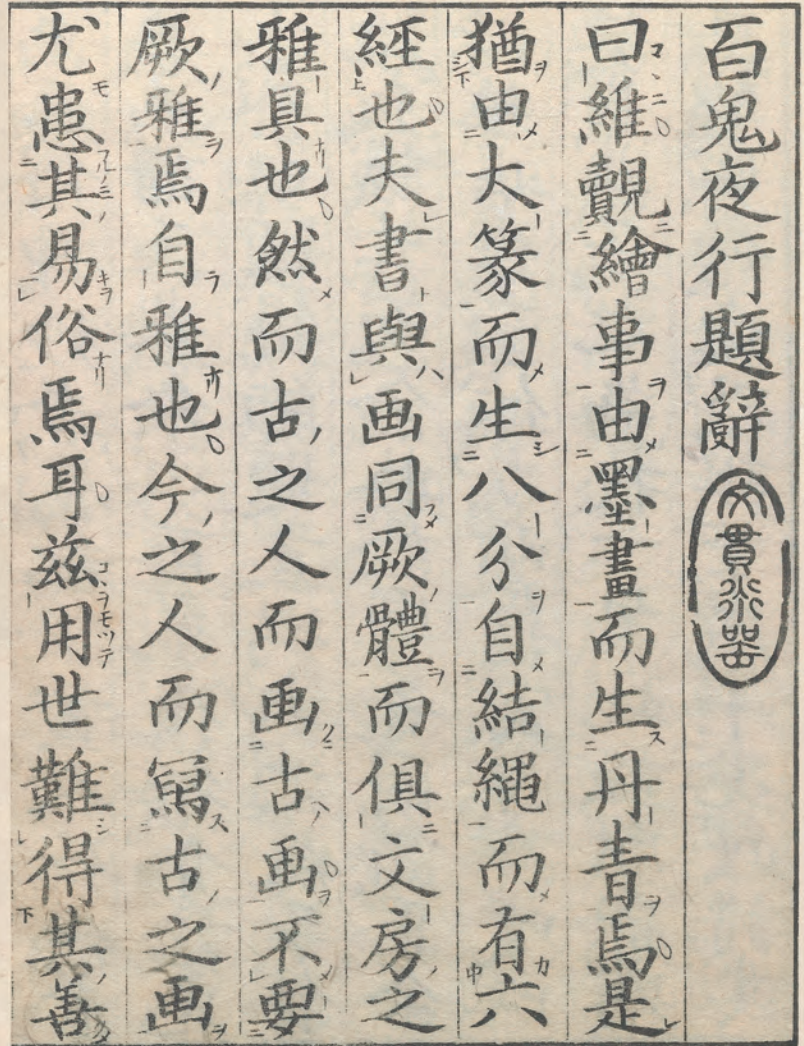




In Praise of the Hyakki Yagyō

In art, ink painting gave rise to color painting. Just as how in calligraphy, 'great seal script' gave rise to 'clerical script,' and how record-keeping via knotted ropes gave rise to the Six Classics of Confucianism.¹ Indeed writing and painting are the refined tools of the writing-room.

When people of old made art of old, they did not need to strive for refinement, for they already were refined. But when modern people attempt to duplicate these styles of old, their work is inevitably vulgar or banal. Artists who can truly capture the essence of their subjects are hard to find in this age.



¹ The six official styles of Chinese calligraphy—oracle bone, great seal, clerical, cursive, running, and standard—developed over more than three thousand years. They remain in use for artistic calligraphy today. The Six Classics are better known as the Five Classics of Confucianism today.

In Praise of the Hyakki Yagyō

Recently, an Edo artist named Sekien created three illustrated volumes of such work. He called it *Hyakki Yagyō* [the Demon Horde's Night Parade]. Sekien sent Akitora² as an intermediary, conveying that “[Sekien] requested a preface to commit to the woodblocks for printing.” Sekien and I had yet to meet at this point, but Akitora and I were close, and I accepted. At the time I happened to fall ill with fever, but still managed to examine his work closely. And in the end I sighed in admiration: what wonderful skill this Sekien has! What a pinnacle has he reached! At his best he can paint a donkey so vividly as to vex a monk, while even the slips of his brush produce beautiful cows.³

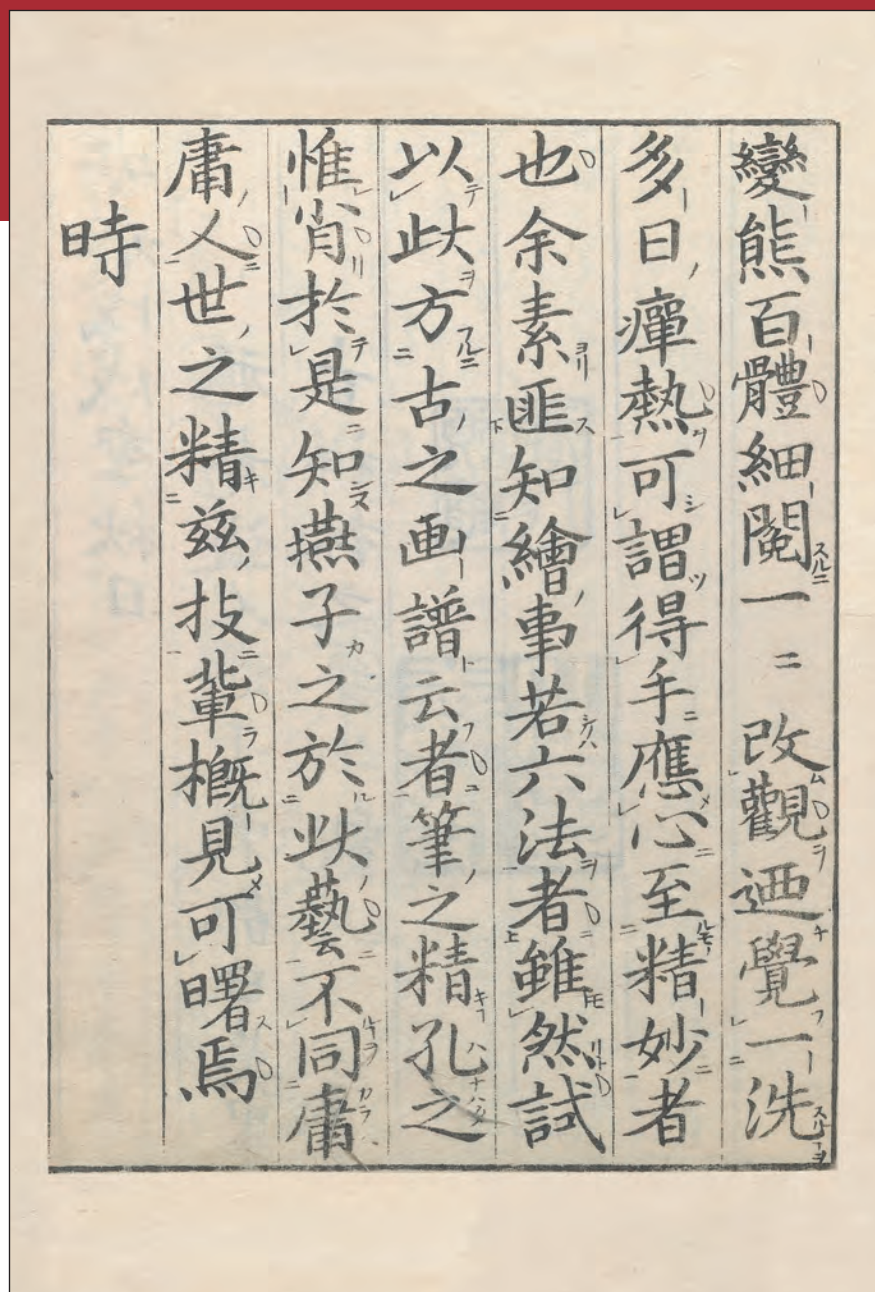
画至傳神妙者屬都下畫人石燕者
著画譜三卷命曰百鬼夜行介詮虎
告余曰願得師題言以木之燕子余
雖未識其面余與詮厠善因諾焉余
時雖疴作而伏力而獲寓目乃嘆曰
美哉燕子之為技一至此極耶奇則
画驢惱僧逸乃誤筆成牛况此譜其

² Akitora is the pen-name of Yashiro Hirokata (1758—1841), scholar, scribe to the Shogun, and patron of the arts. His personal library, which eventually reached some 50,000 volumes, was said to be Edo's largest.

³ A pair of Chinese parables. In the first, a Taoist sage draws a donkey so well that it leaps from the page and kicks a rival Buddhist monk's room to pieces. The second refers to the artist Wang Xianzhi (344—386?), renowned for his handwriting. When during calligraphy practice one day as a child, his brush slipped from his hand, and he transformed the ink-smear into a beautifully rendered cow.

In Praise of the Hyakki Yagyō

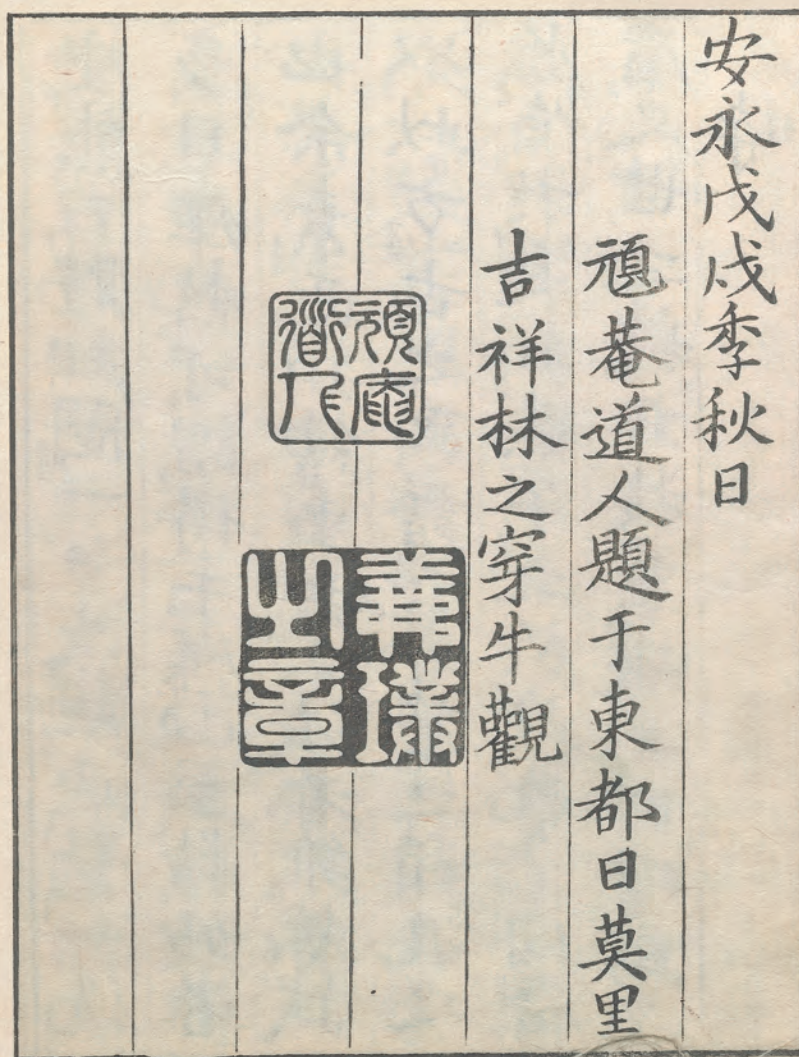
His phantasmagoric books reveal more detail upon every viewing. They proved an excellent tonic for my days of fever. One might say his fulsome experience has culminated in excellence. Now, I myself am not particularly knowledgeable about painting or the Six Principles.⁴ But whenever I compare these drawings to collections of old classics, I find the beautiful linework quite similar. From this it is clear to me that Sekien is no ordinary artist. This book should be an eye-opener for those able to appreciate these skills.



⁴ The Six Principles of Chinese painting, established in the 6th century, are a series of points used to judge a painting's quality: the work's overall sense of vitality, brushwork, depiction of form, use of color, arrangement, and its relationship to styles of old.

In Praise of the Hyakki Yagyō

*Anei, Tsuchinoe-inu,⁵ Autumn
by Ganan Dōjin⁶
Sengyōkan of Kisshō-rin,⁷ Nippori,
Edo*



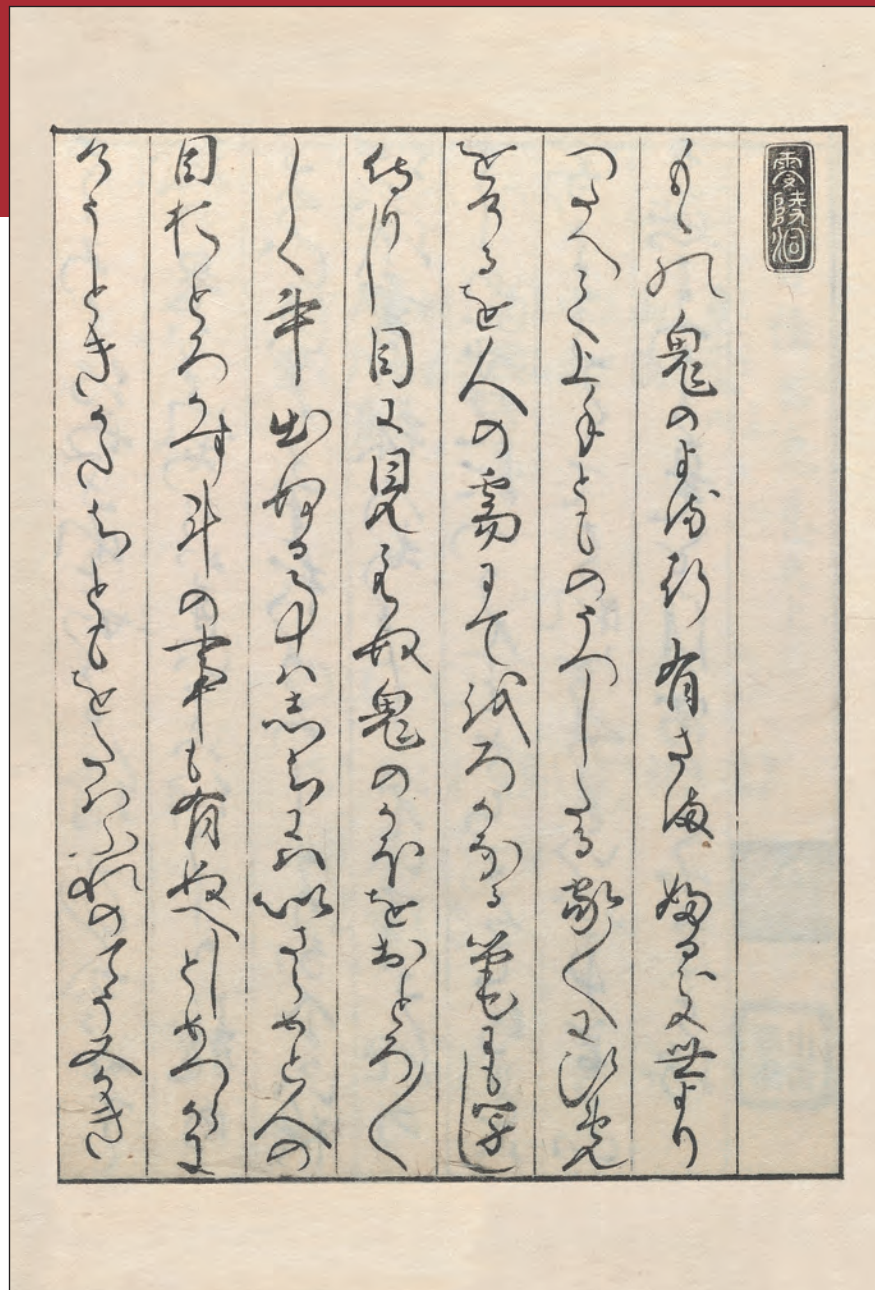
⁵ The Year of the Earth-Dog. The thirty-fifth cycle of the lunar calendar in the Anei emperor's reign; 1778.

⁶ A pen-name. This represents a best guess at its reading. It suggests something like "The Stubborn Adept."

⁷ Kisshō-rin literally means "Kisshō grove," and presumably is located near Kisshōji Temple, which stands to this day in Nippori. Sengyūkan transliterates into "Hall of the Bull with the Ring in its Nose," and seems to refer to a Chinese poem lamenting man's domination over the natural order.

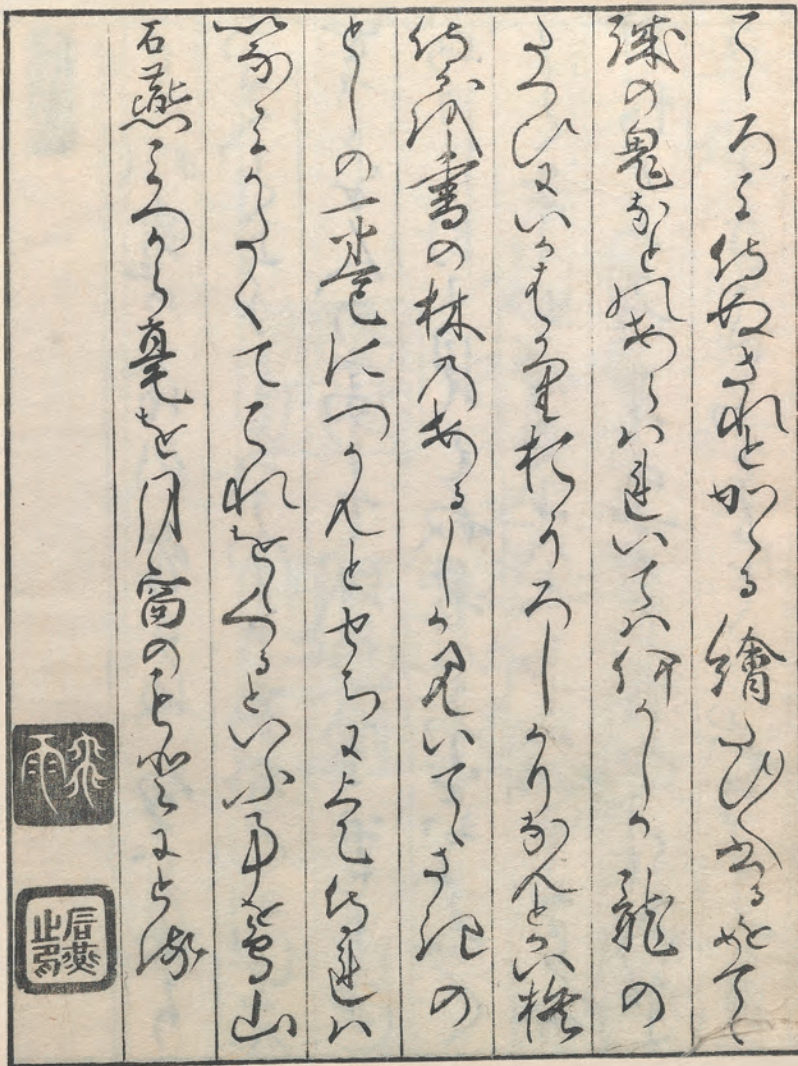
Introduction

Since times of old, the night parade of the demon horde has been passed down, copied, and kept in the houses of the great masters. Here I have acquiesced to demands to apply my humble techniques to the topic. There's no hope of achieving realism when it comes to the fearsome faces of things that can't be seen with the human eye, but I can at least shock and awe, and so I have tried my best with humble skills to capture their bizarre forms once again.



Running my fingers over my beloved earlier work, I mused: I certainly love drawing this sort of thing, but what if a real demon showed up? When a certain man got a visit from a real dragon it was utterly terrifying.⁸ But even still, when the bookseller pleaded for a sequel to my book of a few years back, I found it hard to refuse. And so I, Toriyama Sekien, find myself again taking up my brush under the moonlight.

[Seal: Toriyama Sekien]



⁸A Chinese parable about a magistrate named Ye who loved dragons so much that he decorated his entire house with dragon figures and motifs. And one day, an actual dragon dropped by to thank him. But upon seeing the “real deal,” Ye turned and ran in terror.

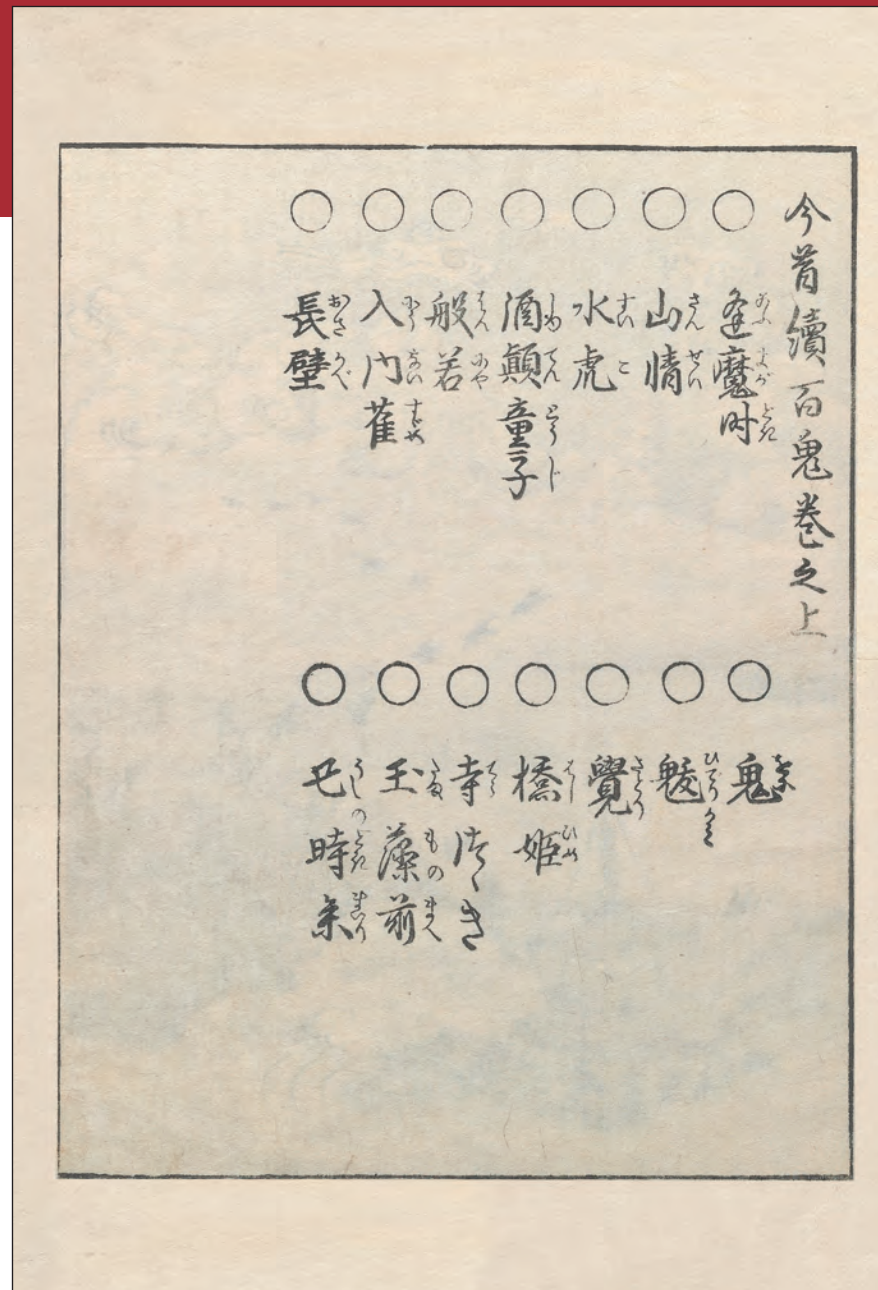
今昔続百鬼卷之上

Konjaku Zoku

Hyakki Maki-no-Jō

The Demon Horde from Past and Present, Continued: Volume 1

Ōma-ga-toki
Oni
Sansei
Hideri-gami
Suiko
Satori
Shuten-dōji
Hashi-hime
Hannya
Tera-tsutsuki
Nyūnai-suzume
Tamamo-no-mae
Osakabe
Ushinotoki-mairi



Note that the title of the book used in the Table of Contents differs slightly from that used on the cover of the book itself.



changed course in 11 AD, his administration failed to assist the large numbers of citizens who were displaced by the massive floods and resulting social disorder. Refugees were forced to band together to protect themselves, eventually forming into rebel armies that stormed the palace and beheaded Wang Mang in 23 AD.

逢魔時

Ōma-ga-toki

(THE HOUR OF MEETING DEMONS)

Another word for twilight. The time when uncounted phantoms appear and the common folk avoid letting their children go outside. Some suggest that it can also be written with the Chinese characters “Wang Mang’s time.” He seized power from the Former Han Dynasty, but before long it became the Later Han. Writing it as such likens this division between the two Han eras to the boundary between day and night.



Neither light nor dark, twilight represents instability, a time of day when things have a higher tendency for going weird. Sekien accentuates the potential for chaos by referencing a famous episode from Chinese history. Wang Mang (45 BC— 23 AD), took power in 9 BC during an era of great societal unrest. When the Yellow River unexpectedly

鬼 Oni (ONI)

The direction known as *ushitora* ["ox-tiger," northeast] is also called *kimon* ["gate of oni"]. Today, oni are portrayed with the horns of an ox and tiger-skin loincloths. This is a combination of the directions of ox and tiger.



Traditionally, Japan employed the animals of the Chinese zodiac to refer to not only to years, but months, times of day, and directions as well. Oni are a ubiquitous presence in Japanese folklore and popular antagonists of children's stories. They are generally portrayed as enormous, muscular humanoids with red or green skin, tiger-pelt togas or loincloths, and a pair of horns. Here Sekien unravels the etymological origins of the Oni while

emphasizing their reputation as ferocious cannibals, as seen from the assortment of human skulls around its feet.

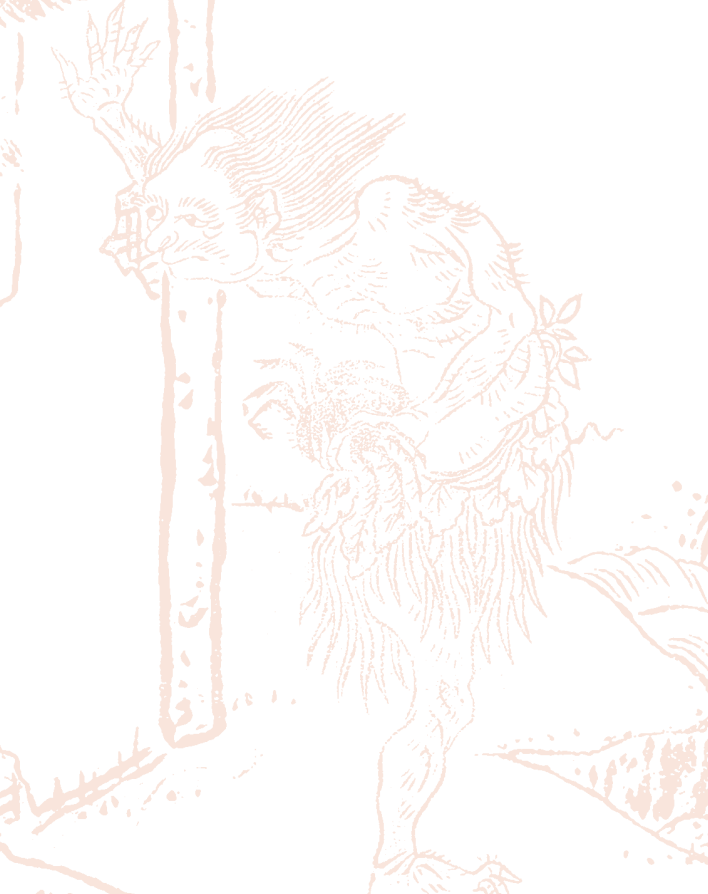
The term "oni" is used over and over again throughout these pages as a synonym for scary, powerful presences in general. In fact it even appears in the title of the books (the *ki* in *Hyakki*, to be specific.)

山精

Sansei

(MOUNTAIN SPIRIT)

In Anguo of China, there is a mountain-oni that resembles a human with one leg. According to *A Record of Yongjia*, it steals salt from woodcutters and eats roasted stone crabs.



Sekien adapted the illustration from the 1712 *Wakan Sansaizue* (*Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*). That text goes into more detail about the Sansei. It is described as standing between 90 and 120 centimeters tall, with the foot facing the opposite direction of its face; it is nocturnal and eats frogs and toads as well as crabs. Should a human attack the Sansei, they will suffer

illness or their homes will catch fire. But should a human be attacked by it, shouting “batsu!” will stop the Sansei in its tracks. In the *Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*, “batsu” is written with the character “hideri,” the name of the creature described on the page opposite the Sansei. Sekien follows this pattern by putting Hideri-gami on the next page of his book.

魃

Hideri-gami (DROUGHT-BRINGER)

Also known as *Kanbo*. It dwells on China's Mt. Gangshan. It has the face of a human and the body of a beast. It has just one arm and leg and runs like the wind. Its appearance is a harbinger of drought.



Kanbo is written with characters meaning “drought-mother.” There is an interesting discrepancy among the various classical sources as to its particulars. The 1712 *Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms* describes the creature as ranging from 2-3 *shaku* (60-90cm) in height, and that its eye is located on the back of its neck. This in turn references an even earlier text, the 1596 Chinese *Compendium of Materia Medica*,

which lacks any description of it being single-legged, and says the eye is located on top of the creature's head. (The kanji characters for “back of the neck” and “top of the head” are quite similar.) Sekien for his part shows the eye on the top of the head.

A third eye on the top of the head actually has a basis in biology: a “parietal eye” sits atop the heads of certain lizards, frogs, and fish and is capable of sensing sunlight.

水虎

Suiko

(WATER-TIGER)

Suiko is shaped like a child. Its carapace resembles that of a pangolin, and its kneecaps are sharp like tiger claws. It dwells in China's Sushui River, where it is often seen on the sand, drying its shell.



A Chinese version of what would come to be known in Japan as a *Kappa* or *Kawatarō* (p. 16). Although it is often treated simply as a variation of the *Kappa*, Sekien breaks it out into its own entry here. His illustration is new, but the description paraphrases the one in the *Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*. Note how the river setting balances out the bone-dry

background of Hideri-gami on the preceding page.

Pangolins are terrestrial mammals, but China's *Compendium of Materia Medica* classified them as a type of fish, presumably because of their scaly hides. They are an endangered species today due to a continued demand for their scales in traditional Chinese medicine.

覚

Satori

(PERCEIVER)

A *kaku* that dwells deep in the mountains of Hida and Mino provinces. Locals call it Satori. It is covered in long, dark hair. It can speak human language and read people's minds. It takes care not to harm people. If on the other hand, a human attempts to kill it, it will sense their intent and run away.



Japan's answer to Bigfoot? *Kaku* is short for *kakuen*, oversized apes with extraordinary lifespans on the order of centuries; they have a long history in Chinese and Japanese folklore. *Satori* is written with a character meaning "enlightenment," presumably a reference to its ability to read minds.

酒顛童子

Shuten-dōji

(SHUTEN-DŌJI)

Known to steal things from travelers on Mount Ōeyama, where his treasure is piled in heaps. This resembles what, in the *Chuo Geng Lu*, is called a “demon-hoard.” He lounges boorishly, using his elbow as a pillow while beautiful women pour him saké, which he devours by the huge cupful. But he styles his hair in a childish bob and wears a red *hakama* robe, hinting at a tender heart. Buddha’s teachings tell us that when end times are nigh monsters clad in white robes will appear.

The *Chuo Geng Lu* (also known as the *Nancun Chuo Geng Lu*) is a 1341 Chinese text whose name translates into *Tales Told While Resting from Farmwork*.

The Shuten-dōji (literally “saké-drinking child,” but portrayed as a huge, hideous monster) was an enormously popular subject for paintings and stories in Japan. In them, the Shuten-dōji rules over a small army of Oni in a mountain stronghold. The warrior Minamoto no Yorimitsu leads a raid to rescue the maidens being held captive there. Disguised as monks, Yorimitsu and his men are forced to sit at a banquet of human flesh until the drugged saké they brought as an offering takes effect, allowing them to behead the sleeping Shuten-dōji and his fiendish henchmen and spirit the women to safety.

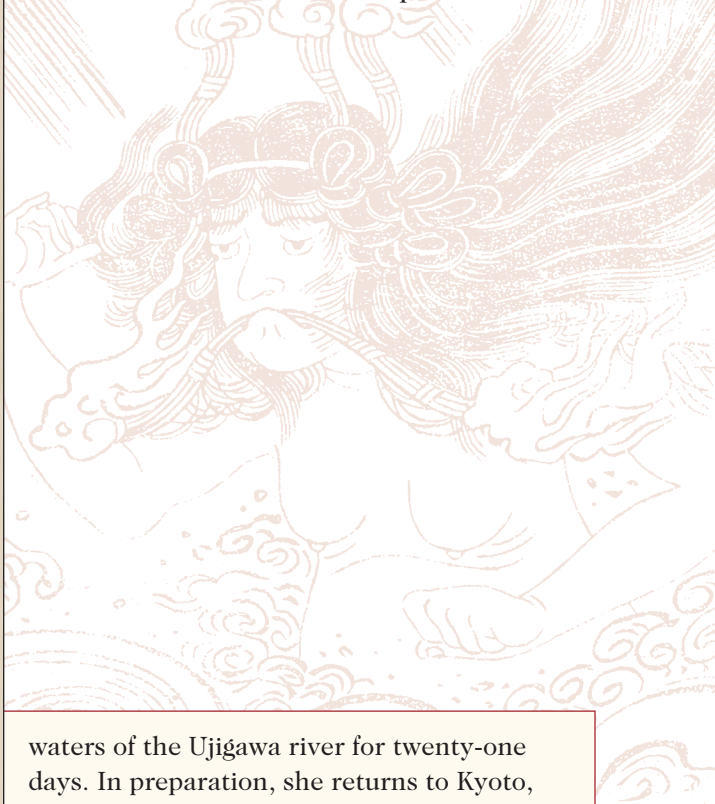


The “end times” refers not to Armageddon, but rather the third era in the Pure Land sect of Buddhism. Also called the Latter Day of the Law, it describes an era of relentless decline and degeneracy that began 2,000 years after the Buddha’s passing and will last for 10,000 years. None can attain enlightenment during this time. “White robes” refers to normal citizens (as opposed to the “black robes” worn by monks.) In essence, wolves in sheep’s clothing.

橋姫

Hashi-hime (BRIDGE PRINCESS)

Hashi-hime's shrine is by Ujibashi Bridge in Yamashiro province. Her ugly looks prevent her from finding a spouse. Yet she detests being single, and envies anyone having good fortune with relationships.



waters of the Ujigawa river for twenty-one days. In preparation, she returns to Kyoto, where she parts her hair into five horn-like locks, paints her face and body red, places an inverted *kanawa* (iron trivet) on her head, and bites down on a torch lit at both ends. So costumed, she then ran full speed due south to the river. It is said that her fearsome appearance along the way was enough to knock those who caught sight of her unconscious or even kill them. After soaking for the proscribed three weeks, she was indeed transformed into a living Oni. (The “living” is key here, as Oni are not human to begin with, as seen on p. 88). See also Ushinotoki-mairi, p. 100.

As described in the 13th century *Tale of Heike's* addendum, *The Book of the Sword*, and a much later Noh play called *Kanawa* (*The Iron Trivet*). It concerns a woman consumed by jealousy—the reason for which isn't made clear in the original telling, but is described as her husband leaving her for another woman in the play.

She journeys to Kifune Jinja shrine and prays to its god, Kifune Daimyōjin, for seven days straight, begging to be transformed into a “living Oni.” The god takes pity and instructs her to soak in the



般若

Hannya

(HANNYA)

Hannya is the name of a sutra, a boat of mercy traversing the ocean of suffering. The origin of the face of the Hannya, a woman turned Oni from hate and jealousy, is the Noh play “Lady Aoi.” The vengeful ghost of Lady Rokujō, hearing the ascetics’ chanting the sutra, cries, “oh, the dreadful voice of Hannya!” This is why it is so called.



Specifically, it is from the *Hannya-kyō* sutra, Prajnaparamita. The underlying story is from *The Tale of Genji* (ca. 1021). The Lady Rokujō is so furious at being spurned after an affair with heart-throb Hikaru Genji, that her soul rises from her body when she sleeps to stalk Genji’s pregnant wife Aoi, with fatal consequences. In the original novel,

this phenomenon is referred to as Lady Rokujō’s *ikiryō* (living ghost - see p. 48.) In the scene shown here, the Hannya attempts to blow out the fire lit by the holy men trying to protect Aoi. True to Sekien’s description, female oni masks used in Noh are still called Hannya masks today.

寺つつき Tera-tsutsuki (TEMPLE-PECKER)

When the politically powerful Mononobe-no-Ōmuraji Moriya opposed Buddhism, he was crushed by Prince Umayado. Moriya's soul transformed into a bird and furiously attacked Umayado's Buddhist temple. The bird is called a "tera-tsutsuki" (temple-pecker).



Prince Umayado (572 - 622), better known as Shōtoku Taishi, is famed as Japan's first patron of Buddhism; he remains one of the nation's most beloved historical figures. The specific temple being referenced in Sekien's text is Shitennō-ji, which Prince Umayado commissioned to thank the "four heavenly kings" that he believed helped him win the battle against the Mononobe clan. It is Japan's oldest Buddhist temple, and still stands in the city of Osaka today.

There is a passage in the ancient text *Genpei Seisuiiki* (*The Rise and Fall of the Gempei*): "in order to destroy the temple, Moriya's furious spirit transformed into a flock of several thousand woodpeckers, which began hurling themselves to death on the buildings. Taishi transformed himself into a hawk to chase them away. It is said no woodpeckers can be seen near [the temple] to this day." Sharp-eyed visitors to Shitennō-ji may be able to spot a ceremonial hawk-roost placed inside to commemorate the event.

入内雀

Nyūnai-suzume

(PALACE-SPARROWS)

Fujiwara no Sanekata was banished to Ōshū. His desire to return manifested as a flock of sparrows that ravaged the Imperial Palace's kitchen stores. Thus they are known as *Nyūnai-suzume* (sparrows-entering-the-Imperial-Palace).



The Imperial court official Fujiwara no Sanekata (? - 999) is mainly remembered today for his contribution to the *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu*, a 13th century collection of one hundred classical poems by one hundred poets. He was a ladies' man who counted among his many lovers the great Sei Shōnagon, author of *The Pillow Book*. However in times of old he was equally well known for his fall from grace, a rising star banished to the hinterlands after an embarrassing public row with a rival poet. He died there just a few years later, around the age of 40.

玉藻前

Tamamo-no-mae (THE LADY TAMAMO)

In *Langye's Substitute for Drunkenness* it is written:

“Daji, favorite concubine of King Zhou of Shang, was a fox-spirit.” She flew across the waters to Japan to become Lady Tamamo-no-mae, polluting the Emperor with her presence. Dazzling all with her feminine charms, she is far more dangerous than any fox or *tanuki*.

creatures ever to stalk the Japanese islands. She is often portrayed as a “nine-tailed fox,” for in folklore, foxes sprout additional tails as they age, and a nine-tailed fox is at the peak of its supernatural abilities. That said, in the most famous chronicle of her appearance, the 16th-century story collection *Otogi-Zōshi*, she is described as having just two tails. It further describes her as “the smartest and most beautiful woman in the whole

country and perhaps the world, [whose] body naturally exuded a lovely scent, and her clothes stayed beautiful all day.” The Emperor takes the beauty as his favorite consort, but finds his health rapidly ebbing away. His fortune-tellers reveal Tamamo-no-mae to be a wily fox with designs on the throne. After a lengthy pursuit, one of the Emperor’s retainers kills the fox with an arrow shot. Its fallen body is transformed into the *Sesshō-seki* (“Life-Taking Stone,” see p. 202.)

The full title is actually *Langye's Substitute for Drunkenness: A Compilation*, known in Chinese as *Langye Dai Zui Bian* and in Japanese as the *Rōya Taisui Hen*. Originally published late in the 16th century in the midst of the Ming dynasty, it is a forty-volume collection of writings by the scholar Zhang Dingsi. (Zhang also penned the preface to the 1603 reprint of the *Compendium of Materia Medica*, another fount of inspiration for Sekien.)

A variety of stories surround Tamamo-no-mae, considered one of the most powerful and dangerous

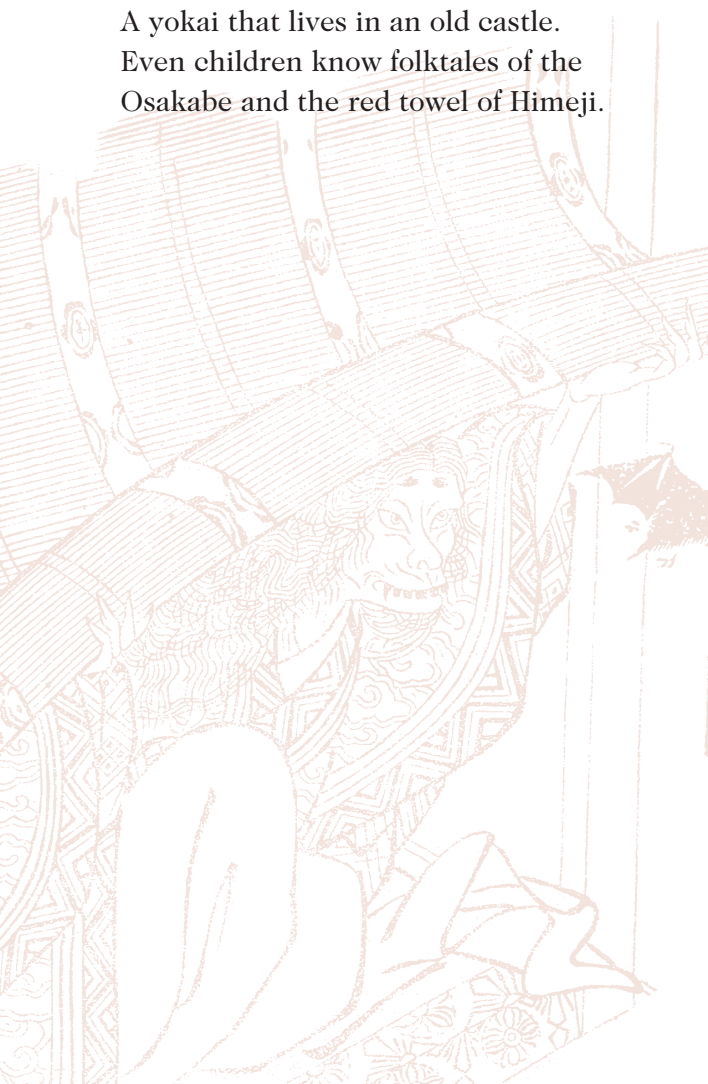


長壁

Osakabe

(LONGWALL)

A yokai that lives in an old castle.
Even children know folktales of the
Osakabe and the red towel of Himeji.



Himeji Castle is famed for its brilliant white exterior. It took its current form after an extensive expansion in 1580, which necessitated relocating a nearby shrine for a local deity. Years later in the Edo era, the castle's lord fell inexplicably ill and rumors spread of a curse caused by the angry god. The lord ordered a new shrine called Osakabe to be built within the castle keep, where it continues to serve as a guardian spirit to this day.

Bats were popular design motifs in Edo-era Japan, as the second character of their common name, *kōmori*, resembles that of the character for "prosperity."

Both Osakabe and the "red towel" (*aka-tenugui*) were well enough known to be listed in the scientist Hiraka Gennai's popular 1763 social satire *Fūryū Shidōken-den* (*The Elegant Tale of Mr. Shidōken*). Osakabe remains part of Himeji Castle's lore today, but the particulars of the red towel have faded into obscurity—a testament to how the conventional wisdom of one era can be utterly forgotten in the next. UNESCO recognized Himeji Castle in 1993, making it perhaps the only World Heritage site occupied by a yokai.

丑時参り

Ushinotoki-mairi

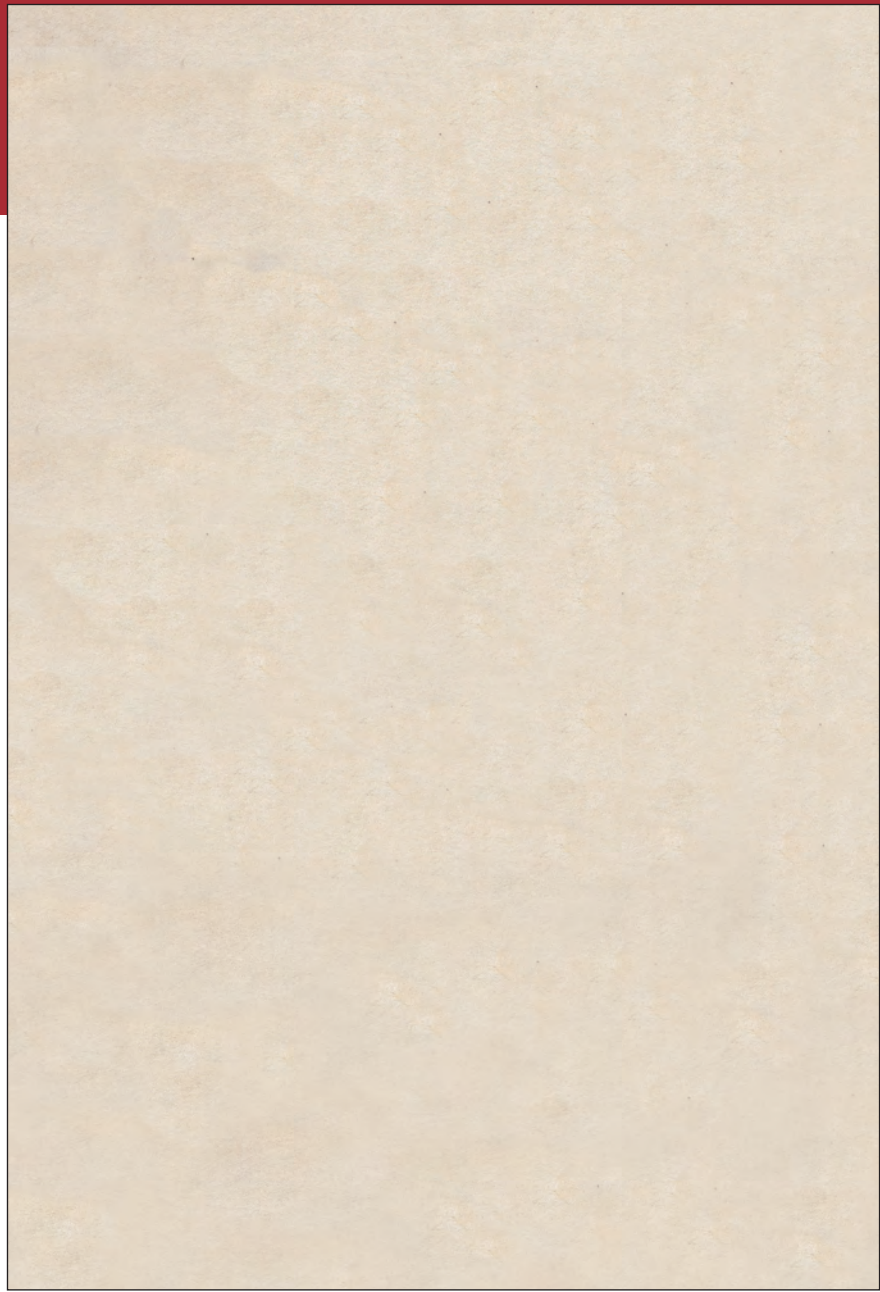
(THE HOUR OF THE OX)

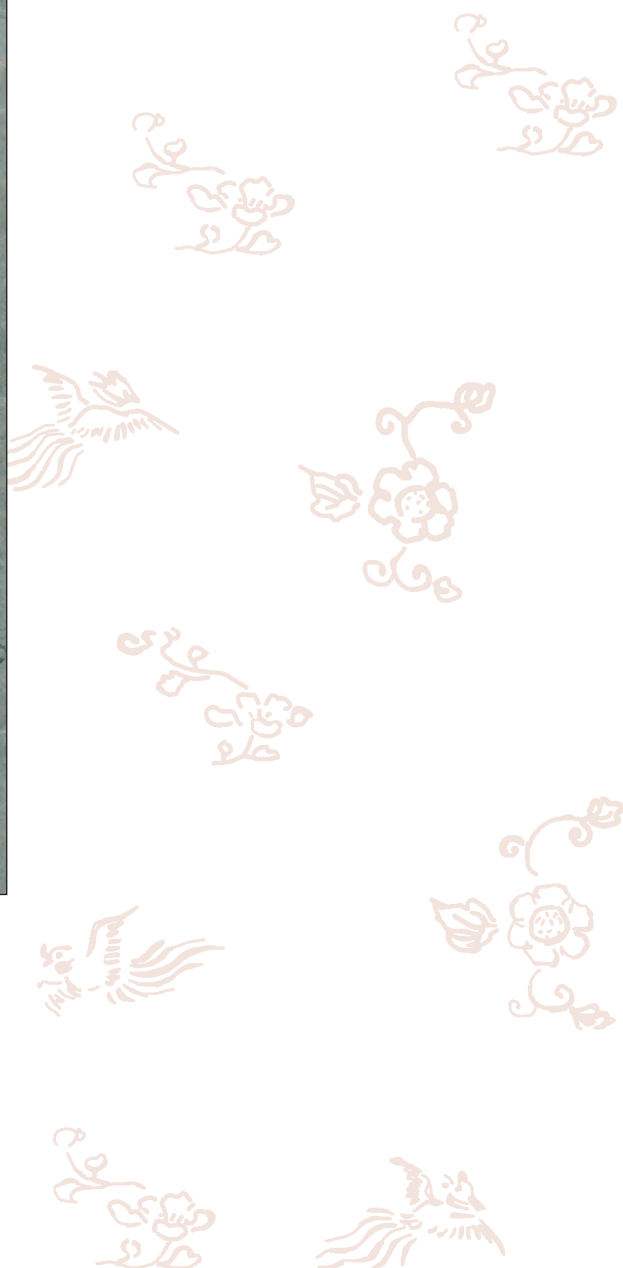
This involves secreting a mirror upon your breast, wearing three lit candles atop your head, visiting a certain shrine at the Hour of the Ox, and driving a nail into the trunk of a cedar tree. The jealousy of delicate womanhood consumes body and soul. This is exemplified by the saying: if you curse someone, dig two graves.



Two graves as in, one for the cursed, and the other for the one doing the cursing. The “Hour of the Ox” refers to an archaic style of timekeeping and corresponds to darkest night, between 2 and 2:30 in the morning. The “certain shrine” is Kifune Shrine in Kyoto, whose cedar trees retain holes from centuries of attempted curses. According to legend, Kifune Ōkami, the deity venerated at the shrine,

descended on the Year of the Ox, Month of the Ox, Day of the Ox, and Hour of the Ox accompanied by a boy named Gyūki (written with the characters “ox” and “oni.”) Praying at the shrine at this time was believed to be most effective, and at some point the concept became linked to that of cursing. See also Hashi-Hime, p. 94.





今昔画圖続百鬼 晦 中
Konjaku Gazu Zoku
Hyakki (Kai) (Chū)

The Illustrated Demon
Horde from Past and Present,
Continued (Darkness) Volume 2





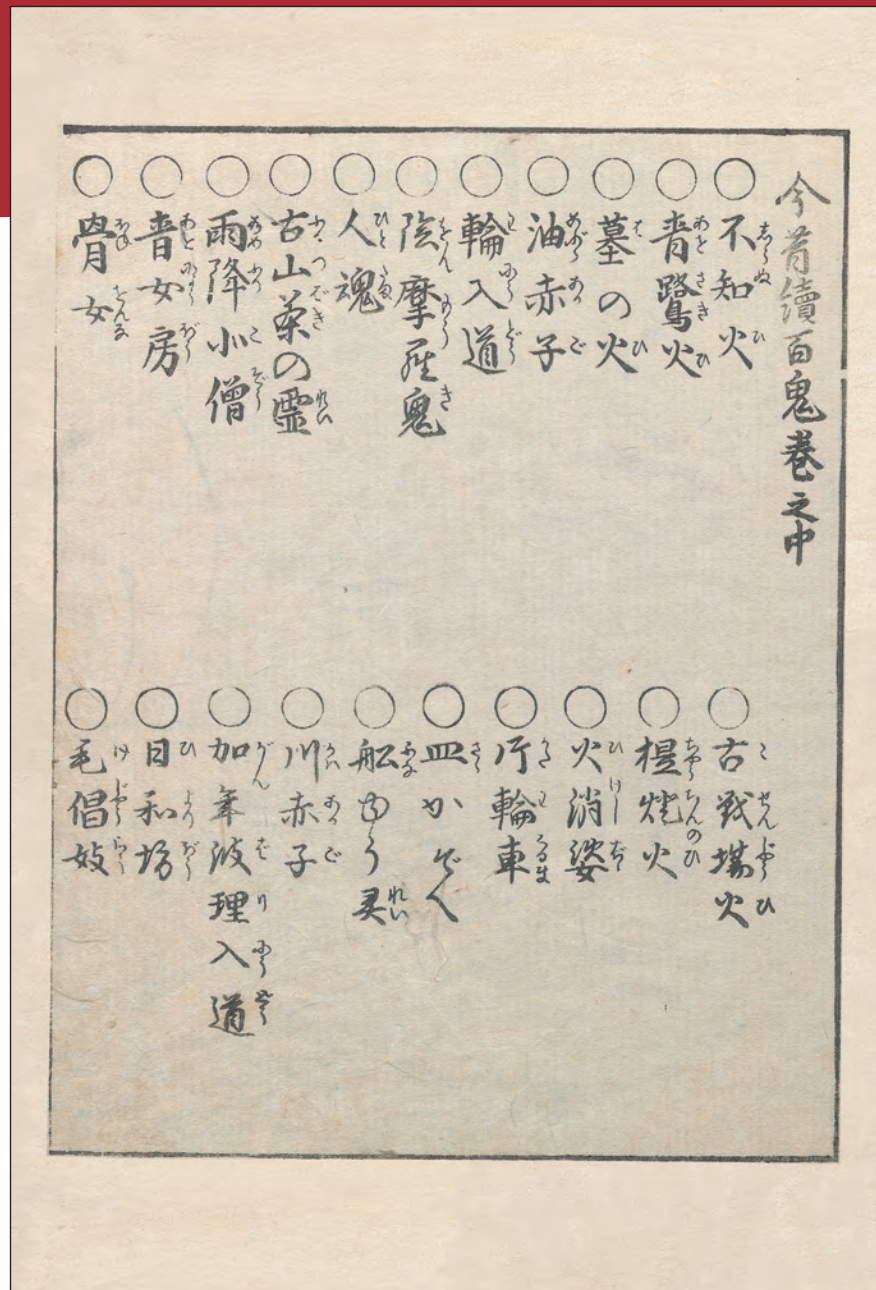
今昔続百鬼卷之中

Konjaku Zoku

Hyakki Maki-no-Chū

The Illustrated Demon
Horde from Past and Present,
Continued: Volume 2

Shiranui
Kosenjō-hi
Aosagi-bi
Chōchin-no-hi
Haka-no-hi
Hikeshi-baba
Abura-akago
Katawa-guruma
Wanyūdō
Onmoraki
Sara-kazoe
Hitodama
Funa-yūrei
Furutsubaki-no-rei
Kawa-akago
Amefuri-kozō
Ganbari-nyūdō
Ao-nyōbō
Hiyori-bō
Hone-Onna
Kejōrō



Note that the title of the book used in the Table of Contents differs slightly from that used on the cover of the book itself.

不知火

Shiranui

(THE UNKNOWN FIRE)

A fire at sea off the coast of Tsukushi was interpreted as heralding Emperor Keikō's arrival. The word "Shiranui" is used as a poetic epithet for Tsukushi.



Tsukushi is an old way of referring to the island of Kyushu. The Shiranui is the locals' name for a strange atmospheric phenomenon in which the lights of the shoreline are doubled when viewed from a distance at sea. It appears to be a form of mirage. See also Shinkirō, p. 165.

Keikō is said to have reigned from AD 71 - 130. Although venerated by Japan's royal family as the

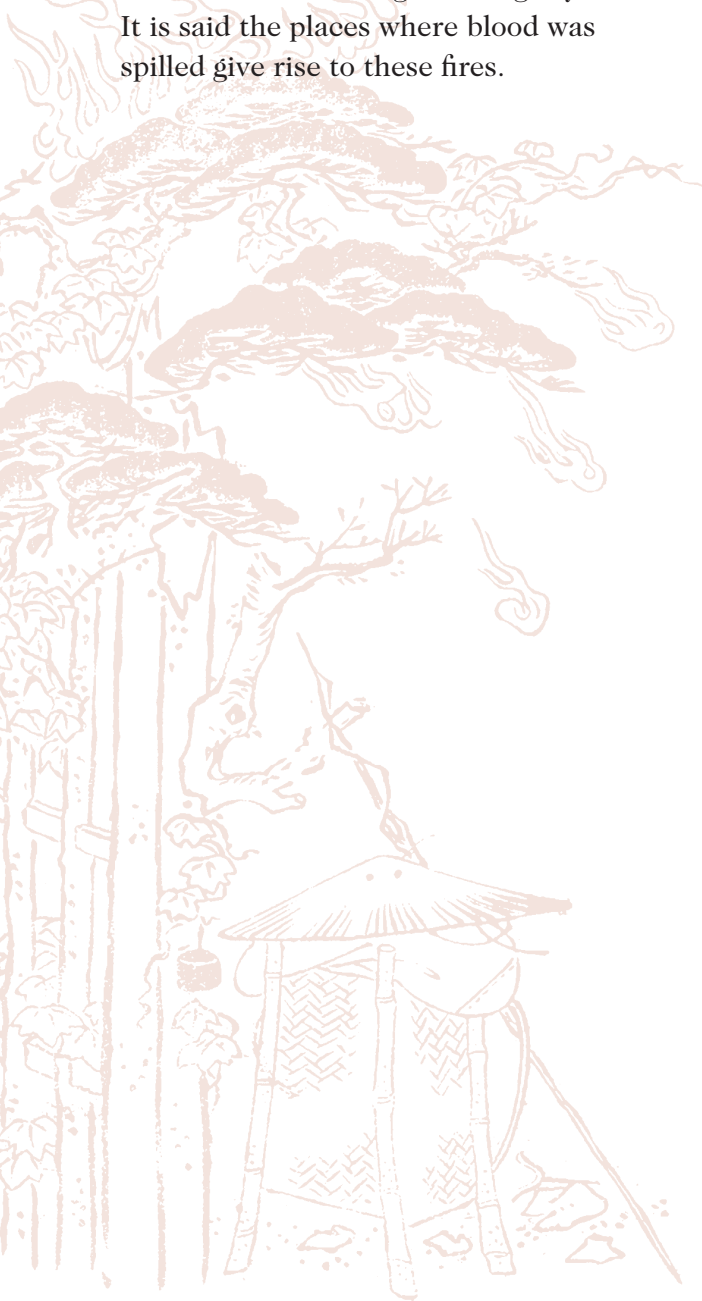
12th emperor, there is very little verifiable historical information about him. The 8th century *Nihon Shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*) describes his traveling to Kyushu by boat to quell an uprising of local tribes, with his navigator using strange lights to guide them to land. The man sitting in the boat, dressed in white with his face discretely covered, is the Emperor.

古戦場火

Kosenjō-no-hi

(OLD BATTLEGROUND-FIRE)

Phosphorescent lights may appear over desolate prairies upon which thousands died for a general's glory. It is said the places where blood was spilled give rise to these fires.



The traditional backpack, conical straw hat, and fishing rod at bottom center illustrate that this is a time of peace, not war. The pines (*matsu*) framing the image may be intended to evoke the Matsudaira, the family line of the Tokugawa shoguns. Certainly a great deal of blood was spilled as Tokugawa Ieyasu vied for power during the Era of Warring States.

青鷺火

Aosagi-no-hi

(HERON-FIRE)

The wings of aged grey herons always glow when they take flight at night. Their eyes shine and their beaks are fiercely sharp.



The Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms includes discussion of a similar glowing phenomenon in its entry on night herons, which it declares to be “mysterious.”

Intriguingly, there are occasional reports of glowing herons in Western literature as well, such as this one by the British botanist George Simonds Boulger in 1908: “I have never seen a heron luminous, though I have been told about it by gamekeepers,

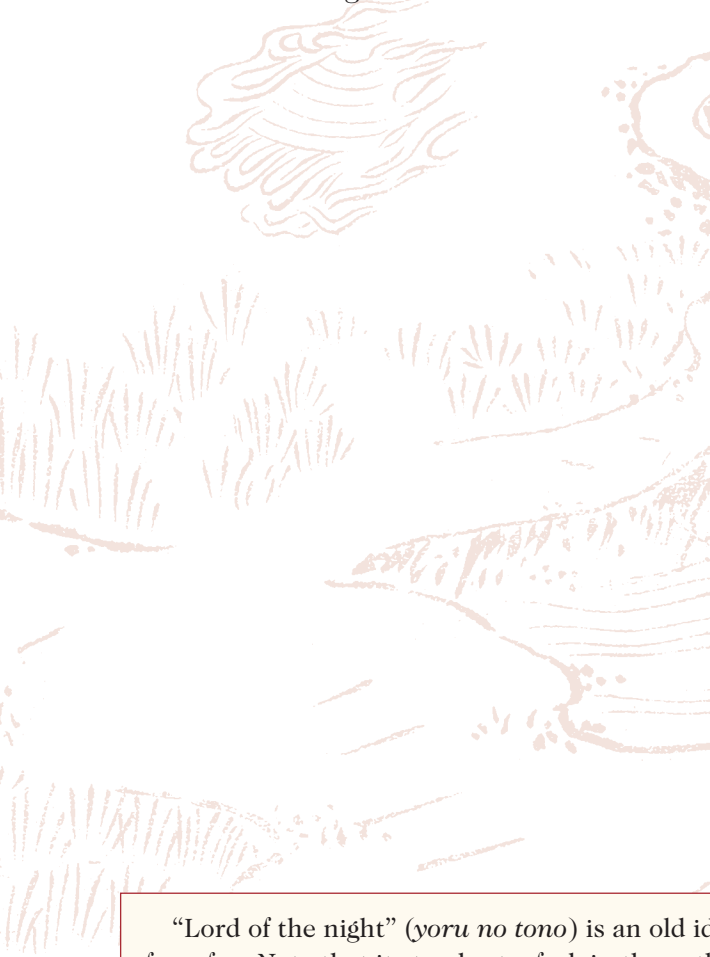
poachers, and others who have seen it.” Meanwhile, Allan D. Cruickshank’s 1977 *Photographs of Birds of America* notes that “an amazing superstition persisted for years that a night-heron could throw out a light from its breast with which to attract prey,” dismissing it as the “glow of irritated plankton-forms in the water or a very fertile imagination.”

提灯火

Chōchin-bi

(LANTERN-FIRE)

In the countryside, fires are occasionally sighted on the footpaths between rice fields. They may be the lanterns carried by the underlings of a lord of the night.



“Lord of the night” (*yoru no tononari*) is an old idiom for a fox. Note that it stands at a fork in the path. The places where roads branch or meet have a certain mystical significance in popular belief, as seen in *tsuji-ura* (crossroad divination), which involved standing at a crossroads at twilight and interpreting overheard snippets of conversation from passer-by. Another example can be seen in the Buddhist concept of *Rokudō-no-tsuji*, the Crossroads of the Six

Realms, where the souls of the dead must pass on their way to reincarnation.

The object at left appears to be a scarecrow. The straw coat and rain-hat, both symbols of travelers, evoke the concept of *marebito*, “strange outsiders” whose sudden appearances can herald unusual, auspicious, or ominous events. See also *Mino-Waraji*, p. 282.

墓の火

Haka-no-hi

(GRAVE-FIRE)

That which has passed grows more distant, while that happening now grows closer day by day. An old burial mound is eventually plowed into rice fields and its pine tree markers even felled for kindling, but should its *gorin* hold its shape and be observed wreathed in yin-flame, you might call it a sign of the tenacity of the human soul.



The opening line echoes the opening lines of a famed Chinese poem: *The dead grow distant as the days go by; living people grow closer day by day.* In Sekien's era, it was well enough known that the first half was used as an idiom for the concept of "out of sight, out of mind."

A *gorin*, more properly *gorintō*, is the distinctive

five-storied stone pagoda seen in Japanese graveyards. Each level is associated with a different element: from the ground up, they are earth, water, fire, air and nothingness. The one in Sekien's illustration is so old that the ornaments representing the last two elements have fallen away.

火消婆

Hikeshi-baba

(FIRE-EXTINGUISHING HAG)

Fire is the yang to the uncanny's yin.
In blackest night, when yin must
overcome yang, the Hikeshi-baba
must be there.



The “blackest” in “blackest night” (*ubadama no yoru*) is a poetic epithet written with the characters for “raven’s wing.”

The text may be an allusion to the ancient Daoist work *Taiping Jing* (*Scriptures of Great Peace*), which states that “when yin overcomes yang, it means that ghosts and spirits will cause harm.”

The lanterns are of the sort used in the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter.

油赤子

Abura-akago

(OIL-BABY)

In the town of Hacchō of the city of Ōtsu of Ōmi Province, balls of fire are known to fly through the air. Locals say: “Once there was an oil-seller in Shiga. He would steal oil left as offerings for the *jizō* statue at the crossroads to Ōtsu. When he died, he became a spirit-fire that wanders to this day.” Perhaps a baby that licks oil from a lantern is his reincarnation.



In Sekien's era, fish-based oils such as sardine oil were generally used for lighting purposes. The fluffy comforter and elegant folding screen indicate that this is the home of a family wealthy enough to keep their child well fed, making it all the weirder that he would want to lick lamp oil.

The story is quoted from the 1743 anthology *Shokoku Rijindan* (*Stories of Common Folk*), which

contains a story called “The Oil-Stealer's Fire.” *Jizō* is the Buddhist guardian deity for children, and stone effigies can be found throughout Japan's cities and countryside even today.

The theft is amplified by happening at a crossroads, which often have otherworldly associations in Japanese folklore.

片輪車

Katawa-guruma

(SINGLE-WHEEL)

On a road in the Kōka district of Ōmi province it is said that the sound of a cart's wheels could be heard nightly. One day a local cracked open her door to see it. As she watched, her baby went missing from the bedroom. Desperately, she cried:

Your destination

*he knows not; please don't hide my
precious tot; the crime
is mine for daring to see;
give my child back to me!*

That night, a woman's voice called from the darkness: "You are admirable. I shall return your child," and tossed the infant back. From that night forth, none would dare set eyes on the Katawa-guruma ever again.



The mother's lament is presented in the form of a traditional *waka* poem, with a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable structure.

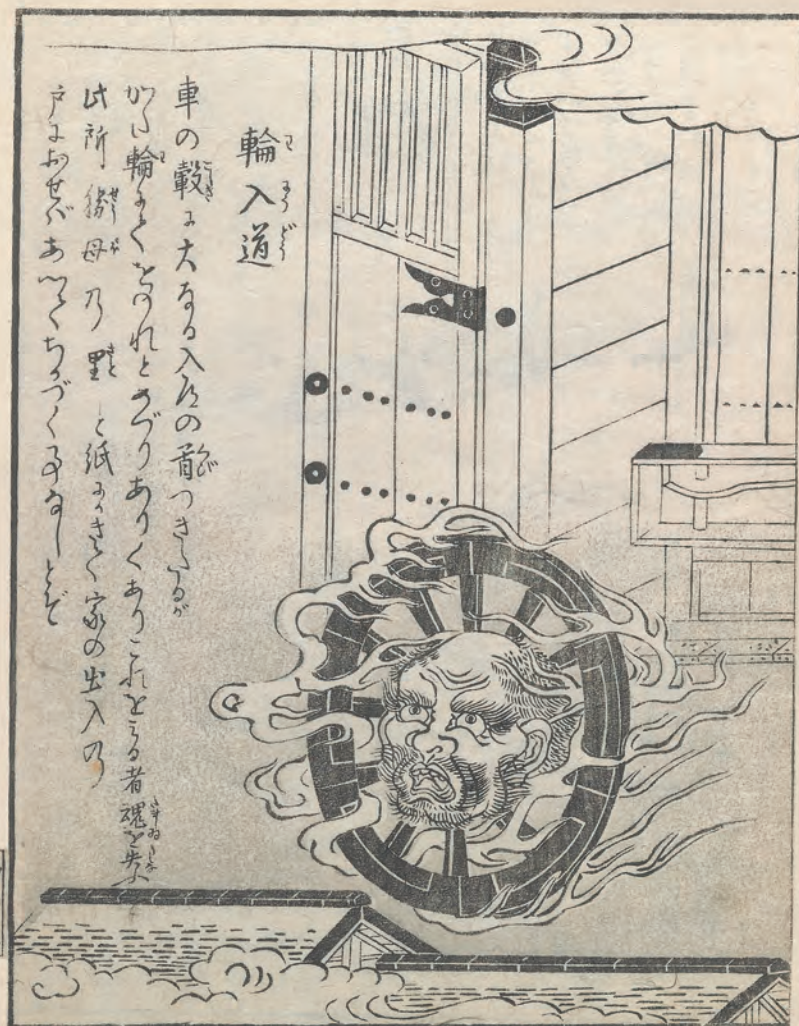
Just as with the previous entry, Sekien quotes the story and poem from the 1743 *Shokoku Rijindan* (*Stories of Common Folk*).

輪入道

Wanyūdō

(WHEEL-MONK)

A cart wheel with a huge monk's face for a hub. It rolls all about under its own power. Any who gaze upon it shall forfeit their soul. Posting a paper talisman inscribed with the words *kono-tokoro-shōbo-no-sato* on your door will keep it away.



Kono-tokoro-shōbo-no-sato means “this is the town of Shōbo.” Sekien references a Chinese parable in which one of Confucius’ disciples refuses to set foot into Shōbo because its name is written with characters that can be interpreted as “victory over one’s mother.”

Traditional Japanese art often uses stylized clouds to delineate different settings or the passage of time,

in much the same way that modern cartoonists use panels. Note that Wanyūdō is both flying over a roof yet next to a wall—the presence of the clouds at top and bottom indicates that these are different locations, emphasizing the rolling “all about” the ground and sky.

陰摩羅鬼

Onmoraki

(SHADOW-DEMON)

In the Buddhist canon, it is said that the soul of a freshly dead corpse can sometimes transform into an Onmoraki. According to the Chinese chronicle *Qing Zun Lu*, it is like a crane, with a black body and eyes that glow like lanterns; when it flaps its wings, it emits a startling cry.



The *Qing Zun Lu* is known as the *Seisonroku* in Japanese. The story involves a man named Sai Shifuku who dozes off in a countryside temple's lecture-hall and is awakened by this strange beast, which chases him down a hall but disappears when Sai looks back over his shoulder. The local monks blame it on a body they have been storing there.

When Sai returned to the capital, he reported the incident to a Shramana monk at Kaihō temple. He replied, "It is written in the Tripitaka that the soul of a newly deceased corpse will transform into something much like this. It is called the Onmoraki."

皿かぞへ

Sara-kazoe

(PLATE-COUNTER)

It is said that the maidservant of a certain household was killed for the mistake of dropping one of her master's ten plates into a well. Thereafter her soul appeared beside the well night after night, counting the number of plates from one to nine, and then, without saying ten, starting to wail. This old well can be found in Banshū province.



Banshū province is also known as Harima province. The tale of Okiku, the Plate-Counting Ghost, is one of Japan's most well-known and influential ghost stories. Several variations exist; this Harima-regional version of the story is set in Himeji Castle. In the story, Okiku rebuffs the advances of a high-ranking samurai who hides one of a set of priceless plates and blames Okiku for the loss in an attempt to blackmail her. When this too fails, he kills her and throws her body down a well in an attempt to conceal his crime, but her spirit's reappearance seals his fate.

人魂

Hitodama

(HUMAN SOUL)

Flesh and bone return to earth, but the spirit can go anywhere. Those who see Hitodama should immediately perform the invigoration rite by knotting the hem of their kimono.

Hitodama are some of the most common spooks in Japanese folklore, taking the form of weird, floating orbs or fireballs that are believed to represent souls of the dead. Sekien's first sentence paraphrases a sentiment from the Tangong chapter of the Chinese *Book of Rites*, one of the Five Classics of Chinese literature. The "invigoration rite," (*shōgon-no-hō*), is from *Onmyōdō* (esoteric astrology). It is performed to reinforce the subject's life-force.

The act of binding the kimono hem is an ancient charm to make sure one's spirit remains in one's body in the presence of the supernatural. The earliest literary mention comes in the *The Tale of Genji* (ca. 1008) when the free-roaming soul of Lady Rokujō speaks through the dying body of Lady Aoi: "Bind the hem of my robe, to keep it within, the grieving soul that has wandered through the skies." However, this is by no means the origin of what was already a long-standing folk tradition.

The Heian poetry anthology *Fukuro-sōshi* (ca.



1159) expands with more detail. Its formula involves reading a certain poem three times, then knotting the corner of the lower inside hem of your kimono (left for men, right for women) for three days. (Note that in all cases "binding" means only tying a knot in the single corner of the folded-under half of the kimono—you wouldn't be able to walk otherwise!) For those so inclined, the poem reads: *tama wa mitsu / nushi wa dare tomo shiranedomo / musubi todomeyo / shita gai no tsuma* (If you see a soul / drifting free of its owner / then knot up your hem).

舟幽霊

Funa-yūrei (BOAT PHANTOMS)

In the Western and Northern provinces, it is said that on days when winds whip the ocean into high waves, hordes of human forms appear and scoop water with bottomless ladles. These are called Funa-yūrei. Their boats have lost their rudders, leaving their aimless souls to wander the seas.



Although “yūrei” is generally used to refer to the souls of dead people—and Sekien’s subtle, ethereal portrayal of a boat of mariners adrift is certainly ghostly—Funa-yūrei seems to represent the concept of hardship at sea rather than any one specific individual or group, and as such are generally grouped with yokai.

Note the ladles being hoisted by the phantom sailors. According to legend, Funa-yūrei pull alongside boats and demand ladles. Then they furiously bail water into the hapless vessel, sinking it and its crew. For this reason, sailors in times of old sometimes carried a ladle without a bottom as a good luck charm when they set out to sea.

川赤子

Kawa-akago

(RIVER-BABY)

Occasionally the reeds in mountain streams are found to resemble human babies. Thus they are called Kawa-akago. Perhaps they are related to Kawatarō and Kawa-warawa.



Water, flowing or otherwise, is something of a loaded word as concerning children in Japanese; aborted fetuses are *mizuko* (water babies) and miscarriages *ryūzan* (washed-away-births), making this entry highly evocative of children lost before or as they were born.

Kawatarō and Kawa-warawa are regional names for the yokai popularly called Kappa (p. 16).

古山茶の霊

Furutsubaki-no-rei (SPIRITS OF OLD CAMELLIAS)

The spirits that dwell in old camellia trees sometimes take form and trick humans. Old trees do many strange things.



Note that “spirit” in this case is closer in meaning to what might be termed a “fairy” or “sprite” abroad, not a human soul. Lafcadio Hearn dubbed the phenomenon “goblin-trees,” and explained the connection between camellias and the supernatural thusly: “To old Japanese fancy, the falling of these heavy red flowers was like the falling of human heads under the sword; and the dull sound of their dropping was said to be like the thud made by a severed head striking the ground.”

On the other hand, the folk story of the *Yaobikuni*, or Eight Hundred Year Nun, frames the flower as a symbol of longevity. A woman consumes the meat of a strange fish with a human face, is cursed with immortality, and finds herself doomed to wander the land with a camellia in hand.

Those able to read Japanese will note that Sekien does not use the standard character for camellia here. Instead, he writes it with the Chinese name for the species and annotates it with the Japanese reading. In ancient writings, far before Sekien’s day, there were a great many cases of domestic flora being described using Chinese words. Sekien may have chosen to render *Furutsubaki-no-rei*’s name in this way as both wordplay (similar to that seen in the following entry) and as an homage to old texts.

加牟波理入道

Ganbari-nyūdō

(STRIVING-MONK)

It is a common custom on New Year's Eve to chant *Ganbari-nyūdō-hototogisu* [Striving-monk-cuckoo] in the toilet to prevent this yokai from appearing. In China there is a deity of the toilet called *Kakutō*. Also known as the *Yūtenhiki-daisatsu Shōgun* [Flying-Killer-General], it has the power to grant fortune and misfortune to people. Perhaps the association came about because *Kakutō* and *kakkō* [cuckoo] are basically the same.



This entry proved a real head-scratcher until we realized that *hototogisu* is the Japanese word for a “lesser cuckoo,” while the *kakkō* is the word for a “common cuckoo,” and as Sekien mentions in the last sentence, the latter shares the first Chinese character with the name of China’s toilet-god, *Kakutō*. Another twist not evident in English translation is that while the chant is pronounced *Ganbari-nyūdō-hototogisu*—“lesser cuckoo”—it’s actually written with the character for “common

cuckoo.” All of this is based on an archaic superstition of Chinese origin that misfortune will befall any who hear a cuckoo cry while using the toilet. (Specifically, according to the 10th century Chinese *Taiping Guanji*, the victim will vomit blood and die).

By the way, note that “toilet” here refers to the room in which the toilet is located, not the toilet bowl itself.

雨降小僧 Amefuri-kozō (RAIN-CHILD)

The god of rain is known as Ushi. The Amefuri-kozō must be the houseboy of Ushi.



Ushi is written with characters meaning “lord of rain.”

In 1792, Utagawa Toyokuni, pupil of Sekien’s disciple Utagawa Toyoharu, penned the art for an illustrated *kibyōshi* pamphlet focusing on this yokai. Called *Gozonji no Bakemono* (*Monsters You Know*), it’s a prime example of how Sekien’s tastes filtered down through his network of students.



日和坊

Hiyori-bō

(SUN-MONK)

Found deep in the mountains of Changzhou. Said that it cannot be seen in times of rainy weather, but appears once the weather clears. When ladies and girls make *teru-teru hōshi* out of paper to pray for sunshine, they venerate this spirit.



Teru-teru hōshi (or *teru-teru bōzu* in modern parlance – literally, “Sunshine monks”) are made from squares of thin paper that are bunched in the middle and tied off to make heads. Their appearance is similar to tissue paper “ghosts” in the West. In Japan, they are associated with wishes for clear weather. (*Teru-teru* is onomatopoeia for the sun shining in Japanese.)

青女房

Ao-nyōbō

(BLUE LADY-IN-WAITING)

A yokai lady-in-waiting in an old palace; with her unshorn eyebrows and overly-blackened teeth, she slinks around watching the more cultivated.



In times of old, it was customary for women to blacken their teeth as part of their makeup. Called *o-haguro* ("tooth-blackening"), the Japanese government banned the practice in 1870 as part of a modernization initiative. Here she has piled on too much, and also failed to pluck out and repaint her eyebrows, as would have been standard practice for a demure lady of the era.

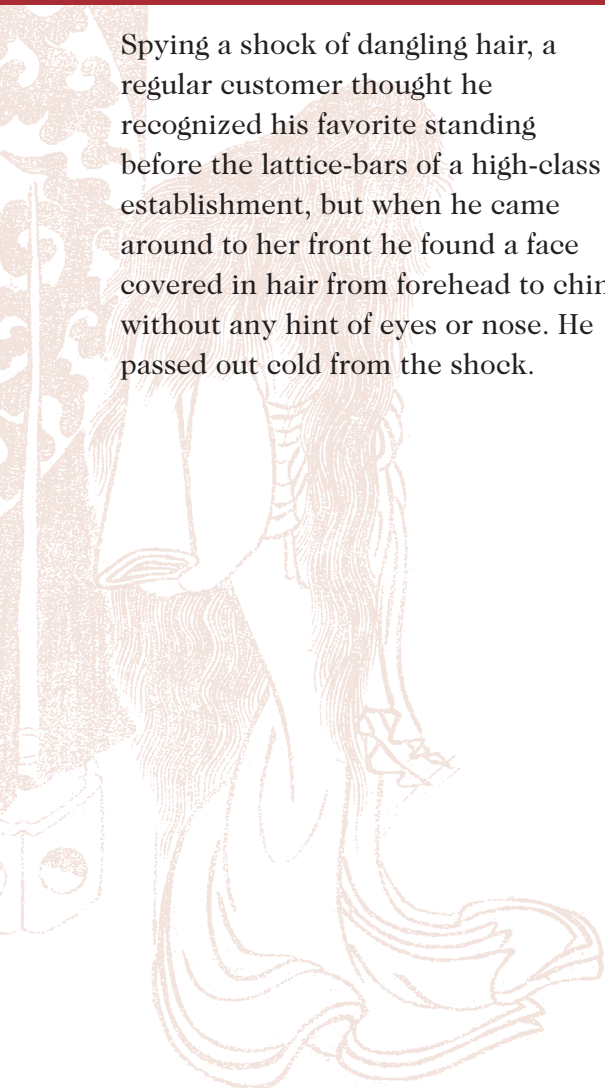
"Blue" here is used in the sense Westerners call someone who is inexperienced "green," and in fact, *ao-nyōbō* was a derogatory term for young and inexperienced ladies of the court. Sekien undoubtedly created this creature as a caricature of the concept.

毛倡妓

Kejōrō

(HAIRY HARLOT)

Spying a shock of dangling hair, a regular customer thought he recognized his favorite standing before the lattice-bars of a high-class establishment, but when he came around to her front he found a face covered in hair from forehead to chin, without any hint of eyes or nose. He passed out cold from the shock.



Shades of “Cousin Itt” from the Addams Family. The illustration appears to be set in Edo’s licensed brothel district of Yoshiwara. The women were traditionally displayed behind wooden lattices whose positioning and widths differed depending on the class of the house. The highest class brothels had lattice bars that reached to the ceiling, as seen in Sekien’s drawing. (Were it color, they would be shown as being red). The round object leaning

against the wall at bottom right is the handle for a paper lantern carried by an attendant to herald the arrival of a top-ranked *oiran* courtesan.

Passage 9 of the Buddhist monk Yoshida Kenkō’s 1331 *Tsurezure-gusa* (*Tales of Idleness*) begins: “It is the lovely hair of a woman that first attracts a man’s eye,” and muses that “with a cord made of twisted woman’s hair even an elephant can be tethered.”

骨女

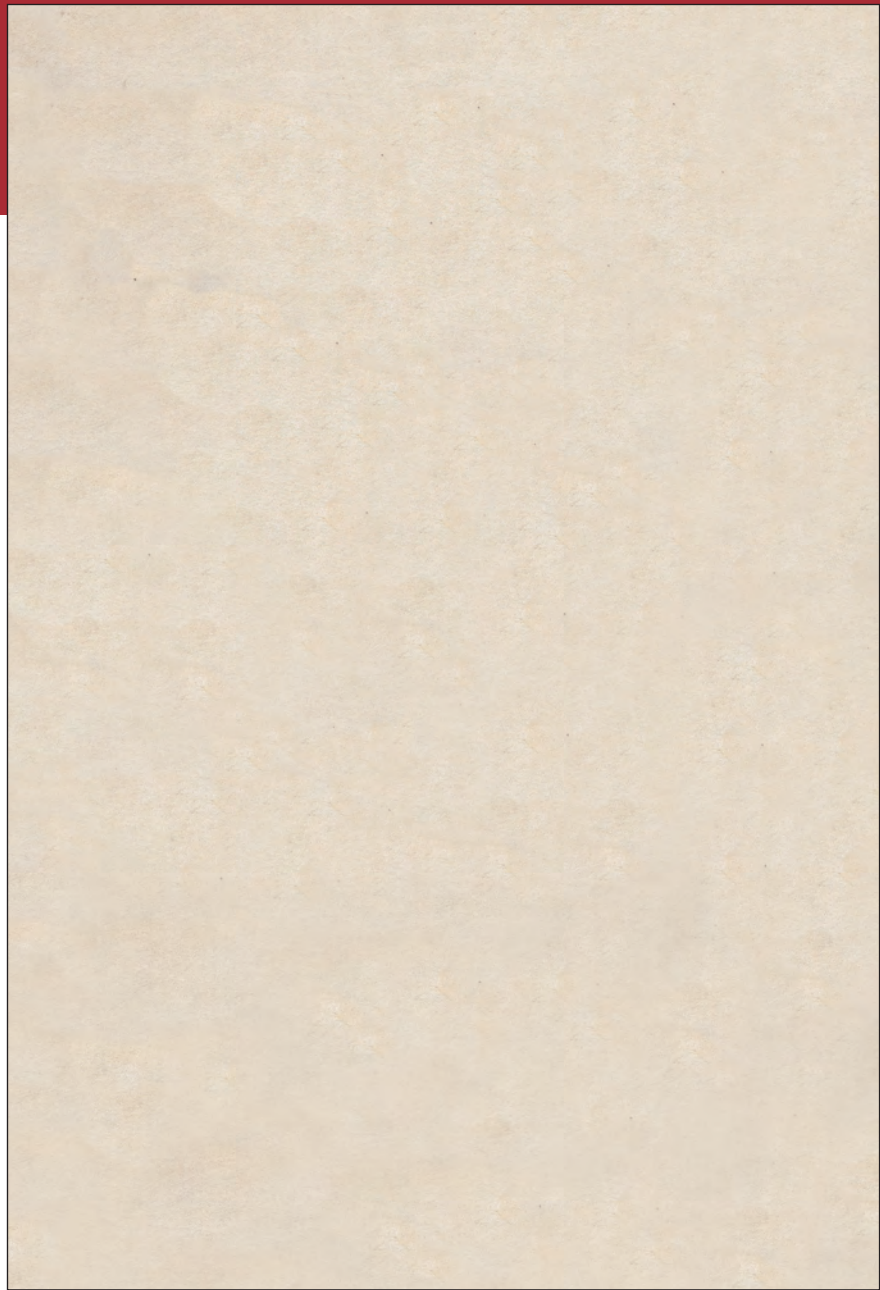
Hone-onna (BONE-WOMAN)

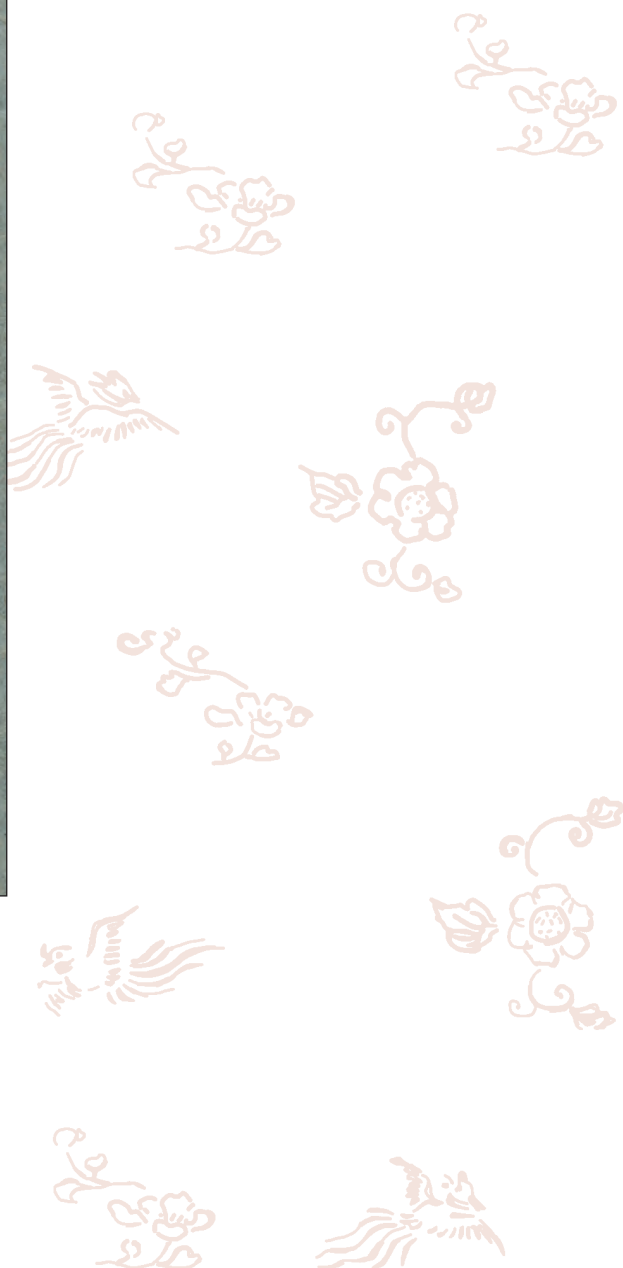
As seen in *Hand Puppet Tales*, an aged woman's skeleton returns bearing a peony lantern to seduce a man. *The Peony Lantern* is based on a story from *New Tales Told by Candle-Light*.



This is Sekien's take on the famed tale of *Botan Dōrō* (*The Peony Lantern*), in which the ghost of a woman seduces an unwitting man with fatal results. It first appeared in Japan via Asai Ryōi's deeply influential 1666 book *Otogi Bōko* (*Hand Puppet Tales*), a series of ghost stories "localized" from Chinese texts such as the 1378 classic *Jiandeng Xinhua* (*New Tales Told by Candle-Light*).

In combination with the lilies at the bottom right, the scene also evokes a popular proverb: *tateba shakuyaku, suwareba botan, aruku sugata wa yuri no hana*; "she stands like a Chinese peony, sits like a Japanese peony, and walks like a lily"—an idiom for someone who is a great beauty. As an added bonus, the specific lilies Sekien portrays here are tiger lilies, which are known in Japan as *oni-yuri* (demon lilies) for their striking size and color.

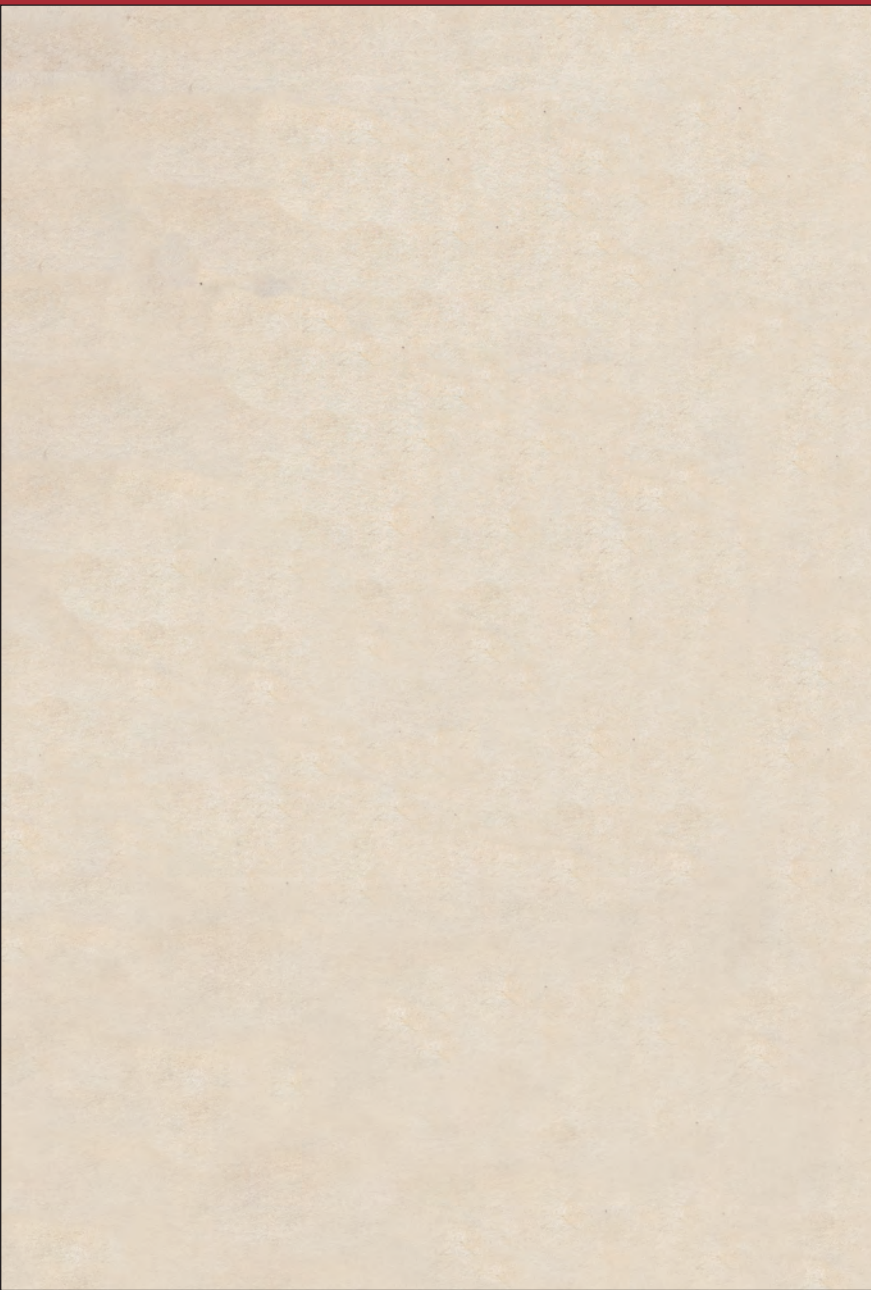




今昔畫図続百鬼 明 下 Konjaku Zoku Hyakki (Mei) (Ge)

The Illustrated Demon
Horde from Past and Present,
Continued (Light) Volume 3





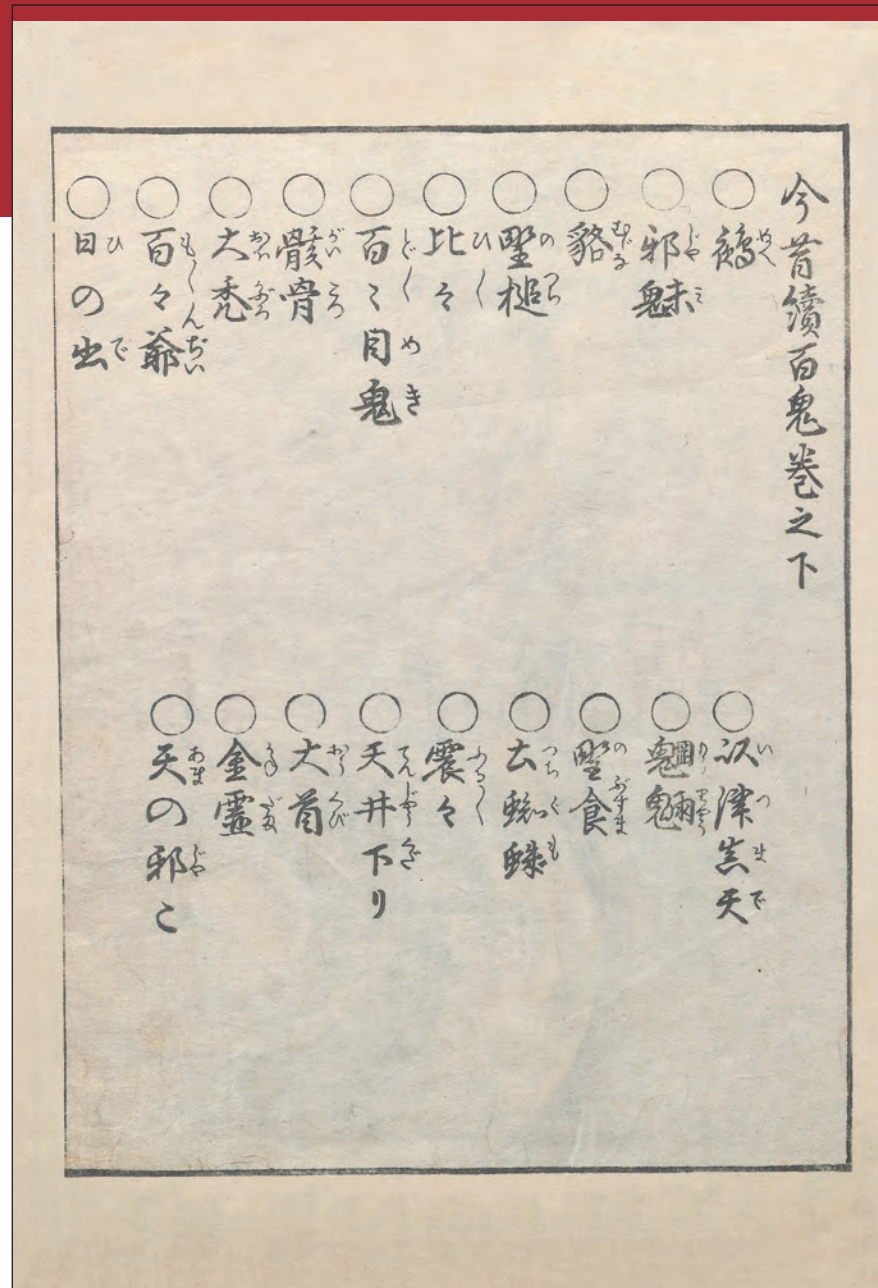
今昔續百鬼卷之下

Konjaku Zoku

Hyakki Maki-no-Ge

The Demon Horde from Past and Present, Continued: Volume 3

Nue
Itsumade
Jami
Mōryō
Mujina
Nobusuma
Nozuchi
Tsuchi-gumo
Hihi
Buru-buru
Dodomeki
Tenjō-kudari
Gaikotsu
Ōkubi
Ōkaburo
Kanedama
Momonjii
Ama-no-jako
Hinode

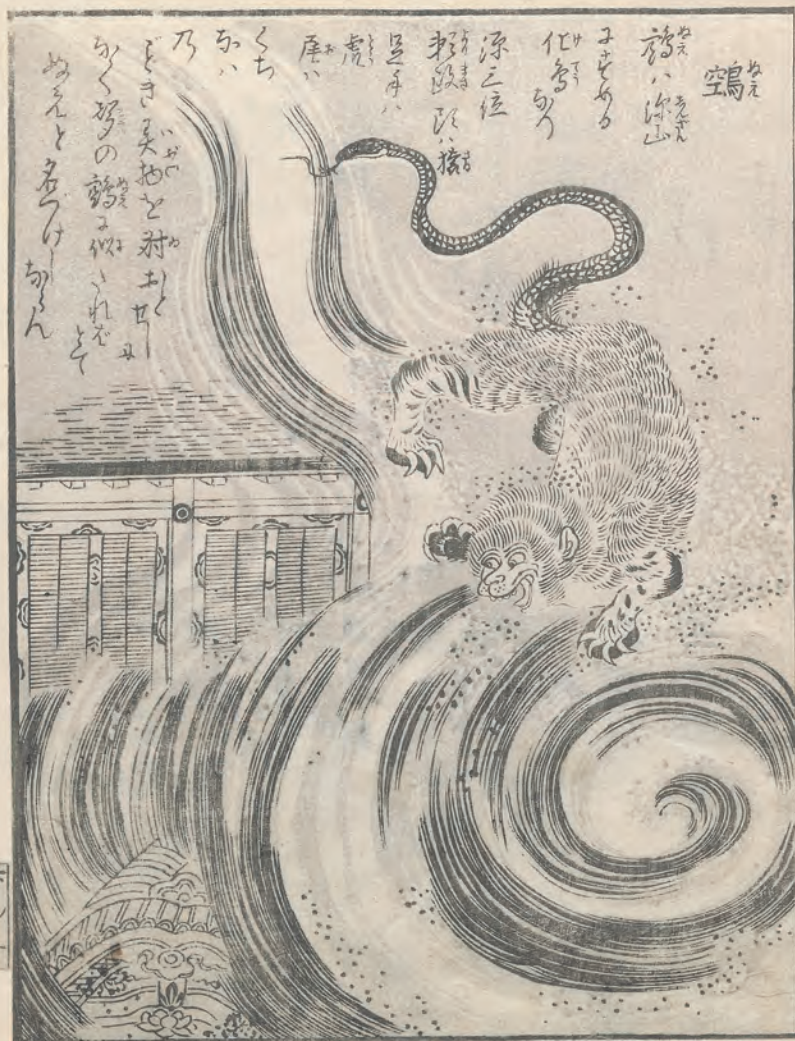


Note that the title of the book used in the Table of Contents differs slightly from that used on the cover of the book itself.

鵄

Nue (NUE)

Nue is a bird-beast that lives deep in the mountains. Genzanmi Yorimasa's arrow felled a strange creature with the head of monkey, limbs of a tiger, and a tail that resembled a viper, and it was so named because its cry resembled that of the *nue* thrush.



The epic history *Tale of the Heike* and other manuscripts describe Genzanmi, also known as Minamoto-no-Yorimasa (1104–1180), slaying the Nue with a well-placed arrow shot. Intriguingly given its description as a “bird-beast” and being named after a real bird, this chimaeric hybrid doesn’t seem to actually contain any avian components.

The emperor rewarded Yorimasa with a sword for his efforts. Named *Shishiō* (“King of Lions”), it survives to this day, and remains on permanent display at the Tokyo National Museum.

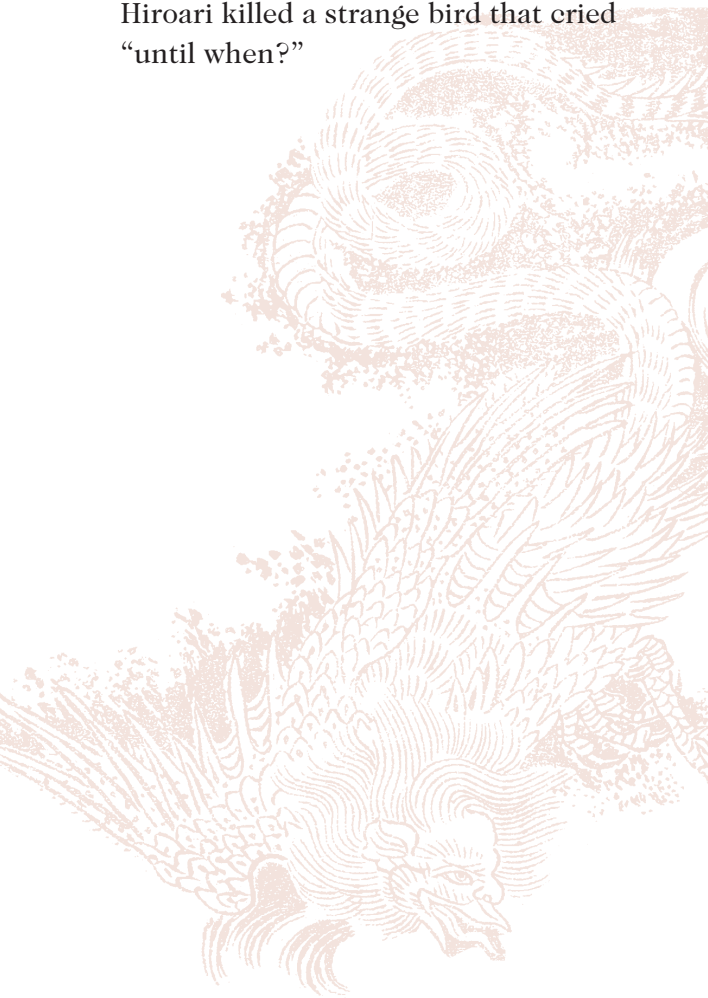


以津真天

Itsumade

(ITSUMADE)

In the *Taiheiki* it is written that Hiroari killed a strange bird that cried “until when?”



Though written with different characters, the name *Itsumade* sounds like “until when?” in Japanese.

The *Taiheiki* is a fictionalized historical saga written in the 14th century. The chapter in question’s title is actually “Hiroari Shoots a Strange Bird.” The dragon-like creature isn’t explicitly named in its pages. Its appearance preceded an epidemic, and it was described as having “the head of a man, and the body as that of a snake. The bill was crooked

in front, with saw teeth, and there were long spurs on the legs, sharp as swords. It exhaled fire and lightning, and had a wingspan extending “1 *jō* and 6 *shaku*” (4.8 meters).

It was hiding in the clouds when the archer Hiroari felled it with a single arrow, aimed only by listening for the creature. Neither the *Taiheiki* nor Sekien explain the meaning of the bird’s cry. Perhaps it is intended to evoke the desperation at wanting an epidemic to stop.

邪魅

Jami

(EVIL SPIRIT)

The Jami is a type of Chimi. It is an ominous manifestation of uncanny malevolence.



Chimi is difficult to translate succinctly on its own; it is more commonly seen as the first half of the idiom *chimi-mōryō*, meaning all the supernatural creatures found in mountains and rivers. (It's no coincidence that Sekien has placed the yokai "Mōryō" on the opposing page.) The ca. 938 *Wamyō Ruijushō* (*Japanese Names for Things, Annotated*) describes it as originating in the 4th century BC Chinese *Classic of Mountains and Seas* and defines it as "a form of mountain oni" (see p. 88).

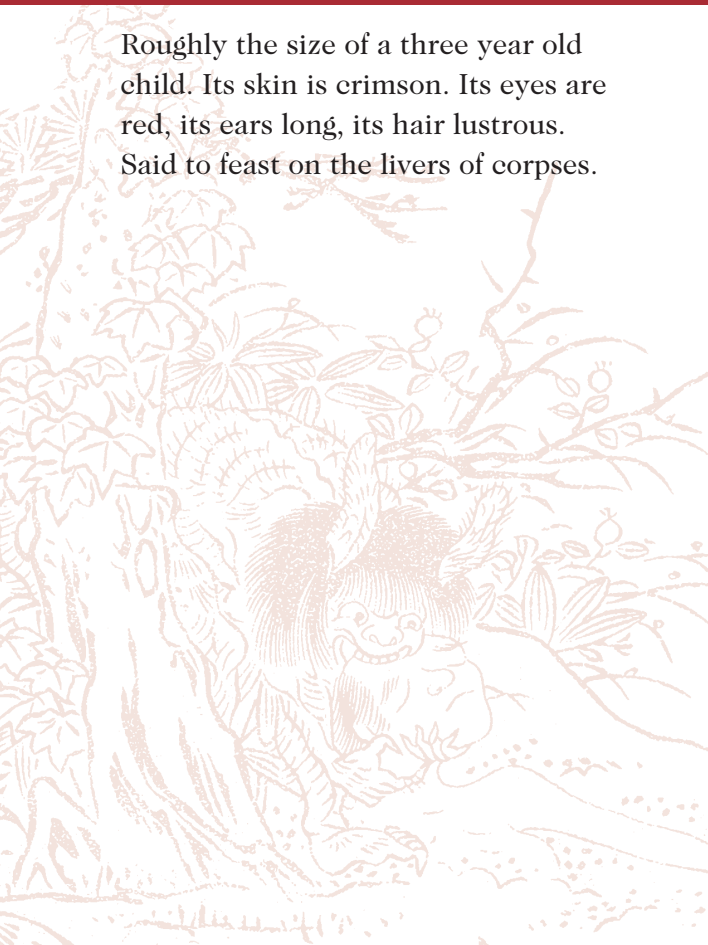
Theories and lay scholarship abound as to if this constitutes a Chinese origin for the creature, none making a truly airtight case. One intriguing addendum: the name sounds suspiciously similar to a verb, *jamiru*, that describes something going wrong mid-way through. It is archaic usage today, but was widely used during the Edo period when Sekien penned his books.

魍魎

Mōryō

(MORYŌ)

Roughly the size of a three year old child. Its skin is crimson. Its eyes are red, its ears long, its hair lustrous. Said to feast on the livers of corpses.



As discussed in the previous entry, the name of this yokai is actually taken from the last two characters of the idiom *chimi-mōryō*. It's something of a wild card, with different sources claiming wildly different origins and backstories and even spellings of its name. Here Sekien quotes the descriptive detail from *Wakan Sansaizue* (*Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*), which describes Mōryō as a “water god” (contrasting it to Chimi, which is a “mountain god.”) Then again, the 1689 *Kishin Shūsetsu* (*Explanations of Ghosts and Spirits*) describes it as a phantom of the mountains, while a Chinese source calls it one that appears



among “trees and rocks.” What can we say? Yokai classification is not an exact science.

Note that although Sekien clearly specifies that Mōryō eats livers, it actually appears to be consuming the corpse’s brain. In the Edo era, human livers, genitals, and brains were used as the basis for a certain medicine believed useful for treating chronic illness. The material was only supposed to be harvested from executed criminals... Theoretically speaking.

貉

Mujina (BADGER)

Its ability to shapeshift is on par with that of the fox or tanuki. At a rustic little temple, an aged Mujina transformed itself into the form of a monk, and even performed the devotions at six every morning, but was discovered one day when he fell asleep after a meal and his tail flopped out.



In modern times the mujina is often mentioned together with the faceless humanoid yokai called *Nopperabō*, as folklorist Lafcadio Hearn used “Mujina” as the title for his telling of a story about the faceless ones in his 1904 *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things*.

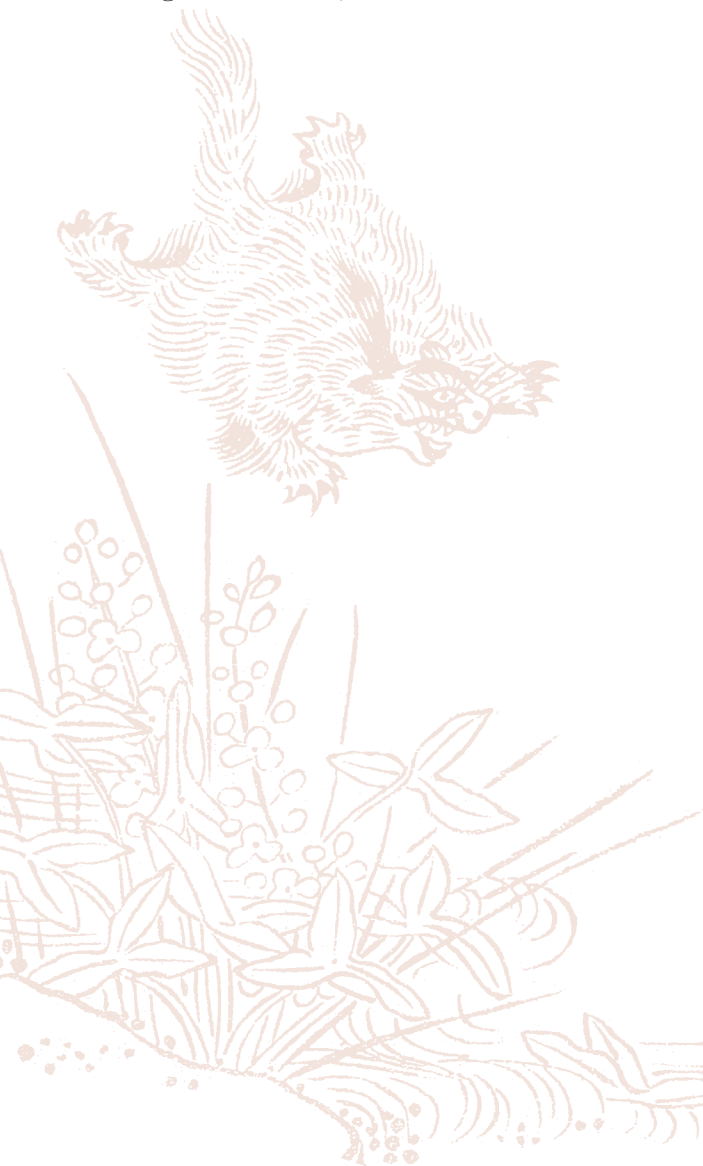
The Chronicles of Japan contains a short but amusing mention of a Mujina taking human form to sing a song for the Empress Suiko. It explains that the incident took place in Mutsu province in the spring of the 35th year of her reign (which would correspond to roughly 627 AD).

野衾

Nobusuma

(NOBUSUMA)

The Nobusuma is essentially a flying squirrel. Its shape resembles a bat, covered in fur and with webbed wings. Its four limbs are short and its claws long. It eats nuts, and also fire.



Written with the characters for “wild” and “bedding,” apparently because it resembles a blanket when in flight.

This description seems almost scientific until the swerve at the end. This is a yokai version of the *musasabi*, the Japanese giant flying squirrel. The fire being eaten presumably refers to the torches carried for illuminating one’s path, leaving a hapless traveller in pitch darkness.

野槌

Nozuchi

(FIELD-HAMMER)

The Nozuchi is a spirit of flora and greenery. The Nozuchi described in *Sand and Pebbles* has neither nose nor eyes.



The book referred to is a 1283 collection of Buddhist parables called *Shasekishū* (*Sand and Pebbles*). The section in question has an excellent description of the creature: “its body is large, and they say it has neither hands, nose, eyes, nor feet. They say it has only a mouth, and that it feeds on human beings. The monk who died had studied Buddhism for the sake of honor and profit... His mouth was clever, but he did not have the eyes of wisdom, the hands of faith, nor the legs of righteous behavior. And so he was reborn as this fearsome thing.”

土蜘蛛

Tsuchigumo

(GROUNDSPIDER)

Even women and children know of Minamoto no Yorimitsu stalking and killing the Tsuchigumo.



A great deal of classic art deals with Imperial expeditions to rout these creatures out of their nests in far-flung provinces. A classic example, the illustrated *Tsuchigumo no Sōshi Emaki* scroll, unrolls like a 13th century action movie; the Tokyo National Museum has thoughtfully digitized and posted its copy online in all its glory.

The 1781 kabuki play *Kumo no Hyōshimai* (*Dance of the Spider-Woman*) recasts the tale with a sexy twist; Yorimitsu encounters a beautiful woman in the creature's lair, only to realize the

shadow she casts is of a spider.

In interpreting these sorts of works, it helps to know that while Tsuchigumo was already synonymous with monster insects or arachnids in Sekien's era, it was originally an epithet used to describe tribes that refused to submit to Imperial authority. Although portrayed as barbarians and monsters by those in power, in reality they were undoubtedly more like political refugees or those who simply preferred their own ways of life.

比々 Hihi (HIHI)

Hihi is a beast that lives in the mountains. It preys on fierce animals in the way hawks prey on smaller birds.



Seen here killing a wild boar, the Hihi shares its pronunciation (but not its kanji-characters) with the Japanese word for “baboon.”

百々目鬼

Dodomeki

(HUNDRED-EYED DEMON)

According to the *Kankan-gaishi*, “a woman born with long arms always stole people’s money. A hundred birds’ eyes sprouted on her arm: the spirit of the money. She was thus named Dodomeki: the Hundred-eyed Demon.” *Gaishi* refers to realms beyond Hakone. It is said a neighborhood in the Eastern capital is named after her.



The *Kankan-gaishi* has never been confirmed to exist. It may be an invention of Sekien's, a theory supported by the fact that this entry is the first known appearance of this particular yokai in Japanese folklore.

Bird's eye—*chōmoku*—was slang for money in Sekien's era, as copper coins were minted with a hole in their centers.

Hakone is a pleasant hot-spring town located in the mountains about an hour and a half from Tokyo by modern transport. In times of old, smug Edoites

would run down other cities by saying *yabo to bake-mono ha Hakone kara saki* (“it's all bumpkins and monsters beyond Hakone.”)

Sekien may have been inspired by the exploits of the 10th century warrior Fujiwara no Hidesato, a fabled slayer of monsters. These included Hundred-legs, a giant centipede, and *Dōmeki*, a demon with a hundred eyes on each arm. (Hongan-ji Temple in Utsunomiya claims to have several of his fangs in their collection; they open them to public viewing every ten years.)

震々

Buru-buru

(SHIVERS)

Buru-buru is also known as Zozo-gami or the God of Cowardice. When a person feels fear, their bodies tremble in terror. This is in fact caused by this god grasping their collar.



Zozo resembles the verb *zotto suru*, “creeped out,” so Zozo-gami would be something like “God of the Creeps.” This is an obscure term, but on the other hand, the God of Cowardice (*okubyōgami*) is used as an idiom even in modern Japanese: *okubyōgami ga tsuku*, “possessed by the god of cowardice,” means to turn timid.

The illustration shows Buru-buru emerging from the hole in the ground left by a deliberately uprooted

tree. Buru-buru is onomatopoeia for shaking, shivering, or even quaking as in an earthquake. In fact, the Japanese word for earthquake is written with the kanji for “earth” and the *buru* from Buru-buru. The pun here seems to be that someone digging in the earth unleashed a “quake” in the form of this yokai.

骸骨

Gaikotsu

(SKELETON)

Keiun's *Ode to a Skeleton* says:
 "Look within! What is your heart?
 Ask this even as you see form and
 hear sound."



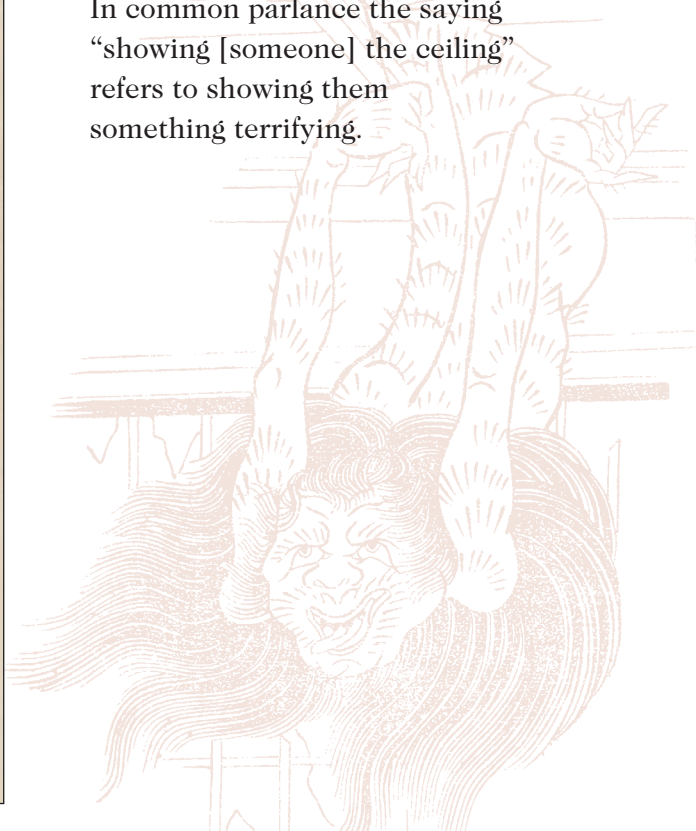
Both the poet and the poem are real. The verse of the Buddhist monk Keiun inspired for centuries after his death in 1369. He is considered one of the "four kings of poetry" of his era. That he is saying these words about a skeleton should give you a hint that it is about the impermanence of the world.

This particular poem was compiled in volume 15 of the thirty-volume *Fusō Shūyō-shū* (*A Collection of Japanese Literature*), published in 1689 and edited by none other than Tokugawa Mitsukuni, better known as Mito Kōmon.

天井下

Tenjō-kudari (CEILING-DROPPER)

In times of old, the Ibaraki-dōji took the form of [Watanabe-no] Tsuna's aunt [to reclaim the arm Tsuna had severed from him], and escaped by breaking through his roof. But this yokai ceiling-dropper is no beauty. In common parlance the saying "showing [someone] the ceiling" refers to showing them something terrifying.



In folklore Ibaraki-dōji is often portrayed as the top servant of Shuten-dōji (see p. 93). The details differ from source to source, but the basic story is as laid out here, with Tsuna severing Ibaraki-dōji's arm and the creature coming back to get it. Sekien's version seems to come from *Zen-Taiheiki* ("Before *Taiheiki*"), a 1681 prequel-after-the-fact to the famed 14th century military chronicle *Taiheki*.

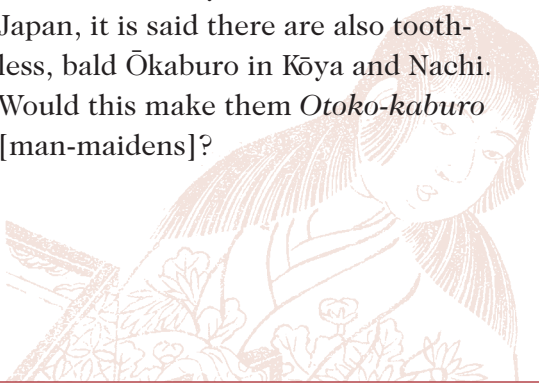
In Sekien's day, the idiom *tenjō wo miseru* ("to show [someone] the ceiling") more broadly meant to to give them a hard time (the implication being they were so knocked off their feet they're staring at the ceiling.) For more about the Ibaraki-dōji and Tsuna, see also the entry for Rajōmon-no-oni, p. 210.

大禿

Ōkaburo

(GREAT KABURO)

According to legend, [the Chinese immortal] *Hōso* is some seven hundred years old and calls himself *Yū-Jidō* [Chrysanthemum Boy]. Could this be what is meant by Ōkaburo? Here in Japan, it is said there are also toothless, bald Ōkaburo in Kōya and Nachi. Would this make them *Otoko-kaburo* [man-maidens]?



Double entendres, social satire, and kanji-wordplay abound in this entry. When the kanji here is pronounced *kaburo* or *kamuro*, it means “child” (taken from a peculiar hair-style where all but the forelocks are shaved; the titular cub of the manga *Lone Wolf and Cub* sports one.) But it can also be pronounced *hage*, meaning “bald,” and implying old men or monks. A popular proverb of the Edo era went, *Kōya rokujū Nachi hachijū* ([The monks of] Kōya do it until sixty and [those of] Nachi until eighty), referring to trysts with young men. In the era, this was simply seen as another form of sexual play rather than a definition of sexual identity.

Hōso, as the Taoist immortal Peng Zu is known in Japanese, achieved his immortality via copious amounts of sex with women. Sekien links this to another well-known legend in which a beautiful young man named *Yū-Jidō* becomes *Kiku Jidō* (“Chrysanthemum Boy”) by drinking the dew of chrysanthemums to achieve eternal youth. In the original story, which was made into a popular Noh play, the flower’s just a flower - it’s a popular symbol of longevity, which is why it’s also used as the Imperial family crest. The double entendre comes in know-



ing that “chrysanthemum” was also a key-word for homosexual play in the Yoshiwara pleasure-quarters, as the flower’s petals resemble an anus.

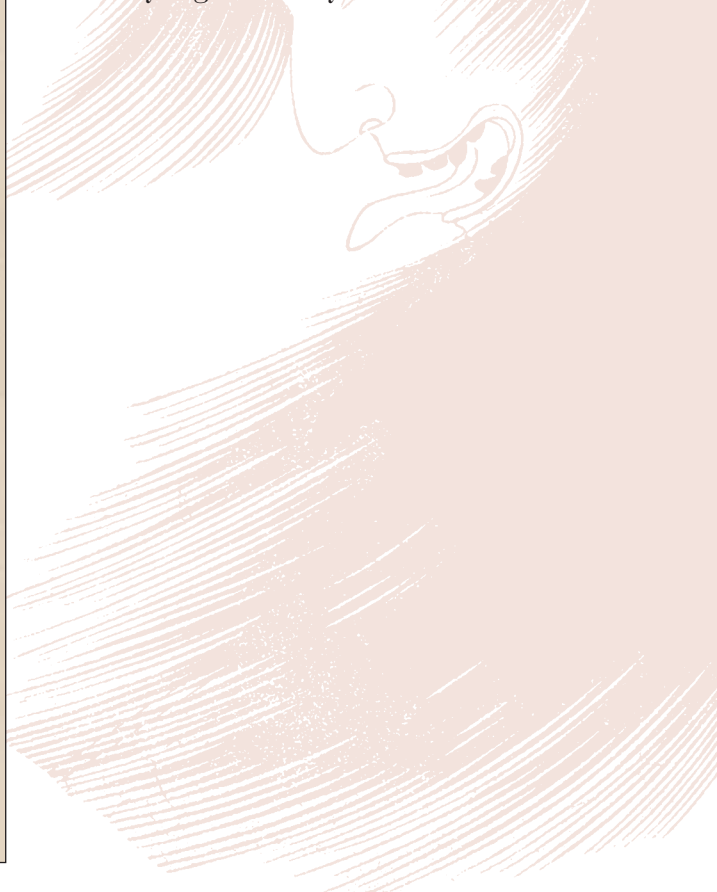
The handmaidens of the higher class “working women” of Yoshiwara were also known as *kamuro* or *kaburo*, and the boys occasionally born from the women’s liaisons might be raised in the pleasure quarters as *wakashū-kamuro*. These “boy-handmaidens” sometimes continued to dress as young girls even after growing up, servicing clients who desired such things (many of whom, bringing things back full circle, seem to have been monks.)

大首 Ōkubi

(GIANT HEAD)



Generally speaking, an excess of anything is scary. For example, the head of a woman with a caked-black mouth under the dim starlight of a rainy night is scary. How ridiculous!



Sekien puns off of “stars on a rainy night” (*amayo no hoshi*) which implies a very dark night, and is also vintage slang for something very rare or uncommon. Blackened teeth aren’t a mark of the supernatural, but rather a cosmetic used by sophisticated ladies in times of old for contrast against their white-powdered faces. If poorly applied, this sort of thing could look quite shocking, particularly when encountered unexpectedly in dim light. Thus the first sentence can

be interpreted as referring either to a head that’s excessively large, or to a head with excessively over-applied makeup.

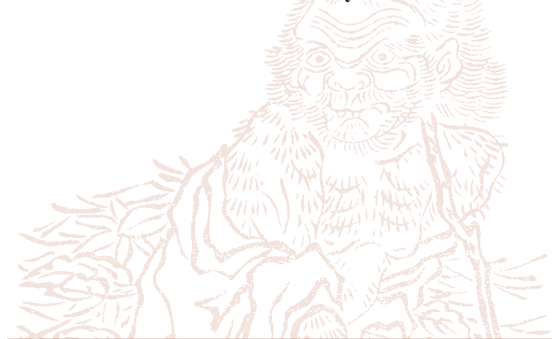
But this isn’t the only joke here. Ōkubi-e (giant head prints) were a style of Ukiyo-e focusing on a close-up of the head and shoulders of kabuki actors. The genre exploded in popularity when a certain artist began portraying pretty women from the pleasure quarters. That artist happens to be Kitagawa Utamaro - Sekien’s most famed disciple.

百々爺

Momonjii

(OLD MAN MOMO)

Little is known of Momonjii. Here is my humble opinion. In the mountains lives an animal called the *momonga*, also known as the Nobusuma. Furthermore, in Kyoto crying children are shushed with the threat of the Gagoji. Momonjii appears to be a combination of these two words. When the hour grows late and no one is around, and the fog thick and the wind strong, it transforms into an old man to move about. It is said that any traveler who encounters it will certainly fall ill.



The meat of four-legged mammals such as rabbit, boar, and deer was long referred to as variously “*mononga*” and “*momonji*.” The word’s wild connotations made it slang for monsters as well. Note that Sekien has added an extra *i* to the end, transforming the word into a name. It’s something like “Old Man Momo,” with *momo* written with the characters for “hundreds,” linking it back to the uncountable gods and yokai of folklore.

During the Edo era, the eating of land mammals was seen as declass  , even taboo—yet undeniably delicious. This contradiction led enterprising vendors to euphemistically “rebrand” their wares in a sort of code. Wild boars were dubbed “*yamakujira*” (mountain-whale) and their meat “*botan*” (peonies), while horse meat was “*sakura*” (cherry) and venison “*momiji*” (maple). The latter was a nod



to a famed verse from *One Hundred Poems by One Hundred People*:

*Deep in the mountains, I hear the cries of the stag searching for its mate amidst the momiji—
How sad autumn feels to me!*

The establishments serving this sort of fare tried to keep a low profile, using maple leaves as a signal to customers in the know—thus the pile of maple leaves Old Man Momo is standing in.

For more about Nobusuma, see p. 137. For more about Gagoji, see p. 65.

金靈

Kanedama

(GOLD-SPIRIT)

The Kanedama is the essence of the metal element. In Tang Chinese verse it is said “an austere sort can sense gold and silver in the night.” And in the *Analects of Confucius* one can see “wealth and honor depend on heaven.” It is a natural principle that those who do good deeds shall reap rewards from above.



In Sekien's illustrations, gold *koban* coins are funneled into the house of a deserving person.

The great novelist Santō Kyōden (1761-1816), whose lurid exploitation stories fueled many of Edo's more blood-soaked kabuki dramas, expanded on the concept in his 1805 book *Kaidan Momonjii*

(the latter word being a homonym for “*momonjii*” on the previous page, but written with characters making it “*A Monster-Dictionary of Weird Tales*”). He described it as something that “can't be controlled... it loves those pure of heart and despises even the hint of deceit.”

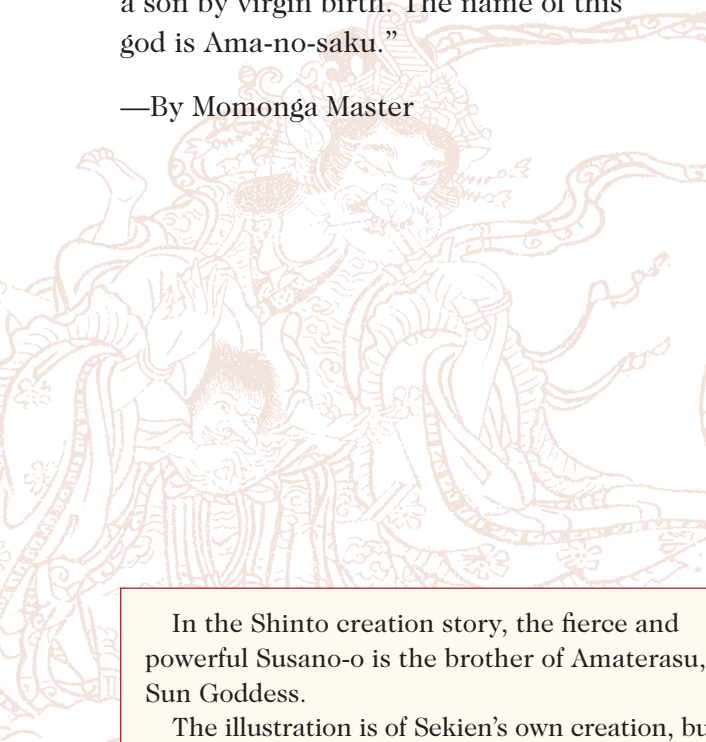
天逆每

Ama-no-zako

(HEAVEN-OPPOSES-ALL)

According to a certain book, “When Susano-o’s chest filled with fury, he exhaled it and begat this god. Human of body and beast of head, with a long nose and long ears. Even should a powerful god oppose her, shall she hook them with her nose and run 1000 ri. Even should a strong sword oppose her, shall its blade be rent by her teeth. Her name is Princess Ama-no-zako. She filled herself with ki life-essence and begat a son by virgin birth. The name of this god is Ama-no-saku.”

—By Momonga Master



In the Shinto creation story, the fierce and powerful Susano-o is the brother of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess.

The illustration is of Sekien’s own creation, but the text is paraphrased from the *Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*, which also describes her as a Tengu princess (see p. 10).

Momonga means flying squirrel, but was also slang for a monster in the Edo era. For more about this connection, see the entry for Momonjii. Although he intended it as an amusing faux-attribution, “Monster Master” is certainly a fitting title for Sekien himself.

One *ri* equals roughly 2.5 miles.

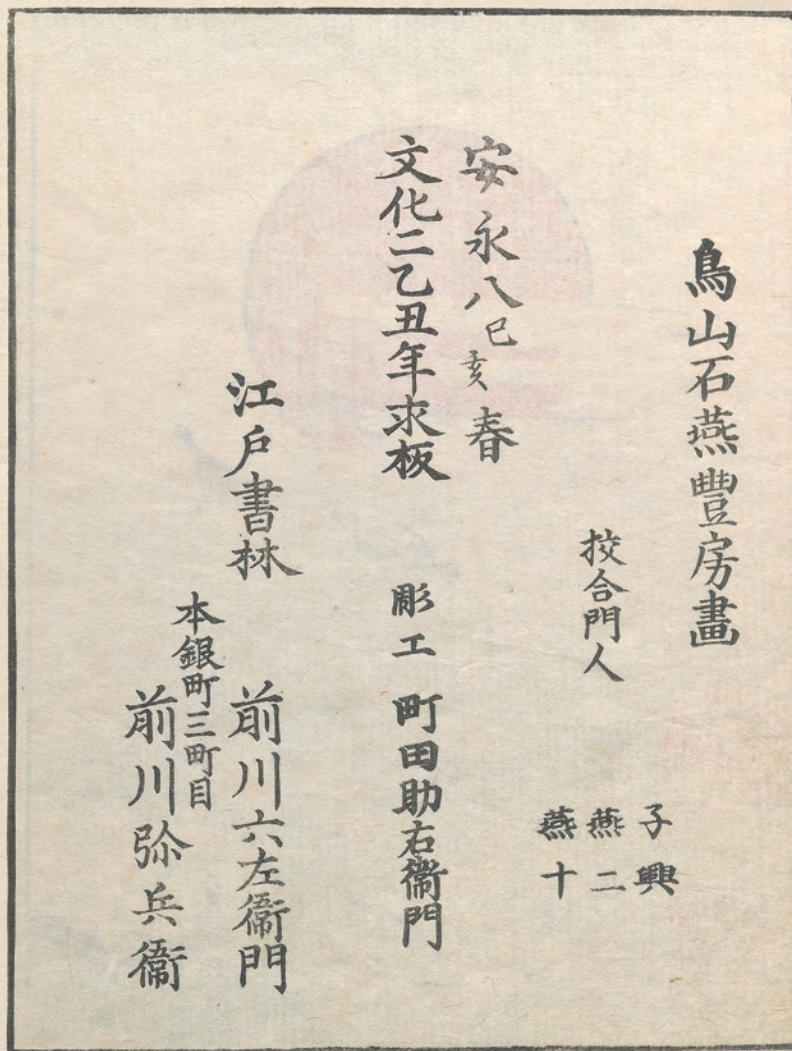
(SUNRISE)

The wicked cannot triumph over the virtuous. In the depths of night, the horde runs wild like those who would curry favor with a scheming king. But when the sun rises to illuminate all of creation, time favors the superior man, as in the era of an enlightened ruler.





As the sun comes up, the yokai go back into hiding. The “superior man” is a concept from the Confucian treatise *Doctrine of the Mean*. It refers not to a superman, but rather someone following the Way: one who is enlightened, sincere, honest, and cautious.



Art: Toriyama Sekien Toyofusa

Apprentices: Shikō, Enji, Enjū

Carver: Machida Sukeemon

Edo Booksellers:

Maekawa Rokuzaemon

Maekawa Yahei

Honshirogane-chō, 3-chōme

First edition printed Anei 8,
Tsuchinoto-i, Spring

Blocks acquired Bunka 2,
Kinoto-ushi

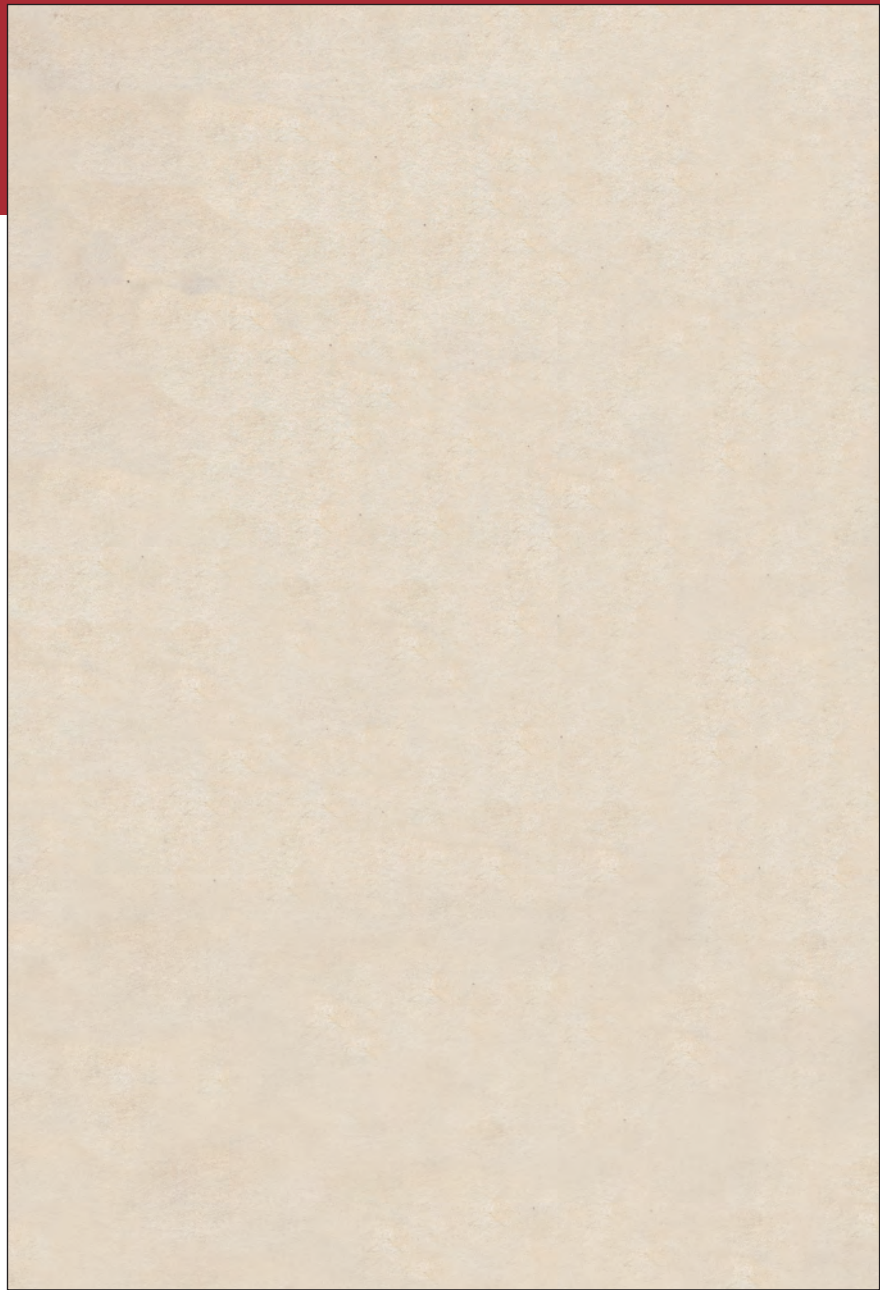
This colophon is from the second edition of the book, published after the two Maekawa booksellers acquired the blocks from the original bookseller-publisher, Enshū-ya Yashichi. Although presumably related, the two Maekawas were different companies.

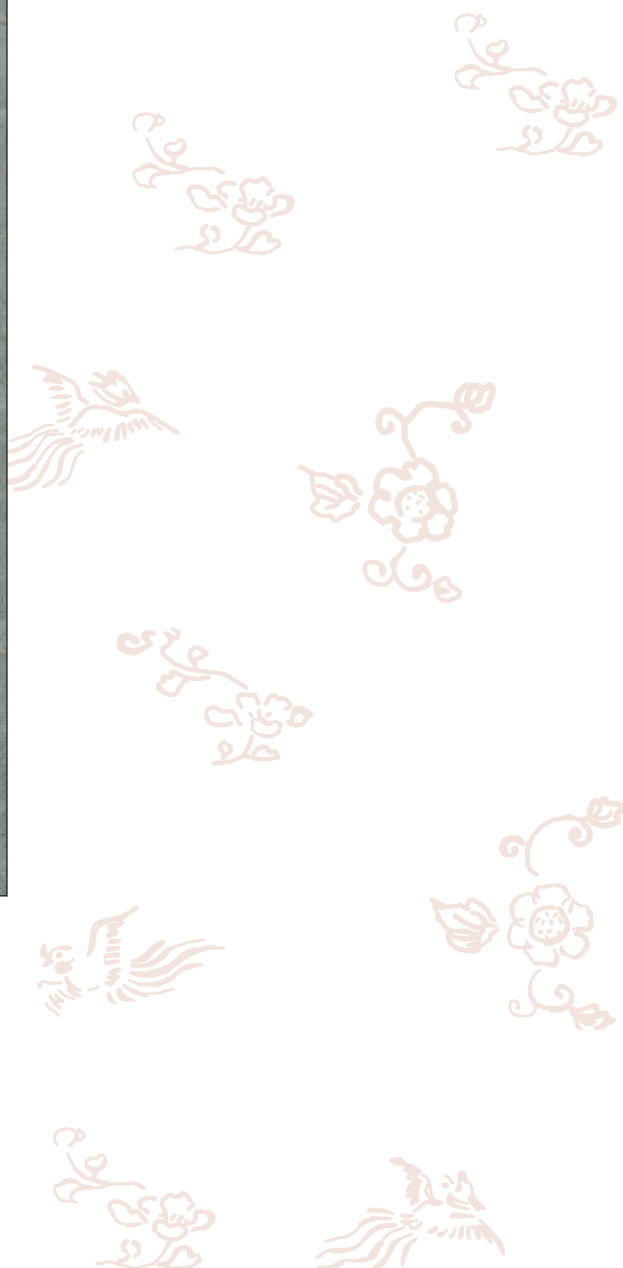
Honshirogane-chō is the address for Maekawa Yahei; it corresponds to what is now known in Tokyo as Nihonbashi-Muromachi.

Anei 8 refers to the eighth year of the Anei emperor's reign: 1779. *Tsuchinoto-i*, the Year of the Earth-Pig, corresponds to the 36th of the 60-year

period of the traditional lunar calendar, widely used in China, Korea, and Japan. This "sexagenary cycle" consists of combinations of the 12 zodiacological animals paired with five elements of wood, metal, fire, earth, and water, each of which in turn is divided into yin and yang versions.

Bunka 2 refers to the second year of the Bunka emperor's reign: 1805. Kinoto-ushi is the Year of the Wood-Ox. This is the year this second edition was printed by the Maekawas.



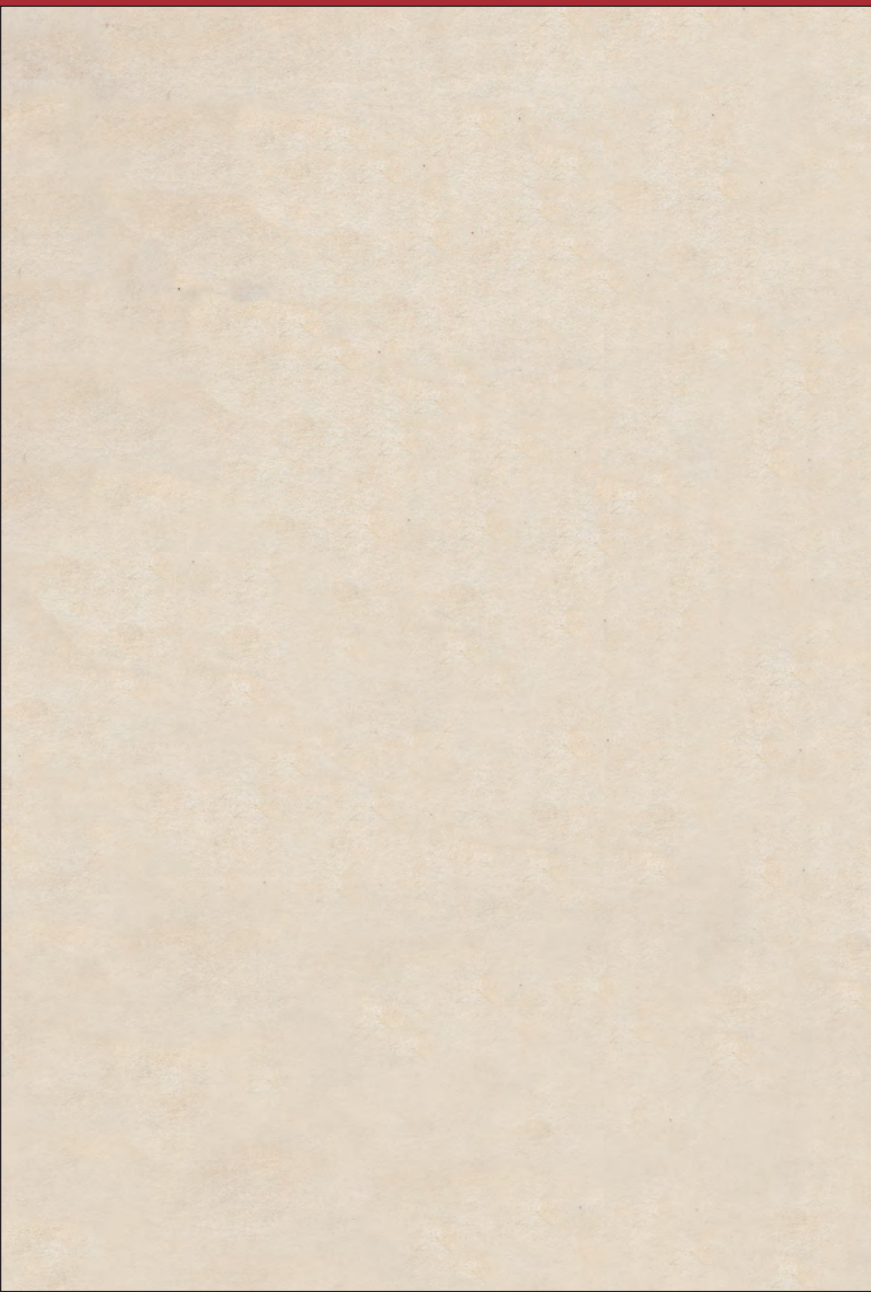


今昔百鬼拾遺 雲 上
Konjaku Hyakki Shūi
(Kumo) (Jō)

More of the Demon Horde from
Past and Present,
(Cloud) Volume 1

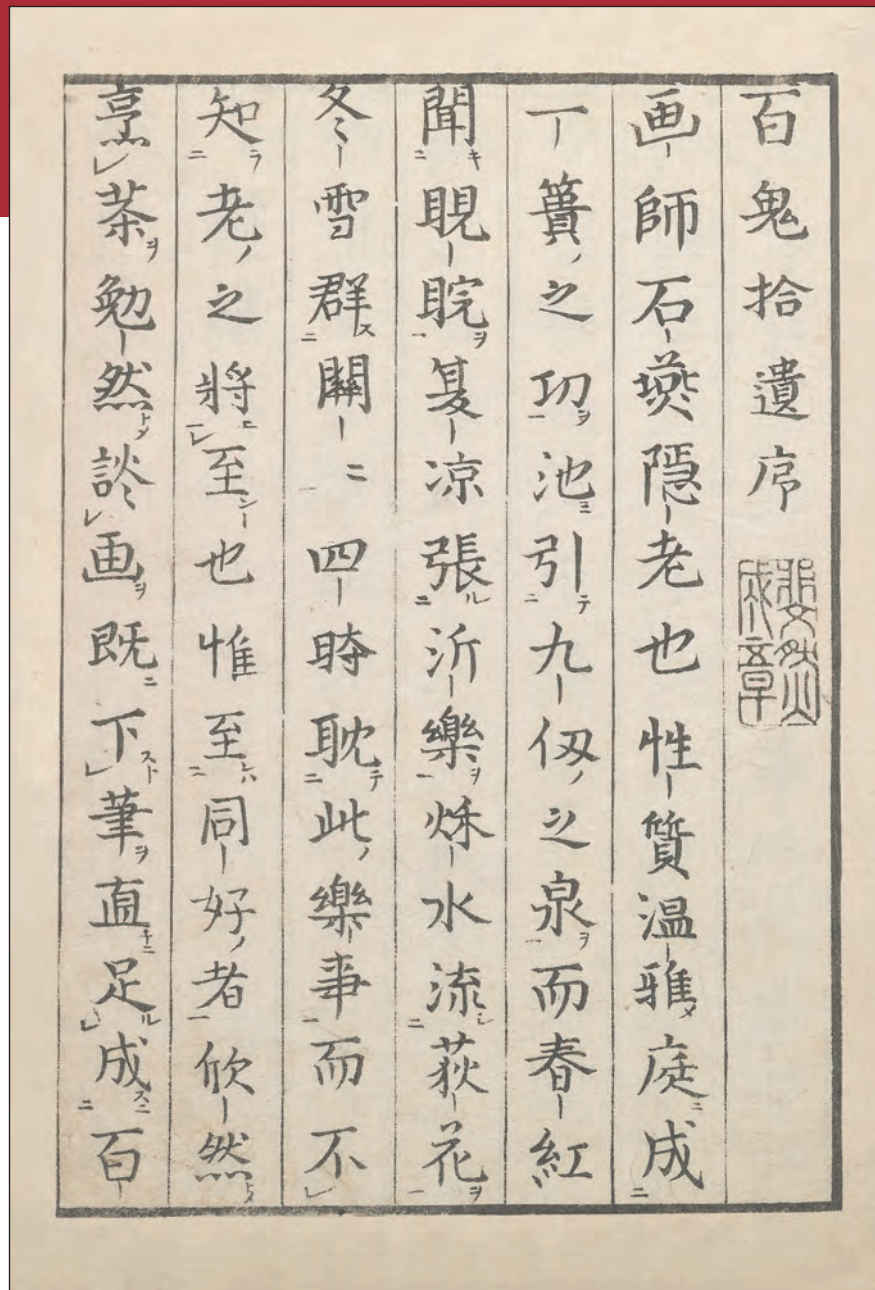


This copy of this volume is missing its label.



More of the Demon Horde: Preface

Let us consider a kindly old hermit, the artist Sekien. He's a gentle and refined sort, a successful gardener who dug deep to find a spring to feed his pond. He listens for the warblers in spring and savors cool river-waters in summer, watching the flower petals drift in fall and the birds flock in winter. Whatever the season, he immerses himself in its pleasures, seemingly unaware of old age setting in.¹ When he encounters one of similar tastes he delightedly puts on tea and throws himself into a discussion of art. And when he starts drawing, he'll quickly turn out more than a hundred in a sitting.



¹ From *The Analects of Confucius*. "Why didn't you just tell him that I am a man who in eagerness for study forgets to eat, in his enjoyment of it, forgets his problems and who is unaware of old age setting in?"

More of the Demon Horde: Preface

He glows with the creative impulse, and disciples flock to him. He is widely published and read. In the spring of *hinoe-saru* (year of the fire-monkey) (1776), he produced his *Hyakki Yagyō*. He added another volume in the year of *tsuchinoto-i* (year of the earth-pig) (1779), completing the set of *Hyakki* books.

In the spring of this year *kanoto-ushi* (year of the metal-ox) (1781), a certain bookseller returned to request more ghostly drawings, and to publish them. Sekien laughed and said, "I'll make many drawings, which will not only require a great deal of effort, but attract a thousand criticisms. But all I fear is making the demons cry.² What say you to that?"

餘圖樂ニ玄勝市以賞矣由此弟
子益衆成編且多皆世之所吟也
丙申春著百鬼夜行已亥歲後編
繼出而前後百鬼全焉今茲辛丑
春書肆某又来請幽冥之圖而欲
以刻之隱老笑曰多圖之則不啻
損心力而取譏千載但恐鬼哭夫

² A Chinese verse:

In ancient times when Cangjie created kanji-characters, millet rained from the heavens and the demons cried at night.

Like the Bible's forbidden fruit, the creation of writing signaled humanity abandoning nature for modernity, a loss of innocence and the origin of deception and falsehood.

More of the Demon Horde: Preface

The bookseller replied: “what is painting, if not pushing the limits of an incomparable soul and an impeccable talent? Indeed, even if the heavens should unleash a deluge of millet and the demons weep, it will merely nourish your body and art, which can only be a good thing. We implore you not to decline our request.”

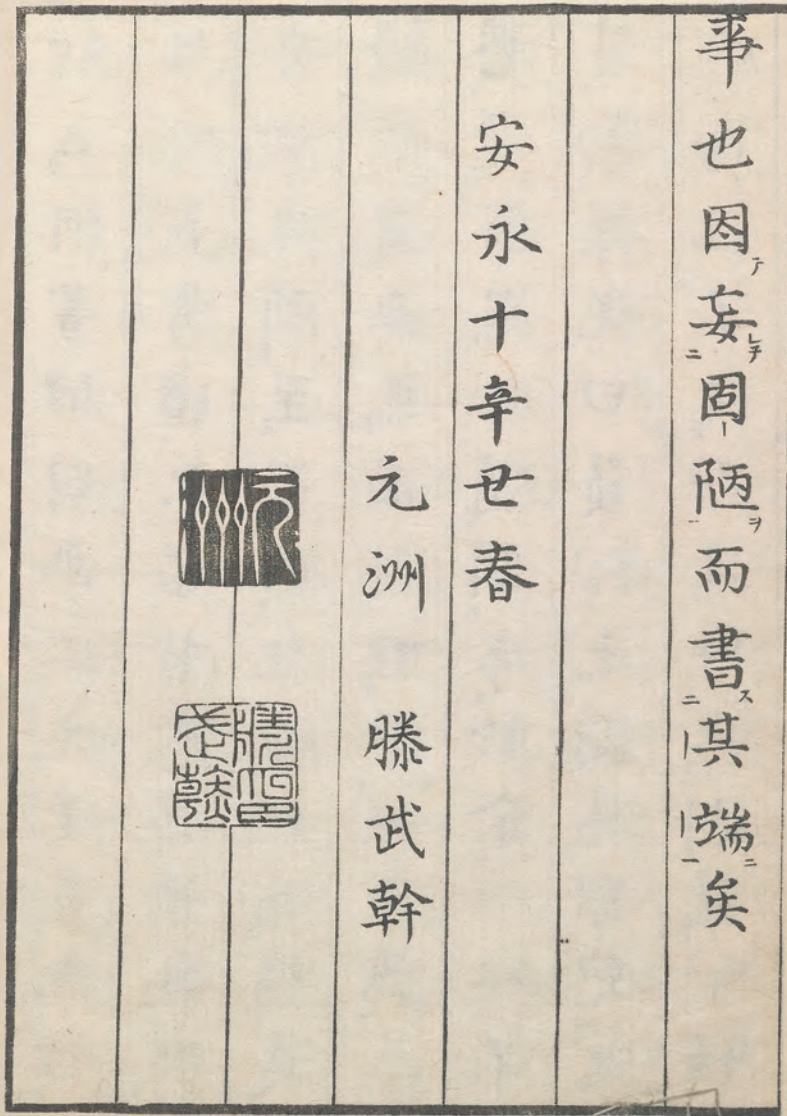
So cornered, he compiled this, his third book of the strange and the supernatural. He called it *Hyakki Shūi* [More of the Demon Horde], and asked me to write this introduction. Citing my lack of talent I refused. Sekien countered that his silly sketches were mere child's play. And that's how a man with no talent came to be penning an introduction.

如^ニ之^ヲ何^ニ書^キ肆^シ曰^ク画^ハ工^ハ元^ト是^ニ盡^ス無^ニ類^ス
之^ハ心^ニ合^ス有^リ道^ニ之^ヲ器^ニ若^シ夫^レ雨^ニ粟^ヲ鬼^ノ哭^{スルモ}
亦^チ骨^ノ力^ヲ所^レ至^ル而^{シテ}尚^ラ佳^キ事^也強^ク請^フ莫^シ
辭^{スルヲ}於^ニ是^ニ無^ク已^タ而^{シテ}探^リ怪^ヲ聚^メ妖^ヲ而^{シテ}為^ス三^ニ
卷^ト題^ス百^ニ鬼^ノ拾^フ遺^ト問^フ序^ヲ於^ニ余^ニ以^テ不^レ
才^ヲ辭^ス隱^シ老^シ曰^ク負^フ俗^ノ之^ヲ圖^ヲ為^ス嬰^ノ兒^ノ之^ヲ
戲^ト而^{シテ}已^タ不^レ才^ヲ而^{シテ}且^ツ作^レ序^ヲ則^チ是^レ一^ニ怪^ノ

More of the Demon Horde: Preface

It strikes me that this is a strange
happening indeed. And so I put aside
my misgivings and do as he asked.

*10th year of the Anei era, the Year of
the Metal-Ox,³ Spring
Motosu Shōbukan⁴*

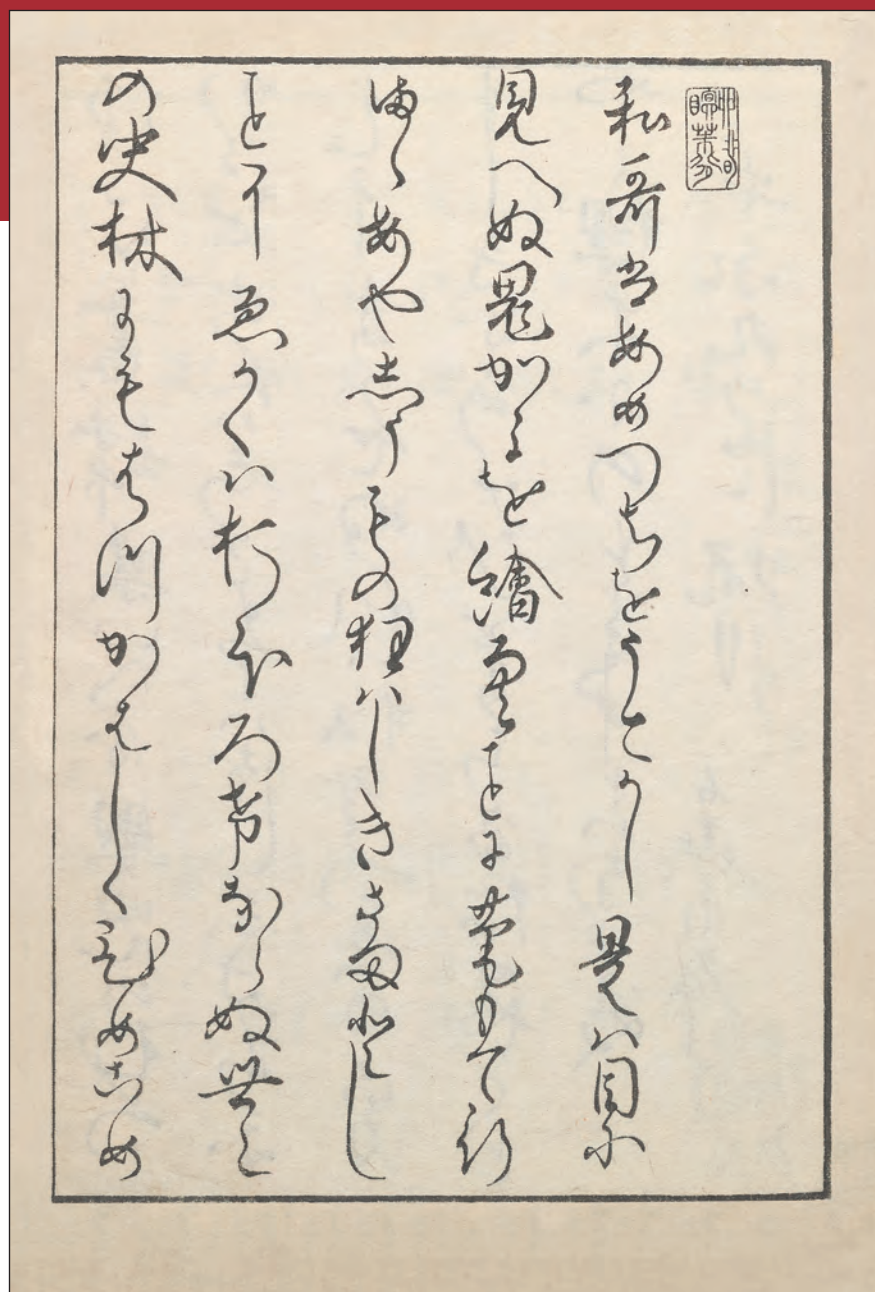


³ The 10th year of the Anei emperor's reign, thirty-eighth cycle of the sixty cycles in the traditional lunar calendar; in Western reckoning, 1781.

⁴ A pen-name. This represents a best guess at its reading.

Introduction

It is said poetry has the power to move heavens and earth. Here I let my brush run free to capture the portrayals of normally invisible gods and spirits, drawing their strange forms and maddening behavior year after year, but was embarrassed at my handiwork in comparison to the storied works of old.

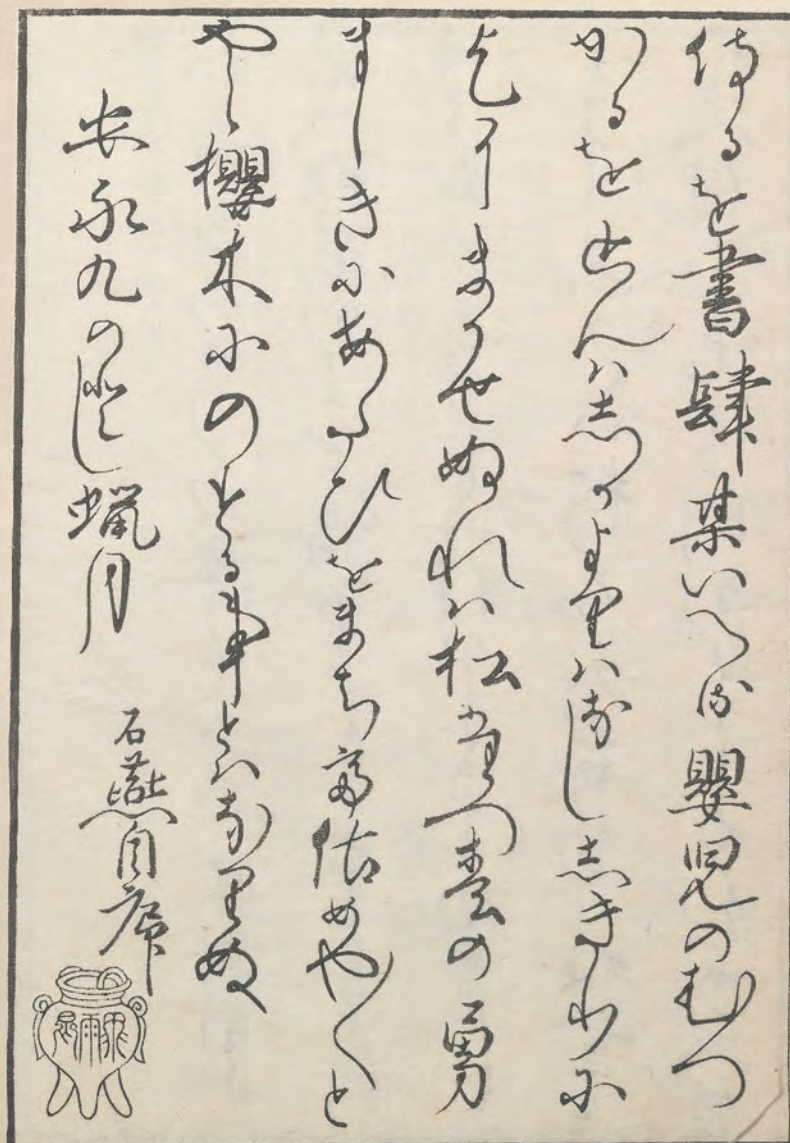


Introduction

Thus long did I keep my work hidden from sight, until a certain persistent bookseller said: “but this is the only way to soothe a crying baby.”¹ Giving in to the repeated requests, I awaited the bright spring for a price to be offered, whereupon I cried “sell! sell!”² and saw it transferred to the woodblocks.

9th year of the Anei era,³ Rōgetsu (December)

By Sekien's Own Hand



¹The precise meaning of this turn of phrase is unclear; it may be an archaic idiom.

²From the *Analects of Confucius*:

Zi Gong said:

I have a beautiful gem.

Should I put it in a case and keep it?

Or should I seek a good price and sell it?

The Master replied,

“Sell it!

Sell it!

...But wait for someone to offer a good price.”

³1780.

百鬼夜行拾遺上之卷目錄

Hyakki Yagyō Shūi Jō-no-Maki

More of the Demon Horde,
Table of Contents: Volume 1

Shinkirō
Shokuin
Ninmenju
Ningyo
Hangonkō
Hōkō
Tengu-tsubute
Dōjōji-no-kane
Tōdai-ki
Doratabō
Kokuri-baba
Oshiroi-baba
Jakotsu-baba
Kage-onna
Kerakera-onna
Enenra

○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	百鬼夜行拾遺上之卷目錄
あ ら わ 女	蛇 骨 婆	あ ら わ 婆	燈 臺 鬼	天 物 礫	返 夷 香	人 面 樹	蜃 氣 樓	
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
煙 く	陰 粉	白 粉	泥 田	道 成 の	彭 の	人 の	燭 の	
羅	女	婆	坊	鐘	候	奥	陰	

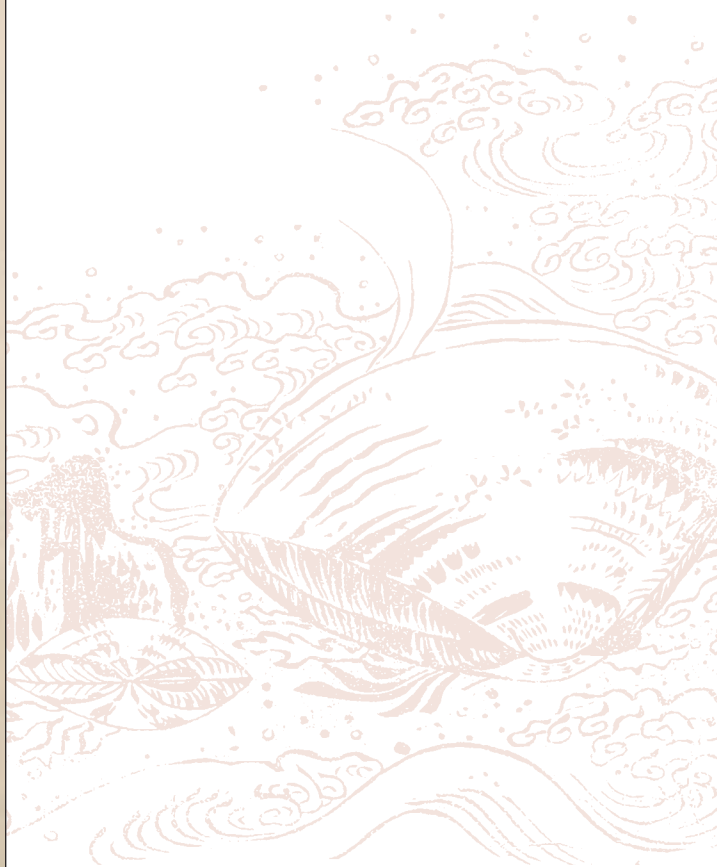
Note that the title used for the Table of Contents differs from that on the book's cover. This volume is "officially" known as *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi* (*More of the Demon Horde from Past and Present*). The reason for this discrepancy is unknown; perhaps the title changed at some point during the production process.



no suffering or cold, and the fruits have the power to cure all disease. In his book *Kwaidan*, Lafcadio Hearn described its atmosphere as “not made of air at all, but ghost—the substance of quintillions and quintillions of generations of souls blended into one immense translucency [so that] whatever man

inhales that atmosphere, he takes into his blood the thrilling of the spirits... and they reshape his notions of space and time so that he can see only as they used to see... and think only as they used to think.”

Kaishi is written with the characters for “ocean” and “city.” It is a synonym for mirage.



蜃気楼

Shinkirō

(MIRAGE)

In the *Tianguan Shu* of the ancient *Shiji*, it is written that ocean-borne mirages [*Shinki*] take the form of tall structures [*Rō*]. The “shin” is a giant clam. Exhaling its ki essence upon the surface of the ocean, it generates the image of a multi-storied city. This phenomenon is called Shinkirō. It is also known as *Kaishi*.



Literally, “mirage,” but more specifically, a “Fata Morgana,” a so-called superior mirage seen over the horizon at sea. In modern times it is understood they are generated by temperature differences in the air. The *Shiji* (*Records of the Grand Historian*) is a history of ancient China authored by Sima Qian

(145—86 BC). *Tianguan Shu* (*A Treatise on Heavenly Constellations*) is an astronomical entry in the *Shiji*.

The multi-storied city is known as *Hōrai*, an enchanted retreat deep in the mountains where the Immortals gather for their banquets; there is

燭陰

Shokuin

(TORCH-SHADOW)

In *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* it is written that the god of Mount Shōzan is called Shokuin [Torch-Shadow]. Its body is a thousand leagues long, a dragon with a human face, scarlet in hue. Mount Shōzan is located in the northern seas.



The Classic of Mountains and Seas is a Han dynasty collection of Chinese mythology. It describes a deity called “Torch-Dragon,” so named because “when this deity closes his eyes, there is darkness. When the deity looks with his eyes, there is light.... The deity shines his torch over the ninefold darkness.”



人面樹

Ninmenju

(HUMAN-FACED TREE)

Found in canyons. Its blossoms take the form of human heads. They do not speak, only laugh continuously. And in so doing, they plummet from the branches.



Here, Sekien quotes from the *Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms*, which describes the trees as existing in the Arab world. This may be a reference to the “Waq-Waq Tree” from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, which bears human-shaped fruit. It is a perfect example of the multifaceted, multicultural origins

of many of the yokai. A similar sort of tree also appears in the Chinese classic *Journey to the West*. The “Ginseng-fruit Tree” bears fruit resembling human infants once every 9,000 years; according to the story, eating or simply sniffing it is said to extend one’s lifespan by hundreds or even thousands of years.

人魚

Ningyo (MERMAID)

Dwells to the West of the World Tree.
It has a human face, a fish body,
and no legs. From the chest up it is
human, and like a fish below.
Also said to be a human from the
realms of the Di.



Known in Japanese as the *kenboku* and Chinese as *kien mu*, the World Tree represents one of several mystical trees in Chinese folklore said to run through the axis of the universe. The *Di*, also known as one of the *Wu Hu* (Five Barbarian Tribes), were a semi-nomadic ethnic group from a region corresponding to modern-day Tibet.

返魂香

Hangonkō

(SOUL-RETURNING INCENSE)

Emperor Wu of Han loved his consort Li so much that he could not stop thinking about her even after her death, and so ordered a mage to light Hangonkō incense. Her image coalesced in its smoke. Yet this had the effect of deepening the Emperor's sorrow, leading him to pen a poem: *Is it thou? Is it not? I stand here gazing at a faint form; why art thou so slow to come to me?*



A fictional incense, rarer than rare, and capable of conjuring the image of a dead loved one in its smoke — a precious commodity in an era before photography. It was a well-known trope of Japanese supernatural art and literature.

For example, the Kyoto painter Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795) titled one of his famed series of ghost scroll-paintings *Hangonkō-no-zu*, or “An Illustration of Hangonkō.” It is currently in the collection of Kudoji Temple, Aomori.

彭侯

Hōkō

(PENGHOU)

A thousand year old tree has a spirit that takes the form of a black dog. It has no tail. Its face resembles that of a human. It is different from Yamabiko.



千歳せんさいの木きハ精せいあり状よう黒くろ狗こ
 のこゝろ一いっ尾びあり面おもて人ひとニ似にたり
 又山彦またやまひこと云いふあり

Directly or indirectly, Sekien is quoting the 4th century Chinese *Soushenji* (A Record of the Search for the Supernatural), which describes a creature written with the same characters. It is pronounced Penghou in Chinese. The passage reads, paraphrased:

During the Wu Kingdom, Jing Shu dispatched a man to fell a big camphor tree. The wood bled and inside there was an animal that was similar to a dog but with a human face. Jing Shu said this was a Penghou. So he stewed the animal and ate it, which tasted like dog meat.

天狗礫

Tengu-tsubute

(TENGU GRAVEL)

When a gust of wind blows through mountains and dark valleys, the mountains rumble, and the valleys respond by loosing boulders. This is known as Tengu Gravel. The tale of the seven stones that fell in the Song dynasty, as chronicled in the *Commentary of Zuo*, could well be the same.



The *Commentary of Zuo*, known as the *Zuo Zhuan* in Chinese, is one of the nation's earliest history books. It covers two and a half centuries from 722 to 468 B.C.

道成寺鐘

Dōjōji-no-kane (THE BELL OF DŌJŌJI)

The daughter of a wealthy family in Manago went to Dōjō-ji temple. When she discovered the monk Anchin hiding himself inside a temple bell, she transformed into a serpent and coiled around it. Some say the bell melted into boiling water. Others say the bell is now at Myōman-ji temple in Kyoto. That bell contains the following Chinese inscription:

Yata village, Hidaka district, Ki province. This is the bell of Dōjō-ji temple, designated an imperial prayer temple by Emperor Monmu, and forged by his order. Funds solicited by monk-official in charge Hōgen Jōshū, from patrons Minamoto no Manjumarū and Yoshida Minamoto no Yorihide, together with the other men and women parishioners of the temple. Blacksmith: Sangān Dōgan. Blacksmith's assistant: Taijū Morinaga. The eleventh day of the third month of the fourteenth year of the Enryaku era, year of the wooden pig.

The famed tragedy, well known in Sekien's era and today, of the star-crossed lovers Anchin and Kiyohime. The handsome young monk Anchin is smitten by the beautiful Kiyohime while travelling on a religious pilgrimage. The feelings were mutual, but Anchin resolved not to break his religious vows and left her village, never to return. Infuriated, Kiyohime tracked Anchin across the countryside, even transforming into a serpent to pursue him across a river. When he reached his destination, Dōjō-ji temple, he begged the other monks to hide

him. They hid him in a bell, and the rest is as you read here.

The Enryaku era spanned the years from 782 through 806; the fourteenth year would correspond to 795. The Year of the Wooden Pig corresponds to the twelfth of the 60-year period of the traditional lunar calendar, widely used in China, Korea, and Japan. This "sexagenary cycle" consists of combinations of the 12 zodiacological animals paired with five elements of wood, metal, fire, earth, and water, each of which in turn is divided into yin and yang versions.



灯台鬼

Tōdai-ki

(CANDLESTICK-DEMON)

Minister Karu went to China as an envoy. A Chinese minister poisoned him to silence his voice, colored his body, put a candle on his head, and renamed him Tōdai-ki. His son, Chancellor Hitsu, visited China to see his father. Tōdai-ki cried, bit his finger and composed a poem in blood:

I am from Japan; we share the same family name.

A vow from a previous life made us father and child. Across the sea and mountains, my life has changed terribly. For years have I cried in this weed-choked place; all I can think about are my precious parents.

I have been transformed into a candlestick-demon in this foreign village, but I only want to return home.

Japan dispatched a series of diplomatic missions to Tang dynasty China from the 7th through 9th centuries. The reasons for envoy Karu being poisoned here remain obscure; the story may refer to some long forgotten political intrigue. The 1712 *Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms* contains a longer version of the story. In it, the son tries to carry his father back to Japan, but his father dies by the time the ship reaches Iwo Jima. Later, the son buries him on an island called Kikai-gashima (Demon-Realm Island). A tiny shrine to Karu's memory does in fact stand on Iwo Jima today, at the base of Mt. Inamuradake.

Note the go board in the background. We speculate that it may be a reference to a tale of another envoy trapped in a foreign land, the talented Minister Kibi (695–775). Imprisoned in China and

subjected to a series of intellectual trials to return home, his adventures were featured in a number of scrolls, prints, and kabuki plays. One of said trials involved what just might be the weirdest game of go ever played. Accused of cheating by swallowing one of his pieces, he was forced to take a laxative, defecate in front of the judges, and have his output scrutinized before being declared the winner. Those so inclined can check out the entire proceedings in the 12th century *Minister Kibi's Adventures in China* scroll, currently in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.



泥田坊

Dorotabō

(MUDMAN)

Long ago, there was an old man in the north. He purchased a small rice paddy for his heirs. Whether it be cold, or hot, or windy, or rainy, he worked it without fail. He passed away, but his son abandoned farming in favor of saké. Eventually, the paddy was sold to someone else. Ever since, a dark, one-eyed figure has appeared in it every night, crying:
ta kaese! ta kaese! (Till my paddy!)
 This is the Dorotabō.



Ta kaese, which we have translated above as “till my paddy!” is also a homonym for “give back my paddy!”

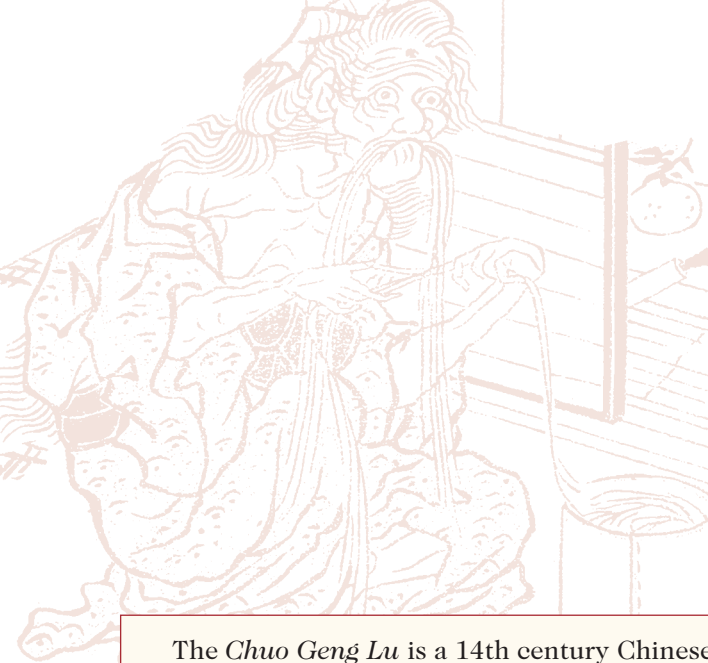
Note the three fingers. In Japanese art, oni (p. 88) and other creatures are often portrayed with three fingers, both to accentuate their inhuman nature visually and as a reference to the “three poisons” considered the root of all suffering in Buddhism: jealousy, hatred, and delusion.

古庫裏婆

Kokuri-baba

(HAG-IN-THE-HOUSE)

As seen in the *Chuo Geng Lu*, the wife of a priest is commonly known as a *bonsō*. This creature lives in the residence of a certain temple in the mountains. She was the beloved wife of the head priest seven generations ago or more. Now she steals the rice and money left as offerings by parishioners and even peels and consumes the flesh from fresh corpses. She is more fearsome even than the River Sanzu's Datsue-ba.



The *Chuo Geng Lu* is a 14th century Chinese text by Tao Zongyi whose title translates into “Tales Told While Resting from Farmwork.” Many Buddhist sects allow monks to marry today, but back in time taking a wife would have been seen as utterly scandalous. Perhaps this is why the story Sekien quotes was included in the *Chuo Geng Lu*’s entry on cannibalism.

Datsue-ba, literally, “the hag who removes clothes,” is a deity who strips off the recently deceased souls of their Earthly possessions in preparation for their judgment before King Enma, the overlord of the underworld. She resides on the far banks of the River Sanzu, the equivalent of the River Styx.

白粉婆

Oshiroi-baba (FACEPOWDER HAG)

The god of *beni* and *oshiroi* is known as *Jifun-senjō*. The Oshiroi-baba is this god's handmaiden. As the saying goes, there's nothing scarier than a woman's appearance in the December moonlight.



Traditional cosmetics both: *beni* is lip rouge; *oshiroi* is a face powder used to whiten one's complexion.

The saying Sekien refers to is an archaic proverb that goes, "Even the mountain gods tremble at a woman's makeup in December." The implication is that women are so busy getting ready for the new year festivities that they don't have time to apply their makeup properly.

蛇骨婆

Jakotsu-baba

(SNAKEBONE HAG)

In China, to the north of the Cattle-Women, lies the realm of the Shamans. The people there bear a blue snake in their right hands, and a red in their left. I wonder if Jakotsu-baba is from this land? According to one story, she was the wife of a man called Jagoemon of Snakemound; thus Jago-baba [Jago's Hag] in regional patois, shifted into Jakotsu-baba [Snakebone Hag]. But the truth is unknown.



The first sentences of Sekien's description are from the 2nd century Chinese *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, which lists the exotic inhabitants of distant realms. Cattle-women refers to young women who were ritually sacrificed by staking them out on mountaintops to burn in the hot sun.

A linguistic note: *ja* is the way the kanji character for "snake" is read in compounds; thus names like Jakotsu-baba and Jagoemon (goemon being a very common first name in times of old.)

影女

Kage-onna (SHADOW-WOMAN)

It is said that moonlight casts shadows of women on the shoji screens of haunted houses. The *Zhuangzi* questions the link between shadow and mōryō: the shadow is that of a man. The mōryō is the penumbra cast by the shadow.



A penumbra is the term for the thinner shade at the very edge of a shadow. Today it is written with completely different kanji, but this entry references an episode from the 3rd century B.C. Taoist book *Zhuangzi* that uses the word *mōryō* to refer to the penumbra. In it, a mōryō asks a shadow why they move about so uncontrollably. The shadow replies that it must follow the will of whatever cast it. For more information about mōryō, see p. 135.

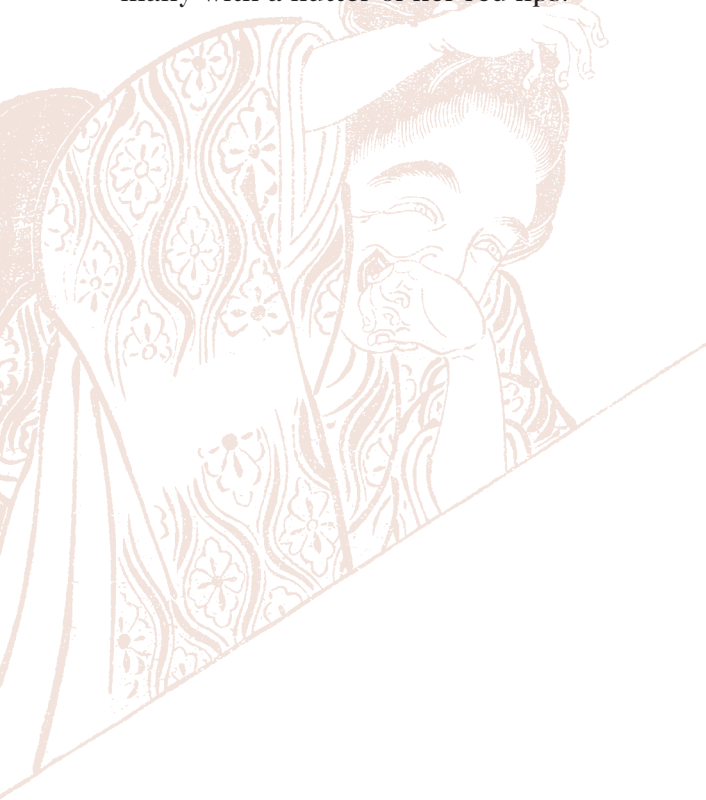


倩兮女

Kerakera-onna

(CACKLING WOMAN)

A true beauty lived east of the poet Song Yu from the state of Chu. She would climb the wall of his house and peer over at him. In fact the sight of her sweet smile caused no end of trouble for the residents of Yangcheng. Then as now, many have lost their wits at the sight of a beautiful face. Perhaps the Kerakera-onna is the ghost of such a vixen who titillated so many with a flutter of her red lips.



The story comes from the influential 6th century Chinese prose anthology *Wen Xuan* (*Selections of Refined Literature*). But that referred to a human woman, while Sekien's illustration portrays a giantess. A similarly huge character appeared in a popular Japanese illustrated book *Heike Bakemono Taiji* (*Slaying the Heike Monsters*); Sekien seems to have combined the two concepts for this entry.

煙々羅

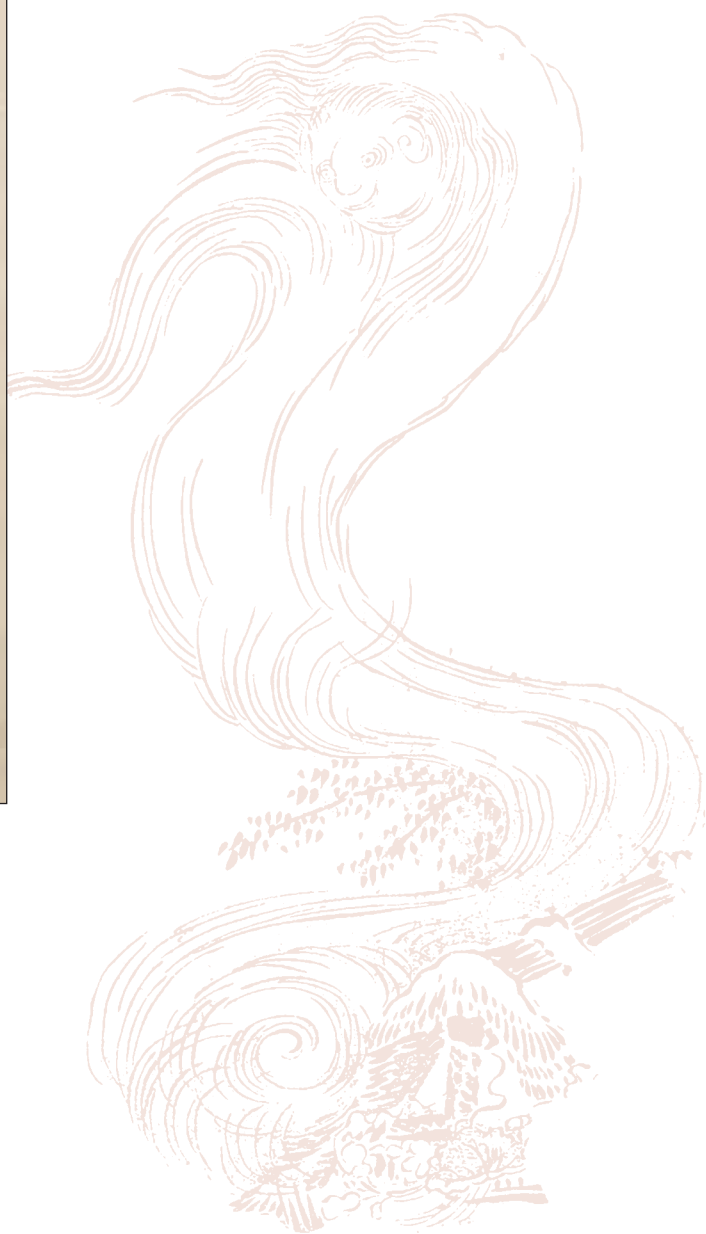
Enenra

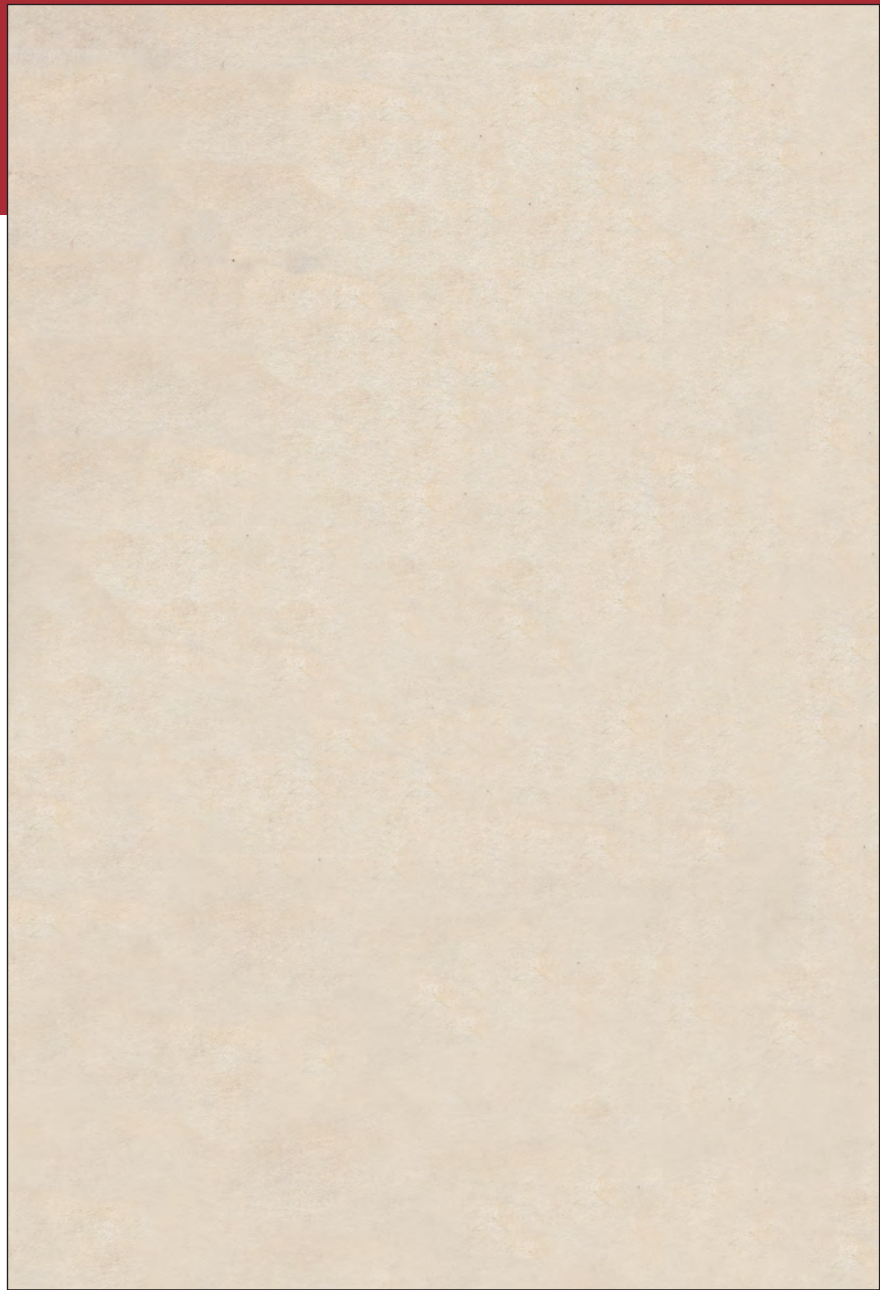
(SMOKENET)

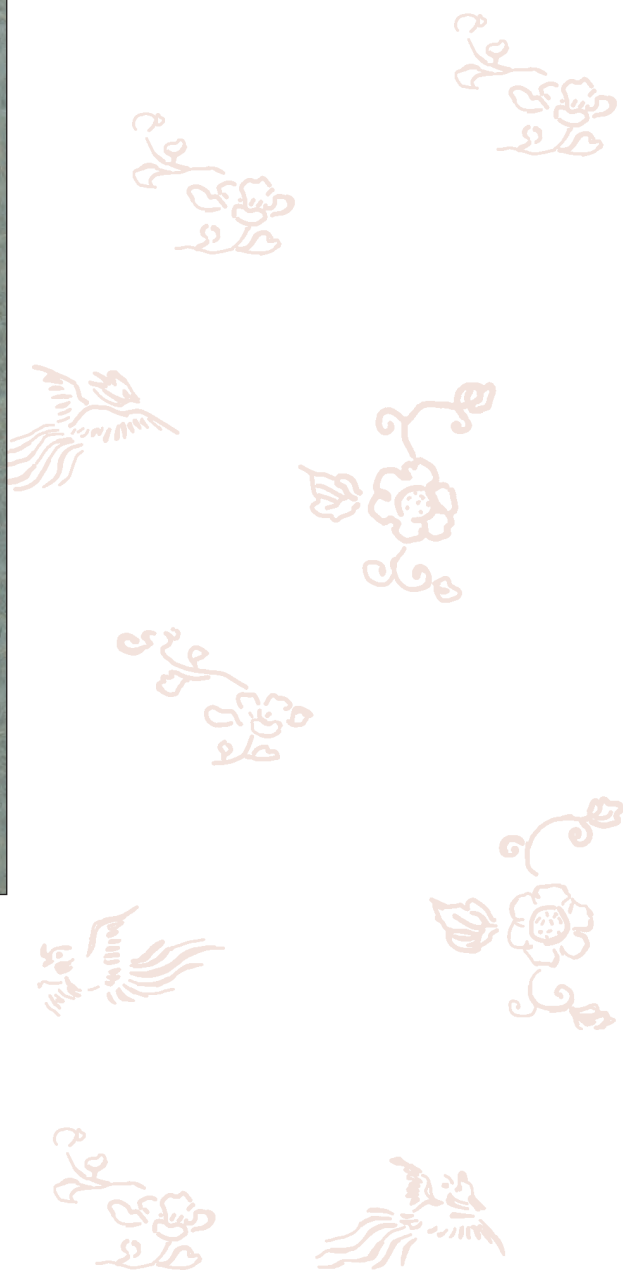
A fire lit to repel mosquitoes near a pauper's meager home twisted into a strange shape. So diaphanous it looked as though a breeze would carry it away, it was named Enenra.



En here is written with the kanji for smoke. The ra is an archaic term for the thin cloth netting used by trappers. It can also refer to the gauze-like cloth used for summer kimonos. The implication here is that the smoke is thin because the impoverished residents had so little wood to burn.







今昔百鬼拾遺 霧 中
Konjaku Hyakki Shūi
(Kiri) (Chū)

More of the Demon Horde from
Past and Present,
(Mist) Volume 2





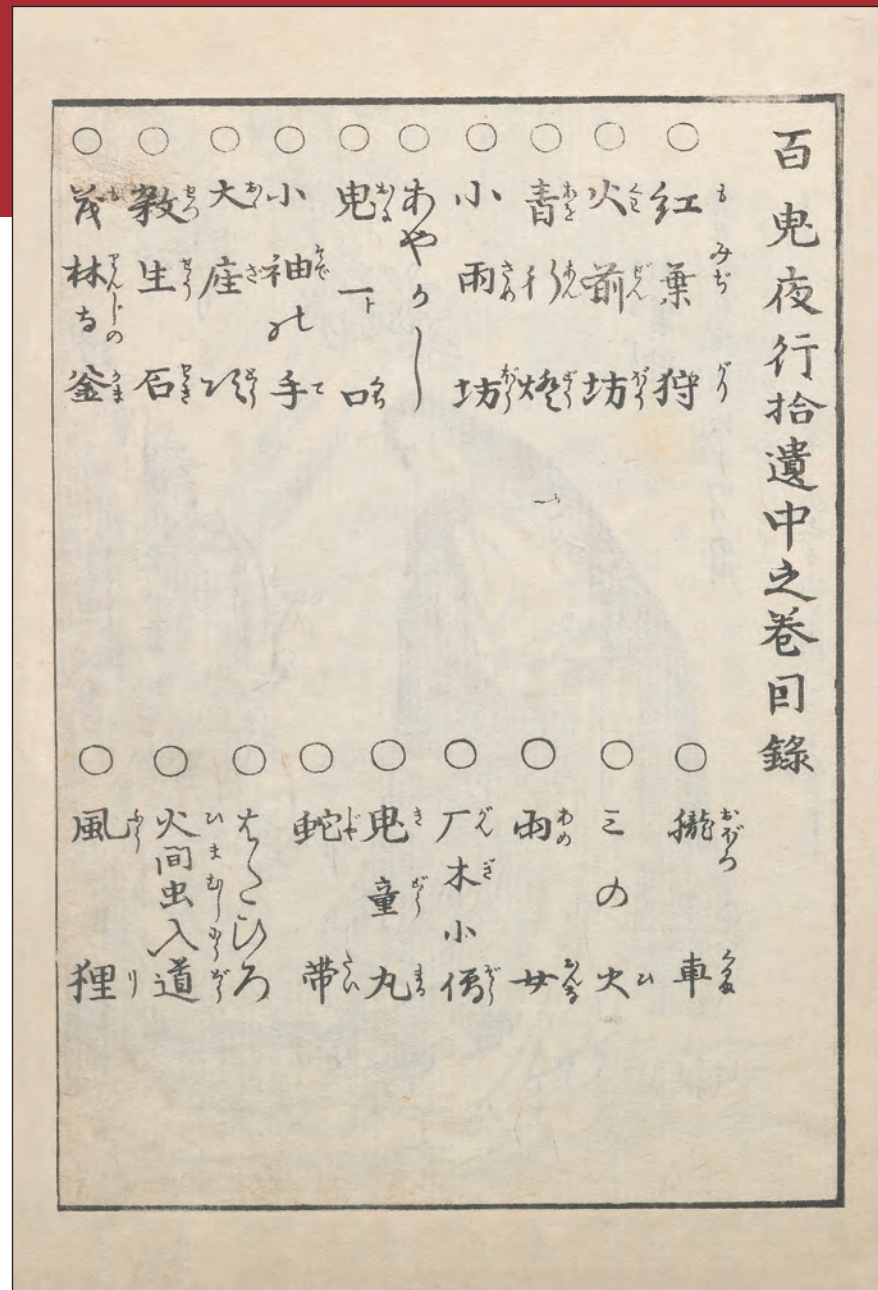
百鬼夜行拾遺中之卷目錄

Hyakki Yagyō Shū

Chū-no-Maki

More of the Demon Horde,
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Momiji-gari
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Note that the title used for the Table of Contents differs from that on the book's cover. This volume is "officially" known as *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi* (*More of the Demon Horde from Past and Present*). The reason for this discrepancy is unknown; perhaps the title changed at some point during the production process.

紅葉狩

Momiji-gari (MOMIJI HUNTING)

The Yogo-Shogun, Koremochi, encountered the demoness Kijo while viewing the autumn colors in the mountains. Those who have seen the famed Noh play will need no further explanation.



Momiji is a traditional girls' name; it evokes the crimson of maple leaves in autumn. The phrase *momiji-gari* colloquially means "viewing the autumn colors," but here a literal reading of the kanji is implied: hunting for *momiji*.

Sekien's readers may not have needed any further explanation, but modern readers undoubtedly do. Yogo-Shogun translates into "the Fifteenth General," a nickname for the warrior Taira-no-Koremochi. In a popular Noh play called *Momiji-gari*, Koremochi is hunting on Mt. Togakushi. He encounters a

beautiful princess deep in the forest who invites him to dinner (note the long-handled sake pot she carries in the illustration.) Upon falling asleep, he sees a vision that the princess is actually a demon in disguise—and at the play's climax, unmasks and kills her. Kijo is actually written with the characters for "oni" (see p. 88) and "woman." Interestingly, the Nagano town from which this legend originates is called Kinasa-no-sato, which transliterates into "Village Without an Oni."

朧車

Oboro-guruma

(GLOOM-CART)

Long ago on a misty moonlit night, the sound of oxcart wheels could be heard on a Kamo boulevard. If one were to look out, they would have been greeted by a weird sight: the grudge of those jockeying their carts for position.



In times of old, aristocrats often travelled in carts, and spurring one's servants to compete for the best viewing positions at events was such an established practice that it actually had a name: *kuruma-araso*.

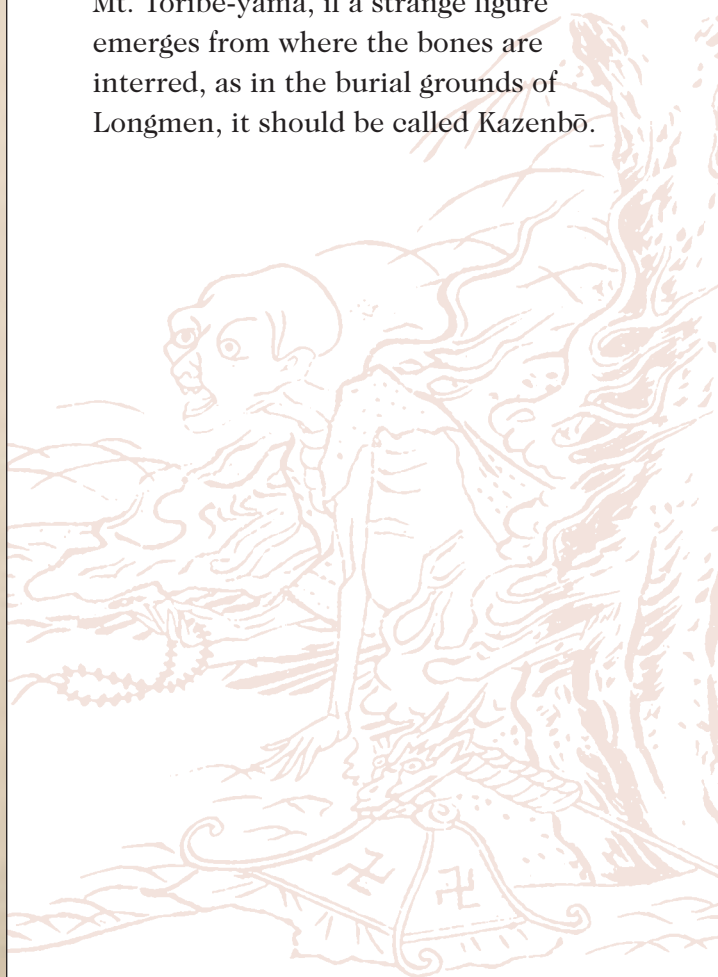
Kamo is an area in northeastern Kyoto that is home to several key Shinto shrines, and this entry alludes to a famed episode from *The Tale of Genji*.

During the Kamo Festival, the cart of Genji's mistress the Lady Rokujō is edged out of prime viewing position by the retinue of her rival, Genji's wife, the Lady Aoi. The incident infuriated Rokujō so much that her soul rose from her sleeping body that night as an *ikiryō* — a “living ghost” (p. 48) — and mortally wounded Aoi.

火前坊 Kazenbō

(BONZE-BEFORE-THE-FIRE)

When the smoke rises over
Mt. Toribe-yama, if a strange figure
emerges from where the bones are
interred, as in the burial grounds of
Longmen, it should be called Kazenbō.



Mt. Toribe-yama, located in Kyoto, is an ancient cremation and burial ground; its name alone is evocative enough to make it a keyword in Japanese literature and poetry. But the rosary and manji-marked lantern evoke a darker history: in the 10th through 11th centuries, the site was also associated with a Buddhist practice of ritual self-immolation. Perhaps the context here is that some of these monks did not rest in peace after the act.

Longmen refers to a verse by the Chinese poet Bai Juyi (772—846), whose work deeply influenced literature both in his home country and in Japan:

*Though your bones may be buried at Longmen /
Your name shall not*

蓑火

Mino-bi

(RAINCOAT-FIRE)

The majority of strange lights that appear nightly on country paths and such are foxfire. Perhaps fire manifesting from a raincoat, just as in Tamino Island's name, represents yang within yin. Or perhaps it is simply the fire from the shins of poor peasants.



The yang (fire) within the yin (rain.)

A *mino* is a traditional straw raincoat.

Deciphering this entry requires knowing both a bit of local superstition and an old poem. Folklore describes a strange phenomenon of mino raincoats spontaneously sparking in the rain. The sparks were called “mino-bi” or “mino-mushi” (mino-bugs), and it was said that only removing the mino could extinguish them; trying to brush them away would cause the raincoat to ignite.

Known as Tsukuda today, Tamino Island sits near the mouth of Osaka's Kanzaki river. The name transliterates into “island of the straw raincoat of the rice fields.” It is mainly remembered from a poem on the subject from the 10th-century *Kokinshū*: *A Collection of Poems ancient and Modern* (translation by Laurel Rasplica Rodd, 1996).

*Caught in the rain I
went today to Tamino
Island but I
found no shelter in its name*



The final sentence in Sekien's entry alludes to a now archaic Japanese idiom, *sune kara hi wo toru* (“making fire from your shins”) which means someone is so poor they don't even have two sticks to rub together.

青行灯

Ao-andō

(THE BLUE LANTERN)

It is said that when the shadows flare as the last candle goes out and the room plunges into darkness, the Ao-andō appears. In times of old, Hyaku Monogatari was played with a lantern covered in blue paper. Do not tell weird tales on dark nights. When one does, it is said that strange things will happen.



The first sentence plays on a set phrase in Japanese: *tomoshihi kien to shite hikari wo masu*, meaning “the light flares as the candle burns out.”

Hyaku Monogatari (literally, “One Hundred Stories”) was a parlor game popular throughout the Edo era. Participants would take turns telling spooky tales over the course of a night around a specially prepared lantern. “One Hundred” is something of a keyword in Japanese horror, the belief being that the simple act of telling the final, hundredth story would conjure something supernatural.

Asai Ryōi’s 1666 *Otogi Bōko* (*Hand Puppet Tales*) cautions against the practice, but describes a session thus: “on a dark night, a lantern is covered in blue paper, and into its oil 100 wicks are dipped and lit; when each is removed for every story told, the room will grow darker, casting the room in an eerie blue glow, and something incredible will happen.” Amusingly, Asai then follows his own advice -- he concludes his own book of scary stories by declaring that he is stopping before reaching the one hundred mark.

雨女

Ame-onna

(RAIN WOMAN)

As the maiden of China's Mt. Fuzan once said, "I shall appear as a cloud to you in the morning, and rain in the evening." Perhaps Ame-Onna is another of this sort.



Sekien's description alludes to an archaic idiom for sexual liaisons. It was based on an old tale in which a Chinese king visiting Mt. Fuzan falls asleep and dreams of sleeping with a holy maiden, who parts with the words Sekien quotes in this entry. The story was written by Song Yu (319–298 BC), whom you may remem-

ber from Sekien's entry on the Cackling Woman (p. 179).

In Japan, the story was well enough known to have been condensed into a now archaic four-character idiom used to refer to couples who are inseparable, written with the four characters "morning-cloud-evening-rain."

小雨坊

Kosamebō

(DRIZZLE-MONK)

On nights of gentle rain, Kosamebō prowls Mt. Ōmine and Mt. Katsuragi begging for alms.



These peaks are venerated as the birthplaces of Shugendō, a religious order centering on asceticism and training in the mountains. The famed mystic En no Gyōja (a.k.a. En no Ozunu, 634?—701?), born on Mt. Katsuragi, consecrated Mt. Ōmine. Shugendō retains deep associations with the mountain-dwelling creatures known as Tengu (see p. 10).

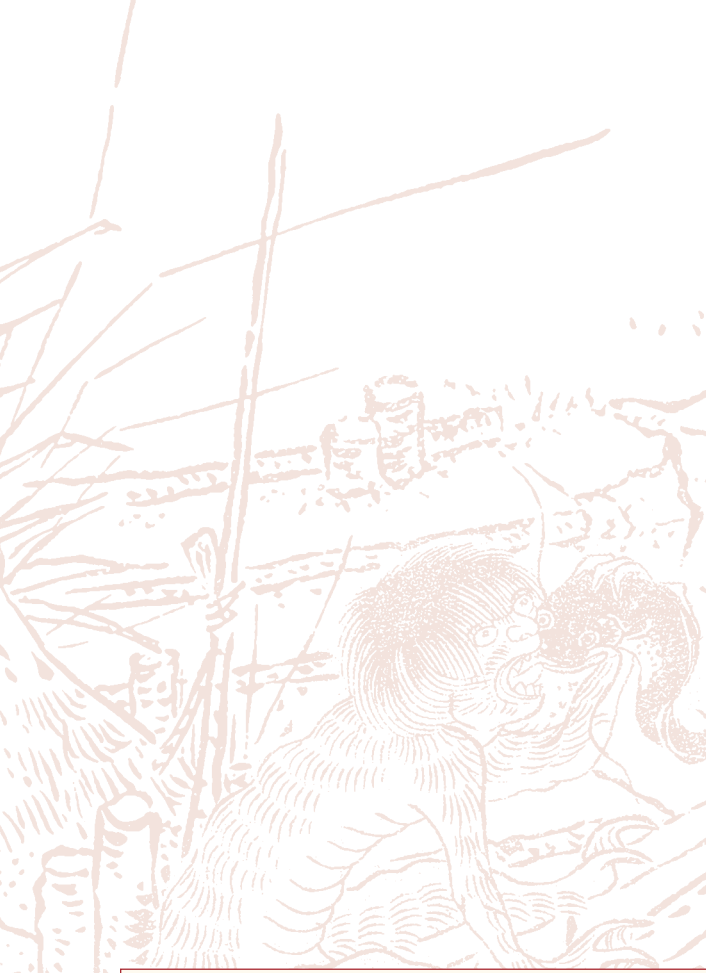


岸涯小僧

Gangi-kozō

(RIVER-TERRACE BOY)

Gangi-kozō sits by the river, where it catches and eats fish. Its teeth are sharp as rasps.



岸涯小僧
魚を喰ふ
利きや
やしろの如し

Wordplay and literary references abound in this entry. The *gangi-yasuri* is a particularly rough-toothed rasp in the traditional Japanese carpenter's toolbox. A stone ramp down to the water's edge is also known as a *gangi*. And yukata robes dyed with a repeating v-shaped pattern (such as the one seen at the upper left) are known as *gangi-shibori*. But the basis of the illustration appears to be a now-obscure literary reference to a work by the Kyoto tea

master and silk farmer Nomoto Dōgen (1655-1714). His 1679 *Sugi Yōji* (*The Redwood Picks*), named after an implement used in the tea ceremony, described the statue of a boy eating a fish on the anniversary of his father's death draped in *gangi-shibori* yukata. (Eating meat on a loved one's death anniversary was considered taboo in Buddhist circles.)

あやし Ayakashi (AYAKASHI)

When a boat is out on Western seas, a tendril long enough to slither over its deck for two or three days may appear. It spews forth large amounts of an oil. If a sailor bails furiously, he will be saved. If not, the boat will sink. Such is the work of the Ayakashi.



Sekien's description closely echoes that of a creature called the *Ikuchi* in Western Japanese folklore. The *Ikuchi* is described as being similar in appearance and diameter to an eel, but unnaturally long.

Given the tentacle-like portrayal here and mention of a vague "western sea," it's tempting to conjecture if this might represent the fabled Kraken from Western folklore. Legends of of giant cephalo-

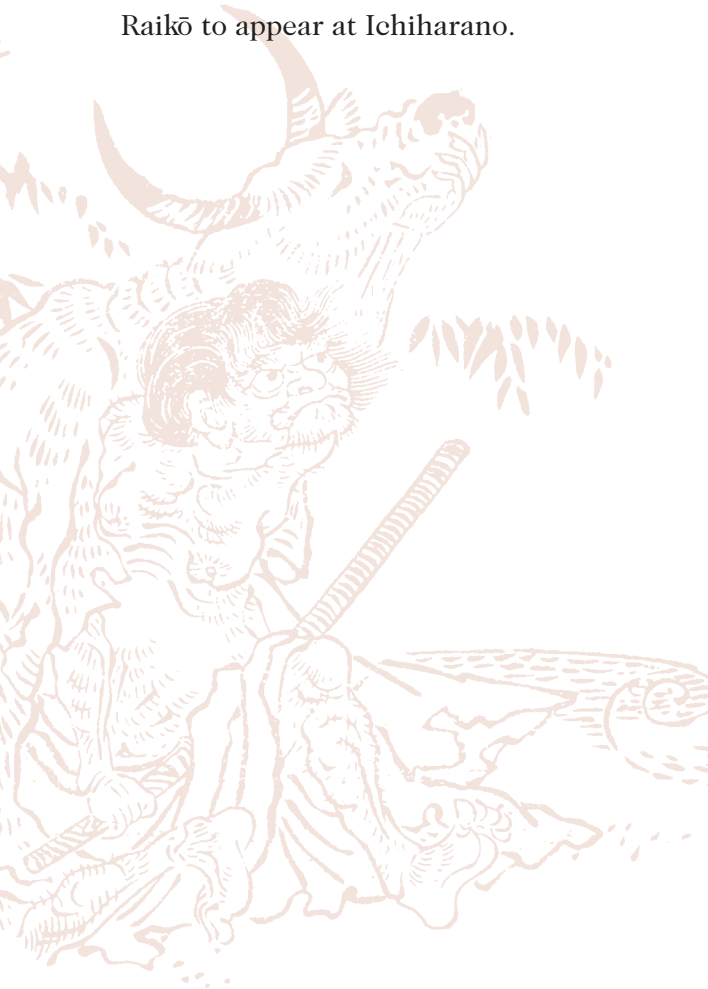
pods extend back to at least the 13th century in Europe, and Linnaeus even included the Kraken in his 1735 *Systema Naturae*, making it entirely possible that tales of it reached Japanese shores. Whatever the case, one thing is certain: in times of old, sailors around the world viewed the sea as a place full of dangerous creatures.

鬼童

Kidō

(THE ONI KID)

It is said that Kidōmaru waited beneath an ox-skin in the snow for Raikō to appear at Ichiharano.



Ichiharano is located near Kyoto's Mt. Kurama. Kidō is written with the characters for “oni” (see p. 88) and “child.” Kidōmaru (written with different characters) is a legendary bandit whose rivalry with the warrior Minamoto no Yoritomo (a.k.a. Raikō) was a popular subject for Japanese artists.

Viciously beaten and chained by Raikō's men, Kidōmaru escapes and plots revenge. He kills and guts a cow, hiding inside its body to ambush Raikō.

The gambit fails and Kidōmaru is killed. The deck was stacked against him—Raikō and crew are also famed for having slayed the Shuten-dōji (p. 93).

Note the unusual tiger-striped scabbard of Kidō's sword, which, in combination with the ox, evokes *ushi-tora* (ox-tiger)—the most inauspicious direction in traditional Japanese divination, and deeply associated with oni.

鬼一口

Oni-hitokuchi (ONE GULP OF AN ONI)

According to the *The Tales of Ise*, Ariwara no Narihira spirited the future Nijō Empress away to an abandoned house, where she was eaten in one gulp by an oni.

When my beloved asked
“Is it a clear gem?
Or what might it be?”
Would that I had replied
“A dewdrop!” and perished.



The Tales of Ise is a 9th century collection of poems, centering on an unnamed protagonist that is strongly hinted be the poet Ariwara no Narihira. He is a historical figure who really does seem to have had a politically forbidden affair with the Nijō Empress-to-be. In the story, it turns out that she wasn't

actually eaten by an oni (p. 88) but recaptured and taken back to the capital by her brothers.

The verse is recited by Narihira after entering the house to find his beloved gone. Their escape marked the first time she had ever been outdoors, and the first time she had seen the morning dew.

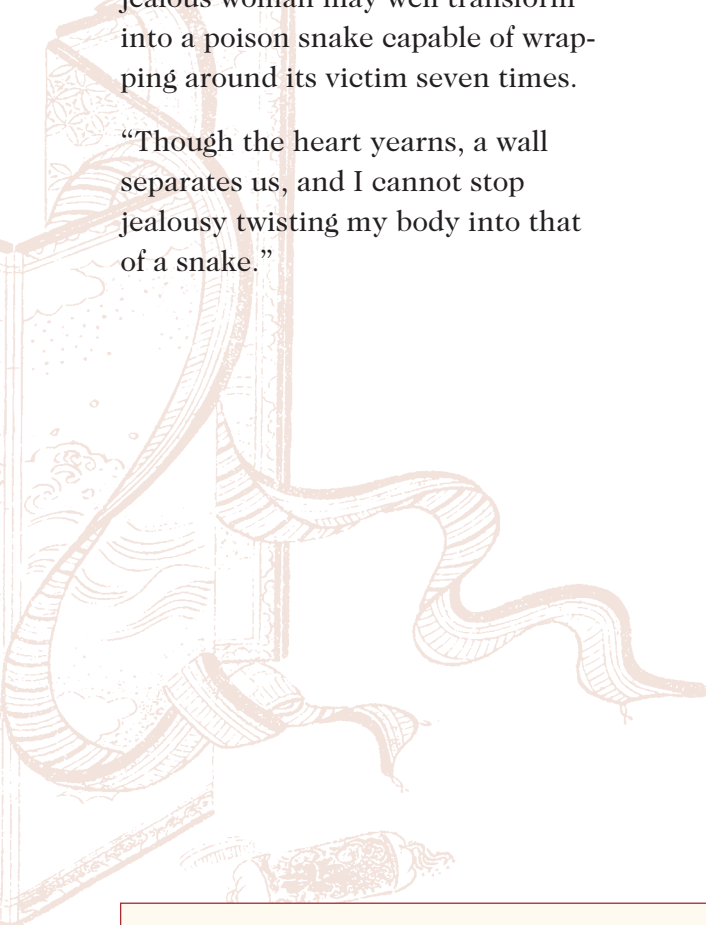
蛇帯

Jatai

(SNAKE-SASH)

The *Bo Wu Zhi* states that if one sleeps atop an obi sash, they shall dream of snakes. If this is the case, the triple-wrapped obi sash of a jealous woman may well transform into a poison snake capable of wrapping around its victim seven times.

“Though the heart yearns, a wall separates us, and I cannot stop jealousy twisting my body into that of a snake.”



Obi are the belts used to cinch kimono closed, but this refers to a Chinese tale about a Tang emperor who was willing to sacrifice his empire for his beloved concubine, Yang Guifei. Their tragic affair represents the classic love story of ancient Chinese and Japanese drama, and in fact Yang Guifei is considered one of the “three beauties” of Japanese Noh theater. In one scene, she exclaims that she has lost so much weight pining for the emperor that her sash can be wrapped around her waist three

full times. That the Jatai wraps itself seven times may be a play off of a common idiom *nanai-yae*, “seven-times, eight-times,” meaning something with many layers. The folding screen, comb, and pillow are all key items in traditional wedding sets.

The *Bo Wu Zhi* is a Chinese encyclopedia compiled by Jin Dynasty era poet Zhang Hua (232-300). Never translated into English in its entirety, its title is variously rendered as “A Treatise in Curiosities” and “A Record of Things at Large,” among others.

小袖の手

Kosode-no-te (THE KIMONO'S HANDS)

There is a Chinese verse by a man who, grieving over the death of his favorite courtesan, requests a monk to conduct a funeral rite over her kimono, whereupon he notices a single biwa lute string hidden in its folds. The discovery reminds him all the more of what he has lost, heightening his anguish. Something of a woman's soul remains in the clothing and accoutrements she wears, and it is said hands have been seen extending from the sleeves of the kimono of women who have passed.



Kosode is the term for a short-sleeved kimono. The idea of phantom hands extending from an empty garment was a popular image in Edo art and literature; the 1853 *Kyōka Hyaku Monogatari* (*Spooky Kyōka Verse*) devotes two full pages to the topic. The backdrop of the illustration is a Buddhist temple. Traditionally, any special or precious clothing owned by a deceased person was brought there rather than tossing it away.

The juxtaposition of kimonos, women, and temples also recalls a dark episode in the history of Edo. Officially known as the Great Fire of Meireki, it raged for

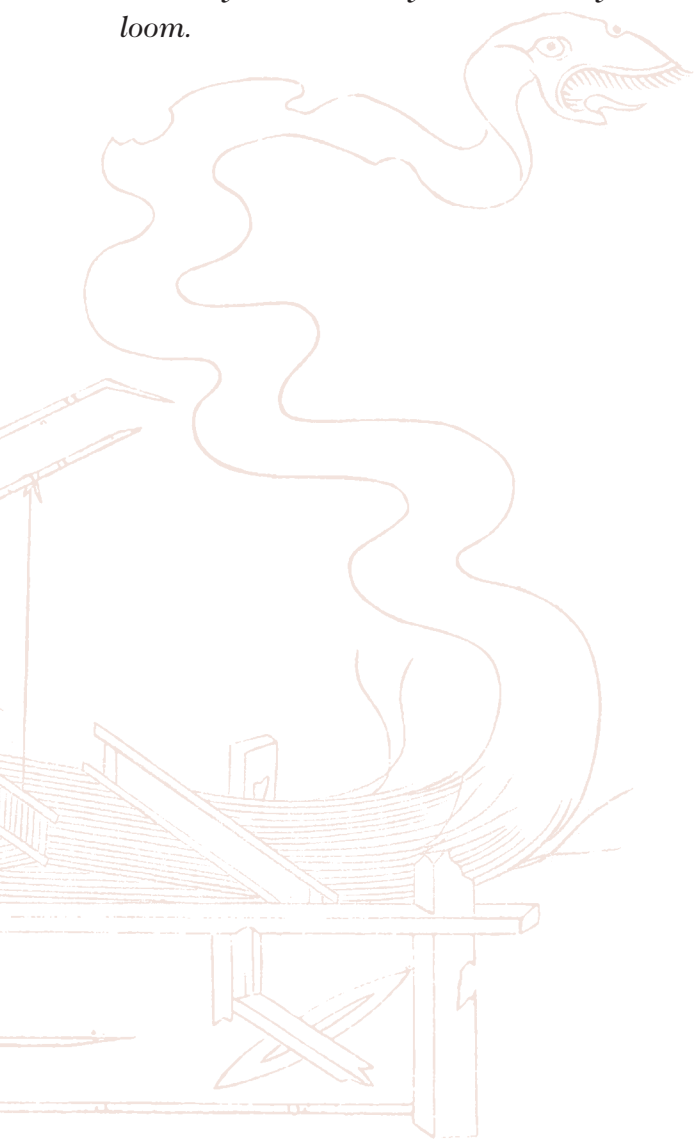
a week in 1657 and claimed the lives of some 100,000 residents. Survivors gave it another name: the *Furisode Kaji* (Kimono Conflagration). The story went that a teenaged woman had an expensive kimono made to resemble that of her unrequited love. After she died shortly thereafter from a broken heart, it was sold to another family whose daughter soon died as well. After a third suspicious death involving the “cursed” kimono, it was brought to a local temple to be immolated. The pyre raged out of control, spreading to nearby buildings and then to the rest of the city.

機尋

Hatahiro

(LOOM-SPAN)

A wife's anger at her husband's leaving her caused her to abandon her loom. This grudge transformed her into a great serpent of some twenty span that quested out in search of him. There is also a Chinese poem that reads, *Ever since you left my side / my hands have yet to touch my loom.*



The verse is from the poem *Since Home You Departed* by Chinese poet and court scholar Zhang Jiuling (673-740). The second half reads, *I yearn for you like the moon on high / weaning as I sit in my gloom.*

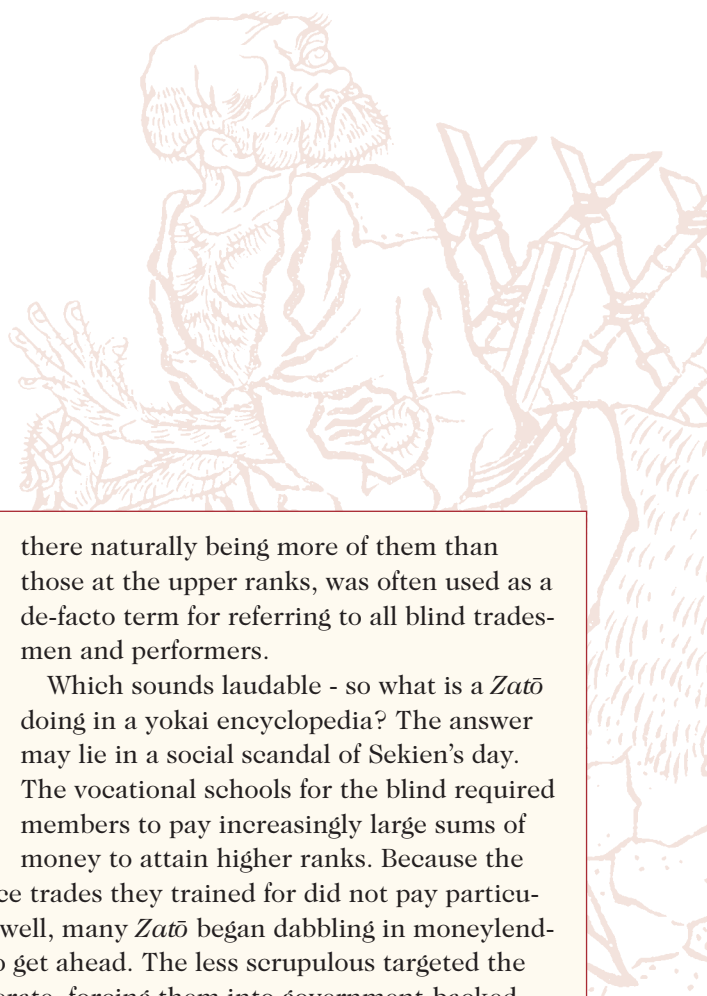
A *hiro* is an archaic unit of measurement corresponding to roughly the span of a man's arms, 1.8 meters. *Hatahiro amari no daija* - "a serpent of some twenty spans" - was a set phrase for describing the creatures in folklore. However Sekien has written the name with different characters, replacing the "twenty" with the first character from the Japanese word for "loom."

大座頭

Ōzatō

(GREAT ZATŌ)

Ōzatō, clad in ragged clothes, wooden sandals, and clutching a wooden cane, wanders the streets on stormy nights. When approached and asked where he is going, he replies: “playing shamisen at the brothel, like always.”



there naturally being more of them than those at the upper ranks, was often used as a de-facto term for referring to all blind tradesmen and performers.

Which sounds laudable - so what is a *Zatō* doing in a yokai encyclopedia? The answer may lie in a social scandal of Sekien's day. The vocational schools for the blind required members to pay increasingly large sums of money to attain higher ranks. Because the

service trades they trained for did not pay particularly well, many *Zatō* began dabbling in moneylending to get ahead. The less scrupulous targeted the desperate, forcing them into government-backed contracts with exorbitant interest rates and arduous payment terms. The 1812 tabloid tell-all *Seji Kenbunroku* (*Things I Have Seen and Heard*) devotes an entire chapter to this loan-sharking, claiming that “3,000 out of the 3,700 [*Zatō* in Edo] are moneylenders,” decrying them as “evil people filled with greed and dishonesty.”

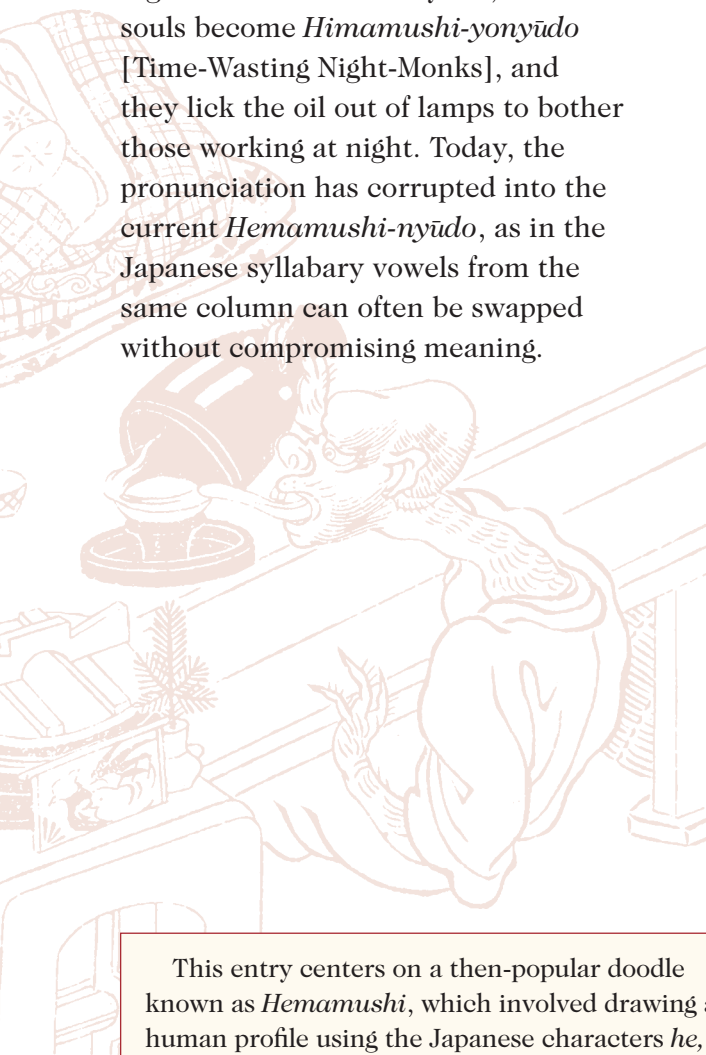
Zatō was a title for a blind person trained in a service field. The term originated in the ranking system of a 13th century organization called *Tōdōza* that trained the blind as “lute-monk” entertainers who strummed the lute while reciting passages from *The Tale of Heike*. By the Edo era, the organization had split into several competing schools. The largest, known as the *Ichikata*, was officially recognized by the Shogunate, allowing it to flourish and expand into more trades, including massage, acupuncture, shamisen, koto, and the like. *Zatō* represented the lowest rank for apprentices, and

火間虫入道

Himamushi-nyūdō

(FIREBUG MONK)

It is said that “life is work, and those who work never go poor.” When those who float through life aimlessly wasting their time eventually die, their souls become *Himamushi-yonyūdo* [Time-Wasting Night-Monks], and they lick the oil out of lamps to bother those working at night. Today, the pronunciation has corrupted into the current *Hemamushi-nyūdo*, as in the Japanese syllabary vowels from the same column can often be swapped without compromising meaning.



This entry centers on a then-popular doodle known as *Hemamushi*, which involved drawing a human profile using the Japanese characters *he*, *ma*, *mu*, and *shi*, often in combination with the characters *nyūdo* (monk) forming a body. Here Sekien has combined this concept with the idiom for wasting of time, *himamushi*, to create a new yokai, simultaneously making the tongue-in-cheek claim that this yokai is actually the origin of the *hemamushi* doodle.



Note the stone oven at bottom left, known as a *kamado* in Japanese. In folk tradition, a home's oven needed to be properly cleaned and tended to lest the *Kamado-gami* (god of the oven) grow angry and bring misfortune down upon the family. Here it is topped by a sprig of pine and a votive plaque with chickens, both traditional offerings. The kanji used to write the *Hima* in *Himamushi-nyudo* can also be read *kama*, further linking this yokai to the oven.

殺生石

Sesshō-seki

(LIFE-TAKING STONE)

The Life-Taking Stone is found in Nasuno of Shimotsuke. It is an old fox transformed, and any creature who approaches it on foot or wing dies. It is said that the monk Gen-ō smashed the stone on the 11th of January in the second year of the Ōei emperor, the Year of the Wooden Pig.



The old fox in question is none other than Tamamo-no-mae (p. 98) - note the multiple “tails” of stone at bottom right.

Shimotsuke is now known as Tochigi prefecture; the second year of Ōei corresponds to 1395 AD. The Year of the Wooden Pig is from the Chinese “sexagenary” calendar, divided into combinations of the 12 zodiacological animals paired with five elements of wood, metal, fire, earth, and water,

each of which in turn is divided into yin and yang versions.

The traditional Japanese hammer known as the *gennō*, which looks something like a ball-peen hammer, takes its name from the tale of the monk smashing the Life-Taking Stone. Incidentally, the stone really exists. It is located in a rock-field scattered around volcanically active fumaroles in Tochigi Prefecture’s Nasu highlands.

風狸

Fūri

(WIND-TANUKI)

Driven by wind it barrels up cliffs and trees as fast as a bird flies.



The 1712 *Wakan Sansaizue* (Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms) further describes this creature as being roughly the size of a *tanuki* (p. 19) and nocturnal.

茂林寺釜

Morinji-no-kama (THE KETTLE OF MORINJI TEMPLE)

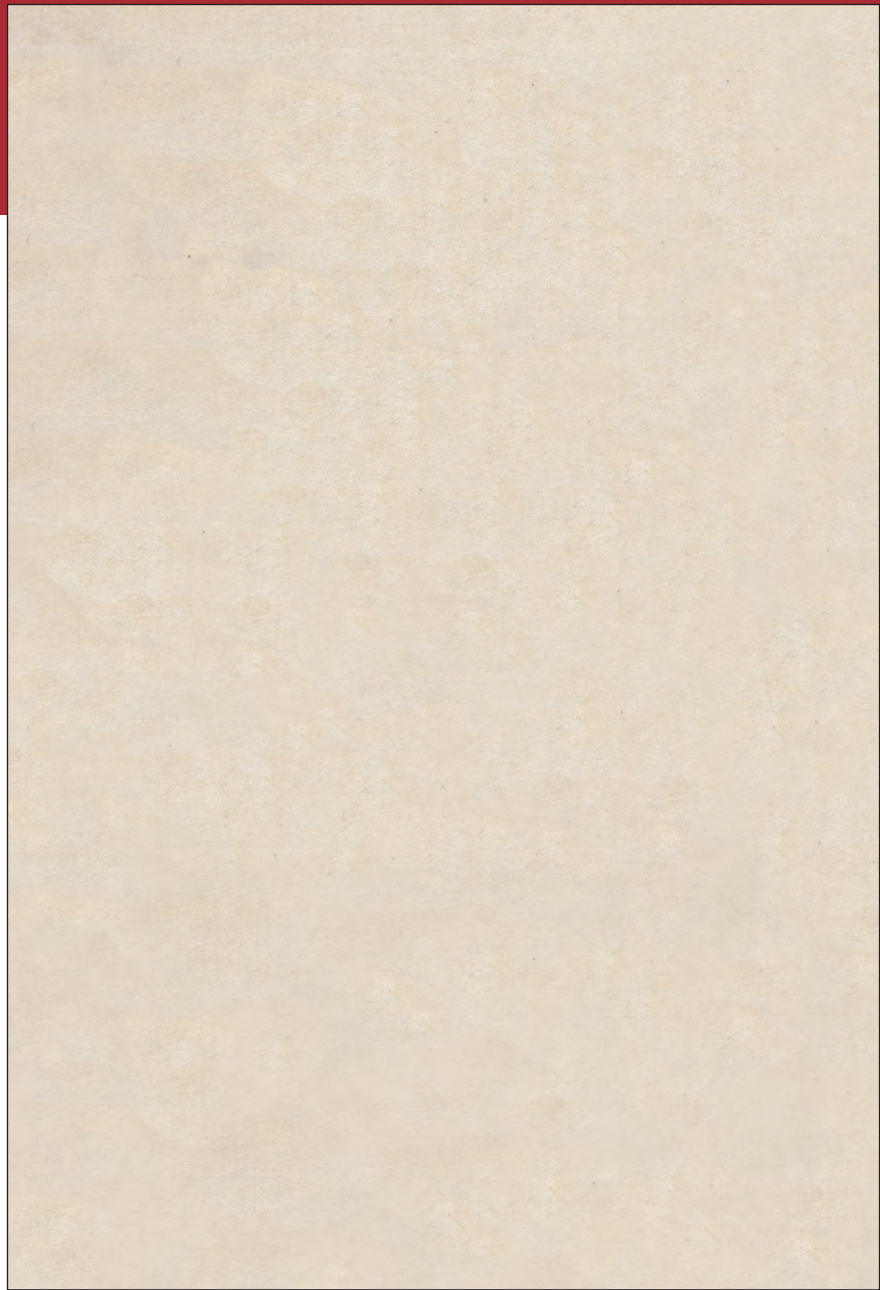
There is a tanuki in Jōshū's Morinji Temple. Taking the name Shukaku, he transformed himself into a monk and remained for seven generations. Shukaku was always making tea. When he boiled water in his kettle, it would remain hot for six or seven days. People called his kettle *bunbuku* [happily bubbling]. Perhaps this is taken from a mistaken reading of the phrase *bunbuka*, in which *bunka* is a weak flame and *buka* is a strong one.

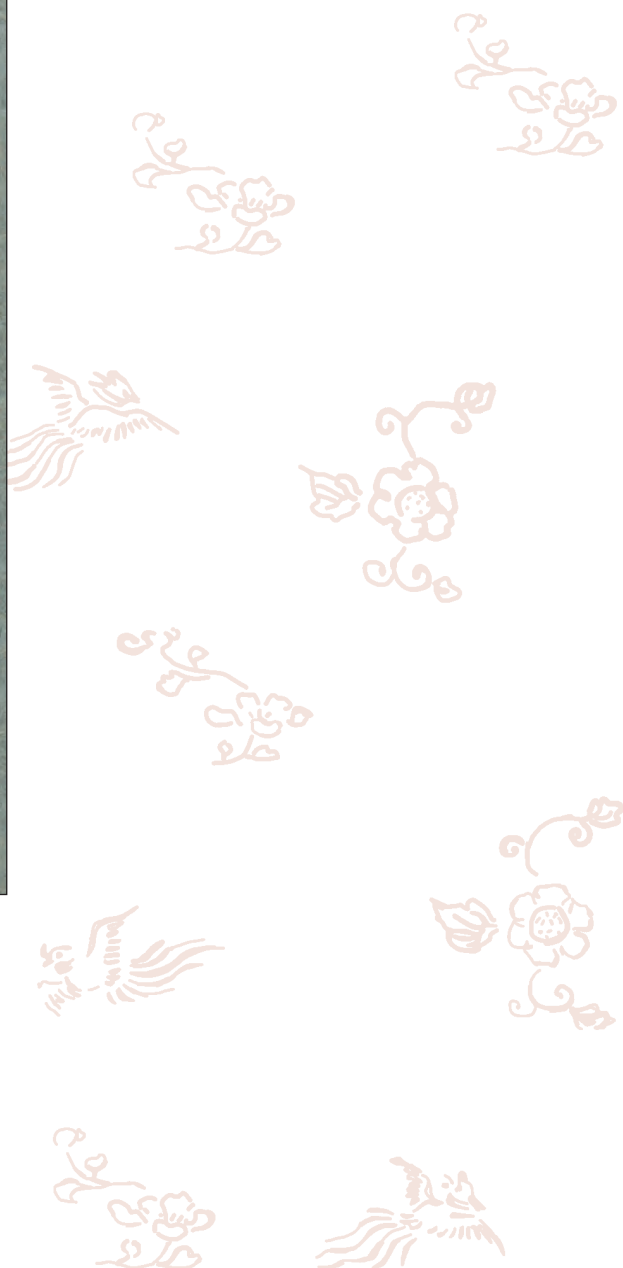


Jōshū corresponds to modern-day Gunma prefecture, where Morinji Temple stands to this day; in fact, they even keep the kettle on display for visitors.

The legend also forms the basis for the popular children's story *Bunbuku Chagama*, or "The Happiness-Spreading Teapot." In that tale, an old woodcutter saves a tanuki from a trap. In thanks, the tanuki transforms itself into a kettle that the old

man can sell for money. A monk purchases it to boil tea, but the flames cause the tanuki to transform back into an animal and return to the old man. The pair start a circus show, and a new star is born. A number of variations on the story exist, but the basic concept of a tea kettle with a tanuki's head, limbs, and tail dancing around a room remains one of the most enduring images in Japanese folklore.

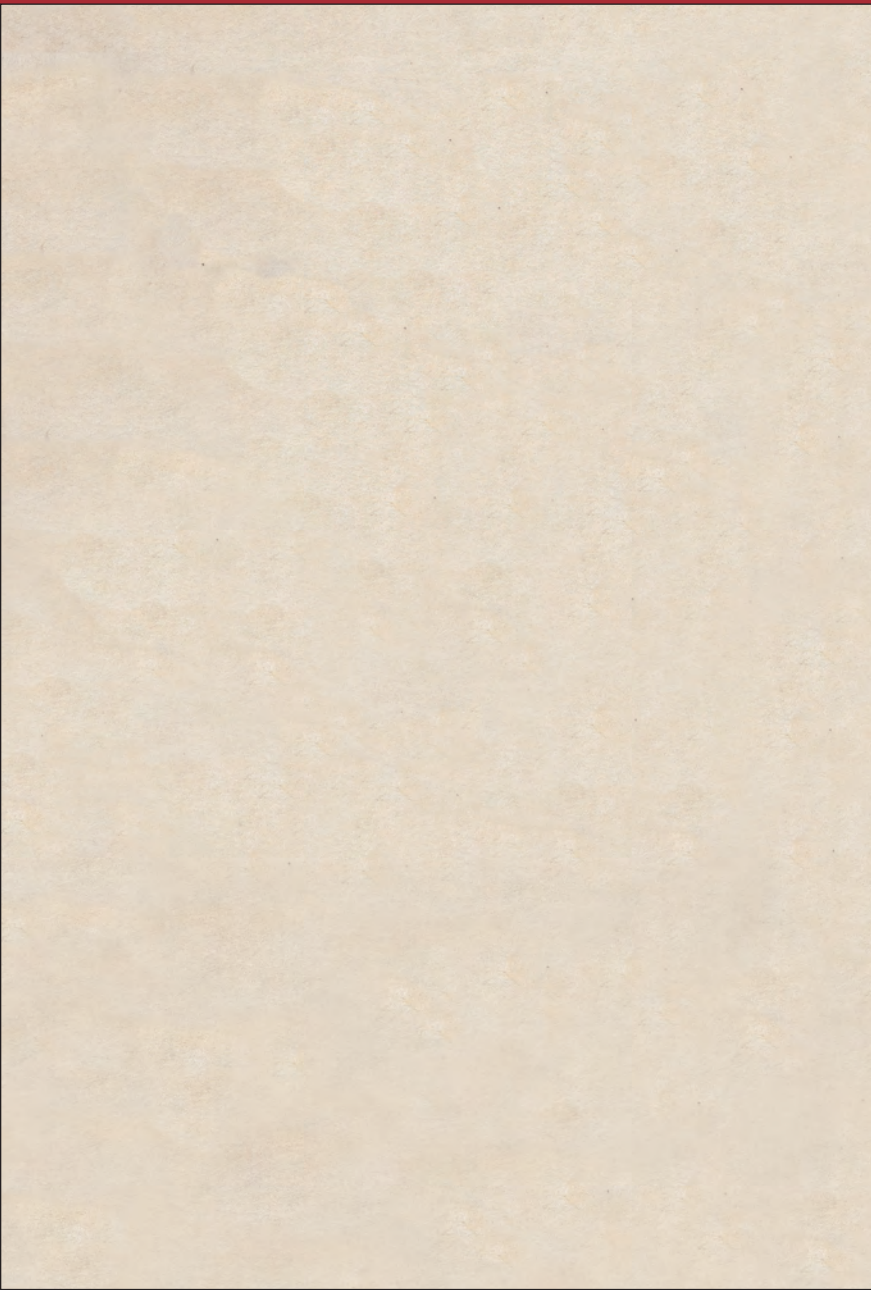




今昔百鬼拾遺 雨下
Konjaku Hyakki Shūi
(Ame) (Ge)

More of the Demon Horde from
Past and Present,
(Rain) (Volume 3)



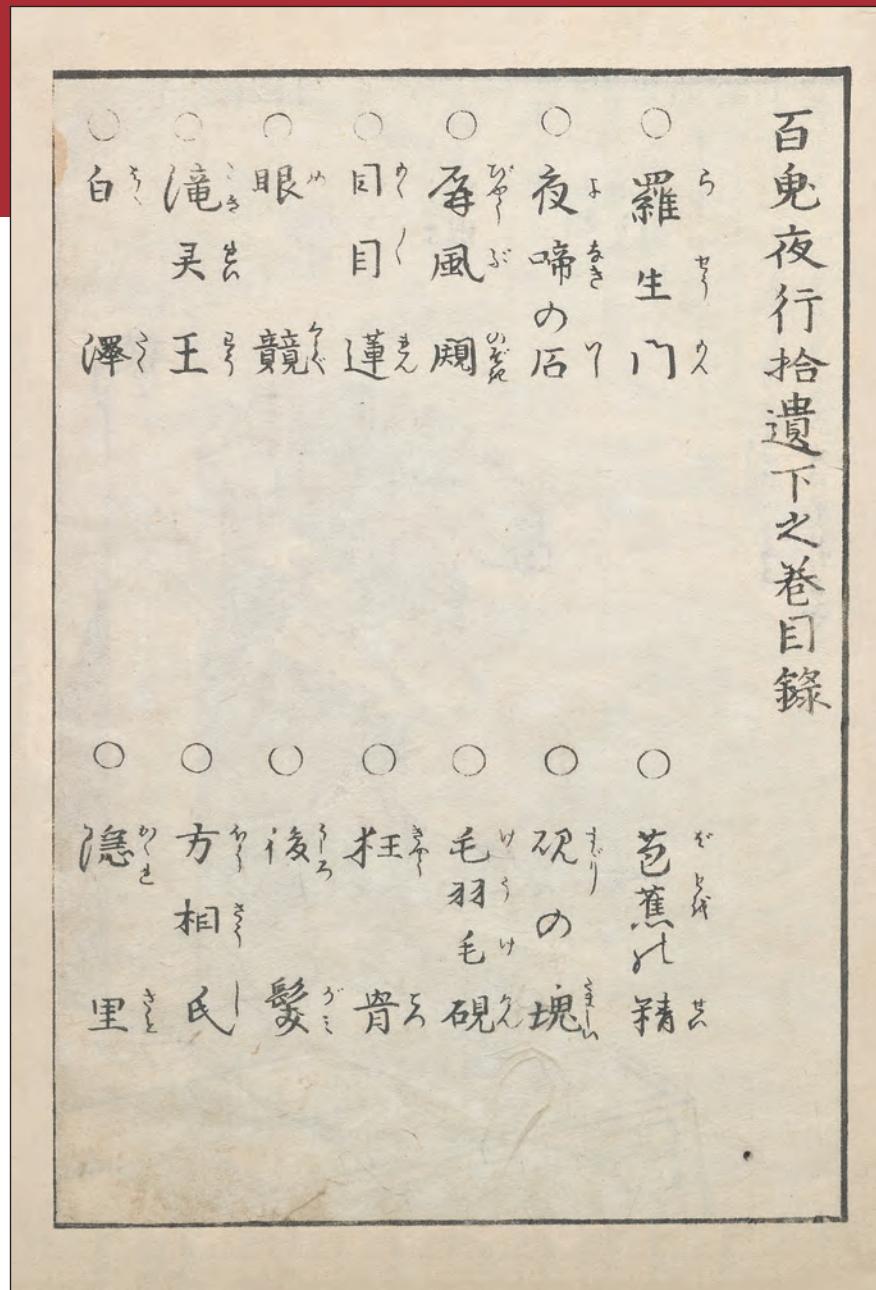


百鬼夜行拾遺下之卷目錄

Hyakki Yagyō Shūi Ge-no-Maki

More of the Demon Horde,
Volume 3: Table of Contents

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Mekurabe
Ushiro-gami
Taki-reiō
Hōsō-shi
Hakutaku
Kakure-zato



Note that the title used for the Table of Contents differs from that on the book's cover. This volume is "officially" known as *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi* (*More of the Demon Horde from Past and Present*). The reason for this discrepancy is unknown; perhaps the title changed at some point during the production process.

Note: Iyaya (p. 220) is missing from the Contents.

羅城門鬼

Rajōmon-oni (THE ONI OF RAJŌMON GATE)

Toryōkō composed the first line of a poem as he passed Rajōmon Gate. “The air clears; the wind ruffles the young willow’s hair.” The voice of the oni of Rajōmon called out the second: “The ice melts; the waves wash the moss’ beard.” This is the same demon that later suffered its arm being severed by Watanabe-no-tsuna.



This gate is better known today as *Rashomon*, thanks to the Akira Kurosawa film of the same name. Toryōkō is an alternate reading of the characters for the name of Miyako no Yoshika (834-879). He is a famed master of Chinese verse and official of the Heian royal court. Watanabe-no-Tsuna’s tangle with the demon (Ibaraki-dōji, p. 144) is a popular theme in Japanese art, famously described in the 13th century “sequel” to the *Tale of Heike*, the *Book*

of the Sword. There’s a definite hair theme here; the demon reaches down to grab Tsuna’s top knotted hair, and Tsuna whips around to slice off the demon’s arm with a sword called *Hige-kiri Maru*—The Beardcutter.

The story of swapping verse with the oni comes from the 1252 book *Jikkishō* (*A Miscellany of Ten Maxims*).

夜啼石

Yonaki-no-ishi

(THE STONE THAT WAILS AT NIGHT)

Found in the mountains of Sayo no Nakayama pass in Enshū. Long ago, a pregnant woman was attacked and killed by bandits. However, the child in her womb was unscathed, and grew up to exact revenge.



The full story is such a well-known folktale in Japan that Sekien felt no need to elaborate its particulars. The child climbs out of his mother's sliced-open womb, onto the rock, and wails to alert rescuers. He is raised by local monks and grows up to become a knife-polisher in a nearby town. One day, an aged ronin comes in with a chipped blade, explaining that he hit a rock with it on Sayo no Nakayama pass decades earlier. Realizing it is his mother's killer, the knife-polisher strikes the ronin down.

芭蕉精

Bashō-no-sei (PLANTAIN-SPIRIT)

In China, the spirits of plantain trees occasionally take human form and tell stories. The Noh play *Bashō* was created from these tales.



Bashō refers to the Japanese banana or plantain tree. The Noh play referenced here, by the 15th century poet Komparu Zenchiku, involves a Buddhist monk engaging in an enlightening dialogue with a banana tree. Incidentally, the famed poet Matsuo Bashō took his pen name from the tree as well.

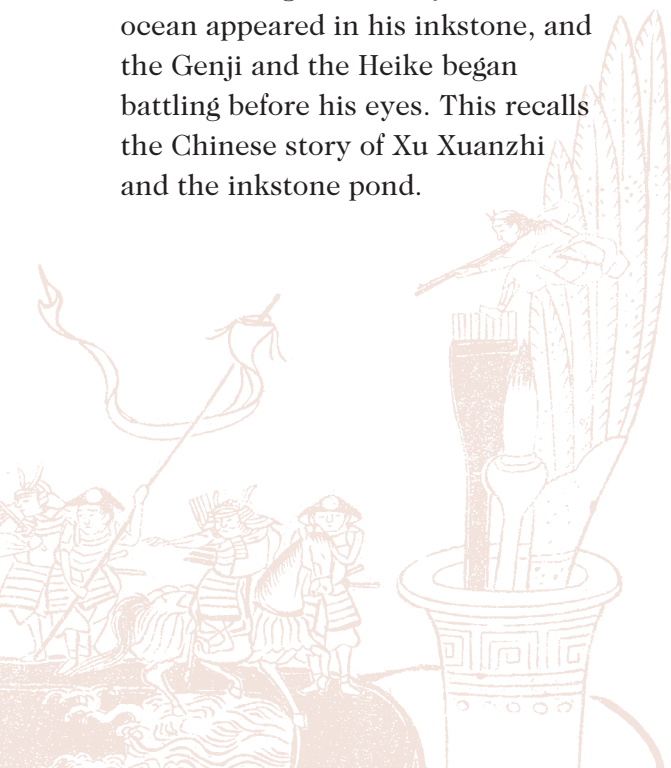


硯の魂

Suzuri-no-tamashii

(THE HAUNTED INKSTONE)

A certain man had a fondness for the Akama-ga-seki inkstone in his writing-room. One day, he dozed off while reading *The Tale of Heike*. An ocean appeared in his inkstone, and the Genji and the Heike began battling before his eyes. This recalls the Chinese story of Xu Xuanzhi and the inkstone pond.



Akama-ga-seki is an old name for what is today known as Shimonoseki. In the Edo era, inkstones from this city, located at the westernmost tip of the main island of Honshu, were prized for their quality.

The area also happens to be the site of one of Japan's most famous sea engagements, the 1185 Battle of Dan-no-Ura. In this epic naval confrontation, the Genji wiped out the Heike clan, cementing their claim on the throne and changing the course of Japanese history. The souls of the defeated are said to haunt the strait to this day, and have inspired generations of tales—including this one. Note the soldier with the flintlock rifle at upper right. Delib-



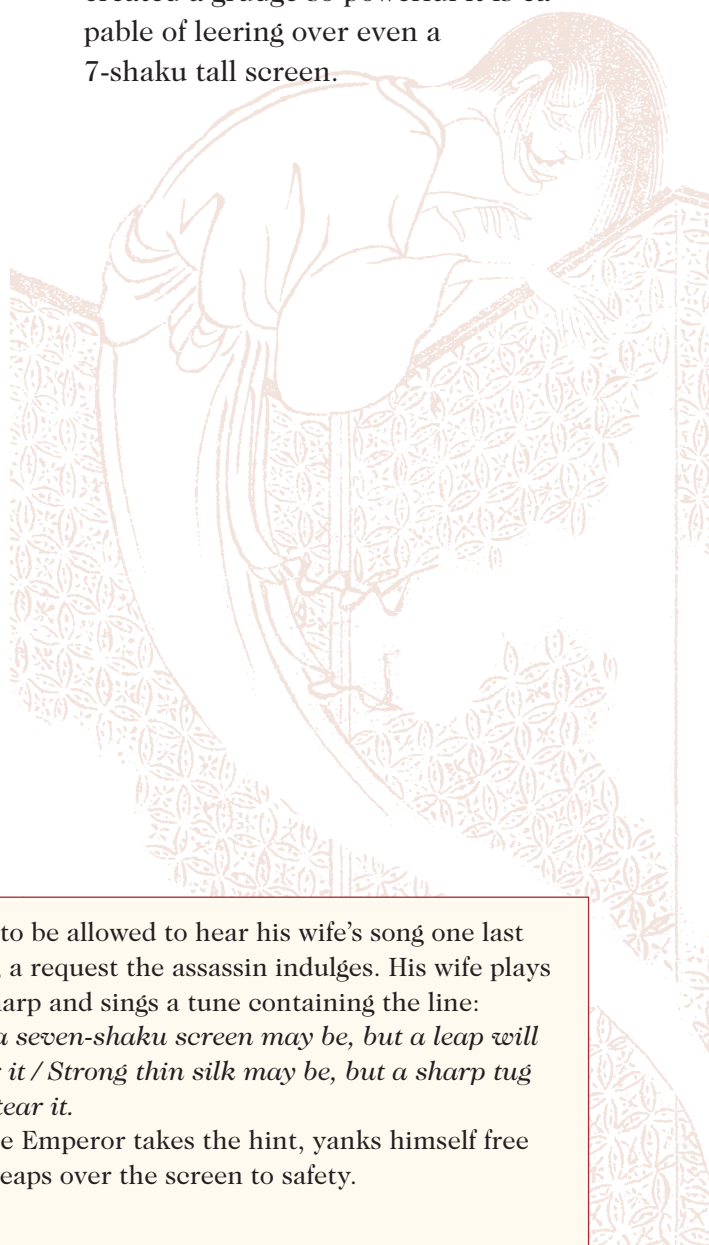
erate or not, it's an anachronism—the first firearms wouldn't enter Japan until 1543.

The last sentence refers to a book called the *Taiping Guangji* (*Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*.) It contains a story about a man who awakens in a strange miniature kingdom. After a variety of adventures, he makes it back home, only to realize that he had been in an ant-hole under his house the entire time.

屏風闖

Byōbu-nozoki (SCREEN-PEEPER)

Pillows placed side by side in a lady's chambers for liaison upon liaison, but in the end, the promise of conjugal affection and bliss is broken. This created a grudge so powerful it is capable of leering over even a 7-shaku tall screen.



"If these walls could talk..." goes the English saying. In old Japan, the same could be said of folding screens, which were found in bedrooms and other intimate places. 7 *shaku* corresponds to roughly two meters.

The phrase "7-shaku tall screen" evokes the story of a Chinese emperor cornered by an assassin, well known in Japan through its inclusion in the 14th century saga *Tale of the Heike*. The First Emperor

begs to be allowed to hear his wife's song one last time, a request the assassin indulges. His wife plays the harp and sings a tune containing the line: *Tall a seven-shaku screen may be, but a leap will clear it / Strong thin silk may be, but a sharp tug will tear it.*

The Emperor takes the hint, yanks himself free and leaps over the screen to safety.

毛羽毛現

Keu-ken

(KEU-KEGEN)

Perhaps Keu-ken is so called because it is covered in hair like Mōjo. Also written with different characters reading “strange-and-rare-to-see” as it is uncommon and encounters are extremely rare.



Its name is written with the characters “fur-feather-fur-appearance.” In other words, this yokai is a furry, feathery sight.

Mōjo (*Mao nu* in Chinese) is one of the Taoist immortals. She was first described in the 1st century BC Chinese compilation *Liexian Zhuan* (*Biographies of the Immortals*). Covered in hair, she lives deep in the mountains, subsists on nothing more than pine needles, and has a body so light that she can fly through the air. That Sekien felt no need to elaborate suggests she was fairly well known at the time.

目目連

Mokumoku-ren

(EYE-EYE)

Spring mists leave no traces; gone like those who once lived in this abandoned house, now filled with eyes corner to corner. Perhaps it was once home to a go player.



This sentient shoji (paper screen) is a staple of Japanese haunted houses. Its name is an amusing visual rebus in and of itself: it's written with the character for eye (itself a pictogram for the eye) twice, followed by a character meaning "connected."

Sekien's first sentence paraphrases the second stanza of a famed poem:

*Peach and plum blossoms do not speak / how many springs have come and gone?
Spring mists leave no traces / gone like those who once lived here.*

Penned by Sugawara no Fumitoki, grandson of the celebrated scholar Sugawara no Michizane, this verse appeared in the 11th century poetry anthology *Wakan Rōeishū* (*Collection of Japanese and Chinese Poems for Singing*.)

The illustration echoes an old proverb, "the walls have ears and the shoji have eyes." But as the text implies, the joke's really about the game of go. First of all, the squares of the board are commonly called "eyes." But more to the point, there's a famed move called *nigan*, literally "two-eyes," that is a technique for using two pieces to establish a foothold in the opponent's territory. Only one "eye" will get captured, but a pair together will survive.

狂骨

Kyōkotsu

(CRAZYBONES)

Kyōkotsu is a skeleton in a well. That the common word *kyōkotsu* means “extreme” goes to show that his or her grudge is even more extreme still.



Written here with the characters “crazy” and “bones,” Kyōkotsu is pronounced identically to an archaic word meaning “extreme” or “terrible.”

Wells are portrayed as portals to other worlds or epicenters for supernatural activity in a great many Japanese ghost stories, most notably that of Okiku, the Plate-Counting Ghost (p. 116). The well in this drawing appears to be of the *hane-tsurube* (“jumping wellbucket”) style, which uses a simple wooden frame supporting a bamboo pole to hoist the water bucket.

Although Sekien describes Kyōkotsu as a skeleton, its portrayal is quite ghost-like. The idea of a skeletal-looking bamboo pole against the backdrop of withered tall grasses evokes a famous proverb: *yūrei no shōtai mitari kareobana* (“what I thought to be a ghost was simply dried grass”). In other words, one can see things that aren’t really there, if in the grip of “extreme” terror.

目競

Mekurabe

(STAREDOWN)

One night, the sovereign monk Kiyomori had a dream in which he was confronted by skulls on all sides: first two, then ten, twenty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, and then millions of skulls. Kiyomori glared them down as though in a staring contest. Such is written in the *Tale of the Heike*.



The ruthless Taira no Kiyomori (1118–1181), renowned for his shrewdness both in battle and in politics, is a key player in the 14th century saga *Tale of the Heike*. In the scene Sekien evokes here, Kiyomori has declared himself a holy man, but remains dogged by the souls of those he destroyed, as their skulls coalesce into a giant apparition in his garden.

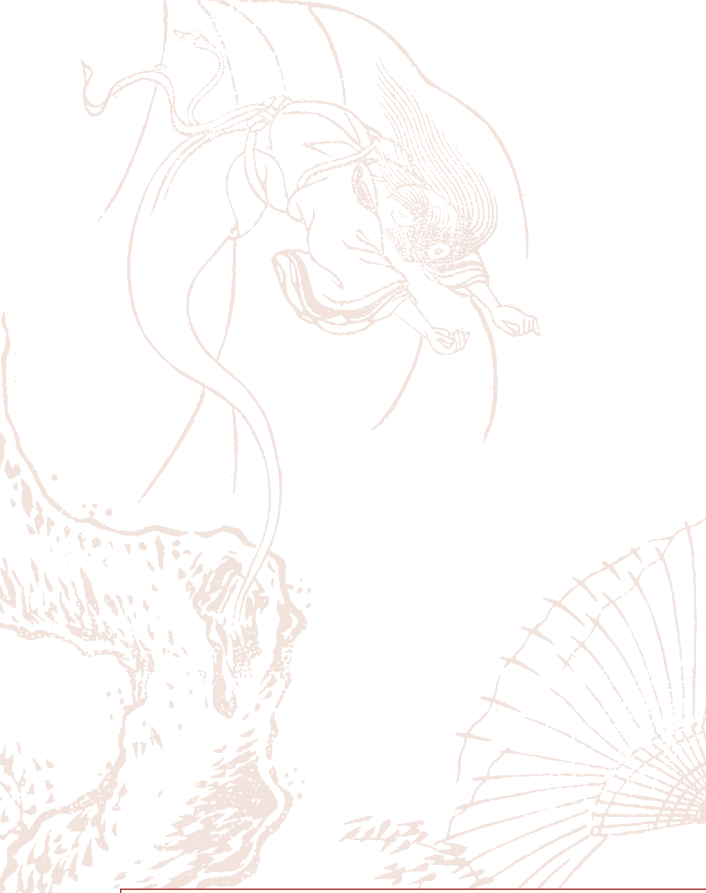
A linguistic note. Sekien describes the skulls descending on Kiyomori using the word *tōzai*, written with the characters for east and west; this is an archaic term meaning “everywhere.”

後神

Ushiro-gami

(THE GOD BEHIND YOU)

Ushiro-gami accompanies the god of cowardice. Just when you think Ushiro-gami is in front of you, it disappears behind you and yanks the hair on the back of your head.



A strange yokai with front and back thoroughly mixed up, arched over backwards with reversed hands and an eye atop its head.

Many puns are at play here. Swapping just a single character turns Ushiro-gami, “the god behind you” into *ushiro-gami*, “the hair on the back of your head.” This wordplay recalls the idiom “pulling the hair on the back of your head,” used in situations when one must reluctantly tear oneself away from someone they love.

Meanwhile, the umbrella, apparently flipped inside-out by a powerful breeze, evokes the saying *okubyō-kaze ni fukareru*—literally, “blown by the wind of cowardice,” but used to mean “lose your nerve.”

And finally, the whirlwinds known as dust devils in English were in Japan once called *Tengu-kaze* (Tengu-winds), but are more commonly referred to as *tsumuji-kaze*—literally, whorl-winds, as in the whorl of hair atop a head, right where Ushiro-gami’s eye happens to be.

否哉

Iyaya

(OH NO)

Upon spotting a strange insect, Dongfang Shuo of China named it *guaizai* (“how monstrous!”). The Iyaya was named in the same manner.



Iyaya sounds a lot like saying “oh, no!” in spoken Japanese—precisely what a beautiful woman would say upon seeing a reflection of herself that looks like this.

Dongfang Shuo (ca. 160 BCE—ca. 93 BCE) was a scholar and court official of Han Dynasty China. The anecdote Sekien references comes from the

10th century *Taiping Guangji* (*Extensive Records of the Taiping Era*). It involves Dongfang discovering a strange insect that he believes represents the reincarnated spirit of an oppressed citizen, and he dubs it *guaizai* (“how monstrous!”) as a critique of the Qin Dynasty government.

方相氏

Hōsō-shi

(FANGXIANG SHI)

In the *Analects of Confucius* is written: “When the villagers were going through their *oni-yarai* ceremonies, he put on his court robes and stood on the eastern steps.”

Note: *oni-yarai* means a ritual performed to drive away pestilential influences; such is the role of the Hōsō-shi in the *Rites of Zhou*.



In Japan, *oni-yarai* rituals were traditionally held in the Imperial Palace on New Year's Eve. Over the centuries, the date shifted to the eve before the first day of spring. This gave rise to the popular annual tradition of *setsubun*, in which beans are scattered to rid households of *oni* and other negative influences.

Hōsō-shi is the Japanese reading of the Chinese word *fangxiang shi* (exorcist), whose role is

detailed in the 2nd century Chinese text *Rites of Zhou* as such: “the duty of the *fangxiang shi* is to cover himself with bearskin, a mask having four eyes of gold, a black upper garment, and a lower vermillion garment; grasping his halberd and brandishing his shield, he leads the hundred functionaries in the seasonal *Nuo* [great exorcism]... to drive out pestilences.”

滝霊王

Taki-reiō

(WATERFALL SPIRIT KING)

Said to appear in the waterfall basins of various regions. In the *Blue Dragon Commentary*, it is said that all demons and calamities must submit to its authority.



The *Blue Dragon Commentary* is attributed to Saichō (766?–822), the founder of Japan's Tendai school of Buddhism. Taki-reiō, portrayed holding a sword and lariat and biting its lower lip, strongly resembles the powerful Buddhist deity Fudō Myōō (also known as Acala).

In the town of Nikko, not far from the tomb of the first Shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu, runs a beautiful river gorge called the Kanman-ga-fuchi Abyss. It has been a tourist spot for centuries, revered for the sound of

water cascading over its rocks, said to resemble the sound of the sutra of Fudō Myōō. In fact Fudō Myōō is said to appear there from time to time, and in Sekien's day a two-meter statue of the deity actually stood watch over the abyss (it was washed away in a 1902 flood.) While the abyss is not explicitly mentioned in Sekien's commentary, the illustration may have been intended to evoke this serene and scenic place.

白澤

Hakutaku

(BAI ZE)

*Deep in the distant Eastern realms
Did the Yellow Emperor find Bai Ze;
it taught him to counter hauntings
Of every type, kind, and way.*

[By Momonga]



Known in China as the *Bai Ze*, which transliterates into “White Marsh.”

Strictly speaking not a yokai, but a benevolent mythical beast along the lines of the *kirin*, *komainu*, or phoenix. The Yellow Emperor is a legendary Chinese ruler whose reign lasted from 2697 to 2598 BC. According to the 11th century *Yunji Qiqian*, a compendium of Taoist learning, the Bai Ze dictated

to the Yellow Emperor a detailed guide to the 11,520 types of supernatural creatures that existed in the world, and how to deal with them. Alas, the resulting book has long since been lost.

Sekien has composed the entry in the form of a Chinese poem, which he accentuates by using the faux attribution of Momonga (“flying squirrel,” but also used colloquially to mean “a monster.”)



to make all of one's dreams come true. Behind it in the alcove is a scroll painting of the same. At the bottom right are bales of rice, currency in times of old; it is being overrun by his familiars, mice, who carry golden *koban* coins in their mouths. In the center of the room, tables brim with gold coins, silk, and boxes of more gold. Red snapper fish are arrayed on the table at center (their Japanese name, *tai*, evokes the word *medetai*, or auspicious).

隠里

Kakure-zato

(HIDDEN VILLAGE)



A realm separate from our own, in which gods, yokai, ghosts, mythical beasts, immortals, and others not of our world dwell. Here we are given a glimpse of a celebration headed by Daikokuten, god of commerce and trade. Symbols of prosperity abound. Daikokuten is wrapped in a “lucky bag” filled with riches, and holds a magical mallet that produces money when struck. By his right hand is a vessel filled with what appear to be legendary cinta-mani jewels, which in popular lore have the power

鳥山石燕豐房畫
 授合門人
 燕子興
 安永十^辛丑^春
 彫工 井上新七
 文化二乙丑年求板
 江戸書林
 本銀町三丁目
 前川六左衛門
 前川弥兵衛

Art: Toriyama Sekien Toyofusa

Apprentices: Shikō, Enji

Carver: Inoue Shinshichi

Edo Booksellers:

Maekawa Rokuzaemon

Maekawa Yahei

Honshirogane-chō, 3-chōme

First edition printed Anei 10

Kanoto-ushi, Spring

Blocks acquired

Bunka 2, Kinoto-ushi

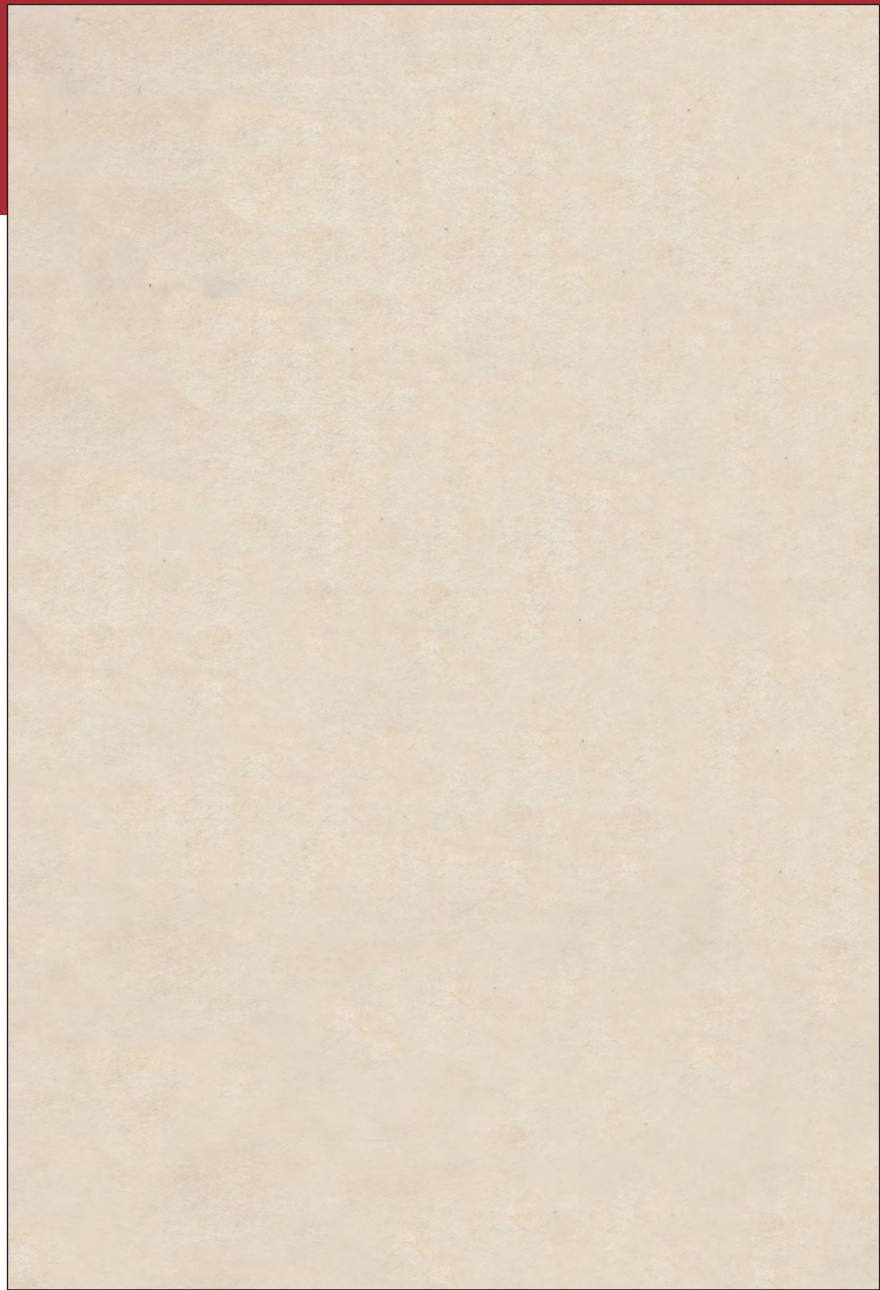
This colophon is from the second edition of the book, published after the two Maekawa booksellers acquired the blocks from the original bookseller-publisher, Enshū-ya Yashichi. Although presumably related, the two Maekawas were different companies.

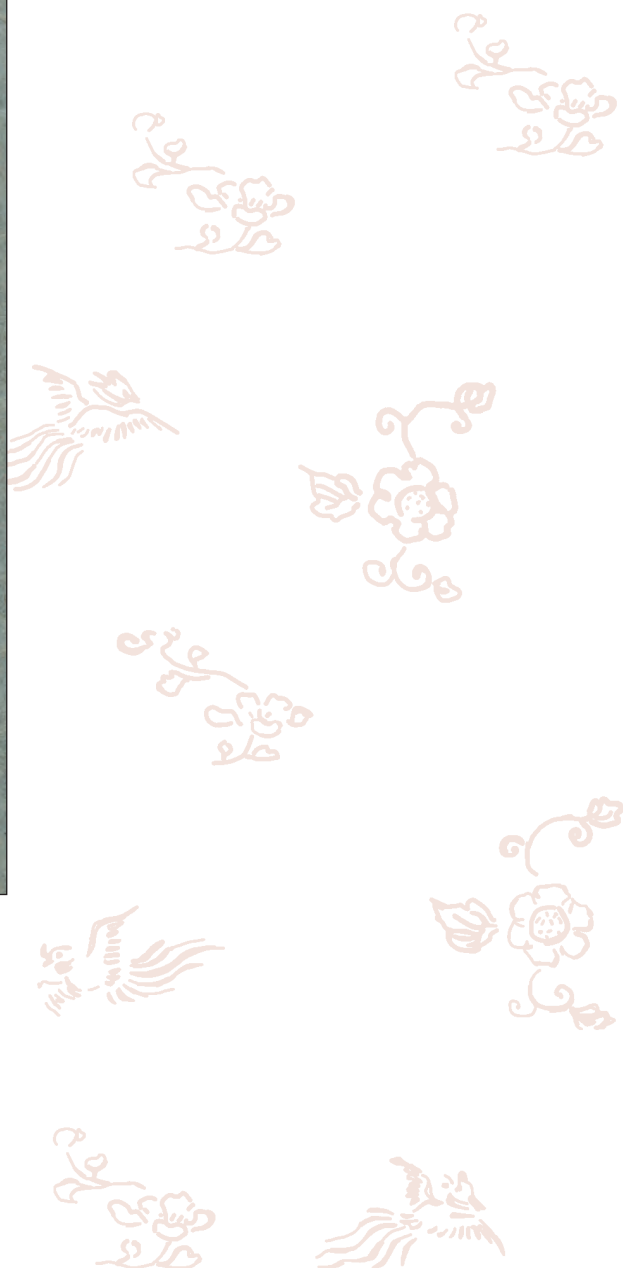
Honshirogane-chō is the address for Maekawa Yahei; it corresponds to what is now known in modern-day Tokyo as Nihonbashi-Muromachi.

Anei 10 refers to the tenth year of the Anei emperor's reign: 1781. Kanoto-ushi, the Year of the

Metal-Ox, corresponds to the 38th of the 60-year period of the traditional lunar calendar, widely used in China, Korea, and Japan. This "sexagenary cycle" consists of combinations of the 12 zodiacological animals paired with five elements of wood, metal, fire, earth, and water, each of which in turn is divided into yin and yang versions.

Bunka 2 refers to the second year of the Bunka emperor's reign: 1805. Kinoto-ushi is the Year of the Wood-Ox. This is the year this second edition was printed by the Maekawas.





百器徒然袋 上
Hyakki Tsurezure
Bukuro (Jō)

A Horde of Haunted Housewares,
Volume 1



Preface

A Horde of Haunted Housewares: Preface

There's an old joke about a man told he resembles a holy tree. Viewed from a distance, its branches soar like the peaks of a mountain range against the spring sunshine. Up close, however, its roots are infested with shape-shifting foxes.

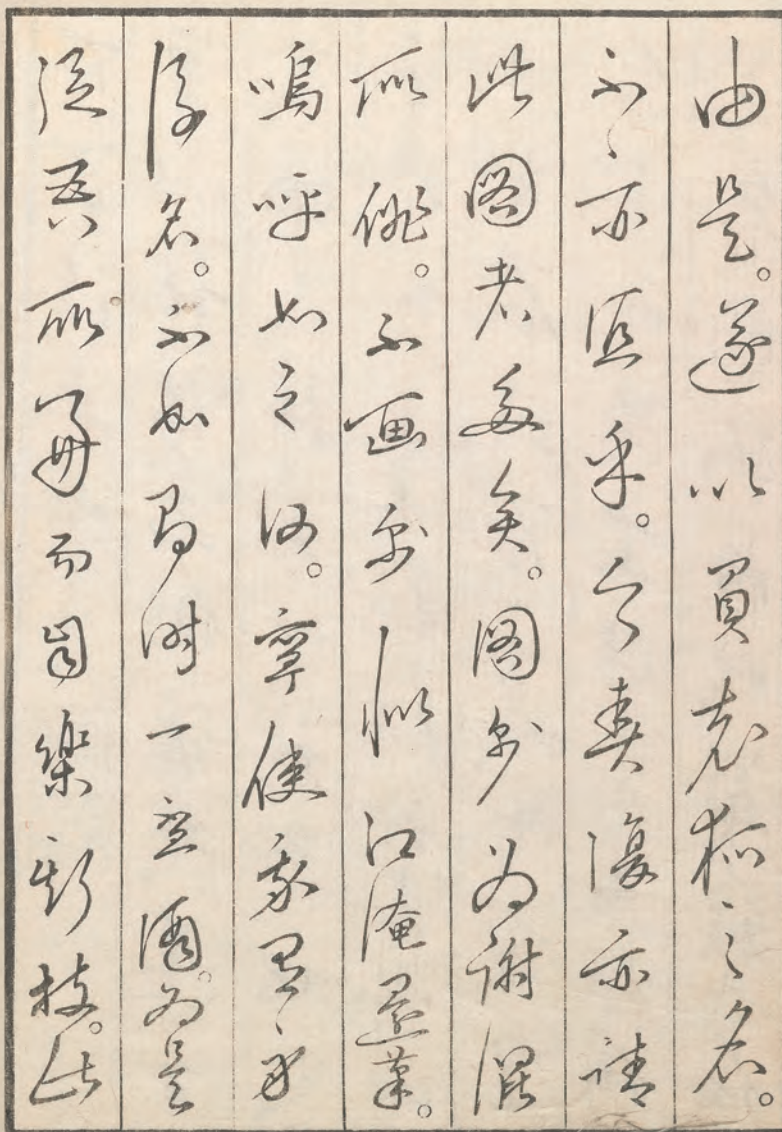
This could well have been written about Sekien. A man who appeared to the West of the Tiantai,¹ peers beneath shrines, consorts with thousands of demons, and generally wows the world with his drawings of the weird. Thus he wound up with the nickname "old fox." Fitting, is it not?

百道法然袋序
 嘗以社樹為仙謠也。遙望
 之。峽々拂青雲。就而視之。
 其根少。蔓草如絲。水當此
 流。石燕即生。又。臨之
 台之西。隱士林々。而伏倚
 萬石。圖畫怪狀。驚駭古俗。

¹ China's Mt. Tiantai is venerated as the birthplace of what is known in Japan as the Tendai sect of Buddhism, but it was also Edo-era vernacular for Kanei-ji Temple. In Sekien's era, it was huge, occupying most of what is now Ueno Park in central Tokyo. Sekien's home and studio in the neighborhood of Nezu was indeed to the West of it. Roughly a century later the Imperial government would seize the land to create the park.

Preface

Again this spring, a great many clamor for another book of his art. If he draws, he has to suffer the accolades; yet if he doesn't, it would be a tragedy akin to the great Jiang Yan returning his brush.² What a fine mess! It's far better to raise a cup of sake in the here and now rather than wait for posthumous accolades; to follow your own path and enjoy the fruits of your techniques.



² A Chinese parable. As a young child, in a dream, Jiang Yan was given a five-colored brush. When he grew up, he became a writer whose vividly evocative stories drew great acclaim. But late one night, an old man appeared before him, requesting his dream-brush back. Jiang Yang complied, and his success as a writer dwindled.

Preface

And that is how we find ourselves in the hands of this witty and talented man. For he has gathered the spooks and shades into three new volumes. He calls it *Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro*. And he asked me to pen its preface.

Having written a preface once before, to fail this time would make me like Feng Fu,³ unable to avoid the laughter of my peers. Yet in our three realms⁴ there is a concept of pushing forth with something one knows is impossible, and so I write these words with my comrades looking on.

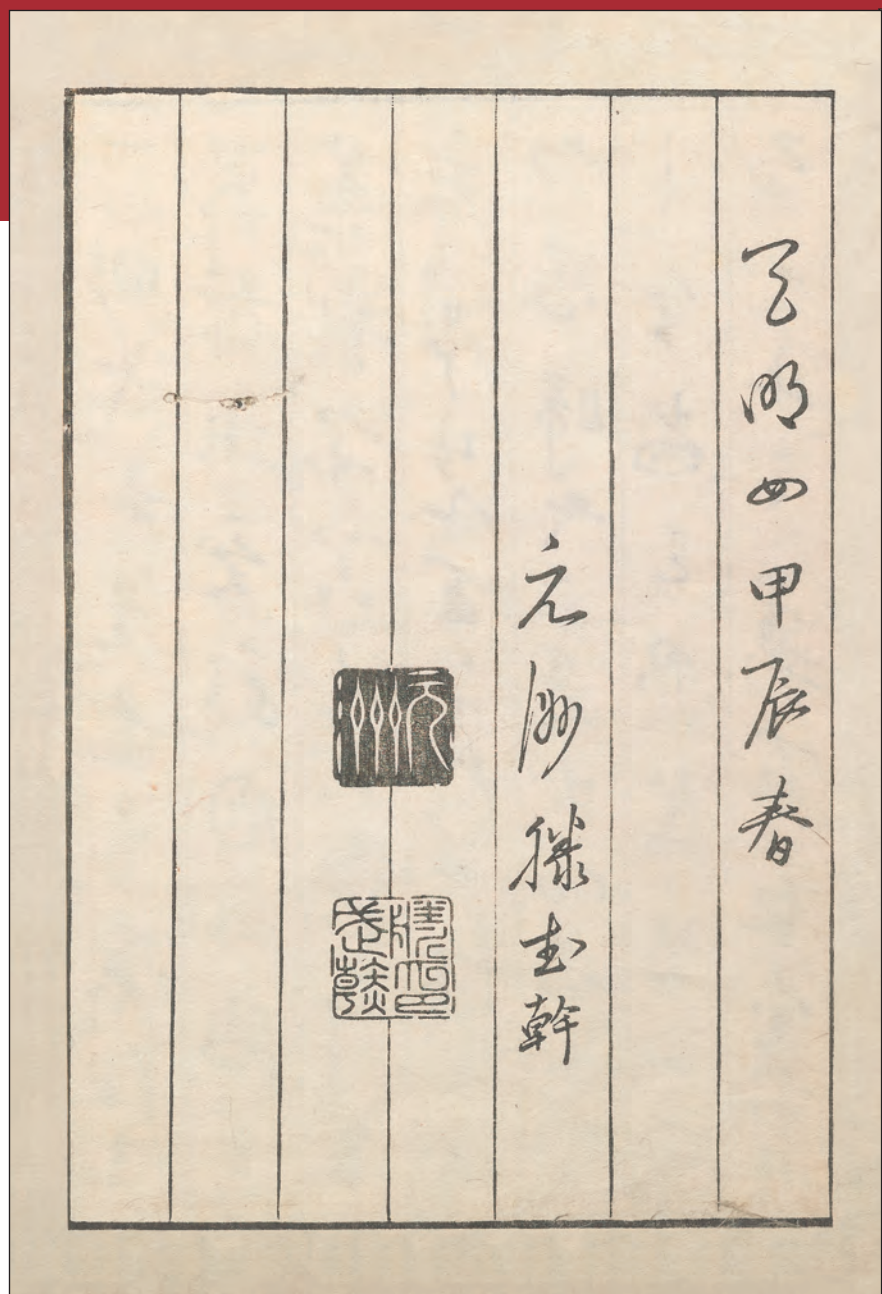
一時也。書是。昔者。囊。仕才。
 甚。採。影。實。然。因。以。為。之。
 甚。影。子。若。法。然。袋。而。請。予。
 序。予。先。再。序。而。乃。書。云。
 此。為。序。也。不免。出。為。古。書。矣。
 之。今。為。之。思。生。出。而。一。可。
 而。不。止。之。義。在。觀。書。者。解。

³ In a parable attributed to Mencius, Feng Fu was famed throughout the land as a tiger-catcher, but eventually turned to study and became a respected scholar. Years later, in his old age, he happened to pass through a village troubled by a tiger. Recognizing Feng Fu, the villagers begged and cheered him to take the animal on. Feng Fu's scholar friends laughed when they saw how easily the old man was persuaded to take up the challenge. Long out of practice, Feng Fu was mortally wounded by the beast. The moral of the story: a weakness for flattery and a desire to reclaim the glories of one's youth can drive one to do reckless things.

⁴ The three realms of Buddhist philosophy: heaven, hell, and earth. Essentially, the whole world and universe.

Preface

*Tenmei 4,⁵ Kinue-tatsu [the year of
the Wood-Dragon], Spring
Motosu Shōbukan*



⁵ The fourth year of the Tenmei Emperor's reign: 1784.

Introduction⁶

There are doves that transform into sash-fasteners and deer that transform into brushes.⁷ Both evoke the acclaimed seventy-two-year-old Sekien, whose handiwork in his amusing *Hyakki Yagyō* and its sequels have earned accolades from all quarters.

This year he has faithfully taken up his brush again and transformed “demons” into “vessels.”⁸ As this character-shift should hint, he has breathed life into the household items he has drawn, splitting his brush-hairs to attain such precise detail as to astound with the revelation of just what is out there.

叙
 年釣小化とる極めは筆に化す麻
 巾の里に寶成屋一交七十二更
 石蕨酒屋世に百鬼夜行の夜端り溪
 編み物と其祥と花子の妻と世に年
 又も先やたゑととりて器鬼小化す一字
 返音の題と柴折一く古き潤皮と鏡と
 二一物化自在と画てこゑふれとる

⁶ This introduction, and Sekien's prologue that follows, are missing from third edition copies of the book.

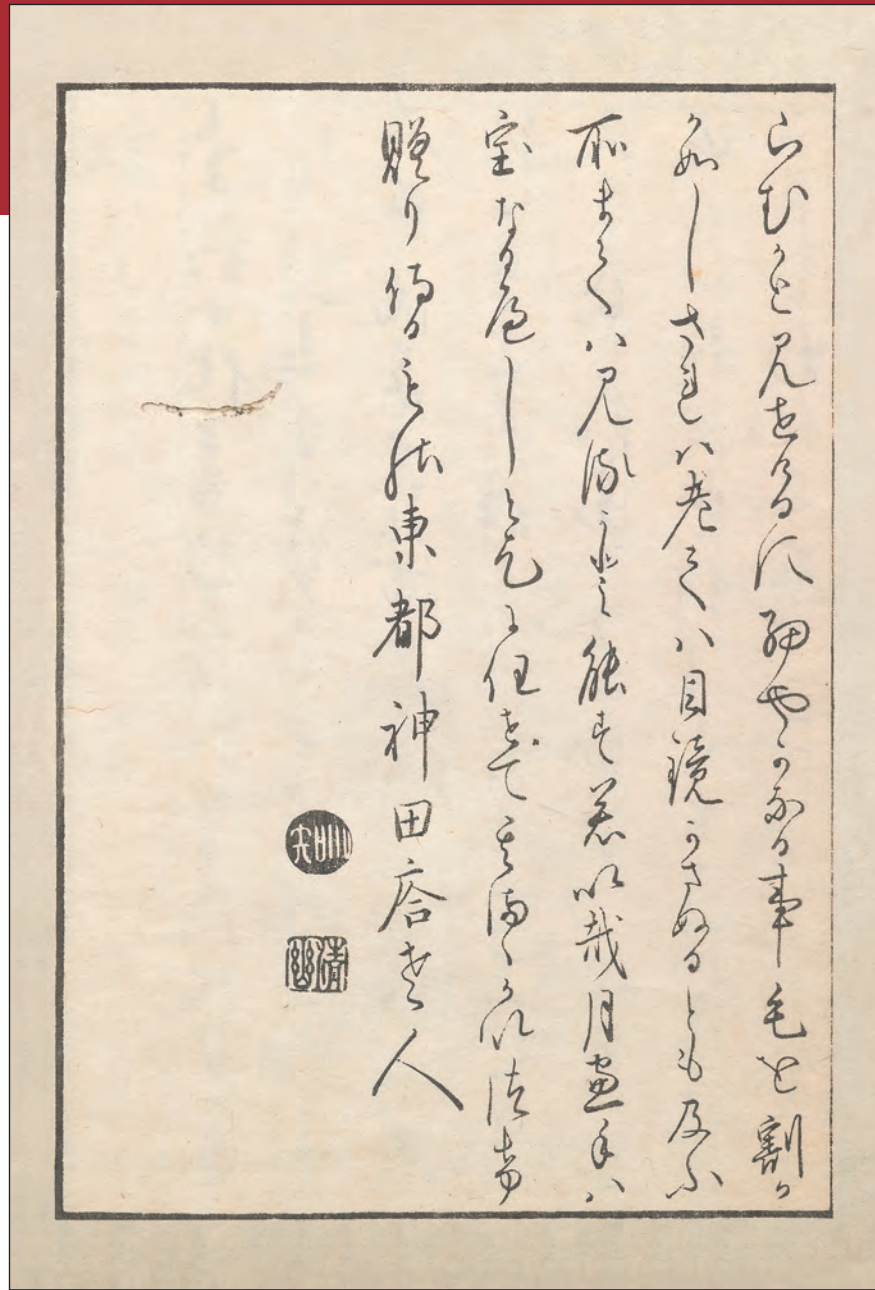
⁷ The first bit refers to a parable from China in which a young girl is visited by a dove. She asks if it is a harbinger of good fortune or ill. If the former, she begs it to sit with her; if the latter, to roost on her mosquito-net. It flies towards her and disappears, but when she opens her hand, she finds a golden obi sash fastener shaped like a dove. The second part refers to brushes made from the hair of sacred deer in the city of Nara.

⁸ The “ki” of “*Hyakki Yagyō*” (The Demon-Horde's Night Parade) is normally written with the kanji-character for oni (demon) but for these volumes Sekien has mischievously changed it to a character meaning vessel or tool, hinting that the interior will abound with haunted or enchanted objects from everyday life.

Introduction

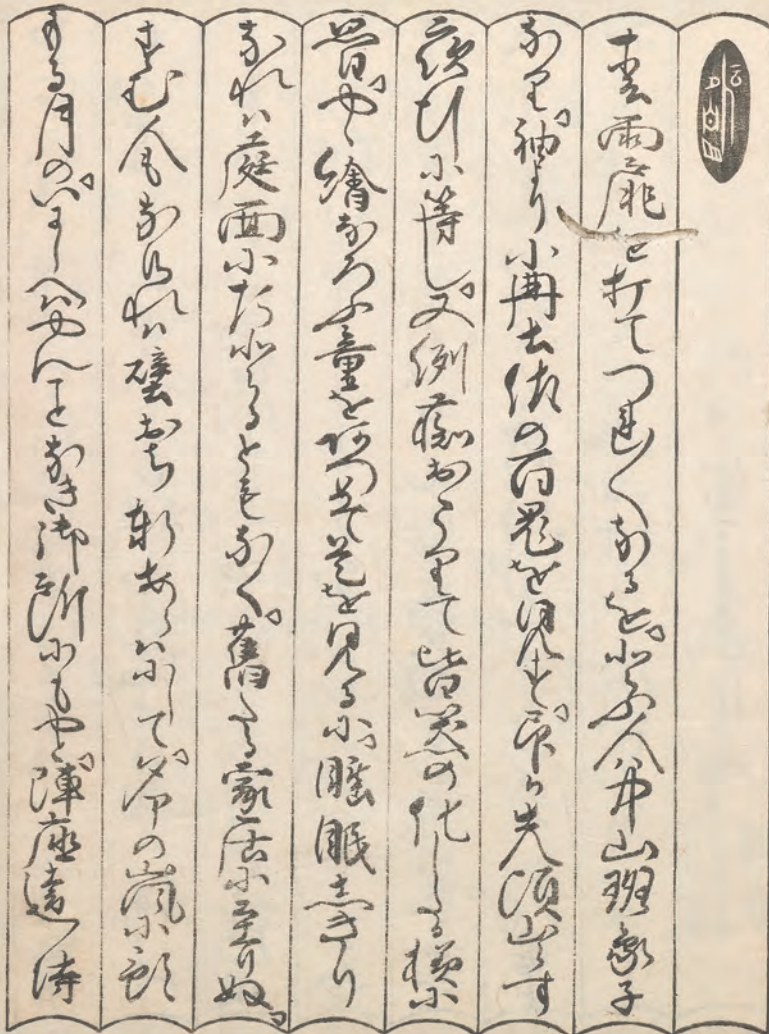
His advancing years may necessitate
the use of glasses, but oh how his eyes
retain their youthful ability to see!
I write these words wholeheartedly
believing his hands are treasures.

Eastern Capital, Kanda
*Kōrōjin*⁹



⁹ Written with an archaic character *kō* meaning “dimpled” or “concave,” this pen-name might be translated as “Old Man Dimples,” though that is simply an educated guess.

Prologue



A gentle spring rain patters my door as I find myself idle one day.¹⁰ Then Mr. Nakamura Hanzō¹¹ pays a visit. From his sleeve he produces a sketchbook of Tosa's *Hyakki*. Like the *Hyakki* book I myself had published a while back. This spurs my incorrigible whimsy again, and I imagine all sorts of things transformed. I gather the young ones I teach to see.

I fall into a sleep. Without even passing through my garden, I find myself standing before an old building. Abandoned, its crumbling walls reveal their framework within. The moon, clouded by an evening storm, reveals it to be a splendid palace of old, down even to the guard station and inner sanctum. All is covered with dust and fallen leaves. The shutters gape wide open.

Powerful emotion: an attraction to ancient texts, the bond between father and child. I linger.

¹⁰ Here "idle" (*tsurezure*) is a keyword. It evokes Yoshida Kenkō's 14th century essay collection *Tsurezure-Gusa* (variously translated as *The Harvest of Leisure* and *Essays in Idleness*.)

¹¹ The third of the Hanzō line of poets. Birth and death dates unknown.

Prologue

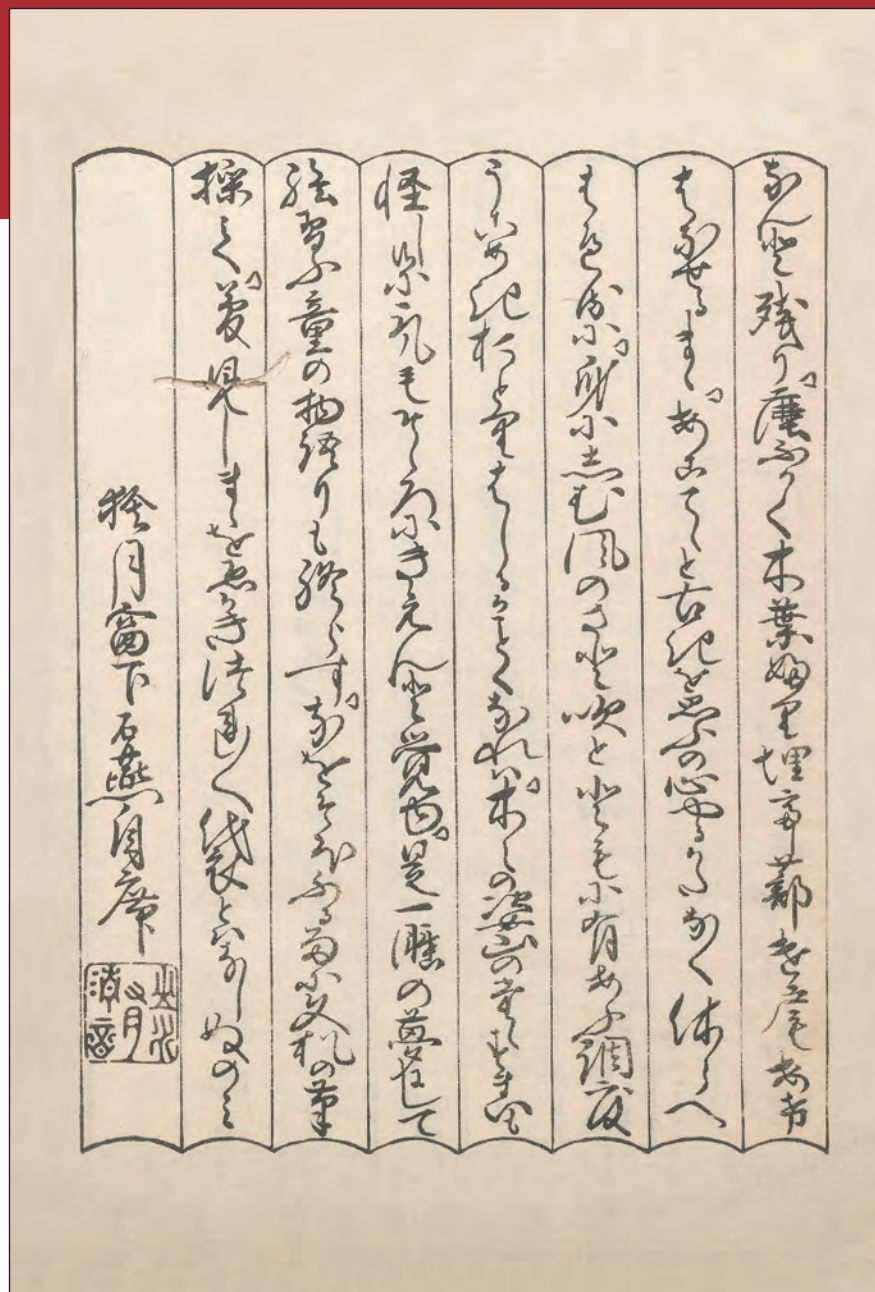
Then a crisp wind pierces me to my core. All around I see objects and furniture moving and squirming. The surrounding woods and mountains look strange, filling me with unease. Suddenly it all vanishes.

It was just a dream, but the story does not end here for my students.

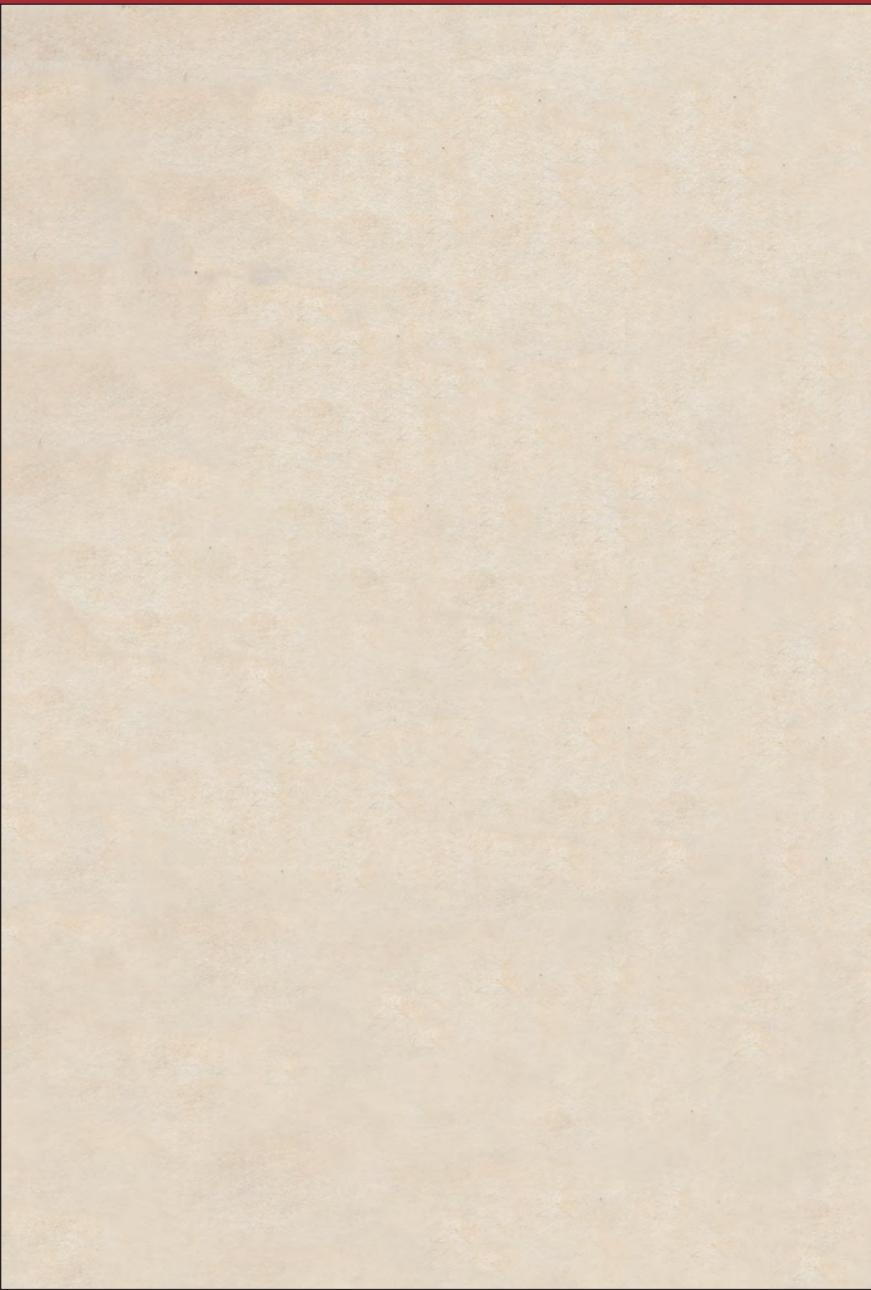
As a pleasant spring rain falls outside, I take up my brush at my desk. I will record the things I saw in my dream, and call this idle grab-bag the *Tsurezure-bukuro*.¹²

By Sekien's own hand

Under the moonlit window



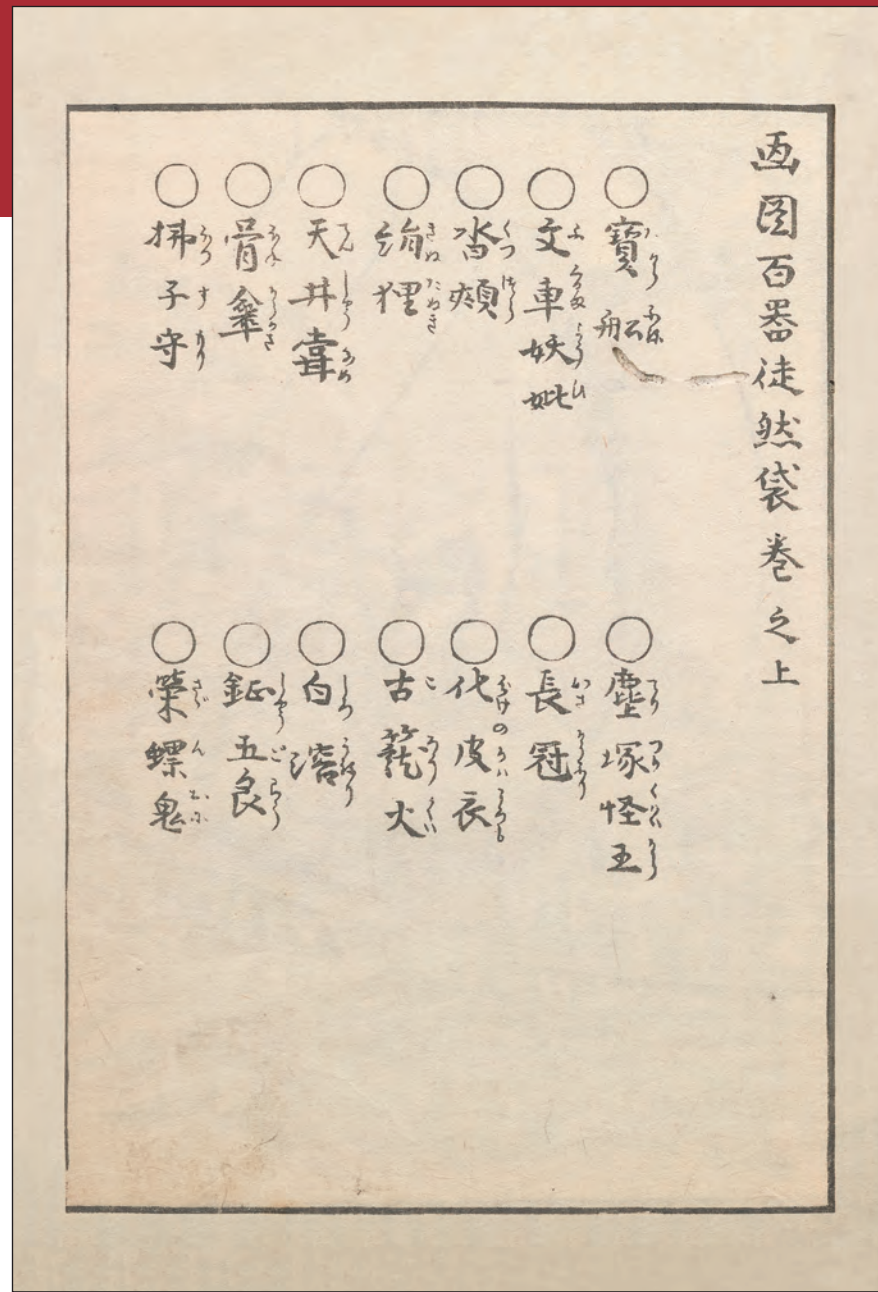
¹² The Japanese title of this book is *Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro*, which transliterates into “An idle grab-bag horde of housewares,” evoking both the titles of *Hyakki* demon scrolls and the *Tsurezure-gusa*.



画図百器徒然袋卷之上 Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro Maki-no-Jō

The Illustrated Horde of Haunted
Housewares, Volume 1

Takara-bune
Chirizuka-kaiō
Fuguruma-yōhi
Osa-kōburi
Kutsu-tsura
Bakenokawa-goromo
Kinu-tanuki
Korōka
Tenjō-name
Shiro-uneri
Hone-karakasa
Shōgorō
Hossu-mori
Sazae-oni



Note that the title of the book used in the Table of Contents differs slightly from that used on the cover of the book itself.



The remaining verses play out over the final pages.

Sekien ends each entry with a variation on the phrase “so I dreamed,” linking them to the cryptic dream detailed in his introduction to the volume. The majority of creatures in this book are yokai popularly known as *tsukumo-gami*: everyday objects taken haunted, sentient form. Many are his own invention, but others are based on creatures that appeared in old monster parade scrolls.

宝船

Takara-bune

(TREASURE SHIP)

Through the long night, those
sleeping...



This entry features the Seven Gods of Fortune on their customary treasure-boat, but with a twist: they're all asleep. The text is a play on a famed *kaibunka*, or palindrome-poem. It is generally written in hiragana, the better to leave the meaning of the words open to interpretation. It is virtually impossible to capture the palindrome in translation, but one version is as follows:

*Through the long night
those sleeping
are all awakened, perhaps
by the sound of the boat
carried across the waves.*



into a pun with “Mountain-Hag,” whom the Queen distinctly resembles. For more about the Hag, see page 13. Rather than a dust-heap, Sekien has created an homage to a famed scene from the 16th-century illustrated scroll of monsters on parade. A subtle Chinese influence infuses the image. The crown-wearing demon emerges from a palace and tears into an elaborately decorated *karakitsu* (a Chinese footed chest). The scroll behind him is

ruled, marking it as a Chinese *kanbun* text. And the monsters being unleashed include mainland staples such as a dragon and a *kirin*. In contrast, the Queen’s pages feel distinctly Japanese; she holds a Japanese scroll and is surrounded by domestic *tsukumo-gami*: tools, clothing, and other man-made objects that have been “animated” as yokai. Viewed together, the pair evokes the Sino-Japanese influences that run through the book.

塵塚怪王

Chirizuka-kaiō

(KING OF THE TRASH-HEAP)

In the natural order, there always exist head figures. Just as the *kirin* is leader of the beasts and the phoenix is leader of the birds, so too must a garbage dump have its king: Chirizuka-kaiō. For even the smallest of dustheaps can eventually grow into a mountain, or mountain-hag. So I dreamed.



This dramatic two-page spread of the King of the Trash-Heap plays a counterpoint to the entry for the Queen of the Book-Cart immediately following. The pair, believed to be creations of Sekien, seem to have been inspired by the 72nd passage of the book *Tsurezure-gusa* (*Essays in Idleness*), an influential 14th-century text by the Buddhist monk Yoshida Kenkō. The passage discusses “unsightly” things, such as cluttered rooms, and ends with two

examples of objects in their proper places: “dust on a dust-heap, and books in a book cart.” The Japanese title of this volume is *Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro*, literally “An Idle Grab-Bag of a Horde of Things,” which Sekien presumably intended as a tip of the pen to Kenkō. Many of the entries that follow are directly inspired by his essays.

“Even the smallest dust-heap can eventually grow into a mountain” is an idiom transformed

文車妖妃

Fuguruma-yōhi

(QUEEN OF THE BOOK-CART)

A famed poem: *Book-worms are the souls of those still attached to the texts they read long ago. Even sutras written by the holiest of monks get worm-holes. So the fulsome missives of those filled with desire undoubtedly will end up with strange holes in them. So I dreamed.*



allowing strange creatures to swarm out. They are *tsukumo-gami*, tools and other objects taken uncanny form. In keeping with the theme, these include a pair of scissors (center left) and combs and brushes (far right).

This illustration forms a pair with the preceding two-page spread; as mentioned in the King of the Trash-Heap's text, the Queen's wrinkled countenance and hanging breasts evoke a Yama-uba, or Mountain-Hag (p. 13). For more information, see the previous entry.



A *fuguruma* is a human or animal-drawn cart used to store and transport scrolls and books. They were often employed by temples to keep holy texts mobile in the event of fires. Here the Queen of the Book-Cart examines a Japanese scroll being drawn out of a lacquered make-up box called a *kushige*. Used to store grooming items or valuables, containers of this sort can also serve as symbols of things that should never be opened, as seen most famously with the Pandora's Box-like *tamatebako* in the folk-tale *Urashima Tarō*. Here the box has been holed,

長冠

Osa-kōburi
(HOARYCROWN)

Do not confuse this headwear for that left on the castle gate by the wise man who resigned his job there. Only the headwear owned by a conniving two-face who clings to the prestige of their vestments can become a Hoarycrown. So I dreamed.



Sekien references a story from the 5th century Chinese *Book of the Later Han* in which a palace official refused to serve under a usurper king, hanging his royal headwear on the castle gate as he left. Note that “crown” in this context refers to the official headwear worn by the royal inner circle and not that by the king himself.

沓頬

Kutsu-tsura

(SANDALFACE)

Strange things were afoot in the fields of a gourd farmer named Teikashū. A monk from Lingyin Temple who partook of his gourds heard this, and gave him a talisman. When Teikashū hung the talisman in his field, the strange happenings stopped for a long while. Eventually, he opened the talisman. Inside he found the following characters penned: “Do not adjust your clogs in a gourd-field; do not adjust your headwear under a plum tree.” The Kutsu-tsura must have caused the strange happenings. So I dreamed.



Teikashū, whose name includes the character for “gourd,” appeared in a verse by the Chinese poet Du Fu (712–770). The phrase “Do not adjust your sandals in a gourd field; do not adjust your headwear under a plum tree” is an old Chinese idiom that means to avoid attracting unnecessary attention. Sekien seems to have placed Hoarycrown and

Sandalface on adjacent pages to illustrate the entire phrase.

The image is somewhat difficult to parse for those used to modern footwear. The man wears a boot on his head, while the badger-like creature evokes *kegutsu*, furred boots made from wild animal pelts.

ばけの皮衣

Bakenokawa-goromo (DISGUISE-GARB)

The old Chinese tales about a three thousand year old fox who draped itself in water-moss and prayed to the north star to shape-shift into a beautiful woman must refer to this. So I dreamed.



This yokai's name plays off the idiom *bakenokawa o hagu*, literally “peeling off the pelt being used as a disguise,” meaning to unmask someone and reveal their true nature.

Asai Ryōi's influential 1666 *Otogi Bōko* (*Hand Puppet Tales*) describes foxes that can shapeshift into human form by placing a skull atop their heads and praying to the north star. They can maintain the illusion so long as the skull does not fall off.

The water-moss here indicates this ambitious old fox is trying to teach itself a new trick. Namely, transforming into the greatest fox of them all: Tamamo-no-mae (see p. 98), the kanji-characters of whose name transliterate into “beautiful water-moss” (or algae, though that lacks a certain poetry in English). Moss, *mo* in Japanese, also happens to be a homonym for the elegant dresses worn by ladies of the court in times of old.

絹狸

Kinu-tanuki

(SILKEN TANUKI)

Tanuki are usually described as beating their bellies like drums, which reminds me of beating laundry on the banks of the Tama river, the tama [jewel] of which reminds me of the “family jewels” of a tanuki, transformed into *hachijō* [eight spans of] kinu [silk]. So I dreamed.



This punny entry, set in a tailor’s shop, plays off a string of recursively nested jokes in Japanese. First of all, “Kinu-tanuki” is a palindrome in the Japanese syllabary. And according to legend, tanuki (p. 19) can disguise themselves with their testicles (*tama* or *kintama* in Japanese), which can spread out some eight tatami mats (*hachijō*) in size.

The joke continues by referencing the Tama River (whose name means jewel, but as in English “jewel”

also colloquially refers to testicles) and *Hachijō-kinu*, a famed brand of silk from Hachijō island (the name of which happens to be pronounced identically to the length-counter, *hachi-jō* for eight spans (meters) of silk.) In a final, unstated pun, laundry mallets are called *kinuta* in Japanese. This entry is a textbook example of how Sekien was as skilled as a writer as he was a painter.

古籠火

Korōka

(OLD LANTERN FIRE)

There are so many types of enchanted fire: yin-fire, yang-fire, demon-fire. I've heard of the sweat and blood left on old battlefields igniting into demon-fire to show their strange forms; yet why have I never heard mention of a haunted stone lantern? So I dreamed.



Yin-fire (*inka*) and yang-fire (*yōka*) are imports from the Chinese occult; they refer to flames fueled by one or the other of the dualistic yin-yang essence of things. The stone lanterns Sekien discusses are common sights on temple and shrine grounds.

天井嘗

Tenjō-name

(CEILING-LICKER)

It is said that high ceilings are always devoid of light and cold in winter. But this is not due to a home's construction.

Rather the phenomenon is caused by this strange creature, the thought of which makes me shiver. So I dreamed.



In later characterizations, this yokai is said to cause the dirt and stains that often inexplicably appear in high places, but here in its original telling, it creates cold and darkness instead. The unnamed source being referenced is, of course, *Essays in Idleness*—passage 55, to be specific. Note the hands: they resemble Japanese dusters, which were

traditionally made from strips of paper attached to a stick.

Also note the odd perspective of the illustration, which twists from outside to inside in an almost M.C. Escher-like fashion. Tenjō-name's feet appear to be planted on an outside veranda while its upper torso is within the confines of the room.

白容裔

Shiro-ururi

(WHITE-TWISTER)

“Shiro-ururi” appears in *Essays in Idleness*. This Shiro-ururi is an old cloth transformed. I wonder if there are other types. So I dreamed.



Shiro-Ururi is the title of the 60th passage of *Essays in Idleness*. It's a parable about a monk who spends his entire inheritance on yams. This same monk refers to another as a *Shiro-ururi*, and when pressed as to what it means, says he doesn't know. A footnote to the 1914 translation explains: “*Shiro-uri* is a white melon, and to say that a man has a face like a white melon means that he is handsome without having much ability. But the [abbot], so as not to be too frank, changed the phrase to *Shiro-ururi*.”

骨傘

Hone-karakasa

(BONEBRELLA)

In northern seas lives a fish called the *chiwen*. It has a head like a dragon and a body like a fish. It creates clouds that cause rain. This umbrella too is connected to rain; perhaps it appears when the rain does. So I dreamed.



The *chiwen* is the Chinese version of what the Japanese call a *shachihoko*, the ornamental arched-back dragon-fish placed on roofs that give many Japanese and Chinese buildings their distinctive horned silhouette. Both *chiwen* and *shachihoko* are rain-gods that are placed as charms to protect buildings from fire. This may explain why Sekien has connected them to his umbrella monster, which features a similar arched back in his drawing.

鉦五郎 Shōgorō (SHŌGORŌ)

Kogane-no-niwatori, a rooster cast in gold, was the treasure of the house of Yodoya Tatsugorō. This gong is called *Shōgorō*, and perhaps it is made of gold too. So I dreamed.



Buddhist imagery abounds in this illustration, including the gong (called a *shōgo*), the rosary, and the altar behind them. Appreciating Sekien's mash-up of the *shōgo* and Tatsugorō's name requires some knowledge of 18th century Osaka history.

For many years, the Yodoya were Osaka's wealthiest merchant family. Their fortune was based largely on rice, which in the Edo era equated to money. The Yodoya clan's businesss grew into a rice-based stock exchange, and their stranglehold on distribution put many local *daimyo* lords into deep debt

with the family. Forcing the aristocracy to kowtow to merchants, who by all rights occupied the lowest rung of the social ladder, chafed deeply. And the behavior of the young head of the clan Tatsugorō didn't help matters: raised in luxury, he spent his days being carried to and from the pleasure-quarters via palanquin, dressed in the finest clothing money could buy. This extravagance infuriated the Shogunate, who used a 1705 accounting scandal as an excuse to strip the clan of all of its holdings and banish Tatsugorō to a remote island.

払子守

Hossu~mori

(HOSSU-MORI)

In his dialogue about nothingness, Jōshū stated that even a dog has a Buddha-nature. If this is so, in keeping with the concept of “transmitting the light” [from master to disciple], perhaps a hossu that has been used in Zen practice for nine years might well begin sitting lotus itself. So I dreamed.



This koan is well enough known in Zen circles that it has a name: Jōshū's dog.

A hossu is the term for a short staff, tipped with a bundle of animal hair or hemp fiber, that is carried by Buddhist monks. Long used in India to shoo flies away without killing them, they were adopted by Zen monks both for that purpose and to ward off

distracting emotions and desires during meditation. The hossu also symbolizes religious authority, and is usually passed down from master to successor. The nine years is a reference to the nine years Bodhidharma (a.k.a. Daruma) spent staring at a wall in meditation to achieve enlightenment.

栄螺鬼

Sazae-oni

(SAZAE-ONI)

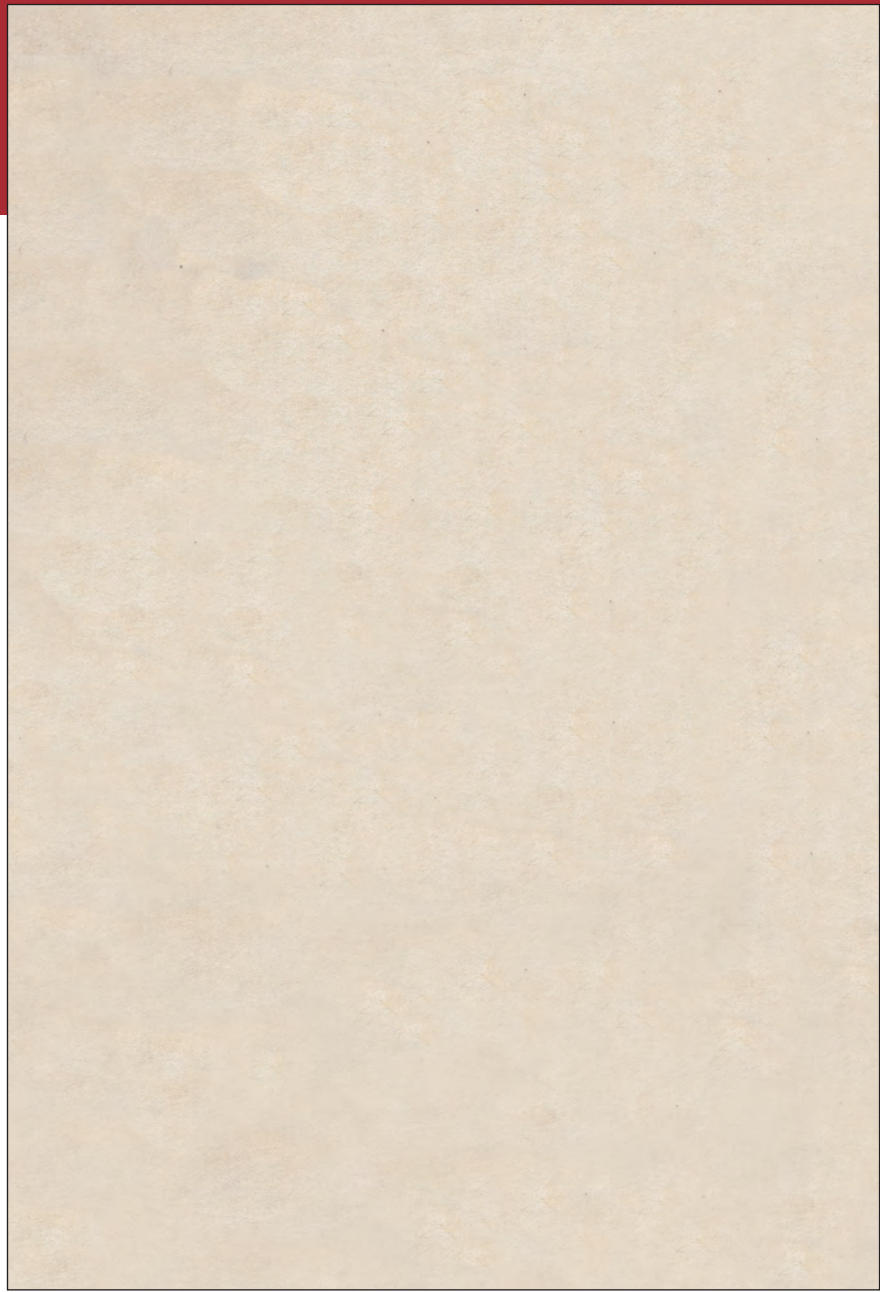
If sparrows dive into the sea to become shells [for winter], and moles emerge as quails [in spring], perhaps the ways of creation could transform a sazae snail into an oni. So I dreamed.

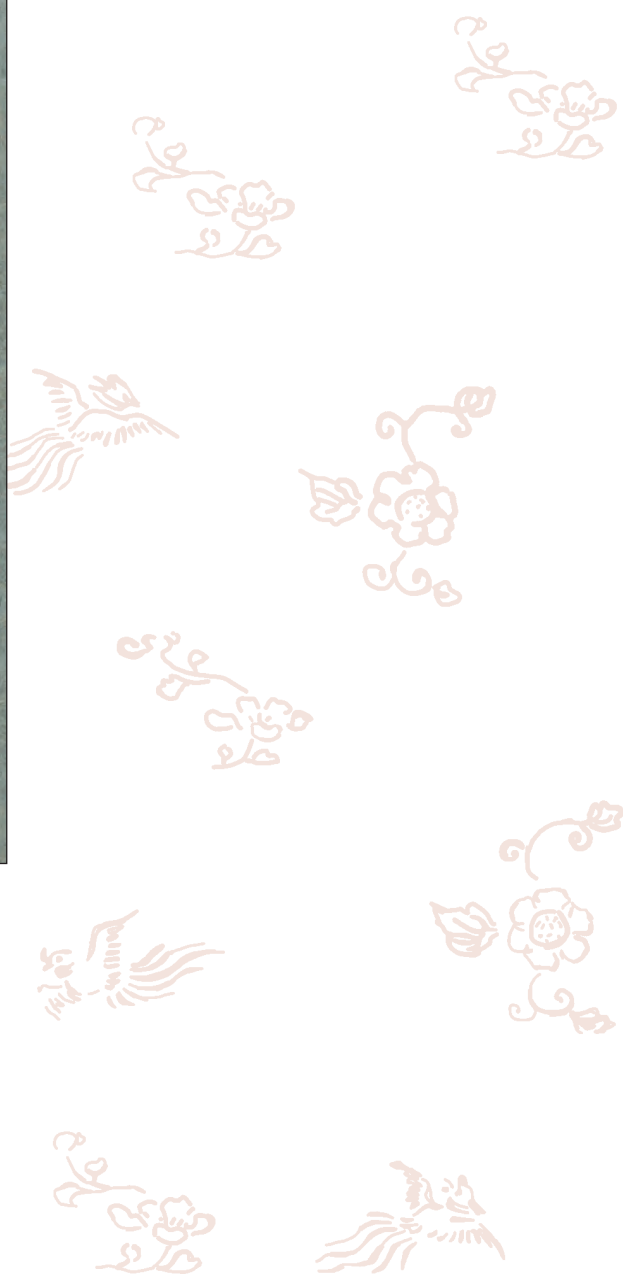


Sazae are sea snails called “horned turban shells” abroad; they are prized as a delicacy in Japan.

This entry plays on a pair of entries in the “72 Seasons,” which are capsule descriptions of seasonal climate changes used in composing poetry. They generally cover five-day periods that could be termed micro-seasons; the precise dates shift based on the calendar year. One in mid-October is “Spar-

rows become clams.” It refers to an old wives tale that sparrows dive into the ocean to hibernate as clams during the winter. In fact, there’s even a sea-shell called the *Fukura-suzume* (“Puffed Sparrow”), as it resembles a sparrow puffed up against the cold. Another micro-season in mid-April is “Moles emerge as quails,” which isn’t intended literally, but rather to all sorts of animals emerging from hibernation.

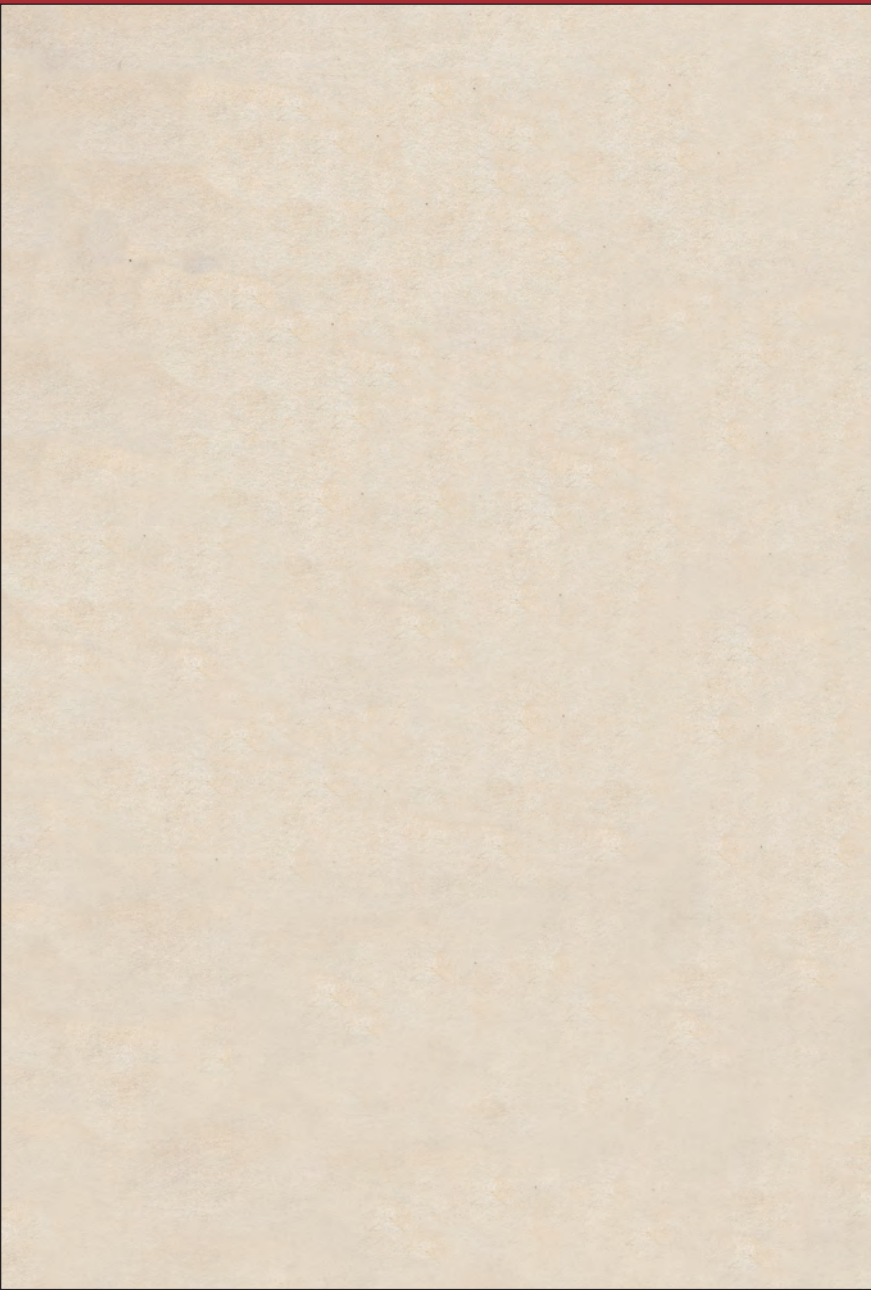




画図百器徒然袋 (壽)(中)
Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure
Bukuro (Kotobuki) (Chū)

The Illustrated Horde of Haunted
Housewares (Felicitations) (Volume 2)

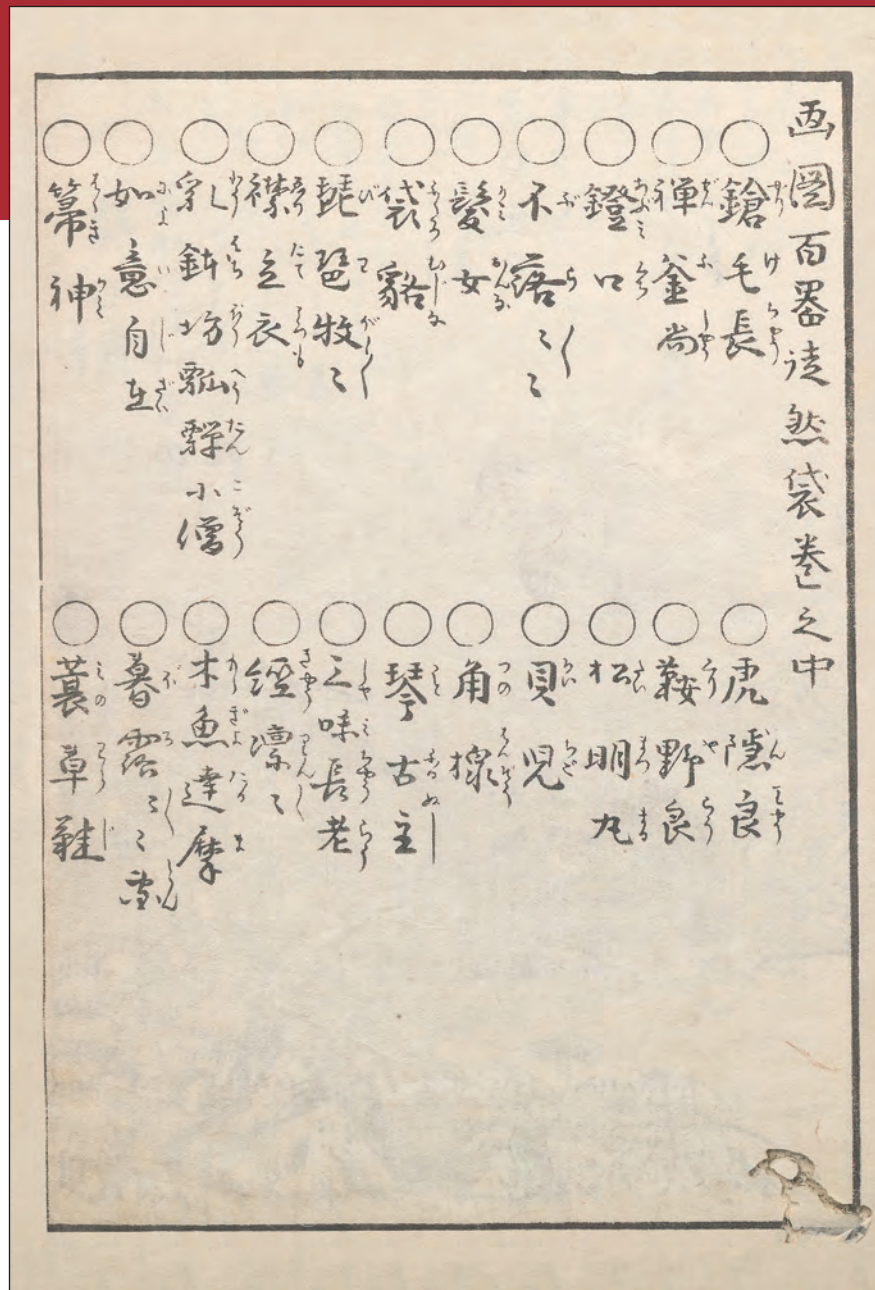




画図百器徒然袋卷之中 Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro Maki-no-Chū

The Illustrated Horde of Haunted
Housewares, Volume 2

Yarike-chō
Koinryō
Zen-fushō
Kurayarō
Abumi-guchi
Taimatsu-maru
Bura-bura
Kaichigo
Kami-onna
Tsuno-hanzō
Fukuro-mujina
Koto-furunushi
Biwa Boku-boku
Shami-chōrō
Eritate-goromo
Kyō-rin-rin
Nyūbachi-bō
Hyōtan-kozō
Mokugyo-daruma
Nyo-i-jizai
Boro-boro Ton
Hahaki-gami
Mino-waraji



鎗毛長, 虎隠良

Yarike-chō/Koinryō

(CAPTAIN YARIKE) (KOINRYŌ)

CAPTAIN YARIKE

A keyari once hoisted by Japan's strongest warrior. Fears nothing, no matter how weird. Achieves its feats by striking first.

KOINRYŌ

Being made from the skin of a vicious animal, this pouch can sprint for 1,000 ri.



Zen-fushō is the round-headed yokai at far left. *Bunbuku Chagama* is a popular Japanese folktale about a shape-shifting tanuki raccoon-dog; Sekien references it directly in his entry for Morinji-no-kama (p. 204).

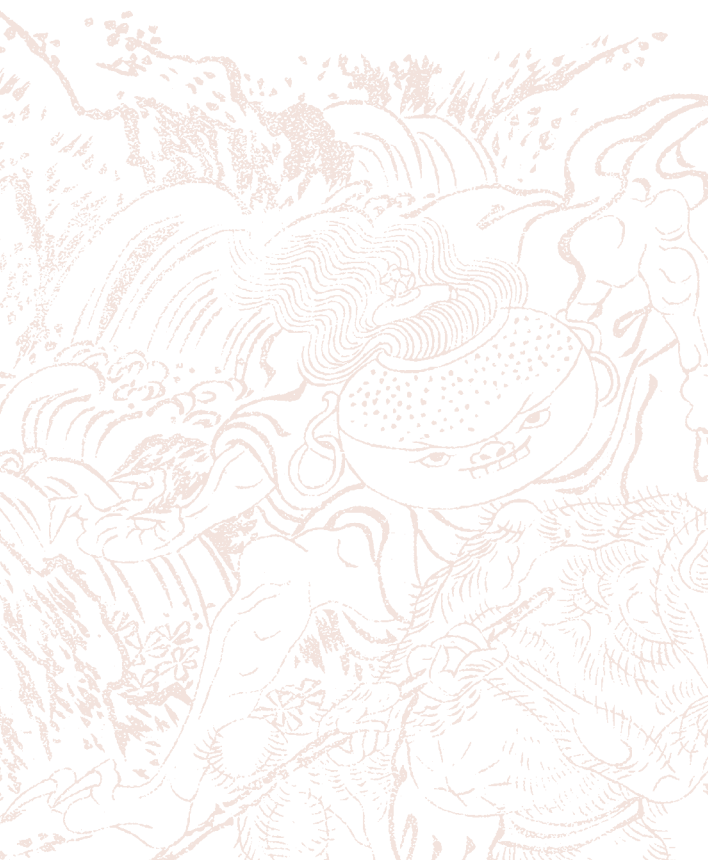


禅釜尚

Zen-fushō

(ZENKETTLE)

The tea ceremony deeply values tranquility. Might this “yin” force cause strange things like Zen-fushō to happen? Bunbuku Chagama set the example. So I dreamed.



Although the explanations are Sekien's creation, he has patterned all three of these yokai off of nearly identically posed ones from Tosa Mitsunobu's 16th century *Gazu Hyakki Yagyo Emaki* (*Illustrated Demon Horde's Night Parade Scroll*), which he mentions having seen sketches of in his preface (p. 236).

Yarike-chō is the yokai carrying a mallet. Keyari

(literally “hair-spear”) is a lance-shaped ornament topped with animal hair. The foot soldiers marching at the head of a warlord's procession thrust them skyward to set cadence as they march. Koinryō is the hairy, spear-carrying yokai in the center. 1,000 *ri* corresponds to roughly 4,000 kilometers (almost 2,500 miles).

鞍野郎

Kurayarō
(SADDLE-GUY)

*Kamada Masakiyo
in the Hōgen Rebellion
Owes his exploits to me,
who faithfully held him*

*For all the honor
I brought him in battle
You'd think he'd appreciate
his trusty old saddle*

*But the only thanks I got
was a nick on my face
Now my soul fades away
as my body goes to waste!*

*Fascinating. So went
Kurayarō's dirge in my dream.*



Talk about a sore saddle. The Hōgen Rebellion was a brief civil war that flared up over imperial succession in the late summer of 1156. Kamada Masakiyo, faithful servant of Genji clan leader Minamoto no Yoshitomo, served bravely there, according to the war chronicle "The Tale of Heiji." The nick refers to a groove Masakiyo cut into the front of his saddle for a better grip in inclement weather.

鐙口

Abumi-guchi

(STIRRUP-MOUTH)

The Abumi-guchi sang in my dream as well:

*My warrior-rider took an arrow to his knee
Causing great trouble in dismounting me.*



A reference to the climactic scene of the Noh play *Tomonaga*, in which the titular hero is wounded during the Heiji Rebellion, which followed the Hōgen Rebellion (see previous page). An enemy arrow penetrates Tomonaga's entire knee, pinning it to the side of his horse. The wounded horse naturally begins bucking, causing Tomonaga excruciating pain.

He eventually manages to extricate himself, but the wound is so terrible that he chooses ritual suicide rather than letting himself hold his forces back.

In Sekien's stylized portrayal, we are looking into the stirrup's "mouth" where the rider's foot would be inserted.

松明丸

Taimatsu-maru

(THE TORCH)

Torch may be its name, but I wonder
if the light might actually come from
the Tengu-gravel hurled from cedar
treetops deep in uninhabited valleys.
So I dreamed.



The *-maru* suffix was once used to denote the nicknames of young men (such as Kidō-maru, p. 195). Here it is used to “characterize” the phenomenon of a flying light in the mountains. Today it is more commonly seen in the names of boats and ships. For more on Tengu-tsubute (Tengu-gravel), see p. 171.

不々落々

Bura-bura

(SWAY-DANGLER)

Although they resemble lanterns
[that farmers] set up to protect the fields,
they are actually foxfire hiding amidst
the orchids and chrysanthemums.
So I dreamed.



This entry actually has a soundtrack. It is a tip of the pen to the song *Nasuno* by composer Yamada Kengyō (1757–1817). The very first words of the entry in Japanese, *yamadamoru*, literally mean “protect the mountain fields,” but also contain Yamada’s name. And the bit about foxfire hiding amidst the orchids and chrysanthemums closely echoes an actual line from the song. The song is a lament for the fate of the most famous fox of all, Tamamo-no-mae (p. 98).

Haunted paper lanterns remain a staple of Japanese folklore today. Normally they are treated simply as haunted objects, but here Sekien characterizes them as the manifestations of mischievous foxes. Written here with characters meaning “never fall, never fall,” *bura-bura* is a play on the onomatopoeia *burari-burari*, which evokes dangling or swaying.

貝児

Kaichigo

(CLAMSHELL KID)

Shell-game boxes and *hōko* dolls, both playthings of the upper classes, are seldom separated from one another. This makes Kaichigo and *hōko* siblings. So I dreamed.



This entry centers on a carrying case for the *kai-awase* (shell-matching) game, which is played with painted clamshells that are separated, scattered, and matched with their mates as quickly as possible. Elaborately patterned and lacquered *kai-awase* carrying cases, such as the octagonal one seen in Sekien's illustration, were often included

in a bride's dowry. *Hōko* dolls are traditional plush figures shaped like sitting or crawling babies, traditionally given to young children both as toys and as "guardian angels" to protect them from misfortune.

Kaichigo's curves evoke the appearance of marine life, perhaps a sea-snail.

髪鬼

Kami-oni

(HAIRDEMONESS)

They say that one's body, skin, and hair is what remains of their father and mother. Perhaps the Kami-oni is being punished for the sin of defiling her thousands of hairs with dirt. So I dreamed.



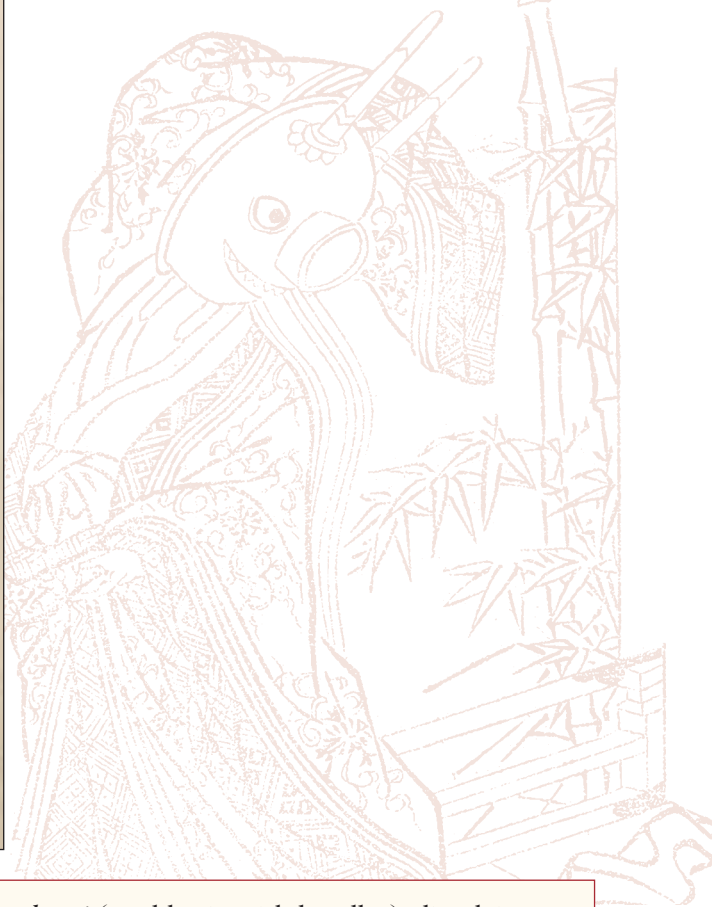
“Body, skin, and hair,” an idiom for one’s entire body, comes from the 5th century BCE Chinese Xiao Jing, *Classic of Filial Piety*. It opens “Our bodies—to every hair and bit of skin—are received by us from our parents, and we must not presume to injure or wound them. This is the beginning of filial piety.” Thus the Hairdemoness being punished for carelessly soiling her own locks.

角盥漱

Tsuno-hanzō

(HORNED BASIN)

A manifestation of the negativity directed at Ono-no-Komachi, she of the floating weeds from unknown seeds, in the *Sōshi Arai*. So I dreamed.



A yokai washbasin. *Sōshi Arai* means “washing of the paper.” In this famed story, the Heian era poetess Ono-no-Komachi is framed for plagiarism. However, she notices that the evidence, supposedly an ancient document, is written in fresh ink. She vindicates herself by dunking the paper in her

tsuno-darai (washbasin with handles), dissolving the text to prove that she was framed.

The verse she was accused of stealing went as follows:
*As floating weeds grow / without knowing who
spread their seeds / so too did the sorrow grow in
my heart*

(BAG-BADGER)



Note the persimmon tree motif on the Bag-Badger's outfit. The sweet fruits are a favorite of *tanuki*.

琴古主

Koto-furunushi

(OLD MAN KOTO)

Ever since the blind composer Yatsunashi revised its music, *Tsukushi*-style koto has dwindled to just a name, seldom heard. Perhaps Koto-furunushi is an expression of this resentment taken form. So I dreamed.



In illustrated scrolls, Old Man Koto is often portrayed as being led on a leash by Biwa Boku-Boku (p. 273). Sekien visually quotes and greatly expands on the character here, describing it not simply as an anthropomorphic floor-harp, but rather as an anthropomorphization of a forgotten style of floor-harp music.

The prestigious *Tsukushi* school of koto music was founded in the late 1500s. However, its study was restricted to male monks, and forbidden for

women or the blind. One of its masters, Hōsui, chafed against these restrictions. He moved to Edo and taught the entire repertoire to Yatsunashi Kengyō (1614-1685). Ironically, Yatsunashi's re-tuned modifications of *Tsukushi* songs quickly eclipsed their predecessors in popularity, growing into the dominant form of koto music in Sekien's era and today.

A popular koto-shaped sweet in Kyoto is named Yatsunashi to commemorate Kengyō.

琵琶牧々

Biwa Boku-boku

(BIWA BOKU-BOKU)

The Genjō and the Bokuba were renowned biwa lutes in times of old, and knowing that many strange incidents are said to have accompanied them, perhaps this yokai is called Boku-boku because it is the Bokuba lute, changed. So I dreamed.



Popularly seen in illustrated scrolls, usually in concert with Koto-furunushi. It was famously described in the 12th century *Konjaku Monogatari-shū* (*An Anthology of Tales of Old*). The Genjō (written variously as “Shadow-elephant” or “Shadow-above”) was owned by Emperor Murakami, who reigned from 946-967. It was said to become angry and refuse to make sound if it wasn’t properly dusted, and that when a fire broke out in the Imperial storehouse, it exited the building without the

help of men. One day it was stolen. The emperor’s nephew caught sound of its music and followed it to Rajōmon Gate (p. 210). He saw no sign of it or anyone playing, but demanded it back nonetheless. Whoever—or whatever—had stolen it lowered it back it to him via a rope.

The name Bokuba transliterates into “Grazing-horse.” Passage 70 of *Tsurezure-gusa* (*Tales in Idleness*) is a story about the Bokuba being unsuccessfully sabotaged before a performance.

三味長老

Shami-chōrō

(SENIOR SHAMI)

There is a saying that a novice monk [shami] cannot become a senior monk [chōrō], which is a metaphor for the idea that a lowly novice cannot enjoy the respect a venerable senior has attained. Shami-chōrō must be the spirit of a shamisen that had been played by an absolute virtuoso. So I dreamed.



The three-stringed shamisen is a classical musical instrument. Sekien plays with the homonym “shami” (novice monk) and “shami” (three strings).

襟立衣

Eritate-goromo

(HIGH COLLAR)

Eritate-goromo is the high-collared vestment worn by Sōjōbō of Mt. Kurama, to whose feather-fan all of the other Great Tengu must submit, from Buzenbō of Mt. Hikoizan, Sagamibō of Mt. Shiromine, Hōkibō of Mt. Ōyama, Saburō of Mt. Izuna, and Tarō of Mt. Fuji down to the other Konoha Tengu. So I dreamed.



Eritate-goromo are the high-collared vestments worn by Buddhist priests. Tengu (p. 10) are powerful creatures that dwell in mountains throughout Japan. There are two “species”: bird-like Karasu (raven) Tengu, also known as Konoha (treeleaf) Tengu, and long-nosed Hanadaka Tengu. The latter are generally muscular humanoids with

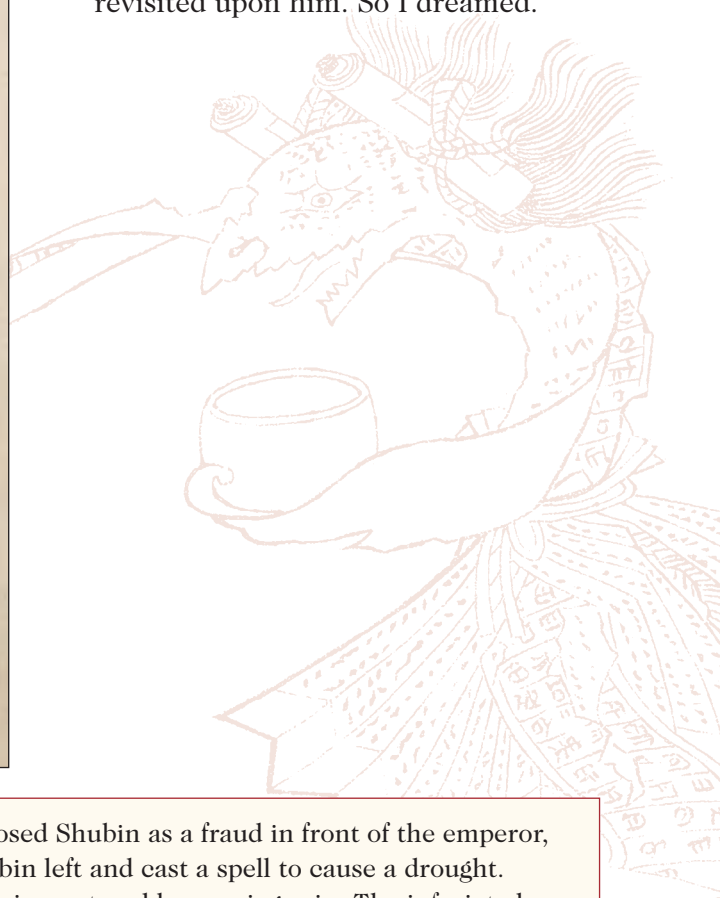
blue or red skin and large feathered wings. They are often portrayed as carrying fans made of leaves or feathers that can be waved to create typhoon-speed winds. Mt. Kurama is famed as the training ground for the legendary Minamoto no Yoshitsune, whose excellent swordsmanship led to stories that he learned it from the tengu there.

経凛々

Kyō-rin-rin

(FIERCERINGER SUTRA)

That a holy book of sutras came to look this way is because they are the sutras abandoned by the monk Shubin, whose curses and poison were revisited upon him. So I dreamed.



Although written with characters meaning “fierce,” the “rin-rin” is also onomatopoeia for a bell ringing. The bowl-like object at center, which the creature is poised to strike, is a Buddhist “singing bowl,” rung at regular intervals during prayer.

According to the 14th century *Taiheiki* (*Chronicle of Japan*), Shubin was locked in rivalry for the Emperor’s good graces with another monk, the famed Kūkai (a.k.a. Kōbō Daishi). After Kūkai

exposed Shubin as a fraud in front of the emperor, Shubin left and cast a spell to cause a drought. Kūkai countered by causing rain. The infuriated Shubin cast a curse on Kūkai. Kūkai sensed this and caused rumors of his own death to be spread to trick Shubin. It worked, and as Shubin began dismantling the arrangement he had set up for the curse on his altar, he collapsed and died in agony.

乳鉢坊, 瓢箪小僧

Nyūbachi-bō

(MORTARMONK)

Hyōtan-kozō

(GOURD-BOY)

Shocked green at the sight of Gourd-boy, Mortarmonk clashed his cymbals together loud enough to jolt me from my dream.



Sekien patterned these two after a very similar pair of yokai that appeared in Tosa's 15th century *Hyakki Yagyō* monster parade scroll. However, to the visuals he added some wordplay: the disk-headed yokai takes the form of a Chinese cymbal, *nyōbachi*, but Sekien has written it with the word for mortar (as in the mortar and pestle used to mix medicine): *nyūbachi*.

Japanese superstition holds that hollow objects like gourds act as receptacles for bad luck and evil spirits. As such, folk tradition held that hanging a gourd outside your front door would intercept sickness before it could come inside.

Note that Mortarmonk wears a monk's robes, and stands in front of a tapestry patterned with lotuses

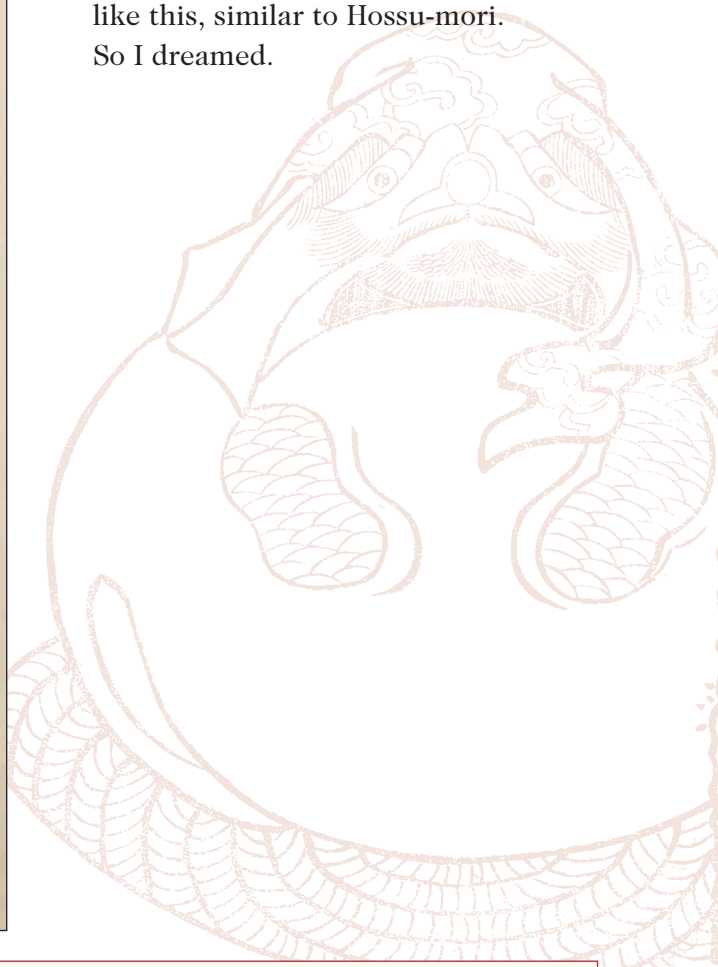


and manji, both Buddhist symbols. The term *Ja-ranpon*, onomatopoeia for a monk's cymbals, is also slang for a funeral. In fact, there's even a *Jyaranpon Matsuri* festival, held in the city of Chichibu, in which locals dress up in funeral garb and bang cymbals in a ceremony that originally began to drive away plague and other illnesses. From this one might conjecture that Mortarmonk was so shocked at Gourd-boy's appearance that he launched into a ritualized funeral to cure him of sickness he took on for humans.

木魚達磨

Mokugyo-daruma (WOODFISH DHARMA)

Implements such as sticks, woodfish, and *han* boards are used daily in Buddhist ritual, and can transform like this, similar to Hossu-mori. So I dreamed.



For more about Hossu-mori, see p. 255.

Sounding boards, *han*, are used to call monks to prayer. A “woodfish” is the name for the percussion instrument that is used to maintain rhythm while reading sutras in Buddhist ceremonies. Both are struck with wooden sticks. Although woodfish now generally take the form of hollowed out spheres (as seen in the illustration), traditionally they were actually carved to resemble a fish—animals then

believed to never sleep, a symbol of perseverance in meditation.

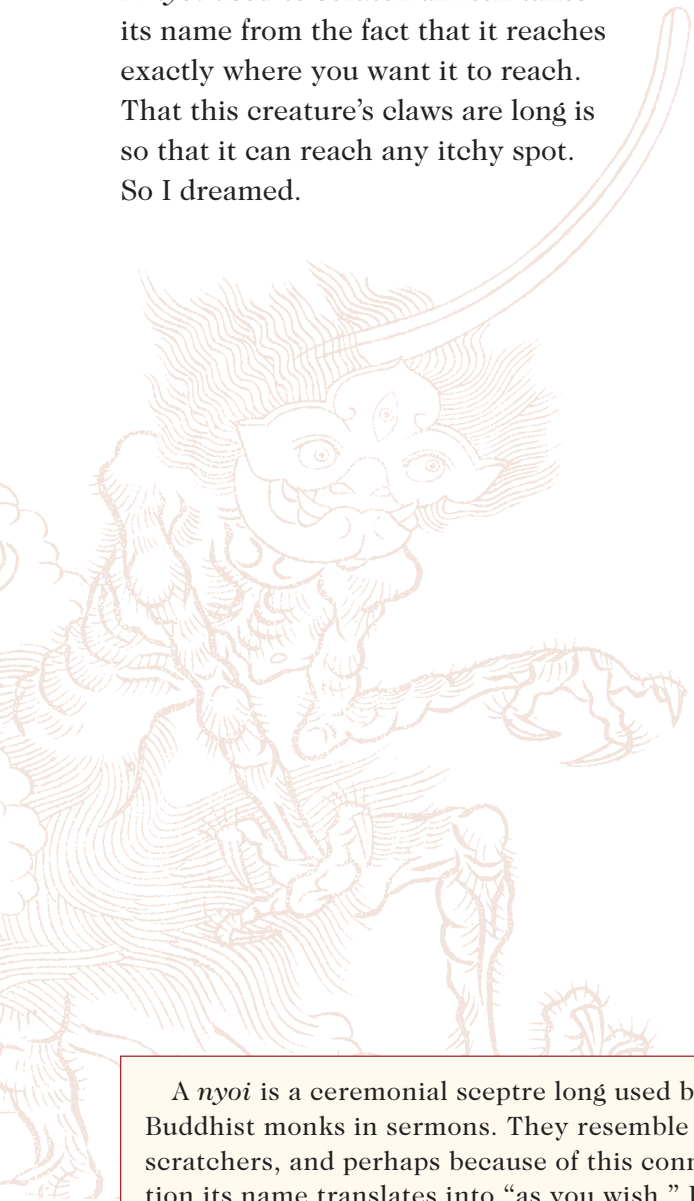
A dharma doll (daruma) is a roly-poly paper maché effigy of Bodhidharma, founder of Zen Buddhism, who meditated without sleep or movement for nine years to attain enlightenment. These dolls, symbols of good luck and encouragement, are commonly seen throughout Japan.

如意自在

Nyoi-jizai

(FULLY FREELY)

A *nyoi* used to scratch an itch takes its name from the fact that it reaches exactly where you want it to reach. That this creature's claws are long is so that it can reach any itchy spot. So I dreamed.



A *nyoi* is a ceremonial sceptre long used by Buddhist monks in sermons. They resemble back-scratchers, and perhaps because of this connection its name translates into “as you wish.” Here Sekien has appended *-jizai*, or “freely,” to give a sense of a creature that can do whatever it likes.

Note that it is soaring through the air on a cloud.



This may be intended to evoke the Chinese epic *Journey to the West*, whose protagonist Sun Wukong famously rides a magic cloud, called the *kinto-un*, freely through the skies.

暮露々々団

Boro-boro Ton

(BEAT-UP BEDDING)

A monk of the Fuke sect of Zen Buddhism is called a *komusō* [nothingness-monk]. They believe this nothingness means the emptiness of Nirvana, and are also known as *komosō* [straw mat monks] for their propensity to sit and meditate on straw mats wherever they go. Their title in the *Poetry Contest Among Professionals* scroll can also be read Boro-boro. Thus perhaps this creature is the *boro* [worn out] futon coverlet once worn by someone who has renounced all worldly things. So I dreamed.



Komusō are mendicant monks who wander from place to place in distinctive garb consisting of a basket-like hat that covers the entire head and face. They renounce all possessions and rely on the goodwill of strangers for sustenance, playing distinctive melodies on their *shakuhachi* flutes along the way.

Futon are well known as mattresses in the West, but in Japan the word can also be used for the bed's

coverlet (specifically, a *kake-buton*), which is what is being portrayed here.

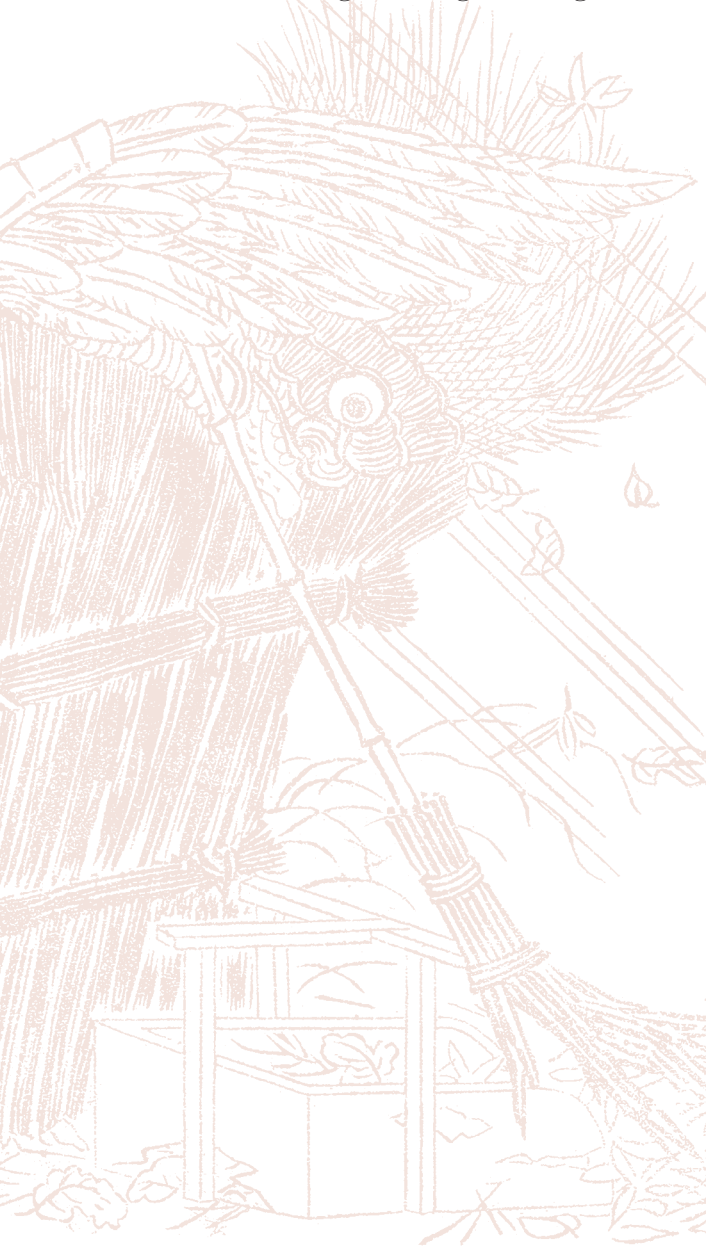
The contest that Sekien refers to was a famed illustrated scroll depicting an imaginary “poetry slam” among professionals of various occupations, including a *komusō* monk. In unraveling the joke here it helps to know that *boro* isn’t just old-fashioned slang for a begging monk but also a homonym for a word meaning old, tattered, or beaten up.

箒神

Hahaki-gami

(BROOM GOD)

In my dream I saw a broom, just as one uses to clean up after an autumn typhoon sweeps through, just as poets use when warming their saké among the trees, just like the ones carried by attendants during morning cleaning.



The name can also be pronounced *Hōki-gami*. The second example references the poetry of China's Bai Juyi, popularized via the 11th century poetry anthology *Wakan Rōeishū* (*A Collection of Japanese and Chinese Poems for Singing*).

*We heated wine among the trees,
burning autumn leaves;
We brushed away green moss
to inscribe poems on rocks*

蓑草鞋

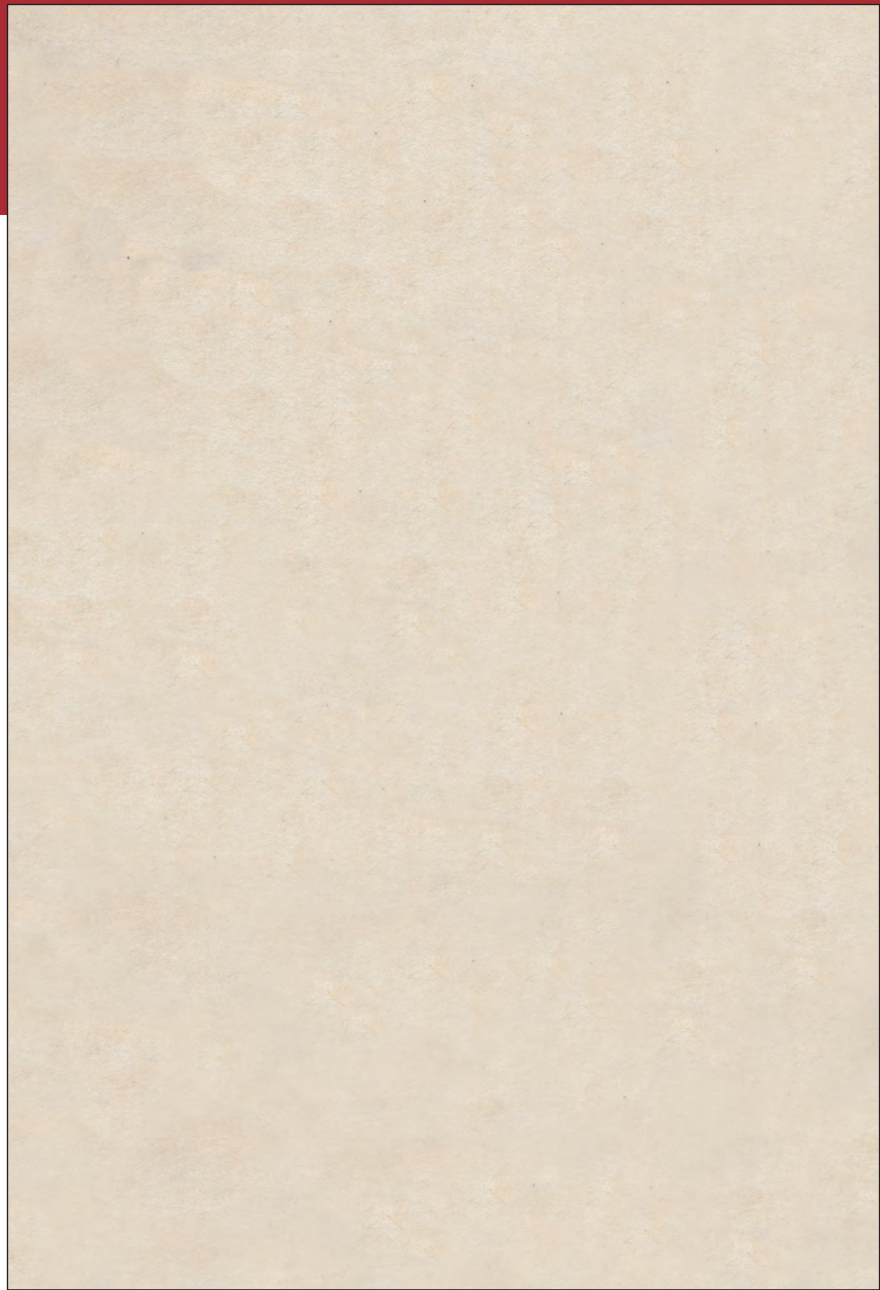
Mino-waraji (COAT-SANDALS)

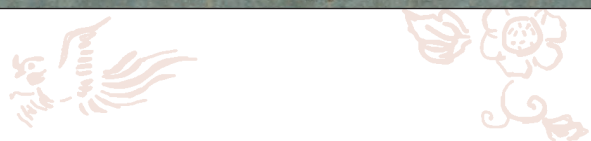
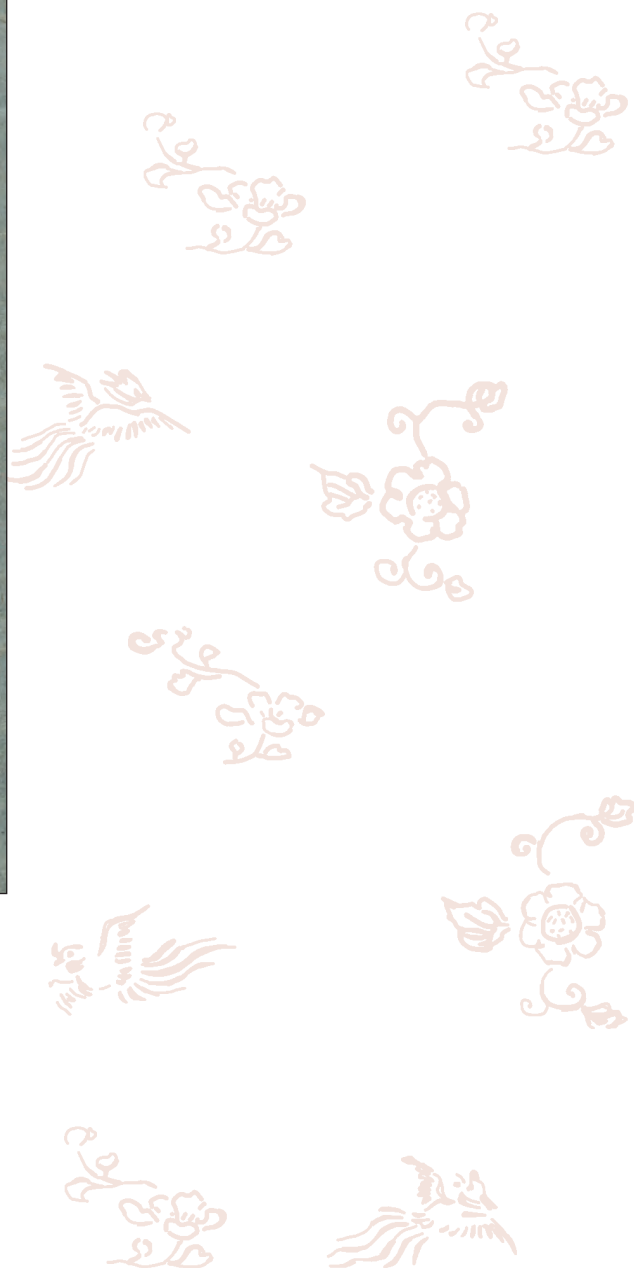
The snow scatters like wild goose-feathers, one wanders in dress white as a crane, and their *mino* [raincoat] transforms into a yokai. So I dreamed.



A “transformed” straw raincoat (*mino*) and sandals (*waraji*). Sekien parodies a famed line from a popular 15th century Noh play *Hachi no Ki* (*The Potted Trees*), which in turn is quoting a Chinese poem by Bai Juyi, popularized in Japan via its inclusion in the *Wakan Rōeishū*:
The snow swirls like wild goose-feathers;
One wanders in dress white as a crane.

Decades later in 1840, Hiroshige used the same verse as inspiration for his famed woodblock print *Man Crossing a Bridge in Snow*. The *mino* coat and *waraji* sandals are deeply associated with wanderers, travelers, and outsiders in Japanese literature.



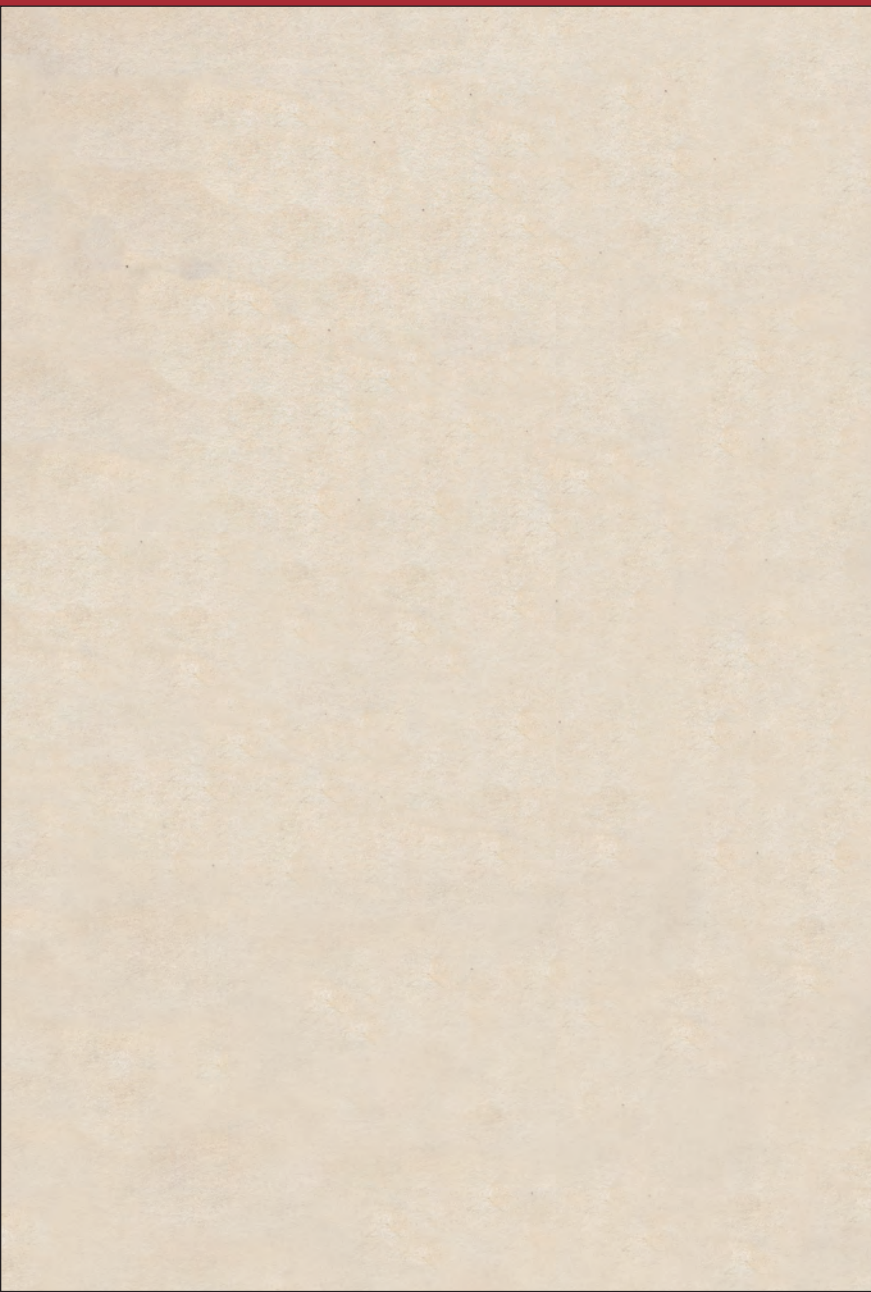


画図百器徒然袋 下 Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro (Ge)

The Illustrated Horde of Haunted
Housewares, Volume 3



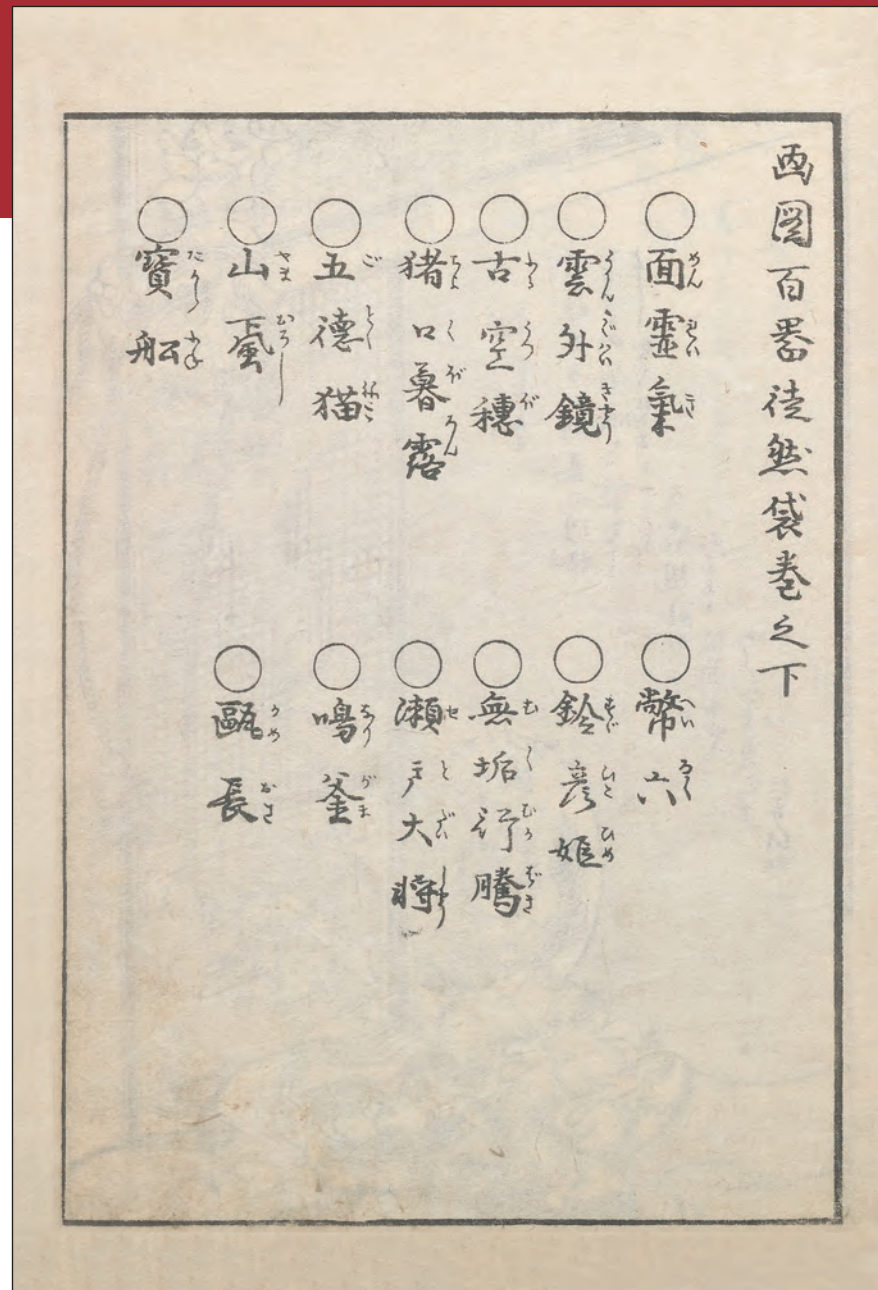
Note that this particular copy of the book is mislabeled with the incorrect title: The Second Volume of Gazu Hyakki Yagyō (The Illustrated Demon Horde's Night Parade). The reason for this is unknown. The labels tend to fall off the covers, and at some point the wrong one may have been mistakenly reapplied.



画図百器徒然袋卷之下 Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro Maki-no-Ge

The Illustrated Horde of Haunted
Housewares, Vol. 3

Menreiki
Heiroku
Ungai-kyō
Suzuhiko-hime
Furu-utsubo
Muku-mukabaki
Choku-boron
Seto-taishō
Gotoku-neko
Nari-gama
Yama-oroshi
Kame-osa
Takara-bune

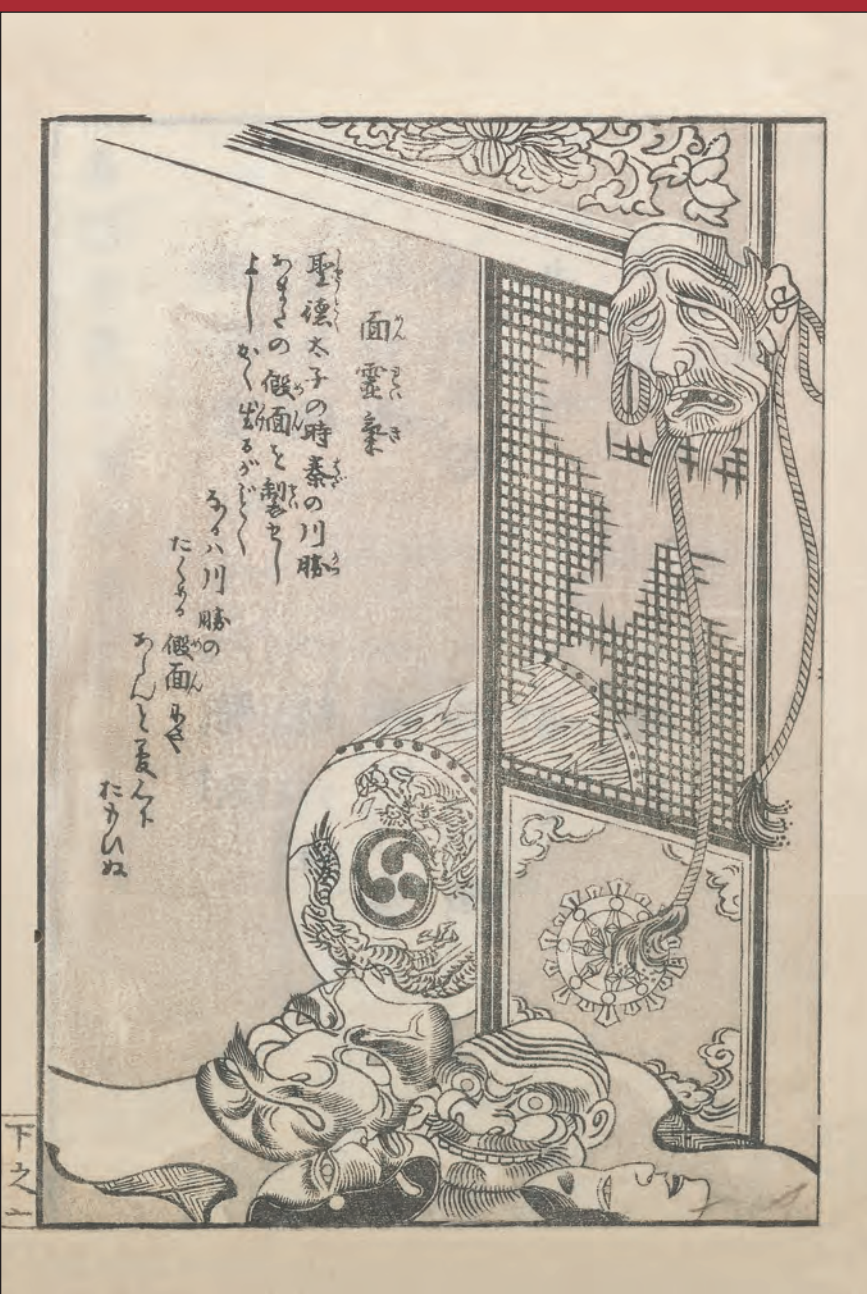


面靈氣

Menreiki

(SPIRIT-MASK)

In the era of Prince Shōtoku, many masks were created for Hata-no-Kawakatsu. Perhaps the reason the masks look so alive is because Kawakatsu's performance brought them to life. So I dreamed.



Noh theater masks that have been enchanted by the incredible talent of the man who first wore them. Sekien writes the name with the characters for “mask,” “spirit” and “ki” (life-essence).

Prince Shōtoku (572—622), regent to Empress Suiko, is celebrated today for his political prowess and for promoting the spread of Buddhism in Japan. His minister Hata-no-Kawakatsu is credited as the founder of sarugaku (“monkey music”), the precursor to the Noh theatre.

In a 1420 treatise on Noh, *Fūshikaden* (“Style and the Flower”), Zeami (c.1363— c. 1443) wrote that Hata-no-Kawakatsu invented the art at the behest of Prince Shōtoku. Zeami was descended from a long line of playwrights, and according to family lore, Shōtoku created sixty-six masks and ordered Hata-no-Kawakatsu to write performances around them. Zeami further explained that a troupe called the Konparu actually possessed a demon mask that was one of these sixty-six, carved by Shōtoku’s own hands.

幣六

Hei roku

(HEIROKU)

The capital of flowers failed to be
graced with a shrine, causing the
agitated spirit of a god to turn riotous.
So I dreamed.



Sekien spins the meaning of a famed pair of *waka* poems on their head for this entry. The “capital of flowers” is a poetic way of referring to Kyoto, which was revered for its cherry blossoms. The episode involves a shrine erected in 994 to placate an angry god believed to be causing an epidemic. (It is Imamiya Jinja shrine, which stands in the city to this day.)

<i>Shirotae no</i>	<i>Sacred white cloth</i>
<i>Toyomitegura o</i>	<i>As a rich offering</i>
<i>Torimochite</i>	<i>Taken in hand,</i>
<i>Iwai zo somuru</i>	<i>We begin our worship</i>
<i>Murasaki no no ni</i>	<i>On the Murasaki plain</i>
<i>Ima yori wa</i>	<i>From this day hence</i>
<i>Araburu kokoro</i>	<i>May your agitation</i>
<i>Mashimasu na</i>	<i>increase no further;</i>
<i>Hana no miyako ni</i>	<i>For in the capital of flowers</i>
<i>Yashiro sadametsu</i>	<i>we have erected a shrine</i>



Sekien imagines a situation where this didn't happen, amplifying the agitation of the angry god to the point where creatures such as Hei roku can run wild. The name may be a play off of a pair of famed bandits, one named Hei roku (though Sekien spells it here with the *hei* from *gohei*, the paper-festooned staff waved by Shinto priests) and one named Haka-madare (whose name includes *hakama*, the pleated trousers that Hei roku wears in the illustration).

雲外鏡

Ungai-kyō

(MIRROR BEYOND THE CLOUDS)

The Shōmakyō has been known from times of old to reveal the forms of strange things, and I wondered if these shades might take up residence therein, letting the yokai-mirror move as it pleased. So I dreamed.



This entry is one of the few times that Sekien uses the word “yokai.” The *Shōmakyō*, literally “demon-illuminating mirror,” is a legendary magical mirror.

Sekien’s illustration takes the form of a *go-shin-tai*, the sacred mirror that represents the vessel for the god worshipped at the altar of a Shinto shrine.

They generally consist of a round mirror whose bottom edge is supported by a wooden frame.

In fact the backdrop is of a Shinto shrine. That Ungai-kyō is peeking out from hiding links it to Suzuhiko-hime on the opposite page. See her entry for more information.

鈴彦姫

Suzuhiko-hime

(BELLPRINCE-PRINCESS)

In a dream I saw Suzuhiko-hime yearning for when Ame-no-uzume danced the *kagura* in front of a cave to draw a goddess out from hiding in ancient times.

In the Shinto creation story, the sun goddess Amaterasu shut herself away in a cave, depriving the world of light. In an effort to draw her out, her fellow *kami* devised a complicated plan. Part of this involved hanging a mirror on a tree, and having the goddess Ame-no-uzume launch into a wild dance to stir up a party atmosphere. The ensuing commotion caused Amaterasu to open the boulder sealing her cave a crack. Spying her reflection in the mirror she emerged, restoring light to the world again. In legend this is said to be the origin of the art of the *kagura* dance, which is deeply intertwined with Shinto rites. However, Shinto regards four as an inauspicious number; the four bells on Suzuhiko-hime's head mark her as yokai, not god.

We believe this entry is part of a pair with Ungai-kyō on the opposite page. Both are set against the backdrop of a Shinto shrine, with Suzuhiko-hime facing Ungai-kyō. Could the Bellprince-Princess be dancing to draw the fellow yokai Mirror Beyond the Clouds out from hiding?



Suzuhiko-hime is an unusual name. *Hiko* is generally only used for males and *hime* only for females. This double-gendered name reminds us of Tanabata, the Star Festival. According to legend, the Milky Way separates two lovers who are only allowed to meet once a year on the seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. In the Edo era, celebrations included preparing a shallow wooden tub with water and placing it outside so as to reflect the nighttime sky. Ungai-kyō, which translates into “Mirror Beyond the Clouds,” certainly evokes this tradition.

古空穂

Furu-utsubo

(QLDQUIVER)

Perhaps Furu-utsubo was that used
by Miura-no-suke or Kazusa-no-suke,
who killed the fox of Nasuno plain.
So I dreamed.



The keywords of “fox” and “Nasuno plain” would have clued readers in that this quiver represented that used by the two archers who hunted down Lady Tamamo-no-mae [p. 98], a nine-tailed fox that had taken human form to become the Emperor’s favorite consort. Her fallen body transformed into the Sesshōseki (Life-Taking Stone, p. 202). In fact, the story forms the basis for a well-known Noh play by the same name: *Sesshōseki*.

The text for the name and description are missing from third edition printings of the book.



(EMPTYCHAP)



293

猪口暮露 Choku-boron (CUPMONKS)

As Emperor Ming of Tang sat reading, a tiny human appeared on his desktop. The Emperor shouted; his servant declared that the creature was an ink-fairy and it disappeared. Perhaps the Choku-boron I saw in my dream are similar sorts.



As with Boro-Boro Ton on p. 280, Sekien puns off the word “boro,” an old slang term for the komusō monks who wandered the land wearing basket-like hats that covered their faces. But here the baskets are upended choko (saké-cups). The illustration hints that these old choko have taken on a life of their own and are going wandering themselves.

瀬戸大將

Seto-taishō

(GENERAL SETO)

General Seto, the Guan Yu of the saké-warming pot, trounces the Karatsu-ware Cao Cao, composing poetry with his lance at the ready. He wears a beautiful Shu Han brocade inspired pattern. So I dreamed.



He's a little teapot, short and stout. The saké-warming pot is the large one with handle and spout forming General Seto's body; Seto's head is a saké bottle.

Sekien describes General Seto using well-known characters from the celebrated 14th century Chinese novel *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*: the arch-rival generals Cao Cao and Guan Yu. Seto

ware and Karatsu ware were both highly respected ceramics originating in different regions of Japan. That Sekien has portrayed them as competing generals hints at some rivalry between the two.

Brocade patterns from China's Shu Han (today Sichuan province) were adopted for use on ceramics in Japan.

五徳猫

Gotoku-neko

(TRIVET-CAT)

Having forgotten two of the Dances of Seven Virtues, he was henceforth known as the Master of Five Virtues; in my dream, I wondered what this cat might have forgotten.



Multiple jokes are at play in this seemingly simple illustration of a cat-monster blowing air into a raging fire. First of all, *aka-neko* (“red cat”) was Edo-era slang for arson, the literal expression being *akaneko wo hawaseru*—“letting the red cat crawl.” Fires were such an issue in Japan’s wood-and-paper cities of the era that the crime of arson was punishable by death.

The “he” in the text refers not to the cat but to stanza 226 of *Essays in Idleness*: “Once in the era of the ex-Emperor Go Toba, Yukinaga, a former ruler of Shinano, who was renowned for his knowledge

of old music, on being summoned to take part in a discussion upon musical matters, forgot two of the Dances of Seven Virtues so he was thereupon nicknamed the Young Man of Five Virtues. He was so cut to the heart by this that he relinquished his studies and shaved his head” to become a monk.

The pun here is that the iron braziers or trivets used in traditional hearths are also called *gotoku* and written with the same characters meaning five virtues. *Gotoku* come in a variety of shapes, but most common are round ones with three hooked legs—you can see them poking out of the top of Gotoku-neko’s head in the illustration. Also note the twin tails, the hallmark of a Nekomata (see p. 15). Inverting a trivet and placing it atop one’s head is also part of a traditional curse (for more detail see Ushinotoki-Mairi, p. 100).

鳴釜

Nari-gama

(CRYING CAULDRON)

Bai Ze's Guide to Quelling Demons:
"the source of the crying in the crying
cauldron ritual is an oni known as
Renjo. Saying aloud this oni's name
can put a stop to strange happenings."
So I saw in my dream.

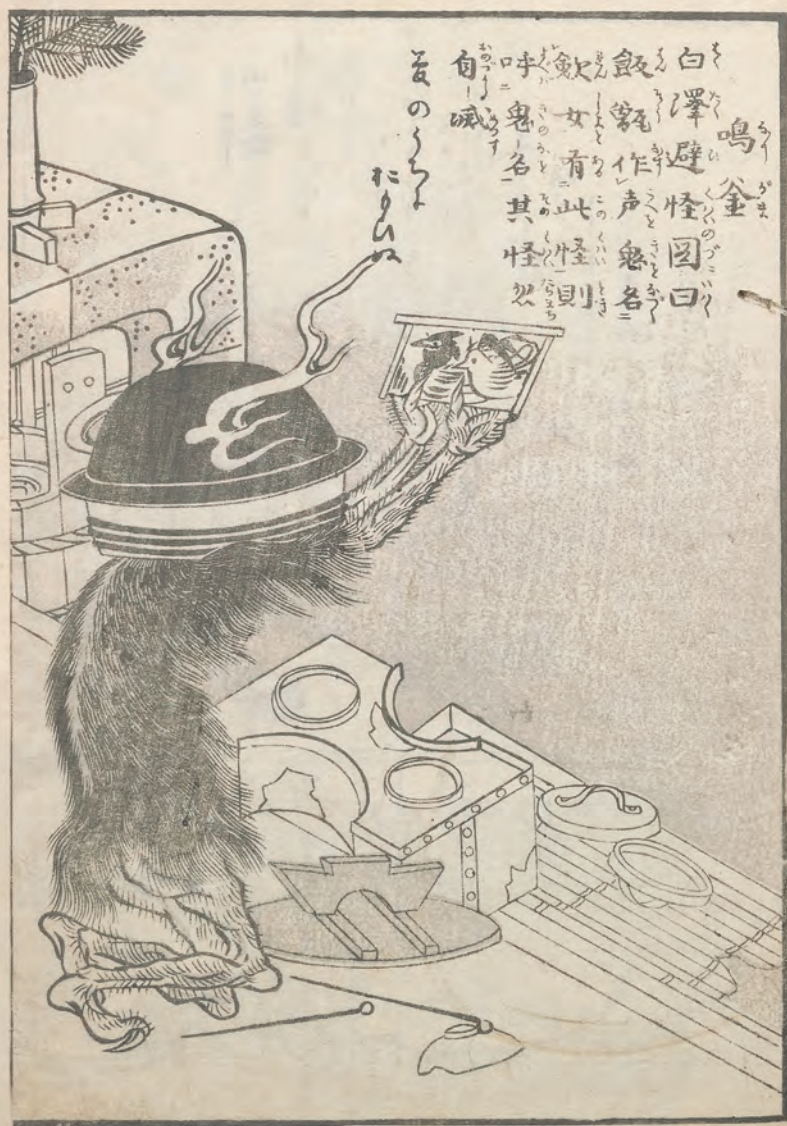
Perhaps to emphasize its origins, Sekien penned this entry entirely in *kanbun* (annotated Chinese) rather than Japanese. As seen on p. 223, the Bai Ze was a fount of information about the strange beasts that once populated our world. Its wisdom was compiled into a book by the legendary Yellow Emperor close to five thousand years ago. Alas, this mythical tome has long since been lost to time, if it ever existed in the first place. Fortunately for us, Sekien seems to have found a copy in the realm of his dreams.

Okayama Prefecture's Kibitsu Shrine is home to the Kibitsu Cauldron Ritual. This form of divination involves a special cauldron that makes a sound when water is boiled in it, and the tone is interpreted to give a fortune.

However, Nari-gama isn't posed in a shrine here, but rather in a traditional kitchen. It holds aloft an *ema*, the wooden plaque upon which worshippers write their wishes at shrines. This particular *ema* features a pair of birds. In times of old, *ema* plaques with birds, particularly chickens, were commonly placed near ovens (also, incidentally, pronounced *kama*) as talismans in Japanese homes, as the "god of the oven" was considered a powerful protector of

families. Mothers interacted with this deity via the *ema* board, flipping it over to help quiet a crying child, or placing an *ema* with a rooster on to speed the cure of a headcold. Once it was cured, an *ema* with both rooster and hen was placed in thanks—echoing the two birds on Nari-Gama's plaque.

In an additional layer of meaning, the kanji character for *Nari*, which means to cry (as in an animal's cry), is composed of smaller ideograms for bird and mouth. Perhaps the Nari-gama is venerating a bird to express appreciation at being able to make a sound?

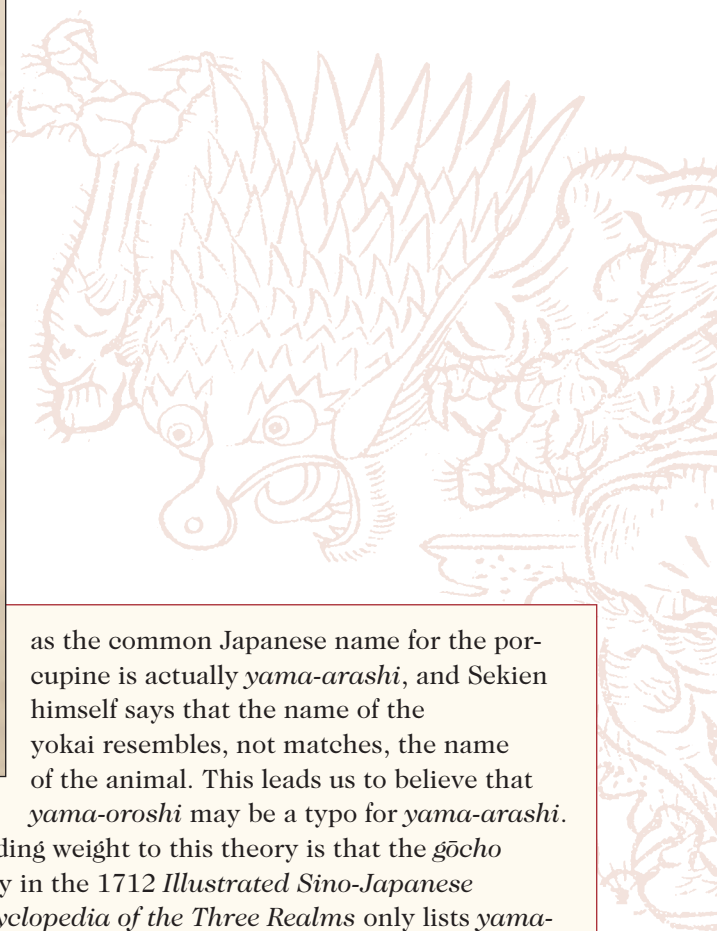


山嵐

Yama-oroshi

(YAMA-OROSHI)

There is an animal known as gōcho, also called the yama-oroshi; its fur is like needles. This yokai is so called because its name and appearance resemble the animal. So I dreamed.



as the common Japanese name for the porcupine is actually *yama-arashi*, and Sekien himself says that the name of the yokai resembles, not matches, the name of the animal. This leads us to believe that *yama-oroshi* may be a typo for *yama-arashi*.

Lending weight to this theory is that the *gōcho* entry in the 1712 *Illustrated Sino-Japanese Encyclopedia of the Three Realms* only lists *yama-arashi* for the animal's Japanese name.

Not being native to Japan, in times of old the porcupine was known mainly through descriptions in foreign texts and treated as a semi-mythical creature. Its depiction in the *Encyclopedia of the Three Realms* resembles a wild boar (and indeed *gōcho* is written with the characters for “splendid” and “boar.”)

Colloquially, *yama-oroshi* is the term for a chill breeze blowing down off of a mountain in the winter months. The *gōcho*, known in the West as the porcupine, is commonly known in Japan as the *yama-arashi* (“mountain-wilding.”) And a grater for food is an *oroshi*. Sekien combines the concepts, amplifying the pun by portraying the yokai running amok in a kitchen.

Most Japanese sources transliterate the first sentence as “also called the *yama-oyaji*,” with *oyaji* meaning old man. However, a close reading of the text reveals it to be *yama-oroshi*. Even this is odd,



瓶長

Kame-osa

(CAPTAIN CROCK)

As they say, fortune conceals misfortune, and I dreamed of Kame-osa, from which saké can be ladled and drunk without draining, foretelling of auspicious things before they happen.

Fortune conceals misfortune is from the Chinese philosopher Laozi's *Tao Te Ching*.

The *kame* here refers to a crock used to hold saké, and more specifically, to a mythical crock that never goes empty. It shows up in a famed Noh play called *Shōjō*. Echoing the theme of this book, it's about a dream.

A man falls asleep and is told that he will prosper if he opens a saké stall in the local market. When he awakes, he launches into his new vocation to great success. Eventually he takes note of a particular customer who consumes huge quantities of his stock without ever seeming to get drunk. The man asks his name, and the customer reveals that he is *Shōjō*, a mythical sasquatch-like creature that lives in the sea. (Note the furry hand at bottom left of the illustration.) The next day, the man waits on the beach with a full crock for *Shōjō*. Delighted, *Shōjō* dances, then presents the man with a saké-crock that never drains no matter how much is ladled from it. Just then, the saké-seller suddenly awakes; it was all a dream. But beside him on the beach is the magical crock!



That's the background, but there's another, even better joke here. Throughout his life, Sekien took on numerous art apprentices. One was a young man by the name of Koikawa Harumachi, who achieved great acclaim for his *kibyōshi*, illustrated "yellow-cover books" that are a forerunner of modern *manga*. He wrote satirical verse under the pen name Sakenoue-no-furachi ("The Unpardonable Drinker") and produced ukiyo-e prints under yet another pen name: *Kame-osa*. It seems this illustration is a tip of the pen to a favorite student.



red snapper, and Daikokuten, god of commerce and trade. They lead an elephant laden with riches, and whose forehead sports a flaming *cintamani* jewel said to make all wishes come true. Although there is a tradition of worshipping each god separately, they are generally referenced and venerated as a group: *shichi-fukujin*, the Seven Gods of Fortune. These scene plays out against the backdrop of pine,

bamboo, and plum trees (*shōchikubai*), a symbol of prosperity often used for celebrations such as births or weddings. If you look closely, you can see a crane pecking the ground behind Jurōjin at the far right, and a trio of turtles at the far left, clad in algae “skirts” expressing their advanced age. The combination evokes an auspicious proverb: *cranes live a thousand years, turtles ten thousand*.

宝船

Takara-bune

(TREASURE SHIP)

Now all are awakened,
perhaps



The ending lines to the poem referenced at the beginning of the first volume (p. 241). Portrayals of the Seven Gods of Fortune remain a popular theme even today. Although they individually originated in Indian, Chinese, and domestic lore, their “packaging” into a single group is a Japanese custom dating to the 15th century.

Their details vary from era to era and portrayal to portrayal, but they are generally venerated as

patrons of wealth, longevity, and prosperity. Hotei, the rotund god of prosperity watches a performance flanked by Bishamonten, god of war, while Jurōjin, god of longevity, stands behind. The tall-headed Fukurokuju, god of wealth and longevity, dances to a song played on the lute by Benzaiten, patron goddess of art, music, and wealth. The remaining two gods are seen on the following pages: the popular Ebisu, god of merchants, shouldering his customary



by the sound of the boat
carried across the waves.

many artists, budding and established. One of them was the Shogun's official painter Kano Hisanobu, who captured the elephant's appearance as it entered Edo. Hisanobu was, of course, a Kano-school artist, the very same style in which young Sekien was training. Sekien would have been just 16 at the time. Could this drawing also be intended as an old man's fond recollection of an exciting experience from his youth? There's no direct reference to the event here, but it's an intriguing connection.



Not being native to Japan, elephants were long treated as semi-mythical creatures with deep links to Buddhism. In June of 1728 a juvenile Asian elephant was paraded through the streets of Edo. It was marched there from the port of Nagasaki, where it arrived from Vietnam via an Asian trader. It wasn't the first elephant to come to Japan, but was the first so widely seen, as it walked its way along more than a thousand kilometers of back roads to the capital. Locals clamored to take in the sight of the unusual creature passing along the way, among them a great

七十三翁
鳥山石燕豐房畫
天明四甲辰春
文化二乙丑年求板

校合門人

燕子興
石調示

彫工井上新七

江戸書林

本銀町三丁目

前川六左衛門
前川弥兵衛

Art: an Old Man of 73 Toriyama Sekien
Toyofusa

Apprentices: Shikō, Enji, Sekichō

Carver: Inoue Shinshichi

Edo Booksellers:

Maekawa Rokuzaemon

Maekawa Yahei

Honshirogane-chō, 3-chōme

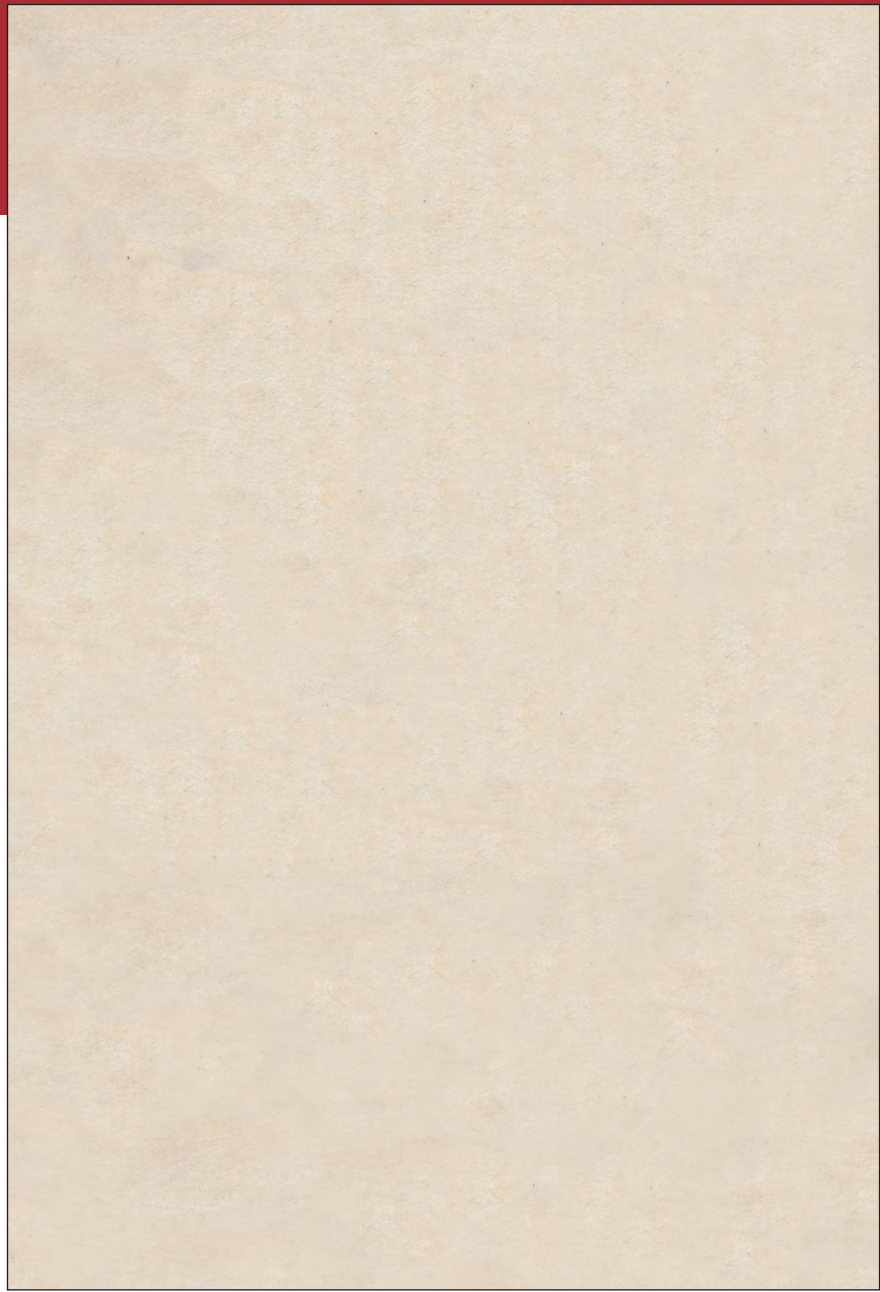
First edition printed Tenmei 4,
Kinoe-tatsu, Spring

Blocks acquired Bunka 2,
Kinoto-ushi

This colophon is from the second edition of the book, published after the two Maekawa booksellers acquired the blocks from the original bookseller-publisher, Enshū-ya Yashichi. Although presumably related, the two Maekawas were different companies with separate business addresses. The address here is for Maekawa Yahei.

Tenmei 4, the fourth year of the Tenmei emperor's reign, corresponds to 1784. Kinoe-tatsu is the Year of the Wood Dragon in the traditional lunar calendar. This is when the first edition of the book was published by Enshū-ya Yashichi.

Bunka 2, the year this second edition came out, corresponds to 1805. Kinoto-ushi is the Year of the Wood-Ox.





Appendix¹

One day, I found myself treading fallen blossoms at Mount Hiei of the East², then making my way down an indistinct path entwined with wisteria in Negishi. Following crisp streams of beautifully blossoming kerria flowers on my way home, I paid a visit to Sekien's studio, where I was met by one of his disciples. He put on tea and told me the master was out, but would surely return soon.

Presently I was seized by drowsiness. But in threes and fours and twos bees emerged from a hive under the eaves and began an incessant buzzing.³ Try as I might, I could not shoo them away. Just like the man who drew his sword to chase a fly, the disciple and I waved sticks to try and scare the bees away. But this only served to disgorge a huge number of them that quickly transformed into people.

They looked like little puppets. Gentlemen, beautiful ladies, wise ones, fools, even priests. Talking animatedly, standing and sitting, moving and pausing, going through the motions of all the good and bad in the world. Fascinated, I propped an elbow on the table to watch the little drama unfold, utterly transfixed.

Then: "I'm home," announced Sekien, startling me awake from the book my head had found as a pillow. Spotting an actual beehive beneath the eaves, I reeled with shock. It was as though I had returned from the Great Kingdom of Ashendon!⁴

Getting down to business, I knew Sekien had recently made drawings of characters from *The Water Margin*. I begged him to show me posthaste, and flipping through the very same book, I found it populated by the very same people from my dream. Indeed, the things I had seen as I slept must have been the drawings from this book!

Recently a certain bookseller, desiring to see this work get its due in the world, had asked Sekien to have woodblocks carved. Now that they were done, he asked me to provide an Introduction. Being such close companions and confidants, I could hardly refuse the request. And so I picked up my brush.

*An'ei 6 [1777], January, Year of the Rooster
Secchuan Ryōta*

¹ This introduction was appended to third edition printings of the first book, *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō*, by Nagano-ya Kankichi. They were published in the town of Ise sometime after 1805, many years after Sekien's death. It was actually lifted from a completely different book, Sekien's 1777 *Suiko Gasen Ran* (*Illustrations Exploring 'The Water Margin'*), and appended here for reasons unknown. It has nothing to do with Sekien's yokai encyclopedias, but we include it here both in the interest of completeness and because it's an amusing anecdote about visiting Sekien's home in Negishi.

² An Edo-era appellation for Ueno's Kan'ei-ji temple. It was destroyed in 1868. Ueno Park occupies the site today.

³ "Threes and fours and twos" is an allusion to a similar phrase in Sei Shonagon's *The Pillow Book*.

⁴ An imaginary miniature kingdom ala Swift's Lilliput. The Great Kingdom of Ashendon is central to Tang dynasty writer Li Gongzuo's fable "The Governor of the Southern Tributary State." It's about a man who falls asleep and awakens in a strange kingdom that, in the end, turns out to be an anthole beneath an old ash tree.

Acknowledgments

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And finally, a big thank you to acquisitions editor Drew Ford, editor Jim Miller, designer Marie Zaczekiewicz, and the entire Dover team. You made this translation of Sekien possible in the first place.

Hiroko Yoda
Matt Alt

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Note: In order to preserve context, references are organized by section for the various introductions/prefaces/afterwords, and alphabetically by Japanese name for the yokai entries.

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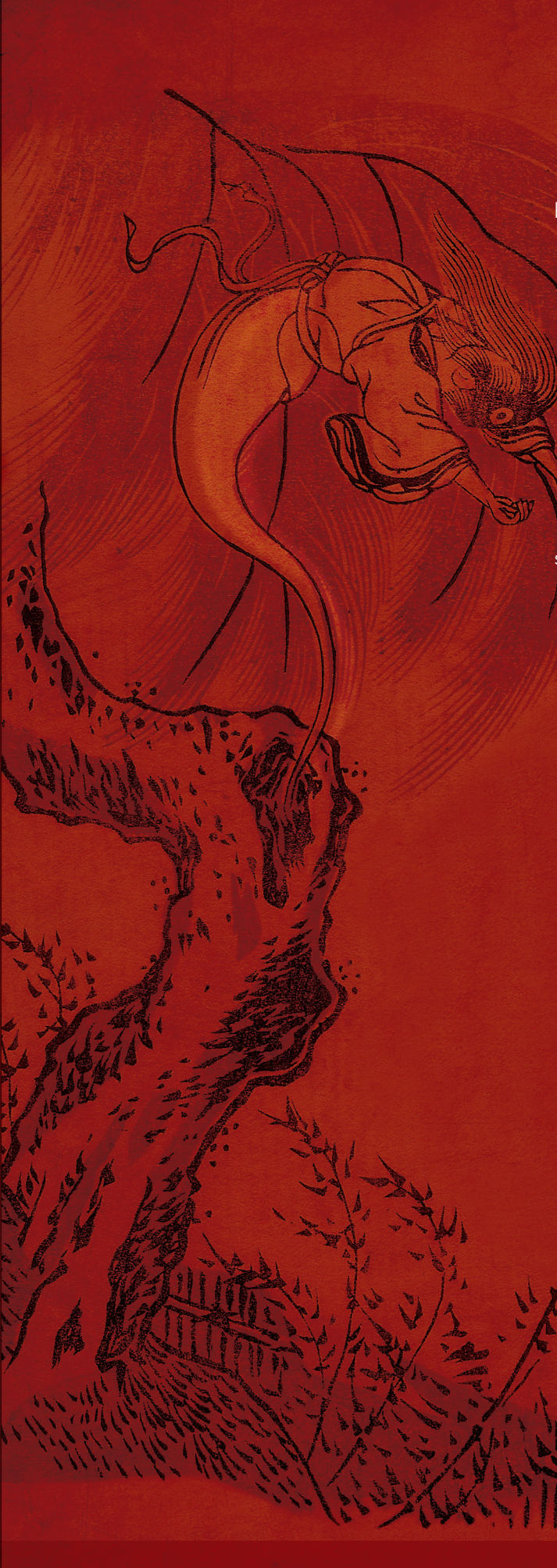
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In order to remain true to the artist's original intent and vision, this book is presented in the traditional Japanese style, with the pages arranged sequentially from right to left. Thus, what would be considered the last page of the book in the Western style is actually the first page in this edition. Likewise, what is customarily the back cover in Western bookmaking is actually the front cover in the traditional Japanese style, a design feature that this Dover edition has preserved for the sake of authenticity.



ABOUT THE TRANSLATORS

Hiroko Yoda and **Matt Alt** are the founders of AltJapan Co., Ltd., a Tokyo-based company that specializes in producing the English versions of Japanese entertainment, including video games, comic books, literature, and other consumer products. They are frequent pop-cultural commentators in English and Japanese media, and the co-authors of *Yokai Attack! The Japanese Monster Survival Guide* (Tuttle, 2011), *Ninja Attack! True Tales of Assassins, Samurai, and Outlaws* (Tuttle, 2011), and *Yurei Attack! The Japanese Ghost Survival Guide* (Tuttle, 2011).



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—ALFRED BIRNBAUM

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