

ANIME AND ITS ROOTS IN  
EARLY JAPANESE MONSTER ART



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by

ZILIA PAPP

*Hosei University, Tokyo*



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By Zilia Papp

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*For my family*



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*Zilia Papp*  
*Hosei University, June 2009*

#### NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND ROMANIZATION

For Japanese words the Hepburn transliteration system is employed. Exceptions to the rule are familiar place names that are commonly written without the macrons indicating long vowels (e.g. Tokyo rather than Tōkyō). Similarly, for presentational reasons, because of the extensive use of Japanese words throughout the text, the usual convention of italicizing Japanese words that have not yet entered the English language has not been followed.

As regards names, the Japanese convention of putting family names first has been followed throughout.

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# Introduction

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One dark and stormy night in 1964, twelve years after Japan regained its independence from the Allied Forces, a strange little boy emerged from the graveyard, crawling out of the tomb of his dead mother. While it makes the event less sensational, that this happened on the pages of a Japanese comic book, the little boy went on to make some even stranger friends – and enemies – and his adventures propelled him into stardom within the context of contemporary Japanese visual culture, a stardom which any real-life boy band could only dream of. For this boy was Graveyard Kitaro, the brainchild of manga artist Mizuki Shigeru, and he became solely responsible for reintroducing Japanese folk monsters, or *yōkai*, to the popular imagination in post-war mass media, including comics, animation, computer graphics, television and film.

Despite this domestic importance, Kitaro is virtually unknown internationally. Mizuki Shigeru is one of the most important manga artists of post-war Japan, and the animation series *Gegege no Kitaro* (ゲゲゲの鬼太郎) derived from his manga, originally known as *Hakabano Kitaro* (墓場の鬼太郎, Graveyard Kitaro), has had a profound influence in postwar visual media. After more than fifty years since launching the then black-and-white animation series of the *yōkai* boy Kitaro and his eye-ball father, Mizuki's work is still extremely popular as well as highly acclaimed as a contribution to the conservation of Japan's cultural heritage.<sup>1</sup>

The Kitaro saga is the longest running animation series in Japan; Kitaro is still found in contemporary media in film and animation form. The Edo Museum of Tokyo held an immensely popular exhibition on Mizuki in late 2004, preceded by equally successful regional exhibitions at art museums from Hokkaido to Kyushu. Kitaro-related paraphernalia are progressively produced by the subsidiary company Mizuki Pro and three feature films have been released between 2005 and 2008 that are related to Mizuki's work. One of these is a modern adaptation of *Yōkai Daisensō* (妖怪大戦争, Great Yōkai Wars, 2005) from 1968, while the others are film versions of *Gegege no Kitaro*.

Furthermore, Mizuki's popularity resonates in such phenomena as a train station being named after one of his characters, Nezumi Otoko (鼠

男, Ratman) – this is a first for an animated character in Japan – or the substantial influence his characters have on the image planning for the town of his birth, Sakaiminato city in Tottori prefecture, where every street lamp is shaped as an eye-ball and every shop displays a yōkai image.<sup>2</sup> This popularity is not coincidental, but derives from the influence Kitaro episodes and manga books have had on the imagination of contemporary Japanese audiences.

Identifying the key figures of Japanese manga and anime is an important task that has been undertaken in volumes focusing on specific artists perceived to be important in the context of Japanese animation, such as Miyazaki Hayao (McCarthy 1999) or Oshii Mamoru (Ruh 2004). However, the canonization of manga and anime artists is still in progress, and sometimes the importance of an artist is distorted and unjustly defined by his or her availability for Western audiences and academics. The fact that Mizuki, one of the most influential and far-reaching manga artists in contemporary Japan, is virtually unknown in the West shows how Japanese manga and anime are still a relatively under-researched field when compared to their immense influence on international popular culture as well as to their current international artistic and cultural status.

To fill this gap to some extent, this work aims to document the influence of a special segment of Edo and Meiji period visual art, yōkai art, on Mizuki's work by studying the imagery based on comparisons, contrasts and aesthetic evaluations, with the aim of identifying the visual continuity between yōkai representation of these periods and in contemporary manga and anime. We will investigate how the yōkai imagery used in the animation series *Gegege no Kitaro*, based on the manga series of the same title, has been influenced by yōkai imagery created in the Edo to Meiji periods and demonstrate how the design of the characters of the contemporary animated series is an integral part of a process of visual evolution of the representation of monsters that began in the Muromachi period.

Furniss (1998) claims that animation is a legitimate visual art form, that is further supported in Furniss (2008) with a detailed analysis drawing on a wide range of topics related to animation aesthetics, including water- and oil-based media, mixed media and drawing, concept, style, and sound. She demonstrates that theories of aesthetics can be applied to animated works, and substantiates that research that places animation in the context of art history is viable. Furniss proposes a contextual approach to the study of animation aesthetics, with regards to the historical, economic, technological, etc. context of production, while emphasizing an urgent need for the documentation of this previously marginalized field (Furniss 1998:7). Furniss establishes her claim that the consideration of animation as an art form is legitimized by the post-modernist discourse within Media Studies, which allows for an academic approach to popular forms of entertainment (Furniss 1998:3).

Animation theorist Alan Cholodenko criticizes Furniss's approach

as being reductive and generally limited in scope, while acknowledging that her work is pioneering within the field of animation aesthetics (Cholodenko 2007:30). While Furniss's work is one of the first attempts to theorize animation aesthetics, and if viewed in isolation might seem minimalist, it is grounded in the theoretical framework addressing the artistic merits of caricature and the comic, which arose from modernism in nineteenth century Europe, and progressed in twentieth century discourses of Western art history related to Impressionism (Herbert 1988), Cubism (Gopnik 1983) and Pop Art (Nakas 2004), while the relationship between animation and the avant-garde is explored in Leslie (2004).

Within the framework of modernism, caricature and the comic are theorized as legitimate art forms in the essay trilogy *De l'Essence du Rire et Généralement du Comique dans les Arts Plastiques* (The Essence of Laughter and the Comic in General in the Plastic Arts, 1855), *Quelques Caricaturistes Français* (Some French Caricaturists, 1857) and *Quelques Caricaturistes Étrangers* (Some Foreign Caricaturists, 1857) by French symbolist poet and art critic Charles Baudelaire (1821–67). These essays were the first theoretical arguments put towards establishing the aesthetic value of caricature as a serious art form and in proposing a radicalized caricatural aesthetic that can be applied to define modernist painting (Hannoosh 1992:5–6). Baudelaire established an extensive theoretical structure that was supported by its application to specific art works to identify the formal elements of the comic (Hannoosh 1992:75).

The artwork of Spanish painter Francisco Goya (1746–1828) proved to be central to Baudelaire's theorization of the comic (Hannoosh 1992:210). Baudelaire demonstrated how Goya succeeded in diluting the line between realms of the fantastic and the real, creating monstrosity rooted in realism (Hannoosh 1992:211). By citing examples from the vampirism and witchcraft group (plates 59 and 62) of Goya's aquatint print set *Los Caprichos* (The Caprices, 1799), a series of etchings depicting fantastic and grotesque themes, Baudelaire showed that Goya's modernity derived from the comic: from violent contrasts, horrifying distortions and caricatural forms (Hannoosh 1992:215). According to Baudelaire, the hallucinatory aspect of Goya's work, expressed by a "grâce satanique" (satanic grace) (Hannoosh 1992:238), had an effect that passed the test of the "caricature artistique" (artistic caricature), the confrontation of reality through the fantastic and irrational (Hannoosh 1992:215).

In his subsequent theoretical work on modernism, *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne* (The Painting of Modern Life, 1863), Baudelaire extended "the satanic – and thus human – nature of comic art to the whole of art" (Hannoosh 1992:253). In this way, Baudelaire established the connection between comic art and modern art as sharing an aesthetic value system that draws beauty from the transitory, banal, artificial and grotesque ugliness of contemporary life, and ultimately applied this theory to art in general (Hannoosh 1992:254–5).

Baudelaire's essays on the relationship between comic and modern art

became central to nineteenth century aesthetic theory, and established fundamental principles for twentieth century art practice.

It clearly provided a means for realizing the objectives of modernist movements, undermining the authority of neoclassical standards and values. From the radically caricatural methods of Courbet, Manet, and Degas – abbreviated and exaggerated forms, strong outline, summary backgrounds, sketch-like drawing, bold coloring, effects of improvisation, immediacy, and spontaneity, even the progressive flattening of the picture characteristic of pictorial modernism – to the Cubist play with representation, and the distortion, irreverent humor, uncanniness, and license characteristic of twentieth century forms, modern art has been dominated by the comic, the grotesque, and the caricatural. Yet the comic provided not only a means of overthrowing standards but also of establishing them, finding the rule of the norm more clearly expressed in the distortion.

(Hannoosh 1992:309)

Based on the theoretical framework established by Baudelaire regarding the relationship between the comic and the art of modernism of the nineteenth century, twentieth-century aesthetic theory readdressed the question of finding general principles of art in caricature and the comic. The 1960 essay *The Experiment of Caricature* by twentieth-century Vienna School art historian Ernst Gombrich (1909–2001) initiated a theoretical framework that placed the comic within the context of fine art that was later utilized in post-modern art theory. Gombrich argues that, “we can perhaps rid art history of its obsession with space and bring other achievements into focus”, including aspects of the reproduction of the physiognomic expression (Gombrich 1960:279). Gombrich cites as examples the intense, distorted physiognomy in *The Scream* (1895) by symbolist painter Edvard Munch (1863–1944) and the fusion of humor and art by expressionist painter Paul Klee (1879–1940) as early evidence of the breakdown of barriers between caricature and art in the twentieth century (Gombrich 1960:303).

This phenomenon was investigated in the 2004 exhibition *Funny Cuts – Cartoons in Contemporary Art* (December 4, 2004 – May 17, 2005, State Gallery, Stuttgart, Germany), which put the comics-influenced artwork of forty twentieth-century artists, including Pop artists Andy Warhol (1928–87), Mel Ramos (1935–) and Roy Lichtenstein (1923–97), into an art historical perspective. While the Pop Art movement incorporated cartoon images as “everyday icons” into its motifs, and saw them as an antithesis of “high” art, art critic and writer Öyvind Fahlström related the artistic merits of comics to Dadaism, Surrealism, Lettrism and Concrete Poetry, positioning comic art between fine art and literature in his 1954 article “The Comics as an Art” (Nakas 2004:28, 76). Following Fahlström’s theorization, comics as pictorial narratives were also positioned in the 1950s literary movements including Concrete Poetry,

Visual Poetry and the Situationalist International movement founded by hypergraphist Guy Debord (1931–94), which aimed to erase divisions between art and everyday life (Nakas 2004:33). The theory of positioning comics in relation to literature was further explored by Eisner (1985), McCloud (1994) and, in the case of manga, Schodt (1996).

In the case of contemporary art, the theory regarding the dissolution and appropriation of comic iconographies in relation to art is revisited in the 2004 exhibition *Funny Cuts – Cartoons in Contemporary Art* via the works of contemporary artists, including contemporary European and American artists Sue Williams (1954–), Arturo Herrera (1959–), Inka Essenhigh (1969–), and, in the case of Japanese artists, Amano Yoshitaka<sup>3</sup> (天野 喜孝, 1952–) and Murakami Takashi (村上隆, 1962) (Nakas 2004:76).

Gombrich already argued that the framework of Western art history might be reinvented by shifting the focus from spatial representation to other aspects of art (Gombrich 1960: 279). Modernism progressively introduced flatness as a concept in fine art that developed through the movements of Impressionism, Cubism and later twentieth-century Pop Art. On the other hand, Murakami Takashi theorizes that the flat nature of Japanese art prior to its contact with Western perspective art provided a continuity in post-modern Japanese Neo Pop as well as anime and manga (Murakami 2005:vii). A theorist as well as a visual artist trained in *Nihonga* (日本画), a painting style that emerged in the Meiji period (1868–1912) during Japan's modernization period with the aim to fuse traditional Japanese and Western painting concepts, Murakami is instrumental in assigning a new art historical framework within which anime and manga are convincingly situated.

Murakami's theoretical framework is informed by the revisionist art historical theory of Kitazawa (2000, 1989), which proposes that the distinction between *geijutsu* (芸術, arts and crafts) and *bijutsu* (美術, fine art) in the case of Japanese art is an artificial one, corresponding to Japan's modernization period and borrowing from Western art historical categories, which distinction is progressively erased in the post-modern (Murakami 2005:244–245). Based on this premise, Murakami introduces the theory of the Superflat (Murakami 2000), a value system that is simultaneously applicable to traditional and Neo Pop Japanese art, while considering Japan's modernization period as an interval when the Superflat sensibility metamorphosed only temporarily (Murakami 2005:155).

The theory of the Superflat borrows from the art historical theorization of Tsuji (1988), which suggests that traditional Japanese painting creates autonomous spaces based on a two-dimensional aesthetic (Murakami 1999:23). Murakami labels this phenomenon Superflat, and demonstrates its presence in the screen paintings of Edo period painter Kano Sansetsu (狩野山雪, 1590–1651), the woodblock prints of Edo period *ukiyo-e* artist Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760–1849) as well as in the case of the contemporary animation of Kanada Yoshinori

(金田伊功, 1952-) and manga sequences of Matsumoto Taiyō (松本大洋, 1967-) (Murakami 1999:24). According to Murakami's Superflat thesis, "brilliant color, planar surfaces, stylized features, and the absence of illusionistic space define a lineage in Japanese art that links Rinpa screens to ukiyo-e woodblock prints to early modern Nihonga painting, and ultimately to postwar manga and anime" (Murakami 2005:244). Derived from Kitazawa's notion, Murakami looks at Japanese art history not only on the "vertical axis of time" but on the "horizontal axis of culture", thus including manga, animation, computer graphics and other contemporary genres of creative expression (Murakami 2005:151). In the supporting exhibitions, curated by Murakami, this theory is put to the test by formal comparisons of the works of Neo Pop artists and the manga and anime icons derived from the animated work *Ginga Tetsudō 999* (銀河鉄道999, Galaxy Express 999, 1979) by Kanada and the manga *Hakabano Kitaro* (墓場の鬼太郎, Graveyard Kitaro, 1965) by manga artist Mizuki Shigeru (Murakami 2005:245).

"Murakami's Superflat program aims to explode the enduring Western-art boundaries between art and the mass media of comics and cartoons" (Murakami 2005:245) and in the process situates these works in relation to Neo Pop, a contemporary, "distinctly Japanese form of artistic expression dating from the 1990s, rooted in Japanese subculture," including manga, anime and tokusatsu (特撮, special effects) (Murakami 2005:187). However, instead of claiming admission to the realm of fine art for these modes of expression, Murakami claims to recreate the notions of global art by introducing a radically new value system (Murakami 2005:160).

In his quest of creating a new paradigm in art history, Murakami goes as far as theorizing the *kawaii* (可愛い, cute) aesthetics of contemporary Japanese popular visual culture in relation to the Japanese art historical term *yurui* (緩い, lethargy) (Murakami 2005:137). Murakami argues that the contemporary transition to *kawaii* from *yurui* indicates a sense of sexual incapacity and impotence. Following the establishment of the Superflat theory, Murakami proposed in his 2005 exhibition and treatise that Little Boy, the name the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 was given, could also stand as a metaphor for the sexual incapacity indicated in *kawaii* and an underlying culture and politics of infantilization characteristic of postwar Japan (Murakami 2005:247). Murakami argues that *kawaii* is a symptom of a re-imagined and distorted history derived from repressed memories and self-imposed historical amnesia that contributed to a withdrawal from reality and an overwhelming embracement of fantasy, the infantile and monsters (Murakami 2005:204).

Murakami aims to achieve a radicalization of art theory with regards to sequential art and animation aesthetics primarily in the case of Japanese works. Furniss's theorization, in contrast, while minimalist when compared to Murakami's, aims to achieve the same result in the case of international animation within the framework of Western art historical practices.

In order to synthesize these theoretical approaches, this work applies the Western art historical methodology of visual evolutionary approach, as proposed by New Vienna School art historian Otto Pächt (Pächt 1999), to the animated and sequential works *Gegege no Kitaro* created by Mizuki Shigeru to demonstrate an art historical continuity between the character design of the contemporary *Gegege no Kitaro* and the productions of previous art historical periods regarding Japanese *yōkai-ga* (妖怪画, monster art) traditions. In doing so, Furniss's theory is applied in the context of Japanese art history and the relevance of Murakami's theory in the context of Western art history.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Mizuki received the Cultural Affairs Art Award in the TV section in 1991 for his NHK television drama *Nonnonba to Ore* (のんのん婆と俺, Nonnon-bā and I).
- <sup>2</sup> Even in the case of his second chosen home city, Chōfu-shi, there is a Kitaro road with *yōkai* statues and Mizuki is personally responsible for the image planning of the local library's community publications designs. His picture series *Chōfu History* underlines the presence of *yōkai* in a city that tries to retain its rural ambiance and heritage despite, or in face of, the fact that it is part of metropolitan Tokyo.
- <sup>3</sup> Amano is relevant within this discourse because of his dual presence within the fields of fine and applied arts: as an animation and video game character designer, the "suggestive pictorial language of his commercial figures is transposed into his stylized drawings of futuristic comic characters" (Nakas 2004:71).

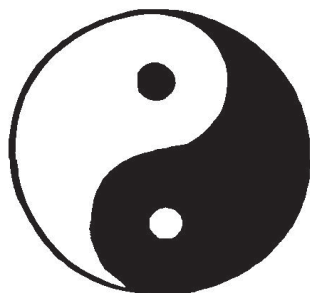
# Yokai Art – From Prehistory to Modernity

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## WHAT ARE YŌKAI?

**Y**ōkai 「妖怪」 is a compound word whose two Chinese characters both mean uncanny or eerie. The term yōkai can refer to eerie phenomena, feelings, sounds as well as animal or human characters, and it has been commonly used since Meiji period scholar Inoue Enryō (井上 円了, 1858–1919) introduced it into the vernacular to describe all supernatural phenomena recorded in Japan (Foster 2003:7). Other words to describe such phenomena are bakemono (化物) and henge (変化) in the Edo period, and mononoke (物の怪) in Heian period literature. Bakemono, obake and henge refer to, and emphasize, the shape-shifting attribute of the supernatural creatures whereas mononoke is a more complex term.

Based on the lecture series “Yōkai Bunkaron” (妖怪文化論, Yōkai Cultural Theory) delivered at Kyushu University, January 10–13, 2006, cultural anthropologist Komatsu Kazuhiko (小松和彦, 1947–) claims the concept of yōkai and mononoke can be most easily perceived when approached from the theoretical framework of Onmyō-dō (陰陽道) philosophy. To summarize Komatsu’s position, when analyzing the cultural phenomenon of mononoke and yōkai we need to distance ourselves from a value system that is based on the belief that there are distinctly good and evil beings. Onmyō-dō was introduced to the Japanese court from China in the Heian period and its philosophy had an important impact on fortune-telling, divination, astrology and consequently religious beliefs.<sup>1</sup> The basic principle of Onmyō-dō – derived from Taoist philosophy – is based on the idea of 氣 (ki, chi), energy flowing, fluctuating and changing in every aspect of the universe, be it physical forms, words, thoughts or intangible and invisible beings. The well-known symbol of the taikyoku (太極, tai-chi) image summarizes this belief in its ultimate conciseness (Fig. 2.1). The taikyoku image symbolizes a constant flow of energy (氣ki, chi) and change in all aspects of the universe.



**Fig. 2.1** Taikyoku

The taikyoku (太極, tai-chi) image that symbolizes the constant flow of energy (気ki, chi) (Komatsu 2006)

On this bipolar scale the two polarities of the change are the two opposite aspects of the energy pulsation, 陰 (in, yin) and 陽 (yō, yang). While this bipolarity can give two opposite faces to the same entity, yin and yang are not to be interpreted as “good” and “bad” or to be assigned any other moral values (Komatsu 2006).

According to Taoist philosophy, the same entity, be it a god or a human, can have two faces, a yin and a yang, according to its current energy status. When this principle is applied in a Shinto context, the corollary is that there are neither absolutely peaceful nor absolutely angry gods, but all supernatural beings have a positive (nigi 和) as well as a negative (arami 荒) aspect. Because of this, the matsuri (祭り, celebration) is a central concept in Shinto, where the positive energy created by the annual festivities aims to serve the purpose of having the celebrated god retain its nigi, or positive aspect for the given year (Komatsu 2006). The energy (ki) that abides in the gods when left unnoticed or uncelebrated holds the danger of mutating into a negative (arami) aspect with equal force, bringing misfortune to the people residing around the god’s abode, the shrine.<sup>2</sup>

For this reason, all gods have the potential to morph, mutate or turn into yōkai unless they are cautiously respected and fully celebrated to keep their positive face. This aspect of Shinto beliefs is closely portrayed in Miyazaki Hayao’s animated epic, *Mononoke Hime* (もののけ姫, Princess Mononoke, 1997), where the tatarigami (崇り神, vengeful god) of a wild boar attacks a village and is consequently killed by the local hero. However, after its death, the god is treated with respect and an offering is made to him by the village elder.

This opening sequence of the animated film is the detailed visual rendering of the mukashi banashi (昔話, folk tale) of the Obagamineno Ipponashi (伯母峰の一本足, The One-legged God of Obagamine) or Inosasaō (猪笹王, Boar Bamboo King), the yōkai forest deity (Hikakuminwa Kenkyukai 1991:155). In the original narration, a giant boar wandering through a bamboo forest is wounded by gunshot and its spirit returns as

the angered one-legged forest deity. A traveling monk later celebrates (祭る, *matsuru*) and lulls his spirit, upon which he promises to only return once a year (Iwai 2000/1:46). The warrior who wounded the giant boar first sees an approaching wave in the bamboo similarly to the hero of *Mononoke Hime* (Kano 1997:26).

The central idea behind *yōkai* is the transmutability of all beings. A human can become a vengeful spirit (怨霊, *onryō*) and then, once revered, be transformed into a sacred spirit (御霊, *goryō*), as in the case of the Heian period scholar Sugawarano Michizane (菅原道真, 845–903), and utensils can become humans or demons (鬼, *Oni*) and then achieve Buddhahood as depicted on the Muromachi period picture scroll *Tsukumogami Emaki* (付喪神絵巻).

The other fundamental principle to consider regarding *yōkai* and *mononoke* besides the principle of the transmutability of all things is the concept of *ki* (気). The term “*mono no ke*” incorporates two extremely general concepts: *mono* and *ke*. *Mono* is all things without distinction, while *ke* is originally another reading for *ki*, energy. *Mono no ke* means all aspects of energy, the essence of all things. Today the word *mononoke* is written with the kanji 物の怪, incorporating 怪,<sup>3</sup> the second character of *yōkai*, as since the Heian period this term started to refer to the *matsuraretenai* (祭られてない, un-celebrated), *kawatta* (変わった, mutated), supernatural and strange aspects of the energy (*ke*) found in all things (*mono*), mainly seeing them as causes of diseases, mental disorders and epidemics (Fujimoto 1994).

*Mononoke* is an expression of the primordial untamed energy that is utmostly feared and awed for being supernatural; that is dangerous in its powerfulness and mysteriousness. In order to tame certain aspects of the *mononoke*, it was believed since the Heian period that if the name of the apparition was known, it could be uttered thereby weakening its power and causing it to disappear. For this reason, *mononoke* started to receive their individual names and characteristics according to their place and manner of appearance and supernatural phenomena turned into supernatural beings in regional lore. The next step in this process was the visual description and expression of these individual beings, fixing the shape of each in the form of pictures, carvings and statues.

The evolution of *mononoke* into distinct *yōkai* characters took the path from the phenomenon to the creation of a being and finally to its fixed form in visual expression. While in the eleventh century historical tale *Ōkagami* (大鏡, The Great Mirror, eleventh century CE), the night parade of the *mononoke* was not seen by anyone other than the nobles, and even they were not allowed to look at them directly (McCullough 1991), by the Muromachi period the first *Hyakki Yagyō* (百鬼夜行, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons) picture scroll already depicts the demons with humor instead of reverence. The *Night Parade of One Hundred Demons* marks the beginning of the history of *yōkai* depiction, *yōkai-ga* (妖怪画) in Japanese visual art, that would extend to Edo period woodblock prints, Meiji period paintings, *kamishibai* (紙芝居, picture card show) in

the postwar period, and in its contemporary form to manga, animation or computer graphic design. As each yōkai attracted its own mythology and was progressively visualized by several artists, their shapes and characteristics were more and more fixed in a given form. On the other hand, the artists themselves also invented new yōkai.

Mononoke is the energy inherent in all things that can change or mutate within anything creating a new yōkai. This mutation can take place in natural forces, phenomena, animals or plants as well as in humans and tools. In this sense, there are wild and domestic yōkai. In the human world henge (変化, shape shift) is usually encountered when a person or tool is not sufficiently respected and thereby his or her energy is not maintained in the positive domain. This happens in the case of the Tsukumogami wars, the theme of the Muromachi period picture scroll *Tsukumogami Emaki*. Tsukumogami (付喪神) are utensils which, upon turning one hundred years old, gain supernatural power. However, they are thrown away when they are ninety-nine years old, and their wrath transforms them to yōkai, then humans, Oni (鬼, demon, ogre) and finally to Buddha.

In summary, the underlying philosophical framework of yōkai, while addressed within Shinto mythology, is to be found in Onmyō-dō, a Japanese version of Taoist philosophy. Shinto shrines celebrate several distinct yōkai, and picture scrolls of local minor deities and yōkai are still commissioned from contemporary designers. These scrolls are enshrined within the local shrine and are not open for public viewing. However, fundamentally Taoist ideas underpin the philosophy behind mononoke and yōkai. Mononoke is without known form, it is the flow of energy that accumulates into a powerful and mysterious entity. Yōkai, on the other hand, are the distinct formations<sup>4</sup> of mononoke and the very symbols of the concept of change and mutation. Yōkai appear on the border between yin and yang, they are the frozen moment where one aspect turns into another (Fig. 2.2).



**Fig. 2.2** Yōkai symbolizing moment of change

Yōkai symbolize the moment of change (indicated by grey line) standing on the borderline when one principium turns into another (Komatsu 2006)

Yōkai appear on the border between the worlds of kami and human, of this world (現世 *gense*) and the other world (他界 *takai*), such as on bridges, at crossroads, at the edge of the water or in the forest glade. They appear when night turns into day or day turns into night, at dusk or dawn. Yōkai are either mutations from humans, animals, plants or utensils, or a mutation from a kami (god). They are the mutation of the neutral *ke* 気 into something untamed and uncelebrated. This aspect is also mirrored in the function the yōkai undertake in their activities. Yōkai are known to do the following: surprise, trick, possess, harm or help people. Many of them are also known for doing nothing at all. In this respect yōkai also stand on the border between beneficial and harmful supernatural beings, with the liberty of turning either way depending on their temporary status.

Yōkai is the moment of change in turning from one category to the other, representing the anxiety and fear associated with the uneasiness of change from known to unknown, from certainty to uncertainty. Yōkai is also the moment of change from male to female, from winter to summer, from wet season to dry season. They symbolize the ultimate nature of things (*mono*), which is constant transformation and uncertainty. Yōkai, in summary, are the form given to change and the anxiety, uncertainty, fear and awe associated with it. They give shape to the anxieties associated with historical and social change as well; not surprisingly yōkai mostly proliferated at the dusk of the late Edo period and the dawn of the early Meiji period. As the photo collection of Dr. Ikkaku Ochi from this period documents, lack of medical care for the general population produced a wide stratum of “monstrosities,” i.e. humans with gross deformities, some of whom ended up in freak shows (見世物, *misemono*) employed as monsters and morbid curiosities (Naruyama 2003).

Yōkai also give shape to the fear associated with losing the support of one’s group within the strict social structure of the village. Deviation from the norm would pose the threat of becoming separated from one’s social group and by becoming an outcast, the fear of facing the unknown dangers of the outside world. Living on the *sato-yama* (里山, cultivated mountain side), yōkai are between the civilized world of the village (里, *sato*) and the uncivilized world of the savage, untamed forces of nature and the outcast (山, *yama*). In fact, yōkai are often associated with outsiders: the Kappa with *ijin* (偉人, foreigners) from the Korean peninsula and China; and the Oni and the Tsuchigumo (土蜘蛛, Earth Spider), a spider that lives in burrows in the earth, with rebel groups living in the deep forests, outside of legal authority.

Finally, yōkai also embody the power struggle between the genders, regarding the female position concerning lineage, pregnancy or conduct. Yōkai usually do not have a pronounced male gender, whereas there are several particular female yōkai associated with virginity (Hime, 姫, Princess), eroticism (transmutations of the mouth, vagina and hair), pregnancy and birth (Ubume, 姑獲鳥, Birthing Mother), or old age

(Yamanba, 山姥, Mountain Hag). These emphasize not only the transformational character of the female body but also the dangers associated with the female psyche and its place in the social hierarchy, the power of giving life as well as the pollutant nature of menstrual blood. The word 妖怪 (yōkai) itself incorporates the female radical 女 (woman).

#### TYPES OF YŌKAI

Artists are responsible for the creation of a certain number of new yōkai; however, the main source of representation of yōkai is folklore and local legends. The systematic collection of yōkai started with the establishment of yōkai-gaku (妖怪学, yōkaiology) by Inoue Enryō in the Meiji period, and was later widened and brought within the scope of ethnography, which provided its theoretical underpinning, by Yanagita Kunio. In this overview, basic categories of yōkai derived from folklore are introduced, such as yōkai of the mountains, yōkai of the water, yōkai of the village and the home (Iwai 2000:1–4). Given that there are more than 20,000 known yōkai, as recorded in the *Nichibunken Kaiti-Yōkai Denshō Database* (日文研怪異妖怪伝承データベース, Strange Phenomenon and Yōkai Folklore Database 2006), it is not feasible to give a detailed account of the genealogy of each yōkai. Rather, the aim is to introduce the concept of yōkai by listing some of the yōkai most relevant to contemporary media research and provide information about their distinct origins and characteristics.

#### YŌKAI OF THE MOUNTAIN

Japanese mountains contain a large number of mountain deities and yōkai, among which the most characteristic ones are the Oni (鬼, demon or ogre), Tengu (天狗), Kodama (木霊, tree spirit) or Yamabiko (山彦, echo). Oni is probably the most ancient and basic form of yōkai in folk belief, equivalent to demons derived from Buddhist iconography, as they appear in the *Jigoku Zōshi* (地獄草子, Hell Scrolls) and *Gaki Zōshi* (餓鬼草子, Hungry Ghost Scrolls) picture scrolls of the Heian period. Oni appears in the most varied contexts, from Buddhist iconography to Noh plays to local tales and narrations.<sup>5</sup>

While Oni is mostly associated with wild energy and bodily strength, the Tengu is a powerful entity due to its wizardry, initiation in Shugendō (修験道, mountain ascetics), magic and supernatural powers including the ability to fly. Its most common iconography includes a red face and long nose, wearing the clothes of a Shugendō priest and holding a feather fan. This shape of the Tengu was fixed due to Muromachi period representations, well illustrating the process of yōkai gaining fixed forms after the visual representation of a given aspect of a yōkai becomes widespread. Before the Muromachi period, depending on the historical time and geographic location, the Tengu, a mountain and forest deity, had varying forms, such as that of a shooting star, a Tanuki (狸, badger) or

a Karasu Tengu (烏天狗, Bird-beaked Tengu), and curious phenomena encountered in the forest would be declared to be the work of the Tengu (Iwai 2000/1:16).

Another mountain yōkai that became well known in Miyazaki's *Mononoke Hime* is the Daidarabo or Daidarabocchi (also Deranbo, Reiranbocchi). The Daidarabo is a giant living in the mountains, known in different parts of Japan, and first referred to in the eighth century geographical archival scroll *Hitachinokuni Fudōki* (常陸国風土記). Contrary to Miyazaki's visual rendering, this yōkai is not closely associated with the mountain deity (山ノ神, yamano kami).

Similarly to the Daidarabochi, the Kodama (木霊, Tree spirit) also appears in *Mononoke Hime* and is also pictured by Miyazaki in an original manner. The traditional iconography of the Kodama is an old spirit living in the trees, following the representation in Takehara Shunsen's late Edo period illustrated book *Ehon Hyaku Monogatari* (絵本百物語, Picture Book of One Hundred Scary Stories, 1841) and Toriyama Sekien's yōkai catalogues. The Kodama is a tree spirit that lives in trees older than a hundred years and it is called Hōkō (彭侯) in the case of thousand-year old trees. While the Kodama is an old man with long hair and black face in the *Ehon Hyaku Monogatari*, the Hōkō resembles a black dog without a tail and with a human face in Toriyama Sekien's *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi* (今昔百鬼拾遺, Supplement to The Hundred Demons from the Present and Past, ca. 1781). Different versions of the Kodama (Hōkō, Yanagibaba, or Kijimun in Okinawa Prefecture) appear in folk tales relating stories of beneficial and harmful acts of the tree spirits in relation to human encounters.

In the iconographical sense, Miyazaki's Kodama is a derivative of the yōkai Ninmenjū (人面樹, Face Sap), which is another form of a tree spirit. According to local lore collected in Fukushima Prefecture (Iwai 2000/1:31), there are trees to be found in the forest whose flowers blossom into human faces. They do not talk but they tend to laugh and when they do, they fall off the tree<sup>6</sup> (Sekien 2005:191) (Fig. 2.3). The Jinmenjū is thought to be the spirit of the Sazanka (山茶花, Mountain camellia).

Toriyama Sekien's catalogue representation of the Ninmenjū is in turn based on the *Wakan Sansai Zue* (54th scroll, 1713) while its story is narrated in the *Rōōsawa Kidan* (老嫗茶話奇談, 1742) collection.

Another interesting mountain yōkai is the Yamawarō or Yamawarawa (山童). Originally a mountain deity in the Kyushu region, the Yamawarō's initial form was that of a creature with the face of a child and long limbs, able to speak and harmless towards humans (Iwai 2000/1:42). The Yamawarō, if respected and celebrated through matsuri, would help the community, while when angered it would harass the village with mischievous deeds or itazura (悪戯). Itazura in fact is an important concept in describing yōkai. By the Edo period yōkai are not necessarily malevolent or evil in intent. Some of them do not have a specific purpose and many of them do not cause harm by attaching their spirit to humans



**Fig. 2.3** Ninmenjū (人面樹, Face Sap)  
Visual representation of the Ninmenjū in Toriyama Sekien's catalogue  
Gazu Hyakki Yagyō (画图百鬼夜行, 1781) (Sekien 1992: 191).

(tsukimono 憑物, spirit possession). However, yōkai are noted for their itazura or mischievous tricks when encountering members of the community in their habitat. The Yamawarō are also known for helping the community in their work in the forest or at the river (Iwai 2000/1:43).

The Yamawarō also demonstrate the most basic concept behind the yōkai, which is transformation or transmutation. Yamawarō, in fact, turns into Kappa (河童, River spirit) in the spring and enters the waters as Kappa until winter, when it returns to the mountains as Yamawarō until next spring (Iwai 2000/1:42).

#### YŌKAI OF THE WATER

The basic features of the River spirit, or Kappa are its slimy green body, webbed feet and hands, with a tortoise-like shell on its back and a plate on its head. The Kappa is mostly associated with the Kyushu region, where it is traditionally believed that the plate on the Kappa's head needs to stay wet otherwise it loses its strength and power. The Kappa are also known for being very fond of cucumber, that they can be malicious in intent and use bodily power to inflict harm, especially by pulling children down into rivers. However, the Kappa is also noted for being easily tricked into submission and helping the community (Yanagita 2004:73). Similarly to the Tengu, the basic iconography of the Kappa has not changed significantly since its widespread representation started in the Edo period. The Kappa is still represented in a similar manner in modern and contemporary media, as it can be seen in the advertising series for the saké brand Kizakura, Kappa mascots promoting local events, for example the 9th FINA 2001 Aquatic World Championships in Fukuoka city, or the design of characters in films, animation or computer games. Foster traces the mascotization process of a once feared creature into a cute logo in his essay, "The Metamorphosis of the Kappa" (Foster 1998).

Kappa is one of the rare numbers of yōkai which has male and female versions. The Yamawarō-Kappa dichotomy is thought to be a symbol for the transformation between male and female principia, as well as the transformation from the wet to the dry season (Tada 2000:163). The image of the female Kappa is associated with eroticism in the modern period, first portrayed as such in Akutagawa Ryunosuke's short story *Kappa* (1927), and later visually rendered in the popular advertisement design, *Kappappa* for the Kizakura (黄桜) saké brand, introduced in the early postwar years (Fig. 2.4). Although this advertising campaign is one of the oldest consistently running ones in Japan, the gender roles assigned to the female Kappa have hardly changed since the early fifties from pouring saké for the husband or shopping for groceries. The body of the female kappa is naked, slimy and wet, displaying very strong eroticism.

Another water yōkai, the Kawa Hime (川姫, River Princess), is a central character in Miike Takashi's film *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005). The Kawa Hime



© Ko Kojima

**Fig. 2.4** Kappa in advertisement for Kizakura

Visual representation of the female Kappa on the advertisement design of the Kizakura (黄桜) saké brand.

is an erotic character living in the rivers of Fukuoka Prefecture, luring young boys under water. Yet another exotic female yōkai living in water is the Kawa Tengu (川天狗, River Tengu), which is a beautiful female counterpart of the mountain Tengu (Iwai 2000/2:43).

Other yōkai associated with water take the form of unusual water animals, such as giant toads (Gama, 蝦蟇), water buffalo (Ushi Oni, 牛鬼), snakes (Nureonna, 濡女), mermaid-like creatures (Ningyō, 人魚), and ghost-like entities (Umibōzu, 海坊主) attacking fishermen or diving women (ama, 海女) in the open water (Iwai 2000/2:45).

Another category for water-related yōkai is for the ones appearing on or under bridges and next to rivers. These include the Hashi Hime (橋姫, Bridge Princess) and the Azuki Arai (小豆洗い, Bean Washer). Village borders, crossroads, river banks and bridges are all considered to be on the border between the world of kami and yōkai and that of humans. As these areas are feared because of the apparition of yōkai, they are also very often protected by travelers' guardian deities (dosōjin, 道祖神). A famous Hashi Hime is celebrated as a protecting bridge deity at Uji (Kyoto Prefecture). In a related story, the Uji Hashi Hime (宇治橋姫) is a woman in an unhappy marriage, who died because of jealousy and turned into a yōkai. She has a face displaying deep anger and distrust, and it is unwise to lead a marriage parade across the bridges she lives near. In another story from Yamanashi Prefecture, the Hashi Hime gives a letter to travelers to take to her relative, the Swamp God. These adventures can be either dangerous or rewarding for the traveler (Iwai 2000/2:41)

#### YŌKAI OF THE VILLAGE AND THE HOME

Not only the unknown terrains of mountains, rivers, seas or crossroads, but also the villages themselves were traditionally inhabited by yōkai, residing within different parts of the human habitat or entering the village at certain times and on certain occasions. Some animal yōkai, such as the Kitsune (狐, fox) or the Tanuki (狸, badger) enter the village changed into human form; others, which reside with humans and are part of daily life, include the cat (化け猫, Bakeneko), the mouse or rat (化け鼠, Bakenezumi) and the spider (土蜘蛛, Tsuchigumo).

However, not only animals are yōkai associated with village life. The Zashikiwarashi (座敷童子) takes the form of a little child, which resides in the uninhabited corners of the house and brings good luck to the family (Yanagita 2004:117–23). Other beings include the Aka Name (垢嘗, Mold Licker) and Tenjō Name (天井嘗, Ceiling Licker), who lick off the mold and dirt of the bath area and the ceiling respectively. Their forms are not traditionally known (Iwai 2000/4:42); however, their iconography was fixed in Toriyama Sekien's *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (画図百鬼夜行, The Illustrated Night Parade of A Hundred Demons, 1781) and *Gazu Hyakki Tsuredzure Bukuro* (画図百鬼徒然袋, The Illustrated Bag of One Hundred Random Demons, 1781) (Sekien 1992:38, 273).

Objects can also turn into yōkai upon reaching one hundred years of age. Utensil yōkai have appeared since the earliest yōkai depictions on the Muromachi period picture scrolls *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* (百鬼夜行絵巻) and the *Tsukumogami Emaki* (付喪神絵巻). Distinct utensil yōkai are also depicted in Sekien's *Gazu Hyakki Tsuredzure Bukuro*, such as the Koto (Koto Furunushi, 琴古主 Ezu Hyakki Tsuredzure Bukuro) or the Seto Tableware (瀬戸大将, Seto Taishō) (Sekien 1992:294, 317).

#### THE ART OF YŌKAI

So far yōkai were described from an ethnographic standpoint. However the phenomenon of yōkai within the context of Japanese popular imagination and culture can be approached within the framework of different disciplines. Yōkai research is fundamentally a cross-disciplinary area that can be related to cryptozoology, ethnography, cultural anthropology, sociology, literary studies or archeology. Our approach focuses not on yōkai per se, but on images of yōkai. The approach taken assimilates art historical methodology with inquiries into contemporary media representation. Social, psychological or anthropological implications of the yōkai are investigated only peripherally; however, emphasis is given not to yōkai, but to the formal representation of yōkai, the aesthetics and iconology of yōkai art, its development and transformations in different time periods and its form in contemporary media.

Based on currently available literature on Japanese popular animation and manga, there is a considerable lack of, and therefore need for, academic work that focuses more on the form rather than the content of these products of media. If animation and sequential art are considered as legitimate art forms, there is a need for literature that specifically addresses the aspects that make them works of art, including formal elements and aesthetic values. This need is equally present in the case of yōkai art, where design is often overlooked for the sake of content analysis.

As surrealist painter René Magritte proclaimed in his artwork “Ceci n'est pas une pipe” (This Is Not a Pipe) (*La Trahison des Images*, *The Treachery of Images*, 1928–29), it is equally true and important to proclaim at this juncture, concerning yōkai art: “These are not yōkai.”

Yōkai-ga are not yōkai, they are images of yōkai, images specific to the imagination of the artist or artists and the era they were produced in. For this reason, this work will keep discourse on yōkai limited to what pertains to the explanation and analysis of images of yōkai as the formations of imagination.

It is an exciting endeavor to investigate the formations and visual renderings of that which was originally considered to be unutterable and unknowable (mononoke). As Foucault points out in his essay “This is Not a Pipe” (1968), dealing with the intricate relationship between images and linguistic signs:

Cleverly arranged on a sheet of paper, signs invoke the very thing of which they speak – from outside, by the margin they outline, by the emergence of their mass on the blank space of the page. And in return, visible form is excavated, furrowed by words that work at it from within, and which, dismissing the immobile, ambiguous, nameless presence, spin forth the web of significations that christen it, determine it, fix it in the universe of discourse. A double trap, unavoidable snare: How henceforth would escape the flight of birds, the transitory form of flowers, the falling rain?

(Foucault 1983: 22)

Visual artists depicting yōkai face the complex problem of how the concept of yōkai, the moment of change itself, can be represented visually in the genres of painting and drawing, which fix a static visual moment. It seems as if sequential art, animation and computer graphics are more suitable for this task, as these are the art forms which capture transformation and transfiguration. Animation itself could be considered as henge (変化, shape shift) itself: it is the essence of animation to turn inanimate objects into life and give them personality, similarly to the utensil wars appearing in the Muromachi period picture scroll *Tsukumogami Emaki* (付喪神絵巻). Narration is, in fact, the key concept in yōkai-ga. The representation of yōkai until the Meiji period relies on narration, with yōkai either in the form of quasi-religious scrolls (*Jigoku Zōshi* and *Gaki Zōshi* in the Heian period), picture scrolls (*Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* in the Muromachi period), catalogues (*Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* in the Edo period) or picture books (*Ehon Hyaku Monogatari*, 絵本百物語, Picture Book of One Hundred Stories, late Edo period). For example, the *Inou Mononoke Roku* (稲生物怪録, Inou Monster Records, Edo period), the renderings of the thirty-day adventure of Edo period samurai Inou Heitaro (稲生平太郎, 1734–?) with yōkai, is a picture scroll series that could be read as a film storyboard. Other apparitions of yōkai are found in the theatrical settings of Noh and Kabuki. Edo period ukiyo-e in fact often portrays yōkai that appear in Kabuki or in popular legends of the time, thereby giving an implied narrative context to the visual images. Meiji-period yōkai-ga, such as those of Kawanabe Kyōsai, also borrows from the caricature genre. Finally, postwar yōkai art is narrated and animated

in the story-telling formats of kamishibai, manga, animation, film, computer graphics and computer and pachinko games. It seems as if yōkai had always been striving for representation in an animated narrative medium, because yōkai themselves are nothing else but the representation of the anima itself.

Komatsu describes the process of yōkai formation as a process, from experiencing a strange phenomenon (yōkai genshō, 妖怪現象) to the formation of a yōkai in folk imagination (yōkai) to its consequent visual rendering (yōkai zōkei, 妖怪造形) (Komatsu 2006). In this three-step process the unutterable energy presence, the mononoke, is gradually fixed in a given form. For example, the yōkai Azuki Arai (小豆洗い, Bean Washer) is first described by Yanagita as an auditory phenomenon, the sound of someone washing azuki beans next to a river (Yanagita 2004:102). Yanagita also mentions (while refuting them) theories according to which the name originates from the region name adzu, and that azuki was a later rendering. Nonetheless, the Azuki Arai yōkai in several accounts in Japanese folklore is the sound of someone washing azuki beans next to a river. This yōkai phenomenon (yōkai genshō) later turns into a folklore yōkai, in the form of an old man who washes beans next to a river, and those who catch a glance of him will fall into the river. The features of this old man are fixed as yōkai image (yōkai zōkei) in Takehara Shunsen's *Ehon Hyaku Monogatari* (絵本百物語, Picture Book of One Hundred Scary Stories, 1807), and the twentieth and twenty-first century yōkai-themed animation series *Gegege no Kitaro* (ゲゲゲの鬼太郎) uses the iconography laid out by Shunsen. The most recent versions of the Azuki Arai, a character in the 2005 movie *Yōkai Daisensō* and the subsequent *Pachinko* game version as well as the character appearing in the first episode of the *Kitaro* 2007 animation series, all closely follow the iconography of the Shunsen painting (see Fig. 4.34). In this description, the development of the yōkai Azuki Arai was traced from the auditory phenomenon to the formation of a yōkai to the final solidification of a visual vocabulary describing it. From the demonstration of this process it follows that the original yōkai phenomenon cannot be equated with the image that signifies this original phenomenon.

For this reason, yōkai cannot be identified with yōkai-ga, and consequently the approach of Foucault is adopted, which he formulates in the above essay in the following way:

Despite appearances, in forming a bird, a flower, or rain, the calligram does not say: These things *are a* dove, a flower, a downpour. As soon as it begins to do so, to speak and convey meaning, the bird has already flown, the rain has evaporated. For whoever sees it, the calligram does not say, cannot yet say: This is a flower, this is a bird. It is still too much trapped within shape, too much subject to representation by resemblance, to formulate such a proposition.

(Foucault 1983:24)

Approaching it from this point of view, the following is an overview of the development of yōkai art from the prehistoric Jomon period to the twentieth-century postwar period.

#### YŌKAI OF PREHISTORY

The world's oldest discovered pottery was produced during the Jomon period (ca. 13,000 BCE to 300 BCE) (Kenrick 1995:13) in Japan. Artifacts predating the Jomon period confirm that the islands had been inhabited since at least the Paleolithic, which is considered to be pre-pottery culture, sometimes termed as “pre-art” culture. Needless to say, it cannot be ruled out that the Paleolithic produced its own art; however, no archeological remains have confirmed this. The pre-Jomon period in fact includes several Paleolithic cultures, and their characteristics as well as the extent of their influence on Jomon period art are not adequately known (Egami 1973:13).

Jomon people were hunter-gatherers, who lived in small clusters of family groups of between twenty-five and fifty people. The Jomon findings mainly consist of hand-made vessels, urns, and clay dolls. The significant number and diversity of the dogū (土偶, clay dolls) differing in each Jomon sub-period indicate a high probability that the dolls were used in a ceremonial or ritual context (Kobayashi 2004:148). Below, the different theories pertaining to the dolls will be outlined, while it is important to note that the material evidence does not make it possible to describe or categorize the spiritual side of Jomon cultures with certainty.

The National Museum of Japanese History documented a total of 10,683 figurine fragments from the Jomon period in 1991 (Togawa 2004:71), with significant temporal and spatial diversity. Their shape and size also differ considerably, with at least sixty different types identified, indicating different functions and roles. The early Jomon period produced small and simplified forms, consisting of a flat body without legs, arms and head and with slightly indicated breasts. The smallest one of the figurines excavated is only 2.9 centimeters long, and its over-simplified form is in sharp contrast with the Paleolithic “Venus” figurines (Naumann 2000:86), even though most researchers agree that the figures depict female bodies (Naumann 2000:83). The Middle Jomon produced considerably different dolls, where the natural model for the figurines was the human body and face. However, these dolls also display deliberate modifications in their proportions, facial features and decoration and they are not straightforward representations of human beings (Kobayashi 2004:148). The Late Jomon period further developed the tube-shaped (Ibaraki and Kanagawa prefectures), heart-shaped (Chubu, Kanto, Tohoku regions), owl-faced (Kanto) and “snow-goggled” (North-East Honshu Kamegaoka culture) types of dolls (Naumann 2000:90). As Kobayashi notes, the clay figures were completely eradicated during the Yayoi period, possibly indicating the emergence of a new worldview, where the clay dolls lost their function (Kobayashi 2004:153).

Due to the scarcity of information, reconstructing the spiritual life of the Jomon people is highly problematic. While some researchers claim that the Jomon religion was predominantly sexual in nature (Imamura 1996:97), others interpret the figurines to be asexual renderings of the human body (Nagamine 2004:255). A synthesis of the two approaches proposes that the grotesque shapes depict deities, and their swollen bellies indicate that they could be “Mother Goddesses” responsible for fertility and childbirth (Naumann 2000:96).

It is important to note that the figurines in almost all cases were intentionally broken and scattered at a considerable distance, which was interpreted as a provision of regenerative power to the community or to primitive agriculture (Nagamine 2004:263). The Mother Goddess and the murdered goddess theories led Yoshida to draw parallels between the figurines and the *yōkai* Yamauba (山姥, Mountain Hag) on several occasions (Yoshida 1992, 1997) theorizing that the Yamauba, a mountain-dwelling creature with the characteristics of both a goddess and a *yōkai*, might be the folk remembrance of the Earth Mother of the Jomon period. The Yamauba is known for giving multiple births, as the protector of fields and also as a man-eating monster that ultimately gets slaughtered. Yoshida’s theory, while compelling, is itself based on the theory of a Mother Goddess that cannot be adequately proven relying on the available physical evidence.

Kobayashi, an overtly daring theorist of Jomon period spirituality, on the other hand, claims that the figurines themselves are the representation of what later is considered as *mononoke*, or shapeless presence (Kobayashi 2004:148). Kobayashi postulates that the deliberate attempt on the part of the Jomon artists to avoid representing lifelike facial features could be due to the fact that the artists themselves didn’t know the shape of the being they were representing in the figurines. According to Kobayashi (Kobayashi 2004:146), this deliberate ambiguity suggests that the figurines are depictions of neither gods nor humans (2004:153).

## JOMON ART

Japanese cultural historian Namio Egami claims that the Jomon style to a certain extent might have set the pattern for some of Japan’s distinctive artistic traits persisting to the present time (Egami 1973:9). Jomon period artists were highly creative and possessed a high level of craftsmanship, giving the Jomon hand-made earthenware its intrinsic aesthetic values.

Jomon art was progressively replaced by the new art of the Yayoi period (弥生時代, ca. 300 BCE – 250 CE) settlers, and its direct influence on subsequent Japanese art is highly questionable. The spiritual worldview of the Jomon, on the other hand, could possibly enter the consciousness of the newly settling peoples of the archipelago in the late Jomon to early Yayoi periods and might have contributed to some of the concepts of Shinto and newer forms of nature worship (Kobayashi 2004: 51).

Jomon art has very high-level aesthetic merits, a “sophistication and appeal rare in primitive art,” proving the presence of lively imagination and creativity on the part of the Jomon artist (Egami 1973:8). Still, to claim that Jomon art had a profound influence on consequent Japanese art is problematic. It was only in 1877 that Jomon material remains were systematically studied from an archeological point of view, first discovered by the American Edward Sylvester Morse. It was in fact the English word chord-marked as used by Morse in his first treatise on Jomon artifacts, *Shell Mounds of Omori* (1879) that was later translated into Japanese as jōmon (縄紋, 縄文) (Kidder 1968:7).

Still, this does not mean that Jomon art and artifacts were unknown in Japan before their systematic excavation and the research into Jomon art begun in the Meiji period. In fact, Jomon implements and pottery have been observed in Japan for many centuries. The Hitachi Fudōki (常陸風土記, early eighth century CE), a compilation of the history and legends of the province of Hitachi (in present-day Ibaraki Prefecture) already mentions the Okushi shell mound, and connects it with a legend of giants. Volume Eight of the *Shoku Nihon Kōki* (続日本後紀, chronicles from 833 to 850 CE) narrates the discovery of several stone arrowheads after a storm in an area located in today’s Yamagata Prefecture, which the locals viewed as a bad omen from the gods. These and other narrations indicate that the Japanese were aware to some extent of the artifacts left behind by the Jomon period; however, the traces of that culture remained unexplained until scientific enquiries began in the early Meiji period.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE ONE-EYED GOD

Kobayashi outlines a basic cosmology possibly subscribed to by Jomon societies, which includes mountain worship as well as reverence of celestial bodies (Kobayashi 2004:175). Burial sites and village arrangements conclusively prove that the position of mountains and their relationship with celestial movements, such as spring and autumn equinox and lunar movement, were central in Jomon landscape and settlement planning (Kobayashi 2004:174). The encultured landscape of the Jomon period might have provided a basis for subsequent differentiation of the boundaries of each worldly realm contributing to the definition and concept of yōkai, living on these exact boundaries (Kobayashi 2004:175); however, these theories cannot be proven based on the material evidence available.

Animals were also frequently represented in the Jomon period in the form of clay dolls, and sometimes with deliberately transformed features or with human and human-like faces (Naumann 2000:106). The most common animal representations were wild boar, bear, dog or dolphin (Naumann 2000:104). Naumann postulates that these animal representations might be connected to the mountain deity (yamano kami, 山ノ神) appearing in animal shape, as narrated in the oldest literature

of the *Kojiki* (古事記, Records of Ancient Matters, ca. 680 CE) and the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀, The Chronicles of Japan, ca. 720 CE) (Naumann 2000:104).

Nelly Naumann, the outstanding German Japanologist, makes a remarkable discovery in her comprehensive treatise on Jomon material and spiritual culture concerning a striking feature of a Katsusuka-type<sup>8</sup> figurine from the Middle Jomon period, found at the Tōnai site (Nagano Prefecture) in the 1960s (Naumann 2000:113). Naumann points out that the two eyes of the figurine are different. While their length and shape appears to be identical, the left eye seems to be closed, with marks suggesting tears under it. This is not an isolated finding, as other figurines from the Shakado site (Yamanashi Prefecture) had similar characteristics (Harada 1995:52), where a straight line indicates the closed left eye. The right eye in both cases seems to be open. A better known and more intricate figurine found at the Kamikurokoma site (Yamanashi Prefecture) displays a slit for the left eye with an incised oval around it. There are also punctures leading away from the left eye, which Naumann interprets as possible marks of tears (Naumann 2000:145). The right eye is an intact almond shape.

While the differences between the two eyes are not easily noticed in the above examples, there are several Middle Jomon period rim heads (Ninomiya Morikoshi site and Yashikiyama site, Tokyo; Aogadai site, Kanagawa Prefecture) with more striking features concerning their two eyes. The Ninomiya rim head's right eye is crossed by a crescent-shape opening, while the left eye is almond shaped. In the case of the Yashikiyama rim head, the left eye is crossed by the crescent shape opening. Archeologists Kamikawana (Kamikawana 1983:222) and Yoshimoto (Yoshimoto 1994:37) interpret this to be the representation of a wounded left eye.

The idea of one-eyed supernatural beings is an ancient one, with findings also indicating their existence in Inner Mongolia and Central Russia from at least 1000 BCE (Spitzyn 1909, Tallgren 1925:313). In most of these cases, one eye is open and the other is closed, which might be associated with light and darkness and consequently lunar-mythological ideas (Hentze 1955:97).

Naumann points out elsewhere that the incision marks under the eyes are to be interpreted as tears and possibly connected with the concept of lunar cycles (Naumann 2000:129). Concerning the one-eyed figurines, she interprets the one open and one closed eye as possible symbols of light and darkness as well as the full and the dark moon. She concludes that the two eyes possibly represent the new and the full moon, and the concept of recurrence in nature (Naumann 2000:148).

This is one plausible explanation for the open/closed eye displayed by the prehistoric figurines. What is important to note is how frequently gods with one eye blinded appear in Japanese folk legends and mythology. The *Kojiki* (古事記, Records of Ancient Matters, ca. 680 CE) and the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀, The Chronicles of Japan, ca. 720 CE) both describe

the mythical Prince Yamato Takeru's encounter with a mountain god in the shape of a white deer. In both stories the prince pokes one of the god's eyes out with a garlic stick. Yanagita (Yanagita 1962) also describes the importance and frequency of gods blinded in one eye by certain plants, where the plants later become taboo for the local community.

"However," – as Naumann points out (Naumann 2000:149) – "when examining these and other mythic and legendary stories involving the motif of wounding or shooting the eye of a deity [. . .] it becomes quite clear that from the beginning these stories are simply an attempt to 'explain' in a rational way the one-eyedness of a deity, the original meaning of which was long since forgotten."

Naumann adds that it might be significant to note that it is the mountain god (yamano kami) that loses its eyes in the Kojiki story, which points toward a god of great antiquity (Naumann 2000:149). The topic of the one-eyed god and its relation to yōkai resurfaces with the manga and animation character Kitaro, who also loses one of his eyes after birth.

#### THE END OF THE JOMON PERIOD

The Yayoi period (弥生時代, ca. 300 BCE – 250 CE) produced wheel-made pottery significantly different from the heavily and creatively decorated Jomon aesthetics. Both the Yayoi and the Kofun (古墳時代 ca. 250–538 BCE) periods display less decorative design while the enigmatic clay dolls also disappear. New ceremonial objects include mirrors or ceremonial weapons (Yayoi) or the simply designed Haniwa burial figurines (Kofun) (Egami 1973:8). It is plausible to conclude at this point that the world's oldest known art form, the highly elaborate Jomon pottery, that lasted for more than ten millennia with intrinsic aesthetic values and intricate belief systems, while not necessarily contributing to high art, had a profound influence on the shaping of local beliefs and remembrances concerning gods and supernatural beings.

It is not until the late Heian period that distinct art emerges that addresses the theme of otherworldly creatures, and that is already in the form of picture scrolls. The Heian period (平安時代, 794 CE – 1185 CE) produced the *Hell*, *Hungry Ghost* and *Disease* scrolls derived from Buddhist iconography (地獄草子 Jigoku Zōshi, 餓鬼草子 Gaki Zōshi, 病草子 Yamai Zōshi, twelfth century CE) as well as the *Scroll of Frolicking Animals* (鳥獸戯画, Chōjū Giga, twelfth century CE). While the *Hell* scrolls are considered to be the forerunners of art depicting grotesque themes, and consequently yōkai-ga, the *Chōjū Giga* is mentioned as a forerunner of animation and manga (Takahata 1999). Mononoke is not depicted in art until the Muromachi period, but there is already extensive mention of mononoke in Heian period literature, including the *Genji Monogatari* (源氏物語, The Tale of Genji, eleventh century CE), the *Ōkagami* (大鏡, Great Mirror, ca. 1120 CE) and the *Konjaku Monogatari* (今昔物語集, Collection of Tales Now Past, twelfth century CE).

## HORRORS OF THE HEIAN PERIOD

The *Hell Scroll*, *Hungry Ghost Scroll* and *Disease Scroll* (地獄草子 Jigoku Zōshi, 餓鬼草子 Gaki Zōshi, 病草子 Yamai Zōshi, twelfth century CE) grew out of Buddhist iconography representing the other realms and sufferings, based on paintings and illustrations of hell in China and India. Although not many have remained, hell paintings are recorded in Buddhist illustrations in Japan from approximately the tenth to the twelfth centuries CE. It was in the twelfth century, corresponding with the decline of the Heike (平家) clan, that scrolls depicting the six worlds (hell; gaki or hungry ghost; ashura or evil spirit; human; deva or demigod) in opposition to the Pure Land or paradise were increasingly produced. The sudden and exceeding appearance of such scrolls at a critical time of social confusion underpins Komatsu's theory, which postulates that monsters tend to appear at times of social crisis (Figal 1999:22).

The Hell scrolls do not depict folk monsters in the sense of *yōkai* as their iconography is strictly based on Buddhist nomenclature. On the other hand, the style in which these scrolls are drawn, which is uniquely grotesque, morbid and humorous at the same time, sets the tone for *yōkai* art starting with the Muromachi period. Art historian Tsuji Nobuo describes the scrolls in the following way:

The spirit of humor did not change. . .with Rokudo-e (六道絵 Paintings of the Six Realms) which are didactic religious scrolls, dealing boldly with filth and the grotesque. For example, the *Jigoku Zoshi* (Hell Scroll). . .is a rare specimen of an existential work which deals frankly with scenes of the weird and fantastically ugly. The scroll contains in rich proportions a spirit of laughter that can be termed black humor. Giant maggots with glaring eyes and long beards are shown in a pool of feces, teasing the deceased who have been cast there. Snapping at the heads of the dead, who are drowning in the pool of excreta, are large beelike insects, which seem to have flown out of monster comic books. It is as if we can hear the dead crying in agony, "Ouch! Ouch!" The faces of the deceased are exaggerated in comic-book fashion and a sense of the humor of the situation is clearly revealed. The artist took delight in rendering this wretched scene, while viewers of the scroll must also have been simultaneously delighted and terrified.

(Tsuji 1986:27)

As Tsuji points out, twelfth-century art seems to have overflowed with a playful spirit, finding delight in depicting the grotesque and even the morbid with great levity. This is the same era when the *Scroll of Frolicking Animals* (鳥獸戯画, Chōjū Giga, twelfth century CE), a picture scroll frequently cited as a forerunner of animation in Japanese art (Takahata 1999:127–40), was produced. As Tsuji observes, artists of the era needed to emphasize, thus "in order to inject an animated reality into a work

of art, a fabricated exaggeration is needed” (Tsuji 1986:30). In the case of the *Hell*, *Hungry Ghost* and *Disease* scrolls, this exaggeration serves to help the contemporaneous viewers confront the horrors of reality with a certain amount of detachment achieved through the application of humor in depiction. While the topics follow the words of Buddhist scriptures, the style of the paintings displays great artistic freedom in the treatment of the subject matter. The fabricated exaggeration, as Tsuji puts it, achieves an expressive style not unlike those of comic books. In summary, in the words of art historian Ienaga Saburo, “the Picture Scrolls of the Six Worlds are noteworthy as a unique and rare work of art born out of the peculiar state of the Japanese mind in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries” (Kadokawa 1960:4). From the uproarious dynamism of the *Scroll of Frolicking Animals* (鳥獸戯画, Chōjū Giga, twelfth century CE) to the gentle sarcasm and wit embedded in the light brushstrokes of Zen-ga (禪画), the levity in style, playfulness and humor applied in the art of the medieval period have been frequently interpreted as a forerunner of comic and animation art in several aspects, such as composition, perspective, use of movement and “sound” effects (strokes to represent sound) as well as content and narrative structures (Takahata 1999).

The subject matters of the scrolls seem to set a tone for future visual dealings with the horrid, the grotesque and the otherworldly. Otherworldly creatures appearing include the several demons particular to the specific hell depicted, setting the iconography for later Oni representations. Noteworthy is the *Hell of Dissection or Dismemberment* (Hell for Priests, Masuda Collection; 沙門地獄草紙 解身地獄, Shamon Jigoku Zōshi, Geshin Jigoku) from the thirteenth century, with a theme of demons dismembering and eating humans. This hell, based on the *Butsumyōkyō Sutra* (仏名經 Fo-ming-ching) that became widely known at the Heian court from the seventh century on, is reserved for priests who dismembered and killed living beings. Bodily dismemberment, detached body parts and limbs as well as their consumption by demons are depicted in gruesome detail while the artist attaches comical elements to the pictures. The three demons preparing dishes from human flesh and organs at three tables are in fact participating in a cooking festivity. This theme will resurface in the *Shuten Dōji*<sup>9</sup> picture scrolls (酒呑童子絵巻, Otogi Zōshi, Muromachi period). The Oni and Hell scenes also appear on the *Kitano Tenjin Engi Emaki* (北野天神縁起絵巻 Kamakura period, early thirteenth century CE) picture scrolls depicting the story of Sugawarano Michigane (菅原道真) who turned from human to onryō (怨霊 vengeful spirit) to kami (神, god). The hell scenes of this narration were strongly influenced by the Hell scrolls of the Heian period, while Kitano Tenjin is ultimately a kami canonized within the Shinto religion.

Besides demons, the iconographic equivalents of Oni known from folk beliefs, other yōkai-like creatures appearing on the scrolls are the Gaki (餓鬼, Sanskrit: preta) or hungry ghosts and the Jikininki (食尸鬼,

Sanskrit: rakshasa) or corpse-eating ghosts. Their iconography closely follows the descriptions given in the *Garuda Purana* Hinduist scripture describing the realms after death. The hungry ghosts, or Gaki are pear-shaped with big stomachs, long and thin necks and very narrow mouths. Gaki can be more easily associated with yōkai. They are in fact transformations of human beings, depicted in a condescending and grotesque yet to a certain degree pitiful or compassionate manner, exposing their endless suffering and aimless status invisible to the humans attending to their everyday duties around them. Two beings derived from Buddhist iconography, the Oni and the Gaki, which will later relate to yōkai, are the visual renderings of certain undesirable aspects of humans. As Komatsu states, looking at yōkai means looking at the people who created them (Komatsu 1994:8).

Another curious picture is found in the *Yamai Zōshi* (病草子, Disease Scrolls) where a man is suffering from the illusion of seeing dwarfs. This is a unique picture within the series, as it is a realistic depiction of dwarfs in paper clothes appearing as the hallucination of a sick person. Given that Fox possessions (and other types of possession) as well as apparitions were not considered within the realm of psychology until the Meiji period (Figal 1999:98), this depiction is clearly ahead of its time.

The Hell, Gaki and Disease Scrolls are important in laying the foundation for a tradition of visual representation of the deteriorated, the gruesome, the filthy, all of which will be a part of yōkai-ga. These scrolls bring into the viewer's focus the exact themes and topics that one tries to ignore, avoid or avert one's eyes from, such as excretion, mutilation, or the rotting away of the human body. The *Kusōshi Emaki* (九相詩絵巻) of the Kamakura period is an outstanding work within this context. It confronts the very question of aesthetics of whether a work that depicts the putrefying process of a dead body in minute detail could be considered as a work of art. The hell and disease scrolls set a powerful alternative way for art to develop in Japan and deal with the realities of life, decay and death, in parallel with fine art, which is the depiction of harmonious and attractive themes. Still, regardless of the "impure" theme of the scrolls, they undoubtedly have aesthetic and artistic merit. The mercilessly realistic depiction of putrefaction or human dismemberment is complemented with delicate strokes of compassion and at the same time the artist's humorous treatment breaks the tension within the pictures. Even though the Buddhist scrolls are religious in nature, following predetermined iconography, the free creative genius of the individual artist, although unknown by name, is tangible. This original creativity makes these paintings true works of art while at the same time gaining validity for the subsequent art form of yōkai-ga in the nomenclature of Japanese art history. Still, yōkai art will be relatively toned down in theme and depiction compared to the Hell and Disease scrolls. The next moment in time when equally or similarly gruesome art is produced will be in postwar horror manga, within which context Mizuki Shigeru also started his early career. The Hell, Gaki and Disease scrolls set

the tone of explicitness and a psychological background to fall back on when dealing with the gruesome that artists and directors still rely on in the contemporary period.

The artistic value of the scrolls is not overlooked by experts. Ienaga Saburo thus comments on the Disease Scroll parts known as “woman suffering from cholera nostras” and “man with anal fistula”:

. . . anal fistula is an abnormality of the anus while cholera nostras is a malady in the intestines, which causes laxity and vomit, but both these pictures frankly portray the ugly moments of giving forth filthy things. If the Hell of Dissection is the extreme of cruelty, these two, together with the section showing ghosts eating excrements, are the utmost of filthiness.

Although dealing with such ugly subjects, the two scenes reveal excellent skill of the artist. That of the man with anal disease, especially, has won universal admiration of experts. . . . The curves of the girl’s contours, her line of vision, the man’s tall clogs, his hand touching the ground, and his hat, can be connected in an uninterrupted circle, and this circle forms the nucleus of the composition in this painting. Considering that compositions of Chinese paintings are always characterized by regularity, precision and stillness rather than dynamic effect, it admits no doubt that such novel composition conceived in a circle was a Japanese invention.

(Kadokawa 1960:11)

Art historians Fukui Rikichiro and Kobayashi Taichiro equally praised the artist as having a philosophic mind for adding to the scene a young girl looking into the sick man’s “numerous anuses.” Fukui finds that “in respect to the effect of a decorative manner of depiction revealed in the girl’s strongly curving figure, it may be said that this scene contains an embryo of ‘wit’ distinguishing the purely Japanese decorative style of painting of later periods” (Kadokawa 1960:3).

As Buddhism is based on the fundamental teaching that life is rooted in the Four Sufferings (birth, old age, sickness, death), it is a task of Buddhist art to confront its viewers with such realities. In other words, no topic can escape being artistically reproduced, and the concept of beauty in this case is rendered irrelevant. Horror and humor both serve the striking effect for the viewers to awaken to the Four Sufferings in life, thereby the scrolls, due to their distinguished artistic merit, serve the Buddhist worldview and philosophy that produced them. As Ienaga points out (Kadokawa 1960:3), these scrolls were born as a natural result of the spiritual atmosphere of the time they were produced in, a time when the Buddhist self-discipline practice “Contemplation on Filthiness,” of gazing at decomposing corpses at cemeteries, was actively practiced in an attempt to confront the tragic reality which arose after the relatively luxurious and prosperous period of the Heike rule, whose elusiveness proved to be traumatic for the citizens of the Heian capital.

The wit and humor applied in these works, while ultimately contributing to the individual approach of the artist, might also serve the aim of reaching a sense of awakening or realization of impermanence, in alignment with the Buddhist idea of *satori* (悟, awakening). Absurd humor is attributed to be an agency for self-realization, as claimed in Henri Bergson's *Rire* (Laughter) (1921:20).

It could be argued that the intention of the artist might be in a way therapeutic, to help its contemporaneous audience of the common classes to face what they could fear the most in a time of upheaval, suffering and death, and to do so with a certain amount of humor and levity. It is, in fact, a crucial point when considering hell paintings in relation to *yōkai* art. The fear of the unutterable, the events from which one averts one's eyes, produce more powerful feelings of horror than the explicitly shown, visually rendered, named and detailed. If done so with the stroke of humor and slapstick, the mind is gradually set at ease. This process can be observed in the case of *yōkai* depiction. While *mononoke* were not named, permitted to being looked at or visually represented in the Heian period, their power started to decline at the exact same time as their first grotesque and humorous visual renderings appear on the Muromachi period (室町時代, 1333 CE – 1573 CE) picture scrolls of the *Night Parade of One Hundred Demons* (百鬼夜行絵巻, *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki*, sixteenth century CE).

#### DEMON PARADE OF THE MUROMACHI PERIOD

The specific origin of the *Hyakki Yagyō* (百鬼夜行) or *Night Parade of One Hundred Demons* is not adequately known; however, it is frequently mentioned in Heian period literature. In the *Ōkagami* (大鏡, Great Mirror, author unknown, twelfth century CE) historical tale, which focuses on the life of regent Fujiwarano Michinaga (藤原 道長, 966–1028 CE), an influential political figure of the Heian court, the parade is described in the following way:

There was an occasion on which Morosuke encountered the demon procession (1). I have not heard what the month was, but he lowered his carriage blinds late one night near the Nijō intersection, while he was traveling south from the Palace along Ōmiya Avenue. "Unyoke the ox and get the shafts down. Get the shafts down," he shouted. The puzzled attendants lowered the shafts, and the Escorts and outriders came up to investigate. Morosuke lowered his inner blinds with meticulous care and prostrated himself, baton in hand, as though paying someone every possible mark of respect.

"Don't put the carriage on the stand," he said. "You Escorts stand to the left and right of the shafts, as close to the yoke as you can, and make your warnings loud. You attendants keep shouting too. Outriders, stay close to the carriage." He began a fervent recitation of the *Sonshō Dhāraṇī* (2). The ox had been led out of sight behind the carriage.

After about an hour Morosuke raised the blinds. “Hitch up now and go on,” he said. His attendants were completely at sea.

I suppose he kept quiet about it until much later, and then spoke of it only in confidence to close friends, but a queer tale is bound to get out.

[(1) Hyakki yagyō. Made up of various kinds of ghosts and goblins; believed to travel through the city on specified nights.

(2) A magical incantation explaining the virtues of Sonshō (Sanskrit *Vikīrṇa*), a deity regarded as a manifestation of one of the five forms of the Buddha’s wisdom. He was worshipped as protector against evil.]

(McCullough 1980:136)

It seems from the description of this scene that the parade of the hundred demons at night was invisible for people of lower ranks but meant danger to the nobility, to whom it was, in turn, forbidden or highly dangerous or even fatal to look at. The *Uji Shūi Monogatari* (宇治拾遺物語 *Tales from Uji*), a collection of tales from the Kamakura period, describes the *Parade of One Hundred Demons* in the following way:

“ . . . a crowd some hundred strong came surging into the temple, every one of them with a torch in his hand. When they got close, he saw that they were fantastically weird creatures, not men at all; there were all sorts of them, some with only one eye, some with horns, while their heads were more terrible than words can describe. . . . In due course there was word of dawn approaching and the raucous mob of demons went away.”

(1/17 How an itinerant priest encountered a nocturnal procession of demons)

(Mills 1970:154)

“ . . . a swarm of some hundred creatures of all sorts and descriptions, red ones dressed in blue, black ones wearing red loincloths, some with only one eye and some with no mouth – the whole lot hideous beyond words. In a noisy, jostling throng, carrying torches that blazed as brightly as the sun . . . They were offering each other wine and enjoying themselves just like ordinary people.”

(1/3 How someone had a wen removed by demons)

(Mills 1970:137)

“ . . . In the middle of the night – a very wild night of howling winds and lashing rain – he heard someone going by in the street chanting ‘All life is fleeting’ (1), and wondering who it could be, he raised the shutter a little and peered out – to find it was a demon as tall as the eaves of the building and with the face of a horse. He closed the shutter in panic and retreated to the other side of the room, but the demon pushed up the lattice, thrust its face inside and shouted, ‘How dare you look at us! How dare you look at us!’ . . . But it only called out, ‘Take a real good

look, then!' and went away. The man was terrified that this might have been the nocturnal procession of demons, and from then on, they say, he never spent another night in that particular viewing stand."

[(1) the opening phrase of a celebrated passage from the Nirvana Sutra]

(12/24 About a demon by the viewing stand in First Avenue)  
(Mills 1970:377)

In this last example of the *Uji Shūi Monogatari*, it seems that the parade was not meant to be looked at by anyone. The *Uji Shūi Monogatari*, as well as the *Konjaku Monogatari* (今昔物語集, Collection of Tales of Now Past, Heian period) to which it is closely related, narrate several stories of the Hyakki Yagyō as well as other yōkai encounters including Fox possessions, Tanuki transformations, or tricks of the Tengu. The divination practices based on Onmyō-dō philosophy that was extremely influential at the Heian court, are also detailed in relation to altering the behavior of yōkai.

The first picture scrolls which depict yōkai apparitions are to be found in the Muromachi period, and often relate to the Yakubyō-gami (疫病神, plague gods) associated with the bubonic plague epidemics of the Heian and Kamakura periods. The sixteenth century scroll *Nakifudō Engi Emaki* (泣不動縁起絵巻) depicts the renowned Onmyō-dō priest Abeno Seimei in the process of exorcising the gods of plague with the help of Shikigami (式神, magical servants or talismans of the Onmyō-dō priest, created from folded and cut paper). The Yakubyō-gami as well as the Shikigami of this scroll lend their iconography to other yōkai depictions of the same period, while the early fifteenth century scroll *Yudzū Nenbutsu Engi Emaki* (融通念仏縁起絵巻) gives an even wider palette for the representation of yōkai in the form of Yakubyō-gami.

It seems that the early Muromachi period witnessed increasing prosperity and stability, in which the once dreaded spirits of the plague gods and yōkai could be expressed visually with levity and humor. This new era is celebrated even by the yōkai with carnivalesque euphoria and festival. The most significant representation of yōkai in Muromachi period art is the picture scroll *Hyakki Yagyō*, which becomes the basis for future representations of Hyakki Yagyō.

The *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* by Tosa Mitsunobu (土佐光信, sixteenth century), similarly to the contemporaneous *Tsukumogami Emaki* (付喪神絵巻), depicts mainly utensils which turned into yōkai. This picture scroll is drawn without a narrative, which is relatively rare in the picture scroll tradition, and therefore the background or specific name of each yōkai is not established and thus open to interpretation. The carnivalesque parade, while humorous and grotesque rather than scary or gruesome, seems to follow the descriptions of the *Hyakki Yagyō* in the *Konjaku Monogatari* and other Heian period texts, as the parade ends with the Hinode (日ノ出, sunrise) or dawn and the comical escape of the yōkai from the first rays of the Sun. These monsters, similarly to the

*Tsukumogami Emaki* depictions, are harmless and seem easily defeated. The representation of yōkai will borrow from this style in the works of the following generations of artists in the Edo and Meiji periods.

#### CODIFIED MONSTERS OF EDO

Edo period (江戸時代, 1603 CE – 1868 CE) painter Toriyama Sekien's (鳥山石燕, 1712–88) work on yōkai consists of four fukuro tōji (袋綴) codex books, the *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (画図百鬼夜行, The Illustrated Night Parade of A Hundred Demons, 1776), the *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki* (今昔画図続百鬼, The Illustrated One Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past, 1779), the *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi* (今昔百鬼拾遺, Supplement to The Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past, 1781) and the *Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro* (百器徒然袋, The Illustrated Bag of One Hundred Random Demons, 1784), illustrating 206 distinct yōkai entries. As Foster points out, one of the main reasons this body of work is exceptionally important in the development of yōkai art is that Sekien introduced yōkai for the first time as individual beings, in alignment with the encyclopedia format that gained popularity in the late-Edo period (Foster 2004: 92). In this respect, Sekien's work was most profoundly influenced by the encyclopedic collections of the *Kinmo Zui* (訓蒙圖彙, 1666), the first illustrated Japanese encyclopedia, and Terajima Ryōan's (寺島良安) *Wakan Sansai Zue* (和漢三才圖會, 1713), both of which contained entries of yōkai.

Edo period zukan (図鑑, illustrated reference books) also informed Sekien's work, such as the *Bakemono Zukushi* (化物づくし, artist and date unknown), and the *Hyakkai Zukan* (百怪図巻, 1737 by Sawaki Sūshi 佐脇嵩之 1707–72), whose thirty yōkai entries are reproduced in the Sekien codices; however, his attempt is the first one to separately represent yōkai as “distinct units of information” (Foster 2003:91). While the Muromachi picture scrolls of *Hyakki Yagyō* were the first attempts to visually render the previously invisible and unutterable, those demons are parading in a cavalcade without names or narrative. Sekien's encyclopedic design tries to create order out of this chaos and supply a name and compact story for each yōkai.

In sharp contrast with the colorful Muromachi picture scrolls, Sekien's work is printed in the fukuro tōji book format; it is of a sharp black and white graphic design. His design gives rational visual information for each delinquent with precision and exact contours, without concern for the emotional effect produced by color representation, as observed on the picture scrolls. Accordingly, while the Muromachi art had a profound effect on twentieth and twenty-first century film visual effects, costume design or animation, Sekien's work is more influential in the development of modern manga, given that his style is not far removed from the manga medium.

The medium of the Muromachi picture scrolls is color and ink on paper, which produce the distinct color palette associated with yōkai:

ambivalence, levity, colorfulness, melancholy and antiquity. The images of the yōkai parades utilize watercolor to create a wide scale of refined tones regulated by the amount of water used, thereby in a certain way wash together the cavalcade of the demons, and create a scene almost dream-like and light-hearted. In this sense, introducing the distinct identity of each yōkai is not the concern of the artist; it is rather an attempt to reproduce the atmosphere of the “Other” world. The absorbent paper itself gives a light yellow-brown background well suited for the theme, and the main colors utilized in the yōkai figures are fading shades of warm colors: orange, red, yellow, amber, green and gray. This color palette will fix and determine the color range of the representations of yōkai.

The color palette of Muromachi yōkai is conserved and further refined by the delicate brushwork of Takai Kōzan (高井高山, 1806–83), a patron and student of Hokusai, who created his paintings in the tranquil environment of Obuse, Nagano Prefecture. Kōzan, being a wealthy salt merchant, had no financial incentives to produce art to order, or to enter the world of ukiyo-e in Edo or other major cities. Kōzan remained an amateur painter with diverse interests, ranging from *sanshui* (山水) landscape painting to calligraphy, but who is mainly remembered for his support of Hokusai as well as for his unique hanging scrolls of yōkai, simply titled *Yōkai-zu* (妖怪図). On these paintings, sometimes accompanied by short texts which toned down the ambient atmosphere, yōkai seem to unreservedly leap out from their natural environment in the mountain town of Obuse. These yōkai are more melancholic than the parading ones of the Muromachi period, and consequently the water colors are dominated by dirty tangerine, ochre yellow and auburn with hues mixed with gray and brown, while the background is dirty green, brown or gray. In line with the Muromachi period scrolls, these monsters are born out of the imagination of the individual artist, have no distinct names and serve no other purpose than to express the aimless tranquility (*nonbiri*) of the yōkai and the artist alike.

The role of artists, however, was different in the major cities during the late Edo period, where woodblock prints served the taste of the strengthening *chōnin* (町人, townsmen) and urbanized bureaucratic classes. *Ukiyo-e* (浮世絵, Pictures of the Floating World) was an emerging visual art form in contrast to the established and traditional painting schools of Japan, such as the Kano and Tosa schools, which were based upon restrained and reserved aesthetic principles. A central principle of traditional Japanese aesthetics, *wabi*, is in simple terms described as “irregularity, simplicity, austerity, naturalness, mystery, otherworldly and tranquility” and as an “ideal of beauty [which] sets simple and unpretentious expression above the complex and striking. It abhors excess; it admires restraint” (Haga 1995:250). In striking contrast to the long-established aesthetic principles sternly handed down from master to student for centuries, *ukiyo-e* prints and paintings seemed to be driven by a radically different, even opposing system of aesthetic values.

The ukiyo-e, serving notably different purposes than the traditional paintings aimed at a narrow, aristocratic audience, followed a stylistic pattern of vivid and saturated polychromaticity, spatial tension created by shallow space construction and asymmetrical arrangements, precise linear patterns and a straightforward representation of the pictured matter (Bell 2004:x).

Woodblock prints were relatively easy to produce and thus circulated in large quantities at low cost, allowing commoners for the first time to collect and purchase art works for personal pleasure (Bell 2004:9). The function of the ukiyo-e varies from promotion of Kabuki plays, actors or popular Yoshiwara district prostitutes to landscapes or depictions of stories including legends of warriors, historical and fantastic events. While picture scrolls were designed to narrate stories in detail scene by scene, the new function of telling a story in an easily and instantly understandable, effective and often sensationalistic way on one single block contributed to the emergence of the specific stylistic marks of ukiyo-e, while the new ways of spatial composition and visual tension within one scene could also be considered to have contributed to the development of modern manga. The innovations in style, material and mode of expression allowed some of the most talented artists to flourish within the medium from the Edo to the Meiji periods, including Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760–1849), Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川国芳, 1797–1861) and Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (月岡芳年, 1839–92), all of whom were also active in representing yōkai and ghosts in ukiyo-e prints.

The late Edo period witnessed a notable increase in the representations of yōkai in the popular arts, literature and other cultural productions of the era, including freak shows (見世物, *misemono*), games, story telling and theatrical narrations. This phenomenon is viewed by Komatsu as a corollary to periods of acute crisis within the political and social system (Figal 1999:23). As Komatsu explains, historically the central power of the emperor and later the shogunate was emphasized by their symbolic rule over the supernatural and outcast stratum of the yōkai (Oni and Tengu), and it is notable that the shogun Tokugawa Iemochi felt the necessity to explicitly display this power by posting a sign in 1860 at Nikko forbidding Tengu and other demons from entering the area during the shogunal visit (Figal 1999:78, Visser 1908:27–32). Despite the shogun's efforts to maintain control over the untamed energy of the bakemono and what they might symbolize in an era of violent change including political, social, economic as well as natural disasters, morbid displays and stories relating to monsters and other grotesqueries flourished excessively in this period, which early Western observers from a Christian and often Victorian point of view tended to describe as decadent or even perverse (Bell 2004: xvii).

One of the characteristic genres of literature and story-telling emerging and flourishing in this period is the *kaidan* (怪談) or tales of the strange and supernatural. While narrations of supernatural events

have been elements of Japanese literary works since at least the *Genji Monogatari* (源氏物語, The Tale of Genji, ca. 1010, chapters Yugao and Aoi), found their place in the body of story collections, such as the *Konjaku Monogatari* (今昔物語集, Collection of Tales Now Past, ca. 1120), and have been important parts of Buddhist moral teachings, as in the *Nihon Ryōiki* (日本靈異記, Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition, ca. 823), kaidan stories were widely secularized in the Edo period and became separate narrative units with an easily recognizable structure containing a supernatural element and a decisive closure of story (Reider 2001:82). The supernatural element in these instances mostly originates from a horrid sin, such as murder, treason or adultery, and ends in the punishment carried out by the ghost of the wronged person. While this pattern is reminiscent of the Buddhist moral stories related to the concept of karma, by the seventeenth century the stories shifted focus to detailing the supernatural and gruesome elements of the stories, as exemplified by the *Inga Monogatari* (因果物語, Tales of Retribution, ca. 1660). Kaidan quickly gained popularity in urban Edo society, and did not restrict itself to story collections, but appeared in genres of story telling, Kabuki and Noh theatre as well as ukiyo-e prints and painting. Kaidan collections published in book format also gave rise to kaidan picture books, often illustrated by the popular ukiyo-e artists of the time.

Reider points out that one of the reasons for the proliferation of eerie stories in urban Edo society is the increased communication and exchange between the rural and urban areas of the country (Reider 2000:264). The flow of the newly permitted travel of monks, merchants, story tellers and commoners, as well as the influx of low ranking samurai into urban areas created a fertile soil for the exchange of local and exotic stories (Reider 2000:266). One of the notable sources of the kaidan genre is found in the *hyaku monogatari* (百物語, one hundred scary tales) tradition that became widely popular in the early Edo period.

The practice of *Hyaku Monogatari Kaidankai* (百物語怪談会, Meetings for Telling One Hundred Kaidan Tales) possibly started out as a parody version of the medieval *Hyakuza Hōdan* (百座法談, Meetings for One Hundred Buddhist Stories), where gatherings were held for one hundred days to narrate one hundred Buddhist stories, at the end of which a miracle was believed to happen (Reider 2001:85). In the case of the *hyaku monogatari*, the participants gather at dusk and narrate one hundred scary stories, while one of one hundred lit candles is extinguished after each story ends. At the end of the gathering, the room succumbs to darkness, and a supernatural phenomenon is believed to occur.

In summary, the genealogy of eerie stories in the Edo period can be seen as an emerging oral tradition of the *hyaku monogatari*, collected and published as kaidan and kaidanshū (怪談集, collection of supernatural tales), and the particularly powerful and popular of these stories are further popularized in the Kabuki theatre. The visual arts followed all the above stages of kaidan from book illustration to ukiyo-e, contributing to

a strongly emphasized visual presence of the supernatural and grotesque in the Edo to Meiji periods.

The first instances of ukiyo-e art related to yōkai and kaidan are to be found in the works of Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760–1849), one of the most influential and prolific artists of the Edo period. Hokusai's manga (漫画, whimsical pictures) sketches depict several supernatural creatures, while his print titled *Shinban Uki-e Bakemono Yashiki Hyaku Monogatari* (新版浮絵屋敷百物語, New Version of a Perspective Print: Haunted House, late eighteenth century) is the forerunner and trend setter of the hyaku monogatari pictures, depicting the grand finale of the game with the dramatic appearance of supernatural creatures. In this composition, Hokusai manipulates perspective and spatial depth to achieve the chilling effect of sudden apparitions; however, the comical element is equally strongly emphasized. While the appearing yōkai seem to be based on or are in alignment with the earlier depictions of Sekien or of his contemporary, Takehara Shunsen, it is notable that Hokusai included an original mode of expression that can be most clearly seen in the case of the animated stepping-stone in the foreground of the picture, as it is coming to life with the overtly simplistic features of a caricature or manga character.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, Hokusai's *Hyaku Monogatari* (百物語, One Hundred Ghost Stories series ca. 1830), while only including five works, not only became an important reference for future ukiyo-e artists in depicting horrid tales derived from Kabuki dramas popular at the time, but established an Edo period style depiction of the horrid and the otherworldly, and even influences contemporary sensibilities and aesthetics in Japan in the horror genre. The themes of *The Ghost of Kohada Koheiji* (こはだ小平二), *Oiwa San* (お岩さん) and *Sarayashiki* (さらやしき, The Tale of the Dish Mansion) are based on true stories of murder as well as their dramatization by popular Kabuki playwright Tsuruya Namboku IV (鶴屋南北四世, 1755–1829). While the themes derived from the blood-curdling scenes onstage, unlike other ukiyo-e artists of his time, Hokusai maintained his imagery to be removed from the stage of Kabuki, and depicted his own vision of the horrid events. These images are not without inspired visual solutions and are effective compositions for representing ghosts and inducing fear, chill or suspense (as in the case of *Shūnen*, しょうねん, Obsession) in the viewer, but the grotesque and humorous sides of the apparitions are also maintained (as in the case of *Sarayashiki*). The *Warai Han'nya* (笑いほんにゃ, Grinning Han'nya) composition of the jealousy-driven female demon Han'nya holding the severed head of a child would especially become a reference point for the following generation of ukiyo-e artists in depicting otherworldly and gruesome themes.

Hokusai's innovative depictions based on the themes of the hyaku monogatari and kaidan stories profoundly influenced late Edo period ukiyo-e painter Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川国芳, 1797–1861). Hokusai's *Shinban Uki-e Bakemono Yashiki Hyaku Monogatari* served as reference

for Kuniyoshi's *Hyaku Monogatari Bakemono Yashiki no Zu Hayashiya Shōzō Kufū no Kaidan* (百物語化物屋敷の図・林屋正蔵工夫の怪談、The Monster House of the One Hundred Horrible Stories as Performed by the Storyteller Hayashiya Shōzō, 1836–42) print, and Hokusai's *Hyaku Monogatari* influenced Kuniyoshi's depictions related to the Yotsuya Kaidan (四谷怪談), where Lady Oiwa's deformed ghost appears in a lantern, haunting her husband Iyemon, while the relationship between Hokusai's print *The Ghost of Kohada Koheiji* and Kuniyoshi's triptych *Sōma no Furudairi ni Masakadono Himegimi Takiyasha* (相馬の古内裏に将門の姫君瀧夜叉, Masakado's Daughter the Princess Takiyasha at the Old Soma Palace, 1844) cannot be overlooked. However, in both cases the original visual solutions of Kuniyoshi created new, and equally powerful haunting images.

In alignment with the growing militarism and decadence of the Bakumatsu period, Kuniyoshi's body of work centered on "military exploits and things abnormal" (Segi 1985:26), focusing to a considerably larger extent on and giving a much more pronounced significance to the supernatural and *yōkai* than Hokusai had. Among many, one of the most important print series combining the supernatural and warrior scenes is the *Nansō Satomi Hakkenden* series (南総里見八犬伝, ca. 1836, The Tale of the Eight Dog Warriors). Based on the popular novel of Takizawa Bakin (滝沢 馬琴, 1767–1848) and the consequent Kabuki adaptation, *Hakkenden* (八犬伝, 1814–1842) it narrates the story of eight warriors born to families whose name starts with the "dog" character, with a bead of rosary in their hands, inscribed with a Chinese character representing a Confucian ideal, such as Filial Piety, Compassion or Honor etc. The eight Dog Warriors are in fact the unborn children of the Princess Satomi Fusehime and the family dog, who helped his master against his rival Lord Anzai, and to whom the princess's hand was promised, but later both of them were destroyed by Lord Satomi. The Legend of the Eight Dog Warriors is a romantic adventure and revenge story, where the eight characters come together and follow their fate as inscribed by the rosary beads which originally belonged to their mother. The rosary beads started to glow and vanished at the moment of Fusehime's death.

This story, a major success and a bestseller novel during the late Tokugawa period, was reproduced as animation (*Hakkenden Shin Shō*, dir. Anno Takashi, 1993) and as TV drama (*Satomi Hakkenden*, 2006). Being one of the most outstanding romantic literary works produced in the late Edo period, this saga also bears an indirect, albeit strong influence on animation works based on the themes of romantic adventure quests such as *Dragon Ball* (1986, dir. Nishio Daisuke) or the manga and animation series *Inuyasha* (animation dir. Aoki Naoyo, manga Takahashi Rumiko, 2000), where the collection of magical crystals or crystal balls is central to the story.

Kuniyoshi, however, did not simply ride the wave of nostalgic militarism that started gaining momentum during the era when the artist

was active. From 1842 onwards, edicts were issued by the government outlining a new system of censorship for the woodblock print publishing industry which targeted publishers, distributors and artists alike (Schaap 1998:18). As censorship of the media emerged in the Bakumatsu era, *yōkai* became a powerful symbol substituting for and ridiculing political figures and dignitaries. The triptych *Minamoto Yorimitsu Yakata Tsuchigumo Yōkai wo Nasu Zu* (頼光館土蜘蛛怪異倣図, Minamoto Yorimitsu in Bed, Haunted by the Earth Spider and his Demons, 1843) is an oft-cited example of Kuniyoshi's satire, where *yōkai* are used as a comical allegory for the political situation of the time (Schaap 1998:18). In this respect, *yōkai* would progressively become signifiers in the hands of state versus opposition media, standing for different political or social groups associated with being outcast or deviating from the norm. Even though in the Bakumatsu era artists and publishers risked imprisonment for such (extremely popular) prints, the polarity between state and opposition media was gradually muddled after the Meiji Restoration gained strength and the state embarked upon militaristic totalitarianism. Still, during Kuniyoshi's lifetime *yōkai* imagery witnessed a new revival not simply as a political metaphor, but as humorous caricatures and grotesqueries whose representational limits are only dictated by the imagination of the artist, as seen in the *Bakemono Chushingura* (化物忠臣蔵、Monster Chushingura, late eighteenth century, where *yōkai* act as masterless samurai) or the comical *yōkai* images of the print *Dōke Bakemono Yūsu Zumi* (道外化もの夕涼, late Tenpō period) where *yōkai* spend a mellow summer's night at a roadside inn conversing, smoking pipes, and drinking saké. As *yōkai* are known to haunt crossroads and bridges, this caricature is a comical afterthought of what *yōkai* do in their spare time, after a good day's (or dusk's) work – in this picture the *yōkai* gather at night. This train of thought is further developed in the *yōkai* bath appearing in Miyazaki Hayao's animated film, *Sen to Chihirono Kamikakushi* (千と千尋の神隠し, Spirited Away, 2001).

The aim of this print is simply to entertain and raise a laugh in the viewer. As Isao Toshihiko, painter and art critique, points out (Isao 1999:110), Kuniyoshi's visual world is intertwined with the representation of the supernatural equally for prompting responses of awe, horror or laughter. This tradition was followed and considerably expanded by his student, Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (月岡芳年, 1839–92), whose elaboration on otherworldly themes will at the same time reflect the changing concepts regarding the supernatural and what they come to signify under the Meiji Reformation.

#### MILITARIZED MONSTERS OF MEIJI

*Tsukioka Yoshitoshi* (月岡芳年, 1839–92)

As art historian Segi Shin'ichi notes, Yoshitoshi's early set of works took the tradition of *hyaku monogatari* prints prescribed by Hokusai and Kuniyoshi to its full conclusion (Segi 1985:34). Yoshitoshi's work shows

previously unprecedented power and intensity with an equally striking attention to detail in narrating gruesome acts of merciless cruelty. These depictions of murders, torn limbs and bowels, severed heads and swords dripping in blood seem to serve a sadistic voyeuristic pleasure that might have equally arisen from a popular taste in the final years of the Edo era, as well as from the artist's own psyche. Nevertheless, his print series were skillfully and precisely executed to reach even more realistic effects, as Yoshitoshi was using the innovation of mixing alum and glue particles to the already striking red pigment of aniline dyes in order to achieve a raw blood color (Segi 1985:36–9). The series, which hallmark this early era of the artist's life, are the *Wakan Hyaku Monogatari* (和漢百物語, One Hundred Ghost Tales from Japan and China, 1865), based on kaidan tales, the *Eimei Nijūhasshuku* (英名二十八衆句, Twenty-eight Infamous Murders with Accompanying Verses, 1866–67, in collaboration with Yoshiiku) and the *Kaidai Hyaku Sensō* (魁題百戦争, One Hundred Selections of Warriors in Battle, 1868–69). These series invariably have as their themes monsters and harmful spirits as well as the even more horrifying visions of human brutality.

Yoshitoshi, who suffered numerous nervous breakdowns in his life, was also known to see ghosts on occasion, which further inspired his works on the otherworldly: the *Kaii Zoroi* (怪異揃, Diverse Grotesqueries, 1869) and the *Kankyō Hyakurankai* (観経博覧会, Exposition of One Hundred Phantasms, 1880) are known to be based on his experiences of seeing ghosts. However, after his recovery from his most severe depression, Yoshitoshi significantly changed his style under the name Taiso (大蘇, Great Rebirth). While he retained his explicit style, depicting brutalizing crime scenes appearing as full-color newspaper prints (shinbun nishiki-e) in the *Postal News* (Yūbin Hōchi Shinbun, 郵便報知新聞、1875), *Illustrated Liberal Newspaper* (E-iri Jiyū Shinbun, 絵入自由新聞、1880) and the *Yamato Newspaper* (Yamato Shinbun, 大和新聞、1886–88), his more personal undertakings in his final years are considerably toned down under the influence of the ideal of *yūgen* (幽玄, mysteriousness, beauty and sadness) borrowed from Noh aesthetics, which art form increasingly influenced him from the 1880s on (Segi 1985:113). His two final monumental series, *Tsukino Hyakushi* (月百姿, One Hundred Aspects of the Moon, 1885–91) and most remarkably the *Shinkei Sanjūrokkaisen* (新形三十六怪撰, Selected New Forms of Thirty-Six Ghosts, 1889–92), are saturated with a disturbing tranquility and restrained colors which show a sharp contrast to his early, highly explicit works. The implicit tension in the final series of *Thirty-six Ghosts*, often showing quiet moments before acts of violence, helped the artist to map the psychological landscape of highly personalized characters instead of the stereotypical rendering of cheerful or horrid monsters. The title itself, *shinkei* (新形) or new form is in fact a play on words with *shinkei* (神経) or nerves, a novel idea derived from the new vocabulary of the Meiji Restoration. As Figal points out, the Meiji government from the late 1880s invested heavily in moving the supernatural from the outside world of mountains and villages to

within the human mind (Figal 1999:51), where it could be treated as mental disorder. This way of new thinking is exquisitely mirrored in the *Thirty-six Ghost* series, where often the supernatural is altogether omitted and replaced with a tense focus on the facial expression and possible mental state of the centrally positioned human character. This is most notably so on *Fujiwarano Sanekatano Shūshin Suzume to Naruno Zu* (藤原実方の執心雀となる図、Fujiwarano Sanekata's Obsession with Sparrows) or on *Akikaze no Fuku ni Tsuketemo Aname Aname Ono to wa Iwaji Susuki Oikeri – Narihara* (秋風の吹くにつけてもあなめあなめ 小野とはいはじすすき生いけり – 葉平, The Autumn Wind Blows, there is Nothing More to Say, Grass Grows Through the Eye-sockets of Ono's Skull – Narihara), depicting the psychological states of the Heian period poets Fujiwarano Sanekata and Ariwarano Narihara.

### THE MEIJI RESTORATION AND YŌKAI

The Meiji Restoration (1868) followed a traumatizing era for Japan during which it was forced to open its ports to United States trade after more than two hundred years of isolation. The traumas experienced, as a consequence, were also soon reflected in a shift in contemporaneous yōkai discourse. As Figal points out in his profound study *Civilization and Monsters – Spirits and Modernity in Meiji Japan* (Figal 1999), the “grammar of the supernatural” radically changed after the arrival of the “black ships” of United States Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853. While the early Meiji period witnessed the Tengu Insurrection (天狗騒動, Tengu Sōdō, 1864) and the Osaka monster riots (妖怪騒動, Yōkai Sōdō, late Edo, early Meiji period), which equated discontent and disobedient masses with dangerous monsters, at the same time the authorities, aligning themselves with the foreigners (異人, ijin), became equally suspicious in the eyes of the common folk. Ijigoroshi (異人殺し, murdering of strangers) and the Blood Tax Riots (血税一揆, Ketsuzei ikki, 1873) are symptoms of the mutual distrust of authorities and commoners. The early years of Meiji were a time of confusion, and monsters, historically occupying a terrain helping to demarcate the concepts of uchi (内, inside) and soto (外, outside), the physical and psychological categories that differentiate between insiders and outsiders, were now also thrown into a crisis with regards to whom they should be identified with in a world order that was newly taking shape (Figal 1999:35).

Meiji period (明治時代, 1868–1912) scholar and self-proclaimed disperser of knowledge and enlightenment, Inoue Enryō (井上円了, 1858–1919) was in the forefront of weeding out yōkai from the rural areas. Enryō aimed to collect yōkai in all regions of Japan and give a scientific explanation for them, while allowing room for “True Mysteries” (真怪, shinkai) in the process. In Enryō's approach, and in the spirit of Meiji transformation, yōkai would not appear on the physical border between mountain and village, bridge or crossroad, dusk or dawn anymore. They entered a new realm, the realm of theorization and academia. Enryō was

meticulous in his hunt for yōkai, and even introduced a quasi-Linnean system to rigorously pinpoint each entity (Figal 1999:45, 1887).

Enryō's work had a profound influence on the Meiji government's handling of yōkai, and, with his proclamation that "eighty to ninety percent of monsters are born out of the operations of the human mind" (Figal 1999:49), contributed in moving the spirits and monsters from geographical sites to within the human psyche – where they could be managed more easily, especially with the tools of modern compulsory education introduced in the late nineteenth century. By 1880, the proclamation of the new state power over the supernatural is expressed in the official children's textbooks issued by the Monbusho (Ministry of Education), announcing with authority that "there is no such thing as Tengu" (Figal 1999:79). Consequently, Tengu possession or Fox (狐豹, kohyō) possession, conditions traditionally cured by the village faith healers (祈禱し, kitōshi), became psychological illnesses with such new names as kohyōbyō (fox possession disease, 1885), alopekantoropy (1892) or hyōimōsō (possessional delusion, 1894). While stigmatizing folk healers and remedies, delusion and temporal insanity, as it was now termed, would be deemed incurable and the undesirable individuals suffering from such conditions were turned over to asylums (yashikiro) in order to keep the body of the nation (kokutai) clean and undisturbed by irrational and uncontrollable elements.

In fact, while Enryō's field of yōkai-gaku (monster studies) might seem to be a mere dilettantish attempt at designing a new branch of natural science – not uncommon in the age of modernism – it significantly contributed to the establishment of a new myth that would aim at creating the Japanese Spirit as opposed to local, scattered spirits of the past. Enryō's underlying political motives are revealed in his formulation of what *shinkai*, or True Mystery is:

“. . . it is believed that the Imperial nation-body is also the brilliant light of the Ideal. . . . Above the state we see the pure spirit of the Imperial sacredness and the energy of we loyal subjects mutually reflecting and glittering in the completely spiritual divine light of the national body.”

(Figal 1999:91)

Thus the divine Emperor was restored to rule over local spirits, and a new, official myth replaced the folklore of yōkai and supernatural beings in the minds of commoners. Enryō was summoned in front of the Meiji Emperor in 1897, for carrying out a task radically differently than was accomplished by Abeno Seimei in the Heian court a thousand years earlier, which was to subdue the harmful spirits under the control of the divine ruler.

The visual evolution of images of the emperor as a new, state-sponsored supernatural being is traceable via picture scrolls and Meiji woodblock prints, the emperor being at the other end on the scale

of supernatural polarity, where yōkai represent the extreme dark and polluted, while the emperor represents the source of divine light. The visual evolution of the emperor's changing image via picture scrolls in the medieval period is documented in Kuroda's *Ōno Shintai*, *Ōno Shōzō* (Kuroda 1993), while his modern image-making in Meiji-period media and popular art is discussed in depth in Fujitani's *Splendid Monarchy* (Fujitani 1998).

Restoring a divine emperor strengthened state power, but was far from aiming at enlightening the masses as the restoration's name claims (文明開化, bunmei kaika, civilization and enlightenment). A militaristic build-up was soon to follow, and Enryō followed suit with his yōkai-ron (妖怪論, yōkai theory), theorizing such themes as the relation between war and monsterology (Enryō 1999).

Another crisis befell local yōkai and supernatural beings with the shrine mergers (神社政令・神社合併, jinja seirei/jinja gappei, 1906–12), which Figal calls the “bureaucratization of spirits” (Figal 1999:200), that occurred simultaneously with the establishment of the state shrine at Yasukuni jinja following the Russo-Japanese war (1905–10). While Tengu and local kami were responsible for kidnapping children and the elderly in earlier times (tengu-kakushi, kami-kakushi), it shows the fallen status of yōkai that now it is the state that abducts souls and even gods themselves. Old shrines could only be saved from destruction if they could claim lineage with the divine emperor, which resulted in hundreds of shrines “reorganized” or “merged” at often remote and unfamiliar sites, contributing to the weakening of local patriotism and the heterogeneity of local belief systems. On the other hand, the national enshrinement of more than eighty thousand souls who “died for the Emperor” meant an unprecedented emotional investment by the state on behalf of the families of the fallen soldiers from all over the country. Thereby, with the dispersion of yōkai and local spirits, the myth of the Divine Light of the Emperor and a purified (purged) and homogeneous Nation State could emerge from the dusk of a heterogeneous and colorful “pagan” world of Edo Japan. The new father state, however, did not let the yōkai disappear but instead found a new, yet overtly domesticated role for them, under constant surveillance by the new regime. Foretelling their fate on Kawanabe Kyōsai's nishiki-e, *Bake Bake Gakko* (化け化け学校、School for Spooks, 1874), where yōkai are forcefully reformed and groomed for a new era at a bakemono reformatory school, yōkai had become sufficiently innocuous by the end of the Meiji period they were able to take on their new roles assigned to them by state-controlled media and the institutionalized academia.

#### THE FOLK STUDIES OF YANAGITA KUNIO

It seems that researchers of yōkai and monsters find themselves on the same ambiguous border between two worlds as their research subjects. While Enryō's yōkai gaku, or monster studies, could not effectively

be incorporated into any established, legitimate branch of an existing scientific field, his counterpart in the late Meiji to Taishō and Showa eras, Yanagita Kunio (柳田國男, 1875–1962), also found it difficult to operate within the boundaries of anthropology or, on the other hand, literature. Yanagita established the new field of *minzoku gaku* (民俗学) or folk studies in order to collect and analyze the “feelings” and “psychic realm” of “the Japanese” (Figal 1999:113) mostly with respect to folk knowledge concerning *yōkai* and otherworldly creatures. Yanagita took a stance opposite to Enryō, claiming that the folk tradition of *yōkai* should be collected, studied, preserved and, most of all, treasured as the “shared fantasies” (共同現象, *kyōdō genshō*) of “the Japanese psyche” (Yanagita 1906). While several of Yanagita’s theories were later refuted and his methodology questioned, his body of work largely contributed to the preservation of folk knowledge derived from otherwise perishable sources, mainly of oral transmission. Rendered harmless by the state effort channeled by Inoue Enryō, *yōkai*, now powerless and faintly disappearing into the twilight of oblivion with the untold histories of local informants, were now ready to be rescued, categorized and analyzed by the benevolent social scientist under the gaze of institutionalized academia.

By the mid-1920s, however, Yanagita radically shifts from focusing on the connection between Tengu and *yamabito* (山人, mountain dwellers) to the connection between *jōmin* (常民, “abiding folk”) and ancestor worship (Yanagita 1926). While his motives are not explicit, the emphasis on a consciousness regarding the invisible surveillance of ancestors – in alignment with the actual surveillance of the state – could be nonetheless beneficial to the strengthening of patriotism and the concept of a unified family-state (家族国家, *kazoku kokka*) in the years building up to the Pacific War. Meanwhile, even *yōkai* took up their patriotic duty in popular and state controlled media in order to support the war effort of this newly emerged (but claimed to have always existed), uniquely pure or purely unique family nation-state.

#### YŌKAI GO TO WAR

*Yōkai*, becoming an element of mainstream, state-controlled media, was put to new use as a metaphor for outsiders. The first instance of equating *yōkai* with foreigners as enemy of war appears on Utagawa Yoshiiku’s print *Kokkei Wanishiki* (滑稽倭日史記, 1895), a comical imitation of the traditional *Hyakki Yagyō* emaki (新案百鬼夜行, Shinan Hyakki Yagyō, New Design of the Night Parade of One Hundred Demons). The composition of this print follows closely that of the original *Hyakki Yagyō* scroll, while each *yōkai* is designed to represent and ridicule soldiers from the Chinese army conquered in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95), in Meiji Japan’s first important military victory. The rising sun at the end of the scroll is the *hino maru* sun disk of the Japanese navy flag.

By the time of the Pacific War, *yōkai*, mainly Oni, were routinely

used in wartime cartoons to represent the allied powers (Dower 1986). As Reider points out (Reider 2003:147), Oni were traditionally characterized as the untamed forces living outside the emperor's control. Utilizing this notion, as well as complying with government censorship rules on caricatures, the only wartime magazine, *Manga*, equated Oni with Roosevelt, Stalin or Churchill.

Other than caricatures and manga, animated film was also used as a means of war propaganda. The most relevant examples are the Momotaro short films, *Momotaro of the Sky* (空の桃太郎, Sorano Momotaro, 1931), *Momotaro of the Sea* (海の桃太郎, Umino Momotaro, dir. Murata Yasuji, 1932), *Momotaro and the Sea Eagles* (桃太郎の海鷲, Momotarono Umiwashi, 1943) and *Momotaro, Divine Troops of the Ocean* (桃太郎・海の神兵, Momotaro Umino Shinpei, dir. Seo Mitsuyo, 1945). The final version, *Divine Troops of the Ocean*, is an intriguing animated work, produced in collaboration between the Ministry of Navy and Shochiku Studios. While the 74-minute long animated film used up considerable resources, its 1945 April release proved to be too late to generate significant social response. Nonetheless, the symbolism used in Momotaro animation – what Dower calls the Momotaro paradigm (Dower 1986: 255) – gives significant insight into war propaganda tactics and the extent of flexibility of archetypal symbolism. While a strong Chinese Taoist symbolism can be traced in the original Momotaro story (Horiyoshi 1998:93), it was reworked to the instruction of the Ministry of Education to represent an indigenous Japanese folk hero (Dower 1986: 252). The story became oversimplified to accommodate evident parallels with the war effort, such as Momotaro being the pure Japanese hero, his grandparents the spirits of ancestors, his companions the “liberated” Asian nations, and the Oni, residing on a remote island, the Allied Forces. The 1945 film shows this parable in its fullest version, rendering the Oni as the British “demons with human face” (Dower 1986: 255), who surrender to the pure-hearted hero.

The Momotaro animations were banned and copies destroyed by the US troops in the early years of the occupation. However, as Dower points out, the archetypal Outsider remained a homogeneous block to be used in postwar symbolism, and the old clichés were quickly re-assigned in the new world order. Political cartoonists would start to draw horns on the heads of communist states by the end of the 1940s (Dower 1986: 310).

At the same time, in the postwar years state censorship of manga and film was gradually lifted, and the government-sponsored New Association of Japanese Cartoonists (新日本漫画家協会, Shin Nihon Mangaka Kyōkai) lost its sovereignty for publishing comic books. The early postwar years saw the emergence of kamishibai (紙芝居, picture cards) and rental manga books (貸本漫画, kashihon manga), due to both the publishing and sales costs of printed material putting a burden on an economically devastated nation. Still, kashihon manga flourished in the postwar years, in sharp contrast to the war period, when the only

available manga was the magazine with the unimaginative title *Manga*, edited by Kondo Hideo (1908–79). Artists emerging with new vitality after the war, such as Tezuka Osamu (手塚治虫, 1928–89), revolutionized comics and animation in Japan. Censorship of manga had significantly weakened by the time the avant-garde *Garo* magazine appeared in 1964. The postwar years would also see the resurrection of *yōkai* in the works of Mizuki Shigeru, whose presence is still palpable in diverse genres of contemporary visual media.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Abeno Seimei 安倍晴明 (921–1005) is the best-known priest of Onmyō-dō, whose life was romanticized in the 2001 film *Onmyōji* (陰陽師, dir. Takita Yojiro, 2001).
- <sup>2</sup> A more detailed discussion of Onmyō-dō is presented in Komatsu (1994).
- <sup>3</sup> 怪 is normally not read as ke in compound words, while 気 has a legitimate reading as ke.
- <sup>4</sup> Once a given form and name, and consequently a visual representation are attached to them, they become less feared and awe-inspiring than the mononoke, the ultimate, unnamed mystery.
- <sup>5</sup> Detailed studies of Oni are presented in Baba (1988), and more recently Reider (2003).
- <sup>6</sup> Not all tree spirits are such well natured. According to local lore from Aomori Prefecture, the Jumokko (樹木子) is a tree that sheds and sucks blood, mainly growing on battlefields (Iwai 2000/1:31).
- <sup>7</sup> The influence of Jomon art on contemporary art can be traced in the works of postwar surrealist painter Okamoto Taro (岡本太郎, 1911–96) or in the animation of Miyazaki Hayao. The literature outlining the Jomon influence on Miyazaki is extensive, produced both by the Ghibli group and independent researchers (Kuji 1998). Miyazaki's animated film centering on the theme of mononoke, *Mononoke Hime* (1997), is heavily based on Jomon and Yayoi period art concepts.
- <sup>8</sup> A type of pottery of the Middle Jomon period, excavated in the central mountainous and western Kanto plains (Barnes 1986:89).
- <sup>9</sup> Shuten Dōji (酒呑童子) is a popular Oni character from Heian period lore, who was known to consume the flesh of young virgins abducted from the Heian court. His character is very complex. The iconography of the Shuten Dōji scrolls reappears in Miyazaki's animated film, *Mononoke Hime* (1997).
- <sup>10</sup> A similar design will resurface in the Nurikabe (塗り壁、Plastered Wall) *yōkai* character in the Mizuki Shigeru manga.

## Enter the Limping Hero

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MIZUKI SHIGERU, PROFESSOR OF YŌKAI

*Gegege no Kitaro*, the manga series of Mizuki Shigeru (水木しげる, 1922–), reintroduced yōkai characters to popular visual media in the post-war era. Before this era, the visual representation of yōkai evolved from expressing fearful aspects of life such as death or disease to the grotesqueness and outcast status associated with criminals, foreigners and, later, enemies of the state. Mizuki, on the other hand, assigned new notions to these creatures in his visual representation, relating them to the ideas of pacifism and nostalgia, which propelled yōkai in new directions as visual signifiers and assigned a new place for them in contemporary visual vocabulary while maintaining a visual continuity with previous art historical time periods. To understand how Mizuki was able to achieve this effect within his sequential artwork, his life will be introduced in this chapter to show how Mizuki's new approach towards yōkai was informed by his personal experiences as artist, soldier and war veteran.

### EARLY YEARS (1922–41)

Mizuki Shigeru was born Mura Shigeru (武良茂) on March 8, 1922, as the second son of a relatively rich family. Mizuki's father, Mura Ryōichi (武良亮一) was a talented, yet eccentric bank official. The first person from Mizuki's native Sakaiminato city, Tottori Prefecture, to graduate from a university in Tokyo, Mizuki's father had a special interest in the visual arts and in literature which helped Mizuki to develop his own interest in pictures from a very early age (Mizuki 2004:25). Mura Ryōichi, a devout fan of Kabuki, set up the first movie theater in Sakaiminato city at his own expense, where his wife, Shigeru's mother, Kotoe (琴江) acted as the ticket collector. The cinema club, which was set up in a small kamishibai (紙芝居, picture card story telling) hall and operated only when kamishibai performers were out of town, served to satisfy Mura Ryōichi's urge to "bring culture to Sakaiminato"

rather than to make a profit (Mizuki 2004:57). Films included mainly chanbara (チャンバラ, sword fight) swordplays such as *Sonno Jōi* (尊王攘夷, Revere the Emperor, Expel the Barbarians, dir. Ikeda Tomiyasu, 1927), but he works of director Ozu Yasujiro (小津 安二郎, 1903–63), such as *Daigaku wa Deta Keredo* (大学は出たけれど, I Graduated But. . . , 1929) were also shown. While the project did not last long, it helped to introduce Mizuki to the world of Japanese cinema of the 1920s and 1930s (Mizuki 2004:59).

According to his own accounts, Mizuki's other important influence in his early childhood was a local nanny, Kageyama Fusa (景山ふさ), whom he called Nonnonbā (のんのん婆). Nonnon is an expression traditionally used in the Chūgoku area (中国地方) of Japan for a person who provided praying services for the community. Serving as a "shaman," the nonnon-san, or ogamiya-san (拝み手, 拝み屋), was responsible for making offerings to the gods, praying for the healing of the sick and for the well-being of the village (Mizuki 1990:18). After her husband's death, Nonnonbā went to live for longer periods with the Mura family as a nanny to the three children, and, according to Mizuki's autobiographical manga, *Manga Mizuki Shigeru Den 1-3* (マンガ水木しげる伝, Manga Legend of Mizuki Shigeru) (Mizuki 2004), developed a special relationship with the young Shigeru.

Shigeru wasn't a promising child in his early years. He didn't speak until he was four years old, and while both his older and younger brothers attended kindergarten, five-year-old Shigeru was left home in the care of Nonnonbā (Mizuki 1997:16). Being left in the care of Nonnonbā in his most formative years made an important contribution to the work he would later produce. Nonnonbā was a believer in spirits and yōkai, and according to the artist's recounts, she introduced local lore of yōkai to Mizuki, including the Tenjō Name (天井嘗め, Ceiling Licker), the Aka Name (垢嘗め, Mold Licker), the Iyanari (家鳴り, strange noises produced by the wooden logs of the flooring of the house) or the Sazae Oni (サザエ鬼, Shell Devil, edible shells of strange shapes or big sizes) (Mizuki 2004). Nonnonbā also tried to prove the existence of yōkai to the impressionable young Mizuki, which led him not to question the existence of yōkai throughout his childhood and so started to sketch the invisible beings from an early age (Mizuki 1990:26).

Yōkai and ghosts were part of folk imagination in rural Tottori Prefecture in the prewar era as monsters were born out of anguish related to the everyday life realities of famine, poverty or infectious diseases, including measles and pulmonary tuberculosis, which were largely left untreated and often resulted in death. Mizuki got acquainted with the reality of death in his early childhood years as several children in his village were lost to measles, while others perished at sea when working as child laborers for fishermen (Mizuki 1990:184). In this environment, Nonnonbā's ghost stories fired Shigeru's curiosity of what happens after death. Mizuki gives an account of his first encounter with a dead body when one of the ships harbored in Sakaiminato City exploded:

The sailor, who caused the explosion, went into pieces, for his body could not be gathered. The divers were trying to pull him up, but the body, just like a sucking fish, was clinging to the bottom of the boat. Finally six people pulled it out with the help of a rope.

Thinking about it now, I think this happened because of the water pressure, but at that time, as I was only a child, it became a basis for a *kaidan* story.

(Mizuki 1990:93)

Ever since the minute depiction of bodily degradation on the *Rokudō-emaki* (六道繪卷) picture scrolls of the medieval period, adult artists have sketched dead bodies from live scenes, including the gut spilling imagery on *byōbu-e* (屏風繪, paper folding scenes) paintings produced by late Edo, early Meiji period painter Ekin (繪金, 1812–79). Mizuki seems to legitimize his position as a *yōkai* artist by positioning himself within this context.

*Yōkai* painters are also known to have significant experiences with dead bodies in their early childhood. The very first biography of a Japanese painter, *Kyōsai Gadan* (暁斎画談, 1887), the biography of *yōkai* painter Kawanabe Kyōsai (河鍋暁斎, 1831–89), written by late Edo, early Meiji period comical story book (滑稽本, *kokkei-bon*) and romantic book (人情本, *ninjō-bon*) writer Baitei Kinga (梅亭金鷲, 1821–93, alias Uryū Masakazu, 瓜生政和), and illustrated by the artist himself, allows us a rare glimpse into the childhood of a *yōkai* painter. The 1887 edition of the illustrated *Kyōsai Gadan* and the 2004 edition of Mizuki's manga autobiography show important similarities between the childhood accounts of Kyōsai and Mizuki, which attest to the deep personal interest the *yōkai* artists seem to show from a very early age in sights which, from the point of view of aesthetics and artistic depiction, are plainly horrid.

Similarly to the above count from Mizuki's childhood, Kyōsai also encountered dead bodies re-emerging from water at an early age and, similarly to Mizuki, Kyōsai also approached those confronting themes with feelings of horror and the detached curiosity of the visual artist, as documented in the *Kyōsai Gadan* in the following way:

In the summer of his ninth year, a notable event occurred. During the fifth month rain fell day after day continuously; the Kanda River spilled over its banks. There was much excitement about all this. Hearing that extraordinary things could be seen, and wanting to sketch the surging currents himself, he waited for the rain to let up, and went down to the wharf through the valley in front of Sakura-no-baba, now the site of the Normal School. At the wharf, all alone, he was absorbed in studying the waters swirling down from the direction of the Suidobashi Bridge. Just at that time, in the waves near his feet, his attention was drawn toward something. "What's that?" he said. As he looked, long hair was undulating in the muddy water. "Maybe it's mino-game!" he thought. (The

legendary million-year-old turtle, always depicted with long strands of algae trailing behind like hair.) He reached out and grabbed the hair, pulled, and what was it? A man's head, severed at the neck. Horrified, his impulse was to throw the thing and run away, but then he stopped. He had made sketches of the detached heads constructed by the puppet master Izumi Mekichi, but a real severed head was virtually unobtainable, so he'd never sketched one. Now this unobtainable object was right there, and although it was frightening before his own eyes, to throw it away seemed too great a waste.

He decided to take it home with him, planning to sketch it there. He was afraid he'd get caught carrying it just dangling from his hand, so he covered the head with weeds, ran home to get a furoshiki, went back, bundled it in the cloth and hurried home. He decided to wait for a good chance to copy it, and hid it in the corner of a closet. It happened that a maid, while taking out some firewood that had been stored there, found the head. "Kyaaa!", she screamed, and because she tried to run away, my teacher's parents called out "What's the matter?" They became as shocked as the maid. My teacher ran to them. "I'm the one who put the head there; I picked it up just because I wanted to sketch it," he said. Everyone was horrified beyond scolding him. His father said, "Maybe you had the feeling that it would be a lost opportunity not to copy it. However, to get out of what could be a difficult situation, you'd better take it back to the wharf." With the head concealed in straw matting, my teacher went back to the wharf.

There he put the head on top of the matting in a place where there were no people. Nevertheless in a short time a crowd of sight-seers came along, but no one wanted to find fault. When he finished his picture, he wrapped the head in a carefully prepared Kannon Sutra, and laid it to rest in the river.

For a child not yet ten to do such a thing, it's fortunate the authorities neither caught nor investigated him. People heard about him, though, and rumors flew about how his love of art had made him fearless.

(Baitei 1983:6-7)

In another version, the Meiji period newspaper *Nippon Shimbun* (日本新聞) narrates the story in its eulogistic article *Kawanabe Kyōsai wo no Den* (河鍋曉齋をの伝, The Legend of Kawanabe Kyōsai) as an eleven-year-old Kyōsai finding the body of a young woman on the river bank at night (*Nippon Shimbun*, May 1, 1889). In this narration, Kyōsai severed the woman's head and hid it in his home to later use it as a model for sketching, where Kyōsai's father finds it and takes it to a Buddhist temple (Jordan 1993:19).

Mizuki narrates a similar story from his childhood:

Also, to use as material for my fantasy pictures, I started to collect bones of cats and dogs found on the sea shore, and put them in one of

my drawers. But they were all thrown out by my mother. My drawer smelled of death, so she investigated it. She was shocked at what she found and threw it all away.

(Mizuki 1990:110)

Jordan questions the extent of the truth behind Kyōsai's childhood story (Jordan 1993:22), and the validity of the Mizuki story equally cannot be verified; the similarity of the two stories could also indicate either a shared interest in depicting dead bodies from an early age, or alternatively and plausibly, that Mizuki, who has an extensive background and training in the visual arts, is well acquainted with the content of the *Kyōsai Gadan*, and aims to build an artist persona that would legitimize Mizuki as a yōkai-ga artist within the context of his Edo to Meiji period predecessors. In this case, the accentuation of the personal relationship between the artist and the subject matter as a source of authorization is apparent and legitimization to represent yōkai visually is sought, not unlike in the case of the initiation ceremonies prerequisite to the legitimization of the Ogamiya.

#### WAR YEARS (1942–45)

Mizuki, a promising visual artist from an early age, showed no interest in conforming to authority, which caused more and more friction as Japanese militarization became apparent even at a school level (Mizuki 2004:228). A boy, one of whose early recollections is trying to eat the Hino Maru (日の丸) sun disk on the Japanese military flag (Mizuki 2004:21), Shigeru would later become a living symbol of the tumbling human within the clockwork of a merciless war machine. Mizuki received his aka gami (赤紙, army enlistment paper) in 1942, at the age of twenty (Mizuki 2004:480).

According to his autobiographical manga (Mizuki 2004), Mizuki was one of the least disciplined cadets in the army, who neither mastered the correct military behavior, nor became enthusiastic about the war effort. Manga-Mizuki, the bespectacled manga character, is a Japanese version of the chief protagonist in Czech humorist Jaroslav Hašek's novel *The Good Soldier Švejk* (1921–22), as it appears in the illustration by Josef Lada. Mizuki's calamities in the Divine Emperor's Army readily match Švejk's idiocy that undermined the First World War effort and brought down the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Hašek 1993). Mizuki's war manga character is remarkable because it mirrors a universal pacifist approach through the eyes of one individual within the Japanese Imperial Army, a rare depiction in postwar period literature, especially one based on personal experiences.

After his military training, Mizuki was sent to the South Pacific front line and reached New Britain Island (Rabaul) of present Papua New Guinea via Palau in 1943 (Mizuki 2004:481). Mizuki kept a visual diary during this period, sketching daily life in the army and of the native

Tolai tribe he encountered in Rabaul. His sketches of this period are collected in *Mizuki Shigeruno Rabaul Senki* (水木しげるのラバウル戦記, Mizuki Shigeru's War Notes from Rabaul) (Mizuki 1997) and *Topetoro to no 50 Nen* (とペトロとの50年, 50 Years with Topetro) (Mizuki 2002).

As an artist, often overwhelmed by the natural sights of the island, Mizuki did not prove to be a reliable soldier. Another story during the war period shows a parallel with Kyōsai's enthusiasm for depicting the unusual, as retold in the Kyōsai Gadan:

On the 15th day of the first month of Kōka 3 (1846), a fire began in the Maruyama district of Hongō on land belonging to Lord Abe. Because of a powerful northwest wind, the fire spread quickly, and finally reached as far as the vicinity of Tsukudajima. This is called the Great Fire of the Year Hinoe-Uma.

At that time, in the Hongō 3-chome precinct, there was a bird shop called Echizen-ya, a purveyor to the government. It kept wild geese and ducks, cranes, peacocks and so on; in fact there was no bird that was not kept there.

To avoid the fire, Echizen-ya put all the birds in cages and carted them to an open space at Sakura-no-baba. But from every direction people were bringing every kind of object; the open area quickly became piled up with wooden chests and wicker trunks. Sparks from the fire began to fall, and here and there fires sprang up. The master of Echizen-ya was afraid that the birds would be killed in their cages. The tops of the cages were opened, and the birds were all set free at the same time. They flew up all together. In the light of the raging fire, the beauty of the colors of all those wings was striking, exactly like scattering scarlet flower petals. Especially the beauty of the peacocks prompted people to cry out, "Look! Look!" as they watched the sky. The birds flew in the direction of the light from the fire, but as they became scorched by the flames and wrapped in smoke, they could no longer fly and fell – a sight as rare as it was pathetic.

Before this, my teacher saw that the fire was coming from the vicinity of the firefighters' quarters, which were already engulfed in flames. Even my teacher's home had caught fire; people desperately carried out the household goods. The only things my teacher took were an ink stone, a brush and paper. He found a place out of the wind, climbed upon a heap of bundles and sat down. He sketched the flight of the birds and his own house as it burned and collapsed. . . .

When his relatives saw my teacher's actions, they said, "While even strangers came running and helped carry things out of the house, one person blithely went out sketching pictures. What on earth does this mean?" Sheepishly my teacher replied, "Wait, I came to help carry things out, too, but then I saw those birds fly up. I thought that not even the old masters had painted anything like that. On the other hand, the flames were shooting up; on the other hand, the birds were falling. I was so fascinated I forgot everything else and went sketching.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry!" As he said this, he pulled on his fire hood and ran out. Here and there he stood observing the strong fires still burning, smoke pluming up, firemen running about. All these things converged on him, and he totally forgot about everything else.

(Baitei 1983:8-9)

Kyōsai's fascination with eerie visual sights can again be compared to that of Mizuki, as Mizuki would, based on his own recounts, lose himself in viewing some strangely beautiful parrots with his binoculars when on guard watch in Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, missing the incoming air raid, causing grave losses to his troops, and barely saving his own life.

Dawn comes quickly in the South Pacific, and it is very beautiful. I started to change freely the watching angle of the military binoculars. On top of the big trees of the jungle, around twenty-thirty beautiful parrots were clapping their wings, they seemed to be having fun. In my morning drowsiness, it was as beautiful as being in a dreamland. I was watching it for so long, I passed the alarm time with thirty minutes.

This is trouble, I thought, and I started my way back to our camp. 'Para Para' there came a splendid sound. I felt strange and turned, and I saw smoke emerging from the ocean. "Ah! They are aiming at me!" Confused, I started to shoot with my handgun, and something that sounded like a small automatic rifle answered. Our sergeant ran out of our camp, injured on his back, he and a young soldier who was helping him, were both gunned down.

(Mizuki 2004:91)

In this incident, his troops perished and Manga-Mizuki spent days in the jungle alone trying to return to his main camp. Even though catching malaria and barely escaping hostile native tribes, he managed to return, only to be scolded and beaten for "not dying properly" for the emperor together with his comrades (Mizuki 2004:140). In the same year (1944) Mizuki loses his left arm during an air raid, and he is treated in the Rabaul army hospital until the end of the war. It is during this time, that Mizuki, the only Japanese soldier in his own accounts, befriends the nearby Tolai tribe and frequently visits them in their village. These experiences lead into a lifelong friendship with Topetro, a little boy at the time, who later becomes the village chief. According to Mizuki, his interest in yōkai is partly due to his experiences in the Papua New Guinean jungles and villages, where he claims he met the yōkai Nurikabe (塗り壁, Plaster Wall) (Mizuki 2004:132). Nurikabe, a yōkai traditionally known to appear in front of tired travelers, became a popular character in the *Gegegeno Kitaro* series, and its iconography is Mizuki's original, not derived from the Nurikabe depiction of the yōkai-ga picture scroll of the Brigham Young University Collection (Edo period), identified by Japanologist scholar Lawrence Marceau (*Asahi Shimbun*, August 7, 2007).

Mizuki's experiences in Rabaul confronted the artist with extreme

realities: the brutalities of war and the idealized village life of the local Tolai tribe. As Mizuki claims in his autobiographical work, his inclination to draw yōkai is closely related to these extreme experiences (Mizuki 2002:150). Mizuki revisited the area several times in the postwar years, and collected masks and carvings from the region, which are displayed in the Mizuki Shigeru Memorial Museum in Sakaiminato City.

#### POSTWAR YEARS (1945–)

After returning to Japan in 1945, Mizuki enrolled in the Musashino Bijutsu Gakkō (武蔵野美術学校, Musashino Art School, present Musashino Art University), and started his kamishibai (紙芝居, picture card story telling) practice under the pen name Mizuki Shigeru.

Mizuki, from the age of twenty-nine to thirty-five, produced several kamishibai works between 1951 and 1957 with eerie themes, including *Kaidan – Amenoyono Kasa* (怪談一雨夜の傘, Kaidan – The Umbrella of a Rainy Night, 1951), *Karasu* (カラス, Crow, 1951), *Neko Musume* (猫娘, Cat Girl, 1953), *Kaijū Rapan* (怪獣ラパン, Lapan the Monster, 1953), *Hakaba Kitaro* (ハカバ奇太郎 Graveyard Kitaro, 1954), *Janin* (蛇人, Snake Man, 1954), *Karate Kitaro* (空手奇太郎, 1954), *Kappano Sampei* (カッパの三平, 1955), *Hitotsume Kozō* (一目小僧, One Eyed Boy, 1955); *Kechō* (化鳥, Bird Monster, 1956) and *Ningei* (人鯨, Human Whale, 1956), some of which could be considered as the forerunners of the *Kitaro* manga series. From 1958, at the age of thirty-six, Mizuki turned from the declining kamishibai business to writing kashihon manga (貸本漫画, rental manga books), and in 1960, the first kashihon manga versions of *Hakaba Kitaro* (ハカバ奇太郎, Graveyard Kitaro) was completed. Following that, the manga version of the *Kitaro* stories was regularly published in the avant-garde manga magazine *Garo* (ガロ) since its inaugural issue in 1964. By 1967, *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* (週刊少年マガジン), a popular youth manga magazine, adapted the series, changing the main character from monster to a more child-friendly version. The name *Hakaba* (墓場, Graveyard) was changed into *Gegege*, one of Mizuki's childhood nicknames. In 1968, *Kitaro* became a television animation series, thereby resurrecting the popularity of yōkai characters in this popular visual mass medium of the postwar years.

The yōkai pantheon introduced in Mizuki's *Kitaro* series could not be rivaled in the contemporaneous manga world. Manga artist Tezuka Osamu (手塚 治虫, 1928–89) produced a short-lived yōkai series called *Dororo* (どろろ, 1967–68), published in *Weekly Shōnen Sunday Magazine* (週刊少年サンデー), while another attempt at yōkai manga was *Nekome Kozō* (猫目小僧, Cat Eyed Boy) by manga artist Umezu Kazuo (楳図 かずお, 1936–), published in *Shōnen King* (少年キング, 1968–69) *Shōnen Gahō* (少年画報, 1967–68) and *Shōnen Sunday* (少年サンデー, 1976) manga magazines. However, Mizuki became the uncontested master of yōkai manga and animation, and *Kitaro* characters became synonymous with yōkai in the postwar period, continuing to the present time.

After *Kitaro's* success, Mizuki published several picture and manga books related to *yōkai* or of autobiographical content. In 2003, the Mizuki Shigeru Memorial Museum was opened in Mizuki's native Sakaiminato City, and in 2004, the *Oh! Mizuki Shigeru Ten* (大! 水木しげる展, Oh! Great Mizuki Shigeru Display) exhibition traveled the country at major museums, including the Edo Historical Museum in Tokyo, with great success. Mizuki also contributed to the illustration of the local community magazine of Chōfu City, his current home town. Mizuki's body of work is permeated by a joy of life and his comical take on the difficulties he faced during his lifetime render his art to be a humanist, pacifist statement. Morphing his experiences into the narration of a village of monsters echoes the role of folk imagination that created *yōkai* out of the everyday hardships of rural life in Japan, conveying his version of the theme to contemporary metropolitan audiences in the form of a popular visual narrative.

While Mizuki's persona and *yōkai* depictions helped to transpose *yōkai* to postwar popular visual media, his re-creation of the monsters was in alignment with the *furuzato dzukuri* (故里づくり, home town creation) agenda starting in the early 1970s as a response to Japan's unprecedented rate of urbanization and industrialization, which led to the mascotization of *yōkai* to represent a utopian shared and idyllic rural and communal past as well as to distinguish constructed local identities (Foster 1998:15). Mascotization of *yōkai* also meant that new, copyrighted manga and animation characters could be produced and merchandized, exploiting the popularity of the images related to known traditional *yōkai* characters. Nevertheless, as Foster points out, the genealogy of *yōkai* representation in folklore and in folklorism is intertwined, serving differing agendas in each historical period (Foster 1998:20).

The first *Kitaro* animation series, consisting of sixty-five monochrome 30-minute long episodes broadcast on Fuji Television between January 3, 1968 and March 30, 1969, was based on Mizuki Shigeru's manga episodes of *Hakabano Kitaro* (墓場の鬼太郎, Graveyard Kitaro) as they appeared in the *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* (週刊初年マガジン) (Mizuki Pro 2006/1:82) from 1965 on (Mizuki 1988/1:918) and then as they were later published simultaneously with the animation series (Mizuki 1988/2:906). For marketing purposes, Toei decided to change the title *Hakaba* (Graveyard). First experimenting with *Kitaro-kun* (*kun* being a diminutive honorific used for young males), due to the similarity to Mizuki's other popular comic, *Akuma-kun* (悪魔君, Devil Boy), Toei finally submitted the project to Fuji Television with the title *Gegege no Kitaro* (Mizuki Pro 2006/1:4). Surprisingly, the show was a sudden hit, and it was moved after its thirteenth episode from Wednesday afternoons to the Sunday afternoon prime timeslot (Mizuki Pro 2006/1:82). Corresponding to the release of the animation series, the title of the manga was also changed to *Gegege no Kitaro* from Episode 46 published in the *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* on November 12, 1967 (Mizuki Pro 2006/1:5). This was the first step in the

process of *Kitaro's* domestication, taming the initial horror manga to a child-friendly version.

By the late 1990s, the *Kitaro* animation series shows a polished form of the *yōkai* boy. The gradual change in the design patterns of the *Kitaro* animation series between the 1960s and the 1990s runs parallel to the mascotization process of the Kappa in the popular media described by Foster (Foster 1998), that is, a change from folklore to folklorismus or folklorism; from a signifier of the mysterious to the signifier of an imagined shared, idyllic rural past. In the case of *Kitaro*, this is a shift from the expression of anxiety and fear as represented by *yōkai*, to a cute, unthreatening version in alignment with the *furusato dzukuri* (古里づくり, hometown creation) ideology popularized in the 1970s to 1980s.

*Kitaro's* story started out in a genre closely related to horror manga that reverberated in the 1960s and 1970s animation series, in which dead bodies, vengeful ghosts or murder-suicide are depicted as matter-of-fact. However, by the late 1990s, the *yōkai* characters are gradually sanitized and polished. The *yōkai* became cuddly or malevolent; however, the subtlety of their otherworldliness became less present in their concept. This miniature degradation of the *yōkai* in the series between the 1960s and the 1990s resonates with the theory of the gradual degradation of minor deities (Yanagita 2004).

#### TRICKSTERS ANIMATED

The main characters of the *Gegege no Kitaro* series are Medama Oyaji (目玉親父, Eyeball Father), the *yōkai* boy Kitaro (鬼太郎) and Nezumi Otoko (鼠男, Ratman). Medama Oyaji is an easily recognizable manga and anime icon. It is a small eyeball with a funny squeaky voice, little body, arms and legs. Kitaro is the *yōkai* boy hero of the series. A *yōkai* by origin, he pledged to help humans against the attacks of his own kind. Nezumi Otoko is the rascal in the story, half human and half *yōkai*. He is often attacked by Neko Musume (猫娘, Cat Girl), a *yōkai* girl that can transform herself into a cat monster (化け猫, Bake Neko). Other reappearing characters are Nurikabe (塗り壁, Plaster Wall), Konaki Jijī (子泣き爺 Crybaby Man) and Sunakake Babā (砂賭け婆, Sand Throwing Woman), *yōkai* that are mentioned in Yanagita Kunio's *Yōkai Meiei* (妖怪名彙, Compilation of *Yōkai* Names, 1938). These *yōkai* characters have no visual predecessors and are visually rendered for the first time by Mizuki. In the case of the Nurikabe, Japanologist Lawrence Marceau discovered an Edo period version of the *yōkai* on an unsigned *yōkai* picture scroll in the Brigham Young University collection; however, Mizuki had no knowledge of this depiction prior to its 2007 discovery (*Asahi Shinbun* August 7, 2007). Mizuki's version of the Nurikabe draws more parallels with the visual representation of the animated stepping stone on Edo period painter Katsushika Hokusai's woodblock print *Shinban Uki-e Bakemono Yashiki Hyaku Monogatari* (新版浮絵屋敷百物語, New Version of a Perspective Print: Haunted House, late eighteenth century).

## DADDY EYEBALL

Medama Oyaji is born in the opening chapter of the *Hakaba Kitaro* kashihon manga version, *Yurei Ikka* (幽霊一家, Ghost Family, 1960) (Mizuki 1997:95). He is the eyeball of Kitaro's dead father. As the body of the father is rotting away, it is his worries for his son's wellbeing that make one of his eyeballs spring to life and go on a quest to find Kitaro. The Eyeball character is Mizuki's original and later becomes an icon in contemporary popular yōkai imagery. However, we may find some predecessors of the Eyeball character in Edo period yōkai representation. The Nuribotoke (塗り仏 Plaster Buddha), that appears in the *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* catalogue of Toriyama Sekien (Sekien 1992:82) as well as in the *Bakemono Tsukushi* scrolls (Tada 2000:137), shows similar iconography, that of a black plaster Buddha statue with eyes falling out. Writer and yōkai researcher Kyōgoku Natsuhiko argues that the black plaster symbolizes a balm used for dead bodies to ward off intruding ghosts, while the black color itself is a sign of uncleanness and corporeal degradation of the corpse (Tada 2000:155). The eyes falling out are the visual renderings of the expressions *mewo otosu* (目を落とす losing one's eyes) or *me detaku naru* (目出度くなる, the eyes are coming off) which both mean that a person has died (Tada 2000:155). The Nuribotoke remained a popular figure until the Meiji period, reinvented several times, for example, in Kawanabe Kyosai's *Hyakki Gadan* (1889) (Tada 1998:33). Mizuki's depiction of the deteriorating corpse of Kitaro's father follows in this tradition, while the eyeball itself springs into life in his subsequent narrative.

Mizuki, who himself lost an arm during his war years, would often describe the experience when he suddenly realized his wound had healed after a long fight with infections and malarial fever:

That day from my amputated arm a dim smell of a baby arose. It was the smell of life emerging from deep inside. "It is a smell of a baby. Life turned to counterattack. It feels like some entity is helping me from the inside." . . . I kept on smelling the baby smell every day with great pleasure. It was the smell of heaven.

(Mizuki 2004:296)

The Eye Ball springing to life from the deteriorating body of the deceased father might be a reference to this wartime experience and to Mizuki's life-reaffirming optimism.

## GRAVEYARD KITARO, THE PSEUDO FOLK SUPERHERO

*Birth in the Graveyard*

Kitaro is born in the graveyard, to an already dead mother, and loses one of his eyes during the same night, when he is found by a certain Mr. Mizuki, who takes care of him in his early years (Mizuki 1997:74). These

characteristics put Kitaro into the context of Muromachi period otogizōshi (御伽草子, illustrated prose narrative) tales, as well as traditional yōkai folk narratives.

Children born in graveyards to dead mothers often hold special significance in medieval Buddhist texts and popular prose narratives based on them. The *Kumano Honji* (熊野の本地, Nara Picture Book, Muromachi period) is an illustrated otogizōshi scroll, narrating the story of Gosuiden, the concubine of an Indian king, who is sent to the mountains to be decapitated by the henchmen of her jealous rivals. Gosuiden is pregnant with the king's only child, and her dead body keeps on nurturing the boy until a holy man finds him. While it is a routine pattern for manga and comics superheroes in both Japanese and Western traditions to have their mothers eliminated early in their stories – which allows for independent coming-of-age adventures – Kitaro's background story at the same time serves as a link to Japanese yōkai folklore. Komatsu claims that a birth outside of the borders of civilization, in the mountains or graveyard, foretells an extraordinary child or even the birth of the mountain god (Komatsu 1985:144).

The medieval Buddhist confessional tale *Kōya Monogatari* (高野物語, Muromachi period) (Ichiko 1989:327–52) narrates the story of a young wife murdered and buried in an unmarked grave in the Jizo hall of the local cemetery. Her ghost appears to a visiting monk to whom she presents a robe with a message written in blood:

A child who dies in the womb is heavily burdened with obstacles to salvation. Hurry and dig up my body, remove the child from my womb, and give it a funeral.

(Childs 1991:63)

Her husband exhumes the body and cuts open the belly of the corpse, from which a beautiful boy emerges. As Glassman claims, medieval Japanese believed that fetuses kept on developing in the bellies of dead women, and that babies could be born in graveyards unless the fetus was removed from the corpse before burial. The medieval legends of this theme contributed to Edo period kaidan tales of children living underground in their mothers' graves, discovered when heard crying in the tomb (Glassman 2001:162). One of these stories is found in the sixteenth century *Kii Zōdanshū* (奇異雑談集, Edo Period) (Takada 1989:178–271), narrating the story of the priest Kokua Shonin, who dug up the baby of his dead wife from the grave, upon hearing him crying underground. While the wife's body was badly decomposed, the boy was in good health. In every version of this narrative, the child born in the grave is a boy who grows to have extraordinary powers. Glassman considers this to be based on the medieval Buddhist tradition of equating the birth of a boy with the salvation of the mother (Glassman 2001:115).

In the *Sendaokokuō Kyō Sutra* (旃陀越国王経, Sutra of King Senda, Taishō Tripitaka Vol. 14. Nr. 518) (Takakusu 1925:791–2), which serves

as basis for the *Kumano Honji*, Gosuiden is murdered and buried while the baby is still inside her. In this version, the child is born inside the grave, later found by a holy man, to become a monk with special powers himself (Glassman 2001:171). The original motif, birth in grave, later became a recurring theme of late-medieval Buddhist narrations and bears a close similarity with Kitaro's birth. Kitaro's birth in the graveyard, to a dead mother, thus foretells the story of an extraordinary being, a yōkai boy.

#### THE LIMPING HERO

While in the medieval otogizōshi and religious stories, such as the *Kōya Monogatari* or the *Kumano Honji*, the graveyard hero is found and raised by a holy man, Kitaro is found by the ordinary Mr. Mizuki. When Mr. Mizuki finds Kitaro, he throws him away, and Kitaro, landing on a tombstone, loses one of his eyes on the first day of his life (Mizuki 2001:31).

The motif of the one-eyed, maimed or limping hero is rooted not only in Japanese folk tradition, but also in world literature and mythology. The limping hero, a folk or literary hero, would receive his or her otherworldly powers through an initiation process that includes bodily mutilation. This stigma would give the hero outcast and sacred status within the community at the same time (Hays 1971). This motif also appears in the non-healing wound of the central character, Ashitaka, in the case of Miyazaki Hayao's animated film *Mononoke Hime* (もののけ姫, Princess Mononoke, 1997), as well as in the case of the Kitaro character. Mizuki himself has gone through this initiation process by losing a limb in the exotic, otherworldly location of the war-time Southern Islands. This rite of passage gives the hero the authority to be a medium between the two worlds. This aspect of the story, while based on a general literary and folk tale structure (Propp 1971), at the same time gains its roots in yōkai tradition. More specifically, Kitaro's character can be related to the Hitotsume Kozō (一つ目小僧 One Eyed Monk), as suggested by Foster (Foster 2003:245).

Findings of Jomon period pottery suggest the importance of one-eyed deities or entities, while the *Kojiki* (古事記, Records of Ancient Matters, 708 CE) mentions the Yamano Kami (山ノ神, mountain deity) losing one of his eyes to humans. Depictions of yōkai in the Edo and Meiji periods often show monsters with only one eye and this representation remains common in contemporary popular media. This one-eyed-ness signifies both outcast and sacred status, which suggests that the yōkai are related to degraded one-eyed, and often one-legged, ancient deities (Iwai 2000:46).

Yanagita proposes a hypothesis regarding the origin of the Hitotsume Kozō, one of the most significant anthropomorphic yōkai with one eye, in his essay *Hitotsume Kozō* (一つ目小僧, 1917) (Yanagita 2004:178–81). The Hitotsume Kozō yōkai displays the iconography of a little human male figure with one eye and one leg, to be found in most parts of Japan,

evolving similarly throughout the country. Yanagita bases a substantial hypothesis on this *yōkai*, namely, that it is a trace or remainder of a folk ceremony of human sacrifice practiced before written records (Iwai 2000:45). According to Yanagita's theory, a ceremony was possibly carried out a year before the sacrifice would take place, where the victim would be selected through divination practices. This person would have one of his eyes poked out, and his legs broken, so that he cannot escape from the village, or could be easily traced. Following this ritual, he would be treated with respect, occupying a sacred capacity within the village life for one year, before the sacrificial ceremony took place. However, as the custom gradually faded away, this sacred communal figure lost its function within religious practices and became an uncelebrated *yōkai*, without aim or purpose. Yanagita's theory cannot be proven; however, it gives a viable explanation for the simultaneously outcast and sacred status of the *yōkai*, the fear and awe induced by them at the same time.

Kitaro receives this initiation immediately after his birth. In fact, Kitaro does not have an infant period except for the first episode, as from the next story he is a young boy, in which shape he stays. Even though Kitaro stays in the same shape, his facial and bodily features change gradually throughout the decades, changing him from a grotesque figure to a nice and handsome human-looking boy. Kitaro's initial deformed shape bears a close resemblance to monsters depicted in Edo period *yōkai-ga*, for example, to the *Kasaneno Onryō* (累ノ怨霊) depicted in Hokusai's manga (*Kyōgoku*, Tada 2004:168). Although the original *kaidan*, on which the drawing is based, aims to arouse fear, the Hokusai manga is grotesque and humorous. This levity towards the *yōkai* is preserved in Mizuki's manga and the later animation series.

#### RATMAN

A comical antagonist character of the manga and animation series is *Nezumi Otoko* (鼠男, Ratman), who is half *yōkai* and half human. Morally corrupt and selfish, his character represents corporeal as well as spiritual impurity, which features link his character to the tradition of the rat *yōkai*, *Bake Nezumi* (化け鼠).

One of the rat *yōkai* established in this tradition is the *Tesso* (鉄鼠), whose iconography is laid down in Toriyama Sekien's catalogue *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (画图百鬼夜行, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons, 1776) (Sekien 1992:62), based on a late Heian period legend. According to the legend, as narrated in the military tale *Heike Monogatari* (平家物語, The Tale of Heike, 1371) (Ishida 1954:110–12), the emperor requested *Raigō* (頼豪, 1002–84), the high priest of Mii Temple (三井寺, in today's Shiga Prefecture) to pray for the birth of a male heir. *Raigō* complied with the request and a boy was shortly born; however, the emperor failed to do what he promised in return, the renovation of the temple. *Raigō* pledged revenge, putting a curse on the crown prince and shortly after the priest starved himself to death. *Raigō's* vengeful spirit (*onryō*,

怨靈) entered the body of the rat monster Tesso (鉄鼠), which returned to the Mii Temple with 84,000 rats, that destroyed all the valuable scrolls and Buddhist scripts of the temple (Sekien 1992:62) and the emperor's son also died shortly after (Isao 1999:85). Sekien depicts the Tesso as a rat with a human face, wearing the robes and hair line of Buddhist priests, in the company of his rat army in the process of destroying the temple (Sekien 2003:62). The Raigō legend is rendered visually in more detail on Katsushika Hokusai's woodblock print series published in the yomihon (読本, Edo period illustrated narrative) *Raigō Ajari Kaiso Den* (頼豪阿闍利恠鼠伝, The Legend of High Priest Raigō Turning into a Monster Rat, 1808), that visually narrates each step of the priest's transformation (Kyōgoku, Tada 2004:82–5). Meiji period painter Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (月岡芳年, 1839–92) bases his depiction of the theme on Sekien's design on his print *Mii Dera Raigō Ajari Akunen Nezumito Henzuru Zu* (三井寺頼豪阿闍利悪念鼠と変ずる図, Priest Raigō of the Mii Temple Turning into the Evil Spirit of a Rat, 1891). Other rat monster representations include the print *Jutsuso Hashiru* (術鼠走る, Magic Rat Running, 1811) by late Edo period painter Kitagawa Tsukimaro (喜多川月麿, 1775–1831) (Ozaki 2001:31).

The motif of packs of rats appears on Edo period woodblock prints as a symbol of deterioration and filth and to signal the presence of a threatening supernatural force. On the woodblock *Onryō Nezumito Bakasu* (怨靈鼠と化す, Vengeful Spirit Turning into Rats, 1808) by Katsukawa Shuntei (勝川春亭, 1770–1824) it is an onryō (怨靈, vengeful spirit) that turns into a herd of rats, which consume their enemy's wife (Ozaki 2001:40). A pack of rats gathering around a human figure during an act of revenge is a recurring motif on Edo period narrative prints, for example, on the woodblock print *Hino Tamani Notta Kubi* (火の玉に乗った首, Head Riding a Fireball, 1828) by Keisai Eisen (溪斎 英泉, 1791–1848) and on a similar composition on the woodblock print *Onryōno Chikaramochi* (怨靈の力持ち, The Power of the Vengeful Spirit, 1808) by Shōdai Utagawa Toyokuni (初代歌川豊国, 1769–1825) (Ozaki 2001:70–1, 114). While the rat monster is associated with attacking the weak, causing material harm, and with filth, unclean thoughts and vengeance, this yōkai in itself does not represent a threatening supernatural power. This aspect of the rat monster resurfaces in the character of Nezumi Otoko, rendering him a visual prop with a similar function as that of the Edo period woodblock prints, namely, as an entity that signals the presence of the yōkai world as a subsidiary character and as a catalyst for yōkai action.

Furthermore, Nezumi Otoko's character is a sarcastic response to the fifteenth century narrative picture scroll, the *Nezumi Sōshi* (鼠草紙, Rat Scroll), produced in the naïve folk-art tradition of ko-e (古絵) or miniature scroll. The *Nezumi Sōshi* visually renders the story of the Gonno Kami (権頭), a rat monster, who wishes to marry a human in order to elevate his descendants to a higher plane of existence than the bestial level occupied by his forbears. His wish is granted after a pilgrimage to Kyoto's Kiyomizu Temple (清水寺), when he is transformed into human

form and consequently proposes marriage to a woman. However, as the wedding ceremony takes place, a cat recognizes his true form and catches the impostor, whose wish of half-human, half-rat descendants is therefore never to be fulfilled (Yokoyama, Matsumoto 1982:241–56). The comical pathos of this story is counterattacked by the very character of Nezumi Otoko in the Mizuki manga and animation. Nezumi Otoko is half-human, half-rat, the embodiment of the Gonno Kami's wish, but does not display the elevated level of existence yearned for by the Gonno Kami, manifesting his wish fulfilled and ridiculed at the same time.

## Art History Meets *Gegege no Kitaro*

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The *Gegege no Kitaro* animation series (1968-present time) consists of more than three hundred episodes, most of which introduce a new yōkai being. It would be too much of a task to trace the visual influences behind all of these yōkai characters. By focusing on key characters, concepts and transformations via representative episodes from each animation block, we rather aim to identify the most significant influences on the design of yōkai characters that appear on screen, by analyzing the aesthetic make-up of the animated characters.

The objective is to identify the main visual sources that impacted on the Mizuki characters, the effect of their reappearance in twentieth and twenty-first century visual media, the evolution of the characters and the underlying trends in their transmutation when introduced to celluloid animation and computer graphics. While we seek to establish a canon from an aesthetical standpoint, we also aim to identify the main themes appearing in the narratives related to yōkai. Given that the 1980s to 1990s series overwhelmingly consist of remakes of the 1960s to 1970s episodes, we will also trace the differences occurring with the reintroduction of previously utilized yōkai, i.e. how their design as well as the surrounding narrative changed in consecutive decades. By demonstrating the changing role of yōkai in narrative and visual form in relation to social commentary, we pinpoint the major themes increasingly associated with yōkai in contemporary visual media, such as environmental protection, rural nostalgia and urban alienation.

Additionally, we also consider the reappearance of the Kitaro phenomenon in twenty-first century visual media, focusing on the 2007 *Gegege no Kitaro* animation series in relation to the effects the newly emerged anime style, computer graphics technology, hyper-realism and gaming visual culture has had on the series with regards to the design of its characters and its narrative development.

## PATTERNS OF REPRESENTATION

Approximately 90% of the sixty-five 1960s animation episodes were based on *Gegege no Kitaro* manga episodes, published two and a half years prior to the animation episode's airing in popular weekly and monthly boys' magazines (Mizuki 1988/1:918), some episodes having as short a time difference between them in the manga and animation forms as only two months. This aspect of the first animation series means that the initial batch of Kitaro animation was extremely close in following its contemporaneous manga original, as it was making its primary influence felt within Japanese popular visual culture.

In contrast, of the forty-five animation episodes of the 1970s series only approximately 45% are based on the *Gegege no Kitaro* manga, while the time difference between the publication of the manga and the animation broadcast is anywhere between three years and three months. This could still be considered close proximity between the manga and animation episodes; however, this relationship ceases in the case of the 1980s and 1990s series, when the overwhelming majority of the work consists of remakes of previous animation episodes of the 1960s and 1970s series. The 1980s and 1990s series, with 109 and 114 episodes respectively, consist of the remade versions of the 1960s and 1970s episodes. By 2007, new adult or adolescent-themed story lines are introduced, without manga predecessors, while the *yōkai* imagery reintroduced is based on the mini-evolution of the monsters within the previous four decades of TV animation. Nonetheless, the *yōkai* of the 1960s series serve as the basis for the minor visual evolution that can be traced in Japan's longest running animation series.

The *yōkai* representations of the animation series can be grouped in four categories regarding their visual influences and narrative objectives: *yōkai* representation based on Toriyama Sekien's catalogues; other visual sources from the Muromachi to Meiji periods, including folk and popular art depictions; original *yōkai* characters created by Mizuki Shigeru; and episodes which carry significant social commentary and complex storylines, addressing contemporaneous issues on both social and psychological levels, where the visual representation of *yōkai* is secondary to the narrative. We aim to analyze the most representative characters pertaining to these four patterns of visual representation of *yōkai* in animation. After identifying the main art historical visual influences and the postwar visual evolution of *yōkai* characters and their changing role in twentieth century popular visual culture; the established categories of visual patterns will serve as points of reference when analyzing the 2007 series that resurrected *yōkai* characters for twenty-first century popular media.

## TORIYAMA SEKIEN'S YŌKAI CATALOGUES

The most frequently recurring narrative pattern of any *Kitaro* manga and animation episode consists of the introduction of a new *yōkai*,

its harmful acts against humans and its final defeat by Kitaro and his companions.

Of the sixty-five episodes of the 1960s series, twenty-six episodes (40%) showcase a yōkai whose design is based on the yōkai depictions in Toriyama Sekien's yōkai catalogues *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (画図百鬼夜行, The Illustrated Night Parade of One Hundred Demons, 1776; Sections 陰,陽,風; Shadow, Light, Wind), *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki* (今昔画図続百鬼, The Illustrated One Hundred Demons from the Present and Past, 1779; Sections 雨,晦,明; Rain, Dawn, Light), *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi* (今昔百鬼捨遺, Supplement to the Hundred Demons from the Present and Past, 1780; Sections 雲,霧,雨; Cloud, Fog, Rain) and *Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro* (百器徒然袋, The Illustrated Bag of One Hundred Antique Demons, 1784; Sections 上,中,下; Top, Middle, End). Sekien's artwork is one of the most significant visual sources for the character design in the 1960s series. Other Edo and Meiji period sources behind character design comprise approximately 9% of the total number, while Mizuki's original design could be estimated at around 17% of the total number of yōkai introduced in the series.

While in the 1970s series these ratios will significantly change, with Sekien's work only contributing approximately 14% to character design, while that of other sources increase to approximately 33% and Mizuki's original design to approximately 20%, in the case of the 1960s series Sekien's catalogue art could be identified as the main vehicle for transposing yōkai into twentieth century animated representations. The 1980s and 1990s series consist of the remade versions of the 1960s and 1970s episodes, maintaining Sekien's overall influence on the visual design of the series until the latter half of the twentieth century.

The reason why Sekien's dominant influence on character design decreased from the 1960s to 1970s series could be found in the fact that by the 1970s the series developed its status as the first animated series introducing yōkai characters and, building on the increased national interest, could shift its focus to introducing more characters from Japanese folk traditions and customs related to the native religion of Shinto. This alteration in main sources by the 1970s series could only be achieved because Mizuki employed the specific yōkai imagery laid down in the Sekien catalogues and successfully modified them for the purposes of twentieth century television broadcast, creating an unprecedented popular interest in the topic in the post-war era. To achieve this elevated level of public interest in traditional Japanese yōkai imagery, Mizuki concentrated on predominantly Japanese visual sources, despite the fact that as a graphic artist trained in sequential art expression, he had extensively studied Western materials, including American horror comics and films of the postwar era. Nonetheless, parallel to the shift in focus from Sekien's work to sources more directly influenced by folk tradition between the 1960s and 1970s series, the process of mascotization could also be observed, which phenomenon contributed to a gradual shift from the horror effect of an introduced character to an increase in utilizing visual cues of likeability of the same character in the remade

episodes, contributing to a decrease of emotional impact of the character. However, this phenomenon was reversed in the 2007 series, where an increase of the horror component in character design was reintroduced.

Sekien's catalogues introduce 208 separate yōkai characters with short descriptions of their background as well as their visual characteristics. As the narrative pattern indicates, introducing a new yōkai within the animation with a simplistic storyline could benefit from the traditional visual sources that are found in Sekien's body of work. In this sense, while the animators and the manga artist serve as cultural preservationists, their new media product replants the Edo period imagery with ease in a contemporary form and setting.

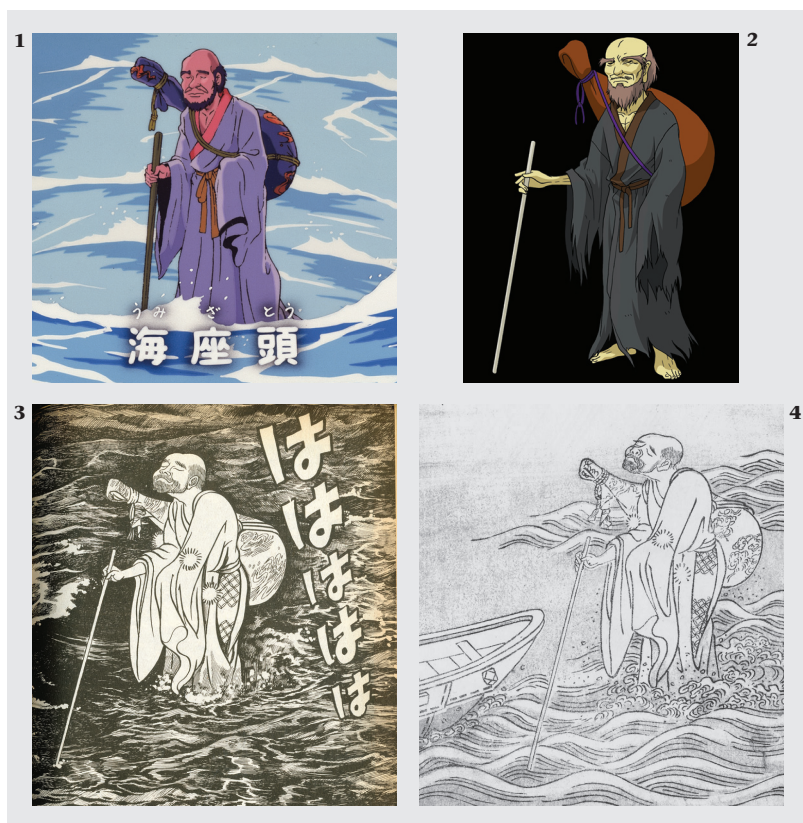
The most significant influence on character design can be traced back to the first two volumes of the catalogues, as the *Illustrated Night Parade of One Hundred Demons* acts as visual source for eleven characters while its second part, *The Illustrated One Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past* is a source for eight characters. These first two volumes are the catalogued equivalent of the one hundred demons' parade (hyakki yagyō, 百鬼夜行) as known from the Muromachi period, and represent the relatively better known and more easily identifiable yōkai. The second two catalogues, *The Supplement to the Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past*, which introduces more obscure yōkai, supplies three yōkai characters to the animation, while the final part, *The Illustrated Bag of One Hundred Antique Demons*, which specializes in utensil yōkai, acts as a visual source for four animated yōkai characters.

### *The Illustrated Night Parade of One Hundred Demons, 1776*

*The Illustrated Night Parade of One Hundred Demons* (画図百鬼夜行, Gazu Hyakki Yagyō, 1776) consisting of the three parts *Shadow*, *Light* and *Wind* (陰, 陽, 風), introduces fifty-two distinct yōkai, fifteen in *Shadow*, twenty-two in *Light* and fifteen in *Wind*, respectively. This Edo period catalogue is the first comprehensive collection of popular yōkai where names and characteristics are given to the entities, as opposed to the *One Hundred Demons* picture scrolls, which parade a cavalcade of yōkai and animated utensils without further identification. The list of yōkai in this catalogue include the Tengu, the Inugami, the Nekomata, the Kappa, the Tanuki and other popular monsters, and based on its comprehensibility, it served as the visual source for eleven (42%) out of the twenty-six Sekien-inspired animated representations of yōkai. We introduce some of these representative yōkai animation characters derived from this catalogue.

#### UMI ZATŌ (海座頭), BLIND SEA MONK

The Umi Zatō (海坐頭) or Blind Sea Monk is a visual derivative of the Biwa Hōshi (琵琶法師, Biwa Lute Monk) or Zatō (坐頭, Blind Monk), the order of blind vagabond Buddhist monks, known to be active from the Kamakura to early Meiji periods, who played the biwa lute narrating



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**Fig. 4.1** Umi Zatō (海座頭), Blind Sea Monk

The representation of Umi Zatō (海坐頭), the Blind Sea Monk in **1** Kitaro 1980s animation Ep#50 and **2** 2007 series, **3** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1: 812) and **4** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992: 58)

sutras and popular tales. The character of the Biwa Hōshi appears in the historical epic *Heike Monogatari* (平家物語, The Tale of Heike, 1371) and in Lafcadio Hearn's related kaidan story, *The Story of Hōichi, the Earless*. The biwa lute itself is a known yōkai instrument that appears on *Hyakki Yagyō* picture scrolls of the Muromachi period, on the *Tsukumogami Emaki* picture scrolls (Otogi Zōshi 5th book, Edo period) or Kawanabe Kyōsai's *Hyakki Gadan* (百鬼画談, Illustration of the Hundred Demons, 1889), in the Meiji period.

The original source of the Umi Zatō might be traced back to the more general Umi Bōzu (海坊主, Sea Monk) sea yōkai, most popularly known from Utagawa Kuniyoshi's print *Tōkai-dō Gojūsan-tsui Kuwana* (東海道五

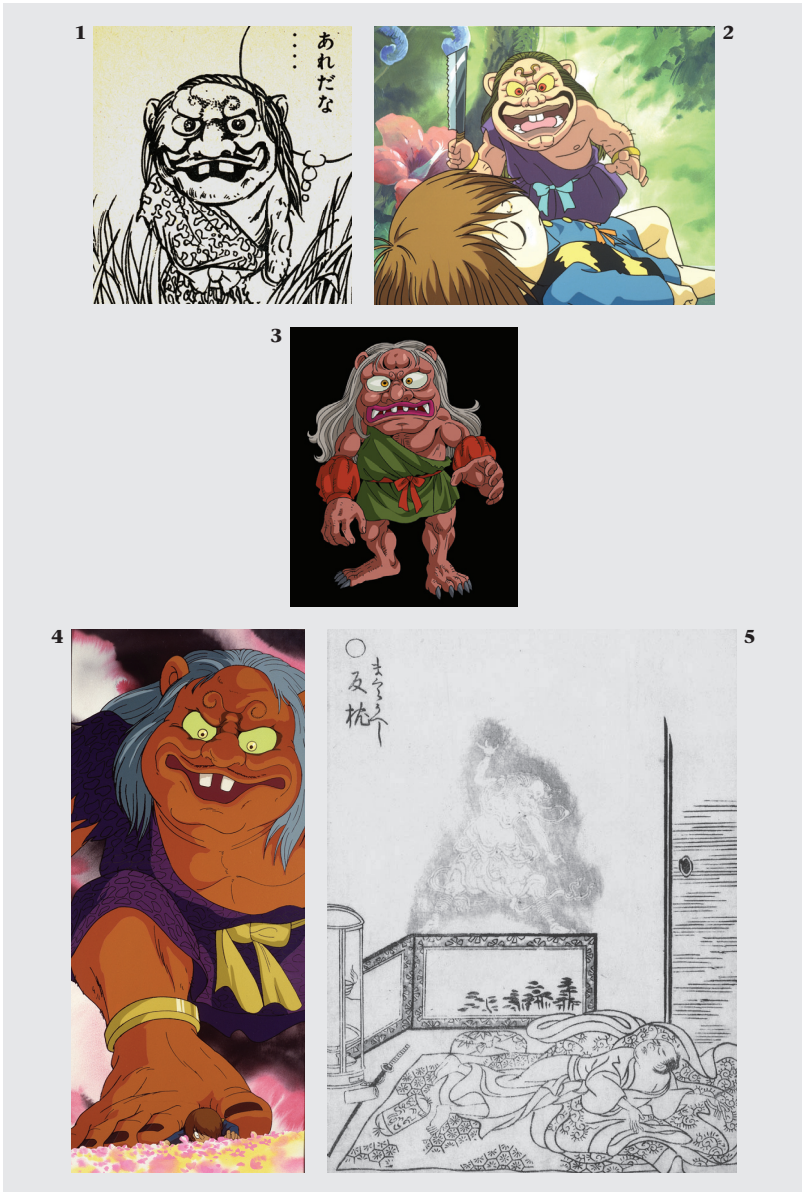
十三対 桑名, Fifty-three Parallels for the Tōkai-dō The Sea Monster Umi Bōzu at Kuwana, 1843), a giant black ghostly figure without facial features that appears in the open sea. Relying on regional legends related to the Umi Bōzu, Iwai argues that the Umi Bōzu might be a reduced version of a dragon god sea deity (Iwai 2000/2:37). On the other hand, the Umi Zatō is possibly related to sightings of giant sea mammals such as dolphins, seals or walruses, as, for example, the humpback whale is called zatō kujira in Japanese, where the hump of the whale may act as the visual equivalent of the biwa on the monk's back (Jinbunsha 2005:13).

While the Umi Bōzu is mainly depicted on the Kuniyoshi print as a giant entity without face or distinct body shape, the *Wakan Sansai Zue* (和漢三才図会, 1712, 46th scroll) encyclopedia compiled by Terajima Ryōan (寺島良安, eighteenth century) and the *Saikai Zokudan* (斎諧俗談, 1758), an Edo period collection of anecdotes (珍談, chindan) and fantastic stories (奇談, kidan), describe it as a monster with a human face, balding head and a turtle-like body (Nihon Zuihitsu Taisei 1928:327–8). This iconography appears in Sekien's Umi Zatō depiction.

The Umi Zatō is a Biwa Hōshi standing on waves in open water, and wearing waves as kimono patterns in its original emaki version (Tada 2000:181). The Umi Zatō appears in the *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* (百鬼夜行絵巻, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons Picture Scroll, 1832) (Tada 2000:125) which is a visual equivalent of the Umi Zatō in Sekien's *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (Sekien 1992:58): a bold, blind monk with a biwa lute on his back. On the *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki*, a colored rendering, the monk's kimono has wave patterns, while Sekien placed the wave patterns on the clothes covering the lute, which element is reproduced in Mizuki's manga version (Mizuki 1988/1:812) (Fig. 4.1). Mizuki's manga version is a close copy of Sekien's design, including the kimono pattern. The animated version slightly borrows from the *Emaki* version, but essentially relies on the Mizuki manga as primary and the Sekien catalogue as secondary sources.

#### MAKURA KAESHI (まくら返し), PILLOW TURNER

The Makura Kaeshi (枕返し, Pillow Turner) is a trick of turning the pillow of a sleeping person or the person himself upside down, often attributed to the Zashiki Warashi (座敷童子), a child-like spirit that makes its home in uninhabited rooms (Iwai 2000/4:45–6). As a distinct yōkai, it is depicted in Toriyama Sekien's *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (Sekien 1992:66), but the image more closely resembles the Niō guardian gods of the Buddhist pantheon regarding its garments, facial structure and mudra-like hand gestures. The origin of Sekien's image of the Makura Kaeshi is unknown. The pillow itself is a symbol representing a transition or gate between awakening and sleeping, and tricking the sleeping person's pillow is a metaphor of the soul's return to the body at the time of awakening, from which perspective the visual allegory of the Niō gate guardian gods seems relevant. Mizuki followed the visual attributes of the Sekien design relatively closely and used the yōkai to introduce a dream world.



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**Fig. 4.2** Representation of Makura Kaeshi (枕返し), the Pillow Turner.

- 1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1:812), **2** Kitaro animation series 1980s Ep#19, **3** 1990s Ep#15, **4** in the 2007 series, **5**, Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:66)

As the only direct source is Sekien's visualization of a trick attributed to a different yōkai (the Zashiki Warashi), Mizuki's approach to the design and narrative related to the Makura Kaeshi is original (Fig. 4.2).

#### TENO ME (手の目), HAND EYES

The Tenome (手の目, Hands Eyes) iconography is laid down in Sekien's *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (Sekien 1994:61), based on the kaidan story *Bakemononi Honewo Nukareshi Hitono Koto* (ばけ物に骨をぬかれし人の事, The Story of the Man who Gave a Bone to a Monster; *Shokoku Hyaku Monogatari*, 諸国百物語, One Hundred Stories from Different Countries Vol. 3, 1677) where the monster, that takes the form of a giant eighty-year-old man with protruding fangs, is described to have eyes on the palms of his hands. The Tenome also appears on the Edo period *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* (百鬼夜行絵巻, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons Picture Scroll, 1832) (Tada 2000:127) and the *Bakemono Tsukushi Emaki* (化物つくし絵巻, Monster Creation Picture Scroll) (Yumoto 2006:59). Mizuki, on the other hand, gave new powers to the yōkai, such as shooting beams from the eyes on its palms. At the end of the episode, the yōkai is arrested by the police and put into jail. In this way Mizuki reinvented the Edo period monster as a modern day villain with super powers as well as being a social delinquent



© Mizuki Pro

**Fig. 4.3** Representation of Teno Me (手の目, Hand Eyes).  
**1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/2:74), **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:58)

and by attributing new, creative roles to the *yōkai*, it prevents them from becoming stale, retraced copies of the Edo period originals. While Tezuka Osamu experimented with the fusion of science fiction and *yōkai* manga in his *Dororo* (どろろ, 1967–68) series in the late 1960s, his works did not gain popularity and were discontinued after one year, as Tezuka's manga failed to find a balance between the traditional nature and modern aspects of *yōkai*, a relationship that Mizuki fine-tuned in his sequential art. The use of the Teno Me is one of the examples of this balance (Fig. 4.3).

MIAGE NYŪDŌ (見上げ入道, UPLOOKING MONK) AND AOBŌZU  
(青坊主, BLUE MONK)

The Miage Nyūdō (見上げ入道, Uplooking Monk) is mentioned in Yanagita Kunio's *Yōkai Meii* (妖怪名彙, Compilation of Yōkai Names, 1938) (Yanagita 2004:208). According to his recordings, the Miage Nyūdō is seen mostly by children, first appearing in a very tiny form, then growing in size. This attribute is shown in the 1960s animation series Episode 9, where the Miage Nyūdō enters an elementary school in its tiny form to kidnap children.

However, the visual representation of the Miage Nyūdō in the animation episode has an intricate genealogy. While the Miage Nyūdō in Yanagita's description is drawn with a close resemblance to the Mikoshi Nyūdō (見越し入道), a *yōkai* that appears on crossroads and grows in size under the gaze of the traveler (Iwai 2000/3:39), Mizuki's visual representation follows closely Sekien's depiction of the Aobōzu (青坊主) (Sekien 1992:87) instead that of the Mikoshi (見越) (Sekien 1992:77) (Fig. 4.4).

The Mikoshi Nyūdō appears in the fortieth scroll of the *Wakan Sansai Zue* (Terajima 1987/6:151) as Santo (山都). Sekien's depiction of the Mikoshi follows the *Wakan Sansai Zue* version to a certain degree. The Sekien version of the Mikoshi is seldom used in the Mizuki manga and Kitaro animation, often only as a nameless and silent background character within a group of monsters. Mizuki's Miage Nyūdō, on the other hand, is a reproduction of the Aobōzu, or Blue Monk, that is in itself a reproduction of the Mehitotsu Bō (目ひとつ坊, One Eyed Monk) from the *Bakemono Tsukushi* (化物つくし) Edo period picture scroll (Tada 2000:64, 65). Sekien named his One Eyed Monk the Blue Monk. Its character appears in blue color in the films *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005) and *Gegegeno Kitaro* (2007), providing a traceable example of the visual evolution of the *yōkai* design in contemporary visual media.

NURARIHYON (ぬらりひょん)

The *yōkai* Nurarihyon is a recurring antagonist of the Mizuki manga and animation series. Nurari means slippery, while Hyon stands for unthinkable, unexpected or mysterious (Tada 2000:149). The expression Nurarin also stands for exiting a vehicle with haste, and Sekien used



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**Fig. 4.4** Representation of the Miage Nyūdō (見上げ入道, Uplooking Monk).

**1** Kitaro 1980s Ep#30, **2** 1990s Ep#1, **3** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1:697),

**4** Aobōzu (青坊主, Blue Monk) in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:87)

this metaphor in his depiction of the yōkai Nurarihyon (Nuurihyon) leaving a palanquin (Sekien 1992:84). Sekien's depiction in the *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* is a close copy of the Nurarihyon image of the Edo period *Bakemono Tsukushi* picture scroll of the Yūmoto collection (artist unknown) (Yumoto 2006:175), except for the palanquin that Sekien added as a visual pun.

The first visual traits of the Nurarihyon are given in the Edo period chōnin (町人, merchant class) novel *Koshoku Haidokusan* (好色敗毒散,



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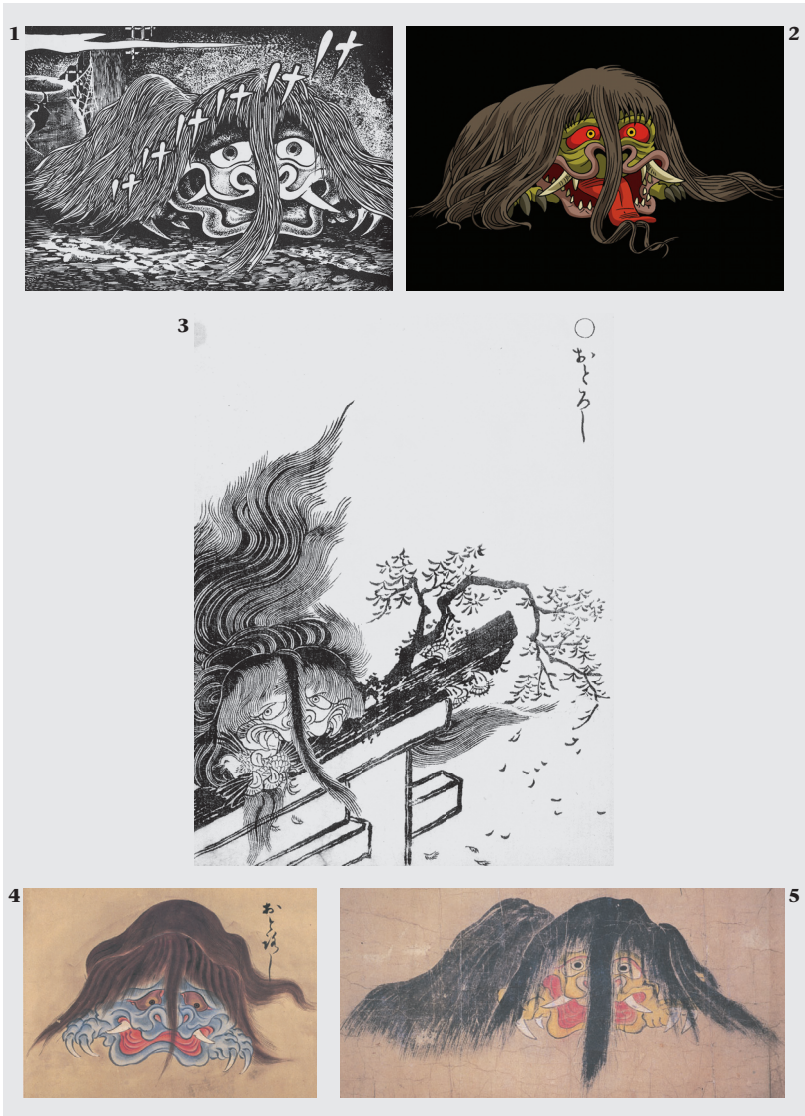
**Fig. 4.5** Representation of the Nurarihyon (ぬらりひょん).

**1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1:743), **2** 2007 series, **3** Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:84)

Love's Remedy, 1703), written by Yashoku Jibun (夜食時分, seventeenth-eighteenth century) as a creature similar to a catfish (namazu, 鯰) without eyes and mouth (Jinbo, Hasegawa 1971:74). As Kyōgoku notes, the Nurarihyon was also known around the Seto Inland Sea (Seto Naikai, 瀬戸内海) in Okayama Prefecture as an unidentifiable blob similar to a human head, floating on top of the water, that would slip away if someone tried to fish it out (Tada 2000:149). In this case the Nurarihyon might originate from a giant jelly fish sighting, which might explain the visual features it gained in its first Edo period depictions (Tada 2000:32–3). Mizuki's Nurarihyon, however, follows the visual traits laid down in the Sekien catalogue (Sekien 1992:84) (Fig. 4.5).

#### OTOROSHI (おとろし) AND ODORO ODORO (おどろおどろ)

The design of the yōkai appearing in the *Kitaro* 1960s animation Episode 27 and 1980s Episode 86 is based on the yōkai known by the names Odoroshi, Otoroshi, Odoro-odoroshi, Odoro-odoro or Otoron,



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**Fig. 4.6** Odoro Odoro (おどろおどろ)

The representation of the Odoro Odoro (おどろおどろ) in **1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1:877), **2** in Kitaro 2007 animation, **3** and the representation of the Otoroshi (おどろし) in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992: 81),

**4** on the Hyakkai Zumaki (Tada 2000:43) and **5** the Bakemono Tsukushi (Tada 2000:42)

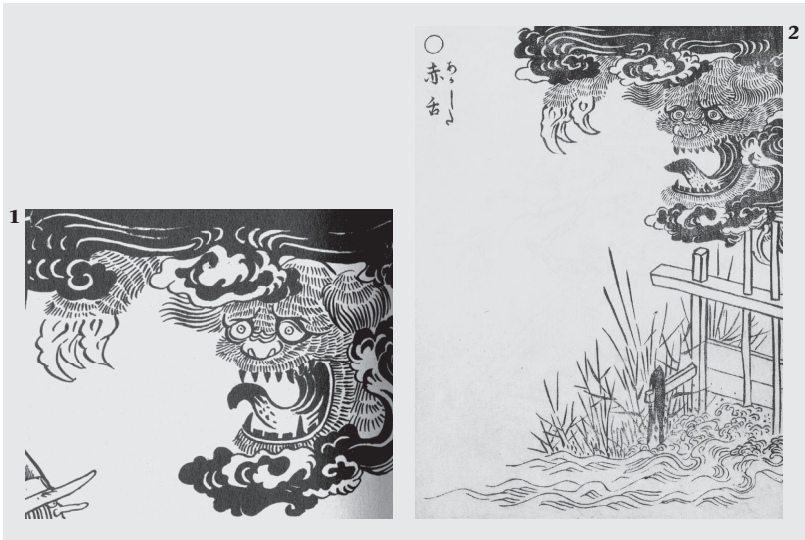
which etymologically originate from the expressions *osoroshii* (恐ろしい, dreadful), *osore ooi* (畏れ多い, fearsome) or *ochiru* (落ちる, downfall) (Jinbunsha 2005:21). The word *odoro* on the other hand is associated with the Chinese character 棘 meaning thorn or spike, which in turn refers to *odoro-gami* (棘髪), disheveled or ruffled hair, which in this case becomes a play on words, referring to a rumple-haired supernatural being.

The first depiction of the Otoroshi on the Edo period picture scroll *Bakemono Tsukushi* shows a monster with disarrayed hair (Tada 2000:42). While yellow on its *Bakemono Tsukushi* depiction, the Otoroshi will turn blue on the *Hyakkai Zumaki* (百怪図巻, Picture Scroll of One Hundred Monsters, Edo period) (Tada 2000:43) and keep this color in consecutive representations up until its most recent design in the film *Yōkai Daisensō* (妖怪大戦争, Great Yōkai Wars, 2005). Mizuki's Otoroshi is black and white in the manga and the 1960s animation series but its line rendering is more in alignment with the primitive, simple and animalistic hairy monster of the *Bakemono Tsukushi* than the more elaborate and stylistically complicated Sekien design; however, Mizuki's Otoroshi is depicted in blue color in the 1980s series, indicating that the *Hyakkai Zumaki* was influential on the color design of the animation character (Fig. 4.6).

Sekien's work is intricate and while it keeps the original iconography of ruffled hair, two tusks and claws, it also creates a mythology around the monster by placing it on top of a torii (鳥居) gate of a Shinto shrine, which is responsible for the pseudo-mythology created around the persona of the *yōkai* as the guardian of Shinto shrines, dwelling on top of the torii gate and punishing people by falling on top of them if they misbehave within the shrine area (Jinbunsha 2005:21). Sekien's Otoroshi also has a stranglehold on a pigeon, or *hato* (鳩), possibly referring to the eighth century Korean monk Hatauji (秦氏), who was responsible for establishing major shrines and temples in today's Kyoto area. Mizuki's *Odoro-odoro* on the other hand follows the basic, animal-like spiky haired monster image of the more antique *Bakemono Tsukushi*, and omits reference to Sekien's elaborate Otoroshi design of a shrine guardian.

#### AKASHITA (赤舌), RED TONGUE

Mizuki's manga episode, *Yōkai Rally* (妖怪ラリー, September 1968) was published in the *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* simultaneously with the debut of the first version of animation series *Wacky Races* (prod. Hanna-Barbera), which aired on September 14, 1968, in the United States (Mizuki 1988/3:916). Mizuki's *Yōkai Rally* is a *yōkai* equivalent of the American auto racing animation and the tongue of the *yōkai* Akashita (赤舌, Red Tongue) appears as a substitute for the checkered car racing flag. Mizuki's Akashita imagery closely follows Sekien's design, which is in turn based on the more simplistic Akakuchi (赤口 Red Mouth) depictions of the Edo period *Bakemono Tsukushi*, *Hyakkai Zumaki* and



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**Fig. 4.7** Akashita (赤舌, Red Tongue)

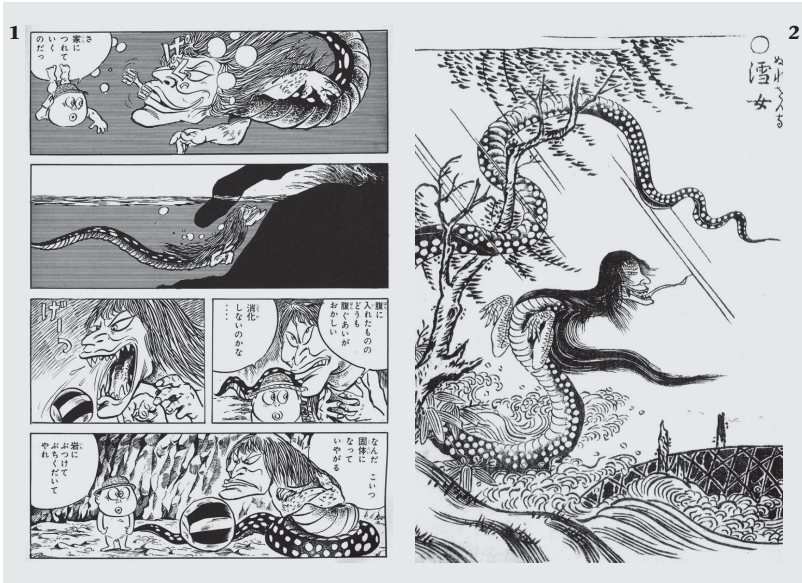
The representation of the Akashita (赤舌, Red Tongue) in **1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/3:137), in **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992: 88)

*Bakemono Emaki*. While on the Edo period scrolls the yōkai appears in the sky in a cloud, in Sekien's design it floats above an open flood gate, possibly visually referring to one of its regional versions from the Tsugaru (津軽) region of today's Aomori Prefecture, where the Akashita was believed to induce floods (Jinbunsha 2005:10).

The yōkai possibly originates from the Shakuzetsujin (赤舌神 Red Tongue God), originally a member of the Rakshasa demons of Hindu mythology (Jinbunsha 2005:10). Rakshasa or demon spirits are similar to yōkai as they are also shape shifters, harass and possess humans, eat human flesh and desecrate graves. Despite its solemn roots, the Akashita is represented comically in the Edo period scrolls, but Mizuki's use of it as a car race flag ultimately renders this yōkai as a comical prop in contemporary visual media (Fig. 4.7).

#### ISO ONNA (磯女), SEASHORE WOMAN

The Iso Onna (磯女, Shore Woman) in the manga and animation episodes follows the folktale storyline of the water yōkai that is also known as Nure Onna (濡女, Wet Woman). In the folk tale originating from Shimane Prefecture, a young artisan, Samegoro encounters the Iso Onna on the sea shore. The monster gives him a child to hold, which he



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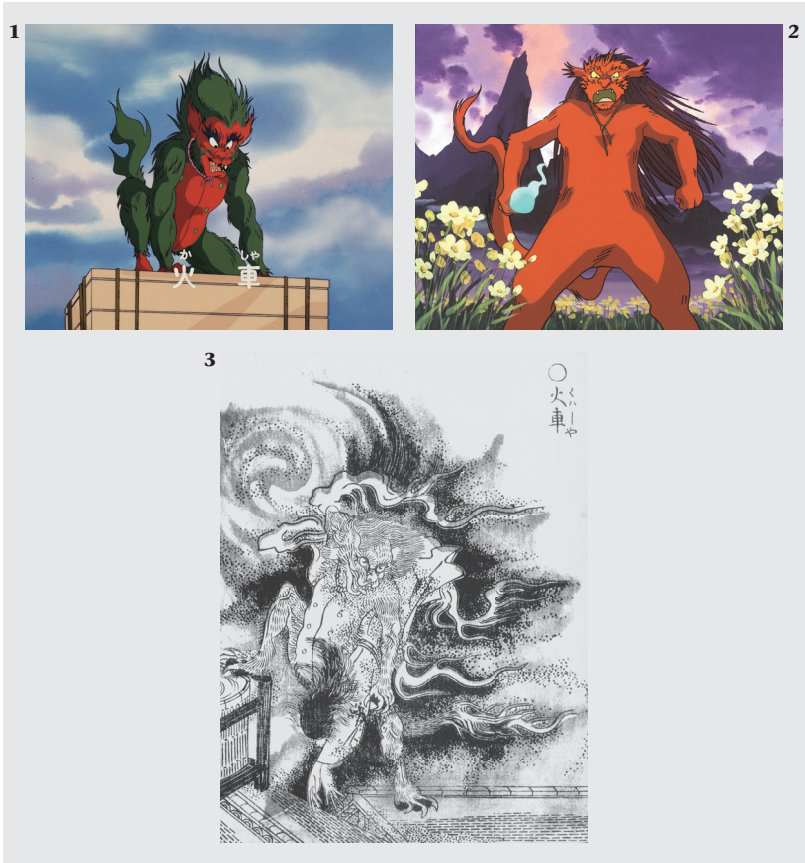
**Fig. 4.8** Iso Onna (磯女, Seashore Woman)

The representation of the Iso Onna (磯女, Seashore Woman) **1** in Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1:898), **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992: 83)

throws away and escapes, until the yōkai reappears in its other form, the Ushioni (牛鬼, Bull Demon). The Iso Onna was believed to be a woman with wet hair and body, the face of a human, and the body of a long serpent, and according to some narrations, with a tail of 3 chō (3町, 330 meters) in length (Tada 2000:146). It has two hands which end in claws, and a long thin tongue reminiscent of serpents. If one keeps holding its child, the child will turn into stone and suffocate its victim, similarly to the Ubume and the Konaki Jijī narrations (Iwai 2000/2:22–3). The manga and the animated version are built on a similar story structure. The yōkai itself derives from sea serpent sightings, while Mizuki's design is built on Sekien's as it appears in the *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (Fig. 4.8), which is in turn based on the imagery appearing in the *Bakemono Tsukushi* (Tada 2000:26).

#### KASHA (火車), FIRE CART

The monster of the animation episode *Kasha* (1970s Episode 23) is based on the *Kasha* (火車, Fire Cart) yōkai mentioned in the Heian period collection *Konjaku Monogatari-shū* (今昔物語集, Anthology of Tales from the



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**Fig. 4.9** Kasha (火車, Fire Cart)

The representation of the Kasha (火車, Fire Cart) in **1** Kitaro 1970s 1980s Ep#62, **2** 1990s Ep#45 and in **3** Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992: 55)

Past, twelfth century), in the Edo period kaidan collections *Shin Otogi Bōko* (新御伽婢子, 1683), *Shokoku Hyaku Monogatari* (諸国百物語, One Hundred Stories from Various Countries, 1677) and in other collections of popular Edo period kaidan narratives. The Kasha is a cart that takes people to hell after their death. On the Bakemono Tsukushi and Hyakkai Zumaki, it is a demon that draws a cart, while Sekien depicts it in the *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* as a hairy catlike creature with long wing-like ears, claws and smooth abdomen. Sekien gives no commentary to this monster (Sekien 1992:55). Mizuki's Kasha is closely related to the Sekien design, with the animation adding an extra level of coloring (Fig. 5.9). The manga version follows

the original story of the Kasha as narrated in the Shin Otogi Bōko volume 1 *Kashano Sakura* (火車の桜, Cherry Tree of the Fire Cart) in which two children see in their dreams how the demon takes their mother to Hell. Sekien shows the monster together with the dead body of a long-haired woman, and Mizuki reproduces this image in the manga version.

UBUME (産女、姑獲鳥)

While its name conveys a birth-giving mother, and thereby foretells a female character with an infant, the Ubume (産女、姑獲鳥) character possesses curious features, such as having wings or being dressed in a white and red kimono, which are not arbitrary, and follow a complicated visual tradition. The representation of the yōkai Ubume has a genealogy that permits a glimpse into the formation and reformation of an imagined folklore. Foster (2003) points out that the Ubume depiction of Sekien is encoded with characters not ordinarily associated with the meaning of the word. The Japanese origin of the Ubume is a woman who dies in childbirth, and after death she is changed into a yōkai. Her body is covered with blood and she holds her baby as she appears at a crossroad or bridge, symbolizing the crossroads between this and the other world. The Ubume would make a male passer-by hold her baby while the baby would get heavier. Finally causing distress and invocation of the Amida Buddha by the victim, the Ubume would return and thank him for blessing her baby.

This description of the Ubume is to be found in the Edo period collection of kaidan tales *Kiizōdanshū Maki* (奇異雑談集巻, Collection of Extraordinary Stories, Edo period) written with the characters for birth 産 and woman 女, following the pronunciation and the folklore definition. Sekien's Ubume in the yōkai catalogue *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* follows this legend in its visual representation, depicting a female yōkai with a child. However, Sekien's characters used for Ubume are not those of the birth-giving mother, but what in Japanese reading would be "mother-in-law taking bird" (姑獲鳥). These characters first appear in the encyclopedic collection *Wakan Sansai Zue* (和漢三才図会, 1713) compiled by Terajima Ryōan (寺島良安, eighteenth century) (Fig. 4.10). The entry shows a little bird with the visual representation of rain in the background, while the Chinese legend is given as the bird being the incarnation of a woman who died in childbirth. The bird can transform into a woman and steal children. This bird is called Kokakuchō (Tada 2000), and is written with the characters "woman taking bird": 姑獲鳥.

In fact, if the Chinese reading of the characters is considered, it can be read as woman taking bird, as the first character is also used in Chinese as a general term for an unmarried woman. According to Japanese lore, a woman who died before getting pregnant would enter the Umazume Jigoku (生まず女, 石女地獄) or the Hell of Childless Women, while a woman who died pregnant would enter the Chino Ike Jigoku (血の池地獄) or The Blood Pool Hell. Signifying this, the Ubume's lower body is



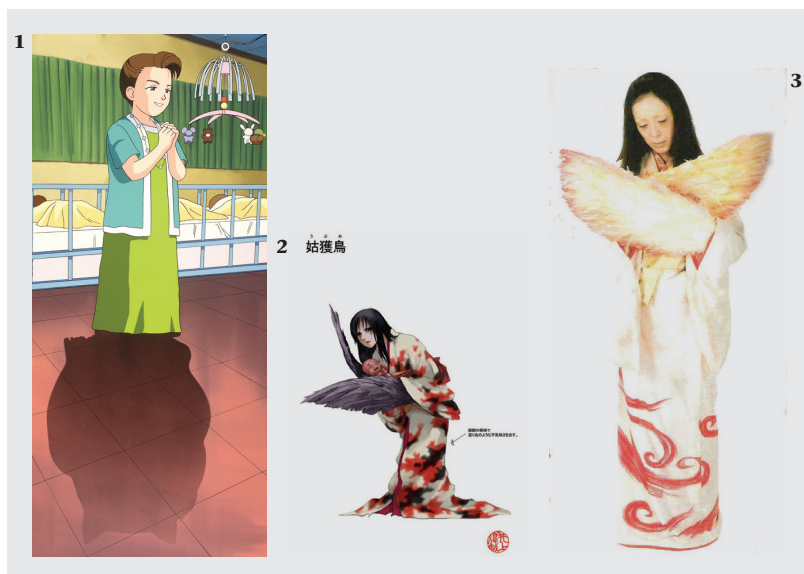
**Fig. 4.10** The visual representation of the Kokakuchō (姑獲鳥) in **1** the *Wakan Sansai Zue* (和漢三才図会, 1713) compiled by Terajima Ryōan (寺島良安, 18th century); and the visual representation of the Ubume (産女; うぶめ) in **2** in Toriyama Sekien's yōkai catalogue *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (画図百鬼夜行, 1781) and **3** on *Hyakki Gadan* (百鬼画談, Illustrations of the Hundred Demons, 1889) by Kawanabe Kyōsai (河鍋曉齋, 1831–89)

covered with blood. The two characters, the Ubume and the Kokakuchō, are explicitly and visually combined on the Meiji period woodblock print *Hyakki Gadan* (百鬼画談, Illustrations of the Hundred Demons, 1889) by Kawanabe Kyōsai (河鍋曉齋, 1831–89), where the Ubume already has wings (Fig. 4.10).

In the case of the contemporary design of Inoue Junya (Fig. 4.11), character designer of the 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō*, the wings of the Meiji period bird-woman remain, whereas the color palette of the woman's kimono is borrowed from the *Bakemono Emaki* (化物絵巻, Monster Picture Scroll, 1700), the *Bakemono Tsukushi* (化け物つくし, Monster Creation, Edo period) and the *Hyakkai Zukan* (百怪図巻, Picture Scroll of a Hundred Monsters, 1737) images (Fig. 4.12). In these three collections, all predating Sekien's catalogues, the name of the Ubume is written in hiragana (non-pictorial phonetic Japanese syllabic script), and no visual or textual reference is apparent with regards to the Chinese legend of the Kokakuchō. In the case of Sekien's catalogue, the visual representation of rain in the background and the flying hair of the woman evoke wings as a visual reference to the Kokakuchō myth.

The *Kitaro* animation episodes 1960s Episode 46, 1980s Episode 24 and 1990s Episode 81, based on the manga episode *Ubume* (姑獲鳥, Weekly *Shōnen Magazine*, 1968, Mizuki 1988/2: 847–62) perpetuate these dual characteristics with the tools of animation, rendering the yōkai both as a bird and a crossroads apparition, expressing the ambivalent character of this yōkai as being harmful and pitiable at the same time (Fig. 4.11).

In the 2005 film *Ubumeno Natsu* (姑獲鳥の夏, Summer of the Ubume, dir. Jissoji Akio, prod. Dentsu, 2005), the Ubume representation strictly follows an invented and reinvented Japanese lore, with colors evoking



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© 2005 "YOKAI DAISENSŌ FILM PARTNERS design by JUNYA INOUE

**Fig 4.11** Ubume in **1** Kitaro animation 1990s series Ep#81 **2** in Inoue Junya's design and **3** in character design of 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō*

the *Hyakkai Zukan* imagery. By now, the Ubume written with the characters of the Kokakuchō has entered common knowledge concerning yōkai, even though it was an association produced at the site of the Ubume in Sekien's yōkai catalogue *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō*. The connection of traditional art with cinema art was in this case further legitimized by the Tokyo National Museum (東京国立博物館, Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan), which hosted an official screening of the film in July 2005, accompanied by an exhibition and display where the museum was draped in red.

### *The Illustrated One Hundred Demons from the Present and Past, 1779*

The following are representative yōkai animation characters derived from Toriyama Sekien's catalogue *The Illustrated One Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past* (今昔画図続百鬼, *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki*, 1779).

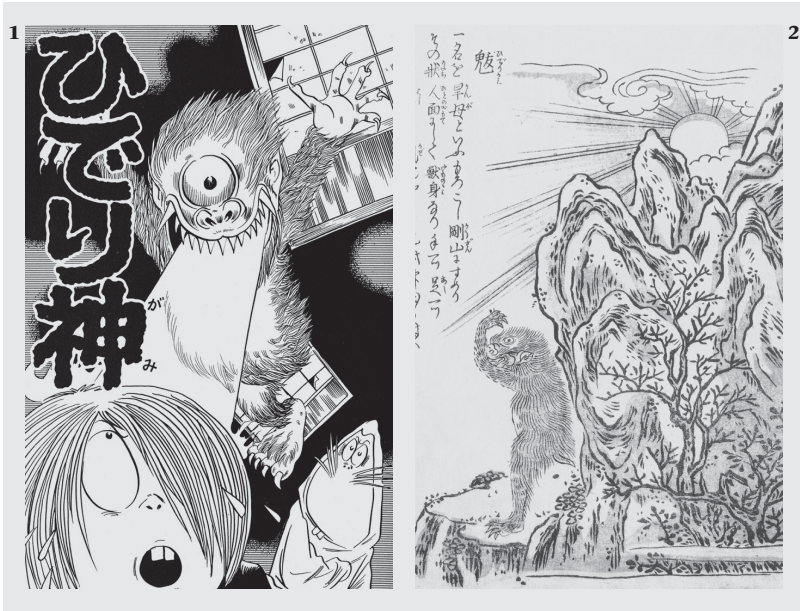
#### HIDERI-GAMI (ひでり神), DROUGHT GOD

Hideri, or Drought is a yōkai derived from the natural phenomenon. According to Sekien's description, that relies on the entry on Hideri in the *Wakan Sansai Zue* Vol. 40, the Hideri lives in the mountains, has a human



**Fig. 4.12** Ubume Color Patterns

- 1** Bakemono Emaki (化物絵巻, Monster Picture Scroll, 1700), **2** Bakemono Tsukushi (化け物つくし, Monster Creation, Edo period), **3** Hyakkai Zukan (百怪図巻, Picture Scroll of a Hundred Monsters, 1737) **4** Hyakki Yagyō Emaki (百鬼夜行絵巻, Boston Art Museum Collection, ca. 1780)



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**Fig. 4.13** Representation of the Hideri Gami (ひでり神, Drought God).  
**1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/2:757) and **2** in Sekien's catalogue  
 (Sekien 1992:112)

face and beast body, one arm and one leg that can run like the wind. When the Hideri appears near a human settlement, drought follows (Sekien 1992:112). For this reason the Hideri was also revered as a god and given the name Hideri-gami, Drought god (Jinbunsha 2005:156). The manga character follows Sekien's design while Mizuki also added the special power of breathing fire (Fig. 4.13). While its roots in the natural phenomenon are downplayed, this yōkai in the manga and animated episodes are used to fuel cars with hot air, in alignment with the transition Mizuki put on the roles of yōkai with regard to contemporary urbanized society.

#### WANYŪDŌ (輸入道), WHEEL MONK

Mizuki's manga design very closely follows Sekien's Wanyūdō design, while the animated version is based on this design with essentially more dimensionality (Fig. 4.14). The Wanyūdō will reappear in the films *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005) and *Gegege no Kitaro* (2007). In *Yōkai Daisensō*, the Wanyūdō is a computer-graphically created character based on the design of Inoue Junya; in *Gegege no Kitaro*, the role is mixed with computer graphics and real-life acting by comic actor Nishida Toshiyuki (西田敏行, 1947-).



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**Fig. 4.14** Representation of the Wanyūdō (輪入道, Wheel Monk).

**1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1:855), **2** Kitaro 2007 animation and  
**3** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:112)

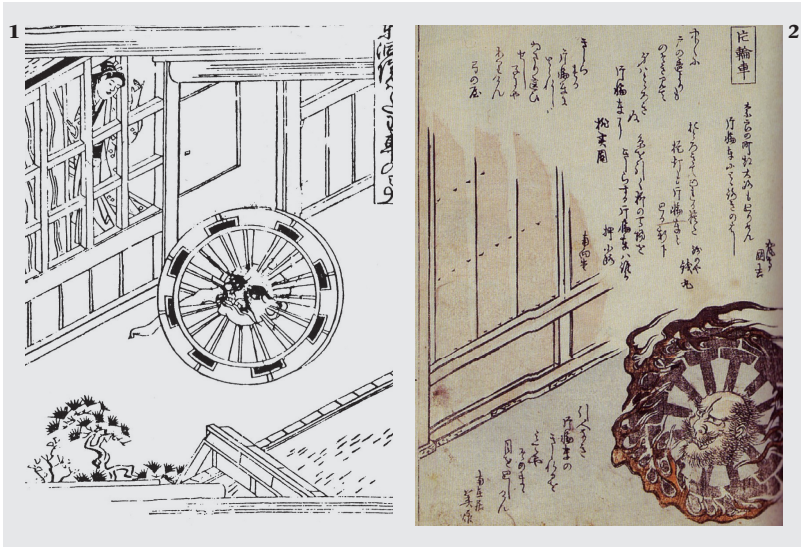
Sekien's Wanyūdō (Sekien 1992:136), a giant head set on the axis of a burning and rotating wheel, is based on the Higashi Tōin Katawashano Koto (京東同院かたわ車の事, The Story of the Crippled Wheel of Higashino Tōin) kaidan story narrated in the Edo period kaidan collection, *Shokoku Hyaku Monogatari* (諸国百物語, One Hundred Tales from Various Countries, 1677) (Takada 1989:13–15). The image of the Wanyūdō also appears in the *Kyōka Hyaku Monogatari* (狂歌百物語, Kyōka Hundred Scary Tales, 1853) (Yoshida 1999:25) (Fig. 4.15).

#### ONMORAKI (陰摩羅鬼)

Sekien describes the Onmoraki (陰摩羅鬼) as follows:

Onmoraki. It says in the Tripitaka Buddhist canon: [The spirit of the newly dead body becomes the Onmoraki]. [Its shape is that of the crane, it is of black color, its eyes shoot lights, it flaps its wings and cries out as a bird] it says in the *Seisonroku* (清尊録, 清尊录 Qing Zun Lu)

(Sekien 1992:137)

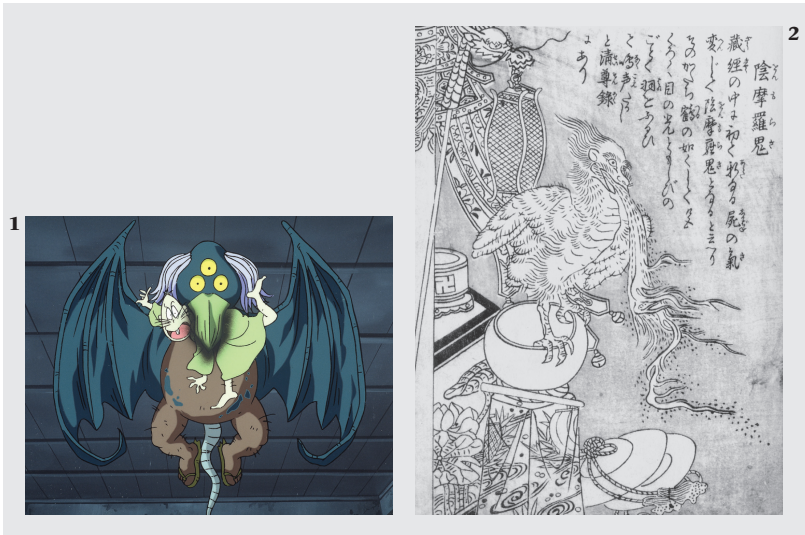


**Fig. 4.15** Wanyūdō  
 Wanyūdō in **1** Edo period illustrated kaidan story collections *Shokoku Hyaku Monogatari* (Takada 1989:14) and **2** *Kyōka Hyaku Monogatari* (Yoshida 1999:25)

Mizuki’s Onmoraki does not contend with Sekien’s version but follows its own iconography of a bird with three eyes, bat wings, tail, human hair and legs. Sekien’s Onmoraki, as represented in the *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki* Section Darkness (晦), is a bird with human face and hair, standing on a Buddhist altar, spitting fire (Sekien 1992:137) (Fig. 4.16).

BURUBURU (震々), SHIVERS

Sekien’s shivering outline of the Buruburu yōkai derives from the fact that the yōkai is associated with the Okubyō Gami (臆病神, God of Cowardice) that makes its victims shiver with fear (Miya, Sato 1992/19:193–4). Both in the manga and the animation episodes, the yōkai Buruburu (震々, Shivers) is contained on an old drawing that highly resembles Toriyama Sekien’s Buruburu (Sekien 1992:164) (Fig. 4.17). In both versions the drawing is burnt and the yōkai gets released, but retains its original form that is a close copy of Sekien’s original work. This graphic design is converted to the character in the film *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005), where the delicate drawing lines are insinuated by white yarn threads in the costume design of costume designers Chiyoda Keisuke and Sasaki Takashi (Fig. 4.18).



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**Fig. 4.16** Representation of the Onmoraki (陰摩羅鬼).

**1** Kitaro 1990s Ep#24 and in **2** Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:137)

### MŌRYŌ (魍魎)

Chimi Mōryō (魍魅魍魎) is a collective term in use in the Edo period, that referred to yōkai derived from natural phenomena (Jinbunsha 2005:101). According to the *Wakan Sansai Zue*, Scroll 40, Chimi represents the mountain god (山ノ神, yamano kami) while Mōryō stands for water god (水ノ神, mizuno kami) (Terajima 1987/6:156–7). Terajima notes that the Mōryō is believed to have the body of a three-year-old human child, to be of red and black color, to have red eyes, long ears and beautiful hair. Despite its harmless appearance, the Mōryō feeds on the liver of dead bodies (Terajima 1987/6:156). Sekien's depiction of the Mōryō in the *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki* catalogue follows Terajima's imagery, with the added detail of the Mōryō digging up and feeding on a corpse (Sekien 1992:157) (Fig. 4.19). Sekien also describes the Mōryō to have the shape of a three-year-old child, to be of red and black colors, with red eyes and nice hair and that it eats the liver of the dead. Mizuki's design loosely follows the Terajima and Sekien descriptions; the animated form of the Mōryō is a more frightening version of the Sekien image, and its long ears are replaced with pointy ones.



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**Fig 4.17** Representation of the Buruburu (震々).

**1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1:775), **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:164)

#### AMANOJAKU (天邪鬼)

The Amanojaku (天邪鬼) yōkai is mentioned in ethnographic recordings from different regions of Japan (Miyaoka 1979, Ishikawa 1960, Koshiba 1936) as an entity that reads people's minds and tricks people by imitating them. It is a late derivative of the Amano Sakume (天探女) harmful deity mentioned in the *Kojiki* (古事記, Records of Ancient Matters, 680 CE) (Philippi 1968). The forty-fourth volume of the *Wakan Sansai Zue* mentions it as god Amano Zako (天逆海), a form of crow Tengu born from a lineage that reaches back to the Shinto god of sea and storms Susa-no-Ō-no-Mikoto (須佐之男命) (Sekien 1992:171).

Amano Zako is also known by the names Saku-gami, Suku-gami or Jaku-gami, the latter of which might have linked to the name Amanojaku. Relying on the *Wakan Sansai Zue* as source, Sekien pictured the Amano Zako as a form of exotic Tengu-like creature with long ears and nose reminiscent of the visual representation of Hindu deities. Mizuki, on the other hand, while keeping the facial features of long ears and nose applied by Sekien, used a body structure and overall style close to



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**Fig. 4.18** Buruburu in *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005)

Character design of the Buruburu in the film *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005)

**1** Inoue Junya design **2** Costume Design and Art Direction: Chiyoda Keisuke, Sasaki Takashi

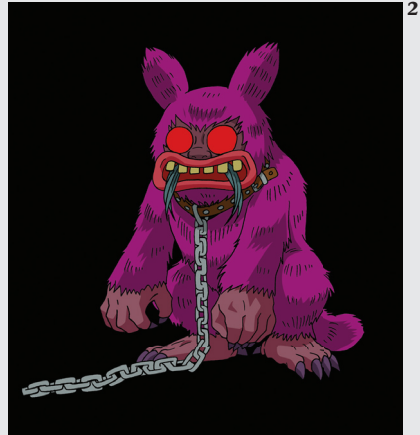
folk depictions of Oni (鬼, ogre), emphasizing the relation between the Amano-jaku and folk imagination (Fig. 4.20)

*Supplement to the One Hundred Demons from the Present  
and the Past, 1781*

Following are representative *yōkai* animation characters derived from Toriyama Sekien’s catalogue *Supplement to the One Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past* (今昔百鬼拾遺, *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi*, 1781).

OBORO KURUMA (朧車), DIM CAR

The *yōkai* character featured in *Kitaro* 1960s animation Episode 58 is derived from the Oboro Kuruma (朧車, Dim Car), an ancient *yōkai* described as part of the Parade of One Hundred Demons in Volume 12 of the *Uji Shūi Monogatari* (宇治拾遺物語, *Collection of Tales from Uji*, early thirteenth century), *Ichijōno Sayashiki* (一条の棧屋敷, *The Lodge on Ichi-jō*) (Miki, Kobayashi, Harada 1997:122). According to Sekien, it is a spirit embodiment of a grudge arising from a cart race (Sekien 1992:211). Sekien used segmented lines for outlines to indicate that the



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**Fig. 4.19** Representation of the Mōryō (魍魎).

**1** Mizuki's Manga (Mizuki 1988/2:137), **2** 2007 series, **3** *Wakan Sansai Zue* (Terajima 1987/6:157), **4** Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:157)



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**Fig. 4.20** Representation of the Amano-jaku (天邪鬼).

**1** in Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/3:51), and **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:171)



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**Fig. 4.21** Representation of the Oboro Kuruma (臙車, Dim Car) **1** in Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/3:51), and **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:211).

yōkai is translucent. Mizuki used the similar technique of dotted lines in his manga, while the Kitaro animation used semi-transparent animation cels to convey the translucency of the yōkai (Fig. 4.21).

### KEUKEGEN (毛羽毛現), FUR WINGS

The Haiwai Dong Jing (海外東經, Classics of Regions Beyond the Seas: East), the ninth volume of the Shan Hai Jing (山海經 Classic of the Mountains and Seas, author unknown, ca. 100 BCE – 100 CE), a collection of illustrated geographic and mythological entries of pre-Qin (221–206 BCE) era China mentions a country where Hair People (毛民) live, whose bodies are entirely covered by hair (Guo 2004). Sekien's version might have been influenced by this narration, while his rendering of the Keukegen (毛羽毛現, Fur Wing) yōkai as a creature covered in hair is more specifically based on the Mōjyō (毛女, Hair Woman), a Sennin (仙人, mountain ascetic) from today's Huayin (華陰) region described in the second volume of the Taoist hagiographical work *Ressen Den* (列仙伝, Biographies of Recluses, first century BCE) compiled by Chinese philosopher Ryū Kyō (劉向, 77–76 BCE) (Ryu, Ko 1993). According to that description, the Mōjyō's body was covered with hair and was so



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**Fig. 4.22** Representation of the Keukegen (毛羽毛現, Fur Wings). **1** in Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1:761), and **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:239)

light, that when she was running she was almost flying. This feature of the Hair Woman contributed to the name of the yōkai on Sekien's design: 毛羽 (fur wings). At the same time, the name is a play on words, because Keukegen written with the characters 希有希見 means a thing that is rarely seen (Sekien 1992:239). In Mizuki's version, the Keukegen also flies. The yōkai Keukegen, associated with the Yakubyō Kami (疫病神) Plague Gods, lurks in damp, dark areas around human dwellings and brings unhappiness and disease upon the inhabitants (Isshukan 2006:90). Based on this tradition, Mizuki's Keukegen inhabits the dark corners of old shrines.

#### USHIROGAMI (後神) AND KAGE ONNA (影女), SHADOW WOMAN

On Sekien's image, the Ushirogami (後神) is designed in a way that its back and front sides are indistinguishable. One of its arms and hands face forward while the other ones backward; depending on visual interpretation the yōkai is leaning backwards or forwards with hair flowing backward or forward; while it has a white face at one side of its head and a black one on the other. On Sekien's design, the Ushirogami enters as a ghost, without feet, from a willow tree, with an open paper umbrella and wavering bamboo in the background, indicating coming rain (Fig. 4.23). According to Tada this is a visual allusion to the saying *Furanu sakino kasa* (降らぬ先の傘, umbrella without rain) referring to unnecessary worries, while the willow refers to the saying *Yanagino obake* (柳のお化け, monster from the willow) that indicates failure and misfortune (Tada 2005:331). The rain and willow metaphors are utilized in the animation episode, as the Ushirogami is defeated in rain and then locked inside a willow tree.

As Sekien notes:

The Ushirogami is attached to the Cowardice God (臆病神 *Okubyō-gami*). When you think it is in front of you, it is behind your back. It pulls on one's hair from the back.

(Sekien 1992:243)

The Ushirogami yōkai represents delicate psychological states of mind including regret, fear, anxiety or anger. Sekien describes it as one that pulls one's hair from the back, which is an expression used for the feelings of regret, which holds one back from progress (Jinbunsha 2005:133). The Ushirogami yōkai is also mentioned in the anecdote *Shokokuno Hitowo Mishiru Ise* (諸国の人を見しる伊勢, Ise Recognizing People from Different Countries) in the Edo period illustrated book *Saikaku Oridome* (西鶴織留, Vol. 4, seventeenth century), written by popular novelist Ihara Saikaku (井原西鶴 1642–93), as an apparition that appeared behind angered parents near the auxiliary and subsidiary shrines of the Ise Jingū shrine, to hold them back from disowning their misbehaving child (Ihara 1976:135–71).



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**Fig. 4.23** Representation of the Ushirogami (後神).

- 1** Kitaro 1960s animation Ep#55 and **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:243) and the representation of the Kage Onna (影女, Shadow Woman) **3** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:202)

Mizuki shows an original interpretation of Sekien's design of the Ushirogami in his manga and the consequent animation episode. In Mizuki's interpretation, the yōkai retains its fragile feminine shape and kimono garment, but has a black face during its yōkai transformation and human face during its appearance in the human world. Mizuki's story line and gentle design depicts the Ushirogami as a delicate, fragile woman, dressed in kimono, who hides in the shadow and is harmed by daylight. Her yōkai wizardry is also very weak and easily defeated (Isshukan 2006:47). Mizuki also based his original interpretation both in appearance and function on the yōkai Kage Onna (影女, Shadow Woman) in the case of this version of the Ushirogami. The Kage Onna originally appears in the Rain Section of Sekien's *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi* catalogue as a mere shadow cast on the exterior of a sliding paper door (Fig. 4.23).

### *The Illustrated Bag of One Hundred Demons, 1781*

Following are representative yōkai animation characters derived from Toriyama Sekien's catalogue *The Illustrated Bag of One Hundred Demons* (画図百鬼徒然袋, *Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro*, 1781).

#### SAZAE ONI (栄螺鬼), TURBAN SHELL DEMON

Sazae (栄螺) is the Japanese name of the Turban Shell, a type of marine snail:



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**Fig. 4.24** Sazae Oni (栄螺鬼, Turban Shell Demon)

The transformation of the Sazae Oni (栄螺鬼, Turban Shell Demon) in **1**, **2** Kitaro animation 1990s Ep#17 **3** 2007 series and **4** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992: 278)

. . . of the family Turbinidae (subclass Prosobranchia of the class Gastropoda) that has a wide aperture in the first whorl of the stout shell, which is topped by a bulbous, turbanlike coil.

(Encyclopædia Britannica Online 2007:9073811)

According to folklore recordings from the area of Edo period shelling spot Kazusano Kuni (上総国, in today's Chiba prefecture), the Sazae yōkai is a quiet entity that lives in the deep open water, that only comes up to the surface during full moon, to float and dance in the moonlight. After its dance, the Sazae yōkai comes to shore, shape shifts into a woman and looks for a place to stay for the night. When provided with accommodation, the yōkai kills its host in the morning (Jinbunsha 2005:52). In local versions from the Kishū (紀州) area of Wakayama prefecture, the Sazae Oni takes the shape of a beautiful woman on the coastal waters of the Kishū sea, and tricks seamen to let her on board. In this version the Sazae Oni eats the seamen as a punishment, because they rape the monster in its woman form (Jinbunsha 2005:52).

The first turban shell yōkai appears on a Mohon Hyakki Yagyō Emaki version (模本百鬼夜行絵巻, copied version of the Hyakki Yagyō Emaki, Tokyo National Museum collection) where a yōkai of a child clam holds hands with an adult turban shell (Sekien 1992:278).

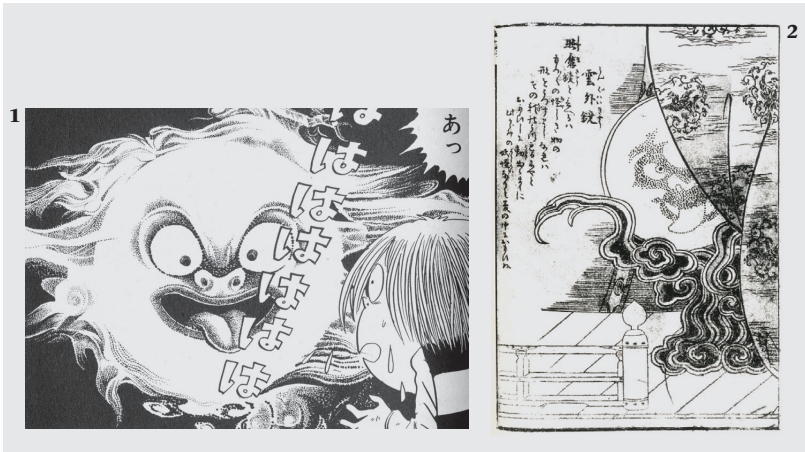
Sekien's commentary accompanying his Sazae depiction states that animals can change in mysterious ways following the rules of nature, clams can turn into shells, and shells can turn into demons (Sekien 1992:278). Following this commentary, Mizuki's Sazae Oni is a clam-like creature with one eye at the tip of its tongue that Mizuki briefly uses as a stage in the shape shifting (Mizuki 1988/2:702–703, Fig. 4.24), underscoring Sekien's postulate of the clam and shell forms metamorphosing into one another. Mizuki's design has a simple contour, it is based on the original body shape and texture of the clam and other sea-dwelling mollusks, it is easily identifiable and distinguishable from other characters, and the tongue used as an eye is a very intriguing visual device to render a monster.

#### UNGAIKYŌ (雲外鏡)

The yōkai appearing in the manga and animation episodes Mirror Fight follows the iconography of Toriyama Sekien's Ungaikyō (雲外鏡) (Sekien 1992:312). The Ungaikyō is Sekien's original, loosely based on the concept of the Tsukumogami bronze mirror Shōmakyō (照魔鏡) that is known to show the shape of monsters (Ion 1996:126). Katsushika Hokusai also depicts the Shōmakyō on his picture Yōkai Zōshi (妖怪草紙), as it appears in the *Ehon Wakanno Homare* (絵本和漢の誉, 1836). Similarly to the Makura Kaeshi, that guards the borderline between the worlds of reality and dream, the Ungaikyō governs the dimensions on the other side of the mirror, while the Kitaro animation further applies this aspect of otherworldliness from mirrors to the television set.

#### OTHER TRADITIONAL INFLUENCES

The visual design of most yōkai characters in the 1960s Kitaro animation series were based on the catalogue art of Edo period painter



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**Fig. 4.25** Representation of the Ungaikyō (雲外鏡).

**1** Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/2:61), and **2** Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:312)

Toriyama Sekien. The visual origin of approximately 40% of the appearing yōkai can be traced back to Sekien's work in the 1960s series, while this percentage is significantly reduced by the 1970s series to only 14%. On the other hand, the number of yōkai with other visual sources had significantly increased from the 1960s to 1970s periods. While in the case of the 1960s series, approximately 9% of the appearing yōkai are derived from primary visual sources other than Toriyama Sekien, this percentage increases to approximately 33% by the 1970s series, while the 1980s and 1990s series consist of the remade versions of the 1960s and 1970s episodes. Visual influences besides the catalogue art of Toriyama Sekien can be grouped into three categories: folk and popular art; religious and mythological sources; and Edo and Meiji period sources, including the works of Utagawa Yoshitoshi, Kawanabe Kyōsai and Takehara Shunsen.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF FOLK ART

The yōkai design in the *Kitaro* series that belongs to this group is based on folkloristic traditions, such as descriptions found in folk tales or in folk and popular art. Yōkai influenced by folk tale descriptions appear more frequently in the 1970s series, where six yōkai of this origin can be identified. While the 1960s mainly relied on Sekien's design, by the 1970s the focus shifted more to native Japanese, folkloristic sources as well as native Shinto mythology.

## TANUKI (狸), BADGER

The 1960s animation episode *Yōkaijū* (妖怪獣, 1967) centers on a clan of shape shifter Tanuki (狸, badger) that will be a popular theme later in animation, peaking in Takahata Isao's feature length animated film *Heisei Tanuki Gassen Pompoko* (平成狸合戦ぽんぽこ, Heisei Tanuki Wars Pompoko, Studio Ghibli 1994). Between the 1960s and the 1990s, the Tanuki went through a gradual change in its character and associated visual features, from a bloodthirsty demon to a cute trickster. In the 1960s episode, the Tanuki appear in a fearsome and well organized group. Dressed in Meiji period costumes, the monster badgers crucify Nezumi Otoko, reminiscent of the haritsuke (張付) crucifixion practice used on Christians during the Tokugawa era.

Takahata directed the 1970s Kitaro episode *Ashimagari* (あしまがり, 1971), that is also based on Tanuki characters. Takahata's latter work, *Heisei Tanuki Gassen Pompoko*, is an animated film formulating concerns over the destruction of environment and community-based lifestyle through narrating the story of a family of shape shifting Tanuki. The 1970s episode could be considered as an understudy for the animated film, as the main appearing Tanuki characters display similar accessories and features as the ones appearing in *Heisei Tanuki Gassen Pompoko*. While the Tanuki are strictly malevolent in the Kitaro animation, and lack dimensionality in character when compared to the animated film directed by Takahata, the main theme of the episodes, that is using *yōkai* as symbols of environmental destruction, remains unaltered.

## NAMAZU (鯰), CATFISH

One of the giga-monsters, or *kaijū*, that the Tanuki release on the city in the 1960s series Episodes 21–22 is the *Namazu* (鯰, Catfish). The *Namazu* is known from the *Namazu-e* (鯰絵, Catfish Picture) genre, a type of *nishiki-e* (錦絵, multicolored woodblock print) that became popular following the 1855 Ansei Edo earthquakes that claimed approximately 5,000 lives and damaged most parts of Edo (Ouweland 1964:3). The *Namazu* pictures center on a giant mythological Catfish, that lives below the ground and which causes earthquakes with its movements. In this sense the *Namazu* is the Edo period version of the mega-destroyer mutated animal, the *kaijū*, later appearing in twentieth century cinema in the characters of *Godzilla* or *Gamera*.

Mizuki's manga draws this parallel as the giant Catfish awakens and sets out to destroy the city similarly to the *Godzilla* narrative. Mizuki's *Namazu* follows the iconography laid out by the *Namazu-e* tradition of a simplified catfish body, whiskers and round head. Despite its potential to offer continuity with popular visual tradition from the Edo period, the Catfish was not used by other artists as a *kaijū* character in twentieth century visual media, and Mizuki's choice was an original attempt in terms of creating bridges between the visual cultures of proceeding eras.

### YANAGITA KUNIO'S *Yōkai Meii*

When *yōkai* from folk tales and oral narratives were applied to animation and manga characters in the *Kitaro* series, the collections of Yanagita Kunio also served as the source for visual representation. Following are two examples of this pattern, the Tsuchi Korobi and the Sune Kosuri *yōkai*; while the third one, the Daidarabochi, is an example of a *Kitaro* character that is derived from folk tale recordings from sources other than Yanagita Kunio.

#### TSUCHIKOROBİ (土転び), LAND SLIDE

The Tsuchikorobi (土転び, Land Slide) is mentioned in Yanagita Kunio's *Yōkai Meii* as one manifestation of the Azuki Arai (小豆洗い, Azuki Bean Washer). According to Yanagita's description, it is shaped like a haystack, with some parts covered with fur. At certain regions of Kyushu it is said to roll down on pathways when people are walking back from their fields (Yanagita 2004:204). The Tsuchi Korobi, a folk *yōkai*, was not visualized in printed media before the Mizuki manga episode, that was published in 1969. However, a Tsuchi Korobi appears in the 1968 Toei film *Yōkai Hyaku Monogatari* (妖怪百物語, One Hundred *Yōkai* Tales, dir. Yasuda Kimiyoshi, 1968). In the film, the Tsuchi Korobi is a hairy creature with two arms and one giant eye. This design was recycled in the 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō* (Kwai Vol. 19 2005:54) (Fig. 4.26).



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**Fig. 4.26** Tsuchikorobi (土転び, Land Slide)

The representation of the Tsuchikorobi (土転び, Land Slide) character design in 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō*

## SUNE KOSURI (脛擦り), SHIN RUBBER

The Sune Kosuri (脛擦り, Shin Rubber) is another *Kitaro* yōkai that is originally mentioned in Yanagita Kunio's *Yōkai Meii*. According to Yanagita, the small and harmless entity has the shape of a dog, and appears on rainy nights, when it crosses between the legs of travelers rubbing itself against their shins (Yanagita 2004:203). The *Kitaro* series is the first one to visually render this monster, interpreted to resemble the shape of a cat. The Sune Kosuri later reappears in the 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō*, in Inoue Junya's design, which follows a different pattern, closer in resemblance to a hamster (Fig. 4.27).

## DAIDARABOCCHI (ダイダラボッチ)

This giant yōkai is recorded in different regions of Japan as the Daidarabo, Daidarabocchi, Deranbo or Reirabocchi. The Hitachino Kuni Fudoki (常陸国風土記, 713 CE), a Heian period record of the area of Hitachino Kuni (in today's Ibaraki prefecture) mentions it as the Daidarabo (Iwai



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**Fig. 4.27** Sune Kosuri (脛擦り, Shin Rubber)

The representation of the Sune Kosuri (脛擦り, Shin Rubber) character design by Inoue Junya in 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō*

2000/1:26). The Daidarabo is a giant anthropomorphic being that is the creator of mountains and swamps. Iwai considers it to be a derivative of the Yamano Kami (Iwai 2000/1:28).

Miyazaki Hayao also interprets the Daidarabocchi as an aspect of the Yamano Kami in his animated film *Mononoke Hime* (1997). As there is no specific visual predecessor to this yōkai, it is freely used both by Miyazaki and by Mizuki. While Miyazaki built a delicate pseudo-mythology around the figure of the Daidarabochi as an ancient Jomon period god, Mizuki recreated it in a simple form of an anthropomorphic giant.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY

Similarly to the increase from the 1960s to the 1970s series in the number of native Japanese folklore yōkai as visual sources for the animation characters, a similar increase can be observed in the case of character design derived from religious iconographic sources. While the 1960s used Hindu and Taoist canonic sources, by the 1970s the focus shifted to native Shinto mythology. Buddhist sources are present in both sequences; however, the 1970s series introduces those that have a longer tradition in Japan. The 1980s and 1990s series, consisting of the remade versions of the 1960s and 1970s episodes, displays a synthesis of the 1960s and 1970s influences.

#### HINDU SOURCES: YASHA (夜叉)

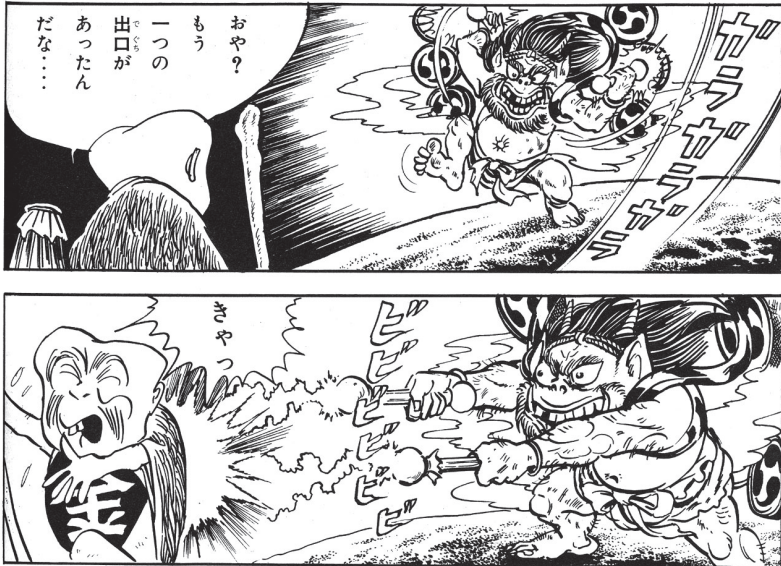
The name Yasha (夜叉) originates from the collective name of nature spirits, yakṣa or yakṣha that appear in Hindu and Buddhist mythology. Yakṣa also refers to demons lurking in mountains hunting for travelers, from which the Japanese demon spirit Yasha is derived. Yasha is a generic term for malevolent demon spirits, and Mizuki portrays the Yasha in his manga as a piece of hair.

#### BUDDHIST SOURCES: RAIDEN (雷電), THUNDER GOD

The Electricity Yōkai of the 1960s' series Episode 25 follows closely the iconography of Raijin or Raiden (雷神, 雷電), the god of thunder and lightning. Raijin is not a yōkai but a thunder god derived from Buddhist mythology, and its iconography includes a set of drums, which the Raijin beats to create lightning. In the case of the animation and manga these drums create electric shocks (Fig. 4.29). This is one of the rare examples where an entity from Buddhist iconology is used by Mizuki. Imagery based on Shinto gods is relatively more frequent in the 1970s series.

#### TAOIST SOURCES: HŌKŌ (彭候)

The yōkai Hōkō (彭候) is a tree spirit recorded in the fourth century zhiguai (志怪, mysterious tales) collection *Sou Shen Ji* (搜神記, Anecdotes



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**Fig. 4.28** Electricity Yōkai

The representation of the Electricity Yōkai (電気妖怪, Denki Yōkai), Thunder God in Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1: 794)



**Fig. 4.29** Representation of the Raijin (雷神) on the folded screen painting Fūjin Raijin Zu (風神雷神図, Wind God and Thunder God) by Tawaraya Sotatsu (俵屋宗達, seventeenth century)

About Spirits and Immortals, ca. 317–322 CE) compiled by court historian Gan Bao (干寶, Kan Pao, ?-336 CE). It later reappears in the *Wakan Sansai Zue* as an entity with a human face and the body of a black dog that lives inside certain trees. When the tree is cut down, the Hōkō emerges and eats the woodcutter (Gan 1964). In other narrations, if the tree with the Hōkō inside is cut, the Hōkō's blood pours out of the cutting (Otsuki 1976:361–2). The Hōkō imagery used in the manga and animation episodes is created by Mizuki.

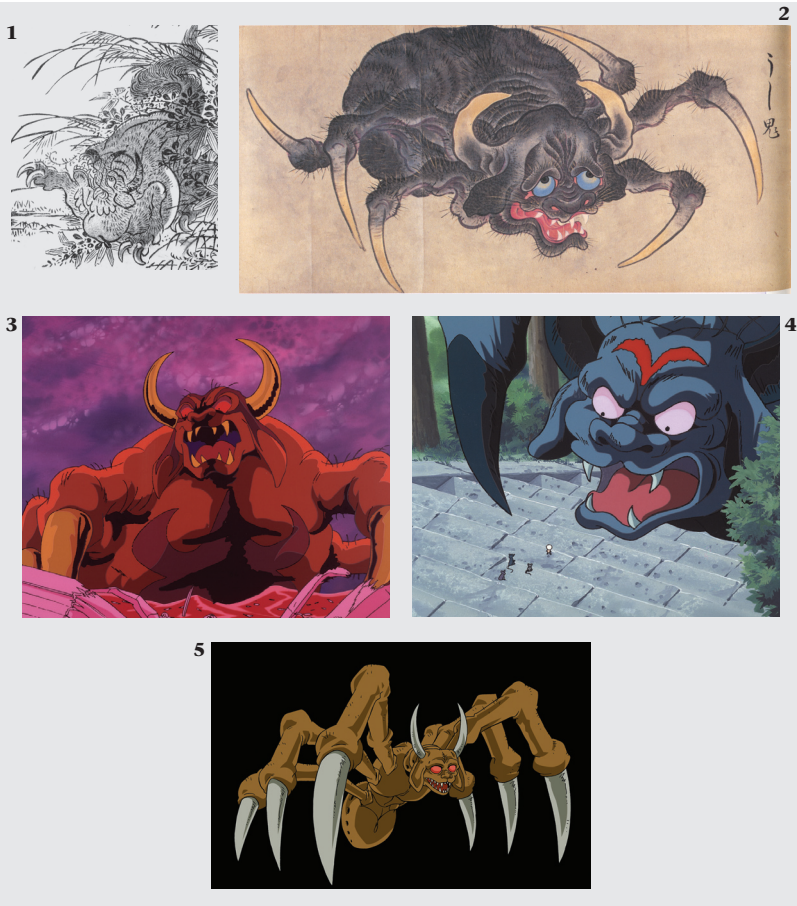
SHINTO SOURCES: YAMATANO OROCHI (八岐大蛇),  
THE EIGHT-HEADED SNAKE

The Yamatano Orochi (八岐大蛇), the Eight-Headed Snake, is a Shinto mythological creature recorded in the *Kojiki* (古事記, Records of Ancient Matters, ca. 680 CE) and *Nihon Shoki* (日本書記, Chronicles of Japan, ca. 720 CE). In the *Kojiki* it is the sea god Susano-ō-no-Mikoto (須佐之男命) who slays the giant serpent, while in the animation Kitaro is the hero who defeats the monster in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s versions.

SHINTO-BUDDHIST SOURCES: USHI ONI (牛鬼, BULL DEMON);  
GARURA (迦樓羅, GARUDA)

The Heian period memoir collection *Makurano Sōshi* (枕草子, Pillow Book, 1002) written by court lady Sei Shōnagon (清少納言, 965–ca.1010) mentions the Ushi Oni (牛鬼) or Bull Demon at its 148th entry as one of the famous fearful creatures of the time. In the Muromachi period historical chronicle, the *Taiheiki* (太平記, Vol.32, 1373), the severed head of the Ushi Oni attacks regent Minamoto no Yorimitsu (源賴光, 944–1021) while the monster's headless body comes to life and crawls up the ceiling dancing (Tada 2000:161).

According to Tada, the iconography of the Ushi Oni can be divided into four distinct categories (Tada 2000:161). The *Gozuki* (牛頭鬼, Bull-headed Demon), according to Buddhist mythology, together with the *Mezuki* (馬頭鬼, Horse-headed Demon), is one of the demon leaders who decide about condemnation in the realm of Hell. Mentioned in the *Makurano Sōshi* and the *Taiheiki*, this demon is close in its iconography to the Minotaur from Greek mythology, having a bull head and anthropomorphic body. The Ushi Oni (牛鬼, Bull Demon), on the other hand, has the body structure of the water buffalo (水牛, *suigyū*, *Bubalus bubalis*) that was introduced to Southern Japan from Southeast Asia around the Nara Period. The Ushi Oni, also as a male manifestation of the Iso Onna (磯女, Seashore Woman), dwells in waterbeds and abysses and is primarily a water-related *yōkai* (Iwai 2000/2:20). The wild water buffalo, both its river and swamp subspecies, prefers shady areas around waterbeds, spends daytime cooling off in the mud and feeds on water grass during nighttime (Britannica 2007:9076214). The Ushi Oni depictions on the *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* (Matsui 2006:26–7) and *Sekien's*



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**Fig. 4.30** Ushi Oni (牛鬼, Bull Demon)

Representations of the Ushi Oni (牛鬼, Bull Demon) in  
**1** Toriyama Sekien's catalogue *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (Sekien 1992:90) and  
**2** on the Edo period picture scroll *Hyakkai Zumaki* (百怪図巻,  
 Picture Scroll of One Hundred Monsters, Edo period) (Tada 2002:61);

The representation of the Ushi Oni (牛鬼, Bull Demon)  
 in Kitaro animation **3** 1980s Ep#42 and **4** 1990s series Ep#6  
 and **5** 2007 series

subsequent Gazu Hyakki Yagyō (Sekien 1992:90) are both modeled after the water buffalo (Fig. 4.30). However, a unique type of Ushi Oni with wings reminiscent of the Japanese flying squirrel (鼯鼠、鼯鼠, musasabi, momonga, *Petaurista leucogenys*) is recorded at the Negoro-ji (根香寺) Buddhist temple located in Takamatsu city, Kagawa prefecture (Shikoku island). This monster has a bull's head with fangs and it can fly with the help of flaps of skin stretched between its fore and hind limbs (Fig. 4.30). Another type of Ushi Oni is a monster with the body of a giant spider, bull horns and demon face. Images following this iconographic pattern appear in the Bakemono Tsukushi, Hyakkai Zukan and Bakemono Emaki and Hyakki Yagyō Emaki of the Edo period (Tada 2002:81) (Fig. 4.30). Mizuki's Ushi Oni belongs to this fourth type of representation (Fig. 4.30).

In both manga and animated versions the village is saved from the Ushi Oni by prayer to a god that lives in the local Shinto shrine. However, this god is graphically based on the mythical birdlike Garuda (迦楼羅, in Japanese Garura) deity of Hinduism and Buddhism that has wings, a beaked face and a human body. In Hinduism the Garuda is a celestial eagle that transports Vishnu, while in Buddhism it is one of the twenty-eight protectors of Kannon (Avalokitesvara). Garuda, the eagle-like deity is the enemy of snakes, it is not known to be the protector of villages, nor is it associated with mythology involving bull-like monsters. In 1980s Episode 42, however, the village protecting deity is identified as Garura (迦楼羅). While its body and facial structure as well as its wings, halo and flute follow the visual representation of Garuda, its garments are distinctly Shintoist. Mizuki created a character of pseudo-Shinto mythology at this instance utilizing the visual characteristics of a Hindu-Buddhist deity.

#### POSTMORTEM TRANSFORMATION OF HISTORICAL FIGURES

The yōkai appearing in 1970s Episode 25 is the yōkai version of Marilyn Monroe (1926–62), the Hollywood movie actress who died one decade prior to when the episode was aired. According to the explanation in the Mizuki manga, this yōkai only resembles the dead actress because, as a vampire, it used to suck Monroe's blood (Mizuki 1988/3:755).

Historical figures would turn into yōkai in Heian period narrations, as in the case of Heian period Buddhist priest Raigō (頼豪 1002–84) of the Mii-dera Temple (三井寺, today's Shiga prefecture), whose vengeful spirit transformed into the Tesso (鉄鼠) monster rat after he starved himself to death in a grudge against the Emperor Shirakawa (白河天皇, 1053–1129). Heian period court poet and politician Sugawarano Michizane (菅原道真, 845–903) turned into a vengeful spirit (怨霊, onryō) after his death in exile. His vengeful spirit was lulled into its current form of Shinto god of studies enshrined in the Dazaifu Tenmangū (大宰府天満宮) shrine in today's Fukuoka prefecture.

In modern literature, mystery fiction writer Yamada Futaro (山田



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**Fig. 4.31** Marilyn Monroe as yōkai in 1980s Ep#61

風太郎, alias Yamada Seiya 山田誠也, 1922–2001) was responsible for turning into a demon the historical figure Amakusa Shiro (天草 四郎, ca. 1621–38), the leader of the Shimabara Uprising against Tokugawa rule (島原の乱 Shimabaranō Ran, 1637–38), who died at the battle of Hara together with many Christian rebels (Yamada 2002). The historical Amakusa's head was ceremoniously transported to Nagasaki and put on display, evoking the fate of the legendary rebel demon Shutendōji (酒呑童子) from the Heian period. Despite his heroic death, Amakusa's character was turned into a demon in Yamada's popular fiction novel *Makai Tenshō* (魔界転生, *Demon Revival*, 1967) first published in segments in the Osaka *Shimbun* newspaper (大阪新聞, 1964–65). This work was later adapted to equally popular manga by Ishikawa Ken (石川賢, 1948–2006) in 1987; animation in 1998; films in 1981 (dir. Fukasaku Kinji, prod. Kadokawa) and 2003 (dir. Hirayama Hideyuki, prod. Toei) and PlayStation2 video game in 2003 (prod. D3). However, the Monroe character is the first attempt in postwar popular visual media to represent a modern-period historical figure as a yōkai (Fig. 4.31).

#### EDO AND MEIJI PERIOD SOURCES

The main visual influence for yōkai representation in the Kitaro series derived from art historical sources is to be found in the Edo period yōkai catalogues of Toriyama Sekien. On the other hand, influences of other Edo and Meiji period artists can be traced in the animation and manga series, among which Takehara Shunsen's (竹原春泉, ca. 1775–1850) figures in the *Ehon Hyaku Monogatari* (絵本百物語, *Picture Book of One*

Hundred Scary Stories, 1841) picture book is one of the most prominent sources.

Shunsen's design is a Meiji-period follow-up to the Sekien catalogues, as it also lists distinct yōkai with their image and related story, while introducing some new entities that are not found in Sekien's body of work. Some of these entries resurface in the Kitaro animation, including the Shinigami (死神, Death God), the Futakuchi Onna (二口女, Two-mouthed Woman) or the Azuki Arai (小豆洗い, Bean Washer), which later became popularized in twentieth and twenty-first century cinema.

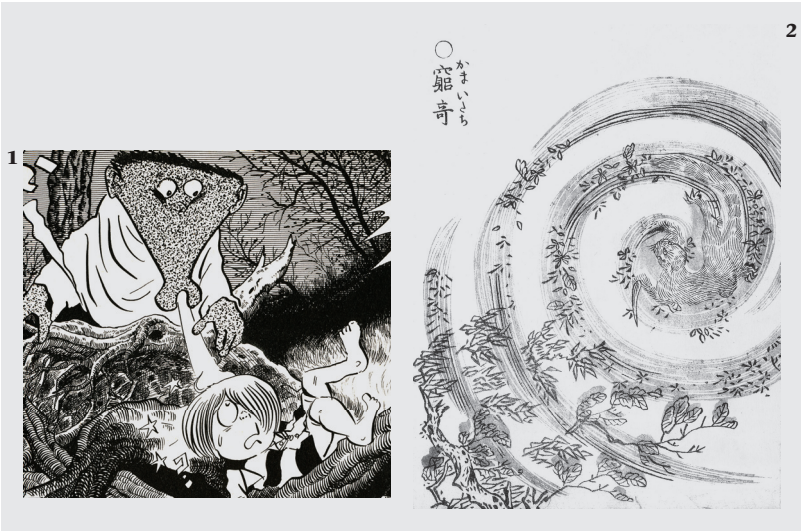
1960s series animation Episode 3, Yōkai Castle (妖怪城, Yōkaijō) is the first animation episode within the Kitaro animation series that introduces specific yōkai from the Edo and Meiji periods and identifies their names in still frame captions. Identifying the names of yōkai is a practice that will follow more generally from the later part of the 1960s series, which serves the purpose of educating people about yōkai names embedded in the flow of the story.

The yōkai used in 1960s episode 3 are the Kamaitachi (鎌鼬, 窮奇, Weasel) from Toriyama Sekien's Gazu Hyakki Yagyō (Sekien 1992:40) and the Futakuchi Onna (二口女, Two-mouthed Woman) from Takehara Shunsen's Ehon Hyaku Monogatari (Tada 1997:53).

The Kamaitachi retains the role of the original yōkai of causing whirlwinds (Sekien 1992:40), while its new form is Mizuki's creation. The shape of the original Edo period yōkai is based on the folklore associated with the weasel. In folk belief, the weasel is an animal of supernatural powers, similarly to the shape-shifter Tanuki (狸, Badger) and Kitsune (狐, Fox). The Kamaitachi yōkai is recorded as different kinds of wind from harmful whirlwinds to whirling blades. In Mizuki's interpretation, however, the Kamaitachi is a human-like figure that causes whirlwinds with its breath (Fig. 4.32).

The Futakuchi Onna, on the other hand, follows closely the iconography of Takehara's depiction as a woman with a pretty face, long hair that can grab objects and a mouth on the back of the head (Fig. 4.33). Mizuki also maintained iconography laid down by Shunsen in his depiction of the Hakuro Bettari (齒黒べつたり, Black Teeth) and the Azuki Arai (小豆洗い, Bean Washer) (Fig. 4.34).

Furthermore, Mizuki also resurrected the Shinigami (死神, Death God) from Shunsen's picture book to twentieth century animation. The Shinigami animation character is based on the Shinigami entry that appears in Takehara Shunsen's Ehon Hyaku Monogatari (Tada 1997:27). Shinigami does not correspond to any Shinto or Buddhist deity, mythological figure or folklore yōkai, but is a Japanese adaptation of the European Grim Reaper, as its concept and iconography was introduced to Japan during the Meiji period. Takehara's Shinigami is also based on that concept. Mizuki's character, a skeleton and skull wearing a long gown, is also loosely based on the mediaeval European personification of death; however its gown is white instead of black, retaining the Buddhist color symbolism assigned to death (Fig. 4.35).



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**Fig. 4.32** Kamaitachi (窮奇), Weasel

The representation of the Kamaitachi (窮奇), Weasel in **1** in Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1: 386) and **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:40)



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**Fig. 4.33** Futakuchi Onna (二口女), Two-mouthed Woman

The representation of the Futakuchi Onna (二口女), Two-mouthed Woman in **1** in Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/1: 378) and **2** in Takehara Shunsen's Ehon Hyaku Monogatari, 1841 (Tada 1997:53)

1



2



3



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**Fig. 4.34** Azuki Arai (小豆洗い, Bean Washer)

The representation of the Azuki Arai (小豆洗い, Bean Washer) in **1**  
 Kitaro 2007 animation **2** in the character design of 2005 film  
 Yōkai Daisensō, **3** in Takehara Shunsen's Ehon Hyaku Monogatari, 1841  
 (Tada 1997:100)



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**Fig. 4.35** Shinigami (死神), Death God

The representation of the Shinigami (死神), Death God **1** Kitaro 2007 animation and **2** in Takehara Shunsen's Ehon Hyaku Monogatari, 1841 (Tada 1997:28)

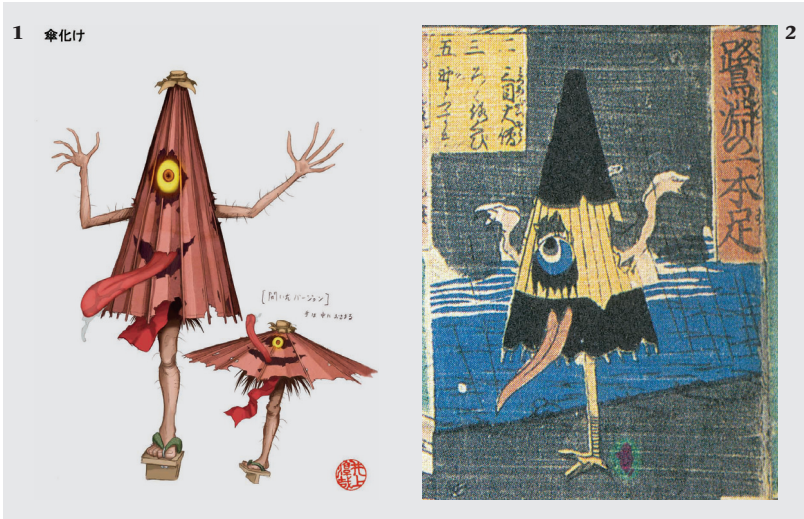
Other artists, whose influence is less tangible than Shunsen's, but is still distinctly present include Meiji period painter Kawanabe Kyōsai (河鍋曉齋, 1831–89), Edo period painter Hayamishun Kyōsai (速水春曉齋, 1767–1823) and late Edo-early Meiji period painter Utagawa Yoshikazu (歌川一寿齋芳員, active between 1848 and 1854). Following are some of the yōkai characters derived from these sources.

#### BAKE NEKO (化け猫), MONSTER CAT

The Bake Neko (化け猫, Monster Cat) has a long genealogy, however it was most intensely utilized and popularized by Meiji period painter Kawanabe Kyōsai, a known patron of cats, who painted several versions of humorous caricatures involving the cat yōkai and who was also fascinated with drawing the animal in different positions (Clark 1994:153). In postwar visual media, the Monster Cat reappears in the Neko Shamisen (猫三味線) kamishibai of the mid-1950s and in manga and animation from the late 1960s, in Mizuki's manga series as well as in Umezu Kazuo's yōkai manga character Nekome Kozō (猫目小僧, Cat-eye Boy, 1967–68).

## KASA OBAKE (傘おぼけ), UMBRELLA MONSTER

Mizuki follows early Meiji period painter Utagawa Yoshikazu's iconography of the Umbrella Monster, as it appears on the *Mukashi Banashi Bakemono Sugoroku* (百種怪談怪物双六, ca. 1848–54) with one eye in the centre and one leg, that makes the *yōkai* similar to the One-legged God (一本ダタラ, *Ippon Datara*) (Iwai 2000/1:44). Sekien's umbrella *yōkai*, *Hone Karakasa* (骨傘, Bone Umbrella) is significantly different (Sekien 1992:275) with a small facial component at the end of the umbrella. Mizuki adapted Yoshikazu's version as it more readily suits the characters in animation and manga with its easy-to-understand outline and big expressive eye. Given its simple iconography, this monster did not evolve significantly in the postwar period, except for the fact that color technology enabled this monster to reappear in its original, colorful outfit, known from the Meiji period. The Umbrella Monster also became a *yōkai* icon in the *yōkai* films of the 1960s. The *Yōkai Hyaku Monogatari* (妖怪百物語, One Hundred *Yōkai* Stories, dir. Yasuda Kimiyoshi, prod. Daiei, 1968) devoted a significant segment of the film to introducing this *yōkai* (Ion 1996:95). Since then the Umbrella monster is a well-known one often reappearing across a wide range of visual media genres due to its simple yet expressive iconography (Fig. 4.36).



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**Fig. 4.36** Kasa Obake (傘お化け, Umbrella Monster)

The representation of the Kasa Obake (傘お化け, Umbrella Monster) in **1** in the character design of Inoue Junya in the 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō*, **2** on Utagawa Yoshikazu's *Mukashi Banashi Bakemono Sugoroku* (百種怪談怪物双六, ca 1848–1854)

## ŌKUBI (大首), BIG HEAD

The Ōkubi (大首, Big Head) was a popular yōkai image in the Edo period that had several representations, each centering on the theme of the sudden appearance of a giant head that surprises or frightens the people around it. On Sekien's image in the *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki*, the head is that of a woman, with long hair and blackened teeth (Sekien 1992:168). Mizuki, however, recreated the Ōkubi based on the representation laid out by Hayamishun Gyōsai (速水春曉齋 1767–1823) in the Edo period illustrated picture book *Ehon Sayoshigure* (絵本小夜時雨, *Midnight Drizzle Picture Book*, ca. 1801)

## MIZUKI SHIGERU'S YŌKAI ORIGINAL

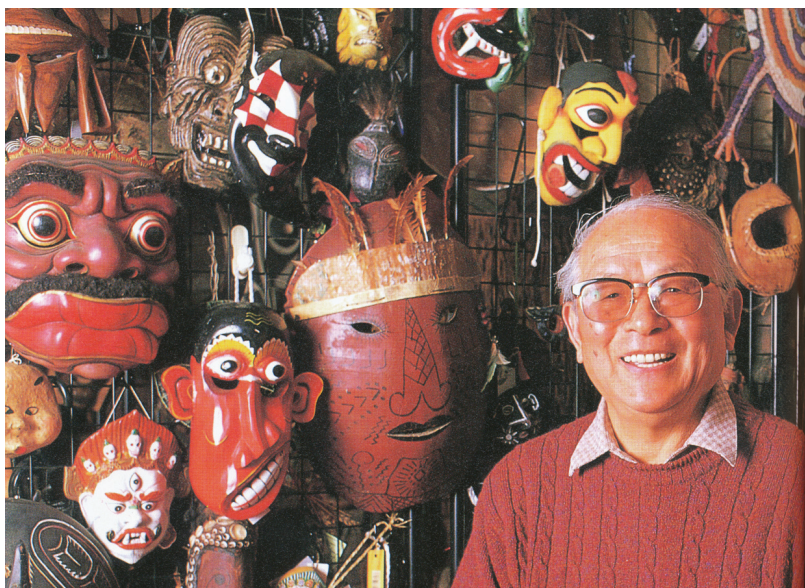
Approximately 15% of the characters in both the 1960s and the 1970s series introduced yōkai without any art historical background, and these could be considered Mizuki Shigeru's own contribution to the yōkai pantheon. The 1980s and 1990s series, consisting of remakes of the 1960s and 1970s episodes, consequently have a similar ratio of original design. These patterns, while Mizuki's originals, can be further identified as being influenced by traditional art historical and folk art sources or by contemporaneous art works.

Patterns of influence in design can be traced to Toriyama Sekien's catalogue art, compilations of folk encounters and folk tales by Yanagita Kunio and others and the influence of Asian and South Pacific mask design. In the case of contemporaneous influences, the works of surrealist painter Okamoto Taro (岡本太郎, 1911–96), sculptor Narita Tōru (成田亨 1929–2002) and designer Takayama Ryōsaku (高山良策 1917–82) are significant.

The original Mizuki designs, which follow Sekien's pattern of representation, include the *Neko Sennin* (猫仙人, Cat Mountain Wizard) (1960s Episode 17) or the *Satori* (サトリ, Awakening) (1970s Episode 34). Similarly to the yōkai in Sekien's catalogue system, these yōkai have a specific form and pseudo-mythology attached to them, making them individual yōkai compatible with those in the Edo period catalogue system.

The cat version of the *Sennin* (仙人, xiānrén, mountain ascetic) is an original creation of Mizuki. In Japan, *Sennin*, or immortal mountain ascetics, were practitioners of *Shugendō* (修験道), a nature-worshipping faith that arose from Shinto, Taoist and Buddhist teachings in seventh century Japan. Abolished in the Meiji period, the followers of *Shugendō*, *Sennin*, or mountain-dwelling monks, were associated with alchemy and mountain yōkai, especially the *Tengu*, in the Edo period.

While the cat version of the *Sennin* is Mizuki's original, the *Toad Sennin* (蝦蟇仙人, Gama Sennin), originating from the fable of tenth century mountain monk Liu Hai (劉海), is reworked in the Toriyama



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**Fig. 4.37** Mizuki Shigeru with mask collection

Mizuki Shigeru in front of the display of his unlabeled Asian and South Pacific mask collection at the Mizuki Shigeru Memorial Museum, Sakaiminato City (Mizuki 1997:73)

Akira manga series *Dragon Ball* (1984–95, Weekly Shōnen Jump, 週刊少年ジャンプ) in the character of Muten Rōshi (武天老師, Turtle Hermit), that also appears in the *Dragon Ball* (1986–89, Fuji TV) and *Dragon Ball Z* (1989–96, Fuji TV) Toei animation series.

The Satori appears in Sekien's *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki* as a hairy, ape-like, mountain-dwelling creature that can read people's minds (Sekien 1992:114). Satori is originally a Buddhist term for awakening or enlightenment. The Satori of the *Kitaro* episode is similar to the Sennin, and the background animation cels of this episode are drawn to resemble Chinese shan sui (山水, sansui) landscape paintings. Utilizing the animation genre, perspective is applied to the background images, which provides a new dimensionality to the animation from an aesthetic point of view. This artistically valuable episode also extensively features the unique, eerie camera angles which have become the trademark of the *Kitaro* series by the 1970s (Fig. 4.36).

Mizuki's original creations were also influenced by Asian and South Pacific mask designs in Mizuki's mask collection currently displayed in the Mizuki Shigeru Memorial Museum, Sakaiminato City. However, as the exhibition space also attests, Mizuki did not keep precise records of the origins of specific items in this collection (Fig. 4.37). Visual

influences from South Pacific mask designs can be traced in the case of the *yōkai* appearing in the 1960s Episode 38 Oritatami Nyūdō (折畳み入道, Folding Monk) or the 1960s Episode 52 Vampire Army even if they are too faint to pinpoint a specific region as the source. Mask designs and regional folk tales from Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, had an overall influence on Mizuki's manga art as the artist revisited the island that holds Papua New Guinea's annual national mask festival, several times in the postwar years.

The influence of surrealist painter Okamoto Taro's primitive art is observable in the design of the *yōkai* Kyūketsuki (吸血木, Blood Sucking Tree) which first appears in manga form in 1966 and in 1968 in the animation series (Fig. 4.38).

Okamoto Taro (岡本太郎, 1911–96) ignited interest in postwar Japanese art circles for Jomon period design patterns, on which he based many of his artworks. Okamoto's groundbreaking book *Nihon Saihakken Geijutsu Fudōki* (日本再発見芸術風土記, Rediscovery of Japan Topography of Art, 1958) and the subsequent *Shinpi Nihon* (神秘日本, Mysteries of Japan, 1964) contributed to the postwar rediscovery of the timeless and mysterious energy Jomon art objects radiate.

Okamoto, who studied ethnography in Paris before becoming an artist, also had a substantial influence on fusing Jomon art with popular culture as one of the consultants, together with sculptor and designer Narita Tōru (成田 亨, 1929–2002) and Takayama Ryōsaku (高山良策, 1917–82), for one of Japan's most successful tokusatsu (特撮special effects) superhero television series, *Ultraman* (ウルトラマン), which first aired between July 1966 and April 1967 (prod. Tsuburaya, TBS TV) (Okamoto Taro Museum 2006:24). Narita Tōru and Takayama Ryōsaku designed the monsters for the series.

Okamoto had been representing surreal monsters in his paintings since the 1950s (Fig. 4.39), while his collaboration with Takayama and Narita resulted in the introduction of a new set of monsters on film, the *kaijū* (怪獣), a fusion of outer space aliens and mutated animals that moved surrealist, primitive and Dadaist art into Japanese popular visual culture

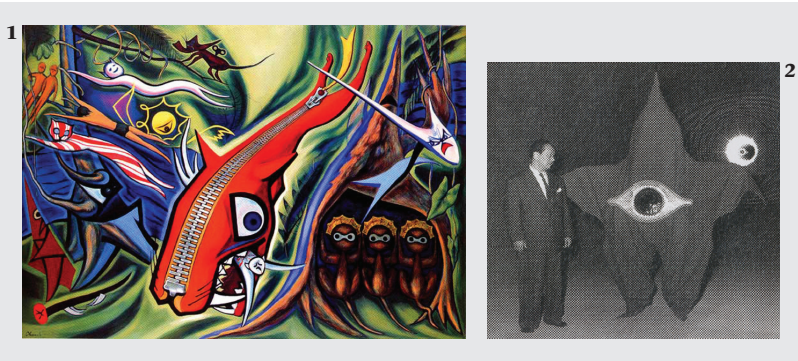
While Mizuki was successful in transposing traditional *yōkai* imagery to twentieth century visual media, his invention of new *yōkai* seems to be less significant. When distanced from Edo and Meiji period visual sources, Mizuki's original *yōkai* display the surrealist pattern laid down by Okamoto, Narita and Takayama's character designs (Fig. 4.40) or include easily recognizable animation icons (Fig. 4.41) which lack the relative staying power and effect of *yōkai* design with traditional genealogy.

The reason for this phenomenon could be attributed to the fact that Mizuki's original *yōkai* designs neither contained elements of significant innovation nor presented a thoroughly developed background myth created around them, unlike Sekien and other Edo and Meiji period artists, who utilized Sekien's work for reference.



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**Fig. 4.38** Kyūketsuki (吸血木, Blood Sucking Tree)  
 The Kyūketsuki (吸血木, Blood Sucking Tree) **1**, **2** in manga  
 (Mizuki 1988/1:135, 136) and animation **3** 1990s Ep#109,  
**4** 2007 series Ep#6



Courtesy of Taro Okamoto Memorial Foundation for the Promotion of Contemporary Art

**Fig. 4.39** Okamoto Taro's influence on popular visual culture

- 1** Okamoto Taro: Rule of the Forest (森の掟, Morino Okite, oil on canvas, 1950) and **2** Okamoto with his costume design Paira-jin (パイライ人) from *Uchūjin Tōkyōni Arawaru* (宇宙人東京に現る, Spacemen Appear in Tokyo, dir. Shima Koji, prod. Daiei, 1956) (Okamoto Taro Museum 2006:3)



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**Fig. 4.40** Surrealist designs for Mizuki's original yōkai  
 Surrealist character design of Mizuki's original yōkai **1** Ido Sennin (井戸仙人, Well Wizard) (Toyooka, Takami 2007:63) and **2** Kyūketsu Pi (吸血鬼ピー, Vampire Pi) 1990s Ep#9



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**Fig. 4.41** Kōmori Neko (蝙蝠猫, Bat Cat)

The character design of the Kōmori Neko (蝙蝠猫, Bat Cat), animation 1990s Ep#97 partially follows the Bake Neko (化け猫, Cat Monster) tradition, while the bat as a yōkai source is without predecessors in Japanese monster art (Mook 2007:68)

#### YŌKAI PERSONA: THE ARTIST AS YŌKAI

Episode 58 of the 1960s series establishes Mizuki Shigeru's persona as an artist who belongs to the yōkai world he created. In the animation series Mizuki is depicted with one arm and in a self-deprecating manner, in which a chain-smoking animation character of Mizuki admits to have run out of ideas for the *Kitaro* manga, and resignedly goes to his favorite café house, where he meets Kitaro and Nezumi Otoko. "What is this?", asks the animated version of Mizuki's wife, when meeting the yōkai characters, to which Nezumi Otoko answers: "Missus, this is when fantasy meets reality."

Manga artists often enter the world they created, such as Tezuka Osamu's character, which is based on his trademark Swiss cap and round glasses. As a more recent example, contemporary horror manga artist Umezu Kazuo (榎図 かずお, 1936-) uses a puppet of himself, which wears the artist's easily recognizable red-and-white striped shirt, in the film version *Tokyo Zombie* (東京ゾンビ, dir. Sato Sakichi, 2005) based on the manga by Hanakuma Yūsaku (花くまゆうさく, 1967-) (Hanakuma 1999). The ironic appearance of the yōkai-ga artist within his own imaginary world is paralleled in the practice of caricature self-portraits by ukiyo-e artist Kawanabe Kyōsai, who often depicted himself in sketches in a humorous manner. As a tribute, Kyōsai's character is recreated as a yōkai in the 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō* by mask designer Dohi Yoshinari (Fig. 4.42). Mizuki's character returns in the final moments of the film *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005) in the role of the Great Yōkai Elder (妖怪大翁, Yōkai Taiō), an imaginary character thousands of years old, who stands at the top rank of the yōkai world. According to the description of his character, he stands between the yōkai and human worlds, striving for



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**Fig. 4.42** Kawanabe Kyōsai.

**1** Kyōsai self-portrait (Kyōsai in Tokyo Prison, 10<sup>th</sup> Month 1870, Kyōsai Gadan, 1887) (Clark 1993:22), **2** Mask design of Kyōsai yōkai character (Dohi Yoshinari, *Yōkai Daisensō*, 2005)

balance, and only shows his true form when relations between them deteriorate. At those times he appears to mend things, as a giant head riding on a mikoshi portable Shinto shrine (Zennihon Yōkai Suishin Iinkai 2005:84). Manga-Mizuki, the character of an outsider in the 1960s animation series, in this way becomes part of the yōkai world in film.

#### YŌKAI IN POSTWAR NARRATIVE

The visual representation of yōkai served different roles in each historical period. While they were equated with harmful, unexplainable energies in the Heian period, as their visual representation became widespread by the Muromachi period their images started to be associated with the social strata of outcasts within Japan. The Tsuchigumo Earth Spider and Shutendōji's forest-dwelling demon army were visual metaphors for

rebels and renegades by the Tokugawa period, while the Meiji period more frequently rendered the yōkai as the creations of deranged minds, as it is presented on Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's *New Forms of Thirty-Six Ghosts* (1889–92) ukiyo-e series. During the Taishō and war years, under state censorship of visual media, the yōkai became simplified caricatures of the Allied Forces.

In the years of Allied Occupation, from 1945 to 1951, affordable forms of popular visual entertainment consisted of kashihon manga borrowing outlets and mobile kamishibai picture-card story tellers. State media were strictly controlled by the Civil Censorship Detachment of the Allied Powers until 1951, limiting the topics the media could address, prohibiting criticism of the Allied Powers, defense of the imperial side or reporting on diplomatic relations between Allied and Communist states (Dower 1999).

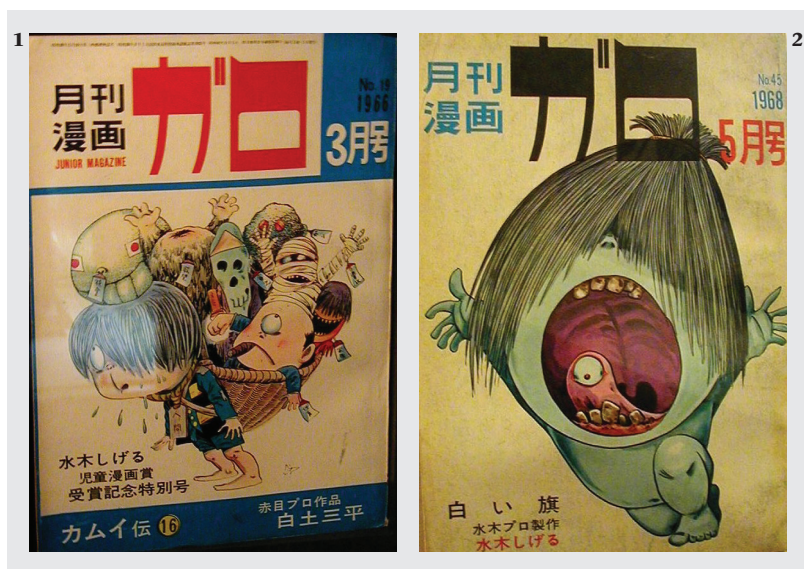
Manga for entertainment purposes developed rapidly in the early postwar years, starting with Tezuka Osamu's groundbreaking work *Shin Takarajima* (新宝島, New Treasure Island) published in 1947. After 1952, state censorship of the media was gradually lifted. Television broadcasting started in 1953 and color television programs appeared in 1963. In 1964, *Garo*, the first avant-garde art manga magazine, was established by editor-in-chief Nagai Katsuichi (長井勝一, 1921–96). *Garo* introduced many new talented gekiga (劇画, graphic novel) artists and graphic designers including Shirato Sanpei (白土三平, 1932–), Tamura Shigeru (田村茂, 1909–87) or Tatsumi Yoshihiro (辰巳ヨシヒロ, 1935–), many of whom had substantial influence on the development of the visual arts in Japan in the following years.

Mizuki Shigeru started publishing *Kitaro* stories in *Garo* from the early years of the magazine, from 1964 until 1979 (Fig. 4.43). While horror manga was a known sub-genre in Japan in the 1960s, the series of the ongoing adventures of *Kitaro* in *Garo* and in the popular *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* was the first time in postwar Japan that yōkai characters reappeared in number in visual media. Following *Kitaro's* success in manga form, the animation series was launched in 1968 on Fuji Television by Toei Animation, resurrecting and reinventing the monsters for the next five decades on television. In this new setting, yōkai took up new roles in providing social commentary in their modern and contemporary representations from 1968 to the present time.

#### YŌKAI AS ENDANGERED SPECIES

As Foster points out in relation to the Kappa, traditional monsters returned to popular culture as products of processes of folklorism, where units of folklore are altered or invented for specific purposes in literature, art or popular media (Foster 1998:1–24).

The history of the visual representation of yōkai is interwoven with the dynamic exchanges of folklore and folklorism since the first yōkai



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**Fig. 4.43** Kitaro characters on the cover of *Garō* magazine

**1** March 1966 edition, **2** May 1968 edition (Nagai Katsuichi Manga Art Museum Collection, Shiogama City, Miyagi Prefecture)

depictions appeared in the Muromachi period, and this phenomenon is not new or specific to the postwar era. The difference, when compared to previous art historical periods, lies in the fact that with the emergence of new media of mass communication *yōkai* appear in new genres, such as manga, film, animation or computer games, and reach a wider range of audiences in a shorter time. At the same time, with the changing realities caused by rapid postwar industrialization and urbanization, *yōkai* as signifiers shifted to new, unprecedented roles.

As Foster demonstrates, the postwar transformation of the Kappa follows the pattern of value recognition, iconization in the mass media and consequent mascotization in diverse genres of popular culture. The *yōkai* becomes a mascot that stands for an idealized, nostalgic rural past and a shared national and communal identity. By extension, it also becomes a symbol of pristine nature and an idyllic rural way of life that is progressively disappearing in the postwar period.

The same process can be identified in the *Kitaro* animation series. *Yōkai* as symbols of environmental pollution and environmental problems caused by urban encroachment first surface in the 1960s series, and the number of episodes with such themes progressively increases throughout the 1970s to 1990s series. By the time of the 1990s series

approximately 10% of the episodes equate yōkai with environmental problems.

The patterns of representation can be categorized in the following way: yōkai become disturbed because of pollution or loss of habitat, or it is the yōkai as Tsukumogami (utensil monster) which are thrown away. When pollution, in the form of air pollution or waste dumping, is the problem, the situation is resolved by humans promising the monsters that they would clean up and not pollute again. It is a simplified story pattern where harmony is amicably restored at the end. When following the Tsukumogami narrative pattern, where angered utensils become monsters after they are thrown away, the solution is again straightforward: the humans promise the utensils that they will treat them properly and with respect in the future. In the case of human encroachment, however, the artist is unable to offer a simple solution that restores the “wa” (harmony) between humans and monsters, and in those cases the yōkai are lulled by food offerings, they simply disappear or they offer to continue their lives in the human environment.

As these patterns show, the role of the yōkai is controlled so as not to overstep the boundaries of the emblem in the settings of twentieth-century mass media, as these domesticated and simplified mascots allow for a token solution to environmental problems with an unconvincing happy ending that later also typifies Miyazaki Hayao’s optimistic epic, *Mononoke Hime* (1997). Takahata Isao’s *Tanuki Gasen Pompoko* (1994) is a notable exception to this pattern, as Takahata drastically confronts the inevitable consequences of human encroachment on natural habitats in his animated film, showing how badgers are ultimately hit and killed by cars.

A representative example of this type of narrative in the *Kitaro* series is the 1960s series Episode 40, The Yōkai of Obebe Marsh (Obebe Numano Yōkai, おべべ沼の妖怪), which aired on October 6, 1968, based on the manga episode of the same title that appeared in the *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* in June, 1968 (Mizuki 1988/2:906, 801–15).

The main yōkai character of this first environmentally conscious episode of *Kitaro* is the Kawauso (川獺), or River Otter. River otters (*Lutra Canadensis*) are defined as

... semiaquatic mammals, noted for their playful behavior, that belong to the weasel family. The lithe and slender body has short legs, a strong neck, and a long flattened tail that helps propel the animal gracefully through water. Swimming ability is further enhanced in most species by four webbed feet... .

Most travel is aquatic, but river otters can venture swiftly overland between bodies of water. They typically follow the shortest route possible and often establish much-used trails. While in the water, they constantly search features such as logjams and deepwater pools for prey. To rest, otters seek refuge in underground holes, rock crevices, beaver lodges, cavities in root systems, or simply dense vegetation along the shoreline.

(Britannica 2007:9057672)

The *yōkai* version of the river otter is known from Sekien's rendering (Sekien 1992:37), and its characteristics, such as turning into a child or woman to trick villagers, is noted in the *Wakan Sansai Zue*, Vol. 38, as well as in Edo period *kaidan* stories. The *Kawauso* is also considered to be a version of the *Kappa*. Based on the playful behavior of the original animal, the *Kawauso yōkai* is considered to be a trickster lurking around waterbeds and occasionally entering the village.

In the *Mizuki* episode, the *Kawauso* shape shifts into a little boy, in accordance with the lore associated with this monster. It pulls tricks on the local village community just as known from traditional sources (Iwai 2000/2:43). However, it soon turns out that the *yōkai* is itself the victim of human encroachment on its habitat, and that it was acting in self-defense. The episode's airing date corresponds with the period from the mid-1950s to the 1960s when aggressive river regulation and dam building resulted in increasing protests from rural communities.

The solution offered in the *Kitaro* episode is intriguing. The *yōkai* has to show remorse because of the burden it has placed on the village. After it moves the giant rock it put on the new dam to sabotage its



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**Fig. 4.44** *Kawauso* (川獺, River Otter)

The representation of the *Kawauso* (川獺, River Otter) *yōkai* in **1** *Kitaro* 2007 animation and **2** in Sekien's catalogue (Sekien 1992:37)

construction, the water yōkai voluntarily decides to “move to the mountains, where he can live a quiet life” (Fig. 4.44).

The optimistic, amicable farewell of the yōkai tones down the notion that “moving to the mountains” (山に行く, *yamani iku*) is a traditional euphemism for passing away, derived from the practice of village elders going to the mountains to die in times of food shortages, that is also epically rendered in Kinoshita Keisuke’s (木下恵介, 1912–98) 1958 film *Narayama Bushikō* (檜山節考, *Ballad of Narayama*, dir. Kinoshita Keisuke, prod. Shōchiku, 1958)

Not soon after the airing of this episode, the Japanese river otter, which proliferated along Japanese riverbeds until the early 1950s, almost entirely disappeared from the islands. Even though they are optimistically classified as “critically endangered species,” there have been no otter sightings in Japan since 1979.

#### YŌKAI AS PROCESSING TRAUMA: GHOSTS OF WAR

Yōkai became associated with foreigners and enemies of war in popular visual media with Japan’s first military victory after the Meiji restoration in the Sino-Japanese War 1894–95. In the Meiji period, ukiyo-e artists represented defeated Chinese soldiers as caricaturized yōkai. After Japan’s military build-up and full mobilization, animation and caricatures created under state surveillance and censorship, equated yōkai, mostly Oni, with the Allied Powers.

From the late Meiji military victories until Japan’s capitulation in 1945, the artists and designers who used yōkai as political metaphors were working under the agenda of promoting nationalism and had no direct experience of war.

In the postwar years, however, the situation was reversed. The expression of nationalistic notions in popular media was prohibited during the Allied Occupation, and was repressed in the following years. Furthermore, freedom of expression in the visual arts was gradually granted in the postwar period and with the emergence of new media, such as television and manga magazines, new avenues of artistic expression were progressively explored by the 1960s.

The newly emerging visual artists had first-hand experience of the realities of war which they translated into works of art and graphic narratives in the postwar years. While nationalism was a theme to be avoided, to find a renewed definition of national identity was an aim of both visual artists and the national media.

Mizuki Shigeru’s *Kitaro* manga series once again uses yōkai as metaphors related to warfare. However, while until 1945 yōkai were equated with the foreign enemy in popular visual representation, Mizuki, for the first time, equates yōkai with the horrors of war itself, from the standpoint of the victims and fallen soldiers. In this sense, Mizuki utilizes yōkai to help process the trauma that soldiers lived through at the front lines and to propagate a pacifist message through the yōkai characters.

In the *Kitaro* animation series, the role of *yōkai* as metaphors for war victims lessens with the progression of time: While the 1960s series portrays *yōkai* in this role in five episodes, this number is reduced to two by the 1970s, one in the 1980s and the 1990s, which are remakes of the same 1960s episode, *Yōkai Flower* (妖花), and serve a distinct agenda pertaining to the construction of a national identity.

This process indicates that *yōkai* have become metaphors for topical anxieties. With the passage of time, the horrors of the Second World War gradually fade as the new audiences have less first-hand experience of the era. On the other hand, the postwar economic boom triggers unprecedented industrialization and urbanization in the country, where consequent acute environmental problems become apparent. Mirroring these processes, the number of *yōkai* that stand for war experiences decreases, as the number that stand for environmental problems increases in the period from the 1960s to the 1990s.

Nonetheless, a newly promoted national identity regarding Japan's role in the Second World War is also noticeable in the episodes that utilize *yōkai* to represent war experiences. While the 1960s Episode 32 *Yōkai Flower*, remade in the 1980s Episode 71 and in the 1990s Episode 30, deals with the trauma soldiers experienced at the front lines during the Pacific War (1942–45), the 1960s Episodes 5 and 6, *Daikaijū* (大怪獣), process the trauma related to the domestic occupation, nuclear bombings and Cold War era paranoia.

#### YŌKAI FLOWER (妖花)

Originally aired on Sunday, August 11, 1968, on the day of the annual commemoration of Japan's surrender in the Second World War as well as of the victims of the two atomic bombings, the episode *Yōkai Flower* (妖花) centers on a war theme that allows some insight into the postwar self-image Japan cultivated in the late 1960s that is still relevant today.

Based on a play on words, Hanako (Flower-girl) is overwhelmed by a monster flower that she and Kitaro trace back to an island in the South Pacific. Soon they find skeletal remains of Japanese soldiers who fought on the island during the Second World War, together with a seal-ring on one of the skeleton's fingers, engraved with the family name Hanada (it's a flower) (Fig. 4.45). As the story unfolds, it turns out that the monster flower that attacked Hanako in Tokyo is possessed by the spirit of Hanako's ancestor who died on the island during the war, and who wished to be buried properly. After the burial, his soul becomes at rest.

During the spirit's narration, we see flashbacks of solemn Japanese soldiers, men, women and children, being bombed to death in a cave on the island. The military emblems displayed in the episode are the sun disk from the current Japanese flag, and not the sun disk with sixteen red rays, which represented Japan's navy and military during the war years. In the case of the 1990s remake, the soldier wears a five-pointed star as an emblem on his helmet (Fig. 4.45). The current inhabitants of



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**Fig. 4.45** Yōkai Flower

Image sequences from the Yōkai Flower **1**, **2** 1980s Ep#71 and  
**3** 1990s Ep#30

the island are cute and exotic kobolds with unicorns, and the bombing enemy is never shown.

The explicit lesson learnt in this episode is that young Japanese should not forget about the sacrifices their forbears made during the war. There is no mention of Japan's role in the Second World War; the native islanders are not introduced in detail and the reasons why Japanese soldiers were forced into caves during air raids are not given. Hanako's ancestor is together with his wife on the island, despite the fact that the war effort in Japan did not involve Japanese women as soldiers. Despite Mizuki's war experience and often expressed pacifism, these visual tools create a somewhat misleading self-image of colonial Japan.

Animation, due to its perceived innocence, is one of the most effective tools used for the dissemination of sublime propaganda in mass media. Daniel J. Leab demonstrates in his work *Orwell Subverted: The CIA and the Filming of the Animal Farm* (Leab 2007) the involvement of the CIA in producing the 1954 Batchelor-Halas animated feature film *Animal Farm*, adapted from George Orwell's original novel, and how the

content of the film was manipulated in order to emphasize a strong anti-communist message. The history of censorship in American animation is further detailed by Cohen (2004).

At the same time, animated cartoons produced in the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellite states used visual and narrative tools to emphasize the validity of communism and to negate capitalism, following guidelines laid out by state propaganda offices. Diverging from these rules risked the animator his or her livelihood or even imprisonment (Dizseri 1999).

Prior to and during the Second World War animation was used both by the Axis and Allied sides as propaganda, as was the case in the *Momotaro* animation series produced in Japan between 1931 and 1945. *Sorano Momotaro* (空の桃太郎, Momotaro of the Sky, dir. Murata Yasuji, 10 mins animation, 1931) and *Umino Momotaro* (海の桃太郎, Momotaro of the Sea, dir. Murata Yasuji, 2 mins animation, 1932) concentrate on the aerial and naval war effort, while *Momotarono Umiwashi* (桃太郎の海鷲, Momotaro and the Sea Hawk, dir. Seo Mitsuyo, 1943) and the 74-minute-long feature, *Momotarono Shimpei* (桃太郎の神兵, Momotaro's Divine Sea Warriors, dir. Seo Mitsuyo) produced by Shōchiku Dōga, which premiered on March 12, 1945, contains overall propaganda messages. Momotaro, the Japanese folk hero, together with his animal companions, which serve as allegories for Asian colonies, embark for an island in the Southern Seas where they teach the local animals how to talk (Japanese) and how to work happily for the Empire. The evil enemies are the British demons, who are finally conquered by the boy hero and his happy companions. The film took up considerable resources at a time of severe shortages, showing the extent of propaganda value the imperial leadership attributed to the effect of popular animated films.

The *Kitaro* episode *Monster Flower* does not essentially digress from the core concept of *Momotarono Shimpei*. Where there was a visible enemy in *Momotaro*, which is now politely visually censored, the viewer only hears and does not get a glimpse of the attacking forces, similar to the earliest literary descriptions of mononoke parades in the Heian period. The natives of the island are exotic, otherworldly creatures who do not speak a human language and who are passively happy without concern for the war remains on their island. The only humans, and the only woman in the animation, are Japanese and they are only depicted during an air raid. The jungle hosts no human remains other than those of the Japanese; those are the only ones that are laid to rest at the end. The essential lesson learnt in the episode is that a good Japanese child does not forget about his or her ancestors who served in the war.

Mizuki, a war veteran, has shown traits of pacifism not only in his autobiographical writings and manga *Manga Mizuki Shigeru-den* (Mizuki 2004), *Rabaul War Diaries* (Mizuki 1997) and *Fifty Years with Topetro* (Mizuki 2002), but also in his approach towards the *yōkai*, the ultimate outsiders of society. On the other hand, the over-simplified self-victimizing approach that was applied in the *Yōkai Flower* episode indicates

that it serves the agenda of reconstituting a new and polished national self-image of Japan's role in the Second World War.

Mizuki's personal stance towards the war is more subtly expressed in the 1970s Episodes 16 and 37. Mizuki often expresses in his autobiographical works that the yōkai he creates represent the spirits of his fallen comrades. The 1970s Episode 16, *Invitation from the South* (南からの招き, Minamikarano Maneki) is a nostalgic episode based on Mizuki's war past, which narrates the story of a Kappa society that nursed a wounded soldier back to life. The utopian society is reminiscent of the underwater Kappa world described in Akutagawa Ryunosuke's novel *Kappa* (1927) (Akutagawa 1933). It also draws parallels with Mizuki's experiences on Rabaul island during the Pacific War, as the Kappa community could be considered as the symbol of the native tribe that gave food to Mizuki, according to the artist's autobiographical works.

The 1970s Episode 37 is another tribute to Mizuki's war past where the artist's humanistic touch could be felt by the delicate way the war-torn backgrounds are drawn, in the middle of which the fragile manga character of the bespectacled, little-bodied soldier is placed. Mizuki describes in his autobiographical work, *Fifty Years with Topetro*, the heartbreak it caused when he told relatives how he gave one of his glasses to a young soldier, who later died. The soldier with glasses becomes a metaphor in Mizuki's graphic art for the fragility of man in the war machine.

Mizuki is a representative of the generation of manga artists who grew up during the war, and that is reflected in his art work. Besides manga art, Mizuki also illustrates media material for the Peace Memorial Museum (平和祈念展示資料館) in Shinjuku ward, Tokyo, and the Historical Materials Hall for the Wounded and Sick Retired Soldiers (戦傷病者史料館), the only museum in Japan dedicated to the wounded, albeit only Japanese, soldiers of the Second World War, an institution that is within walking distance of the Yasukuni shrine.

#### DAIKAIJŪ (大怪獣)

Mizuki also addressed the anxieties associated with homeland occupation and nuclear warfare in the 1960s Episodes 5 and 6 *Daikaijū* (大怪獣).

The 1960s saw the emergence of the kaijū (怪獣 monster beast) film genre in Japan. Influenced by the 1933 American film *King Kong* (dir. Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack, prod. RKO Pictures), the first kaijū to appear on the movie screen was *Gojira* (Godzilla) in 1954 (dir. Honda Ishiro, prod. Toho Film). While the theme of the original *King Kong*, created between the two world wars, centers on the colonial idea of exploration and exploitation of the powers of nature, the concept of the Japanese kaijū accentuates the mutation of nature and post-nuclear anxieties.

Appearing on screen in 1954, the year the US Military tested its second hydrogen bomb on Bikini Island, three thousand kilometers east

of Tokyo, Godzilla is a dinosaur-like reptile that mutated to gigantic size due to the fallout from a hydrogen bomb test carried out in the Pacific Ocean. Toho's *Godzilla* was answered by Daiei's *Gamera* (Ion 1996:50), a mutated giant tortoise, in 1965 (大怪獣ガメラ, Daikaijū Gamera, dir. Yuasa Noriaki, prod. Daiei, 1965). Gamera, the giant turtle, is awakened in the Arctic region due to an atomic explosion occurring in a military incident between American and Soviet forces. Both *Godzilla* and *Gamera*, awakened by the Cold War nuclear powers, saw several remakes and sequels, and both attack Tokyo.

Even though Mizuki utilized the kaijū theme in his manga episode *Daikaijū* published in 1966, his approach differs from those of the *Gamera* and *Godzilla* movies. *Godzilla* and *Gamera* are born in areas strictly outside of the uchi (内, inside) concept of Japan, within foreign military zones and unfamiliar, threatening parts of the Pacific Ocean. They are depersonalized, outside forces of nature, attacking the civilized "inside" Japanese home of Tokyo. They are a threat that is neutralized or eliminated through military tactics in a simplified fight between the two opposing forces of home protectors and outside invaders.

While King Kong is an ape, the closest relative of man in nature, both kaijū creatures are prehistoric reptiles, suggesting low intelligence, lack of personality and lack of emotions. Spectators do not have the chance to develop an emotional attachment to the giant invaders, neither do they have a glimpse into the personal psyche of the monsters. *Gamera* and *Godzilla* are outsiders, and implicit in this fact is that they do not have personalities or souls; instead, they are primitive threats to be dealt with by military means.

Mizuki, on the other hand, develops the theme in greater complexity. The environment where the *Daikaijū*, a hairy whale-like creature, lives is identified early on as New Guinea (Mizuki 1988/1:222) and the paradise-like island is introduced with familiarity and affection, and in great detail on the first twenty pages of the hundred-page-long manga episode. As Mizuki spent his military years on Rabaul, Papua New Guinea, the visual description of the island evokes a certain sense of nostalgia.

The monster's birthplace is not the unfamiliar and dangerous outside world of the soto (外, xenos), as in the case of *Godzilla* and *Gamera*. Mizuki's *Daikaijū* character is developed to be part of the uchi (内, homoios) sphere from the very beginning. This is a key point in Mizuki's work when dealing with yōkai, and bringing them from the outside to the inside by means of visual devices such as home-land descriptions or showing vulnerability and personal human-like or comic traits. The reptile characters *Godzilla* or *Gamera* both lack a sense of humor or warmth of their own.

Mizuki's *Daikaijū* character is a hairy whale, a gentle yet gigantic creature, a comic tribute to the original *Gojira* concept, as *Gojira* was originally a word coined from *Gorilla* and *Kujira* (whale). In contrast to the reptiles appearing in the kaijū films, the whale, while giant in body size, is a warm-blooded, non-aggressive mammal that is known

for its intelligence and vulnerability. The visual description of the whale Daikaijū entails repeated emphasis of its cuteness, fragility and tangible affection by the artist (Mizuki 1988/1:248, 275, 289, 320).

The familiarity of the whale Daikaijū is heightened as it is in fact Kitaro who turns into the monster after being tricked and injected with the Daikaijū's blood. As Kitaro is transformed, he loses his ability to communicate, but retains all his intellect, emotions and personality. He becomes an ultimate metaphor of discrimination and defenselessness, while at the same time being a rampaging monster.

The compulsory elements of the genre also enter the story, such as a mecha Daikaijū and the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, who both battle the hairy whale monster. Mizuki portrays a Japanese naval force that evokes the country's military past (Mizuki 1988/1:307). The Japanese army (self-defense force) even drops an atomic bomb on the Kitaro-monster (Mizuki 1988/1:299), something that is repeated in the animated version. The episode is criticized for using the imagery of dropping an atomic bomb by Japanese forces as being inconsiderate to the sufferings of the A-bomb victims as well as for its disregard of Japan's image as an anti-nuclear nation (Toyooka, Takami 2007:13). On the other hand, Mizuki's imagery shows more realism concerning the ruthlessness of warfare, derived from his first-hand experiences in war situations, than the faux idealism with which the Japanese Self-Defense Forces are portrayed in the Daikaijū films. While in the Daikaijū films nuclear harm is caused by the outsider forces of the United States and the Soviet Union and it is mended on homeland by the Japanese forces defending themselves, in the case of Mizuki's work the gentle monster is created by fundamental human malice, such as greed and treachery, and is fought with all weapons in self-defense, in an ultimately realistic manner. While Mizuki's story used the elements of the popular Daikaijū genre, such as nuclear power, city-rampaging monsters and giant mecha (メカ, mechanical object) robots, his work centers on issues regarding discrimination and personal fragility in a discriminatory society, displaying Kafkaesque overtones of alienation to the extent that a work within the genre of children's comics allows.

#### YŌKAI AS SOCIAL COMMENTARY: INVOLUNTARY SIGNIFIERS

Yōkai are part of the folk imagination partially invented to serve the purpose of alleviating anxieties and processing trauma. Until the Muromachi period yōkai were invisible, inexplicable forces (mononoke), while from the Muromachi to the Edo period they represented disease and famine, death and hell, natural disasters, dangers and dangerous outsiders. Their visual representation varies from comical to fearsome, which serves the purpose of relieving psychological stress related to the experiences they signify. By the Meiji period, the visual representation of yōkai had gradually lost this function as yōkai were progressively

purged from the folk imagination, and by the Taisho period they had become simplified characters manipulated by the state media.

In the postwar period, visual artists regained their liberty to express *yōkai* relatively freely; however, in the case of popular visual media, such as manga and animation, commercial as well as political factors also influenced the artist. Mizuki Shigeru's *Kitaro* series showcases the most prolific number of *yōkai* in postwar media, and the changes in the representation of *yōkai* in the series from 1966 to the present time indicate the processes by which visual representation of *yōkai* fluctuates between being the untamed signifiers of trauma and domesticated versions of mascotization.

This process of fluctuation follows a certain pattern. In the 1960s series, *yōkai* are represented as comical creatures, often with visual signs of big, round heads and small bodies, signifying their childlike and harmless nature. This aligns with the Disney traditions in children's animation, as pointed out in the essay "A Biological Homage to Mickey Mouse" (Gould 1980:95–107) by evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould (1941–2002), and helps to establish the *yōkai* as emblems of an idyllic past and the nostalgia of childhood. This tactic also derives from the animation studio's strategy to convert the originally gruesome horror manga *Hakabano Kitaro* (Graveyard Kitaro) into the child-friendly brand of *Gegegeno Kitaro* that can sell merchandise while reintroducing *yōkai* characters to mainstream visual media. In the 1970s series, this trend drastically changes. The *yōkai* of the 1970s series are more threatening and antagonistic in appearance, and in their narrative patterns their visual characteristics evoke more mature, adult entities with smaller heads proportionate to their elongated torsos and limbs.

In the 1970s series, the *yōkai* are directly associated with death. The 1970s series Episodes 6 Possessed by the Dead (死人つき) and 39 *Yōkai* Water Mill (妖怪水車) display dead bodies in a matter-of-fact manner. The *Yōkai* Water Mill episode also shows how corpses are made into leather and in several cases, a happy ending means a successful funeral. As the younger audiences of the 1980s and 1990s series are one generation removed from first-hand experience of the horrors of the Second World War, the series seems to become more explicit in associating *yōkai* with death and less with sensitivity towards survivors of the war.

Despite the fact that the *Kitaro* series was primarily aimed at child audiences, the 1970s series is robustly filled with explicit representations of death and dead bodies. On the other hand, the representation of death partially served the agenda of transplanting prewar notions concerning national identity with regards to the dead, as in the case of the 1970s Episode 36 *Yōkai* Room (妖怪屋敷). In the *Yōkai* Room episode a young schoolboy dies and consequently becomes able to see the spirits of dead ancestors lining up behind each living being. The moral of the story is verbalized for children in an easy-to-understand manner: children should behave well because the spirits of their ancestors are always watching them from behind their backs. This reverberates with the

theory laid down by Yanagita Kunio in *About Our Ancestors: the Japanese Family System* (first published in 1945), which claims that the veneration of ancestor spirits plays a central role in the Japanese family system and should be maintained in the modern period (Yanagita 1946).

In the 1980s and 1990s series animation returned to its child-friendly version, reintroducing the child-like proportions of the monsters, with new, comical personalities. This iconization process is further supported by new computer-aided coloring technologies introduced to animation. Dead bodies disappear from the lighthearted story lines and the mascotization of yōkai in popular visual media is now complete.

Nonetheless, the recurring episode *Hakusanbō* (白山坊) carries an involuntary signifier in its narration concerning the psychological undercurrents associated with yōkai representation. The *Hakusanbō* episode is remade in the 1980s Episode 11 and the 1990s Episode 39, based on the original 1960s Episode 24. Its story is loosely based on the *Kitsuneno Yomeiri* (狐の嫁入り, Fox wedding) folk metaphor linked to the natural phenomenon of the sunshower. The manga and the 1960s animated versions of this story start with the narration of an attempted suicide by a young man, while the 1980s animated version expands this theme to attempted murder-suicide by a young married couple carrying their newborn child. The 1990s animated version shows the attempted murder-suicide of a father and a newborn child.

The 1980s version shows a matter-of-fact approach towards the act of murder-suicide, including the detailed description of the couple leaving their shoes and a parting note at the cliff from which they jump. We are told in flashback narration that the couple was haunted by loan sharks. The animation itself never passes moral judgment on murder-suicide and implicitly shows that the couple's act was the honorable thing for them to turn to in their desperate situation. This recurring episode indicates that despite the mascotization of yōkai characters in the period of the 1980s to 1990s, yōkai would still be utilized to process psychological trauma. The 2007 series brings the *Kitaro* animation full circle in this respect, where yōkai return as threatening, mysterious and ambiguous creatures deeply rooted within the realm of the human psyche.

#### KITARO IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Nine years after Toei Animation's fourth series of the *Gegege no Kitaro* animation had ended, the studio released a new sequence of the animation series, which the Fuji Television network launched in the children's matinee time slot of 9 to 9.30 am on Sunday mornings. The new series started on April 1, 2007, four weeks before the *Shōchiku* film version of *Gegege no Kitaro* (dir. Motoki Katsuhide, prod. Shōchiku, 2007), starring Wentz Eiji (ウエンツ瑛士, 1985–), debuted in Japanese cinemas. Toei and Fuji TV thereby could exploit the presence of the preliminary marketing campaign. The new animation series debuted in an atmosphere of heightened anticipation regarding the *Kitaro* franchise and the *Kitaro* of

the new millennium needed to deliver a renewed visual and narrative world in alignment with the significant development of Japanese animation in the last decade in relation to computer graphics, 3D simulation and gaming virtual environments.

While visual and narrative differences between the 1980s and 1990s series are subtle, the difference between the 1960s and the 1970s series is striking because multicolor production replaced the monochrome version, and the difference between the 1970s and the 1980s to 1990s versions is equally significant as the process of taming the story lines and the gradual domestication of the *yōkai* into child-friendly household entities gradually took place from the 1970s to the 1990s. The visual and narrative changes, which were introduced in the 2007 series, again brought significant changes to the visual world of the series. The 2007 series is radically different from its predecessors in its take on representing *yōkai* in media.

While the earlier series closely followed the story lines outlined by the Mizuki manga, the 2007 series, directed by Toei animator Kaizawa Yukio (具沢幸男, 1960–) loosely uses the Mizuki manga as a framework to build complex narratives and nuanced character development on. As Kaizawa claims, the creators of the 2007 series aimed to break away from the remake cycle that was characteristic of the earlier episodes of the 1980s to 1990s sequences. In Kaizawa's words, the 2007 series aims at reacquainting today's younger generations with the fearsome power which *yōkai* represent, making Kitaro a "dark hero" in the process (Mook 2007:41).

As the new *Gegege* series paints a dark and scary contemporary *yōkai* world in the Kitaro saga, Fuji Television started a new animation series less than one year later, in January 2008, based on the original Mizuki manga, *Hakabano Kitaro* (墓場の鬼太郎, Graveyard Kitaro). This version, aired in the midnight time slot, closely follows Mizuki's original horror manga style that was utilized in the *Hakabano Kitaro* kashihon and early manga series and that was abandoned for the child-friendly *Gegege* version when Kitaro was first adapted for television programs.

With this, the representation of *yōkai* had come full circle by 2007 as the new series portrays a scary, often gruesome and morbid dark world of the original manga, which style had been gradually diluted from the 1980s to the 1990s. The *yōkai* of the longest running animation series in 2007 once again express and represent fear, anxiety and aggression, with a matching visual world that often seems unsuitable for children.

Although the malaise returns to *yōkai*, the animators of the new series, distanced from Mizuki's original body of work, created characters which are less charismatic and emblematic of the *yōkai* phenomenon that Mizuki managed to capture with wit and conciseness. The 2007 series, while playing on the horror elements as well as contemporary aspects of *yōkai*, fails to capture their essence in the way Mizuki did, and risks the gradual loss of the originality associated with Mizuki's work. Still, the creators managed to recreate Kitaro for the contemporary audience with



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**Fig. 4.46** Anime style is established in the opening sequence of the first episode, while water color still images and picture-in-picture still frames are later introduced to the 2007 series.

a new visual and narrative world which mirrors the changing role *yōkai* have been assigned since the turn of the millenium.

The 2007 series started airing on April 1, 2007, showing one 23-minute episode per week for the duration of the year that continued in 2008 and 2009.

The design structure of the 2007 episodes introduces substantially new visual elements to the series. The imagery is created with computer graphics while interior and urban spaces are often expressed with a three-dimensionality which occasionally turns into computer game environments. The first example of this comes in an early sequence of the opening episode, *Yōkaino Sumu Machi* (妖怪の棲む街, The Town Where *Yōkai* Live, Episode 1), where Neko Musume enters the parallel reality of a *yōkai* town that is reached through the alleys and gutters of a busy Tokyo suburb, possibly Chōfu-city, the real-life residence of Mizuki Shigeru.

The drawing style is in contemporary anime style that is established early in the opening sequence of the debut episode, while previously not seen visual elements, such as water color still images or picture-in-picture still frames borrowed from the manga tradition are introduced later in the series (Fig. 4.46). These tools underpin the conceptual and content design which emphasizes an intuitive pictorial narrative unlike the previous series.

The new design aims to paint a realistic environment equivalent to

contemporary Japan's adult urban spaces, such as convenience stores, parks, train stations, film studios, company interiors, etc. and therefore emphasizes the presence of the yōkai in our own reality. While rural settings appear considerably less frequently in this series compared to earlier decades, a new introduction, the Yōkai Town, situated in a parallel dimensionality behind suburban alleys, serves as an alternative vehicle for nostalgia associated with the yōkai.

Mizuki's manga series contains sporadic references to the yōkai apartment, an apartment inhabited by yōkai; however, the town setting is the original design of the animation producers, while the influence of Miyazaki Hayao's Yōkai Bath from the animated film *The Spiriting Away of Sen and Chihiro* (千と千尋の神隠し, *Sen to Chihirono Kamikakushi*, prod. Studio Ghibli, 2001) is tangible. The Yōkai Town, a concentrated presence of the eerie beings counterbalances the rigid, crowded yet hollow, cold metropolitan spaces which bring malevolent yōkai into being.

In fact, the new series assumes more maturity from its audiences than series of the previous decades, as Kitaro and his companions display more subtle human traits, while their past and present lives are also shown in more detail. Nezumi Otoko becomes more nuanced and his previously simplistic treacherous personality gains considerably more dimensionality: he becomes a metaphor of a modern-day hustler. The producers also juggled with giving an edge to the animation icon Medama Oyaji by replacing his bath in a cup of traditional green tea with that of café latte, lemon tea or hot saké, as part of the symbolic adaptation of the characters to the human world that has already encroached on their traditional habitat.

The epitome of this symbolic move is the shift in Neko Musume's character, who picks up different part-time jobs (バイト, *baito*) in the human world in several episodes. These jobs require minimal skills, diverse, cute or even sexy uniforms and put the character in crowded spaces where the initial conflicts take place. They underline the message of the new series, namely, that yōkai can be found in the midst of humans, while at the same time, as social satire, they poke fun at the peripheral status of young freeters (フリーター, young adults outside of the main workforce) in contemporary Japanese society (Fig. 4.47).

As a sign of updates to the Kitaro character, similarly to Wentz Eiji's version, Kitaro shows traits of being an adolescent rather than a child, with romantic and even erotic overtones. Kitaro's love interests are adolescent women who themselves turn into yōkai and deceive the hero (2007 Episode 3 Yasha, Episode 8 Nurarihyon). These strong-willed and sexually attractive characters, fallen humans overtaken by yōkai, are in sharp contrast with the girl ideal of the 1980s to 1990s series, the helpless, bug-eyed human girl, Hanako, who herself needs to be rescued. Together with Neko Musume, these characters seem to reflect male anxieties towards the untamed sexual energies of female bodily transformations.



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**Fig. 4.47** Neko Musume in human costume, 2007.

At the same time, complex psychological issues which lead to the expression of stress, fear and horror that manifest as *yōkai* become the common theme of the episodes. Characters get murdered and corpses are shown in distressing ways that would render the series inappropriate for a children's matinee in European cultures, while there is a sentimental or moral lesson regarding karmic retribution to be learnt at the end of several episodes.

The series also starts with an unprecedented choice of *yōkai* as its debuting character. The 1960s and 1980s series debuted with episodes that depicted colorful groups of monsters: the 1960s series connecting the popularity of baseball with a monster night game and the 1980s series depicting a *yōkai* castle. The 1970s and the 1990s debuting episodes, on the other hand, emphasized the human-*yōkai* interaction in urban settings. The 2007 debuting episode seems to be a powerful merger of the two concepts, establishing both the *yōkai* characters of the series by introducing the concept of the *yōkai* town, as well as linking the antagonist *yōkai* with urbanization.

The first *yōkai* introduced in the 2007 series is the Suiko (水子, 水虎) or Water Tiger, an entity known from the *Wakan Sansai Zue* (Terajima 1987/6:158) as a form of Kappa, with a body adapted for aquatic life and the face of a tiger. This visual description is also seen in Sekien's catalogue version of the Suiko (Sekien 1992:113), while neither Terajima nor Sekien gave special powers to the creature.

The animation series reintroduces the Suiko several times with different effects: it is a Kano-style screen painting of a tiger in the fourteenth episode of the 1960s series, while in the 1980s it is a tiger made of snow, thereby remaining in a natural environment. By the 1990s (Episode 56), the Suiko is transformed into an urban *yōkai* with supervillain-like attributes.

The contemporary version of the Suiko is a viscous liquid body that morphs from sewage water and can manifest itself wherever water reaches, and therefore appears in the toilet, the bath and the swimming pool in the story. The form of the Suiko and the content of its character evolved within the series based on the imagery of each preceding



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**Fig. 4.48** Suiko (水子, Water Tiger)

Suiko (水子, Water Tiger) character design in 1990s Kitaro animation series

episode. While the name of the entity, Water Tiger, is transformed into a function of the *yōkai* relating it to snow and water that is not present in the original depictions of Terajima and Sekien, its shape gradually changes from Kano-school tiger to a liquid monster that is still based on the general features of a tiger. This mini-evolution of the character does not take into account the original iconography of this monster resembling a small, riverside-dwelling creature with webbed feet, fish scales and a tiger-like face, an imagery that is conserved in the manga version (Mizuki 1988/3:139, 140) (Figs 4.48, 4.49).

The theme of urban alienation is carried further in the second episode with an exquisite visual allegory combining a Japanese company interior with the exaggerated skeleton figure depicted on Utagawa Kuniyoshi's triptych *Sōmano Furadairi* (相馬の古内裏, Masakado's Daughter the Princess Takiyasha at the Old Soma Palace, ca. 1848) (Fig. 4.50). The animation, in fact, utilizes Mizuki Shigeru's rendering of the Kuniyoshi painting, as it is seen on Mizuki's graphic design *Gashadokuro* in Mizuki's *yōkai* catalogue, *Yōkai Gadan*, published in 1992 (Nakagawa, Imai, Katsumoto 2004:173). In Mizuki's adaptation, the giant skeleton has eyeballs, one of which is red, and this feature reappears in the animation, repeatedly attesting to what has been demonstrated regarding the Suiko depiction, namely, that the new series is based on visual imagery from secondary sources, established in twentieth century graphic design.

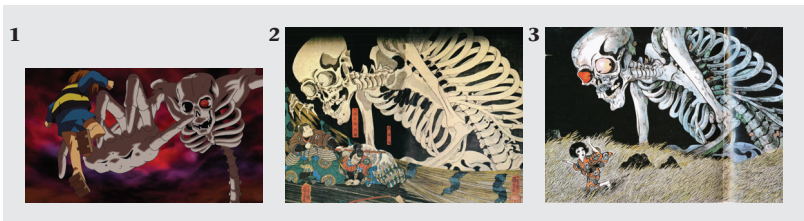
Kuniyoshi's giant skeleton figure is utilized to represent a *yōkai* fabricated by Mizuki, the *Gashadokoro*, a giant skeleton arising from the souls of dead bodies on a battlefield or, in the case of the animation, an Edo period graveyard. However, the hollow and cold interior of the Japanese company, the *kaisha* (会社), used as a visual equivalent of the body parts of a ghost skeleton, is a very powerful visual image that evokes fear and suspense but at the same time, a more nuanced, dark



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**Fig. 4.49** Other representations of the Suiko (水子, Water Tiger)

The visual representation of the Suiko in **1** the *Wakan Sansai Zue*, Scroll 40, 1713 (Terajima 1987/6: 158), **2** in Toriyama Sekien's *yōkai* catalogue *The Illustrated One Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past*, 1781 (Sekien 1992:113) **3** in Mizuki's manga (Mizuki 1988/3: 139)



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**Fig. 4.50** Giant skeleton design.

**1** 2007 series Ep#2 **2** Utagawa Kuniyoshi's *Somano Furadairi* (ca 1848)  
**3** Mizuki Shigeru's *Gashadokuro* design (1992)

and realistic atmosphere. The dialogues of the stories also turn into more serious and layered discussions, when compared to the simplistic slapstick fight between Kitaro, Nezumi Otoko and Neko Musume in the preceding decades.

In summary, the twenty-first century version of the *Kitaro* animated series builds on visual imagery predigested by the twentieth century graphic design patterns laid down by Mizuki Shigeru. While Mizuki bases his characters primarily on Edo and Meiji period imagery, the new series builds on Mizuki's work while trying to alter it to a contemporary anime visual style with the help of newly introduced computer graphics technology as well as new design concepts such as the expression of viscosity in animation or hyper-realism. Together with the dark, more mature narratives, these effects result in a series that builds on suspense, fear and melancholy. While it portrays more nuanced characters and more complex story lines, relying on a limited background of visual sources for character design as well as emitting the innate naivety of the *yōkai* world that is central in Mizuki's art, the pseudo-folklore of the *yōkai mura* (妖怪村, *yōkai* village) and the nostalgia associated with it gets deconstructed and lost in the process.

This aspect is manifest most strongly in Episode 9, *Yūrei Densha* (幽霊電車, ghost train). While previous versions of the Ghost Train narrative, first introduced in Mizuki's manga in the *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* in 1966 (Mizuki 1988/1:205–20) and recycled in the animation series from the 1960s to the 1990s (1960s Episode 7, 1980s Episode 6, 1990s Episode 53), are tongue-in-cheek, burlesque-style episodes where *yōkai* teach obnoxious drunkards a lesson, in the 2007 version the story becomes a *kaidan*-style narrative that teaches the laws of karmic retribution regarding a powerful man who bullied and killed his subordinate, and whose body he abandoned. The realistic depiction of the decomposed body of the victim as well as the psychological impact *yōkai* apparitions have on the killer as the intense psychological drama unfolds, does not allow for the situational comedy previously associated with the narrative of a train full of tricksters.

While the content of the 2007 series suggests that the *yōkai* narrative has come full circle since the Edo period *kaidan* tradition, once again equating *yōkai* with subconscious anxieties and fears, the shallow visual references as well as abandoning of the childlike atmosphere of the series that associated *yōkai* with the countryside and nostalgia indicate a radically new direction *yōkai* depictions might take in the twenty-first century.

## Yōkai in Cinema, 1968–2008

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The emergence of yōkai-themed films chronologically coincides with the television broadcast of the 1968–69 *Gegege no Kitaro* animation series. Film production company Daiei (大英) pioneered the Japanese yōkai film genre in 1960s' cinema, producing the *Yōkai Hyaku Monogatari* (妖怪百物語, One Hundred Monster Stories, dir. Yasuda Kimiyoshi, prod. Daiei, 1968), *Tōkaidō Obake Dōchū* (東海道お化け道中, Journey with Monsters Along the East Sea Road, dir. Kuroda Yoshiyuki, Yasuda Kimiyoshi; prod. Daiei, 1969) and *Yōkai Daisensō* (妖怪大戦争, Great Yōkai Wars, dir. Kuroda Yoshiyuki; prod. Daiei, 1968).

Between 2005 and 2008, yōkai-themed films reemerged, including the remake of *Yōkai Daisensō* (妖怪大戦争, Great Yōkai Wars, dir. Miike Takashi, prod. Kadokawa, 2005), followed by the film version of *Gegege no Kitaro* (ゲゲゲの鬼太郎, dir. Motoki Katsuhide, prod. Shōchiku, 2007) and its sequel in 2008, and the film adaptations of yōkai manga classics of the same titles, *Dororo* (どろろ, dir. Shiota Akihiko, prod. Tōhō, 2007), based on the 1967–68 manga of Tezuka Osamu and *Nekomoe Kozō* (猫目小僧, Cat-eye Boy, dir. Iguchi Noboru, prod. Shōchiku, 2006), based on the 1967–68 manga of Umezu Kazuo.

### GREAT YŌKAI WARS, 1966–2005

#### *Yōkai Daisensō in Manga, 1966*

The title *Yōkai Daisensō* (妖怪大戦争, Great Yōkai Wars) refers to the manga episode written and drawn by Mizuki Shigeru, published in *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* in April 1966 (Mizuki 1988/1:918); the *Gegege no Kitaro* animation episodes that were shown on Fuji Television on March 6, 1968 (Part 1) and March 13, 1968 (Part 2), the 1968 film version produced by Daiei Motion Pictures, directed by Kuroda Yoshiyuki, and its 2005 remake produced by Kadokawa Film, directed by Miike Takashi.

The *Yōkai Daisensō* narratives, whether in manga, animation or film, center on a war fought between two groups of yōkai: aggressors and defenders. While comical visual narratives, including the *Tsukumogami Emaki* (付喪神絵巻, Utensil Wars Picture Scroll,

Muromachi period) and Utagawa Yoshiiku's Meiji period print *Kokkei Wanishiki* (滑稽倭日史記, Comical Records of Japanese History, 1895), depict wars between humans and yōkai, the *Yōkai Daisensō* narrative is the first one where two groups of yōkai fight each other in a war. In the case of the 1966–68 works (manga, animation and film), the two sets of yōkai are distinctly of Japanese and “Western” origin, their fights serve as thinly disguised reenactments of Second World War and Cold War traumas.

In the 1966 manga version, analogies with the Pacific War (1942–45), the Battle of Okinawa (June 3, 1945) and the Vietnam War (1959–75) are articulated early in the narrative, while visual references to the Korean War (1950–53) and the Bikini Atoll hydrogen bomb experiments (1954) carried out by the United States military appear later in the episode.

The villagers hide in a cave waiting for death, where the visual rendering of the cave is a close copy of the Kamekō-baka (亀甲墓, turtle-back tombs) ancient Okinawan tombs built on cave openings, which Japanese defensive forces and local Okinawans used for cave warfare during the Battle of Okinawa. Caves were also put to similar use during the Vietnam War, which is explicitly mentioned in the narrative (Mizuki 1988/1:175, 179). The Western monsters, trying to trick Kitaro into creating a demilitarized zone that in turn alludes to the outcome of the Korean War (1950–53), claim:

“Hey Kitaro, we don’t want to fight a meaningless war, like Vietnam.”  
(Mizuki 1988/1:187)

Mizuki later published a six volume manga, where Kitaro himself joins the Vietnam War. Titled *War Notes from Vietnam* (ベトナム戦記, Betonamu Senki, 1969), Kitaro’s yōkai army goes to Vietnam to help the local people there, joining the National Liberation Front against the American forces (Mizuki 2000:12). In one instance, Konaki Jiji (子泣き爺, Old Crybaby monster) even fights a Scorpion submarine (Mizuki 2000:40). The story, which appeared in mainstream children’s comic magazines, also narrates the history of Vietnam. The war ends when the Western monsters are blown up in a fire ball in the middle of the ocean, which evokes images of the Bikini atoll atomic and hydrogen bomb tests as recorded from a distance (Mizuki 1988/1:198).

The narrative structure of the manga version is not far removed from the Momotaro paradigm as proposed by Dower, where simplified quasi-folkloristic characters are equated with aspects of a perceived patriotism in an effort to justify acts of aggression (Dower 1986:255). In the manga narrative, an exotically dressed boy, wearing a Vietnamese leaf hat (*nón lá*), asks for the help of Japanese yōkai to liberate his remote Okinawan island from “Western” invading monsters. Despite the warning “Western monsters are cruel” (Mizuki 1988/1:154), Kitaro gathers “pure-blooded” Japanese yōkai (Mizuki 1988/1:157) to go into war against the Westerners on an Okinawan

island, to answer the call of a Vietnamese child, who had asked the Japanese for liberation. The Western monsters, on the other hand, include a generic witch and werewolf as well as Dracula derived from Béla Lugosi's character from the 1931 film *Dracula* (dir. Tod Browning, prod. Universal Pictures) and a monster based on the character played by Boris Karloff from the 1931 film *Frankenstein* (dir. James Whale, prod. Universal Pictures).

The central concept of the narrative resides with Kitaro's magical vest, Chanchanko, which is taken hostage by the Western forces. According to the manga, Chanchanko is woven from the hair of the deceased ancestors of the Hakabano Kitaro lineage, as it is articulated by Kitaro's father:

"Our kind, when we die, we leave one thread of spirit hair that keeps on living. Your vest is woven from those hairs. Your superpowers. . . are all thanks to the power of the spirit hair of your ancestors. . . . If we cannot get back your vest, it will be a great insult to your ancestors."

(Mizuki 1988/1:174)

This aspect of the vest is reinforced on several occasions within the narrative. Without his vest, Kitaro becomes naked, injured and powerless. He soon succumbs to sickness in the middle of the jungle after losing his hair in one final, desperate fight, echoing images of the Manga-Mizuki character in Mizuki's autobiographical manga, who fell ill with malaria in Rabaul, and lost his hair (Mizuki 2004:280). However, in the midst of the desperate situation, the vest helps the Japanese troops:

"The vest started to emit tremendous power to help its descendants. Now, the final member of the Japanese ghost lineage is about to die. At that moment, the Chanchanko turned stark red! That is the color of anger it felt against the Western monsters!"

(Mizuki 1988/1:188)

In the final credits, where insects sing the final tunes, Kitaro again proclaims:

"This time, sing the Gegege song for the Chanchanko, made of the spirit hair of my ancestors. I have never felt more grateful to my ancestors."

(Mizuki 1988/1:202)

Finally, the story comes full circle when the Vietnamese boy expresses his gratitude to the Japanese liberators (Mizuki 1988/1:203), thereby transplanting the Momotaro paradigm of equating Southeast Asian civilians as helpless subjects waiting for the rescue by pure-hearted Japanese heroes (Dower 1986:255), first identified in the wartime Momotaro animation trilogy, to a postwar popular visual narrative.

*Yōkai Daisensō in Animation, 1968*

The animated version of *Yōkai Daisensō*, which aired on Fuji Television in two parts on March 6 and 13, 1968, two years after the manga version was released and in the same year as the *Yōkai Daisensō* film was produced, toned down some of the notions of the manga original. References to the Vietnam War were cautiously removed, and the little boy asking for help was strictly pictured as Okinawan. However, the notions that Western monsters smell different, are cruel, aggressive and dangerous were restated several times in the animation, and reference to pure-bloodedness was also maintained.

While the cave fight scenes do not resemble historical images from the Battle of Okinawa as readily as in the manga version, at one point the Western monsters pull out a map of Japan and plot their landing on Kyushu, the southern main island of Japan, reenacting Operation Downfall, the Allied plan for the invasion of Japan in 1945, with the help of “biological warfare,” using a local monster to spread diseases. The central message of the story is, nevertheless, unaltered. Kitaro’s vest, the Chanchanko, woven from the hair of Kitaro’s ancestors, is the symbol of one’s ancestral lineage, and without the help of the ancestors the Japanese fight cannot be won.

*Yōkai Daisensō in Film, 1968*

The film *Yōkai Daisensō*, directed by Kuroda Yoshiyuki, is the second in the yōkai film trilogy produced by Daiei Motion Pictures in 1968–69. The two other films, *Yōkai Hyaku Monogatari* (妖怪百物語, One Hundred Scary Stories, 1968) and *Tōkaidō Obake Dōchū* (東海道お化け道中, Journey with Monsters Along the East Sea Road, 1969) follow story lines borrowed from period dramas (時代劇, jidai geki), which center on narratives romanticizing Edo period samurai virtue. The monsters in these two films only appear as supporting cast with minimal dialogue, and act as allegories for human weakness and fallacies.

In the film *Yōkai Daisensō* (1968), on the other hand, monsters take central stage, fighting a war with an invading monster from “the West” (西洋, Seiyō). Given that this genre was more accessible internationally than manga or Japanese animation in the late 1960s, the film toned down both visual and verbal references to the Pacific War and Vietnam War and distilled the theme of the monster war as a metaphor of Japanese patriotism to its most politically correct and non-confrontational form. In the film version, the “Western” invader is an ancient Babylonian monster, Daimon, who arrives in Japan to take over the souls of humans and threatens the habitat of local folklore monsters. The film is set in Edo period Japan, so neither the invader nor the occupied land draws parallels with contemporaneous war-time events.

The character design and iconography of Daimon are partly based on the Burney relief, a Babylonian terracotta wall carving (ca. 2000 BCE) from Southern Iraq, often associated with Lilitu, the Babylonian female blood sucking demon depicted with bird wings and claws (Jacobsen

1987:2). Lilitu, as mentioned in the Gilgamesh Epic (ca. 2000–2150 BCE), is a vampire-like night demon that, similarly to Daimon, lives on the blood of children and women. On the other hand, Daimon's characteristic of entering the bodies of its victims can be related to another Babylonian mythical being, Ekimmu, a vampire-like spirit that lives off the life force of its human victims. Daimon's body structure is based on the late Assyrian (ca. 1800 BCE) monumental sculptures and reliefs found in today's Iraq, in the current geographic area of Babylonia and Assyria, which depict anthropomorphic demon beings with human heads wearing pointed caps with horns, with upright winged torsos and hindquarters of birds of prey (Green 1985:75).

In the film, Daimon is a giant, dormant in statue form since approximately 2000 BCE in the ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur, who is woken up by treasure hunters. When disturbed, he flies to Edo period Japan, where he enters the body of a local feudal lord. He lives off the blood and life energy of children and women, takes over the bodies of its victims, and is able to multiply itself into an army of demons or to grow to a giant size, emulating the giant reptile Godzilla, that has been popular in kaijū monster films since the mid-1950s (Ion 1996:101). Daimon's first act against Japanese spirit-beings starts when he tears down the Shinto shrine and the Buddhist altar at the feudal lord's home. His atrocities soon wake up the Kappa water monster, which is first defeated by Daimon. Following that, local monsters gather to protect their homeland and after several encounters they finally defeat the monster when stabbing it in the eye, its weak point. The monster is not killed, but flies away from Japan.

Despite the film's painstaking attempt to stay non-offensive to postwar and Cold War sensibilities, portraying a fight between Edo period Japanese and Babylonian monsters, the film's structure, similarly to the manga and animated versions, also reverberates around the Momotaro paradigm established in the Momotaro animated films produced during the Second World War.

The Western monster is a tall, thin figure with sharp bodily features, with a long face and nose. It is a lonesome figure against the cavalcade of Japanese monsters. It is dark, scary and monochromatic, a generic monster without many features, and its cold temperament more closely matches the kaijū reptiles of the *Godzilla* and *Gamera* films. The group of Japanese monsters, on the other hand, lacks an adult, male leader figure, as it consists of comical creatures with the childlike features of big round heads, small bodies and weak voices.

Daimon acts as a prop, a background to accentuate the colorfulness of the Japanese yōkai. Daimon only enters the bodies of male authority figures; it is a serious male adult character throughout the story, similarly to the Oni devil characters in the war-time animation *Momotaro Divine Troops of the Ocean* (1945). Stabbed in the eye, it is defeated in the same way as the chief deity of Japanese folklore, the Yamano Kami (山ノ神, mountain god) as described in the *Kojiki* (古事記, Records of Ancient

Matters, 680 CE) and the *Nihon Shoki* (日本書紀, Chronicles of Japan, 720 CE). Following the Momotaro paradigm, the monster is not killed but expelled from the islands.

Thus, the manga, animation and film versions of the Great Yōkai Wars produced in the late 1960s all center on the idea of a Western invasion of Asian regions, exoticized by geographical or temporal distance: Vietnam and Okinawa in manga and animation, and Edo Japan in the film version. In all cases, the adult-like foreign forces are defeated by the collaboration of childlike local monsters. In the manga and animated versions, the importance of ancestor reverence is also accentuated, in alignment with the Momotaro Paradigm as proposed by Dower (Dower 1986).

The notable deviation from the Momotaro Paradigm lies in the fact that the yōkai in the *Yōkai Daisensō* narratives represent “Japaneseness,” while until the end of the Second World War, yōkai were used as metaphors for foreigners and outsiders in popular visual media. This important change can be attributed to the effect of the yōkai-themed sequential art series produced by Mizuki Shigeru, which contributed to the mascotization of the monsters, changing their roles from outsiders to representations of an imagined, shared nostalgic Japanese past (Foster 2009:13).

The 1968 Daei film version of *Yōkai Daisensō* was created in the year Japan’s Gross National Product (GNP) became the second largest in the world. In an era when Japan’s postwar economic recovery was at its turning point, the reappearance of Japanese monsters in media in the guise of innocence, nonetheless reinforced the myth of justified vigilance against suspicious outsiders, propagated a line of demarcation and ongoing rivalry between “Western” interests and Japan, while also portraying Japan as the protector of Asian cultures against Western occupation, all unmasking the ambivalent relationship of Japan towards the United States during the Cold War.

#### *Yōkai Daisensō in Remake, 2005*

The director of the 2005 remake of the film *Yōkai Daisensō*, Miike Takashi (三池崇史, 1960–) is noted for his visually exaggerated use of sexual and violent content as well as his frequent use of surreal narrative and character development patterns, as is apparent in his films *Koroshiya Ichi* (殺し屋1, Ichi the Killer, dir. Miike Takashi, prod. Omega Project, 2001) or *Zeburaman* (ゼブラマン, dir. Miike Takashi, prod. Bingo, 2004). Given this tendency, Miike delivered a relatively complex remake version of the 1968 classic, which, in contrast, was a simply-structured fantasy story.

The 2005 Miike version is set in a futuristic Tokyo, where yōkai fight the embodiment of pollution and alienation: mecha (メカ, mechanical objects) created from discarded rubbish and yōkai souls, brought to life by Onmyō-dō wizard Katō Yasunori (加藤保憲), an antagonist character based on the novel *Teito Monogatari* (帝都物語, Tale of the Capitol, 1971), written by historian and yōkai researcher Aramata Hiroshi (荒俣宏, 1947–) (Aramata 1985).

According to Aramata's novel, Katō is the descendant of native non-Japanese tribes that lived on the Japanese islands and who were annihilated by the Yamato court and the ancestors of today's Japanese. Katō's parents were killed by the Onmyō-dō wizard Abeno Seimei, and Katō was born from a dying mother. Katō, the human manifestation of the wrath of the annihilated tribes (Iwasa 2005:28), was raised in the Onmyō-dō wizardry tradition and he returns to Japan throughout history to cause disasters, including the Great Kanto Earthquake (1923) (Gunji 2005:7).

In the 2005 Miike film, Katō combines the supernatural powers of yōkai with the wrath of used tools that were thrown away by people, to create kikai (機怪), a play on words meaning machine-monsters (Nashimoto 2005:53). The wrath of discarded utensils is the central theme of the *Tsukumogami Emaki* (付喪神絵巻, Utensil Wars Picture Scroll, Muromachi period). The manga and animation series *Gegege no Kitaro* also frequently used yōkai characters as metaphors of environmental pollution. It is the first instance, however, of yōkai and mecha being combined to achieve this effect. While Katō is the wrath of the native tribes that once occupied Japan, there is no mention of foreigners in the story. The scope of the narrative changed, the fight takes place in the psyche of the opponents. Given the intricate story line and characters, Miike's cynical genius as director is well utilized in creating a surreal setting and downplaying the melodramatic overtones that fantasy films often risk.

While yōkai until the Meiji period were equated with outsiders, and were feared for their harmful powers over humans (Foster 1998:7), in the contemporary narrative of the 2005 film they are treated as fragile and vulnerable endangered species, the symbols of a nostalgic, rural Japanese communal life. They do not fight, but simply gather for a festival in the capital. The 2005 Miike film, produced during the consolidation phase of the invasion of Iraq by the United States (2003–2006), did not display monsters from Babylonia, and according to Miike Takashi's instructions, Muroi Shigeru (室井滋, 1960–), the actress playing the yōkai character Sunakake Babā (砂かけ婆, Sand Throwing Witch), was to throw sand in the imagined direction of Iraq as a tribute to the casualties of war. In contrast to the 1960s narratives, the 2005 Miike film had a strong anti-war message, delivered by production consultant and Second World War veteran Mizuki Shigeru in a final sequence. The eighty-three-year-old Mizuki appears in the final scenes of the film as the Yōkai Taiō (妖怪大翁, Great Yōkai Elder), who keeps the balance between monsters and people. His final message in the film reverberates with the final message of his 1966 *Yōkai Daisensō* manga: "War is meaningless. You only get hungry." (Zennihon Yōkai Suishin Iinkai 2005:84).

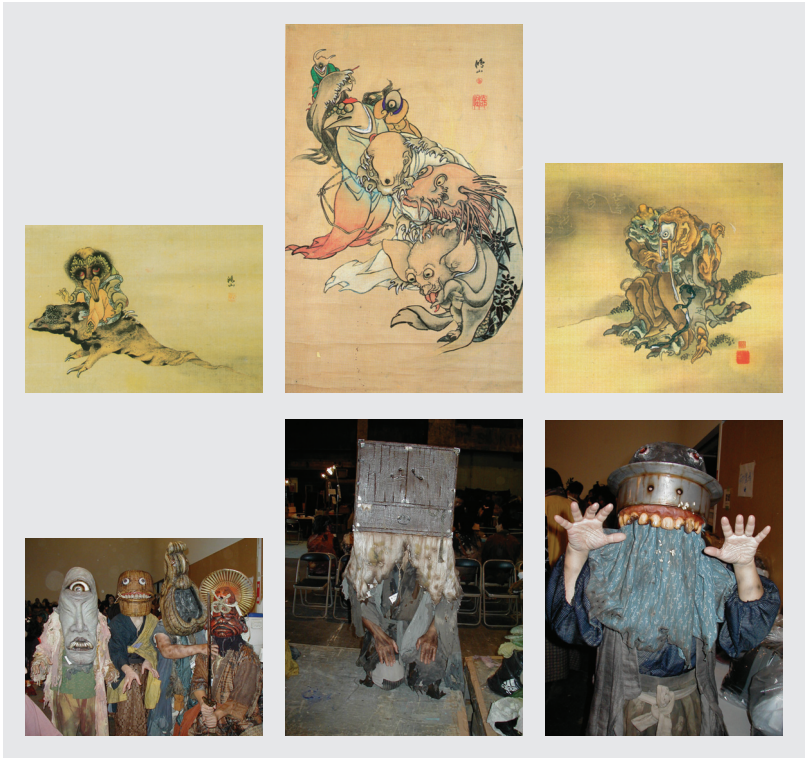
#### *Yōkai Daisensō Character Design*

The yōkai film trilogy of the 1960s introduced character, costume and mask design of yōkai to postwar Japanese cinema. However, the Daiei

films showcased only a limited number of yōkai, between ten and fifteen per film, a total of thirty to thirty-five (Ion 1996:104–31), some of which, for example, the Abura Sumashi (油濟まし, Oil Squeezer) or the Bake Kasa (化け傘, Umbrella Monster) were also recycled from film to film (Ion 1996:110–11, 122–3). These early films already show intricate planning of the design of the yōkai characters, where the main visual sources of design were the yōkai catalogues of Toriyama Sekien (Ion 1996:104) while *Hyakki Yagyō* and Hell scrolls were also consulted to a lesser extent (Ion 1996:97). Relatively obscure and less known yōkai, such as the Ungaikyō (雲外鏡, Clouded Mirror) (Sekien 2005:312) or the Ninmenjū (人面樹, Human Faced Tree) (Sekien 2005:191) also appear in the Daiei films (Ion 1996:103, 126), suggesting that the artists were consciously planning the reintroduction of yōkai into popular visual media. The main influence from contemporaneous media sources was the popular manga series of Mizuki Shigeru (Ion 1996:104) while the influence of the costume designs of Okamoto Taro, Narita Toru and Takayama Ryōsaku, who applied post-modern art concepts to the design of alien monsters in the popular television series *Ultraman* of the mid-1960s, can be also perceived (Ion 1996:128).

On the other hand, the 2005 film version of *Yōkai Daisensō* is an explicit vehicle for reintroducing a maximum number of yōkai characters in visual contemporary media, often with considerable disregard for the story line. The film introduces more than 500 distinct yōkai adopted from a wide plethora of visual heritage in yōkai-ga, ranging from Muromachi period picture scrolls to the creations of contemporary designers working in graphic, digital and mixed media, thoroughly researched by screenplay writer Aramata Hiroshi and casting consultant Kyōgoku Natsuhiko. Three distinct visual influences in the design of characters and costume for the film can be identified, namely, that of Takai Kōzan (高井高山1806–83, Late Edo period), Toriyama Sekien (1712–88, Edo period) and Kawanabe Kyōsai (1831–89, Meiji period), while considering other visual sources in the process.

Takai Kōzan ((高井高山, 1806–83), a late Edo period painter, student and patron of Katsushika Hokusai, and a devout fan of Kawanabe Kyōsai, produced several hang-scrolls of yōkai paintings. Simply titled *Yōkai-zu* (妖怪図, yōkai images), these paintings do not depict an iconology derived from Sekien, nor do they display a pantheon of well-known yōkai from folk beliefs. Instead, these are the original, artistic visions of Kōzan, where the atmosphere of the yōkai is reproduced, showing their aimless status, spending time in the obscurity of twilight and dawn, without a special purpose or intention. These original depictions of yōkai were used in the costume designs of the 2005 version of *Yōkai Daisensō*, in order to convey a characteristically Japanese visual world, where yōkai are expressively Japanese and not Hollywood-style monsters. Whereas Hollywood-style monsters frequently have skin texture and coloring similar to live creatures, the yōkai costume designs utilized a color palette that expressed the fact that the monsters live in a sublime



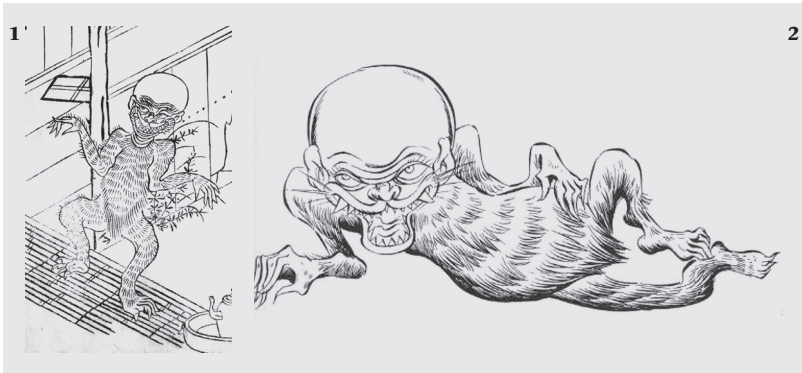
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**Fig. 5.1** Yōkai color design.

**Top 3** Examples of Takai Kōzan’s Yōkai-zu (Obuse-chō Kyōiku Ōnkaï 1999:6, 8–9), **Bottom 3** Examples of color hues in designs of yōkai characters and costumes for the film *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005)

world floating between imagination and reality. For this purpose, the color range of Kōzan was applied in the design of make-up, mask and costumes on 500 yōkai extras, creating a backdrop of otherworldliness to the main story (Fig. 5.1).

The main source for the design of characters, however, for the 2005 film was the body of work by Toriyama Sekien. The main characters were designed by emerging manga and game design artist Inoue Junya (井上淳也), who works with computer-based imagery instead of traditional hand drawn manga. Sekien’s mode of graphic art expression blended extremely well with contemporary graphic design, as a comparison of Sekien’s and contemporary film illustrations of the yōkai *Hyōsube* (ひょうすべ) (Sekien 1992:79) and *Seto Taishō* (瀬戸大将, Seto Region Pottery Admiral) (Sekien 1992:317) demonstrates (Figs 5.2, 5.3). However, the



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**Fig. 5.2** Hyōsube (ひょうすべ)

**1** The yōkai Hyōsube (ひょうすべ) represented in Toriyama Sekien’s *Gazu Hyakki Yagyō* (Sekien 2002:79) **2** Hyōsube design for film *Yōkai Daisensō*, 2005

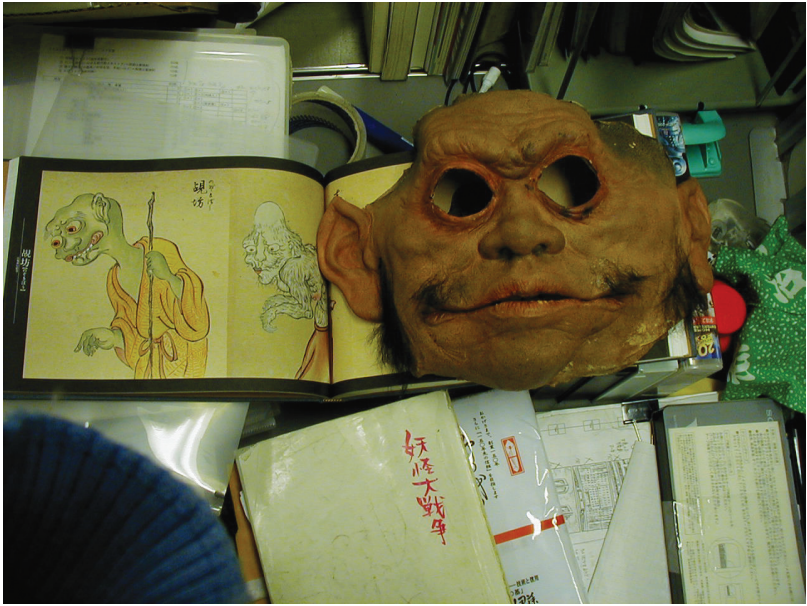


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**Fig. 5.3** Seto Taishō (瀬戸大将)

**1** The yōkai Seto Taishō (瀬戸大将) represented in Toriyama Sekien’s *Hyakki Tsurezure Bukurō* (Sekien 2002: 317) **2-3** Seto Taishō design in film *Yōkai Daisensō*, 2005

Edo period picture scrolls depicting yōkai characters, which served as forerunners to Toriyama Sekien’s catalogue art, were also consulted; for example, the mask design of the yōkai Nozoki-bō (覘坊, Peeping Monk) was based on its depiction in the *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* (Tada 2000:113) (Fig. 5.4).



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**Fig. 5.4** Mask design of yōkai Nozoki-bō (覘坊, Peeping Monk) in 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō*, based on its depiction in Edo period picture scroll *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* (Tada 2000:113).

The influence of Meiji period painter Kawanabe Kyōsai's artwork is also perceivable in the design of the characters in several post-war yōkai-themed films. Regarding the design of costumes and characters of the Rokurokubi (ろくろ首, Pulley Neck), a female yōkai thought to be able to extend her neck at will, Kyōsai's more visually appealing rendering is generally preferred over Sekien's graphic art style in the 1968 and 2005 film versions of *Yōkai Daisensō*, as well as in the 2007 film version of *Gegege no Kitaro*. Suitably for a film character, the Rokurokubi is depicted as a female figure with some degree of personality and dimensionality. In sequential art, Mizuki follows the art tradition of Sekien, rendering the Rokurokubi in Edo period style, where the grotesqueness of the yōkai is emphasized over its personality. In Inoue Junya's design, the Rokurokubi follows the Meiji period pattern of depiction, displaying facial features aligned with the traditions of the anime graphic style (Fig. 5.5).

This anime style is further exploited in the computer graphically rendered version of the Pachinko (パチンコ, pinball and video slot machine) game *Yōkai Daisensō*. Yōkai have been used in games since the Edo period, including the story-telling game of *Hyaku Monogatari* (百物語, telling of one hundred scary stories), or the Edo period card games



**Fig. 5.5** The Rokuro-kubi (轆轤首, Pulley Neck)  
The Rokuro-kubi (轆轤首, Pulley Neck) yōkai represented in Kawanabe Kyōsai's  
Kyōsai Manga (晧齋漫画, 1881) (Tada 1998:77)

called Yōkai Karuta (妖怪カルタ, yōkai cards) (Tada 1998). While yōkai appear in Pachinko and PlayStation video games in the contemporary period, they often feature a substantially unaltered iconography when compared to their Edo period depictions, and thereby, even if reduced to an emblemic form, the characters still serve the purpose of connecting the players with an imaginary furusato (故里, home town).

#### *Yōkai Daisensō Demon Parade*

In 1960s' yōkai cinema, the *Hyakki Yagyō* (百鬼夜行) or Night Parade of One Hundred Demons), the quintessential symbol of the yōkai visual

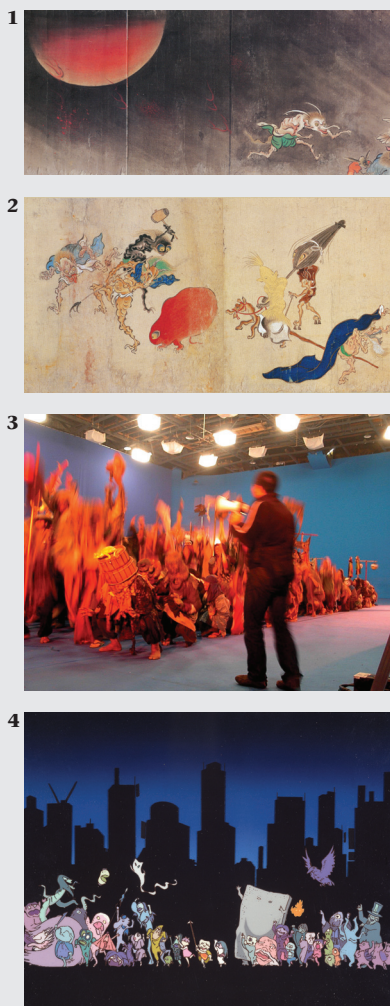
tradition, was reintroduced. The parade is first mentioned in Heian period literature, and it is first visually rendered on picture scrolls from the Muromachi period. The *Hyakki Yagyō* was reproduced with increasing levity in new forms in Edo and Meiji period visual media including picture scrolls, woodblock prints and picture books.

This visual tradition, in turn, is recreated in twentieth and twenty-first century mass media. In the 2005 film version of *Yōkai Daisensō*, the color palette of the Parade scene evokes the coloring and material use of the Muromachi period parades, in that it predominantly uses warm colors of brown and tangerine, suggesting an atmosphere of nostalgia. The *Gegege no Kitaro* animation series, on the other hand, depicts the *Hyakki Yagyō* in the 1980s and 1990s series amidst the cold colors of neon light and electricity. Skyscrapers and an airplane appear in the background during the Parade, demonstrating Mizuki's "theory," that *yōkai* are drawn to the ambiguous lights of candles but repulsed by the sharp lights of neon. It is made explicit in the animation series that the nostalgic longing for an imaginary past cannot be satisfied, and the opening and closing credits of the animation episodes underpin a lonely metropolitan space, where the *yōkai* ultimately disappear into thin air, similarly to Kitaro's feet wearing *geta* (下駄, traditional Japanese wooden sandals) which disappear in the cavalcade of modern shoes rushing around in downtown Tokyo (Fig. 5.6).

#### KITARO ON FILM, 2007

The 2005 remake of *Yōkai Daisensō* by Kadokawa Eiga (角川映画) Film Corporation was not linked to Mizuki's production company, Mizuki Pro (水木プロ), and consequently *yōkai* characters based on Mizuki's design were omitted in the film to avoid copyright infringement. This resulted in the creation of more than 500 *yōkai* characters, based on art historical *yōkai* depictions as well as on original ideas of the filmmakers.

The 2007 film *Gegege no Kitaro* (ゲゲゲの鬼太郎), a film adaptation of the *Gegege no Kitaro* animation, produced by Shōchiku (松竹) Film Production Company, on the other hand, purchased the copyright to *yōkai* characters that appear in the *Gegege no Kitaro* manga and animation series, as a result of which the film's *yōkai* design is limited and stays close to Mizuki's style. Therefore, this film did not produce new venues for the representation of *yōkai*, but helped Mizuki's designs of *yōkai* to cross over to the film genre. The storyline itself is an extended version of a selection of *Kitaro* episodes, incorporating elements from the episodes *Tenko* (天狐, Heaven Fox, *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, July 1968; animated version December 8, 1968) and *Yōkai Daisaiban* (妖怪大裁判, Great *Yōkai* Trials, *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, January-February 1969; animated version October 21, 1971). Following the *Tenko* narrative, the film introduces Mizuki's pseudo-mythology and nomenclature for the fox *yōkai* including the *Yako* (野狐, feral fox), *Kiko* (気狐, energy fox), *Kūko* (空狐, air fox) and *Tenko* (天狐, heavenly fox) categories created by Mizuki.



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**Fig. 5.6** Visual depiction of *Hyakki Yagyō* (百鬼夜行, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons)

**1 and 2** Scenes from *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* (百鬼夜行絵巻, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons Picture Scroll, Muromachi Period), **3** In 2005 film *Yōkai Daisensō* (photo on film set), **4** Closing credits of 1990s animation series *Gegege no Kitarō*



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**Fig. 5.7** Kitsune (狐)

**1** Visual representation of the Shinto fox deity Inari (稲荷) at the Kitsuneno Gyōretsu (狐の行列, Fox Parade festival), Ōji Inari Shrine (王子稲荷神社), Tokyo, 2007 **2** Costume design of yōkai character Kūko (空狐, Air Fox) in 2007 film *Gegege no Kitaro* (photo on film set) **3** Visual representation of the Nine-tailed Fox Spirit on Utagawa Kuniyoshi's print, nineteenth century

The costume and props designs for the regal yōkai Tenko borrow from Shinto representations of the fox-god Inari (稲荷) while the design of the character of her subordinate Kūko is based on visual representations of the Nine-tailed Fox Spirit known from the Chinese classics collection *Shan Hai Jing* (山海經, Classics of the Mountains and Seas, ca. 100 BCE) (Guo 2004) and various other Asian folklore sources (Fig. 5.7).

In the 2007 film version of *Gegege no Kitaro* a cast of eminent set, mask and costume designers, including set designer Inagaki Hisao (稲垣尚夫, 1956–) (*Narayama Bushikō*, 1983; *Kuroi Ame*, 1989; *Tokyo Zombie*, 2005; etc.), special effects artist Egawa Etsuko (江川悦子, 1955–) (*Ghostbusters*, 1984; *Teito Monogatari*, 1988; *Kogitsune Helen*, 2006; etc.) and costume designer Hibino Kozue (ひびのこづえ, 1958–) (*Shiseidō* advertisement design, 1991; *Comme des Garçons* collection, 1993; etc.), as well as a distinguished cast of actors including Katō Koyuki (加藤小雪, 1976–) (*The Last Samurai*, 2003) and Kabuki actor Nakamura Shidō (中村獅童, 1972–) (*Letters from Iwo Jima*, 2006) were used, aiming to create a classic film tribute to the *Gegege no Kitaro* manga and animation series. The film also aimed to upgrade the image of the *Kitaro* franchise to a modern, adolescent version, utilizing contemporary electronic music artist DJ Tucker's (タッカー, 1978–) (Fuji Rock Festival, 2003; Summer Sonic, 2005; Sonar, 2006; etc.) techno music version of the original *Kitaro* animation theme song. To achieve a heightened appeal to adolescents, several scenes



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**Fig. 5.8** Notions of contemporary popular culture

**1** Character design of the yōkai Yamauba (山姥, Mountain Hag), as a Shibuya-style prostitute in the 2007 film *Gegegeno Kitaro* (photo on film set) and **2** popular techno musicians performing at the graveyard nightclub scene of the 2007 film *Gegegeno Kitaro* (photo on film set)

of the film take place at a graveyard nightclub. On the other hand, the film managed to remain child-friendly as a character based on the yōkai Yamauba (山姥, Mountain Hag), with accessories characteristic of quasi-prostitutes frequenting the Shibuya (渋谷) district of Tokyo, was cut from the final version of the film (Fig. 5.8). Kitaro's character itself was upgraded to a modern adolescent version due to a casting strategy, which implies that the visual representation of yōkai in popular media did not cease to serve as vessels of subliminal agendas in the contemporary period.

Contemporary popular television celebrity, model and boy band member Wentz Eiji (ウエンツ瑛士, 1985–) was cast in the character of Kitaro. While casting Wentz as the all-Japanese boy hero was a risqué choice – with the young actor appearing in black leather shorts, the Chanchanko vest made of skunk hair, with long silver hair falling into his face – it proved to be successful for the film franchise, contributing to the commission of a sequel by Shōchiku in 2008.

However, Wentz's popularity was not the sole reason for casting him in the role of Kitaro. Shōchiku's side stated that Wentz was chosen for his "otherworldly looks" (Shochiku 2007:27), while an interview with casting coordinator and associate producer Tsujimoto Tamako (辻本珠

子, 1965–) reveals that Tsuchiya Anna (土屋アンナ, 1984–), the actress playing the main female yōkai character, Mai Mai Onba (マイマイオンバ) in the 2007 film *Dororo*, produced by Tōhō (東宝) Film Company, was cast because she combined “beauty with eerie otherworldly looks” (Yuhara, Gushiken 2007:61). Wentz is half-Japanese and half-German/American, while Tsuchiya is half-Japanese and half-Russian/American.

Earlier it was demonstrated how yōkai, as visual symbols, occupy a niche on the border between the familiar (内, uchi) and the outside world (外, soto) in Japanese visual narratives. The casting of actors of half-Japanese, half-European descent as key yōkai characters, who display facial features which, according to the creators, are attractive but at the same time unfamiliar, reinforces the subliminal notion that foreigners are part of the Other (soto), while “halfs” (ハーフ, a colloquial expression used for persons of mixed ethnicity with one Japanese and one Caucasian parent) occupy a niche in Japanese society that can be paralleled with the traditional role of yōkai: on the border between insiders and outsiders. Yōkai, once again, shifted into a new role, representing a social stratum that emerged in the postwar period and had become increasingly visible in the entertainment industry by the end of the millennium: the “half-Japanese” with attributes desirable but at the same time unsettling. “Halfs” with striking physical and facial features can become successful entertainers, or, as in the case of the abandoned children of Okinawa, the estimated 4,000 Amerasian offsprings of local Okinawans and temporarily stationed US military personnel, can become social outsiders from an early age (Curtin 2000). In this sense, the casting of half-Japanese actors as yōkai in mainstream films reinforces a stereotypical image concerning foreigners and half-Japanese as exotic-looking, suspicious outsiders who are “like us, but not just quite”.

#### *Dororo, 2007*

The yōkai character design introduced in *Dororo* (どろろ, dir. Shiota Akihiko, prod. Tōhō, 2007), the film version based on manga artist Tezuka Osamu’s (手塚治虫, 1928–89) only yōkai manga, published in *Shōnen Sunday* (少年サンデー) manga magazine under the same title in nineteen episodes with an unfinished storyline between January 1967 and July 1968, closely follows Tezuka’s original yōkai imagery.

The yōkai Tezuka created are in sharp contrast with Mizuki’s monsters. While Mizuki’s imagery, which is primarily based on traditional visual influences from the Edo to the Meiji periods, aims to mascotize yōkai into naïve and childlike characters, Tezuka portrays monsters which are primarily Tezuka’s own creations without main apparent visual predecessors and which evoke a serious adult world with sublime, complicated and dark emotions. When a visual source is traceable, it is a Buddhist rather than a Shinto one, as in the case of the monster pantheon of the *Jigoku-dō* (地獄堂, Hell pavilion) in the opening sequence of the manga as well as the film. Tezuka ultimately failed to capture the

lovable and nostalgic nature of yōkai, which Mizuki pioneered in manga and which made the monsters easy to relate to in the postwar period.

The storyline of Tezuka's original manga narrative remained unfinished as it could not rival Mizuki's contemporaneous yōkai manga, *Gegege no Kitaro*, in popularity. Similarly, while the 2007 film version was initiated with the ambitious aim of creating an internationally compelling fantasy remake, filmed in New Zealand, drawing parallels with the fantasy film settings of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (dir. Peter Jackson, prod. New Line Cinema, 2001–2003), and utilizing world-renowned action choreographer Ching Siu-Tung (程小東, 1953–) of Hong Kong cinema (*Chinese Ghost Story*, 1987; *Shaolin Soccer*, 2001; *Hero*, 2002; etc.), production activities for sequels *Dororo 2* and *Dororo 3*, planned to be filmed in 2008–2009, were abandoned in 2007.

While the narrative pattern and design of characters display a unique Tezuka-world, *Dororo's* monsters are one-dimensional and antagonistic, symbols of hidden, terrifying spasms of the human psyche portrayed by an artist who was also a medical doctor. Without traditional visual or narrative background, however, the monsters remain sanitized, clinical portraits of fears and anxieties, but lack the attribute of an ageless, collective consciousness that folk tales have, and that Mizuki's monsters seem to possess. Tezuka's yōkai are artificial similarly to the artificial limbs of the main hero, Hyakki Maru (百鬼丸), and for this reason only made a marginal impact on the development of yōkai imagery in the popular visual media of the post-war period.

#### CAT-EYE BOY, 2006

Umezu Kazuo (楳図 かずお, 1936–), the pioneer of Japanese horror manga, created the *Nekomoe Kozō* (猫目小僧, Cat-eye Boy) manga series showcasing the author's original yōkai characters, that was published in the manga magazines *Shōnen Gahō* (少年画報) in 1967–68, *Shōnen King* (少年キング) in 1968, and *Shōnen Sunday* (少年サンデー) in 1976. In the manga narrative, *Nekomoe Kozō*, the cat-eyed boy, featuring an iconography reminiscent of the boy hero Kitaro, was born to the *Nekomata* (猫又, Cat Monster) yōkai and became an outcast in the yōkai world after his birth. He is the main character of the subsequent episodes, living on the periphery between the human and yōkai realms.

The manga was adapted to television gekimotion (劇メーション, cut-out stop motion animation) under the title *Yōkaiden Nekomoe Kozō* (妖怪伝猫目小僧, Yōkai Myth Cat-eye Boy), of which twenty-four episodes were shown between April 1, and September 30, 1976, on Tokyo Television (Tokyo Channel 12) and which was awarded for its unique use of animation technology with the Fuji Film Technology Award (富士フィルム技術賞) in 1977. The film version of *Nekomoe Kozō* (猫目小僧, Cat-eye Boy, dir. Iguchi Noboru, prod. Shōchiku, 2006) was released amidst renewed interest in Umezu's horroristic sequential art works, appearing in the same year as the film *Kamino Hidarite Akumano Migite*

(神の左手悪魔の右手; God's Left Hand, the Devil's Right Hand, dir. Kaneko Shusuke, prod. Arcimboldo, 2006), the film version of Umezu Kazuo's horror manga of the same title published between 1986 and 1988 in manga magazine *Big Comic Spirits* (ビッグコミックスピリッツ).

While Tezuka's original yōkai characters are derived from the psyche of a complex and cold adult world, Umezu's monsters seem to embody lurking, animalistic and often repulsive aspects of a repressed human subconscious. Umezu is a pioneer of horror rather than yōkai manga: his characters are saturated with eroticism, perversion and aggression. While yōkai turned into child-friendly nostalgic icons at the hands of Mizuki, Umezu's representation of yōkai is closer to their original, Heian period notions of unutterable, impure energies. Umezu's monsters, as representations of raw, savage subconscious emotions, lack originality or individuality on the visual level, with the sole exception of the central hero, Cat-eye Boy, who is, on the other hand, a harmless, mascot character and a vaguely disguised derivative of Kitaro.

Visual representations of Yōkai in the guise of innocence have always served an agenda pertaining to the specific historical period in which they appeared and reappeared. From Yoshiiku's Meiji period print *Kokkei Wanishiki* (1895) of a yōkai parade ridiculing the Chinese army following the Shino-Japanese War (1894–95) to the Momotaro paradigm (Dower 1986:255) of the Momotaro animation trilogy in the final stage of World War Two, visual representations of yōkai have frequently served militaristic propaganda since the Meiji period. The *Yōkai Daisensō* narrative in manga, animation and cinema follows in this tradition.

The role of yōkai could be manipulated in postwar visual media because of its inherent ambivalence. Following the Second World War, yōkai were transformed in the popular visual media to represent a nostalgic Japanese past, for example, in the manga, animation and cinema versions of *Yōkai Daisensō* in the 1960s. During Japan's Cold War era economic recovery, the dogmatic narrative of a West versus Japan power struggle emerged, where yōkai served as patriotic and righteous beings, legitimized by ancestral lineage, which guarded Japan against outside forces.

On the other hand, in Miike Takashi's surreal contemporary vision of *Yōkai Daisensō* (2005), yōkai are equated with environmental pollution and metropolitan alienation that is also shown by placing the *Hyakki Yagyō* One Hundred Demons Night Parade into contemporary urban settings. Not unlike the process of the gradual degradation of local minor deities theorized by Yanagita, it is observable in the subsequent versions of the 1966–2005 *Yōkai Daisensō* narrative that yōkai became less and less powerful with each remake. While yōkai fought off the enemy in Okinawa in the 1966 manga and 1968 animated versions, they became timid and vulnerable in the 1968 film version. In the 2005 remake, the yōkai are rendered useless, childish, senile and cowardly and it is their utmost incompetence which leads them to victory.

Furthermore, in the case of contemporary live action cinema, the

roles of the main yōkai characters are allocated to actors of mixed ethnic heritage, half-Japanese, half-European, attesting to the notion that yōkai occupy a niche on the border between insiders and outsiders, while unmasking aspects of ethnic relations in postwar Japan. As their fluidity as visual symbols permits, yōkai have been adapted to new roles in contemporary media including manga, film, animation and computer games, and these roles change with each new patriotic war they take on to protect the Japanese homeland from invaders. Nonetheless, their core feature remains unaltered: they live on no-man's-land between right and wrong, which readily lends them to new interpretations in their constant visual evolution within Japanese popular visual culture.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, films inspired by the works of postwar period manga artists Tezuka Osamu and Umezu Kazuo also succeeded in putting yōkai characters to new directions. While equating yōkai with sublime, subconscious emotions in these cases might suit post-modern sensibilities, the sequential art works these films were based on did not manage to capture the visual essence of yōkai in a convincing way. In this sense, Mizuki Shigeru's body of work remains the main vehicle for the representation of yōkai to enter the twenty-first century carrying on an uninterrupted visual legacy that started in the Muromachi period.

## Monsters March On

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The material cultural display of the Japanese Galleries of the British Museum incorporates manga display within its Modern Japan section. Taking up one eighth of the display space allocated for material culture from 1853 to the contemporary period, the manga section belongs to the newly constructed Japan from Prehistory to the Present chronological display that aims to document Japanese history and material culture from the Jomon to the contemporary period. While the exhibited materials are rotated three times per year, the inaugural manga selection aiming to introduce key manga artists included the manga book *Bokuno Issei wa Gegege no Rakuen da* (ボクの一生はゲゲゲの樂園だ, My Life is a Gegege Paradise, 2001) by Mizuki Shigeru alongside works of Tezuka Osamu and other internationally recognizable manga works, thereby identifying Mizuki as a central figure within the history of manga (October 2006 – February 2007).

The third display (June – October 2007) on the other hand placed Mizuki's manga works within the context of Edo period woodblock prints indicating a relationship between Edo period *yōkai* imagery and Mizuki's contemporary manga. The display included the color woodblock illustrated book *Ima wa Mukashi* (異魔話武可誌, Once Upon a Time, 1790) by Katsukawa Shun'ei (勝川春英, 1762–1819) and Katsukawa Shunshō (勝川春章, 1726–91); the manga book *Yōkai Gadan* (妖怪画談, Chat About Drawing Spooks, 1992) by Mizuki Shigeru (水木しげる, 1922–) and the colour woodblock illustrated book *Hokusai Manga Vol. 10* (北斎漫画十編, 1819) by Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760–1849) (Fig. 6.1).

Curated by Japanese Section chief curator Timothy Clark, the captions accompanying the exhibit aimed to underline the presence of an art historical linkage and continuity between Mizuki's work and the Edo period woodblock prints representing *yōkai* the following way:

Mizuki is the master of modern spook manga. His most famous character, one-eyed "Gegege Kitaro," continues much older traditions. You can see this in the books by Hokusai and other traditional artists displayed alongside.



**Fig. 6.1** British Museum Display

Katsukawa Shun'e, Katsukawa Shunshō: *Ima wa Mukashi* (1790); Mizuki Shigeru: *Yōkai Gadan* (1992); Katsushika Hokusai: *Hokusai Manga* vol. 10 (1819) exhibited at the Manga Exhibition corner, Japanese Galleries, British Museum, June-October 2007

(Caption, Japan from Prehistory to the Present Exhibit, Manga Section, Section 14, Rooms 92–94, Japanese Galleries, The British Museum, June – October 2007)

Our study has sought to document the influence of Edo and Meiji period *yōkai* art on the character design of the twentieth and twenty-first century sequential and animated series *Gegege no Kitaro*. In the process, we also tried to identify the visual evolution of *yōkai* representation traceable from the Muromachi period (1333–1573), when *yōkai* first appear on the *Hyakki Yagyō* picture scrolls, and to demonstrate that the visual representation of *yōkai* in twentieth and twenty-first century popular media can be considered as part of this lineage, by focusing on the on-screen mini-evolution of *yōkai* characters in the postwar era, placed in the context of their role from the Muromachi to Meiji periods. While the art historical influences were to be identified and pinpointed in the design of *yōkai*, the changing role of *yōkai* characters in social commentary has also been traced from the 1960s to the contemporary period. We also showed that the visual representation of *yōkai* has actively evolved in our present time, by adapting to new visual genres, such as animation or computer graphics, while organically incorporating visual elements of previous art historical periods, thereby becoming a vehicle of visual continuity and cultural preservation while retaining contemporary aesthetic relevance.

The *Gegege no Kitaro* series, originally created by manga artist Mizuki Shigeru, was chosen for the focus of investigation not only because it is the only long-running animation series that has reintroduced *yōkai* to the visual media in the postwar period but also because it is Japan's longest running series (1968-current time), allowing for the unique

opportunity to illustrate the progression of character design from the 1960s to the 2000s. Even though Mizuki's influence is not limited to animation and manga, but extends to Japanese contemporary art and design (Murakami 2005:245), his body of work is not sufficiently documented in the international discourse on animation and manga. For this reason, we aimed to bring Mizuki's work to the attention of an international readership, approaching it from the theoretical framework laid down in Furniss (1998), who argues that animation, as an art form, can be analyzed and documented from the standpoint of aesthetics and art history (Furniss 1998:7). From this standpoint, the design of the postwar *yōkai* characters of the 1960s to 2008 was interpreted within the art historical context of visual evolution of monster representation in Japan.

*Yōkai* and *mononoke* are supernatural entities that grew out of folk beliefs related to phenomena that induced fear, including sudden misfortunes, famines, diseases, social outcasts or unexplainable events. The visual representation of *yōkai* themes dates back to the Muromachi period (1333–1573), when the first *Hyakki Yagyō* (百鬼夜行, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons) picture scrolls appear. While in the Heian period (794–1185) *yōkai* were not represented visually due to fears of image magic, from the Muromachi period onwards *yōkai* were increasingly shown with levity and humor. With the appearance of print making and the emerging popularity of the codex and catalogue formats, the Edo period (1603–1868) saw the proliferation of *yōkai* catalogues that identified *yōkai* with specific names, often derived from folklore sources.

During the Edo to Meiji periods, *ukiyo-e* woodblock print representations of the monsters increased, displaying a wide range of artistic expression. While Kuniyoshi utilized *yōkai* as sublime political caricatures, Yoshitoshi used them as metaphors for the complexities of the human psyche. From the early twentieth century onwards, however, visual representations of *yōkai* became increasingly associated with foreigners and war enemies. While during the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) *yōkai* could represent Chinese soldiers, during the Second World War (1939–45), when the first *yōkai* characters appeared in animation, they were associated with the Allied Forces.

The visual representation of *yōkai* returned to Japanese popular media in the postwar era in the *Gegege no Kitaro* series of Mizuki Shigeru. These *yōkai* characters take on new roles in accordance with twentieth and twenty-first century realities, while remaining within the visual context of traditional *yōkai* representation.

While until the twentieth century *yōkai* were associated with outsiders, social outcasts and war enemies, in the *Kitaro* representations *yōkai* signify an explicitly Japanese side, as opposed to a foreign or Western one, with childish, demasculinized features. Furthermore, *yōkai* are brought into relation with ancestor worship and Japanese war dead of the Second World War.

Additionally, in the *Kitaro* series *yōkai* represent the environment

and rural nostalgia. In this sense, *yōkai* are equated with aspects of environmental pollution, while also taking part in a mascotization process that renders them as harmless, childlike symbols of an imagined shared Japanese rural past as opposed to the realities of urban alienation of the postwar era of increasing economic development in Japan.

Furthermore, in the case of twentieth and twenty-first century Japanese cinema, 2007 films *Gegege no Kitaro* and *Dororo* implicitly equated *yōkai* with people of mixed ethnic background. The 2008 *Kitaro* sequel, *Gegege no Kitaro Sennen Noroi Uta* (ゲゲゲの鬼太郎千年呪い歌, *Gegege no Kitaro and the Millennium Curse*, dir. Motoki Katsuhide, prod. Shōchiku, 2008) used popular South Korean drama actor So Ji Seop (소지섭, 1977-) as the main *yōkai* antagonist Yasha (夜叉), who entices young Japanese women with his music, portraying a *yōkai* that is suspicious but at the same time alluring and attractive – and, ultimately, foreign.

#### KITARO IN THE CONTEXT OF *Superflat*

The extent of influence of Edo and Meiji period visual sources on the character design of the animated series seems to support Murakami's view regarding the fluidity between visual genres in Japanese art history, while positioning the *Gegege no Kitaro* animated series within the framework of Japanese art history from the perspective of Murakami's *Superflat* theory (Murakami 2005).

While *yōkai* were traditionally equated with fearful events and psychological anxieties as well as with social outcasts and foreign enemies in the Edo to Meiji periods, in the postwar animated series, on the other hand, *yōkai* are also equated with an idyllic traditional Japan as mascots, representing a shared rural past and environment. In the manga, animation and film war narratives, *yōkai* represent the Japanese side as opposed to Western foreigners, while they also emphasize ancestor worship. While fearful creatures until the Edo period, they become weak and comical childish figures in the postwar period.

This element of representation resonates with Murakami's theory which situates the term *kawaii* (可愛い, cute), associated with a postwar era aesthetic, within a broader art historical nomenclature (Murakami 2005:247). Murakami postulates that the appearance of infantile fantasy characters in Japanese popular visual culture could be interpreted as a symptom of a sense of impotence, derived from Second World War traumas, as well as an avoidance of confronting historical truths.

Interpreted from this perspective, the postwar visual representation of *yōkai* in the *Gegege no Kitaro* animation series transforms *yōkai* into signifiers of an imagined Japanese unity while at the same time rendering them impotent. This phenomenon is extended to the case where *yōkai* represent environmental pollution or metropolitan social alienation, in which cases only token solutions are offered, thus perpetuating the underlying impotence of the *yōkai*.

*Yōkai* representation in the post-war animated series is part of a

process of the visual evolution of the depiction of monsters in Japan that started in the Muromachi period and peaked in the Edo to Meiji periods. While the postwar era representation shifted the paradigm from yōkai as harmful outsiders to harmless insiders, this shift is in alignment with the visual evolutionary process that took place between the Muromachi and Meiji periods, where the visual representation of yōkai corresponded to and mirrored contemporaneous social issues and anxieties. A continuity of this visual evolution in twenty-first century visual media could be presupposed, where new, changing roles will be assigned to yōkai in alignment with changing realities related to twenty-first century social and environmental changes and the traumas related to them.

These new roles could be further studied in the case of the 2008 animated version of *Hakaba Kitaro* (墓場鬼太郎, Graveyard Kitaro) by Toei Animation that could serve as a point of comparison for changes in the representation of yōkai in the visual media of the first decade of the twenty-first century. Our test of applicability in contemporary visual media could be also extended to other animated works with yōkai themes, including the works of Studio Ghibli animation director Miyazaki Hayao, the manga series *Inuyasha* (犬夜叉, 1996–2007) by Takahashi Rumiko and its subsequent 2000–2004 animation version or the animation series *Kaiketsu Zorori* (かいけつゾロリ, Incredible Zorori, 2004–2007), based on the children's book series by Yutaka Hara. Besides works of manga and animation, the scope of research could be extended to the design of characters in computer graphics and gaming software that contain yōkai themes.

In the case of twenty-first century cinema, mask, costume and set designs as well as special effects used in the film sequel *Gegege no Kitaro Sennen Noroino Uta* (ゲゲゲの鬼太郎 千年呪いの歌, Gegege no Kitaro and the Millennium Curse, dir. Motoki Katsuhide, 2008) are worth investigating. In the case of other cinematic works, the design of characters by Ikeya Noriyoshi, the costume designs by Chiyoda Keisuke and the special effects designs by Koga Nobuaki are noteworthy in *Mushishi* (蟲師, Bug Master, dir. Otomo Katsuhiro, 2007) a pseudo-mythological story that blends animation with live action film based on the original manga of Urushibara Yuki (1999–) and subsequent animation (2005–2006). Investigating the art design of Harada Tetsuo and the special effects designs of Higuchi Shinji, Oda Takashi and Onoue Katsuro in the case of the live action film *Sakuya Yōkaiden* (さくや妖怪伝, Sakuya Slayer of Demons, dir. Haraguchi Tomō, 2000) would also yield interesting results. In order to compare late twentieth and early twenty-first century representations of yōkai in Japanese cinema, the art direction of the *Gakkono Kaidan* series (学校の怪談, School Kaidan, dir. Hirayama Hideyuki, 1995–97; dir. Sasaki Hirohisa, 2007) could be investigated as well as the design of the characters in *Heya Kyōko in Kappa* (河童, dir. Ishii Tatsuya, 1994), a live action film that equates the Kappa with extra-terrestrials and ponders the theme of the human exploitation of yōkai in commercial media.

## YŌKAI LANDSCAPE

Besides visual media, taking a look at the contemporary yōkai landscape also produces interesting findings. Several of the yōkai narratives are connected to specific geographical locations. The *Hyakki Yagyō* (百鬼夜行, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons) and other yōkai narratives are connected to the urban areas of the Heian capital, which is today's Kyoto City, while the Muromachi period legend *Shuten Dōji* (酒吞童子) was set in the mountains of Ōe-yama, Kyoto Prefecture, both of which locations are now dedicated to three-dimensional representations of yōkai in sculpture and displays, including the Ōe-yamano Onino Monument (大江山の鬼のモニュメント, Monument of the Ogres of Ōe Mountain, 1990), a three-figure bronze group sculpture representation of the Shuten Dōji legend by Narita Tōru, twentieth century sculptor and character designer of the *Ultraman* film series (Fig. 6.2). Interactions of historicity and popular visual culture can also be observed at the Onmyō-dō Abeno Shrine, Kyoto City, dedicated to the Heian period Onmyō-dō priest Abeno Seimei, which displays a plethora of paraphernalia related to the manga, animation and film sequences that use Abeno Seimei as their main character.

Modern creations of yōkai have also left their mark on the contemporary



**Fig. 6.2** Oni representations in Ōe-yama town

- 1 Bronze sculpture Ōe-yamano Onino Monument by Narita Toru, 1990,
- 2 Oni statue in Ōe-yama town, Kyoto Prefecture



**Fig. 6.3** Kitaro characters in urban planning

- 1** Kitaro-themed display on train cars, Sakaiminato City, Tottori Prefecture,  
**2** Plastic statue of Kitaro animation character Nezumi Otoko in Chōfu  
 City, Tokyo

landscape, including the town planning of Mizuki Shigeru's birth town Sakaiminato City, Tottori Prefecture, and his current residential town Chōfu City, Tokyo Prefecture. In both locations, sculptures and displays commemorate the contemporary yōkai creations of Mizuki (Fig. 6.3). In the case of Okayama City, Okayama Prefecture, on the other hand, the pseudo-mythology of the Momotaro legend is utilized in the city's town planning design. These phenomena can be related to twentieth and twenty-first century trends in urban planning including furusato-tsukuri (故里作り, home town planning) and machi-dzukuri (町作り, town planning) as proposed by Foster (1998).

Furthermore, contemporary representations of yōkai can be found in other forms of creative expression, including a laser light show (Kōdai-ji Temple, 高台寺, Kyoto City, May 19 – October 8, 2006), culinary sources (yōkai rāmen, 妖怪ラーメン, yōkai noodle soup, Kyoto City), displays (Yōkai street, Ichijō dōri, 一条通り, Kyoto City), local merchandise design (Sakaiminato City, Tottori Prefecture), which can be related to Micropop theory that substantiates the validity of amateur involvement in artistic expression outside of the boundaries of traditionally established art forms (Matsui 2007) and in relation to contemporary notions of recycling and ecological awareness (Fig. 6.4).

The interaction between art historical influences and contemporary representations of yōkai is apparent in the case of the twentieth and twenty-first century *Hyakki Yagyō Emaki* (百鬼夜行絵巻, Night Parade of One Hundred Demons picture scroll) design by contemporary designers commissioned by Shinto shrines; however, access to these designs is limited as enshrined scrolls are rarely accessible for public viewing. A similar interaction of contemporary landscape and art historical representations of yōkai, on the other hand, is manifest in the case of the contemporary festivals (matsuri, 祭り) of the Kitsuneno Gyōretsu (狐の



**Fig. 6.4** Yōkai in Micropop

**1** Yōkai ramen, Ichijō road, Kyoto, **2** Yōkai display along Ichijō road, Kyoto, the area traditionally associated with the procession of the Night Parade of One Hundred Demons (Hyakki Yagyō)

行列, Fox Parade, Ōji, North Tokyo) and the Ekin Matsuri (絵金祭り, Ekin Festival, Kōchi Prefecture, Shikoku island).

The *Kitsuneno Gyōretsu* is a Heisei (平成時代, 1989–) period matsuri, initiated in 1993 by the Inari Shrine, Ōji, North Tokyo. In this annual New Year's Eve parade, the residents of Ōji wear fox masks and make-up, reenact the fox depiction of late Edo period woodblock painter Utagawa Hiroshige (歌川広重, 1797–1858) on his 1857 print Ōji Shōzoku Enoki Ōmisokano Kitsunebi (王子装束ゑの木大晦日の狐火, Fox Fires on New Year's Eve at the Enoki Tree, Ōji), the rendering of the yōkai phenomenon kitsune-bi (狐火, fox fire) of fire appearing at night in marshes and wetland fields as the artist witnessed it in the Edo period Ōji region, while the parade itself also borrows elements from the *Kitsuneno Yomeiri* (狐の嫁入り, Wedding Parade of Foxes) visual tradition (Fig. 6.5).

The rural *Ekin Matsuri*, on the other hand, has a relatively longer tradition, dating back approximately 150 years. Celebrated in different enshrinement locations within Kōchi Prefecture, the main festival is held on the streets of Akaoka town on the night of the third Saturday of July. The festival displays candle-lit 180 × 180 cm<sup>2</sup> folding panels of byōbu-e (屏風絵, folding screen) by local late-Edo period Kano school painter Ekin (絵金, 1812–79), which depict horrid climactic scenes of



**Fig. 6.5** Kitsune in Ōji

**1** Utagawa Hiroshige's print *Ōji Shōzoku Enoki Ōmisokano Kitsunebi*, 1857 **2** Fox mask and make-up of Ōji resident participating in the Fox Parade festival, 31.12.2006

Edo period Kabuki plays with vivid detail. This genre of *byōbu-e* was developed by Ekin, using special materials to withstand corrosion when displayed outside, while the size of the panels was designed to create the most effective visual impact on a contemporaneous Japanese viewer, whose average height would have been 150–160 cm. These panels were purchased by commoners and local shrines and displayed partially folded and lit by candlelight during annual summer festivals from the early Meiji period onwards. The panels, standing on their own, were designed in such a way as to draw the viewer into the scene, while the candlelight and the folding angle aimed to achieve a three-dimensional, moving effect of the figures. Ekin used painting materials of striking green and blood red, whose exact content is not known, as the paintings were meant to withstand the eroding effects of sunshine, moisture, rain and wind during these outside displays, a tradition maintained up until the contemporary period (Fig. 6.6).

In the case of both the *Kitsuneno Gyōretsu* and the *Ekin Matsuri*, the interaction of the contemporary landscape with art historical traditions is observable, creating new venues for the representation of *yōkai* in the contemporary era on a public level, while at the same time fertilizing contemporary imaginations of *yōkai* as derived from art historical sources, thereby maintaining an ongoing interaction between art



**Fig. 6.6** Ekin's byōbu-e  
 Street displays of Ekin's byōbu-e during the Ekin Matsuri, 07-08.2006 in  
**1** Akaoka town and at **2** Asakura shrine, Kōchi city, Kōchi prefecture,  
 Shikoku island

historical traditions and contemporary sensibilities towards the monsters of Japan.

As yōkai make excellent animation characters due to their diversity and lack of copyright concerns, audiences will most often face them in the other-worlds of television, manga, computer generated and gaming designs. However, the contemporary period festivals of the Kitsune Gyōretsu and the Ekin Matsuri should also remind us that the timelessness of creative expression related to monster representation has retained its power to re-fertilize the popular imagination of the coming generations (Fig. 6.7).



**Fig. 6.7** Yōkai in the backyard: Stone lanterns at Kitano Tenmangu Shrine commemorating the hiding place of the mythological Tsuchigumo (土蜘蛛, Earth Spider) yōkai from the Muromachi period, surrounded by the modern urban landscape of Kyoto City

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