Edo *Yōkai Karuta* and Japanese Folk Spiritual Beliefs & Practices

March 2025

江戸妖怪カルタに読み取る民間信仰の要素

2025 年 3 月

Kyoto Seika University, Graduate School of Art

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京都精華大学大学院芸術研究科芸術専攻

ウィリアム・ズィー・ウッド（ザック）

(京都精華大学学位申請論文)

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation provides the first in-depth, English-language analysis of *yōkai karuta*, a *yōkai*-themed variation of a popular card game that was first created and played in the late Edo Period (1603-1868) in Japan. Each deck is composed of 48 pairs of image and text cards related to *yōkai*, or "traditional Japanese monsters," which are matched during the course of play. Though there has been some discussion of Edo *yōkai karuta* in Japanese, relatively little scholarship is available in any language. What's more, only a small number of decks have survived to the present day, and little is known regarding the background information of each deck, such as author or year of creation. Given these limitations, this inquiry draws on a variety of sources to contextualize the cards in terms of their historical origins and the playful culture of the Edo Period. *Yōkai karuta* are viewed as a part of *gesaku* (戯作), or playful literature, which illuminates their function as a form of subversive play. This paper also highlights the connections between research on *yōkai* and the primarily English-language fields of monster studies and play studies in order to expand possibilities for further research.

The primary focus of this paper is to examine individual cards across six decks of *yōkai karuta* to identify elements of Edo Period folk spiritual beliefs and practices. Themes discussed in research on folk spiritual traditions in Japan are laid out and organized into four categories, and the cards themselves are divided into three groups based on the origins of the *yōkai* and scenes they depict. This provides a framework for understanding the patterns in which various beliefs and practices are referenced in the cards, and I hope that it could be of value for examinations of other *yōkai*-related materials from Edo Japan.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. OVERVIEW and OBJECTIVES OF THIS RESEARCH

Yōkai karuta (妖怪かるた) is a Japanese card game originating in the late Edo Period (1603-1868) that features images of *yōkai*, or what could be called "traditional Japanese monsters." In this dissertation I examine the images and text in six surviving decks to identify elements of and references to Japanese folk spiritual beliefs and practices. Through this I hope also to provide a foundation for further research considering there has been very little English-language scholarship on *yōkai karuta* to date. The relatively minor and overlooked nature of the object of my inquiry requires me to draw on a broad range of sources to achieve these objectives.

i. MY PERSONAL BACKGROUND

As a child I loved drawing in sketchbooks, and there was one particular game I remember playing with myself from time to time. I would draw random dots on a page, add lines connecting them, and then see what the resulting jagged shape looked like and fill in the drawing accordingly. More often than not it looked like the face or body of a "monster"—that is, an oddly shaped creature. Both then and now it's been an instinct for me to casually scribble creatures and characters not only in sketchbooks but also in the margins of handouts or tests at school and on any scratch paper lying around. There were years at a time when this monster drawing practice nearly disappeared, but it always reemerged and maintained a position at the periphery of my life, sustaining itself in scraps of paper and moments of distraction.

I say this to first of all recognize that for me it is common sense that monsters are a source of discovery and delight. It is unimaginable that monsters draw strength only from

sinister emotions like fear and repressed desires. If anything, my desire to sketch light-hearted monsters itself was repressed for parts of my life, and this repression was due to pressure to be productive and skilled in a marketable way.

Given my interest in visual depictions of monsters, I was struck by the many mysterious-seeming creatures I encountered in popular culture from Japan at a time when it was becoming more accessible in the United States. This began with video games and animation, but I was later inspired by the detailed, whimsical-looking creatures in Edo Period illustrations. Japan's long history of playfully rendered creatures helped me see possibilities beyond monsters as terrifying enemies, which was a more common form for monsters in the United States in the late 1900s and turn of the century.

Eventually, and due in part to inspiration from media from Japan, I deciding to actively embrace and make space for my monster drawing practice, which led me to first create a video game about monsters and then to create a deck of cards based on the game. This helped me realize that cards were the most interesting medium for me as a visual artist. Cards captured the playfulness, accessibility, and mutability that I loved about monsters, while also providing a creative outlet for illustrations.

As a deck of cards depicting "monsters," Edo *yōkai karuta* seemed to me to be an opportunity to gain insight into the visual culture of *yōkai* in Edo Japan, to better understand cards as artistic and cultural objects, and to understand what sort of connections could exist between cards and spiritual traditions. This research felt like an especially valuable opportunity given the lack of English-language materials available on Edo *yōkai karuta*.

ii. WHAT IS IN A DECK OF *YŌKAI KARUTA*?

A deck of Edo *yōkai karuta* contains 48 illustrated cards (*efuda*) and 48 corresponding text cards (*yomifuda*). Each card typically measures roughly 60 by 40 millimeters, printed with the woodblock printing technology that enabled diverse forms of popular visual culture to flourish in Edo Japan. These 48 pairs of cards correspond to the 48 syllabaries, or *kana*, in written Japanese in the Edo Period—that is, the 45 *kana* of modern Japanese plus three archaic *kana* still in use at the time. The final *kana* (*n* or ん) is omitted because it cannot come at the beginning of a word, and it is replaced instead by *kyō* (京). Each illustrated card has one *kana* written usually in the upper right corner, and on the matching text card is a sentence beginning with the same *kana*.

Take, for example, the image card for the syllable *mu* (む).

Fig. 1: Image card from an Edo Period deck of *yōkai karuta*.

Source: Paper Deck (*mu* / む)[1]

The illustration shows two *yōkai* bursting out of a box, and in the upper right corner is the kana *mu* (む). The corresponding text card reads, “Mukashi no omoitsudzura,” a reference

[1] For detailed information on each deck including sources, see Chapter I Section 2.

to *yōkai* said to appear in long-forgotten boxes. In an actual game of *yōkai karuta*, one person would read this text card aloud, and the other players would try grab the card above as quickly as possible from among 48 illustrated cards spread out before them.

Each deck contains its own unique assortment of *yōkai*, though certain *yōkai* are common across decks. Decks often feature different *yōkai* for the same *kana*, and sometimes the same *yōkai* appears in multiple decks but for different *kana*. For example, Figure 2 shows four cards from different decks depicting variations of a *yōkai* based on a wooden pestle (as in a mortar and pestle used for grinding). Notice that the *kana* in the upper right are different: れ (*re*) and す (*su*). The difference in this case corresponds to two words for "pestle," *rengi* and *surikogi*.

Fig. 2: Four cards depicting a *yōkai* based on a tool with wings.

Sources left to right: Tada Deck (*re* / れ); Tokyo Deck (*su* / す); Ikkyōsai Deck (*su* / す); Nishiki-e Deck (*re* / れ)

Seeming to refer to the tradition of *tsukumogami*, or old tools that come to life after 100-years, this particular *yōkai* has all but disappeared today despite its apparent popularity in the Edo Period. Thus, *yōkai karuta* also serve as a time capsule for *yōkai* and the cultural

references they contain even after they've faded from the popular imagination. The manga artist Shigeru Mizuki brought many yōkai to life for modern audiences through his famous *yōkai*-themed manga *Gegege no Kitaro* (originally published from 1960-1969), while other *yōkai* have found renewed popularity today as mascots for towns or as video game characters. Maybe the pestle with wings seen above simply lost relevance because grinding ingredients with a mortar and pestle isn't as common as it once was—or perhaps this *yōkai* might have been iconic today if only Mizuki had decided to feature it in his manga.

iii. WHO PLAYED *YŌKAI KARUTA*?

As discussed later in the section on *gesaku* literature and subversive play, Edo *yōkai karuta* was very much a product for adults. The cards contained multi-layered intertextual allusions to stage plays and other previous images of *yōkai*, and the recognition of these connections was intended as one major part of what made them appealing and entertaining. In other words, the creativity and playfulness of the images and text in the cards would be most fully appreciated by an adult with knowledge of social trends and familiarity with a wide range of images of *yōkai*.

At the same time, *yōkai karuta* appeared at a time in the late Edo Period when *yōkai* and work featuring them came to be created for and enjoyed by a wider audience that included children, rather than just intellectuals (Kagawa 2016: 14). In addition, towards the end of the Edo Period *gesaku* works became more juvenile with less social satire and political critique. So, though it is impossible to know the distribution of ages of people who played Edo *yōkai karuta*, the cultural context would suggest that they were intended for an adult audience but were sometimes enjoyed by children in this era of broad cultural reception. Considering that the game is playable as long as one has basic reading comprehension, it is hard to imagine that a child

never picked up a deck of *yōkai karuta* or that an older child never joined in a game in some form or fashion.

However, due to my interest in the origins of the *yōkai* in the cards and their connections to folk spiritual traditions, as well as my personal interest in playful activities among adults rather than children, I view *yōkai karuta* in this dissertation as a game played by adults. I will not consider their potential educational impact or relevance for children, though this would certainly be a worthwhile topic for future research.

iv. OVERVIEW OF ORIGINS and PRECEDING RESEARCH

Yōkai karuta are one variation of a lineage of card-matching games that are more famously based on proverbs or poems. These games date back to even earlier "shell-matching" or *kai-awase* games (*kai* means "shell," and *awase* means "match") using shells painted with images. The term "karuta" comes from the Portuguese word for card, "carta," since cards were brought to Japan in the 16th Century by Portuguese sailors. This new format led to, on the one hand, Japanese interpretations of European playing cards with altered suits and face cards, and, on the other hand, paper versions of these older shell-matching games. Elements of both lineages merged in the case of *hanafuda*, a still popular Japanese card game that involves finding combinations of cards with both matching and trick-taking elements (Pollard 2024: 1).

In short, *yōkai karuta* could be viewed as a combination of four elements: local object-matching games in Japan, the paper card format from Europe, Edo Period woodblock printing technology, and *yōkai* folklore and visual culture. Unfortunately, however, few *yōkai karuta* decks have survived to the present day, and those that remain are usually incomplete due to their small size and easily destructible material. There is no way to know how many decks were created in the Edo Period, but certainly many more existed than we have access to today.

Perhaps because of the small number that have survived—I was only able to collect data for six decks—there has also been scant research on Edo *yōkai karuta*. They are sometimes briefly mentioned within broader discussion of *yōkai* culture in the Edo Period, particularly regarding games and playfulness. There has, however, been some research in Japanese, primarily a relatively short book meant to introduce modern audiences to Edo *yōkai karuta* (Tada 1998), as well as monographs published on the website of the Japan Playing Card Museum (Ebashi 2020; Ebashi 2021).

v. *YŌKAI* and *OBAKE*: A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

During the Edo Period, *yōkai karuta* were actually called *obake karuta* or *bake karuta*. This is a reflection of the variety of terms that have been used over the centuries for what we now know as "yōkai," a term that only began to be used broadly in the early 1900s.[2] Modern researchers draw distinctions between *yōkai* and other entities like *yūrei* (usually translated as "ghosts") due to key differences in where they come from and how they manifest,[3] and the *karuta* at the center of this dissertation portray *yūrei* as well as *obake* or *bakemono*, creatures that would be called *yōkai* today. These nuances reflect the difficulties involved in retroactively applying the term "yōkai" to the creatures in these cards. Nonetheless, in keeping with modern naming conventions and for simplicity's sake, I will refer to the decks as *yōkai karuta* rather than *bakemono karuta.* In addition, I will generally refer to the entities depicted as "yōkai," despite the fact that the term is never used in the cards themselves and not every card depicts what would be called a *yōka*i today.

[2] For the evolution of terms like *bake* and *mononoke*, see Foster 2015a: 14-24.
[3] For more on the difference between *yūrei* and *yōkai*, see Komatsu 2017: 134-136.

vi. WHY *YŌKAI KARUTA* and FOLK SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS?

Research on *yōkai* in Japan has often overlapped with research on folk spiritual beliefs and practices, beginning with the forerunners of folklore studies and "monsterology" in Japan, Inoue Enryō and Kunio Yanagita. Gerald Figal's *Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan* details the work of Enryō and Yanagita regarding *yōkai* and folk beliefs during Japan's period of rapid modernization (Figal 1999).[4] Other researchers have since addressed the ways in which folk spiritual beliefs may have influenced the ways people imagine *yōkai* as well as the connections between individual *yōkai* and past spiritual practices (Foster 2008: 42, 2015a: 181-184; Komatsu 2017: 156). My own research focuses on identifying how these connections present themselves in the specific case of Edo *yōkai karuta* with an eye for unique elements of the paper card game format. In doing so I aim to identify potential contributions made by Edo *yōkai karuta* to the broader fields of *yōkai* studies, monster studies and research on Japanese folk spiritual practices. Ultimately, I hope to open the door for further research on instances where monsters and spiritual traditions overlap in playable, visual form such as a card game.

vii. ON IMAGINATION and "IMAGINARY CREATURES"

Research on monsters and *yōkai* sometimes involves discussions of belief and what is or isn't real, often leading to a critique of how we think about belief. For example, Foster discusses the ambiguity of belief regarding *yōkai* (Foster 2008: 12-15). Rather than focusing on belief and realness, however, I would prefer to focus on how we use our imagination to know and build real relationships to things that exist along a spectrum of *feeling* real—from an

[4] The two are discussed throughout the book, but Figal specifically lays out Inoue's thinking regarding the supernatural in his discussion of *fushigi* in Meiji Japan (Figal 1999: 40-52) and details Yanagita's approach in a chapter titled "Modern 'Science' of the Folk" (103-152).

insignificant-feeling flight of fancy to someone or something that feels so real it has an impact on our day-to-day life. This makes it possible to look at the ways imagination affects our lives as a real way of knowing things.

As an artist and researcher, I am interested in creatures and entities that we know primarily through our imagination, but that nonetheless *feel* real to varying degrees. This would include a fictional human character in a book, an imaginary creature in a children's cartoon, the person I imagine reading this sentence, and the person you imagine as the author of this dissertation. In addition, I believe there is immense value in referring to these imaginary creatures and entities broadly as "monsters" in order to enable a dynamic discussion of imagination, play and the unknown. Though some *yōkai* are thought to originate from real sights or sounds—such as *yanari*, which are described as being manifestations of "the phenomenon of mysterious sounds emitted from a house" (Foster 2008: 62)—I am interested in the creatures that dwell in our imagination as a result of this initial inspiration. In the sense that these creatures exist in our imaginations, the question of whether anyone "*really* believes in them" is not necessarily relevant when they have a very real impact on our emotions or behavior.

In other words, I believe that describing monsters as "imaginary creatures" is not a statement on whether they are real or significant. Though words like "imagination" and "imaginary" are usually used to denote fakeness and deny credibility (ex. "That's just your imagination."), I intentionally use them in order to reassert the *feeling* of realness of entities known only through our imagination and the importance of serious inquiry into them, regardless of whether they are silly or sacred.

Perhaps discussion of imagination, monsters and belief would benefit from a greater range of words to discuss what is called "imagination" in English, especially given how broadly

it can potentially be used to include terrifying monsters, spiritual traditions, and fleeting moments of whimsy. One starting point could be the delineation by De Koven (2020) of various types of imagination and their functions in *The Infinite Playground*.[5] Also, in the translation of Arabic and Persian texts, French philosopher Henri Corbin coined the term "imaginal" to describe "a perfectly *real* world, more evident even and more coherent, in its own reality, than the *real* empirical world perceived by the senses" (Corbin 1964: 1). This is meant to contrast with the standard term "imaginary" and its connotation of unreality. "Imaginal" has been developed further in other contexts, such as Chiara Bottici's application to modern politics in *Imaginal Politics: Images Beyond Imagination and the Imaginary* (Bottici 2019).

This term makes it possible to discuss "imaginal creatures"—creatures that are accepted as existing in the realm of imagination without needing proof that they are *actually* real in the material world. It also creates a spectrum from "imaginary things/creatures" that do not exist (or that feel fake and unreal) to "imaginal creatures" that do exist (or that feel real), both known primarily through the faculty of imagination.

Because I am interested in the full spectrum of these creatures, from frivolous "imaginary" ones to perfectly real "imaginal" ones, I use the more common term "imaginary" to indicate the full spectrum. I do this partly to recognize that even the most unreal-feeling objects of our imagination can have a real impact on our lives, but also to assert that imagination and imaginary things deserve serious consideration on their own terms.

With this understanding of imagination at the core of my investigation, I am interested in spiritual traditions because they provide structured ways to use our imagination and thus impact our lives in ways both small and large, and they can in turn affect and be affected by

[5] Specifically, see the chapters titled "The Private Imagination" (De Koven 2020: 51-75), "The Shared Imagination" (77-112), and "The Working Imagination" (113-142).

other concepts and entities we know through our imagination. In this dissertation I hope to elucidate the overlap and interplay of *yōkai* and folk spiritual traditions through the example of Edo *yōkai karuta*.

2. DETAILS OF THE SIX DECKS OF EDO *YŌKAI KARUTA*

My research focuses on scanned images of six decks of Edo *yōkai karuta*. One deck is from an individual's private collection that was reproduced and published with a book, while the five others are held in the collections of museums in Japan—the only five decks available through domestic public institutions, as far as I know. In this section I will describe the physical characteristics and known historical details about each deck. I will also give each deck a name for simplicity and clarity when listing sources for image cards, and I invite readers to refer back to this section should they have any questions.

The first deck, from the private collection of Katsumi Tada, was physically reproduced and sold together with a book titled *Edo Yōkai Karuta* that offers explanations of each individual card (Tada 1998). This deck is missing two image cards, which Tada supplements with cards from another deck in order to provide a full playable deck. The cards measure 63 x 42 millimeters, and, as with all but two of these decks, the author, publisher, and year of printing are unknown. I will refer to this as the Tada Deck.

The cards used to supplement Tada's reproduction are from a deck in the collection of the Paper Museum in Tokyo, referred to by the museum as *obake karuta* (お化けかるた). Measuring 63 x 42 millimeters, this deck has the greatest number of missing cards: nine image cards and seven text cards. Despite this, they are some of the most well-preserved with less fading and damage, although some have holes due to insects. I was able to physically handle

these cards when I visited the Paper Museum, and I personally took photos of them. The artist, publisher, and year of production are unknown. I will refer to this deck as the Paper Deck.

The third deck is from the collection of the Tokyo National Museum in Tokyo, listed as *bakemono karuta* (化け物かるた). This deck measures 66 x 45 millimeters and is missing three image cards and seven text cards. Again, the artist, publisher, and year of printing are unknown. This deck is notable in that the images on the image cards extend onto the matching text cards, producing a "full-spread" image when laid side-by-side. I received digital data of this deck from the Tokyo National Museum and never saw the cards in-person. I will refer to this deck as the Tokyo Deck.

A fourth deck is held at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto and is freely available to view on their website, where it is listed as *bakemono karut*a (化物かるた). Although the year of printing is unknown, this is the only deck with a known artist and publisher: Ikkyōsai Tsuyanaga and Tsujioka Bunsuke, respectively. The cards measure 60 x 40 millimeters, and the deck is missing three image cards and one text card. I downloaded the digital data of the cards from the Center's website. I will refer to this deck as the Ikkyōsai deck.

The images for the fifth deck are taken from a *nishiki-e* (a type of multi-colored woodblock print often used for *ukiyo-e*) in the collection of the National Museum of Japanese History in Chiba, where it is referred to as *obake karuta* (おばけかるた). The *nishiki-e* is a rendering of the image and text cards of a deck of Edo *yōkai karuta* lined up in rows. The images of each card are smaller than conventional *karuta* at only 37 x 25 millimeters. The year of printing is 1860, but the artist and publisher are unknown. No cards are missing, thanks to their being preserved in a single image. This deck is the simplest in terms of both images and text; the images have thick line work and less detail, while the text cards sometimes offer only a

single word rather than a full phrase. I visited the museum to view the *nishiki-e* and photograph it myself. I will refer to this as the Nishiki-e Deck.

The previous five decks have been discussed in previous scholarship (Tada 1998; Ebashi 2020). The sixth and final deck, however, has not been previously made public, according to researcher Matsunobu Kagawa at the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of History. This is likely due to their considerable fading and damage, rendering some images difficult to decipher. This deck is referred to in their collection as *obake karuta* (おばけかるた). The cards measure 49 by 36 millimeters, and the deck is missing one image card and one text card. The artist, publisher, and year of printing are unknown. A photographer who accompanied me to the museum took photos of the deck. I will refer to this as the Hyogo Deck.

When showing images of individual cards from any of the decks above in the body of this dissertation, I will refer to their source decks using the naming conventions listed above (ex. "Source: Hyogo Deck") rather than writing out the full names of the museums each time. This is done to save space and help familiarize readers with the unique character of each deck. In addition, each time I show images of the cards for the first time in a new chapter or section within a chapter, I will use a footnote to remind readers to refer back to this section for details.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to fill the gap in research on Edo *yōkai karuta* and to paint as clear a picture as possible of their context and significance, I draw on work from a variety of fields, including religious studies, media studies, and cultural history. I believe that such a wide-reaching approach that relies on diverse scholarship is in fact appropriate when researching *yōkai*, which are recognized by researchers to be elusive and constantly transforming.

In a comparable case, Lillehoj (1995) notes the difficulties in studying *hyakki yagyō* scrolls, discussed in a later chapter, given how little is known about them and the diversity of materials that must be dealt with in order to understand their background. She writes that this does not lend itself to "the standard, structured analysis of art history or folklore studies" and adds that the best approach is to "cast one's net widely and to sift through the various materials that are gathered" (Lillehoj 1995: 8-9). I believe this far-reaching and open attitude is also useful for a marginal object of study like Edo *yōkai karuta*, and I adopt a similar approach in my research here.

i. CONSTRUCTING A DATABASE FOR HUNDREDS OF *KARUTA*

The main section of my dissertation relies on visual and textual analysis of digital data of the pairs of image and text cards in six decks of Edo *yōkai karuta*. Data for four of the decks were obtained through formal application procedures at the following institutions: the Tokyo National Museum, the Paper Museum, the National Museum of Japanese History, the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of History. The Tokyo National Museum provided photographs of the deck in their collection, while the Paper Museum, the National Museum of Japanese History, and the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of History allowed me to visit their archives and document the decks myself. Digital images of a fifth deck were published on the website of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, which I downloaded. Finally, I used scanned images of the physical reproduction that was published with the book *Edo Yōkai Karuta* (Tada 1998). These are all the decks that I have been able to locate at institutions in Japan through internet search and consultation with researchers. I contacted a number of additional museums that informed me they did not have Edo *yōkai karuta* in their collections.

Because the text cards were written in Edo Period handwriting and thus difficult to read, I relied on transcriptions provided by the museums for most decks and on Tada (1998) for the Tada deck. For the Ikkyōsai Deck I relied on the transcriptions provided on the website of the Japan Playing Card Museum (Ebashi 2020: 1).

I used image editing software to divide the photos of the full decks into individual files for each image card. I then placed these image files in a spreadsheet in order to view all cards in one place. Below each image card I added lines in the spreadsheet for the text from the matching text card, my own English translation of this text, the name of the *yōkai* depicted in the card where applicable, the source material or origin of the image/*yōkai* depicted in the card, and any other miscellaneous notes. Finally, I added lines to classify each card as belonging to one of three groups: 1) References to well-known popular entertainment; 2) References to local legends and stories; and 3) Standalone images that don't strictly depict a scene from a story.

I organized the cards in this way in order to compare the decks easily and to record known facts as well as my own thoughts and impressions. Due to the sheer volume of images, however, it was at times unwieldly to navigate. In order to manage the hundreds of images, I used a color-coding system where I marked certain cards as particularly relevant to this research. For example, depictions of depicting blind, itinerant musicians were highlighted in orange, while depictions of *yōkai* with only one eye were highlighted in yellow. This enabled me to quickly find and reference cards when researching and writing.

ii. REGARDING NAMES, TITLES AND TERMS in JAPANESE

For Japanese names, I will generally use the format of "given name followed by family name" that is standard in English, except in cases of major historical figures like Toriyama Sekien whose names are always rendered otherwise. When providing my own, non-official

translation of Japanese titles, I will place them in parentheses and quotations without capitalizing the first letter of words beyond the first word. When an official translation is available, I will write it in parentheses in italics with full capitalization just as I would for any other title of a text. I will write out the text associated with a given card in italics in romanized Japanese, followed by my own English translation in quotations.

When introducing uncommon Japanese terms for the first time or at the beginning of a lengthy discussion of the term, I will include the original Japanese in parentheses, such as in the following example: *zatō* (座頭). I do this to aid comprehension for Japanese speakers as well as to better enable further research. For emphasis on specific Japanese terms, I will sometimes place them in quotes without italics. I will omit macrons for any Japanese words or names that commonly appear in English-language materials without macrons ("Tokyo," etc.). Any other Japanese terms will be written in italics with macrons where necessary to denote long vowels.

iii. FOOTNOTES AND CITATIONS

I will write in-text citations in the following format: "Author Year: First page-last page" (ex. "Foster 2015: 11-12"). Meanwhile, I will use footnotes in the following cases: 1) To cite pages from a source with additional details about what can be found there; and 2) To share information that is only tangentially related to the current argument but may be of interest to readers who wish to learn more. Please refer to the "Works Cited" section at the end of this dissertation for full bibliographic information on all sources.

II. BACKGROUND OF EDO *YŌKAI KARUTA* and PRECEDING RESEARCH

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF EDO *YŌKAI KARUTA*

One way to view *yōkai karuta* is as part of the centuries-long tradition of illustrating *yōkai* combined with the "karuta" (paper card) format. Following this line of thought, in the following sections I will provide a brief overview of what could be called visual monster culture in Japan—hundreds of years of illustrated *yōkai*—followed by an overview of how cards printed in Belgium entered Japan via Portuguese ships and were localized into new ludic forms. I will then outline the ways *yōkai karuta* developed during and after the Edo Period before reviewing the available literature on them.

i. FROM ENTERTAINING SCROLLS TO ILLUSTRATED GAMES

The earliest known images of *yōkai* date back to the Medieval Period (1185-1600), where they were used for entertainment or to attract religious converts—not for reverence or worship (Komatsu 2017: 17-18). However, these early images included *yōkai* in the context of a larger scene, such as a human hero defeating *yōkai*. The earliest surviving illustration focused solely on the *yōkai* themselves is a *hyakki yagyō emaki*, or illustrated handscroll depicting "The Night Parade of One Hundred Demons," specifically one known as the Shinju-an scroll because it is held in Shinju-an Temple in Kyoto, Japan (Yumoto 2021: 1). Painted in the early 16th Century, it was previously attributed to Tosa Mitsunobu, but this is now thought to be unfounded (Lillehoj 1995: 10). In fact, many *hyakki yagyō* scrolls were created over hundreds of years before and after the time of the Shinju-an scroll; there are records of now lost *hyakki yagyō* scrolls from the 14th Century, and the first is thought to date back to the late 12th Century (28). Since these scrolls have not survived to the present day, however, there is no way to know to what degree the Shinju-an scroll was based on earlier precedents. In any case, it is clear that *hyakki yagyō* became quite popular as a genre of illustrated scrolls (Foster 2015a: 45).

In discussing *hyakki yagyō* scrolls, Lillehoj (1995) notes that they primarily depict *tsukumogami*, or old tools and everyday objects come to life (Lillehoj 1995: 7-8). This is a marked difference from later collections of *yōkai* illustrations, such as Toriyama Sekien's *Gazu hyakki yagyō* (Toriyama 1776), which primarily features individual, named *yōkai* not based on tools. Regarding this change, Komatsu (2017) highlights how the forms taken by *yōkai* shifted over the centuries from natural forms to anthropomorphic tools (*tsukumogami*), and finally to more humanoid forms (Komatsu 2017: 75). Lillehoj (1995) points out that in the 16th Century when the Shinju-an scroll was created there were also *tsukumogami* emaki, or scrolls depicting old tools come to life, albeit not in the context of a chaotic night parade (Lillehoj 1995: 21). She details two *tsukumogami* scrolls known as the Sūfuku-ji scrolls, which, like the Shinju-an scroll, are thought to be the earliest surviving examples of their genre. These scrolls, however, depict a religious story where abandoned tools come to life to attack humans before being converted to Buddhism by sacred boys (*gohō dōji*). With the help of an abandoned rosary turned into a human monk, the old tools join the Shingon sect of Buddhism and finally achieve enlightenment (21-24). The structured religious narrative is obviously very different from the chaos of *hyakki yagyō*, but her analysis shows that images of *tsukumogami* were likely familiar to whoever painted the Shinju-an scroll.

Written stories about *hyakki yagyō* date even farther back to the Heian Period, although these stories rarely describe the appearance of the creatures (Lillehoj 1995: 16-18). There were also Chinese paintings that depicted processions of demons in the context of stories about Zhong Kui, a famous "demon queller," as far back as the Tang dynasty (618-908), which could theoretically have influenced Japanese *hyakki yagyō* artists (Lillehoj 1995: 18-19; Takeuchi 1987: 8). Thus, although there is no way to know exactly what led to the creation of the earliest surviving *hyakki yagyō* scroll, it is possible that the artist drew on Heian stories about *hyakki*

yagyō, paintings of demon processions from China, and/or contemporary *tsukumogami* scrolls for inspiration.

No matter its origins, the Shinju-an scroll was enormously influential in the Edo Period as one of the first illustrations focused on depictions of large numbers of *yōkai*. As Komatsu (2017) points out, the tradition of illustrating *yōkai* is a key part of their development and popularity, as fixed visual forms and names helped them spread beyond the local stories and beliefs from which they emerged (Komatsu 2017: 17). By the time *yōkai karuta* appeared in the late Edo Period, examples of the diverse visual media featuring *yōkai* included *kibyōshi* (黄表紙), or illustrated books that were often satirical (Yumoto 2013: 84-86); *tsukushi-e*, or illustrations of many variations on one theme (175-179); *sugoroku-e*, or board games played with dice (160-165); and *tatebanko*, or images that were cut and glued together into three-dimensional forms (182).[6]

The connection between *yōkai* and play is clear from the examples listed above. Throughout his work on *yōkai*, Michael Dylan Foster has highlighted this profound and complex relationship, showing how the *yōkai* visual tradition has revolved in large part around recreation and play (Foster 2008: 8, 56-57, 70; Foster 2015a: 29-30, 91-92). Foster goes so far as to describe this intergenerational creativity, in which an artist might reference an image made a century prior while adding their own playful new additions, as the "Yōkai Culture Network," which he considers a "profound form of play" (Foster 2015a: 82). He includes in this network everyone involved in creating, researching and celebrating *yōkai* across the world and all time periods, insisting that we (people interested in *yōkai*) are a folk group, like the "folk"

[6] Foster (2015a) offers further discussion of *yōkai* in relation to Edo Period print culture (Foster 2015a: 50-51).

interrogated by Yanagita and Inoue in the early days of folklore and *yōkai* studies in Japan (Foster 2015a: 14).

Thus, one way to describe the history of images of *yōkai* in Japan could be as a history of drawing imaginary creatures for fun. Illustrated *yōkai* provided fun for both the artists, who engaged in wordplays and flexed their creative muscles, as well as for the audiences who consumed them. Artists' interplay over generations helped to solidify particular *yōkai* in the cultural imagination, whether in the form of famous works like the *hyakki yagyō* scrolls, Sekien's illustrated collections of *yōkai*, and Mizuki Shigeru's famous *yōkai*-themed manga, or more minor forms like Edo *yōkai karuta*.

ii. A NOTE ON *YŌKAI* AS "JAPANESE MONSTERS"

Though the degree of playfulness and volume of visual monster culture in the Edo Period is notable, it is important also to reiterate, as many researchers have already done, that this is not due to some inherent special character of Japan or the people living there. Foster (2015a) and Figal (1999) go to great lengths to avoid contributing to nationalist ideologies portraying Japan as a "bizarre" land of "quirky" monsters with some sort of special "uniqueness" that makes it incomprehensible to anyone not born and raised there (Figal 1999: 14; Foster 2015a: 69-70). I share their concern and take care in avoiding these nativist narratives. Furthermore, I see great value in actively considering the potential implications of *yōkai* research for other monster traditions. For example, artists in Western visual traditions also reference past iterations of monsters as they produce original work meant to entertain. In the present day, monsters are ubiquitous in video games and other forms of popular entertainment, including reinventions of monsters whose identities were established over centuries of intergenerational play between authors, artists and researchers. I will discuss this further in a

later section on preceding research on monster studies, but I wanted to highlight this before beginning any discussion of *yōkai*'s long history in Japan.

iii. LOCALIZING PORTUGUESE "CARTA"

The playing cards used by Portuguese sailors were dubbed "namban karuta" when they arrived in Japan in the late 1500s (Ebashi 2021: 2), since "namban" was a term used generally to refer to European people in Japan. The "carta" used by Portuguese sailors were localized into diverse new forms – that is, recreated by Japanese artists with some changes to appeal to the local audience. Jiang (2022) discusses how the visual design of *karuta* changed through a process of simplification, reinterpretation and localization (Jiang 2022: 61-83). The oldest extant localized deck is called *Miike karuta*, since it was produced in Miike Province, now Ohmuta city in Kyushu Prefecture in southern Japan (Ebashi 2021: 1). Other decks include *Tensho Karuta* and *Unsun Karuta*, both based on the original Portuguese *carta* and their numbered suits. However, though the original cards measured nine centimeters, localized *karuta* would gradually become smaller and smaller through their iterations in Japan until finally reaching around five centimeters at the end of the Edo Period when *yōkai karuta* emerged (4).

Sylvia Mann's *The Dragons of Portugal* describes how Portuguese playing cards spread through trade and colonization to Japan, Brazil, India, and elsewhere, taking on new local forms in each location (Mann 1973). The title of the book is a reference to how the original cards famously feature a dragon on the ace of each suit, a feature often preserved in their localized versions. However, though the cards came on ships from Portugal, they are thought to have actually been printed in Belgium, a "global centre of advanced woodblock printing, producing sophisticated products not found in Spain or Portugal" at the time (Ebashi 2021: 2). In fact, cards contemporary with those brought to Japan were discovered for the first time when a

Belgian museum made its collection available online in 2021 (3). Until then, no one had seen the actual decks that inspired *Miike karuta* and other *karuta* in Japan. Additional research on the visual composition of these cards has led to theories that the cards arriving in Japan might have first arrived in another Asian port, been localized for the audience there, and then been brought to Japan in this slightly altered form (4).

In short, playing cards printed in Belgium and brought to Japan by Portuguese sailors in the late 1500s developed into multiple lineages of card games over hundreds of years. This led, on the one hand, to a lineage of games that preserved the suits and basic structure of the original *namban karuta* and its trick-taking playing style. On the other hand, a separate lineage of card games developed that eliminated the suits, dragons, and trick-taking nature of European playing cards in favor of the "matching" format of an earlier Japanese shell-matching game called *kai-awase*. *Yōkai karuta* are a part of this second tradition, which revolved around matching phrases read aloud with cards illustrating the phrase. *Hana-awase karuta*, or "flower-matching karuta," also emerged in the Edo Period and developed into the card game *hanafuda*, which combined elements of both card game lineages with its plant-themed "suits" and a match-based playing style (Pollard 2024: 1).

Mostow (1996) writes that the *karuta* game based on *Hyakunin Isshu,* or *One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*, a classical Japanese anthology of poetry, was "already flourishing by the early eighteenth century," and this game was one of the most widely distributed versions of *Hyakunin Isshu* (Mostow 1996: 38). Considering that the *Hyakunin Isshu* is considered a classic of Japanese literature, there is a stark difference between a game of *karuta* based on these poems and one referencing contemporary culture through comically rendered *yōkai*. The next section will show how it was in fact quite natural for a *yōkai* version of *karuta* to appear in the

late Edo Period given the cultural and political context of *gesaku* literature and government censorship.

iv. EDO *YŌKAI KARUTA* and *GESAKU* LITERATURE

In order to understand the cultural context in which Edo *yōkai karuta* emerged as a form of entertainment, it is helpful to consider contemporary *gesaku* (戯作) literature. *Gesaku* has been defined as "popular fiction depicting life in the pleasure quarters" that makes "extensive use of colloquial expressions" (Tomasi 1999: 337), "parodist literature of the Edo Period" (Ariga 1989: 320), "Edo-period satire" (Wilson 1998: 325), and "popular literature that punctures the solemnity of history and turns it into play" (Smith 2024: 145). In terms of content, Iwasaki (1983) states that "the playful tone of the work and the use of Edo colloquial speech are key characteristics of *gesaku*" (Iwasaki 1983: 8). Screech (2008) describes *gesaku* in greater detail as follows:

> *Gesaku* was an umbrella category for amusing writing produced by intellectuals in relaxed, or feignedly unguarded, moments. It had an important place in Chinese and Japanese writing throughout the early-modern period. In Edo, *gesaku* was important because its self-removal from the worlds of work and order allowed cross-class fraternization, which was impossible in more formal situations. … The spirit of *gesaku* resided in clever use of words, topical and historical references, and inter-genre slippages. (Screech 2008: 223)

In fact, although the original authors of *gesaku* were intellectuals or "gentleman dilettante" of the samurai class, over time the field came to be dominated by writers of a

middle-class background who were primarily merchants (Leutner 1986: 50). This shift accompanied the Kansei reforms, a series of censorship measures from 1787 to 1793. Based on earlier reforms of a similar nature, the Kansei Reforms sought to reduce consumption and limit certain social behaviors in order to address economic issues (Ariga 1989: 323). Authors of works deemed to be either too sexually provocative or critical of the current government were punished, such as the case of Santō Kyōden, who was specifically targeted as a leader among writers in order to set an example (Kornicki 1977: 162). At the same time, Ariga (1989) shows how some works managed to evade censorship, such as *Kōshjima toki ni aizome* (Kyōden 1789), a *kibyōshi* by Kyōden that depicted social malaise through stories about oppressed members of society like beggars and the blind (Ariga 1989: 324). Smith (2024) also analyzes techniques used by authors to play with history in their works without risking "upsetting power by rewriting the history that legitimated it" (Smith 2024: 148). Nonetheless, the censorship of the Kansei reforms led to a "retreat into harmlessness," which Leutner (1986) describes in the case of *kibyōshi* as a shift from "an exuberance of style, content and conception" in first-generation *kibyōshi* to more conservative works in the late Kansei period (Leutner 1986: 28).

It is also notable, according to Reider (2010), that in the context of these reforms *yōkai* were a good outlet for expression without censorship. Furthermore, though *yōkai* did experience some strict oversight, at the end of the Edo Period they began to "strike back and flood the storefront" once more (Reider 2010: 98). One example of the use of *yōkai* to reference illicit activities is described by Tada (1998) regarding the pair of cards for *te* (て) in the Paper Deck, which reference an area in Edo where sex workers could be found even after government reforms targeted the pleasure quarters. This area was known as *yōkai yokochō* (Tada 1998: 42), or "*yōkai* alley," highlighting the connection between *yōkai* and the evasion of government regulations.

Leutner (1986) shows how toward the end of the Edo period censorship slackened somewhat, with authors limited more by common sense than fear of government intervention (Leutner 1986: 31). This was partly because, as Soranaka (1978) argues, the reforms ultimately failed in that they were met with severe opposition by a public who preferred permissiveness and resisted intrusion (Soranaka 1978: 154, 163). Still, Leutner (1986) tells how *kibyōshi* were succeeded later in the Edo Period by *gōkan*, which were similarly composed of illustrations and text but more juvenile and violent in content (Leutner 1986: 8-9). This suggests that *gesaku* works remained distant from their origins as intellectual political critique.

Given this trend in *gesaku* towards more commercial and less intellectual work, it makes sense that *gesaku* would extend into a new format that was not only playful in literary content but was an actual game—in other words, *karuta*. Furthermore, at the time *yōkai karuta* were created, producers of *gesaku* works would have been dealing with various forms and degrees of censorship from within and without, and they would have likely avoided anything that could be read as a critique of the government or overly sexual. One can imagine that a creator of *yōkai karuta* could readily defend their creations if necessary by claiming them to be nothing more than a simple children's game about *yōkai*. Moreover, given the use of *yōkai* for metaphor and to avoid censorship indicated above by Reider (2010), it is in fact unsurprising that a *gesaku*-style deck of *karuta* would center around *yōkai*.

Though I include *yōkai karuta* in the discussion of *gesaku*, I have not seen *yōkai karuta* mentioned in any lists of *gesaku* works, perhaps because they are relatively minor and not a conventional form of literature. *Kibyōshi* make a useful comparison here, since they combined written words with full-page images to tell satirical stories in a manner comparable to comics and were aimed at adults. In addition, Iwasaki (1983) points out that *kibyōshi* were in fact the "most popular genre of *gesaku* fiction" by the mid-1780s (Iwasaki 1983: 10). Thus, like

kibyōshi, which were at one point the most popular form of *gesaku*, *yōkai karuta* combined images with text in a humorous manner, and, what's more, the textual aspect is at the core of how the game is played. The text used in *yōkai karuta* also matches the common elements of *gesaku* identified above: topical and historical references, clever use of words, and parody. Thus, *yōkai karuta* may not be a form of *gesaku* literature exactly, but viewing them within the broader context of *gesaku* writing in the Edo Period helps illuminate how they were created and enjoyed. Finally, if we use the more literal translations of *gesaku* as "playful works" (Hideo 2008: 13) or "playful compositions" (Morley 1990: 761), *yōkai karuta* could easily be included.

v. PLAYFUL CONSUMERS OF *GESAKU*

In terms of the audience of these playful literary works, Smith (2024) illustrates the political significance of enjoying *gesaku* within contemporary Edo culture:

> [T]he spectacle of unproductive bodies, of people at play, was a form of resistance against the dominant ideology. Harry D. Harootunian notes that a popular culture of play "was a system of signification that recognized that the fixed boundaries and social identities established to guide people had become increasingly uncertain as society grew larger and more complex." Play itself, in other words, was a way to dispute the hegemonic sociopolitical order. It flouted the disciplinary regime, even if it did not contain a political dimension, in the modern sense of potential to reform or alter power. And this contestatory power of play extended to textual forms of play as well, to the playful literature (*gesaku*) that Buyō bemoans. As Glynne Walley writes, "the play offered...on the pages of *gesaku* constituted a temporary reprieve from Tokugawa society, with its all-pervasive ideology of noble self-sacrifice in service of an

> oppressive, morally determined class system. And like the theater and the licensed quarter, *gesaku* constituted a challenge to that system, regardless of whether *gesaku* texts satirized it or not. Play itself, and particularly the existence of people who subsisted on play, was an affront to the system." ...In addition to the subversiveness of play writ large, there is also the specific danger represented by the carnivalization of history, an important discourse for samurai and Tokugawa legitimation. (Smith 2024: 144-145)

Fujii (1989) offers a comparable framing of *gesaku* as "a 'carnivalized' expression of the otherwise powerless private subject in Tokugawa, Japan" (Fujii 1989: 556). As noted above, the Kansei Reforms failed to redirect the public's economic interests; for example, gambling and prostitution merely went underground (Soranaka 1978: 154). Similarly, *gesaku* works exhibited a subversive playfulness, even if they could not portray contemporary political critiques through a removed historical setting or other metaphors as they had once done. Sakai (1991) argues that the social critique contained in *gesaku* was the rejection of transcendental truth and noble ideals proclaimed by the government; rather, the profane world before the eyes of the reader was presented as the only real truth (Sakai 1991: 195). Even if the stories sometimes became didactic to avoid censorship (Kornicki 1977: 163), the reader could still find meaningfully purposeless play in *gesaku* works.

To summarize the historical background of *gesaku*, early *gesaku* works such as *kibyōshi* used parody, metaphor and wordplay to critique the Tokugawa government and to portray stories in the pleasure quarters, but the Kansei Reforms contributed to changes in both authorship and content. As the field became dominated by the merchant class and censorship became stricter, works became more commercial and less political. Still, the use of a format

associated with children but filled with content for adults was in itself parodic (Leutner 1986: 82), and some works retained a subversive edge as a "conscious rejection of tradition, orthodoxy, and what [people in Edo] perceived as the stifling and perhaps dangerous small-mindedness of the official vision of Japanese society" (42). This subversive nature of *gesaku* is all the more relevant to *yōkai karuta* given that, as a card game, it was literally played in addition to containing playful text in the vein of *gesaku* literature. In the Meiji Period, however, *gesaku* would be used as a negative foil against which Japanese writers could rebel in the 1880s and 1890s in order to establish a modern Japanese literary tradition comparable to Western literature (4-5).

Finally, viewed in terms of the vulnerability of play discussed later, *gesaku* could be described as a vulnerable population—people living under the control of the Tokugawa government—pushing back against hegemonic ideologies through the unproductive act of play despite attempts by the state to limit their actions and censor literature. Hideo (2002) describes how one *gesaku* writer saw himself as "a superfluous being, 'useless to society,'" at the saw time aware that "his education was in no way inferior to that of high government officials" (Hideo 2002: 17). This self-parodying style reflects the carnivalesque nature in which *gesaku* authors were self-deprecating while also mocking powerful individuals and social hierarchies. In the images and text in *yōkai karuta*, we can see how money-collectors, malicious spiritual entities like *inugami*, and traveling musicians and spiritual practitioners alike are turned into comical characters, flattened into a collection of scenes to be grabbed in the course of playing a simple card game. Though the game would have been accessible to children due to its simplicity, in the context of Edo *gesaku* literature adults would experience a game of *yōkai karuta* on cultural and political levels beyond what a child might appreciate.

It should also be noted that, like play, games, and monsters, *gesaku* literature of the Edo Period has been thought of as frivolous and not worthy of academic inquiry, causing its political and cultural depth to be overlooked until recently (Leutner 1978: 236; Walker 2008: 134-135). Leutner (1986) neatly lays out the reasons for the lack of interest in *gesaku*: its "role in the development of modern fiction seems minor and indirect," and while *gesaku* works are not considered "classics," they are also not easily comprehensible to modern readers without considerable effort (Leutner 1986: 4-5). Regarding this final point, Morley (1990) writes, "[t]he 'playfulness' of this type of fiction, dependent as it is on an insider's knowledge of the ever-changing fashions of the day, has rendered it virtually impenetrable to outsiders" (Morley 1990: 761)—outsiders such as modern-day readers and researchers. Unfortunately, when it comes to understanding of playful *gesaku* works like *yōkai karuta*, we must accept that there are aspects of their inter-textural and multi-layered nature that go beyond what we can possibly understand through modern research and analysis.

GESAKU TECHNIQUES: *UGACHI* and *MITATE*

Despite the inevitable barriers to understanding the layered cultural references in *gesaku*, examining some commonly used techniques can help us appreciate the context in which *yōkai karuta* and other *gesaku* works were consumed and the type of cultural information we can expect to find in them. I would like to focus on two techniques associated with *gesaku*: *ugachi* (穿ち), or "making jabs" to expose hypocrisy, and *mitate* (見立て), or intertextual allusions and parodies. I am not suggesting that *gesaku* in the Edo Period used techniques profoundly different from other genres or time periods or that these techniques should be elevated and wrapped in mystique. Rather, I simply hope to provide a clearer picture at the practical level of how *yōkai karuta* were created and experienced.

First, a discussion of *ugachi* illuminates the type of "subversive play" found in *gesaku* works discussed above. Smith (2024) succinctly describes *ugachi* as "subversively poking holes in the official ideology of samurai morality and the power it legitimated (even if such texts rarely offered an alternative to that power)" (Smith 2024: 144). Painting a more detailed picture, Pastreich (2000) begins by describing how the "rich Edo tradition of *gesaku* literature...played upon differing levels of language and perspective to explore the urban world in a detached and sardonic manner" (Pastreich 2000: 209). He goes on to say that "[*g*]*esaku* relied on irony, or *ugachi* a ('piercing the surface'), to expose the hidden workings of a social system and the hypocrisy of its inhabitants. The aim was...to uncover the machinery behind the stage. Although on occasion *gesaku* narratives contain stinging critiques of social ills, the ironic tone of most undercut the authority of the author and ultimately rendered the tone and implied moral ambiguous" (Pastreich 209-210). In short, *ugachi* played a central role in *gesaku*, but the ironic tone prevented *gesaku* from becoming too incisive in their political critique.

Johnston (2015) discusses three types of *ugachi*, reflecting the depth to which it had been developed, and offers the example of a professional "fartist" who makes music, which is meant to parody the elevated status of Confucian music as a means for spiritual cultivation (Johnston 2015: 446). He goes on to review possible types and degrees of subversion in these works; for example, laughter induced by *ugachi* could mark "the defeat of political power and the ruling hierarchy," or, alternatively, it could stem from the very rigidity of the political and social order it described" (Johnston 2015: 447).

The above discussion of *ugachi* shows how *gesaku* works sought to cut through grand ideological narratives and point out the failings of those in power. Despite this subversive attitude, however, *ugachi* was in large part an institutionalized aesthetic technique for amusement rather than an impetus for real change. As Sakai (1991) writes, "Even though

gesaku may not convince the readership that the conventional mode of presentation is inadequate, at least it suggests discursive possibilities other than those accepted by contemporary institutions. Nevertheless, it must also be emphasized that this form of insincerity and parody was itself institutionalized" (Sakai 1991: 187).

A discussion of *mitate*, meanwhile, highlights the multi-layered and intertextual nature of *gesaku* works and thus the types of references that could be expected to be found in *yōkai karuta*. *Mitate* was a technique of "bizarre, brain-teasing collisions" (Clark 1997: 10) that could take written or visual form; in the latter case they were referred to as *mitate-e*, or "parody pictures" (Bell 2016: 88). Bell (2016) focuses on the playful nature of *mitate*, writing that they "provided a conventional protocol for a particular type of play... [M]itate refers to incidents of sophisticated play of visual allusion, thematic cross-reference, 'metaphoric representation,' or 'visual transposition'" (Bell 2016: 88). Fleming (2015) describes how much of the visual parodies in *mitate* referred to stage performances, incorporating "elements of performance practice, allusions to specific performances, and the recreation in the text of key components of the kabuki soundscape" (Flemings 2015: 394).

Regarding the references in *mitate*, Clark (1997) writes that they often "reworked a pre-existing reworking from just a few years before" (Clark 1997: 26). In other words, even if they seemed to reference historical events or older work, they were thoroughly contemporary. Clark (1997) further describes these allusions as "pictorial quotes" that were "hidden there deliberately to be discovered by the cultivated patrons, constituting a playful 'device' (*shukō*) in their own right. They were yet another manifestation of the overriding taste for *mitate*" (17).

These explanations show how important intertextual references were in *gesaku*, especially to stage plays and kabuki culture, and how being able to recognize these allusions and appreciate the parodies was a major part of the appeal for consumers. Given that *yōkai*

karuta appeared at the end of the Edo Period and thus had an enormous wealth of work to refer back to, it is likely that the cards refer to other *gesaku* works and contemporary cultural trends. This means that a depiction of a *goze*, or blind shamisen player, for example, is likely a reference to preceding *gesaku* works rather than an arbitrary or personal decision to portray this figure outside the context of *mitate*'s interconnected parodies and allusions. Thus, any references to folk spiritual traditions are most likely references to other references, nestled into layers of allusions—in other words, quite indirect.

The importance of *mitate* also reflects the complex playfulness that took place in the creation and consumption of *gesaku*, as well as a focus on entertainment rather than historical accuracy. Clark (1997) imagines what a consumer might be looking for in terms of *mitate*, suggesting that it was the charm, novelty and ridiculousness of a work that likely mattered most, rather than whether it was historically accurate or deepened ones understanding of the source material (Clark 1997: 26). Nonetheless, I believe that these complex playful images contain some significant if indirect references to various concepts and themes from folk spiritual traditions that are worth recognizing.

2. PAST RESEARCH ON EDO *YŌKAI KARUTA*

Yōkai karuta from the Edo Period are a relatively minor phenomenon, whether viewed as a part of Edo *yōkai* culture or part of the card-matching *karuta* tradition, and so it is understandable that they have seen little scholarship, especially considering how few decks have survived. However, *yōkai karuta* continued to be produced into the Meiji Period the Showa Periods, and decks from these later periods have seen somewhat more attention in discussion of *yōkai* culture. For example, the Mononoke Museum in Hiroshima, devoted to

yōkai-related materials and based on the collection of Kōichi Yumoto, features Meiji Period *yōkai karuta* in one of their books on Yumoto's collection (Yumoto 2013: 188-191).

In terms of research focused on Edo *yōkai karuta*, Tada (1998) contains a brief essay about their history and a detailed explanation of the cultural references of each card in the deck that was physically reproduced with the book (Tada 1998: 3-6). In addition to analysis of the cards in his deck, Tada also includes the image cards and corresponding text for cards from the Tokyo Deck and Paper Deck at the top of each page. As the only book devoted solely to Edo *yōkai karuta*, this is an invaluable resource. By Tada's estimate, half of the cards in the deck feature *yōkai* from kabuki and other plays that would've been widely known at the time, while others come from famous "ghost stories" like "Yotsuya Kaidan" or children's stories. Still others were iconic on their own, such as *ubume*, a ghost (*yūrei*) of a mother who lost her child, or *sesshō-seki* (the "Killing Stone"). Finally, some cards refer to lesser known *yōkai* not seen outside *yōkai karuta* (4-5).

In *Edo yōkai kakumei* ("Edo *yōkai* revolution"), Kagawa (2013) mentions *yōkai karuta* briefly in a discussion of playful *yōkai* images that combined curiosity about natural history with a desire for entertainment, similar to Foster's "encyclopedic mode" and "ludic mode" discussed elsewhere in this dissertation (Kagawa 2013: 208-212). In a separate article, Kagawa (2016) describes three eras of Edo *yōkai* culture based on which segments of society consumed *yōkai*-related materials. In his first *yōkai* cultural era, samurai and intellectuals consumed material about *yōkai*, gradually transitioning from a focus on *yōkai* as sources of fear to objects of amusement. Then, in his second era, the audience for *yōkai* culture broadened to the general population of adults, and *yūrei* (or ghosts based on specific people or characters) were more popular than *yōkai*. Finally, in Kagawa's third era, *yōkai* appeared both as caricatures in critique of the government and as children's toys. This last era saw an increased range in the ages of

those consuming *yōkai* materials to include children (Kagawa 2016: 14). To summarize his three eras, one could say that during the Edo Period *yōkai* shifted from frightfully amusing objects of entertainment for elites to objects of play for all ages. It was in this final era, at a time when *yōkai karuta* were enjoyed by adults and children alike, that *yōkai karuta* appeared. Kagawa (2016) specifically mentions *yōkai karuta* as an example of colorful playful images (*omocha-e*) created in opposition to reforms that banned the production of extravagant multi-colored prints (15).

Takashi Ebashi's monograph for the Japan Playing Card Museum shows how *yōkai karuta* continued to transform in the Meiji Period and focus even further on children as an audience (Ebashi 2020: 1). He looks at the same three decks of Edo *yōkai karuta* as seen in Tada's book plus an additional two and compares them to those created in the Meiji Period, identifying how Edo *yōkai karuta* depict *yōkai* within environments that highlight their connection to real places, while those from Meiji feature only the faces of *yōkai* without broader context. Additionally, the relative realism in style and neutral or frightening atmosphere of Edo *yōkai karuta* contrasts with a simple and comical style in their Meiji counterparts. Thus, Edo *yōkai karuta* contain a greater connection to real places and beliefs in comparison to later decks with less visual information.

In English-language scholarship, meanwhile, Edo *yōkai karuta* have been mentioned when describing the diverse playfulness of this period (Foster 2008: 73; Foster 2015a: 51). *Yōkai karuta* indeed capture many of the themes laid out by Foster regarding Edo *yōkai* culture—they reflect his "encyclopedic mode" (Foster 2008: 31-35), for example, as each card is like a brief entry on a given *yōkai*. They are also part of the tradition of illustrating *yōkai* that he and other researchers describe as being key to sustaining and developing *yōkai* in the popular imagination (Komatsu 2017: 13-19; Foster 2015a: 26-28).

Beyond this there has not been a great deal of research in English on *yōkai karuta* from any period, and there has certainly not yet been a detailed examination of Edo *yōkai karuta*. I hope that my research helps to highlight the unique position occupied by these cards and make space for future research on them.

III. OTHER RELEVANT PRECEDING RESEARCH

1. *YŌKAI* and MONSTER STUDIES

English-language research on *yōkai* has often appeared in the context of monster studies, such as in anthologies of research on monsters. In this section I offer a general overview of the field of monster studies, suggesting that some aspects of monsters may have gone overlooked and identifying potentially valuable insights from *yōkai* studies. Rather than looking at *yōkai karuta* in Japan as an isolated example unrelated to other monsters or imaginary creatures, I hope to contribute to the identification of trends and patterns in the ways that play and monsters intersect.

i. A FOCUS ON FEAR

"Monster studies" or "monster theory" refers to the English-language field of academia that has emerged primarily in North America and grown rapidly from the 1990s to today. Explicit interest in monsters appears stronger today than ever before, with at least two academic

podcasts on monsters[7] and a Center for Monster Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz, among other monster-focused research organizations and events around the world.[8]

Discussion of monsters within the field has generally focused on how monsters, or monstrosity more broadly, pose a disruptive threat from the outside. A pervasive focus on fear is clear from a cursory glance at book titles: *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears* (Asma 2009), *The Science of Monsters: The Origins of Creatures We Love to Fear* (Kaplan 2013) and *Monsters: Evil Beings,* and *Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors* (Gilmore 2003), to name a few. Some scholarship has focused on individual monsters such as Frankenstein, Godzilla, zombies or vampires, which reflects the fact that a considerable amount of work has been devoted to the genre of horror, especially in film and literature.

Researchers often express how difficult it is to define monsters, and this elusiveness itself is recognized as core to what monsters are—they exist at the border of the known and unknown, their very existence a challenge to existing categories. This "ambiguous" or "hybrid" nature of monsters is then used to explain why monsters are inherently disturbing and destructive, sometimes citing Freud's idea of the *unheimlich* (Beal 2001: 4-5; Freud 2020: 59-88). In this regard, given that there is nothing inherently frightening about being difficult to define, the field of monster studies seems to be haunted by a widespread and unspoken logic in which ambiguity is terrifying and a fear-focused fascination with Freud's *unheimlich*.

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[7] On *The Monster Professor* podcast, host Josh Woods invites an expert on each episode to discuss a different monster. On *The Show Where They Talk About Monsters* podcast, host Mike Halekakis and "monster expert" Dr. Michael Chemers discuss various monsters.

[8] "The Monster Network" is a network of academics interested in monsters whose founding members are based in Northern Europe. Meanwhile, "MEARCSTAPA" ("Monsters: the Experimental Association for the Research of Cryptozoology Through Scholarly Theory and Practical Application") focuses primarily on monsters in the Middle Ages, its title an Old English word that means "border-walker."

On the Monster Professor podcast, editor of *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous* (Mittman 2016) Asa Mittman describes struggles to be taken seriously as a monster researcher (Woods 2011a: 10:15). On the same podcast, Emily Zarka discusses how scholarship on monsters is not considered "real scholarship," recognizing that part of her role as a monster researcher is to work towards getting validation for the field (Woods 2011b: 41:58). Meanwhile in *yōkai* studies, Michael Foster describes initially being met with surprise and laughter when working on a dissertation on *yōkai* in 1999, though he adds that this dismissive attitude has faded (Foster 2015b: 150). From my own personal experience, I can confirm that many people laugh or express disbelief when I say I'm researching a card game about *yōkai*, and I can only assume that other researchers of monsters and *yōkai* have experienced similar. Perhaps this perception of research on monsters as fake or frivolous has discouraged investigation of their relationship to play in the past and partially explains the lack of direct acknowledgement and exploration of more playful aspect of monsters.

ii. BEYOND "BIG, SCARY MONSTERS"

Discussion of more "positive" portrayals of monsters tends to be limited to cases where monsters are "dangerously sexy" (such as vampires) or are cast as the unfairly vilified "good guys" (such as Shrek in the film *Shrek* (2001)) (Weinstock 2013: 278-280). This makes it possible to keep monsters contained within the conventional definition of "big, scary creatures" even when they're not scary; sexy monsters embody our repressed desires in a way that combines fear and fascination, while monsters like Shrek represent a modern desire to "become the monster" and assert oneself against the *real* monster of broader oppressive forces in society. Monsters that inspire simple joy or delight unrelated to deep psychological fears—the creatures

of *Sesame Street*, for example, who refer to themselves as "monsters"[9]—are almost universally ignored. This suggests that these self-described monsters are either not "real" monsters or are not considered worthy of academic inquiry. If true, the latter could stem from a view that children's media and its monsters are "just for fun" and thus lacking in depth or value, running parallel to the earlier discussion of imagination.

I would argue that the residents of Sesame Street are complex creatures whose form and function cannot be sufficiently summarized with conceptions of "big and scary monsters," "disturbingly sexy monsters," or "unfairly vilified good guys." Rather, they could be better described as "guides through the unknown," serving to make the unfamiliar familiar—the opposite of *unheimlich* monsters that seem uncomfortably uncanny. A similar function can be seen in other self-identifying monsters, such as the main character of *The Color Monster Goes to School*, where a monster wears a backpack and goes to school as a child would (Llenas 2020). The book could be said to reflect a "desire to become the monster," but I think a better summary of the monster's role here would be a guide through the unknown, the unknown in this case being a child's experience at school. I mention this example simply to highlight one role performed by monsters, possibly among many others, that has gone virtually ignored in monster studies.

When it comes to who or what is allowed to be a monster, monster studies has been largely dominated by three definitions: 1) "Monster" as a term to identify immorality or evil in society, focusing on a vastly broadened concept of "monstrosity" to discuss how people in real life are othered and made "monstrous"; 2) Monsters as fictional entities within a text that

[9] In *The Monster at the End of this Book*, after begging the reader to stop reading because a monster will appear, Grover acknowledges that he was in fact the monster all along (Stone 2003: 22). A musical album performed by Sesame Street characters is also titled *Sesame Street: Monster Melodies* (Hunt et al. 1996).

symbolize frighteningly powerful forces or a fear of the unknown or Other; or 3) Monsters as non-human, non-animal creatures or hybrid creatures in general, technically without any connection to fear.

The first differs significantly from the second two in that it focuses on real-life situations (outside the context of fictional media) where people are declared inhuman ("monsters") and therefore deserving of punishment. Research using this definition discusses how powerful figures in medieval Europe declared babies with physical abnormalities to be monstrous or demonic (Weinstock 2020: 8-9), and how "serial killers" or "terrorists" are described as immoral monsters today (Puar 2020: 375-381; Weinstock 2013: 280-282). This has led to a "decoupling of monstrosity from appearance," where invisible oppressive forces have replaced scary-looking people or creatures as the *real* monster (monster in this case meaning "embodiment of evil") (Weinstock 2020: 360-363).

This trend in monster studies builds on work in gender and sexuality studies, race studies and anti-colonial studies, among others, that focus on systematic oppression. Thus, it includes instances where the terms "monster" is not used in context, but where "monstrosity" is used by researchers to conceptualize the way people are othered and excluded from the category of "human." This leads Weinstock (2020) to use the term "traditional monsters" to refer to imaginary creatures like Dracula that are no longer an object of inquiry in this line of thought (Weinstock 2020: 363).

Meanwhile, there is still a great deal of research on these "traditional monsters." However, in many cases researchers shift between the above definitions of monsters without acknowledgment that any such shift is occurring. The fact that we call serial killers "monsters" (*a term to identify immorality in society*) is implied to be related at a core level to the way we feel about any imaginary creature called a "monster" (*monsters as non-human, non-animal*

creatures); and, when a fictional creature is a hybrid of multiple animal parts (again, *monsters as non-human, non-animal creatures*), it *must* be disturbing or terrifying because monsters embody our deepest fears (*monsters as embodiments of fear in fictional media*).

The introduction to *Monster Theory Reader* is one example of how monsters are described seemingly playfully while ultimately being located within a framework of fear (Weinstock 2020: 4-19). Weinstock (2020) initially describes monstrosity as what sounds like a playful tool for making sense of the unknown—"monstrosity is a loose and flexible epistemological category that allows us space to define that which complicates or seems to resist definition" (4)— and lists a "a panoply of fantastic creatures that testifies to the fecundity of the human imagination" (17). Soon after, he asks rhetorically, "if monsters are repulsive and epistemological vertigo is unpleasant, what explains the human fascination with monsters?" (19). This is framed as an unanswerable mystery, which is puzzling considering that the previous pages offer a clear description of monsters' connection to play, imagination and delight. From a practical perspective it isn't mysterious that people enjoy using their imagination simply for the fun of it, and perhaps it was Weinstock's intent to hint at this. Nonetheless, there is an almost universal reluctance to explicitly state and explore the playful side of monsters as being on par with their terrifying side; instead, monsters are kept rooted firmly in a binary of fear and desire.

In the case of *yōkai*, on the other hand, playfulness is readily recognized as core to what they are, perhaps due to their consistently and inarguably playful manifestations going back to the humorous *hyakki yagyō* scrolls. They are framed as a dynamic combination of fun and fear, certainty and uncertainty (Foster 2008: 11-12), leading Foster (2015a) to proposes the phrase "cognitive resonance" to refer to how *yōkai* are animated by embodying contradictory elements at the same time (Foster 2015a: 30-31). Though this is a valuable and productive way to think

about the dynamism of *yōkai*, I believe that rather than contradictory, it is sensible and should be expected that playful entities would be frightening in some contexts and simply fun in others—or a little of both at once. Identifying playfulness as a core, defining feature of monsters explains precisely why they can be so scary: Play involves vulnerability, stepping into the unknown, and changes in rules and power, all of which can be frightening. Whether a monster seems frightening or not could depend simple on one's position and perspective, a subjective impression of an inherently playful creature.

iii. VULNERABILITY IN PLAY

Play involves a form of vulnerability insofar as it involves doing something simply because it is fun or feels good; this means being frighteningly transparent about one's own feelings, impulses and desires. By "vulnerability" here I mean being in a position where one is capable of being physical or emotional harmed or is especially susceptible to something harmful occurring. Hoffmaster (2006) lists these and other definitions of vulnerability before concluding that the "real definition of vulnerability is richer than these sketchy definitions" (Hoffmaster 2006: 38). Defining vulnerability and applying it to play and monsters is certainly a complex issue that warrants a more in-depth discussion than what I am capable of here, but for now I will rely on the relatively simple definition of potentially exposing oneself to some sort of harm.

Depending on the degree of vulnerability involved in a game, some games may feel more intense in contrast to comparatively silly or "harmless" games. For example, in Bernie De Koven's *Infinite Playground* I discussed an intimate game involving touch that can feel intense in a potentially uncomfortable way. Regarding this discomfort, I suggested that it is not a matter of whether playing a particular game feels vulnerable or frightening; it is the degree along a spectrum to which it feels that way, as this vulnerability is inherent to physical play with others

(Wood 2020: 106-108). At best, a combination of vulnerability and confrontation with the unknown feels delightful and exhilarating, but this very same combination is what can make it feel scary. I believe that this helps explain why monsters can have a strong connotation of fear while also having a deep connection to play.

Regarding Edo *yōkai karuta*, the earlier discussion of *gesaku* literature showed how *gesaku* works represented a form of subversive play in their rejection of demands for status-based productivity in Tokugawa society. To engage in play rather than conventionally productive actions could be understood as putting oneself in a vulnerable position when one's livelihood depends on productivity, no matter the time period. In this regard, engaging in play or any other activity without clear goals or outcomes can be frightening to adults who wish to know what they stand to gain from an activity.[10]

In terms of vulnerability and monsters, Stephen Asma states that they are "symbols of human vulnerability" and "imaginative foils for thinking about our own responses to menace" (Asma 2020: 290), suggesting that their combination of imaginative playfulness and vulnerability can make them powerful tools for understanding. Meanwhile, in *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self*, Margrit Shildrick concludes, "It is only those who have no wish to cede the authority and power that they hold under the sign of modernism who need fear the monsters" (Shildrick 2002: 133). In other words, whether monsters are scary or not is partly a matter of perspective. Rather than being defined by subjective fear, which has been thoroughly discussed in preceding monster research, I believe it is the playfulness of the unknown, as explored by Foster (2008: 22, 25, 28, 45; Foster 2015a: 30-31, 50, 244), as well as the vulnerability inherent in play that animates monsters.

[10] De Koven (2020) describes the necessity of convincing adult players that a game is a good use of their time (De Koven 2020: 132).

iv. RECLAIMING MONSTERS

Following the example of queer studies, the word "monster"—if understood as a derogatory term for inhuman forces of evil, similar to how "queer" was once used as a derogatory term in the past—could be reappropriated as a way to make space for the things that the term has been used to exclude and subjugate: "irrational" emotions, feelings of vulnerability, marginalized people, and the Other. In the field of monster studies, the cases where monsters are discussed as genuinely neutral, ambiguous, or grounded in something other than fear tend to be about monsters outside of Western countries. Authors in these cases are at times hesitant to call the subjects of their research "monsters" at all due to the history of European colonization in which indigenous people and local spirits and deities were declared "monsters" to legitimize their subjugation (Drewal 2013: 77-78; Leoni 2013: 152; Looper: 198-199, 215). This reticence is understandable given how monsters are defined as frightening threats, and it highlights both the limitations of defining monsters by an inherent connection to fear and the possible benefits of reclaiming the term from a different perspective.

v. *YŌKAI* and POSSIBILITIES FOR PLAYFUL MONSTERS

Yōkai are possibly one of the most well-researched traditions of "monsters" outside of Western cultural history. Often translated into English with a list of monster-like nouns (ghost, specter, ghoul, goblin, etc.), their appearance in monster studies is thanks in large part to leading English-language researcher Michael Dylan Foster. He describes *yōkai* as embodying a nuanced combination of fun and fearful aspects, hence the title of his book, *Pandemonium and Parade* (Foster 2008: 8-9). Foster goes so far as to identify one of *yōkai*'s core attributes as a "ludic mode," or an inherent connection to forms of play and games across hundreds of years of

history (48-49). This includes *hyaku monogatari*, or ghost story-telling meetups in the Edo Period and extends to card games and anime with *yōkai*-inspired creatures today. In addition, this "ludic mode" refers not only to consumption of *yōkai* but also to the playful process through which they are created, such as the wordplays and visual puns of Toriyama Sekien's famous *yōkai* illustrations. "For all the spookiness they may educe," Foster writes, "*yōkai* are also *fun*. And this levity is one key to their longevity and versatility: if the zone of uncertainty allows limitless possibilities and unbridled imagination, then it is a space of experimentation and play and ultimately of creation" (Foster 2015a: 92).

Foster (2015a) details the social position and motivations of major figures involved in creating the category of *yōkai*, establishing the field of *yōkai* studies, and facilitating their proliferation in popular visual media since the late 1700s (Foster 2015a: 46-73). He goes on to discuss how modern-day fans of *yōkai* outside academia form casual gatherings to discuss *yōkai*, sell handmade *yōkai*-related products, dress up as *yōkai*, and generally celebrate these creatures. He then connects this diverse cast of actors throughout Japanese history and around the world as a "Yōkai Culture Network" that transcends space and time (75-76).

Foster's attention to the practical reality of monster creation and consumption leads to valuable insights on the inherently playful nature of *yōkai*; a similar assessment of other monsters might also prove worthwhile. This could include recognition of the creativity and playfulness visible at fan conventions (so-called "cons") in the United States, where people expend enormous amounts of time, energy and money on creating elaborate costumes based on their favorite monsters, not to mention Halloween, where monster costumes are just as often intended to be funny as they are scary. These events naturally may differ greatly in terms of scope or context from *yōkai* meetups in Japan, but the presence of the sort of "ludic mode" described by Foster is undeniable.

Of course, Edo Period Japan is a vastly different context than modern America, particularly in the case of *gesaku* literature and how it relates to Edo *yōkai karuta*, as discussed above. However, it is equally important to recognize that Japan, the people living there and the imaginary creatures created there are not fundamentally different than those everywhere else in the world. As mentioned earlier, Foster and Figal take care to avoid playing into narratives of "quirky Japan" and its "uniquely Japanese monsters," while at the same time showing through their research how *yōkai* have been utilized to bolster "nhionjin-ron" or ethnic nationalist ideologies in Japan.

To suggest that imaginary creatures in Japan are inherently playful while monsters in the English-speaking world are embodiments of our deepest fears would suggest that things are somehow just "different" in Japan. If anything, America could be described as an anomalous and quirky land where researchers created a field of study that ignores monsters' historical connection to play and their everyday function as an invitation to play or guide to the unknown. Also, Foster (2015a) notes that in the present world of globalized media, drawing a sharp line between "Western monsters" and "Japanese *yōkai*" is impossible as *yōkai* have gone global (Foster 2015a: 96-98). I agree and would like to see more examination of the practical realities of *yōkai* and monsters in people's lives rather than consideration of their theoretical natures in isolation.

Upon closer scrutiny, even many "scary" monsters show a surprising tendency towards play and revelry, just as much if not more so than a tendency towards bone-chilling terror. Take Frankenstein's monster, for example. Described as having "impeccable credentials for a monster" (Six 2013: 239), it is perhaps the archetypal example of a "big, scary monster" that embodies cultural anxieties about the unknown. However, like many other monsters, Frankenstein was created as a character in a work of fiction, which inevitably involves a

connection to leisure and entertainment, if not necessarily play. At the same time, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (Shelley 1818) specifically pioneered the genre of science fiction, which involves a great deal of imagination and, some might argue, playfulness. Also, from a practical perspective, the idea of this monster inspired Shelley to write a book and would continue to inspire creative action by fans of Frankenstein for centuries to follow, with Frankenstein (or a very Frankenstein-like monster) appearing as a comedic character in a live-action TV show (*The Munsters*), as a romantic partner in a monster dating-themed video game (*Monster Prom*), and as the shape of cookies and snacks at Halloween, among countless other cases that reflect a "ludic mode."

Similar observations can be made about most of the scariest monsters discussed in English-language monster studies, with perhaps the only difference between the "ludic mode" of *yōkai* and other monsters being the *degree* to which this mode is present in practice and recognized in theory. I believe this ludic mode, or what I would call the inherently playful nature of monsters, stems from something like the "delight in the exercise of the imagination" that is briefly recognized by Weinstock (2020: 14). Taking a playful look at monsters might guide us toward a more broad and inclusive monster studies that gives space to all sorts of monsters, even those that are "just" for fun. Part of this could involve viewing Foster's "ludic mode" as a spectrum of sorts, where monsters could range from slightly ludic on one end to wildly playful on the other, or anywhere in between.

Perhaps it would be useful to recognize a "Monster Culture Network," akin to Foster's Yōkai Culture Network, that connects scholars, children, fans and artists who have been inspired by monsters to imagine, play and create. It is clear that monster researchers are passionate about monsters, derive joy from thinking and talking about them, and use them as an invitation to make playful puns. Explicitly acknowledging and exploring the widespread play

and delight propagated by monsters could make space for research on topics such as monsters in children's media or fans' creative production based on creatures from horror films.

vi. PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH ON *YŌKAI* and MONSTERS

One potentially fruitful way to consider monsters and *yōkai* could be as two dialects of the same language giving form to the unknown in fluid, profane and playful ways. Despite their differences, both are noted for continually shape-shifting to evade rigid definition or elimination, both have strong historical connections to entertainment, creative production, and play, and, in terms of research, both have seen push-back and dismissive attitudes from academia, at least in their early days in English-speaking countries. The similarities between monsters and *yōkai* become even more clear if we compare them to other entities known through the imagination, such as religious deities, one's idea of their ideal partner, the main character of a famous television franchise, or a memory of a pet who has passed away. These are likely more rigidly defined, less malleable, and experienced in less of a light-hearted manner. I believe that this makes *yōkai* and monster akin to two dialects of the same language.

At the same time, however, these two dialects certainly have their differences; monsters in Western traditions are often associated with distant places, great power, and unnatural forces, whereas *yōkai* are often located nearby, even in one's own home, and are often relatively harmless. Also, monsters are of course connected to the historical use of "monstrosity" to ostracize and dehumanize the "other," whether deformed babies or indigenous people and their deities in lands colonized by Europeans, as discussed earlier. *Yōkai* do not seem to have been used to legitimize the brutal use of power in the same way, although researchers have discussed ways that minority populations and outsiders in Japan may have influenced the development of

certain *yōkai* (Foster 2015a: 67; Komatsu 2018: 93, 95, 108, 42-63). I would be intrigued to learn how, if at all, *yōkai* played into Japanese colonialism and whether *yōkai* were believed to be present in any colonized territories.

Perhaps it is also relevant that in the Japanese language there are multiple terms for various monster-like creatures. In addition to older terms like *bakemono* and *mononoke* discussed earlier, *kaijū* refers to large creatures like Godzilla, and the term *monsutā* is used as loan word based on the English term "monster." In English, meanwhile, the term "monster" has a monopoly over all sorts of creatures given how it was used as a receptable for anything deemed "other" in Western culture. Descriptive phrases like "fantastic beasts," "nature spirits," and similar expressions are sometimes used, but they are less common and lack the specificity of an iconic term like "monster."

As powerful figures in European churches and colonial empires used the term "monster" to legitimize their destructive acts, there is no doubt that many people involved must have wished for the term to be associated with an evil that must be eradicated. However, in practice—that is, in literature, art and culture—non-human, non-animal creatures seem to invariably maintain a connection to entertainment and play. Perhaps similarly, *yōkai* were embraced in the nationalist search for the essence of Japanese identity in the early 1900s and have now become a part of a multimillion-dollar *yōkai* industry, arguably to the detriment of those negatively impacted by Japanese nationalism and capitalism. Nonetheless, they remain a major source of creativity and playfulness for individuals in the *Yōkai* Culture Network who pour time and energy into *yōkai*-related projects, sometimes in a way that could be deemed a "waste of time" in the context of a capitalist society. With this inherent playfulness that seemingly persists through their use in nationalist and colonial projects, perhaps both monsters

and *yōkai* are prone to facilitate a form of subversive play like that of *gesaku* works in Edo Japan such as *yōkai karuta*.

vii. TOWARDS A MORE MONSTERFUL APPROACH

Foster (2015a) proposes a new term to be used in the discussion monsters: "monsterful" (Foster 2015a: 243-244). Though he doesn't explicitly offer a definition, the way he discusses monsters would suggest that "monsterful" means evoking a sense of wonder and making space for mysteriousness to emerge. Such a word would be valuable in allowing us to refer to monsters along a spectrum; an extremely familiar monster like Dracula, for example, might evoke less wonder and therefore be less subjectively "monsterful" than a new and strangely evocative monster that one has never before encountered.

In fact, this focus on spectrums or gradations overlaps with a trend in play studies towards focusing on "playfulness" rather than judging whether or not an action "is play" (De Koven 2020: 40; Gordon 2014: 249-250; Masek 2021: 13-14; Sicart 2014: 19-34). This makes it possible to acknowledge that an act of play, such as playing a sport, could actually be very unplayful (as in boring, not fun, or not filled with a thrilling sense of exploration of the unknown, etc.). Similarly, the term "monsterful" makes it possible to get beyond whether a creature is technically a monster or not, and instead discuss whether its implementation or impact is "monsterful" (however that might be defined) and to what degree. This also raises the possibility of seeking more monsterful methodologies suited for making sense of elusive creatures at the margins. Lioi (2020) offers a valuable example of what a monsterful methodology could look like in his discussion of "becoming a swamp dragon." He proposes that the swamp dragon be considered "a new identity or an icon for further work," and that this entails "becom[ing] the monster under the bed." His writing embraces a playful, even humorous

tone, and he champions the perspectives of amateurs when it comes to the nonhuman world of monsters (Lioi 202: 452-454).

With all of this said, my research focuses on what would have been a relatively unmonsterful form of play in Edo Japan—a card game for all ages packed with familiar references to popular culture—although its connections to *gesaku* culture reflect greater political and cultural impact than might be initially apparent. For people today, however, *yōkai karuta* contain connections to contemporary Edo culture, such as folk spiritual beliefs and practices, which imbue them with special significance as vessels for the remnants of already marginalized and mostly forgotten traditions.

2. PRECEDING RESEARCH ON FOLK SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS IN JAPAN

The primary focus of my dissertation is to identify references to folk spiritual beliefs and practices in Edo *yōkai karuta*. In this section I will provide a brief overview of past research on Japanese folk spiritual beliefs and practices, focusing on English-language resources, in order to compose a list of key themes and concepts. First, however, I will also touch on some issues relevant to the discussion of folk spiritual beliefs and practices in Japan.

i. A NOTE ON "JAPANESE" FOLK SPIRITUAL BELIEFS & PRACTICES

In the next section I will lay out themes identified by past researchers that I will be looking for in the decks of Edo *yōkai karuta*. Before doing so, however, it is important to note that the folk spiritual beliefs and practices discussed below are not the only or the definitive beliefs and practices of the islands now known as "Japan." As Tanaka (2000) writes, "Japanese people" itself is a complicated term; her dissertation is devoted to detailing spiritual practices of

the indigenous people of Northern Honshu and Hokkaido and how they survived centuries of oppression in the "middle" (between Honshu and Hokkaido) region of Tsugaru. She charts the complex history of Japan and various cultural spheres within the islands, continually highlighting the limitations of the idea of monolithic groups of "Japanese" and "Ainu" people (Tanaka 2000: 52-125).

Tanaka also mentions a tendency for foreign scholars to accept narratives of a unified and singular Japan put forth by Japanese researchers out of an attempt to be respectful or considerate of cultural differences (Tanaka 2000: 35). This hesitancy, however, runs the risk of upholding nationalist narratives of an ancient and "pure" Japanese people that have always lived on these islands, or, in Tanaka's words, "an absolutely unique identity, a language, culture, and traditions unrelated to anything else in the world," which she describes as a "powerful myth…that must be brought fully to light before it can be discarded forever" (123). Tanaka critiques both the myth of a monolithic Japanese people as well as the myth of a monolithic Ainu people. Her comments, of course, align with those of *yōkai* researchers regarding tropes of a "unique Japanese essence" that supposedly animates *yōkai*.

Because I focus on spiritual traditions on Honshu that would have been familiar to residents of Edo, Ainu and other indigenous traditions fall outside the scope of my research.[11] Nonetheless, I want to emphasize the limited nature of the subject of my research and avoid presenting it as an all-encompassing look at the folk spiritual traditions of Japan. I want to avoid these nationalistic and ideological traps on the one hand, but I also simply wish to understand as clearly as possible what exactly it is that I am researching when I say, "Japanese folk spiritual beliefs and practices."

[11] For a detailed discussion of the way the Japanese government variously sought to control and oppress Ainu in northern Japan, see Siddle 1996: 26-68.

With this in mind, the practices and beliefs discussed below can be viewed as a fragment of a fragment of a fragment of a much broader picture. What I mean by this is that, for one, these folk beliefs and practices had largely disappeared by the mid-1900s, due in part to the repressive policies of the Meiji Japanese government; any modern research on them is inevitably based only on whatever fragmentary documentation has survived. Second, even if we could look at all spiritual beliefs and practices that would have been familiar to Japanese people in Edo Japan, this would still only be a fragment of all spiritual beliefs and practices across the entire archipelago. This includes not only Ainu and Ryūkyū beliefs and practices,[12] but also any other local Japanese beliefs or practices that simply weren't well-known for the people who created and played Edo *yōkai karuta*. This is why I call the object of my research a fragment (in terms of surviving documentation of practices) of a fragment (in terms of beliefs and practices that survived into the era of modern research through practice or documentation) of a fragment (in terms of the beliefs and practices of "Japanese" people on Honshu within the broader picture of the Japanese archipelago.)

I highlight this fragmentary nature in order to prevent my research from contributing to the impression that the "Japanese folk spiritual traditions" discussed here are the complete picture of all spiritual practices in the islands known as Japan. Rather than embrace a fragment of a fragment of a fragment as the full picture, I want instead to inspire further creativity and curiosity when it comes to imagining the past, present and future. I hope my work here in examining the intersection of monsters, play and spirituality at the center of power in Edo Japan can help illuminate the spaces at the periphery where other things might emerge.

[12] See Baksheev (2008) on ancestor and death-related practices in the Ryūkyūs and Tanaka (2000) on Ainu shamanism in the Tsugaru area of northern Honshu.

ii. RESEARCH ON JAPANESE FOLK SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS IN ENGLISH

Research on folk spiritual beliefs and practices are, like *yōkai*, generally traced back to two major figures: Inoue Enryō and Kunio Yanagita. Foster offers overviews of these two researchers in his summary of the key people involved in the development of *yōkai* (Foster 2015a: 52-72), while Figal (1999) goes into detail in analyzing how their work played into the Meiji government's efforts to modernize the country and create a population with national awareness as citizens of Japan (Figal 1999: 50-52, 138-152).

Carmen Blacker's *The Catalpa Bow* (Black 2004) is centered on identifying elements of shamanism in Japanese spiritual traditions, and she devotes a substantial portion of the book to her firsthand accounts of events in the mid-1900s. Although portions may not hold up to modern expectations of academic rigor—in one passage she seems to suggest that she met a real *tengu*—the detailed descriptions and interviews with spiritual practitioners are a valuable resource. An English translation of Ichiro Hori's book on Japanese folk spiritual traditions offers further ethnographic research conducted throughout the country in the mid-1900s. He addresses a number of groups not covered by Blacker, including *nembutsu* priests and the broader category of *hijiri*, or independent holy men. Meanwhile, Mircea Eliade commits a brief portion of *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* to practices in Japan, in which he focuses on blind shamanesses, though he describes their state of shamanic ecstasy as "factitious and crudely simulated" (Eliade 1951: 462-464).

Since Hori and Blacker's work in the 1960s and 1970s, there has been a considerable amount of additional scholarship on Japanese folk spiritual traditions focused on female figures like *miko* and *itako* (Miller 1993, Gilday 1993, Averbuch 1998, Groemer 2007, Kárpáti 2013, Parać 2015). Though not directly related to spiritual practices, Fritsch (1992) discusses the

social organization of *goze* (瞽女), the itinerant blind female musicians who figure prominently in my research. Beyond female mediums and shamans, Matthias Hayek examination divination practices in Edo Japan (Hayek 2013) and their relation to *onmyōji* and *onmyōdō* (Hayek 2012).

In terms of examining games to discern elements of Japanese folk spiritual traditions, Ijima (1987) includes a discussion of possible ancient beliefs and practices that have survived in the form of children's games (Ijima 1987: 45-47). Blacker makes similar observations regarding children's games (Blacker 2004: 276-277).

The goal of this dissertation is not to contribute new research on Japanese folk spiritual practices. Rather, my intent is to assemble an overview of Edo *yōkai karuta* and examine how this card games reflects the folk spiritual beliefs and practices identified by past researchers. In the next section I look at the core themes and concepts recognized in preceding research that will guide my analysis of the cards. I divide these core themes into four categories: sacred places, forms and figures; folk spiritual practitioners; malicious entities; and theoretical ancient practices of human sacrifice.

3. KEY CONCEPTS IN JAPANESE FOLK SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS

i. SACRED PLACES, FORMS and FIGURES

① THE MOUNTAIN

In a chapter of *The Catalpa Bow* dedicated to locating the "other world" in Japanese shamanism, Blacker (2004) discusses mountains as a sacred location for shamanistic practices in Japan, both as a physical place and on a cosmological level comparable to the "world tree" at the center of many shamanistic belief systems (Blacker 2004: 69-84). She also devotes a chapter to accounts of mediums she calls "mountain oracles" active in the mid-1900s (279-297).

Blacker (2004) identifies the elongated shape of the mountains, reaching up to the sky, and the long, thin shape of the trees covering them as an important part of their relevance, evoking a vertical bridge between worlds (79-80) and similar to the shape of *yorishiro* discussed below. She also notes that specific mountains in Japan were noted for their holiness and otherworldliness (166) and describes how the advent of Buddhism changed mountains from a "sacred ground on which no human could tread" to a place to which those with "a suitable state of ceremonial purity" could ascend in order to gain ascetic powers (84).

Hori (1974) also recognizes mountains as a location leading to the other world (Hori 1974: 155). He goes on to offer three key factors in mountain worship: their conical shape, their importance as a source of water, and their relationship to the dead (149-151).

Meanwhile, in discussion of *yōkai* during the process of modernization in the Meiji Period, Gerald Figal describes how going into the mountains came to be seen as a sign of mental illness as folk spiritual traditions were subjugated by science and Western medicine (Figal 1999: 177). People were even locked away for the crime of going into the mountains (102). This reflects the enduring strength of pre-modern beliefs in mountains as a special place outside the realm of what is "normal" and "reasonable," a liminal space relevant for folk spiritual traditions and *yōkai*. Similarly, Komatsu (2017) brings up the theory that *yamauba*, a *yōkai* that could be translated as "wild mountain woman" or "mountain hag," could have originally been based on the ancient shamanistic figure of the *miko*, relegated to the mountains in the process of the social exclusion of these practices (Komatsu 2017: 129).

In terms of *yōkai karuta* or similar cultural products, this could manifest as references to mountains as a special or sacred place, as a bridge to other worlds, or as a place from which the dead come and go. It could also include depictions of a mountain's conical form or mention

of specific sacred mountains. Unfortunately, I did not find the theme of mountains to be of particular relevance to the Edo *yōkai karuta* available to me.

② *YORISHIRO* / *TORIMONO* / ELONGATED FORMS

Blacker (2004) specifically highlights the importance of long, thin forms in Japanese shamanism, not only in the case of sacred mountains as discussed above, but also in objects like *yorishiro* (依代), which she defines as "temporary vessels for the *kami*" (Blacker 2004: 38). These *yorishiro* were thought to draw *kami* ("gods" or "deities") down from the heavens due to their elongated shape, and objects with a similar shape like jewels, mirrors, swords and *magatama* were placed as *yorishiro* in stone altars at the base of sacred mountains (80-81). Blacker also includes in her discussion of *yorishiro* the flowers and bonfires used in ceremonies to summon ancestors down from the mountains and guide them back afterwards (47). Additionally, she mentions a bow, sword, bamboo wand and branch as among the nine types of *torimono* or conductors for a kami wielded by *miko* in their ritual dances (107, 149). Komatsu (2017) also references magical beliefs about sticks (Komatsu 2017: 173).

Depictions of branches, wands and other long, thin objects like those used as *yorishiro* and *torimono* would be relevant if they were to appear in Edo *yōkai karuta*. However, I did not identify any relevant references to this theme of long, thin forms.

③ MAREBITO / SACRED VISITORS OR OUTSIDERS

Blacker (2003) describes the so-called "*marebito* theory" that outsiders such as lower caste *hinin* (非人) or *kawaramono* (河原者) served as traveling performers and brought blessings and warnings to villages (Blacker 2003: 74). She links beliefs about sacred visitors from across the sea with beliefs about visiting deities in the Ryūkyū Kingdom (present day

Okinawa Prefecture), too (73-75). Blacker also recognizes the archetypes of travelers as salvationary messengers and itinerant priests who bring messages of their visions (191-192), noting that the *yōkai* known as *namahage* are thought to be derived from this concept of *marebito*.[13]

Similarly, Hori (1974) mentions a welcoming though ambivalent attitude towards "magico-religious or magico-technical strangers" (Hori 1974: 24-25), which he ties to a "belief in authority from without" (24). He discusses the belief in benevolent deities, spirits and ancestors who visit a community on special occasions and have the power to thwart threats from the outside precisely because they too from the outside (36). However, he mentions that this could be part of an inherent ambivalence of religion in general rather than anything unique to Japan (36). Komatsu also makes note of the association of divine presence with traveling performers in his discussion of *yōkai* culture (Komatsu 2017: 151-152).

This idea of a special visitor from the outside gives special importance to any references to traveling performers and similar figures in Edo *yōkai karuta*. This will be of particular significance given numerous cards referencing blind, itinerant musicians.

④ SUPERNATURAL CHILDREN

Another archetypal figure of particular interest when it comes to *yōkai karuta* is the supernatural child. Blacker (2004) discusses mysterious supernatural boys who appear in stories to rescue the hero, as well as the 36 supernatural boys who attend Fudo Myō, an important deity in *shugendō* (Blacker 2004: 180-181). She goes on to look at stories of children being captured by *tengu* who come back either unwell or specially gifted (197-201). In these "kamikakushi"

[13] Blacker (2004) addresses this in an un-numbered series of pages between pages 192 and 193 where photos listed as "Plates" are shown. Information about *namahage* is seen in Plate 3.

stories where children are abducted, she also finds a metaphor for the shaman's visionary journey in the themes of magical flight to another world where one receives gifts, and a benign a savior who intervenes to return the journeyer to their home (197-201).

In "Folklore and the Liminality of Children," Ijima (1987) similarly writes about the "sacred and magical nature of juvenile form" (Ijima 1987: 44). He states that up until age seven children were considered sacred and closer to gods and the other world, noting that children sometimes served as divine oracles and that in ancient times there were child mediums at court (41-44). He also describes *dōji-mura* (童子村), communities of adults who wore juvenile hairstyles and clothes and served as mediums among other magical skills they possessed. They were thought to be descended from demons (*oni*) and derived their powers from being an "incomplete" adult, like a child (43).

In *Rethinking Japanese History*, Amino (2012) elaborates on *dōji-mura* by discussing *yase dōji* (八瀬童子), a community of people in the mountains north of Kyoto Wearing their hair in the style of children, they were afforded various privileges, including being exempt from taxation and carrying the coffin of deceased emperors (Amino 2012: 190-197).

Yōkai with a child-like appearance in terms of clothes or hairstyle could potentially be related to this archetype and belief in the magical powers of children. Edo *yōkai karuta* contain numerous references to children and "young boys" (*kozō*), though this is largely due to the influence of one particular *yōkai*.

ii. FOLK SPIRITUAL PRACTITIONERS

① *ITAKO* / BLIND MEDIUMS

Blacker (2004) frames her discussion of spiritual practitioners in terms of the medium-ascetic pair, in which "the medium is primarily a transmitter and the ascetic primarily a healer

and exorciser" (Blacker 2004: 14). She presents the typical example as a *yamabushi* and a blind female medium (273). Blacker (2004) goes on to attempt to reconstruct an image of *miko* in ancient times when they had more shamanistic functions, noting that these aspects were lost over time as *miko* were reduced to performative dancers at shrine ceremonies (3, 104-126). In her assessment the capacity for shamanism was instead retained in a degraded form among groups of itinerant, blind women who served as mediums (140-141).

Similarly, Hori (1974) describes the itinerant, often blind women who played music and provided spiritual services as a transformed remnant of older shamanic roles (Hori 1974: 187, 200, 215). However, with the spread of belief in *goryō*, described in further detail below, these former shamanesses became mediums, dancers or singers, and ballad reciters (200). At the same time, they shifted from a higher social position to being lower caste or outcast members of society focused on folk arts (215).[14] This reflects a connection between older spiritual practices and figures like *goze*. *Goze* (瞽女) were blind itinerant women who traveled Japan playing music on shamisen, a plucked three-stringed instrument similar in size to a banjo, but did not offer mediumship or shamanic services.

Finally, in *Female Shamans in Eastern Japan during the Edo Period* (Groemer 2007), Gerald Groemer discusses how settled and sighted *miko* provided divination and mediumship services, emphasizing that it was not just blind, itinerant women who provided sought-after spiritual services (Groemer 2007). In addition, he writes that exorcisms were performed by

[14] There are many regional variations on the names of these women. Hori (1974) lists various terms for different types of *miko* (Hori 1974: 202), writing that until the early 1900s there were *aruki-miko* (translated as "wandering shamanesses") who went by different regional names such as *ichiko* (202). Fairchild (1962) provides a map of Japan showing the terms used in each region for "non-shrine attached miko" (Fairchild 1962: 117) and offering explanations of each term (120-121).

low-ranking Buddhist monks, mountain ascetics (*yamabushi*) and blind men (Groemer 2007: 38), adding some diversity to the image of ascetic and medium painted by Blacker (2004).

In terms of Edo *yōkai karuta*, any depictions of blind women, itinerant women, or folk art performers will be relevant to these themes. In fact, multiple cards depict *goze*, blind itinerant musicians who have a historical connection to *miko*, *itako*, and other major figures in folk spiritual traditions.

② *ZATŌ* and BLIND PRIESTS

Blind in Early Modern Japan (Tan 2022) is a valuable look at the professions and social status of blind people the Edo Period, who were thought to have an "uncanny connection with the otherworldly realms" (Tan 2022: 8) and to be able to more easily access the spiritual realm through music and ritual (81). Much of the book is focused on the guild for blind men based in Kyoto,[15] which both benefited and oppressed its members as it collaborated with the government to control the blind status group (79, 128-131). The guild was originally founded to train blind men to perform the *Tale of Heike*, or *Heike* music (8), but it provided other opportunities in acupuncture, massage and begging (182), and eventually came to focus on moneylending (95-98). Tan (2022) makes it clear how much one's official status and occupation dominated people's lives under Tokugawa rule (7-9) and how blindness was its own status with both enabling and disabling features (80, 90-94, 156, 186-187).

Within the blind guild "zatō" (座頭) was the lowest rank, and becoming *zatō* or any other rank involved paying fees to the guild (89-90). To rise above the rank of *zatō*, guild members were required to abandon work associated with blind Buddhist priests, who were seen

[15] See the third chapter "The Blind Guild: Status and Power" for a discussion of the guild (Tan 2022: 78-106) and the following chapter "Nonmembership and the Challenge of Authority" for a look at those who chose not to join (107-131).

as competitors (126). These blind priests performed Buddhist incantations and were managed by separate organizations associated with local temples (126-128). Technically speaking then, if a blind priests joined the blind guild at the rank of *zatō*, he could still provide ritual services as a priest; it is unclear, however, how many priests actually chose to join the guild only to remain at the lowest rank and continue to provide services as a priest. What is important here is to emphasize that the *zatō* rank involved a diversity of services beyond the guild's general association with music. In fact, the term *zatō* was a general term for blind men, not only members of the guild (114). *Zatō* appearing in *yōkai karuta* could potentially have been read as anything from a lute player of Heike music to a Buddhist priest, a beggar, a specially gifted masseuse, or an unscrupulous moneylender[16].

In a similar vein, Groemer (2001) offers insight into the nature of guilds for *zatō*; he describes them as offering divination services and being thought to have special healing abilities (Groemer 2001: 360). *Zatō*, or *biwa-hōshi* as they were sometimes also called, are not discussed by Blacker (2004) or Hori (1974), likely because *zatō* played a relatively small role in terms of folk spiritual practices. Indeed, Groemer (2001) writes that over time they came to focus more on moneylending over performing arts and other services (Groemer 2001: 357). Nonetheless, *zatō* are a part of the broader picture of the special social position of to the blind, which had connections to various spiritual practices, even if *zatō* primarily performed music or provided other services such as moneylending not directly related to folk spiritual traditions.

In my analysis of *yōkai karuta*, I will look for references to themes of blindness, music and itineracy that were linked to a general connection to the spiritual world for men as well as women. Multiple cards directly reference *zatō*, making this figure all the more important.

[16] Tan (2022) describes moralistic stories about greedy blind moneylenders that reflect stereotypes of the time (Tan 2022: 96).

③ *YAMABUSHI*

Yamabushi are the mountain ascetics who practice *shugendō*, sometimes referred to as *shugenja* (practitioners of *shugendō*). They are especially noteworthy in that they have a strong connection not only to mountains but also to an individual *yōkai*, the *tengu*, which are described as "ambivalent, non-moral forces of nature" (Blacker 2004: 182). Like *yamabushi*, *tengu* have a strong connection to mountains and are thought to possess supernatural powers. They are often depicted in the clothes of *yamabushi*, including their distinctive *tokin* hat, and in stories they sometimes disguise themselves as *yamabushi* (183). The supernatural powers *yamabushi* are thought to obtain through their ascetic practices in the mountains include invisibility, flying, walking on fire, entering boiling water, and being able to climb ladders of swords (248).

Hori (1974) views *shugendō* as one of three major "streams" in folk religion that combine elements of Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Confucian ethics, and/or native animistic folk religions (Hori 1974: 73). He defines *shugendō* as a combination of Mantrayana Buddhism and Shinto animism and shamanism in contrast to the two other traditions of *nembutsu* and *onmyōdō*. Hori describes practitioners of theses these traditions, including *yamabushi* and *nembutsu* priests, as minority groups who were popular with commoners, especially farmers, fisherman and other outcast groups. Tendai, Shingon and Zen Buddhism, on the other hand, were the religious traditions of the elite (139).

Regarding Edo *yōkai karuta*, depictions of *tengu* will be of special interest given their connection to *yamabushi*, as well as any depictions of *yamabushi* clothing or implements, or references to their practices or powers. As will be discussed below, two cards depict *tengu* in *yamabushi* garb.

④ *NEMBUTSU* PRIESTS, *HIJIRI* and OTHERS

In his discussion of popular religious practices, Hori (1974) makes special note of *nembutsu* priests and the broader category of *hijiri*, or independent "holy men" (Hori 1974: 101). Nembutsu priests primarily offered services related to *goryō* (御霊), or "vengeful ghosts" as described below, such as protecting the living from *goryō* and preventing the dead from becoming *goryō* (123). Hori also mentions *nembutsu* songs and dances, including dance and music to prevent plague (124) and *nembutsu* priests who danced with blind musicians (126-127).

Hori (1974) includes both *nembutsu* priests and *shugenja* in the broader category of *hijiri* (Hori 1974: 118), which he identifies as the most popular religious figures in rural eras from the Heian to the modern era (139). These outsider holy men reflected a shift from magico-religious and secular restrictions to spiritual freedom of the individual (103), over time gradually shifting to become a low-class minority group (134).

His discussion of *nembutsu* song and dance and the degradation of spiritual figures into itinerant outsiders highlights once again the themes of itineracy seen with the *goze* and *zatō* above. This gives additional importance to these recurring themes in Edo *yōkai karuta*, even if there are not specific references to *nembutsu* or *hijiri*.

iii. MALICIOUS FORCES/ENTITIES

① *ONRYŌ* / *GORYŌ*

Blacker (2004) describes different types of malevolent spirits before defining *onryō* (怨霊) or *goryō* (御霊) as the "most dangerous of all" (Blacker 2004: 48). They are the spirits of those whose manner of death was "violent, lonely or untoward," meaning that they "require for their appeasement measures a good deal stronger than the ordinary everyday obsequies" (48).

She discusses *onryō* in the context of issues that would require shamanic intervention from the medium and ascetic (50), also providing detailed accounts of exorcism rituals in which these *onryō* (or animal spirits) enter the medium's body and speak through her so that the ascetic can question and exorcise them (298-314).

Hori (1974) states that *goryō* beliefs began in the 8th Century and flourished throughout the Heian Period (Hori 1974: 199), where constant fear and anxiety about *goryō* among elites was actively promoted by Buddhist priests and others for their own gain (116). Belief in an afterlife as a spirit coupled with a desire not to become an *onryō* was important in creating demand for spiritual services (117).

From Blacker's and Hori's work we can see how the need for interventions by spiritual practitioners, including blind mediums, *yamabushi*, and *nembutsu* priests, was fueled by belief in *onryō*, which was in turn actively promoted by these practitioners. This makes any references to *onryō* in *yōkai karuta* relevant as one of the cornerstones of Edo spiritual beliefs.

② ANIMAL SPIRITS and ANIMAL SPIRIT POSSESSION

In addition to *onryō*, protection from and exorcism of animal spirits was another service provided by the spiritual practitioners mentioned above (Blacker 2004: 50-51, 298). Hori (1974) also emphasizes the importance of *kitsune-tsuki* or fox spirit possession beliefs (Hori 1974: 45-46). Although fox spirits are the most well-known, there were also snake and dog spirits (56-57); for example, in Shikoku and the Chūgoku area of Japan, *inugami*, or dog spirits were more common (5), and the techniques for gaining command of an *inugami* or dog spirit are described by Ishidzuka (1999: 56-59). According to Fairchild (1962), there was even an area in Kyūshū where *kappa* (now famous as a river-dwelling *yōkai*) served as animal spirits in animal spirit possession beliefs (Fairchild 1962: 114). Blacker (2004) views these "witch familiars" as a

degraded form of an older practice that was not originally malicious (Blacker 2004: 55). She also draws connections to Chinese "ku magic" (61-65), which involved putting venomous creatures in a pot and letting them "devour each other until only one is left," the survivor becoming the eponymous *ku* (61-65).

Mention of foxes or other malicious animal spirits in *yōkai karuta* will be relevant here, as well as references to the techniques used to gain control over these animal spirits. Among the various animals listed above, only an *inugami* or dog spirit makes an appearance in the cards.

iv. THEORETICAL ANCIENT PRACTICES OF HUMAN SACRIFICE

Like the powerful *miko* thought to have performed shamanistic practices in ancient times mentioned in the section on *itako* and blind mediums, there have also been theories about human sacrifice in ancient times. Specifically, Yanagita focuses on a *yōkai* called *hitotsume kozō*, or the one-eyed boy, to suggest that people selected as a human sacrifice in ancient times were blinded in one eye, and possibly lost one leg as well (Foster 2008: 145-147; Foster 2015a: 202-204; Fukuda 2006: 450). From then until the time of their sacrifice, he proposes, they were believed to possess special spiritual abilities or a connection to deities. If it were true,

Though this theory touches on the connection between impaired vision and spiritual gifts, it is, of course, impossible to prove, and in recent years there has been more recognition that much of what Yanagita did was arbitrary (Kawamori 2003: 244). His work, such as his theory of *yōkai* degradation, has also seen criticism (Komatsu 2017: 71-75). It is not my intent here to validate his theories; however, in the following chapter we will see that *hitotsume kozō* was not only common in the cards but also influenced depictions of many other *yōkai*. Setting aside Yanagita's theory, it is clear that this one-eyed *yōkai* and the eye-related creativity it inspired deserves greater exploration.

IV. ELEMENTS OF FOLK SPIRITUAL BELIEFS IN EDO *YŌKAI KARUTA*

1. ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL *YŌKAI KARUTA* IN THREE GROUPS

In this section I will examine the image and text cards from six decks of Edo *yōkai karuta* to identify elements of the folk spiritual beliefs and practices described above. In order to better understand the context in which these references emerge, I have divided the cards into three groups: 1) Cards depicting scenes from contemporary popular culture, primarily kabuki and other plays, as well as historical events; 2) Cards referring to local legends or "ghost stories"; and 3) Cards depicting standalone *yōkai* outside the context of a well-known story.

The first group is made up of references to kabuki and noh plays and famous historical tales. Because these cards refer to stories that are well-established in the popular imagination, they must be depicted somewhat strictly, such as with an image associated with a certain character or scene in a kabuki play. As seen below, the same four plays revolving around *onryō* (怨霊), or vengeful ghosts, appear across all six decks.

I have included stories about famous historical figures in the first category as well, since they too are well-established and provide less leeway for playfulness or variation. As with kabuki, noh and other plays, people would likely have strong visual references for these tales from contemporary visual culture.

The second group contains references to local legends and stories, sometimes associated with particular places in real life. These are what me might call "ghost stories" or "urban legends," in that they have some common elements but vary in the details. In other words, these stories were familiar but less rigidly established in the public imagination than those of kabuki, for example. I define "stories" broadly in this group to include, for example, the methods

proscribed to gain control of an *inugami*, or dog spirit, by burying it or chopping off its head; for residents of Edo this could be considered an amusing or frightening "story" of what people do in the rural periphery.

The third group involves cards depicting "standalone" *yōkai* without particular reference to a scene in a famous story or a particular location. Of course, the cards still involve a number of references—they must be immediately recognizable in order for the game to be playable, after all—but this group allows for more variation and play in the *yōkai* and references they contain.

These three groups are meant to provide structure to the discussion, help explain the context in which references to folk spiritual divisions arise, and clarify any unique role that *yōkai karuta* might play in the broader picture of depictions of *yōkai* in Edo Japan. In the next sections I will look at cards in each group, beginning with the first group.

i. GROUP ONE: ESTABLISHED STORIES FROM POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT and HISTORY

Each of the six decks contains at least two references to any of four plays whose stories revolve around *onryō*, one of the malicious entities from which *yamabushi* and others provided relief. Before continuing, I have to make it clear that I am not a scholar of kabuki or noh plays, and there may be significant gaps in my knowledge here. I will not attempt to analyze the content of the plays themselves; rather, my goal here is to highlight these plays as one particular context in which references to folk spiritual beliefs emerge.

To give a better picture of how the cards in this group fit into their respective decks, I should add that the decks often reference other plays and historical events that fall outside the scope of this research. There is a card referencing the Noh play *Rashōmon*, for example, while

multiple cards depict the *hannya* masks worn in noh plays. Another card references Taira-no-Kiyomori, a historical figure famous for temporarily relocating the capital to Fukuhara. I do not discuss these cards because they are not significantly connected to the themes laid out in the earlier section on folk spiritual traditions.

This is all to say that the cards discussed below are part of a broader picture of references to the popular entertainment and well-known historical tales of the day. They must adhere to relative rigidity in their depictions in order to come across as recognizable and "accurate," leaving less room for playful variation or invention.

① FOUR PLAYS STARRING ANGRY GHOSTS

The four plays seen across the six decks are *Sarayashiki* (皿屋敷), or "The Dish Mansion," *Yotsuya Kaidan* (四谷怪談), or "the Ghost Story of Yotsuya," *Kohada Koheiji* (小肌小平次), and *Kasane* (かさね). In each case, a famous scene or iconic images associated with the play are depicted, with some degree of variation.

For example, the story of *Sarayashiki* involves a servant girl being murdered by being thrown into a well, from which her ghost later emerges. Five of the decks reference this play by depicting a ghost coming out of a well. Moreover, four of these decks have essentially identical text accompanying the image card: *Ito kara deru sarayashiki*, which could be loosely translated as "The dish mansion where something comes out of a well." (One of the decks is missing the image card, but the text identifies it as a reference to the play.)

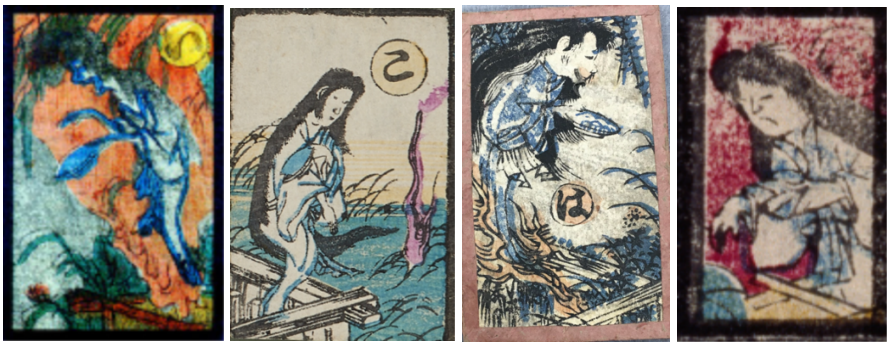

Fig. 3: Four *karuta* with images referencing the play *Sarayashiki*.

Sources left to right: Tada Deck (*i* / い); Tokyo Deck (*ko* / こ); Paper Deck (*ha* / は);

Nishiki-e Deck (*i* / い)[17]

Similarly, three of the five cards referencing *Yotsuya Kaidan* show the iconic scene where a ghost emerges from a paper lantern, and all of the text cards mention "Oiwa," the name of the character who becomes an *onryō*. For *Kasane*, meanwhile, a disfigured woman's face and a sickle are depicted to reference a character who is murdered with a sickle after being physically disfigured, and all but one of the five text cards explicitly mention the name "Kasane." The four depictions of *Kohada Koheiji* vary somewhat, but all focus on the ghostly figure of a balding man—the only case where it is a man rather than a woman who comes back to exact revenge on the living. All of the text cards include the name of the play, "Kohada Koheiji."

[17] For detailed information on each deck including sources, see Chapter I Section 2.

Fig. 4: Depictions of popular plays (left to right): *Yotsuya Kaidan*, *Kasane*, and *Kohada Koheiji.*

Sources left to right: Tokyo Deck (*yo* / よ); Hyogo Deck (*ki* / き); Nishiki-e Deck (*ko* / こ)

The artists of each deck take some liberties in their depictions but ensure through their choice of imagery and text that the cards will be quickly recognizable as references to each of these famous plays about vengeful spirits of the dead. Tada (1998) writes that roughly half of the cards in the Tada Deck refer to popular plays and specifically names the four plays listed here (Tada 1998: 4).

A scholar of kabuki may have further insights into the design of the cards and references to details of the plays. However, I simply wish to highlight that the nineteen total cards referencing these four plays all depict *onryō*, or vengeful ghosts. In other words, though this is a relatively large number of cards, the range of references to folk spiritual traditions is narrowly limited to *onryō*. In addition, as depictions of famous literary scenes, these cards do not offer any direct reflection of everyday spiritual practices or beliefs.

② A NOH PLAY and A *TENGU*

Beyond kabuki, one card in the Nishiki-e deck references a noh play titled *Kurama Tengu*, which takes place on Mount Kurama in Kyoto and is famously associated with *tengu*. The image card shows a *tengu* with a white beard and a leaf-shaped fan, both of which are

associated with this play's depiction of a *tengu*.[18] The small black hat is that of *yamabushi*, often seen on *tengu* in general, not just in the context of this noh play. The text reads *Kyō nara kurama yama*, or "You can't think of Kyoto without thinking of Mount Kurama."

Fig. 5: A card depicting the *tengu* from the Noh play *Kurama Tengu*.

Source: Nishiki-e Deck (*kyō* / 京)

By virtue of featuring a *tengu* wearing the hat of a *yamabushi*, this card invariably has a connection to *shugendō* and folk spiritual traditions. However, like the cards above, it references a play that happens to feature *tengu* more so than pointing directly to any specific spiritual practices or beliefs.

③ *KARUTA* BASED ON HISTORICAL EVENTS

One final card in this category references a historical document called the *Taiheiki* (*Chronicle of Great Peace*), which is generally considered an embellished but accurate depiction of historical events and is known for its depiction of a military commander and

[18] For Edo Period images depicting *Kurama Tengu* and the white-bearded *tengu* holding a leaf-shaped fan, see *Kurama no ushiwakamaru* by Utagawa Kunisada I (Utagawa, year unknown) and *Ushiwakamaru to Sōjōbō* by Katsukawa Shuntei (Katsukawa, year unknown).

samurai, Kusunoki Masashige (Sather 2022: 43-44). The text card reads, *Kusunoki no bōkon*, or "the vengeful spirit of Kusunoki," and the card seems to be a depiction of his ghost getting vengeance on his enemies.

Fig. 6: "The Vengeful Spirit of Kusunoki," a reference to Kusunoki Masashige and the *Taiheiki*. Source: Tada Deck (*ku* / く)

Because Kusunoki lived roughly 500 years before Edo *yōkai karuta* were created, this card is notable for referencing events that occurred in the relatively distant past. As a famous work of literature, adults would have probably been familiar with the story of Kusunoki. Given the artistic style of the image card resembling ukiyo-e prints, it may be referencing other illustrations of the life of Kusunoki or the events of the *Taiheiki*.

ii. GROUP TWO: LOCAL LEGENDS and "GHOST STORIES"

The *karuta* in this category are based on famous stories or legends, sometimes associated with a specific place. Less visually and culturally established than popular entertainment like kabuki, noh or other plays, these stories nonetheless have consistent structure and themes, which *karuta* artists evoke with each pair of image and text cards. Compared to the cards in group one, those in group two offer greater insight into real world beliefs and spiritual

practices. For example, every deck references itinerant blind musicians (*goze* or *zatō*) on the card for a particular kana (*me* / め).

① *BAKEGOZE* and *BAKEZATŌ*: TALES OF BLIND MUSICIANS

Three of the six decks feature a depiction of *bakegoze* (化け瞽女), or the *bakemono* ("ghost" or "yōkai") version of *goze*, the blind itinerant women who played shamisen music. The text cards specifically label them as *bakegoze*, while the figures on the image card are recognizable by the objects they wield; in two of the cards the *bakegoze* strike a similar pose with a cane in one hand and a *shamisen* over the shoulder. In the Hyogo Deck, in contrast, the *bakegoze* actually plays the shamisen and no cane is visible. On all three cards the figure's eyes are closed, likely to denote blindness.

These cards refer to real life individuals in contemporary Edo society and draw on a genre of stories about killing travelers, particularly the blind. Thus, I include *bakegoze* cards in this second group for local legends and well-known stories, along with the *bakezatō* discussed below.

Fig. 7: Three decks depicting *bakegoze*, ghosts of the blind itinerant musicians known as *goze*.

Sources: Tada Deck (*me* / め); Paper Deck (*me* / め); Hyogo Deck (*me* / め)[19]

When explaining the *bakegoze* card in the Tada Deck, Tada (1998) connects it with two stories about *goze.* In one, a *goze* who fell from a bridge and died in Nara Prefecture, and afterwards her ghost could be heard playing the shamisen. In this case, the ghost doesn't seem to be out for vengeance, so it may not qualify as an *onryō*. The second story comes from *Sororimonogatari*, a collection of ghost stories from early Edo, in which a murdered *goze* comes back as an *onryō* to get vengeance on the man who killed her (Tada 1998: 47). Murakami (2005), under an entry for *goze no yūrei* ("ghosts of *goze*"), also describes a story of a man killing a *goze*, reflecting the number of such stories (Murakami 2005: 141-142). These tales can be located within the broader category of what Komatsu (2017) calls "legends of outsider murders" (*ijin-goroshi*) (Komatsu 2017: 155). In a chapter titled "Ijin and Ikinie: Outsiders and Sacrifices," he discusses stories about killing "ijin" (outsiders such as wandering religious figures, blind musicians, and disabled people) and the theories regarding them (150-163).

Despite appearing in half of the decks, to my knowledge depictions of *bakegoze* do not seem to be common in other Edo art, making this a somewhat notable aspect of Edo *yōkai karuta*. If we look at other cards for the kana *me* (め), we can see an even greater frequency of blind musicians in *yōkai karuta*.

In the three decks without *bakegoze*, the kana *me* (め) is occupied by depictions of *bakezatō* (化け座頭), a reference to blind men known who provided various services in Edo Japan including music, massage and acupuncture. Their depictions vary more from card to card

[19] For detailed information on each deck including sources, see Chapter I Section 2.

than *bakegoze*, but each carries a walking cane, sometimes with a *biwa* or lute, which was the instrument they traditionally played.

Fig. 8: Three cards featuring *bakezatō* for the kana *me* (め).

Sources: Tokyo Deck (*me* / め); Nishiki-e Deck (*me* / め); Ikkyōsai Deck (*me* / め)

The fact that all six decks feature either *bakegoze* or *bakezatō* for the kana *me* (め) reflects a unique degree of consistency in terms of a single kana being monopolized by one type of *yōkai*. The only other such case is *mikoshi-nyūdō*, which appears in some form for the kana *mi* (み) in every deck. Others, like *rokurokubi*, a *yōkai* with an extremely long neck, appear in four of the six decks for *ro* (ろ). The same goes for many of the stage plays described above.

One reason that these blind itinerant musicians appear for the kana *me* (め) is that this happens to be the word for "eye." The text cards for *bakegoze* and *bakezatō* use either a word for blind that begins with "eye" or alternatively make puns related to eyes. For example, one card reads, *Meguro-mura no bakegoze*, or "bakegoze from Meguro Village" (literally, "black eye village"). Meguro is an area in both Edo and present-day Tokyo, so the text here could have been a pun referencing this location.

Furthermore, additional cards referencing *zatō* appear for other kana. Two more *zatō* appear for *ka* (か): *Kabe kara deru zatō*, or "*Zatō* coming out of the wall" (Hyogo Deck), and *Kakurezatō*, or "hidden *zatō*," (Ikkyōsai Deck). The latter seems to be a play on words, since *kakurezato* (隠れ里) is normally a word unrelated to *zatō* that means "hidden village" (*kakure* means "hidden" and *zato* means "village").[20] *Kakurezato* is also used to refer to the faraway place where victims of *kamikakushi* abductions are taken.[21] Thus, this card plays with the similar pronunciation of *zato* and *zatō* to replace "village" with "itinerant blind man" (*zatō*), possibly suggesting that a *zatō* is the one abducting children. Perhaps because of this connection with children, the *zatō* himself seems to have a more child-like appearance than *zatō* in other decks with a larger head and shorter stature. This is of additional relevance given the discussion of group three below regarding *yōkai* that take the form of a young boy (*kozō*).

Fig. 9: Two more depictions of *zatō*. Note the child-like stature of the figure on the right.

Sources left to right: Hyogo Deck (*ka* / か); Ikkyōsai Deck (*ka* / か)

[20] Notice the slightly different spelling of *zato* versus *zatō*. The pun is a slight stretch since they are not technically homonyms.
[21] See, *Kamikakushi kakurezato* (Yanagita 2014) an anthology of the work of Kunio Yanagita regarding *kakurezato* as the place where people are taken via *kamikakushi*.

Because every deck features *bakegoze* or *bakezatō* for the kana *me* (め), these additional *zatō* mean that one deck references both *goze* and *zato*, while the other deck has two separate depictions of *zatō*. This relatively large number of cards devoted to *goze* and *zatō* reflects a widespread familiarity or popularity of stories about both *goze*, who are thought to be one of many descendants of powerful shamanic figures in the past, and *zatō*, guild members who sometimes benefited from beliefs in the special abilities of the blind. Of additional interest is that in some cases the *bakegoze* and *bakezatō* return from the dead as *onryō* to get revenge.

These depictions of blind itinerant figures in Edo Japan may at first seem disparaging, given the stories about murder and their comical depictions. Here it is worth considering depictions of other real-life figures in the decks. For example, cards for *ru* (る) often feature some variation of *Rusu no ma ni deru obake*, or, "the monster that appears while you're out of the house." Tada explains that this refers to people who left requests for payment while someone was away from home (Tada 1998: 18). In this case, the person being represented as a *yōkai* is someone with a degree of power over others in that they can demand payment, and their depiction as a *yōkai* plays with the fear or annoyance felt towards these individuals. Similarly, the depictions of *zatō* and *goze* could reflect that they commanded some degree of real power, respect or fear, even if they occupied a relatively low rank in society. On this note, Groemer (2001) describes the vast disparity in status between high-ranking and low-ranking *zatō*, showing that some commanded great respect (Groemer 2001: 357). By the late 1800s, however, the *zatō* guild had lost power and influence (374), so the social status of *zatō* by the time of Edo *yōkai karut*a was likely reduced from what it may have been in the past.

Fig. 10: Various entities that appear at your home “while you’re away.”

Sources left to right: Tada Deck (*ru* / る); Ikkyōsai Deck (*ru* / る); Nishiki-e Deck (*ru* / る); Hyogo Deck (*ru* / る)

In terms of previous illustrations of *yōkai* related to *goze* and *zatō*, Toriyama Sekien’s work features multiple images referencing *zatō* both directly and indirectly, though none seem to reference *goze*. There is an image of an *umizatō* (海座頭), or “ocean *zatō*” (Alt 2016: 38; Toriyama 1776), which could be a play on another ocean-related *yōkai* called *umibōzu* or a reference to a tale where a *zatō* entertains the ghosts of Heike warriors who drowned in battle (Alt 2015: 38). There is also an image of an *ōzatō* (大座頭), or “large *zatō*,” depicted as a man in tattered clothes, covered in body hair, and holding a cane with one eye closed (Alt 2016: 200; Toriyama 1781). Alt (2016) attributes the inclusion of the *ōzatō* to contemporary scandals related to the moneylending practices of *zatō* (Alt 2016: 200). Another entry does not mention *zatō* by name but consists of a figure with a lute for a head who holds a cane and has closed eyes (Alt 2016: 273; Toriyama 1784). Alt (2016) connects this to a story about a famous lute seen in other illustrated scrolls, but he doesn’t mention *zatō* (Alt 2016: 273). However, the closed eyes and cane coupled with the lute clearly evoke images of *zatō*. Finally, regarding the *kakurezato* pun mentioned above, Sekien’s *Konjaku Hyakki Shūi* includes a two-page depiction

of this "hidden village," including many "symbols of prosperity" (Alt 2016: 224-225; Toriyama 1781).

② *FUNAYŪREI: ONRYŌ* AT SEA

A second sub-group of cards draws on local legends about *funayūrei* (船幽霊), which appear in five of the six decks. *Funayūrei* are spirits of those who died at sea but return to sink the ships of the living by flooding them with water. Though termed *yūrei* (the general term for ghost), not *onryō*, they are clearly on a vengeful mission to harm the living. The cards don't reference a specific location, but the setting of night at sea and the specificity of what they do provides enough detail to put them in this group rather than with independent *yōkai* in the third group.

Fig. 11: *Karuta* depicting *funayūrei,* vengeful ghosts on ships at sea.

Sources left to right: Tada Deck (*re* / れ); Tokyo Deck (*fu* / ふ); Paper Deck (*tsu* / つ)

Ikkyōsai Deck (*fu* / ふ); Hyogo Deck (*fu* / ふ)

Three of the cards show *funayūrei* holding ladles, a reference to the *funayūrei*'s famous act of scooping water using a ladle to sink the boat of the living (Tada 1998: 34). Sekien's *Konjaku gazu zoku hyakki* also featured ghostly figures wielding ladles in a depiction of

funayūrei (Alt 2016: 118; Toriyama 1779). Murakami (2005) lists five variations of *funayūrei*: some are ghosts on a boat, some are just a boat, some are just the ghosts, and others are based on famous ocean-related *yōkai* like *umibōzu* (Murakami 2005: 291). The *funayūrei* depicted here are primarily the first type with both ghosts and a boat, which makes sense in terms of creating compelling imagery and text for *yōkai karuta*, while also possibly evoking Sekien's earlier illustration.

③ *KAMIHIKINEN*: A VENGEFUL HAIR-PULLER

One additional card references stories about *onryō* where women are dragged away by the hair by a *yōkai* called *kamihikinen*, or "hair-pulling angry spirit." Tada (1998) references a specific story from the Edo Period in which the spirits of those killed by a man drag his lover by the hair into a well (Tada 1998: 27).

Fig. 12: *Nedokoro he deru kamihikinen*, or "Hair-pulling ghost that enters the bedroom."

Source: Tada Deck (*ne* / ね)

④ ANIMAL SPIRIT POSSESSION: *INUGAMI*

In one last card in this group, we see the most direct reference to folk spiritual traditions out of all the decks. The initial card in the Tokyo Deck, this card shows an *inugami*, or dog spirit, associated with animal spirit possession in some parts of Japan.

Fig. 13: *Inugami inoru kubi no ikinie*, or "Sacrificed head praying to the inugami."

Source: Tokyo Deck (*i* / い)

The text card for this card reads, "A sacrificed head praying to an *inugami*." This seems to be referring to the measures used to gain command of an *inugami*, which included burying the decapitated head of a dog, placing food near a starving dog and then cutting off its head when it extends its neck to take a bite, or beheading the winner of a dog fight (Murakami 2005: 37). Murakami (2005) writes that the dog's head itself was sometimes worshipped, which could also be what the card is referring to (36-37).

The inclusion of this unique card is likely due to the fact that Toriyama Sekien included *inugami* in *Gazu hyakki yagyō*, one of his famous collections of illustrations of *yōkai* (Alt 2015: 14; Toriyama 1776). However, Sekien's *inugami* is seated indoors with no reference to decapitated dogs, possibly engaged in spirit possession (Alt 2015: 14). Considering how influential Sekien's images were, this could help explain why the Tokyo Deck includes an

inugami despite the lack of such direct references to animal spirit possession in any of the other cards or decks.

iii. GROUP THREE: STAND-ALONE *YŌKAI*

In order for a game of *yōkai karuta* to be playable, each card must refer to or play with ideas and characters familiar to the players. The cards in this category, however, feature *yōkai* that are neither characters from famous stage plays nor associated with a specific location or "ghost story"; instead, they depict easily recognizable *yōkai*, often remixing familiar elements from depictions of other *yōkai*.

In the previous section we saw cards referencing the special social status of blind people based on a connection between blindness and spiritual capabilities. This section features similar references to limited vision, in addition to possible references to and the liminal, spiritual nature of young children. There is a great deal of interplay between these two themes, as well as limited references to *shugendō* and animal spirit possession.

① *HITOTSUME KOZŌ*: THE ANCIENT and INFLUENTIAL ONE-EYED BOY

It is first necessary to discuss *hitostume-kozō* (一つ目小僧), a *yōkai* found in folklore throughout Japan (Fukuda 2006: 450). *Hitotsume* means "one-eyed," and Iijima (1987) explains that *kozō* means "young monk" but should be understood as "young man" (Iijima 1987: 44). This *yōkai* usually appears as a boy with one eye, but Murakami (2005) writes that *hitotsume kozō* sometimes appears also as a *nyūdō* (adult monk) that is three meters tall (Murakami 2005: 274).

Hitotsume kozō's widespread distribution has led to theories that it may have been connected to ancient traditions of human sacrifice (Foster 2007: 145-147; Foster 2015a: 202-

204; Fukuda 2006: 450). Foster (2015a) describes Yanagita Kunio's theory that a person selected to be sacrificed would be blinded in one eye as a way of "marking" them, and from then until the time of the sacrifice they were seen to have a special connection to deities (Foster 2015a: 202). Komatsu (2017) also discusses the possibility that it was travelers who were selected as sacrifices when they arrived in villages (Komatsu 2017: 154-159). Even if Yanagita's theory is shaky at best, *hitotsume kozō* is at least tangentially connected with the themes of limited vision and the archetype of the supernatural child.

Below are all cards specifically labeled as "hitotsume kozō."

Fig. 14: *Karuta* depicting *hitotsume kozō*, or the "one-eyed boy."

Sources left to right: Tokyo Deck (*re* / れ); Paper Deck (*ta* / た); Ikkyōsai Deck (*hi* / ひ); Nishiki-e Deck (*hi* / ひ); Hyogo Deck (*wa* / わ)[22]

One can immediately see a lot of variation in these depictions, from pose to clothes to objects and background. In fact, most of these combine the familiar concept of *hitotsume kozō* with other *yōkai* and characters. The associated text for the image from the Ikkyōksai Deck, for example, reads, *Hitotsume-kozō issun-boshi*. "Issun-boshi" is a character from a fairy tale who

[22] For detailed information on each deck including sources, see Chapter I Section 2.

is extremely small, comparable to a character from western fairy tales like "Tom Thumb." By depicting Issun-boshi with only one eye, the card combines these two familiar characters. Meanwhile, the card from the Paper Deck combines *hitotsume kozō* with a *yōkai* called *tofu kozō*, or "tofu boy," which takes the appearance of a boy carrying tofu.

② ALL MANNER OF *KOZŌ*

By the end of the Edo Period a number of similar *kozō* or "boy" *yōkai* seem to have merged or blurred within the popular imagination, leading to variations of *kozō* with some combination of three features: carrying tofu, having a large tongue hanging out, and having one eye. Looking at other cards labeled *kozō*, not only those with one eye or specifically labeled *hitotsume kozō,* one can see a remixing of these loosely connected features of "one-eyed boy carrying tofu with his tongue hanging out."

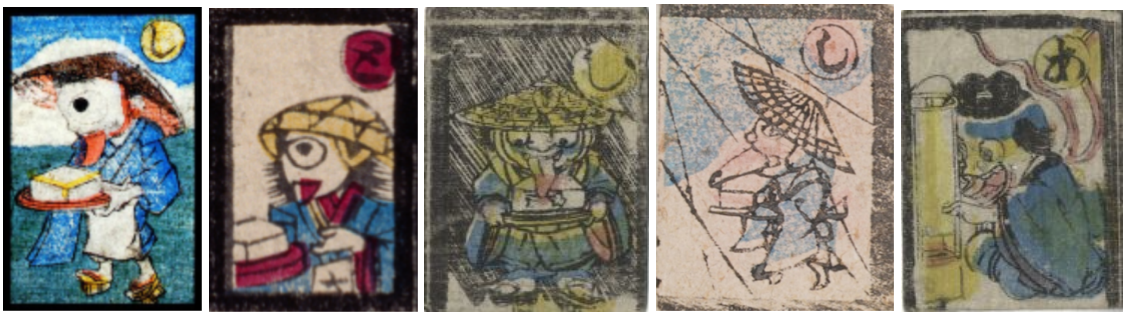

Fig. 15: *Karuta* depicting variations of *kozō* with one eye, a tongue hanging out, and/or tofu. Sources left to right: Tada Deck (*shi* / し); Nishiki-e Deck (*to* / と); Ikkyōsai Deck (*shi* / し); Hyogo Deck (*shi* / し); Ikkyōsai Deck (*a* / あ)

The cards from the Tada Deck and Nishiki-e Deck offer what would have been a familiar image of a one-eyed boy carrying tofu. The text card from the Tada Deck reads,

Shitadashi kozō no tōfu name, or "A tofu-licking, tongue-hanging out boy," while the text card from the Nishiki-e Deck reads simply, *Tōfu kozō* or "tofu boy."

The card from the Ikkyōsai Deck for *shi* (し), however, while labeled *Shitadashi tofu kozō*, or "Tongue-hanging out tofu boy," has two eyes, and appears to be in the rain. The card from the Hyogo Deck has identical text and also depicts a seemingly two-eyed boy in profile holding tofu. Finally, a second card from the Ikkyōsai Deck (*a* / あ) is labeled *Aburaname kozō*, or "Oil-licking boy," and appears to have two eyes. This card references a *yōkai* called "Aburaname" known for its act of licking lamp oil, thus playing with the "tongue-hanging out" aspect of *kozō*.

One more card from the Hyogo Deck seen below depicts another combination of *hitotsume kozō* and Issun-boshi. However, it does not mention *kozō*, simply calling the *yōkai* a "one-eyed Issun-boshi."

Fig. 16: *Hitotsume no issun-boshi*, or "One-eyed Issun-boshi."

Source: Hyogo Deck

The Paper Deck also contains mention of a five-eyed boy (*itsutsume kozō*) on the text card for the kana *e* (え), but, unfortunately, the image card for this pair has not survived to the

present day. Assuming that it featured a child-like *yōkai* with five eyes, it would have been an intriguing addition to this discussion.

There are still other *yōkai* labeled as *kozō* that appear in child-like form but lack the traits seen above; they have more than one eye, they do not have a big tongue hanging out, and they are not carrying tofu.

Fig. 17: *Karuta* labeled as *kozō* but lacking other features of *hitotsume kozō*.

Sources left to right: Paper Deck (*sa* / さ); Hyogo Deck (*sa* / さ)

These two card are associated with the same line of text in their respective decks: *Saru-hashi no saru tsura kozō*, or "Monkey mask boy from Monkey Bridge." Characters in both images have similarly wrinkled foreheads and what appear to be whiskers, holding some sort of pamphlets. The pamphlets, especially coupled with the bottle in the Paper Deck image, resemble depictions of tanuki as seen in ceramic statues in Japan today. Meanwhile, *Saru-hashi* ("Monkey Bridge") is the name of an actual bridge in Yamanashi Prefecture. These cards likely involve a multi-layered reference or joke otherwise unrelated to folk spiritual traditions. What is notable here is that the term *kozō* and child-like appearance appear here without other traits associated with *hitotsume kozō*. This could reflect a more general connection between a child or boy-like appearance and *yōkai*.

In a similar vein, there are four cards across the decks featuring a "lantern boy." In each case, the text cards simply read "lantern boy" with slight variations in spelling, hence the two different kana seen below.

Fig. 18: A series of *karuta* featuring *chōchin kozō*, or "lantern boy."

Sources left to right: Tada Deck (*chi* / ち); Paper Deck (*chi* / ち); Ikkyōsai Deck (*te* / て); Nishiki-e Deck (*te* / て)

Despite being labeled as *kozō* these *yōkai* lack even the appearance of a child, and they don't have the one eye, large tongue hanging out, or tofu-carrying traits of *hitotsume kozō*. According to Tada (1998), the card in the Tada deck makes a wordplay based on the phrase "Chōchin-ya no kozō," which literally means "the boy from the lantern store" but in common parlance means "to try very hard only to end up being scolded" (Tada 1998: 15). In other words, the artist depicts a common phrase literally as a visual gag. These *yōkai* also seem to be drawing on images of *tsukumogami*, or 100-year-old objects that come to life and slowly transform into *oni*. Perhaps these lanterns could also be paying homage to *Yotsuya Kaidan*, the popular kabuki play mentioned above in which an *onryō* emerges from a lantern. In any case, the term *kozō* connects them with the many other *yōkai* that take the appearance of a young boy.

③ *KABURO*: *YŌKAI* WITH A CHILD-LIKE HAIRCUT

Finally, there are two more *yōkai* not directly referred to as *kozō* but that take the appearance of a child, particularly in terms of hairstyle. The text cards both mention "kaburo," the name of a children's hairstyle. One reads *Kirikaburo*, or "Kaburo haircut" (Nishiki-e Deck), and the other reads, *Rōka he deru bakekaburo*, or "Yōkai kaburo going into the hall" (Hyogo Deck). The depiction of a tongue hanging out in the Nishiki-e Deck certainly draws comparisons to *hitotsume kozō*, while the figure in the Hyogo Deck has the stature of a child and the tray in his hands evokes *hitotsume kozō*'s tray of tofu.

What must be pointed out here is the strength of the connotation between a children's hairstyle, social status as a child, and the special spiritual powers of children, as identified by Ijima (1987) and Amino (2012) in discussion of *dōji-mura*. Members of *dōji-mura* communities, who were "seen as having special powers unavailable to common people" (Amino 2012: 194), cut off their topknot to let their hair flow freely like children, which was "equivalent to being stripped of one's status as an adult commoner" (193). Ijima (1987) similarly writes how members of *dōji-mura* wore a juvenile hairstyle and were thought to be incomplete, like children, in addition to being descended from *oni* ("demons") and possessing powers of mediumship and other magical skills (Ijima 1987: 41-44).

Fig. 19: Two cards referring to *kaburo*, a hairstyle associated with children.

Sources left to right: Nishiki-e Deck (*ki* / き); Hyogo Deck (*ro* / ろ)

However, though the card from the Hyogo Deck depicts a character with a shaved and tufts of hair at the ears, the card from the Nishiki-e Deck shows shaggy, unkempt hair. This could be a reference to the famous *oni* Shuten Dōji, who is sometimes depicted with a "childish bob," as in Sekien's *Konjaku gazu zoku hyakki* (Alt 2016: 93; Toriyama 1779). In this same volume, Sekien separately depicts *ōkaburo* (大禿), or "huge *kaburo*," which is a multi-layered reference to a beautiful young man, the pleasure quarters and homosexuality (Alt 2016: 145; Murakami 2005: 58), and this *ōkaburo* has similarly loose, long hair (Toriyama 1779).

④ AN ABUNDANCE OF ONE-EYED *YŌKAI*

There are also a number of *yōkai* that seem to be playing on the familiarity of the "one-eyed" feature of *hitotsume kozō*. First is an apparently very popular *yōkai* that takes the form of a pestle with wings and appears in every deck, usually but not always with one eye. When explaining the card in the Tada Deck, Tada (1998) mentions a belief in Kumamoto Prefecture that when the wood of a camelia tree is used to make pestles, the spirit of the tree gets angry, and the pestle turns into a *yōkai*. He also mentions that in Kyoto, camelia trees are thought to

release balls of fire known as *tobimono* (“flying things”). Finally, he cites an expression about a pestle turning into a bird that is used to express something that would never happen (Tada 1998: 24). Whatever the backstory of this *yōkai,* we can see that the singular eye seems to be a popular but optional element of its design.

Fig. 20: Images of a flying pestle with one eye.

Sources left to right: Tada Deck (*re* / れ); Paper Deck (*re* / れ); Ikkyōsai Deck (*su* / す); Nishiki-e Deck (*re* / れ)

Fig. 21: Two more flying pestles that lack any eyes at all.

Sources left to right: Tokyo Deck (*su* / す); Hyogo Deck (*su* / す)

There are a few other individual cards featuring one-eyed *yōkai*. The card for *mo* (も) from the Paper Deck shows a tea kettle-shaped *tanuki*, a reference to "Bunbuku Chagama," a story about a *tanuki* that turns into a kettle.[23] Normally a *tanuki* would have two eyes, but here it has only one, a playful change to add unique character to this deck. This card technically belongs in the second group related to legends, but I include it here because it shows how pre-existing *yōkai* were given one-eye as a playful variation.

Fig. 22: Four cards depicting a one-eyed version of a *yōkai.*

Sources left to right: Paper Deck (*mo* / も); Ikkyōsai Deck (*no* / の); Nishiki-e Deck (*ro* / ろ); Nishiki-e Deck (*wa* / わ)

The card from the Ikkyōsai Deck (*no* / の) shows a one-eyed face on a tree, and the accompanying text card reads, *Nonaka no bakesugi*. "Sugi" means "cedar tree," and "bake" is a prefix for the *yōkai* version of something as we've seen before. "Nonaka" appears to be a place name but literally means "middle of the field" (野中). Thus, the phrase could be translated as "A cedar tree turned into a *yōkai* in the middle of nowhere."

[23] For discussion of the tale and the broader context of tanuki stories, see Foster 2015a: 188.

The card from the Nishiki-e Deck (*ro* / ろ), depicts *rokurokubi*, a popular *yōkai* that is used for the kana *ro* (ろ) in four out of six decks. The depiction in this deck, however, is unique in that the *rokurokubi* is depicted with one eye and a tongue-hanging out, clearing playing on the *kozō* themes seen above. Another card from the Nishiki-e Deck (*wa* / わ) of a straw doll with one eye is accompanied by text reading, *Waraningyō no baketano*, which could be translated as "Straw doll *yōkai*."

In a similar vein, one-eyed *yōkai* appear in depictions of generic groups of *yōkai*, as seen below in cards below. The card from the Paper Deck (*mu* / む) is a reference to a story about an old box left in the attic that contains *yōkai* when it is finally opened. Among the *yōkai* bursting out is what seems to be a generic one-eyed *yōkai*.

Fig. 23: Depictions of generic one-eyed *yōkai* in groups of *yōkai*.
Sources left to right: Paper Deck (*mu* / む); Ikkyōsai Deck (*re* / れ);
Ikkyōsai Deck (*ra* / ら)

The other two cards are both from the Ikkyōsai Deck, and their associated text cards read, *Renji wo wataru yūrei*, or "Ghosts going over the wall/fence," and *Ranma kara hairu*

bakemono, or "*Yōkai* entering through the gap in the railing." In these example, the one eye feature is applied to generic *yōkai* in a group rather than a particular named *yōkai*. Given the intertextual nature of *yōkai karuta*, however, these depictions likely reference some previous images, perhaps stories about *yōkai* sneaking into areas through gaps and over walls.

These cards show how the addition of one eye is used to create playful variations on existing *yōkai*. Much of this is likely the influence of *hitotsume kozō*, with its long and widespread history in Japan. By the late Edo Period when *yōkai karuta* emerged, "one eye" seems to have become one of many elements that could be mixed and matched as artists created cards for their decks. The connection of one-eyed *yōkai* with *hitotsume kozō* also potentially ties them back to ancient sacrificial practices and beliefs about special status conferred through loss of vision. Additionally, the one-eyed status itself could potentially be seen as a state of "impaired vision" that connects these cards with the spiritual connotations of blindness.

⑤ *MIKOSHI-NYŪDŌ* and OTHER THREE-EYED BALD MEN

If we look at one-eyed *yōkai* more broadly as "*yōkai* with unusual numbers of eyes," we could extend the inquiry to *yōkai* with more than two eyes. Most of these are seen in the case of *mikoshi-nyūdō* and seem to, at the very least, reflect play with the theme of eyes to create amusing new *yōkai*.

Fig. 24: *Yōkai* resembling bald *nyūdō* with similar arrangements of three eyes. Sources left to right: Paper Deck (*mi* / み); Hyogo Deck (*mi* / み); Ikkyōsai Deck (*mi* / み); Hyogo Deck (*o* / お); Hyogo Deck (*ya* / や)

The cards above from the Paper Deck and Hyogo Deck for the kana *mi* (み) depict *mikoshi-nyūdō*, while another card from the Hyogo Deck (*o* / お) depicts *ōnyūdō*. Somewhat similarly to how *kozō* means "young monk" but came to be used for a wide range of child-like *yōkai* with overlapping traits, *nyūdō* means "monk" and is used for a wide range of *yōkai* resembling adult men, often bald. *Mikoshi-nyūdō*, known for its long neck that extends farther and farther the more you look up at it, is perhaps the most famous *nyūdō* and is, like *hitotsume kozō*, found all over Japan (Murakami 2005: 311). The six decks contain three additional depictions of *mikoshi-nyūdō* beyond those seen here, but with only two eyes.

Regarding *ōnyūdō*, *Nihon yōkai jiten* ("Encyclopedia of Japanese *yōkai*") (Murakami 2005) describes *ōnyūdō* as a huge shadowy figure (Murakami 2005: 60-61), actually quite different from other *nyūdō* such as *miage nyūdō*, *nyūdō-bōzu* or *mikoshi-nyūdō*. Nonetheless, the depiction in the Hyogo Deck (*o* / お) lacks these characteristics and is closer to other *nyūdō*. Perhaps unsurprisingly, though, this *ōnyūdō* (Hyogo Deck *o* / お) has a large tongue hanging out and an especially large eye on its forehead, calling back to the motifs of *hitotsume kozō*.

The fourth card above, also from the Hyogo Deck (*ya* / や), is described as *Yane ni korogeru ōmedama*, or "A big eyeball rolling on the roof." It is strikingly similar to the other depictions of *nyūdō* and seems to play with these familiar motifs even if it doesn't use the term *nyūdō* itself. Interestingly, three of these three-eyed entities come from the same deck; it seems as though the creator of the Hyogo Deck really liked the idea of bald, three-eyed *nyūdō*.

Nihon yōkai jiten has only one entry for a three-eyed creature: *mitsume yadzura*. It is described as having three eyes and eight heads and attacking and eating traveling merchants (Murakami 2005: 314), an appearance and behavior that has little in common with *yōkai* like *mikoshi-nyūdō*. In addition, Sekien's illustration of *mikoshi*—another name for *mikoshi-nyūdō* (Alt 2016: 57)—in *Gazu hyakki yagyō* is seen in profile but seems to have only two eyes (Alt 2016: 57; Toriyama 1776). This suggests that the "three-eyed" nature of the *yōkai* seen here reflects originality on the part of the decks' creators as they play with the motif of "number of eyes." The placement of the third eye on the forehead also vaguely echoes *hitotsume bōzu*'s large eye in the middle of the forehead. One other possible explanation for these three-eyed variations of *mikoshi-nyūdō* could simply be that both *mitsume*, or "three-eyed," and *mikoshi-nyūdō* begin with "mi," which is one way to pronounce the Japanese character for "three."

Besides *mikoshi-nyūdō*, there are two other *karuta* featuring three-eyed variations of familiar *yōkai*.

Fig. 25: A three-eyed *jizo* and a three-eyed version of *tsuchigumo*.

Sources: Tokyo Deck (*ho* / ほ); Hyogo Deck (*tsu* / つ)

The card from the Tokyo Deck is unfortunately missing its text card, but it appears to be a *bakejizo* based on the children in the image and the blue coloring that matches the depiction of a *bakejizo* in the Tada Deck. *Jizo* are stone statues seen throughout Japan and associated with protection of children, and *bakejizo* are *jizo* that have turned into *yōkai*. As has now been seen in multiple cases, the artist seems to have increased the number of eyes to add playful variation. The other card, from the Hyogo Deck, features *tsuchigumo*, a famous spider *yōkai*. The Tada deck also features a *tsuchigumo* but with only two eyes, which reflects a choice by the creator of the Hyogo Deck to add a third eye.

⑥ THE UNIQUE CASE OF *DODOMEKI*

There is one more *yōkai* with an increased number of eyes, though quite different than those seen so far. *Dodomeki* first appears in Toriyama Sekien's *Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki* (Toriyama 1779) and is described as a woman with long arms who steals money and has one hundred bird eyes on her arms. Sekien's illustration is possibly based on the idea that the word for "bird eye," *chōmoku*, was also slang for money (Alt 2016: 141). The number and significance of the eyes, their location on the arms rather than the forehead, and the fact that the *yōkai* is a woman distinguish this *yōkai* from *hitotsume kozō* and the "playful variations in number of eyes" seen above.

Fig. 26: *Dodomeki*, a *yōkai* covered in eyes.

Source: Paper Deck (*to* / と)

The text card reads, *Tosa no yamagoe no dodomeki*, or "Dodomeki that can be heard in the mountains in Tosa." Tosa is the former name for present-day Kochi Prefecture, a notoriously remote and inaccessible area of Shikoku in southern Japan. In other words, the "mountains of Tosa" would be a distant and remote place for people in Edo. This location in the mountains is also greatly removed from that of a *kozō* walking the streets of Edo with a plate of tofu. Thus, *dodomeki* seems to be an eye-themed creature with a lineage of its own. Regarding the original illustration and text by Sekien (Alt 2016: 141; Toriyama 1779), however, Murakami (2005) suggests that "dodomeki" could be a reference to certain locations in or around Edo (Murakami 2005: 232-233).

⑦ THE INFLUENCE OF *HITOTSUME KOZŌ*, the ONE-EYED BOY

If we bring together all the cards depicting one-eyed boys, well-known *yōkai* altered to have one eye, and *yōkai* with three or more eyes into one group of "*yōkai* with an abnormal number of eyes," this group would amount to 24 cards in total and a substantial portion of each deck. This most definitely stems from the familiarity and popularity of *hitotsume kozō*. Still, there seems to be something very "yōkai" about having abnormalities of vision, which could be related to cultural beliefs about the special powers of the blind in Edo Japan.

There was also a number of cards depicting *kozō* or child-like *yōkai*. Here again, *hitotsume kozō* probably played a large role in building a connection between *kozō* and *yōkai*. However, the number of child-like characters, including some not labeled as *kozō* but clearly

taking child-like form, could be related to the spiritual powers that children were believed to possess and the liminal, spiritual status of children.

⑧ A CLAPPING *TENGU*

Unrelated to eyes and child-like figures, one final card in the third group of standalone *yōkai* features a *tengu*. The *tengu* wears a *tokin*, the small black hat worn by *yamabushi*, and the text card describes a *tengu* clapping its hands together. This could be a reference to the supernatural powers thought to be possessed by *tengu*, such as "tengu-daoshi," a loud sound in the forest attributed to *tengu* (Murakami 2005: 223-224). Compared to the depiction of the noh play *Kurama Tengu* in group one, this card more clearly reflects the connection between *yamabushi* the supernatural powers of mountain-dwelling *tengu*.

Fig. 27: A *tengu* clapping its hands and wearing the hat of a *yamabushi*.

Source: Tokyo Deck (*te* / て)

2. SYNTHESIS and DISCUSSION

In the preceding section I looked at references to folk spiritual traditions in Edo *yōkai karuta*, dividing the cards into three groups based on the origins of the *yōkai* or scenes they depict: 1) References to popular entertainment and historical events; 2) References to local

legends and "ghost stories"; and 3) Standalone depictions of *yōkai* outside of a specific story. This revealed key differences in the way the cards reference or play with themes from folk spiritual traditions. The first group primarily contained depictions of iconic scenes and characters from kabuki and other plays and thus featured almost exclusively *onryō*, or vengeful spirits of the dead. One exception to the large number of *onryō* was a card featuring a *tengu* in the clothes of a *yamabushi*, or mountain ascetic, as depicted in a noh play.

These references to *onryō* adhere to the well-established visual imagery associated with each play; Kasane is depicted with a disfigured face and a sickle, for example, while Oiwa from *Yotsuya Kaidan* emerges from a lantern, and these key details are relatively consistent across decks, enabling the cards to be instantly recognizable. It would be confusing and obstruct the playability of the game if, for example, a card combined the sickle of Kasane with the lantern of *Yotsuya Kaidan*. The need to make each card immediately recognizable combined with players' expectations regarding visual elements of these well-known stories leaves less room for playful mixing and matching of elements.

In other words, though this group includes a large number of cards across all six decks, they reference one specific aspect of folk spiritual traditions, vengeful spirits or *onryō*, and the high context representation offers little insight into the role of *onryō* beliefs in contemporary society. Essentially, these cards referencing well-established stories offer an opportunity for preset characters related to *onryō* beliefs to make a limited and straightforward appearance.

The second group of *yōkai karuta* depicting local legends and stories do more to paint a picture of actual spiritual practices. Here we see images of *goze*, the blind shamisen players who walked the roads of Edo Japan and are thought to be descendants of ancient *miko*. We also see *zatō*, itinerant blind men who offered a wide variety of services. In both of these figures we can see the special status of the blind in Edo Japan and the historical connection between blindness

and spiritual abilities. These *goze* and *zatō* mostly appear in *yōkai karuta* as characters in stories where they are killed and become *onryō*. Furthermore, one or both of these figures appear in all of the six decks, reflecting a widespread familiarity and cultural relevance that would make their inclusion in a game of *yōkai karuta* amusing.

It is also in this second group that we see the most direct reference to folk spiritual traditions in the form of an *inugami*, or dog spirit, with mention of the abusive measures performed on a dog in order to gain control of an *inugami*. We also see a real-world setting—the ocean at night—where *onryō* of those who perished at sea would supposedly appear to sink the boats of the living.

Like the first group, the second group is primarily made up of depictions of *onryō*, but it reflects a wider variety of folk spiritual themes. Also similar to the first group, key objects are used to identify characters, such as closed eyes, a shamisen, and a walking cane to make *goze* recognizable as blind musicians. However, these cards feature more variation and wordplays, such as with *kakurezato* and references to Meguro.

In the third group of we see an even greater degree of creative freedom as the cards mix and match different *yōkai* tropes in order to create variations of familiar *yōkai*. In the process they also draw on aspects of folk spiritual beliefs not seen in the preceding groups. This group contains an array of playful variations on the themes of child-like appearance and an unusual numbers of eyes, encapsulated in *hitotsume kozō*, a *yōkai* with widespread distribution across Japan. Seemingly playing on this familiar figure, we see one-eyed versions of famous *yōkai* like *rokurokubi*, multiple three-eyed *nyūdō*, and a number of *kozō* who may or may not carry tofu, have a big tongue hanging out, and have only one eye. *Yōkai* like *rengi-no-bakemono*, the flying pestle, seem to have been extremely popular usually but not always with one eye. Meanwhile, a number of *yōkai* containing various wordplays and cultural references are depicted as children.

Hitotsume kozō connects these many playful iterations, albeit tangentially, to Yanagita's theory that people may have once been blinded in one eye before being sacrificed and seen as possessing spiritual powers. This theory about ancient practices cannot be proved, and the idea that *yōkai* with one eye necessarily evoked themes of human sacrifice for Edo players may be a stretch. However, coupled with the consistency of cards depicting the blind in every deck, the thematic popularity of "visual impairment" is hard to ignore. If we look at all cards related to visual impairment or an unusual number of eyes (*bakegoze*, *bakezatō*, all one-eyed *yōkai* and all *yōkai* with more than two eyes), this includes over 30 *karuta* out of the 288 *karuta* in all six decks, or more than one in ten. Eyes and vision are clearly a major theme for play and representation within Edo *yōkai karuta*, even if the connection to spiritual traditions is indirect or theoretical.

Similarly, the existence of multiple *yōkai* taking the form of a *kozō* or boy may not be related to beliefs about the magical or spiritual powers of children. It is likely primarily a playful reference to *hitotsume kozō*, just as with the many one-eyed *yōkai*. However, given that there were communities of people who wore their hair in the style of children and were thought to have special connections to *oni* ("demons"), the preponderance of *yōkai* appearing as children—particularly those defined by their child-like haircuts—is notable. Again, though tentative, it is possible that certain themes of folk spiritual practices are related to these cards.

In short, without the presence of a structured narrative in the third group we see fewer *onryō*, since theses tend to be based on specific people or characters. Instead, we see a plethora of creative combinations of familiar *yōkai* and physical elements associated with *yōkai*, potentially harkening back to past beliefs and traditions.

To view the three groups on a spectrum, we could say that they go from narrow depictions of highly structured stories in the first group to free play with concepts related to

yōkai in the third group. The second group, meanwhile, freed from the high context of the kabuki stage but still with a degree of focus and specificity, could be seen as a "sweet spot" in terms of insight into the reality of folk spiritual traditions in Edo Japan.

Finally, the references to contemporary popular entertainment and figures in the first two groups and the multi-layered references and wordplays seen especially in the second and third groups connect *yōkai karuta* with *gesaku* literature. This shows that although the game would be playable by children, it would only have been fully appreciated by adults familiar with these sorts of playful works in late Edo Japan.

V. CONCLUSION and POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. CONCLUSION

This dissertation aimed to fill the gap in scholarship on *yōkai karuta* from the Edo Period in Japan. As the first in-depth look at these cards, it provided an overview of their makeup and history with a review of the limited research on them to date. It showed that in this card game in the style of *gesaku* literature that revolves around *yōkai*, figures and themes from folk spiritual traditions are wrapped into a form of subversive play.

I also discussed the current state of monster studies, which is where English language research on *yōkai* often appears. I attempted to show that monsters are animated by play, which is precisely what makes them seem either frightfully transgressive or delightfully entertaining.

I showed how the cards emerged at a time when *gesaku* works were becoming less intellectual and political after the Kansei Reforms. However, given the history of using *yōkai* to avoid censorship, it was natural for a card game centered on *yōkai* to emerge as a *gesaku* work for adults. In contrast to *gesaku* works such as *kibyōshi* that are only viewed and read, adults

could engage in subversive play literally through a game of *yōkai karuta* and physically reject demands for productive activity in Tokugawa society. Edo *yōkai karuta* thus embody the insistence on unproductive play that characterized *gesaku* literature. Finally, *yōkai karuta* raises interesting questions about the ways *yōkai* contributed to the subversive play of *gesaku*—how do *gesaku* works featuring *yōkai* differ from those that do not involve *yōkai*?

With these questions in mind, I have tried throughout this dissertation to emphasize the recognized dangers in viewing *yōkai* and their many manifestations as quintessentially unique to Japan or as adhering to fundamentally different principles than other monsters or imaginary creatures. Additionally, though this research focuses on Japanese folk spiritual traditions as seen through Edo *yōkai karuta*, I emphasized that "Japanese folk spiritual traditions" are at best a fragment of a fragment of the practices and beliefs that have existed on the Japanese archipelago. Though *yōkai* are sometimes framed as an almost endless array of diverse creatures, I also aimed to show the limitations in which they emerge and in doing so create space for the imagining of new *yōkai*. By emphasizing the above limitations, I hope to inspire further research and creative production.

The main section of this dissertation used a framework for viewing Edo *yōkai karuta* in groups so as to better understand the contexts in which references to folk spiritual traditions emerged. This framework enabled me to discern a range of rigidity and freedom in the cards, from straightforward and strict depictions to playful remixes. It also enabled me to identify the context in which the most direct and diverse references to folk spiritual traditions arise, a "sweet spot" of loosely structured legends and stories. This framework could potentially be used to analyze depictions of *yōkai* in other media, such as *bakemono zukushi-e* (illustrations filled with *yōkai*) or *sugoroku* board games. I would be curious to see whether the popular *yōkai* from

yōkai karuta, such as *bakegoze* and *rengi-no-bakemono*, appear as frequently in other contemporary works in the late Edo Period.

In terms of the shortcomings of this research, I was severely limited in having access to only six decks, a fraction of all Edo *yōkai karuta* decks that were likely created. Taking this into account, the seeming popularity of certain cards could be partially due to the randomness of which decks survived to the present day. Some elements, however, such as the popularity of the four plays and the proliferation of *yōkai* with an abnormal numbers of eyes, seem to be widespread enough to offer a fair degree of certainty that they reflect broader trends.

In addition, the limited amount of research on *yōkai karuta* was a significant obstacle. This led me to draw on sources from a broad range of fields, arguably leading to a disjointed approach. Still, assembling the existing scholarship relevant to Edo *yōkai karuta* is itself one key contribution of this research. Also, I believe that bringing together sources from different fields without perfect cohesion is a suitable methodology for research on monsters and *yōkai*, considering that they are thought to exist across or outside boundaries and to evade definition. This is all the more true for a minor, marginal subject like Edo *yōkai karuta*.

Further research could be carried out on the ways *yōkai karuta* reference established cultural forms like kabuki and noh plays; the history of their production could be analyzed for more focused and comprehensive research. At the same time, this dissertation raises the question of how to conduct research on monsters and *yōkai* that lack such context or connection to famous stories. If we go back to the previously discussed spectrum from "strict depictions of kabuki characters" to "free play with familiar themes," we can imagine additional space beyond the third group and its variations of *hitotsume kozō*, a space with even less connection to established and easily recognizable themes. How can we research a loosely scribbled monster that doesn't reference clear cultural concepts for quick recognition? How can we research

depictions of creatures that do *not* build on hundreds of years of stories or archetypes? Can such a context-less scribble even exist in the first place? To understand such loose and unstructured monsters, creative production might be helpful in addition to research on well-established monsters from highly structured stories; perhaps a monster or *yōkai* practice is needed in conjunction with scholarship.[24]

I hope that my research contributes to a greater curiosity for what types of creatures might lie above and beyond the relatively narrow range of those seen in this dissertation. The creation of new monsters might even be critical in understanding the subversive rejection of productivity inherent in playful cultural products such as Edo *yōkai karuta*.

2. POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Yōkai karuta continued to be produced in the Meiji and Showa Periods, and today there are all manner of *yōkai*-themed cards being created inside and outside Japan. What, if anything, was the lasting cultural impact and influence of the playful visual culture of *yōkai* that developed during the Edo Period and of which *yōkai karuta* could be viewed as the final capstone?

Certain aspects of *yōkai* culture show a clear throughline from the Edo Period to the present day. For example, Foster's "encyclopedic mode"—that is, the act of collecting and describing various *yōkai* (Foster: 2008: 31)—can be seen in the illustrations of Toriyama Sekien, the work of manga artist Mizuki Shigeru in the mid-1900s, and multiple compendiums of *yōkai* published for English-language audiences in more recent years (Foster 2021: 27-28). Shigeru in particular is known to have drawn directly from the work of Yanagita for *yōkai*

[24] Foster (2015a) mentions the possibility of a *yōkai* practice (Foster 2015a: 74-75).

characters in his manga (Foster 2021: 25), and Mizuki's work in turn became a collection of *yōkai* knowledge for later generations. But, as *yōkai* transformed into a hugely profitable global phenomenon, what came of the elements of *gesaku* that drove the production of *yōkai* work in the Edo Period? Through *gesaku* literature, *yōkai* had been a tool for parody of political figures and exposing the shortcomings of the predominant ideological system. How if at all have elements of subversive play remained, or maybe shifted in tone, degree, and form?

Foster (2021) describes another intriguing throughline from past to the present, this one revolving around the work of Yanagita. Yanagita famously sought to preserve *yōkai* as a disappearing connection to traditional Japanese culture and in doing so set the stage for them to be embraced as an element of national Japanese identity. Though he approached rural villages as a Tokyo academic hoping to make folk tales relevant to a modern audience, Foster (2021) argues that Yanagita's intellectual attitude has become the mainstream view of casual *yōkai* fans around the world; the view from Tokyo on rural Japan has become the view of international audiences on Japan as a whole. Japan itself has become the magical place where *yōkai* survive as remnants of a romanticized past or other world (Foster 2021: 24-30).

In this light, *yōkai* appear to be friendly embodiments of nationalist consumerism, providing a certain degree of imaginative stimulation through exoticized otherness. Still, if play has an inherently subversive side in its refusal to be productive or predictable, and if there are elements of play in manifestations of *yōkai* throughout the 1900s and 2000s, then there should be elements of subversive play here worth exploring.

Finally, one might take an even broader look at the themes of this dissertation and ask, how do spiritual traditions, monsters and the subversive nature of play come together in cultural products in other time periods and places? The difficulties in researching these topics would

likely present issues similar to those I encountered, but perhaps this makes such an endeavor all the more worthwhile to attempt.

3. MY PERSONAL TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS RESEARCH

Like the university students Foster (2021) cites in his discussion of views on *yōkai* in an international context, I originally saw the *yōkai*-like creatures that populate modern Japanese media as "representative of all that is exotic, mysterious, and compellingly fascinating about" Japan, an "otherworld across the sea" (Foster 2021: 12). Since my college days I have become more critically aware of the limitations of commercially produced mass media when it comes to imagination and play, and gaining a better understanding of the context and bounds of *yōkai* visual culture in the Edo period has been an opportunity for me to gain additional insight into some of the images that inspired me.

At first glance and without knowledge of their background, many Edo illustrations of *yōkai* on *sugoroku* boards or scrolls can seem to reflect broad creative freedom and imagination on behalf of the artists. However, as seen in the discussion of *mitate* as a technique in *gesaku*, these were likely based more on references to and combinations of previous images than on pure whimsy or invention. Of course, it is impossible now to identify the degree to which any individual image combined originality with replication, but we know that intertextual references were a critical aspect of *gesaku* that went above and beyond simply drawing on ones influences as any artist does.

Meanwhile, the discussion of "subversive play" in *gesaku* and its institutionalization reconfirmed for me the limitations of commercial products as a site for the potential of monsters to be fully activated. A form of media that secures a social and historical position large enough to warrant and enable textual analysis likely conforms to the ideological systems of its time

more than it subverts them. However, setting aside for a moment the lens of "subversiveness" and speaking as an artist who has devoted my practice to creating monsters, I believe that the origin of monsters lies in the moment of confrontation with the unknown, in the vague sensation that there is *something* there that could be explored further. This is the moment where a transformation or shift in awareness becomes possible, and, if followed, could lead to a form, name, and other traits of an "actual" monster.

With this in mind, it is valuable to understand the history and limitations of the monsters around us and the *yōkai* that inspire us. This helps us to recognize the boundaries of our own imaginations and makes it just a little easier to expand the range of imaginary creatures that can be brought into existence. I am not sure what type of "subversion" this leads to, if any, but I know that it does not lead to standardized, predictable results like those we must produce in contemporary society in order to meet our basic needs. Because of this, I would say that there is indeed something subversive about creating new monsters, even as we inevitably draw on and reference the monsters that we have encountered before.

Perhaps my greatest single takeaway from this dissertation was linguistic. If I were to choose key words for discussion of monsters from the languages I speak, it would be "play" or "playfulness" from English, and "fushigi" from Japanese. Foster (2008; 2015a) and Figal (1999) have discussed the importance of the term *fushigi* in understanding *yōkai* (Figal 1999: 25-39; Foster 2008: 16-17) and how the term's relevance and use have changed over time (Figal 1999: 197-222; Foster 2008: 157-159) . In particular, Figal (1999) writes how in the course of Japan's rapid modernization *fushigi* was fetishized into a "defining feature" or "spirit" of "Japanese history and culture," adding that "this fantastic nature of Japan and its people is also cast as exclusive" (Figal 1999: 215). I don't want to contribute to fetishized mysticism around this term or promote the general idea of "words so distinctively 'Japanese' that they cannot possibly be

conveyed in another language"; however, I believe the term *fushigi* could provide value in the discussion of monsters in addition to *yōkai*. Though it can be simply translated as "strange" or "mysterious," in my understanding *fushigi* contains a connotation of mildly spookiness, such as an unexpected synchronicity that feels strangely meaningful. Having a word like this to express powerful but ambivalent mysteriousness could be useful in a discussion of what makes monsters monsterful.

There are surely relevant words in other languages as well, which harkens back to earlier discussion of the lack of satisfying terminology to discuss the full range of what we call "imagination" in English. Clearly and completely capturing the meaning of monsters and other imaginary creatures in any one language might be too much to ask; we might need words from every language to get close to having a sufficient vocabulary.

Regarding this dissertation's focus on folk spiritual traditions, attempting to connect monsters, spiritual traditions and play might seem arbitrary; however, if the term "monster" is re-appropriated in a manner similar to queer studies, and if play, along with imagination, is viewed as one "monster" that has been relegated to the realm of "frivolous" children's culture, then the connection becomes much more clear. Reclaiming the term "monster" to make space for the things that it was used to eliminate means making space for monsters to be spiritual, to be playful, and to emerge on their own terms.

Perhaps there is also something spiritual in the place where monsters come from: the moment where one allows something to begin to emerge from the unknown. Allowing a mysterious monster to emerge is one way of describing what I have learned to do when using my own deck of cards for divination—letting an unclear inkling gradually shift into an articulatable message. Given that divination was one of the services provided by folk spiritual practitioners mentioned in this dissertation, one connection between monsters and folk spiritual

practices generally speaking could possibly be found in this metaphor of allowing a monster to emerge. After all, we (people interested in *yōkai* and monsters) are ourselves a folk group (Foster 2015a: 14).

Finally, a connection between monsters and divination calls to mind the linguistic origins of "monster" in the Latin word "monstrum." Monstrum is "related to the verbs monstrare ('show' or 'reveal') and monere ('warn' or 'portend'). The monstrum, then, at least for the ancients, had a portentious quality, as it was 'a message that breaks into this world from the realm of the divine'" (Weinstock 2020: 2). Henry (2020) writes that monstrum "denotes something marvelous, extraordinary, excessive, exorbitant and directly connected with the Divine" (Henry 2020: 236). This connection to omens or messages from the divine would become a reason for leaders of the Christian church and other powerful figures to declare that "monstrous" babies were bad omens or punishment from God for sinful behavior (Weinstock 2020: 5-8). Nonetheless, considering the term's linguistic roots, reappropriating the term to create space for monsters to reveal themselves could be akin to taking monsters back to their origins—or, more specifically, returning to the origins of monsters but this time embarking in a different direction.

To go one step further, maybe it is not a matter of creating space for monsters to emerge but rather becoming monsters ourselves. In discussing the work of Kumagusu Minakata, Figal (1999) uses the metaphor of "becoming a *tengu*" to refer to "the creative accident, the dreamlike epiphany, the achronological disruption that frustrates simple categorizations of things and breaks up the determinism of a unilinear chronology. What [Minakata] offered in their place were conditions that opened up alternatives for thought and action" (Figal 1999: 215). Expanding this metaphor to monsters more broadly, maybe one way to become a monster is to make ourselves a vessel for their creation.

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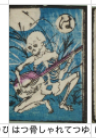
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
	い i	ろ ro	は ha	に ne	ほ ho	へ he	と to	ち chi	り ri	ぬ nu	る ru
Tada Deck 妖怪かるた 作者・年　不明 63x42mm プライベートコレクション 「江戸妖怪カルタ」に追加											
カードのテキスト	いどからでるさらや	ろくろくびのあぶら	はにふむらのかさね	にかいからでるもも	ほんじょのおいてけ	へいごしのゆうれい	ときの海のようかわ	ちやうちん小僧	りょくのしんか（利	ぬえのばけもの	るすのまにでるばけ
Card Text	Ido kara deru saray	Rokurokubi no abur	Hanifumura no kasa	Nikai kara deru mon	Honjo no oiteke bori	Heigoshi no yuurei	Tosa no umi no you	Chōchin kozō	Riyoku no shinka	Nue no bakemono	Rusunoma ni deru b
Translation	Sarayashiki from th	Oil-licking rokurokul	Kasane of Hanyū Vil	Momonji from the se		Yūrei over a wall	Yōkai in Tosa ocean	Chōchin kozō	Intense flame of gre	Bakemono nue	Obake that appears
妖怪名	幽霊・怨霊	ろくろ首	怨霊	ももんじい	置行堀（おいてけぼ	幽霊		提灯小僧	手目	ぬえ	
Yokai name	Yūrei/Onryō	Rokurokubi	Onryō	Momonjii	Oitekebori	Yūrei		Chōchin kozō	Teme (hand-eye)	Nue	
What it's from, if anything	番町皿屋敷 / Banch	Chinese yokai 飛頭	かさね / Kasane (kal	Red light district joke	Yōkai tourism (本所七	Yūrei folk beliefs	Unexplained phenor	Wordplay on famous	Wordplay ("hand-eye	Famous story about	Edo culture/wordplay
Memo		Oil-licker = unpopul	業/かさね=ugly girl c	Momonji=inoshishi c	Based on 水虎（すい	Can slip in like a sn	Tosa = Kochi Pref	Usually a child holdi	Referring to Buddhis	Flew around over Ky	Referring to invoices
1　歌舞伎・能・文楽	1		1								
2　有名スポット・伝説		1		1	1		1				1
3　独立妖怪						1		1	1	1	
Tokyo Deck 化け物かるた 作者不明・江戸時代末期 66x45mm 東京国立博物館蔵 Tokyo National Museum		なし　N/A									
カードのテキスト	いぬ神いのるくびの	ろくろくびのむりひ	はつ骨しゃれてつゆ	にくひゃつをば喰こ	不明	へびくふ雉子は無言	とうをまげたる地蔵	ちくしょう道のだち	りんきの角ふるうわ	ぬらりと旋出るぬれ	るすには聞るな化物
Card Text	Inugami inoru kubi r	Rokurokubi no muri	Hatsu hone shareteti	Nikuhyatsu wo baga	N/A	Hebikufu kiji ha mu	Tou wo magetaru ch	Chikushou michi no	Rinki no kaku furuu	Nurarito nukederu ni	Rusu ni ha hadakaru
Translation	Sacrificed head pray		Fancy skeleton sinin			Tons of pheasants t		Chikushou michi no	Divorced wife with h	Slithering out nure-o	
妖怪名	犬神	ろくろくび			化け地蔵		地縛霊？			濡女	重い悪鬼
Yokai name	Inugami	Rokurokubi			Bakejizo		Jibakurei?			Nure-onna	Omoi tsuzura
What it's from, if anything	式神信仰 spirit pose	Chinese yokai 飛頭	Kabuki?							Related to rokurokub	
Memo			Tsuyu ha obana is a							Seem to be popular	Tsudzura = wicker ba
1　歌舞伎・能・文楽			1						1		
2　有名スポット・伝説						1	1				1
3　独立妖怪	1	1						1		1	
Paper Deck お化けかるた 作者不明・江戸末期 63x42mm 紙の博物館蔵 Paper Museum									なし　N/A		
カードのテキスト	不明	不明	ばんしゅう皿やしき	目板山ももんじい	本所のおいてけぼり	へまむしよ入道	ときの山さへのどど	ちゃうちん小僧	りょくのしんか	ぬえ紫旗殿に出る	不明
Card Text	N/A	N/A	Banshuu sarayashiki	Nilta-yama momonji	Honjo no oitekebori	Hemamushi nyūdō	Tosano yamagoe no	Chōchin Kozō	Riyoku no shinka	Nue shishinden ni de	N/A
Translation			Banshū sarayashiki	Momonjii of Mt. Nilta	Oitekebori of Honjo	Hemamushi monk	Dodomeki from Tosa	Chōchin Kozō	Intense flame of gre	Nue in the Shishiden	
妖怪名	油舐め		幽霊・怨霊	ももんじい	置行堀（おいてけぼ	火間虫入道	百々目鬼（どどめき	提灯小僧	手目	ぬえ	
Yokai name	Abura-name		Yūrei/Onryō	Momonjii	Oitekebori	Hemamushi nyūdō	Dodomeki	Chōchin Kozō	Teme (hand-eye)	Nue	
What it's from, if anything			番町皿屋敷 / Banch	Red light district joke	Yōkai tourism (本所七	Cartoon face	Sekien	Wordplay on famous	Wordplay ("hand-eye	Famous story about	
Memo			Banshu = Himeji ver	Momonji = inoshishi	Based on 水虎（すい	Sekien's was based	Similar 百々眼鬼 als	Usually a child holdi	Referring to Buddhis	Flew around over Ky	
1　歌舞伎・能・文楽			1								1
2　有名スポット・伝説				1	1		1			1	
3　独立妖怪	1					1		1	1		
Ikkyōsai Deck 化物かるた 一機齋鬘長 Ikkyousai Tsuyanaga 金松堂・辻岡文助製・江戸後期 60x40cm 国際日本文化研究センター Intl Research Center for Japanese https://shinku.nichibun.ac.jp/esoshi	N/A										
カードのテキスト	いどからでるさらや	ろくろくびのびやう	はにふむらのかさね	にかいからでるもも	ほん所のをいてけぼ	へいからでるゆうれ	とこあらつてまくら	ちやのみゆうれい	りょくのしんくは	ぬき下のうぶめ	るすの間に出るばけ
Card Text	Ido kara deru saray	Rokurokubi no byou	Hanifu mura no kasa	Nikai kara deru mon	Honjo no oitekebori	Heikara deru yūrei	Toko aratta makura	Chanomi yūrei	Riyoku no shinka	Nukishita no ubume	Rusu no ma ni deru
Translation	Sarayashiki out of t	Rokurokubi over the	Kasane of Hanyū Vil	Momonga from the s	Oitekebori of Honjo	Yūrei coming out of	Flipping pillow while	Tea-drinking ghost?	Intense flame of gre	Ubume under pillars	Bakemono that appe
妖怪名	幽霊・怨霊	ろくろ首	怨霊	ももんが	置行堀（おいてけぼ	幽霊	枕返し	幽霊	手目	うぶめ	N/A
Yokai name	Yūrei/Onryō	Rokurokubi	Onryō	Momonga	Oitekebori	Yūrei	Makuragaeshi	Yūrei	Teme (hand-eye)	Ubume	N/A
What it's from, if anything	番町皿屋敷 / Banch	Chinese yokai 飛頭	Kabuki play	Red light district joke	Yōkai tourism (本所七	Yūrei folk beliefs	Folk legends		Wordplay ("hand-eye		Edo culture/wordplay
Memo			業/かさね=ugly girl c	Momonji = inoshishi	Based on 水虎（すい	Can slip in like a sn	Originally from idea		Referring to Buddhis		Referring to invoices
1　歌舞伎・能・文楽	1		1								
2　有名スポット・伝説				1	1					1	
3　独立妖怪		1				1	1	1	1		1
Nishiki-e Deck おばけかるた 作者不明・万延元 (1860) 37x25・木版画 Woodblock print 国立歴史民俗博物館蔵品 National M											
カードのテキスト	井戸から出る皿屋敷	ろくろくび	はさみむしのおばけ	にんめんそう	ほん所をのをいてけ	へいけがに	とうふこぞう	ちのいけぢごく	りすのをばけ	ぬれぼとけ	るすにでるたぬき
Card Text	Ido kara deru saray	Rokurokubi	Hasamimushi no obi	Ninmensou	Honjo wo no oitekeb	Heikegani	Tofu kozō	Chinoike jigoku	Risu no obake	Nurebotoke	Rusu ni deru tanuki
Translation	Sarayashiki out of t	Rokurokubi	Obake earwig	Jinmensou (Human-	Oitekebori of Honjo	Heike crab	Tofu boy	Blood lake hell	Obake Squirrel	"Painted Buddha"	Tanuki that appears
妖怪名	幽霊・怨霊 (お菊)	ろくろ首		人面瘡（じんめんそ	置行堀（おいてけぼ	平家蟹	豆腐小僧・一つ目小	血の池		塗仏	たぬき
Yōkai name	Yūrei/Onryō	Rokurokubi		Jinmensou (Human-	Oitekebori	Heike crab	Tofu-kozo / hitotsum			Nuribotoke	Tanuki
What it's from, if anything	番町皿屋敷 / Banch	Chinese yokai 飛頭		Legend	Yōkai tourism (本所七	Heike Monogatari		Real place / Tourism		Edo art/unknown	Edo culture/wordplay
Memo				Tumor that grows ar	Based on 水虎（すい	Heike people who d			Related to Nobusum	Looks different than	Referring to invoices
1　歌舞伎・能・文楽	1										
2　有名スポット・伝説					1	1		1			
3　独立妖怪		1	1	1			1		1	1	1
Hyogo Deck おばけかるた 作者・年　不明 49x36 mm 木版画 Woodblock print 兵庫県立歴史博物館蔵（入江コレク	（欠）										
カードのテキスト	（欠）	鹿下へ出る化け売（	般若のげたげた笑い	二階からもものがア	本所の七不思議（ほん	糸瓜の行列（へちま	蜂蝙の火吹き（とか	宙を飛ぶ生首（ちう	吾妻の鬼火（りんし	塗り笈に目鼻（ぬり	留守を覗くももんが
Card Text		Rōka he deru bake	Hannya no geta geta	Nikai kara momonga	Honjo no nana-fushi	Hechima no gyōretsu	Tokage no hifuki	Chū wo tobu namak	Rinshoku no onibi	Nuribon ni mehana	Rusu wo nozoku mo
Translation		Bake kafuru (hairst	Boisterously laughin	Momonga from the s	7 Wonders of Honjo	Sponge gourd para	Fire-breathing lizard	Head flying through	Intense flame of gre	Eyes and face on the	Momonga that come
妖怪名		化け売		ももんが				生首	手目		ももんが
Yokai name		Bake-kafuru		Momonga				Namakubi (Severed	Teme (hand-eye)		Momonga
What it's from, if anything				Red light district joke					Wordplay ("hand-eye		Red light district joke
Memo				Momonji=inoshishi c				Flying head monste	Referring to Buddhis		Momonji=inoshishi c
1　歌舞伎・能・文楽			1								
2　有名スポット・伝説				1	1						1
3　独立妖怪		1				1	1	1	1	1	

M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
を wo	わ wa	か ka	よ yo	た ta	れ re	そ so	つ tsu	ね ne	な na	ら ra	む mu
											
おかざきのねこでら	わらいはんにゃ	かめやまのばけもの	よつやのおいわ	たぬきのはらつづみ	れんぎのばけもの	そらをとぶひとだま	つじどうまえの たび	ねどこへでるかみひ	なすのがはら せっし	らいこう つちぐもの	むかしむかし おもい
Okazaki no nekoderu	Warai hannya	Kameyama no bake	Yotsuya no oiwa	Tanuki no haratsudzu	Rengi no bakemono	Sora wo tobu hitodar	Tsujidoumae no tabil	Nedoko ge deru kam	Nasu no gahara sesi	Raikou tsuchigumo r	Mukashi mukashi on
Yōkai of cat temple i	Laughing hannya	Tondari-hanetari (toy	Yotsuya no oiwa	Tanuki drumming on	Pestle bakemono	Hitodama flying in th	Traveler who died in	Hair-puller in bedroo	Sesshōseki of Nasur		Bakemono of an old
化け猫	笑い般若	かめやまのばけもの	おいわ （怨霊）	たぬき	れんぎ系	人玉	ヒダル神、餓鬼仏	怨霊・鬼	殺生石	土蜘蛛	重い葛籠の化け物
Bakeneko	Warai Hannya ("Lau	Kameyama no bake	Oiwa (onryō)	Tanuki	Rengi-type	Hitodama	Hidaru-gami, Gaki-b	Onryō/Oni	"Killing stone" ghost	Tsuchigumo ("Earth	Omoi tsudzura no ba
Kabuki (Traveling Ac	Buddhism/legend	Popular toy & its stor	四谷怪談 / Yotsuya K	Legend/tourism	Urban legends / sayi	Religious art/buddhis	Folk beliefs about ev	Famous mysterious	Leged/fox spirit belie		Parable/story
	Vengeful spirit of Lac	Toy inspired by mise		"Tanuki bayashi" bar	Beliefs in Kumamoto	Tradition of writing «[	Dead starved travele	Victim is guy killed b	Kyūbi fled to Nasunc		Greedy old woman v
1	1		1							1	
		1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1
					1						
											
をんねん鎌の刃ふむ	不明	かぜの神つくカマイ	よつやのおいわ	たそがれどきのあぶ	れんじの月が一目小	そっと手を出す袖引	つみのおも荷を火の	ねづみは屍はずいじ	なめたやゝゝゝ姫	らしょうもん手形を	むつの猟がむんにゃ
Wonen kama no yaib	N/A	Kaze no kami tsuku	Yotsuya no oiwa	Tasogaredoki no abu	Renji no tsuki ga hitc	Sotto te wo dasu soc	Tsumi no omoni wo h	Nedzumiha nerazuiji	Nametayayaya aka-e	Rashoumon tegata v	Mutsu no mujina ga
		Kamaitachi stabbing	Yotsuya no oiwa	Aburakai at twilight		Sleeve-puller stealth		Nekomata that avoid	Scum-licker		Mujina from Mutsu is
かさね・怨霊		かまいたち	おいわ （怨霊）	油買い/油赤子	一つ目小僧・疫鬼	袖引系・袖引小僧？	火の車・火車	猫又	あかなめ		葛
Kasane (onryō)		Kamaitachi	Oiwa (onryō)	Aburakai/Abura-akag	Hitotsume-kozō / eki	Sleeve-pulling (like s	Hinokuruma / Kasha	Nekomata	Akaname		Mujina
Kabuki play		Mysterious injury in c	四谷怪談 / Yotsuya K	Toriyama Sekien illus	Possibly related to st	Saitama-ken legends		Fear of dead resurre	Sekien & other depic		
								Why daikon?			Yōkai version of bad
1			1							1	
		1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1
											
	なし N/A									なし N/A	
をうしうの小は小平	わたによくにた雪女	かっぱ川太郎	よつやのおいわ	たて川の一ッ目小僧	れんき鳥とけす	不明	つちうらの船ゆうれ	ねこまた橋のおばけ	なすのが原のくろ仏	らんとうばへ出るば	むかしのおもいつづ
Wo ushu no kohada		Kappa kawatarou	Yotsuya no oiwa	Tategawa no hitome	Renki-dori to kesu	N/A	Tsuchiura no fune no	Nekomata bashi no	Nasunogahara no ku	Rantouba he deru ba	Mukashi no omoitsu
		Kappa kawatarou	Yotsuya no oiwa	Hitotsume-kozō of Ta	Turn into pestle-bird		Funa-yūrei of Tsuchi	Ghost of Nekomata t	Black buddha from N	Bakemono going in c	Old heavy wicker ba
怨霊・こはだ小平治		カッパ・川太郎	おいわ （怨霊）	一つ目小僧・疫鬼	れんぎ形	人玉？	船幽霊・怨霊	猫又	塗仏？焼けた仏？		重い葛籠の化け物
Onryō (Kohada Koh		Kappa/Kawatarō	Oiwa (onryō)	Hitotsume-kozō / eki	Rengi-type	Hitodama？	Funa-yūrei / onryō	Nekomata	Nuribotoke? or Budd		Omoi tsudzura no ba
小幡小平次 / Kohada			KABUKI 四谷怪談 (Y	Possibly related to st	Urban legends / sayi		Folk belief/superstitic	Old thing --> yokai (t			Parable/story
Actor famous for play				Confused version of	Beliefs in Kumamoto		People who died at t	Can see forked tail			
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		1			1	1					
											
をかさきのはけねこ	わらいはんにや	かくれぎとお	欠	たぬきのおどかし	れんじおわたるゆう	そらをとぶひかり物	つちぐものせいれい	ねどころへ出るかみ	なまくさい風にばけ	らんまからはいるば	むまのばけもの
Okasaki no bakenek	Warai hannya	Kakure zatō		Tanuki no odokashi	Renji wo wataru yūre	Sora wo tobu hikarur	Tsuchigumo no seire	Nedokoro he deru ka	Namakusai kaze ni b	Ranma kara hairu ba	Muma no bakemono
Bakeneko of okasak	Laughing hannya	Kakure zatō		Fright from a tanuki		Shiny thing in the sk	Spirit of Tsuchigumo	Hair-puller in sleepin	Bakemono with fish-	Bakemono entering t	Horse yōkai
化け猫	笑般若			たぬき	幽霊	ひとだま	土蜘蛛	怨霊・鬼	入道形？		
Bakeneko	Warai hannya			Tanuki	Yūrei	Hitodama	Tsuchigumo	Onryō/Oni	Related to Nyūdōs?		
Kabuki (Traveling Ac						Religious art/buddhis	Kabuki/legends	Famous mysterious			
		Play on 隠れ里 (kaku			Looks like omoi tsud	Tradition of writing «[		Victims a guy killed b	Yōkai cause bad sm	One-eyed	
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		1		1	1	1			1	1	1
											
をんなのいちねん	わら人形のばけたの	かさね	よたかのばけたの	たこの入道	れん木にはねのはえ	底抜け柄杓	つちぐもおばけ	ねやのおばけ	なまづのをばけ	らんまからでるほそ	むらのばけぎぞう
Onna no ichinen	Wara ningyō no bake	Kasane	Yotaka no baketano	Tako no nyūdō	Rengi niha hane no l	Soko nuke bishaku	Tsuchigumo no obak	Neya no obake	Namazu no obake	Ranma kara deru ho	Mura no bake jizou
Woman's angry spiri	Straw doll that turne	Kasane (ugly womar	Low-class prostitute	Tako nyūdō	Pestle that grew win	Bottomless ladle	Tsuchigumo obake	Bedroom obake?	Catfish obake	Thin hand from railin	Village Bake-jizō
幽霊		怨霊	夜鷹のお化け		れんぎのばけもの	船幽霊?	土蜘蛛	枕のおばけ			化け地蔵
Yūrei		Onryō	Yotaka no obake		Rengi no bakemono	Fune-yūrei?	Tsuchigumo	Pillow bakemono?			Bake-jizō
Saying (女の一念岩を		Kasane (kabuki play			Urban legends / sayi	Customs (bottomless	Kabuki/legends				
		累/かさね=ugly girl c	Why tano? Yotaka =	Play on mikoshi-nyūd	Beliefs in Kumamoto	Calm down sea spiri			Causes earthquakes		Can shapeshift?
		1					1				
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重い葛籠に大入道 (そ	わんとくちあく一ツ	壁から出る座頭 (かべ	四谷のお岩稲荷 (よつ	盥のくじつかみ (たら	道子を渡る姑獲鳥 (そ	空を飛ぶ火の玉 (そら	土蜘蛛の小女郎	猫じゃのお化け	生臭風の生首	羅城門の覇玉	葛の和尚婆
Omoidzura ni ōnyūdō	Wanto aku hitotsume	Kabe kara deru zatō	Yotsuya no oiwa inar	Tarai no kuji tsukami	Renji wo wataru ubu	Sora wo tobu hi no ta	Tsuchigumo no shōjo	Neko ja no obake	Namagusa kaze no	Rashōmon no oyada	Mujina no oshō suga
Ōnyūdō in old baske	Mouth open hitotsum	Blind musician comir		Washbowl clutching		Hinotama flying in th	Tsuchigumo woman			Head of Rashōmon	Mujina appearing as
大入道	一つ目小僧	座頭	おいわ 怨霊	付喪神	姑獲鳥	火の玉	土蜘蛛	猫又	生首	鬼（茨木童子）	葛
Onyūdō	Hitotsume kozō	Zatō	Oiwa Onryō	Tsukumogami	Ubume-dori	Hinotama	Tsuchigumo	Nekomata	Namakubi	Oni (Ibaraki-doji)	Mujina
			四谷怪談 / Yotsuya K					Fear of dead resurre			
Combine Ōnyūdō an								Can see forked tail			
			1				1			1	
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	1			1		1		1	1		1

Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD	AE	AF	AG	AH	AI	AJ	AK
う u	ゐ/ヰ wi	の no	お o	く ku	や ya	ま ma	け ke	ふ fu	こ ko	え e	て te	あ a
											N/A	
うすいとうげのしゃ	いなかむらからでる	のなかのばけじぞう	おきに見える船ゆう	楠のぼうこん	やなぎの下のうぶめ	まつやまむらのくわ	げたのばけもの	ふるでらのばけぼん	こはだこへいじのし	えんの下から出るた	てんじゃうのぞきの	あおさぎのばけもの
Usui touge no shuku	Inakamura kara deru	Nonaka no bakejizou	Oki ni mieru funa yur	Kusu no boukon	Yanagi no shita no u	Matsuyama-mura no	Geta no bakemono	Furudera no bakeho	Kohada koheiji no sh	En no shita kara den	Tenjō nozoki no kuw	Aosagi no bakemon
Bell hammer of Usui	Kitsunebi from rural	Bake-jizō of Nonaka	Boat spirit that looks	Departed tree of can	Ubume under willow	Yokai of Matsuyama	Geta bakemono	Bake-Buddha in an	Ghost of Kohada Ko	Tatami-raiser from ur	Yōkai peeking in the	Grey heron bakemo
しゅくもくむすめ	狐火	化け地蔵	船幽霊・怨霊	怨霊・楠木正茂の幽	産女・姑獲鳥・ウブ	未詳。見越し入道・	化けた古下駄・つく	たぬき	怨霊・こはだ小平治	座の霊		青鷺火
Shukumoku musume	Kitsunebi / Foxfire	Bake-jizō	Funa-yūrei / onryō	Onryō / Ghost of Kus	Ubume / Kokakuchō	Unknown. Mikoshi ni	Baketafurugeta / Tsu	Tanuki (that turns int	Onryō (Kohada Kohe	Ghost of a bear he'd		Aosaginohi / Aosagi
Abandoned crutches			Folk belief/superstitic	Famous historical fig	Legends/practices (h	Presumably had thre	Pun: parts of geta ar	Folk stories	小肌小平次 / Kohada	Story about famous l		Famous story from t
Mountain pass betwe		Why Nonaka? Turne	People who died at s		Goes back to China.	Source: Edo Yokai K	Roughly used geta n	Stories often involve	Actor famous for play		Replaced this one w	Also appears in Seki
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	1						1				1	
												
うし鬼うなれば海う	ゐておとしたを猪の	のでらをのぞくいっ	おにもおよばぬをど	くすりをくだせい	不明	不明	けぶだしに幅々笑ふ	ふな幽霊は雪吹なだ	こりや九つこはれ皿	えものがあるなる置	てこまん天狗が手を	不明
Ushi oni unareba um	Iteotoshita wo wi (ine	Nodera wo nozoku k	Onimo oyobanu wo	Kusuri wo kudasei	N/A	N/A	Kebudashini tenten v	Funa yūrei ha fubuki	Koriya kokonotsu ko	Emono ga aru nara	Tekoman tengu ga te	N/A
If cow oni roars, the		Ippeppou looking at	Scary thing that oni i	Medicine, please				Funa yūrei on the sn			Tekoman tengu clap	
うし鬼	ぬえ? 猪早太は平安	ぬべべっぽう						船幽霊・怨霊	幽霊・怨霊	置いてけ	天狗	油赤子（?）
Ushi-oni	Nue? I-no-hayato is	Nupepeppo						Funa-yūrei / onryō	Yūrei/Onryō	Oiteke	Tengu	Abura-akago ?
				Yotsuya Kaidan scer				Folk belief/superstitic				
								People who died at s		Associated with Hon	Yamabushi tokin hat	
	1								1	1		
1		1	1				1	1			1	1
		なし N/A		なし N/A				なし N/A		なし N/A		
うすひとうげのしゃ		のろいのわら人形	おくの京の子とり女	くらやみ坂のつべら	やなぎの下のうぶめ	まつ山むらのくわい	げちのばけもの	ふか川の袖引手	こんにゃくばしのぶ	えだがさきの五つ目	てん神下のけしゃう	あさ草一ッ家のしゃ
Usuhi touge no shuk		Noroi no waraningyo	Oku no kyou no koto	Kurayami ita nopperi	Yanagi no shita no u	Matsuyama-mura no	Gechi no bakemono	Fukakawa no sodehi	Konnyaku bashinobu	Edagasaki no itsutsu	Tenjinshita no kesho	Asakusa Hitotsu ka
Bell hammer of Usui		Cursed straw doll	Woman who takes k		Ubume under the wil							
しゅくもくむすめ				のっぺら坊	産女			袖ひき小僧		五つ目小僧		
Shukumoku musume				Noppera-bou	Ubume			Sodehiki kozou		Itsutsume kozou		
Abandoned crutches					Legends/practices (h						Edo culture/spot	
Mountain pass betwe					Goes back to China.						(kesshou means you	
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				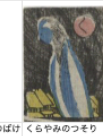								
うみほうすくろくた	みなむらのそでひき	の中のばけ杉	おもひつゝらのばけ	くらやみのつそり	やせツこけたばけも	まよツて出るゆうれ	けひきベツたり	ふなゆうれいひしや	こどものすきなばけ	えんの下にすむひら	てうちん小ぞう	あぶらなめ小ぞう
Umibōzu kurokutach	Inemura no sodehiki	Nonaka no bakesugi	Omoi tsudzura no ba	Kurayami no tsusori	Yasetsu koketa bake	Mayotte deru yūrei	Kehiki pettari	Funa yūrei hishaku k	Kodomo no suki na b	En no shita ni sumu	Teuchin kozō	Abura-name kozō
Black umibōzu	Sleeve-puller of inen	Bake-sugi in Nonaka	Yokai in heavy baske	Slow and dark?		Yūrei that appears w		Funa-yūrei asking fo	Bakemono kids like		Chōchin kozō	
海坊主	袖引	化けすぎ	重い葛籠			幽霊		船幽霊・怨霊			提灯小僧	油赤子
Umi bouzu	Sode-hiki (sleeve-pu	Bake-sugi	Omoi tsudzura			Yūrei		Funa-yūrei / onryō			Chōchin kozō	Abura-akago
								Folk belief/superstitic			Wordplay (提灯屋の	
			Tsudzura = wicker ba					People who died at s			Usually a child holdi	
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うぶめ	井の中の蛙のお化け	野中の一つ家（のな	おいはのぼうこん	桑名の海坊主	やねの上のゆうれい	まむしおばけ	源兵衛堀	ふらり火のくわいだ	こはだこへいぢ	えん朝のくわいだん	ちょうちん小僧（て	あおら怪しい鼠のお
Ubume	Inonaka no ubawami	Hitotsuya (Single hou	Oiwa no bōkon	Kuwana no umibōzu	Yane no ue no yūrei	Mamushi obake	Genbebori	Furari hi no kuwaidn	Kohada koheiji	Enchō no kuwaidan	Teuchin kozō	Aara ayashii nezumi
Ubume (Woman who	Large snake/heavy c		Spirit of Oiwa	Umibōzu from Kuwa	Yūrei on the roof	Viper yōkai	Genbebori	Ghost story of furarit	Ghost of Kohada Ko	Enchō's ghost story	Chōchin kozō	Creepy mouse obak
うぶめ	うわばみ		おいわ （怨霊）	海坊主	幽霊		河童	ふらりび	怨霊・こはだ小平治	三遊亭 圓朝（円朝）	提灯小僧	
Ubume	Uwabami (giant snal		Oiwa (onryō)	Umibōzu	Yūrei		Kappa		Onryō (Kohada Kohe	Sanyutei Encho	Chōchin kozō	
Legends/practices (h		Kabuki play "Hitotsu	四谷怪談 / Yotsuya K				Yōkai tourism (本所七		KABBUKI & Edo urb	Sanyutei Encho was	Wordplay (提灯屋の	
Goes back to China.	Related to legends c						Like Oitekebori of Ho		Actor famous for play		Usually a child holdi	
			1						1			
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雀氷峠の檀木娘	栃むらの袖引き	野中の化け蝦蟇	奥州の小幡小平次	雲に乗る異形異類	屋根を転げる大目玉	真夜中に出るのっぺ	げろげろ乙りき笑い	舟に水汲む舟幽霊（お	こんにゃく橋のぶる	緑の下の平蜘蛛（えん	天神下の化生屋敷（て	浅茅ヶ原の鬼婆ァ（お
Usui tōge no shumoi	Inamura no sode hik	Nonaka no bake icho	Ōshū no kohada koh	Kumo ni noru igyō ir	Yane wo korogeru ōr	Mayonaka ni deru nu	Gero gero otsuriki wa	Fune ni mizu kumu f	Konnyaku bashi no b	En no shita no hiragi	Tenjinshita no kesho	Asajikahara no oniba
		Bake Gingko of Nona	Ghost of Kohada Ko	Strange things on th	Big eyeball rolling or	Nopperapon appeari	Gross extremely wei	Fune-yūrei scooping	Woman walking on K	Spider under the por		
			怨霊・こはだ小平治		大目玉	のっぺらぼん		船幽霊				
			Onryō (Kohada Kohe		Ōmedama	Nopperapon		Funa-yūrei				
			KABUKI & Edo urbai		Ōmedama means "a							
			Actor famous for play						Konnyaku bridge is j	Refers to kettle of a t		
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AL	AM	AN	AO	AP	AQ	AR	AS	AT	AU	AV	AW
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さよの中山よなき石	きよもり ふくはらの	ゆきふりにでるゆき	めぐまむらのばけこ	みこしがたけ みこし	しただしこぞうのと	えのくまのくび	ひだか川 しっとのね	もりんじのぶんぶく	せん中のくわい 海坊		きょうのまちへでる
Sayonakayama yona	Kiyomori Fukuhara r	Yukifuri ni deru yukij	Megumura no bakeg	Mikoshigatake mikos	Shitadashi kozou no	Enokuma no kubi	Hidakagawa shitto n	Morinji no bunbuku	Senchuu no kai umit		Kyou no machi he d
Night-crying stone in	Kiyomori Fukuhara's	Yukionna that appea	Bakegoze from meg		Tongue-hanging out	Head of inokuma nyi	Jealousy monster in		Yōkai when you're o		Katawaguruma appe
幽霊	髑髏	雪女・雪女郎・雪の	ばけごぜ・怨霊	大入道・見越し入道	一つ目小僧・疫鬼	猪熊入道	鬼女	たぬき	海坊主		片輪車
Yūrei	Skulls	Yuki-Onna / Yuki-jor	Bakegoze / onryō	Ōnyūdō / Mikoshi-ny	Hitotsume-kozō / eki	Inokuma nyūdō	Kijo (female oni)	Tanuki (from Bunbuk	Umibouzu		Katawaguruma
Famous legend/spot	Famous historyical k	Famous ghost stories	Location-based lege	General scary story	Possibly related to s	Famous character g	Kabuki (Dojōji 道成寺	Legend/children's sto	General scary story		Local legend (Kyoto)
Related to Kyoto car	Kids "scaring contes	Like Ubume	Story about her bein	Supposedly back str	Confused version of	Used on kites and ta	Kiyohime 清姫	Morinji is a temple in	Sailors stay quiet so		From 諸国百物語
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不明	きつね火消てきみわ	ゆきのゆふべの雪女	めぬりくちぬり壁座	みこしに見られて身	不明	ゑなの崇りか産女鳥	ひとだまひう ひうと	もじ書ものいふ茂林	なし N/A	すこやすりこぎ雀い	京に凶事ある希有車
N/A	Kitsunebi kihetekimi	Yuki no yufube no yu	Menuri kuchinuri kat	Mikoshi ni mirarete r	N/A	Enano tatarika ubum	Hitodama hiu hiudor	Mojikakimono ifu mo	Sesshou no urami n	Surikogi suzi	Kyou ni kyouji aru ke
			Blind and mute kabe					Morinji kettle as writt			
ばけ傘・付喪神	狐火	雪女・雪女郎	怨霊・化け座頭	大入道・見越し入道		産女（鳥）	人魂	たぬき	殺生石	連木の化け物・すり	片輪車
Bake-kasa / tsukum	Kitsunebi (Foxfire)	Yuki-Onna / Yuki-jor	Onryō / Bakezatō	Ōnyūdō / Mikoshi-ny		Ubume (bird-woman	Hitodama	Tanuki (from Bunbuk	"Killing stone" ghost	Rengi-no-bakemono	Katawaguruma
		Famous ghost stories		General scary story				Legend/children's sto	Legend/fox spirit belie	Urban legends / sayi	Local legend (Kyoto)
	depicted holding fire	Like Ubume		Supposedly back str				Morinji is a temple in	Kyūbi fled to Nasun	Beliefs in Kumamoto	From 諸国百物語
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さるはしのさるつら	きたざはのたたみあ	不明	めぐろむらのばけこ	みこしがたけの見こ	しつとのおんねん	ゑつ中立山地さくこ	ひだの山おく大ひき		せん中のくわい 海坊	するがのきたはま	お 京の町へでるかたわ
Saruhashi no sarutsu	Kitazaha no tatamiay	N/A	Meguro-mura no bak	Mikoshigatake no mi	Shitto no onnen	Wetsu chuuritsu yam	Hidanoyama oku oul		Senchuu no kai umit	Surugano kitahama	Kyou no machi he d
			ばけごぜ・怨霊							Onibi from Kitahama	
	熊の霊		Bakegoze / onryō	大入道・見越し入道				たぬき	海坊主	おにび・くらべび	片輪車
	Ghost of a bear he'd		location-based leger	Ōnyūdō / Mikoshi-ny				Tanuki	Umibouzu	Onibi	Katawaguruma
	Story about famous		Story about her bein	General scary story						Local legend	Local legend (Kyoto)
				Supposedly back str						From Shizuoka. Call	From 諸国百物語
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1
					1				1		
さよの中山夜なき石	きつねのばかしおん	ゆき女らしろ女	めぐま村のばけさと	みつ目入道大あたま	しただしとうふ子僧	ゑのくま大入道	ひとつ目小僧一寸ぼ	もゝんかあどろゝゝ	せん中のほうず	すりこきにはねかは	京のまちのかたは車
Sayono nakayama y	Kitsune no bakeshi c	Yuki onna rashiro on	Meguma mura no ba	Mitsume nyūdo ōata	Shitadashi tōfu kozō	Enokuma no Ōnyūdō	Hitotsume kozou issi	Momonga dororoor	Senchuu no housu	Surikoki ni hane kah	Kyō no machi no kat
Stone crying at night	Fox transformed into	Woman resembling	Bakezatō from Megu	Big-headed mitsume	Tongue-hanging out	Enokuma ōnyūdō	One-eyed Issun bos	Muddy momonga		Wings on a pestle	Katawaguruma of Ky
		雪女・雪女郎・雪の	ばけさとう・怨霊	大入道・見越し入道	小僧・疫鬼	えのくまのくび	一つ目小僧・疫鬼	ももんが	ほうず＝ぼうず？	連木の化け物・すり	片輪車
		Yuki-Onna / Yuki-jor	Bakesatou / onryō	Ōnyūdō / Mikoshi-ny	kozō / ekiki (disease	Enokuma no kubi	Hitotsume-kozō / eki	Momonga		Rengi-no-bakemono	Katawaguruma
		Famous ghost stories	location-based leger	General scary story	Possibly related to s		Possibly related to s	Red light district joke		Urban legends / sayi	Local legend (Kyoto)
		Like Ubume		Supposedly back str	Confused version of		Confused version of	Momonji=inoshishi o		Beliefs in Kumamoto	From 諸国百物語
						1					
1		1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1
さんばのおばけ	切り禿（きりかぶろ	ゆきをんな	めくらいもねん	みこし入道	しぼりのゆかた	ゑのくま	ひとつめこぞう	もゝんがあ	胃戸から出るお化け	すごいなまくび	京ならくらまやま
Sanba no obake	Kirikaburo	Yuki onna	Mekura ichinen	Mikoshi nyūdō	Shibori no yukata	Enokuma	Hitotsume kozō	Momonga	Sedo kara deru obak	Sugoi nama kubi	Kyōto nara kuramay
	Kirikaburo	Yuki onna	Blind angry spirit	Mikoshi nyūdō		Inokuma	Hitotsume kozō	Momonga	Obake from the back	Shocking head	When in Kyoto, Mt. K
剣烏帽子 (hat)?	切り禿	雪女・雪女郎・雪の	怨霊・化け座頭	大入道・見越し入道		大入道・見越し入道	一つ目小僧・疫鬼	ももんが			天狗
	Kirikaburo	Yuki-Onna / Yuki-jor	Onryō / Bakezatō	Ōnyūdō / Mikoshi-ny		Ōnyūdō / Mikoshi-ny	Hitotsume-kozō / eki	Momonga			Tengu
	Shuten Dōji	Famous ghost stories		General scary story		General scary story	Possibly related to s	Red light district joke			鞍馬天狗 / Kurama T
	Child's haircut	Like Ubume		Supposedly back str		Supposedly back str	Confused version of	Momonji=inoshishi o			
						1					
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
猿橋の猿面小僧（さ	鬼怒川の累（きぬ川(	雪の中の雪女郎（ゆき	盲の化け簪女（めくら	見越し入道（みこし	舌出し豆腐小僧（した	ゑたがさきの子もち	一つ目の一寸法師（ひ	茂林寺のご存知（も	船中の海坊主（せん	擂子木の羽ばたき（す	京町の片輪車（京町の
Zaru-hashi no zaru-b	Kinugawa no kasane	Yuki no naka no yuki	Mekura no bakegoze	Mikoshi ōnyūdō	Shita-dashi tōfu kozō	Etagasaki no komoc	Hitotsume no issun b	Morin-ji no gozonji	Senchuu no umibōzu	Surikogi no hanabat	Kyōmachi no katawa
Boy with monkey fac	Kasane of demon-kil	Yuki jorō in the snow	Blind goze bakemon	onyudo + mikoshi ny	Tongue-out tofu boy	Pregnant woman fro		Thing everyone knov	Umibōzu when you're	Pestle with wings	Katawaguruma of Ky
	怨霊?	雪女・雪女郎・雪の	ばけごぜ・怨霊	大入道・見越し入道	下出し・豆腐小僧		一つ目小僧+一寸法師	たぬき?	海坊主	れんぎ系	片輪車
	Onryō?	Yuki-Onna / Yuki-jor	Bakegoze / onryō	Ōnyūdō / Mikoshi-ny	Shita-dashi tōfu kozō		Hitotsume kozō & Iss	Tanuki (from Bunbuk	Umibouzu	Rengi-type	Katawaguruma
	KABUKI & Folk tale/	Famous ghost stories	location-based leger	General scary story				Legend/children's sto	General scary story	Urban legends / sayi	Local legend (Kyoto)
	累/かさね=ugly girl c	Like Ubume	Story about her bein	Supposedly back str				Morinji is a temple in	Sailors stay quiet so	Beliefs in Kumamoto	From 諸国百物語
	1										
1	1	1	1			1	1	1		1	1
				1	1				1		