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Image of Fox and Its Influence on Japanese Folklore

Lapsas tēls un tā ietekme uz Japāņu folkloru

BAKALAURA DARBS

Āzijas bakalaura studiju programma

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INTRODUCTION

The bachelor paper under the title "Image of Fox and Its Influence on Japanese Folklore" is describing fox being a type of *yōkai* (妖怪) and its influence on Japanese traditions, tales and people's perception towards it throughout the time.

The aim of the work is to find out how something as simple as a fox may affect a whole perception of mythological deities, and become an object to worship, to awe, to scare and to study.

The following objectives have been set in order to achieve the goal:

- Find out what is the meaning of *yōkai* in general, its definition, as well as its studies from the point of view of Western and Japanese scholars.
- Look through the origins of *kitsune* (狐), its places of worship and the reasons behind it.
- Find out how the fox influenced literary Japanese genre and how the peculiarities, such as the phenomenon of "fox's wedding" or kitsune to yomeiri (狐の嫁入り) were described from the perspective of different time frames.
- Explore the main behavioral features of foxes, their transformation abilities and behavioral patterns towards people.
- To conclude the image of *yōkai* by providing wider insight about them, taking a fox as an example of how such a common creature can be so multifaceted and up-to-date in different folkloric tales and sources.

The paper gives several Japanese personal names, titles and terms. The words are written in Hepburn's transcription. Personas and certain Japanese places and terms are not in italics, while lesser-known terms, image names, etc. are in italics.
This work takes examples from both ancient and modern Japanese and Western sources, as well as examines the writings of some Russian articles to have a broader representation of data obtained.

The following research methods are used in the work:

- Historically descriptive (image of fox in historical view)

- Inductive (in drawing conclusions)

During the research, majorly used sources about *yōkai* were: Figal, Gerald. Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999., Hearn, L. P. Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan. Vol. 1. Boston: Hokuseido Press, 1894., Комацу, Кадзухико 小松和彦 "Переосмысление науки о ёкай: К сердцу японцев через ёкай" 妖怪学新考 妖怪からみる日本人の心 ("Ёкайгаку синко: ёкай кара миру нихондзин но кокоро"). Токио: Сёгакукан, 1994.

Regarding the sources about the researches of foxes, these were: Nozaki, Kiyoshi 野崎潔. Kitsune: Japan's Fox of Mystery, Romance & Humor. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1961., Casal, U.A. The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan // Asian Folklore Studies. Vol. 18, 1959., Bathgate, Michael. The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture: Shapeshifters, Transformations, and Duplicities. New York: Routledge, 2003.

The work is divided into four parts. Part 1gets the reader acquainted with the terms *yōkai* and *kitsune* and gives an insight about their first references and origins. It also provides information about several types of foxes and explanations of their divine side.
Part 2 mainly deals with literature writings about ancient foxes, from the oldest mentions and up to the modern one, Japanese and Western as well.
Part 3 portrays the behavioral characteristics of the fox, its transformation abilities, possession and ways of interaction with people.
Part 4 concludes with an image of *yōkai* with *kitsune* as an example, and tells about the fox being imprinted in the traditions of Japanese people and having a massive influence in life and perception of mysterious creatures.

1. About *yōkai*

Throughout the history of mankind, representatives of any nation have been turning unknown phenomena into monsters and spirits. Japan is no exception, as unexplained phenomena and supernatural beings have always remained part of people's imagination. Famous Japanese cultural anthropologist and *yōkai* researcher Komatsu Kazuhiko (小松和彦, b. 1947) defines them as "transcendental phenomena or existence associated with fear" (恐怖に結 びついた超越的現象存在 - それが「妖怪」なのである, "*Kyōfu ni yui bitsu ita chōetsu-teki genshō sonzai - sore ga `yōkai'na nodearu"*). [1]

In a broad sense, the mystical phenomenon in Japan is usually denoted by *yōkai* - a general term that translates as spirits, goblins, phantoms, spectra, fairies, werewolves, demons, fantastic creatures, monsters.

From the Nara period (奈良時代, AD 710-794) to modern times, the representation and magico-religious management of an "other world" of symbolic demon-enemies and the dark outer regions of the country associated with it has been used by emperors as well as *shōguns* (将軍) to secure and display power and authority; it has also been used by discontented factions (peasants, disgruntled *samurai* (侍), religious groups, opposition parties) as a means to protest authority through carnivalesque reversal and parody (in which monsters become champions of the common folk), or by directly designating the authorities themselves as evil monsters. [2]

By drawing *yōkai* from other texts and local legends, Toriyama Sekien (鳥山 石燕, 1712 – 1788) took them beyond the tightly constrained habitats and stories in which they played their roles. [3]As a result, *yōkai* have become more general and universal, penetrating many facets of culture, from folk art to plays in the theaters of *kabuki* (歌舞伎), *ningyō jōruri* (人形浄瑠璃), and miniatures of *rakugo* (落語).

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[1] Комацу Кадзухико 小松和彦 "Переосмысление науки о ёкай: К сердцу японцев через ёкай" 妖怪学新考 妖怪からみる日本人の心 ("Ёкайгаку синко: ёкай кара миру нихондзин но кокоро"). Токио: Сёгакукан, 1994, Стр. 31.
[2] Figal Gerald. Civilization and Monsters: Spirits of Modernity in Meiji Japan. Durham: Duke University Press, 1999. P. 32.
[3] Pen-name of Sano Toyofusa, an 18th-century scholar, *kyōka* poet, and *ukiyo-e* artist of Japanese folklore. Wikipedia.

Popular in the early illustrated books of the Edo period (江戸時代, 1600 –1868) - *kusazōshi* (草双紙), *yōkai* especially flourished with the beginning of a new stage in the development of this art, marked by the appearance of the books of *kibyōshi* (黄表紙, *yellow covers*), actively published between 1775 and 1806. *Kibyōshi* were a popular form of comics or picture books at the time. They were considered the most complex and satirical genre of literature. They no longer frightened, but amused people.

With the onset of the Meiji period (明治時代, 1868 –1912), in Japan, involved in radical industrial, military, cultural and social transformation, *yōkai* for the first time underwent serious research by scientists. One of the most active researchers was Inoue Enryō (井上円了, 1858–1919), a philosopher and Buddhist priest who founded a companion discipline to philosophy which he named *yōkaigaku* (妖怪学) — literally "monsterology," but in Inoue's usage it designated something closer to "superstition studies," "psychical research," or simply "folklore studies." It is fundamentally organized to bring apparently inexplicable objects into the purview of rational explanation. [4]

"Monsterology" captures the 19th-century scientific quaintness, sensationalism, and seriousness of the pursuit that would become Inoue's contribution to the management of spirits into spirit in Meiji Japan. [5] It is an application of his personal guiding principle "Defend the Nation, Love the Truth" *(gokoku airi)*: "Researching the principles of *yōkai* and expelling false mysteries is based on the spirit of loving the truth. By applying this in actuality one heals the errors of the masses. Standardizing reforms in public education is based on the spirit of defending the nation. Sure enough then, the single practice of monsterology can handily accomplish these two important goals." [6]

As Komatsu Kazuhiko hypothesized, the symbolic control of monsters was an important pillar of the *shōgunate's* ideological foundations; the symbolic unleashing of the same monsters could certainly serve to shake it. [7]

Always ploddingly methodical and systematic in his argumentation, Inoue initiates his discussion of monsterology in a bluntly logical fashion: people commonly describe monsters (*yōkai*) as *fushigi* (不思議, *mystery*) and *ijō* (異常, *unusual*), as things that cannot be known

[4] Figal, Civilization and Monsters. Ibid. P. 46.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Inoue Enryō 井上 円了. Yōkaigaku 妖怪学. Tokyo: Kōjinsha, 1933.
[7] Figal, Civilization and Monsters. Ibid. P. 38.

by usual standards of knowledge and everyday reason. But, he asks, what is "usual knowledge" and "everyday reason" ? Even more important, if one were to accept this common judgment that *yōkai* are *fukachiteki* (不価値的, *irrational, beyond reason*), then it would be foolish to investigate the topic at all. [8]

> According to Inoue, "there is in fact no set standard for supernatural beings themselves. In other words, the standard for supernatural beings is the knowledge and intellect of the person. The reasons for numerous supernatural beings among the lower classes are their shallow knowledge, limited experience, and the high number of unfamiliar places they observe or hear about."

The first Western author interested in *yōkai* is the American novelist Lafcadio Hearn. Since moving to Japan in 1890, he has written and published over ten books on the history, culture and life of Japan. For the Western world, he became an early interpreter of such a complex and interesting country as Japan, which opened up to the world after three hundred years of isolation.
The merit of Lafcadio Hearn is to popularize the specifics of *yōkai*, which he sought to convey to Western readers, in contrast to Inoue, who tried to cleanse Japanese culture of them. [9]

Yōkai appear on the border between the worlds of God (神, *kami*) and people of this world (現世, *gense*) and other worlds (他界, *takai*), for example, on bridges, intersections, on the water's edge or in a forest clearing. They appear when night turns to day or day turns to night, at dawn or dusk. *Yōkai* are mutations of humans, animals, plants, utensils, or a *kami* mutation. *Yōkai* also stand on the border between useful and harmful supernatural beings with the freedom to turn in any direction, depending on their temporary status.
Yōkai are a moment of change from one category to another, representing the anxiety and fear associated with the constraint of changing from the known to the unknown, from certainty to uncertainty. Created by human society in response to the spite of the day, *yōkai* reflect the time in which people live, and therefore change over the centuries without having a fixed and definite form. In other words, "*yōkai* are reborn to take on the appropriate form each time." [10]

Yōkai also give the form of fear associated with the loss of support in the strict social structure

[8] Inoue, Yōkaigaku. Ibid. P. 2–3.
[9] Figal, Civilization and Monsters. Ibid. P. 50.
[10] Комацу, Переосмысление науки о ёкай. Ibid. Стр. 253.

of the village. Deviation from the norm will pose the threat of becoming detached from one's social group and becoming an outcast, the fear of facing the unknown dangers of the outside world.

Thus, *yōkai* remain very popular today as a form of entertainment, which can be seen, for example, in the fashion for images of ghosts and monsters in anime, films, and modern literature. Currently, such phenomena are not part of beliefs, they have become a part of the popular culture of Japan.

1.1. *Kitsune* as a type of *yōkai*. Origin and first references

In Japan, the fox is still considered to be one of the most interesting and popular animals. It is possible to find the traditions related to foxes existing everywhere you go in the country. *Kitsune* is loved and worshipped by the people. It plays a role in Japanese culture that is unusually rich and complicated. Beliefs that developed when people lived much closer to nature persist in stories, festivals, and language. And even nowadays, the fox has a magical aura that still fascinates.

The oldest recorded account of shapeshifting foxes in Japan can be found in the Nihon Ryōiki (「日本霊異記」), a collection compiled in the early 9th century by a Buddhist monk affiliated with the Yakushiji temple in Nara. [11] Entitled "On Taking a Fox as a Wife and Bringing Forth a Child," the tale is translated by Kyoko Nakamura (中村恭子, b. 1958). [12]

Such mythological characters like magic foxes are characteristic of all East Asia. In contrast to the traditional European and Central Asian ideas about werewolves as originally anthropomorphic creatures that turn into zoomorphic demons, a completely different type prevails in the beliefs of China, which were later borrowed by the Japanese. These are animals that have lived for hundreds of years, capable of taking on a human form, as well as inducing illusions and conjuring.

W.A. Casal writes about it this way:

[11] Yakushi-ji (薬師寺) is one of the most famous imperial and ancient Buddhist temples in Japan, that was once one of the Seven Great Temples of Nanto, located in Nara. Wikipedia.

[12] Bathgate Michael. The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture: Shapeshifters, Transformations, and Duplicities. New York: Routledge, 2003. P. 50.

> "The belief in the magic of foxes, as well as in their ability to turn around, did not originate in Japan, but came from China, where these fearsome animals, capable of taking on a human form and fooling people, were described in the literature of the dynasty Han (202 BC - 221 AD). Since animism has always been inherent in the Japanese, the belief in fairy foxes was relatively easy to adopt." [13]

The Ainu (アイヌ), also known as the Ezo (蝦夷) in historical Japanese texts, are an East Asian ethnic group indigenous to Japan, the original inhabitants of Hokkaidō (北海道) and nearby Russia (Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands, Khabarovsk Krai and the Kamchatka Peninsula) also have beliefs related to the fox. According to Spevakovsky's reports: "The black fox was almost always considered by the Ainu as a "good," kind animal. At the same time, the red fox was considered capable of causing harm to humans." [14]

Nevertheless, foxes are rarely seen in Japan nowadays, even in rural districts. In ancient times however, they could be seen everywhere. According to Nihon Ryakki (「日本略記」, "An Abbreviated Record of Japan"), a great number of foxes lived even in the capital of Kyōto (京都).

In the reign of the Emperor Kammu (桓武天皇, 735 – 806), foxes barked at night in the Imperial Palace in December 803, and in the reign of the Emperor Saga (嵯峨天皇, 786 – 842) foxes walked up the stairs in the Imperial Palace in September 820. [15]

Yoshida Kenkō (吉田兼好, 1283–1350), the famous writer-recluse of the middle part of the 14th century, writes in his Tsurezuregusa (「徒然草」, "Essays in Idleness," also known as "The Harvest of Leisure") as follows:

> "In the palace at Horikawa, a servant was bitten in the leg by a fox while he was in bed fast asleep. A petty priest of the Ninnaji temple was passing one night in front of the main building of the temple when three foxes attacked him. He unsheathed his sword to defend himself and lunged at two foxes. One of them was killed, the other two scampered away.

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[13] Casal U.A. The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan // Asian Folklore Studies. Japan, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Vol. 18., 1959. P. 1.
[14] Spevakovsky A.B. Spirits, werewolves, demons and deities of the Ainu. Russia, Nauka Press, 1988. P. 76-77.
[15] Nozaki Kiyoshi 野崎潔. Kitsune: Japan's Fox of Mystery, Romance & Humor. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1961. P. 3.

The priest was injured in several parts of his body. However fortunately he was not seriously wounded." [16]

By the above statement made by Kenkō, we can see that foxes were still rampant in the 14th century capital.

According to the Nihon Shoki (「日本書紀」, "The Chronicles of Japan"), the annals compiled in 720, *kitsune* was held in respect as an animal of good omen. In the same year a black fox was presented from Iga province (伊賀国) to the Empress Genmyo (元明天皇, 660 –721), an empress-regnant, the founder of the capital of Nara. [17]
However during the 10th and the 11th centuries when poetry was flourishing, *kitsune* was not treated with affection. In fact, it was merely considered to be weird and uncanny. *Kitsune*, in those days, was associated in literature with such things as an apparition or a wraith.

The literature, and especially the stories told of foxes in those days, naturally reflect this tendency to superstition. When, for instance, a maniac appeared on the street of Edo (present Tōkyō) and cut women's hair - people could not apprehend the culprits, they attributed the offence to the act of *kitsune*, calling them hair-cutting *kitsune.*
Kitsune, it must be remembered, was real in the minds of people. They lived with *kitsune*, sharing joy and sorrow with them. They fell in love with *kitsune* and *kitsune* was infatuated with men and women. [18]

In the Chinese stories of the fox-spirit, the *huli jing* (狐狸精, *fox spirit*) can appear to be very kind and beneficial to the man whom she is with. However, she is always vicious towards any other women in the household be they relatives or simple servants. She enjoys playing cruel and often fatal "tricks" on women but always seems to manage to give it the appearance of an accident.

Regarding Korean myths, *kumiho* (구미호, *nine-tailed fox*) uses a marble carried in its mouth to steal wisdom from humans, usually through a kiss. In Korea, the fox-spirit at the age of 100 could take on human form, and shape will always remain to be female. However, the

[16] Nozaki, Kitsuné: Japan's Fox of Mystery, Romance & Humor. Ibid. P. 4.
[17] Ibid. P. 4.
[18] Nozaki, Kitsuné: Japan's Fox of Mystery, Romance & Humor. Ibid. P. 7.

fox-spirit requires the use of a human skull that it places on top of its head in order to transform. It can also devour a human to take on their shape. Oftentimes the *kumiho* will take on the form of someone who their intended victim knows so that they are more trusting and easier to get close enough to.[19]

Thus, the myths that originated in China and subsequently spread out to different locations, still have their own differences and peculiarities.

Nowadays, werewolf foxes have firmly taken the place of mythological characters that are associated with nostalgia for old Japan. It will be appropriate to note that the image of a werewolf fox in our time has moved from the sphere of folklore to the sphere of folklorism, now it can be found only in children's fairy tales, cartoons and legends, stylized "antique." Due to the movement of the bulk of the population from the village to the city, the lower mythology becomes predominantly urbanistic, and new characters from urban legends are replacing the traditional demonological images. [20]

The shapeshifting of the fox as a spirit—whether benevolent or dangerous, venerated or exorcised—is seldom far removed from the imagery of the fox as an animal, an *imaginaire* reflecting the troubled intersections of wild and domestic, beast and humanity. Similarly, the imagery governing relations between wilderness and domesticity, or between the human world and spirits, informed (and were themselves informed by) the imagery of human relations, from the connubial relations of husband and wife to the realpolitik of kinship and family alliances, aristocratic and commoner alike. [21]

Not only did these patterns of mutual influence tend to shift as the imaginaires themselves shifted, but the imagery of the fox as shapeshifter—with all its attendant transformations and trickery—was closely bound up with the imagery of social, political and economic transformation more generally. In Japanese beliefs, magic foxes have several pronounced features. Speaking of appearance, it is worth noting that werewolf animals always differ in some way from their usual relatives. In foxes, this is expressed through predominantly white color and many tails, but these signs are characteristic only of old, "experienced" foxes. Reincarnation into a human is the second distinguishing feature of magic foxes. There are

[19] Nozaki, Kitsuné: Japan's Fox of Mystery, Romance & Humor. Ibid. P. 8.
[20] Bathgate, The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture. Ibid. P. 40.
[21] Ibid.

many motives for this, ranging from mischief and ending with vampirism. The third characteristic is the ability of foxes to create illusions. Magic foxes are considered masters of deception, they are able not only to completely transform the space around a person, but also create a completely independent flow of time there.

And yet, even the foxes, said the ancients, gratefully remember their home, and when a fox is dying "he turns his face towards the hillside where he was born." Foxes, as we had occasion to note, are not always or exclusively malevolent or even malicious. [22]

1.2 Types of foxes and their description

According to some, there are various kinds of ghostly foxes. According to others, there are two sorts of foxes only, the *Inari*-fox (*O-Kitsune-San*) and the wild fox (*nogitsune*). (See P.1.2.) Some people again class foxes into superior and inferior foxes, and allege the existence of four superior sorts—*byakko* (白虎, *white fox*), *kokko (*黒虎*, black fox*) *kūko* (空虎, *air fox*), and *reiko* (霊虎, *heaven fox*)—all of which possess supernatural powers. Others again count only three kinds of foxes—the field-fox (野狐, *nogitsune*), the man-fox (人狐, *hito-kitsune*) and the *Inari*-fox (稲荷狐, *Inari-kitsune*). But many confuse the field-fox or wild fox with the man-fox, and others identify the *Inari*-fox with the man-fox. One cannot possibly unravel the confusion of these beliefs, especially among the peasantry. The beliefs vary, moreover, in different districts. [23]

The *Inari*-fox is good, and the bad foxes are afraid of the *Inari*-fox. The worst fox is the *hito-kitsune*: this is especially the fox of demoniacal possession. It is no larger than a weasel, and somewhat similar in shape, except for its tail, which is like the tail of any other fox. If he goes close to still water, his shadow can be seen in the water. It is rarely seen, keeping itself invisible, except to those to whom it attaches itself. It likes to live in the houses of men, and to be nourished by them, and to the homes where it is well cared for it will bring prosperity. It will take care that the rice-fields shall never want for water, nor the cooking-pot for rice. But if offended, it will bring misfortune to the household, and ruin to the crops. [24]

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[22] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 28.
[23] Lafcadio Hearn. Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. First Series, Duke Classics, 1894. P. 230.
[24] Ibid.

The wild fox (*nogitsune*) is also bad. It was believed that *Inari* could control them, however, not in all cases. *Nogitsune* foxes are represented there in the form of the main antagonists: they seek to harm people in every possible way.

It also sometimes takes possession of people; but it is especially a wizard, and prefers to deceive by enchantment. It has the power of assuming any shape and of making itself invisible; but the dog can always see it, so that it is extremely afraid of the dog. Moreover, while assuming another shape, if its shadow falls upon water, the water will only reflect the shadow of a fox. Still if one eats the flesh of a fox, he cannot be enchanted afterwards. The *nogitsune* also enters houses. Most families having foxes in their houses have only the small kind, or *hito-kitsune*; but occasionally both kinds will live together under the same roof. Some people say that if the *nogitsune* lives a hundred years it becomes all white, and then takes rank as an *Inari*-fox. [25]

There are curious contradictions involved in these beliefs. To define the fox-superstition at all is difficult, not only on account of the confusion of ideas on the subject among the believers themselves, but also on account of the variety of elements out of which it has been shaped. Its origin is Chinese; but in Japan it became oddly blended with the worship of a Shinto deity, and again modified and expanded by the Buddhist concepts of thaumaturgy and magic. So far as the common people are concerned, it is perhaps safe to say that they pay devotion to foxes chiefly because they fear them. The peasant still worships what he fears. [26]

Goblin foxes are peculiarly dreaded in Izumo shrine (出雲大社) for three evil habits attributed to them. The first is that of deceiving people by enchantment, either for revenge or pure mischief. The second is that of quartering themselves as retainers upon some family, and thereby making that family a terror to its neighbours. The third and worst is that of entering into people and taking diabolical possession of them and tormenting them into madness. This affliction is called kitsune-tsuki (狐憑き, 狐付き).

The favourite shape assumed by the goblin fox for the purpose of deluding mankind is that of a beautiful woman; much less frequently the form of a young man is taken in order to deceive

[25] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 227.
[26] Ibid. P. 232.

some one of the other sex. Innumerable are the stories told or written about the wiles of fox-women. [27]

Many declare that the fox never really assumes human shape; but that he only deceives people into the belief that he does so by a sort of magnetic power, or by spreading about them a certain magical effluvium.

The older the fox, the greater his powers will be: most alarming are those who have reached the good old age of eight-hundred to a thousand years. But when one reaches the latter age, he is admitted to the Heavens and becomes a "celestial fox." He is then of golden colour and possesses nine tails; he serves in the halls of Sun and Moon, and is versed in all the secrets of Nature.

Those foxes which burrow in or near old graves are particularly dangerous because they become connected with the human ghosts, who themselves are as a rule considered nefarious, unless carefully propitiated. And of course a grave desecrated by a fox shows terrible negligence on the part of the deceased's progeny, so that his spirit will become incensed against all humanity.

The Shuowen (說文解字) encyclopaedia already states that the fox is the course upon which ghostly beings ride; hence all foxes are uncanny. [28]According to this Shuowen the fox has three particular attributes: "in colour he partakes of that which is central and harmonizing" (which applies to his "yellow" colour, corresponding to Earth); "he is small before and large behind" (contrary to other animals); "and at the moment of his death he lifts his head upwards." [29]

[27] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 233-234.
[28] A very important Chinese work of about the year 100 A.D. Wikipedia.
[29] Bathgate, The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture. Ibid. P. 9.

1.3. *Inari* shrine

It should be noted that the fox cult borrowed from Chinese mythology was incorporated into an already existing layer of beliefs associated with foxes. One evidence is the cult of the Shinto deity *Inari* (稲荷), also called *Ō-Inari* (大稲荷).

Inari, the name by which the Fox-God is generally known, signifies "Load-of-Rice." But the antique name of the deity is the August-Spirit-of-Food: he is the Uka-no-mi-tama-no-mikoto (宇迦之御魂神) of the Kojiki (「古事記」, "Records of Ancient Matters" or "An Account of Ancient Matters"). In much more recent times only has he borne the name that indicates his connection with the fox-cult, Miketsu-no-Kami (三狐の神), or the Three-Fox-God. Indeed, the conception of the fox as a supernatural being does not seem to have been introduced into Japan before the 10th or 11th century; and although a shrine of the deity, with statues of foxes, may be found in the court of most of the large Shinto temples, it is worthy of note that in all the vast domains of the oldest Shinto shrine in Japan—Izumo—you cannot find the image of a fox. [30]

The name *Inari* is derived from the word of *ine* (稲), rice plant and literally means the growing of rice plants. Rice in Japan is the symbol of agriculture - the symbol of life in ancient times. In the phenomenon of the sprouting of rice plants - in the growth of rice plants, the young and fresh spirit of the *Inari* God was to be felt. Thus the name *Inari* was given by the founder of the shrine, the Hatas. [31]

The *Inari* foxes—sculptured of some whitish stone if large, or formed of white porcelain when small—sit on their haunches, with erected bushy tail which ends in a "jewel"; in their snarling teeth they hold a longish cylindrical object, of somewhat varying shape according to the artist's fancy.
The tail of the fox is presumed to contain the fertilizing power; when he goes through the standing rice he gives it the last fructification which produces the grain. [32]

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[30] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 228-229.
[31] The Hata are said to have come to Japan from China through the Chinese Lelang Commandery, then through the Kingdom of Baekje (both on the Korean peninsula). Wikipedia.
[32] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 47.

The tail of the *Inari* fox ends in a "jewel" of what we term onion-shape. This jewel has a very vast meaning in oriental mysticism, being connected with soul-lore, with the ebb and flow of life, with power over evil, but also quite plainly with phallicism. [33] Phallicism, in turn, is principally linked with the fertility of the fields and stock, the sexual act being so to say conditional only, as provoking the fertility-spirits to fructification. [34]

At the rear of almost every *Inari* temple you will generally find in the wall of the shrine building, one or two feet above the ground, an aperture about eight inches in diameter and perfectly circular. It is often made so as to be closed at will by a sliding plank. This circular orifice is a fox-hole, and if you find one open, and look within, you will probably see offerings of *tofu* (豆腐) or other food which foxes are supposed to be fond of. You will also, most likely, find grains of rice scattered on some little projection of woodwork below or near the hole, or placed on the edge of the hole itself; and you may see some peasant clap his hands before the hole, utter some little prayer, and swallow a grain or two of that rice in the belief that it will either cure or prevent sickness. [35]

The Fushimi Inari shrine (伏見稲荷大社), one of the most popular and prosperous shrines in Japan is so closely related to *kitsune* tradition, that the shrine became the synonym of *kitsune*. More than a third of the recorded shrines in Japan are Inari shrines and, aside from the fox statues, the obvious symbol that indicates "Inari shrine" is red *torii* (鳥居) gates. The shrine was originally constructed in 711 as their patron deity by the influential Hatas, the descendants of the Korean prince naturalized in the 4th century. (See P.3.)

Inari can appear in human form, but most often appears in the form of a heavenly snow-white fox. Fox statues are an integral part of the temples in his honor; *Inari* is usually accompanied by two white nine-tailed foxes. *Inari* is the patron saint of rice, in all its forms.
Lafcadio Hearn points out that *Inari* was often worshiped as a healing deity; but more often he was considered a god of wealth (perhaps because the entire fortune in Old Japan was

[33] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 48.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 231.

considered *koku* rice). [36] Therefore these foxes are sometimes represented holding keys in their mouths.

However, there is a significant difference between the foxes of the deity *Inari* and the werewolf foxes, which the Japanese ethnologist Kiyoshi Nozaki (野崎潔) points out:

> "It should be noted that the foxes in Inari's service have nothing to do with the witchcraft of other foxes, which are often called *nogitsune*, or "wild foxes." One of the duties of the servants of the Inari shrine in the Fushimi quarter (伏見区) of Kyōto was to ward off these *"nogitsune"*. [37]

Presented here is a mythological story telling us how the white foxes became connected with the *Inari* shrine:

To the north of the capital, Kyōto, there lived a pair of very old white foxes in the neighbourhood of Funaoka hill. The he-fox was a silver-white furred animal and looked as if he were wearing a garment of bristling silver needles. He always kept his tail raised while walking. The she-fox had a deer's head with a fox's body. Their five cubs followed them wherever they went. Each of these cubs had different faces.

The two white foxes, accompanied by the five cubs, made their way to the Inari shrine at Fushimi leaving their home near Funaoka hill. When they reached the Inari-yama hill on which the shrine stood, they prostrated themselves in front of the shrine and aid reverently:

> "Oh! Great God! We are naturally gifted with wisdom though we were born as animals. Now we sincerely wish to do our part for the peace and prosperity of the world. We regret, however, that we are not able to realize our purpose. Oh, Great God! We pray from the bottom of our hearts that you would graciously allow us to become members of the household of this shrine so that we will be able to realize our humble wish." [38]

Inari God was greatly impressed by the sincerity with which these words were spoken. The sacred altar of the shrine instantly shook as if by an earthquake, and in the next moment, the foxes heard the solemn voice of the *Inari* God coming from behind the sacred bamboo screen:

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[36] The traditional Japanese measure of volume (~ 180.39 liters). It was roughly equal to the amount of rice enough to feed one person for a year. Wikipedia.
[37] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 15.
[38] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 13-14.

"We are always endeavoring to find some means to bestow the divine favor of Buddha on all men by doing our best. Your desire, foxes, is really praiseworthy. We will allow you, all of you, to stay there to do your service in this shrine forever. We expect you to assist with sympathy for the worshipers and the people in general with faith. We order you, He-Fox, to serve at the Upper Temple. We give you the name of Osusuki. And you, She-Fox, shall serve at the Lower Temple. We give you the name of Akomachi."

Hereupon each of the foxes including the five cubs made ten oaths and began to comply with the wishes of all the people. (It is generally believed that if any person with the *Inari* faith actually sees the natural shape of a white fox, or even sees it in a dream, they are receiving a divine revelation of the God of *Inari* through the medium, the messengers of the deity). [39]

And here is a reliable record of how the white foxes of the shrine became closely connected with the *Inari* God:

"Imperial Princess Toyuki, (Toyouke-Ōmikami 豊宇気毘売神, literally "Luxuriant-food Princess"), to whom the *Inari* shrine is dedicated, was commonly called Goddess Mi-Ketsu (三狐の神). People wrote the word mi-ketsu using a phonetic equivalent - three foxes. Since then they believed that the deity was a fox-deity and also were under the impression that the Inari shrine was sacred to *kitsune*, a fact proving that the thought of ancestor-worship was combined with that of animal-worship. Consequently they thought that when they had faith in the *Inari* God, the fox-messenger would make an appearance doing an act of charity and benevolence. Thus the fox-faith flourished throughout the country." [40]

All religions have a certain messenger for the communication of God and men. And regarding *Inari* God, he has the white foxes as his messengers. There are many other messengers in the service of temples and shrines in Japan such as: Snakes, Pigeons, Crows, Deer, etc.

There is a document treasured in the Onishi family (大西), the descendents of the Hatas - a note sent to the shrine from Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉, 1537 – 1598), the 1st commoner

[39] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 13-14.
[40] Ibid. P. 14-15.

in Japan to rise to the highest state office, and the unifier of the Japanese Empire. The note was written by Hideyoshi when the daughter of his adopted son, Ukita Hideiye (宇喜多秀家, 1573 – 1655), was reporting suffering from fox-possession. It runs as follows:

To the *Inari* God:

> "Ukita's daughter is now babbling, apparently possessed by a wild fox. I hope that the fox will be dispersed immediately. When no suitable measures are taken, a nation-wide fox-hunt will be ordered.
> P.S. The chief priest of the Yoshida shrine was also notified concerning this matter.
> Hideyoshi (signature)"

Sending a note of protest to a god demanding him to drive away a wild fox supposedly possessing his adopted son's daughter is Hideyoshi's way of doing things. Hideyoshi reflects the spirit of the age: He believed in power. However he also believed in the *Inari* God. There are other gods to whom a particular animal is sacred and symbolic, but for some reason the *Inari*/fox connection is different. Hearn noticed this in the 19th century, and did not much care for it:

"Indeed, an old idea of the deity of rice-fields has been overshadowed and almost effaced among the lowest classes by a weird cult totally foreign to the spirit of pure Shinto—the fox-cult. The worship of the retainer has almost replaced the worship of the god." [41]

Did people really think they were worshipping a fox? Do they still believe this today? The scholar Karen Smyers, while writing a book about the worship of *Inari*, tried to figure this out, and the answer she came up with seems to be "it depends on who you ask."

On the one hand, the priests that she interviewed all said basically, "heck no, no way!" The party line was that the fox was only a messenger of God. But the mere fact that there has to be a party line, and that priests have to put effort into discouraging the alternative, has to mean something. [42]

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[41] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 18.
[42] Linda Lombardi, Kitsune: The Divine/Evil Fox Yokai, 2014. https://www.tofugu.com/japan/kitsune-yokai-fox/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

Smyers thinks that the official view is probably pretty recent, going back to the Meiji period, when there was an attempt to purge Shinto of its animistic elements, as part of the push to make Japan a Westernized nation. This attempt clearly did not take as far as the average worshipper went. Talking to devotees, she discovered that some did see *Inari* as a fox, although they differed on whether the god was benevolent or terrifying. [43]

Inari worship also became what was perhaps the single most widely-recognized focal point of fox imagery in Japan. The figure of the fox seems to have played a fundamental role in the symbolic associations by which the deity was linked to worldly success in a range of different enterprises—including not only agriculture but also metal-working, fire fighting and the work of female entertainers— both before and during the Edo period. It appears to have been only during the Edo period, however, that the powers of *Inari* came to be linked explicitly with monetary success. In the 18th century in particular, a number of tales began to express the rewards of *Inari* worship in specifically commercial terms, tales which make use of the fox as an agent of prosperity. One tale describes a man who saves the life of a pregnant white fox, who later appears to him in the form of a young woman. She tells him to go to Edo, where her husband (another fox) teaches him the recipe for a patent medicine. Making a fortune in this new trade, he built an Inari shrine in their honor. In tales such as these, the benefits of *Inari* worship are mediated through the figure of the fox, and the gifts of the divinity appear in their most immediate form as a gift from a fox. [44]

The symbolic and historical dynamics by which this identification came about, however, are far from clear. The image of the fox is conspicuously absent from the earliest records of *Inari* worship, and the historical origins of their association remains a matter of some controversy. A common argument holds that the fox—a figure often (and multifariously) linked by folklorists with agricultural fertility —is understood to have shared a basic affinity with *Inari* as a spirit of rice agriculture, a common symbolic ground which led to their association as a matter of course. In a similar fashion, the deepening association of *Inari*, the fox and the growing forces of commercial wealth during the Edo period is typically described as having developed as a "natural" outgrowth of their common links with rice, as the new

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[43] Linda Lombardi, Kitsune: The Divine/Evil Fox Yokai, 2014. https://www.tofugu.com/japan/kitsune-yokai-fox/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
[44] Bathgate, The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture. Ibid. P. 109.

money-economy grew out of and gradually supplanted traditional forms of exchange based on rice-agriculture. [45]

The links between *Inari* and the shapeshifter fox were thus continually and creatively redrawn throughout the course of the Edo period, both by those who prospered in the new economy and by those it threatened, a reflection of both of the marvelous power of commercial wealth and its profound social costs. Whereas exchange at the beginning of the Edo period (both within the village and between village and feudal lord) was built upon a cycle of labor, land and rice passing along (and helping to cement) established lines of hierarchical social organization, money-based exchange as it operated by the end of the Edo period crossed regional lines and class boundaries, and was used to purchase everything from land to social prestige. As the embodiment of earlier forms of exchange, the imagery of *Inari* could be proffered as both a critique and a corrective to the transformations and duplicity of commercial wealth, powers symbolized by the ambivalent gifts of the fox. At the same time, the very link with those powers could render the worship of *Inari* suspect; as a nationally-popular god of financial success, it was also taken as the symbol and agent of a corrosive and corrupting profit-motive. It is precisely this ambivalence, however, that made the imagery of *Inari* and the fox such a prevalent and adaptable element in the discourse of the Edo period. Just as *Inari* worship itself spread along national commercial networks, the imagery of *Inari*, the fox and the ambivalent power of money provided the foundation for an equally nationwide field of significance, on which the power, prestige, and sometimes even the lives of historical agents were negotiated. [46]

[45] Bathgate, The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture. Ibid. P. 111.
[46] Ibid. P. 138-139.

2. Literary compositions

Although not being directly referred to as *yōkai*, there are countless mentionings of fantastic beings in the Kojiki, and the Nihongi. A century later, in the Nihon Ryōiki, myths, stories and legends are described, and, since then, there have been many cases of scrolls containing drawings of supernatural beings in different forms and stances. [47] We first find them represented in detail in the four illustrated volumes of Toriyama Sekien, already in the 18th century. The tetralogy consists of Gazu Hyakki Yagyo (「画図百鬼夜行」, "*The Illustrated Night Parade of a Hundred Demons*" or "*The Illustrated Demon Horde's Night Parade*", 1776), Konjaku Gazu Zoku Hyakki (「今昔画図続百鬼」, "*The Illustrated One Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past*", 1779), Konjaku Hyakki Shui (「今昔百鬼拾遺」, "*Supplement to The Hundred Demons from the Present and the Past*", 1781) and Gazu Hyakki Tsurezure Bukuro (「百器徒然袋」, "*The Illustrated Bag of One Hundred Random Demons*" or "*A Horde of Haunted Housewares*", 1784) include illustrated notes on 207 *yōkai*. As M. Foster notes, one of the main reasons why these works are extremely important in the development of *yōkai* is that Toriyama Sekien first considered each *yōkai* separately and presented them in the format of an encyclopedia that became popular in late Edo. [48]

The first *yōkai* mentioned by the Japanese author is the *kodama* (木霊, 木魂 or 木魅), which is among those that have generated most literature. [49]A *kodama's* outer appearance is very much like an ordinary tree, but if one attempts to cut it down, one would become cursed, etc., and it is thus considered to have some kind of mysterious supernatural power. Sekien describes these beings as spirits that appear in ancient trees in the form of elderly people. (See P.4.)

Not surprisingly, *yōkai* also proliferated during this period of vibrant cultural activity, finding new prospects in the world of commercial art, popular literature, and drama. At the same time, they remained part of local culture—still thriving in folktales and legends.

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[47] Nihon Ryōiki - an early Heian period *setsuwa* collection (説話). It consists of myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes). Written between 787 and 824, it is Japan's oldest collection of Buddhist *setsuwa* (3 volumes). Wikipedia.
[48] Foster M.D. Morphologies of Mystery: Yōkai and Discourses of the Supernatural in Japan. Stanford University, 2004. P. 91.
[49] Spirits in Japanese folklore that inhabit trees. Wikipedia.

The belief in spooky or shape-changing foxes does not seem to have grown on the soil of Japan itself, but to have been acquired from China, where these fearful animals, able to assume human form or to play foul tricks, were already described in the literature of the Han dynasty, (漢朝, 202 BC - 221 AD). Since the Japanese were fundamentally animistic from the beginning, the belief found no difficulty in being accepted. Written reference to goblin-foxes does not seem to exist before the very early 11th century, in the well-known Genji Monogatari (「源氏物語」, "*The Tale of Genji*"); a somewhat more definite reference to this type of magic foxes—some demonically powerful *reiko*, ghost-fox, or haunting fox—appears in a slightly later story-book, the Uji-shūi Monogatari (「宇治拾遺物語」), also of the 11th century. It would thus appear that at about that time, or somewhat before, such superstitions came over from China, where they undoubtedly are far older; but as earlier Japanese writings are scarce, the belief in question may nevertheless have been current among the commoners for many generations before. The belief in supernatural foxes seems to have considerably spread during the Heian (平安時代, 794-1185) and following periods, until the popular literature of the Edo era became replete with stories of such beasts of evil omen and of marvellous powers of transformation. [50]

In the Konjaku no Monogatari (「今昔物語」, lit. "*Anthology of Tales from the Past*") we may find that the fox is treated as a hero/heroine in Japan for the first time. It's a rare book written by Minamoto-no-Takakuni (源隆国, 1004–1077), known as Uji Dainagon (宇治大納言) in the closing years of the Heian period. It is true that the folklore relative to such a thing as bewitchery, or metamorphosis, is now regarded as concerning things of the past. However in Japan, the idea of the mysterious power of *kitsune* is deep-rooted among the populace; and a superstition such as *inu-gami* (犬神, *dog god/spirit*) or *hebi-gami* (蛇神, *snake god/spirit*) is still prevalent in some rural districts in the country. [51]

Konjaku Monogatari accordingly, has this to say about supernatural events which take place during the daylight: "Such ghosts appear during the nighttime, and when they make a commotion during broad daylight, this is truly something to fear." This, in short, is indicative of a real fear that supernatural creatures would break through the bounds of their normal time

[50] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 1-2.
[51] Ibid. P. 3.

frame and penetrate into the everyday world. Their appearances, also, could continue until dawn. There is for example, the following case:

> The office at the central governmental bureau began work in the early morning. The officials would light the lamps and prepare for work even before it grew light. One day a certain official knew his superior would have already reported for work, and in a state of agitation about his own late arrival he came into the office. The light was extinguished, and it did not appear that there was anyone around. When he lit a lamp he saw only a bloody head at his superior's desk. The man had been eaten by a demon (XXVII. 9, paraphrase of the tale). [52]

The superior had doubtless arrived at his office just a little too early. He had, thus, unintentionally violated the time frame claimed by supernatural creatures. Such time periods as this, when it was difficult to ascertain whether it was supernatural time or mortal time, were thus extremely dangerous.

Supernatural creatures also lived, or appeared, at certain fixed locations. These were places such as old residences, halls in which no one lived, or abandoned warehouses in XXVII. 4 and it was thought that certain specific supernatural creatures had made their homes at such places. In most cases when a person is treated unprepared into a haunted place he would arouse the wrath of the supernatural creatures living there, and generally lose his life. For this reason, the Konjaku compiler constantly repeats his didactic messages: "You should never take even the smallest of steps into an area you do not know. It is needless to say that you should find spending the night in such a place unthinkable" (XXVII. 7) or "You should never spend the night in old halls when there is no one around" (XXVII. 6). Thus it is easy to appreciate why the Konjaku compiler has added a detailed geographical explanation of places considered haunted and extending to other areas in which supernatural creatures were likely to appear. These spirits controlled such locations, and it was necessary for humans to learn that they should not invade them. Volume X X V I I of Konjaku monogatari might be considered a map of sites occupied by humans and supernatural creatures. [53]

Vast is the literature of the subject of foxes—ghostly foxes. Some of it is as old as the 11th century. In the ancient romances and the modern cheap novel, in historical traditions and in

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[52] Masato Mori 森正人. Konjaku Monogatari-shū: Supernatural creatures and order. Translated by W.Michael Kelsey. Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 9/2-3, 1982. P. 149.
[53] Ibid. P.149-150.

popular fairy-tales, foxes perform wonderful parts. There are legends of foxes discussed by great scholars, and legends of foxes known to every child in Japan— such as the history of Tamamonomae (玉藻前), the beautiful favourite of the Emperor Toba (鳥羽天皇, 1103 – 1156) —Tamamonomae, whose name has passed into a proverb, and who proved at last to be only a demon fox with nine tails and fur of gold. This legend is also mentioned in "The Tale of the Taira House", where Prince Taira no Shigemori tells it. Originally a white fox with nine tails lived in India. Turning into a beautiful girl, she was able to enchant the King of India, Pan Tsu. He made her his wife. Inherently evil and cruel, she enjoyed killing thousands of innocent people. When she was exposed, the fox flew to China. Once again turning into a beautiful girl, she entered the harem of the Emperor Yu-wang (周幽王, 795–771 BC) from the Zhou dynasty (周朝, 1045 BC–221 BC). She soon became a queen, still heartless and insidious. "Only one thing was not in Yu-wan's heart: she never laughed, nothing caused her smile. And in that foreign country there was a custom: if there was a mutiny somewhere, they lit fires and beat big drums, summoning the soldiers. These bonfires were called *"fenho"* (滕霍) - signal lights. One day an armed riot broke out and the signal lights came on. "How many lights! How beautiful!" the queen exclaimed when she saw these lights and smiled for the first time. And in one of her smiles there was an endless charm." [54] The emperor, for the pleasure of his wife, ordered the signal fires to be lit day and night, although there was no need for that. Soon the soldiers stopped gathering, seeing these lights, and then it happened that the capital was besieged by the enemies, but no one came to defend it. The emperor himself died, and the fox, having assumed its real appearance, flew to Japan (according to another version, she died along with the emperor, and was revived already in Japan).

In Japan, the fox was named Tamamo no Mae. She accepted the appearance of a dazzlingly beautiful girl and became a court lady. Once at midnight, when a celebration was held in the palace, a mysterious wind rose and blew out all the lamps. At that moment, everyone saw that a bright glow began to emanate from Tamamo no Mae. "From that very hour, Mikado fell ill. He was so ill that they sent for a court spellcaster, and this worthy man quickly determined the cause of his majesty's debilitating illness. He insinuates that Tamamo no Mae is vicious, this is a demon who, with skillful cunning, taking possession of Mikado's heart, will bring the state to death!" [55] Then Tamamo no Mae addressed the fox and fled to the Nasu Plain. She killed people on her way. At the behest of the emperor, two courtiers went after her. But the fox

[54] Повесть о доме Тайра 平家物語 ("Хэйкэ моногатари"). Пер. И. Л. Львовой, А. А. Долина. Москва: Художественная литература, 1982.

[55] Дэвис Х.Ф. "Мифы и легенды Японии", Перевод с англ. О.Д.Сидоровой, Москва: Центрполиграф, 2008. Стр. 90.

turned into a *sesshō-seki* stone (殺生石) or "killing stone" which killed everyone who approached him. Even the birds fell dead as they flew over him. Only in the XIII century a Buddhist monk named Genno destroyed him by the power of his prayers. T.W. Johnson notes that this Japanese legend looks as if it was transformed from a Chinese legend, which in turn may have an Indian basis. [56]

But the most interesting part of fox-literature belongs to the Japanese stage, where the popular beliefs are often most humorously reflected—as in the excerpts from the comedy of Hiza-Kuruge (「膝栗毛」), written by Jippensha Ikku (十返舎一九, 1765–1831). [57]

One way in which *yōkai* made their way from local rural communities onto a more national (or regional) urban stage was through a practice called *hyaku-monogatari* (百物語). These were gatherings at which spooky stories, called *kaidan* (怪談), were exchanged one after another with the intent of inducing a supernatural experience. The procedure was simple: people would gather in a large room, sometimes in a temple or other semi public venue, and tell short, spooky stories or anecdotes about ghosts, *yōkai*, or mysterious occurrences. After each brief tale, a lantern or candle would be extinguished. At the end of the final story, the room would be plunged into complete darkness. And then, it was said (or hoped, or feared), a real *yōkai* would appear. Buddhist priest and author Asai Ryoi (浅井了意, 1612 – 1691) explains, "It is said that when you collect and tell one hundred stories of scary or strange things that have been passed down since long ago, something scary or strange is certain to occur." [58]

The word *hyaku-monogatari* literally means "one hundred stories," but the number one hundred was not necessarily taken literally. In fact, most hyaku-monogatari collections include fewer than a hundred tales. In one sense, the implication was simply as this was a very large number. The particular number one hundred (*hyaku*), however, also had symbolic meanings for the mysterious. One hundred seems to have signified a transformative or liminal point— beyond the normal lifespan of an object or living thing but not so high as to be completely out of reach. One hundred was the number after which things might get a little unusual. The number was cited as the age after which a normal fox, cat, or *tanuki* (狸, raccoon

[56] Johnson T.W. Far Eastern Fox Lore, Asian Folklore Studies. Vol. 33/1., 1974. P. 36.
[57] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 242.
[58] Michael Dilan Foster. The Book of Yokai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore. University of California Press, 2015. P. 43.

dog) might turn into a *yōkai*. The practice of hyaku-monogatari reflects this premise: after a certain point—after the one hundredth story—you were in a space in which the mundane and the normal could be transcended. [59]

2.1. Fox's Wedding

There are days when the sun shines bright and the rain falls, and it is not recommended for children to play outdoors during this time. It is not because they might catch a cold. It is something more mysterious. On such days the *kitsune* hold their wedding processions.
From Sakurai city (桜井市) in Ibaraki prefecture (茨城県) to Kashihara city (橿原市) in Nara prefecture, tales of kitsune no yomeiri appear almost all over Japan. Most stories follow similar patterns with only slight variations. There are two phenomena referred to as kitsune no yomeiri—the bizarre weather called sunshowers where rain falls in broad daylight; and *kitsune-bi* (狐火, *fox fire*), winding through the mountains late at night. Ancient Japanese associated mysterious lights at night, including unusual phenomena in the heavens, with foxes. The 12th-century Konjaku Monogatari records an early mention of luminous lights in Kyōto and associates them with foxes. [60]

Indeed, foxes are very fond of luring people to an unholy place by creating a welcoming light or "fire," which is *kitsune-bi*. [61]
Kitsune-bi could also mean the light made by foxes to draw men astray. The fire is produced by the fox striking the ground with his tail, or it may also be his luminous breath. It will either burn quietly, like a lamp, to attract the intended victim into a phantom house, or it will wander about like a torch and confuse the late traveller, sometimes ensnaring him into an inextricable forest or a swampy moor. At other times the beckoning flame will promptly extinguish at the approach of the victim, leaving him in complete darkness far away from the road. Or it may suddenly "fly away and disappear in the sea." The breath-exhaled fire may even "shoot forward to a distance of some two or three feet." [62]
Kitsune no Yomeiri combines the kanji 狐の *(kitsune no, fox's)* with 嫁入り*(yomeiri;*

[59] Foster, The Book of Yokai: Mysterious Creatures of Japanese Folklore. Ibid. P. 43.
[60] Zack Davisson, Kitsune no Yomeiri - The Fox's Wedding, 2013. https://hyakumonogatari.com/2013/07/19/kitsune-no-yomeiri-the-fox-wedding/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
[61] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 10.
[62] Ibid.

wedding). In a literal translation, *yomeiri* means to "receive a bride," as the custom is for the groom's family to receive the bride on the wedding day as a proper member of their family. Until the middle-Showa period (昭和), Kitsune no Yomeiri Gyoretsu (狐の嫁入り行列; *the fox wedding bridal procession*) was more commonly used. But most drop *gyoretsu* in the modern age. [63] (See P.5.)

While kitsune no yomeiri is the most common term, there are regional versions of the same phenomenon. In Saitama prefecture (埼玉県) and Ishikawa prefecture (石川県) it is known as kitsune no yometori (狐の嫁取り; *the taking of a fox bride*). In Shizuoka prefecture (静岡県) it is called kitsune no shūgen (狐の祝言; *the fox's wedding celebration*).
In Tokushima prefecture (徳島県), the kitsune no yomeiri is a less happy occasion. It was called the kitsune no sōshiki (狐の葬儀; *fox's funeral*) and seeing one is considered an omen of death. [64]
The kitsune no yomeiri has long been a part of Japanese folklore, although with the rise of the *Inari* fox-cult during the Edo period it gained a greater significance and cultural permeation. A description of kitsune no yomeiri comes from the book Echigo Naruse (越後名寄; "Encyclopedia of Echigo") published during the Horeki period (宝暦, 1751-1764).

> "On dark and quiet nights, in secret places, strings of lanterns or torches can be seen stretching out a single file in an unbroken chain more than two miles long. It is a rare site, but an unmistakable one. It can be seen most often in Kanbara county, and it is said that on such nights young foxes claim their mates." [65]

Legends of the kitsune no yomeiri merged with existing stories of *kitsune* magic and bewitchment. People who tried to follow these foxfire lantern processions would find that they disappeared as soon as they got close—although on rare occasions traces of the ceremony were found. [66]

Stories of kitsune no yomeiri continued well into the Edo period. In Toshima village (豊島)

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[63] https://hyakumonogatari.com/2013/07/19/kitsune-no-yomeiri-the-fox-wedding/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
[64] https://hyakumonogatari.com/2013/07/19/kitsune-no-yomeiri-the-fox-wedding/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

kitsune no yomeiri was seen on several consecutive nights, eventually becoming one of the Seven Mysteries of Toshima. In both Niigata prefecture (新潟県) and Nara prefectures, kitsune no yomeiri was thought to be a good omen for the harvest, with the more lanterns being seen the more fruitful the harvest. A year with no fox weddings made people dread the upcoming famine.
The foxes of Gifu prefecture (岐阜県) did not just content themselves with lanterns. The foxfire procession was accompanied by the sound of cracking and blazing bamboo, although when examined the following day the forests appeared untouched. [67]

The most common explanation is that these fires are the oxidation of the chemical phosphine caused by decaying organic matter, such as can be found in forests. Other suggestions are that they are a mere optical illusion caused by the setting sun. But there is no scientific evidence for either of these theories.

The Meiji period *tanka* (短歌, *short poem*) poet Masaoka Shiki (正岡子規, 1867 – 1902) wrote:
"When rain falls from a blue sky, in the Hour of the Horse, the Great Fox King takes his bride." [68]

In the story "fox wedding" (1741), a richly dressed samurai comes to the ferryman and tells him that the daughter of the master whom the samurai himself serves is getting married tonight. Therefore, he asks to leave all boats on this shore, so that with their help the whole wedding procession can cross to the other side. The *samurai* gives the ferryman a *koban* (小判), who, surprised by the guest's generosity, readily agrees. [69] The wedding procession arrives around midnight all lit by lights. She dives into boats, each with several torchbearers. However, soon they all disappear into the darkness of the night without a trace, never reaching the coast. The next morning, the owner saw a dry leaf in place of the coin. [70]

How sunshowers became associated with fox weddings is vague. Some say that it has to do with mountains where foxes are mostly found. There are times when mountains are covered in

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[67] https://hyakumonogatari.com/2013/07/19/kitsune-no-yomeiri-the-fox-wedding/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
[68] Ibid.
[69] Japanese oval gold coin in Edo period feudal Japan. Wikipedia.
[70] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 191-195.

rain, while the town is clear. People said that the foxes summoned the rain with their magic to hide their wedding ceremony. Others just think that because sunshowers are a mysterious occurrence, going against the natural pattern of clouds and rain, that people assumed a supernatural origin and associated it with foxes.

Although most pre-Meiji period accounts are of the foxfire processions, Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎, 1760 – 1849) captured the sunshower-type in his painting Kitsune no Yomeiri-zu (狐の嫁入図; "Picture of a Fox Wedding"). The sunshower fox wedding was also mentioned in a 1732 bunraku puppet play Dan no Ura Kabuto Chronicles (壇浦兜軍記; "The Chronicles of a Helmet of Dan no Ura"). [71]

As always, there are regional variations. In agricultural regions the sunshower version of kitsune no yomeiri was a good omen, promising rain for the crops and many children for any new brides lucky enough to be married on such a day.

During the Edo period, numerous writers included first-hand accounts of kitsune no yomeiri, including those of people wandering into the middle of them and participating. The Kan'ei period (寛永, 1624-1645) Konjaku Kaidanshu (「今昔妖談集」, "Kaidan Collection of Times Past"), the Kansei period (寛政, 1789-1801) Kaidanro no Tsue (「怪談老の杖」, "A Cane for Old Kaidan Folk"), and the Bunsei period (文政, 1818-1830) Edo Chirihiroi (「江戸塵拾」, "Picked up Dust from the Edo Period") all contained first-hand accounts of encounters with kitsune no yomeiri.
Some of the stories can be grim. A tale set in the Warring States period (1467-1568) tells of a young bride who suddenly fell sick and died. The night of her burial, a foxfire procession passed over her gravesite. Some are more uplifting, like the tale of an old couple who cared for a wounded fox pup, and many years later were honored guests at the fox's wedding procession. Most stories, however, are of the voyeur nature—just a glimpse caught by a frightened soul hiding behind a tree when the wedding train passes by. [72]

Kitsune no yomeiri remains a popular aspect of Japanese culture and folklore. Many towns hold such festivals re-creating the famous processions. Most of these festivals are

[71] https://hyakumonogatari.com/2013/07/19/kitsune-no-yomeiri-the-fox-wedding/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
[72] https://hyakumonogatari.com/2013/07/19/kitsune-no-yomeiri-the-fox-wedding/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

modern—coming from the 1950s to as recently as the 1990s—and were started as tourist attractions to draw people into town. Local politicians and businesses participate in the festival, and sometimes the fox bride and groom are selected as a sort of "beauty pageant." [73]

[73] https://hyakumonogatari.com/2013/07/19/kitsune-no-yomeiri-the-fox-wedding/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

3. Main characteristics and behavior of the fox

The main magical ability of foxes is the ability to transform into a human. In the collection Otogi-boko (「御伽婢子」, "*Hand Puppets*") Asai Ryoi has a story called "The Story of a Fox That Absorbed the Energy of a Daimyō." It describes in detail the process of transformation of a fox into a human:

> "Walking along the banks of the Shinohara River in the dim light of a misty autumn evening, he (the main character of the story) saw a fox who was praying furiously, turning to the north, standing on its hind legs, with a human skull on its head. Every time the fox bowed in prayer, the skull fell from its head. However, the fox put it back and continued to pray, facing north, as before. The skull rolled many times, but in the end it was firmly entrenched on the head. The fox recited the prayer about a hundred times". [74]

After that, the fox turns into a young girl of about seventeen or eighteen years old.

Not all foxes could turn into humans. W.A. Casal writes the following:

> "The older the fox, the greater its strength. The most dangerous are those who have reached the age of eighty or one hundred years. Those who have crossed this threshold are already admitted to heaven, they become "heavenly foxes". Their fur takes on a golden hue, and instead of one tail, nine grow. They serve in the halls of the Sun and the Moon and know all the secrets of nature." [75]

In the play by the kabuki theater "Yoshitsune and a thousand sakura" (義経千本桜), the main character, a magic fox, says that her parents were white foxes, each of which was a thousand years old.

In Ogita Ansei's story "About the Werewolf Cat" (「猫又」, "Nekomata"), it says: "In the sacred books say that a thousand-year-old fox can turn into a beauty, a hundred-year-old mouse into a witch. An old cat can become a werewolf with a forked tail." [76]

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[74] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 78.
[75] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 8.
[76] Огита Ансэй 荻田安静 "О кошке-оборотне". 猫又 ("Нэкомата"). Пер. В. Мазурик // Пионовый фонарь. Москва, 1991.

Can younger foxes take on human form?

Yes, but they don't always do it well. In "Notes from Boredom" Kenko-Hoshi tells the story of a young fox who entered the Gojo Imperial Palace and looked through a bamboo curtain at a game of go: "From behind the curtain, a fox peeked out in human form. - Ah! It's a fox! - everyone rustled, and the fox, in confusion, took off. It must have been an inexperienced fox, and she did not succeed in reincarnation as it should." [77]

This aspect directly resonates with Chinese beliefs:

> "In the ideas of the Chinese, there were several, if so to speak, the age categories of magic foxes. The lowest are young foxes, capable of magic, but limited in transformations; further - foxes, capable of a wider range of transformations: they can become both an ordinary woman and a beautiful virgin, or they can become a man. In human form, a fox can enter into relationships with real people, seduce them, fool them so that they forget about everything <...> the fox, as a result, can significantly increase its magical capabilities, which allows it to achieve longevity, and maybe even immortality, and thereby fall into the last, highest category - millennial foxes, become a saint, approach the heavenly world (it is often said about such a fox that it is white or nine-tailed), having left the vain world people." [78]

The belief that some particularly powerful fox can retain the human shape for a long time, unnoticed by others except under circumstances most distressing to the animal, is equally strong in China and Japan. Foxes can exert a propitious influence, but mostly it is a nefarious one. Almost all of them transmogrify themselves into beautiful women who, through their charm, attract and fascinate their lord and master, sometimes cleverly maneuvering for his advancement, more often causing his downfall because of excesses and neglect of duty. Otherwise they will behave exactly like humans, and mostly they are witty and cajoling lovers: especially those who, as foxes, possess nine tails; and "a fox with nine tails," a *kyubi-no kitsune* (九尾の狐) has remained a proverbial synonym for a flatterer. [79]

A most frequent "trick" of the fox is to take on human shape. For this he needs a

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[77] Кенко-Хоси Ё. 吉田兼好. "Записки от скуки". 徒然草 ("Цурэдзурэгуса"). Москва: Азбука классика, 2007.

[78] Алимов И.А. Китайский культ лисы и «Удивительная встреча в западном Шу» Ли Сянь-Миня // Петербургское востоковедение. Вып. 3. Санкт-Петербург, 1993. Стр. 232–233.

[79] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 28.

skull—preferably human—and a few old bones, of horse or cow, which he places on his head and holds in his mouth. He first goes through some mysterious performances, and decks himself out with leaves and grasses. Then he faces the north-star, and "worships." His genuflections and obeisances begin slowly and circumspectly, but their motion gradually increases in rapidity, until finally the fox seems to perform an "Indian dance", and jumps towards the star. Yet the skull does not fall off. After a hundred acts of worship, the beast becomes able to transform himself into a masculine human being; he is now a *hito-kitsune*, but if he wants to be able to turn into a young and elegantly dressed girl it is essential that he constantly live near a grave-yard. [80] This human disguise may be transitory or semi-permanent. But only aged and wise foxes have power to act as people for a prolonged time; incidentally, age and wisdom do not imply benevolence. The "beginners" last long enough to perform their fooling play, and then suddenly disappear with an uncanny laugh. [81]

Finding a fox that has turned into a human is quite simple: she most often has a fox tail. In the legend about a fox named Kuzunoha (葛の葉), the mother of the famous wizard Abe no Seimei (安倍晴明, 921 A.D – 1005), the fox, transformed into a young beautiful woman, admired the flowers, but in admiration did not keep track of the fact that her tail became visible through the kimono's floors. He was noticed by her son, Abe no Seimei, who was seven years old. After that, his mother leaves the farewell poem and goes back to the forest, assuming her true appearance. In Izumi prefecture (和泉市), there is now a temple of Kuzunoha-Inari (葛の葉稲荷), built, according to legend, on the very spot where Kuzunoha left her farewell poem. But there are even more reliable ways to identify a fox. In a tale from Konjaku Monogatari called "Fox, wrapping As a wife," the main character unexpectedly meets at home not one, but two wives. He realizes that one of them is a fox. He begins to threaten both of them, the women burst into tears, but only when he firmly grabs the fox by the hand, as if he wants to tie it, - it breaks loose, takes on its true appearance and runs away. The author of the work himself gives advice: "The samurai was angry with the fox for fooling him. But it was too late. It was necessary to guess right away, so he himself is to blame. First of all, he had to bind both women, and the fox would eventually take its true form." [82]

Foxes are immediately recognized by dogs. For the first time, this idea is heard in a story from

[80] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 6.
[81] Ibid. P. 7.
[82] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 32.

Nihon Ryōiki - "The Word of the Fox and Her Son": the fox wife, utterly chasing a dog, takes on his true form and runs away into the forest.

Davis Hadland notes that the word "dog" written on the child's forehead was a defense against the witchcraft of foxes and badgers. He also points out another way to identify a fox: "If the shadow of a female fox accidentally falls on the water, the fox will be reflected in it, and not a beautiful woman." [83]

An interesting way to identify a fox is pointed out by Lafcadio Hearn: "The fox cannot pronounce the word completely, only part of it: for example, "*Nishi ... Sa ...*" instead of "*Nishida-san*," "*de goza ...*" instead of "*de gozaimasu*" or "*uchi ... de*" instead of "*uchi desu ka*?". [84] The evolution of this way of recognizing a fox in modern society is reported by W.A. Casal:

> "According to popular belief, the fox cannot say the word "*moshi-moshi*". [85] Fox says "*moshi*" once, and then something incomprehensible, or else says the next "*moshi*" after a while. According to popular explanation, the habit of saying "*moshi-moshi*" at the beginning of a telephone conversation is precisely the way to make sure that your interlocutor is not a fox."

A good means to find out whether one is meeting a real person or a spooky fox, is to pinch oneself. If one feels the pain, that is all right; but if one feels nothing, the "person" is undoubtedly a bewitching apparition. One other efficacious way to detect a *bakemono* fox is to depose a fried rat on the road along which the suspicious person comes: the animal is so fond of fried rats, that he will immediately abandon his prank and pounce upon the tidbit. [86]

What is the reason foxes take on human form? In the already mentioned story by Asai Ryoi "The Story of the Fox, Absorbing the Energy of the Daimyō" says that the fox was expelled by the priest, who noticed that the samurai in love with the transformed fox looked bad. He tells him the following: "A spell has been put on you. Your energy is consumed by a monster, and your life is in danger if we do not immediately do something. I am never wrong in such matters." Priest later denounces the fake girl, and she turns into a fox with a skull on her head, appearing in the same image in which she was transformed into a human many years ago. You

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[83] Дэвис, Мифы и легенды Японии. Ibid. Стр. 87.
[84] Hearn. Ibid. P. 331. The full phrase translates as "Is Mr. Nishida at home now?"
[85] The Japanese greeting used during phone calls. Wikipedia.
[86] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 8.

can see that vampirism is not alien to foxes. [87]

The most dangerous transformation, people believe, is when the fox becomes a Buddhist priest. Perhaps only the very powerful beasts can adopt this saintly disguise.

The same motive can be traced in Chinese beliefs about foxes. I.A. Alimov writes:

> "It is the marital relationship with a person that is the ultimate goal of the fox, since in the process of sexual relations she receives his vital energy from a man, which she needs to improve her magical capabilities <...> outwardly this is expressed in a sharp weight loss ("skin and bones"). And general weakness. Ultimately, a person dies from exhaustion of vitality." [88]

However, it is believed that from a marriage with a fox, children are born, endowed with wonderful abilities. In addition, despite the tendency towards vampirism of Japanese magic foxes, their husbands often sincerely grieve for their beloved ones, whom they left, and this sadness is explained by human reasons, and by no means bewitched.

When a fox's weird yelping—*kon! kon!*— is heard at night, people crawl deep under their covers, and pray that the beast may leave them in peace and pass on. (Some people however say that the *"kon, kon!"* sound is not dangerous, as that is the one of a "good", i.e. ordinary fox; the "bad" one yelps *"kai! kai!"*. In some parts of Japan, again, it is believed that some divine white fox cries *kon-kon* when in a good mood, but *kan-kan* when ill-tempered). [89]

In addition, the fox knows how to turn into different things, into a belly and plants. Konjaku Monogatari's "The Story of a Fox Who Was Killed While Pretending to be a Tree" tells how the nephew of the Shinto high priest Nakadayu and his servant saw a huge cedar, which had never been there before, while walking. They decide to check whether it is a real cedar or not, and shoot it with a bow. In the next moment, the tree disappears, and in its place afterwards they find a dead fox with two arrows in its side.

B.Kh. Chamberlain recounts a highly publicized case in 1889. It was the story of a fox taking the form of a train on the Tokyo-Yokohama line. The ghost train was moving in the direction of the present and, it seemed, was about to collide with it. The driver of the real train, seeing

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[87] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 83.
[88] Алимов, Китайский культ лисы. Ibid. Стр. 233.
[89] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 2.

that all his signals were useless, increased his speed, and at the moment of the collision the the phantom suddenly disappeared, and in his place was a knocked down fox. [90]

An "explanation" of sorts may be found in a superstition reported from the interior of Kyūshū (九州) in the very south, still a few years ago. One interesting belief is that frequently a fox train may be seen going along the railroad tracks. It consists of a row of many lights. This is because when the railroad was built, several fox homes were destroyed: so today the spirits of these foxes occasionally form such a ghostly train. People are rather afraid of all such manifestations of the fox spirit. [91]

Intermarriage with a fox-possessing family, according to Hearn, is out of the question; and many a beautiful and accomplished girl in Izumo prefecture cannot secure a husband because of the popular belief that her family harbours foxes. It affects the value of real estate in Izumo to the amount of hundreds of thousands. The land of a family supposed to have foxes cannot be sold at a fair price. People are afraid to buy it; for it is believed the foxes may ruin the new proprietor.
Amazingly, as late as the 1950s there was a case in Shimane prefecture (島根県), where fox belief was particularly strong, of a couple committing double suicide when they were forbidden to marry because girl came from a fox-owning family.

In addition to transformations, foxes also know how to fool and bewitch people and animals. As Kiyoshi Nozaki notes, "it is believed that when a fox bewitches people, the number of its victims is limited to one or two." However, this rule does not always work. In the story of Ihara Saikaku (井原西鶴, 1642 – 1693) it is told how a rice merchant, walking along a mountain path in a deserted place, saw a whole gathering of white foxes. Without much thought, he threw a pebble at them and hit one fox right in the head - he died on the spot. After that, the foxes took revenge on a merchant himself and his family members for a long time, presenting themselves to them either as guards of the steward, or at the time of the funeral ceremony. [92]

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[90] Chamberlain B.H. Things Japanese: Being notes on various subjects connected with Japan for the use of travellers and others. London: Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1905. P. 122-123.
[91] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P.12-13.
[92] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 136.

The fox isn't the only animal yokai that can shape-shift, but they have a special predilection for appearing as a beautiful woman in order to deceive human men. Oddly, in this case they don't always have bad intentions. As Lafcadio Hearn tells it:

> "The fox does not always appear in the guise of a woman for evil purposes. There are several stories, and one really pretty play, about a fox who took the shape of a beautiful woman, and married a man, and bore him children—all out of gratitude for some favour received—the happiness of the family being only disturbed by some odd carnivorous propensities on the part of the offspring."

Fox enchantment is proverbial in Japan. In Genji Monogatari there is an episode in which Prince Genji is mistaken for a fox werewolf due to the fact that he wears a normal hunting dress, but behaves too courteously for a man of that rank. Genji himself calls himself a fox in a love conversation with a lady: "Indeed," Genji smiled, "which of us is a werewolf fox?" "Do not resist my charms, " he said affectionately, and the woman obeyed him, thinking: "Well, apparently, so be it." [93]

But it is not only at night that the fox manifests his power for mischief: at high noon he may tempt you to go where you are sure to get killed, or frighten you into going by creating some apparition or making you imagine that you feel an earthquake. Consequently the old-fashioned peasant, on seeing anything extremely queer, is slew to credit the testimony of his own eyes. [94]An example might be the case presented by Lafcadio Hearn about peasants, which might be the weirdest account which shows how incredibly deep the belief in fox bewitching was even a couple of generations ago:

> "The most interesting and valuable witness of the stupendous eruption of Bandai San in 1888"一 which blew the top of the huge volcano and devastated an area of twenty seven square miles, levelling forests, turning rivers from their courses, and burying a number of villages with all their inhabitants—"was an old peasant who had watched the whole cataclysm as unconcernedly as if he had been looking at a drama. He saw a black column of ashes and steam rise to a height of twenty thousand feet and spread out at its summit in the form of an umbrella, blotting out the sun. Then he felt a strange rain pouring upon him—hotter than the water of a bath. Then all became black, and he felt the mountain beneath him shaking at its roots, and heard the crash of

[93] Мурасаки С. 紫式部. "Повесть о Гэндзи". 源氏物語 ("Гэндзи-моногатари") Пер. С.Д.Татьяна-Львовна. Т. 1. Москва: Гиперион, 2010. Стр. 70.
[94] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 234-235.

> thunder that seemed like the sound of the breaking of a world. But he remained quite still until everything was over. He had made up his mind that all he saw and heard was a delusion wrought by the witchcraft of a fox." [95]

However, there are a few stories where vixen became faithful wives, and it is said that the very name for fox, *kitsune*, means "come and sleep," and is derived from such a tale dating back to the year 545. [96] A certain Ono longed to marry the ideal of feminine beauty, and waited for his luck far longer than usual. At last he encountered a wonderful maiden while crossing a moor, and married her. They lived happily, and in due course a son was born to them—and at the same time Ono's dog delivered a pup. As the latter grew up, it became more and more hostile to the mistress, snarling and frightening her; yet Ono refused to kill the dog. One day it attacked his wife so fiercely that in despair she resumed her proper fox-shape, jumped over the fence, and disappeared in the moor. Ono was crushed. But he loved his wife in spite of her fox identity, and "because she was the mother of his son." So he shouted after her that whatever she was he wanted her to *kitsune*; and so, every night she stole into the hut and slept in his arms. [97]

It's not a bad idea to be nice to foxes if you can, because they can be grateful (and given everything they are capable of, you probably would rather have them on your side). They will even bring little gifts, as best they can. Lafcadio Hearn tells of a man who saw a fox being chased by dogs, and chased the dogs away with his umbrella:

> "On the following evening he heard someone knock at his door, and on opening the door he saw a very pretty girl standing there, who said to him: "Last night I should have died but for your august kindness. I know not how to thank you enough: this is only a pitiable little present." And she laid a small bundle at his feet and went away. He opened the bundle and found two beautiful ducks and two pieces of silver money—those long, heavy, leaf-shaped pieces of money—each worth ten or twelve dollars— such as are now eagerly sought for by collectors of antique things. After a little while, one of the coins changed before his eyes into a piece of grass; the other was always good." [98]

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[95] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 16.
[96] Ibid. P. 16-17.
[97] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 16-17.
[98] Linda Lombardi, Kitsune: The Divine/Evil Fox Yokai, 2014. https://www.tofugu.com/japan/kitsune-yokai-fox/ (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

Indeed, the gratitude of foxes is a common theme in both folk tales and setsuwa collections; one tale from the Konjaku Monogatari (27.40) concludes with the moral message that, if foxes are capable of genuine demonstrations of gratitude, then surely human beings can do the same. [99]

Sometimes, again, a fox tries to assist some poor human to the best of his ability and supernatural powers; only, he expects some degree of gratitude for it. There is that story of an old man in Owari province (尾張国) who laboriously dug a well. A kind-hearted fox decided to help him, transformed himself into a strong young man, and finished the job. But instead of nicely thanking him, the old man was full of complaints: so the fox cursed the waters in the well.
Or a fox may bestow on a human the gift of "hearing ears," so that he may understand the language of bird and beast. Of course that enables him to become wealthy, and respected for his wisdom. A condition however is that he should not divulge this knowledge; if he does, he will suffer the direct disasters. And not infrequently a man is "misled" by a spook-fox simply to make him lose time, so that he should not be in a certain place, his destination, when some such calamity as fire, flood or earthquake destroys that place. This, however, seems to happen only to very good old men. [100]

Foxes have no fixed code of ethics, and have proved themselves untrustworthy servants. They may initiate and long maintain the prosperity of some family; but should some grave misfortune fall upon that family in spite of the efforts of its seventy-five invisible retainers, then these will suddenly flee away, taking all the valuables of the household along with them. And all the fine gifts that foxes bring to their masters are things which have been stolen from somebody else. It is therefore extremely immoral to keep foxes. It is also dangerous for the public peace, inasmuch as a fox, being a goblin, and devoid of human susceptibilities, will not take certain precautions. He may steal the next-door neighbour's purse by night and lay it at his own master's threshold, so that if the next-door neighbour happens to get up first and see it there is sure to be a row. [101]

Another evil habit of foxes is that of making public what they hear said in private, and taking

[99] Bathgate, The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture. Ibid. P. 78.
[100] Ibid. P. 18.
[101] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 289.

it upon themselves to create undesirable scandals. For example, a fox attached to the family of Kobayashi-san (小林さん) hears his master complain about his neighbour Nakayama-san (中山さん), whom he secretly dislikes. Therewith the zealous retainer runs to the house of Nakayama-san, and enters into his body, and torments him grievously, saying: "I am the retainer of Kobayashi-san to whom you did such-and-such a wrong; and until such time as he command me to depart, I shall continue to torment you." [102]

3.1. Fox-Possession

Apart from the temporary bewitching pranks of their mummerry, the goblin-foxes can be far more seriously harmful to people by taking up their abode in a human body. "After one thousand years, foxes can enter into direct communication with Heaven itself, and prey upon the souls of men" it is believed. This so-called "fox-possession" is one of the most common nervous diseases of Japan, if on the wane with advancing education. The derangement usually begins with the victim meeting a fox. Dr. John Berry, one of the earliest physicians to come to Japan, in 1872 recounted his experience as follows:

> "Superstition prevailed among the people at large, both as to cause and treatment of the disease. Fox possession was an ailment which I frequently met at the clinics—the story generally being, When returning home at night my lantern went out. Confused, I lost my way, when a light appeared in the distance which I took to be my home. I went toward it, falling and confused, for there was no road, but the light receded as I went, and finally disappeared. A beautiful girl came, and to my great relief, guided me to my home, when she suddenly vanished. Such "possession" patients were usually anaemic, anxious, foreboding, evil, sleepless, and nervously depressed. Tonics, general hygiene and the intelligent co-operation of the patient usually resulted in a cure, though the priests were about as successful in such cases as I was. They would gravely direct the patient to go to a distant shrine, make certain offerings, recite certain prayers, and then return. "You will be cured—and usually they were." [103]

[102] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 232.
[103] Ibid. P. 31.

Foxes were also credited with the ability to inhabit humans. This condition was usually called *"kitsune-tsuki"*, or *"kitsune-tai"*- obsession with a fox. B.Kh. Chamberlain writes about this as follows:

> "Obsession with a fox is a form of nervous disorder or mania that is often observed in Japan. Penetrating into a person, sometimes through the chest, but more often through the gap between the finger and the nail, the fox lives its own life, separate from the personality of the person in whom it has moved. The result is a person's double being and his double consciousness. The possessed hears and understands everything that the fox says or thinks from the inside; they often engage in loud and fierce arguments, and the fox speaks in a voice that is completely different from the usual voice of this person." [104]

Lafcadio Hearn describes the fox-possessed as follows:

> "The madness of those in whom the fox possessed. Sometimes they run naked through the streets, screaming desperately. Sometimes they lie on their backs and yapping like foxes, foaming at the mouth. Sometimes the obsessed suddenly grows a strange tumor under the skin, which seems to be living its own life. Poke it with a needle and it will immediately move. And even with force it is impossible to squeeze it so that it does not slip between the fingers." (See P.6).

It is said that the possessed often speak and even write in languages they knew nothing about before the foxes took over. They only eat what foxes are believed to love: *tofu* (bean curd), *abura-age* (油揚げ), *azuki-meshi* (小豆飯), etc. - and they absorb all this with great eagerness, claiming that it is not they who are hungry, but the foxes that have settled in them." [105]

It does not infrequently happen that the victims of fox-possession are cruelly treated by their relatives—being severely burned and beaten in the hope that the fox may be thus driven away. Then the *yamabushi* (山伏, lit. "one who prostrates himself on the mountain") or a hermit is sent for—the exorciser. [106] The exorciser argues with the fox, who speaks through the mouth of the possessed. When the fox is reduced to silence by religious argument upon the wickedness of possessing people, he usually agrees to go away on condition of being supplied

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[104] Chamberlain, Things Japanese. P. 123.
[105] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 324-325.
[106] Yamabushi are Japanese mountain ascetic hermits.

with plenty of *tofu* or other food; and the food promised must be brought immediately to that particular Inari temple of which the fox declares himself a retainer. For the possessing fox, by whomsoever sent, usually confesses himself the servant of a certain Inari though sometimes even calling himself the God. As soon as the possessed has been freed from the possessor, he falls down senseless, and remains for a long time prostrated. And it is said, also, that he who has once been possessed by a fox will never again be able to eat any of those things which foxes like. [107]

The story of the fox's invasion of man is found in Nihon Ryōiki (scroll 3, story two). A sick person comes to the monk Eigo and asks him to be cured. For many days, Eigo tried to expel the disease, but the patient did not get better. And then, "vowing to cure him at all costs, [Eigo] continued to cast spells. Then the spirit took possession of the sick, and he said: "I am a fox and will not yield to you. Monk, stop fighting me." [Eigo] asked, "What's the matter?" [Spirit] replied, "This man killed me in my last birth, and I take revenge on him. When he dies, he will be reborn as a dog and bite me." The amazed monk tried to instruct [the spirit] on the right path, but he did not give in and tortured [the patient] to death." [108]

A very famous spot for the curing of fox-possession is the Honmyō-ji (本妙寺), a temple of the Nichiren sect (日蓮), in Kumamoto prefecture (熊本県), where the unfortunate patients, not so long ago, used to line the way hoping for deliverance. However, most Nichiren temples are good for fox cures: it is said that the saintly founder, Nichiren, deliberately made use of the fox superstition "because its wide spread made its converts feel at home, and it was very congruent with the noisy fanaticism which he cultivated as the distinguishing mark of his sect." The priests at any rate are deemed facile princeps at the art of healing the *kitsune-tsuki*. "The usual procedure followed is for the holy man to upbraid the fox in his sternest tones for being in a place he has no legal right to. This treatment may continue for a matter of some weeks or so, the length of the treatment probably depending on the length of the purse of the patient or the patient's relatives," as an anonymous commentator some thirty years ago cynically thought. "All this time the fox will argue with the priest from his own vulpine point of view, mimicking the voice of his victim generally in a harsh, dry, cracked sort of voice. Ultimately the fox himself appears to get tired of the whole proceedings, and is eventually

[107] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 236-237.
[108] Нихон Рё:ики 日本霊異記 ("Японские легенды о чудесах"). Свитки 1-й, 2-й и 3-й. Пер. А.Н.Мещерякова. Санкт-Петербург: Гиперион, 1995, Стр. 175.

cajoled or bribed to leave his unfortunate victim by the offering of certain foods to be placed before the altar or shrine of a certain temple at a certain time." [109]

Accounts of fox possession present a similar gamut of permutations, from the exorcism of dangerous spirits to their appeasement and the creation of tutelary relationships. Foxes are renown as both mischievous and vengeful creatures, and possession is understood as a basic mechanism by which they wreak havoc on the lives of human beings. A particularly dramatic account appears in the 12th-century Fusō Ryakuki (「扶桑略記」), describing the possession of an empress some 250 years before. According to the text, the venerable abbot was summoned to perform an exorcism, a ceremony that lasted for three days straight:

> "On the morning of the fourth day the Empress cried aloud, bent her body and rolled on the floor so violently that the bedroom nearly collapsed. In the meantime there appeared from the north-west corner of the bed curtain a fox-spirit (*reiko*) which anxiously ran to and fro in all directions. The Prime Minister and all the others who were present trembled with fear and quite lost their presence of mind. Then the abbot read the Salvation Mantra, at which point the house stopped shaking and the fox disappeared." [110]

In the Heian era, fox obsession was considered a kind of disease. Even then it was believed that foxes are of different ranks, depending on their strength. When a fox of a lower rank takes possession of a person, he simply starts shouting something like: *"I am Inari-kami-sama!"* or *"Give me an adzuki-meshi!"* When a person is possessed by a top-ranked fox, it is very difficult to understand. The person looks sick and lethargic, he spends most of the time in oblivion, sometimes only coming to his senses. Despite this, at night the possessed cannot sleep, and constant supervision is needed for him, since the fox's victim will try to commit suicide. Almost unchanged, the belief about the obsession with the fox reached the beginning of the twentieth century. If a person fell ill with something and had symptoms such as delirium, hallucinations and morbid interest in something, then such a disease was attributed

[109] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P .32-33.
[110] Bathgate, The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture. Ibid. P. 94-95.

to the obsession with a fox. Moreover, as noted by Kiyoshi Nozaki, any disease that was difficult to cure was considered *kitsune-tai* and monks were invited instead of doctors. [111]

Some people with mental health problems simply began to feign obsession with the fox when they heard that they might have one. This phenomenon is not at all surprising when you remember that in Japanese society, almost all unexplained phenomena were considered fox tricks. Therefore, in case of a mysterious illness, the fox was also remembered in the first place.

The abnormal behavior known as fox-possession, was in Inoue's opinion a clear example of mental illness. [112]

As Kawamura Kunimitsu (川村邦光, b. 1950) points out, among the common folk the term fox-possession was used to designate a condition that was inexplicable and incomprehensible. It was *fushigi*. As such, it was a problem that belonged to a supernatural discourse that only those qualified in supernatural communication could treat. Shamans and faith healers were the ones usually called upon. [113]

The reinscription of fox-possession began with German medicine. The first "scientific" study of fox-possession was conducted by the German doctor Erwin O. E. Von Bealz, who had lectured on psychiatry at Tokyo Imperial University in 1879. His 1885 paper, "Theories on Fox-Possession Illness," inspired similar studies by Japanese counterparts throughout the 1890s and early 1900s. A notable trait of these new studies from the point of view of methodological approach was the abstraction of the concrete, experiential conditions of fox-possession by the use of new analytical terms with which to refer to the disorder. The fox-possession illness had been in use since early Meiji, and alopecanthropy, or the delusion that one has become a fox, coined on the model of lycanthropy, the delusion that one has become a wolf, was introduced by one of the first Japanese professors of psychiatry at Tokyo University in 1892. [114]

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[111] Nozaki, Kitsune: Japan's fox of mystery, romance and humor. Ibid. P. 215.
[112] Inoue, Yōkaigaku. Ibid. 4:1136.
[113] Kawamura Kunimitsu 川村邦光. Genshisuru kindai kūkan 幻視する近代空間. Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 1990. P. 74.
[114] Figal, Civilization and Monsters. Ibid. P. 88.

Much in the same vein as Inoue, Kuni Hidemitsu (邦秀光) argued that mental illness of individuals would ruin the economy and productivity of the nation, so it should be dealt with as a national concern within national institutions. With the health of the nation thus in mind, he became interested in fox-possession, and his approach to it had a particular slant toward women as (re)producers of Japanese citizens. His 1902 paper "On Fox-Possession" was first published in Fujin Eisei Zasshi (「婦人衛生雑誌」, "Women's hygiene journal") and then delivered as a lecture at the Women's Hygiene Association in Tokyo. In it he identified fox-possession as a type of depressive persecution complex related to hysteria. Kawamura reads Kuni's emphasis on fox-possession qua hysteria as an example of what Foucault has described in the Western context as "the hysterization of women," whose health and mental and sexual hygiene were increasingly handled by a psychiatry that surveilled and administered female minds and sexual desire. [115]

The treatment of fox-possession illness that village shamans practiced and the treatment that early Japanese psychiatry administered differed not only in theory but also in the assumptions concerning its cure. Under folk practice, fox-possession was assumed to be curable. The policies of Meiji psychiatry, on the other hand, acted as if it were not. Rather than being treated until they returned to a "normal" state, those diagnosed as afflicted by the illness were shut away in asylums, essentially privately run prisons for deviants and undesirables, to protect the health of the nation. [116]

For all these reasons, and, doubtless many more, people believed to have foxes are shunned. As a rule, Izumo girls do not like to marry out of their own province; but the daughters of a *kitsune-mochi* must either marry into the family of another *kitsune-mochi*, or find a husband far away from the Province of the Gods. Rich fox-possessing families have not overmuch difficulty in disposing of their daughters by one of the means above indicated; but many a fine sweet girl of the poorer *kitsune-mochi* is condemned by superstition to remain unwedded. It is not because there is none to love her and desirous of marrying her—young men who have passed through public schools and who do not believe in foxes. It is because popular superstition cannot be yet safely defied in country districts except by the wealthy. The consequences of such defiance would have to be borne, not merely by the husband, but by his

[115] Kawamura, Genshisuru. Ibid. P. 92.
[116] Figal, Civilization and Monsters. Ibid. P. 90.

whole family, and by all other families related thereunto. Which are consequences to be thought about!

Among men believed to have foxes there are some who know how to turn the superstition to good account. The country-folk, as a general rule, are afraid of giving offence to a kitsune-mochi, lest he should send some of his invisible servants to take possession of them. Accordingly, certain *kitsune-mochi* have obtained great ascendancy over the communities in which they live. In the town of Yonago (米子市), for example, there is a certain prosperous chonin whose will is almost law, and whose opinions are never opposed. He is practically the ruler of the place, and in a fair way of becoming a very wealthy man. All because he is thought to have foxes. [117]

Even as spirits may be differentiated by their motives or by the forms they assume, the manifestation of spirits in the human world all share a common mechanism—whether articulated through animal messengers, possession, omens, divination or a host of other means, the presence and desires of spirits are always expressed indirectly. Episodes of spirit-possession, for example, typically begin without any clear indication of who the spirit is or why it has taken possession of this particular individual at this particular time. Nor is it known how the possession will end. Will the spirit be expelled? Will a settlement be reached? Will the victim die? All that is clear is that the spirit will convey its message through a body other than its own, afflicting it with illness or speaking through its lips. The revelation of spirits, in other words, constitutes a particular sort of sign, one in which the tenuous connection between signifier and signified, medium and message is frequently exemplified by the shapeshifting of figures like the fox. [118]

The possessed person hears and understands everything that the fox inside says or thinks; and the two often engage in a loud and violent dispute, the fox speaking in a voice altogether different from that which is natural to the individual. The only difference between the cases of possession mentioned in the Bible and those observed in Japan is that here it is almost exclusively women that are attacked—mostly women of the lower classes. Among the predisposing conditions may be mentioned a weak intellect, a superstitious turn of mind, and

[117] Hearn, Glimpses of an Unfamiliar Japan. Ibid. P. 238.
[118] Bathgate, The Fox's Craft in Japanese Religion and Culture. Ibid. P. 95-96.

such debilitating diseases as, for instance, typhoid fever. Possession never occurs except in such subjects as have heard of it already, and believe in the reality of its existence. [119]

[119] Casal, The Goblin Fox and Badger and Other Witch Animals of Japan. Ibid. P. 34.

4. *Kitsune* as an example of a great adaptation and imitation to the modern world

The "boom" of *yōkai* in our days can be explained by people's fear of the "unknown" in the unpredictable world. That's why it makes *yōkai* an extremely important instrument not only for investigating contemporary world culture, but also for understanding the archetypes of the «collective unconscious» of modern society as a whole.

We do not see what is happening in the dark or right behind us. And such emerging anxiety of the unknown gives significance to our monsters. Even after looking back at history, we can see that there was a surge in the popularity of youkai in society when the country was restless. People are not afraid of what is next to them, but what they cannot see.

Trying to control this anxiety, people start to name, to explain, to revere what scares them. In this way they calm themselves down. Fear and anxiety before the unknown will never change, no matter what year this is. And so *yōkai* who are the personification of this fear and anxiety become very important tools for the study of culture. In addition, *yōkai* are born in this way and vary from age to age, from region to region, from folklore to folklore, from culture to culture. Apparently there are no places where they do not permeate.

Shazhinbatyn Ariunaa, Candidate of Philosophy, Doctoral Candidate of the Department of History anthropological teachings of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences in the article "Main characteristics personality of the Japanese," based on the opinion of the professor of the University of Nihon Miyagi Otoya (宮城音弥, 1908-2005), describes the formation of the "national character" of the Japanese as a synthesis of carriers of two types of temperaments: cyclothymic and schizothymia (with a noticeable predominance second). [120] Personality types with schizotypal traits (far from reality, uncommunicative, prone to neuroses) appeared on the Japanese Islands a long time ago, but even today it forms the basis of the Japanese temperament. [121] In crisis situations strong characters show a tendency to paranoia, uncompromising - to hysteria." Approaching this problem from the angle of psychoanalysis as a method of diagnosis and treatment of neuroses and hysteria (as mentioned at the very beginning of the article), you begin to understand that the unhealthy passion for the sweet

[120] Мияги Отоя 宮城音弥 Амэрикадзин то нихондзин アメリカ人と日本人 ("Американцы и японцы"). Токио, 1976. Цит. по: Шажинбатын Ариунаа. Основные характеристики личности японца. Электронные журналы издательства Notabene, 2014.
[121] Ibid. P. 195.

horror of the *kaidans* among the Japanese does not seem to be accidental. This is how a specific safety valve works, freeing the mind from horror and anxiety - before in the face of a formidable and unforgiving nature, now - also in front of "unknown" in the unstable modern world and uncertainty about the future. [122]

Kitsune here, might be an example of how far Japanese people went to actually bestow the fox an ability to transform and to live as a creature among us and to be an object to worship. It is a combination of modernity and eternal-like ability to preserve the traditional sense of living and believing in superstition, which sometimes seems to be pretty normal for Japan, and can be an object to various discoveries and further academic works.

[122] Мияги Отоя 宮城音弥 Амэрикадзин то нихондзин アメリカ人と日本人 ("Американцы и японцы"). Ibid. P. 206.

CONCLUSION

From the goals that were set at the beginning of the work, the following conclusions were made by the author:

- *Yōkai* is a phenomenon which is originally connected with the fear of the unknown. Collectively they are a range of mythological beings, such as spirits, monsters, fairy creatures that can appear at dawn or dusk. An interesting thing to consider about them is that they have a different level of perception in regards to certain time frames. Nowadays *yōkai* can be something a mother would fear when her child stays on a playground till the dark. However in ancient times, as Komatsu Kazuhiko hypothesized, the symbolic control of monsters was an important pillar of the shōgunate's ideological foundations. They can try to take your life or stay indifferent. They can be harmful or useful from the perspective of different people. Created by human society, *yōkai* reflect the time in which people live, and therefore change over the centuries without having a fixed and definite form.
- *Kitsune* is an ancient magical fox, which has lived for hundreds of years and is capable of taking on a human form, induce illusions, take a person's life or help somebody who did a favour to it. The oldest recorded account of shapeshifting foxes in Japan can be found in the Nihon Ryōiki, a collection compiled in the early ninth century in Nara. Foxes and humans lived closely together in ancient Japan; this companionship gave rise to legends about these creatures. *Kitsune* has become closely associated with *Inari*. There are good and bad foxes. The *Inari*-fox is good, and the bad foxes *(nogitsune)* are afraid of the *Inari*-fox, according to Lafcadio Hearn. *Inari,* the name by which the Fox-God is generally known, signifies "Lord-of-Rice." The concept of the fox as a supernatural being has not been introduced into Japan before the 10th or 11th century. *Inari* can appear in human form, but most often appears in the form of a heavenly snow-white fox. Fox statues are an integral part of the temples in his honor and *Inari* is usually accompanied by two white nine-tailed foxes. Lafcadio Hearn points out that *Inari* was often worshiped as a healing deity; but more often he was considered a god of wealth. A common argument holds that the fox is a figure often linked by folklorists with agricultural fertility.
- Regarding the literature sources, there are beautiful and terrible stories about foxes. There are legends of foxes discussed by great scholars and known to every child in

Japan— such as the history of Tamamonomae, the favourite of the Emperor Toba, which was mentioned in the work inself. The most interesting part of fox-literature belongs to the stage, where the popular beliefs are often most humorously reflected—as in the excerpts from the comedy of Hiza-Kuruge, written by Jippensha Ikku. Another peculiar thing might be an event, when *kitsune* hold their wedding processions or kitsune no yomeiri. There are actually two phenomena referred to as kitsune no yomeiri—the bizarre weather and *kitsune-bi*, atmospheric ghost light. The 12th-century Konjaku Monogatari records an early mention of luminous lights in Kyōto and associates them with foxes.

- The main magical ability of foxes is the ability to transform into a human. According to Lafcadio Hearn, "The older the fox, the greater its strength. The most dangerous foxes are those who have reached the age of eighty or one hundred years." The reason for such behavior is the need for the energy that they might take from the human body; another reason is that they are keen on living with people and sometimes they want to live like them and have families with children. When possessed, the person might have the symptoms of mental diseases and many people tried to cure them with the help of shamans or traditional medicines.
- In the case of Japan we can assume that fear and anxiety before the unknown will never change, regardless of the year. And so *yōkai* who are the personification of this fear and anxiety become a very important probe for the study of culture.

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2. "Yako" (やこ), A part of Bakemono no e scroll (化物之繪, "Illustrations of Supernatural Creatures"), Brigham Young University, 17th-18th century. https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Yako_(fox)#/google_vignette (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

3. "Fushimi Inari Shrine" (伏見稲荷大社), Nomura Yoshimitsu (野村芳光, 1870-1958). Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1931. https://ukiyo-e.org/image/aggv/dscn1781 (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
4. "Kodama" (木魅), Toriyama Sekien (鳥山 石燕, 1712 – 1788). Scroll from the Gazu Hyakki Yagyō (画図百鬼夜行, "The Illustrated Night Parade of a Hundred Demons" or The Illustrated Demon Horde's Night Parade), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1776. https://collections.mfa.org/objects/528439/gazu-hyakki-yagyo-illustrated-night-procession-of-the-hun;jsessionid=1FD91D26145A8F6D29D10FDCEBEC5274?ctx=bb3f4e5d-030f-4d55-85d3-ce64680ac7c9&idx=10 (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

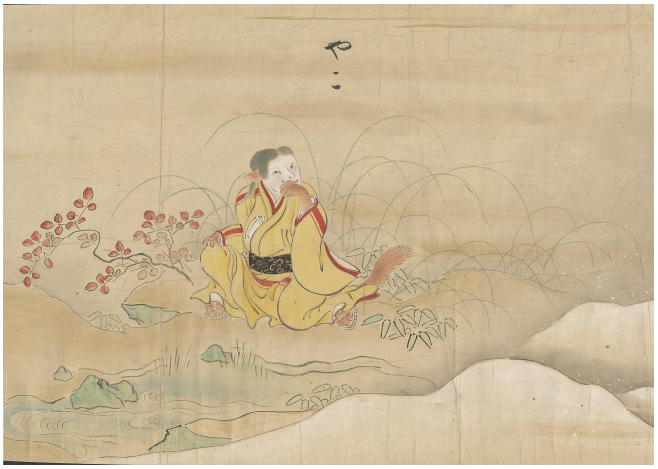
5. "Kitsune no Yomeiri" ("Fox's Wedding"), Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川國芳, 1798 – 1861). Mutual Art Online Auction, 1827-1840. https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/2-Works--Kitsune-no-yomeiri--Foxes--Wedd/B43AC9DBBC517610 (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
6. "Daji possessed by Nine Tailed Fox Spirit in China" Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川國芳, 1798 – 1861). B.W. Robinson Collection, 1849-1850. https://japanesegallery.com/kuniyoshi-utagawa-daji-possessed-by-the-nine-tailed-fox-spirit-in-china (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

ANNEX

Picture 1.

"Summer Evening" [123]

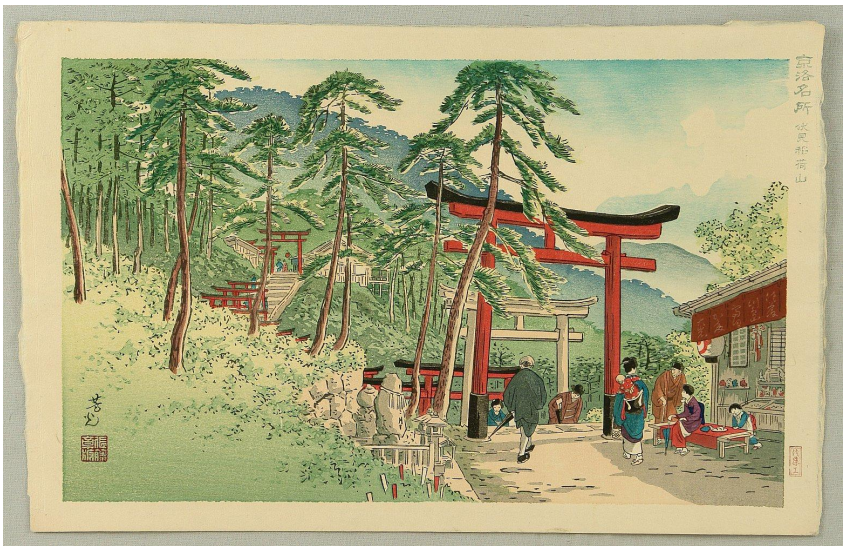
Picture 2.



"Yako" (やこ) [124]

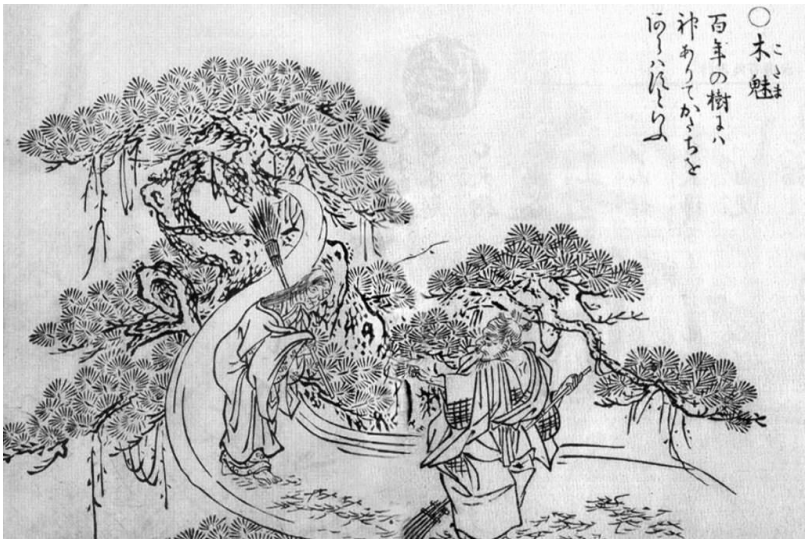
[123] Kansetsu Hashimoto (橋本関雪, 1883-1945). Adachi Museum of Art (足立美術館), 1941. https://www.adachi-museum.or.jp/en/archives/collection/hashimoto_kansetsu (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
[124] Nomura Yoshimitsu (野村芳光, 1870-1958). Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1931. https://ukiyo-e.org/image/aggv/dscn1781 (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

Picture 3.



"Fushimi Inari Shrine" (伏見稲荷大社) [125]

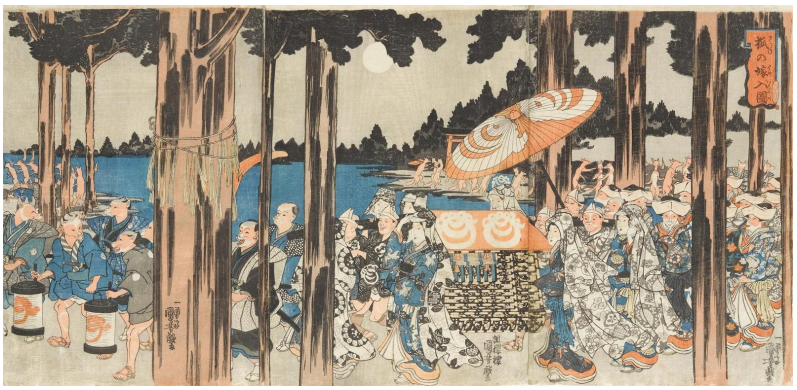
Picture 4.



"Kodama" (木魅) [126]

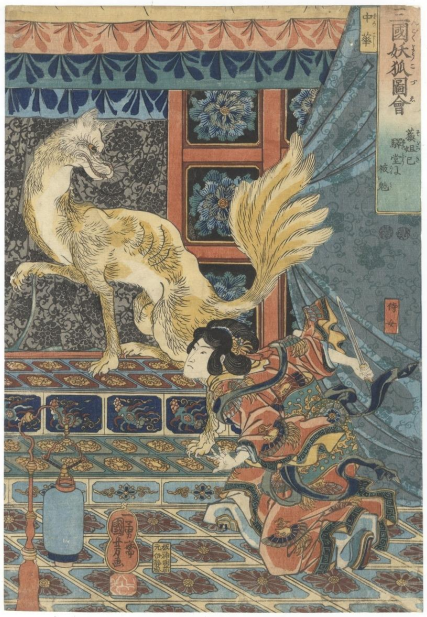
[125] Nomura Yoshimitsu (野村芳光, 1870-1958). Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, 1931. https://ukiyo-e.org/image/aggv/dscn1781 (Accessed on 9.05.2021).
[126] Toriyama Sekien (鳥山 石燕, 1712 – 1788). Scroll from the Gazu Hyakki Yagyō (画図百鬼夜行, "The Illustrated Night Parade of a Hundred Demons" or The Illustrated Demon Horde's Night Parade), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1776. https://collections.mfa.org/objects/528439/gazu-hyakki-yagyo-illustrated-night-procession-of-the-hun;

Picture 5.



"Kitsune no Yomeiri" ("Fox's Wedding") [127]

Picture 6.



"Daji possessed by Nine Tailed Fox Spirit in China" [128]

jsessionid=1FD91D26145A8F6D29D10FDCEBEC5274?ctx=bb3f4e5d-030f-4d55-85d3-ce64680ac7c9&idx=10 (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

[127] Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川國芳, 1798 – 1861). Mutual Art Online Auction, 1827-1840. https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/2-Works--Kitsune-no-yomeiri--Foxes--Wedd/B43AC9DBBC517610 (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

[128] Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川國芳, 1798 – 1861). B.W. Robinson Collection, 1849-1850. https://japanesegallery.com/kuniyoshi-utagawa-daji-possessed-by-the-nine-tailed-fox-spirit-in-china (Accessed on 9.05.2021).

SUMMARY

Japan is and has been for thousands of years a very spiritual nation that is influenced by three different religions as well as folklore and myth. The three main religions in Japan being Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, all three offer its followers different moral perspectives that in Japan meld with each other and the folklore that is dominated by strange creatures and horrific monsters. Japanese folklore is also populated by real animals that have been given special abilities and powers which make them a part of the supernatural world.

The *yōkai*, which are a great example of folklore, are made up of demons, shapeshifters, spirits, and all other sorts of various creatures. Like many myths from Europe and the Americas some of these supernatural creatures including *yōkai* have a real world animal equivalent. *Yōkai* are not only creatures, but can be gods as well. They appear in folktales, myths and legends much the same as werewolves, witches and vampires do in Europe.

During the Edo period the stories and legends would have been one of the main ways people knew about or were connected to these creatures because the period was marked by a decrease in religious activity. That is not to say that Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism were not present in Japanese society during this time but there was no state enforcement of religion, but the Edo government did require "all Japanese to be registered members of some recognized Buddhist sect." Religion offers answers to many of life's questions, in Japan however it was not only religion that offered answers to world events, *yōkai* do as well.

The fox has an interesting and complex place in Japanese folklore and legend, it became associated with the God of Rice, *Inari* in the 11th century. After this many of the evil doings of the fox can be attributed to this connection. The fox is an incredibly powerful creature that not only can transform itself but, "They have the power of infinite vision; they can hear everything and understand the secret thoughts of mankind generally."

Japanese myth and legends have been told for centuries and were used to teach moral and life lessons. They explain the world through supernatural means and entertainment.

These tales reveal a world full of supernatural creatures and monsters that terrorize the world we call reality. This reality is challenged by the one who is exposed to myths and legends. These myths and their reality allow for moral and life lessons to be taught in an entertaining

way which lends itself to their retelling before and after they were first written down in The Kojiki in 712 CE.

Thesis's main text consists of 50 pages.

DOKUMENTĀRĀ LAPA

Bakalaura darbs "Lapsas tēls un tā ietekme uz Japāņu folkloru" izstrādāts LU Humanitāro zinātņu fakultātes Āzijas studiju nodaļā.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

Autors: Darya Akhmedova _____ 10.05.2021.

Rekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai

Vadītājs: asoc. prof. Agnese Haijima_____10.05.2021.

Recenzents: _____

Darbs iesniegts Āzijas studiju nodaļā 2021. gada 10. maijā.

Komisijas sekretāre: lekt. Ildze Šķestere _____

Darbs aizstāvēts Āzijas studiju bakalaura gala pārbaudījuma komisijas sēdē

__.__.2021. prot. Nr. _____, vērtējums ___ (_____)

Komisijas sekretāre: lekt. Ildze Šķestere

Āzijas studiju BSP studiju metodiķe _____Natālija Ambrosova