

THE GOBLIN FOX AND BADGER
AND OTHER WITCH ANIMALS
OF JAPAN

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THE FOX

Foxes seem to have been considered uncanny, shrewd, supernatural animals all over the world, and every race has *Märchen* and parables concerning them. A Chinese apologue of the year 333 B.C. already tells us how the fox warned the tiger to be careful not to attack and eat him: "The Sovereign of Heaven has privileged me among all animals by giving me greater cunning than to others. Should you devour me, you would certainly displease him very much."

In China and Japan the mistrust in the living fox and its powers is even deeper than in Europe; yet far more dreaded still than the real animal is the spectral fox, perhaps the most important goblin of all. He is exceedingly dangerous and greedy. Luckily he is also cowardly, and priests and sorcerers have power to vanquish him—at least if sufficient inducement is forthcoming.

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, 202 B.C. to 221 A.D. 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*; a somewhat more definite reference to this type of magic foxes—some demoniacally powerful *reiko*, ghost-fox, or some almost as dangerous

koryô, haunting fox—appears in a slightly later story-book, the *Uji-shûi Monogatari*, 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-chô* and following periods, until the popular literature of the *Yedo* era (1600-1850, about) became replete with stories of such beasts of evil omen and of marvellous powers of transformation. During these several centuries the conviction that there are *bakemono-kitsune* has become so deeply ingrained in the Japanese that even in our enlightened times few people will venture to pass a lonely spot—especially a grave-yard or wood—at night. They openly admit their fear of being bewitched. Nobody is ashamed of it, and if an uncomprehending foreigner laughs at the superstition, examples are immediately forthcoming of “well-authenticated” cases, or at least of people who knew people whose friend was once fooled by a fox.¹ 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*

1) The Chinese, but not the Japanese, nevertheless use the name “Fox” as a family-name. It has been surmised that this is due to ancient totemism. Long after having completed this study on the Witch-animals of Japan, I had occasion to read a most interesting long article by Li Wei-tsu, “On the Cult of the Four Sacred Animals in the Neighbourhood of Peking” (in *Folklore Studies*, Vol. VII, Peking 1948). These “Four Animals”, considered as “Gods of Wealth”, are the Fox, the Snake, the Hedgehog and the Weasel, with at times the addition or substitution of the Rat; but there is a difference between the supernatural and the vulgar kind in each “family”. Many beliefs have their counterparts in Japan; many, also, go far deeper in China, especially also in regard to the invocations of these animal-spirits for help, through the medium of a magician-shaman. It would almost seem that in crossing to Japan the Chinese beliefs had been weakened, unless they have since expanded in China itself. Some of the Chinese animal-beliefs can be found in Japan applied to other, anthropomorphic deities.

when in a good mood, but *kan-kan* when ill-tempered. . . .) Many communities will not even use the word *kitsune* at night, fearing to "call" the powerful fox-demon;² they may use *inari* instead (the name of the deity whom, as we shall see, the foxes serve, and which connects them with the fertility of the fields and other advantages), or *tôka*, a less regular pronunciation of the same characters but sounding like "ten days" (!), or perhaps *byakko*, white fox, which is always a benevolent animal. . . .

In Japan, as in some Eastern Siberian regions, it was also believed that if a fox crossed one's path it would bring ill luck, and the superstition may still be found in isolated districts.

Savants tell us that there are a good many varieties of foxes, good, bad and indifferent. The common fox, *kitsune*, or field-fox, *yako*, hardly counts in lore, although it is of course not easy to know whether the animal in question is a simple *yako* or one of its more moody peers. Like the white foxes, the black ones, *genko*, are friendly, and their appearance of a good omen. A red *shakko* is still fair, but the "field-shield" *yakan* is highly harmful. The air-fox *kûko* and the celestial-fox *tenko* are probably rather *tengu* of sorts, goblins that can fly through the air and of which it is best to beware, since the entire *tengu*-tribe can be very nasty.³ The *kûko* and *tenko* seem rather Chinese conceptions, of no folkloristic importance in Japan; could they be the big "flying fox" bats of South China? Other special characters we shall encounter as we proceed. We may note, however, that the common people are not at all familiar with or interested in such scholarly classifications; to them a fox is a fox. . . .

The excitement which the "appearance" of a fox may cause is well illustrated by the following newspaper report which, although dated 1875, would probably not sound much different if written to-day, as applied to some forlorn village. The spot mentioned is now one of the best residential districts of Kobe

2) In Bavaria, similarly, the farmer will not mention the fox by its name, lest his poultry-yard should suffer from the depredations of the animal. Queerly enough, he will substitute a term embodying "Hena", hen: *Henading*, *Henaloinl*, *Henabua* etc. Wolves are at times treated in the same respectful-awful manner.

3) A study of the Tengu bird-man forest sprite by the author appeared in the Kansai Asiatic Society's *Occasional Papers*, Kyoto, December 1957.

City. "A foreigner who lives on the hill to the North of Ikuta temple, was witness to the observance of a curious superstition of the Japanese a few nights ago. Some sixty or seventy of the inhabitants of a neighbouring village turned out after nightfall, provided with lanterns, drums and bells, and uttering loud shouts. On enquiring into the cause of this unwonted uproar, it appeared that a man belonging to the village had been missing for three days past, and that it was believed he had been spirited away by a fox. The direction which the searchers are to take is ascertained from a diviner. Whilst the search is going on, the people shout out the name of the missing person and call upon the fox to restore him to his friends. What with the flashing of lanterns, the beating of drums and the ringing of bells, the scene, we are told, was both lively and picturesque." Whether the man was found or not is not stated. . . .

The Ainu, too, dislike the fox and avoid him as much as possible.⁴ This notwithstanding, the fox-skull with them is a fetish, set up on sacred posts outside their house to protect them from evil spirits. Its wiliness is thus put to the service of the family, who also consults the skull for oracles. With the Ainu, the fox is the chief (animal) god, more powerful, because of its subtlety, than even the clever and mighty (but foreign) tiger. Only the bear may be considered its compeer. Very interesting I think the fact that in the Ainu legends the fox figures as one of the "good deities", and that it is due to him that they, rather than the evil ones, rule the world. After the world had been created, the two groups of Benevolent and Malevolent Deities agreed that those should reign over it who would first see the sun the next morning. So they all went into a valley to watch, and all faced the East, except the Fox, who looked West. The others of course poked fun at him; yet it was the Fox-god who first exclaimed: "I see the sun!" And indeed, when the others turned around, there was the brilliant sunshine reflected from a high peak in the West! They could but acknowledge the clever Fox's victory—and so it comes that his party, the good spirits, are supreme on earth.

4) The Ainu are the only surviving pre-Japanese race of aborigines, now confined to the northmost island of Hokkaido (Yezo) and to Saghalien. Their customs, which probably have not changed for a millennium or more, may to some extent have influenced those of their conquerors.

The fox, with Ainu, Japanese and Chinese, is so wise that he can see into the future. . . . The Japanese have one easy way of consulting him for an oracle:—when in doubt, they offer “the fox” some rice and red beans cooked together—the *azuki-meshi* of festivals—and if the next day some of it is gone, that is regarded as a favourable omen. . . .

His wisdom is therefore also made use of when human memory fails or laziness prevails. What follows is reported from China, but no doubt the same attitude was often enough duplicated in old Japan, where *Inari*, as Fox-god, is still consulted to find lost articles. “In the course of official business,” we read, “a great number of documents are accumulated in the archives of the *Yamen*. Sometimes these are urgently required and the person in charge is unable to find them. He then lights some sticks of incense, and prostrates himself beseeching the help of the fox god. Shutting up all the windows and doors, he leaves the room for a time. Returning after an interval he will find, it is said, thanks to the kindly help of the fox god, one volume or packet sticking out beyond the others; this will be the manuscript or volume he is in search of.”⁵

The same willing assistance, if in somewhat different garb, is shown in a story related by Isaac Titsingh, who was in charge of the Dutch “factory” at Deshima between 1779 and 1784. The grandfather of his friend the imperial treasurer of Nagasaki, he says, who had in his time filled the same office, despatched one day a courier to Yedo with very important letters for the Councillors of State. To his consternation he found a few days later that one of the most important documents had been left behind, which exposed him to serious disgrace. “In his despair he resorted to his fox and offered him a sacrifice. The next morning he saw, to his great satisfaction, that some of it had been eaten”; but when he went into his office he found that the forgotten paper had mysteriously disappeared. That naturally caused him even greater uneasiness. . . . Soon after, he received a communication from his Yedo representative informing him that “upon opening the box which contained the despatches, the lock of it appeared to have been forced by a letter pressed in between the box and its cover from without,” which letter, of course, was the very same one which had been forgotten.—Mysterious indeed.

5) “Shanghai Folklore”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, N.C.B., 1902.

Interesting is the belief, found here and there in Japan, that such messenger foxes are invisible, yet may be caught if perchance they step into a trap!

The Japanese fox, *kitsune*, tries to fool people in many ways. The word *bakeru* itself is hard to translate: it implies transform, deceive, impose, be fraudulent. The *bakemono* may be a ghost, spook, apparition, spectre; but it is principally the "thing", *mono*, into which a fox, badger, cat has transformed itself. *Bakasu*, furthermore, means to cheat, delude, befool, hoax—but also to bewitch or cast a spell.⁶

A most frequent "trick" of the fox is to take on human shape. For this he needs a 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 circumspectedly, but their motion gradually increases in rapidity, until finally the fox seems to perform an "Indian dance", with 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 *jinko*, "man fox", 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....⁷

6) In English "to fox" means to act craftily, to dissemble, and one may "get foxed up" (especially by women!); the German "fuchsen" means to vex, provoke.

Etymologically interesting is the use of the sign *bake* in combinations, evidently based on a meaning akin to "transform". The sign may form part of the ideogram, as in grass-*bake*=flower (*hana*), or in leather-*bake*=shoe (*kutsu*). More often and in many more variations, *bake* is one of the two signs used for the word. Instances are, *keshin*, *bake*-body, for incarnation, personification; *keshô*, to (thoroughly) make up one's face, is *bake* with a repeated "make-up", *tsukuru*; *henka*, different-*bake*, means change, variation; *kakotsu*, *bake*-bone, is ossification; and chemistry becomes *bake*-studies, *kagaku*. Some other words are combined with *bakasu*, to bewitch, enchant, cast a spell, like *gomakasu*, mistake-evil-*bakasu*, to cheat or hoodwink, and *chakasu*, tea-*bakasu*, to make fun of, to turn something into a joke. Many more such combinations may be found.

7) The Chinese think the fox has two means of acquiring the capability of transforming himself into a human being: a fowl way

He can now sally forth to play his pranks and torment mankind. . . .

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. Even during their mummery, however, their disguise may be recognized by the wary. For one thing, a spook-fox will always emit a certain luminosity, and even on the darkest night his human shape will stand out so clearly that the colour of the hair and the pattern of the *kimono* is plainly discernible at the distance of some six feet. Hair and pattern show up as if a fire were glowing beneath them! Usually, also, the face of the human apparition is unnaturally long. Another important sign: the fox, while he can learn to talk like a human in a year's time, experiences some difficulty in pronouncing certain words or sounds. It is impossible for him, for instance, to say "*moshi-moshi*" in quick succession. He just manages to say *moshi* once, and it sounds somewhat awkward. "*Moshi*" is the exact counterpart of our "I say!", and so used to call people's attention. It is in order not to be mistaken for a *bakemono*-fox that true humans never use *moshi* only once, but always double it: *moshi-moshi!* Not to do so would be quite impolite, as people might become scared at the contingency of being confronted by a spook-fox. . . .⁸

Another disability from which the apparition suffers, according to some authorities, is that its true shape is outlined near it, as a sort of "reflex picture". If the apparition stands on the left, the discerning eye will see the real thing, like a faint shadow, standing on the right—and *vice-versa*. It is therefore important, when one intends to kill a *bakemono*, that the thrust be not made at the human figure, but at the vapoury fox-shape!

Two circumstances are an unsurmountable handicap to a fox's successful disguise, or at least non-detection of his disguise. A

with all sorts of disgusting "magic", such as the Japanese took over; and a fair way—by performing kind deeds and "studying the classics"!

8) Anyone who has listened to a Japanese telephone conversation will have been struck by the endless "*moshi-moshi; ah...moshi-moshi*", interspersed in the talk. Foreigners quite commonly call the office telephonist "the moshi-moshi girl."

dog will always know that it is a fox and not a human, and excitedly give tongue. The charming female will then dissolve into thin air. . . . And a mirroring in water will also disclose his identity, whether he look into it, when his face will be a fox's face, or whether his shadow fall across the water, when it will always be the shadowy outline of a fox. Often, too, when the fox is still a greenhorn, he will be unable to hide his tail completely under the human dress: the tip will project. This has given rise to the saying, *Shippo wo dasu*, to stick out the tail, meaning "to show one's true character"⁹. . . . In Izumo people believe that when a disguised fox knocks at one's door, the sound will be dull: he uses not his knuckles but his tail. . . .

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.

But, as usual with spectres and eerie animals, not all foxes are able to *bakeru*, to metamorphose themselves, to assume the garb and speech of humans, to bewitch people. At least so the savants say, although the common man prefers to avoid all kinds of foxes. Those who are better versed in their doings declare that only a red, white or yellow fox can ever hope to attain this stage; and before being "safe" in doing these things, he must escape the mortal danger of thunder three times, or be at least five-hundred years old.

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,

9) In our western legends the disguised Devil at times cannot hide the tip of his tail. . . . The oriental devil has none.

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 *Shuo-wên* encyclopaedia¹⁰ already states that the fox is the courser upon which ghostly beings ride; hence all foxes are uncanny. According to this *Shuo-wên* 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."

In China the goblin-fox is often spoken of as a *pi*, which in turn is a fabulous beast akin to the panther. Possibly stories from India are responsible for this confusion, which is unknown in Japan.

Many are the stories of foxes fooling people by such temporary transmutations.¹¹ Less than fifty years ago, a Tokyo newspaper in all seriousness mentioned the experience of a physician of Tochigi Prefecture, who at night was called to assist a lady in her confinement. A cart was even sent for him, but on arrival at the mansion he found that the event had already occurred, and he could only be of slight use. However, he received his fee and, as customary, also a meal, consisting of macaroni, an auspicious dish. So home he went again; but on looking into his purse the next morning, he found that the coins received had turned into withered leaves. . . . He decided to re-visit the mansion, and did trace the place by following the cart-tracks; but when these stopped he found himself in a lonely tea-plantation, in the midst of which a young fox lay dying. . . . The doctor was more fortunate than many another, inasmuch as the macaroni which he had eaten had been real: it was discovered that they had been prepared for a wedding feast in a near-by village, and stolen that same evening!

The fox-goblin may approach a lonely house as an old man who has lost his way, as a pilgrim-monk or Buddhist priest, or as a damsel in distress—rarely in any other human form. The

10) A very important Chinese work of about the year 100 A.D.

11) Almost all folkloristic books on Japan will contain one or several of them. Most such stories are of considerable antiquity.

kind-hearted villager will take the goblin into his home—but on the threshold already some stupid thing will then befall him, or in the morning he will find his guest departed, with all his food and valuables gone too. The most dangerous transformation, people believe, is when the fox becomes a *bôzu*, Buddhist priest. Perhaps only the very powerful beasts can adopt this saintly disguise. . . . A very favourite fox mischief is to completely shave the human's head, so that in the morning he awakens bald as an egg—which of course will provoke utmost derision from all villagers.

More frequently the tired wayfarer himself is lured into a warm and cosy hut by the wiles of the fox. He sees a welcoming light in a field or forest, and is glad to find a meal and repose for his weary body. The usual old man—venerable priest or retired scholar—will make him comfortable, or a beautiful young woman will welcome him, who, because of misfortune or unrequited love, prefers to live all by herself, “away from the world.” The humble abode does not lack an abundant and excellent meal, and soft silk-mattresses for the night: in his or her former status the hermit was of course of high family. . . . The damsel will not be shy with her favours, on the pretence of having taken a sudden fancy to the traveller. But when in the morning he awakens, he finds that he has revelled and slept in an old grave-yard or on a desolate moor, and that the remainder of the luxurious dinner consists of rotting leaves, of moss, filth and excrements. . . .

Indeed, foxes are very fond of luring people to an unholy place by creating a welcoming light or “fire”, so fond that the *ignes fatui* are called *kitsune-bi*, “fox fires”.¹² 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 the distance of some two or three feet”. . . .

12) Although several other explanations for the “will-o’-the-wisp” are given, this is the most current one.

Hence an unknown old poet already said:

*Hi tomoshite
Kitsune no kwaseshi
Asobune wa—
Izuko no uma no
Hone ni ya aruran!*

More or less: "Ah the wanton, lighting her lantern. . . . So a fox-fire is lit at the time of his transformation! Who knows but she may be nothing more than (a fox using) some old horse-bone. . . ." ¹³ The girls of the *Yoshiwara* are a pretty sight in the light of their decorated lanterns; but so is the sight of a transformed fox, and like the latter these women will but delude men to follies. . . . Perhaps the painted beauty is even a despised *Eta*, no better than an old horse-bone. . . . ¹⁴

To take revenge for some offence given them, foxes will pelt one and one's dwelling with huge stones, causing much pain and destruction; but when daylight comes, the stones cannot be found. . . . ¹⁵

Often enough, however, the fox prefers an even slyer method. He deliberately shows himself while taking on, through usual

13) Horse-bones generally figure in "magic", and may also be used by foxes, as we saw. We shall find that prostitutes are known as vixen; "*asobune*", courtesan, actually means "sporting woman"—exactly as used in America.

14) *Eta* or *hinin* were the outcasts, "non-humans", treated like cattle. They could only marry among themselves, of course; but a not too ill-favoured *eta* girl was never refused by a brothel, so that "one never knew" with what one dallied. . . .

15) Less than two-hundred years ago, "ghosts, omens, apparitions, were of the ordinary pattern of Scottish life"; and it was only in 1736 that a law punishing witchcraft with death was repealed for Great Britain. The Scotch continued to be more imaginative, and "the Scot who met a stranger on the moor might well be uncertain whether he was what he seemed to be, or was 'no that canny.' The 'muckle black de'il' was often seen waiting in the shadow at evening outside the cottage door, or slipping away over the north side of the kirkyard wall." Men were also "hunted on the moors by the dragoons," and "Fairies still lurked in the thorn trees of the dene, known visitants to be propitiated by rites lest they should slay the cattle in the byre or take the child from the cradle." (G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*.)

magic, the shape of some person known to the beholder. "Ha!", the latter then thinks, "this fox is trying to fool me! I must watch for this person, who actually will be but a transformed fox!" So of course when the person appears, the principal and his friends will fall upon him, beat him, smoke him out, do anything to make him miserable, because they "know" that he is but a fox. . . . But actually the transformed fox has simply withdrawn to some safe nook from which to watch the "fun", the person so maltreated being no fox but the original. . . .

The weirdest of all fox-transformation stories is, I do not doubt, one of the most modern, dating from 1889. In that year it was widely circulated and believed that a fox had taken the phantom shape of a steam-train on the Tokyo-Yokohama line! This railway, the first one in Japan, had been opened seventeen years before, but must still have been something uncanny to the mind of most Japanese. And one day it so happened that while the train was running, it seemed to the engine-driver that another one on the same single track was coming in the opposite direction—yet never got any nearer! The engine-driver mightily blew his whistle as a signal: still the mysterious train moved towards him without approaching. . . . A mirage? Not to the wise man. . . . He knew what he was about. He put on tremendous speed, as much as the locomotive would give. And at last he caught up with the phantom—there was a slight jar and, lo and behold! a fox was found crushed under the wheels. . . .

An "explanation" of sorts may be found in a superstition reported from the interior of Kyûshû in the very South, still current 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."

But the Wakayama region is even more up-to-date. . . . As the priest of an *Inari* shrine told Buchanan,^{15a} "Late one evening,

15a) D. C. Buchanan, "Inari: Its Origin, Development, and Nature", in the T.A.S.J., Second Series, Vol. XII, Tokyo 1935. M. W. de Visser's "The Fox and the Badger in Japanese Folklore" which appeared in Vol. XXXVI-3 of the same T.A.S.J., Tokyo, 1908, was not at my disposal.

a man was walking along the narrow and steep road known as 'Kurumazaka' ("Cart Hill") which led down from the Inari Shrine when a huge automobile, blazing with light, rushed up and came within a hair's breath of hitting the pedestrian, who stepped to one side in the nick of time. Several days later in the wee small hours of the night, this same man was in his own motor-car carefully making his way down "Kurumazaka" when again up the hill came a large car going at tremendous speed. There was no room to pass and no time to stop. The driver in the first car put on brakes and braced himself for the collision. There was a dull thud, and the huge car disappeared. Getting out, the driver saw beneath the wheels of his car an old, dead fox!"

That must have been some time before 1935, when motorcars had only been introduced in Japan—in very small numbers—for some twenty years. Which certainly shows that Wakayama, usually considered somewhat in the backwoods, was up-to-date in matters of spook-foxes. . . .

The spooks continue. Some ten years ago, somewhat outside of Gobo (South of Wakayama) there was a new road with a bifurcation, fringed on one side by a little woods. Now when towards dusk people walked, or preferably when they pedalled their bicycle, near this forest, there would suddenly descend a sort of mist, while an unusual glow, like shining roofs, would be seen in the distance. . . . And the man, misjudging his direction because of this "fata morgana", would suddenly find himself down in the fields, lucky if not hurt.

In this very year 1959 the following weird happenings have been told to me by a very reliable Japanese acquaintance, who gathered them within Shioya village of the same region:—

Not long ago two men, walking along the road, saw a very good-looking girl come up from the river below, and enter a small house a bit farther on. Puzzled by this "beauty" who certainly did not belong to their village, they decided to peep into the house, and with wet forefinger bored some holes into the paper window (as all naughty boys will do), and glued their eyes onto them. She certainly was a peach of a girl. . . ! Very soon an acquaintance turned up, and wonderingly asked them what they were doing. Quite excitedly they told him, whereupon he burst out laughing:—"What you do," he said, "is to look into the

holes of the shrine's stone-lantern!"^{15b}

Some years before, already, something similar had happened to an old woman of eighty and her daughter of about fifty years. They intended to go down to the beach to gather and take home some seaweed that had been drying, but instead were misled to go to the village's shrine-office. There they looked through some knotholes in the wooden fence for the whole evening, believing that they were watching some very fine theatrical performance....

In April of 1958, on the day of the Doll's Festival, a widow of over fifty years walked near her house at dusk, when she was suddenly and violently bumped into from behind, and thrown off her feet. In order to cushion the fall, she stretched out her arm, when that too was roughly pushed away. In her fall she cut her mouth and lost a tooth; but throughout this happening she did not see anything near her.

There are said to be several instances on record where men of about thirty were also thrown down in the same place. These "jokes" look rather like the doings of a *tanuki* badger (pg. 48, ff.), all the more so since it is reported that in this same village fish are often stolen....

In the spring of 1957 a man of about thirty one evening returned home from his fields. Passing to the North of the Ōji shrine and leaving behind the crematory, he was crossing a wide open space when he suddenly felt a chill run down his spine (what corresponds to the "walking over one's grave" of ourselves!) without any reason. Some fifty paces further on, he as suddenly felt a strong wind blowing, and saw how a gigantic camphor-tree, some 70 or 80 feet tall, was forced down so much that its crown swept the ground, while an even more majestic cypress bent down until its top practically brushed the man's face, so that he had to move in order not to have it scratched.... But all the many pine-trees, some of them very large ones, remained quite immobile!^{15c}

In the spring of 1958 the same thing happened on the same spot to a man about 50 or 60 years old; all he could do was to

15b) Apart from a large square opening in front, closed with a screen when the lamp burns, there are two ornamented ventilation holes on the sides.

15c) Normally the pines are easily blown about in the wind; the *kusu* and the *sugi* are far more resistant. They could never, of course, bend to that extent.

run home tremblingly.

Some three or four years ago a man of the same village, Shioya, intended to catch the first morning train out of Gobo, so mounted his bicycle and went there. When, however, he was on a bridge in the middle of the town, he must have been fooled: instead of going on to the station, all he did was to constantly pedal "between East and West."

As always, "priests" play a role. A man past seventy, who regularly takes his dog for a walk in the evening, between 9 and 10 o'clock, as recently as last autumn on his promenade encountered a priest in full dress (*koromo*), well over six feet tall; queer enough, the priest was not walking on the road but over a rubbish heap. Then he suddenly changed into a negligently dressed priest with stubbly cranium, about fifty years old, who as suddenly disappeared.

Shortly afterwards, a man of only about 40 years but not quite "all there" walked behind the *Ôji jinja*, along the foot of Mount Rokumame, when he met a gigantic priest, "like a big barrel", who stuck out his tongue and beckoned with the hand, "*oide, oide!*" ("come, come!"). The poor dotard got the shock of his life and hardly managed to run home, where he collapsed and for a long time continued to shake with fear.

The same old man with his dog, some months before the priest incident, was walking along the beach when he heard a sudden loud noise in the sea. A fire-ball some two feet in diameter had jumped up a couple of yards; after a while it split into seven or eight parts, and extinguished. But at the same time in a hut near the beach a fire (light) began to glow...^{15d}

In the same region there are also tales of such fire-balls coming out of ancient stone-markers or "monuments".

At the intersection of some roads there stands the office and warehouse of the region's agricultural co-operative society, where at times some employees have to pass the night. It then often

15d) Apparently also attributed to some fox prank. There are many stories about such fire-balls, all over Japan, but usually they are believed to be in the nature of religious offerings of the Dragon, whence mainly known as *ryû-tô*, dragon-lanterns, or *ten-tô*, heavenly lamps, but also as *burari-hi*, dangling fires (because usually they first fly into a venerated pine-tree), or more sincerely as *shiranu-hi*, unknowable fires. The first reference to them goes back to mythic ages.

happens that the men suddenly shiver with cold and feel a heavy weight on the chest. For two or three minutes they cannot move at all, so that there is no way of shaking off the incubus. Girl workers are so afraid of this spooky influence that they refuse to even remain till late in the evening. There is hardly a doubt that this is a fox's doing: when not long ago an old shed next to the office was cleaned, a big fox came out and ran away. . . .

As my informant adds, "it is hardly believable that people can be so fooled by foxes; yet these stories which I report are all true!"

This shows, at the same time, that even the average man of to-day is hardly different, in such matters, than was the famous scholar Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) who once said:—"When insentient beings change into sentient beings such as birds and insects (!), or when foxes and badgers take on human form—are these not the strangest of all strange things? Thus, the universe and all things therein are without a single exception strange and wondrous when examined carefully. Even the Sage would be incapable of explaining these phenomena." . . .

Lafcadio Hearn gives a most weird 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"—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 thunders 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." Stout heart. . . .

However, there are a few stories where vixen became faithful wives, and it is said that the very name for fox, *ki-tsu-ne*, means "come and sleep", and is derived from such a tale dating back

to the year 545 (!).¹⁶ A certain Ono, of Mino, 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 was delivered of 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 be he wanted her to "ki tsu ne"; and so, every night she stole into the hut and slept in his arms.¹⁷

A very quaint "historical legend" applies to the knightly hero Yoshitsune (1159-1189) and his beloved concubine, Shizuka Gozen. After this Minamoto general had won battle after battle over the enemy Taira, his elder half-brother, the *shôgun* Yoritomo, from jealousy and fear decreed his death. Yoshitsune had to flee, but in order to save Shizuka he sent her to Kyoto in the care of a retainer, Sato Tadanobu. Now Shizuka had received from Yoshitsune a famous *tsutsumi* covered with fox-skin—one of those "hours-glass" drums which the dancing-girls used at their performance, but usually covered with cat- or dog-skin—and this she had taken along. What then exactly happened seems a bit obscure; but because of the fox-skin a goblin fox appears in the story. This fox either took the form of Tadanobu, to get hold of the drum on the way, or, some believe, Tadanobu was in fact a fox who had changed into a knight, followed Yoshitsune as henchman in all these years, perhaps even caused his downfall—all because he wanted to recover the drum which most probably was covered with the skin of a relative. . . .

16) All over the world there are legends in which some animal transforms itself and becomes the wife of a man: to the primitive mind, a mutation between human, animal and even divine forms is nothing impossible. Usually the human partner must avoid some forbidden act which would resuscitate the animal-wife's association with her former life; and if he neglects the precautions which she has enjoined, she disappears. . . .

17) The pup evidently smelled the hidden vixen; the old dog may have accepted her as the master's friend.—The Chinese believe that such a transformed wife exhales a faint trace of musk, which after

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 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 *kiki-mimi*, "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 direst 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. . . .

A peculiar and much more recent story, in which the supernaturally gifted animal helped humanity, was reported in the "Japan Chronicle" of April 6th, 1923, as follows:

"Last August in a house near the Hanshin Terminus,¹⁸ right opposite to a police box, a whole family was done to death with an iron bar. The murder was discovered by a neighbour, and, after all details had been widely published, the police forbade mention of it. Incidentally the Chronicle was fined ¥30 for mentioning that a crime had been committed—such was the strictness of the embargo, and there were, in consequence of this procedure, all sorts of rumours about a policeman being the culprit, these rumours being indignantly denied. Suspects were duly arrested, and examined in the usual manner.

"Some time after, at Onoye-dori (street), a fox was seen and chased, and caught in a thicket, where an iron bar, believed to be the weapon with which the murders were committed, was discovered by the hunters. The fox was taken alive, and the Japanese papers reported that when he was produced in the

18) In those days more or less at the eastern end of Kobe City, about where now the main Sannomiya station is, and where a thriving business centre has developed. Thirty-odd years ago there were still a few copses among the fields east and north of the terminus.

police station—of all extraordinary things to do—a man who was at that time under examination, trembled all over and made a clean breast of the crime.

“The fox is still a captive, but has been deified, and a shrine has been erected for him at Kurakuen, the pleasure resort on the Rokko hill-side. A few days ago the formal dedication ceremony was conducted in the presence of numerous local officials, policemen, and some Japanese newspaper representatives. The shrine has been provided in honour of the creature’s ‘having at the risk of his life suggested the whereabouts of the concealed weapon.’ Anyhow the animal is attracting a number of devotees since his consecration at Kurakuen, including, it is said, police officials and detectives. The new shrine is adorned with the red *torii*, *sembon-nobori* (flags), and other adornments peculiar to the shrine of Inari-san.¹⁹ Nothing, by the way, has been heard further of the man who confessed. Perhaps it did not turn out to be he after all, or perhaps he is in prison still awaiting trial. With a deified fox put in as evidence against him, he will have to prove a very good alibi to get off.”

A still oft repeated story of a grateful fox is supposed to instil the sense of utter devotion to a “superior”, or at least a quite Confucian sense of gratitude for favours received. Long, long ago, a man delivered a fox-cub from the hands of some boys, who had caught it and were going to kill it. The little fox joyfully scampered away. Shortly afterwards the man’s only son fell seriously ill; all kinds of medicines were tried, but nothing helped, and in the end the physician decided that only the liver of a live fox could cure the boy. (Live organs, or live flesh, were often prescribed as supreme medicaments.) The parents in vain tried to obtain such a liver from the villagers—nobody had any. But late that night a stranger came to the house, bringing a fresh fox-liver which he said he had received for the boy. After eating it, the boy of course recovered, but the parents still did not know who might have sent them the liver. Until one night in a dream the mysterious stranger again appeared to the father, and explained that in gratitude for the earlier delivery of their cub he and the mother had decided to kill it, so that its liver might save the kind-hearted man’s son... (Such, indeed, was the retainer’s sense of “obligation” to his lord!) The boy’s parents in

19) See below.

turn showed their gratitude by erecting a shrine to the Fox-*Inari* in their garden, where they prayed for the cub's soul, and venerated the fox-couple....

Such stories are evidently Confucian, and intended to inculcate "virtue". They are probably not very old, and embrace sundry variations. Buddhism at the same time seems to have introduced the legends in which a fox turns himself into a monk, and applies for a most humble job at some temple. He works hard and satisfactorily, acts kindly and religiously, but somehow is discovered and probably killed as a "*bakemono*", while evidently all he did was to look to Buddhism for his own salvation. Presumably the undeserved death procures the so much desired "advance" in the next life, since even animals, by repeated metamorphoses through re-incarnations, can in the end enter Nirvana....

Spook-foxes are generally, in some way or other, connected with dirt; and dirt, in the symbolism of all the world, indicates riches, money. Many are the stories in which foxes present people with golden coins which, once the man is alone again, turn into decaying leaves.²⁰

Yet there are fox-goblins which actually bring wealth to their masters, who are known as *kitsune-mochi*, fox-possessors. The belief in such goblin-owners is not general in Japan; but while sporadic in several regions, it is prevalent in the province of Izumo (North coast), and particularly in its western parts.²¹ The belief is so important there that it is an all-decisive factor in marriages and the transfer of landed property. The "owners"

20) Similarly in Europe, when the devil gives money to some poor in need who begs him for it, the "gold" will turn into excrements the moment he has left. Fox-excrements, like human ones, are allied to treasure troves in innumerable tales. In ancient Babylon already, gold was the dirt of Hell. Japan is not scatologically inclined, and has usually changed the faeces into dry leaves etc.

21) The Japanese mythology clearly shows that this coastal stretch was originally inhabited by a race different from the "Yamato", or "Tsukushi", of Korean/East-Siberian stock, which in some respects was culturally more advanced than the "Japanese". The fox-possessor belief is probably based on totemism, which is also discoverable in other legends and superstitions of the district.

Similar beliefs must have been current in many lands. "And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land." (1 *Samuel*, xxviii, 3.)

are like wizards and witches commanding "familiar", which bring them wealth through the fear they inspire among fellow-beings.²² The fox-possessing families are known to all neighbours; but should a marriage be contemplated between two families living at some distance from, and unacquainted with each other, the main inquiry will concern fox-ownership, such questions as taints for leprosy or tuberculosis coming second. "Is or is not the other party a fox-possessor?" is the first consideration.

"To explain this term, we may say that fox-owning families are believed to have living with them a tribe of small, weasel-like foxes to the number of seventy-five, called human foxes [*jinko*], by whom they are escorted and protected wherever they go, and who watch over their fields and prevent outsiders from doing them any damage. Should, however, any damage be done either through malice or ignorance, the offender is at once possessed by the fox, who makes him blurt out his crime and sometimes even procures his death. So great is the popular fear of the fox-owners that anyone marrying into a fox-owning family, or buying land from them, or failing to return money borrowed from them, is considered to be a fox-owner too. The fox-owners are avoided as if they were snakes or lizards. Nevertheless, no one ever asks another point blank whether or not his family be a fox-owning family; for to do so might offend him, and the result to the inquirer might be a visitation in the form of possession by a fox. The subject is therefore never alluded to in the presence of a suspected party. All that is done is politely to avoid him.

"It should be noticed, moreover, that there are permanent fox-owners and temporary fox-owners. The permanent fox-owners silently search for families of similar nature to marry into, and can never on any account intermarry with outsiders, whatever may be the inducement in the shape of wealth or beauty. The situation closely resembles that of the pariahs and outcasts of former times. But even the strictest rules will sometimes be broken through by love which is a thing apart, and liaisons will be formed between fox-owners and outsiders. When such an irremediable misfortune takes place, parents will renounce even their well-beloved only son, and forbid him to cross their threshold for the rest of his life. Temporary fox-owners

22) German witches often transform themselves into a fox, sometimes invisible to human eyes. In some respects, the oriental foxes are also comparable to the wer-wolves, of which more later.

are those who have been expelled from the family for buying land from a permanent fox-owner. These circumstances conspire to give security to the fox-owners (whether such in truth or imagination, we are not in a position to say); for no one will harm them by so much as a hair's breadth. Therefore they are all well-to-do; some are even said to count among the most affluent families in the province. The very poorest people that have borrowed money from them will strain every nerve to raise money to repay the loan, because failure to do so would make others regard them as fox-owners and shun them."²³

In some parts, like the Hikawa District of Shimane Prefecture, there are not only ordinary fox-owners, *kitsune-mochi*, but "great" ones too, *ô-kitsune-mochi*. They are said to usually be rich farmers with many relatives living within the same region, and practically intermarrying only within their "clan"—which keeps their wealth together.²⁴

Certain "sorcerers" are said to employ a method of capturing their fox servants first used on Mount Izuna in Shinano, and therefore known as the *Izuna-tsukai*. Although some shrines on the mountain were dedicated to the Food-deity, *Ukemochi-no-kami*, Izuna was popularly regarded, rather, as the abode of *Dakini* (or *Dagini-ten*, *Daten*), also known as *Kiki Tennô*, "the Heavenly King, the Venerable Fox," and of the *Guin-Tengu*, or Forest-goblin of the "Hidden Cause," having reference to the Buddhist "Cause and Effect," *Karma*. The mountain's name, Izuna, is itself believed to mean Embodied Sorcery. . . . *Dakini* represents a Hindu conception of some lewd female divinity, a "demon whose original self was a fox," and having a miraculous instinct to foresee the death of people, and supernatural wisdom in many other respects, mostly magical. . . . Being in such close neighborhood with the Food-deity and having herself been a fox, *Dakini* is often linked with the fox-owning Rice-god, *Inari*. The *Guin* goblin on the other hand was most deeply versed in magic and sorcery, and likes to ride on a fox, surrounded by flames.

23) Extract from the *Nichi-Nichi Shimbun* (newspaper) of the 14th August, 1891, quoted by Basil Hall Chamberlain in "Things Japanese".

24) As has been pointed out by Japanese folklorists, the imputation of being a *kitsune-mochi* may often enough originate with some unsuccessful farmer who sees his neighbour's wealth increasing for no obvious reason. In Japan, too, some people are less assiduous than others, and become envious when results show it. . . .

The three divinities are thus connected with Food, which means Wealth, with Foxes, and with Magic—perhaps the magic of Nature in constantly re-producing that growth which is needed for man and beast. No wonder that the Izuna adherents can master foxes, and use them in their service, for very personal purposes.

The way in which they proceed, as explained in a book of two centuries ago,²⁵ is described as follows:—

“First these sorcerers purify themselves by fasting, and then go into the mountains to seek fox-holes. If they find a pregnant fox they politely ask her to make her young their child. Night and day they bring her food, and when the little fox is born the mother takes it to them. Then the sorcerer says to the young fox:—‘Henceforth you shall follow me as my shadow.’ He gives the young animal a name, and then mother and child go away. From that time the fox always appears immediately when he is called by name by the sorcerer, and tells him all kinds of secret things, the knowledge of which gives him among the people the reputation of being a divine man. But if such a fox sorcerer becomes in the smallest degree lewd or greedy, he cannot exercise his art any longer, for the fox does not come again.”

There certainly were other methods, but I have only found one more reference as to how such subservient spirits can be secured, and that one seems also simple enough. You have to tie three balls of rice (*nigiri-meshi*, a sort of *Knödel*) to a straw-rope a hundred handbreadths long. For one hundred consecutive nights, at midnight, this charm must be taken to an *Inari* shrine, and each time one handbreadth of the rope must be deposited as an offering to the deity. In the end a fox will come and eat the rice-balls (which must be pretty mouldy by then!), and “provided you have a pure heart” this fox will become your humble servant for the rest of your days. . . .

Yet, being a fox-owner is not all beer and skittles. The ghostly animals will steal things for their master even against his will, which may cause no end of scandalous complications. Worse still, they will not hesitate to make known things which were discussed very confidentially, again with disagreeable results to the master. They have such an acute mind that they even know the thoughts of people, their past and their future;

25) *Rô-on chawa*, “Tea-talks of Old Women”, 1742.

and if they foresee bad times for their owner they may suddenly decide to leave him.

The first recorded reference to what looks like "fox owners" occurs in a diary, the *Yasutomi-ki*, and refers to the year 1420, when four prominent men of the shogunal court of Ashikaga Yoshimichi were accused of "employing foxes". These fox-sorcerers were the court-physician, his son, his younger brother, the official chief diviner. Their nefarious activities were proved when some Buddhist priests, by means of incantations, succeeded in driving out two foxes from the apartment of the *shôgun's* consort. . . .

The wer-animals of other races may at times be the "double" of the man himself, whose activities leave him to all appearances unchanged, or his soul which goes forth, leaving the body in a state of trance: or it may be no more than a "messenger" of the human being, a real animal or familiar spirit. This phenomenon, known as "repercussion", is connected with totemic and demonological beliefs in "tutelary spirits", which may also underly the fox-ownership of Japan.

In a somewhat different way, ghost-foxes also help the *yamabushi*, a religious sect of "mountain-priests" founded in the 7th century by En-no Shôkaku, a militant Buddhist proselytizer whose faith, nevertheless, was guided by Shinto conceptions. He himself was later accused of sorcery, and in 699 exiled to a lonely island for some years.²⁶ His monkish followers were a most superstitious crowd, and because of their own weird rites and performances were feared by the people. These believed that by blowing their conch-shell—the usual means of the *yamabushi* to convoke a meeting and also to dispel evil ghosts on the road—the *yamabushi* called to them the many foxes which were their servants. According to the "savants", the *yamabushi* had several types of helpers: the *kiko* or spirit-fox as a general assistant in sorcery²⁷; the *osaki-kitsune*, whose written name means

26) He was born in 634, and when 32 years old retired to Mount Katsuragi, where he lived in solitude for over thirty years. He ascended many high peaks to consecrate them to *Shaka* (Buddha).

27) A *Kiko-myôjin*, Venerable Fox Brilliant Deity, a fox of the highest grade, is one of *Inari's* most reliable messengers. . . . For a special study of this divinity I refer the reader to my "Inari-sama, the Japanese rice-deity and other crop divinities", in *Ethnos*, Vol. 14-1, 1949, of the Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm.

“tall-promontory”, but should probably be but a “tail-tip”,²⁸ of very small size; and the even smaller *kanko* or *kuda-kitsune*, the “pipe-fox”, because it could be enclosed in a bamboo tube and carried in the hand by the *yamabushi* while on his pilgrimage! Whatever their size, these foxes, being the most powerful of all goblins, through their presence in a holy cause would then dispel and vanquish all inferior spirits.

The belief that should a fox cross one's path it will bring misfortune, exists strongly in Japan, as it does in sundry other countries;²⁹ and to encounter a *bakemono*-fox is of course fraught with gravest danger. We shall see later how people can lose their reason and maybe die from such a calamity; but even when a fox is only out for a prank, he will frequently leave some permanent memento. So for instance will the nose of a man once fooled by a fox never run again. . . . Neither will he ever be able to hold up his head in the presence of others. . . .

To protect oneself from such untoward encounters, certain preventive measures are advisable. The best one is to eat the tongue of a fox—he will then never be able to fool one. But the tongue must be cut up very fine first, because it will swell when being masticated, and might choke one if eaten too hastily. To cure certain afflictions “wished on” by foxes, like the “fox-cold” which people catch from whirlwinds of dust, it is sufficient to invoke the help of an equally spooky badger, whose body is “stronger” than that of the fox, and who is his born antagonist. Another excellent charm against fox-bewitching is to carry an *ichô* seed in your sash (a *ginnan*); why, I am unable to say, but these quaint-shaped, almost trigonal seeds as well as the tree's fan-shaped leaves are good for all kinds of protection.³⁰ In other, more serious cases, of course only the specialist, the “priest” or exorciser, can help.

28) Might there be a reference to the “jewel-tip” of the *Inari*-fox, of which more later?

29) In Siberia there is a myth that a hero, Altin Shagoy, shot a yellow fox that crossed his road, and with the arrow cut it in two. But the forepart flew to heaven and induced the fox-father to kill the hero. . . .

30) The *ichô*, Ginko or Maidenhair-Tree, is a majestic plant said to be a survivor of the coal age. It is mainly grown in temple grounds and parks, but no longer found wild. Quaintly enough, the seeds have an entirely different appellation.

At any rate one should be most careful to avoid giving offence to the foxes.³¹ If, on the other hand, an intrepid man finds a fox asleep, he will unfailingly shoot him in all the folk-tales—if sometimes with well-understandable emotion.... The farmers in some parts of Japan have discovered a quite interesting way in which to confound and capture the clever Reynard when his depredations become too annoying. They affix a lighted candle to the back of a turtle, and then start it into the fox's den after ascertaining that the animal is at home. The slow-moving turtle marches forward, and the steadily approaching mysterious flame greatly perplexes the fox, who becomes more and more uneasy, until he decides to make a wild dash for the open—to run head-long into a sack which has meanwhile been held over the entrance. He can then be clubbed to death. But, as the consequences of even an accidental killing of a fox may be terrible, and not only affect the slayer but the whole community, immediate religious services for the weal of the fox's spirit are always indicated. It is also said, however, that hunters protect themselves by eating fox-flesh, which makes them immune against fox-witchery. Very strong man, like wrestlers, never need fear a fox, dead or alive; the foxes are afraid of them!

Foxes will not fail to avenge the death of one of their companions. As recently as November 1922 the *Mainichi* paper of Iwate in the Northeast is said to have brought an actual confirmation. A certain Chukichi Ishidate, aged 67, of Wainai village, had smoked out a fox from its den by burning pine-needles, killed it, and sold its fur. Ishidate lived all by himself as the caretaker of a mineral spring. Several days later, he was awakened at night by six men armed with shot-guns, who demanded 300 Yen—a sum far above what he could have. His life being threatened, he offered them his purse which contained ¥35.68, and as the robbers came closer, managed to escape and run to the village, where he roused the policeman, firemen and others, who accom-

31) I quote from Giles: *Glossary of References*: "In some parts of China it is customary for Mandarins to keep their seals of office in what is called a "fox-chamber" (狐仙樓); but the character for fox is never written, the sight of it being supposed to be very irritating to the live animal. A character 胡, which has the same sound, is substituted, and even that is divided into its component parts 古 and 月, so as to avoid even the slightest risk of offence. This device is often adopted for the inscriptions on shrines erected in honour of the fox."

panied him back to his hut. By the time of course the unwelcome visitors had left; his purse was found on the floor untouched. . . . On the other hand it was discovered that his rice-pot was empty, and that fish and other foodstuff had also disappeared. On the mats they found footprints of foxes: foxes who had bewitched him so as to steal his food-supply in punishment of the death of their vulpine friend. . . .

I give the following extract from the "Japan Chronicle" of Kobe, dated the 27th December 1932:

"Nine hurt in One Race—Twelve Jockeys crash in Two Days at Sonoda—Due to Fox's Death!

"Twelve jockeys crashed in two days' racing at Sonoda, near Amagasaki, on the Hanshin line [connecting Kobe with Osaka], nine of them in one race. All were injured, three of them seriously.—This series of accidents is being put down by the superstitious as due to the killing of a fox found on the race track on Saturday morning.—The mishap commenced that afternoon. In one of the early races, the leading horse fell, and two others just behind were brought down. Five-hundred yards farther on another horse fell, and five more piled on top.—Six of these nine jockeys were injured, having ribs or arms broken. Three of them are in a very serious condition due to the horses having rolled over them.—On Sunday there were three more falls, all the jockeys being hurt badly."

The British editor of the "Chronicle" probably made no comment because his paper was read by a good many Japanese. . . .

Foxes are so impudent, some of them even tried to once bewitch Kôbô Daishi, the great Buddhist and saintly missionary, in his own stronghold, the island of Shikoku through which he was wandering.³² But the great Teacher and holy man of course noticed the trick at once, and as a punishment banished all the foxes from the island. Therefore, ever since his days, foxes are unknown in Shikoku.³³

32) Kôbô Daishi, in lifetime the priest Kūkai (774-835), was born in that island, went to China in 804, and established the *Shingon* sect and doctrine upon his return to Japan. He founded his main monastery on Mount Kôya in Kishû, and many more temples in his native Shikoku. See also the article on page 93, ff.

33) It has been said that this is an allegory of Kôbô Daishi "banning" the worship of the *Inari* Fox from Shikoku, where it may have been prevalent, so as to have people embrace his Buddhist faith. The

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. Tadanobu, who "in reality was a fox," was deemed a faithful henchman of the famous Minamoto hero Yoshitsune. Others, as we saw, may marry a human and become a good wife. The Chinese have several stories regarding kind foxes, of which some have penetrated Japanese fairy-tales.³⁴ Only, they have remained fairy-tales, to be told to children so that they, too, may grow up to be grateful and helpful. These "goody-goody" stories are not half as vivid in the Japanese mind as are the nastier ones.

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 manoeuvring 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 *kyûbi-no kitsune*, has remained a proverbial synonym for a flatterer.

One of the oldest surviving legends refers to the beautiful concubine of Emperor Toba-no-in, of the early 12th century, for whose sake the imperial master fully neglected his duties. He was struck down by disease, and some weird happenings in the palace disclosed that the accomplished lady was but a nine-tailed

Inari worship itself, however, does not antedate Kôbô Daishi, and while an earlier fox-worship may have existed, there are no definite indications of it. And it is credibly reported that Shikoku actually has no (or very few) foxes. In superstition too, the Badger predominates in that island.

34) For sundry fox-stories, good and bad, see for instance: Willoughby-Meade: *Chinese Ghouls and Goblins*; Ferguson and Anesaki: *The Mythology of All Races* (Chinese, Japanese); de Visser: *The Dragon in China and Japan*; Krause: *Geschichte Ostasiens*; Griffis: *The Mikado's Empire*; Martens: *The Chinese Fairy Book*; Werner: *Myths and Legends from China*.

vixen of vampirish tendencies. She was pursued and flew away through the air to the moor of Yasu, where she resumed her original shape, but later on turned into a poisonous rock. In fact this "Lady Tamamo-no-mae" story is but a mutation of the Chinese story of Lady Pao Szü, daughter of a black lizard and superlatively charming concubine of the Chou emperor Yu-wang, who finally lost throne and life through her wiles, in 771 B.C. . . .

The idea of a fox-woman coming into one's family is uniformly abhorrent to the normal Japanese. Another proverb has it that one should always be polite to a fox "lest she become your sister-in-law or even your wife."³⁵ The "permanently muted" fox, as noted, becomes a woman in almost every instance, and it would appear that it is immaterial whether, as animal, it is a male or a female. Possibly it has been felt since antiquity that woman, in order to beat the stronger and more wilful sex, had to rely on "foxy" wiles and subterfuges. . . .

The fox is one of the most cunning, cautious, skeptical animals all over the world. It also possesses lecherous and covetous propensities, and we need hardly wonder, therefore, if—at least in the mind of the suffering wives—the worst kind of mercenary and shameless women are termed *kitsune*, foxes, vixen.^{35a} Yet, as we shall see, the fox is also auspiciously connected with crops. It is believed that the fox, being so clever, has a particular "virtue" in every part of its body, which thereby becomes medicinal. Fox hairs, brain, liver, and intestines mainly, but to some extent all other parts and even the flesh itself, were frequently used in the Sinico-Japanese pharmacopoeia, each one having its special curing or prophylactic effect.

In spite of his cleverness, nevertheless, even the fox was once fooled, and by a most insignificant creature, a crab. That the story is a true one is proved by the name of a hill near

35) It is a general custom that the bride has to step over a fire when arriving at the house of her future husband: fire is one of the most ancient purificatory media, and the bride must leave behind any kind of pollution. But in parts of Ibaraki Prefecture, it is reported, even nowadays the underlying idea is that by stepping "over a torch" the girl would disclose her identity as a fox, should she simply be disguised as a human being. . . .

35a) The old Romans called a strumpet a *lupa*, she-wolf, which we still retain in the expression *lupanar* for brothel. Fox and wolf are closely related also in superstition.

Akashi, in Harima (not far from Kobe), still known as Kanigasaki, the Hill of the Crab.

At the foot of this hill the crab once met a fox, who ridiculed him for being the slowest thing on earth. "Whatever I be," the crab replied, "I am ready to bet you that I shall reach the top of the mountain before you; and I know that I shall win!" "What a conceited fellow," the fox thought; and just for the fun of it accepted the challenge. Getting ready for the start, the crab excused himself for just a moment, and then sang out: "Ready! Let's be off!"—and off they went. The fox did not over-exert himself, being convinced of an easy victory. The crab was nowhere to be seen. And when he was just below the top of the hill, the fox sat down and waited for the little fellow. "Oi!" he shouted after a while, "where are you, sluggard?"—"Right here on the top, waiting for you!" came the answer; and indeed there the gleeful crab stood, above the greatly surprised fox. "Beat you this time," he sneered; "but indeed I have never travelled as fast as when hanging on to your bushy tail! Still, I was first, and claim the race." And the clever fox could but hang his head for the shame of having been beaten by the stupid crab.

Foxes, even when they do not *bakeru*, are believed to behave more or less like humans in their relations to each other, and especially the question of marriage plays the same important role with them as with the Japanese: social status and wealth of the two parties, go-betweens, ritual formalities, feasting and similar circumstances are duly observed. It is believed that the foxes actually form permanent monogamous mateships. The wedding takes place when there is a rain-shower during sunshine, which is itself known as *kitsune-no yome-iri*, the foxes' bringing in the bride, as in English one speaks of "the devil beating his wife."

At the same time people often refer to the "marsh-lights" as torches for the foxes' wedding. At the end of the ceremonious entertainment, to which all the foxes of the neighbourhood are invited, and during which there is much eating and drinking, it is supposed that the merriment becomes even more wild and libertine than it used to be customary with the farming class.³⁶

36) Weddings in Japan always took place in the early evening. The convivial freedom, common all over the world after certain popular festivities and after a marriage ceremony, was connected with ideas about crop-fertility being influenced by the intercourse of humans. The fox, as we shall see, was the main "crop-animal" of Japan.

But even in other respects foxes are said to be congenial among themselves, gregarious, and they often arrange social meetings or processions and so forth, or appear disguised as a troop of warriors. Such *kotai*-fox-assemblies are usually seen in the distance and at night, and the animals carry torches for an illumination—and of course a delusion for the late wanderer. Like humans, the foxes of a district have their Chief, the *Osa-gitsune* or *Chôko*, or an almost royal *Shuryô*. . . . The “better class” of foxes again have their numerous *yorikata* assistants. . . .

Apart from the temporary bewitching pranks of their mumery, 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.”

Fox-possession, *kitsune-tsuki*, seems indeed to be a form of delusion due to nervous disorder. The patient may begin to bark like a fox, to show aversion to dogs and even to humans, and to lose his identity. After a while his chin is said to elongate,

the lower jaw suggesting a fox's snout, and his eyes may change into curved slits. His entire face will acquire a "foxy" expression. He will unreasonably insist on being served with the best of everything at shortest notice: the fox is greedy and loves tidbits. Fortunately, the patient himself knows of the possession, and a "powerful" exorcist in whom he can trust is therefore able to heal him by "expelling" the intruder. After due preparations, the sufferer is informed that everything is ready to entice the fox back to the hills or moors on a certain day and hour, in obedience to "religious incantations." Since the belief in such remedies is strong, it generally assures their success; which in turn fortifies the belief in the actuality of bewitchments. . . .³⁷ Nasty foxes do not even spare the highest-born, if we may trust tradition. Admittedly Emperor Juntoku had abdicated by then—or, rather, he had been deposed and exiled, in 1221—but his daughter was still an imperial princess, when she became possessed by a fox. It was even known that this fox lived in a field of Sugao, in Mikawa Province. . . . Fortunately a certain Homma succeeded in driving the fox out of the princess by twanging a bow. He was given the Sugao fox-field as a reward, whereupon he there built a shrine to *Inari*, "in gratefulness"—perhaps that the spook-fox had given him such a chance. . . .

A very famous spot for the curing of fox-possession is the *Honmyôji*, a temple of the *Nichiren* sect, in Kumamoto (Kyû-shû), where the unfortunate patients, not so long ago, used to line the way hoping for deliverance. However, most *Nichiren* (or *Hokke*) 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 *Hokke*

37) Let us not forget that Jesus drove seven demons out of Mary Magdalen alone. . . . Evidently with the same "divine help" in mind, the Bishop of Japan, in 1606, while writing home about the martyrdom of a blind convert, known as Damian, stated that this saintly man "furthermore possessed the blessing of exorcising the devils from possessed, and indeed so delivered many a possessed person, to the great astonishment of the heathens. . . ." These same heathens of course practised exorcism long before the missionaries came to Japan. . . . Call the intruders demons or devils or foxes and badgers, the idea is always the same, and found universally.

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 of 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 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."

But many of Kôbô Daishi's *Shingon* temples are also most efficacious; prominent among them for instance the *Shinshôji* at Narita (Shimôsa), in whose treasury is a sword which Emperor Shujaku (931-946) presented to the *Fudô* deity there venerated, for the help he had given the imperial cause in the Masakado revolt. The touch of this sword not only delivers from fox-possession but cures insanity....

More commonly, the Shintô exorcist, or healing priest, the *kitôshi*, may be successfully called in. With his *gohei* wand, compelling even the deity, his power is such that the patient will continually tremble during the exorcism—due, as is carefully explained, to the behaviour of the agonizing fox within his body, and by no means to any fear of the man himself.... A rather important point to note is that while certain Buddhist sects, as we saw (mainly the *Nichiren*, *Shingon* and *Tendai*), believe in fox-possession, whether for an oracle or as a nefarious penetration, when acting either as medium or as exorcist their priests invariably use the Shintô *gohei*, and not some Buddhist implement, as the ritual "wand" embodying their power.

Fox-possession is most prevalent in those districts where people also believe in the "fox-owners" (*kitsune-mochi*), and of course is more frequent among the farming population than among townspeople, and more among the women than among the men. I quote another, earlier and even better known foreign authority, the famous Professor Dr. Baelz:

"Having entered the human being, sometimes through the breast, more often through the space between the finger-nails

and the flesh^{37a}, the fox lives a life of his own, apart from the proper self of the person who is harbouring him. There thus results a sort of double entity or double consciousness. The person possessed 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 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.

“The explanation of the disorder is not so far to seek as might be supposed. Possession is evidently related to hysteria and to the hypnotic phenomena which physiologists have recently studied with so much care, the cause of all alike being the fact that, whereas in healthy persons one half of the brain alone is actively engaged—in right-handed persons the left half of the brain, and in left-handed persons the right—leaving the other half to contribute only in a general manner to the function of thought, nervous excitement arouses this other half, and the two—one the organ of the usual self, the other the organ of the new pathologically affected self—are set over against each other. The rationale of possession is an auto-suggestion, an idea arising either with apparent spontaneity or else from the subject-matter of it being talked about by others in the patient’s presence, and then overmastering her weak mind exactly as happens in hypnosis. In the same manner the *idea* of the possibility of cure will often actually effect the cure. The cure-worker must be a person of strong mind and power of will, and must enjoy the patient’s full confidence. For this reason the priests of the Nichiren sect, which is the most superstitious and bigoted of Japanese Buddhist sects, are the most successful expellers of foxes. Occasionally

37a) The belief that evil spirits or devils can penetrate under the nails of hands or feet is very common among primitives, everywhere. To paint the nails red was probably, to begin with, a magic protection to scare such undesirable intruders; some savages still act on this basis at the wedding night.

fits and screams accompany the exit of the fox. In all cases—even when the fox leaves quietly—great prostration remains for a day or two, and sometimes the patient is unconscious of what has happened.³⁸

“To mention but one among several cases, I was once called in to a girl with typhoid fever. She recovered; but during her convalescence, she heard the women around her talk of another woman who had the fox, and who would doubtless do her best to pass it on to someone else, in order to be rid of it. At that moment the girl experienced an extraordinary sensation. The fox had taken possession of her. All her efforts to get rid of him were vain. ‘He is coming! He is coming!’ she would cry, as a fit of the fox drew near. ‘Oh! what shall I do? Here he is!’ And then, in a strange, dry, cracked voice, the fox would speak, and mock his unfortunate hostess. Thus matters continued for three weeks, till a priest of the Nichiren sect was sent for. The priest upbraided the fox sternly. The fox (always, of course, speaking through the girl’s mouth) argued on the other side. At last he said: ‘I am tired of her. I ask no better than to leave her. What will you give me for doing so?’ The priest asked what he would take. The fox replied, naming certain cakes and other things which, said he, must be placed before the altar of such and such a temple, at 4 p.m., on such a day. The girl was conscious of the words her lips were made to frame, but was powerless to say anything in her own person. When the day and hour arrived, the offerings bargained for were taken by her relations to the place indicated, and the fox quitted the girl at that very hour.”³⁹

38) Of old it was widely believed that epileptics were possessed by some dangerous spirit, and “it is a curious fact in the history of surgery that the operation of trepanning was apparently first practised in Europe with the intention, and for the purpose of causing or permitting the demon, which was believed to inhabit the head, to come out. Professor Broca says that a certain Sehan Taxil published in 1603 a treatise on epilepsy, and in a chapter proving that demoniacs were epileptics he advocates the opening (la trépanation) of the skull, to cause the demon to come out. This notion was clearly both ancient and widespread, for the aboriginal inhabitants of Peru practised trepanning extensively. Numerous skulls have been discovered, on which the operation had been performed in a terribly rough manner...” (Frederick Thomas Elworthy: *Horns of Honour and other Studies in the By-ways of Archaeology*.)

39) Dr. Baelz adds the following interesting remarks on self-hypnotism of a similar hysterical type: “A curious scene of a somewhat

A quaint way of "exorcising" a goblin-fox is reported by the painter Shiba Kōkan (1732-1818), who had it from a physician of Ashimori, in Bichū. The doctor seems to have had quite some experience with fox-possessed people in his village. His method was to pinch and rub the patient's body and arms, while also tying up one arm. Through the massage the fox was gradually forced into the arm, which would swell as if with a tumour, thus indicating where the fox sat. The good doctor then would pierce the bulge with a needle, and although the fox could only be a spiritual one, the prick hurt him so much that he would promise to leave. But foxes are liars, and at times a second operation became necessary. In one case particularly reported, the fox "proved" that he would leave by telling the doctor that his body would be found in a nearby bamboo-grove—where indeed it was discovered. . . .

Sometimes, however, far more drastic means are needed to get rid of a pertinacious *kitsune*. Physical violence on the patient of course is equally felt by the fox, who also dislikes being choked by smoke. . . . If a "persuasion" of this kind is postponed until the very end, it is only because the patient may die of it before the fox has left. . . . I think it of interest to fully quote an essay (and personal account) sent in by a Japanese in 1916 for a certain English language examination held in Kobe.⁴⁰

similar nature may occasionally be witnessed at Minobu, the romantically situated chief temple of the Nichiren sect, some two days' journey from Tokyo in the interior. There the people sit praying for hours before the gigantic statues of the ferocious-looking gods called Ni-ō, which are fabled to have been carried thither from Kamakura in a single night on the back of the hero Asaina some sixhundred years ago. The devotees sway their bodies backwards and forwards, and ceaselessly repeat the same invocation, "*Namu myōhō renge kyō! Namu myōhō renge kyō!*" At last, to some of the more nervous among them, wearied and excited as they are, the statues' eyes seem suddenly to start into life, and they themselves rise wildly, feeling a snake, or maybe a tiger, inside their body, this unclean animal being regarded as the physical incarnation of their sins. Then, with a cry, the snake or tiger goes out of them, and they themselves are left fainting on the ground."

40) As reproduced by "Yama Neko" in *The Tale of a Fox*, published in "Inaka", Vol. XVII, 1923. These volumes of "Reminiscences of Rokkōsan and Other Rocks" were privately published by "The Bell Goat" (H. E. Daunt) for the "Mountain Goats" of Kobe and their friends.

Dear Master:

Kyoto, 14th August 1916

Beg to inform you that I have show you with my very unskilful composition herein enclose, and I shall be much honour if you will kindly take to your object of derision.

I am, Dear Master,

Yours very respectfully

(Name)

Kyoto

enclose 1

SUPERSTITION: FOX POSSESSION, ETC.

I understand that the title, which you gave us for the English Language Competition,—Superstition: Fox possession, etc.—means “Fox possession as Superstition, etc.”

We have great many superstitions of possession in our country, and one of the most popular of those is fox possession. From the view point of psychology, possession or mediumship, spiritism, demonology are generally phenomena of what we call Multiple personality. In former times belief in these phenomena was merely superstition. Even psychology denied it. At the present time, however, it was combined with scientific truth, and become systematic one, which had a definite theory.

As a rule the man who is possessed has a power to enter into trance. Sometimes, when he is under the condition of possession, he seems as if he becomes a medium of spirit of the dead, or that of the fox,—if he is possessed by fox, etc.—and he says as if the spirit itself—or the fox itself, etc.—says. Sometimes he writes on the paper instead of speaking. The man whom fox possessed wants to eat “*Aburage*” (fried bean-curd) or becomes like a mad man; and when the fox goes out he recovers from the trance, and restores to the former condition. He does not know what he did under the condition of possession. It is very strange. I heard a real story from an old man, who saw a man whom fox possessed.

Here is his story:—

“It was in autumn of my twentieth age, I remember,—at the end of Tokugawa period—when I was invited by one of my relatives to their village festival. Thereupon I went to Hokaiji-mura—in which the relative lived—about two miles north from Kanzaki. At that time I live in Amagasaki.⁴¹ I was entertained, eating and

41) Both Kanzaki and Amagasaki are towns between Kobe and Osaka.

drinking, when we saw a fishmonger, who used to come to sell fish to my host's, coming as if he was gone mad. We were known [told] by men who came after him that he was possessed by fox. We watched him; he laughed again and again, and he ate awful large quantity of food. He did not select them as his taste; he ate whatever food there was. He said that which we could not understand, but we supposed that his talks were real events of which the fox saw at its dwelling; because from only one talk, of which we could understand, we know where lived the fox which possessed on the monger.

It was the fox which lived in the large bamboo jungle between Kanzaki and Hokaiji-mura. He said about a certain *Samurai*, who passed the jungle with his many attendants. 'Several spearmen walked dignifiedly, talking their formal manners' said he 'and he (that *Samurai*) walked also with his extraordinary attitude.'⁴² This happened really a few days before the festival.

The *Samurai* was an inspector, who was sent to Hokaiji-mura by Tokugawa Bakufu, and his procession passed by the bamboo jungle.

At last I was persuaded to take him with me; he lived in Amagasaki also. I consented to their asking, with my curiosity. We (he and I) started for our town; when we passed by the jungle, I thought to get out the fox from him. So I said 'You bad fox, out, out, from this man' and I beat him with my fist. Then the voice of the fox came from that man's mouth.

'Yes, I will go out,' said he. But it did not go out. I did so repeatedly, but in vain. At last I determined to give him a severe blow. 'Don't you out, you fox' said I. Then the fox said as before. No sooner I heard the words than I gave him a violent stroke with another end—not the blade of my sword—and at the same time I said, with my extreme loud voice, 'Out, out.' At my violent blow, he fell to the ground. For a few minutes he seemed to sleep, and then awoke as if he recovered from a swoon. He saw me with strange eyes; he seemed as if he did not know what he did only a few minutes before. I told him the story. He did not know in fact what he did during his trance. He thanked me again and again, and we hastened our steps towards the town."

I believe that the story was real. In Japan we have many other stories of fox possession.⁴³ We have also other beasts possession; at Iki island we hear the story of "Kappa" possession a river monster. At Oshima—one of the Idzu islands—we hear the story of weasel

42) The warriors of all classes always behaved very stiffly, formally, even among themselves, and their manners were entirely different from those of the commoners.

43) For some such fox stories see for instance *Japanese Folk Tales*, by Kunio Yanagita, translated by Fanny Hagin Mayer, Tokyo 1954.

possession. As fox possession, badger possession⁴⁴ is also influential superstition all over our country.

We must take care the cheating of this kind, but from the psychological view point we should believe the possibility of such experience as this story.

(Name)
Kyoto

In reading this essay, one feels how the author trembles before the "reality" of fox-possession.... "You foreigners," he tells his teacher, "come along with psychopathological explanations which do not explain anything. You superciliously call it "superstition", if I have understood you correctly, and refer to "multiple personality", hysterics, and what not. We students of foreign ways and manners may echo your theories; but don't imagine for a moment that we agree. Things indeed are very strange. Now the story I am going to give you is a *fact*, and I believe in facts, whatever your theories...."

As our Japanese friend says, in parts of Japan people believe in a quite analogical possession by other animals, including the imaginary *kappa*, and to which should be added the monkey with its *saru-tsuki*.... Generally speaking, however, the fox is the greatest evil-doer. In passing we may note that the belief in bewitching foxes is fully reflected in a common fast game of forfeits mainly played by *geisha* and their male guests. Both hands (of the two players) are thrown into three positions: at shoulder-height with palms outward they indicate the hunter; two fists, one near, the other a bit away from the body, are the gun; and two hands flat on the thighs are the running *kitsune*, wherefore the game is known as *kitsune-ken*. The man can use the gun, but the gun do nothing to the man; the gun can kill the fox, who can do nothing against the gun; the man as man is powerless against the fox, while the fox can bewitch him. There are thus nine combinations, of which three win. The loser usually is "fined" a tiny cup of sake.

It is reported that even the famous Toyotomi Hideyoshi (second half of the 16th century) once wrote a letter to the "God of Foxes", threatening all the foxes with extermination unless the one which had possessed a servant would behave.⁴⁵

44) See next section, the Badger.

45) Quoted by Walter Dening in his *Life of Toyotomi Hideyoshi*, Part V, Tokyo 1890.

To Inari *Daimyôjin*

My Lord,—I have the honour to inform you that one of the foxes under your jurisdiction has bewitched one of my servants, causing her and others a good deal of trouble. I have to request that you will make minute inquiries into the matter and endeavour to find out the reason of your subject misbehaving himself in this manner, and let me know the result.

If it turns out that the fox has no adequate reason to give for his behaviour, you are to arrest and punish him at once. If you hesitate to take action in this matter, I shall issue orders for the destruction of every fox in the land.

Any other particulars that you may wish to be informed of in reference to what has occurred, you can learn from the High Priest, Yoshida.

Apologizing for the imperfection of this letter, etc. etc.

How much the level-headed Hideyoshi himself believed in the superstition is doubtful. And yet...

Almost three centuries after Hideyoshi, when the foreign barbarians were already overrunning parts of Japan, the "Far East" journal of Yokohama (December 1873) had the following bit of "news" to report:

"A farmer of Shidzuoka Ken was taken very ill, and both he and his friends believed his malady was *kitsune-tsuki*—(fox illness). His brother had a book which professed to treat solely of this illness and its cure; and obtaining the medicine it recommended, the sick man took it, and died in a few minutes in intense agony. The brother and the seller of the medicine were both taken in charge, but as they intended no harm, but on the contrary the cure of the sufferer, it is not supposed they will be punished. The book is ordered to be destroyed, and its publication to be stopped. 'Tis a pity they cannot suppress the superstition respecting the fox, as easily."

They certainly could not: over eighty years later, in spite of rapid westernization and modern schools, the superstition still flourishes. So do we find a rather similar story reported in a newspaper ("Osaka Mainichi") of 1926:

"A telephone message from Chiba (a city near Tokyo) says that two women have been killed by their nearest kin, on account of the superstition that a 'fox' had possessed them. Yasu Fujita has been insane for some time, but her daughter and her brother were sure that she was possessed by a fox, so they went on with the usual process of filling the poor woman's eyes and nostrils with sulphur to drive the animal out. In the meantime they

repeated "Namumyôhorengkyô", invoking the Buddha of the Nichiren sect for the exorcism.⁴⁶ They did not stop with this but further went through the same process for the woman's mother, a very old woman whom they thought possessed by the fox too. They waited in vain for their restoration. In fact, they were not aware that the poor patients were already dead. As the women did not rise from their beds for many hours, the family reported the case to the local police yesterday morning."

Unfortunately few people know of a much easier method for a person bewitched by a fox to find relief, which is simply to wear one of those large sedge-hats customary with farmers and, particularly, with the pilgrims to holy places...

This idea of a person being "possessed" by some evil spirit, animal, human or hellish, seems to equally have been very general farther West until not so many generations ago. In the days of our most fervent Christian faith-demonstrations, it was an undisputed doctrine that people were at times "possessed by the devil", and the Church fathers made short shrift of persons so convicted. The remarkable fact is, as already noted, that the belief in the superhuman and evil powers of the fox (and the other animals later discussed) appears to have been unknown in Japan before the "middle-ages"; it spread with great rapidity, however, and not much later there was not a person in Japan not fully convinced of the demoniacal powers of these beasts.

This morbid fox-possession must therefore not be confused with the old Shintô-ritualistic god-possession, entered into by the *miko* (priestess) in order to vaticinate. The Shamanistic god-possession is willed, deliberately provoked for a definite purpose, usually with the help of a ritual wand, into which the deity is actually believed to "descend" so as to speak through the diviner's mouth. In the same manner the spirits of the dead (who in a way have become "gods", *kami*) can communicate with the living through the "medium". The feared fox-possession, on the other hand, is undesired and unintentional, occurs at the whim of the fox-goblin, and only causes harm to the person possessed, until he is bribed to leave, or forced to do so by a

46) *Namu myôhô renga kyô*, the Buddhist invocation "Hail to the Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law," endlessly repeated by the Nichiren adherents, who usually however mutilate it to *Nammyôhô-rengekkyô*...

superior power.⁴⁷

It is only on very rare occasions, indeed, that a "fox" may "take possession" of an individual not for mischief but to give oracles and information, like any other Shintô deity that is "called down" into the medium (*kami-oroshi*). In such a case the fox should more correctly be interpreted as a Fox-divinity, an apotheosized fox-spirit perhaps, possibly supplanting *Inari* himself. Thus Kagawa Toyohiko describes a meeting of some followers of the Nichiren sect in a small Japanese house, ending in such a possession:⁴⁸

"It was a very tedious service. For ten or twenty minutes they did nothing but repeat *Namu myôhôte renge kyô*, while beat-

47) The belief in (temporary) possession of people by "spirits" is world-wide: vaticination was generally based on this conception, and the "possession" was mainly voluntarily induced through "incantation". Yet other persons were supposed to become involuntarily possessed from time to time by a deity or spirit, and such possessions revealed themselves partly in supernatural powers, more regularly in supernatural knowledge. Both kinds are thus fundamentally different from "fox-possession", which is simply a mental derangement with bodily illness, harmful to the possessed and of no advantage to others. The oracular "*kami*-possession" is widely known in Japan too, and was regularly practised by Shintô "priestesses", especially, since mythical times. The fanatic sect of *Yamabushi* constantly has recourse to it, and there are still innumerable soothsayers who provoke a god-possession in their own body, by a sort of hypnotism, in order to vaticinate. The entrance of the deity is usually announced by shiverings and convulsions, the soothsayer sitting with eyes closed or wildly staring. The voice changes in pitch, since it is not the medium speaking on behalf of the divinity, but the divinity's own voice, issuing from the medium's body. While the possession lasts, the medium's own personality completely lies in abeyance. At the end he is in a comatose state, but usually revives soon enough and without external help.

With other races, however, according to Frazer's *Golden Bough*, even with oracular god-possession it often happens that the body swells, the features are distorted and strained, there are wild gestures, and the mouth foames. The possessed may roll on the ground and otherwise act madly, while he emits shrill, violent and indistinct sounds (which the "priests" then interpret as the spirit's announcements). There is, thus, some apparent similarity between "god-possession" of this latter (and more savage) type, the "demoniacal possession" known to ancient Christian communities, and the "fox possession" of the Japanese.

48) In *Before the Dawn*, his well-known novel of the Kobe slums, of some twenty-odd years ago, entitled *Across the Deathline* in Japanese, and translated by my old friend, Thomas Satchell.

ing the drum and striking the clappers. Eichi looked on with patience, however, till at last the noise of the clappers ceased, the drum was silent, and the voice of the worshippers grew lower. Then Ju, with her palms pressed together, lifted up her hands and waved them in the air, while she cried repeatedly, in a low voice, "Namu Arakuma Daimyôjin" . . . All present, with a fearful look in their eyes, fixed their attention on Ju.

"Suddenly Ju rose to her feet, all her body quivering.

"I am the fox of the Myôken Shrine at Nosé,' she cried. 'Ask me what you will. I know everything.'"⁴⁹

Concurrently, certain devotees of *Inari* enjoy a great reputation as diviners, and *Inari*, as we have found, while being a "Rice-deity" is also a "Fox-deity". I understand that some such intermediaries use a mediumistic board, but the majority fall into a trance by holding the usual *gohei*-wand. It would seem that they as a rule answer questions only, if rather in detail. I am not sure, however, whether they call down *Inari* himself or only one of his fox-messengers. People often confound the deity with his (or her) animals.⁵⁰

49) The "Arakuma" deity is unknown to me: the *Ara* is usually the "rough side" of a Shintô *kami*; under Buddhist influence, many prominent *kami* received the title *Dai-myôjin*, Great Brilliant Deity. . . . This deity of Nose was very probably a fox—see for instance the Badger-deity of Tokushima, page 57, and also Note 51a).

50) Some ten years ago I heard of a typical case, if more involved than usual. An acquaintance of mine, in Kobe, received a request from some relatives in Kishû, across the bay, to visit a prominent *Inari* zealot and ask for counsel. A man and his wife, after spending almost twenty years in California as farmers, had returned to Japan some ten years previously, bought ground in Kishû, and developed some "upland" near their peddy-fields. In the course of his work the husband happened to cut in two a snake in the soil. Suddenly he was taken ill and died—around sixty years old. The illness looked suspicious, and a diviner of course blamed it on the curse of the cut-up snake—a supernaturally dangerous animal even in Japan—to whose ghost no oblations had been made. . . . And now, a few years after the husband's death, ill-luck would that the wife, too, became bed-ridden. She simply could no longer walk about, and while not otherwise "feeling sick" she was perishing, and the village-physician had given up hope. Somebody had suggested a fox curse.

The *Inari*-god's reply was definite and distinct. The husband's death had been erroneously diagnosed as due to the snake-spirit's revenge. In the course of levelling some ground, he had also closed up a fox-hole. In that hole lived an old, old Reynard, so old he was almost hair-

A most unusual "fox-story", and unique as far as I know, is recounted in the "Chronicle of Sumpu" (*Sumpu-ki*; Sumpu, now Shizuoka, being then the residence of Tokugawa Iyeyasu), for the year 1611, in September.⁵¹ "From Kyoto, too, a most remarkable occurrence was told: In one of the backstreets of Ichijô there is said to have lived a man called Chôan, who adored Amida. A few days after his death there appeared in his house, as it grew dark, several people who looked like *yamabushi*. As one went to look at them closer, they suddenly disappeared. For several evenings the same thing happened. The younger brother of Chôan decided to stop these doings, so one night, as it had gotten completely dark, he and some like-minded friends armed themselves and watched for the appearance. Then hundreds of thousands of figures looking like *yamabushi* appeared and crammed the house, so that the brother fled horrified; but the next day he died. . . . His wife, his children, the servants could no longer stand the thought of living in that house, and all left.— On hearing this, Iyeyasu remarked: 'It seems to me that that is a fox locality.'

A weird story indeed, as it looks like some punishment on the part of Amida: or else after killing Chôan "the fox" decided to also annihilate his relatives. Iyeyasu's comment, at the same time, proves that even in his days and by intelligent persons, anything "uncanny" was attributed to mischievous fox-doings.

A short reference must now be made to the *Inari* fox, which I consider to be actually outside of the "bewitching" circle, but

less, and not nimble enough to escape while it was time. So he was entombed in his lair, and asphyxiated. Which he did not like; hence his revenge on the malefactor, unwitting that he was. Yet through the stupidity of the first diviner, no propitiation had taken place even after that, and now the fox-ghost was harassing the widow.

The remedy: some paper charms and a few grains of sacred rice. Used according to prescription, they would break the fox's spell. They did. After some months the old woman, almost sixty, could walk again, if with slight pains.—It takes more than twenty years in the United States to get rid of superstitions that are bred into the bones with mother's milk.

51) I translate from Wilhelm Röhl: *Aus der "Chronik von Sumpu"*, in the "Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens", No. 79/80, Hamburg 1956.

which is quite commonly confused with the *bakemono-kitsune* by the populace. Indeed, some Inari shrines were and are famous for the charms which they issue as good against fox-possession.^{51a} And, as we have seen from Hideyoshi's letter, the "Fox-deity", *Inari*, is supposed to be responsible for the doings of all the foxes in the land.

Japan has still a "fox worship" connected with crop-fertility. It goes back to dim antiquity, and is far more general in this country than in China, although fairly prevalent in that country as well. When the wind sets the haulms in a wave-like motion, the Japanese say that the fox goes through the rice-field, just as in Europe the wolf, usually, goes through the corn-field. The rice-fox is believed to be a white one, a *byakko*, and is thought of as the messenger, or familiar, of Inari, the Rice-deity.⁵² Such supernatural or divine foxes belonging to *Inari*, while invisible to the human eye may nevertheless be "smelled". They are said to exhale a fragrant, faint, burnt-flesh scent, "difficult to explain or describe, but easily recognized." Not everybody, however, will notice the odour. . . .

The Rice-fox, in popular religion, has practically usurped the deity's importance. Indeed, at the principal *Inari* sanctuary

51a) Among the most famous was the "black talisman", *kuro-fuda*, issued by a shrine in the grounds of a *hatamoto* called Nose, in Yedo. The public was only admitted once a year, and these most successful charms were therefore scarce and in great demand. There was even a saying concerning this *Inari*: *Kuro-fuda no rei ni wa baka na kao de kuru*—When returning the black charm with thanks, one makes a silly face—because one admitted, indirectly, that one had been possessed by a fox for a while. . . .

52) Wayside shrines, dedicated to the Fox, are often found in rural China, although a true Fox-"religion" is apparently not developed.—"Crop animals" or "Corn spirits" were believed in by all races, it would seem, and may take a variety of forms, whether quadrupeds or birds.—*Inari* is the common name given by people to a personification sometimes thought of as feminine and young, but also identified with an "old man", *Uga*, who in the epoch of the gods was "the first one to discover and cultivate the rice-plant." *Uga*'s "familiar" is the snake, however, which is also a common symbol of birth and fertility. *Uga* got practically lost as a divinity already in antiquity, and may well have been the local god of a restricted region, while *Inari*, which probably simply means the Rice-bearer or Rice-producer, i.e. the Rice Lord, was a later compound-deity owing a good deal also to *Inada-hime*, the "Rice-field Princess" of mythology. But see also my "*Inari*". (Note 27.)

at Fushimi (Kyoto), separate shrines are erected for the veneration of such white foxes as *Myôbu*, the "Court Lady", *Tome*, the "old Woman", *Kiko-Myôjin*, the "Venerable Fox Brilliant Deity", his descendant *Chôko* or *Osa-gitsune*, King of all the foxes in Japan, while it is said that *Tôka*, whose name can also be read "*Inari*", is actually the White Fox original Deity of the mountain-sanctuary. But for lesser tasks there are also a number of *yorikata* or common assistants. . . .

To the simple-minded man the appearance of an animal in his field is probably sufficient to suggest a mysterious connection between its passing and the corn's fructification, especially if the animal be a carnivorous one which "has nothing to seek there" in the way of food. At harvest time some such animal may then be driven from its shelter in the field, and thus become the manifestation of the Corn-god, as his Corn-animal or as his own transformation. To primitive man, the changing of shape, whether of gods, men or animals, seemed something perfectly credible, and he found it particularly natural that a "spirit" should show himself in the shape of a beast that was familiar to him but of somewhat dubious character.⁵³ It is, partly at least, out of this belief in a transformation of the "corn spirit" into an animal that the superstition grew that the animal, in turn, could transform itself into a pseudo-human. Also, the animal being in truth a spirit—or a goblin—can take possession of a being whom he wants to smite.⁵⁴

Everywhere along the roadside in Japan, and even on the flat roofs of the most modern office-buildings and department-stores, are the small, red or plain white shrines devoted to *Inari*, with often a long row of *torii*⁵⁵ before them. These shrines are

53) In Central Java a "wer tiger" guards the plantations at night against the destructive wild pigs; in the Yucatan the *balams* (magicians) took on an animal shape to guard the corn-fields!

54) In Europe the belief prevails that if a reaper unwittingly stumbles over the corn-spirit, he will be taken ill in the field as a punishment. He will mainly suffer from pains in the back and the loins, as if he had been sorely beaten by the spirit.

55) The *torii*, whose origin is disputed but which probably was in the nature of a perch, whether for the sacred cocks welcoming the sun (which entered the sacred precinct by this gate?) or originally for the soul-bird of a deceased person, is composed of two upright posts with two cross-beams, the topmost one protruding on both sides. They are invariably painted red for *Inari*.

flanked by two white foxes, and actually the people pray rather to these animals than to the invisible spirit. They, as the familiars of the deity, are in the best position to listen to and fulfill humanity's wishes. *Inari* himself is often thought of as a fox.

Since rice, in Japan, as corn with the Europeans, represents the country's chief wealth, the *Inari* foxes can also procure cash and other property. Their, or their master's, shrines are thus most popular with all classes of people, but especially with the traders, *geisha*, and other "materialistic persons", who generally have a tiny *Inari* shrine in their own home, complete with the pair of foxes, or sometimes even the foxes alone. And they never forget to invoke their help for a prosperous day's work.

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.

This fox is thus a phallic symbol. The object in its jaws is traditionally a key, now interpreted as the key which by divine power unlocks the portal of wealth, the granary. This "key" or pestle shape, or oblong object, however, is but an emblem of the phallus: the very idea of its purpose of "opening the portal" is phallic.⁵⁶

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.⁵⁷

56) It would lead too far to go into the various aspects of phallicism in Japan, even if restricted to its modern survivals. In Europe, too, we still have many customs among farmers which can be traced back to ancient phallic beliefs, similar to those of Japan. In France and elsewhere the peasants speak of "having the key", thereby meaning to have (or carry) the key to a field in which dwells "the Old Man", that is, the Corn-spirit. Pestles and similar objects are equally phallic in mythology and legends.

57) In Europe the wolf, pig, hare, ox, cow, dog and several other animals are represented. It is also remarkable that a fox's tail is called "bush" in English, while the Germans call a sheaf a "Büschel", which means nothing but a small bush (and from which undoubtedly the measure "bushel" is derived). Possibly the suggestion is due to the shape of a sheaf of rice (or corn) which stands in the field, and which to some extent resembles the bushy tail of fox or wolf. In some ancient paintings of the West the "corn deity" is represented with a tail or mane of corn. In the Bourgogne the last sheaf harvested is called the

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.⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹

The outline of the *Inari* fox's tail—which from its root swells into a club-shape, then contracts as if bound with a cord, to spread again into the onion-shaped jewel—may well at first have been suggested by a sheaf of rice, bound with a few stalks below the ears. With the intensification of phallic symbolism the tail was then given a more correlated outline. The tail of the fox indubitably was one of the main reasons which made the animal into the mystic and mysterious being as which it was considered by all peoples.⁶⁰

A queer custom is that the offerings made to an *Inari* shrine in Japan often are *waraji*, the straw-sandals worn by peasants

fox's tail. There, as in many other countries, the harvesters throw their sickles at this last sheaf, and he who succeeds in severing it is said to have "cut off the fox's tail." (Keeping the tail of a hunted fox as a trophy may be due to identical customs.) The "wolf's tail" takes its place in other regions, and similar ceremonies are observed by the harvesters. Hare and pig may have been substituted because of their superlative prolificacy. Ox and cow, being the constant help-mate of the farmer, and another source of food, offered themselves quite obviously as corn-animals.—It was supposed that the corn-spirit gradually retreats from sheaf to sheaf until he finally is captured in the last one standing. When the threshing is finished, it is customary in many lands to make a puppet in the form of the corn-animal, of straw, with tail and mane of wheat-ears. (In Japan many amulets consist in an animal shape made of straw.) Corresponding customs seem not to have obtained in Japan or China, where the rice-fox is permanently worshipped.—Incidentally, in most languages the word for tail is also the general appellation for the male organ.

58) "Jewels" very often penetrate virgins and glow in them, rendering them pregnant of supernatural sons. The phalli formerly worshipped along the roadside frequently ended in a jewel.

59) Palaeolithic cave-pictures in Southwest Europe show naked beings in ithyphallic positions, whose heads and skins, on a human body, are mostly of animals. They are plainly emblems of crop-fertility, or of rituals, "magic", made to procure fertility.

60) It has been suggested that the Teutonic expressions Fox, Fuchs, Vos, etc. are derived from the Sanskrit *puccha*, tail.

and pilgrims, while in China the fox-deity received tiny women's shoes. Both, no doubt, again have reference to woman's fertility, to progeny. Feet are also universally connected with phallicism, and shoes mean feet. The sandals are furthermore linked with crops because of their material, straw. Both are connected with "roads", and it is another universal fact that the road-gods, the protectors of the travellers, are phallic. *Inari* himself is also a road-deity, therefore his shrines can be found all along the field-roads.

Demoniacal foxes which possess people can be exorcised by the patient being taken to a powerful *Inari* shrine. The evil fox will leave the person as he is afraid of "the good *Inari* deity, the Great White Fox." Concurrently, since rats and mice are the enemies of crops, the fox-goblins—connected with the *Inari* foxes—are masters over the rat- and mouse-goblins. Amulets sold at *Inari* shrines, and which are chiefly ornamented with the deity's white fox, are thus very powerful against the evil spirits of poverty. Which, in turn, makes the fox-amulet one of the best to obtain wealth and prosperity. . . .

Folklore has naturally created many legends on the *Inari*-fox's doings. A remarkable fact is that *Inari*—or his phallic foxes—should be the patron-god of the Japanese sword-smith, just as with the Romans the phallus was the emblem which the smiths placed before their forges.

All foxes, whether *Inari*'s or the common field-fox or even the *bakemono*, are inordinately fond of fried tidbits, which may therefore be used to propitiate them.

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THE BADGER

We see what a complicated animal the fox of oriental and chiefly Japanese lore is. It is very old in some of its aspects in China, and in others in Japan. In both countries it is the principal *bakemono* among all animals. In both countries, also, it is closely linked to another *bakemono*, the badger, *tanuki*, whom it intensely dislikes. That fox and badger—as well as most animals which live in holes in the ground, if these others to a lesser extent—should in some manner all have transcendental powers, is due to the fact that in the stillness of the night they hear what goes

on in the bowels of the earth. . . .

The *tanuki* is popularly also known as *mameda*, and while neither name can be rationally explained nowadays, we may suspect that the *ta-* or *-da* connects the animal with the cultivated fields, *ta*.

The lore of the badger is far more restricted than that of the fox, and in Japan seems to have become general only in about the 14th century, being then supported by tales introduced from China. Nevertheless we find traces of what looks like badger-superstition long before that. According to the *Nihon-shoki*, written early in the 8th century, a *mujina* in the province of Michinoku was the first one to take the shape of a man one day in the second month of the 35th year of the reign of Empress Suikô (A.D. 627)⁶¹; but another manuscript version of the same chronicle simply tells us that the badger kept intercourse with humans, instead of that it assumed a human figure. Both copies, however, agree in the next line, *viz.* that the badger "sang"! As a Japanese story-teller cleverly evolves, the "badger" in question was probably invented by a girl to camouflage the illicit nightly meetings with a man from the same or a neighbouring village, somewhere on the moor. After the fairy-tale had travelled over the country, similar singing badgers were encountered in other provinces, and the belief became firmly established that the badger could assume human shape.

To be quite correct, the *tanuki* is rather the "raccoon-faced dog" (*Canis nyctereutes* or *procionides*), the true badger being a *mujina* or a *mami*, depending on locality, or also an *ana-guma*, a "hole-bear". To the common people, however, they are all *tanuki*. This badger is but rarely a terrible beast, although that can happen; he mostly plays practical if at times painful jokes and pranks, less often really wicked deception. In fact, as "fox", *kitsune*, is applied to women who disrupt family-life by ensnaring and financially ruining the husband or son, so was the term "badger", *tanuki*, given in a patronizing manner to those buffoons, jesters, and other male entertainers who by their witty chatter and antics amused and enlivened festive parties.⁶² The *tanuki* is

61) "Michinoku" was a vague region far in the North, "off the road" and in those days decidedly inhospitable.

62) The wily, patient, "diplomatic" *shôgun* Tokugawa Iyeyasu was irreverently nicknamed "Furu-Tanuki", the Old Badger.—Note that in English "to badger" means to tease, to worry. . . .

in general less smart in his pranks than the *kitsune*, often clumsy or even crude, and sometimes cruel. One of his predilected jokes is to cause fishermen to draw up their nets empty—although they may feel heavy as if full to bursting—and then laugh uproariously at their discomfiture.

Perhaps this joke is due to the *tanuki*'s extreme fondness of fish—especially the small *dôjô* or loach, but else of any kind he can get. The badger will steal fish, from somebody carrying it in a deserted place, as the fox will steal anything fried. Apart from fish, the badger is especially fond of parched beans, as sundry stories prove. Sometimes he eats so many that he then feels sick!⁶³

Another favourite prank is to frighten people at night: either by throwing stones at them or their houses, or by suddenly dropping the bucket clatteringly into the well, or by throwing about pots and pans in the kitchen.

Badgers too "emit fire", and *tanuki-bi* is another word for will-o'-the-wisps. In the Osaka-Kishû district mainly, there is a belief that *tanuki-bi* wander around on rainy nights. The unwary rustic mistakes this for the glowing pipe of a fellow-farmer; he will not only hold conversation with the disguised *tanuki*, but may even light his own pipe at this ghost-fire! Since the use of tobacco among the lower classes goes back hardly to the beginning of the 17th century, this shows that the belief in *tanuki* was strong enough to create new variants as opportunity arose, up to comparatively recent times.

The badger's transmutations are numerous, but he as well prefers the form of a beautiful maiden to ensnare his victim, who is usually a man. The badger is very amorous in this disguise, and as the victim is generally induced to sleep in "her" embrace, his disgust is all the greater when he awakens from the phantom in the morning, and finds himself bedded on rotting leaves in a desolate spot. Yet the *tanuki* may also become a man, and then seduce women, or play the drunkard and smash up things. He may act like some government official come to harass people for taxes or some imaginary misdeed; or else he may seat himself comfortably in a tree, and spin a *fata morgana* to

63) I wonder whether the name *mameda* for the animal could have been "bean-field", *mame-da*.

bewilder the traveller coming along the road. He can equally well "create" thunder and lightning and earthquakes, to scare people out of their wits. . . .⁶⁴

The true hero of course always recognized the deceptive beast and slays it; the gullible man yields and suffers the consequences. When *tanuki* take human shape they are luminous like the goblin-fox, which should warn the wary. Another safe means by which the badger can be detected unfortunately only works in rainy weather, when in spite of the downpour the beautiful lady's *kimono* will remain quite dry. . . .

A further favourite disguise of the animal is that of a monk, well-nourished and often found sitting on his cushion, beating the Buddhist wooden drum known as a *mokugyô*. In this shape he takes the name of *tanuki-bôzu*. Somehow he likes to associate with Buddhism, and will usually have his residence beneath the floor of a Buddhist temple, or at least in its immediate neighbourhood. He may also carry a lotus-leaf on his head, upside-down, like a warrior's lacquered war-hat: *Jizô*, the Buddha of roads and protector of children and of the souls on their journey to the Otherworld, frequently wears the same leaf head-cover. . . . And since Buddhism is concerned with death, a bunch of badgers will also delight in imitating a funeral at night, whenever there has been such a sad ceremony in the village: carrying lanterns, assembling at the grave, and repeating the litanies and other rites common among humans. Badgers are anyhow very fond of aping human doings among themselves, and for their own fun.

The metamorphosed badger will often conclude a deal with men, and pay them golden coins. He takes away the goods, but the coins will shortly after transform themselves back into dry leaves, to the merchant's utter chagrin. At the same time the badger will not hesitate to use his wiles in a corresponding way on other animals, even if in the end he may dearly pay for his deception. In extreme cases the badger will even devour some human, for a specific "prank".

Although the *tanuki* is usually conceived as greedy, on the other hand he may equally be a grateful and benevolent animal,

64) I would say that in Hearn's story given on page 16 the old man believed in a *tanuki*'s mirage rather than a *kitsune*'s; the *tanuki* is adept at such jokes, which the *kitsune* usually does not indulge in.

especially if he has been rendered a favour.⁶⁵ How deep the badger-superstition is ingrained is shown by the following report which illustrates the belief in his benevolence when well treated, and which appeared in the "Japan Chronicle" of the first of December, 1939:

"Thanks to the fervent animal worship of a group of villagers a badger which was captured by riparian workers along the Kanzaki River near Osaka on Wednesday has been given its freedom after having been treated to a feast of delicacies and *sake*.—The workers spied the animal among the rushes on one of the river banks and after a brief chase managed to capture it. Meanwhile, however, Shigetaro Sasaki, Kane Tsuji, Tsuki Kinoshita and a number of others who are firm believers in a superstition regarding animals, particularly badgers, heard about the incident and offered the men ¥12 for the animal. Taking it home they held a "badger festival" to which they summoned three Buddhist priests and then gave the animal a feast including *sake*. While the festival was at its height, a man from Osaka approached them and offered ¥50 for the animal but the men refused and allowed it to regain its freedom after another drink of *sake*.—A story is prevalent in the district to the effect that a man who once spared the life of a badger many years ago is now living in luxury.

A somewhat unusual badger story was reported to me from Kashihara, some 12 miles south of Nara. Since it happened in the same street, Soga-cho, in which my informant lives, it must be true even if it happened some while ago. . . .

In a large but very old house there lived a Mr. Kitabayashi and his family. On the occasion of his son's marriage, Kitabayashi gave quite a banquet, with choice food including the auspicious mixture of rice and red beans, the *sekihan*. The food was so plentiful that after the guests had retired there were still heaps left over; it being late, things remained as they stood, and the family went to bed.—Shortly afterwards a clock struck midnight,

65) For some badger stories see Lord Redesdale, Ferguson and Anesaki, etc., *op. cit.*—The story of the Badger and the Vixen and her cub, as also *Kachi-kachi Yama*, the best known ones, are available in many renditions. To readers acquainted with German I recommend Kurt Meissner's *Der Krieg der alten Dachse* (Tokyo 1932), the story of a country-wide war among badgers due to one leader's loyalty to his human benefactor.

and at the same time Mr. Kitabayashi heard an unusual noise in the guest room, and suspecting a marauder decided to investigate: he carefully slid aside one of the *fusuma*, and peeped through the gap.

What was his surprise to see a couple of big badgers and a troop of young ones partaking of the *sekihan*! The parents eagerly helped the youngsters to gorge themselves, and they all seemed to have a really good time. . . . "Poor things", thought the kind-hearted Mr. Kitabayashi; "they evidently are short of food and find it hard to satisfy all these mouths." So he not only went to bed, leaving them to their enjoyment, but thenceforth laid out a meal for them every evening.

Now one night two real burglars broke into the house, and threatened Kitabayashi with a long sword, asking for money. "Unless you give us a large amount, we shall kill you all!" they warned. He and his family could but tremble and stay under their covers as if frozen by fear. . . . But then the *fusuma* were suddenly thrown apart, and two gigantic wrestlers entered the room. . . . "Rascals!", they cried, "out you go, or we shall kill you with our bare hands!" And the burglars were scared to death and ran away as fast as their legs would carry them. . . .

The relief of the family was naturally intense. "How can we ever thank you enough!" they cried, and deeply bowed their heads. But when they looked up again, the wrestlers had disappeared. Wondering for a long time what might really have happened, and glad of the supernatural help, they at length fell asleep.

Later on, Kitabayashi and his wife had a strange dream. A badger appeared to them, and thanked them for their kindness in providing so much food for him and his during a period of great shortage. It was only out of gratitude that they had helped when danger from burglars had threatened. There was nothing to worry about. So saying, the badger again vanished.

Incidentally, all "supernatural" animals are fond of *sake* (rice-wine), which stands for the *elixir vitae*; and if ever caught they are made to drink it, while cups of wine are also offered at their master's shrine. First in line, nevertheless, stands the *tanuki*, often represented with a wine-bottle or calabash in his hands. An alternative is to show him dancing about, upright on his hind-legs, holding the large lotus-leaf already mentioned over his head with one paw, and in the other carrying a bill for *sake* which of course he is never going to pay. There used to be a

quite general belief that at dusk during a slight rainfall the *tanuki* would call at a wine-shop in disguise, provided with his bottle and a charge-book, like one of the shop's regular customers, obtain a good supply, and of course cheat the *sakaya* for the amount. Probably the lotus-leaf is metamorphosed into the needed umbrella.

One of the best known old *Märchen* treats of a "humming tea-kettle", *Bumbuku-chagama*, as it is called, in which a badger benefitted a poor but kind-hearted old man by assuming a kettle-shape from which his head, legs and bushy tail protruded, and in this guise performing all sorts of acrobatic tricks. The badger indeed can transform himself into any object, which the fox rarely does.⁶⁶ In other tales he becomes a stone, an old tree, a lantern, any kind of thing which may fool and mislead the lonely wanderer. He also loves to assume the shape of a moon. This, however, he can only do when the real full-moon is also in the sky: the double luminary then is bound to confuse a good many people, to bewilder their senses, and make them feel crazy.

Like the fox, the badger needs paraphernalia to enact his transformation, usually bones or dry grasses and leaves. But the *tanuki* has one more means to lead people astray: he inflates his belly to an enormous globe, on which he drums a tattoo with his paws while sitting on his haunches. The sound produced by this *hara-tsutsumi*—

Teketen — teketen — teketen —
Dokodon — dokodon — dokodon . . .

is said to be so delicate and entrancing that the wayfarer cannot but turn aside to follow it. At times the *tanuki* may also "sing" an imitative *pom-poko pom, pom-poko pom, or pom-poko sho* and so forth. As the badger, ensconced in some wood or shrubs in a lonely place, recedes or advances so as to confuse the victim by the constantly changing sound, the man, if not lured to a

66) In the story of Princess *Tamamo-no-mae*, who was actually a nine-tailed vixen (see pg. 28), a sequence has it that after having been killed she transformed herself into a rock. This must have been her spirit, and the rock, then, was no longer able to transmute itself back into a fox, or into any other being. It was finally destroyed by a priest's incantations because of its poisonous emanations. . . .

swamp and possible destruction, at least quite loses his direction.⁶⁷ But often enough a badger will drum on his belly for his own delectation, or a party of friends may do it together, as humans would make music; and then it may happen that one of them becomes so enchanted with his own "melody", and so blows up his belly, to make it even louder and more *vibrato*—that he will burst.

Often enough, on a moonlight night, a group of *tanuki* will meet for general merrymaking, and dance a peasant's rondo in some field. Now and then they may also dance around an abandoned shrine.... They are just enjoying themselves, and not out for a prank. Yet bright moonlight nights are considered particularly risky for humans: the animal may then also go roistering about on his hind-legs even in the village, drumming, knocking at doors and shaking shutters, loudly crying *gyang-gya! gyang-gya!*, and in other ways "scaring women and children." Or he may make himself invisible, enter a home, and start moving things about as if they were flying, while abstracting others. He may shear off one's hair, or the tail of a horse, or pluck the fowls bare. He delights in assuming abnormal shapes which grab people with enormous arms, or throw boulders which knock people down. If the people die from fright and shock, why should he care? There is no end to his whims, and as a precaution the image of a badger, with his protuberant abdomen, either sitting or standing, is a favourite sympathetic amulet.⁶⁸ For some obscure reason it is also a usual shop-sign not only of dealers in *sake*—perhaps indicating an excellence which would even be appreciated by a *tanuki*—but, less understandably, of a certain class of food-shops, and of such as sell household-porcelains.

Not infrequently the badger's drumming is done with a pair of round-headed sticks (as used for large ritual drums) on his own scrotum, which is tremendously enlarged and lies in front of the squatting animal, somewhat like a *mokugyô*, the Buddhist percussion instrument shaped like a huge jingle-bell. Some combination of this idea may have entered into the occasional re-

67) *Hara* means belly, and the *tsutsumi* is the quaint orchestral drum shaped like an hour-glass. I wonder whether this "drumming" idea is not a faint memory of the message-drums of South-Sea islanders.... A strong influx into Japan certainly came from that quarter.

68) For some fanciful badger stories see again *Japanese Folk Tales* by Yanagita.

presentation of a *tanuki* in the robes of a Buddhist priest, as already noted, which is not exactly a compliment to that fraternity. But Buddhist priests, the same as the Catholic ones in Europe, were at times and by certain groups considered no better than charlatans ensnaring the credulous, especially the women. They were thus deemed to be rather dangerous fellows destroying in the end those whom they pretend to save. The *tanuki-bôzu* is the sly but ruthless individual to whom any pretext and deception, even an apparent piousness, will serve his ends.⁶⁹

Incidentally, in every representation of the badger the scrotum is of excessive dimensions, and prominently displayed. And its owner can even further distend it and give it any desired shape: he may use it as a cloak and head-cover, as a means to look like a goblin, as a stand for exhibiting his wares in the market-place, as something like a bulky carpet under which to smother his enemy, the hunter. In fact he is said to be able to cover with it eight mats—*hachi-jo-shiki-kintama*—the size of a good room.

For some reason or other, on the other hand, the *tanuki* figures show no penis. . . . I have never obtained a sensible explanation of this defect, which of course must originally have had a meaning. I would say that nevertheless we must consider the characteristic scrotum as indubitable evidence of the animal's extreme phallic significance: it, too, is a "crop-spirit", a fructifying power of Vegetation, possibly closer connected with glens and marshes than with the rice-fields, which are the domain of the fox. The badger indeed is as erratic as Nature is: he "plays pranks" on humanity and sometimes even kills; yet he can also be benevolent, and procure wealth.

Although as a rule the fox-goblin is considered the more cunning and superior of the two, in several places in Japan the badger-goblin is deemed as having the stronger spirit and greater muscular powers. People therefore pray to the less fearsome badger to help them get rid of some ailment "wished on" by foxy influence. In Shikoku, where the holy Kôbô Daishi banned all the foxes, the badgers are looked upon with the greatest veneration and superstitious awe. They are fully be-

69) In the cathedral of Brandenburg there is an ancient representation of a fox clothed as a priest and preaching to geese. The same notion must have occurred to its producer. In German too, a goose is a silly woman.

lieved to bring wealth to a household that will treat them kindly, seeing to it that their dens are unharmed and that the animals daily receive a dish of dumplings, fish, or other delicacies. It is said, indeed, that there are a few Buddhist temples where people more or less openly worship a badger-god, and one of them at least, the *O-Mutsu-an* in Tokushima, is outright dedicated to an *O-Mutsu-Daimyôjin*, a "brilliantly deified" Badger.⁷⁰

It may happen, nevertheless, that a badger will "bewitch" a person by entering him and torturing him mercilessly. Usually this will be in revenge for some harm that the man did to him—destroying his den, killing a near relative, persecuting the badger himself. In such a case the offended badger can be more tenacious and more ferocious even than the fox, and a very powerful exorciser will be needed to expel him. More often the man will die a painful death. Hence man will do well not to anger the *tanuki-san*.

The best way to protect oneself against bewitching by fox or badger is to hold, in one's left hand, the bone of a tortoise's foot. . . .

All over Asia, bulky fatness, an ample abdomen, a corpulence which looks bloated, is considered to be a sign of wealth and ease. A poor man cannot afford plentiful rich food such as will produce adipose; a man bodily busy does not have the leisure to accumulate this fat in thick layers. . . . A leisurly, well-fed existence will gradually give one some *embonpoint*, and gradually only can this *embonpoint* develop into that really heavy belly and plumpness of limbs which indicates utmost prosperity. The wit of the Japanese therefore evolved a triad of such "fat beings" to bring one Luck: *Hotei*, the well-known deity with huge paunch, always smiling; the *tanuki* with his roundly distended belly; and the *fugu* or globefish, which can similarly blow up its underpart to look like a sphere. . . .

One feature which the *bakemono*, badger or fox, should never forget, because, as several stories show, it may indeed "turn the scale against him" in his pranks, is that whatever his disguise may be, his bodily weight remains the actual animal one.

* * * * * * * * *

70) It seems evident that the *tanuki* is in many ways linked to Buddhism, chiefly, perhaps, the "Tantric" *Shingon* form, in a far more general manner than the fox. I have found no indication as to the reason for this

THE CAT

With the Ainu of the North, Foxes and Cats are close relations, both being born from the ashes of a wicked demon whom the Mole burned. Both animals have therefore uncanny powers and can bewitch people. Another Ainu explanation is that God caused the Rat to bite out the devil's tongue as a punishment, whereupon the devil avenged himself by making the Rat enormously prolific. Rats became a real plague to the people, so that they could hardly continue to live. Then they prayed God for a remedy, and He created the Cat.

The cat, like the fox, is clever and can look into the future, and therefore the Ainu employ also his skull for divination.

The Chinese and Japanese do not, as far as I know, bring the cat in actual relationship with the fox—although one Chinese author states that it is called “the domestic fox”—but with them too the cat is a most fearsome animal, its goblin pranks being usually cruel, like its character, and lacking the “saving grace” of the fox's wit, hurtful as it may be. Hence cats are but rarely made pets of, and until recently were hardly ever seen in homes.⁷¹ They are ungrateful at best. “Feed a dog for three days,” says a Japanese proverb, “and he will remember your kindness for three years; feed a cat for three years, and she will forget your kindness in three days.”⁷² People are firmly convinced that no cat can be trusted, especially if it is born with a long tail, which must immediately be clipped so that the beast does not develop into a *neko-mata*, which actually refers to a cat with a forked

71) Except for some expensive imported breeds which, at certain epochs, became a fad. It is indeed contended that cats were first introduced from Korea in the 10th century, on ships whose cargo they should protect against rats. Some of them being presented to the Imperial Court, they became the pets of Court-ladies, having even their own attendants. Even among the numerous “prints” showing life within the house we find but a few with a playing cat, and I think they are rather late ones, probably depicting some such foreign pet.—In parts of China cats were fattened for food.

72) The Japanese of course use neither “he” nor “she”, as they know no gender. Note how with us the dog always represents the masculine element, the cat the feminine one!

tail.⁷³ The "snaky" appendage seems to reinforce the cat's natural tendency to metamorphose itself into a goblin. . . . But a contrary belief has it that a cat's tail must never be cut off, as the tail would most certainly grow into a dangerous goblin-snake. So you have your choice of evil. . . . Cats have some kind of magician's character anyhow, and therefore all must be treated with circumspection. This becomes all the more necessary when the cat gets old and its fur becomes pepper-and-salt: age develops its evil propensities, and so it may again some day become a *neko-mata*. At first it may only produce weird lights that dance across the ground and cannot be caught; later it may turn a sleeper's bed into some inauspicious direction.⁷⁴ Later still it may devour its mistress. Note that a dog usually has a master, a cat a mistress.

Whatever the kind of cat, and petted as it may be by the family, most Japanese still feel that, after all, it is an uncanny being, something of a *mamono*—a spell-binder, a spirit of evil tendencies, something a bit devilish. Yet cat-superstitions in Japan, in spite of the Ainu lore, again do not seem to much antedate the 14th century, when they apparently were taken over from the Continent. In Korea, too, the cat is detested, and in *Märchen* is always a cruel and treacherous figure. Nevertheless, cats, being the natural enemies of rats which destroy both rice and silk-worms, are considered protectors of wealth.⁷⁵

The most terrible thing that can happen on the occasion of a death in the house, is to leave a cat alone with the corpse. Should this occur by mischance, the cat will jump over the corpse,

73) Long-tailed cats are scarce, but occasionally such a kitten is born.

74) The emplacement of the *futon* bedding is most important because of astral influences. Facing North is worst. Rooms at inns sometimes showed the compass painted on the ceiling, so that the guest might be certain of sleeping in a position favourable to him.

75) In some parts of China the "cat spirit" is worshipped, and the picture of a cat is hung up in the silk-worm shed to scare away evil spirits. In other parts of China dead cats are not buried but hung on a tree. I have come across no indication that similar customs obtained in Japan.

At the same time the picture of a cat in China may be a rebus (as are so many others) auguring longevity, because cat is *mao* and *mao* is also an old person past seventy. Even more auspicious is the combination of a cat watching the flight of a butterfly, or *hu-tieh*, because another *tieh* means eighty years of age. . . .

and by doing so may impart to the body—which still retains the “lower soul”—a sufficient modicum of its own “tiger nature” to transform the corpse into a vampire.⁷⁶ The only way to prevent such a spell is to lay a naked sword across the corpse; in China you may also buy a “magic knife” from a wizard, which knife can be left anywhere in the room holding the corpse, and if a cat should appear and try its trick, an invisible hand will come to wield the weapon and kill the demon-cat.⁷⁷

Furthermore, even if a cat should only run under the coffin—which in China and Japan is always exhibited, before burial, on special trestles—the spirit of the deceased would certainly come to life and attack the members of the household. All such superstitions may be founded on observations similar to those which spread the belief in Europe that cats were “psychic”. It is contended in Europe, for instance, that cats will not enter a haunted room, and avoid people with the “evil eye”. Actually cats are susceptible to atmospheric electricity, and more sensitive to certain impressions than humans are. They have a most delicate distinction of scent, and their eyes react very noticeably to light, thus being able to perceive things in comparative darkness.⁷⁸ That is about as far as their “psychic” reactions will go. But furthermore, in the Orient as in Europe, cats are believed to have a very tenacious life—nine lives, indeed!—and that they can “recuperate” even after having been clubbed to death....

Because of the evil propensities of the cat, the Chinese witches could transform them into fiery steeds on whose backs

76) Each individual has a “superior” or spiritual soul, which ascends to heaven, and an inferior or animalistic soul, which for a long time remains near the body and the home. It is this latter one which is to be feared by posterity.—In many places in the Balkans, especially in Bosnia, it is believed that if a cat is allowed to jump over a corpse before interment, a vampire will enter the dead body!

77) This Chinese superstition may be connected with an even older belief that if the death takes place at an “unlucky” hour for the deceased, the body will be chastized so severely by evil spirits that it will get up and jump about for pain. Hence the feet of a corpse should always be bound together!

78) Although not in complete darkness, as often presumed. It is said that the Chinese used to tell the time by the width of the slits in the cat’s eyes....

they would ride into space.⁷⁹

Only faint traces of many of the Chinese superstitions can be found in Japan, where the cat is nevertheless a feared being. Stories of the cat taking on human shape to bewitch people, occasion illness, misfortune, and at times even death, are not as numerous, whether in China or Japan, as those concerning either fox or badger. But just as the fox occasionally adopts the "permanent" body of a wife, so does the cat, which usually becomes a concubine, while the badger's transformation seems always to be temporary. A cat can thus prey on a victim for years—in fact is nothing but a blood-sucking vampire. Hence females who bewitch men with their artful wiles, and ways as coy as those of a cat—in the main, that is, the "singing girls" of China and the *geisha* of Japan—are termed "cats".⁸⁰

The cat's goblinly *répertoire* is by no means as variegated as the one of fox or badger; almost invariably it changes itself into a woman of "bewitching" beauty to destroy some prominent man by her blandishments. Another favourite trick is to assume the shape and manners of a man's wife, so that this wife seems present *in duplo*, to the bewilderment of the husband. To so transform itself, the cat need only take the wife's towel and wrap it around its head (as women do when at work), the while sitting on its haunches.⁸¹ Should the man discover the impersonation

79) Exactly as the European witches rode to the Brocken on black cats on Hallowe'en. They themselves frequently took the shape of black cats in their wicked transformations. In all of Christian Europe cats, and particularly black cats, were regarded as incarnations of the devil, and a good many people cannot even now get rid of this feeling. Cats are thus still burnt in bonfires, which were originally intended to destroy devils and witches. Often they were cruelly roasted alive, bound to a pole: the cat, representing evil, could never suffer enough! All the world over, cats were regarded as uncanny beasts. In Egypt the cat "was once a god"; and devils are but evil or fallen gods. With the Zulus, cats are the "familiar" of wizards, and through them they inflict sickness and death upon persons whom they dislike.

80) We have seen that the "frail sisterhood" of much lower degree than these entertainers, and more dangerous still, are called "foxes", while male entertainers, who are principally buffoons, are "badgers". The expression "old cat" for a vexatious, cross, or spiteful woman, on the other hand, does not exist.—For some cat-stories see again Redesdale, Ferguson & Anesaki, and Yanagita.

81) In some South-African tales a cat transforms itself into its master. In European tales a cat acts and speaks, and in part dresses, like a human, while retaining its own body.

at the right moment and kill the appearance, the cat will be found to have a body five feet long and with two tails. In rare instances the cat may play tricks similar to those of the badger, and, for instance, become a moon. I have not discovered, however, whether to do so the identical or other paraphernalia are needed, or whether the cat succeeds by simple will-power.

Sometimes, however, the roles are changed: it is not a cat-goblin which takes on the body and manners of a woman, but an old man-eating witch becomes a *neko-bake*, a spook-cat, to enter a house and be taken care of by the family. The monster will then on the first opportunity steal children and devour them....

Particularly dangerous are old cats: those that have acquired human knowledge and the art of walking upright on the hindlegs. They can be quite devilish, and if somebody should kill one, he will be cursed during seven lives. Generally speaking, the most feared cats in Japan were not the black ones, bad as they were and allied to witches, nor the white ones, which were also considered "spooky", but those of a "red-brown" colour, known as the "golden flower cat". Next in magic power came those of mixed white, black and brown. Some people believe these *mi-ke neko*, three-fur cats, to be capable of keeping away the *O-bake*, the Honourable Ghosts. Perhaps because their colour is connected with rain-clouds, the black cats are believed to be able to foretell the weather, and in certain parts of Japan are therefore kept as barometer-pets by the sailors. In others, sea-faring people attribute a lucky character to the tortoise-shell tomcats, and carry them aboard: they are guarantee against foundering.⁸² Again, the presence of a cat of any colour on board a vessel is believed to offer this protection, because the terrible sea-spirits, which cause storms and shipwrecks, so abhor cats that they will

82) A "rational" explanation—how far true I do not pretend to know—is that there are no tortoise-shell "toms"! In Europe too cats play a role aboard the ships.

Years ago I had two "golden flower" cats, beautiful animals of silky fur with a reddish sheen. They were particularly clean and intelligent: they obeyed orders like a dog, accompanied me part of the way every morning, met me at the door on returning, and perched on my shoulders when I sat in an easy-chair. Perhaps such intelligence is especially developed in this species (the Japanese cat as a rule is rather dumb); and, as everywhere in this world, perspicacity, being uncommon, looks suspicious....

rather spare the ship than have the body of the animal pollute their waters. Contrary to this opinion, in some localities the *funa-gami* (ship-god) or *funa-dama* (ship-soul), the protective individual spirit of the vessel enshrined on it, so dislikes certain animals, especially cats, that when a boatman leaves the house with his tools to go aboard his craft, and on the way as much as encounters a cat crossing the road, he will immediately return home and abandon his enterprise for the day, even if the weather should be most favourable and the sea teem with fish.⁸³ In fact, these fishermen shun the very word *neko*. Should a man by mischance use it on board the boat, his companions will give him a good dipping "as a punishment"—which originally was surely rather an ablutionary rite. If the animal must be referred to at all, a substitute description is used. . . .

While the three-coloured *mike neko* is at times believed to bring good luck to the family, the black cat may also have some redeeming features—provided, always, that they are not *bake-mono* ones. If one suffers from cramps or spasms, a black cat set on one's chest will immediately stop the pain.⁸⁴ Furthermore—and this is probably due to the cat's "craftiness" or "superior wisdom"—its spirit may ban a thief. It suffices if he be caught in the act of removing some goods from the house, to shout that "if things are not returned, the cat's spirit will plague you!" and the thief will leave his booty behind and decamp. . . .

No doubt the snaky aspect of a cat's tail when moved from side to side, and the cat's habit of catching its tail as if it were an independent being, have had much to do with the aversion shown to cats as household pets. Snakes are quite universally abhorred in spite of their oft benevolent symbolism.⁸⁵ Cats with

83) The ship's god also dislikes snakes, monkeys, and certain birds. Cats crossing one's path are of evil portent also in Europe.

84) With us, cat skins used to cure colds, stomach-aches and so forth, if kept on the chest. . . .

85) Fertility, wisdom, riches, health and so forth.—Incidentally, the role which cat-superstition played in Europe is well illustrated by the many sayings or terms in which it appears. A few examples will suffice: the cat has nine lives; "see how the cat jumps" must have been connected with divination; the "cat and mouse" game of cruel extortion, etc.; the "cat-o'-nine-tails" whip; the "cathead" beam which carries the ship's anchor; "cat's cradle" string game; the "cat's paw" dupe—and so forth. The interested reader will find many more "catty" things, if not always easy to explain. Why, for instance, does it "rain cats and dogs"?

more than one tail, or with a particularly long one, are especially apt to bewitch people. Although the objection to long-tailed cats is not general, in most parts of Japan one will only find cats with a stumpy tail, often even twisted or crooked, like those of the Manx cat. These cats are born that way.⁸⁶

Of course no cat will ever be able to enter Paradise. . . . The cat and the snake were the only creatures which did not weep at the death of Buddha; the cat was even worse than the snake, because it suddenly danced with glee before the Great Teacher's death-bed!

In a very few cases only do we find the cat as a grateful animal.⁸⁷ Yet owing to a more "veracious" legend than the gobliny ones, a "beckoning cat", the *maneki-neko*, has become a favourite talisman with *geisha*, prostitutes, and small restaurant or shop keepers, to attract customers and money. Usually made of porcelain, with a white body and black splotches, it sits on its haunches and raises the left paw to beckon. Its neck will wear a *ruche*, a silk bow or other ornament. The posture is due to an old belief that when in the act of washing its face a cat passes its left paw over its left ear, it is a sign that visitors will come.

During the earlier Tokugawa days there was an inmate of the famous Yoshiwara, going by the professional name of *Usugumo* (Faint Cloud), who loved cats above all animals. She had many of them, and when she went on her visits a maid had to follow, carrying her pets. So attached was she to these animals that a rumour went about that she was bewitched by them. Her master therefore insisted that she should get rid of her *ménagerie*.

Usugumo steadfastly refused, and when one day her favourite cat acted in a particularly weird manner, following her about

86) It is possible that the cats of the Island of Man are from a stock originally imported from Japan: in no place on earth except these two, do cats with such tails seem to exist. How the tails originally grew to be so is not told in any legend. In the districts around Lake Suwa (Shinano) wild cats with long tails occur, noticeably different from the usual Japanese cat, and possibly in turn of foreign stock. The long-tailed domestic varieties appear to be all from foreign ancestry.

87) Swedish superstition warns against using a cat's proper name, especially if speaking angrily of her (!) or giving her a beating; for she is a friend of the mountain troll, whom she frequently visits. In Germany, on the other hand, cats at times help poor but honest lads in obtaining riches.

nervously, mewing and pulling her dress, the master, angered beyond endurance, drew his sword and cut off its head. Whereupon the head immediately flew to the ceiling and caught a poisonous snake sliding over a beam! The cat had been trying to warn Usugumo of the danger, but had not been understood. It was killed for its pains, but its spirit, making use of the released head, killed the foe.⁸⁸

Usugumo was desolate. After a most elaborate funeral, which the entire district attended, she kept to her room and sighed for her lost pet. None of the other cats could arouse her interest. "A pitiful state, indeed!," her admirers thought. So one of them, a wealthy fellow, ordered a master-artist to make an exact replica of the dead feline in expensive aloës-wood, and presented this perfumed image to Usugumo. The cat had its left paw raised, and was so natural-looking that the girl became happy again, played with it and fed it. And because of her story she attracted more patrons than ever before; she became famous and wealthy—and therefore other girls and the shop-keepers of the Yoshiwara copied the first *maneki-neko*, and hoped that their own amulets would be as potent as Usugumo's.⁸⁹

An entirely different cat-superstition was started as late as October 1938, when suddenly the people of the Kwantô⁹⁰ began hunting tortoise-shell cats for their paws, with air-guns and traps, with nets and clubs and slings. Possibly based on an old and long-forgotten belief, it was suddenly revealed that the paws of these cats were endowed with a mysterious power to protect humans against harm, especially against bullets! Large quantities of the new-found talismans were thus sent to the soldiers at the front, and those who could not obtain any were equally certain that snapshots of a tortoise-shell cat would be effective and welcome. . . .⁹¹

88) Cut-off heads that "fly" to accomplish the person's last and most fervent wish occur quite frequently, especially in cases of revenge. In European legends the vampire sometimes takes on the shape of a human head only; similar goblins are also known in China.

89) There are a few different versions of the origin of the *maneki-neko*, but always due to a grateful cat, and this seems to be the most popular one.

90) Approximately the main eastern part of Japan, with Tokyo as its hub.

91) This was early in the war with China. The intensive hunt ceased almost as suddenly as it had started, apparently because the police

The most famous cat of all Japan is the *nemuri-neko*, the "sleepy cat", carved in wood over a gallery door of the Nikko shrines. It is coloured in black and white, and supposed to look absolutely "alive and natural", which is hardly correct. This *chef-d'oeuvre*, which among so much magnificence looks quite insignificant, is attributed to the most renowned sculptor, Hidari Jingoro (c. 1720). Nothing definite is known as to its reason for being there; but like a few other famous cat representations, the carving will come alive and chase the rats if they become too insolent.

No doubt the similarity of a cat with a tiger has had much to do with the cruel power attributed to the former. (A good many cats in fact are named *Tora*, Tiger.) The tiger, unknown in Japan but frequent in Korea, Manchuria and North China, on the continent is often a true wer-animal. The tiger's powerful fierceness, cleverness, evasiveness, made it the King of all animals. On its head, the tiger has markings in the fur which outline the ideogram for king, or sometimes for jade or jewel (which are similar), and the first tiger was the son of one of the stars in the Great Bear. . . .

We are not here concerned with the magic of the tiger-image as an amulet against evil spirits, which it will devour, wherefore a crude *papier-mâché* reproduction is an excellent preventive of sickness; nor with all its occult influence over weather and wealth. The tiger's uncanniness, however, in China makes it a "vampire", which has a human spirit, a *ch'ang-kuei*, as its "familiar" or guide. Passers-by may be captured by this ghost, who throws a tiger-skin over them.⁹² They are thus in turn transformed into wer-tigers, whom the spirits compel to devour men and beasts.

While the sickness-scaring characteristics of the Chinese tiger have been thoroughly accepted as a talisman by the Japanese, it is not, with them, known as a man-destroying beast except from hear-say. Japan had not even a similarly ferocious carnivore, and could hardly imagine its depredations.

of the affected areas managed to enlighten the people that a dead cat's paw "could have nothing to do with bullets fired from Czechoslovakian machine-guns in the Wuhan area."—Could the cat's paw have had any relation to our still extant hare-paw amulets?

92) Compare Note 119 on the Werwolf.

Old tigers—they live to five hundred or even one thousand years—may become white and supernatural. However, tigers in the role of true *bakemono* are not known even in China. The beast was evidently considered too noble for such pranks.⁹³

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THE DOG

The cat's biggest enemy is the dog, *inu*.⁹⁴ Various legends explain why the dog hates the cat: it is usually considered that formerly they were friends, and served the same family—always a poor one. The family is suddenly rewarded with some “jewel” for its hard work and honesty. When the naughty rats, or an evil imp, or a greedy neighbour steal the jewel, cat and dog set out to recover it. The cat is the cleverer animal and finds it, carrying it home in its maws. On the way thither, the two have to cross a river or pond, and the dog carries its mate on the back, because it cannot swim. While the dog “plods along” through the water, the cat, for some silly reason—whether boastful pride or saucy remark—opens its mouth, and the jewel is irretrievably lost. This angers the faithful dog, who thenceforth distrusts and persecutes the malapert collaborator. Or else the dishonest cat claims all the credit for having found and returned the jewel, and casts aspersions on the dog when back in the family. The dog is punished and, naturally, after suffering such injustice, cannot but hate its earstwhile partner. As with us, “cat and dog” is the emblem of inborn antagonism and perpetual fighting.

The dog, in China, Korea and Japan, is generally a benevolent and protective “spirit” in the home.⁹⁵ He can see spectres and

93) Many savages deem the tiger such a weird animal that they will not hunt and kill it except in retaliation, as a punishment for it having eaten a man.—The Malays believe that the office of *pawang*, priest-magician, is only hereditary if the soul of the dead priest, in the form of a tiger, passes into the body of his son.

94) The well-known *chin* “Pekinese” is not a “dog” to the Orientals, and plays no role whatever in folklore. Japan had but a few breeds, mostly “fighting dogs”; the majority were and are mongrels.

95) During the war, several dogs were “decorated” in Japan for services rendered to the troops, while memorial masses were held for others which had lost their lives in battle.

chase them away; he assists in the birth of numerous progeny, and protects infants from illness. The dog is thus a "faithful" or "kind" animal most of the time. Often the simple appearance of a dog forces the spectre to assume its true form—only goblins over a hundred years old can escape this fate—and then he will risk even his life in combating it.⁹⁶

The idea that dogs can discern ghosts and will then bark is wide-spread. The "supernatural vision" of the dog was admitted by everybody in Japan, and even had to once serve as a basic fact in explaining the incomprehensible and infinite "vision" which a true belief in Buddha could give man. And that happened as late as a few generations ago, in A.D. 1878 to be exact. In August of that year, a priest named Sata Kaiseki, of the *Shinkaiji* in Shinagawa (Tokyo), delivered a lecture on the *tengan*, this same supernatural religious vision. By that time Western ideas had already begun to ferment; there was a general uncertainty as to moral values, beliefs, ethics, and quite a few "advanced spirits" had begun to doubt that all the Buddhist doctrines were true. The priest was thus repeatedly interrupted by hecklers, who demanded clearer explanations than metaphysical parables. Hard pressed, the priest referred to obvious "visions", such as light reflected, the bat's sight at night, and so forth; then coming to the less evident sensibilities: "Vision of the order which dogs and monkeys possess, having the power of seeing fairies, hobgoblins, and elves in their true form, so

As early as the sixth century, as reported in the *Nihongi*, a dog's faithfulness caused his master's body to be saved from ignominious contempt. A certain Yorozu, a rebel, seeing his cause lost, committed suicide, and the Court ordered that his body be cut into eight pieces and distributed among the eight provinces. Yorozu's white dog, however, stood near his master's dismembered body, miserably howling; and at last, taking up the head in its mouth, it placed it on an ancient burial-mound, lay down close by, and starved to death. When this was reported to the Court, the latter was moved by profound pity, and issued an order that the dog's conduct should be handed down to after-ages, and that the kindred of Yorozu should be allowed to construct a tomb and bury his remains, so that his soul might enjoy eternal rest, which it otherwise could not....

96) Most races of Asia, Europe and America consider the dog bold, brave and nimble, and man's best companion. To the Zoroastrians the dog was a sacred animal. Only with the Moslems is the dog absolutely taboo.

that its possessor cannot in any way be bewitched, or led astray by such supernatural beings. Human beings," he continued, "do not possess this faculty of supernatural vision, and consequently are often bewitched, beguiled, and led astray by *kitsune* and *tanuki*, who temporarily put on the form of some object which entrances the senses of the individual, and causes him or her to do whatever best pleases the beguiler." This, in itself, was accepted as good and valid proof by the audience. And when in further explanation the priest referred to the equally well known fact that these evil animals themselves were endowed with an inferior grade of infinite vision, being able to see "for hundreds and thousands of miles in every direction," as illustrated by the story of the fox who bewitched a man of Tsugaru, and showed to him places and persons over five-hundred miles distant, this, too, was freely conceded by the audience, and thus *tengan* "understood".... In A.D. 1878....

The blood of dogs, poured out before a village or over the frame of a new house, was therefore deemed protective, and would prevent epidemics. Three thousand years ago, when the emperor or a prince of China undertook a voyage, his cart was first made to roll over and crush a dog, whose blood consecrated the road and the start of the journey. Its carcass was then buried as a further sacrifice to the road-gods. As early as 676 B.C., King Têh of Ch'in slaughtered dogs at the four gates of the city as a precaution against spectral poisonings. Since Confucius' time (c. 500 B.C.), straw images of dogs have been amulets with a similar purpose. Blood and parts of a dog's body were excellent medicinal ingredients. A dog's hair was carried by children in their amulet-bag. Black dogs are particularly magic.⁹⁷ The fact that in the Chinese language *kou* is homonymic for dog and also for abundance or sufficiency, is of course of the utmost auspiciousness.

The howling of a dog at night, for no apparent reason, will usually portend the death of one in some neighbouring family, or also an earthquake. When a dog climbs on the roof of any building, a fire is certain to break out. It is as if, foreseeing

97) When, in 1840, the Catholic missionary, Perboyre, was martyred in China, his patient death was attributed to the protection of devilish ghosts which alleviated his pains. He was therefore given dog's blood to drink, so as to break the spell!

the happening, he tried to warn people.⁹⁸

The *Nihongi* reports that in the year 659 "A fox bit off the end of a creeper which a labourer . . . held in his hand, and went off with it. Moreover a dog brought in his mouth a man's hand and forearm and laid it in the Ifuya shrine." Both happenings were considered signs that the ruling empress, Seimei, would shortly die.

Many are the tales in which a dog unearths treasure for his deserving master.⁹⁹ Like *Cerberus*, the dog of the East is connected with the Underworld—probably because of his habit of digging. In various tales dogs and sundry other animals accompany or assist the young hero in his conquest of the "devil's fortress", where they find much gold and jewels.¹⁰⁰

Like the dragon who guards the treasures of the sea, the dog may also "protect" gold and precious stones in the earth. As pearls, gold, jewels and so forth are clear "soul symbols", this protective dog is thus evidently connected with death and after-life, and also with progeny.¹⁰¹

98) Much of this is evidently based on the fact that the dog has excellent olfactory and auditory perceptions, which enable it to smell and hear things unnoticed by humans. European beliefs were (and are?) very similar.

A rather interesting report comes from the Oraons of Bengal:—"If a woman gets up on the thatch of a house, the people anticipate disease and death to some inmate of the house and misfortune to the village in general," wherefore a solemn purification ceremony has to be performed. "In former times, one of the ears of the offending woman used to be cut off. But in our days it is only when a dog or a goat gets upon the roof of a house that one of its ears is cut off." Thus, evidently, either animal on the roof brings the same calamity as a woman. . . . The blood serves "to appease the wrath of the offended spirit."

99) It is contended that this feature is based on the belief that the digging of the mandrake—or ginseng—involved great bodily risk to the digger; to circumvent this, the man used a dog as a helper, and the curse fell on the animal, which died in his stead. "Treasure", however, is currently associated with dirt, all over the world, and the dog is a born scavenger.

100) The story of *Momotarô*, the Peachling, at once comes to one's mind, but there are others.

101) The identical conception seems to underly the various mythologic tales of Egypt, Greece, Germany and other countries, in which a dog protects the gate to the Underworld of the Dead. These dogs are not infrequently triple-headed, and three-legged dogs accompany the "Wild Hunter" of Indogermanic sagas, who in turn is connected with

But there are extraordinary, supernatural dogs, whose activities are not always so harmless or advantageous. Old dogs are especially to be feared, and perhaps even more so those who "sit up" and—as Chinese and Germans say—"make the little man." They have acquired too much knowledge, and are on the point of becoming quite super-powerful, so should be killed at once! Such dogs cannot only take possession of living persons or of corpses, become vampires, but may also "give away secrets". . . . Possibly this fear of an imitative "power" is the reason why in ancient Chinese writings the dog is sometimes referred to as a *jên-shih*, a "quasi-person", a queer expression which may mean either "one which is akin to a person" or "one that imitates a person"; it is evident that the dog most noticeably adapts itself to the manners and customs of humans, understands human commands, and often enough grasps human intentions.

There are a few legends of mountain-deities having the shape of enormous dogs; they are always white, very dangerous to man, and connected with a woman: a virgin having to be sacrificed every year, and simply disappearing (eaten, probably), or one only who is being kept as a constant prisoner in his lodging. The spirit-dog cannot always be killed, and attempts to do so are usually followed by dire consequences to the villagers.

Of old, however, there must have existed a belief very similar to our occidental werewolf, and indeed the more familiar "dog" may have taken the place of the similar if more ferocious (but less known) *okami* wolf. Thus we find a story in the *Nihongi*, dated A.D. 469, in which we are told that "There was a man of Miwikuma in the province of Harima called Ayashi no Womaro, who was strong of body and stout of heart, and did wanton outrage, committing robberies on the highways, and preventing traffic. He intercepted the boats of merchants and plundered them every one. He had also disobeyed the laws of the country by neglecting to pay his taxes (!).—Hereupon the Emperor sent Ohoki, Kasuga no Wono no Omi, in command of one hundred soldiers who feared not death. They all together took torches, and having surrounded his house, set fire to it. Now from the

Death—or with restless wandering in quest of Eternal Life—and with the Moon, the latter again a source of "life and death", of fertility and decay. A ghostly dog serves as guide to the soul of the deceased in beliefs ranging from Western Europe through Asia to Peru.

midst of the flames there came forth furiously a white dog, which pursued Ohoki no Omi. This dog was as big as a horse. But the complexion of Ohoki no Omi's spirit did not change.¹⁰² He drew his sword and slew it, whereupon it became changed into Ayashi no Wamaro."

The least offensive ones are those spiritual dogs that roam about to steal the children's sweets and dumplings from under their nose or right out of their hands, wherefore many kinds of such delicacies are strung together on skewers. The spirit of the skewer-"stick" will then drive away the ghostly thief....

In the Oki Islands, off the coast of Izumo, in Kyûshû, Shikoku (mainly in Tosa) and the Sanindô, supernatural dogs help certain wizardly people in obtaining wealth, as foxes assist them in other regions. Such people are known as *inu-gami-mochi*, "dog god possessors". With the help of such "spiritual dogs", these people are bound to succeed in all their enterprises, and every one of their requests will be granted for fear that evil might otherwise follow. Every favour received from them will be scrupulously returned with interest; nothing will be done to offend them. Naturally the *inu-gami-mochi* become rich in land and money; but they are also shunned by everybody else, and when a marriage is proposed the most strict enquiries are made in regard to possible "dog-ownership", so as to avoid the calamity of marrying into such a family.¹⁰³ But the dog does not, like the fox, simply obey his master's commands. When his spirit goes forth on one of the mischievous errands, his body remains behind, gradually weakens, and may even die and decay. In such cases the goblin-dog, on his return, takes up his abode in the body of the master, who thereupon becomes more powerful than ever before. I understand that at this very time of writing, the belief in "dog owners"

102) Meaning that he did not lose courage and run away?

103) With sundry primitives, a very grave sign of "being in relation with evil powers" is to enjoy unusual good fortune, to amass wealth and to prosper in everything one undertakes. "Success which is never belied can only be accounted for by pledges given to evil powers." With us, people made a pact with the devil. But very similarly, also, in many parts of Europe those people recognized to have the "evil eye" could obtain anything they wanted from their neighbours, who feared possible reprisals if withheld. Socially, however, such "witches" and "wizards" were ostracised; and during several centuries, not so long ago, they often paid for their power with death at the stake. In Japan the *inu-gami* possessors apparently were never punished.

continues particularly strong in Oki. No secret is there made of such owning: streets are divided into dog-owner and non-owner regions. And no effort to change the inhabitants' mentality has so far succeeded.

A kindred relationship is mentioned elsewhere in Japan, and pointed out as the possible reason which turned the benevolent animal into a malevolent one. Long, long ago, an old woman was consumed with hatred against a powerful enemy, and decided to use her faithful dog as a means of vengeance. She buried him in the ground, all but the head, and after fondling him addressed him with the words: "If you have a soul, kill my enemy and I shall worship thee as a deity"—and then cut off the pet's head with a bamboo-saw.¹⁰⁴ The dog fulfilled her wish, but out of resentment at having been so cruelly killed then haunted her house, and made her suffer for the pain inflicted.

Yet no doubt a similar "magic" procedure was common until recent times, to fulfil a strong and normally unattainable desire. The buried dog, his head only exposed, was surrounded with tempting food, just out of reach, and constantly told how his pains and longing were no worse than his human master's, whom he was supplicated to save from misery. After starving to death, the dog's spirit was presumed to act as directed. The spirit became the "dog god", and his former owner the *inu-gami-mochi*.¹⁰⁵

I would say that the "quaint method of divination" which Weston describes as he found it current in the Northeastern parts of Japan is founded on this dog-magic, although the practitioners there use a fox as a *kitsune-tsukai*, Fox-messenger or Fox-assistant. "The divination is carried on by means of a small image of a fox, made in a very odd way. A fox is buried alive

104) One of the most painful ways of inflicting death, kept up until the Restoration for criminals of the worst kind.

105) The "witches" of Europe were also regularly believed to have "familiar": always some small animal—a little dog, a cat, a mole, a rat or a toad, etc.—which was kept in the house in some small receptacle, was fed in some special manner, and ready to obey the witch's commands. These imps, spirits, "domestics", "familiar", etc. always brought wealth, but their owners, being witches, were naturally feared. Familiars could be inherited, acquired, received as a present, but also produced by conjuring an ordinary animal with some weird ritual. Such familiars were frequently used for carrying out a curse, and indications suggest that they were known by oldest humanity, possibly already during Palaeolithic periods....

in a hole with its head left free. Food of the sort of which foxes are known to be most fond is placed just beyond the animal's reach. As days pass by the poor beast in its dying agony of hunger makes frantic efforts to reach the food; but in vain. At the moment of death the spirit of the fox is supposed to pass into the food, which is then mixed with a quantity of clay, and shaped into the form of the animal. Armed with this extraordinary object, the *miko* [diviner] is supposed to become an infallible guide to foretelling future events of every kind."¹⁰⁶

Of course in all cases of such "ownership" the helpful spirit has then to be regularly pleased with offerings of that food which he most craved while still in the body. It is a common belief that the last, most fervent wish before death (in this case the wish to eat) will "continue to act", and in order to gratify it the ghost will be subservient to man's wishes.

I can do no better than in addition to extensively quote the report of a sociologist who investigated the beliefs in "Dog Spirits" as existing in a small settlement off the road in Kyûshû only some years back:¹⁰⁷

"In every *buraku* [hamlet] there is at least one woman with an unsavoury reputation as an *inugami-mochi*, or sorceress by means of the dog spirit, a dog-spirit carrier. A possessor of this spirit is not necessarily evil by nature, but the dog spirit which she has cannot always be controlled and sometimes acts as a free agent to work harm.

"A household where there is such a spirit always has a little *Jizô* or some other god's image housed somewhere on the property. This is 'in reality' a monument to the dog spirit.¹⁰⁸ Offerings made to it are to appease it and keep it satisfied. It is believed that originally a dog's head was buried underneath the stone. Possessors of the dog spirit can cause sickness or death to their

106) Rev. Walter Weston: *Mountaineering in the Japanese Alps*.

107) John F. Embree: *Suye Mura, a Japanese Village*. Univ. of Chicago Press, 1939.

108) *Jizô* is the Buddhist Road-deity, protector of children and of mothers, guide of the souls to the Otherworld, and a common substitute for the older phallic *kami* of Shintô. His statues are found wherever danger threatens along the road, but in many parts of Japan, including Kyûshû, also somewhere in the backyard of practically every home. Its presence thus would not be indicative of an *inugami* household. But apparently the *inugami-mochi* cannot do without the "statue", which often is but an elongated stone of odd but still phallic outline.

enemies. People dislike very much to speak of sorcery and are strongly averse to mention names; to talk too freely about sorcery might bring it down upon one. The spirit of the dog when released in the victim's house is sometimes heard uttering strange sounds and in that manner can be detected. Unless the spirit makes a noise, the person possessed might not know what is the matter with him and might try different cures for his disease; but, as soon as the presence of *inugami* is ascertained, one must at once go to the *kitôshi* [the exorciser, who may be a Buddhist or Shintô priest or a layman].

"*Kitôshi*, who work for the well-being of man, are nearly always men; witches, who work evil to man, are for the most part women. Women are said to harbour deeper and longer grudges than men. The witchery power stays in a house and is inherited through the female line, so that sometimes a daughter-in-law takes it up after the mother-in-law. Sometimes it is the house rather than a person that carries the spirit and to have a fight with the people living in such a house is dangerous."

After touching on the "poverty spirit" (*bimbo-gami*) and "good fortune spirit" (*fuku-gami*) that may dwell in a house, the investigator continues: "Reasons for cursing are envy and jealousy. If a man is very rich, some neighbour who is an *inugami mochi* may, while not disliking the rich man, merely covet his neighbour's wealth—and, presto, out goes the dog spirit and the rich man's horse dies, or his house burns down. Jealousy is more likely than envy to give rise to sickness and death curses, and such curses are purposely begun. Witchery is often referred to as *kaze*, wind, because one cannot see it."

Information obtained by my authority from a *Tendai* (Buddhist) *kitôshi* added that "In feudal times Lord Sagara¹⁰⁹ told the people who had *inugami* (*inugami mochi*) to do some form of worship to it in order to keep it satisfied, such as erecting a *Jizô* or a *dô* [worship hall, usually but a very small roofed cubicle] or by putting some sutra in a stone box, burying it, and putting a stone over it. Some people put up a *Jizô* so that the dog spirit will not speak (a stone *Jizô* does not speak).

"The dog spirit is in those houses where people are not sincerely religious. This dog spirit can leave the person or house

109) The Sagara *daimyô*-family were lords of the district, Higo, from the 13th century to the Restoration of 1868.

and possess someone, especially an enemy of its 'owner'. This is different from ordinary cursing inasmuch as the dog spirit leaves a person and possesses the other person quite of its own accord. It can be exorcised by the *kitóshi*'s praying or by his striking the possessed with fire or by feeling on the body with a paper cut in diamond shape¹¹⁰ to find out where the pain is—and, where the pain is, there is the dog spirit. The priest then prays to get rid of it, through *Sambô Kôjin*. The person possessed often shivers. In some regions the serving dogs of the witches or wizards seem to be a distinct breed: they are believed to be no larger than a mouse. They of course remain invisible to all except the members of the family. . . . It is also said at times that there are two kinds of such *inugami*, "one attaching itself to persons, and the other to animals" . . .

Elsewhere too, dogs will "possess" humans in exactly the same manner as foxes and badgers do. The possessed will then bark and behave like a dog.¹¹¹

The *Sambô Kôjin* above referred to is everywhere considered one of the best helpers in expelling such ghostly, evil-minded dogs. *Sambô Kôjin* is a "Three Ways" or "Three Faced" Road-god who also presides over the hearth and homestead. His "servants" are three monkeys; and the antipathy between monkeys and dogs is as proverbial as that between dogs and cats!

It need hardly be said that such dog-owners are everywhere shunned by other people. They are dangerous because if they covet another's property they can make the man waste and die, or become demented. Even a fine meal is not safe from an envious *inu-gami mochi*: his envy will immediately render it putrid. Hence, naturally, before concluding a marriage both parties will have "experts" investigate the genealogy of the other to the *n*th degree, so as to be sure not to have anything to do with dog-families.

The Japanese pretend that the aboriginal Ainu considered themselves as descendants of a supernatural dog. The Ainu disclaim it; yet there may have been some lingering totemism involved of old. The dog, with them, is rather a wily and dangerous

110) "This shape may have a sacred sexual significance," says Embree. It is, in fact, ktenic, and to be found in sundry other emblematic developments, also in Europe.

111) The Greeks believed in kynanthropy, the faculty of a man to change into a dog.

animal; it must have been conceived as a sort of human-like being, as is suggested by the following tale which explains why dogs cannot speak. Incidentally, it refers to a belief which is rather universal in various garbs, that is, that the (male) dog likes to copulate with women.

"Formerly dogs could speak. Now they cannot. The reason is that a dog belonging to a certain man, a long time ago, inveigled his master into the forest under the pretext of showing him game, and there caused him to be devoured by a bear. Then the dog went home to his master's widow, and lied to her, saying: 'My master has been killed by a bear. But when he was dying, he commanded me to tell you to marry me in his stead.' The widow knew that the dog was lying. But he kept on urging her to marry him. So at last, in her grief and rage, she threw a handful of dust into his open mouth. This made him unable to speak any more, and therefore no dogs can speak even to this very day."¹¹²

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THE WOLF

While the common dog-spectre is seldom threatening to man and almost always so to evil ghosts, its cousin, the spectral wolf, is a most dangerous being. It will cruelly and rapaciously destroy humans and beasts. Yet it plays but a secondary role in China, and an infinitesimal one in Japan, although wolves seem to have been quite numerous of old.¹¹³ The name *okami* is said to originally have meant "the big deity" (probably of the mountain-forest), and could be due to some ancient Ainu beliefs, connected with the islands of the North, or even the Siberian coast. It is just as possible, however, that the *okami* was not at first a "big deity" but a much plainer "big eater", "big biter": *kamu/kami* can mean both. In the *Manyôshû* the wolf is once mentioned as "the big deity with the big mouth", *ô-kuchi no ô-kami*, which

112) Quoted by Basil Hall Chamberlain in his *Things Japanese*.

113) Satow & Hawes' *Handbook of Japan* however states that "No true wolf exists in Japan, but *Canis hodophylax* is a sort of lame counterfeit of the European beast."

might equally well mean "the big mouth that eats plenty".... People being scared of wild animals, and everything weird or powerful becoming "divine" in Japan, the wolf, the tiger, the bear, even large snakes easily became "awe-inspiring deities". The Japanese wolf actually is cowardly (therefore hardly dangerous) and a big eater.

Quaint is a happening reported in the *Nihongi* under the reign of Kimmei Tennô (540-571), who in a dream and long before he ascended the Throne was advised to find a man called Hada-no Ohotsuchi, and favour him, which would bring him throne and good fortune. Such a man was indeed found after much searching, and upon the future emperor being so informed, "joy pervaded his whole frame." "A dream without a precedent!" he exclaimed; then he enquired of the man whether he had experienced anything extraordinary. The reply was: "Nothing. Only when thy servant was on his way back from Ise, whither he had gone to trade, he fell in with two wolves on a mountain, who were fighting with one another, and were defiled with blood. Thy servant got down from his horse, and, having rinsed his mouth and hands,¹¹⁴ made prayer to them, saying:—'Ye are august deities, and yet ye take delight in violence. If ye were to fall in with a hunter, very speedily ye should be taken.' So thy servant restrained them and cleansed their blood-stained hair, eventually let them go, thus saving both their lives." The emperor then was convinced that the man was recommended to him in a dream as a godly recompensation, treated him with utmost favour, and when he became emperor made him his Treasurer.—It is hard to say what to make of this story; all that we can guess is that wolves were powerful but extremely combative "deities".

Later on there seems also to have existed a belief that if one encountered an *okami* on a mountain and "treated him kindly", he would bestow kindness in return, and protect the man against other dangers. This may have to do with the belief, current in many parts of Japan, that the *okami* is a messenger of the gods, especially also of *Yama-no-kami*, the Mountain-deity, who during agricultural activities of the humans descends from her mountain residence to act as *Ta-no-kami*, the Field-deity.

114) Rinsing one's mouth and washing one's hands is the regular and unavoidable purification ceremony undergone before approaching Shintô divinities in the shrine.

(While commonly conceived as a female, *Yama-no-kami* may at times be a male; as usual with *kami*, the sex is variable.) Possibly as *Yama-no-kami*/*Ta-no-kami*'s messenger, the wolf was thought of as a kind of protector of the rice against evil goblins.¹¹⁵ No doubt originally similar ideas applied to both *Ta-no-kami*'s wolf and *Inari-san*'s fox, depending on locality.

In the role of divine messenger, the wolf watches over mountains and forests. He sees to it that there is no undue cutting of trees or careless fire which may start a mountain conflagration, as also that there be no pollution of those little sanctuaries which are found all over a mountain. If anything goes wrong, he may start out in search of *Yama-no-kami* to tell her, so that she may punish the miscreants; and to see a string of wolves descend from the mountain is of evil omen, as presaging "trouble"....

The animal's "sense of propriety" also induces him not to leave corpses which might be found in the wilderness unattended. Since he cannot perform the real rites and bury them, he will jump over the body, once forward and once backward, then make water (at the funeral rite holy water is sprinkled over the coffin!) and eat the body for disposal....

There may have been a more general belief, of old, that like the goblin-cat the wolf could take the shape of a person that he had previously devoured, and live in the family, for some nefarious purpose, in his or her shape. I have, however, only come across one such legend, which still survives in the mountainous district between Iyo and Tosa in Shikoku.

There a *samurai*, walking along a mountain road at night, was attacked by a troop of wolves, but his fearless defence sent them scuttling away. Shortly afterwards the same troop came again, and this time every beast carried, on its head, like a helmet, an iron pot such as used for steaming the rice. The *samurai* again defended himself valiantly, cracking most of the pots with his sharp sword, so that the wolves again disappeared in the mist.—The second occurrence looked most suspicious to this warrior, and he thought that probably the goblin-wolves had obtained the pots from some near-by iron-monger. He indeed found such a shop, and on enquiring had it confirmed by the owner that a good many of his *kama* had been found cracked

115) Refer to Note 53.

for no apparent reason. Now the *samurai*'s suspicions grew: "Did anyone in your family perhaps get hurt last night?", he asked. Yes, it so happened that his old mother had an accident when she went to the privy during the night¹¹⁶; she had hurt her head, and was now in bed resting. So then the *samurai* desired to see her—and he at once drew his sword and cut off her head. . . . The son naturally was greatly upset at this, but on hearing the explanation and remembering some of the queer acts of the old woman, he consented to wait for developments; and in fact, as was to be, the mother's corpse within 24 hours had turned into the carcass of a large and old wolf!—Since the animal had evidently been a *bakemono* goblin, they then looked everywhere under the floor of the house for possible misdeeds, and so found the bones of the real old mother, whom the wolf had eaten. . . .¹¹⁷

But apparently there are wolves and wolves. Of one kind it is reported that they do not adopt the shape of man or woman, but on the contrary are themselves the incarnation of a corpse-spectre or of a vampire. These wolves possess spiritual intelligence and belch forth smoke and fire.¹¹⁸ They can fight such powerful animals as dragons. In order to keep them under control, the *Bodhisattvas*, or Buddhist demi-gods whose only purpose is to save and guard humanity, use them as steeds, when they have to obey the purer and stronger will. . . .

It would almost appear as if this "werwolf" manifestation were a conception imported into China from some European, or at least Siberian source. But the belief also persists, in some parts of Japan (as in Shikoku) that unusually hairy people are the descendants of such wolves which once had taken human shape. (Similarly, a dog descent is attributed to the hairy Ainu,

116) It was customary to have a flimsy small shed at some distance from the house, with a step or two leading to a platform below which was the cesspool.

117) In most such legends the victim's remains are put away under the raised floor of the house. Since this is the place where decomposition would easiest become noticeable to the inhabitants, there would seem to be some obscure, deeper meaning in the choice of location. It appears to be a fact, however, that in most regions a dead infant was buried below the floor, not in a field or cemetery; possibly the idea was that a re-incarnation in a future baby would become easier.

118) So did the giant-wolf *Fenrir* of the Nordic gods.

as we saw.)¹¹⁹

Interesting is a report by Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843) in one of his lectures on "the Superiority of the Ancients". In the Ômine and Mitsumine mountains, he avers, "there are many wolves which are called the messengers of the gods of the mountains, and people from other parts of the country come and, applying through the guards of these mountains, choose and borrow one of these wolves as a defense against fire. That is to say they only arrange to borrow it and do not take a wolf to their place. And from the day of borrowing they offer daily food to the spirit of the wolf. But if through neglect several days pass without food being offered then the wolf chosen becomes thin, emaciated, and weak. There is a case where a man I know borrowed a wolf and neglected to offer food for four or five days, and misfortune

119) All European races believed in the werwolf, from antiquity until at least the 17th century. Men and women were able to transform themselves into wolves, temporarily or permanently, voluntarily or by the curse of devil or witch. Sometimes the transformation was a punishment for deadly sins, or for having eaten human flesh. This forced metamorphosis often lasted for seven or nine years, after which it ceased. The voluntary one was mostly accomplished by wearing the skin of a wolf, or a girdle made of it, and could be stopped by discarding the garment; but other means were not unknown, especially also magic potions connected with the animal's body. Herodotus tells us that the Neuri, a tribe of Eastern Europe, were annually so changed for a few days. Werwolves generally only roamed the country at night, resuming human shape with the break of day. The main purpose of becoming a werwolf was for the gratification of a craving for human flesh, or for some other loathsome end. "The werwolves," writes an author as late as 1628, "...doe not onely unto the view of others seem as wolves, but to their owne thinking have both the shape and nature of wolves.... And they do dispose themselves as very wolves, in wourrying and killing...." France in particular was infested with werwolves during the 16th century, and trials for murder and cannibalism in the shape of a *loup-garou* were numerous. (In England the wolf was all but extinct, and instead of becoming "warwoolfes", the witches were accused of changing into cats, hares and weasels.) But in Prussia, Livonia, Lithuania, too, werwolves were, in the 16th century, "far more destructive than true and natural wolves."

Yet werwolves, like some of their counterparts in Asia, were not always satanic beasts viciously disposed towards humanity. They often appeared in order to help the Church against heretics! In 617 werwolves entered a monastery to tear in pieces several friars who entertained dissident opinions. Early in the 16th century, wolves were sent by God

to destroy sacrilegious soldiers of the Urbino army, who had come to sack the holy treasures of Loreto. Saints were several times protected by wolves against wild beasts (!). These werewolves were acknowledged as innocent and God-fearing persons who suffered through the witchcraft of others. . . . Such, too, were the many princes and princesses who appear as wolves in *Märchen* of all Aryan nations. Should, however, this wer-animal hurt mankind, it may be condemned to retain its shape indefinitely.

Magicians and priests could exorcise the beast-shape by various means, including the use of the cross. The exorcising of one's werwolf misfortune seems in fact to have been a much easier performance than the exorcising of the fox which possessed a Chinese or Japanese. At times it sufficed to call one's baptismal name thrice—in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—or to strike one's forehead thrice with a knife!

This lengthy note will show that the fundamental beliefs in the possibility of a shape-exchange, with resulting depreatory or at times beneficial acts, existed both East and West. In Europe it was the "human man-ness", but in practice used for any metamorphosis into an animal which took on human shape. In Europe lycanthropy—actually "wolf-man-ness", but in practice used for any metamorphosis into an animal shape—was mostly confined to wolves. With other peoples, lycanthropy is generally concerned with the most "dangerous" animal of their land. In the North of Europe, the wolf's place is often taken by the bear, and to some extent this is the case with the Ainu of North Japan. We have noted the tiger-metamorphosis of China, which also occurs in India. In Africa, men become leopards, hyenas, or lions; in South America jaguars. Yet harmless animals, like the deer, also figure in lycanthropy, which, pathologically speaking, is an insane delusion akin to hysteria, schizophrenic as we now say, in which the patient believes that he is transformed into the animal, and then behaves accordingly. It is thus cognate with the "fox possession" (or that by other animals) in the Far East. Like the possession in China and Japan, pathological lycanthropy still generally exists among many backward peoples of Europe, Africa, Celebes and so forth. Sometimes the "insides" of the man can take on an animal's shape, sally forth, and act for him.

Basically the idea of transformation may be due to a rather wide belief among totemistic tribes that a man can take the shape of his totem animal. But, and this is an important point, lycanthropy, universal as it is, has neglected the transformation of some animal into a human shape. While totemism also acknowledges this possibility, in our legends and current superstitions only the "vampire" does occasionally assume human shape to prey on its victim. The *bakeru* of goblin-animals seems to be confined to Eastern Asia. On the other hand the power to transform oneself into an animal, in Eastern Asia is mainly ascribed to the Taoist "magicians" or "wizards" of China. Autochthonous stories of this kind do not seem to exist in Japan, but the oldest records suggest that certain chiefs of wild aboriginal tribes were conceived as strong animals—possibly a link with totemism, again.

came to him from that source and he was fearfully surprised."¹²⁰

Apparently it was believed of old that the wolf was shameful of sexual things, having no strong sexual instincts. He would never disclose his organ, but hide it behind his hanging tail. Should a person perchance see his sexual act, he or she would have to open the *kimono* and disclose his or her own organ, so as not to shame the wolf. . . .

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THE RAT

Among the few other animals which occasionally figure as *bakemono*-goblins are the rats, *ne*, *nezumi*, which in popular esteem are associated with melancholy. Sadness, in an ancient Chinese text, is called "rat disease".

In some ways, the rats imitate men's customs, as the foxes do. In the Odes¹²¹ it is already written: "Even rats have propriety, and if a man has none he had better die." We again find the "wedding ceremony", with the attendant procession of the bride and her dowry, as a most important event in the rat world. Their weddings are said to always be held on the 19th day of the first moon. On this day of "bringing in the rat-bride", *nezumi-no yome-iri*, people should go to bed early, lest they disturb the procession and festivities of the rodents, who would avenge themselves by becoming a pest in the house for the rest of the year.¹²²

There is a Japanese fairy-tale of the *Nezumi-no yome-iri* which dates from before 1661, and is still a favourite with small children. The rat-parents try to obtain a very exalted and powerful groom for their daughter among sundry other groups of animals; but finding at every enquiry that somebody else is stronger, in the end realize that their own tribe, the rats, are supreme. So the rat-girl in the end marries a rat-groom. The

120) Refer also to the Fox-borrowing, p. 22.

121) A Chinese Classic, attributed to the 8th century B.C.

122) I have read in one story's translation that the day was known as the Rat's Flitting Day, but have never heard a corresponding expression used by the Japanese. Of course every bride on marrying "changes abode", or flits, by joining her husband's family. Like the *kitsune-no yome-iri*, the Japanese refer to the *nezumi-no yome-iri*.

story should teach people to be satisfied with their lot; but the choice of rats for the parable at the same time proves their prominence in the lives of humans.

In Japanese mythology, rats appear at an early epoch; in fact they already assisted the god *Okuninushi*, the "Great Land Possessor", original civilizer-deity of Izumo. When he was sorely pressed by *Susa-no Ô*, the destructive Storm-god and ruler of Hades, the rat offered him shelter in its hole, and thus saved him from a raging moor-fire. Later on, this deity *Okuninushi* became amalgamated with the patron-god of Rice and Wealth, *Daikoku*, whose "familiar" the rats still are. Being connected with the main food, if only in a thieving capacity, it is natural that the rat be holy, and worshipped as a "crop animal".

"Piebald rats" appear to have possessed some special characteristic, perhaps superior knowledge. An explanation seems no longer available, nor do I think that there are any rats other than gray ones: but artists were fond of depicting spotted ones, by preference as critically looking at a *kakemono*. The rat, although fundamentally believed a gloomy animal, has always been considered extremely sagacious, and even wise.¹²³

Sundry lesser superstitions attach to the rat. In ancient days it was customary, in China and Japan, to climb a hill on the first cyclical day of the Rat—the *ne-no-hi*—of the new year, to there hold a picnic, and to enjoy the distant view while worshipping the Four Quarters of Heaven and Earth. This was sure to bring one luck and wealth.—Should it rain on any "Wood, elder brother—Rat" day, the first of the sexagesimal cycle, rain would continue for the full sixty days following.¹²⁴ At the same time one should not cut one's nails or hair on any rat-day, as this would bring misfortune.

Rats are the agents who, by their demoniacal power, frighten sleeping people by the oppression which, for similar reasons, perhaps, we call "night-mare".

123) The Hindus often represent *Ganesh*, the elephantine God of Wisdom and Obstacles, as riding on a rat or being attended by one.

124) The sixty years and sixty days cycles were arrived at by combining the twelve signs of the zodiac—Rat, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Cock, Dog, Boar—with the five "elements"—Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water—divided into "elder" and "younger brother" to make them ten. The date was the "St. Swithin's Day" of the Orient....

Should rats live apart from the dwellings of man for a considerable time, they will become huge goblins. They can then in turn adopt the shape of men or women, and become dangerous "werwolves". Yet they usually retain certain features—especially their nibbling and twitching of the mouth—which fortunately disclose them as rat-transformations.¹²⁵

Furthermore they may haunt a house as spectres—shapeless or awful-looking, unnatural things, which make one's hair rise on end. Such fearsome spooks occupied a house in China as far back as A.D. 492. The house was duly exorcised by a priest, and in the morning there was found half a dozen dead rats, hairless and of reddish colour, and with bodies some two feet in length! Enormous, supernatural and maleficent rats sometimes are after humans in Japan also. In one story an old monster-rat disguised himself as a *yamabushi* to enter a temple and kill the priest; luckily the temple's cats "smelled a rat" and together attacked the false pilgrim, saving the master's life by giving their own. Such rats of course are always of enormous size, and most violent.

Particularly dangerous seem to be those monster rats, old and often hairless, spotted, red, or of some other weird colour, that live within dilapidated temples or in caves near such temples. They most often change into priests, and then destroy humans like a vampire. . . .

Occasionally a goblin-rat tries to make love to a young girl, and is only prevented by the watchfulness of an old tom-cat or of the girl's lover. Cats are naturally the rats' fiercest antagonists; but while they may overcome the rodents, they at the same time may lose their own life through wounds received. The human "hero" frequently only wounds the goblin, but then follows him to his lair, there to finish him off.

Rats, as a class, are so spooky that if an artist realistically depicts them on screen or wall, they will come to life at night, steal food, and, should anybody surreptitiously enter the room, scamper off, leaving the screen or wall a blank. Unfortunately for them, a cleverly painted cat may also come to life if it sees a rat, whether actual or spectral, and kill it.

The cat-goblin is of course more powerful than the rat-goblin,

125) If one should eat food which has been nibbled at by rats, one's face-muscles will shortly after start twitching. . . .

and so is the fox-goblin. We have seen how the Ainu God created the cat because the rats became too impudent. It is quite possible that the *Inari* fox, as a crop creator, was also intended to keep in check *Daikoku's* rats, the crop-destroyers. As we noted, foxes are so inordinately fond of rats, especially fried ones, that even under the most clever disguise they will give themselves away when seeing such a luscious dish. . . .

Very quaint is the ancient Chinese belief—not found in Japan—that during the 8th lunar month the rats transform themselves into quails, while quails turn into rats. The actual date of such transformations was recorded in the Imperial Almanac. . . .

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THE SNAKE

Everywhere on earth the snake has been feared, and therefore most often also worshipped. In Japan, serpent-lore and serpent-worship goes back to the days of the gods: the first task of *Susano O* when he came from heaven was to kill a huge "crocodile"-snake, the *orochi*; his successor, the great Land-owner and Civilizer, *Ōnamochi*, had to sleep in a snake chamber; the old god of Miwa was himself an enormous serpent, and various other gods either were, or took the shape of, snakes for some purpose or other.

Snakes were feared because vengeful, malicious and cruel, and also because they were concupiscent. Most dangerous (especially in the South) were those snakes which had acquired the power to transform themselves into men: they would change into somebody's husband, and then during his absence go and sleep with the wife. Snakes are said to be intensely desirous of having human offspring. . . . Fortunately there is a ready contraceptive to avoid pregnancy: the woman need only eat leeks. . . . (Leeks and other "strong vegetables" are usually good against all kinds of spooks too.) Apparently, however, the impersonation is not always discovered in time and, as was the case in other lands, there are families in Japan which claim descent from an ancestor so procreated.

In the rare legends where a snake becomes a woman and some man's wife or lover, she seems to always turn into a vampire. With the introduction of the Chinese "dragon", however,

which in many cases replaced the serpent, we also find dragon-princesses who become faithful wives and mothers for a period of years, before they must return to their abode, which has become some under-the-water place.¹²⁶

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THE SPIDER

The last spooky animal which we shall consider is the spider, *kumo*. Spiders too are harbingers of both luck and misfortune in the superstitions of all races.

Stories about supernatural spiders are not numerous, but rather weird. The earliest such goblin-spider is already noted in the time of Jimmu Tennô, legendary founder of the Japanese empire in the 7th century B.C. It had six arms and two legs, horns on its head, large eyes shining like mirrors, teeth like saws, and long red hair. It was strong enough to split rocks and up-root trees, and used its heavy white threads to bind men and horses. An army sent against it was powerless to kill it; on the contrary it lost so many men that it was put to flight. The spider was in the end overcome by a strategem: when it had retired into its cave, the cave's mouth was closed with a heavy iron-net, and a brisk fire lit in front of it suffocated the monster!

An entirely different legend treats of a woman of Oki Province, who was found to have a mouth on the top of her head, which would eat enormous quantities of food. Having of course immediately been divorced, the woman returned shortly afterwards in her true form of a gigantic spider, and sought revenge by attacking her husband. Evidently spiders can, thus, assume "permanent" human shape, probably with the evil intent of sucking blood. But they also assume fantastic spook-shapes, like the one who showed himself as an old bonze, of whom one half only could be seen as if the body had been cut in two from top to bottom. Such spooks often have three or four eyes, enormous

126) Concurrently, but of course in a different class, we find jealous women who transform themselves into fire-spitting serpents to pursue a faithless lover, and also "ghost-serpents" which are but the spirit of a jealous dead woman.

and balefully glaring. These abhorrent things can use spider-webs, of the thickness of ropes, to cover and entangle humans and paralyze their movements. When in the end the monster is killed by some stratagem, and its belly cut open, it may disgorge the skulls of numerous former victims. . . .

But in many cases the spiders are hardly larger than normal, and only become dangerous because, like vampires, they suck people's blood at night, a little at a time, hardly noticeable, until the victim perishes from anaemia.¹²⁷ Due to their nocturnal depredations, spiders are particularly obnoxious in the evening, and should be killed—preferably by burning—if found at that time, “even if they were the transmigrated embodiments of one's ancestors' souls”! In the morning they may be left to live; they could, in fact, be messengers of good fortune to follow during the day. . . .¹²⁸

Quite possibly the ancient Japanese believed in “human spiders” dwelling in the ground. This, at any rate, was the name—*tsuchi-gumo*, earth-spiders—which they gave to an aboriginal tribe, whose identity has been the subject of much controversy. They appear only in the oldest “history”, and according to one record had “short bodies and long legs and arms.” An Ainu myth makes them so tiny that ten of them could easily take shelter under one burdock leaf, and it needed the strength of all the men of five boats—made of leaves—do drag ashore a single herring. . . . More probably they were simply pit-dwellers of small stature, and perhaps of such ugly aspect, for crude features and garb, to be considered “as repulsive as a spider.” Japanese history, at any rate, would make them a rather defiant, savage folk which had to be tackled with circumspection.

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127) The tarantula's virulent bite was believed, in Europe, to cause “tarantism”, a state of apathy and melancholy which could easily end in death. A cure could only be achieved through lively music (*tarantella!*), when the patient would become dance-crazy and twirl around until falling to the ground, exhausted. Then the “poison” had left him. But in Europe, too, there are lingering beliefs in blood-sucking spiders.

128) In Germany and France, if not elsewhere in Europe, the contrary belief exists: Spinne am Morgen bringt Kummer und Sorgen; Spinne am Abend, erquickend und labend; or: Araignée au matin, chagrin; araignée au soir, espoir.—For some Japanese spider-stories see the books mentioned earlier. They are scarce.

ODD WITCH-ANIMALS

In various parts of Japan there are, of course, more regional legends of transforming or possessing animals: in fact it would seem that under given conditions any animal can either become a *bakemono* or occupy a person's body to harass it. Quite possibly this has to do with the ancient animistic beliefs which were current in Japan as much as anywhere else among primitive peoples. Totemic links nevertheless are but faint or even absent.

The "monkey" is considered to be a weird animal in sundry respects, and being so human-like it is not to be wondered that it should have powers even superior to the human ones.¹²⁹ Its principal role apparently is to possess people in the same way as the fox does. Surprisingly enough, in view of the hordes of monkeys which formerly infested the Japanese forests, there are few regions with such spectral beliefs.

The "*kappa*" is a river-monster, keen on devouring young boys or drowning adults and horses. What water-animal it actually stands for is no longer fathomable. Although a fictitious being for several centuries at least, the *kappa* too can possess people and make them miserable.

"Frogs" and "toads" in turn can grow to gigantic sizes, and then become goblins. They usually change into beautiful girls willing to take a good-looking youth for a lover; but after enticing him to her abode (near or under the water), the girl will eat him. Both batrachians seem to be purely anthropophagous.

In one of the oldest legends, later repeated with a few variations, a large "turtle" becomes a charming lady, and marries a young man who had taken her fancy. The tale may be Chinese in origin.

I have only come across one legend of a bewitching "wild boar", and no indication that such a belief may have been more general even in a restricted area, although wild boars were very numerous in many districts of Japan. The legend in question comes from Mount Atago, northwest of Kyoto, which teems with Shintô deities and stories which seem to indicate that there was

129) For some other superstitions see the writer's "Far Eastern Monkey Lore" in the *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. XII 1-2, Tokyo 1956.

a strong resistance to the penetration of Buddhism. Even this one might be interpreted as a victory of the older creed (the hunter) over the new religion (as applied to the hermit). The legend is interesting enough to be given *in extenso*.

On this high mountain, Atago, in the long ago lived a hermit-priest who passed his days in prayer and contemplation and the recitation of the Sutra of the Lotus. No wonder that the common people believed him to be a saint, and deeply venerated him.

Among his humble friends there was a hunter, who now and then brought the saint some dainty to eat, or simply called to pass an hour in elevating talk. And one day the hermit confided to him, with awed voice, that he had had the incredible good fortune of seeing Buddha himself, as an appearance in the night. He expected the apparition to be repeated, and in his kindness of heart the old man invited the hunter to stay for the night, so that he, too, might benefit from Buddha's grace. . . .

The hunter seems to have been a bit more earth-bound, and before accepting asked the acolyte whether he had witnessed the apparition. The acolyte could but confirm that he had also seen Buddha's manifestation, which was evidently due to the hermit's pious devotion. So the two friends sat down for a frugal meal, and then awaited the sacred hour of night.,

The night was dark: neither moon nor stars shone. And yet, after a long wait, there appeared a luminosity as if the moon were rising. The luminosity grew and approached—and indeed the holy Buddha, riding on a white elephant, manifested himself in all his glory, remaining in the air at but a short distance from the hermit's hut, the hermit himself in extatic adoration with hands folded and his face on the ground. . . .

But the hunter was not quite convinced, in spite of what he saw. How could he, poor sinner, see Buddha, who had only bestowed this favour on the old man because of his long and persevering devotion, his many prayers, his sinless life? Hunters kill, and killing is strictly forbidden by the Holy Teacher; all hunters are doomed to perdition. Something was wrong somewhere: bewitching by goblin-animals was too well known a fact. So he fitted a sharp arrow to his bow, and aimed it at Buddha. A Buddha-manifestation would not be harmed; an animal would be killed. He let fly before the priest could raise his voice in objection, and the manifestation disappeared.

The priest vehemently scolded him for his impiety, for having offended Buddha instead of giving up his evil way as a hunter.

The hunter deeply apologized, explaining that he had noticed something "fishy" about the apparition, and for the moment nothing further could be done. But with dawn the man went in the direction where Buddha had stood—and found the ground soaked in blood, a trail leading farther down into the bushes. And there he found a huge *inoshishi*, a wild boar dead from his arrow which had entered the heart. The priest-hermit was of course called to see it, and was horrified at the mystification that had been played on him. But then he reflected that it must have been due to his own vanity, his pride in being better than others, his conceit in believing that the true Buddha would become visible to him for the sole reason that he had been a devoted believer for so many years. . . .

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S P O O K S

Everybody knows, of course, that there are two distinct kinds of evil spirits, the "true devil-deities" or "real (demoniacal) spirits, *makoto-no oni-gami* or *jitsu-no kishin*, and the "false (or simulated) things", the *ese-mono*. It is evident that all these spooky witch-animal manifestations belong to the latter category. They are "fakes". Yet the possibility of such apparitions greatly worried humanity.

There can be no doubt that the belief in "spooky" animals was much stronger in Japan before our days, but neither can it be doubted that it has survived in many quarters with a far deeper conviction than might appear on the surface to the inquisitive foreigner. The controversy as to visible soul-reincarnations—whether as spooks or as animals—has occupied the best Chinese minds since two-thousand years ago. But while the "rational" philosophers of the Wang Ch'ung type were positive on the impossibility of ghostly appearances, or at least very skeptical and rather explaining them as certain "emanations" of passions, they fought shy of similar negations in regard to animals. Dogs and foxes, but also rats, hedgehogs (unknown in Japan) and snakes simply *are* "a little" transcendental! They *can* at times produce remarkable bedevilments—and one must always be on guard against such creatures.

Much more could be said about "transmigration", the nexus

between individual souls and individual animals; about Buddhist reincarnation theories linking men and beasts; about various creatures which are worshipped for the occult powers they possess; about others which are figments of the fertile oriental imagination, and at times are directly or indirectly connected with prominent humans of almost supernatural wisdom. They all possess abnormal traits, but do not, or not in the main, belong to the class of "commutative" or lycanthropic animals, or of such that can *bakeru* by assuming a human (or other) shape. The latter feature, as pointed out, is preponderantly Far Eastern. And it is this feature, in all its variations, which appeals not only to the psychopathist but especially also to the folklorist. While some of the stories are eerie and horrid indeed, most are merry and harmless enough to be told to children by their granny. Both styles give us an insight into the emotional consciousness of the people concerned.
