NORIKO T. REIDER
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio

Transformation of the *Oni*

From the Frightening and Diabolical to the Cute and Sexy

Abstract

Popularized through both oral and written Japanese folklore and religious traditions, early literary treatments of the *oni* 鬼 rendered a hideous, demonic, ogre-like creature intent on terrorizing humans. While it is true that the shape-shifting powers of the *oni* made it possible for them to take on human form, their gruesome appearance would reflect their evil dispositions. The *oni* were often depicted with one or more horns atop their heads, wearing only a loincloth of tiger skin, and a toothy grimace that stretched from ear to ear. The *oni* were also feared because of their penchant for human flesh. Popular modern day literary treatments of the *oni* reveal several new renderings of this demon. Today's *oni* are much more eclectic in appearance and demeanor than their ancestral cousins. Some modern renderings even depict the *oni* as benign and, at times, benevolent beings. Although they are still shape shifters, today's *oni* sometimes assume the form of an alluring human female, exuding sexuality, sensuality, and a child-like naughtiness that is altogether absent in older mytho-historical and literary treatments. There is no doubt this change in the *oni* has been at least partially brought on by commercial interests imposed on writers and artists in the modern age. Moreover, the *oni*'s transformation is reflective of Japan's own socio-economic transmutation into one of the major industrialized nations of the world. This article delineates the *oni*'s transformation.

Keywords: *oni*—Japanese ogre—demon—animation—commercialism

In popular thought, the *oni* immediately conjures up images of a hideous supernatural creature emerging from hell's abyss to terrify wicked mortals. According to Anesaki, Japanese *oni* "belong to a purely Buddhist mythology" (Anesaki and Ferguson 1928, 283), but the *oni* is not exclusive to the Buddhist cosmic universe. According to Komatsu Kazuhiko, *oni* was the term used in *Onmyōdō* 陰陽道 (the way of yin and yang) to describe any evil spirits that harm humans. In early *Onmyōdō* doctrine, the word "*oni*" referred specifically to invisible evil spirits that caused human infirmity (Komatsu 1999, 3).

In Japan's ancient past, Origuchi Shinobu infers that there may have been no demarcation between a Japanese *oni* and a Japanese kami 神 (deity). Both were "awesome" beings (Origuchi 1975, 47). Similarly, Tsuchihashi Yutaka asserts that many types of kami possessing powerful spiritual forces existed in ancient Japan. Among kami, those harmful to humans were quite similar to the *mono*, or evil spirits. Both beings were invisible, however the kami were the object of awe and respect while the *mono* were universally feared, but not respected. Tsuchihashi further notes that the *oni* were spiritual beings very much like the *mono*. Despite this, however, there exist no definitive examples of the term *oni* in the ancient literature (Tsuchihashi 1990, 94–95).

Ishibashi Gaha finds the origin of the Japanese *oni* in *yomotsushikome* 豫母都志許賣 (lit. fearful creature[s] of the nether land), who appear in the creation myth of the *Kojiki* 古事記 ("Record of Ancient Matters," 712 ce; Ishibashi 1998, 4). *Yomotsushikome*, the precursors of *oni,* were sent from the underworld to avenge the shame of Izanami, the divine female creator of Japan. Izanagi, her brother and male counterpart broke his promise not to look at her, causing her undying shame. While Japanese can identify with the primordial form of *oni* in *Yomotsushikome*, Ishibashi attributes the appellation *oni* to Chinese thought (Ishibashi 1998, 104).

Ancient Japanese literature has assigned a number of different Chinese characters to express the term *oni*. Among them, the character used now is

鬼,[1] which in Chinese means invisible soul/spirit, both ancestral and evil, of the dead. According to the *Wamyō ruijushō* 倭名類聚抄 (ca. 930s), the first Japanese language dictionary, an *oni* is explained as something that is "hiding behind things, not wishing to appear.…It is a soul/spirit of the dead." Takahashi writes that the concept of *oni* in *Wamyō ruijushō* is apparently based upon the Chinese concept (TAKAHASHI 1992, 41).

During the medieval period, *oni* gradually entrenched themselves into popular consciousness. Their extensive representation in paintings and the performing arts is evidence of this. *Oni* were customarily portrayed with one or more horns protruding from their scalps. They sometimes had a third eye in the center of their foreheads, and varying skin colors, most commonly black, red, blue, or yellow. More often than not, the *oni* were scantly clad, carryed an iron mace, and wore a loincloth of fresh tiger skin.[2] Though *oni* were not exclusively male, for there were female *oni,* the popular image of *oni* was predominantly that of a male character.

As the image of *oni* spread and gained recognition amongst the public, more and more supernatural characters began to display *oni* features and *oni* attributes, which included the ability to cause natural disasters and to possess ordinary household objects. Even "people who had different customs or lived beyond the reach of the emperor's control" (KOMATSU 1999, 3) were considered to be some form of *oni*. Expansive and dynamic, *oni* thrived in all corners of ancient and medieval Japanese society. They could appear anywhere and often did. *Oni* frequented both urban and rural areas, and were even seen in the capital, disturbing everyday life, causing fears and trouble. Indeed, the *oni* were the object of awe and fear, considered a real entity among the ancient and medieval Japanese. Modern *oni,* despite of continued evolution/changes, still exhibit the characteristics of medieval *oni,* as will be discussed in the following section.

CANNIBALISM

It is thought that *oni* can eat a person in one gulp and they are, in fact, sometimes portrayed feasting on human flesh. Indeed, the phrase "*oni hitokuchi*" 鬼一口 (*oni* in one gulp), is highly suggestive of the inclinations of *oni*s to eat human flesh. The sixth episode of the *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 ("Tales of Ise," tenth century CE) tells of a man who falls hopelessly in love with a lady well above his social status. The man decides to kidnap her. On a thunderous night during their flight, the lady takes shelter in a ruined storehouse near Akuta River. Even though the man stands gallantly on guard at the entrance of the shelter, the lady is still eaten up by an *oni* in one gulp. Although she screams, a thunderclap muffles her outcry to such an extent

that the man does not realize what has happened until she has been completely devoured (SAKAKURA 1957, 114). In the story, nobody sees the *oni* eating the woman, or even the *oni* itself. But the gruesome act is attributed to the *oni*. "*Oni* in one gulp" suggests an instantaneous action, amplifying the *oni*'s atrocious nature and enormous appetite. But the action of eating does not have to be instantaneous. In the story "Shutendōji" 酒顚童子, the *oni* deliberately enjoy the delicacies of human flesh during a special banquet. The ghastly nature of *oni* may well be symbolized by the act of cannibalism.

Another example of an *oni*'s cannibalism appears in the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記 ("Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition," ca. 823). The story is entitled "Nyonin no akuki ni kegasarete kurawareshi en" 女人の悪鬼に点されて食喰はれし縁 ("On a Woman Devoured by an *Oni*"). During the reign of Emperor Shōmu 聖武 (724–749) in the province of Yamato, there was a wealthy family who had a beautiful daughter. Many suitors came to ask for her hand in marriage. But the daughter never consented to wed any of them. One day, a suitor sends her a number of luxurious gifts including three carriages full of splendid silks. She is pleased with his overtures and accepts his proposal of marriage. On the wedding night, from the bed chamber of her house comes a cry, "Ouch, ouch, ouch!" Her parents hear the cries but think, "perhaps she feels pain because she is not used to it." So they take no action. On the following morning, her mother goes to her daughter's bedchamber to wake up the newly-wedded couple, but there is no reply to her call. Thinking it rather strange, she opens the door. She finds only her daughter's head and a finger; the rest of her body have been devoured. The parents are obviously horrified. People claimed it was the work of an *oni* (ENDŌ, KASUGA 1967, 274–77).[3] In the story, no one sees the enemy or its act of cannibalism, but as the title denotes, this abhorrent act is again attributed to an *oni*.

Although the *oni*'s appearance is not described in the text, the creature must have appeared to the woman as a decent-looking human male since she let him spend the night with her. This also provides proof of the *oni*'s transformative power, as will be discussed below.

POWER OF TRANSFORMATION

One of the most famous stories of *oni*'s transformation can be found in the story of Watanabe no Tsuna 渡辺綱, one of Minamoto no Raikō's (d. 1021) four brave warriors. According to the *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 ("Tale of the Heike"), Watanabe no Tsuna encounters a beautiful woman of about twenty years of age at Modori Bridge on First Avenue in Kyoto. She solicits Tsuna to take her back to her house. Tsuna agrees and lifts her on his horse, just as the lady reveals her (or probably his) real identity—that of a mon-

strous *oni*.[4] Tsuna manages to cut off one of the *oni*'s arms. The *oni* flies in the air—*oni* can fly—leaving his severed arm behind. Later, the same *oni* disguises himself as Tsuna's aunt in attempt to gain entry into Tsuna's house. The aunt/*oni* asks Tsuna to show her the famous *oni*'s arm. Believing that the woman was his own aunt, Tsuna takes the disguised creature to the chest where he had placed the *oni*'s arm. Seeing his severed arm, the creature revealed his true identity to Tsuna, grabs his limb, and flies off with it (YASHIRO-BON HEIKE MONOGATARI 1966, 973–83). In the *Genpei seisuiki* 源平盛衰記 ("The Vicissitudes of the Genji and Heike Clans," mid-thirteenth century) an *oni* turns into Tsuna's foster mother rather than his aunt. The *Konjaku monogatarishū* 今昔物語 ("Tales of Times Now Past," ca. 1212) contains a similar story, which is probably the origin of the later development of a similar theme. In the *Konjaku monogatarishū* version, a man (not Tsuna) meets a young woman at a bridge, who asks him for a ride home. She soon reveals her identity as an *oni*—red-faced, one-eyed, with dishevelled hair. The man narrowly escapes with his life. Later, the *oni* visits the man disguised as his brother, and then proceeds to devour his head while still in disguise (YAMADA et al. 1962, 491–94).

As revealed in these few select stories, *oni* have the power to freely transform into human males or females at will. An *oni* often uses this power of transformation to trick men, and to prevent warriors from accomplishing their heroic tasks. An example is the Nō play "Momijigari" 紅葉狩 ("Maple Leaf Viewing"), by Kanze Kojirō Nobumitsu (1435–1516). The warrior Taira no Koreshige (ca. late tenth century) receives an imperial order to subjugate the *oni* on Mt. Togakushi. At the mountain Koreshige meets with an enchanting lady (another *oni* in disguise) and the two partake in a banquet under the maple trees. Seduced by the lady, he sleeps alongside her, completely intoxicated. In his dream, a messenger of the deity of Hachiman bestows a sword on him and tells Koreshige to use it to kill the *oni*. Jostled awake, Koreshige is shocked to find the sword from his dream alongside him and then, is even more shocked when he realizes what he is lying next to: Instead of the beautiful lady he thought he had slept with lies a gruesome *oni* with horns on its head. As mentioned earlier, *oni* can be female. Indeed, the *oni* in "Maple Leaf Viewing" is a female *oni*—this can be understood by the audience because the performer who plays the role of *oni* wears a *hannya* 般若 (she-demon) mask. Koreshige kills the *oni* with the sword given by the deity (SANARI 1982, 3079–3092). Though unsuccessful, the *oni* of Mt. Togakushi transformed into a voluptuous woman to preempt Koreshige's attack. It is not at all uncommon for *oni* to use female sexuality as a ploy to prevent the warrior from achieving his task.

Those Who Live Beyond the Reach of the Emperor's Control are Disenfranchised

It is worth noting that in the aforementioned "Momijigari" the *oni* was to be eliminated by imperial command because it was deemed to be a troublemaker, even a threat to imperial authority. *Oni* were often "beyond the reach of the emperor's control," so suppressing them meant dispatching special warriors to remote regions. When a being was "beyond the reach of emperor's control" or was considered to be an enemy of the establishment, it often came to be labeled *oni,* thus becoming a target of subjugation. The subjugation, however, was not necessarily always successful.

An interesting example of an *oni* defying the emperor and actually triumphing over him in the end can be found in a story that appears in *Konjaku monogatarishū*. A holy man of Mt. Katsuragi, who has gained miraculous power through asceticism in the mountain, is summoned by imperial order to heal the illness of the emperor's beautiful consort. The holy man successfully cures the consort's illness, but while staying in the palace, he comes to recognize her striking beauty and falls hopelessly in love with her. As he attempts to realize his newly-found carnal desires, he is caught in the act and is imprisoned by imperial order. In prison the formerly ascetic, devout man swears that he is prepared to die and reincarnate as an *oni* so that he can possess the consort, the object of his obsessive affections. Hearing this ominous promise and obviously afraid of this holy man's curses, the emperor and Fujiwara Yoshifusa (804–872), the prime minister and the consort's father, releases the holy man from prison. Back in the mountain, the holy man proceeds to starve himself to death, determined to make good on his threat and return to earth as an *oni*. No sooner does he die than he appears before the consort as an *oni* apparition—a huge, statuesque, black-skinned, big-eyed, wide-mouthed being with sharp teeth. He seduces the consort and realizes his carnal desires in public, even in front of the emperor, who can not do anything about it (Yamada 1962, 155–58).[5] This *oni* reveals his extraordinary determination to realize his sexual desire, that is, his will power made him an *oni*. In fact, he is a personification of determination driven by carnal desire. His determination is such that he was able to spurn the wishes of the emperor and powerful Fujiwara. This *oni* is indeed to be feared, not respected.

Baba Akiko states that the *oni* were a representation of those suppressed people and/or those who were not a part of the Fujiwara Regency (tenth to eleventh centuries) (Baba 1988, 141). The Fujiwara Regency reached its peak with Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長 (966–1027), and Baba observes that *oni* were more rampant during Emperor Ichijō's 一条 reign (986–1011), the zenith of the Fujiwara Regency, than at any other time in Japan's histo-

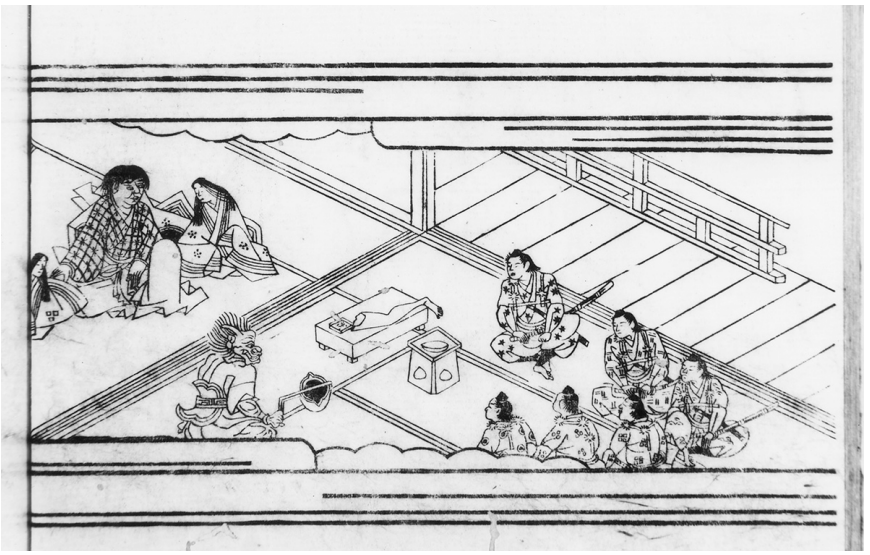

FIGURE 1. "Shutendōji." Shutendōji in a human form enjoys flesh and blood. (Courtesy of the University of Tokyo)

ry (BABA 1988, 150). One of the best examples of those who "lived beyond the reach of the emperor's control" can be found in the story of "Shutendōji."

Shutendōji, the chief of a band of *oni*, lives on Mt. Ōe. During the reign of Emperor Ichijō, Shutendōji and his *oni* band abduct people, particularly maidens, enslaving them and eventually feasting on their flesh and drinking their blood. The concerned emperor orders the warrior hero Minamoto no Raikō and his men to stop the abductions by vanquishing Shutendōji and his followers. Receiving the imperial order, Raikō is alarmed: "*Oni* are transformers—if they learn that punitive force is coming, they will turn into dust and leaves, and it will be hard for us ordinary humans to find them. Yet, how can I disobey an imperial order?"(ICHIKO 1958, 363–64). But the warriors disguise themselves as *yamabushi* (mountain ascetics) and with some divine help they find the *oni*'s Iron Palace.

The powerful, diabolical Shutendōji boasts, "I abduct ladies of my liking from the capital to use and enjoy as I wish. Look at this place! My azure palace with bejeweled screens has many rows of roofs and before me are trees and grasses in the tens of thousands, representing the four seasons.… How could any heavenly guardians surpass this?"(ICHIKO 1958, 373–74). Yet, through guile, deception, and with some divine help, Raikō and his men eliminate Shutendōji and his *oni* band.

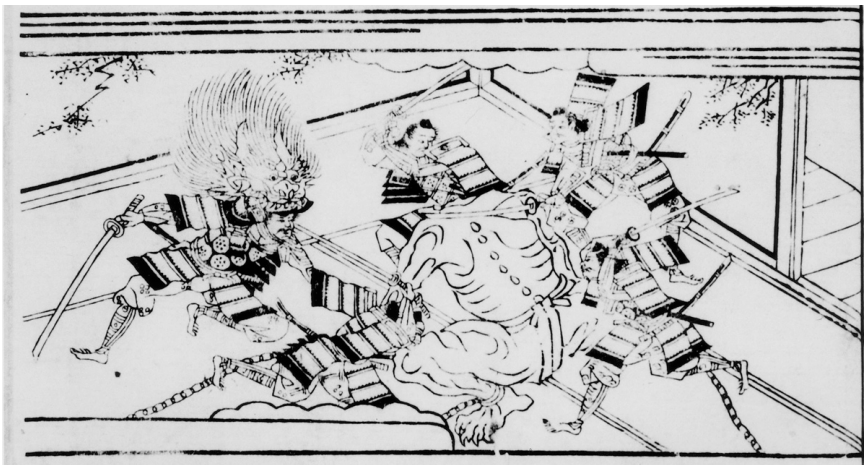

FIGURE 2: "Shutendōji." Shutendōji is being beheaded by Raikō and his men. (Courtesy of the University of Tokyo)

Rosemary Jackson asserts that "the fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" (JACKSON 1981, 4). Those who were considered anti-establishment caused unease and angst amongst the authorities. The subverters were labeled as *oni* by the establishment, and were to be suppressed and eliminated. In contrast, from the point of view of those fighting against the establishment, their resentment and angst were what caused them to transform into *oni* in order to frighten and instill fear into the authorities.

There are many theories regarding the origins of the Shutendōji legend, including the idea that Shutendōji and his fellow *oni* were nothing more than a gang of bandits who lived on Mt. Ōe, or that Shutendōji was a Caucasian man who drifted to the shore of Tanba Province (present-day Kyoto) and drank red wine.[6] Yet, what is most common among these theories is that all the characters are disenfranchised either by geography, customs, and/or different lifestyles.

OBSERVING DIFFERENT CUSTOMS

In *Yama no jinsei* 山の人生 ("Life in the Mountains") Yanagita Kunio writes of babies born with teeth who were clearly different from ordinary babies. These babies were widely believed to be *onigo* 鬼子 (children of *oni*) and were badly abused, particularly prior to the Edo period. Yanagita cites various documents including *Tsurezure Nagusamigusa* 徒然慰草, which records "a deplorable custom in Japan where a baby born with teeth is called the

child of an *oni* and is killed." Jōjin 定深 (1108–?), a Buddhist monk, chronicled in *Higashiyama ōrai* 東山往来 ("Letters from Higashiyama") that "a maid gave birth to a baby with teeth. The woman's neighbors advised her to bury the baby in the mountain, rationalizing that it [the baby] had to be an *oni*. The maid came to me for consultation and I [Jōjin] suggested that the baby be sent to a temple to become a monk" (YANAGITA 1978, 234). Similarly, Satake affirms the bleak destiny of a child thought to be of *oni* lineage—death, abandonment, or the priesthood. People seriously believed that those babies born with teeth would become *oni* (SATAKE 1977, 44). As many social scientists cross-culturally have come to observe, however, it is human nature to apply social stigmas to those displaying difference or anomaly.

One of the sources of the above-mentioned Shutendōji legend has it that the legend was actually based on the unconventional lifestyles of a group of metal and/or mine workers living in the Ōe Mountains. These metal workers were travelers who were purportedly well-versed in magic and medicinal practices. It is because these men followed lifestyles different to those of the masses that they were feared and ultimately regarded as heathens by many of the local townsfolk. There exists ample literary and historical proof that people living in the mountains were often referred to as the descendants of *oni,* primarily because their customs and manners were so different from those of the people living on the flatlands (MIYAMOTO 1969, 10; WAKAO 1981, 46).

If the Shutendōji legend is even partially based on these early metal workers of the Ōe Mountains, the fact that Shutendōji and his gang of *oni* were purportedly residing in an Iron Palace makes all the more sense, from a practical standpoint. As previously mentioned, *oni* were almost always depicted carrying an iron mace. Could it be that these early metallurgists, geographically and socially distinct from the rest of the populace, were what helped to spawn the medieval revival of an even older myth? Perhaps these same metallurgists used their propensity for metal to help conjure up the *oni*'s impressive power—lightening.

EMITTING LIGHTNING

Kondō Yoshihiro asserts that the genesis of *oni* came about through people's fear toward the destructive power of nature's fury, which manifests in such forms as thunder and lightning, storms and earthquakes (KONDŌ 1966, 14). This is probably a result of a combined visual and auditory intensity of the experience, coupled with the threat of potential, instantaneous destruction. Among the natural forces, lightning is most strongly associated with the *oni*.[7]

In the aforementioned *Ise monogatari*, the woman of upper-class descent is eaten by the *oni* during a violent thunderstorm.

If those who went against the emperor (and Fujiwara Regents) were given the label *oni,* Sugawara no Michizane (849–903), a statesman and scholar, might be regarded as a chief *oni* in relation to the imperial family (KOMATSU, NAITŌ 1991: 117). Sugawara fell victim to Fujiwara Tokihira's slanderous tongue and was demoted from the position of Minister of the Right , one of the highest court offices, to that of chief administrator in Kyushu. After his death, his vengeful spirit was said to have caused intense natural disasters, especially the lightning which struck the imperial palace, to exact his revenge against the imperial family and Fujiwara clan. In the popular military chronicle *Taiheiki* 太平記 ("Chronicle of Great Peace," ca. fourteenth century), Sugawara Michizane himself is said to have actually transformed into the lightning that struck the imperial palace (GOTŌ, KAMADA 1960: 406–407). Similarly, in the Nō text "Raiden" 雷電 ("Thunderbolt"), which is based upon the story of the *Taiheiki*, Sugawara actually changes to assume the more traditional *oni*-like appearance.

BRINGING WEALTH

A literary survey throughout the ages would no doubt reveal that, more often than not, the *oni*'s evil side has been emphasized. Yet, *oni* are not exclusively evil beings. An *oni* can also be a supernatural entity that brings good fortune and wealth. The famous folk tale of "Issun-bōshi" 一寸法師 ("Little One-Inch") tells how *oni* can bring fortune to humans. In the story, a boy is born to an elderly couple who are well beyond the years of conception and childbirth. For years, the couple had been praying to a deity so that they might conceive. The child the woman gives birth to, however, a boy, never grows big, and remains as small as one inch (hence his name, Little One-Inch). One day, he decides to go to the capital in search of fortune and success. He finds a job as a servant of an aristocrat family and falls madly in love with the couple's beautiful daughter. Tricked by Little One-Inch, the daughter is banished and comes under his care. The two soon depart the family's compound. On their aimless journey, Little One-Inch and the daughter meet up with a band of *oni*. One of the *oni* eats Little One-Inch in one gulp but the boy fights against the *oni*, plunging his little sword into the being from inside its body. Defeated, the *oni* coughs up Little One-Inch and the band of demons scamper away, leaving behind a magical, wish-granting mallet. Little One-Inch picks up the mallet and with the help of its supernatural power, he is transformed into normal human size. He uses the mallet to produce food and treasures (ICHIKO 1958, 319–26).[8] Little One-Inch becomes rich, marries the princess, and lives happily ever after, primarily

because of the *oni*'s wish-granting mallet. Although the mallet was not given to Little One-Inch as a present but was left behind by the band of *oni,* the fact that treasure was brought by the *oni* from the land of the *oni* remains unchanged. Thus through their wish-granting mallet, the *oni* became bringers of fortune.

Another example of how the *oni* can be seen as a bringer of wealth and fortune appears in the *kyōgen* play "Setsubun" 節分 (*setsubun* is the day before the first day of spring). Traditionally, on the night of *setsubun*, people scatter beans, one for each of their years, saying "*oni wa soto*, *fuku wa uchi*" 鬼は外, 福は内 (Demons out, Fortune in). In some rites, a male member of the community pretending to be an *oni* (wearing a paper *oni* mask) enters a house, but is chased outside while people scatter their beans. In this play, however, an *oni* from *hōrai* 蓬莱, the land of eternal youth, goes to Japan, wishing to eat beans. The *oni* visits a house where the husband has gone on a religious retreat and only the wife is home. The *oni* falls in love with the wife. At first, she is scared of the *oni,* but quickly realizes how to make the most of her situation by going after the *oni*'s fortune and treasures saying, "If you really love me, you will give me your treasures." The *oni* eagerly agrees replying, "my treasures are a cloak of invisibility, a hat of invisibility, and a mallet of fortune," and he hastily gives her the cloak and the hat he wore on his way to Japan. As soon as she receives the treasures, the wife chases the *oni* away with beans (Koyama 1961, 125–31). Portrayed in the spirit of *kyō-gen*, which makes fun of serious and frightening figures, this *oni* is humorous and quite credulous. The treasured cloak and hat with the power to make their wearer invisible may have been the source of the *oni*'s powers of invisibility. Such equipment was considered to be treasure; by being invisible, one could acquire tangible and intangible wealth, from precious metals to valuable information.

Through the medieval period, images of *oni* with these attributes were predominant in all corners of society. Much of whatever was inexplicable and/or mysterious to human intellect and perceived as negative eventually took shape as *oni*. An abundance of records on *oni* in the ancient and medieval periods reveal how real *oni* were perceived to be by the Japanese masses.

During the ensuing early modern period, the image of the *oni* as an enigmatic dark force threatening the central authorities became less prominent. But *oni* survived in deep mountains, remote rivers and, in a way, thrived in the minds of common folks through both the literary and visual arts. Demonic people, such as those who frequently appear in the plays of Tsuruya Nanboku IV 鶴屋南北 (1755–1829), were called *oni*. For example, his *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan* 東海道四谷怪談 ("Ghost Story of Yotsuya," 1824)

depicts the retaliation of a once beautiful woman, Oiwa, against her cruel husband Iemon, a masterless samurai. Iemon kills Oiwa's father because the father knew Iemon committed fraud against their late lord and was opposed to Iemon's marriage to his daughter. Oiwa agrees to marry Iemon because he promises to avenge her father's death. Being unemployed, Iemon lives a life of dire poverty and gradually becomes dissatisfied with his lot. He learns that the daughter of a wealthy merchant family in the neighborhood has fallen madly in love with him. Iemon then casts Oiwa aside so that he can gain employment with the wealthy girl's family. In order to cover up his deceitful avarice, Iemon kills an innocent man and mentally tortures his wife to death. As a ghost Oiwa exacts revenge by haunting Iemon, tormenting him, and inciting him to commit acts of murder. Iemon is the personification of evil, an *oni* in human form.

Over the years, the *oni* have become a topic of intellectual investigation. For instance, in the book *Hyakumonogatari hyōban* 百物語評判 ("Explanations of Strange and Weird Tales," 1686), Yamaoka Genrin 山岡元隣 (1631–1672), a widely recognized intellectual of the day, explains the *oni* as follows:

> Heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, trees and grasses, water and fire, stones and dirt, all sentient beings are yin-yang. The work of yang is called kami, and the work of yin is named *oni*....Since all the bad and evil belong to yin, the souls of wicked people are called *oni*...their [wicked] souls have nowhere to go and nobody worships them. So they linger in the air and cause various problems [to humans]....Shutendōji did not necessarily eat humans, but he is called *oni* because he overestimated his own prowess, went against imperial authority and Buddhist teachings, and committed evil deeds....The *oni* that ate the lady near the Akuta River was said to have been the chief councilor of state, Kunitsune. (TACHIKAWA 1993, 13–14)

Genrin attempts to provide an operational definition of what a so-called *oni* is. To the modern reader, this explanation does not seem to clarify the actions of *oni* with any reasonable rationale because yin alone does not explain why *oni* should linger in the air. Yet, Genrin's students, who asked this question of him, seemed to find his answer quite acceptable. With this trend of intellectualization and rationalization becoming more pervasive however, the awe and fear previously associated with *oni* seems to have significantly lessened.

The trend toward a less frightening *oni* can be more clearly seen in *Ōtsu-e* 大津絵 (Ōtsu pictures), folk paintings produced in and around Ōtsu town in the Edo period. Yanagi Sōetsu (1889–1961) writes that Ōtsu paint-

ings "represent folk art in its purest form" (McArthur 1999, 12). The most well-loved figure in the entire *Ōtsu-e* repertoire is called "*oni* no nenbutsu" 鬼の念仏 (praying *oni*), which depicts a praying *oni* dressed in a Buddhist priest's garb with a gong around his neck, a striker in one hand and a Buddhist subscription list in the other. As McArthur comments, the image of an *oni* as a Buddhist priest seems somewhat contradictory, for *oni* are considered to be evil and inhabitants of a Buddhist hell who are striving for Buddhahood. Some of the "inscriptions to the paintings warn against the superficial appearance of goodness, while others suggest that even the most evil beings can be saved by Buddhism" (McArthur 1999, 30). In any case, the image of *oni* depicted in Buddhist garbs is quite humorous. Ōtsu town is one of the fifty-three stations of the Tōkaidō (the Eastern Sea route) which connected Edo (now Tokyo) and Kyoto. Undoubtedly, the praying *oni* were popular souvenirs for travelers who journeyed on the Tōkaidō.

Although the attributes of the *oni* and their overall impact on social life were somewhat static in early modern Japan, particularly when compared to the medieval period, they nonetheless found a place in art, literature, and folktales.

Oni of Modern Times

The modern era has witnessed the birth of a new type of *oni*—the utterly kind, benevolent *oni*. The earliest depictions of this type of *oni* seemed to have come from the writer of children's stories, Hamada Hirosuke (1893–1973). Written at a time of change, an era of fast-paced modernization, Hamada's stories would serve to help children as well as adults come to terms with the new age. The dehumanization brought on by modernization and industrialization raised many questions seemingly inherent to the human species including, importantly, what does it mean to be human? As industrialism spread and more people began to feel its marginalizing effects, many began to ask themselves this very question. Hamada succeeded in drawing empathy from his readership by emphasizing the more compassionate side of humankind and producing a kind-hearted and benevolent *oni*.

In his *Naita akaoni* 泣いた赤鬼 ("The Red *Oni* who Cried," 1933), a kind red *oni* is determined to be good. The red *oni* wants to be a friend of mankind, but humans are afraid of *oni* and do not want to be associated with him. Knowing the red *oni*'s desire, a blue *oni*, (the red *oni*'s friend, who is also a good *oni*) makes the ultimate of sacrifices: He plans an elaborate ruse that provides an opportunity for the red *oni* to jump to the rescue of the humans while the blue *oni* himself destroys their homes. He is willing to come across as evil so that his friend, the red *oni*, can come across as being

good. His plan is successful and as a result, the red *oni* comes to have many human friends. One day, when the red *oni* visits the blue *oni*'s house, he finds that the blue *oni* has disappeared so as not to disturb the red *oni*'s good relationship with the humans. The red *oni* cries and is touched and moved by the blue *oni*'s thoughtfulness, friendship, and self-sacrifice.

As is typical of Hamada Hirosuke's writings, there is no villain in this story. Hamada's *oni* are righteous and pure-hearted:[9] The red *oni* is friendly and prepares tea and home-made cakes for the humans, while his counterpart, the blue *oni,* espouses qualities of self-sacrifice by putting the needs of others ahead of his own. The blue *oni* is considerate enough to leave the area so as to prevent his friend's cover from being blown. Such conduct among humans was an increasing rarity at the time the story was written; thus this piece served to illustrate the benefits of self-sacrifice and righteous, upright behavior. The expository comment on *Naita akaoni* says that an "*oni* is a frightening creature. There are many stories about scary and evil *oni* in Japan. *Oni* are frightful and evil, so it is quite understandable that the Japanese dislike them. *Naita akaoni* is very unique, for it describes *oni* as good creatures" (HAMADA 1978, 199–200). Yet, when asked about his motivations, the author states he created the good *oni* because, "I felt that I should like to bestow good intentions upon the *oni*. If the reader pities the well-intended *oni* and feels compassion towards them, then such a sentiment would undoubtedly be extended to thoughtfulness and compassion for other people's feelings."[10]

The roots of this humane *oni* may be found in the character of Yamamba 山姥 (who is a mountain witch or woman-*oni*), the protagonist of the Noh play "Yamamba," which is attributed to Zeami (1363–1443).[11] Folk belief portrays Yamamba as a mysterious old woman living on a mountain and feasting on travellers who happened upon her path. Unlike the folk belief, Zeami's Yamamba is an invisible, lonely, old woman who helps humans with their chores. She tells a group of entertainers to spread her side of the story to the public. Popular during the medieval period, Zeami's reflective Yamamba proffers Buddhist philosophical entreaties, such as "the good and evil are not two; right and wrong are the same" (BRAZELL 1998, 207). Zeami's Yamamba is downcast with a spiritual burden, forever making the mountain rounds, forever disenfranchised by ordinary people.

On the other hand, there is no darkness in Hamada's red *oni*. Unburdened by religious stigma, Hamada's *oni* is befriended by others, and becomes a source of hope to expand human compassion. The *oni*'s compassionate side is not an emphasized characteristic, but as the story of *Naita akaoni* has grown in popularity to become a classic of children's literature, the kind *oni* too has become less of an anomaly.

ONI AS FOREIGN ENEMY

If the *oni* were considered to be anyone "who lived beyond the reach of the emperor's control," it comes as no surprise that *oni* were employed to describe Japan's real-life enemies. This was especially the case during the wars of modern times. It is common knowledge among Japanese that during World War II the appellation *oni* was used to describe the Japanese enemy—the leaders of the Allied forces, the Americans and British. As the war intensified, the government's censorship tightened and even cartoonists and caricaturists had their works scrutinized. In fact, various organizations of cartoonists were forced to reorganize to suit the needs of the government. Backed by the government, the *Shin Nippon Mangaka Kyōkai* 新日本漫画家協会 (New Association of Japanese Cartoonists) published the monthly *Manga*, the only cartoon magazine that existed throughout the war. The editor, Kondō Hideo (1908–1979), depicted as evil demons Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin (LENT 1989, 227). Regarding *Manga*, Kobayashi Nobuhiko, a writer, says, "[apart from *Manga*] there was virtually no other magazine which expressed Japanese popular culture during the World War II. Writers and thinkers cooperated during the war, but there was nothing that encouraged the populace [to support the war] more than the words of the cartoonist Kondō Hideo. His simple style, which involved talking at the level of ordinary people, was truly outstanding" (KOBAYASHI 1995, 179).

One of *Manga*'s cartoonists, Fujii Tomu (1912–1943) depicted Roosevelt with horns on his scalp.[12] The caption reads "*oni wa washi, oni wa washi*" (I'm the *oni,* I'm the *oni*), which is a playing on the words "*oni wa soto, fuku wa uchi*." In this cartoon a super-sized Roosevelt, dressed in a western shirt covered by the upper part of traditional samurai clothing, is scattering bullets on Japanese towns. In another cartoon, Sugiura Yukio (1911–) draws an attractive Japanese wife holding a pocket book and looking to buy materials for clothes in a store window. The materials have three faces embroidered on them, those of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek. Each man was drawn with horns, the primary feature of *oni*. The caption reads, "The Spirit of Saving" (SUGIURA 1943, 6). Needless to say, as far as wartime slogans go, this was a powerful juxtaposition of imagery. Similarly, the slogan "Luxury is enemy" speaks to the theme of saving encouraged by the Japanese government. In this cartoon, the ordinary housewife is smiling because instead of buying materials for new clothes, she decides to save her money. The small caption reads, "My saving spirit is quite something. Even things [such as clothes] have started to look like this [*oni*]." This certainly encouraged many wives to save, while subtly deepening the image of the Allied forces as true enemies.

The *oni*'s adaptability becomes increasingly apparent when one exam-

ines how they were used in the Japanese war effort versus the "evil Allied forces." A good example of this appears in the famous folktale entitled "Momotarō" (Peach Boy). Momotarō is so named because he was divinely born from a peach, which mysteriously floats down a stream. As the boy grows older, he begins to demonstrate miraculous strength. At that time, *oni* from a distant island frequented the capital, looting treasures and abducting people. The young Momotarō decides to confront and subjugate the *oni*. His elderly parents provide him with dumplings for food. En route, Momotarō meets a dog, monkey, and a pheasant which all became his vassals in exchange for his remarkably delicious dumplings. Momotarō and his three vassals go to the *oni*'s island, defeat the *oni,* and take back all the treasures of the island with them.

Named as one of the five most famous folktales in Japan in the prewar period, one would be hard-pressed to find a Japanese youngster not familiar with Momotarō's story, most probably because it was included in the textbook for elementary language instruction issued by the Ministry of Education.[13] Momotarō's goodness, and his affection and filial piety toward his elderly parents provide the perfect model of good conduct for young Japanese. But, as John Dower explains, the message was beyond a simple moral lesson. In fact, the story was used as an expedient to promote nationalism during wartime Japan. Momotarō's divine appearance on earth was a symbol of Japan, a divine country. His animal vassals were other Asian countries under the umbrella of Japan's ambitious Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. The cartoons, magazines, and animated films about the Momotarō story were made to help support the Japanese cause and encourage nationalism (Dower 1986, 250–58).[14] The concept of *oni*-Allied forces was thus imposed upon the youth, quickly disseminating into the larger populace. Unlike the medieval period when the antiestablishment *oni* took shape gradually over hundreds of years, the *oni* as enemy during World War II was artificially created by Japanese leaders and fervent nationalists. This was a ploy used to manipulate the image of *oni* as fearsome creatures in order to advance the Japanese wartime ultranationalist agenda. In the case of the war, the *oni*'s evolution was entirely a product of human design. Yet while the Japanese propaganda machine was portraying the image of *oni* onto the enemy camp, the Japanese army was acting like *oni* in various Asian countries, a prime example being the atrocities of Nanking it committed in 1937.

It is indeed ironic, considering the *oni*'s powers and predilection to transform, that the American *oni* actually turned into Japan's strongest ally in postwar time, revealing its kind side immediately after the war by providing much needed food and democratic guidance. In this light, the *oni* enemy

was transformed into a liberator from Japanese militarism and fascism; it took the form of the American occupation force which brought "gifts from heaven"—democratic revolution—to the Japanese people (DOWER 1999, 65–84).

SEXY AND CUTE *ONI*

After a decade of recovery from the devastating effects of war, most Japanese began to think less about survival and more about the country's socio-economic future. In 1956 the government issued an economic white paper proclaiming the end of the postwar period with its economic hardships and social chaos (SCHILLING 1997, 32). With economic growth soaring, food shortages and rationing had become a distant memory. This was a period of remarkable transformation for Japan. The country picked itself up from the shame and hardships of defeat to emerge as one of the world's strongest postwar economic players. The late 1950s and 1960s ushered Japan into an era of new-found prosperity and by 1960, Prime Minister Ikeda's policy of doubling the average worker's income was formally introduced (SCHILLING 1997, 36–37). Japan was the first Asian nation to carry out this postwar "economic miracle."

Economic development invariably produces new social conditions as well, and encourages a culture of consumption. One example of this is *manga*, an essential component in contemporary Japanese pop culture. Certainly Japanese *manga* were popular in the prewar period, but it was only after the war that the industry blossomed, most notably with the production of Tezuka Osamu 手塚治虫 (1928–1989), widely regarded as the god of *manga*. In 1995 comic books and magazines were a billion-dollar industry, accounting for forty percent of all books and magazines sold (SCHODT 1996, 19).

In this enormous industry, a modern *oni* has made an appearance as a sexy ogress. Her name is Lum, and she appears in the *manga* series entitled *Urusei Yatsura* うるせいやつら ("Those Obnoxious Aliens"). When Takahashi Rumiko, the author, created *Urusei Yatsura*, she combined the aliens of science fiction with the traditional Japanese *oni*. Lum, the protagonist, is a modern, non-terrestrial version of the Japanese *oni*. The series first appeared in 1978 in the boy's weekly manga magazine *Shonen Sandee* 少年サンデー ("Boys' Sunday"). *Urusei Yatsura* was such a phenomenal success that it ran over nine years and was also made into a TV series which ran from 1981 to 1986 (PROULX 2000b).

The series of *Urusei Yatsura* opens with a fleet of *oni*-invaders arriving on earth. In order to save humans the randomly-selected challenger, Moroboshi Ataru, a lecherous teenage Japanese boy, plays tug-of-war with

Lum, the ogress, by holding her horns in his hands. Lum turns out to be cute and overflowing with sex appeal. Using trickery, Ataru wins the tug-of-war game and through a misunderstanding, Lum becomes Ataru's loving, devoted, and obsessive wife.

Lum is replete with traditional *oni* attributes. Consider first her appearance. She wears a traditional *oni* outfit of tiger skin, and has two horns on her head. Instead of a big mouth to eat humans in one gulp, she has cute canine teeth, indicating a sexual appetite. Her mouth becomes conspicuously large when she discovers Ataru's lecherous ways. She acts as if she is going to devour Ataru, thus demonstrating a trace of cannibalism. Her devotion to (or obsession with) Ataru may remind one of the holy man/*oni* of Mt. Katsuragi and his obsessive determination to possess the imperial consort. Lum can fly, just like the *oni* at Modoribashi Bridge who reportedly flew off into the air. Although Lum herself does not transform into any non-recognizable creature, her former fiancé, Rei, who is so taken with Lum that he comes after her from his home planet, transforms into a huge tiger/ox-like monster when he gets excited. Ordinarily, Rei is an *oni* with an incredibly good-looking human appearance (complete with two horns and tiger skin outfit). Since Lum's *oni* folks originally arrived on earth with the intention of invading the planet, they are obviously antiestablishment. At the same time, as they come from a different planet, Lum's *oni* are clearly beyond the reach of the emperor's control. The alien *oni* have many customs that differ from those of the human earth dwellers. Lum's weapon emits electricity like lightning—a traditional *oni* power. When she becomes jealous or angry, she uses her electric power most effectively to injure her target. As *oni* can be bringers of wealth, so Lum brought wealth to those associated with her. It was not her husband Ataru, however, who received it but her creators, that is, the author, Takahashi Rumiko, and the companies who made TV shows and films based on the character. As mentioned above, *Urusei Yatsura* was so popular that it spawned a television show that lasted almost two hundred episodes, six movies, and eleven OAC (Original Anime Video). Today, these titles can even be found on DVD and are available in English for an international audience (ANIMEIGO 2001).

Takahashi, who was born in 1957 and is one of Japan's most popular comic artists, has rendered an *oni* that is entirely modern—Lum is equipped for modernity. She is an alien *oni,* who is capable of piloting a super-advanced spaceship. Not only that, she is sexy. Unlike her past precedents who *transformed* into voluptuous women, Lum *is* inherently cute and coquettish with a curvaceous figure. She looks more Caucasian than Japanese, though no human has such big eyes. Lum's facial features are synthetic images, as if morphed by a computer. This effect provides familiarity

and global appeal (OLSON 2001, 265). To show her attractive figure most effectively, Lum often wears a tiger skin bikini. Bikini bathing suits certainly indicate a foreign influence, while increasing popular appeal to the audience.

Furthermore, Lum appears on television and is broadcast internationally. Interestingly enough, the occupying American forces provided assistance to Japan immediately after the war in many areas, including broadcasting. Therefore, it might be said that were it not for this help, internationally recognized *oni* like Lum may very well have never come to be. Japan's first ever television broadcast occurred in 1953, color broadcasts followed soon after in 1960. With the Japanese crown prince's marriage in 1959 and the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, the television set rapidly became a household staple in Japan. As Japan's broadcasting industry began to pick up momentum, American and foreign programming imports declined rapidly. By the 1980s, Japan had become a net exporter of programming, fifty-six percent of which was animation. Today, the United States imports ninety percent of all Japanese programming exports (STRONACH 1989, 128–39). *Urusei yatsura* is no exception. One hundred episodes of TV programs, films, and OAV are imported and translated into English. As mentioned earlier, even DVD format is now available, attracting an international array of avid followers. Once translated into English, it has been easily translated into other languages like Italian and German, attracting more fans. Mason Proulx writes, "I honestly believe that it is the greatest *anime* and *manga* series to ever come out of Japan" (PROULX 2000a). The modern *oni* Lum enjoys a high degree of popularity among consumers of various media—print, audio-visual, and electronic—and is thus a child of the technological advancements of the age. With the show's catchy theme song, and copious spin-off marketing, Lum has proven to be a valuable commodity for Japan, an entertainment franchise that celebrates the capitalistic and commercial accomplishments of the modern era.

Lum is portrayed as cute and loveable, and a dotingly devoted and attentive wife. Timothy J. Craig writes that one of the features of "Japan's popular culture is its closeness to the ordinary, everyday lives of its audience" (CRAIG 2000, 13). Lum is all the more likeable to her fans because she behaves just like ordinary women (except for her electric powers and ability to fly); she becomes jealous, cries, laughs, and gets mad—many can relate to her. As a result of this transmutation, the *oni,* once the object of intense fear and awe, has been turned into an idolized object of commercialism.

MACHI OKOSHI 町おこし (TOWN REVITALIZATION)

Commercialism is a very important aspect of the modern *oni*. In fact, this aspect is exemplified in the movement of *machi okoshi* (town revitalization)

in such towns as Ōe-machi in Kyoto. Ōe-machi is a town at the foot of Mt. Ōe, and is known as the setting for the legend of Shutendōji. Once rich with rice, wood, and copper, Ōe-machi is now facing a depopulation crisis. Currently six thousand people live there and many of these residents are elderly. In attempt to ward off its own extinction, the townspeople decided to make the town rich and comfortable again by employing the theme of the *oni* legend through "borrowing the strong power of *oni* to bring happiness" (NIHON NO ONI KŌRYŪ HAKUBUTSUKAN 1993). The area is rich in *oni*-related legends and sites and the townspeople decided to capitalize on this. The town has an *oni* museum[15] and hopes to be a mecca of *oni* in Japan that will attract many tourists.[16]

The *oni* has come a long way from being a feared and terrifying creature who threatened the lives of Japanese to one who represents a vital financial resource. These days there are even gentle *oni*, and cute and sexy ones. The transformation of *oni* reflects of Japan's own socio-economic change. Yet, as has been shown in this article, the main characteristics of *oni*—their cannibalism, their power to transform, their opposition to the central authorities, their observation of customs different to those of humans, their ability to emit lightning and also bring wealth to those around them—still remain as their major features. Some aspects of the *oni* may be emphasized more than others. Furthermore, *oni* can be used as art objects, or exploited as political weapons. But whatever the means, *oni* have been always an important part of the Japanese psyche, and continue to be so.

At present, books, comic books, and films describing *oni* as evil beings are abundant in the Japanese market. Many of them maintain the traditional images of *oni,* and add something more. *The Weeping Demon*, the seventh episode of a recent film entitled *Dreams* (1990) by Akira Kurosawa, for instance, heavily relies on traditional images to gain the desired cinematic effect: The *oni* gather at a bleak place with blood-colored ponds dominating the surreal landscape. These *oni* wail over the pain coming from their horns, which make this place all the more hellish. In the film, Kurosawa depicts human *oni*. The *oni* in *The Weeping Demon* were once humans who turned into *oni* as a result of a nuclear weapon's blast. The image of *oni* is used as a means to criticize nuclear technology. Furthermore, the horn, a feature of *oni,* symbolizes the hierarchical social order of Japan. According to NAKANE (1970), Japan is a vertical society where vertical relations, such as senior and junior rankings, are strong and strictly prescribed, and people in the lower social ranks work for (and obey the orders of) those in the upper echelons. In return, the senior members advise and take care of the junior members. Even after becoming the *oni,* Kurosawa's one-horned *oni* laments, hierarchy exists: The more horns an *oni* has, the stronger it is. In a realm where the *oni*

eat each other, the weak, one-horned *oni* serve the stronger *oni* as a food source. Here, *oni* are being utilized for social criticism—the underlying message being that those who are well off in society should help the lesser advantaged, and not "eat" them (which was common practice in the *oni* underworld.)

BABA Akiko writes, "During and after the early modern period, *oni,* as they are represented on the night of *setsubun*, have been depicted as beings who can be easily chased away by mere beans" (1988, 288). The modern *oni* may not be as dynamic as they used to be, and may not be the target of fear and awe. But *oni* are tenacious, flexible, and, seemingly, ever transmutable. In the hands of artists, writers, and promoters of commercial interests, the *oni* have not only reflected Japan's socio-economic transformation through the ages, they have survived and have, in turn, transformed into more human-like and commercially profitable entities.

NOTES

1. The first appearance of this character in Japanese textual records is in the *Izumo fudoki* 出雲風土記 ("Topography of Izumo Province," CE 733). In the community of Ayo of Izumo Province (present-day Shimane prefecture) a one-eyed *oni* appeared in a stretch of reclaimed land and devoured a man (AKIMOTO 1958, 238–39). But it is not certain that this character was pronounced as "*oni*."

2. The combination of the horn and the tiger skin may in fact trace the origins of *oni* back to an ancient folk belief. The image of *oni,* with ox's horn(s) and tiger skin loincloth, developed from a play on the word *ushitora* 丑寅. *Ushi* 丑 (ox) represents the direction thirty degrees east from due north (north-north-east); *tora* 寅 (tiger) is the direction thirty degrees north from due east. *Ushitora* was considered to be the *kimon* 鬼門 (*oni*'s gate 門)—an ominous direction. Hence, ox horns and tiger skins were used to depict *oni* (BABA 1988, 46–47; TORIYAMA 1967, 80).

3. An English translation is available in NAKAMURA 1997, 205–206.

4. Later, in a story by Shibukawa Seiemon, *Otogizōshi*, this *oni* appears as Ibarakidōji, a lieutenant of Shutendōji, the *oni* chief of Mt. Ōe.

5. An English translation is available in TYLER 1987, 178–80.

6. For the origins of Shutendōji, see REIDER 2001–02.

7. KONDŌ writes that among natural forces lightning was the most feared by the people. The extent to which lightning was feared can be surmised by the sheer number of shrines dedicated to the lightning gods (1966, 16).

8. An English translation is available in MCCULLOUGH 1990, 495–98.

9. There is a group of folktales called "*Oni no ko Kozuna*" (Kozuna, Child of an *Oni*) in which the protagonist, Kozuna, is kind to humans like the Red *Oni*. However, Kozuna is a half-*oni* and half-human child, and it is implied that his human side is the kind side. Although Kozuna's *oni* side is latent, it is cannabalistic: Kozuna asks to be killed as he feels an urge to eat humans. In "*Oni no ko Kozuna*," Kozuna as *oni* is still harmful to humans.

10. Hamada Hirosuke, *Hirosuke yōnen dōwa zenshū,* quoted in HAMADA 1978, 200.

11. See YOKOMICHI, OMOTE 1963, 275–87. An English translation is available in BRAZELL 1998, 207–25.

12. Reprinted in SHIMIZU 1971, 29.

13. The story was first adopted in the elementary language text in 1887, and was continuously reprinted until the end of World War II. The story disappeared from text books after the war (NAMEKAWA 1981, ii). For details regarding how the images of Momotarō changed over the years since the story's inception in the late Muromachi or early Edo period, see NAMEKAWA 1981.

14. For a detailed account of how the *oni*'s island is identified as an uncultivated, barbaric land far from the center of Japan, see ANTONI 1991.

15. It is called NIHON NO *ONI* NO KŌRYŪ HAKUBUTSUKAN 日本の鬼の交流博物館 (The Japanese Oni Exchange Museum).

16. There is another *oni* museum (*ONI* NO YAKATA) in Kitakami City, Iwate Prefecture. Opened in 1994 as a municipal museum, it collects and studies materials concerning the *oni*.

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