



Picture: Utamaro

The hair-cutting fox was the talk of the town in the days of the great ukiyo-é artist Utamaro in Edo (present Tokyo).

(See p. 7)

# KITSUNÉ

JAPAN'S FOX  
OF  
MYSTERY, ROMANCE & HUMOR



BY  
KIYOSHI NOZAKI

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To  
My Wife  
and

Two Nisei Daughters





## PREFACE

*KITSUNE*, Japan's fox, is a unique figure in the annals of the animal kingdom of the world. In Japan, you will find him not merely in fable or parable, as in the case of his celebrated cousin in the Occident, *Reynard* the Fox, but also you will be introduced to **him** in the nation's traditions, beliefs, superstitions and literature, including, of course, poetry and plays—and even in a malady called *Kitsuné-tsuki* disease (fox-possession).

And there are a great many things named after *Kitsuné*, proving the popularity enjoyed by him throughout the country. He has been closely related to the life of the Japanese people from olden times.

*Kitsuné* is an animal supposed to be mysterious, fascinating and mischievous. And he is believed to be very grateful for the kindness done him, as seen in many tales, and also affectionate as revealed in some dramas. He is enshrined as a god because of his supernatural power. He is endowed with the subtle art of metamorphosis, and he is able to bewitch men in the guise of a charming girl. An exceedingly interesting and entertaining beast *Kitsuné* is.

What produced *Reynard* in the Occident, and *Kitsuné* in Japan? The fox, in each case, seems to reflect the national character. The former, to my mind,

is fundamentally intellectual; while the latter is inclined to be romantic, a fact which, I believe, lends charm and beauty to any fiction or tradition in which he figures. This is the most striking difference between the two.

The Japanese people seem to have found an expression of themselves in the fox, the idea of which was introduced to a certain extent from China and Korea. When imported, however, that idea underwent a remarkable change. Superstitious by nature, and yet cheerful and optimistic in *tendency*, the Japanese expressed themselves in the fox. Besides being mysterious, the fox became cheerful, optimistic, and humorous, with a touch of the milk of human kindness.

It is hoped that a comprehensive study of Japan's fox, of unique nature, will serve some purpose. It will bring out the character of a people, superstitious, imaginative, romantic and not without a sense of humor.

This volume is the result of three years spent in collecting the rare materials from ancient documents and pictures of various parts of the country.

The author expresses his sincere thanks to whose who assisted him in making this publication possible.

## THE AUTHOR

Kyoto, Japan

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE .....	vii
1. A BACKGROUND TO APPRECIATION .....	1
2. CONCERNING THE INARI SHRINE .....	10
3. CONCERNING THE KONJAKU MONOGATARI ..	19
4. THE FOX IN THE KONJAKU MONOGATARI ...	27
5. THE FOX IN THE KONJAKU MONOGATARI (Continued) .....	38
6. THE FOX IN THE KONJAKU MONOGATARI (Continued) .....	54
7. THE FOX IN OTHER WORKS BY FAMOUS AUTHORS .....	66
8. THE FOX IN OTHER WORKS BY FAMOUS AUTHORS (Continued) .....	78
9. THE FOX IN FAIRY TALES .....	99
10. THE FOX IN PLAYS .....	109
11. THE FOX IN NO PLAYS .....	119
12. THE FOX IN POETRY .....	125
13. CONCERNING THE BEWITCHERY OF FOX .....	135
14. CONCERNING THE BEWITCHERY OF FOX (Continued) .....	145
15. KITSUNE'S INTELLECT AND LEWDNESS .....	157

16	DAKINI-TEN FAITH & THE RECORD OF FOXES WITH UNCANNY POWER .....	169
17	KITSUNE-BI, OR FOX-FIRE .....	181
18	KITSUNE-BI, OR FOX-FIRE (Continued) .....	190
19	THE FOX IN ANCIENT CARTOONS & WORKS OF ART .....	199
20	THE FOX IN ANCIENT CARTOONS & WORKS OF ART (Continued) .....	206
21	KITSUNE-TSUKI, OR FOX-POSSESSION .....	211
22	KITSUNE-TSUKI, OR FOX-POSSESSION (Continued) .....	220
23	THINGS NAMED AFTER KZTSUNE .....	228

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
The <i>hair-cutting</i> fox was the talk of the town (colored) .....	frontispiece
Portrait of Kenko .....	2
Washing Hair by Harunobu .....	8
A bird's-eye view of the present <i>Inari</i> Shrine (colored) .	10
The <i>White-Fox</i> shrine & <i>Inari</i> God .....	11
The <i>Inari</i> Shrine as seen in the 18th Century .....	167
Portrait of <i>Hidéyoshi</i> .....	18
Portrait of <i>Murasaki</i> Shikibu .....	22
Costume of the people of the Heian Era .....	23
<i>Kitsuné</i> emitting its fire .....	24
She ascended to Heaven to sweet celestial music .....	31
Their figures were seen in relief .....	40
<i>Kanzéon</i> , the Goddess of Mercy .....	46
Self-portrait of Akinari .....	66
Her big blackened eyebrows moved in resentment ....	74
He saw a fox praying .....	79
"What is the matter with you, girl?" .....	80
And the charming woman— .....	845
An elderly samurai came out .....	88
She walked with her two arms stretching forward— ..	96

A big painting of <i>Kitsuné-no-yoméiri</i> .....	108
The <i>Kabuki</i> theatre of Edo Era (outside) .....	108
The <i>Kabuki</i> theatre of Edo Era (inside) .....	109
Kuzu-no-Ha writing her farewell poem (colored) ....	110
Portrait of Great Astrologer Séiméi .....	111
The Nine-Tailed Fox appearing in the form of Tamamo- no-Maé (colored) .....	112
Fox-Tadanobu (colored) .....	114
You will see <i>Kitsuné-bi</i> — (colored) .....	118
No Masks .....	119
The God of <i>Inari</i> sends a sacred fox .....	121
A fine blade by Kanénaga .....	121
Portrait of Buson & his painting .....	128
Buson's <i>hai-ga</i> & writing .....	129
An express messenger of old days .....	129
Portrait of Garai-Senryu .....	130
The <i>josai-ya</i> man .....	142
The <i>samurai</i> came running & wooden statue of <i>Jizo</i> ....	166
<i>Dakini-ten</i> .....	169
Buson, the great lover and student of <i>Kitsuné</i> .....	173
Koan's writing .....	176
Wistaria family crests .....	192
<i>Kago</i> , Japanese palanquins .....	194
A wedding procession of the Edo Era .....	197
Animal cartoons by Toba Sojyo .....	201-203
The wicked white nine-tailed fox by Kuniyoshi .....	204

<i>Fox-faced beauties</i> by Kunisada (4 colored pictures) ..	206
The " <i>Kitsuné-bi</i> " of Oji by Hiroshige .....	207
To-O .....	208
A <i>samurai</i> style <i>Kitsuné-no-yoméiri</i> .....	208
A fox is trying to turn itself into a pretty girl .....	208
A fox in the guise of a woman .....	208
This fox is doing its best to metamorphose itself .....	208
Writing made by a person possessed by a fox .....	216
Praying before the God of <i>Fudo</i> .....	221
<i>Fox's penis</i> , a kind of toadstool .....	229
<i>Fox's hand-game</i> .....	230
<i>Fox-mask man</i> .....	232
<i>Fox latticework</i> .....	233



## CHAPTER 1

### A BACKGROUND TO APPRECIATION

IN Japan, *Kitsuné* is considered to be the most interesting and popular animal—in tradition. You will find the tradition of the fox existing everywhere you go in the country. And *Kitsuné* is loved and worshiped by the people.

All the principal authorities on ancient customs and ideas tell us that animal worship has prevailed in every part of the globe. And whatever may be the origin of this worship, a good authority on Hindu religion asserts that it is to be accounted for by the working of one or other of the motives of gratitude, fear, or awe, operating separately in the separate cases. Men, in not understanding the ways and powers of animals, considered them as higher than themselves and hence worshiped them and copied them in some of the habits.

In this connection, it is interesting to note how the American Indians, good hunters as they were, feared and worshiped the animals of woods and forests.

"The animal people lived," says an Indian legend, "before the days of the first grandfather, long, long ago, when the sun was new and no larger than a star, when the earth was young, and the tall firs of the



Portrait of Kenko

forest no larger than an arrow."

A beautiful legend, this.

Indeed it was the fox, the Silver Fox, that created the world, according to the legend of the Hat Creek Indians, who live in the Northwest of America.

The word *Kitsuné* comes from two Japanese syllables: *kitsu* and *né*. *Kitsu* is the sound made when a fox yelps, and *né* is a word signifying an affectionate feeling, a suitable name for such an interesting creature as a fox.

Foxes are rarely seen nowadays in Japan even in rural districts. In ancient times, however, they would roam about leisurely in any place, wagging their long pointed muzzles and dragging their long busy tails.

Late at night, in the stillness of a deserted village, the plaintive barking of a fox would be heard.

"*Kitsu*\* is yelping. *Kitsu* is yelping again," a mother would tell her infant, giving the breast to him in bed.

In ancient times, according to the *Nihon Ryakki*, one of the oldest books of records, a great number of foxes lived even in the national capital, Kyoto: In the reign of the Emperor Kammu (737-806), foxes barked at night in the Imperial Palace in December, 803; and in the reign of the Emperor Saga (786-842), foxes walked up the stairs of the Imperial Palace in September, 820.

Yoshida Kenko, the famous writer-recluse of the middle part of the 14th century, writes in his *Tsurezuregusa* as follows:

\**Kitsuné* was called *kitsu* in ancient times. Not an abbreviation here. (See the chapter Fox in Poetry.)

"In the palace at Horikawa, a servant was bitten in the leg by a fox while he was in bed fast asleep. A petty priest of the Ninnaji temple was passing one night in front of the main building of the temple when three foxes attacked him. He unsheathed his sword to defend himself and lunged at two foxes. One of them was killed, the other two scampered away. The priest was injured in several parts of his body. However fortunately he was not so seriously wounded."

You can see by the above statement made by Kenko that foxes were still rampant in the 14th century capital of the country.

In Japan, says the *Nihon Shoki*, the annals compiled in 720, Kitsuni was formerly held in respect as an animal of good omen. In 720 a black fox was presented from Iga Province to the Emperor Gemmyo (661-726), an empress-regnant, the founder of the capital of Nara.

However in the 10th and the 11th centuries when poetry was flourishing, *Kitsuné* was not treated with affection. The animal, then, was merely considered to be weird and uncanny. *Kitsuné*, in those days, was associated in literature in general with such a thing as an apparition or a wraith.

To understand the tales (including, of course, those of Kitsuni) told in the era during which The *Genji* Monogatari or The *Konjaku* Monogatari was written, we must know the social conditions. The foregoing stories were written in the epoch dominated, to all intents and purposes, by the military men. And it must also be remembered that the religion of these

military men was Power. Each of the war barons, who wanted to be the master of the capital by conquering his rival, had no leisure to resign himself to his fate. He simply strove against it, casting aside effeminate fatalism. He engaged in internecine feuds. He would break his promises. And only the brave could win the laurels of victory.

On the other hand, the masses in those days, who lived in the world of disturbances, must have found themselves exhausted—physically and spiritually. They had previously suffered under the tyrannical government. And now they could not seek a place for peaceful living because of wars. Therefore they were obliged to take refuge in superstition, a natural course for them to take.

Superstition is a thing calculating and materialistic—in any age, common to all. Superstition instantly captivates the masses by its momentary pleasure and immediate advantage. It always avails itself of the disadvantages of people. They lose their reason when blinded by superstition.

Thus there were two different currents in those days—power-worship and the addiction to superstition, as seen in the military class and the lower people, phenomena totally contradicting each other in nature. The faith of the latter was under pressure by the former.

Now we must look back upon the later era—the *Édo* Era (1615-1847), during which such famous tales as The *Ugésu* Monogatari and The *Hakken-den* were written. We find there a different aspect of life—totally

different from that of the above-mentioned age.

Tokugawa-Iyéyasu, who assumed the reins of government after Toyotomi-Hidéyoshi in the early part of the 17th century, was an extremely shrewd statesman-general. He believed not only in Power, but also in religion—as a policy, and he was afraid of his fate after death, like an ordinary man.

As for the populace in this era, they saw peace ensured by the establishment of the Tokugawa *shogunate*. However the class system, the samurai class and the lower classes still existed. It was still the world of samurai. In consequence, the populace could do nothing but resort to their faith for the relief of their sufferings. However after the insurrection of Shimabara, a great revolt of Christians in Kyushu in 1637, a strict surveillance was exercised over religion—their only safety-valve. It was natural that they began to indulge merely in pleasure.

The samurai class, at the same time, sank into effeminacy by the neglect of military discipline; and began to follow the example of the people in general as they became used to peace. As a result, they became as superstitious as the populace.

Tsunayoshi, the 5th Shogun of the Tokugawas, for instance, believing blindly in the preaching of Priest Ryuko, established several big temples and issued an order to protect animals, especially dogs, because he was born in the Year of the Dog (The year falling on one of the twelve horary signs, Dog). Dogs, therefore, thrived, and the streets of Edo, as might well be imagined, were full of their feces, and they called Tsunayoshi the Dog-Shogun. He was a wise and

learned shogun. However superstition made him such a man.

The literature, and especially the stories told of foxes in those days, naturally reflect this tendency to superstition. When, for instance, a maniac or maniacs appeared on the street of Edo (present Tokyo) and cut women's hair and they could not apprehend the culprits, they attributed the offence to the act of Kitsunb, calling them hair-cutting *Kitsuné*.

The hair-cutting Kitsunh was the town-talk in the days of the great artist Utamaro (1753-1806). The outrageous act must have caused considerable alarm among the women at that time who prized their hair so much, as shown in several block-printed genre-pictures.

To the minds of the people, Kitsunh seemed to take delight: 1) in assuming the form of human beings; 2) in bewitching human beings and 3) by possessing human beings. The people of the Heian Era (781-1185) and the Edo Era (1615-1867) believed in these things—and the superstition still survives in some rural districts of the country.

*Kitsuné*, it must be remembered, was real in the minds of these people. They lived with Kitsunh. They shared joy and sorrow with *Kitsuné*. They fell in love with Kitsunh—and Kitsunb was infatuated with men—and women, as you will read later in The Konjaku Monogatari and other tales. The writers of these books, of course, related stories about *Kitsuné* believing in *Kitsuné*, the animal of romance and mystery.



The author of this book, therefore, sincerely hopes that the reader will live with those people—believing in Kitsuné endowed with supernatural power. Then you can appreciate him fully and enjoy the tales found in this volume.



Washing Hair by Harunobu  
(Printed in 1789)

The hair-cutting mania in Edo must have caused a great sensation among the women who prized their long raven-black locks so much, as seen in this ukiyo-é picture.

## • CHAPTER 2

### CONCERNING THE *INARI* SHRINE

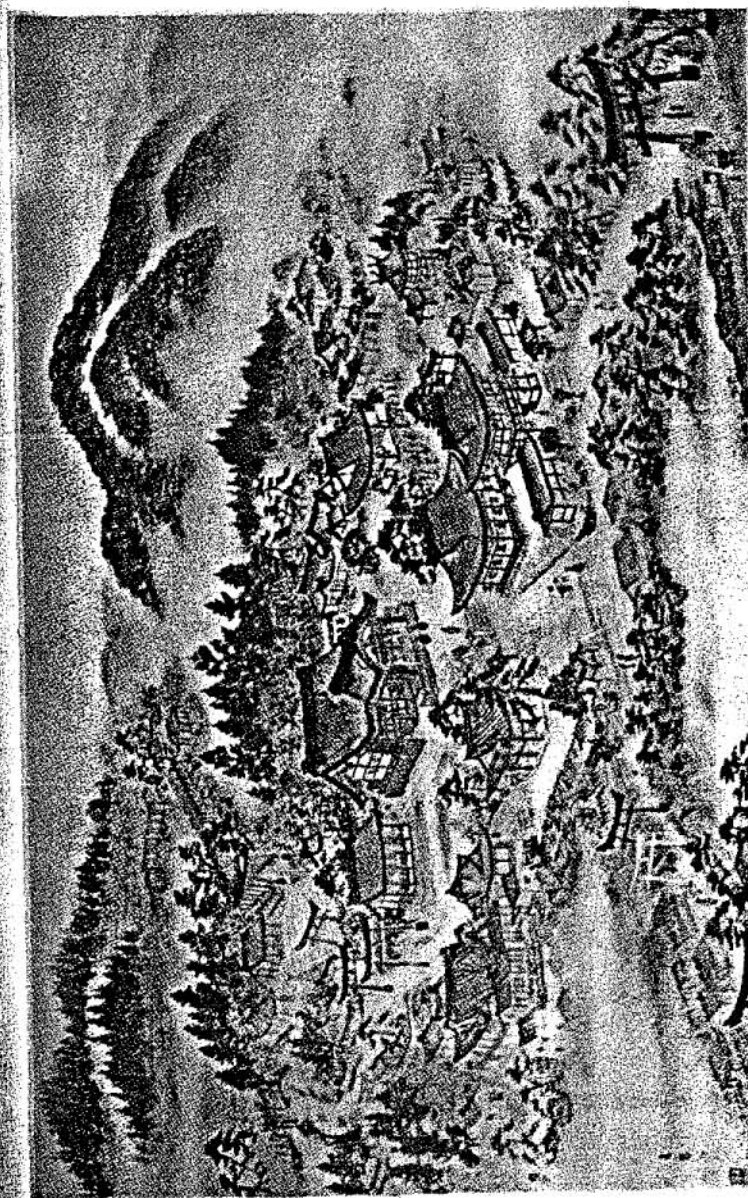
THE *Inari* shrine, one of the most popular and prosperous shrines of Japan, is so closely related to *Kitsuné* tradition that the animal, with the Japanese people in general, is synonymous with the shrine.

The *Inari* shrine with its characteristic red *torii* (a symbolic entrance to the precincts of a shrine) and a pair of white fox images, the messengers of the deity, will be found everywhere in the country—in towns, in villages—and a miniature one, in private houses, geisha houses, on department store roof gardens and other places.

The *Inari* shrine was originally erected in 711 as their patron deity by the influential Hatas, the descendants of the Korean prince naturalized in the 4th century.

Because of the fact that the *Inari* shrine is greatly concerned with the tradition of the fox in Japan, I will speak here about the shrine in detail.

The shrine is dedicated to *Inari*, the God of Rice. The name *Inari* is derived from the word of *iné*, rice plant. *Inari* means literally the growing of rice plants. It means, in substance, rice crop. Rice, in Japan, is the symbol of agriculture—the symbol of life in ancient times. In the phenomenon of the sprouting



A bird's-eye view of the present Inari Shrine at Fushimi, Kyoto, by a Modern Artist.



Above: The White-Fox shrine, a tributary shrine in the precincts of the *Inari* shrine at Fushimi, Kyoto.

Right: A rare ancient picture of *Inari* God, walking carrying sheaves of rice plants, accompanied by his messenger white foxes. (They are supposed invisible to human eyes.)



## CONCERNING THE *INARI* SHRINE

11

of rice plants—in the growth of rice plants, the young and fresh spirit of the *Inari* God was to be felt. Thus the name *Inari* was given by the founder of the shrine, the Hatas.

Speaking of *Inari* it is interesting to note, from the etymological point of view, that there are many Japanese archaic words with the suffix of *ri*. For example:

*Ika-ri* (anger), *oko-ri* (origin), *hika-ri* (light), *aka-ri* (source of light), *ino-ri* (prayer), *mamo-ri* (protection), *mino-ri* (crop) and others.

As it is clearly seen from the above instances, the Japanese suffix *ri* means something related closely to the divine work or power of God: *Ikari* (anger) is a word originally used in expressing a strong emotion aroused at seeing a gushing spring. Later, this word was used in expressing the intense feeling of God and men.

*Okori* (origin) means the power of Mother Nature. *Hikari* (light) and *akari* (source of light) have something to do with the mysterious power of God for which human beings are grateful. *Inori* (prayer), in any language, is the act of offering reverent petition, especially to God. And, in the case of *inari*, meaning *iné-nari* (rice crop), it signifies the fruit of the farmers' labor gained by the grace of God.

All the foregoing words with the suffix of *ri* are religious words. The name of *Inari*, therefore, was given by the Hatas to their tutelary god out of gratitude to the God of Rice.



Some people think that the white foxes, the guardians and messengers of the shrine, are identical with the deity of Inari. It is true that this is one of the characteristics of the faith. However this, it must be remembered, is only an aspect of the Inari faith. This can be proved by the fact that the god of foxes has never been deified in the Inari shrine as the object of worship, though there is a tributary shrine dedicated exclusively to the sacred white foxes in the precincts of the shrine at Fushimi, Kyoto, the site of the great Inari shrine.

In former years, the Inari shrine was supposed to have the senior grade of the first Court rank—Sho-Ichii. The fox gods, however, had no rank though they were enjoying general popularity. To illustrate this point, here is a poem by Issa, a haiku poet of the early 19th century, a humorous haiku composed by him on the occasion of the festival of *Hatsu-uma* held annually at the Inari shrines throughout the country in February:

O spring season's gaities!  
The white foxes bark  
In a festive mood  
With no Court rank of mark.

The white foxes of the Inari shrine are also called *myobu*. Here is the legend why they are so named:

In the reign of the Emperor Ichijyo (980-1011), there lived a charming Court lady with a rank of *myobu* (a Court rank conferred on ladies) whose name was Shin-no-Myobu. She was a devotee of Inari God. She

went to the shrine at Fushimi, Kyoto, to confine herself there for prayer for a period of seven days. After she had completed her term of worship, it is said, she won the heart of the Mikado and later became his consort. She attributed her 'good luck to the white foxes guarding the shrine and the name of *myobu* was given to them.

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

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

During the Koin Era (810-823), the two white foxes, accompanied by the five cubs, made their way to the Inari shrine at Fushimi leaving their earth near Funaoka hill. When they reached the *Inari-yama* hill on which the shrine stood, they prostrated themselves in front of the shrine and said reverently:

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



able to realize our humble wish!"

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

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

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

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

Imperial Princess Toyukb, Goddess of Crops, to whom the Inari shrine is dedicated, was commonly called Goddess Mi-Kbtsu. People wrote the word of Mi-KMsu using a phonetic equivalent of *Mi-Kétsu*—

*Three Foxes*. Since then they believed that the deity was a fox-deity and also were under the impression that the Inari shrine was sacred to *Kitsuné*, a fact proving that the thought of ancestor-worship was combined with that of animal-worship.

Consequently, they thought that when they had faith in the Inari God, the fox-messenger would make its appearance doing an act of charity and benevolence. (See the legend of Sanjyo Kokaji, the swordsmith, appearing in the chapter Fox in *Nô Plays*.) Thus the fox-faith flourished throughout the country.

It is a well-known fact that all religions had a messenger for the communication of God and men. In Christianity, for instance, we see the Holy Sheep or angels effecting the connection between the celestial world and the lower world, and we also see other messengers transmitting the Christian doctrine.

In the case of Buddhism, we see a sort of Buddha, Bodh'-sattva, next to Buddha in rank, and also *Jizo* (*Ksitigarbha*), a guardian deity of children. They are the messengers of Buddha endeavoring to bring about the redemption of all men. (See these messengers of Buddha appearing in the tales of The Konjaku *Mono-gatari*, to be introduced later.) And Inari God has the white foxes as his messengers. There are many messengers in the service of temples and shrines in Japan such as: Snakes, Pigeons, Crows, Deer, etc.

In this connection, it must be added that the foxes in the service of Inari God have nothing to do with the bewitchery or mischief of other foxes which are commonly called *nogitsuné*, or wild foxes. One of the



The *Inari* Shrine as Seen in the 18th Century.

A picture painted in 1786 by Kiyonaga,  
a famous *ukiyo-e* artist.

Visitors are seen going up the stone steps leading  
to the main shrine after entering the torii gate with



two stone images of the messenger foxes **sitting** on  
each side.

Foxes in those days were found even in the  
precincts of the shrine. You see two of them **romp-**  
ing on the hill just above the place where two men  
are purifying themselves in the clear water coming  
through the mouth of a stone dragon head.

duties of the *Inari* shrine at Fushimi in Kyoto was to purge or chastise these *nogitsuné*. The direct descendants of the Hatas, founder of the shrine, had a secret method of driving away wild foxes possessing men.

There is a very interesting document treasured in the Onishi family, the descendants of the Hatas, a note sent to the shrine from Toyotomi-Hidbyoshi, the Tycoon (1536-1598), the first commoner in Japan to rise to the highest state office, and the unifier of the Japanese Empire.

The note was written by Hidéyoshi when the daughter of his adopted son, Ukita-Hidéiyé, was reported suffering from fox-possession. It runs as follows:

To the *Inari* God:

Ukita's daughter is now babbling, apparently possessed by a wild fox. I hope that the fox will be dispersed immediately. When no suitable measures be taken, a nation-wide fox-hunt will be ordered.

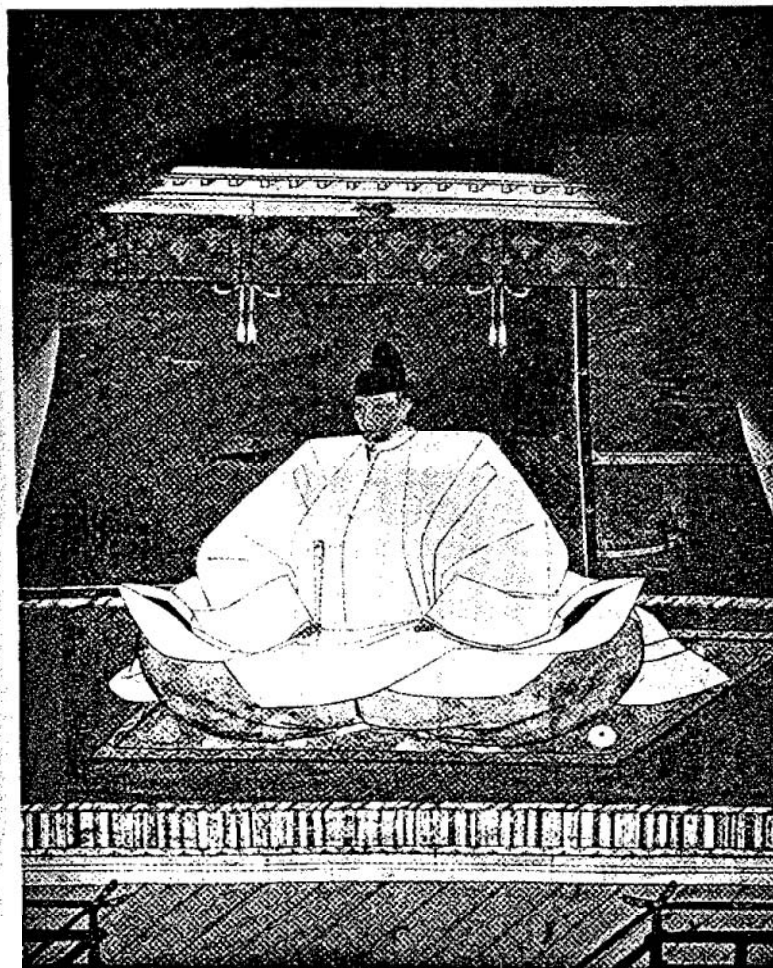
P.S.

The chief priest of the Yoshida shrine\* also notified concerning this matter.

Hidbyoshi (signature)

Note: Sending a note of protest to a god demanding him to drive away a wild fox supposedly possessing his adopted son's daughter is Hidéyoshi's way of doing things. Hidéyoshi reflects the spirit of the age: He believed in Power. However he also believed in the *Inari* God, and built the two-storied gate of the shrine.

\*Also a shrine in Kyoto with *Kitsuné* messengers.



Portrait of Hidéyoshi



### CHAPTER 3

#### CONCERNING THE *KONJAKU* *MONOGATARI*

IN *The Konjaku Monogatari*, or *Tales, Present and Past*, you will find many stories relative to *Kitsuné*—and the book treats of *Kitsuné*, in literature, as a hero or heroine, for the first time in Japan. It is appropriate, therefore, to say a few words concerning the book and its author.

The *Konjaku Monogatari* is a rare book written by Minamoto-no-Takakuni, known as Uji Dainagon (1004-1077) in the closing years of the Heian Era (781-1185). The oldest as a collection of narratives in Japanese, the book consists of 31 volumes, divided into Three Sections: Tenjiku (ancient name for India), Shintan (ancient name for China) and Japan.

A wonderful book, this. The author was evidently a man who read extensively and learned abundantly by hearsay. He possessed many friends in every walk of life. He was energetic, systematic, accurate, and wrote with a powerful pen. Nobody could hope to start such a great work, and finish with success, unless he were a man holding views above the general level of opinion.

In the book, the Section of Tenjiku comes first,



followed by Shintan and Japan. The author compiled the book in this order out of respect toward Tenjiku, the country in which Buddhism arose and where Sakyamuni was born—and Shintan, the country of culture—the two great nations to which Japan owed a debt of gratitude.

Why did Takakuni write this book of narratives, comparable only with such books as *Aesop's Fables* or *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*? Did he finish the work just finding it an occupation to his taste? Without any meaning? Without any prime object? And did he simply endeavor to collect and record tales of a strange nature?

In Japan, in the latter part of the remote ages, Buddhism, became more and more popular, and it was at the zenith of its prosperity in the early years of the 9th century after the brilliant Nara Era (645-780). Meanwhile, with the lapse of time, the old trend of things had been superseded by the traditions of China, and those of India coming through China had a great influence on the Japanese people—in ideas and in knowledge.

The author of *The Konjaku Monogatari*, no doubt, added the two sections of Tenjiku and Shintan for the purpose of enlightening people concerning the two great countries of culture and wisdom. Takakuni told them, through his work, of things which were being preached and observed in Tenjiku and Shintan as the truth, and therefore, he thought, should be observed in Japan.

Takakuni taught in his narratives that the law of

nature was firm and stable forever, like the sun shining high up in the sky. And he preached by telling them that it was Buddhism that taught them this everlasting truth. He informed them of the importance of knowing the great truth of *samsāra*, or transmigratism, and karma or inevitable retribution.

With this in mind, Takakuni gave to the Japanese people the narratives he had garnered. Therefore on many occasions, he never forgot to tell the people of *karma*, the inevitable consequences of some fault committed in a previous state of existence even when he was speaking of worldly things. However it is interesting to see that he was, on the other hand, a humorous person, a fact shown well in some of his tales.

The *Konjaku Monogatari* teaches us to be grateful, sympathetic, to keep to our sphere in life—warning us not to despise other people, not to be captivated by beautiful women, not to go anywhere without any knowledge of the place, not to confide in anybody (reflecting the conditions of life in those days) even in one's wife, and so on.

The *Genji Monogatari*, written by Murasaki Shikibu, *Lady Purple*, deals almost exclusively with the life of the upper classes. When we read the *Genji*, the Book of Love and Romance of the handsome Imperial prince and the beautiful ladies, we breathe the very air of the brilliant Heian Era with the Court noblemen, effeminate and superstitious—and the gay and intellectual noblewomen.

In *The Konjaku Monogatari*, however, we meet the common people as well as noblemen and noblewomen.

And the fact that Buddhism, especially the Tendai sect (a sect the fundamental doctrine of which is the Sutra of the Lotus) was prevalent at that time is clearly reflected in the writing. ,

Takakuni also extolls the benevolence of *Kanzéon*, or the Goddess of Mercy, and *Jizo*, the guardian deity of children. He believes in the transmigration of the soul. Many phantoms in various forms including *Kitsuné* appear in the narratives. However as in the case of later years, they are not ferocious or wicked in nature. They are, to my mind, rather good-natured, and they reveal their true character easily when cornered.

Minamoto-no-Takakuni came of a noble family. His grandfather was an Imperial prince of the Emperor Daigo (885-930); and Fujiwara-no-Michinaga, the most influential Prime Minister in the age, was his uncle. Still, according to the records, he was democratic enough to invite travelers passing in front of his mansion at Uji, near Kyoto, the capital; and he wrote The *Konjaku* Monogatari by listening to what they told him.

Reading the book, we learn the manners and customs, the thoughts, morality and superstitions of the people of the Heian Era as well.

Now before we proceed with such tales as those found in The *Konjaku* Monogatari, containing a great number of the foxes resorting to their subtle art of bewitchery, we deem it necessary to tell you concerning the matter of metamorphosis in general.



Portrait of Murasaki Shikibu

Property of Ishiyama temple where The *Genji-Monogatari* is believed to have been written by Murasaki Shikibu.

Note: The noblewomen, in accordance with the custom in those days, shaved off their eyebrows, substituting them with blackened eyebrows, as you see in this portrait. The effeminacy of men of the age is well reflected by the fact that some noblemen followed the example of the Court ladies in this branch of make-up.



Costume of the People of the Heian Era

Top (left) & bottom: The Heian Era (781-1185)

Top (right): The Nara Era (645-780)

# CONCERNING THE KONJAKU MONOGATARI 23

It is true that the folklore relative to such a thing as bewitchery, or metamorphosis, is now regarded as concerning things of the past. However in Japan, the idea of the mysterious power of *Kitsuné* is deep-rooted among the populace; and a superstition such as *Inu-gami*<sup>1</sup> or *Hébi-gami*<sup>2</sup> is still prevalent in some rural districts in the country, and the case of *Kitsuné-mochi*<sup>3</sup> or *Izuchi-mochi*<sup>4</sup> is also prevalent in some part of Japan.

Such things as these, no doubt, are a superstition fermented by tradition. However it cannot be denied that there is—in each of them—a fixed form. Why there is such a fixed form?

Now let us study the metamorphosis tradition of such an animal as *Kitsuné*. In the form of metamorphosis, there is a difference between the case of a human being turning himself into an animal; and the case when an animal changes its shape into a human being. An interesting contrast will be observed between these cases.

And there is also a form—a fixed one—in the conjugal relation between human beings and animals in tradition. For instance, there exists in legend some hindrance in the marriage of human being and serpents

<sup>1</sup> Literally, Dog-god. A sort of possession by evil spirits. The natural shape of it, however, is not a dog. Supposed to be an animal about the size of a rat with a supernatural power.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, Snake-god. A sort of possession by the evil spirit of a small snake.

<sup>3</sup> A specific family supposed to have a supernatural power through the influence of *Kitsuné*.

<sup>4</sup> Same as *Kitsuné-mochi*.





Kitsuné Emitting Fire by  
Stroking Its Tail  
(An ancient picture)

# CONCERNING THE KONJAKU MONOGATARI 25

(as seen in the case of a man marrying a serpent in the guise of a charming girl, in *The Ugétsu Monogatari* by Akinari), or otters or badgers, animals supposed to have the power of turning themselves into human forms. *In the case of the union of human beings and foxes, they do not have any such drawback.*

In the tradition of a human being changing his form into that of an animal, there is no record of matrimony between the person changing his form and other human beings. However, in the case of an animal changing its shape into that of a human being and the real human being, you will find many tales of matrimony.

The case of the human being changing his form into such an animal as a fox—or the case of the human being joining the fox family by marrying a fox—will be found in the legends of China. However in the case of the latter, the form of the human being is not changed: He will just become a fox-man without changing his form, though perhaps, a slight change may be seen in his appearance or voice.

In this connection, it may be added that there are many stories of foxes turning themselves into women, *but no stories of women assuming the shape of foxes in any Japanese fox-tradition.*

There are various ways in the art of bewitching men on the part of Kitsuné. The method of metamorphosis differs according to the districts. *Kitsuné* is supposed to emit fire, *Kitsuné-bi*, by stroking its bushy tail. And it is also believed that it will put a skull on its head and bow in veneration to the Dipper before turning itself into a human shape. When the skull does not



fall off, it will be able to turn itself into a human form successfully, it is said.

As the method of assuming a human form, especially a beautiful girl, *Kitsuné* adopts the process of covering its head with duckweed or reeds. Japan's fox is an expert in changing itself into any form, and its speciality is assuming the shape of a charming and seductive woman, to captivate a young man and an old gentleman susceptible to female charms.

According to the fox-marriage legend, the fox in the guise of a pretty woman will lead men into temptation to satisfy its desire. All the foxes will turn themselves into the shape of fascinating women and exhaust the energy of their victims. The men victimized, it is believed, are to die, sooner or later.

*Kitsuné*, as you will read in such a book as *The Konjaku Monogatari*, is an animal wanton by nature. It is supposed to satisfy its desire by having relations with men through the art of bewitchery. Apart from the question of the possibility of this, you will notice, in the fox tradition, that *Kitsuné* is making use of its superior brains in various ways in bewitching men. This is the time-honored tradition of Japan in regard to the bewitchery of *Kitsuné*.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FOX IN THE KONJAKU MONOGATARI

The Story of a Young *Samurai* Who  
Copied the Sutra of the Lotus  
For the Repose of a Fox's Soul

ONCE there was a young and handsome *samurai* living in Kyoto, the capital, name unknown.

One evening, on his way home, he was passing near the Shujaku gate of the Imperial palace when he saw a girl with a graceful figure, about 18 years old, attired in an exquisite robe of silk, standing on the main road.

She looked so beautiful with her raven-black locks straying in the gentle breeze that the *samurai* was instantly fascinated by her. He approached the girl and invited her to go inside the gate and have a chat for a while with him. She complied with his request, to his great delight.

They stayed in a quiet place inside the gate and talked together. Soon the stars began to twinkle here and there in the sky and even the Milky Way was seen faintly. It was a balmy evening.

Said the young man:

"We have met here by a happy chance—by the Providence of God, I might say. Therefore you should accede to my request—in *every way*. We should share the same feelings. I love you—and you must love me."

Answered the girl:

"If I comply with your request in *every way*, I must die. This is my lot."

"Your lot—to die?" the young *samurai* echoed her words, "it is hardly possible. You are simply avoiding me by saying so."

And he tried to gather her up in his arms.

The girl shook herself loose from his grasp, and said tearfully:

"I know you are living with your wife; and that you are telling me you love me on the spur of the moment. I am weeping because I must die for a man of moods."

He denied what she said, again and again until she acquiesced. In the meantime the stars and the Milky Way were shining more brightly in the heavens. A night of romance.

They found a shed in the neighborhood, and spent the night together there. A lone cricket was heard chirping throughout the night....

The summer morning broke soon. The girl said:

"Now I am going home—to die because of you, as I told you last evening. When I pass away, please say a mass for the repose of my soul by copying the Sutra of the Lotus and offering it to the merciful Buddha."

Said the young man:

"It is the way of the world that man and woman

have intimate relations with each other. You are not destined to die necessarily. However if you should die, I will not fail to do as you wish. I promise."

Said the girl sadly, tying back her stray locks:

"If you care to see whether what I am now telling you is true or not, come to the neighborhood of the Butoku-den\* this morning."

The young *samurai* could not believe what was told him by the beautiful girl.

She said in a mournful tone:

"Let me keep your fan as a memento."

She took the fan. He took her hand, and looked straight into her eyes.

He followed her outside, and stood looking after the departing figure until it faded into the grayish veil of the morning mist.

The young man could not bring himself to believe what the girl had said. However during the morning, he went to the neighborhood of the Butoku-den as he was very anxious to know the fate of the girl.

There he saw an old woman sitting on a stone, bitterly weeping.

"Why are you crying so? What is the matter with you, old woman?" he asked her.

"I am the mother of the girl you saw near the Shujaku gate last night. She is now dead," she answered.

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\*The place where the Emperor used to see archery on horseback, horse races, and the like. Located to the west of the Imperial palace.

"Dead?" the young man said with a dubious look.

"Yes, she is dead. I have been waiting for you here—to break the sad news to you. The dead person is lying over there."

So saying, the old woman pointed to a corner of the big hall—and the next moment she was gone like magic no one knows where.

The young *samurai*, approaching the spot pointed, found a young fox lying dead on the floor, its face covered with an open white fan, *the very fan given by him!*

"So this fox was the girl I met last night!" he said mournfully to himself. He could not help but feel pity for the poor fox.

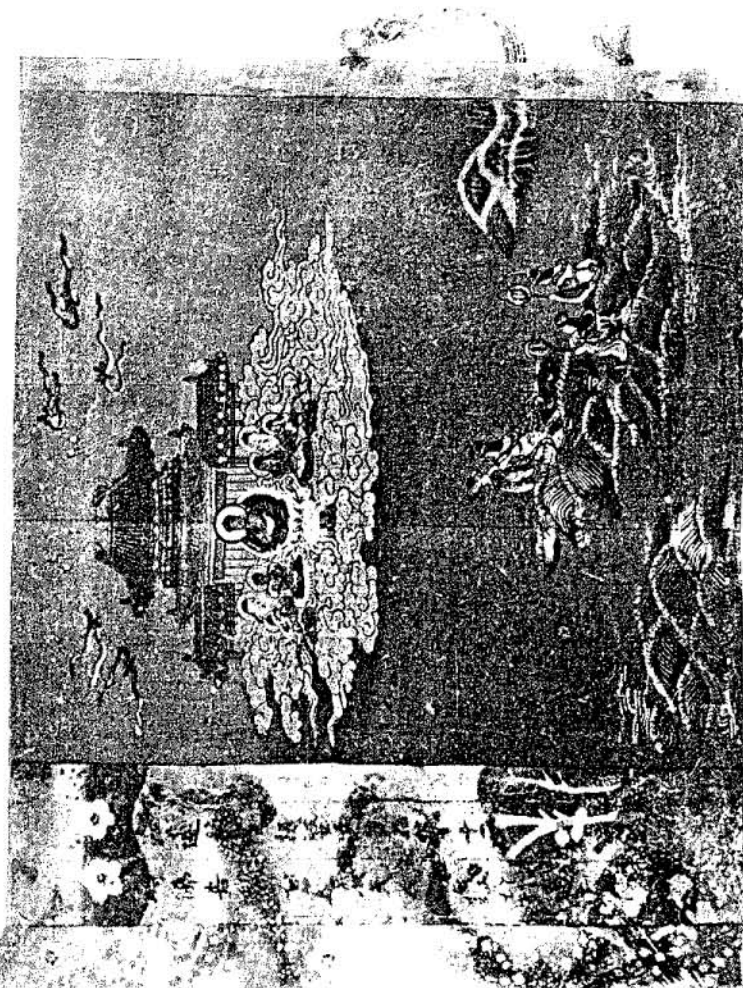
He returned home with a heavy heart.

He started copying the Sutra of the Lotus immediately, as was requested by the fox in the form of a beautiful girl. He found the task a hard one. However, he copied one sutra every week and offered it to Buddha and prayed for the repose of the soul of the dead fox, night and day.

One night, about six weeks later, the young *samurai* dreamed a dream, a strange dream in which he met the beautiful girl. She looked so noble and divine that he thought her to be a celestial nymph.

Said the girl in the dream:

"You have saved me by copying the Sutra of the Lotus and offering several of them to Buddha. I was re-born through your efforts in Paradise delivered from sin. I am eternally grateful to you!"



She ascended to Heaven to sweet celestial music.

So saying, she ascended to Heaven to sweet celestial music. She was accompanied by two maids of honor, and he saw the Great Buddha sitting calmly with his saints in front of the Castle of Heaven, and several scrolls of the Sutra of the Lotus were seen flying in the air like so many birds as if welcoming the girl!

It was a dream. However the young *samurai* still continued to copy the Sutra of the Lotus for the repose of the soul of the young fox who died for him.

#### The Story of a Fox Coming Disguised As a Wife

ONCE the wife of a *zoshiki*\* went out at dusk on urgent business. She did not, however, come home for quite a long while. Her husband, naturally, felt it strange.

After a while, however, the wife returned home to the relief of the husband. Then, to his surprise, another woman entered the house. She was a woman exactly like his wife: The same face—the same figure—the same voice—the same manner—in the same dress!

The *zoshiki samurai* was puzzled, to say the least of it. One of them must be a fox, or something in the guise of my wife, he thought. How to tell one from another? This was a very difficult thing for me to decide.

\*A petty officer, low in rank, not allowed to wear the robes of regular color. He wore a parti-colored dress. *Zoshiki* literally means parti-colored. Hence the name.



In desperation, the zoshiki finally pulled his sword from its sheath in an attempt to kill the woman coming home after the first one.

Said the woman, crying:

"Are you going to kill me? Have you lost your mind?"

Then the man, again in desperation, and reckless rushed toward the woman returning first, with the sword raised overhead. The woman screamed and implored him to spare her, clasping her hands. At this juncture, however, her behavior raised suspicion in the mind of the zoshiki. Therefore he seized her by the arm as he wanted to take her captive.

This woman, however, turned herself instantly into the shape of a fox, made water on the man, and ran away through the open door barking, and disappeared into the gathering twilight.

The zoshiki samurai was angry with the fox for making a fool of him. But it was now too late. He should have set his mind to work a little earlier. It was his fault. In the first place, he should have caught both women and bound them with ropes. If he had done so, the fox would have revealed its natural shape sooner or later.

However the fox was lucky in effecting its escape. The animal had evidently seen the wife of the zoshiki and wanted to disguise itself as the wife for fun. In such a case, one should be cautious not to be deceived by such a crafty and mischievous beast as a fox. The zoshiki was also lucky not to have killed his own wife.

### The Story of a Fox Repaying Kindness For Returning Its Treasured Ball

ONCE there was a woman believed to have been possessed by a fox.

Said this woman to those present one day:

"I am a fox, but I am here not to bring evil upon people. I just came as I thought I could find some food here and there."

Presently she produced a whitish ball about the size of a mandarin orange, and she played with it by throwing it up in the air and catching it as it fell with her hands. The people who saw it thought that she had the intention of cheating them by some trick.

A young samurai who happened to see it took the ball when it was thrown—and pocketed it.

Said the woman possessed by a fox:

"How mean you are! Return the ball immediately! Give it back to me!"

The young fellow, however, laughing, would not return it to her.

The woman said again, with falling tears:

"It would be useless for you if you do not know how to use it. However, it is a thing indispensable to me. If you do not give it back to me, therefore, I will cast an evil spell on you. If, on the other hand, you will be good enough to return it to me, I will protect you as your guardian angel."

"Is that true?" said the samurai doubtfully.

"Without fail," answered the woman. "In such things, I never tell a lie. And, mind you, I am not an ungrateful fox, either."

The young man produced the whitish ball of the size of a mandarin orange and gave it back to the woman, who received it gladly.

The woman believed to have been possessed by a fox came to herself a little later, thanks to the prayers offered by an ascetic who visited the house. Then they searched the woman for the whitish ball. Strange to say, however, it was missing! It must have been taken away by the fox who possessed the woman, they said.

Later the young *samurai* who returned the whitish ball to the woman possessed by a fox went to Uzumasa, the suburbs of Kyoto, the capital, one evening.

He went by way of Omuro. So it was quite dark by the time when he was passing the Oten gate. He did not know the reason why, but, at that time, he felt a chill creep over him. He was sure something was to happen and that he was in danger. He was wondering whether he could find some way of escape. Now he recalled what had been told by the woman possessed by a fox.

"She might protect me in such a case," he thought. Therefore he cried aloud in the dark:

"KITSUNE! KITSUNE!"

The fox did come. It came out from somewhere, barking softly in response to the call.

Said the *samurai* to the fox:

"You did not tell me a lie. I am very glad that you came, glad, indeed, to see that you are a reliable animal. I felt a chill creeping over me while I was passing here.

I thought something is wrong. I hope you will go along with me for some distance."

The fox seemed to understand what was said to it. It walked ahead of the *samurai*, turning back anxiously now and then. The road along which he was now being led by the fox, he found, was overgrown with low striped bamboos, a path he was not accustomed to walk before. He was tracing the path, following the fox proceeding at a trot.

Occasionally the fox stopped and looked around—and continued to walk stealthily with bent back. The man walked, following the example of the animal.

Soon the young *samurai* was conscious of the fact that there were signs of some people lurking somewhere. They were armed with bow and arrow and swords and halberds, and were a band of robbers. They were, as he thought, planning to break into somebody's house.

He could now understand well that the fox walking ahead of him had successfully passed the spot without being perceived by those rough men.

The fox left the *samurai*, barking softly again at the end of the path.

He came home safely. After that, it is said, the fox would act as his guardian angel, as it had promised, on several occasions. He found that *Kitsuné* was an animal very grateful, repaying the kindness of man.

The Story of a Fox who Got Killed  
Assuming the Form of a Cedar Tree

NAKADAYU, nephew to the chief Shinto priest of the Kasuga shrine at Nara, was once roaming about with his servant towards evening in a lonely mountain when they espied a gigantic cedar tree standing ahead of them, about 200 feet high.

Said Nakadayu to his servant:

"I never saw such a big cedar tree standing near here in this mountain before. Can you see the tree yonder?"

"Yes, master," answered the servant, "I can see a big cedar tree over there."

"I don't think we have such a gigantic cedar tree even in other parts of this province," said Nakadayu.

"We have cedar trees in this province. However I have never seen such a big one before," agreed the servant.

"In that case," observed Nakadayu, "we might have been bewitched by a fox. We had better go home now."

They had been walking about the mountain to cut plenty of grass for the horse kept at Nakadayu's house. They were unaware of the passing of time. In the gathering dusk, they saw the moon rise and cast a weird light on the gigantic cedar tree. A nocturnal bird screeched somewhere. A bush hard by rustled in the stillness of the mountain as if a bandit lurking behind it were coming out.

Master and servant exchanged glances, and each of them fixed an arrow to the string of the bow they were

carrying for self-defence. A squirrel appeared and quickly vanished across the path.

"Before we go home," said the servant, "let us shoot the cedar tree and come here again tomorrow morning to see it."

They notched an arrow upon their bows.

"We had better shoot the cedar tree from a shorter distance," advised the servant.

They proceeded a little farther--drew their bows to their full extent--and both shot at the giant tree at the same time.

"Whiz!" went the arrows--and the next moment they saw the huge tree disappear!

They were afraid that it might be the act of some uncanny hand, so they left the spot without delay.

The following morning they found an old fox shot dead with two arrows stuck in its body at the very spot where the gigantic cedar tree had been observed standing by Nakadayu and his servant.

The prank of the fox cost it its life.

CHAPTER 5  
THE FOX IN THE *KONJAKU*  
*MONOGATARI* (Continued)

The Story of a Fox Fond of Riding  
On a Horse's Buttocks

A YOUNG pretty girl would stand on the bank of the Kaya river to the east of the Ninnaji temple, Kyoto, of an evening. When she saw a man passing there on horseback in the direction of the capital, she would ask him to give her a ride.

The girl would invariably say:

"I want to go to the capital riding on your horse's buttocks."

The rider would answer:

"All right. You may ride on my horse's buttocks."

However when he went on for about 500 yards with the girl riding on the horse's back, she would slip down from on the horse and run away in the shape of a fox, barking with delight.

The mischief mentioned above was repeated several times, and the victims were always men passing on horseback along the bank of the Kaya river to the east of the Ninnaji temple.

Now, at the Station of the Takiguchi (the Head-

quarters of the Guards belonging to the Imperial palace), somebody spoke about the girl riding on the horse's buttocks, on the bank of the Kaya river. On hearing this, a young takiguchi officer (we will call him the takiguchi in this narrative) said:

"Well, I will catch her and teach her a lesson."

Other takiguchi officers present said with one voice:

"Certainly we will catch her!"

Said the takiguchi who spoke first:

"I will capture her tomorrow evening."

Said somebody:

"Can you?"

"Certainly I can!" was the answer.

The takiguchi, on the following evening, went by himself to the bank of the Kaya river, riding a very intelligent horse. The girl in question, however, was not to be seen there. Disappointed, the takiguchi was riding back in the direction of the capital when he saw a girl standing by the roadside. On seeing the takiguchi coming riding, she said cheerfully:

"Hey, give me a ride on your horse's buttocks, won't you?"

"Surely. Climb on quickly. Where are you going?" said the takiguchi.

Answered the girl:

"To the capital. It is getting dark, so I want to go there, riding on your horse's buttocks."

As soon as the girl got on the horse's buttocks, the officer tied her by the wrist to the saddle with a rope used for hitching a horse.

Said the girl:

"Why do you do such a brutal thing to me?"



Replied *the takiguchi*:

"To prevent you from getting away from me, of course. I am now taking you to my quarters—to sleep with you tonight, my girl."

They continued riding. It was now quite dark. After passing Ichijyo, they proceeded along the road toward the east. When passing Nishi-no-Omiya, *the takiguchi* saw a procession approaching toward him from the east preceded by a forerunner on horseback, holding a pine-torch to light the road. By torch-light, *the takiguchi* could see some carriages drawn by oxen moving in stately fashion to the musical creak of their heavy wheels—with two men walking before each carriage, holding pine-torches in their hands. Their figures were seen in relief against the darkness of night.

*The takiguchi* thought it was the procession of some personages of high rank. Therefore he turned back out of respect, and went on, riding along the road of Nishi-no-Omiya toward the east—from Higashi-no-Omiya to Tsuchimikado.

At the gate of the Tsuchimikado palace, *the Taki-guchi* called out to his followers whom he had previously ordered to wait for him there.

Said about 10 men under *the takiguchi*, coming out:  
"At your service, sir."

Then *the takiguchi* pulled the girl down from the horse after unfastening the rope; and he ordered his men to make a fire on the ground. And then he went to the *Takiguchi* Station.

Aroused by the clamor, all his fellow *takiguchi* officers emerged from the station.



Their figures were seen in relief  
against the darkness of night.

Said the captor of the girl:

"I have caught her."

The girl began to cry and entreated to be released.

The fire was now burning brightly on the ground.

Said all takiguchi officers with one consent:

"Release her! into the fire with her!"

The takiguchi who had caught the girl said that she might escape if this were done. However they said that it would be fun to throw into the fire and shoot her with bows and arrows in a volley.

About 10 takiguchi officers notched their arrows upon their bows. The takiguchi who had been holding the girl coming from the bank of the Kaya river threw her right into the fire!

The girl, however, turned herself, in a twinkling, into the shape of a fox and, before they could send a volley of arrows, effected her escape, putting out the fire....

In the dark, the takiguchi called to his men.

No response. Not a single man was there. And, to his surprise, he found himself on a lonely plain!

He could see that he was now in the midst of the cremation ground at Torib&no, located in the suburbs of the capital. (The only crematory in the Heian Era, Toribbno was a word used as synonym of death in those days.) He thought that he had dismounted from his horse at the gate of the Tsuchimikado palace. He was mistaken. He recalled that he had turned back to go to Tsuchimikado. He was mistaken. He had come to this desolate and death-like crematory, instead. He imagined that he had seen many pine-torches burning in the dark after passing Ichijyo. He remembered

seeing all these things clearly, including the two torch-carriers walking on each side of a carriage drawn by an ox. He was deplorably mistaken. Now he knew that the torches were nothing but the fire produced by foxes by stroking their tails.

Brave as he was, the takiguchi had no alternative but to go on foot. He had no *horse* to ride on. He returned home dog-tired and chagrined—about midnight.

His fellow takiguchi officers at the station at Tsuchimikado, on the other hand, wondering what had become of the takiguchi since he left on his *adventure*, sent a messenger to the takiguchi's *quarters* to look for him two days later.

The takiguchi, in the evening of the third day, presented himself at the station, feeling like a sick man.

Asked his friends:

"Did you go to catch the fox-girl the other evening?"

Replied the takiguchi with some asperity:

"No, I did not. I was ill, very ill."

Asked his fellow officers again:

"What are you going to do now?"

"I will go and catch her this evening," was the rejoinder.

Said another takiguchi, laughing:

"Catch two of them this evening, I hope."

The takiguchi left the station without saying a word. This time he said to himself:

"The fox may not come this evening as it was outwitted by me the other night. If it appears this evening, I will never loosen my hold on it. Never! I will hold it all through the night. If it does not appear this

evening, I will not present myself at the station, but keep to my quarters for some time."

He set out on horseback followed by several strong men for the Kaya river. He soliloquised once more:

"Going to make myself a fool again, eh? I cannot help it, though, since I said I would catch her."

The fox-girl was not in sight when the takiguchi crossed the Kaya river by a bridge. However when he was coming back disheartened, he saw a girl standing at the edge of the river. He found that she had a different face.

The girl accosted him, and said:

"Hey, give me a ride on your horse's buttocks, won't you?" I want to go to the capital."

The takiguchi obliged her. However the moment she was on horseback he lost no time in tying her up with a rope as before.

It was getting darker and darker as the takiguchi was riding along the Ichijyo road in the direction of the capital, accompanied by his men. He ordered his followers to kindle pine-torches and carry them ahead of him and beside his horse. They went on, but they saw nobody until they reached the Tsuchimikado palace.

The takiguchi got off his horse. He seized the fox-girl firmly by her hair. She cried. But he would not have mercy on her. He brought her to the Takiguchi Station. He was deaf to her entreaties; and she seemed quite to realize the situation this time.

The fellow officers came to see the captive.

"So you have caught her at last, eh?" they said.

The fox-girl was tortured and tortured until she

could stand it no longer—and she turned herself into the form of a fox.

They scorched the animal with pine-torches.

"O spare me!" the fox yelped plaintively.

The takiguchi said:

"We have given it a lesson. Set it free!"

They released the fox. It scampered off, limping.

About 10 days later, the takiguchi went to the Kaya river. He wanted to see the fox-girl again out of curiosity. She was there. She looked ill—and beaten.

Said the takiguchi to the fox-girl:

"Don't you want to ride on my horse's buttocks?"

Responded the fox in the guise of a pretty girl weakly:

"I should like to ride on your horse's buttocks; but I don't like to have my precious fur scorched. No thank you."

With that, she vanished.

This is a very strange thing. Nevertheless it did happen—and not long ago, so this writer (Takakuni, the author of *The Konjaku Monogatari*) was told by the narrator of this tale.

### The Story of the Man Infatuated with a Fox Saved by the Goddess of Mercy

HE was feeling very lonesome, a man of fifty, with his wife gone to the capital, Kyoto, on business. It was an evening in the autumn of 895. Yoshifuji, of Kayo County in Bitchu Province, was seen rambling alone



*Kanzéon*, the Goddess of Mercy.

along the country road. A rich man engaging in exchange business; he was wanton by nature and in the habit of taking to amours.

Presently he met an attractive woman. She was an utter stranger in the community. Yoshifuji, however, found it impossible to control himself. She smiled a charming smile as she approached him. She had a set of pearly teeth.

"A nice evening," he accosted her. With women his talk was usually gentle and soothing. "Where are you going? And who are you? I have never seen you before."

"I am nobody," the woman said laughingly.

Yoshifuji was now completely swayed by passion.

"Come with me," he said.

"No. I am going home," replied the woman, "you come with me."

"Where you live?" asked the money man.

"I live over there. Not far from here. Come with me," she invited him again.

They walked together. Yoshifuji soon saw a splendid house standing at a short distance.

"That is our house," told the woman.

He had never seen such a fine house before, in this neighborhood, a fact that puzzled him considerably. However he was now so fascinated with the woman that he did not pay much attention to that.

When he arrived at the house, he was welcomed by everybody as if each member of the household had known him well.

"You are welcome here!" they said heartily.

Yoshifuji spent the night there, with the woman.

The following morning, another woman who seemed to be the mistress of the household came and said:

"I am so glad you came. There is a Providence in it. I sincerely hope that you will stay here as long as you wish."

On seeing the woman, Yoshifuji instantly became infatuated with her. He decided to stay in the house as long as possible. Capricious by nature, Yoshifuji was inconsistent in love.

Thus he stayed in the house for a long period of time.

In the household of Yoshifuji, on the other hand, they were wondering what was the matter with him. He did not come back in the evening. He was away from home at night. Was he philandering somewhere,



as usual? Midnight still found him not at home. Gone for a long trip? No. It could not be so. He had left his house in his white robe (abbreviated clothes worn in those days, a wadded garment, with skirt).

The day broke in alarm.

They combed the village for Yoshifuji. The whereabouts of the man were still unknown. Had he joined the priesthood, having grown weary of the world?—or drowned himself, realizing the uncertainty of life? Strange, this thing, they thought.

Now to return to the luxurious house where Yoshifuji, the wanton man, was leading a licentious life with the fascinating mistress. The woman with whom he was intimately related had given birth to a child, and they, the man and the woman, were bound up with each other, and their love was growing with the years.

Yoshifuji had two brothers: Toyonaka, his elder brother; and Toyotsuné, his younger brother. The former was the chief of a sub-prefecture; and the latter, the priest of a big temple. Both of these people were also rich. They wanted to find the body of Yoshifuji at all costs through the favor of *Kanzéon*, the Goddess of Mercy. So they made her image out of a huge oak tree—and prayed night and day kneeling down before it.

They implored the goddess for the repose of the soul of the departed man. However their efforts seemed not to bear fruit. Still they continued to pray awake or asleep with untiring zeal.

Now it so happened, one day, that a person carry-

ing the long staff of a priest came to the house where Yoshifuji was staying.

"Here he comes!"

The members of the family cried in consternation on seeing this person. Then they flew in all directions.

The caller made Yoshifuji come out of a narrow place by prodding him on the back with the staff.

On the evening of the thirteenth day since Yoshifuji dropped out of sight, his people were talking together about him, sitting in a room when they saw a strange black creature looking like a monkey come creeping, on all fours, with his hips raised high, from under the floor of a warehouse standing facing the house.

Said the strange creature:

"I am here, folks."

He was no less a person than Yoshifuji!

Tadasada, his son, felt it strange. However it was the voice of his father that he heard. Therefore he got down on the ground and pulled him up.

Said Yoshifuji:

"I was staying alone at home feeling lonesome. I went out, and strolling along the road met a woman, who led me to her house, where I was obliged to become the father of a child. He was a boy and he was so cute and lovely that I used to hold him every day in my arms fondling him. I named him Taro (meaning first son). Therefore I will call you hereafter—Jiro (second son), as I respect his mother."

Asked Tadasada:

"Where is the child, father?"

"Down there!" replied Yoshifuji, pointing to the warehouse.

Tadasada and others, on hearing the words of Yoshifuji, were greatly surprised. They looked at Yoshifuji again. He looked haggard and sick. He was wearing the white robe he worn when leaving the house, a dirty robe now, and it smelt bad.

A servant was sent to look under the floor of the warehouse. At the approach of the servant, several foxes were seen running away helter-skelter. The servant found where his master used to sleep—under the cobwebby floor.

Now they learned for the first time that Yoshifuji had been bewitched by foxes and that he had forgotten to return to his own house, after becoming the husband of a female fox-beauty.

They called in a high priest to pray for his speedy recovery from the fox's witchcraft and a man exorcising evil spirits to purify him. They washed him several times, too. Still he did not look as he used to be.

Gradually, however, he came to his senses. He believed that he had lived with the fascinating fox-woman in the luxurious house for a period of thirteen years; but, in reality, he had spent only thirteen days with her under the floor of the warehouse. Now it was revealed that he had been saved by the favors of *Kanzéon*, the Goddess of Mercy, appearing in the form of a priest carrying a long staff.

This story, by the way, was told by Miyoshi-no-Kiyotsura, the feudal lord of Bittchu Province in those days.

### The Story of an Imperial Household Guard Officer Disillusioned by an Act of a Fox

A *TONERI* (whose duty was to guard the Imperial palace in the Heian Era) by the name of Yasutaka was a man of romantic disposition.

Now you see him going home from the Imperial palace to bring one of his retainers who had failed to arrive at the palace. He was waking alone in the grounds of the palace. A refreshing night, with a bright moon, about the middle of September.

Presently, the *tonéri* officer caught sight of a young woman when he was approaching the pine-grove there. She was attired in an aster-colored dress of figured cloth. She had a superb figure, a fact he perceived at a glance.

She must be a beautiful thing, Yasutaka imagined.

The moonlight seemed to enhance her charm. Yasutaka followed her. He was wearing a pair of high wooden clogs.

*Click-clack, click-clack*... he walked after her bathed in the moonlight. One or two *suzumushi* (a kind of cricket with a sweet and sonorous chirping) were singing in the pine-grove.

Soon Yasutaka overtook the attractive figure. He walked drawing near her. She seemed shy. She walked covering her face with a pictured fan. She looked pretty, with her stray tresses of the side-locks playing on her forehead and cheeks. Yasutaka drew close to her and touched her. She was faintly redolent of *ranjatai* (a precious incense first imported from

Korea in the reign of the Emperor Shomu in the early part of the 8th century).

Said Yasutaka:

"At this hour of the night, where in the world are you going?"

A sweet voice responded from behind the pictured-fan:

"I am going to the house of a person living at Nishi-no-Kyo."

Said Yasutaka:

"You had better come with me, to my house. I live at Nishi-no-Kyo, too."

Said the girl with a sweet smile in her eyes, a pair of clear eyes:

"You know me, do you?"

Yasutaka simply smiled back.

She was, to the delight of the tondri officer, a woman endowed with personal charms. They walked together in the moonlight. . . .

Presently the girl entered the Konoyé gate of the palace.

Now Yasutaka said to himself:

"They say that there lives a fox in the habit of bewitching people here in this premises. Is this charming girl a fox? And she is still covering her face with the fan. Very strange, this. Well, I will put the matter to the proof."

Yasutaka seized the girl abruptly by one of her sleeves and said:

"Wait, girl. Stay right here for a moment. I want to say something to you."

On hearing this, the girl looked more bashful, covering her face with the pictured-fan.

Said Yasutaka still seizing her by the sleeve:

"Now I am going to disrobe you. Do you hear me?"

So declaring, the tondri officer unsheathed his short sword, about 8 inches long, a glittering blade; it looked cold and shiny like an icicle.

Continued Yasutaka:

"I am going to cut your throat. Take off your clothes!"

The *tonéri* officer now seized the girl by the hair. He pinned her against a pillar of the gate. He was on the point of plunging the sword into her throat when, unexpectedly, his nostrils were assailed with a pungent and offensive smell, so pungent and offensive, in fact, that, tough and daring as he was, Yasutaka loosed his grip on the girl, sneezing.

In an instant, the fascinating girl changed herself into a fox and took to flight. The fox was soon heard, barking somewhere in the distance outside the gate. The Imperial guard officer was left with the smell still hanging in the night air.

Yasutaka felt chagrined at his unsuccessful attempt. Later, it is said, he went out nightly to see the fox assuming the shape of the charming girl. He wanted to see her again—in spite of the smell. No further opportunities occurred, however.

One should not try to become friendly with a charming girl walking alone of a night. In the case of Yasutaka, however, he was clever and cautious enough not to be cheated by a fox, they said.

CHAPTER 6  
THE FOX IN THE KONJAKU  
MONOGATARI (Continued)

The Story of General Toshihito Who  
Employed a Fox for His Guest,  
Exercising An Influence Upon It

IN the 10th century, there lived a general whose name was Toshihito. He was in the service of Moto-tsuné, the Prime Minister, in his younger days. Brave and intelligent, he was promoted to the rank of general and he married the daughter of an influential man of Tsuruga in Echizen Province, a province very far from the capital, Kyoto. Therefore the general lived there in his mansion.

One year, during the New Year's celebrations, a great banquet was given in the mansion of the Prime Minister. Previously it was customary to give the leavings of the table to the beggars coming for them when the banquet was over. On that particular occasion, however, the remnants of the dinner were eaten by the officials and others in the service. Among those shared them was an official with the 5th grade Court rank (a low rank).

During the repast, this official with the 5th grade Court rank was heard saying:

THE FOX IN THE KONJAKU MONOGATARI 55

"O how I wish I could eat imogayu<sup>1</sup> to my heart's content!"

General Toshihito, who had been listening attentively to the remark made by this official, stroking his left side-whisker with his strong hand, said:

"Well, *Tayu*,<sup>2</sup> have you not eaten *imogayu* to your heart's content yet?"

Answered *the tayu*:

"No, sir. To tell you the truth, I have never eaten *imogayu* to my heart's content in my life."

Said the general:

"In that case, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you eat *imogayu* to your heart's content some day."

Said *the tayu*:

"That is good, very good, indeed."

Asked the general:

"Would you accept my offer?"

"With great pleasure, General," was the reply.

Four or five days later, towards evening, General Toshihito came to the quarters of *the tayu*.

"Come with me, *Tayu*. I am going to take you to a place near Higashiyama where, I hear, there is a good hot-spring.

Said *the tayu* in glee:

"That is good, very good, indeed. I will go with you

<sup>1</sup> Rice gruel boiled with the juice of sweet arrow-root after putting in sliced yams, a tidbit enjoyed by the nobles in those days.

<sup>2</sup> The person with the 5th grade Court rank was commonly called *tayu*.



with great pleasure, General. Incidentally I am at present feeling itchy, especially this evening. I am afraid I shall not be able to sleep well tonight. By the way, is there any means of conveyance to take me there?"

The general assured him:

"Two horses are ready at the gate."

The joy of the official with the 5th grade Court rank knew no bounds.

"That is good, very good, indeed," he said, "Please wait for a moment, I will put something on."

Now *the taw* put on, for the occasion, two thinly padded garments, one over the other, a worn-out green-colored skirt of silk, a hunting suit of the same color, the shoulders of which were somewhat out of shape. He did not take the trouble of wearing an under-skirt, as was the custom at that time.

*The tayu* was a man with a prominent nose, the tip of which was reddish. The nostrils were always wet in winter, a fact proving that he was not in the habit of wiping his nose, apparently. The back of the afore-said hunting suit was rumped as he tied the sash tightly. *The tayu* presented a comical sight.

The general and *the tayu* proceeded toward Higashiyama where, the general had told *the tayu*, the good hot-spring was. *The tayu* rode ahead of the general. They came to the Kamogawa river beach. *The tayu* was not accompanied even by a boy footman. General Toshihito had as attendants a man carrying arms, and a servant. After passing the Kamogawa river beach, they were approaching Awadaguchi.

Asked *the tayu*:

"Where are we now?"

He was told.

Then they passed Yamashina. Then they passed Sekiyama. They went on and on... The hoofs rang on the deserted road. Then, to the surprise of *the tayu*, they arrived at Miidera temple.

"Do we stop here?" inquired *the tayu*, "is this the place where there is a hot-spring?"

"No, *Tayu*," answered General Toshihito, "not here. To tell you the truth, I am taking you to my place at Tsuruga, in Echizen Province."

*The tayu* said that Echizen Province was a distant province, and that he should have brought his servants with him from Kyoto to accompany him.

General Toshihito stroked his left-side whisker as usual and said:

"Do not worry, *Tayu*. When I go with you, you may consider yourself accompanied by an army of one thousand men."

On hearing this, *the tayu* seemed to have felt much relieved.

After taking a meal, they left the temple for their destination, Tsuruga in Echizen Province.

Now the general was riding ahead of *the tayu*, taking a quiver from his man and carrying it on his back. They were passing along a lonely road again. The north wind was blowing over the withered grass and the paddy-fields with only stacks of rice-straw and stubble of rice plants.

They heard the muffled sound of a distant bell—coming evidently from the Miidera temple, from which they had departed.

When they were riding along Mitsu-no-Hama beach, a fox was seen running hurriedly.

On seeing the fox, the general started in pursuit of it, saying:

"O splendid! A good messenger for you, Tayu!"

The fox ran as fast as *its* legs could carry it.

The general rode after it at a gallop.

Finally when the horse was running abreast of the fox, General Toshihito lowered himself on the flank of his horse, seizing the animal by one of its hind legs.

Said the general to the fox:

"Fox, you go to my mansion at Tsuruga tonight, you understand? Tell my family that I am taking a guest home. Tell them to come to see me with two saddled horses—near Takashima—at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, you understand? If you should fail to fulfil your mission, Toshihito will handle you roughly. You understand? Now, run along!"

So saying, the general set the fox free.

The tayu saw the fox run away at full speed and disappear behind a wood in the distance.

Said General Toshihito to the tayu:

"An exceptionally good messenger, isn't he? Wait and see, he will do as he was told without fail."

They stayed at an inn that night.

On the following morning, they got up very early, and proceeded toward Tsuruga, the end of their journey.

At about 10 o'clock in the morning, the general said to the tayu:

"It is about the time."

"About what time?" asked the tayu.

"Wait and see," answered the general.

Presently the tayu saw a party of horsemen coming, galloping toward the general's party.

"My men have come for us," said the general.

"Are they your men?" said the tayu, "Really?"

"Yes," replied the general. "The fox reached my mansion all right. A clever animal."

"A strange thing. Very strange, indeed. Unbelievable!"

The tayu could not bring himself to believe it.

Before long, the party came nearer.

The general called out:

"Have you brought two saddled horses?"

One of this men responded:

"Yes, my lord. We have brought the two saddled horses."

General Toshihito heard the following:

"About 8 o'clock in the evening," recounted one of the men, "her ladyship at the mansion felt a sharp pain in her breast. We did not know what the matter with her ladyship. Presently, however, her ladyship said: I am a fox, nobody else. I happened to see his lordship today at Mitsu-no-Hama beach. He was unexpectedly coming home from the capital with his guest. I wanted to run away. However I was caught by him. He came galloping after me, faster than me.

"He told me to reach the mansion within a day and tell the people to bring two saddled horses at 10 o'clock in the morning on the following day, to Takashima. The general said I must do as I was told, if I did not want to be handled roughly by him."—"This

was what we were told by her ladyship, my lord. So we are here at your service."

The *tayu* listened to the report with surprise and wonder. General Toshihito, *however*, simply *heard the recountal* with pleasure.

They arrived at the mansion at Tsuruga in Echizen Province that day in the evening.

The people of the mansion came out and cried in chorus:

"It was true! it was true! Just as it was told by her ladyship!"

The *tayu* dismounted from the horse and went inside the mansion.

When seated in a room, the *tayu* looked around him. It was cold—strangely cold. There was a long brazier with charcoal fire burning. However he felt cold. The parlor was covered with thick bordered mattings. Presently tea and cake, and then the meal was served.

The *tayu* was given three yellow-colored thickly padded garments in order to keep out the cold. Still he felt strangely cold. There was an uncanny air about the room. *Is it accounted for by the fact that General Toshihito has something to do with Kitsuné and with its supernatural and mysterious power?*—thought the *tayu*.

Before long, the general and his father-in-law came into the room.

Said the father-in-law to General Toshihito:

"You sent a messenger and we busied ourselves in complying with your request. Indeed, it is very bad that your wife is suffering from illness."

The general answered, smiling:

"I did it *only* as a trial. I *am* glad, *however*, that the fox obeyed my order."

Said the father-in-law:

"Anyway it was a strange thing, this, was it not?—and the guest you mentioned is this gentleman here, I presume."

Replied the general:

"Yes, sir. This gentleman here is my guest. He told me that he had never eaten *imogayu* to his heart's content. So I have brought him here to treat him to *imogayu* to his heart's content, you know."

"He doesn't seem satiated even with such an *in-expensive* thing as *imogayu*, eh?" said the father-in-law, jokingly.

Said the *tayu*:

"The general told me that at Higashiyama there was a hot-spring, and that he would take me there—and now I find myself here in his mansion. A practical joke, it was, indeed!"

They laughed together. They chatted together for a while. Then, as the night was growing late, they said good night to the *tayu* and left the room.

The guest was now shown into another room, which looked like a bed-chamber. The *tayu* found there a *hitataré* (a robe of Court nobles of old days) thickly padded with cotton, four or five inches thick. As he was feeling itchy (as he had said before), he took off his own garment that he had been wearing since he left the capital. Then he put on the *hitataré* robe on the three yellow-colored thickly padded garments he was now wearing.

And then *the* tayu went to sleep. Now he became moist with perspiration. He opened his eyes. He heard something like footsteps entering the room.

Said the official with the 5th grade Court rank with dignity:

"Who goes there?"

A feminine voice answered:

"I came here, sir, as I was instructed by my master to massage your feet."

*The tayu* saw a white face in the dim light of the *andon* (paper-covered night-light). Then a rustling of clothes ushered in a woman, apparently a young and pretty woman. She sat beside his bed. She did not look timid. The tayu drew her toward him....

Some time later, the tayu opened his eyes, aroused from sleep. Somebody was heard calling aloud outside:

"You blockheads! You've got to bring yams. Each of You—three inches in diameter at the cut part and five feet long—at 6 o'clock tomorrow morning. Each of you! You understand?"

*The tayu* thought it very strange to hear that sort of thing in the middle of the night. Then the neighborhood dropped back into silence.

At dawn, the tayu heard the sound of something resembling straw-mats being spread on the ground outside.

When it was daylight, the tayu raised the folding shutter, and found that there were four or five long straw-mats spread outside.

"What are they for?" he wondered.

Presently he saw a man come, carrying something

which looked like a piece of wood—about three or four inches in diameter and about five or six feet in length. This fellow left the thing on one of the straw-mats and went off.

Then another man came, carrying the same thing. He put it on the mat and left. A third—a fourth—a fifth—one after another they appeared, carrying the same thing. Each of them put it on the mat and moved away—until there was a pile reaching almost to the roof!

The voice of the man calling out in the middle of the night instructing each blockhead to bring a yam—three inches in diameter at the cut part and five feet long at 6 o'clock in the morning—*the tayu* now recalled, came again from the top of a mound called *the hill* for calling out for men at the mansion—a weird voice when heard at dead of night.

While *the tayu* was looking outside, several strange fellows came out, carrying five or six cauldrons with the capacity of 5 to (one to: 3.9703 gallons) each. These fellows were seen busily engaging in driving in the stakes to hang the cauldrons they brought them on. *What are they going to boil in the cauldrons, the tayu* wondered.

Soon *the tayu* saw again several young men and clean-looking women in white dress coming. They were carrying several pails containing water, which was put in each of the cauldrons. No, *the tayu* was mistaken. It was not an ordinary water that was being put in the cauldrons. It was the water mixed with seasoned powder.

Then more than ten men in white clothes with long



sleeves presented themselves. They stretched out their arms from their sleeves and cut the yams (now the *tayu* could see that the things piled up on the mats were innumerable yams) with long, sword-like, thin-bladed knives.

Said the *tayu* to himself:

"They are now boiling *imogayu*, to be sure."

But what a grand scale *imogayu* boiling!

Is this the General Toshihito's style of *imogayu* boiling? Yes, it was his style of *imogayu* boiling, no doubt. It was his style of hospitality.

On seeing the sight of the *imogayu* boiling, however, the *tayu*, strange to relate, began to lose his appetite for the *imogayu*, which he had been wanting to eat to his heart's content.

While the *tayu* was talking with the general, one of the men came and said:

"*Imogayu* is ready, my lord."

"Offer it to our guest," the general told him.

Three or four big silver saki-holders containing *imogayu* were offered to the *tayu*.

"*Tayu*," said General Toshihito with a mischievous gleam in his eyes, "please help yourself to *imogayu* to your heart's content."

The gentleman with the 5th grade Court rank thanked the general profoundly, saying:

"Thank you very much, General—thank you. I regret, however, to say that strangely I seem to have lost my appetite for *imogayu*, pardon me, *just now*."

A servant who overheard it remarked:

"A queer sort of gentleman, ain't he? He seems

satisfied already—without taking a morsel of *imogayu*."

Another chimed in with:

"We get treated to *imogayu* to our hearts' content—thanks to the virtue of our guest!"

The official with the 5th grade Court rank left the general's mansion, after staying there for a period of a month. He was treated well. He enjoyed himself immensely. When he went back to the capital, he was presented by the generous general with several suits of clothes—garments of silk, figured cloth and cotton cloth, and a fine horse, together with a saddle and a bridle. He did not, however, eat any *imogayu* during his sojourn there in the general's mansion, according to legend.

## CHAPTER\*7

### THE FOX IN OTHER WORKS BY FAMOUS AUTHORS

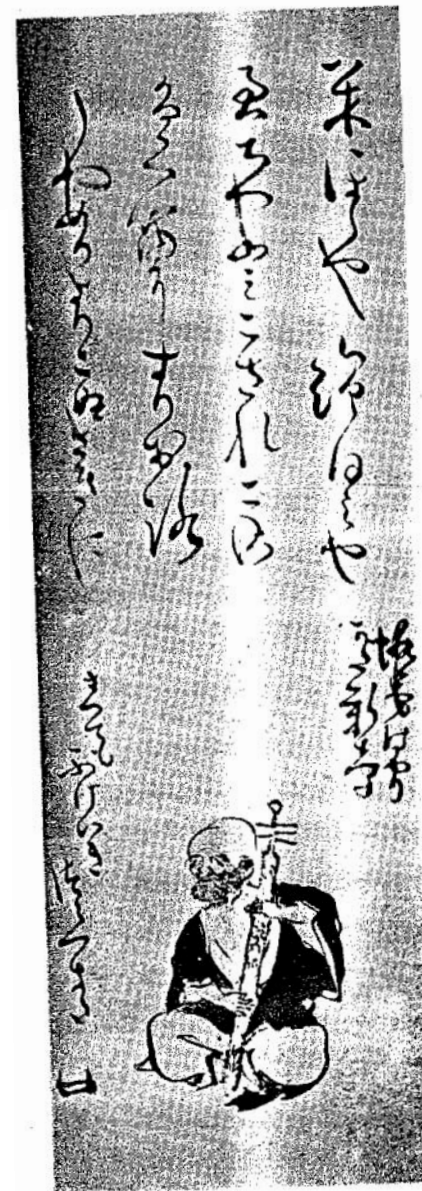
#### The Story of the One-Eyed God

A fantastic tale reflecting the way of life in turbulent 15th century Japan, written by Uyéda Akinari (died in 1809), the celebrated author of *The Ugetsu Monogatari*. The story of a handsome young man marrying a serpent in the guise of a fascinating woman by him became internationally known, winning a grand prize in a film contest several years ago.

THE people of Azuma (Eastern Japan) are supposed to be savages. Therefore, they cannot hope to indulge in such an elegant accomplishment as making poems, they say.

However, once there lived a youth on the shore of Koyorogi in Sagami Province, who was a person of taste, and his ambition was to go to the capital, Kyoto, to study the art of versification under some courtiers so that he would never expose himself to ridicule as a mountain dweller living in the shade of *flowers* (a phrase taken from the Preface to The Kokin-shu Anthology compiled in 905).

Therefore he asked his father to grant his wish. He told him proudly: "The uguisu (a spring bird with a sweet note) is born in a nest in a ravine, but it will



Self-portrait of Akinari playing an instrument of his own invention, & his handwriting.

*not sing in a gruff voice,"* (also a quotation from a poem found in *The Yamaga-shu Anthology* of Saigyō, a famous priest-poet who lived in the 12th century).

The above remark was made by the youth, likening himself to the singing bird of spring. His father tried to dissuade him from the step, telling him that there was little traffic on the road after two civil wars, and that it was unsafe and inconvenient for him to travel. However his son would not obey him, saying it was his heart's desire. His mother, however, was a woman of firm character, hardened by the successive wars and she said to him:

"In that case you may go, and come back as soon as possible."

Thus she allowed him to go on a journey for the capital.

The youth was armed with various passes to show at each barrier, so he finally arrived safely in the province of Omi, not so far from the capital. He was so excited at the thought that he was soon to reach Kyoto he had so much wished to visit that he forgot to put up at an inn—and, when he came to a forest, it grew dark.

"I shall have to sleep in the open tonight," he thought.

He got into the forest.

"I must find some comfortable spot here—say at the root of a big pine tree," he said to himself. A lone traveler. He went into the forest and walked in the stillness that reigned there. He heard only the soft sound of his own footsteps as he stepped on the fallen leaves.

Shortly he espied a big dead tree lying on the ground. He stepped over it. However he hesitated to sleep there. He felt, for some reason or other, something uncanny. The ground was covered with fallen leaves and withered twigs—and the skirt of his clothes got wet as if he were wading a shallow swamp.

He was now oppressed with a sense of loneliness.

Then he saw a shrine—a dilapidated one—ahead of him. On approaching it, he found the eaves leaning to one side and the old staircase collapsed, and it looked precarious to step on it. The pillars and stones of the shrine were covered with moss and the grounds were overgrown with weeds. He found, however, a clear spot under a big pine tree. Somebody must have stayed overnight. He decided to sleep there.

He sat down after taking off the load he had been carrying on his back. He felt relieved when he found a suitable place to sleep for the night. However he was now assaulted with fear in addition to loneliness. And suddenly he saw a sort of shimmer passed before him and spread into the bluish darkness. The moon! Red, nearly round. A strange moon.

"It looks like a fine day tomorrow," he muttered.

He wanted to say it aloud because he was so lonesome. He wanted to hear his own voice as if it were the voice of some other person. He was just going to sleep, curling himself up, when he saw somebody. It was a figure extremely tall in stature, carrying a halberd in its hand, reminding the youth of the mythological age of Sarutahiko (a giant deity with a long nose). He was followed by a person who looked like a *yamabushi* (a mountain priest, an ascetic) with

the long sleeves of his reddish-orange-colored robe tied up at the back, walking with a pilgrim's staff with several metal rings on top, which tinkled as the staff touched the ground.

Then the young man from Koyorogi of Sagami Province heard some person, apparently a woman, singing in a strange sort of voice somewhere. Presently a woman who looked like a Court lady made her appearance, attired in a wadded silk garment. As she walked, her long, stiff, scarlet skirt rustled. She was holding up a *hi-ogi*\* over her forehead.

The youth looked at her charming face, and found that she was a white fox in disguise. She was followed by a girl of about 10 years of age. This girl was a fox-cub, too.

The party—consisting of the tall figure with a long nose, the *yamabushi* priest, the fox-Court lady and the fox-cub girl—came to a stop abruptly, facing the dilapidated shrine, standing in a line.

The deity carrying a halberd cried in a loud voice as if he were reading a Shinto ritual. The voice, deep and solemn, resounded through the forest.

The night was not yet advanced. However the voice echoed and was terrible to hear. Soon a door of the old shrine was opened from within, and a person with a fantastic appearance emerged. He was one-eyed. He had a mouth slit open to the ears. He had a nose, but it was an apology for a nose. He was wearing a suit of bleached clothes and a newly-made light purple-

\*A fan made of thin boards of cypress joined together with a gold or silver rivet. The upper part of the fan is bound with white silk strings. A fan used at the Court by noblewomen.



colored skirt. He walked out majestically, a fan of feathers in hand.

The deity who looked like Sarudahito, the giant, to the One-Eyed God, said:

"The yamabushi here departed from Tsukushi (ancient name for the provinces of Chikuzen and Chikugo in the Northern part of Kyushu) yesterday and returned to the capital this morning (a feat no one can hope to accomplish without supernatural power). And now he is obliged to go to the east as the messenger of a personage in the capital. Therefore passing here, he would like to have the honor of seeing you here.

"The presents to be offered to you, God, will be fried meat and the sea-basses found in the Sea of Matsuyé of Izumo Province. The sea-basses were brought to the capital this morning by an attendant of mine. These fish are fresh, and they will be offered to you by making them into *sashimi* (slices of raw fish)

Then the yamabushi said:

"I am on my way to the east as the messenger of a in Kyoto, carrying his message because I can go very fast. I shall never disturb this quiet neighborhood even when I am in trouble."

Said the One-Eyed God:

"This province (Omi Province) is poor in the products of land and sea because of the useless lake (Lake Biwa). It is too bad. I will now drink *saké* immediately. The fish you have brought for me will be a capital accompaniment of *saké*."

The fox-cub girl made a fire in a broken cooking-stove by gathering some leaves of trees, twigs, and pine-

The flames flared up brightly, illuminating the

scene—a grotesque scene with fantastic characters present. There was the smell of decay and age here, the air stale and musty.

"A lovely night," said the fox Court lady from behind her large hi-ogi fan. Somebody laughed aloud.

The youth from Sagami Province pretended to be asleep by putting his bamboo-hat over his face, trembling with fear lest he be killed at any moment, when found out.

"Warm *saké* quickly!" The One-Eyed God was heard urging the fox-cub girl.

A monkey and a rabbit came, carrying a big wine-jar on a bamboo pole between them. The bearers were tottering under the burden.

"Quick!" the One-Eyed God said again.

"Too heavy!" said the monkey and the rabbit, gasping for breath. They set the load down on the ground covered with fallen leaves.

The fox-cub assuming the form of a little girl, who had been working faithfully taking care of the fire and cooking food, her sleeves tucked up with ivy, now offered the One-Eyed God seven big wine-cups put one upon another. The wine-cups looked heavy for the little girl to carry.

The white fox in the guise of an elegant Court lady took off four wine-cups on top and filled one with *saké* and offered it to the One-Eyed God.

"Good, good!" said the god draining the cup filled by the Court lady. Then he offered the wine-cup to the yamabushi.

"Drink this, you are my guest," he said. Then he said to the fox Court lady:

"Go and bring the young fellow who is pretending

to be asleep at the root of the pine tree yonder. Bring him right here. Tell him to act as my boon companion."

At the command, the fox lady went to wake up the youth. She accompanied him to the presence of the One-Eyed God. The student of poetry was trembling with fear.

"Drink this, young man," said the One-Eyed God in a joyful mood, giving him the fourth wine-cup from top. The Court lady filled it with *saké* to the brim. The young fellow wanted to decline. However he took the wine-cup and drained it, lest he should be scolded by the One-Eyed God.

The One-Eyed God said:

"Eat the meat, fish salad—anything you like. So you are going up to the capital to study, eh? Too late now, though. There were some masters under whom you could have learned poetry in the capital 400 or 500 years ago. In such troublous times, however, such a thing as learning is out of fashion. Men of rank are now deprived of their possessions and reduced to extreme poverty and they say: 'Such and such an art has been handed down from my ancestors,'—misrepresenting a fact for their living. The rich men and rough *samurai*, on hearing that, will become their pupils by paying entrance fees, to make fools of themselves...."

There was a crackling sound when the fox-cub girl fed some dead twigs to the broken cooking-stove and the face of the One-Eyed God was momentarily illuminated.

"One can make good in any art when one with ability studies it at one's leisure. One cannot hope to

excel in it by being taught by others. Even parents cannot make a bright child by taking the utmost care. One must remember that one can attain proficiency in such a thing as writing or poetry, only when one realizes one's own ability. One cannot hope to attain one's aim by being taught by others. You understand?"

The youth nodded. The One-Eyed God continued.

"It would be convenient for a beginner to take rudimentary lessons in any art from a teacher, I admit. However as one makes progress in one's art, one will invariably find that there is a limit beyond which one cannot hope to go further.

"The people of Azuma are supposed to be brave by nature, with the minds of *savages*. They look honest, but they are, in reality, crooked. They look wise, but they are, in reality, foolish. So you people of Azuma are not promising. You had better go home, young man, and find a good teacher. You can say you have studied anything, only when you have meditated on it well. Anyway, drink the *saké*. It will be cold if you sleep in the open."

After a while, a priest appeared from behind the dilapidated shrine.

The priest said sarcastically:

"We are liable to talk nonsense under the influence of *saké*. However we will soon sober down. Now let us drink tonight as much as we please."

So saying the priest sat haughtily above the god, crossing his knees. The priest had a round and flat nose. His eyes and nose were in bold relief. He set a large bag he carried on his right side, and said again:

"Give me a wine-cup, will you?"

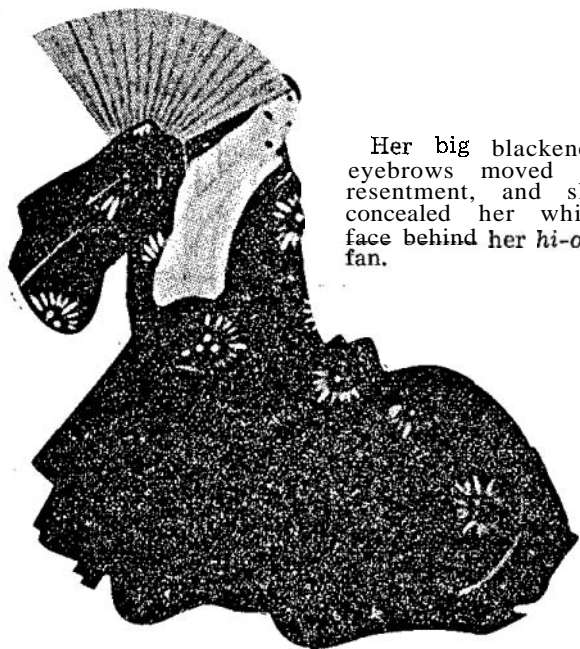
The fox Court lady gave him a wine-cup and filled it with *saki*.

Then she sang—holding her large fan over her head:  
*"Kara-tama ya! Kara-tama ya!... (O the fine jewel produced in China! O the fine jewel produced in China!...)*

The voice was like that of a woman. It was, however, a terrible voice.

The cynical priest commented on her, saying:

"Lady, you look graceful, holding up your elegant fan over your head. But nobody will care to make love to you—when you are showing your busy tail between your legs."



Her big blackened eyebrows moved in resentment, and she concealed her white face behind her *hi-ogi* fan.

The fox Court lady looked offended. Her big blackened eyebrows moved in resentment, and she concealed her white face behind her *hi-ogi* fan.

Then the priest said to the youth from Sagami Province:

"Young man, go home at once, obeying the advice just given by the One-Eyed God. Mountains and fields are infested with robbers, and your journey is a perilous one. You must consider it lucky that you have been able to continue your travels so far in safety. A miracle, I should say. I hear that the mountain priest here is going to the east. You had better go home quickly by clinging to the skirt of his robe. 'While father and mother are alive, one must refrain from leaving home for the purpose of pursuing knowledge,' says a sage of China. Remember that there is another way of pursuing knowledge in this life."

Admonishing him thus, the priest passed the young man a wine-cup.

"I won't eat fish," the priest said, "it is so stinking." Then he started to bite off a big dried turnip taken out from his large bag, making a wry face. The priest had a boyish face, but it looked forbidding.

The youth from Sagami Province said:

"I will not go up to the capital tomorrow. I will go home and read books and learn the art of poetry as I have just been told by the One-Eyed God. Now I have learned what course to take, as a fisherman's son of Koyorogi of Sagami Province."

"Good," roared the One-Eyed God.

"For the entertainment, my thanks. For the advice, my eternal gratitude," said the youth.

While they were enjoying themselves carousing, somebody said drowsily:

"The day is breakin', I guess."

The One-Eyed God seemed to have got drunk. When he said something by way of greeting, taking up his halberd again, it sounded as if he were coughing. The face of each of them had a most amused expression on it.

"Now I must take my leave," said the yamabushi priest picking up his long staff. And, showing the staff to the young man, he said:

"You may hold on to this as we fly away toward the east."

The One-Eyed God said to the youth:

"Here I am—Ichimoku-ren! (one-eyed god!) By virtue of this, I can do anything for you, see!"

So saying, the fantastic god fanned the young man up into the air with his fan of feathers. Up went the fellow into the dimly-lit sky like a ball.

On seeing the sight, the monkey and the rabbit laughed themselves into convulsions.

The yamabushi, who had been perching on a branch of a tree waiting for the young man, held the latter instantly under his arm, and flew away toward Azuma like the wind through the murky night.

"Look at the young man! look at the young man!" cried the cynical priest hilariously. Then he took the big bag across his shoulder and stood staggering on a pair of wooden clogs, a figure reminding one of a certain soul seen in the cartoons by the famous Toba

Sojo, of the 12th century. (See the chapter Fox in Ancient Cartoons.)

"Stay here," said the One-Eyed God to the fox Court lady and the fox-cub girl, when morning dawned. Then he invited the sarcastic priest to go with him to his abode in the green forest...



CHAPTER 8  
THE FOX IN OTHER WORKS BY  
FAMOUS AUTHORS (Continued)

The Story of a Fox  
Sucking Up the Energy of a Feudal Lord

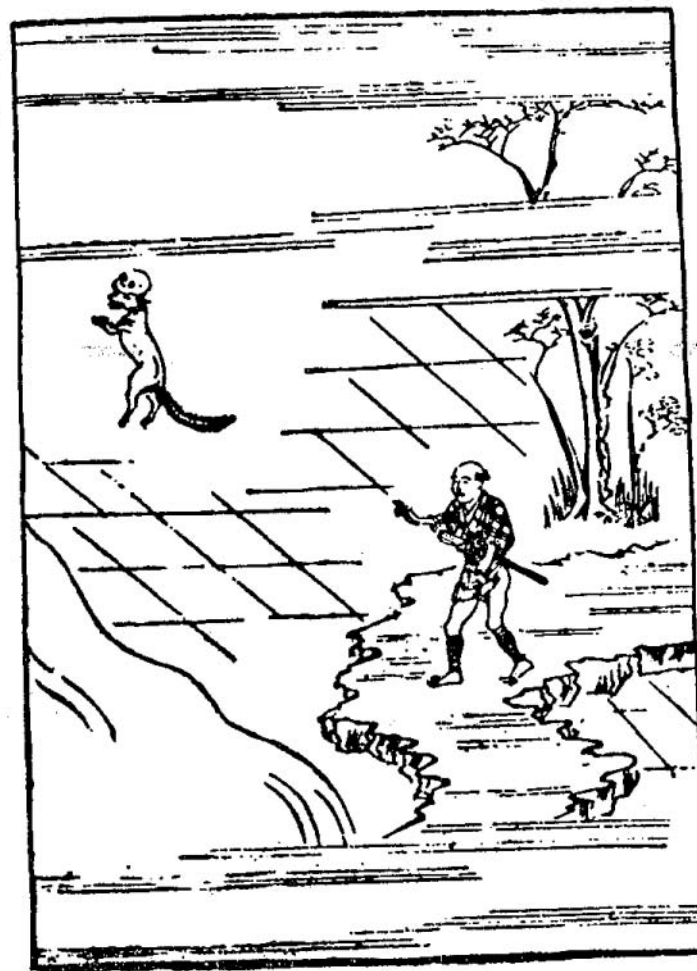
A story found in **The** Otogiboko, consisting of 13 volumes, including more than 60 ghost-like stories written by Asai-Ryoi (died in 1709).

DURING the 16th century, there lived a man named Koyata at Musa of Omi Province. He was very fond of sumo (Japanese wrestling) and he was plucky. He was the proprietor of an inn.

Once he was walking along the bank of Shinohara in the fading light of a dull autumn afternoon when he saw a fox praying in earnest, facing the north, standing on its hind legs, with a skull on its head (an act supposed to be performed by a fox before turning itself into the shape of a human being).

Each time the skull fell off from its head, the fox replaced it and continued to pray, facing the north as before. The skull tumbled down often, but finally it stayed securely on the head. The fox continued to pray about one hundred times.

Presently Koyata, the innkeeper, saw the fox turn itself into the form of a girl of seventeen or eighteen.



He saw a fox praying in earnest, facing the north, standing on its hind legs, with a skull on its head.



"What is the matter with you, girls" he asked her, stepping up to her.

He had never seen such a pretty girl before in his life. It was already night. He found that the girl was crying bitterly. She was crying her heart out. He felt sorry to see her crying though he knew she was a fox.

"What is the matter with you, girl?" he asked her, stepping up to her. "Where, in the world, are you going now, when it is already getting dark?"

Answered the girl:

"I am a girl of Yogo, a distant county to the north. The other day, a general named Kinoshita-Tokichiro (about 30 years later, to become Toyotomi-Hidéyoshi, the Tycoon) came and attacked the castle of Yamamoto-yama. The castle fell and Yogo, my native place, and other places were reduced to ashes by the invading army. My father and brother died in battle, and mother became sick.

"The soldiers broke into the house and looted all the valuables. Mother got angry and used abusive language to them and they killed her on the spot. I concealed myself among the bush and escaped.

"I am now alone—alone in this wide world! I am so helpless! And I am now going to kill myself by throwing myself into the water. So I am crying without self-restraint, not afraid what others may think."

Koyata was sure that the girl was a fox trying to bewitch him. However pretending not to know anything about its natural shape, he said:

"What a pity! I am a poor man. However I can afford to support you. Come to my house if you don't mind?"

Said the girl:

"I am so happy to hear that! I will be faithful to you like a daughter."

Koyata, on returning home, refrained from telling his wife that the girl was a fox. His wife loved the girl. The latter was very obedient and worked hard for the family; and they lived together in harmony.

In the beginning of the Tensho Era (1587-1591), peace was ensured in Omi Province, with Kinoshita-Tokichiro ruling all over the province.

One day, Ishida-Ichinosukk\* happened to pass through Koyata's district, and put up at his inn, where Ishida fell madly in love with the girl, without, of course, knowing that she was a fox.

The innkeeper, Koyata, was requested by Ishida to part with the girl.

Said Koyata:

"Other daimyo (feudal lords) who saw her told me so. However I have to keep her for my living. But if you would consent to give me a sum of one hundred ryo (a unit of old Japanese coinage), I might accede to your request, my lord."

Ishida was so infatuated with the girl that he was willing to pay the price. He took the girl to his mansion at Gifu, where she was very faithful to her master and popular among the servants, too. She was also found very wise and resourceful and quick-witted doing things without being told what to do.

Ishida loved the girl more than he did his wife. However the girl was exceedingly polite. She knew the

\*Kinoshita's general, who, as Ishida-Mitsunari, fought after Hidéyoshi's death for his son, Hidéyori, the battle of Sekigahara, a Waterloo, in 1600, and was defeated by Tokugawa-Iyéyasu, who founded the shogunate of the Tokugawas.

feeling of Ishida's wife and served her faithfully night and day and she was loved very much by her mistress.

The girl was also kind to the servants and gave them presents, such as wadded garments, sewing-needles, face powder, and the like. The girl was skillful in sewing, painting, *hana-musubi* (an ornament made of thread in the form of various kinds of flowers) and other arts.

About a half-year later, Ishida's duty was to go to Kyoto by the order of Hidkyoshi, his master. The girl, on this occasion, told him:

"Please be faithful to your master and also be prudent in everything you do. Do not ruin yourself by falling for trifling things."

In the capital, Kyoto, Ishida met Yugaku, the noted priest of the Takao temple. The priest, after gazing at the face of Ishida for a while, said gravely:

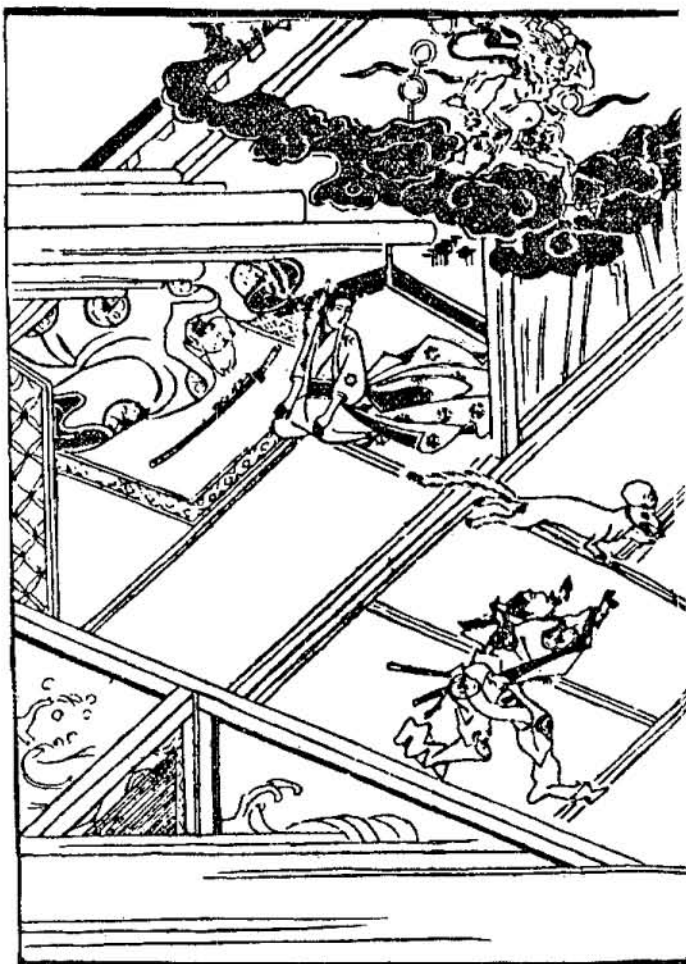
"You are under the spell of a phantom. Your energy is being sucked away by it and your life is at stake, unless something against it is done immediately. I never fail in my phrenological interpretations."

Ishida did not believe what was told by the priest. He simply laughed, and said to himself:

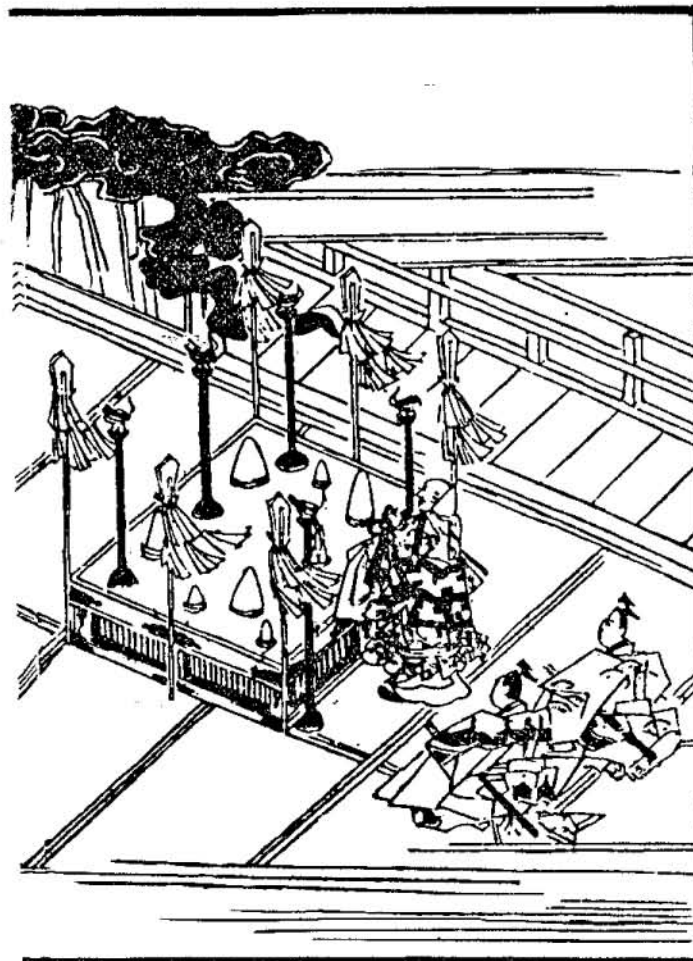
"The depraved priest! He is only talking nonsense!"

Presently, however, Ishida began to show signs of emaciation. A remarkable change came over his countenance. He looked pale and haggard. He became absent-minded. All possible means to restore his health were tried. However they were of no avail. As a result, they sent for Yugaku, of the Takao temple.

The priest came and said, wearing a worried look as before:



And the charming woman sitting with the wife  
at the lord's bedside, revealing her natural shape,



an old fox, ran, carrying a skull on its head toward  
the altar to save its life.



"I never fail in my phrenological interpretations. His life now hangs by a thread. However he may be saved by the mercy of Buddha. Send him home immediately. Then I will accompany him and pray for his recovery at his Gifu mansion."

On reaching the mansion at Gifu, Yugaku, the great priest, erected an altar in the room adjacent to the room where Ishida lay in bed afflicted with the bewitchery of the fox.

Around the altar, the priest put up several *gohēi* (pendant paper-cuttings usually seen in Shinto shrines or any other sacred places) offering precious incense and various offerings, and prayed confusion to the enemy, and lo! the God of Thunder came all of a sudden, riding on a black cloud beating drums of thunder, and it rained in torrents! The charming woman, sitting with the wife at the lord's bedside, revealing her natural shape, an old fox, ran, carrying a skull on its head toward the altar to save its life. The fox, however, died before reaching the altar.

The fox was found still with the skull on its head, it is said, even when it fell dead.

Ishida was restored to health immediately. Several soldiers were sent to capture Koyata, the innkeeper, at Musa. However his whereabouts were unknown. He seemed to have moved somewhere, after selling the fox-girl. Yugaku acquired fame for his miraculous power.

### The Story of the *Samurai* Entertained by Foxes

This is a story found in The *Otogiboko* published in 1662.

ADACHI-KIHEI, a samurai in the service of the Court, was on his way home at Sakamoto one evening. He was riding through a pass followed by his two retainers when he caught sight of a young girl attired in a beautiful kimono. Nobody else was there. She seemed to have lost her way.

Adachi, a samurai of chivalry, reined his horse and sent one of his followers to ask what was the matter with her. When the retainer came back with her, Adachi dismounted from his horse and said to her politely:

"Allow me to offer you this horse of mine. I shall be glad to accompany you to where you live."

The girl replied coyly:

"Thank you so much, sir."

A songless lark soared into the approaching dusk.

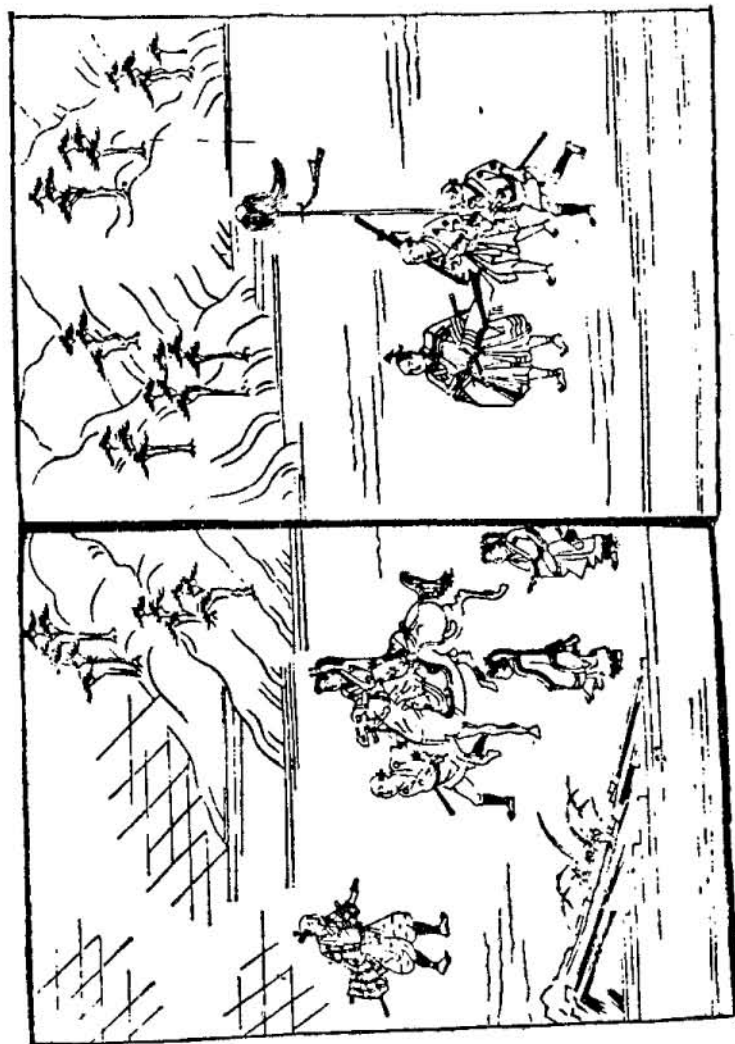
The party proceeded, the girl mounting on the horse and the others walking.

Presently a man came along with two young women, who looked like maid-servants.

The man said:

"We have been looking for you everywhere, Princess. I am very glad to have found you, at last." And, turning to Adachi: "We are very much indebted to you, sir, for taking care of her."

Said Adachi:



An elderly *samurai* came out hurriedly from the mansion to meet them.

"I am glad that you have come for her. I am on my way home. I live in Sakamoto."

"Our princess was invited to attend a party held at a place called Tanaka today," said the man. "When the feast was at its height, she went out alone in the excess of happiness to look at the scenery, and seems to have lost her way. Night has already fallen. Sakamoto is far from here. Please come and stay tonight at the mansion of the princess."

Adachi accepted the offer and they went on until they reached their destination; a splendid mansion built with taste and elegance. Twilight seemed to enhance its beauty. An elderly *samurai* came out hurriedly from the mansion to meet them.

Said the *samurai* respectfully:

"Welcome home, Princess. Welcome our guests."

Adachi and his retainers were shown into a well decorated room. In the garden, plums, cherries, peaches, damsons, and other fruit trees were in full bloom. In the miniature lake, a great number of carp, red and black, were swimming leisurely, leaping up now and then breaking the tranquility of the balmy evening.

Soon an elegant woman, about 40 years of age, made her appearance, accompanied by seven or eight maid-servants.

The woman said:

"We are really grateful for your kindness in bringing back the princess who lost her way. If it were not for your help, she might have been bewitched by a fox, attacked by a wolf, or threatened by a highwayman."

Then they entertained Adachi and his men with all

kinds of delicacies. The elegant woman, Adachi now learned, was the mistress of the household. She served him with *sakh*. Adachi thought that he had never drunk such *saké* of superidr quality.

Said the mistress:

"The aunt of the princess is here. Come Aunt, and serve our honorable guest with *saké*, please."

Adachi heard a rustling of a silk kimono. He looked up and saw a face, bright and radiant. He thought that he had never seen such a face before in his life.

An exceedingly beautiful young woman. About 24 or 25 years old. She sat beside Adachi, after bowing to him gracefully, and filled his wine-cup with *saké* of amber color. A breeze wafted a fragrant smell of the flowers in the garden.

While Adachi was enjoying himself immensely by drinking *saké*, the mistress said to him:

"Play *sugoroku* (a kind of backgammon) with Aunt here, and make a wager."

So saying, she brought a table of ebony, beautiful stones, black and white, a gold-lacquered dicebox, and a die of ivory.

Adachi accepted the challenge, and enjoyed the game. When he won, he got *jinko* (a rare incense extracted from a sweet-smelling tropical tree). And when she came off the winner, Adachi presented her with his *kogai* (a metal rod attached to a sword-sheath). Thus they engaged in the game of *sugoroku* like two lovers. Adachi was unconscious of the flight of time....

A cock was heard crowing somewhere. The eastern sky was gradually turning gray when Adachi became

aware of a commotion in the mansion.

"A band of robbers has broken into the house!" they were shouting to each other.

Then Adachi heard the sound of footsteps of people in all directions. The mistrees of the household came rushing toward Adachi and pushed him hastily out of the rear gate. The aunt of the princess now seemed to have concealed herself somewhere for safety...

After a while, Adachi found himself creeping on all fours out of a cave on the side of a cliff of red earth. The breeze was soughing among the pines. He heard the murmuring of a mountain stream in the distance....

"What is the matter with me?" Adachi wondered.

"And where am I?"

Then Adachi heard the the voice of his two retainers:

"Steady, master, steady!"

The voice sounded to him like something in a dream, far away and inconsequent. Then he opened his eyes wide and gazed at the faces of his men.

"What is the matter with you?" he inquired.

It was revealed later that Adachi was a victim of the bewitchery of the foxes living in the mountain where he had met the fascinating young girl. Adachi, according to his retainers, followed the girl after dismounting from his horse, and soon disappeared mysteriously.

They had searched for their master, they told him, here and there, everywhere. They failed to find him in the evening. They resumed the search on the following morning and they came to a cliff and found a

cave there. They peeped into the cave and they saw a man sitting there with a blank look. It was their master. Adachi seemed to have passed the night in the cave.

"Where is the *aunt*?" he is said to have asked his men, still with an abstracted air.

The **Story** of a Rich Merchant Deceived by  
a Girl Impersonating Kitsune

In The *Manyu-ki*, a book of remarkable stories published in 1774, you will read of the strange case of a man victimized by a girl impersonating a fox:

ONE day, a millionaire merchant of Naniwa (present Osaka) went on a picnic, accompanied by several servants; and, on his way to Hirano, they passed Koboréguchi village, where he espied a small animal kept in a cage at a farmhouse.

At first sight, he thought it was a young rabbit, but it was a fox-cub. The animal looked very cute and the merchant asked a man there, apparently the master of the house:

"Will you sell this fox-cub to me?"

"This is not for sale," was the answer.

"Where did you get it" the rich merchant inquired of the man.

To this query, the man replied as follows:

"Some time ago, I went to Sonézaki and saw two dogs killing a fox near a wood. I took pity on the fox and drove away the dogs. I found, however, the fox

was dying; it was so seriously injured by the dogs.

"The fox opened its eyes when I approached it and it looked toward the wood several times, giving a significant look to me at the same time. I went immediately into the wood and I discovered a big old *énoki* tree (a high tree belonging to the family of the elm-tree) with a hollow at its root. There was a fox-cub concealing itself in it. I took up the cub.

"When I got back to the spot where I had found the injured fox, it was still alive. I told the fox:

"Poor as I am, I will bring up this cub for you. When it grows up, I will go to a wide field where no dogs are found and set the cub free. And if anybody comes along and tells me he wants to erect a small shrine to make the cub the guardian deity of it, I will arrange the matter properly for this cub of yours; therefore you need not worry about it any more."

"The mother fox died soon. I buried the body in a bush there. Then I took the cub home. I fed the cub by giving it rice-gruel daily. Gradually it became tame. Look!"

So saying, the man opened the cage-door. The fox-cub came out and licked his hands and frisked around him. The rich merchant wanted to have the cub very much and he said:

"I am greatly impressed by your story. I can see that you are a very kind-hearted man. I really want to take this cub home and bring it up in my house. I will make it the guardian deity in my household by erecting a small shrine for it. Will you consent to part with it for me? How much shall I pay as remuneration?"

The man nodded gladly and said:



"Now I can see that you are a man of great sympathy. I am immensely happy to hear that you are going to erect a small shrine for this cub and make it the guardian deity of your household. Take this cub, please. I don't want any remuneration."

So saying, the man gave the fox-cub to the Naniwa merchant along with its cage. The latter thanked the former and went home.

The next morning, the rich man sent one of his servants with many presents to the house of the man living at Koboréguchi village. However the servant found the house closed. He was told by a neighbor that the man had moved somewhere.

"Where?" he asked the neighbor.

"I really don't know," was the reply.

The servant went home disappointed.

The fox-cub did not grow used to anybody in the household, including the rich merchant. The animal looked miserable, sitting in the cage, eating nothing. It became thinner and thinner each day.

"The fox-cub may die soon," they said. "What shall we do?"

One day, a No player came to the house and he said:

"I know that a fox is exceedingly fond of fried rat. In the No play of *Tsuri-Gitsuné* (Trapping a Fox), fried rat is used to trap the fox. You had better give the fox-cub its favorite food."

They caught two rats and made fried rat and gave it to the fox-cub. Still the cub did not eat it and the animal looked more miserable, sitting in the cage.

That very evening, a young girl, about 20 years of

age, came to the rich merchant's house.

Said the girl to a servant:

"I have come to ask a favor of the rich man here."

"Where you come from?—and who are you?" she was asked.

"Just tell your master that I am related to the fox-cub kept here."

"Related to the fox-cub?"

"Yes, I am closely related to the cub, I assure you," she said to the servant again.

The servant went to his master and told him about the strange caller.

"Related to the fox-cub?" echoed the millionaire.

"In that case, she must be a fox, I suppose. Anyway, show her into a room," said the master.

When she was ushered in a room, the rich man told his employees:

"Go and peep into the room and see what she looks like—what clothes she wears—and watch her every movement."

In a little while, one of the servants came and said:

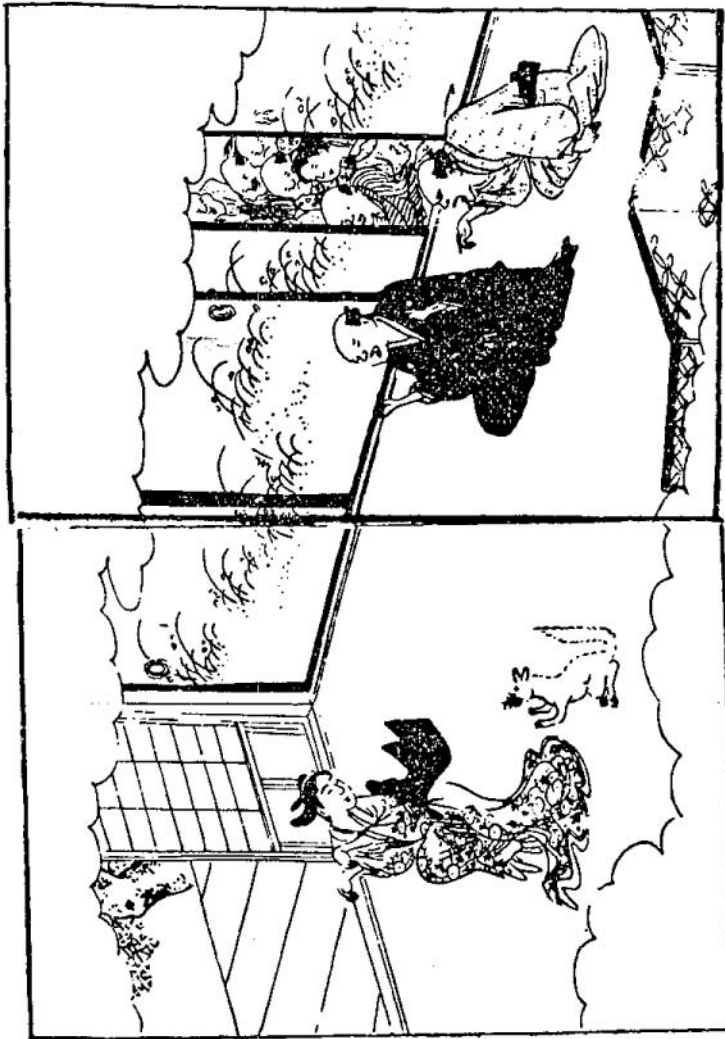
"She looks like an ordinary woman. However she seems to shun the lamplight—and, it may be a mere fancy on my part, she has a *Kitsuné-gao* (a long fox-like face).

Another report was made by another servant:

"Nothing has happened so far. But I imagine I saw her twitch her ears."

A third servant related confidentially to his master:

"She seems to have a habit of sniffing something by distending her nostrils slightly. She must have



She walked with her two arms stretching forward after the fashion of a fox, playing with the fox-cub in a most friendly way.

sniffed the smell of fried rat."

Then an old servant advised the rich merchant:

"You had better show her in here. You need not be afraid of her. She is only a fox. Listen to what she has to say. You must know the truth."

The visitor was brought to the room of the rich man. Said the merchant of wealth:

"Glad to see you, Miss."

The girl answered him politely:

"I am the **aunt** of the fox-cub. I have learned that my niece here is getting thinner every day for want of food—suitable food, I mean. I have come to take her home, to my home. Please let me see her immediately."

The millionaire ordered a servant to bring in the cage of the fox-cub.

"O my niece!" cried the girl in an ecstasy of joy as soon as she saw the fox-cub in the cage. "Let us live together from now on!"

The wealthy man opened the door of the cage and the cub ran out jumping toward the girl.

"O my poor niece!" she said, rising to her feet. Then, to the surprise of those present, she walked with her two arms stretching forward after the fashion of a fox, playing with the fox-cub in a most friendly way.

When she sat down, the fox-cub climbed on her lap, licking her hands.

"I will take care of my niece with your permission from now on. And I thank you heartily for what you have done for her," said the girl to the rich man.

"Not at all," answered the Naniwa merchant. "I am very sorry that I could not do anything for your niece.

Now can I do anything for you? I shall be glad to do anything in my power."

"If you could help our benefactor out of a difficulty—financial worries, I should be very happy, indeed," said the girl demurely.

"Who is your benefactor?" asked the millionaire.

The girl replied:

"He is the man who buried my sister in the wood when she was killed by the dogs and brought up my niece as if he were her own father."

"Was he the man who used to live at Koboréguchi village?" asked the merchant.

"Yes, he was the man, the kind-hearted man—and you were also kind enough to take this niece of mine home and did your best bringing her up," said the fox-girl.

"How much do you need—or rather, how much does your benefactor need?"

"One hundred *ryo*\* would suffice, I think," answered the cub's aunt modestly.

The Naniwa millionaire complied with her request gladly; and she left the house with her niece, the fox-cub, thanking him profusely. And this was the last the rich man saw of the aunt and her niece.

The swindlers, as they learned later, were the man who had generously given the fox-cub to the Naniwa merchant and his niece who paid a visit to take her niece home, along with a sum of one hundred *ryo* in cash.

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\*A unit of old Japanese coinage.

## CHAPTER 9

### THE FOX IN FAIRY TALES

#### The No player and the Fox

ONCE upon a time, there lived a No player in Hiroshima. One day he went to a seaside village, where a festival was held, to give his performance. It was late at night, and he was going home, walking alone at the foot of Mount Hiji.

It was winter and very cold, with the north wind blowing. He took out one of his No masks he was carrying with him. He put it over his face.

"I feel warmer," he said to himself as he walked against the wind. Soon a man came down from the mountain.

"Hallo!" he called out to the No player. "I see you are wearing a strange thing. What is that?"

"This is a No mask," he answered. "I dance wearing this mask."

"A very strange thing!" the man repeated. "Can you always make your face like that when you wear that thing?"

"Yes, I can," replied the No player.

Said the man:

"I am, to tell you the truth, a fox living here in Mount Hiji. I should like to turn myself into a man—exactly like you. Therefore I hope you will kindly

give that thing to me. Please give that thing to me!"

The fox in the form of a man entreated the No player so much that he was obliged to comply with the request of the animal.

Soon after that, the feudal lord of Hiroshima went hawking, and he was passing the foot of Mount Hiji when a fox with a very funny face came down from the mountain and sauntered about, standing on its hind legs.

"Look! a fox!" cried one of the retainers of the lord and he killed the fox instantly with his sword.

The fox was wearing a No mask. It was the fox which had obtained the No mask from the No player who was going back, after giving his performance at the festival held at the seaside village.

The fox seems to have thought that it could become a man exactly like the No player when it put on the mask. The fox made a big mistake, and it cost it its life.

### **The Fox and the Branches of a Big Tree**

A FOX was taking up his abode under a big tree. One day a terrible storm rose and some branches of the big tree were broken and fell and hit the fox on the back.

"Ouch!" cried the fox and looked up at the big tree reproachfully once--just once, and then he left the place without even once looking backward over his shoulder out of disdain. He was disgusted with the big tree. Then he came to a wide field.

In a short time, night began to fall. However he did not want to go back to his former abode. He felt very lonesome, however.

Now he looked back toward the big tree standing high in the heavens. He looked at the tree with a longing eye this time. Then he noticed that the branches of the tree were beckoning him, swaying to and fro.

"Come back, Fox—come back!" the fox thought they were calling aloud, swinging back and forth.

"After all," said the fox to himself, "the branches of the tree were not responsible for striking me on the back. It was the storm that did it."

The fox went back to the big tree and he lived under the protecting branches of it in peace again as he used to.

### **The Gift of a Fox**

ONCE upon a time, there was a poor old man who lived with his old wife in a village. One morning the old man was going to town passing through a field when he saw five or six vagrant dogs eating something ravenously. He found that they were devouring the flesh of a dead horse.

At some distance, the old man also espied a fox, a very miserable-looking skinny one, concealing itself in a thicket. When the fox moved, he could see that it was a lame fox. The fox was looking with envy at those dogs eating the horse-flesh greedily. The fox could not, however, approach them as it was afraid of them.



The old man, out of sympathy, drove the stray dogs away, and gave the poor dog a large piece of the flesh of the dead horse.

"Go home immediately," the old man told the fox. "You had better not stay here long. The stray dogs may come back at any moment."

So saying, the old man went to town.

In the evening, when the old man was returning home, he met the lean fox again. It came to him as soon as it saw him and tugged him by the sleeves. The old man thought it very strange. However he followed the fox as it seemed very solicitous.

Then the fox said to the old man:

"Close your eyes for a while, please."

The old man did as he was told by the fox.

Presently the fox said:

"Now, Ojii-san (dear old man), you may open your eyes."

The old man opened his eyes and found himself in a room of a strange house.

Soon two foxes made their appearance.

"You are welcome here," said one of them, "we owe a great debt of gratitude to you. You were kind enough to take pity on our son and give him a large piece of horse-flesh this morning. My wife and myself are now old—so old that we cannot go out to work; and our son is so weakly and deformed, so he cannot do as he pleases for us.

"How can we repay you? Now we happen to have an old book called Choni-soshi (meaning literally

*audible book*). When you apply this book to your ear, you will be able to hear—and understand what any animal, bird, insect, fish, any living thing is saying—just as you can understand a human being."

Then the old fox offered the book to the old man. It looked like an old almanac. The old man received it with thanks and went home.

The following morning, the old man got up early as usual and he was washing his face when he saw a crow perching on the roof of his house.

Presently another crow came flying from the east and alighted on the roof beside the other bird. And they immediately started to engage in a lively conversation.

On seeing them, the old man wanted to know what they were talking about out of curiosity. Therefore he brought the old book given by the old fox and applied it to one of his ears. And lo! he could understand the talk of the two crows perfectly well.

The first crow was saying:

"Any news?"

Answered the second crow:

"Nothing in particular. However the only daughter of the wealthiest man in the next province is now suffering terribly from pain."

"What pain?" asked the first crow to alight on the roof.

"She has a great difficulty in giving birth to a baby—and doctors and faith-curers can do nothing, absolutely nothing for her," replied the second crow, pruning his feathers elaborately.

"That's too bad. Is there any means to help her out of her difficulty?"

"Yes, I know it. In this case, they should make a decoction of the leaf of an old almanac and a needle, and let her drink it. Then she will have an easy delivery. Human beings look wise and seem to know everything; but they are so ignorant and do not know even such a trivial thing as relieving a woman of difficult labor. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" his friend laughed, too.

"Ha, ha, ha!" they laughed together and flew away, flapping their wings.

On hearing the talk of the crows on the roof through the medium of the old almanac, the old man immediately set out to help the only daughter of the wealthiest man in the next province.

The effect of the decoction made by the old man by learning from the wise crow on the roof was simply wonderful. The wealthiest man in the next province was so glad to see his only daughter become the happiest mother in the province that he rewarded the old man for his good service handsomely—so handsomely that he returned home to be the richest man in his village.

#### The Carpenter and Foxes

ONCE upon a time, there was a young carpenter who was commonly called Toku-san.

Toku-san was now going to a moor named Maki,

a moor supposed to be infested with foxes. Toku-san was a fellow stubborn and obstinate in disposition. He was a complete sceptic in regard to the bewitching power of *Kitsuné*. His scepticism exasperated his fellow carpenters, who finally challenged him to go to the moor.

If nothing happened, Toku-san was to receive a big bottle of *saké*. If, on the other hand, he should suffer through the charm of foxes, he was to present a similar gift to his friends. And now he was drawing near his destination, the moor of Maki, at dusk.

There was a stream flowing murmuring. When Toku-san was crossing an earthen bridge, he saw a lone firefly skimming over the water—an eerie phosphorescent light flitted, and vanished in the twilight. Then he happened to see a fox which was covering itself with some duckweed.

"So it is now trying to disguise itself, eh?" Toku-san chuckled to himself at the thought that he could now outwit the cunning animal.

Presently the young carpenter saw the white face of a pretty girl against the darkness of night.

"Hallo, Toku-san!" accosted the girl in a charming voice. She was Sayo, the daughter of the farmer of his neighboring village called Kami-Horikane. The girl was married to Kisaku, the eldest son of the headman of the village of Maki.

"Where are you going now, Toku-san?" asked the girl.

"Why, I am going to the village hard by," replied the carpenter bluntly.

"In that case," said the white face, "may I accompany you, as you will pass my native place?"

Toku-san thought this very odd. He made up his mind that it was surely a fox *trying* to bewitch him. So he determined to turn the tables on the crafty beast. He accepted her offer and walked behind her thinking he would see the end of a fox's tail peeping out. But, to his disappointment, there was nothing to be seen.

When Toku-san and the girl reached Kami-Horikané village, the parents of the girl came out and they were much surprised to see her.

"Oh, dear me! oh, dear me! Aren't you Sayo? Nothing wrong, I hope," said her mother.

The carpenter, with a smile of superior wisdom, secretly told the old couple that the girl was not their daughter; but a fox in disguise. The parents were at first indignant and refused to believe what they were told by Toku-san. Eventually, however, the carpenter persuaded them to leave the girl in his hands and told them to wait for the result concealing themselves somewhere.

Then Toku-san seized the girl abruptly.

"You fox!" he said, "show your tail!"

So saying, he took up a piece of wood and stunned her by beating her with it.

The carpenter expected to see her turn into a fox. The girl, however, did not show her true colors. He touched her and, to his great surprise, he found she was dead!

At this juncture, the parents of the girl came rush-

ing in and bound Toku-san to a pillar and fiercely accused him of murder.

"You scoundrel! You have killed my daughter!" they cried.

Now it so happened that a Buddhist priest came and, hearing the noise, requested an explanation. The parents of Sayo, the girl, told the priest all.

The priest, after listening to the carpenter's pleadings, begged the old couple to spare the life of the young man in order that he might become in time a good and devout priest.

This request was acceded to at last.

"Sit down," said the priest, "Now I will shave your head so that you will become a disciple of Buddha."

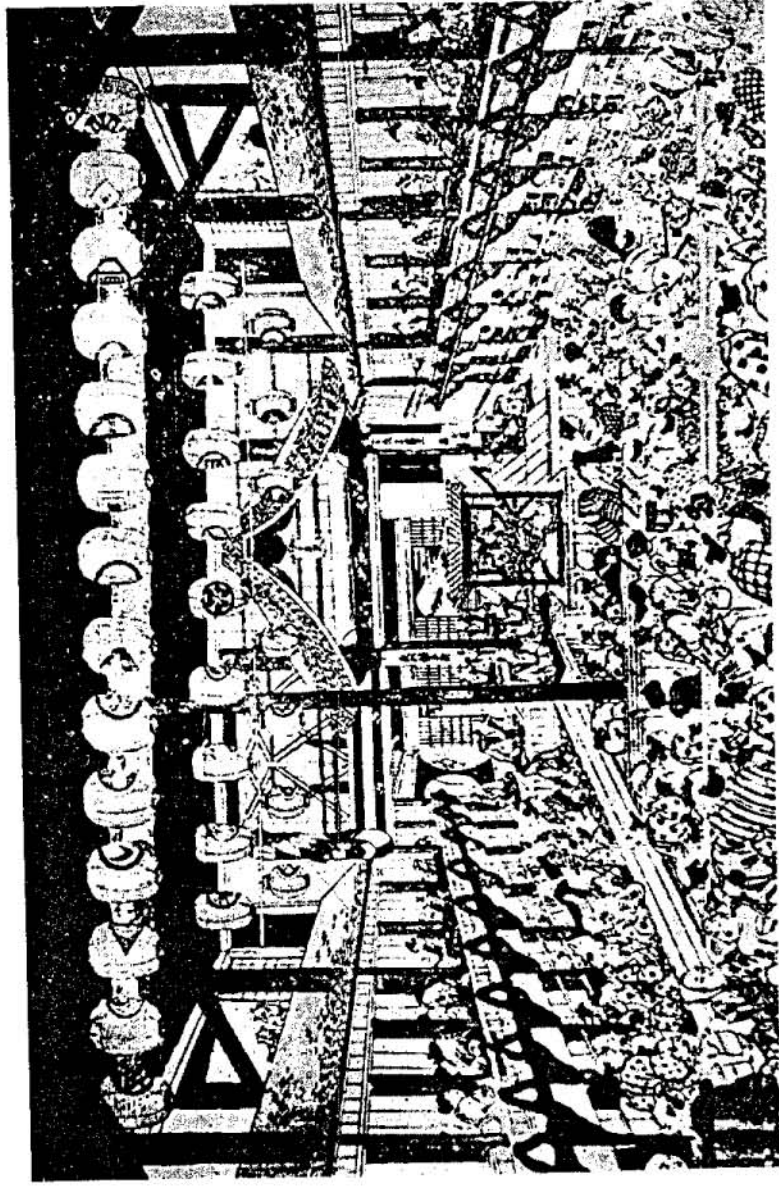
The mother of the girl brought a razor and a bowl containing water. The young carpenter knelt down to have his head shaved, as was the custom to become a priest,—happy, no doubt, to be released from his predicament so easily.

No sooner, however, had the head of Toku-san been shaved completely than he heard a loud peal of laughter, and he awoke to find himself sitting in the large moor, alone. He instinctively raised his hand to his head to discover that he had been thoroughly shaved!

The girl, her parents and the priest—all of them—were foxes in disguise!

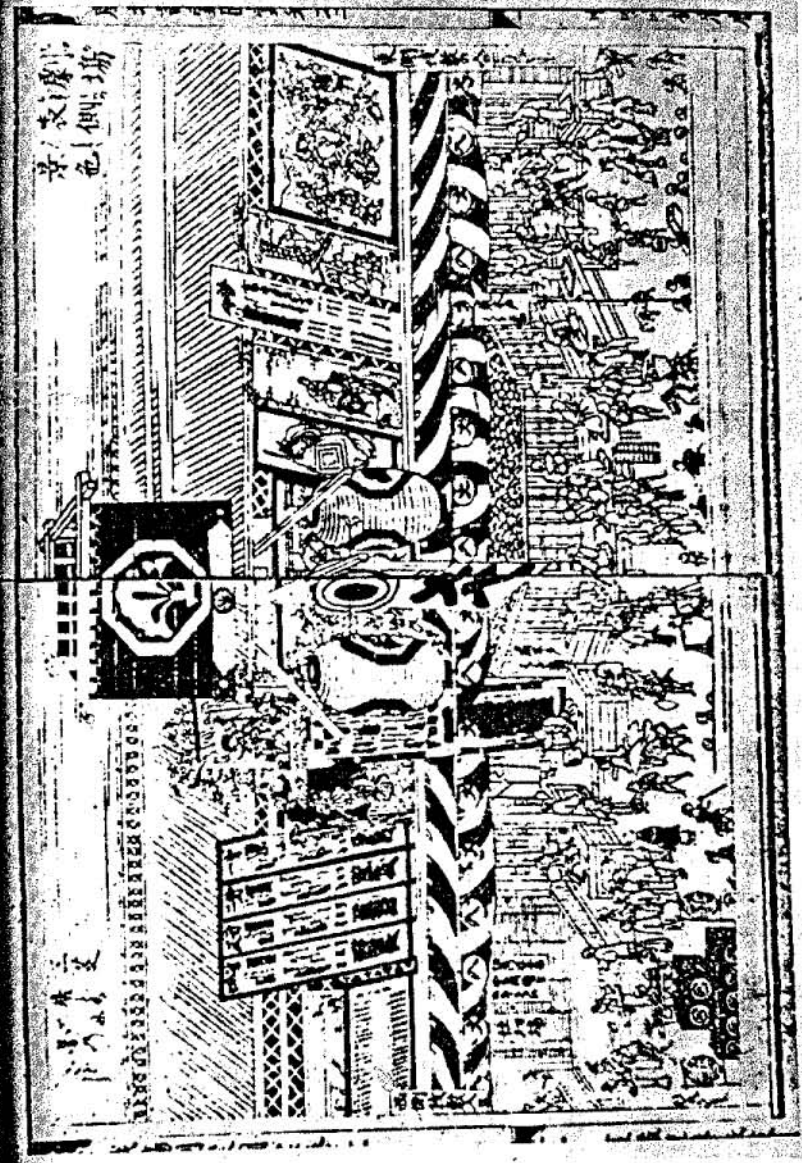
Toku-san, the carpenter, had lost his bet!

He took out a *ténugui* (Japanese towel) immediately, wrapped it round his face, and went back home, drooping his shaved head.



The Kabuki-za Theatre in the Latter Part of the Edo Era (1615-1867)

Inside



The Kabuki-za Theatre in the Latter Part of the Edo Era (1615-1867)

Outside



There was a giant camphor tree in the wood with its branches spreading in all directions darkening the sky. This tree was widely known as the *Camphor Tree with Innumerable Branches*. *Chié-no-Kusunoki*. There are many poems referring to the wood and the camphor tree. For instance, Minamoto-no-Toshiyori, a famous poet at that time, sings:

*O cuckoo of Shinoda Wood  
Singing in the month of May  
Filling each branch of the camphor tree  
With her melody, sweet and gay!*

*KUZU-NO-HA*, or *The Fox-Wife of Shinoda Wood*, is a 5-act play of the fox marrying a young *samurai* of good family out of gratitude and love.

In the reign of the Emperor Murakami (926-967), there lives a *samurai* called Abé-Yasuaki in Sétsu Province, and his son is Yasuna by name.

To save the life of a young fox, Yasuna, on his way to the Shinoda shrine in the wood, fights with Tsunéhira, a military commissioner who is hunting foxes to obtain their livers for his wife suffering from an incurable disease, on the advice of his brother Doman, an astrologer.

Yasuna sustains several wounds and a charming girl comes along and takes him home. (She is, in reality, the fox saved.)

Yasuaki, Yasuna's father, coming for the rescue of his son, is killed by Tsunéhira, the military commissioner. A retainer of Yasuaki, in pursuit of the killer, finds the wicked man in front of the house of the charming girl. Yasuna comes out and avenges his father by killing Tsunéhira.

After the incident, Yasuna lives with the girl, whose

*Kuzu-no-Ha Writing Her Farewell Poem*  
by Kunisada

In this *shibai-é*, play picture, Kuzu-no-Ha, the fox-woman, is writing her farewell ode on a *shoji*, paper sliding-door, holding a writing-brush in her mouth, holding also her child in her arms. Yasuna, her husband, is in the adjoining room looking at her and her writing.

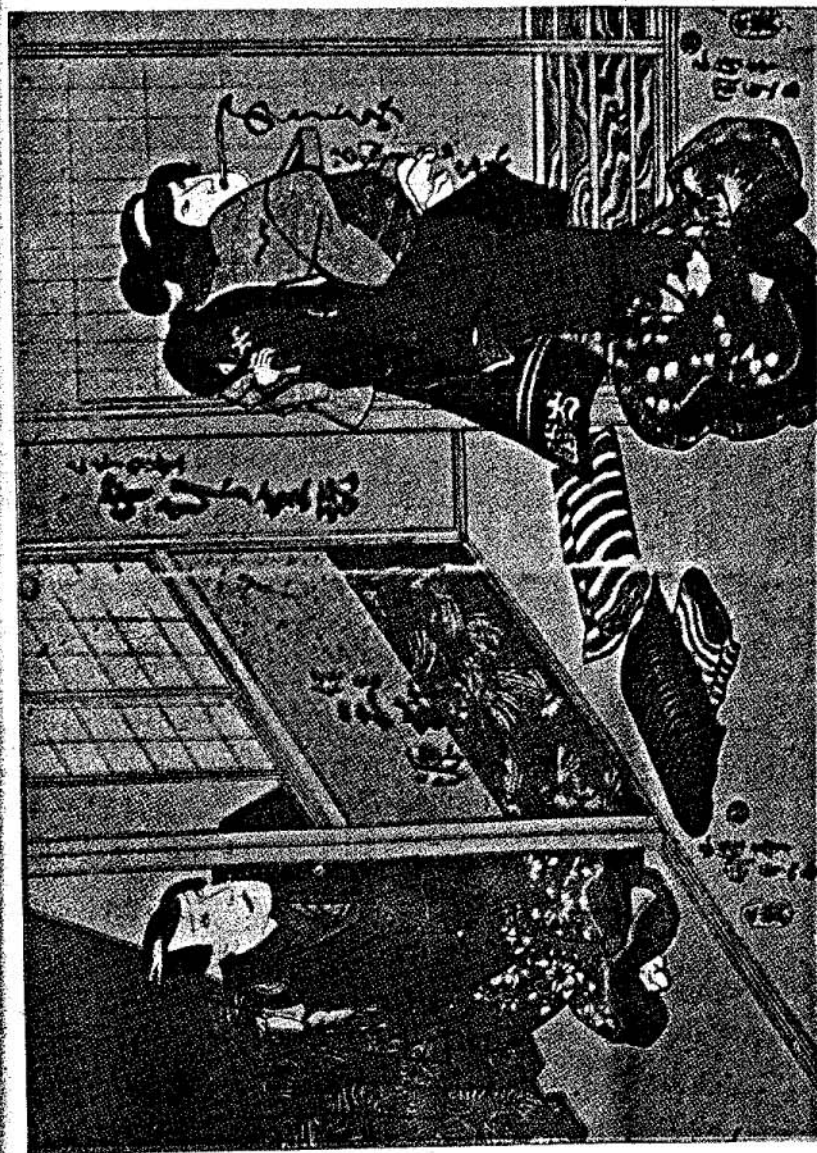
In this play of *Kuzu-no-Ha*, this scene is considered to be a most pathetic one appealing to the audience.

The fox-woman, as you notice, is writing her poem in an unusual way: She is writing upward from the bottom. This difficult method is adopted in this play, usually. Quite a feat to be performed. The actor impersonating the fox-woman must become an expert in this way of writing.

This play was presented at the Nakamura-za theatre in September, 1831.

Nakamura-Shikan II as Kuzu-no-Ha.

Mimasu-Gonnosuke as Yasuna.





Portrait of Great Astrologer Séiméi

name is Kuzu-no-Ha (Arrowroot-Leaf). Later they are blessed with a child, a very intelligent boy.

When the boy is 7 years old, his mother, the charming woman, while feasting her eyes on the chrysanthemums in rapture, reveals her natural shape, an old fox, by showing the end of the tail. The child sees it. Therefore she feels regret for it—so deeply that she disappears, after leaving the following parting ode on a paper sliding-door:

If you love me, darling, come and see me.  
You will find me yonder in the great wood  
Of Shinoda of *Izumi* Province where the leaves  
Of arrowroots always rustle in pensive mood.

Yasuna goes to see the woman in the wood taking the child along with him.

Presently, the fox makes its appearance. The fox, Yasuna now learns, is the deity of the Shinoda shrine. The fox gives the child a casket called Ryugu-no-Hako, or the Casket of the Sea God's Palace, with which one can tell the meaning of the language of birds and beasts.

It is now 3 years later. You will see the child of 10, with the dignified name of Séiméi, who has become famous by beating his opponent, Doman, in the contest of astrology held in the Imperial palace. The Emperor confers the degree of Doctor of Astrology on Séiméi, who becomes the greatest astrologer in the latter part of the 10th century, winning the favor of the Emperor Kazan and the Emperor Ichijyo.

**Tamamo-no-Maé,**

## Japan's Greatest Kitune Adventuress

Tamamo-no-Maé is a name notorious in legend, and she is found in plays and No plays.

Concerning Tamamo-no-Maé, the white nine-tailed fox of bewitchery, you will read the following account in *The Story of Inu-o-mono* or *The Story of Setting Dogs on the Fox* found in *The Kagaku-shu*, written in 1446:

THERE is a king called Pan-Tsu in the remote western region of ancient India. His consort named Hua-yang, is, in reality, a white fox with nine tails. She is wicked and cruel by nature. She takes pleasure in seeing a thousand innocent people killed.

Later she flees to China when her true colors are disclosed. In China, calling herself Pao-ssu, she joins the harem of Yu, a king of the Chou dynasty.

She finally becomes the queen, still heartless and cruel. She rarely smiles unless she sees some cruel deed done. The king wants to see her smile, and therefore he does everything cruel to please her. The king and his kingdom cease to exist because of Pao-ssu, the nine-tailed fox.

After her death, Pao-ssu is born in Japan in the 12th century. It is the reign of the 76th Emperor Konoyé (according to another legend, the reign of the Emperor Toba, the 74th Emperor).

She enters the Imperial palace as a Court lady, now calling herself Tamamo-no-Maé. She is a woman of extraordinary beauty. Later, however, she turns herself into a fox—the Golden-Furred Fox with Nine

The Nine-Tailed Fox Appearing in the Form of  
Tamamo-no-Maé Again from the *Séssho-Séki*,  
Now with a Deathly Face  
Before Disappearing forever.

by Kuniyasu

This play was presented at the Nakamura-za theatre in September, 1809.

Nakamura-Utaémon III as Tamamo-no-Maé.  
(Another name of this actor was Nakamura-Shikan.  
as a *haiku* poet.)







Tails—when she is forced to disclose her natural shape by Abé-Yasuchika, a great astrologer (a descendant of Abé-Séiméi of the 10th century).

The fox is now found to be extremely harmful, killing thousands of people. Therefore dogs are set on it in an attempt to slay the animal, whereupon the nine-tailed fox flees to the Nasuno plain in Shimozuké Province, where, according to legend, it turns itself into a stone, a poisonous stone, and kills every living thing approaching it. Even the birds flying above it drop dead, and all plants growing near it wither. Hence the name of *Séssho-Séki*, the Stone of Life Destruction.

Tamamo-no-Mae! The greatest adventuress of *Kitsuné* legend! Just imagine. A Court Lady of matchless beauty with long raven tresses attired in a gorgeous robe of silk and a trailing, flaming red skirt, carrying a large fan of hi-ogi in her elegant hand! When compelled to reveal her true colors by the noted astrologer of the Court, she flees to the desolate moor of Nasuno and turns herself again into a stone of poison, killing human beings, birds and beasts, and withering plants—until finally destroyed with a big hammer in the hand of the great priest Genno in the reign of the Emperor Gofukakusa in the 13th century!

#### Sembon Zakura, or Romance of Yoshitsune

This is a drama in which a fox named Genkuro is **figured**. This fox plays a prominent role, though this play is primarily a dramatic version of the romance of the national hero Yoshitsuné, one of the most popular

heroes in the history of Japan, and his mistress Shizuka, the former famous dancer of Kyoto, the capital.

Minamoto-no-Yoshitsuné, as a brother of Yoritomo, contributed greatly to overthrowing the Héiké family, the rival family, and establishing the system of *Shogunate* for the first time in Japan assisting Yoritomo.

Yoritomo, however, was a very jealous man. He did not like Yoshitsuné because of the latter's popularity. Therefore he persecuted Yoshitsuné in every way until the latter was betrayed and killed at the age of 31 in 1189.

GENKURO, the fox, makes his appearance, in the drama, when Yoshitsuné, as a refugee persecuted by his brother, Yoritomo, stays at a mansion of a sympathizer at Yoshino, famous for its cherry-blossoms.

Yoshitsuné has a devoted retainer whose name is Tadanobu, one of the Four Right-Hand Men of Yoshitsuné. Now Genkuro, the fox, wants to obtain the *tsuzumi* (hand-drum) owned by Lady Shizuka, formerly a great dancer in Kyoto, now a devoted sweetheart of Yoshitsuné. Therefore Genkuro assumes the shape of Tadanobu who has gone to his native province. Genkuro follows Shizuka on her way to Yoshino to meet her lover, Yoshitsuné. And at the mansion there, the true nature of Genkuro, the fox, is disclosed by Lady Shizuka.

And now the reciter of the *yoruri*\* will tell you the rest of this act—to the music of samisen, with the cherry-blossoms of Yoshino in full bloom as the background, a delightful scene.

"You imposter! Tadanobu in disguise! Out with it! Now, now, now! Confess yourself! Tadanobu

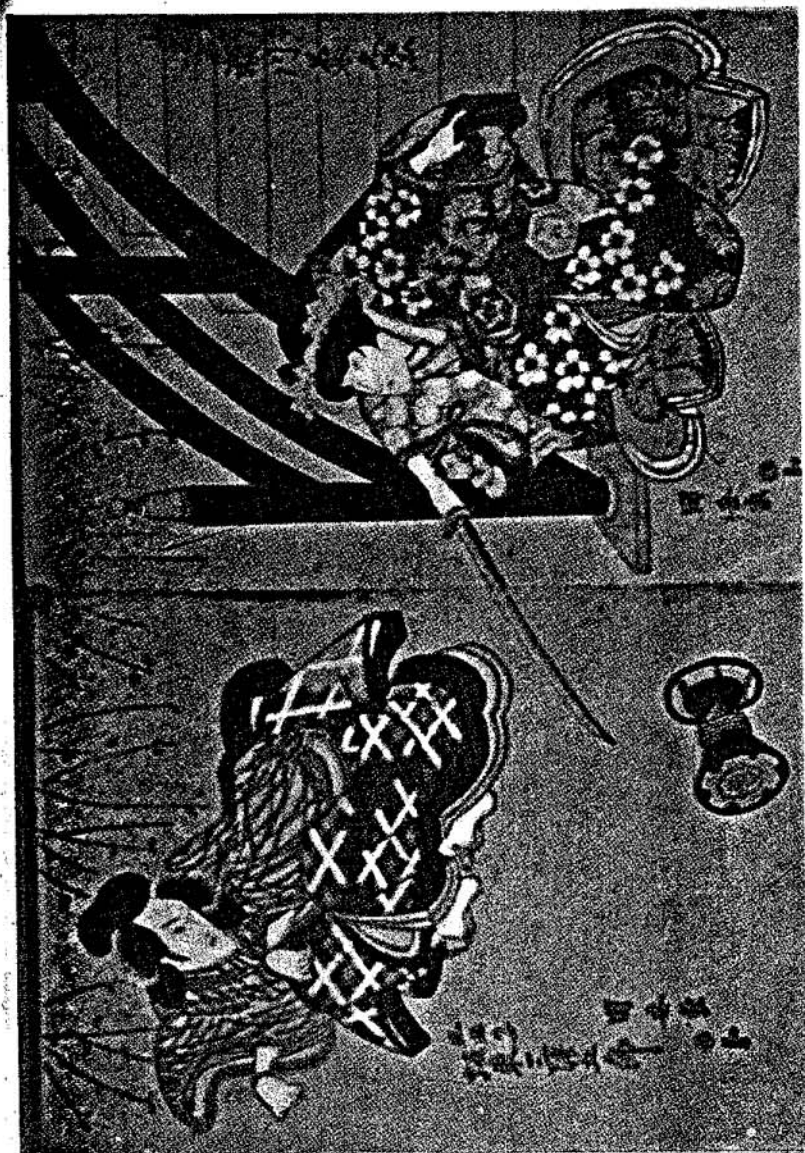
\*In the Kabuki drama, the orchestra will speak the dialogue and action of each actor. It is known as *yoruri*, a kind of ballad-drama.

Fox-Tadanobu, Pursued by Shizuka, Is Jumping Up  
Dropping the Hand-Drum in His Hands.

by Kuniyasu

This play was presented at the Ichimura-za theatre in May 1825  
Ségawa-Kikunojo V as Shizuka  
Banto-Mitsugoro III as Fox-Tadanobu





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has come back and I know you are an imposter!"  
(says the "joruri" reciter in the words of Shizuka).

Facing thus a barrage of cross-questions, the fox in the shape of Tadanobu is at a loss for an answer. He can do nothing but prostrate himself before Lady Shizuka for a while.

Then he raises his head. He takes up the *tsuzumi*. He places it quietly before her, after lifting it reverently to his head. He gets to his feet slowly. He steps down onto the garden with a heavy heart. He makes an obeisance to Lady Shizuka putting both his hands on the ground dejectedly.

"I have hitherto concealed my identity," (says the "joruri" reciter in the words of the fox). However since Tadanobu himself has come back from his native province, I find it impossible to assume his form any more. So I will tell you the truth, your Ladyship.

"The *tsuzumi* has a history of its own. That is *Hatsuné-no-Tsuzumi*—the ancient famous *tsuzumi*. When prayers for rains were offered in the reign of the Emperor Kammu (737-806), two foxes, male and female, one thousand years old, living in the province of Yamato, were hunted out, and with their skins a *tsuzumi* was made. The two foxes, my Ladyship, were my parents.

"It was the *tsuzumi* used, on that occasion, for soliciting the God of Rain for sending rain when there was a long spell of dry weather. When beaten against the sun, it would rain to the joy of the farmers.

"The *tsuzumi* sounds like the sound of waves. *Kitsuné*, your Ladyship, is an animal feminine by nature. Therefore it would invariably rain charmed by the sound of the instrument. For this

gaki Himé, daughter of Kenshin, head of the former family, and Katsuyori, son of Shingen, head of the latter family—is woven into the fabric of this drama.

It is good to see the beautiful young lady, Yayégaki Himé, the heroine into whose body the spirit of Kitsuni—the sacred fox messenger of the Suwa shrine—enters, and the handsome young samurai, Katsuyori, the hero of the drama, who loves her as intensely as she loves him.

In one act, you will see the Kitsuni-bi, fox-fire, flaring up, here and there, in the dark garden as Yayégaki Himé walks, carrying the helmet, the heirloom of the Takédas, in her hands, the helmet of Suwa Hossho adorned with abundant long white tufts, the helmet supposed to have been given by the god of Suwa to the ancestors of the Takédas. She is now going to cross the frozen lake of Suwa in an attempt to save the life of her lover, Katsuyori....



You will see Kitsuné-bi, fox-fire, flaring up  
in the dark garden as Yayégaki Himé walks,  
carrying the helmet...

by Kunichika

Onouyé-Kikugoro V, famous for taking female parts, acted the role of Yayégaki Himé when this play was presented at the Kabuki-za theatre in February, 1894.

# No Masks



Man



Old man



Strong man



God



Man



Old man



Strong man



God



Young man



Female demon



Lion



Young woman



Woman



Old woman

## CHAPTER 11

### THE FOX IN NO PLAYS

NO plays, which dated from the early part of the 15th century, are quite Japanese in their form and tone—one of the most excellent products of Japan's culture that can safely be compared with *The Manyo-shu*, the first anthology of the country, *The Genji Monogatari* of Murasaki Shikibu, or *haiku*, the 17-syllable ode.

No, in the strict sense of the word, is not a drama. No has its own characteristic, an excellence all its own. No has its characters, *shit * (protagonist) and *waki* (deuteragonist). The former, as the Japanese word signifies, is the *doer* and the latter, the *bystander*.

In No plays masks are used. They are made by specialists. The reason is that, in the No play, the expression of the human face had to be restrained. In the case of an unpainted face, actors are placed under restriction in impressing the audience thoroughly with their expression. Besides when a man impersonates a woman—or an old man impersonates a young man and vice versa, the players cannot represent their roles properly.

In such a case when the actor impersonates such an animal as a monkey, lion, or other animal, and such an imaginary supernatural thing as demon, ghost, or *tengu* (a long-nosed goblin with supernatural power),



the human facial expression is enough to answer the purpose adequately. There are two methods by which the various restrictions may be removed: one is to make up the face itself, the other is to put on a mask.

No masks are strange things and the making of them is a strange art; they are not merely carvings. They are not things to be admired by hanging them on the wall. The real value of the No masks is to be appreciated when the players play their parts wearing them on the stage—the No stage which is so simple, with a single picture of a green pine tree as scenery.

No masks can be classified into 5: God. Man. Woman. Animal, and Demon. There are about 57 regular No masks in use now on the No stage.

The No play developed from a pantomimic drama after the reign of the Emperor Shirakawa (1053-1129). There are two kinds of play: One is of serious nature, and the other, a farce. This play is accompanied by yokyoku or utai (No song). At present there are about 230 yokyoku songs, and the style of singing is different according to each school. There are five principal schools of No plays.

*Kitsuné* are also found in No plays. Some fox-plays of No belong to the No play of a serious nature, most of which are based on history or legend. Others are found in several farces. (No No masks are used in the No play in which foxes are figured.)

Examples of some No plays in outline are given in this chapter. The beauty of No plays is to see them played on the No stage to the accompaniment of *yo-*

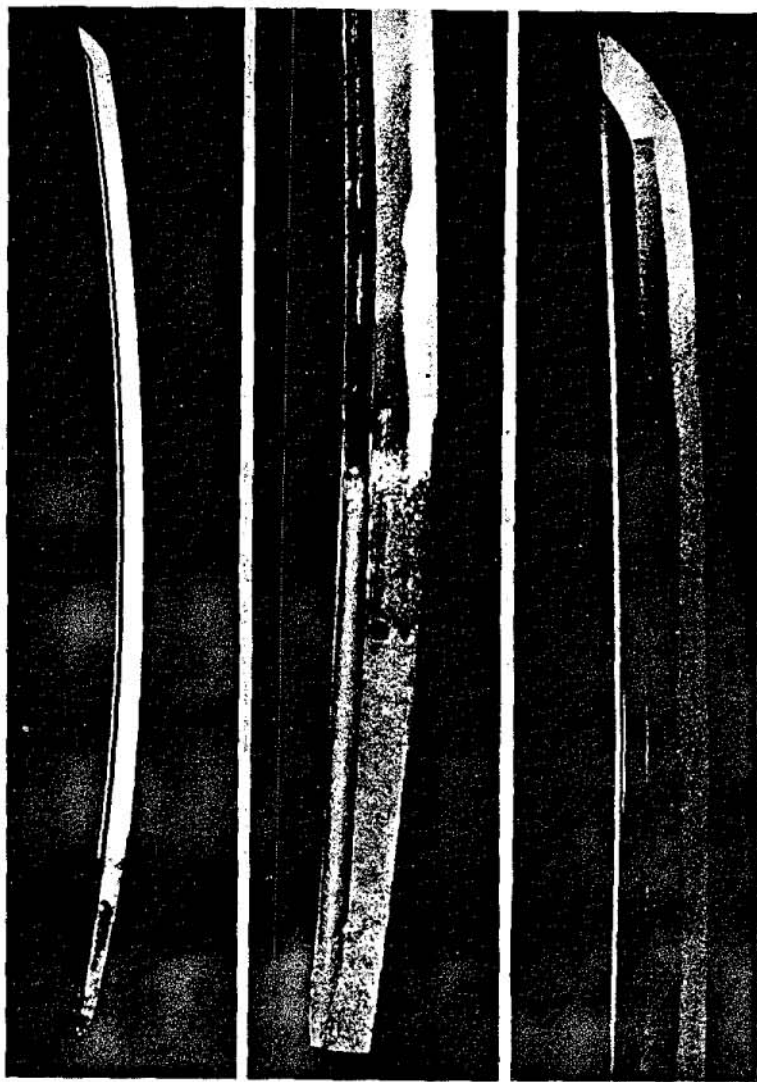


Photo: Courtesy of the National Museum of Kyoto.

The blade shown here is the property of Mr. Shinichi Hamada of Hyogo Prefecture. It is the work of Kanénaga, one of the great swordsmiths belonging to the Sanjo school of which Munéchika was the founder. This blade may give some idea of the fine sword made by Munéchika by the Imperial command, inspired by his great faith in the Inari God.

*kyoku*, or *utai*. They are simple in plot, superb when you see them played.

### *Sanjo Kokaji, or Munechika, the Swordsmith*

Munéchika, founder of the famous Sanjo school of swordsmithery, who lived at Sanjo, Kyoto, in 10th century Japan, is the principal character of this *No* play. He is said to have made the fine blade of *Kogitsuné-maru* by Imperial command. This *No* drama tells about the legend relative to this celebrated sword.

MUNECHIKA, in his sacred place of work, his swordsmithery, is working night and day with his companion hammer. Now he looks haggard and emaciated. He is working very hard since he has received the order



The white fox messenger coming to assist Munéchika.

of the Mikado to make a fine sword for him.

Greatly moved by the zeal and a strong sense of responsibility with which Munéchika is exerting himself to the utmost, the God of Inari at Fushimi, Kyoto, sends a white fox messenger, which takes possession of the young companion hammer, and assists Munéchika in making a fine blade.

The name of *Kogitsuné-maru*, Young Fox, is given to the sword tempered by Munéchika in appreciation of the assistance given by the white fox of Inari, according to the legend.\*

### *Tsurigitsune, or Trapping a Fox*

A Farce

AN OLD fox, in the guise of a priest named Hakuzosu, goes to the house of a trapper who is a nephew to the priest to persuade him not to set traps to catch foxes.

The trapper, however, sees through the design. The fox is trapped—and manages to effect an escape with his bare life, a farce with a tinge of irony.

### *Tamamo-no-Maé*

THE legend of the Golden-Furred Fox with Nine Tails is also played by No players. This No play, however, is performed to the accompaniment of yokyoku

\*By the way, the halberd You see on the top of one of the floats in the internationally-known Gion Festival of Kyoto is the work of Munéchika, a national treasure.

(utai), No songs; and it has a charm of its own.

The legend of Tamamo-no-Maé became widely known among the populace with the vogue of yokyoku.

### *Sado-gitsune, or the Fox of Sado Island*

A Farce

TWO farmers, one from Echizen Province, and the other from Sado Island, meet on their way to the magistrate's office to pay the land tax. They make a bet concerning *Kitsuné* of Sado Island. The latter loses the wager through his stupidity.

### *Kitsune-zuka, or the Earth of Foxes*

A Farce

A FARM hand, a coward by nature, is sent by his master to a rice field near *Kitsuné-zuka* infested with mischievous foxes to shoo away sparrows by means of bird-clappers.

Another farm hand is also sent by the master after the first one to see what he is doing down there in the rice field. On seeing the latter, the former binds him up with a straw rope attached to a bird-clapper believing him to be a fox in disguise.

Later the master himself comes to the rice field to see what his farm hands are doing, too.

The coward, on seeing the master, binds him also taking him for another fox coming to bewitch him. Then he proceeds to smoke out the foxes, burning green pine-needles, according to the proper method.

After a while, the coward tells the two victims that he wants to make a cushion out of their skins and he goes to borrow a sickle from a farmhouse in the neighborhood.

Meanwhile the two men unfasten the ropes and, when the fellow comes back with a sickle, they bind him with a straw rope—and go away leaving him behind in the rice field near Kitsuné-zuka believed to be infested with *Kitsuné*.

## CHAPTER 12

### THE FOX IN POETRY

IT is interesting to note that in the 4th or the 5th century when people were hardy and simple, we find the first ode of *Kitsuné* in The *Mannyo-shu*<sup>1</sup> and that it was a different sort of poetry from that of later years.

*Kitsuné*, in the 4th or the 5th century, was generally regarded as man's friends, and they treated the animal as such. And naturally they would derive enjoyment by playing a prank on it in a spirit of friendliness and familiarity.

Thus Okimaro, one of the noted poets at that time, sings in the anthology with delight and mischief:

*"Kitsu"*<sup>2</sup> is coming from *Hibashi* at *Ichihitsu*.  
Keep the water boiling, children, in a pot.  
We will welcome our guest coming so often  
By pouring it over him while it is hot.

It may be said that a frequent contact of foxes with men brought about a friendly feeling toward them,

<sup>1</sup> The oldest anthology of Japan containing 4,496 poems compiled from the first year of the Emperoe Nintoku, 313, to 760 in the reign of the Emperor Junnin—a period of 446 years.

The characteristic of this anthology lies in the fact that the poems contained in the anthology are an expression, simple and frank, of the people.

<sup>2</sup> Ancient name for *Kitsuné*, not an abbreviation.



especially so in the rural districts. In those days, the foxes appearing in the fields at the back of the farm-houses were considered to be domestic animals like dogs.

In later years, however, *Kitsuné* was thought to be an animal, uncanny, fearful, mysterious, and crafty. And the poets and poetesses (and the latter were predominant) of the 10th or the 11th century of the Heian Era, the golden era of Japan's literature, what with superstition under the influence of Buddhism and what with the mannerism in prosody, did not wish to take up such an animal as *Kitsuné* as the subject of their poems, apparently, though they would compose poems on such birds and animals as uguisu (a singing bird, a kind of bush-water), wild geese, or deer, with interest and sentiment.

There is a Japanese bird, by the way, commonly called *goi-sagi*, a night-heron. (Sagi is the Japanese for the English heron and goi means the 5th grade Court rank.)

The Emperor Konoyé (1139-1155), according to the record, was pleased to confer that rank on this heron because of the sentimental note it gave while flying away in the air when a banquet was being held at the Diving Spring Garden, an Imperial pleasure ground. Those present, it is said, composed poems of sentiment on this nocturnal bird.

### *Kitsune in Haiku*

THE poets of haiku (formerly called *haikai*), the 17-syllable ode, took up Kitsuni as a subject of haiku. Haiku, a school of poetry, found its great master in Matsuo-Basho (died 1694).

Basho was a page as a child of 10 and served the son of the feudal lord Todo of Iga Province. He found great interest in haiku by the influence of his master whose nom de plume as a *haiku* poet was Zengin, Singing Cicada.

At the age of 31, Basho shaved his head, and called himself Furaibo, Wanderer, in Edo (present Tokyo). After that, he perfected himself in the art of haiku by traveling all over the country.

Here is a haiku of Kitsuni made by Basho in a humorous vein and sent to his friend who became a doctor. This one was given to his friend on the occasion of the *Hatsu-uma*\* festival.

The haiku sent by Basho to his doctor friend was as follows:

Congratulations, friend, you took the tonsure  
On this auspicious day of "Hatsu-uma"  
Solemnized by the foxes of the God of "Inari!"

In those days, it was customary for a person who became a doctor to shave his head. And, as related in the chapter Fox in Fairy Tales, *Kitsuné* were sup-

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\*A festival celebrated in February at the Inari shrines throughout the country.

posed to play a prank on men by shaving their heads. Basho, therefore, took the occasion to give vent to his sense of humor by sending his friend the *haiku*.

AMONG other *haiku* poets, Yosa-Buson (1715-1783) is known as the greatest lover of *Kitsuné*, and a large number of fox-*haiku* will be found in his *haiku* collection.

Buson was not only the first *haiku* poet to contribute greatly to the restoration of *haiku* during the era of Temméi (1781-1788), but also famous as a prominent artist of the Nantsung school (the southern school of Chinese painting).

He also wrote a very good hand. His paintings and writings are now highly valued. (You can see some of his works at the Itsu-o Museum at Ikéda city, near Osaka.)

Here are some examples of Buson's fox-*haiku*:

*O spring with dream-like eve!  
A fox has assumed the form  
Of a young and handsome prince!*

Buson was a poet gifted with a rare power of imagination. Most of his *haiku* of *Kitsuné* are imaginary ones, and he seemed to have reveled in this sort of thing.

The above *haiku* was made in the evening of spring and he must have thought that it was an ideal eve for any fox, of romantic disposition, to turn itself into the form of a young and handsome prince.

*I espied a fox-cub, lovely and innocent-looking,  
Concealing itself, at my foot-steps, behind  
The bush clovers, feeling safe and secure.*



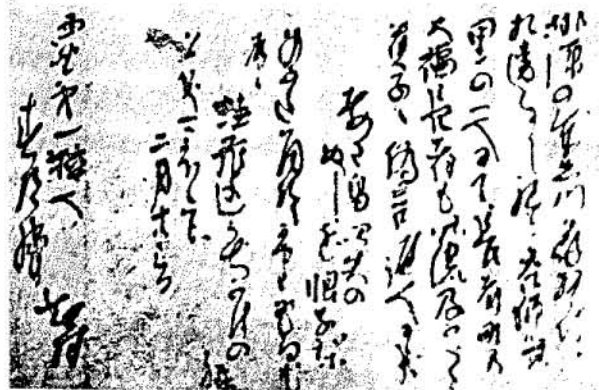
Portrait of Buson



A Farmer Feeding a Horse,  
by Buson



Buson's hai-ga  
(Haiga: rough sketches by haiku-poets)



Buson's writing

As an artist, Buson excelled in the art of sketch. Now he displays his skill in this *haiku*. What a fine contrast! The bush clovers in full bloom! And a brown-furred fox-cub with a white face! An exquisite sketch, this. And he sketches the timid fox-cub with affection—as a great lover of *Kitsuné*.

Spring night!  
"Kitsuné" will lure Court pages  
With its charm and honeyed words!

Also an imaginary one. In this case, however, *Kitsuné* will assume the shape of a charming girl, no doubt.

"Fox-Fire" is burning in the rain  
In the field of Farmer Gorosaku.  
No wonder this is the harvesting time of barley!

Fox-fire, or *Kitsuné-bi* (See the chapter for *Kitsuné-bi*, or *Fox-fire*) was supposed to be seen often in the harvesting time of barley. And the fox-fire is burning in the rain! Real or imaginary, it must have been a weird and dreary sight. Buson was a man very fond of portraying such a scene as this.

Across a moor with dead grass  
A fox was seen going in a great hurry  
In the guise of an express messenger.



An express messenger of olden days.

*Kitsuné* was supposed to act as an express messenger for man. Buson saw an express messenger going fast across a desolate moor and he imagined that it was a fox assuming the shape of an express messenger, perhaps.

### Kitsune in Senryu

SENRYU is also a school of Japanese poetry created during the Temméi Era (1781-1788) by Garai-Senryu living in Édo. It is so called because of its originator, Senryu, according to some students of *senryu*.

This is a kind of *haiku*, but of comical nature. Its characteristic is that contains satire and humor on the phases of human affairs and life in general. It takes people by surprise in its ways of expression and sometimes it is rather vulgar and indecent, it must be admitted. However it tells the truth of life—and in a bold fashion.

It would not be fair, therefore, to say that *senryu* is an ode inferior to *haiku*. On the contrary, *senryu* has its own merit and originality—a sphere of its own.

Among the *senryu* collections, The Yanagi-Daru Collection compiled by Senryu is the most poignant and humorous. Many *senryu* contained in this collection are still used as pithy sayings and epigrams—such as the following:

When you wish to be good to your parents,  
They are, alas, no more.

\* \* \*

The husband is the only person who does not know



Portrait of Garai-Senryu and part of draft of  
The Yanagi-Daru Collection compiled by Senryu.



About his own wife's personal doings.

\* \* \*

"Koken-nin" will sometimes want  
To see the "front side" of his ward.

Koken-nin is guardian—a Japanese word meaning *literally* the one who sees from the back. In the case of this *senryu*, however, he seems to take interest in seeing her from the front side. (A suggestive verse.)

In *senryu*, you will see *Kitsuné* galore. In The *Yanagi-Daru* Collection alone, more than 70 fox-senryu will be found, a fact proving the popularity of the fox among the populace.

Examples are given below:

Even now we are apt to be bewitched  
By white-faced foxes.

White-faced foxes means women of charm, such as *geisha* girls and other seductive ones.

\* \* \*

A foolish fox is found *puzzled*  
By taking possession of a deaf-mute.

Naturally. Even a fox endowed with the power of bewitchery will be given a deaf ear by such a person, no doubt. A satire.

\* \* \*

On the lake of Suwa, a fox will lead  
A horse by the bridle in crossing it.

A satiric and humorous one based on tradition. In crossing the lake of Suwa in winter, people and horses were in the habit of waiting until the white fox, the messenger of the Suwa shrine, went *across* the frozen lake *first*—to show that it was now safe for them to

follow its example. Here is also such a phrase as: A fox riding a horse. The senryu poet here tells it inversely.

\* \* \*

The mania for cutting women's hair, after all,  
Must be attributed to the act of "Kitsuné."

As previously mentioned, some maniacs scared women in those days in Edo by cutting women's hair at night. The culprits, however, could not be apprehended. Therefore they finally attributed the offense to the doing of Kitsuné. Foxes were generally believed to cut women's hair as a pledge when assuming the form of a woman.

\* \* \*

The fox-possession prescription to be written  
By a quack doctor will invariably be "kakkon-to."

Kakkon-to is a Chinese remedy used as a sedatory for fever. It is made by boiling the bulbs of arrow-roots. The patient suffering from fox-possession is believed to suffer from fever. Hence the prescription. And here in this *senryu* arrowroots are also referred to the legend of Kuzu-no-Ha, or Arrowroot Leaf, the fox-woman of the wood of Shinoda, where arrowroots grew. (See the chapter Fox in Plays.)

In The Yanagi-Daru *Senryu* Collection, you will also find many historical ones relative to *Kitsuné* such as:

Young as he was, Yasuna got a "middle-aged"  
Woman of more than 900 years old as his wife.

*Kitsuné*, in legend, is believed to live long, exceedingly long, as long as one thousand years! Yasuna, hero of the *Kuzu-no-Ha* play, marries a maiden without knowing that she was a fox, a very old one, more than 900 years of age, presumably. (See the chapter Fox in Plays.)

\* \* \*

Frugal as she was, *Kuzu-no-Ha* would have  
Boiled her favorite "*azuki-méshi*" sometimes.

*Azuki-méshi* is the rice boiled together with red beans and it is believed to be the favorite food of *Kitsuné*.

*Kuzu-no-Ha*, the fox-woman, must have boiled it even in her humble life with Yasuna, her husband, in the wood of Shinoda, in the opinion of the *senryu* poet.

\* \* \*

*Kuzu-no-Ha* wrote her farewell ode by  
Skipping the holes in the paper sliding-door.

Living in the humble home in the wood, she must  
have done so when she wrote the poem of farewell  
on a *shoji*, paper sliding-door.

\* \* \*

*Tamamo-no-Maé* effected her escape by giving  
"A discharge of wind" to each three kingdoms.

A fox, as universally known, has a penchant for breaking wind, after the fashion of his distant relative, the skunk, to tide over a crisis. *Tamamo-no-Maé*, the captivating beauty, the nine-tailed fox in disguise, must have done so when she said good-bye for good to the kingdoms of India, China and Japan respectively. (See the chapter Fox in Plays.)

\* \* \*

A flaw in the gem, alas the day!  
She was found "excessively hairy."

*Tamamo-no-Maé*, it was true, was a matchless beauty. However she was a fox after all. Naturally she must have been excessively hairy. (A suggestive verse.)

\* \* \*

She caused the birds of the air to drop  
Even while she was a Court lady.

To cause the birds of the air to drop is a Japanese idiomatic expression meaning having great power and influence.

Tamamo-no-Mae, when turned herself into a poisonous stone in the moor of Nasund, caused the birds flying above it to drop dead, according to tradition. Tamamo-no-Mae, however, was already able to cause the birds of the air to *drop*, even before she turned herself into the stone while she was at the Court of the Mikado, affirms the senryu poet.

\* \* \*

They spoke highly of *Munéchika*  
When possessed by a fox.

Nobody will speak highly of a person when possessed by a fox. In this case, however, it was different: *Munéchika*, the great swordsmith, was possessed by a sacred fox of the God of *Inari*. He was made famous by the blade he tempered by the help of the Kitsuni. It was only natural they spoke highly of him. (See the chapter Fox in No Plays.)

\* \* \*

At each stroke of his companion's hammer,  
*Munéchika* was filled with awe and fear.

Now his companion was not an ordinary one. He was, *Munéchika* knew, a white fox sent from the God of *Inari* to assist him. (See the chapter Fox in No Plays.)

\* \* \*

Kokaji finished tempering the blade  
Moistening his eyebrows all the time.

They believed in Japan that the best way to prevent a fox from bewitching them was to moisten their eyebrows with saliva with the fingers. Kokaji, the swordsmith *Munéchika*, knew that a fox was helping him in making the blade. So he never forgot to moisten his eyebrows with saliva as a precaution, in the version of the senryu poet.

They still moisten their eyebrows with saliva jokingly in Japan when they hear incredible talk—for example about a fishing excursion.

## CHAPTER 13

### CONCERNING THE BEWITCHERY OF THE FOX

Kenko, a well-known writer-recluse of the 14th century, tells us a story of the bewitchery of *Kitsuné* in his *Tsurezuregusa*:

A STRANGE thing happened at the Gojyo palace, according to Vice-premier To. Some years ago, several Court nobles were having the game of *go* at the palace when the silhouette of a person was seen peeping into the room by rolling a bamboo-blind.

"Who goes there?" demanded a courtier turning toward the shadow.

A fox was found crouching there like a man.

"Fox! fox!" they cried in excitement.

The fox took to flight.

The animal seemed to have been an amateur in the art of bewitchery.

Matsuura *Séizan*, the feudal lord of the castle of Hirado, Chikuzen Province, the celebrated author of *The Koshi-Yawa*, a voluminous work published in the early part of the 19th century, writes concerning the bewitchery of *Kitsuné* as follows:

IN any story of *Kitsuné*, they are believed to bewitch men in any province. However in the case of *Kitsuné* in *Ezo* (present Hokkaido), it is different: They are not in the habit of bewitching people there, I hear. They do not seem to know

how to bewitch human beings there. I cannot make out why.

When my friend Takahashi *Es*shu called at my residence in his way to Nagasaki, where he was to take up his new post as the magistrate there, and we talked together then about the customs of various provinces, I asked him concerning the foxes in *Ezo*, which I had heard not accustomed to bewitch men, and he told me as follows:

"When I went to Ezo as the magistrate of *Matsu-maé* (a county located to the south-eastern end of Oshima peninsula in *Ezo*), the foxes there seemed to have begun to bewitch people—following the example of the foxes in other parts of *Ezo*, no doubt.

"I gathered this was due to the fact that a change had been brought about in the very nature of the foxes there in keeping with the spirits of the times—by the coming of many people there for the reclamation of waste land. It was men who have changed the good nature of the *Kitsunh* in *Ezo*, I suppose."

The Chief Abbot of the  
Higashi-Honganji Temple Bewitched  
Together with His Followers by *Kitsune*

Speaking of the bewitchery of *Kitsuné* of ancient times, here is an interesting case. It was generally believed that, when *Kitsuné* bewitch human beings, the number of victims was usually restricted to one or two at the same time.

However in the latter part of the Edo Era (1615-1867), a party of more than 30 persons, including Chief Abbot of the Higashi-Honganji temple (the head temple of the Otani sect of *Shin-shu*) was victimized by the foxes, an unprecedented case.

IN 1818, the Higashi-Honganji temple of Kyoto bought a plot on the outskirts of the city and started to build a villa for the Chief Abbot.

There was an ancient-looking small shrine there in the ground, and they found an earth of foxes under its floor. There were also several earths of foxes in the neighborhood. Therefore they hesitated, out of superstition, to level the ground. They were afraid to incur a curse from *Kitsunh*, supposed to be vindictive. However the rumor got abroad that the Emperor might visit the villa when completed. Encouraged by the auspicious news, they destroyed the small shrine and leveled the whole area.

One day, the Chief Abbot came to the building ground to inspect the work, accompanied by several officiating priests and many others, a party of about 30 men.

On their way home, they were proceeding toward the north, by mistake, instead of the south. Still they did not perceive that they were going in the opposite direction, strange to relate.

They walked and walked, feeling as if treading in the land of dreams. Presently they walked into a rice-field, a wide rice-field. It seemed endless. They



kept on walking all night. It was a dark night. The palanquins swayed from side to side, rolled, dipped, and plunged. They no longer seemed to move—it was only the phantom night that rushed by them.

They got tired, dead tired. The Chief Abbot and three high priests riding in kago (Japanese palanquins) grew weary, too. The night-breeze coming over the murky rice-field swung the bamboo-blinds of their kago now and then. Several frogs were heard croaking in the dark. Those walking, treading along the narrow foot-paths of the rice-field, were now covered with mud. The four kago were also spattered with mud. Still they could not get out of the maze of the rice-field.

"Croak, croak, croak!" the frogs continued as if chanting a dirge. The party of 30 men were trudging through the dark rice-field listening to this song of lamentation....

At dawn, however, the incident came to an end when the palanquin of the Chief Abbot was plunged by its bearers into the hedge of a farmhouse. At the angry voice coming from within the house, they regained consciousness for the first time.

Now they found themselves at Kami-Saga, a direction in which they did not dream of going when they started from the building ground on the previous evening.

The spiritless party, including the four muddy kago, reached the head temple in the morning and the people of the city wondered what was the matter with them.

### Is *Kitsune* Really Gifted with the Power of Bewitchery?

In Japan, there are many instances of fox-deceived or bewitched men—in some form or other.

However men of culture are now positive in denying the fact—attributing the bewitchery of *Kitsuné* to the wild fancies or delusions on the part of superstitious people.

Is it right to deny instances of the fox's power of bewitchery? It is impossible for us to decide this matter because, to tell the truth, there are not a few cases when we find the remarks made by others doubtful—or even our own subjectivity is proved to be a traitor to truth.

The following instances are obtained from reliable sources:

### Fox Bewitching a Man by Wagging Its Tail

This is the story told by Mr. Mita, retired businessman of Miyagi Prefecture living at Suma, a well-known health resort, near Kobe.

JULY the 5th being the day for the raw silk transaction in our district, Miyagi, I got up at 2 o'clock in the morning and started for Takada in the adjacent country to collect bills.

I had gone over two mountains and tramped through the greater part of the mountainous region before I reached, at daybreak, the foot of Mount Tsunagi, not far from a human habitation. There was an earthen bridge across a stream. I sat down on the grass on this side of the bridge and began to smoke.

It was now daylight. However there still lingered some darkness in the shade of the trees, and not a soul was in sight. But, as I looked at a big tree standing

on the opposite side of the bridge, I perceived a fellow, about 40 years old sitting at the foot of the tree: He was all alone. However he seemed as if he were exchanging wine-cups with somebbody (some imaginary person) in a jocund mood.

I had previously heard that there was a fellow widely known as the Fool of Osabé in this part of the country. Therefore I thought the fellow was that man and I was looking at his actions with amusement, smoking leisurely, when, all of a sudden, I felt a strange shock, as if an electric current had been applied to my face.

It was a most disagreeable sensation, to say the least, so I diverted my attention to the right—and I saw a big reddish-furred fox sitting not far from the fellow with its back toward him, stretching its tail out horizontally and moving the tip of it in a circle. The fox, I noticed, while doing so, was constantly turning its face toward the elderly man as if it were putting him under its control.

On seeing that, I threw a rock at the fox and the animal took flight instantly, jumping into a bush in the neighborhood—and, at the same time, I saw, to my astonishment, the fellow fall with a thud with his face to the ground, as if drawn by a magnet or something!

The man remained unconscious for a while. Therefore I drew near him and slapped him on the back two or three times, lifting him up in my arms.

Then he came to himself and looked around.

"Where am I?" he inquired with a look of surprise and bewilderment.

"You are at the foot of Mount Tsunagi," I told him.

"What day of the month is it today?" he asked me.

"July the 5th," I replied.

He passed his hand across his face—and then over his body.

Said the fellow:

"I am a farmer living at Osémba village beyond Takada. I went to a certain house at Otsuchi to attend a wedding, carrying a salted salmon with me as a gift."

So saying, he looked around for the salted salmon. No salted salmon could he find.

"I have been eating and drinking *saké* in the room of the wedding until now. Strange! I cannot understand it!" he said.

So I told him about the fox. He seemed greatly embarrassed to hear about the incident.

We started together and I parted from him when we reached the entrance of the town of Takada.

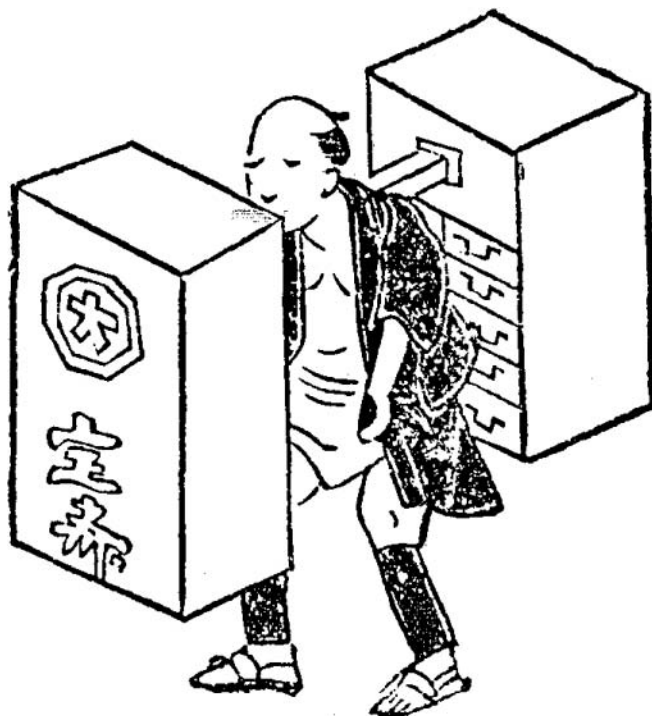
#### Fox Luring a Pedlar by Its Occult Power

This is a similar case related by Mr. N., a school superintendent of Kyoto, as an experience of his grandmother while young.

ONE summer day, says Mr. N.'s grandmother, I was sitting in my room eating tokoroten jelly, enjoying a cool breeze coming over the green rice-fields when I noticed a very strange thing: A *jōsai-ya*\* was walking in a most queer fashion.

\*A medicine pedler of old days in Japan. In summer, he would come walking along the country road, carrying a pair of tall cases, with several

The josai-ya man was turning back when he came to a spot—a fixed spot on the foot-path in the rice-field. Then I saw him resuming his tour of peddling, and going on for about twenty steps. Then he turned



The josai-ya man of the good old days--of Kitsuné.

drawers, on his shoulder. He would sell such sundry stuff as charred mud-fish as a remedy for sunstroke, and the like. The bright brass rings attached to each drawer of the tall cases would clatter as he walked leisurely, an interesting scene on a summer day along with the coming of the goldfish vendor crying: "Buy goldfish!... buy goldfish!"

back again when he came to the spot on the foot-path. And then again he resumed his tour. He was doing the same thing over and over again like an automaton.

Yes, the josai-ya was walking in that fashion in the green rice field, carrying his tall cases on his shoulder. The summer sun glinted on the polished cases with his house-name—especially glinted on the elaborately polished brass handles of the drawers. The rhythmical sound of the brass handles attached to each drawer of the medicine cases was heard clinking distinctly in the quiet neighborhood.

Clink, clink, clink, clink! the josai-ya ~~man~~ was going backward and forward in a most strange fashion!

About 15 minutes had passed since the josai-ya started going back and forth in the rice-field. What was the matter with the man? Was he suffering from somnambulism—or gone insane?

Then I espied a big dog crouching at the foot of a pine tree standing on the highway. I saw it wagging its tail constantly. No, it was not a dog—it was a fox. It was the fox called in our community Gombéi—Gombéi Fox. It was a tame one often seen in our village. The wagging of its tail, I observed, had something to do with the movement of the josai-ya, evidently.

While the fox was wagging its tail to the left side, the pedler was seen coming back. When the fox swang its tail to the right, the man resumed his tour. Gombéi Fox seemed immensely happy wagging its bushy tail right and left, putting the josai-ya completely under its control. The fox was unmistakably enjoying itself.

The sight of the helpless man was pitiful. He was being bewitched by *the* fox, no doubt. I rose to my

feet and chased Gombéi away, calling out to him. I was right, perfectly right in my judgment.

When the fox stopped the wagging of its tail and left, the *josai-ya* man did not turn back. He went on his way—as if nothing had happened. The clinking sound of the brass handles attached to each drawer of his tall cases was now heard receding in the distance in the wide green rice-fields, over which a cool breeze was coming into the room where I was sitting, listening to the faint melody of the brass handles....

#### Fox Making a Fish Dealer Intoxicated

A DOCTOR named Yuasa living at the mountainous village of Ikéda in Iwaki Province was once following a country road, accompanied by his servant when they saw a man coming toward them, bearing a pair of fish-baskets on his shoulder. He was staggering like a person under the influence of liquor.

A fox was seen coming after the man.

Yuasa thought it strange.

On approaching them, the man, they thought, looked exceedingly sleepy, not intoxicated.

"Ho, there!" the doctor cried when the fox came nearer.

The fox, surprised, ran off and soon disappeared.

"I felt very sleepy. Just sleepy," said the fish dealer, recovering from a state of intoxication.

"I felt sleepy. Just sleepy," the man repeated.

Then he went on his way with steady steps, bearing his fish-baskets.

## CHAPTER 14

### CONCERNING THE BEWITCHERY OF THE FOX (Continued)

#### Fox Kidnaping a Girl

ONE evening, Masu, a girl of 20 living in Otacho, Hokkaido, was emptying boiled rice from a cooking-pot into an ohitsu (a wooden boiled rice container) when an old woman with a *ténugui* (Japanese towel) on her head came from the direction of the farm in the rear of the house. She stood at the alley entrance and called Masu, the girl, with a chirrup, after the fashion of a rat.

When the girl turned her face, the visitor said in a low voice:

"Come out for just a moment."

Masu, as she recalled later, ought to have been suspicious of the old woman, who was quite a stranger. At that time, however, the girl felt compelled to obey the old woman. Therefore she put the rest of the boiled rice into the ohitsu with great haste, and followed the caller, who was already walking ahead of her.

When the girl overtook the old woman in the farm, the latter urged her on. Soon they were walking faster and faster along a path toward the mountain. Masu



felt again she had to follow the old woman anywhere—without the slightest doubt.

The strange woman was walking ahead of the girl at the distance of about 35 feet. She looked back now and then and urged Masu to walk faster. It was the path along which people used to walk every day about that time in the evening. However not a soul was now to be seen. Then they went past a hill at the back of a temple and when they set foot in a thick pine tree forest, night had completely fallen. The girl thought that a quavering owl hooted somewhere.

Soon the moon began to come-out, a bright moon.

While walking, the old woman, pointing to a silverberry growing in the forest, said:

"Pick the berries and eat them."

Masu obeyed her and picked some silverberries and ate them. They were not ripe and tasted rather sour. She wanted to say so. However she could not say so; she was afraid of the old woman.

They continued walking through the forest now flooded by the moonlight. No sound was heard except the soft footsteps of the two women wearing straw sandals.

Masu was getting tired. She trudged on with sore feet. She imagined she heard an owl again.

"Hurry, hurry!" the old woman urged her every now and then....

At home, the family of Masu worried about her when she did not return by midnight. A search party was organized in the community. They searched for Masu, the girl, in the hills and woods in the neighbor-

hood, heating gongs and drums, calling her name:

"MA-SU ... MA-SU ... MA-SU ..."

They searched for her all night.

However they could find no trace of Masu. *She might have eloped with her* lover, some of them thought. However she was not such a person.

"She might have been taken away by the witchery of a fox," the other people said.

On the following day, they sent for a faith-curer, who was supposed well versed in the art of fox-witchery. He came, prayed, and soon he was in communication with the fox in possession of Masu, the girl.

"When Masu came to Furushiro hill to gather dead pine-needles several days ago," said the fox through the medium of the faith-curer, "she stepped on a big stone and it fell over the precipice and stopped up the entrance of my earth. Therefore I had a great difficulty in getting out. I could not forget the suffering. And I wanted to revenge myself on her. However Masu did not do so out of evil intentions. So I am going to let her go home sometime tomorrow."

On hearing that, the parents of the girl felt somewhat relieved.

The next morning, Masu's father repaired to the barn and went upstairs to fetch some straw and there he found, unexpectedly, Masu, his daughter, lying unconscious with her red yumaki (loin cloth worn by women) over her head.

She was taken to the house immediately. She slept for about 15 hours before she regained consciousness. Her whole body was covered with scratches made by

thorny plants growing in the forest.

Masu said:

"I remember the old woman telling me she would let me go home as my parents were worrying so much about me, praying for my safe return."

Several days later, they went to the spot in Furu-shiro hill where Masu had dropped the stone and found a big stone weighing 50 or 60 kan (one kan: 8.28lbs.) lying on the ground and a hole, apparently newly dug by the fox, beside the heavy stone.

#### Fox Sending an Old Woman Insane

IN Itami Province, a farmer named Masaichi once went with his wife to the adjoining village to visit a relative.

While they were away, Maki, his old mother, was washing the dishes after supper at the well when a fox appeared, and ran off, carrying a fish bone from a plate. She became angry because she was going to give it to her cat.

"Curse you!" she screamed at the fleeing animal. She picked up a pebble and threw it at the fox. The missile, however, did not reach the pilferer.

When the old woman got inside the house, she felt strangely lonesome. She felt left alone in the wide world. She could not wait for the return of her son and his wife any longer. So she went out to meet them, fastening the door of the house.

When she approached the village graveyard, she saw

Onatsu, wife of her neighbor, coming toward her.

"Glad to meet you here, Onatsu-san!" the old woman said.

"Where are you going, O-basan (dear old woman)?" the woman asked her.

"I am so glad to see you here," the old woman said again.

"I am going to meet my son and his wife who are coming home. I feel somehow lonesome—awfully lonesome."

"Too bad," said the neighbor's wife.

"Onatsu-san," said the old woman, "won't you please come along with me for some distance?"

"Certainly, I will," replied the woman.

And they started walking together along the lonely mountain path....

When the old woman passed a woodman's cabin, a bamboo pole fell and hit her on the back and shoulder. She lost her reason by the shock.

Presently Maki, the old woman, saw her son and his wife coming toward her with a lighted pine-torch.

"Where are you going, Mother?" her son asked her.

Maki now mistook him for a stranger and said:

"I am on my way to meet my son, Masaichi. And Onatsu-san here is being kind enough to come along with me."

Masaichi and his wife could not see anybody except the old woman. They thought it strange. Now they thought that the old woman was under the spell of a fox. (They knew that the old woman had been bewitched by a fox once before.)

They did their best to bring her to herself by shaking her by the back and shoulder. However it was of no avail.

Two days later Maki, the old woman, came to her senses. She had been again the victim of a fox.

#### Fox Turning Itself into a Stag

IN the beginning of the Meiji Era (1868-1912), bad foxes were found abundantly in the county of Minami-Imuro, Miyé Prefecture, and even now they are said to be harassing people there.

Once a hunter by the name of Genji was hunting for game in a mountain when he saw a stag, a big one, with a pair of fine antlers, about 2 feet in length, coming running toward him. He killed it in one shot.

On getting near the animal, however, the hunter found that it was not a stag—but an old fox, shot dead with a bullet right in the side. The fox, it seemed to him, just tried to deceive him and, in this attempt, lost its life.

*Kitsuné* seem to bewitch not only men but also animals and birds, according to reliable records:

#### Pox Bewitching a Horse

THIS was an incident that really happened in the early part of the Meiji Era, too.

There lived a man named Okaémon Suzuki in

Matsuyé City. He had a stable beside the gate of his house.

One night, the horse was heard jumping up and down constantly in the stable. Suzuki went to the kitchen and looked toward the stable through a small window.

It was a moonlit night. A fox was found sitting on the high wall in the rear of the stable. The shadow of the fox fell on the high paper window of the stable. When the fox kicked behind with its hind legs together, the horse in the stable followed the example of the fox on the wall outside. The horse was kicking up the wall of the stable.

The fox repeated this, and the horse followed his example, until the former was driven away by the servant of the house with a broom.

Was the horse under the spell of the fox? Suzuki believed it was due to the animal's power of magnetism.

#### Fox Bewitching a Rooster

ONE evening a man, Ito by name, living in Tajima Province heard a tumult coming from a flock of chickens left feeding in the mulberry field at the back of the house.

He went out of the house and looked around. A rooster was going tottering toward a bamboo grove in the neighborhood.

Then he saw a fox in the shade of a big tree near the bamboo grove. The fox was standing on its hind legs and beckoning to the rooster with one of its paws after the manner of the *manéki-néko* (the good luck

cat seen sitting at such places as restaurants, *geisha* houses, bath-houses or barber shops, beckoning to customers—the earthen cat). ,

The fox was apparently trying to bewitch the rooster through its hypnotic power. But when Ito shouted, the fox vanished into the bamboo grove. Then the rooster, he saw, went in the direction of the house with unsteady steps.

#### •Fox Bewitching Crows

Matsuura-Séizan, the author of *The Koshi-Yawa*, tells us the following story:

AN OLD *fox* would come to the house of a *samurai* living at Négishi in Edo. The fox used to come from Uyéno hill, not far from Négishi. It was quite tame with the members of the family, so domesticated, in fact, that they would give it food when it visited the house.

This fox would bewitch the crows alighting on the trees there. On seeing a crow settling on a tree, the fox would run around the root of the tree two or three times looking at the bird.

Then the crow, strange to say, would find it impossible to fly away. And when the fox moved its head, the crow would also move its head, and when the animal lifted up one of its paws, the bird would raise one of its legs, to the immense enjoyment of those present.

*Kitsuné*, according to the following record, seem to imitate the human voice:

#### Fox Imitating a Maid's Voice

IN 1881, there was a maid of the name of Sod6 employed at the house of the Négishis in Matsuyé City. She was in the habit of throwing away the remnants of dinner outside the kitchen for stray cats and foxes.

However in winter on a cold evening, when the ground was covered with snow, she would sometimes neglect to treat them to the leavings.

There was a fox who often came for the leavings. This one would call the name of the maid, Sod6, when she failed to feed it of a snowy night:

"So-d6-san!" (*san*: a title of courtesy suffixed to the name of a person.)

It was revealed that the fox was producing the sound of "So-d&san" by the following process:

The fox, as observed by the members of the family, would make a big snowball with the tips of its paws. It would carry the snowball to the door of the kitchen, standing on its hind legs. It would lie down on the ground on its back, holding the snowball in its paws. Then it would move the snowball to the tips of the hind legs stretched out together. And then it would Aing the snowball with its hind legs against the door of the kitchen.

The fox, still lying on its back, would catch the snowball skillfully with its hind legs when it came back from the door. Each time the snowball hit the door, it produced a sound similar to that of a knock. The



sound of "So-dé" was produced when the fox crossed its right and left paws together by bending them.

The fox, at the same time, would strike the door with its tail with force—producing the sound of "san!" When the above three processes were performed in succession, the combined sound effect was: "Tap, tap! *So-dé-san!*...tap, tap! Sod&-sun!"

On learning the method adopted by the fox in producing the sound of the name in the human tongue, the Négishis were speechless with admiration.

It is supposed in Japan that the fox or the badger is able to call a man or talk with him through the medium of suggestion. It is really surprising to note that the human voice produced at the Négishis is genuinely attributable to the human technique for producing sound.

### Fox Calling for Help in Human Tongue

IN the autumn of 1920, a man named Itohara who lived in the village of Umaki in Izumo Province laid a strongly-built snare for catching a fox in a coppice on a mountain he owned.

One night, about 10 o'clock, a frightened cry was heard in the direction of the coppice, shattering the silence of the night:

"TASUKE-TE! TASUKE-TE!" (HELP! HELP!)

The shriek resounded far and wide, and the villagers at the foot of the mountain heard it!

A man who was living with his wife half-way up

the mountain as a forester for Itohaha was so frightened on hearing the scream that he and his wife ran down the hillside breathlessly and made a report at the house of the owner of the mountain.

"We cannot stay on the hillside when we hear such a terrible cry!" they tremblingly told Itohara.

The villagers in the neighborhood came one after another to Itohara's. Then they hurried toward the mountain, carrying handy weapons and pine-torches with them.

The weird wail was still coming from the hilltop:

"TASUKE-TE! TASUKE-TE!" (HELP! HELP!)

The terrible cry seemed to be that of a woman. It was really horrible to hear! A cry of pain, pathos, terror, and despair! It penetrated the cool and quiet nocturnal mountain air with the keenness of a razor.

Itohara, a man with a great sense of responsibility, felt naturally exceedingly sorry for the person who was caught by mistake in the snare he had laid. He was the first man to reach the hilltop, running ahead of others.

A gruesome spectacle greeted their eyes! It was not a human being. It was an old fox that they saw struggling in the snare—in an attempt to liberate itself. The body of the animal was suspended in midair. It was swaying right and left like a child on a swing. The light of the flaring torches fell upon the pitiful sight!

"KITSUNE! they cried with one voice, dashing toward the snare.

The fox, on hearing the noise, managed at last to free itself from the trapping device. As soon as the animal dropped onto the ground, it vanished like a flash of lightning into the night.

They wondered why they had mistaken the cry of the fox for that of a human being—for a woman's voice! *Everybody*, however, was positive that it *was the cry of a woman* in distress!

## CHAPTER 15

### KITSUNE'S INTELLECT AND LEWDNESS

Is *Kitsuné*, in its nature, an intellectual animal? Is it lewd? The following instances will tell you concerning these matters:

#### Fox Outwitting a Famous Artist

TANI-BUNCHO (one of the prominent artists in 19th century Japan) had an experience concerning the fox's intellect.

While staying at the house of his uncle, who was a retainer of the feudal lord of Tottori, he heard that the chickens of the house were being stolen by a fox. He told his uncle that he would catch the fox.

It was winter. Buncho went outside and dug a deep hole in the ground near a stable and put a snare in it with fried rat, supposed to be the favorite food of Kitsunh. He thought that the fox would smell it and come out. Then Buncho went inside the house and waited for the animal to make its appearance.

Soon a fox was seen coming along furtively. It was already night, the stars shining brightly in the sky. The fox approached the hole and investigated it cautiously with its paws. Then it put its head into the hole—remaining that way for some time. And then it entered it.

Buncho, the artist, thinking now was the time, pulled the snare by the rope in his hand. He was sure he had successfully caught the fox. He ran outside, followed by other jubilant people of the household.

There was no fox in the hole! The fried rat in the hole was also missing! The fox had successfully effected its escape through a hole dug sideways, they found to their chagrin.

#### Fox Locating a Hunter's House

AN EXPERT hunter named Mambéi in Iwaki Province bagged a fox one day. It was a female fox. He shot it in a mountain far from the haunts of men.

He was sure that its mate, the male fox, would come that night to retrieve the female fox's body. He wanted to kill the male, too. So the hunter waited for the fox, after sending the other members of the family to bed. He put out the light and he sat behind a paper sliding-door, placing his gun at his elbow.

There was a swift stream running at the back of his house. A branch dike of the stream was connected with the hunter's garden from the upper stretch of water. The fox was supposed to come along this dike.

The moon was bright on that particular night.

The fox did come, as expected, at about 9 o'clock. It got on the veranda stealthily, and it was trying to peep into the house, coming close to a paper sliding-door. The moonshine threw the outline of the fox's figure on the paper sliding-door. It was an easy mark for the hunter.

Mambéi, as a hunter, knew the habit of foxes well. But how did the male fox know the house of the hunter? The house was located at the place several miles away from the valley where the hunter had bagged the female fox. Between the valley and the hunter's house, there were many houses, and of course Mambéi's house could not be seen from the top of the mountain. It was also impossible for the male fox to follow the hunter's track.

This must be attributed to the fox's intellect—though we are inclined to call such a thing an animal's instinct. In that case, it may safely be said that the male fox had a wonderful instinct.

#### Fox Robbing a Man of His Food By Using Its Brains

SHOJI, a villager of Kawai in Iwaki Province, was once attacked by a fox, and the food carried by him in a *jubako*\* was skillfully taken away by the animal. In this case, however, the fox did not resort to its usual method, bewitchery. It simply depended on a psychological means: Intimidation.

Shoji was on his way home at night, from his relative's house where a banquet had been given in celebration of an auspicious event. He was taking with him a *jubako* full of nice things to eat wrapped up in a *furoshiki* (a large wrapping cloth).

Shoji fastened both ends of the *furoshiki* tightly

\*A nest of lacquered square food boxes fitting one upon the other.

around his neck and he thought that he would never lose the gift given at his relative's. He was afraid of *Kitsuné*.

He was obviously under the influence of *saké* taken at the relative's house. And, to say that he was plucky would be far from the truth. However in such a condition that evening, he thought he was not a coward even when he was to pass the foot of Watada hill believed to be infested with foxes.

He was not carrying a paper-lantern, but it was a rather bright night with the stars shining in the heavens. And the breeze sweeping across his face was also pleasant. He was, in fact, in the mood for singing his favorite song. And he sang it:

Why tie thy steed  
To a blossoming cherry-tree?  
The horse will prance,  
The blossoms scattered be.

Presently, however, he found himself drawing near the hill of Watada. He did not know the reason why, but he felt a chill and imagined something was after his jubako.

Was it a fox coming after the jubako full of nice things to eat? It was after the jubako without a doubt.

He was right. Soon something leapt at the jubako from behind. He did not turn round, or rather he could not turn round. He just kept walking, now steadily. He walked holding one corner of the jubako wrapped up in the large *furoshiki* tightly with one of his hands.

Then something leapt at the jubako again!

He really wanted to turn his head. However he could not do so. (And he thought inwardly that he

was not a brave man.) Now he wanted to run. Then a fox (now he knew unquestionably it was a fox) leapt at the jubako for a third time!

It occurred to him that it would be the best policy for him to abandon the jubako and walk as fast as he could so that he could reach his house as soon as possible. Therefore he unknotted both ends of the *furoshiki* fastened tightly right on his Adam's apple.

Then he ran as fast as his feet could carry him...

The cheerful sun of the next morning found a broken jubako and a large *furoshiki* torn into pieces lying forlornly on the road near Watada hill. Not a single bit of food was left.

#### Fox Retrieving Its Horse-Bone by a Trick

A FOX was found burning its fire in the premises of the house of a *samurai* in my service (says Matsuura Séizan, the lord of the castle of Hirado, Chikuzen Province, in his Koshi-Yawa). Some young men who saw the sight rushed to the spot to catch the fox. It slunk away, dropping a horse-bone it had been holding in its mouth.

The young men thought that the fox would return later to recover the bone. They wanted to capture the fox alive. Therefore they put the horse-bone in a room and waited for it to show itself.

The fox came back, as expected. At first, the animal looked into the room, for some time. Presently the fox began to open the paper sliding-door quietly until it was wide enough for it to pass its slim body into the



room. Once inside, the fox seized the horse-bone in its mouth quickly—and fled in a wink!

The young men who had been drinking tea rose instantly to their feet and tried to open the paper sliding-door to get out, but it would not open. When they got out by opening another paper sliding-door, they found a piece of bamboo placed in the groove of the paper sliding-door from which the fox had escaped—preventing the paper sliding-door from being opened!

*Kitsuné* is said to be sexy—very much so, an animal of lewdness, a fact proved by many records and stories. Naturally it would find a good companion in a lewd man. And we read in *The Shotéi Hogobukuro*, the following story:

#### How a Man Is Captivated by a Fox

I KNOW a man, says the author, who was very licentious at the age of fifty. One evening, he went to a restaurant where he found a bevy of beautiful women, more than 20 in number.

They were enjoying themselves drinking sake?—with no men there. The man was so delighted to see these beautiful women. They were quite strangers to him. However he approached them and offered a cup of wine to one of them—the most delectable among them.

The woman was also so delighted to meet him, and they—the man of fifty and the woman—had a heart-to-heart talk drinking *saké* together until they got quite drunk. Then they went outside. A balmy night. However they found it was very late. Surprised, the charming woman said:

"I have no husband. I am lodging at another's house. If, therefore, I return at this late hour and knock at the gate, I would be put out of countenance."

So saying, she looked very despondent.

"This is a good chance," thought the lewd man of fifty. So he took the beautiful woman to the house of a man he knew well and he shared the bed with her upstairs....

The man waked up about the time when day dawned. The woman, he found, was not sleeping beside him. He went out of the room to find her. No, she was not in the toilet... All the doors, he also found, were tightly closed from inside. No sign showing anybody had gone out.

The man, wondering what had happened to the lovely lady, woke up the wife of the house and told her about the incident. He and the wife searched for the woman. However she was clean gone!

Now he became aware that he had been bewitched by a fox—or several of them. The fox in the shape of an alluring woman must have taken advantage of his weakness—lewdness.

After that, the man kept to himself—complaining that he was not feeling well. And he died about 30 days later.

"The fox must have sucked up all his energy," said the people who knew the man of fifty.

### How a Sozu Is Ruined by a Fox

Now a similar case is told of a *sozu* (next to bishop in rank) in *The Otogi Zoshi*, a collection of short stories published in the Muromachi Era (1403-1583):

A WOMAN came to the residence of a *sozu* as a messenger of her mistress and handed over a love letter to him.

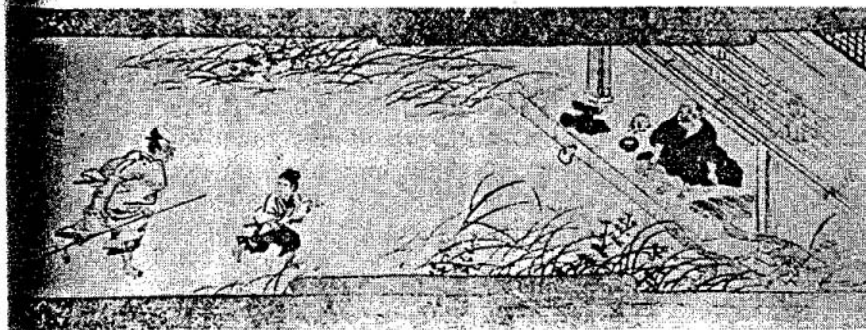
That very evening, a one-ox-carriage was sent from the sender of the billet-doux. Highly pleased with his good luck in the love affair, the *sozu*, who was widely known as a lascivious man, got in the ox-carriage, which took him to a splendid mansion with a big gate.

The high priest was received by the mistress of the mansion, a captivating woman of about 30 years of age, to his satisfaction.

The *sozu* stayed at the mansion for a period of seven years living a life of luxury and licence with the fascinating mistress.

One day, however, a young priest carrying a *shakujo* (a priest's long staff with several rings on top) in his hand came running into the mansion of the lady from the big gate. On seeing this, the charming lady and all members of the household vanished!

The *sozu* now felt as if he had woken from a long dream. The mansion, the splendid large dwelling house with a big gate was gone! The fine bamboo-blinds and mats were now changed into scraps of straw-mats! The lute and koto (a kind of harp) were now reduced to bones of cows and horses! And he also found human



The *samurai* came running to rescue the *sozu*...



A wooden statue of Jizo

skulls around him! And the utensils and furniture were now seen as broken saddle seats!

The high priest now found himself among these things, sitting under the great floor of the Kongo Ski-in temple! He crawled out from under the floor, when fortunately he was found by his friend, a samurai in the service of Councilor Konoyk. The samurai came running to rescue the sozu, led by a child who had made the discovery.

The sozu went home in an abstracted state of mind. They said that he was saved by the divine favors of Jizo (Ksitigarbha) who appeared in the form of a young priest, carrying a *shakujo* in his hand.

(The sozu thought he had lived with the captivating lady for seven years, but, in reality, it was only seven days, bewitched by a wanton old fox.)

#### How a Maid Is Seduced by a Fox

The lord of the castle of Hirado, Matsuura Séizan, in his voluminous book, *The Koshi-Yawa*, writes concerning the lewdness of *Kitsuné*:

A WILD fox will sometimes indulge in sexual pleasure by seducing human beings. When a woman has relations with a fox, she will invariably suffer from a terrible physical pain, I hear. The remedy, it is said, is to wash her affected part with decocted buckwheat. The effect, they say, is instantaneous.

A certain Kumazawa, one of my retainers, was once greatly infatuated with his maid. However he was

unable to have an improper connection with her because of the jealousy of his wife. Therefore he made use of a shed built in the shade of trees in the premises of his house--often indulging in iniquitous pleasure there with the maid.

A wild fox, learning of their stolen interviews, led the maid one night to the shed, assuming the form of her lecherous master—and gave rein to carnal passion as much as it desired.

The act on the part of the fox, however, was beyond the endurance of the maid. Therefore she cried and cried imploring the *Kitsuné* in the shape of her master to stop it—immediately!

"Stop it, master, please! stop for Buddha's sake!" she cried.

Still the fox insisted without paying the slightest attention to her plight. And the maid finally screamed with pain:

"Help, Madam! come and help me, Madam! Master is now embracing me and giving me much pain!"

The wife of Kumazawa, the samurai, heard the cry of the maid. However she could not bring herself to believe it. Her husband, at that moment, was with her—sitting sipping tea calmly together with her. Naturally she felt it terribly strange. The husband himself was alarmed, to say the least of it, on hearing the cry of the maid.

Therefore they, the master and mistress, lost no time in repairing to the shed from which they cry of pain was issuing, breaking the solitude of the night.

They found nobody there—except the maid in agony.

A certain person has told me that a wild fox, after having connection with a woman, will tell her as to the treatment necessary. It does so, perhaps, to recompense for the service.

The she-fox is also in the habit of having connection with men, I hear. The person who kept company with it, they say, will suffer in the same fashion, and the best remedy is also the use of decocted buckwheat.

## CHAPTER 16

DAKINI-TEN FAITH & THE RECORD OF  
FOXES WITH UNCANNY POWER

DAKINI-TEN, *Dakinē* (Sanskrit), is a sort of female demon of Hinduism, supposed to have occult power, and to know the hour of the death of a person six months previously, and eat the heart of the person.

In Japan, *Dakini-ten* is supposed to be the spirit of *Kitsuné* and she is enshrined as an avatar of Buddha at the Iizuna shrine on Mount Iizuna in Shinano Province called Iizuna Gongen—and also at the Inari shrine at Fushimi, Kyoto, called Inari Gongen.

The goddess is shown riding her fox holding a sword in her right hand and the sacred fox jewel\* in her left hand. The fox carries the sacred



*Dakini-ten*

\*A symbol of sacred *Kitsuné* often seen in anything connected with *Kitsuné*—even on the costume of a player impersonating a *Kitsuné* in the *Kabuki* theatre.



jewel also on the tip of its tail.

The faith-curiers belonging to this faith are supposed to cast a spell over people. (The faith even exerted its evil influence upon the people of Mino Province. And you will read the story of a strong woman of Mino Province who was closely related with *Kitsuné* in The *Konjaku Monogatari*.)

*Kitsuné-tsukai* is the person supposed to exercise witchcraft through the power of *Kitsuné*, and *Iizuna-tsukai* is one of them. This person used to practise sorcery through the power of *Dakini-ten*. This practice was, of course, considered to be the black art of the faith of *Dakini-ten*.

According to the records, it was used during the *Édo* Era as one of the tactics. However most of the samurai did not wish to resort to this sort of art as they thought it an evil practice.

In connection with *Kitsuné* sorcery, there were people exercising witchcraft through the power of *kuda-gitsuné*, which was thought to be a kind of *Kitsuni*. An animal small in size, it looks like a weasel, black- or brown-furred, with a big tail.

The person who could employ this animal could do various things through its occult power, it was believed. For instance, he could amass a fortune with the help of the animal. Once it lived with the employer, it would not leave him—even after his death, it is recorded. Other people would not like to contract a marriage with the family of the *kuda-gitsuné* man, calling it *kuda-gitsuné* family.

(*Osaki-gitsuné* seen in part of the eastern districts of the country belongs to the same category.)

*Kitsuné* is an animal supposed to be strange, mysterious and uncanny, as shown in various records and stories. Here are some instances:

#### *Kitsune* Are Averse to Accepting Unwilling Charity

IN the spring of the 17th year of Meiji (1885), an unprecedented snowfall was experienced in the San-in and San-yo districts of Japan.

According to the records, snow fell in the mountainous regions to a depth of more than 10 feet, and birds and animals took refuge in groups in villages and towns. There was a large number of foxes among them. It is said that approximately one thousand foxes found shelter under the floors of temples in *Miyoshi-cho* of *Bingo* Province alone.

These foxes were extremely hungry. They were so famished, in fact, that they stormed the kitchens of the temples for food in broad daylight. Therefore it was decided by the town council in *Miyoshi-cho* to provide *Kitsuné* with boiled rice.

Each street boiled rice in a cauldron and made *nigiri-méshi*\* for those poor foxes.

In a street of the town, however, some people com-

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\*Rice-balls made by hand with a small quantity of salt. sometimes a pickled plum is put in each of them.

plained, saying that it was not right to supply the foxes with the *nigiri-méshi* when men themselves were suffering because of the heavy' snowfall.

Strange to say, the foxes taking refuge in a temple would not eat the *nigiri-mhshi* sent from the street where some people did not want to supply Kitsunh with the rice-balls. These foxes, according to the records, went to another temple to eat *nigiri-mhshi* given by the people of another street. The foxes were averse to accepting unwilling charity.

#### *Kitsune Suffer from a Guilty Conscience*

*Kitsuné* are supposed to be revengeful. However they are, at the same time, very remorseful sometimes, as shown in the following story appearing in *The Toyu-ki* by Tachibana-Nankéi (died in 1805):

THERE lived a farmer and his wife with three daughters in the village of Murakami in Échigo Province in the Temméi Era (1781-1788).

The house of this family was infested with many rats. So the farmer gave them some boiled rice mixed with rat-poison and killed two rats. Then he threw the dead bodies of these rats on the ground. And that night, a young fox appeared, ate the poisoned rats, and died.

The parent-foxes felt resented this so bitterly that they took possession of the eldest daughter of the family, who died seven days later babbling out reproaches, in the words of the dead fox-cub, on the farmer. After that, the other two daughters died one after another



Buson, the great lover and  
student of *Kitsuné*

within a period of a month, in the same way.

The parents of the daughters who died lamented their death, and, on the very night of the death of the youngest daughter, they went out of doors, and the farmer cried aloud:

"Listen, foxes! I did not throw down the dead rats for the purpose of killing your cub. It simply devoured them and died. We are not, therefore, responsible for the death of your cub; while you were so cruel and outrageous that you caused the death of all our daughters. We cannot understand the reason. Are you foxes so unreasonable and relentless?"

The following evening, two old foxes were found dead in the yard of the farmer. The farmer and his wife, on seeing the dead foxes, said sorrowfully:

"Poor foxes! So both of you died suffering from a guilty conscience!"

The farmer and his wife, realizing the uncertainty of life, shaved their heads, sold their farm and set out to make a pilgrimage in the Shikoku district and other western provinces to pray for the repose of the souls of their dead daughters, and the dead foxes.

#### Family Fortunes decline Because of *Kitsune*

Here is an uncanny story of *Kitsuné* told by Buson, the great lover and student of *Kitsuné*:

NAKAMURA-HEIZAEMON, a very wealthy man living in Shimodaté in Hitachi Province, was leading a happy life with a wife named Omitsu, a woman of taste. They were not blessed with children. However they were

living a quiet life—until a mysterious thing happened, and the fortunes of the family gradually declined.

In December of a certain year, the family made a great deal of mochi (rice-cake) for the New Year, according to custom. These *mochi*, however, disappeared mysteriously. Night after night, somebody came and stole these mochi, an ominous incident for the family, so they made a very heavy lid for the big box containing the *mochi*, and, in addition, a huge stone was placed on it. But somebody came and took away the *mochi* at night—without lifting the lid!

One night, Omitsu, the wife, sat up sewing a fine *kimono* for her spring wear. It was the unearthly hour, what they call the witching hour of midnight. Not a sound broke the tranquility of the spacious room in which she was sitting sewing intently.

Presently, however, Omitsu saw five or six foxes passing like so many shadows through the room! She saw them with her own eyes! The foxes were in their natural shape! They merely passed through the room and vanished like phantoms!

It was an extraordinary incident. How did the foxes get inside the house? All the doors had tightly been closed. They wondered at the incident.

"An exceedingly queer thing!" said Omitsu to Héizaémon, her husband.

"It is indeed!" said Héizaémon looking around the room.

"I hope nothing bad will happen to our family."

However something did happen. Strange to relate, the fortunes of the Nakamuras began to fall off—until the family was reduced to extreme poverty! Nobody knew the reason why. Anyway the appearance of the foxes seemed to have had something to do with the fortunes of the Nakamuras. The disappearance of the *mochi* was attributed to the foxes, too.

There are many foxes with their own names left on record. All of them were also strange and uncanny, as shown in the following examples:

#### Kitsune Named Koan (Buddhist Priest Fox)

A story taken from *The Téiséi Kidan*, an ancient book of records.

ONCE there lived a white-haired old man called Koan in the province of Kozuké. He would tell people that he was 130 years old. He was in the habit of preaching the doctrine of Buddhism, and there were many who believed in him. He would take up his quarters at the house of one of his devotees, and would preach a sermon.

When asked to tell fortunes and about future, he would give his answer properly. He also had insight into human nature, and would write the character of LONGEVITY along with his age, signature, and seal, and he would give it to people.

One evening, while staying in the house of a man, Koan entered the bath-room and the moment he put one foot into the bath-tub he cried with pain:



Koan's writing:  
 "LONGEVITY"  
 with  
 age, signature,  
 & seal

"Ouch!"

It was too hot. He immediately went out of the bathroom. They found, to their surprise, that he was covered with hair all over his body and that he had a tail!

The master of the house came running on hearing the noise made at the strange discovery. He was just in time to see Koan for the last time, fleeing in the form of an old fox, barking.

I (the author of the book, *The Téisêi Kidan*) saw the writing of Koan and found it was not so good when compared with that of a human being. However the character was written correctly.

### Kitsune Named Jingoro (Enshrined Fox)

There is an account of the *Kitsuné* named Jingoro in *The Nikko Yashiogi*, a book of records.

ONCE upon a time, a servant employed by a rich family in Nikko went into a bamboo grove, and stepped by mistake on a fox sleeping, and the animal ran away. The fox, however, was apparently under the impression that the man came to kill it. Therefore the fox bore him a grudge and did everything to annoy him, in an uncanny way.

The master of the house was a man of stout heart. On hearing about the matter, he called the servant and said:

"The fox is doing something! It is in possession of you! But don't be afraid of the animal. If it does not leave you, I will give it cruel treatment!"

The servant, however, was a man, gentle and virtuous by nature.

Said the servant:

"The fox wants to kill me because it thinks that I had the intention of killing it in the bamboo grove. But it will not kill me after all because it will soon learn that I spared its life. If it should kill me, it will surely suffer from a guilty conscience. I am not afraid of it."

Said the master:

"What you tell me is perhaps right. Now what would you like me to do for you?"

Answered the servant:



"If you would kindly erect a small shrine for this fox, it will leave me immediately."

The master complied with his request.

At the place called *Shiken-cho*, there stands a small shrine dedicated to the fox. They call it *Jingoro Inari*.

Kitsune Named **Gengoro**  
(Express Messenger Fox)

ABOUT the era of *Enho* (1673-1680), there was a fox named *Gengoro* in Yamato Province. It was employed by farmers as a farm hand, and it was very popular among them because it could do the work of two or three men. Nobody, however, knew where it came from.

The fox was also known as a fast messenger, and they would often send it to the eastern districts as an express messenger.

Poor animal, it was killed finally by a wild dog on its way home in the pass of *Sayo-no-Nakayama*. It was found dead, lying on the ground with the dispatch-box containing the letter addressed to a man in Yamato Province hanging from its neck.

A kind-hearted villager living near the pass of *Sayo-no-Nakayama* sent the letter-case to the man who had sent the fox as his messenger.

Kitsune Named **Genkuro**  
(Hair-Cutting Fox)

ACCORDING to *The Kiyu Shoran*, a book of strange

happenings, once there lived a fox named *Genkuro* in Yamato Province.

They believed that this fox was in the habit of cutting the hair of women and breaking *horoku* (earthen parching pans).

In the *Edo* Era, hair-cutting *Kitsuné* scared women, appearing nightly in the streets of *Edo* in the days of *Utamaro*, the famous *ukiyo-e* artist.

Kitsune Named **Hakuzo**  
(Learned Fox)

In *The Shokoku Satobito-dan*, the author relates the following tale:

WHEN *Kakuzan Shonin*, noted bishop of the *Dentsu-in* temple in *Edo*, was on his way home from the capital, *Kyoto*, he had a traveling companion, a priest named *Hakuzo*.

*Hakuzo* came to the *Dentsu-in* temple and studied under Bishop *Kakuzan* with whom he had traveled. *Hakuzo* seemed exceptionally clever, and never failed to give answers in the religious dialogues. All the priests of the temple thought him a great scholar.

One summer afternoon, however, *Hakuzo* revealed his natural shape, that of a fox, an old one, while taking a nap. He immediately vanished, ashamed of himself, apparently.

However the fox would hang around the temple at night, and they would hear him preaching the doctrine of Buddhism in the dark.

It is said that there is a chestful of Hakuzo's works on Buddhism in the temple. In former years, they would borrow these books and copy them out of curiosity. The works, however, are not real ones when seen now. Hakuzo lived, according to tradition, until the era of Hoëi (1704-1709).

The **fox** was enshrined and now the shrine is called Hakuzo *Inari*. The legend, by the **way**, is also found in Shimousa Province.

*Kitsune Named Kojoro*  
(Little Maid Fox)

THERE once lived a female fox named Kojoro in the Kozanji Temple in Iga Province. She was supposed to be the wife of Gengoro Kitsund (the messenger fox mentioned before). Kojoro looked in appearance like a girl of twelve or fourteen years of age in her disguise.

She used to work as a maid in the temple's kitchen. She would go out to buy vegetables or tofu (bean-curd). The people of the town who came near the temple knew that she was a fox. The children, on seeing her on the street, would banter her calling: "Kojoro! Kojoro!" (Little maid! Little maid!).

Hearing this, she would turn her head, and smile an innocent smile.

Kojoro stayed at the temple for a period of four years. Then she disappeared and her whereabouts were unknown.

## CHAPTER 17

### *KITSUNE-BI, OR FOX-FIRE*

THE most favorite sport of Kitsund is what they call in Japan Kitsund-bi, or fox-fire. It is said that there are 4 kinds of *Kitsuné-bi*:

- 1) A host of small lights is given forth by *Kitsuné*.
- 2) One or two fire-balls are shown by *Kitsuné*.
- 3) A scene in which several magnificent buildings with all the windows illuminated is presented by *Kitsuné*.
- 4) The scene of a procession of *Kitsunh-no-yomkiri* (fox-wedding) is introduced by *Kitsunh*.

The first case would not be strange as it has been known in all parts of the globe from ancient times under some other names—though not supposed to be given forth by foxes, as in the case of Japan.

Now it would not be out of place to give a few examples in connection with *Kisund-bi* here because *Kitsund-bi* and *Kitsund* are so closely related. *Kitsuné-bi* is, so to speak, the trade-mark of *Kitsuné*. (See the illustration given in the scene in which Yayégaki Himô is walking with *Kisunh-bi* in the chapter Fox in Plays.)

*Kitsune-Bi* as seen  
in Ancient & Recent Times

The following instances are only a few out of many that might be cited.

Boy Sees Foxes Emitting Fire from Their Mouths

A tale found in *The Issho-wa*, published in 1811.

THERE have been many instances of *Kitsuné-bi* from time immemorial, says the author of the book.

Once a man told me that he had seen *Kitsuné-bi* with his own eyes in his boyhood in the mountains.

At peep of day on the 25th of July, he said, he was going down to the adjoining village when he saw some torches flickering at the foot of a mountain at a distance of about 450 yards. He thought them to be what they call *Kitsuné-bi*. Therefore he hastened stealthily in that direction along a *foot-path* between rice-fields.

On approaching the spot, he found about 20 or 30 foxes, big and small, frolicking together, chasing each other by turns in the yard of a small Inari shrine erected there. And he also found that the fire he had thought to be their torches was their breath. When a fox jumped up into the air, it breathed it out. The breath flickered like a flame, about 2 or 3 feet in front of its nozzle. The thing was not luminous for minutes together. It looked like a flame only when the fox jumped up into the air.

No wonder the fire appeared and disappeared intermittently when seen at a distance. Presently the foxes in the yard scattered in all directions on hearing the

sound of a voice coming from a mountain path....

I (the author) once read in an ancient book that a fox emits fire by stroking its tail. Now I have learned that *Kitsuni-bi* is emitted from the mouth of *Kitsuné*.

The Fox Fire Ball Returned by a Bishop

An uncanny story we read in *The Unkon-shi*, an ancient book of records.

ONE day, the Bishop of the Chikurin-in temple at Mikado in Omi Province was watching some foxes playing near the miniature lake in the precincts of the temple when he noticed that they were making much of an egg-like stone.

Then four or five *téra-zamurai* (the samurai in the service of a temple) belonging to the temple stealthily got behind the foxes and suddenly cried out in a loud voice to frighten them. The foxes instantly ran off, leaving the strange stone behind.

The temple *samurai* found that it was a beautiful whitish stone. When looked at night, the light emitted from the stone was doubtlessly that of *Kitsuné-bi*. Therefore they set a high value upon it and wanted to keep it as a treasure.

Later the bishop would hear a knocking at the door of his room nightly and a voice would say imploringly: "Return our fire-ball, please..return our fire-ball, please...."

It was evidently that of a fox.

The bishop called the young temple *samurai* into his

presence and urged them to return the fox's fire-ball at once to the original owner. However they would not do so, saying that the whitish stone was a treasure.

The knocking at the door of the bishop's room would break the stillness of night—night after night:

"Return our fire-ball, please...return our fire-ball, please...."

A plaintive voice appealed to the bishop repeatedly.

The bishop called the young *téra-zamurai* again and told them to return the fox's fire-ball immediately to the foxes—if they wanted to stay in the temple. They were now obliged to hand over the property of the fox to the bishop to be restored to it.

On that night, the bishop heard the rapping at the door of his room as usual:

"Return our fire-ball, please...return our fire-ball, please...."

The voice was now full of pathos.

The bishop went outside taking the whitish ball with him.

He was unable to see the person clearly. However he found a figure of an old man standing alone outside. The bishop gave the whitish ball to him without saying a word. The old man received it with a bow and faded away....

After that, no mysterious thing happened for about 8 years. The bishop, about that time, fell ill and he was confined to bed, at the age of 88. He was now emaciated and his doctor said that there was no hope for his recovery.

At this juncture, the brother of the bishop living in

the far east, in Shirakawa of Mutsu Province, the bishop's native place, came to see him, accompanied by several relatives.

Said the brother:

"I came in a hurry as soon as I heard of the bishop's serious illness from the messenger sent from this temple."

Everybody present was greatly surprised to hear that, because no messenger had been sent to Shirakawa informing the family members of the brother of the illness of the bishop.

"Yes, it was true," said the brother of the bishop, "a messenger was sent from this temple. He told us that the bishop was going to die soon, and that we should meet him before his death."

The kinsfolks of the bishop were ushered into the sick-room immediately. They told the bishop all about the condition of his native province and the mysterious messenger sent from the temple.

On the following day, the bishop passed away in peace. The foxes seemed to have repaid him for his kindness in making the young *téra-zamurai* return the fire-ball, the whitish stone.

The above story was told to me by my brother, Yoshitaké, one of the temple *samurai* when he was young, says the author.

### The Fox-Fire Ball Caught in a Net

The Shokoku-Kibun, an old book, tells us the following story of *Kitsuné-bi*:

A MAN living in Kyoto once went night-netting to the Higashigawa river about the beginning of the Genroku Era (1688-1703). While he was engaging in his netting in the vicinity of Kamo, he saw a fox's fire-ball come flying near him; so he cast the net over it. Something uttered a strange cry and flew away. Then the man found a bright thing caught in the net. He took it home.

When he examined the thing he had brought home the next morning, it looked like an egg in shape and was whitish in color. It was not luminous when seen in the daytime; but it shone brightly at night. When he put it inside a paper-lantern, it shone as bright as candle-light. Therefore he treasured it as an heirloom of his house.

One night, the man went night-netting again and, on this occasion, he put the egg-shaped ball in a bag of silk gauze and took it with him.

At the river, he hung the bag from his elbow and cast his net. At this moment, a stone-like object, about 6 feet in length, dropped suddenly into the river with a big splash. Then he found the bright fox fire-ball missing! He only saw the broken hag of silk gauze still hanging from his elbow—but no fox's ball found in it!

And then, to his joy, he espied the thing shining as brightly as before at a short distance. He went there

stealthily and flung out the net over it. However he could not catch it.

He went home, carrying a wet net minus the fox fire-ball.

### A Procession of Fox-Fire Balls

In The *Chomon-Kishu*, a book of strange stories, an account of a procession of fox-fire balls is given.

ONE night, a drizzling night, I happened to see fox-fires—more than 50 in number coming toward me while I was walking along a country road, says the author. I wanted to see what they were like. I half shut my oil-paper umbrella and stepped down onto a rice-field, and concealed myself among rice-plants.

I saw the fire balls coming one after another. A procession of fire balls. A brilliant sight. When several of them passed me, I cried at the top of my voice: "Hi!" stepping up on the road.

The fire balls died out instantly. I found myself alone in the dark with the rain drizzling. I brandished my umbrella blindly when something passed me. An animal—apparently a fox, whined when I thought I hit it. Then I brandished my umbrella again and again—hitting nothing.

I groped for some horse-bones on my way home, but without result. And when I got home, I lighted a paper-lantern and went back to the spot where a fox had bumped against me. However I failed to find any horse-bone there.

Then I kept walking until I came to a broad road, where my eyes were greeted by a pile of more than 50 white horse-bones!



Now I learned that *Kitsuné* make their lights by holding horse-bones in their mouths—on a rainy night.

### A Fox's Torch

Here is an account of a fox's torch written in *Ari-no-mama*, an ancient book.

JIROBÉI, a farmer living in my village had the experience of seeing a fox's torch, says the author.

One night, Jirobéi, the farmer, saw a light on the road—not like the one carried by man. A strange sort of light. He was a plucky fellow, so he approached it stealthily without fear.

He found a fox in a dried up stream, eating fish ravenously, walking here and there. A torch was burning on the bank. The farmer took up the torch and frightened off the fox.

When returned home, Jirobéi found that the torch in his hand was a cow's shin-bone. When he flourished the bone on a dark night, it emitted a bright fluorescent light. It was so bright, in fact, that he could take it with him in place of a lantern when walking along the road at night.

The fox tried to retrieve the torch. However every effort seemed fruitless.

One evening, Jirobéi's cow got loose. The farmer went out to look for the cow, carrying the fox's torch with him. He finally found the cow and he dragged it into the stable, putting the torch on the ground. However when he came out of the stable, the fluorescent light was gone!

The cow, they said, got loose because of the trick on the part of the fox. The fox was successful in retrieving its torch at last.

## CHAPTER' 18

### *KITSUNE-BI, OR FOX-FIRE* (Continued)

#### Fox-Parade

An account appearing in *The Shokoku-Kibun*.

IN the province of Rikuchu, there is a field, about 12 miles square in area, in Nambu district. In this field appears a singular phenomenon called *Kitsuné-tai*, or fox-parade, in the latter part of February every year.

The people of this region will go to see the sight in a spirit of a picnic, carrying lunch or *sasah* (a bamboo-tube used as a container of *saké*, or tea).

This phenomenon is presented usually on a cloudy day. At first, there appear 20 or 30 foxes in the field. When encouraged by the spectators, the foxes will presently form the shape of a castle at a distance of about 240 yards. Then about 200 fox-soldiers in armor will come galloping in formation.

When people encourage the foxes still more, the animals will show another form of entertainment—a procession of a daimyo (feudal lord), such as the procession of the lord of Matsumaé (a feudal lord who ruled over a district in Ézo, present Hokkaido, not far from Nambu district)—or that of Tsugaru (a feudal lord who held sway over Nambu, part of present Aomori Prefecture).

## KITSUNE-BI, OR FOX-FIRE

The foxes, it is believed, present the image of a castle and the formation of soldiers on horseback by imitating the ancient battle of Kuriyagawa.<sup>1</sup>

The number of foxes will increase when they (foxes) have a large audience and are encouraged by cheers and clapping of hands, they say.

The foxes are evidently very conservative. They are extremely fond of sticking to old customs. The *Kitsuné* in the field of Nambu seem to have been enacting the scene of the ancient battle, witnessed by their ancestors, over and over again.

### *Kitsune-no-Yomeiri* (Fox's wedding)

ON the evening of May 14th in 1741, according to an old book, an important-looking samurai attired in *haori*<sup>2</sup> with the family crests of the influential Okubo family came to the ferry at Takémachi in Honjo ward, Edo.

Said the samurai wearing the *haori* with the circled wistaria with the character of *GREAT*:<sup>3</sup>

"I came from the Okubos of Honjo. A daughter of the family is going to get married tonight. A large

<sup>1</sup> Located in Rikuchu Province, where, in 1062, Minamoto-Yoriyoshi, ancestor of the great family of the Minamotos, fought and captured Abé Sadato, the brave rebel leader, by Imperial order.

<sup>2</sup> A Japanese coat. A ceremonial one has 5 family crests: 2 in front, 3 at the back.

<sup>3</sup> The family crest of the Okubos is the circled wistaria with the character of *GREAT* (大) in the middle.

## Wistaria Family Crests



\*The family crest of the Okubos:

The circled wistaria with the  
character of GREAT  
in the middle

(The rest of the wistaria crests belong  
to other families.)

number of people will accompany her, crossing the river from here. Therefore you are requested to keep all the boats on this side of the river, you understand? As for the remuneration, you shall have additional pay besides your fare."

Then the samurai produced a kobang of one *ryo*.\*

The samurai handed the kobang to the head of the ferry, saying:

"This is the tip for all the ferrymen."

The recipient of the *kobang* was greatly impressed by the generosity of the *samurai* wearing the *haori* with the family crest of the Okubos.

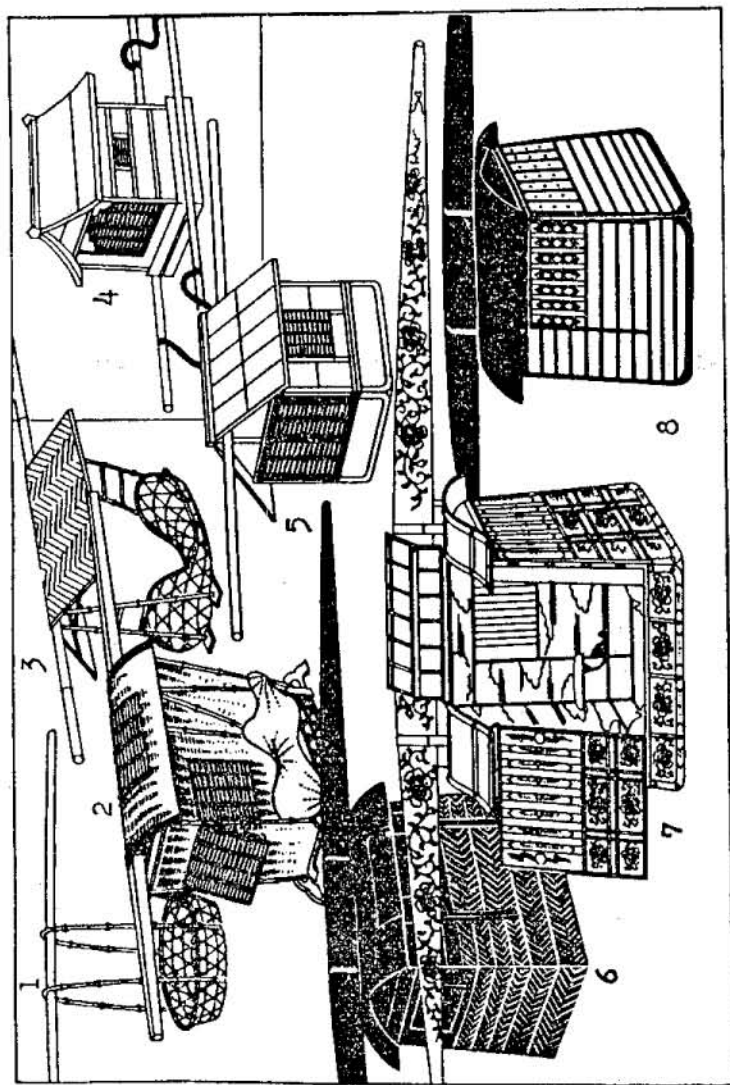
Said the ferry head:

"All the boats will be ready on this side of the river for the occasion, sir."

The head of the ferry was waiting for the nuptial retinue, keeping all the boats on one side of the river, when, at about 12 o'clock midnight, they did come: The bearers of trousseaus—many retainers of the family in ceremonial robes—and the resplendent palanquin of the bride guarded by several *samurai*—a good many paper-lanterns with the family crests illuminating the people walking with measured steps...

The head of the ferry and all the boatmen in his employ came out to greet the party respectfully. Then they got on board the boats one after another. The boatmen shoved off the ferryboats with bamboo poles. The water of the river was black. However the paper-lanterns on each boat shed a light on the surface of

*Ryo*, a unit of Japanese coinage in ancient times. A *kobang* was used as a *ryo*, an oblong gold coin, about 2 in. in length. Coined during the period of 1573-1867.



Kago, Japanese Palanquins

1 Simple palanquin. 2 "Cab" palanquin. 3 Mountain palanquin. 4 One like a portable shrine. 5 One with a roof and bamboo blinds. 6 One made of bamboo basketwork. 7 One for a noble lady. 8 One for a gentleman.

the river and they looked like so many fireflies as they receded across the wide river....

Strange to relate, however, the number of the lights of the paper-lanterns gradually diminished mysteriously when each boat reached the opposite side of the river. And no sounds of footsteps and human voices were to be heard....

On the following day, the head of the ferry who took out the *kobang* given as the fare and tip on the previous night was surprised to find that they were not *kobang*! All of them were leaves of trees!

They now learned that they had been victims of *Kitsuné*—a great number of *Kitsuné*—burning their fires, *Kitsuné-bi*!

Rumor had it at the time that a marriage was solemnized between the Handa *Inari*<sup>1</sup> at Kasaikané-cho and the Yazaémon *Inari*<sup>2</sup> at Asakusa. Perhaps it was due to this fact that the ferrymen at Takémachi were bewitched by *Kitsuné*.

According to another rumor, the foxes bore the head of the ferry some grudge, and played a prank on him.

1 & 2 Shrines of *Inari*, where white foxes are supposed to live as the messengers of the deity.

## Rifsune-no-Yorneiri Witnessed by Schoolteacher

About 60 years ago, Mr. Yukawa, teaching in a middle school of Izumo Province, witnessed the phenomenon of *Kitsuné-no-yoméiri* with his wife.

AFTER leaving the residence of Baron Sénké at Kizuki-cho, says Mr. Yukawa, my wife and myself were walking along the beach in the neighborhood of the Izumo shrine on our way home. It was about one hour after the sunset.

Presently we saw a strange phenomenon—at the foot of Matsuyama hill.

The sky was dark after the rain. However we were walking without carrying a paper-lantern. We were familiar with the pathway. Now we were walking in a lonely place with many mulberry fields around, and, a little farther on, we came to Matsuyama hill covered with dwarf bamboos. You could see several earths of foxes in the daytime around here.

We heard a rustling sound among the dwarf bamboos beside the path.

"They have come!" we thought instantly. "*Kitsuné!*"

We advanced a little farther. And we saw, all of a sudden, that halfway up the hill was illuminated brightly as if by a searchlight. However it was only a part of the hill that was illuminated. The rest was dark, black as pitch.

While we were looking at the strange sight, we saw, in the illuminated part on the hill, a two-storied house with each paper sliding-door illuminated, the second





A Wedding Procession of the Edo Era (1615-1867)

story and the lower story. There was a grand porch in front of the house.

Presently there appeared in the porch many servants with top-knots of yore, attired in livery-coats, carrying ancient-style box-shaped paper-lanterns with the family crests.

The ancient trousseaus—such as ryogakh (a kind of a pair of suit-cases used for traveling), hasami-bako (a lacquered traveling box carried at the end of a pole), to say nothing of chests of drawers and oblong chests were being brought in by bearers in lively coats. The kago in which the bride was riding followed them.

Strange to say, however, these people did not reach the porch. They merely passed before the porch of the big house—and vanished mysteriously into the night. An uncanny sight. However their black shadows could clearly be seen against the bright lights coming from the house as they disappeared one after another...

We were looking at the singular sight, fascinated for a while. Now we thought that it was so interesting and unusual that we wanted to share the pleasure with other people. Therefore we went hurriedly to the house of a widow who was selling cheap candies near there.

"Come quickly, Oba-san!"\* we told her breathlessly, "you can see a *Kitsuné-no-yoméiri* down there!"

By the time we came to the scene of the *Kitsuné-no-yoméiri* together with the Oba-san, however, the

\*Oba-san, a friendly term for addressing an elderly woman. Obā-san is used for an old woman.

procession had already gone--and what we saw there was a streak of whitish smoke pervading the air, which soon faded away to nothingness—and we found ourselves standing on the dark path along which grew the dwarf bamboos rustling in the night breeze....

According to Mr. Yukawa, he took the trouble of conducting a study of the strange phenomenon later. However, he said, he could not bring himself to attribute it to any human agency—or to such a phenomenon as a mirage. Therefore he was, in the last analysis, obliged to believe in the ancient story of *Kitsuné-no-yoméiri*. And he added, "It was not the wedding of *Kitsuné*. The foxes were simply imitating the wedding of human beings."

## CHAPTER 19

### THE FOX IN ANCIENT CARTOONS & WORKS OF ART

#### Toba Sojo

IN the 12th century, Japan produced the greatest animal cartoonist she has ever had: Kakujo, commonly called Toba Sojo (Bishop Toba). Born as a son of Minamoto-no-Takakuni, the well-known author of *The Konjaku Monogatari*, from which some stories of *Kitsuné* have already been introduced, he was a priest of the Tendai sect of Buddhism.

Kakujo lived in the monastery of Enryoji temple at Mii. He was appointed archbishop and then the Abbot of the Tendai sect after resigning the former post. However because of the keen strife among factions of the sect, he resigned soon. He died at the age of 88 in 1140 after enjoying his life and art completely.

His character and personality is reflected well in his cartoons of men as well as animals and birds: humorous and good-natured. He also made fine pictures besides his cartoons.

Kakujo was called Toba Sojo because he lived late in life in the village of Toba in Yamato Province. He served in those days as *gojiso*<sup>1</sup> in the Imperial detached

<sup>1</sup> The priest who prayed for the safety of the Emperor at the Imperial palace, an honorable post.

palace at Toba, where he enjoyed his life and work immensely producing his animal pictures and other fine pictures, now designated as national treasures by the government.

The cartoons by Toba Sojo have been known widely as *toba-é*. They are suggestive of an unconventional aloofness and detachment. They are simply funny.

The collection of bird and animal cartoons, called the *Chojyu-Giga*, by Toba Sojo, consists of 4 scrolls belonging to the Kozanji temple of Kyoto, and is a national treasure.

The characteristic of these picture-scrolls of animal cartoons is that they were drawn in *hakubyo*<sup>2</sup>—due, perhaps, to the fact that it was in vogue among the priests in those days.

The animal cartoons shown in this chapter were photographed by the courtesy of the Kyoto University (Kyoto Daigaku) Library, which owns the reproduction of the picture-scrolls by Toba Sojo.

### Kuniyoshi

ONE of the most famous pictures concerning the bewitchery of foxes is one by Kuniyoshi (1797-1861), a celebrated artist of the *ukiyo-é* school.

In the picture shown in this chapter, the wicked white fox with nine tails is seen fleeing from the palace

<sup>2</sup> A style adopted in Japanese painting, drawn by using Indian ink exclusively.



They seem to be following some dignitary, a bishop, perhaps, who is riding in a palanquin, a fat Fox in the guise of a fat bishop.

A young Fox is carrying a pair of footgears, and a young Rabbit, a big sunshade for the bishop. The latter is carrying, at his side, a branch of *hagi* (a kind of bush-clover), as a souvenir. They have been to a temple famous for *hagi*-blossoms, to be sure.

These two are the fellows full of curiosity. Now they are looking at something with great interest, as usual. As for another Rabbit, he seems to be a fellow liable to get tired easily, especially on his way home from any place.





What are they doing today?

They are enjoying themselves by giving a signal for their friends who are practising archery.

The Fox will emit his fire, *Kitsuné-bi*, by stroking his bushy tail when an arrow (of a reed) hits the target (of a lotus frond) as a signal. A very handy signal, this.

The Rabbit, on his part, will tell his friend Fox when to stroke his tail. See how anxious they are to perform their duty in a spirit of fairness.



Here they are in a real picnicky mood.

Mr. Frog and Mr. Tomcat are wearing *éboshi*-headgears now, and they look naturally stylish, particularly the former, who is carrying a cane with him.

Miss Rabbit who is accompanied by two young Rats today is in her new dress.

Mrs. Fox, lifting up her elegant hat slightly, is looking at somebody, with her child clinging to her sleeve timidly.

Her husband, who is ordinarily inclined to be dull in disposition, is turning his rather vacant face to see what is going on, intercepting the sunlight with his fan.

What is the matter, anyway? Mr. Tomcat is also turning his head with his eyes wide open, taking up his tail gingerly.

of King Pan-Tsu of ancient India, revealing its true colors—after staying there for some years as his favorite mistress calling herself Hua-Yang.

As previously stated, the nine-tailed fox is said to have appeared at the Court of the *Mikado* in Japan in the 12th century. Previous to that, the fox was in India, and then it fled to China, and later showed itself in Japan, according to legend. (See the chapter Fox in Plays.)

Commenting on the above-mentioned picture by Kuniyoshi of the *ukiyo-é* school, Mr. Kazumaro Oda, noted art critic, says in his recent work, *The Influence of "Ukiyo-é" on the Art of Illustration*:

"This is a picture manifesting feelings intently with a touch of grotesqueness.... The *musha-é* (a picture representing a fight and struggle) by Kuniyoshi is invariably depicted with a color of mystery. A mighty power is seen in the delineation of the human body. The fine effect of both light and shade.

"In this method of drawing, we can see the great influence exerted by Hokusai (another *ukiyo-é* master, who died in 1849 at the age of 90) and some examples introduced from abroad, such as printed matter.

"In this picture by Kuniyoshi, the foreign buildings in the rear are the same as those appearing in the *ukiyo-é* by Toyoharu (1735-1814), another famous *ukiyo-é* artist. However in other respects, Kuniyoshi seems to have used his own methods.

"In the works of Kuniyoshi, we will find many instances of *musha-é*. For example, the nine-tailed fox fleeing from the palace of King Pan-Tsu of ancient India. The popularity enjoyed by such a master as Hiro-

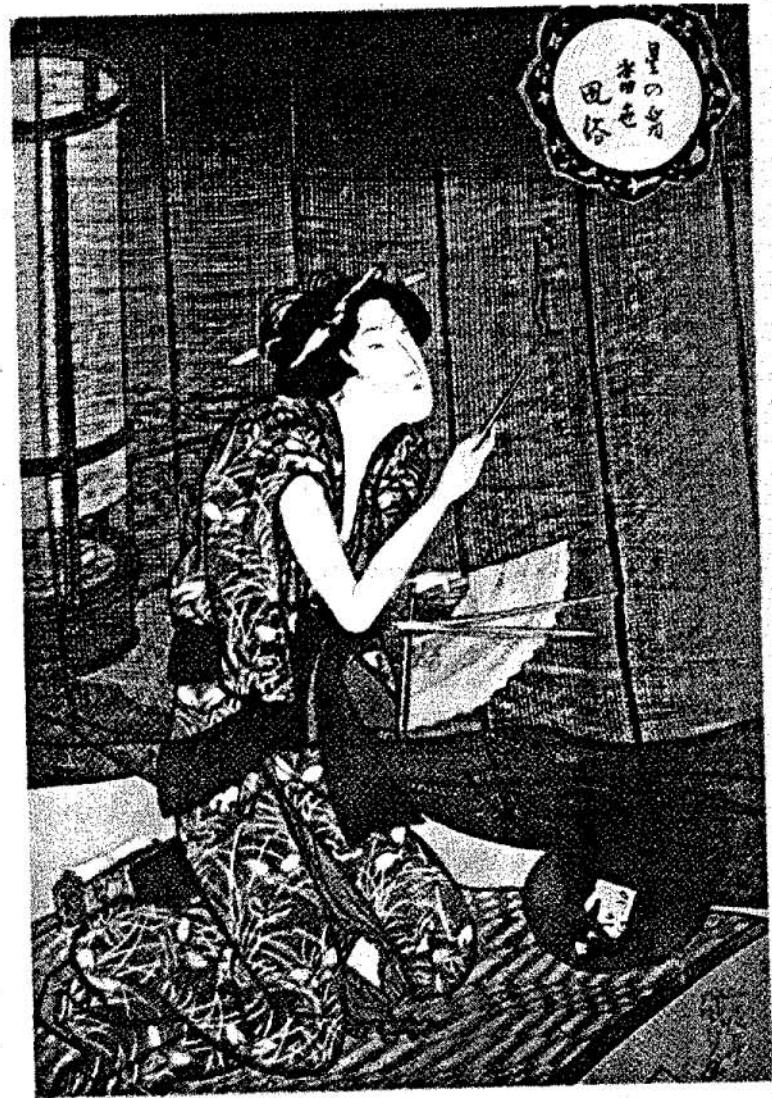


The wicked white nine-tailed fox fleeing from the palace of King Pan-Tsu of India, by Kuniyoshi.



A summer night. A woman is applying the flame of a long taper to a few mosquitoes who have got inside the mosquito-net. It looks rather dangerous. However she can do it with her skillful hand.

A woman's pillow is lying behind her. And in front of her, a large round fan with the likeness of a popular actor in those days (with which she fans the mosquito-net before getting in it, driving away obnoxious insects). An *andon* (paper covered night light) is burning outside the mosquito-net sucking rapeseed oil. A quiet summer night.



A buxom and voluptuous young belle is admiring herself in counter-mirrors.

She seems to have protected her lovely left arm vaccinated for small pox before taking her bath by tying it with a *ténugui* (Japanese towel)—making her arm look more attractive, perhaps.





A girl (presumably the daughter) of a tea-house is sitting crossing her young legs coquettishly, a tobacco-pipe with a long bamboo-stem and a **tobacco**-tray beside her.

No, she is not smoking. She prefers to kill time by engaging in paper-doll making at this moment.

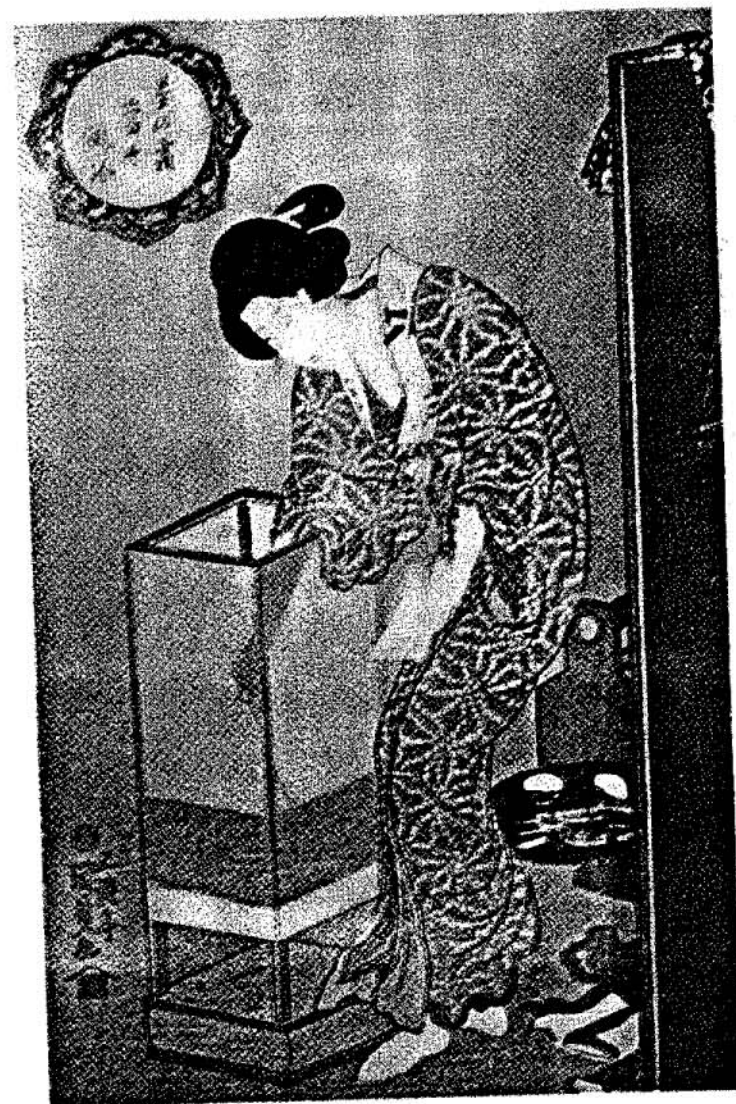
But the paper-doll is not an ordinary one: It is the **téru-téru-bozu** which is made when praying for fine weather. It **will** be hung outside after it is finished. The **téru-téru-bozu** has no eyes. They will be given when the weather turns out fine. Then it will be thrown into the river, after offering **saké** to it.



She is dimming the light by putting out one of the two rushlights burning in an andon—before going to bed. She holds, as you notice, some paper handkerchiefs in her left hand.

She is in her night-dress—a very bright-colored one, as you can imagine. Her kimono is hanging from a folding screen behind which lies a bed for two.

Her toilet things are lying scattered at her dainty feet. They (judging by the two tea-cups on a lacquered tray) seem to be in a hotel room. On a balmy spring night, perhaps.







The "Kitsuné-bi" of Oji  
by Hiroshige

shige, who was very fond of depicting landscapes, and other prominent artists should also be shared by Kuniyoshi—when seen from the viewpoint of art appreciation. One Hundred Views of *Édo* by Hiroshige is a masterpiece, no doubt. However some *musha-é* by Kuniyoshi should also be rated high.

"If Kunisada (1786-1864), a well-known artist of the same school, gains public favor because of his eroticism, it would not be wrong if Kuniyoshi is famous for his *musha-é*."

## CHAPTER 20

### THE FOX IN ANCIENT CARTOONS & WORKS OF ART (Continued)

#### Kunisada

SPEAKING of Kunisada, who was very good at drawing erotic beauties, and to whom Mr. Oda referred in his comment on the *musha-é* by Kuniyoshi, the artist was also, incidentally, greatly fond of depicting what are called in Japan *Kitsuné-gao-bijin* (fox-faced beauties).

A woman's charm and beauty is enhanced, making her look more delectable and erotic, by the charm and fascination of *Kitsuné*.

Kunisada, by the way, was the artist who painted the *shibai-é* (play picture) of the Kuzu-no-Ha, the fox-woman appearing in the play of *Kuzu-no-Ha*, or *Fox-Wife of Shinoda Wood*. We find a typical fox-faced woman in Kuzu-no-Ha, the fox-woman depicted in the *shibai-é*—and also the examples of *Kitsuné-gao-bijin* (fox-faced beauties) in his ukiyo-6 prints shown here in this chapter. (See the play picture of *Kuzu-no-Ha* play in the chapter Fox in Plays.)

In all the women in the pictures by Kunisada, you will see long-faced beauties reminding you of the alluring and fascinating Kitsunh.

#### Hiroshige

ANDO HIROSHIGE—the master artist of ukiyo-6, who died at the age of 62 in 1858, was an expert in depicting landscapes such as The 53 Stages on the *Tokaido*, The One Hundred Views of *Edo* and others.

You will see among The One Hundred Views of *Edo* an interesting picture of: The "*Kitsuné-bi*" of *Oji*.

*Oji* is now under the jurisdiction of Tokyo. In the days of Hiroshige, the *Edo* Era, people would go there to worship at the Inari shrine, and, according to record, foxes, hundreds of them, would gather around the shrine on the night of the last day of December burning their fires—Kitsunh-bi.

People would predict the rice-crop of the coming year by the number of the *Kitsuné-bi* of the foxes assembled around the shrine of the God of Rice, *Inari*.

In the picture of The "*Kitsunbibi*" of *Oji*, you will see a desolate and forlorn scene of December. In the distance, a few farmhouses are seen relieved against a black wood.

In the foreground, two bare trees are standing as if shivering with cold, and you will see a great number of foxes standing under the trees with stacks of rice-straw, and in the paddy-fields with stubble. A desolate scene of winter.

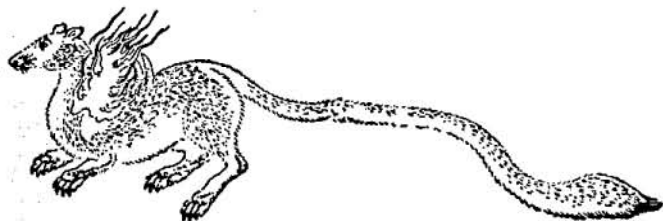
Now you may wonder why these bright and luminous foxes look so warm and comfortable, exposing themselves to the cold wind. They are burning their fires, *Kitsuné-bi*, gathering in the neighborhood of *Oji*'s *Inari* shrine dedicated to the God of Rice, offering their fires,

observing the good old annual custom.

The *ukiyo-é* pictures by Hiroshige are all richly colored as are those of other artists of the same school. The "*Kitsuné-bi*" of *Oji* is a fine work with the fantastic white foxes burning red *Kitsuné-bi*.

### To-O

ONE of the most interesting and fanciful figures finding expression in the shape of a fox is, perhaps, To-O, or Ascending *Hwang*, the account of which appears in *Unkin-Zuihitsu*, a rare book of strange things, published in 1861.



To-O or Ascending *Hwang*.

This is an animal which looks like a fox, a very strange fox with devouring flames on both sides of its body, and you will also see a pair of sharp horns protruding from its back. The animal has a long tail—a preposterously long one.

According to legend, this fox-like creature was in existence in Japan for a period of 2,000 years from The Age of the Gods. It is also stated that this fox went over to China in the reign of the Emperor Hwang there. The Emperor, it is said, made a tour all over the land, riding on this fox, thus teaching the people



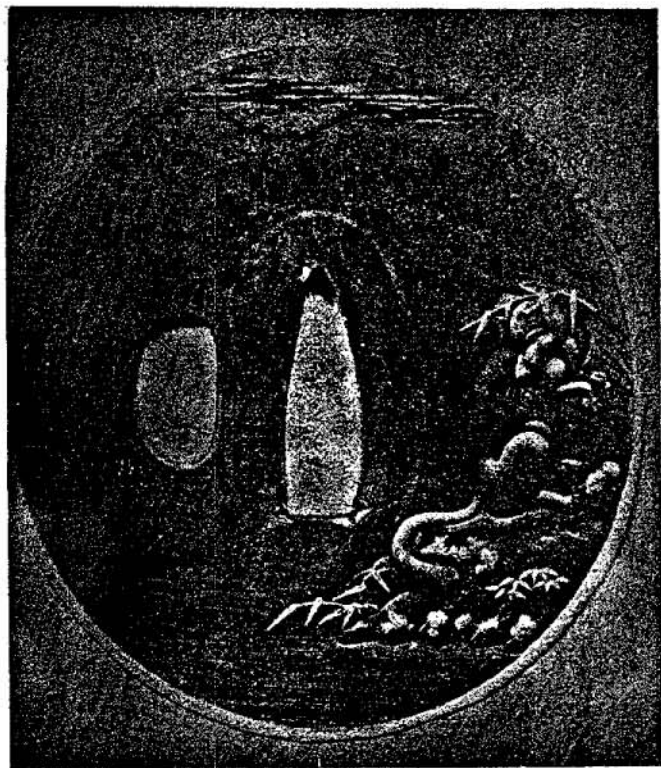
Engraved on handle of *kozuka*

Part of a long procession of the wedding of *Kitsuné* Conducted after the style of a samurai family. (They are all foxes.)

The nuptial retinue is proceeding solemnly following the bride, headed by a petty *samurai* wearing two swords. Two servants carrying trousseaus are following the forerunner.

Two ladies are seen walking before the *kago* in which the beautiful bride is riding shyly. A lady is also walking beside the *kago* which is followed by a dignified *samurai*.

Among the servants following this *samurai*, you will see the one shouldering a *naginata*, a kind of halberd, belonging to the bride, who, shy as she is, knows how to use it in case of emergency as a daughter of a *samurai*.



Engraved on tsuba

A fox is trying to turn itself into a human being, a pretty girl, perhaps, by covering its head with some reeds growing on the edge of a stream with a full moon in the sky.

Note: The hole on left side is used for putting in the kozuka.



Engraved on handle of kozuka

A fox in the guise of a woman is now waiting for some young fellow to come along, to be captivated by her charm.

Engraved on handle of kozuka

This fox is doing its best to metamorphose itself into the shape of a woman, an alluring woman—with a slim figure, if possible.





how to ride a horse, riding on horseback for the first time in history.

They say in China, "*The Emperor Hwang made a tour of the world riding on a dragon with eight wings,*" and this means this To-O, says the author of *Unkin-Zuihitsu*.

In Japan, on the occasion of a coronation, the picture of To-O will be seen hanging among other strange and fanciful animals in the Imperial Purple Palace in Kyoto where the ceremony is held, according to the book

It is interesting to note that the form resembling that of a fox was regarded a thing, sacred and mysterious from time immemorial.

#### Fox Used as a Sword Ornament

YOU will also find it interesting and amusing to see the popular animal, *Kitsuné*, used as an ornament on such a thing as *kozuka* (a knife attached to the sheath of a Japanese sword—to the shorter one) or *tsuba* (sword-guard).

In the latter part of the Édo Era, notably in the period of Genroku (1688-1703), when people became used to peace and luxury, fine and exquisite works of art were produced in large numbers with the experts in their line appearing in succession. Elaborate ornaments were seen even on the swords, such as on *kozuka* or *tsuba*.

To tell the quality of these works of art, we need a good connoisseur of swords.

The *tsuba* and *kozuka* shown in this chapter are

rare ones, the property of Dr. Shunichi Katsuya, professor at the University of Kyoto Prefecture (Kyoto Furitsu Daigaku). Dr. Katsuya is one of Japan's foremost connoisseurs of Japanese swords, especially an authority on tsuba and kozuka.

## CHAPTER 21

### KITSUNE-TSUKI, OR FOX-POSSESSION

KITSUNE-TSUKI, or fox-possession, is a very strange case seen only in Japan. In the Occident, there was demon-possession, or wolf-possession—but not the fox-possession as prevailing in the Orient, especially in Japan.

*Kitsuné-tsuki* was seen in Japan as early as in the closing years of the Heian Era (781-1185). The story of a woman possessed by a fox who repaid the kindness of a *samurai* for returning her fox-ball appearing in *The Konjaku Monogatari* is believed to be the first case of *Kitsuné-tsuki* given in a book. (See the chapter Fox in *The Konjaku Monogatari*.)

The origin of *Kitsuné-tsuki* is remote, and it is interesting to read its historical record. Judging by the record, it is clear that *Kitsuné-tsuki* was prevalent as a disease from 800 or 900 years ago at least in Japan. A scholar of ancient times says in his book concerning this case of *Kitsuné-tsuki* as follows:

"There are various kinds of *Kitsuné* with their power of witchery—high-class *Kitsuné* and low-class *Kitsuné*. When possessed by a high-class *Kitsuné*, it is difficult to notice any difference in the way of bewitchery. According to a certain *kannagi* (maiden of the shrine

who divines things, besides having other duties), there are 13 kinds of foxes with their different methods of witchery, such as celestial 'foxes, earthly foxes, black foxes, white foxes and so forth. Such foxes are very strange and fantastic.

"Nogitsund (wild foxes) will possess a person, but not high-class foxes—and their victim will blurt out such things as:

"I am God of *Inari*'—or 'Let me eat *azuki-méshi* (rice boiled together with red beans, believed to be the favorite food of Kitsuni), or something like that. In such a case, people immediately resorted to prayers without consulting a doctor, in olden times.

When possessed by a high-class fox, however, the victim will appear like a true sick person. So the patient can be put under the care of a doctor. The doctor, however, cannot tell whether his patient is possessed by some phantom, or mentally deranged.

"The Kitsunk-tsuki patient will look sometimes mentally deranged; and other times will appear to be sane and sound. The condition of the *Kitsuné-tsuki* patient is different during the day. At night, he will find it hard to go to sleep—or sometimes will try to commit suicide in desperation.

"The patient has a strange habit. He will not allow any person to come near him when taking his meals except his maid servant, and he is particular about what he eats, and he likes to keep company with persons inferior to himself in intellect.

"He will avert his eyes from other people when sitting opposite them. He will invariably turn his face aside or drop his eyes, putting both his hands on his

knees and shrugging his shoulders. However this does not necessarily show that he is mentally deranged.

"He also will not allow anybody to touch his arm-pits, and he hates to have anybody come behind him. In addition, he has another strange habit: He keeps a great number of hairs in the sleeves of his kimono and when the pail containing *miso* (salted bean-paste, a condiment taking the place of soy in Japanese cookery) in the patient's house is removed, the same kind of hair will be found beneath it..."

The above is a statement made by a person who closely observed a kitsund-tsuki patient. This, of course, is not true of all *Kitsuné-tsuki* patients. Generally speaking, however, it is so.

In 1892, Dr. Shunichi Shimamura went to Shimané Prefecture, one of the prefectures where *Kitsuné-tsuki* disease was prevalent, to conduct an investigation by order of the authorities.

(On the following year, 1893, Dr. Shuku Sakaki, authority on the disease, made a report on *Kitsuné-tsuki* at the Philosophical Society.)

Dr. Shimamura, in his report, says as follows:

"I found in Shimané Prefecture 34 people who were suffering from Kitsuni-tsuki, a fact proving that the superstition of *Kitsuné-tsuki* is still prevalent in the country.

"When seen from the vocational point of view, the number of farmers was the largest: 24 including 8 men and 16 women. Merchants came second in order.

In age, the greater part of them were the people above 25 and below 50. As for heredity, the greater part of the 34 persons believed to have been suffering from the *Kitsuné-tsuki* disease had no relation with each other."

The following table shows the diseases mistaken for the case of Kitsunk-tsuki:

Hysteria		
Name of Disease	Men	Women
Alcoholism	3	
Hallucination	4	0
Sequent dementia	0	1
Mania	2	2
Dementia senilis	1	0
Hysteria	0	15
Malaria, Typhus	3	0
Alcoholism	3	0
Arthritis	0	1
Phthisis	0	1
Ovarian cyst	0	1
Total	13	21

It will be seen from the above table that almost all the cases accompanied by a fit of fever, besides the mental diseases, were called Kitsunk-tsuki before Dr. Shimamura arrived in Shimané Prefecture in 1892. Even such a disease as ovarian cyst, a disease not easy

to cure, was included in the category of *Kitsuné-tsuki*.

In conclusion, Dr. Shimamura, in his report, says:

"The *Kitsuné-tsuki* cases found in Shimané Prefecture include not only mental diseases and the condition of mental derangement, but also rare cases of disease not accompanied by the condition of mental derangement. In the above table, among diseases, hysteria

is the most frequent, and is by a long way the most frequent.

the first work in which the case of *Kitsuné-tsuki* is mentioned in a book on psychopathology in Japan, says:

"The case of *Kitsuné-tsuki* is a kind of apparition or possession and it is nothing but a manifestation of the superstition seen commonly in the local districts; the superstition is brought about mainly from the original trouble attributable to the disease. For this reason, in

the Occident, they have such things as wolf-possession, dog-possession, and demon-possession. However they have no *Kitsuné-tsuki*, fox-possession, there.

"A great number of *Kitsuné-tsuki* cases, on the contrary, are found in Japan. They hastily set down the case of mental derangement as *Kitsuné-tsuki* and there are, generally speaking, three causes bringing about *Kitsuné-tsuki* symptoms:

- 1) Delusion.
- 2) Illusion.
- 3) Abnormal consciousness of the person concerned.



Writing Made by a Person  
Possessed by a Fox

The writing runs as follows:

November, the Sheep Year of  
the Kan'een Era\*  
Dedicated to the GREAT INARI  
GOD, Yonago, Hoki Province

\*1748-1750.

Note: The writing is a treasured article in Dr. Kadowaki's house handed down from his ancestors.

The strange thing is the fact that the man who made the writing was illiterate. He could neither read nor write. He made the writing (and the picture of a messenger fox of the Inari shrine) while he was under the spell of his *Kitsuné*, that is, while he was suffering from *Kitsuné-tsuki* disease.

It is remarkable that such a good piece of writing and the picture is the work of such a person.

Dr. Shinshi Kadowaki, who had been engaging in the study of *Kitsuné-tsuki* case for years under Dr. Shuzo Go and Dr. Shuku Sakaki in the Medical Department of Tokyo Imperial University, published about that time his book: *A New Study of "Kitsuné-tsuki" Disease*.



According to Dr. Kadowaki (then the director of the Oji Mental Institution), the cause of *Kitsuné-tsuki* may be attributed to:

- 1) Impediments in mood.
- 2) Impediments in the Organs of perception.
- 3) Impediments in the function of association.
- 4) Impediments in consciousness.
- 5) Infection of mental derangement.

An unbalanced person, says Dr. Kadowaki, especially in the case of a person who becomes easily jubilant, is liable to be possessed by a fox. He is in the positive mood. Such a person, when told that he is a fox, that he is possessed by a fox, will immediately pretend to be so, for various reasons.

Reason 1: He must be a person who has already heard some ghostly stories of *Kitsuné* and was greatly impressed by them in his childhood, or, even when he has heard of them casually in those days, he is liable to be aroused now by hearing the word *Kitsuné-tsuki*, or some uncanny stories relative to foxes, but recalling the stories he heard before.

Reason 2: The person who has been brought up in the district where fox-possession or the superstition of foxes or the like is prevalent will easily become a victim to *Kitsuné-tsuki*. For instance, in the Shikoku district and Tottori and Shimané Prefectures, where there are many cases of dog-possession, a large number of *Kitsuné-tsuki* cases will be found.

Reason 3: A person who is feeble-minded and easily swayed by what he sees or hears is liable to be

possessed by a fox. Therefore you will hear such a saying in the prefecture of *Shimané* as:

"Kitsunh will possess the person who is too honest and simple."

And the mentally-deranged who are apt to be impeded in intellect are easy marks for the foxes, in the opinion of Dr. Kadowaki.

Now Dr. Kadowaki, as the director of the Oji Mental Institution, continues to tell us, in his book, what the cause of Kitsunh-tsuki disease is, citing instances for each case:

#### 1) Impediments in mood.

Instance:

KURODA, male. Married. 35 yrs. Rice dealer. Onset: At the age of 22. Heredity: Unknown. Cause of excitement: Failure in business.

Progress:

At first, the patient said that he might show strange symptoms in his mental condition. Ten days later, he became insane. He would use abusive language to any person without good reason, and had a liking for going out of doors. He could not sleep well at night or in the daytime, and would pray to gods and Buddha.

"Are you not possessed by a fox?" somebody asked him.

He answered:

"O yes, a fox has at last taken possession of me!"

After that, he became a *Kitsuné-tsuki* man. He pretended to be a millionaire and gave things to

other people without reason—or behaved like a nobleman.

Discharged from hospital completely cured, after staying here for a month and a half.

Instance:

USUI, female. Married. 45 yrs. Father: Drinker. Uncle on mother's side: Died of apoplexy. Had 3 children. One of them died of dropsy.

The patient had the habit of eating sand in her childhood. Married at the age of 15. Gave birth to a child at the age of 20. Began to eat charcoal with gusto during the period of pregnancy. Timid and mild by nature.

Proximate cause: Worried about wasting a small amount of money.

Progress:

At first, the patient visited a temple of Bishamon, the god of treasure, and, on returning home, began to weep and laugh in quick alternation. Then suddenly clenched her teeth, raised her eyes and shock her clenched fists for several minutes. Then she came to her senses.

She became very excitable. Could not sleep at night. No appetite and said that she could see the god of Bishamon. When asked whether she was a fox, she said:

"O yes," and acted like a fox.

Discharged from hospital taking a turn for the better, after staying here for 23 days.

## CHAPTER 22

### *KITSUNE-TSUKI, OR FOX-POSSESSION* (Continued)

#### 2) Impediments in the organs of perception.

Instance:

MOCHIZUKI, male. Married. 62 yrs. Matmaker.  
Mother: Became insane at a great age and died.  
Had 2 children. Timid by nature. Short-tempered  
and obstinate. Heavy drinker.

Progress:

The patient believed in fortune-telling. This sort of thing seemed to have affected his mind greatly. All day long, he occupied himself in fortune-telling since the early part of last April.

One day he cried out:

"A monster has come to torture me!"

Then in a frenzy he began to sweep away the the dust with his long bamboo tobacco-pipe from his cushion.

"I cannot live any longer!" he cried and went running out and threw himself into the river.

He was rescued, and all night and day he made noises sitting or rising in his sick ward. And now and then he said:

"Inari God has come!"—or "The fox is here!" writhing in agony.

Left hospital completely cured, after staying here for a month.



A priest of the Shingon sect at prayer sitting before the God of Fudo making a fire-offering.

The God of Fudo is supposed to be the incarnation of Tathagata, God of Mercy. Fudo is represented by a dreadful figure holding a sword in his right hand and a rope in his left hand, sitting among devouring flames.

The purpose of this god of mercy for assuming such a form, it is said, is to frighten away devils.

Instance:

SHINTO, female. 37 yrs. Divorced. Married at the age of 16. Gave birth to a child at the age of 22. Had spasms at the age of 24. Father: Died when she was 10 yrs. Always worried much because of family circumstances.

Progress:

At first, the patient said that a fox took possession of her and she tried to flee from place to place. Said she had a fox in her head and another one in her abdomen. She said one day to a child:

"A dog is living in your tummy."

So saying, she assaulted the child.

After that, she said nothing and ate or drank nothing, smiling a sinister smile and always saying something to herself in a low tone of voice. And she assumed an attitude of paying homage to gods, saying that she had just received a divine message.

At the stage of convalescence, she said:

"I have been under the impression that I was possessed by a fox because I had heard a rumor that a *gyoja* (a person goes about performing religious austerities) of the God of Fudo\* who is living in the neighborhood was employing *Kitsuné* for his witchcraft."

She also said that she heard a voice of the fox in her head and abdomen. The fox, she said, was sucking up her blood.

After coming to the hospital, she became conscious and realized how foolish she had been. Left here completely cured.

\*See the picture of the God of Fudo shown in this chapter.



## 3) Impediments in the function of association.

## Instance:

TAMURA, male. 38 yrs. Farmer. Grandfather on father's side: Died of apoplexy. Father: Died of the same disease, a fact proving a predisposition to the hereditary neurosis. The patient was healthy by nature. Mild in disposition. Heavy drinker, taking more than one sho of saké daily. (One sho: 1.588 quart.)

## Progress:

At first, the patient caught influenza. Had a terrible headache, and at the same time became very melancholy. Told that he was being chased by something. Soon became extremely remorseful. Cut off his hand at the wrist with a woodman's hatchet because, according to him, he regreted so much neglecting to visit the injured persons when there was an accident in his neighborhood.

"I am a victim of a fox. The fox will come to get me soon," he would say.

Said after being taken to hospital:

"My native place is an obscure spot among the mountains. I know that there was an acquaintance of mine in the adjacent village who lost his mind and died because of a fox. I also know that there was a man who became stupid, because he was possessed by a wild fox.

"However nothing of this sort of thing happened in my family, and we have no taint of insanity in my family, either. I am a healthy man by nature, and I have never suffered from any serious illness.

"I am a great eater. I could eat anything. I am exceedingly fond of drinking saké and eating ginger. I could drink 3 sho of saké eating a bunch of ginger as an accompaniment. Now, after suf-

fering from illness, I have reduced the amount of them by half, both saké and ginger.

"About the 20th of last August, I went up a mountain and stayed there felling trees for a month. There was a spell of broiling weather and I suffered very much from the heat. To make matters worse, there was also a heavy thunder-storm and my health was injured greatly.

"I stopped working and took a rest at home. Then I found myself suffering from fever and I was cured by the treatment of a herb doctor in my neighborhood. However, I became strangely unconscious and it was about 30 days later that I recovered my senses.

"My people told me that I had acted very violently while I was unconscious and that they had concealed all edged tools as they were afraid of me, but that they could not find the woodman's hatchet though they searched for it everywhere.

"One day, according to the members of my family, I rose to my feet suddenly while talking with them and, fetching the woodman's hatchet from somewhere, I cut off my hand with it in the yard.

"When asked the reason for doing so, I remember telling them that I had been upset by a series of incidents such as the accident in which several of my relatives and neighbors got injured—a wedding, a funeral service and so forth and so on. I cut my hand off to express my feelings of great regret for not showing up myself on these occasions.

"I did not act like a lunatic, I hope. O shame on me! I heard my people say that I was possessed by a fox when I went up the mountain to cut down the trees. And they said that it was advisable not to let the fox approach me. Therefore they watched me night and day by turns. Now, strange

to say, I noticed at the time a few short white hairs—supposed to be those of a white fox stuck to my clothes and bedding each night."

The patient left the hospital, after staying here for a period of a month completely cured.

4) Impediments in consciousness.

Instance:

MASUBUCHI, male. 57 yrs. Farmer. Married. Grandfather on mother's side: Died of palsy. Father: Died of apoplexy. Became insane because of poverty.

Progress:

The patient would say:

"I have been disgraced. Therefore I could not live any longer."

Extremely frenzied. Attempted suicide. Would say that he was possessed by a fox. Abstained from food so that he could kill the fox in his body.

Said:

"I cannot utter a word. The words you are now hearing are not mine. They are the words of the fox."

Later attempted to commit *harakiri* to kill the fox and injured his abdomen. He would say that the fox was running throughout his body. Occasionally he would crawl naked on all fours after the fashion of a fox along the passage barking, "Kon, kon, kon!"

He said that he could not sleep well because he was full of *Kitsuné*. Scorched his fingers in a brazier because, according to him, he wanted to torture the foxes living in his body.

Left hospital not cured, after staying here for a period of 8 months.

Instance:

SUGIMOTO, female. 13 yrs. A girl with a hereditary nervous temperament. Melancholy by nature.

Progress:

One day, the patient visited the *Inari* shrine at Matsushima-cho. After coming home, she could not sleep at all. Showed strange symptoms and was in a state of mania. She broke several articles. Acted very violently. Said that a fox came—or that another soul came to dwell in her body and that therefore she was now under the control of two souls.

After coming to hospital harrassed much by visual hallucinations. Said that a fox lived in her soul. She was as fickle as the proverbial autumnal sky.

Left hospital not cured, after staying here for 27 days.

5) Infection of mental derangement.

Instance:

NITTA, female. 49 yrs. Married. Had two sisters with a disposition liable to be possessed by a fox.

Progress:

During the month of April, something deranged her mind, apparently.

She said one day abruptly:

"I am a fox. I am now going to spit miasma!"

So saying, she began to spit at frequent intervals. Later she went out now and then and roamed about far and near.

Said:

"I am now avoiding the prayers I know they will say against me."

She moved her limbs, shook her body and wagged her head twice night and day, crying or getting angry. She said that the fox lived on the left side of her body. Previously she was fond of eating fish. However she now stopped eating it saying that she might reveal her natural shape by eating fish.

After coming to hospital, the patient had a fit of mania. Said one day by beating the mat with her hand:

"I am a fox. I was hungry. So I went under the floor of the kitchen and took a meal to my heart's content."

She has two younger sisters. Since last year, one of them has been suffering from a uterine disease and stomach trouble, and tried to cure them by a faith-curer. As a result, she became possessed by a fox. The fox, according to the faith-curer, was the one belonging to *Dainichi-nyorai* (Mahāvairocana, the object of worship of the Esoteric Buddhism).

Another younger sister has also been possessed by a fox since February this year. This is the same fox as the one that possessed the patient in question. The fox was harrasing them by turns. When the patient was persuaded to go up to Tokyo for treatment by her people, she would not listen to their advice.

She said:

"I hate to go up to Tokyo without taking my fox with me. I would be put to inconvenience later."

Previous to this, when a faith-curer came and prayed for her, she said, in the voice of the fox, gnashing her teeth with vexation:

"My natural shape has been disclosed!"

Then she said:

"But I have no place to go back to, so I will kill the patient!"

Discharged from hospital completely cured, after staying here for about a month.

Judging from the above instance, it was evident that the patient was infected with the *Kitsuné-tsuki* disease through her sisters. And it is also interesting to note that the same fox possessed the sisters by turns, says Dr. Kadowaki.

## CHAPTER 23

### THINGS NAMED AFTER *KITSUNE*

THE popularity of *Kitsuné* in Japan will be proved fairly well by the fact that there are many interesting and amusing names given to various things after *Kitsuné*.

#### 1. Plants

Fox's powder-bruslo (*Kitsunh-azami*): An annual plant belonging to the aster family.

Fox's peony (*Kitsuné-no-botan*): A kind of perennial plant.

Fox's tobacco (*Kitsuné-no-tabako*): A plant belonging to the chrysanthemum family with leaves resembling those of a tobacco-plant.

Fox's umbrella (*Kitsunh-no-karakasa*): A perennial plant belonging to the strawberry saxifrage.

Fox's mustard (*Kitsunh-no-karashi*): A crucifer plant.

Fox's ornamental hair-pin (*Kitsuné-no-kanzashi*): A kind of black alder. (A dialect of Okayam Prefecture.)

Fox's pillow (*Kitsunh-no-makura*): A kind of snake-gourd.

### THINGS NAMED AFTER *KITSUNE*

229

Fox's grandchild (*Kitsunk-no-mago*): An annual plant found in a field. In spring, they eat its young leaves.

Fox's penis (*Kitsunh-no-chimpo*): A kind of toadstool. *Phallus reglosus*, in the parlance of botany.

In 4th century Japan, *Kitsunh-no-chimpo*, the real one, not the toadstool, was called *Kitonh*. Now an obsolete word. It sounds like *Kitsuné*. Interesting from the etymological point of view.

Fox's cowpea (*Kitsuné-sasagé*): A perennial plant. Poisonous. The decoction of its stalks and leaves is used for exterminating noxious insects.

Fox's razor (*Kitsunh-no-kamisori*): A perennial grass belonging to the *Lycoris radiata* family. Poisonous.

Fox's candle (*Kotsune-no-rosoku*): A poisonous toad-stool.

Fox's wooden bowl (*Kitsunk-no-wan*): A tiny fungus, a parasite to the berry of the mulberry.

#### 2. Animals, **fish** & shells

Fox-monkey (*Kitsuné-zaru*): A lemur.

Fox-seabream (*Kitsunk-tai*): A teleost fish found off the shores of Japan.

Fox-cod (*Kitsuné-tara*): A kind of teleost with a fox-like snout.





*Fox-carp (Kitsuné-koi)*: A kind of carp with a fox-like snout.

*Fox-shell (Kitsuné-gai)*: A kind of shell with radial stripes.

### 3. Food

*Fox's flavored rice (Kitsuné-zushi)*: Boiled rice with fried bean-curd flavored with vinegar.

*Fox's macaroni (Kitsuné-udon)*: Macaroni with fried bean-curd.

*Fox's boiled rice (Kitsuné-méshi)*: Rice boiled with soy.

### 4. Games

*Fox's hand game (Kitsuné-ken)*: A game played from old times with the hands, the position of which represent a fox, man (*shoya*, old name for village head) and gun (*hunter*).

This is a game of checking and rechecking one another. *Shoya* (*man*) can beat *hunter*—*hunter* can beat *fox*—*fox* can beat *shoya* (by the art of bewitchery, of course).

However each player will find himself a loser, according to the sign he shows. Each player will cry: "Fox!"—or "Shoya!"—or "Gun!" as he shows his sign. A lively game, this.

(See the illustration given in this chapter.)

*Fox's play (Kitsuné-asobi)*: A game for children, a kind of tug of war.



*Fox's Hand Game*  
by a 19th century artist

In this picture, the person in a black haori coat is making the sign of *shoya* (*man*)—the person, the sign of fox imitating *Kitsuné*—and the person, the sign of *hunter* leveling his imaginary gun. The players are so absorbed in their noisy and hilarious game that nobody present seems to notice the entry of a thoughtful-looking tomcat in the arena. He is at this moment sniffing speculatively at the square lacquered *jubako* full of nice things to eat.

## 5. Annual functions

*Fox-feeding (Kitsuné-ségyo)*: A custom prevailing in Osaka and vicinity. People will visit an *Inari* shrine, God of Rice, in winter at night, carrying a small paper-lantern crying: "O-ségyo! O-ségy!" (O-ségyo here means fox-feeding.)

On their way home, they will leave the fox's favorite food of *azuki-méshi*, rice boiled together with red beans, and fried bean-curd on the banks or any other places where foxes are expected to go.

*Fox-expelling (Kitsuné-okuri)*: An annual function observed on January the 14th in the western district of Totomi Province. Headed by a *yamabushi*, mountain priest, they turn out in full force, carrying bamboo poles to each of which a fox and a doll made of straw are attached and go to a mountain on the outskirts of the village where they bury the straw foxes and dolls under the ground.

This is believed to prevent *Kitsuné* from playing pranks on the villagers during the year.

*Fox-mask man (Kitsuné-mén)*: In former days, the fox-mask man would visit houses on the festival of the *Inari* shrine, singing the song of prosperity by virtue of the White Fox God. (See the illustration.)

## 6. Dramas

*Fox-feet (Kitsuné-ashi)*: A term used in the *Kabuki* (classical drama) or *No* play. The actor, when supposed possessed by a fox, will walk after the fashion of *Kitsuné*—*Yayégaki Himé* of the play of *Honcho*



## 11. Military words

*Fox's arrow (Kitsunk-ya):* An archaic word meaning a stray arrow. Example: The general died, struck by a "Kitsunh-ya."

## 12. Superstition

*Fox's wedding (Kitsunk-no-yomkiri):* When it rains with the sun shining brightly, they say in Japan that a fox-bride is going to her bridegroom's house; a romantic superstition. An interesting word still in use.

## 13. Idiomatic phrases

*Fox's luck (Kitsuné-fuku):* A windfall, an unexpected good luck.

A fox-cub, quite like its parent-fox, has a white face (*Kitsunh-no-ko-wa hojiro*): They say so when one has a striking resemblance to one's parent.

A happy phrase used first in the famous *Gempéi Séisui-ki* written in the Kamakura Era (1186-1330):

"A daring rascal! Young as he is, like the cub of a fox, he has a striking resemblance to his father!..."

Like making a fox ride on a horse's back (*Kitsuné-o-uma-ni-nosdru*): They say so when anybody or anything is shaky or unsteady.

Like foxes living in the same earth (*Onaji-ana-no-Kitsunh*): A phrase meaning they are of one group.

Like giving "azuki-méshi" into a fox's keeping (*Kitsuné-ni*-*"azuki-méshi"*): Same as: Trusting a cat with milk.

The Empress Jito (645-702), the celebrated poetess, once composed a satirical poem:

Placing a young girl  
Under a young man's charge  
Is like trusting a fox  
With "azuki-méshi" in a barge.



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