

妖怪、新潟に現る

妖怪を^{ごらく}娯楽として楽しむ文化が^{はなひら}花開いたのは江戸時代も^{なか}半ばを過ぎてから。

「^{ほくえつせっぽ}北越雪譜」や「^{ほくえつきだん}北越奇談」が大ベストセラーになり、不思議の^{くにえちご}国越後は江戸っ子たちの熱い視線を浴びていた。人々は遠く越後国に思いをはせ、見たことのない^{ゆきぐに}雪国の暮らしや^{たいじ}化け猫を^{ほっこうおしょう}退治した^{ぶゆうでん}北高和尚の武勇伝に心をと^{きめ}きめかせたという。

時を隔てて^{へだ}2016年夏、新潟に伝わるそんなミステリアスな伝承を解き明かそうと、博物学研究家の^{あらまたひろし}荒保 宏が妖怪探偵団を結成、新潟各地を訪ね歩いた。

ひゅ～、どんどろどんどろどんどろ。妖怪特集、はじまりはじまり～。

Yōkai, they appear in Niigata

Half of the Edo period (1600-1868) had already passed when a culture bloomed in which *yōkai*¹ were seen as amusement. The mysterious land of *Echigo*² was attracting the enthusiastic eyes of the people of Edo and books such as the “*Hokuetsu Seppu*”³ or “*Hokuetsu Kidan*”⁴ became big bestsellers. They say that people, thinking about the far away land of *Echigo*, had their hearts pound by the heroic tale of the high priest Hōkō who exterminated monster cats and lived in an unimaginable snow land.

Fast forward to the summer of 2016 and natural history researcher Hiroshi Aramata has formed a team of *yōkai* detectives and visits various sites in an effort to unravel such mysterious folklore that has been transmitted to Niigata prefecture.

WoooOOOOoooo, the special report on *yōkai* is about to begin.

¹ Supernatural monsters within Japanese folklore.

² Former name of the Niigata Prefecture

³ An encyclopedic work of human geography describing life in the Uonuma area of Japan's old Echigo Province first published in 1837 and written by Suzuki Bokushi (1770-1842)

⁴ A collection of essays on the Echigo province written by Konron Tachibana in 1812.

新潟に古くから伝わる妖怪伝説を解き明
かそうとご存じ荒俣^{あらまたひろし}宏を団長に漫画家・熊倉^{くまくら}
^{たかとし}隆敏、古生物学者・荻野^{おぎのしにかい}慎諧と、妖怪に
^{いっかげん}一家言を持つ面々が新潟に集結。妖怪探偵団
を結成した。生きざまの全く異なる3人の目
に、新潟の妖怪はどう映ったのだろうか。

To unravel these yōkai legends that have been transmitted from the past into Niigata the now known Hiroshi Aramata, head of the group, manga artist Takatoshi Kumakura, and paleontologist Shinikai Ogino who all have their own views of yōkai assemble in Niigata. They formed a yōkai detective team.

How will the yōkai appear in the eyes of these 3 men with completely different lifestyles?

鵺

夜な夜な現れる鵺の正体

7月某日、上越新幹線「燕三条駅」

で合流した一行。最初の目的地は、鵺の彫刻があるという新潟県三条市吉野屋に鎮座する石動神社だ。車で移動すること約30分、石動神社へ。鳥居の奥に立ちはだかる約440段の石段を一気に上がりきると、右手に社殿が見えてきた。

Nue⁵

The true identity of the *nue* that appears night after night.

A certain day in July, a group comes together at Tsubamesanjō-station of the Jōetsu-Shinkansen line. Their first destination is the Isurugi-shrine of Yoshinoya, Sanjō-city in Niigata prefecture where a woodcarving of a *nue* is enshrined. About 30 minutes by car, to Isurugi-shrine they go.

When they go all the way up the stone stairs of about 440 steps that stands firmly in between the entrance gate, the shrine becomes visible on the right side.

⁵ A Japanese monster appearing in folklore. It is said to have the head of a monkey, the body of a *tanuki* (raccoon dog), the limbs of a tiger, and the tail of a snake. Account vary on its appearance.

明治5年に再建された^{はいでん}拝殿の内部にある
^{らんま}欄間には、“越後のミケランジェロ”と^{たた}讃え
られる彫刻家・石川雲蝶^{いしかわうんちょう}による鶴の彫刻が残
されている。^{あんないやく}案内役を務める三条雲蝶会の
^{ほりうちえいいち}堀内栄一さんが、こう解説してくれた。
「ここに彫刻されているのは、
^{へいけものがたり}『平家物語』の一場面です。^{まいよ}毎夜、^{きゅうちゅう}宮中に
^{きのえてんのう}現れては近衛天皇を悩ませていた鶴に、
^{みなもとのよりまさ}源頼政^{はな}が矢を放った後、部下の^{いのはやた}猪早太が刀
でとどめを刺して退治した場面が^{びょうしゃ}描写されているのです」

On the transom⁶ in the interior of the main shrine that was reconstructed in the 5th year of Meiji (1868-1912) a carving of a *nue* was left behind by Unchō Ishikawa hailed for being the ‘Michelangelo of Echigo’. Eiichi Horiuchi who works as a guide for the Sanjō-Unchō organization explains:

‘What is carved here is a scene of the “Heike Tales”⁷. It portrays the scene of the subordinate Hayata Ino landing the finishing blow with his katana on the *nue* after Minamoto no Yorimasa had shot an arrow at it. This *nue* had been appearing at the imperial court every night and causing Emperor Kinōe (reign: 1142-1155) trouble.’

⁶ Architectural term. A bar of wood or stone which separates a door from a window above it.

⁷ A chronicle written in the Kamakura era (1185-1333) of the rise and fall of the Taira clan during the Heian period (794-1185)

うんちょう
雲蝶の彫刻では、鶴の姿は恐ろしく、
きかい
奇怪な存在として捉まられている。そもそ
も一般的には、妖怪とは実在しない想像の産
物で、かくう
架空の生物と考えるのが普通だ。ところ
ろが、この一般論に異をうた
い づてるのが古生物学
者の荻野さんである。

へいけものがたり
「『平家物語』や『源平盛衰記』の鶴に
きじゅつ
関する記述は、極めて細かな特徴まで記され
ていることから、実際に見た動物を素直に記
録した可能性が高いと思われます。私は、め
ったに目にすることのない生物と出会った当
時の人々の驚きが、よく表われていると感じ
ました。」

In Unchō's carving the appearance of the *nue* has been captured as a terrifying and strange being. Generally it is normal to think that *yōkai* are a product of the imagination that do not exist in reality and that they are fictitious creatures. However, paleontologist Ogino objects this general theory.

'The descriptions made in relation to the *nue* in works such as the "Heike Tales" or the "Genpei Seisui Ki"⁸ seem to hold a high possibility of having honestly recorded an animal which one has seen in reality, because these have been recorded right up to extremely detailed features. I feel that the astonishment of the people at that time who encountered a creature they rarely ever see has been very well expressed.'

⁸ An extended version of the Heike Tales.

荻野さんによると、古い文献^{ぶんけん}に記された妖怪とされる物の中には、発掘^{かせき}された化石^{かせき}を基に、当時の人々が想像を膨^{ふく}らませて創り上げた生物や、すでに絶滅してしまった未知の生物すら含まれている可能性があるという。ここで今一度、『平家物語』に記された鶴^{せいり}の特徴を整理してみよう。顔は猿、胴体は狸、手足は虎、尻尾は蛇に似ているという。さらに、夜行性^{やこうせい}で宮中の屋根に飛び乗れるだけの跳躍^{ちようやくりよく}力を持つ。

「一方で『源平盛衰記』では鶴の描写はおおむね『平家物語』と同じですが、尻尾は狐に似ているとあります。私は、尻尾が狐というのであれば、現在も存在する動物の中に心当たりがあるのです」と荻野さん。

According to Ogino there is a chance that amongst the creatures that are considered *yōkai* as described in the old literature, creatures that people of the time fabricated and prompted speculation about based on excavated fossils or even unknown creatures that had already become extinct are included.

Let's try once more to arrange the characteristics of the *nue* as recorded in the “Heike Tales”. They say that the face resembles that of a monkey, the torso a *tanuki*⁹, the arms and legs a tiger and the tail a snake. On top of that, it is a nocturnal creature and even holds the jumping power to be able to leap on top of the roof of the imperial palace.

‘Although’ Ogino says ‘the depiction of the *nue* in the “Genpei Seisui Ki” is largely the same as the one in the “Heike Tales”, they say that the tail resembles that of a *kitsune*¹⁰. If they say that it has the tail of a *kitsune* then I have a clue about an animal that exists even now.’

⁹ Raccoon dog

¹⁰ Trickster fox in Japanese folklore

「では皆さん、思い浮かべてみてください。
動物園にもいる生き物です。一体何だと思いきいますか」

恐ろしい鶴の意外な正体

「答えは、レッサーパンダです」

「えっ、2本足で立つあの！？」と一同。

「はい。長い^{かつしよく}褐色の胴体は狸に似て、狐のよう
にふさふさした尻尾を持ち、虎のような^{すど}鋭
い爪があります。夜行性で^{こうしょ}高所に登る^{しゅうせい}習性も
^{がっち}合致します」

現在見られるレッサーパンダは小型だが、
かつては全長約150センチに達する巨大な
種類がいたことが判明している。荒俣団長が
続ける。

‘Alright then, everyone, try and picture it. It’s an animal that is also
in the zoo. What ever could it be?’

The unexpected identity of the frightening *nue*

‘The answer is the red panda.’

‘Wait, the one that stands on 2 legs!?’ the squad shouts in unison.

‘Yes. It’s long brown body looks like a *tanuki*, it has a bushy tail like
a *kitsune*, and claws as sharp as a tiger. It being a nocturnal creature
and its habit for climbing onto high places also fits perfectly.’

The red panda that we can see today is small sized, but it is
proven that there once was a type of giant reaching a total length
of about 150 centimeters. The head of the group Aramata
continues.

「ジャイアントパンダも最近まで未知の
存在で宣教師せんきょうしのアルマン・ダヴィドが奇妙な
動物として報告ほうこくしたのが100年前だからあ
り得る話だ」

話を聞いた堀内さんは驚嘆きょうたんする。

「鶴の恐ろしいイメージを、これからはどう
説明すればいいのやら」

「従来通りじゅうらいどおの説明で構いませんよ。自由
に想像を膨らませることも妖怪の楽しみ方で
すから」と、荻野おぎのさん。

鶴＝レッサーパンダ説を裏付けるかのよ
うに長岡市栃尾では、約300万年前のレッ
サーパンダの歯の化石が国内で唯一見つかっ
ている。もちろん、想像上の鶴のような未知
の生物がいた可能性も否定できないと、荻野おぎの
は付け加えた。

‘The story is plausible, because a 100 years ago the giant panda also
existed unbeknownst to us until not so long ago when a missionary
by the name of David Armand reported a peculiar animal.’

Horiuchi who is listening to the story is amazed.

‘I wonder how I should explain the frightening image of the *nue*
from now on.’

‘I don’t mind the explanation you have been using before.
Because a way to enjoy *yōkai* is to freely spur on your imagination.’
Ogino said.

What backs up the theory that a ‘Nue’ is a red panda is that
the only fossil in the country of a tooth of a 3 million year old red
panda has been discovered in Tochio, Nagaoka-city. Of course,
Ogino adds, we cannot discount the possibility that there was an
unknown creature like the imaginary *nue*.

河童

河童が伝えた秘伝薬^{ひでんくすり}

^{ながおかししまぎ}長岡市島崎は、江戸時代を代表する歌人
である^{ぜんそう}禅僧・^{りょうかん}良寛の^{しゅうえん}終焉の地として知られ
る。この地に代々^{じゅうきよ}住居^{かま}を構える^{くわはらけ}桑原家には、
良寛がまとめた文書^{すいじんそうでん}「水神相伝」が伝わる。
河童が伝えた秘伝薬に関する記述があり、し
かも、桑原家では代々その薬が受け継がれて
いるという。^{いちぎょう}一行を迎えてくれたのは「良寛
^{さとびじゅつかん}の里美術館」館長も務める^{くわはらたけし}桑原剛さんだ。

Kappa¹¹

The secret medicine the *kappa* handed down

Shimazaki, Nagaoka-city is considered to be the place of the demise of the Zen priest Ryōkan: a poet typical to the Edo period. The “Suijin Sōden” records compiled by Ryōkan have been handed down to the Kuwahara’s who have set up house here for generations. There is mention of a mysterious medicine that a Kappa handed down, and on top of that they say that the Kuwahara’s have inherited this medicine through their lineage. Takeshi Kuwahara who is also the head of the ‘Ryōkan’s Home Museum’ is the one who welcomes our team.

¹¹ Water-dwelling creature appearing in Japanese folklore.

とうけ
「当家の前を流れる島崎川にいたずら好
す
きの河童が棲んでいて、馬を川に引きずり込
もうとしたそうです。先祖が怒ると河童が謝
せんぞ
ったため、許したといひます。河童はお礼に
ちど
血止めの薬をもたらししたそうです。」

さず
河童から授かった薬の名は” あいす、と
いう。もちろん、アイスクリームは異なる。
きざ
刻んだチョウセンアサガオの根を用いた
ふんまつじょう
粉末状の薬で、食後に酒や味噌湯で服用すれ
しょくご
ば骨折、打撲、切り傷にも効果があるという。
だぼく

‘It is said that there lived a mischievous *kappa* in the Shimazaki river that runs in front of this house and that it intended to drag a horse into this river. They say that my ancestor got angry, but because the *kappa* apologized he forgave the creature. It appears that the *kappa* presented a medicine that could halt bleeding as a way of showing gratitude.’

Kuwahara says that the name of this medicine that they received from the *kappa* is “*aisu*”. Of course, it’s different from ice cream. They say it is a medicine in powder form made by using the chopped up root of the *datura metel*¹² and it has an effect on cuts, bruises, and broken bones when taken in with sake or hot *miso*¹³ soup after a meal.

¹² More commonly known as ‘devil’s trumpet’.

¹³ A fermented soybean paste used to make *miso* soup.

「当て字で”阿伊寿”と書くのですが、意味が伝わっていないのです。^{げんぶつ}現物をご覧にいきましょうか」

桑原さんが運んできた小さな桐箱^{きりばこ}を開くと巾着^{きんちやく}があった。中に”あいす”^{ほかん}が保管されているが、ここから先の開封^{かいふう}は禁じられているという。

「”親といえども、子といえども開いてはならない”という家伝がありますから、何人たりとも中身を見ることはできませんね」と、桑原さん。

「そこを何とか、お願いいたします」と、^{あらまた}荒俣団長は桑原さんに交渉^{こうしょう}を試みたが、やはり^{げんかく}厳格なる家伝。残念ながら封印を解くところまでには至らなかった。

^{a i s u}
‘It is written “阿伊寿” when using *ateji*¹⁴, but that does not convey the meaning. Shall I show you the real thing?’

When Kuwahara opened a small paulownia box he had brought in a pouch was inside. He says that the “*aisu*” is safely kept inside, but that it is forbidden to open it any further.

‘Because of the family saying “Whether you are a parent or a child, do not open it” no one can see the contents.’ Kuwahara says.

‘Could you somehow please let me ...’ The head of the group Aramata says trying to bargain with Kuwahara, but the family saying is obviously strict in this. Unfortunately we did not reach the point of opening the seal.

¹⁴ Kanji characters used for their pronunciation and not there meaning.

ついに” あいす、と対面

探偵団一行は、近年まで” あいす、を
しょうほう
処方していた病院があると聞き、新潟市郊外
ねこやまみやお
の「猫山宮尾病院」を訪れた。歴史は古く、
ほうれきがん かいぎょう
宝暦元（1751）年の開業という。ここにも、桑原家と似た伝承が残されている。

「開業の地である阿賀野市猫山にはいた
ずら好きの河童がいたため、先祖は河童の腕
を切り落としてしまったそうです。河童が
こんがん
懇願したため、許したところ、切れた腕を秘
伝薬でたちまち再生させたといいます。その
薬が” あいす、だったそうです」と話すのは、
みや お まさひさ
12代目の宮尾益尚院長である。

Coming face to face with the “*aisu*” at last

The detective squad heard of a hospital that has been prescribing this “*aisu*” not too long ago and visited ‘Nekoyama-miyao Hospital’ on the outskirts of Niigata-city. A hospital with a long history having been established at the beginning of the Hōreki era (1751). Here too a tradition similar to that of the Kuwahara’s has been handed down.

‘Since there was a mischievous *kappa* in Nekoyama, Agano-city where the hospital was established, my ancestor cut off its arm. They say that when he pardoned him as he pleaded for his life the *kappa* regenerated its cut off arm with the secret medicine in an instant. It would appear that the medicine was the “*aisu*”.’ The 12th Hospital Director Masahisa Miyao tells us.

平成元年まで製造されていた” あいす、
は、深緑色の粉末^{ふんまつ}だった。効能^{こうのう}は桑原家の”
あいす、とほぼ同じ。酢か水で溶いて新聞紙
などに染^しみ込^こませ、皮膚に貼って用いるとい
う。

「名の由来は、酢に和^あえるという言葉が、
和える酢、あいす、と転じたのでしょうね」
と、宮尾さん。” あいす、の名の由来が解け
た。

しかし、なぜ河童が薬をもたらすのだろ
うか。桑原家からずっと考えていた荻野^{おぎの}さん
がハッと閃^{ひらめ}いた。

The “*aisu*” that was made up until the beginning of the Heisei period (1989-) was a deep green coloured powder. The effect is about the same as that of the “*aisu*” of the Kuwahara’s. He tells us that you use it by diluting it with vinegar or water and letting it soak into something like a piece of newspaper and putting that onto your skin.

‘The origin of the name likely came from the phrase dressing something in vinegar (*su ni aeru*) that shifted into vinegar dressing (*aeru su*) which in turn shifted into “*aisu*”.’ Miyao says. The origin of the name “*aisu*” has been unraveled.

However, why would the *kappa* present someone this medicine? Ogino, who had been thinking about this nonstop since the visit at the house of Kuwahara, suddenly had an epiphany.

「伝承に出てくる河童は、両生類りょうせいりいかもしれません。イモリやサンショウウオは四肢ししを切られても再生でき、河童の特殊能力に合致します。中国古来の河童は身体が赤かったといえますから、具体的にはアカハライモリが思い浮かびました」

あらまた 荒俣さんもう指摘してきする。

「田んぼや自然が多い新潟では、十分に考えられる話です。人々が身近みぢかに見ていた生物を題材だいざいに生み出されたのでしょう。イモリがちよこまかと逃げ回る姿が、いたずら好きの童子どうじのように思えてきますね」

‘The *kappa* appearing in the folklore might be an amphibian. Newts or salamanders can re-grow their limbs even when cut off which fits perfectly with the *kappa*’s special ability. Because they say that the *kappa* of ancient China were red, it occurred to me that this in effect is a fire belly newt.’

Aramata also points out the following.
‘These are pretty conceivable stories within Niigata where there are many rice fields and where there is a lot of nature. Surely these creatures that were seen in the vicinity of people became a subject matter. The appearance of a newt running around restlessly could have come to be thought of as a mischievous young child.’

漫画家の熊倉さんも続けて、こう指摘する。

「『ガマの油』のように、両生類と薬を結ぶ逸話はたくさんあります。彼らの持つ薬効のイメージが、薬のエキスパートとしての河童のキャラ付けに影響を与えたかもしれませんね」

The manga artist Kumakura continues, pointing out another thing.

‘Just like “Gama no abura”¹⁵, there are many anecdotes that link amphibians with medicine. The image of them being effective with medicine might have influenced the trait of a *kappa* as being a medicine expert.’

¹⁵ Translating to “Toad’s Oil” this could refer to the 2009 movie or the Rakugo (a type of Japanese storytelling with the aim to amuse audiences) by the same name.

怪猫

謎の頭骨の正体

ねこやまみや お びょういん あと
猫山宮尾 病院を後にした一行。「” 猫山
ミャーオ、病院だけに化け猫が見たくなって
しまいましたね」と話なす荒俣団長^{あらまただんちよう}は、一行
を引き連れて 南 魚沼市^{みなみうおぬま し}の雲洞庵^{うんとうあん}へと向かった。
雲洞庵^{うんとうあん}は約 1 3 0 0 年前の奈良時代、内大臣^{ないだいじん}
藤原房前^{ふじわらふささき}の母が結んだ庵が始まり。この寺に
は雪国越後^{ゆきぐにえちご}の暮らしぶりや奇談をまとめた江
戸時代^{しよもつ}の書物『北越雪譜』にも記述された、
火車(化け猫の一種)の伝説がある。葬列^{そうれつ}を襲^{おそ}っ
てきた火車を、雲洞庵^{うんとうあん}の北高和尚^{ほっこう}が霊力^{れいりょく}で
撃退^{げきたい}したという。

Kaibyō¹⁶

The identity of the enigmatic skull

The group leaves behind the Nekoyama-miyao hospital. The group leader Aramata, who talks about ‘wanting to see a monster cat precisely because of the “Nekoyama-miauw” hospital’, takes the group to the temple of Untōan in Minamiuonuma-city. The Untōan temple became a place of seclusion for the mother of the interior minister Fusasaki Fujiwara about roughly 1300 years ago during the Nara period (710-794). In this temple there is a legend about a fiery chariot (a type of monster cat) which is also mentioned in the book “Hokuetsu Seppun” from the Edo period which collects interesting stories and the lifestyle of the snow country of Echigo. They say that the high Buddhist priest Hokkō of the Untōan temple and his spiritual powers drove back a fiery chariot that came and attacked a funeral procession.

¹⁶ Cats with magical powers: a category of Japanese monsters

たからものでん

宝物殿には、そのときに返り血を受けた”火車落としの袈裟けさ”と、火車の頭骨くぼとされる遺物が展示されている。凝視ぎょうしすると、目、鼻、口とおぼしき窪みくぼがあることが分かる。ただ、骨とは少し様相ようそうが違うが……。

「私は答えを知っているのですが、いきなり話してしまったら

面白くありませんね。皆さんで推測すいそくしてみてください

ください」と、田宮隆児たみやたかじ住職じゅうしやくは笑みを浮かべながら話す。これは探偵団への挑戦状、

真相しんそうを解き明かすしかない。早速推理さっそくすいりが始まった。手袋をはめた荻野さん、荒俣さんが意見かを交わす。

Inside the temple's sanctuary the relics purported to be the skull of the fiery chariot and the “monk's stole that was dropped by the fiery chariot” covered in blood from that time are being displayed. When you look at the skull carefully, it becomes apparent that it has eyes, a nose, a mouth, and what appears to be a cavity. Still, it's a little bit different from actual bone.

‘I know the answer, but if I just say it all of a sudden it won't be very interesting. Try and guess together.’ The main priest Takaji Tamiya says with a smiling face. This is a challenging invitation towards the detective squad and the truth must be revealed. At once the deduction has begun. Ogino, who has put on some gloves, exchanges views with Aramata.

「見た感じは、鉄っぽいですね」と荻野さんが話すと、「いや、手に持つと重量感じゅうりょうかんがありませんし、表面の質感しつかんから推測すると、粘土ねんどでできている可能性もありますね」と、荒俣さんが応える。

「裏側を見てみよう」「側面にも窪みがあります。こんな生き物、この世にいるのでしょうか」

次第に検証けんしょうはエスカレート。約30分にわたって議論したが、結論が出なかったため、田宮住職たねあが種明かし。「実は縄文土器の破片はへんです」

一同、納得。一見生物の目や鼻、口に見えたものは、縄文土器特有の文様もんようだったのだ。伝来した経緯いきさつは不明というが、熊倉さんがこう推測する。

When Ogino says ‘From the looks of it, it’s iron-like isn’t it.’ Aramata counters with ‘No, because when you hold it in your hands there’s no weight to it, and also when you judge it from the feel of the exterior there is a possibility it is made from clay.’

‘Let’s look at the backside’ ‘There’s also cavities on the side. Could it be that there is such a animal in this world?’.

Bit by bit the inspection escalates. About 30 minutes of arguing had passed, but because no conclusion came out of it the chief priest Mitaya unveils the secret. ‘It’s actually a fragment of Jōmon¹⁷ earthenware.’

Everyone agrees. Apparently the things that seemed to be the creature’s eyes, nose, and mouth were the typical pattern of Jōmon earthenware. The particulars of how it was handed down are unknown, but Kumakura guesses the following.

¹⁷ The Jōmon period (14000 BC – 300 BC) of Japanese prehistory

「和尚の靈力を示すために生み出された
逸話いつわのでしょうね。しかし、土器の破片を顔
に目立てた昔の人の想像力たるや、なかなか
のものです」

妖怪” 雷獸、と対面

自然や動植物について きょくてい 曲 ば 亭馬琴 あらわ が 著 した
『玄同放言』など、数々の書物に登場する妖
怪に、落雷らくらいと共に現る妖怪” 雷獸、がいる。
『玄同放言』には雷獸のイメージが描かれ、
「全体は灰色で、子狐こきつねのようであり、胴体の
大きさは子犬ほど。くちばしは半分以上が黒く、
尾は狐、爪は鷲わし、尻尾はカワウソに似ている」
とある。

‘Surely it is an anecdote that came to be, because they
wanted to point out the spiritual powers of the great priest.
However, it’s quite the thing; the imagination of the people of
bygone days where a fragment of earthenware stood out as a face.’

Coming face to face with the yōkai “raijū”

Amongst the *yōkai* that appear in a great deal of books on
nature and flora and fauna such as the “Gendō Hōgen”¹⁸ written by
Bakin Kyokutei, there is the “*raijū*” monster that appears together
with a lighting strike. In the “Gendō Hōgen” the appearance of the
raijū is portrayed as ‘being entirely grey and the body looking like a
small fox with the size of the body as big as a small dog. Half of its
beak is black, its tail is light brown, its claws are that of an eagle,
and its tail resembles that of an otter.’

¹⁸ Published somewhere between 1818 and 1820

日本海を望む、標高 634 メートルの弥
彦山の中腹に西生寺が建つ。住職の案内で
境内の宝物堂に入ると、奥に雷獣のミイラが
安置されていた。漫画の作中に『玄同放言』
の描写を基に雷獣を描いたという熊倉さんは
興味深げに見入り、こう話す。

「江戸時代に広く知られるようになった
雷獣には、様々な種類があります。

『玄同放言』の雷獣は狼のような姿ですが、
西生寺のミイラには、猫のような趣がありますね」

The Saishō temple stands on the hillside of the 634 meter high Yahiko mountain commanding a view of the Japanese sea. Entering the hall of treasures on the temple grounds as we are guided by the chief priest, a mummy of the *raijū* has been enshrined. Kumamura, who drew a *raijū* in his *manga* work inspired by the representation of it in the “Gendō Hōgen”, looks at it with great interest and talks about the following.

‘The *raijū* which was widely known in the Edo period comes in various types. The *raijū* from the “Gendō Hōgen” has a figure of that of a wolf, but the mummy of the Saishō temple has a more cat-like appearance.

展示ケースから雷獣のミイラを持ち出し、
検証を始めた一行。

「化石の研究をしている立場からは、歯を見
れば一目瞭然いちもくりょうぜんですが、答えを言ってもいいで
すか？」と、荻野さん。ためらいながらこう
話す。

「\ピーッ/ですね」

解説を聞いた住職夫人は、「そうか、雷
獣くん、君は\ピーッ/だったのか……」と、少
し残念そう。

荒俣さんが続けてこう話す。

「\ピーッ/であったとしても、これほど良質りょうしつ
なミイラは珍しいですよ。ミイラが完成する
には冬の寒冷かんれい きこうな気候が重要。この土地でなけ
れば、生まれなかったものですね」

The group takes the mummy of the *raijū* out of its display
case and starts the investigation.

‘Looking at it from the perspective of someone who does research
on fossils, when I look at the teeth it is quite clear. Is it okay if I give
the answer.’ Ogino says.

Reluctantly he says

‘It’s a ***bleep***’.

The wife of the chief priest, hearing this explanation, says a
little bit disappointingly ‘Really, little *raijū*, you were a ***bleep***...’.

Aramata continues.

‘Even if it was a ***bleep***, a mummy of this quality is very rare! In
order for a mummy to become perfect a cold winter climate is
necessary. If it wasn’t in this land, it would not have not come to
exist.’

自然現象を昔の人々は恐れていた。雷が
落ちた場所に横たわっていた獣の死骸を見て、
妖怪の仕業と解釈したのでろう。人々の自然
に対する畏敬の念を感じる。

ところで、この宝物堂は、火葬場だった
建物を移築したのだという。

「曇洞庵で火車を見た後に、火葬場に展示さ
れる雷獣を見られるとは、不思議な巡り合わ
せです」と、火葬場建築を研究しているとい
う荒俣団長、思いがけぬ収穫に満足げだった。

People of yesteryear were afraid of natural phenomena.
Looking at the corpse lying on the spot where lighting had struck,
they must've interpreted this as the doings of a *yōkai*.
You can feel the reverence the people had towards nature.

By the way, they say that this treasure hall was a former
crematory that got reconstructed. Aramata, who is studying the
architecture of the crematory, seemed to be unexpectedly satisfied
with the results and says 'The fact that we are able to see a *raijū*
displayed in a crematory after seeing a fiery chariot at Untōan is a
miraculously fateful encounter.'

ついに妖怪、姿を現す！？

数々の妖怪伝説の謎を解き明かしてきた探偵団一行。最後に化け猫伝説が残る、南魚沼市にある普光寺^{ふこうじ}を詣^{もう}でた。到着時^{かいせい}は快晴だったが、参詣^{さんけい}を終えた一行を突然、ゲリラ豪雨^{ごうう}が襲った。滝のように降り注ぐ雨は、一向^{おさ}に収まる様子がない。

「これは、妖怪の仕業だな」と、荒俣団長。新潟各地^{たんぼう}を探訪してきた探偵団一行^{たた}を讃える、妖怪のパフォーマンスだったのかもしれない。

At long last, will the yōkai reveal itself!?

The detective squad has come to clear up many mysteries of the legends about *yōkai*. They visit the Fukōji-temple in Minamiuonuma-shi where the final legend of the monster cat remains. At the time of arrival there were clear skies, but a sudden torrential downpour attacks the team who ended their temple visit. The rain that is coming down like a waterfall shows no sign of calming down.

‘This is an act of a *yōkai*’ the group leader Aramata proclaims. This might have been a *yōkai*’s way of praising the detective team who had come to search for so many stories in various places in Niigata.

妖怪会議開催

「新潟らしい妖怪って何だ！？」

妖怪好きになったきっかけ

山内

皆さんが妖怪好きになったきっかけからお話ください。

荒俣

妖怪やサンタクロースを実在だと信じる子どもでした。でも、実在することが信じられなくなってから妖怪がもっと面白くなりました。

キッチン

水木しげるさんの漫画がきっかけです。沖縄の^{さいし}祭祀のような、民俗文化にも関心がありました。

The meeting on yōkai is now open

‘What are Niigata-like yōkai!?’

The reason you started liking yōkai

Yamauchi

Everyone, please tell us since when you started liking yōkai.

Aramata

I was a kid who believed that yōkai and Santa Claus were real. But, after I couldn't believe in their existence anymore, yōkai became more interesting.

Kicchin

The start for me was a *manga* by Shigeru Mizuki (1922-2015)¹⁹. I also had an interest in folk customs such as rituals performed on Okinawa.

¹⁹ A famous *manga* author and historian who has created many *manga* with yōkai as their topic

荻野

祖父が山梨県に住んでいて、夜更かしすると” モーモー〰 という妖怪が出てくるという話を聞かされて育ちました。大人になって、それが” モモンジャ〰 だと気付き、妖怪の謎を解明したいと思いました。

熊倉

僕は子供の頃に祖母から、夜更かしをする” ゴーヘドリ〰 が来ると聞かされたのが、初の妖怪体験です。祖母の証言はリアルで、怖かったですよ。また、当時の僕は漠然と死ぬことに対して抵抗があったのですが、水木さんの漫画に触れ、目に見えない妖怪の世界の存在を知り、不思議と心が満たされました

Ogino

My grandfather lived in the Yamanashi prefecture²⁰, and he told me the story that if I stayed up late the *yōkai* “mōmō” would appear. Becoming an adult I realized that the *yōkai* was “momonja”²¹ and then I wanted to solve the mysteries of the *yōkai*.

Kumakura

My first *yōkai* experience was when my grandmother told me during my childhood that if I would stay up late “gōhedori”²² would come. Her testimony was so real and it was scary! Also, I had a vague resistance against dying at that time, but coming into contact with Mizuki’s *mangas* I got to know of the existence of the world of *yōkai* invisible to the human eye, and in some mysterious way my heart was filled with satisfaction.

²⁰ A province of Japan bordering the capital province of Tōkyō to the left.

²¹ A general term for referring to monsters. Used for Children.

²² A monster bird passed down in an area of Iwafune, Tochigi-city.

新潟を訪ね、印象に残った場所

山内

新潟各地を巡り、印象的な場所が多かったですね。皆さんはどんなものに興味を引かれましたか。

熊倉

桑原家で拝見した”赤い河童”の絵が印象的でした。緑の河童が登場する前に語り継がれていた、本来の姿が描かれていたのでうれしかったです。河童に両生類の特徴が与えられ、薬に精通^{せいっとう}しているという性格付けがされたという荻野さん説も興味深かったです。

Places that left an impression while visiting

Niigata

Yamauchi

There were many impressive places going around various places in Niigata. Gentlemen, what things caught your interest?

Kumakura

The image of the “red *kappa*” we saw at the Kuwahara’s was impressive. I was happy because before the green *kappa* appeared its original form was handed down and put to paper. Ogino’s theory of ascribing amphibian features to the *kappa* and giving it a personality trait of it being well versed in medicine was also most intriguing.

荻野

河童が両生類である可能性は、初めは気にも留めていませんでしたが、桑原家、猫山宮尾病院と立て続けに訪問して、イメージが固まりました。新潟は初訪問で何もかも新鮮でしたが、現地を訪れると気付くことが多いと実感しました。

荒俣

僕は、鶴の特徴からレッサーパンダを導き出すという荻野さんの話が面白かったですね。古生物学的な観点が新鮮で、結び付かないようなものが結び付き、^{しょうげき}衝撃でした。

Ogino

At first I did not take into account the possibility that the kappa is an amphibian, but visiting the Kuwahara household and the Nekoyama-miyao hospital in succession solidified the idea. In Niigata, just about anything was new and fresh during the first visit, but when you go to the actual sites, I really felt there are many things to take note of.

Aramata

What I found interesting was the story where Ogino derived the red panda out of the traits of the *nue*. Viewpoints from a paleontology perspective are new to me and having things that don't connect come together, it's quite the shock.

キッチン

普光時の参詣後、突然、大雨になったことも忘れられません。道中、妖怪にずっと尾行されていて、彼らが最後の締めくくりにふさわしい光景を見せてくれたのではと思いました。写真に写らないはずの妖怪が見えた！と感動しつつシャッターを切りました。

熊倉

もう一つ、僕のイチオシは、長岡藩士の伴喜内が著した『越之風車』に描かれた“見越し入道”です。妖怪には方言のような地域差があると思っていましたが、編み笠をかぶり、蓑をまとう雪国仕様に新潟らしさを感じましたし、その形に驚きました。見越し入道といえは僧の姿をしているのが普通ですから。

Kicchin

I also cannot forget the sudden downpour after we visited the Fukōji temple. I thought we were being shadowed by *yōkai* all throughout and that they showed us a scene befitting the final conclusion. Whilst being moved and thinking I was able to see *yōkai* that for sure would not show up in photographs, I snapped pictures.

Kumakura

One more thing I would like to recommend is the “*mikoshi-nyūdō*”²³ that was drawn in the “*Koshi no Kazaguruma*”²⁴ written by the Nagaoka feudal warrior Ban Kinai. I was thinking that *yōkai* would be different just like dialects in different regions, but because I sensed the Niigata-ness in the snow country method of cladding a straw raincoat and wearing a woven straw hat I was quite surprised by its shape. This is because when talking about a *mikoshi-nyūdō* it's normal for it to take on the form of a Buddhist priest.

²³ One of the *yōkai* types of Japan said to resemble a Buddhist priest with a really long neck.

²⁴ Published around 1771 and features *yōkai* among other things.

荒俣

妖怪は基本の話が同じでも、地域性が与えられると表現が変わります。西生寺にあった雷獣のミイラも新潟の寒冷な気候がなければ生まれなかったものです。

荻野

鶴についても、新潟は約300万年前のレッサーパンダの化石が国内で唯一見つかった土地です。地域性とつながる部分が多く、興味深く各地を回りました。

Aramata

Even though the basic story of a *yōkai* is the same, when it is given the character of the region the presentation will be different. As was also the case with the *raijū* at Saishōji temple, it could not have been born if it wasn't for the cold climate of Niigata.

Ogino

The *nue* as well, since Niigata is the place where the only fossil of a 3 million year old red panda was discovered in the country. We visited several places which were very interesting and had many parts where it connected to the region.

新潟は妖怪研究に適した土地

山内

新潟には昔話が多いといわれます。ただ、もともと生み出された量が多いのか、残っている量が多いのか、検証するすべがありません。

しかし、新潟を旅していると豪農^{ごうのう}の屋敷が目につきますし、明治初期には日本一の人口を誇った豊かな地域です。記録を残そうとした研究者や、有力な支援者がいたのでしょうか。

荒俣

良寛を支えた桑原さんのご先祖様のように、支援者は多かったはずです。僕も長年^{ながねん}妖怪を研究してきましたが、知識があるだけでなく、相当な体力と時間がないとできませんよ。昔の新潟県には、余裕^{よゆう}をもって研究できる環境があったでしょう。

Niigata as suitable grounds for the study of *yōkai*

Yamauchi

It is said that there are many old tales in Niigata. But there is no way to verify if they are many original tales or many that have survived. Still, it was a prosperous region boasting the biggest population in Japan at the beginning of the Meiji period, because when you travel in Niigata you are struck by all the mansions of wealthy farmers. Surely there were scholars leaving behind records and influential supporters [in making Niigata popular], don't you think?

Aramata

Just like the ancestors of the Kuwahara's who supported Ryōkan, there must have been many [supporters]. I too have come to study *yōkai* for many years, but it's not just about having the knowledge, if you don't have the appropriate stamina or time you would not be able to do it. There must have been an environment in the Niigata prefecture that had room for this and where one was able to do research.

熊倉

新潟の人々の ^{ふところ} 懐 の深さの ^{たまもの} 賜物ですね。妖怪
研究に限らず、優れた人材が出てくる ^{どじょう} 土壌を
つくることは、これからの地方にも必要な視
点です。

Kamakura

It's the gift of the deep pockets of the people of Niigata. From now
on, a necessary point of view in the region is creating a foundation
for talented not limited to *yōkai* research.

荒俣

日本で妖怪ブームが起こったのは江戸時代で、
『北越雪譜』や『北越奇談』もこの時代に編
さんされています。日本人はもともと物好き
な国民性ですから、近世以降には、一般の人
も各地の地域色に関心を持つようになりました。
現代でいうご当地ブームの先駆けです。
江戸時代の封建制度は、地方の発言力を高める
ために役立ったと思います。当時は藩が自
立していましたから、自給自足のために藩主
が自国の調査する必要がありました。そこで、
それぞれの藩が博識な人物を抱え、博物学的
な学問を重んじていたのでしょう。8代将
軍・徳川吉宗の時代に行われた各藩の博物調
査にも妖怪に関する記述がありますが、博物
学的観点から答えを出せる人がいたのです。

Aramata

In Japan the *yōkai* boom occurred in the Edo period, and works like the “Hokuetsu Seppu” and the “Hokuetsu Kidan” were also compiled in this era. From the outset Japanese people have national characteristic of curiosity, so since the early modern period a lot of people also started to take an interest in the regional flavor of various regions. It is the forerunner of what we today call the ‘*tōchi* boom’²⁵. I think that the feudal system of the Edo period was helpful in raising the influence of the regions. Because at the time the *han*²⁶ were autonomous, the leader of the *han* had a need for research in his land in an effort to become self-reliant. Because of that the various *han* had to keep people of great knowledge, and the study of natural history was surely very important. In the natural history research of the various *han* that were conducted in the period of the 8th shōgun (of the Edo period) Yoshimune Tokugawa as well, there is mention of *yōkai* related matters, but there were people who could give answers from a natural historic perspective.

²⁵ The phenomenon where more and more interest is directed towards the different regions in Japan as opposed to only the larger cities.

²⁶ Feudal states and precursors to today's prefectures.

山内

荻野さんのような調査研究に、昔の人も取り組んだのですね。

Yamauchi

People of way back when also grappled with investigative research just like Ogino.

荻野

地元に興味を持ち、記録を残した先人^{せんじん}たちがいたため、現在、私たちが科学的視点から調査できるのです。知れば知るほど、荒唐無稽^{こうとうむけい}と思われていたものは、真摯^{しんし}な記録だと分かってきました。最近は、『古事記』や『日本書紀』の記録を読み解いて、“八岐大蛇^{やまたのおろち}”を考察しています。

昭和初期に地球物理学者の寺田寅彦^{てらだ とらひこ}さんが火山説^{とな}を唱えましたが、説を補強^{ほきょう}しようと。私は記述などの分析から、火砕流^{かさいりゅう}こそが“八岐大蛇^う”ではないかと考えていますが、埋もれて事実を掘り起こして検証することを、“妖怪古生物学”として確立したいですね。

Ogino

We can do research from a scientific perspective these days, because there were predecessors who left records and held an interest in their local area. The more we knew, we came to understand that the things that were thought of as absurd are actually sincere recordings. Recently, I am carefully reading the records of the “Kojiki”²⁷ and the “Nihonshoki”²⁸ and am investigating “Yamata no Orochi”²⁹.

The geophysicist Terada Torahiko from the early Showa period (1926-1989) advocated the volcano theory, and I set out to reinforce this view. I am thinking that from my analysis “Yamata no Orochi” is precisely a pyroclastic flow, and it should be established as “yōkai paleontology” to find out and verify unknown facts.

²⁷ “Records of Ancient Matters”. Japan’s oldest historical record dating back to 711-712 AD.

²⁸ “The Chronicles of Japan”. Japan’s 2nd oldest historical record dating back to 720 AD.

²⁹ An eight-headed snake-like monster with eight tails, and red eyes.

日本人に妖怪は身近な存在

熊倉

未知のものや面白いものを見つけたときに、
パッと飛び付くことができる感度は、昔の人
や、地方の人が秀^{ひい}でている気がします。

キッチン

以前、南米ペルーのアマゾンで地元住民に妖怪になりきってもらい、その姿を撮影したことがあります。幼い頃から伝え聞いてきたからだと思いますが、彼らは妖怪の踊りを再現するなど、完全になりきって踊ったりしていました。また、ある公民館は夜になると妖怪が出る^{ちょっかんてき}というので、直感的に近づかないという感覚を持っていました。新潟の民家や深い森などにも、明らかに昔は妖怪がいたのかなと感じられる空気が残っていますね

Yōkai familiar to the Japanese

Kumakura

I feel that that people of the past or people from the countryside excel at having a type of sensitivity that makes them able to lunge at the moment when an unknown thing or an interesting thing is discovered.

Kicchin

A while ago I shot the figure of a local turned *yōkai* in the Amazon of Peru, South America. I think it's because they were told this since they were young, but they turned completely into a *yōkai* and danced, reproducing the dance of a *yōkai*. Moreover, they said that when the night falls the *yōkai* will appear at the community hall, so I had the sense of instinctively not going near it. Just like in the private residences of Niigata or the deep forests, there is an air left behind where you can undoubtedly feel the wonder of whether or not *yōkai* were there back in the day.

荒俣

ごうりしゅぎいっぺんとう
戦後の合理主義一辺倒の中で、妖怪なんて非科学的といわれ続けてきました。しかし、現在も日本人の”妖怪感度”は高いですね。

きもだめ
肝試しや近年のハロウィンなど、誰でもお化けになれる文化が受け継がれています。水木さんや熊倉さんのような妖怪漫画もありますし、夏には博物館で妖怪展が開かれるようになりました。せっかく妖怪が身近な存在なのですから、学問的に考えても面白いねというところまで持っていくのが目標です。

Aramata

After the war during the complete devotion to rational thought, it kept being said that *yōkai* and things like that are unscientific. However, even today the “sensitivity towards *yōkai*” is high! We inherited a culture where anyone can become a monster with things like ‘dare games’ or the recent Halloween. It has become so that for example Mr. Mizuki or Mr. Kumakura’s *yōkai manga* also exist and that in the summer *yōkai* expositions are held in museums. Especially because *yōkai* are so familiar it’s my goal to take it to a point where even thinking scholarly about *yōkai* is interesting.

未知の人類が記録されたいる？

山内

今回、荻野さんのお話を聞いて、荒唐無稽な
存在として捉えられがちな妖怪のイメージが
変わりました。『北越雪譜』で描かれている
姿とは異なりますが、鳥取県境港市の水木し
げるロードでは、新潟の代表的な妖怪として
「異獣」が紹介されています。これらは荻野
さんの目にはどのように映りますか？

Has an unknown human species been recorded?

Yamauchi

This time my image of *yōkai* that tend to be treated as sheer nonsense has changed upon hearing Ogino's story. Though it differs in form from the one that has been drawn in the "Hokuetsu Seppu", the *ijū*³⁰ was introduced as the typical Niigata *yōkai* of Niigata at the Mizuki Shigeru Road of Sakai-Minato city, Tottori prefecture. How do you look upon all this, Ogino?

³⁰ A monster comparable to Bigfoot or the Abominable Snowman.

荻野

実在していたとしても違和感がないと思います。『北越雪譜』の「異獣」、『越之風車』^{こしのかざぐるま}の「さとり」などの大男は毛むくじゃらですが、数万年前まではネアンデルタールとフロレスという2種のヒトが同時期に存在したことが分かっています。例えば、縄文時代の生活を送っていた人類が山^{さんちゅう}中で生き残っていたとしても不思議ではありません。

Ogino

Even if they did exist for real I don't think it feels out of place. The giant *ijū* of the "Hokuetsu Seppu" or the *satori* of the 'Koshi no Kazaguruma' are covered in rough fur, but we know that up until a couple of 10,000 years ago two types of humans called the Neanderthals and the Flores Human existed during the same period. For example, even if the human species that led a Jōmon period (14,000 – 300 BCE) lifestyle lived on within the mountains it would not be strange.

荒俣

日本人は単一民族のように思っている人がいますが、どんでもないことです。現在も、アイヌ^{みんぞく}民族など様々な民族がいます。ひょっとすると、コミュニケーション手段の違う^{そうぐう}民族と山中で遭遇した可能性もあります。気候の変動期だった3000年前までは、多様な人類が存在したとされます。江戸時代にも存在した可能性はあります。

山内

黒船^{くろふね}で日本を訪れたペリーが錦絵では天狗^{てんぐ}のような鼻を持つ人として描かれています。異なる民族と出会ったとき、特徴を強調して描くことは歴史上^{れきしじょう}もよくあります。

Aramata

There are people who think of the Japanese as one race, but it couldn't be further from the truth. At present too, there is the Ainu race³¹ and various other races. There is also the possibility that per chance they encountered races with a different means of communication in the mountains. Many different types of humans are thought to have existed up until 3000 years ago during a period of climate change. In the Edo period as well there is a possibility that they existed.

Yamauchi

Perry³² who visited Japan with his 'black boats' has been drawn as a person with a nose just like a *tengu*³³. Emphasizing the special features when a different race was encountered through drawing has happened a lot in history.

³¹ A people said to precede the common Japanese race today living mostly in the northern regions of Japan. The Ainu have their own language and culture.

³² Matthew Calbraith Perry (1794-1858). American navy officer who came to Japan with his black steam ships in 1853 and demanded ports would be opened up for trade.

³³ A birdlike creature with human features and a long nose, though its form can vary. A well-known form of *yōkai* within Japan.

キッチン

アマゾンには交流できない民族、行ってはいけない地域が残っていました。異獣などの記録は、日本国内で異民族間の交流があったことを示す、重要な記録なのかもしれませんね。

現地を旅して、妖怪を楽しむ

山内

それでは宴もたけなわになったところで団長の荒俣さんに、新潟妖怪探訪の旅を総括していただきましょう。

Kicchin

In the Amazon there were areas left where you should not go and where races could not intermingle. The record of the *ijū* could be a valuable record showing that there was a space for different races to meet each other within Japan.

Traveling around the sites, enjoying *yōkai*

Yamauchi

Well then, now that the party is in full swing, could you, group leader Aramata, sum up the trip of investigating *yōkai* in Niigata.

荒俣

新潟を旅して、妖怪には地域性や、その土地の生活様式が反映されていることがよく分かりました。伝統文化や独自の気候風土がある新潟ならではの、でしょう。河童が両生類であるという荻野さんの説のように、現地の人も気付かない新たな視点を生み出すこともできました。あらゆるものを自分の目で見ることは妖怪学、そして博物学の基本だと思います。ぜひ読者の皆さんも、新潟を訪れて、妖怪と触れ合っていたきたいです。我々が気付かなかった発見があるかもしれませんよ。

Aramata

We have come to understand quite well the way the lifestyle of the local area and the regional traits are being reflected in the *yōkai* whilst traveling through Niigata. This is surely because Niigata holds a unique climate and traditional culture. Just like the theory of Ogino regarding the *kappa* being an amphibian, we were also able to devise new viewpoints even the locals were not aware of. I think that seeing everything with you own eyes is the foundation for natural history as well as *yōkai* studies. I would also very much like the reader to visit Niigata and come into contact with *yōkai*. There might be discoveries yet to be discovered!

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