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The Emergence of *Kaidan-shū*

The Collection of Tales of the Strange and Mysterious in the Edo Period

Abstract

Kaidan are tales of the strange and mysterious, supernatural stories often depicting the horrific and gruesome. Many contemporary Japanese regard stories of the *kaidan* genre as frightening ghost stories. Written stories that fit the *kaidan* mold have been part of Japanese literature since ancient times, but they were not identified apart from the rest. It was only during the Edo period that these stories were collected, compiled, and published under the rubric of *kaidan* as *kaidan-shū* (collections of *kaidan*). In the middle of the eighteenth century, the production of *kaidan* literature reached one of its peaks. At the same time, the artistry of *kaidan* attained a zenith in *Kinko kaidan* (*Kaidan* Present and Past) and *Ugetsu monogatari* (Tales of Moonlight and Rain, 1776), a collection of nine short stories of the supernatural written by Ueda Akinari (1734–1809). By tracing the *kaidan-shū* from its emergence in the early Edo period up to the appearance of *Ugetsu monogatari,* this paper will demonstrate how *kaidan* literature of the Edo period (1600–1867) moves away from the religious and didactic, toward the secular.

Keywords: *kaidan*—*kaidan-shū*—storytelling—entertainment—Edo Japan

In Japan today the general term for frightening ghost stories is *kaidan* 怪談.[1] Although *kaidan* need not evoke fear in the minds of those who hear them, frequently they include elements of horror as well as a revenge motif. Etymologically, the character *kai* 怪 in *kaidan* means "strange, mysterious, rare, or bewitching apparition," while *dan* 談 is similar in meaning to *hanashi* 話 or *katari* 語り (i.e., "talk," or "recited narrative"). Put simply, *kaidan* literally means "a narrative of the strange." While tales of strange phenomena in the *kaidan* mold existed prior to the Edo period (1600–1867), the appellation "*kaidan*" does not appear in extant historical records until the seventeenth century. As the character *dan* of *kaidan* indicates, the oral elements in *kaidan* are important, just as the role of storytellers of an earlier age was crucial for spreading *kaidan*-like tales.

The development of a commercial economy in sixteenth-century Japan brought with it enhanced communication, as the growing integration of a national economy exposed Japan's urban culture and ideas to rural people and vice versa. Traveling merchants, performers, artists, and itinerant priests were popular agents of change, spreading the entertaining tales to both the countryside and urban centers. These stories were derived from various sources such as recent events in local areas and classical Chinese texts. Their subject matter was also varied and ranged from stories of the strange and scary to the funny, silly, and exotic. The rise in popularity of this form of entertainment created a demand for professional storytellers. Some served as *otogishū* 御伽衆—the professional storytellers attending provincial lords.[2] As storytelling grew in popularity, it became integrated with popular events including village gatherings and religious events such as funerary watches and a ritual called *kōshinmachi* 庚申待, a nightlong vigil during which no one should sleep. Tales about the strange, bizarre, and/or frightening served many functions, not the least of which was to keep people awake particularly during wakes and *kōshinmachi* (Takada 1989, 391–95).

The role of the storytellers of previous generations was significant in the formation of *kaidan*, despite the fact that oral traditions are quite disparate

from their literary counterparts. In an oral tradition, the story is supplemented by the tellers' gestures, intonation, facial expressions, and the tellers' ability to spontaneously interact with the audience. It was thus a true interactive experience. If the storytellers were so inclined, they could tailor their stories to accommodate the varying aptitudes, attitudes, and atmosphere of each audience. Rarely does literature afford this personalized and interactive advantage. Because extratextual context is lacking in literature, writers must provide the context for the absent readers (ONG 1982, 102). On the other hand, as Walter J. ONG writes, "The writer finds his written words accessible for reconsideration, revision, and other manipulation until they are finally released to do their work. Under the author's eyes the text lays out the beginning, the middle and the end, so that the writer is encouraged to think of his work as a self-contained, discrete unit, defined by closure" (1982, 148). In the Edo period, a writer would have assumed that his readers shared the same background knowledge. Yet, the writer did not have the advantage of having his audience in front of him as he wrote. Put plainly, authors routinely had to make assumptions about the background, interest, knowledge, and intelligence of their readers, such was the assumptive nature of their craft.

One of the earliest examples of literature bearing the name of *kaidan* is an exemplary amalgamation of oral and literary tradition. The work, entitled *Kaidan* and more popularly known as *Kaidan zensho* 怪談全書 (Complete Works of Strange Tales), was a translation completed around 1627 of strange and mysterious Chinese tales written in classical Chinese.[3] Hence the foundation of the work is literary. However, the author, Hayashi Razan 林 羅山 (1583–1657), a Confucian physician of the third Shōgun, Tokugawa Iemitsu 徳川家光 (1604–1651), wrote the book to entertain the Shōgun while he was ill (FUJI 1992). The author knew his audience intimately and could gauge his stories accordingly, just as in an oral tradition.

For generations, *kaidan* literature was broadly considered to consist of tales of the supernatural, but today it includes tales that are surrealistic, strange, and frightening. Some *kaidan* tales still retain their oral heritage and continue to be popular among contemporary Japanese.

THE PREDOMINANTLY ENTERTAINING CHARACTERISTICS OF *KAIDAN*

As already discussed, prior to the Edo period written stories that fit the *kaidan* mold were already present in literary treatments, but often as a part of a larger work. For example, the classic of Japanese literature, *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (Tales of Genji, ca. 1010), possesses many supernatural elements, the more notable of which can be found in the episodes of *Yūgao* 夕顔 (Evening Faces) and *Aoi* 葵 (Hollylock). The supernatural elements, while

undeniably part of *Genji monogatari,* are but a small part of the overall work. Similarly, *Konjaku monogatari-shū* 今昔物語集 (Tales of Times Now Past, ca. 1120) contains various strange tales, most notably in chapter twenty-seven, which includes forty-five tales of malevolent Japanese spirits and demons. Again, although the chapter is heavy on the treatment of the supernatural, the theme is lost in the larger anthology of stories that make up the *Konjaku monogatari-shū*.

In keeping with traditional Japanese reverence for the divine and the unknown, the expectation that many bring to reading and experiencing stories of the supernatural is one of awe. This expectation on the part of the "experiencer" is surpassed only by the serious intentions of the author in writing these bizarre tales, many of which are often inseparable from the religious and didactic. For instance, *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記 (Miraculous Stories from the Japanese Buddhist Tradition, ca. 823), which was written to illustrate how good and evil deeds are rewarded and punished in this life, is frequently regarded as the first anthology of supernatural tales. The book explains and expounds upon the Buddhist principle of karma (ENDŌ 1967, 31–33). Elements of Buddhist teachings continue to exist in a number of tales of the strange in the Edo period; yet, when one examines the plethora of *kaidan-shū* 怪談集 (collections of *kaidan*) of the period, one cannot help but notice the conspicuous move toward secularization in the artistic and literary treatment of the supernatural. As we shall see in the following, the primary concern of the work and interests of the author and/or readers or audiences is *kai,* strange or rare phenomena laced throughout the story.

The *kaidan* story entitled *Botan dōrō* 牡丹灯籠 (Peony Lantern, 1666) can function as a prototype of the *kaidan* genre, which has been immensely influential not only as prose fiction but also in various genres such as plays, storytelling, and, in modern times, motion pictures and television.[4] The short story *Botan dōrō* was originally adapted to Japanese by Asai Ryōi 浅井了意 (? –1691) from a Chinese story entitled *Mudan dengji* 牡丹燈記 (Tale of Peony Lantern) in *Jian deng xin hua* 剪燈新話 (New Tales Under the Lamplight).[5] Asai Ryōi's *Botan dōrō* opens on the night of the Festival of Souls (*obon*) in summer. A beautiful woman accompanied by a young girl holding a peony lantern, strolls by the house of Ogiwara Shinnojō, a young samurai who has just lost his beloved wife. Enchanted by her beauty, Shinnojō invites her into his house. He learns that she is from a celebrated family now in decline, and is told that she lives near a temple. On that very night, they swear an eternal relationship. From then on, the beautiful woman visits him every night, only to depart at dawn. An elderly neighbor, suspicious of the young woman's voice coming nightly from Shinnojō's house, peeks into his house at night and, to his horror, finds Shinnojō hav-

ing an intimate talk with a skeleton.

On the following day, the old neighbor tells Shinnojō what he saw and warns him that he will lose his life if he continues to associate with the deceased. Terrified, Shinnojō goes to the temple where the woman said she lived to discover her true identity. There, instead of her house, he finds an ancestral shrine containing the woman's coffin. Deciding that he needed an exorcist, Shinnojō treks to a famous Buddhist priest, who confirms that his life is indeed in grave danger. Shinnojō receives a charm from the priest, which he affixes to the gate of his house to prevent the entity from entering at night. This results in the immediate cessation of the woman's nightly visits to him. Some time later, however, Shinnojō, intoxicated, carelessly wanders near the temple gate. The woman appears suddenly and takes him inside the temple. He is later found dead in the temple, inside the woman's coffin—his body strewn atop of the woman's skeleton. His corpse is soon after buried, but Shinnojō and the woman are still occasionally seen on rainy, cloudy nights, walking hand in hand accompanied by the girl holding a peony lantern. Those who meet them fall gravely ill. The Ogiwara family, which grieves over the misfortune the apparitions cause to others, employs a priest to invoke the *Lotus Sutra* to release the spirits. Thereafter, the ghosts of Shinnojō, his lover, and the small girl with the peony lantern never reappear (ASAI 1910, 29–32).

The extent to which this story became secularized is clear when the story line of the Japanese *Botan dōrō* is contrasted with the original Chinese text. In the original Chinese story, *Mudan dengji*, help against the misfortune brought by the deceased couple's visits comes not from the family of the male protagonist, but from a Taoist priest who had previously given the male protagonist two charms to prevent the ghosts from reappearing. (In the Japanese version a Buddhist, not Taoist, priest is described as only giving one charm to the male protagonist.) A powerful Taoist summons the officials of the underworld and has them bring the ghosts before him. After being flogged, each ghost writes a confession of his/her wrongdoings. The Taoist then makes a long speech on the handing down of divine punishment to wrongdoers before promptly sentencing them both to hell. The ethical or moral aspect of the Chinese tale is thus unquestionable. The same cannot be said of its Japanese counterpart.

In the Japanese *Botan dōrō* the latter half of the tale is completely eliminated. It could be because the writer, Asai Ryōi, thought the scene of the underworld not very effective for the story, bearing in mind too that Taoist rituals were unfamiliar to many Japanese. Yet, whatever the reason(s), when Ryōi chose to omit the underworld section from his version of *Botan dōrō,* all overt ethical lessons were also eliminated. One may claim that the story

suggests the power of the *Lotus Sutra* by which the ghosts cease to appear in this world. But because the *Lotus Sutra* appears at the very end and in only one sentence, one might also argue that the story's use of prayer is no more than a literary device—an expeditious means for ending the story. The rest of the story has little religious color, and it would be hard to claim that the primary intent of the story was to convey any overt Buddhist message. One might also contend that this story warns against association with strange women because it may lead to misfortune. Yet, it is hard to believe that this ethic is the focal point of the tale, for though the man actually dies, he returns to this world with the woman to upbraid and scare people. The tale presents no trace of his suffering or divine retribution for his conduct. Written in classical and poetic diction, *Botan dōrō* keeps the reader attentive by focusing on supernatural beings and strange events. The main interest is generated through the narration, particularly through the descriptions of how these strange things happened. Ryōi's version is disinterested in forwarding any kind of moral or religious agenda and is thus more secular, designed more for entertaining the masses than for teaching.

Another example of the secularization of an older, more religious text can be found in the story of "The Girl Who Became a Serpent Through Delusive Attachment" (*Mōshū ni yorite musume ja to naru koto* 妄執によりて娘蛇となる事). An identical story appears in both *Shasekishū* 沙石集 (Sand and Pebbles, 1283),[6] written by the Buddhist monk Mujū Ichien 無住一円 (1226–1312), and *Zen'aku mukui banashi* 善悪報ばなし (Tales of Rewards and Punishments), a collection of *kaidan* published in the late seventeenth century.[7] The story tells of a young girl who died of love-sickness over a page. Upon her death she transforms into a serpent and converses with the young man, who dies shortly thereafter. In *Shasekishū*, the narrator or Mujū tells the audience after the story that he knows the name of the parties concerned, but cannot say who they are because of the currency of the event. He then adds a paragraph as to how fearful obsession is and that one must pray to the Buddha and Shinto deities to sever any attachment.[8] On the other hand, the unknown author of the Edo-period work *Zen'aku mukui banashi* finishes his narrative right after revealing his intentions. Without any moral or religious teaching, he simply states that he has narrated the story "because it was so strange" (TAKADA 1989, 318). Mujū may have added the religious lesson at the end out of guilt for telling such a story. As a Buddhist monk he was morally obligated to refrain from telling fictional stories (*kyōgen kigo* 狂言綺語). Mujū, who liked telling stories,[9] may have really just written down the story because of its strangeness. Yet, the fact that the author of *Zen'aku mukui banashi* did not add even one paragraph of moral edification reveals his primary intent of writing the story was in chronicling

kai, or a strange phenomenon.

A further example of secularization can be found in *Inga monogatari* 因果物語 (Tales of Retribution, 1660?), a collection of *kaidan* whose authorship is attributed to the Buddhist monk Suzuki Shōsan 鈴木正三 (1579–1655). *Inga monogatari* has two versions, one written in hiragana syllabary with pictures, and the other in katakana syllabary without pictures. Sometime after Shōsan's death, the hiragana version appeared in bookstores. Almost on the heels of its release, the katakana version appeared on the publishing market in 1661 in direct protest to the hiragana version. The "Preface" to the katakana version explains how the text was originally not meant for publication because many people mentioned in it were still alive and accountable at the time. Since, however, the hiragana version of *Inga monogatari* distorted and blurred the facts, it was deemed necessary to publish the katakana version so as to reveal the true veracity of Shōsan's tales (YOSHIDA 1962a, 4–5). Printed after the appearance of the hiragana version, the katakana version of *Inga monogatari* was a clear literary backlash to the altered copy. In spite of the Preface, which states that the "work was written as an expedient means to lead people to religious awakening and to record the manifest concept of cause and effect" (YOSHIDA 1962b, 3–4), the hiragana version of *Inga monogatari* was received as entertainment, as revealed from this contemporary commentary on the work: "There is a picture-book called *Inga monogatari,* which was written by somebody named Shōsan. Children read it playfully and consider it to be just for fun" (SANO 1929, 139). The titillating and provocative *Inga monogatari* was well received by those who read or hear the stories in it and its popularity has withstood the test of time. The longevity of both versions of the text, due in large part to the overall entertainment value of the stories in it, and the popular reception of *Inga monogatari* by readers and audiences alike is remarkable.

Tachikawa Kiyoshi suggests that behind the popularity of these early *kaidan* collections were gatherings, already going on before the genre was popularized, called *hyakumonogatari kaidankai* 百物語怪談会 (gatherings for telling one hundred *kaidan* tales). In these gatherings, a group of people took turns telling stories until one hundred were told, in attempt to induce supernatural phenomena.[10] These gatherings may have originated during the medieval period in *hyakuza hōdan* 百座法談 (one hundred Buddhist stories), a practice of telling one hundred Buddhist stories over one hundred days, which was widely believed among Buddhists to induce miracles. During the time of civil war in the sixteenth century, the activity of telling frightening stories was also carried out among warriors as a means to cultivate courage. But in the early Edo period, the emphasis of the purposes shifted from a pious intent and/or cultivation of courage to an artistic effort to narrate an interesting

story (TACHIKAWA 1963 and 1979). It is important to note, however, that this does not mean that *kaidan* excludes religious or didactic elements.

SOCIAL BACKGROUND

Donald KEENE writes that *kaidan* "emerged as a distinct genre only during the Tokugawa period" (1976, 379). According to Pavel Medvedev, genre is "a specific way of visualizing a given part of reality" (quoted in MORSON and EMERSON 1990, 275). Similarly, Bakhtin asserts, "new genres reflect changes in real social life. Those changes lead to new views of experience and to different genres of speech, social behavior, and literature" (MORSON and EMERSON 1990, 277). It is worthwhile to briefly look into what socio-economic changes helped bring about the shift of supernatural literature in the direction of entertainment from the overtly religious or didactic.

The social stability brought about at the beginning of the seventeenth century made the terror and death associated with civil war a thing of the past. In a time of peace, people could regard strange phenomena and terror as entertainment. I have already commented on how the development of a commercial economy in sixteenth-century Japan brought enhanced communication as the growing integration of a national economy exposed Japan's urban culture to rural areas and vice versa. Together with the improving economic and communication network, interesting stories were transmitted by word of mouth or by texts to various areas of Japan.

The popularity of strange tales as entertainment was accelerated by an advance in printing technology, without which, Donald KEENE states, "popular literature could hardly have been created" (1976, 2). A metal printing press with movable type was brought back from Korea and presented to Emperor Go-Yōzei 後陽成 as a spoil of war after the de-facto ruler of Japan Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1536–1598) invaded the country. Four years later, in 1597, on the emperor's initiative, a Japanese version of the Korean printing press was made with wooden instead of metal type. The movable type of printing was eventually replaced in favor of block type.[11] Then, having pacified Japan, the Tokugawa military government actively promulgated a civil bureaucracy. The authorities collected many classics and were enthusiastic about printing them. An interest in learning soon spread among the upper class and wealthy townsmen (NODA 1964, 112–17).[12] With the increased demand for books, commercial printing became viable as early as the seventeenth century. People could now enjoy interesting stories either orally or in print.

Furthermore, there appeared among intellectuals an inclination to attempt to explain supernatural phenomena with logic. This tendency was probably accelerated by the fact that the Tokugawa government adopted

Neo-Confucianism as the official ideology to buttress its political control. Orthodox Neo-Confucian philosophy, the teachings of the twelfth-century Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi 朱子 (1130–1200), has been aptly and succinctly described as a doctrine of reason or principle (*li*). Zhu Xi asserted that all things were governed by their underlying principles, and that, if men wished to determine what these principles were, it was incumbent upon them to pursue with diligence the "investigation of things" (VARLEY 1984, 151). The tendency to explain the supernatural phenomena logically with the theory of yin-yang helped take the religious aura away from these inexplicable events. This is evident in, for example, *Hyakumonogatari hyōban* 百物語評判 (Explanations to the Strange and Weird Tales, 1686) by Yamaoka Genrin 山岡元隣 (1631–1672), a widely recognized intellectual of his day. Genrin's book explains the supernatural by frequently employing the theory of yin-yang. Of the *oni* 鬼 (demon/ogre) for instance, Genrin has this to say:

> Heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, trees and grasses, water and fire, stones and dirt, all sentient beings are yin-yang. The work of yang is called kami, and the work of yin is named *oni*.... Since all the bad and evil belong to yin, the souls of wicked people are called *oni*.... their [wicked] souls have nowhere to go and nobody worships them. So they linger in the air and cause various problems [to humans].
>
> (TACHIKAWA 1993, 13–14)

To the modern-day reader, this explanation with rational logic hardly clarifies the nature of *oni*, for yin alone cannot explain why or how the *oni* manage to linger in the air. Yet, Genrin's students, who asked this very question of him, seemed to find his explanation of *oni* quite acceptable. As theories given by the Church in medieval Europe were widely accepted as authoritative, so were explanations by intellectuals based on logic grounded in yin-yang theory authoritative in Edo-period Japan. Views such as his were held in high regard and actually helped to push the literary treatment of the supernatural away from religious edification and moral preaching. Supernatural tales, in effect, became secularized as they became increasingly available to the masses.

THREE PROTOTYPES OF *KAIDAN-SHŪ* BEFORE THE APPEARANCE OF *UGETSU MONOGATARI* (TALES OF MOONLIGHT AND RAIN)

Like other literary forms, *kaidan* had to have a certain artistic appeal in order to capture and retain the attention of readers. In the case of prose fiction, for example, one would expect *kaidan* tales to have some literary quality or

standard that readers could appreciate. As Noda Hisao expounds, there already existed three important examples of *kaidan* literature that had seminal influences on the developing genre: *Otogi bōko* 御伽婢子 (Hand Puppets, 1666), *Inga monogatari,* and *Tonoigusa* とのい草, which is more popularly known as *Otogi monogatari* 御伽物語 (Nursery Tales, 1660). Each of these can be seen to represent a different type of *kaidan-shū*. *Otogi bōko,* which includes the aforementioned *Botan dōrō,* was written by Asai Ryōi and is considered to be a *kaidan-shū* that adapted some stories from Chinese fiction. *Inga monogatari* is a representative *kaidan* work of Buddhist teachings, while *Otogi monogatari*, written by the *haikai* poet Ogita Ansei 荻田安静 (d. 1699), is a type of *kaidan* with strong traces of Japanese folk tales (NODA 1970, 38–39).[13] These works all treat stories of the strange, weird, and frightening in an entertaining way. In fact, a great many similar works followed these early precedents and this promulgating trend continued well throughout the Edo period.

Among these early works, *Otogi bōko* was arguably one of the most influential for the development of later *kaidan,* and is often considered the origin of literary *kaidan*.[14] *Otogi bōko* contains sixty-eight strange and mysterious stories taken from classical Chinese fiction. Among them, seventeen stories are taken from the Chinese tale collection *Jian deng xin hua*. Asai Ryōi artfully adapted Chinese stories to Japanese settings, making them more familiar to Japanese readers. The Preface clarifies the didactic purpose of *Otogi bōko*: "Generally, [sages] do not talk about the supernatural; however, if it is unavoidable, [they] narrate and write about it in order to show a model.... [The tale] will make women and children mend their ways and will become an expedient means [for ensuring] correct behavior" (ASAI 1910, 1). Because Asai Ryōi was a passionate proponent of Buddhist teaching, he probably attempted to follow the example of the didactic "Preface" of *Jian deng xin hua*.[15] Yet, as seen in the case of *Botan dōrō,* the contents do not always fully support this attitude. In fact, the stories are more in line with Ryōi's statement in the Preface that the tales of the supernatural will "surprise and excite the ears of women and children" (ASAI 1910, 1). In this work, rich in poetic form, one can clearly see Asai Ryōi's effort to narrate the stories in a highly literary style of Japanese prose centered around fascinating subject matters (EBARA 1980, 93). His engaging writing style as well as his technique for transposing classical Chinese fiction into Japanese contexts and settings was so successful it spurred multiple imitative works such as *Zoku otogi bōko* 続伽婢子 (Hand Puppets Continued) and *Shin otogi bōko* 新御伽婢子 (New Hand Puppets) in succession.

A *kaidan* type different from that of the *Otogi bōko* is one that includes a Buddhist conceptual framework such as that found in *Inga monogatari*. The title of the work *"Inga monogatari"* and its Preface, indicate an evident

slant toward didactic elements of Buddhist teaching. With this strong predilection for the didactic intact, various weird stories, such as the transformation of men into animals, are related in that they emphasize retribution for one's earthly actions. Yet, as mentioned earlier, the hiragana text was enjoyed most for its entertaining elements. In the katakana version, too, the content is not blatantly didactic. On the contrary, as in the case of the *Otogi bōko*, the author's major interest seems to lie more in the story itself. This intent on the part of the author becomes increasingly obvious, especially when comparing it with the preaching tone of the aforementioned *Nihon ryōiki* or *Shasekishū*. In many stories of *Inga monogatari,* an unusual plot or event is presented to the audience without an obvious statement of Buddhist teaching. For example, there is a story in which a monk transforms into a woman. A certain monk saw a woman who looked like a nun colleague. Upon asking the woman whether she had any relation with the monk, she replied that she was actually his religious colleague. It was explained that she was once a man who became ill and as a result lost his penis and thus turned into a woman. She (he) now had two children and sold wine (YOSHIDA 1962a, 122–23).[16] The narrator states no karmic causation for the monk becoming a woman. There is no moral lesson inherent in the story, either. The intent behind the story thus seems sensational, designed for the purpose of providing entertainment. A similar story, also found in *Inga monogatari,* tells of a mother who died from childbirth. Her baby was born healthy and safe. The ghost of the dead mother returned to this realm to feed the baby until the baby reached three years of age. The mother was seventeen when she died, but amazingly, even three years after her death, she still had the appearance of a normal seventeen year-old woman. Those who saw the child said that the child looked rather pale (YOSHIDA 1962a, 96). Again, there is no moral or religious lesson attached to the story. Shōsan and his disciples would have added many more elements of Buddhist teachings to the katakana text when narrating the stories to their audience. But in print, the religious and/or didactic color is not always evident. With its entertaining content, *Inga monogatari* was a commercial success and was followed by a number of similar works.

Otogi monogatari is a representative work of the type of *kaidan-shū* that contains elements of Japanese folklore. This work contains sixty-eight folk tales about the supernatural, which treat such subjects as *tengu* 天狗 (long-nosed flying goblins), foxes, snakes, *oni*, and spiders (NODA 1970, 38). *Otogi monogatari* has its root in *hyaku monogatari* 百物語 (one hundred tales),[17] which is an abbreviation of the aforementioned *hyaku monogatari kaidankai* (i.e., gatherings for telling one hundred *kaidan* tales). In fact, *Otogi monogatari* contains a story about such a gathering. Young men of full vigor got

together one night to tell one hundred *kaidan* tales, hoping to conjure up strange and supernatural phenomena. At the end of the ninety-ninth tale, a big hand appeared from the ceiling. When one of the men cut the hand with a single strike of his sword, it turned out to be a three-inch-long leg of a spider (TAKADA 1989, 43–44). These *kaidan* gatherings were very popular and books carrying the phrase *hyaku monogatari* in their titles were published in rapid succession. A forerunner of these books was *Otogi monogatari.*

These three types of elements found in the three different types of *kaidan* (namely, Chinese adaptation, Buddhist teachings, and Japanese folklore) were, needless to say, not exclusive of each other. In varying degrees, they were intermingled in *kaidan-shū*. And traces of these three types of *kaidan* fiction are evident in Akinari's *Ugetsu monogatari* 雨月物語 (Tales of Moonlight and Rain) to various degrees. For example, the adaptation of Chinese fiction is obvious in the story of *Kikka no chigiri* 菊花の約 (Chrysanthemum Tryst). Akinari not only uses the plot but also the diction of the Chinese vernacular story, *Fan Juqing jishu sisheng jiao* 范巨卿鶏黍死生交 (Fan Chü-ch'ing's Eternal Friendship).[18] Buddhist precedents are also discernible in *Aozukin* 青頭巾 (Blue Hood), a story of an eminent Buddhist priest who saves the soul of a homosexual priest who turned into a goblin. *Shiramine* 白峰 (White Peak), a story based upon a Japanese legend that features the native supernatural flying goblin *tengu,* likewise has strong elements of a folk tale prototype. *Kibitsu no kama* 吉備津の釜 (Cauldron of Kibitsu) mixes adaptations of Chinese fiction, such as the aforementioned *Botan dōrō,* with Japanese folklore and legend.[19]

PARODIC *KAIDAN*—*SAIKAKU SHOKOKU BANASHI* (SAIKAKU'S TALES FROM VARIOUS PROVINCES)

One of the periods that witnessed and experienced the flowering of *kaidan* was the Genroku era (1688–1703), a time known for the exuberance of its urban culture. Backed by growing commercial wealth, the well-to-do commoners, especially city merchants, actively supported the popular arts.

One representative work of *kaidan* of this era is *Saikaku shokoku banashi* 西鶴諸国噺 (Saikaku's Tales from Various Provinces, 1685) written by the professional writer, Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693). His primary purpose in writing *Saikaku shokoku banashi* was to tell interesting stories,[20] which naturally included those of the *kaidan* genre. Saikaku had an enormous interest in human nature and behavior. With his keen observations, Saikaku states in his Preface that "human beings are bewitching apparitions" (IHARA 1973, 66). Saikaku's stories of the supernatural include little that might be considered religious teaching, and his didacticism, when it exists, is by no means the primary focal point of the story. For example, in

Karakasa no go-takusen 傘の御託宣 (An Oracle of an Umbrella), Saikaku makes fun of the supernatural and the resultant overall impression is not at all mysterious, but rather, comical. The story goes as follows. An umbrella falls in a remote province where the villagers have never seen an umbrella before. Not knowing what an umbrella is, the villagers begin worshiping it as a deity. A spirit then enters the umbrella and asks for a beautiful maiden to serve him. As no maidens are willing to commit, a sexually active widow volunteers instead. The widow anxiously waits throughout the night but, to her chagrin, nothing happens. Frustrated, she destroys the umbrella (IHARA 1973, 78–80). Saikaku may have wanted to warn that what is worshiped is not necessarily sacred, or warn against the destructive power of a sexually active widow. Yet, the story does not come across to the reader as didactic or religious; on the contrary, it is the humorous, entertaining elements that resound. *Saikaku shokoku banashi* is a collection of various stories told like folk tales and arranged at random. This type of *kaidan* was widely read and favored by the general population throughout the Edo period.

THE APPEARANCE OF SOPHISTICATED *KAIDAN* FICTION — *HANABUSA ZŌSHI* (TALES OF A GARLAND)

The appearance of *Hanabusa zōshi* 英草紙 (Tales of a Garland, 1749) introduced a new, high level of sophistication to *kaidan*. *Hanabusa zōshi* consists of nine stories in five volumes, and was written by Tsuga Teishō 都賀庭鐘 (1718–1791), a physician in Osaka and the person considered to be Akinari's mentor in medicine as well as fiction (NAKAMURA 1974). A recognized intellectual of the period, Teishō, published the Japanese version of the renowned Chinese dictionary entitled, *Honkoku kōki jiten* 翻刻康熙字典 (Reprint of Dictionary of Chinese Characters Compiled in the Reign of the Emperor K'ang-his).

A major characteristic of *Hanabusa zōshi* is that every story is an adaptation from Chinese vernacular fiction. Unlike previous adaptations, which drew from classical Chinese literature, *Hanabusa zōshi* was the first successful adaptation of Chinese vernacular fiction into Japanese literature. Akinari learned a great deal from *Hanabusa zōshi* as well as from Teishō's ensuing fictional work entitled *Shigeshigeyawa* 繁野話 (Tales of the Thriving Field), published in 1766. Teishō influenced *Ugetsu monogatari* in many ways. Similarities include the format (nine short stories in five volumes), characters' inclination for intellectual discussion on classical literature, the writing style called *wakan konkōbun* 和漢混淆文 (Japanese writing mixed with Chinese characters), and the technique of incorporating Chinese material into Japanese stories (NAKAMURA 1974, 128–31; GOTŌ 1956). When Teishō

adapted the Chinese text, he purposely left some of the original Chinese in his text to be seen and appreciated by the readers. For example, the Chinese style of portraying hell as a mixture of Taoist and Buddhist elements, which was seen as exotic to most Japanese, appears in the story entitled *Ki no Tōshige inshi ni itari kuji wo wakuru koto* 紀任重陰司に至り滞獄を断くる話 (Ki no Tōshige Goes to the Underworld to Finalize the Long-Pending Judgements). With the popularity of Chinese vernacular fiction having not yet reached its apex in Japan, Teishō employed many Chinese characters and words in the text. Writing *Hanabusa zōshi* was an entertaining and intellectual exercise for Teishō. It appears that he enjoyed showcasing his erudition and, in turn, readers savored the book's exotic nuances.

Flowering of *Kaidan* and the Appearance of *Ugetsu monogatari*

During the Hōreki era (1751–1763), soon after the publication of *Hanabusa zōshi,* the popularity of *kaidan* greatly expanded. Books on *kaidan* appeared in profusion on the shelves of bookstores. *Seiban kaidan jikki* 西播怪談実記 (True Records of *Kaidan* in the Western Province of Harima, 1754) and *Shokoku kaidan-chō* 諸国怪談帳 (*Kaidan* Notes from Various Provinces, 1757) are just two examples of the numerous popular books published on *kaidan* in the eighteenth century. The popularity of *kaidan* at this time is not without reason. The first year of the Hōreki era was the time when the eighth Shōgun, Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗 (1684–1751), died. Yoshimune had initiated the strict Kyōhō Reform, which aimed at stabilizing and strengthening the military government system. Weakening of this reform had already appeared while Yoshimune was still alive, and Hōreki was an era of reaction against the strictness with which the reforms were implemented. A yearning for something strange, mysterious, or imaginative had grown strong (Noda 1970, 49–50). This tide lasted through the An'ei and Meiwa eras (1764–1780). As mentioned earlier, Teishō published another fictional work entitled *Shigeshigeyawa* in 1766. Like *Hanabusa zōshi,* this work is an adaptation of Chinese vernacular fiction, consisting of nine stories. Two years later, *Nishiyama monogatari* 西山物語 (Tale of Nishiyama) written by Takebe Ayatari 建部綾足 appeared. Akinari's *Ugetsu monogatari* (1776), which marked a zenith of the genre (Yamaguchi 1927, 90), was certainly riding the *kaidan* wave of popularity of that time.

Akinari's goal was to compose highly sophisticated *kaidan* literature. He took meticulous care incorporating his beliefs and experiences into his writing, creating highly sophisticated *kaidan* stories that are still popular to this day. Akinari was well aware of Japan's literary heritage, and he deliberately composed *Ugetsu monogatari* to be part of that tradition. The structure of the nine stories seems similar to that found in the program of the tradi-

tional performing art Noh. As mentioned earlier, *Ugetsu monogatari* contains nine stories in five volumes. The first volume of *Ugetsu monogatari* contains *Shiramine* and *Kikka no chigiri.* The second volume has *Asaji ga yado* 浅茅が宿 (House Amid the Thickets) and *Muō no rigyo* 夢応の鯉魚 (A Carp That Appeared in My Dream). The third volume includes *Buppōsō* 仏法僧 (Bird of Paradise) and *Kibitsu no Kama*. Volume Four is *Jasei no in* 邪性の淫 (Lust of the White Serpent). The last volume contains *Aozukin,* the story of a fallen priest, and *Hinpuku-ron* 貧富論 (Theory of Wealth and Poverty). By subject, they are arranged according to the order of a single-day's Noh program, in sequence: plays of gods, warriors, women, mad persons (or miscellaneous present plays), and demons.

The first story in *Ugetsu monogatari, Shiramine,* describes the fearsome, vengeful spirit of an historical figure, who is later deified. As a story of a god, *Shiramine* corresponds to the category of the god play in Noh (ZOLBROD 1974, 74). The second story, *Kikka no chigiri,* follows a suffering warrior and his loyal friend.[21] It is strikingly similar to the warrior plays of Noh that frequently deal with battles and the sufferings of warriors. The third story, entitled *Asaji ga yado,* describes a waiting woman. It corresponds to the third category in the Noh program, which focuses on the concerns of women. The protagonist of the eighth tale, *Aozukin,* is a priest who has gone mad after having lost his catamite. This fits the fourth category in the Noh program that features a mad person. Unlike the other stories, the protagonist of the *Aozukin* is a living person. Still alive, he acts like a demon, thus helping to fulfill the corresponding role in the fifth classification of a prototypical Noh program, the demon play.

Noh's influence on *Ugetsu monogatari* is also indicated by the adaptation of Noh's *shite* (lead actor) and *waki* (supporting actor) roles to the characters of *Ugetsu monogatari* (SHIGETOMO 1946; KATSUKURA 1977).[22] For example, as SHIGETOMO (1946) delineates, the protagonist of *Shiramine,* former Emperor Sutoku 崇徳 (1119–1164), corresponds to the *shite* who appears to the traveling priest Saigyō to expresses his anguish. Saigyō, on the other hand, corresponds to the *waki,* the character that introduces the audience to information about the setting and the *shite*'s background while praying for the *shite*'s salvation. In many "dream Noh" (*mugen nō* 夢幻能) plays, sprits or ghosts are the protagonists and they come back to this world to ask for prayers for their salvation because they cannot go to the other world due to some type of earthly attachment. The unsaved spirits of Noh help merge the transcendental and mundane worlds by shifting the narrative perspective between the first person and third person, and between the past and present. In *Ugetsu monogatari,* allusions to Noh adumbrate the sufferings of unsaved, obsessive spirits: their shadows draw Akinari's characters as well as readers

deeper into a world of the supernatural.

Although Noh plays are not considered *kaidan,* their influence on *Ugetsu monogatari* is enormous. So are *Nihon ryōiki, Konjaku monogatari-shū,* and *Genji monogatari.* Akinari admired the diction of *Genji monogatari* and freely incorporated it into his own works of fiction. In the *Kibitsu no kama,* for example, the mistress is described as follows in the scene in which she suffers an attack by the evil spirit of the protagonist: "she sobbed constantly and the seizures in her chest seemed too painful to bear" (*tada ne wo nomi nakite, mune semari taegatageni* 只音をのみ泣きて、胸窮り堪がたげに) (UEDA 1959, 90). This diction is taken directly from the episode of *Aoi* in *Genji monogatari* (GOTŌ 1972, 63). When the evil spirit of Lady Rokujō attacks Aoi, Genji's principal wife, Aoi "sobbed constantly and was occasionally struck by seizures of the chest, looking extremely painful to bear" (MURASAKI 1958, 329). By allusion, the suffering of Aoi is superimposed upon the mistress, and Lady Rokujō's intense obsession and fierce attack are juxtaposed with those of the mistress's. Furthermore, as already mentioned, Akinari benefited greatly from the popularity of the *kaidan* genre, as is evident in, for example, his narrative framework and his use of numerous allusions to both vernacular and classical Chinese and Japanese literature. According to Nakamura Hiroyasu, more than sixty passages in *Ugetsu monogatari* are derived from Chinese literature, while over a hundred are taken from Japanese literature (NAKAMURA, TAKADA, and NAKAMURA 1973, 49). The sheer number of sources suggests Akinari's enthusiasm toward creating *Ugetsu monogatari.* The work also shows that *kaidan-shū* came a long way from religiously and/or didactically dominant tales of the strange, to its more contemporary, entertaining resting place.

Kaidan-shū that appeared in the early Edo period were predominantly entertaining stories, though it should be stressed again that this does not mean the religious and didactic factors were completely excluded. As various *kaidan-shū* were published, *kaidan* evolved from simple tales, which often originated in an oral tradition, to literary narrative fiction as seen in the *Ugetsu monogatari.* Indeed, *Ugetsu monogatari,* while not excluding religious and didactic elements, was an exemplary work in the shift toward the secular in the literature of *kaidan.*

NOTES

1. The term *kaidan* may remind some readers of Lafcadio HEARN's masterful collection of stories entitled *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (1904). In his Preface, Hearn translates "Kwaidan" as "weird tales" (1904, iii). There is also a striking film entitled *Kwaidan* directed by Masaki KOBAYASHI (1965).

2. *Hanashi* (talks) by *otogishū* were very popular during the Sengoku period (1467–1573). KUWATA Tadachika claims that as *hanashi* by *otogishū* frequently refer to military undertakings, their origins lie in the stories told before and after battles. Whatever the context, Kuwata argues, the main purpose of the stories is to unify the thoughts of men of all ranks (1942, 3).

3. A Kyoto bookseller published *Kaidan* in 1703, forty-one years after the death of Razan, under the title *Kaidan zensho*. The bookseller/ publisher probably benefited from the popularity of *kaidan* at the time and printed the work for commercial sale (FUJI 1992, 67). *Kaidan zensho* is included in YAMAGUCHI 1927.

4. For a history of *Botan dōrō,* see MAEDA 1974; TACHIKAWA 1998.

5. This is an influential work for *kaidan* written in classical Chinese by Qu You (1341–1427) that deals with strange and mysterious materials. *Mudan dengji* (Tale of Peony Lantern) in *Jian deng xin hua* is contained in QU 1962.

6. For a translation of this story, see MUJŪ 1985, 200.

7. *Zen'aku mukui banashi* is included in TAKADA 1989.

8. Various editions of *Shasekishū* published during the Edo period show that the book was received as a collection of Buddhist sermons or sacred scripture (MUJŪ 1966, 16).

9. MUJŪ writes that "I love tales. I jotted down tales between the training periods. I should refrain, but cannot stop this habit" (1966, 14).

10. Regarding the form of *hyakumonogatari kaidankai*, Asai Ryōi writes: "On a dark night, one puts a light on an *andon* (paper-covered lamp stand)." The paper for the *andon* should be pale-colored. One hundred wicks are placed in a lamp, and every time a tale is told, one wick is pulled out. Gradually the room becomes darker and darker. The pale-color of the *andon* flickers in the room, and the atmosphere becomes ghostly" (ASAI 1910, 145).

11. For a compact description of the development of printing in English, see the Introduction of KEENE 1976.

12. In accordance with the official policy of the government, the local lords built fief schools, and paid ardent attention to their teaching culture. However, commoners, who were by far the vast majority of the total populace, were generally excluded from the fief schools. The official point of view was that all the samurai and their children had to be literate and well educated. Yet, the samurai class made up only about five or six percent of the whole population (at the end of the Tokugawa period) (DORE 1965, 11 and 179). There were private schools for commoners called *terakoya* 寺子屋, but they were considerably smaller in scale and less formal in content than fief schools. This *terakoya* education expanded rapidly beginning in the late 1700s, and it is said that there were two or three teachers in every ward in Edo in 1810 (DORE 1965, 253). DORE writes that "*gakumon* (study, learning) was far from universal among the non-samurai, but it was far from being a rarity either, and among the more wealthy merchants and the headman class of villagers it was a common accomplishment" (1965, 266).

13. YOSHIDA Kōichi also suggests that early premodern fiction of the supernatural consists of three types: (1) Japanese native classical tales; (2) Buddhist cause and effect tales; (3) Chinese strange tales (1955, 380).

14. For more detailed information on the literary origins of *kaidan,* see YAMAGUCHI 1927 and 1933; EBARA 1980.

15. In the Preface to *Jian deng xin hua,* the narrator states that "Sages wrote *Books of Odes, Records, Change,* and *Spring and Autumn Annals* in order to regulate life and the world.... I edited this book to teach people, to encourage the good, punish the bad, pity the poor, and console the less fortunate" (quoted in TACHIKAWA 1979, 8).

16. *Kii zōtanshū* 奇異雑談集 (Collection of Miscellaneous Strange Tales, ca. 1650s) contains similar stories.

17. See Noda Hisao's "Preface" in TACHIKAWA 1979.

18. "Fan Chü-ch'ing's Eternal Friendship" (John Bishop's translation) is included in *Gujin xiaoshuo* 古今小説 (Stories Old and New, 1620) compiled by Feng Meng-lung (1574–1646). An English translation of "Fan Chü-ch'ing's Eternal Friendship" can be found in John L. BISHOP 1956. Bishop uses the Wade-Giles system in his translation. Except for references to the translations by Bishop, all Chinese transliterations in this paper are given in pinyin.

19. NODA considers that the adaptation of Chinese fiction is conspicuous in the story of *Kikka no chigiri* and *Kibitsu no kama*. Buddhist precedents that are discernible in *Muō no rigyo*, *Aozukin*, *Shiramine,* and *Jasei no in* have elements of a folk tale prototype (1970, 41).

20. IHARA Saikaku writes in his Preface that "The world is big. I toured around the provinces to look for the topics of my stories" (1973, 66).

21. Regarding the theme of *Kikka no chigiri,* see CHEUNG 1977.

22. In structural terms, there are basically two types of Noh. One is called *genzai nō* (living Noh) in which the *shite,* the lead actor, is a living person and the drama progresses chronologically. The other type is *mugen nō* (dream Noh). In *mugen nō,* the *shite* is a ghost or the embodiment of a spirit. The drama progresses to bear the soul of the *shite* without much regard for a chronological order. In *mugen nō,* a standard scenario is as follows: the *shite* is a ghost or the embodiment of a spirit. In the first act, the *shite* appears in the guise of a common villager. A visitor (*waki* [supporting actor]), usually a travelling priest, meets the villager who, at his request, relates the story of the protagonist. When the visitor's curiosity is kindled, the actor begins to make inquiries. The villager suggests his or her real identity and departs. In the second act, the *shite,* in his or her true guise, appears, usually in the supporting actor's dream, and expresses his or her innermost feeling.

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