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Where were they gone, invisible *mononoke* during the modernizing period of Meiji enlightenment: Shibusawa, Fukuzawa, Chamberlain, Hearn and Pound's views on Shinto ghosts

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Reason was the dominant idea throughout the period of enlightenment such as the eighteenth century France: *le siècle de la raison* or during the period of *Aufklärung* in Germany. It was almost the same with the modernizing Japan of the Meiji period(1868-1912). Shibusawa Eiichi(1840-1931), called the father of Japanese capitalism, and Fukuzawa Yukichi(1835-1901), called the intellectual father of Meiji Japan, were like their American counterpart Benjamin Franklin, rationalists. Their antipathy against superstitions was strong as they were under Western "civilizing" influence. They were ashamed that superstitions still subsisted among the Japanese in this scientific age. Their condemnations were indeed very harsh even in their recollections of their young days.

Here are Shibusawa's and Fukuzawa's views about superstitions told in their autobiographies. Shibusawa says in the first chapter of his *Uya-monogatari*(1900) how the boy Shibusawa in his early teens refuted a medium who announced a solemn message that Shibusawa's elder sister was sick because the house was haunted by a ghost as the baneful effects of the untimely death of an unlucky pilgrim who had started from the house to the Ise Shrine many years before. Shibusawa asked the medium the date of the accident, and by pointing out contradictions in her statements he talked down the medium. His disbelief in ghosts and goblins is apparent.

Fukuzawa is more radical and recalls almost with pride in the first chapter of *Fukuō-jiden*(1899) his juvenile sacrilegious experiments. Here is the story:

One day when I was twelve or thirteen years old, I ran through the room in one of my mischievous moments and stepped on some papers which my brother was arranging on the floor. Suddenly he broke out in disgust:

'Stop, you dunce!'

Then he began to speak solemnly. 'Do you not see what is written here?' he said. 'Is this not Okudaira Taizen-no Tayū—your lord's name?'

‘I did not know it,’ I hastily apologized. ‘I am sorry.’ ‘You say you did not know,’ he replied indignantly. ‘But if you have eyes, you should see. What do you think of trampling your lord’s name under foot? The sacred code of lord and vassal is...’

Here my brother was beginning to recite the samurai rules of duty. There was nothing for me to do but bow my head to the floor and plead: ‘I was very careless, please forgive me.’

But in my heart there was no apology. All the time I was thinking: ‘Why scold about it? Did I step on my lord’s head? What is wrong with stepping on a piece of paper?’

Then I went on, reasoning in my childish mind that if it was so wicked to step on man’s name, it would be very much more wicked to step on a god’s name; and I determined to test the truth.<sup>i</sup>

Then Fukuzawa began the sacrilegious experiments of trampling on one of the Buddhist temple charms, which he later took to the lavatory and put it in the excrement. He was a little afraid, but nothing happened. He later became more reckless, and conceived the idea of finding out what the Shinto god of Inari shrine really was. He opened the shrine and found only a stone. He threw it away and put in another stone which he picked up on the road. In another shrine the token of the god was a wooden tablet; he threw it away and waited for what might happen. When the season of the Inari festival came, many people gathered to put up flags, beat drums and make offerings of the sacred rice-wine. During all the round of festival services, the young Fukuzawa was chuckling to himself, saying, ‘There they are—worshipping my stones, the fools!’<sup>ii</sup> For the young Fukuzawa religion and superstition were practically synonymous.

The aging Fukuzawa, however, felt strongly the need of religion, but that was not for the salvation of his soul but for the safeguard of society. In an article entitled “Religion is like tea” appeared in 1897 Fukuzawa explains religion’s role as a moral police of society.

It goes without saying that the maintenance of peace and security in society requires a religion. For this purpose any religion will do. I lack a religious nature, and have never believed in any religion. I am thus open to the charge that I am advising others to be religious, when I am not so. Yet my conscience does not permit me to clothe myself with religion, when I have it not at heart... Of religions, there are several kinds— Buddhism, Christianity and what not. Yet, from my standpoint,

there is no more difference between these than between green tea and black tea. It makes little difference between you drink one or the other. The point is to let those who have never drunk tea partake of it and know its taste. Just so with religion. Religionists are like tea-merchants. They are busy selling their own kind of religion. as for the method of procedure in this matter, it is not good policy for one to discharge the stock of others in order to praise his own. What he ought to do is to see that his stock is well selected and his prices cheap, etc., etc.<sup>iii</sup>

Basil Hall Chamberlain(1850-1935), dean of Western Japanologists residing in Japan during the most part of the Meiji period comments on Fukuzawa as follows in his *Things Japanese*(1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1891; 6<sup>th</sup> edition, 1939): “the democracy which he had found there (in the United States)...the common-sense empiricism, the “Franklinism” of America exactly suited his keen, practical, but somewhat pedestrian intellect. The strong devotional bent of Anglo-Saxondom struck no sympathetic chord in his heart. He always regarded religion as mere leading-strings for the ignorant.”<sup>iv</sup>

Listening to Fukuzawa and other Japanese leading figures of the Civilization and Enlightenment movement of the Meiji Japan, Chamberlain gives the following evaluation of the indigenous religion of the Japanese in the article ‘Shintō’ in his *Things Japanese*:

... Shintō, so often spoken of as a religion, is hardly entitled to that name even in the opinion of those who, acting as its official mouthpieces today, desire to maintain it as a patriotic institution. It has no set of dogmas, no sacred book, no moral code.<sup>v</sup>

W. G. Aston begins *Shinto*, published in 1905 with these words:

As compared with the great religions of the world, Shinto, the old *Kami* cult of Japan, is decidedly rudimentary in its character. Its polytheism, the want of a Supreme Deity, the comparative absence of images and of a moral code, its feeble personifications and hesitating grasp of the conception of spirit, the practical non-recognition of a future state, and the general absence of a deep, earnest faith—all stamp it as perhaps the least developed of religions which have an adequate literary record.<sup>vi</sup>

Many Japanese, too, recognize that as compared with Buddhism, the great religion

of Asia, Shinto is rather rudimentary in its character. It is natural that when Shinto was disregarded, Japanese modernizers put a slight, if not directly on Shinto divinities, but on Shinto ghosts.

Then where were they gone, *mononoke*, invisible Shinto ghosts and goblins? What was the consequence of this disregard of Japanese ghosts? The modernization movement must have fed their anger with secret thoughts of revenge. I would like to examine the aftermath of the slighted ghosts in the history of Japanese literature.

After the Industrial Revolution in many developing countries science and technology were welcomed and glorified. The ideological success of scientific materialism in the early twentieth century Russia and in China derived, at least partly, from the belief in technological science of their intelligentsia. In Europe itself superstitions were denigrated in the eighteenth century. When the Spanish painter Francisco Goya painted scenes such as flight of witches, it was, according to explanations generally given by art historians, in order to awake the uneducated people from the state of ignorance. It was the same with Meiji Japan: with the belief in progress that scientism and materialism came into vogue, Japanese intellectuals became vocal, negating the existence of ghosts and condemning those who were indulged in telling ghost stories. In this way Civilization and Enlightenment movement were pushing ghosts back in the dark.

Not only Japanese westernizers but Western missionaries too held in low esteem Shinto ghosts. There was, however, an exception. Lafcadio Hearn(1850-1904), who had fled from the Industrial America to Martinique in 1887, found there in Creole stories irradicable existence of pre-Christian ghosts. According to French missionaries the French West Indies were said to have been totally christianized, but to the folklorist Hearn's great surprise, there remained in Creole oral traditions another older world of ghosts and spirits. Conjecturing that this must be the same with Japan and believing in the unseen existence of Shinto ghosts in modernizing Japan, Hearn came to Izumo, province of Shinto traditions, in 1890. In this way Hearn became the first American reporter of Shinto ghosts and goblins in his *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*(1894).

There was a curious encounter. On May 30, 1891 Hearn met Inoue Enryō (1858-1919), known as *Yōkwai hakushi* (Doctor of Ghosts and Marvels), who came to Matsue to give a conference. There have been made many speculations as to what had been told at the occasion between Hearn, the future author of *Kwaidan*(1904), ghost stories, and Inoue, the future author of 48 volumes of *Yōkwai-gaku kōgi* (Lectures on studies of ghosts and marvels). However neither the local newspaper, *Sanin shimbun*,

nor the diary of Nishida Sentarō, who was present at their meeting, nor Hearn's *Letters from Shimane and Kyushu* that describe the encounter in detail in the article dated June 23, 1891, did not have any mention concerning ghosts and goblins. It was in a sense understandable because for Inoue Enryō ghosts and marvels were something that should be removed from the mind of the Japanese as superstition. Inoue Enryō studied ghosts in order to eliminate them, while Lafcadio Hearn took interest in them in order to revive them in his retold stories.

Yamada Taichi, one of the most popular dramatists of today's Japan and scenario writer of the play *Out of the East*<sup>vii</sup> caricaturizes the contrast between Japanese modernizers' forward looking attitude and Hearn's backward looking attitude. Here is a passage from Yamada's play. A Japanese professor at Kumamoto Government College talks aggressively towards Hearn.

**Professor:**

As head of English department, I cannot pretend not to notice your behavior any longer. I must also think about its bad influence on the students.

**Hearn:**

I am not giving any bad influence.

**Professor:**

Listen to me, Mr. Hearn. You glorify what is good about the Japan of the past. And you are saddened to see this disappearing. ....There's nothing good at all about the old Japan. It's full of poverty and superstition, women are treated with disdain, wives are bullied by their in-laws, villagers are ostracized for the smallest things, land owners turn tyrannical, and regular peasants don't have so much as an identity. Sanitation is absolutely horrific.... There is plenty that needs to be improved or restructured. We are now in an age when we need to be telling our students, it doesn't matter if you have to copy the West, it doesn't matter if it looks strange. as long as it makes Japan strong, it is good. We must tell them to forget the Japan of yore.

Present-day Japanese audience of the older generation seem to be laughing furtively of the view as expressed by this Japanese professor of the play. It certainly reminds them of the lectures given by the American Occupation authorities and by their Japanese followers in the years following Japan's defeat in WWII. Japanese audience, old or young, seem to regret together with Nishida, Hearn's friend in his Matsue days, the rapidity with which Japan has been changing. It seems even the ghosts will no

longer have anywhere to live.

I guess that the regret has also something to do with the state of mind of the Japanese to whom Hearn's *Kwaidan*(1904), ghost stories, have an everlasting appeal. *Kwaidan*'s popularity amply attests to the vivid interest Japanese readers still have of the other world of the dead beyond the realm of the living. The immaterial world of ghostly Japan, however, is very difficult to grasp even for Japanese themselves, and some Japanese still feel today that invisible Shinto deities and ghosts are not to be trifled with, *sawaranu kami ni tatari nashi*.

Now in this seemingly contradictory situation let us examine the touchy point of the whereabouts of *mononoke* in the field of Japanese literature. Though slighted, primitive Shinto ghosts appear in some representative masterpieces of Japanese literature. Ghostly Japan is without fail one of the richest sources of literary inspiration as *mononoke* play decisive roles in the *Tale of Genji* as well as in Nō plays of Spirit, where, as Ezra Pound remarked,<sup>viii</sup> ghost psychology is amazingly well represented. It is indeed one of the most curious phenomena of trans-Pacific relations that once neglected Japanese ghosts were rediscovered and reanimated by writers such as Ezra Pound and Lafcadio Hearn, alias Koizumi Yakumo, in his land of adoption.

First let us make a general consideration before entering into details. Religions have generally been great sources of literary inspirations. Ethical teachings, however, are not always beneficial to literary creation. In East Asia poetry and history were literary genres highly appreciated by Confucian men of letters, while fiction was not, and this has something to do with the teaching of Confucius. Confucius's credo as a man of letters is the following: while writing, the Master appreciates only what is not fictional (*Shù er bu zuò*).<sup>ix</sup> His imaginary world also is limited by the this-worldly realism of his: it is said in the seventh book of the *Analects*: "The Master never talked of prodigies, feats of strength, disorders of nature or spirits."<sup>x</sup> Strange stories are, therefore, out of the realm of Confucian orthodoxy. Confucianism has set limits to literary activities, as it excludes things fantastic. It is in this context that the eighteenth century Chinese poet Yuan Mei gave to his collection of ghost stories the ironical title, *Zi bu yu*, which means: *What the Master did not talk of*. Everything ghostly is, therefore, out of Confucianists' concern.

Moreover, moralizing attitudes in Confucianism are positively injurious to literary creation, as they tend to create taboos. They recommend "virtuous" ways of living according to Confucian ethics, and inhibit authors from writing certain aspects of human life. If Lady Murasaki had been brain-washed by the Confucian *Xiào-jīng*, which

insists on the duty of children towards their parents, she would never have dared write the intimate relationship between Prince Genji and his father's consort Fujitsubo. It is understandable that in Japan Confucianists were very severe towards the *Tale of Genji*. Some Buddhist priests argued that the authoress was condemned to Hell after her death.

The Japanese National Scholar (kokugakusha) Motoori Norinaga (1730- 1801) tried hard to safeguard the *Tale of Genji*. Motoori was, therefore, right when he criticized as prejudiced ethically oriented interpretations given to Japanese works of literature by Buddhist monks and Confucian scholars. Their narrow-minded moralistic value judgments are generally misleading at least as aesthetic interpretation of literature. Motoori tried to safeguard Japanese culture from foreign ideological "contamination," and in a sense he succeeded. In this regard, I should add, however, that that fact alone does not justify the superior quality of the Shinto ways of gods, as claimed by some overzealous followers of Motoori. His literary method of *mono no aware* is in many ways exquisite and revealing. It saves us from falling into rigoristic pitfalls of theological moralism. But Motoori's approach to literary texts, which is a kind of *explication de texte* à la française, is not a monopoly of Shinto. I do not wish, therefore, to dogmatize on this point. What I would like to point out in this paper is simply the importance of ghostly Japan as a source of literary inspiration. Its importance has been overlooked precisely because of the civilizing efforts of the modernizers.

What, then, is ghostly Japan? Let us begin by referring to a typical use of this expression, easily accessible to Western readers of things Japanese. It is known that this ghostly Japan is a source of inspiration of many of Lafcadio Hearn's Japanese writings. In fact, Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) wrote a book entitled *In Ghostly Japan* in 1899. His best known book *Kwaidan*, published in 1904, is also about ghostly Japan, as it is a collection of Japanese ghost stories retold in English.

The American writer Hearn, having got married to Koizumi Setsuko, one of the most helpful informants of weird tales of his life, became a citizen of the country of his wife under the adopted name of Koizumi Yakumo in 1896. Hearn passed away in 1904. In March 1907 the literary monthly *Shinchō* published Japanese translation by Tamura Riuko of his ghost stories. Since then Hearn's *Kwaidan* has been translated and retranslated into Japanese many times, and it has become very popular among the Japanese. Hearn is a rare Westerner who caught the heart of the Japanese, in two meanings of the term: as a writer and as a folklorist he succeeded in catching the psychological nuances of the Japanese heart, and by writing them down, Hearn caught the heart of his posthumous Japanese readers. Actually Hearn published a book in 1896,

entitled *Kokoro*, which means “heart.” This book, which treats of the inner rather than of the outer life of Japan, is not only highly appreciated by a literary critic as eminent as Hugo von Hofmannsthal but also by the Japanese of later generations.

Hearn finally wrote a book entitled *Japan: an Attempt at Interpretation* in 1904, in which the author tries to comprehend what underlies the surface of Japanese life. There is a common characteristic in all these works: even in his last book, which is a series of scholarly lectures he prepared for eventual lectures at Cornell University, Hearn’s interest lies in ghostly Japan, in the sense that he attempts to interpret Japan through the world of the Japanese dead. He repeatedly inquires into the relationship between the living and the dead of the common people of Japan.

Hearn has been harshly criticized for his concern over ghostly things<sup>xi</sup> Was his interest in these matters really morbid? If so, is the Japanese people’s interest in ghostly Japan also morbid? Does not his popularity in Japan testify to the truthfulness of many of his observations and interpretations? Our relationship with the world of the dead is Hearn’s lifelong concern. Although he had early lost faith in Christianity and did not believe in the world beyond as was preached by Catholic priests, he was not a materialist. He had a subtle religious sensibility. Hearn was curious to know how the common people of Japan perceived the world of their dead ancestors.

In Japan Buddhist monks have much preached about the next world. There are consequently many references to it in works of Japanese literature of the Heian and Muromachi periods. Scholars also have much talked about the traces of Buddhism in the *Tale of Genji* and in Nō plays. But apart from the official Buddhist points of view, are pre-Buddhistic elements of ghostly Japan really negligible? Or is underlying Shinto religious sensibility that survives unconsciously among converts to other imported religions something of little importance? Why has Hearn’s folkloristic approach to ghostly Japan attracted so many Japanese readers?

Here let me remind you of a parallel academic tendency which insists on the preponderance of a major religion. Western scholars have much talked about the pervaded influence of Christianity on Dante’s *Divina Commedia*. Dante scholars nowadays are almost unanimous when they call him *il somma poeta cristiano*. But by so doing, have they not inadvertently neglected pre-Christian ghostly aspects of Dante’s work? It is true that bookish scholars find pagan sources of inspiration in Virgil and other Latin authors’ works, as it is rather easy to trace these classical influences in the *Divine Comedy*. The most difficult thing, however, is how to catch the ghost psychology of Dante, of which the poet himself was only half-conscious. Many Italians of course



consider Dante's ghost psychology Christian. It may be so. Then how about Yeats's *Purgatory*? Is the ghost psychology so well written in his last drama really Christian? Although the title "Purgatory" reminds us of Catholicism, I presume that Yeats's *Purgatory* has more to do with Celtic ghostly tradition.

Likewise modern Japanese scholars have much talked about the influence of Buddhism on works of Japanese literature of the Heian, Kamakura and Muromachi periods. It is true that in the *Tale of Genji*, in the *Tale of Heike* as well as in Nō plays, the presence of Buddhist monks are conspicuous; there are many references to Buddhism of various sects, and consequently there are many articles dealing with these literary masterpieces in their relations with Buddhism.<sup>xii</sup> Compared with these articles stressing on the importance of Buddhist elements in Japanese literature, articles dealing with Shinto or shamanistic elements are rather few.

This academic tendency shows the general direction of modern Japanese scholars' attention. Does it, however, really reflect where the source of inspiration of Japanese masterpieces lies? The elements of Buddhism, an imported religion with its written literature, are easily recognizable. Buddhism has spread in Japan with conscious efforts of propagation, while Shinto has been transmitted from generation to generation through rites and customs. It has been transmitted without any theological texts. It was mainly through Japanese religious sensibility that the ghostly world of the dead has been kept alive. Curiously, Shinto, the indigenous belief of the Japanese with its unwritten tradition, is more difficult to seize even for the Japanese. Most of the Japanese feel that the ghostly world of the Japanese is something of Japanese religious tradition. Though they tend to believe it to be Buddhist, it often is something pre-Buddhist tinted with Buddhism. For example, *go-ryō shinkō*, or belief in ghosts, though considered to be a part of Buddhism in Japan, is strongly tinged with Shinto ways of thinking. It is a kind of eclecticism between Shinto and Buddhism. Buddhism in Japan is sometimes Shinto in disguise. I would like to show the decisive parts played by these unconscious pre-Buddhist religious feelings, which took forms of visions, dreams and fears in masterpieces of Japanese literature.

As concrete examples, I would like to focus my attention on *mono no ke*, or ghostly spirits, examining the pivotal roles played by them, when these *mono no ke* appear in the *Tale of Genji* and in some Nō plays of spirits.

*Mono* is today translated as "a thing" in Japanese-English dictionaries. *Ke* itself is not mentioned in them and the etymology is not clear, but is understandable if it is explained as a part of the word *henge*. *Ge* or *ke* means "ayashii koto"(a strange thing). *Mono no ke* is nowadays translated into Chinese with two Chinese characters as *kikon*

(*guǐhún* in Chinese)<sup>xiii</sup>. *Mono no ke* with its variations such as *shiryō*, *ikiryō*, *onryō* have been translated into English either as “apparition,” “personal apparition,” “living phantom,” “ghost,” “angry ghost,” “spirit,” “evil spirit,” “hostile spirit,” “spirit of some living person,” “demon,” “some accursed thing,” “menacing vision,” “mysterious power,” “spiteful power,” or even as “infection”.<sup>xiv</sup> These demoniac beings are of course not Buddhist. They belong to the more primitive world of the Japanese Shinto. They too may be rudimentary in their character. Rudimentary or not, these ghostly spirits are, in my opinion, important figures not to be neglected casually in any literary analysis. Let us check a parallel example in Western Europe. In Celtic traditions faeries and ghosts have played important roles not only in folklore but also in literature. Druidism may be a religion, rudimentary in its character; but primitive or not, pre-Christian religious tradition forms an important background of Yeats’s literary works.

Fears of *mono no ke*, indeed abound in the *Tale of Genji* and in Nō plays of spirits.<sup>xv</sup> They make us taste literary sensations. Now the point in question is how these supernatural things are treated by modern Japanese scholars of classical literature in this age of enlightenment. The scholar Okazaki Yoshie, who was the authoritative leader in the field of Japanese literature until the 1970s, however, makes little of *mono no ke* and attaches greater importance to the notion of *sukuse* (karma) or *zense* (former life). Okazaki writes as follows in his *Nihon koten no bi*:

....sukuse no hokani mono no ke no chikara mo sekai o ugokasukoto mo aruga, korewa shutsugen no dosū mo sukunaku, jūdai-sei nimo toboshiku, mata bukkuyō no chikara de taisan saserarerukoto ga arunode, bukkuyō yoriwa hikui ichi ni aru. Sono ue, konnichi kara mireba amarini meishin-teki de, shūkyō-teki jiban mo fukakujitsu de arukara tōtei sukuse no shisō no jūdai-sei niwa oyobanai.<sup>xvi</sup>

As this is an important statement of a leading Japanese scholar of Japanese Literature, I have quoted it in Japanese. Here is my translation:

Apart from the idea of *sukuse* (karma), the force of *mono no ke* also moves the world (of works of classical Japanese literature). However, *mono no ke* do not appear so often, and compared with the idea of *karma*, *mono no ke* lack in importance. Moreover, they are easily exorcised by the strength of Buddhism; their position, therefore, is lower than Buddhism. Looking back from today’s viewpoint *mono no ke* are too superstitious, and their religious background seems not very secure. They are far behind the ideas of *karma* in importance.

It is in a sense understandable that Okazaki makes little of *mono no ke*: these ghosts are not so important as religious ideas, especially compared with the Buddhist notion of *karma*. *Mono no ke*, moreover, are in most cases subjugated by Buddhist priests. It is natural that phantoms and apparitions are easily cast aside as superstitions. Why could we attach importance to these supernatural elements? This, in sum, is Okazaki's view concerning the folkloristic *mono no ke*.

It is true that in the *Tale of Genji* as well as in its adaptations on Nō stage Buddhist monks are there, for example, beside the bed of Princess Aoi. They are invited to pronounce holy words, though they are often no more than corruptions of Sanskrit formulae. They are there to calm down Princess Rokujō's *mono no ke*. The Little Saint of Yokawa, who appeared in the Nō play "Aoi no Uye" is an example of the Tendai ascetic.

However what is important as a religious idea and what is important as a literary function in a literary piece of work should not be confused. Okazaki does not make a distinction between the two, and says almost naively "*mono no ke* are easily exorcised by the strength of Buddhism; their position, therefore, is lower than Buddhism." This statement seemed to have been accepted by many scientific-minded people as a common-sensical judgment as far as their respective religious values are concerned; but, in my opinion, it has little to do with literature.

In the case of the Nō play 'Aoi no Uye' in which the main role is played by a ghost, its importance is obvious: the play is one of *mugen-nō*. The English translation of this literary genre tells us more directly what it is. *Mugen-nō* has been translated as "Nō plays of spirits" or "Ghost Plays." If a spirit or a ghost is a protagonist, could a Nō play be called a Buddhist drama? What actually, then, is the religious thought that lies behind these Nō plays? A Westerner gave an answer in the early 1910s. While reading the manuscripts of Nō plays translated into English by Ernest Fenollosa and Hirata Tokuboku, Ezra Pound, one of the first outsiders to be fascinated by ghostly Nō plays, made a following remark:

.....the lover of the stage and the lover of drama and poetry will find his chief interest in the psychological pieces, or the Plays of Spirits; the plays that are, I think, more Shinto than Buddhist. These plays are full of ghosts, and the ghost psychology is amazing.<sup>xvii</sup>

Pound is right in discerning that in Nō plays of spirits the apparitions or the ghosts,

that are the central figures (*shite*) are not Buddhist in their concepts. They are baleful unworldly beings that haunt the world of the living. They are revengeful even after their death. In Buddhist terms they are considered to be human beings who are not released from karmic bonds, because of their passionate resentment. So, it is generally the rule that towards the end of a Nō play of spirit a Buddhist monk comes on the stage to break the spirit's bonds so that the spirit may become free to depart. The ending surely is Buddhist, but the ghost psychology, which is the central interest of the play, is something more ancestral, something pre-Buddhist.

Ghosts of a living person or a dead person, *ikiryō* or *shiryō*, are originally alien to Buddhism. It is true that in order to placate the resentful spirits, *mono no ke*, Buddhist monks are called upon to perform the Buddhist rites and invoke Buddha's help for salvation. They perform the rites just the same way the *Shugendō* priests performed the rites of exorcising in the Shibusawa house.<sup>xviii</sup> Many Nō plays of spirits end this way. This *deus ex machina* solution gives us an after-taste that Nō plays are Buddhistic in conception. The presence of *waki* as a traveling Buddhist monk probably strengthens that impression. However, if the protagonists are mostly *mono no ke* in Nō plays of spirits, how is it possible for us to call them Buddhistic, even if there is a *Buddha ex machina* solution at the end? It should be kept in mind that traveling monks are always *waki*, that is, deuteragonists, whose role is secondary. As is well known, in the Western theatre the god in *deus ex machina* ending has no real religious meaning. It is a theatrical convention to conclude a play, and if it is practically the same with Japanese Nō plays, could we call them Buddhistic in their inspiration? It is clear that Shinto ghosts play an important part in contradistinction to the part played by Buddhism.

It is true that Pound practically knew nothing of the cultural background of Japanese Nō theatre. However, the remark of his that the Plays of Spirits are more Shinto than Buddhist hits the mark. We do not know what Pound exactly means by Shinto, a notion he probably had got either from Ernest Fenollosa (Notes on the Japanese Lyric Drama, 1901; Lecture V. *Nō*, March 12<sup>th</sup> 1903) Lafcadio Hearn, William George Aston, Marie Stopes (*Plays of Old Japan, The Nō*, 1913) or Captain F. Brinkley (*Japan: Its History, Arts and Literature*, 1902). Pound, however, macroscopically catches correctly the religious situation in the Nō plays of spirits: what is obvious for an outsider like Pound is that spirits or *mono no ke* could not be Buddhist entities. They belong to pre-Buddhist subconscious world, which some may call the world of Shinto and which some may call Ghostly Japan. In the case of "Aoi no Uye" the whole play is a dramatization of Princess Rokujō's jealousy, the externalization of which is possible, so long as something within us is touched by her *mono no ke*.

While admitting my disbelief in ghosts, I still feel that the world is a mystery, a ghostly one. The mere fact that many of us enjoy ghost stories<sup>xix</sup> suggests how we are moved by them. Yes, all great art has something ghostly in it. In Hearn's words, "it touches something within us which relates to infinity."<sup>xx</sup>

I have focused my attention on the pivotal roles played by *mononoke*, in masterpieces of Japanese literature, and how these Shinto ghosts and goblins have been inadequately treated by Japanese historians of Japanese literature, and I have tried to clarify the background of their depreciative "scientific" explanation. I could not authenticate the following etymology, but it is said that the Chinese word *míxìn*, that is *meishin* in Japanese, was said to be coined after the introduction of Christianity as the translation of "superstition."

Though I have dealt with the problem of the neglected Shinto ghosts and their consequences only in the field of Japanese literature, I am afraid that similar problems with ill-fated aftermaths must exist in other fields as well.

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<sup>i</sup> Y. Fukuzawa: *The Autobiography*. (tr. Eiichi Kiyooka (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966) p.16.

<sup>ii</sup> Y. Fukuzawa: *The Autobiography*, p.17.

<sup>iii</sup> 'Shūkyō wa cha no gotoshi' *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1961) vol. 16, pp.91-93. The English translation of Fukuzawa's *Jiji-shimpō* article appeared in *Japan Herald*, 9 September 1897.

<sup>iv</sup> Basil Hall Chamberlain: *Things Japanese* (London: John Murray, 1902) p.366.

<sup>v</sup> Basil Hall Chamberlain: *Things Japanese* p.419.

<sup>vi</sup> William George Aston: *Shinto: The Way of the Gods*, Volume 6, *Collected Works of William George Aston* (Bristol: Ganesha Publishing Ltd, 1997), p.I..

<sup>vii</sup> *Out of the East*, a play by Yamada Taichi, originally published in Japanese as *Nihon no omokage* (Tokyo: Shūeisha Inc., 1993; English translation by Z.H.Sethna, Tokyo:Atlas, 2005)pp.152-155.

<sup>viii</sup> Ezra Pound: *The Translations of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber, 1954) p.222

<sup>ix</sup> *Lúnyǔ (The Analects of Confucius)* Book VII 1, The Chinese original is 述而不作

<sup>x</sup> Arthur Waley: *The Analects of Confucius* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991) Book VII 20, p.127. The Chinese original is 子不語怪力乱神. It should be noted here that both Shibusawa and Fukuzawa were rationalists in the Confucian tradition, as they too "never talked of prodigies, feats of strength, disorders of nature or spirits." The problem of pro- or anti-Confucianism apart, both of them were faithful to Confucius's teaching in this regard.

<sup>xi</sup> Many Westerners have accused Hearn of morbidity. The first among them, George Gould, with his *Concerning Lafcadio Hearn* (1908) is wellknown. Among the Japanese Inoue Tetsujirō, dean of the Faculty of Letters at the time of Hearn's replacement by Natsume Sōseki, later mentioned in his *Kaikyūroku*(1943) Hearn's morbid tendency, citing as an example the cover picture of Hearn's *Ghostly Japan*, which was a mountain of skulls.

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xiii Okazaki Yoshie: *Genji momogatari no bi* (Tokyo: Hōbunkan, 1960) and Nose Asaji: *Nōgaku genryūkō* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1938) are representative works in this direction. Arthur Waley adds a “Note on Buddhism” in his *The Nō Plays of Japan*. It is true the religion of the Nō plays is predominantly Amidist Buddhism. However, we should be reminded that the origin of Nō plays is *sarugaku*, which, according to Zeami’s words, “is associated with the age of the Shinto deities,” as it is traced back to the *kagura* dance performed by Ame-no-Uzume-no-mikoto before the Heavenly Rock Cave. The reason given by Zeami in chapter 4 of *Fūshikaden* is evidently to legitimize Nō plays, but it is clear that Zeami was conscious of Shinto aspects of the origin of the dance.

xiii 鬼魂

xiv The examples are taken mainly from Arthur Waley’s English translation of “Aoi no Uye” (Waley: *The Nō Plays of Japan*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1921), from Fenollosa=Pound translation of “Awoi no Uye” (Ezra Pound: *Poems and Translations*, New York: The Library of America, 2003) as well as from Chapter IX “Aoi” (Waley: *The Tale of Genji*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925). In the last case *mono no ke* is considered as a kind of “infection,” that is the reason why Waley used this term in Chapter “Blue Trousers.”

xv With this background knowledge, let us read one of the most impressive scenes of the *Tale of Genji*. Arthur Waley writes in his “Introduction” to *The Sacred Tree*, the second volume of his translation of the *Tale of Genji* (1926), as follows:

Many readers have agreed with me in feeling that such episodes as the death of Yūgao, the clash of the coaches at the Kamo festival, the visit of Genji to the mountains, the death of Aoi, become, after one reading, a permanent accession to the world as one knows it, are things which have ‘happened’ as much as the most vivid piece of personal experience.

The sudden death of Yūgao as well as the death of Aoi are related with the *mono no ke* of Princess Rokujō. The visit of Genji to the mountains and the clash of the coaches at the Kamo festival are connected respectively with the death of Yūgao and the rivalry between Princess Aoi and Princess Rokujō. All the most memorable episodes of the *Tale of Genji* have, therefore, something to do with *mono no ke*. As these scenes of apparitions or ghosts are very impressive, Nō authors took their themes from these most famous episodes of the *Tale of Genji*. Let us have a look at the gist of the story and examine the literary function of ghosts in the Nō play “Aoi no Uye.” Here is Waley’s preliminary note to it:

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At the age of twelve Prince Genji went through the ceremony of marriage with Aoi no Uye, the Prime Minister's daughter. She continued to live at her father's house and Genji at his palace. When he was about sixteen he fell in love with Princess Rokujō, the widow of the Emperor's brother; she was about eight years older than himself. He was not long faithful to her. The lady Yūgao next engaged his affections. He carried her one night to a deserted mansion on the outskirts of the City. "The night was far advanced and they had both fallen asleep. Suddenly the figure of a woman appeared at the bedside. "I have found you!" it cried. "What stranger is this that lies beside you? What treachery is this that you flaunt before my eyes?" And with these words the apparition stooped over the bed, and made as though to drag away the sleeping girl from Genji's side."

Before dawn Yūgao was dead, stricken by the "living phantom" of Rokujō, embodiment of her baleful jealousy. Soon after this, Genji became reconciled with his wife Aoi, but continued to visit Rokujō. One day, at the Kamo Festival, Aoi's way was blocked by another carriage. She ordered her attendants to drag it aside. A scuffle ensued between her servants and those of Rokujō (for she was the occupant of the second carriage) in which Aoi's side prevailed. Rokujō's carriage was broken and Aoi's pushed into the front place. After the festival was over Aoi returned to the Prime Minister's house in high spirits.

Soon afterwards she fell ill, and it is at this point that the play begins.<sup>xv</sup>

As Princess Aoi has fallen sick, abbots, high-priests of the Greater School and of the Secret School, and also a *miko*, the medium-maiden of Teruhi, have been sent for. By twanging of her bow-string Teruhi can make visible an evil spirit. In this way on the Nō stage appears the living phantom of Rokujō with a *Deigan* mask, which symbolizes jealousy with its red gold colour. Here is the apparition as described by Waley's translation:

You would know who I am that have come drawn by the twanging of your bow?  
I am the angry ghost of the Princess Rokujō, Lady of the Chamber.

Long ago I lived in the world.

I sat at flower-feasts among the clouds.

On spring mornings I rode out

In royal retinue and on autumn nights

Among the red leaves of the Rishi's Cave

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I sported with moonbeams,  
With colours and perfumes  
My senses sated.  
I had splendour then;  
But now I wither like the Morning Glory  
Whose span endures not from dawn to midday.  
I have come to clear my hate.

Passion seizes her and she cries:

I am full of hatred.  
I must strike; I must strike.

She creeps towards Aoi's bed and bystanders, shocked at her savagery, try to stop her, saying: "You, Lady Rokujō, you a Lady of the Chamber! Would you lay wait and strike as peasant women do? How can this be? Think and forbear!" Here closes the first part of the play.

At the beginning of the second part the Little Saint of Yokawa is fetched in, and the priest begins his incantations at once, shaking his rosaries. After a harsh spiritual battle is being fought between the Saint and the angry ghost of Lady Rokujō, now revealing her identity with a demoniac *Hannya* mask, the Saint finally prevails. Overcome by the Saint's exorcism, Rokujō says:

Never again will I come as an angry ghost.

Then follows the ending Chorus<sup>xv</sup>:

When she heard the sound of Scripture  
The demon's raging heart was stilled;  
Shapes of Pity and Sufferance,  
The Bodhisats descend.  
Her soul casts off its bonds,  
She walks in Buddha's Way.

This is the summary of the Nō play "Aoi no Uye."



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It is often said that all great art has something ghostly in it. Why are we moved by something ghostly? Don't you think that this something ghostly has a real evocative power in this play or that the Little Saint of Yokawa has a superior spiritual power as he succeeded in calming the demon's raging heart?

<sup>xvi</sup> Okazaki Yoshie: *Nihon koten no bi* (Tokyo: Hōbunkan, 1973) p.91.

<sup>xvii</sup> Ezra Pound: *The Translations of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970) p.222.

<sup>xviii</sup> If the latter in the Shibusawa house is called a superstition, the former in the *Tale of Genji*, too, should be labelled a supersition, as both rites are practically the same.

<sup>xix</sup> Among the recent adaptations of *mono no ke* in film, the animation by the director Miyazaki Hayao, who consciously sought material in Shinto folklore, is most remarkable. The world admires his *Sen to Chihiro no Monogatari* without knowing that it is a Shinto film.

<sup>xx</sup> Lafcadio Hearn: "Supernatural in Fiction" *Interpretation of Literature* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1915) p.92.