

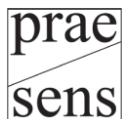
# **Tanuki: The ‘Badger’ as Figure in Japanese Literature**

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## **Abstract**

*The tanuki, largely misjudged in the Western world as a badger, is in fact a wild dog native to East Asia. Especially in Japan, this animal not only is represented in the local fauna but furthermore stars in the traditional lore as a kind of fabulous creature. Endued, according to popular beliefs, with magical powers, the artful shape-shifter willingly scares men to entertain himself. Folk tales too identify him as a rapsallion or a tease, but then out of gratitude he may act like a benefactor as well. This ambivalence in the figure of the tanuki, which ranges over the spectrum from a terrifying beast through a sottish fraud to a loyal friend, seems to have made him a popular subject for Japanese writers up to the present day. The way in which the rich heritage from folklore has eventually found expression in modern literature is the central issue of the present paper.*

**Keywords:** Japanese literature, folk tales, folklore, mythology



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## Preface

When visitors come to the small town of Shigaraki in central Honshū, they are received by a sea of curious, grinning statues. Varying in size from miniature to metres high, the well-fed creatures are standing on their hind legs, a straw hat on the head, a sake bottle in one hand and an unpaid bill in the other. This fellow's name is *tanuki* 狸, an actually existing animal that has become the figurehead of the local pottery. Far beyond Shigaraki one comes across such *tanuki* statues, popular mascots at the entrances to shops and restaurants all over Japan.

Who, at the sight of these cute dumplings, would suspect that the *tanuki* does not necessarily bring luck but can scare just as well? Indeed the *tanuki*'s figure, despite being much belittled, originally had a rather sinister mythical background. Japanese folklore sometimes imputes infamous and even frightening features to the animal, then grants it the gentlest and friendliest of traits, thus making its character appear most ambivalent.

Over the centuries and continuing to the present, the *tanuki* has held his ground as a many-sided figure in Japanese literature. It is the main issue of the paper in hand to examine this figure's various facets, focusing on modern authors and their works as contrasted with the rich folklore tradition. Taking a linguistic approach to clear up current misunderstandings, a general introduction to the topic rounds out my discussion.

## Removing ambiguity

Before plunging into the *tanuki*'s adventures as a literary character we should first of all reach clarification on what kind of animal we are actually dealing with. If for this purpose one consults Japanese to English dictionaries, in the majority of cases the result is 'raccoon dog'. The monolingual *Encyclopedia Japonica* reveals what is behind this appellation, namely:

A mammal and carnivore from the family of Canidae, native to Siberia, China, Korea and Japan. As a genus of dogs, stocky and with a thick tail. The coat is yellow-brown. Ridge, shoulders and tail contrast strongly with the rest in their black colour. The areas around the eyes and also beneath are deep black. Moreover the animals have dark brown spots. The face resembles that of a raccoon. Fore and hind legs are black, sometimes even blackish brown. ... Head and body have a length of 50 to 60 centimetres, the tail is between 13 and 25 centimetres long, whilst the bodyweight amounts to 4 to 6 kilos. (Shirai 1973: 609-610)<sup>1</sup>

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1 All quotations from foreign-language sources are given in my own translation.

Beyond East Asia, its original range of distribution, *Nyctereutes procynoides*<sup>2</sup> has been repeatedly introduced to European Russia since 1930 and thus is now about to spread throughout Scandinavia as well as Central and Southeast Europe. Albeit not highly esteemed, the thick winter coat plays a certain role in trade (Starck 1995: 813-814). Furriers label it among others as Japanese fox, Chinese coon, Ussurian raccoon or *Seefuchs*.

Notwithstanding serious zoological offence and ignoring existing punctilious translations, in most English- and German-language editions of Japanese folk tales, one of the *tanuki*'s favoured literary playgrounds, this animal is rendered respectively as badger<sup>3</sup> or *Dachs*. Placed in quotation marks, this incorrect but common equalisation has also found its way into the title of my article, the more so as Western scientific papers on the *tanuki* as subject of Japanese folklore traditionally tend to use the same terms. To avoid ambiguity I have decided to break the mould, and except for citations from such secondary literature *tanuki* shall here remain untranslated.

It was, however, not only Westerners' incompetence in distinguishing an animal still little known in our climes that turned the *tanuki* into a badger. On the contrary, the similar coat colouring in both species led to frequent confusion in Japan as well (NKD 2001b: 956). The badger belongs to the family of *Mustelidae* (weasels) and not to that of *Canidae* (dogs) as the *tanuki* does. The two animals can be recognised by their different types of locomotion: the former is plantigrade, i.e. walking on the soles of its feet, and the latter is digitigrade, i.e. walking on its toes. As the *tanuki* is a nocturnal animal that sometimes inhabits badgers' burrows, it is, nevertheless, difficult to differentiate between them (Shirai 1973: 610).

It is therefore no wonder that in Japanese too several unclear denominations are to be found, starting with *mujina* 貉, correctly synonymous with *anaguma* 穴熊, the real badger (NKD 2001b: 955). In the vernacular, on the other hand, this name often stands for *tanuki*. Furthermore Japanese dialects call it *kusai* くさい, *yachi* やち, *kokeru* こける, *nekoma* ねこま or *tatake* たたけ (Imaizumi 1994: 33). *Mami* 猫 may also be used reciprocally for either badger or *tanuki* (NKD 2001a: 507).

A look at the Chinese character 狸 used to write *tanuki* shows that it is a compound of the left-side radical for dog added to the phonetic *ri* 里. Originally even phonetically related in Chinese with the *kanji* 埋 (to bury) that today has the Sino-Japanese reading *mai*, the two characters are obviously cognate in their content,

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2 Another scientific name for the *tanuki* is *Nyctereutes viverrinus*, coined by the Dutch zoologist Temminck (1778-1858). Nowadays largely obsolete, it only appears in the form *Nyctereutes procynoides viverrinus*, denoting the subspecies living on Honshū, Kyūshū and Shikoku, the so-called *hondotanuki* (cf. Nakamura 1990: 243).

3 Less often compilers decide in favour of raccoon.

considering that *tanukis* creep into their dens only leaving them if necessary (Tōdō 1986: 50-51).

The etymology of the native Japanese reading *tanuki*, by contrast, proves to be complex. Connected with the *kanji* in question it is, indeed, documented as early as in a dictionary from the Heian period, the so-called *Wamyō ruijushō* 倭名類聚抄 (around 930). But its true word meaning remains uncertain, particularly as it seems likely that in this glossary, following the tradition of Chinese literature, *mujina* 貉 names the *tanuki* whilst *mi* 獾 denotes the badger. Basically there are three theories on the origin of the name of *tanuki*, all of them controversial. One takes it as a malformation of *tenuki* 手貫, a leather gauntlet, whereas a further one assumes that it originates from *tanoke* 田怪 (ghost of the rice fields) or *taneko* 田猫 (rice field cat). Proponents of this theory argue that in former times these animals were kept for catching rats in the fields. Besides, in China 狸 was used as a vague collective term for feline wild animals. The supposed phonetic corruption, however, does not sound plausible enough, nor does it in the case of the third theory suggesting the compound 獾貉 (*tanraku*, *tankaku*, *tanaku*) as a potential genesis (Nakamura 1990: 231-234).

In fact, it was not until the 19th century that the appellation *tanuki* became widely accepted (Imaizumi 1994: 49). This might explain the numerous parallels with *mujina* in popular beliefs also apparent on the linguistic level. The expression *tanuki tsukau* 狸使う (to pretend, to fake), for example, corresponds to *mujina o tsukau* 貉を使う. Nonetheless, in everyday usage *tanuki* prevails. While, on the one hand, *tanuki neiri* 狸寝入 (sham sleep) refers to the real animal's natural behaviour of feigning death when threatened (cf. 'to play possum'), sayings like *tanuki oyaji* 狸親父 (foxy old man), *tanuki babā* 狸婆 (witch of an old woman) or *tanukigao* 狸顔 (facial expression of feigned ignorance)<sup>4</sup> reflect the mythical creature's characteristic traits, namely shiftiness and trickery. In the culinary domain too he has left his marks: *tanuki udon* 狸饅頭 as well as *tanuki soba* 狸蕎麦 are noodle dishes garnished with deep-fried *tempura* 天ぷら batter crumbs (*agedama* 揚げ玉) (we could call them leftovers), and the rejects from sweet bean jam are picturesquely termed *tanuki no kuso* 狸の糞 (*tanuki* poop). *Tanuki jiru* 狸汁, a special type of miso soup, is not only named after him but contains his meat as an ingredient. The badger occasionally suffers the same fate when boiled into a *mujina jiru* 貉汁 (NKD 2001a: 1051-1052; NKD 2001b: 956).

Though in the Western world the badger, to draw this comparison once again, is not so present in a linguistic form, he seems to have been likewise credited with perfidy and naughtiness, given that in English 'to badger' means to pester, to tease; and let us not forget the facetious German expression *Frechdachs* of which the lit-

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4 The unflattering term *tanukigao* can equally allude to a round, chubby face and thus is directed especially at women.

eral meaning is 'cheeky badger', addressed to children in the same way the British would use the term 'monkey'.

## Appearances in pre-modern Japanese literature

It is around the year 1200 that in Japan the *tanuki* makes his first nameable entry onto the literary stage. The *Uji shūi monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語 ('Collection of tales from Uji') speaks of a devout mountain ascetic to whom the bodhisattva Samantabhadra appears at night. When a local hunter gets to know about the miracle he becomes suspicious. That is why one night the doubter accompanies the holy man. Face to face with the apparition of the bright bodhisattva seated on a white elephant, the stout-hearted huntsman sends an arrow through the phantasm, whereupon it vanishes. At break of dawn the hunter follows a trail of blood down into the valley where he finds a big *tanuki* lying dead, his chest pierced by an arrow (Imaizumi 1994: 75-76).

'This is the first passage in Japanese literature where we find the *tanuki* mentioned as haunting men' (De Visser 1908: 40). About one hundred years prior to that, however, the same story has already been recorded in another anthology, the *Konjaku monogatari-shū* 今昔物語集 ('Tales of times now past'), with the difference that a wild boar takes the place of the *tanuki*. Viewed in this light, the *tanuki* as a legendary creature adopts characteristics not only of the cat (see below) but also of the boar (Nakamura 1990: 213).

Unlike this first episode, the *tanuki*'s tricks are not always that harmless. The *Kokon chomon-jū* 古今著聞集 ('Collection of famous tales of former times and today') written in 1254, illustrates this point. There we read about a secluded old pond well known for its great number of water birds. But whoever sets forth for it in order to hunt them never returns. Eventually a brave samurai and his servant head for the strange pond. At this grim place something eerie is in the air and just as they hear an old hag's laughter, a spirit makes an attack, trying to pull them into the water. At length the servant gets caught in its clutches, whereas the samurai has the presence of mind to wedge his feet into the roots of a pine. He draws his sword and stabs the monster to death. There it lies, changed back into its original shape of an old *tanuki* (Imaizumi 1994: 76-77).

Despite such early examples, initially the lore of the *tanuki* remains very restricted 'and in Japan seems to have become general only in about the 14th century, being then supported by tales introduced from China' (Casal 1959: 50). But as far back as the Nara period ghost stories reached Japan simultaneously with the import of the *kanji* still in use, in Chinese legends, note well, referring to civet cats and lynxes as causers of mysterious occurrences. By the Muromachi period, the *tanuki*, then, had gradually become the epitome of a cruel ogre, putting on the unsuspecting

shape of an old woman so as to devour innocent humans. From such myths, common to many places in Japan, the cat-like daemon *nekomata* 猫又 arose, and the famous folk tale *Kachikachi-yama* カチカチ山 has its origin in that legend (Imai-zumi 1994: 70-71).

‘By the eighteenth century, the badger or *tanuki* was a firmly entrenched figure in the folklore tradition’ (Harada 1976: 1). At dead of night he might appear as a one-eyed spirit, gigantic woman or black-clad priest, amongst lightning and earthquake. But after all, he is not necessarily terrifying or injurious to men. When, preferably on clear nights under a full moon, he uses his round belly as a drum, for instance, this causes great amusement. Altogether the *tanuki* has become more and more harmless compared with his beginnings, winding up as a creature that rather helps and entertains mankind than it bothers them (De Visser 1908: 155-158).

Certainly fairy tales are a rich source of the manifold ways Japanese folklore typcasts the *tanuki*. In consulting them as literary source material, it should nonetheless be made clear that so-called *Volksmärchen* or folk tales are indeed considered as literature, but as an oral one. The origin of such *kōshō bungei* 口承文芸 (oral lore), passed on by word of mouth, dates far back before the time of its later recording.

In the second half of the 19th century, Western visitors like Lafcadio Hearn were the first ones to pay attention to local lore, even though the sources of their anthologies, for the most part in English, remain obscure, and only a small sample of the stories compiled can be regarded as real folk tales. Systematic collecting as an activity on the Japanese side only set in some one hundred years after the spadework of the Grimm brothers in Europe, when Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男 (1875-1962), the Nestor of Japanese folkloristics, published his still rather modest collection *Tōno monogatari* 遠野物語 (‘Tales from the Tōno region’) in 1910. Real efforts in this direction did not begin until the 1920s (Mayer 1973: 85).

Owing to their high degree of popularity, certain *Märchen* still have an effect on the general perception of the *tanuki*’s figure, hence the two by far best known tales in which he plays the lead will be examined in the following section.

## A popular folk tale character – two prominent examples

Hardly any modern collection of Japanese folk tales omits *Kachikachi-yama*, a true classic, of which the title has already been mentioned. Its earliest printed text is

available in the form of a 17th-century *akakohon* 赤小本<sup>5</sup> published in Kyōto. After having been repeatedly printed in the course of the Edo period, it was this literary version that was adopted for use in school readers of the early Meiji period. Today it is the standard version of the tale, but in spite of its prevalence, local variants are still extant (Ikeda 1960: 229-230).

This tale-cycle, known in Japan in some eighty-eight versions, resembles the cycle of Reynard the Fox in Europe. Motifs may be added or may drop out in a variety of ways but the general outline of the tale remains constant. (Seki 1963: 6)

This outline is as follows: An old man tilling his field is mocked by a naughty *tanuki*, whereupon he traps the scallywag, ties him up and asks his wife to boil the beast into a soup. After the man has gone to work again, the *tanuki* whimperingly persuades the old woman to release him, which does not do her any good for the ungrateful creature strikes her dead. Now it is up to the woman to perish as a soup ingredient, served to her own husband by the metamorphosed *tanuki* posing as the poor wife. When he realises the truth the old man is consumed with grief, whereat the *tanuki* taunts him and flees to the mountains. A rabbit comes around and, sympathising with the weeping man, vows vengeance for him. At first the avenger gets the malicious *tanuki* to carry a bundle of brushwood on his back, then, unnoticed, sets it alight from behind. To this end – *kachikachi* – he strikes a flint. The *tanuki* is surprised at the sound but the rabbit asserts that hereabouts such a noise is heard at all times, thus this place is called *Kachikachi-yama*, or 'Click-Click Mountain'. Just then the brushwood catches fire and along with it the *tanuki* bursts in flames. In addition the rabbit passes off hot pepper paste as a healing ointment and rubs it into the *tanuki*'s burned back. To crown it all, the cheating rabbit suggests a boat ride on the river, with him boarding a wooden boat, the *tanuki* – at the rabbit's bad recommendation – one made of mud, together with which he is drowned.

The tale's regional variants differ in both their length and the combination of the several components. Even its main cast may be substituted: 'The badger is almost always featured in the first half of the tale; in the second half, where revenge is taken, his part may be played by the bear' (Seki 1963: 6). Independently from the rest this final section with the joke on the bear exists as a single story. Moreover folklorists take the view that *Kachikachi-yama* is actually composed of three separate tales knitted together only in the Edo period. These are the opening scene on the field where the *tanuki* nettles the peasant, the one in which he kills the old woman, and finally the storyline around the rabbit's dirty tricks. Here each time the *tanuki* shows

5 These 'small red books', owing their name to their red cover and small format of 12 x 9 centimetres, were published from the 17th to the early 18th centuries. Favoured material for such woodblock-printed picture books were fairy tales for children, every page being composed of one-fourth of text in the upper part and three-fourths of illustration below (Parent 2001).

different traits referring to other fairy tale characters: as the tomfool who teases the old man he is reminiscent of the monkey, the brutal grandmother-murderer corresponds to the image of the cat, whilst the dullard sinking in his boat of mud stands in the tradition of the badger or the wild boar (Imaizumi 1994: 72).

Another representative folk tale in which the *tanuki* stars is *Bunbuku-chagama* 文福茶釜, or ‘The humming tea-kettle’. No less popular in Japan than *Kachikachi-yama*, its genesis turns out to be just as complicated. The tale often begins with a poor old man saving a *tanuki* (or a fox) from some bad children’s abuse. Out of gratitude the animal successively transforms itself into a tea-kettle, a horse, or a young girl, always in order to be sold by the human hero, who thus becomes rich. A range of local versions unfold around this frame. Above all,

The story of a grateful badger transforming itself into a tea-kettle and having itself sold to a Buddhist temple is very popular in Japan ... The tale was very often printed during the Tokugawa period\* (1603-1867), each time varying slightly so as to satisfy the readers. To-day the tale is one of the best known in Japan. (Ikeda 1971: 81)

Only a very few of the roughly forty documented variants of *Bunbuku-chagama* contain all three transformations. Instead each transformation tends to assume a separate existence (Ikeda 1971:81). ‘The episode in which [the fox] changes into a prostitute and then is sold developed into an independent story known as “The fox courtesan” (*Kitsune yūjo* 狐遊女)’ (Asakura 1964: 396). Children’s books, more often than not influential in the standard versions of folk tales, mostly exclude this particular passage, though in Japan beyond the feudal age it was quite usual for impoverished parents to sell a daughter to a brothel (Seki 1963: 107).

Just with the two folk tales introduced so far, the diversity of the *tanuki*’s figure becomes evident. In *Kachikachi-yama* he is a mocker, murderer and thickhead all in one, in *Bunbuku-chagama*, on the other hand, we encounter him as a grateful fellow bestowing fortune upon men. With these stories, the spectrum of possibilities is almost defined, because ‘[t]he roles played by the badger in folklore fall basically into three categories: that of vengeful transformer, grateful friend and roguish prankster’ (Harada 1976: 2). At first glance these features may seem contradictory, but they coincide in a mythological archetype that is to be found throughout the world, that of the trickster.

Trickster is the character in folktales who fools others and then is sometimes tricked himself. His fondness for sly jokes and malicious pranks often results in harm to himself or others. ... *Tanuki* demonstrates certain specific elements of Trickster, particularly in his role as prankster. ... Changing shape and a predisposition towards humorous sexual antics are two other elements of Trickster which are present in *tanuki*. ... many *tanuki* tales deal with the underlying dark side of the Trickster mythology – the devil with the sinister smile. (Jordan 1985: 129-131)



We shall now turn towards the issue of how Japanese authors of the 20th century deal with this ambivalent heritage. Based on selected examples, prevalent types and motifs are discussed in the following sections.

## The *tanuki*’s figure as penned by modern Japanese authors

### Literary fairy tales

A prolific genre where the *tanuki* is endemic can unsurprisingly be found in so-called *Kunstmärchen* (artistic fairy tales) where, in contrast to the oral tradition of folk tales, authorship plays its role very well.

#### *Miyazawa Kenji*

One prime exponent of this literary genre, today famous far beyond the borders of Japan, is Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢賢治 (1896-1933). In his lifetime, however, no more than one volume of poems – *Haru to shura* 春と修羅 (‘Spring and Asura’) – as well as a single collection of fairy tales – *Chūmon no ōi ryōriten* 注文の多い料理店 (‘The restaurant of many orders’) – were released. Although texts had emerged occasionally in various magazines, it was not until his death, when several publishers brought out complete editions of Miyazawa’s oeuvre, that his work at last became accessible to a broader public. The tale *Ginga tetsudō no yoru* 銀河鉄道の夜 (‘Night on the galactic railroad’), for instance, is widely known. Probably written around 1927, like most of Miyazawa’s works it was discovered as a manuscript after the author’s passing and was then published posthumously in 1941 (NKB 1977b: 313-314).

Of lesser prominence but all the more interesting from our point of view is *Kumo to namekuji to tanuki* 蜘蛛となめくじと狸 (‘The spider, the slug and the *tanuki*’),<sup>6</sup> most likely created in 1918 and presumed to be one of Miyazawa’s very first tales. Its eponymous anti-heroes are all three top athletes in an unconventional sport: the one of a marathon to hell. The reader retrospectively learns about the red long-legged spider that, weak from hunger, spins a humble web that saves her from dying of starvation. With time the webs get bigger and bigger, which consequently raises the spider’s reputation. At the zenith of her social prestige the megalomaniac spinner runs as many as ten webs at once. But as a result of this ostentation, all of them

6 Despite its promising title, John Bester’s English translation ‘The Spider, the Slug, and the Raccoon’ (Miyazawa 1993: 145-159) in reality reflects the text of a later, extended version revised by the author himself and named *Horakuma gakkō o sotsugyō shita sannin* 洞熊学校を卒業した三人 (‘The three graduates from the badger’s school’) in the original.

moulder away because far too much food accumulates within a short time. Eventually the spider and her family also fall prey to rot and are washed away by the rain. The silver-coloured slug on her part is likewise crawling on the road to ruin. Albeit in good odour with the other forest-dwelling animals, behind her friendly mask she turns out in truth to be a greedy-guts without scruples. So ‘brothers’ seeking for help mercilessly fall victim to her voracious appetite: in a sumo fight she wrestles down a starved snail in order to eat her up; feigning patient treatment she licks to death a hurt lizard and regales herself with this titbit. But in the end the slug’s ravenousness leads to her own downfall. Challenged to another round of sumo by a narrow-chested frog, she smells easy prey without discovering her opponent’s ruse. The frog, all in the manner of the real sumo wrestlers, throws salt into the ring, whereby the slug’s plump body dissolves. One bite and she is gone, ending up in the frog’s stomach. The *tanuki* who has never washed his face completes the rascally trio. Beset by hunger, this scoundrel of a priest gnaws off a meek rabbit’s ears and paws while hoaxing the pious animal into believing that everything is the will of the divine wildcat. In the hope of saving his soul the rabbit gladly donates his body parts and lulled by the *tanuki*’s insincere prayers even sheds tears of joy. Only when completely eaten up does he comprehend the religious humbug, on finding himself in the villain’s pitch-black belly. A shallow-witted wolf comes next on the *tanuki*’s bill of fare. After having been threatened with the wildcat’s godly rage, the anxious predator is prepared to do penance for killing so many innocents. Without facing any resistance the guileful *tanuki* pulls out the wolf’s dangerous fangs, squashes his eyes and then devours him too. But finally the false priest does not emerge unscathed. He falls ill as mud and water pile up inside his body, making him round as a ball. Shortly before charring the stricken *tanuki* comes to the conclusion that he has run a marathon straight to hell (Miyazawa 2003).

An almost ever-present aspect of the *tanuki*’s figure in legends and folk tales, which we have repeatedly come across in the previous sections, is absent from this tale, to wit the ability to shift shape. As in Aesop’s beast fables, there are no humans acting as counterparts. The *tanuki* does not need to deny his true shape, but as an anthropomorphic animal quite unflattering characteristics are attributed to him. According to expectation, a didactic element is firmly contained in this modern fable. The three title characters’ self-indulgence and craving for recognition may serve as a warning example of a false way of life leading to disaster. Yet Miyazawa did not coincidentally choose a *tanuki* for the portrayal of his fraudulent cleric, because in popular belief this animal often appears in the guise of a Buddhist monk and commonly lives on a temple property or nearby (Casal 1959: 52). In the majority of cases, anyway, the *tanuki*’s representation as a priest

... is not exactly a compliment to that fraternity. But Buddhist priests, the same as the Catholic ones in Europe, were at times and by certain groups considered no better than

charlatans ensnaring the credulous, especially the women. They were thus deemed to be rather dangerous fellows destroying in the end those whom they pretend to save. The *tanuki-bōzu* is the sly but ruthless individual to whom any pretext and deception, even an apparent piousness, will serve his ends. (Casal 1959: 57)

According to this, our third marathon runner from *Kumo to namekuji to tanuki* definitely stands in the tradition of Japanese folklore. His association with Buddhism is furthermore given expression when the obscure clergyman utters his repetitive incantation just to lull his victims: '*Yamaneko daimyōjin-sama no oboshimeshi dōri ja. ... Namaneko. Namaneko* 山猫大明神さまのおぼしめしどおりじゃ。... なまねこ。なまねこ' (Miyazawa 2003). These unctuous words may be translated as: 'Thy will be done, great blessed wildcat. Praise the cat. Praise the cat.' The devout rabbit immediately joins in reciting this prayer, referred to as *nenneko* 念猫 ('mindfulness of the cat'), which obviously is an allusion to the practice of *nenbutsu* 念佛, that is to say the invocation of the Buddha's name. Consequently the correct phrase *Namu Amida butsu* 南無阿弥陀仏 ('Hail Amitabha Buddha') has been adapted to the tale's feline deity, resulting in *Namaneko*.

A further reference to folklore in the present text is the *tanuki*'s drumming on his belly, this time so as to stimulate the digestion of the angry hare, who – *nomen est omen* – continues to rabbit on from inside the *tanuki*'s body. '*Ponpoko ponpon*' the beats of the belly drum drone, a sound which at least since the release of the animated film *Heisei tanuki gassen ponpoko* 平成狸合戦ぽんぽこ ('*Ponpoko* – The *tanuki* war of the Heisei era') by the Studio Ghibli director Takahata Isao 高畑勲, should be well known to children in Japan and elsewhere. Sometimes the *tanuki*'s belly drumming or *haratsuzumi* 腹鼓 is performed for general amusement, sometimes it may eerily echo through the woods, leading humans astray. Applying this activity as a digestive measure, on the contrary, seems to be a novelty.

But often enough a badger will drum on his belly for his own delectation, or a party of friends may do it together, as humans would make music; and then it may happen that one of them becomes so enchanted with his own "melody", and so blows up his belly, to make it even louder and more *vibrato* – that he will burst. (Casal 1959: 56)

In our case the final bang is missing indeed, but the inflated *tanuki*, in the closing tableau as round as a globe, somehow reminds us of this motif. If he exploded instead of charring,<sup>7</sup> parallels with a fable of Phaedrus in which a frog attempts to puff himself up to the size of an ox and then bursts would suggest themselves. As the frog there pays for aiming high above his rank, the *tanuki* does for his disgraceful deeds to innocent believers.

7 In *Horakuma gakkō o sotsugyō shita sannin*, the *tanuki* in effect pops open for having hastily swallowed raw rice that sprouted and grew into plants inside his body (Miyazawa 2008).

Although strictly speaking not a fairy tale, another famous story by Miyazawa Kenji, *Sero-hiki no Gōshu* セロ弾きのゴーシュ ('Gōshu the cellist'), where the *tanuki* plays only a bit part, likewise identifies him as an apt percussionist. Here it is not up to the animal's belly to be used as a sound box, but the body of the human protagonist's instrument serves a little *tanuki* as a snare drum. All night long man and beast make music together until at dawn the nocturnal visitor from the woods packs his drumsticks and leaves Gōshu's home (Miyazawa 1999). In folklore the musical animal may also hit essentially sensitive objects with these sticks: 'Not infrequently the badger's drumming is done with a pair of round-headed sticks ... on his own scrotum, which is tremendously enlarged and lies in front of the squatting animal' (Casal 1959: 56). Its 'golden balls' have become a real signature feature – particularly of pictorial representations – that we shall encounter again later. Anyhow, the *tanuki*'s image in *Sero-hiki no Gōshu* is clean of sexual connotations – mind you, we are dealing with a child. Miyazawa's depiction of this little drummer, who amongst other animals practises with a mediocre cellist, contrasts sharply with the depraved priest in *Kumo to namekuji to tanuki*. Thus it reflects much more the trend towards a positive portrayal of the *tanuki* in modern literature.

### *Toyoshima Yoshio*

Toyoshima Yoshio 豊島与志雄 (1890-1955) is another Japanese writer whose fairy tales, through their poetical and visionary character, can often be considered as such for adults. Prolific as a novelist himself, during his lifetime it was with the translations of the French novels *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo and *Jean-Christophe* by Romain Rolland that he gained recognition and achieved financial success (NKB 1977a: 462-463).

At the age of 31, Toyoshima wrote the tale *Tanuki no o-matsuri* 狸のお祭り ('The *tanuki* festival'), first published in the February 1921 edition of *Akai tori* 赤い鳥, an important children's literature magazine. On this occasion, the *tanuki* presents himself as an all-round illusionist who fools two simple-minded hunters by the names of Jiroschichi and Gorohachi.

When, on a moonlit night, the luckless huntsmen try to shoot down our belly drummer from the limb of a deciduous tree he is squatting on, the annoyed *tanuki* suddenly vanishes into thin air, just to reappear as the baffled men make their way home to the village. Dancing and beckoning, the impish animal provokes them, but having fired their rifles Jiroschichi and Gorohachi angrily realise that nothing more than a big stone has been the target. The very next day, resolved to wipe out the *tanuki*, both men search the forest in vain for him. They thus await moonrise to lie in ambush at the tree he was sitting on the other night. This time, however, a flock of grey starlings is perching on the limb in question. The undiscerning hunters simply

aim their rifles and bring them all down without any difficulty. At home, to the men's disappointment, the captured birds reveal themselves as dry leaves from the tree. Again they have fallen for the *tanuki*'s mirage! Only thanks to the village elder's wisdom do the dupes finally catch their nemesis. The old man spares the animal's life but extracts the promise of doing a good deed from the prankster. From the following day onwards, the desolate shrine near the village, as if by an invisible hand, is renovated and polished up until at last it shines in new splendour. The villagers rejoice at the magnificence of their sanctuary and celebrate the *tanuki* when, metamorphosed into an old woman, he goes to see them. From then on, once a year the shrine becomes the scene of a feast where the villagers revel together with the *tanuki* and his whole kin. During this so-called '*tanuki festival*' the village elder sings cheerful songs accompanied by the old *tanuki* on his belly drum. With these familiar beats the tale fades away sonorously – *ponpoko, ponpoko, ponpokopon* (Toyoshima 2006).

Admittedly the *tanuki* in this case is a pest to men, yet the pranks he plays are downright harmless. Making fun of the feather-brained hunters is sheer entertainment, permitting the eponymous animal to win the reader's favour. The *tanuki* also willingly pursues such pastime in folklore where, by way of example, he enjoys cheating fishermen into believing their nets were full and the moment they reel in the empty mesh laughs at them (Casal 1959: 51). Jiroshichi and Gorohachi too get a rude awakening when the supposed quarry assumes its original shape: in lieu of starlings the hunters have brought home nothing but a pile of leaves. The image of deceived humans holding in their hands a mere bunch of dead leaves is intrinsically tied to the *tanuki*'s figure in folklore:

The metamorphosed badger will often conclude a deal with men, and pay them golden coins. He takes away the goods, but the coins will shortly after transform themselves back into dry leaves, to the merchant's utter chagrin. (Casal 1959: 52)

In the present fairy tale after all the *tanuki* is purged from teasing and even gains the friendship of the villagers. Shape-shifting into an old woman no longer has the negative connotation of a man-eating monster like the horrible *nekomata* but, quite the contrary, designates the *tanuki* as a kind old woman who could do no harm to anybody.

### *Hamada Hirosuke*

Despite this decidedly positive portrayal, the *tanuki*'s character does not lack mischievous attributes. But the fact that minimisation may very well go beyond recognition becomes apparent with the following example penned by Hamada Hirosuke 浜

田廣介 (1893-1973), a great exponent of children's and youth literature in Japan, who rendered outstanding services to the fairy tale as a literary genre.

Created around 1960, *Tanuki no chōchin* たぬきのちょうちん ('The *tanuki* lantern'), merely one of roughly a thousand fairy tales Hamada wrote in his lifetime, tells of a greying *tanuki* grandfather who explains to his grandchild why the only transformation he has ever learned is that into a paper lantern. Trained by his own grandfather, as a child he had been told to choose a sole transformation so as to concentrate on one thing and to learn it thoroughly. After long rumination, his choice fell upon a lantern which should glow on dark nights. It took diligence and persistence until at length it worked. In that shape then he used to hang on the limb of a willow tree and his light fell onto a small wooden bridge that could have been a danger to people crossing over the river in the dark. Their gratitude for the helpful light even today fills the old *tanuki* with joy. His grandchild knows that this joy consists in having helped others and for that reason also wants to learn how to transform into a lantern in order to please mankind (Hamada 2005).

Unlike Miyazawa's *Kumo to namekuji to tanuki*, where he is used as a deterrent example, in this tale the *tanuki* fulfils a role model function. He only serves as a vehicle for the idealistic author's noble message, and attributes traditionally associated with his figure, except for the general ability of shape-shifting, take a back seat. Complete altruism and contentment with one's aptitudes are virtues that actually exceed the qualities of the folklore's 'grateful friend' as met with in *Bunbuku-chagama*, to say nothing of the 'roguish prankster'. Hamada's *tanuki* seems robbed of any vitality so that one is tempted to read a slightly risqué subtext into the title of the tale, given that *chōchin* 提灯 in Japanese beside its primary meaning of lantern can also stand for 'old men's erectile dysfunction'. To some extent this reading is symptomatic of the figure's limpness: in the shape of a paper lantern the lonesome *tanuki* dangles from a willow limb while nearby humans celebrate a festival. In better times he would have thrown himself into the fray, boisterously hitting his belly drum and rather than lighting passers-by would all the more have pushed them off the unhedged bridge into the river.

Certainly it is in the nature of things that whenever modern writers take up the *tanuki* as a subject suitable for children his figure is exposed to a certain reduction and details on his wanton life are at all costs omitted. Not always, however, is the result so anaemic – thanks be to the divine wildcat!

## Amorous affairs

In *Shin kaidan shū* 新怪談集, a 'collection of new ghost stories' by the novelist and essayist Tanaka Kōtarō 田中貢太郎 (1880-1941), released in 1938, we find two

quite different examples illustrating what it may lead to when the *tanuki* indulges his latent propensity for spending hours of love with humans.

The first story, *Tanuki to dōsei suru hitozuma* 狸と同棲する人妻 ('The wife who lived together with a *tanuki*'), is about a busy pedlar named Kutsuzawa Nizō, whose wife Nao is widely known for her beauty. One day in February, Nizō as usual goes out hawking but never returns from his tour. Time goes by and April arrives. As the long-lost husband then unexpectedly comes home, Nao breaks out in tears of joy. Showing the money he has earned to his wife, he affirms that business has been going so well that he just kept moving around. Nizō continues to peddle as ever but in the evening always returns home. One night, husband and wife are peacefully having dinner when all of a sudden a man comes rushing in and bludgeons Nizō to death. Deeply shocked, Nao looks the thug straight in the face and identifies her own husband. In place of the slain man, an old *tanuki* drenched in blood lies on the floor. Since April she has been living together with a *tanuki*! In the meanwhile, the real Nizō as if in a trance has wandered about until he regained consciousness. On returning he found his wife side by side with an old *tanuki*. So he took a cudgel and beat the beast to death. After that night Nao is taken ill, becomes bedridden and before long dies (Tanaka 2004a).

Although not explicitly mentioned in the text, it can be assumed that the shape-shifting *tanuki* is to blame for Nizō's trance-like state. In folklore more often than not a philanderer, he must have lusted after Nao, everywhere praised for her beauty, but first had to rid himself of the husband in order to settle in with his beloved. As almost always when the *tanuki* fills the role of an evil-doer he ultimately pays with his life. It is characteristic, too, that having been slain by the story's hero the false husband reverts to his original shape. With his death the *tanuki*'s magical power ceases, as early legends in anthologies from the 13th century have already shown (see the section above on 'Appearances in pre-modern Japanese literature'). Be it the bright apparition of a bodhisattva or the frightening spirit at a strange pond, in the end no more remains than a miserable dead *tanuki* lying in his blood.

In the present example, the *tanuki*'s love, moreover, harms the tragic female protagonist because for shame of having shared bed and board with the beast, Nao falls ill and dies. With Tanaka, nonetheless, liaisons between man and *tanuki* do not have to be dangerous per se. Of a somewhat romantic nature is the relationship in *Tanuki to haijin* 狸と俳人 ('The *tanuki* and the *haiku* poet'), where an old poet by the name of Sawada Shōzō, solitary and eccentric but nonetheless acclaimed, is visited every evening by a gentle *tanuki*. He feeds the fearless animal, invites it into the parlour and one stormy winter night even allows the *tanuki* to stay overnight, sleeping on his own futon. From then on the nocturnal visitor spends every night with Shōzō, who is glad about having won a friend in his old age. At dawn people repeatedly see the animal leaving Shōzō's house, so in the close village it is soon rumoured that the old

man loves a *tanuki*. When the poet then becomes critically ill, the good friend watches over him, sitting beside his futon whenever villagers look in on the patient. Shōzō bids farewell to the *tanuki* and sends him away before departing this life surrounded by the caring villagers. A few days later, a man from the village is passing Shōzō's grave. There he sees kneeling an elegantly clothed woman with a bunch of flowers in her hand. As soon as he addresses the unknown beauty she disappears, leaving nothing behind but the flowers which have fallen to the ground. The villagers agree that this woman must have been the loyal *tanuki*. They give the animal credit for its noble behaviour and decide that in future *tanukis* shall be hunted no more (Tanaka 2004b).

A frequent motif in Japanese folklore is that of an animal bride in human form. The best known tale of this sort is the one about the crane wife (*tsuru nyōbō* 鶴女房) who, out of gratitude for having been rescued from the clutches of a trapper, turns into a gorgeous woman and marries her deliverer. Since her husband is a poor man, she asks him to put her in a cabinet and to leave her there for three days. During this time she weaves a beautiful cloth which is sold for good money to the lord of the province. Overwhelmed by the quality of the material, he straightaway orders another one. When this time the wife secludes herself in the cabinet to weave for a full week, her husband gets worried and clandestinely looks in on her. But what he sees in there is a naked crane, all of her feathers pulled out in order to weave the cloth that shall make him a rich man. Now that he has revealed the secret of his wife's true shape she is forced to leave him, flying away together with thousands of other cranes (Seki 1963: 77-80).

Similar tales circulate about a fish, a snake, a frog, as well as a fox. Each time the happy marriage to the animal spouse ends with the revelation of her real nature. The unmasked women either disappear for shame or are repudiated by their husbands. As distinct from these folk tales, the lonely poet in Tanaka's *Tanuki to haijin* from the outset is aware of his friend's animal identity. In cosy togetherness the *tanuki* probably assumes the shape of a woman, which can only be imagined for no details on their love attachment are given in the text. Anyhow, the taboo of love between man and beast is completely absent from this tender story.

Opinions differ on what role the *tanuki*'s shape-shifting into a woman plays in Japanese folklore. On this topic Casal writes:

The badger's transmutations are numerous, but he as well prefers the form of a beautiful maiden to ensnare his victim, who is usually a man. The badger is very amorous in this disguise, and as the victim is generally induced to sleep in 'her' embrace, his disgust is all the greater when he awakens from the phantom in the morning, and finds himself bedded on rotting leaves in a desolate spot. (Casal 1959: 51)

According to Imaizumi, on the other hand, the *tanuki* rarely transforms into a woman and if he does, then it is only since the Edo period (Imaizumi 1994: 78-81).



An example for this is to be found in the *Toen shōsetsu* 兎園小説 ('Stories of the rabbit grove') from 1825, an anthology of mystery stories in which the leading best-seller writer of that time, Bakin 馬琴, collaborated. There one reads about a *tanuki* in the Kansei era (1789-1801) who used to stand at the crossroads near a tavern in the shape of a woman to seduce men (De Visser 1908: 92).

Whether frequent or not, the negative tenor of such narrations is unmistakeable. Whenever the *tanuki* changes into the shape of a woman, he does it so as to deceive and ensnare unsuspecting men. The *haiku* poet Shōzō is spared a rude awakening afterwards. Quite the reverse, the *tanuki* is a loyal companion to him, warming the old man's heart in the evening of his life. Here the motif of female companionship in the form of a metamorphosed *tanuki* has an unusually positive connotation.

### Setting: Shikoku

The smallest of the Japanese main islands proves to be a traditional stronghold of *tanuki* superstition, not least because there he stands largely unrivalled in his role as trickster: 'In Shikoku, where no foxes are, the *tanuki* are looked upon as the culprits, when strange things happen' (De Visser 1908: 97). So the animals are at once shown greatest veneration and superstitious awe (Casal 1959: 57).

Seen from this angle, it appears reasonable that the local *tanukis* claim the right of co-determination in their sovereign territory when the land is devastated by men's war, as told in the half-fictitious historical tale *Sengoku tanuki* 戦国狸 ('The *tanukis* of the warring states period') written by novelist Murakami Genzō 村上元三 (1910-2006) and first published in the May 1968 edition of the literary magazine *Ōru yomimono* オール讀物.

Amalgamating historical facts with fantastic imagination, the author sets the story during the so-called Sengoku period (late 15th to late 16th century), a time of countrywide turmoil. He sends the *tanukis* of Shikoku to battle against the warlord Oda Nobunaga 織田信長 and his allies supporting Ishikawa Michikiyo 石川通清, lord of the province of Iyo,<sup>8</sup> to whom the magic-tries animals are indebted for his friendliness. In face of fierce battles and the summoning of much witchcraft, however, the *tanukis* cannot help their benefactor to prevail. Under the leadership of the artful Kōno Michinao 河野通直, a third party unexpectedly obtains supremacy over Shikoku. Gyōbu, the wise but aged ruler over all the *tanukis* on the island, finally comes to the decision that henceforth they will keep out of humans' affairs (Murakami 2004).

To dwell on one of the references to folklore tradition Murakami's text teems with, I would like to pick out a humorous passage in which two young *tanuki* males

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8 Corresponds to the modern prefecture of Ehime in the island's northwest.

by the names of Akamaru and Gorō, sent out on an important mission and therefore transformed into men, pass a steaming open-air bath. The workshy and idle Akamaru then and there rips his clothes off to jump in. When his virtuous companion returns after having accomplished their mission all alone, he is startled by a peasant girl's hysterical scream. Gorō finds her lying unconscious on the wayside, not far from the bath Akamaru is snoozing in. Asleep, his transformation has been undone, revealing the hairy body of a *tanuki* with its huge scrotum that floats on the water surface. Aghast at this sight, the girl has sought refuge in a fainting fit (Murakami 2004: 329-332).

This scene represents a winking allusion to the legends that twine around the animal's oversized privates. Their usefulness is attested in the folk tale *Tanuki no hachi-jō-jiki* 狸の八畳敷, where a travelling mat-maker stops at a secluded house in the mountains to stay overnight. While seated by the fireside, the wayfarer notices the floor mat's rough surface and pulls out some threads. With each thread the host grimaces with pain. When the mat-maker eventually cuts into the matting with a knife, the whole house starts shaking, throws him out of the door, and then vanishes off the face of the earth. The next morning he follows a blood trail which leads him to a dead 'badger'. Last night's house has only been an illusion created by the animal, the mat being formed of its testicles that by a Japanese belief can be spread to the size of an eight-mat room or *hachi-jō-jiki* (Ikeda 1971: 86).

A noteworthy book of the 20th century, this time in German, that likewise deals with warring *tanukis* on the island of Shikoku, is Kurt Meissner's *Der Krieg der alten Dachse* ('The old badgers' war'). In this instance, the militant animals do not mobilise against unwelcome humans but fight an internal battle. Out of loyalty to a benevolent dyer, the story's hero Kinchō breaks with Rokuemon, lord of the *tanukis*, and thus unleashes an island-wide war between a southern and a northern army (Meissner 1932). Contrary to *Sengoku tanuki*, Meissner's narrative is no original work but, to be exact, the translated and abridged recording of an orally recited tale. Such folk legends may also have inspired Murakami.

## Prospects

Overviewing the examples given so far, it can be said that in modern Japanese literature a tendency to positive portrayal of the *tanuki*'s figure is to be observed. With few exceptions, he seems to have abjured his infamous actions of the past and while still teasing, the pranks he plays on men are largely harmless. The negative image of a horrible monster as known from older legends has mostly been supplanted by general sympathy for this character, making it the story's definite hero in the majority of cases. Positive reinterpretation, however, set in as far back as the Edo period. Looked at in that light, modern literature only reflects a trend that has existed for a

long time. As appropriate, references to folklore are numerous in the above-examined texts, but motifs may appear in a completely different context, thus offering new aspects.

A constellation common to many of the *tanuki* tales is the contrasting juxtaposition of the village as habitat for humans and the forest as the *tanuki*'s haunt. In Japan, woods traditionally have been regarded as rather threatening places, home of supernatural beings, both gods and evil spirits. But along with increasing urbanisation, wild nature has gradually lost its menacing aura and so has the *tanuki* as its apparent symbol.

In his 1978 'short short story'<sup>9</sup> *Tanuki* たぬき, Nasu Masamoto 那須正幹 (born in 1942), successful author of juvenile books, draws a picture that can be considered as symptomatic for the animals' changed situation. A long-serving zoo keeper named Yamashita tells about his experiences with the ill-famed wild dogs. Entrusted with mucking out their enclosure, as a young professional he was fooled by one of their illusions. Having done his work, Yamashita proceeded to leave the cage but the moment he slipped through the door found himself inside the enclosure again. As often as he tried, the desperate keeper could not escape until a colleague went to his rescue. Amidst the zoo-goers' laughter, Yamashita had just been running around in a circle inside the *tanuki* cage (Nasu 1993: 155-157).

Transplanted into a zoo, by tendency an urban institution, Nasu's *tanukis* are cut off from nature. They no longer inhabit deep forests but are exhibited behind bars, tamed to such an extent that their tricks have grown disappointingly weak.

Nonetheless, modernisation of the country and its society in the second half of the 19th century was not able to eliminate popular beliefs about the *tanuki*'s witchcraft at once. As late as 1908, De Visser wrote: 'To-day [sic] the old superstitions are still in full vigour, as the Japanese newspapers are telling us from day to day' (De Visser 1908: 158). How far such superstition could go may be illustrated with the case of a 'badger' captured by riverside workers near Ōsaka. A number of men, susceptible to that sort of belief in the supernatural, bought the animal off the workers and held a three-day festival in its honour to gain the beast's benevolence. After one last drink of sake eventually they set it free, as reported in the *Japan Chronicle* of 1 December 1939 (cited in Casal 1959: 53).

Admittedly such occurrences already date far back but in a high-tech age such as ours, perhaps more than ever, there is a fascination with the mysterious and occult that, with the worldwide success of *Harry Potter* leading the way, to bring in a hackneyed example, also manifests itself in literature. In contemporary Japan too, this yearning for an antithesis to an extremely rational world may be a breeding ground for the *tanuki*'s dark side which still lies dormant in him. At the very least,

9 Notably shorter in length than traditional short stories, in Japanese, besides the English loanword *shōto-shōto*, this pointed genre is termed *shōhen shōsetu* 掌編小説 as opposed to the classical *tanpen* 短編.

there is hope yet that his figure will not forfeit its mischievous attributes. May he stay a real rogue, indulging his quite human passions, instead of definitely degenerating into a pure mascot, to be labelled as *kawaii* 可愛い (lovely, cute), and a brand named 'Hello Tanuky' or the like.

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## GLOSSARY

<i>agedama</i>	揚げ玉	‘fried drops’, crumbs of <i>tempura</i> batter
<i>Akai tori</i>	赤い鳥	‘Red bird’, a literary magazine
<i>akakohon</i>	赤小本	‘small red book’, a woodblock-printed picture book from the early Edo period
<i>anagama</i>	穴熊	badger
Bakin	馬琴	light novelist (1767-1848)
<i>Bunbuku-chagama</i>	文福茶釜	‘The humming tea-kettle’, a folk tale
<i>chōchin</i>	提灯	paper lantern; old man’s erectile dysfunction
<i>Chūmon no ōi ryōriten</i>	注文の多い料理店	‘The restaurant of many orders’
<i>Ginga tetsudō no yoru</i>	銀河鉄道の夜	‘Night on the galactic railroad’
Hamada Hirotsuke	浜田廣介	writer of children’s literature (1893-1973)
<i>haratsuzumi</i>	腹鼓	belly drumming
<i>Haru to shura</i>	春と修羅	‘Spring and Asura’
<i>Heisei tanuki gassen ponpoko</i>	平成狸合戦ぽんぽこ	‘ <i>Ponpoko</i> – The <i>tanuki</i> war of the Heisei era’
<i>Horakuma gakkō o sotsugyō</i>	洞熊学校を卒業した	‘The three graduates from the badger’s school’
<i>shita sannin</i>	三人	provincial leader (?-1584)
Ishikawa Michikiyo	石川通清	‘Click-Click mountain’, a folk tale
<i>Kachikachi-yama</i>	カチカチ山	lovely, cute
<i>kawaii</i>	可愛い	‘The fox courtesan’, a folk tale
<i>Kitsune yūjo</i>	狐遊女	‘Collection of famous tales of former times and today’
<i>Kokon chomon-jū</i>	古今著聞集	‘Tales of times now past’
<i>Konjaku monogatari-shū</i>	今昔物語集	warlord (1500-1572)
Kōno Michinao	河野通直	oral literature
<i>kōshō bungei</i>	口承文芸	‘The spider, the slug and the <i>tanuki</i> ’
<i>Kumo to namekuji to tanuki</i>	蜘蛛となめくじと狸	badger; raccoon dog
<i>mami</i>	猫	poet and writer (1896-1933)
Miyazawa Kenji	宮沢賢治	badger; raccoon dog
<i>mujina</i>	貉	‘badger soup’, a miso-based soup containing badger meat
<i>mujina jiru</i>	猪汁	to pretend, to fake
<i>mujina o tsukau</i>	貉を使う	novelist (1910-2006)
Murakami Genzō	村上元三	‘Hail Cat’, a corruption of the invocation
<i>Namaneko</i>	なまねこ	<i>Namu Amida butsu</i>
<i>Namu Amida butsu</i>	南無阿弥陀仏	‘Hail Amitabha Buddha’
Nasu Masamoto	那須正幹	writer of children’s literature (b. 1942)
<i>nekomata</i>	猫又	‘forked cat’, a bicaudal ghost cat
<i>nenbutsu</i>	念仏	‘mindfulness of the Buddha’, the recitation of Amitabha Buddha’s name
<i>nenneko</i>	念猫	‘mindfulness of the cat’, a corruption of the word <i>nenbutsu</i>
Oda Nobunaga	織田信長	warlord (1534-1582)

<i>Ōru yomimono</i>	オール讀物	‘All reading’, a literary magazine
<i>Sengoku tanuki</i>	戦国狸	‘The <i>tanukis</i> of the warring states period’
<i>Sero-hiki no Gōshu</i>	セロ弾きのゴーシュ	‘Gōshu the cellist’
<i>Shin kaidan shū</i>	新怪談集	‘Collection of new ghost stories’
<i>shōhen shōsetu</i>	掌編小説	short short story
Takahata Isao	高畑勲	film director (b. 1935)
Tanaka Kōtarō	田中貢太郎	novelist and essayist (1880-1941)
<i>taneko</i>	田猫	‘rice field cat’
<i>tanoke</i>	田怪	‘ghost of the rice fields’
<i>tanpen (shōsetsu)</i>	短編 (小説)	short story
<i>tanuki</i>	狸	raccoon dog
<i>tanuki babā</i>	狸婆	witch of an old woman
<i>tanuki bōzu</i>	狸坊主	a <i>tanuki</i> in disguise of a Buddhist priest
<i>tanukigao</i>	狸顔	facial expression of feigned ignorance; round, chubby face
<i>tanuki jiru</i>	狸汁	‘ <i>tanuki</i> soup’, a miso-based soup containing <i>tanuki</i> meat
<i>tanuki neiri</i>	狸寝入	sham sleep
<i>Tanuki no chōchin</i>	たぬきのちょうちん	‘The <i>tanuki</i> lantern’
<i>Tanuki no hachi-jō-jiki</i>	狸の八畳敷	‘The eight-mats-wide <i>tanuki</i> ’, a folk tale
<i>tanuki no kuso</i>	狸の糞	‘ <i>tanuki</i> poop’, sweet bean jam rejects
<i>Tanuki no o-matsuri</i>	狸のお祭り	‘The <i>tanuki</i> festival’
<i>tanuki oyaji</i>	狸親父	foxy old man
<i>tanuki soba</i>	狸蕎麦	buckwheat noodles topped with leftover bits of fried batter
<i>Tanuki to dōsei suru hito- zuma</i>	狸と同棲する人妻	‘The wife who lived together with a <i>tanuki</i> ’
<i>Tanuki to haijin</i>	狸と俳人	‘The <i>tanuki</i> and the <i>haiku</i> poet’
<i>tanuki tsukau</i>	狸使う	to pretend, to fake
<i>tanuki udon</i>	狸饅頭	thick wheat flour noodles topped with leftover bits of fried batter
<i>tenpura</i>	天ぷら	Japanese fritter
<i>tenuki</i>	手貫	a leather gauntlet
<i>Toen shōsetsu</i>	兎園小説	‘Stories of the rabbit grove’
<i>Tōno monogatari</i>	遠野物語	‘Tales from the Tōno region’
Toyoshima Yoshio	豊島与志雄	writer and translator (1890-1955)
<i>Tsuru nyōbō</i>	鶴女房	‘The crane wife’, a folk tale
<i>Uji shūi monogatari</i>	宇治拾遺物語	‘Collection of tales from Uji’
<i>Wamyō ruijushō</i>	倭名類聚鈔	‘Japanese names, classified and anno- tated’, a 10th-century dictionary
Yanagita Kunio	柳田國男	folklorist (1875-1962)