



Obihiro Pioneer

Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section Newsletter

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Winter Yokai Stories

Happy December pioneers! Now that December is upon us... so are the yokai! This month we learn a little bit about yokai and take a look at some of Japan's yokai stories revolving around snow and winter.

What Are Yokai?

Yokai are Japanese supernatural beings (creatures, monsters, spirits) that can be mysterious, mischievous, helpful, or outright dangerous. They have existed in Japanese culture for centuries, stemming from urban legends, religion (Shinto, Buddhism), and art. They were used to explain natural phenomena and unexplainable events. There are many types of yokai, including animals such as kitsune, objects such as umbrellas and teapots, humanoids such as oni, and vengeful spirits such as yurei. Today let's look at some winter-related yokai! Note that all yokai have multiple stories and origins, so I will describe the most well famous and well known descriptions.

Yuki Onna

One of the most famous and well-known yokai which also happens to be one of the

most vengeful! Yuk on-na, or "snow woman", is described as a beautiful, tall, ethereal woman with pale skin, long black

hair, and piercing, often red eyes. She wears a white kimono that gives her a ghost-like appearance as she glides over the snow. Fun trivia, the Pokemon Froslax is based on Yuki onna



Her origins are unknown, with some stories claiming them to be women who die in snowstorms, or victims of murder in the winter. She feeds off the life force of men lost in snowstorms and in the mountains, leading them astray in the cold until they perish. She can also freeze people with her icy breath. While having a cold heart and body, some stories claim she is capable of love and redemption, sometimes marrying and starting a family. There are countless recounts of Yuki onna, with one famous one as follows:

There were two woodcutters living in the countryside: the old Mosaku and his young apprentice Minokichi. One day they were

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out cutting in the woods when suddenly, a terrible snowstorm engulfed them. They couldn't return home, so they had no choice but to spend the night in a nearby empty



hut. Minokichi was awoken by a cold chill and to his horror, a woman with black hair and terrifying eyes exhaled white breath onto Mosaku and he froze to death. As he was paralyzed with fear, the woman leaned over to Minokichi and was about to take his life as well, but she paused and stared at him for a while. She smiled and said "I was going to kill you like that old man, but since you're young and handsome, I will spare you. However, you must NEVER tell anyone about what happened here. If you do, I will kill you." With those words, she left the hut and faded into the dark snowstorm.

Years later, Minokichi met a beautiful woman named Oyuki, pale and slender as snow. They fell in love, got married, and had ten children together. Despite having had so many children, Oyuki showed no signs of aging and remained as young and beautiful as the day they met. One day, Minokichi said to Oyuki, "You know, looking at you reminds me of a strange experience I had when I was a young apprentice. That day, a beautiful woman who looked just like you killed my master and spared my life. I wonder, was it a dream, or was it the yuki-onna?"

After hearing this, Oyuki stood up and screamed "That woman was me, I am the yuki-onna! I told you that if you ever mentioned that night, I would kill you.

However, thinking of our beautiful children, how could I possibly kill you? From now on, raise them well. If you ever make them unhappy, I WILL come back and kill you. With those words, Oyuki melted into a white snowy mist and disappeared.

Tsurara Onna

The female winter yokai continue with Tsurara onna! "Icicle woman" is the spirit of an icicle that becomes a woman. She is essentially the friendly version of Yuki onna but is often confused with her because their description is almost the same, having long black hair and donning a snow-white kimono. She appears to lonely men to marry them (that's nice).



The story goes that one day, a lonely man was gazing up at the icicles hanging off the eaves of his house. Mesmerized by their beauty, he says, "I wish I had a wife that is as beautiful as these icicles." Suddenly, a beautiful woman appears...! They marry and live happily, but the man doesn't know that she's an icicle, so he is confused as to why she never takes a bath. One day made her take a bath. She didn't come out for a long time, so he went in to check on her only to find pieces of ice floating in the bathwater. Variations of the Tsurara onna story include some where she disappears in the spring, becomes vengeful when the man remarries and he mysteriously gets killed by a fallen icicle the next winter.

Yukinko

These little yokai are fairy spirit of a children. They

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are joyful and playful and often seen outside in snowy regions. They wear a minoboshi, a straw hat from ancient times. They don't have much of a story, but some say they are the children



of Yuki onna. The Pokemon Snowrunt is based off Yukinko, and is actually the preevolution of Froslass who is based on Yuki onna. In fact, only female Snowrunt can become Froslass!

Yuki Jiji

Old Man Winter, Japanese version! "Winter grandpa" is a bit similar to Yuki onna in that he appears in cold, snowy blizzards and is said to be the spirit of those who perish in snowstorms. Although he is more of a neutral yokai, he does appear to lost travelers and is said to startle them, causing them to lose their way. While he doesn't have much lore

about him, he may have originated from trees in mountains that appear to have the face of an old man on them.



Kitsunebi

While not exactly a winter yokai, this yokai is sometimes associated with winter. "Fox fire" is a fire spirit created by kitsune, which are fox yokai with magic powers. They eerily flicker in the night, and are often seen on winter nights. These sometimes appear to travelers in the night. Foxes are more mischievous than dangerous, so the fires they create often trick travelers into getting even more lost on their path.

These are some winter yokai. Keep an eye out for other yokai stories in future issues!

Movies @ Cinema Taiyo in Obihiro

Not all movies are listed. Times and movies are subject to change. To confirm, call or check online at: www.taiyogroup.jp/movie/obihiro			
Title	Genre	Lang	Dates
Suzume <i>Suzume no Tobari</i>	mystery	JP	Until 15 th
Black Panther: Wakanda Forever <i>Burakku Pansā Wakanda Fōebā</i>	action	EN	Until 27 th
Black Adam <i>Burakku Adamu</i>	action	EN, JP	From 2 nd
Fragments of the Last Will <i>Rāgeri Yori Ai wo Komete</i>	drama	JP	From 9 th
Avatar: The Way of Water <i>Abatā: Wei Obu Wōtā</i>	action/ suspense	EN	From 16 th
Lonely Castle in the Mirror <i>Kagami no Kojō</i>	anime/ drama	JP	From 23 rd

KEY: JP = Japanese voice EN = English voice with Japanese subtitles

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Events in Tokachi

Please be aware that these and other events may be affected by COVID-19. To find out if these events are still running, please contact the respective organizers or check out their webpages online.

When	What	Where/Contact
12/7 (Wed) 19:00-21:00	International Mini-Sports Night 国際ミニスポーツ・ナイト Meet new friends from around the world while enjoying fun and easy sports, including mini volleyball, ping-pong, and mini soccer! Fee: Free of charge Participants: First 15 to register Registration: Register by phone until 12/6 Note: Please wear a mask	Tokachi International Relations Center @ Obihiro 森の交流館・十勝 0155-34-0122 tirc@city.obihiro.hokkaido.jp
12/17 (Sat) 10:00-12:00	Kadomatsu Creation Challenge 門松づくりに挑戦しよう Take a stab at making kadomatsu (Japanese new year door decorations) with white birch instead of the traditional bamboo. This is a great even for both parents and children to attend and learn more about Japanese culture. Fee: 1000 yen / group Participants: First 10 child-parent groups to register Registration: Register by phone Notes: Children must be accompanied by a guardian. All participants	Tokachi Ecology Park, Earthen Folly @ Otofuke 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 Www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
12/17 (Sat) 15:00-16:00	Xmas Concert Xmasコンサート Get your night off to a good start by listening to wonderful musical performances by local musicians. Music will revolve around the theme "warmth in Christmastime". Fee: Free of charge Notes: Please wear a mask	Tokachi Ecology Park, Visitor's Center @ Otofuke 十勝エコロジーパーク 0155-32-6780 Www.tokachi-ecopark.jp
12/18 11:00-12:00	Ecopark Mochi Pounding エコパもちつき会 Making mochi by pounding rice with a giant mallet is a Japanese cultural activity done by families during the new year. Take a shot at making some yourself at this event, then eat the mocha when it's done! Fee: Free of charge Note: Wear a mask and disinfect your hands at the door.	

Obihiro Pioneer is a newsletter published monthly by the Obihiro City Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section for residents of the Tokachi District and related parties. The contents of this newsletter do not necessarily represent the official views or opinions of the Tourism and Goodwill Exchange Section or the City of Obihiro.

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