

Lafcadio Hearn's Faceless Women and Ireland: A Study of the Irishness of Yakumo Koizumi's Japanese Ghost Stories, "Mujina" and "Yuki-Onna"

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Introduction

The Japanese stories retold by Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904), or Yakumo Koizumi, have had a huge impact on Japanese culture. Among other things, some of his stories have been accepted so generally and ubiquitously that most Japanese believe them to be genuinely Japanese; the reality, however, is that they originated from the Japanese translations of the tales retold by Hearn in English. The two stories collected in his *Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things* (1904), a collection of 16 Japanese horror and mysterious stories in combination with four other writings, and discussed in this article—"Mujina" and "Yuki-Onna (Snow Woman)"—are good examples. To understand what Hearn really handed down to the Japanese, it is important to examine how Hearn recomposed his Japanese stories from the materials which he collected. The situation, however, is often complicated, and sometimes even confusing. For instance, the source of "Yuki-Onna," a story of a supernatural snow creature seducing a human youngster, has not been clearly established, while many of the original literary works on which Hearn's other stories are modelled have been identified. Hearn mentions that he heard the original story of "Yuki-Onna" from "a farmer of Chōfu, Nishitama-gōri, in Musashi province" (*Kottō* and

Kwaidan 159) in the preface of *Kwaidan*. The farmer, however, has not been identified yet, and it seems slightly odd that in the one-page preface, minute information is given about the source of “Yuki-Onna,” although most of the other stories are just said to be taken from books. The other fact which should not be ignored is that Japanese folklorists collected stories very similar to Hearn’s “Yuki-Onna,” but over a couple of decades after Hearn’s death, i.e., in the period when Hearn’s former students, surely knowing their master’s works well, had already taught English for a long time in various districts of Japan. Actually, there is no clear evidence that the Japanese knew the story of the seductive snow woman before the publication of *Kwaidan*.¹

This article will deal with Hearn’s Irish connections, which have drawn increased attention in the last ten years thanks to the opening of the Lafcadio Hearn Japanese Gardens in Tramore, Ireland, in 2015 and his great-grand son’s, Bon Koizumi’s enthusiastic activities promoting Hearn’s achievements. Born on one of the Ionian islands, Greece, Hearn was brought to Ireland in his infant days. He became accustomed to Irish folklore and legends when he was there, and even after leaving it, he paid keen attention to Irish literature for the rest of his life. In some of his writings, even if they do not treat Irish subjects, Hearn’s link to Ireland seems to be reflected. The reason why this article will focus on “Mujina” and “Yuki-Onna” is that they are strongly connected to Hearn’s Irishness. The goal of this article is to clarify the tight but delicate relationships between these two stories from *Kwaidan* and Ireland, paying peculiar attention to the two supernatural female figures appearing in the tales.

"Mujina" and "My Guardian Angel"

Hearn was a multi-faceted writer, and considering his early life, we can regard him as one of the *fin-de-siècle* Irish writers. The Hearn family was middle-class and Protestant, and lived in Dublin. Lafcadio's father, Charles, was a doctor in the British Army. He was posted to Greece, and there he fell in love with Rosa Kassimatis, and Lafcadio was born. Just after the birth of Lafcadio, Charles was posted to the West Indies, and he decided to leave his wife and baby with his family in Dublin. Charles's mother lived in a big, old-fashioned terraced house on Lower Gardiner Street in the north of Dublin. Rosa, poor at communicating in English, struggled with life in Ireland and eventually returned to Greece. Lafcadio was then taken care of by his great aunt, Sara Brenane, also living in Dublin at no.73, Upper Leeson Street. It was just a few blocks away from Oscar Wilde's home on Merrion Square. Wilde and Bram Stoker were just a few years older than Lafcadio, and many of the Hearn family, though not Lafcadio, studied at Trinity College, Dublin, where Wilde, Stoker, Robert Maturin and Joseph Sheridan LeFanu spent their student days. Every summer, Sara Brenane took Lafcadio to Tramore, in the south of Ireland, with her, and he became familiar with the provincial culture of the area. In his early teens, Lafcadio was sent to schools outside Ireland, and he finally left for the United States at the age of 19 (Bisland 5-12; Murray, "Lafcadio" 173-33; Stephens 8).

Working internationally as a journalist, editor and writer in various places, Hearn seemed to establish his own method of collecting and rewriting local stories. Hearn's Japanese wife, Setsuko ("Setsu") Koizumi, left a precious statement concerning how he collected and retold Japanese stories.

According to her recollection, Hearn asked her to tell stories in Japanese. Having told him all the stories she knew, Setsu attempted to read aloud some Japanese texts, but Hearn fiercely refused to listen, insisting that the stories must be hers: “There is no use of your reading it from the book. I prefer your own words and phrases—all from your own thought. Otherwise, it won’t do” (Koizumi, Setsuko 37). Consequently, most of Hearn’s retold Japanese stories are different from their originals, especially in their particulars. The original stories changed in Setsu’s narrations, and then amalgamated with Hearn’s own imagination or memories when he wrote them down.

The story “Mujina” must have been collected and retold by Hearn in this way. The original story has been precisely identified: it is the 33rd story of *Hyaku Monogatari*, or *One Hundred Ghost Stories*, recounted by Taishō Oyama. Around 1900, *kaidan* or ghost-story sessions were a fad among Japanese men of culture such as writers, *kabuki* actors, *rakugo* or *kōdan* performers, and so on. Among them, the contemporary leading novelist Ōgai Mori harshly criticized the fashion in one of his short stories, “Hyaku Monogatari” (1911). The story on which Hearn modelled his “Mujina” is thought to have been narrated at one such session held in 1892 (Masuko 73-75; Shimokusu 225-26). The text of the tale told by Oyama fortunately survives.²

“Mujina” and Oyama’s story have an almost identical structure: a shape-shifting supernatural creature horrifies the protagonist twice by taking different shapes. In “Mujina,” a merchant hurrying up a slope beside a deep and wide moat, comes across a young lady crouching and sobbing. He tries to console her, but she just keeps weeping, and avoids turning towards him. But finally, she turns around, stroking her face. The merchant sees that “she had no eyes or nose or mouth” (206). He screams and runs away terrified.

He sees the light of a lantern and makes for it, trying to tell the lantern's owner, a noodle seller, what he has seen. The merchant, however, cannot speak clearly because he is out of breath and scared. The story ends as follows:

“Hé! Was it anything like THIS that she showed you?” cried the soba-man, stroking his own face—which therewith became like unto an Egg And, simultaneously, the light went out. (207)

At One-Hundred-Ghost-Story sessions, many candles were lit, and as each story ended, one of the candles was extinguished. The last sentence here thus skillfully connects with the ritual. However, this way of ending the story is only Hearn's, not Oyama's.

Another change which Hearn made in his retelling Oyama's tale is important for our argument; Hearn turned a big-faced creature into the no-faced one. In Oyama's story, the creature makes the protagonist's hair stand on end with its “*nishaku*” (approximately 60 centimeters) face, not with an empty face like an egg (Oyama 379 and 380). Hearn's weak eyesight or the Japanese faceless monster, *nopperabō*, might be a possible source, but other sources are relevant too.³

Among the possible sources for Hearn's no-faced creature, one of his reminiscences clearly suggests his faceless figure's connection with Ireland. Elizabeth Bisland (1861-1929), the journalist and writer associated with Hearn, edited his letters and writings, and detailed his life in *Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn* (1922). Bisland collected impressive episodes of Hearn's Irish life which are “from the autobiographic papers found after his death—half a dozen fragments of recollection, done exquisitely in his

small beautiful handwriting, and enclosed each in fine Japanese envelopes” (15). The first fragment was published with the title “My Guardian Angel.” Hearn’s great aunt, Sara Brenane, was a convert to Roman Catholicism. Her house received “one privileged visitor who came regularly each autumn to remain until the following spring—a convert—a tall girl who looked like some of the long angels in my French pictures” (17). She was generally called “Miss Jane” at Brenane’s house, but Hearn was told to call her “Cousin Jane.” She was very ascetic, and often taught Hearn about the Catholic faith.

The person who becomes faceless in Hearn’s writing is this “Cousin Jane.” Her extreme piousness made Hearn hate Jane. Around the age of six, Hearn even hoped for her death “so that I might never see her face again” (19). This wicked desire seemed to lead Hearn to have a sinister daydream:

[. . .] I was standing in the lobby, close to the head of the stairs, when I noticed that the door of Cousin Jane’s seemed to be ajar. [. . .] Cousin Jane herself, robed in her familiar black dress came out of the room, and advanced toward me—but with her head turned upwards and sideways, [. . .] [S]he walked directly past me into the room nearest the stairway [. . .]. Into the bedroom, I ran after her, calling out, “Cousin Jane! Cousin Jane!” [. . .] I followed her to the other side of the bed. Then, as if first aware of my presence, she turned; and I looked up, expecting to meet her smile. . . . She had no face. There was only a pale blur instead of a face. And even as I stared, the figure vanished. It did not fade; it simply ceased to be—like the shape of a flame blown out. (19-20)

If this is a precise mental record of Hearn’s, then this memory of Cousin

Jane is likely to be the origin of the faceless creature in "Mujina." But we cannot ignore the fact that this fragmentary piece of writing was found *after* Hearn's death; therefore, the period when it was written is ambiguous, and it is even possible that Hearn may have written it after drafting "Mujina." (*Kwaidan* was published in the year of Hearn's death, 1904.) In fact, the scene in which the wraith of Cousin Jane suddenly disappears "like the shape of a flame blown out" is strikingly similar to the end of "Mujina": "And, simultaneously, the light went out." It is unclear when and how "My Guardian Angel" was written, but it is at least obvious that the ghostly face without eyes, nose and mouth was firmly connected with Ireland in Hearn's mind when he recorded the episode of Cousin Jane.

Hearn in His Late Years and William Butler Yeats

Although most of writings collected in *Kwaidan* are Japanese ghost stories, Hearn oddly added one memory of his infant days in Ireland to his selection: "Hi-Mawari (Sunflower)." At the age of seven, Hearn tried to search for "fairy-rings" with his cousin Robert. Hearn was afraid of a harper visiting their house, suspecting that he may be a goblin or a fairy, although his fancies were rejected by his cousin. As the song the harper sang, four lines of the lyrics of Thomas Moore's Irish popular song, "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms," are quoted. This episode does not seem to be exactly harmonious with Japanese horror stories; its inclusion in *Kwaidan* implies that Hearn had his boyhood in Ireland in mind, when editing the book.

In his late years, Hearn paid great attention to Irish literature, especially to the contemporary rising star, William Butler Yeats (1865-1939). Hearn

taught English literature at the Imperial University of Tokyo from 1896 to 1903. After his death, his lectures were miraculously reproduced in book forms thanks to his lecture style: “Lafcadio Hearn lectured slowly, choosing simple words and constructions, in order to make the foreign language as easy as possible to his Japanese students; and some of his students managed to take down many of his lectures word for word” (Erskine vii).

In the lecture entitled “Some Fairy Literature” included in *Life and Literature* (1917), Hearn discusses how ubiquitously fairies prevailed in Western culture. He states that the literature treating these folkloric figures had again become “popular,” nominating as a representative poet of fairy literature “William Butler Yeats, who himself collected a great number of stories and legends about fairies from the peasantry of Southern Ireland” (325).⁴ In the lecture, Hearn quotes the full text of Yeats’s poem “The Host of the Air,” assuring his readers that “as a fairy poem it could not be surpassed” (327).⁵ In the poem, a “changeling” folk tale is reproduced; a local farmer named O’Driscoll is enticed by fairies, and because he eats their food and wine, they take away his wife.

One anecdote shows not just how keenly Hearn paid attention to Yeats’s writing but also what elements he sought in fairy literature. “The Host of the Air” first appeared in the journal *The Bookman* in 1893, and it is this version which Hearn quotes in “Some Fairy Literature.” Yeats later modified the poem, especially its ending, when compiling it into the collection *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899). In the *Bookman* version, after seeing the fairy abduct his wife, O’Driscoll hurries home only to see that the “[o]ld women were keening the dead” (Quoted in Hearn, *Life and Literature* 327). On the other hand, in *The Wind among the Reeds* the poem ends with the scene in which O’Driscoll speechlessly sees the host of the air take away his wife.

The poem may gain pathos with this change, but it seems to cut off the end of the folk tale on which Yeats depended. Hearn was dissatisfied with this change to what he evaluated as the best fairy poem, and even wrote to Yeats to protest (Koizumi, Bon 22-23).⁶

"Mujina" and Banshee

Hearn's protest about the modifications to "The Host of the Air," including the deletion of the line "Old women were keening the dead," gives us another subject to discuss. The word "keen" is an archaic Irish-English term meaning to utter the "Irish lamentation for the dead" and "to wail or lament bitterly," and a professional mourner attending old-fashioned Irish wakes and funerals was called a "keener" (*OED*). This funeral culture of Ireland was inseparably associated with one of the best-known fairies in Irish folklore, a "banshee." This fairy is said to herald the death of a member of the peculiar old family which it haunts. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the word "banshee" was so general in Irish vocabulary that it was often used as a simile or metaphor in various discourses, even in daily life.⁷ It is probable that Hearn shared the knowledge of keening and a banshee with his Irish contemporaries.

There is an example of a banshee in a story collected in Yeats's *Fairy and Folk Tales of Irish Peasantry* (1888).⁸ This book edited by Yeats is probably the one Hearn mentioned in the above quotation from "Some Fairy Literature." In *Fairy and Folk Tales*, Yeats catalogues famous fairies and folk-tale motifs with stories or poems representing each subject. Consequently, the collection vividly mirrors the knowledge of supernatural creatures common among Irish people at the end of the nineteenth century.

To illustrate the idea of the banshee and another death-messenger fairy, the Dullahan, Yeats selects a story by John Todhunter (1839-1916): “How Thomas Connolly Met the Banshee.” In Todhunter’s story, the narrator Thomas Connolly comes back to his temporal residence in the dusk. Coming to an old bridge over a little stream, Thomas finds an old woman “sittin’ on her hunkers, all crouched together, ’n’ her head bowed down, seemin’ly in the greatest affliction” (119). Thomas pities her, speaking to her, but she does not even raise her face. Then, when Thomas notices the old woman’s strangeness, she reveals her true form as a supernatural creature and frightens him. Especially, her “two eyes [were] sewn in wid [sic] red thread, from the terrible power o’crying” (121). The creature disappears into the stream without hurting him. Thomas believes that it was a banshee because on the same night, someone violently keened around a mansion of an old family, and the master of the house was found dead the next morning.

Several details of this banshee story interestingly correspond to those of Hearn’s “Mujina,” especially the parts which he modified in Taishō Oyama’s story as he retold it. In both Oyama’s and Hearn’s tales, the protagonists are hurrying on a road at night. Oyama’s story begins with a scene in which the protagonist is caught in heavy rain, but no detailed description of the place and scenery is given. The protagonist finds a young lady crouching, and she says that she has a pain in the stomach. On the other hand, in “Mujina,” the merchant comes to “an ancient moat, deep and very wide, with high green banks rising up to some place of gardens;—and on the other side of the road extend the long and lofty walls of an imperial palace,” and he finds a young woman crouching, “weeping bitterly” (Hearn, *Kottō* and *Kwaidan* 205). Hearn turned the sick woman crouching in the rain into the lady crouching and wailing by the moat, which functions as a dividing line.

The banshee crouches beside the old bridge over the stream in Todhunter's story, as places by water are suitable for the banshees wailing for the dead. The death-messenger fairy always appears when someone is about to go beyond the border between life and death. In many cultures, this border is represented by a river such as the Styx. Also, because the banshee keens, it always sheds tears; it is associated with the image of streaming water. The moat by the great mansion where the faceless woman crouches and weeps bitterly in "Mujina" may be another place suitable for the Irish fairy lamenting the dead if it is in Ireland. It is unclear whether or not Hearn remembered Todhunter's banshee tale when he wrote "Mujina," but if Hearn knew of the Irish fairy, he probably understood that it is generally associated with the image of water. "Mujina" is not clearly Irish, but Hearn seems to have added some Irish twists in the process of his retelling the Japanese story.

"Yuki-Onna" and Hearn's Faceless Women

Apart from the faceless women, Hearn included another group of supernatural female figures with common features in his stories. The scholar of comparative literature Yoko Makino points out that the "White Woman" in "Yuki-Onna" is the final representation of the "white women" whom Hearn repeatedly created in his long writing career. As mentioned above, Hearn was separated from his mother in infancy, and his desire to return to the lost mother and his short blissful days with her often led him to write tales of marriages between humans and supernatural females. These stories are often modelled on foreign legends, including Nordic, Chinese, and South Pacific examples. In the stories, supernatural women marry humans,

create happy families, but return to their own worlds in the end. Some of these heroines are described as *white* women even if the stories are set in places where the locals are generally not white. Makino calls them Hearn's "white women" (Makino, "*Toki*" *wo Tsunagu Kotoba* 157-82). Here, by exploring the shared features between the Yuki-Onna representing Hearn's white women and the faceless ladies discussed in this article, I will suggest that "Yuki-Onna" also has a strong Irish flavor.

The brief storyline of "Yuki-Onna" is as follows. A heavy snowstorm forces two woodcutters into a ferryman's small hut beside a river. A supernatural female creature visits the hut at night, killing one of the woodcutters with her cold breath. She is attracted to the other young man named Minokichi, and decides to let him live, ordering him not to tell this incident to anyone. She says that she will kill him if he breaks his promise. Later, Minokichi comes across a beautiful young woman named Oyuki. They marry and make a blissful family with ten children. One night, Minokichi confesses to Oyuki his terrible experience with the snow creature. Oyuki then reveals her true identity as the Yuki-Onna, but does not kill Minokichi because of their children. She disappears, leaving her human husband and children. As mentioned in the introduction, the source of this story is ambiguous.⁹ Therefore, it is all the more noteworthy that both "Yuki-Onna" and "Mujina" have a similar story structure: the supernatural creatures horrify the protagonists *twice* by revealing their true appearances.

As one of the shared features between the Yuki-Onna and Hearn's faceless ladies, I will first focus on the Yuki-Onna's face, which is always unfocused or blurred, although it is called "beautiful." When the snow woman appears in the small hut, there is no light inside; only the moonlight reflected on the snow comes through the door behind the creature. Furthermore, "[t]he White

Woman bent down over him, lower and lower, until her face almost touched him" (167). Eyes cannot focus on something too close to them. The narrator says, "he saw that she was very beautiful" (167). The situation does not allow Minokichi clearly to see her face, though; he just sees or *knows* that she is beautiful. Her face is blurred in the darkness, in Minokichi's vision and in his memory. (This may be necessary for the story, since the snow woman later appears as a human being, seducing Minokichi and marrying him.)

The Yuki-Onna's true character is revealed again just before the end of the story. Minokichi's wife, Oyuki, disguised by the Yuki-Onna sews by the light of a paper lamp. Her face, lit with the dim light in the darkness, reminds Minokichi of his encounter with the snow woman. Minokichi then recounts his memory and breaks his promise with the creature. The Yuki-Onna thus shows her true identity; she "bowed above Minokichi where he sat, and shrieked into his face" (170). Again, her face is too close for Minokichi's eyes to focus; and furthermore, the whole of her body as well as her face becomes blurred and disappears: "she melted into a bright white mist that spired to the roof-beams, and shuddered away through the smokehold. . ." (170).

The descriptions of the Yuki-Onna's face, therefore, are always unclear; she even seems to be a creature with a blurred face. In this article, we already saw the two faceless women: Cousin Jane in "My Guardian Angel" and the young lady in "Mujina." In addition to the facelessness, each of them has characteristics common with the Yuki-Onna. In "Yuki-Onna," the snow creature is described as threatening and even authoritative; she decides whether Minokichi can survive or not, and commands him to be silent about his encounter with her. On the other hand, the Irish woman with the

blurred face, Cousin Jane, is also described as highly authoritative because she represents the Catholic faith itself in Hearn's writing, with her excessive piety. Hearn described how Cousin Jane severely rebuked his innocent doubts about God, and threatened him by explaining what Hell is. Also, both of them are depicted as motherly. The Yuki-Onna bears ten children and decides not to kill Minokichi because of them. On the other hand, although afraid of her, Hearn loved Cousin Jane's "smile" as he expected to see it in his encounter with her wraith; she must have partly substituted Hearn's mother's role in his childhood.

With the young lady in "Mujina," the Yuki-Onna shares associations with water. Makino argues that along with other *fin-de-siècle* writers, Hearn gave the image of a *femme fatale* to the snow woman in "Yuki-Onna." In nineteenth-century Western literature, a great number of *femme fatales* accompanied with watery images seduces men, threatening their lives (Makino, "*Toki*" *wo Tsunagu Kotoba* 165-66). The Yuki-Onna, the spirit of snow, appears beside the river, and at the end of the story, she even melts into water. On the other hand, as we saw in "Mujina," the woman crouches and cries bitterly like a banshee by the deep and wide ancient moat. This common feature is not directly connected to Ireland, but both of the supernatural women are described in a similar vein in the same book, *Kwaidan*.

Conclusion

Biographically, Lafcadio Hearn can be categorized with *fin-de-siècle* Irish writers. His way of retelling stories which he collected in Japan let him amalgamate his own imagination and memories with the original stories.

"Mujina" and "Yuki-Onna" were deeply associated with his experiences in Ireland and knowledge of Irish folklore and literature. Of course, Hearn's experiences in various districts of the world and erudite knowledge of diverse cultures are also interlaced with the two stories, but still, Irish influences are conspicuous.

The story structure and most of the elements of "Mujina" are faithful to the original story, but Hearn made a few critical changes in the details. The big-faced creature pretending to be sick is turned into the faceless creature "weeping bitterly" beside the watery place. The faceless lady in "Mujina" is surely linked to the blurred-face wraith in the fragmentary piece of autobiography on his childhood in Ireland. Also, Hearn's changes to the details of the story are strikingly correspondent to the general characteristics of the notorious death-messenger in Irish folklore, the banshee.

The "White Woman" of "Yuki-Onna" is the final representation of the white women who repeatedly appear in Hearn's works. The Yuki-Onna also shares several features with the faceless women discussed in this article, and as a result she is closely connected with Hearn's experiences in and knowledge about Ireland. "Yuki-Onna," juxtaposed with "Mujina" in *Kwaidan*, thus conveys a strong Irish flavor.

At the end of "Yuki-Onna," as the White Woman melts into the mist and disappears into the smoke-hold, there is a mixture of various images and motifs which Hearn collected and digested throughout his life. Nevertheless, given the arguments made here, the images of the fairies "gone like a drifting smoke" in Yeats's "The Host of the Air" (*The Poems* 75) and that of the changeling escaping from a chimney like a lightning after its true identity is revealed seems to be more prominently reflected in the snow creature's fading figure than others.

Notes

1. For the details of the ambiguous origins of “Yuki-Onna,” see Makino, “Between Folklore and Literature” and “*Toki*” *wo Tsunagu Kotoba* 182-84.
2. Oyama’s story may be found in Hirakawa 379-80 or Masuko 74-75.
3. Kazuo Masuko’s study shows that Japanese people had narrated or described faceless creatures, generally called *nopperabō*, for a long time, and that they transformed these figures under the influence of Chinese literature. Furthermore, among the books on Hearn’s bookshelf, Masuko discovered a book including the picture of a woman without eyes, nose, and mouth; here an old racoon dog metamorphoses into the woman to tease humans. Masuko considers that these sources and others may have been amalgamated into the Egg-faced creature of “Mujina” with other possible sources (75-140).
4. In this quotation, Hearn may confuse Thomas Crofton Croker with Yeats. Croker’s representative book is *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (1825-1828), and some excerpts from Croker’s *Fairy Legends and Traditions* are included in Yeats’s *Fairy and Folk Tales of Irish Peasantry* (1888).
5. In the text, the author of the poem is regrettably given as “Keats” (326), probably due to an editorial error.
6. The Lafcadio Hearn Memorial Museum held an exhibition on the relationships between Hearn and Ireland from June 20, 2015 to January 3, 2016. According to its website, the letter is dated September 24, 1901. See “Kioku no Hajimari.”
7. For example, in James Joyce’s “Grace” in *Dubliners*, we read: “Her faith was bounded by her kitchen but, if she was put to it, she could believe also in the banshee and in the Holy Ghost” (135).
8. This is the original title of Yeats’s *Irish Fairy and Folk Tales* in the reference list below.
9. Hearn recorded another Yuki-Onna in his first book after coming to Japan, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1894). According to Hearn’s informant, it is a “White One” doing nothing special, but just scaring those encountering it. Like the creature in “Mujina,” the actions taken by this Yuki-Onna are surprisingly similar to those of the banshee in Todhunter’s story discussed in this article. While “at night she [the Yuki-Onna] rises up sometimes, taller than the trees, and looks about a little while, and then falls back in a shower of snow” (Hearn, *Glimpses* 338), the banshee stands up before the narrator Thomas, swelling to be “as tall as Nelson’s Pillar,” and then gliding away into the “sthrame [sic]” (Yeats, *Fairy* 121). Furthermore, Hearn adds

a strange footnote to this Yuki-Onna tale, stating that he heard another story of the Yuki-Onna who seduces men and sucks their blood (338). Hearn did not write any more about this Western-style vampiric snow woman in his later writing career. As for this footnote of Hearn's, see Makino, "Toki" *wo Tsunagu Kotoba* 165-66.

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