

Presented by Mia Mann

What is a Kappa?

Notable traits of the kappa include:

- A basin of water on their head
- Bowl-cut hairstyle
- Sexual perversion
- Water-dwelling
- A love of cucumbers and Sumō
- Mischievous



Kappa from Gazu hyakkiyagyo by Toriyama Sekin

Methods and Results:

This section covers trends and observations from my content analysis of three media pieces from three different decades of the modern period that feature kappa characters in speaking roles.



Summer Days with Coo (2007)



Nura: Rise of the Yokai Clan (2010)



Sarazanmai (2019)

Appearances:

- associated with nostalgia or traditionality (inspired by Gegege no Kitaro).
- The kappa as a relic of the past.
- The kappa as a mascot.

Behaviors:

- love of sumō and cucumbers
- Mischief
- desire to protect nature
- Representations often alluded to an ideal past during which yokai lived unbound by human intervention.
- The kappa as an outlet to discuss difficult topics.

怖い(kowai) to 可愛い (kawaii): The Transformation of the Kappa and Tsuchigumo in Japanese Media

Yokai Defenition:



“weird or mysterious creatures, a monster or fantastic being, a spirit or a sprite.”

- Michael Dillan Foster Foster, Pandemonium and Parade" (2008), 94.

Image: Soma no furu-dairi ni Masakado no himegimi Takiyasha

Conclusion:

- Yokai have remained significant due to their ability to morph themselves to fit narrative needs.
- As Japanese productions continue to reach global audiences, the definition of yokai is subject to change again in response to shifting cultural needs in the context of global identity through media production.



Nōsatsu of kappa and cucumber (late Edo period)

What is a Tsuchigumo?

Notable traits of the Tsuchigumo include:

- Social outsiders
- Indigenous stereotype
- Pit dwelling
- Masculine and feminine



Tsuchigumo sōshi picture scroll (1185-1333)

Methods and Results:

This section covers trends and observations from my content analysis of three media pieces from three different decades of the modern period that feature tsuchigumo characters in speaking roles.

Appearances:

- Sexual and threatening appearance has continued.
- varied genders and aesthetics



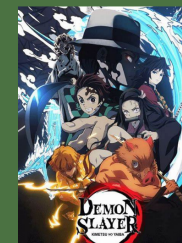
Karas (2005)

Behaviors:

- Antagonistic
- Occasionally sympathetic
- Smaller spider offspring
- Living on a mountain or a pit
- Otherness from society continues as a trait.
- The tsuchigumo is no longer associated with obvious indigenous stereotypes.
- Contemporary tsuchigumo narratives trend towards incorporating multidimensional framing of tsuchigumo motives and moral alignments.



Nura: Rise of the Yokai Clan (2010)



Demon Slayer (2020)