

Report on Activities of Death: *Agora*

デス：アゴラの活動に関する報告

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Project: *Yokai* 2020

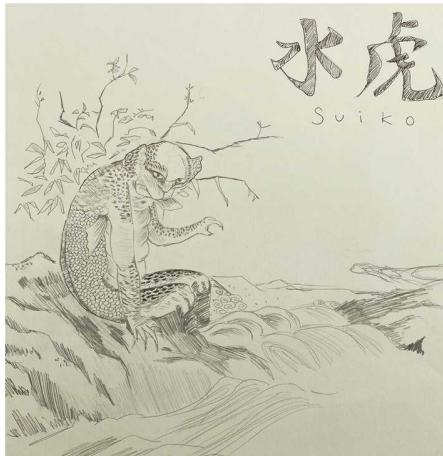
In the fall of 2020, a project was devised which involved the creation of pictures of *Yokai*. With the spread of covid-19 across the world and the continuing pandemic, the *yokai*, *Amabie*, became popular in the news, both in Japan and abroad. *Amabie* is a *yokai* that is said to project those who see it from disease. With this in mind, Project *Yokai* 2020 was designed for students at Hirosaki Gakuin University to create a narrative surrounding *yokai* as they might appear in everyday life.

The hope was to bring attention to the folklore surrounding *yokai* beyond that which is known about *Amabie*. *Yokai* are an important aspect of Japanese folklore yet are often relegated to the realm of children's animation or seen as cute characters without any deeper cultural significance.

Participants in this project were asked to consider what sort of *yokai* might be found around Aomori prefecture, and what those *yokai* might be doing. This was to both raise the participants awareness of the wide range of *yokai* that exist in Japanese lore, and also for them to consider the cultural implications of those *yokai*. By researching and writing about these *yokai*, students considered both the *yokai* within the context of Aomori prefecture, as well as in the context of the cultural representation of those *yokai* both in traditional literature and pop culture.

The result of this project was over 20 illustrations with accompanying text. A selection of these *yokai* and text are presented below.

Suiko



This *Yokai* attacks humans to gain rank amongst *Kappa*. In Aomori prefecture, it attacks children who are playing in the water and drags them to their death. They used to be in Iwaki river and there are tales of children drowning after being attacked by *Suiko*.

Yuki Onna



This *Yokai* wears a white kimono and she has white, blue, or black hair. She is very beautiful. If you touch her skin, your hands will freeze. If you meet her, she will ask you to hold her baby, if you do, the baby will get heavier and heavier until you die covered in snow. She lives in snowy mountains, so if you are in the *Hakkoda* mountains in winter, you might meet her.

Ringo Oni Onna