
The Benefits of Humanising Ghosts: The Demon Queller in the Popular Imagination in Early Modern China and Japan

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Detail of Utagawa Kuniyoshi, *The Demon Queller Exorcizes Demons Quickly* (see p. 14)

The demon queller (Chinese: Zhong Kui, Japanese: Shōki) straddled the porous divide between the world of ghosts and the world of the living in early modern China and Japan. He started out as a ghostly apparition protecting Tang Dynasty Emperor Xuanzong (r. 713-56) in his dream. Despite being a ghost, he shared in the experience of human struggles. In life, he had been so distraught by his ugliness and failure at the civil service examination that he committed suicide. In the popular imagination, he combined human traits with apotropaic powers, protecting homes, travellers, and the young against demons and disease. He used his fearsome looks to keep danger away while his insight into human frailties allowed him to be a more effective protector.

This article discusses how people's familiarity with the demon queller engendered infinite modes of drawing him close to the human world, and of showing him as an ally in the struggle against demons and disease in early modern China and Japan. His image was malleable depending on which aspect of his personality people wished to emphasise. As part of New Year celebrations, he was brought close to the human world, and by the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) his countenance adorned a



multitude of auspicious objects, making him a familiar presence in people's lives. In popular prints produced in Edo, the demon queller emerged as a powerful figure combining fearsome and avuncular qualities (fig. 1). He shared in the pleasures of Edoites, peeping at young women as a libidinous old man or frequenting brothels.¹ As Edo prints took a satirical turn in the nineteenth century, the familiarity, and the parodic qualities of the demon queller's image allowed print designers to vent their frustration at the hypocritical moral codes of the ruling samurai elite

Humanising the Image of Zhong Kui in China

In orthodox Daoist practices, Zhong Kui never gained the status of an independent deity in the sense that there was no shrine or prayer solely dedicated to him.² However, his ambiguous and multifaceted identities that placed him at the juncture of the real and the supernatural made him an acceptable and

1. Anonymous, Zhong Kui Vanquishes a Demon. *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji* 新編連相搜神廣記., xia.123-24. Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1989. Also Van Von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture*, p. 127.



2.

Yan Geng 顏庚 (13th-14th centuries), Detail of *The Demon-Queller Zhong Kui Giving His Sister Away in Marriage* (Zhong Kui jiamei tu 鍾馗嫁妹圖). Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368). Metropolitan Museum.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1990.134.

popular figure in early modern everyday life. Starting in the eighth century, he became the guardian of households and communities. On the one hand, he continued to appear as a ferocious demon-quelling deity in New Year paintings, but on the other hand, he was also presented as a humane and comical figure, a solitary scholar, a drunk old man, a caring brother, or a hilarious unrefined man looking into a mirror.³ The open-endedness of his identities made his appearance as an elderly companion and protector of children a logical move.

The flexibility of Zhong Kui's identities lay in his disparate origins. In early medieval China, his name could be written as *zhongkui* (literally, "the tip of cluster mellow"), *zhongchui* (literally, "the end of a hammer"), or eventually more commonly as Zhong Kui, a deity in *nuo* exorcist rites.⁴ From the Tang Dynasty (618-906) onward, he started to assume human form. In his previous life, he had been an outstanding scholar named Zhong Kui, but unjustly failed the civil service examination due to his unpleasant looks. Out of shame and despair, he committed suicide. When ghosts played mischief in the place of Emperor Xuanzong, making him ill, Zhong Kui appeared in his dream. He killed the demons and thus affected the swift recovery of the

emperor. Zhong Kui was deified as the demon-queller to protect people's homes from evil spirits.⁵ After his cure, Emperor Xuanzong ordered the renowned painter Wu Daozi (680-circa 760) to draw Zhong Kui. It is said that in Wu Daozi's painting, Zhong Kui wore a blue robe with a tablet of official rank attached to his waist and a leather boot on one foot, and he had an ugly face with an askew beard and unbound hair. More recognisably, Wu's painting depicts a moment when Zhong Kui grasps a demon with his left hand, gouging the demon's eye with the second finger of his right hand.⁶ Although Wu's original painting has since been lost, its iconographic features were maintained in later representations. As Richard von Glahn suggests, the connection between a printed image in the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) and Wu Daozi's tradition is clearly visible (fig. 1).⁷ However, the violent slaughter of the ghost was not always popular, and in the Song (960-1279) and Yuan Dynasties, it was increasingly replaced by more playful, celebratory scenes associated with marrying off his younger sister or patrolling his arena. It is on these occasions that his humane characteristics came to the fore.

No sources explicitly explain the origin of the younger sister of Zhong Kui, but in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), Zhong Kui

and his younger sister were recorded to appear together in the grand procession at Kaifeng on New Year's Eve.⁸ In the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279) capital, Lin'an (in Zhejiang province), palace troupes as well as beggars would perform supernatural beings including Zhong Kui and his younger sister starting in the last month of the year; they struck gongs and drums to ward off evil spirits.⁹ Undoubtedly, the New Year procession was spectacular and appealing to its audiences. Using human beings instead of effigies in the performances created room for interpreting him with humane and entertaining qualities. The emergence of his younger sister also added a humane dimension. The Northern Song imperial catalogue, *The Painting Catalog of the Xuanhe Era* (*Xuanhe huapu*), records that Zhou Fang (907–975) painted *The Little Sister of Zhong Kui* (*Zhong Kui shi xiaomei tu*).¹⁰ Zhong Kui and his sister can be found on three extant paintings by Gong Kai (1221–1305), Yan Geng (active Southern Song dynasty), and Yan Hui (active 1270–1310) (fig. 2).¹¹ In these paintings, his hat and garment which were often associated with an official are tattered and worn, and his coarse beard makes him appear like a pariah. However, his appearance was different from ghosts and beggars who were often depicted half-naked, grotesque, and deformed. He is always depicted fully clothed, and his determined eyes and upright posture clearly distinguish him from marginalised subalterns like beggars. These paintings may originally have had a close relationship with the New Year's Eve parade. The ritual resemblance between such a parade with a wedding parade, including the presence of a girl on a horse, musical performance, and objects carried by the retinue eventually led to the interpretation of the New Year parade as the wedding parade of his younger sister. In this setting, Zhong Kui played the role of a caring brother in the popular imagination. His family

continued to expand in various dramas as well as pictorial representations, and by the late Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), it had come to include not only his younger sister, but also his sister-in-law, his wife and son, his parents, and parents-in-law.¹²

His playfulness and his family made his secularised imagery logical and acceptable: He was a solitary scholar, a drunken old man, a caring brother, and a hilarious unrefined man looking into a mirror and a children's companion. These themes did not seem to have originated from any textual sources, but from the interaction and dialogues between various popular pictorial traditions. Zhong Kui was often incorporated into the popular theme of the so-called 'children at play' (*yingxi*). In a painting attributed to Su Hanchen (1094–1172) who was famed for drawing children, four children are fully engrossed in playing with a Zhong Kui string puppet (fig. 3). In another painting, *Children Playing in Summer* (*Xiajing xiyong*), the figurine of Zhong Kui is placed on a table among food and flowers. The five pestilences depicted on the fan held by the boy, the sticky rice dumplings on the table, and the toad on a leash in the foreground point to the Duanwu Festival (Japanese: *Tango no sekku*) on the fifth day of the fifth month. Zhong Kui became associated with this festival in the late Ming Dynasty (fig. 4). In the Qing Dynasty album *Pleasures in a Peaceful World* (*Shengping leshi*), Zhong Kui was performed by a child on the fifteenth day of the first month (fig. 5). The performance of Zhong Kui in both paintings reminds us of the New Year procession in the Song Dynasty. At the same time, situating him in the context of children's play blurred his authority as a deity, connecting him more closely to the realm of familial relations.

Zhong Kui also appeared as an elderly man accompanying children at play. To some extent, children resemble little ghosts in terms of their size and naughtiness. The

3.

Attributed to Su Hanchen
蘇漢臣 (1094–1172),
Children's Puppet Theater
(*Ying xi tu* 嬰戲圖). Song
dynasty.

Palace Museum, Taipei.
<https://theme.npm.edu.tw/opendata/DigitImageSets>





4.

Anonymous, *Children*

Playing in Summer (Xiajing

xiying tu 夏景戲嬰圖). Ming

copy based on the Yuan

original.

Palace Museum, Taipei.

[https://theme.npm.edu.tw/
opendata/DigitImageSets](https://theme.npm.edu.tw/opendata/DigitImageSets)



combination of Zhong Kui and children thus endorsed a two-fold auspiciousness: the protection offered by the elderly Zhong Kui and the familial prosperity resting on numerous young children. This relationship became more apparent in the painting *Zhong Kui Teased by Children* by Xu Baizhai (1777-1853) (fig. 6). The auspiciousness of the theme is highlighted by a flying bat (*fu*), which is a rebus play for blessing (*fu*).

In early modern China, Zhong Kui's image underwent a shift from a deified guardian who exercised his power to subdue demons to a humanised figure who took care of his family and enjoyed playing with children. The deification of Zhong Kui and his

humanisation within the context of familial relations, however, should not be understood as a binary pair of concepts. Rather, while being a humanised deity, he came even closer to the fabric of people's daily lives. The merged themes of Zhong Kui and children at play show that images actively contributed to producing new meanings and interpretations in this process.

The Demon Queller as Mirror Image and Protector of *Edokko*

In early modern Japan, the demon queller featured prominently as a protector and even as a powerful remedy against disease. His

5.
Anonymous, *Pleasures in the Peaceful World* (*Shengping leshi tu* 昇平樂事圖). Qing Dynasty.

Palace Museum, Taipei.
<https://theme.npm.edu.tw/opendata/DigitImageSets.aspx?sNo=04012827>



6. Xu Baizhai. the Zhong Kui Teased by Children (Zhong Kui xipan 鍾馗戲判). Place unknown.

Wang Shucun 王樹村, Xu Baizhai 徐白齋 (Shanghai: Renmin meishu, 1982), p. 25.



7. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, Posthumous Portrait of Ichikawa Danjūrō the eighth at the Sai no Kawara, woodblock print dated sixth day of the eighth month of 1854.

Tokyo Metropolitan Library, 5721-C32/東C5721-C032.

fearsome yet familiar countenance adorned printed *senjafuda* votive slips, medicine wrappers, and talismanic prints produced in the city of Otsu.¹³ At the same time, in the popular imagination, he was also envisioned as a special protector of children. Banners depicting a standing demon queller holding a sword and donning a scholar's hat were raised during the Boys' Day Festival (*Tango no sekku*) on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.¹⁴ In the nineteenth century, towards the end of the Edo Period (1615-1868), his multivalent image as protector and remedy allowed him to be appropriated in satirical prints and satirical books (*kibyōshi*) which drew him into townspeople's biting commentary on dysfunctional and corrupt samurai authority.¹⁵

Being an intermedial phenomenon, the demon queller connected the world of ghosts and the world of the living, and the desires of Edoites to protect themselves while

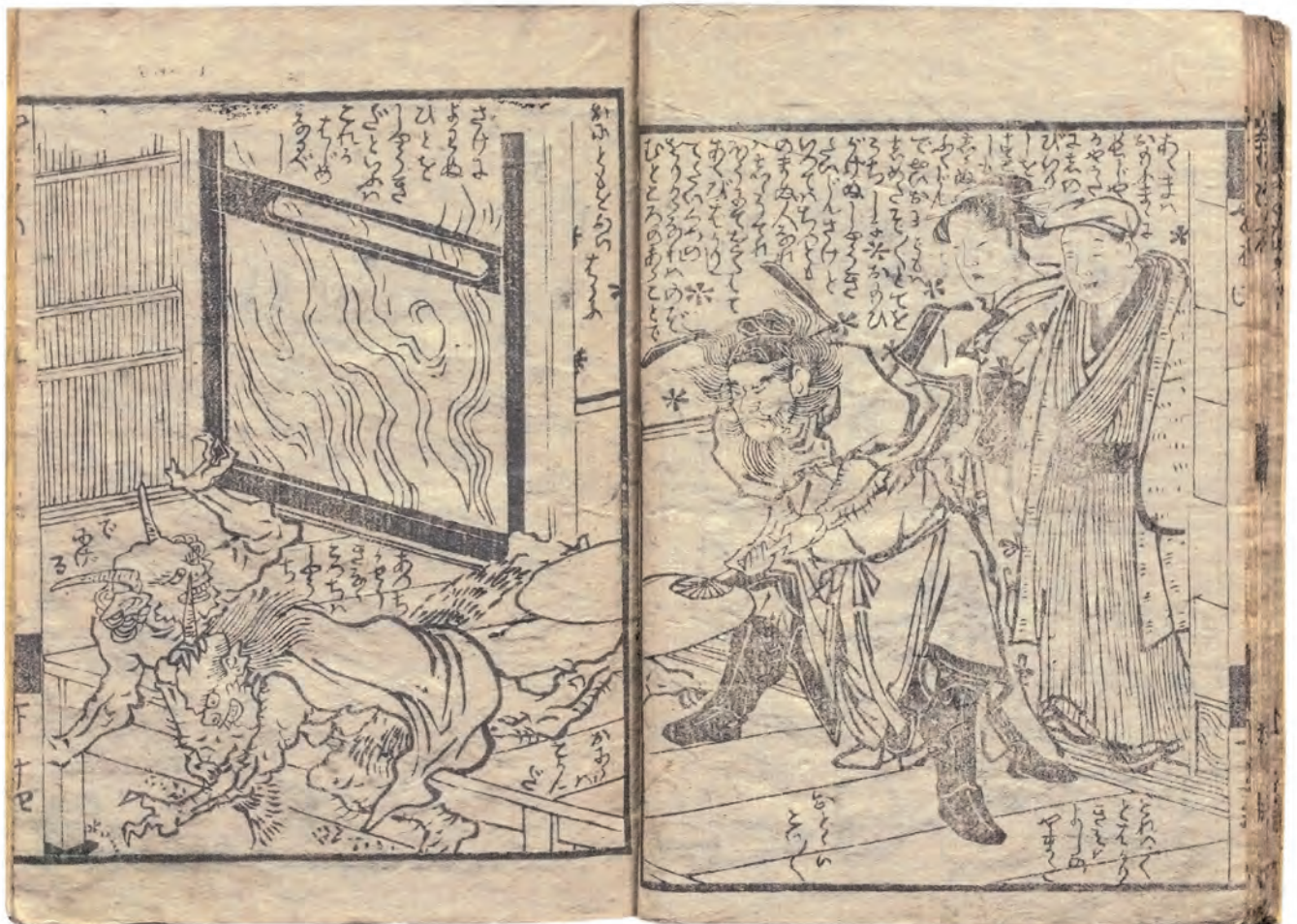
expressing pride in townspeople's culture. He quelled Edoites' fears just as he shared their feelings and desires. Life in Edo was precarious for townspeople regardless of whether they were affluent merchants or struggling to make ends meet as day labourers. In the densely populated city, frequent fires forced people to be ready to evacuate at a moment's notice. Thriving in the face of impending danger required resilience. In this sense, Edoites valued courage and military prowess, and they identified these qualities in historical warriors rather than contemporary samurai¹⁶. They also prided themselves in a standoffish disposition which people that were born and bred in Edo, so-called *Edokko*, were believed to display from birth.¹⁷ Kabuki actors who were the champions of *Edokko* embodied the cossetted character trait of standing one's ground in the face of unjust authority.¹⁸

Following struggles with debt as well as professional rivalries, actor Ichikawa Danjūrō the eighth (1823–54) committed suicide in the eighth month of 1854.¹⁹ This unfortunate event inspired a flurry of posthumous portraits. An uncensored print which was probably designed by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798–1861) shows him at the *Sai no Kawara* (*Children’s Limbo in Hell*) bank of the *River of Three Crossings* (*Sanzu no Kawa*), fighting hell demons with a bamboo *shakuhachi* flute (fig. 7).²⁰ Danjūrō’s posthumous name was ‘Believer in Growing Purity’ (*Jōen Shinshi*). Accordingly, in this print, he has taken on the role of Ksitigarba Bodhisattva who safeguards the souls of children at the *Sai no Kawara*. By fighting the hell demons, he is not just defending himself but he is also protecting a group of children who – emboldened by his bravery – are throwing stones at the hell demons. These



8. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, privately commissioned print depicting Ichikawa Danjūrō the eighth as the Demon Queller, dated 1849. British Museum, 1906,1220,0.1342.

9. Double-page illustration from *Shicchin Manpō, Warai masu yakubarai no kōshaku* (*Lecture on Increasing Laughter and Removing Disasters*), 1791. National Diet Library Tokyo, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/9892690>





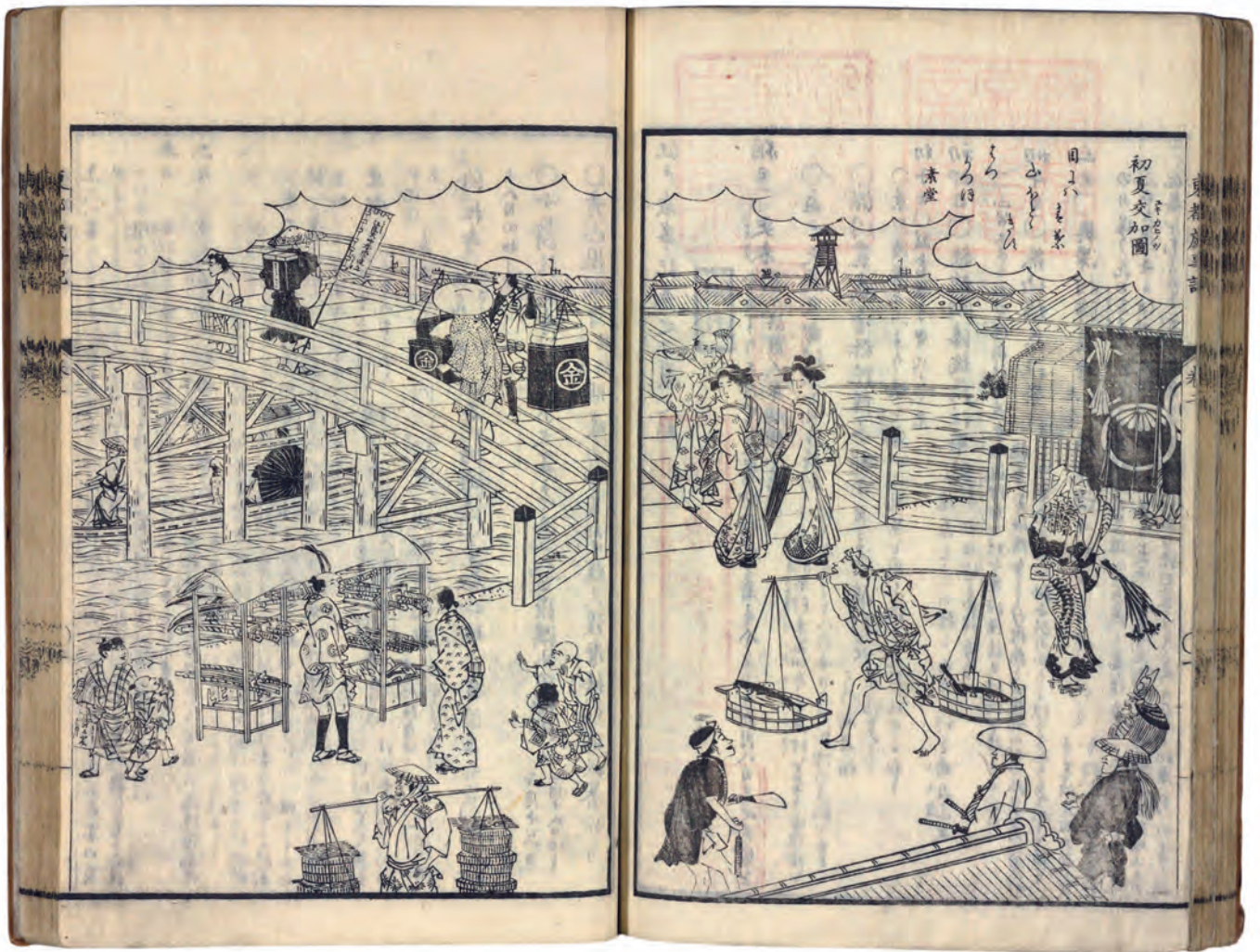
children represent his loyal supporters in Edo who had been suffering under the unjust authority of the Shogunate during the crisis years of the Tenpō Era (1830-44) and after. Danjūrō is repaying their loyalty by keeping them safe from the stooges of hell and by extension from the government. Danjūrō and his father suffered under the sumptuary regulations of the Shogunate, which forced them to take refuge in Osaka. When Danjūrō left for Osaka in the fifth month of 1849 to meet his father, his supporters commissioned a private print to pray for his safety (fig. 8). The print depicts Danjūrō in the guise of the demon queller on a Boys' Day Festival banner, staring down a meek demon that gasps in horror. His portrait is rendered in red as additional protection since the red demon

queller was a medical remedy that had the power to ward off disease as well. The large carp banner in the background and the demon taking flight convey his supporters' heartfelt wishes for the success of his endeavours in Osaka.

In the view of Edoites, the demon queller's siding with townspeople's concerns was unwavering. In a satirical *kibyōshi* by Shicchin Manpō (1762-1831) titled *Lecture on Increasing Laughter and Removing Disasters* (*Warai masu yakubarai no kōshaku*, 1791), the demon queller steps in to protect the fortune of a wealthy merchant who had been let down by the Seven Lucky Gods (*Shichifukujin*). Images of the Seven Lucky Gods were displayed during the New Year as bringers of good fortune, often assembled in a boat

10. Utagawa Kuniyoshi, *The Demon Queller Exorcizes Demons Quickly* (*Shōki San Jaki ni Sokuto*), diptych print dated eighth month of 1858.

British Museum, 2008,3037.18206.



bearing treasure. Drawing the lucky gods too close to the human world, however, could have unforeseeable consequences, and this merchant had overdone it by hosting a party for the gods. The gods became so inebriated that they fell asleep, allowing demons to enter the merchant's home. Fortuitously, the demon queller stepped in, chasing the demons away (fig. 9).²¹

The demon queller's ability to stand by at the ready was vital in the protective ecology of Edoites who drew upon a multitude of potent deities. Prints that protected people from disease sometimes depicted the demon queller side by side with local deities as an additional source of protection.²² During a cholera epidemic in Edo in the fall of 1858, the demon queller did not just quell disease but he also

exorcised people's inner demons.²³ A diptych print designed by Utagawa Kuniyoshi and titled *The Demon Queller Exorcizes Demons Quickly* (*Shoki San Jaki ni Sokuto*) shows him expelling the inner demons (*kokoro no oni*) that had caused a reveler to overindulge in drink (fig. 10). He rushes forward, his hand stretched out in an admonishing gesture. Edoites wished for swift and effective relief even from self-inflicted pain, and they envisioned the demon queller as a useful remedy in this regard.

However, the demon queller was more than a powerful medical remedy. He also featured in printed books celebrating the culture of Edo such as the *Tōto Saijiki* (*Record of the Annual Events of the Eastern Capital*, 1838) authored by Saitō Gesshin (1804-78). The first illustration (fig. 11) of the third volume of the

11. Double-page illustration for the fourth month, *Tōto Saijiki*, *Record of the Annual Events of the Eastern Capital*, 1838.

National Diet Library Tokyo, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/8369317>



Tōto Saijiki is dedicated to early summer which corresponds to the fourth lunar month. The illustrations of the fourth and fifth months in the Tōto Saijiki form an overarching metanarrative that conveys Edoites' concern for their children who they considered to be treasures (*kodakara*). The first illustration depicts a group of young boys on their way to school – one boy is carrying a *tenarai sōshi* booklet for writing practice and he is hurrying towards a street vendor selling toy swords. Edo's male offspring was expected to resist danger by developing physical strength and courage. Dolls and prints depicting historical warriors that were displayed during the Boys' Day Festival in the fifth month reflected these wishes. The fifth month was a dangerous season as it brought summer rains, rising

temperatures, and diseases. People in Edo and elsewhere sought protection from these by adorning the eaves of their houses with irises which were thought to expel evil and with dolls representing historical warriors. These dolls harked back to the military campaigns of the war deity Chi You (Japanese: *Shiyū*) in ancient China, as is explained in the *Illustrated Compilation of Japanese Agriculture* (*Yamato Kōsaku Eshū*) dating to the Genroku Period (1688-1704).²⁴

The illustrations of the fifth month in the Tōto Saijiki show Edo's streets lined with temporary stalls and decorated with banners showing the demon queller and *koi* carps for the Boys' Day Festival. The scene is brimming with a festival atmosphere. The reader is also treated to a close-up view of the celebrations

12.
Double-page illustration for the fifth month, Tōto Saijiki, *Record of the Annual Events of the Eastern Capital*, 1838.

British Museum, 2008,3037.18206.



(fig. 12). An excited Edoite has just dropped an offering of rice cakes wrapped in oak leaves on the floor while a group of young boys are playing with a toy sword. The rice cakes are in the way of a group of travelling samurai who are not amused. All the while, the figure of the demon queller on the banner watches calmly. Staying serious was befitting of someone wearing a scholar's hat. As the people of Edo were engrossed in the endearing microcosm of their annual customs, the demon queller stood ever watchful, his sword and boots serving as reminders of the constant presence of danger.

Edo prints sometimes reinterpreted his watchfulness as the libidinous desire of a reveler in the pleasure quarters, but overall, he was depicted as a serious deity devoted to

the task of quelling danger and disease in adversarial situations. The adversarial contexts in which the demon queller displayed his powers came to a head in the spring and summer of 1868 when invading forces from southern Japan expelled the Shogun, bringing civil war to Edo. During this time, a satirical print designed by Utagawa Yoshifuji (1828-87) rendered in the style of *children-at-play* (*kodomo asobi*) prints shows the invading forces entering Edo Castle with their treasured token – Golden Boy (Kinchan), the juvenile future Emperor Meiji (1852-1912). Meanwhile, the shogunal forces are crouching next to a Boys' Day Festival display of warrior dolls and a banner displaying the demon queller holding a sword (fig. 13).²⁵ They watch on passively as the invading forces claim possession of the dolls and the banner.

13.
Utagawa Yoshifuji, *Children at Play – The Liveliness of Children at the Boys' Festival (Kodomo Asobi Tango no Kisei)*, 1868, diptych print.


National Diet Library Tokyo,
<https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/1310268>

The demon queller was envisioned as an ever-watchful presence in people's daily lives in printed media in Edo, mirroring Edoites' cossetted qualities of vigilance and resilience by bringing his protective powers to the fore when needed. Paying attention to the various contexts in which the demon queller was depicted gives a sense of Edoites' awareness of the underlying fragility of their seemingly prosperous existence, hinting at the precarious environment in which they conducted their daily lives.

Conclusion

In early modern China and Japan, the demon queller acquired human traits that allowed him to be interwoven into the fabric of the family and urban life. His popular image combined seeming contradictions such as his seriousness as a scholar and his unruliness as a ghost. He was represented as ever watchful while also sharing in the virtues and the vices of the people he protected. He was closely associated with children who he protected as familiar avuncular. His countenance adorned a multitude of apotropaic objects, making him a constant presence in daily life and in festivals in the New Year and in the fifth month. Satirical prints in Edo envisioned him as mirror image of the idealized military values of bravery and resilience that *Edokko* aspired to. Believing that military prowess would quell demons and disease, people in Edo emphasised his warrior-like presence, symbolised through his sword. Siding with the perspective of the common people in early modern China and Japan, the demon queller became more than a ghost who comfortably negotiated the porous divide between the ghostly and the human realms

Acknowledgements

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NOTES

- 1 A pillar print design by Suzuki Harunobu (d. 1770) shows the demon queller peeping at a woman taking a bath in a stream. Source: Chicago Art Institute, URL: <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/89059/shoki-in-love>
- 2 von Glahn, Richard, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 2004, p. 123.
- 3 Shih Shou-hsien, 'Ya su de jiaoliu: Wen Zhengming, Zhong Kui yu dazhong wenhua', in: *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* (Taida Journal of Art History) 16, 2004, pp. 307-339. Hsü, Ginger Cheng-Chi, 'The Drunken Demon Queller: Chung K'uei in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Painting', in: *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 3, 1996, pp. 141-175. Little, Stephen, 'The Demon Queller and the Art of of Qiu Ying (Ch'iu Ying)', in: *Artibus Asiae*, 46.1/2, 1985, pp. 5-128.
- 4 Lu Eting, *Zhong Kui kao* (*Studies of Zhong Kui*), Zhonghua shuju, Beijing 2017, pp. 1-17.
- 5 von Glahn, Richard, *The Sinister Way* (2004), pp. 122-128. Tsai, Chun-Yi Joyce, 'Imagining the Supernatural Grotesque: Paintings of Zhong Kui and Demons in the Late Southern Song (1127-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasties' (PhD Dissertation), Columbia University 2015, pp. 56-61.
- 6 von Glahn, *The Sinister Way* (2004), p. 125. Little, Stephen, 'The Demon Queller and the Art of of Qiu Ying (Ch'iu Ying)', in: *Artibus Asiae* 46 1/2, 1985, pp. 5-128.
- 7 von Glahn, *The Sinister Way* (2004), p. 127.
- 8 Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing menghua lu jianzhu* (*The Eastern Capital: A Dream of Splendors, Annotated*), Zhonghua shuju, Beijing 2006, Vol. 2, juan 10, p. 958.
- 9 Wu Zhimu, *Meng liang lu*, Vol. 8.5, juan 6, Wanxiang shuju, Zhengzhou, 2017.
- 10 Zhao Ji, *Xuanhe huapu*, in Yu Anlan, *Huashi congshu* (Collection of Treatises on Painting) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin meishu, 1963), juan 7.3, p. 70.
- 11 The titles of these paintings, *Zhong Kui's Inspection Tour* (*Zhongshan chuyou tu*) by Gong Kai, *Zhong Kui Giving His Sister Away in Marriage* (*Zhong Kui jiamei tu*) by Yan Geng, and *The Lantern Night Excursion of Zhong Kui* by Yan Hui, are given in the modern times.
- 12 Hong Hui-wen, 'Qianxi Yan Geng Zhong Kui jiamei', in: *Tanyi fenzi* 29, 2017:09, pp. 16-29.
- 13 Salter, Rebecca, *Japanese Popular Prints: From Votive Slips to Playing Cards*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 2006, p. 115.
- 14 The banners are discussed in detail in Ueda Nobumichi, 'Sekku Nobori no Kenkyū: Rekishiteki Hensen to Tezome Kōtei' in: *Chiiki Kyōdō Kenkyū* 3, 2016, pp. 21-8.
- 15 Discussed in Steele, William, *Alternative Narratives in Modern Japanese History*, Routledge, Richmond 2003. Nagura Tetsuzo, *Etoki Bakumatsu Fūshiga to Tenno*, Kashiwa Shobō Company, Tokyo 2007.
- 16 Reider, Noriko, *Japanese Demon Lore: Oni from Ancient Times to the Present*, Utah State University, 2010, p. 96.
- 17 Screech, Timon, *Tokyo before Tokyo: Power and Magic in the Shogun's City of Edo*, Reaktion Books, London 2020, p. 22.
- 18 Discussed in Gerstle, Andrew, 'Flowers of Edo: Eighteenth-Century Kabuki and Its Patrons', in: *Asian Theatre Journal* 4, no. 1, 1987, pp. 52-75.
- 19 Nishiyama Kazuo, *Edo Culture: Daily Life and Urban Diversions, 1600-1868*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 1997, p. 209.
- 20 The *shakuhachi* was an attribute of disenfranchised samurai who used it for self-defense in lieu of a sword.
- 21 Takashi Miura, 'The Buddha in Yoshiwara: Religion and Visual Entertainment in Tokugawa Japan as Seen through Kibyōshi', in: *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 44, no. 2, 2017, p. 232.
- 22 An example is the print *Hashika nochi no Yōjō* (*Taking Care after the Measles*) designed by Utagawa Yoshitora, and dated 1862. It shows the demon queller helping Sakata no Kintoki, one of the followers of the historical warrior Minamoto no Yoritomo (948-1021), drive away the spirits of various diseases including measles and cholera.
- 23 The cholera epidemic of 1858 is discussed in Bowman Jannetta, Ann, *Epidemics and Mortality in Early Modern Japan*. Princeton University Press, Princeton 2014.
- 24 Mueller, Doreen, 'Children-at-play Prints and the Affective Nature of Political Caricature in Edo in 1868', in: *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident* 46, 2023, p. 233.
- 25 Nagura, "Etoki Bakumatsu Fūshiga to Tenno," pp. 68-73. For a discussion of the satirical meanings of children-at-play prints see Mueller, Doreen, 'Children-at-play Prints and the Affective Nature of Political Caricature in Edo in 1868' (2023), pp. 213-242.