

= Tengu =

Tengu ( 天狗 , " heavenly dog " ) are a type of legendary creature found in Japanese folk religion and are also considered a type of Shinto god ( kami ) or yōkai ( supernatural beings ) . Although they take their name from a dog @-@ like Chinese demon ( Tiangou ) , the tengu were originally thought to take the forms of birds of prey , and they are traditionally depicted with both human and avian characteristics . The earliest tengu were pictured with beaks , but this feature has often been humanized as an unnaturally long nose , which today is widely considered the tengu 's defining characteristic in the popular imagination .

Buddhism long held that the tengu were disruptive demons and harbingers of war . Their image gradually softened , however , into one of protective , if still dangerous , spirits of the mountains and forests . Tengu are associated with the ascetic practice known as Shugendō , and they are usually depicted in the distinctive garb of its followers , the yamabushi .

= = Image = =

The tengu in art appears in a large number of shapes , but it usually falls somewhere between a large , monstrous bird and a wholly anthropomorphized being , often with a red face or an unusually large or long nose . Early depictions of tengu show them as kite @-@ like beings who can take a human @-@ like form , often retaining avian wings , head or beak . The tengu 's long nose seems to have been conceived in the 14th century , likely as a humanization of the original bird 's bill . The tengu 's long noses ally them with the Shinto deity Sarutahiko , who is described in the Japanese historical text , the Nihon Shoki , with a similar proboscis measuring seven hand @-@ spans in length . In village festivals the two figures are often portrayed with identical red , phallic @-@ nosed mask designs .

Some of the earliest representations of tengu appear in Japanese picture scrolls , such as the Tengu-zōshi Emaki ( 天狗草子 ) , painted c . 1296 , which parodies high @-@ ranking priests by endowing them the hawk @-@ like beaks of tengu demons . Tengu are often pictured as taking the shape of some sort of priest . Beginning in the 13th century , tengu came to be associated in particular with the yamabushi , the mountain ascetics who practice Shugendō . The association soon found its way into Japanese art , where tengu are most frequently depicted in the yamabushi 's distinctive costume , which includes a small black cap ( 烏帽子 , tokin ) and a pom @-@ pommed sash ( 袴 , yuigesa ) . Due to their priestly aesthetic , they are often shown wielding the Shakujo , a distinct staff used by Buddhist monks .

Tengu are commonly depicted holding magical ha @-@ uchiwa ( 羽子 , " feather fan " ) , fans made of feathers . In folk tales , these fans sometimes have the ability to grow or shrink a person 's nose , but usually they are attributed the power to stir up great winds . Various other strange accessories may be associated with tengu , such as a type of tall , one @-@ toothed geta sandal often called tengu @-@ geta .

= = Origins = =

The term tengu and the characters used to write it are borrowed from the name of a fierce demon from Chinese folklore called tiāngōu . Chinese literature assigns this creature a variety of descriptions , but most often it is a fierce and anthropophagous canine monster that resembles a shooting star or comet . It makes a noise like thunder and brings war wherever it falls . One account from the Shù Yì Jì ( 述異記 , " A Collection of Bizarre Stories " ) , written in 1791 , describes a dog @-@ like tiāngōu with a sharp beak and an upright posture , but usually tiāngōu bear little resemblance to their Japanese counterparts .

The 23rd chapter of the Nihon Shoki , written in 720 , is generally held to contain the first recorded mention of tengu in Japan . In this account a large shooting star appears and is identified by a Buddhist priest as a " heavenly dog " , and much like the tiāngōu of China , the star precedes a military uprising . Although the Chinese characters for tengu are used in the text , accompanying

phonetic furigana characters give the reading as amatsukitsune ( heavenly fox ) . M.W. de Visser speculated that the early Japanese tengu may represent a conglomeration of two Chinese spirits : the ti?ngo? and the fox spirits called huli jing .

How the tengu was transformed from a dog @-@ meteor into a bird @-@ man is not clear . Some Japanese scholars have supported the theory that the tengu 's image derives from that of the Hindu eagle deity Garuda , who was pluralized in Buddhist scripture as one of the major races of non @-@ human beings . Like the tengu , the garuda are often portrayed in a human @-@ like form with wings and a bird 's beak . The name tengu seems to be written in place of that of the garuda in a Japanese sutra called the Emmy? Jiz? @-@ ky? ( ????? ) , but this was likely written in the Edo period , long after the tengu 's image was established . At least one early story in the Konjaku Monogatari describes a tengu carrying off a dragon , which is reminiscent of the garuda 's feud with the n?ga serpents . In other respects , however , the tengu 's original behavior differs markedly from that of the garuda , which is generally friendly towards Buddhism . De Visser has speculated that the tengu may be descended from an ancient Shinto bird @-@ demon which was syncretized with both the garuda and the ti?ngo? when Buddhism arrived in Japan . However , he found little evidence to support this idea .

A later version of the Kujiki , an ancient Japanese historical text , writes the name of Amanozako , a monstrous female deity born from the god Susanoo 's spat @-@ out ferocity , with characters meaning tengu deity ( ??? ) . The book describes Amanozako as a raging creature capable of flight , with the body of a human , the head of a beast , a long nose , long ears , and long teeth that can chew through swords . An 18th @-@ century book called the Tengu Meigik? ( ????? ) suggests that this goddess may be the true predecessor of the tengu , but the date and authenticity of the Kujiki , and of that edition in particular , remain disputed .

= = Evil spirits and angry ghosts = =

The Konjaku Monogatari , a collection of stories published in the late Heian Period , contains some of the earliest tales of tengu , already characterized as they would be for centuries to come . These tengu are the troublesome opponents of Buddhism , who mislead the pious with false images of the Buddha , carry off monks and drop them in remote places , possess women in an attempt to seduce holy men , rob temples , and endow those who worship them with unholy power . They often disguise themselves as priests or nuns , but their true form seems to be that of a kite .

Throughout the 12th and 13th centuries , accounts continued of tengu attempting to cause trouble in the world . They were now established as the ghosts of angry , vain , or heretical priests who had fallen on the " tengu @-@ realm " ( ??? , tengu? ) . They began to possess people , especially women and girls , and speak through their mouths ( kitsunetsuki ) . Still the enemies of Buddhism , the demons also turned their attention to the royal family . The Kojidan tells of an Empress who was possessed , and the ?kagami reports that Emperor Sanj? was made blind by a tengu , the ghost of a priest who resented the throne .

One notorious tengu from the 12th century was himself the ghost of an emperor . The H?gen Monogatari tells the story of Emperor Sutoku , who was forced by his father to abandon the throne . When he later raised the H?gen Rebellion to take back the country from Emperor Go @-@ Shirakawa , he was defeated and exiled to Sanuki Province on Shikoku . According to legend he died in torment , having sworn to haunt the nation of Japan as a great demon , and thus became a fearsome tengu with long nails and eyes like a kite 's .

In stories from the 13th century , tengu began to abduct young boys as well as the priests they had always targeted . The boys were often returned , while the priests would be found tied to the tops of trees or other high places . All of the tengu 's victims , however , would come back in a state of near death or madness , sometimes after having been tricked into eating animal dung .

The tengu of this period were often conceived of as the ghosts of the arrogant , and as a result the creatures have become strongly associated with vanity and pride . Today the Japanese expression tengu ni naru , literally , " becoming a tengu " , is still used to describe a conceited person .

= = Great and small demons = =

In the Genpei J?suiki , written in the late Kamakura period , a god appears to Go @-@ Shirakawa and gives a detailed account of tengu ghosts . He says that they fall onto the tengu road because , as Buddhists , they cannot go to Hell , yet as people with bad principles , they also cannot go to Heaven . He describes the appearance of different types of tengu : the ghosts of priests , nuns , ordinary men , and ordinary women , all of whom in life possessed excessive pride . The god introduces the notion that not all tengu are equal ; knowledgeable men become daitengu ( ??? , greater tengu ) , but ignorant ones become kotengu ( ??? , small tengu ) .

The philosopher Hayashi Razan lists the greatest of these daitengu as S?j?b? of Kurama , Tar?b? of Atago , and Jir?b? of Hira . The demons of Kurama and Atago are among the most famous tengu .

A section of the Tengu Meigik? , later quoted by Inoue Enry? , lists the daitengu in this order :

S?j?b? ( ??? ) of Mount Kurama

Tar?b? ( ??? ) of Mount Atago

Jir?b? ( ??? ) of the Hira Mountains

Sanjakub? ( ??? ) of Mount Akiba

Ry?h?b? ( ??? ) of Mount K?my?

Buzenb? ( ??? ) of Mount Hiko

H?kib? ( ??? ) of Daisen ( mountain )

My?gib? ( ??? ) of Mount Ueno ( Ueno Park )

Sankib? ( ??? ) of Itsukushima

Zenkib? ( ??? ) of Mount ?mine

K?tenb? ( ??? ) of Katsuragi

Tsukuba @-@ h?in ( ???? ) of Hitachi Province

Daranib? ( ???? ) of Mount Fuji

Naigubu ( ??? ) of Mount Takao

Sagamib? ( ??? ) of Shiramine

Sabur? ( ?? ) of Mount Iizuna

Ajari ( ??? ) of Higo Province

Daitengu are often pictured in a more human @-@ like form than their underlings , and due to their long noses , they may also called hanatakatengu ( ???? , tall @-@ nosed tengu ) . Kotengu may conversely be depicted as more bird @-@ like . They are sometimes called Karasu @-@ Tengu ( ??? , crow tengu ) , or koppa- or konoha @-@ tengu ( ???? , ?????foliage tengu ) . Inoue Enry? described two kinds of tengu in his Tenguron : the great daitengu , and the small , bird @-@ like konoha @-@ tengu who live in Cryptomeria trees . The konoha @-@ tengu are noted in a book from 1746 called the Shokoku Rijin Dan ( ????? ) , as bird @-@ like creatures with wings two meters across which were seen catching fish in the ?i River , but this name rarely appears in literature otherwise .

Creatures that do not fit the classic bird or yamabushi image are sometimes called tengu . For example , tengu in the guise of wood @-@ spirits may be called guhin ( occasionally written kuhin ) ( ?? , dog guests ) , but this word can also refer to tengu with canine mouths or other features . The people of K?chi Prefecture on Shikoku believe in a creature called shibaten or shibatengu ( ???? , ??? , lawn tengu ) , but this is a small childlike being who loves sum? wrestling and sometimes dwells in the water , and is generally considered one of the many kinds of kappa . Another water @-@ dwelling tengu is the kawatengu ( ??? , river tengu ) of the Greater Tokyo Area . This creature is rarely seen , but it is believed to create strange fireballs and be a nuisance to fishermen .

= = Protective spirits and deities = =

The Shasekish? , a book of Buddhist parables from the Kamakura period , makes a point of distinguishing between good and bad tengu . The book explains that the former are in command of the latter and are the protectors , not opponents , of Buddhism - although the flaw of pride or

ambition has caused them to fall onto the demon road , they remain the same basically good , dharma @-@ abiding persons they were in life .

The tengu 's unpleasant image continued to erode in the 17th century . Some stories now presented them as much less malicious , protecting and blessing Buddhist institutions rather than menacing them or setting them on fire . According to a legend in the 18th @-@ century Kaidan Toshitoko ( ????? ) , a tengu took the form of a yamabushi and faithfully served the abbot of a Zen monastery until the man guessed his attendant 's true form . The tengu 's wings and huge nose then reappeared . The tengu requested a piece of wisdom from his master and left , but he continued , unseen , to provide the monastery with miraculous aid .

In the 18th and 19th centuries , tengu came to be feared as the vigilant protectors of certain forests . In the 1764 collection of strange stories Sanshu Kidan ( ???? ) , a tale tells of a man who wanders into a deep valley while gathering leaves , only to be faced with a sudden and ferocious hailstorm . A group of peasants later tell him that he was in the valley where the guhin live , and anyone who takes a single leaf from that place will surely die . In the S?zan Chomon Kish? ( ?????? ) , written in 1849 , the author describes the customs of the wood @-@ cutters of Mino Province , who used a sort of rice cake called kuhin @-@ mochi to placate the tengu , who would otherwise perpetrate all sorts of mischief . In other provinces a special kind of fish called okoze was offered to the tengu by woodsmen and hunters , in exchange for a successful day 's work . The people of Ishikawa Prefecture have until recently believed that the tengu loathe mackerel , and have used this fish as a charm against kidnappings and hauntings by the mischievous spirits .

Tengu are worshipped as beneficial kami ( gods or revered spirits ) in various Japanese religious cults . For example , the tengu Sabur? of Izuna is worshipped on that mountain and various others as Izuna Gongen ( ???? , incarnation of Izuna ) , one of the primary deities in the Izuna Shugen cult , which also has ties to fox sorcery and the Dakini of Tantric Buddhism . Izuna Gongen is depicted as a beaked , winged figure with snakes wrapped around his limbs , surrounded by a halo of flame , riding on the back of a fox and brandishing a sword . Worshippers of tengu on other sacred mountains have adopted similar images for their deities , such as Sanjakub? ( ??? ) or Akiba Gongen ( ???? ) of Akiba and D?ry? Gongen ( ???? ) of Saij? @-@ ji Temple in Odawara .

= = In popular folk tales = =

Tengu appear frequently in the orally @-@ transmitted tales collected by Japanese folklorists . As these stories are often humorous , they tend to portray tengu as ridiculous creatures who are easily tricked or confused by humans . Some common folk tales in which tengu appear include :

" The Tengu 's Magic Cloak " ( ??????? , Tengu no Kakuremino ) : A boy looks through an ordinary piece of bamboo and pretends he can see distant places . A tengu , overwhelmed by curiosity , offers to trade it for a magic straw cloak that renders the wearer invisible . Having duped the tengu , the boy continues his mischief while wearing the cloak . Another version of this story tells of an ugly old man who tricks a tengu into giving him his magical cloak and causes mayhem for his fellow villagers . The story ends with the tengu regaining the coat through a game of riddle exchange and punishes the man by turning him into a wolf .

" The Old Man 's Lump Removed " ( ??????? , Koku @-@ tori Jiisan ) : An old man has a lump or tumor on his face . In the mountains he encounters a band of tengu making merry and joins their dancing . He pleases them so much that they want him to join them the next night , and offer a gift for him . In addition , they take the lump off his face , thinking that he will want it back and therefore have to join them the next night . An unpleasant neighbor , who also has a lump , hears of the old man 's good fortune and attempts to repeat it , and steal the gift . The tengu , however , simply give him the first lump in addition to his own , because they are disgusted by his bad dancing , and because he tried to steal the gift .

" The Tengu 's Fan " ( ??????? , Tengu no Hauchiwa ) A scoundrel obtains a tengu 's magic fan , which can shrink or grow noses . He secretly uses this item to grotesquely extend the nose of a rich man 's daughter , and then shrinks it again in exchange for her hand in marriage . Later he accidentally fans himself while he dozes , and his nose grows so long it reaches heaven , resulting

in painful misfortune for him .

" The Tengu 's Gourd " ( ????? , " Tengu no Hy?tan " ) : A gambler meets a tengu , who asks him what he is most frightened of . The gambler lies , claiming that he is terrified of gold or mochi . The tengu answers truthfully that he is frightened of a kind of plant or some other mundane item . The tengu , thinking he is playing a cruel trick , then causes money or rice cakes to rain down on the gambler . The gambler is of course delighted and proceeds to scare the tengu away with the thing he fears most . The gambler then obtains the tengu 's magic gourd ( or another treasured item ) that was left behind .

" The Tengu , and the Woodcutter " : A tengu bothers a woodcutter , showing off his supernatural abilities by guessing everything the man is thinking . The woodcutter swings his axe , and a splinter of wood hits the tengu on the nose . The tengu flees in terror , exclaiming that humans are dangerous creatures who can do things without thinking about them .

= = Martial arts = =

During the 14th century , the tengu began to trouble the world outside of the Buddhist clergy , and like their ominous ancestors the ti?ngo? , the tengu became creatures associated with war . Legends eventually ascribed to them great knowledge in the art of skilled combat .

This reputation seems to have its origins in a legend surrounding the famous warrior Minamoto no Yoshitsune . When Yoshitsune was a young boy going by the name of Ushiwaka @-@ maru , his father , Yoshitomo , was assassinated by the Taira clan . Taira no Kiyomori , head of the Taira , allowed the child to survive on the grounds that he be exiled to the temple on Mount Kurama and become a monk . But one day in the S?j? @-@ ga @-@ dani Valley , Ushiwaka encountered the mountain 's tengu , S?j?b? . This spirit taught the boy the art of swordsmanship so that he might bring vengeance on the Taira .

Originally the actions of this tengu were portrayed as another attempt by demons to throw the world into chaos and war , but as Yoshitsune 's renown as a legendary warrior increased , his monstrous teacher came to be depicted in a much more sympathetic and honorable light . In one of the most famous renditions of the story , the Noh play Kurama Tengu , Ushiwaka is the only person from his temple who does not give up an outing in disgust at the sight of a strange yamabushi . S?j?b? thus befriends the boy and teaches him out of sympathy for his plight .

Two stories from the 19th century continue this theme : In the S?zan Chomon Kish? , a boy is carried off by a tengu and spends three years with the creature . He comes home with a magic gun that never misses a shot . A story from Inaba Province , related by Inoue Enry? , tells of a girl with poor manual dexterity who is suddenly possessed by a tengu . The spirit wishes to rekindle the declining art of swordsmanship in the world . Soon a young samurai appears to whom the tengu has appeared in a dream , and the possessed girl instructs him as an expert swordsman . Some rumors surrounding the ninja indicate that they were also instructed by the tengu .

= = In popular culture = =

Profoundly entrenched in the Japanese imagination for centuries , tengu continue to be popular subjects in modern fiction , both in Japan and increasingly in other countries . They often appear among the many characters and creatures featured in Japanese cinema , animation , comics , rpgs , and video games .

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