

MYSTERY STUDIES AND ANALOGICAL THINKING

THE INTERLACE BETWEEN INOUE ENRYO AND MINAKATA KUMAGUSU

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to elucidate the formation process of *yōkai* (i.e., "mysteries" in the broadest sense) in terms of analogical thinking. To do so, I will refer to the thoughts of INOUE Enryō 井上円了 (1858–1919) and MINAKATA Kumagusu 南方熊楠 (1867–1941). While I have already published a comparative philosophy-based analysis of their academic methods, this paper does not adopt such an approach. I have chosen to focus on their thought because they both were deeply interested in *yōkai*, and, as I will describe below, had deep insight into human errors related to analogical thinking.

In *Record on the Path of Philosophy*, Enryō warned about ambiguity developing in an out-of-control fashion due to the sounds of words, the polysemy of Chinese characters, and association. He also discussed analogies as a kind of association with the aim to distinguish between fallacious and insightful analogies. Furthermore, in *Lectures on Mystery Studies*, he added deductive errors (based on confusing the whole with its parts or one part for another) and inductive errors (based on confusing cause and effect) as factors giving rise to alleged *yōkai*. Enryō touches upon the process by which the sound *tōtenka* is first heard as a bird's cry and then regarded as a mysterious bird. He identifies an error that arose due to people thinking that a cry resembling a bird's cry was actually that of a bird. With regard to the True Mystery, he says it resembles moonlight reflected at the base of the mind, and recommended practicing seated meditation (*zazen*) to acquire insight into it. He did so because the True Mystery is similar to moonlight but not moonlight itself. Enryō critically examined how *yōkai* that arise from analogies do not function as analogies.

The same thing can be pointed out with regard to Kumagusu. In "Footprints of Gods," while analyzing the process by which depressions in rocks around the world are worshipped as the footprints of legendary giants or spirits of the deceased, he made clear that recognizing them as such is based on the thought pattern "X resembles Y". According to Kumagusu, even contemporary people think in this way, and that they share this with imagination of ancient people. However, at the same time Kumagusu did not regard such natural phenomena as being in fact the footprints of some legendary giants or spirits. He made clear that natural phenomena were not simply natural phenomena but indispensable mediators in the formation process of folklore, which is based on a chain of associations ("this resembles that").

Thus, the following is clear. First, *yōkai* are analogies. They originate in the cognitive operation that something resembles something else. For example, *yōkai* depicted in picture scrolls resemble tableware or have legs. However, at the same time they are neither human nor tableware. This is because to resemble something is to not be it. This advances our understanding of *yōkai* because the process of X being likened to Y means that X is unknown, and that Y is only one example of something that is similar to X. Due to these variations, the many *yōkai* that we know today have come into existence. We need to consider this concrete formation process of *yōkai* phenomena while being led by the insights of Enryō and Kumagusu.

(Keywords: Inoue Enryō, *Record on the Path of Philosophy*, *yōkai*, Minakata Kumagusu, analogy)