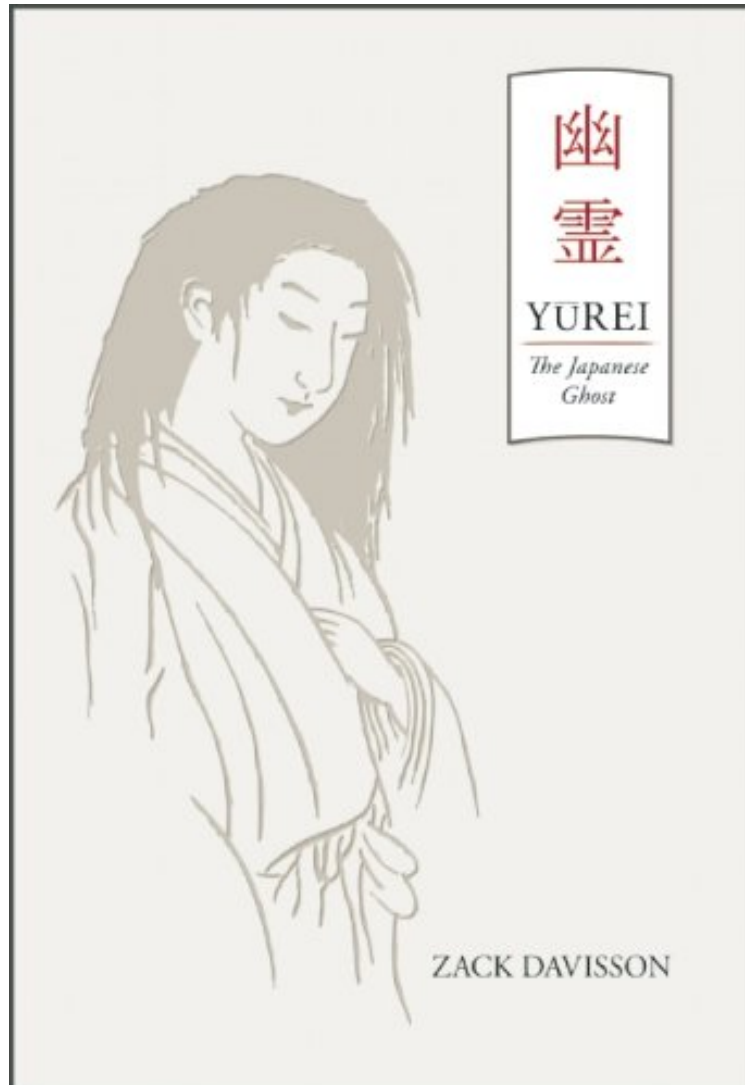


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## Yurei: The Japanese Ghost

Zack Davisson

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**Zack Davisson : Yurei: The Japanese Ghost** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Yurei: The Japanese Ghost:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Davisson's delight in the material By Bellis While future editions would benefit from more attentive editing, Zack Davisson's Yurei: The Japanese Ghost is an engaging overview of the yurei, and of its connection to other Japanese art forms. A resident of Japan for nine years, I was familiar with many (though not all) of the kaidan and cultural details. Davisson's delight in the material, and his discussion of the interplay between kabuki, noh, visual art, film and folklore make the book a valuable contribution to my own explorations. Of particular interest are his translations of stories not ordinarily accessible to an audience unable to read the tales in the original Japanese. 4+ stars. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Great

Reading for Ghost Story and Folklore Lovers  
By Nina Zumel  
I've long been a fan of Zack Davisson's Japanese folklore blog Hyakumonogatari Kaidankai, so I was eager to read his new book, *Yūrei: The Japanese Ghost*. It did not disappoint. Davisson traces the origins of the yūrei from their basis in Japan's belief systems and traditions about the dead, starting with early animistic beliefs and their mixture with beliefs from Shintoism and Buddhism. The worlds of the living and the dead are perhaps nearer to each other in the Japanese conception than they are in Western belief systems. Your obligations to your ancestors continue past their deaths; and perhaps their interest in your life outlives their deaths, too. Becoming a ghost might be as simple as dying with something pressing on your mind; and moving on as easy as fulfilling the goal that keeps your ghost here. The book also presents the literary history of the Japanese ghost story or weird tale (kaidan), beginning with the story behind Maruyama Ōkyō's famous 18th century painting *The Ghost of Oyuki*. Oyuki is the prototype of the modern image of the yūrei: pale, dressed in white, with no feet; she also graces the cover of the book. From there, we follow the weird tale through Japanese art, Japanese literature (and Chinese contributions to Japanese literature), Noh and Kabuki theater, and film. We learn about the three great yūrei of Japan: the lovelorn Otsuya, the vengeful Oiwa, and the earth-bound (or maybe well-bound) Okiku. As with the Latino legends of La Llorona, there are many versions of the stories of Otsuya, Oiwa, and Okiku, and Davisson introduces us to several variations. He also shares other classic ghost tales and legends from Japanese and Buddhist mythology. Beyond the tales and legends, the real-life histories are interesting, too. We read about the colorful life of Lafcadio Hearn, who introduced much of Japanese folklore to the West, and maybe rekindled in the Japanese an interest in their own stories, too. We get the histories of many prominent actors and playwrights of Kabuki theater, and read how Kabuki costuming also influenced the look of modern yūrei. I was especially interested in the story of Ueda Akinari, the humbly-born son of a prostitute who eventually wrote the 18th century masterpiece *Ugetsu monogatari* (*Tales of Moonlight and Rain*). But of course the ghost stories, which Davisson weaves throughout the narrative, are the big draw. The last section of the book; my favorite; is a cornucopia of kaidan: selections from Hearn and translations from several Japanese ghost story collections, some of which I think haven't been translated to English before. Most of the Hearn selections I'd already read, but it was nice to read them again in light of the additional cultural context. And the other, brand-new (to me) stories were a delight. Flipping through the book now, it's amazing how much information managed to fit into such a slim, accessible volume; I couldn't detail more of what's in there without this review getting longer than the book itself! Overall, I found the book readable, interesting, and just plain fun. It's also a really beautiful book: hardcover, full of gorgeous color reproductions of ghostly paintings and prints. If you're interested in ghost stories, folklore (either Japanese specifically, or in general), or Japanese horror film, you should check out *Yūrei: The Japanese Ghost*. Recommended. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Beautiful, fascinating and entertaining  
By Angela F Chouinard  
I've been following Zack's blog for some time and love his work. I pre-ordered this and waited patiently for months for the publication. It was completely worth the wait. The book is beautiful and the production quality is excellent, from the cover design, to the weight of the pages and the generous selection of full color plates. This book is the kind of book that becomes a collector's item. All this was icing on the cake, though, because I got the book for its content and was not disappointed. From the introduction, where he describes his own experience living in a haunted house in Japan, through the chapters unrolling the history of the Japanese ghost and its relation to Japanese life and culture, to the beautifully rendered selection of classic Japanese ghost stories in the last section this book is fascinating. Zack's knowledge on the subject is really comprehensive but his style is very entertaining and enjoyable. I had to force myself not to read it through a one sitting. If you are interested in things Japanese, a ghost story fan, or just love beautiful books, please treat yourself to a copy. I'm glad I didable to r

"I lived in a haunted apartment." Zack Davisson opens this definitive work on Japan's ghosts, or yūrei, with a personal tale about the spirit world. Eerie red marks on the apartment's ceiling kept Zack and his wife on edge. The landlord warned them not to open a door in the apartment that led to nowhere. "Our Japanese visitors had no problem putting a name to it . . . they would sense the vibes of the place, look around a bit and inevitably say 'Ahhh . . . yūrei ga deteru.' There is a yūrei here." Combining his lifelong interest in Japanese tradition and his personal experiences with these vengeful spirits, Davisson launches an investigation into the origin, popularization, and continued existence of yūrei in Japan. Juxtaposing historical documents and legends against contemporary yūrei-based horror films such as *The Ring*, Davisson explores the persistence of this paranormal phenomenon in modern day Japan and its continued spread throughout the West. Zack Davisson is a translator, writer, and scholar of Japanese folklore and ghosts. He is the translator of Mizuki Shigeru's *Showa 1926–1939: A History of Japan* and a translator and contributor to *Kitaro*. He also worked as a researcher and on-screen talent for National Geographic's TV special *Japan: Lost Souls of Okinawa*. He writes extensively about Japanese ghost stories at his website, [hyakumonogatari.com](http://hyakumonogatari.com).

"... Zack Davisson takes us on a wild and spooky ride through an oft-ignored aspect of Japanese history and culture. Along the way, he gives us lots of thrills and chills, but valuable insights and chuckles, too. Kudos to the author, and to Chin Music Press for such a delightful book." --Frederik L. Schodt, author of *Professor Risley and the Imperial*

Japanese Troupe: How an American Acrobat Introduced Circus to Japan--and Japan to the West""Zack's writing breathes new life into Japan's undead!"--Matt Alt, co-author of ""Yurei Attack! The Japanese Ghost Survival Guide""Yurei -- ghosts, souls, spirits, or consciousness -- are not just a subset of Japanese monsters (yokai) and Zack Davisson's new book makes that clear. Informative, well written and nicely illustrated, Yurei: The Japanese Ghost explores the many aspects of Japanese religion and folk beliefs as they relate to life, death and everything in between."--Ronald Morse, original translator of Legends of Tono (Tono Monogatari)"For decades I've been a fan of the Japanese ghost and horror tales;retold by Lafcadio Hearn and Bernhardt J. Hurwood. And now,thanks to Zack Davisson, I finally understand the historical and cultural significance of Japan's y?rei."--Douglas Draa, online editor Weird Tales Magazine"... a modern day Lafcadio Hearn is picking up this ghostly torch. Zack Davisson is then;author, translator, and folklorist following in Hearn's footsteps."--tofugu.com"The pages of "Yurei" seem to turn themselves -- whether with the assistance of a ghostly hand, I'd really rather not know." - Mark Schilling, The Japan Times"This is a book of many layers. immensely enjoyable ... a lively journey through history, culture, and religion." - Fortean Times

About the AuthorZack Davisson is a translator, writer, and scholar of Japanese folklore and ghosts. He is the author of YUREI: THE JAPANESE GHOST,THE GHOST OF OYUKI, andTHE SECRET BIWA MUSIC THAT CAUSED THE YUREI TO LAMENT from Chin Music Press. He contributed articles toWEIRD TALES MAGAZINE,JAPANZINE, and the comic book WAYWARD from Image comics. As a manga translator, he was nominated for the 2014 Japanese-US Friendship Commission Translation Prize, and is the translator of the Eisner Award winning and Harvey nominated Shigeru Mizuki's SHOWA: A HISTORY OF JAPAN. For Drawn and Quarterly, Davisson translates and curates the famous folklore comic KITARO. For Dark Horse, he translates Satoshi Kon's work, including OPUS, SERAPHIM: WINGS, and THE ART OF SATOSHI KON. He was also a researcher and on-screen talent for National Geographic's TV special OKINAWA: THE LOST GHOSTS OF JAPAN, has appeared as a commentator on Chinese news network CCTV, and maintains the popular Japanese folklore website HYAKUMONOGATARI.COM. He currently resides in Seattle, Washington, with his wife, Miyuki, their dog Mochi, cats Bagheera and Sheer Khan, and several ghosts.