

THE REGISTER OF PROVENANCE

What Hearn's own note establishes about where these tales came from — and what it leaves open. Four pieces have a stated origin. Sixteen do not.

Hearn's own prefatory note is the only statement of origin this book contains, and it is more careful than the editions that quote it. He says that most of the tales come from old Japanese books and names five of those books. He does not say which tale came from which. He then singles out three pieces for individual comment.

The table below therefore has two kinds of row, and the difference between them is the point. Four pieces have an origin Hearn states. Sixteen do not, and are shown as open rather than assigned to one of his five books on the strength of a guess. Editions that print a confident source for every story are inventing sixteen facts.

The five books Hearn names are the Yasō-Kidan, the Bukkyō-Hyakkwa-Zenshō, the Kokon-Chomonshū, the Tama-Sudaré and the Hyaku-Monogatari. The Kokon-Chomonshū is a thirteenth-century collection of setsuwa and is much the oldest; Hyaku-Monogatari is not one book but the name of a whole genre of hundred-tale collections, and of the candle-game that gave the genre its name.

Piece	Register	What establishes it
The Dream of Akinosuké	STATED — Chinese source	Hearn: “the very remarkable 'Dream of Akinosuké,' for example, is certainly from a Chinese source”
Yuki-Onna	STATED — oral, named informant	Hearn: “told me by a farmer of Chōfu, Nishitama-gōri, in Musashi province, as a legend of his native village”; and he adds that he does not know whether it was ever written in Japanese
Riki-Baka	STATED — personal experience	Hearn: “a personal experience; and I wrote it down almost exactly as it happened, changing only a family-name”
Hi-Mawari	EVIDENT — autobiography	Not stated by Hearn, but the piece is a first-person memory of his own childhood in Wales and contains nothing Japanese. Listed here because a reader is entitled to know it is not a Japanese tale.
The other sixteen pieces	OPEN	Covered only by “most of the following Kwaidan... have been taken from old Japanese books”. No book is attached to any individual tale by Hearn, and none is attached here.

From Kwaidan: Stories and Studies of Strange Things, Valice Classics 13. Free at valicepress.com/companion/kwaidan