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The Iconography of Anthropomorphized Animals and the Possibility of Narrative Expression: A Study of the *Otogi-zoshi* Tale *Yahyôe Nezumi*

This article sets out to grasp the development and structure of narratives using the characteristic of "anthropomorphization" seen in late medieval to early modern painterly expression. The main focus of this study is the *Otogizôshitale Yahyôe nezumi* (Keio Gijuku University Library). In contrast to the one-dimensionally described method of "anthropomorphization" found in previous research on *Otogizôshi* that centered on verbal text, Taguchi's analysis of the "image text" (images) presupposes differences in the degree of anthropomorphization, and the author indicates that there is a mixture of different levels of anthropomorphization in a single narrative. Taguchi goes on to demonstrate through detailed examples how the structure of interactions between the different levels or form changes is a major factor in the dynamic promulgation of narrative. It took a keen eye to notice the shifts in levels of anthropomorphization and we can praise his analytical abilities in interpreting how these differences function within the work and contribute to the development of the narrative.

In detail, Taguchi categorized the anthropomorphization of different types of objects in the *Otogizôshi* into three types, namely, those of "originally animal form," "costume change form," and "physical transformation form." In *Yahyôe nezumi*, there is a shift from "originally animal form" (while assuming the form of animals, they speak, have conversations and engage in other human acts, and are anthropomorphizations in the broad sense of the term) to "costume change form" (even though they stand upright and wear proper

clothes, they adhere closely to their animal attributes). This shift can be understood as a representation of the particularly medieval wish of commoners to rise to the status of clan lords and the aristocracy. The author also analyzes the opposite phenomenon, however, of a shift to a lower status, which speaks to the animals' mutual and selfless aid. The author asserts that the visual expression of these different types of shifts provide the narrative paintings with their own unique image logic.

Taguchi's article offers one potential reading of *Otogizôshi*, which was created and consumed within a set period and region. However, the issues raised and the methodology employed also help to understand the important theme of anthropomorphization in the history of art. The judging committee finds this praiseworthy. By further refining his methodology in future studies, Taguchi will provide interpretations of the expressive potential of other *Otogizôshi*, an area that has been subjected to relatively little art historical analysis. For these reasons, this article has been awarded the *Bijutsushi* Article Prize.