

URUSEI YATSURA DISC 3, EPISODES 9 – 12

Ep. 9, Story 17: “Princess Kurama, Sleeping Beauty”

Kurama, the name of the new major character introduced in this episode, is the first of many references to Minamoto Yoshitsune, brother of Minamoto Yoritomo, who founded the first military government in Japan, at Kamakura, in 1192. “Kurama” is most likely derived from Kuramayama (Mt. Kurama), which is where Yoshitsune, under the name of Ushiwaka Maru (which he took in his youth, in a ceremony called “genpuku,” or coming-of-age; see ep. 12, story 24), is supposed to have received training in swordsmanship from the Tengu, legendary goblin spirits. Tengu are also referred to as “Karasutengu,” or “Crow goblins,” because they resemble crows in appearance. The Tengu who reside on Mt. Kurama are additionally called, appropriately enough, “Kuramatengu,” which is what Princess Kurama is--with an extraterrestrial twist.

Up Close and Personal: When Ataru leans over Kurama's sleeping form and says “Gotaimen,” it is a reference to “Punch De Date,” a TV matchmaking program which was popular at about the same time as Urusei Yatsura. A given couple would come on-stage, their identities kept secret from one another by a curtain. They would talk to one another to find out if there was any mutual interest. If there was, then the MC would say “Gotaimen!” (first face-to-face meeting), the barrier would be raised, and the couple would meet face-to-face for the first time.

First Impression: Kurama's first impression of Shinobu is not at all flattering. Kurama calls Shinobu “Zashikiwarashi,” which are household guardian spirits in the Toohoku (“Northeast”) region of Japan, which is the area of Honshuu (the largest of the four main islands of Japan) north of Kantoo, and is known for being cold and covered in snow a lot of the time. These spirits typically have the appearance of a plain, immature, round-faced, rosy-cheeked girl with a bob haircut, which happens to describe Shinobu very nicely at this point in the series.

Anima/Animus: The “Anima Ray” that Kurama uses on Ataru to try to change his personality is a reference to a major theme of Jungian psychology: that everyone has elements of both sexes in them. Jung refers to these elements as “Anima” (female) and “Animus” (male). In oversimplified form, the degree to which these traits manifest in a given person determines that person's sexual persona.

Ep. 9, Story 18: “Athletics in Women's Hell!”

And on top of this, tons of homework: Depending on the school, students often have the responsibility of cleaning up their classrooms after school. Students may be divided into groups in a given classroom, and those groups rotate their responsibilities. High schools in particular don't hire custodians as a general rule, so the students have to clean up instead!

Old Baldy: Ataru calling the giant-size Shinobu “Dainyuudo” is a reference to a type of “Yookai,” or evil spirit, typified by its baldness. The reason Ataru can apply the term to Shinobu is partly due to her size, and also because her haircut looks like the silken artificial “hair caps” that monks would wear atop their shaven heads. Taira no Kiyomori, a leader of the Heike Clan (again, see ep. 12, story 24) was called Dainyuudo because he was monstrously successful in making his

clan powerful.

Ep. 10, Stories 19-20: “Pitter Patter Christmas Eve”

Shades of “Ima Trapp”: The name of the girl Megane and the gang create is, no surprise, a pun. “Kumino Otoko” literally means “Men of the Classroom,” but Ataru is so blinded by lust that he doesn't notice this obvious hint.

No Time to Write: Normally, a Japanese letter is supposed to begin with greetings appropriate to the season. However, to simplify matters, “zenryaku,” which means “the beginning of a letter,” is often used.

Café Pigmon: This may or may not be a reference to the creature Pigmon from Ultraman. (Given the other references to Tsuburaya Productions that appear in both the manga and the anime, it seems unlikely that this would be coincidence.)

Ep. 11, Stories 21-22: “Ataru Genji Goes to the Heian Capital”

Kadomatsu: The “New Year's Pine” is made of bamboo stems and pine leaves, used for decorating entrances of houses on the New Year, to invite the god of that particular year into that house.

Poetic Cards: The card game Ataru, Shinobu, Lum, Sakura and Cherry are playing at the beginning of this episode is based on a volume of poems, the Hyakuninissu (100-Poets' Collection), compiled by Fujiwara no Teika, who collected one great poem from the works of each of 100 greatest Japanese poets. The game is a popular New Year's pastime, wherein one person reads the first part of a poem from that collection and the players try to be the first to find the card containing that poem. Ataru, however, is playing to lose. The full versions of the two poems Cherry quotes are as follows:

“Tago no ura ni uchiirete mireba shirotae no Fuji no takane ni yuki wa furitsutsu” --Yamabe no Akahito (dates unknown)

“From the seashore of Tago, if you ride a boat on the ocean, you will see the beautiful white snow falling atop Mt. Fuji.”

“Haru sugite natsu kinikerashi shirotae no koromo hosuchoo ama no Kaguyama” --Jitoo Tennoo (Empress (later Emperor) Jitoo, AD. 645-702)

“Spring has gone, it seems to be Summer already, because I see white cloth being hung out to dry on Kagu Mountain.”

Author, Author: It's not certain, but Murasaki Shikibu, author of Genji Monogatari (The Tale of Genji) is believed to have lived between AD. 978-1014 or 1016. She wrote Genji Monogatari in the beginning of the 11th Century. She married once, to one Fujiwara Nobutaka, and had a daughter. But Fujiwara's death left her a widow. After his death, she worked for Shooshi, the daughter of Fujiwara no Michinaga, and also the luckier of the Emperor's two wives, Teishi being

the name of the other. Shooshi's charmed existence seems to have rubbed off favorably on Murasaki, because she started writing *Genji Monogatari* to entertain the Empress Shooshi, and the more the Empress asked what would happen next, the longer the story got, until eventually the masterpiece resulted. The end of this episode says that Murasaki Shikibu never married, but that's just taking license for the sake of humor.

Genji Monogatari, commonly considered to be the world's first true novel, depicts life in the Heian Imperial Court in the 10th Century, roughly 100 years before the story was actually written. It is also considered the single greatest work of Japanese literature.

The Heian Era began in AD. 794 and ended in AD. 1192, with the establishment of the first military government at Kamakura. The Heian capital was established at Kyoto, and the Emperor resided there until the beginning of the Meiji Era (AD. 1868), when the Imperial Residence moved to Tokyo.

The Awa Odori is a type of dancing that originated in Tokushima Prefecture (Southwest Honshuu), and may not have anything to do with Kyoto at all.

Take-out: We translated "Daihanten" as "Chinese restaurant," but its original Chinese meaning seems to be "hotel." However, it seems to have been misinterpreted in Japan, and the literal reading of the Kanji (Chinese characters) was used to get the meaning of this word in Japanese.

Take-offs: Hikaru Genji, the title character of *Genji Monogatari*, was the son of the Emperor by a favored concubine who died soon after his birth. However, a fortuneteller told him that remaining the Emperor's son would be unlucky for him, so he changed his name to Genji, that of a servant, and lowered his status as well. One of his sons, by his mother-in-law, Fujitsubo, would eventually become Emperor, though most people believed that this child was the son of the Emperor himself. This should give the viewer an idea of why Ataru was cast as Genji, though the literary figure had much more class, and was much more successful with the ladies.

Too no Chuujoo was Genji's best friend, sharing a similar rank, and every bit the playboy that Genji was. They shared numerous escapades together, but eventually they would become rivals. Therefore, it seems fitting that Mendou Shutaro should be cast as Too no Chuujoo.

"Tsubo," as in Genji's mother-in-law, Fujitsubo, means a woman of high rank. "Tsubone" designates a lady-in-waiting, a servant, to a tsubo or other person of high status. Hence the name, "Shinobu no Tsubone."

The legend of Momotaro ("Peach Boy") says that an old childless couple, Ojiisan and Obaasan, found a large peach drifting down a stream one day, when Obaasan went to do her laundry. When they opened it, out sprang Momotaro. When he grew up, he went to hunt the Oni, who had stolen all the wealth of the people years before. Along the way, he met a dog, a monkey, and a pheasant, all of whom joined him when he gave them one of his "Nippon-ichi no kibidango" (Steamed shiratamako flour with white sugar on top; they taste like rice-cakes.) When they

reached Oni-ga-shima (“Oni Island”) in the Inland Sea, a great battle took place, and Momotaro took all the treasures back to the people from whom they had been stolen. He also ensured that Ojichan and Obaachan would be well taken care of.

All the Oni have navels that stick out, known as “debeso” in Japanese. Calling someone “debeso” in Japanese is roughly akin to saying “Your mother wears Army boots” in English.

Double Takes: “Kakuheiki” means “nuclear weapons.” But Momotaro, not knowing of such things, mistakes the “kaku” in “kakuheiki,” which means “nuclear,” for a different “kaku,” which means “angle.” With “maru” meaning “circle,” and hence “maruheiki” meaning “circular weapons,” we get the pun on “kakuheiki/ maruheiki.” Momotaro was actually saying “angular weapons” and “circular weapons,” misunderstanding Ten's meaning entirely.

Ol' Four Eyes: Grading in Japanese schools is done all on bell curves, as opposed to the straight percentage method often used in the US. The difference is that, whereas the latter scoring method is an absolute, the former is a relative measurement, all students against each other, so that the top scorer, regardless of his actual score on a given test, is considered the A student, and everyone else is measured against him. A score of 50 on this deviation is considered average, and the 75 that Momotaro gets is very high, though it only means that he is doing better than the other students. It doesn't show how well he's learned a given subject.

Behavior reports are made by teachers. They make evaluations of the personalities of students, which seem to be little more than whether they are “good” boys and girls or not. They follow a student to the high school or college to which he applies, so students have to be careful that their teachers have a good opinion of them. These reports are kept secret from the students, and recently there have been several court cases in which students and parents have managed, after much resistance, to see them.

Koshien is where the Summer High School Baseball Tournament is held. Productivity in Japan plummets when the “Boys of Summer” go to Koshien.

The Naoki Sanjuugo Sho and the Akutagawa Ryuunosuke Sho are literary awards named for two well-known Japanese writers. The Akutagawa Sho is primarily for “serious” writing, and the Naoki Sho is aimed at more “entertainment” novels. Getting these awards confers a high status, and is often a ticket to a career in writing.

The FNS Record Contest is roughly to the Japan Music Awards as the American Music Awards are to the Grammys.

The bronze statue is a mark of glory hunting, much like some people will make a donation for the ego-boost of being recognized as having made that donation, rather than for any good that their donation will do.

First Steps: “Oni-san kochira. Te no naru hoo e. Anyoo wa joozu korobu wa heta,” (Over here, Mr. Oni! To the sound of the hands! Your walk is good, falling is bad...) is a chant sometimes

used by parents to encourage their children to walk. It is also sometimes used in Onigokko (the Japanese name for Tag, a.k.a. "The Game of the Oni.")

Kirk to Enterprise: "Ryuusei-go, ootooseyo" (Come in, Ryuusei) is from a popular anime series of the late 1960s called "Super Jetter." Many Japanese series have "in-joke" references to Japanese and American series (especially "Star Trek"), and recently, "Star Trek: The Next Generation" has been returning the favor.

Military Intelligence: "Heian Booeigun" (Heian Defense Force) is probably a joke at "Chikyuu Booeigun" (Terran Defense Force) from such series as "Ultra Seven" and "Uchuu Senkan Yamato" ("Space Battleship Yamato," also known as "Star Blazers." in the US.)

She'll stick it to you: The Naginata is a sort of Japanese pole arm, originally intended for use by infantry against cavalry. Later, it came into common use by monks and women, the latter especially during World War II.

Ep. 12, Story 23: "Battle Royal of Love"

When Ataru's Father says "I'm the one who always gets stuck with the bills for HIS girl chasing," the original Japanese is "Aho wa onnazuki, ore wa loanzuke da!" This is a better joke in Japanese than it is English (as so many of these are). "Onnazuki" means "hot for women," and "loanzuke" means "stuck with loans/mortgages." So a more literal translation would be "He's hot for women, and I'm stuck with the mortgages!"

What's in a Name (a regular feature of these notes!): The name Ozuno Tsubame itself contains a couple of jokes. First is his family name, Ozuno, which seems to be derived from "Oz no Mahootsukai," which is the title of the Japanese translation of The Wizard of Oz. "Oz no" (or "Ozu no," as it would be pronounced in Japanese) becomes "Ozuno." It might also reflect his having gone to the West to study. Tsubame, his given name, which literally means (the bird) "swallow" (see Ep. 2, Story 4, "Mrs. Swallow and Mrs. Penguin"), is also slang for "himo," which in this case means a man who lives off of a woman, something typically considered degrading in Japan.

Go West, Young Man: Tsubame's going to the West to study (Seioogaeri) is part of an old tradition, dating back to the early days of Japan's first push toward modernization, in the Meiji Era (1868-1912). In order to try and catch up with advanced Western countries, Japanese would travel to those countries to study things not known in Japan, and bring back what they had learned to Japan (they still do, but not nearly as much as they used to, now that Japan is an industrial leader in its own right). In Tsubame's case, he went West to study magic, because magic is supposedly more advanced there than it is in Japan. His use of the word "Seioogaeri" to describe his studies in the West is a nod to the old-fashionedness of this particular journey, reflecting the superior attitude of Japanese who made such trips in earlier times.

Cherry Green: When Megane says, "Hey, with Cherry around, you can get run down crossing the street on a green light!" he is punning on a saying that was popular in the last decade or so: "Akashingoo minna de watareba kowakunai." This phrase literally means, "You can get away with crossing at a red light if you do it with a lot of people." The underlying meaning is that if you get a lot of people together to help you break the law, you can get away with it. It's a way of justifying things one isn't supposed to do. However, what Megane means is that, if you do something with

Cherry, no matter how legal and innocuous it may be--like crossing at a green light--you'll end up in a pile of hurt. Language Note: "Aoshingoo" literally means "blue light," though it is usually translated as "green light." This is because some shades of what are referred to as "green" in the West are considered "blue" in Japan, especially with regard to traffic lights and greenery. There are references in old Chinese literature to calling green plants blue, which may have had an influence in this area.

Bring out the Vote: Tsubame shouting "Ozuno Tsubame ni kiyoki ippyo" is a take-off on a slogan commonly used by politicians campaigning for election. It literally means "Give your one pure vote to Ozuno Tsubame (in his campaign to marry Sakura)!"

Y'all come back now, heah: When Tsubame makes his summonings, he finishes them up with the phrase, "Come on out, y'all!" The original, "Oidemasse!" comes from an advertising slogan for Yamaguchi Prefecture (in the Chuugoku region of Honshuu, near the Southern end of the island): "Oidemasse Yamaguchi e," or "Come on out to Yamaguchi, y'all!" which was famous at the time this episode originally aired (around Dec., 1981-Jan., 1982). The Yamaguchi accent is, roughly, to Japanese what the Southern accent is to American English, which is why we chose this particular translation.

A Story that Bears Repeating: When he first fails to summon Satan (because Japanese spirits don't understand anything but Japanese), Tsubame tries again, calling out "Akuma!" which can be translated variously as "demon," "devil," or (as in this case) "Satan." But he screws up again, turning Ataru into a bear, or "kuma," which is the Japanese word for same. Then the pun is completed when the onlookers start saying, "Aa! Kuma! (Ah! It's a bear!)" which can be (and is) confused with "Akuma."

Flying the Friendly Skies: The disc jockey calling Lum "a high-flying woman" ("Tonderu onna") comes from "Tobu no ga Kowai," the Japanese translation of Erica Jong's "Fear of Flying." This phrase became popular for referring to a woman who does her own thing, and succeeds in doing so; an independent, challenging woman, characteristics which seem to describe Lum rather well. So this phrase is both literal and figurative.

His Face is His Fortune: Tsubame saying "My face!" in the subtitles when Ataru trips him up is a shorthand way of trying to explain an idea that can be expressed in just one word in Japanese, but is not nearly so simple in English. His actual line is "Nimaime ga!" The term "Nimaime" might best be translated as "matinee idol." It usually refers to a really good-looking actor, along the lines of Robert Redford, Clark Gable, or James Dean. What Tsubame means is that his good looks have been messed up by Ataru, and they are what he is most concerned about at the moment. A related word, "Sammaime," refers to comic actors. Both terms have their origins in Kabuki.

Ep. 12, Story 24: "Father, You Were Strong"

The title of this episode comes from the title of a song, "Chichi yo, Anata wa Tsuyokatta," which was popular in Japan during World War II. It was a propaganda song used by the Government to keep up the people's morale.

Sometimes, translating is easy: When the Karasutengu says he can “stretch [his] feathers,” the original Japanese phrase, “Hane o nobasu,” means just that, literally. But it also has a more common, idiomatic meaning of “stretch out, take it easy,” which means that the Karasutengu is speaking both literally and figuratively.

And then again, sometimes it isn't: Lum's conversation with that same Karasutengu, shortly thereafter, leads to the following exchange:

Karasutengu: To become a disciple of a certain man...

Lum: ...a disciple of a monkey?

Karasutengu: No, Her Highness's ideal man. She's going to train him like a monkey...

The joke in the original Japanese is a pun on the word “saru,” which can have the meaning of “a certain...” as in the phrase “saru otoko (a certain man),” and which is the meaning the Karasutengu intended. But Lum misunderstands, thinking the Karasutengu used another meaning of “saru,” which is “monkey” or “ape.” Hence the confusion, and yet another example of maddening puns!

And on this one, we just gave up: When Ushiwaka Maru first sees Lum, his reaction prompts Ataru to pound him in the head. However, instead of saying “Sukiari!” (a traditional kendo term meaning that one's opponent's defenses are down, i.e., he is wide open), Ataru says “Sukimono!” (someone who likes sex) at the crucial moment. Ataru is punning on how the sight of a nearly-naked woman has caused Ushiwaka Maru to let down his guard.

And you thought learning American History was tough: The great rival of the Genji Clan (a real-life clan not to be confused with the fictional Genji of the previous episode) was the Heike Clan. The Heike Clan came to power in the late Heian Era and grew arrogant as a result of their prosperity. But they rested on their laurels, and fell into decline. Finally, they were destroyed by the Genji Clan, the final battle between the two taking place in Dannoura, in 1185, which is now Shimonoseki in Yamaguchi Prefecture. Minamoto no Yoshitsune was commander for the Genji (“Minamoto” being the “kun,” or Japanese, reading of the kanji “Gen” in “Genji,” of which “Gen” is the “on,” or Chinese, reading), and led them to decisive victory. But after his brother, Minamoto no Yoritomo, established the first military government at Kamakura, in 1192, he began trying to kill Yoshitsune, because Yoshitsune promoted himself without Yoritomo's permission, and this caused a rift that made it impossible for them to live together. So Yoshitsune fled, eventually traversing a large portion of Japan. It is generally believed that Yoshitsune committed suicide, but there are legends that maintain that he went to China and became Genghis Khan.

Ushiwaka Maru was the name used by Minamoto no Yoshitsune in his youth.

The full name of Benkei the monk is Musashiboo Benkei. He was fighting many warriors on a bridge (Gojoo no Hashi, in Kyoto), and taking their swords, as it was his intention to collect 1000 swords, and it was Ushiwaka Maru (later Minamoto no Yoshitsune) who defeated him. As a result, Benkei decided to serve Ushiwaka Maru, and remained faithful to him the rest of his life. When, as Yoshitsune, he ran from his brother Yoritomo's assassination attempts, Benkei went

with him as well.

Often, a samurai would change his name and hairstyle upon officially entering the ranks of the samurai, to signify his coming of age, and becoming a real samurai. This ceremony was called “gempuku,” and it is with this ceremony that Ushiwaka Maru confers full samurai status on Ataru, in his Karasutengu identity, by giving him the new name of “Crow Yoshitsune” (a take-off on the name that Ushiwaka Maru himself would eventually take).