

The God of Poverty

Long, long ago a hard-working husband and his wife were living in a village. However hard they might work, their lives were always poor.

"I got tired of poverty. Why are we always so poor? I would like to drink, buy you a beautiful KIMONO, and once in a while go to the town." said the husband to his wife.

"It's no use thinking of such a thing. The best way to live is anyway to work hard in our field." said the wife to his husband.

"Maybe, you are right."

They were the hardest workers in the village, though they were not so rich. He worked in the field from morning till evening, while she made boots, baskets of straw and so on .

It was the last day of a year. They were talking by the hearth.

"Thanks, God. We could save a little money and make Mochi(rice cakes) for the new year." said the wife folding her hands in prayer.

Then they heard someone crying in the attic of the house.

"Who is crying there?" asked the husband.

It was the God of Poverty that put his face out of the attic.

"I see. It was because of you that we are so poor. By the way, why are you crying?" said the husband to the God of Poverty.

"As you worked so hard this year, I can't stay at this house any more. Soon the God of Fortune will come to this house instead of me. I must leave here.

"Why don't you drive him back and keep staying here?"

"But I'm so hungry that I don't have any energy to do so."

"You coward! Eat these rice cakes and fish as much as you like." The wife encouraged him to eat.

"I have never eaten such a delicious meal before. Give me another rice cake."

He ate and ate for the first time in his life so much that he had power and courage to drive back the God of Fortune. He stamped like a Sumo wrestler on the earth floor for a warm-up.

The God of Fortune was now walking along a narrow street to the house.

"Oh, that's the house I have lived in from today." And he knocked on the door.

"Hey, I am the God of Fortune. I'll live here from now and give you fortune. The God of Poverty, it is no longer your house. Why don't you get out at once?"

"No, I'll never leave this house. I'll stay here. My master and his wife told me to drive you out."

"The Poverty, Never be defeated by the Fortune. We'll cheer you." said the couple.

"What! It's unbelievable. Why do you support him? He is the God of Poverty." said he, trying to enter the door.

The Poverty attacked the Fortune and threw him away on the street with all his might.

"I'll never come to this house."

The God of Fortune went away, dropping his magic hammer.

"He dropped something. Oh, it's a magic hammer. Now he has no hammer. He is not the God of Fortune any more. I have one, so I am the God of Fortune." said the God to the couple, picking it up.



"This is a magic hammer which brings you fortune. What do you want?"

They looked at each other. They wanted some straw bags of rice and a beautiful KIMONO and a little money.

"I am not the God of Poverty any more. I am the God of Fortune." said the God and returned to the attic.

The couple worked very hard even after it and had a happy life though they were not poor.(2006.5.26)

貧乏神と福の神

むかし、むかしとても働き者の夫婦が住んでいました。でも働けど、働けど生活はいつこうに楽になりませんでした。

「もう貧乏にはこりごりだ。どうしてこんなに貧乏なんだろう。酒も飲みたいし、お前にきものも買ってやりたい。たまには町にも行きたい。」

「そんなこと言っても仕方がないわ。とにかく働きましょう。」

夫婦は村一番の働き者でした。でも貧乏です。朝から晩まで畑で働いて、家ではわらぐつやかごをあんでいました。

ある大晦日のことです。神棚の前で妻が言いました。

「神様、今年はわずかですがお金がたまり、お餅を作ることができました。」

その時です。屋根裏で泣き声がしました。

「そこで泣いているのは誰だ。」

屋根裏から顔を出したのは貧乏神でした。

「そうか、お前がいるから俺たちは貧乏なんだ。でもどうして泣いているんだ。」

「今年はお前たちが一生懸命働いたから、私はもうこの家にはいられない。まもなく福の神がやってくることになっている。」

「それじゃ、追い返してここにいればいいじゃないですか。」

「でも腹が減って、力がでない。」

「元気をお出し！この餅とさかなをたらふく食べなさい。」と妻が励ましました。

「うわ、こんなにおいしい物は初めてです。もっと食べていいですか。」<

食べて、食べて、貧乏神は元気が体にみなぎり、福の神を追い出す勇気も出てきました。相撲取りのようにしこを踏みました。

さて、福の神がゆっくりと家の前までやってきました。

「おお、この家だ。」そして入り口をたたきました。

「われこそ、福の神じゃ。この家に福を与えにやってきた。貧乏神はさっさと立ち去りたまえ。」

「いやじゃ。この家からは一步も離れないぞ。この家のあるじが福の神は追い返せと言ってくれた。」

「貧乏神、福の神に負けるな。がんばれ。」と妻が声援しました。

「一体どうなっているんだ。貧乏神の味方をするとは。」

貧乏神は福の神に飛び掛ると外に投げ出しました。

「こんな家には二度と来てやらないぞ。」

福の神は行ってしまいました。そして「打ちでの小槌」を忘れていきました。

「おや、これは打ちでの小槌じゃ。これがなければ、福の神はもう福の神ではない。これがあれば、もう貧乏神ではない。われこそ福の神じゃ。」と貧乏神、いや福の神は言いました。

「これは、打ちでの小槌というものです。望みをかなえてくれます。何か欲しいものはありませんか。」

二人は顔を見合わせました。欲しいものは米俵ときれいなきものと少しのお金です。

「われは今日より福の神。」と言って望みをかなえてやると屋根裏に戻っていきました。

二人はその後も一生懸命働いて末永く幸せに過ごしました。

