

Revenge of Skeleton

Long, long ago there were two brothers living in a mountain. As they had no work in Winter, they went working in Edo,(now Tokyo). "Which of us will be more successful in three years? We'll meet here on the same day in three years, and come back to our village." said the elder brother on a bridge and departed from the younger brother.

The younger brother worked very hard and saved much money, while the elder one drank and played with women every day.

Three years had passed quickly since they came to Edo. On the appointed day they met on the bridge. The younger brother had many souvenirs, but the elder one nothing.

When they came to a narrow bridge across a deep valley in a mountain, the elder said to the younger.

"I'll carry your luggage. Why don't you go ahead?"

The elder brother walked after the younger one and suddenly pushed him down to death into the valley in the middle of the bridge.

He returned to his home innocently and said to the villagers.

"My younger brother was drinking and playing with women every day and he had no money, so he told me he couldn't come home this year."

One year had passed since he returned to his village. As he used up the money he robbed his brother of, he was going again to leave his village for Edo.

When he stood on the narrow bridge, he heard a beautiful song coming from the valley.

He was so fascinated by the song that he went down into the valley. To his surprise, he found a skeleton singing the song. He was so scared enough to tremble himself. The skeleton stopped singing and said to him,

"Don't be afraid! I am your young brother killed by you. Are you going to Edo again to drink and play? Why don't you take me with you together? I'll sing at a show and make you rich."

"That's a good idea!" said he and wrapped the skeleton with Furoshiki, or Japanese cloth wrapper.

On arriving in Edo, he had shows of the skeleton in busy streets every day.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'll present you the wonderful show of a singing skeleton. Do come here and put money in the box."

After earning much money, he returned to his village. He thought of earning money there too.

The skeleton suddenly told a large audience.

"We must be careful of our brother. I'll never forgive him." the skeleton suddenly began to cry.

"What's the matter with you?" asked one of the audience.

"I am the younger brother killed by the elder brother. I was killed by him on my way back to the village and had my money, my luggage and my life stolen. He was drinking and wasting his time every day in Edo."

The elder brother tried to escape, but he was caught to be bound with a rope and taken to a jail.

(2001/7/3 with Mazuka)



歌う骸骨

昔、昔あるところに兄弟が住んでいました。冬になると仕事がないので二人は江戸に仕事に出かけました。

「3年たったら、どっちがお金持ちになっているかな。3年後の今日ここで会って村に帰ろう。」と兄が橋の上で弟に言って別れました。

弟は一生懸命働いてお金をためました、しかし兄は毎日酒を飲んで遊んでいました。

あっという間に3年が経ち、二人は橋の上で約束の日会いました。弟は沢山のお土産を持っていましたが、兄は何も持っていませんでした。山の険しい谷にかかる狭い橋の上で、兄は弟に言いました。

「荷物を持ってやるから先に行きな。」

兄は弟の後ろを歩いていて突然橋の真中まで来ると弟を谷につき落とししてしまいました。

兄は何食わぬ顔で村に帰って行きました

「弟は酒飲みで女遊びばかりしているから一文なしで今年は帰ってこられなかったんだ。」と村人に言いました。

村に帰って一年が過ぎ、弟から奪ったお金を使いきってしまうと兄は再び江戸にたって行きました。橋の上に来ると谷底から歌が聞こえてきました。

歌に聞きほれて谷まで降りて行きました。すると骸骨が歌を歌っていました。骸骨は歌を止めると震える兄に言いました。

「そんなに驚かなくてもいいですよ。自分は殺された弟ですよ。江戸にまた酒と遊びに行くんでしたら自分を連れていってくれませんか。見世物で歌ってもうけさせてあげるよ。」

「そいつはいい考えだ。」と兄は骸骨を風呂敷に包むと江戸に向かいました。

江戸につくときっそく毎日人ごみで骸骨の見世物を開きました。

「みなさま、これより歌う骸骨の見世物をお見せいたします。どうぞ見てください。御代は箱の中に入れてください。」

大金をもうけると兄は村に帰りました。兄は村でもお金をもうけようとしてました。

骸骨は突然村人に語り始めました。

「兄は悪い人です。許せません。」すすり泣き始めました。

「どうしたんだ。」と村人たち。

「自分は兄に殺された弟です。村へ帰る途中殺されてお金と持ち物と命を奪われました。兄は江戸では酒と女遊びで日々を送っていました。」

兄は逃げ出そうとしましたが村人に取り押さえられ縄で縛られ牢屋に連れて行かれました。

(2002.3.24)

