## The Flower Girl

Long, long ago, there lived a little girl who loved flowers in a village. Her parents also loved flowers and took care of them every day. Many kinds of beautiful flowers came out all year round not only in their garden but also around their house: lilies, sunflowers, chrysanthemums and so on. The girl was named Yuri (Lily) because her parents wanted her to be a lovely girl like a lily. People liked to



see their flowers and their daughter Yuri. In fact, the flowers and Yuri's smiling face soothed them and cheered them up.

Years went on, Yuri became a beautiful girl. She had been taking care of flowers instead of her busy parents. One day early in autumn, she caught a bad cold with a high fever. She had to stay in bed for a month. A number of flowers in her garden had been withering day by day. A month later, she finally got over her illness, and went out to see the flowers. What she saw in the garden was nothing but some withered stems. She was so shocked that she stood perfectly mute. She wanted to tell her parents how she felt, but she couldn't. She lost her voice. Her parents were worried about it and went to see doctors in and out of the village. They asked the doctors how she could regain her voice, but nobody knew of any medicine or any effective cure for it. They even asked fortunetellers to help their daughter. One of them suggested that they should plant as many lily bulbs as they could. They began to plant lily bulbs in the fields, hills and by the river. The villagers were puzzled by it at first, but soon they understood what her parents were doing, and offered to give their hands. They planted hundreds of lily bulbs before the winter came.

Next spring the village was covered with many kinds of beautiful lilies. One of the villagers visited Yuri's place. He brought a bunch of lilies. Her face became reddish with joy. She took a look at the lilies in his hands, and opened her mouth slowly. It seemed like she wanted to say something. Her parents and the villager stared at her. Then again her lips moved. A miracle happened. "Lilies." The word came out from her lips!

The lilies caused a miracle. The villager and Yuri's parents admitted the hidden power of flowers, which gave people pure, warm and happy feelings. Then the people in the village started planting flowers around their houses, fields, and hills. Before long, people named the village the 'Village of Flowers.'

## 花乙女

むかし、むかし、ある所に花の大好きな女の子がいました。両親も花が好きで、毎日花の手入れを欠かしませんでした。百合、向日葵(ひまわり)、菊、そのほか色々美しい草花が、庭や、家の周りに、一年中咲いていました。

女の子はユリ(百合)という名前でした。百合のように 美しい女の子になって欲しいという親の願いでした。村 人は、その家の草花と、娘のユリを見るのが楽しみでし た。実際、なんと多くの村人が、その草花とユリの笑顔 に慰められ、励まされたことでしょう。

月日が過ぎて、ユリは美しい娘に成長しました。忙しい両親に代わって、ユリが草花の手入れを するようになりました。

初秋のある日のことでした。ユリはひどい風邪にかかり、高熱が続きました。一月(ひとつき) 余り寝たきりの状態でした。庭の沢山の草花も日に日に枯れていきました。それから一ヶ月ほどしてようやく病気もよくなり、草花を見に庭に出てみました。目にしたのは枯れ果てた草花の茎のみ。あまりのショックで言葉を失ってしまいました。自分の気持ちを両親に話そうにも言葉がでません。

両親も心配して、村の内外の医者の所に行き、どうしたら声を取り戻せるか尋ねましたが、特効薬も治療法もありませんでした。占い師にも相談してみました。「できるだけ多く百合の球根を植えなさい。」という占い師がいました。さっそく、野原や山や川岸に百合の球根を植え始めました。村人達は、最初二人が何をしているのか分かりませんでしたが、何のためなのか分かると、手を貸そうと言いました。冬が来る前に、何百個もの百合の球根が植えられました。

春が来ると、村にはいろいろな百合の花が咲きました。百合の花束を持ってユリの家を訪れた村人がいました。ユリは嬉しさで顔がぽっと赤らみました。村人が抱えている百合に目をとめると、口をゆっくり開きました。何か言いたいようです。両親と村人はじっと見守ります。するとまた娘の唇が動きます。奇蹟が起きました。

「ゆ・・・り・・・」娘の口から言葉が出たのです。

百合の花が奇蹟を起こしたのです。村人と両親は花の持つ不思議な力を実感しました。人々は花を見て、すがすがしい気持ちや、温かく幸わせな気持ちになります。村の人たちは、それぞれの家の周りや野原、それに山にも花を植え始めました。いつしか、その村は『花の村』と呼ばれるようになりました。