

Golden Boy

Long, long ago, in a mountain called 'Mt.Ashigara' there lived a young boy called 'Kintaro(Golden Boy)' and his mother. His father had been a samurai, a warrior in the Capital but he was caught and killed in a battle. His mother, who ran away from the enemy, brought Kintaro into the deep mountain.



"I must make my son a brave samurai like my husband at all cost." said she to herself.

The two hid and lived in a cave. She picked up the fruits or nuts or berries for his food instead of good meals.

Though she had been very beautiful, she now lost her beauty. Her beautiful clothes became dirty and worn out, but she loved him and took care of him well.

Soon he grew up to a high spirit lad. Every day he played sumo wrestling with many animals living in the mountain. He threw away one animal after another.

"Dear Bear, it's your turn. Come on!"

He wrestled with the huge bear, which was no less strong than he was. After a long match, he defeated the bear.

After the wrestling, he ran in the forest with animals. He was taught how to climb trees by a monkey, how to run in the woods by a deer.

One of his friends was a big carp living in a river, which was saved by him when it jumped on the bank.

He sat astride the carp and enjoyed going up the steep fall of the river.

When it was raining, he spent all day with animals in a cave. He gave foods to rats, squirrels, foxes, badgers, monkeys, rabbits, bears and so on. He was very popular among them.

Looking at her son, his mother prayed for God, "May he be a brave samurai!"

Several years had passed, and spring came. One day, he went on an expedition to the next mountain with animals.

He sat on a big bear, with his hatchet on his shoulder, accompanied by a rat, a squirrel, a monkey, a rabbit, a raccoon, a fox, a boar, and a deer. They really enjoyed the expedition.

Reaching a cliff, they found a wide river flowing at a great speed below them.

"It is so fast we can't cross the river." said Kintaro.

"I'll push a big tree and make a bridge of it" said the bear, and pushed it in vain.

The boar bumped against the big tree, whose leaves shook a little.

"Ok, I'll try." said Kintaro, and stood in front of the tree.

He pushed and pushed it. To their surprise, the tree leaned and fell down between two cliffs with a big noise.

Everyone jumped with joy. Then somebody spoke to them from behind.

"What a powerful boy you are!"

There were a samurai and his followers standing.

"My name is MINAMOTO-NO-YORIMITSU. Why don't you be my follower?"

"Can I be a samurai?" asked Kintaro with a surprise.

"I'm sure you'll be one of my brave followers." said the samurai.

He returned to the cave where his mother lived and said to her:

"I'll be one of the brave samurais in Japan like my father."

Tears of joy ran down her face, though it was sad to part with him.

When he left the mountain, the animals as well as his mother saw him off with sorrowful faces.

"Thank you for your friendship. I'll never forget you. I love you, Mom. I am sure I will return home in the future." said Kintaro, waving his hands again and again.

A few years later he became an excellent samurai named 'SAKATA-NO-KINTOKI'. In the Capital, he was chosen one of the famous four trusted followers of his master and got rid of ogres living in the mountain called 'Mt. O-O-E.'

He invited his mother in the Capital and lived together happily ever after.

○「金太郎」は森の動物たちとどんなふうにして過ごしたのでしょうか。

金太郎

むかし、むかし足柄山に金太郎という男の子と母上が住んでいました。父上は京の都の武士で敵に捕らえられ殺されてしまいました。

母上は、敵から逃れ、小さな金太郎を連れて山奥に入りました。

「この子を夫のような一人前の武士にしなければなりません。」
親子は洞窟の中にかくれ暮らしています。木の実や野イチゴなどを取ってきては金太郎に与えていました。かつてはとても美しかった姿も今は色あせてしまいました。着物も汚くなり、擦り切れていました。しかし必死に金太郎を育てました。



金太郎は元気のいい男の子になりました。森に住む動物と遊んだり、相撲をしたりして毎日をごしていました。

「くまさん、次は君の番だ。さあ、かかってこい。」

熊も金太郎にはかないません。相撲のあとは森の中でかけっこです。鹿と競争です。木登りは猿から教わりました。川では大きな鯉が友達です。鯉にまたがると急流下りです。

雨の日は、洞窟の中で、ねずみやリスやキツネやたぬきやさるやうさぎやくまたちとおしゃべりです。金太郎は森の人気者です。

金太郎を見ながら、母上は神に祈りました。

「どうか素晴らしい武士になりますように。」

数年が過ぎ、春が来ました。ある日、金太郎は動物たちと隣の山に探検に出かけました。大きな熊の背中にまたがり、おのを肩に背負い、その後をねずみやリスや猿やうさぎやキツネやタヌキやいのししや鹿がついていきます。みんな幸せでした。

がけに来ると下を激流が流れています。

「流れが速くて川は渡れない。」と金太郎。

「あの大きな木を倒して橋を作りましょう。」と熊は木を押しましたがびくともしません。押しでも葉っぱが揺れるだけです。

「よし、私がやってみよう。」と金太郎は大きな木の前に立ち、力一杯押し始めました。するとどうでしょう、木が傾き、大きな音とともに倒れ川の上にかかりました。みんな大喜びです。すると後ろから声がしました。

「ものすごい力だ。」

そこには立派な武士とその家来が立っていました。

「私は源頼光と申すものです。私の家来になりませんか。」

「私は武士になれるのですか。」

「あなたならきっとすばらしい武士になれるでしょう。」

金太郎は母上のところに帰るとこの話をしました。

「私は父上のような立派な武士になりとうございます。」

別れるのはつらいけれども母上の目からは喜びの涙が流れました。

山を去るとき、母上だけでなく動物たちも金太郎をさびしそうに見送りました。

「母上ありがとうございました。ご恩は決して忘れません。かならずお向かいに参ります。」金

太郎は何度も何度も手を振りました。

数年が過ぎ、金太郎は坂田金時という武士になりました。ご主人の忠実な四人の家来に選ばれ、大江山に住む鬼も退治しました。

その後、京に母上を迎え幸せに暮らしました。