

A Foolish Boy called 'Power'

Long, long ago there lived a man named 'Power' in a village, but people called him 'Foolish Power'. He was always childish and made fun of by neighbors around him since he was born. When he was 3 years old, he put a light to the mosquito net in his house and burned up his house. He was enjoying seeing it burn, clapping his hands with joy.



When he got 16 years old, he was a young man of strong body, but his intelligence still remained the same as that of 3 year-old-child. He was always playing with little children in his neighborhood. He couldn't remember any letters, songs or games. Striding a broomstick everyday, he was running up and down the street.

One day, however, he suddenly died.

An old man asked his mother,

"What's the matter with your son?"

"Power"? He died....Poor 'Power'....Yes, he died a few weeks ago....Suddenly." she answered.

His mother wrote 'Foolish Power' on his left hand when he was buried and hoped he would be reborn in a rich family."

Strange to say, a baby, who has the letters, 'Foolish Power' on his left hand, was born in a rich family in Edo a few months later. The parents, thinking that he must be cursed and reborn in this world, made his employees visit many houses here and there to see whether any man called 'Foolish Power' used to live.

At last they found a man called 'Power' died in a house in the suburb of Edo a few days ago just when their son was born. They asked his mother the grave of her dead son and at once visited the very grave. They gathered the soil before it a little, which they wrapped in cloth, and took it to their master. To remove the curse, he rubbed the letters on his baby's hand with the soil. (2019.12.11) Original by Lafcadio Hearn

力ばか

むかし、むかし、ある所に「力（りき）」と言う男がいました。でもみんなは「力ばか」と呼んでいました。生まれてこの方いつになっても子どものままで、みんなに馬鹿にされていました。三歳の時は、蚊帳（かや）に火をつけて家を燃やしてしまいました。家が燃えるのを、手をたたいて喜んで見ていました。



十六歳の時は、体は大人でしたが、頭の中身は三歳のままでした。いつも近所の子どもと遊んでいました。字も歌も遊びも覚えられませんでした。毎日、ほうきの柄にまたがり、あちこち走り回っていました。

しかし、ある日、突然死んでしまいました。

老人が母親に尋ねました。

「お子さんはどうしたのですか？」

「力ですか？死んで・・・かわいそうに・・・数週間前に死んでしまったのです・・・突然・・・」

母親は、「力」を埋める時、左手に「力ばか」と書いて、金持ちの家に生まれ変わるように願いました。

不思議なことに、数日後、左手に「力ばか」と書いてある赤ん坊が江戸の名家に生まれました。両親は、赤ん坊は呪われて、この世に生まれて来たと考え、「力ばか」という人物がかつていたかどうか、奉公人にあちこち調べさせました。

息子が生まれる数日前に、「力」と言う男が、江戸のはずれのある家で亡くなったことがわかりました。母親に息子の墓を聞くと、すぐにそこに向かい、墓の前の砂を少し集めると、布に包んで持ち帰りました。主は、呪いをとくために、その砂で赤ん坊の手の文字をこすりました。(kudos) 原作：小泉八雲「怪談」