

The man who dropped a wallet and the other man who picked it up

This is a story in the Edo period.

One day in December, when Kintaro, an old plasterer, was on his way home, he picked up a wallet. He found a seal, a note, and three-ryo of money in it. He also found in the note that Kichigoro, a carpenter, was the original owner. The plasterer took the things to the original owner's place. The carpenter was just having grilled sardines with sake for his supper.



The plasterer said,

"I happened to pick up this wallet. I found three-ryo of money, a seal, a note and the name of Kichigoro in it. It's your name, isn't it? I'm here to bring them back to you. You should have them."

But Kichigoro said,

"You can give back the seal and note to me as they used to be my belongings, thanks. But three-ryo isn't mine anymore. Since you picked it up, you can have it."

"It's nonsense. It's like stealing another person's money! I've never done such a shameful thing!"

The two men got into a quarrel. People gathered and watched the development. Each man's landowners tried to arbitrate, but they couldn't succeed.

At last they brought the problem to court. But as the chief judge was busy with another suit, the vice judge treated it.

The vice judge listened to the both side's claim calmly. After that he told them to put out the three-ryo to him. Then he took out his pocket money one-ryo in a leisurely way, and said,

"Your three-ryo is here. I'll add one-ryo to it. Now you see four-ryo in front of you."

Then he gave each man two-ryo, and said,

"Kintaro, if you tried to own this 'three-ryo' in your inside pocket, you'd have three-ryo. Kichigoro, if you took money Kintaro brought you, you'd also have three-ryo. But now each of you got only two-ryo, that means each of you lost one-ryo. And I also lost one-ryo. Three men lost the same amount of one-ryo. How do you think?"

The two men were impressed with the judgement.

The vice judge, who was proud of his judgement, reported it to the chief judge. He never thought the chief judge get angry at him.

"You are so silly! Do you think you solved the problem well?"

The vice judge asked him,

"Did I make any mistake with my judgement?"

"Of course, you made a big mistake. You were deceived by them. Didn't you know that it was a trick that both of them made?"

"A trick?"

"Yes. First of all, the quarrel between the two men in front of a crowd was suspicious. And what is more, they asked the judge to have a fair judgement. They not only showed themselves to the public as they were the most honest men in the world with that three-ryo, but also they got another one-ryo from the vice judge in addition to the first three-ryo. Call them back here

immediately. I'll investigate them for myself."

A few days later, the chief judge called the two men to court, staring at them and said, "Even if you were able to deceive the vice judge, you can't take me in. I know that was a make-believe show you two conspired. Can you excuse yourself?"

"Please forgive us. Indeed I dropped that money as I was told to do so by this old friend." The carpenter apologized. The old plasterer also apologized for suggesting that he should do so.

"What an impolite idea you hit on while you are old enough to visit shrines for your happiness in the next world. I must give you a severe punishment. Even so, you didn't give any trouble to others, I'll help you with your life. But you must leave this town!"



The carpenter also was driven out of the town where he had lived for long years.(2016/06/1 With Itaya)

三方一両損

これは江戸時代のお話です。

年の暮れが迫ったある日のこと、年老いた左官の金太郎は、家に帰る途中、財布を拾いました。中に印形（いんぎょう）と書き付けと三両が入っていました。書き付けから落としたのは大工の吉五郎と分かり、さっそく届けに行きました。吉五郎は鯛（いわし）の塩焼きで一杯吞んでいました。

「偶然この財布を拾いましたが、中に三両と印形と書き付けが入っていて吉五郎の名前がありました。これあなたの物でしょう？届けに来ました。お受け取り下さい。」

「印形と書き付けは俺のものだから貰っておくよ。ありがとよ。でも三両はもう俺のものではない。あんたが拾ったのだから、取っておきな。」

「とんでもない。人様の金を盗むのと同じです。そんな恥知らずのことはできません！」

二人の口論が始まり、大勢の人が集まってきて成り行きを見守っていました。二人の大家も仲裁に入りましたが、うまくいきませんでした。

二人はこの件を御白州に訴え出ることになりました。御奉行は生憎他の訴えで忙しく、副奉行がこの訴えを取り扱うことになりました。

副奉行は、両者の言い分に冷静に耳を傾けました。それから、その三両を差し出すように言いました。次に袂から一両をゆっくりと取り出しました。

「お前たちの三両はここにある。そして一両加える。四両が目前にある。」

それから副奉行は、両者に二両ずつあげました。

「金太郎、ふところにしまえば三両。吉五郎、金太郎の金を受け取れば三両。しかし、今それぞれ手にしているのは二両。つまり一両損したことになる。私も一両損したことになる。わかるか？」

二人は、その裁きに感服しました。

副奉行は、自慢の裁きを奉行に報告しました。まさか、怒られるとは思っていませんでした。

「この愚か者！それでうまく裁いたと思うのか？」

「私の裁きに何か手違いがあったでしょうか？」

「当たり前だ。とんでもない手違いだ。お前は二人に騙されたのだ。あれは二人が仕組んだ企みと分からなかったのか？」

「企み？」

「そうじゃ。まず、人々の前で二人が言い争いを始めたのが疑わしい。さらに、二人はここに訴え出てきた。二人は世間に善人であることを示しただけでなく、最初の三両に加えて、お前からもう一両手に入れた。今度は、私が直々に裁いてやろう。」

数日後、奉行は二人に御白州への出頭を命じると、じっと睨みました。

「副奉行は騙せても、私は騙されないぞ。あれは、お前たち二人が企んだ策略であることは明白である。異議申し立てはあるか？」

「どうかお許し下さい。この昔なじみから言われて財布を落としました。」

大工は謝りました。年老いた左官も大工にそうするよう勧めたことを謝りました。

「何と不謹慎なことを思いついたものよ。お前はもう来世の幸せを願って寺詣出をしてもよい歳であろう。厳しい裁きを下すとしてよう。しかし、人様には何の迷惑をかけていない。命だけは助けてやろ



う。この町にいることを禁じる！」
大工も長年暮らした町から出されました。