

## Shibahama, Was It Really a Dream?

In Edo era, a fish peddler named Katsugoro lived in Shiba, Edo. Although he was a skilled fish peddler, he couldn't pay rent for months. He was such a heavy drinker that almost all the money he earned was spent for *sake*. The last day of the year would soon come, but Katsu didn't work: he had drunk *sake* and then went to bed as usual. His wife, who reached her limit of patience, woke him up, saying,



"Hey, Darling, wake up! It's high time to go to the fish market."

"Oh, don't cry loudly at midnight. You woke me up when I was sound asleep."

"It's almost dawn. You should go to the fish market."

"It's still dark, isn't it? I'm sleeeepy..."

"Hey! The end of this year will be coming soon. If you don't want to work, how do you think we will be able to pay all the debt that we owe?"

"That is worth mentioning. But it is not only us who will have the last day of the year."

"What are you talking about? You, lazy guy! Hurry up!"

"Okay, Honey, you won. But where are the tubs for carrying fish I always use?" He was looking for his tubs with a sleepy face. The moment he asked her, she answered,

"Here they are with water in it so that the fish won't be dry."

"And I need a knife for cutting fish with."

"Here you are. You sharpened it a few days ago, remember? And I prepared a pair of new straw sandals there. Good bye, have a nice day."

Katsu reluctantly stepped out with a carrying pole on his shoulders with two tubs at each end.

"Oh, it's cold outside. She may be satisfied to see me out. At any rate, what a dull business it is to deal with fish! I must get up early in the morning while others are still sleeping. But unless I work, I can't support our life. ...My wife said it's almost dawn...but it's still dark...possibly she miscounted the time. What a scatterbrain she is! It isn't worthwhile to be here. I'll go to the beach to kill time. It's been a long time since I last came here...what a nice smell the sea has!"

While he was strolling around the beach, he found something between the stones on the beach.

"What is this...? Oh, it's a wallet. How dirty it is...! Wow! It's so heavy...gee, so much money in it. Hurray! It must be a windfall!"

He hastily put the wallet into the pocket of his workman's apron and hurried back.

"It's me, open the door quickly." he cried.

"It's you, Darling, so soon? Wait a minute, I'll open it now."

She opened the door and looked at him.

"What's up...? You look pale. Did you have a quarrel with someone?" she asked doubtfully.

"Listen. I picked up a wallet on the beach. You won't believe it but I found a lot of money in it. Look, here..."

"Money?" she opened it and started counting, "One, two, three...My, my, there are 50 ryos."

"I don't have to work for a while. Go get some *sake* and food. Have a party here with my friends."

He cried with joy, invited some of his friends for drinks, and whooped it up.

The next morning, he was still sleeping while his wife came over, and cried as usual.

"Hey, Darling, wake up..."

"Oh, what's the matter? Didn't I tell you not to wake me up while I'm sound asleep? Let me sleep a little more."

"What are you talking about? It's another morning: the time you go to the fish market."

"Fish market? I don't have to work any more. We have 50 ryos, remember?"

"Don't be stupid. How can we greet a New Year's Day if you don't work? How can we pay for the last night's party you and your friends enjoyed having?"

"It's pretty easy to pay the bill, isn't it? Because we have 50 ryos."

"50 ryos? Where would we get such a large sum of money?"

"In the wallet I found on the beach yesterday. Didn't I hand it to you?"

"You found a wallet on the beach? How foolish you are! You didn't go anywhere yesterday. You were in futon sleeping almost all day at home."

"What? Didn't I go to the beach? It's unbelievable you said so. You woke me up and forced me to go to the fish market. But the market hadn't opened yet. To kill time, I went to the beach and found the thick wallet. I'm sure I remember handing it to you. But you insist you don't have it?"

"Oh, now I see why you had such a fuss yesterday. Everything you did was caused by a foolish dream. How woeful you are! Even though we are so poor, you shouldn't dream that you picked up money...!"

"A dream?"

"Yes, it's a mere dream. Yesterday, I tried to wake you up many times, but you never woke up. When you got up, it was about noon. Then you went to the public bath, and you brought your friends when you came home. You were crying, 'I'm so lucky. I'm so happy. Buy some sake, eels, tempura... Seeing you drinking and singing so much, I thought you had gone mad. At last you got dead drunk and fell asleep. That's all you did yesterday. You see, you didn't have time to go to the beach."

"You are saying it was a mere dream?"

"Do you doubt the truth of my words?"

"Well, you may be right, but...was it really a dream...? What a strange dream I

had when the last day of the year is coming soon...You are saying that the wallet I found was a dream, and the party I drank and ate too much at wasn't a dream, right? How miserable I am to have such a dream! All that has happened to me is due to *sake*. I swear not to drink *sake* any more, and from now on I'll make the best effort in my job. Money is not what it is given to you but what you earn by yourself. I've come to my senses now."

Since then, he started working from early in the morning till late at night. As he was skilled in dealing with fish, he got a good reputation as a fish peddler among customers.

Three years had passed since then. Finally he succeeded in being a fish dealer having his own shop on main street.

One day in December the wife said to her husband,  
"Darling, when you finish work, why don't you come over to talk with me?"

"I'm finished working right now. I'll be coming soon. How comfortable I am to greet a New Year's Day on the new Tatami mats!...An old saying says, 'New Tatami and a new wife is...' Sorry, an old wife is better."

"You need not apologize to me," she smiled.

Feeling happy, he said to his wife, All I want to say is 'Thank you.' How nice it is not to have any debt collectors!"

"Listen, I have something to tell you. In advance, promise me not to get angry with me until I finish my talking."

Puzzled, Katsu looked at her serious face and said,

"I don't know what you are trying to tell me, but anyway I promise not to get angry."

"Do you mean it?"

"Yes, I mean it."

"If so, please look at this wallet."

"Oh, dirty as it is, it is a wallet. What does this mean?"

"There are 50 ryos in it. Don't you have any idea about 50-ryos and the dirty wallet?"

"Oh, now I remember, I had a terrible dream three years ago. In that dream, I found a wallet in which there were 50-ryos."

"It wasn't a dream. You really found this wallet."

"What? You'll pay for it! Damn you!" saying, he raised his hand.

"Do you want to hit me? You promised me you'd never get angry with me until I finished my story, didn't you?"

"It's true, indeed."

"At that time I got worried about you. You said you didn't have to work and you would live an enjoyable life, drinking sake everyday. So while you were fast asleep, I took it to the landlord to get some advice. He said, 'If he used that money, he would be arrested sooner or later. I'll bring it to the police and report it instead of him. All you have to do is make him believe that it was a dream.' Because you are an honest person, you believed me that it was a dream and decided to stop

drinking and work hard for us. Thanks to you, we were able to get our own store...But whenever I saw you working hard, I always felt uneasy. I got this money back from the police two years ago because nobody appeared nor claimed ownership of the wallet. But I hardened my heart against pity and kept it in my mind. Now that you had your shop like this, I've decided to show you this money as a token of my apology. You may well be angry with me, deceived by your wife...Now you can hit and kick me if it makes you feel better."

"How could I hit or kick you? You've impressed me a lot, you are a wonderful woman! If I had had the money at that time, I would have spent it up drinking and eating and wouldn't have worked any more. That might have made me a beggar in the end. As the landlord said, I might have been caught and beheaded...It is all thanks to you that we can have a New Year's Day safely with no debt. I'll express my sincere thanks to you from the bottom of my heart again. Thank you!"

"Do you really forgive me?"

"Whether I forgive you or not, I'm expressing my gratitude to you."

"I feel so happy. I've prepared some warm *sake* here for you today. I want you to drink it for the first time in three years, and talk about our future."

"What? *Sake*? Warm *sake*? I've noticed something smelling good from the kitchen...Now I see what it is."

"And I cooked this. How do you like it?"

"It's true that an old wife is better. How long haven't I drunk? Thank you...Thank you. Well, I'll accept your offer and have a drink of it...Pour it into this teacup...Oh, it's a long time since I drank last. Oh, the mere smell of it makes me happy. I can't wait...but," he suddenly stopped drinking,

"It may be a good idea not to drink it."

"Why? What's on your mind?"

"Nothing, but I'm afraid that this will become another dream."



## 芝浜の革財布

江戸時代、活五郎という魚屋が、江戸は芝、今の港区に住んでいました。腕のいい魚屋ではありましたが、毎月の家賃の払いもままなりません。たいそう酒が好きで、かせぎはみんな酒代にってしまうのです。

歳末（くれ）も近いのに、今日も酒を飲んで寝てしまいました。さすがにかみさんもたまりかねて、

「ねえ、おまえさん。起きとくれ！魚河岸（かし）に行っとくれよ。」



「おい。夜中に大声出すなよ。いい気持ちで寝てたってえのに。」

「じきに夜が明けるよ。仕事に行っとくれ。」

「まだ、暗いじゃないか。眠む・・・い。」

「もう！歳末も近いっていうのに、仕事もしないで、どうやって借金を返そうって言うんだい。」

「言われなくたってわかってらあ。うちだけが歳末が近いってわけじゃねえや。」

「何を言ってるのさ。おまえさん、ぐずぐずしないで！早く行っとくれ！」

寝ぼけ眼（ねぼけまなこ）で、回りをみまわし、

「わかったよ。かかあ。行くよ。盤台（はんたい）はどこだ。」

「ほら、いつでも使えるようにちゃんと水を張っておいたよ。」

「庖丁は。」

「はいどうぞ。二、三日前に、おまえさん、ちゃんと研いだじゃないか。忘れたのかい。わらじもそこに出してある。さあ、行っとくれ。気をつけてね。」

活さんは、前と後ろに盤台のついた天秤棒を担いで、しぶしぶうちを出ると、

「うー、外は寒いな。かかあのやつ、俺が出かけて一安心だろうよ。しかし、魚屋なんてつまらねえ商売だなあ。みんながまだ寝てるっちゅうのに、朝早くから起きなくっちゃならねえんだから。そうかと言って、働かなくては飯の食いあげだし・・・かかあはもうじき夜が明けるって言っていたが・・・まだ真っ暗じゃねえか・・・あいつ、時を間違えたな。そそっかしいやつめ。ここに居てもらちがあかねえな。浜にでも行って一服してくるか。久しぶりだな。磯の香りがたまらねえや！」

活さん、浜をぶらぶらしていると、石ころの間に何かがあります。

「何だ、こりゃ。おっ、財布だ・・・汚ねえな・・・！おっと！重てえな・・・おや、金（かね）だ。やったぞ！お天とうさまがおれにくれたんだ！」

あわてて、腹がけのどんぶりの中へ財布をつっこむと、うちへとんでかえりました。

「俺だ。早くあけてくれ。」

「おまえさんかい。随分と早いじゃないか。ちょっと待って。今あけるから・・・」

戸を開けて、だんなを見て、

「どうしたんだい・・・真っ青じゃないか。喧嘩でもしたのかい。」

「そんなんじゃない。浜で財布を拾っちゃったんだ。中を見ると金がいっぱい入っているじゃねえか。驚いたのなんのって。見ろ、ほれ・・・」

「お金？」中を開けて数え始めます。「ひい、ふう、みい・・・あら、あらっ、五十両も。」

「しばらく遊んでも暮らしていけらあ。酒と肴を買ってこい。仲間と祝い酒だ。」

活さん、大喜びで、仲間をよんできて、飲めや唄えの大騒ぎ。

次の朝も、活さんは布団の中、かみさんがいつものように起こします。

「ねえ、おまえさん。起きとくれ・・・」

「おい、何だよ。いい気持ちで寝ているときは、起こすな、って言っただろう。もうちょっと寝かせてくれよ。」

「何を言ってるのさ。朝だよ。魚河岸に行っとくれ。」

「魚河岸？商売なんかおかしくって。五十両あるじゃねえか。」

「ばかなこと言わないでよ。おまえさんが働かなくて、どうやって正月を迎えるのよ。それに、ゆうべの飲み食いの勘定だってどうやって払うのよ。」

「そんなものは簡単さ。五十両あるじゃねえか。」

「五十両？どこにそんな大金があるのさ。」

「昨日、芝の浜でおれが拾ってきた財布があるじゃねえか。おめえに渡したろう。」

「芝の浜で財布を拾ったって？おまえさん、なに言ってんのよ！昨日はどこにも行きやしないよ。一日中寝ていたじゃないか。」

「なんだと。浜に行かなかった？そんなことがあるものか。おれを起こして、無理やり魚河岸に行かせたじゃあねえか。でもな、まだ魚河岸が開いちゃあいなかった。一服しに、浜に行って、あの金が入った財布を拾って、おめえに渡したんだ。持ってねえって言うんかい。」

「そうかい、それであんな大騒ぎをしたんだね。そんな夢を見たもんだから。情けないね！いくら貧乏だからって、お金を拾ったなんていう夢を見るなんて！」

「夢？」

「そうさ。夢に決まってるじゃないか。昨日は何回も起こしたけど、おまえさんは起きなかったじゃないか。お昼ごろ、ようやく起きたと思ったら、風呂へ行って、帰りに仲間を引っ張ってきて、おまえさん、『めでたい。うれしい。酒だ、うなぎだ、天ぷらだ・・・さあ買って来い。』って大声上げてた。そして飲めや唄えの大騒ぎ、気でも違ったのかと心配になった。あげくの果てに、ぐてんぐてんに酔っぱらって眠ってしまった。昨日はそんなありさまで、あんたには浜なんか行く暇なかった。」

「本当に夢かい？」

「あたしの言うことがうそだっていうのかい？」

「いや、おめえの言うとおりにかもしねえな。でも・・・本当に夢かい？歳末も近えっていうのに変な夢見ちゃったなあ・・・するってえと何かい？財布を拾ったのは夢で、飲んだり食ったりしたのはほんまものかい？・・・情けねえ！あんな夢見るなんて。これもみんな酒がいけねえんだ。もう酒はやめるぜ。これからは商売に精をだすぜ。金はもらうもんじゃなくて自分で稼ぐもんだ。やっと目が覚めたぜ。」

それからというものは、活さん、朝早くから夜遅くまで商売に精を出しました。もともと腕のいい活さん、ご鬘眞（ひいき）さんもどんどんふえていきました。三年が経ち、表通りに魚屋の店を構えることができました。

師走のある日・・・

「おまえさん、仕事が終わったら、ちょっとこっちへ来ないかい？」とおかみさんが声をかけます。

「ようやく片付いた。いま行くよ。新しい畳で正月を迎えられるなんて気持ちいいね！・・・昔っからよく言うじゃねえか、『女房と畳は新しいほうが・・・』いや、すまねえ。かかあは古いほうがいいな。」

「何もあやまらなくて・・・。」かみさん、にこっとします。

「おれが言っているのは、『ありがとよ』ってことさ。どこからも借金取りが来ねえってのは気持

がいいもんじゃねえか。」活さん、ご機嫌です。

「ねえ、おまえさんに聞いてもらいたいことがあるの。そいでね、私の話が済むまで怒らないって約束してくれるかい。」

活さん、戸惑いつつも妻の真剣なまなざしに、

「なんのことだかわからねえが、約束するよ。」

「本当だね？」

「ああ、約束するよ。」

「じゃ、この財布を見てもらいたいの。」

「汚ねえけど、財布だな。こいつはなんだい。」

「中に五十両入ってるよ。お前さん、五十両と汚い財布に心当たりはないかい。」

「そう言われてみれば、三年めえ、ひでえ夢みたな。夢の中で、五十両入った財布を拾ったな。」

「あれは夢じゃなかったんだよ。おまえさん、本当に拾ったんだよ。」

「何だと。本当か！こんちきしょう！」活さん手をあげます。

「ぶつのかい？おまえさん、私の話が済むまで怒らないって約束しなかったかい。」

「した。確かに。」

「あの時は、あんたのこと本当に心配したのよ。おまえさん、商売なんかしないで、毎日酒を飲んで遊んで暮らすって言ってたでしょう。おまえさんが寝込んでいる間に、財布を持って大家さんのところに相談に行ったんだよ。すると、大家さんは、『あの金を使えば、遅かれ早かれ手が後ろへ回ってしまう。おれがかわりにお上に届けてあげるから、お前さんは夢だということにしてごまかしなさい。』って言うんだよ。お前さんは人がいいから、あたしの言うことを信じて、酒もやめて一生懸命商売をする決心をしてくれたわ。お前さんのおかげでお店も持てたわ・・・でもお前さんが仕事に精を出しているのを見るたびに、あたしはいつも申し訳ないと思っていたの。このお金も落とし主がでないってことで二年前にお上からさがってきたんだけど、あたし、心を鬼にして隠してきたの。でもこんなふうにお店も持てたし、お詫びかたがた、このお金を見せることにしたのさ。腹がたつのももっともだわ、自分の女房にだまされて・・・さあ、気が済むまで、あたしを殴るなり、蹴るなり好きにしておくれ。」

「殴る、蹴る？とんでもねえ。えれえ。おめえはえれえ！あの時あの金を持ってりゃ、おれは、飲んだり、食ったり、ぶらぶらして、しまいには乞食に身を落としていたかもしれねえな。大家さんの言うように、手が後ろに回って、打ち首だったかもしれねえ・・・こうして借金もなく正月を迎えられるのも、みんなおめえのおかげだぜ。おらあ、あらためて心から礼を言うぜ。ありがとよ！」

「本当に勘弁してくれるのかい。」

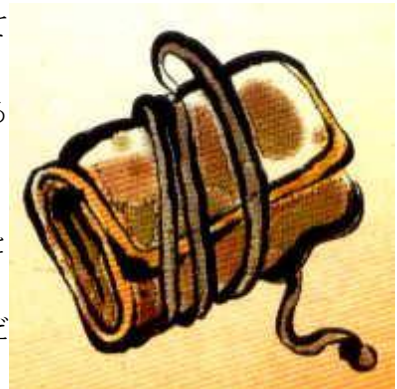
「勘弁するもしねえも、おめえに礼を言ってるじゃねえか。」

「あたしや、本当にうれしいよ。今日は、お前さんに飲んでもらおうと思ってお爛をつけてあるの。三年ぶりでしょう。他にも聞いてもらいたいことがあってさ。」

「え？酒かい？爛をつけたって？台所からいい匂いがしていると思っていたら・・・そういうことか。」

「こんなものもこしらえたんだけど。どう？」

「やっぱり古女房はいいな。随分と飲まなかったなあ。ありがとうよ・・・ありがてえ。じゃあお言葉に甘えて、一杯やるか・・・この湯のみにたのまあ・・・おととと、久しぶりだな。匂いだ¥けでも酔っぱらっちゃうぜ。たまらねえな・・・でも。」



活さん、飲むのをやめます。

「止めとくわ。」

「どうしたんだい。おまえさん。」

「何でもねえ。また夢になるといけねえや。」 「古典落語」より