

A Beautiful Wife from the Sea

Long, long ago there lived a young man and his mother in a village, who were so poor that he had little food and no land. They earned their money by selling mountain mushrooms.

One day on his way home after selling only a few flowers in a town, he was watching toward the sea on the beach. He said to himself. "It is no use taking these mushrooms out to my house. I'll give these to the Gods and Goddesses living in the sea."

He threw them far into the sea, which slowly sank in it. Then a big turtle put the head out of the sea and said to the man,

"I thank you for your giving us many mushrooms. I'm a messenger from a Dragon king. We would like to invite you to the Dragon castle under the sea."

"I'd like to, but I hear it's far away and it will take a long time to go."

"Never mind. If you ride on my back and close your eyes, you'll find yourself be in the Dragon castle."

He rode on the back of the turtle and closed his eyes. Without breathing he reached to the Dragon castle. The turtle advised him,

"If you are asked by the king what you want, you should tell him you want a beautiful wife."

He had enjoyed wonderful dinners, sea music, dancing of breams and flatfishes for three days. When he left there, the king said to him,

"I'll give you a souvenir. What do you want?"

"I would like to have a beautiful wife." said he as he was told by the turtle.

Both he and a beautiful lady left there riding on the turtle's back.

To his surprise, three years had already passed while he was enjoying himself under the sea for three days. His mother had been sick in bed for two years.

"Mom. I'm sorry. It's my fault. I went into the sea leaving you alone."

The lady, seeing him crying, said to him,

"Please stop crying. I'll make your mother better again."

She sent her breath to the sick mother a few times, when the sick opened her eyes, took a breath and stood up until at last she was in good health.

They had no house to live in together. He cut down the trees and prepared some site in a forest. The lady, taking a small wooden hammer out of one of her sleeves and swinging it, said in a loud voice. "A big house. Come out."

They were standing in front of a huge and wonderful house. She also produced rice, clothes and so on out of the hammer.

Soon they became rich and she became famous as the most beautiful and wonderful wife in the country. The rumor went to the lord, who called the young man to his castle and ordered him.

"I would like to have your wife as one of my wives. If you can't bring me a hundred straw bags by tomorrow, bring your wife instead."

He was at a loss what to do and talked to his wife about it.

"There's no need to worry. It's very easy." said she.



She went to the seashore and prayed it for God, clapping her hands, when straw-bags flew up from the sea to his house one after another up to a hundred ones.

The young man said to the lord,

"I prepared a thousand straw bags for you. Come to my house."

The lord, not believing it, collected fifty horses up to carry the bags from the man's house to his castle.

The young man and his wife had had peaceful lives for three months.

One day, the lord called the young man again to his castle and ordered him,

"I do would like to have your wife as one of my wives. If you can't bring me a thousand straw slippers by tomorrow, bring your wife instead."

He was at a loss what to do and talked to his wife about it.

"There's no need to worry. It's very easy." said she.

She went to the seashore again and prayed it for God, clapping her hands, when straw slippers flew up from the sea to his house one after another up to a thousand ones.

The young man went to the castle with a joy and said to the lord,

"I prepared a thousand straw slippers for you. Come to my house."

The lord, not believing it, collected his men to carry a thousand straw slippers from the man's house to his castle.

The young man and his wife had had peaceful lives for another three months.

On the last day of the year, the lord called the young man again to his castle and ordered him,

"I do indeed would like to have your wife as one of my wives. I'll visit your house for dinner with a thousand men of mine. If you can't prepare a thousand dishes and a thousand bottles of SAKE, give me your wife instead."

On the very day, she went to the seashore again and prayed it for God, clapping her hands, when a thousand dishes and a thousand bottles of SAKE flew up from the sea to the garden of his house. Soon the lord and his men came to his house. They sat down in front of their dishes and SAKE bottles in the garden.

The lord said to the beautiful wife,

"I would like to have you as one of my wives. Could you show me your performance? If you can't show it to me, you'll have to marry me."

"What kind of performance do you want to see?" asked the wife.

"I hear you have magic power. Show me a kind of magic."

She took out a big box and a tiny one from each of her sleeves.

"First of all, I'll open this small one."

On opening it, hundreds of dancers came out of it, singing and dancing.

"Why don't you open the big box?" said the lord to her.

"It's dangerous to open it. Even I don't know who will come out of it. If you open it, you may be killed" said the wife.

"I have a thousand men here. So No matter who may come out, I will kill them. Open the box at once."

As soon as she opened the big one, thousands of strong soldiers with swords jumped up out of it. The lord and his men were killed on the spot.(corrected:2002.8.16 with Itaya)

海から来たお嫁さま

むかし、むかし、あるところに若者とその母が住んでいました。とても貧しく、食べるものもほとんどなく、土地もありませんでした。山のきのこを売って暮らしていました。

ある日、若者は、町で花だけ売れて帰る途中、浜辺で海を眺めていました。「きのこを家に持ち帰ってもどうしようもないな。海に住んでいる神様にやろう。」

若者は、海に遠く投げ込みました。きのこはゆっくりと沈んでいきました。すると、大きなかめが海から顔を出し、言いました。

「きのこを沢山ありがとう。竜宮王からの伝言で、あなたを竜宮城にご招待しろ、とのことです。

「是非とも。でも竜宮は遠くて、時間がかかる、と聞いていますが。」

「大丈夫。僕の背中に乗って、目を閉じれば、もう竜宮城だ。」

若者は、かめの背中に乗って目を閉じました。息つく間もなく、竜宮城に到着です。かめは若者に言いました。

「もし王様に、何が欲しいか、と聞かれたら、きれいな嫁が欲しい、と答えなさい。」

若者は、豪華な食事や海の音楽や、鯛や平目の踊りを三日間楽しみました。城を出る時、王が言いました。

「お土産をやろう。何が欲しい。」

「きれいなお嫁が欲しいです。」とかめに言われたように言いました。

若者ときれいなお嫁さんはかめの背に乗って城を去りました。

驚いたことに、海で三日過ごしている間に三年が過ぎていました。母親は病気で二年間床に臥していました。

「おかあ、許してくれ。俺のせいだ。一人残して、海に行ってしまったからだ。」

嫁は、夫が泣いているのを見て、こう言いました。

「泣かないで。お母さんの病気を治してあげるわ。」

嫁は、二、三回息を吹きかけると、お母さんは、目を開け、ふっと息をすると、元気に立ち上がりました。

でも一緒に暮らす家はありませんでした。森を伐採し、土地を用意しました。嫁は、そこから小さな木槌を取り出すと、大きな声で、「大きな家、出て来い。」と木槌をふりました。

すると、目の前に大きな素晴らしい家が現われました。お米や着物も木槌で出てきました。

まもなく若者夫婦はお金持ちになり、嫁は国一番の美しく、素晴らしい妻として有名になりました。

うわさは領主まで届き、若者を城に呼び寄せると、こう言いました。

「お前の妻を、側妻（そばめ）にしたい。明日までに米俵百表用意できなければ、女を連れて来い。」
若者は、どうしたらよいか途方に暮れ、妻に話しました。

「心配しなくても大丈夫ですよ。簡単よ。」

妻は、海辺に行くと、手を叩いて、お願いしました。すると、米俵が海から家の方に次から次へと百表飛んで行きました。

若者は領主に言いました。

「百表用意できました。家に来てください。」

領主は、不思議な思いで、五十頭の馬を集めて、俵を城まで運ばせました。

若者夫婦は平和な日々を三ヶ月過ごしました。



ある日、領主は再び領主を城に呼び寄せ、命じました。

「是非とも、そなたの妻を側妻としたい。明日までに、草履を千足持ってこられなければ、妻を連れて来い。」

若者は、どうしたらよいか途方に暮れ、妻に話しました。

「心配しなくても大丈夫ですよ。簡単よ。」

妻は、海辺に行くと、手を叩いて、お願いしました。すると、草履が海から家の方に次から次へと千足飛んで行きました。

若者は喜びいさんで城に行き、領主に言いました。

「草履千足用意できました。家へどうぞ。」

領主は、不思議な思いで、家臣を集めて、草履千足を城まで運ばせました。

若者夫婦は平和な日々を三ヶ月過ごしました。</P>

その年の大晦日、領主は若者を三度（みたび）城に呼び、命じました。

「どうしても、そなたの奥方を側妻としたい。家臣千人で夕食にうかがう。千人分の料理と酒千本用意できなければ、そなたの奥方をよこせ。」

まさにその日、妻は、海辺に行くと、手を叩いて、お願いしました。すると、千人分の料理と酒千本が家の庭に飛んでいきました。まもなく、領主と家臣が家にやって来て、庭で料理と酒瓶の前にすわりました。

領主は、美しい妻に言いました。

「そなたを側妻にしたい。踊りを見せてもらいたい。もし踊れなければ、覚悟してもらおう。」

「どんな踊りをすればよいのでしょうか。」

「そなたには魔力があるとのこと。是非見せてもらいたい。」

妻は、両袖から大きな箱と小さな箱を取り出しました。

「まず最初に、小さい箱を開けます。」

箱を開けると、何千という踊り子が現われ、歌や踊りを始めました。

「大きい箱も開けてくれ。」と領主は女に言いました。

「これを開けると、とても危険です。私にも何が出てくるのかわかりません。開けたら、命がないかも知れませんよ。」

「家来がここに千人おる。誰が出てきても、大丈夫だ。すぐ開ける。」

大きな箱を開けるやいなや、刀を持った何千人もの侍が飛び出し、領主と家臣は殺されてしまいました。(kudos)