

## Yuriwaka Legend

### Episode 1/The Battle

Long, long ago, there lived a strong and brave warrior called 'Yuriwaka.' He was a big man of strength. Everyone around him knew he was a great archer. His favorite bow was a 3-meter iron



one. It was so heavy no one could even lift it. But he could handle it as if it had been nothing. Later he became a provincial governor of Bungo (now in Oita Prefecture), Kyusyu. His wife, Kasuga-hime was a beautiful and gentle lady. So he lived happily with his wife.

One day, they found thousands of warships from the Korea Peninsula sailing toward Kyusyu.

Yuriwaka left home with one thousand warriors and a fleet of ships to fight them.

When his wife saw him off, she said to him,

"Be careful, please. You shouldn't let down your guard until the time you come home safely."

The battle started off the coast of Tsushima Island, one of the islands of northern sea of Kyusyu. Yuriwaka, who was standing on the bow of his ship, used his 3-meter iron bow with hundreds of arrows. He never missed his targets. His men also fought bravely. But the enemy's ships outnumbered his. However times he shot, the new target appeared one after another. It seemed like the fight wouldn't have finished. But one of his arrows shot the enemy's leader's head. Their boats soon turned back and sailed away.

When he saw them sailing away, he was confident that the battle had finished with his great success. But he knew lots of his men had been killed or injured during the battle, and he himself was exhausted. He decided to drop by the nearest island and took a rest for a while. He told Beppu Brothers, his chief retainers, to find a place to have a rest. Then the ships reached the Genkai Island that was a deserted island and still far from Kyusyu. As soon as Yuriwaka landed, he took off his armor and helmet, and fell asleep. In fact he had been fast asleep for three days without waking a single moment.

When he woke up, he felt something strange. It was so quiet. The sun had been already risen high above him. He called to his men in a loud voice,

"Somebody, come quickly!"

Nobody answered. He looked around. His armor, helmet and the iron bow were gone. Soon he realized that it was Beppu Brother's rebellion. They had abandoned him on the deserted island.

○「百合若」はどうして孤島に置き去りにされたのでしょうか。

## Episode 2/ The Deserted Island

Yuriwaka barely managed to survive alone catching fish, and gathering seaweed and wild fruit. Every morning he stood up on the seashore of the island and shouted his wife's name to the sea,



"I'll return home without fail, Kasuga-hime. Please wait for me a little longer."

In the mean time, the Beppu Brothers, who'd been Yuriwaka's chief retainers, of all things, had abandoned their master on the deserted island and returned home with his men in victory. They visited Kasuga-hime with her husband's armor and helmet, and told her a pack of lies. The elder brother said,

"You may not believe this. But we must tell you the saddest news. Your husband, our master, was shot by the enemy's leader and fell into the sea. Can you forgive us that we couldn't save him?" he made his face look very sad and shed false tears.

"This is his armor and helmet. Please keep them as his remembrance," the younger brother handed them to her.

Soon they each became a new provincial governor and a sub-governor successfully. It had been their desire for years to take the place of Yuriwaka. They gloated over their success.

Kasuga-hime, however, didn't believe her husband had died. She had been taking care of 32 hawks and 12 dogs that her husband had loved very much. She thought that if she would keep them, he would be happy. She wanted to see her husband's happy face when he found them safe and sound. She waited for him day after day. She wanted a little bird to tell her his news, but no one told her about him. She gradually lost her appetite, and became thinner and thinner with grief

Two years had passed and she heard no news. She finally decided to release his hawks and dogs. Soon all the dogs ran away, and the hawks flew up high in the sky. But Midorimaru, one of his hawks, was still in the cage. She fed it some food, but it didn't eat. She gave it a rice ball. It took it with its beak and flew away.

Meanwhile, Yuriwaka also became thin and lean. His appearance had changed so much that nobody would recognize him if anyone had come to see him. All he could eat was a bit of fish and seaweed. That turned him to skin and bones. His clothes were ragged, hair was messy, and his beard had grown long.

One day he saw something flying toward him. Then it landed on his shoulder. It was Midorimaru with a rice ball! What a bird! It found its master.

"Oh, it's you, Midorimaru. You've recognized me, haven't you? I wish you could speak, and tell her about me! If you could tell her I'm still alive--- Wait a minute. There must be something I can do."

He looked for something to write on, then picked up a leaf, cut his finger with a knife, and wrote '*YURIWAKA*' on it with his blood. He tied it to its leg and let it fly.

Three days later, the bird flew back to its cage. Kasuga-hime found



it and said,

"I gave you freedom, didn't I? Why have you flown back here? " Although she felt happy when she found the hawk again. Soon she noticed something attached its leg.

"Oh, a leaf---there's something written on it---with blood. ---'YURIWAKA' It says 'YURIWAKA.' It must be my husband's handwriting! He is still alive!" She cried with joy. But she didn't tell anyone about it.

She wrote a letter to him and tied it to the bird's leg again. And she let it fly. The flight to and from the island was a hard journey for the bird. Moreover it started flying to the island again without a rest. Poor Midorimaru! It flew until there was no strength left and then flew down and down--- to death--- and floated above the waves.

○「百合若」はどうやって妻に生存を知らせたのでしょうか。

### **Episode 3/Return**

One day a fisherman fishing in the offing spotted something moving on the island. He strained his eyes and listened carefully. It looked like a man crying something and waving his hands. That was Yuriwaka, of course.

The fisherman soon rowed his boat toward the island. He was very surprised when he saw the creature at first. It had a bushy bearded face, long hair, dirty hands and legs, and scarcely wore clothes. It looked like an ogre that could speak man's language.

"I was one of Yuriwaka's men. After he defeated the navy from the Korean Peninsula two years ago, he and his men stopped by on this island and rested for a while. I failed to ride back on the boat and have been isolated from everyone. You are the first man I've met since then. I'd greatly appreciate it if you could take me to Kyusyu with you." Yuriwaka didn't tell the fisherman who he was because he was afraid the fisherman might be under the Beppu Brothers.

The fisherman felt pity. He came back with Yuriwaka and named him Kokemaru (Moss man) since his face and body was covered with hair like moss. He treated him as his servant. Soon he noticed that Kokemaru was clever and had tremendous power. He said to him now and then about the Beppu Brothers and Kasuga-hime,

"Listen. The brothers have taken over Yuriwaka's position and have been ruling the nation with a high hand. They've imposed heavy taxes on us and forced us to work for them. They had a big house built like a palace. Thus they are living in luxury. Mean while, people have been enduring lives of the hardship. The power had gone to their heads, especially the older brother. He wanted to marry Kasuga-hime. Poor Kasuga-hime! She loved Yuriwaka very much. She ended up throwing herself into the pond of Makomo."

Kokemaru thought his heart would break when he heard of his wife's death. But he still didn't tell the fisherman that he himself was Yuriwaka.

He visited his old house secretly. As he expected, he didn't meet anyone there. He couldn't help thinking of his wife and the life with her years ago.

Some days later, The fisherman told Kokemaru about the ceremony and event that would be held at the Beppu Brothers' place on New Year's day.

"After a banquet, they'll have a competition of horseback archery. Do you want to watch it with me? If you want, I'll take you to the place."

"Can I enter their place?" he asked.

"You can, but only outside of their house for the New Year's event. They permit anyone to watch the horseback archery." the fisherman answered.

People gathered around the riding ground. Urging horses, a man shot two arrows. But both shots missed the mark. The next man tried, and the third man. They also missed the shot.

Then a big laughter echoed around the field. It was Kokemaru! Nobody knew who he was because his appearance was greatly different from what he had been.

"Who is he?" Everybody thought. Some men came to the man who laughed loudly, and took him in front of the Brothers.

"What a daring fellow you are, laughing at our men missing the shot! Try it yourself. If you miss, you shall die!" The older brother yelled at him. The younger one threw a bow and two arrows. A horse was prepared for him.

"I can't," the daring fellow said, "I can't make it with such a weak bow and arrow. Those are for children, aren't they?" He grabbed the bow and arrows, and broke them.

"None of your impudence!" The Brothers' faces turned red with rage.

"Bring the iron bow and arrows for him," the younger brother cried to the followers near him. Soon two men carried a big bow and another two men an arrow each. They looked very heavy. Kokemaru, however, carried them easily under his arm, and mounted the horse. Then he shouted, "Listen, everybody. Who do you think I am? I am none other than Yuriwaka, your real master. The Beppu brothers abandoned me on the island two years ago, and---."

No sooner did the Brothers hear this announcement than they turned their horses' heads and laid whip to them. They started running very fast. Yuriwaka took aim at the target and released the arrow one by one.

A woman came trotting to him from the distance. He recognized her as Kasuga-hime at a glance.

"Kasuga---" surprised he ran to Kasuga-hime. He wanted to show her how delighted he was to see her again. The cry he made, however, was like a beast's roar. The two ran to each other and held each other's hands.



How happy they were to reunite at their old house! He told her about the life on the island briefly. She also told him that she had to get through a hard time, and how outrageous the Beppu Brothers treated her.

She said, "The older Beppu Brother wanted to marry me. As I refused his proposal, he raged at me and told one of his men to kill me. I was close to death at that time."

"Yeah, I heard about that story," Yuriwaka said,  
"Someone told me you'd thrown yourself to death. It gave me a shock. I was determined to destroy them in my mind, and watched for a chance to do it. I finally killed the wicked men today. Then you appeared in front of me. I couldn't believe it. But it wasn't a dream!" Yuriwaka said.



"Listen, my love. I have to tell you more about how I escaped from their wicked hands. The man who was ordered to kill me had been one of your men for years. He believed that you had passed away on the island because of a poisoned arrow you've got during the sea battle as he'd been told. Since then he has served the Beppu Brothers. But the loyal man didn't forget you or me. He couldn't kill me. He thought that if he did that, he would be tortured by remorse for his crime for the rest of his life. But if he didn't obey his cruel master's order, they would punish him, and some other man would get the order to kill me. He had a daughter who was the same age as me, and she looked very similar to me. He told his daughter about me. After the young woman heard her father's agony, she vowed to offer her life in order to save her father and me."

When her story reached this point, her eyes were filled with tears, and she couldn't continue for a moment.

Yuriwaka was deeply moved. Soon after that he had a shrine built for the poor young woman.

○「百合若」の妻はどうして助かったのでしょうか。

## 百合若伝説

### エピソードⅠ/戦い

むかし、むかし、「百合若」という強くて勇敢な武将がおりました。強靱な体力の持ち主で、弓の名手としても知られておりました。百合若愛用の弓は長さ八尺五寸（約3メートル）もある鉄の弓でした。その重いことと言ったら、誰も持ち上げることさえ出来ないのに、百合若はいとも簡単にその弓を扱うのでした。後に、豊後（ぶんご・今の大分県）の国守（国司の長）としての任につきました。妻の春日（かすが）姫は美しく心優しい人でした。百合若は妻と平和な日々を送っておりました。

ある日のことです。朝鮮半島から九州に向けて何千隻もの軍船がやって来ました。百合若は千人の部下と一船団を引き連れて出港しました。見送りの際、妻は夫にこう言いました。

「くれぐれもお体を大事にして下さい。無事にお戻りなるまで気を抜きませんように。」

戦いは、九州北方の島々の一つ、対馬沖で始まりました。百合若は、船の舳先（へさき）に立ち、八尺五寸の鉄の弓から、何百本もの矢を射ましたが、狙った的を外すことはありませんでした。部下も勇敢に戦いました。しかし数においては敵に敵いません。射れども射れども新たな敵兵が現れ、戦いの決着はつかないように思えました。しかし百合若の矢が敵の首領の頭に命中すると、敵船は向きを変え、戻って行きました。

百合若は、引き帰す敵船を見て、戦いは大勝利に終わったと確信しました。しかし、多くの部下が、戦いで命を落としたり、負傷しました。百合若自身も疲れきっていました。最寄の島に立ち寄り、しばし休息を取ることにしました。腹心の部下、別府兄弟に休息場所を探すよう命じ、やがて、船団は九州に程近い孤島、玄海島にたどり着きました。百合若は、陸にあがると直ちに、鎧（よろい）、兜（かぶと）を脱ぎ、眠りにつきました。実を言うと、一時たりとも目を覚ますことなく、三日三晩ぐっすり眠り続けたのです。

目を覚ました百合若は、異様な様子に気がつきました。あたりは静寂に包まれ、太陽が頭上高く照っています。部下を呼びつけました。

「誰か、すぐ参れ！」

返事はありません。回りを見渡します。鎧と兜が見当たりません。まもなく別府兄弟の謀反と気づきます。百合若は孤島に置き去りにされたのです。

### エピソードⅡ/孤島

百合若は魚をとり、海草・木の実を集め、何とか生き延びていました。

朝が来るたび、島の浜辺に立ち、海に向かって妻の名を叫ぶのでした。

「春日姫、必ず帰る。しばらく待っていてくれ。」

さて、あろうことか、かつては百合若の腹心の部下でありながら、主（あるじ）を孤島に置き去りにした別府兄弟は、部下を引き連れ勝ち軍さの帰路についたのでした。

そして、百合若の鎧と兜を携え春日姫を訪れ、うそ八百を語るのでした。

兄曰く、

「信じられないこととは存じますが、悲しい知らせをお伝えしなければなりません。われらが主（あるじ）百合若様は、敵の首領に射られ、海に消えました。お命を守れなかったこと、お詫びの言葉もありません。」と嘆き悲しみ、そら涙を流すのでした。

「亡きご主人の鎧と兜です。形見としてお納め下さい。」弟が手渡す。

まもなく、二人はまんまと新しい国司（国司の中で守（かみ）は国守とも言われ、国司の長、介（すけ）は守の下役）に任せられたのでした。百合若に取って代わって国司の任に就くのが二

人の長年の願いでしたから、うまくやったとほくそえんだのでした。

春日姫は、夫が亡くなったとは信じられません。姫の所には、夫がたいそう可愛がっていた鷹が三十二羽、犬が12頭いて、ずっと面倒を見ていました。このまま飼っていれば、夫はきっと喜ぶと思っていましたから。夫の留守中、鷹や犬が無事だったとわかって、満足げな夫の顔を、あれこれ思い浮かべてみるのです。来る日も来る日も夫を待ち続けました。風の便りにもすがりたい気持ちでした。もちろん夫のことを語ってくれるものはありません。姫は悲しみに次第に食欲もなくなり、どんどん痩せ細って行きました。

二年の歳月（さいげつ）が流れました。何の知らせもありません。姫は、鷹と犬を放してやることにしました。まもなく犬はどこかへ行き、鷹は空高く飛び立って行きました。しかし「緑丸」と言う鷹だけは、おりから出る様子はありません。えさをやっても食べません。しかし、おむすびを与えると、くちばしにくわえ、飛び去りました。

話は変わって、百合若も痩せ細ってしまいました。見かけもすっかり変わってしまいましたから、誰かが会いに行ったとしても気がつく者はいないでしょう。食べ物はわずかの魚と海草。そんなでしたから、骨と皮ばかりになったのでした。着物はぼろぼろ、髪はもじゃもじゃ、あごひげが長くのびていました。

ある日のことです。何かが百合若の方へ飛んできました。そして肩に止まりました。緑丸です。おむすびをくわえているのです！何という鷹でしょう！主人を見つけたのです。

「何と、お前か、緑丸。わしがわかったのか。お前が話せて、妻にわしのことを知らせてくれたらう。わしがまだ生きていることを知らせてくれたらう・・・待てよ。何か手立てがあるに違いない。」

百合若は何か書くものを探すと、葉を一枚拾いあげました。そして小刀で指を切り、自らの血で葉に「百合若」と書きました。そして鷹の脚に縛り付け、飛び放ちました。

三日後、鷹はおりに舞い戻りました。春日姫は鷹に気づき、こう言いました。

「自由にしてやったのに、どうしてまた戻ってきたの。」それでも心の中では鷹が戻ってきたのを嬉しく思っていました。そして、すぐに何かが脚に結んであるのに気がつきました。

「おや、葉っぱですね。何か書いてあるようですが・・・しかも血で・・・百合若！百合若ですって！まぎれもなく夫の筆跡です。生きておられるのですね。」

春日姫は喜びの声をあげましたが、そのことは誰にも話しませんでした。

春日姫は夫への手紙を書くと、手紙を鷹の脚に結びました。そして放してやりました。鷹にとって島の行きかえりだけでも大変な距離でした。まして休む間もなく再び島に飛び立ったのですから。可哀想な緑丸！もう飛ぶ力は残っていません。どんどん下降していき・・・死んでしまいました。緑丸は波の上に漂っています。

### エピソードⅢ/帰還

ある日のことです。沖合いで魚を獲っていた漁師がふと見ると、何かが島で動いているのです。目を凝らし、耳をそばだてると、一人の男が何か叫んで、手を振っているようです。男が百合若であることはおわかりですね。

漁師は直ちに島に向かって漕ぎ出しました。その得体の知れぬ者を初めて見た時の驚きようったらありません。もじゃもじゃのひげ面、伸びきった髪、真っ黒な手足、ぼろぼろの着物。人の言葉が話す鬼のようでした。

「某（それがし）はもと百合若殿の家臣、二年前の朝鮮軍との海戦に勝利の後、百合若殿一行は、この島に立ち寄り、しばし休息された。しかし某は船に乗り遅れ、独り島に取り残されてしまっ

た。以来、人に出会ったのはそこもが初めてだ。某を九州に連れて行ってはくれまいか。」百合若は自らの素性（すじょう）は明らかにはしませんでした。ひよっとすると漁師が別府兄弟配下の者かも知れないと思ったからです。

漁師は男を不憫（ふびん）に思い、百合若を舟に乗せて戻ると「苔丸」と名づけました。顔といい体といい、まるで苔のように毛で覆われていたからです。漁師は苔丸を僕（しもべ）のように扱いました。そのうち、苔丸が切れ者で、並外れた力持ちであることがわかりましたから、漁師はことあるごとに苔丸に別府兄弟や春日姫のことを話して聞かせてました。

「いいか、あの兄弟（ふたり）は百合若の地位を奪い、我が物顔で国を治めている。庶民に重税を課し、労働を強要している。宮殿のような邸宅を構え、贅沢三昧の毎日を送っている。かたや、庶民は艱難辛苦に耐えている。権力に物言わせ、好き勝手のし放題。春日姫までわがものにしようとした。可哀想に！百合若を心から愛していた春日姫は結局、まこもが池に身を投げて死んでしまった。」

妻の死を耳にした苔丸は心臓が張り裂けんばかりであったが、自分が百合若である、とは言いませんでした。

苔丸は密かにかつての自分の屋敷を訪ねてみました。案の定誰一人迎えてくれる者はいませんでした。春日姫のこと、春日姫と過ごした日々がよみがえってきました。

それから数日後、別府兄弟の屋敷で、元旦の祭事と催しものがあることを、苔丸は主（あるじ）から聞きました。

「宴のあと、流鏝馬（やぶさめ）の腕比べがあるとのこと。一緒に見物はどうかな。よければ連れて行ってあげるぞ。」

「やしきに入れるのですか。」

「ああ、屋敷の外で催し物を見るだけだがな。流鏝馬は誰でも見せてもらえるのだ。」

馬場には人だかりができていました。馬を駆り立て、男が矢を二本放ちましたが、二本とも的をはずしてしまいました。次の男も、また次の男も、みんな的を外しました。その時、馬場に高笑いが響きました。苔丸です。その正体がわかるものは誰もいません。全く別人のように見かけがすっかり変わってしまったからです。

「あいつは誰だ。」みながそう思いました。笑った男は捕らえられると、別府兄弟の前に引き出されました。

「わが家臣の射そこねた技を笑うとは何と大胆不敵な奴め。自分でやってみるがよい。失敗したら命がないと思え。」兄が苔丸に大声で言うと、弟が弓と二本の矢を投げ与えました。馬も引き出されました。

「できん。」その豪胆な男は答えました。「そんなへなちょこの弓と矢ではできん。子どもの遊びじゃあるまいし。」弓と矢をつかむと二つに折ってしまいました。

「小癩（こしゃく）な奴め！」兄弟（ふたり）は激怒で顔が真っ赤になりました。

「鉄の弓と矢を持って参れ。」弟が側近の家臣に命じました。

やがて大きな弓を二人がかりで運んできました。もう二人の男が矢を一本ずつ持ってきました。いかにも重そうです。しかし苔丸はいとも軽々と弓矢を脇に抱えると、馬にまたがりました。そして、おお声をあげました。

「よく聞け、皆のもの。われに気づく者はおらぬのか。われこそ誰あろう、そなたたちのまことの主（あるじ）百合若ぞ。兄弟（ふたり）により、2年前、島に置き去りにされた。さらに・・・」これを聞いた別府兄弟は、馬の鼻面（はなづら）の向きを変えると、馬に一鞭（ひとむち）あてました。馬は一気に走り出しました。百合若はすかさず狙いを定めると、一本づつ矢を放ちまし



た。

遠くの方から小走りに百合若の方にやってくる女がいます。百合若は一目でそれが春日姫とわかりました。

「春日・・・」百合若は驚愕（きょうがく）し、春日姫の許に駆け出しました。再会できた喜びを表したかったのですが、百合若の雄叫び（おたけび）は、まるで野獣（けだもの）のそれのようでした。夫婦は駆け寄り手を握り合いました。

なつかしの我が家で再会できた喜び！夫は妻に孤島での暮らしを語り、妻は夫に艱難辛苦（かんなんしんく）を乗り越えなければならなかったこと、別府兄弟の常軌を逸した扱いを語ります。

「ことに別府兄弟の兄の方は、私を手に入れようとしたのですが、断られると激怒のあげく、家臣に私を殺すよう命じました。あの時は、危うく命を落とすところでした。」

「うん、そのことは私も耳にした。」百合若は答えます。「身を投げて命を落とすと聞き、動揺した。心の中で復讐を誓い、実行の機会をうかがっていた。今日あの極悪人を始末した。そこへお前があらわれた。これ以上の喜びがあるのか。夢ではなからうか！」

「聴いてください。貴方様。いかにして兄弟（ふたり）の魔の手から逃れたかお話ししなければなりません。私を殺すよう命ぜられた家臣はかつては貴方に長年仕えていたものでした。戦いの最中受けた毒矢がもとで、貴方様が島で亡くなったと信じていたようです。以来兄弟（ふたり）に仕えておりましたが、貴方の忠臣は、貴方や私のことは忘れませんでしたから、私を殺しはしませんでした。そんなことをすれば、一生罪の呵責（かしゃく）にさいなまれると思ったのでしよう。とは言え、非道な主（あるじ）の命令に従わなければ、罰せられ、別の家臣が命（めい）を受けて私を殺しに来ると思ったのでしよう。その家臣には、私と同じ歳の娘さんがおりました。見かけも私に似ていたのです。娘さんに私のことを話しました。娘さんは父親の苦しみを耳にし、自分の父親と私を助けるため命を捧げる決心をしました。」

春日姫の目は、涙があふれんばかりで、しばし言葉を継ぐことができません。

百合若は痛く心を打たれました。その後、その可哀想な娘さんを祀る寺を建立しました。