

The Brothers, a Foolish one and a Sly one

Long, long ago, two greasy brothers lived next door to each other; one was a foolish guy and the other a sly one. The foolish brother was older and rich, and had a large house while the sly one was younger and poor, and lived in a small house.

One day the younger brother found a lean worn-out horse. He paid only five *mon* for it. But that was all the money he had. On his way back, he happened to find a silver coin by the road. He picked it up, and looked at his horse. It was too old to ride on or to make work. Just then a brilliant idea flashed in his mind. He might obtain a profit from his big brother by a trick. Just wait and see how his trick works. (*Mon* is one of the denominations of old Japanese money.)



(The younger brother looks very excited. He puts a silver coin into the horse's dung in advance. Then he visits his brother and says to him.)>

(Younger): You know what? I bought a horse yesterday. To tell the truth it's not such a good a horse as yours. But I happen to know it's a marvelous horse.

(Elder): A marvelous horse? Hey, tell me everything you know about it.

(Younger): Umm--- Perhaps you won't believe this. But I found a silver coin in its dung this morning.

(Elder): A silver coin in its dung? Ridiculous! I can't believe it.

(Younger): I knew you'd say so. I shouldn't have told you about it. Good bye.

(Elder): Wait, wait a minute. I'll go and see the horse and tell you how silly you are.

(At his brother's stable, the elder brother sees a coin shining in the horse's dung. He doesn't realize he is being taken in. He foolishly believes what his brother said, and gradually wants the horse more than anything else.)

(Elder): How lucky you are to get such a wonderful horse!

Umm--- would you mind selling it to me?</br>

(Younger): Don't be silly. The horse is my treasure now. I don't want to let it go.

(Elder): I know it's your treasure. But if you are kind enough to sell it to me, I'll pay 100 *mon* for it. What do you say?

(Younger): Only 100 *mon*? There's no way to sell my horse.

(Elder): How about 200 *mon*?

(Younger): 200 *mon*? No, I can't. I can't sell it no matter how much you can offer me.

(Elder): Um--- then, 300 *mon*. I'll pay 300 *mon* for your lean horse.

(Younger): No, I won't. You don't know how precious it is.

(Elder): All right, all right. But you can't deny me if I pay 400 *mon* for it.

(Younger): No. It's priceless, you know.

(Elder): Damn it! What a greedy person you are! 500 *mon*. I can't pay more for it than that.

(Younger): Well, if you want to have it that badly, I'll take the plunge and sell it to you.

(The younger brother is so pleased to get a lot of money while the elder one is also satisfied to get the 'wonderful horse'. He happily brings it to his stable and gives it a stuck of fodder.)

(Elder): Eat as much fodder as you can. And give me as many coins as you can.

(He waits and waits until the horse drops dung. When the horse drops some dung, he shouts for joy. He hurries to examine it to find coins. But he fails at the first try. He tries the second piece of dung. Then he wildly stirs the dung, but he never finds any coin. He gets so angry and rushes to his brother's house. The younger brother is eating supper with a look of feigned innocence. There is an iron pot with hot rice by them.)

(Elder): You deceived me to sell me that damn hack!

(Younger): Calm down. What makes you so angry? Did I deceive you? What are you talking about?

(Elder): You told me that the horse could drop coins in its dung. You liar! I've never found any coins in its dung.

(Younger): Aha, you are mad at the horse, aren't you? Wait a few more days and, I promise, you can get coins in its dung. By the way, look at this iron pot. It looks like an ordinary one, but to tell the truth it's a magic pot.

(Elder): Are you trying to cheat me again? I'll never be tricked by your false stories. Everybody knows that it's an ordinary iron pot. You can't deceive me any more.

(Younger): I know you don't believe me. But I call this a treasure pot, because it produces cooked rice by itself. You don't need to measure rice, rinse it, or cook it. Just sit and wait, and you can see hot cooked rice in it. Why don't you sit down here by me and eat rice from this magic pot.

(The foolish elder brother enjoys having rice with them. He doesn't notice that he is been taken in again. Soon his desire to get the magic iron pot raises its head, and forgets the horse. But he is still careful not to be cheated by his brother.)

(Elder): Is it true that the pot produces cooked rice by itself?

(Younger): Are you doubting me yet? But you just had rice from the pot, and we did too. You're not saying it wasn't real rice, are you?

(Elder): um--- I'm just asking. Yes, it was the nicest cooked rice I've ever had. Um--- I have something to ask you. Would you sell the iron pot to me?

(Younger): How can I sell it to you? It's my treasure. I can't sell it to anybody.

(Elder): But if I pay 100 *mon* for the old pot, what do you say?

(Younger): Only 100 *mon*? There's no way I'll sell my pot.

(Elder): How about 200 *mon*?

(Younger): 200 *mon*? No, I can't. I can't sell it no matter how much you offer me.

(Elder): Um--- then, 300 *mon*. I'll pay 300 *mon* for your old iron pot.

(Younger): No, I won't. You don't know how precious it is.

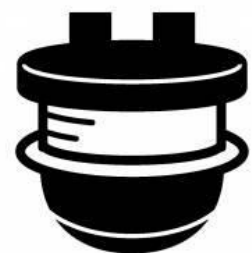
(Elder): All right, all right. But you can't deny me if I pay 400 *mon* for it.

(Younger): No. It's priceless, you know.

(Elder): Damn it! What a greedy person you are! 500 *mon*. I can't pay more for it than that.

(Younger): Well, if you're so eager to have it, I'll take the plunge and sell it to you.

(The younger brother is so pleased to get a lot of money while the elder one is also satisfied to own the 'magic iron pot'. He happily takes it back to his house, and waits for a few minutes. Nothing happens. He has to wait for hours. Still nothing happens. After patiently waiting for a day, he at last realizes that he is cheated again. He storms into his brother's house and yells.)



(Elder): Hey, you liar. I can't forgive you this time. You sold me a damn iron pot. It doesn't have any magic power at all.

(The younger brother says nothing but he is praying something to a gourd hanging on the wall. He is raising his hands up and down and walking around the room.)

(Elder): Hey, what are you doing?

(Younger): Hello, Brother. My wife is ill seriously.

(Elder): Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Is she so bad?

(Younger): I don't want to say she is dying. But--- it's a serious case. I'm praying to this magic gourd for my wife's recovery.

(Just then his wife returns home with a bucket full of vegetables. The younger brother cries with joy.)

(Younger): Thank you, God. And thank you, Gourd! You see, thanks to the gourd, my wife was saved. I prayed for my wife's recovery for hours to the gourd, and this magic heard my prayer. You can pray about anything, and the gourd will answer you.

(The foolish elder brother doesn't notice that he is been taken in again. Soon his desire to get the magic gourd raises its head, and forgets the horse and pot. But he is still careful not to be cheated by his brother again.)

(Elder): Is it true that your wife was ill? And she recovered as you prayed to the gourd?

(Younger): You doubt my words? But you've just seen my wife coming back home with a bucket full of vegetables.

(Elder): Um--- I'm just asking. Well, there's no doubt that she is healthy. Um--- I have something to ask you. Would you sell the gourd to me?

(Younger) How can I sell it to you? It's my treasure. I can't sell it to anybody.

(Elder): But if you sell it to me I'll pay 100 *mon* for the old gourd, what do you say?

(Younger): Only 100 *mon*? There's no way I'll sell my gourd.

(Elder): How about 200 *mon*?

(Younger): 200 *mon*? No, I can't. I can't sell it to you however much you offer me.

(Elder): Um--- then, 300 *mon*. I'll pay 300 *mon* for your old gourd.

(Younger): No, I won't. You don't know how precious it is.

(Elder): All right, all right. But you can't deny me if I pay 400 *mon* for it.

(Younger): No. It's priceless, you know.

(Elder): Damn it! What a greedy person you are! 500 *mon*. I can't pay more for it than that.

(Younger): If you want to have it so badly, I'll take the plunge and sell it to you.

(The younger brother is so pleased to get a lot of money while the elder one is also satisfied to get the 'magic gourd'. He happily brings it back with him to his house. He wants to try its magic power right away. He looks around. He already has everything he wants. And everybody looks healthy, no one is sick or injured. He notices that his wife smiled at him. He suddenly grabs a thick stick near him and starts hitting her on her back. She screams and cries.)

(Wife): Stop, stop it. why are you hitting me? I don't get it. Did I do something wrong ? Did I do something to hurt your feelings?

(Husband): Sorry. I don't want to injure you. But I need to try this gourd's magic power. Be patient.



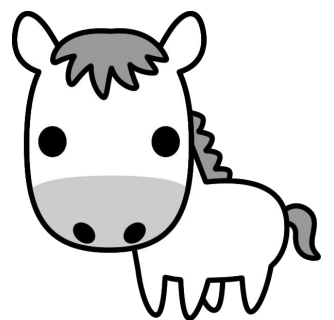
Your backache will soon be recovered.

(He begins praying to the gourd and dancing around the room as his brother did. But her bruise is still throbbing with pain. She keeps crying. He realizes that his brother has tricked him again. He stamps his feet in anger, and storms into the neighbor's to blame him for his lying.)

(Elder): Hey, you liar. I can't forgive you this time. You sold me a damn---

(He finds nobody in the house. All he finds are a couple of cracked rice bowls.)(2005.4.1 With Itaya)

かしこくない兄とずるかしこい弟



むかし、むかし、お調子ものの兄弟が隣同士で住んでいました。かしこくないのとずるがしこい兄弟でした。かしこくない方は兄で、お金があり、立派な家に住んでいました。ずるがしこい方は弟で、お金がなく粗末な家に住んでいました。

ある日のことです。弟は、痩せこけたよぼよぼの馬が気に入り、たったの五文（文とは日本の古い貨幣の単位です）で手に入れました。それしか手元になかったのです。さらに、帰り道、道端（みちばた）で銀貨を見つけました。それを拾うと、馬に目をやりました。年老いて、とても乗ったり、仕事に使ったりできる馬ではありませんでしたが、ふと妙案が脳裏にひらめきました。兄を騙して儲けられるかもしれないと。さて、ことの顛末（てんまつ）はこんなふうです。

（弟は興奮気味。銀貨を馬の糞の中に前もって忍ばせる。兄を訪れ、こう言う。）

「(弟) あのだ。昨日馬を買ったんだ。兄貴んちの馬のようないい馬じゃないが、実は素晴らしい馬だったんだ。」

「(兄) 素晴らしい馬というと？詳しく話してみろ。」

「(弟) まあ、信じてくれないだろうな。今朝、馬の糞の中に銀貨を見つけたんだ。」

「(兄) 銀貨が糞の中？まさか。うそだろう。」

「(弟) そう言うと思ってたよ。だから黙っていようと思ったんだ。じゃあね。」

「(兄) ちょ、ちょっと待て。馬を見に行つて、うそか本当か確かめてみる。」

（弟の馬屋。兄は銀貨が馬の糞の中にきらめいているのを見る。騙されているのに気づかない。愚かにも弟の言葉を信じる。だんだんと何が何でもその馬が欲しくなる。）

「(兄) すごい馬を手に入れたものだな。ウーン。どうだ、俺に売らないか。」

「(弟) 冗談じゃないよ。この馬は今や俺の宝ものだよ。手放す気にはなれないよ。」

「(兄) それはわかっているが、もし売ってくれるなら、百文出そう。どうだ。」

「(弟) たった百文かい。だめだな。」

「(兄) じゃ二百文。」

「(弟) 二百文か。だめだな、売れないな。いくら出したって売れないよ。」

「(兄) ウー、じゃ三百文ではどうだ。痩せ馬に三百文払うよ。」

「(弟) いや、だめだな。どれほど価値あるものかまだわかってないな。」

「(兄) よかろう、いいだろう。四百文出そう。いやとは言えまい。」

「(弟) だめだよ、値段はつけられないよ。」

「(兄) ちえ、欲張り、じゃ五百文でどうだ。それ以上は無理だ。」

「(弟) そうまでして欲しいと言うなら、清水の舞台から飛び降りたつもりで売ることにするか。」

（弟は大金を得てご満悦。兄も「凄馬」を手に入れ、満足。さっそく馬小屋に連れて行き、飼い葉を与える。）

「(兄) さあ、さあ食べろ。いっぱい銀貨を出してくれよ。」

（馬が糞をするのを今か今かと待つ兄。馬が糞を落とすと、喜びの声。糞を調べて銀貨を探す。でも見つからない。もう一度、やけくそに糞をかき回す。結局一枚の銀貨もなし。腹を立て弟の所へ駆け込む。弟は、何のことかわからぬと言ったふうに冷静を装い夕食中。かたわらに熱々のご飯の入った鉄釜。）

「(兄) あんな馬を売りよつて、よくも騙したな。」

「(弟) 落ち着いてくれよ。何を怒っているんだい。騙したつて、何のことだい。」

「(兄) あの馬は銀貨を出す、つて言ったよな。この嘘つき。銀貨なんていくら糞の中を探しても見つからないぞ。」

「(弟) ああ、あの馬のことか。あと二、三日すれば、大丈夫だよ。ところで、この鉄釜だけど、普通

に見えるだろ。ところが実は、摩訶不思議な釜なんだ。」

「(兄) また騙そうって言う魂胆か。こんどはお前の作り話には騙されないぞ。誰が見たって普通の釜だ。騙されないぞ。」

「(弟) そう言うと思っていたよ。魔法の釜なんだ。何もしなくてもご飯が炊けるんだ。米を計って、洗って、炊かなくてもいいんだ。座って待ってれば、熱々のご飯が炊けるんだ。ねえ、座って魔法釜のご飯を食べていかないかい。」

(愚かな兄はご飯をいただく。また騙されていることに気づかない。魔法釜が欲しいという思いが強くなる。馬のことは頭から消える。でもまだ用心している。)

「(兄) 本当に、何もしなくても飯が炊けるのか。」

「(弟) まだ疑っているのかい。いま、釜のご飯を食べただろう。ご飯じゃなかったなんて言わないだろう。」

「(兄) ウーン、ちょっと聞いただけだ。確かに、とてもおいしく炊けたご飯だった。どうだ、魔法釜を売ってくれないか。」

「(弟) だめだよ。宝ものだよ。誰にも売れないよ。」

「(兄) 百文出すから、どうだ。」

「(弟) たったの百文かい。だめだな。」

「(兄) じゃ、二百文。」

「(弟) 二百文。だめだな、売れないな。いくら出してくれたって売れないよ。」

「(兄) ウー、じゃ三百文。古い鉄釜に三百文出すよ。」

「(弟) いや、だめだな。どれほど価値あるものかまだわかってないな。」

「(兄) よかろう、いいだろう。四百文出すよ。いやとは言えまい。」

「(弟) だめだよ、値段はつけられないよ。」

「(兄) ちえ、欲張り、じゃ五百文でどうだ。それ以上は無理だ。」

「(弟) そんなに欲しいなら、清水の舞台から飛び降りたつもりで売ることにするか。」

(弟は大金を得てご満悦。兄も「魔法の釜」を手に入れ、満足。さっそく家に持ち帰り数分待つ。更に数時間待つ。何も起こらない。辛抱強く一日待つ。ついにまたもや騙されたと気づく。怒り心頭に発し、弟の家に怒鳴り(どなり)込む。)

「(兄) この嘘つき。もう勘弁ならん。よくもあんな釜を売ったな。魔法の力なんてないじゃないか。」

(弟は答えず、手を合わせて、壁に掛かった瓢箪に何か祈っている。手を上下させ部屋の中を歩き回っている。)

「(兄) おい、何をしている。」

「(弟) ああ兄貴か。女房が病気なんだ。」

「(兄) それは気の毒だな。ひどいのか。」

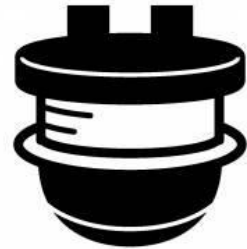
「(弟) 命に別状はないが重病なんだ。この魔法の瓢箪に女房が治るように祈っているんだ。」

(丁度その時。妻が桶に野菜を仰山入れて戻ってくる。弟は歓喜の声をあげる。)

「(弟) ありがたや、神さま。ありがたや、瓢箪さま。女房は助かりました。何時間も瓢箪にお願いした甲斐あって祈りが通じたんだ。何でも願いをこめて祈ると、この瓢箪はその願いを叶えてくれるんだ。」

(愚かな兄はまたしても騙されているのに気がつかない。魔法の瓢箪が欲しいという思いがだんだんと強くなる。馬と釜のことは頭から消える。でもまだ用心している。)

「(兄) 本当に女房は病気だったのか。瓢箪に祈って治ったのか。」



「(弟) 疑うのかい。今、女房が野菜を持って戻って来たのを見たろ。」

「(兄) ウーン、ちょっと聞いただけだよ。確かに、元気そうだ。どうだろう、その瓢箪を売ってくれないか。」

「(弟) だめだよ。宝ものだよ。誰にも売れないよ。」

「(兄) 百文出すから、どうだ。」

「(弟) たったの百文かい。だめだな。」

「(兄) じゃ、二百文。」

「(弟) 二百文。だめだな、売れないよ。いくら出したって売れないよ。」

「(兄) ウー、じゃ三百文。汚い瓢箪に三百文出すよ。」

「(弟) いや、だめだな。どれほど価値あるものかわかってないな。」

「(兄) よかろう、いいだろう。四百文出すよ。いやとは言えまい。」

「(弟) だめだよ、値段はつけられないよ。」

「(兄) ちえ、欲張り、じゃ五百文でどうだ。それ以上は無理だ。」

「(弟) そんなに欲しいなら、清水の舞台から飛び降りたつもりで売ることにするか。」

(弟は大金を得てご満悦。兄も「魔法の瓢箪」を手に入れ、満足。さっそく家に持ち帰り、試してみたいくなる。辺りを見回す。欲しいものは特になし。みんな健康で、病人、怪我人はいない。ふと妻が微笑んでいるのに気づく。突然手元にあった太い棒を掴むと、妻の背中を叩き始める。妻は泣き叫ぶ。)

「(兄の妻) 止めて、止めてよ。何するのよ。何をしたって言うのよ。気に障ることでもしたって言うの。」

「(兄) すまん。怪我をさせるつもりは毛頭ない。ただ、この瓢箪の力を試してみたいんだ。我慢してくれ、背中痛みもすぐ取れるから。」

(兄は弟がしたように瓢箪に祈りながら部屋を踊りまわる。しかし妻の背中はずきずきと痛む。妻は泣き止まぬ。またしても騙されたと気づく兄。怒り心頭に発し、地団駄(じだんだ)を踏み、弟の嘘の責任を問いに隣の家へ怒鳴り込む。)

「(兄) この嘘つき。今度という今度は勘弁しないぞ。よくも売りつけやがって、あんな…」

(家の中は蛻(もぬけ)の殻。われた茶碗が転がっているだけ。)(kudo)

