

Japanese Folk Tales

— Once upon a Time —

Kachi-kachi-yama



Once upon a time, there lived an old man and his wife. One day, just as the old man had finished planting seeds in his vegetable field, a raccoon dog came by, dug them up, and ate them all. Angered by this, the old man captured the raccoon dog, tied it up with rope, and took it home to his wife. "Let's have raccoon dog soup tonight," he said as he handed the raccoon dog to her, and set out again to work in the field.

When the old woman began preparing to make raccoon dog soup, the raccoon dog pleaded with her, saying, "Please untie me and let me help you with your housework. I promise never to do anything bad again." Trusting his words, the old woman untied the rope binding the raccoon dog, but at that instant, the raccoon dog struck the old woman and fled. The blow killed the poor old woman.

The old man was grieving the death of his wife when a rabbit came along. Learning why the old man was grieving so, the rabbit said to him, "I shall get rid of the evil raccoon dog for you," and went off in search of the culprit.

Upon finding the raccoon dog, the rabbit invited him, saying, "Would you go to the mountain with me to gather some firewood?" The two then spent some time gathering firewood together, and when they had enough, they headed down the mountain carrying the firewood on their backs. The rabbit let the raccoon dog lead the way, and struck a flint from behind with a clicking sound. "What was that clicking sound?" the raccoon dog asked, and the rabbit replied, "This mountain is called Kachi-kachi-yama, so the "Kachi-kachi" clicking sound was probably the mountain singing!" After a little while, the firewood on the raccoon dog's back began to burn fiercely. "Ow! Ow!" the raccoon dog yelped and scampered off, trying to run away from the heat.

Later, the rabbit visited the badly burned raccoon dog, who was taking a nap. "Let me apply some ointment to your burns," he said, and rubbed miso paste mixed with hot chili peppers on his back. "Owww!" the raccoon dog screamed, as his pain increased even more.

Sometime later, when the raccoon dog's burns had healed, the rabbit visited the raccoon dog again, and asked, "Would you like to go fishing with me?" The raccoon dog replied yes, and went along with the rabbit to the beach, where there were two boats. With the raccoon dog rowing the larger boat, the two went out to sea to fish. Soon, however, the raccoon dog's boat began to list to one side. The rabbit's boat was made of wood, but the raccoon dog's boat was made of mud. The raccoon dog yelled for help, but sunk into the sea with the boat. The rabbit thus avenged the kind old woman's death, so it is said.

日本の昔話～むかし、むかし～

かちかち山

昔々ある所にお爺さんとお婆さんが住んでいました。ある日、お爺さんは畑に種を撒きましたが、狸がやってきてその種を掘り出して全部食べてしまったので、お爺さんは怒って狸をつかまえ、縄で縛りました。そして家のお婆さんに「狸汁にしておくれ」と渡すと、また仕事に行きました。

お婆さんが狸汁の用意をしていると、狸がお婆さんに「もう悪いことはしないから、縄をほどいて家事を手伝わせてくれな

いか」と頼むので、お婆さんは狸の言葉を信じ、縄をほどいてやりました。すると狸はお婆さんを殴って逃げました。狸に殴られお婆さんは死んでしまいました。

お婆さんが死に、お爺さんが悲しみに暮れていると、兎がやってきました。お爺さんに悲しんでいる訳を聞くと「私が悪い狸を退治しましょう」と出掛けていきました。

兎は狸を見つけると「柴刈り（薪拾い）と一緒に行きませんか」と狸を連れ出し、2匹は柴刈りをしました。柴を背負って山を下る時、兎は狸を先に歩かせ、後ろから火打石をカチカチと打ちました。「今のカチカチという音はなんだい？」と狸が訊くと、兎は「この山はかちかち山と言う山だから、カチカチ音

するので」と答えました。しばらくすると狸が背負っていた柴はぼうぼう燃え「アチチチ！」狸は熱くて逃げ帰っていきました。

背中にやけどを負った狸が寝ていると、また兎がやってきて「やけどによく効く薬を塗ってあげましょう」と言いました。そして狸の背中に唐辛子味噌を塗りつけました。「イタタタタ！」やけどは益々酷くなりました。

しばらくしてやけどが治った狸の元に兎がやってきて「釣りに行きませんか」というので行ってみると、海岸に舟が2艘あります。狸は大きい方の舟に乗り、共に沖に出て釣りを始めました。すると狸の舟が傾き始めました。兎の舟は木の舟でしたが、狸の舟は泥の舟だったのです。狸は助けを求めましたが海に沈んでしまいました。兎はこうしてお婆さんの仇を取りましたとさ。