

Japanese Folk Tales — Once upon a Time —

Kobutori Jiisan (The Old Man with a Lump)



Once upon a time, two old men, each with a large lump on his cheek, lived next door to each other. One day, one of the old men went to the mountains to cut firewood. As night drew in, he began to hear lively singing and the sound of drums from somewhere. Curious, the old man started walking toward the sounds, and peeping from the shadows, he saw ogres having a party. The old man stayed hidden in the shadows because he was afraid of ogres, but because the ogres seemed to be having so much fun singing and playing the drums, he soon began to feel merry. Eventually, he even began dancing.

The ogres were surprised that the old man came to join their circle of dancing, but they clapped and cheered him on, because the old man danced so well. When the dawn began to break, the ogres said to the old man, "You dance so well, why don't you come and dance for us again tonight?" Then, strangely enough, they plucked off the lump from the old man's cheek without leaving any scar whatsoever, and walked away, saying, "We'll return this to you when you come again tonight."

When the old man returned home without his bothersome lump, the old man next door noticed the lump was gone, and asked how he got rid of it. Hearing about the old man's previous night's adventure, the old man next door exclaimed, "It's not fair that only you got to get rid of your lump. I'll go to the ogre's party tonight in your place." So off he went the party at night.

When the old man next door arrived at the party, the ogres mistook him for the old man who joined them the previous night, and welcome him, saying "We were waiting for you. Come, dance for us." However, the old man next door was so frightened of the ogres that he began shaking in fear. He shook so badly that he could hardly remain standing, much less dance. "Your dancing today is terrible! Here, take your lump and go home!" the ogres yelled, and attached the lump to the old man's cheek, the side which did not have a lump in the first place. The old man next door, the poor thing, thus ended up with two lumps for being greedy.

日本の昔話～むかし、むかし～

こぶ取り爺さん

むかしむかし、ところ、かたほお おお つ じい ふたり、昔々ある所に、片頬に大きなこぶが付いたお爺さんが2人、となりどうし す ときひとり じい やま しごとを隣同士に住んでいました。ある時1人のお爺さんが山で仕事をしているとき夜になり、どこからか賑やかな歌や太鼓が聞こえてきました。不思議に思って音のする方に行き、物陰からそっと覗いてみると、おにたち あつ うたげ ひら ではありませんか。お爺さんは鬼が恐ろしくて隠れていましたが、おにたちの歌や太鼓があまりにも賑やかで、だんだん楽しい気持ちになってきました。そしてしまいには踊り出してしまいました。

お爺さんが鬼の踊りの輪に加わってきたので、驚いた鬼達でしたが、お爺さんの踊りがとても上手いので拍手喝采。夜が明けそうになったとき、鬼はお爺さんにこう言いました。「なんと踊りが上手いやつだ。今晚また宴で踊ってくれ」。そして鬼は不思議にも、お爺さんの頬から傷ひとつ残さずこぶをもぎ取ると「このこぶは今晚来たら返してやろう」と言って去っていきました。

邪魔なこぶが無くなったお爺さんが家に帰ってくると、それを見た隣のお爺さんがやってきて、どうやってこぶを取ったのかと尋ねました。そこでお爺さんが昨晚の出来事を話すと「お前だけこぶが無くなるとはねたましい。わしがお前の代わりにその宴に行こう」と言い、夜に出掛けていきました。

隣のお爺さんも鬼の所に到着しました。鬼達は隣のお爺さんを昨晚のお爺さんと思い込み「待っていたぞ。さあ踊ってくれ」と歓迎しました。ところが隣のお爺さんは鬼が恐ろしくて恐ろしくてふるえてしまいました。腰も抜けそうになり、とても上手くなど踊れません。鬼は「今日はなんて下手な踊りだ！ 昨日のこぶは返すからもう帰れ！」と言うと、お爺さんのこぶの無い方の頬にこぶをくっ付けました。欲張った隣のお爺さんは、こうして哀れにもこぶが2つになってしまいましたとき。