

AI-Generated Graded Readers

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Publication webpage:

https://www1.gifu-u.ac.jp/~masaru/a1/ai-generated_graded_readers.html

Publication date: May 6, 2026

About This Edition

This book is a simplified English adaptation created for extensive reading practice.

The text was translated from Japanese into English and simplified using ChatGPT for intermediate English learners as part of an educational project.

Target reading level: CEFR A2-B1

The adaptation aims to improve readability while preserving the narrative content and spirit of the original work.

Content Note

This adaptation is based on a historical literary work. It may contain expressions, attitudes, or depictions that some readers may consider inappropriate or offensive by today's standards. Such elements have been retained or reflected where necessary in order to preserve the historical and literary character of the original work.

Source Text

Original work: Tōno Monogatari (遠野物語)

Author: Yanagita Kunio (柳田国男)

Source: Aozora Bunko (青空文庫)

<https://www.aozora.gr.jp/>

Original Japanese text available at:

<https://www.aozora.gr.jp/cards/001566/card52504.html>

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Yanagita Kunio, *The Legends of Tōno [Tōno Monogatari]* (Simplified Edition, Adapted and Simplified from Japanese by ChatGPT)

Part 1: The Road to Tono

This book is offered to people who live in foreign countries. The stories in it were all told to me by Sasaki Kyoseki, a man from Tono. From about February of last year, Meiji 42, he often came to see me at night and told me these stories. I wrote them down as I heard them. Kyoseki was not a great speaker, but he was an honest man. I also tried not to add or take away even one word. I wrote what I felt as I listened.

I believe that there are still hundreds of stories like these in Tono. I strongly hope to hear more of them. In mountain villages deeper than Tono, there must be many more tales of mountain gods and mountain people. I hope people will tell these stories and make the people of the flat land feel fear. This small book is only a beginning. It is like the first small fire before a larger movement.

At the end of August last year, I went to Tono. From Hanamaki, the road was more than ten ri. On the way there were only three small towns. Apart from them, there were only blue mountains and wide fields. There were fewer houses than in the open plain of Ishikari in Hokkaido. Perhaps the road was new, and so few people had yet built homes along it.

The town of Tono was an old castle town. It was lively compared with the lonely country around it. I borrowed a horse from the owner of the inn and rode alone through the villages outside the town. The horse had a thick black cover made from seaweed-like grass. It was put on the horse because there were many horseflies. The valley of the Sarugaishi River had rich soil, and the land was well opened for fields.

Along the road there were more stone towers than I had seen in many other places. From a high place, I could look over the fields. The early rice was almost ready, and the late rice was still in flower. The water had run down into the rivers, and the rice fields had many different colors. When three, four, or five fields had

the same color, they probably belonged to one family. Only the owners knew the very small names of the fields.

When I crossed into the valley of Tsukumoushi, Mount Hayachine stood in a pale mist. Its shape looked like a straw hat, or like the Japanese letter he. In this valley the rice grew more slowly, and everywhere was still green. As I went along a narrow road between the fields, a bird crossed in front of me with its young. The young birds were black with some white feathers. At first I thought they were small chickens, but they hid in the grass beside a ditch, so I knew they were wild birds.

On the mountain of Tenjin there was a festival. There was also a deer dance. Only there, a little dust rose, and something red moved in the green of the village. In this dance, people wore masks with deer horns. Five or six boys carried swords and danced with them. The flute sounded high, and the song was low. I was near them, but I could hardly hear the words.

The sun went down, and the wind began to blow. Some people were drunk and called out to one another. Women laughed, and children ran about. Still, I could not lose the lonely feeling of travel. During the Bon season, houses with a newly dead person raised red and white flags high to call the soul home. From a mountain pass, while I sat on the horse, I could see more than ten of these flags in different places.

Evening slowly covered everything. It covered the villagers who would live there all their lives. It covered me, a traveler who had come only for a short time. It also covered the high holy mountains standing far away. In Tono there were eight Kannon halls, each with an image made from one tree. That day many people went to give thanks, and I saw lights on the hills. I also heard the sound of small metal gongs.

In the grass where roads crossed, there was a straw doll for the rain-and-wind festival. It lay on its back, like a very tired person. These were the things I saw and felt in Tono. Some people may say that books like this are not popular in our time. They may say, "Why print such a book? Why force your narrow taste on other people?" But I cannot agree. After hearing such stories and seeing such

places, who would not want to tell others?

I do not have friends who can keep such deep silence. The old book *Konjaku Monogatari* told stories that were already “long ago” even in its own time. But these stories are not so distant. They are things that people still speak of now. I do not claim that this book is greater than older books. Yet these stories have not passed through many mouths, and they have not been changed much by many writers. For that reason, they are worth hearing.

Some people may still blame me. They may say that Kyoseki is only twenty-four or twenty-five, and that I am only about ten years older than he is. They may say that we live in a busy age and should use our strength for larger problems. They may say that I open my ears too wide and make my eyes too round, like an owl in the mountain trees. If they say so, there is nothing more to do. I must take the blame myself.

An old owl sits still.

It does not fly.

It does not cry.

Perhaps the owls in the far forest
are laughing at it.

Tono is a flat land surrounded by mountains. Today it is in the western half of Kamihei County in old Rikuchu. The area is divided into one town and ten villages: Tono, Tsuchibuchi, Tsukumoushi, Matsuzaki, Aozasa, Kamigo, Otomo, Ayaori, Masuzawa, Miyamori, and Tassobe. In more recent times it has also been called Nishihei County. In the Middle Ages it was called Tono-ho. The town of Tono, where the county office stands, is the main town of the whole area. It was once the castle town of the Nanbu family, who held ten thousand koku of land.

To go there, one gets off the train at Hanamaki Station. Then one crosses the Kitakami River and follows the valley of the Sarugaishi River eastward for thirteen ri. At last one reaches the town of Tono. For a town deep in the mountains, it is surprisingly lively. People say that in very old times all of Tono was one great

lake. Then the water flowed out into the human world as the Sarugaishi River. After that, villages naturally formed in the open land left behind.

Many small rivers and valleys run down into the Sarugaishi River. People speak of “seven nai and eight saki.” Here, nai means a stream valley or a small valley. Many place names in the north have this word. Some say that the word Tono may come from an Ainu word meaning lake. They also say that nai is an Ainu word. Whether this is fully true or not, the names themselves keep the memory of old land and old people.

The town of Tono stands where rivers from the north and south meet. In earlier times people spoke of “seven valleys, each seventy ri deep.” Goods came from these deep valleys to the market. On market days, people said that there were a thousand horses and a thousand people. Of all the mountains around Tono, the highest and most beautiful is Hayachine. It stands in the north, deep in Tsukumoushi. To the east stands Mount Rokkoushi. Between Tsukumoushi and Tassobe stands Mount Ishigami, lower than the other two.

Long ago, people say, there was a goddess. She came to this high land with her three daughters. One night they stayed at the place where the shrine of Izu Gongen now stands in Rainai village. Before they slept, the mother goddess said, “Tonight, the daughter who has the best dream will receive the best mountain.” In the deep night, a holy flower fell from the sky. It came down and rested on the chest of the eldest daughter.

But the youngest daughter woke and saw it. Quietly, she took the flower from her sister and placed it on her own chest. Because of this, she received Hayachine, the most beautiful mountain. The elder sisters received Rokkoushi and Ishigami. The three young goddesses still live in these three mountains and rule them. For this reason, people say that women of Tono do not go to these mountains for pleasure. They fear the jealousy of the mountain goddesses.

Part 2: People Taken by the Mountains

In the deep mountains, people say that mountain people live. In Tochinai

village, in the place called Wano, there was an old man named Sasaki Kahei. He was still alive when these stories were told, and he was more than seventy years old. When he was young, he went far into the mountains to hunt. There, on a distant rock, he saw a beautiful woman sitting alone. She had very long black hair and was combing it slowly.

Her face was very white. Kahei was a bold man, so he did not run away. He lifted his gun, aimed at her, and fired. The woman fell at once. He ran to the rock and looked at her body. She was a very tall woman, and her loose black hair was even longer than her body.

Kahei thought he should keep some sign of what he had seen. He cut off a little of the woman's hair, tied it together, and put it inside his clothes. Then he started for home. But while he was still on the mountain road, a heavy sleep came over him. He could not keep walking, so he went to a shaded place and slept for a short time.

As he slept, he felt that he was half in a dream and half awake. A very tall man came near him. The man put his hand inside Kahei's clothes and took back the tied hair. Then the man went away. At that moment Kahei woke. People said that this tall man must have been a mountain man.

In Yamaguchi village, there was a house where the head of the family was called Kichibei. One day this man went into the mountain called Nekkodachi. He cut bamboo grass and tied it into bundles. Then he was about to lift the bundles onto his back. Just then, he noticed that wind was moving across the field of grass.

He looked toward the deeper part of the mountain. From the trees, a young woman came walking over the grass toward him. She carried a small child on her back. She was very beautiful, and her long black hair hung down. The child was tied to her with a vine, not with ordinary cloth.

Her clothes looked like normal striped clothes. But the lower part was torn and broken, and leaves from different trees had been used to mend it. Her feet did not seem to touch the ground. She came near him without any fear. Then she passed right in front of him and went away somewhere.

Kichibei was filled with terror. After that day he became ill. The fear did not

leave his body or his mind. He was sick for a long time. Not long before these stories were written down, he died.

From Tono, there was an old mountain road to the coast, to places such as Tanohama and Kirikiri. This road was called Fuefuki Pass. It went from Yamaguchi village toward Mount Rokkoushi. It was a shorter road than the other way. But in recent years, people who crossed this pass often met mountain men and mountain women.

Because of this, everyone became afraid. Fewer and fewer people used the pass. At last a new road was opened through another pass called Sakaige Pass. Waya became the stopping place for horses on that route. The new road was more than two ri longer, but people chose it because they feared the old road.

In Tono, rich farmers are still sometimes called choja. In Aozasa village, in the place called Nukanomae, there was a rich farmer's daughter. One day she was suddenly hidden away by something. Many years passed, and she did not return. Then, one day, a hunter from the same village went into the mountains and met a woman there.

The hunter was frightened and was about to shoot her. But the woman cried out, "Are you not my uncle? Do not shoot me." He was shocked and looked at her carefully. She was the lost daughter of the rich farmer. He asked, "Why are you in such a place?" She answered, "Something took me away. Now I am its wife."

She said she had given birth to many children. But her husband had eaten them all, and now she was alone. "I will probably spend my whole life here," she said. "Do not tell people about me. You are in danger too, so go home quickly." The hunter was too afraid to ask exactly where she lived. He ran away and returned to the village.

In Kamigo village, a girl from a farmhouse went into the mountains to pick chestnuts. She did not come home. Her family thought she must be dead. They used her pillow as a sign of her body and held a funeral for her. Two or three years passed after that.

One day a man from the same village went hunting near the side of Mount Goyo. There he found a place where a great rock leaned out and made something

like a cave. By chance, he met the missing woman there. They were both very surprised. He asked, "How did you come to live in this mountain?"

She said, "I went into the mountain and was taken by a frightening person. That is how I came here. I want to run away and go home, but I never have a chance." The hunter asked, "What kind of person is he?" She answered, "To me he looks like an ordinary man. But he is very tall, and his eyes look strange and terrible."

She said that she had given birth to several children. But the man said, "They do not look like me, so they are not my children." Then he carried them away somewhere. She did not know whether he killed them or ate them. The hunter asked again, "Is he truly a human being like us?" She answered, "His clothes are normal. Only his eyes are a little different."

She also said that once or twice between market days, four or five men like him came together. They talked about something and then went away again. Since they brought food from outside, she thought they might even go to town. While she was speaking, she became afraid. "He may come back here at any time," she said. The hunter too became frightened and left quickly.

People said that women and children who went outside at dusk were often hidden away by gods or spirits. This was not only true in Tono. People in many other places said the same thing. In Matsuzaki village, in a place called Samuto, there was once a young woman from a farmhouse. One day she left her straw sandals under a pear tree and disappeared.

More than thirty years passed. Then, one day, relatives and friends were gathered in that house. Suddenly the lost woman came back. She was now extremely old and thin. The people asked her, "How did you come back? Why have you returned?" She answered, "I wanted to see you all, so I came."

After saying this, she said she would go again. Then she disappeared once more and left no trace behind. That day the wind blew very hard. Because of this story, people in Tono still say something on stormy days. They say, "Today feels like a day when the old woman of Samuto may come back."

Part 3: Voices in the Dark

There was an old man named Kikuchi Yanosuke. When he was young, he worked by carrying goods with horses. He was very good at playing the flute. When he drove horses through the night, he often played as he walked. The sound of his flute went out into the dark road and the empty hills.

One night, under a thin moon, Yanosuke was crossing Sakaige Pass with many other men. They were going over the mountain road toward the coast. As usual, he took out his flute and began to play. They came to a place called Oyachi. It was a deep valley, full of white birch trees, wet ground, and reeds.

While they passed above that valley, a voice suddenly rose from the bottom. It was high and clear. It called out, "That is interesting!" The men stopped for a moment, and their faces lost all color. Then fear took hold of them, and they all ran away together.

This same Yanosuke once went into a deep mountain to gather mushrooms. He built a small hut and stayed there for the night. In the middle of the night, he heard a woman's scream from far away. The voice cried out sharply in the darkness. His heart beat hard, and he could not forget the sound.

When he returned to the village, he learned a terrible thing. On that same night, at that same time, his sister had been killed by her own son. The cry he had heard in the mountain was like the cry she gave at the moment of death. The mountain had carried the sound to him, though he was far away. People remembered this as a strange and fearful thing.

That woman lived in a house with only her son. The son had a wife, but the wife and the mother did not get along. The wife often went back to her parents' home and stayed away. On that day, however, the wife was in the house, lying down. Around noon, the son suddenly spoke in a hard voice.

He said, "Mother cannot be allowed to live. Today I will surely kill her." Then he took out a large grass-cutting sickle and began to sharpen it. The sound of the blade against the stone filled the house. It did not look like a joke. His mother tried to explain many things and begged him to stop, but he would not listen.

His wife rose and cried as she tried to stop him. But he showed no sign of changing his mind. When he saw that his mother might run away, he closed and locked every door. She said she needed to go outside, but he brought a vessel from outside and told her to use that. Evening came, and at last the mother gave up hope.

She sat down beside the large hearth and only wept. The son came near her with the sickle, which he had sharpened again and again. First he swung it toward her left shoulder. But the tip of the blade caught on the shelf above the fire, so it did not cut her well. At that moment the mother gave the terrible scream that Yanosuke heard deep in the mountain.

The second time, the son cut down from her right shoulder. Even then she did not die at once. People from the village heard the noise and came running. They seized the son and held him down. Then they called the police and handed him over.

This happened in the time when policemen still carried sticks. As the son was being taken away, his mother lay in her blood. Yet she looked at him and spoke. She said, "I die without hate. Please forgive Magoshiro." The people who heard this were deeply moved. No one could hear those words and feel nothing.

Even on the road, Magoshiro raised the sickle and chased the policeman. Later people said he was mad, and he was set free. He returned to his house. When these stories were told, he was still alive in the village. The memory of what he had done remained there like a dark mark.

In Tsuchibuchi village, in Yamaguchi, there was an old man named Nitta Otozo. The villagers called him Otojii. He was nearly ninety years old and very sick. He was close to death. For many years he had known the old stories of Tono, and he often said that he wanted to tell them to someone before he died.

But people did not like to go near him because he smelled very bad. So almost no one came to listen. This was a great pity, because he knew many things. He knew the stories of old forts and their lords. He knew how families had risen and fallen. He also knew old songs, deep mountain legends, and tales of people who lived far inside the hills.

Otojii had lived alone in the mountains for many years. He came from a good family, but when he was young he lost his property. After that he turned away from ordinary life. He built a small hut on a mountain pass and sold sweet rice drink to travelers. The horse carriers liked him and treated him almost like a father.

When he had a little extra money, he came down to town and drank sake. He wore a short coat made from a red blanket and put a red hood on his head. When he became drunk, he danced through the streets on his way home. Even the police did not stop him. In his last years, when his body became weak, he returned to his old village and lived a poor and lonely life.

All his children had gone to Hokkaido. He was left by himself. Still, inside his old body there remained many stories that no one else knew so well. He carried the memory of Tono's houses, mountains, songs, and strange people. When he died, many of those memories must have died with him.

Part 4: House Gods and Vanishing Fortune

In every small village group, there was usually one old house. In that house, people worshipped a god called Okunai-sama. Such a house was called a Daido house. The image of this god was made from mulberry wood. People cut the wood into a simple shape, drew a face on it, and put a square cloth over it like clothing.

On the fifteenth day of the New Year, all the people of the small village area came to this house and worshipped the god. There was also a god called Oshira-sama. The image of this god was made in almost the same way. People also worshipped it on the fifteenth day of the New Year. During the rite, they sometimes put white face powder on the face of the god.

In a Daido house, there was always a room as large as one tatami mat. Strange things happened to anyone who slept in that room. Sometimes the person's pillow was turned over. Sometimes the person was lifted up by someone unseen. Sometimes the person was pushed out of the room. It seemed that no one was allowed to sleep there quietly.

People said that a house with Okunai-sama received much good fortune. In

Tsuchibuchi village, in Kashiwazaki, there was a rich Abe family. In the village this house was called Tanbo no Uchi, the house by the rice fields. One year, when they were planting rice, there were not enough workers. Some fields were still unfinished, and the sky looked bad for the next day.

The people in the house were worried and spoke about it. Then a small young boy came from nowhere. He said, "I will help you too." They let him work, and he worked well. At noon, they looked for him to give him food, but he could not be found.

Before long, the boy returned and worked for the rest of the day. Because of his help, the rice planting was finished that same day. In the evening, the family said, "We do not know where you come from, but please come and eat with us." But after the sun went down, they could not find him again. He had disappeared.

When the family went home, they saw many small muddy footprints on the veranda. The footprints went into the house, then farther into the main room. At last they stopped at the shelf where Okunai-sama was kept. The family opened the small door of the shelf and looked inside. The lower half of the god's image was covered with mud from the rice field.

There were also many houses that worshipped Konse-sama. The body of this god was much like that of Okoma-sama. Small shrines to Okoma-sama were common in villages. People made a male sign from stone or wood and offered it to the god. In later times, this custom became less common little by little.

In many old houses, people said that a god called Zashiki-warashi lived. This god often looked like a child of about twelve or thirteen. Sometimes people saw it. In Iide, in Tsuchibuchi village, there was a house belonging to a man named Imabuchi Kanjuro. Not long before these stories were told, his daughter came home during a school holiday.

One day, as she was walking in the passage of the house, she suddenly met the Zashiki-warashi. She was very surprised. This Zashiki-warashi was clearly a boy. In another house, the Sasaki house in Yamaguchi, the mother of the family was sewing alone. Then she heard paper making a dry rustling sound in the next room.

That room belonged to the master of the house. At that time he was away in

Tokyo, so no one should have been there. The mother thought this was strange and opened the wooden door. She saw nothing. She sat there for a while, and soon she heard the sound of someone breathing through the nose again and again. Then she thought, "This must be the Zashiki-warashi." People had long said that this house had such a spirit.

People believed that a house where Zashiki-warashi lived could become rich and lucky. But if the spirit left, the house might fall. In Yamaguchi there was an old house called Yamaguchi Magosaemon's house. People had long said that two girl spirits lived there. One year, a man from the same village was coming home from town and met two fine young girls near the bridge at Tomeba.

He had never seen these girls before. They looked sad and thoughtful as they came toward him. He asked, "Where have you come from?" They answered, "We have come from Magosaemon's house in Yamaguchi." He asked, "Where are you going now?" They answered that they were going to the house of a certain man in another village.

That man lived in a village some distance away and was a rich farmer. When the traveler heard this, he thought, "Then Magosaemon's house must be near its end." Not long after this, a terrible thing happened. More than twenty people of Magosaemon's house, both family and servants, ate poisonous mushrooms. They all died in one day.

Only one girl of seven years was left alive. She was outside playing that day and forgot to come home for the noon meal. Because of that, she did not eat the mushrooms. Later she grew old, but she had no children. Not long before these stories were written down, she became sick and died.

The mushrooms had grown around a pear tree. Some men of the house saw many strange mushrooms there and discussed whether they should eat them or not. The last Magosaemon told them, "It is better not to eat them." But one servant said, "Any mushroom is safe if we put it in a water bucket and stir it well with hemp stalks." Everyone followed his words, and the whole household ate the mushrooms.

After the sudden death of the master and the others, people in the family lost

their calm. During that confusion, relatives from near and far came to the house. Some said that the dead master had owed them money. Others said that he had promised them goods. They carried away the things in the house, even miso and other small things. In one morning, the old rich house of the village came to nothing.

Before this disaster, there had been many signs. One day, the men were taking out cut grass for feed. They used a three-toothed hoe to move it and found a large snake under it. The master told them not to kill it, but they did not listen. They killed it, and then many more snakes came moving out from under the grass.

The men killed them all for amusement. There were too many dead snakes to throw away easily. So they dug a hole outside the house grounds and buried them there. It became a snake mound. People said there were so many snakes that they filled many large baskets. Later, when the house was destroyed, people remembered this as a warning sign.

Magosaemon was rare in the village because he was a learned man. He often ordered books from Kyoto and read Japanese and Chinese writings with great interest. People thought he was a little strange. He wanted to become friendly with foxes and learn a way to make his house rich. So he built a small Inari shrine in his garden.

He even went to Kyoto himself and received a high sacred rank for the shrine. After that, every day, he offered one piece of fried tofu at the shrine with his own hands. In time, foxes became used to him. They did not run away when he came near. People said he could even put out his hand and hold one by the neck.

There was a man who kept a Yakushi hall in the village. He often laughed and said, "My Buddha receives no offerings, but he gives more help than Magosaemon's god." People repeated this joke many times. It shows how the villagers looked at Magosaemon's strange wish. He read books, worshipped foxes, and tried to bring fortune to his house, yet the house still fell in the end.

When the great-grandmother of the Sasaki family died, her body was placed in a coffin. Relatives gathered in the house that night. Among them was one of the dead woman's daughters, who had been sent away from her husband because her

mind was troubled. During the time of mourning, people disliked letting the fire go out. So the grandmother and the mother of the house sat on both sides of the large hearth and kept adding charcoal.

Suddenly they heard footsteps coming from the back door. When they looked, they saw the old woman who had just died. In life, her back had been bent, and she had lifted the lower part of her clothes and sewn it up in front so that it would not drag. Now she looked exactly the same. Even the pattern of her clothes was clear.

Before the two women could cry out, the dead woman passed beside the hearth. Her clothes touched the round charcoal basket, and the basket turned round and round. The mother was brave, so she looked back and watched the figure go. It seemed to move toward the room where the relatives were sleeping. Then the troubled daughter suddenly cried in a loud voice, "Grandmother has come!" The others woke and were filled with fear.

On the night of the forty-ninth day's service for the same dead woman, many friends gathered and prayed until late. When they were about to go home, they saw an old woman sitting on a stone near the gate. Her back was turned to them. From behind, she looked exactly like the dead woman. Many people saw her, so no one doubted the story. But no one ever knew what feeling or wish kept her near the house.

Part 5: Old Houses, Mountain Paths, and Hidden Powers

People said that the old houses called Daido had a special beginning. Their ancestors, they said, came from Kai Province in the first year of Daido. This was also the age of General Tamura's wars in the north. Kai was the old home country of the Nanbu family. Because of this, different old memories may have become joined together in one story.

There was also another idea about the word Daido. Some people thought it might once have meant a large family line or an old house group. In the north, words like this were often used for families, valleys, and old settlements. It is hard

to know the first meaning now. But in Tono, the word still pointed to old houses with long memories.

People told another story about the first ancestors of those Daido houses. They reached this country at the end of the year. The New Year was coming, and they had to prepare pine branches for the gate. But before they could stand up both New Year pines, the first day of the year arrived.

Because of this, the families kept a strange custom. Even in later times, they placed only one New Year pine upright. The other pine was left lying on the ground. Then they stretched the sacred rope across the gate. They did this not because they had forgotten the custom, but because they remembered the story of their first arrival.

In Kashiwazaki, the Abe family called Tanbo no Uchi was a very famous old family. One of its former heads was skilled at carving. Many sacred images in the whole Tono area were made by his hands. People saw his work in shrines and temples. In this way, the memory of one person remained in many holy places.

There was once a house in Tono town called Ikenohata, the house by the pond. A former master of that house went to Miyako. On his way home, he passed near a deep pool on the Hei River, in a place called Haradai. There he met a young woman. She gave him a sealed letter and asked him to carry it.

She told him, "Go to the pond halfway up Monomiyama, behind Tono town. Clap your hands there, and the person named on the letter will come out." The man agreed, but as he walked, he became more and more uneasy. He thought about the letter again and again. On the road, he met a traveling holy man.

The holy man read the letter and spoke in a serious voice. "If you carry this letter as it is, great trouble will come to you. I will write another letter for you." Then he gave the man a different letter. The man took it and went to the pond on Monomiyama. There he clapped his hands, just as he had been told.

A young woman came out, exactly as promised. She took the letter and gave him a very small stone hand-mill as thanks. It was a wonderful thing. If he put one grain of rice into it and turned it, gold came out from below. Because of this treasure, his house became rather rich.

But his wife was greedy. One day she put many grains of rice into the little mill at once. Then the mill began to turn by itself again and again. It moved strongly and would not stop. At last it slipped into a small hollow where water was always offered to it each morning. It sank into the water and disappeared.

After that, the little hollow of water slowly became a small pond. The pond still remained beside the house. People said this was why the house was called Ikenohata. The treasure came from a strange woman and went back into water. The family gained fortune for a time, but greed made the gift vanish.

The first person to make a path up Mount Hayachine was said to be a hunter from Tsukumoushi village. This happened after the Nanbu family had come to Tono. Until then, people of the area had not entered that mountain. The hunter opened about half the path and made a small hut halfway up the mountain. He stayed there while he worked.

One day he was sitting by the hearth in the hut. He had placed rice cakes over the fire and was eating them as they cooked. Then he saw someone passing outside. The person kept looking in. When the hunter looked closely, he saw that it was a very large bald man, like a monk.

Soon the large man came into the hut. He watched the rice cakes cooking with great interest. At last he could not wait any longer. He reached out, took one rice cake, and ate it. The hunter was afraid, so he gave him more. The large man looked happy and ate until all the rice cakes were gone. Then he left.

The hunter thought the same being might come again the next day. So he took two or three white stones that looked like rice cakes. He placed them among the real rice cakes on the hearth. The stones became red-hot in the fire. As expected, the large bald man came again and ate the rice cakes as before.

When the real rice cakes were gone, he took the hot white stones too and put them into his mouth. At once he was shocked and in pain. He jumped out of the hut and disappeared. Later, people said that the hunter found the large bald man dead at the bottom of the valley. This story was told as one of the strange and dangerous things of Hayachine.

Mount Keito stands in front of Hayachine. People in the villages below also

called it Maeyakushi. They said that tengu lived there. For this reason, even people who climbed Hayachine never climbed that mountain. They feared what might happen if they entered the place of the tengu.

In Yamaguchi there was a man from the Haneto house. He had been a childhood friend of Sasaki's grandfather. When he was young, he was a very rough and wild man. He cut grass with an axe and dug earth with a sickle. He did many careless and violent things.

One time he made a bet with someone and climbed Maeyakushi alone. When he returned, he told what had happened. At the top, he said, there was a great rock. On that rock sat three huge men. In front of them lay a large amount of gold and silver.

When the three men saw him coming near, they turned around angrily. Their eyes shone with a terrible light. The man was afraid, but he said, "I climbed Hayachine and lost my way. That is why I came here." Then the huge men said, "In that case, we will send you back." They walked ahead of him and led him down near the foot of the mountain.

When they came close to the village side, they told him, "Close your eyes." He stood there for a short time with his eyes closed. When he opened them again, the strange men had disappeared. He had been sent back alive. But after that, the mountain seemed even more fearful to the people who heard his story.

A man from Oguni village once went to Hayachine to cut bamboo. In a thick growth of low mountain bamboo, he saw a huge man lying asleep. The man had taken off a pair of straw sandals made from bamboo. Each sandal was about three feet long. The giant lay on his back and snored loudly.

Stories like these made people feel that the mountains were not empty. They were not only places of trees, rocks, animals, and snow. Other beings lived there too, close to people but not the same as people. Sometimes they showed themselves only for a moment. Sometimes they took people away.

In Tono, people said that sons and daughters of village houses were carried away by strange beings almost every year. This happened especially often to girls and young women. A person might go into the hills for work, food, or play and

never come back. Behind the quiet fields and old houses, the mountains always waited.

Part 6: White Deer, Wolves, and the Fear of the Hills

In the mountains there is a place called Senbagatake. Deep inside it, there is a pond. The valley around it has a terrible smell, like raw flesh. People say that very few people go into that mountain and return safely. Because of this, the place has always felt far from ordinary human life.

Long ago, there was a hunter whose name included Hayato. His descendants were still living when these stories were told. One day this hunter saw a white deer. He followed it into the valley and stayed there for a thousand nights. Because of this, people called the mountain Senbagatake, the mountain of a thousand nights.

The white deer was shot, but it did not die at once. It ran away to the next mountain, and one of its legs broke there. For that reason, the mountain was later called Kataha-yama, the mountain of the broken leg. After that, the deer came to another mountain and died at last. That place was called Shisuke. People worshipped the white deer there as Shisuke Gongen.

On Mount Shiromi, strange things happened to people who stayed overnight. In the deep night, the area around them sometimes became faintly bright. In autumn, people who went into the mountain to gather mushrooms often met this light. They also heard the sound of great trees being cut down across the valley. Sometimes they heard singing too, though no person could be seen.

No one could measure how large that mountain was. In May, when people went to cut grass, they sometimes saw a far mountain covered with paulownia flowers. From a distance, the flowers looked like a purple cloud lying over the hill. But however much they tried, people could never reach that place. It stayed before their eyes and yet remained far away.

Once a man went into the deep part of Shiromi to gather mushrooms. There he saw a golden water pipe and a golden dipper. He wanted to carry them home, but

they were far too heavy. He tried to cut off a small part with his sickle, but even that was impossible. So he decided to come back later.

To mark the place, he scraped the bark of a tree and made it white. The next day, he returned with other people to look for the golden things. They searched for the marked tree. But they could not find even that. The mountain had hidden the place again, and the man returned with nothing.

Near Shiromi, there was another place called Hanare-mori. In one small area there, people spoke of Chojayashiki, the old rich man's house. But no one lived there. It was a completely empty and lonely place. Once, a man went there to burn charcoal and stayed in a small hut.

One night, someone lifted the hanging mat at the entrance of the hut and looked inside. The charcoal burner saw a woman. Her hair was long and divided into two parts, hanging down on both sides. She did not come in, but only looked at him. In that area, people often heard women crying out in the deep night, so the story did not seem impossible to them.

Sasaki's grandfather had a younger brother who also went to Shiromi to gather mushrooms. One night he stayed in the mountain. Across the valley, in front of a great dark forest, he saw a woman running. She seemed not to run on the ground. She seemed to run through the air. He heard a voice call, "Wait!" twice, and then the figure was gone.

People feared the old monkeys that had become strange beings. They also feared the old wolves. In Tono, people called wolves Oinu, meaning honorable dogs. Near Yamaguchi village there was a rocky mountain called Futatsu-Ishiyama. On a rainy day, some children were coming home from school and looked up at that mountain.

They saw wolves sitting on several rocks. The animals crouched there in the rain. Then, one after another, they lifted their heads from below and howled. Seen from the front, each wolf looked as large as a newborn foal. Seen from behind, people said, they looked much smaller.

The sound of a wolf's growl was one of the most frightening sounds in the mountains. It was not only loud. It seemed to come from a place deeper than the

animal's body. A person who heard it felt that the mountain itself was speaking. The children never forgot the sight of those wolves on the rocks.

In the old days, horse drivers often met wolves between Sakaige Pass and Waya Pass. These men traveled at night in groups of about ten. Each man usually led five, six, or seven horses. So, when they moved together, there might be forty or fifty horses on the road. The line of men and animals went slowly through the dark mountain.

Once, two or three hundred wolves came after them. The sound of their feet made the mountain shake. The men and horses were so afraid that they gathered in one place. The men lit fires around them to protect themselves. But some wolves still jumped over the flames and tried to come inside.

At last the men untied the horse ropes and stretched them around the group. Perhaps the wolves thought the ropes were a trap. After that, they did not jump in. They stood at a distance and surrounded the men and horses. All night, until morning came, the wolves howled around them.

In Otomo village, there was an old house whose master was still living when this story was told. One night he came home from town. He had drunk sake, and he heard wolves howling again and again. Because he was drunk, he copied their voices and howled back at them. Then the wolves seemed to follow him, still howling.

The man became afraid and hurried home. He went inside, closed the gate hard, and hid quietly. But through the whole night, the wolves went around the house and howled without stopping. When morning came, the family looked outside. The wolves had dug under the foundation of the stable, entered it, and killed all seven horses. People said that from that time, the fortune of the house began to fall.

When Sasaki Kyoseki was a child, he once came back from the mountain with his grandfather. Near the village, above the bank of a small river, they saw a large deer lying dead. Its side had been torn open. It had been killed only a short time before, because warm steam still rose from the wound. The sight was fresh, quiet, and terrible.

His grandfather looked at it and said, "A wolf has eaten this." He wanted the deer's skin, but he did not take it. "The honorable dog must be hiding somewhere near here and watching," he said. "So we cannot touch it." Then the two of them left the deer where it lay. In Tono, even a dead animal could still belong to the mountain.

Part 7: Beasts of the Mountain

People said that a wolf could hide if the grass was only three inches high. This may sound impossible, but people in Tono believed it. They also said that a wolf's fur changed with the seasons. As the colors of grass and trees changed, the color of the wolf changed too. In this way, the wolf belonged to the mountain in every season.

Sasaki Kahei of Wano once went hunting at Oyachi on the Sakaige road. This was a wide field that ran from the direction of Shisuke. It was late autumn, and all the leaves had fallen. The mountain looked bare, and the ground was open. From the ridge across from him, he suddenly saw wolves running toward him in a great group.

There were so many wolves that he could not count them. They came down the mountain together, like a living river. Kahei was filled with fear and climbed up into the top of a tree. Soon the wolves passed under him. Their feet made a heavy sound on the ground as they ran north.

After that time, people said, there were far fewer wolves in Tono. No one knew where the great group had gone. It was as if the wolves had left the land together. The mountain still kept many dangers, but one old power had become weaker. People remembered the passing of the wolves as a sign of change.

At the foot of Mount Rokkoushi, there were places called Obaya and Itagoya. They were wide fields of tall grass. People from many villages went there to cut grass. One autumn, some men from Iide village went to cut grass and found three wolf cubs in a rock hole. They killed two of them and took the third home.

From that day, wolves began to attack the horses of the Iide people. They did

not harm the horses or people of other villages. They seemed to know exactly who had taken the cubs. The men of Iide gathered and decided to hunt the wolves. Among them was a strong man named Tetsu, who was proud of his power and often wrestled.

When the men went out into the field, the male wolf stayed far away and did not come near. But one female wolf rushed at Tetsu. He quickly took off his outer coat and wrapped it around his arm. Then he pushed that arm straight into the wolf's mouth. The wolf bit hard, but Tetsu pushed still deeper and called for help.

No one came near him because everyone was afraid. While he fought alone, his arm went deep into the wolf's mouth, almost into its belly. The wolf suffered and bit down with all its strength. It crushed the bones in Tetsu's arm. The wolf died there, but Tetsu was carried home and died soon after.

A story about a bear was even printed in the Tono newspaper two years before these tales were written down. In Kamigo village there was a man named Kuma. One snowy day, he went hunting on Mount Rokkoushi with a friend. They went deep into a valley and found bear tracks. The two men separated and followed the marks in the snow.

Kuma went toward the ridge. Then, from behind a rock, a large bear looked at him. It was much too close for him to shoot safely. He threw down his gun and grabbed the bear with both arms. Man and bear rolled together over the snow and down toward the valley. His friend wanted to help, but he could not reach them.

At last they fell into a mountain stream. Kuma went under the bear and was pushed down into the water. At that moment, the other man had a chance and shot the bear. Kuma did not drown. He had several wounds from the bear's claws, but none of them killed him. He survived a fight that should have ended his life.

On a mountain above the village of Hashino, in the same range as Rokkoushi, there was a gold mine. Some men made their living by burning charcoal for this mine. One of these charcoal burners was also good at the flute. One day, while it was still light, he lay on his back in his hut and played. The sound filled the small dark room.

Then someone lifted the hanging mat at the hut door. The man was surprised

and looked up. There, at the entrance, was an old monkey that had become a strange being. The man was so frightened that he sat up at once. When he moved, the being slowly ran away. It did not hurry like an ordinary animal, and that made it more fearful.

People said that such old monkeys were very much like human beings. They liked women and often stole women from villages. They put pine resin on their fur and then covered it with sand. Because of this, their skin became like armor. Even a gun bullet could not pass through it.

In Tochinai village, in the place called Hayashizaki, there was a man who was nearly fifty when these stories were told. More than ten years earlier, he went to Mount Rokkoushi to hunt deer. He blew a deer whistle. Then an old monkey heard the sound and seemed to think it was a real deer. It came down from the ridge, pushing the low bamboo apart with its hands.

Its mouth was open wide. It came through the bamboo in a slow and terrible way. The hunter was so frightened that his heart almost stopped. He stopped blowing the whistle at once. Then the being turned aside and ran down toward the valley. The man did not follow it.

In this area, adults often frightened children with one warning. They said, "The old monkey of Rokkoushi will come." There were many monkeys on that mountain. When people went to see the waterfall called Ogase, they saw many monkeys in the trees on the cliff. When the monkeys saw people, they ran away through the branches. As they fled, they threw nuts and fruit down at the people below.

There were also many monkeys on Sennin Pass. They played tricks on travelers and threw stones at them. Sennin Pass was a long and hard road, fifteen ri up and fifteen ri down. In the middle of the pass, there was a small hall where people worshipped an image of a holy mountain man. The walls of this hall had a special custom.

Travelers wrote on those walls about strange things that had happened to them in the mountains. One might write, "I am from Echigo. On the night of such and such a day, I met a young woman on this mountain road. Her hair hung down, and

she looked at me and smiled.” Others wrote that monkeys had played tricks on them. Others wrote that they had met three robbers.

These writings made the hall a place of fear and memory. Travelers did not only pass through the mountain; they left their fear behind in words. A person who entered the hall could read the fear of many earlier people. The walls spoke of women in the dark, monkeys in the trees, and men who might rob the lonely. The pass itself seemed to listen.

On Mount Shisuke there was a flower called kakko-bana. Even in Tono, people said it was rare. In May, when the cuckoo began to cry, women and children went into the mountain to pick it. If they put the flower in vinegar, it turned purple. They played with it by blowing it like the fruit of a winter cherry. For young people, gathering this flower was one of the happiest pleasures of the year.

Part 8: Birds, Kappa, and River Women

Many kinds of birds live in the mountains, but people said that the loneliest voice belonged to the otto bird. It cries in the middle of summer nights. When horse carriers came over the pass from the coast near Otsuchi, they sometimes heard its voice far below in the valley. Long ago, there was a rich man’s daughter. She was close to the son of another rich man, and one day they went into the mountains to play.

While they were in the mountains, the young man disappeared. The girl searched for him until evening came. Then she searched through the night, but she could not find him. At last, people said, she became this bird. Its cry sounds like “Otto, otto,” and otto means husband. The end of the cry grows thin and weak, and it is a very sad sound.

There was also a bird called umaoi-dori, the horse-calling bird. It was like a cuckoo, but a little larger. Its feathers were reddish brown, and on its shoulders it had lines like the ropes used for horses. On its chest there was a mark like a small net bag put on a horse’s mouth. People explained this bird with another old story.

A servant from a rich house once went into the mountains to let the horses

loose. When he was ready to return home, he found that one horse was missing. He looked for it all night, but he could not find it. At last he became this bird. Its cry sounds like “A-ho, a-ho,” which is the voice people used in this area when they called horses in the fields.

In some years, the horse-calling bird came down to the villages and cried there. People said this was a sign that famine would come. In the deep mountains, however, its voice could always be heard. The bird’s cry kept the old search alive. It was as if the servant still walked through the night, looking for the missing horse.

The cuckoo and the hototogisu were once sisters, people said. The cuckoo was the elder sister. One day she dug up potatoes and cooked them. She ate the hard part around the outside herself, and gave the soft middle part to her younger sister. But the younger sister thought, “My sister’s part must be better than mine.”

So the younger sister killed the elder sister with a kitchen knife. At once the elder sister became a bird and flew away, crying, “Ganko, ganko.” In the local speech, ganko meant the hard part. Then the younger sister understood the truth. Her sister had kept the hard part for herself and had given her the good soft part.

The younger sister was filled with regret. She too soon became a bird. People said that she cried, “I used the knife.” In Tono, people called the hototogisu by a name that meant the knife had been used. Around Morioka, people heard the bird differently. There, they said its cry sounded like, “Where did you fly?”

In the flow of the Hei River there are many deep pools, and many fearful stories belong to them. Near the place where the Oguni River joins it, there is a village called Kawai. A servant of a rich man from that village once went to cut trees on a mountain above a pool. While he was working, he dropped his master’s axe into the water.

The axe belonged to his master, so he entered the pool and searched for it. As he went down into the water, he heard sounds. He followed the sounds and came to a house behind a rock. In the deeper part of the house, a beautiful young woman sat at a loom and wove cloth. His axe was standing beside her loom.

The servant asked her to give back the axe. When the woman turned her face toward him, he saw that she was his master’s daughter. She had died two or three

years before. She said, “I will return the axe, but you must not tell anyone that I am here. In thanks, I will make your life better, so you will not need to work as a servant.”

After that, the man strangely kept winning money at gambling. Soon he had enough money to stop serving and to live as a farmer of middle rank. But he forgot the woman’s words. One day, he passed near the same pool on his way to town. Suddenly he remembered what had happened and told the person with him about it.

The story soon spread through the nearby villages. From about that time, the man’s property began to fall again. He lost what he had gained and went back to work as a servant for his old master. The master did not know what to think. He even poured many loads of hot water into the pool, but nothing came of it. The woman of the water had given fortune, and the broken promise had taken it away.

People said that many kappa lived in the rivers. There were especially many in the Sarugaishi River. At a house called Kawabata in Matsuzaki village, people said that women gave birth to kappa children for two generations. When such a child was born, it was cut up, placed in a small barrel, and buried in the ground. Its shape was said to be extremely ugly.

The woman’s husband came from a family in Niibari village, also living by the river. The master of that family told the whole story to others. One day, all the people of the house had gone to the fields. When they returned in the evening, they found the woman crouching at the edge of the river and smiling. The next day, during the noon rest, the same thing happened again.

This went on day after day. Then people began to say that a certain man from the village was coming to her every night. At first he came only when her husband was away carrying goods to the coast. Later he came even on nights when her husband slept beside her. More and more people said that the visitor must be a kappa.

The relatives gathered and tried to watch over her, but it was useless. Even the husband’s mother came and slept beside the young woman. In the deep night, the mother heard the young woman laughing. She knew that the visitor had come, but

she could not move. No one could do anything.

The birth was very difficult. Then someone said, “Fill the horse trough with water. If she gives birth in the water, it will be easier.” They tried this, and it happened as the person said. The child had webbing between its fingers. People also said that the young woman’s mother had once given birth to a kappa child. Some people believed this was not only a matter of two or three generations, but a deeper tie with the river.

In another house in Kamigo village, people said that a child like a kappa was born. There was no certain proof, but the child’s whole body was bright red, and its mouth was large. It was a very unpleasant child to look at. The family thought it was unlucky and decided to throw it away.

They carried it to a place where the road divided and put it down there. Then they walked away a short distance. But suddenly they changed their minds. They thought, “This is a rare thing. If we sell it as something to show people, we may get money.” They went back to the place. But the child had already been hidden away and was gone.

People often saw what they called kappa footprints in the sand on riverbanks. This was especially common on the day after rain. The footprints were like those of a monkey, with the big toe set apart. They also looked a little like the mark of a human hand. They were less than three inches long, and the tips of the toes were not as clear as human toes.

Near Obako Pool on the Kogarase River, there was a house called Shinya. One day, a horse was taken to the pool to cool its body. The boy who was leading the horse went away to play. While he was gone, a kappa came out and tried to pull the horse into the water. But instead, the horse pulled the kappa away.

The horse dragged the kappa back to the stable, and the kappa ended up under the horse trough. The people of the house wondered why the trough had been turned over. They lifted it a little and saw the kappa’s hand come out. People from the whole village gathered and discussed what to do. Some wanted to kill it, and others wanted to forgive it.

In the end, they made the kappa give a firm promise. It had to promise that it

would never again play tricks on the horses of the village. After that, they let it go. People said that this kappa later left the village. It went to live in the deep pool below Aizawa Falls.

In other places, people often said that a kappa's face was blue. But the kappa of Tono had red faces. When Sasaki's great-grandmother was a child, she was playing in the garden with friends. Between three walnut trees, she saw the face of a boy. His face was bright red. People said this was a kappa.

Those walnut trees still stood there as large trees. Around that house there were walnut trees everywhere. The memory of the red face stayed with the family for a long time. It was only a small sight, seen by a child in a garden. But in Tono, even such a small sight could become proof that the river beings were near.

Kahei-jii of Wano village once entered a pheasant hut and waited for pheasants. A fox came out again and again and chased the birds away. Kahei became angry and decided to shoot it. He aimed at the fox. The fox turned toward him and looked as if nothing was wrong.

Kahei pulled the trigger, but the gun did not fire. He felt a sudden fear in his chest and checked the gun. Then he saw what had happened. From the mouth of the gun barrel all the way down toward his hand, the barrel had somehow been filled with earth. The fox had stood there calmly because it had already made the gun useless.

Part 9: Mayoi-ga and Old Bloodlines

The same Kahei-jii once went into Mount Rokkoushi and met a white deer. People said that a white deer was a god. Kahei thought, "If I hurt it but cannot kill it, trouble will surely come to me." But he was known as a good hunter. He feared that people would laugh at him if he did not shoot.

So he made up his mind and fired. He felt that the shot had struck the deer, but the deer did not move at all. At this, his heart beat hard with fear. He took out a golden bullet, which he kept for times of great danger. He wrapped it with mugwort, because this was thought to keep evil away, and fired again.

Still the deer did not move. This was too strange, so Kahei went closer and looked. Then he saw that it was not a deer at all. It was a white stone shaped exactly like a deer. A man who had lived in the mountains for many years could not mistake a stone for a deer. Kahei said later that this must have been the work of a spirit, and at that time he truly thought of giving up hunting.

Another night, the same man was in the mountains and had no time to build a hut. He stopped under a large tree. Around himself and the tree, he drew a sacred rope three times to keep evil away. Then he held his gun upright in his arms and slept a little.

Deep in the night, he heard a sound and woke. He looked up and saw a large being like a priest. It wore red clothing, and the clothing moved like wings. The being covered the top of the tree above him. Kahei cried out in his heart and fired his gun.

At once the being moved its wing-like clothing again and flew back into the air. The fear of that night was beyond ordinary fear. Kahei met such strange things three times in his life. Each time he promised in his heart to stop hunting, and each time he prayed to his family god. But soon he changed his mind again, and he could not leave the hunter's life until he grew old.

In Oguni there was a man of the Miura family who was the richest man in the village. Two or three generations before him, the family was still poor. The wife of the house was simple in mind. One day she went to gather butterbur along the small river that ran in front of her house. There were not many good plants, so little by little she went farther up into the valley.

Suddenly she saw a fine house with a black gate. She felt that it was strange, but she went inside the gate. The yard was large, and red and white flowers were blooming everywhere. Many chickens were walking about. When she went around toward the back, she saw a cow house with many cows and a stable with many horses, but there was no person anywhere.

At last she went up through the front entrance. In the next room, many red and black bowls and trays had been taken out. In the inner room, there was a brazier, and water was boiling in an iron kettle. Everything looked as if people had just

been there. But she still saw no one. Then she suddenly became afraid and thought, "Perhaps this is the house of a mountain man."

She ran out and went home. She told people what she had seen, but no one believed that it was true. Another day, she was washing something at the water place by her house. From upstream, one red bowl came floating down. It was so beautiful that she picked it up.

She thought, "If I use this as a food bowl, people may say it is dirty." So she put it in the grain box and used it as a measure for grain. From the time she began to use that bowl, the grain never seemed to grow less. The family thought this was strange and asked her about it. Then, for the first time, she told them that she had picked up the bowl from the river.

From that time, the house became lucky. In the end it became the rich Miura house. In Tono, people called such a strange house in the mountains Mayoi-ga. If a person finds Mayoi-ga, that person should take something from the house, whether it is a tool, a bowl, or an animal. People say that the house appears in order to give something. Because the woman was not greedy and stole nothing, the bowl came to her by itself.

Kanesawa village stands at the foot of Mount Shiromi. It is one of the deepest mountain places in Kamihei County, and few people pass through it. Six or seven years before these stories were told, a young man from this village married into a house in Yamazaki, in Tochinai village. One day he tried to go to his birth home, but he lost his way on the mountain road. Then he too came upon Mayoi-ga.

The house looked like the one in the earlier story. There were many cows, horses, and chickens. Red and white flowers were blooming beautifully. He went in through the entrance and saw a room where bowls and trays had been taken out. In another room, water was boiling in an iron kettle, as if someone was just about to make tea.

He also felt as if someone might be standing near the toilet or in some other hidden place. At first he stood there without knowing what to do. Then fear slowly grew inside him. He turned back and at last came out into Oguni village. People in Oguni did not believe his story.

But people in Yamazaki said, “That must have been Mayoi-ga. Let us go there and bring back bowls and trays. Then we may become rich.” Many people went into the deep mountain with the young man leading them. They came to the place where he said the gate had stood. But there was nothing before their eyes. They returned with empty hands, and people did not hear that the young man ever became rich.

Hayachine is a mountain of hard pale stone. On the side facing Oguni, there is a rock called Abe-ga-jo. It stands halfway up a steep cliff, in a place where ordinary people cannot go. People said that the mother of Abe no Sadato still lived there. On evenings before rain, people heard the sound of the door of the rock house being closed. Then people in Oguni and Tsukumoushi said, “The lock of Abe-ga-jo is sounding. Tomorrow it will rain.”

On the Tsukumoushi side of the same mountain, near the path up Hayachine, there was also a cave called Abe-yashiki. In any case, people connected Hayachine strongly with Abe no Sadato. At the path from Oguni, there were about three mounds. People said that soldiers of Hachiman Taro had died there and were buried in those mounds.

There were many other stories about Abe no Sadato. On the border between Tsuchibuchi village and the village once called Hashino, high in the mountains, there was a wide flat field. One place there was called Sadato. There was also a pond where people said Sadato had cooled his horse. Others said it was the place where he had built his camp. It was a beautiful place, and from there one could see the east coast clearly.

In Tsuchibuchi village, there was a family named Abe. They said they were descendants of Sadato. In old times they had been a great family. Even later, water still ran through the ditch around their house, and they had many swords and horse tools. The head of the family was Abe Yoemon. He was still one of the richer men in the village and served on the village council.

There were many other Abe descendants too. Near Abe-date in Morioka, there were houses close to the old fort of Kuriyagawa. North of the Abe house in Tsuchibuchi, near a bend in the Kogarase River, there was the site of an old fort

called Hachimanza no Tate. People said it was the camp of Hachiman Taro. On the road from there toward Tono town, there was also a mountain called Hachiman-yama.

On the side of that mountain facing Hachimanza no Tate, there was another old fort site. People said that this was Sadato's camp. The two forts were more than twenty cho apart. There was a story that warriors had shot arrows at each other between them. Many arrowheads had once been dug up there.

Between the two places was a village called Nitakai. People said that at the time of the battle, reeds grew thick there, and the ground was soft. When Hachiman Taro passed by, he saw much rice porridge placed there. He asked, "Is this boiled porridge?" Because of those words, people said, the village received its name. Near it ran a small river called Narukawa, and beyond it was Ashiraga village. People said that Yoshie washed his feet in the Narukawa, and that this gave Ashiraga its name.

In present Tsuchibuchi village, there were two Daido houses. The Daido house in Yamaguchi was headed by a man named Ohora Mannosuke. His foster mother was called Ohide. She was over eighty years old and still strong. She was the elder sister of Sasaki's grandmother, and people said she was skilled in magic.

Sasaki Kyoseki had often seen her use charms. She could kill snakes by a charm. She could also make birds fall from trees. On the fifteenth day of the old New Year, she told the story of Oshira-sama. It began with a poor farmer who had no wife, a beautiful daughter, and one horse.

The daughter loved the horse deeply. At night she went to the stable and slept there. In time, she and the horse became like husband and wife. One night the father learned this. The next day, without telling his daughter, he led the horse out and killed it by hanging it from a mulberry tree.

That night the daughter saw that the horse was gone. She asked her father and learned what he had done. Shocked and full of sorrow, she ran to the mulberry tree. She held the dead horse's neck and cried. Her father hated what he saw and came behind her with an axe.

He cut off the horse's head. At that moment, the daughter rose into the sky

while riding on the horse's head. People said that this was the beginning of the god Oshira-sama. The images of the god were made from the branches of the mulberry tree where the horse had been killed.

There were three such images. The one made from the base of the branch was kept at the Daido house in Yamaguchi and was called the elder sister god. The one made from the middle was kept at the house of Zaike Gonjuro in Yamazaki, where Sasaki's aunt had married. That house had died out, and no one knew where the god had gone. The youngest sister god, made from the end of the branch, was said to be in Tsukumoushi village.

Part 10: Village Gods and Haunted Old Places

The old woman who told the story of Oshira-sama also spoke about Okunai-sama. She said that wherever Oshira-sama was kept, Okunai-sama was always there too. But some houses had only Okunai-sama and no Oshira-sama. The images were not always the same from house to house. In the Daido house of Yamaguchi, Okunai-sama was a wooden image, but in the house of a woman named Tanie at Haneishi, the god was shown on a hanging picture.

At Tanbo no Uchi, Okunai-sama was again a wooden image. In the Daido house of Iide, people said there was no Oshira-sama, but there was Okunai-sama. These small differences mattered to the people of Tono. They showed that each old house had its own way of keeping the gods. The same god could live in wood, in a picture, or in a quiet room of an old family house.

The old woman who told these things was a strong believer in prayer to Amida. But her belief was not like ordinary prayer groups. It had the feeling of a secret faith. The believers sometimes taught their way to new members, but they kept the rules very strictly hidden. They did not tell even their parents or children about the details.

Their group had no real connection with temples or priests. Only ordinary people in the villages joined it. The number of believers was not large. Tanie of Haneishi was said to be one of them. On the special days of Amida, they waited

until deep night, when people were quiet, and gathered in a hidden room to pray.

These people were also thought to be good at charms and magic. Because of this, they had a special power in the village. Other people did not always know what they did, but they respected and feared them. Their prayer was not open like a temple service. It belonged to closed rooms, night hours, and words that outsiders were not allowed to hear.

In Tochinai village, there was a deep mountain place called Kotobata. It lay near the headwaters of a branch of the Kogarase River. There were only about five houses there. From Kotobata to the ordinary houses of Tochinai was a distance of two ri. At the entrance to Kotobata, there was a mound.

On top of the mound stood a seated wooden image, about the size of a person. Long ago it had stood inside a small hall. But later it was left outside in the rain and wind. People called this image Kakura-sama. The village children treated it like a toy.

They pulled it out, threw it into the river, and dragged it along the road. Because of this rough play, its nose and mouth could no longer be seen clearly. Yet adults did not always stop the children. If someone scolded the children and tried to stop them, that person might receive a curse and become sick. People said the god did not mind playing with children, but became angry when the play was stopped.

There were many wooden images of Kakura-sama in the Tono area. There was one at Nishiuchi in Tochinai. Some people remembered that there had also been one in Ohora, in the Yamaguchi area. No one truly worshipped Kakura-sama in the usual way. The carving was rough, and the clothing and head decorations were not clear.

At Tochinai, there were two Kakura-sama images, one large and one small. In Tsuchibuchi village as a whole, there were three or four. All of them were half-body wooden images, roughly cut with a hatchet and badly shaped. Still, one could see that they were meant to be human faces. Long ago, Kakura may have meant a resting place for gods on a journey, but later the god who stayed at such a place was called Kakura-sama.

At Chojayashiki in Hanaremore, there had been a match-stick factory until only a few years before these stories were told. At night, a woman came near the door of the work hut. She looked in at the workers and laughed loudly. The place was too lonely and frightening, so at last the factory was moved to Yamaguchi.

Later, another hut was built in the same mountain area for men who cut railway sleepers. But when evening came, some of the workers often wandered away somewhere. When they returned, they sat in a blank state, as if their minds had gone away. There were four or five such men. The same thing happened again and again.

Later, those workers said that a woman had come and led them away. After they returned, they could remember nothing for two or three days. They did not know where they had gone or what had happened. The mountain woman did not need to seize them by force. She only came near, and their own feet followed her.

Chojayashiki was said to be the place where a rich man had lived long ago. Near it there was a mountain called Nukamori. People said it was made from the rice bran thrown away by that rich man's house. In that mountain, there was said to be a five-leafed deutzia tree. Under it, gold was buried.

Even in later times, a few people still went looking for that tree. Perhaps, people said, the old rich man had once worked a gold mine. In that area, pieces of waste from iron making were found. The Ondoku gold mine was also not far away across the connected mountains. Old wealth, old work, and old fear seemed to sleep together in that lonely place.

In Yamaguchi, Tashiri Chozaburo was the richest man in Tsuchibuchi village. The old master of that house told a story from when he was about forty. The son of old Ohide had died, and on the night of the funeral people had finished their prayers and gone home. Chozaburo liked talking, so he left later than the others. As he came out, he saw a man lying on his back under the eaves, using a stone as a pillow.

He looked carefully and saw that he did not know the man. The man seemed dead. It was a moonlit night, so Chozaburo could see him clearly. The man's knees were raised, and his mouth was open. Chozaburo was bold, so he touched him

with his foot, but the man did not move at all.

The body lay in the way, and there was no other easy path. So Chozaburo stepped over it and went home. The next morning he returned to the place. Of course, there was no body there, and no one else had seen such a man. But the stone that had been used as a pillow was exactly where Chozaburo remembered it.

Later he said, "I should have touched him with my hand." But he had been half afraid, and so he had only touched the body with his foot. Because of that, he never learned what it was. It was not clearly a ghost, and it was not clearly a living man. It remained one of the things that could be seen once and never understood.

The same old master told another story. A servant of his house named Chozo came from Yamaguchi and was still alive at more than seventy. Once, when he was young, Chozo went out at night for pleasure and came home late. The gate of his master's house faced the road to Otsuchi. In front of the gate, he met a person coming from the coast.

The person wore a snow cloak. He came near and stopped. Chozo looked at him with suspicion. Then the person suddenly moved away toward the field on the other side of the road. Chozo thought this was strange, because there should have been a hedge there.

When he looked well, the hedge was truly there. The person had gone where no person could pass. Chozo was suddenly filled with fear and ran into the house. He told his master what he had seen. Later they heard that, at that same hour, a man from Niibari village had fallen from his horse on the road back from the coast and died.

Chozo's father was also named Chozo. For generations, his family had served the Tashiri house. When the elder Chozo was young, he too went out at night and came back while it was still early evening. As he entered through the gate, he saw a human shadow standing in front of the house area. The figure had its hands hidden in its sleeves, and the sleeve ends hung down.

The face was dim and could not be seen clearly. Chozo's wife was named Otsune, and he thought, "Is this a man who has come secretly for Otsune?" He

became angry and walked straight toward the figure. But the figure did not run deeper into the house grounds. Instead, it moved toward the entrance on the right.

Chozo grew even angrier and thought the person was making a fool of him. He went forward again. The figure stepped backward with its hands still inside its sleeves. Then it slipped through a narrow opening in the entrance door, though the opening was only about three inches wide.

Even then, Chozo did not yet understand that this was strange. He put his hand into the opening and tried to feel inside. But the sliding paper door inside was firmly closed. Only then did fear come over him. He stepped back a little and looked upward.

The same man was now stuck to the wall above the entrance. He seemed to be looking down at Chozo. His head hung so low that it almost touched Chozo's head. His eyes seemed to have pushed out of his face by more than a foot. This time, nothing happened afterward, and it was not a sign of anyone's death. It was only fear itself, standing in the dark part of an old house.

Part 11: Houses, Shadows, and the Near Dead

To understand the earlier stories about the Tashiri house, it helps to know the shape of the house. Houses in the Tono area were usually built in almost the same way. The gate of this house faced north, though gates usually faced east. People called the gate the *jomae*, or castle front. Around the house there were fields, and there was no strong wall around the land.

Between the master's sleeping room and the main living space, there was a small dark room. People called it the *zato* room. In old times, when there was a feast in the house, people always called a blind singer or musician. This room was the place where he waited. Such rooms show how an old house kept not only a family, but also old customs and old ways of receiving guests.

One thing that struck travelers in this area was the shape of the houses. Many of them were built like a bent arm, or like a hook. The Tashiri house was a good example of this shape. A person did not always see the whole house at once.

Corners, passages, inner rooms, and dark spaces made the house feel deep and partly hidden.

In Tochinai, in the place called Nozaki, there was a man named Maekawa Mankichi. He died two or three years before these stories were told, when he was a little over thirty. Two or three years before his death, he went out at night for pleasure and came home late. It was a moonlit night in June.

He entered by the gate and walked along the veranda. When he reached the corner, he happened to look at the wall. There he saw a man lying flat against it. The man's face was pale blue-white. Mankichi was deeply frightened and later became ill, but this did not become a sign of any clear disaster. Tashiri Marukichi, who was close to him, heard the story from him.

Tashiri Marukichi himself also met something strange. When he was a boy, he got up one night from the family living room and went toward the toilet. He entered the tea room. At the place between that room and the guest room, he saw a person standing. The figure was faint and unclear, but he could see the striped clothes, the eyes and nose, and the long loose hair.

He was afraid, but he reached his hand toward the figure. His hand struck the wooden door and touched its frame. Yet he could not see his own hand clearly. Instead, the human shape lay over his hand like a shadow. When he moved his hand toward the face, the face still appeared over the hand.

He returned to the living room and told the others. They took a lamp and went back to look. But by then there was nothing there. Marukichi was a modern and clever man. He was not the kind of person who told lies. Because of this, people listened carefully when he spoke of what he had seen.

The Daido house of Yamaguchi, the house of Ohora Mannosuke, was built a little differently from other houses. Its entrance faced the southeast. It was an extremely old house. Inside it there was one old box of documents. People said that if the box was opened and shown to others, a curse would come. For that reason, the box remained shut.

Sasaki's grandfather died three or four years before these stories were told, when he was about seventy. When he was young, it was probably around the Kaei

years. At that time, many Western people lived in the coastal areas. There were Western-style houses in Kamaishi and Yamada. Western people also lived at the end of the Funakoshi peninsula.

Christianity was practiced secretly in some places. People said that even in Tono, some believers had been punished with death. Old people who had gone to the coast still told strange stories about foreigners. Their words were not always accurate or kind. They said, in their own rough way, that foreigners often held each other and kissed. People also said that there were many mixed children in the coastal area.

In Kashiwazaki, in Tsuchibuchi village, there was a house where both parents were clearly Japanese, but two of their children were white-haired and pale-skinned from birth. Their hair, skin, and eyes looked like those of Western people. They were about twenty-six or twenty-seven when these stories were told. They worked as farmers at home. Their voices were not like the voices of local people; they were thin and sharp.

In the middle of Tsuchibuchi village, there was a place called Motojuku, where the village office and school stood. There lived a tofu maker named Masa, who was about thirty-six or thirty-seven. When Masa's father was very sick and near death, building work was being done across the Kogarase River in Shimo-Tochinai. Men were using a heavy tool to press and harden the ground.

One evening, Masa's father came there alone. He greeted the workers and said, "I will help with the ground work too." For a short time, he joined the men and worked with them. When it grew rather dark, he left with the others. Later, the workers thought, "Was he not seriously ill?" They felt that something was strange.

Afterward they heard that he had died that very day. They went to the house to express their sorrow and told the family what had happened. Then everyone understood the time. The hour when he had appeared at the building place was just the hour when the sick man had been taking his last breath. His body had been in bed, but something of him had gone out to work once more.

There was a similar story about a rich house in Tono town. The name of the person was forgotten. The master of the house was very ill and close to death. One

day, he suddenly visited his family temple. The priest received him politely and offered tea. They talked about ordinary things for a while.

After some time, the man seemed ready to leave. The priest felt a little uneasy and sent a young temple boy after him to watch. The man went out of the gate and turned toward the direction of his house. Then he went around a street corner and disappeared. Other people had also met him on the road that day, and he had greeted everyone in his usual way.

But that evening he died. Of course, at that time he had not been strong enough to go out at all. Later, at the temple, people wondered whether he had really drunk the tea. They looked at the place where the tea cup had been set. The tea had all spilled into the lines between the tatami mats. The visitor had seemed alive, but he had not been able to drink like a living man.

Another story was much the same. In Tsuchibuchi, there was a Soto Zen temple called Jokenji. It was an important temple among the twelve temples of the Tono area. One evening, a villager was walking from Motojuku and met an old man on the road. The old man had long been very sick.

The villager asked, "When did you become well enough to walk?" The old man answered, "For two or three days I have felt better. Today I am going to the temple to listen to a talk." They spoke again near the temple gate and then parted. At Jokenji, the priest also received the old man, gave him tea, and talked with him for a while.

When the old man left, the priest had a temple boy watch him. Outside the gate, the old man disappeared. The boy was shocked and told the priest. They looked carefully and found that the tea too had been spilled between the tatami mats. The old man died that same day. In Tono, people believed that a person near death might still walk a familiar road, visit a familiar temple, and speak with familiar people before leaving the world.

Part 12: Mountain Gods, Tengu, and Strange Meetings

To go from Yamaguchi to Kashiwazaki, people passed around the foot of

Mount Atago. Near the rice fields there was a pine wood. As one came close to the houses of Kashiwazaki, the trees changed into mixed forest. At the top of Mount Atago there was a small shrine. The path to it went up through the trees.

At the start of the path there stood a shrine gate. Near it were twenty or thirty old cedar trees. Beside them was an empty hall. In front of that hall stood a stone tower with the words "Mountain God" cut into it. From old times, people said that the mountain god appeared there. Stone towers like this stood in many places in Tono, usually where someone had met the mountain god or suffered from its anger.

A young man from Wano once had business in Kashiwazaki. In the evening, he passed near the hall at Mount Atago. Then he saw a tall person coming down from the top of the mountain. The young man wondered who it could be. He walked toward the person, looking through the trees at the place where the face should be.

At a corner of the path, he met the tall person face to face. The other one seemed very surprised too. Its face was very red, and its eyes shone brightly. It looked at the young man with a face full of shock. The young man knew at once that this was the mountain god. Without looking back, he ran all the way to Kashiwazaki village.

In Matsuzaki village, there was a mountain called Tengu Mori. At its foot there was a mulberry field. One day a young man of the village was working there. He became very sleepy and sat down on the edge of the field to doze for a short time. Then a very large man with a bright red face appeared before him.

The young man was light in feeling and liked sumo. When he saw this unknown giant standing before him and looking down at him, he felt angry rather than afraid. He stood up and asked, "Where have you come from?" The giant gave no answer. The young man thought, "I will push him down once." He jumped at the giant and put his hands on him.

But in the same moment, the young man himself was thrown away. He lost his senses. When he woke in the evening, the large man was of course gone. He returned home and told people what had happened. The story did not end there.

In the autumn of that same year, the young man went with many villagers to

the side of Hayachine. They led horses and went to cut bush clover. When it was time to go home, only this man could not be found. The others were shocked and searched for him. Deep in a valley, they found him dead. His hands and feet had been pulled off one by one.

This happened only twenty or thirty years before these stories were written down. Old people who knew the event well were still alive. From long ago, everyone had known that many tengu lived in Tengu Mori. The young man had treated a strange being like an ordinary man. People believed that the mountain had answered him in a terrible way.

In Tono town there was a man who knew the mountains very well. He had once been a falconer for the Nanbu baron's family. People in town gave him the nickname Tori Gozen, or Lord Bird. He knew the trees and stones of Hayachine and Rokkoushi, and he knew where each unusual thing could be found. When he grew old, he once went mushroom gathering with one companion.

This companion was famous as a very strong swimmer. People said that he could go into the water with straw and a hammer, make straw sandals under the water, and come out again. The two men went into the mountain above the strange rocks called Tsuzuki-ishi in Ayaori village. After a while they separated. Tori Gozen climbed a little higher by himself.

It was autumn, and the sun was low. The light stood only a little above the western mountain edge. Suddenly, behind a great rock, Tori Gozen saw a red-faced man and a red-faced woman. They were standing together and talking. When they saw him coming near, they spread out their hands as if to push him back and stop him.

Tori Gozen did not stop. The woman seemed to cling to the man's chest. From the way they stood, Tori Gozen felt that they were not true human beings. But he was a playful and bold man. He drew the short blade at his waist and made as if to strike them.

The red-faced man seemed to lift his foot and kick. In the next moment, Tori Gozen knew nothing. His companion searched for him and found him unconscious at the bottom of a valley. He was helped and brought home. When

he woke, he told everything that had happened that day. "I have never met anything like this before," he said. "I may die because of it. Do not tell anyone."

He lay sick for about three days and then died. His family felt that his death was too strange, so they asked a mountain priest named Kenko-in what it meant. The priest answered that Tori Gozen had disturbed the mountain gods while they were enjoying themselves. Because of that, he had received their anger and died. This happened a little more than ten years before these stories were told.

Last year, fourteen or fifteen village children from Tsuchibuchi went to Hayachine to play. By chance, it became close to evening, and they hurried down the mountain. When they were near the foot, they met a tall man coming quickly up from below. His skin was dark, and his eyes shone. On his shoulder he carried a small bundle wrapped in an old pale blue cloth.

The children were afraid, but one of them called out, "Where are you going?" The man answered, "To Oguni." But this path did not lead in the direction of Oguni. The children stopped and wondered about this. Then, almost as soon as the man had passed them, he was no longer there. All the children cried out, "It was a mountain man!" and ran home.

There was a man from Wano named Kikuchi Kikuzo. His wife came from Hashino, beyond Fuefuki Pass. One day, while his wife was visiting her parents' home, their small son Itozo became sick. The child was five or six years old. After noon, Kikuzo crossed Fuefuki Pass to bring his wife back.

The road followed the long ridge of Rokkoushi, so it was deep with trees. Near the place where the road went down from the Tono side toward the Kurihashi side, the path ran like a narrow cut in the earth, with high sides on both left and right. The sun had already gone behind those high sides, and the road was growing dim. Then someone behind him called, "Kikuzo."

He turned and saw something looking down from the top of the cliff. Its face was red, and its eyes shone like the beings in the earlier stories. It said, "Your child is already dead." When Kikuzo heard these words, his first feeling was not fear but a sudden shock in his heart. Then the figure was gone. He hurried through the night, brought his wife home, and found that the child had truly died.

The same Kikuzo once went to his sister's house in Kashiwazaki. She gave him food, and he put some leftover rice cakes inside his clothes to take home. As he passed through the wood at the foot of Mount Atago, he met Toichi of Zotsubo. Toichi was a great drinker and one of Kikuzo's good friends. He smiled and pointed to a small grassy place in the wood.

"Shall we wrestle here?" Toichi asked. Kikuzo agreed. The two men played sumo on the grass for a while. Toichi was strangely weak and light. Kikuzo could lift and throw him as he liked, and because it was amusing, they wrestled three times. Then Toichi said, "I cannot beat you today. Let us go."

They parted, but after Kikuzo had gone only a short distance, he noticed that the rice cakes were gone. He returned to the wrestling place and searched, but he found nothing. For the first time, he thought that his friend might have been a fox. Four or five days later, he met the real Toichi at a sake shop and told him the story. Toichi said, "I did no sumo with you. I was at the coast that day." Then everyone knew that Kikuzo had wrestled with a fox.

In Matsuzaki there was a man of the Kikuchi family, about forty-three or forty-four years old. He was very good at making gardens. He often went into the mountains, dug up grasses and flowers, and moved them to his own garden. If he found a stone with an interesting shape, he carried it home, even if it was heavy.

One day he felt a little unwell and went into the mountain for pleasure. There he found a beautiful large stone, unlike any stone he had seen before. Because he loved such things, he wanted to take it home. He tried to lift it, but it was terribly heavy. It had the shape of a standing person and was almost as tall as a person.

He still wanted it very badly, so he put it on his back. He forced himself to walk about ten ken. But the stone was so heavy that he almost fainted. Feeling that something was strange, he set the stone beside the road and leaned against it. Then he felt himself and the stone rise smoothly into the air.

He seemed to go above the clouds. The place was very bright and clean, and many kinds of flowers were blooming around him. From somewhere, he heard the voices of many people. Still the stone kept rising. At last it seemed to reach the highest place, and after that he remembered nothing.

When he came to himself, some time had passed. He was still leaning against the same strange stone, just as before. He thought, "If I bring this stone into my house, no one can know what may happen." Fear finally overcame his desire. He ran home and left the stone there. People said the stone still remained in that place. Sometimes, even after all this, the man saw it again and wanted it once more.

Part 13: Souls, Sea Loss, and Night Visitors

In Tono town there was a man of about thirty-five or thirty-six. People called him Yoshiko Baka, a rude name that meant foolish Yoshiko. His mind was not like other people's minds, and he lived until the year before these stories were told. He had a strange habit when he walked along the road. He picked up small pieces of wood, dust, or rubbish, twisted them in his fingers, stared at them for a long time, and smelled them.

When he went into someone's house, he rubbed the posts with his hand and then smelled his fingers. He lifted almost anything close to his eyes, smiled, and smelled it again and again. Because he often did this, people noticed him but did not always fear him. Yet there was one thing he did that filled houses with dread. Sometimes, while walking on the road, he suddenly stopped, picked up a stone, and threw it at a house.

Then he cried out loudly, "Fire! Fire!" When this happened, the house struck by the stone always caught fire that night or the next day. The same thing happened many times. Later, people in such houses became careful at once and tried to prevent fire. But people said that not one house escaped after Yoshiko had thrown a stone at it.

In Iide there was a man named Kikuchi Matsunosuke. He became very ill with a fever, and many times his breathing almost stopped. During one of those times, he felt that he had gone out into the rice fields. He was hurrying toward Kisei-in, his family temple. When he put a little strength into his feet, he suddenly rose into the air.

He flew forward about as high as a person's head. His body went gently

downward as it moved, but when he pushed with his feet again, he rose once more. The feeling was wonderfully pleasant. He did not feel heavy, sick, or afraid. It seemed easier than walking on the ground.

When he came near the temple gate, he saw many people gathered there. He wondered why so many people had come. He went through the gate, and inside he saw red poppy flowers blooming everywhere. The flowers filled the whole place as far as he could see. His heart felt lighter and happier than ever.

Among the flowers stood his father, who had died before him. His father looked at him and said, "Have you come too?" Matsunosuke answered something and went on. Then he saw a little son whom he had also lost before. The child said, "Father, have you come too?"

Matsunosuke said, "So you were here." He wanted to go closer to the child. But the child stopped him and said, "You must not come now." At that moment, from near the gate, he heard people calling his name again and again. The voices were loud and troubling, and he did not want to listen to them.

Still, there was nothing he could do. His heart became heavy, and he turned back unwillingly. Then he came back to his senses. His relatives had gathered around his sick body. They were pouring water on him and calling his name, trying to bring him back to life. The red flowers, his dead father, and his dead child had disappeared.

Beside roads in Tono, it was common to see stones with the names of gods cut into them. Some were for the mountain god. Some were for the field god. Some were for Sae no Kami, the god who stood at borders and protected roads. People placed these stones where the human road met another kind of place.

There were also stones with the names of Mount Hayachine and Mount Rokkoushi cut into them. These stones could be found in Tono, but there were even more of them near the coast. The names of mountains traveled with people. A stone beside a road could hold fear, thanks, prayer, and memory. In this way, the gods of the high places stood close to ordinary paths.

In Tsuchibuchi village, there was a man named Kitagawa Kiyoshi. His house stood in the place called Hiishi. His family had long been connected with

mountain religion. His grandfather was called Shofuku-in. He was a learned man, wrote many things, and worked hard for the village.

Kiyoshi had a younger brother named Fukuji. Fukuji had married into a family at Tanohama on the coast. In the great tsunami of an earlier year, he lost his wife and one child. He survived with two children and built a small hut on the land where the old house had stood. He lived there for about a year after the sea had taken so much from him.

One night in early summer, the moon was bright. Fukuji got up to go to the toilet, but it stood far from the hut. The path went along the shore, where the waves came in and out. Mist lay over the ground and the sea. As he walked, he saw two people, a man and a woman, coming toward him through the mist.

He looked carefully and saw that the woman was his dead wife. Without thinking, he followed them. They went a long way toward Funakoshi village, to a place near a cave on a point of land. Fukuji called his wife's name. She turned back and smiled at him.

Then he looked at the man beside her. The man too was from the same village and had died in the tsunami. Before Fukuji had married into the family, people had said that this man and his wife had loved each other deeply. His dead wife told him that now she and this man were husband and wife.

Fukuji asked, "Do you not love your children?" When she heard this, the color of her face changed a little, and she began to cry. For a moment, Fukuji forgot that he was speaking with a dead person. Grief and bitterness rose in him, and he looked down at his feet. When he looked up again, the man and woman had already moved away quickly.

They turned around the shadowed side of the mountain on the road toward Oura and disappeared. Fukuji tried to follow them. Then suddenly he remembered that they were dead. He stopped in the road and stood there until dawn, thinking and grieving. In the morning he returned home. After that night, he was ill for a long time.

A fisherman from Funakoshi once came back from Kirikiri with other fishermen. It was deep night, and they were passing near Shijuhachizaka. At a

place where there was a small stream, he met a woman. When he looked at her, he saw his own wife. But he thought, “There is no reason for my wife to be alone here in the middle of the night.”

He decided at once that she must be a monster. He took his fish-cutting knife and stabbed her from behind. She gave a sad cry and died. For a short time, she did not change into any other form. The fisherman became uneasy. He asked his companions to watch the body and ran home.

At home, his wife was waiting safely. She said, “I had a terrible dream. You were so late coming home that, in the dream, I went out along the road to meet you. Then, on the mountain road, something unknown frightened me. I thought it would take my life, and I woke.” The fisherman understood something then and hurried back to the place.

When he returned, the woman he had killed had changed into a fox while his companions watched. People said that when a person walks through fields and mountains in a dream, such a beast may borrow that person’s shape. The wife had dreamed that she went out to meet her husband. In the lonely road, the fox had taken that dream shape and had appeared before him.

A traveler once passed through Toyomane village late at night. He was tired, and he saw a light in the house of someone he knew. He was glad and went in to rest. But the master of the house said, “You have come at a good time. Someone died here this evening, and there is no one to watch the house. Please stay for a short while.”

The traveler did not like this at all, but he could not easily refuse. The master went out to call other people, and the traveler sat beside the hearth and smoked. The dead person was an old woman. Her body was lying in the inner part of the house. After a while, the traveler suddenly saw the old woman slowly sit up on the bed.

His heart almost stopped, but he forced himself to stay calm. He looked quietly around the room. Then he saw something like a fox at the water hole near the sink. It had put its face through the hole and was staring hard at the dead woman. The traveler understood that this must be the cause.

He hid himself and quietly went outside. Then he went around to the back of the house. There he saw a real fox, with its head pushed into the hole and its back feet stretched tight. He found a stick nearby and struck the fox dead. After that, the dead woman no longer sat up. The fear in the house had come not from the dead alone, but from the living fox watching through the wall.

Part 14: Little New Year and Village Rites

The evening of the fifteenth day of the New Year was called Little New Year. In the early part of that evening, children went from house to house in small groups of four or five. They carried bags and called themselves gods of fortune. At each house, they sang that the god of fortune had come dancing in from the bright side. Then the people of the house gave them rice cakes.

But after the early evening had passed, people did not go outside on that night. They believed that after midnight on Little New Year, the mountain god came out and played. In Yamaguchi, in the place called Marukodachi, there was a woman named Omasa. She was about thirty-five or thirty-six when these stories were told. When she was still twelve or thirteen, she once went out alone as a god of fortune.

For some reason, she had no other children with her that night. She walked from place to place and became late. Then she started home along a lonely road. From the other direction, a very tall man came toward her. His face was terribly red, and his eyes shone.

The man passed close by her. Omasa was so frightened that she dropped her bag. She ran home without looking back. After that, she became very sick. People believed that she had met the mountain god, because it was the night when the mountain god walked outside.

People also said that the snow woman came out on Little New Year night. Even when it was not Little New Year, she might come out on a winter night with a full moon. They said that she brought many children with her and played in the snow. Her world belonged to bright cold nights, white hills, and children's laughter that might not be human.

In winter, village children often went to the nearby hills to play with sleds. The play was so pleasant that they sometimes stayed until night came. On the fifteenth night, adults always warned them, "Come home early. The snow woman will come." The warning was common in the villages. But people who said they had truly seen the snow woman were few.

Many rites were held on the evening of Little New Year. One of them was called moon-viewing. People took six walnuts and broke them into twelve pieces. They put all twelve pieces into the hearth fire at the same time. Then they took them out at the same time and placed them in one line.

The pieces were counted from the right, one for January, one for February, and so on through the year. If the night of the full moon in a certain month would be clear, that walnut piece stayed red for a long time. If the night would be cloudy, the piece quickly became black. If there would be wind that month, the fire in the walnut piece shook and made a soft blowing sound.

However many times people tried this, the result was the same. What was stranger was that every house in the village got the same answer. On the next day, people talked together about what they had seen. If the sign said that the full moon of the eighth month would be windy, they hurried to cut the rice that year. A small piece of walnut could tell them how to plan their work.

Another rite was called yonaka-mi, or looking into the middle of the year. This too was done on the evening of Little New Year. People made rice cakes from different kinds of rice and shaped them like round mirrors. They spread the same kinds of rice flat on a tray and placed the mirror-shaped rice cakes upside down on top.

Then they covered them with a pot and left them until the next morning. In the morning, they lifted the pot and looked carefully. The kind of rice that had many grains stuck to its rice cake would bring a good harvest that year. In this way, people chose which rice to plant: early rice, middle rice, or late rice. The rite joined household food, farming plans, and hope for the year.

On the coast at Yamada, people saw a mirage every year. They said it always looked like a foreign land. The scene was like a city they had never seen before.

There were many carts and horses on the roads. Many people seemed to come and go there, bright and busy before the eyes.

People also said that the shape of the houses in the mirage did not change from year to year. The same unknown city appeared again and again. It was not a place that people could reach by walking. It only rose before them over the sea or air. To those who saw it, it seemed like another world showing itself for a short time.

In Kamigo village, there was a house called Kawabuchi no Uchi. It stood on the bank of the Hayase River. One day, a young daughter of this house went out to the riverbed and picked up stones. While she was there, a man she had never seen came to her. He was very tall, and his face was as red as bright paint.

The man gave the girl something. People said it may have been a leaf or something like a leaf. From that day, the girl gained the power to tell hidden things. People said that the strange man was the mountain god. They also said that she had become a child of the mountain god.

There were people in several places who told fortunes because the mountain god had entered them. One such person lived in Tsukumoushi village. His ordinary work was cutting wood. Another was Magotaro of Kashiwazaki. Long before, Magotaro had gone mad and lost his clear mind. But one day he went into the mountain and received the power of fortune-telling from the mountain god.

After that, his power was amazing. He could read what was in a person's heart. His way of telling fortunes was completely different from other people's ways. He did not look at books or special signs. A person who had come to ask him something sat and talked with him about ordinary matters. Then, suddenly, Magotaro stood up and began walking here and there through the room.

He did not look at the visitor's face. He only spoke the things that rose in his own mind. But people said that he was never wrong. For example, he might say, "Take up the floor boards in your house and dig into the earth. You will find an old mirror or a broken sword. If you do not take it out, someone in the house will soon die, or the house will burn."

When people went home and dug under the floor, they always found what he had said. There were too many such examples to count. Because of this, people

feared and trusted him. He had once lost his mind, but after meeting the mountain god, he received a strange second mind. It could see what ordinary eyes could not see.

Around the Bon season, people held a rite called the rain-and-wind festival. They made a straw figure larger than a human being and carried it to a crossroads. They drew a face on paper and fixed it to the figure. They also added shapes made from gourds or melons. These shapes showed male and female powers.

This straw figure was different from the smaller figures used in insect festivals. For the rain-and-wind festival, the people of one village group chose a house to lead the rite. The villagers gathered there and drank sake together. Then, with flutes and drums, they carried the figure to the road crossing. Some of the flutes were horn-like instruments made from paulownia wood, and people blew them loudly.

As they carried the figure, they sang a song. The words meant, “We hold the rain-and-wind festival for the two hundred and tenth day. To which way do we send it? We send it to the north.” The rite treated rain and wind almost like living powers that could be sent away. The people did not only pray with quiet words. They made a body, carried it, sang to it, and moved danger out of the village.

There was also a sacred image called Gongensama. Each kagura dance group had one. It was carved from wood and looked much like a lion head, though it was a little different. People believed that it had great power. The Gongensama of the Hachiman shrine group in Niibari once fought with the Gongensama of the kagura group of Itsukaichi in Tsuchibuchi village.

People said that the Niibari Gongensama lost the fight and lost one ear. Even in later times, that ear was still missing. Every year the kagura groups carried Gongensama from village to village and danced. Because of this, everyone knew what Gongensama looked like. Its strongest power was the power to stop fire.

Once, the Hachiman kagura group went to Tsukumoushi village. It became dark, and they could not easily find a place to stay. At last a poor family kindly let them sleep in their house. The people of the group turned over a five-sho measuring box and placed Gongensama on top of it. Then they lay down and slept.

In the middle of the night, they woke because they heard a hard biting sound. They got up and saw that fire had caught on the edge of the roof. Gongensama, sitting on the measuring box, was jumping up and down. It was eating and putting out the fire. People also asked Gongensama for help when children had sickness in the head. They let Gongensama bite the sickness away.

Part 15: Mounds, Graves, and Old Tales

In many parts of Tono, there were places called Danno-hana. There was one in Yamaguchi, one in Iide, one in Tsukumoushi, and others in Aozasa and Tsuchibuchi. Near each Danno-hana, there was also a place called Rendaino. The two names seemed to belong together. People said that, in old times, anyone over sixty was sent away to Rendaino.

But the old people did not simply lie down and die there. During the day, they came down to the village and worked in the fields so that they could live. Because of this, people around Yamaguchi and Tsuchibuchi still used special words. Going out to the fields in the morning was called haka-dachi. Coming back from the fields in the evening was called haka-agari.

People also said that Danno-hana may have been the place where prisoners were killed in the age of old forts. The land shape was almost the same in Yamaguchi, Tsuchibuchi, and Iide. It stood on a hill near the border of a village. The Danno-hana in Yamaguchi was on the hill road to Ohora, and it continued from the old fort site.

Rendaino faced it from the other side of the village houses. Around Rendaino, there were streams or low wet places on every side. To the south was a place called Hoshiya. There were many square hollows in the ground there, called Ezo-yashiki, or Ezo house sites. Their shapes could still be seen clearly.

Many stone tools and clay things were found there. In Yamaguchi, there were two places where such things came out of the ground. One was Rendaino, and the other was a small place called Horyo. The objects from the two places were not alike. The things from Rendaino were simple and rough, but the things from

Horyo had better shapes and patterns.

Clay figures, stone axes, stone knives, round beads, and tube-shaped beads were also found. At Rendaino, people found many small clay objects shaped like coins. They called them Ezo coins. Some had simple round patterns. There were also two places nearby where people said that if one dug, a curse would come.

In Wano, there was a place called Jozuka Mori. People said that an elephant had been buried there. They also said that there was no earthquake on that one place. So, from old times, people nearby were told, “If an earthquake comes, run to Jozuka Mori.”

In truth, it was probably an old grave where a person had been buried. There was a ditch around the mound. On top of the mound, there was a stone. People said that if anyone dug there, a curse would come. Because of this, fear protected the mound more strongly than a fence could have done.

The Danno-hana in Yamaguchi was later used as a common graveyard. On the top of the hill, people planted flowering shrubs around the place. On the east side, there was an opening like a gate. In the middle stood a large blue stone. Once, someone dug under the stone but found nothing.

Later, another person tried to dig there again. This time he saw a large jar under the ground. The old people of the village became very angry and scolded him strongly. So the place was covered again and left as it had been. People said that it was probably the grave of the lord of the old fort.

Near this place was an old fort called Bonshasa no Tate. The people who built it had cut through several hills to bring water. They had also made three or four lines of ditches around it. Place names such as Terayashiki and Toishi Mori still remained there. There was also the mark of an old well, with stone walls left in the ground. People said that the ancestors of Yamaguchi Magosaemon once lived there.

People in Tono called old fairy tales mukashi-mukashi, meaning “long ago, long ago.” Among these tales, there were many stories about Yamahaha. Yamahaha seems to mean a mountain old woman, or yamauba. She was not like an ordinary old woman. She was a frightening being from the mountain, and

children heard many stories about her.

In one old tale, there were once a father and mother. They had one daughter. One day the parents went to town and left the daughter at home. Before they went, they locked the door and warned her, "Do not open the door, whoever comes." The girl was afraid and sat by the fire, waiting alone.

Around noon, someone struck the door. A voice outside cried, "Open this door." The girl did not open it. Then the voice shouted, "If you do not open it, I will kick it down." The girl had no choice. She opened the door, and Yamahaha came in.

Yamahaha stepped into the best place beside the hearth and warmed herself. Then she ordered the girl to cook rice and serve her a meal. The girl obeyed and prepared food. While Yamahaha was eating, the girl ran out of the house. But when Yamahaha finished eating, she came after the girl.

The mountain old woman ran faster and faster. She came so close that her hand almost touched the girl's back. At that moment, the girl met an old man cutting brushwood in the shadow of the mountain. She begged him, "Yamahaha is chasing me. Please hide me." The old man hid her inside the cut brush.

Yamahaha came and asked where the girl had gone. She tried to move the bundle of brushwood, but as she held it, she slipped and fell down the mountain. During that time, the girl ran away again. Soon she met another old man cutting tall grass. She begged him in the same way, and he hid her inside the grass.

Yamahaha came again and tried to move the grass bundle. Once more she slipped and fell down the mountain. The girl ran away and reached the bank of a large pond. There was nowhere else to go, so she climbed a tall tree beside the water. Yamahaha came after her and looked around, asking where the girl had gone.

Then Yamahaha saw the girl's shadow in the water. She thought the girl was inside the pond and jumped in at once. While Yamahaha was in the water, the girl climbed down and ran again. Soon she found a small bamboo hut. Inside the hut there was a young woman.

The girl told her the whole story. The young woman hid her inside a stone chest. Soon Yamahaha came flying to the hut and asked where the girl was. The

young woman said, "No one came here." Yamahaha answered, "That cannot be true. I smell a human smell."

The young woman said, "That smell is from a sparrow I cooked and ate just now." Yamahaha believed her. Then Yamahaha said she wanted to sleep. She asked whether she should sleep in the stone chest or the wooden chest. "The stone chest is cold," she said. "I will sleep in the wooden chest." She went into the wooden chest, and the young woman locked it.

Then the young woman took the girl out of the stone chest. She said, "I too was brought here by Yamahaha. Let us kill her and go home." They heated a sharp iron tool until it was red and pushed it through the wooden chest. Yamahaha only said, "A little mouse has come." Then they boiled water and poured it through the hole. At last Yamahaha died, and the two women returned to their parents' homes.

Another old tale also began with a father, a mother, and a daughter. The parents were going to town to buy things for the daughter's marriage. They closed the door and told her, "Do not open it, whoever comes." The daughter answered yes, and they went away.

At noon, Yamahaha came. She entered the house, took the daughter, and ate her. Then she put on the daughter's skin and sat there, pretending to be the girl. In the evening, the parents came home and called from the gate, "Orikohime, are you there?" Yamahaha answered in the daughter's voice, "Yes, I am here. You came home early."

The parents showed her all the marriage things they had bought. They were happy because they thought their daughter was pleased. But at dawn the next day, the house rooster flapped its wings and cried in a strange way. Its cry seemed to say, "Look in the corner of the storehouse." The parents thought, "That is not the rooster's usual cry."

Later, when they were about to send out the bride, they put the false Orikohime on a horse. Then the rooster cried again. This time its voice seemed to say, "You have not put Orikohime on the horse. You have put Yamahaha on it." It repeated this again and again. At last the parents understood. They pulled Yamahaha down from the horse and killed her. Then they looked in the corner of the storehouse

and found many bones of their daughter.

The story of Benizara and Kakezara was also told in Tono. But in Tono, the girl called Kakezara was called Nukabo. Nukabo means a hollow grain case. She was hated by her stepmother, but the gods helped her. In the end, she became the wife of a rich man. This story had many beautiful scenes, and the teller said that he hoped to write it in full someday.

Part 16: The Deer Dance Songs

In Tono, the deer dance had its own songs. The words were old, and they were not always easy to understand. Different villages and different singers changed the songs a little. The songs written here came from an old copy made more than a hundred years before. People said that the deer dance was not one of the oldest customs of this land, but had come into the area in the middle ages.

Bridge Praise

We have come here, and we look at this bridge. Who first stepped on it and opened the way across? It is not an easy thing to pass over. This bridge stands before us like a place of honor. We praise the road, the crossing, and the hands that made it.

We have come here, and we look at this riding ground. It runs far, seven ri through cedar fields, toward the great gate. Horses may pass here, and people may gather here. The land is wide, and the way is open. We praise the place where feet, hooves, and song all meet.

Gate Praise

We have come here, and we look at this gate. It is built of fine wood, of cypress and sawara. This is a happy gate, a bright white-silver gate. Open the door of the gate, and let us see inside. A good house stands beyond it, and good fortune seems

to wait there.

Hall Praise

We have come here, and we look at this great hall. What carpenter had the hands to build it? The builder's hands must have been strong and wise. It is like a temple built long ago by a master carpenter. The pillars stand, the roof rises, and the place shines before the dancers.

Kojima Song

At Kojima, the gate is made of cypress and sawara. It is a happy gate, a white-silver gate. Open the white-silver gate and look inside. There is a fine house with many roofs. On top of the bark roof, a larch tree grows and watches the place.

To the right and left of the larch tree, clear water springs up. People draw it, people drink it, yet it does not end. The morning sun shines on the great temple. One hundred young children in cherry color stand there. From the sky, fine water for ink seems to fall, and someone waits to receive it.

Stable Praise

We have come here, and we look at this kitchen. There are many great cooking pots, as many as sixteen. When food is cooked in those sixteen pots, forty-eight horses go out to cut morning grass. They cut bellflowers and small grasses together. The stable shines with flowers.

Among the shining horses, there is a dark young horse. It stamps its feet and wants to rise. The house has food, horses, grass, and work. It has the sound of hooves and the smell of morning fields. So the singers praise not only the people's rooms, but also the kitchen, the stable, and the horses that help the house live.

Song of the Courtyard

We have heard that there is a fine singer in this courtyard. We are poor players, and we feel shy, even as we sing. We have learned only from yesterday, and today we play before you. Please forgive our mistakes. We bow once, and then we rise with our friends.

Square Court Praise

We have come here, and we look at this square court. It has four sides and four corners. It is a good court for dancers to turn in. We have come here, and we look at this house. It is called a kind house, a house with a human heart. A song can stand well in such a place.

Town Praise

We have come here, and we look at this town. The main street is long, and the cross street is wide. Friends may lose their way in such a place. Yet the town is bright and full of movement. The dancers enter it with sound, and the song praises its size.

Magistrate Praise

We have come here, and we look at the lord official. In the middle of the town, banners are set up. The streets stand before him, and people know his place. The official sleeps in the upper room with money as his pillow and gold as his toy. High places are called castles, and low places are called castle towns.

Bridge Praise Again

We have come here, and we look at this bridge. It stands at a golden crossing, and its bridge is white silver. People pass over it with care. The song makes the

bridge greater than an ordinary bridge. In the dance, even a road and a crossing can become bright.

Upper Hall Praise

We have come here, and we look at this holy hall. It stands square on every side, held by one strong peg. A person takes a fan and a string of prayer beads. If that person goes up to the high place, good help may come. The song turns a hall into a path toward blessing.

House Praise

The words of this song are not fully clear now. They speak of golden beams and water shining along the roof edge. Perhaps the old singers saw the house as more than wood and thatch. They saw it as a place bright with wealth and water. Even when the exact words are lost, the praise remains.

Nami-ai Song

We have heard that there is a good singer in this courtyard. We feel shy even while we sing. Fine woven mats and bright cloth are spread in this garden. A beautiful cup is set on a fine stand and placed here before us. The garden shines because people have prepared it with care.

If you receive this cup of sake, may your life be long. For food there may be sea bream and sea bass. There may also be many other gifts. But the song says that what is heard in the dance is also food for the heart. We bow once, and then we rise with our friends.

Pillar Song

Bring in the middle dancer. Bring him in, bring him in. Without the middle

dancer, the garden is lonely. A young deer is born and comes down, then goes around the mountain. We also go around, turning and turning through the garden.

When a great pillar stands in this garden, even the deer polishing its horns becomes young again. The pine of Matsushima is raised and watched. A vine twists around the pine. If there is no bond between them, the vine falls away. In the song, tree, vine, deer, and dancer all move together.

Mate-Choosing Song

Bring in the middle dancer. Bring him in, bring him in. Without the middle dancer, the garden is lonely. A young deer is born and comes down, then goes around the mountain. We too go around the garden, searching and turning.

The deer goes to look for the female deer. Mist lies over the holy mountain of Hakusan. How happy it is when the wind blows the mist away. Now the female deer can be found. Even if she hides in a village of tall grass, the deer opens the grass and looks for her.

In the bamboo leaves, the female deer is hidden. But she is drawn out. Look at the steps of the female deer and the great deer. The heart of the deer is like a heart from the capital. In the deep mountain, the great deer begins this year's dance for the first time.

The deer cannot take the female deer and so feels longing. Its heart becomes tight and troubled. The pine of Matsushima is raised and watched, and the vine still twists around it. If there is no bond, the vine falls away. On the far shore, a beach bird rises slowly and moves with the waves.

Nagekusa Song

Who has come here to receive this offering grass? The one who has come has a thankful heart. What carpenter made this world, with treasure playing at its four corners? What kind of sake is this sake? We have heard that it is chrysanthemum sake, a drink of long life.

What kind of money is this money? Perhaps it is left from a journey to Ise or a visit to Kumano. What kind of paper is this paper? Perhaps it is fine paper from Harima. Fold it with care, and let it lie beautifully. The song praises gifts, journeys, paper, sake, money, and all things placed before the dance.

Where is the place of the fan? The fan belongs to a holy house, and the center of it is its pin. Fold after fold lies upon it. These words are old, and some are unclear, but their feeling is plain. The singers praise the house, the garden, the gods, the guests, and the dancers. Then they bow, rise with their friends, and leave the song standing in the air.