

A Cat Killed for Killing a Chicken
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(Keimyo)

Tozaburo
Lord
Taro Kaja
Jiro Kaja
Saburo Kaja
Tozaburo's Son

LORD I am Lord Kono from the Land of Iyo. Recently my favorite cat has disappeared. I have made numerous inquiries, but I am still unable to determine its whereabouts. I will call my servant Taro Kaja and give him a job to do. Taro Kaja, are you there?

TARO KAJA Here.

LORD There you are.

TARO KAJA At your service, Sir.

LORD You came quite quickly. What has happened concerning my cat who is missing?

TARO KAJA Concerning that matter, I have searched high and low, but I am most troubled to have to tell you that I have not uncovered even the smallest clue.

LORD Well then, there is nothing left for us to do, so put up

and signboard.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir.

LORD On the signboard, you must write, "Anyone who provides information on the whereabouts of my cat will be granted any reward that he desires."

TARO KAJA With all my heart.

LORD And if anyone speaks out, bring him to me.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir.

LORD Eiiiiii.

TARO KAJA I have been given a most important task. I must put up the signboard quickly. (He mimes putting up a signboard.) There, now, this will do just fine.

SON OF TOSABURO I am a resident of this neighborhood. The lord of this land has lost his favorite cat and he put up a signboard announcing that anyone who provides information on the whereabouts of his cat will be granted any reward that he desires. Concerning which, it was my own father who killed the lord's favorite cat. If he were to hear of this from someone else, not only would it be a bother to my father and our family, but to all our relatives as well. So I have decided to go and tell the lord myself and request the life of my father as my reward. In order to determine whether or not this is really true, I must hurry on my way. Well, I must say, if this is really true, I intend to

have my desire granted me. Well, here I am already. And here is the signboard. (He looks up at the signboard and reads it.) “Anyone who provides information on the whereabouts of my cat will be granted any reward that he desires.” So it appears to be true. I must quickly announce myself. Hello in there, is anybody home?

TARO KAJA Oh, someone it at the door. Who might it be, who is there?

SON I have come about the signboard. Please announce me to your lord.

TARO KAJA I will announce you as you request, so please wait right there for a minute.

SON With all my heart.

TARO KAJA I have a matter to announce to you. A youngster has come concerning the signboard.

LORD What’s that you say? A youngster had come concerning the signboard?

TARO KAJA That is indeed the case.

LORD That is truly good news. Bring him all the way in here.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. Here, here, I say. Come all the way inside.

SON With all my heart.

TARO KAJA This is the youngster.

LORD Here, here where are you from?

SON I am a resident of this neighborhood.

LORD Do you know what happened to my cat?

SON That I truly do.

LORD So tell me who is was who caught it.

SON Indeed I will tell you. Your signboard said that anyone who provides information will be granted any reward that he desires. If that is indeed your intent, will you grant me any reward that I desire?

LORD Indeed I will grant you any reward that you desire, so hurry up and tell me what you know.

SON Above everything else, I want to know exactly the extent of your intent on this score.

LORD I swear by the bow and arrow of the God Hachiman that it is my firm intent to grant such a reward, so hurry up and tell me what you know.

SON If that is the case, I will now tell you that it was Tozaburo of this neighborhood who killed your cat.

LORD You say it was Tozaburo who killed it?

SON Indeed it was.

LORD What an inexplicably hateful rascal. And did you see him do it with your own eyes?

SON There is not the least bit of untruth in what I say.

LORD In that case, I will call you to witness before him later on.

SON As you say, Sir, I will.

LORD Until that time comes, wait right where you are.

SON With all my heart.

LORD Here, I say, did you hear what he just said?

TARO KAJA I did indeed hear him.

LORD What a hateful rascal. Hurry up and go capture Tozaburo and bring him here.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir, but that Tozaburo is a constantly alert man, so I do not feel confident in capturing him alone.

LORD Then take my other two servants along with you.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir

LORD Make absolutely certain that you do not fail in catching him.

TARO KAJA I will most certainly not fail.

LORD Eiiii

TARO KAJA Haaa. Here, here, I say are you two there?

JIRO KAJA & SABURO KAJA Here we are.

TARO KAJA Just a bit ago, I put up a signboard inquiring after the whereabouts of the missing cat, and a youngster came and informed us that it was Tozaburo of this neighborhood who killed it. Do you not think that he is a hateful rascal?

JIRO KAJA & SABURO KAJA As you say, he is indeed a hateful rascal.

TARO KAJA So I have been ordered to go and capture Tozaburo, but since he is such a constantly alert man, he will not likely allow him to be captured and come along easily. So what must we do?

JIRO KAJA As you say, he is a constantly powerful man, so he will not agree easily to being captured. So what must we do?

SABURO KAJA Indeed, what must we do?

TARO KAJA Oh, I have a great idea. I will go ahead alone and call him out of his house nonchalantly, so you two must take him sneak up from behind and tie him up with a rope.

JIRO KAJA & SABURO KAJA We will do exactly as you say.

TARO KAJA Be sure you do not fail.

JIRO KAJA We will most certainly not fail.

TARO KAJA Well, here I am already. Hello in there, is anybody home?

TOZABURO Oh, there is someone at the door. Who is there?

TARO KAJA It is me.

TOZABURO Oh, there is no reason for you to announce yourself. Why did you not come right in as usual?

TARO KAJA I thought that would be alright, but still, feeling that it might be an imposition, I announced myself on purpose this time.

TOAZABURO You are always extremely polite on that score, but what have you come for today?

TARO KAJA The reason for my coming here is of no great import. It is just that the lord has an urgent matter to discuss with you, so you must go to him quickly.

TOZABURO What's that? You say he has an urgent matter to discuss with me?

TARO KAJA That he does indeed.

TOZABURO In that case, I will go along with you immediately.

TARO KAJA Come, come, let us be on our way.

TOZABURO I'm coming, I'm coming. I wonder just what urgent matter he has to discuss with me.

JIRO KAJA (Grabbing Tozaburo.) You rascal.

TOZABURO (Throwing Jiro Kaja off.) What are you up to?

SABURO KAJA (Grabbing Tozaburo's arm.) We've got you.

TOZABURO (Throwing Saburo Kaja off.) You hateful rascal.

TARO KAJA Hurry and tie him up, tie him up with the rope.

JIRO KAJA (Tying up Tozaburo with the rope.) You hateful rascal.

TOZABURO What are you up to? Stop this foolishness. (He struggles, but they finally succeed in tying his arms behind his back.)

JIRO KAJA We do not know the precise reason, but it is the lord's order we follow, the orders of the lord.

TARO KAJA You have done it, you have done it. Come, come, lead him away.

JIRO KAJA & SABURO KAJA With all our hearts. Come, come, move on, move on.

TARO KAJA I have a matter to announce to you. We have brought Tozaburo to you.

LORD You have done well, done very well. Bring him in here quickly.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. Here, here, bring him in here quickly.

JIRO KAJA & SABURO KAJA With all our hearts. Come, come, move on in, move on in.

LORD I say, I say, is it true that you killed my favorite cat?

TOZABURO What an unexpected thing you ask me. I have never even so much as set eyes on that cat of yours.

LORD Here, here, there is a person who says that it was you who killed my cat. Don't hide anything, tell me the whole truth.

TOZABURO While I am reluctant to contradict you, I know nothing at all about that matter. It must have been that

someone else was mistaken for me.

LORD We have a witness of proof here. So now do you still say you know nothing of the matter?

SON It is I who stand as the witness of proof.

TOZABURO Hey, what is this? Was it you who witnessed against me?

SON Indeed it was me.

TOZABURO Oh, what a hateful rascal you are. No matter how young you are, you will know that standing witness against you father will make you an accessory to my crime. So how could you accuse me with your own words and cause me to be tied up like this?! (To the Lord.) Since it has come to this pass, there is nothing else to be done, I will confess everything straight away.

LORD Confess quickly.

TOZABURO I cannot hide anything. I also had a favorite chicken, but recently a cat appeared from who knows where that ate my chicken and tried to run away, so I struck it dead without further thought. But when I got a good look at it, I realized that it was your favorite cat. So, thinking that if I were to be found out, I would be punished, I hid the dead cat deeply away. And after all, it was this, my only son, who has thus abandoned his own father in favor of being loyal to you our lord. But though his is a loyal follower of you his lord, he is, to me his father, a traitorous enemy. So since I

have thus confessed, I beg you to spare me my life.

LORD I am grateful for your confession. However, since you are the true enemy of my cat, how can you say that your son is your enemy?

TOZABURO I cannot agree with what you say, for since the cat was the enemy of my chicken, is not this my own son my enemy?

LORD Hey, hey, since it has been established that you are the enemy of my cat, arguing in this manner is only a waste of time, so I will cut you down immediately. (He draws his sword and prepares to execute Tozaburo.)

SON (Rushing in front of the Lord and spreading his arms wide.) Oh, how sad I am. First wait just a moment.

LORD Wait for what?

SON As my reward concerning this present matter, I beg you to grant my father his life.

TOZABURO So why did you stand as witness against me?

SON The crux of the matter is, that, thinking that if the Lord were to hear about this from someone else, it would cause trouble for not only you my father and myself his son, but for our entire family as well, so that is why I witnessed against you. So I humbly beg you, dear lord, to grant me my father's life as my reward.

LORD Hmm, what you say well stands to reason, but since this man is a criminal, I cannot grant his him life. So get out of my way. I will cut him down in one fell stroke. (Raising his sword once more.)

TOZABURO Wait just a moment.

LORD Wait for what?

TOZABURO I just remembered something that relates to this matter. Once long ago in the ancient Land of Prosperous Sunlight, a person was stricken with a disease. He dreamed that if he ate mutton, he would be cured, so he stole the emperor's favorite sheep, and as soon as he ate it, he was completely cured, but this irritated the emperor to the extent that he put up a signboard offering any reward the witness might desire in return for information concerning the criminal, in response to which, a son came forth as witness against his father, and succeeded in receiving the life of his father as his desired reward. So since this stands as a precedence, I humbly beg you to spare me my life.

SON Also, if a father is executed as a result of his son standing as witness against him, there is great fear of punishment from the heavenly deities, so, since things have come to this pass, I beg you to execute me first.

LORD Well, I must say, you speak with logic unexpected from one of your age, so anyone who might execute you would be a criminal. So get out of my way. I will cut you father down in a single stroke.

SON So do you renege on what you swore to just a moment ago?

LORD So what I am saying is that I will grant you any other reward that you desire.

SON How can I go on living if you kill my father? So until you execute me first, I will not budge from this spot. (He begins weeping piteously.)

LORD Oh, well then. . .

TARO KAJA, JIRO KAJA & SABURO KAJA Ohhhh. . .

LORD (He and Zosaburo also begin weeping.) This is the most loyal person under the sun. I intended to cut him down with a single stroke, but I cannot make myself bring my sword down into play. Now I do spare you your lives.

TOZABURO & SON Is this really true?

LORD It is truly true.

TOZABURO & SON Is it a fact?

LORD To show that it is a fact, I put my sword back in its scabbard.

SON Thank you for being the beneficent father of life for me.

LORD Hurry up and untie him.

TARO KAJA, JIRO KAJA & SABURO KAJA With all our hearts.

LORD Did this cause you undue concern?

TOZABURO Since you appeared more angry than usual, you caused all the hairs on my body to stand up in sheer fear.

LORD I was indeed far more angry than usual, but sensing strongly this youngster's heartfelt intention, I was unable to go through with your execution, and I have spared you your life. Your son is the most loyal person under the sun. Be certain to give him the care he so much deserves.

TOZABURO For your benevolence, I am more grateful.

LORD I would like to give you a special reward, but I do not have anything that would be truly appropriate. This sword, I have inherited from many generations back, and this I give you as a reward. You must take it and hurry on your way back home.

TOZABURO Yes, Sir. (He receives the sword and then sings and dances in grateful celebration.)

How very felicitous,
How very grateful I am,

CHORUS

The sympathy of our most benevolent lord,
The loyalty of one who saved
the life of his criminal father,
Make all present feel as though
they have ascended to paradise.
The father bears the joy on his shoulders,
As all return home in greatest joy,
Return together in greatest joy.