

Kane no Ne – translated by Don Kenny

MASTER: I am a resident of this neighborhood. My son has reached adulthood, so I have decided to have a sword with gold fittings made for him. Concerning which, I mean to call my servant Taro Kaja and give him a job to do. Taro Kaja, are you there?

TARO KAJA: Here!

MASTER: There you are!

TARO KAJA: At your service, Sir.

MASTER: You came quite quickly. The matter I have called you here about is of no great import. I have decided to have a sword with gold fittings made to give my son. What do you think?

TARO KAJA: If you had not mentioned it, I was about to suggest it myself. That is a fine idea.

MASTER: In that case, while I realize it is a great imposition, I order you to go to Kamakura and inquire after the ring of metals.

TARO KAJA: As you say, Sir.

MASTER: While it goes without saying, the ring will be different in different places. Be certain to take care to find the very best ring of metals.

TARO KAJA: On that score, I assure you, you have no need for concern.

MASTER: Go quickly and hurry back.

TARO KAJA: Haa!

MASTER: Ei!

TARO KAJA: Haa!

TARO KAJA: I have been sent out on most urgent business. I must hurry on my way. (He sets out.) Truly, I have never seen the sights of Kamakura. I will take this happy chance to have myself a good look around. Well, here I am in Kamakura already. Well, I must say, what a bustling town it is. And here is a temple. I wonder what the name of the temple might be. What? Jufuku Temple? I wonder where the bell tower might be. Oh, here it is. First, I will listen to the ring of this bell. (He grasps the clapper rope and swings it.) Ei, ei, ei! (He listens.) Jan, mon, mon, mon. This is an average ring. He said the ring of bells will be different in different places. I must go listen at another temple. This seems to be a temple town.

I'll just walk straight down this street. Truly, I have heard that Kamakura is a town full of interesting sights. I will take my time and enjoy them all. Here is another temple. I wonder what the name might be... Enkaku Temple? I wonder where the bell tower might be. Oh, here it is. I will listen to the ring of this bell. (Grasping the clapper rope and swinging it.) Ei, ei, ei! (Listening.) Paaan! Well, I must say, what a thin and scanty ring. I am certain this scanty of a ring would be of no use at all. I must say, my master is a man who knows what he is about. He said the ring of bells would be different in different places, and there is indeed a great variety of rings.

Here is another temple. I wonder what the name of this temple might be... Here is some sort of placard. I will read it and see what it says. Let me see. "Prohibitions within the grounds of Gokuraku Temple." To begin with it is called Gokuraku Temple. "The breaking off of branches from bamboo trees and unauthorized striking of the bell are strictly prohibited. " Oh! It says not to strike the bell. What shall I do? After coming all this way, I hate to go away without hearing the ring of this bell. (He grasps the clapper

rope and swings it.) Ei, ei, ei! (Putting his hands to his ears.) Jaga, jaga, jaga! It looks whole from the outside, but it seems there is a crack on the inside. What good would a cracked bell be? I'll go find one more temple. Truly, it is only reasonable that the placard said not to strike the bell, as it is a cracked bell.

Oh, look! Here is a very big temple. I say, I say! What is the name of this temple?...What? Kencho Temple? No wonder! They say you can recognize a great temple just by looking at its gate, and this is Kamakura's greatest temple – Kencho Temple. I'll just go have a look inside. Oh, I must say, this is a lovely temple. I wonder where the bell tower might be...Oh, here it is. Now I will listen to the ring of this bell. (He grasps the clapper rope and swings it.) Ei, ei, ei! (He listens.) Kon, mon, mon, mon. Oh, I must say, what a fine, clear ring this is! Of all those I have heard, there is none so clear as this. Rather than haggling over this one or that one, I'll just decide on the ring of this bell of Kencho Temple, and be on my way home. But just to make sure there is no mistake, I will listen to it just once more. (He grasps the clapper rope and swings it.) Ei, ei, ei! (He listens.) Kon, mon, mon, mon. The more I listen, the better this ring gets. In any case, I choose this bell. I must hurry on my way home. Truly, I thought it would require a great deal of time, but I have already found the finest of all bell rings. Nothing could make me happier. And when I report to my master, I am certain he will be satisfied as well. Well, here I am at home already. I say, Sir! Are you there?

MASTER: Well, it sounds as though Taro Kaja has come back. Are you back? Are you back?

TARO KAJA: Are you there, Sir? Are you there?

MASTER: Oh, Taro Kaja, have you come back?

TARO KAJA: I have just come back home.

MASTER: Well, I must say, you have gone to great pains for me. And did you find out the ring of metals?

TARO KAJA: I did indeed listen to them.

MASTER: And was the ring different in different places?

TARO KAJA: Truly I found them greatly different.

MASTER: And how much were they?

TARO KAJA: I do not know how much they may be, but as soon as I arrived in Kamakura, I listened to the ring of the bell at Jufuku Temple. It went Jan, mon, mon, mon. Now this is just an average bell.

MASTER: (Aside.) What can he be up to?

TARO KAJA: As you said the ring of the bells would be different in different places, I went on to Enkaku Temple to listen to the ring of its bell, but it only went Paaan. This is a most thin and scanty ring.

MASTER: (Aside.) What nonsense he keeps talking!

TARO KAJA: As I felt sure that such a scanty ring would be of no use to you at all, I went to listen to the ring of the bell at Gokuraku Temple. I say, I found a most serious problem there. You cannot see it from the outside, but there seems to be a crack on the inside, for when you strike it, it goes jaga, jaga, jaga. It is a cracked bell.

MASTER: (Aside.) This rascal seems to have gone completely out of his head.

TARO KAJA: As I felt a cracked bell such as this would be of no use to you, I proceeded on to the greatest temple in all of Kamakura – Kencho Temple. And Kencho Temple

proved most worthy of its name, for when I struck its bell, it went Kon, mon, mon, mon. What a fine, clear ring it has! I advise you to decide on the bell of Kencho Temple.

MASTER: What's that? You say you advise me not to haggle over this one or that one, but to decide on the bell of Kencho Temple?

TARO KAJA: That I do, Sir.

MASTER: Well, I must say, what a useless rascal you are! If you did not understand my order, why did you not ask for an explanation? As my son has reached adulthood, I decided to have a sword with gold fittings made for him. And it was for that purpose I ordered you to go to Kamakura and inquire after the ring of metals. Of what use could it be to me for you to listen to temple bells ring?

TARO KAJA: But you told me to listen to the ring of bells and listen to them I did!

MASTER: Still you talk nonsense! It is gold I was talking about!

TARO KAJA: If it is gold you wanted, you should have said gold in the first place!

MASTER: You hateful rascal! I will have you in this house no longer! Get out of here!

TARO KAJA: Ah! (Turning away but not moving.) Ah!

MASTER: (Striking Taro Kaja's shoulder with his fan.) Are you still here?

TARO KAJA: (Running out of the house.) Oh, forgive me! Please forgive me!

MASTER: You hateful rascal! (Chases him out)

(missing final song. To come)