

**The Spirit of Pine Resin
(Matsu Yani)**

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Spirit of Pine Resin

Master

Taro Kaja

Head Guest

Guests

MASTER I am a man of great food fortune. In the midst of the present reign of peace and prosperity, while each and every new year is a good one, there has never been such a felicitous New Year as this. Well now, as is our annual custom, plans have been made to perform the song and dance in honor of the pine today. As the time is just right, I will call my servant Taro Kaja and order him to go invite my friends to come here now. Here, here. Is anyone about?

TARO KAJA Here.

MASTER 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. As is our annual custom, plans have been made to perform the song and dance in honor of the pine today. As the time is just right, I order you to go invite my friends to come

here now.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. Well I have been sent on a most urgent errand. So whose place should I go to first? Oh, as Somebody (Name of actor playing HEAD GUEST.) lives the nearest, I will go to his place first. Well, here I am already. First I will announce myself. Hello in there. Is anybody home?

HEAD GUEST Well, someone is at the door. Who is there?

TARO KAJA It is I.

HEAD GUEST Oh, Taro Kaja. And what have you come about?

TARO KAJA My master said that since the time is just right, and he sent me to invite you to come to his place now.

HEAD GUEST It is most kind of him. Since everybody was ready and planning to come, they have all gathered at my place.

TARO KAJA So does this mean that there is no need for me to visit each of their places?

HEAD GUEST Indeed there is no need for you to visit each of their place. We will be along presently, so you go on back now.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. (He returns and approaches the MASTER.) I have a matter to report to you.

MASTER What might it be?

TARO KAJA Just now when I got to Somebody's (Name of actor playing HEAD GUEST.), I was informed that they have all gathered at his place and that they will be along presently.

MASTER Let me know when they arrive.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir.

HEAD GUEST (To the other GUESTS.) Somebody's (Name of actor playing the MASTER.) servant just came to invite us to his place. Let us be on our way.

GUESTS That is a fine idea.

HEAD GUEST Then come, come, let us be on our way.

GUESTS With all our hearts.

HEAD GUEST Well, here we are already. First we must announce ourselves. Hello in there. Is anybody home?

TARO KAJA Well, someone is at the door. Who is there?

HEAD GUEST Tell your master we have arrived.

TARO KAJA I will inform him you are here. Please wait right where you are for a moment.

HEAD GUEST With all our hearts, we will.

TARO KAJA (To the MASTER.) .) I have a matter to report to you.

MASTER What might it be?

TARO KAJA Everybody has arrived.

MASTER Ask them all to come all the way inside.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. (To the GUESTS.) He says you are to come all the way inside.

HEAD GUEST **With all our hearts, we will.**

GUESTS **Taro Kaja, we have arrived.**

TARO KAJA **And you are all most welcome.**

HEAD GUEST **Felicitations for your hospitality today.**

MASTER **I am most grateful that you have all come. Here, here, come all the way inside.**

GUESTS **With all our hearts.**

HEAD GUEST **Now, what are the lyrics of our song for this year to be?**

MASTER **It is my opinion that since there is nothing as felicitous as the pine, we should sing a song in its praise.**

HEAD GUEST **That is a fine idea. Even so, it does not seem advisable to simply repeat the word 'pine' as we sing, so what lyrics shall we use?**

MASTER **Pine resin is a thing that possesses a most vital power, so what do you think of singing, 'Pine resin, oh, dear pine resin, heigh-ho'?**

GUESTS **That is a fine idea.**

MASTER **In that case, let us all sing together.**

GUESTS **With all our hearts.**

(The MASTER and the GUESTS sing and dance the suggested lyric over and over, gaining in momentum as they go. In the midst of their singing and dancing, the SPIRIT OF PINE RESIN appears.)

MASTER **Who might this be who puts in an appearance here?**

SPIRIT **I am the Spirit of Pine Resin and I reside in this neighborhood. When I heard you begin singing and dancing, ‘Pine resin, oh, dear pine resin, heigh-ho,’ I thought that I was being called for, so based upon the old saying that on felicitous occasions even hermits descend from their mountains and saints appear in the mundane world, I have come to appear here before.**

MASTER **It a matter of great felicitation for us that you have come here. Taro Kaja, first usher him into the parlor.**

TARO KAJA **As you say, Sir. (To the SPIRIT.) Please come all the way inside.**

(The SPIRIT follows TARO KAJA into the parlor, and the MASTER and his GUESTS follow them. ALL sit with the SPIRIT in the center.)

SPIRIT **Well then, now I will relate to you the felicitous virtues of pine resin. (Chanting in a narrative style.) I say unto you that the thing known as pine resin gathers its power from the light source that is the sun. But the mother of a man called Teiko of the Land of China swallowed some pine resin in a dream on the Day of the Rat, as a result of which she conceived and gave birth to a manchild. This manchild was the most handsome of all the people throughout that land, resulting in his enthronement as king at the age of eighteen. It is said that this is the reason that the pine was given the name of Lord Eighteen, and has become known to one and all by that appellation. Also, in the Way of Poetry, it is said that the famed Four Pines of Sumiyoshi and the Onoe Pine of Takasago have lived for one thousand years. It is in this manner that we pines go about the world granting blessings. And this is not all, for in the case bows that serve to keep peace under heaven, it is thanks to the pine resin that is rubbed into their bowstrings that all foreign devils are conquered. Are these not felicitous virtues?**

MASTER Well, I must say, they are indeed felicitous virtues. (To the **GUESTS**.) Just what do you all think? Shall we not knead this felicitous pine resin together with oil?

GUESTS That is a fine idea.

MASTER (To the **SPIRIT**.) All of these young men agree that in celebration of the appearance of this felicitous Spirit of Pine Resin, it is our ardent desire to knead you together with oil. So I beg you to prepare your heart for that.

SPIRIT That would be most annoying. You must refrain from kneading me.

HEAD GUEST Oh, no. We will never have such an opportunity as this again. We urgently request that you prepare your heart for us to knead you all together.

SPIRIT Well, so do you mean to say that you insist that you must knead me?

MASTER Most certainly.

SPIRIT If that is the case, the way of kneading is of the greatest import in preparation for applying me to your bowstrings that allows me to be kneaded without the slightest damage to my person, without allowing the invasion of any demonic element. So what do you all say to my kneading myself for you right here and now and dividing myself amongst you in celebration of this felicitous occasion?

HEAD GUEST That most a most welcome and even great felicitation. We humble request that you quickly knead yourself for us.

SPIRIT (Singing and dancing.)

**At this very time and this very place,
I being my kneading of myself.
At this very time and this very place,
I being my kneading of myself.
First I take a large piece of bark,
Then I place myself inside with some oil,
And when the proper consistency is achieved,
You must, one and all, take your portion home,
And strengthen your bowstrings with me.
And every time your bows are drawn in battle,
You must not neglect to recall and appreciate
The great virtues of the everlasting Pine Resin.**