

SIX OX-LOADS OF WOOD  
(Kirokuda)

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A Master who lives in Inner Tanba orders his servant Taro Kaja to take six oxen loaded with wood and six more loaded with charcoal, as well as a barrel of sake, to his Uncle who lives in the capital as a Year's End gift. Taro Kaja is freezing by the time he reaches the teashop at the pass, so he drinks all the sake in the barrel. He then presents the six oxen loaded with wood to the teashop owner, and goes on his way with only the six oxen loaded with charcoal. When he reaches the Uncle's house and is questioned about the whereabouts of the six oxen loaded with wood, he claims the the words Six Ox-Loads of Wood in the letter from his master is his new name.

Taro Kaja	(Shite)
Master	(Ado)
Uncle	(Ado)
Teashop Owner	(Ko-ado)

MASTER I am a resident of Inner Tanba. The end of the year is upon us already. It is my custom to send

year's end gifts to my uncle who lives in the capital each year. I will call my servant Taro Kaja and send him to deliver them. 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. Has not the end of the year come upon us already?

TARO KAJA As you have so astutely observed, Sir, it is very near indeed.

MASTER Concerning which, as it is my custom to send year's end gifts to my uncle who lives in the capital each year, I have prepared six ox-loads of wood and six ox-loads of charcoal, and had them loaded on oxen. While I realize it is a great imposition, I order you to deliver them.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir, but is not six ox-loads of wood and six ox-loads of charcoal a total of twelve oxen?

MASTER That it truly is.

TARO KAJA What a silly thing to say. Just stop and think. How can I possibly drive twelve oxen all that way all by myself? I humbly beg you to send a few more people to help me.

MASTER What you say is true indeed, but as I have no one else but you in my household to send, while I realize what a great imposition it is, I order you to go alone.

TARO KAJA As there is no other way out, I will go.

MASTER Wait right there for a moment.

TARO KAJA With all my heart.

MASTER (Bringing a small barrel of wine.) Here, here! Here is a barrel of wine. Take it to my uncle and tell him to drink it as a nightcap.

TARO KAJA You say you want me to carry this too?

MASTER Most certainly.

TARO KAJA Well, you are generally fair enough in the handling of servants. How can I drive twelve oxen along and carry a thing like this at the same time?

MASTER Well, I must say, how you do exaggerate. The oxen have legs with which they walk by themselves, so I am not asking you too carry them on your back. All you have to do is carry this wine barrel in one hand and a whip to herd the oxen in the other.

TARO KAJA You make it sound simple indeed, but oxen very seldom walk along sibi-missively. And besides, there was recently a heavy snowfall, and the roads are very bad. In any case, there is no way I can do it.

MASTER You must not talk like that, just go. If you go, you will get something good out of it.

TARO KAJA I am certainly I will get nothing specially good if I go.

MASTER As it is particularly cold this year, I ordered you a thickly padded coat and some warm tabi socks. But it seems that you don't want them.

TARO KAJA I say, I say, is what you say true indeed.

MASTER Why would I lie to you?

TARO KAJA I will go.

MASTER You say you'll go?

TARO KAJA Oh, yes. It was not out of laziness that I refused to go, but from a concern that people would feel sorry for you saying that you do not know how to handle your servants. But since you insist, give me whatever else you have to send, and I will deliver it all for you.

MASTER Oh, I have nothing else to send him, but give him this letter and tell him that I will come to visit him very early next spring.

TARO KAJA If that is the case, with all my heart, I will go prepare to go, so please make certain that you do not forget those things you just promised that will make my body warm.

MASTER Oh, I will most certainly not forget. Go quickly and hurry back.

TARO KAJA Ha.

MASTER Ei.

TARO KAJA (Bowing.) Ha. (The MASTER exits.) Oh, how happy, how happy I am. He says that as it is particularly cold this year, he ordered me a thickly padded coat and some warm tabi socks. This is indeed a matter of great happiness. First I will quickly make my preparations and then I will be on my way. (He exits.)

TEASHOP OWNER I am a farmer who resides in this neighborhood. All of my brothers are farmers, but

since I was born a weakling, I am no good at wielding shovels and hoes. Thus I have set up a teashop at the pass on Old Hill, where I make a living selling tea to passersby. But recently snow has continued to fall, and there have been no clear skies, making the number of people traveling across the pass very small indeed. Even so, a few come by every day, so I must not close my teashop for even a single day. Today as every day, I will go open my teashop. Truly, while the snow does fall every year, this year is a particularly snowy one. And since snow has continued falling steadily for the past four or five days, the number of passersby has decreased to almost nothing. In any case, I want to do as much business as possible today. Well, here I am at the pass already. First, I will open my teashop. Well, I must say, how the snow does come down. It comes down so thick that it looks pitch black. In such weather, I am certain there will be very few people by here today. Usually, the number of people who take a rest from their journey at this pass is so very great that I am hard put to brew enough tea to serve them all. But recently the snow is so very deep that hardly anyone has dropped by. In any case, I will brew some tea. (He takes out his flat round fan and mimes stoking the fire and fanning under his teapot.)

(TARO KAJA comes on dressed in a straw hat and cape covered with cotton to represent snow. He carries the wine barrel in one hand and a short bamboo whip in the other. He mimes herding the twelve oxen along the

way, running back and forth along the bridgeway and the main stage as he tries to keep the oxen safely on the road.)

TARO KAJA     Get along there, get along with you! Hup-hup-hup, hup-hup-hup! Oh, here, here! This road is too narrow for you to bunch up together! Walk in single file! Get along with you! Oh, good, now you are lined up right. And you make a line from all the way over there to all the way over that way. Here, here. I take time to talk to myself a bit and you start lagging behind. Catch up with the rest! Get along with you! Hup-hup-hup, hup-hup-hup. Oh, here, here! That's cliff. You'll drop your load over the edge if you're not careful. Come this way! Well, I must say you do take a lot of watching after, don't you? Get along with you! Get along with you! Oh, how the snow does fall! It is still falling so thick that it looks pitch black. It is hard enough getting through this snow by myself, and here I am being forced to herd you twelve oxen through it as well. And what's worse, you won't behave so we are making very little progress. Get along with you, get along with you! Oh, no, that yellow ox over there has already worn out his snowshoes, even though I just changed them for him back there under that pine tree. I've never seen an ox with such strong legs as yours before. There is nothing for it but to change your snowshoes again for you. Here, here, here! (He mimes changing the snowshoe and getting kicked for his trouble.) What's this? You want to kick me, do you?

Well, I must say, what a hateful rascal you are. Just what do you think you'll gain by kicking me? With such a temper, it is no wonder you were born an ox! (He finishes putting the snowshoes on the ox.) There now. Now you won't get cold, and that'll feel better. (He goes back to herding the oxen again.) Get along with you. Hup-hup-hup. Oh, here, here! There's a valley that way, you'll drop your load into it. Come this way. Well, I must say, that was a close call. Get along with you, get along with you. If only I can make it as far as the Old Hill Pass, I will take a rest there. But your oxen are so unruly that we aren't making any progress. Get along with you, get along with you. Hup-hup-hup. Well, here we are at the pass already. Oh, how happy, how happy I am! Now I'll take a little rest. Oh, here, here! I told you to stop but you just keep on going. We're going to stop here for a rest. (To the TEASHOP OWNER.) So you've come out to open your teashop today, have you?

TEASHOP OWNER Oh, so you're on your way to the capital again, are you?

TARO KAJA Just take a look. It is hard enough getting through this snow by myself, and here I am being forced to herd these twelve oxen through it as well.

TEASHOP OWNER That is indeed a great imposition. Take off your straw hat and cape and rest a bit here.

TARO KAJA I am in need of more than just a bit of a rest. (He starts taking off his straw hat and cape.)

TEASHOP OWNER Here, here. Let me help you.

TARO KAJA Please do help me.

TEASHOP OWNER These are truly covered deep with snow.

TARO KAJA Is there not a lot of snow this year?

TEASHOP OWNER I do not remember ever before having as much snow as there is this year.

TARO KAJA But they always say that after as much snow as this, there is always a rich harvest, so we have at least that to look forward to.

TEASHOP OWNER You are right, I am looking forward to that.

TARO KAJA Oh, I must say, how cold it is.

TEASHOP OWNER Well, then, I will brew you a cup of tea.

TARO KAJA Oh, here, here. This no time to be talking of tea. Give me some of your wine to drink!

TEASHOP OWNER Oh, no. I'm out of wine.

TARO KAJA What's this? You're out of wine?!

TEASHOP OWNER Most certainly.

TARO KAJA What is this? I pushed along like I was swimming looking forward to having a drink here. Can't you do something for me?

TEASHOP OWNER Due to the recent heavy snow, no one has been able to get here from the village with supplies, so there is nothing I can do for you.

TARO KAJA Oh, how disappointed I am.

TEASHOP OWNER Hey, Taro Kaja.

TARO KAJA Huh?

TEASHOP OWNER      What is that you are carrying there?

TARO KAJA    You mean this?

TEASHOP OWNER   Most certainly.

TARO KAJA    This is wine.

TEASHOP OWNER   Drink that.

TARO KAJA    No, no never. As this wine is a year's end gift from my master to his uncle who lives in the capital, I must not even touch it.

TEASHOP OWNER   Well, I must say, what obstinate things you say! What could it matter if you just drink a little of all that you have there?

TARO KAJA    As you say, as I have so much wine here, it would not matter if I drink just a little, but the rest would slosh around inside.

TEASHOP OWNER   I have a good idea to get around that.

TARO KAJA    What is your idea?

TEASHOP OWNER   Well, to keep it from sloshing around, just replace what you drink with water.

TARO KAJA    That is indeed a fine idea. And as it is very strong wine, if I take just one drink and fill it up again with water, no one will likely notice.

TEASHOP OWNER   Of course, no one will notice.

TARO KAJA    It is a matter of life or death, so I will have one drink, so please lend me a winecup.

TEASHOP OWNER   With all my heart. (He goes and gets a winecup.) Now I have brought the winecup.

TARO KAJA    Then pour for me.

TEASHOP OWNER I'll warm the wine first.

TARO KAJA Oh, here, here. I cannot wait for you to warm it up.

TEASHOP OWNER I am certain it is very cold.

TARO KAJA It will get warm as I drink it.

TEASHOP OWNER It is as you say indeed. (He pours and TARO KAJA drinks.) How was it?

TARO KAJA Why, all I remember is the sensation of something cold sliding down my throat.

TEASHOP OWNER Well, then, have another cup to savor the flavor.

TARO KAJA Do you think it will be all right to drink another cup?

TEASHOP OWNER What could it possibly matter?

TARO KAJA Whether I drink one cup or two cups, it is all the same. I will have another cup.

TEASHOP OWNER That is a fine idea.

TARO KAJA Then pour for me again.

TEASHOP OWNER With all my heart. (He pours.)  
Dobu-dobu-dobu.

TARO KAJA (Drinks.) Now I have savored the flavor.

TEASHOP OWNER How was it?

TARO KAJA Wine is a fine thing indeed. When I took it in my mouth, it felt as though I had a mouthfull of ice, but now it has already warmed up my insides.

TEASHOP OWNER Well, I must say, that is a fine thing indeed.

TARO KAJA Oh, your face also looks cold.

TEASHOP OWNER     Why, you are right, I feel most cold.

TARO KAJA     Shall I give you a drink then?

TEASHOP OWNER     Do you really think it will be all right if I have one?

TARO KAJA     I cannot let you just sit there watching me drink. (Handing him the winecup.) Have a drink.

TEASHOP OWNER     (Accepting the winecup.) I am most grateful.

TARO KAJA     Then I will pour for you. Dobu-dobu-dobu.

TEASHOP OWNER     Oh, it is full, it is full. You have filled it to the brim. (He drinks.)

TARO KAJA     How was it?

TEASHOP OWNER     Well, I must say, what fine wine it is.

TARO KAJA     And well it should be, for it is my master's own favorite wine.

TEASHOP OWNER     That it must surely be. I find that it is finer than any ordinary wine.

TARO KAJA     If you like it, have another cup.

TEASHOP OWNER     Is it really all right if I have another cup?

TARO KAJA     Well, I must say, what obstinate things you say! Come, come! Drink, drink!

TEASHOP OWNER     I am most grateful.

TARO KAJA     (Pouring.) Dobu-dobu-dobu.

TEASHOP OWNER     Oh, it is full, it is full.

TARO KAJA     Come, come. Drink, drink.

TEASHOP OWNER The more I drink, the better this wine tastes. Here, here. Now I pass this cup to you.

TARO KAJA Well then, and I receive it.

TEASHOP OWNER Shall I sing a bit for you?

TARO KAJA That is a fine idea.

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

Wine was first meant for use as medicine.

This life was first meant for caring for each other.

Wine helps us forget the pains of life.

This is the greatest virtue of drinking wine.

(They laugh.)

TARO KAJA This has become quite a drinking party.

TEASHOP OWNER It is as you say indeed.

TARO KAJA Again I pass this cup to you.

TEASHOP OWNER May I have another cup?

TARO KAJA Drink your fill.

TEASHOP OWNER Please pour a little lightly.

TARO KAJA Oh, come drink your fill.

TEASHOP OWNER Here, you have filled it to the brim. I cannot drink so much so quickly.

TARO KAJA Then, shall I dance to entertain you?

TEASHOP OWNER That is a fine idea.

TARO KAJA Loan me that round fan of yours.

TEASHOP OWNER With all my heart.

TARO KAJA And please sing to accompany me. [

TEASHOP OWNER With all my heart.

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

Come one and all, see the dancing quails,

Come one and all, see the dancing quails.

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

Come one and all, see the dancing quails,  
Come one and all, see the dancing quails.

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

Hoping to have it to eat right away,  
I set out to shoot myself just one quail,  
Taking up my little bow and arrow,  
I looked both here and there for one to shoot.

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

Come one and all, see the dancing quails,  
Come one and all, see the dancing quails.

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

Just at that time a whole flock of quails,  
About fifty thousand came from the sky,  
With such a lot of quails alighting,  
I put a little lie in their number.

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

Come one and all, see the dancing quails,  
Come one and all, see the dancing quails.

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

What strange birds they were, for not one took  
Even the slightest notice of me,  
As though they thought I am a poor archer.  
The famed Chinese archer Yangyu shot  
A goose down from the very clouds in the sky.  
And in Japan, the great Yorimasa  
Subdued the monster called the chimera.

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

Come one and all, see the dancing quails,

Come one and all, see the dancing quails.

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

While I am no match for such as they,  
I was determined to bring down a quail.

Notching my first arrow in my bow,  
Setting it in flight with a great whooshing sound,  
My first arrow went far off the mark.

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

Come one and all, see the dancing quails,  
Come one and all, see the dancing quails.

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

I thought I'd get one with arrow two,  
But it also went hyoro-hyoro.  
Yelling at the kids to shut up,  
Telling them not to laugh so at me,  
Drawing forth arrow number three, I said,  
"Now I will really shoot one and feather it."

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

Come one and all, see the dancing quails,  
Come one and all, see the dancing quails.

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

Arrow three too just skidded along.  
Since it seemed that a bow an arrow,  
Were useless against quails like these,  
I announced I'd take five or three quails at once,  
Using nothing more than my own bare hands.  
So I set out to take them all by hand,  
Crawling on all fours, nearer and nearer,  
Crawling on all fours, nearer and nearer,

I got just as close to them as I wanted to,  
And at that instant, they all flew away.

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

Come one and all, see the dancing quails,  
Come one and all, see the dancing quails.

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

Finding the whole matter so very amusing,  
I got right up and sang a little song.

TEASHOP OWNER (Singing.)

What was the song that you got up and sang?

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

All the quails disappeared,  
Leaving only Mount Deep Grass.

(Laughing and speaking.) I was most awkward.

TEASHOP OWNER (Speaking.) Well done, well done.  
(He picks up the winecup and drinks.)

TARO KAJA (Singing.)

Za-zan-za, how the winds blow,  
Through the beach pines, za-zan-za.

TEASHOP OWNER Once more I pass this cup to you.

TARO KAJA Well, then, and I receive it. Please pour  
for me.

TEASHOP OWNER With all my heart. (Pouring.)  
Dobu-dobu-dobu.

TARO KAJA Oh, it is full, it is full. (He drinks.)

TEASHOP OWNER (He puts his ear to the wine barrel  
and shakes it.) Hey, Taro Kaja, It is almost all gone.

TARO KAJA That cannot be yet.

TEASHOP OWNER (Shaking the wine barrel again.)  
Oh, no. It is really almost gone.

TARO KAJA (Taking the wine barrel.) Let me see, let me see. (He puts his ear to the wine barrel and shakes it.) Truly, it is almost gone. Do you think that we can fill this barrel up with water?

TEASHOP OWNER If we fill it with water, it will be nothing but water that smells like wine.

TARO KAJA If it only smells like wine, it will be of no use to anybody. What are we to do?

TEASHOP OWNER Just what are we to do?

TARO KAJA Let's just drink all of it.

TEASHOP OWNER That is a fine idea.

TARO KAJA (Taking the wine barrel by both handles and turning it upside down over the winecup.) Dobu-dobu-dobu, pisho-pisho-pisho. (Laughing.) This solves everything.

TEASHOP OWNER It is as you say indeed.

TARO KAJA I give you the barrel. (He drinks the rest of the wine and gives the winecup to the TEASHOP OWNER.) And take back the winecup too.

TEASHOP OWNER With all my heart.

TARO KAJA Well, thanks to you, I have rested and enjoyed myself well today.

TEASHOP OWNER Why, it's the other way around. Thanks to you, I have forgotten how cold it is.

TARO KAJA Well, now, I have something else for you.

TEASHOP OWNER And what might that be?

TARO KAJA Would you not like some firewood?

TEASHOP OWNER     Since I build a fire every day, I need all I can get.

TARO KAJA     Then, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. Out there are six ox-loadsof wood. I will give you one of them.

TEASHOP OWNER    I thank you indeed for that.

TARO KAJA     If anybody says they want the other five, sell them to them. That will provide you with spring pocket money.

TEASHOP OWNER     You're right. I'll do the best I can with them.

TARO KAJA     And just tie the oxen up anywhere, and I'll drop by on my way back and lead them away.

TEASHOP OWNER    I will, with all my heart.

TARO KAJA     Well then, I'll be on my way.

TEASHOP OWNER    (Bringing a straw hat and cape.)  
Here, here. I give you this staw hat and cape.

TARO KAJA     What do you want me to do with them?

TEASHOP OWNER    Well, it is snowing.

TARO KAJA     I enjoy the snow falling on my face.

TEASHOP OWNER    Well, I suppose you do.

TARO KAJA     Now, I will be on my way.

TEASHOP OWNER    Are you going so soon?

TARO KAJA     Most certainly.

BOTH     Fare you well, fare you well.

(The TEASHOP OWNER exits.)

TARO KAJA     Oh, I must say, how good I feel. Now, I must be on my way. Hey, are you oxes still waiting there for me? Well, I am sorry to have kept you

waiting. (He laughs.) Come, come, be on your way, be on your way. Why, you are covered deep in snow. More weight to your already heavy loads. (He laughs.) Get along with you, get along with you. I think I'll sing a little.

(Singing.)

Deepening as I go, my snowy mountain,  
Falling countless ages, drifting deeply,

Snowy mountain of the ages, formed of deep drifts.

(Speaking.) Hey, you yellow ox, what do you mean by shaking your horns at me? So all you have to say for yourself is "moo," is it? (He laughs.) You are absolutely right. Well, anyway, be on your way. If you do as I say, I'll give you some of that rice gruel you like so much when we get to Uncle's place. Get along there, get along there. Hup-hup-hup. Hup. Well, here we are already. We've arrived much faster than I expected. Well then, I'll tie up the oxen. (Taking off his straw hat and miming shaking off the snow.) What a lot of snow I have carried here. And besides, I feel a bit woozy. Maybe I got a little drunk on that wine. Is anybody home, is anybody home?

UNCLE Well, someone is at the door. Who is there?

TARO KAJA It is I.

UNCLE Oh, Taro Kaja.

TARO KAJA (Laughing.) It is indeed Taro Kaja.

UNCLE What have you come for?

TARO KAJA I have come on an errand.

UNCLE What were you ordered to come for?

TARO KAJA That I do not know.

UNCLE What do you mean you do not know what you were sent for?

TARO KAJA Here, here, I have a letter for you. (Taking the letter out of the breast of his kimono.)

UNCLE So there is a letter for me?

TARO KAJA If you read this, you will learn everything you need to know. (Handing UNCLE the letter.)

UNCLE Let me see, let me see. (Taking the letter and opening it.)

TARO KAJA Written things are most useful treasures.

UNCLE (Reading the letter and then looking out to where the oxen are tied.) Hey, Taro Kaja. I see the six ox-loads of charcoals, but I don't see the six ox-loads of wood.

TARO KAJA The wood is not coming.

UNCLE But it is written in this letter that it is.

TARO KAJA Even so, it is not coming.

UNCLE You also know how to write. Come here and look at this letter.

TARO KAJA Let me see, let me see. (He comes near the UNCLE and looks at the letter.) Hmm. This is a mistake of the writer.

UNCLE What do you mean by a mistake of the writer?

TARO KAJA I recently changed my name.

UNCLE What did you change it to?

TARO KAJA I changed it to Six Ox-Loads of Wood.

UNCLE What he meant to write was that he sent Six Ox-Loads of Wood to deliver six ox-loads of charcoal.

UNCLE Well, what a strange name you have taken.

TARO KAJA It is a very good name I have taken.

UNCLE He also says that he has sent a barrel of wine. What happened to this wine.

TARO KAJA The wine is not coming.

UNCLE But it is written right here that it is.

TARO KAJA Even though it is written there, it is not coming.

UNCLE Well, I must say, what a hateful rascal you are! From the start, no matter what I ask you, you claim you know nothing of this and nothing of that. And on top of that, you look to me to be very drunk. Do you know or do you not. (Threatening to draw his sword.) Tell me straight away.

TARO KAJA Oh, please wait.

UNCLE Wait for what?

TARO KAJA I will tell you.

UNCLE Then tell me.

TARO KAJA It was so very cold, that when I got to the teashop on Old Hill Pass, I drank up all you wine.

UNCLE I thought it was something like that. (Chasing TARO KAJA off.) You lazy rascal. I'll catch you yet, I'll catch you yet.

TARO KAJA Oh, forgive me, please forgive me.

UNCLE I'll catch you yet, I'll catch you yet.

TARO KAJA Oh, forgive me, please forgive me.

UNCLE I'll catch you yet, I'll catch you yet.