

THE GOD OF HAPPINESS

(Fuku no Kami)

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God of Happiness (GH) -- Shite

Worshipper 1 (W1) -- Ado

Worshipper 2 (W2) -- Koado

W1 I am a resident of this neighborhood. The end of the year is upon us already. It is my custom to travel to the Grand Shrine of Izumo each year to make my spring offerings. And my friend who lives nearby always accompanies me. I will go fetch him and we will set out on our journey. I must hurry on my way. Truly, it is a fine custom to make one's spring offerings without fail. Since we always travel together on this occasion, I am certain he will be eagerly awaiting my arrival. Well, here I am already. First I will announce myself. Hello in there! Is anybody home?

W2 Well, someone is at the door. Who is there?

W1 It is I.

W2 Oh, it is you! And to what do I owe the honor of this visit?

W1 Has not the end of the year come upon us already?

W2 Truly, spring is almost here.

W1 Thus I have come to invite you to accompany me on our customary pilgrimage to the Grand Shrine of Izumo to make our spring offerings.

W2 I was certain you would come. I have been awaiting your arrival. I accept your kind invitation.

W1 If that is the case, come, come. Let us be on our way.

W2 With all my heart.

W1 Well now, on my way here I was saying to myself, what a fine custom it is to see the New Year in at the shrine each year without fail.

W2 As you say, it is indeed a fine thing that we enjoy sufficient health to see the New Year in at the shrine.

W1 Well, here we are at the shrine already. Let us approach the altar.

W2 That is a fine idea.

BOTH (They mime striking the gong.) Jagan! Jagan! (They sit down and bow in obeisance.)

W1 Now let us go to the shrine of the God of Happiness and make our spring offerings. Come, come with me.

W2 With all my heart.

W1 Well now, do you not agree that though a whole year has gone by, it seems only yesterday that we made our last pilgrimage?

W2 As you say, time flies as swiftly as an arrow.

W1 Well, here we are at the Shrine of the God of Happiness. Now let us pay our respects.

W2 That is a fine idea. (They sit and bow in obeisance.)

W1 Well now, have you brought your beans?

W2 Indeed, I have brought my beans.

W1 Let us perform the ceremony.

W2 That is a fine idea. (They get to their feet and mime

throwing beans.)

W1 In with joy! In with joy!

W2 In with joy! In with joy!

W1 Now let us perform the ceremony in the inner shrine.

BOTH (They circle around the stage, throwing beans as they go.) In with joy! In with joy! In with joy! In with joy!

(During the above, the GOD OF HAPPINESS laughs twice behind the lift curtain, then the curtain raises and he comes on laughing. WORSHIPERS 1 & 2 kneel and bow to him.)

W1 Who is this who appears in such a merry fashion?

GH As you pay your respects at this shrine each year without fail. I, the God of Happiness, appear now before you.

W1 & W2 (Bowing.) Haaah?

(W1 & W2 bow each time they speak to GH from this point onward.)

W1 We are indeed most grateful. We heartily welcome. you.

W2 Grant us the pleasure of your company.

(GH enters the main stage and W2 brings a stool for him to sit on at stage center. W1 and W2 sit face GH, one on each side, in such a way that the three form a triangle with GH at the up stage apex.)

GH Here, here! The two of you pay your respects each year to this God of Happiness. What is the purpose of this unfailing faithfulness?

W1 We desire wealth and honor.

GH There is a thing one must have to gain great fortune. Do you have it?

W1 What might that thing be?

GH It is only with "means" that one can gain great fortune.

W1 What you speak of as "means" must surely be gold and silver and stores of grain. If we had such things, we would not be making pleas to the God of Happiness. It is from a want of things that we continue our faithful worship.

GH I must say, what foolish words you utter! "Means" is not a matter of gold and silver and stores of grain, but rather comes

from living by the five great virtues of benevolence, justice, politeness, wisdom, and fidelity; from respecting one's superiors; from pitying one's inferiors; and from keeping one's heart on the path of honesty. This is what is known as having "means." Remember this well.

W1 With all my heart.

GH And you also remember this well.

W2 With all my heart.

GH All this talk has made me quite thirsty. Serve me sacred wine and do so quickly.

W1 (X to GH.) I have brought you sacred wine.

(W1 mimes pouring wine with his fan, and GH mimes receiving it with his fan as a cup.)

GH (Raising his cup and bowing.) To all gods great and small through the length and breadth of all the land. And especially to the Gracious Deity of Matsu-no-O. The Grand and Gracious Deity of Matsu-no-O. (He lowers his cup and raises his head.) Only after all of these may I, the God of Happiness, imbibe of this sacred wine. (He drinks.)

W1 I wish to ask a question.

GH What do you wish to know?

W1 I understand your gratitude to all gods great and small throughout the length and breadth of all the land, but why did you make special obeisance to the Grand and Gracious Deity of Matsu-no-O?

GH You speak with great impertinence. The Gracious Deity of Matsu-no-O is the God of Wine. His wrath is incurred if he is not offered the first sip of new wine. Thus I offer the first sip to him, and then I, the God of Happiness, am free to drink as I please.

W1 Your gracious purpose. . .

W1 & W2 . . . we now perceive indeed.

GH Do you still desire to gain great fortune?

W1 We earnestly desire to gain great fortune.

GH Then I will say the words to bless you with good fortune.
(To W1.) Prepare your heart for that.

W1 With all my heart.

GH (To W2.) You prepare your heart too.

W2 Haaah!

GH (Singing and dancing. (He can be accompanied by a chorus, in which case he only sings the first line.))

At this very time and this very place,

At this very time and this very place,

I reveal now unto you how to gain a happy life.

Rise up swiftly in the morning, compassion in your heart.

Man and woman joined in wedlock,

Ne'er let anger come between you.

When someone is at your door, welcome him with joy.

And to happy gods of my sort, all the joyful gods,

Always give them the very best of all your possessions.

And when you serve wine to guests, give of your best wine.

If you pour their cups brimful until they cry stop,

If you pour their cups brimful until they cry stop,

You will find that you are blessed

With joy unbounded.

(GH goes down stage center, laughs once, and exits, followed by W1 & W2)

