

The Wrestling Mosquito
(Ka-Zumo)

Translation copyright 2014 by Don Kenny
kyogen-in-english.com

Lord
Taro Kaja
Mosquito

LORD I am a well-known feudal lord. But, though I talk big, I have only one servant. Since one servant is not sufficient, I have decided to hire a huge number of new servants. I will call my servant Taro Kaja and explain to him what I need. Here, here! Is anyone about? I say, is anybody there?

TARO KAJA Here.

LORD Are you there?

TARO KAJA Here.

LORD There you are.

TARO KAJA At your service, Sir.

LORD You came quite quickly. The matter I have called you here about is of no great import. If I am to continue traveling about here and there as I have been recently, one servant is not sufficient, so I have decided to hire a huge number of new servants. What do you think?

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

LORD In that case, how many shall I hire?

TARO KAJA That depends entirely on how many you desire.

LORD What? Does your saying that it depends entirely on how many I desire mean that I can hire as many as I like?

TARO KAJA That it truly does.

LORD Rather than doing things by halves like most lords do, let's just hire eight thousand all at once.

TARO KAJA That is a very large number. To begin with, we have no place to house eight thousand servants.

LORD We can just let them loose out in my broad fields and mountains.

TARO KAJA What foolish words you utter. Servants cannot subsist in the fields and mountains. Please reduce the number a little.

LORD What's that? Reduce the number?

TARO KAJA That is what I said.

LORD If that is the case, I will reduce the number all the way down to two hundred.

TARO KAJA That is indeed a big reduction, but we do not have sufficient provisions for even that number.

LORD What? Provisions?

TARO KAJA Yes.

LORD Provisions. . . provisions. . . Oh, by provisions, do you mean food?

TARO KAJA That is what I mean.

LORD We have plenty of water, so we can just let them drink that.

TARO KAJA You are still talking nonsense. Servants cannot subsist on water alone. Please reduce the number a little more.

LORD What's that? Reduce the number more?

TARO KAJA That is what I said.

LORD If that is the case, I will reduce the number all the way down to two.

TARO KAJA Only two?

LORD You and one other.

TARO KAJA Then do you mean that you will hire only one new servant?

LORD That what I mean.

TARO KAJA That is a fine idea.

LORD In that case, while I realize it is a great imposition, I order you to go out to the highway, and though it be only one, hire a clever servant who has some entertainment skills.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir.

LORD Then are you ready to go now?

TARO KAJA I will go any time you like.

LORD In that case, go quickly and hurry back.

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD Ei.

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD Ei. (He sits upstage left.)

TARO KAJA Ha. I have suddenly been given an order. I must hurry on my way. Truly, I have been his sole servant up to now and I have had to work very hard, so if I find a new servant to hire, I will leave the bulk of the work up to him, and I myself will take it easy. Well, here I am at the highway already. I will rest here for awhile, and if a likely prospect comes along, I will speak to him and take him back home with me.

MOSQUITO (He wears a mask with puckered lips and an overgarment that resembles wings when he flaps his arms.) I am the spirit of a mosquito and I am from

Mount Mori in the Land of Omi. Today I have decided to go to the capital to mingle with the people there and suck their blood. I must hurry on my way. Truly, there is nothing more clever than human beings. In the summer they put up mosquito nets and burn mosquito repellents, thus building defenses against mosquitoes like me, making life most difficult for us.

TARO KAJA Here comes a likely prospect. I will speak to him. I say, I say.

MOSQUITO Is it me to whom you speak?

TARO KAJA Indeed, it is you to whom I speak. Where have you come from and where are you going?

MOSQUITO As I wish to go into service, I am on my way to the capital.

TARO KAJA If that is the case, I can give you a position.

MOSQUITO You say you will hire me?

TARO KAJA No, no. It is not I myself, but my master, a feudal lord, who has decided to hire a new servant, so I am offering to do my best to obtain the position for you.

MOSQUITO For that I would be most grateful. Please do your best to obtain the position for me.

TARO KAJA Then, will you come with me now?

MOSQUITO I will go any time you like.

TARO KAJA If that is the case, come, come. Follow me.

MOSQUITO With all my heart.

TARO KAJA Well, though I spoke only a few words to you, you immediately agreed to come with me. No circumstance could be a happier one.

MOSQUITO They say that even the brushing of sleeves in passing indicates some mutual connection in a previous life. So ours must have been a strong connection, indeed.

TARO KAJA Well, now, where do you hail from?

MOSQUITO From Mount Mori in the Land of Omi.

TARO KAJA Do you have any entertainment skills?

MOSQUITO I can hold my own in archery, football, cooking, Go, and backgammon, as well as in the breaking of horses.

TARO KAJA Well, I must say, you have great and numerous skills, indeed. When I tell this to my master, I am certain that he will be greatly satisfied.

MOSQUITO Since I am coming with you, I beg you to act as my sponsor. Please negotiate everything for me.

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

MOSQUITO And do we still have far to go?

TARO KAJA No. Here we are already. I will go tell my master that you have come with me, so wait right there for a minute.

MOSQUITO With all my heart.

TARO KAJA I say, Master, are you there?

LORD Well, it appears that my servant has come back home.

TARO KAJA Are you there, are you there?

LORD Are you back home, are you back?

TARO KAJA There you are.

LORD I say, Taro Kaja.

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD Are you back?

TARO KAJA I have just now come back home.

LORD And did you hire a new servant?

TARO KAJA Indeed I did hire a new servant and bring him back home with me.

LORD Oh, good. And did you tell him I am a lord?

TARO KAJA Indeed, I did inform him that you are a lord.

LORD They always say that first impressions are lasting ones. I will talk big so that he can hear me. You respond as though you are many servants.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir.

LORD Here, here! Is anybody there?

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD First, bring me my stool.

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD My stool, my stool.

TARO KAJA Ha. Here is your stool.

LORD Taro Kaja!

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD Do you think he heard that?

TARO KAJA Since you spoke in an impressively strong voice, he most likely heard you.

LORD You go and inform him that I have put in an appearance in the grand parlor. Also inform him that, as I am a feudal lord, if I am pleased with him, I will immediately take him into service, but even if he does not satisfy me, assure him that he will be allowed to stay here for five or ten days.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir.

LORD Bring the new servant to kneel at my feet.

TARO KAJA With all my heart. (To the MOSQUITO.) I say, I say. Are you there?

MOSQUITO I am here.

TARO KAJA And did you just now hear my master's voice?

MOSQUITO He has a strong voice, as befits a feudal lord.

TARO KAJA He is the lord of all the surrounding area.

MOSQUITO That is, indeed, what he seems to be.

TARO KAJA Well, now, he has just entered the grand parlor. As he is a feudal lord, if he is pleased with you, he will immediately take you into service, but even if you does not satisfy him, rest assured that you will be allowed to stay here for five or ten days. Prepare your heart for that.

MOSQUITO That is customary for people in service, so I most willing comply.

TARO KAJA Then go in now to meet him.

MOSQUITO With all my heart.

LORD Hey, hey! Is anyone about?

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD Lead out the fifty head of horses that came out of the hinterlands recently and wash them down with hot water.

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD And order the young servants to rouse themselves from their lethargy and get to work polishing arrowheads.

TARO KAJA Ha.

LORD Oh, I see it is fine weather today.

TARO KAJA Indeed, the weather is fine.

LORD So it will be a pleasant evening.

TARO KAJA It will be pleasant.

LORD The young lordlings will want to play a game of aristocratic football. Order the cleaning and wetting down of the playing court.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir.

LORD Ei.

TARO KAJA Ha. And here is the new servant.

(The MOSQUITO bows in front of the LORD and then immediately runs out of the room.)

LORD Is that him?

TARO KAJA That is him.

LORD What a strange face he has.

TARO KAJA That he does.

LORD Even with a face like that, does he have any entertainment skills?

TARO KAJA I questioned him about that matter on the way here, and he said that he can hold his own in archery, football, cooking, Go, and backgammon, as well as in the breaking of horses.

LORD You say he can do all of that all by himself?

TARO KAJA That he said he can.

LORD Well, I must say, he has great skills, indeed. He has far more skills than most.

TARO KAJA In any case, I am certain he will be of great value to you.

LORD Well, since I have no horses, what use could his ability to break horses be to me? Perhaps he could break the cat.

TARO KAJA Shhhh! He will hear you.

LORD The breaking of horses is a valuable skill, indeed.

TARO KAJA A most valuable skill it is.

LORD Go ask him which of his skills he is best at.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. (To the MOSQUITO.) I say, I say. He wants to know which of your skills you are best at.

MOSQUITO Tell him that I am particularly good at sumo.

TARO KAJA With all my heart. (To the LORD.) He says he is best at sumo.

LORD What's that? You say he says he is best at sumo?

TARO KAJA That is what he says.

LORD Well, he is a man after my own heart. So you say he is good at sumo just as I am?

TARO KAJA That he is.

LORD If that is the case, tell him to come here and show me his skill at sumo.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. (To the MOSQUITO.) I say, I say. He says for you to come to him and show him your skill at sumo.

MOSQUITO Ask him to provide someone for me to wrestle with.

TARO KAJA With all my heart. (To the LORD.) He says to ask you to provide someone for him to wrestle with.

LORD Well, just tell him to wrestle by himself.

TARO KAJA If he wrestles alone, there is no way to decide the winner.

LORD You are right, there is, indeed no way to decide the winner if he wrestles alone.

TARO KAJA There is not.

LORD Just who shall I have wrestle with him?

TARO KAJA Just who would be best?

LORD Shall I have Dokin who heats the bath wrestle with him?

TARO KAJA He is much too old to wrestle.

LORD Indeed, his knees are so weak that he would not be able to wrestle.

TARO KAJA That he would not.

LORD Rather than haggling over this one or that one, you wrestle with him.

TARO KAJA Oh, no. I have never wrestled in my life.

LORD What? You have never wrestled in your life?

TARO KAJA I have not.

LORD Well, now, I want to see him wrestle, but we have no one to wrestle with him. There is no other way, I will wrestle with him.

TARO KAJA Huh? You say you yourself will wrestle with him?

LORD You must go tell him that while I have many sumo wrestlers in my employ, today they have all been sent out here and there on errands, and there is not a single one left at home. But as I am eager to see him wrestle, I will wrestle with him myself. Go ask him if he will agree to this.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. (To the MOSQUITO.) I say, I say. He says to tell you that while he has many sumo wrestlers in his employ, today they have all been sent out here and there on errands, and there is not a single one left at home. But as he is eager to see you wrestle, he will wrestle with you himself. And he wants to know if you will agree to this.

MOSQUITO Tell him that I am quite willing to wrestle for him no matter who my opponent might be.

TARO KAJA With all my heart. (To the LORD.) He says he is quite willing to wrestle for you no matter who his opponent might be.

LORD You say he agrees to wrestle with me?

TARO KAJA That he does.

LORD Well, that indicates the extent of his sumo skills.

TARO KAJA What might that be?

LORD Well, if he beats me, who will reward him? And if he loses, the problem is compounded further. But, since I said I would do it, I must wrestle with him. Tell him to make his preparations and come all the way in here.

TARO KAJA With all my heart. (To the MOSQUITO.) I say, I say. He says you are to make your preparations and come all the way inside.

MOSQUITO With all my heart.

LORD Taro Kaja! You referee.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir.

(The MOSQUITO sticks a slender roll of paper in the puckered lips of his mask to serve as a stinger. The MOSQUITO and the LORD come forward. TARO KAJA acts as referee.)

TARO KAJA Ready, fight!

MOSQUITO & LORD Iiya, iiya, iiya.

MOSQUITO Bzzzzz. (The MOSQUITO stings the LORD, knocking him down.)

TARO KAJA (Helping the LORD to his feet.) I say, Master! What happened?

LORD Who is it?

TARO KAJA It's Taro Kaja. What happened?

LORD Well, I must say, I do not know what to make of this. Just when we grabbed a hold of each other, that rascal thrust his face toward me. The next thing I knew, I felt a stinging sensation and I got dizzy. Where is that rascal from?

TARO KAJA He said he is from Mount Mori in the Land of Omi.

LORD Oh, here, here! You need say no more. There is no doubt about it. That rascal is the spirit of a mosquito.

TARO KAJA What makes you say that?

LORD Mount Mori in the Land of Omi is famous for its mosquitoes. And they say that the smarter ones are as big as a man. So this one is a rowdy rascal who has come out to mingle with human beings to suck their blood.

TARO KAJA What a hateful rascal.

LORD So did I lose this round?

TARO KAJA Well, it cannot be said that you won it.

LORD How vexing it is to lose to a mosquito. Just what am I to do? Oh, I know. How about putting up a mosquito net?

TARO KAJA I have never heard of anybody putting up a mosquito net to wrestle.

LORD Then how about lighting some mosquito repellent incense and wrestling in its shadow?

TARO KAJA If you do that, the smoke will drive him away.

LORD Oh, I just remembered something. Tell him I will wrestle him another bout. (The LORD goes and gets a huge flyswatter.)

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. (To the MOSQUITO.) He says he will wrestle you one more bout. Come out to meet him once again.

MOSQUITO With all my heart.

LORD Taro Kaja! You referee again.

TARO KAJA As you say, Sir. Fight!

MOSQUITO & LORD (Wrestling.) Iiya, iiya. Yatto-na. Iiya, iiya, Yatto-na. Iiya, iiya, iiya.

MOSQUITO (Dashing toward the LORD.) Bzzz.

LORD (Swatting the MOSQUITO.) Yatto-na, yatto-na. (He laughs.)

MOSQUITO (Staggering weakly away.) Bzzz.

LORD Yatto-na, yatto-na. I won, I won.

MOSQUITO (Grabbing the LORD by the arm.) I've got you.

LORD What are you up to?

MOSQUITO Iiya, iiya.

LORD Watch out, I say, watch out!

MOSQUITO (Throwing the LORD down.) Down you go. And you lose. (He exits, buzzing happily and flapping his arms.) Bzzz, bzzz, bzzz.

LORD (Getting to his feet and throwing down his fly swatter.) This is of no use at all against mosquitoes. (To TARO KAJA.) Hey, you rascal!

TARO KAJA Huh?

LORD What are you doing there?

TARO KAJA I am your servant Taro Kaja.

LORD What? You say you're Taro Kaja? (Grabbing TARO KAJA by the arm.) I've got you.

TARO KAJA What are you up to?

LORD Iiya, iiya.

TARO KAJA Oh, how dangerous!

LORD (Throwing TARO KAJA down.) Down you go. And you lose! (He exits, flapping his arms and buzzing happily in imitation of the MOSQUITO.) Bzzz, bzzz, bzzz.

□