

Japan Folktales Story of Taro The Super Lazy Young Man

Muham Taqra

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Long, long ago, in the province of Shinano there lived a lad called Monogusa Taro. Monogusa was not his surname. The word means "lazy," or "good-for-nothing," and he was so nicknamed because by nature he was so lazy that he would not even take the trouble to pick up anything that was lying in the way. When the neighbours asked him to do something for them, saying, "Do this," or "Do that," he would shrug his shoulders and say, "It is really too much bother," and go away without attempting to obey, or even wishing to be kind to those about him.

At last all turned their backs on him, and would have nothing to do with him. Strange to say, no one knew who his father or mother was, or from where he had come. He seemed to be a waif and stray that had drifted into the province of Shinano, and yet there was an air about him which excited interest and respect.

But this lazy lad, Monogusa Taro, had his dreams and ambitions. He wanted to live in a large house. In his imagination he pictured this house like a daimio's palace. It was to stand in its own grounds and be closed by four high walls, with large roofed gates opening out on three sides of it. In the park-like garden he would have four miniature lakes, laid out in the four directions, north, south, east, and west, and each pond was to have an island in its centre, and dainty arched bridges were to span the distances between the islands and the shores of the little lakes.

And oh! how beautiful the garden should be, with its miniature hills and valleys, its tiny bamboo forests and dwarfed pine trees, its rivulets and dells with little cascades. And he would keep all kinds of singing-birds in the garden, the nightingale and the lark and the cuckoo. And the house itself was to be large, with spacious rooms hung with costly tapestries of brocade, and the ceilings were to be inlaid with rare wood of fine markings, and the pillars supporting the corridors must be adorned with silver and gold. And he would eat off costly trays of lacquer, and the dishes and bowls should be of the finest porcelain, and the servants who glided through the rooms to serve him should be beautiful maidens clothed in silk and crape and brocade, daughters of ancient families, glad to enter his house, so that they might learn the etiquette and manners of a princely house. Such were the day-dreams and visions of Lazy Taro.

Once or twice he spoke of these things to a kind neighbour who brought him food and little gifts, but he was laughed to scorn for his pains, and so he kept silent henceforth and dreamed only for himself...........



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