

Wooden Buddha Millionaire *kibu tsu chou ja*

There used to be a poor man who was working as a servant of a wealthy man. The wealthy man owned a golden Buddha statue, and the poor servant always longed for worshipping such golden Buddha.

One day, the servant went into the forest to log trees, and found a wooden piece shaped like a Buddha statue. He brought back the wooden piece and placed it in his room. He started to make the offerings from some of his meals to the wooden Buddha everyday. As the servant kept on worshipping his wooden Buddha in such way, everyone laughed at him so as his wealthy master.

On the other hand, the poor servant was a honest man and good at his job. The wealthy owner wanted to keep him for ever, and came up with an idea to pit his golden Buddha and the wooden Buddha against each other in *sumo* wrestling match. The wealthy owner made his poor servant promised to be his servant through his life. The poor servant became restless for the wrestling match, and about to run away with his wooden Buddha. But the wooden Buddha was calm and told the poor servant that there is nothing to worry about.

On the wrestling match, most of the servants was on the wooden Buddha's side. When the servants cheered the wooden Buddha on, the wealthy owner shouted encouragement to his golden Buddha. When the wooden Buddha proceeded the match slightly better than the golden Buddha, the wealthy owner became upset and snarled at his golden Buddha. The more the wealthy owner became upset, the more the golden Buddha felt depressed, and finally the wooden Buddha won the match.

People started to worship the wooden Buddha after its winning match, and the wealthy owner and his golden Buddha left their place to somewhere else. The ex-wealthy man grumbling on the unconvincing result for a long time in front of the golden Buddha. Every time the man looked depressed, the golden Buddha soothed him explaining that any Buddha statue receiving offerings every day becomes stronger than other statues only receive some offerings once or twice every year. Moreover, the golden Buddha statue pointed out that the worship of the man was a kind of superficial one. The man was not able to talk back to the golden Buddha's words and spent rest of their life together.

[Kizen Sakai, *Rouou-yatan* (Night Tales from an Old Woman), no. 6.]