

## Phantom House *mayoiga*

There was a certain wealthy man called Mr. Miura in the Oguni area. One or two generations earlier, this Miura family was still not wealthy. At that time, there was a poor man in this Miura family and his wife was not very wise. One day, this wife went along a stream, looking for some butterbur plants, but there were not good ones. All of sudden, there was a house with a huge black façade. The wife went into the entrance, feeling a bit strange, there was an enormous garden, full of red and white blooms, hens and chickens rambling everywhere. Going around the backyard, there was a shed with many cows, and a stable with many horses, but no one was there. She went into the house at last. In the following room, she saw the vermilion bowls and dining trays and the black bowls and dining trays. At the rear chamber, there was an iron kettle singing on a pottery brazier. Since no one was there after all, some kind of fear came up to her mind and went out of the house.

Every time the wife told about this story, no one believed her story. One day, she went down the stream by the front door to do some washing, the red bowl was floating down the stream. She picked up the bowl, as it was so beautiful. However, she thought people would claim that it is not very clean to use the bowl from nowhere. So she decided to use that bowl to measure grains in a storage bin. From the time on, she kept on measuring the grains with the bowl, but she never came to the bottom of the grain bin. The families of the wife came to feel strange about the situation and asked her the reason why the grains never run out. The wife told them the story that she picked the bowl up from the stream.

The house Miura began to acquire the great fortunes, and became the wealthy household as we know today. In Tōno, such phantom house is called "Mayoiga." Anyone who reached to the Mayoiga would better to take some piece of furniture or a domestic animal back home, because the reason that the house appeared in front of someone is to give fortunes to the person. As the wife was not aware of this very reason, and did not bring anything back her home, the magic bowl itself followed after her.

\*The Mayoiga story told by Mrs. Ōdaira, was arranged based on the section 63 of the Tales of Tōno. For further information, please refer her book, Ōdaira Etsuko no Tōno Monogatari, Atarashii Nohon no Katari 6, Nihon Minwa no Kai (ed.), Tokyo, 2014 (In Japanese).

[Kunio Yanagida, *Tales of Tōno*, no. 63.]