

Tree-blooming Old Man *hanasaka-ji*

Once upon a time, there was an honest old man with his wife. They did not have any child, but a dog. They loved the dog like their own child. On the other hand, there was a mean old man and his wife lived next door. They had bad feeling towards the dog, and picked on him.

While the honest old man was tilling his fields, the dog called him and let him dig a corner of the field. When the honest man dig where his dog told him to do so, something hit his hoe. They were gold coins. The honest old man and his wife suddenly became wealthy.

The mean old man and his wife heard that news and wanted to become rich as their honest neighbor. The mean old man pulled the dog to his fields and forced the dog to tell him where the gold coins are. The dog was difficult to breath, as the mean old man tied him with a rope tightly and severely pulled the rope. So the dog scabbled everywhere of the field, and the mean old man dig the place where the dog scabbled, but there was no treasure at all. The mean old man finally got tired and he hit the dog with his hoe.

The honest old man and his wife buried their dog weeping and planted a pine tree as the dog's grave. The pine tree grew tall and they made a mortar out of the pine tree for their dog's memory. When they started to pound rice with the mortar, the mortar became full of rice and the rice kept on increasing endlessly to fill up their kitchen.

The mean old man and his wife asked their honest neighbor to lent them the magical mortar, and tried to pound rice with the mortar. When they started to pound rice, the rice turned into stinky mad, and their kitchen has covered with mad. The mean old man chopped the mortar into firewood and burned them to ashes.

The honest old man was surprised to find his burnt mortar, and gathered its ashes to home. When the honest old man brought the ashes to his dog's grave, the wind blew and the ashes scattered over his garden. It was still winter, but the withered trees began to bloom like in spring. The old man crapped his hands with joy. Then he wanted to make people happy by making the trees bloom, he went out to the streets with rest of his ashes, saying "Let me make the withered trees bloom." A load and his followers happened to see this honest old man, and let him bloom the withered trees. The load became happy and gave the old man large rewards.

The mean old man followed what the honest man did and met the load. The load asked him to make the withered trees bloom and he scattered too much ashes, that the load and his followers started to sneeze, and their eyes and heads became itchy. The load became furious of the mean old man and put him in jail.