

## **Wife Eats Nothing** *meshikuwanu nyoubou*

There used to be a mean young man who wanted the wife eating less meal, but work hard. It is very rare to find such woman. One day, a woman came to his house, and asked him to marry her, as she does not need any meal. The man got married with the woman. The woman did not eat anything in front of her husband, but there was far less rice left than the man expected. He asked a lady in the next door, and she told him, "I saw your wife boiling three *shou* (about 5.4 liters) of rice."

Next day, the man decided to watch her from the attic. As the lady next door told him, his wife boiled three *shou* of rice and made many rice balls in a pot. Then she loosen her hair, and the man saw there were a lot of mouths on her head. She threw a rice ball after a rice ball in her mouths, and washed the pot with hot water and drank the water lastly. The man felt scared.

After the man came back his home, pretended not to have seen her secret, he told her to leave his house. The woman accepted his request, and asked him to give her a bath tub instead. When the man prepared the items she wanted, she asked him to check the bottom of the bath tub not to fell out. When the man got into the bath tub, she asked him to sit there. When he sit on the bottom of the bath tub, the woman shut its cover and tied with a rope.

The woman carried the tub with the man inside, high up in the mountain. On half the way up the mountain, she took a rest. The man in the tub realized that there is a string of tree above his head. He used the string to get out quietly from the tub. The woman started to walk up on the mountain road, comfortably carried up the tub, saying "The tub became light after taking rest." When she reached a rugged home, she called her friends, "Here is a lot of fish for you." The ogres came out from behind the rocks. The woman opened the tub and saw nothing inside. She swiftly returned her way and about to catch the man with her long arms. The man escaped in the bush. The woman was not able to get close to him, but just hanging around the bush. There were full of irises and mugworts. Those plants are poisonous to the ogre woman, and she gave up of catching the man, and returned home.

It was 5th of May, which was the day of the Boy's Festival. People display mugworts and irises on their roofs to protect their family members from evil and diseases. The special rice cakes wrapped with oak leaves for the day is known as "horn buns" or the "ears of ogres" after their conical shape.