

KAGUYA

THE DAUGHTER OF THE MOON

JAPAN'S
OLDEST
FAIRY TALE
WITH PICTURES
BY KASUSHIKA
HOKUSAI ET AL.



ALFA-VEDA

LARGE PRINT



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CLASSICS FOR CONSCIOUSNESS BASED EDUCATION

ALFA-VEDA



1 THE BAMBOO-CUTTER

In bygone days, ever so long ago, there lived in a little village at the foot of a mountain an old wood-cutter called Taketori. He was very poor and earned his living by cutting bamboos, and making them into baskets and other useful things. In fact, his name, Taketori, meant a bamboo-cutter.

One day when he was wandering about in the forest, looking for bamboo-stems fit to cut, he saw a soft light shining from the roots of one of the trees, and on drawing near to it he found that the light came from a tiny fairy who was caught among the stems of bamboo. Wondering greatly he picked up the fairy, who glowed like a firefly, and took it home in his sleeve to show it to his old wife, and they were so delighted with the lovely little thing that they resolved to keep it.

To their great surprise, in a few months' time the tiny fairy grew up into a tall and beautiful maiden. Nobody on earth had seen a fairer or a more noble-looking girl. As they had no children of their own, old Taketori and his wife were exceedingly glad that this good luck had come to them, and tried to rear the child in the best possible way. They dressed her in silken robes, built her a new house, and indeed made a great lady of her. And you must wonder how these two poor old people could afford to do all these things; but the fairy proved to be a bringer of good fortune to

them, besides being herself the greatest joy to the wood-cutter and his wife. Strange to say, ever since the day he first saw her in the forest, whenever he went out to cut down a bamboo, the wood-cutter found golden treasures hidden between the joints of the stem, so that soon Taketori and his wife became very rich, and were able to build a magnificent palace, where they lived with their adopted daughter.

Now the time came for her to be named, for it would not do to always call her the Fairy Baby when she was grown up. So they gave a royal feast to celebrate the occasion, to which all the Princes and nobles of the country around were invited. And what do you think was the name chosen for the lovely maiden? She was called Nayo-Take-no-Kaguya-Hime, Princess Splendour of the Feathery Bamboo, a name which surely suited her wonderful beauty.

After the feast had been going on for three days, during which time the guests could not believe their eyes—so beautiful was this new-found Princess—Taketori and his wife took

good care to keep her within the inner court of the palace, as they feared that the eager gaze of all sorts of people might rob her of her glory, and, besides, they believed it the most fitting way of showing honour to a Princess of such noble birth.

Before long the fame of the Princess's beauty spread all over the whole world, till everybody was crazy to see her. Many of the Princes of the realm left their palaces, and spent days and nights hovering around the high hedge of the garden enclosure, hoping that by some happy chance they might catch a passing glimpse of the lovely maiden.

Naturally there were many suitors who came to court her, and longed to marry her, and among those who were most devoted were two Princes of royal blood, besides three of the highest nobles of the land. The old bamboo-cutter much desired to have his adopted daughter married to one of these suitors of exalted rank, but to his great disappointment she refused all their offers; she said that men were fickle, and not to be trusted however



eager they might be in their love-making. Besides—she told her father—she was afraid that these nobles who were courting her might not realize that she was brought up as a poor wood-cutter's daughter, and they might soon become tired of her; and so before she would consider the matter seriously, as her parents wished her to, she desired that her lovers should do some great deed to prove their true devotion to her.

To this condition the Princes and the nobles willingly agreed; but when they heard what the young Princess demanded of each of her suitors, they were very much troubled in mind, because the maiden hoping to get rid of them now and for ever asked them to perform such deeds as were almost impossible.

One of them the Princess sent to India to find the age-buried stone bowl of Buddha, who lived in that land thousands of years ago; and another she sent to seek a floating island called Horai, in the Eastern Ocean, and to bring her a branch of a jewel-tree which grew there; a third was to go to China and bring back a fur



robe made of fire-rats, which would not burn even if it were held in flames of fire; a fourth was to procure for her the rainbow jewel from off the neck of the dragon that lived in the depths of the ocean, and the last one was to find the pearl-shell which the swallows keep hidden away in their nests. It was clear that these wonderful things were all out of the reach of her lovers, but they pretended willingly to obey her wishes, even at the risk of their lives, for each and all declared that life was not worth living without her.

