

## The Mountain Pass of Blowing Snow (吹雪峠)(1)

- 1) It happened on a snowy day. Ayako is traveling from Tokyo to her uncle's house with Hitomi in her arms. She is following the Mountain Pass of Blowing Snow. Even though she is hurrying, the driving snow shows no mercy to the mother and child.
- 2) "Hitomi, just a little more patience. If we just make it through this pass, we will soon be at uncle's house." The mother and child have at this point in time, progressed little more than halfway through the pass.
- 3) "Oh!" Ayako's foot slips on the ice. She falls from the mountain path running along the pass and rolls towards the bottom of the valley. A little while later, a man comes along the swamp path – where the snow has already stopped falling.
- 4) This man is a hunter and goes by the name Shinsaku. He lives in a single house situated along the mountain pass. "Ah, I hear the crying of a baby! Well, I guess my ears are playing tricks on me." Shinsaku walks a little further when...
- 5) "Oh, a baby! How did it end up in such a place!? I wonder if it's an unwanted child...? Tossing a child out into the snow, what a heartless parent!" "Oh, there you go, there you go."
- 6) Shinsaku picks the baby up and returns home with it. His wife Otoyo and his adopted child Tenkichi are waiting for him.
- 7) "Oh, what are you doing with that child?" (asks his wife). "Dad, did you buy that baby in the town?" "When you go to town, you can buy anything!" (asks Tenkichi). "Don't talk nonsense! It's an unwanted child, I picked it up," (says Shinsaku). "Ah, an unwanted child? Poor thing..."

- 8) "...although we do have a child, we only have our nephew Tenkichi, so let's raise it as our own," (suggests Otoyo). "Yes, that would be good. A little girl. Isn't she cute," (says Shinsaku). And this is how the baby who fell off the cliff was saved by Shinsaku and his family. Now the story changes.
- 9) The baby's mom, Ayako was helped by the village's policeman and was treated at the local police station. "You're okay. You came around quickly," (says the doctor). Soon Ayako was back on her feet.
- 10) "Ah, you have regained consciousness. How did you end up falling off the cliff?" asks the policeman. "I don't know," (replies Ayako). "So you don't know? Well what is your name then?" (continues the policeman). "My name... I can't recall," (says Ayako).

Ayako has lost her memory – what on earth will become of her?