

## Cat Wagon (猫車)(5)

- 1) “Mee-oww, Mee-oow” cries the monster-cat Tama. She’s sitting on top of the roof, looking for Ochiyo and Kōshichi, but they aren’t coming back...
- 2) Finally, dawn breaks. Crossing over the mountain pass leading to their uncle’s house, the two take a break at the top. (Kōshichi says), “Sister, I want to get to uncle’s house as quickly as possible.”
- 3) Just then, the rōnin Akitsuki Hayato, who had fought with the monster-cat the previous night, climbs to the top. As soon as he sees Ochiyo and Kōshichi, he remarks to himself, “Ah, that girl is no doubt the monster-cat from last night!”
- 4) “If I let this continue she might kill and eat the young boy!” “Well, I’ll destroy it, and save the boy!” (says Akitsuki to himself) – mistaking Ochiyo for the monster-cat.
- 5) “You! Monster! Don’t move a step!” (challenges Akitsuki). “Oh! What may I ask are you doing?” (asks Ochiyo politely). “I’m no strange creature!” (she continues). “Oh, sister...!” (exclaims Kōshichi in surprise) “Arrr! Shut up! Yar!” (yells Akitsuki).
- 6) Although narrowly escaping Akitsuki Hayato’s sword slash, Ochiyo, no longer able to escape, jumps off the cliff, falling to the valley floor below. “You got away, didn’t you?” (says Akitsuki mockingly).
- 7) Having just seen the samurai force his sister off the cliff, Kōshichi angrily yells at him, “Hey! What are you doing! You’re a murderer!” (Akitsuki responds), “No, you have it wrong. I was saving you.”

- 8) “You have it wrong, you have it wrong! Bring back my sister!” (exclaims a teary Kōshichi, as he grabs onto Hayato pleadingly). “If my sister is indeed a monster, last night she would have eaten me. We were together, the whole time!”
- 9) “Is that true?!” “Hhm, that’s a problem (says Akitsuki, pondering).” Forgive me young man.” “Last night, I fought with a monster that looked exactly like your sister... Akitsuki Hayato this is your greatest failure ever,” (says Akitsuki to himself dejectedly). Well, anyway, let’s go looking for your sister (says Akitsuki).
- 10) Having no other choice, the two descend the cliff in search of Ochiyo. But where has she fallen? They don’t see anything of her.

And then...