

## THE GIANT SNAKE OF YAMATA

Long, long ago there was a powerful spirit, called Prince of Susano. Once when he was travelling across the mountains, he heard some people crying. They crying came from a house where an old couple lived. He asked them what made them cry.

"A giant snake with eight heads live near us. Every year the snake comes here and takes one of our daughters away. It has already taken seven of our daughters and we have only one left. Tonight the giant snake will come again and take her too," sobbed the old man.

"Don't worry any more," said the prince. "I'll kill the giant snake. Let me think. Yes I have a good plan. Please ask all the villagers to come here."

The prince told the villagers to build a very strong fence with eight doors around the house. In the front of each door, they put a huge jar and filled it with strong wine. Everyone worked hard and soon the smell of wine filled the air.

The prince of Susano then spoke to the young girl, "Nothing will happen to you," he said, he quickly changed her into a small comb, "Now you will be safe!" the prince put the comb into his hair.

When everything was ready, he hid the old couple and the villagers in a safe place, then he stood alone. Ready with his sword, waiting for the snake.

At midnight, he heard a strange sound and saw a giant snake with eight heads. Then the snake smelt the wine. It stretched its eight heads through the eight gates and drank from the eight jars. Because the wine was so strong, the snake soon become dizzy.

The prince was watching from behind a tree. "Now is the right moment," he thought. He jumped out and cut off the snake's eight heads. One after another, until the snake was dead. The prince also cut off the snake's tail so that it could not come alive again. As he did this, he heard a loud noise. When he looked closer, he saw a fine sword. The prince took the sword and kept it as a treasure.

When he was sure that snake was dead, the prince took the comb from his hair and breathed on it. At once the old couple's daughter came alive again and stood before him. She knelt down and thanked the prince and wept with relief that it was all over.

The old couple also thanked the prince for killing the horrible snake. "Now we can all live in peace again. We would be very happy if you stayed and lived with us," said the old man.

The prince then decided to stay and live in the mountains. He asked the daughter to be his bride and live with him in a beautiful palace at Izume. They lived happily together there for a long time.

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