

Neck Pulling
(Kubihiki)

Father Demon
Tametomo
Demon Princess
Demons

TAMETOMO Tametomo Hachiro Chinzei is my name. I traveled to the Western Lands for a certain matter, and now I am on my way back to Kamigata. Truly, I was born with great strength of body, and I have accomplished countless feats in many places. But still I carry my weapons and keep myself alert at all times. Well, here I am already at the Inami Plain in Harima. This is a place where no one ever passes through after dark. But as I fear nothing at all in all the world, I walk about in even the most difficult of places both night and day.

FATHER DEMON I smell a man, I smell a man! It appears some person has come this way, for suddenly I smell a man. Just as I thought! I'll catch and gnaw. Catch and gnaw! Catch and gnaw!

TAMETOMO I humbly beg you to forgive me, I beg you to forgive me!

FATHER DEMON Hey, you rascal! After the seventh hour, no one ever passes through here. Who are you?

TAMETOMO I am a traveler. I was passing through, not knowing this was such a place. Please spare me my life.

FATHER DEMON No, no, there is no way that you could not have known. I am certain you passed through here due to your lazy nature. In any case, your life must not be spared. I will devour you this minute. But on second thought, I have a darling daughter named Oto, and I want to have her eat her first man. Do you prefer being eaten by my daughter, or being eaten by me?

TAMETOMO If there is no way I can be spared, I prefer having your daughter eat me.

FATHER DEMON It appears you have some gentleness of heart. If that is the case, I will call my daughter here. Hey, hey, come here, Daughter, come here, Daughter.

DEMON DAUGHTER What is it, Daddy?

FATHER DEMON As you are my most beloved daughter, I always treat you with loving care, but I have never yet let you eat your first man. Happily, today, a fine young man has come here. Go over there and eat him.

DEMON DAUGHTER If you bite him up in pieces for me, I will eat him.

FATHER DEMON How long do you think you can go on depending on your parents for such things? Hurry over there and eat him in one

bite.

DEMON DAUGHTER But eating my first man is so embarrassing.

FATHER DEMON It is of no great import. Hurry over to him.

DEMON DAUGHTER Well then, where is he?

FATHER DEMON There. Right over there.

DEMON DAUGHTER He is most handsome and looks very tasty.

FATHER DEMON As he looks so tasty, I wanted to eat him myself, but I kept him for you to eat, so hurry up and eat him.

DEMON DAUGHTER If that is the case, I'll catch and gnaw. (She runs toward TAMETOMO and he hits her with his fan. She runs away.) Ow, ouch! Ow, ouch!

FATHER DEMON What's happened, what's happened?

DEMON DAUGHTER That man hit me! (She weeps.)

FATHER DEMON Don't cry, don't cry. I will scold him. Take heart, take heart. (To TAMETOMO.) Well, I must say, you are a hateful rascal. For what reason did you strike my darling daughter?

TAMETOMO Oh, no, what happened just now is that she ran against my arm and it touched her.

FATHER DEMON See that you do nothing untoward. (To DD.) I scolded him. Hurry over there and eat him.

DEMON DAUGHTER I am so frightened, I don't want to eat him any more.

FATHER DEMON How can you say you don't want him? Pluck up your spirits and eat him.

DEMON DAUGHTER Is it all right if I eat him head first?

FATHER DEMON Eat him from what ever part you like.

DEMON DAUGHTER I am going to eat him now.

FATHER DEMON Hurry and eat him.

DEMON DAUGHTER Catch and gnaw! Ow, ouch! Ow, ouch! He hit me again! (She cries.)

FATHER DEMON Ooooh, don't cry, don't cry. I will scold him. Hey, hey, you are a hopelessly hateful rascal. I will waste no more time with you. In one bite, I'll catch and gnaw.

TAMETOMO Oh, wait, please wait!

FATHER DEMON Wait for what?

TAMETOMO As it is said that deities and demons are never unjust, you should not eat me without due cause. Since things have come to this pass, I beg you to compete with me in a test of strength, and eat me if I lose.

FATHER DEMON It is as you say, indeed. There is no particular

cause, except that you have passed through a place where no one ventures after dark. In that case, we will have a test of strength. But do you wish to compete with me or with my daughter?

TAMETOMO **Since you say it is your daughter's first time to eat a man, I will compete with your daughter.**

FATHER DEMON **You are a clever fellow. So what sort of test do you prefer?**

TAMETOMO **I prefer arm wrestling.**

FATHER DEMON **That is a fine idea. Hey, hey, Daughter. As a test of strength, go arm wrestle with that man.**

DEMON DAUGHTER **I do not wish to arm wrestle, but I would be happy to belly wrestle with him.**

FATHER DEMON **What naughty things you say. Go arm wrestle with him quickly. Come, come. Go right over there. (To TAMETOMO.) Here, here. You come over here too.**

DEMON DAUGHTER **Ow, ouch! Ow, ouch!**

FATHER DEMON **What's happened, what's happened?**

DEMON DAUGHTER **He scratched me hard.**

FATHER DEMON **Where did he scratch you?**

DEMON DAUGHTER **Right here, right here.**

FATHER DEMON **What a hateful rascal! (To TAMETOMO.) Hey! Why did you hurt my daughter?**

TAMETOMO **I did not try to hurt her. She cries like that simply because my hard, rough hand touched her lovely, soft one.**

FATHER DEMON **There is no way to judge that match. Compete with her once more.**

TAMETOMO **This time, I wish to shin wrestle with her.**

FATHER DEMON **That is a good idea. Daughter, go over there and shin wrestle with him. I will watch you. Hurry up and do it.**

DEMON DAUGHTER **Ow, ouch! Ow, ouch!**

FATHER DEMON **What's happened, what's happened?**

DEMON DAUGHTER **I can take it no longer. (She cries.)**

FATHER DEMON **Don't cry. I will scold him. From the start, you have hurt my daughter in several ways. Why do you not compete fairly?**

TAMETOMO **In any case, it is because she must touch my unruly arms and legs that she is discontented. Thus I suggest that we do neck pulling this time.**

FATHER DEMON **It is as you say indeed. (To DD.) It is just because you were born with such lovely arms and legs that his rough arms and legs seem so hard when they touch you. He**

suggests you do neck pulling this time, so go and do it.

DEMON DAUGHTER Oh, no, I have lost interest in eating a man. And I do not want to do neck pulling.

FATHER DEMON Well, I must say, how cowardly you are. How can you, a child of my own flesh, say you do not want to eat a man? If you do not mind what I tell you, I will pinchy, pinch you.

DEMON DAUGHTER Even so, I am still afraid of him. (She cries.)

FATHER DEMON Oh, here, here. If you weep so hard, you'll get worms. Stop shedding tears this minute. Come, come, go over to him. I will hold him down from behind. (To TAMETOMO.) Here, here, do your neck pulling fairly. Oh, wait, wait a minute. (Facing the lift curtain.) Hey, hey, all you demons and relatives, come here quickly, come here quickly.

DEMONS What do you want of us?

FATHER DEMON My daughter is doing neck pulling. As she is about to lose, you must lend her your strength and pull.

DEMONS With all our hearts. Eiya, eiya.

FATHER DEMON Pull in rhythm, pull in rhythm! Ei, sara-sa, ei, sara-sa. Pull harder, pull harder, you demons all. The team of my daughter is the weaker. Ei, sara, wassara, essara-sa. (TAMETOMO throws off the rope, making all the DEMONS fall to the ground, then he exits quickly with the DEMONS in hot pursuit.) Catch and gnaw.

DEMONS Catch and gnaw. Catch and gnaw.

FATHER DEMON **Catch and gnaw. Catch and gnaw.**

DEMON DAUGHTER **(Getting up and skipping off after the rest are gone.) Hoi, hoi. Hoi, hoi.**

(Source: Kyogen Shusei, 141-143, Nogaku Shorin, Tokyo, 1974)