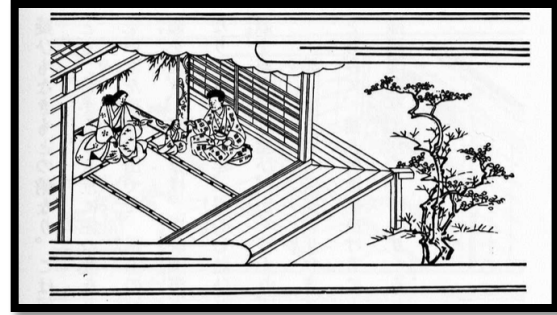


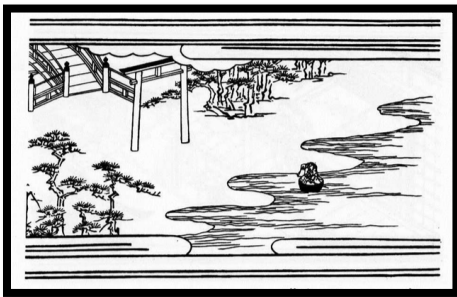
Inchling

At a time not so long ago, in the village of Naniwa, in the province of Tsu, there were an old man and woman. Lamenting that she had reached the age of forty and had no child, the old woman went to Sumiyoshi Shrine and prayed for a child. The Great Brilliant Deity [of Sumiyoshi] was moved, and when she reached the age of forty-one, she grew 'indisposed': the old man's happiness was boundless. In no



time, when she was in her tenth month, they were blessed with a lovely boy. However, from the moment he was born, since he was a mere one-inch tall, they named him—just like that—"Inchling."

Time went by, and though he soon reached twelve or thirteen years of age, his height was not that of a [normal] person. His parents pondered this. "He's not a normal person. Indeed,

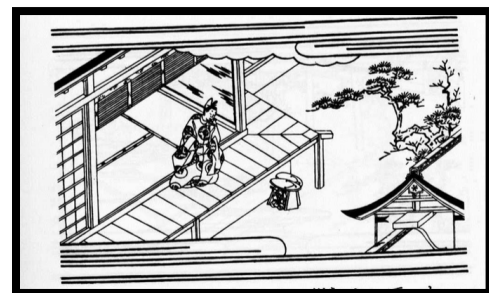


he looks just like a monster. What sin was ours that we received this sort of person from the Sumiyoshi deity as payback? How unseemly! It would be awful for anyone to see him. If we could just send Inchling off somewhere!" When Inchling heard this, he thought, "To have even your parents feel this way is a hard lot. I have to get away somewhere. But I can't just take off without a sword..." He asked the old woman for a needle, and upon receiving it, he prepared to set off. Fashioning a hilt and scabbard of straw, he thought, "I

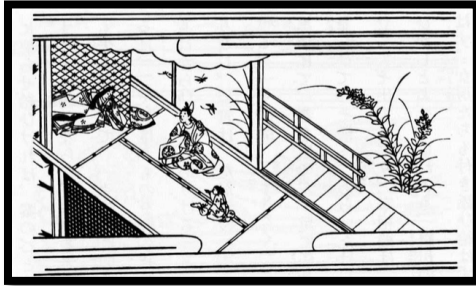
should head to the capital," but when it occurred to him that he didn't know what to do about a boat, he again spoke to the old woman, "A bowl and chopstick, too, please." And his regret notwithstanding, he departed. He set out from Sumiyoshi Bay with his bowl for a boat and headed up to the capital.

*To quit the familiar Naniwa bay
And make haste to the capital—
This is my design!*

Thus, when he reached Toba Harbor, he disembarked from his boat and cast it away, heading up to the capital. As he took in the sights of 4th and 5th Avenue [in the capital], words failed him. He approached the residence of one Lord Chancellor on 3rd Avenue. "Excuse me." The Lord Chancellor heard this and thought, "What a curious voice!" He got up from his mat and looked about, but no one was there. Inchling was worried that he might be trampled to death in this way, and he hid beneath some clogs. "Excuse me." The Lord Chancellor thought that this was strange indeed. Although no one was there, something was calling out in this curious voice. He



wondered whether he should take a look, and when he called for his clogs, [Inchling] said, "Don't tread on me!" He thought this very strange, and when he looked, there was an extraordinary person. The Lord Chancellor peered at him. "Truly, an interesting person!" he laughed.



As the years had thus gone by, Inchling had turned sixteen, but he hadn't grown a bit taller. Anyway, the Lord Chancellor had a thirteen-year-old daughter. She was lovely, and from the moment he set eyes on her, Inchling was in love. "Oh, how I wish I could come up with a plan to make her my wife!" he thought. One time, he took some of the rice they had received in payment and put it in a tea bag. While the daughter

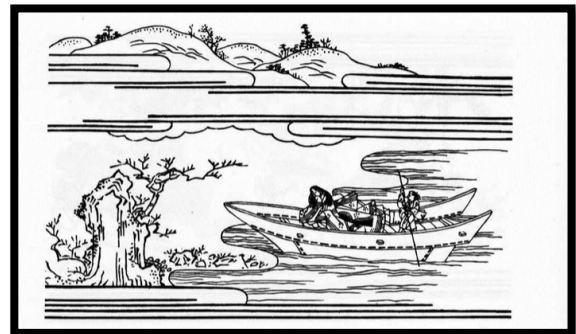
was asleep, he hatched a plan and stuck some rice grains to her mouth and then went about crying with his empty tea bag. When the Lord Chancellor saw him and asked about it, he said, "The Young Miss has eaten the rice I was saving." The Lord Chancellor was furious when he heard this, and just as Inchling had said, there were rice grains stuck to his daughter's mouth. Thinking that it was certainly true, and that there was no way he could have a daughter like this in the capital, he decided to do away with her, and he entrusted the task to Inchling. Inchling told her, "Since you took my things, I was instructed to get rid of you by any means necessary." In his heart, Inchling was thrilled. The young lady felt as though she were dreaming and was completely dumbfounded. "Come on, hurry up!" Inchling said. Feeling as though she were lost aimlessly in the dark, she left the capital [with him], going where her legs took her and wondering what was going on. The poor thing! Inchling set her in front, and they took off. The Lord Chancellor—alas—wanted to hold her back, but because of her stepmother, he did not; nor did he send any female attendants with her.

The young lady felt it was heartless, and although she had nowhere to go, [Inchling] thought perhaps they should go to Naniwa Bay, so they set off in a boat from Toba Harbor.

Just then, the wind grew violent, and they docked at a strange-looking island. When they looked up, there were no signs of human habitation. Although they wondered what to do since they had met with this ill wind and been blown ashore at this island, they had no choice but to disembark from the boat.

Inchling looked about, when all of a sudden, two demons appeared. One carried a wishing gavel, and the other said, "Let's gulp this one down and take the girl." When he swallowed

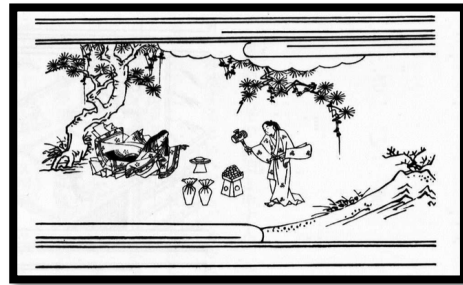
[Inchling], [Inchling] emerged from his eye. The demon said, "How creepy! When I close my mouth, he leaves through my eye." When Inchling was swallowed by the [other] demon, he flew out his eye, which made the demon both frightened and afraid. "This is no ordinary person. He must have come to raise hell. We'd better get out of here!" As he said this, he cast aside all sorts of things—the wishing gavel, a staff, a rod—and fled to some dark





corner north-west of the Buddha's Pure Land. Well, when Inchling saw this, he first of all wantonly banged the wishing gavel, saying, "Make me taller!" Since he banged away, in no time, he had grown tall. Now, since they were famished, he banged the gavel and wished for rice, and incredibly delicious-looking rice appeared from nowhere. It was both mysterious and happy.

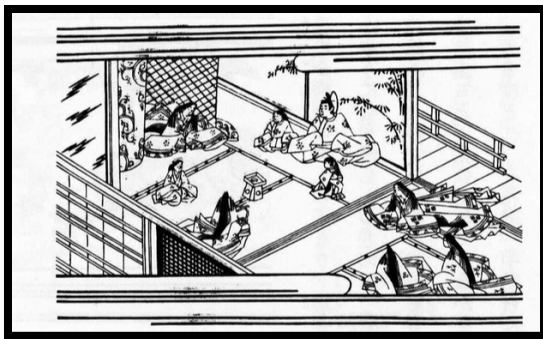
After that, they wished for gold and silver, and he and the young lady returned to the capital and took a residence in the vicinity of 5th Avenue. After about ten days, since this business was not the palace, and Straightaway, he emperor saw him, man! There's no enquired about was the Thanks to had a child out in



kept secret, the news made it to Inchling was summoned at once. he went to the palace, and when the he said, "What a splendid young way he's of low status." And he Inchling's parentage. His father Horikawa Middle Counselor's son. slander, he had been exiled and the country. His mother was the

Fushimi Lesser Captain's child. When young, she had lost both her parents. Since, according to this, [Inchling] was of no mean standing, he was summoned to the Seiryōden Hall and made Horikawa Lesser Captain, a most laudable event. His parents, too, were summoned, and the way in which they were received was without parallel.

Before long, the Lesser Captain became a Middle Counselor. Since from the first, in both mind and appearance he had surpassed all others, his family, too, was held in awe. When the Lord Chancellor learned of this, he was overjoyed. Afterwards, he had three sons. It was a laudable flourishing [of fortunes].



In keeping with the vow of Sumiyoshi, they flourished through the ages. It was said that there was no more laudable example in the world than this.