

Recitation C

A Japanese Folktale

Once upon a time, in a Japanese mountain inn, there was a greedy innkeeper who was always thinking about money.

One day, a rich man stopped at the inn. The innkeeper looked at the guest's fat money belt and thought, "Oh, if only all that money could be mine!" The rich man requested the most luxurious room at the inn. Then he went up to his room to dress for dinner.

Now, all around the inn there grew delicate Japanese ginger plants. In Japan, there is a saying that eating too many ginger buds makes you stupid and forgetful. This gave the innkeeper an idea.

"This evening for dinner I'll serve ginger bud tempura!" she thought. "Then, when the rich man leaves in the morning, he'll be forgetful and leave his money belt behind!" She ran into the kitchen and started cooking up the most delicious ginger bud tempura she had ever made.

Later that evening, the rich man came down the stairs and requested dinner. The innkeeper could hardly contain her delight as she served him dish after dish of ginger buds. "Delicious!" declared the rich man loudly. After he finished his dinner, he went to bed happy, full of ginger buds.

The next morning, the innkeeper said goodbye to the rich man. As soon as he was out of sight, she raced up to his room. She looked all over the room for the money belt, but she couldn't find it. Suddenly, she noticed a piece of paper on the floor. It was the rich man's bill. He had forgotten to pay it! She ran after him, down the stairs, out of the front door, and up the road until she was out of breath, but the rich man was already far, far away.

(296 words)