

A Tanuki Tale

A Story from Japan



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Chapter 1

The Kind Junkman



Long ago, there was a young man named Jinbei. People called him Junkman because he travelled around the Japanese countryside collecting old, unwanted things. He would bring them home, clean them up and then try to sell them.

Unfortunately, Jinbei was not very good at his job. He collected a lot of things that nobody wanted, so few people bought his junk and he was very poor.

One day, Jinbei was pulling his cart, loaded with junk, along a forest path. The path led to a Buddhist temple. As he walked, Jinbei heard a sad cry.

He stopped and peered into the forest, where he saw an animal with the head of a raccoon and the body of a dog. It was a tanuki – a Japanese raccoon dog!

The tanuki cried a mournful wail as it struggled to free itself from a rope that had snagged its foot.

Jinbei was a kind man, so he decided to help. He untangled the rope from around the animal's foot, and the tanuki limped off into the forest.

Jinbei continued on his way.

