



# *The Moon Maiden*

Green Willow And Other Japanese Fairy Tales

Japanese

---

*Easy*  
*7 min read*

There was an old bamboo cutter called Také Tori. He was an honest old man, very poor and hard-working, and he lived with his good old wife in a cottage on the hills. Children they had none, and little comfort in their old age, poor souls.

Také Tori rose early upon a summer morning, and went forth to cut bamboos as was his wont, for he sold them for a fair price in the town, and thus he gained his humble living.

Up the steep hillside he went, and came to the bamboo grove quite wearied out. He took his blue tenegui and wiped his forehead, "Alack for my old bones!" he said. "I am not so young as I once was, nor the good wife either, and there's no chick nor child to help us in our old age, more's the pity." He sighed as he got to work, poor Také Tori.

Soon he saw a bright light shining among the green stems of the bamboos.

"What is this?" said Také Tori, for as a rule it was dim and shady enough in the bamboo grove. "Is it the sun?" said Také Tori. "No, that cannot well be, for it comes from the ground." Very soon he pushed his way through the bamboo stems to see what the bright light came from. Sure enough it came from the root of a great big green bamboo. Také Tori took his axe and cut down the great big green bamboo, and there was a fine shining

green jewel, the size of his two fists.

“Wonder of wonders!” cried Také Tori. “Wonder of wonders! For five-and-thirty years I’ve cut bamboo. This is the very first time I’ve found a great big green jewel at the root of one of them.” With that he takes up the jewel in his hands, and as soon as he does that, it bursts in two with a loud noise, if you’ll believe it, and out of it came a young person and stood on Také Tori’s hand.

You must understand the young person was small but very beautiful. She was dressed all in green silk.

“Greetings to you, Také Tori,” she says, as easy as you please.

“Mercy me!” says Také Tori. “Thank you kindly. I suppose, now, you’ll be a fairy,” he says, “if I’m not making too bold in asking?”

“You’re right,” she says, “it’s a fairy I am, and I’m come to live with you and your good wife for a little.”

“Well, now,” says Také Tori, “begging your pardon, we’re very poor. Our cottage is good enough, but I’m afraid there’d be no comforts for a lady like you.”

“Where’s the big green jewel?” says the fairy.

Take Tori picks up the two halves. “Why, it’s full of gold pieces,” he says.

“That will do to go on with,” says the fairy; “and now, Také Tori, let us make for home.”

Home they went. “Wife! wife!” cried Také Tori, “here’s a fairy come to live with us, and she has brought us a shining jewel as big as a persimmon, full of gold pieces.”

The good wife came running to the door. She could hardly believe her eyes.

“What is this,” she said, “about a persimmon and gold pieces? Persimmons I have seen often enough—moreover, it is the season—but gold pieces are hard to come by.”

“Let be, woman,” said Také Tori, “you are dull.” And he brought the fairy into the house.

Wondrous fast the fairy grew. Before many days were gone she was a fine tall maiden, as fresh and as fair as

the morning, as bright as the noonday, as sweet and still as the evening, and as deep as the night. Také Tori called her the Lady Beaming Bright, because she had come out of the shining jewel.

Take Tori had the gold pieces out of the jewel every day. He grew rich, and spent his money like a man, but there was always plenty and to spare. He built him a fine house, he had servants to wait on him. The Lady Beaming Bright was lodged like an empress. Her beauty was famed both near and far, and scores of lovers came to seek her hand.

But she would have none of them. "Také Tori and the dear good wife are my true lovers," she said; "I will live with them and be their daughter."

So three happy years went by; and in the third year the Mikado himself came to woo the Lady Beaming Bright. He was the brave lover, indeed.

"Lady," he said, "I bow before you, my soul salutes you. Sweet lady, be my Queen."

Then the Lady Beaming Bright sighed and great tears stood in her eyes, and she hid her face with her sleeve.

"Lord, I cannot," she said.

"Cannot?" said the Mikado; "and why not, O dear Lady Beaming Bright?"

"Wait and see, lord," she said.

Now about the seventh month she grew very sorrowful, and would go abroad no more, but was for long upon the garden gallery of Také Tori's house. There she sat in the daytime and brooded. There she sat at night and gazed upon the moon and the stars. There she was one fine night when the moon was at its full. Her maidens were with her, and Také Tori and the good wife, and the Mikado, her brave lover.

"How bright the moon shines!" said Také Tori.

"Truly," said the good wife, "it is like a brass saucepan well scoured."

"See how pale and wan it is," said the Mikado; "it is like a sad despairing lover."

"How long and bright a beam!" quoth Také Tori. "It is like a highway from the moon reaching to this garden

gallery.”

“O dear foster-father,” cried the Lady Beaming Bright. “You speak truth, it is a highway indeed. And along the highway come countless heavenly beings swiftly, swiftly, to bear me home. My father is the King of the Moon. I disobeyed his behest. He sent me to earth three years to dwell in exile. The three years are past and I go to mine own country. Ah, I am sad at parting.”

“The mist descends,” said Také Tori.

“Nay,” said the Mikado, “it is the cohorts of the King of the Moon.”

Down they came in their hundreds and their thousands, bearing torches. Silently they came, and lighted round about the garden gallery. The chief among them brought a heavenly feather robe. Up rose the Lady Beaming Bright and put the robe upon her.

“Farewell, Také Tori,” she said, “farewell, dear foster-mother, I leave you my jewel for a remembrance.... As for you, my lord, I would you might come with me—but there is no feather robe for you. I leave you a phial of the pure elixir of life. Drink, my lord, and be even as the Immortals.”

Then she spread her bright wings and the cohorts of Heaven closed about her. Together they passed up the highway to the moon, and were no more seen.

The Mikado took the elixir of life in his hand, and he went to the top of the highest mountain in that country. And he made a great fire to consume the elixir of life, for he said, “Of what profit shall it be to me to live for ever, being parted from the Lady Beaming Bright?”

So the elixir of life was consumed, and its blue vapour floated up to Heaven. And the Mikado said, “Let my message float up with the vapour and reach the ears of my Lady Beaming Bright.”

Read more fairy tales on [Fairytalez.com](http://Fairytalez.com)