

The Legend of the Dragon God of Manno Lake

- ① This story takes place a long, long time ago. A lone dragon god lived in Manno Lake. On days when the weather was nice, the dragon would transform into a snake and bask in the sun on the banks of the lake.
- ② One day, when the dragon god had transformed into a snake and was basking in the sun as it always did, a black kite came flying by. When the black kite saw the snake sleeping by the bank it thought, "Now there's a tasty-looking snake," and it swooped down on the snake.
- ③ The black kite carried the snake away to its home in a cave on a mountain. "All right, I'll eat this guy here leisurely later. For now, I suppose I'll head into the capital for a bit." With those words, the black kite imprisoned the dragon so that it could not leave the cave. In fact, the black kite was actually a *tengu* who had transformed its appearance.
- ④ "If only I could transform back into a dragon, I would be able to punish that *tengu*..." However, without water returning to its original form is impossible. Just as it was thinking, "Within a cave like this one, what can I possibly do to return to my original form?" this time a monk was abducted from the capital and taken back to the cave by the *tengu*. Taking a look, the dragon saw that the monk was carrying a water jug. It seems that when the monk stepped outside to wash his hands, he was whisked away while still clutching his water jug.
- ⑤ Still in its snake form, the dragon god pleaded, "Monk, I have a favor to ask. Although I appear as I do now, I am in fact the dragon god of Manno Lake. With that water you have, I would be able to return to my original form and defeat the *tengu*. Please splash that water onto my body."
- ⑥ When the boy timidly splashed the water onto it, the snake suddenly turned back into a splendid dragon god. The dragon then said to the surprised monk: "Come, Monk, ride atop my back." I will take you to a temple." The dragon god took flight and whooshed upward, and flying farther still it delivered the monk to the temple in no time at all. "I will now go and punish the *tengu*. From what I have heard, that guy has been doing some very bad things in Kyoto and is causing trouble for many people."
- ⑦ The dragon god searched for the *tengu* from up in the sky. "I found you!" This time, the *tengu* had shapeshifted into a ferocious monk and was starting fights and stealing things. "No matter what a mere *tengu* like you may try to disguise itself as, I will not be fooled!" The dragon god then launched an attack on the *tengu*. No one knows what became of the *tengu* after that. However, from that time on the capital was peaceful, and abundant harvests were promised in the plains of Sanuki.