

MR. LUCKY STRAW

Once upon a time, there was a good-hearted man named Shobei.

One day on his way home, Shobei fell down the steps and tumbled over and over. When he finally stopped tumbling, Shobei discovered that he had caught a piece of straw in his hand.

"Well, well," he said, "a piece of straw is a worthless thing, but it seems I was meant to pick this one up, so I won't throw it away."

As Shobei went walking along, holding the straw in his hand, a dragonfly came flying. He caught the dragonfly and tied the straw around its tail.

Shobei went on walking, holding on to the dragonfly, and presently met a woman walking with her son. When the boy saw the dragonfly, he wanted it very badly. "Mother, I want that dragonfly," he said. "Please, please, please!" "Here you are, little boy, you can have my dragonfly!" said Shobei. To thank Shobei, the boy's mother gave him three oranges.

Before long, Shobei met a peddler resting by the road. The peddler was so thirsty. There were no streams nearby and Shobei felt sorry for the peddler, so he gave him the three oranges.

The peddler was very grateful, and in exchange he gave Shobei three pieces of cloth.

As Shobei was walking along, he came across a fine carriage with many attendants. The carriage belonged to a princess. The princess saw the beautiful pieces of cloth that Shobei was carrying. She said, "Oh, what pretty pieces of cloth you have there. Please let me have them." Shobei gave the princess the three pieces of cloth, and to thank him, she gave him a large bag of coins.

Shobei took the coins and bought many fields with them. Then he divided the fields among the people of his village. For as long as he lived, they all addressed him as "Mr. Lucky Straw."