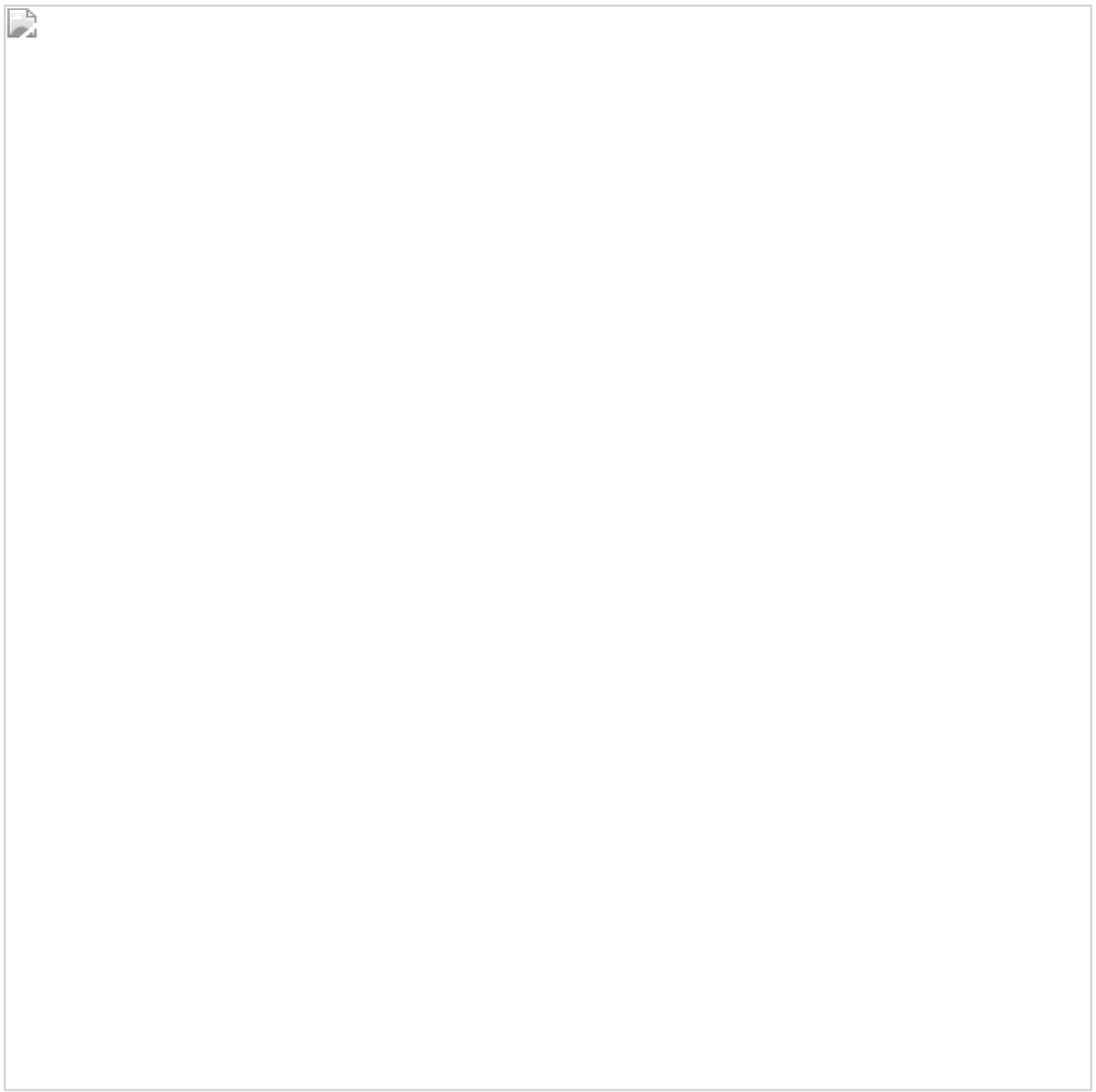
COLORING THE CLASSICS

The Vision of Tsunu

A Tale from Japan



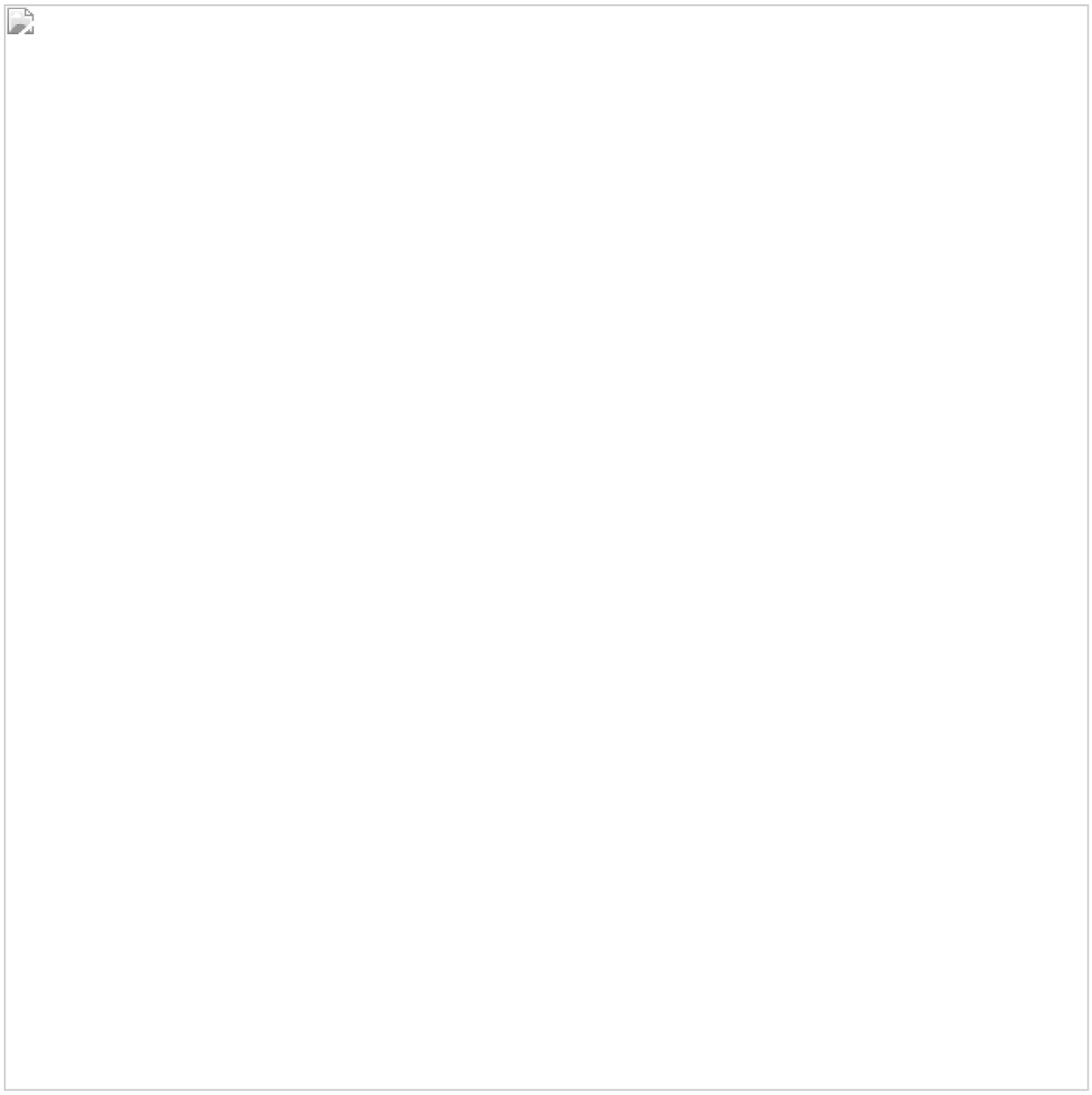
When the five tall pine trees on the windy heights of Mionoseki were only tiny shoots, a woodman named Tsunu lived in a far-off village, with mountains all around and great forests of pine.

TALK ABOUT IT

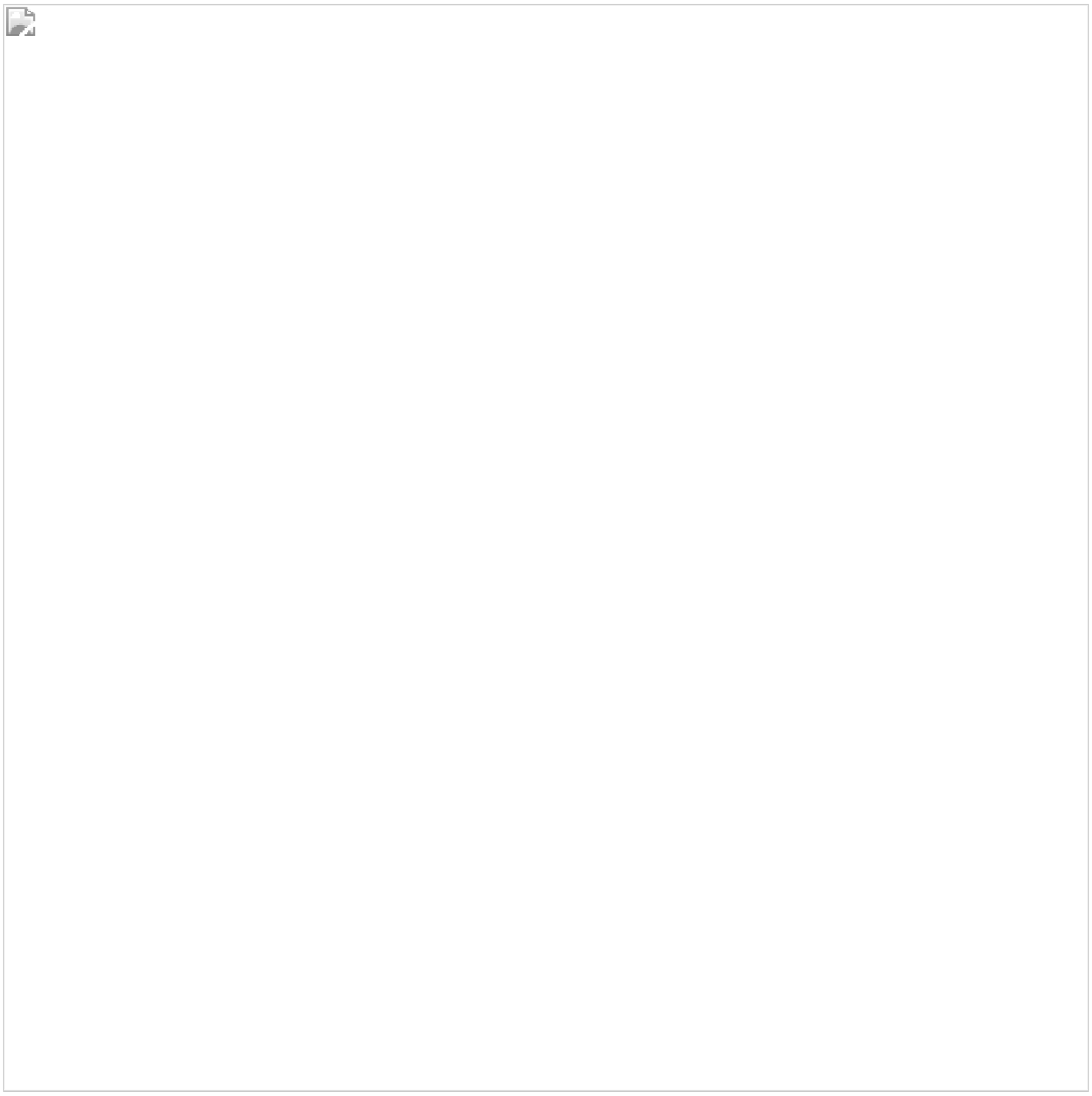
Think of a tree you know. How tall do you think it was when it was just a tiny shoot?

This book belongs to _____

The Vision of Tsunu · another picture



Tsunu the Woodman



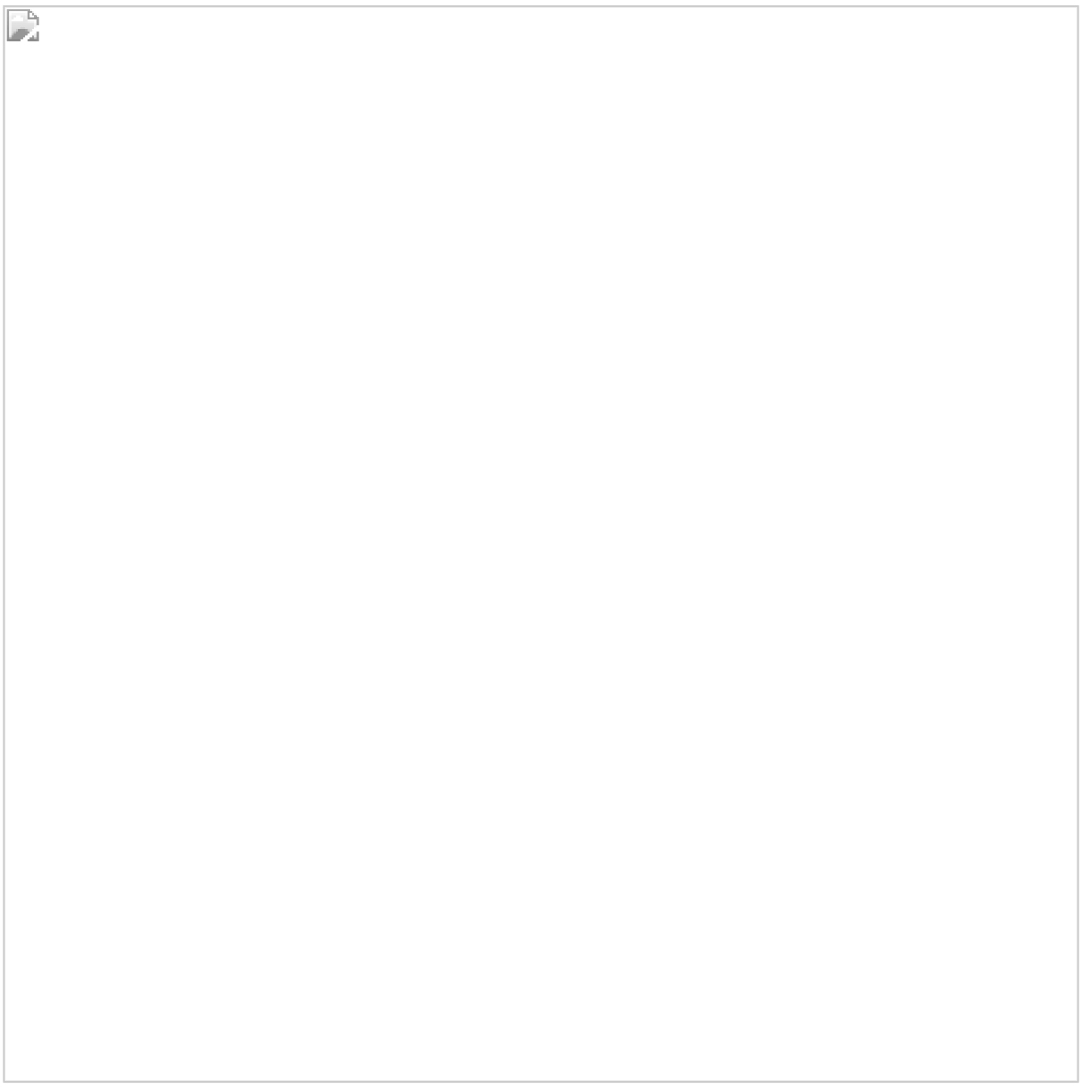
Tsunu was a pious man, which means he honored the gods. He had a wife and sons and daughters.

In summer he was up at cock-crow, and he worked patiently under the pines until nightfall. Then he carried home his load of logs and branches.

After supper he would sit with his family and tell an old story. He never grew tired of tales of the Land of the Gods. Best of all, he loved to talk about Fuji-yama, the mountain that stood so near his home.

TALK ABOUT IT

Tsunu told stories to his family every evening. What is a story someone in your family tells?

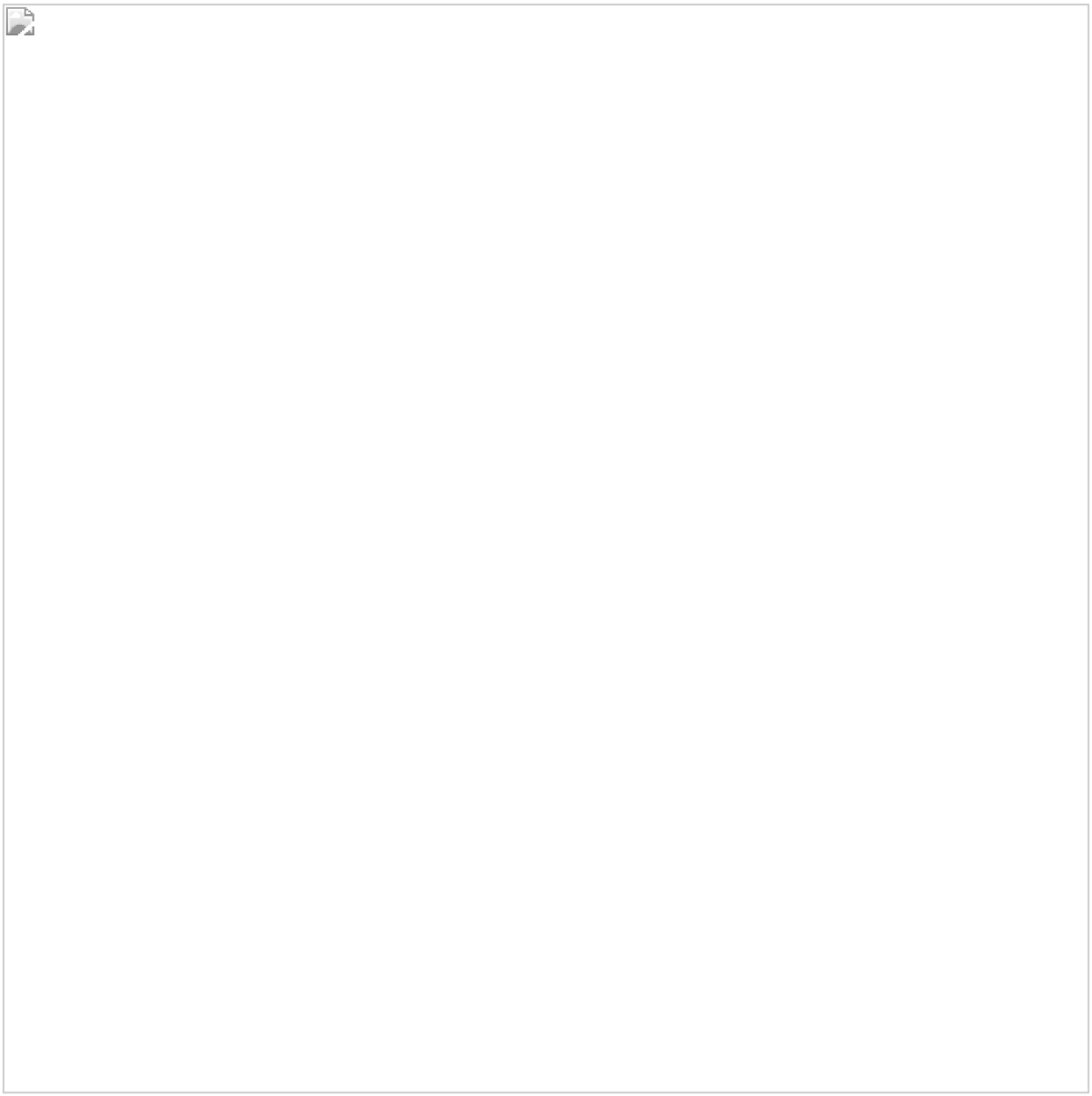


Think about it

1. What did Tsunu do for work?

- ○ He cut wood in the forest
- ○ He sailed a boat
- ○ He kept sheep

The Mountain That Grew in a Night



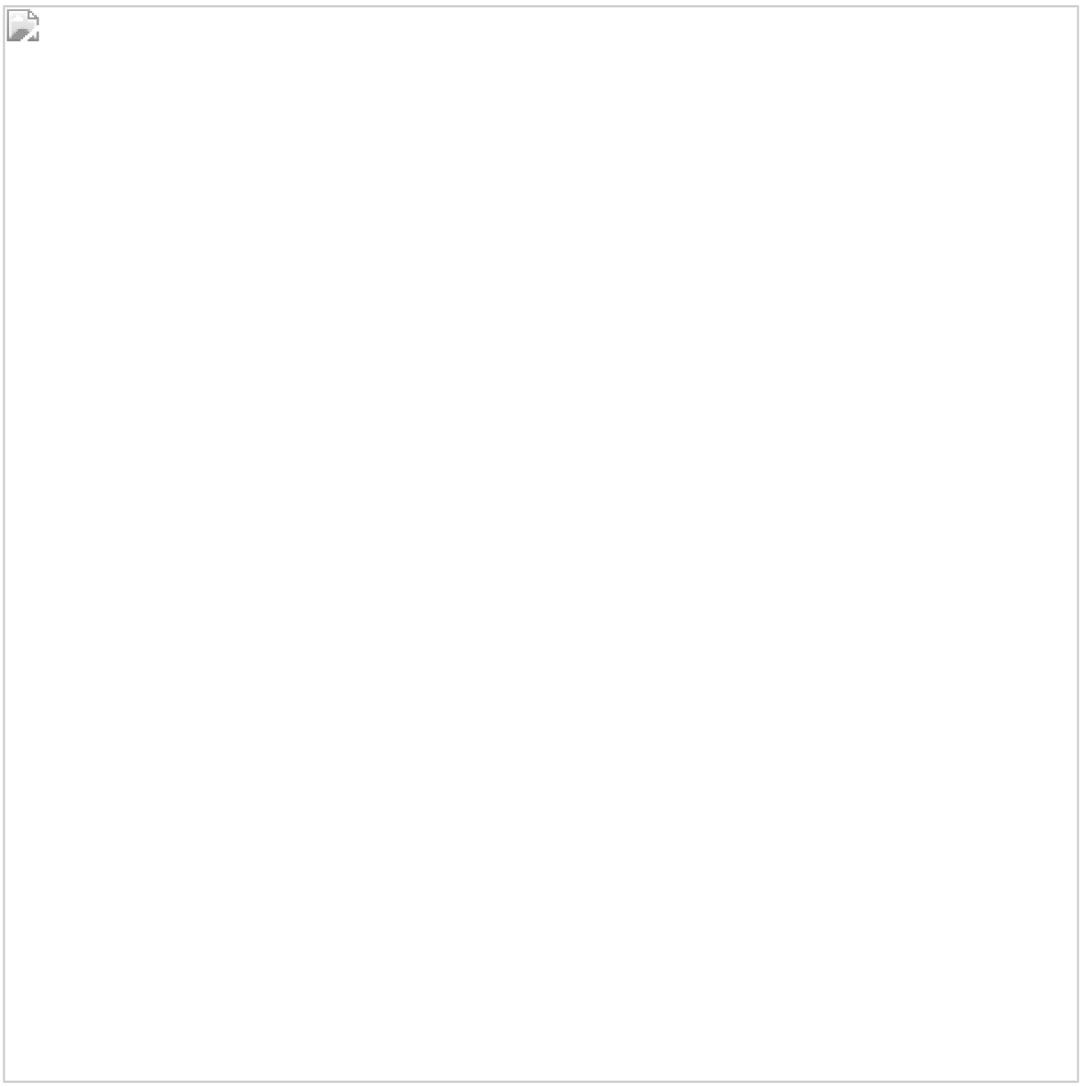
In the old days, said Tsunu, there was no mountain where Fuji-yama now reaches up to the sky. There was only a wide plain, full of sunshine all day.

Then one morning the farmers woke up and saw a mighty hill where the plain had been. It had sprung up in a single night, while they slept!

Fire and huge stones flew from its top, and the people were afraid. But for many, many years now, the mountain has been quiet and peaceful.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think the farmers felt when they saw the mountain? What would you have done?

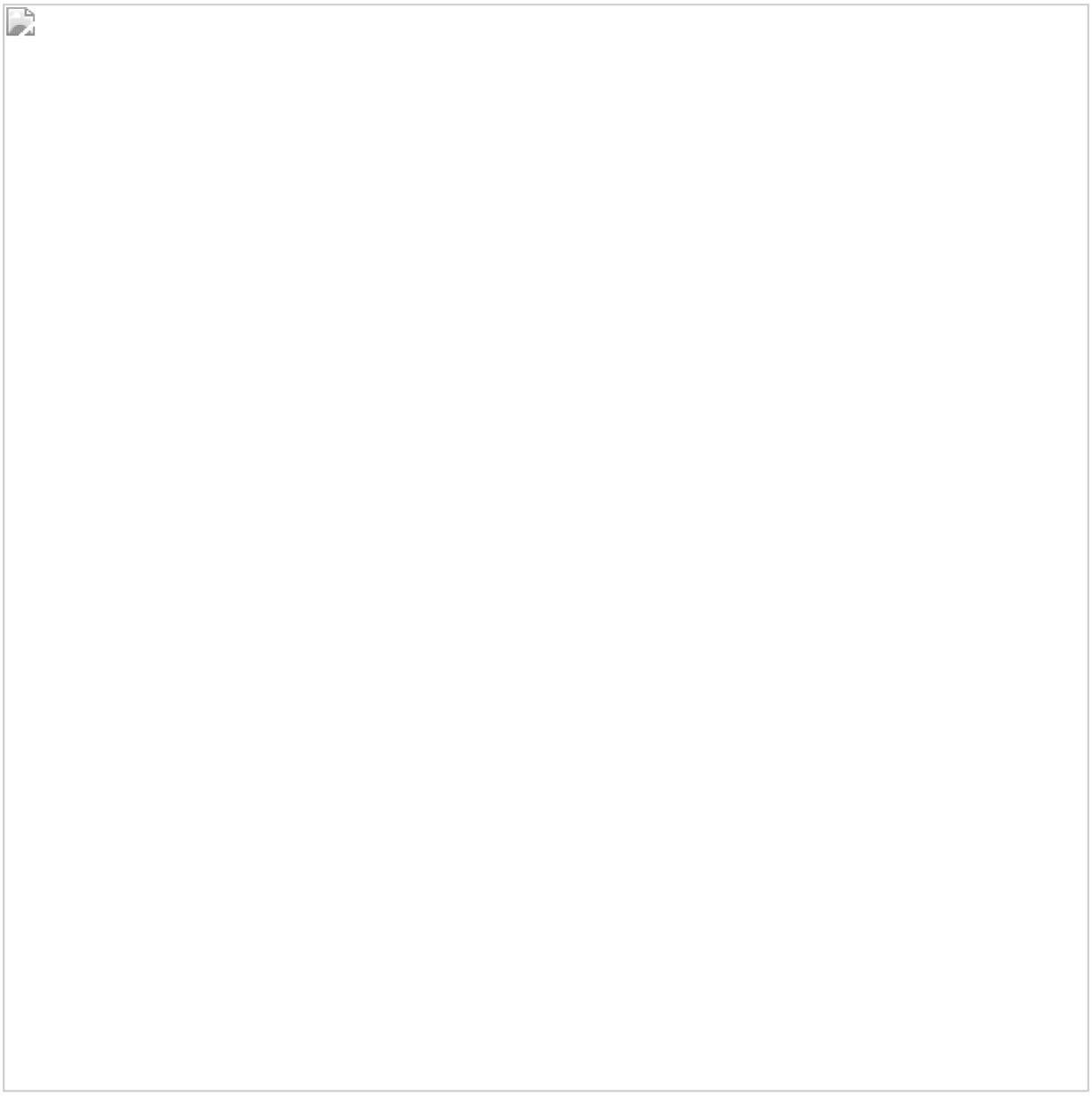


Think about it

1. How long did it take for Fuji-yama to rise?

- ○ One hundred years
- ○ A single night
- ○ One week

The Matchless Mountain



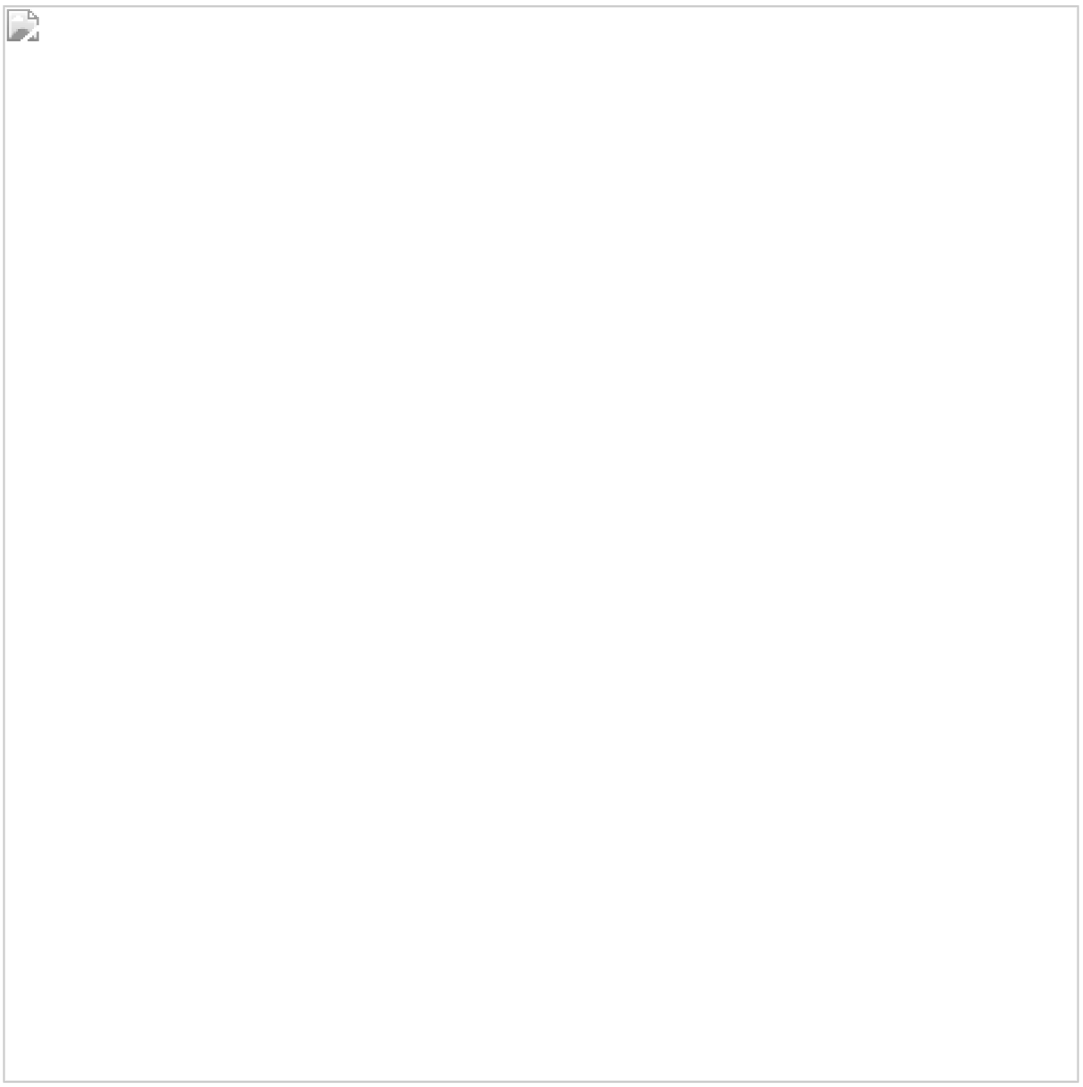
The good Sun-Goddess loves Fuji-yama, said Tsunu. Every evening she lingers on his top, and when she leaves, his peak glows in a soft purple light.

In the evening, the Matchless Mountain seems to rise higher and higher, until no one can tell where he ends and the sky begins. In the early morning, golden clouds wrap around him.

People still walk from far and near to climb the sacred mountain, hoping for blessing and health for their families.

TALK ABOUT IT

What does the sky look like where you are in the evening? What colors do you see?

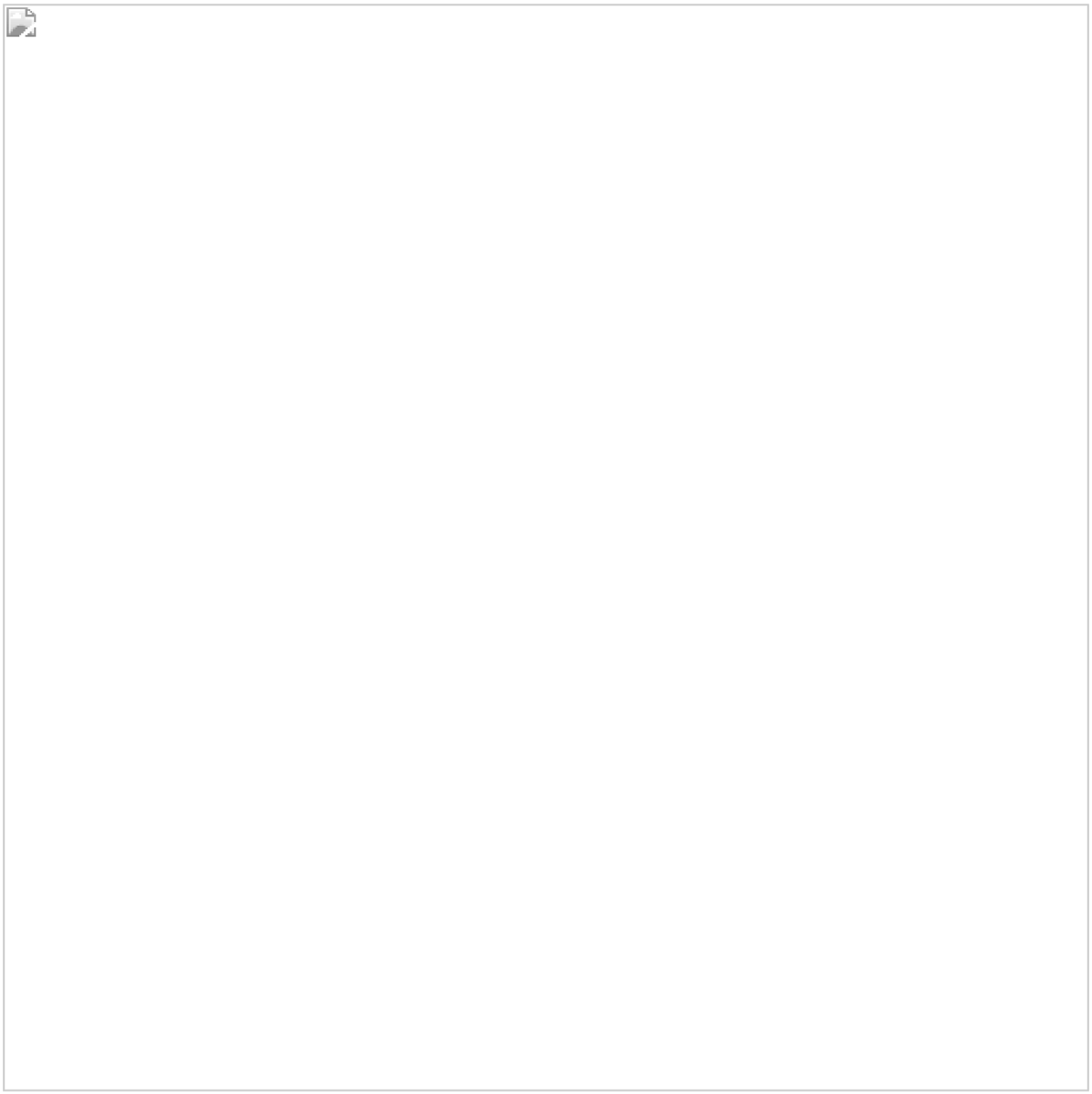


Think about it

1. What color does Fuji-yama glow in the evening?

- ○ Soft purple
- ○ Bright green
- ○ Pink and orange stripes

The Lake Where the Hills Had Been



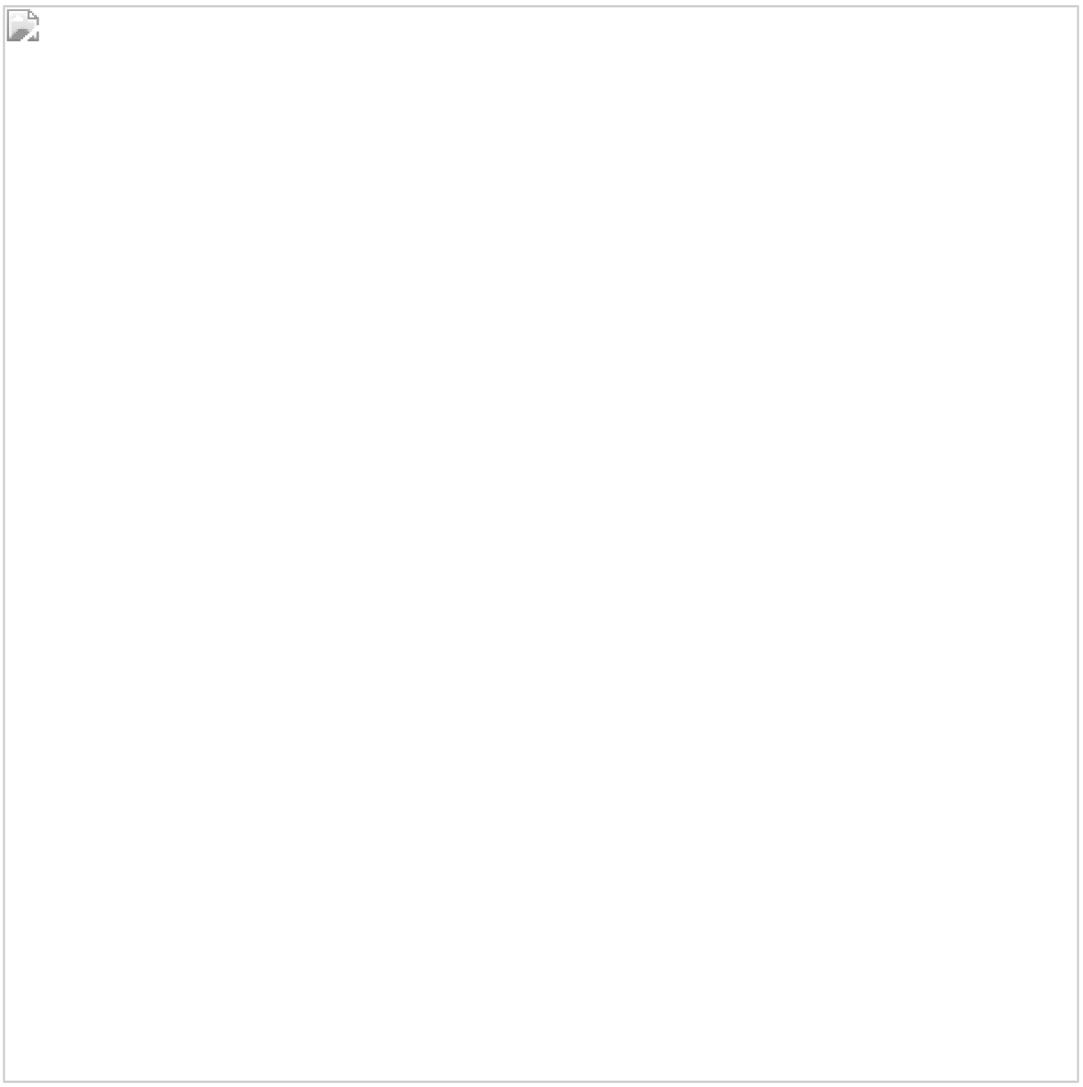
On the very same night, said Tsunu, a strange thing happened near the city of Kyoto.

The people there woke up to a terrible roar that went on all night. In the morning, the mountains were gone! Not one of the hills they loved could be seen. A blue lake lay where they had been.

It was Lake Biwa, shaped like a lute. The old tale says the mountains had traveled under the earth for more than a hundred miles, and became Fuji-yama.

TALK ABOUT IT

That is a wonderful way to explain a mountain and a lake. What would you like to explain with a story?

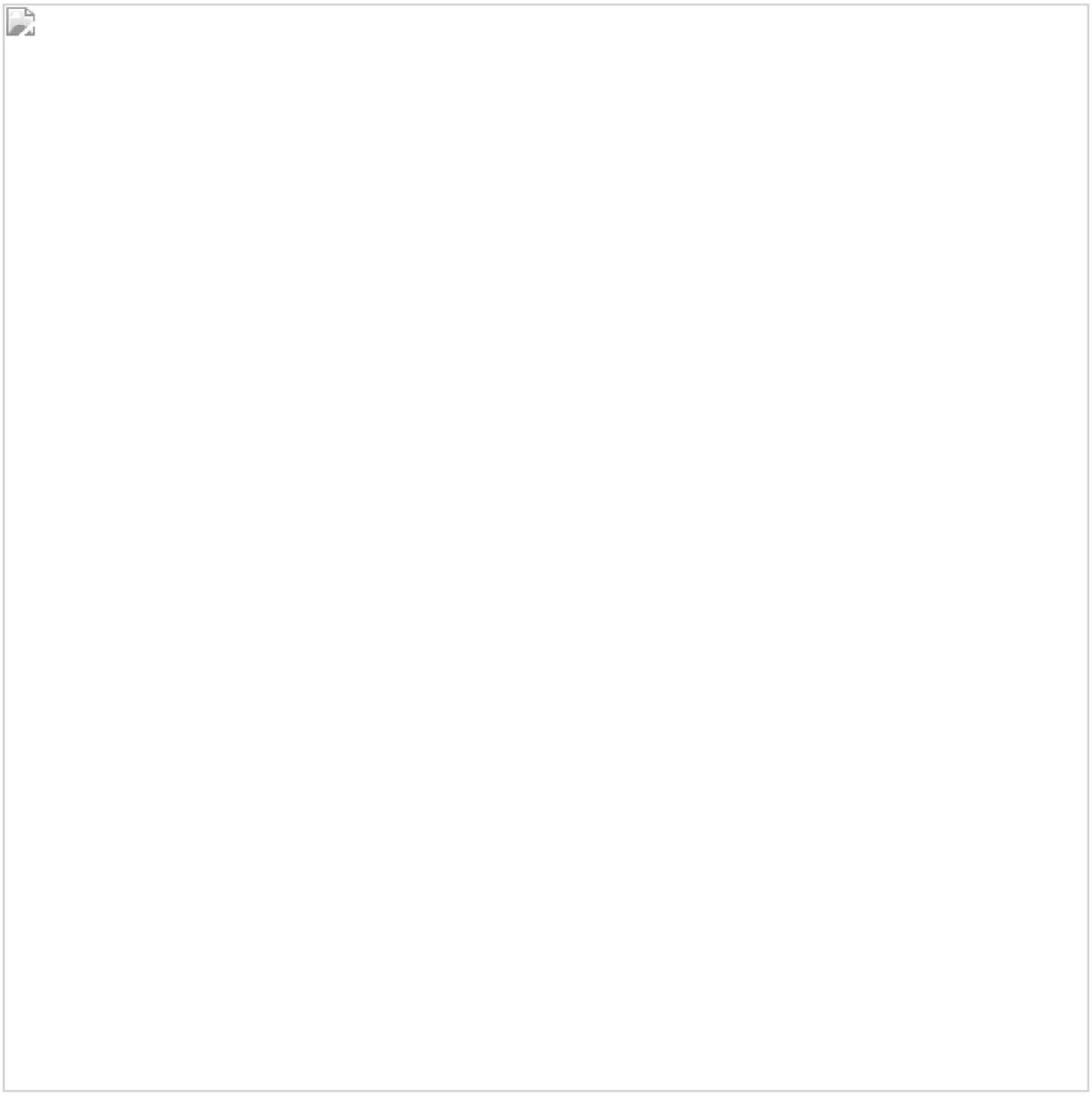


Think about it

1. What did the people near Kyoto find in the morning?

- ○ A new castle
- ○ A blue lake
- ○ A forest

Deep in the Forest



One morning, Tsunu stepped out of his hut and looked for the Mountain of the Gods. He saw the golden clouds, and the beautiful story was in his mind as he went off to work.

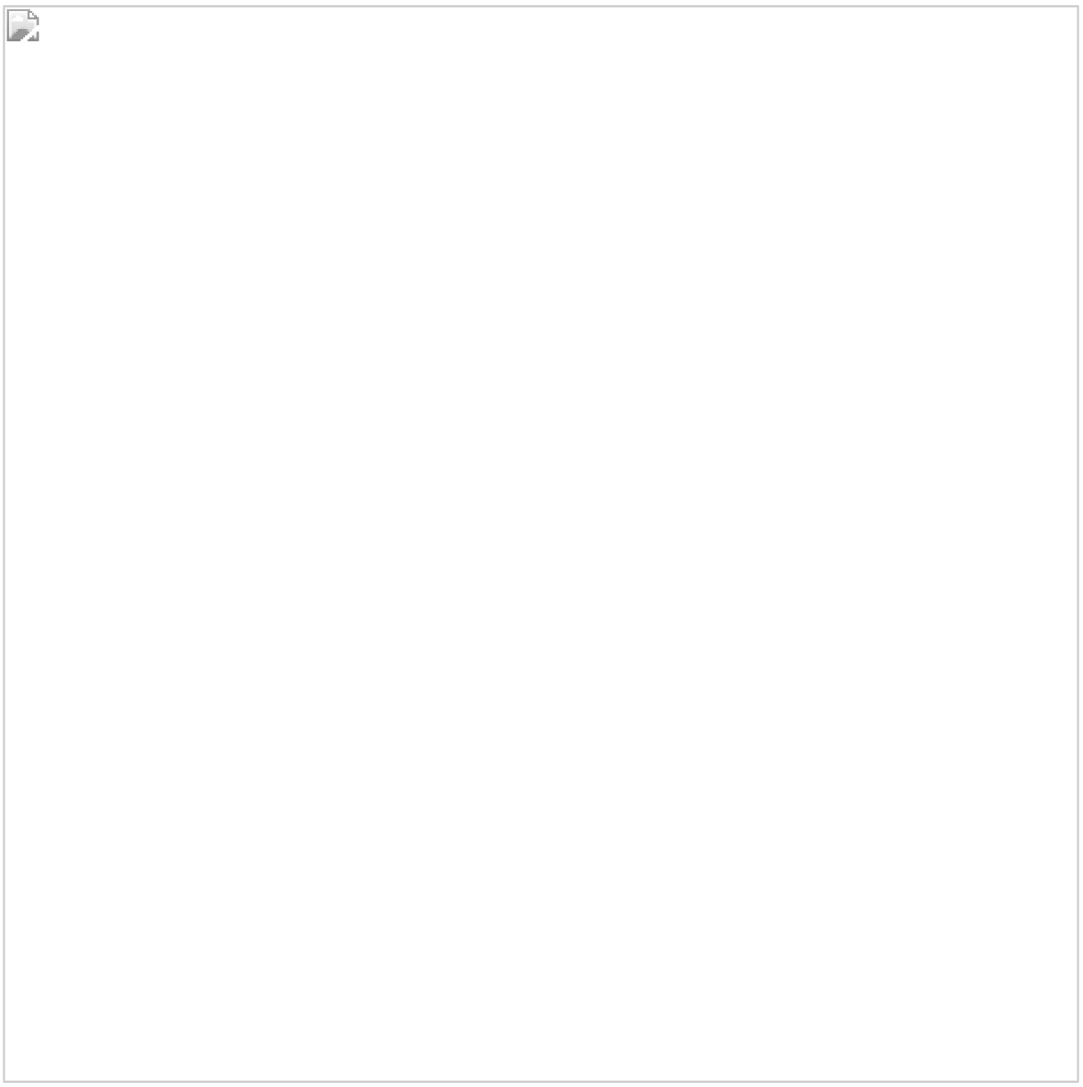
That day he wandered farther into the forest than he ever had before. At noon he came to a very lonely spot. The air was soft and sweet. The sky was so blue that he looked at it for a long time and took a deep breath.

Tsunu was happy.

TALK ABOUT IT

Where do you go when you want to be quiet and happy?

Deep in the Forest · another picture

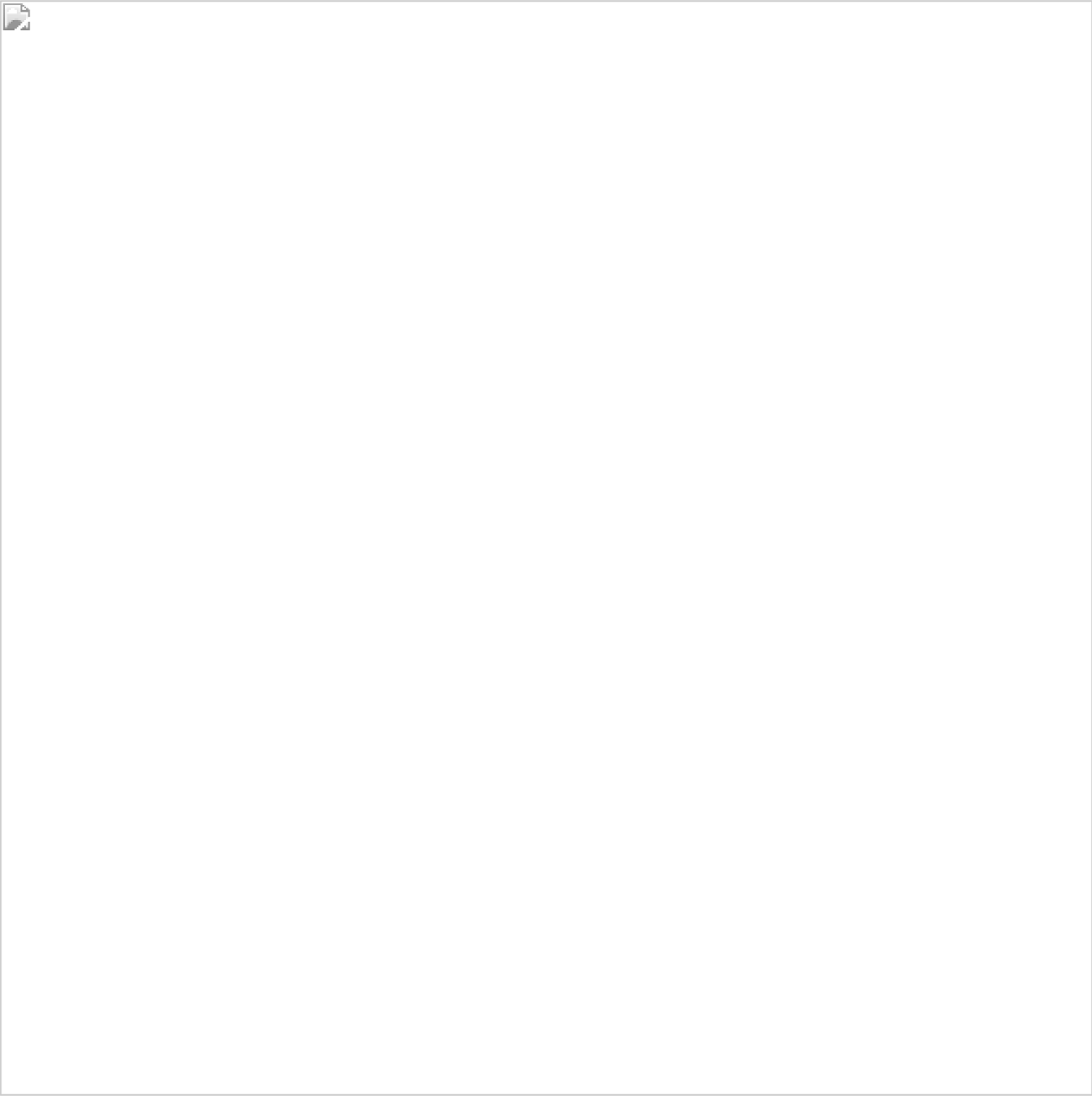


Think about it

1. Where did Tsunu go that day?

- ○ Home early
- ○ Farther into the forest than ever before
- ○ To the sea

The Little Fox



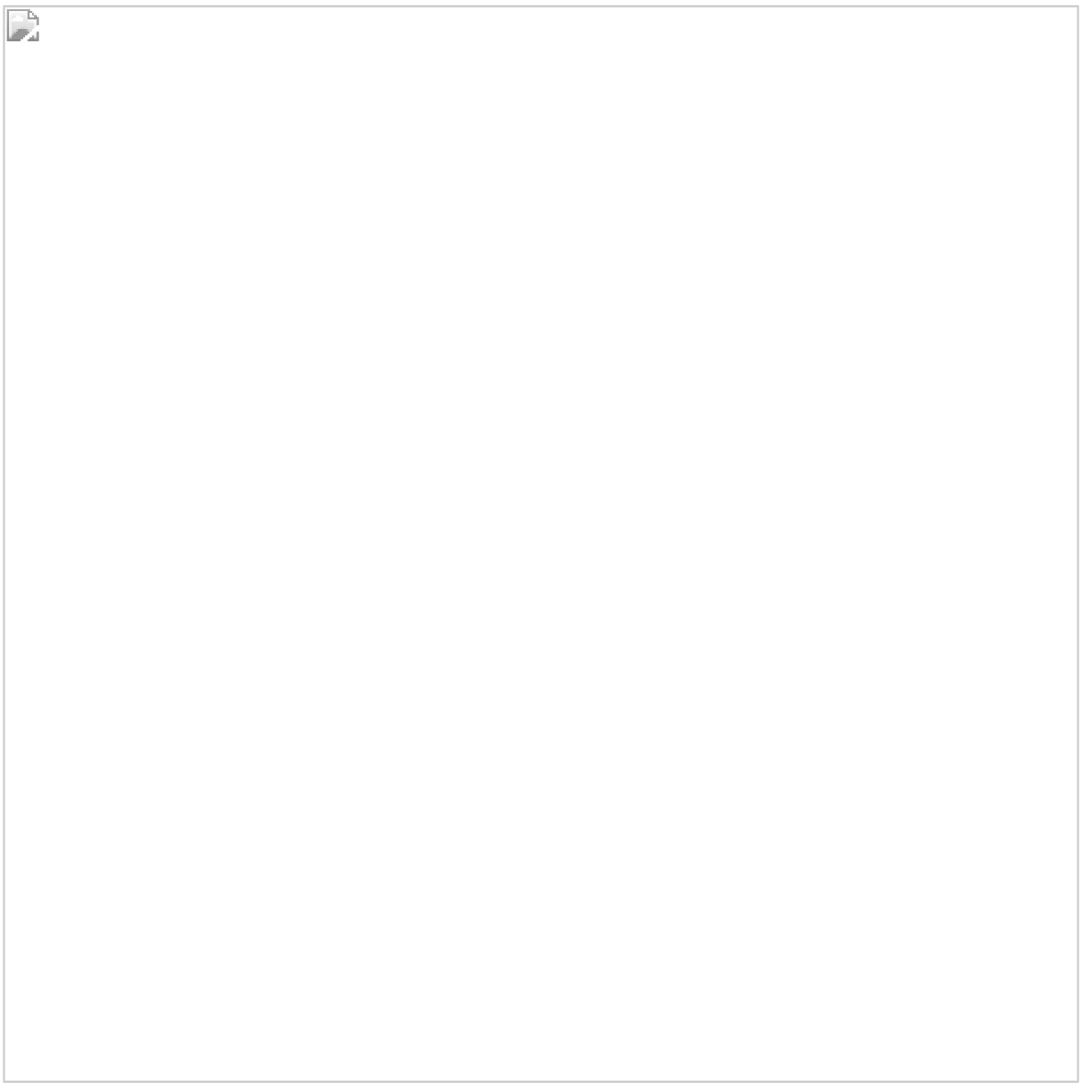
Then Tsunu noticed a little fox, watching him curiously from the bushes. When she saw that he had noticed her, she ran away.

“I will follow the little fox,” thought Tsunu, “and see where she goes.”

Off he went. Soon he came to a bamboo thicket. The slender green stems waved like they were dreaming, and the leaves still sparkled with morning dew.

TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think Tsunu followed the fox?

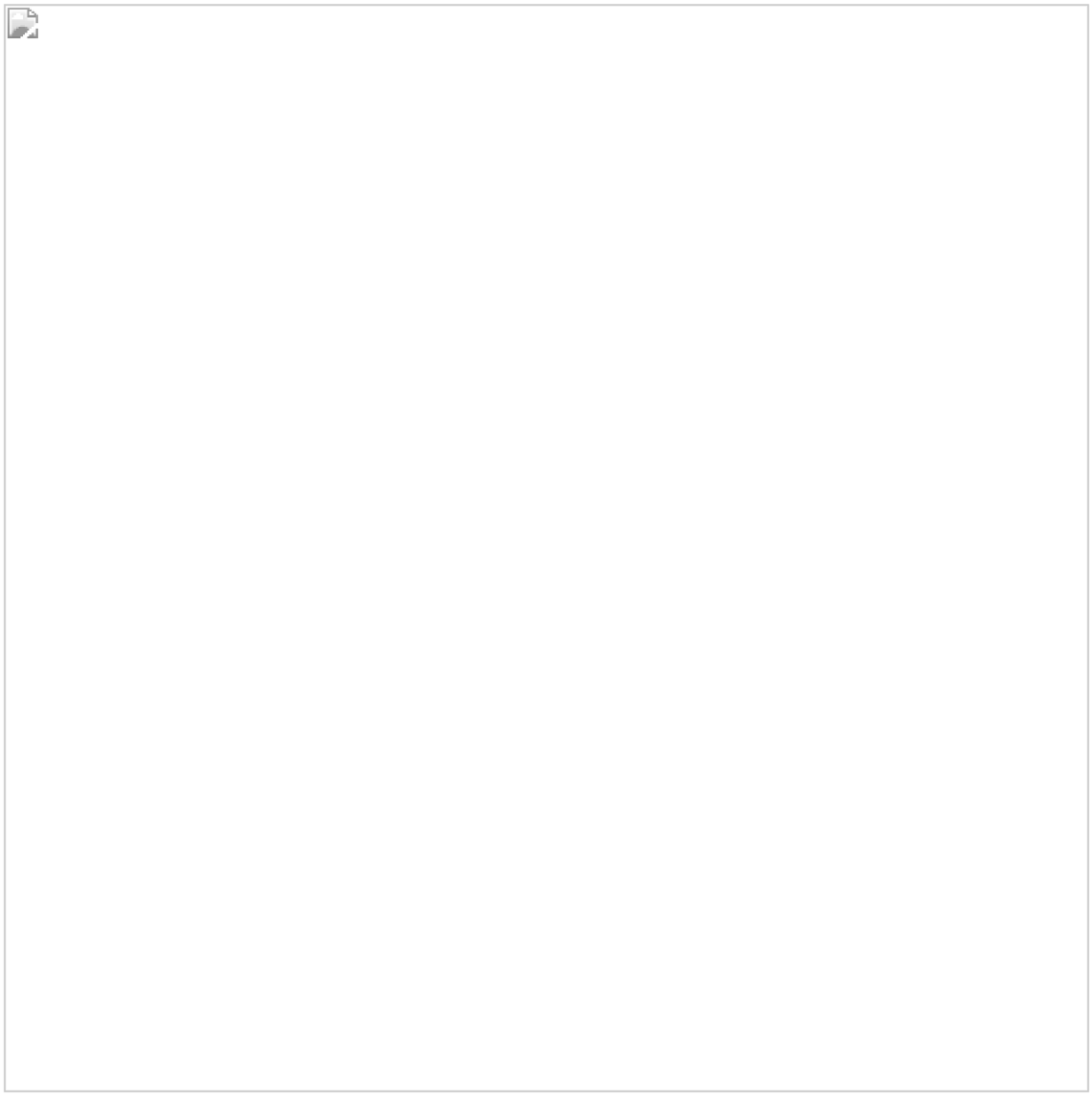


Think about it

1. What animal did Tsunu follow?

- ○ A deer
- ○ A little fox
- ○ A crane

The Game on the Grass



Beyond the bamboo, on a patch of mossy grass, two lovely young women were playing a game of chess. They sat in the sunlight, half in the shade of the bamboo. They did not say a word.

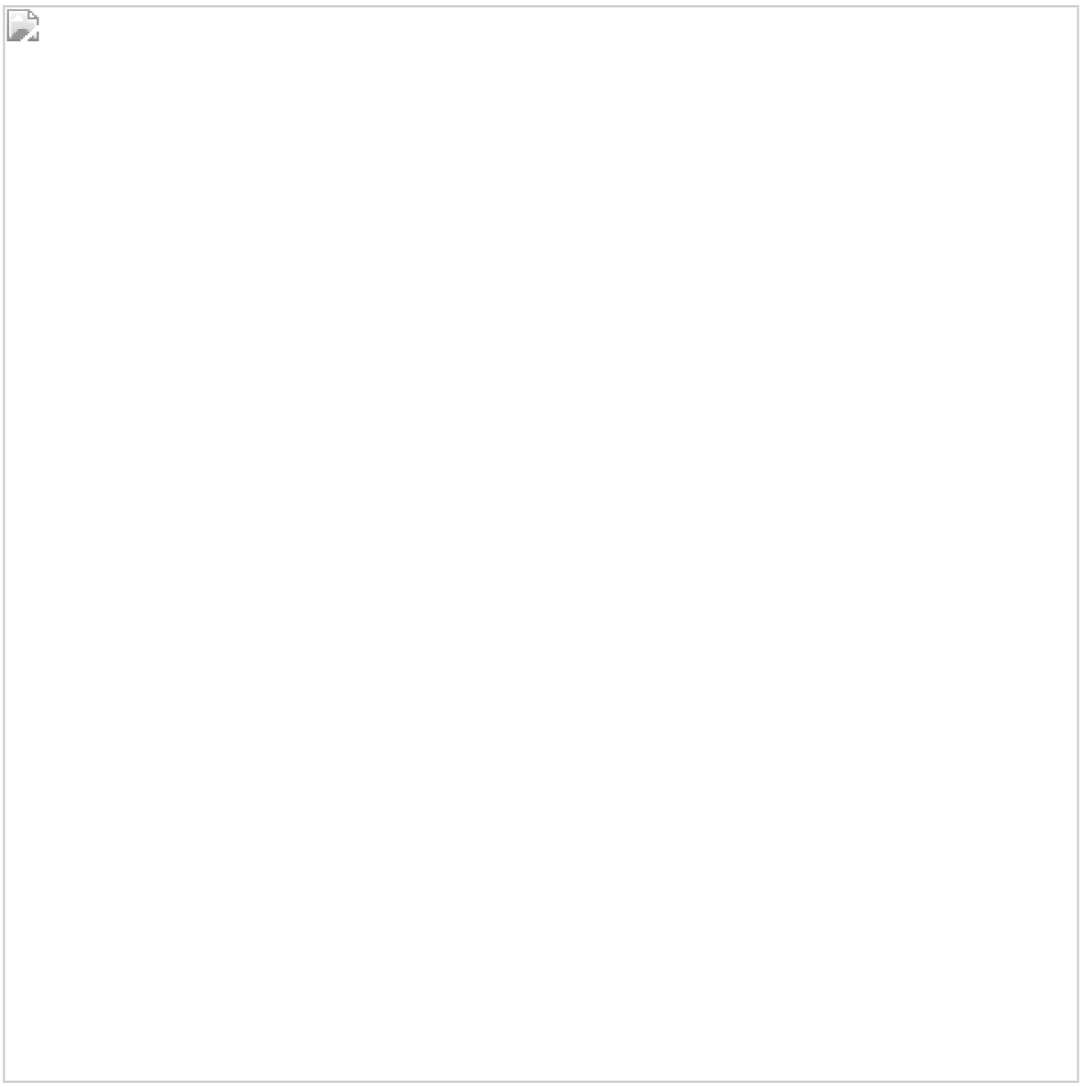
Slowly, slowly, they moved the chessmen on the grass. The breeze lifted their long hair and the sunlight played on it.

Tsunu hardly dared to breathe, lest he should disturb them. The sun still shone. The chessmen were still moved, one at a time. And Tsunu watched, and watched.

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you ever watched something so closely that you forgot about everything else? What was it?

The Game on the Grass · another picture

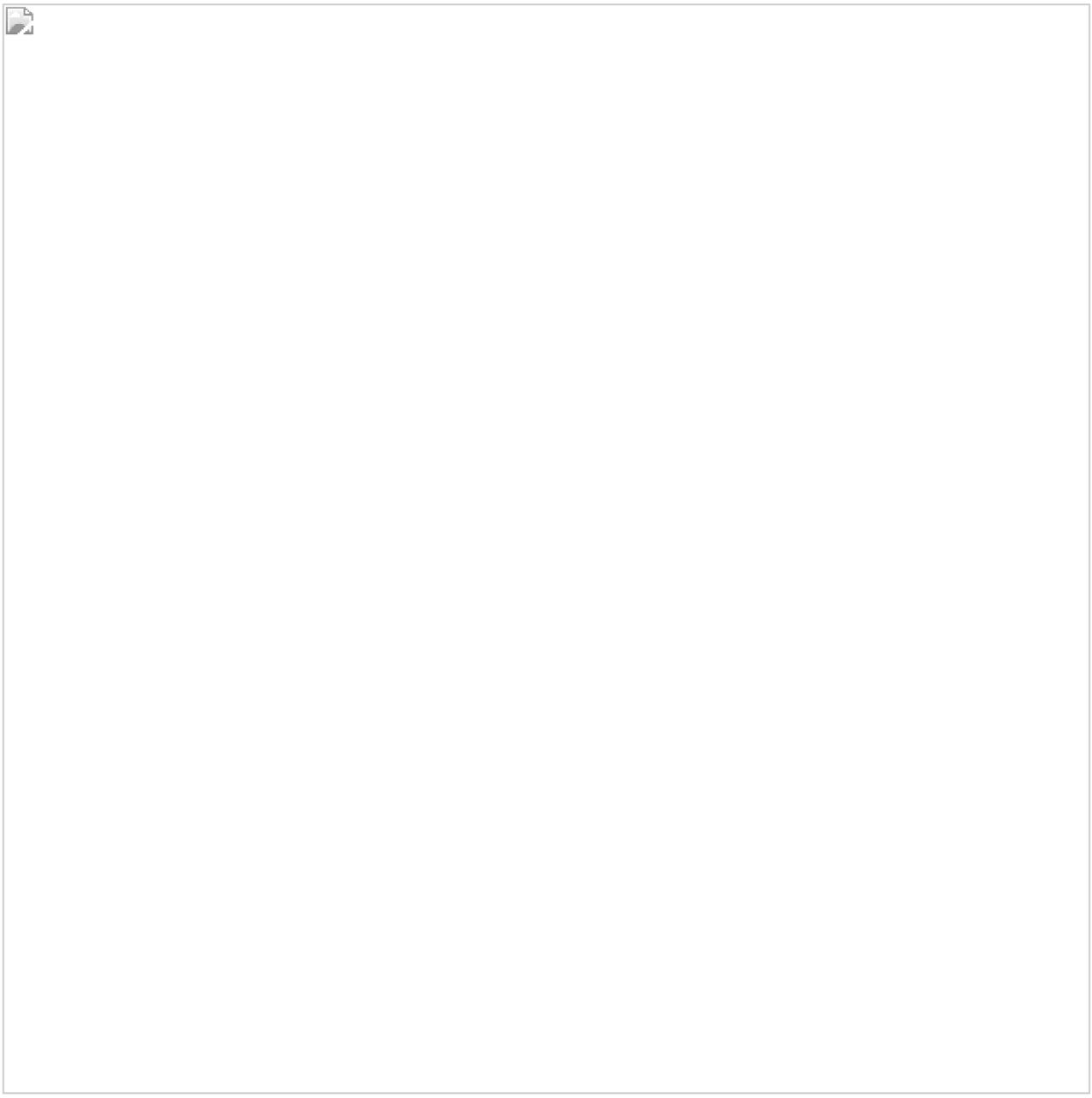


Think about it

1. What were the two young women doing?

- ○ Singing
- ○ Playing chess
- ○ Weaving

The Crumbled Axe



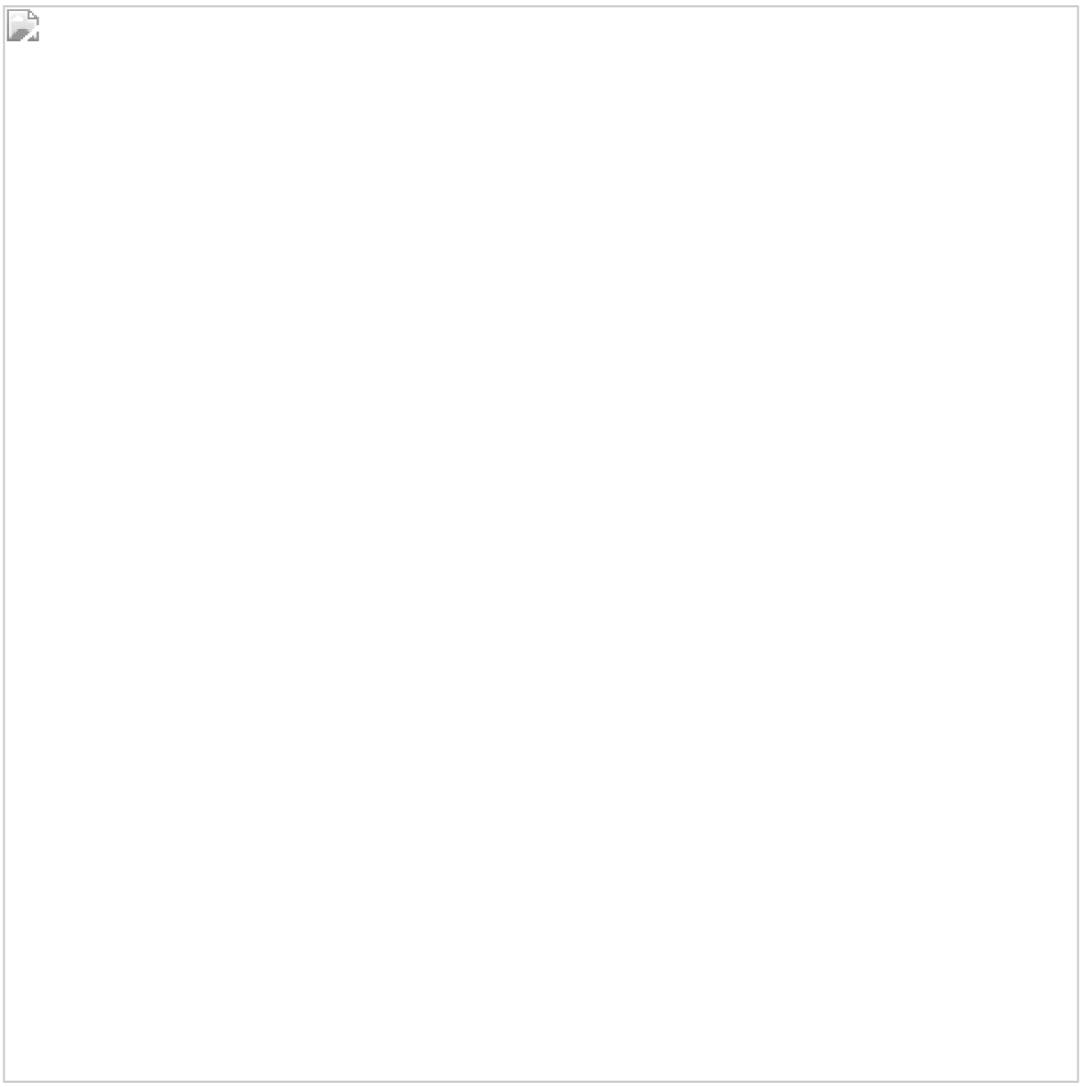
At last Tsunu thought, “I must return, and tell those at home of the beautiful maidens.”

But his knees were stiff and weak. “Surely I have stood here for many hours,” he said.

He leaned on his ax to help himself up, and the ax crumbled into dust! Then he looked down and saw a long white beard hanging from his chin.

TALK ABOUT IT

What do you think Tsunu was thinking when his ax turned to dust?

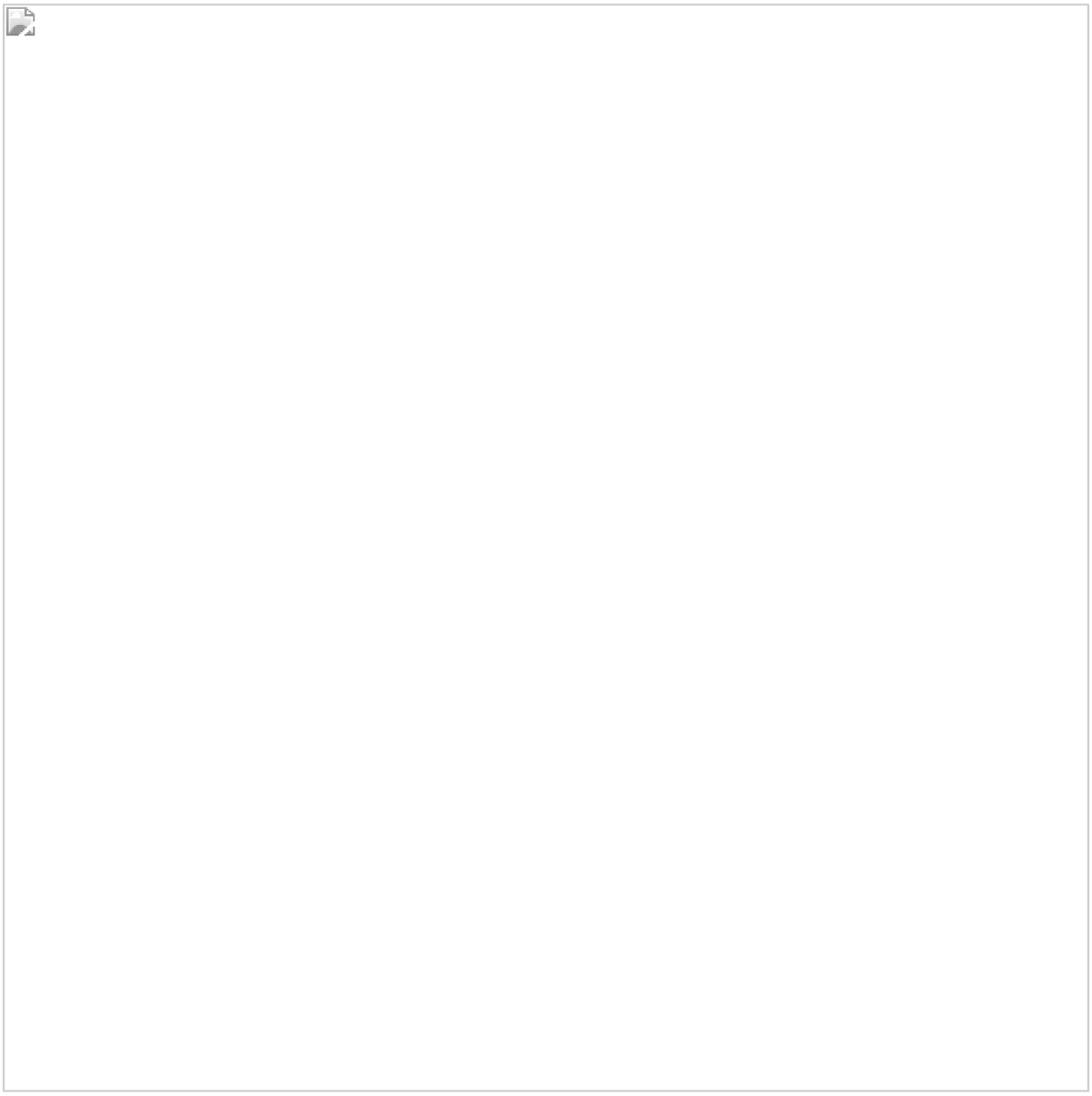


Think about it

1. What happened when Tsunu leaned on his ax?

- ○ It crumbled into dust
- ○ It sang
- ○ It turned to gold

A Village of Strangers



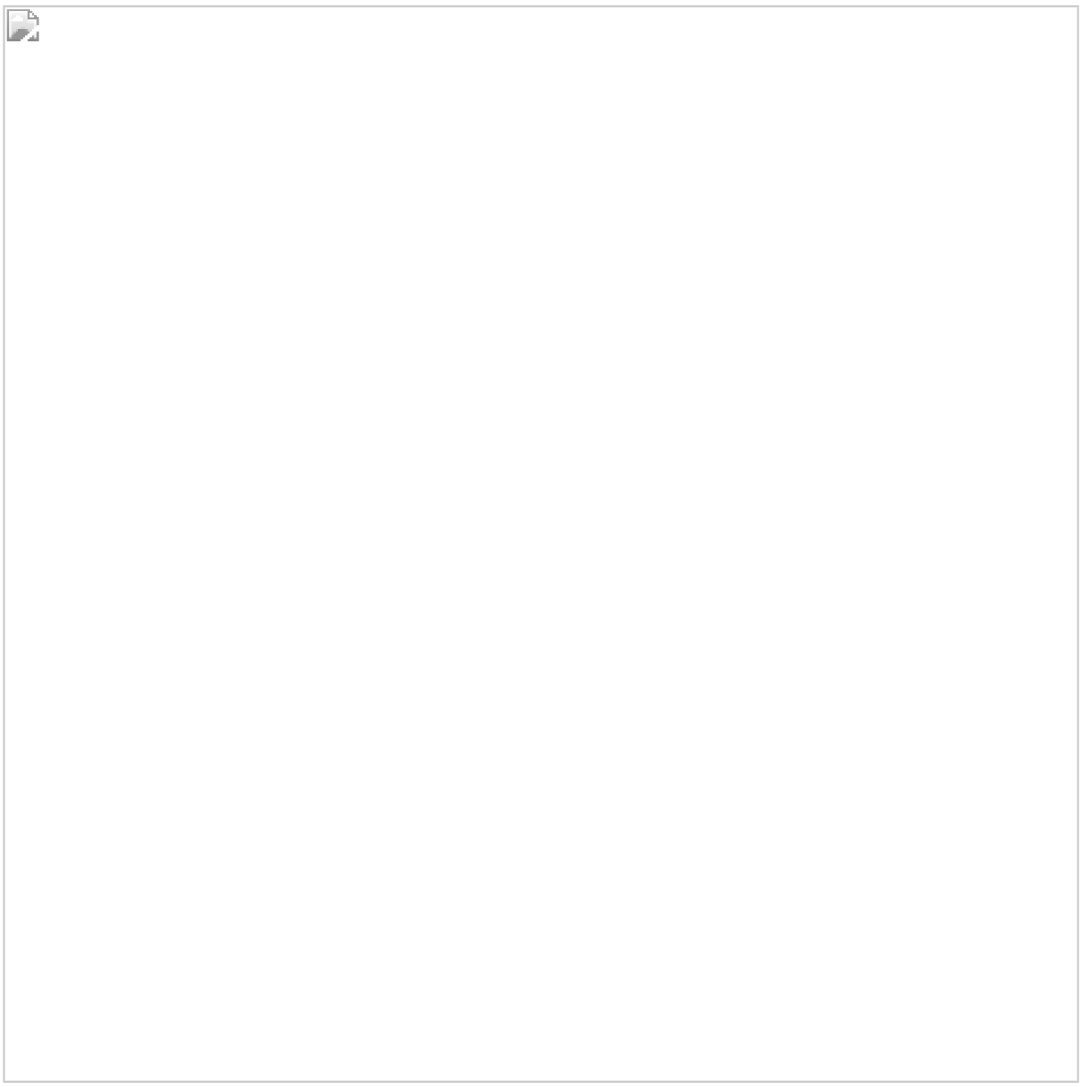
Tsunu tried and tried to get home. Tired and weary, he came to a hut at last. But everything was different. Strange faces peeped out at him. The people spoke in a way he did not know.

“Where are my wife and my children?” he cried. But no one knew his name.

Slowly he understood. Seven generations had passed since he said goodbye to his family that morning. While he had watched the maidens, his wife, his children and his children's children had lived their whole lives and were gone.

TALK ABOUT IT

How do you think Tsunu felt? Who might he have wanted to tell?



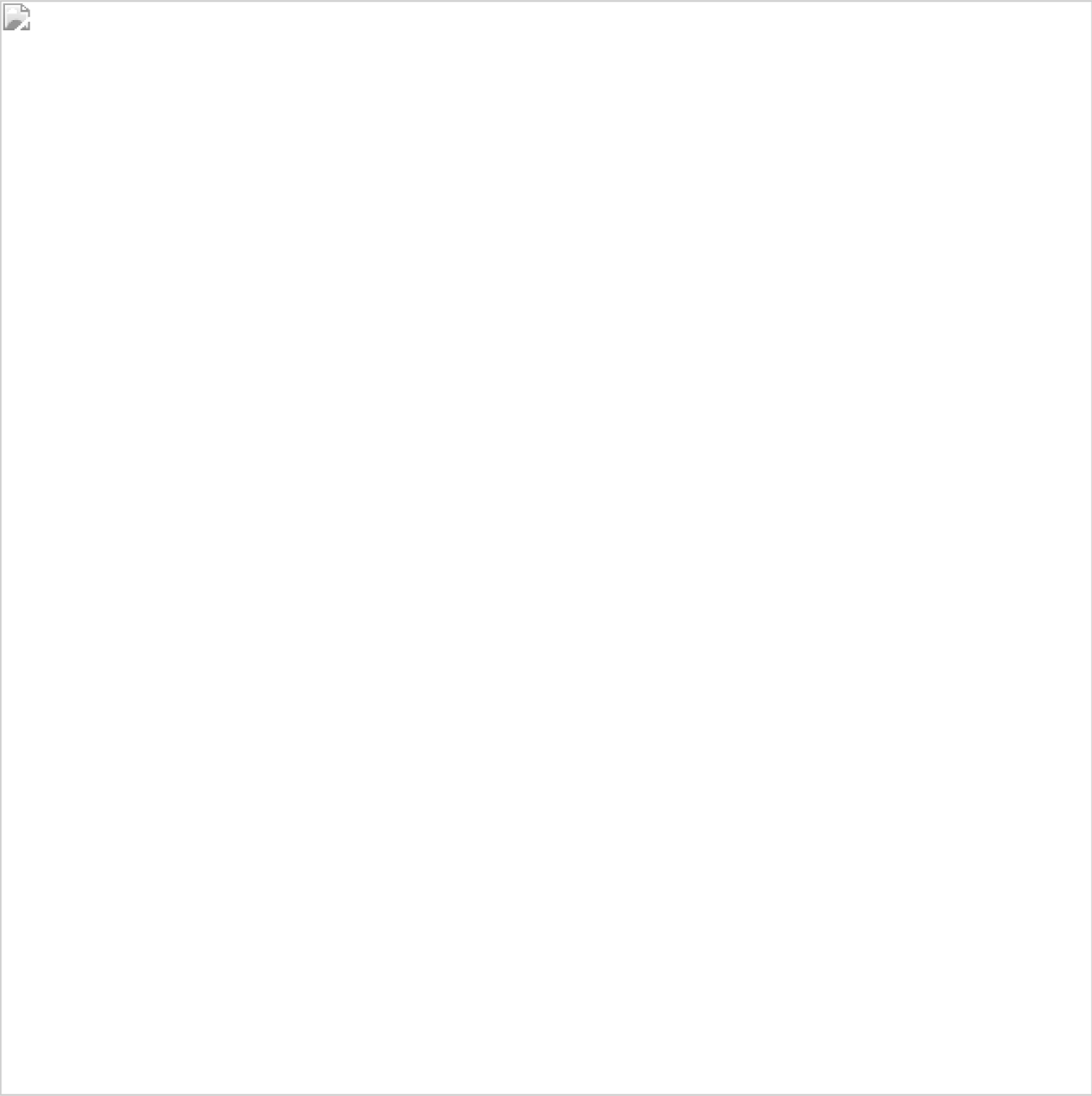
Think about it

1. How many generations had passed?

- ○ One
- ○ Three
- ○ Seven

2. Who do you want to spend time with today? What could you do together?

The Pilgrim

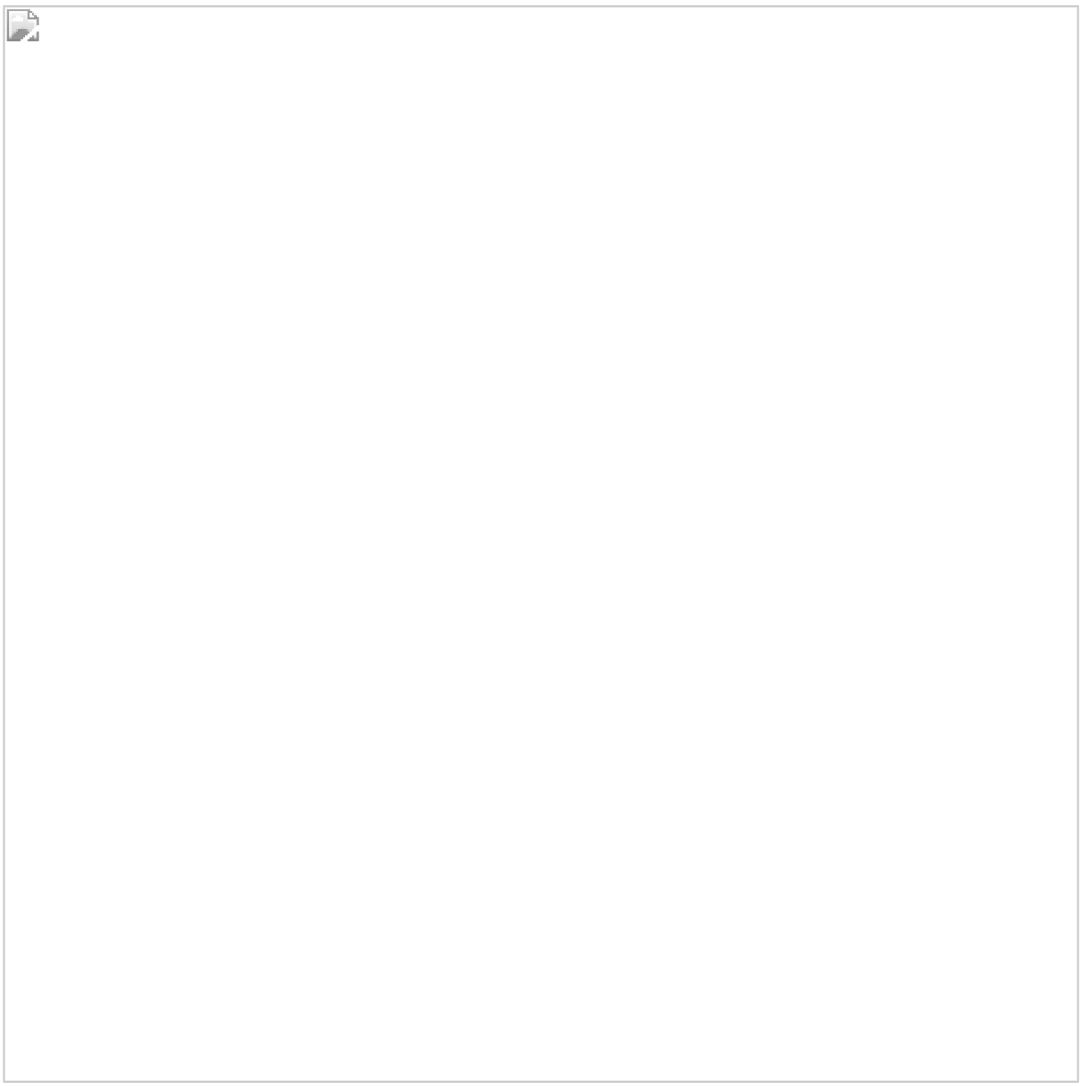


For the few years that were left to him, Tsunu walked as a pilgrim to Fuji-yama, the mountain he had always loved.

After he died, the people honored him as a saint, a kind and holy person who brings good fortune to the people of his land.

TALK ABOUT IT

A very old song says to God, “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past” (Psalm 90:4). What does that make you think about time?



Think about it

1. Where did Tsunu walk in his last years?

- ○ To the sea
- ○ To Fuji-yama
- ○ To Kyoto

2. If you could tell Tsunu one thing, what would you say?

“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”

— Yeshua HaMashiach

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