

Earthquake God

Characters:

Narrator
Oldest Brother
Middle Brother
Youngest Brother
Earthquake God

Narrator: Once on an island far, far to the east—or maybe to the west—there were three brothers. In those days, everyone on that island lived in caves. But the three brothers were not happy about it.

Oldest Brother: Why must we live in a cave?"

Middle Brother: If we built a house, the Earthquake God would come to wreck it.

Youngest Brother: What if we built a house he couldn't wreck?

Oldest Brother: No one knows how.

Youngest Brother: Then we should try and find out.

Narrator: The brothers all agreed they should build such a house, but they could not agree how. So each set off to the valley to build one of his own. The oldest brother built his house from stone and mortar.

Oldest Brother: It is as strong as a mountain.

Narrator: The middle brother built his house from wood and pegs.

Middle Brother: It is as strong as a tree.

Narrator: The youngest brother built his house from bamboo and cord.

Youngest Brother: It is as strong as the grass.

Narrator: One day, the Earthquake God came down the mountain. On legs like pillars, he strode up to the oldest brother's house of stone.

Earthquake God: So! They try to build houses, do they?

Narrator: The Earthquake God stamped his feet. And as he stamped, he shouted,

Earthquake God: "EARTH SHAKE! HOUSE BREAK!"

Narrator: The earth shook and the house shivered. The mortar cracked and the stones fell down. The Earthquake God laughed.

Somehow, the oldest brother got out safely and ran to his brother's house of wood. But it was not long before the Earthquake God arrived.

Earthquake God: "Another one! Well, this one won't last any longer."

Narrator: He stamped his feet and shouted

Earthquake God: "EARTH SHAKE! HOUSE BREAK!"

Narrator: The earth shook and the house shuddered. The pegs snapped and the walls leaned over. The Earthquake God laughed. The two brothers got out quickly and ran to their brother's house of bamboo. But soon the Earthquake God arrived there too.

Earthquake God: "Still another! But this one looks weakest of all!"

Narrator: He stamped and shouted

Earthquake God "EARTH SHAKE! HOUSE BREAK!"

Narrator: The earth shook and the house swayed. The cord strained and the bamboo wobbled—but then it sprang back straight! The Earthquake God frowned. He stamped harder,

then harder still. But nothing he did could wreck the bamboo house. At last, in a fury, he stamped back up the mountain. The brothers were happy to see him go. But the oldest asked the youngest...

Oldest Brother: "Why did your house stand when ours did not?"

Middle brother: "Yes, why?"

Youngest Brother: "You tried to make your houses stronger than the Earthquake God. But I made mine weaker. Whatever bends does not break."

Narrator: And that is why, forever after, everyone on that island built their houses from bamboo.

All Brothers: Poor Earthquake God!