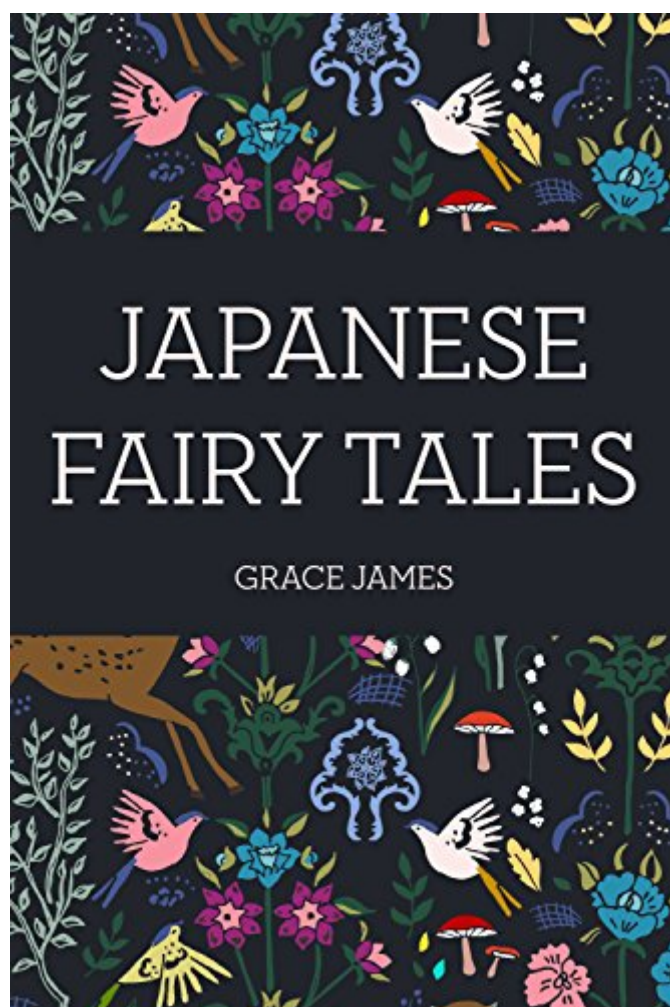


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# Japanese Fairy Tales



## Synopsis

Grace James was an English writer of children's literature and a Japanese folklorist. Her *Japanese Fairy Tales* (1910) collected and retold stories from the Japanese folk tradition. It was illustrated by Warwick Goble. Grace James also wrote the John and Mary children's adventure series, one of which, *John and Mary's Aunt*, is about the author's upbringing in Japan.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Originally published in 1903, Yei Theodora Ozaki's translation of Sadanami Sanjin's collection of Japanese fairy tales has been the introduction of many a young child into the legends and fables of old Japan across the years. Definitely not a scholarly reference or valuable research tool for folktale researchers, Ozaki unabashedly re-crafted some of the stories, translating loosely and adding in elements of unrelated tales, in order to make them more enjoyable and understandable for Western children. She even gave Urashimataro a happy ending! There is something delightfully romantic about translations from this era, due to the unfamiliarity with Japanese culture at the time. Terms that would not be translated today, like "oni" and "samurai", are rendered as "ogre" and "knight" and

other English equivalents. While unauthentic, this makes the stories more approachable by young children who have a mind for fantasy but haven't yet graduated to Japanese Studies. While far from a picture book, artist Kakuzo Fujiyama contributed 66 beautiful drawings to illustrate the 22 tales. Unfortunately, all the illustrations are reproduced in black-and-white, instead of the original color plates included in the original pressings. Many of the stories here are familiar with anyone even slightly interested in Japanese folklore. "Momotaro, or the Story of the Son of a Peach," "The Story of Urashima Taro, the Fisher Lad", "Kintaro the Golden Boy" and "The Ogre of Rashomon". Along with these, there are rarer tales that I haven't seen in any other Japanese fairy tale collection. "The Stones of Five Colors and the Empress Jokwa", "The Sagacious Monkey and the Boar" and "How and Old Man Lost his Wren" were all new to me.

Japanese Fairy Tales, also known as The Japanese Fairy Book, is a 1908 collection of traditional fables and folktales compiled and translated by Yei Theodora Ozaki. As I understand it, this is a somewhat liberal translation; accuracy to the source material has obviously been sacrificed to a certain extent for the sake of accessibility. Interestingly, words that would not be translated today are translated here for the sake of the Western audience ("samurai," for example, is translated "knight"). Many of these stories are not concise - they tend to meander - and some end rather abruptly. Without substantial familiarity with the original material, it's difficult to determine how much of this is the stories themselves and how much is Ozaki's doing, but I suspect the latter is more responsible. These stories are, nevertheless, mostly quite enjoyable, and the differences and similarities with Western fairy tales are particularly interesting. (Wicked stepmothers, apparently, are a source of plot conflict the world over.) Many of these stories are grim and violent, of the degree of the original un-sanitized Grimm Brothers' tales. There are vicious revenge stories here, and the ones involving animals bring to mind Tom and Jerry (or, perhaps more accurately, Itchy and Scratchy, never mind Happy Tree Friends), even with some obvious sanitizing ("The Farmer and the Badger" is a notable example). Many stories do not have happy endings. They certainly aren't all for small children. Accuracy aside, Japanese Fairy Tales is a nice little collection of stories, and a decent introduction to Japanese folklore.

the stories are wonderful. a few of them match some of the stories we heard while living in Okinawa with the military. HOWEVER, I cannot give the Kindle version a 5 star like I would like to, because the formatting is absolutely horrendous.

I'm a fan of Japanese "things" and thought i could tell my grandkids some of these at bedtime. Some are certainly not for bedtime and i think two are Chinese, not Japanese. No matter, they are great stories just the same. I read the whole thing at one shot (over 3 days) and still remember some of them. Definitely older fairy tales, unless you have a decent understanding of their history and thought processes, might be a bit confusing as to why this guy did these things or why a dragon laying across the road is commonplace. Will be reading these to the young'uns and have already told the older kids some of the better ones. Will read again

An entertaining little compendium of fantastic tales that usually revolve around animals. Mean and petty women also abound, as well as moral stories about filial piety. Not surprisingly, there are some similarities with Western fairy tales. These stories, however, will not really give you any insight into Japanese culture. Rather, you should approach this book with at least some basic knowledge about Japanese way of life.

This was not what I expected it to be. Some of the stories dron on forever and never get to a point. The translation is very odd and there are numerous tyoes. What I had really been looking for was a Japanese mythology book and deicded to whet my appetite with this. This book was not anywhere near as enjoyable as the Japanese fairy tale book I had as a child.

I don't have a lot to say about this, other than it is a very nice collection of Japanese Fairy Tales. At first I was a little put off by the way Japanese Fairy Tales are told. If you are like me, and used to European Fairy Tales, then these will seem a little different, namely, when the hero comes in and does his heroly deed, he doesn't simply marry the princess and live happily ever after, or ride off with his sidekick into the sunset. Apparently, the Japanese need a little more closure about the remaining life of the hero, so there are about 5-10 obligatory pages chronicling the fame and fortune of the hero before the actual ending of the book. This makes the stories seem a bit long winded and fluffy at first, but you get used to it after a while. Its true that the kindle freebie version is a bit lacking in format and spell checking, but this didn't bother me because I figure you get what you pay for, and this is free, so take it or leave it. The one thing that I found very cool, being a avid gamer, and growing up playing all the Japanese RPGs and action adventure video games, I could see many of the plotlines of those video games in these tales. Being a huge fan of the game Okami, I was especially happy to hear some real stories about Amaterasu (The Sun Goddess) and Ry'jin (Sea Dragon King). All in all, I liked these stories, but not nearly as much as I enjoyed reading Norse

Mythology.

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