



## Ohkina Kaeru Tiddelik (Australia)

### A Big Frog Tiddelik



Written and illustrated by Kato Chako based on an oral narrative  
Published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc. in 2000

A very big frog becomes thirsty and drinks up all the water in the ponds and rivers. The other animals, suffering because there is no water, make a plan to get the frog to laugh and bring up all the water it drank. This is an old Aboriginal story about a long drought on the Australian plain, populated with cute Australian animals, such as wombats, koalas and emus.



In Northern Europe, there are folktales about cats that swallow the moon and the sun. In Japan, we have stories about creatures that swallow up hunters and demons. The characters commonly have great appetites and their stomachs are like bottomless black holes. While it may be amusing to see big eaters stuffing their faces, the story contrasts the frog's full stomach with the threat of famine and starvation.



## Hyakunin no Otohsan (China)

### One Hundred Fathers



Written by Tan Xiaoyong and Amano Yukichi and illustrated by Tan Xiaoyong  
Published by Fukuinkan Shoten Publishers, Inc. in 2000

This is quite a cynical old Chinese story about a mysterious jar that multiplies everything placed in it one-hundredfold and the greediness of people. At the end of the story, the father of a greedy landlord accidentally falls into the jar and so 100 fathers are created!



The ending predicts the development of clone technology and is actually quite scary. The story warns us that what we think of as great scientific breakthroughs and technological progress may turn out to be double-edged swords that cause as much, if not more, harm as good.

“If I had this jar, I’d put my Lego in it. What would you put in it, dad?”

“Well, I’d put money, no, beer in it.”

“What would you do if mum were multiplied by 100?”

“Oh, that would be a nightmare!”

“Dad, what’s a ‘nightmare’?”

Human beings may be infinitely greedy, but if there were a jar that enabled me to have fun conversation with my children like this, I would like to have one.