

Kamishibai Set: Kaguya Hime

かぐや姫

KAGUYA
HIME



How to Read Kamishibai

Kamishibai stories are read from the back of illustrated cards. However, you can also tell the story from memory or even improvise a little to add to the story.

Move the front card to the back after you finish one part of the story. The text now showing will be the story for the card that is at the front.

The text for the title image (card 1) goes on the back of the last card, so when showing the title image to the audience, you can read the corresponding text without turning the card around.

When you finish the story for card 1, move it to the back of the pack. The story for card 2 which is on the back of card 1 will now be at the back for you to read. Once you have told that part of the story, you move this card to the back and again the story for the card 3 will now be at the back for you. You continue this for each part of the story until the end.

Remember, the text on the back of a card does not correspond to the illustration on its front!

かぐやひめ

KAGUYA
HIME





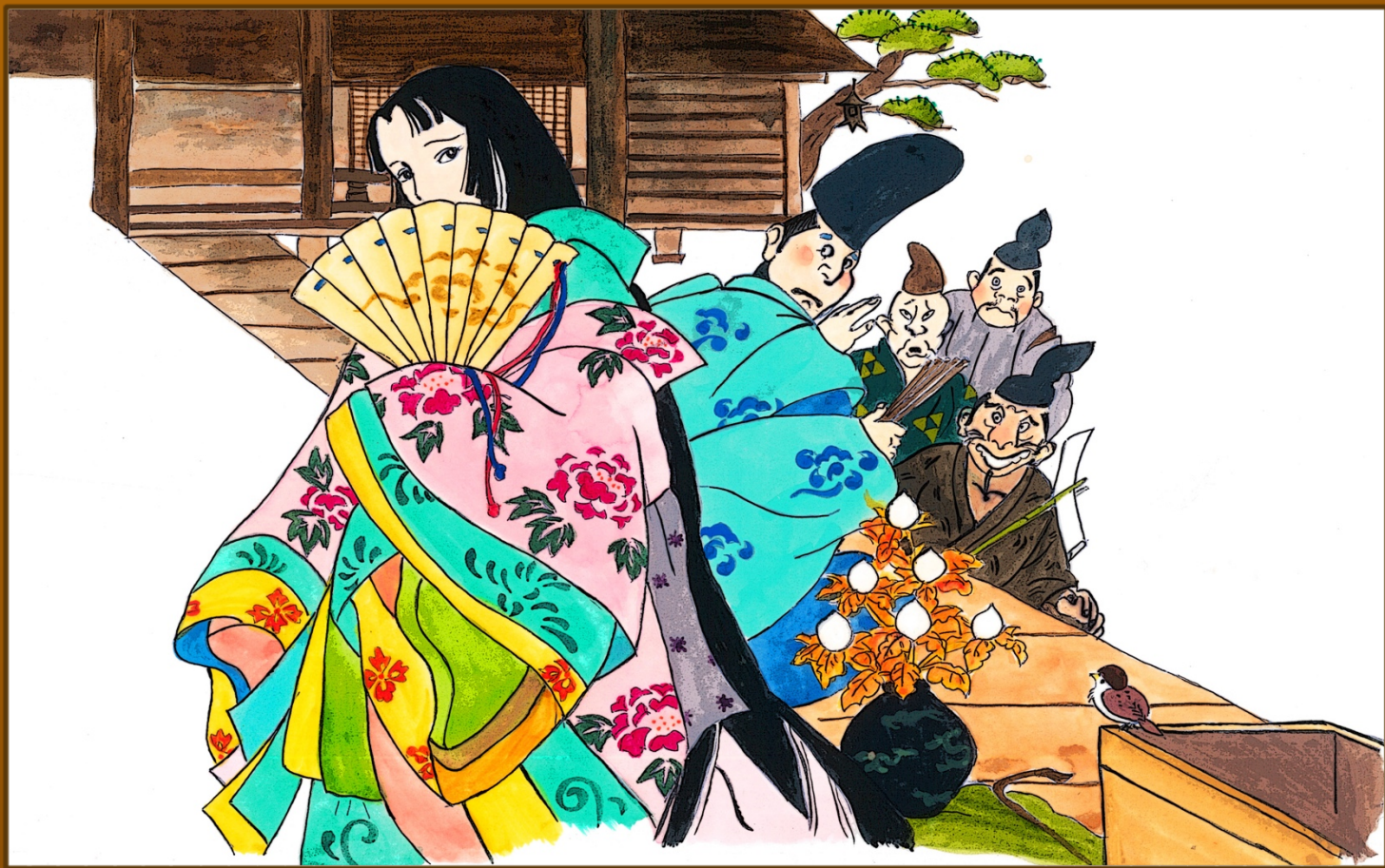




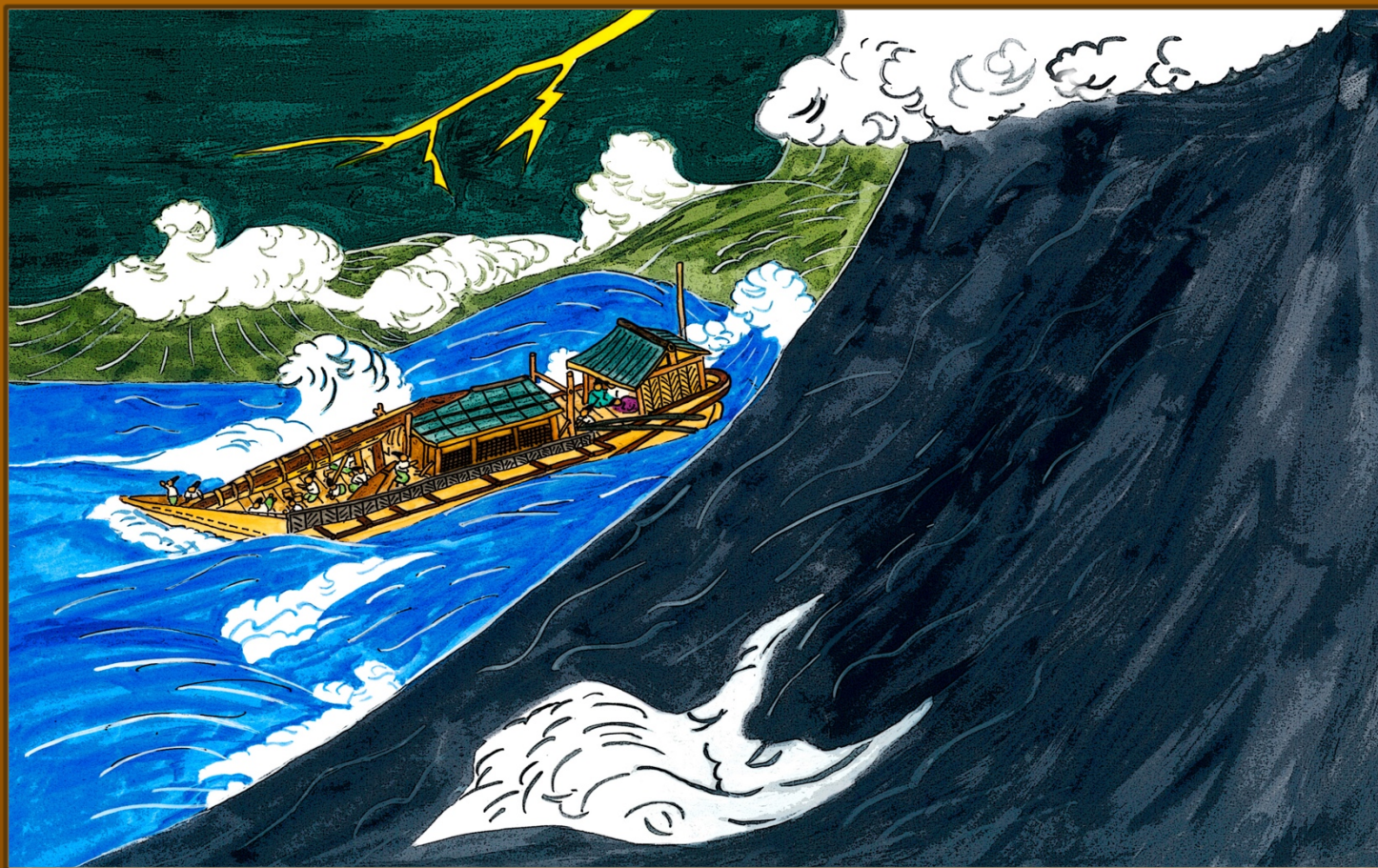




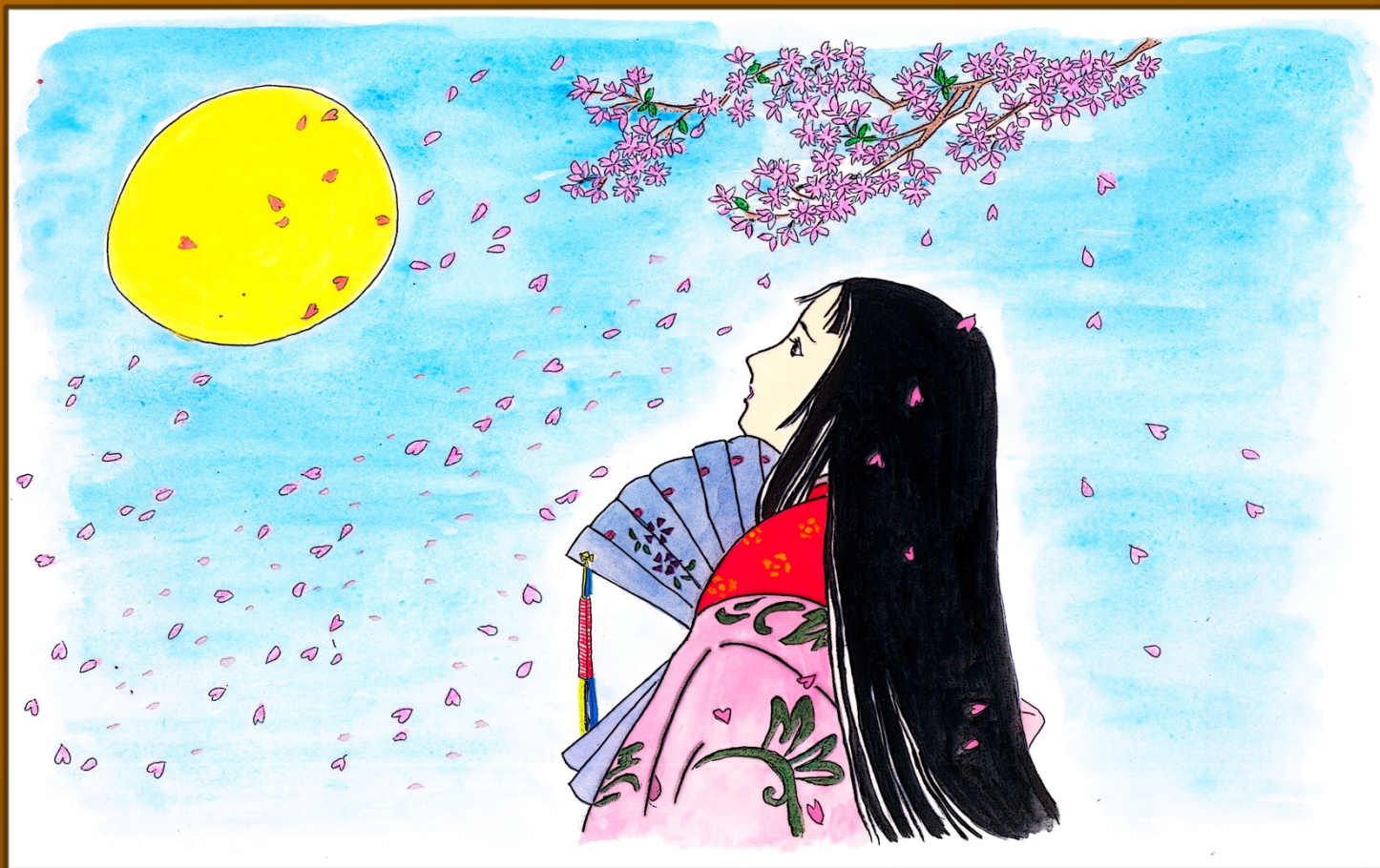




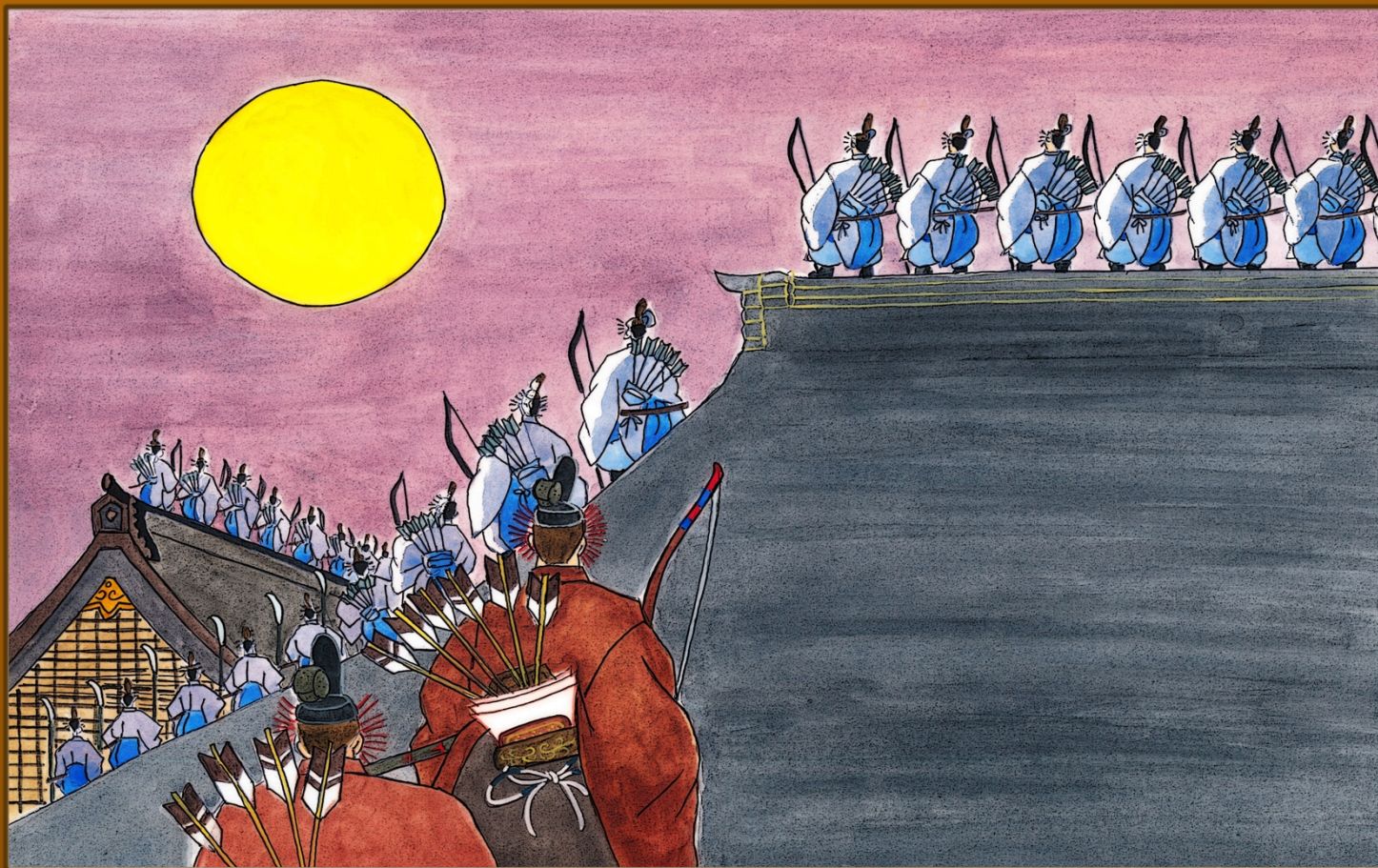




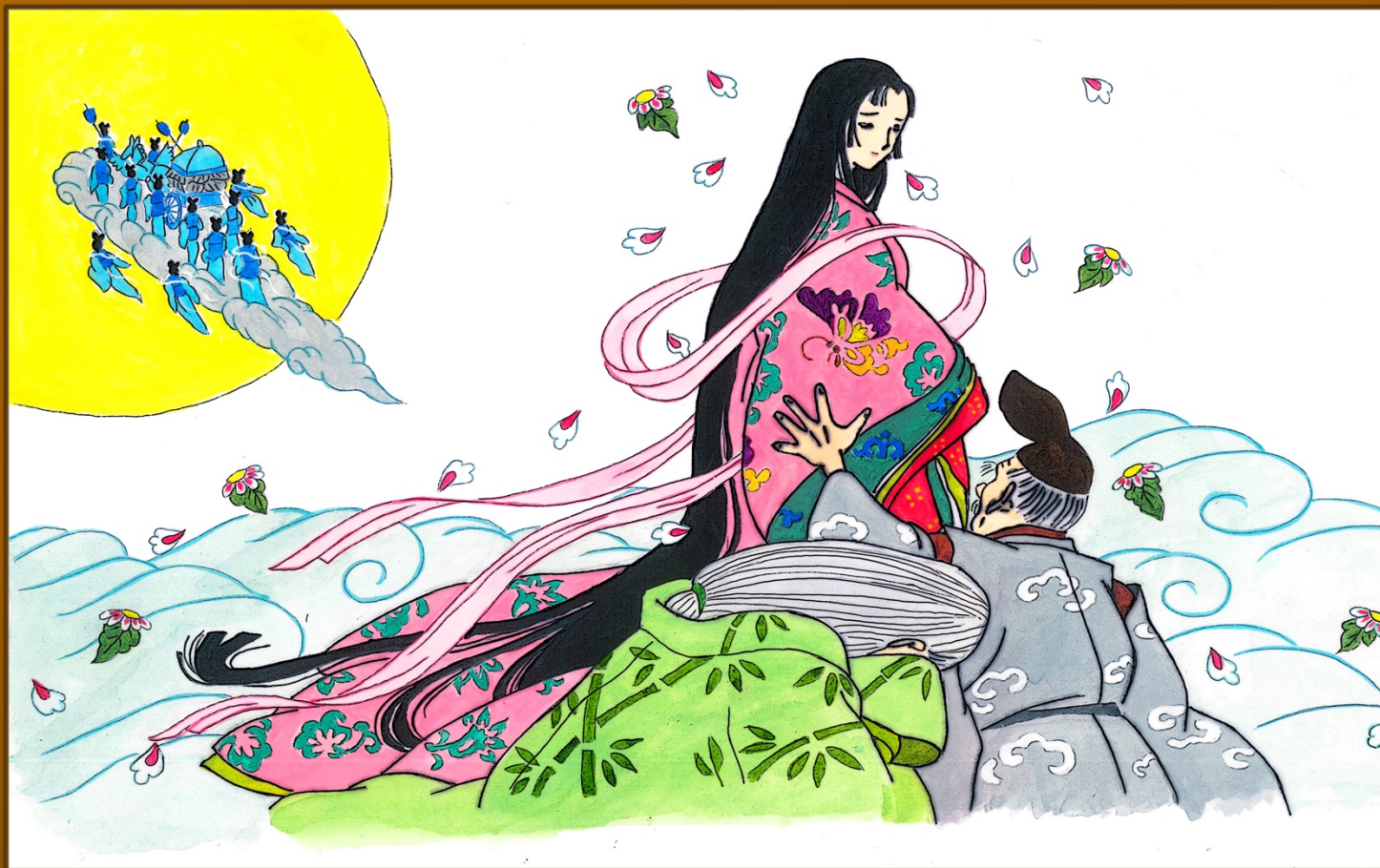












Introduction

This is a story from Japan from long ago.

It is called **Kaguya Hime**
(Ka-gu-ya He-meh)

In Japanese, “Kaguya” means “bright night”
and “Hime” means “Princess”

So Kaguya Hime is known in English as
The Moon Princess

1.

Mukashi mukashi [Japanese]*

Long, long ago, there lived an old bamboo wood-cutter.
He and his wife were very poor and sad because they had no children.

Everyday, he went into the woods and cut down bamboo, which he would take home to make various household items which he sold for a living. One morning, at work as usual, he discovered a bright light coming out of a bamboo stalk.

“How mysterious” he said, and went closer.

Carefully, he cut the bamboo stalk and revealed a tiny girl inside.

**Mukashi Mukashi means “Once upon a time” in Japanese.*

2.

“What a pretty little girl” the old man said, and took her back home.

His wife was very excited too.

“She must be sent from heaven to be our child”, they said.

So they brought her up with loving care, treating her like a treasure.

After finding the tiny girl, the old man found gold in every bamboo he cut down. He soon became the richest man in the village.

3.

Years went by, and the bamboo child grew up to become a girl of great beauty.

People started to call her “Kaguya Hime” (The Moon Princess) because her skin was so bright and beautiful and she glowed like the daughter of the Moon God.

The news of the Princess’s loveliness spread far and wide. Men came to catch a glimpse of her beauty. Many became her suitors, and they wished to marry her.

4.

Among those suitors were five men who stood outside the wood-cutter's house day and night, in sunshine and in rain.
They were all noble knights and very rich.

"Kaguya Hime is a child sent from heaven. I cannot let anyone marry her", the old man kept saying. But the suitors didn't give up.

Finally, the old man gave in and said to Kaguya Hime,
"I am an old man, and my end may come at any time. Maybe it is time that you see these five suitors and choose one of them."

Kaguya Hime replied: "In that case, I shall marry the man who proves his love by bringing me something very special that I desire."

5.

So, she sent word to the first knight asking him to bring her a stone bowl which had belonged to a Buddha in India.

The second knight was asked to go to the Mountain of Horai in the Eastern Sea to bring her a branch of the tree growing on its summit. The tree had a trunk of gold, and its branches bore white jewels instead of fruit.

The third knight was told to go to China to search for the fire-rat and to bring back its skin.

The fourth knight was told to search for the dragon that bore a stone of five colours on its head and bring it to her.

The fifth knight was to find her a special swallow, which carried a shell in its stomach.

When they heard this, the knights were disheartened. But when they thought of the princess, the love in their hearts gave them strength. So they were determined to get what she desired.

6.

The first knight, not having the courage to go all the way to India, went to a nearby temple and took a stone bowl from the altar there.

He wrapped it in a cloth of gold and brought it back to Kaguya Hime, but when she unwrapped the bowl, she said,

“This cannot be the true bowl of Buddha for it does not shine at all.”

Ashamed, the knight went home in despair.

7.

The second knight announced that he was setting out for Mount Horai. He set sail, with no idea where the mountain was.

So he returned secretly and paid skilled jewellers to make a gold branch with fruits of white jewels. This was so perfectly made that Kaguya Hime almost believed it was real.

But, the jewellers who had made the branch arrived at the house and asked to be paid for their work, for the knight had not paid them anything.

So in this way, the knight's deception was discovered and he too had to depart for home in despair.

8.

The third knight had a friend in China already, so instead of going there himself, he asked his friend to obtain the skin of the fire-rat for him.

The friend brought the skin to the knight, who paid him a large sum of money. He brought the fire rat's skin to Kaguya Hime.

"First I must put the skin to the test by putting it into the fire. If it is the real thing it will not burn," said Kaguya Hime.

But when she threw it onto the fire, the skin crackled and immediately burned up.

The knight was very angry and blamed his friend for deceiving him.

9.

The fourth knight hired a ship and he commanded the captain to set sail in search of the dragon.

But after they had been travelling for only a few days, they encountered a great storm which lasted so long that by the time it was over, the knight had lost heart.

Eventually they made it safely back to shore. Exhausted by his dangerous journey, the knight gave up the hunt for the dragon.

10.

The fifth knight was confident of accomplishing his task for there were swallow nests everywhere.

One nest was found just under the roof of the emperor's palace. So, the knight ordered his servants to build poles right up to the roof, and from these poles they swung a big basket on a rope.

The knight climbed into the basket and told them to pull on the rope, raising it to the roof.

"There it is! I've found the shell", he shouted.

The servants let the basket down in such a hurry that it tipped over and the knight tumbled out, onto the ground. When he opened his hand to make sure he had the shell safely inside, he saw only a small pile of bird droppings.

11.

After the failure of all the knights' efforts, Kaguya Hime's parents noticed that ,night after night, she would sit on her balcony and gaze sadly at the moon for hours, always ending in an outburst of tears.

One summer's night the old man found her weeping as if her heart were broken, and he asked the reason for her sorrow.

12.

Through her tears she told him that he had been right when he guessed that she did not belong to this world.

In fact, she had come from the moon, and soon her time on earth would be over. On the fifteenth day of that very month of August her friends from the moon would come to fetch her, and she would have to return. She wept as she told her foster-parents:

“It breaks my heart to think I must leave you and this home where I have been happy for so long.”

“We won’t let you go” said the bamboo-cutter.

“No, we won’t let anyone take you away from us” said the old woman, who was also crying.

13.

The old man went to see the emperor and pleaded with him to do all he could to prevent Kaguya Hime from being taken back to the moon.

On the 15th day of that month, the emperor sent 2000 warriors to guard the house. 1000 stationed themselves on the roof; the remaining 1000 kept watch around the entrances to the house. All were trained archers, with bows and arrows.

The bamboo-cutter and his wife held Kaguya Hime in the inner room.

The night wore on. The yellow harvest moon rose high in the sky, flooding the sleeping world with its golden light.

14.

Suddenly, they saw a cloud form around the moon, and as they watched, the cloud came closer and closer to the earth.

As it came near, everyone saw with dismay that it was coming towards the house. In the middle of the cloud, there was a winged chariot, surrounded by a shining light.

The warriors in the village hurriedly tried to load arrows into their bow-strings. But somehow they had become paralysed and could not move a muscle. Then, they heard a clear voice speaking from heaven.

“Thank you for taking care of the princess, but the time has come for Kaguya Hime to return to the moon.”

At these words, the screen doors of Kaguya Hime’s room slid open of their own accord and the princess stood up to leave.

15.

She walked out of the house and looked back, and saw with pity the deep sadness of the old man.

“It is time to say farewell. Please think of me always when looking up at the moon” she said.

The princess took off her shining coat and gave it to him as a gift.
Then she climbed into the chariot.

The chariot began to fly up towards the moon. They all gazed with tears in their eyes as Kaguya Hime disappeared from sight and the moon-chariot was gradually lost amongst the fluffy clouds drifting across the sky.