

**University of Oregon
Museum of Art
Docent Program**

taken from "**Kintaro's Adventures and Other Japanese Children's Stories**"
Ed. Florence Sakade, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont, 1994.

How to Fool a Cat

Once upon a time there was a rich lord who liked to collect carvings of animals. He had many kinds, but he had no carved mouse. So he called two skilled carvers to him and said:

"I want each of you to carve a mouse for me. I want them to be so lifelike that my cat will think they're real mice and pounce on them. We'll put them down together and see which mouse the cat pounces on first. The the carver of that mouse I'll give this bag of gold.

So the two carvers went back their homes and set to work. After a time they came back. One had carved a wonderful mouse out of wood. it was so well done that it looked exactly like a mouse. The other, however, had done very badly. He had used some material that flaked and looked funny; it didn't look like a mouse at all.

"What's this?" said the lord. "This wooden mouse is a marvelous piece of carving, but this other mouse--if it is indeed supposed to be a mouse--wouldn't fool anyone, let alone a cat."

"Let the cat be brought in," said the second carver. "the cat can decide which is the better mouse."

The lord thought this was rather silly, but he ordered the cat to be brought in. No sooner had it come into the room than it pounced upon the badly carved mouse and paid no attention at all to the one that was carved so well.

There was nothing for the lord to do but give the gold to the unskillful carver, but as he did so he said: "Well, now that you have the gold, tell me how you did it?"

"It was easy, my lord," said the man. "I didn't carve my mouse from wood. I carved it from dried fish. That's why the cat pounced upon it so swiftly."

When the lord heard how the cat and everyone else had been fooled he could not help laughing, and soon everyone in the entire court was holding his sides with laughter.

"Well," said the lord finally, "then I'll have to give two bags of gold. One to the workman who carved so well, and one to you who carved so cleverly. I'll keep the wooden mouse, and we'll let the cat have the other one."