



When the Demon Hunter Became the Demon

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

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- 1 Setsubun's bean-throwing has roots in tsuina, a court ritual imported from China and recorded in Japan as early as 706. Its central figure, the hososhi, wore a golden four-eyed mask and a bearskin, and his job was to drive invisible disease-carrying spirits out of the palace. In 866, the court even ordered that a man about 190 centimeters tall be sent from eastern Japan to play the role.
- 2 Over the Heian period, however, something curious happened. Records suggest that the peach-wood bows and reed arrows once aimed at the spirits began to be aimed at the hososhi himself. Some historians believe that the frightening mask gradually turned the protector into the very monster he was supposed to fight. By the time bean-throwing appears in records in the 1400s, the idea of driving a visible demon out of the house was already familiar.
- 3 The story raises a question that goes beyond folklore: how do societies decide who the outsider or the enemy is? A figure who looks strange or frightening can easily be cast as the villain, whatever his real role may be. Even today, the answer differs from place to place. Some temples refuse to shout 'Demons out,' saying that demons can change their ways, while some shrines welcome demons as guardians.

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

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| (A) Bean-throwing was invented in the 1400s to protect the palace. | (B) The hososhi was always seen as a dangerous monster. |
| (C) The figure who once chased demons came to be seen as a demon, which raises a question about how societies choose enemies. | (D) All temples and shrines in Japan treat demons in the same way. |

2. What did the hososhi wear?

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| (A) A golden four-eyed mask and a bearskin. | (B) A red demon mask with two horns. |
| (C) A white robe and a crown. | (D) Armor made of peach wood. |

3. According to the passage, what did the court order in 866?

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| (A) That bean-throwing should start in every house. | (B) That the hososhi should stop wearing a mask. |
| (C) That arrows should be aimed at the hososhi. | (D) That a man about 190 centimeters tall be sent from eastern Japan to play the role. |

4. What can we infer from the idea that "the frightening mask gradually turned the protector into the very monster he was supposed to fight"?

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| (A) The hososhi decided to become a demon on purpose. | (B) People's fear of how he looked changed how they saw his role. |
| (C) The mask was lost during the Heian period. | (D) The court stopped the ritual because it was too frightening. |

5. In paragraph 3, the word "cast" in "can easily be cast as the villain" is closest in meaning to

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| (A) thrown away | (B) given the role of |
| (C) made out of metal | (D) invited to |

6. Why does the writer end the passage with examples of temples and shrines?

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| (A) To show that Setsubun is no longer celebrated at temples. | (B) To recommend visiting a shrine on Setsubun. |
| (C) To explain how bean-throwing began in the 1400s. | (D) To show that even today, people do not agree on whether demons are enemies. |



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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| 1. ritual | a. making you feel afraid |
| 2. invisible | b. slowly, over a long period of time |
| 3. frightening | c. old stories, beliefs, and customs that people in a community pass down |
| 4. gradually | d. a person who is not accepted as a member of a group |
| 5. folklore | e. a bad character in a story who causes trouble for others |
| 6. outsider | f. someone or something that protects a person or a place |
| 7. villain | g. a ceremony or a set of actions that people always do in the same way, often for religious reasons |
| 8. guardian | h. not able to be seen |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “Over the Heian period, however, something curious happened.”

Hint: Start with "But" and change "curious" to "strange". Use "during".

2. “Some historians believe that the frightening mask gradually turned the protector into the very monster he was supposed to fight.”

Hint: Start with "Some historians think" and use "Because the mask was so scary" and "slowly began to see him as".

3. “A figure who looks strange or frightening can easily be cast as the villain, whatever his real role may be.”

Hint: Use "If someone looks" and "people may think he is the bad guy". Change "whatever his real role may be" to "even if he is not".

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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Motion: Traditional customs that treat someone as the enemy should be changed.

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- The story of the hososhi shows that people can wrongly make someone the villain just because of how he looks.
- Some temples already refuse to shout Demons out, because they believe demons can change their ways.
- Children learn from customs, so a custom should not teach them to chase away people who look different.

Add your own reason:

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- In Setsubun, the demon stands for sickness and bad luck, not for real people, so the custom does not hurt anyone.
- The custom has changed naturally for more than 1,000 years, so there is no need to force a change.
- Places can already choose their own way, as some shrines welcome demons as guardians, so one rule for everyone is not needed.

Add your own reason:

Opinion	<i>I believe / I think that ...</i>
Reason 1	<i>First, ... For example, ...</i>
Reason 2	<i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i>
Counter	<i>Some people say ... However, ...</i>
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, ...</i>