

Namahage Performance, Part 9: Offering the Namahage More Sake

Realizing that their host is not going to budge, the Namahage move from words to action. They announce another, more thorough search of the house, and get up on their feet to barge through the rooms with renewed vigor. (They might grab you for a moment, too, but fear not: you are unlikely to be dragged into the mountains.)

After a few moments of ruckus, the head of the household makes his final move. Imploring the Namahage to abandon their search, he offers them a round cake of mochi (pounded rice). This distinctive food, which is traditionally eaten and also used for decorative purposes around New Year's, is considered auspicious and a symbol of prosperity.

The Namahage reluctantly accept the mochi, bringing the dialogue to a peaceful conclusion. Before leaving, they remind the head of the household that if anyone in his family is ever lazy or disobedient, he need only face Mt. Shinzan and clap his hands three times to summon the Namahage. With the house purified and the family reminded of the importance of discipline, diligence, and respect for the elderly, the mountain deities of Shinzan promise to return the next year, then disappear into the cold darkness.