The Painted Sparrows

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Much and rapid progress has been made in the world. One and a half centuries ago, in the beginning of the Meiji era, the locomotive, called “land-ship” in those days, first ran between Shinbashi and Yokohama in Japan. People were greatly surprised at the big black iron locomotive smoking and running on the iron rails. People wondered: “How can it run so fast!” And many a rich people were boastful to the heavens about boarding the “land-ship.”

“Have you gotten on the locomotive?”
“Yes, I have. I had a wonderful experience.”
“I’m envious of you for having boarding it.”
“Wonderful it was! I really enjoyed it. You won’t have such a chance of boarding the land-ship.”
“I wish I could!”
“It was such a great wonder. Get on it. Electric poles, mountains, and even seas were flying past and plunging into me!”
“It’s dangerous!”
“No, it’s not dangerous. Electric poles, mountains and seas strangely but artfully flew off and avoided us. How wonderful the scientific age!”

In those days people traveled on foot. Only a very few and special rich people were able to get on a palanquin for the journey. And, when the people of Edo city, the edokko, once made a plan to go off on a journey, the traveler himself, his relatives and intimate friends used to meet to see each other off at Ohsaki, Shinagawa in Tokyo, where a signboard read: ‘From here the Tokaido Highway begins.’

“Everybody! I will go now. Thank you for coming to see me off. Everybody! Farewell. Take care of yourselves during my absence.”
“Don’t worry about us. We all will surely take care of ourselves. You, my fellow! Take care of yourself! And, be careful of the water, it changes from place to place.”
“Thank you for the good advice about water! Now I will go but I am greatly worried about my children left at home while I am gone.”
“Don’t worry about them. I will look after them while you are out.”
“Thank you! I am relieved that you are looking after my children but I am also greatly worrying about my wife left at home while I am gone.”
“Wife? Ok. Ok. Don’t worry about her. I will also look after your wife while you are gone.”
“No. No. No, thank you! Don’t be sly. Please, don’t look after my wife while I am out! I can’t believe you about my wife. Anyway, now, farewell! Farewell! I will be off.”

In those days travelers usually used to walk 20 or 24 km a day and took lodging at night on the highway in an inn town.

In every inn town, there were barkers on the streets in the evening.
“Step right up! You are welcome to our inn!”
“Our inn offers special seafood, sashimi dinner!”
“Our inn has been renovated and we now have a spacious bathroom!”
“Our inn offers special sake to drink!”

Each traveler selected the inn of his choice and refreshed himself there at night, then continued his traveling the following morning.

In the old days, while people were traveling on the highways, many pleasant things happened, but many terrible and merciless things also happened. Various types of robbery happened, due to pickpockets, sneaks and bandits during the journey. Once such villains took aim at any traveler on the highways, they inexorably robbed all of the travelers’ property. These villains had a special talent to rob travelers of their property on the highways. By checking travelers’ slippers bandits sniffed out distress and weariness. By checking travelers’ clothes that were frayed, they distinguished the rich from the poor. So even if the travelers were careful enough about their property, when they were tired and went to sleep, they were robbed in due time. Nowadays, even on a journey our property is guarded with various devices from robbery. However, in the old days, belongings were unable to be protected against robbery. There were many travelers who were robbed off all of their property, and many of them had to give up continuing their journey. Many of them could not get back home because of their wretchedness due to thieves. In the old days these villains such as pickpockets, sneaks and bandits were nuisances on the journey.

“Cage shoulders”, the palanquin bearers on the highways in those days, were as common and spiteful villains as pickpockets, sneaks and bandits. When the passengers of a palanquin were women, they complementarily talked to the passengers at the place of where they got on, but carried them away quickly to the solitary, dark, hidden place, and there, changed their attitudes suddenly and threatened the passengers down from the palanquin to rob them of all their property. “Get off here and give us all of your money and clothes.” They stole all
the property off from the palanquin passengers. What’s more, woman-and-girl passengers
who were caught by such vicious palanquin bearers were often sold to disorderly houses in
the entertainment area. So these “cage shoulders”, the palanquin bearers, were as horrible
as the villains such as pickpockets, sneaks and bandits on the journey.

Now, the following story was told at Odawara inn-station on the Tokaido Highway in the
beginning of the Meiji period (1868-1912).

One evening at the Odawara inn-station many hustlers from the inns are luring tonight’s
guests using various tactics on the streets:

“"You are welcome to our inn!"
“Step right up! You are welcome to our inn!"
“Our inn offers special seafood dinner!"
“Our inn has been renovated and we now have a spacious bathroom!"
“Our inn offers special sake to drink!"
“You are welcome!"
“You are welcome!”

There comes a young tramp hobbling and looking for an inn for the night. He seems 25 or
26 years old. He is rather fat. His clothes are weather beaten, and have turned from deep
black to dark red. The color of his family emblems on the sleeves has been tanned and
turned charcoal black. In short, he is wearing a red kimono with black family emblems. His
waist-belt is similar to that of rope leading a wretched dog. His slippers are worn and thin.
He also seems hungry.
“Welcome to our inn!”
“Me?”
“No, the gentleman over there!”
“Are you looking for an inn for tonight?”
“Me? Do you have a room for me tonight?”
“No, the lady over there!”
“Well they are really clever! They easily get that I have no money on me. If anyone invites
me to an inn, any one, I am ready to willingly accept it. But no inn wants to invite me. I am
going to come to the end of the streets of this city."

Landlord: “Are you looking for an inn for tonight?”
Young Tramp: “Do you have a room for me tonight?”
Landlord: “Yes, we do, sir. We are inviting you to our inn for tonight, sir.”
Young Tramp: “I can accept your invitation to your inn. What’s the name of your inn?”
Landlord: “Sagami-ya” is the name! Our Sagami-ya is no better than other inns in Odawara,
no better than the first, nor, the second, nor, the third inn in Odawara. Nor, well, worse than
the fourth, or fifth.”
Young Tramp: “Worse than the fifth! That’s much worse.”
Landlord: However, sir, only my wife and me are running our inn, without any helpers. I’m
sure the hospitality of our inn is the best in Odawara. You are warmly and heartily invited to
our inn!”
Young Tramp: “That sounds nice! I will give you the chance to have me stay at your inn. If
your inn pleases me, I will give you a chance for a longer stay, many days, with you.”
Landlord: “That’s my pleasure. You are welcome!”
Young Tramp: “Decided! And don’t forget, well, I drink a lot of sake every day. Will you
accept me?”
Landlord: “Yes. Yes. With pleasure!”
Young Tramp: “I drink 2 liters of sake in the morning. 2 liters at noon. 2 liters in the
evening. So 6 litters a day, every day! Is this acceptable?”
Landlord: “Yes, with pleasure, sir!”
Young Tramp: “Then, do you want a deposit now? Is one hundred ryo enough?”
Landlord: “No. No. You don’t need to put the deposit now. Please pay the whole bill on the
day you leave.”
Young Tramp: “OK. You are kind, master! I will stay at your place. Bring a 2-litter bottle of
sake to my room after I take my bath.”

The young tramp follows the landlord to Sagami-ya, and steps up to a room of the second
floor. He takes a bath, and he drinks 2 liters of sake while having supper and goes to bed. The
next morning he drinks 2 liters of sake with breakfast, and at noon he drinks 2 liters of
sake with lunch. And in the evening, he drinks 2 liters of sake with supper. He drinks 6 liters
of sake each and every day.

7 days have passed. Eventually the mistress of the inn begins complaining about him:

Mistress: “My lord! Who’s the guest on the second floor! What is he doing all day? He
drinks 6 liters of sake each and every day and lies on the bed in his room all day long!”
Landlord: “It’s not strange, it’s common for a guest to drink sake and relax on his bed in
his room! If someone drinks 6 liters of water under the floor and sleeps there, that would be
grunesome!”

Mistress: “I am sure he has absolutely no money. Look at his clothes. They’re terrible: old
and worn out, torn here and there, rotted. He doesn’t have anything with him. And yet, he
drinks 6 liters of sake each and every day. I am sure he will say on the day he leaves: ‘I
have no money. I can’t pay the charge for my stay.’ I am worrying terribly about it. My dear
husband! What do you think?”
Landlord: “Don’t worry about it. I am sure he is a rich man!”
Mistress: “Though you say, ‘he is a rich man,’ I am worrying terribly. So, my darling, go and tell him: ‘Please give us 5 ryo now as the deposit for the inn, because we must pay in cash the bill for your sake at the bottle shop.’”

The mistress repeatedly insists that her husband be brave and collect the inn charge from him.

Landlord: “I told to him on the first day that we don’t need to take a deposit on the first day. And I asked him to pay the whole bill on the day he leaves.
Mistress: “OK. Then tell him this is my mistress’s claim.”

The mistress pushes and kicks her husband toward the tramp in the guest room on the second floor to collect 5 ryo - the bill for the sake.

Landlord: “Good morning! This is the landlord coming!”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Do you have the 2 liters of sake you brought for me?”
Landlord: “No, sir. I will bring it soon. But before that, as my mistress claims, we would like to have 5 ryo from you now because we have to pay the charge of your sake in cash at the sake shop.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “My sake charge! Uh. Do you demand from me 5 ryo in gold? I am sorry. I don’t have gold right now.”
Landlord: “You don’t have gold now. Instead, you can pay it in silver. We don’t mind whether it’s gold or silver. You can pay it in copper.
Young Tramp (Guest): “I don’t have copper either.”
Landlord: “Then, silver is willingly accepted.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Silver is accepted? I don’t have that either.”
Landlord: “Are you killing me? Are you in full possession of your own senses?”
Young Tramp (Guest): I’m not killing you. I’m talking honestly. Can you imagine how awfully shamed I am of being a tramp? I have no money with me! I am seriously saying that I am a shameful tramp with no money. I’m not killing you. I am talking truth – with embarrassment.”
Landlord: “You said on the first day evening that you would give me one hundred ryo as the deposit in advance. Wasn’t that right?”
Young Tramp (Guest): “I thought that it might have been a stroke of luck if I could have been able to give you one hundred ryo as the deposit in advance.”
Landlord: “Then, you don’t have any money with you. You’re sure?”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Yes, I’m sure! You’re right! No money with me! I think you often find such deprived people around you! Endure it without complaint and in silence. That’s what it means to be human! Don’t make an argument about a fire that happened to a neighbor. Endure such an unlucky fire. A tramp with no money is one of many unlucky mishaps! Throw up your hands against this unlucky mishap! Be brave enough to endure
such a tiny bit of misfortune!”

Landlord: “Don’t kill me! Oh, dear. Is it true that you are a tramp deprived of money?”
Young Tramp (Guest): “‘I am deprived of money’ is none of your business.” Anyway, I don’t have any money with me. That’s true. I’m talking the truth!”
Landlord: “By the way, what can you do for our living? What is your business?”
Young Tramp (Guest): “My business? I am an artist of the Kano painting school.”
Landlord: “You are an artist, an artistic painter? That’s useless! Our family, all of us don’t like the arts. If you were a carpenter, we would ask you to fix shelves or doors of our inn.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “OK. So now I will do something for you here to make up for the inn charge.”
Landlord: “What will you do for us here?”

Young Tramp (Guest): “You have a new wood screen there. Why do you have it?”
Landlord: Oh, That’s a new wood screen that was given to us by a furniture maker. About 10 days ago, a young man stayed at our inn. He was a carpenter. He was a furniture joiner. He was also as deprived of money as you are so he made the wood screen to make up for his inn charge and he gave it to us.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Good idea! So I will paint a picture on the wood screen.”
Landlord: “No, no! Don’t paint a picture on it! Don’t make a mess of it! If you do dirty it we can’t sell it.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Never mind. I’ll paint a beautiful picture on the wood screen. Bring it here. I will paint an excellent picture on the wood screen to make up for my inn charge and I will deposit it with you for a while. Tomorrow I will go to Edo to complete my business and I will come back here again ten days later to pay all of my inn charge in cash. I will leave the picture as my deposit until then. Bring the wood screen to me. Don’t grumble about it! ”

Landlord: “I hope you paint an excellent picture!”
Young Tramp (Guest): “I have brushes and a stone of sumi (charcoal) with me. So bring a suzuri (paint-pot) to me.”
Landlord: “Here you are.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “How foolish you are! A suzuri should be filled with water as a chisel is always used with a hammer. Foolish you are!”
Landlord: You are right I am foolish. That’s why you have been accepted to our inn as a guest even though you have no money.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Stop wasting time! Hurry up and wash the suzuri, fill it with water, and bring it to me quickly.”
Landlord: “Yes, sir.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “This is a stone of sumi. Prepare the sumi paint by scratching the stone of paint on the suzuri.”
Landlord: “Do it yourself!”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Just as I am painting a sumi-picture for you, so you must prepare the sumi-paint for me. If you don’t understand this logic, you must be a fool!”
Landlord: “Yes, I am a fool, that’s why you are accepted as a guest to our inn, even though you are deprived of money.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Don’t be so talkative about worthless things! Prepare the sumi-paint in silence.”
Landlord: “I am busily preparing it, sir. Though I have never asked you to paint a sumi-picture for me, why should I prepare the sumi-paint for you? Oh, dear, how fragrantly this sumi-paint does smell!”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Only your nose is functional.”
Landlord: “Only my nose?!”

Now the young tramp holds the brush in his right hand, and he has been looking at the wood panel for a while. He starts painting with quick sliding touches and in several minutes he completes his painting.

Landlord: “What have you painted on the wood panel?”
Young Tramp (Guest): “What have I painted? You cannot recognize them! What do you have below your two eyebrows? If you don’t know what I have painted in the picture, then your eyes are not functioning! For what do you have eyes?”
Landlord: “To have a look. I have eyes to look at things. I have as good a pair of eyes as you!”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Your eyes are not functioning! Dig them out from your face and throw them away. Instead of your eyes, stick on a patch of sparkling silver paper.”
Landlord: “I wonder, what have you painted on the wood panel?”
Young Tramp (Guest): “These are sparrows. I’ve painted 5 sparrows.”
Landlord: “Oh, sparrows! They become sparrows when you insist. I don’t care what they are. Just give me the picture as a deposit of your payment.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Don’t sell the picture until you get permission from me.”
Landlord: “Never mind! Nobody wants to buy it.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “When a fire destroys it, you will not be blamed. But don’t sell it. Can you follow me? I’ve painted 5 sparrows. One sparrow is worth one ryo. 5 sparrows is worth 5 ryo. Are you satisfied with them?”
Landlord: “Is one sparrow one ryo? It’s too expensive. At the poultry shop in front of our house we can buy much bigger chicken by one ryo.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Don’t talk a load of pig-shit! You are barking up the wrong tree. I will go to Edo tomorrow and complete my business there and come back here again and I will pay you all my inn-charge on that day. By the way, is that woman your wife? Let her big mouth shut. She is too talkative. She could spill the energy of your life frantically. She never boosts your life, only diminishes it. Soon she is going to destroy you. So kick her out.
of your house before you are destroyed.”
Landlord: “Thank you for that bitter advice.”
Young Tramp (Guest): “Ok. I will be back here again in ten days, and pay you all of my inn charge on that day. See you then!”
Landlord: “I hope you will be a rich man and be able to pay all of your inn charge! See you then!”

Landlord: “Oh, my dear wife! You have wisely scented him out. He truly doesn’t have any money with him. He is truly a tramp deprived of money.”
Mistress: “My dear husband, I can always scent truth out. He is such a man - deprived of money. He’s just a dirty tramp with no money. And he drinks shamelessly 6 liters of sake each and every day. Are you sure he hasn’t stolen anything from our inn? He has sly eyes like a fox. Be careful against such a dangerous tramp.”
Landlord: “He’s painted 5 sparrows on the wood panel as a deposit for his inn charge.”
Mistress: “That’s an awful piece of mischief. A carpenter who stayed at us made that wood panel only a few weeks ago. So it is new. We can sell it if it doesn’t have any ugly pictures on it. You don’t have business sense! How can you be so dull and foolish to have picked up such a rotten log! Be careful not to pick up such awful logs again. You should be picking up richer guests for us. Find wealthier travelers on the streets with your connoisseur eyes, and select richer travelers. What are those sparkling balls below your brows?”
Landlord: “Eyes!”
Mistress: “For what do you have those eyes?”
Landlord: “To have a look!”
Mistress: “Your eyes are not functioning. Dig them out from your face and throw them away. And instead of each of them, paste a patch of sparkling silver paper.”
Landlord: “Stop insulting me with such funny wording. You are giving me the same insult as the young tramp!”

Mistress: “Good morning, darling. The guest, the young tramp, didn’t pay his inn charge. Instead he painted a strange picture of sparrows on the wood panel. That has given me a great shock. All my living energy has been wasted away. I am too sick to work. I’ll stay in bed today.”
Landlord: “My dear wife! Don’t say such things. Get up from the bed and go stairs up to the second floor to open the wood windows.”
Mistress: “I am too sick. I don’t have energy enough to open the wood windows of the second floor. You, sweet husband, be kind to jump up to the second floor and open the wood windows by yourself. Please.”

The landlord himself jumps up to the second floor and opens the wood windows, and the morning sunlight brightly pours in through the open windows of the room. In the corner of the room is the wood panel on which the young tramp painted 5 sparrows yesterday as the
deposit for the inn charge.

Chune, chune, chune, chune, chune, ...
What? What are those strange tunes? Oh, those are from the birds! The painted sparrows that are out on the ground! They are pecking something on the ground and singing lovely songs there. How mysterious! Look at the wood panel in the corner of the room. No sparrows are on it! How mysterious that is! The 5 sparrows the tramp painted yesterday have flown out from the wood panel and are pecking at something on the ground and singing sweet songs there! After a while, they fly back into the wood panel.

Travelers! Passers-by! Our citizens! Ladies and Gentlemen! Drop into our inn. Something mysterious happens at our inn! Look at the mysterious things that occur every morning on the second floor room of our inn!

A young tramp stayed at my inn the other day. He didn’t have enough money to pay his inn charge so he painted 5 sparrows on the wood panel in his room of the second floor. The 5 painted sparrows fly out of the wood panel in the morning to get food in the front garden. They peck up worms on the ground and sing sweet songs in the garden and then fly back to the wood panel on the second floor room. This mysterious happening occurs every morning at our inn!

The reputation of the mysterious painted sparrows of the inn spreads among travelers on the highways, passers-by on the streets, and the citizens in the neighborhood.

A lot of people who had heard about these mystery sparrows flooded into the inn to have a look at the painted sparrows that flied out of the wood panel in the morning.

Spectator-1: “Good evening, landlord! Do you have a room for me to stay at your inn tonight? I’d like to have a look at the painted sparrows flying out of the wood panel tomorrow in the early morning.”

Landlord: “We are greatly sorry. Our inn is too crowded with spectators who want to have a look at the painted sparrows flying out of the wood panel tomorrow in the early morning. We are greatly sorry. No room for you.”

Spectator-2: “Good evening, landlord! Do you give us a space to stay at your inn tonight? I’d like to see the painted sparrows flying out of the wood panel tomorrow in the early morning.”

Landlord: “We are greatly sorry. Our inn is too crowded with spectators who want to have a look at the painted sparrows flying out of the wood panel tomorrow in the early morning. We are greatly sorry. Over crowded! No room for you.”
Spectator-3: “Please find a piece of space for us. We want to stay at your inn tonight. We want to have a look at the painted sparrows flying out of the wood panel tomorrow in the early morning. Could you find a bit of narrow space for me? Any place, I will be satisfied with ‘on-the-shelf!’”

Landlord: “No. No. We are greatly sorry. It is impossible. ‘On-the-shelf’ is already occupied with us. I sleep on the shelf with my wife.”

Spectator-3: “Then, let me sleep with your wife on the shelf! You can sleep in some other place! That’s good idea.”

Landlord: No, no. That’s rude! We cannot find any place for you except for the toilette in our inn.”

Spectator-3: “Satisfactory it is. I’ll take it.”

Landlord: “No. No. No. You are rude. Anyway we don’t have any space for you. Please come another day in future. Our inn is filled with spectators who are expecting to have a look at the painted sparrows, which will fly out of the wood panel in the early morning tomorrow.”

The rumor of the mysterious happening goes around to every corner of Odawara. Eventually it reaches the Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami, Samurai Chief in the area. He comes to the inn with his followers to have a look at the painted sparrows flying out of the wood panel in the morning.

Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami: “Excuse me, landlord! I’ve heard you have mysterious painted sparrows that a gifted artist painted on the wood panel in the second floor room of your inn. In the morning they fly out from the panel to the front garden to get food on the ground and back to the wood panel in the second floor room. I will buy the wood panel including the painted sparrows at the price of one hundred ryo.”

Landlord: “I appreciate you, but I really cannot sell it. Though the wood panel is mine, the painted sparrows on it are not mine. Several weeks ago a traveling artist deprived of money stayed at our inn, and he painted the sparrows on the wood panel in the second floor room and gave them to us as the deposit for his inn charge. He said to me at the time. The painted sparrows I painted on the panel are so valuable that you never sell them to any one. In case they happen to be burnt by fire, I will put up with it. However, you must keep them with you until I come back again and pay you all of my inn charge. That is the reason, Dear Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami-sama, why I can now sell only the wood panel, but I cannot sell the sparrows painted on it.”

Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami: “I see. Then, when the artist comes back to you, and you can get the payment, and you get the permission from him to sell the sparrows, then I will surely buy the wood panel including the sparrows. This is my promise with you.”

Landlord: “Certainly I promise it to you. Thank you. Thank you.”
Landlord: “Honey! Where are you?”
Mistress: “My dear darling! Here I am.”
Landlord: “What a surprise! Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami-sama is going to buy the picture sparrows on the second floor at the price of one hundred ryo.”
Mistress: “Is that true! So I said, ‘He is a great artist!’”
Landlord: “Don’t tell a lie. You gave wicked words to him!”

One day five days later, a samurai of around the age 60 comes to the inn with a few followers to have a look at the painted sparrows.

Old Samurai: “Do you have the painted sparrows, the ones that fly out of the wood panel?”
Landlord: “Yes. We do.”
Old Samurai: “May we have a look at the painted sparrows flying out in the morning?”
Landlord: “Certainly. You may. Sir. Please come up and stay with us tonight.”

Next morning a lot of people are crowded in front of the wood panel, and waiting for the painted sparrows to fly out from it. “One more minute! I cannot help waiting for the sparrows flying out. As soon as the wood windows are opened they will fly out!”

Old Samurai: “Excuse me! Excuse me! Are those the painted sparrows? Do they fly out from the wood panel?”
Landlord: “Certainly they are and they will!"
Old Samurai: “Do these painted sparrows fly out from the panel?”
Landlord: “Yes, how true it is! When I open the wood windows, and the sunlight comes into the room, they fly out from the panel into the garden to peck food on the ground. The artist who painted the picture is surely a genius! The picture is absolutely a masterpiece!”
Old Samurai: “Not a masterpiece! Surely it is painted moderately well. No amateurs can paint better than that, however, it is not a masterpiece!”
Landlord: “Don’t speak spitefully of the picture. Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami-sama said the other day that he would like to buy the picture at the price of one hundred ryo.”
Old Samurai: “I don’t care if he would buy the picture at the price of one hundred ryo. In my view the picture has faults. The young artist should have painted a roost for the sparrows to sit and rest! The sparrows seem to have the power to fly out and take food, and fly back to the panel now, but soon they are going to get too tired, and they are going to finally die. If we paint a roost for them in the picture, the sparrows can sit and rest on it. They won’t get too tired, and they won’t never die. By the way, how old was he who painted these sparrows?”
Landlord: “He seemed 25 or 26 years old, a young man.”
Old Samurai: “He’s not matured yet! I am very sorry, but those sparrows are going to get too tired and they are going to die soon.”
Landlord: “That makes me so sad. Are there any treatments to save the sparrows?”
Old Samurai: “Ok, I will paint a roost for them to sit and rest.”
Landlord: “No thank you. Don’t stain the picture. The picture, even without a roost, can be sold at the price of one hundred ryo. When you add a roost to the picture, it won’t be sold at the price of one hundred ryo.”
Old Samurai: “Then the sparrows are surely going to die soon.”
Landlord: “That makes me sad. I am very shocked to hear these sparrows are going to die. Well, well, then, could you paint something like a roost for them? I want to save these sparrows.”
Old Samurai: “Ok. Then bring a suzuri, a paint-pot.”
Landlord: “Here you are.”
Old Samurai: “Fill the suzuri with water. I have a piece of sumi, a stone of paint with me. Prepare sumi by scratching the stone-paint on the suzuri.”
Landlord: “Yes, sir. This stone-paint smells sweet!”
Old Samurai: “It is only your nose that can be recognized as part of a human being.”
Landlord: “Many people often give me such a sarcastic speech!”

The old Samurai holds a paintbrush in his hand, and he gazes at the picture for a while, and the next moment the sparrows in the picture fly out from the wood panel to the front garden and begin pecking up worms on the ground and singing lovely songs in the garden. Instantly, he paints a roost in the center of the picture, and a cage around it. He has painted a roost and a cage so quickly in the picture that they are added in a wink during the sparrows’ absence.

Old Samurai: “Finished!”
Landlord: “What are those? That puzzles me more than before!”
Old Samurai: “What are those?! What are those beneath your two eyebrows?”
Landlord: “These are my eyes. And I have already known what you would like to say next. Your next words are: ‘Dig them up from your face and throw them away, and put a patch of bright silver paper there instead of them.’ However, I cannot yet recognize what you have painted in the picture?”
Old Samurai: “They are a roost and a cage for the sparrows.”
Landlord: “Oh, You have painted a roost and a cage for the sparrows!”
Old Samurai: “That’s well said! Watch the sparrows coming back! They will surely fly back into the cage, and sit and rest on the roost!”

Soon the sparrows pecking worms on the ground fly back into the cage and sit on the roost the old samurai painted a little while ago.

Old Samurai: “Now the sparrows are not going to die. Goodbye! See you again!”
Landlord: “Thank you so much for painting. I want to see you again.”
The rumor of the sparrows flying out of the wood panel spreads over the city. A lot of spectators are crowded in the inn to have a look at the picture of the sparrows flying out from and returning back to the painted cage.

Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami comes to the inn again to have a look at the painted sparrows flying out from and back to the wood panel.

Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami: “It must be surely a genius artist that painted the sparrows and cage on the wood panel. I’ll buy the whole wood panel including the picture of the sparrows and cage at the price of two hundred ryo.”
Landlord: “Hurrah! Wonderful! I want to sell you the wood panel with great pleasure. But, but, it’s regrettable I cannot sell the picture without the permission of the young artist. This is a promise between him and me. I hope that he will come back here soon. I hope that I will be able to get the permission from him then. But now I cannot sell the picture because I don’t have the permission from him.”
Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami: “I understand what you are saying. When he comes back and gives you the permission, I will buy them at the price of two hundred ryo. This is the promise between you and me.”
Landlord: “That’s my pleasure. Thank you! Thank you!”

Landlord: “My dear wife! Ohkubo Sagami-no-Kami has promised me that he will buy our wood panel at the price of two hundred ryo!”
Mistress: “That’s wonderful! But if the young painter doesn’t come back and he doesn’t give us the permission to sell the picture, the promise has no value.”
Landlord: “Exactly. I hope he comes back to us soon.”
Mistress: “When is he coming back to us? My dear lord! Let us treat him with many big bowls of sake and a delicious dinner to celebrate that we have had the sparrows given to us. Don’t forget the panel has the price of two hundred ryo. My dear lord, be awake. You have never had such a luckier chance than this in your life.”
Landlord: “You are exactly right! Nothing will happen if he doesn’t come back to us. I wish he will be back soon!”

A few days later a young tramp stands in front of the inn. He seems 25 or 26 years old, and he is wearing a dirty black robe.

Young Tramp: “Hello, landlord! Excuse me!”
Landlord: “May I help you?”
Young Tramp: “I haven’t seen you for a long time. How are you going? Do you have good news?”
Landlord: “Well, I’m sorry but who are you, sir.”
Young Tramp: “You don’t remember me! A few weeks ago, I stayed at your inn for a week,
and I drank 6 liters of sake each and everyday, and I couldn’t pay you for the bill. Me it’s
the tramp!"
Landlord: “Oh, the tramp! The genius painter! Welcome! Welcome! We have been waiting
for you for a long time.”
Young Tramp: “Now you have remembered me? Has anything happened at your inn?”
Landlord: “The sparrows you painted fly out from the wood panel!”
Young Tramp: “What did you do?”
Landlord: “The rumor of the flying painted sparrows has spread over the city. A lot of
people have crammed into our inn every day to have a look at them. And Ohkubo Sagami-
no-Kami came to me and said that he would like to buy the picture panel at the price of two
hundred ryo.”
Young Tramp: “Did you sell it?”
Landlord: “No, No, No, I didn’t. You said to me, ‘don’t sell it until I come back to you and
pay you all my inn charge.’”
Young Tramp: “You are honest. I will give it all to you, including the sparrows.”
Landlord: “Thank you. Thank you. You are greatly kind.”

Landlord: “My sweet heart! The genius painter! The genius painter is back here!”
Mistress: “Who is it? Oh, The genius painter! Exactly, the genius painter!”
Landlord: “He said he will give us the sparrows. All the sparrows!”
Mistress: “Is it true? Oh, that’s wonderful. He is so kind to give us the sparrows!”
Landlord: “Prepare quickly the bath for him. The bathtub should be filled with a lot of sake,
and serve him the sake-bath. Give him dinner with lots of fine sake, various seafood and
fresh vegetables.”

Young Tramp: “And what happened next?”
Landlord: “Well. Several days later, an old samurai, around 60 years old, came to us with
several followers. He had a look at the picture sparrows, and said, ‘They are going to fall
and die soon.’ I asked him, ‘Why are they going to fall and die soon?’ He answered, ‘A roost
is not painted for them to rest on. The sparrows are going to get too tired and so they are
going to die soon.’

Young Tramp: “Shamefully, I didn't paint a roost for them. What else did he say?”
Landlord: “He said, ‘The sparrows are well painted, but the painter is not yet matured
because he doesn’t paint a roost for them.’”
Young Tramp: “How old was he? The old samurai?”
Landlord: “He seemed 64 or 65 years old.”
Young Tramp: “Does he have a spot beneath the eyebrow?”
Landlord: “Certainly, he does.”
Young Tramp: “He has a spot! Now, show me the picture where he additionally painted a
roost and a cage for the sparrows.”
Landlord: “My pleasure. Fly up the stairs to the panel on the second floor.”

The young tramp and the landlord fly up the stairs to the panel on the second floor room and sat in front of it.

Young Tramp: “Oh dear, Father! You seem to still be going strong! I am very happy to meet you through the picture. Please forgive me of my filial impiety.”
Landlord: “Well, why are you bowing to the panel?”
Young Tramp: “The artist who painted the roost and the cage in the picture is my father!”
Landlord: “Your father!? Is it true? That’s why you can paint the mysterious sparrows! You are truly a genius artist! Your father must be proud of you!”
Young Tramp: “No, no. I am not a good son to my father!”
Landlord: “Why are you not a good son to your father?”
Young Tramp: “Look at the picture. My father made up my picture by additionally painting a roost and a cage for the sparrows to be saved. My painting is far below that of him! Because of my immaturity, I have made my father “a cage painter” - a term for a kind of cage dealer – who has been generally disliked just as “the cage shoulder” since the old days.

参考（オチについて）

a palanquin bearer 駕籃や → a cage shoulder 籠担ぎ → （昔は）「カゴカキ」（と呼ばれた）一方、「カゴカキ」は→籠描き（と解せる 同音異義） → A cage painter