The badger and the magic fan

1. Long, long ago in the mountains of Japan lived three Tengu children. Tengu children were goblin children and had very long noses. The children could make their noses shorter or longer by waving a magic fan over them.

2. While the children were busily fanning their noses one day, they were being watched secretly by a badger. The badger decided he wanted the magic fan for himself. As a Japanese badger could turn into anything it wished, he disguised himself as a girl carrying a plate of four delicious bean-jam buns.

3. The children jumped up in delight when they saw the buns. The badger offered the children each a bun, which they quickly ate. But who would eat the last bun? The sly badger suggested they close their eyes and hold their breath. Whoever held it the longest deserved to have the fourth bun.

4. While the children were doing this, the sneaky badger grabbed the fan and dashed away to the city with it. Still disguised, he saw a beautiful girl who was the daughter of a wealthy man. He tested the magic fan on her by waving it across her nose. To her horror, her nose grew extremely long.

5. Her father invited wise men from all over the land to come and cure her. He promised whoever could do this would receive half his fortune and his daughter's hand in marriage. But none of them succeeded.

6. Then the badger came forward. He waved the fan over the daughter's nose and it shrank back to its normal size. They were married and the badger became very wealthy.

7. However, the Tengu children discovered where the badger lived. One night, while he was fast asleep, they crept in and took the fan. Before leaving, they waved the fan twenty times over his nose. It grew so long it reached through the clouds.

8. A group of workers was building a heavenly bridge above the clouds. When they saw the nose they thought it would make a perfect beam for their bridge. They dragged it up and the badger was never seen again!