

Manju Stones

Once upon a time, in the town of Noheji, here and there you could hear a loud voice call out, “I have *anko*-filled *manju*! Sweet *anko*-filled *manju*!” The Manju Seller had a large box filled with *manju* strapped to her back. Everyone who heard the Manju Seller’s voice, children, grandfathers, grandmothers, and mothers came out of their houses to buy *manju*. Soon the box filled with *manju* would empty and the Manju Seller would say, “Tomorrow, I will come back with more *anko*-filled *manju*.” She would leave Noheji with a much lighter box than she had when she arrived that morning.



One winter day, a snowstorm hit Noheji, heavier and colder than usual. On that day, as usual the Manju Seller cried out, “I have *anko*-filled *manju*! Who will buy my *manju*? I have sweet *anko*-filled *manju*! Who will buy my *manju*?” The Manju Seller raised her voice higher and higher, but with the snow, no door opened. No one came out of their house. She traveled all around Noheji.

Kanezawa, Honmachi, Shitamachi she walked around once, twice, no doors opened. From Fukuromachi to Shinmachi to Hachimanchō, even to Makado she walked, “Please buy my *anko*-filled *manju*! I’m sorry, but please buy my *manju*!” she cried. She started to knock on the houses door by door, but no one would go out in the snowstorm. She continued on to Hamamachi and Tanabumichi, as the wind

grew colder and the snow fell harder. Still, no doors opened. At Kimyo, no doors opened. Before she got to Arito, the day grew darker and the snow fell even harder. Still, no one bought her *manju*. “I’m sorry, but please buy my *manju*! Please!” she cried as she knocked on the doors.

Finally, one door opened and a person said to the Manju Seller, “The snow is falling so heavily, won’t you rest in my home tonight?”

The Manju Seller replied, “I have to go home. My children are waiting for me there.” With the day over and no *manju* sold, the woman set off into the snowstorm.

The next day, the sky had cleared and the person from Arito was worried about the Manju Seller. “The Manju Seller,” he would say, “do you know if she made it home?” Everyone said that they had not seen her. The person from Arito searched all around the town for a sign of the Manju Seller, but could find her nowhere. Soon, the people of Noheji forgot about the Manju Seller.

Many years have passed since the Manju Seller’s disappearance. Walking from Kimyou’s Hikusa Bridge to Sabishiro, you can find round, white stones on the riverbed. If you crack open these stones, the center is a dark color. That area is called the Manju Stream.

It is believed that the long time ago, in her rush to get home and feed her children, the Manju Seller had dropped her *manju*. Those *manju*, over time, became stones.

And that is the story of the Manju Stones.

