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The Wonderful Tea-Kettle.
By Mrs. T. H. James
The Wonderful Tea-Kettle.

A LONG long time ago, at the temple of Morinji, in the province of Kotsuke there lived an old priest.

This old priest was very fond of the ceremonial preparing and drinking of tea known as Chanoyu;
Indeed, it was his chief interest and pleasure in life to conduct this ceremony.

One day he chanced to find in a second hand shop a very nice looking old tea-kettle, which he bought and took home with him, highly pleased by its fine shape and artistic appearance.

Next day he brought out his new purchase, and sat for a long time turning it round on this side and on that, and admiring it.

"You are a regular Beauty, that's what you are," he said, "I shall invite all my friends to the Chanoyu, and how astonished they will be at finding such an exquisite kettle as this!"
He placed his treasure on the top of a box where he could see it to the best advantage, and sat admiring it and planning how he should invite his guests. After a while he became drowsy and began to nod, and at last fell forward, his head on his desk, fast asleep.

Then a wonderful transformation took place. The tea-kettle began to move. From its spout appeared a hairy head, at the other side out came a fine bushy tail, next, four feet made themselves visible, while fine fur seemed gradually to cover the surface of the kettle. At last, jumping off the box, it began capering about the room for all the world just like a badger.
Three young novices who were at study in the next room heard the noise, and, when one of them peeped through the sliding doors, what was his astonishment to see the tea-kettle on four feet, dancing up and down the room!

He cried out "Oh! what a horrible thing! The tea-kettle is changed into a badger!"

"What!" said the second novice, "Do you mean to say that the tea-kettle is turned into a badger? What nonsense!"

So saying, he pushed his companion to one side and peeped in, but he also was terrified by what he saw and screamed.
"It's a goblin! It's coming at us, let us run away!"

The third novice was not so easily frightened.

"Come, this is rather fun," said he, "how the creature does jump, to be sure! I will rouse the master and let him see too."

So he went into the room and shook the priest, crying.

"Wake! Master, Wake! A strange thing has happened."

"What's the matter?" said the old man, drowsily rubbing his eyes "what a noisy fellow!"

"Anyone would be noisy when such a strange thing as this is going on."
Only look master, your tea-kettle has got feet and is running about."

"What! What! What! What's that you say?" asked the priest again. "The kettle got feet! What's this! Let me see!"

But by the time the old man was thoroughly roused the tea-kettle had turned into its ordinary shape, and stood quietly on its box again.

"What foolish young fellows you are!" said the priest. "There stands a kettle on the top of a box, surely there is nothing very strange in that. No, no, I have heard of the rolling-pin that grew a pair of wings and flew away, but, long as I have lived, never have I heard before of a tea-kettle walking about on its own feet. You will never make me believe that."

But for all that, the priest was a little uneasy in his mind, and kept thinking of the incident all that day. When evening came, and he was alone in his room, he took down the kettle, filled it with water, and set it upon the embers to boil,