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Chi-obaa and Friends sample
NOT FOR SALE

CHI-OBAA AND FRIENDS

Level 4 - B1/B2 Intermediate (2) Graded Reader from I Talk You Talk Press

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Chi-obaa and Friends

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Introduction

Meet Chi-obao

These are stories about Chi-obao, her family and her friends. Chi-obao has an interesting life. Before you read about Chi-obao's adventures, I would like you to meet her. You might like to meet her friends and family too.

Mameko Saito lives in Nakashige-cho with her eldest son and his wife. She has three grandchildren.

But no one calls her 'Mameko'. Everyone calls Mameko 'Chi-obao'. 'Chi-obao' is short for 'chiisai obaa-san'. 'Chiisai obaa-san' means 'little grandmother' in Japanese.

Her children and grandchildren call her Chi-obao too. The only person who doesn't call her Chi-obao, is her daughter-in-law, Kaneko. Kaneko calls her 'okaa-san'. 'Okaa-san' means 'mother' in Japanese.

Chi-obao is very small. She is 79 years old. Every year she gets smaller, but her energy seems to grow. She is always busy and she is always smiling. Chi-obao likes bright colours, such as red, pink and purple. Her clothes are very colourful.

Chi-obao's life was very hard. She was an only child, but when she was 12 years old, her family sent her away from Nakashige-cho. She was sent to Osaka to work in a boarding house. She had to cook and clean for the guests all day. She sent all the money she earned back to her family in Nakashige-cho. When she was 28 years old, she married a man who lived in the boarding house. They had two children. When Chi-obao was 32 years old, her husband died. Her children were very young. Chi-obao had no money, so she went back to Nakashige-cho with her children. She cared for her parents, grew vegetables and looked after her children. She worked 16 hours every day. After a few years, her parents died. When Chi-obao's son was in high school, Chi-obao sold the land around her house. She wanted money so that her son could go to university. Then she worked as a cleaner for many years.

When Chi-obao was 65 years old, her son married. He got a good job in the government offices in the city near Nakashige-cho. After he married, he and his wife moved back to his mother's house. When they moved back, Chi-obao said, "At last! Now I can retire! I've been working for other people all my life. Now I will do everything I want to do for myself."

Chi-obaa has three very important possessions. Her mobile phone, the ipod-nano her grandson gave her when he got an itouch, and her shopping walker. A shopping walker is a bag or box on wheels. Chi-obaa's shopping walker is special. She can carry many things in her walker. It has four wheels, a seat and a brake. Chi-obaa can take a rest anytime by sitting on the walker.....

-----End of Introduction sample-----

Story sample:

Chi-obaa and the Flowers

1. A mystery and a plan

Chi-obaa was pushing her shopping walker down the road. Chi-obaa loves her shopping walker. It is big and it has a brake and a seat. Chi-obaa takes it everywhere. She never goes shopping, but she needs to carry other things.

Today, there was a ukulele in her walker because she was on her way to her ukulele class. She saw her friend Hatsuko looking at a stone wall.

“Good morning, Hatsuko. What are you looking at?”

“I am looking at nothing,” answered Hatsuko

“Nothing?” Chi-obaa thought that Hatsuko was having a bad day.

“Yes, nothing!” said Hatsuko. “I should be looking at something, but there's nothing there.”

This will take a long time, thought Chi-obaa.

She put the brake on her shopping walker and sat down on the seat. She looked at the wall. There was small shrine in the wall, which contained a statue of Jizo bosatsu. Jizo bosatsu is a Buddhist deity and is known as the protector of children. Especially, of those who died at a young age. The stone statue was wearing a red hat, and in front of it, there was a vase and some small stones.

“What is the nothing I am looking at?” asked Chi-obaa.

“There are no flowers! Every evening I walk here and I put some flowers in front of Jizo bosatsu. Then I pray,” said Hatsuko. “Every morning there is one more small stone and no flowers!”

“Why?” asked Chi-obaa.

“Because someone is taking the flowers!”

“When did the flowers start disappearing?” asked Chi-obao.

“About three weeks ago,” answered Hatsuko. “Someone is taking the flowers.”

Chi-obao stood up.

“I must go. I'll be late for my ukulele class. I'll think of a plan. I'll come to your house after my class to discuss what we are going to do about this.”

After ukulele class, Chi-obao went to see Hatsuko in her apartment above the hair salon. Hatsuko made tea and the two old ladies sat down in the living room to talk.

“When do you put the flowers in front of Jizo bosatsu?” asked Chi-obao.

“Every day about 6:00 or 6:30pm,” answered Hatsuko. “And every morning by 9:00am, they are gone.”

-----END OF SAMPLE-----

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