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Chi-obaa and Her Town sample
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CHI-OBAA AND HER TOWN

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

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Chi-obaa and Her Town
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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-obao 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-obao's shopping walker is special. She can carry many things in her walker. It has four wheels, a seat and a brake. Chi-obao can take a rest anytime by sitting on the walker.....

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

Story sample:

Chi-obao and the Governor

1. Monday Morning

Kenshin Saito works at the prefectural office. He is a quiet man and he works very hard. Every day, he takes a 40 minute train ride from his home in Nakashige -cho to work.

One Monday morning, Kenshin arrived at the office at his usual time. His boss was waiting for him. Tanaka san is a tough boss. Sometimes he is a bully. Kenshin is a little frightened of him.

“Saito. What have you done?” he asked.

“Done?” asked Kenshin. “I’m sorry Tanaka san. I don’t understand.”

“The Governor wants to see you this morning at 10:00am. I thought it was a mistake. There must be some other person named Saito. But the Governor’s secretary says he wants to see Kenshin Saito. And he wants to see you alone. I am very angry and very worried. What have you done?”

“N..n..nothing, Tanaka san. I promise you. I have not done anything wrong.”
Kenshin was very worried and frightened.

“Go to your desk and think about it,” said Tanaka san.

Kenshin went to his desk. He was shaking with fear.

Did I make some big mistake? he asked himself. But if I made some big mistake, Tanaka would know.

It was now 8:30am. Kenshin had to go to the Governor’s office at 10:00am.

An hour and a half to wait! thought Kenshin.

Kenshin couldn't concentrate on his work. He went to the toilet many times. He thought about everything he had done. He couldn't think of anything bad.

Finally it was 9:40. Kenshin went to Tanaka san's desk.

"Tanaka san, I will go now," he said.

Tanaka san looked at him. "Whatever trouble you are in, do not make trouble for me or this department. Your co-workers are good people. You are the one who makes trouble."

At 9:50, Kenshin was standing outside the Governor's rooms. The offices were on the third floor. Kenshin had never been there. He knocked very quietly on the secretary's door.

"Come in," said the secretary.

"I...I am Kenshin Saito. I don't understand, but my boss says that the Governor wants to see me."

"That is true," said the secretary.

Kenshin knew it was not a good idea. But he could not stop himself.

"Please tell me what I have done wrong," he said to the secretary.

The Governor's secretary is a nice woman. She felt sorry for Kenshin. He looked so frightened. But she couldn't help him.

"I don't know why the Governor wants to see you," she said.

Kenshin waited in the secretary's office. At 10:00 exactly, the secretary telephoned the Governor. "Kenshin Saito is here."

The door of the Governor's office opened. The Governor came out.

"Tea," he said to his secretary. He waved at Kenshin to come into his office.

The Governor's office was very big and it had a beautiful view of the ocean. The desk was huge and empty. In one corner of the room were armchairs and a sofa. The Governor sat in an armchair.

"Please sit," he said to Kenshin pointing to the sofa. Kenshin sat down.

The secretary knocked on the door and carried the tea into the office. She put a cup in front of the Governor. She put a cup in front of Kenshin. She put down the teapot.

"Go," said the Governor. "No phone calls, no visitors."

The secretary and Kenshin were very puzzled. The Governor was behaving in a very strange way.

The secretary went out. She closed the door.

The Governor poured tea.

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He looked at Kenshin. "You will say nothing about this meeting. You will not repeat anything to anyone."

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

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