

The Story of *Kamenoko Tawashi*



As a child, Shouzaemon always saw his mother working hard to support the family and she never had time to play with him. He hoped that he would grow up to invent a hit product and become rich so his mother could have an easier life.

He took hemp palm, a material that his mother used to weave ropes, and tied them with wire to create a door mat. This brush-like mat would be ideal to scrape off dirt from shoes. Unfortunately a similar product had already been invented in England and the hemp palm would squash when anyone stood on the mat, so his invention was a failure.



One day, he noticed that his wife had cut off a piece of a door mat to clean around the house. There had always been a cleaning brush tool, *tawashi*, but not one that was made with hemp palm.

After continuous trial and error, he finally came up with a product and headed to file for a patent. But he realized that couldn't do so without a name for the product.



He then heard his son calling him over to see a turtle he had caught. He stared at the turtle and thought that the *tawashi* looked a lot like the turtle (*kame*). Since turtles were a symbol of long life and lived in water, he was inspired by the resemblance. That was how he came up with the name, *Kamenoko Tawashi*...