

# Chestnut Bur

Oyasama once said to a follower:

*“The bur of the chestnut is rough and prickly. Take away the bur and inside it there is a shell and then there is a bitter coating. Shell it, then peel the coating, and you will find a tasty nut. If a man listens to the truth and discards his bur and his bitter coating, his mind will become indescribably delicious.”*

Anecdotes of Oyasama, no. 77

A western is on TV when you turn on your set. Even though you are not watching it from the beginning, you can easily tell who the good guy is and who the bad guy is by the actors' makeup. In terms of their behavior, too, the villain is genuinely sinister with no redeeming features, and the hero is one hundred percent good.

If things were so simple and clear-cut, it would be easy to understand the world we live in. Yet the reality is far from straightforward. Someone who looks like a true man of integrity may turn out to have a hidden, dark side. On the other hand, someone who seems selfish and uncaring may actually have a good, pure heart.



In fact, people's personalities themselves can change dramatically in response to what others do and how they behave. There are times when we are left speechless as someone snaps at us for no apparent reason. It is almost as if a delicious looking peach suddenly began to grow a prickly bur!

The bur of a mind is the residue of past hurts and pains that the person has endured. It is a defense mechanism that the vulnerable mind has developed to protect itself against what it sees as threats. This means that it would be counterproductive to try to forcibly open someone's bur. That would make it even harder and pricklier.

If we want someone to be a sweet fruit, we must ourselves become a sweet fruit. That may be the only way.

Those who met Oyasama felt their hearts fill with love and kindness. Touched by Her warmth, the deepest and most beautiful part of each person begins to pour forth.

