

*On the Visit to the Palace of King Yama by a Woman,
Devotee of the Shin-gyō, and the Following
Extraordinary Event¹*

Tokari no ubai 利莉優婆夷² came from Kawachi 河内 province. As her surname was Tokari no suguri 利莉村主,³ she was called Tokari no ubai. With an innately pure heart she had faith in the Three Treasures⁴ and used to recite the *Shin-gyō*⁵ as a form of religious discipline. Her chanting was so beautiful that she was loved and appreciated by clergy and laity alike.

In the reign of Emperor Shōmu, this lay sister died while asleep, a sudden death without suffering, and went to King Yama.⁶ Seeing her, the king stood up, made a seat, and spread a mat [for her], saying, "I have heard that you are very good at reciting the *Shin-gyō*. I was longing to hear you, and this is why I have invited you here for a short visit. Will you please recite the scripture? I am listening." She did so, and the king, delighted, rose from his seat and knelt to pay his respects to her, saying, "How noble! The rumor was true."

When three days had passed, the king said to her, "Now it is time for you to go home." When she came out of the palace, there stood three men in yellow robes.⁷ They were delighted to see her, saying, "We met you only once before. We have longed to see you since we have not met for so long. What good luck brought you here! Hurry on home, and we will see you without fail in the east market of the capital of Nara⁸ three days from today." Then she left them, returned home, and awoke.

On the morning of the third day she decided to go to the east market of the city because of the promise, but though she made her way there and waited all day, the three men did not come. Only a humble man came into the market by the east gate to sell Buddhist scriptures. He displayed them, calling out, "Will anybody buy some

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari* (XIV, 31).

2. The name Tokari may have originated with a local name in Kawachi province. *Ubai* is a transliteration of Skt. *upāsikā*, one who keeps the five precepts while remaining in lay status. The male counterpart is *ubasoku*.

3. *Suguri* is a title often conferred on immigrants.

4. 三寶 *sanbō*; see Chap. II(3)b.

5. *Hannya haramitsu shin-gyō* 般若波羅蜜心經; see Chap. II(1)a, n. 19.

6. 閻羅王; see Chap. II(1)c.

7. As it turns out later, they are the spirits of the scriptures she copied. Their yellow robes may signify scriptures which were written on yellow paper.

8. There was a market on each side of the capital.

scriptures?" Passing the sister, he went out of the city by the west gate. As she wanted to buy the scriptures, she sent for him to return, and, on opening them, she discovered that they were the two volumes of the *Bonmō-kyō* 梵網經⁹ and the one volume of the *Shin-gyō* she had copied in the past. They had been stolen before the dedication ceremony, and she had looked for them unsuccessfully for many years. With forbearance and great joy in her heart, she asked the price of the man, whom she knew had stolen them, saying, "How much do you want?" He replied, "I want five hundred pieces¹⁰ for each scroll." She bought them at this price.

It occurred to her that the three scrolls were the three men who had promised to meet her at the market. Thereupon she held a service to read these scriptures and deepened her faith in the law of causality. She recited the scriptures with even more devotion, never ceasing the recitation day and night.

How miraculous! Just as the *Nehan-gyō* says: "If a man does good deeds, his name will be noticed among heavenly beings; if he does evil deeds, his name will be recorded in hell."¹¹

20

*On the Mother Who Had a Bad Dream, with the Utmost
Faith¹ Had a Scripture Recited, and Saved Her
Daughter by an Extraordinary Sign²*

In the village of Yamamura in Sou upper district, Yamato province 大和國添上郡山村里,³ there lived an aged mother⁴ whose name is unknown. She had a married daughter who bore two children. Her son-in-law was appointed provincial magistrate,⁵ and he took his family to his post. Several years passed.

9. *Bonmō-kyō* (*Brahmajālasūtra*) (*Taishō*, XXIV, No. 1484).

10. 文 *mon*.

11. See I.27, nn. 9, 10.

1. 至誠心; one of the three minds (至誠心, 深心, 廻向發願心) which lead to rebirth in the pure land. The Chinese monk Shan-tao 善導 (613-681) says that by the utmost faith is meant the essential sincerity which generates the physical act of prostration, the oral deed of praising Buddha, and the mental deed of meditating on Buddha with concentration (see the *Nihon ryōiki*, ed. by Kasuga and Endō, 236, n. 2). See his *Ōjō raisan* (*Taishō*, XLVII, 1980); also, I.22, n. 10.

2. Cf. *Sanbō ekotoba* (II,12).

3. See I.10, n. 2.

4. 長母; in order to differentiate the mother from her daughter 長 is added to 母.

5. 縣主宰 *agata no mikotomochi*, or 国司 *kuni no tsukasa*.