

ascended to Mt. Fuji. Three years passed in ascetic practice after he was exiled to the island. At the turn of the eighth year of the ox, the first year of the Taihō era,²² he was pardoned and approached the capital, finally becoming a saint²³ and flying to heaven.

Dharma Master Dōshō 道照²⁴ of our country received an imperial order to go to Great T'ang China in order to search out Buddhist teachings. On the request of five hundred tigers he went to Silla 新羅²⁵ to lecture in the mountains on the *Hoke-kyō*.²⁶ At that time there was a man among the tigers who raised a question in Japanese. The monk asked, "Who are you?" and the man answered, "E no ubasoku." The monk thought that the man was a Japanese sage²⁷ and came down from his high seat to inquire about him, but he was gone. Hitokotonushi no Ōkami was bound with a spell by E no gyoja 役行者, and he has not escaped²⁸ even to this day. E no ubasoku did so many miraculous deeds that we cannot enumerate them all. Indeed we learn that Buddhist miraculous arts are comprehensive. Those who have faith will attain them without fail.

29

On Breaking Wickedly the Bowl of a Begging Novice and Gaining an Immediate Penalty of Violent Death¹

Shiragabe no Imarō 白鬚部猪麿² was a man from Oda district, Bitchū province 備中國少田郡.³ He was evil⁴ by nature and did not believe in the Three Treasures.⁵

22. 701.
23. 仙: Taoist saint.
24. See above, 122. Since Dōshō died in 700, his encounter with E no ubasoku lacks historical evidence.
25. Silla unified Korea in 668 and flourished for the following century.
26. See Chap. I(1)d, n. 93; Chap. II(3)b.
27. 我國聖人.
28. 解脱; see I.15, n. 6.
1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XX, 20).
2. The Shiragabe family is well known from early times. The *Shinsen shūjiroku* cites it as an indigenous family (both 神別 and 皇別).
3. Present Oda-gun, Okayama-ken 岡山縣小田郡.
4. 邪見, *jaken*.
5. 三寶 *sanhō*; see Chap. II(3)b.

away. Then Imarō went on a trip to a strange land. On the way he was caught in a storm and crushed to death when the storehouse in which he had taken shelter collapsed.⁶

Truly we learn that retribution is close at hand in the present life. Why do we not behave ourselves prudently? The *Nehan-gyō* is referring to this when it says: "All evil deeds originate in wicked minds."⁷ The *Daijōbu-ron* says: "If you offer alms with compassion, the merit will be as great as earth; if you do so to all for your own sake, the reward will be as tiny as a mustard seed. It is better to save a person in danger than to make all kinds of offerings . . ."⁸

30

On Taking Others' Possessions Unrighteously, Causing Evil, and Gaining a Penalty Showing an Extraordinary Event¹

Kashiwade no omi Hirokuni 膳臣廣國² was an assistant governor³ of Miyako district, Buzen province 豐前國宮子郡.⁴ In the reign of the emperor at Fujiwara Palace, on the fifteenth of the ninth month in the autumn of the second year of the snake, the second year of the Keium era,⁵ Hirokuni passed away suddenly. On the fourth day after his death, about four o'clock in the afternoon, he was brought back to life and told the following tale:

"There came two messengers, one with an adult's hair style, the other with a child's. I accompanied them for the distance of about two stages,⁶ and on our way there was a river with a golden bridge.

6. See I.10, n. 10.
7. *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*, XXXV (Taisō, XII, 573c). 如我所說一切惡行邪見爲因.
8. *Daijōbu-ron* (Taisō, XXX, 257b).
1. Cf. *Fusō ryakki* (V, Monmu), *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XX, 16). The motif is the visit to the other world; see Chap. II(1)b.
2. Kashiwade is a family name; *omi*, a title; Hirokuni, a given name.
3. 少領 *shōryō*, an official who assists a district governor, *daijyō* 大領.
4. Present Miyako-gun, Fukuoka-ken 福岡縣京都郡.
5. 705, in the reign of Emperor Monmu.
6. One stage (*umaya* 躰) is about twelve miles, the distance between stages which were established to facilitate the transportation of taxed goods and messengers along main roads.

Crossing the bridge, I found myself in a strange land. I asked the messengers, 'What country is this?' They answered, 'It is the land in the southern direction.'⁷

'As we reached the capital, we saw eight armed officials following us. We found ourselves in front of a golden palace. When we entered the palace, a king was seated on the golden throne, and he told me, 'I have summoned you on a complaint by your wife.' Then the king called a woman whom I recognized as my deceased wife. Eight men carried her in: iron nails pierced her from top to bottom and from her forehead to the nape of her neck, while an iron chain tied her limbs. The king asked me, 'Do you know her?' I answered, 'Indeed, she is my wife.' Again the king asked, 'Do you know the sin of which you are accused?' I answered 'No.' When my wife was asked the same question, she answered, 'Yes, indeed. Because he drove me from home, I still bear a grudge and feel envious and hateful.' The king said to me, 'You are really innocent. You may go home. I warn you, however, not to talk thoughtlessly about the land of the dead.⁸ If you want to see your father, go to the south.'

'I went south to find my father standing and holding a hot copper pillar. He had thirty-seven nails in his body and was beaten with an iron stick, three hundred times in the morning, three hundred times in the afternoon, three hundred times in the evening, or, altogether, nine hundred times a day. I grieved at this and said, 'I never dreamed that you were suffering such punishment!' Then he spoke to me, saying: 'My son, probably you do not know why I am suffering. In order to support my family I killed living beings, pressed men to repay ten *ryō* on a loan of eight *ryō*⁹ of cotton, or lent rice and collected three times the amount.¹⁰ Also, I robbed others of their possessions, committed adultery with the wives of others, neglected filial piety and reverence to my elders, and used foul language to abuse those who were not slaves.'¹¹ Because of such offenses I have thirty-seven iron nails in my small body and receive nine hundred beatings daily with an iron stick. What pain! What suffering! When shall I be excused from my sin? When shall my body find rest? Please hurry to atone for

7. 圖南國 Tonan no kuni; see Chap. II(1)b, n. 33.

8. 黃泉國 Yomi no kuni; see Chap. II(1)b, n. 26.

9. 兩 a *ryō* is a unit of measurement; sixteen *ryō* equal one *gon* 斤.
10. There are two kinds of *gon*, *daigon* 大斤 and *shogon* 小斤. The former is three times as much as the latter. See I.12, n. 11. An interest rate higher than 100 percent was prohibited (see *Shoku Nihongi*, XXXI, Hōki 10:9:28). In the decree of 797 the practice of 50 percent interest was banned. See I.23, n. 9.

11. 奴婢 *nubi*; see Chap. I(1)a, n. 24. Those who could not pay back their debts often fell into the status of slaves. Therefore, he may have treated his debtors in the same manner as slaves.

my sins by making a Buddha-image and copying scriptures. Never forget this. When I visited you in hunger in the form of a big snake on the seventh¹² of the seventh month and was about to enter the house, you picked up the snake and threw it away. Again, when I went to your home in the form of a small red dog on the fifth¹³ of the fifth month, you called a big dog to chase me, and I left hungry and exhausted. However, when I entered your house in the form of a cat on New Year's Day,¹⁴ I filled my stomach with the various offerings and was able to make up for three years' lack of food. Then, I lost my sense of social order and reason and became a dog eating and watering. I am sure to become a small red dog again.'

'If you make an offering of one quart¹⁵ of rice, you will gain a reward of thirty days' food; if you make an offering of one set of clothes, you will gain a reward of one year's clothing. Those who have Buddhist scriptures recited will live in the eastern golden palace¹⁶ and be born in the heaven according to their wish; those who have Buddha-images made will be born in the Western Pure Land of Unlimited Life;¹⁷ those who set living beings free will be born in the Northern Pure Land of Unlimited Life.¹⁸ Or, those who fast for a day¹⁹ will gain a reward of ten years' food.

'Shocked at the sight of so many instances of retribution, I came back to the big bridge. The guards watching the gate checked me and said, 'We cannot let you go out, since you have been in.' I was wandering around when the child appeared. The gatekeepers knelt to greet him. Then the child called me, led me to a side gate, and opened the door. When I was leaving, he said, 'Go quickly.' I asked him, 'Whose child are you?' He answered, 'If you want to know who I am, I am the *Kanzeon-gyō*²⁰ which you copied in your childhood.' He was gone, whereupon I looked around to find myself in this world again.'

As Hirokuni visited the land of the dead and saw the karmic retribution of good and evil, he recorded it for circulation.²¹ Who can fail

12. Tanabata 七夕 festival; one of the five popular festivals which originated in China. After transmission to Japan, they were celebrated at court as well as in private homes. This festival is associated with the legend of the cowherd (牽牛 Akairi) and the spinning maid (織女 Vega).

13. Tango 端午; one of the five festivals mentioned above, at which prayers for protection from evil were offered.

14. See Chap. II(1)a, for the New Year renewal rite.

15. 升 *shō*.

16. 東方金屋: unidentified. Yakushi-Nyorai's pure land lies in the eastern quarter, but from the following sentence it seems to be a heaven rather than the pure land. Cf. I.5.

17. 西方无量淨土; see above, Chap. I(1)a, n. 16.

18. 北方无量淨土; the abode of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra 普賢菩薩. See *Hika-kyō*, IV (*Taishō*, III, No. 57b).

19. 齋食 *saijiki*; see I.24, n. 3.

20. *Myōhōrenge-kyō*, XXV; Karō, trans., *Myōhō-enge-kyō*, XXX.

21. See Chap. I(2)c.

to believe in the law of karmic retribution, as expounded widely in the Mahayana scriptures? This is what the scripture means when it says: "Honeydew in the present will be an iron ball in the future."²² Hirokuni made Buddha images, copied scriptures, and made offerings to the Three Treasures to repay his father's love²³ and atone for his sin, thereafter turning evil into righteousness.

31

On Attaining a Great Fortune Immediately Owing to Devotion to Kannon and Praying for a Share of Benefits¹

In the reign of ex-Emperor Shōhō-ōjin-shōmu² residing at Nara Palace 諸樂宮,³ Miteshiro no Azumabito 御手代東人⁴ went to Mt. Yoshino 吉野山⁵ to practice Buddhist teachings and seek his fortune. Three years passed during which he worshipped Kannon 觀音, reciting the name,⁶ and saying, "Homage to Kannon.⁷ Please give me ten thousand *kan*⁸ of copper coins, ten thousand *keku*⁹ of white rice and many beautiful girls."

At that time, Awata no asomi 粟田朝臣 of the Junior Third Rank¹⁰ had a daughter who was both unmarried and a virgin. She suddenly fell ill in her home in Hirose 廣瀬.¹¹ Her suffering was so great that there seemed no prospect of a cure. Her father sent messengers in all directions to call Buddhist monks¹² and lay brothers.¹³ Azumabito was called and begged to save her by chanting formulas.¹⁴ The power of

22. 現在甘露未來鐵丸. This given as a scriptural passage in this story, but as an ancient proverb in II.9. 甘露 and 鐵丸 are familiar metaphors in scriptures.

23. Gratitude to one's father is one of the four essential kinds of *ori*. See Chap. II(2)a, nn. 69, 70.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XVII, 14).
2. See I.5, n. 41.
3. Also written 奈良, 平城.
4. The Miteshiro family descended from kami, according to the *Shinsen shōjiroku*.
5. Including mountains located in present Yoshino-gun, Nara-ken. See I.28, n. 15.
6. 稱體 devotional rite of reciting Kannon's name while prostrated before the image.
7. 南無, a transliteration of Skt. *namas*.
8. 貫: one *kan* consists of one thousand pieces, *mon*.
9. 石: one *keku* equals about five bushels.
10. Unidentified; Awata no asomi Mahito of the Senior Third Rank may be the person referred to, but he died in 719, before the reign of Emperor Shōmu (724-749).
11. Present Kita-kazuraki-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣北葛城郡.
12. 禪師 *zenji*; *dhyāna* master.
13. 優婆塞 *ulhasoku*.
14. 咒 *ju*; see Chap. I(1)d, n. 97.

the formulas cured the illness, and she fell in love with him, eventually giving herself to him. Her family seized him and kept him confined in a room. Out of her affection, she cried and would not leave the place of his confinement. After a conference, her family decided to free Azumabito and let him marry her and inherit the fortune. He was given the Fifth Rank owing to the report to the Throne.¹⁵

After several years, when she was dying, she called her sister, and said, "I am dying now. I have but one wish; will you listen?" Her sister said, "I will do as you like." Whereupon Azumabito's wife said, "I can never forget my gratitude to Azumabito. I would like to make your daughter his wife and let her be in charge of the household."¹⁶ Faithful to her wish, the sister gave her daughter to Azumabito and put her in charge of the fortune.

Azumabito was richly blessed in this life because of the mysterious power he gained from his devotional practices and the great virtue of Kannon. How can anyone not believe that?

32

On Gaining an Immediate Reward for Faith in the Three Treasures, Reverence to Monks, and Having Scriptures Recited¹

In the ninth month of the fourth year of the hare, the fourth year of the Jinki era,² Emperor Shōmu went hunting with his officers in the mountain at Yamamura in Sou upper district 添上郡山村.³ A deer ran into a farmer's house in the village of Hosome 納見里,⁴ and the family killed and ate it without knowing whose it was. Later, when the emperor heard this, he sent messengers to take them prisoner. More than ten men and women met with this misfortune, and they shuddered in fear without any recourse. Their only thought was that nothing but the divine power⁵ of the Three Treasures would save

15. As he became the son-in-law of Awata no asomi, he was given the rank.

16. This story demonstrates the practice of handing down authority for the ancestral cult and the family fortune from the aunt to the niece, which is still common in a priestess' family. See Sakurai Mitsuru, "Mei no chikara: Naka no sumeramikoto o megutte," *Kokugogō to kokubungaku*, XLII (No. 12, December 1965), 23-33.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XII, 10).
2. 727.
3. See I.10, n. 2.
4. Present Tenri-shi 天理市, south of Yamamura.
5. 神力.