

I 7

On an Extraordinary Sign of an Unfinished Clay

Image Groaning¹

Novice Shingyō 沙彌信行² came from the village of Mike, Naka district, Kii province 紀伊國那賀郡彌氣里.³ His secular name was Ōtomo no muraji Oya 大伴連祖.⁴ He renounced the householder's life, ordained himself, shaved his head, and wore a surplice, looking for what might bring happiness.⁵ In that village there was a temple,⁶ called Yamamuro-dō of Mike 彌氣山室堂 by the villagers who had built it for themselves. (Its formal name was Jishi-zenjō-dō 慈子禪定堂, Maitreya's Meditation Hall.)⁷ Inside there were two unfinished clay images. They were the attendants of Bodhisattva Miroku, and their broken limbs were placed in the bell hall. The patrons of the temple discussed the matter and said, "We will keep them in some pure place in the mountain."

Novice Shingyō used to live in that hall and strike the bell. Seeing the unfinished images, he felt uneasy and tied the fallen limbs to the images with threads, stroking their heads and saying again and again, "I hope that some sage⁸ will come to complete them."

Many years passed. In the reign of Emperor Shirakabe, in the middle of the seventh month in the autumn of the eighth year of the boar, the second year of the Hōki era,⁹ a voice was heard after midnight, groaning "How painful! How painful!" It was feeble and hardly audible, sounding like a woman's voice giving a long, drawn out groan. At first Shingyō thought that a traveler going across the mountain had suddenly been taken ill and was staying in the temple. He got up immediately and went around the temple looking for a sick person, but he found no one there. Although wondering at this event, he said nothing about it. The groan of someone suffering, however, did not cease at night. When Shingyō could endure it no longer, he got up and

1. Similar to II.22, 23; III.28, etc. See Chap. II(3)b.

2. Unknown.

3. Present Wakayama-shi 和歌山市.

4. Oya may be the first name or a copyist's error. The Maeda manuscript does not have this script.

5. That is, good deeds, attainment of merit.

6. 道場 dōjō.

7. Kyōkai's note.

8. 聖人 shōnin, an eminent monk.

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searched again, locating the groan in the bell hall. He discovered that it was the images groaning, and Shingyō at once marveled and grieved at the discovery.

At that time Monk Hōkei 豐慶¹⁰ of Gangō-ji¹¹ on the East Side of Nara was staying in the temple. Shingyō surprised the monk by knocking on the door of his room and saying, "Venerable Master, please get up and listen to me!" Then he described in detail how the images were groaning. Thereupon the two monks, together moved by great wonder and grief, organized a devotees' association and completed the clay images for dedication. A service was held to enshrine them. They are the attendants of Miroku enshrined in Mike-dō. (The one on the left is Bodhisattva Daimyōshō 大妙聲菩薩, while the one on the right is Bodhisattva Hōonrin 法音輪菩薩.)¹²

Indeed, we learn through this event that any vow will be achieved and fulfilled without fail. This is also a miraculous event.

I 8

On the Immediate Penalty of Violent Death for a

Licentious Scripture Copier Who Copied

the Hokke-kyō¹

Tajihi the Scripture Copier came from Tajihi district, Kawachi province 河内國丹治比郡.² As his surname was Tajihi, he was given such a popular name. In that district there was a temple³ called Nonaka-dō 野中堂.

In the sixth month in the summer of the eighth year of the boar, the second year of the Hōki era,⁴ a man made a vow to copy the *Hoke-kyō* and invited the copier to the temple. Female devotees gathered in the temple to add purified water to the ink for copying scriptures, and it happened that the sky suddenly clouded over and there was a shower in the afternoon. The temple was so cramped that those who sought

10. Or Hōkyō.

11. See I.3, n. 9.

12. Kyōkai's note.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari* (XIV, 26).

2. Present Minami- and Kita-kawachi-gun, Ōsaka-fu 大阪府南. 北河内郡.

3. See III, 17, n. 6.

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shelter from the shower filled it, and the copier and the women were sitting in the same place. Then the scripture copier, driven by strong lust, crouched behind one of the girls, lifted her skirt, and had intercourse with her. As his penis entered her vagina, they died together embracing each other. The girl died foaming at the mouth.

Indeed, we learn that this was the punishment given by the Guardian of dharma.⁵ However intensely your body and heart may burn with the fire of lust, do not, because of the promptings of a lewd heart, commit a filthy deed. A fool indulging in lust is just like a bug jumping into a fire. Therefore, a preceptive scripture⁶ says, "A thoughtless youth easily feels lust."⁷ Or the *Nehan-gyō*,⁸ expressing the same idea, says: "If you know what the five kinds of desire⁹ are, you will not find any pleasure in them. Nor will you remain a slave to them even momentarily. It is just like a dog chewing on a meatless bone, never knowing satisfaction."

I9

On a Girl Born of a Flesh Ball Who Practiced Good and Enlightened People¹

The wife of Toyobuku no Hirogimi 豊服廣公,² in the village of Toyobuku, Yatsushiro district, Higo province 肥後國八代郡,³ became pregnant, and, about four o'clock in the morning on the fifteenth of the eleventh month in the winter of the eighth year of the boar, the second year of the Hōki era,⁴ she gave birth to a flesh ball.⁵ It looked like an egg. Not taking this as a good omen, the man and wife put it in a vessel and stored it in a cave in the mountain.⁶ After seven days

5. 護法 *gohō*; see II.1, n. 11.

6. 律 *ritsu*, a translation of Skt. *vinaya*.

7. *Konpon sabatabu-ritsu-sho* 根本薩婆多部律攝. See Haraguchi, "Nihon ryōiki shutten goku kanken," *Kuntengo*, No. 34 (December 1966), 53-54.

8. *Daihatsu nehan-gyō*, XXII (*Taishō*, XII, 496), *Bonmō-kyō koshakki* (*Taishō*, XL, 705). See Haraguchi, "Nihon ryōiki," 54.

9. 五欲 *goyoku*, five kinds of desire which arise out of attachment to the five objects: color/sound, smell, taste, and touch.

1. Cf. *Sanbō ekotoba* (II, 4); *Hoke kenki* (III, 98); *Genkō shakusho* (XVIII).

2. Present Toyobuku-mura, Shimomashiki-gun, Kumamoto-ken 熊本縣下益城郡豊服村.

3. Unknown. Hirogimi may be the first name, although *kimi* is originally an honorific title such as Lord.

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5. 肉團 *shishimura*; see Chap. II(2)b, n. 96; also, nn. 21, 22, below.

6. "A cave in the mountain" may signify the womb of mother earth to which the dead go back and from which new life comes out.

they returned to the cave and discovered that a girl had been born of the flesh ball, breaking through its covering. The parents took her home, and her mother nursed her. There was no one in the province who did not wonder at this.

After eight months had passed she suddenly grew very large, but her head and neck were joined without any chin, in a form different from other people, and she was three and a half feet high. Endowed with wisdom, she was by nature brilliant. Before she was seven, she recited the *Hoke-kyō* and the Eighty-volume *Kegon-gyō* 八十花嚴.⁷ She was reserved and never boasted. Eventually she decided to renounce the world, shaved her head, and wore a surplice. Prompted by her faith, she practiced good and enlightened people. She had such a good voice that it could lead her audience to become merciful. In her deformed body there was no vagina but only an opening for urine. Foolish laymen mocked her, calling her Saru-hijiri 猴聖,⁸ False-sage.

On one occasion a monk of the provincial temple in Takuma district 託磨郡,⁹ and a monk of Daijin-ji 大神寺 at Yahata, Usa district, Buzen province 豊前國宇佐郡矢羽田,¹⁰ became envious of the nun, and said to her, "Your teachings are false."¹¹ They looked down at her, mocking and making a fool of her. A divine man¹² flew down from the sky and made as though to impale them with a halberd. They screamed in terror and eventually died.

When the Most Venerable Kaimyō 戒明¹³ of Daian-ji¹⁴ was appointed as a superior provincial preceptor¹⁵ of Tsukushi province 筑紫國¹⁶ about the seventh or eighth year of the Hōki era, Sagano kimi Kogimi 佐賀君兒公,¹⁷ of the Senior Seventh Rank, Upper Grade, a governor of Saga district of Hizen province 肥前國佐賀郡,¹⁸ held a

7. There are two major texts of *Avatamsakasūtra* in Chinese: *Daihōkōbutsu kegon-gyō* (60 vols.) (*Taishō*, IX, No. 278) and *Daihōkōbutsu kegon-gyō* (80 vols.) (*Taishō*, X, No. 279).

8. See Chap. II(2)c.

9. Present Izumi-chō, Kumamoto-shi 熊本市出水町.

10. Or Miroku-dera which was once located in the precincts of Usa Hachiman Shrine, in Usa-machi, Usa-gun, Ōita-ken 大分縣宇佐郡宇佐町.

11. 外道 *gedō*; originally refers to non-Buddhists and their teachings, but it is also used in a pejorative sense, meaning followers of the wrong teachings.

12. 神人 *shinjin*; guardian of dharma in a human form.

13. A monk of Daian-ji who specialized in the *Kegon-gyō*, studied in China in the Hōki era (770-780), and died in the Enryaku era (782-805).

14. See I.32, n. 6.

15. 大國師 *daikokushi*; *kokushi* is a provincial preceptor who is in charge of the samgha in the province. See Chap. I(1)a, n. 21; d, n. 79. Since Tsukushi (see below) is a big province, *da* is added to the title.

16. Formally includes Chikuzen and Chikugo 筑前, 筑後, but often means present Kyūshū as a whole.

17. Unknown. Probably of the local gentry.

18. Present Saga-gun, Saga-ken 佐賀縣佐賀郡.