

pagoda, and the painful groan was heard every night. When he could endure no longer, he got up to look for the sufferer, but there was still nobody around. At dawn, however, the groaning was far more intense than usual, echoing through heaven and earth. He wondered again if it were the spirit of the pagoda.

When he arose early the next morning and looked around the temple, he discovered that the head of the sixteen-foot image of Miroku 彌勒<sup>5</sup> had been severed and had fallen to the ground. About a thousand large ants were gathered there, devouring the head. Having seen this, he reported it to the patrons of the temple. In grief, they repaired the image and held a dedication ceremony with reverence.

It is said that the Buddha statue is not alive, so how could it suffer and be sick? Indeed, we learn that this was the manifestation of the Buddha's mind. Even after the death of Buddha, the dharma-body always exists, eternal and unchangeable. You should not doubt any further.

## 29

*On the Immediate Penalty of Violent Death Incurred  
by an Ignorant Man Who Broke a Wooden Buddha Image  
a Village Child Had Made in Playing<sup>1</sup>*

In the village of Hamanaka, Niki, Ama district, Kii province 紀伊國海部郡仁嗜濱中村,<sup>2</sup> there was an ignorant man whose name is unknown. Born ignorant, he did not know the law of causation.

There was a path running along the mountain<sup>3</sup> between Ama 海部 and Ate 安諦.<sup>4</sup> It was called Tamasaka 玉坂.<sup>5</sup> If one climbs the mountain from Hamanaka, traveling due south, he will reach the village of Hata 秦里.<sup>6</sup> Once a child of that village went into the mountain to collect firewood and played by that mountain path, carving a piece

5. Maitreya; see Chap. II(3)b, n. 131.

1. Probably written as an illustration for the second chapter of the *Hoke-kyō*, "Hōben-bon" 方便品 (Kern, *Saddharma*, Chap. II, "Skillfulness").

2. In the vicinity of present Shimotsu-shi, Wakayama-ken 和歌山縣下津市.

3. One of the Nagamine Mts. 長峰山脈, forming the boundary between Kaisō-gun and Arida-gun.

4. See III.10, n. 4.

5. Unidentified.

6. Present Hata, Shimotsu-shi 下津市畑.

of wood into a Buddha image and piling stones into a pagoda. He placed the image in the stone pagoda and occasionally played there, making offerings.

In the reign of Emperor Shirakabe, an ignorant man laughed at the statue carved by the child in his play, chopping and breaking it with an axe. Hardly had he gone any distance when he threw himself on the ground, bleeding from the nose and mouth with both eyes plucked out, dying in an instant like the disappearance of an illusion.

Indeed, we learn that the Guardian of dharma<sup>7</sup> is present. How could we not revere it? The *Hoke-kyō* explains it thus: "If children draw an image of Buddha with a twig, brush, or fingernail in their play, they will all attain Buddhahood. Or if they raise one hand and bow to worship a Buddha-image, they will attain the supreme stage of Buddhahood."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, be pious and faithful.

## 30

*On the Monk Who Accumulated Merits by Making  
Buddhist Images and Showed an Extraordinary  
Sign at the End of His Life*

Elder Master Kanki's 觀規 secular name was Mimana no Kanuki 三間名干岐.<sup>1</sup> He was from Nagusa district, Kii province 紀伊國名草郡.<sup>2</sup> He was naturally gifted in carving. He was such a learned monk that he fulfilled the role of a speaker in a ceremony<sup>3</sup> and was influential among the people. He supported his family by agricultural work.

In the village of Noo 能應村<sup>4</sup> in Nagusa district, there was a temple which his ancestors had built. It was formerly called Miroku-dera 彌勒寺,<sup>5</sup> but popularly referred to as Noo-dera. In the reign of Em-

7. 護法 *gohō*.

8. See Chap. II(1)c, n. 53; also, Katō, trans., *Myōhō-rence-kyō*, 57-58.

1. Mimana 任那 is the name of the estate held by the Yamato court from the fourth century to 562. Kanuki is a popular name for ancient Korean royal families. Cf. *Nihon shoki*, XVII (Keitai 23:4); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 19: "Konomata Kanki 己能未多干岐, King of Imna, came to the court."

2. Present Kaisō-gun, Wakayama-ken.

3. 得業 *tokugō*; monks who have accomplished the task in one of the three great ceremonies of the southern capital, that is, Yuima-e and Hokke-e of Kōfuku-ji 興福寺維摩會, 法華會 and Saishō-e of Yakushi-ji 藥師寺最勝會.

4. Present Yamaguchi-mura 山口村.

5. Although the temple is named after Maitreya, it does not seem to be dedicated to Maitreya. However, it may have enshrined Maitreya when founded.

peror Shōmu, he made a vow to carve a sixteen-foot Śākya<sup>6</sup> and its attendants;<sup>7</sup> he completed them in the sixth year of the sheep, the tenth year of the Hōki era, in the reign of Emperor Shirakabe,<sup>8</sup> and placed them in the golden hall of Noo-dera, holding a dedication ceremony. Then he made another vow to carve a ten-foot wooden statue of the Eleven-headed Bodhisattva Kannon,<sup>9</sup> but he did not complete the work. Having spent years without many helpers, he was too old and weak to carve it himself. When he was over eighty, he passed away in bed at Noo-dera on the eleventh day of the second month, in the spring of the tenth year of the boar, the first year of the Enryaku era, in the reign of Emperor Yamabe 山部<sup>10</sup> who governed Ōyashima at Nagaoka Palace.<sup>12</sup>

After two days he was restored to life and called his disciple Myōki 明規,<sup>13</sup> saying, "I forgot to say one word and, since I could not endure it, I came back to the world." Then he had an elevated seat made on the floor, a rug spread on it, and a meal prepared. He invited Musashi no suguri Tarimaro 武藏村主多利丸<sup>14</sup> of the devotees' organization,<sup>15</sup> had him sit on the seat while he himself served the meal, and ate facing his guest. When it was over, he arose and, leading Myōki and all his relatives, knelt to pay homage to Tarimaro, saying, "I, Kanki, have used up my share of life, dying suddenly without completing the statue of Kannon. Luckily, having this good opportunity, I am wondering how I can express my hope. I beg you in your benevolence to complete the sacred image. If this moderate wish of mine is granted even in part, I will gain great fortune in the future and you will gain the merits for an immediate reward. As I had no control over my sincere wish, I dared to come back to make such a bold request. In awe and fear I am appealing to you in reverence."

Thereupon, Tarimaro as well as Myōki and the others grieved and wailed, saying to him, "We will be sure to complete the work you have told us about." Hearing this, the monk was delighted and stood up, clasping his hands in veneration.

6. 釋迦丈六; see I.32, n. 6.

7. 脇土 *kyōji*; Bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra.

8. 779, in the reign of Emperor Kōnin.

9. 十一面觀音; see Chap. II(3)b, n. 137.

10. 782, in the reign of Emperor Kanmu.

11. See II.1, n. 3.

12. Located at present Otokumi-gun, Kyoto-fu 京都府乙訓郡. Nagaoka was the capital from 784 to 794.

13. Unknown.

14. Unknown.

15. 知識 *chishiki*; see Chap. I(1)d, n. 110.

Two days later, on the fifteenth of the same month, he called Myōki and said to him, "Today is the anniversary of Buddha's entry into nirvana,<sup>16</sup> and I, too, will end my life." Myōki was about to say that the master was right, but, out of love for his dear master, he lied, saying, "No, the anniversary has not come yet." Looking at the calendar, the master said, "Today is the fifteenth. How could you lie by saying that the day had not come, my child?"

Having asked for hot water, he washed himself. He changed his clothes, knelt to clasp his hands in veneration, held an incense burner, faced to the west, and died at four in the afternoon of the same day.<sup>17</sup> In accord with his wish, the Buddhist artist Tarimaro had already completed the statue and held the dedication ceremony to report to Buddha how the statue came to be made. It is now found in the pagoda of Noo-dera.

The note says: How praiseworthy the Most Venerable Mimana no Kanuki is for keeping the Buddha's mind inside and manifesting an average form outside, living a mundane, householder's life and yet not defiling his jewel of the precepts.<sup>18</sup> At his last moment he faced to the west, and his devotion to the vow made his spirit work out an extraordinary sign. Indeed, we know that this is sacred and not ordinary.

## 3 I

### *On a Woman Who Gave Birth to Stones and Enshrined Them as Kami<sup>1</sup>*

In the village of Kusumi, Mizuno, Katakata district, Mino province 美濃國方縣郡水野郷楠見村,<sup>2</sup> there was a woman whose surname was

16. 佛涅槃 *Butsu-nehari*; the fifteenth of the second month is regarded as the date of Śākyamu-ni's entry into nirvana.

17. This is the typical manner of death for those who have faith in rebirth in the western pure land. Cf. I.22.

18. 戒珠 *kaishu*, virtue of self-discipline.

1. One of the legends on the birth and growth of stones. See Yanagita Kunio, "Seiseki densetsu," *Teihon Yanagita Kunio shū*, V, 493-498.

2. Present Nagata, Gifu-shi 岐阜市長良. For the significance of this story, see Chap. II(2)b.