

I7

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.

I8

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-shū* (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.

4. 771.