

year of the Tenpyō hōji era, in the reign of Emperor Ōhi 大炊天皇<sup>5</sup> who resided at Nara Palace, a voice crying, "Take me out! Take me out!" was heard from the sand on the beach at the village of Uda.

At that time a monk was traveling in Tōtōmi province, and, when he happened to pass the spot, he heard the voice calling persistently to be let out. The monk answered and could hear the voice coming from under the sand. Suspecting that some dead person buried there might have come to life, he dug and found a wooden image of Yakushi Buddha 藥師佛, six feet five inches high, with both ears missing. In tears, he paid homage to it, saying, "Great Master, what offense caused you to be a victim of flood? As I was destined by karma to find you, will you please let me repair you?"

He organized devotees,<sup>6</sup> invited a sculptor to fix the ears of the Buddha, and built a hall in the village of Uda to enshrine and venerate it. It is now called Uda-dō 鵜田堂. Clergy and laymen all revered this Buddha, for it gave off light, revealing a miraculous sign, and generously granted their wishes.

It was similar to the sandalwood statue made by Uten 優填<sup>7</sup> which stood up to pay homage to Buddha, or the wooden image of Tinglan's mother<sup>8</sup> which moved as if alive as tradition says.<sup>9</sup>

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### *On the Evil-loving Man Who Was Killed with Swords and Thus Got an Immediate Death Penalty<sup>1</sup>*

Tachibana no asomi Naramaro 橘朝臣諾樂麻呂<sup>2</sup> was a son of Prince Kazuraki 葛木王.<sup>3</sup> With overweening ambition he planned to usurp

5. Emperor Jun'nin (r. 758–764). This event took place in 758.

6. 知識 *chishiki*; see Chap. I(1)d, nn. 110, 111.

7. Udayana, king of the Kushan Empire, patron of Buddhism.

8. See I.17, n. 11.

9. *Shokyo yōshū*, XV (*Taishō*, LIV, 74). 昔優填初刻栴檀...皆現寫真容工圖妙相 故能流光動瑞...丁蘭瀆濁滅木母以之變色. See Haraguchi, "Nihon ryōiki shūten goku kanken," *Kuntengo to kanten shiryō*, No. 34 (December 1966), 53–67.

1. Cf. *Shoku Nihongi*, XX (Tenpyō hōji 1:7:2, 3, 4). Similar to II.1, 35 and III.36 in the sense that men of high status and influence were punished as a consequence of their bad deeds and that none of these events are recorded in court histories.

2. Naramaro planned a rebellion against Fujiwara no Nakamaro (see III.38) with the support of Empress Kōken and Empress dowager Kōmyō. The rebellion failed and he died in 757.

3. (d. 757). In 736 Prince Kazuraki succeeded to his mother's surname and called himself Tachibana no Moroe 橘諸兄. He became Chancellor of the Senior First Rank, but was forced to resign by Fujiwara no Nakamaro in 756 and died in the following year. See *Shoku Nihongi*, XIX (Tenpyō shōhō 8:2:2).

the throne and summoned rebels to consult with him on the possibilities for a rebellion. He painted a monk's figure as a target and tried to shoot out the pupils of its eyes.<sup>4</sup> He loved to do evil deeds, but none was more evil than this.

Once a slave<sup>5</sup> of Naramaro went to Nara hills 諾樂山<sup>6</sup> to hunt birds with a hawk and found many young foxes there. He caught and skewered them with a stick, leaving the stick standing at the opening of the fox hole. Now, this man had a baby. The mother fox, seeking revenge, turned itself into the baby's grandmother. She took the baby in her arms and carried it to the entrance of the hole, threading it on a skewer and leaving it standing at the entrance as the man had done to her children.

Even a humble animal has the means to repay an evil deed. Immediate retribution lies at hand. How can we live without compassion? Merciless deeds will incur merciless revenge. Thus, Naramaro fell into disgrace with the emperor and was put to death not long after. We learn, therefore, that his evil deed in the above story was an omen of his fate of being killed by the sword. This is also a miraculous event.

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### *On a Woman Who Survived Violation of a Big Snake Owing to the Power of Drugs<sup>1</sup>*

In the village of Umakai, Sarara district, Kawachi province 河內國更荒郡馬甘里,<sup>2</sup> there was a girl from a wealthy family. In Emperor Ōhi's reign, in the fourth month in the summer of the sixth year of the boar, the third year of the Tenpyō hōji era,<sup>3</sup> the girl climbed a mulberry tree to pick leaves. A large snake crawled up the tree after

4. According to Kitayama, the monk may be Gyōgi who sided with Fujiwara no Nakamaro. This is why Kyōkai wrote about the retribution of Naramaro as well as Prince Nagaya who was also opposed to Nakamaro. See Kitayama, *Nihon kodai seijishi*, 269–330.

5. 奴 *yakko*, the same as *nuhi*; see Chap. I(1) a, n. 24.

6. Nara-yama, present Sahosaki kyūryō 佐保佐紀丘陵; hills north of Nara between Nara Basin and Kyoto Basin.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari shū* (XXIV, 9). Buddhist adaptation of the snake-lover theme which is also found in II.8, 12. According to Fujisawa Morihiko, a similar legend is found in the tradition of a tribe in Taiwan (see his *Nihon densetsu kenkyū*, IV, 43). A condensed translation of this story is given by D. L. Philippi, "Ancient Tales of Supernatural Marriage," *Today's Japan*, V (No. 3, 1960), 19–23.

2. Present Kita-kawachi-gun, Ōsaka-fu.

3. 759.