

tract, Kii province 紀伊國名草郡三上村,² organized a devotees' association to rotate the medical fund³ of Yakuō-ji 藥王寺,⁴ (now called Seta-dera 勢多寺). At Okada no suguri Obame's 岡田村主姑女⁵ this medical fund was used to gain profits in a brewery.⁶

One day a brindled calf came to the temple and lay at the pagoda. The men of the temple chased it away, but it came back again to lie down and would not leave. In wonder they asked people, saying, "To whom does this calf belong?" But no one claimed it as his own. Therefore the monks caught, tied, and kept it. After it grew up it was driven into the fields of the temple.

After five years, Okada no suguri Iwahito 岡田村主石人, a patron of the temple, had a dream in which he was chased, thrust down, and trampled by the same calf. He screamed in terror. Then the calf asked, "Do you know me?" He answered "No." The calf released him, stepped back, and knelt, saying in tears, "I am Mononobe no Maro 物部麿⁷ of the village of Sakura 櫻村.⁸ (He was popularly called Shio-tsuki 鹽春. When he was alive, he shot at a boar and thought he had hit it, though he had missed. Therefore, he ground salt⁹ and brought it to the spot to find not a boar but an arrow stuck in the ground. Laughing at him, villagers named him "Shio-tsuki" [salt grinder], which became his popular name). In my previous existence I borrowed ten gallons of rice wine from the medical fund of the temple and died without repaying it. Because of that I was reborn as an ox and driven hard to atone for my debt. My service was set for eight years. As I have worked for five years, I have three more years to go. Men of the temple have driven me so mercilessly, whipping my back, that I have suffered greatly. I am telling you of my sad plight, for you are the only one who has shown me mercy."

Iwahito asked, "How can I know if your story is true?" The ox replied, "Please inquire of Ōomina of Sakura 櫻大娘¹⁰ to find whether or not my story is true. (Ōomina was Iwahito's sister, a mistress in charge of the rice wine brewery.) In great wonder he visited his sister to tell her the whole story in detail. Then she said, "That story is true.

2. Present Kaiso-gun, Wakayama-ken 和歌山縣海草郡.

3. 藥分 *yakuhun*; the fund used to distribute medicine to people. Capital was accumulated from the proceeds of rice and wine loans.

4. Judging from the name, it may have served as a medical center.

5. Since the title *suguri* was often conferred on immigrants, the Okada family may have emigrated from the continent.

6. The temple made loans of rice and had the people brew wine, which was loaned again to gain interest for medical expenses.

7. Unknown.

8. Unlocated.

9. He prepared the salt for the curing of the boar's flesh.

10. Meaning "Lady of Sakura village."

He did borrow ten gallons of rice wine and died without repaying it." When Jōtatsu 淨達,¹¹ a monk in charge of the temple household,¹² and patrons of the temple heard the story, they recognized the law of causality, and, moved by compassion, they held a service to recite scriptures for the ox. It disappeared at the end of eight years, and no one ever knew where it had gone; nor did it appear again.

We should remember that failure to pay debts will surely incur a penalty. Can you dare forget that? This is what the *Jōjitsu-ron* 成實論¹³ has in mind when it says: "If man does not repay his debts, he will be reborn among such animals as oxen, deer, donkeys, and sheep in order to atone for his debts."

33

On a Woman Devoured by an Evil Fiend¹

In the reign of Emperor Shōmu a popular song spread all over the country:

Who asked you to be a bride,
Yorozu-no-ko of Amuchi-no-komuchi?
Namu, Namu.
Mountain ascetics inhale the breath,
Chanting formulas
Amashini, amashini.²

At that time there was a wealthy man who lived in the eastern part of the village of Amuchi, Tōchi district, Yamato province 大和國十市郡菴知村.³ Kagamitsukuri no miyatsuko 鏡作造⁴ was his surname. He had a daughter whose name was Yorozu-no-ko. She neither married nor made love. She was a beautiful girl, but, though men of

11. See *Shoku Nihongi*, III (Keiun 4: 5: 28); Snellen, "Shoku Nihongi," *JASJ*, Second Series, XI (December 1934), 239. A student monk who came back from Silla in 707.

12. 知寺僧 *chiji no sō*.

13. *Jōjitsu-ron*, VIII (*Taishō*, XXXII, 301).

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XX, 37).

2. This song is hard to interpret, particularly the second half. Our translation depends on the *Nihon ryōiki* (NKBT). Its most interpretive and sensible explication is given by Kimoto Michifusa (*Jōdai kayō shōkai*) and quoted in the *Nihon ryōiki* (NKBT, 489).

.....
Namu, namu

The bridegroom came with decorated horses and oxen loaded with wine,

If Yorozu no ko had been wise, she would not have incurred her death.

3. Present Nikaidō, Tenri-shi Nara-ken 奈良縣天理市二階堂.

4. See *Nihon shoki*, XXIX (Tenmu 12: 10: 5). The title *miraji* was conferred on the Kagamitsukuri-no-miyatsuko family in 683. See Aston, "Nihongi," II, 361.

high rank proposed to her, she would not accept them. After several years, a man eventually came to propose with a present consisting of three carts loaded with pretty dyed silk cloths. She was happy at this and, becoming friendly with him, accepted his proposal and allowed him to enter the bedroom and consummate the marriage.

That night a voice was heard three times from the bedroom saying "It hurts!" Her parents heard, but ignored it and slept again, saying to each other, "She feels pain because she is not used to it."

The next morning because it grew late and she still did not get up, her mother knocked at the door of the bedroom, calling her daughter but getting no answer. Feeling uneasy, she opened the door and found her daughter completely eaten up except for her skull and one finger. Her parents were horrified and grieved at the sight. When they looked at the silk sent as a betrothal present, they discovered that it had turned into animal bones, and the three wagons into silver-berry wood. People from all quarters came to hear and see what had happened, and all were filled with wonder. Her skull was put into a beautiful imported box, and the box was placed in front of the Three Treasures, where a vegetarian feast⁵ was served on the first seventh morning.

Thus we suspect that an omen preceded the calamity. The song noted above was the omen. Some say that it was the mysterious work of a deity,⁶ and others say she fell prey to a fiend.⁷ On reflection, however, we know that this was a penalty for her past deeds. This is also an extraordinary event.

34

On an Orphaned Girl Whose Devotion to the Bronze Kannon Brought Her an Immediate Reward in a Miraculous Event¹

In the neighborhood of Uetsuki-dera 殖槻寺² on the West Side of Nara there was an orphaned girl. She was unmarried, and her name

5. 齋食 *saijiki*; see I.24, n. 3.

6. 神怪 *shinge*.

7. 鬼啖 *kitan*.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XVI, 8).

2. Or Kenpō-ji 建法寺, Kannon-ji 観音寺. It was located next to Uetsuki Hachiman Shrine 殖槻八幡宮, in present Yamato-kōriyama-shi 大和郡山市. See Fukuyama, *Narachō jihin*, 221-229.

is unknown. Her parents in their lifetime were very rich, built many houses and storehouses, and made a bronze Bodhisattva Kanzeon 觀世音菩薩,³ two and a half feet high. They built a detached hall to enshrine the image and perform rites before it.

In Emperor Shōmu's reign the parents passed away, the slaves⁴ ran away, and the cattle died. Thereupon, having lost her wealth and suffering from poverty, the girl stayed in the house and cried sorrowfully day and night. When she heard that Bodhisattva Kannon fulfilled the wishes of devotees, she offered flowers, incense, and lamps, holding the rope tied to the image⁵ and praying for a good share of fortune, saying, "Since I am the only child, I have been all alone since the death of my parents. I have lost my fortune, and I am poor, lacking any means of livelihood. Will you please bring me a fortune immediately? Please give me a quick response!" Thus she wailed and prayed day and night.

In the same village there was a wealthy widower. He saw the girl and proposed to her through a go-between. She replied, "I am so poor that I am naked and have no clothes. How can I veil my face and go to talk with him?" The go-between reported her words to the widower, who said, "I know very well that she is poor and has no clothes. I only want to know if she accepts me." Therefore, the go-between visited the girl again to tell her the message, but again she said "No." Then the man forced his way in to call on and visit with her. Presently she accepted him and lay with him.

The next day it rained from morning till night. The rain kept him from leaving her, and he stayed for three days. Being hungry, he said, "I am hungry. Will you give me something to eat?" The wife said, "I will prepare a meal soon." She kindled fire in the stove and set an empty pot on the fire, crouching with her chin in her hands. Wandering in her empty house, she sighed sorrowfully, and after she had cleaned her mouth and washed her hands, she entered the sacred hall. In tears, holding the rope tied to the image, she implored, "Will you please save me from shame? Please bring me a fortune immediately." After that, she went out of the hall and crouched with her chin in her hands in front of the empty stove as before.

About four o'clock on that day there was a knock at the door, and somebody called to her. She went out and found the wet nurse of a

3. See Chap. I(1)a, n. 12.

4. 奴婢 *nubi*; see Chap. I(1)a, n. 24.

5. See II.21, n. 8.