

out doing good? My heart aches for all beings. How can we be saved from calamity in the age of the degenerate dharma? If we offer monks only a handful of food, the merit of our good deed will save us from the calamity of hunger. If we keep a precept of nonkilling for a day, we will be saved from the calamity of sword and battle.

Once there was a full-fledged monk who lived on a mountain and practiced meditation. At every meal he shared his food with a crow which came to him every day. After a vegetarian meal, he chewed a toothpick,¹⁰ cleaned his mouth, washed his hands and played with a stone. The crow was behind the hedge when he threw the stone. He hit the crow without knowing that it was there. The crow died on the spot, its head crushed into pieces, and was reborn as a boar. The boar lived in the same mountain as the monk. It happened to go to the place above his hut, rooting about among the rocks for food, whereupon one of the rocks rolled down and killed the monk. Although the boar had no intention of killing him, the rock rolled down by itself. A sin committed by an action which is neither good nor bad¹¹ will in turn generate the same kind of action. In the case of intentional murder, how is it possible to escape the penalty? A deluded mind produces the seed and fruit of evil; an enlightened mind produces the seed of good to attain Buddhahood.

I, the mediocre monk Kyōkai, have not studied enough to ask questions in the manner of the Tendai Sage.¹² Nor am I sufficiently enlightened to answer in the manner of holy and eloquent men.¹³ My efforts are like bailing water out of the ocean with a shell or looking at the sky through a straw. Though I am not an eminent monk who transmits the light of dharma¹⁴ I try hard to meditate on it, following the path to the pure land and directing the mind toward enlightenment. I repent of my previous misdeeds and pray for future good. By editing these stories of miraculous events I want to pull the people forward by the ears, offer my hand to lead them to good, and show them how to cleanse their feet of evil. My sincere hope is that we may all be reborn in the western land of bliss, leaving no one on the earth, and live together in the jeweled palace in heaven, abandoning our earthly residence.

10. See I.26, n. 5.

11. 無記 *muki*. This story may have originated in the *Bonmō-kyō hosatsukaihō-shō* 梵網經菩薩戒本疏 (*Taishō*, XL, 611), according to Haraguchi ("Nihon ryōiki shutten goku kanken," *Kuntengo*, No. 34, 61-62).

12. 天台智者; see Chap. I(1)b, n. 51.

13. 神人辯者.

14. 傳燈良匠.

I

On the Tongues of the Reciters of the Hoke-kyō Which Did Not Decay in the Skulls Exposed to the Elements¹

In the reign of Empress Abe 帝姬阿倍天皇² who governed Ōyashima³ at Nara Palace, there was a monk, Dhyāna Master Eigō 永興⁴ in the village of Kumano in Muro district, Kii province 紀伊國牟婁郡熊野村.⁵ He taught and guided the people by the sea. His contemporaries revered him as a bodhisattva, respecting his self-discipline.⁶ As he lived in a place south of the imperial capital, he was called the Bodhisattva of the South 南菩薩.⁷

Once a *dhyāna* master came to the bodhisattva. He had with him a copy of the *Hoke-kyō* (written with very small characters in one scroll),⁸ a pewter pitcher, and a stool made of rope.⁹ He used to recite the *Hoke-kyō* constantly. After one year or so, he thought of leaving Dhyāna Master Eigō, and with a bow presented his stool as an offering, saying, "I am leaving you and going into the mountains to cross over to Ise province 伊勢國."¹⁰ Hearing this, the master gave him one bushel of ground dry glutinous rice, and had two lay brothers accompany him to see him on his way. After having been escorted for a day, he gave them his *Hoke-kyō*, bowl, and ground dry rice, and sent them back, while he continued with only twenty yards of hemp rope and a pewter pitcher.

After two years had passed, the villagers of Kumano went up to a mountain by the upper stream of the Kumano to cut down trees

1. This section consists of two independent stories on the same motif of the "singing skull." See Chap. II(1)b, n. 41, and (3)a. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XII, 31), *Genkō shakusho* (XXIX, 3).

2. Teiki Abe no sumeramikoto, that is, Empress Kōken 孝謙 (r. 749-757) or Shōtoku 稱徳 (r. 764-770), twice enthroned. It is hard to know whether this story should be dated in her first or second reign.

3. See II.1, n. 3.

4. See III.2, nn. 3, 4, 5. Also see the *Shoku Nihongi*, XXXII (Hōki 3:3:6). He was appointed as one of the ten *dhyāna* masters in 772.

5. In the vicinity of present Shingū-shi, Wakayama-ken 和歌山縣新宮市.

6. 行 *gyō*.

7. Minami no bosatsu.

8. Kyōkai's note.

9. Monks are allowed to possess and carry scriptures, a begging bowl, a pitcher of water for drinking and washing, a stick, a toothpick, a stool made of rope, etc. in traveling. In the Mahayana tradition, the number of such items is eighteen (十八物 *jūhachimotsu*).

10. Present Mie-ken 三重縣.

*On the Mutual Revenge for Killing by Being Reborn
as a Fox and a Dog*

Dhyāna Master Eigō was a monk¹ of Kōfuku-ji 興福寺² on the East Side of Nara. His secular name was Ashiya-no-kimi 葦屋君 family,³ or Ichiki 市往 family,⁴ according to one tradition. He came from Teshima district in Settsu province 攝津國手嶋郡.⁵ He lived a disciplined life in the village of Kumano in Muro district, Kii province 紀伊國牟婁郡熊野村.⁶

Once a sick man in the village came to the temple where he lived, and asked him to cure his disease. As long as he chanted a formula, the patient was cured. If he stopped, however, the disease would return at once. Thus many days passed, and the man was not cured. Making a vow to cure the patient at any cost, the monk continued chanting the formula. Then, possessed by a spirit, the patient said, "I am a fox. I won't surrender easily, so don't try to force me!" The monk asked, "Why?" The patient replied, "This man killed me in his previous life, and I am taking revenge on him. If he dies eventually, he will be reborn as a dog and kill me." In amazement, the *dhyāna* master tried to teach and counsel the spirit, but it did not loosen its hold and finally killed the patient.

A year later, one of his disciples lay in the same room where the patient had been. A visitor tied his dog to a post and came to see the *dhyāna* master. Barking, the dog struggled to free itself from the leash and chain and tried to run away. Amazed, the master said to his visitor, "Set him free to find out the cause." As soon as the dog was released, it ran into the room of the sick disciple and came out with a fox in its mouth. Although the visitor tried to restrain the dog, it would not release the fox but bit it to death.

It was evident that the dead person had been reborn as a dog to take revenge on the fox. Ah! Revenge knows no limits. For King

to build a boat. They heard a voice reciting the *Hoke-kyō*, and it did not stop for days and months. Listening to the voice reciting the scripture, the boat builders felt faith and reverence arising, and, with their rationed food as an offering, they looked everywhere for the reciter. Although they could find no trace of him, the voice reciting the scripture went on as before.

After half a year, they returned to the mountain to draw out the boat. Again they heard the voice continuously reciting the scripture. They reported this to Dhyāna Master Eigō, and, as he also wondered about it, he went to the mountain and heard it for himself. After a search he discovered a corpse hanging over a cliff, its feet tied with a hemp rope, that of a man who had jumped to his death. Beside the corpse there was a pewter pitcher. It was evident that the corpse was that of the monk who had left him. At the sight Eigō wailed in sorrow and went back.

After three more years, villagers came to him, saying, "The voice has never ceased to recite the scripture." Eigō went back to collect the bones, and, when he looked at the skull, he found that the tongue was still alive and had not even begun to decay in the course of three years.

Indeed we know that this event occurred because of the mysterious power of the Mahayana scripture, and the merits of the late monk who had recited it.

The note says: What a noble thing it was for the *dhyāna* master to reveal a miraculous sign of the Mahayana scripture in his flesh-and-blood body by reciting the *Hoke-kyō* constantly! Though he flung himself from a cliff and was exposed to the elements, his tongue alone did not decay. Needless to say, he is sacred and not ordinary.

Also, on Kane-no-take 金峯 in Yoshino¹¹ there was a *dhyāna* master who went from peak to peak reciting the scripture. Once he heard a voice reciting the *Hoke-kyō* and *Kongō hannya-kyō* ahead of him. He stopped to listen to it, and, in searching in the bushes, he found a skull. Though it had been exposed to the elements for a long time, its tongue had not decayed but retained its life. The *dhyāna* master enshrined it in a purified place, saying to the skull, "By the law of causation I met you," and made a shelter above it with grass, living beside it to recite the scripture and hold services six times a day.¹² As he recited the *Hoke-kyō* the skull joined him, and its tongue vibrated. This is also a miraculous event.

11. Or Kinpu-sen in present Yoshino-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣吉野郡.

12. 六時行道 *rokuji gyōdō*. See II.13, n. 6.

1. 沙門 *shamon*; see Chap. I(1)a, n. 4.

2. It stands in the present Nara Park, Nara-shi 奈良市奈良公園. See I.6, n. 10.

3. The *Shinsen shōjiroku* lists it as an immigrant family in Settsu province.

4. The *Shinsen shōjiroku* says that the family is descended from a prince of Paekche.

5. Present Toyono-gun, Ōsaka-fu 大阪府豊能郡.

6. See III.1, n. 5.