

met by the work of interdependent causation.<sup>11</sup> He took the log to its appointed place, called upon the people to make offerings,<sup>12</sup> and directed the work of carving statues of Amida Buddha 阿彌陀佛,<sup>13</sup> Miroku Buddha 彌勒佛,<sup>14</sup> and Bodhisattva Kannon 觀音菩薩.<sup>15</sup> These are now enshrined in Oka-dō 岡堂,<sup>16</sup> in the village of Koshibe, Yoshino district 吉野郡越部村.<sup>17</sup>

Since a log does not have a mind, how can it cry? Doubtless this was nothing but the work of the Buddha's spirit.<sup>18</sup>

## 27

### *On a Woman of Great Strength*<sup>1</sup>

Owari no sukune Kukuri 尾張宿禰久玖利<sup>2</sup> was a governor of Nakashima district, Owari province 尾張國中嶋郡,<sup>3</sup> in the reign of Emperor Shōmu. His wife came from the village of Katawa in Aichi district 愛知郡片藪里<sup>4</sup> of the same province (a granddaughter of the Venerable Dōjō of Gangō-ji).<sup>5</sup> She was faithful to her husband, and as gentle and delicate as glossed silk cloth. Once she wove fine hemp for her husband's robe. Its color and pattern were exquisite.

At that time the lord<sup>6</sup> who ruled that province was Wakasakurabe no Tau 稚櫻部任.<sup>7</sup> When the lord saw the beautiful robe on the district governor, he stripped him of it, saying, "It is too good for you to

11. 因緣 *in'en* or *innen*, the law of cause and effect.

12. He organized a *chishiki* or devotees' organization to carry out this project of making images. See Chap. I(1)d, nn. 110, 111.

13. See Chap. II(3)b, n. 132.

14. See Chap. II(3)b, n. 131. Doctrinally speaking, Maitreya is a bodhisattva, but there are many indications that he was considered a savior Buddha, much like Amida.

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

16. Unlocated. See Fukuyama, *Narachō jūin*, 316.

17. Present Koshibe, Ōyodo-chō, Yoshino-gun, Nara-ken 奈良縣吉野郡大淀町越部.

18. 聖靈 *shōryō*; see Chap. II(3)b.

1. One of the Venerable Dōjō cycle related to I.3, II.4. Cf. *Konjaku monogatarihū* (XXIII, 18).

2. See the *Nihon shoki*, XXIX (Tenmu 1:12:2); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 367. The title of *sukune* was given to the Owari family.

3. Present Nakashima-gun, Aichi-ken 愛知縣中嶋郡.

4. See I.3, n. 3.

5. Kyōkai's parenthesis. For the Venerable Dōjō, see *ibid.*

6. 國守 a chief provincial magistrate.

7. According to the *Shinsen shōjiroku*, Wakasakurabe is the name of a native family, but this provincial magistrate is unknown.

wear," and would not return it. When the district governor's wife asked him what had happened to the robe, he said to her, "My lord took it away." Then the wife asked him, saying, "Do you miss it?" He replied, "Yes, I miss it very much."

Thereupon, the wife went to see the lord and implored, "I beg you to give the robe to me." The lord said, "What a crazy woman! Drive her away." Then, with two fingers, she picked up the bench where the lord was sitting, carried it outside the provincial office<sup>8</sup> with the lord on it, and tore into pieces the hem of his robe, still imploring, "I beg you to give the robe to me!" The lord was so terrified and embarrassed that he returned it to her. She brought it back home and, after cleaning it, folded it and put it away. She could crush a piece of bamboo into strips as fine as silk threads. At that the parents of the district governor were so terrified that they told their son, "Because of your wife you will incur the enmity of the lord and have some trouble," and they continued in panic, "She behaved like that even to the lord. If he decides to punish her for her offense, what shall we do? We cannot make our living." Therefore, they sent her back to her parents and abandoned her.<sup>9</sup>

Some time after that she happened to go out to the Kusatsu River 草津川<sup>10</sup> in the village to wash clothes. A merchant passed in front of her on a big boat heavily loaded with goods. The captain of the boat saw and teased her, treating her lightly. "Be quiet!" she said to him. "Those who play tricks on others get slapped on the cheek!" Angry at that, the captain stopped the boat and hit her, but she did not feel the pain. She drew the boat half way up the beach, leaving its stern sunk in the water. The captain hired men who lived near the ferry to lift the cargo out and then reload it in the boat. She said, "Because he had no manners, I pulled the boat up. Why do you people humiliate a humble woman like me?" She again dragged the loaded boat for about half a furlong. The sailors were struck with such awe that they knelt and said, "We were wrong. We are sorry." Therefore she forgave them. Even five hundred men could not pull the boat, and so it was evident that she had greater strength than five hundred men.

One scripture<sup>11</sup> has a passage to this effect: "If you make and offer

8. 國府 *ko (ku) fu*, a provincial office under the ritsuryō government which became an administrative, cultural, and military center of the province.

9. The law prescribes seven grounds for divorce of a wife by her husband as follows: childlessness; adultery; disobeying of parents-in-law; excessive talking; stealing; jealousy; serious disease (see *Ryō no gige*, "Ko-ryō," Article 28; Sansom, "Early Japanese Laws," Part Two, 142). In this case, the only possible grounds are disobeying of parents-in-law or excessive talking.

10. Unidentified.

11. Unidentified.

rice cakes to the Three Treasures, you will get the strength of Nārāyaṇa,<sup>12</sup> who was as strong as diamond. . . .” Accordingly we learn that this woman was endowed with such strength because of having made big rice cakes to offer to the monks of the Three Treasures in her past life.

## 28

*On the Destitute Woman Who Prayed to the Sixteen-foot  
Śākyamuni Buddha for a Share of Benefits  
and Immediately Attained a Great Fortune  
Brought by a Miraculous Event<sup>1</sup>*

In the reign of Emperor Shōmu, there lived a woman on the west side of Daian-ji<sup>2</sup> in the capital of Nara. She was extremely poor and, being without any means of livelihood, suffered from hunger. Having heard that the Sixteen-foot Buddha<sup>3</sup> of Daian-ji was ready to grant wishes immediately, she bought flowers, incense, and lamp oil, and went to make a petition before the Buddha, saying, “As I did not produce good causes in my previous lives, I am suffering from extreme poverty in my present body. Please give me some wealth to save me from dire poverty.” She never ceased to pray for days and months.

One day she went as usual to pray to the Buddha for wealth, offered flowers, incense, and oil lamps, and went home to sleep. The next morning she got up to find four *kan* of coins<sup>4</sup> by the gate bridge. Attached was a plate which said that they were the Dai-sutaraku 大修多羅供 fund of Daian-ji.<sup>5</sup> In awe she sent them immediately to the temple. Thereupon, the monks of the Sutara seminar group checked the treasury and found that the seal was not broken but that four *kan* of coins were missing. So they put them back in the safe.

12. In the Buddhist tradition the name is used to refer to a legendary hero of great strength.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari* (XII, 15).

2. See II.24, n. 4.

3. 丈六佛; see I.32, n. 6.

4. 四貫錢; see II.6, n. 6.

5. At Daian-ji there were five seminar groups, namely, Sutara, Sanron, Betsusanron, Ritsu, and Shōron. See II.24, n. 6. Each of them had its own office, treasury, and officers.