

*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.

Virūdhaka 毗瑠璃王⁷ killed ninety-nine million and nine hundred thousand men of the Śākya to revenge the past. If vengeance is used to requite vengeance, then vengeance will never end, but will go on rolling like the wheel of a cart. Forbearance⁸ is the virtue of the man who restrains himself by taking his enemy as a teacher and not seeking revenge. Accordingly, enmity is nothing but the teacher of forbearance. This is what the scripture⁹ means when it says: "Without respect for the virtue of forbearance one would kill even one's own mother."

3

On a Monk Who Received an Immediate Reward Because of His Devotion to the Eleven-headed Kanzeon Image¹

The Venerable Bensō 辯宗² was a monk of Daian-ji.³ As he was innately eloquent, he used to address the Buddha on behalf of devotees⁴ and won many patrons⁵ and popularity.

In the reign of Empress Abe, Bensō borrowed thirty *kan* of coins from the Sutaraku fund of the temple⁶ for his own use and could not repay them. The officials of the temple⁷ pressed him for repayment. As he had no means of repaying, he went up to a mountain temple of Hatsuse 泊瀬⁸ and paid homage to the Eleven-headed Bodhisattva Kannon.⁹ Holding the rope tied to the hand of the Bodhisattva Kannon, he prayed, saying, "I have spent the money from the Sutara fund of Daian-ji, but have no means to repay it. I beseech

7. The prince of King Prasenajit. Because of his mother's low status, he was humiliated at Kapilavastu, the castle of the Śākya. Later, when he was enthroned, he gained revenge on the Śākya by exterminating them. See *Zōitsu agon-gyō* 増一阿含經, XXVI (*Taishō*, II, 692).

8. 忍辱 *ninniku*, a translation of Skt. *ksānti*, one of the six kinds of bodhisattvas' self-discipline. See I.6, n. 7.

9. Unidentified.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatarishū* (XVI, 27), *Hase-dera reigenki* (III).

2. Unknown.

3. See I.32, n. 6.

4. 白堂 *byakudō*; a kind of mediator who verbally formulates the devotees' wishes to the Buddha.

5. 檀越 *taniochi*; see I.7, n. 18.

6. See II.24, n. 6.

7. 維那 *ina*, one of the *sangō* 三綱, samgha officials. See Chap. I(1)d, n. 84.

8. Present Hase-dera, Hatsuse-machi, Shiki-gun, Nara-ken.

9. See Chap. II(3)b, nn. 137, 142.

you to give me the money." He chanted the name of Kannon and prayed. The officials followed him there to ask for repayment. He answered them, saying, "Please wait for a moment. I am praying to the Bodhisattva for the money for repayment. It won't take long."

At that time Prince Fune 船親王,¹⁰ led by a good cause, came to the mountain temple and held a service. Holding the rope tied to the image, Bensō continued praying, "Please give me the money so that I may repay it at once." Hearing this, the prince asked Bensō's disciple, "What makes him pray like that?" The disciple told him about the whole affair. When the prince heard it, he gave the money to repay the debt.

Indeed we know that this was brought about by the great compassion of the Kannon and the utmost devotion of the monk.

4

On a Monk Who Was Saved from Drowning in the Sea by Reciting a Mahayana Scripture

In the capital of Nara there was a fully qualified monk² whose name is unknown. He used to recite a Mahayana scripture³ and lived as a layman, supporting his family by lending money. His only daughter married and lived separately with her husband. In the reign of Empress Abe, her husband was appointed an official in Mutsu province.⁴ Therefore, he borrowed twenty *kan* of money from his father-in-law to outfit himself and went off to his new post. After many years, he repaid only the principal but not the interest, which had become as much as the principal in the course of time. Meanwhile the father-in-law asked for repayment. The son developed a secret hatred of him and looked for a chance to kill him. The father-in-law, however, did not know this and urged him, as usual, to repay the debt.

10. Or 船王, son of Prince Toneri 舍人親王, and a grandson of Emperor Tenmu; exiled to Oki because of his involvement in Nakamaro's rebellion. See III.38.

1. Cf. *Sanbō ekotoba* (II, 15), *Fusō ryakki* (VI, Genmyō), *Konjaku monogatarishū* (XIV, 38).

2. 大僧 *daisō*.

3. 方廣經典; see Chap. II(1)a, n. 8.

4. Mutsu is larger than other provinces, comprising present Fukushima, Miyagi, Iwate, and Aomori. 介掾 is a provincial magistrate of the third class (local magistrates are 守, 介, 掾, 目, 史生).