

pagoda, and the painful groan was heard every night. When he could endure no longer, he got up to look for the sufferer, but there was still nobody around. At dawn, however, the groaning was far more intense than usual, echoing through heaven and earth. He wondered again if it were the spirit of the pagoda.

When he arose early the next morning and looked around the temple, he discovered that the head of the sixteen-foot image of Miroku 彌勒<sup>5</sup> had been severed and had fallen to the ground. About a thousand large ants were gathered there, devouring the head. Having seen this, he reported it to the patrons of the temple. In grief, they repaired the image and held a dedication ceremony with reverence.

It is said that the Buddha statue is not alive, so how could it suffer and be sick? Indeed, we learn that this was the manifestation of the Buddha's mind. Even after the death of Buddha, the dharma-body always exists, eternal and unchangeable. You should not doubt any further.

## 29

*On the Immediate Penalty of Violent Death Incurred  
by an Ignorant Man Who Broke a Wooden Buddha Image  
a Village Child Had Made in Playing<sup>1</sup>*

In the village of Hamanaka, Niki, Ama district, Kii province 紀伊國海部郡仁嗜濱中村,<sup>2</sup> there was an ignorant man whose name is unknown. Born ignorant, he did not know the law of causation.

There was a path running along the mountain<sup>3</sup> between Ama 海部 and Ate 安諦.<sup>4</sup> It was called Tamasaka 玉坂.<sup>5</sup> If one climbs the mountain from Hamanaka, traveling due south, he will reach the village of Hata 秦里.<sup>6</sup> Once a child of that village went into the mountain to collect firewood and played by that mountain path, carving a piece

5. Maitreya; see Chap. II(3)b, n. 131.

1. Probably written as an illustration for the second chapter of the *Hoke-kyō*, "Hōben-bon" 方便品 (Kern, *Saddharma*, Chap. II, "Skillfulness").

2. In the vicinity of present Shimotsu-shi, Wakayama-ken 和歌山縣下津市.

3. One of the Nagamine Mts. 長峰山脈, forming the boundary between Kaisō-gun and Arida-gun.

4. See III.10, n. 4.

5. Unidentified.

6. Present Hata, Shimotsu-shi 下津市畑.

of wood into a Buddha image and piling stones into a pagoda. He placed the image in the stone pagoda and occasionally played there, making offerings.

In the reign of Emperor Shirakabe, an ignorant man laughed at the statue carved by the child in his play, chopping and breaking it with an axe. Hardly had he gone any distance when he threw himself on the ground, bleeding from the nose and mouth with both eyes plucked out, dying in an instant like the disappearance of an illusion.

Indeed, we learn that the Guardian of dharma<sup>7</sup> is present. How could we not revere it? The *Hoke-kyō* explains it thus: "If children draw an image of Buddha with a twig, brush, or fingernail in their play, they will all attain Buddhahood. Or if they raise one hand and bow to worship a Buddha-image, they will attain the supreme stage of Buddhahood."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, be pious and faithful.

## 30

*On the Monk Who Accumulated Merits by Making  
Buddhist Images and Showed an Extraordinary  
Sign at the End of His Life*

Elder Master Kanki's 觀規 secular name was Mimana no Kanuki 三間名干岐.<sup>1</sup> He was from Nagusa district, Kii province 紀伊國名草郡.<sup>2</sup> He was naturally gifted in carving. He was such a learned monk that he fulfilled the role of a speaker in a ceremony<sup>3</sup> and was influential among the people. He supported his family by agricultural work.

In the village of Noo 能應村<sup>4</sup> in Nagusa district, there was a temple which his ancestors had built. It was formerly called Miroku-dera 彌勒寺,<sup>5</sup> but popularly referred to as Noo-dera. In the reign of Em-

7. 護法 *gohō*.

8. See Chap. II(1)c, n. 53; also, Katō, trans., *Myōhō-rence-kyō*, 57-58.

1. Mimana 任那 is the name of the estate held by the Yamato court from the fourth century to 562. Kanuki is a popular name for ancient Korean royal families. Cf. *Nihon shoki*, XVII (Keitai 23:4); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 19: "Konomata Kanki 己能未多干岐, King of Imna, came to the court."

2. Present Kaisō-gun, Wakayama-ken.

3. 得業 *tokugō*; monks who have accomplished the task in one of the three great ceremonies of the southern capital, that is, Yuima-e and Hokke-e of Kōfuku-ji 興福寺維摩會, 法華會 and Saishō-e of Yakushi-ji 藥師寺最勝會.

4. Present Yamaguchi-mura 山口村.

5. Although the temple is named after Maitreya, it does not seem to be dedicated to Maitreya. However, it may have enshrined Maitreya when founded.