

*On Gaining an Immediate Penalty for a Lifetime
of Catching Fish in a Net¹*

The Most Venerable Jiō 慈應,² monk³ of Gangō-ji⁴ in the capital,⁵ went on a summer retreat⁶ to lecture on the *Hōke-kyō*⁷ at Nōo-dera 濃於寺⁸ in Shikama district, Harima province 播磨國 都磨郡, on the invitation of the patron of the temple. In the neighborhood, there was a fisherman who had been netting fish since his childhood. One day he began to crawl in the mulberry bushes on his property, crying aloud, "Fire is devouring me!" His family tried to help him, but he only repeated, "Don't come close to me. I shall be in flames soon." In the meantime, his parents rushed to the temple to ask the ascetic⁹ to save their son. The ascetic came and recited formulas¹⁰ for a while, and the fisherman was released from the devouring flames. His breeches had already been burnt. Stricken with terror, the fisherman paid a visit to Nōo-dera, confessed his sins in the congregation,¹¹ and repented, offering clothes and having a scripture recited. Thereafter he never did any evil.

The *Ganshi kakem* 鬪氏家訓¹² gives an analogous passage: "Once there was a man who belonged to the Liu family in Chiang-ling,¹³

1. Cf. *Sanzō okonoh* (II, 6), *Honshū kōshiden* (75).
2. Otherwise unknown.
3. *Shamon*; see Chap. II(1)a, n. 4.
4. See I.3, n. 9.
5. Since no date is given, it is not clear whether this is the new Gangō-ji in Nara or the former one (Asuka-dera or Hōkō-ji) in Asuka.
6. 夏安居 *geango* (also *lajango* 阿呂, *geyo* 夏行, etc.), a translation of Skt. *varṣarāṭika*, which is "summer retreat"; during the rainy season monks in India held a ninety-day retreat for study and disciplinary practice.
7. See Chap. II(3)b.
8. Uncertain; it may be a provincial temple in present Gochaku, Himeji-shi, Hyōgo-ken 兵庫縣 都磨郡 濃於寺.
9. 行者 *gyōja*; in this passage refers to Jiō. It means "one who practices the path."
10. 咒 *ju*; see Chap. II(1)b, n. 47.
11. 大衆 *dassō*: the congregation consisting of the participants of the retreat.
12. *Yen Chih-t'ai, Yen-shih chih-shan* (SPTK, No. 169). See Teng *su-yū*, trans., *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan, Yen Chih-t'ai* (531-591) presents a synopsis of Buddhist and Confucian teachings, and in Chapter XVI (On Faith 歸心篇) in particular, he emphasizes the law of karmic retribution. His work was popular during the Nara period, and its influence may be detected in Fujiwara no Kamatari's *Kōdō* (see Chap. II(1)c, nn. 67, 68) and other biographical and moralistic writings. That particular chapter is included in the *Kuang hang-ming chi* 廣弘明集, XI (7aishō, III, 107b-108c).
13. Present Hupai province 湖北省.

who made a living by selling stewed eel. Later he had a child with the head of an eel and a human body,"¹⁴ which demonstrates the same moral.

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*On a Skull, Which Was Saved from Being Stepped on by
Men and Beasts, Showing an Extraordinary Sign and
Repaying the Benefactor Immediately¹*

Dōtō 道登,² a Buddhist scholar³ of Koryō, was a monk of Gangō-ji.⁴ He came from the Ema 惠滿 family⁵ in Yamashiro 山背 province. In the second year of the horse, the second year of the Taika era,⁷ he built the Uji Bridge 宇治橋.⁸ Once, when he was passing through the valley in the Nara hills 奈良山,⁹ he saw a skull that had been trampled by men and animals. In sorrow, he had his attendant Maro 萬呂 place it on a tree.

On New Year's Eve¹⁰ of the same year, a man came to the temple gate, saying, "I would like to see the Venerable Dōtō's attendant Maro." When Maro came out to see him, he said, "Thanks to the mercy of your master, I have been happy and at peace. And I can repay your kindness only on this evening." Then he took Maro home with him. Through the closed gate they entered the back quarters of the house, where they found abundant food and drink already prepared. The man divided his fare with Maro, and they ate together.

¹⁴ This passage is omitted in the *Kuang hang-ming chi*. See *Family Instructions*, 149. 江陵劉氏以置餅局乘後生一兒頭是餅自額以下爲人耳。

1. Cf. *Fuzō ryaku* (IV, Kōroku), *Kengaku monogatari* (XIX, 31). There is another version of the same story (III, 27). For the significance of the story, see Chap. II(1)a, and (3)a.
2. Dōtō's name is found among the ten great masters (*jūshū* 十師) appointed by Emperor Kōtoku in 645. See *Nihon shoki*, XXV (Taika 1: 8-8); Aston, "Nihongi," II, 203.
3. 學生 *gakushō* is one who studied Buddhist teachings, or Chinese classics at a state college. See Chap. II(1)d, n. 91.
4. See I.3, n. 9.
5. It is unclear whether Ema is his family name, or that of a friend he visited.
6. After 794 it was written as 宇治, present Kyoto-fu.
7. 646.
8. See *Shōku Nihongi* (I (Mōmu 4: 3: 10)). There it gives Dōshō, not Dōtō, as the builder of the Uji Bridge, but other documents agree with the *Nihon ryōki* in making Dōtō its builder.
9. The hills between Kyoto and Nara. See II, 40, n. 6.
10. It was believed that deceased family members visited their former homes at the end of the year, and a cosmic renewal rite was held then. See Chap. II(1)a.