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*On a Wicked Man Who Persecuted a Begging Monk
and Gained an Immediate Penalty¹*

In the days of an old capital,² there was a foolish man who did not believe in the law of karmic causality. Once, when he saw a monk begging food, he grew angry and wanted to restrain the monk. The monk ran into the water of a rice field, but the man chased him and caught him. When the monk could stand this no longer, he cast a spell³ on the man, who rolled on the ground and ran about⁴ hysterically. Then the monk disappeared from the scene.

The man had two sons. In order to break the spell binding their father, they went to the temple and asked a *dhyāna* master to come and see their father. When the master learned what had happened, he at first refused to make a visit. Again and again the two sons begged him earnestly to save their father, and at last the monk came. Hardly had he finished reciting the first passage of the Chapter on the Kannon 觀音品⁵ when the man was released from the spell.⁶ Thereafter his faith⁷ was awakened, and he turned wickedness into good.

1. Cf. *Konjaku monogatari-shū* (XX, 25). Similar stories are found in II.1, II, 35; III.15, etc.

2. See I.1, n. 15.

3. 咒縛 *juvaku*.

4. 東西 literally means "east and west," that is, in all directions.

5. *Kannon-bon*; Chap. XXV of the *Hoke-kyō*, often used as an independent scripture. See Chap. II(3)b; also, Katō, trans., *Myōhō-renge-kyō*, 405-415.

6. 解脱 *gedatsu*; a translation of Skt. *mokṣa*, meaning liberation, freedom from the bonds of illusion and suffering. In this passage, however, it means release from the spell.

7. 信心 *shinjin*; a pure heart, free from doubt, which believes in the Three Treasures and the law of karmic causation, the first requisite for following the Buddha's path.